Cycloartane Triterpenoids from Kleinhovia hospita

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Received January 19, 2009

Four new cycloartane triterpenoids, together with the known gardenolic acid B, were isolated from *Kleinhovia hospita*. The triterpenoids (1–3) contain a unique 21,23-diacetal side-chain, while compound 4 contains two α,β -unsaturated ketone moieties. Their structures and relative configurations were determined by spectroscopic methods, including 2D NMR and IR. These compounds showed promising hepatoprotective effects on nitrofurantoin-induced cytotoxicity in human liver-derived Hep G2 cells.

Kleinhovia hospita Linn. (Sterculiaceae) is an evergreen arbor commonly found in tropical areas of Asia, Africa, and Oceania.¹ As the only species representing the genus *Kleinhovia*, it has been used as a folk medicine in parts of Malaya, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and China for the treatment of pruritus, tetter, epatitis, and scabies.² To date, there are only two phytochemical studies of this species, with several fatty acids and flavonoids identified.³

Our interest in searching for novel bioactive natural products from folk medicines prompted us to conduct a chemical investigation of *K. hospita*. Repeated chromatography of the 95% EtOH extract of this plant led to four new cycloartane triterpenoids (1–4) and the known compound gardenolic acid B. Compounds 1–3 are new cycloartane triterpenoids with a unique 21,23-diacetal (bicyclic tetrhydrofuran/furanone) side-chain, while the new 4 possesses two α,β -unsaturated ketone moieties.

Cycloartane triterpenoids, namely, 9,19-cyclotetracyclic triterpenoids, are commonly found throughout the plant kingdom and play a key role in the biosynthesis of steroids.⁴ Many of them have been shown to possess various bioactivities such as antitumor, antivirus, and hepatoprotection.⁵ Previously, an unsubstituted C-21 methyl was considered to be characteristic of cycloartane triterpenoids.^{4a} However, some cycloartane triterpenoids with C-21 oxygenated substitutions were later identified from plants.⁶ Uvariastrol, isolated from *Uvariastrum zenkeri* in 1984, was the first cycloartane triterpenoid with a unique 21,23-diacetal side-chain.^{6a} The current study is the second report of this type of cycloartane triterpenoids and the first report of this class being isolated from the Sterculiaceae. In this paper, we present the isolation and structure elucidation of five cycloartane triterpenoids from *K. hospita* and their hepatoprotective activities.

Results and Discussion

Compound **1** was isolated as a white, amorphous powder and had a molecular formula of $C_{31}H_{42}O_5$, indicated by a positive HRESIMS pseudomolecular ion peak at m/z 495.3111 [M + H]⁺ (calcd 495.3105). The IR spectrum of **1** showed the presence of an unsaturated ketone (1668 cm⁻¹) and an unsaturated lactone group (1767 cm⁻¹).⁷ The five methyls at δ_H 1.94 (3H, d, J = 1.6 Hz), 1.09 (3H, s), 1.04 (3H, s), 0.96 (3H, s), and 0.89 (3H, s), the H-19 doublets at δ_H 0.74 and 1.34 (each, 1H, d, J = 4.8 Hz), and the olefinic proton at δ_H 6.66 (1H, s) observed in the ¹H NMR spectrum suggested that **1** is a typical cycloartane triterpenoid with a 21,23diacetal side-chain.^{6a,7} This was further supported by the ¹³C NMR and DEPT spectra, which showed 30 signals including five methyl, $\begin{array}{c} & & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\$

eight methylene, eight methine, and nine quaternary carbons. The α,β -unsaturated ketone moiety was recognized by the NMR signals at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 205.2, 153.5, 126.8 and $\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.79 (1H, d, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.96 (1H, d, J = 10.1 Hz), while the characteristic NMR signals at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 171.2, 144.1, 133.7, 110.7 and $\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.66 (1H, s) demonstrated the existence of the α , β -unsaturated lactone moiety.^{6a} In addition, the NMR signals at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 56.2 and $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.40 (3H, s) indicated a methoxy group. The complete assignments of the overall structure and the ¹H and ¹³C NMR signals of **1** were achieved by a combination of ¹H, ¹³C, DEPT, HSQC, ¹H-¹H COSY, HMBC, and NOESY experiments. The multiplicities of the carbon and proton signals were obtained from the HSQC spectrum. The ¹H-¹H COSY spectrum revealed four proton spin systems, as seen in Figure 1. Finally, interpretation of the HMBC spectrum with the aid of HSQC and COSY spectra led to the establishment of the structure skeleton of 1. As shown in Figure 1, the HMBC correlations of H-1, H₃-28, and H₃-29 with C-3, H₂-19 with C-1, and H-2 with C-10 revealed the presence of ring A, while the correlations of H_2 -19 with C-5, C-8, C-9, and C-10 and the transannular correlations of H-1 with C-9 and H₂-6 with C-4 established critical parts of the 9,19cyclopropyl ring and ring B. Similarly, the structures of rings C and D as well as the 21,23-diacetal side-chain were established by the long-range correlations as shown in Figure 1. A key HMBC correlation of $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.40 (3H, s) with $\delta_{\rm C}$ 111.7 placed the methoxy group at C-21.

The relative configuration of **1** was determined through NOE correlations. The key correlations of H-19 β with H₃-29 and H-8, and H-8 with H₃-18, observed in the NOESY experiment of **1** suggested that these protons were β -oriented, while the NOE correlations of H₃-28/H-5, H-5/H-7 α , H-7 α /H₃-30, and H₃-30/H-17 revealed their α -orientation (Figure 2). A molecular dynamics study in the MM2 force field (Chem3D 11.0) and a conformational analysis performed in the MMFF94 molecular mechanics force field (SPARTAN 04) showed that the carbon skeleton of **1** was rigid to some extent and only one dominating conformation was found

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^{10.1021/}np900029z CCC: \$40.75



Figure 1. ¹H $^{-1}$ H COSY (-) correlations of 1; key HMBC (\rightarrow) correlations of 1-3 (dashed arrows only observed for 3).



Figure 2. Key NOESY (---) correlations of 1-3.

(Figure 2). The rotation around the C-17–C-20 bond to form various lowest energy conformations was restricted.⁸ The NOE correlations of H-20/H₃-18, H-20/H-22 β and H-21/H-17, H-22 α /H-24, H-24/H₃-26 supported the orientation of these protons and the two oxygen heterocycles. Assuming the same absolute configuration at C-13 and C-20 in **1** as in other cycloartanes based on biogenetic considerations, the overall structure of **1** was therefore determined to be 21*S*,23*R*-21/23,23/27-diepoxy-21-methoxycy-cloartan-1,24-diene-3,27-dione.

Compounds 2 and 3 were isolated in a mixture and could not be further separated by HPLC under several optimized conditions. The ¹H NMR spectrum of the mixture showed that **2** and **3** were in a ratio of about 1:1 as determined by integration values of H-21. This mixture gave the same $[M - H]^-$ ion at m/z 479.2798 in the HRESIMS (negative ion mode), suggesting 2 and 3 were isomers. The NMR signals of the methoxy group at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 56.2 and $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.40 (3H, s) in 1 did not appear in 2 and 3. This, together with the HRESIMS data, indicated the absence of the methoxy group in 2 and 3. The 13 C NMR spectra of compounds 1, 2, and 3 were very similar, except for the chemical shifts of C-17, C-20, C-21, and C-22 due to the substitutions and the configuration at C-21. The ¹³C NMR data allowed for the differentiation of the isomers as the chemical shifts of carbons C-17, C-20, C-21, and C-22 of 2 and 3 displayed significant differences (Table 2). As observed in the NOESY spectrum of the mixture, the key correlations of H-21 with H-17 for 2 and H-21 with H₃-18 for 3 supported the proposed configuration at C-21 for 2 and 3. The ¹H and ¹³C signals (Tables 1 and 2) of 2 and 3 were unambiguously assigned by detailed analyses of ¹H, ¹³C, DEPT, HSQC, HMBC, and NOESY spectra

Table 1. ¹H NMR Data of Compounds 1-3 (400 MHz in CDCl₃)

Н	1	2	3
1	6.79 d (10.1)	6.78 d (10.1)	6.78 d (10.1)
2	5.96 d (10.1)	5.96 d (10.1)	5.96 d (10.1)
5	2.14 dd (12.9, 3.9)	2.14 m	2.14 m
6a	1.35m	1.55m	1.55m
6b	1.11 m	1.10 m	1.10 m
7α	1.24 m	1.25 m	1.25 m
7β	1.40 m1.	60 m	1.60 m
8	2.09 m	2.09 m	2.09 m
11a	1.85 m	1.81 m	1.81 m
11b	1.71 m	1.71 m	1.71 m
12a	1.57 m	1.69 m	1.73 m
12b	1.51 m	1.58 m1.	39 m
15	1.34 m	1.38 m	1.38 m
16a	1.79 m	1.83 m	1.83 m
16b	1.30 m	1.37 m1.	37 m
17	1.93 m	1.91 m	2.17 m
18	1.04 s	1.07 s	1.02 s
19α	0.74 d (4.8)	0.71 d (4.5)	0.70 d (4.5)
19β	1.34 d (4.8)	1.34 (overlap)	1.34 (overlap)
20	2.65 m	2.55 m	2.55 m
21	4.89 d (5.1)	5.30 dd (9.2, 5.0)	5.58 m
22α	1.89 dd (12.9, 11.0)	1.93 m	2.05 m
22β	2.25 dd (12.9, 7.2)	2.27 m	2.23 m
24	6.66 s	6.68 d (1.6)	6.73 d (1.6)
26	1.94 d (1.6)	1.94 d (1.6)	1.92 d (1.6)
28	1.09 s	1.09 s	1.09 s
29	0.96 s	0.96 s	0.96 s
30	0.89 s	0.89 s	0.90 s
other	MeO: 3.40 s	OH: 3.11 d (9.2)	OH: 2.91 d (2.9)

Table 2. ¹³C NMR Data of Compounds 1-4 (100 MHz in CDCl₃)

= = = -37				
carbon	1	2	3	4
1	153.5	153.6	153.5	154.0
2	126.8	126.8	126.8	126.7
3	205.2	205.4	205.4	205.3
4	45.9	45.8	45.8	45.9
5	43.9	43.8	43.7	44.2
6	19.1	19.0	18.9	19.4
7	22.7	22.6	22.6	23.2
8	42.4	42.2	42.1	43.4
9	24.9	25.0	25.1	24.7
10	30.0	30.1	30.1	29.8
11	27.6	27.7	27.5	27.8
12	30.1	30.1	31.3	32.2
13	45.6	45.6	45.4	49.3
14	49.0	49.0	48.8	45.4
15	34.0	33.9	34.3	34.4
16	27.0	26.8	27.0	28.0
17	49.7	49.7	44.1	52.1
18	17.1	17.2	18.1	16.8
19	28.1	27.8	27.9	29.1
20	45.8	48.5	44.7	33.3
21	111.7	105.2	99.4	19.4
22	41.9	42.4	38.4	51.6
23	110.7	110.8	110.9	201.5
24	144.1	143.9	146.2	124.3
25	133.7	133.9	132.4	154.9
26	10.5	10.5	10.4	27.7
27	171.2	171.2	171.0	20.7
28	21.4	21.3	21.3	21.4
29	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1
30	18.4	18.4	18.3	18.4
MeO	56.2			

and by comparison of the ¹H and ¹³C NMR data of **1**. From the above evidence, the structures of **2** and **3** were elucidated as 21S,23R-21/23,23/27-diepoxy-21-hydroxycycloartan-1,24-diene-3,27-dione and 21R,23R-21/23,23/27-diepoxy-21-hydroxycycloartan-1,24-diene-3,27-dione, respectively.



Figure 3. Key HMBC (\rightarrow) and NOESY (--) correlations of 4.

Compound 4, an amorphous powder, exhibited a positive HRESIMS at m/z 437.3418 [M + H]⁺, corresponding to a molecular formula of $C_{30}H_{45}O_2$. The IR spectrum of 4 showed the presence of α,β -unsaturated ketone absorptions (1664 cm⁻¹), similar to that of 1-3. The ¹³C NMR and DEPT spectra of 4 exhibited 30 carbons including seven methyl, eight methylene, seven methine, and eight quaternary carbons. This, together with the seven methyls at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 2.13 (3H, s), 1.88 (3H, s), 1.08 (3H, s), 0.99 (3H, s), 0.95 (3H, s), 0.88 (3H, s), and 0.88 (3H, d, J = 5.2 Hz) and the H-19 doublets at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 0.74, 1.29 (each, 1H, d, J = 4.5 Hz) indicated that 4 is a typical cycloartane triterpenoid with a linear side-chain devoid of oxygenation at C-21. The two α,β -unsaturated ketone moieties were indicated by two carbonyl carbons at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 205.3 and 201.5, four olefinic carbon signals at δ_C 154.9, 154.0, 126.7, and 124.3, and three olefinic proton signals at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.77 (1H, d, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.93 (1H, d, J = 10.1 Hz), and 6.05 (1H, s). The assignments of the three olefinic protons H-1, H-2, and H-24 and the two ketones at C-3 and C-23 were made on the basis of the HMBC correlations as shown in Figure 3. The HMBC correlations of H-20/C-16, H-20/ C-23, H₃-21/C-17, H₃-21/C-20, H₃-21/C-22, H-22/C-23, H-24/C-23, H₃-26/C-24, and H₃-27/C-24 confirmed part of the linear sidechain. The relative configuration of 4 was concluded from NOEs (Figure 3) obtained from the NOESY spectrum that displayed key correlations of H-5/H₃-28, H-5/H-7α, H-7α/H₃-30, H-8/H₃-18, H-8/ H-19 β (δ 1.29, d, J = 4.5 Hz), H-19 β /H₃-29, H-17/H-21, H-17/ H-30, and H-18/H-20. The full assignments of ¹H and ¹³C NMR signals of 4 were based on HSQC, HMBC, and NOESY correlations (Figure 3). Accordingly, compound 4, a new cycloartane triterpenoid, was determined to be cycloartan-1,24-diene-3,23-dione.

The known compound was identified as gardenolic acid B by analyses of its ¹H, ¹³C, HSQC, and HMBC spectra and by comparison of the literature data.⁹

The five isolated cycloartane triterpenoids were tested for their hepatoprotective effects on nitrofurantoin-induced cytotoxicity in human hepatoma Hep G2 cells. Compound **1**, the mixture of **2** and **3**, compound **4**, and gardenolic acid B exhibited promising hepatoprotective activities, with EC₅₀ values (mean \pm SD) of 123.1 \pm 15.7, 37.9 \pm 5.3, 109.1 \pm 16.2, and 66.4 \pm 7.1 μ M, respectively. Silybin (EC₅₀ = 75.7 \pm 6.5 μ M) was used as positive control.

Experimental Section

General Experimental Procedures. Optical rotations were measured on a JASCO p-1030 polarimeter. IR spectra were recorded on a Bruker VECTOR 22 FT-IR spectrometer. UV spectra were recorded on a Varian Inova-400 spectrometer. NMR spectra were measured on a Varian HRESIMS were measured on a Waters UPLC/MS/MS ACQUITY TQD instrument and a Bruker Daltonics Bio TOF-Q mass spectrometer, respectively. Precoated silica gel GF254 plates (Qingdao Haiyang Chemical Co. Ltd., Qingdao, People's Republic of China) were used for TLC. Silica gel (200–300 mesh), C₁₈ reversed-phase silica gel (150–200 mesh, Merck), and MCI gel (CHP20P, 75–150 μ m, Mitsubishi Chemical Industries Ltd.) were used for column chromatography. All solvents were analytical grade (Shanghai Chemical Plant, Shanghai, People's Republic of China).

Plant Material. Leaves and twigs of *K. hospita* (8 kg) were collected from Hainan Province, People's Republic of China, in December 2007, and authenticated by Prof. Shi-Man Huang, Department of Biology, Hainan University, People's Republic of China. A voucher specimen has been deposited at the Institute of Modern Chinese Medicine, Zhejiang University (accession number KH-2007-I).

Extraction and Isolation. The dried plant material of K. hospita was ground and extracted three times with 95% EtOH for 15 days (5 days for each extraction) at room temperature. The solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure to give a crude extract (288 g). The EtOH extract was suspended in 1.5 L of H₂O and partitioned successively with petroleum ether, EtOAc, and n-butanol. The EtOAc fraction (89 g) was then chromatographed over an MCI gel column eluting with a mixture of H₂O and increasing MeOH gradient to give four fractions (A–D). Fraction C was separated by a silica gel column (CHCl₃/CH₃OH, 50:1) and then a reversed-phase C₁₈ column (70% EtOH in H₂O) to afford gardenolic acid B. Fraction D was subjected to a silica gel column eluting with petroleum ether/EtOAc (8:1) to give six subfractions (D₁-D₆). Compounds 4 (15 mg) and 1 (20 mg) were purified from fractions D1 and D5, respectively, over a silica gel column eluting with petroleum ether/Me₂CO (60:1 for 4 and 5:1 for 1). Fraction D_6 was separated by silica gel chromatography (petroleum ether/Me₂CO, 20:1) and then purified by preparative TLC (silica gel, petroleum ether/ Et_2O , 1:1) to furnish a mixture of 2 and 3 (19 mg).

Compound 1: white, amorphous powder; $[\alpha]^{29}_{D}$ +7.5 (*c* 0.16, CH₃OH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 270 (3.76), 214 (3.81) nm; IR (KBr disk) ν_{max} 3448, 2956, 1767, 1668, 1458, 1380, 1339, 1100, 948, 605 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) and ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz), see Tables 1 and 2; ESIMS (positive) *m/z* 495 [M + H]⁺; HRESIMS (positive) *m/z* 495.3111 [M + H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₁H₄₃O₅, 495.3105).

Mixture of Compounds 2 and 3: white, amorphous powder; $[α]^{18}_D$ -6.8 (*c* 0.8, CH₃OH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 266 (3.84), 225 (3.59) nm; IR (KBr disk) ν_{max} 3443, 2944, 2872, 1769, 1667, 1604, 1463, 1129, 976 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) and ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz), see Tables 1 and 2; ESIMS (positive) *m/z* 503 [M + Na]⁺, 481 [M + H]⁺; ESIMS (negative) *m/z* 479 [M - H]⁻; HRESIMS (negative) *m/z* 479.2798 [M - H]⁻ (calcd for C₃₀H₃₉O₅, 479.2803).

Compound 4: white, amorphous powder; $[\alpha]^{25}_{D} -23.1$ (*c* 0.36, CH₃OH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 273 (3.43) nm; IR (KBr disk) ν_{max} 3420, 2974, 2949, 2872, 1740, 1689, 1664, 1617, 1598, 1465, 1378, 629 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) δ 6.77 (1H, d, *J* = 10.1 Hz, H-1), 6.05 (1H, s, H-24), 5.93 (1H, d, *J* = 10.1, H-2), 2.49 (1H, br d *J* = 13.4, H-22a), 2.13 (3H, s, H₃-27), 2.11 (2H, m, H₂-5), 2.07 (1H, m, H-22b), 2.00 (1H, m, H-20), 1.99 (1H, m, H-8), 1.88 (2H, m, H₂-11), 1.88 (3H, s, H₃-26), 1.63 (2H, m, H₂-12), 1.61 (1H, m, H-17), 1.56 (1H, m, H-6a), 1.50 (1H, m, H-7 β), 1.29 (2H, m, H₂-15), 1.29 (1H, d, *J* = 4.5 Hz, H-19 β), 1.28 (2H, m, H₂-16), 1.26 (1H, m, H-7 α), 1.08 (1H, m, H-6b), 1.08 (3H, s, H₃-21), 0.88 (3H, s, H₃-30), 0.74 (1H, d, *J* = 4.5 Hz, H-19 α); ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz), see Table 2; ESIMS (positive) *m*/*z* 459 [M + Na]⁺, 437 [M + H]⁺; HRESIMS (positive) *m*/*z* 437.3418 [M + H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₀H₄₅O₂, 437.3414).

Hepatoprotective Activity Assay. Human hepatoma Hep G2 (ATCC) cells were maintained at 2×10^5 cells/well in complete medium consisting of RPMI supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated FBS, penicillin G (100 IU/mL), and streptomycin (100 µg/mL) and then incubated at 37 °C in a humidified atmosphere containing 5% CO₂ and 95% air. Cytotoxicity was assessed by the MTT assay after incubating cells for 2 h in the corresponding medium containing 1.7 mM nitrofurantoin or without nitrofurantoin (control).¹⁰ Four concentrations (10, 50, 100, and 150 µM) were tested for each sample, and each experiment was performed in triplicate. The results were expressed as the EC₅₀ values (percentage of viability vs control). Silybin was used as the positive control. Data were statistically assessed by using a linear regression model (Origin 7.0).

Acknowledgment. We thank Mr. A. Peoples (NovoBiotic Pharmaceuticals, LLC) for his kind help with the language editing and revision of the manuscript. Financial support from the National Natural Science Foundation of China (No. 30801429), the Zhejiang Provincial Natural Science Foundation (No. Y2080602), and China Postdoctoral Science Foundation (No. 20080441228) is gratefully acknowledged.

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Supporting Information Available: Spectroscopic data including 1D and 2D NMR, ESIMS, and IR spectra of 1, the mixture of 2 and 3, and 4. This information is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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NP900029Z