CHEMISTRY OF VERONGIDA SPONGES, II. CONSTITUENTS OF THE CARIBBEAN SPONGE APLYSINA FISTULARIS FORMA FULVA

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ABSTRACT.—A detailed analysis of the secondary metabolites of the Verongida sponge Aplysina fistularis forma fulva has been performed. Twelve bromotyrosine derivatives have been identified, of which two, 14 and 15, are novel compounds. Structure determination of compounds 14 and 15, performed by spectroscopic means, resulted in revision of the ¹³C-nmr assignments of aerothionine [1] and its derivatives. The sponge also elaborates an unusual imidazotetrahydropyrimidine derivative [16], probably derived from histidine, which has not yet been described as a naturally occurring compound.

Verongida are marine horny sponges which are characterized by a unique biochemistry. They all lack terpenes, and possess a moderately high percentage of sterols, generally with the aplystane skeleton, and, above all, elaborate a series of brominated metabolites derived from tyrosine, which are considered to be peculiar to species belonging to this order. Another typical feature of Verongida sponges is their high phenotypic variability, which often results in ambiguous identifications based on diagnostic morphological criteria. In order to utilize their characteristic bromocompounds as chemical markers, which could support taxonomic work, we are studying in detail the secondary metabolites of a number of Verongida species collected during the Fenical expeditions (summers of 1990 and 1992) along the coasts of the Bahama Islands. In this paper we wish to report the results obtained from a detailed analysis of a specimen of a Verongida sponge from Grand Bahama Island, identified as *Aplysina fistularis* forma *fulva* (Pallas).

Some data on the secondary metabolites of this sponge have already been reported. In 1979, Gopichand and Schmitz (2) isolated aerothionine [1], the bis-2-oxazolidone derivative 2, and fistularins-1 [3], -2 [4], and -3 [5] from a specimen collected along the coasts of the Virgin Islands, while in 1981 Makarieva et al. (3), by studying several Verongida from the Cuban coast, identified in the MeOH extract of A. fistularis aeroplysinin-2 [6] and 3,5-dibromo-1-hydroxy-4-oxo-2,5-cyclohexadien-1-acetamide [7], in addition to the ketal 8, which was considered an artifact formed during the isolation. Moreover, in 1981 Tymiak and Rinehart (4) isolated the bromohydroquinone 9, and in 1985 Walker et al. (5) identified aerothionine [1] and homoaerothionine [10] from specimens of A. fistularis collected along the coasts of California. However, none of the above papers has given a comprehensive view of the secondary metabolism of A. fistularis, which is the object of the present communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the BuOH-soluble material from the Me₂CO extracts indicated that our Caribbean specimen of A. fistularis elaborates all the bromo-compounds previously

For Part 1 in this series, see Albrizio et al. (1).

R = H

s R = (S)-MTPA

 $\mathbf{r} = (R) - \mathbf{MTPA}$

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isolated, apart from fistularin-2 and compound 2, which were isolated only in trace amounts by Gopichand and Schimtz. Five further bromo-compounds [11–15] were also isolated. Aeroplysinin 1 [11] was first isolated from Aplysina aerophoba in 1972 (6), and since then has been found in several Verongida sponges. 11-Hydroxyaerothionin [12] has been isolated from Pseudoceratina durissima by Kernon et al. (7), and 11-oxoaerothionin [13] has recently been reported from the Caribbean sea sponge Aplysina lacunosa by Acosta and Rodriguez (8). The two epimeric 11-oxo-12-hydroxyaerothionins, 14 and 15, are novel compounds.

Specimens of A. fistularis were collected by scuba at a depth of 1 m off Grand Bahama Island in July 1992. The BuOH-soluble material from the Me₂CO extracts was chromatographed on Si gel with solvents of increasing polarity. Further separation by repeated hplc on SiO₂ afforded compounds 1 (182 mg), 3 (14 mg), 5 (389 mg), 6 (155 mg), 7 (915 mg), 9 (37 mg), 10 (14.5 mg), 11 (140 mg), 12 (9.5 mg), 13 (13.5 mg), 14 (26.2 mg), and 15 (8.5 mg). Compounds 1, 3, 5–7, and 9–13, isolated as amorphous solids, were identified by comparison of their spectral data with those reported in the literature.

Compound **14** showed in the fabms spectrum a 1:4:6:4:1 quintet at m/z 845, 847, 849, 851, and 853 for the pseudo-molecular ion peak, indicative of the presence of four bromine atoms. Combined analysis of the fabms and ¹³C-nmr spectra suggested the molecular formula $C_{24}H_{24}N_4O_{10}Br_4$, implying thirteen degrees of unsaturation, which was confirmed by elemental analysis. The uv spectrum (λ max 262 nm) indicated the presence of a cyclohexadienyl chromophore. The ir absorption bands showed the presence of alcohol (3402 cm⁻¹), ketone (1728 cm⁻¹), and α -imino-amide (1665 cm⁻¹) groups in the molecule.

The ¹H- and ¹³C-nmr spectra of **14** showed signals (see Table 1) corresponding to two 1-hydroxy-2,4-dibromo-3-methoxy-8-carbamoylspirocyclohexadienylisoxazole moieties. The splitting of some ¹H- and ¹³C-nmr signals, which are slightly different for one ring as compared to the other, suggested that compound 14 has the same ring systems as aerothionin 1, but unlike this latter bromo-compound it has an asymmetrical structure. The partial structure, which links the two spirocyclohexadienyl-8-carbamoyl moieties, must be a C₄H₆O₂ group from mass spectral data; the ¹³C-nmr spectrum showed the four carbon atoms as being composed of one carbonyl (\delta 207.84), one oxygenbearing methine (δ 75.73), and two methylene (δ 49.86 and 43.43) groups. The crosspeaks between the methine proton at δ 4.402 (H-12) and the methylene protons at δ 3.662 and 3.628 (H₂-13) in the COSY spectrum, together with the low-field resonances of the same methine proton and the remaining methylene protons H₂-10 (8 4.430 and 4.412), due to the deshielding effect of the carbonyl group, allowed establishment of this partial structure as reported in 14. Additional support for structure 14 came from a COLOC experiment, which revealed coupling of C-9 with H-10, C-9' with H-13a, and C-11 with H-12. The absolute stereochemistry of the chiral centers of the spirocyclohexadiene groups was suggested by the cd spectrum, which is analogous to the spectrum reported for aerothionin (9), whose absolute stereochemistry is known.

The COLOC nmr experiment performed on compound **14** also revealed a mistake in the ¹³C-nmr resonance assignment reported in the literature (7, 8, 10) for the spirocyclohexadiene group frequently present in metabolites from Verongida sponges. It consists of the inversion of the chemical shifts of C-2 and C-4. Examination of literature data revealed that all the previous assignments of C-2 and C-4 in compounds possessing a similar spirocyclohexadiene group were based on a paper by Kashman *et al.* (10), in which the ¹³C-nmr spectrum of aerothionin [**1**] was assigned by comparison with the spectrum of psammaplysin **A**. However, in a subsequent paper (11) Scheuer demonstrated that Kashman's structure of psammaplysin-**A** [**17**] was incorrect, and that the

TABLE 1. Nmr Spectral Data of Compounds 1, 14, and 15 (CD₃OD).²

Position	1	14	15 ⁵	
	δ _C (mult.)	$\delta_{\rm H}$ (mult., J in Hz)	δ _C (mult.)	$\delta_{\rm H}$ (mult., J in Hz)
1,1'	75.5 (CH)	4.144 (d, 0.9),	75.47 (CH),	4.146 (d, 0.9),
·		4.126 (d, 0.9)	75.47 (CH)	4.129 (d, 0.9)
2,2'	114.2 (C)		114.14 (C),	
			114.14 (C)	
3,3'	149.3 (C)		149.28 (C),	
			149.28 (C)	
4,4'	122.7 (C)		122.78 (C),	
			122.78 (C)	
5,5'	133.2 (CH)	6.469 (d, 0.9),	132.23 (CH),	6.464 (d, 0.9),
		6.450 (d, 0.9)	133.21 (CH)	6.473 (d, 0.9)
6,6′	92.6 (C)		92.64 (C),	
			92.54 (C)	
7a,7'a	40.1 (CH ₂)	3.150 (d, 18.3),	40.09 (CH ₂),	3.144 (d, 18.3),
		3.124 (d, 18.3)	40.03 (CH ₂)	3.130 (d, 18.3)
7b,7′b		3.822 (d, 18.3),		3.822 (d, 18.3),
		3.811 (d, 18.3)		3.800 (d, 18.3)
8,8'	155.5 (C)		155.12 (C),	
			154.92 (C)	
9,9′	161.6 (C)		161.93 (C),	
			161.80 (C)	((00 (1 40 0)
10a	38.4 (CH ₂)	4.430 (d, 18.8),	49.87 (CH ₂)	4.430 (d, 18.8),
10b		4.416 (d, 18.8)	207.07.60	4.416 (d, 18.8)
11	26.1 (CH ₂)	((00 (11 (0 (0)	207.84 (C)	((0) (1) (2) (0)
12	26.1 (CH ₂)	4.402 (dd, 6.3, 4.9)	75.73 (CH)	4.406 (dd, 6.3, 4.9)
13a	38.4 (CH ₂)	3.662 (dd, 13.9, 4.9),	43.43 (CH ₂)	3.662 (dd, 13.9, 4.9),
13b	(0.//677)	3.628 (dd, 13.9, 6.3)	(0.20 (CII.)	3.628 (dd, 13.9, 6.3)
-OMe	60.4 (CH ₃)	3.761 (s)	60.39 (CH ₃),	3.761 (s)
		3.757 (s)	60.39 (CH ₃)	3.757 (s)

^aAssignment based on DEPT, COSY, HETCOR, and COLOC experiments.

actual structure [18] possessed a oxacycloheptadiene rather than a cyclohexadiene ring. Consequently, the grounds for Kashman's assignment of the aerothionin ¹³C-nmr spectrum also vanished; nevertheless, Kashman's assignment has continued to be used for reference purposes. Our reassignment rests on the presence of correlation peaks between H-1/H-1' with C-2/C-2' and between H-5/H-5' with C-4/C-4' in the COLOC spectrum of compound 14, which clearly showed that the carbon signals at δ 114.14 and 122.7 are to be assigned to C-2/C-2' and C-4/C-4', respectively. The ¹³C-nmr spectra of aerothionine (see Table 1) and its derivatives are reassigned accordingly.

^bThe ¹³C-nmr spectrum of **15** is superimposable with that of **14**.

Compound 15, isolated in smaller amounts, exhibited ¹³C-nmr, uv, ir, and fabms spectra identical to that of 14. Comparison of the ¹H-nmr data of 15, reported in Table 1, and assigned on the basis of a COSY experiment, with those of 14 confirmed the strong similarity between the two compounds, suggesting that they differ only in some stereochemical details. Because their cd spectra, which are sensitive to the configuration of the spirocyclohexadiene chromophores (9), are superimposable, 14 and 15 were concluded as being epimers at C-12.

In order to confirm this hypothesis, the stereochemistries at C-12 of compounds 14and 15 were investigated by the modified Mosher's method suggested by Kakisawa (12). Two aliquots of each of the two epimers were separately treated with R-(+)- and S-(-)methoxy(trifluoromethyl)phenylacetyl (MTPA) chloride in pyridine solution at room temperature for 2 h, thus obtaining the four triesters 14r, 14s, 15r, and 15s. The stereochemical determinations were based on the chemical shift differences of methylene protons at C-10 and C-13, which were assumed to be mainly affected by the MTPA group at C-12, as they are located relatively far away from the MTPA groups at C-1 and C-1'. The observed chemical shift differences (see Table 2) were in rather good agreement with the Mosher's model, except for the anomalous behavior of H-13b in compound 15r-15s, which could be explained by the influence of the MTPA groups linked at C-1 and C-1'. Both H-10a and H-10b are deshielded in **14s** with respect to **14r**, while H-13a is shielded. Conversely, H-10a and H-10b are shifted upfield and H-13a is shifted downfield in compound 15s compared to 15r. The obtained results, taken together, suggested a 12S stereochemistry for compound 14 and a 12R stereochemistry for compound 15.

In addition to the above compounds, all biogenetically derived from bromotyrosine, fractionation of the extract of A. fistularis led to the isolation of a new metabolite (**16**, 220 mg), which is closely related to histidine. Compound **16**, isolated as a white solid, showed a pseudo-molecular ion peak at m/z 150 in the fabrus spectrum, appropriate for a molecular formula of $C_6H_8N_3O$. Its very simple ¹H-nmr spectrum had two 1H singlets in the olefinic region and two mutually coupled 2H triplets at δ 2.30 and δ 1.71, while in the ¹³C-nmr spectrum only six resonances were present (see Experimental). These data, together with proton-proton and proton-carbon chemical shift correlation 2D-nmr

TABLE 2. Selected ¹H-Nmr Chemical Shifts of Compounds 14r, 14s, 15r, and 15s.

Position	14r	14s	Δδ	15r	15s	Δδ
10a	4.35	4.49	+0.14	4.42	4.27	-0.15
	4.22	4.30	+0.08	4.39	4.27	-0.12
	3.99	3.88	-0.11	3.84	3.92	-0.06
	3.73	3.73	0.00	3.84	3.77	+0.07

experiments, showed **16** to be imidazo-[1,5-c]-tetrahydropyrimidine-5-one, a product previously prepared by Mechoulam and Hirshfeld (13) as an intermediate in the synthesis of zapotidine. To the best of our knowledge, compound **16** has not been found as a naturally occurring compound.

EXPERIMENTAL

GENERAL EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES.—Fabms were obtained in a glycerol matrix on a VG ZAB mass spectrometer (Xe atoms of energy of 2-6 kV). Ft-ir spectra were recorded on a Bruker IFS-48 spectrophotometer with CHCl₃. Uv spectra were performed on a Beckman DU70 spectrometer in MeOH solution. Circular dichroism spectra were performed on a Jasco J-710 spectrophotometer in MeOH solution. 13 C-nmr spectra were determined on a Bruker AMX-500 spectrometer. Chemical shifts are referenced to the residual solvent signal (CD₃OD: $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.34, $\delta_{\rm C}$ 49.0; CF₃COOD: $\delta_{\rm H}$ 10.50, $\delta_{\rm C}$ 163.7). Methyl, methylene, and methine carbons were distinguished by DEPT experiments. Homonuclear 1 H connectivities were determined by using the COSY experiment. One-bond heteronuclear 1 H- 13 C connectivities were determined with a HETCOR pulse sequence optimized for 1 J_{CH} of 135 Hz. Two- and three-bond 1 H- 13 C connectivities were determined by COLOC experiments, optimized for $^{2.3}$ J_{CH} of 8 Hz. Medium-pressure liquid chromatography (mplc) was performed on a Büchi 861 apparatus using a SiO₂ (230–400 mesh) column. Hplc separations were performed on a Varian 2510 apparatus equipped with an RI-3 refractive index detector, using Hibar columns.

EXTRACTION AND ISOLATION.—The sponge A. fistularis was collected (depth 1m) in the summer of 1992, along the coast of Grand Bahama Island and was stored frozen at -20°. Reference specimens are deposited at the Dipartimento di Chimica delle Sostanze Naturali dell'Università di Napoli.

The sponge (167 g dry wt after extraction) was homogenized and extracted with Me_2CO (4×1 liter). The combined solutions, after filtration, were concentrated in vacuo to an aqueous suspension which was subsequently extracted with n-hexane (4×500 ml) and BuOH (6×500 ml). The BuOH extract, after evaporation of the solvent, afforded 12 g of a dark brown oil, which was chromatographed by mplc on a Si gel column using a solvent gradient system from n-hexane to EtOAc and then to MeOH. Fractions eluted with n-hexane-EtOAc (6:4) (fraction A), n-hexane-EtOAc (3:7) (fraction B), and EtOAc (fractions C and D) containing bromotyrosines, and a fraction eluted with EtOAc-MeOH (9:1) containing compound 16, were further separated.

Fraction A, containing aeroplysinins 1 and 2, which was chromatographed by hplc using a Hibar Lichrospher Si $60.10 \mu m (10 \times 250 \text{ mm})$ column with a mobile phase of EtOAc-CHCl₃ (1:1), afforded 140 mg of aeroplysinin-1 [11] and 155 mg of aeroplysinin-2 [6].

Fraction B was purified by hplc on SiO_2 with a mobile phase of EtOAc-CHCl₃ (9:1) to obtain fistularin-3 (5, 208 mg) as a pure compound.

Fraction C, which was further purified using an SiO₂ column with a mobile phase of EtOAc-CHCl₃ (1:1), also contained fistularin-3 (**5**, 181 mg) in addition to aerothionine (**1**, 182 mg) and homoaerothionine (**10**, 14.5 mg).

Fraction D was chromatographed by hplc on SiO_2 with a mobile phase of EtOAc-CHCl₃ (9:1), giving 915 mg of 3,5-dibromo-1-hydroxy-4-oxo-2,5-cyclohexadien-1-acetamide [7], 37 mg of 3,5-dibromohydroquinone-2-acetamide [9], 9.5 mg of 11-hydroxyaerothionine [12], 13.5 mg of 11-oxoaerothionine [13], 14 mg of fistularin-1 [3], and 38 mg of a mixture of 14 and 15. Final separation of this mixture was achieved by hplc on a Hibar Lichrospher Si 60 column (4×250 mm) using CHCl₃-MeOH (97:3) as eluent, to obtain 26.2 mg of 14 (relative R_i =1.00) and 8.5 mg of 15 (relative R_i =1.07) as pure compounds.

12S-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionine [14].—[α]²⁵D +152.5°; fabms m/z [M+H]⁺ 845, 847, 849, 851, 853; anal. (Galbraith Labs, Inc.), found: C, 34.02; H, 2.80; N, 6.51; calcd for $C_{24}H_{24}N_4O_{10}Br_4$ C 33.96; H, 2.83; N, 6.60; uv λ max (MeOH) 280.5 (ϵ 10600), 231 (ϵ 17400) nm; cd (MeOH) $\Delta\epsilon_{288}$ +15.2, $\Delta\epsilon_{250}$ +18.2; ir (neat) ν max 3402, 1728, 1665 cm⁻¹; ¹H- and ¹³C-nmr data, see Table 1.

12R-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionine [15].—[α]²⁵D +160.7°; fabms m/z [M+H]⁺ 845, 847, 849, 851, 853; uv λ max (MeOH) 281 (ϵ 10500), 230.5 (ϵ 17500) nm; cd (MeOH) $\Delta \epsilon_{288}$ +15.0, $\Delta \epsilon_{251}$ +18.3; ir (neat) ν max 3350, 1732, 1662 cm⁻¹; ¹H- and ¹³C-nmr data, see Table 1.

Fraction E afforded a mixture containing compound 16. It was rechromatographed by hplc on an SiO_2 column with a mobile phase of EtOAc-MeOH (95:5) to obtain pure 16 (220 mg).

Imidazo-[1,5-c]-tetrabydropyrimidin-5-one [16].—White solid, mp 220°; fabms m/z [M+H]⁺ 150; 1 H nmr (CF₃COOD) δ 7.87 (1H, s, H₁-3), 7.69 (1H, s, H₁-1), 2.30 (2H, t, J=6.5 Hz, H₂-7), 1.73 (2H, t, J=6.5 Hz, H₂-8); 13 C nmr (CF₃COOD) δ 140.1 (C-5), 134.7 (C-3), 131.9 (C-9), 117.0 (C-1), 39.9 (C-7), 18.8 (C-8).

Aereothionine [1] (14), fistularin-1 [3] (2), fistularin-3 [5] (2), aeroplysinin-2 [6] (15), 3,5-dibromol-hydroxy-4-oxo-2,5-cyclohexadiene-1-acetamide [7] (16), 3,5-dibromohydroquinone-2-acetamide [9] (17), homoaereothionine [10] (14), aeroplysinin-1 [11] (6), 11-hydroxyaerothionine [12] (7), and 11-oxoaerothionine [13] (8) were identified by comparison of their spectral properties with those reported in the literature. A revised assignment of the ¹³C-nmr spectrum of aerothionine [1] is reported in Table 1.

SYNTHESIS OF THE (R)- AND (S)-MTPA ESTERS OF 14 AND 15.—To compound 14 or 15 (2.5 mg) in 200 μ l of anhydrous pyridine, 5 μ l of (R)-MTPA chloride [MTPA= α -methoxy- α -(trifluoromethyl)phenylacetyl] were added, and the mixture was allowed to react at room temperature. After 2 h, 5 ml of H₂O and solid K₂CO₃ were added, and the solution was extracted with CHCl₃ (5 ml). The organic phase, after evaporation of the solvent, yielded the (R)-MTPA triesters 14r (2.2 mg) or 15r (1.9 mg). The use of (S)-MTPA chloride in the same procedure led to the (S)-MTPA triesters 14s (1.7 mg) or 15s (1.6 mg).

12S-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionine (R)-MTPA triester [14 \mathbf{r}].—¹H nmr (CD₃OD) δ 6.54 and 6.51 (1H each, s, H-5 and H-5'), 6.00 and 5.93 (1H, each, s, H-1 and H-1'), 5.65 (1H, dd, J=7.1 and 4.4 Hz, H-12), 4.35 (1H, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-10a), 4.22 (1H, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-10b), 3.99 (1H, dd, J=14.5 and 4.4 Hz, H-12a), 3.73 (submerged), 3.19 and 3.13 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7a and H-7'a), 3.05 and 3.03 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7b and H-7'b).

12S-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionine (S)-MTPA triester [14s].—¹H nmr (CD₃OD) δ 6.65 and 6.61 (1H each, s, H-5 and H-5'), 6.08 and 6.01 (1H each, s, H-1 and H-1'), 5.64 (1H, dd, J=7.1 and 4.4 Hz, H-12), 4.49 (1H, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-10a), 4.30 (1H, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-10b), 3.88 (1H, dd, J=14.5 and 4.4 Hz, H-12a), 3.73 (submerged), 3.48 and 3.37 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7a and H-7'a), 3.27 and 3.22 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7b and H-7'b).

12R-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionine (R)-MTPA triester [15 \mathbf{r}].—¹H nmr (CD₃OD) δ 6.49 and 6.46 (1H each, s, H-5 and H-5'), 6.01 and 5.90 (1H each, s, H-1 and H-1'), 5.68 (1H, dd, J=6.2 and 4.5 Hz, H-12), 4.42 and 4.39 (2H, AB system, J=18.5 Hz, H-10a and H-10b), 3.84 (2H, m, H-12a and H-12b), 3.18 and 3.09 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7a and H-7'a), 3.07 and 2.96 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7b and H-7'b).

12R-Hydroxy-11-oxoaereothionin (S)-MTPA triester [15s].— ¹H nmr (CD₃OD) δ 6.67 and 6.60 (1H each, s, H-5 and H-5'), 6.09 and 6.00 (1H each, s, H-1 and H-1'), 5.66 (1H, dd, J=6.8 and 3.8 Hz, H-12), 4.27 (2H, s, H-10a and H-10b), 3.92 (1H, dd, J=14.5 and 3.8 Hz, H-12a), 3.77 (submerged), 3.48 and 3.43 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7a and H-7'a), 3.28 and 3.25 (1H each, d, J=18.5 Hz, H-7b and H-7'b).

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