

Stereoselective Synthesis of Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids *via* Substituted Nitrones

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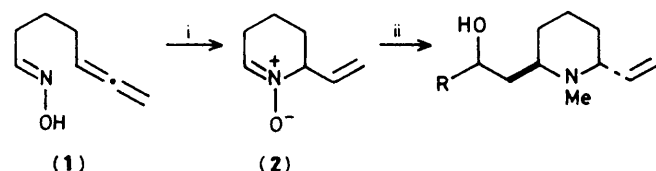
The 3,5-disubstituted pyrrolizidine alkaloid (**8**) has been synthesised using, as a key step, the cyclisation of the allenic oxime *E*-(**3**) to generate a 5-substituted nitrone (**4**); under the same cyclisation conditions *Z*-(**3**) reacts *via* oxygen to give (**9**).

Nitrones, as a class of 1,3-dipoles, have increasingly proved to be valuable intermediates in the construction of a diverse range of alkaloids.¹ Although heterocyclic nitrones, especially unsubstituted examples, have also found applications in this area, general access to a variety of these cyclic dipoles is more limited. For example, oxidation of *N*-hydroxy-2-substituted piperidines or pyrrolidines with mercury(II) oxide is prone to give a mixture of isomeric nitrones.² A lack of regioselectivity in this oxidation step is the major shortcoming of using substituted nitrones of this type.³

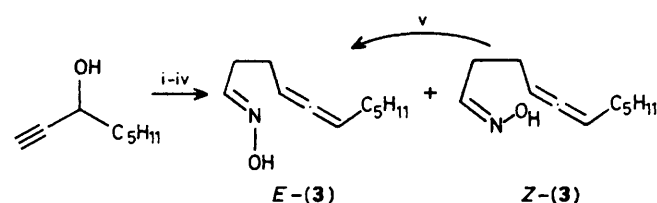
The silver(I)-catalysed cyclisation of ω -allenic oximes [e.g. (**1**)] does, however, provide a route to isomerically pure cyclic nitrones.^{4†} Intermediates such as (**2**) have been trapped by various 1,3-dipolarophiles to give, ultimately, *trans*-2,6-disubstituted piperidines (Scheme 1).⁵

We now report that this methodology is also of value in the construction of *trans*-2,5-disubstituted pyrrolidines and this has been illustrated by a stereoselective synthesis of 3 α ,5 α ,7 $\alpha\beta$ -hexahydro-3-heptyl-5-methyl-1*H*-pyrrolizine (**8**). This unusual pyrrolizidine alkaloid was isolated from *Solenopsis xenoveneum* (a variety of thief ant) and has been assumed to be a component of the ant's venom.⁶

The racemic allenic oxime *E*-(**3**) was prepared, in five steps, from oct-1-yn-3-ol as a readily separable mixture of *E*- and *Z*-isomers (Scheme 2).‡ The efficiency of this sequence was



Scheme 1. Reagents: i, AgBF₄, CH₂Cl₂, 20 °C, 2 h; ii, (a) RCH=CH₂, (b) MeI, (c) LiAlH₄.



Scheme 2. Reagents: MeC(OEt)₃, pivalic acid, 110 °C, 15 h (77%); ii, LiAlH₄, ether, -60 to 20 °C over 30 min (97%); iii, *p*-MeC₆H₄-SO₂Cl, pyridine, 0 °C, then KCN, Me₂SO, 75 °C, 2.5 h (78%); iv, Bu₂AlH, ether, 20 °C, 1 h and quenched with NH₂OH·HCl, NaOAc, H₂O (76%); v, chloroform, overnight, silica chromatography.

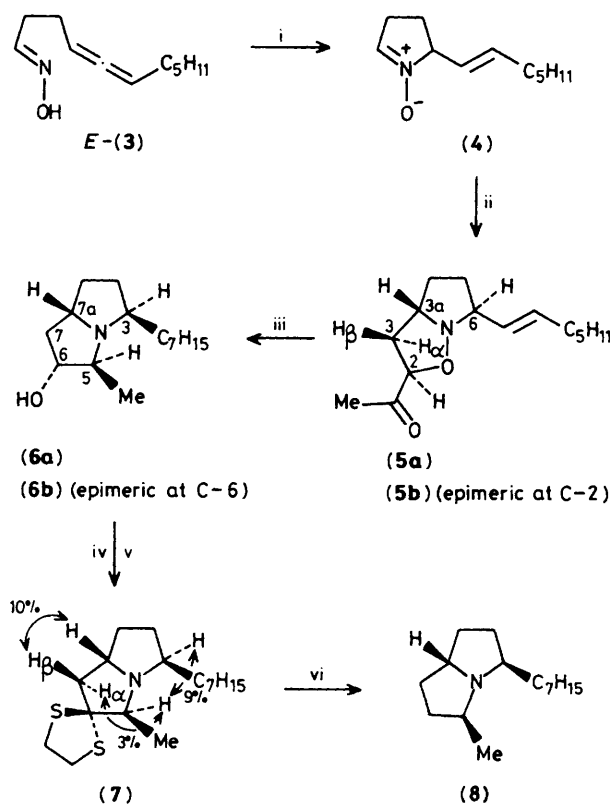
† The oxidation of isoxazolidines, with *m*-chloroperoxybenzoic acid, provides a valuable source of isomerically pure cyclic nitrones. See ref. 1 and N. A. LeBel, M. E. Post, and D. Hwang, *J. Org. Chem.*, 1979, **44**, 1819.

‡ All new compounds gave satisfactory spectral (i.r., ¹H n.m.r.) and high resolution mass data. All ¹H n.m.r. spectra refer to 400 MHz (CDCl₃).

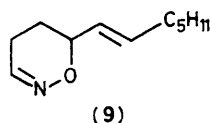
improved by recycling *Z*-(**3**), by allowing a chloroform solution of *Z*-(**3**) to stand overnight. This resulted in a 1:1 equilibrium mixture of *E*- and *Z*-(**3**) which were once again separated by flash chromatography.

Cyclisation of *E*-(**3**) with a catalytic amount of silver tetrafluoroborate gave the 5-substituted nitrone (**4**) which was trapped with methyl vinyl ketone to give (**5a**)/(**5b**) (48% yield) as a 1:1 mixture of isomers (Scheme 3). The structure of (**5a**) was established by ¹H n.m.r. spectroscopy [nuclear Overhauser enhancement (n.O.e.) difference]. Irradiation of 2-H (δ 4.44, t, *J* 7.6 Hz) showed an enhancement of both 3 α -H (5%, δ 2.17, ddd, *J* 4.6, 8.0, and 12.6 Hz) and 6-H (4%, δ 3.60, m) and irradiation of 3 α -H resulted in enhancement of 3 β -H (4.5%, δ 2.46, ddd, *J* 7.0, 8.0, and 12.6 Hz). The stereochemical assignment at C-6 of (**5b**) could not be unambiguously determined but the *trans* relationship between C-3 α and C-6 was confirmed by subsequent transformation of (**5b**) to (**7**).

Hydrogenation of (**5a**) and (**5b**) resulted in (i) reduction of the unwanted double bond; (ii) N-O bond cleavage; and (iii) an intramolecular reductive amination to give (**6a**) and (**6b**)



Scheme 3. Reagents: i, AgBF₄, CH₂Cl₂, 20 °C, 3 h; ii, MeC(:O)CH=CH₂, tetrahydrofuran, 20 °C, 15 h [48% from *E*-(**3**)]; iii, H₂, PdCl₂, ethanol, 20 °C, 18 h (76%); iv, Jones reagent, acetone, 1.5 h, followed by HSCH₂CH₂SH, BF₃·Et₂O, CH₂Cl₂, 20 °C, 2.5 h (48%); v, W-2 Raney Ni, ethanol, 40 min (61%).



respectively (76% yield). Jones oxidation of each of these alcohols gave the same unstable ketone [ν_{\max} (film) 1740 cm^{-1}] which was immediately converted into the 1,3-dithiolane (7) [48% from (6a)/(6b)]. The structure of (7) is consistent with its spectral parameters [δ 3.62 (1H, m, 7a-H), 3.28—3.18 (4H, m, $\text{SCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{S}$), 2.98 (1H, q, J 6.2 Hz, 5-H), 2.70 (1H, m, 3-H), 2.50 (1H, dd, J 6.2 and 12.3 Hz, 3 β -H), 1.99 (1H, dd, J 9.4 and 12.3 Hz, 3 α -H), 2.03—1.90 (2H, m, 1 β - and 2 α -H), 1.54—1.41 (3H, m), 1.30—1.19 (11H, m), 1.21 (3H, d, J 6.2 Hz, 5-Me), and 0.86 (3H, t, J 7 Hz)]. The important nuclear Overhauser enhancements that were observed for (7) are also shown in Scheme 3. Desulphurisation of (7) gave (\pm)-(8) in 61% yield and the spectral data (i.r., mass, ^1H and ^{13}C n.m.r.) of synthetic (8) were identical to those previously reported.⁶

We have also examined the reaction of Z-(3) with silver(I). In this case a clean cyclisation (AgBF_4 , CH_2Cl_2 , 20°C, 2 h) was observed to give (9) [90% yield, ν_{\max} (film) 1660 and 1615 cm^{-1} ; δ 7.23 (1H, m), 5.80 (1H, dtd, J 0.9, 7.0, and 15.3 Hz), 5.49 (1H, tdd, J 1.5, 7.0, and 15.3 Hz), 4.20 (1H, ddd, J 2.3, 7.0, and 10.0 Hz), 2.35—1.70 (6H, m), 1.45—1.20 (6H, m), and 0.89 (3H, t, J 7 Hz)]. This is in contrast to the piperidine case illustrated in Scheme 1, in which cyclisation of the oxime, *via* oxygen, to generate a seven membered ring was

not observed. Both *E*- and *Z*-(1) serve as precursors of the nitron (2) presumably as a result of slow isomerisation of *Z*-(1) to *E*-(1) under the reaction conditions.

We thank Drs. O. Howarth and E. Curzon of Warwick University for high field ^1H n.m.r. spectra and the S.E.R.C. for generous financial support.

Received, 14th March 1986; Com. 335

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