

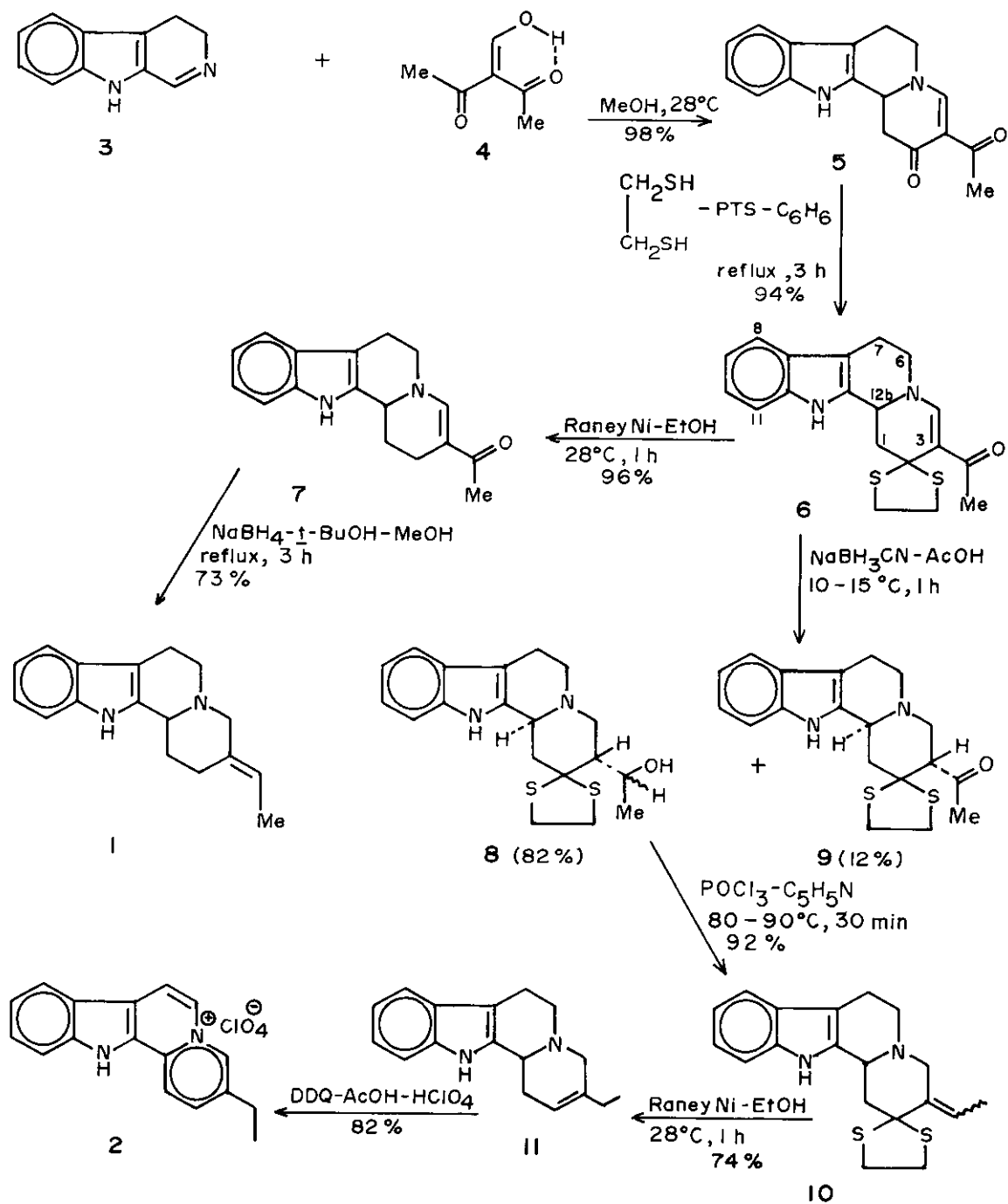
SYNTHESIS OF THE ALKALOIDS (±)-DEPLANCHEINE AND FLAVOPEREIRINE

Parasuraman Jai Sankar, Sankar K. Das, and Venkatachalam S. Giri*
Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Calcutta-700 032, India

Abstract - Desulfurization of 3-acetyl-1,2,6,7,12,12b-hexahydro-indolo[2,3-a]quinolizine-2-ethylene thioketal (6) followed by NaBH_4 reduction afforded (±)-deplancheine (1) whereas NaBH_3CN reduction followed by dehydration, desulfurization and DDQ³ oxidation yielded flavopereirine (2).

The indole alkaloids deplancheine (1),¹ having only an ethylidene side chain with E-configuration at C-3 in an octahydroindolo[2,3-a]quinolizine system, and flavopereirine (2),² inhibitor of in vitro synthesis of cancer DNA, have been synthesised by different groups in moderate to poor yield. In our on-going project concerned with the preparation of potential intermediates for indole alkaloid synthesis, it was conceived that 3-acetyl-1,2,6,7,12,12b-hexahydroindolo[2,3-a]quinolizine-2-one (5)³ could be an ideal intermediate for obtaining alkaloids (1) and (2).

The compound (5) has now been prepared in quantitative yield and at a much faster rate via an improved procedure by condensing 3,4-dihydro- β -carboline (3) with hydroxymethyleneacetylacetone (4).⁴ Thioketalization of 5 with 1,2-ethanedithiol and PTS in refluxing benzene gave only the thioketal (6), desulfurization of which with Raney Ni in ethanol resulted in the known vinyllogous amide (7)⁵ in good yield. The regioselective thioketalization may be explained as follows. Delocalization of the system involving lone pair of nitrogen at N-5, double bond between C-4 and C-3 and the carbonyl of the acetyl group would result in less strain compared to the one arising out of coplanarity of N-5, C-4, C-3 and C-2 ($>\text{C}=\text{O}$) moiety, thus making the ring carbonyl vulnerable to the reaction. Reduction of 7 with NaBH_4 in t-BuOH-MeOH under reflux gave only (±)-E-deplancheine (1) in 73% yield along with some starting material (20%). Stereoselective reduction of similar systems are known⁶ and explained on the basis of steric interaction between the H-4 and



the ethylidene methyl group in the iminium salt with Z-configuration being greater than that in the E-iminium salt [Earlier, we have reported^{1b} the above reduction in 1,4-dioxane].

NaBH_3CN reduction of the thioketal (6) in AcOH afforded on the other hand only a single diastereoisomeric alcohol (8) (82%) besides the reduced ketone (9) (12%). This high stereoselectivity may be explained by assuming prior reduction of the intermediate iminium functionality followed by stereoselective protonation at C-3 from the β -face assisted by the lone pair of N-5. Dehydration of 8 with POCl_3 -pyridine gave the olefin (10) in good yield. Desulfurization of 10 with Raney Ni in ethanol resulted in the isomerised compound (11), the ^1H -nmr of which showed a characteristic triplet at δ 1.06, a quartet at δ 2.02, and a multiplet at δ 5.54 for the endocyclic vinyl ethyl moiety. Finally, oxidation of 11 with DDQ in AcOH gave flavopereirine (2) [confirmed by direct comparison with authentic sample synthesised by us^{2b} previously].

EXPERIMENTAL

Mps taken in open capillaries are uncorrected, ir spectra recorded in a Perkin-Elmer 177 spectrophotometer, ^1H and ^{13}C -nmr spectra were measured on a JEOL FX-100FT nmr spectrometer using TMS as internal standard and the mass spectra (EI) were taken on a Hitachi RMU-6L instrument.

Hydroxymethyleneacetylacetone (4)

Acetylacetone (52 ml, 0.5 mol), triethyl orthoformate (84 ml, 0.5 mol), and acetic anhydride (80 ml) were mixed, refluxed for 3 h and then cooled. Water (20 ml) was added, the reaction mixture was again heated to reflux for 5 min and then cooled. The excess acetic acid was removed under reduced pressure and the residue on Claisen distillation yielded 4 (57.2 g, 90%) as colorless hard crystals, mp 42-43°C; bp 60-62°C/0.3 torr (lit.,⁴ mp 40-42°C).

3-Acetyl-1,2,6,7,12,12b-hexahydroindolo[2,3-a]quinolizin-2-one (5)

To a solution of 3,4-dihydro- β -carboline (3) (1.70 g, 10 mmol) in dry MeOH (40 ml), hydroxymethyleneacetylacetone (4) (1.40 g, 11 mmol) was added at 28°C with stirring under N_2 all at a time. After 10 min crystals started to

appear and the stirring was continued for 2 h more. The reaction mixture was filtered and the solid was recrystallised from MeOH-CHCl₃ to afford 5 (2.72 g, 98%), mp 318-320°C (lit.,³ mp 316-317°C).

3-Acetyl-1,2,6,7,12,12b-hexahydroindolo[2,3-a]quinolizine-2-ethylene thioketal (6)

A mixture of the compound (5) (2.80 g, 10 mmol), *p*-toluenesulfonic acid monohydrate (2.60 g, 14 mmol), and 1,2-ethanedithiol (3 ml, 36 mmol) in benzene (500 ml) was refluxed in a Dean-Stark apparatus and the reaction was monitored by tlc. After 3 h, the reaction mixture was allowed to cool and the benzene portion was decanted. It was washed with 2% NaHCO₃ solution followed by water, dried (Na₂SO₄) and concentrated. The gummy residue was taken in CHCl₃ (100 ml) containing little MeOH (2 ml). This was shaken with 2% NaHCO₃ solution, washed with water, dried (Na₂SO₄) and the solvent was evaporated. The solid formed from this and the decanted portion after removal of solvent benzene (3.34 g, 94%) was recrystallised from petroleum ether-CHCl₃ to afford 6 as colorless flakes, mp 218-220°C; ir ν_{\max} (KBr): 3180, 1630, and 1615 cm⁻¹; uv (log ϵ): λ_{\max} (MeOH) 221 (4.56) and 301 nm (4.44); ¹H-nmr (CDCl₃): δ 2.34 (s, 3H), 2.36-3.00 (m, 4H), 3.38-3.80 (m, 5H), 3.96 (m, 1H), 4.79 (dd, *J*=12, 5 Hz, 1H), 7.10-7.20 (m, 3H), 7.44 (s, 1H), 7.47-7.60 (m, 1H), and 8.19 (br s, 1H); ¹³C-nmr (DMSO-*d*₆): δ 21.3(t), 26.6(q), 40.3(t), 40.8(t), 48.6(t), 49.8(t), 51.9(d), 61.3(s), 106.8(s), 107.6(s), 111(d), 117.6(d), 118.5(d), 121.1(d), 126.1(s), 131.9(s), 136.3 (s), 148.9(d), and 190.3(s); ms m/z (rel. int.): 356(M⁺, 30), 355(28), 313 (66), 297(100), 295(91), 263(56), 169(37), 85(90), and 83(85); Anal. Calcd for C₁₉H₂₀N₂OS₂: C, 64.09; H, 5.66; N, 7.87. Found: C, 63.94; H, 5.61; N, 7.92.

(±)-E-Deplancheine (1)

To a solution of the thioketal (6) (356 mg, 1 mmol) in EtOH (25 ml), Raney Ni (W-2, 2 g) was added, and the reaction mixture was stirred at 28°C for 1 h. The mixture was filtered over a celite bed and the filtrate was evapora-

ted to dryness in vacuo. The residue was crystallised from petroleum ether- CHCl_3 to yield the vinylogous amide (7) as colourless needles (253 mg, 96%), mp 147°C (lit.,⁵ mp $146\text{--}147^\circ\text{C}$). A mixture of the amide (7) (266 mg, 1 mmol), NaBH_4 (400 mg, 10.5 mmol), and *t*-BuOH (15 ml) was refluxed with occasional addition of MeOH (3 ml) in portions for 3 h. When most of the starting material has been consumed (tlc), the reaction mixture was cooled, water (25 ml) was added and excess *t*-BuOH was removed in a rotavapor. The residue was extracted with CHCl_3 (3x30 ml), washed with water, dried (Na_2SO_4), and concentrated in vacuo to yield a gummy residue which was purified by column chromatography over silica gel. Eluates of petroleum ether- CHCl_3 (1:1) were mixed, solvent was evaporated and the residue was recrystallised from ether to yield (\pm)-*E*-deplancheine (1) (185 mg, 73%) as colorless needles, mp $159\text{--}161^\circ\text{C}$ (lit.,^{1b} mp 158°C).

Sodium cyanoborohydride reduction of the thioketal (6)

The thioketal (6) (356 mg, 1 mmol) was dissolved in glacial AcOH (20 ml), the solution was cooled to $10\text{--}15^\circ\text{C}$ and NaBH_3CN (315 mg, 5 mmol) was added under stirring in portions quickly. The reaction mixture was allowed to come to room temperature (28°C) and stirred for a further 30 min. Water (20 ml) was added to the reaction mixture and the excess acid was neutralised with 2% Na_2CO_3 solution. The neutralised mixture was extracted with CHCl_3 (3x30 ml), the organic layer was washed with water, dried (Na_2SO_4) and concentrated to afford a solid which was filtered using little MeOH. The solid was recrystallised from $\text{CHCl}_3\text{--MeOH}$ to yield the alcohol (8) (250 mg, 69%), mp $252\text{--}254^\circ\text{C}$ as colorless microfine needles; ir ν_{max} (KBr): 3510, 3200, 2850-2740 (Bohlmann bands), and 1090 cm^{-1} ; uv (log ϵ): λ_{max} (MeOH) 224 (4.83) and 280 nm (4.23); ^1H -nmr (DMSO- d_6): δ 1.18 (d, $J=6$ Hz, 3H), 1.94 (m, 1H), 2.27 (br s, 1H), 2.54-3.24 (m, 4H), 3.36 (br s, 4H), 4.28 (m, 1H), 4.52 (d, $J=5$ Hz, 1H), 6.84-7.20 (m, 2H), 7.20-7.52 (m, 2H) and 10.77 (br s, 1H); ^{13}C -nmr (DMSO- d_6): δ 19.6(q), 21.4(t), 37.6(t), 38.4 (t), 49.2(t), 51.9(t), 52.2(t), 55.1(t), 58.6(d), 65.1(d), 70.1(s), 106.7 (s), 110.0(d), 117.0(d), 118.0(d), 120.1(d), 126.5(d), 134.5(d), and 135.5

(d); ms m/z (rel. int.): 360(M^+ , 18), 315(11), 299(15), 267(41), 255(26), 184(100), 170(25), 168(31), 156(26), and 45(32); Anal. Calcd for $C_{19}H_{24}N_2OS_2$: C, 63.39; H, 6.72; N, 7.78. Found: C, 63.30, H, 6.76; N, 7.83.

The mother liquor of **8** was evaporated and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel. The eluates from petroleum ether- $CHCl_3$ (1:1) yielded the ketone (**9**) (43 mg, 12%) as colorless fine needles, mp 240-242°C; ir ν_{max} (KBr): 3350, 2850-2760 (Bohlmann bands), and 1690 cm^{-1} ; uv (log ϵ): λ_{max} (MeOH) 271 (3.68), 280 (3.69), and 289 nm (3.62); 1H -nmr (DMSO- d_6): δ 2.02 (m, 1H), 2.34 (s, 3H), 2.40-3.32 (m, 9H), 3.30 (s, 4H), 6.90-7.16 (m, 2H), 7.20-7.54 (m, 2H) and 10.80 (br s, 1H); Anal. Calcd for $C_{19}H_{22}N_2OS_2$: C, 63.74; H, 6.19; N, 7.83. Found: C, 63.65; H, 6.23; N, 7.78.

The $CHCl_3$ eluates gave a further 45 mg to yield a total of 82% of the alcohol (**8**).

Dehydration of the alcohol (8)

To a suspension of the alcohol (**8**) (360 mg, 1 mmol) in pyridine (1 ml), $POCl_3$ (0.3 ml, 3.2 mmol) was added and the resulting homogeneous reaction mixture was heated for 30 min at 80-90°C. The solid mass formed was decomposed with crushed ice, neutralised with 20% NH_4OH solution and extracted with $CHCl_3$ (3x25 ml). The $CHCl_3$ layer was washed with water, dried (Na_2SO_4) and evaporated under reduced pressure to remove traces of pyridine completely. The residue was recrystallised from MeOH to yield the olefin (**10**) (313 mg, 92%), mp 114-116°C; ir ν_{max} (KBr): 3300-3130 and 2850-2720 (Bohlmann bands) cm^{-1} ; uv (log ϵ): λ_{max} (MeOH) 221 (4.81) and 272 nm (4.00); 1H -nmr (DMSO- d_6): δ 1.53 (d, $J=7$ Hz, 3H), 2.38 (m, 1H), 2.76-3.26 (m, 6H), 3.32 (s, 4H), 3.42 (m, 1H), 4.80 (m, 1H), 6.88-7.20 (m, 2H), 7.20-7.56 (m, 2H), and 10.76 (br s, 1H); ms m/z (rel. int.): 342 (M^+ , 23), 341(79), 340 (21), 281(71), 249(52), 221(11), 184(55), and 169(100); Anal. Calcd for $C_{19}H_{22}N_2S_2$: C, 66.72; H, 6.48; N, 8.19. Found: C, 66.63; H, 6.52; N, 8.17.

Flavopereirine (2)

To a solution of the olefin (**10**) (171 mg, 0.5 mmol) in ethanol (15 ml),

Raney Ni (W-2, 1.2 g) was added in portions and the reaction mixture was stirred with tlc monitoring [silica gel, petroleum ether-EtOAc (3:2)]. After the disappearance of the starting material (1 h), the reaction mixture was filtered over a bed of celite, washed with EtOH and the filtrate was evaporated under reduced pressure to afford 11 as a glassy film (94 mg, 74%), $^1\text{H-nmr}$ (CDCl_3): δ 1.06 (t, $J=7$ Hz, 3H), 2.02 (q, $J=7$ Hz, 1H), 2.12-3.90 (m, 7H), 5.54 (m, 1H), 7.04-7.70 (m, 4H), and 7.84 (br s, 1H); ms m/z (rel. int.): 252 (M^+ , 68), 237(5), 223(16), 169(100), and 167(65).

To a solution of 11 (126 mg, 0.5 mmol) in AcOH (15 ml), DDQ (456 mg, 2 mmol) and 70% HClO_4 (0.02 ml) were added and the reaction mixture was heated for 4 h at 80-90°C. Solid formed was filtered and recrystallised (MeOH) to afford flavopereirine perchlorate (2) (140 mg, 82%), mp 316-317°C (dec.) [lit.,⁷ mp 316-317°C (decomp.)].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to Dr. B. C. Maiti, India, for providing a sample of 3-acetyl-1,2,6,7,12,12b-hexahydroindolo[2,3-a]quinolizin-2-one.

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Received, 16th January, 1991