One-Pot Synthesis of Isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones by Cyclocondensation of 3-Hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones with 1,3-Dicarbonyls

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Abstract: Isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones have been synthesized by one-pot reaction of 3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones with 1,3-dicarbonyls via coupling of *N*-acyliminium ion intermediates with 1,3-dicarbonyls and subsequent intramolecular Friedel–Crafts reactions catalyzed by H_3PO_4 – P_2O_5 or H_3PO_4 – H_2SO_4 .

Key words: 2,3-dihydro-3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-one, 1,3-dicarbonyls, 6a,11-dihydroisoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones, *N*-acyliminium ions, Friedel–Crafts reaction

Isoindolo[2,1-a]quinolines are a class of molecules that possess a wide range of biological activities. For examples, 6-aminomethylisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-5,11-diones, analogues of berberine alkaloids, show protective effects against N₂-induced hypoxia and are used for prophylactic and therapeutic treatment of senile dementia, angina pectoris, myocardial infarction, and emotional disorder caused by stroke and cerebral infarction;^{1a,b} trihydroxyisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-5,11-diones show inhibitory activities against bacterial DNA-gyrase and human topoisomerase II.1c Considering the important pharmacological properties displayed by the isoindolo[2,1-a]quinoline core, several synthetic approaches have been developed^{2a-2f} and reviewed,³ for example, N-acylation of 4-(2'-furyl)-4-(N-aryl)aminobutenes with maleic anhydride, subsequent intramolecular Diels-Alder reaction with the furan moiety, and dehydration to afford the 5,6,6a,12-tetrahydroisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-one-10carboxylic acids;^{2a,b} the Suzuki–Miyaura coupling of 2-chloroquinoline with 2-formylphenylboronic acid and nucleophilic cyclization to produce 5,6,6a,12-tetrahydroisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-one;^{2c} lithium bistrimethylsilylamide (LBTSA)^{2d} or sodium hydride^{2e} catalyzed intramolecular aldol condensation of 2-(phthalimidin-3yl)acetophenone and thermal dehydration; one-pot condensation of substituted 2-amino-2-methoxyacetophenones with phthalic anhydrides in refluxing toluene in the presence of triethylamine to give isoindolo[2,1-a]quinoline-5,11-diones;^{1b} intramolecular Friedel–Crafts reaction of 2-aryl-3-carboxymethyl isoindol-1-ones prepared from the reaction of the 2-aryl-3-hydroxyisoindol-1-ones with 1-methoxy-1-trimethylsilyloxyethene in the presence of titanium(IV) chloride^{2f} or from Wittig reaction of Nacyliminium ion from 3-hydroxyphenylisoindolones with

 $Ph_3P=CHCO_2Et^{2g,1a}$ to produce isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quino-line-5,11-diones.

As a part of our research program directed towards the synthesis of polycyclic heterocycles, we recently reported the synthesis of 5-aryl-5,6,6a,12-tetrahydroisoindolo[2,1a]quinolin-11-ones and 5-aryl-3a,9a-dihydropyrrolo[2,1a]quinolin-1-ones by the [4+2] reactions of N-acyliminium ions produced from 3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones with styrenes.⁴ We report herein a concise and efficient synthesis of 6-ethoxycarbonyl- or 6-acyl-subsituted 6a,11-dihydroisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-ones by a onepot reaction of 3-hydroxy-2-aryl-isoindol-1-ones and 1,3dicarbonyls via the coupling of N-acyliminium ions produced from 3-hydroxy-2-aryl-isoindol-1-ones with 1,3dicarbonyls and subsequent intramolecular Friedel-Crafts reactions catalyzed by acids. Although the coupling of Nacyliminium ions produced from 5-hydroxypyrrolidin-2ones and 4-hydroxy[1,3]benzoxazin-2-ones with 1,3-dicarbonyls had been reported,⁵ but no similar work has been found in literature for 3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1ones. Only the condensation of 3-methoxy-2-phenylisoindol-1-ones with acetaldehyde to form 5,6,6a,11-tetrahydro-5-trifluoroacetoxyisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-one was reported recently.⁶ Therefore, this is the first report of a one-pot synthesis of 6a,11-dihydroisoindolo[2,1*a*]quinolin-11-ones from 3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1ones and 1,3-dicarbonyls (Scheme 1).

N-Acyliminium ions are known as important, reactive species in organic synthesis for the construction of carbon–carbon bonds.^{5–7} The reactions of N-acyliminium ions generated from 5-ethoxypyrrolidin-2-ones or 5-acetoxypyrrolidin-2-ones with ethyl acetoacetate under the catalysis of NbCl₅ or AlCl₃ afforded coupling product ethyl 2-(2-oxo-pyrrolidin-2-on-5-yl)acetoacetate in high yields.^{5a,b} We found the reaction of *N*-acyliminium ion generated from 3-hydroxy-2-phenylisoindol-1-ones (1a) with ethyl acetoacetate (2a) could also proceed quickly under the catalysis of BF₃·OEt₂, TFA, PTSA, or H₃PO₄ to afford the coupling product ethyl 2-(1-oxo-2-arylisoindol-3-yl)acetoacetate (4) in high yields, but no further Friedel–Crafts reaction between aryl group and carbonyl group took place. Only when P_2O_5 (method A) or H_2SO_4 (method B) was added to the above solutions, the coupling product ethyl 2-(1-oxo-2-arylisoindol-3-yl)acetoacetate could be converted into the cyclization product 6-ethoxycarbonyl-6a,11-dihydroisoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-one (3a) smoothly (Scheme 2).

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Scheme 1 Reactions of 3-hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones with 1,3-dicarbonyls



Scheme 2 Two-step synthesis of 3a

After comparison of the experimental results from different catalysts and solvents, $H_3PO_4-P_2O_5$ or $H_3PO_4-H_2SO_4$ mixture was selected as a catalyst for the reactions of 3hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones (**1a**–**e**) with 1,3-dicarbonyls including ethyl acetoacetate (**2a**), acetoacetone (**2b**), and benzoylacetone (**2c**) as well as monocarbonyl compound cyclohexanone (**2d**).⁸ The results of the reactions are summarized in Table 1. All these reactions afforded isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones as the main products which were fully characterized by ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR, and MS and the structure of **3c** was further confirmed by X-ray crystal structure as depicted in Figure 1.⁹

In comparison of the reactions of **1a–e** with **2a**, it could be noticed that the reaction rate of **1b** with **2a** was faster than that of **1a** with **2a**, and the yield of product **3b** was higher than that of **3a**; while the reaction rate of **1c** with **2a** was much slower than that of **1a** with **2a**, and the yield of product **3c** was relatively lower. These results could be ascribed to the activating effect of methyl group and the deactivating effect of chlorine atom. But in the case of **1d**, the yield of **3d** was decreased because **1d** could undergo self-condensation in acidic medium. In contrast to **1a–d**, no cyclization product was obtained from the reaction of **1e** with **2a** (Scheme 3), only the decarboxylation product **5** was separated from the reaction mixture after prolonged stirring. Obviously, the deactivating effect of nitro group resisted the intramolecular Friedel–Crafts reaction.



Figure 1 The X-ray crystal structure (ORTEP drawing) of 3c

Another difference in the reaction outcome was found in the reaction of **1a**,**b** with **2b** under different reaction conditions. The main products produced in $H_3PO_4-P_2O_5$ medium at room temperature were the normal cyclization products **3e** and **3f**, but in the presence of $H_3PO_4-H_2SO_4$ at 60 °C deacetylation and reduction products **6a** and **6b** appeared as main products (Scheme 4). We were unable to rationalize the mechanism of their formation.

Besides of the 1,3-dicarbonyls, cyclohexanone (2d) could also react with 1a,b under similar conditions to give the isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones as shown in Scheme 5.



Scheme 3 Reaction of 1e with 2a in H₃PO₄-H₂SO₄ under heating

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Entry	Reactant					Method	Time (h)	Temp (°C)	Product	Yield (%) ^c
		Х		\mathbb{R}^1	\mathbb{R}^2					
1	1a	Н	2a	Me	OEt	A ^a	24	r.t.	3a	85
2	1a	Н	2a	Me	OEt	А	12	60	3a	78
3	1a	Н	2a	Me	OEt	$\mathbf{B}^{\mathbf{b}}$	16	r.t.	3a	75
4	1b	Me	2a	Me	OEt	А	8	60	3b	93
5	1c	Cl	2a	Me	OEt	А	32	60	3c	76
6	1d	MeO	2a	Me	OEt	А	12	60	3d	45
7	1e	NO ₂	2a	Me	OEt	В	4	60	5	90
8	1a	Н	2b	Me	Me	А	34	r.t	3e	83
9	1a	Н	2b	Me	Me	А	4	60	3e + 6a	62 + 8
10	1a	Н	2b	Me	Me	В	24	r.t	3e + 6a	28 + 37
11	1a	Н	2b	Me	Me	В	2	60	6a	78
12	1b	Me	2b	Me	Me	А	1.5	60	3f	82
13	1b	Me	2b	Me	Me	В	0.5	60	6b	67
14	1a	Н	2c	Ph	Me	А	2	60	3g	81
15	1a	Н	2c	Ph	Me	В	1	60	3g	75
16	1b	Me	2c	Ph	Me	А	12	r.t.	3h	84
17	1c	Cl	2c	Ph	Me	А	32	60	3i	78
18	1a	Н	2d	cyclohexanone		А	12	60	3ј	63
19	1b	Me	2d	cyclohexanone		А	6	60	3k	78

 Table 1
 The Reactions of 3-Hydroxy-2-arylisoindol-1-ones with 1,3-Dicarbonyls Catalyzed by Acids

 a $H_{3}PO_{4}\text{--}P_{2}O_{5}$ as catalyst. b $H_{3}PO_{4}\text{--}H_{2}SO_{4}$ as catalyst.

^c Isolation yields based on **1a–e**.



Scheme 4 Reactions of 1a,b with 2b under two different conditions



Scheme 5 Reactions of 1a,b with cyclohexanone (2d)



Scheme 6 Plausible mechanism for the formation of 3a

According to the above results, a plausible mechanism for the formation of isoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-ones was proposed (Scheme 6). The reaction was initiated by the formation of an *N*-acyliminium intermediate which was then attached by the nuclephilic 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds. Subsequent intramolecular Friedel–Crafts reaction between the protected aniline with the ketone afforded the isoindolo[2,1-a]quinolin-11-one derivative.

In summary, an efficient methodology for the synthesis of isoindolo[2,1-*a*]quinolin-11-ones has been developed. To our best knowledge, this is the first report for the synthesis of these compounds via a one-pot, two-step reaction of *N*-acyliminium ions with 1,3-dicarbonyls under the catalysis of $H_3PO_4-P_2O_5$ or $H_3PO_4-H_2SO_4$. Further investigations of synthetic application of this strategy were under way.

Supporting Information for this article is available online at http://www.thieme-connect.com/ejournals/toc/synlett.

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- (8) Typical Experimental Procedure Method A

To a stirred mixture of 3-hydroxy-2-phenylisoindol-1-one (**1a**, 1.0 mmol), ethyl acetoacetate (**2b**, 1.2 mmol) and H_3PO_4 (2 mL), P_2O_5 (2 g) was added at one portion at r.t. After the solid was dissolved completely the mixture was stirred at r.t. or heated at 60 °C for 6–24 h (TLC control). The

reaction was quenched by crashed ice and the solution was extracted with CH_2Cl_2 (2 × 10 mL). The organic phase was washed with sat. aq NaHCO₃ (10 mL) and H₂O, respectively and dried with anhyd Na₂SO₄, concentrated at reduced pressure to furnish the crude products **3a** which was purified by silica gel column chromatography using EtOAc–hexane (1:9) as eluents and further purified by recrystallization from EtOH.

Method B

The procedure is similar to method A, only P_2O_5 was replaced by H_2SO_4 (2 mL, 98%) which was added dropwise into the mixture of **1a** (1.0 mmol), **2a** (1.2 mmol), and H_3PO_4 (2 mL).

Selected Spectroscopic Data

Compound **3a**: colorless needles; mp 124–126 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.33 (t, 3 H, *J* = 7.5 Hz, CH₃), 2.21 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 4.35 (q, 2 H, *J* = 7.5 Hz, OCH₂), 5.92 (s, 1 H, H-6a), 7.23 (t, 1 H, *J* = 7 8 Hz), 7.42–7.60 (m, 5 H), 7.96 (d, 1 H, *J* = 7.2 Hz H-10), 8.05 (d, 1 H, *J* = 7 8 Hz H-1). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.2 (CH₃), 15.6 (CH₃), 58.7 (OCH₂), 61.0 (C-6a), 122.0 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 124.3 (CH), 125.0 (CH), 125.2 (CH), 126.8 (C), 127.5 (C), 128.9 (CH), 129.7(CH), 132.0 (C), 132.5 (CH), 133.7 (C), 134.7 (C), 140.7 (C), 166.5 (CO), 166.9 (CO). MS (EI): *m/z* (%) = 319 (18) [M⁺], 304 (8), 290 (30), 274 (4), 262 (6), 246 (99), 86 (100). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₀H₁₇NO₃: C, 75.22; H, 5.37; N 4.39 Found: C, 75.13; H, 5.45; N 4.25.

Compound 3c: colorless needles; mp 151–153 °C. ¹H NMR $(300 \text{ MHz}, \text{CDCl}_3): \delta = 1.33 (t, 3 \text{ H}, J = 7.2 \text{ Hz}, \text{CH}_3), 2.17$ (s, 3 H, CH₃), 4.35 (q, 2 H, J = 7.5 Hz, OCH₂), 5.90 (s, 1 H, H-6a), 7.39 (dd, 1 H, J = 7.5, 1.5 Hz), 7.42 (d, 1 H, J = 1.5 Hz, H-4), 7.52-7.60 (m, 3 H), 7.94 (d, 1 H, J = 7.5 Hz, H-1), 8.00 (d, 1 H, J = 8.1 Hz, H-10). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 14.2 (CH_3), 15.6 (CH_3), 58.5 (OCH_2), 61.2 (C-6a), 123.1$ (CH), 123.7 (CH), 124.4 (CH), 125.2 (CH), 128.0 (C), 129.0 (CH), 129.4 (CH), 130.4 (C), 131.7 (C), 132.5 (C), 132.7 (CH), 133.1 (C), 140.5 (C), 166.5 (CO), 166.7 (CO). MS (EI): m/z (%) = 355 (8) [M + 2⁺], 353 (25 [M⁺], 340 (20), 338 (62), 326 (31), 324 (87), 310 (28), 296 (5), 282 (29), 280 (100). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₀H₁₈ClNO₃: C, 67.90; H, 4.56; N, 3.96 Found: C, 67.83; H, 4.63; N, 4.07. Compound **3f**: colorless needles; 141–143 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.09 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 2.16 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 2.39 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 5.80 (s, 1 H, H-6a), 7.23 (s, 1 H, H-4), 7.26 (t, 1 H, J = 6.0 Hz), 7.41 (d, 1 H, J = 7.2 Hz, H-2), 7.50-7.59 (m, 3 H), 7.95 (d, 2 H, J = 8.7 Hz, H-1, H-10). ¹³C NMR $(75 \text{ MHz}, \text{CDCl}_3): \delta = 15.6 (\text{CH}_3), 21.2 (\text{CH}_3), 32.8 (\text{CH}_3),$ 58.5 (C-6a), 121.5 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 124.3 (CH), 125.2 (CH), 127.2 (C), 128.9 (CH), 129.1 (C), 130.1 (CH), 132.1 (C), 132.2 (C), 132.4 (CH), 134.5 (C), 134.8 (C), 140.1 (C), 166.1 (CO), 204.6 (CO). MS (EI): *m/z* (%) = 303 (16) [M⁺], 302 (10), 288 (36), 260 (62), 246 (18), 230 (5), 217 (13), 43 (100). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₀H₁₇NO₂: C, 79.18; H, 5.65; N, 4.62 Found: C, 79.12; H, 5.74; N, 4.55.

Compound **3g**: colorless needles; 156–158 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.94 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 6.06 (s, 1 H, H-6a), 7.22–7.54 (m, 9 H), 7.80 (d, 2 H, *J* = 7.8 Hz, H-2¢), 7.90 (d, 1 H, *J* = 6.9 Hz, H-10), 8. 16 (d, 1 H, *J* = 7.5 Hz, H-1). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 16.4 (CH₃), 59.2 (C-6a), 121.7 (CH), 124.0 (2 CH), 124.8 (CH), 125.0 (CH), 127.6 (C), 128.7 (CH), 128.9 (2 CH), 129.2 (2 CH), 129.6 (CH), 131.3 (C), 131.7 (C), 131.9 (C), 132.3 (CH), 134.1 (CH),

134.7 (C), 136.8 (C), 140.1 (C), 166.5 (CO), 196.9 (CO). MS: m/z (%) = 351 (37) [M⁺], 350 (14), 336 (25), 246 (79), 105 (100), 77 (89). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₄H₁₇NO₂: C, 82.03; H, 4.88; N, 3.99 Found: C, 81.94; H, 4.84; N, 4.07. Compound **3j**: colorless needles; 131–132 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 1.49 - 1.75$ (m, 2 H), 1.81 - 1.85 (m, 2 H), 2.16-2.31 (m, 2 H), 2.54-2.62 (m, 2 H), 5.40 (s, 1 H, NCH), 7.22 (t, 1 H, J = 8.7 Hz), 7.30–7.35 (m, 2 H), 7.49–7.61 (m, 2 H), 7.67 (d, 1 H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.95 (d, 1 H, J = 6.5 Hz), 8.05 (d, 1 H, J = 6.9 Hz). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz CDCl₃): $\delta = 22.0$ (CH₂), 22.2 (CH₂), 22.4 (CH₂), 27.5 (CH₂), 60.8 (NCH), 121.3 (CH), 122.7 (CH), 124.0 (CH), 124.7 (CH), 127.3 (CH), 127.6 (C), 128.4 (CH), 129.2 (C), 130.4 (C), 131.5 (CH), 132.4 (C), 133.6 (C), 141.2 (C), 165.6 (NCO). MS (EI): m/z (%) = 287 (86) [M⁺], 286 (67), 270 (4), 258 (100), 232 (10), 216 (11). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₂₀H₁₇NO: C, 83.60; H, 5.96; N, 4.87 Found: C, 83.67; H, 6.02; N, 4.74. Compound 5: colorless needles; 172–174 °C. ¹H NMR (300 MHz CDCl₃): $\delta = 2.20$ (s, 3 H, CH₃), 2.73 (dd, 1 H, J = 18.6, 9.6 Hz, CHH), 3.15 (dd, 1 H, J = 18.0, 2.4 Hz, CHH), 5.83 (dd, 1 H, J = 9.6, 2.4 Hz CH), 7.49 (d, 1 H, J = 7.5 Hz, C-5), 7.64 (t, 1 H, J = 7.2 Hz, ArH), 7.55 (t, 1 H, J = 7.2 Hz, ArH),7.88 (d, 2 H, J = 8.7 Hz, H-2'), 7.92 (d, 1 H, J = 7.8 Hz, H-7), 8.30 (d, 2 H, J = 9.0 Hz, H-3'). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, $CDCl_3$): $\delta = 30.7 (CH_3), 46.2 (CH_2), 55.7 (C-3), 121.2 (2 C),$ 122.8 (CH), 124.5 (CH), 124.9 (2 C), 129.1 (CH), 130.1 (C), 133.3 (CH), 142.6 (C), 143.8 (C), 144.8 (C), 167.1 (NCO), 205.6 (CO). MS (EI): m/z (%) = 310 (11) [M⁺], 293 (10), 281 (7), 267 (27), 253 (44), 234 (18), 43 (100). Anal. Calcd (%) for C₁₇H₁₄N₂O₄: C, 65.80; H, 4.55; N, 9.03 Found: C, 65.75; H, 4.62; N, 9.02. Compound **6b**: mixture of *cis*- and *trans*-isomers (30:70). ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (*trans*-isomer) = 1.48 (d, 3) H, J = 7.8 Hz, CH₃), 1.78 (dt, 1 H, J = 9.3, 3.3 Hz, CHH), 2.30 (dd, 1 H, J = 12.9, 1.2 Hz, CHH), 2.33 (s, 3 H, CH₃), 3.18 (t, 1 H, J = 6.6 Hz, CH), 4.78 (d, 1 H, J = 12.3, Hz NCH), 7.06 (s, 1 H, H-4), 7.11 (d, 1 H, J = 8.4 Hz, H-2), 7.48–7.51 (m, 2 H), 7.57 (d, 1 H, J = 7.5 Hz), 7.92 (d, 1 H, J = 8.4 Hz), 8.46 (d 1 H, J = 8.1 Hz); δ (*cis*-isomer) = 1.42 (d 3 H, J = 6.9 Hz, CH₃), 2.35 (s 3 H, CH₃), 2.60 (dt 1 H, J = 13 5, 1 2 Hz, CHH), 3 21 (t 3 H, J = 6 9 Hz, CH₃), 4 70 (dd 1 H, J = 12 3, 2.4 Hz, NCH), 7.11 (d, 1 H, J = 8.4 Hz, H-2), 7.18 (s, 1 H, H-4), 7.48-7.51 (m, 2 H), 7.59 (d, 1 H, J = 6.9 Hz), 7.92 (d, 1 H, J = 8.4 Hz), 8.44 (d, 1 H, J = 7.8 Hz). ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ (*trans*-isomer) = 21.0, 24.5, 30.8, 34.8, 54.2 (NCH), 120.1 (CH), 121.7 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 131.0 (C), 131.8 (CH), 132.8 (C), 133.4 (C), 144.6 (C), 165.9 (NCO); δ (cisisomer) = 20.9, 21.1, 31.4, 37.5, 58.7, 120.0 (CH), 121.7 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 127.6 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 129.6 (CH), 131.0 (C), 131.8 (CH), 132.9 (C), 133.4 (C), 144.6 (C),

- 165.9 (NCO). MS (EI): m/z = 263 (87) [M⁺], 248 (100), 232 (16), 220 (17), 115 (25), 77 (38).
- (9) (9) Crystal Data for Compound 3c

Formula: $C_{20}H_{16}$ ClNO₃; Mr = 353.79 monoclinic; a = 9.3133(17) Å, b = 7.3351(14) Å, c = 24.716(5) Å, $\beta = 96.800(3)^{\circ}$; space group P2(1)/n; V = 1676.6(5) Å³; colorless plates $\rho = 1.402$ g cm⁻³, T = 296(2) K, space group P2(1)/c Z = 4, μ (Mo Ka) = 0.71073 mm⁻¹, $c_{max} = 25.82^{\circ}$, 3217 reflections collected 2045 unique ($R_{int} = 0.1585$) which was used in all calculations. Final wR (F2) = 0.0830 (all data); CCDC No: 695063

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