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FeCl₃ mediated arylidenation of carbohydrates

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1. Introduction

Protection and deprotection of functional groups are two important functional group transformations in synthetic carbohydrate chemistry.¹ In this field, benzylidenation is generally used to protect 1,2- and 1,3-diols, as such protections are stable under neutral and basic conditions. 4,6-O-Benzylidenated monosaccharides are of particular importance in the synthesis of complex carbohydrates² as these can be selectively transformed under oxidative conditions to the corresponding 6-bromo-4-O-benzoyl-6-deoxy sugars in reaction with NBS.³ The acetals can also either be selectively deprotected under reductive conditions⁴ to give the corresponding 4-O-benzylated or 6-O-benzylated product keeping the other hydroxyl group free. The resulting compounds can act as glycosyl acceptors during oligosaccharide synthesis. Several methods for the preparation of benzylidene acetals have been reported. Of these earlier methods that use benzaldehyde as the electrophile, most were catalyzed by ZnCl₂,⁵ H₂SO₄,⁶ or TsOH⁷ and the like. Later benzaldehyde dimethyl acetal was proved to be a better reagent, and transacetalations were achieved with Brønsted acids (HBF₄,⁸ CSA, and TsOH⁹), including silica gel supported ones (NaHSO₄–SiO₂¹⁰ or H₂SO₄–SiO₂¹¹, or HClO₄–SiO₂¹²) or Lewis acid [VO(OTf)₂]¹³ or by other reagents like I₂.¹⁴ PhCHBr₂ can also be used as an electrophile for benzylidenation under basic (pyridine) conditions.¹⁵ Recently, in continuation of our work on carbohydrates,¹⁶ in connection with some oligosaccharide synthesis, we were trying to prepare benzylidene

ABSTRACT

Glycosides and thioglycosides based on monosaccharides in reaction with benzaldehyde dimethylacetal or *p*-methoxybenzaldehyde dimethyl acetal undergo FeCl₃-catalyzed (20 mol %) regioselective 4,6-O-arylidenation producing the corresponding acetals in high yields. FeCl₃ also mediates acetalation of glycosides and thioglycosides of cellobiose, maltose, and lactose affording the corresponding 4',6'-O-benzyl-idene acetals, which were isolated after their acetylation in situ with acetic anhydride and pyridine. The combined yields (two steps) of these final products are also high (61–84%). The procedure is applicable to a wide variety of functional groups including –OBn.

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acetals of some disaccharide substrates employing the established transacetalation methodologies, we could not obtain the corresponding benzylidene acetals in good yields. Thus, we were in search of suitable conditions for the above purpose. Recently, FeCl₃ has been used to mediate various organic transformations, like, iodination,^{17a} Friedel–Crafts alkylation,^{17b} addition of active methylene to styrene derivatives,^{17c} intermolecular O-arylation,^{17d} coupling of alkynes and alcohols,^{17e} oxidative coupling of aromatic nuclei,^{17f} 1,2-addition of aryl aldehyde with aryl boronic acid,^{17g} synthesis of 3,3-diindolyl oxyindoles,^{17h} synthesis of structurally diverse indenes,¹⁷ⁱ synthesis of 5-hydroxy-1*H*-pyrrol-2-(5*H*)-ones,^{17j} acetylation of carbohydrates,^{17m} among others. We observed that inexpensive and eco-friendly FeCl₃ could mediate arylidenation of sugars (mono- and disaccharides) in high yields; the results of these reactions are reported herein (Schemes 1 and 2, and Tables 1–3).

2. Results and discussion

At the outset, phenyl 1-thio- β -D-glucoside (**1a**) was chosen as the substrate for the standardization of reaction conditions for its reaction with benzaldehyde dimethylacetal in the presence of FeCl₃ using CH₃CN or DMF as solvent. Best results were obtained from the reaction of **1a** (1.0 equiv) and benzaldehyde dimethyl acetal (1.5 equiv) in the presence of 20 mol % FeCl₃ in CH₃CN at ambient temperatures, which produced the corresponding 4,6-*O*benzylidene acetal (**1b**^{16g}) in excellent yield (92%, entry 1, Table 1). Under similar reaction conditions, other phenyl 1-thioglycosides of 2-NPhth- β -D-Glc, - β -D-Gal and - α -D-Man furnished the corresponding 4,6-*O*-benzylidene derivatives (**4b**,¹⁶ⁱ **5b**^{16g} and **7b**^{16h}) in high



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For (a):
$$R^1 = H / Ac / Bz / Bn$$
; $X = OH / OAc / OBz / OBn / Nphth$;
 $Y = SR^2 / OR^3$; where, $R^2 = aryl and R^3 = alkyl / aryl / CPh$



Scheme 1. FeCl₃ mediated O-arylidenation of carbohydrates.



Scheme 2. FeCl₃-mediated O-arylidenation of monosaccharides.

 Table 1

 FeCl3-catalyzed arylidenation of monosaccharide substrates

#	Product	Time (h)	Yield ^a (%)	#	Product	Time (h)	Yield ^a (%)	#	Product	Time (h)	Yield ^a (%)
1	1b	2.5	92	8	8b	2.5	88	15	15b	2.5	88
2 ^b	2b	2.5	86 (87)	9	9b	2.5	88	16	16b	2.5	83
3	3b	2.5	85	10	10b	3.5	86	17	17b	2.0	90
4	4b	2.5	81	11	11b	3.5	85	18	1c	2.5	88
5	5b	2.5	86	12	12b	3.5	85	19	2c	2.5	85
6	6b	3.0	85	13	13b	2.5	79	20	5c	2.5	87
7	7b	2.0	76	14	14b	2.5	65	21	6c	2.5	85

^a Isolated yield.

^b Data in parenthesis represent the yield based on a 1-g scale.

yields (76–86%, entries 4, 5 and 7, respectively, Table 1). It may be mentioned here that in some of the reported procedures for sugar benzylidenation, the yield of the 4,6-*O*-benzylidene acetal of phenyl 1-thio- α -*D*-mannopyranoside is low to moderate because of formation of the corresponding 2,3:4,6-di-*O*-benzylidene product in appreciable amounts.^{9,10,18} Under the present conditions only trace amounts of the product dibenzylidene were formed, and the 4,6-*O*-benzylidene acetal (**7b**) was obtained in 76% yield (entry 7). Efficient 4,6-*O*-benzylidenation was also possible from *p*-tolyl 1-thio-*D*-glycosides (**2b**,¹⁰ **3b**¹¹, and **6b**,¹³ entries 2, 3 and 6) and *p*-chlorophenyl 1-thio- β -*D*-glucoside (entry 9), which afforded their respective products in high yields (85–88%). The efficiency of the present procedure was further established under a scaleup reaction of **2a** (1 g), benzaldehyde dimethyl acetal, and 20 mol % of FeCl₃, which gave **2b** in 87% yield (entry 2 in parenthesis, Table 1). Except for methyl α-D-mannopyranoside (not shown), which was reluctant, probably due to its poor solubility and low reactivity, to undergo reaction under the present conditions, other methyl glycopyranosides (entries 10–12) and β-azidoethyl glucoside (entry 13) afforded the corresponding desired products (**10b**, ^{14b} **11b**¹³ **12b**¹⁰ and **13b**¹⁹) in very good yields. *p*-Methoxyphenyl, *p*-bromophenyl, and 2-naphthyl glycosides are also good substrates for affording their respective 4,6-O-benzylidene acetals (**14b**, ^{14b} **15b**, ²⁰ **16b**, **17b**²¹) in high yields (entries 14–17). The present FeCl₃-catalyzed acetalation protocol was also applied to effect the efficient 4,6-*p*-methoxybenzylidenation of *S*-phenyl and *S*-tolyl

Table 2

Entry

1

2

3

4

5

Comparison of benzylidenation under different conditions of a disaccharide substrate

p-TSA (20 mol %)/DMF9

FeCl₃ (20 mol %)/CH₃CN

FeCl₃ (1.2 equiv) + 4 Å Mol. Sieves/CH₃CN



3 d (complete)

2 h (complete)

1 d (incomplete)

^a Isolated chromatographed (SiO₂) yields.

Table 3

FeCl3-mediated benzylidenation of disaccharide substrates



^a Isolated chromatographed combined yield (two steps).

glucosides (entries 18 and 19) and the corresponding galactosides (entries 20 and 21) using *p*-methoxybenzaldehyde dimethyl acetal

as the electrophile, which proceeded well to furnish the corresponding 4,6-0-acetals (1c,^{16g} 2c,¹³ 5c^{16g} and 6c¹³) in high yields

Yield^a (%)

42

37

81

40

86

(85-88%). The above conversions establish the applicability of the present protocol toward a wide variety of functions like O-alkyl/ aryl glycosides, thioglycosides, benzoyl, acetate, phthalimido, azides, and benzyl groups. The regioselectivity of the present acetalation is excellent, as only the corresponding 4,6-O-benzylidene product is obtained in the D-Glc or D-Gal systems. It is also worthwhile to note here that, although FeCl₃ (3–24 equiv) is used for effecting debenzylation of sugars,²² we did not observe any debenzylation using 20 mol % FeCl₃ during the course of benzylidenation reaction. Moreover, unlike that in FeCl₃-mediated debenzylation,²² anomerisation^{22b} of glycosides could not be observed. Since MeOH is a by-product of the benzylidenation using PhCH(OMe)₂, in situ generation of HCl by methanolysis of FeCl₃ cannot be ruled out. To explore if there is any role of this HCl for benzylidene acetal formation, 2a was treated with 20 mol % HCl-CH₃CN and PhCH(OMe)₂, which generated the corresponding acetal (**2b**), but in lower yield: the reaction also took a longer time for completion compared to that based on FeCl₃. A slower reaction rate was also observed from a reaction of 2a with PhCH(OMe)₂ in the presence of 20 mol % FeCl₃ and 2,4,6-tri-tert-butylpyrimidine (TTBP) compared to that done in the absence of the hindered base (TTBP). Thus, a dual Lewis (FeCl₃) and Brønsted (HCl) acid catalysis is probably operative under the present benzylidenation conditions.

The FeCl₃-mediated benzylidenation of a monosaccharide-glycoside was further extended for conversion of some disaccharide glycosides to their corresponding 4',6'-O-benzylidene acetals. It may be mentioned here that maltose, lactose, and cellobiose are common disaccharide units of many biologically important glycoconjugates and polysaccharides in which chain extension of these units occurs via their C-4' or C-6' hydroxyl groups.²³ Thus these readily available disaccharides, through the formation of respective 4',6'-O-benzylidene acetals, are convertible to their corresponding glycosyl donors or acceptors for the synthesis of those glycoconjugates or polysaccharides. Although, some of the reported methods (based on pTSA, NaHSO₄-SiO₂ or I₂) of sugar 4,6-O-benzylidenation work guite well in monosaccharide substrates affording the corresponding acetals in high vields.^{9,10,14} but when we applied these standard reported protocols to the selected disaccharide substrate, for example, 21d for its conversion to the corresponding 4',6'-O-benzylidene acetal, the results were not satisfactory for the latter two reagents (entries 1 and 2, Table 2). On the other hand, *p*-TSA furnished a good yield of product (**21e**, 81%, entry 3), and the reaction required 3 days for completion. Use of 20 mol % FeCl₃ also produced the desired product (**21e**) in moderate yield (40%, entry 4, Table 2), probably because of the presence of a larger number of hydroxyl functions in the disaccharide system. Modification of the above FeCl₃-based conditions was thus necessary for the benzylidenation of disaccharide substrates. Interestingly, increasing the load of FeCl₃ to 1.2 equiv and performing the reaction in the presence of 4 Å molecular sieves dramatically improved the yield of disaccharide 4',6'-O-benzylidene acetal 21e (86%, entry 5, Table 2); the reaction was expeditious too. Following these conditions, several glycosides and thioglycosides of maltose, lactose, and cellobiose were next benzylidenated to afford their corresponding 4',6'-O-benzylidenated products, which were isolated as acetates after their in situ one-pot acetylation using pyridine and acetic anhydride[‡] in the reaction mixture followed by chromatographic purification on an SiO₂-column. High combined yields (two steps) of the final products (18f-23f, 6184%, entries 1–6, Table 3) indicate that the yields for each of the individual steps are quite high. It is to be noted here that **20f**²⁴ and **21f**²⁴ can be used directly as glycosyl donors, and **18f**,²⁵ **19f**²⁶, and **22f** are selectively convertible under reductive conditions to supply a desired glycosyl acceptor.

3. Conclusions

In summary, we have established that FeCl₃ mediates the Oarylidenation of monosaccharide and disaccharide glycosides affording the corresponding 4,6-O-arylidenated products in high yields. The advantages of the present procedure are its regioselectivity, generally high yields of products (under preparative scale too; moreover, if required, the benzylidene acetals can be converted in onepot to the corresponding acetates), and the use of inexpensive, eco-friendly, and readily available FeCl₃. It does not cause any bond cleavage or anomerization of glycosides or thioglycosides; moreover, it is also amenable to a wide variety of functional groups. The –OBn group is not deprotected under the reaction conditions.

4. Experimental

4.1. General experimental methods

Melting points are uncorrected. NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker DPX 300 NMR spectrometer operating at 300 MHz and 75 MHz for ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra, respectively, in CDCl₃. HRMS data were recorded on a Q-TOF-Micro mass spectrometer by the electrospray-ionization method. Specific rotations were measured on a Jasco J-815 spectrometer.

4.2. General procedure for arylidenation of monosaccharides

To a solution of unprotected monosaccharide-glycosides (0.5 mmol) and benzaldehyde dimethyl acetal or *p*-methoxybenzaldehyde dimethyl acetal (0.75 mmol) in dry CH₃CN (2 mL), 20 mol % anhyd FeCl₃ was added with stirring at ambient temperature. After completion of reaction (indicated by TLC) the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure. In most cases a solid mass was obtained, which was washed with minimum volume of cold water until it was acid free. Then it was dried and washed with chilled 5% EtOAc-petroleum ether to remove excess benzaldehyde dimethyl acetal. The dry, solid product was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂, and filtered, and the filtrate was evaporated to afford the product. Although the products obtained were pure enough, these were crystallized from distilled EtOH or EtOAc-petroleum ether before recording of the NMR data. In some cases (for products **3b**,¹¹ **4b**,¹⁶ⁱ **8b**,^{16h} **10b**,^{14b} **11b**¹³, and **12b**,¹⁰ Table 1), after evaporation of solvent from the reaction mixture, a syrupy material was obtained, which was dissolved in EtOAc. The EtOAc solution was washed with satd aq NaHCO₃ $(1 \times 5 \text{ mL})$ followed by cold water $(2 \times 5 \text{ mL})$. The organic layer was dried over dry Na₂SO₄ and concentrated under reduced pressure. The solid mass obtained (10b or 11b) was washed with chilled 5% EtOAc-petroleum ether. For products **3b**, **4b**, **8b**, or **12b**, the syrupy mass was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (entries 3, 4, 8, 12, Table 1). For *p*-methoxybenzylidene acetals (1c,^{16g} 2c,¹³ 5c^{16g} and 6c¹³), after completion of the reaction the CH₃CN was evaporated under reduced pressure, and the residue was dissolved in EtOAc. This was washed with satd aq NaHCO₃ $(1 \times 5 \text{ mL})$ followed by cold water $(2 \times 5 \text{ mL})$. The organic layer was dried over anhyd Na₂SO₄ and then concentrated under reduced pressure. The syrupy residue was purified by filtration on an alumina column. The NMR spectral data of known compounds matched those reported.

[‡] It may be mentioned here that acetylation with acetic anhydride at this stage in the absence of base (pyridine) required additional FeCl₃ (\sim 1 equiv), which afforded the arylidenated–acetylated product along with some degraded products (probably due to acetolysis in the presence of excess FeCl₃), decreasing the yield of the desired product.

4.3. Procedure for benzylidenation and acetylation of disaccharides

To a solution of unprotected disaccharides (0.2 mmol) and benzaldehyde dimethylacetal (0.3 mmol) in dry CH₃CN (3 mL) and 4 Å MS, anhyd FeCl₃ (0.24 mmol) was added, and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2–2.5 h. After completion of reaction (indicated by TLC), dry pyridine (1.5 mL), Ac₂O (2 mmol), and DMAP (10 mol %) were added. After complete acetylation, the reaction mixture was concentrated and diluted with CH₂Cl₂. It was washed with cold water (2 × 5 mL). The organic layer was dried over dry Na₂SO₄, and then concentrated under reduced pressure. It was purified by column chromatography on silica gel. The NMR spectra of known compounds (**18f**,²⁵ **19f**,²⁶ **20f**²⁴ and **21f**²⁴) matched those reported.

4.4. Characteristic data of selected products

4.4.1. 4-Chlorophenyl 4,6-O-benzylidene-1-thio-β-D-glucopyranoside (9b)

Yield 88%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 156–158 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ –41.6 (*c* 1.59, CHCl₃); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ 7.48–7.45 (m, 4H), 7.37–7.29 (m, 5H), 5.51 (s, 1H), 4.57 (d, 1H, *J* = 9.7 Hz), 4.38–4.33 (m, 1H), 3.83–3.71 (m, 2H), 3.49–3.39 (m, 3H), 3.15 (br s, 1H), 2.94 (br s, 1H), ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): δ 136.9, 135.0, 134.7, 129.8, 129.5, 129.4, 128.5, 126.4, 102.1, 88.4, 80.3, 74.7, 72.7, 70.7, 68.6; HRESIMS: calcd for C₁₉H₁₉ClO₅SNa⁺ *m/z* 417.0540; found, *m/z* 417.0544.

4.4.2. 2'-Azidoethyl 4,6-O-benzylidene- β -D-glucopyranoside $(13b)^{19}$

Yield 79%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 90–92 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ –57.4 (*c* 0.58, CHCl₃); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ 7.50–7.48 (m, 2H), 7.37–7.36 (m, 3H), 5.51 (s, 1H), 4.41 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.7 Hz), 4.32 (dd, 1H, *J* = 4.8, 10.4 Hz), 4.05–4.00 (m, 1H), 3.82–3.71 (m, 3H), 3.56–3.48 (m, 3H), 3.44–3.38 (m, 4H).

4.4.3. 4-Bromophenyl 4,6-O-benzylidene-β-D-glucopyranoside (16b)

Yield 83%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 182–184 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ –38.8 (*c* 0.89, CHCl₃); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ 7.51–7.48 (m, 2H), 7.42–7.36 (m, 5H), 6.95–6.92 (d, 2H, *J* = 8.9 Hz), 5.53 (s, 1H), 4.95 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.6 Hz), 4.35 (dd, 1H, *J* = 4.7, 10.6 Hz), 3.91–3.74 (m, 3H), 3.64–3.50 (m, 2H), 3.16 (s, 1H), 3.07 (d, 1H, *J* = 1.9 Hz), ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 155.9, 136.8, 132.5, 129.4, 128.4, 126.3, 118.8, 115.8, 102.0, 101.2, 80.2, 74.2, 73.2, 68.5, 66.6; HRESIMS: calcd for C₁₉H₁₉BrO₆Na⁺ *m/z* 445.0263; found, *m/z* 445.0267.

4.4.4. Methyl 2,3-di-O-acetyl-4,6-O-benzylidene- β -D-galacto-pyranosyl-(1 \rightarrow 4)-2,4,6-tri-O-acetyl-1-thio- β -D-glucopyranoside (19f)^{26}

Yield 72%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 220–222 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ +36.5 (*c* 0.1.46, CHCl₃).

4.4.5. Phenyl 2,3-di-O-acetyl-4,6-O-benzylidene- β -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 \rightarrow 4)-2,4,6-tri-O-acetyl-1-thio- β -D-glucopyranoside (20f)^{24}

Yield 61%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 264–266 °C, lit.²⁴ mp 267 ± 0.1 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ –42.5 (*c* 0.50, CHCl₃), lit.²⁴ $[\alpha]_D$ –45.3 (*c* 0.83, CHCl₃).

4.4.6. Phenyl 2,3-di-O-acetyl-4,6-O-benzylidene- β -D-galactopyranosyl-(1 \rightarrow 4)-2,4,6-tri-O-acetyl-1-thio- β -D-glucopyranoside (21f)^{24}

Yield 84%; white crystals (EtOH); mp 254–256 °C, lit.²⁴ mp 255 ± 0.25 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ +23 (*c* 0.50, CHCl₃), lit.²⁴ $[\alpha]_D$ +24.4 (*c* 0.70, CHCl₃).

4.4.7. 4-Methoxyphenyl 2,3-di-O-acetyl-4,6-O-benzylidene- α -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 \rightarrow 4)-2,4,6-tri-O-acetyl- β -D-glucopyranoside (22f)

Yield 67% (two steps); white crystals (EtOH); mp 182–184 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ +24.5 (*c* 0.49, CHCl₃); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ 7.44– 7.40 (m, 2H), 7.36–7.33 (m, 3H), 6.95–6.90 (m, 2H), 6.84–6.80 (m, 2H), 5.50–5.43 (m, 2H), 5.38 (d, 1H, *J* = 4.1 Hz), 5.31 (t, 1H, *J* = 8.8 Hz), 5.06 (t, 1H, *J* = 7.7 Hz), 4.97 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.7 Hz), 4.89 (dd, 1H, *J* = 4.2, 10.2 Hz), 4.54 (dd, 1H, *J* = 2.7, 12.1 Hz), 4.32–4.24 (m, 2H), 4.08 (t, 1H, *J* = 9.2 Hz), 3.91–3.80 (m, 2H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.74 (s, 1H), 3.70–3.60 (m, 1H), 2.08, 2.06, 2.05, 2.04, 2.01 (5 × s, 15H), ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): δ 170.9, 170.4, 170.3, 169.9, 155.9, 150.9, 136.8, 129.2, 128.3, 126.3, 119.0, 114.7, 101.7, 99.9, 96.7, 78.9, 77.4, 75.6, 73.0, 72.4, 72.3, 71.0, 68.6, 63.9, 62.7, 55.8, 21.1, 20.9, 20.8, 20.7; HRESIMS: calcd for C₃₆H₄₂O₁₇Na⁺ *m*/*z* 769.2320; found, *m*/*z* 769.2324.

4.4.8. 2'-Azidoethyl 2,3-di-O-acetyl-4,6-O-benzylidene- α -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 \rightarrow 4)-2,4,6-tri-O-acetyl- β -D-glucopyranoside (23f)

Yield 69% (two steps); white crystals (EtOH); mp 186–188 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ +2.0 (*c* 2.25, CHCl₃); ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz): δ 7.42–7.34 (m, 5H), 5.48–5.42 (m, 2H), 5.36 (d, 1H, *J* = 3.8 Hz), 5.26 (t, 1H, *J* = 9.0 Hz), 4.90–4.82 (m, 2H), 4.61–4.57 (m, 2H), 4.26–4.22 (m, 2H), 4.06–3.98 (m, 2H), 3.89–3.81 (m, 1H), 3.76–3.59 (m, 4H), 3.51–3.44 (m, 1H), 3.26–3.22 (m,1H), 2.11, 2.05, 2.04, 2.02, 2.01 (5 × s, 15H), ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz): δ 170.8, 170.3, 170.2, 169.8, 169.7, 136.7, 129.1, 128.2, 126.2, 101.6, 100.2, 96.5, 78.8, 75.4, 72.6, 72.3, 72.0, 70.8, 69.2, 68.7, 68.5, 63.7, 62.3, 50.5, 20.9, 20.8 (2), 20.7, 20.6; HRESIMS: calcd for C₃₁H₃₉N₃O₁₆Na⁺ *m/z* 732.2228; found, *m/z* 732.2229.

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