121. Diastereoface Selectivity During Phthalimidonitrene Additions to (E)- and (Z)-Configurated α,β -Unsaturated Esters, Induced by a Chiral Center in the γ -Position

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In-situ-generated phthalimidonitrene was added to five α,β -unsaturated esters containing a chiral secondary O-function at $C(\gamma)$. The additions were fully suprafacial, inasmuch as the (*E*)-isomers 1 afforded only the *trans*-aziridines 2 and 3 ($J(\beta,\gamma) = 4.8-5.1$ Hz) and the (*Z*)-isomers 4 only the *cis*-aziridines 5 and 6 (8.2–8.5 Hz). The products 2, 3, 5, and 6 where shown to possess the *arabino-*, *xylo-*, *ribo-*, and *lyxo-* configuration, respectively, by X-ray structure analysis of 2b, 2d, and 6a. The disastereoface selectivity of the nitrene additions, induced by the chiral substructure around $C(\gamma)$, resulted in more 2 than 3 from 1, but more 6 than 5 from 4, which means that the preference of attack at the double bond switches from one side to the other depending on the C=C configuration. The preferences were higher at lower temperature. The aziridines 2a, 2d, and 3d exhibit ¹H-NMR-visible isomerism at the ring N-atom; the major (78–95%) invertomer A is always the one with the phthalimido group in *trans*-position to the (larger) substructure around C(γ). The other aziridines only show ¹H-NMR signals of one invertomer, which – by steric reasoning – ought to be A; this is confirmed by a ¹H-NMR argument for 3a, 5a, 6a, 5c, and 6c.

1. Introduction. – With the aim of developing model concepts for asymmetric induction [1], much work has been done concerning the preferred side (diastereoface selectivity) from which a C=O bond in an acyclic system (see I) is attacked under the influence of an adjacent chiral center [2]. Less information is available concerning the diastereoface selectivity of attacks on a C=O bond in an acyclic system (see II or III) under the influence of such a chiral center [3]. An interesting aspect of the latter situation is the effect on the selectivity by the configuration of the double bond [4] [5]. The two situations are more comparable when the C=C bond is conjugated to a C=O group (A = C=O in II and III), *i.e.* when the chiral center is in vinylogous position to the carbonyl C-atom [5] [6]. The chiral center most frequently present in such cases is a C-atom with a secondary O-function [4-8]. We describe here some other examples of this type, namely nitrene additions to α,β -unsaturated esters containing secondary ether functions at C(γ). We met this problem during exploratory efforts to obtain *arabino*-L-pentonic-acid derivative IV (*cf.* [9] [10]) as an intermediate for a synthesis of streptolidine V, which is an essential component of the streptothrycin antibiotics [11].



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2. Nitrene Additions. – In eight experiments, run in CH_2Cl_2 , phthalimidonitrene (PhtNN), generated *in situ* from N-aminophthalimide (PhtNNH₂) with Pb(OAc)₄ [12] [13], was added to the double bond of five α,β -unsaturated esters **1a**, **b**, **d** ((*E*)-configuration) and **4a**, **c** ((*Z*)-configuration), all carrying an H- and O-atom, as well as a CH₂O group at the chirality center C(γ). In all cases, N-phthalimidoaziridines were formed, namely **2a**, **b**, **d**, **3a**, **b**, **d**, **5a**, **c**, and **6a**, **c**, in 72–97% yield for the (*E*)- and 47–64% yield for the (*Z*)-series (see Schemes and Table 1). Evidence for their configurations are given in Chapt. 3. When 1.1 mol-equiv. each of PhtNNH₂ and Pb(OAc)₄ were used, the nitrene addition was incomplete³), but usually most of the unreacted unsaturated ester was recovered. The (*E*)-isomers **1** led only to the arabino- and xylo-products **2** and **3**,



³) This is probably due to the competing side reaction of PhtNN with PhtNNH₂[13]. With 2.2 mol-equiv. each of PhtNNH₂ and Pb(OAc)₄, the isolated yield of 1a/2a was 79% [14].

Starting material (E)	Temp. [°C] ^a)	1 (recovered) [%]	2 (arabino) ^b) [%]	3 (xylo)°) [%]	Ratio 2/3
1a (S)	0	39	45	14	3.1:1
1a (S)	-40	31	57	2	30:1
$1b(RS)^d$	0	39	46 ^e)	14	3.3:1
$1b(RS)^{d}$	-38	38	58	0.2 ^f)	290:1
$1d(RS)^d$	0	25	36 ^e)	18	2:1
Starting material (Z)	Temp. [°C]ª)	4 (recovered) [%]	5 (ribo) ^g) [%]	6 (lyxo) ^h) [%]	Ratio 5/6
4a (S)	0	67	9	12	1:1.3
4a (S)	-40	81	4	8	1:2
4c (S)	0	53	11	11	1:1

Table 1. Reactions of α,β -Unsaturated Esters 1 and 4 with Phtalimidonitrene

^a) Temperature of the nitrene generation and addition.

^b) Result of $(\alpha si, \beta si)$ -attack (major).

^c) Result of $(\alpha re, \beta re)$ -attack.

^d) For comparison, these racemic samples are represented as (*yS*)-enantiomers.

^e) Structures of **2b**, **2d**, and **6a** from an X-ray analysis.

¹) Detected in the mother liquor material after crystallization of 26.

^g) Result of $(\alpha re, \beta si)$ -attack.

^h) Result of $(\alpha si, \beta re)$ -attack.

respectively, and the (Z)-isomers 4 furnished only the *ribo*- and *lyxo*-products 5 and 6, respectively.

Thus, all the nitrene additions were – as expected [15] – fully stereoselective at $C(\alpha)$ relative to $C(\beta)$, namely suprafacial. The diastereoface selectivity (in the following short: selectivity) at $C(\beta)$ relative to $C(\gamma)$, which is the subject of this paper, favored the *arabino*-(($\alpha si, \beta si$)-attack) over the *xylo*-products (($\alpha re, \beta re$)-attack) in the (*E*)-series 1 by a factor from > 2:1 at 0° up to *ca*. 300:1 at -40° (see 2/3, *Table 1*). In the (*Z*)-series 4, there was a smaller selectivity, which preferred the *lyxo*- (($\alpha si, \beta re$)-attack) over the *ribo*-isomers (($\alpha re, \beta si$)-attack) by < 1.2:1 at 0° and by 2:1 at -40° (see 5/6, *Table 1*).

Our optically active starting materials **1a**, **4a**, and **4c** as well as the derived products have the (γS) -configuration. For the sake of visual comparison, we represent the racemic compounds **1b** and **1d** also by the (γS) -enantiomers; the same is true for the products obtained from them⁵).

In the experiments with 1a, b ((*E*)-configuration) and 4a, c ((*Z*)-configuration), the chiral induction is due to the 1,3-dioxolan-4-yl unit; the structures (aside from the configurations) of the starting materials differ only in the ester group (Me vs. Et vs. t-Bu). In the (*E*)-series 1, the (γS)-configuration causes the nitrene to attack the (αsi , βsi)-side of the C=C bond in preference over the (αre , βre)-side by a factor of ca. 3:1 at 0° and ca. 300:1 at -40°. In the (*Z*)-series 4, the same unit causes the (αsi , βre)-attack to exceed the (αre , βsi)-attack ca. twofold at -40°. We note that the preferred attack at C(β), the prochiral center adjacent to the inducing chiral substructure around C(γ), switches to the

⁴⁾ Care was taken to avoid purification procedures which might discriminate between the diastereoisomers.

⁵) Our experiments were not designed to critically evaluate an enantiomeric excess effect (EE-effect) [16] involving the racemic samples (1b, 1d) as compared to the enantiomerically pure ones (1a, 4a, 4c), cf. Chapt. 6.

other side when the configuration of the C=C bond is changed. In the starting material **1d**, the inducing chiral substructure around $C(\gamma)$ is the oxiran-2-yl unit. The selectivity is nevertheless in the same direction, inasmuch as the (γS) -configuration also induces the nitrene to attack the $(\alpha si, \beta si)$ -side of this (*E*)-configurated C=C bond in preference over the $(\alpha re, \beta re)$ -side, in this case by a factor of *ca.* 2:1 at 0°.

3. Configurations. -3.1. Starting Materials. Most of the α,β -unsaturated esters 1 and 2 have been prepared and configurationally assigned previously in racemic or optically active form, or as another ester (see *Exper. Part*, for hitherto unknown samples). The configurations at the C=C bond follow from the 'H-NMR spectra $(J(\alpha, \beta) = 15-16$ Hz, for (*E*)-isomers 1 and $J(\alpha, \beta) = 10-11$ Hz for (*Z*)-isomers 4⁶)) and the absolute configurations of the (*S*)-enantiomers 1a, 4a, and 4c from their preparation from (*R*)-2,3-*O*-isopropylideneglyceraldehyde. The enantiomeric excesses (ee values) of 1a and 4a were determined to be > 98% by capillary GC using an optically active stationary phase (calibrated in the case of 1a). Since 4c was made by the same reaction from the same starting material as 1a and 4a, its ee value was also taken to be > 98%. The racemic samples 1b and 1d stemmed from *rac*-2,3-*O*-isopropylideneglyceraldehyde and from (achiral) methyl (2*E*)-penta-2,4-dienoate, respectively.

3.2. *Products.* The spectral properties of the nitrene-addition products of this work, the aziridines **2**, **3**, **5**, and **6**, are highly characteristic; all the relevant signals in the ¹H-NMR spectra can be identified unequivocally (see *Table 2*). They show the α,β -transconfiguration at the aziridine ring in the *arabino*- and the *xylo*-isomers **2** and **3** $(J(\alpha,\beta) = 4.5-5.0 \text{ Hz})$ as well as the α,β -cis-configuration in the *ribo*- and the *lyxo*-isomers **5** and **6** $(J(\alpha,\beta) = 8.0-8.3 \text{ Hz})$; cf. [17]. This, together with the known configuration at the C=C bond in the starting materials, independently confirms the suprafaciality of the nitrene additions.

Concerning the β , γ -configurations of our products (the feature of major interest of this paper) our arguments are based on the *arabino*-configuration of **2b** and **2d** and on the *lyxo*-configuration of **6a**, all of which were established by X-ray structure analysis (see *Chapt. 5*). This, together with the above conclusions on the α , β -configurations, also fixes the *xylo*-configuration of **3b** and **3d** as well as the *ribo*-configuration of **5a**. We then note that each of our other aziridines shows a remarkable ¹H-NMR similarity with one of the already assigned samples, namely **2a** with **2b**, **3a** with **3b**, **5c** with **5a**, and **6c** with **6a** (see *Table 2*). Thus, there can be no doubt about the *arabino*-, *xylo*-*ribo*-, and *lyxo*-configuration in compounds of this type may be the size of $J(\beta, \gamma)$, inasmuch as it is larger (by $\Delta J = 1.3$ to 3.5 Hz, see *Table 2*) in the *arabino*- or *ribo*-isomers (**2** or **5**) than in the *xylo*- or *lyxo*-isomers (**3** or **6**).

4. X-Ray Structure Analyses. – The results of the X-ray structure analyses of 2b, 2d, and 6a are shown in the $Figure^{7}$)⁸). Each of these three compounds was the major isomer

⁶) We note that $J(\beta,\gamma)$ in the two stereoisomeric series 1 and 4 do not differ greatly (5.5–7.3 Hz). This suggests that the preferred conformation around the $C(\beta)-C(\gamma)$ bond is either not strongly affected, or then rotated roughly around 180°, by the difference in interactions due to the *cis*- as compared to the *trans*-position of the ROOC group with respect to $C(\gamma)$, even when R = t-Bu.

⁷) These results were obtained in our X-ray structure laboratory by Dr. *R. Prewo*, who expects to publish the details separately.

⁸) The optically active **6a** is known to have the (γS) -configuration from its synthesis.

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	arabino	_		olyx	-	ribo		lyxo		arabino		xylo	
	2a (R =	Me)	$2b^{c}$ (R = Et)	3a (R = Me)	$\mathbf{3b}\left(\mathbf{R}=\mathbf{Et}\right)$	5a (R = Mc)) $5c (R = t - Bu)$	6a ^c) (R = Me)	6c (R = t - Bu)	2d ^c) (R =	= Me)	3d (R =	Me)
	•	B q)	V	Y	V	V	V	A	¥	V	B ^c)	A	B ^f)
δ (R) [ppm]	3.71	3.85	4.14, 1.28	3.69	4.13, 1.25	3.86	1.56	3.84	1.54	3.71	3.84	3.73	3.86
δ (H–C(α)) [ppm]	3.36		3.35	3.43	3.43	3.34	3.27	3.42	3.30	3.31	3.54	3.34	
$J(\alpha, \beta)$ [Hz]	4.8		4.8	4.9	5.0	8.2	8.3	8.5	8.5	4.9	5.1	5.0	
$\delta (H-C(\beta)) [ppm]$	3.50		3.53	3.56	3.57	3.01	2.95	3.29	3.26	3.52	3.37	3.64	
$J(\beta, \gamma)$ [Hz]	6.9		7.0	3.4	3.5	8.2	8.4	6.9	6.5	4.5	1.8	2.9	
$\delta(H-C(y))$ [ppm]	4.06		4.06	4.53	4.54	4.32-4.24	4.27	4.44	4.44	3.27	3.47–3.46	3.39	
	(br. q)		(br. q)	(ppp)	(ppp)	(<i>m</i>)	(<i>m</i>)	<i>(b)</i>	(<i>b</i>)	(ppp)	(<i>m</i>)	(ppp)	
$\delta(H-C(\delta))$ [ppm]	4.42,		4.44,	4.29,	4.30,	4.69-4.63	4.34,	4.10,	4.08,	2.98,	2.81,	2.98,	
	4.28		4.29	4.22	4.24		4.50	4.00	3.91	2.90	2.55	2.92	
^a) Measured in	CDCl ₃ at	r.t.											
\mathbf{b} A and B repre	sent the in	nverto	mers at the azin	idine N-atom	1, A being the I	najor and B	the minor one (;	see Table 3). W	'here only one in	vertomer	is mentioned	, only on	e was

Table 2. Some Characteristic ¹H-NMR Data of the arabino-, xylo-, ribo-, and lyxo-Isomers 2, 3, 5, and 6, Respectively^a)^b

detected in the ¹H-NMR.

Structure confirmed by X-ray analysis. A/B = 95:5. A/B = 78:22. A/B = 93:7.

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Figure. Stereopictures of the X-ray structures of the aziridines **2b**, **2d**, and **6a**. Only one enantiomer, namely the (γS) -form of racemic **2b** and **2d**, is shown.

(of two) obtained from an (*E*)-configurated dioxolanyl- (1b), from an (*E*)-configurated oxiranyl- (1d), and from a (*Z*)-configurated dioxolanyl derivative (4a), respectively. The X-ray analyses establish not only the constitution of these aziridines but also the *arabino*-configuration of 2b and 2d and the *lyxo*-configuration of 6a. The *Figure* also shows the preferred conformations around the $C(\beta)-C(\gamma)$ bond in the crystals of 2b, 2d, and 6a, but correlations with the conformations in solutions, as expressed by the ¹H-NMR $J(\beta, \gamma)$ values, and of the latter with the β, γ -configuration is not immediately obvious⁹). In *Chapt. 5*, we shall show that the conformation at the $C(\beta)-C(\gamma)$ bond may depend on the configuration at the stereogenic (pyramidal) aziridine N-atom.

The pyramidality and configuration at the aziridine ring N-atom is also revealed by the X-ray analyses: the PhtN substituent in the crystals of **2b**, **2d**, and **6a** is always *trans*-configurated with respect to the substructure around $C(\gamma)$. Evidence for the generality of this effect in our samples will be presented in *Chapt. 5*.

5. Invertomers. – In CDCl₃ solution, the aziridine 2d exists as two N-invertomers¹⁰), 2dA and 2dB, in the ratio of *ca*. 3:1; almost all ¹H-NMR signals of both invertomers can be seen separately (see *Table 3*). Freshly dissolved crystalline 2d contained 2dA and 2dB in a *ca*. 10:1 ratio, which turned to *ca*. 3:1, the equilibrium, after a few minutes at r.t. Thus, the configuration at the aziridine N-atom of 2dA corresponds to the one found in the crystal of 2d (see the *Fig.*, *b*), where the PhtN group is *trans*-configurated to the oxiranyl residue. Evidently, the PhtN residue is repulsed somewhat more by the oxiranyl group in 2d than by the COOMe group. As noted by *Atkinson* and coworkers [18], a PhtN group on an aziridine magnetically shields the MeO protons of a *cis*-located vicinal COOMe group (3.68–3.70 ppm) more than those of a *trans*-located one (3.84–3.85 ppm), but it deshields vicinal protons in *cis*- more than in *trans*-position ($\Delta \delta = 0.4$ –0.6 ppm). Accordingly, we find in the ¹H-NMR spectrum of 2d the MeO signal at 3.71 ppm for 2dA *vs.* at 3.84 ppm for 2dB, the H–C(α) signal at 3.31 ppm for 2dA *vs.* at 3.54 ppm for 2dB, and the H–C(β) signal at 3.52 ppm for 2dA *vs.* at 3.37 ppm for 2dB.

For 3d and 2a, a minor invertomer B (7% and 5%) could also be detected in the ¹H-NMR, besides the major A (see *Table 3*). Both A's exhibit MeO signals at 3.73 and 3.71 ppm (COOMe/PhtN *cis* or C(γ)/PhtN *trans*), while both B's absorb at 3.86 (7%) and 3.85 ppm (5%).

The methyl esters **3a**, **5a**, and **6a** appear to exist as only one invertomer, since only one MeO signal is visible (see *Table 3*). In the α , β -trans-aziridine **3a**, the MeO signal at 3.69 ppm indicates the COOMe/PhtN *cis*-relationship and thus identifies **3a** as the **A** invertomer. In the α , β -*cis*-aziridines **5a** and **6a**, on the other hand, the MeO signal is at 3.86 and 3.84 ppm, respectively, corresponding to a COOMe/PhtN *trans*-configuration and thus identifies **5a** and **6a** also as the **A** invertomers.

⁹) Of the two X-rayed arabino-aziridines with the larger J(β,γ) values (2b 7.0, 2d 4.9 Hz) as compared to their ribo-isomers (3b 3.5, 3d 2.9 Hz), we find the H-atoms at C(β) and C(γ) in crystalline 2b to be antiperiplanar (Fig., a), in crystalline 2d, however, synclinal (Fig., b). The lyxo-aziridine 6a with its synclinal H-atoms at C(β) and C(γ) in the crystal (Fig., c), on the other hand, exhibits a J(β,γ) value (6.9 Hz) not so much smaller than its ribo-isomer 5a (8.5 Hz).

¹⁰) The invertomers mentioned here are due to different pyramidal arrangements around the N-atom of the aziridine ring (see *Table 3*). The prefixes *cis* and *trans* refer to the relative positions of the PhtN group and the C(y) substructure. The *trans*-invertomer, always the more abundant one, is called A, the *cis*-invertomer B.

\mathbf{E}^{1}	NPht N-	inversion P (minor)	E ¹ N E ² NPht	
A (major)		B (minor)	A	В
α,β -trans-Series (E ¹ = COOMe, E ² = H)	2a 3a 2d 3d	$(X = -OCMe_2 -)$ $(X = -OCMe_2 -)$ (X = -) (X = -)	3.71 (95%) 3.69 (100%) 3.71 (78%) 3.73 (93%)	3.85 (5%) none 3.84 (12%) 3.86 (7%)
α,β -cis-Series (E ¹ = H, E ² = COOMe)	5a 6a	$(X = -OCMe_2 -)$ $(X = -OCMe_2 -)$	3.86 (100 %) 3.84 (100 %)	none none

 Table 3. ¹H-NMR Signal [ppm] of the MeO Group in the N-Invertomers of the Methyl Aziridinecarboxylates 2a, 3a, 2d, 3d, and 5a

The greater repulsion exerted on the PhtN group by the substructure around $C(\gamma)$ than by the COOMe group should also apply to the Et and *t*-Bu esters **2b**, **3b**, **5c**, and **6c**. Since they produce just one set of ¹H-NMR signals each, they should also exist as invertomer **A** only. This is supported for **5c** and **6c** by the chemical shifts of the *t*-Bu groups (1.54 and 1.56 ppm), which agree with the values given in [18] for the COO(*t*-Bu)/PhtN *trans*-invertomers of *N*-phthalimdoaziridines (1.53–1.56 ppm) but not with the corresponding *cis*-invertomers (1.33–1.38 ppm). The *Atkinson* effect is not visible with H–C(β) of our aziridines, possibly because it is obscured by conformational variances at the C(β)–C(γ) bond, as is suggested by the *J*(β , γ) values shown in *Table 2*. Of interest in this connection is the difference in the *J*(β , γ) values are not available for the invertomers **B** of our other aziridines.

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Experimental Part

General. See [10]. Reagent-grade solvents (*Fluka*, Merck) were dried over molecular sieves (3 Å, *Fluka*). Pb(OAc)₄ was freed from AcOH *in vacuo* at r.t. Anal. TLC: Al foil coated with silica gel 60 F (Merck); detection by UV (254 nm) or by spraying with 50% H₂SO₄ soln. followed by heating. GC: Hewlett Packard 5880A with capillary column BP-5, 25 m. M.p.: Mettler FP 5. $[\alpha]_{J_1}^T$: Perkin Elmer 241 polarimeter, c in g/100 ml. ¹H-NMR spectra of enantiomerically pure compounds are described even though these data have already been reported for the racemic mixture, and vice versa, because it is known [19], that pure enantiomers and racemic mixtures do not need to exhibit exactly the same chemical shifts.

1. Methyl (2E)- and (2Z)-3-[(4S)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]prop-2-enoate (1a and 4a, resp.). 1.1. In CH₂Cl₂. As described in [20] [21] for the racemic mixture, 1a/4a were prepared from (R)-2,3-O-isopropylidenegly-ceraldehyde and [(methoxycarbonyl)methylidene]triphenylphosphorane in CH₂Cl₂ as a crude 4:1 mixture (GC). Lobar chromatography (AcOEt/hexane 15:85) afforded 1a (65%) and 4a (17%), both as colorless oils, each > 98% pure by GC.

Data of 1a: $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = +45$ (c = 1.125, CHCl₃; [6j]: +33.6° (c = 10, CDCl₃)). ¹H-NMR (J(H-C(2), H-C(3)) = 16.5 Hz) and IR : identical with those of the (2*E*)-isomer 1a reported in [6j].

Data of $4a: [\alpha]_{25}^{25} = +122 (c = 1.25, CHCl_3)$. IR: identical with that of the racemic mixture [21]. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl_3): 6.38 (dd, J = 11.6, 6.6, H-C(3)); 5.86 (dd, J = 11.6, 1.7, H-C(2)); 5.50 (dddd, J = 6.9, 6.7, 6.6, 1.7, H-C(4')); 4.39 (dd, J = 8.3, 6.9, H-C(5')); 3.72 (s, MeO); 3.62 (dd, J = 8.3, 6.7, H-C(5')); 1.46, 1.40 (2 s, Me₂C(2')). ([21]: ¹H-NMR of the racemic mixture).

To determine the optical purity of 1a and 4a, a sample of the crude 4:1 mixture 1a/4a was analyzed on a *Carlo Erba Fractovap G 1* (cap. column *WCOT*, *XE-60-(S)-valine-[(S)-\alpha-phenylethyl]amide*). Only one peak was found for each of the two olefins. A calibration of the column using different mixtures of 1a and the corresponding racemic material showed 1a to have ee > 98%. Since it is highly improbable that 4a, formed in the same reaction pot, has racemized to a larger extent, it is assumed to have the same optical purity.

1.2. In MeOH. The same Wittig reaction with (R)-2,3-O-isopropylideneglyceraldehyde was also run in MeOH, as described in [21]. It afforded a crude 1:4 mixture 1a/4a. After chromatography on Lobar (AcOEt/hexane 15:85) 1a (14%) and 4a (61%), each > 98% pure by GC, were obtained, with the same properties as described in *Exper. 1.1.*

2. *Ethyl* (2E)-3-[(4RS)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]prop-2-enoate (**1b**). Using the procedure described in [22] for the methyl ester, *ethyl* (4RS,2E)-4,5-dihydroxypent-2-enoate was prepared from *rac*-glyceraldehyde and [(ethoxycarbonyl)methylidene]triphenylphosphorane in 80% yield as a colorless oil. B.p. 130°/0.1 Torr. IR (film): 3400s, 2985m, 2940m, 2880m, 1785 (sh), 1745 (sh), 1722 (sh), 1708s, 1660m, 1395m, 1371s, 1308s, 1280s, 1180s, 1125m, 1075m, 1035s, 980m, 885m, 865m. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃): 6.91 (*dd*, J = 15.8, 4.5, H-C(3)); 6.15 (*dd*, J = 15.8, 1.8, H-C(2)); 4.42 (m, H-C(4)); 4.22 (q, $J = 7.0, CH_3CH_2O$); 3.78 (*dd*, J = 11.0, 3.5, H-C(5)); 3.54 (*dd*, J = 11.0, 7.0, H-C(5)); 2.95 (s, 2 OH); 1.30 (*t*, $J = 7.0, CH_3CH_2O$). Anal. calc. for C₇H₁₂O₄ (160.17): C 52.49, H 7.55; found: C 52.77, H 7.76.

A soln. of ethyl (4*RS*,2*E*)-4,5-dihydroxypent-2-enoate (1600 mg, 10 mmol), acetone (7.35 ml, 100 mmol) and TsOH (5 mg, 0.025 mmol) in benzene (40 ml) was heated to reflux for 12 h under azeotropic removal of H₂O. Powdered K₂CO₃ was added, the suspension stirred for few min and filtered. Distillation of the residue after evaporation of the solvent yielded 1600 mg (80%) **1b** as a colorless oil, > 99% pure by GC. B.p. 145°/15 Torr. IR: identical with the spectrum of the optically active compound described in [23]. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃): 6.88 (*dd*, *J* = 15.6, 5.6, H–C(3)); 6.08 (*dd*, *J* = 15.6, 1.4, H–C(2)); 4.66 (*dddd*, *J* = 7.1, 6.5, 5.6, 1.4, H–C(4')); 4.21 (*q*, *J* = 7.1, CH₃CH₂O); 4.19 (*dd*, *J* = 8.2, 6.5, H–C(5')); 3.68 (*dd*, *J* = 8.2, 7.1, H–C(5')); 1.45, 1.41 (2 s, Me₂C(2')); 1.30 (*t*, *J* = 7.1, CH₃CH₂O); no signals of the (2*Z*)-isomer (*J*(H–C(2), H–C(3)) = 12 Hz) as described for the (*R*)-enantiomer in [24].

3. tert-Butyl (2E)- and (2Z)-3-[(4S)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]prop-2-enoate (1c and 4c, resp.). In analogy to the method described in *Exper. 1.2*, 1c and 4c were prepared from (*R*)-2,3-*O*-isopropylideneglyceralde-hyde and {[(*tert*-butoxy)carbonyl]methylidene}triphenylphosphorane [25] in MeOH in 11% and 82% yield, respectively, after chromatography, as colorless oils, each > 98% pure by ¹H-NMR and GC. The optical purities of 1c and 4c are assumed to be > 98% as in 1a and 4a (see *Exper. 1.1*), since the same starting material was used in the same type of reaction.

Data of **1c**: IR (film): 2985*s*, 2935*m*, 2875*m*, 1715*s*, 1660*m*, 1455*m*, 1393*m*, 1382*m*, 1370*s*, 1311*s*, 1260*s*, 1155*s*, 1065*s*, 980*m*, 850*m*. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃): 6.78 (*dd*, J = 15.6, 5.9, H–C(3)); 6.01 (*dd*, J = 15.6, 1.4, H–C(2)); 4.64 (*dddd*, J = 7.2, 6.5, 5.9, 1.4, H–C(4')); 4.17 (*dd*, J = 8.3, 6.5, H–C(5')); 3.66 (*dd*, J = 8.3, 7.2, H–C(5')); 1.48 (*s*, *t*-Bu); 1.45, 1.40 (2 *s*, Me₂C(2')).

Data of **4c**: $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = +97$ (c = 1.047, CHCl₃). IR (film): 2985s, 2935m, 2875m, 1713s, 1644m, 1455m, 1408m, 1381m, 1370s, 1235s, 1216s, 1158s, 1061s, 855m, 822m. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃): 6.25 (dd, J = 11.7, 6.7, H–C(3)); 5.77 (dd, J = 11.7, 1.7, H–C(2)); 5.50 (dddd, J = 6.9, 6.8, 6.7, 1.7, H–C(4')); 4.37 (dd, J = 8.3, 6.9, H–C(5')); 3.62 (dd, J = 8.3, 6.8, H–C(5')); 1.48 (s, t-Bu); 1.45, 1.39 (2s, Me₂C(2')). Anal. calc. for C₁₂H₂₀O₄ (228.23): C 63.14, H 8.83; found: C 63.39, H 8.70.

4. Methyl (2E)-3-[(2RS)-oxiran-2-yl]prop-2-enoate (1d) was prepared by epoxidation of methyl (2E)-penta-2,4-dienoate (commercial material, 77% pure by GC, containing 8% of the (2Z)-isomer, 10% of an unknown compound and some other impurities) as described in [21]. Separation on Lobar (AcOEt/hexane 15:85) and distillation at 100°/20 Torr, with some loss for the sake of purity, afforded 1d (18%) as a colorless oil, > 99% pure by GC. ¹H-NMR (J(H-C(2), H-C(3)) = 16 Hz) and IR: identical with those described in [21], the ¹H-NMR showed none of the (2Z)-isomer (see below). One *Lobar* fraction, after repeated chromatography (*Lobar*, AcOEt/hexane 15:85) and distillation, yielded a small amount (< 1%) of *methyl* (2Z)-3-[(2RS)-oxiran-2-yl]prop-2-enoate (**4d**) as a colorless oil, > 90% pure by GC. ¹H-NMR (J(H-C(2), H-C(3)) = 10 Hz) and IR: identical with those of the (2Z)-isomer described in [21].

5. Methyl (2S,3S)- and (2R,3R)-3-[(4S)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]-1-phthalimidoaziridine-2-carboxylate (2a and 3a, resp.). 5.1. At 0°. To a stirred mixture of 1a (640 mg, 3.5 mmol; >98% pure), N-aminophthalimide (680 mg, 4.2 mmol), and Na₂CO₃ (740 mg, 7 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (8 ml) at 0°, Pb(OAc)₄ (1860 mg, 4.2 mmol) was added within 0.5 h. After removing the cooling bath and further stirring for 0.5 h, the solid was filtered off and washed with CH₂Cl₂. The combined washings and filtrate were evaporated to dryness and the residue chromatographed on *Lobar B* (AcOEt/hexane 3:7), yielding 250 mg (39%) of 1a and 700 mg (59%) of a 3.1:1 mixture (by ¹H-NMR) 2a/3a. Crystallization from hexane/acetone 3:1 afforded 145 mg (12%) 2a. M.p. 150–152° after recrystallization from the same solvent, as light green needles. M.p. 153.2–153.6°. [a)₁²⁵ = -99 (*c* = 0.995, CHCl₃). In soln., the two invertomers A (major) and B (minor) were present. IR (CHCl₃): 3020w, 2990w, 1770w, 1720s, 1610w, 1450m, 1380s, 1200m (br.), 1070s, 890m, 840m, 700m. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.78–7.72, 7.68–7.63 (2 m, 4 arom. H); 4.42 (dd, J = 8.8, 5.9, H–C(5')); 4.28 (dd, J = 8.8, 6.2, H–C(5')); 4.06 (br. *q*, J = 5.9-6.9, H-C(4')); 3.85 (*s*, 0.15 H, MeO of invertomer B); 3.71 (*s*, 2.85 H, MeO of invertomer A); 3.50 (dd, J = 6.9, 4.8, H-C(3)); 3.36 (*d*, J = 4.8, H-C(2)); 1.48, 1.40 (2 *s*, Me₂C(2')). MS (70 eV): 346 (1, *M*⁺), 331 (23), 287 (12), 239 (11), 229 (37), 221 (17), 213 (15), 201 (24), 148 (12), 130 (22), 104 (76), 101 (80), 76 (46), 43 (100). Anal. calc. for C₁₇H₁₈N₂O₆ (346.34): C 58.96, H 5.24, N 8.09; found: C 59.11, H 5.39, N 8.24.

The ¹H-NMR of **3a** was obtained by subtracting the spectrum of **2a** from that of the mother-liquor material (*ca.* 1:1 mixture **2a/3a**). ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) of **3a**: 7.78-7.71 (*m*, 2 arom. H); 7.69-7.63 (*m*, 2 arom. H); 4.53 (*ddd*, J = 6.6, 5.5, 3.4, H-C(4')); 4.29 (*dd*, J = 8.8, 5.5, H-C(5')); 4.22 (*dd*, J = 8.8, 6.6, H-C(5')); 3.69 (*s*, MeO); 3.56 (*dd*, J = 4.9, 3.4, H-C(3)); 3.43 (*d*, J = 4.9, H-C(2)); 1.41, 1.35 (*2s*, Me₂C(2')).

5.2. $At - 40^\circ$. The same reaction at -40° (instead of 0°) yielded 59% of **2a**/**3a** in a ratio of 30:1, in addition to 31% of **1a**. The amount of **3a** was determined by ¹H-NMR of the mother-liquor material after chromatographic removal of **1a** and crystallization of the bulk of the major product **2a**.

6. Ethyl (2RS,3RS)- and (2SR,3SR)-3-[(4RS)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]-1-phthalimidoaziridine-2carboxylate (**2b** and **3b**, resp.). 6.1. At 0°. The reaction of **1b** (700 mg, 3.5 mmol; >99% pure), N-aminophthalimide (680 mg, 4.2 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (740 mg), and Pb(OAc)₄ (1860 mg, 4.2 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (8 ml) at 0°, following the procedure described in *Exper. 5*, yielded 270 mg (39%) of **1b** and 760 mg (60%) of a 3.3:1 mixture (by ¹H-NMR) **2b**/**3b**. Crystallization from hexane/acetone 3:1 afforded 175 mg (14%) of **2b**. M.p. 130–131°. After recrystallization from the same solvent as light-green needles. M.p. 130.5–131.5°. A sample of these crystals was used for X-ray analysis. IR (CHCl₃): 2990w, 1770w, 1720s, 1380s, 1220m, 1070m, 890m. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz: CDCl₃): 7.79–7.66 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 4.44 (*dd*, *J* = 8.7, 5.9, H–C(5')); 4.29 (*dd*, *J* = 8.7, 6.2, H–C(5')); 4.14 (*m*, CH₃CH₂O); 4.06 (br. *q*, *J* = 5.9–7.0, H–C(4')); 3.53 (*dd*, *J* = 7.0, 4.8, H–C(3)); 3.35 (*d*, *J* = 4.8, H–C(2)); 1.49, 1.40 (2, s, Me₂C(2')); 1.28 (*t*, *J* = 7.1, CH₃CH₂O). MS (70 eV): 345 (6, M^+ – 15), 229 (20), 213 (26), 201 (19), 104 (60), 101 (52), 76 (41), 43 (100). Anal. calc. for C₁₈H₂₀N₂O₆ (360.37): C 59.99, H 5.59, N 7.77; found: C 60.00, H 5.65, N 7.85.

The ¹H-NMR of **3b** was obtained by subtracting the spectrum of **2b** from that of the mother-liquor material (*ca.* 1:1 mixture **2b/3b**). ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) of **3b**: 7.77–7.65 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 4.54 (*ddd*, J = 6.5, 5.7, 3.5, H–C(4')); 4.30 (*dd*, J = 8.7, 5.7, H–C(5')); 4.24 (*dd*, J = 8.7, 6.5, H–C(5')); 4.13 (*q*, J = 7.1, CH₃CH₂O); 3.57 (*dd*, J = 5.0, 3.5, H–C(3)); 3.43 (*d*, J = 5.0, H–C(2)); 1.43, 1.37 (2 *s*, Me₂C(2')); 1.25 (*t*, J = 7.1, CH₃CH₂O).

6.2. $At - 38^\circ$. The same reaction at -38° (instead of 0°) yielded 59% **2b/3b** in a ratio 290:1, in addition to 38% of **1b**. The amount of **3b** was determined by ¹H-NMR of the mother-liquor material after chromatographic removal of **1b** and crystallization of the bulk of the major product **2b**.

7. Methyl (2RS,3RS)-3-[(2RS)- and (2SR)-Oxiran-2-yl]-1-phthalimidoaziridine-2-carboxylate (2d and 3d, resp.). The reaction of 1d (365 mg, 2.8 mmol; > 99% pure), N-aminophthalimide (505 mg, 3.1 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (740 mg, 7 mmol), and Pb(OAc)₄ (1382 mg, 3.1 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (8 ml) at 0°, following the procedure described in *Exper.5*, yielded, after *Lobar B* (AcOEt/hexane 1:1), 92 mg (25%) of 1d and 490 mg (54%) of a 2:1 mixture 2d/3d as a highly viscous yellow oil containing *ca.* 9% of AcOEt (by ¹H-NMR). Repeated recrystallization from AcOEt/hexane 2:3 afforded 2d as yellow prisms. M.p. 120°–121°. A sample of these crystals was used for X-ray analysis. The crystalline material 2d contained only the invertomer A (see *Figure, c*); in soln. both A (major) and B (minor) were present. IR (CHCl₃): 3000m, 2960w, 1785w, 1770w, 1725s, 1610w, 1380m. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) of 2dA/2dB: 7.82–7.66 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 3.84 (*s*, 0.65 H, MeO of 2dB); 3.71 (*s*, 2.35 H, MeO of 2dA); 3.54 (*d*, *J* = 5.1, 0.25 H, H–C(2) of 2dB); 3.52 (*dd*, *J* = 4.5, 4.9, 0.75 H, H–C(3) of 2dA); 3.47–3.46

(*m*, 0.25 H, H–C(2') of **2dB**); 3.37 (*dd*, J = 5.1, 1.8, 0.25 H, H–C(3) of **2dB**); 3.31 (*d*, J = 4.9, 0.75 H, H–C(2) of **2dA**); 3.27 (*ddd*, J = 4.5, 4.0, 2.5, 0.75 H, H–C(2') of **2dA**); 2.98 (*dd*, J = 5.1, 4.0, 0.75 H, H–C(3') of **2dA**); 2.90 (*dd*, J = 5.1, 2.5, 0.75 H, H–C(3') of **2dA**); 2.81 (*dd*, J = 5.1, 4.1, 0.25 H, H–C(3') of **2dB**); 2.55 (*dd*, J = 5.1, 2.5, 0.25 H, H–C(3') of **2dB**). MS (70 eV): 288 (1, M^{+}), 229 (9, M^{+} – CO₂Me), 201 (7), 173 (6), 130 (11), 105 (21), 104 (100). Anal. calc. for C₁₄H₁₂N₂O₅ (288.26): C 58.33, H 4.20, N 9.72; found: C 58.34, H 4.12, N 9.94. ¹H-NMR (80 MHz, CDCl₃): immediately after dissolving a few crystals of **2d**: 3.84 (*s*, 0.30 H); 3.71 (*s*, 2.70 H); after 2 min: 3.84 (*s*, 0.65 H); 3.71 (*s*, 2.35 H).

The ¹H-NMR of **3d** was obtained by subtracting the spectrum of **2d** from that of the mother-liquor material (*ca.* 1:5 mixture **2d/3d**). In this soln, the invertomers **A** (major) and **B** (minor) were present. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) of **3d**: 7.78–7.64 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 3.86 (*s*, 0.2 H, MeO of invertomer **3dB**): 3.73 (*s*, 2.8 H, MeO of invertomer **3dA**); 3.64 (*dd*, J = 5.0, 2.9, H-C(3)); 3.39 (*ddd*, J = 4.0, 2.9, 2.6, H-C(2')); 3.34 (*d*, J = 5.0, H-C(2)); 2.98 (*dd*, J = 5.2, 2.6, H-C(3')); 2.92 (*dd*, J = 5.2, 4.0, H-C(3')).

8. Methyl (2R,3S)- and (2S,3R)-3-[(4S)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]-1-phthalimidoaziridine-2-carboxylate (**5a** and **6a**, resp.). 8.1. At 0°. The reaction of **4a** (3500 mg, 18.8 mmol; > 98% pure), N-aminophthalimide (3.35 g, 20.7 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (4000 mg, 38 mmol), and Pb(OAc)₄ (9200 mg, 20.7 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (40 ml) at 0°, following the procedure described in *Exper.* 5, yielded, after *Lobar B* (AcOEt/hexane 7:13), 2350 mg (67%) of **4a**, 610 mg (9%) of **5a**, and 750 mg (12%) of **6a**, all pure by ¹H-NMR. A sample of **5a** and **6a** each was further purified by crystallization.

Data of **5a**: colorless needles from acetone/hexane. M.p. $131-134^{\circ}$. $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = +3$ (c = 1.085, CHCl₃). IR (CHCl₃): 3000m, 1780m, 1750s, 1720s, 1470m, 1440m, 1370s, 1200m, 1150m, 1070s, 910m, 840m, 710m. ¹H-NMR (200 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.79-7.74, 7.73-7.66 (2 m, 4 arom. H); 4.69-4.63 (m, H-C(5')); 4.32-4.24 (m, H-C(5'), H-C(4')); 3.86 (s, MeO); 3.34 (d, J = 8.2, H-C(2)); 3.01 ($t[4.28 \rightarrow d]$, J = 8.2, H-C(3)); 1.48, 1.36 (2 s, Me₂C(2')). MS (70 eV): 331 (20, M^+ - 15), 270 (11), 239 (13), 229 (53), 201 (32), 130 (27), 104 (65), 101 (24), 76 (52), 43 (100). Anal. calc. for C₁₇H₁₈N₂O₆ (346.34): C 58.96, H 5.24, N 8.09; found: C 59.24, H 5.24, N 8.05.

Data of **6a**: colorless needles from (i-Pr)₂O. M.p. 88.2–89.2°. $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -40$ (c = 1.005, CHCl₃). A sample of these crystals was used for X-ray analysis. IR (CHCl₃): 3000*m*, 2950*w*, 1780*m*, 1730*s*, 1610*w*, 1470*m*, 1440*m*, 1370*s*, 1200*m*, 1150*m*, 1070*s*, 950*m*, 840*m*, 700*m*. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.80–7.70 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 4.44 (q, J = 6.6, H–C(4')); 4.10 (dd, J = 8.6, 6.6, H–C(5')); 4.00 (dd, J = 8.6, 6.1, H–C(5')); 3.84 (s, MeO); 3.42 (d, J = 8.5, H–C(2)); 3.29 (dd, J = 8.5, 6.9, H–C(3)); 1.53, 1.38 (2 s, Me₂C(2')). MS (70 eV): 331 (17, M^{+} – 15), 239 (18), 229 (40), 201 (20), 130 (23), 111 (21), 104 (68), 101 (66), 76 (53), 43 (100). Anal. calc. for C₁₇H₁₈N₂O₆ (346.34): C 58.96, H 5.24, N 8.09; found: C 58.88, H 5.30, N 8.33.

8.2. $At - 40^\circ$. The same reaction at -40° (instead of 0°) yielded only 4% of **5a** and 8% of **6a**, in addition to 81% of **4a**.

9. tert-Butyl (2R,3S)- and (2S,3R)-3-[(4S)-2,2-Dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl]-1-phthalimidoaziridine-2-carboxylate (**5c** and **6c**, resp.). The reaction of **4c** (890 mg, 3.9 mmol; > 98% pure), N-aminophthalimide (820 mg, 5 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (830 mg, 7.8 mmol), and Pb(OAc)₄ (2250 mg, 5.1 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (9 ml) at 0°, following the procedure described in *Exper. 5*, yielded, after *Lobar B* (AcOEt/hexane 1:3), 470 mg (53%) of **4c**, 160 mg (11%) of **5c**, and 160 mg (11%) of **6c**, all pure by ¹H-NMR. A sample of **5c** and **6c** each was further purified by crystallization.

Data of **5c**: colorless needles from hexane/acetone. M.p. 180.5–182.0°. $[\alpha]_D^{25} = +11$ (c = 1.005, CHCl₃). IR (KBr): 2990*m*, 2940*w*, 1770*m*, 1720*s*, 1610*w*, 1470*w*, 1400*m*, 1380*s*, 1230*s*, 1160*s*, 1100*m*, 1050*s*, 910*m*, 840*m*, 710*s*. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.80–7.70 (*m*, 4 arom. H); 4.59 (*dd*, J = 8.6, 5.4 [4.27], H–C(5')); 4.34 (*dd*, J = 8.6, 6.1 [4.27], H–C(5')); 4.27 (*m* [2.95 \rightarrow *t*, J = 6,0], H–C(4')); 3.27 (*d*, J = 8.3 [2.95], H–C(2)); 2.95 (*t* [4.27 \rightarrow *d*], J = 8.4, H–C(3)); 1.56 (*s*, *t*-Bu); 1.48, 1.35 (2 *s*, Me₂C(2')). MS (70 eV): 373 (1, M^{+-} –15), 317 (12), 229 (21), 213 (24), 201 (10), 162 (12), 148 (17), 130 (15), 104 (42), 101 (17), 76 (30), 57 (100). Anal. calc. for C₂₀H₂₄N₂O₆ (388.42): C 61.85, H 6.28, N 7.21; found: C 61.58, H 6.03, N 7.47.

Data of **6c**: colorless fine needles from hexane/acetone. M.p. $143-145^{\circ}$. $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = -28$ (c = 1.025, CHCl₃). IR (KBr): 2990m, 2930w, 1780m, 1730s, 1470w, 1380s, 1230s, 1160s, 1070s, 920m, 850m, 700s. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): 7.80–7.70 (m, 4 arom. H); 4.44 (q [3.28 \rightarrow t], J = 6.5, H–C(4')); 4.08 (dd, J = 8.4, 6.8 [4.44], H–C(5')); 3.91 (dd, J = 8.4, 6.1 [4.44], H–C(5')); 3.31–3.24 (m, 2 H [4.44 \rightarrow 3.30 (d, J = 8.5, H–C(2)) and 3.26 (dd, J = 8.5, 6.5, H–C(3))]); 1.54 (s, t-Bu); 1.56, 1.41 (2s, Me₂C(2')). MS (70 eV): 373 (1, M^{+-} –15), 317 (31), 257 (12), 229 (26), 213 (20), 201 (19), 162 (15), 148 (23), 147 (26), 130 (20), 104 (70), 101 (60), 76 (59), 57 (100), 43 (90). Anal. calc. for C₂₀H₂₄N₂O₆ (388.42): C 61.85, H 6.28, N 7.21; found: C 61.72, H 6.01, N 7.15.

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