Tetrahedron Letters,Vol.29,No.18,pp 2189-2192,1988 0040-4039/88 $3.00 + .00
Printed in Great Britain Pergamon Press plc

ENANTIOSELECTIVE SYNTHESIS OF OPTICALLY PURE S-ISOSERINE

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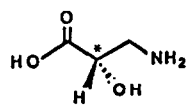
Abstract : KF-promoted addition of nitromethane on (-)-8-phenylmenthyl glyoxylate monohydrate affords, after one purification, optically pure (-)S isoserine in about 50% yield.

Isoserine was found to inhibit several enzymes of serine metabolism in mammals and to interfer with panthotenic acid synthesis from β-alanine in yeast[1]. More recently, it appeared to be a constituent of peptide antibiotics such as edeine[2] and tatumine[3] and to



(-)S isoserine

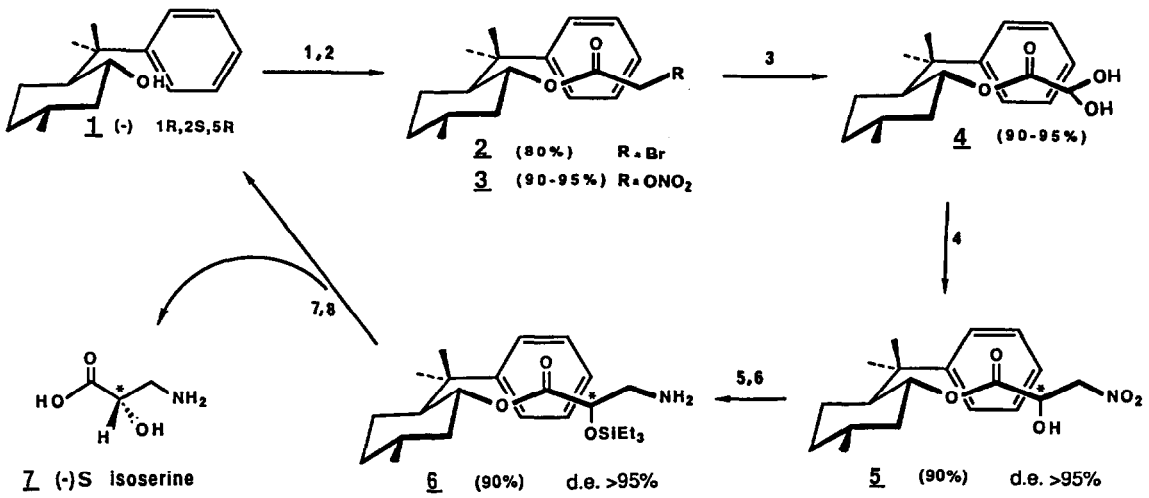
enhance antibiotic activity as in modified butirosin[4] (where isoserine replaces 4-amino-2-hydroxy-butanoic acid). As such S-isoserine is thus an important biologically active β-amino acid.

Racemic isoserine has been synthesized in one step starting from α-chloro-β-hydroxy-propionic acid[5], or in two steps starting from methyl acrylate[6], ethyl glycidate[7] and glyoxylic acid hydrate[8]. S-isoserine has been prepared from S-asparagine[9] or D-mannitol[10], and R-isoserine from S-serine[11] or D-mannitol[10].

We report here the first enantioselective synthesis of S-isoserine (which could also be used for the synthesis of R-isoserine). In this method, scheme 1, the inducer of chirality, (-)-8-phenyl menthol 1[12], is recovered and can thus be used again.

The key material is the (-)-8-phenylmenthol glyoxylate monohydrate 4[13] which is a stable colorless oil prepared in three steps from (-)-8-phenyl menthol 1[14]. Using KF as a catalyst and anhydrous iPrOH as solvent[15] nitromethane addition on 4 proceeds smoothly at 20°C[16] leading to 5 in 90% yield. The use of KF to promote the condensation is also a key point of the synthesis as it allows the presence of an ester function on the substrate and, consequently, permits introduction of a chirality through a chiral ester[17].

The percentage of asymmetric induction at C_α is determined by ^1H NMR (200MHz) on the crude products 5[18] and 6[19]. It appears to be > 95% (fig. 1), as only one diastereomer is detected in both cases.



Scheme 1 : 1) $HOCOCH_2Br/DCC/DMPA$; 2) $AgNO_3/CH_3CN$; 3) $AcONa/DMSO$; 4) CH_3NO_2/KF[16] ; 5) protection ; 6) reduction ; 7) hydrolysis ; 8) epoxypropane/EtOH.

After protection (Et_3SiCl/DMF/Imidazole, overnight, rt) hydrogenation[19] (Raney Ni, EtOH, H_2 35 atm., 50°C, 24 h) and hydrolysis (HCl 6N, 80°C, 18 h) followed by treatment of the hydrochloride with epoxypropane in anhydrous ethanol, (-) S-isoserine[20], is isolated. Therefore, the diastereomer obtained in step 4 (where the new asymmetric carbon C_α is created) is 1R,2S,5R,αS[21].

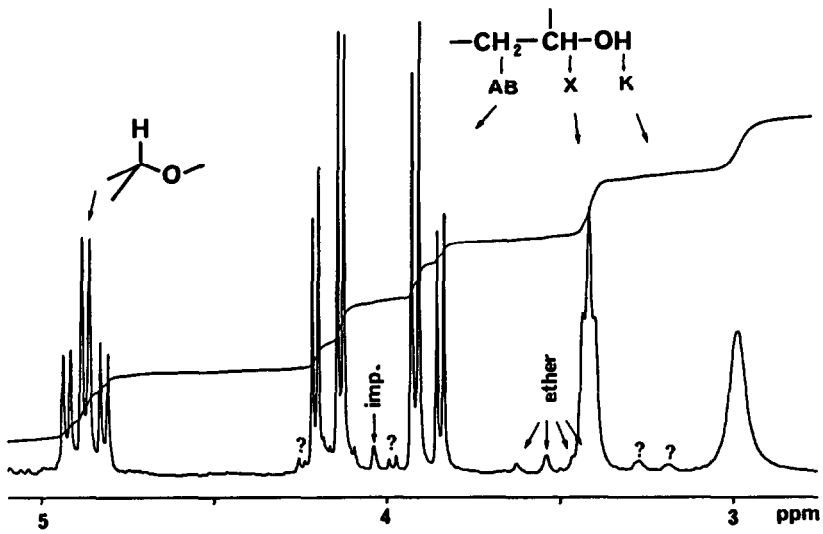
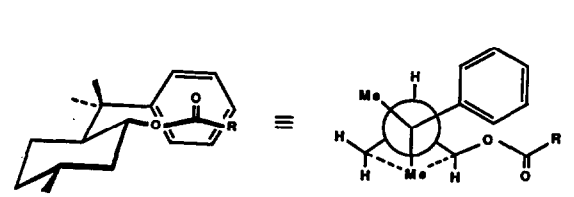
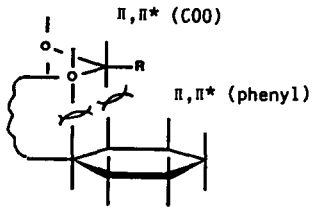
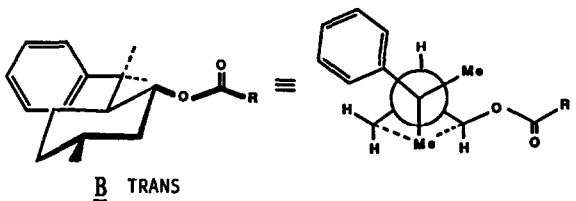


Figure 1 : ^1H NMR (200MHz, $CDCl_3$) of crude product 5.

The observed strong shieldings of the α-H , -1.17 ppm, and of the two β-H, -0.88 and -0.64 ppm, (as compared with the same signals in the corresponding (-) menthyl ester[22]), suggest a conformation, A, where the $CH\alpha-CH_2\beta$ fragment is above the plane of the phenyl ring, i.e. cis to this phenyl group. The stability of this apparently sterically-hindered cis conformation, compared to the trans conformation B, could be due to the presence, in A, of an hyperconjugative stabilizing term of the type $n_O(C-O-C).\Pi,\Pi^*(phenyl)$ and/or $\Pi,\Pi^*(O-CO).\Pi,\Pi^*(phenyl)$[23].







Acknowledgements : We wish to thank L.E.R.S.-Synthélabo for financial support.

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12) (-) 8-Phenylmenthol (1R,2S,5R) is prepared from (+) pulegone (E.J. Corey and H.E. Ensley, J. Am. Chem. Soc., 97, 6908 (1975)). A 90(1R,2S,5R)/10(1S,2R,5R) mixture which is obtained, is flash-chromatographed (silicagel 60, ethyl ether/pentane 15/85).
13) 4 obtained in 70% overall yield from 1, is more stable than the corresponding aldehyde and easier to handle.