

246. Modified Steroid Hormones. Part II.* (i) *Monohalogenation of 5 α :6 β -Dibromocholestan-3-one.* (ii) *Some 2 α -Halogenated Androgens.*

By BERNARD ELLIS and VLADIMIR PETROW.

A method has been developed for the preparation of 2 α -halogenated cholest-4-en-3-ones (VIIIa) from 5 α :6 β -dibromocholestan-3-one (IVa), and extended to the preparation of some 2 α -halogenated androgens.

SOME 2-halogenated derivatives (VIIIb and VIIIc) of testosterone and methyltestosterone were required for biological study. Their preparation by the method used for 2-bromotestosterone hexahydrobenzoate¹ was unattractive as both 3-hydroxyandrostano-3-one and 3-hydroxymethylandrostanone are relatively inaccessible. Halogenation at position 2 of the corresponding 5 α :6 β -dibromo-17 β -hydroxyandrostano-3-ones, followed by 5:6-debromination, seemed a more attractive route. Barton and Miller,² it is true, had stated that such halogenation at this position was improbable on mechanistic grounds. The work of Djerassi *et al.*,³ however, appeared to indicate the feasibility of this approach and we therefore re-examined the bromination of 5 α :6 β -dibromocholestan-3-one (IVa). The results obtained with this compound confirmed our expectations regarding the halogenation (section i) so we also studied the preparation of the required 2-halogenated androgens (section ii).

(i) By monobrominating 5 α :6 β -dibromocholestan-3-one⁴ (IVa) in ether-acetic acid, Inhoffen⁵ obtained a tribromo-ketone, m. p. 138°. A second tribromo-ketone, m. p. 106°, was obtained almost simultaneously by Butenandt and Schramm,⁶ who carried out the monobromination in acetic acid alone. The two compounds were regarded by their discoverers as epimeric 4:5:6-tribromocholestan-3-ones⁶ (see also Corey⁷), not only on account of their chemical reactions, but also because of their conversion into the same tetrabromo-ketone, formulated as a 4:4:5:6-tetrabromocholestan-3-one. The higher-melting isomer, on treatment with potassium acetate, was shown to lose the elements of hydrogen bromide to give an unsaturated ketone, regarded as a 4:6-dibromocholestan-4-en-3-one^{5b} and additionally obtained^{5c} from cholestenone and 6-bromocholestenone by di- and mono-bromination, respectively.

The foregoing structural assignments remained unchallenged till 1950 when Djerassi *et al.*³ showed the need for their revision by proving that dibromination of cholest-4-en-3-one in acetic acid leads, in fact, to the formation of a 2:6- and not a 4:6-dibromocholestan-4-en-3-one (cf. Inhoffen^{5c}). The American authors, however, failed to indicate the incompatibility of this conclusion with the 4:5:6-tribromo-structures then generally accepted for the Inhoffen-Butenandt tribromo-ketones, with the result that in 1954 Corey⁷ still retained the original formulations in his discussion on the stereochemistry of α -brominated keto-steroids. Corey isomerised the lower-melting tribromo-ketone (Butenandt) to the isomer, m. p. 138° (Inhoffen). He concluded that Inhoffen's substance was the stable 4 α (equatorial)-epimer and the product of thermodynamic control, while Butenandt's tribromo-ketone, m. p. 106°, was the unstable 4 β (axial)-epimer and the product of kinetic control. We confirm Corey's conversion of the lower-melting into the higher-melting bromo-ketone, but are unable to accept his formulations. In our view⁸ Inhoffen's and Butenandt's compounds should be reformulated as 2 α :5 α :6 β - (VIa; R = Br) and 2 β :5 α :6 β -tribromocholestan-3-one (Va; R = Br), respectively, on the basis of the following transformations.

* Part I, *J.*, 1956, 627.

¹ Inhoffen and Zuhlsdorff, *Ber.*, 1943, **76**, 233; Djerassi and Scholz, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1947, **69**, 2404.

² Barton and Miller, *ibid.*, 1950, **72**, 1066.

³ Djerassi, Rosenkranz, Romo, Kaufmann, and Pataki, *ibid.*, p. 4534.

⁴ See ref. 2 for the stereochemistry of the compound.

⁵ Inhoffen, *Ber.*, 1936, **69**, (a) 1134, (b) 1702, (c) 2141.

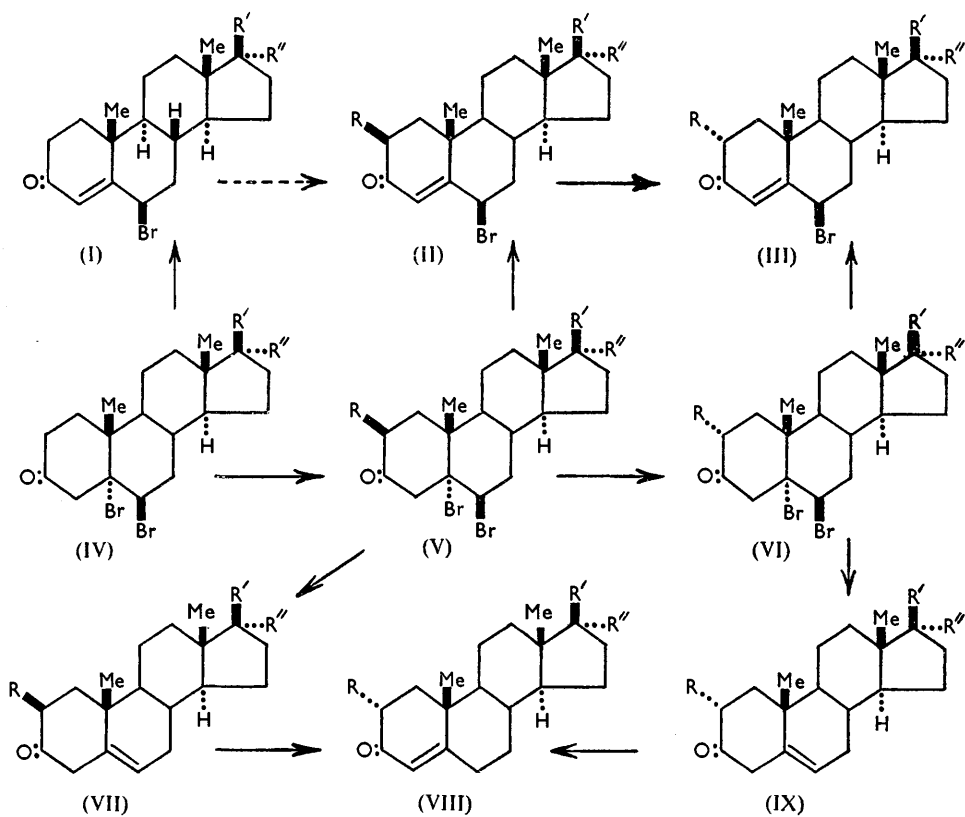
⁶ Butenandt and Schramm, *ibid.*, p. 2289.

⁷ Corey, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1954, **76**, 175.

⁸ Cf. Fieser, Romero, and Fieser, *ibid.*, 1955, **77**, 3305, which appeared while our work was in manuscript.

Partial dehydrobromination of the Butenandt tribromo-ketone (Va; R = Br) by brief warming with pyridine gave 2 β :6 β -dibromocholest-4-en-3-one (IIa; R = Br), which passed smoothly in the presence of mineral acid into the more stable 2 α -epimer (IIIa; R = Br), also obtained directly from the Inhoffen tribromo-ketone (VIa; R = Br) by similar treatment with pyridine. The β -configuration is assigned to the 6-bromine atom in both (IIa; R = Br) and (IIIa; R = Br) as (a) partial dehydrobromination of the dibromo-compound (IVa) under similar conditions leads to the formation of 6 β - (Ia; R = Br) and not 6 α -bromocholest-4-en-3-one² and (b) treatment of the monobromo-compound (Ia) with mineral acids under conditions effecting the change of the 2 β - (IIa) into the 2 α -compound (IIIa) leads only to recovery of starting material.

The ultraviolet absorption spectrum of 2 β :6 β -dibromocholest-4-en-3-one (IIa; R = Br) shows a maximum at 257 m μ in contrast to that at 248—250 m μ reported^{5c,3} for the 2-epimeric dibromo-ketone (IIIa; R = Br). There is, consequently, a bathochromic shift in passing from the 2 α (equatorial)- to the 2 β (axial)-bromo-substituent. A bathochromic shift of similar order has also been observed with certain epimeric 6-bromo-3-oxo- Δ^4 -steroids.^{2,3}



(a) R' = C₆H₁₇, R'' = H. (b) R' = OAc, R'' = H. (c) R' = OH, R'' = Me.

Partial debromination of the tribromo-ketones (Va and VIa; R = Br) by brief treatment with sodium iodide in acetone furnished two epimeric unsaturated bromo-ketones which lacked significant ultraviolet absorption, and to which the constitutions 2 β - (VIIa; R = Br) and 2 α -bromocholest-5-en-3-one (IXa; R = Br), respectively, have been assigned. Both compounds were readily isomerised to 2 α -bromocholest-4-en-3-one (VIIIa; R = Br), a known ketone of proved structure.⁹

⁹ Djerassi, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1949, **71**, 1003.

Monochlorination of the dibromo-ketone (IVa) in acetic acid gave 5 α :6 β -dibromo-2 β -chlorocholestan-3-one (Va; R = Cl), which could be isolated only when the mixture was worked up immediately absorption of chlorine was complete; otherwise epimerisation occurred, to give the 2 α -isomer (VIa; R = Cl). Partial dehydrobromination of these chlorinated derivatives with warm pyridine furnished the epimeric unsaturated chloro-bromo-ketones (IIa and IIIa; R = Cl), respectively. The latter compound was also obtained by epimerisation of the former with mineral acid, and by monochlorination of 6 β -bromocholest-4-en-3-one (I). The ultraviolet absorption spectrum of the 2 α -compound (IIIa; R = Cl) showed a maximum at 249 m μ which corresponds closely to that of its 2 α -bromo-analogue (IIIa; R = Br). The isomeric chloro-bromo-ketone gave a maximum at 254 m μ , a value consistent with the proposed formulation (IIa; R = Cl).

2 β - (VIIa; R = Cl) and 2 α -Chlorocholest-5-en-3-one (IXa; R = Cl), obtained from the chlorodibromo-compounds (Va and VIa; R = Cl), respectively, by debromination with sodium iodide, were severally isomerised by mineral acid to 2 α -chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (VIIIa; R = Cl), identical with a specimen prepared by an alternative route.¹⁰

(ii) Dibromination of 17 α -methylandro-5-ene-3 β :17 β -diol, followed by oxidation with chromium trioxide, furnished 5 α :6 β -dibromo-17 β -hydroxy-17 α -methylandrostan-3-one (IVc). Monochlorination of the latter in acetic acid gave the corresponding 2 β - (Vc; R = Cl) and 2 α -chloro-derivative (VIc; R = Cl), depending upon the conditions employed. Debromination of the 2 β -isomer with sodium iodide followed by isomerisation of the product by mineral acid afforded the required 2 α -chloro-17 α -methyltestosterone (VIIIc; R = Cl).

2 α -Chlorotestosterone acetate (VIIIb; R = Cl) was prepared by the reaction sequence: 17 β -acetoxyandro-5-en-3 β -ol \longrightarrow 5 α :6 β -dibromide \longrightarrow 3-ketone \longrightarrow 2 β -chloro-derivative followed by debromination and isomerisation. 2 α -Bromomethyltestosterone (VIIIc; R = Br) was similarly obtained.

EXPERIMENTAL

Optical rotations were measured for CHCl₃ solutions in a 1 dm tube. Ultraviolet absorption spectra (in propan-2-ol) were kindly determined by Mr. M. Davies, B.Sc. (values in parentheses are log ϵ).

2 β :6 β -Dibromocholest-4-en-3-one (II; R = Br).—2 β :5 α :6 β -Tribromocholestan-3-one (m. p. 106°, $[\alpha]_D^{21} +9^\circ$) (1 g.) in dry pyridine (5 ml.) was warmed for 3 min. on the steam-bath. 2 β :6 β -Dibromocholest-4-en-3-one crystallised from acetone-methanol as prisms (0.6 g.), m. p. 124° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{20} -41^\circ$ (c, 0.54), λ_{\max} , 257 m μ (4.08) (Found: C, 59.5; H, 7.5. C₂₇H₄₂OBr₂ requires C, 59.8; H, 7.8%).

2 α :6 β -Dibromocholest-4-en-3-one (III; R = Br).—(a) The foregoing compound (200 mg.) in ether (10 ml.) and acetic acid (10 ml.) was treated with 10 drops of hydrogen bromide in acetic acid (50% w/w) and kept for 18 hr. at room temperature. Crystallisation of the product from acetone-methanol gave 2 α :6 β -dibromocholest-4-en-3-one (150 mg.), needles, m. p. 162–163°, not depressed on admixture with a specimen prepared by dibrominating cholest-4-en-3-one.

(b) Treatment of 2 α :5 α :6 β -tribromocholestan-3-one (m. p. 138°, $[\alpha]_D^{21} -44.5^\circ$) (1.5 g.) with pyridine (8 ml.) for 3 min. at 100° gave a product (1 g.) which crystallised from acetone-methanol in needles, m. p. 162–163°, not depressed on admixture with a specimen prepared by method (a).

6 β -Bromocholest-4-en-3-one (I).—5 α :6 β -Dibromocholestan-3-one (5 g.) in pyridine (20 ml.) was warmed for 2 min. on the steam-bath, and the solids obtained on dilution with water were purified from aqueous ethanol, to give needles (3.3 g.) of 6 β -bromocholest-4-en-3-one, m. p. and mixed m. p. 130–132°. The compound was recovered unchanged after treatment with hydrogen bromide in ether-acetic acid.

2 β -Bromocholest-5-en-3-one (VII; R = Br).—Sodium iodide (4 g.) was added to 2 β :5 α :6 β -tribromocholestan-3-one (3.6 g.) in acetone (60 ml.). The mixture was stirred for 5 min., then diluted with 5% aqueous sodium thiosulphate, precipitating an oil which soon solidified. Purified from aqueous acetone, 2 β -bromocholest-5-en-3-one formed needles (1.7 g.), m. p. 109–110° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{22} +115^\circ$ (c, 1.12) (Found: C, 70.1; H, 9.3. C₂₇H₄₃OBr requires C, 69.95; H, 9.35%).

¹⁰ Ellis and Petrow, *J.*, 1953, 3869; Beereboom, Djerassi, Ginsberg, and Fieser, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1953, **75**, 3500.

2 α -Bromocholest-5-en-3-one (IX; R = Br), prepared from 2 α : 5 α : 6 β -tribromocholestan-3-one (1.4 g.) by the foregoing procedure, separated (0.75 g.) from aqueous acetone in needles, m. p. 109—110°, $[\alpha]_D^{19} + 0.5^\circ$ (c, 1.02) (Found : C, 70.0; H, 9.4. C₂₇H₄₃OBr requires C, 69.95; H, 9.35%).

2 α -Bromocholest-4-en-3-one (VIII; R = Br).—The foregoing compound (500 mg.) in ether (25 ml.) and acetic acid (12.5 ml.) was treated with concentrated hydrochloric acid (0.5 ml.). Next morning, the mixture was poured into water and the product isolated with ether. 2 α -Bromocholest-4-en-3-one (350 mg.) formed needles (from methanol), m. p. 132—134°, $[\alpha]_D^{19} + 94^\circ$ (c, 0.8), λ_{\max} , 245 m μ (4.13) (Found : C, 69.8; H, 9.25%) {Djerassi³ gives m. p. 117—119°, $[\alpha]_D^{22} + 81^\circ$, λ_{\max} , 243 m μ (4.15).} Reaction with 2 : 4-dinitrophenylhydrazine in hot acetic acid gave the deep red cholesta-4 : 6-dien-3-one 2 : 4-dinitrophenylhydrazone, m. p. and mixed m. p. 227—228°.

The compound (VIII; R = Br) was also obtained by similar isomerisation of (VII; R = Br).

Monochlorination of 5 α : 6 β -Dibromocholestan-3-one.—Chlorine (287 mg., 1 mol.) was added to 5 α : 6 β -dibromocholestan-3-one (2.2 g.) in acetic acid (200 ml.). When absorption of chlorine was complete (ca. 30 min.), the mixture was poured into water (200 ml.) and the solids were collected, washed, and air-dried. Purified from acetone-methanol, 5 α : 6 β -dibromo-2 β -chlorocholestan-3-one (1.6 g.) formed prisms, m. p. 114—116° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{20} + 2^\circ$ (c, 1.1) (Found : C, 55.9; H, 7.4. C₂₇H₄₃OClBr₂ requires C, 56.0; H, 7.5%). The epimeric 5 α : 6 β -dibromo-2 α -chlorocholestan-3-one (1.5 g.), needles (from acetone-methanol), m. p. 150—151° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{21} - 41^\circ$ (c, 1.29) (Found : C, 55.5; H, 7.3%), was obtained when the mixture was set aside overnight.

6 β -Bromo-2 β -chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (II; R = Cl).—5 α : 6 β -Dibromo-2 β -chlorocholestan-3-one (5 g.) in pyridine (20 ml.) was warmed for 3 min. on the steam-bath. The solids obtained by the addition of water crystallised from acetone-methanol, giving the bromochloro-ketone (3.4 g.), m. p. 110—112°, $[\alpha]_D^{21} - 39^\circ$ (c, 0.96), λ_{\max} , 254 m μ (4.09) (Found : C, 64.5; H, 8.4. C₂₇H₄₂OClBr requires C, 65.1; H, 8.5%).

6 β -Bromo-2 α -chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (III; R = Cl).—(a) The foregoing compound (500 mg.) in ether (25 ml.) and acetic acid (15 ml.) was treated with concentrated hydrochloric acid (0.5 ml.). After 18 hr. at 0°, the mixture was poured into water, and the product isolated with ether. The bromochloro-ketone (400 mg.) crystallised from acetone-methanol in needles, m. p. 144—145° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{22} + 39^\circ$ (c, 1.09), λ_{\max} , 249 m μ (4.09) (Found : C, 65.3; H, 8.5%).

(b) Partial dehydrobromination of 5 α : 6 β -dibromo-2 α -chlorocholestan-3-one (1 g.) with warm pyridine (5 ml.) gave 6 β -bromo-2 α -chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (600 mg.), needles (from acetone-methanol), m. p. 145° (decomp.), identical with the compound prepared by method (a).

(c) A stirred solution of 6 β -bromocholest-4-en-3-one (4.1 g.) in ether (100 ml.) at 0° was treated with chlorine (0.63 g., 1 mol.) in acetic acid (20 ml.) dropwise during 15 min. After 24 hr. at 0°, the product was isolated and purified from acetone-methanol, to give the bromochloro-ketone (2.5 g.), m. p. and mixed m. p. 144—145°.

2 β -Chlorocholest-5-en-3-one (VII; R = Cl).—5 α : 6 β -Dibromo-2 β -chlorocholestan-3-one (5.4 g.) in acetone (60 ml.) at 35° was treated with sodium iodide (7 g.). The mixture was stirred for 5 min., then poured into water, and the product extracted with ether. The extract was washed with aqueous sodium thiosulphate and water, then dried, and the solvent removed *in vacuo*. The insoluble fraction obtained on trituration of the residue with a small volume of cold ethanol was purified from aqueous ethanol, to give the chloro-ketone (2.6 g.), needles, m. p. 114—116°, $[\alpha]_D^{21} + 98^\circ$ (c, 0.59) (Found : C, 76.8; H, 10.3. C₂₇H₄₃OCl requires C, 77.4; H, 10.35%).

2 α -Chlorocholest-5-en-3-one (IX; R = Cl), prepared from the 2 α -compound (VI; R = Cl) (3 g.) by the foregoing procedure, separated (1.7 g.) from aqueous acetone in needles or plates, m. p. 141—142°, $[\alpha]_D^{22} - 5^\circ$ (c, 1.09) (Found : C, 76.9; H, 10.1%).

2 α -Chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (VIII; R = Cl).—The foregoing compound (1 g.) in ether (50 ml.) and acetic acid (30 ml.) was treated with concentrated hydrochloric acid (1 ml.), then kept overnight at room temperature. The product crystallised from methanol, 2 α -chlorocholest-4-en-3-one (0.9 g.) separating in needles, $[\alpha]_D^{21} + 86^\circ$, m. p. 98°, alone or mixed with an authentic specimen.¹⁰

5 α : 6 β -Dibromo-17 β -hydroxy-17 α -methylandrostan-3-one (IVc).—17 α -Methylandrostan-5-ene-3 β : 17 β -diol (12 g.) in acetic acid (320 ml.) was treated with bromine (6.4 g.) in acetic acid (40 ml.). After the addition of chromium trioxide (4 g.) in acetic acid (40 ml. of 80%), the mixture was kept for 2 hr., then poured into water. The washed and air-dried solids were crystallised from aqueous methanol and then from chloroform-methanol, to give the dibromo-ketone

(6.1 g.), tablets, m. p. 110—113° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -89.5° (*c*, 1.1) (Found: C, 51.4; H, 6.9. $C_{20}H_{30}O_2Br_2$ requires C, 51.9; H, 6.5%).

5α : 6 β -Dibromo-2 β -chloro-17 β -hydroxy-17 α -methylandrostan-3-one (Vc; R = Cl) and its 2 α -Chloro-epimer (VIc; R = Cl).—The foregoing compound (6.5 g.) in acetic acid (140 ml.) was treated with chlorine (1 g.) in acetic acid (28 ml.), absorption of halogen being complete in 12 min. The mixture was poured into water and the product isolated with ether. The insoluble fraction (4.9 g., m. p. 120—121°) obtained by trituration of the material with a small volume of cold acetone was purified from aqueous acetone, to give the dibromo-2 β -chloro-ketone, prisms, m. p. 130° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{22}$ -34° (*c*, 1.04) (Found: C, 48.4; H, 5.9. $C_{20}H_{29}O_2ClBr_2$ requires C, 48.4; H, 5.9%). The 2 α -chloro-epimer, plates (from aqueous ethanol), m. p. 135—136° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{21}$ -72.5° (*c*, 1.2) (Found: C, 48.0; H, 5.6%), was obtained if the mixture was kept overnight.

2 α -Chloro-17 α -methyltestosterone (VIIIc; R = Cl).—Sodium iodide (7 g.) was added to a suspension of the foregoing dibromo-2 β -chloro-ketone (5 g.) in acetone (70 ml.). The mixture was stirred for 5 min., then poured into water, and the product extracted with ether. The extract was washed with aqueous sodium thiosulphate and water, dried, and concentrated to 150 ml. After addition of acetic acid (75 ml.) and concentrated hydrochloric acid (3 ml.), the mixture was stored at 0° for 18 hr. The product, isolated with ether, was purified from aqueous methanol, to give 2 α -chloro-17 α -methyltestosterone (2.1 g.), plates, m. p. 154—155° (sinters 100—110°), $[\alpha]_D^{23}$ $+79^\circ$ (*c*, 1.08), λ_{max} . 243 m μ (4.10) (Found: C, 67.4; H, 8.8. $C_{20}H_{29}O_2Cl, H_2O$ requires C, 67.7; H, 8.8%). The crystals became opaque and then yellow on brief drying at 100°.

17 β -Acetoxy-5 α : 6 β -dibromoandrostan-3-one (IVb).—17 β -Acetoxyandrost-5-en-3 β -ol (3.3 g.) in acetic acid (100 ml.) was treated with bromine (1.6 g.) in acetic acid (10 ml.). Several minutes later, chromium trioxide (1 g.) in 80% acetic acid (10 ml.) was added, and the mixture kept for 18 hr. The solids obtained on precipitation with water were crystallised from aqueous ethanol. The dibromo-ketone (2.9 g.) formed plates, m. p. 98—100° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{21}$ -72° (*c*, 1.25) (Found: C, 51.7; H, 5.8. $C_{21}H_{30}O_3Br_2$ requires C, 51.4; H, 6.2%).

17 β -Acetoxy-5 α : 6 β -dibromo-2 β -chloroandrostan-3-one (Vb; R = Cl).—The foregoing compound (9.1 g.) in acetic acid (150 ml.) was treated with chlorine (1.44 g., 1.1 mol.) in acetic acid (25 ml.), absorption of halogen being accompanied by the separation of crystals. After 10 min., the mixture was diluted with water and the solids were washed and air-dried. Crystallised from chloroform-methanol, the dibromochloro-ketone (7.3 g.) formed needles, m. p. 118° to 130° (decomp.), depending on the rate of heating, $[\alpha]_D^{22}$ -24° (*c*, 1.02) (Found: C, 47.5; H, 5.1. $C_{21}H_{29}O_3ClBr_2$ requires C, 48.1; H, 5.6%).

2 α -Chlorotestosterone Acetate (VIIIb; R = Cl).—Prepared from the foregoing compound (5 g.) by the method employed for the preparation of 2 α -chloro-17 α -methyltestosterone (above), 2 α -chlorotestosterone acetate (2.7 g.) formed needles (from methanol), m. p. 199—200°, $[\alpha]_D^{23}$ $+90^\circ$ (*c*, 1.22), λ_{max} . 242 m μ (4.14) (Found: C, 69.0; H, 7.9. $C_{21}H_{29}O_3Cl$ requires C, 69.1; H, 8.0%).

2 α -Bromo-17 α -methyltestosterone (VIIIc; R = Br).—Bromine (4 g.) in acetic acid (40 ml.) was added to the dibromo-compound (IVc) (11.4 g.) in acetic acid (300 ml.), absorption being complete in 5 min., then the mixture was poured into water. The product, isolated with ether, was purified from methylene chloride-hexane, giving prisms (7.5 g.), m. p. 126—128° (decomp.). This material was partially debrominated with sodium iodide (10 g.) in acetone (80 ml.), and the product crystallised from aqueous ethanol, to give prisms (2.7 g.), m. p. 108—110°. Treatment of the latter compound with hydrochloric acid in ether-acetic acid gave a product which was triturated with cold methanol. The insoluble fraction (2.2 g.) on purification from aqueous ethanol gave 2 α -bromo-17 α -methyltestosterone, needles, m. p. 155° (decomp.), $[\alpha]_D^{23}$ $+90.5^\circ$ (*c*, 0.86), λ_{max} . 244 m μ (4.15) (Found: C, 62.9; H, 7.6. $C_{20}H_{29}O_2Br$ requires C, 63.0; H, 7.7%).

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