Cathepsin B Inhibitory Tetraene Lactones from the Fungus Talaromyces wortmannii

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Wortmannilactones E-H (1-4), four new cathepsin B inhibitors, were produced and isolated from the culture of the soil filamentous fungus *Talaromyces wortmannii*. Their structures and relative configurations were elucidated on the basis of 1D- and 2D-NMR techniques, three of them (1, 2, and 4) posses an oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane moiety. Compounds 1-4 showed inhibitory activities against cathepsin B with IC_{50} values of 4.3, 6.5, 13.0, and 6.0 μ M, respectively.

Introduction. – Cathepsins, known as a class of lysosomal protein-degrading enzymes, play significant roles in specific physiological activities [1]. Among them, cathepsin B has been documented to be important in many metastatic tumors and the inhibition of its activity resulted in a decreased invasiveness of tumor cells [2]. Therefore, cathepsin B is a possible therapeutic target for the control of tumor progression. In anticipation of the usefulness of cathepsin B inhibitors, we screened against the enzyme new compounds isolated from filamentous fungi, which have been proved to be important sources of significant biological activities [3][4]. As a result, a fungus *Talaromyces wortmannii* from the soil of Chuxiong, in China's Yunnan Province, showed potent activity. Bioassay-guided fractionation afforded four novel tetraene lactones (wortmannilactones; 1-4), three of them (1, 2, and 4) posses an oxabicy-clo[2.2.1]heptane moiety in their structures. Recently, several oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane compounds with inducing neuritogenesis against neuroblastoma and anticoccidial activities have been reported [5–8].

A few previous chemical investigations of *Talaromyces wortmannii* and its asexual stage *Penicillium wortmannii* have been described. These studies resulted in the isolation of some quinones [9–11], wortmannolone [12], wortmannin, which showed phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase inhibition activities [13], and wortmannilactones A-D with *in vitro* antitumor activities [14]. In this work, we report the details of the isolation, structure elucidation, and preliminary biological evaluation of compounds 1-4 for cathepsin B.

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Results and Discussion. – *T. wortmannii* was cultured in solid-state medium for 14 days. The cultures were extracted with AcOEt, and the extract was separated by sequential chromatography on silica gel and reverse phase HPLC to afford compounds 1-4.

The molecular formula of wortmannilactone E (1) was determined as $C_{26}H_{34}O_5$ by high-resolution FAB-MS, requiring 10 degrees of unsaturation. The UV spectrum of **1** in MeOH exhibited absorption bands at 297, 312 and 326 nm, indicating the presence of a conjugated tetraene moiety [15]. ¹³C-NMR (CD₃OD) and DEPT spectra confirmed the presence of 26 C-atoms, including a keto CO group, an ester CO group, ten olefinic CH groups, four quaternary C-atoms, three sp³ CH groups, and seven Me groups. ¹H-NMR (CD₃OD) and HMQC spectra of **1** displayed resonances for 33 H-atoms, including six *singlet* Me groups and one *doublet* Me group, four CH groups, and eight olefinic H-atoms. The H-atoms of **1** were assigned unambiguously to their respective Catoms *via* the HMQC spectrum.

The constitutional formula of **1** was established by straightforward analysis of ¹Hand ¹³C-NMR, COSY, HMQC, and HMBC spectra (*Table 1*). Analyses of the ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectra revealed a partial structure, which contained an oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane substructure [7]. The ¹H-NMR, COSY, and HMBC data led to the identification of a conjugated tetraene substructure (C(8) to C(15)¹)) which was substituted by a Me group at C(15). The ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR data, together with the HMBC observed between H–C(16)/C(18) and C(20), H–C(18)/C(16) and C(20), and H–C(20)/C(16) showed the presence of a dihydropyrane ring which was the same as that of prugosene A1. Connection of the three fragments was established through HMBC correlations from H–C(6)/C(8), H–C(9)/C(7), and H–C(16)/C(14), respectively.

Wortmannilactone F (2) was shown to have the same molecular formula as that of 1 provided by HR-FAB-MS. Closer inspection of the ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectra of 2 and comparison with those of 1 revealed a number of similarities. In particular signals for the oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane and tetraene moieties were identical to 1. The COSY,

¹⁾ Arbitrary numbering. For systematic names, see Exper. Part.

	1				2		
	$\delta(H)$	$\delta(C)$	HMBC $(H \rightarrow C)$	NOESY	$\delta(H)$	$\delta(C)$	NOESY
2		173.4 (s)				173.4 (s)	
3		70.8(s)				70.8(s)	
4		209.5 (s)				209.5 (s)	
5	2.81 (<i>qd</i> , <i>J</i> = 7, 2)	44.4 (<i>d</i>)	4, 5-Me	6, 5-Me, 7-Me	2.82 $(qd, J=7, 2)$	44.4 (<i>d</i>)	6, 5-Me, 7-Me
6	4.95 (d, J = 2.5)	86.3 (<i>d</i>)	2, 3, 4, 5, 8	5, 5-Me	4.97 (d, J = 2.5)	86.3 (<i>d</i>)	5, 9, 5-Me
7		59.5(s)				59.5(s)	
8	5.71 $(d, J = 15)$	131.3 (<i>d</i>)	3, 6, 7, 10, 7-Me	9, 3-Me, 7-Me	5.71 $(d, J = 15)$	131.2(d)	9
9	6.38 (dd, 15, 11)	135.5 (<i>d</i>)	7, 11	6, 7-Me	6.40 (dd, 15, 11)	135.6 (d)	6
10	J = 15, 11	1225(1)	9 10		J = 15, 11	122 A (J)	
10	0.23 (aa, I-15, 11)	155.5(a)	8, 10		0.20 (aa, I-15, 11)	155.4(a)	
11	J = 13, 11 6 36 (dd	134.9(d)	12 13		J = 13, 11 6 38 (dd	134.9(d)	
11	$I = 15 \ 11$	137.9(u)	12, 15		$I = 15 \ 11$	137.9(u)	
12	6.23 (dd)	134.8(d)	10 11 14		6.23 (dd)	134.8(d)	
12	J = 15, 11	10 1.0 (u)	10, 11, 11		J = 15, 11	10 1.0 (u)	
13	6.50 (<i>dd</i> ,	130.4~(d)			6.52 (<i>dd</i> ,	130.7~(d)	15-Me
	J = 15, 11)				J = 15, 11)		
14	5.84 $(d, J = 11)$	130.4(d)	12, 16, 15-Me	16	5.97(d, J = 11)	130.5(d)	16,17-Me
15	10(())	136.0(s)	14 15 17 10	14 15 16	4.00 ()	136.4(s)	14 00 14
16	4.26 (<i>s</i>)	81.5 (<i>d</i>)	14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 15-Me	14, 15-Me, 17-Me	4.22 (s)	81.8 (<i>d</i>)	14, 20-Me
			20, 13-Me	17 - Me			15-Me, 17 Me
17		135.6(s)	17-1410	20-1410		1343 (s)	1/-1010
18	553(d I - 15)	130.0(3) 130.0(d)	16 19 20	17-Me	552(d I - 15)	137.3(3) 132.4(d)	17-Me
10	5.55(a, b = 1.5)	150.9(u)	10, 19, 20, 17-Me 19-Me	19-Me	5.52(u, y = 1.5)	152.4(u)	19-Me
19		68.1(s)	17 100, 19 100	1) 1010		69.8(s)	19 1010
20	3.47(a, I=6.5)	73.1(d)	16 19 19-Me	19-Me	3.58(a, I=6.5)	72.5(d)	19-OH
20		(u)	20-Me	20-Me		/210 (u)	20-Me
3-Me	1.01(s)	5.0(a)	2, 3, 4, 7	8	1.01(s)	5.0(a)	8
5-Me	1.12(d, J=7)	11.7(q)	4, 5, 6	5,6	1.13(d, J=7)	11.7(q)	5
7-Me	1.09(s)	16.9(a)	3, 6, 7	5, 8, 9	1.10(s)	16.9(a)	5.9
15-Me	1.80 (br. s)	15.7(q)	14, 15, 16	16,20	1.82 (br. s)	15.8(q)	13, 16
17-Me	1.55 (br. s)	20.1(q)	16, 17, 18	14, 16, 18	1.52 (br. s)	19.8(q)	14, 16, 18
19-Me	1.07(s)	25.6(q)	18, 19, 20	20	1.05(s)	22.0(q)	18
19-OH ^a)		(1)			3.16(s)	(1)	20
20-Me	1.09 (d, J = 5.5)	14.4(q)	19, 20	16, 20	1.03 (d, J = 6)	14.7 (q)	16, 20
a) Data w	vere recorded in (T						

Table 1. ¹*H*-*NMR* (500 Hz) and ¹³*C*-*NMR* (125 Hz) Data of Wortmannilactone E (1) and Wortmannilactone F (2) (in CD₃OD). δ in ppm, J in Hz.

HMQC, and HMBC data led to the unambiguous assignments of the ¹H and ¹³C signals, which revealed the constitution of 2 to be the same as that of 1. Thus 2 was considered to be a stereoisomer of 1.

The assignment of the relative configuration in 1 and 2 arose from the NOESY spectral data. The relative NOESY correlations of $H-C(5)/Me-C(7)^{1}$, $H-C(8)/Me-C(7)^{1}$ Me-C(3), and H-C(5)/H-C(6) revealed that the relative configuration of the oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane moiety is $(3S^*, 5R^*, 6S^*, 7R^*)$ which is consistent with that of prugosene A(1-3) with the exception of the C(7) position [8]. The four C=C bonds in the two compounds were all assigned the (E) geometry on the basis of the wellresolved H-atom coupling constants (J=15.0 Hz). The difference of 1D-NMR chemical shift between 1 and prugosene A1 in the dihydropyran moiety suggests that they have a different relative configuration at C(19). H-C(16) showed a NOESY correlation with H-C(14) and Me-C(20), whereas Me-C(15) in the trans position of the H-C(14) exhibited a NOESY correlation with H-C(20), indicating that H-C(16)and Me-C(20) should be *cis* disposed (*Fig. 1*). The presence of NOESY relationships between H-C(20) and Me-C(19) in **1** and H-C(20) and HO-C(19) in **2** (in $(D_6)DMSO$ indicated that the Me-C(19) and Me-C(20) were trans in 1 and cis in 2. Therefore, the relative configuration at the three stereogenic centers of the dihydropyran moiety of 1 and 2 was identified as $(16S^*, 19S^*, 20S^*)$ and $(16S^*, 19R^*, 20S^*)$, respectively.



Fig. 1. Key NOE correlations of compounds 1 (top) and 3 (bottom)

The molecular formula of wortmannilactone G (**3**) was established as $C_{27}H_{38}O_6$ on the basis of HR-FAB-MS data. The UV spectrum and NMR data showed the presence of a tetraene group, the (*E*) configurations of the C=C bonds were deduced from their large coupling constant (*J* = 15 Hz) with the exception that the signals of H–C(11)¹) and H–C(12) were overlapped. The NMR data, together with HMBC correlations of H–C(3) to C(2), C(8), and *Me*–C(4), H–C(5) to C(8), H–C(16) to C(18), C(20), *Me*–C(15), and *Me*–C(17), and *Me*–C(17) to C(16) and C(18) showed the presence of a 2,3-dimethylated γ -lactone substituted with a 1-carboxyethyl group in γ -position (at C(5)) and of a dihydropyran moiety, which was the same as in prugosene B2 (*Table 2*). In the NOESY experiment, the *Me*–C(4) showed correlations with H–C(6) and H–C(9), whereas H–C(8) exhibited a correlation with H–C(3) and H–C(5).

	3	4				
	$\delta(H)$	$\delta(C)$	HMBC $(H \rightarrow C)$	NOESY	$\delta(H)$	$\delta(C)$
2		179.1 (s)				173.4 (s)
3	2.75 $(q, J=7)$	47.9 (<i>d</i>)	2, 4, 8, 3-Me, 4-Me	5, 8, 3-Me		70.8 (s)
4		49.5 (s)				209.5 (s)
5	4.36(d, J = 11)	87.2 (<i>d</i>)	6, 7, 8, 4-Me	3, 8, 6-Me	2.82 $(qd, J=7, 2)$	44.4 (<i>d</i>)
6	2.71 (dd , $J = 11, 7$)	42.4 (<i>d</i>)	5, 7, 6-Me	4-Me, 6-Me	4.96 (d, J = 2.5)	86.3 (<i>d</i>)
7	, ,	175.9 (s)			,	59.5 (s)
8	5.72(d, J = 15)	136.7 (<i>d</i>)	9	3, 5, 6-Me	5.68 (d, J = 15)	130.5 (<i>d</i>)
9	6.19 (dd, J = 15, 11)	132.6 (<i>d</i>)	10	4-Me	6.39 (dd, J = 15, 11)	136.0 (<i>d</i>)
10	6.33 (dd, J = 15, 11)	135.1 (<i>d</i>)	9, 11		6.22 (dd, J = 15, 11)	133.2 (<i>d</i>)
11	$6.20-6.25 (m)^{a}$	132.6 (<i>d</i>)	10		6.39 (dd, J = 15.11)	135.0 (<i>d</i>)
12	$6.20-6.25 (m)^{a}$	133.3 (<i>d</i>)	14		6.22 (dd, J = 15, 11)	132.5 (<i>d</i>)
13	6.53 (dd, J = 15, 11)	130.7 (<i>d</i>)	15		6.55 (dd, J = 15, 11)	131.0 (<i>d</i>)
14	6.12 (d, J = 11)	128.0(d)	12, 16, 15-Me	16	6.13 (d, J=11)	127.9 (<i>d</i>)
15		137.8(s)				138.0(s)
16	3.98 (s)	78.8 (d)	14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 15-Me, 17-Me	14, 15-Me, 20-Me	3.96 (s)	78.8 (d)
17		71.2(s)				71.1 (s)
18	5.29 (dd, J=2)	130.8 (<i>d</i>)	16, 20, 19-Me	17-Me, 19-Me	5.29 (d, J = 1.5)	130.7 (<i>d</i>)
19		137.3 (s)			*	137.3 (s)
20	4.12(q, J=7)	74.0(d)	16, 18, 19, 20-Me	19-Me, 20-Me	4.12(q, J=7)	74.0(d)
3-Me	0.90 (d, J = 7)	7.6(q)	2, 4	3	1.01 (s)	5.0(d)
4-Me	0.98 (s)	11.9(q)	4, 5, 8	6, 9	1.12 (d, J = 7)	11.7 (q)
(5-Me in 4)						
6-Me (7-Me in 4)	1.02 (d, J = 7)	14.3 (q)	5, 6, 7	5, 6, 8	1.10 (s)	16.9 (q)
7-Me	3.64 (s)	52.5(q)	7			
15-Me	1.83 (s)	16.1(q)	14, 15, 16	13, 16, 17-Me	1.83 (br. s)	16.0(q)
17-Me	0.96 (s)	22.8(q)	16, 17,18	18, 15-Me	0.96 (br. s)	22.7(q)
19-Ме 20-Ме	1.58 (s) 1.24 ($d, J = 6.5$)	19.3 (q) 17.5 (q)	18, 19, 20 19, 20	18, 20 16, 20	1.52 (s) 1.24 ($d, J = 6$)	19.2 (q) 17.4 (q)

Table 2. ¹*H*-*NMR* (500 Hz) and ¹³*C*-*NMR* (125 Hz) Data of Wortmannilactone G (**3**) and Wortmannilactone H (**4**) (in CD₃OD). δ in ppm, J in Hz.

^a) Overlapping signals.

This, together with the large coupling constant (J=11 Hz) between H–C(5) and H–C(6), suggesting that H–C(3)/Me–C(4), Me–C(4)/H–C(5), and H–C(5)/H–C(6) were *trans*, respectively. In addition, NOESY correlations from H–C(16) to H–C(14), Me–C(20) as well as from Me–C(15) to Me–C(17) provided evidence that H–C(16)/Me–C(17) and H–C(16)/H–C(20) were *trans* disposed (*Fig. 1*). Thus, the structure of G was assigned as **3**, having $(3R^*, 4R^*, 5S^*, 6S^*, 16S^*, 17R^*, 20S^*)$ relative configuration.

Wortmannilactone H (4) was assigned the molecular formula as $C_{26}H_{34}O_5$ on the basis of HR-FAB-MS. The IR, ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectral data of 4 were closely related to those of 1 in the bicyclic ketolactone moiety and 3 in the dihydropyran ring moiety. The remaining signals also showed the presence of a tetraene, which was consistent with those of 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The (*E*) geometry was assigned for the C=C bonds on the basis of the large coupling constant (*J*=15 Hz). On the basis of these data, the structure 4 is proposed for wortmannilactone H (*Table 2*).

Biosynthetic studies showed that the 2,3-dimethylated γ -lactone moiety of prugosene B2 could be the product of hydrolytic opening of the lactone ring in the oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane substructure [8]. The *cis* disposed Me - C(3)/Me - C(4) suggested that **3** should not be the product of cleaving the C(3)/C(4) bond in **4**, the biosynthetic pathway of **3** may be different from that of prugosene B2.

As the initial step of evaluating the biological properties of the compounds isolated in this study, compounds 1-4 were screened for cathepsin B inhibitory activity. The IC_{50} values of compounds 1-4 against cathepsin B were 4.3, 6.5, 13.0, and 6.0 µM, respectively. Leupeptin, the positive control substance, had an IC_{50} value of 7.5 µM (*Fig. 2*).



Fig. 2. Inhibitory activities of compounds 1-4 against cathepsin B (leupeptin as positive control)

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Experimental Part

General. HPLC: Waters HPLC system equipped with a photo-diode array (PDA) detector. Optical rotations: Perkin-Elmer 241 polarimeter at the sodium D line (589 nm). IR Spectra: Nicolet Magna-IR 550 instrument. UV Spectra: Pharmacia Ultrospec 2100 Pro instrument. 1D- and 2D-NMR spectra: Varian Inova-500 spectrometer using standard VARIAN pulse sequences. Mass Spectra: Waters LC-MS ZQ 2000 (ESI mode) or Bruker Daltonics Apex II mass spectrometer (FAB mode).

Fungal Material. The fungus was isolated from a soil sample collected in Chuxiong of Yunnan Province, China (May, 2001). The strain was identified as *Talaromyces wortmannii* according to *Pitt*'s description [16]. The strain was deposited with the *North China Pharmaceutical Group Ltd.* New Drug R&D Center with accession number F01Z0195.

Fermentation and Isolation of Wortmannilactones. T. wortmannii was fermented and the four new tetraene lactones were isolated using a procedure similar to previous work [14]. Briefly, after two stage solid-state fermentation, the solid culture (4 kg) was extracted with AcOEt (4.0 l). The AcOEt layer was evaporated under reduced pressure to yield a residue (20.5 g). The tetraene macrolides were isolated by initial column chromatography on silica gel using CHCl₃ with increasing proportions of MeOH, followed by prep. RP-HPLC, using 80% MeCN/H₂O at a flow rate of 6 ml/min and UV detection at 312 nm to afford **1** (12.8 mg), **2** (8.2 mg), **3** (5.4 mg), and **4** (4.8 mg).

Bioassay. The cathepsin B assays were carried out in triplicate according to a published method [17] with modification: $50 \ \mu$ l of reaction buffer (100 mM AcONa, 1 mM EDTA, 4 mM dithiothreitol, pH 5.5) containing 0.0025 units of cathepsin B and 2 μ l of compounds dissolved in DMSO were added to each well of a 96 well plate. After pre-incubation for 15 min at r.t., $50 \ \mu$ l of reaction buffer (100 μ M Z-Arg-Arg-7-amido-4-methylcoumarin) was added and incubated for 30 min at r.t. Fluorescence was measured using a microplate reader (*Wallac 1420 Victor², Perkin-Elmer Ex 355*, Em 460 nm). The *IC*₅₀ value was defined as the concentration of sample necessary to inhibit the cathepsin B activity to 50% of the control. Leupeptin was used as a positive control substance.

Wortmannilactone E (=(4\$,7R)-7-{(1E,3E,5E,7E)-8-{(2\$,5\$,6\$)-5,6-Dihydro-5-hydroxy-3,5,6-trimethyl-2H-pyran-2-yl]nona-1,3,5,7-tetraen-1-yl]-4,6,7-trimethyl-2-oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane-3,5-dione; **1**). Amorphous powder. [a]_D²⁵ = -38.0 (c =0.125, MeOH). UV (MeOH): 297 (4.12), 312 (4.35), 326 (4.08). IR (KBr): 3300, 1800 (C=O), 1754 (C=O), 1390, 970. ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CD₃OD): Table 1. ESI-MS (pos.): 449 ([M + Na]⁺). ESI-MS (neg.): 425 ([M – H]⁻). HR-FAB-MS (pos.): 449.2298 ([M + Na]⁺, C₂₆H₃₄NaO⁺₃; calc. 449.2304).

Wortmannilactone F (=(4\$,7R)-7-{(1E,3E,5E,7E)-8-{(2\$,5R,6\$)-5,6-Dihydro-5-hydroxy-3,5,6-trimethyl-2H-pyran-2-yl]nona-1,3,5,7-tetraen-1-yl]-4,6,7-trimethyl-2-oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane-3,5-dione; **2**). Amorphous powder. [a]_D²⁵ = -65.0 (c =0.178, MeOH). UV (MeOH): 297 (4.12), 312 (4.36), 326 (4.08). IR (KBr): 3300, 1800 (C=O), 1755 (C=O), 1390, 970. ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CD₃OD): Table 1. ESI-MS (pos.): 449 ([M + Na]⁺). ESI-MS (neg.): 425 ([M - H]⁻). HR-FAB-MS (pos.): 449.2292 ([M + Na]⁺, C₂₆H₃₄NaO⁺₃; calc. 449.2304).

Wortmannilactone G (= Methyl (2R)-2- $[(3R,4R)-3-\{(1E,3E,5E,7E)-8-[(2S,3R,6S)-3,6-Dihydro-3-hydroxy-3,5,6-trimethyl-2H-pyran-2-yl]nona-1,3,5,7-tetraen-1-yl]-3,4-dimethyl-5-oxotetrahydrofuran-2-yl]propanoate;$ **3**). Amorphous powder. [<math>a] $_{25}^{25}$ = -26.0 (c = 0.159, MeOH). UV (MeOH): 297 (4.08), 312 (4.32), 326 (4.18). IR (KBr): 3300, 2920, 1680 (C=O), 1390, 970. ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CD₃OD): Table 2. ESI-MS (pos.): 459 ([M + H]⁺). ESI-MS (neg.): 457 ([M - H]⁻). HR-FAB-MS (pos.): 459.2758 ([M + H]⁺, C₂₇H₃₉O₆⁺; calc. 459.2747).

Wortmannilactone $H = (4\$,7R)-7-\{(1E,3E,5E,7E)-8-\{(2\$,3R,6\$)-3,6-Dihydro-3-hydroxy-3,6-di-methyl-2H-pyran-2-yl]nona-1,3,5,7-tetraen-1-yl]-4,6,7-trimethyl-2-oxabicyclo[2.2.1]heptane-3,5-dione;$

4). Amorphous powder. $[\alpha]_{D}^{25} = -46.0$ (*c* = 0.198, MeOH). UV (MeOH): 297 (4.11), 312 (4.36), 326 (4.09). IR (KBr): 3300, 1801 (C=O), 1754 (C=O). ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CD₃OD): Table 2. ESI-MS (pos.): 449 ($[M + Na]^+$). ESI-MS (neg.): 425 ($[M - H]^-$). HR-FAB-MS (pos.): 449.2289 ($[M + Na]^+$, $C_{26}H_{34}NaO_5^+$; calc. 449.2304).

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