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# First stereoselective synthesis of synargentolide A and revision of absolute stereochemistry

Gowravaram Sabitha\*, Peddabuddi Gopal, C. Nagendra Reddy, J. S. Yadav

Organic Division I, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad 500 007, India

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### ABSTRACT

The first stereoselective total synthesis of synargentolide A isolated from *Syncolostemon argenteus* has been achieved from commercially available (*R*)-benzyl glycidyl ether using Sharpless asymmetric epoxidation and cross-metathesis reactions as the key steps. Comparing the spectral data of the synthesized and naturally occurring synargentolide A, the C4' and C6'- stereogenic centers of the natural synargentolide A were assigned a corrected *anti* relationship.

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Naturally isolated 6-substituted- $\alpha$ , $\beta$ -unsaturated- $\delta$ -lactones gained great attention of researcher due to their cytotoxic and *anti*-tumor properties.<sup>1</sup> In addition they inhibit HIV protease,<sup>2</sup> induce apoptosis,<sup>3,4</sup> and have proven to be *anti*-leukemic,<sup>5</sup> along with having many other relevant pharmacological properties.<sup>6</sup> Synargentolide A (**1**),<sup>7</sup> spicegerolide (**2**),<sup>8</sup> hyptolide (**3**),<sup>9</sup> synroto-lide (**4**),<sup>10</sup> and anamarine (**5**)<sup>11</sup> isolated from *Syncolostemon* and *Hyptis* species are examples of  $\alpha$ , $\beta$ -unsaturated  $\delta$ -lactones (Fig. 1). Due to their pharmacological properties, these molecules

became the interesting synthetic goals. The structure of synargentolide A was proposed to be **1** by Davies-Coleman and Rivett<sup>7</sup> on the basis of spectroscopic findings, Mosher ester analysis, and acetonide formations. Alberto Marco et al.<sup>12</sup> synthesized the published structure of synargentolide A **1** and found that the spectroscopic data of the synthetic product did not match with those reported for the natural product and therefore stated that the proposed structure for the synargentolide A **1** differs from the actual one.



Figure 1. Polyoxygenated lactones.

\* Corresponding author. Tel./fax: +91 40 27191629. E-mail address: gowravaramsr@yahoo.com (G. Sabitha).





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Scheme 2. Reagents and conditions: (a) = -Li, DMSO, 0 °C to rt, 1 h, 92%; (b) DIEA, MOM-Cl, 2 h, 0 °C to rt, 95%; (c) Li/liq NH<sub>3</sub>, -33 °C, anhydrous THF, 0.5 h, 90%; (d) IBX, DMSO, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 24 h, 95%; (e) PPh<sub>3</sub>=CHCO<sub>2</sub>Et, Ph-H, rt, 2 h, 85%; (f) DIBAL-H, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, -20 °C, 1 h, 75%; (g) L-(+) DIPT, Ti(O<sup>i</sup>Pr)<sub>4</sub>, cumenehydroperoxide, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, -24 °C, 4 h, 98%; (h) TPP, I<sub>2</sub>, imidazole, Et<sub>2</sub>O/CH<sub>3</sub>CN, (3:1) 0 °C to rt, 20 min 92%; (i) Zn dust, EtOH, reflux, 2 h, 92%; (j) (a) *m*-CPBA, NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, -10 °C, 10 h, 92%, dr (1:1); (b) BnBr, NaH, anhydrous THF, 0 °C to rt, 3 h, 95%; (k) LiAlH<sub>4</sub>, anhydrous THF, 0 °C to rt, 0.5 h, 95%; (l) 2 N HCl, rt, 5 h, 93%; (m) 2,2-DMP, PPTS, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 1 h, 95%.



Scheme 3. Reagents and conditions: (a) (i) Li/liq NH<sub>3</sub>, anhydrous THF, -33 °C, 0.5 h, 91%; (ii) MeOH, 2 N HCl, rt, 1 h, 93%; (iii) Ac<sub>2</sub>O, TEA, DMAP, anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 0.5 h, 94%; (b) Pd/CaCO<sub>3</sub>, quinoline, HPLC-EtOAc, rt, 2 h, 92%; (c) Gr-II, refluxing anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 2 h, 65%.



Figure 2. Comparison of the  ${}^{1}H$  NMR spectra of the synthetic lactones 1 (A) and 6 (B) with that of natural synargentolide A (C).

As a part of our current interest in naturally occurring, pharmacologically active  $\delta$ -lactones,<sup>13</sup> we became interested in the synthesis of synargentolide A and to determine the absolute configuration of the natural product.

The retrosynthesis is outlined in Scheme 1. The target molecule **1** (published structure)<sup>7</sup> and **6** (revised structure) could be prepared independently by cross-metathesis reaction of **8a** and **8b** with vinyl lactone **7**. The substrates **8a** and **8b** in turn could be obtained from the commercially available (*R*)-benzyl glycidyl ether **12** by sequential reactions.

The synthesis began with the commercially available (*R*)-benzyl glycidyl ether **12** (Scheme 2). Accordingly the ring opening of epoxide **12** with lithium acetylide ethylene diamine complex provided chiral homopropargyl alcohol **13** in 92% yield. The secondary hydroxyl group in compound **13** was protected as its MOM ether **14** using MOMCl and Hunig's base and the subsequent removal of benzyl group furnished alcohol **11**. Oxidation of **11** using IBX in DMSO/DCM gave the corresponding aldehyde **15**, which was subjected to a Wittig reaction with the stable ylide to afford  $\alpha$ , $\beta$ -unsaturated ester **16**. After reduction of **16** to allylic alcohol **17** (75%) using DIBAL-H, Sharpless asymmetric epoxidation delivered epoxy alcohol **18** in 98% yield as a single diastereomer, which was elaborated to allylic alcohol **10** by an iodination/reductive ring-opening sequence.

Epoxidation of the terminal double bond in 10 using m-CPBA provided an inseparable mixture of epoxy alcohol 20a in a ratio of 1:1 (92% combined yield). After protection of the secondary hydroxyl group as benzyl ether, the resulting compound 20b was treated with LAH to give an alcohol again as an inseparable mixture (21). The MOM group was deprotected and a 1,3-diol function in compound **21** was protected as acetonide by 2,2-dimethoxypropane in the presence of PPTS and the resulting acetonides 9a and 9b were easily separable by flash chromatography. In order to confirm the relative configuration of 1,3-acetonides **9a** and **9b**, <sup>13</sup>C NMR chemical shifts were studied. The two methyl groups in the acetonide part in 9a resonated at 19.0 and 29.6 ppm indicating that the two hydroxyl groups are in a 1,3-syn orientation and further substantiated by the appearance of the guaternary carbon in the down-field region (98.8 ppm).<sup>14</sup> In contrast, for the acetonide derivative **9b** signals were found at 24.8 and 23.8 ppm and quaternary carbon at 100.7 ppm, which were characteristic for the methyl groups in the acetonide part of 1,3-anti diol.<sup>14</sup>

To determine the correct absolute configuration of natural synargentolide A, both isomers of synargentolide A **1** and **6** were synthesized by the following steps from **9a** and **9b** as shown in Scheme 3.

Removal of benzyl and acetonide groups, followed by acetylation of the three hydroxy groups was performed to provide **22a** in 95% yield (Scheme 3). The terminal triple bond was reduced partially to double bond under Lindlar's conditions to afford **8a**. Finally, the cross-metathesis reaction between **8a** and vinyl lactone **7**<sup>13j</sup> was smoothly performed using Grubbs' second generation catalyst to give the published structure of synargentolide A **1** (Fig. 2). This did not turn out to be identical with the natural product but matched with the synthesized product.<sup>12</sup>

In a similar fashion, synthesis of **6** was commenced from **9b** (Scheme 3) independently repeating the steps as in the case of **1** and the target molecule **6** was obtained in good yield. The spectral properties (Fig. 2) and optical rotation of the synthetic compound **6** were found to be identical with those published for the natural synargentolide A **1** { $[\alpha]_D^{25}$  +36.5 (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>), lit.<sup>7</sup>  $[\alpha]_D^{25}$  +40 (*c* 1.1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>)}. Therefore, the structure of natural product stands revised to be of **6**.

In conclusion, we have performed a stereoselective synthesis of the natural synargentolide A and shown it to be 6.<sup>15</sup> Synargentolide A is therefore 6R[4R,5R,6R-triacetyloxy-1*E*-heptenyl]-5,6-dihydro-

2*H*-pyran-2-one. Sharpless asymmetric epoxidation (SAE) and cross-metathesis (CM) are the key reactions involved.

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- 15. Analytical data of all the new compounds are given below: *Compound* 1:  $[\varkappa]_{25}^{15}$  +12.5 (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 1738, 1374, 1221, 1024 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 6.84 (ddd, *J* = 8.8, 4.0, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.02 (dt, *J* = 10.4, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 5.75–5.63 (m, 2H), 5.15 (m, 1H), 5.08 (dt, *J* = 7.2, 4.0 Hz, 1H, CH), 4.96 (m, 1H, CH), 4.86 (m, 1H, CH), 2.39 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.28 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.12 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.04 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.0 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.18 (d, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); 13C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 170.2, 170.1, 170.0, 163.8, 144.5, 130.9, 128.3, 121.5,

77.2, 73.7, 69.6, 69.3, 34.0, 29.5, 21.0, 20.8, 20.7, 16.0; HRMS calcd for  $C_{18}H_{24}O_8Na;$  391.1368; found: 391.1355.

Compound **8a**:  $[\alpha]_D^{25}$  +1.5 (c 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 1742, 1370, 1216 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>);  $\delta$  5.66 (m, 1H), 5.30–4.93 (m, 5H), 2.35–2.14 (m, 2H), 2.06 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.01 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.99 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.15 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  170.1, 170.0, 169.9, 132.0, 118.8, 74.2, 70.2, 68.7, 35.3, 121.0, 20.8, 20.6, 16.3.

Compound **8b**:  $[\alpha]_{D}^{25}$  +22.5 (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 1744, 1372, 1222 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  5.69 (m, 1H), 5.16 (dt, *J* = 7.0, 3.1 Hz, 1H, CH), 5.11–5.03 (m, 3H), 4.94 (m, 1H, CH), 2.24 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.13 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.02 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.0 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.18 (d, *J* = 6.2 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  169.9. 169.8, 169.7, 132.2, 118.4, 73.7, 69.7, 67.2, 35.4, 20.8, 20.6, 20.5, 15.9; HRMS calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>20</sub>0<sub>6</sub>Na: 295.1157; found: 295.1149.

calcd for  $C_{13}H_{20}O_6Na$ : 295.1157; found: 295.1149. *Compound* **9a**:  $[\alpha]_{25}^{D5} - 42.0$  (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 2985, 1455, 1378, 1229, 1091 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.42–7.21 (m, 5H, ArH), 4.72 (ABq, *J* = 11.3 Hz, 2H, *CH*<sub>2</sub>–OAr), 3.97 (m, 2H), 3.29 (m, 1H, CH), 2.68 (dd, *J* = 2.6, 16.4 Hz, 0.5H), 2.65 (dd, *J* = 2.4, 10.0 Hz, 0.5H), 1.98 (m, acetylinic CH), 1.43 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.140 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.18 (d, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>);  $\delta$  7.82, 128.2, 128.1, 127.6, 98.8, 80.6, 75.0, 72.8, 71.6, 70.6, 68.5, 29.6, 29.3, 19.0, 17.7; HRMS calcd for C<sub>17</sub>Hz<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na: 297.1466; found: 297.1465.

Compound **9b**:  $[\alpha]_{D}^{25}$  -19.5 (c 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 2990, 1455, 1377, 1202, 1083 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.34–7.23 (m, 5H, ArH), 4.61 (ABq, J = 11.7 Hz, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>-OAr), 4.0, (m, 1H, CH), 3.74 (m, 1H, CH), 3.40 (m, 1H, CH), 2.62 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.60 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.42 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.60 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.42 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.60 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.42 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.60 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.42 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.60 (dd, J = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.42 (dd, J

16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 2.41 (dd, *J* = 2.9, 16.5 Hz, 0.5H), 1.92 (m, acetylinic CH), 1.35 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.30 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.19 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  138.0, 128.3, 127.9, 127.7, 100.7, 82.1, 81.0, 74.1, 69.7 (×22), 69.1, 24.8, 23.8, 20.0, 19.4; HRMS calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>22</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na: 297.1466; found: 297.1457. Compound **10**: [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>25</sup> - 10.0 (c 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); *K* (KBr) 3446, 3295, 2897, 1040 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  5.85 (m, 1H), 5.40 (m, 1H), 5.23 (m, 1H), 4.76 (d, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 1H), 4.70 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 4.22 (m, 1H, CH), 3.57 (m, 1H, CH), 3.41(s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 262–2.35 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 1.94 (m, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  136.7, 117.2, 96.7, 80.3, 79.3, 73.4, 70.2, 55.8, 21.2; HRMS calcd for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na: 193.0840; found: 193.0848.

Compound **11**:  $[\alpha]_D^{25} - 71.6$  (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 3437, 3293, 2932, 1640, 1363, 1105 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  4.72 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.77–3.68 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.59 (m, 1H, CH), 3.41 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.43 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 1.93 (m, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  96.5, 78.1, 70.2, 64.3, 55.6, 36.2, 21.6; HRMS calcd for C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na: 167.0684; found: 167.0684.

Compound **6**: [z]<sub>D</sub><sup>25</sup> +36.5 (*c* 1, CHCl<sub>3</sub>); IR (KBr) 1738, 1374, 1221, 1024 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  6.84 (ddd, *J* = 8.8, 4.0, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.02 (dt, *J* = 10.4, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 5.75-5.63 (m, 2H), 5.15 (m, 1H), 5.08 (dt, *J* = 7.2, 4.0 Hz, 1H, CH), 4.96 (m, 1H, CH), 4.86 (m, 1H, CH), 2.39 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.28 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 2.12 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.04 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 2.0 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.18 (d, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl3):  $\delta$  170.2, 170.1, 170.0, 163.8, 144.5, 130.9, 128.3, 121.5, 77.2, 73.7, 69.6, 69.3, 34.0, 29.5, 21.0, 20.8, 20.7, 16.0; HRMS calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>24</sub>0<sub>8</sub>Na: 391.1368; found: 391.1355.