

# Synthesis of 4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides by uncatalyzed one-pot cyclization of 1,3-bis(silyloxy)alk-1-enes with oxalyl chloride

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**Abstract**—3-Hydroxy-4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides were prepared by one-pot cyclizations of 1,3-bis(silyloxy)alk-1-enes with oxalyl chloride.

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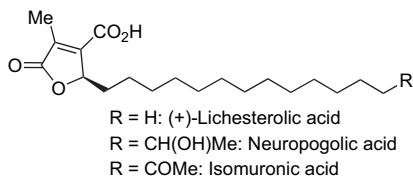
## 1. Introduction

4-Carboxy-, 4-alkoxycarbonyl-, and 4-acyl-butenolides are of considerable pharmacological relevance and occur in a variety of natural products.<sup>1</sup> This includes, for example, (+)- and (−)-lichesterolic acid,<sup>2</sup> neuropogolic acid,<sup>3</sup> isomuronic acid (Scheme 1),<sup>3a</sup> (+)-praezerosidiosic acid,<sup>4</sup> dihydroconstipitic acid,<sup>5</sup> paniculid C,<sup>6</sup> and medium-sized bicyclics such as 8,14-dioxo-7,11-dehydro-11,13-dihydroacanthospermolide,<sup>7</sup> cyclospinosolide,<sup>8</sup> pachyclavulariolide P,<sup>9</sup> and phlogacanthoside B.<sup>10</sup> 4-Alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides are also important synthetic building blocks. For example, (+)-nephrosteranic acid and related γ-lactones were prepared by diastereoselective hydrogenation of 5-alkyl-3-mesyloxy-4-ethoxycarbonyl-butenolides.<sup>11</sup> Isotetronic acid derivatives, containing a hydroxy group at carbon atom C-3 of the butenolide moiety, are also occurring in many natural products. This includes (+)-leptosphaerin<sup>12</sup> and compound WF-3681,<sup>13</sup> distomadine B,<sup>14</sup> various ascorbic acid derivatives,<sup>15</sup> and many other pharmacologically relevant natural products.<sup>16</sup> Isotetronic acids have been used also as synthetic building blocks during the synthesis of (−)-tetrodotoxin,<sup>17</sup>

6-thiosialic and neuraminic acids,<sup>18–21</sup> nactins,<sup>22</sup> and erythronolide A.<sup>23</sup>

3-Hydroxy-4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides and related structures have been previously prepared mainly by base-mediated cyclization reactions. This includes the reaction of pyruvates with aldehydes,<sup>24</sup> of benzaldehyde with dimethyl methoxyfumarate,<sup>25</sup> of acetophenones with formaldehyde and diethyl oxalate,<sup>26</sup> and by DABCO mediated dimerization of methyl 2,4-dioxopentanoate.<sup>27</sup> A different approach relies on the PPh<sub>3</sub> mediated reaction of ketones with methyl acetoxypropynoate.<sup>28</sup> Nair et al. reported the synthesis of spirocycles based on PPh<sub>3</sub> mediated reactions of 1,2-quinones.<sup>29</sup> Saalfrank and co-workers reported the synthesis of 5-alkylidene-3-hydroxy-4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides by cyclization of 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds with oxalyl chloride.<sup>30</sup> Sonoda and co-workers reported the synthesis of 2,3-dioxo-2,3-dihydrofurans by cyclization of acetophenone derived silyl enol ethers with oxalyl chloride.<sup>31</sup>

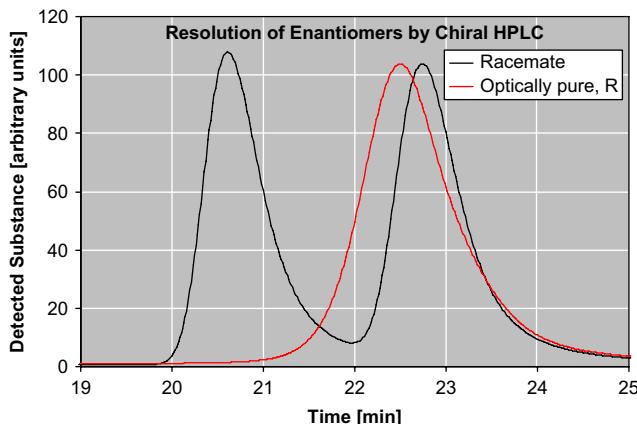
We developed an efficient approach to 3-hydroxy-5-alkylidenebutenolides by cyclization of 1,3-bis(silyloxy)buta-1,3-dienes<sup>32</sup> with oxalyl chloride.<sup>33</sup> Recently, we reported<sup>34</sup> a convenient one-pot synthesis of 3-hydroxy-4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides by cyclization of oxalyl chloride with 1-alkoxy-1,3-bis(silyloxy)alk-1-enes,<sup>35</sup> which can be regarded as bis-silylated 3-hydroxyesters. Herein, we report full details of these studies. With regard to our preliminary communication, we significantly extended the preparative scope. In addition, we report the application of our methodology to the synthesis of an enantiomerically pure butenolide and the functionalization of the products by Suzuki reactions. The reactions reported herein proceed under mild conditions; and the starting materials are readily available.



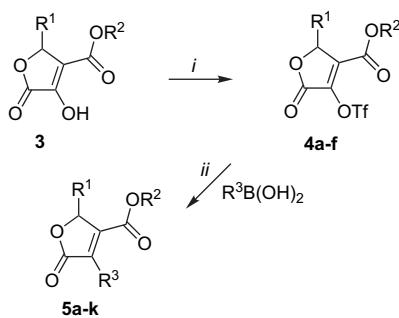
**Scheme 1.** Naturally occurring 4-carboxy-butenolides.

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**Figure 1.** Determination of the enantiomeric excess of butenolide (*R*)-**3a**: chiral HPLC on a CHIRALCEL OD-H column. Conditions: hexane/ethanol=95:5+0.1% CF<sub>3</sub>COOH (0.5 mL/min). Maxima after 20.61/22.50/22.74 min.



**Scheme 5.** Synthesis of butenolides **5a–k**. Conditions: (i) Tf<sub>2</sub>O, pyridine, -78 to -10 °C; (ii) Pd(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub> (3 mol %), K<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> (1.5 equiv), dioxane, reflux.

**Table 3.** Synthesis of butenolides **5a–k**

3	4	5	R <sup>1</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>3</sup>	% (4) <sup>a</sup>	% (5) <sup>a</sup>
f	a	a	i-Pr	Et	Ph	91	63
g	b	b	n-Bu	Et	Ph	84	76
g	b	c	n-Bu	Et	4-MeC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	84	45
g	b	d	n-Bu	Et	2-MeOC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	84	24
g	b	e	n-Bu	Et	3,4-(MeO) <sub>2</sub> C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>3</sub>	84	56
g	b	f	n-Bu	Et	3,4,5-(MeO) <sub>3</sub> C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>2</sub>	84	64
g	b	g	n-Bu	Et	Thien-2-yl	84	66
i	c	h	i-Bu	Et	4-MeOC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	86	57
j	d	i	t-Bu	Me	Ph	51	86
k	e	j	n-Hex	Me	Ph	77	61
o	f	k	Ph	Et	Ph	53	45

<sup>a</sup> Isolated yields.

1,3-bis(silyloxy)alk-1-enes with oxalyl chloride. The method is applicable to the synthesis of enantiomerically pure butenolides. This is useful, since there exist many methods for the enantioselective synthesis of 3-hydroxyesters. The oxalyl derived hydroxy group can be functionalized by Suzuki cross-coupling reactions of the enol triflate.

### 3. Experimental section

#### 3.1. General comments

All solvents were dried by standard methods and all reactions were carried out under an inert atmosphere. For <sup>1</sup>H

and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra the deuterated solvents indicated were used. Mass spectrometric data (MS) were obtained by electron ionization (EI, 70 eV), chemical ionization (CI, H<sub>2</sub>O), or electrospray ionization (ESI). For preparative scale chromatography, silica gel (60–200 mesh) was used. Melting points are uncorrected.

#### 3.2. General procedure for the preparation of 4-alkoxy-carbonyl-butenolides **3a–u**

To a CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution of **2a–u** was added a CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution of oxalyl chloride at -78 °C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to 20 °C within 15–24 h. Ether (60 mL) and brine (20 mL) were added, the organic and the aqueous layer were separated, and the latter was extracted with ether (3×30 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with water (10 mL), dried (Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>), and filtered. The filtrate was concentrated in vacuo. The residue was purified by column chromatography (silica gel) or recrystallized (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/n-hexane) to give 4-alkoxycarbonyl-butenolides **3a–u**.

**3.2.1. Methyl 4-hydroxy-2-methyl-5-oxo-2,5-dihydrofuran-3-carboxylate (3a).** Starting with **2a** (261 mg, 0.99 mmol), CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (10 mL), and oxalyl chloride (2.0 M in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0.50 mL, 1.00 mmol), **3a** was isolated by column chromatography (n-hexane/Et<sub>2</sub>O=1:1) as a slightly yellow solid (89 mg, 52%). Mp 48–49 °C; R<sub>f</sub> 0.25 (tailing; Et<sub>2</sub>O). Reaction time: 17 h. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (250 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ=1.55 (d, <sup>3</sup>J=6.4 Hz, 3H, CHCH<sub>3</sub>), 3.91 (s, 3H, OCH<sub>3</sub>), 5.16 (q, <sup>3</sup>J=6.4 Hz, 1H, CHCH<sub>3</sub>), 8.4 (br, 1H, OH). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ=19.4 (CHCH<sub>3</sub>), 52.5 (OCH<sub>3</sub>), 74.8 (OCH), 119.8 (CCH), 151.6 (COH), 164.6, 165.7 (CO). IR (KBr, cm<sup>-1</sup>): ν=3395 (br, s), 3344 (s), 2958 (w), 1781 (s), 1717 (s), 1456 (m), 1336 (m), 1229 (s), 1139 (s), 1053 (m), 772 (m). MS (EI, 70 eV): m/z (%)=172 (M<sup>+</sup>, 15), 127 (27), 112 (18), 100 (37), 85 (56), 70 (100), 53 (20), 39 (40), 29 (21). Anal. Calcd for C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (172.14): C, 48.84; H, 4.68. Found: C, 49.01; H, 4.81.

**3.2.2. Ethyl 2,5-dihydro-4-hydroxy-2-methyl-5-oxofuran-3-carboxylate (3b).** Starting with **2b** (0.41 g, 1.50 mmol), CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (15 mL), and oxalyl chloride (2.0 M in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0.75 mL, 1.50 mmol), **3b** was isolated by column chromatography (n-hexane/Et<sub>2</sub>O=1:1) as a slightly yellow oil (0.151 g, 54%). Reaction time: 17 h. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz): δ=1.34 (t, 3H, <sup>3</sup>J=7.1 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.57 (d, 3H, <sup>3</sup>J=6.5 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>), 4.33–4.44 (m, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>), 5.10 (q, 1H, <sup>3</sup>J=6.5 Hz, CH), 8.75 (br s, 1H, OH). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz): δ=14.2 (OCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>), 19.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 62.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 74.79 (CH), 120.14 (C), 152.19 (COH), 164.64 (CO), 165.55 (CO<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>). IR (KBr, cm<sup>-1</sup>): ν=3328 (w), 2985 (m), 2938 (w), 2876 (w), 1781 (s), 1709 (s), 1443 (m), 1332 (m), 1225 (s), 1184 (s), 1102 (m), 1052 (m), 923 (w), 769 (w). UV-vis (MeCN, nm): λ (log ε)=205.51 (3.49), 251.03 (4.04). MS (EI, 70 eV): m/z (%)=186 ([M]<sup>+</sup>, 1.5), 187 (1.5), 141 (85), 130 (15), 112 (78), 99 (48), 86 (50), 70 (100), 53 (12), 43 (66), 29 (57). Anal. Calcd for C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>10</sub>O<sub>5</sub>: C, 51.61; H, 5.41. Found: C, 51.2; H, 5.82.

**3.2.3. Ethyl 2-ethyl-4-hydroxy-5-oxo-2,5-dihydrofuran-3-carboxylate (3c).** Starting with **2c** (322 mg, 1.11 mmol), CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (10 mL), and oxalyl chloride (2.0 M in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>,























