

Article

Plant-Mediated Enantioselective Transformation of Indan-1-One and Indan-1-ol

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Abstract: The main purpose of this work was to discover the way to obtain pure enantiomers of indan-1-ol. The subject of the study was the ability of the plant enzyme system to reduce the carbonyl group of indan-1-one, as well as to oxidize the hydroxyl group of racemic indan-1-ol. Locally available fruit and vegetables were selected for stereoselective biotransformation. During the reduction, mainly alcohol of the *S*(+)-configuration with a high enantiomeric excess (ee = 99%) was obtained. The opposite enantiomer was obtained in bioreduction with the apple and parsley. Racemic indan-1-ol was oxidized by all catalysts. The best result was obtained for the Jerusalem artichoke: Over 50% conversion was observed after 1 h, and the enantiomeric excess of unreacted *R*(-)-indan-1-ol was 100%.

Keywords: indan-1-one; indan-1-ol; biotransformation; reduction; oxidation

1. Introduction

In the last decade the need to obtain applicable biologically-active enantiopure compounds has been growing increasingly, because the way they act within living organisms depends largely on their absolute configuration. The chiral environment of a patient's body distinguishes the enantiomers (optical isomers) of drugs as the eutomer (the good enantiomer) and the distomer (the unwanted enantiomer, sometimes with strong side effects). Both enantiomers very probably display different biological properties, and therefore even drugs that are initially administered as the racemate are considered for the development of a single-enantiomer synthesis [1].

Chiral secondary alcohols are increasingly recognized as valuable chiral building blocks in the organic syntheses of pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. In the past, they were produced by several methods, such as by the use of chiral ligands [2,3], separation by chiral chromatography [4] and the application of chiral metal complexes in the asymmetric reduction of prochiral compounds [5]. All of these processes have their own inherent drawbacks, including difficulty in operation, generation of by-products, exorbitant cost and harmful effects upon the environment [6]. This problem can be solved by biocatalysis, which can additively shorten the synthetic route and enable the achievement of high yields with excellent chemo-, regio- and stereo-selectivity [7].

In the biological approaches using biocatalysts, optically active alcohols are prepared from prochiral ketones [8–11], or racemic alcohols as starting materials [8,12–15]. Biocatalytic desymmetrization using ketones is highly significant in several processes, as this allows one to obtain pure enantiomer in a 100% theoretical yield.

L.—potato, *Allium ampeloprasum* L.—leek, *Raphanus sativus* L.—radish) and two fruit *Malus pumila* L.—apple and *Cydonia oblonga* Mill.—quince.

The initial identification of the obtained product was made by means of gas chromatography. The order of the signals was assigned based on a comparison with the standards (Figure 1). Assignment of the alcohol configuration was made based on measuring the specific rotation and comparison with the pertinent literature data.

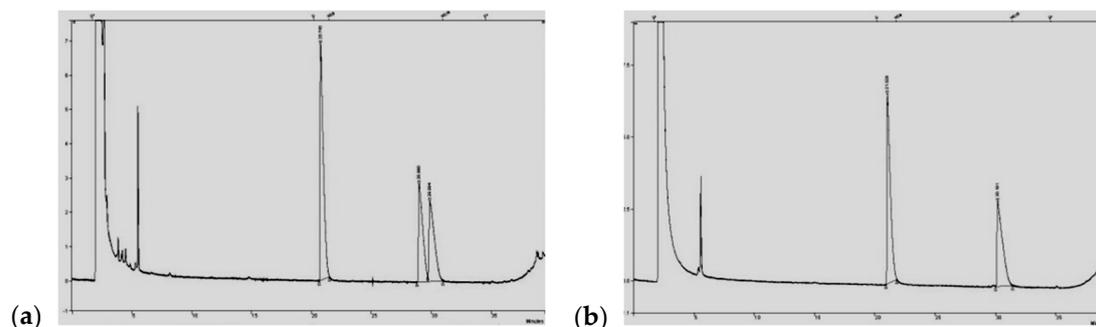


Figure 1. Chromatograms of the standards and biotransformation: (a) Indan-1-one $t_R = 20.7$ min., S-(+)-indan-1-ol $t_R = 28.9$ min., R-(-)-indan-1-ol $t_R = 29.9$ min., (b) biotransformation of indan-1-ol by the Jerusalem artichoke.

Reactions were carried out with the aid of the crushed flesh of the above-mentioned plants suspended in a phosphate buffer of the appropriate pH. The obtained results of the indan-1-one biotransformations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the indan-1-one plant biotransformations determined by GC analysis of the crude extract.

Biocatalyst	% of Alcohol	ee [%]
<i>A. ampeloprasum</i> L. (leek)	0	0
<i>A. graveolens</i> L. (celeriac)	8.4	99 R(-)
<i>B. vulgaris</i> L. (beet)	0	0
<i>D. carota</i> L. (carrot)	8.5	99 S(+)
<i>H. tuberosus</i> L. (Jerusalem artichoke)	3.6	99 S(+)
<i>P. sativa</i> L. (parsnip)	7.4	99 S(+)
<i>P. crispum</i> L. (parsley)	8.4	99 S(+)
<i>R. sativus</i> L. (radish)	0	0
<i>S. tuberosum</i> L. (potato)	0	0
<i>M. pumila</i> L. (apple “Gloster”)	3.1	99 R(-)
<i>C. oblonga</i> Mill. (quince)	0	0

Six biocatalysts were found capable of reduction of indan-1-one with an excellent enantioselectivity (ee = 99.9% S(+)) but, unfortunately, with a low yield. The best result was obtained by means of the enzymatic system of comminuted plants representing the *Umbelliferae* family (*Apiaceae*, e.g., celery, carrot, parsley), which reduced indan-1-one with a yield at the level of about 8%. We received extremely interesting results for one of the vegetables—the celery. The enzyme system of this vegetable biotransformed the substrate into alcohol with a configuration which did not agree with the Prelog rule. Although R-(-)-indan-1-ol was also obtained using the apple as the bioreagent, the efficiency of this process was low.

In 2019, Nagaki et al. [34] biotransformed indan-1-one in a calli culture of *D. carota*. After 25 days, they obtained only 26% alcohol. In turn, in a work by Bennamane et al. [21], indan-1-one was reduced by *Zingiber officinale* and *Citrus reticulata* with a higher yield (36% and 43%, respectively) but lower stereoselectivity (26% S-(+) and 95% S-(+), respectively).

2.2. Oxidation of Indan-1-ol Using the Plant Enzyme System

Since the indan-1-one reduction efficiency by means of comminuted plants was so very low, we tried to transform the corresponding racemic alcohol. Stereoselective oxidation of alcohols has useful applications in organic synthesis, but it is less popular than the reduction of ketones in biotransformations [13]. So far, biooxidation has been described almost exclusively for model substrates such as 1-phenylethanol and its derivatives. Andrade et al. [14] selected 15 plants to carry out the biooxidation of (*RS*)-1-phenylethanol and its derivatives. During the biotransformation of racemic 1-phenylethanol by means of *Zingiber officinale* and *Polymnia sonchifolia*, cyclic deracemization was observed, when the biocatalyst promoted an enantioselective oxidation of the alcohol *S*-enantiomer, and the product was reduced by the *S*-selective enzyme. After six days the authors obtained 100% of 1-phenylethanol with ee = 98% (*S*) (*Z. officinale*) and 99% with ee = 93% (*S*) (*P. sonchifolia*). Further, in the case of (*RS*)-1-(4-bromophenyl)ethanol oxidation, the best biocatalyst was *Dioscorea alata*. The (*R*)-enantiomer was oxidized into the corresponding ketone in 53%, leaving the (*S*)-1-(4-bromophenyl)ethanol unreacted with ee = 83%. Next, the 1-phenylethanol derivative (*RS*)-1-(4-methylphenyl)ethanol was oxidized by *Solanum tuberosum*, and after 3 days of transformation gave (*R*)-1-(4-methylphenyl)ethanol with ee = 86% and a yield of 32% [14].

The Jerusalem artichoke oxidized racemic 1-phenylethanol and 1-(2-naphthyl)ethanol very stereoselectively, yielding 58% of *R*-1-phenylethanol (ee = 80%) and 54% of *R*-1-(2-naphthyl)ethanol (ee = 95%) [12]. When comparing the oxidations of 1- and 2-naphthalene derivatives [8], the β -position was revealed to be more suitable for enzymatic reaction because, similarly to the Jerusalem artichoke, the celeriac enzymatic system transformed 1-(2-naphthyl)ethanol in 60% with a 35% enantiometric excess *S*-(-)-enantiomer of unreacted alcohol, but the other alcohol with biaryl ring, that is, 1-(1-naphthyl)ethanol, was not transformed.

In our research, the same plants were used both for the biooxidation and reduction of indan-1-one. The obtained results of the indan-1-ol biotransformations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the indan-1-ol plant biotransformations determined by GC analysis of the crude extract.

Biocatalyst	Ketone [%]	The Unreacted Alcohol	
		%	ee [%]
<i>A. ampeloprasum</i> L. (leek)	2.5	97.5	1.2 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>A. graveolens</i> L. (celeriac)	44.4	55.6	4.4 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>B. vulgaris</i> L. (beet)	30.8	69.2	12.8 <i>R</i> -(-)
<i>D. carota</i> L. (carrot)	16.1	83.9	12.8 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>H. tuberosus</i> L. (Jerusalem artichoke)	99.5	0.5	99 <i>R</i> -(-)
<i>P. sativa</i> L. (parsnip)	28.9	71.2	7.3 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>P. crispum</i> L. (parsley)	31.2	68.8	8.4 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>R. sativus</i> L. (radish)	3.4	96.6	1.3 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>S. tuberosum</i> L. (potato)	17.8	82.2	12.4 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>M. pumila</i> L. (apple "Gloster")	6.2	93.8	3.6 <i>S</i> -(+)
<i>C. oblonga</i> Mill. (quince)	4.7	95.3	2.2 <i>R</i> -(-)

All biocatalysts were able to oxidize indan-1-ol within 48 h. This transformation was more efficient than the bioreduction of indan-1-one, but less stereoselective. Only in the case of biotransformation with crushed Jerusalem artichoke pulp was complete conversion after 48 h observed. For this reason, we decided to study the course of this biotransformation in time. Samples were taken every 1, 2, 5, 21, 24 and 28 h (Figure 2).

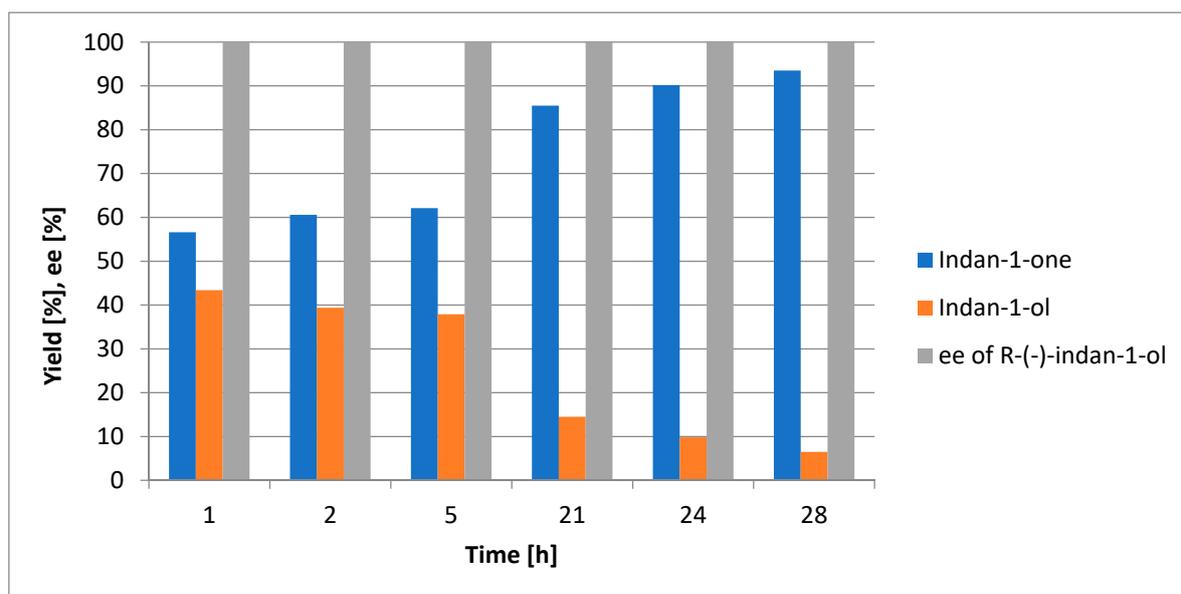


Figure 2. Biotransformation of indan-1-ol by comminuted Jerusalem artichoke.

When analyzing the results of indan-1-ol biotransformation with shredded Jerusalem artichoke pulp, we noticed that during oxidation, the racemic substrate of the *S*-(+)-enantiomer of alcohol was preferred. This reaction was fast, as after one hour over 50% conversion was detected. Only after this *S*-(+)-enantiomer had been depleted did the second of the enantiomers slowly oxidize. This is a very interesting result, considering the literature data available to us, which provides much worse results. Indan-1-ol was oxidized by Uzura [35] in a *Fusarium moniliforme* MS31 culture with a yield of 2.6%. The reaction lasted 35 h. On the other hand, Stampfer [36] published the results of the microbiological oxidation of this compound using the *Rhodococcus ruber* DSM 44541 bacterium. However, after 24 h of the reaction, only 11.3% of the product was obtained.

The Jerusalem artichoke was seldom used as a biocatalyst. Oxidation of (\pm)-1-phenylethanol, 1-(1-naphthyl)- and 2-(1-naphthyl)ethanol alcohol was presented in a publication by Mironowicz. [12] In the same work the Jerusalem artichoke was also used in the hydrolysis of similar esters, where the oxidation of alcohol was the subsequent reaction. Enzymatic lactonization of three acyclic γ,δ -epoxy esters was revealed in the research by Olejniczak [38]. In turn, Xie et al. [39] described results of 2-chloro-fluorenone biotransformation, where this compound was completely reduced contrary to the Prelog rule, yielding alcohol with an enantiomeric excess of 76% (*R*).

Biotransformations are the first stage of the xenobiotic detoxification process. Many enzymes participate in this process in plants, including cytochrome P450-related enzymes (CYP), alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH), short-chain dehydrogenases/reductases (SDRs), aldo-keto reductases (AKR) and others. Only small ADH families have been found in plants, which function is often unknown. In turn, the SDR superfamily exhibits low sequence similarities. Additionally, the AKR4 subfamily C (AKR4C), a group of aldo-keto reductases found in plants, can also participate in the detoxification of xenobiotics [40].

The enzyme isolated from Jerusalem artichoke, which metabolizes with high efficiency a wide range of xenobiotics, is CYP76B1. This cytochrome P450-containing monooxygenase detoxifies among others several herbicides of the phenylurea class and alkoxy coumarins [41].

The energy metabolism of Jerusalem artichoke tubers is dominated by glycolysis, the tricarboxylic acid cycle, and the mitochondrial electron transport chain, the consequence of which is a high level of NAD synthesis [42]. This cofactor is necessary for all enzymes responsible for alcohol oxidation and ketone reduction. Extremely high conversion of indan-1-ol catalyzed by Jerusalem artichoke tubers

can be the consequence of high levels of cofactor or better substrate specificity of the enzyme present in this vegetable.

3. Experimental

3.1. Biocatalysts

In the present work the following vegetables and fruit were used as a biocatalyst: *Allium ampeloprasum* L.—leek, *Apium graveolens* L.—celeriac, *Beta vulgaris* L.—beet, *Daucus carota* L.—carrot, *Helianthus tuberosus* L.—Jerusalem artichoke, *Pastinaca sativa* L.—parsnip, *Petroselinum crispum* L.—parsley, *Raphanus sativus* L.—radish, *Solanum tuberosum* L.—potato, and *Malus pumila* L.—apple “Gloster”. All biocatalysts have been purchased in a local market.

In order to ensure optimal conditions for the enzymes of the intracellular biocatalyst to carry out the reaction, a phosphate buffer with a pH close to the natural juice of the vegetable or fruit was used (Table 3).

Table 3. The pH values of the cell juice of used bioreagents.

Biocatalyst	pH
<i>A. ampeloprasum</i> L. (leek)	6.0
<i>A. graveolens</i> L. var. <i>rapaceum</i> (celeriac)	6.2
<i>B. vulgaris</i> L. (beet)	5.9
<i>D. carota</i> L. (carrot),	6.5
<i>H. tuberosus</i> L. (Jerusalem artichoke)	6.9
<i>P. sativa</i> L. (parsnip)	6.5
<i>P. sativum</i> Hoffm: (parsley),	6.5
<i>R. sativus</i> L. (radish)	5.9
<i>S. tuberosum</i> L. (potato)	5.9
<i>M. pumila</i> L.(apple)	4.5

3.2. Duration of Biotransformation

Biotransformations using suspended shredded plant tissues were carried out under non-sterile conditions for up to 48 h. This time was determined on the basis of research performed at our Department. The obtained results allow us to state that the number of bacteria growing at that time has no effect on the course and efficiency of the biotransformation process [43].

3.3. Screening Procedure

The experiments were carried out according to the method worked out by Mączka et al. [44]. Healthy vegetable roots and fruits were comminuted and 20 mL of plant pulp was mixed with 50 mL of 0.1 M phosphate buffer in 300 mL Erlenmeyer flasks. Buffer was prepared at the appropriate pH comparable to the pH of cell juice (Table 3). Next, 20 µL of the substrate was dissolved in 0.5 mL acetone and added to the pulp of the biocatalyst. The transformations were performed at room temperature. After 48 h the biotransformed mixtures were extracted with 30 mL of ethyl acetate and dissolved into 2 mL of acetone after evaporation. Under these conditions the substrate in the buffer solution was stable.

Each biotransformation was duplicated. In addition, control samples (buffer + biocatalyst) were prepared out to eliminate the influence of plant-derived metabolites on the interpretation of the results obtained.

The presence of the product was confirmed by analytical TLC, which was performed on silica gel-coated aluminum plates (DC-Alufolien Kieselgel 60 F254, Merck) with a mixture of hexane and acetone in various ratios as the eluent. Compounds were detected by spraying the plates with 20% ethanolic H₂SO₄, which contained 0.1% of anisaldehyde, followed by heating to 120 °C.

The composition of the product mixture was established by GC. This analysis was performed on a CP03380 instrument (Varian, Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA). The temperature program, which was used in GC analysis on the THERMO TR-5 (cross-linked 5% phenyl polysiloxane) capillary column (30 m × 0.32 mm × 1.0 μm), was as follows: Injector 250 °C, detector (FID) 300 °C, column temperature: 100 °C (hold 2 min), 100–200 °C (rate 20 °C/min), 200–300 °C (rate 40 °C/min), 300 °C (hold 1 min). To determine the enantiomeric excess of indan-1-ol, GC analysis was performed using the chiral column Gamma DEX™ 325 (30 m × 0.25 mm × 0.25 μm, Supelco) under the following conditions: Injector 150 °C, detector (FID) 200 °C, column temperature: 110 °C (hold 35 min), 110–200 °C (rate 25 °C/min), 200 °C (hold 1 min).

3.4. Procedure of Preparative Biotransformation

Preparative biotransformations were performed in the same way as screening. Fresh, healthy and undamaged vegetables and fruit were ground after thorough washing. To each of the 10 Erlenmeyer flasks with a volume of 300 mL, 20 mL of ground catalyst was metered, and 50 mL of phosphate buffer poured. To each of the samples, 20 μL of the substrate dissolved in 200 μL of acetone, was added. After 48 h the reaction mixtures were extracted with 50 mL of ethyl acetate. The chloroform layer was then carefully collected and dried using anhydrous MgSO₄. The resulting solution was filtered and concentrated in a vacuum evaporator.

The products of biotransformation were purified by using preparative column chromatography, which was performed on silica gel (Kieselgel 60, 230–400 mesh ASTM, Merck) with a mixture of hexane and acetone in various ratios as the eluent.

The structure of the obtained product was determined on the basis of physicochemical data **1** compared with the literature data [45]. ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded in a DMSO solution on a Bruker Avance DRX 600 MHz.

¹H NMR (600 MHz, DMSO): δ: 1.75–1.81 (m, 1H, H-2), 2.34–2.33 (m, 1H, H-2), 2.70–2.73 (m, 1H, H-3), 2.89–2.91 (m, 1H, H-3), 3.41 (s-broad, 1H, OH), 5.05 (t, 1H, H-1, J = 6.0 Hz), 7.18–7.23 (m, 2H, Ar), 7.33–7.39 (m, 2H, Ar), ¹³C NMR δ: 29.3 (C-2), 35.9 (C-3), 74.8 (C-1), 124.6, 124.9, 126.6, 127.8 (C4,5,6,7), 143.0 (C-8), 146.8 (C-9).

Based on the literature data [46] and the measured rotation, the configuration was assigned to the R isomer: (R)-indan-1-ol: $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -39.3$ (c1, CHCl₃): ($[\alpha]_D^{23} = -35.2$ (c1.05, CHCl₃) lit [46]).

3.5. Investigation of Biotransformation over Time

In order to verify the course of the indan-1-ol biotransformation over time, the reaction was terminated after 1, 2, 5, 21, 24, 28 h. The enzymatic system of the Jerusalem artichoke was used as the biocatalyst.

4. Conclusions

Indanol enantiomers can find versatile use as chirons in the organic synthesis of other useful compounds. In this work, we carried out biotransformation using plant catalysts to obtain indanol isomers with a high enantiomeric excess. We tested the ability of our catalysts to perform both stereoselective reduction and oxidation. Reduction of indan-1-one was found catalyzed by only six of the eleven plant catalysts under analysis. The reaction was highly stereoselective, allowing the pure S-(+)-indanol enantiomer to be obtained, but conversion was low, i.e., up to 8.5% in the case of *D. carota*, for instance. For this reason, we decided to study the ability of plant catalysts to perform a stereoselective oxidation of racemic indan-1-ol. All catalysts were able to carry out this reaction. The conversion rate was higher than in the case of reduction; however, in most cases transformation was at low stereoselectivity, except for the Jerusalem artichoke, in which conversion reached 99.5 and the pure R-(-)-enantiomer remained in the reaction mixture. Investigation of this biotransformation over time has enabled to establish that as early as after one hour of transformation, the S-(+) alcohol enantiomer totally reacts, leaving the second (R-(-)-) enantiomer intact.

Author Contributions: W.M. conceived, designed the experiments and analyzed the data, W.M. and K.W. performed the experiments, W.M., K.W. and M.G. wrote the paper, M.G. analyzed the NMR spectrum of products, R.G.—confirmed botanical compatibility.

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