Tetrahedron Letters 52 (2011) 3397-3400

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Tetrahedron Letters

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tetlet



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Stereo-conserved synthesis of *syn*-diarylheptanoids, active principles of *Zingiber*, starting from *D*-glucose

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history: Received 16 February 2011 Revised 22 April 2011 Accepted 23 April 2011 Available online 30 April 2011

Keywords: Syn-diarylheptanoid D-Glucose Wilkinson's catalyst Wittig reaction

ABSTRACT

A highly efficient and stereo-controlled synthetic strategy has been developed to access *syn*-diarylheptanoids, for example, **2**, **3**, **4**, and **5b** starting from D-glucose as a chiral pool. The 3-(R), 5-(S)-*syn*-diol stereochemistry present in these heptanoids was obtained after conserving C2 and C4 stereochemistry of D-glucose during the course of synthetic transformation. The key features of this synthetic strategy include: (i) conversion of D-glucose to a known chiral template **6** armored with the required 1,3-*syn*diol stereochemistry as well as two terminal aldehyde functionalities for building up customized '*diaryl wings*'; (ii) conversion of **6** to **7** via an initial Wittig olefination at the C5-aldehyde; (iii) use of the hemiacetal **7** as a common intermediate to obtain the individual heptanoids via a second Wittig reaction at its anomeric center using appropriately chosen ylides.

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Diarylheptanoids (Fig. 1) such as **1** (curcumin), **2–5** (octahydrocurcuminoids) are plant metabolites isolated from *Zingiber* (e.g., zingiberaceae; commonly known as ginger family).¹ Rhizomes and fruits of these medicinal plants are especially enriched with diarylheptanoids. There are emerging literature reports indicating potential medicinal applications of these class of compounds^{2–6} including **2–5**^{2e,3a,4a,b,5a} which are of our interest.

In literature, medicinal chemistry around the scaffolds **2–4** has been conducted using the compounds either isolated from various plant sources or via rather less controlled semi-synthetic process starting from the commercial curcumin. As shown in Scheme 1a, the compound **2** was obtained in modest yield (15%) along with its partially saturated products by hydrogenation of **1** under 1 atm of H₂ pressure.^{5a,6} Higher H₂ pressure (200 psi) and longer reaction time were reported to be the solution to avoid partial hydrogenation.^{5a}

A better stereo-controlled synthesis of **5** has been reported by Narasimhulu et al. in 14 steps starting from D-mannitol diacetonide as the chiral pool (Scheme 1b). At the end, **5a** and **b** were separated from a diastereomeric mixture.^{2e}

Being interested in this series of biologically active compounds, we came up with a synthetic strategy starting from D-glucose which provided us a completely stereo-conserved synthesis of the *syn*-diarylheptanoids **2–5b**. A retro-synthetic map is shown in Scheme 2.^{7,8} The acetonide protected aldehyde **6** was conceived for synthetic transformation of its masked C2,C4-1,3-*syn*-diol

template into the C3,C5-*syn*-diol stereochemistry present in the heptanoids **2–5b**. The required synthetic manipulation was thought to be carried out by involving two Wittig olefination reactions, initially at C5 aldehyde of **6** (to get **7**), followed by another at C1 anomeric position of **7**.

As shown in Scheme 3, commercially available D-glucose di-acetonide was converted to 3-deoxy-1,2-O-(1-methylethylidene) α -D*erythro*-pentodialdo-1,4-furanose **6** in four steps using a known procedure amenable for a large scale synthesis.⁹ Wittig olefination



Figure 1. Examples of natural diarylheptanoids.



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^{0040-4039/\$ -} see front matter \odot 2011 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved. doi:10.1016/j.tetlet.2011.04.097

a) Ref: 5a and 6



b) Ref: 2e





5a-b

of the aldehyde **6** using ylide generated from 3-methoxy-4-benzyloxybenzyl triphenylphosphonium bromide and *t*-BuOK in THF at



Scheme 2. Retro-synthetic route to 2-5b from D-glucose.

0 °C gave us olefins (*Z*)-**9**¹⁰ and (*E*)-**9**¹¹ (*E*/*Z* 1:2; separable on column chromatography) in 80% combined isolated yield (condition b).^{9b} Based on ¹H NMR spectra, C5 olefinic proton signals for (*Z*)-**9** and (*E*)-**9** appearing at δ 5.55 (dd, $J_{5-6} = 11.2$ Hz, $J_{4-5} = 8.8$ Hz), and δ 6.02 (dd, $J_{5-6} = 15.7$ Hz, $J_{4-5} = 7.3$ Hz) respectively, were assigned for the *cis* and *trans* geometry. Selective reduction of the double bond in **9** was achieved by using 5 mol % Wilkinson's catalyst in *t*-BuOH/THF (1:1) under an atmospheric pressure of H₂



Scheme 3. Synthesis of **2–5b.** Reagents and conditions: (a) Following Ref. 9; (b) [(4-benzyloxy-3-methoxybenzyl)P(Ph)₃]Br, *t*-BuOK, THF, 0 °C to rt, 3 h; (c) Wilkinson's catalyst, *t*-BuOH/THF (1:1), H₂ balloon pressure, rt, 4–6 h; (d) 4% aq H₂SO₄, THF, 60 °C, 4 h; (e) [(4-benzyloxy-3-methoxybenzyl)P(Ph)₃]Br, 18-crown-6, K₂CO₃, dichloromethane, 40 °C, 6 h; (f) 10% Pd/C, H₂ balloon pressure, EtOAc, rt, 5–6 h; (g) Ac₂O, pyridine, cat. 4–(*N*,*N*-dimethylamino)pyridine, dichloromethane, rt, 14 h; (h) [(3,4-dibenzyloxybenzyl)P(Ph)₃]Br, 18-crown-6, K₂CO₃, dichloromethane, 40 °C, 6 h; (i) [(benzyl) P(Ph)₃]Cl, 18-crown-6, K₂CO₃, dichloromethane, 40 °C, 6 h.

(condition c)¹² to afford **10**¹³ in 90% yield. Hydrolysis of 1,2-acetonide functionality in **10** with 4% aq H₂SO₄ in THF at 60 °C (condition d) gave us anomeric mixture of hemiacetals **7**¹⁴ (evident from ¹H NMR of crude product) in 85% isolated yield which was deployed as a common intermediate for the synthesis of *syn*-diaryheptanoides **2–5b**.

The mixture of hemiacetals **7** was subjected to the intended second Wittig olefination with the ylide generated from 3-methoxy-4benzyloxybenzyl triphenylphosphonium bromide and potassium carbonate in the presence of 18-crown-6 in dichloromethane at 40 °C (condition e)¹⁵ to obtain the required *syn*-1,3-diol olefin intermediate **8**¹⁶ (*E*/*Z* 1:3) in 73% isolated yield. Subsequently, it was noticed that the above Wittig condition was also very effective for the conversion of **6** to **9** (*E*/*Z* 1:3). On the contrary, use of *t*-BuOK (condition b) was found to be ineffective for the 2nd Wittig reaction (**7** \rightarrow **8**) presumably because of free C2-OH functionality present in **7**. The present work provides some additional information in conducting the 2nd Wittig reaction without protecting the C2-OH group in light of what was experienced by Pawar and Shinde.^{8a}

Reduction of the double bond and simultaneous hydrogenolysis of two benzyloxy protecting groups in **8** (combined regioisomers used) were carried out by global hydrogenation using H₂ (1 atm) in the presence of catalytic amount of 10% Pd/C in EtOAc (condition f) to furnish analytically pure **2**^{1b} after column chromatography (80% isolated yield) as a colorless oil. Compound **3**^{1b} was obtained (also as colorless oil, 71%, two steps), from the mixture **8**, initially by di-acetylation (condition g), followed by global hydrogenation (condition f).

The diarylheptanoids $\mathbf{4}^{1g}$ and $\mathbf{5b}^{1d,2e}$ were obtained from the hemiacetal intermediate **7** following the same route employed for $\mathbf{2}$ ($\mathbf{7} \rightarrow \mathbf{11} \rightarrow \mathbf{4}$; $\mathbf{7} \rightarrow \mathbf{12}^{17} \rightarrow \mathbf{5b}$) and using appropriately substituted benzyl triphenylphosphonium salt in the Wittig reactions (conditions h and i respectively).

Once the complete synthetic route was established, we also examined whether the selective olefinic hydrogenation $(9 \rightarrow 10)$ could be avoided in this general synthetic scheme and instead be carried out as a part of global hydrogenation. As shown in Scheme 4, the idea was applied for the synthesis of **5b**. Initial deprotection of acetonide group in the intermediate **9** (*E*/*Z* mixture), followed by the 2nd Wittig reaction furnished the 1,6-di-olefinic intermediate **13** (as a mixture of four regioisomers). Subsequent global hydrogenation provided us the desired compound **5b** in very good isolated yield (52% overall yield in three steps).



Scheme 4. Reagents and conditions: (d) 4% aq H₂SO₄, THF, 60 °C, 4 h; (i) [(benzyl) P(Ph)₃]Cl, 18-crown-6, K₂CO₃, dichloromethane, 40 °C 6 h; (f) 10% Pd/C, H₂ balloon pressure, EtOAc, rt, 5–6 h.

It is rewarding to mention here that partial hydrogenation was not noticed in any of the above hydrogenation reactions, unlike what is known in the case of hydrogenation of curcumin.^{5a,6} This is presumably because of the absence of carbonyl groups in the present set of compounds.

In conclusion, we have accomplished synthesis of *syn*-diaryl-heptanoids **2**, **3**, **4**, and **5b**, which are active principles of *Zingiber* (a genus of ginger family). Starting from a known aldehyde **6**, derived from D-glucose diacetonide in four steps, all the four natural products were obtained via a common intermediate **7**. The present synthesis is very efficient, involves simple reagents and high yielding steps indicating a large scale synthetic feasibility of these biologically promising natural products. For example, **5b** was synthesized in eight steps starting from the commercially available D-glucose diacetonide with 27% overall yield (Schemes 3 and 4). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first completely stereo-controlled synthetic strategy toward accessing diarylheptanoids having 1,3-*syn*-diol moiety where optional '*aryl wings*' can be installed for conducting systematic medicinal chemistry.

Acknowledgments

Authors are grateful to Drs. Rashmi Barbhaiya, and Kasim A. Mookhtiar for their support and encouragement. Mahesh Mone (Analytical Dept.) and Ganesh B. Salunke (presently at Nagoya University, Japan) are being acknowledged for their help during this work. Advinus Publication No. ADV-A-009.

Supplementary data

Supplementary data (detailed experimental procedure, spectral characterization of all the compounds and copies of representative ¹H and ¹³C NMR) associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.tetlet.2011.04.097.

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- 10. (*Z*)-9: R_{Γ} -value: 0.6 (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 117–119 °C. (*z*)_D²⁵+67.9 (*c* 1.0, CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.32 (s, 3H), 1.44 (s, 3H), 1.71 (ddd, *J* = 15.6, 11, 4.6 Hz, 1H), 2.21 (dd, *J* = 13.4, 4.1 Hz, 1H); 3.93 (s, 3H), 4.78 (t, *J* = 4.1 Hz, 1H), 5.06 (dt, *J* = 10.7, 3.9 Hz, 1H), 5.17 (s, 2H), 5.55 (dd, *J* = 11.2, 8.8 Hz, 1H), 5.89 (d, *J* = 3.9 Hz, 1H), 6.63 (d, *J* = 11.5 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.27–7.31 (aromatics, 1H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 26.36, 26.89, 40.41, 56.16, 71.13, 73.96, 80.97, 105.55, 111.03, 112.53, 113.70, 121.84, 127.47(2C), 127.63, 128.07, 128.79 (2C), 129.89, 134.74, 137.25, 147.87, 149.51. HPLC-MS (*m/z*): 400.3 [M+18] base peak, HPLC purity: 99.0%, rt: 15.6 min.
- 11. (*E*)-9. *R_f*-value: 0.65 (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 121–123 °C. [*a*]_D²⁵–15.5 (*c* 0.2, CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.35 (s, 3H), 1.56 (s, 3H), 1.71 (ddd, *J* = 13.7, 10.8, 4.9 Hz, 1H), 2.23 (dd, *J* = 13.7, 4.4 Hz, 1H); 3.89 (s, 3H), 4.76–4.82 (m, 2H), 5.16 (s, 2H), 5.89 (d, *J* = 3.9 Hz, 1H), 6.02 (dd, *J* = 15.7, 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (d, *J* = 16 Hz, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 2 Hz, 1H), 6.96 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.28–7.31 (aromatics, 1H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 26.18, 26.76, 39.87, 55.98, 70.99, 78.70, 80.67, 105.43, 109.37, 111.09, 113.76, 119.90, 125.54, 127.29 (2C), 127.93, 128.63(2C), 129.96, 132.54, 137.06, 148.22, 149.68. HPLC-MS (*m*/*z*): 383.2 [M+1], 400.2 [M+18] base peak, purity: 99.44%, rt: 17 min.
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- 10: R_p-value: 0.6 (30% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 61-63 °C. [α]_D²⁵-5.6 (c 1.0, CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.32 (s, 3H), 1.43-1.51 (m, 1H), 1.48 (s, 3H), 1.79-1.84 (m, 1H), 1.85-1.95 (m, 1H), 2.08 (dd, J = 13.2, 4.1 Hz, 1H), 2.57 (dd, M), 2.65 (m, 1H), 2.68-2.76 (m, 1H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 4.16-4.24 (m, 1H), 4.72 (t, 3H)

J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 5.83 (d, *J* = 3.7 Hz, 1H), 6.66 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.76 (d, *J* = 1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.27–7.30 (aromatics, 1H), 7.35 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 26.44, 26.92, 32.30, 36.43, 39.26, 56.24, 71.57, 77.36, 80.86, 105.55, 111.06, 112.76, 114.74, 120.50, 127.55(2C), 127.99, 128.74 (2C), 135.39, 137.74, 146.71, 149.93. HPLC-MS (*m*/*z*): 402.3 [M+18] base peak, HPLC purity: 97%, rt: 15.66 min.

- 14. 7: *R_f*-value: 0.3 (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 74–76 °C. [α]²⁵/_D+11.66 (*c* 1.0, CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.70–1.90 (m, 3H, -CH₂–, -OH), 1.90–2.10 (m, 2H), 2.54–2.74 (m, 2H+0.66H, -CH₂– and -OH), 3.02 (s, 0.33H, -OH), 3.87 (s, 3H), 4.24–4.36 (m, 2H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 5.26 (s, 0.33H, anomeric-H), 5.38 (d, *J* = 3.4 Hz, 0.66H, anomeric-H), 6.65 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (s, 1H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.27–7.31 (aromatics, 1H), 7.36 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ [31.92, 32.21, 37.71, 38.06, 38.53, 39.52 account for 3C)], 56.21, 71.40, 71.82 (0.7C), 76.48 (0.7C), 76.80 (0.3C), 79.42 (0.3C), 96.97 (0.7C), 102.81 (0.3C), 112.60, 114.46, 120.45, 127.55 (2C), 128.00, 128.71 (2C), 135.18, 137.50, 146.55, 149.71. HPLC-MS (*m*/*z*): 362.2 [M+18] base peak, HPLC purity: 94.0%, rt: 11.68 min.
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- 16. (*Z*)-**8**. *R_f*-value: 0.6 (60% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 64–65 °C. [*z*]_D²⁵+20.36 (*c* 0.5 in CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.67–1.82 (m, 4H), 2.56–2.72 (m, 2H), 2.76 (br s, 1H, -OH), 2.99 (br s, 1H, -OH), 3.85–3.94 (m, 1H), 3.86 (s, 6H, -OMe), 4.85 (t, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 5.16 (s, 2H), 5.59 (dd, *J* = 11.2, 9.3 Hz, 1H), 6.45 (d, *J* = 11.7 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (s, 1H), 6.76–6.82 (aromatics, 2H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 6.88 (s, 1H), 7.30 (app. t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.30–7.40 (aromatics, 4H), 7.43 (d, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 4H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 31.65, 40.17, 43.76, 56.33(2C), 69.38, 71.34, 71.59, 72.01, 112.71, 113.05, 114.06, 114.70, 120.53, 121.70, 127.58 (2C), 127.62 (2C), 128.09, 128.22, 128.83 (2C), 128.91 (2C), 130.14, 131.18, 132.84, 135.47, 137.36, 137.73, 146.78, 148.02, 149.72, 150.01. HPLC-MS (*m*/z): 572.4 [M+18] base peak HPLC purity: 99%, rt: 16.12 min. IR (neat): 3401, 2936, 1602, 1514 cm⁻¹.
- (Z)-12. R₂-value: 0.6 (40% ethyl acetate in hexanes). Mp: 66–69 °C. [α]₂₅²⁵+34.0 (c
 1.0, CHCl₃). ¹H NMR (400 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 1.66–1.84 (m, 4H and –OH), 2.58–2.73 (m, 2H and –OH), 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.88–3.95 (m, 1H), 4.84 (dt, J = 9.3, 2.9 Hz, 1H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 5.68 (dd, J = 11.7, 9.3 Hz, 1H), 6.54 (d, J = 11.7 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (dd, J = 8.3, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.27–7.34 (aromatics, 6H), 7.36 (app. t, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.43 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz; CDCl₃): δ 31.38, 39.83, 43.17, 56.03, 69.03, 71.24, 71.71, 112.32, 114.27, 120.26, 127.35 (2C), 127.47, 127.84, 128.48 (2C), 128.60 (2C), 128.83 (2C), 130.84, 133.88, 135.22, 136.49, 137.45, 146.40, 149.63. HPLC-MS (m/z): 436.2 [M+18] base peak, HPLC purity: 98.52%, rt: 16.27 min.