

Enantioselective Michael Reaction of α -Alkyl- β -keto Esters and Enones under Multifunctional Catalysis

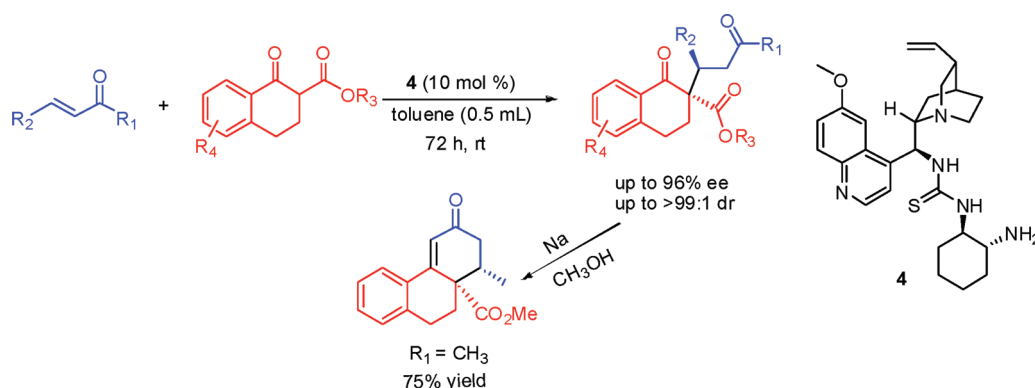
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Received September 20, 2010

ABSTRACT



An efficient approach for the enantioselective Michael additions of β -alkyl- β -keto esters to β -substituted α,β -unsaturated ketones has been developed. The Michael products could be obtained in good to excellent yields (75–98%) with excellent diastereoselectivities (up to >99:1 dr) and enantioselectivities (up to 96% ee) and could easily be transformed into a synthetically useful hexahydrophenanthrene structure under mild conditions in good yield.

Of those common methods for construction of valuable compounds in modern organic synthesis, the Michael addition has been the most fascinating and powerful one,¹ whose product might also be a key intermediate for further transformations such as the Robinson annulation reaction affording a variety of substituted cyclohexenones.² Therefore, the asymmetric version has been increasingly attractive to most scientists either in natural product preparations or in enantioselective organic synthetic methodologies.³ The past

few decades have witnessed a tremendous development of various efficient methodologies for asymmetric synthesis involving enzyme catalysis, organometallic catalysis, and more recently, organic catalysis.⁴ Among those powerful approaches for enantioselective catalysis, the asymmetric organocatalytic synthesis has been one of the most outstanding methods mainly due to its high efficiency, low toxicity, and ready availability.⁵ Up until now, great efforts have been made in this field, and remarkable progress has been achieved in both aldehyde and ketone activations through certain catalytic modes such as iminium, enamine, and SOMO activation.⁶ Nevertheless, compared with the magnificent achievements in asymmetric aldehyde activation,⁷ the organo-catalytic Michael addition involving α,β -unsaturated ketone, whose reactivity is generally weak, remains a

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challenging task, and the control of stereoselectivity is another formidable issue for this transformation. Moreover, the formation of an all-carbon chiral center and a simultaneous construction of a vicinal chiral tertiary carbon center

with complete stereocontrol would certainly add to those difficulties greatly.⁸ During the past couple of years, α -alkyl- β -keto esters have been applied frequently in such transformations with a variety of conjugate electrophilic Michael acceptors to conquer those difficulties involving both organic and organometallic catalysts,⁹ and of course, a number of investigations of the Michael addition of β -keto esters with different vinyl ketones had also been implemented.

For example, Hermann and Wynberg reported a seminal work on the enantioselective conjugate additions of β -keto esters to methyl vinyl ketone using natural cinchona alkaloid as catalyst,¹⁰ and the highly enantioselective conjugate addition reaction of β -keto esters with methyl vinyl ketone had been disclosed by Sasai and Shibasaki.¹¹ Moreover, there were also excellent reports employing chiral organometallic catalysts such as scandium(III) catalysts,¹² palladium catalysts,¹³ and ruthenium catalysts,¹⁴ as well as the phase transfer catalysis reported by Maruoka and co-workers.¹⁵ More recently, an efficient cinchona alkaloid catalyst which has been developed by Deng and co-workers also represented an outstanding work in this transformation.¹⁶

Although the asymmetric conjugate addition of β -keto esters to methyl vinyl ketone catalyzed by a variety of chiral Lewis base, Lewis acid, Brønsted base, and Brønsted acid has been reported, asymmetric conjugate addition of α -alkyl- β -keto esters to β -substituted α,β -unsaturated ketones still remains a challenge due to the above-mentioned difficulties and is definitely worthy

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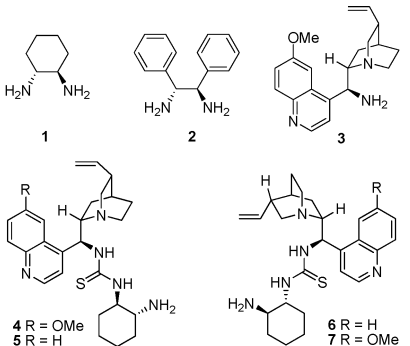
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of our best effort to overcome those barriers. Herein, we report our new development of the enantioselective Michael addition of α -alkyl- β -keto esters to β -substituted α,β -unsaturated ketones under multifunctional catalysis with excellent diastereo- and enantioselectivities, and the products could also be easily transformed into synthetically useful chiral cyclohexenones through the Robinson annulation.

The reaction of **8a** and **9a** was first investigated as the model reaction, and optimizations of catalyst and solvent were carried out, whose representative results were shown in Table 1. A variety of chiral primary amine catalysts were tested in

Table 1. Primary Screening Results^a



Reaction scheme: **8a** + **9a** $\xrightarrow[\text{solvent, 72 h, rt}]{\text{cat. (10 mol \%)}}$ **10a**

entry	cat.	solvent	conv % ^b	dr ^c	ee % ^d
1	1	DCM	65	90:10	22
2	2	DCM	6	68:32	47
3	3	DCM	5	87:13	–77
4 ^e	3	DCM	15	77:33	51
5	4	DCM	88	99:1	90
6	5	DCM	76	97:3	92
7	6	DCM	41	95:5	86
8	7	DCM	38	84:16	90
9	4	toluene	93	97:3	91
10	4	EtOAc	97	94:6	91
11	4	CH ₃ CN	90	84:16	90
12	4	DMF	60	86:14	86
13	4	DMSO	52	37:63	75
14	4	CHCl ₃	92	96:4	85
15	4	MTBE	96	96:4	86
16	4	THF	85	94:6	94
17	4	Et ₂ O	97	97:3	85
18	4	MeOH	73	92:8	51
19 ^f	4	toluene	95 ^g	98:2	93

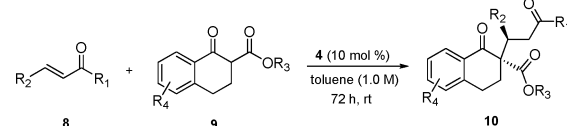
^a All reactions were carried out using 1.0 equiv of **8a** (0.10 mmol, 0.5 M), 2.0 equiv of **9a**, and 0.10 equiv of catalyst. ^b Conversion was determined by GC. ^c Diastereoselectivity was determined by ¹H NMR of the crude reaction mixture. ^d Enantiomeric excess of the major diastereoisomer, determined by chiral HPLC. ^e With 10 mol % of CF₃CO₂H as additive. ^f The reaction was carried out using 1.0 M of **8a**. ^g Isolated yield of the final product.

this transformation, and a high diastereoselectivity of 90/10 was obtained when (1*R*,2*R*)-diaminocyclohexane **1** was used as

catalyst, but with very low enantioselectivity of 22% (Table 1, entry 1). However, moderate enantioselectivity of 47% and diastereoselectivity of 68/32 were obtained using (1*R*,2*R*)-diphenylethylene-1,2-diamine **2** as catalyst (entry 2). Increasingly, when 9-amino (9-deoxy) epiquinine **3** was used as catalyst, 87/13 dr and 77% ee were achieved (entry 3). Acidic additives, such as trifluoroacetic acid, decreased both diastereo- and enantioselectivity (entry 4). To our great delight, when multifunctional catalysts were used, both the diastereo- and enantioselectivity improved (entries 5–8). After a series of attempts, catalyst **4** was found to be the best one. Examination of solvent effects found that toluene, ethyl acetate, acetonitrile, and THF were all good solvents for this Michael reaction (entries 9–18). Finally, the result proved best when using catalyst **4** in toluene with a concentration of 1.0 M based on **8a** at ambient temperature (entry 19).

Under the optimized conditions, we next explored the scope of the asymmetric Michael addition of α -alkyl- β -keto esters to β -substituted α,β -unsaturated ketones. Experimental data showed that the reaction proceeded very well with a variety of alkyl vinyl ketones, and the substituents on the α -alkyl- β -keto esters had little effect on the results. All these Michael products were obtained in good to excellent yields and high diastereoselectivities with excellent ee values (Table

Table 2. Expanding the Scope of the Asymmetric Michael Additions of α -Alkyl- β -keto Esters to β -Substituted α,β -Unsaturated Ketones^a



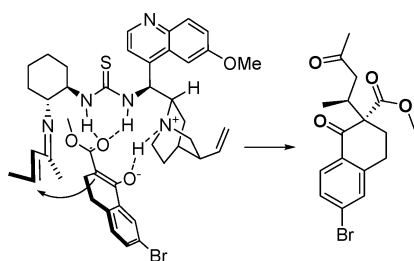
entry	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	yield % ^b	dr ^c	ee % ^{d,e}
1	Me	<i>n</i> -Pr	Me	H	95, 10a	98:2	94
2	Me	Me	Me	H	82, 10b	99:1	95
3	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	H	86, 10c	98:2	96
4	Me	<i>n</i> -Pen	Me	H	97, 10d	98:2	91
5	Me	<i>n</i> -Hex	Me	H	97, 10e	98:2	96
6	Me	Me	Et	H	95, 10f	99:1	95
7	Me	<i>n</i> -Hex	Et	H	93, 10g	98:2	93
8	Et	Me	Me	H	95, 10h	99:1	96
9	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	Me	H	80, 10i	98:2	95
10	Me	<i>n</i> -Pen	Me	7-OMe	92, 10j	98:2	92
11	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	7-OMe	82, 10k	98:2	97
12	Me	Me	Me	6-OMe	92, 10l	97:3	93
13	Me	<i>n</i> -Hex	Me	6-OMe	90, 10m	98:2	93
14	Me	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	6-Br	85, 10n	97:3	93
15	Me	<i>n</i> -Pr	Me	6-Br	87, 10o	98:2	92
16	Me	<i>n</i> -Pen	Me	6-Cl	92, 10p	98:2	87
17	Et	Me	Me	6-Cl	93, 10q	>99:1	95
18	Me	<i>i</i> -Bu	Me	H	75, 10r	>99:1	86
19	Me	(CH ₂) ₂ Ph	Me	H	95, 10s	>99:1	91
20	Et	Me	Me	6-Br	89, 10t	>99:1	93
21	<i>n</i> -Bu	Me	Me	6-Cl	75, 10u	>99:1	92
22 ^f	Ph	Me	Me	H	85, 10v	77:23	15 (82)
23	–(CH ₂) ₃ –		Me	Me	98, 10w	57:43	65 (82)
24	–(CH ₂) ₄ –		Me	Me	90, 10x	60:40	94 (92)

^a All reactions were carried out using 1.0 equiv of **8** (0.50 mmol, 1.0 M), 2.0 equiv of **9**, and 0.10 equiv of **4**. ^b Isolated yield of both diastereoisomers. ^c Diastereoselectivity was determined by ¹H NMR of the crude reaction mixture. ^d Enantiomeric excess of the major diastereoisomer, determined by chiral HPLC. ^e The value in parentheses was enantiomeric excess of the minor diastereoisomer, determined by chiral HPLC. ^f 30 mol % of **4** was used.

2, entries 1–21). Notably, several cyclic vinyl ketones also participate well in this reaction, and the products could be gathered as a mixture of two diastereoisomers in excellent yields with moderate to excellent enantiomeric excesses, albeit with generally moderate diastereoselectivities (entries 23–24). However, only a moderate ee value could be observed when benzylideneacetone was employed as the electrophilic reagent, and the corresponding product was collected as a mixture of two diastereoisomers with a 77:23 ratio in 85% yield (entry 22). What's more, no reactions occurred when the more bulky Michael acceptors such as chalcones were used as the electrophilic reactant.

The absolute configuration of the Michael product **10t** was determined by single-crystal X-ray analysis.¹⁷ This result prompted us to assume a possible process for the asymmetric Michael addition based on our previous works,¹⁸ as summarized in Scheme 1.

Scheme 1. Assuming Process of the Asymmetric Michael Addition



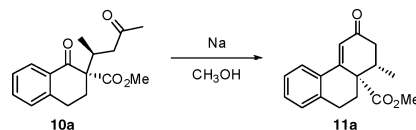
Having successfully extended the scope of the Michael addition with a wide range of substrates, we also were eager

(17) For more details, see Supporting Information.

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to apply this approach in some useful synthetic transformations. As shown in Scheme 2, a Robinson annulation could

Scheme 2. Robinson Annulation of **10a**



easily be promoted by use of sodium in methanol,¹⁹ and the corresponding hexahydrophenanthrene derivative could be obtained in 75% yield as a white solid.

In conclusion, we have developed an efficient approach for the enantioselective Michael additions of α -alkyl- β -keto esters to β -substituted α,β -unsaturated ketones with excellent diastereo- and enantioselectivities, and the product could easily be transformed into synthetically useful hexahydrophenanthrene structure under mild conditions in good yield. Further applications of this methodology are currently well under way and will be published soon.

Acknowledgment. This work was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (20902018), 111 project (B07023), the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities, and Shanghai Pujiang Program (08PJ1403300).

Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures, structural proofs, NMR spectra, and HPLC chromatograms of the products and cif file of enantiopure **10t**. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

OL102256V

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