A New Approach to the Stereospecific Total Synthesis of Racemic *Cecropia* Juvenile Hormone†

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Summary 4-Methyl-5,6-dihydro-2*H*-thiopyran and its dimer (**4**) are used as structural units for the synthesis of C_{18}-juvenile hormone.

WE describe herein a new and economically feasible method for the stereospecific synthesis[1] of a racemic *Cecropia* juvenile hormone (C_{18}-J.H.), based on condensation of dihydrothiopyrans. The structure of C_{18}-J.H. can be divided into three structural units (A)—(C). The configuration of two ethyl groups in units (A) and (B) might be retained if they were blocked with two sulphur atoms [see (A′) and (B′)]. These blocking atoms could easily be removed by reductive desulphurization.

A key intermediate, the thiopyran (**4**), was synthesised by two methods. Condensation of tetrahydrothiopyran-4-one[2] with dimethyloxosulphonium methylide afforded the epoxide (**2**)‡ (65%), m.p. 52°. The carbanion prepared from the thiopyran (**1**)[3] and Bu^nLi in the presence of 2,3-diazabicyclo[2,2,2]octane (DABCO) was treated with the epoxide (**2**) in THF at −20° and the resulting adduct was further dehydrated with $SOCl_2$–pyridine to give the desired dimeric dihydrothiopyran (**4**) [73% based on (**2**)],

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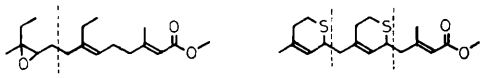
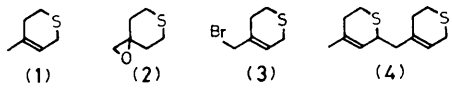
‡ All new compounds gave satisfactory elemental analyses and i.r. and n.m.r. spectra consistent with the assigned structures.

b.p. 85° at 0·2 mmHg. The other method was based on the condensation of (**1**) with (**3**), which was prepared from tetrahydrothiopyran-4-one by treatment with HCN, followed by solvolysis with EtOH, dehydration, reduction, and bromination with PBr_3.

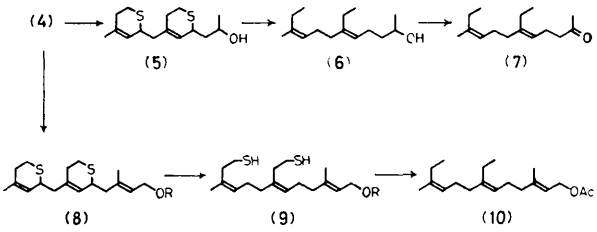




Attachment of the final unit (C) and the removal of the blocking sulphur atoms were carried out by the following routes.

Route A: The dimer (**4**) was converted into a carbanion by treatment with Bu^nLi–DABCO and was then treated with propylene oxide to afford the alcohol (**5**) (84%). Reductive desulphurization of (**5**) by treatment with metallic Li in ethylamine[4] at −20° produced the dodecadienol (**6**) (60%), b.p. 97—98° at 0·45 mmHg. Oxidation of the alcohol (**6**) with Jones reagent yielded the ketone (**7**) (85%), b.p. 98—99° at 1·5 mmHg, which was further transformed into deoxy C_{18}-J.H. by condensation with diethyl methoxycarbonylmethylphosphonate.[5] Epoxidation[6] of the ester gave racemic J.H., which was identical spectroscopically with natural J.H.[7]

Route B: The carbanion of dimer (**4**) was condensed with *trans*-4-chloro-3-methylbut-2-enyl tetrahydropyranyl ether, prepared from isoprene,[8] to yield the triene (**8**; R = THP) (60%). The trienol (**8**; R = H) was treated with Li in ethylamine at −70° and the resulting dithio-alcohol (**9**; R = H) was converted into the corresponding acetate (**9**; R = Ac) (80%). Final desulphurization of (**9**; R = Ac) was achieved by treatment with excess of deactivated Raney nickel (W-2/acetone) to give the acetate (**10**) as a colourless oil (55%), b.p. 115° at 0·15 mmHg. Deoxy-C_{18}-J.H. obtained from (**10**) by the method of Corey *et al.*[9] was identical spectroscopically with that prepared from the ketone (**7**).



C_{18}-J.H. can thus be obtained with 100% stereospecificity at C-6 and C-10 and 95% or more at C-2[10] by route A, and with complete stereospecificity by route B.

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