Supporting Information for:

Unsaturated β-ketoesters as versatile electrophiles in organocatalysis

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1. General methods

¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded at 300 MHz and 75 MHz or at 400 MHz and 100 MHz respectively. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm relative to the resonance of CHCl₃ (δ = 7.26) for ¹H-NMR and to the central peak of CDCl₃ (δ = 77.5) for ¹³C-NMR. Flash chromatography (FC) was carried out using Merck silica gel 60 (230-400 mesh) using mixtures of petroleum ether 30-50 °C (PE) and diethyl ether. Diastereoisomer ratios (*dr*) and enantiomeric excesses (*ee*) of the products were determined either by CSP-GC equipped with a MEGA column (chiral stationary phase diacetyl *t*-butyl β CAX 30%) and a flame ionization detector (FID 5890 series II Hawlett-Packard) or by HPLC, using a CHIRALPAK IB ocolumn and a refractive index detector VARIAN RI 4.

1.1 Materials

Analytical grade solvents were used as received. All commercially available reagents were used as received, including nitroalkanes 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2g and 2h and *Cinchona* alkaloid catalysts I, II, III, IV, V, and VII. Catalyst VI was prepared accordingly to ref. 11e.

Nitroalkanes **2e** [M. Cherest and X. Lusinchi, *Tetrahedron*, 1986, **42**, 3825] and **2f** [A. K. Ghosh and H. Lei, *J. Org. Chem.*, 2002, **67**, 8783] were prepared accordingly to standard literature procedures.

Unsaturated substrates **1a-c** were prepared following the procedure reported in ref. 8 and stored at -20 °C prior to use. It should be noted that no chromatographic purification should be performed on the unsaturated adducts because of their instability over silica gel.



Ethyl-2-oxo-cyclopent-1-enecarboxylate (1a):



¹**H NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 8.28 (t, 1H, J = 2.7 Hz), 4.14 (q, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz), 2.7-2.6 (m, 2H), 2.42-2.39 (m, 2H) 1.19 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 203.2, 172.2, 162.1, 137.6, 61.2, 36.0, 27.0, 14.5.

1a

Ethyl-2-oxo-cyclohexen-1-enecarboxylate (1b):



¹H NMR (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 7.66 (m, 1H), 4.26 (q, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz), 2.6-1.9 (m, 6H) CO₂Et 1.31 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

³C NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 194.7, 164.9, 156.0, 133.6, 61.3, 39.0, 26.4, 22.5, 14.4.

2. Synthesis and characterization of compounds 3

2.1 General procedure for the preparation of products 3a-3j

Unsaturated substrate **1a-c** (0.35 mmol) is dissolved in 3.5 mL of the solvent with catalyst **I-VII** (10% mol, an equimolar mixture of quinine and quinidine is used for the preparation of racemic samples) at the temperature indicated in table 2. When the mixture is homogeneous, the nitroalkane **2a-h** (3 eq) is added. The reaction is left without stirring for a period of time that varies between a few hours (reactions at room temperature, racemic samples) and some days (reactions at -20°C). When the unsaturated β -ketoester is totally consumed (TLC), the crude reaction mixture is directly loaded on a chromatographic column filled with silica gel and packed with PE, and quickly purified by FC (PE first, then PE:Et₂O from 10:1 to 1:4) to avoid degradation. The solvent is removed in vacuo to provide the products **3a-j** as dense, pale yellow oils.



3a. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 14 psi, column temperature 180°C); $\tau_{major} = 24.8 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 23.8 \text{ min}$. For *ees*: see table 1, entries 1-14.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of keto and enol forms with ratio 1:1: 10.6 (bs, 1H, enol form), 4.71 (dd, 1H, J = 12.0 Hz, J = 4.2 Hz, enol form), 4.59 (dd, 1H, J = 12.7 Hz, J = 6.7 Hz, keto form), 4.52 (dd, 1H, J = 12.7 Hz, J = 6.7 Hz, keto form), 4.3-4.1 (m, 2H, keto form, 3H enol form), 3.7-3.6 (m, 1H, keto form), 3.4-3.2 (m, 1H, enol form), 3.10 (d, 1H, J = 11.4 Hz, keto form), 2.8-2.0 (m, 6H), 1.8-1.6 (m, 2H), 1.32 (t, 3H, J = 7.2

Hz, keto form), 1.31 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz, enol form).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 208.3, 179.0, 169.3, 167.9, 99.7, 79.2, 78.4, 62.5, 60.9, 58.7, 40.0, 39.1, 38.1, 31.4, 25.1, 24.3, 14.6, 14.7.

 $[\alpha]_D$: +35.4 (sample with 79% *ee*, MeOH, c = 30 mg/mL)

HRMS calculated for C₉H₁₃NNaO₅: 238.0691; found: 238.0658.



3b. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 14 psi, column temperature 180°C); for major diastereoisomer: $\tau_{major} = 9.6$ min, $\tau_{minor} = 9.2$ min. For *ees*: see table 1, entries 15-18.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of keto and enol forms with ratio 6:1: 4.46 (ddd, 1H, J = 11.7 Hz, J = 10.5 Hz, J = 3.6 Hz), 4.25 (q, 2H), 2.96 (d, 1H, J = 11.7 Hz), 2.6-2.5 (m, 2H), 2.2-2.0 (m, 3H), 1.8-1.6 (m, 2H), 1.31 (t, 3H), 0.98 (t, 3H).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 208.6, 168.6, 93.1, 62.5, 58.5, 43.8, 38.2, 25.6, 24.0, 14.6, 10.8. **HRMS** calculated for C₁₁H₁₇NNaO₅; 266.1004; found: 266.1041.



3c. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 14 psi, column temperature 180°C); for major diastereoisomer: $\tau_{major} = 13.1 \text{ min}, \tau_{minor} = 12.1 \text{ min}, ee = 94\%, dr = 20:1$, table 2, entry 1.

Hb $^{-}$

¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 208.6, 171.6, 168.6, 100.0, 86.0, 84.4, 66.3, 62.5, 60.8, 58.3, 45.9, 44.8, 38.3, 31.4, 24.1, 17.8, 16.7, 15.7, 14.7, 14.6.

HRMS calculated for C₁₀H₁₅NNaO₅: 252.0848; found: 252.0859.



3d. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 9 psi, column temperature 165°C); for major diastereoisomer using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{\text{major}} = 32.6 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{\text{minor}} = 28.6 \text{ min}$, *ee* = 94%, *dr* = 30:1, table 2, entry 8. Using quinidine as catalyst: *ee* = -93%, *dr* = 15:1, table 2, entries 2-3.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of keto and enol forms 3:1: 10.6 (bs, 1H, enol form), 5.0-4.8 (m, 1H), 4.6-4.1 (m, 5H), 3.4-3.1 (m, 2H), 2.96 (d, 1H, J = 11.7 Hz), 2.6-1.9 (m, 8H), 1.8-1.1 (m, 8H), 1.28 (t, 6H, J = 6.9 Hz), 1.0-0.8 (m, 6H).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), keto form: 208.3, 168.6, 91.3, 62.5, 58.5, 43.9, 38.2, 34.0, 24.0, 19.6, 14.6, 13.8.

HRMS calculated for C₁₂H₁₉NNaO₅: 280.1161; found: 280.1170.



3e. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 15 psi, column temperature 190°C); for major diastereoisomer using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{\text{major}} = 61.4 \text{ min}, \tau_{\text{minor}} = 53.4 \text{ min}, ee = 91\%, dr = 20:1$, table 2, entry 4.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 7.4-7.0 (m, 5H), 5.0-4.8 (m, 1H), 4.26 (q, 2H, J = 6.9 Hz), 3.5-2.9 (m, 3H), 3.08 (d, 1H, J = 11.7 Hz), 2.6-2.1 (m, 4H), 1.31 (t, 3H, J = 6.9 Hz).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), keto form: 207.9, 168.2, 135.0, 129.2, 129.1, 128.9, 128.8, 127.9, 92.1, 62.4, 58.2, 43.5, 38.0, 37.9, 23.4, 14.4.

HRMS calculated C₁₆H₁₉NNaO₅: 328.1161; found: 328.1133.



18.3, 14.6, 12.4.

3f. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 15 psi, column temperature 190°C); for major diastereoisomer using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{\text{major}} = 46.7 \text{ min}, \tau_{\text{minor}} = 45.3 \text{ min}, ee = 98\%, dr = 20:1$, table 2, entry 5.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of keto and enol forms 3:1: 4.8-4.6 (m, 1H), 4.4-4.1 (m, 2H), 3.89 (dd, 1H, J = 11.1 Hz, J = 3.7 Hz), 3.03 (d, 1H, J = 11.4 Hz), 2.8-2.0 (m, 5H), 2.0-1.8 (m, 1H), 1.2-1.1 (m, 3H), 1.1-0.8 (m, 21H).

¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 208.3, 168.5, 93.0, 63.8, 62.6, 58.5, 40.7, 38.0, 24.2,

HRMS calculated for $C_{19}H_{35}NNaO_6Si$: 424.2131; found: 424.2135.



3g. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 16 psi, column temperature 180°C); for major diastereoisomer using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 64.6 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 60.3 \text{ min}$, *ee* = 91%, *dr* = 15:1, table 2, entry 6.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of keto and enol 4:1: 10.7 (bs, 1H, enol form), 4.9-4.8 (m, 1H, enol form), 4.7-4.6 (m, 1H, keto form), 4.27 (q, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz, keto form), 3.69 (s, 3H, keto form), 3.3-3.1 (m, 1H, keto form), 3.06 (d, 1H, J = 11.4 Hz, keto form), 2.8-2.0 (m, 6H, keto form), 1.8-1.6 (m, 2H, keto form), 1.33 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz, keto form), 1.32 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz, enol form).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), keto form: 208.3, 172.5, 168.5, 90.3, 62.6, 58.2, 52.4, 43.8, 38.2, 30.2, 27.1, 24.0, 14.6.

HRMS calculated for C₁₃H₁₉NNaO₇: 324.1059; found: 324.1066.



3h. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97:3, flow 0.9 mL/min); for major diastereoisomer using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 42.0 \text{ min}, \tau_{minor} = 36.5 \text{ min}, ee = 92, dr = 35:1$, table 2, entry 7.

¹**H-NMR** (400 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of **3h**' and **3h**'': 5.18 (d, 1H, J = 9.4 Hz, **3h**''), 4.45 (d, 1H, J = 2.8 Hz, **3h**'), 4.18 (q, 4H, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.2-3.1 (m, 1H, **3h**'), 3.0-2.9 (m, 1H, **3h**''), 2.6-2.0 (m, 8H), 1.4-1.2 (m, 6H).

¹**H-NMR** (400 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), single diastereoisomer **3h**': 4.44 (d, 1H, J = 2.8 Hz), 4.18 (q, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.2-3.1 (m, 1H), 2.4-2.2 (m, 4H), 1.27 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³C-NMR (100 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of **3h**' and **3h**'': 202.8, 201.9, 172.0, 162.3, 71.2, 63.7, 62.7, 48.9, 40.5, 39.9, 33.8, 32.7, 32.6, 30.4, 21.2, 17.9, 14.0, 13.8.

¹³C-NMR (100 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), single diastereoisomer **5i':** 202.7, 162.2, 63.9, 62.8, 48.8, 33.8, 32.7, 21.2, 13.9.

HRMS calculated for C₉H₁₁NNaO₅: 236.0535; found: 236.0541.



3i. The *ee* was determined by CSP-GC (column head pressure of carrier gas nitrogen of 16 psi, column temperature 180°C); using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 19.2 \text{ min}, \tau_{minor} = 19.4 \text{ min}, ee = 87\%$, table 2, entry 8.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), only enol form: 4.54 (dd, 1H, J = 11.7 Hz, J = 3.9 Hz), 4.4-4.2 (m, 1H), 4.26 (q, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.5-3.4 (m, 1H), 2.4-2.2 (m, 2H), 1.9-1.6 (m, 5H), 1.33 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 176.0, 172.0, 97.1, 78.3, 61.4, 32.3, 29.4, 24.9, 17.2, 14.6.

 $[\alpha]_{D}$: +5.3 (sample with 87% *ee*, CHCl₃, c = 45 mg/mL).

HRMS calculated C₁₀H₁₅NNaO₅: 252.0848; found: 252.0842.



3j. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant hexane:*i*-propanol, 92.5:1.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: τ_{major} = 43.5 min, τ_{minor} = 38.5 min.*ee*= 52%, Table 2, entry 9.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 14.0 (bs, 1H, enol), 4.5-4.6 (m, 2H, ketone), 4.3-.4.4 (m, 2H, enol), 3.6-3.8 (m, 1H, ketone), 3.3-3.5 (m, 2H, ketone), 2.0-2.7 (m, 6H), 2.41 (s, 3H, ketone), 2.09 (s, 3H, enol), 1.9-2.0 (m, 1H), 1.5-1.8 (m, 1H).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 208.9, 204.4, 201.2, 179.3, 126.0, 109.6, 65.8, 64.0, 38.7, 38.6, 34.6, 31.0, 37.0, 24.9, 24.4, 21.0.

HRMS calculated C₈H₁₁NNaO₄: 208.0586; found: 208.0570.

3. One pot procedure for the synthesis of bicyclic adduct 5a and adducts 6a-f

3.1 General procedure for the preparation of products 5a and 6b-f

Unsaturated substrate **1a** (0.35 mmol) is dissolved in 1 mL of toluene with quinine **I** (10% mol) at -20°C. To the homogeneous mixture nitroalkane **2a-g** (3 eq) is added and the reaction is left without stirring for 24 h; then methyl vinyl ketone **4** is added (3 eq) and the solution is left at room temperature for additional 12 h. The crude reaction mixture is loaded on a chromatographic column packed with silica gel and purified by FC (PE first, then PE:Et₂O from 10:1 to 1:4). The solvent is removed in vacuo to provide directly bicyclic adduct **5a** or adducts **6b-f** as colorless oils.



5a. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); mixture of epimers 1.5:1; for more polar epimer $\tau_{major} = 31.7 \text{ min}, \tau_{minor} = 28.0 \text{ min}, ee = 97\%$, table 3, entry 1.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃), mixture of epimers 3:1: 5.32 (d, 1H, J = 12.0 Hz), 4.18 (q, 4H, J = 7.2 Hz), 4.00 (d, 1H, J = 12.0 Hz), 3.26 (dd, 1H, J = 12.0 Hz, J = 5.7 Hz), 2.85 (ddd, 2H, J = 12.6 Hz, J = 12.6 Hz, J = 5.7 Hz), 2.6-1.5 (m, 19H), 1.35 (s, 3H), 1.24 (t, 6H, J = 7.2 Hz), 1.23 (s, 3H).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 211.1, 208.9, 185.8, 169.9, 165.6, 93.8, 91.7, 71.1, 69.5, 62.8, 62.4, 62.1, 43.7, 41.6, 36.9, 36.5, 34.4, 33.7, 27.4, 27.3, 25.0, 22.6, 21.8, 21.7, 14.4.

HRMS calculated C₁₃H₁₉NNaO₆: 308.1110; found: 308.1105.



6b. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 22.7 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 18.2 \text{ min}$, *ee* = 96%, table 3, entry 2.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 4.4-4.1 (m, 3H), 2.8-2.2 (m, 6H), 2.15 (s, 3H), 2.1-1.9 (m, 5H), 1.28 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz), 0.92 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

6b ¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 213.4, 207.5, 169.7, 93.9, 62.5, 60.9, 48.5, 38.7, 38.1, 30.4, 28.4, 26.4, 24.8, 14.6, 10.9.

HRMS calculated $C_{15}H_{23}NNaO_6$: 336.1423; found: 336.1440.



6c. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 28.0 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 25.6 \text{ min.} ee = 95\%$, table 3, entry 3.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 4.6-4.5 (m, 1H), 4.4-4.1 (m, 2H), 2.8-2.4 (m, 6H), 2.15 (s, 3H), 2.1-1.9 (m, 3H), 1.64 (d, 3H, J = 6.6 Hz), 1.28 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 213.3, 207.6, 169.6, 86.9, 65.2, 62.6, 49.2, 38.7, 38.1, 32.6, 28.2, 24.9, 22.8, 19.4, 14.6.

HRMS calculated C₁₄H₂₁NNaO₆: 322.1267; found: 322.1271.



6d. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 29.5 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 27.5 \text{ min}$, *ee* = 95%, table 3, entry 4.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 7.3-7.2 (m, 3H), 7.1-7.0 (m, 2H), 4.7-4.5 (m, 1H), 4.4-4.1 (m, 2H), 3.35 (dd, 1H, J = 14.1, J = 3.0 Hz), 3.15 (dd, 1H, J = 14.1 Hz, J = 11.4 Hz), 2.8-2.2 (m, 6H), 2.15 (s, 3H), 2.1-1.9 (m, 3H), 1.30 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 213.2, 207.5, 169.8, 135.5, 129.4, 129.1, 128.1, 93.9, 62.7, 60.9, 48.2, 39.1, 38.7, 38.1, 30.4, 28.5, 24.7, 14.6.



6e. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: $\tau_{major} = 13.9 \text{ min}$, $\tau_{minor} = 11.5 \text{ min}$, *ee* = 93%, table 3, entry 5.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 4.6-4.5 (m, 1H), 4.3-4.0 (m, 2H), 4.14 (d, 2H, J = 6.3 Hz), 3.35 (dd, 1H, J = 14.1 Hz, J = 3.0 Hz), 3.15 (dd, 1H, J = 14.1 Hz, J = 11.4 Hz), 2.8-2.5 (m, 2H), 2.4-2.1 (m, 3H), 2.14 (s, 3H), 2.1-1.8 (m, 3H), 1.28 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz), 1.2-0.9 (m, 20H).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 213.2, 207.3, 169.6, 93.0, 63.7, 62.7, 60.6, 45.2, 38.7, 38.1, 30.4, 28.0, 24.7, 18.3, 14.6, 12.3.

HRMS calculated C₂₃H₄₁NNaO₇Si: 494.2550; found: 494.2548.



6f. The *ee* was determined by CSP-HPLC (eluant *n*-hexane:*i*-propanol, 97.5:2.5, flow 0.9 mL/min); using quinine as catalyst: τ_{major} = 43.5 min, τ_{minor} = 38.5 min *ee*= 96%, Table 3, entry 6.

¹**H-NMR** (300 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 4.8-4.6 (m, 1H), 4.3-4.1 (m, 2H), 3.7 (s, 3H), 2.8-1.9 (m, 13H), 2.13 (s, 3H), 1.27 (t, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz).

¹³**C-NMR** (75 MHz) δ (CDCl₃): 213.1, 207.6, 171.8, 169.1, 90.5, 62.4, 60.4, 52.1, 48.5, 38.5, 37.8, 30.1, 29.9, 28.2, 27.8, 24.6, 14.2.

HRMS calculated C₁₇H₂₅NNaO₈: 394.1478; found: 394.1465.

4. Determination of the configuration for the newly formed stereocenters

4.1 Determination of the stereochemistry of compounds 3



4.1.1 Determination of the absolute configuration of the stereocenter on the β '-position

Upon ester cleavage and decarboxylation of adduct 3a, only compound 7 is obtained (reaction conditions: 50 mg of 5a, 200 mg of NaCl in 1 mL of DMSO at 140 °C; after 2h water was added and the mixture extracted with ethyl acetate; concentration of the organic phase and column chromatography purification afforded 7 in 75% yield). Comparison of the sign and value of optical rotation with the one reported in the literature [ref 12c-d] assigned unambiguously the configuration of the stereocenter in the β '-position, also ruling out the possibility of epimerization of this stereocenter.



Scheme 3

4.1.2 Determination of the absolute configuration of the stereocenter on the α-position

The large coupling constant observed (J = 12.7 Hz) between protons Ha and Hb in compound **3a**, and the similar value (12-13Hz) measured through all the series of compounds **3** is compatible only with the presence of the more stable *trans* isomer.



4.1.3 Determination of the absolute configuration of the stereocenter on the γ '-position

When nitrobromomethane **2h** is employed as the nucleophile, the outcome of the reaction is similar within the series of compounds illustrated in Table 2. Two diastereoisomers are formed, in low diastereoselectivity when the reaction is run at rt, (dr = 4:1), employing as the catalyst a mixture of quinine and quinidine to produce a quasi-racemate, while high diastereoselectivity (>20:1) is observed at lower temperature (-20 °C),

utilizing as the catalyst only quinine (see table 2 in the article and table 4 in SI). The major diastereoisomer shows enantiomeric excess of 92%. These dr values are in good agreement within the series studied. The resulting products are, however, not the expected nitro Michael adducts 3k'-k'', but the cyclopropyl derivatives 3h'-h''. The formation of 3h'-h'' can be rationalized through an internal S_N2 reaction and subsequent ring closure, which would occur with inversion of configuration of the stereocenter at the γ' -position.

Epimerization of the stereocenter at the γ '-position in compound **3h**' or **3h**'' (at -20 °C) under the reaction conditions has not been observed; moreover, only one diastereoisomer is formed at low temperature while a mixture is formed at high temperatures, indicating that this ratio is related to the diastereoselectivity of the nitro Michael reaction and not to an epimerization process.

The larger coupling constant observed (J = 9.4 Hz) between protons Hc and Hb in compound **3h**'' in comparison with the smaller value observed for compound **3h**' (J=2.8 Hz) indicates *trans* relationship between these protons in compound **3h**'' and *cis* relationship in compound **3h**'. Consequently, the configuration of the stereocenter present in the γ '-position of compound **3** has been assigned as (*R*).



Condition **A**: quinine + quinidine,(racemate), rt, **3h'/3h''=**4:1 Condition **B**: quinine, -20 °C, **3h'/3h''**>20:1

Scheme 4



Entry ^[a]	R	Solvent	Y, % ^[b]	dr ^[c]	ee, % ^[c]
1	Et, 2b	DCM	3b , 77	3:1	85/60
2 ^[d]	Et, 2b	DCM	3b , 67	2:1	-
3	Me, 2c	DCM	3c , 67	1:1	69/n.d.
4 ^[d]	Me, 2c	DCM	3c , 75	1:1	-
5	<i>n</i> Pr, 2d	toluene	3d , 70	1:2	84/68
6 ^[d]	<i>n</i> Pr, 2d	DCM	3d , 60	4:1	-
7 ^[d,e]	Br, 2h	DCM	3h , 45	4:1	-

[a] Reaction condition: 0.35 mmol **1**, 3 eq nitrocompund **2**, 3.5 mL solvent, 10% mol catalyst **I**, rt, 24 h. [b] Yield referred to pure isolated compounds after FC. [c] *dr* and *ee* determined by CSP-GC. [d] mixture of quinine **I** and quinidine **VII** employed as the catalyst. [e] The isolated product is the cyclopropyl derivative **3h**, see ref 15 and SI.

4.2 Determination of the stereochemistry of compounds 5a and 6



The stereochemistry of the newly formed stereocenters in the α and γ' position has been determined via analysis of the NOESY spectra of the cyclic compound **5a**. The stereochemistry of the stereocenter in the α position of adducts **6** has been assigned as identical.



Figure 2

In particular, the *trans* relationship between Ha and Hb has been determined by the large coupling constant observed (J=12 Hz). The stereochemistry of the quaternary stereocenter has been determined by the analysis of the NOESY spectra, which indicate no spatial proximity between Ha and Hd and a spatial correlation between Hb and Hd.

4.3 Characterization of compound 7



4.4 High field spectra for compound 3h

¹H-NMR spectra of the mixture of diastereoisomers **3h'-h''**



¹H-NMR spectra of **3h**'



¹³C-NMR spectra of **3h**'

Mixture of diastereoisomers



Single diastereoisomer











4.5 High field spectra for compound 5a

¹H-NMR spectra of compound **5a**





NOESY spectra of compound 5a



5. Copies of ¹H and ¹³C-NMR spectra, and chromatograms







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11.750	1974	PP	.148	.01413
12.308	3483	ΡV	.116	.02494
13.330	112434	ΡV	.187	.80493





















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