Ruthenium-catalyzed aerobic oxidative cyclization of aromatic and heteroaromatic nitriles with alkynes: a new route to isoquinolones

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Experimental Section

General Procedure for the Cyclization of Aromatic Nitriles with Alkynes Catalyzed by Ruthenium Complex.

[{RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)}₂] (0.05 mmol, 5 mol %), KPF₆ (0.20 mmol, 20 mol %) and Cu(OAc)₂.H₂O (0.30 mmol, 30 mol %) were taken in a 25-mL round bottom flask equipped with a magnetic stirrer. To the flask were then added substituted nitriles **1** (1.0 mmol), alkyne **2** (**2a-c** and **2g** 1.00 mmol and for alkynes **2d-f** and **2h** 1.50 mmol) and acetic acid solvent (3.0 mL) via syringes. Then, condenser was fitted with water circulation in the round bottom flask and the reaction mixture was allowed to stir at 120 °C for 10 h under an open atmosphere (Note: the top of the condenser was exposed to the air and has not been covered by anything. AcOH boiling point is 118 °C. Solvent evaporation was not observed during the reaction). After cooling to ambient temperature, the reaction mixture was diluted with CH₂Cl₂, filtered through Celite and silica gel, and the filtrate was concentrated. The crude residue was purified through a silica gel column using hexanes and ethyl acetate as eluent to give pure **3** and **4**.

General Procedure for the Chlorination or Bromination Reaction.¹

In a 50 mL round-bottom flask fitted with a condenser, a suspension of isoquinolone (100 mg) in phosphorus oxychloride (POCl₃) or phosphorus tribromide (PBr₃) (2.0 mL) was heated at 100 °C for 2 h for chlorination (120 °C for 6 h for bromination). The reaction was monitored on TLC. After completion the reaction (approx. 2.0 h for chlorination and approx. 6.0 h for bromination), the reaction mixture was cooled to ambient temperature, and poured in ice and added saturated NaHCO₃, extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic layer was washed with water and brine, dried over Na₂SO₄. The solution was concentrated under reduced pressure to provide crude 1-halo isoquinolines **5a-d**. The crude residue was purified through a silica gel column using hexanes and ethyl acetate as eluent to give pure **5a-d**.

Ref. 1: M. Tobe, Y. Isobe, H. Tomizawa, T. Nagasaki, H. Takahashi, T. Fukazawa and H. Hayashi, *Bioorg. Med. Chem.* **2003**, *11*, 383.

General Procedure for the Preparation of Compounds 5e and 5f.²

A mixture of isoquinolone (3) (1.0 equiv), diphenylacetylene (2a) (2.0 equiv), $[RuCl_2(p-cymene)]_2$ (7.5 mol %), $Cu(OAc)_2H_2O$ (2.0 equiv) and Na_2CO_3 (2.0 equiv) were taken in a 15-mL pressure tube equipped with a magnetic stirrer and a septum. Dry PhCl (2.0 mL) was added to the reaction mixture and evacuated and purged with nitrogen gas three times. Then, the reaction mixture was stirred at 120 °C for 16 h under N₂ atmosphere (During this time, septum was removed under nitrogen atmosphere and a screw cap was used to cover the tube). After cooling to ambient temperature, the reaction mixture was diluted with CH_2Cl_2 , filtered through Celite and silica gel, and the filtrate was concentrated. The crude residue was purified through a silica gel column using hexanes and ethyl acetate as eluent to give pure **5e** and **5f**.

Ref 2: B. Li, H. Feng, S. Xu and B. Wang, Chem. Eur. J. 2012, 18, 12873.

Spectral data and copies of ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of all compounds **3a-t**, **4a-h** and **5a-f** are listed below.

М	eOCN		[{RuCl ₂ (<i>p</i> -cymene)} ₂] (5.0 mol %)	MeO	N ^H
М	eO 1a	+ Ph <u> </u>	Additive (20 mol %) Oxidant Solvent, 120 °C, 10 h	MeO 3a	Ph
Entry	Solvent	Oxidant		Additive	Yield of $3a (\%)^b$
1	AcOH	No		No	NR
2	AcOH	$Cu(OAc)_2 H_2O$ (2.20 equiv)		No	65
3	AcOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	AgSbF ₆	83
4	AcOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	KPF ₆	89
5	AcOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	AgBF ₄	72
6	AcOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	AgOTf	75
4	MeOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	KPF_6	10
8	tert-BuOH	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	KPF_6	trace
9	DCE	$Cu(OAc)_2 H_2O$ (2.20 equiv)		KPF_6	NR
10	DME	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	KPF_6	NR
11	DMSO	$Cu(OAc)_2$	H ₂ O (2.20 equiv)	KPF_6	NR
12	DMF	$Cu(OAc)_2 H_2O$ (2.20 equiv)		KPF ₆	NR
13	AcOH	KOAc		KPF ₆	NR
14	AcOH	NaOAc		KPF_6	NR
15	AcOH	Cu(OAc) ₂ [·] H ₂ O	(30 mol %, open air)	KPF ₆	91 ^c
16	AcOH	No	(open air)	KPF ₆	NR^{c}

0

Table 1. Optimization Studies^a

^{*a*} All reactions were carried out under the following conditions: **1a** (1.0 mmol), **2a** (1.0 mmol), [{RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)}₂] (5 mol %), additive (20 mol %) and oxidant in solvent (3.0 mL) at 120 °C for 10 h under N₂ atmosphere. ^{*b*} Yields were determined by the ¹H NMR integration method, using mesitylene as an internal standard. ^{*c*} Under an open atmosphere.

Note: The catalytic reaction was tried without ruthenium and copper and KPF₆. No product **3a** was observed in the reaction. The catalytic reaction was also tried without ruthenium and KPF₆ only in the presence of copper catalyst. In the reaction also, no product **3a** was observed. However, in the case, 3,4-dimethoxy benzamide was observed in 91% isolated yield.

The reaction of ortho-substituted aromatic nitriles with diphenylacetylene

The cyclization reaction of *ortho*-substituted aromatic nitriles with diphenylacetylene (2a) was also tested. The reaction of *ortho*-methoxy (1v) and bromo (1w) benzonitriles reacted with 2a to provide hydroarylation products 3u and 3v in 73% and 68% yields, respectively, instead of the expected isoquinolone derivative. The exact reason for the observation of hydroarylation product is unclear to us. This is most probably due to the steric hindrance of ortho substituent in the substrates 1v and 1w.



Mechanistic Investigation

The cyclization reaction of **1a** and **2a** was also tested with commercial acetic acid. However, in the reaction, product **3a** was observed only in moderate 65% isolated yield. In the aqueous acetic acid solution (2.0 mL AcOH and 1.0 mL H_2O), product **3a** was observed only in less 40% isolated yield.

The reaction of **1a** was done without ruthenium catalyst and only in presence of copper(II) acetate. Treatment of 3,4-dimethoxy benzonitrile **1a** (1.0 mmol) with AcOH in the presence of $Cu(OAc)_2$ ·H₂O (15 mol %) at 120 °C under air gave 3,4-dimethoxy benzamide **11a** in 95% yield. However, in the reaction, product **6a** was not observed. We strongly belive that initially product **6a** might formed in the reaction. Later, the acidic solvent, AcOH, might hydrolized the product **6a** to **11a**. In the meantime, the same reaction was tested without copper catalyst and only in the presence of ruthenium catalyst. In the reaction, no product **11a** or **6a** was observed and starting material **1a** was recovered. This result clearly revealed that copper catalyst plays an important role to convert aromatic nitrile to **6a** or **11a** as well give acetate source to ruthenium catalyst to do C-H bond activation.



The treatment of 3,4-dimethoxy benzamide **11a** with diphenylacetylene (**2a**) (1.0 equiv) in the presence of [{RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)}₂] (5.0 mol %), KPF₆ (20 mol %) and Cu(OAc)₂·H₂O (30 mol %) in acetic acid at 120 °C for 10 h under air provided isoquinolone derivative **3a** in 75% isolated yield.

At present the exact mechanism for the present recation is not very clear. Two different types of catalytic reactions are involved. The first reaction is $Cu(OAc)_2$ -catalyzed nuleophilic addition of H₂O or AcOH to benzonitrile. The second reaction is *ortho* C-H bond activation of substituted aromatics followed by cyclization with alkyne in the presence of ruthenium and copper catalysts.

We have done the reaction of 1a (1.0 mmol) with excess amount of 2a (1.5 mmol or 2.0 mmol) under the optimized reaction conditions. In these reactions, only first insertion product

3 was observed and no two insertion product **5** was observed. This is most likly due to the first insertion takes place under acidic conditions and the second insertion does not take place under acidic conditions.



Spectral Data of Compounds 3a-v, 4a-h and 5a-f.

6,7-Dimethoxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (3a).^{3a}



Dark brown solid; eluent (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.43 (bs, 1 H), 7.70 (s, 1 H), 7.31 - 7.25 (m, 3 H), 7.20 (bs, 5 H), 7.14 - 7.16 (m, 2 H), 6.56 (s, 1 H), 3.90 (s, 3 H), 3.57 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.0, 152.8, 148.5, 137.0, 136.1, 134.7, 133.2, 131.6, 129.8, 128.2, 127.9, 127.6, 127.0, 118.8, 115.1, 106.9, 105.5, 55.6, 55.1.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₉NO₃)H] (M+H) 358.1443, measured 358.1434.

6-Hydroxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (3b).



White solid; eluent (50% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.23 (bs, 1 H), 10.15 (s, 1 H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 8.7, 1 H), 7.31 – 7.22 (m, 3 H) 7.20 (bs, 5 H), 7.14 – 7.12 (m, 2 H), 6.94 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.48 (s, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.4, 161.0, 140.3, 138.7, 136.2, 134.7, 131.7, 129.7, 129.1, 128.2, 128.0, 127.6, 126.9, 117.7, 116.0, 115.0, 108.8

HRMS (ESI): calc. for $[(C_{21}H_{15}NO_2)H]$ (M+H) 314.1181, measured 314.1180.

6-Methoxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3c).^{3b}



White solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.38 (bs, 1 H), 8.25 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.32 – 7.26 (m, 3 H), 7.22 (bs, 5 H), 7.16 – 7.13 (m, 3 H), 6.51 (s, 1 H), 3.67 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 162.3, 161.3, 140.1, 139.2, 135.9, 134.6, 131.6, 129.7, 129.1, 128.2, 128.1, 127.6, 127.0, 118.8, 115.1, 114.5, 107.13., 55.17.
HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₁₇NO₂)H] (M+H) 328.1338, measured 328.1333.

6-Methyl-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3d).^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 9.55 (bs, 1 H), 8.36 (d, *J* =8.0, 1 H), 7.33 – 7.30 (m, 4 H), 7.27 – 7.22 (m, 5 H), 7.19 – 7.16 (m, 2 H), 7.12 (s, 1 H), 2.37 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 162.8, 143.3, 138.7, 137.1, 135.8, 135.0, 131.8, 129.2, 128.5, 128.3, 128.2, 127.8, 127.4, 127.2, 125.3, 122.7, 117.1, 22.0.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₁₇NO)H] (M+H) 312.1388, measured 312.1382.

6-(Dimethylamino)-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (3e).



Yellow solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 8.89 (bs, 1 H), 8.31 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.28 – 7.26 (m, 4 H), 7.21 – 7.18 (m, 6 H), 6.91 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.37 (s, 1 H), 2.92 (s, 6 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 162.6, 153.1, 140.4, 137.1, 136.3, 135.5, 131.7, 129.1, 128.9, 128.3, 128.2, 127.0, 116.9, 114.5, 112.4, 105.2, 39.9.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₂₀N₂O)H] (M+H) 341.1654, measured 341.1661.

6-Iodo-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3f).^{3b}

O NH Ph

White solid; eluent (25% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.64 (bs, 1 H), 8.00 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.79 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.40 (s, 1 H), 7.29 – 7.22 (m, 3 H), 7.17 (bs, 5 H), 7.10 (d, J = 8.0, 2 H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.4, 139.9, 139.7, 135.2, 134.8, 134.2, 133.2, 131.6, 129.7, 128.7, 128.4, 127.7, 127.3, 124.1, 114.2, 101.3. HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄INO)H] (M+H) 424.0198, measured 424.0192.

6-Bromo-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3g).^{3b}



White solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.73 (s, 1 H), 8.23 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.67 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4 Hz, 1 H), 7.34 - 7.28 (m, 3 H), 7.25-7.21 (m, 6 H), 7.17-7.14 (m, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.2, 140.2, 139.8, 135.1, 134.1, 131.6, 129.7, 129.3, 129.1, 128.4, 127.7, 127.4, 126.9, 126.8, 123.8, 114.4.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄BrNO)H] (M+H) 376.0337, measured 376.0343.

6-Chloro-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3h).^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.73 (bs, 1 H), 8.31 (d, *J* = 8.0, 1 H), 7.55 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.34-7.28 (m, 3 H), 7.23 (bs, 5 H), 7.17-7.15 (m, 2 H), 7.05 (s, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.1, 140.3, 139.7, 137.6, 135.1, 134.1, 131.6, 129.7, 129.3, 128.4, 127.7, 127.4, 126.4, 123.8, 123.6, 114.5.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄ClNO)H] (M+H) 332.0842, measured 332.0844.

6-Fluoro-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3i).^{3b}



White solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 10.41 (bs, 1 H), 8.42 (dd, J = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.34-7.29 (m, 3 H), 7.27 - 7.22 (m, 5 H), 7.17 - 7.14 (m, 3 H), 6.98 (dd, J = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H)

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 166.7 and 164.2 (F coupling), 162.4, 141.2 and 141.1 (F coupling), 138.7, 135.2, 134.5, 131.6, 130.6 and 130.5 (F coupling), 129.3, 128.7, 128.5, 128.1, 127.4, 121.5, 116.74 and 116.70 (F coupling), 115.2 and 114.9 (F coupling), 110.8 and 110.6 (F coupling).

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄FNO)H] (M+H) 316.1138 , measured 316.1139.

3,4-Diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3j).^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 9.42 (bs, 1 H), 8.46 (dd, J = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.59 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.50 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.36 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.33 – 7.29 (m, 3 H), 7.27 – 7.23 (m, 5 H), 7.20 – 7.17 (m, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 162.7, 138.6, 137.0, 135.6, 135.0, 132.6, 131.8, 129.2, 128.6, 128.37, 128.33, 127.4, 127.3, 126.6, 125.6, 125.0, 117.2.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₅NO)H] (M+H) 298.1232, measured 298.1228.

1-Oxo-3,4-diphenyl-1,2-dihydroisoquinoline-6-carbaldehyde (3k).^{3b}



Pale yellow solid; eluent (45% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 9.96 (s, 1 H), 9.40 (bs, 1 H), 8.55 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.91 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H) 7.79 (s, 1 H), 7.32 – 7.29 (m, 3 H), 7.25 – 7.19 (m, 7 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 192.1, 162.3, 139.2, 139.1, 138.4, 134.8, 134.5, 131.7, 129.5,

129.3, 129.1, 128.8, 128.7, 128.6, 127.9, 124.9, 117.5.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₁₅NO₂)H] (M+H) 326.1182, measured 326.1176.

6-Acetyl-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (3l).



Yellow solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 9.82 (bs, 1 H), 8.53 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.01 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.94 (s, 1 H), 7.36 – 7.32 (m, 3 H), 7.30 – 7.24 (m, 5 H), 7.20 – 7.18 (m, 2 H), 2.53 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 197.9, 162.3, 140.0, 138.7, 138.1, 134.9, 134.5, 131.6, 129.2, 128.8, 128.6, 128.3, 128.1, 127.7, 126.2, 125.1, 117.4, 26.8.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₇NO₂)H] (M+H) 340.1338, measured 340.1335.

Methyl 1-oxo-3,4-diphenyl-1,2-dihydroisoquinoline-6-carboxylate (3m).^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.81 (s, 1 H), 8.43 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.01 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.80 (s, 1 H) 7.33 – 7.29 (m, 3 H), 7.23 (bs, 5 H), 7.19 -7.16 (m, 2 H), 3.80 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 165.7, 161.1, 139.7, 138.0, 135.2, 134.2, 132.8, 131.7, 129.8, 128.3, 127.7, 127.6, 127.3, 126.3, 125.7, 115.4, 54.9, 52.5.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₇NO₃)H] (M+H) 356.1287, measured 356.1292.

6-Nitro-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3n).^{3b}



Yellowsolid; eluent (35% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 10.21 (s, 1 H), 8.57 (d, 1 H), 8.23 - 8.20 (m, 2 H), 7.38 - 7.35(m, 3 H), 7.33 - 7.31 (m, 1 H), 7.29 - 7.25 (m, 4 H), 7.19 - 7.17 (m, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 161.7, 150.6, 139.7, 139.5, 134.2, 131.5, 129.5, 129.25, 129.22, 128.9, 128.6, 128.5, 128.4, 128.0, 121.1, 120.1, 117.1.
HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄N₂O₃)H] (M+H) 343.1083, measured 343.1083.

5-Methoxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3o').^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.50 (bs, 1 H), 7.95 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.46 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.15 (bs, 6 H), 7.06 -7.03 (m, 5 H), 3.25 (s, 3 H),

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.2, 156.0, 139.7, 138.7, 135.0, 130.9, 129.9, 127.9, 127.7, 127.3, 127.1, 126.9, 126.3, 125.4, 119.0, 114.9, 113.6, 55.7.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₁₇NO₂)H] (M+H) 328.1338, measured 328.1332.

7-Chloro-3,4-diphenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (3p).^{3b}



Colorless solid; eluent (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.77 (bs, 1 H), 8.24 (s, 1 H), 7.69 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 4.0, Hz, 1 H), 7.32 – 7.26 (m, 3 H), 7.23 (bs, 6 H), 7.17 - 7.14 (m, 2 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 160.6, 139.1, 136.8, 135.3, 134.2, 132.6, 131.6, 130.9, 129.8, 128.3, 127.7, 127.3, 127.2, 126.2, 125.7, 115.0.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₄ClNO)H] (M+H) 332.0842, measured 332.0844.

6,7-Diphenylfuro[3,2-c]pyridin-4(5H)-one (3q).



Pale yellow solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.70 (s, 1 H), 7.88 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.32-7.21 (m, 8 H), 7.14-7.17 (m, 2 H), 7.04 (d, *J* = 3.2 Hz, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 159.1, 158.8, 144.6, 140.8, 133.3, 132.4, 130.7, 130.0, 128.7, 128.1, 127.9, 127.1, 114.4, 108.0, 107.0.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₃NO₂)H] (M+H) 288.1025, measured 288.1029.

3,4-Diphenyl-2,5-dihydro-1*H*-pyrido[4,3-*b*]indol-1-one (3r).



Grey solid; eluent (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.38 (br s, 1 H), 11.16 (s, 1 H), 8.17 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.50 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.37 - 7.30 (m, 3 H), 7.28 - 7.20 (m, 9 H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 159.5, 144.6, 141.2, 138.1, 134.2, 134.1, 130.9, 130.0, 128.6, 128.3, 127.8, 127.2, 124.1, 123.6, 120.6, 120.4, 111.8, 107.7, 106.1. HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₆N₂O)H] (M+H) 337.1341, measured 337.1347.

6,7-Diphenylthieno[3,2-c]pyridin-4(5H)-one (3s).



Pale yellow solid; eluent (35% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.71 (s, 1 H), 7.60 - 7.58 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.58 - 7.56 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.32-7.20 (m, 10 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 158.5, 151.2, 138.6, 136.5, 133.5, 130.1, 129.9, 129.2, 128.5, 127.8, 127.6, 125.8, 124.5, 113.6.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₃NOS)H] (M+H) 304.0796, measured 304.0802.

4,5-Diphenylthieno[2,3-c]pyridin-7(6H)-one (3t).^{3b}



Light-yellow solid; eluent (35% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.78 (s, 1 H), 8.02 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.30 - 7.21 (m, 8 H), 7.13 - 7.15 (m, 2 H), 6.92 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 158.0, 146.7, 139.8, 136.3, 134.1, 133.9, 130.7, 130.0,

128.3, 128.2, 128.0, 127.8, 127.0, 124.5, 114.7.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₃NOS)H] (M+H) 304.0796, measured 304.0803.

(E)-2-(1,2-Diphenylvinyl)-6-methoxybenzamide (3u).



Colorless sold; eluent (50% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 7.72 (bs, 1 H), 7.36 (bs, 1 H), 7.28 -7.19 (m, 6 H), 7.14 – 7.11 (m, 3 H), 6.97 -6.95 (m, 3 H), 6.80 (s, 1 H), 6.56 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 3.80 (s, 3 H). ¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 168.5, 155.7, 142.0, 140.6, 140.3, 136.8, 129.83, 129.80, 129.0, 128.5, 128.3, 127.97, 127.93, 127.2, 126.8, 121.3, 109.8, 55.6. HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₁₉NO₂)H] (M+H) 330.1494, measured 330.1498.

(E)-2-Bromo-6-(1,2-diphenylvinyl)benzamide (3v).



Colorless solid; eluent (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 8.01 (bs, 1 H), 7.64 (bs, 1 H), 7.56 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.31 – 7.28 (m, 5 H), 7.14 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.12 – 7.09 (m, 3 H), 6.96 – 6.90 (m, 3 H), 6.86 (s, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 168.8, 142.9, 140.2, 139.6, 139.4, 136.5, 130.7, 130.9, 129.8, 129.4, 129.1, 128.6, 128.5, 128.1, 127.5, 127.1, 119.3.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₁₆BrNO)H] (M+H) 378.0494, measured 378.0497.

6,7-Dimethoxy-3,4-bis(4-methoxyphenyl)isoquinolin-1(2H)-one (4a).



Brick-red solid; eluent (65% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.28 (bs, 1 H), 7.68 (s, 1 H), 7.10 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.05 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.86 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.76 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.58 (s, 1 H), 3.88 (s, 3 H), 3.73 (s, 3 H), 3.70 (s, 3 H), 3.58 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.1, 158.7, 157.9, 152.9, 148.4, 136.9, 134.1, 132.7,

 $131.1,\,128.3,\,127.2,\,118.7,\,114.5,\,113.8,\,113.1,\,106.9,\,105.6,\,55.6,\,55.2,\,55.1,\,54.9.$

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₅H₂₃NO₅)H] (M+H) 418.1654, measured 418.1650.

6,7-Bis(4-methoxyphenyl)thieno[3,2-c]pyridin-4(5H)-one (4b).



Pale yellow color semisolid; eluent (50% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.55 (s, 1 H), 7.54 (s, 2 H), 7.16 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.12 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.87 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.81 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 3.73 (s, 3 H), 3.72 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 159.1, 158.6, 158.3, 151.9, 138.3, 131.3, 128.8, 128.7, 125.8, 125.4, 124.5, 114.0, 113.3, 112.9, 55.1, 54.9.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for $[(C_{21}H_{17}NO_3S)H]$ (M+H) 364.1007, measured 364.1009.

6,7-Dimethoxy-3,4-di(thiophen-2-yl)isoquinolin-1(2H)-one (4c).



Black semisolid; eluent (55% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.46 (bs, 1 H), 7.76 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.56 (s, 1 H), 7.51 (t, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 2 H), 7.15 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.97 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.61 (s, 1 H), 3.90 (s, 3 H), 3.63 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 161.1, 153.2, 148.9, 136.1, 135.5, 133.9, 132.9, 131.2, 129.6, 128.9, 128.8, 127.9, 126.5, 119.0, 107.0, 106.9, 105.7, 55.7, 55.3.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₅NO₃S₂)H] (M+H) 370.0572, measured 370.0566.

6,7-Dimethoxy-4-methyl-3-phenylisoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (4d).



Off-white solid; eluent (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.11 (bs, 1 H), 7.65 (s, 1 H), 7.51 – 7.42 (m, 5 H), 7.11 (s, 1 H), 3.94 (s, 3 H), 3.88 (s, 3 H), 2.12 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 160.8, 153.0, 148.3, 136.2, 134.9, 133.5, 129.7, 128.4, 128.1, 107.0, 106.9, 104.6, 55.6, 55.4, 13.8.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₈H₁₇NO₃)H] (M+H) 296.1287, measured 296.1283.

4-Ethyl-6,7-dimethoxy-3-phenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (4e).



Grey solid; eluent (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 9.71 (bs, 1 H), 7.80 (s, 1 H), 7.47 – 7.44 (m, 5 H), 7.10 (s, 1 H), 4.03 (s, 3 H), 4.02 (s, 3 H), 2.66 (q, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 1.22 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 161.8, 153.6, 148.8, 135.8, 135.6, 133.3, 129.1, 128.9, 128.7, 115.2, 107.8, 104.2, 56.2, 56.1, 20.8, 15.3.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₉NO₃)H] (M+H) 310.1443, measured 310.1439.

4-Butyl-6,7-dimethoxy-3-phenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (4f).



Pale yellow solid; eluent (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.12 (s, 1 H),7.68 (s, 1 H), 7 53 – 7.48 (m, 3 H), 7.44 – 7.41 (m, 2 H), 7.12 (s, 1 H), 3.94 (s, 3 H), 3.91 (s, 3 H), 2.54 – 2.52 (m, 2 H), 1.53 – 1.46 (m, 2 H), 1.27 - 1. 18 (m, 2 H), 0.79 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d₆, 100 MHz): δ 160.6, 153.0, 148.2, 136.7, 135.1, 132.6, 129.3, 128.5, 128.2, 119.5, 111.9, 107.2, 104.4, 55.57, 55.51, 31.9, 26.2, 22.0, 13.5.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₁H₂₃NO₃)H] (M+H) 338.1756, measured 338.1755.

3-Butyl-6,7-dimethoxy-4-phenylisoquinolin-1(2H)-one (4f').



Brown solid; eluent (58% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.25 (s, 1 H), 7.61 (s, 1 H), 7.52 – 7.41 (m, 3 H), 7.27 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 6.33 (s, 1 H), 3.85 (s, 3 H), 3.53 (s, 3 H), 2.25 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 1.49 – 1.41 (m, 2 H), 1.16 – 1.07 (m, 2 H), 0.69 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 3 H).

4-Butyl-6,7-dimethoxy-3-(4-methoxyphenyl)isoquinolin-1(2*H*)-one (4g).



Pale yellow solid; eluent (65% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d6, 400 MHz): δ 11.01 (s, 1 H), 7.64 (s, 1 H), 7.32 (d, *J* = 8.0, 2 H), 7.08 (s, 1 H), 7.02 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 3.91 (s, 3 H), 3.87 (s, 3 H), 3.81 (s, 3 H), 2.53 – 2.50 (m, 2 H), 1.47 -1.46 (m, 2 H), 1.25 – 1.23 (m, 2 H), 0.79 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d6, 100 MHz): δ 160.6, 159.2, 152.9, 148.1, 136.5, 132.7, 130.6, 127.4, 119.3, 113.5, 111.9, 107.1, 104.4, 55.57, 55.51, 55.1, 32.0, 26.3, 22.0, 13.6.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₂H₂₅NO₄)H] (M+H) 368.1862, measured 368.1860.

Ethyl 6,7-dimethoxy-1-oxo-3-phenyl-1,2-dihydroisoquinoline-4-carboxylate (4h).



Pale yellow semisolid; eluent (65% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (DMSO-d₆, 400 MHz): δ 11.65 (s, 1 H), 7.60 (s, 1 H), 7.44- 7.41 (m, 3 H), 7.37 (d, J = 8.0, 2 H), 7.21 (s, 1 H), 3.90 (q, J = 8.0 Hz, 2 H), 3.85 (s, 3 H), 3.81 (s, 3 H), 0.75 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (DMSO-d6, 100 MHz): δ 167.3, 161.4, 153.9, 149.3, 142.3, 135.0, 130.3, 129.8, 128.9, 128.7, 118.9, 108.4, 107.4, 105.2, 61.1, 56.1 (2 OMe merged together), 13.8.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₀H₁₉NO₅)H] (M+H) 354.1341, measured 354.1349.

1-Chloro-6,7-dimethoxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinoline (5a).



Colorless solid; eluent (18% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 7.61 (s, 1 H), 7.37 -7.31 (m, 5 H), 7.24 - 7.22 (m, 2 H), 7.18 - 7.16 (m, 3 H), 6.90 (s, 1 H), 4.09 (s, 3 H), 3.77 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 153.2, 150.6, 148.6, 148.0, 139.5, 136.9, 134.6, 130.9, 130.1, 129.7, 128.4, 127.5, 127.1, 121.4, 104.6, 104.3, 56.2, 55.8.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₈ClNO₂)H] (M+H) 376.1104, measured 376.1112.

4-Chloro-6,7-diphenylfuro[3,2-c]pyridine (5b).



Colorless solid; eluent (5% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 7.66 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.40 – 7.37 (m, 2 H), 7.35 – 7.29 (m, 5 H), 7.23 – 7.20 (m, 3 H), 6.93 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 159.3, 152.1, 146.6, 141.9, 138.5, 132.8, 130.5, 130.3, 128.4, 128.0, 127.9, 122.7, 119.9, 105.2.
HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₂ClNO)H] (M+H) 306.0686, measured 306.0695.

1-Bromo-6,7-dimethoxy-3,4-diphenylisoquinoline (5c).



Colorless solid; eluent (18% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 7.59 (s, 1 H), 7.37 – 7.31 (m, 5 H), 7.24 – 7.22 (m, 2 H), 7.18 – 7.16 (m, 3 H), 6.89 (s, 1 H), 4.10 (s, 3 H), 3.77 (s, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 153.2, 150.7, 149.1, 141.7, 139.4, 136.8, 134.2, 130.8, 130.1, 128.4, 127.5, 127.1, 123.5, 106.7, 104.5, 56.2, 55.8.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₂₃H₁₈BrNO₂)H] (M+H) 420.0599, measured 420.0605.

4-Bromo-6,7-diphenylthieno[3,2-*c*]pyridine (5d).



Colorless solid; eluent (5% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 7.53 (bs, 2 H), 7.39 – 7.35 (m, 5 H), 7.32 – 7.30 (m, 2 H), 7.21 - 7.18 (m, 3 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 150.8, 150.1, 138.4, 137.2, 135.5, 135.2, 130.3, 129.5, 129.3, 129.0, 128.8, 128.2, 127.8, 124.4.

HRMS (ESI): calc. for [(C₁₉H₁₂BrNS)H] (M+H) 365.9952, measured 365.9962.

11-Fluoro-5,6,13-triphenyl-8*H*-isoquinolino[3,2-*a*]isoquinolin-8-one (5e).^{3a}



Yellow solid; eluent (13% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 8.27 – 8.23 (m, 1 H), 7.58 – 7.52 (m, 3 H), 7.51 – 7.49 (m, 2 H), 7.28 – 7.22 (m, 3 H), 7.18 – 7.10 (m, 6 H), 7.08 (bs, 5 H), 6.99 – 6.95 (m, 1 H), 6.91 – 6.87 (m, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 166.6 and 164.1 (F coupling), 161.4, 139.6 and 139.5, 138.1, 137.0, 136.1, 135.9, 135.1, 133.1, 131.9, 131.3, 130.7 and 130.6 (F coupling), 129.8, 128.7, 128.3, 127.9, 127.1, 127.0, 128.3, 127.9, 127.1, 127.0, 126.87, 126.80, 126.3, 125.7, 122.3, 116.14 and 116.1 (F coupling), 115.1 and 114.8 (F coupling), 110.7 and 110.5 (F coupling). HRMS (ESI): calc. for $[(C_{35}H_{22}FNO)H]$ (M+H) 492.1764, measured 492.1754.

11-Nitro-5,6,13-triphenyl-8*H*-isoquinolino[3,2-*a*]isoquinolin-8-one (5f).^{3a}



Pale yellow solid; eluent (15% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 8.37 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.22 (d, *J* = 2.0 Hz, 1 H), 8.15 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 2.0 Hz, 1 H), 7.61 – 7.58 (m, 3 H), 7.52 – 7.50 (m, 2 H), 7.28 – 7.22 (m, 4 H), 7.17 – 7.15 (m, 4 H), 7.11 – 7.06 (m, 5 H), 6.95 – 6.91 (m, 1 H).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz): δ 160.8, 150.3, 137.7, 137.2, 136.4, 136.0, 135.8, 135.6, 133.1, 131.8, 131.2, 130.2, 129.4, 129.3, 129.2, 128.9, 128.8, 128.4, 128.0, 127.8, 127.3, 127.2, 127.1, 126.7, 126.6, 125.9, 121.2, 119.7, 116.3.

3,4-Dimethoxybenzamide (11a).^{3c}



Pale yellow solid; eluent (70% ethyl acetate in hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz): δ 7.46 (s, 1 H), 7.34 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1 H), 6.84 (bs, 2 H), 3.93 (s, 6 H).

Refs:

3. (a) B. Li, H. Feng, S. Xu and B. Wang, *Chem. Eur. J.* 2012, **18**, 12873. (b). B. Li, H. Feng,
S. Xu and B. Wang, *Chem. Eur. J.* 2011, **17**, 12573. (c) M. D. Ganton and M. A. Kerr, *Org. Lett.* 2005, **7**, 4777.

NOESY Studies

Copy of NOESY Experiment of Compound 4f.



There is a NOE correlation between Ha (δ 7.12, s) and Hc (δ 2.54, m). In meantime, there is also a correlation between Hc (δ 2.54, m) and He (δ 7.53, m). These results clearly revealed that the regiochemistry of compound **4f** is correct.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3a.**













DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3b.

¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3c.**





DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3c.



















DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3f.











DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3h.
¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3i.**



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3i.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3j.**





DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3j.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3k.**



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3k.

¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3l.**



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3m.**



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3m.









DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3n.

¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **30.**





DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 30.





DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3p.







¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3r.**



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3r.







¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3t.**



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3u**.



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 3u.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **3v.**















DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 4b.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **4c.**









¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **4d.**
























¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **5b.**





¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **5c.**

DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 5c.



¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **5d.**















¹H and ¹³C NMR Spectra of Compound **5f.**



DEPT (135) NMR Spectrum of Compound 5f.

