phenol and  $\beta$ -chloroallyl alcohol was also investigated. Although pure hydroxy-ethers were not obtained, analytical data indicated that the reaction proceeded mainly in the expected manner.

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### [CONTRIBUTION FROM THE EASTERN REGIONAL RESEARCH LABORATORY<sup>1</sup>]

# Chemistry of Epoxy Compounds. VI.<sup>2</sup> Thermal Polymerization of the Isomeric 9,10-Epoxystearic Acids<sup>1a</sup>

## BY DANIEL SWERN, GERALDINE N. BILLEN AND C. ROLAND EDDY

The isomeric 9,10-epoxystearic acids<sup>3,4</sup> (I), m. p. 59.5° and 55.5°, contain two very reactive functional groups, and theoretically they should yield linear polyesters of structure II on thermal polymerization at relatively low temperatures. (Mixtures of isomers would be obtained, since it is equally probable that the oxirane ring would be opened between the oxygen atom and  $C_9$  or  $C_{10}$ ).

tures than necessary were employed, thereby encouraging side reactions.

### Experimental

Starting Materials.—The isomeric 9,10-epoxystearic acids, m. p. 59.5° and 55.5°, were prepared from pure olele and elaidic acids, respectively, by epoxidation with peracetic or perbenzoic acids.<sup>3,4</sup> Anal. Calcd. for C18H34O3: neutralization equivalent, 298.5; oxirane oxy-



Since no product of reaction would be eliminated in their formation and since the molecular formula of the recurring unit would be identical with that of the monomer, they would resemble addition polymers, but on hydrolysis they would yield a monomer whose molecular formula is not identical with that of the recurring unit, and in this respect they would resemble condensation polymers.<sup>5</sup> This interesting point, coupled with the fact that convenient methods for the laboratory preparation of the isomeric 9,10-epoxystearic acids in a high degree of purity were available,<sup>3,4</sup> prompted us to study the quantitative thermal polymerization of these compounds.

A limited amount of work on the thermal polymerization of the 9,10-epoxystearic acids has been published,6 but the starting materials were apparently impure and, in general, higher tempera-

(1) One of the laboratories of the Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry, Agricultural Research Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

(1a) This paper was presented at the meeting-in-miniature of the Philadelphia section of the American Chemical Society held in Philadelphia, Pa., Jan. 22, 1948.

(2) For the previous paper in this series, see THIS JOURNAL, 70, 1226 (1948).

- (3) Swern, Findley and Scanlan, ibid., 66, 1925 (1944).
- (4) Findley, Swern and Scanlan, ibid., 67, 412 (1945).

(5) Carothers, ibid., 51, 2548 (1929).

(6) Nicolet and Poulter *ibid.*, **52**, 1186 (1930).

gen,<sup>67</sup> 5.36. Found: neutralization equivalent, 297.5-299.5; oxirane oxygen, 5.32-5.37. Polymerization Procedures.—Approximately 5-g. por-tions of the 9,10-epoxystearic acids were weighed into a series of test-tubes. The tubes were flushed with nitrogen, tightly stoppered and immersed in a constant temperature oil-bath which maintained the desired temperature to  $\pm 0.2^{\circ}$ . Fifteen minutes was allowed for the establishment of temperature equilibrium before polymerization times were counted. At selected time intervals, a tube was removed from the oil-bath and rapidly cooled to room temperature. The required analytical information was usually obtained within twenty-four hours.

Analytical Procedures .- Acid numbers were determined by means of 0.1 N aqueous sodium hydroxide on 0.15–0.30 g. of sample dissolved in neutralized 95% ethanol, phenolphthalein being employed as indicator. Oxirane oxygen was determined by the modified method of Nicolet and Poulter.6.7 Carbonyl oxygen analyses were conducted by the method described by Leithe,<sup>8</sup> except that a pH meter was employed to determine the end-point.

### Discussion

The course of the polymerization of 9,10-epoxystearic acid, m. p.  $59.5^{\circ}$ , at  $65^{\circ}$ ,  $75^{\circ}$  and  $85^{\circ}$  is shown in Tables I, II and III, and that of its isomer, m. p.  $55.5^{\circ}$ , at  $75^{\circ}$ ,  $100^{\circ}$  and  $120^{\circ}$  is shown in Tables IV, V and VI. The rate of disappearance of the oxirane and carboxyl groups is plotted in

(7) Swern, Findley, Billen and Scanlan, Anal. Chem., 19, 414 (1947).

(8) Leithe, Felle u. Seifen, 45, 615 (1938).

March, 1948

THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 65° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 59.5°

| Time,<br>hours | n <sup>69</sup> D<br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | % Oxirane<br>oxygen | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | carboxyl<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer <sup>a</sup> | oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer <sup>b</sup> | Physical<br>appearance |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|------------------------|
| 0              | 1.4450                      | 188.0       | 0                         | 5.36                | 0                                  | 0.335  | 0.335   | White solid            |
| $^{2}$         | 1.4459                      | 181.5       | 3.46                      | 5.10                | 4.85                               | .324   | . 319   | White solid            |
| 4              | 1.4465                      | 177.0       | 5.86                      | 4.87                | 9.14                               | .316   | .304  | White solid            |
| 7              | 1.4474                      | 170.2       | 9.46                      | 4.57                | 14.7                               | .303   | .286  | White solid            |
| <b>24</b>      | 1.4519                      | 145.2       | 22.8                      | 3.65                | 31.9                               | .259   | .228  | Partially solid        |
| 30             | 1.4530                      | 137.0       | 27.1                      | 3.51                | 34.5                               | .244   | .219  | Viscous oil            |
| 48             | 1.4555                      | 122.2       | 35.0                      | 2.75                | 48.7                               | .218   | .172  | Viscous oil            |
| 96             | 1.4590                      | 97.0        | 48.4                      | 2.06                | 61.6                               | . 173  | . 129   | Viscous oil            |
| 144            | 1.4610                      | 82.0        | 56.4                      | 1.52                | 71.7                               | . 146  | .095  | Viscous oil            |
| 226            | 1.4629                      | 70.5        | 62.5                      | 0.89                | 83.4                               | . 126  | . 056   | Viscous oil            |
| 344            | 1.4639                      | 59.8        | 68.2                      | 0.47                | 91.2                               | . 107  | . 029   | Viscous oil            |
| 576            | 1.4650                      | 51.2        | 72.8                      | 0.10                | 98.2                               | .091   | .006  | Viscous oil            |

<sup>a</sup> Moles of carboxyl group per 100 g. of monomer = acid number/561.0. <sup>b</sup> Moles of oxirane group per 100 g. of monomer = % oxirane oxygen/16.

### TABLE II

THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 75° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 59.5°

| Time,<br>hours | <i>n<sup>60</sup>D</i><br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | %<br>Oxirane<br>oxygen | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | Moles of<br>carboxyl<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Moles of<br>oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Physical<br>app <b>e</b> arance |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 0              | 1.4450                           | 188.0       | 0                         | 5.37                   | 0                                  | 0.335   | 0.336  | White solid                     |
| <b>2</b>       | 1.4470                           | 177.7       | 5.48                      | 4.89                   | 8.94                               | .317  | . 306  | White solid                     |
| 4              | 1.4480                           | 168.4       | 10.4                      | 4.55                   | 15.3                               | . 300   | .284   | White solid                     |
| 8              | 1.4508                           | 152.9       | 18.7                      | 3.98                   | 25.9                               | .273  | .249   | Partially solid                 |
| 18             | 1.4549                           | 128.5       | 31.7                      | 3.09                   | 42.5                               | .229  | . 193  | Viscous oil                     |
| 32             | 1.4576                           | 103.9       | 44.7                      | 2.25                   | 58.1                               | , 185   | .141   | Viscous oil                     |
| 56             | 1.4601                           | 84.7        | 54.8                      | 1.63                   | 69.6                               | . 151   | . 102  | Viscous oil                     |
| 101            | 1.4625                           | 66.6        | 64.6                      | 1.04                   | 80.8                               | .119  | . 065  | Viscous oil                     |
| 200            | 1.4651                           | 52.3        | 72.2                      | 0.65                   | 87.9                               | . 093   | .041   | Viscous oil                     |
| 312            | 1.4660                           | 46.1        | 75.6                      | 0.22                   | 95.9                               | .082  | .014   | Viscous oil                     |
| 392            | 1.4662                           |             | • •                       | • •                    |                                    |   |  | Viscous oil <sup>a</sup>        |
| 504            | • • • •                          | • • •       | ••                        |                        | ••                                 |   | • • •  | Gel                             |
|                |                                  |             |                           |                        |                                    |   |  |                                 |

<sup>a</sup> Viscous oil only partially soluble in ethyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol and acetotte.

TABLE III

THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 85° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 59.5°

| Time,<br>hours | <b>π<sup>60</sup>D</b><br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | %<br>Oxirane<br>oxygen | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | Moles of<br>carboxyl<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Moles of<br>oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Physical<br>appearance |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| 0              | 1.4450                           | 188.0       | 0                         | 5.36                   | 0                                  | 0.335   | 0.335  | White solid            |
| <b>2</b>       | 1.4491                           | 163.6       | 13.0                      | 4.48                   | 16.4                               | .292  | .280   | White solid            |
| 4              | 1.4518                           | 148.1       | 21.2                      | 3.88                   | 27.6                               | .264  | . 242  | Partially solid        |
| 8              | 1.4543                           | 128.4       | 31.7                      | 3.18                   | 40.6                               | . 229   | . 199  | Partially solid        |
| 16             | 1.4580                           | 106.3       | 43.5                      | <b>2.5</b> 6           | 52.2                               | . 190   | .160   | Viscous oil            |
| 32             | 1.4611                           | 75.2        | 60.0                      | 1.24                   | 76.8                               | . 134   | .077   | Viscous oil            |
| 64             | 1,4639                           | 59.3        | 68.5                      | 0.72                   | 86.6                               | . 105   | . 045  | Viscous oil            |
| 128            | 1.4655                           | 50.1        | 73.4                      | 0.37                   | 93. <b>2</b>                       | .089  | .023   | Viscous oil            |
| 256            |                                  |             |                           |                        |                                    |   |  | Gel                    |

Figs. 1 and 2 for the high-melting isomer and in Figs. 3 and 4 for the low-melting isomer.

Examination of the tables and figures reveals several significant points. First, both epoxyacids may be polymerized to form gels. Second, in the polymerization of the high-melting isomer, m. p. 59.5°, the oxirane group disappears more rapidly than the carboxyl group throughout the reaction. In fact at the gel point more than 90% of the oxirane group has been consumed, whereas only about 73–76% of the carboxyl group has disappeared. Third, in the polymerization of the low-melting isomer, m. p. 55.5°, the rates of disappearance of both the oxirane and carboxyl groups are almost the same over the entire period investigated. This is best observed when Figs. 3

| TABLE ] | [V |
|---------|----|
|---------|----|

THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 75° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 55.5°

| Time,<br>hours | <i>п</i> <sup>60</sup> D<br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | %<br>Oxirane<br>oxygeu | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | Moles of<br>carboxy1<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Moles of<br>oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Physical<br>appearance |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| 0              | 1.4419                             | 189.0       | 0                         | 5.35                   | 0                                  | 0.337   | 0.334  | White solid            |
| 4              | 1.4421                             | 185.6       | 1.80                      | 5.28                   | 1.31                               | .331  | . 330  | White solid            |
| 8              | 1.4422                             | 182.8       | 3. <b>28</b>              | 5.19                   | 2.99                               | . 326   | .324   | White solid            |
| 16             | 1.4428                             | 179.8       | 4.87                      | 5.10                   | 4.67                               | .321  | .319   | White solid            |
| 32             | 1.4434                             | 173.6       | 8.14                      | 4.92                   | 8.04                               | . 310   | . 307  | White solid            |
| 64             | 1.4448                             | 161.6       | 14.8                      | 4.58                   | 14.4                               | . 287   | . 286  | White solid            |
| 128            | 1.4488                             | 139.5       | 26.2                      | 3.84                   | 28.2                               | . 249   | .244   | White solid            |
| 256            | 1.4527                             | 110.0       | 41.8                      | 3.21                   | 40.0                               | . 196   | .201   | White solid            |
| 512            | 1.4569                             | 74.9        | 60.4                      | 2.29                   | 59.2                               | . 134   | .143   | Partially solid        |

TABLE V

THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 100° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 55.5°

| Time,<br>hou <b>rs</b> | <sup>л60</sup> D<br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | %<br>Oxirane<br>oxygen | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | Moles of<br>carboxyl<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Moles of<br>oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Physical<br>appearance |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| 0                      | 1.4419                     | 187.3       | 0                         | 5.32                   | 0                                  | 0.334   | 0.332  | White solid            |
| 4                      | 1.4442                     | 175.3       | 6.41                      | 5.04                   | 5.26                               | . 313   | .315   | White solid            |
| 8                      | 1.4458                     | 165.0       | 11.9                      | 4.76                   | 10.5                               | . 294   | . 297  | Partially solid        |
| 16                     | 1.4478                     | 151.5       | 19.1                      | 4.39                   | 17.5                               | .270  | . 274  | Partially solid        |
| 32                     | 1.4510                     | 123.9       | 33.9                      | <b>3.3</b> 3           | 37.4                               | . 221   | . 208  | Partially solid        |
| 64                     | 1.4549                     | 90.4        | 51.8                      | 2.78                   | 48.9                               | . 161   | . 174  | Viscous oil            |
| 128                    | 1.4582                     | 61.3        | 67.2                      | 1.96                   | 63.2                               | . 109   | . 122  | Viscous oil            |
| 256                    | 1.4609                     | 36.5        | 80.6                      | 1.35                   | 74.6                               | .065  | . 084  | Viscous oil            |
| 512                    | 1.4624                     | 19.6        | 89.6                      | 0.98                   | 81.6                               | 035   | 061  | Viscous oil            |

TABLE VI

# THERMAL POLYMERIZATION AT 120° OF 9,10-EPOXYSTEARIC ACID, M. P. 55.5°

| Time,<br>hours | n <sup>go</sup> d<br>(Abbe) | Acid<br>no. | % Decrease<br>in acid no. | %<br>Oxirane<br>oxygen | % Decrease<br>in oxirane<br>oxygen | Moles of<br>carboxyl<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Moles of<br>oxirane<br>group<br>per 100 g.<br>of monomer | Physical<br>appearance |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| 0              | 1.4419                      | 187.3       | 0                         | 5.32                   | 0                                  | 0.334   | 0.332  | White solid            |
| 4              | 1,4480                      | 149.4       | 20.2                      | 4.33                   | 18.6                               | . 266   | .271   | Partially solid        |
| 8              | 1.4510                      | 126.5       | 32.5                      | 3.77                   | 29.1                               | . 226   | . 236  | Partially solid        |
| 16             | 1.4545                      | 95.8        | 48.9                      | 2.87                   | 46.1                               | . 171   | . 179  | Partially solid        |
| 32             | 1.4584                      | 65.4        | 65.1                      | 2.10                   | 60.6                               | . 117   | . 131  | Viscous oil            |
| 64             | 1.4609                      | 41.9        | 77.6                      | 1.48                   | 72.2                               | .075  | . 093  | Viscous oil            |
| 128            | 1.4624                      | 27.1        | 85.6                      | 1.04                   | 80.4                               | . 048   | .065   | Viscous oil            |
| 256            | 1.4638                      | 16.3        | 91.2                      | 0.80                   | 85.0                               | . 029   | .050   | Viscous oil            |
| 512            |                             |             | • •                       |                        |                                    |   |  | Gel                    |

and 4 are superimposed, although it is fairly evident from Tables IV, V and VI. Fourth, the polymerization of the high-melting isomer <sup>a.</sup> proceeds at a more rapid rate than that of the low-melting isomer.

The fact that both epoxy-acids may be polymerized to gels indicates that these compounds have a higher functionality than two. Consideration of the possible addition and condensation reactions which may occur makes this point evident. These reactions are listed below:

1. Reaction between the oxirane and carboxyl groups (addition reaction).

2. Reaction between the hydroxyl groups, formed as a result of reaction 1, and carboxyl groups, with the elimination of

water (condensation reaction).





Fig. 1.—Thermal polymerization of 9,10-epoxystearic acid, m. p. 59.5°.

3. Reaction between the hydroxyl groups, formed as a result of reaction 1, and oxirane groups (addition reaction).

4. Reaction between oxirane groups (addition reactions).

5. Reaction between the hydroxyl groups,

formed as a result of reaction 1, with the elimination of water (condensation reaction).

Reaction 1 is undoubtedly the main polymerization reaction, since carboxyl groups react readily with oxirane groups at moderate temperatures without catalysts, but such a reaction cannot ac-



Fig. 2.—Thermal polymerization of 9,10-epoxystearic acid, m. p. 59.5°.





count for gel formation, since it yields only linear polyesters. Likewise, reaction 4b, which yields a difunctional dimer, cannot account for gel formation. The concept that reaction 4b may account for the oxirane group's disappearance at a more rapid rate than the carboxyl group's in the high-melting isomer, is not tenable because such a reaction requires high temperatures and acid catalysts. Reactions 2, 3 and 5, however, are cross-linking reactions, and reaction 4a yields a poly-functional product capable of cross-linking. Reactions 4a and 5, however, in common with reac-







Fig. 5.—Thermal polymerization of the 9,10-epoxystearic acids, m. p. 59.5° and 55.5°.

tion 4b, require catalysts and high temperatures and probably do not account for cross-linking in either isomer or for the oxirane group's disappearance at a greater rate than the carboxyl group's in the high-melting isomer. Although we cannot state positively which of the remaining crosslinking reactions predominate, in the high-melting isomer it is probably reaction 3, and in the lowmelting isomer it is probably reaction 2. These reactions can account not only for gelation, but reaction 3 also accounts for the oxirane group's disappearance at a more rapid rate than the carboxyl group's in the high-melting isomer, and reaction 2 accounts for the carboxyl group's disappearance at a slightly more rapid rate than the oxirane group's in the low-melting isomer, noticeable toward the end of the reaction. The assumption that reaction 3 accounts for gelation in the high-melting isomer is consistent with the fact that the oxirane group in this isomer reacts considerably faster with various simple secondary alcohols than the oxirane group in the low-melting isomer.

It was thought that the disappearance of the oxirane group at a more rapid rate than the disappearance of the carboxyl group in the highmelting isomer might be explained on the assumption that this group was isomerizing to the carbonyl group. Carbonyl oxygen analyses,<sup>8</sup> however, carried out on the polymers just prior to the gel point indicated that this reaction would account for only about one-third of the oxirane groups which had disappeared in excess of the carboxyl groups. In the low-melting isomer, carbonyl oxygen values were negligible, as would be expected from the data already discussed.

Cross-linking reactions must occur to only a limited extent in the low-melting 9,10-epoxystearic acid, since the disappearance of the carboxyl and oxirane groups proceeds at nearly the same rate throughout the entire polymerization and gelation does not occur until about 85% of the oxirane groups have disappeared. The parallel disappearance of these two functional groups suggested that the polymerization of this isomer might be a simple second order reaction. In Fig. 5, the concentration of carboxyl group is plotted against the concentration of oxirane group both for this isomer and the high-melting one. If the only process is a second order reaction between oxirane and carboxyl groups, a straight line which makes an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  with the co-ordinate axes, should be obtained. In the low-melting isomer, the points fall almost exactly on this line during the early stages of the polymerization, and diverge slightly toward the later stages. The best straight line drawn through these points makes an angle of 47° with the abscissa. It was fairly obvious from an inspection of the data in Tables I, II and III and by superimposition of Figs. 1 and 2, that a simple second order reaction was not the sole process occurring in the high-melting isomer, but this fact was strikingly illustrated when the points for this isomer, m. p. 59.5°, were also plotted in Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.—Thermal polymerization of 9,10-epoxystearic acid, m. p. 55.5°.

These points diverge from the line for equimolar disappearance of the oxirane and carboxyl groups even during the early stages of the reaction, and the best straight line drawn through these points makes an angle of about 36° with the abscissa.

Furthermore, if the second order reaction between oxirane and carboxyl groups is the only process occurring, plotting the reciprocal of the concentration of either the oxirane or carboxyl group against time should give a straight line, since both groups are initially present in equimolar amounts, and the slope of the line is the reaction rate constant, k. This is shown in Fig. 6 for the low-melting isomer only. At 75°, an almost perfect straight line is obtained over the entire range investigated, whereas at 100° and 120°, the first seven and five points, respectively, appear to fall on straight lines. These early points were replotted on larger graph paper, and the broken lines in Fig. 6 represent the extensions of the best straight lines for these points, as obtained from the plots on the larger graph paper. The rate constants at 75, 100 and 120° for the low-melting isomer are 0.00781, 0.0412 and 0.161, respectively (time in hours, concentration in moles per 100 g.). The energy of activation was calculated from the slope of the line in Fig. 7, in which  $\log k$  is plotted against 1/T. The value of E thus obtained is 18,600 calories per mole. The equation for correlating k with T is shown below

$$\log k = -4081/T + 9.59$$

Just prior to the gel point, the polymers are highly viscous, colorless oils, which are soluble in ethanol, diethyl ether, butanol, acetone, xylene, ethylene dichloride and ethyl acetate, and insoluble in water and in aliphatic hydrocarbons. At the gel stage, the polymers are insoluble in all these solvents at their boiling points.



Fig. 7.—Thermal polymerization of 9,10-epoxystearic acid, m. p. 55.5°.

Acknowledgment.—We are indebted to Rudolph Speiser, Thomas W. Findley and John T. Scanlan for valuable discussions in connection with this problem. March, 1948

### Summary

The thermal polymerization of the isomeric 9,-10-epoxystearic acids, m. p.  $59.5^{\circ}$  and  $55.5^{\circ}$ , derivable from oleic and elaidic acids, respectively, has been quantitatively studied. Both isomers can be polymerized to the gel stage, the high-melting isomer yielding a gel when about 75% of the carboxyl groups and 95% of the oxirane groups have disappeared, the low-melting isomer when about 85% of the oxirane groups and 90% of the carboxyl groups have disappeared. The main process appears to be the formation of linear polyesters by the reaction of the oxirane with the carboxyl group.

In the high-melting isomer, side reactions, which take place from the beginning of the reaction, cause the oxirane group to disappear at a more rapid rate than the carboxyl group, thereby preventing a kinetic analysis of the polymerization. In the low-melting isomer, the approximately parallel disappearance of both functional groups permits calculation of reaction rate constants as well as activation energy. This latter value is 18,600 cal. per mole. For both isomers, the reaction rate approximately doubles for each ten-degree rise in temperature.

The polymers just prior to the gel stage are highly viscous, colorless oils, soluble in many common organic solvents, and insoluble in water and in aliphatic hydrocarbons. At the gel stage they are insoluble at the boiling point in all the solvents tested.

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### [CONTRIBUTION FROM THE EASTERN REGIONAL RESEARCH LABORATORY<sup>1</sup>]

# Chemistry of Epoxy Compounds. VII.<sup>2</sup> Stereochemical Relationships between the 9,10-Epoxy-, Chlorohydroxy- and Dihydroxystearic Acids

## BY DANIEL SWERN

The stereochemical relationships involved in the conversion of oleic and elaidic acids (*cis*- and *trans*-9-octadecenoic acids, respectively) to the 9,10-dihydroxystearic acids by way of the intermediate oxirane and chlorohydroxy compounds have been studied by King<sup>3</sup> and also by Atherton and Hilditch.<sup>4</sup> These investigators have proposed reaction schemes which not only differ on several fundamental points but which are at variance with accepted thinking on the Walden inversion<sup>5</sup> and double bond addition reactions<sup>5</sup> in some important respects.

A satisfactory reaction scheme must be in agreement with the following experimentally determined facts: (1) The 9,10-epoxystearic acid obtained from oleic acid by epoxidation with organic per-acids and that obtained by hypohalogenation and subsequent dehydrohalogenation are identical, and therefore have the same configuration; (2) the 9,10-epoxystearic acid obtained from elaidic acid by epoxidation and that obtained by hypohalogenation and dehydrohalogenation are also identical, and differ from the 9,10-epoxystearic acid described under (1) above; (3) the 9,10-dihydroxystearic acid obtained from oleic acid by oxidation with potassium permanganate and that obtained from elaidic acid by epoxidation and subsequent hydrolysis are identical; (4) the 9,10-dihydroxystearic acid obtained from

elaidic acid by oxidation with potassium permanganate and that obtained from oleic acid by epoxidation and hydrolysis are also identical and differ from the 9,10-dihydroxystearic acid described under (3) above; (5) the chlorohydroxystearic acids obtained from oleic acid by reaction with hypochlorous acid and those obtained by epoxidation of oleic acid and subsequent treatment of the 9,10-epoxystearic acid with hydrochloric acid are identical; (6) the chlorohydroxystearic acids obtained from elaidic acid by reaction with hypochlorous acid and those obtained by epoxidation of elaidic acid and treatment of the 9,10-epoxystearic acid with hydrochloric acid are also identical and differ from the chlorohydroxystearic acids described under (5) above; and (7) treatment of either 9,10-dihydroxystearic acid with hydrochloric acid, followed by dehydrohalogenation and hydrolysis, vields the other isomer.

For some time we have been studying the reactions discussed above, and in this paper we are suggesting a scheme which correlates configurational relationships involved, in harmony with accepted theories of the Walden inversion and double bond addition reactions. This reaction scheme is shown in Fig. 1 (the + and - signs do not refer to optical rotations but are employed to correlate configurational relationships and to demonstrate the inversions more clearly).

Although it is generally agreed that opening and closing of the oxirane ring is accompanied by inversion, 6,7,8,9 and this rule has been followed in re-

(7) Böeseken and co-workers, Rec. trav. chim., 47, 683 (1928). Consult this paper for previous contributions.

(8) Esafov, J. Gen. Chem. (U. S. S. R.), 7, 1403 (1937).

(9) Wilson and Lucas, THIS JOURNAL, **58**, 2396 (1936); Winstein and Lucas, *ibid.*, **61**, 1576, 1581 (1939); Lucas, Schlatter and Jones, *ibid.*, **63**, 22 (1941); Wilson and Gould, *ibid.*, **63**, 2541 (1941).

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<sup>(2)</sup> For paper VI of this series, see THIS JOURNAL, 70, 1228 (1948).

<sup>(3)</sup> King, J. Chem. Soc., 387 (1942).

<sup>(4)</sup> Atherton and Hilditch, ibid., 204 (1943).

<sup>(5)</sup> Hammett, "Physical Organic Chemistry," McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, N. Y., 1940; Remick, "Electronic Interpretations of Organic Chemistry," John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, N. Y., 1943.

<sup>(6)</sup> Kuhn and Ebel, Ber., 58, 919 (1925).