

An improved large scale synthesis of 1,4-anhydro-4-thio-D-ribose[☆]

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Abstract—An improved large scale synthesis of 1,4-anhydro-4-thio-D-ribose (**4**) from D-ribose has been accomplished by combining the *O*-allyl and *O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl protecting groups. Compound **4** was obtained in 31% yield in eight steps with three chromatographic separations. © 2003 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

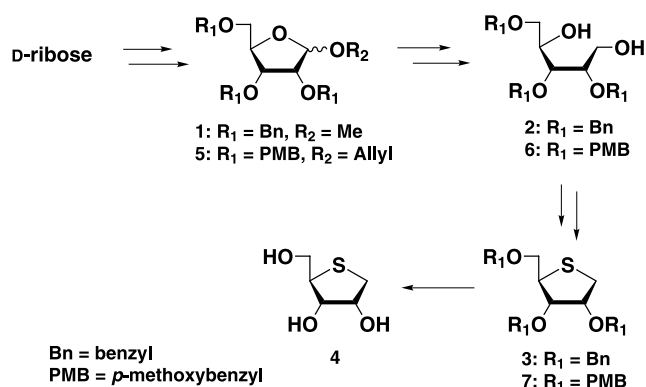
Over the last decade, there has been increasing interest in the synthesis of 4'-thionucleoside derivatives because of their potent biological activity.¹ Since the 4'-thionucleosides are not available as natural products, condensation of a nucleobase with an appropriate thiosugar is necessary for their synthesis. Although much attention has focused on their biological activity, there are comparatively few literature references for an efficient synthesis of the 4'-thionucleosides.² We recently reported the stereoselective synthesis of 4'-thioribonucleosides involving a Pummerer reaction of a sulfoxide derived from 1,4-anhydro-4-thio-D-ribose (**4**) in the presence of a silylated nucleobase.³ The reaction afforded the desired β-anomer with the assistance of neighboring group participation. However, in order to develop it as a practical method for the synthesis of the novel 4'-thionucleosides, an efficient synthesis of **4** was required.

As summarized in **Scheme 1**, compound **4** was prepared by an 11-step synthesis from D-ribose by combining the *O*-methyl and *O*-benzyl protecting groups (**1**→**2**→**3**→**4**). Although, this method has since been shortened to an eight-step synthesis,⁴ the last step, namely the debenzylation of **3**, had to be modified in order to apply it to large scale synthesis. Since **3** includes a sulfur atom, the conventional practice of using a palladium catalyst could not be employed. As a result, the reaction was carried out using an excess of BCl₃ at −78°C. In addition, the reaction had to be quenched at the same temperature to furnish **4** in better yield, conditions which made this protocol quite tedious.

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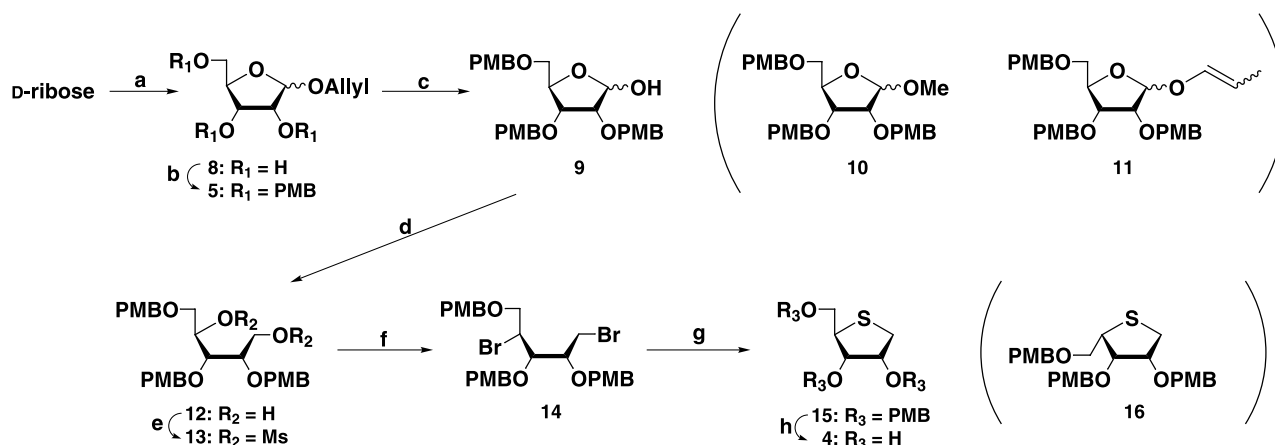
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Scheme 1.

Consequently, we sought a facile synthesis of **4** that would be applicable to large scale synthesis. To this end, we devised a combination of *O*-allyl and *O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl (*O*-PMB) groups as alternative protecting groups. The *O*-PMB group would be removed under milder conditions than the *O*-benzyl group, while the *O*-methyl protecting group at the 1-position would be replaced by the *O*-allyl group. Using this combination, we developed the improved large scale synthesis of **4** (**5**→**6**→**7**→**4**), also succeeded in minimizing the tedious chromatographic separation of each intermediate. In this paper, details of the synthesis will be described.

Our synthetic route is illustrated in **Scheme 2**. The allyl glycosidation of D-ribose was carried out by treatment with allyl alcohol in the presence of a catalytic amount of sulfuric acid.⁵ Increasing the amount of allyl alcohol produced a corresponding increase in the yield of **8**, which was ultimately obtained in 95% yield when 70 equiv. of allyl alcohol was used. The remaining hydroxyl groups of **8** were then protected with PMB groups by treatment with PMBCl



Scheme 2. Reagents: (a) allyl alcohol, H₂SO₄; (b) PMBCl, NaH, THF–DMF; (c) PdCl₂, CHCl₃–H₂O, O₂, 50°C; (d) NaBH₄, MeOH; (e) MsCl, pyridine; (f) LiBr, methyl ethyl ketone, reflux; (g) Na₂S·9H₂O, DMF, 100°C; (h) 20% TFA in CH₂Cl₂.

Table 1. Deprotection of *O*-allyl ether of **5** with PdCl₂

Entry	Solvent	Conditions	Time (h)	Product	Yield (%)
1	MeOH	rt	5	10	55
2	CHCl ₃ –H ₂ O	rt	42	9	66
3	CHCl ₃ –H ₂ O	50°C	27	9	73
4	CHCl ₃ –H ₂ O	50°C/O ₂	24	9	90

to give **5** in 97% yield. Because of its ease and facility, PdCl₂ was selected for the deprotection of the *O*-allyl group to afford **9**. As shown in Table 1, when **5** was treated with PdCl₂ in MeOH, the *O*-methyl derivative **10** and not **9** was obtained as the major product in 55% yield (entry 1). Accordingly, the solvent was altered to a mixture of CHCl₃–H₂O (1:1), and the desired **9** was obtained in 66% yield; however the reaction rate was slower (entry 2). Although a slight improvement was observed when the reaction mixture was heated at 50°C (entry 3), the starting material **5** was not consumed completely in either case. The results markedly improved when the reaction was carried out under an O₂ atmosphere to give **9** in 90% yield (entry 4).⁶ In all cases, the *O*-propenyl intermediate **11** was observed on TLC analysis and was slowly hydrolyzed to give **9**.⁶ It should be noted that vigorous stirring of the reaction mixture is essential to complete the reaction.⁷ Other conditions such as *t*-BuOK/DMSO,⁸ PdCl₂/AcONa/AcOH,⁹ NaBH₄/I₂/THF,¹⁰ or DIBAL/NiCl₂(dppp)/toluene¹¹ did not afford **9** in better yield. Conversion of **9** into **15** was carried out according to our previous method.⁴ Thus, **9** was treated with sodium borohydride to give the diol **12** quantitatively. After treatment of **12** with methanesulfonyl chloride in pyridine, the resulting dimesylate **13** was heated under reflux in methyl ethyl ketone in the presence of lithium bromide, followed by treatment with sodium sulfide in DMF to give compound **15**. As in our previous case,⁴ the 1,4-anhydro-L-lyxitol derivative **16** was obtained along with **15**. This could be attributed to further substitution of **14** by the bromonium ion, and it was difficult to eliminate this over reaction on a large scale. Although **15** and **16** were obtained as an inseparable mixture, the undesired **16** was an oil, while the desired **15** was obtained as crystals. Therefore, the undesired **16** was removed by crystallization to give the pure **15**. Finally, the PMB groups of **15** were readily

removed by treatment with a mixture of TFA–CH₂Cl₂ (1:4) at room temperature to give **4** in 96% yield.

Since the conditions in each step had been optimized, a large scale synthesis of **4** was attempted (see the Experimental Section). In this process, we also tried to avoid the chromatographic separation of each intermediate. Starting with 60 g of D-ribose, compound **12** was prepared in 79% yield in four steps without separation of the intermediates. The resulting **12** was then converted to **15**, which was obtained in 42% yield after crystallization in three steps. Unlike our previous method, the PMB groups of **15** were easily removed to give **4** in 92% yield.

In conclusion, we have developed the facile large scale synthesis of **4**, which was obtained in 31% yield in eight steps from D-ribose even on a large scale. It is worth noting that this synthesis can be carried out using only three chromatographic separations. In addition, use of the PMB group appeared to be advantageous for 4-thiosugar construction. Generally, a benzyl group is used as a protecting group for the synthesis of 4-thiosugars. However, the low reaction temperature and harsh conditions required to deprotect a thiosugar have often proved difficult.^{3,12} Since the PMB group can be removed under mild conditions, we think it represents a superior protecting group for the synthesis of 4-thiosugars.

1. Experimental

1.1. General methods

Physical data were measured as follows: Melting points are uncorrected. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded at 270 or 400 MHz and 67.5 or 100 MHz instruments in CDCl₃ or DMSO-*d*₆ as the solvent with tetramethylsilane as an internal standard. Chemical shifts are reported in parts per million (δ), and signals are expressed as s (singlet), d (doublet), t (triplet), q (quartet), m (multiplet), or br (broad). All exchangeable protons were detected by addition of D₂O. TLC was done on Merck Kieselgel F254 precoated plates. Silica gel used for column chromatography was Merck silica gel 5715.

1.2. Practical synthesis of 1,4-anhydro-4-thio-D-ribitol (4)

1.2.1. 2,3,5-Tri-*O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl-D-ribitol (12). To a solution of D-ribose (60.0 g, 0.4 mol) in allyl alcohol (1.8 L) was added concentrated sulfuric acid (6.4 mL, 0.12 mol) at 0°C, and the mixture was stirred with a mechanical stirrer at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was neutralized with sodium bicarbonate. The solids were filtered through a Celite pad, and washed with methanol. The combined filtrate and washings were concentrated in vacuo to give crude **8**.⁵ A three-necked flask attached a bubbler was charged with NaH (60% dispersion in mineral oil, 64 g, 1.6 mol) and THF (700 mL). A solution of **8** in DMF (300 mL) was added to the above solution over 3 h at 0°C. After being stirred for 4 h at room temperature, the reaction mixture was cooled to 0°C. About one-third of PMBCl (190 mL, 1.4 mol) was added dropwise to the reaction mixture at the same temperature (10 mL/15 min). Then, the ice-bath was removed, and the remaining PMBCl was carefully added to keep the reaction gentle (Caution! A violent evolution of hydrogen sometimes took place if one added all of the PMBCl at 0°C and then the reaction mixture was warmed to room temperature). After completion of the addition, the reaction mixture was stirred for 24 h at room temperature. The reaction was carefully quenched by addition of saturated aqueous NH₄Cl, and then partitioned between AcOEt and H₂O. The organic layer was further washed with H₂O, followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄), and concentrated in vacuo to give the crude **5**. To a solution of **5** in CHCl₃–H₂O (1.2 L–800 mL) was added PdCl₂ (21.2 g, 0.12 mol), and the two phase solution was vigorously stirred with a mechanical stirrer at 50°C under an O₂ atmosphere. After 24 h, the reaction mixture was filtered through a Celite pad, and washed with AcOEt. The organic solvent was removed in vacuo, and the mixture was diluted with AcOEt. The separated organic layer was washed with H₂O, followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄), and concentrated in vacuo to give the crude **9**. The resulting **9** was then dissolved in MeOH, and NaBH₄ (30.3 g, 0.8 mol) was added portionwise at 0°C. After being stirred for 1.5 h at room temperature, the solvent was removed in vacuo. The residue was partitioned between AcOEt and H₂O. The separated organic layer was washed with H₂O, followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄), and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by a silica gel column, eluted with hexane/AcOEt (5:1–1:1), to give **12** (162.4 g, 79% as a colorless oil): FAB-LRMS *m/z* 513 (MH⁺, 1.9%); FAB-HRMS calcd for C₂₉H₃₇O₈ (MH⁺) 513.2489, found 513.2486; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 7.25–7.15 (m, 6H), 6.88–6.82 (m, 6H), 4.66–4.40 (m, 6H), 3.95 (m, 1H), 3.78 (m, 11H), 3.72 (m, 2H), 3.54 (m, 2H), 2.67 (br s, 1H), 2.37 (br s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 159.15, 129.96, 129.92, 129.81, 129.64, 129.44, 113.77, 113.72, 113.69, 78.89, 78.82, 73.56, 73.01, 71.51, 70.66, 70.59, 60.99, 55.23.

1.2.2. Physical data for allyl 2,3,5-tri-*O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl-D-ribofuranose (5). FAB-LRMS *m/z* 573 (MNa⁺, 51.9%); FAB-HRMS calcd for C₃₂H₃₈NaO₈ (MNa⁺) 573.2464, found 573.2490; ¹H NMR of isomer A (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 7.30–7.18 (m, 6H), 6.87–6.81 (m, 6H), 5.81 (dddd, 1H, *J*=17.3, 10.3, 6.2, 5.5 Hz), 5.20 (dd,

1H, *J*=17.3, 1.2 Hz), 5.13 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.3, 1.2 Hz), 5.02 (s, 1H), 4.61–4.31 (m, 6H), 4.29 (ddd, 1H, *J*=6.7, 6.2, 3.8 Hz), 4.15 (dd, 1H, *J*=12.9, 5.5 Hz), 3.98 (dd, 1H, *J*=6.7, 4.7 Hz), 3.90 (dd, 1H, *J*=12.9, 6.2 Hz), 3.85 (d, 1H, *J*=4.7 Hz), 3.80, 3.79, 3.78 (each s, each 3H), 3.56 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.6, 3.8 Hz), 3.46 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.6, 6.2 Hz); ¹³C NMR of isomer A (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 159.16, 159.08, 158.93, 134.03, 130.30, 129.83, 129.50, 129.35, 129.12, 128.52, 117.13, 113.83, 113.67, 113.60, 113.57, 104.41, 104.38, 80.46, 79.26, 78.09, 72.70, 71.93, 71.88, 71.10, 68.18, 55.24; ¹H NMR of isomer B (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 7.26–7.12 (m, 6H), 6.85–6.79 (m, 6H), 5.98 (dddd, 1H, *J*=17.3, 10.3, 6.5, 5.9 Hz), 5.32 (dd, 1H, *J*=17.3, 1.3 Hz), 5.18 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.3, 1.3 Hz), 5.02 (d, 1H, *J*=4.1 Hz), 4.71–4.33 (m, 6H), 4.27 (m, 1H, *J*=13.2, 4.1 Hz), 4.21 (m, 1H), 4.13 (dd, 1H, *J*=13.2, 6.7 Hz), 3.81, 3.80, 3.79 (each s, each 3H), 3.74 (m, 2H), 3.38 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.6, 3.8 Hz), 3.31 (dd, 1H, *J*=10.6, 4.4 Hz); ¹³C NMR of isomer B (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 159.09, 159.01, 158.97, 134.60, 130.25, 129.91, 129.86, 129.67, 129.48, 129.13, 117.21, 113.60, 113.58, 113.48, 99.95, 81.82, 77.09, 74.59, 72.98, 71.87, 71.69, 69.68, 68.52, 55.22.

1.2.3. Physical data for 2,3,5-tri-*O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl-D-ribofuranose (9). FAB-LRMS *m/z* 509 (M–H⁺, 1.4%); FAB-HRMS calcd for C₂₉H₃₃O₈ (M–H⁺) 509.2176, found 509.2163; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 7.30–7.16 (m, 6H), 6.87–6.82 (m, 6H), 5.28–5.23 (m, 1H), 4.63–4.08 (m, 8H), 3.80–3.78 (m, 9H), 3.60 (m, 0.5H), 3.41 (m, 2.5H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ: 159.24, 159.19, 159.06, 128.84, 129.74, 129.70, 129.58, 129.51, 129.43, 129.31, 129.24, 129.10, 113.75, 113.72, 113.68, 113.66, 100.29, 100.25, 96.19, 96.16, 80.89, 80.29, 77.26, 77.14, 73.08, 72.29, 72.00, 71.98, 71.96, 71.84, 69.65, 68.99, 55.24.

1.2.4. 1,4-Anhydro-2,3,5-tri-*O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl-4-thio-D-ribitol (15). To a solution of **12** (162 g, 0.32 mol) in dry pyridine (900 mL) was added methanesulfonyl chloride (122 mL, 1.6 mol) at 0°C. After being stirred for 30 min at the same temperature, the reaction was quenched by addition of ice. The reaction mixture was partitioned between AcOEt and H₂O. The separated organic layer was washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO₃ (three times), followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄) and concentrated in vacuo, and the residue was coevaporated several times with toluene to give the dimesylate **13**. The crude **13** was dissolved in methyl ethyl ketone (1 L), and well-dried lithium bromide (278 g, 3.2 mol) was added to the solution. The mixture was heated under reflux for 12 h. After being cooled to room temperature, the mixture was diluted with AcOEt and washed with H₂O, followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄) and concentrated in vacuo to give the crude **14**. The resulting **14** was dissolved in DMF (1 L), and sodium sulfide nonahydrate (92.2 g, 0.38 mol) was added to the solution. The mixture was heated at 100°C for 30 min. After being cooled to room temperature, the mixture was diluted with AcOEt and washed with H₂O (three times), followed by brine. The organic layer was dried (Na₂SO₄) and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by a silica gel column, eluted with hexane/AcOEt (10:1–1:1), to give **15** including **16** (121.5 g, 63%, **15/16**=7:1). The resulting product was crystallized from hexane–AcOEt to give pure **15** as white

crystals (69.1 g, 42%): mp 82°C; FAB-LRMS m/z 511 (MH^+ , 1.8%); 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ : 7.25–7.19 (m, 6H), 6.87–6.81 (m, 6H), 4.55–4.39 (m, 6H), 3.97 (ddd, 1H, $J=7.0, 5.6, 3.8$ Hz), 3.90 (dd, 1H, $J=3.8, 4.1$ Hz), 3.81 (s, 9H), 3.63 (m, 1H), 3.43 (m, 2H), 2.99 (dd, 1H, $J=7.0, 10.6$ Hz), 2.84 (dd, 1H, $J=5.6, 10.6$ Hz); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ : 159.11, 130.14, 130.09, 129.48, 129.19, 113.72, 113.64, 80.45, 79.24, 72.69, 71.67, 71.45, 71.35, 55.29, 47.23, 30.79. Anal. calcd for $C_{29}H_{34}O_6S$: C, 68.21; H, 6.71. Found: C, 68.17; H, 6.87.

1.2.5. Physical data for 1,4-Anhydro-2,3,5-tri-*O*-*p*-methoxybenzyl-4-thio-*L*-lyxitol (16). FAB-LRMS m/z 509 ($M-H^+$, 4.0%); FAB-HRMS calcd for $C_{29}H_{33}O_6S$ ($M-H^+$) 509.1998, found 509.2004; 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ : 7.25–7.21 (m, 6H), 6.87–6.82 (m, 6H), 4.76 (d, 1H, $J=11.4$ Hz), 4.59 (d, 1H, $J=11.4$ Hz), 4.49 (s, 2H), 4.42 (m, 2H), 4.13 (dd, 1H, $J=3.2, 3.8$ Hz), 3.99 (ddd, 1H, $J=3.2, 6.2, 9.4$ Hz), 3.80 (m, 10H), 3.50 (m, 2H), 3.02 (dd, 1H, $J=9.4, 9.7$ Hz), 2.87 (dd, 1H, $J=6.2, 9.7$ Hz); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ : 159.14, 159.10, 159.02, 130.75, 130.21, 130.10, 129.34, 128.96, 113.78, 113.73, 113.58, 83.22, 78.26, 73.15, 72.96, 71.82, 69.90, 55.29, 45.80, 30.43.

1.2.6. 1,4-Anhydro-4-thio-*D*-ribitol (4).³ To a solution of **15** (69 g, 135 mmol) in dry CH_2Cl_2 (560 mL) was added trifluoroacetic acid (140 mL) at room temperature, and the mixture was stirred for 2 h at the same temperature. The solvent was removed in vacuo, and the residue was coevaporated with MeOH several times. The resulting precipitates were filtered off, washed with MeOH. The solvent was removed in vacuo, and the residue was purified by a silica gel column, eluted with MeOH in $CHCl_3$ (2–10%), to give **4** (18.7 g, 92% as a yellow oil).

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- If the *O*-propenyl derivative **11** was not consumed, the reaction mixture was successively treated with 10% trifluoroacetic acid in aqueous THF (TFA/THF/ H_2O =1:4:5) to give **9** completely.
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