OXIRANYLPHENYL ESTERS FROM PIMPINELLA DIVERSIFOLIA

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Abstract—The major components of the essential oil from roots of *Pimpinella diversifolia*, gathered in the Kumaun Region of India, have been identified as the (+)-Z-2-methyl-2-butenoate (angelate) and (+)-isobutyrate esters of 4-methoxy-2-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenol. Aromatic ¹³C NMR resonances of these compounds and their synthetic acetate analog, as well as those of 2-methoxy-4-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl acetate prepared from isoeugenol, were found to be in excellent agreement with calculated values. Comparison of the EIMS of the natural and synthetic products with those reported for compounds previously identified as 2-methoxy-4-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl esters indicates that they also have the 4-methoxy-2-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl structure.

INTRODUCTION

Several Apiaceae have yielded compounds identified as 2-methoxy-4-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl esters (1). Bohlmann and Zdero reported that they obtained the 2methylbutyrate 1a from Pimpinella saxifraga L. [1] and the (-)-Z-2-butenoate (angelate) 1b from Ligusticum mucronatum Hort. [2]; Stahl and Herting reported that they obtained the E-2-methyl-2-butenoate (tiglate) 1c as well as 1a from P. saxifraga L. and P. major Huds. [3]. These structural assignments were based primarily on the El mass spectra and ¹H NMR spectra of the compounds and, in all cases, there is no question concerning the identity of the three substituents on the benzene ring. However, the assigned orientation of the substituents appears to be based solely on an assumed relationship to isoeugenol, which is widely distributed among Apiaceae. Subsequent to these reports, two groups independently reported that (\pm) -4-methoxy-2-(E-1-propenyl)phenyl 2methylbutyrate (2a) is an important component of the essential oil of P. anisum L. [4, 5]. Identification of 2a was accomplished by both a detailed study of its ¹H and ¹³CNMR spectra [4,6] and its degradation to 2hydroxy-5-methoxybenzaldehyde and (\pm) -2-methylbutyric acid [5].

Pimpinella diversifolia DC. [7] is found at altitudes of 1500-3000 m in the Kumaun Region of the Himalayas. The ethanol extract of its seeds has been reported to be strongly fungitoxic [8], and the extract of the whole plant has been reported to possess spermicidal activity in rat semen [9]. Examination of the essential oil from seeds of *P. diversifolia* indicated the presence of carvone, geranyl acetate, limonene, myrcene, α -pinene, pulegone, santene, α -terpineol, terpineolic acid and unidentified coumarins [10], and two coumarins, iso-angenomalin and oxypeucedanin, have been isolated from the aerial part of the plant [11]. There has been no previous report on the chemical composition of the essential oils from roots of *P. diversifolia*.

We describe here the isolation and characterization of the two major constituents (37% and 15%) of the essential oil from roots of pre-flowering *P. diversifolia*: (+)-4-methoxy-2-(*E*-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl Z-2methyl-2-butenoate (3b) and its (+)-isobutyrate analog 3d.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Examination of the steam-volatile oil by GC/MS indicated the presence of at least 40 components. In contrast to the majority, the two present in largest amounts, **A** and **B**, both with relatively long GC retention times, had relatively simple fragmentation patterns that suggested they were not terpenes. They were obtained together by flash chromatography and separated by reverse phase HPLC.

The HREIMS of the colourless oils indicated that $C_{15}H_{18}O_4$ is the molecular formula of the major component A, and that B has molecular formula $C_{14}H_{18}O_4$. Their 360 MHz ¹H NMR spectra (Table 1) have common bands for 11 protons and suggested that each compound was one of six possible benzenes substituted at C-1, C-2 and C-4 with methoxy, E-3methyloxiranyl and either Z-2-methyl-2-butenoyloxy (A) or isobutyryloxy (B) groups. The 1,2,4-trisubstitution pattern on the benzene ring follows from the fine structure of the three signals at lowest field [12]. The ¹HNMR resonances at δ 3.60, 2.92 and *ca* 1.4 showed the presence of a 3-methyloxiranyl group, and the ring-proton coupling of 2.0 Hz established the E stereochemistry [13, 14]. The presence of a 2-methyl-2-butenoyloxy group in A was shown by HREIMS peaks due to $C_5H_0O_2^+$, $C_5H_7O^+$ and $C_4H_7^+$ [15] and ¹HNMR resonances at $\delta 6.28$, 2.10 and 2.07. Comparison of these chemical shifts with those reported for angelates and tiglates [2, 3, 16] strongly suggested the Z stereochemistry, and this was confirmed by the ¹³C NMR spectrum of A (Table 2),





Table 1. ¹HNMR data of *P. diversifolia* products (CDCl₃, 360 MHz)

	δ(p	pm)		
Protons	36*	341	mult.	J (Hz)
H-6	7.00	6.94	d	8.7
H-5	6.83	6.80	<i>d</i> , <i>d</i>	3.1, 8.7
H-3	6.78	6.76	d	3.1
OMe	3.79	3.79	5	
ArCHO	3.60	3.60	d	2.0
OCHMe	2.92	2.91	q.d	5.1, 2.0
OCHMe	1.40	1.42	d	5.1

*Other resonances at $\delta 6.28 [qq, J = 7.2 \text{ and } 1.2 \text{ Hz}, \text{HC}(Me)=C]$. 2.10 [dq, J = 7.2 and 1.4 Hz, HC(Me)=C] and 2.07 [p, J \approx 1.4 Hz, =C(Me)C=O].

†Other resonances at $\delta 2.84$ [sept, J = 7.2 Hz, Mc₂CH], 1.335 and 1.326 [doublets, J = 7.2 Hz, Me₂CH].

which has no signal below $\delta 16$ ppm characteristic of tiglate [16, 17]. The presence of an isobutyryloxy group in **B** was suggested by the m/z 43 base peak $(i-C_3H_7^-)$ and the prominent peak at m/z 71 $(i-C_3H_7CO^+)$ in its LREIMS and confirmed by the ¹H NMR resonances at $\delta 2.86$ and ca 1.34. Significantly, the gem-dimethyl of **B** exhibited not one but two doublets separated by 0.009 ppm. This indicated that they were influenced by one or both chiral centres of the oxiranyl group, which would only be likely if the oxiranyl and acyl groups were ortho [18]. The remaining ¹H NMR resonance at $\delta 3.79$ in the spectra of A and B is characteristic of a methoxy group, which must be on the benzene ring.

When the aromatic ¹HNMR chemical shifts for 1, 3

Table 2. ¹³C NMR data of *P. diversifolia* products (CDCl₃, 50.3 MHz)

	δ(p	pm)		δ (ppm)		
Carbon	36*	d†	Carbon	36+	341	
C=0	166.1‡	176.5	HC.	114.2	114.2	
C _{ar}	157.6‡	157.6	HC,	109.9	109.8	
C,	142.4‡	142.4	OC	58.4	58.4	
C _{at}	131.2‡	131.1	OC	55.6	55.6	
HC	122.8	122.6	OC	55.4	55.2	
			Me	17.7	17.8	

*Other resonances at δ 141.0 (Me CH=C), 126.8‡ [C=C(Me)CO₂], 20.7 (Me) and 16.0 (Me).

+Other resonances at δ 34.1 (Me₂CH) and 19.1 (Me₂C).

*Lower intensity signal.

and their four possible isomers were calculated using the parameters listed by Silverstein *et al.* [12] for acyloxy, methoxy and, for the oxiranyl group, alkoxymethyl, the same values, and those in best agreement with the spectra of **A** and **B**, were obtained for 1 and 3: H-3, $\delta 6.75$; H-5, 6.75; H-6, 7.05. This together with the likely *ortho* relationship of the isobutyryloxy and oxiranyl groups in **B** indicated that the *P. diversifolia* products are **3b** and **3d**.

Comparison of the aromatic parts of the ${}^{13}C$ NMR spectra of A and B (Table 2) with the calculated aromatic parts of the ${}^{13}C$ NMR spectra of 1, 3 and their four isomers (Table 3) gave even stronger evidence that the compounds are 3b and 3d. Two methods were used to calculate the spectra. For 1 and 3, ${}^{13}C$ parameters [19] of

Substituents		Chemical shifts (ppm)†								
C-1	C-2	C-4	 Method	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-5	C-6	- ΣΔ‡ (ppm)
OAc	OMe	C'H'O	•	139.4	151.5	108.9	136.5	118.1	122.6	19.3
OAc	OMe	C'H'O	В	139.3	151.2	110.1	135.7	118.2	122.7	18.1
OAc	C'H'O	OMe	•	141.6	130.6	111.1	157.1	114.2	123.1	3.4
OAc	C'H'O	OMc	В	140.8	131.3	112.5	156.9	114.2	122.3	5.5
OMe	OAc	C'H'O	B	1 50.6	139.9	120.4	129.5	124.4	112.4	21.6
OMe	C'H'O	OAc	B	154.6	123.8	120.0	143.1	121.5	114.8	22.8
C'H'O	OAc	OMe	B	122.5	149.6	106.9	160.0	111.1	127.9	18.9
C,H,O	OMe	OAc	B	120.1	158.3	106.9	151.3	113.5	127.9	18.9

Table 3. Calculated ¹³C NMR frequencies for 1, 2, 4-trisubstituted benzenes*

*See text for methods used.

[†] The reverse of original assignments to C-5 (122.9) and C-6 (120.7) of 2-methoxyphenyl benzoate [20] and to C-1 (137.3) and C-4 (138.5) of isoeugenol 3-methylbutyrate [4] were used in the calculations.

 $\Sigma\Delta$ is the sum of the absolute values of the differences between the calculated values and observed values for the P. diversifolia products assuming the best possible agreement.

the E-1-propenyl group [20] were subtracted from the spectra of isoeugenol 3-methylbutyrate [4] and of 4methoxy-2-(E-1-propenyl)phenyl 2-methylbutrate (2a) [4] and the parameters for E-3-methyloxiranyl were then added (method A). The latter parameters were taken to be the average for the oxiranyl group [20] (C-1, 9.3; $o_1 - 3.0$; m, -0.1; p, -0.5 ppm) and the 3,3-dimethyloxiranyl group [21] (C-1, 8.3; o, -2.0; m, -0.4; p, -1.0 ppm). For all six isomers, parameters for the E-3-methyloxiranyl group were added to the spectra calculated for m- and pmethoxyphenyl acylate by group additivity [19] and the spectrum reported for o-methoxyphenyl benzoate [20] (method B). Note that addition of E-1-propenyl group parameters to the reported spectrum of o-methoxyphenyl benzoate and the calculated spectrum of pmethoxyphenyl acylate gives values for the aromatic resonance of isoeugenol 3-methylbutyrate and 2a in very good agreement with the reported values: ada, 0.9 ppm; greatest deviation, 2.3 ppm. When original assignments are corrected, as noted in a footnote to Table 3, the ada and greatest deviation become 0.5 and 1.4 ppm. Note also that the aromatic resonances of phenyl esters show very little change with change in acyl or aroyl group [17, 20]. The average substituent effects for 13 such groups are: C-1, 22.6; $o_1 = 7.0$; $m_1 = 0.9$; $p_1 = 2.8$ ppm; greatest deviations are: C-1, 0.4; o, 0.8; m, 0.2; p, 0.3 ppm. Thus we could expect that the aromatic parts of the ¹³C NMR spectra of 1b, 1d and their acetate analog 1e-or 3b, 3d and their acetate analog 3e-would be essentially the same.

Epoxidation of isoeugenol acetate and 4-methoxy-2-(1propenyl)phenyl acetate (2e) with m-chloroperbenzoic acid [22] gave le and 3e. Comparison of their ¹³C NMR spectra (Table 4) with those calculated for 1 and 3 and those observed for the P. diversifolia products confirmed that they are 3b and 3d.

The EIMS of the acetate 3e, like that of the P. diversifolia products and the compounds previously identified as 1a [1, 3], 1b [2] and 1c [3], showed a strong peak at m/z 162 (21.5% of BP 137). In contrast, the m/z 162 peak in the EIMS of 1e was very weak (< 0.5% of BP 137). This difference, which is probably due to the relative ease of water loss from the o-substituted phenol radical cation [23] that forms when 3 loses the acyl group on electron impact indicates that the 2-methylbutyrate

Table 4.	¹³ C NMR data of	le and 3e (CD	Cl ₃ , 50.3 MHz)
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	Chemical shifts (ppm)							
Compound	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-5	C-6		
le*	139.3	151.1	108.8	136.7	117.9	122.5		
3et	142.4	131.0	110.0	157.7	114.2	122.7		

•Other resonances at $\delta 17.7$ (MeCH), 20.5 (MeCO), 55.7 (MeO), 55.7 and 59.1 (CH-CH) and 168.9 (C=O). Cf. Table 3, lines 1 and 2.

†Other resonances at δ17.7 (MeC), 20.6 (MeCO), 55.5 (OMe), 55.2 and 59.3 (CH-CH) and 169.5 (C=O). Cf. Table 2 and lines 3 and 4 of Table 3.

obtained from P. saxifraga [1, 3] and P. major [3] is 3a rather than 1a and suggests that the angelate and tiglate identified as 1b [2, 3] and 1c [3] are probably 3b and 3c. In this regard, the optical rotations at three wavelengths of 3b from P. diversifolia are consistent with the possibility that it is the enantiomer of the L. mucronatum product [2].

The unusual 'isoisoeugenol' structures 2 and 3 have now been shown to be produced by four members of the genus Pimpinella. Conceivably, the biosynthetic pathway to 2 and 3 may involve o-cournarate and the rarely if ever encountered 5-methoxy-o-coumarate [24] and may compete with the biosynthesis of coumarins [25] from those intermediates.

EXPERIMENTAL

Plant material. Pimpinella diversifolia DC. was collected from Dwali, Almora District, elevation 2727 m, in June. The identity of the plant was confirmed by Dr. B. M. Wadhwa, R.B.G. Kew, London (herbarium no. H6/2035/82).

Isolation of 3b and 3d. Roots (1.3 kg) of the freshly collected plants were finely chopped and steam distilled. The essential oil was extracted from the NaCl-satd distillate with petrol, bp 40-60°, and the organic soln was dried (Na2SO4) and concd by distillation. Removal of the last traces of solvent at red. pres. left 0.37 g (0.28 %) of essential oil.

The oil was analysed using a 30 m × 0.25 mm (J. & W.) fused

silica capillary column, liquid phase DB-5, with He as the carrier gas in a Hewlett-Packard 5840A GC interfaced with a Hewlett-Packard 5985 mass spectrometer at California State University, Sacramento. The column temp. was maintained at 60° for 1 min, and then programmed at 2.5°/min for the next 29 min and 3°/min up to 74 min. The eluant was sampled repeatedly by the mass spectrometer, EI conditions, 70 eV. The two major components, subsequently identified as 3b and 3d, had retention times of 52.3 and 47.4 min and were estimated on the basis of their GC response to make up 37% and 15% of the oil.

The major components were isolated together by flash chromatography (SiO₂, hexane-CHCl₃) and separated on a C-18 prep. HPLC column using MeOH-H₂O (7:3) as the mobile phase. The yield from 0.36 g of oil was 71 mg (20%) of 3b and 30 mg (8%) of 3d as colourless oils.

(+)-4-Methoxy-2-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)-phenyl Z-2-methyl-2butenoate (3b). HREIMS (probe) 50 eV, m/z (rel. int.): 262.1241 $[C_{13}H_{18}O_4]^*$ (3.4), 162.0673 $[C_{10}H_{10}O_2]^*$ (100), 147.0463 $[C_0H_7O_2]^*$ (52.0), 131.0498 $[C_8H_7O]^*$ (6.0), 119.0487 $[C_8H_7O]^*$ (31.0), 100.0520 $[C_5H_8O_2]^*$ (9.0), 83.0508 $[C_5H_7O]^*$ (19.6) $[C_{13}H_{18}O_4$ requires: 262.1205]. LREIMS (GC/MS) m/z (rel. int.): 262.1 [M]* (1.4), 162 [M - C₅H₈O₂]* (13), 83 [C₅H₇O]* (100), 55 $[C_8H_7]^*$ (51). ¹H and ¹³C NMR: Tables 1 and 2.

$$[x]_{23}^{\frac{1}{2}} = \frac{578}{+44^{\circ}} + \frac{546}{+49^{\circ}} + \frac{436}{77^{\circ}} (CDCl_3, c \ 1.7).$$

(+)-4-Methoxy-2-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl isobutyrate (3d), LREIMS (GC/MS) m/z (rel. int.): 250 [M]* (19), 180 [M $-C_{4}H_{6}O$]* (49), 163 [M $-C_{4}H_{7}O_{2}$]* (38), 162 [M $-C_{4}H_{6}O_{2}$]* (48), 151 [M $-C_{4}H_{6}O - CHO$]* [26] (44), 137 [$C_{4}H_{9}O_{2}$]* (100), 71 [$C_{4}H_{7}O$]* (26), 43 [$C_{3}H_{7}$]* (21), ¹H and ¹³C NMR: Tables 1 and 2. [x] $\frac{23}{23}$ * + 56° (CDCl₃, c 0.8).

2-Methoxy-4-(3-methyl-2-oxiranyl)phenyl acetate (1e). The epoxidation method of ref. [22] was used to convert 2.90 g of isoeugenol acetate, mp 80-81° (lit. [27] mp 80.7-81.3°), to 2.65 g of 1b, $n^{30} D$ 1.5185. (Found: C, 64.53; H, 6.39. C₁₂H₁₄O₄ requires: C, 64.85; H, 6.35°,) LREIMS (GC/MS) m/z (rel. int.): 222 [M]* (4.3), 180 [M - C₂H₂O]* (27), 163 (2.4), 162 (< 0.5), 151 [M - C₂H₂O - CHO]* [26] (39), 137 [C₈H₉O₂]* (100). ¹H NMR (360 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.99 (d, 1H, J = 8.1 Hz), 6.87 (dd, 1H, J = 1.5, 8.1 Hz), 6.83 (d, 1H, J = 1.5 Hz), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.56 (d, 1H, J = 1.8 Hz), 2.99 (qd, 1H, J = 4.9, 1.8 Hz), 2.30 (s, 3H), 1.43 (d, 3H, J = 4.9 Hz). ¹³C NMR: Table 4.

4-Methoxy-2-(E-3-methyloxiranyl)phenyl acetate (3e). The procedure used in ref. [28] to convert allybenzene to propenylbenzene (160°, KOH-HOCH₂CH₂OH) was used to convert 35.1 g of 2-allyl-4-methoxyphenol [29, 30] to a 70:30 mixture of the E- and Z-isomers of 4-methoxy-2-propenylbenzene, bp 78 93°/0.1 mm (lit. [30] bp 110 114°/3 mm), from which 5.8 g of the higher boiling E isomer was obtained by fractional distillation. Treatment with excess Ac₂O and a trace of NEt₃ gave the acetate 2e as a viscous, colourless liquid after evaportion of solvent at 42°/0.4 mm, $n^{23}D$ 1.5443. (Found: C, 70.01; H, 6.85. C₁₂H₁₄O₃ requires: C, 69.88; H, 6.84%.)

Epoxidation [22] of 3.50 g of 2e gave 2.7 g of 3e, bp 94-95/0.4 mm, $n^{18}D$ 1.5185. (Found: C, 64.57; H, 6.27. C₁₂H₁₄O₄ requires: C, 64.85; H, 6.35°, LREIMS (GC/MS) m/z (rel. int.):222 [M]* (13) 180 [M - C₂H₂O]* (45), 163 [M - C₂H₃O₂]* (12), 162 [M - C₂H₄O₂]* (30), 151 [M - C₂H₂O - CHO]* [26] (53), 137 [C₈H₉O₂]* (100). ¹H NMR (360 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 6.95 (d, 1H, J = 8.8 Hz), 6.79 (dd, 1H, J = 3.0, 8.8 Hz), 6.75 (d, 1H, J = 3.0 Hz), 3.76 (s, 3H), 3.58 (d, 1H, J = 1.8 Hz), 2.93 (qd, 1H, J = 5.2, 1.8 Hz), 2.30 (s, 3H), 1.42 (d, 3H, J = 5.2 Hz). ¹³C NMR: Table 4. Acknowledgements- This work was supported in part by grants from the Faculty Research Committee, University of California, Davis, the Herman Frasch Foundation, administered by the American Chemical Society (to ATB), the National Science Foundation and the University Grants Commission, India, to VD as U.S.-India Exchange Scientist, and the University Grants Commission, India (to CSM). High resolution mass spectra were obtained at the Bio-organic, Biomedical Mass Spectrometry Resource (A. L. Burlingame, Director) supported by NIH Division of Research Resources Grant RR01614. NMR spectra were obtained at the University of California, Davis, NMR Facility; the NT-200 spectrometer used for determination of the ¹³C NMR spectra was purchased in part by NSF grant CHE 79-04832 to the Department of Chemistry. We are grateful to Professor David Forkey for assistance in obtaining the GC-MS data and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India, for a fellowship to ABM.

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