Enantioselective Synthesis of *cis*- and *trans*-3,5-Disubstituted Piperidines. Synthesis of 20*S*- and 20*R*-Dihydrocleavamine

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Received June 27, 2003

ABSTRACT



 $R_1 = H, R_2 = Et$ (+)-20*R*-Dihydrocleavamine

Diastereoselective alkylation at the carbonyl α -position of chiral nonracemic lactams 2 and 3, the former prepared by cyclocondensation of (*R*)-phenylglycinol with a racemic γ -substituted δ -oxoester in a process that involves a dynamic kinetic resolution and the latter by a subsequent equilibration, provides access to enantiopure *cis*- and *trans*-3,5-disubstituted piperidines. The usefulness of the approach is illustrated with the synthesis of the alkaloids 20*S*- and 20*R*-15,20-dihydrocleavamine.

Chiral nonracemic bicyclic lactams derived from phenylglycinol have proven to be versatile building blocks for the enantioselective synthesis of enantiopure piperidines with a variety of substitution patterns: 2- and 3-substituted, cis and trans 2,3-, 2,4-, 2,6-, and 3,4-disubstituted, as well as 2,3,4and 3,4,5-trisubstituted and 2,3,4,5-tetrasubstituted.¹ Most of these targets were selected because they are naturally occurring products (or synthetic precursors) or because of their biological activities.

We report here a synthetic entry to enantiopure *cis*- and *trans*-3,5-disubstituted piperidines. The key steps of the synthesis, involving the generation of the stereogenic centers at the piperidine β and β' positions, are (i) the cyclocondensation of a racemic γ -substituted δ -oxoester with (*R*)-phenylglycinol in a process that involves a dynamic kinetic resolution (DKR) and (ii) the stereoselective alkylation at the carbonyl α -position of the resulting bicyclic δ -lactam. We illustrate the potential and usefulness of this approach with the enantioselective synthesis of the diastereomeric indole alkaloids (–)-20*S*- and (+)-20*R*-15,20-dihydrocleav-amine.

10.1021/ol035199+ CCC: \$25.00 © 2003 American Chemical Society Published on Web 07/24/2003

The enantiopure ethyl-substituted bicyclic lactam 2 was obtained² in 70% yield by cyclocondensation of racemic aldehyde ester 1 with (*R*)-phenylglycinol under neutral conditions, followed by column chromatography of the

ORGANIC LETTERS

2003 Vol. 5, No. 17

3139-3142

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resulting 4:1 diastereomeric mixture of lactams 2 and 3 (Scheme 1). Interestingly, when the above crude mixture was



^{*a*} Reagents and conditions: (a) Et_2O , anhyd Na_2SO_4 , 0 °C, 1 h, then 70 °C, 10–15 mmHg, 79% (**2**/3 ratio 89:11); (b) 3 N MeOH–HCl, 25 °C, 24 h, quantitative (**2**/3 ratio 3:7).

treated under acidic conditions a reversal in the ratio of isomeric lactams 2 and 3 was observed, and lactam 3 could be easily isolated in 60% overall yield after chromatographic purification.

To gain access to 3,5-disubstituted piperidines we explored the stereochemical outcome of the alkylation of the enolates derived from the above lactams **2** and **3**. Although the alkylation at the carbonyl α -position of bicyclic γ - and δ -lactams derived from amino alcohols has received considerable attention from both the synthetic and theoretical standpoint,³ the observed stereoselectivities are difficult to rationalize and, to our knowledge, there are no precedents of such alkylations from δ -lactams with the substitution pattern present in **2** or **3**.

Generation of the enolate of 2 with lithium hexamethyldisilazide followed by alkylation with methyl iodide took place with moderate facial diastereoselectivity to give a 7:3 mixture of the endo alkylation product 4a, in which the piperidine β and β' substituents are trans, and the *exo* epimer in 94% overall yield (Scheme 2). A much better result from the stereochemical standpoint was obtained from lactam 3, which underwent exo alkylation with excellent yield (84%) and high stereoselectivity to give lactam 7a, bearing cis substituents at the piperidine β and β' positions. Only very minor amounts (<5%) of the corresponding endo epimer were detected. The alkylated product 4a was converted to piperidine *trans*-6a by borane reduction followed by catalytic debenzylation of the resulting 3,5-dialkylpiperidine trans-5a. A similar borane reduction from lactam 7a gave 3,5dialkylpiperidine cis-5a.

The cis-trans relationship between the substituents at the β and β' positions of the piperidine ring in lactams **4a** and **7a**, as well as in piperidines **5a**, was deduced by ¹³C NMR from the upfield chemical shift of the piperidine β and β' carbons observed in the trans isomers as compared with the



^{*a*} Reagents and conditions: (a) LiHMDS, -78 °C, 1 h, then MeI or BrCH₂CO₂*t*Bu, -78 °C, 2 h, 66% (**4a**, 70% **4b**), 80% (**7a**), 60% (**7b**); (b) 1 M BH₃-THF, -78 °C, rt, 53% (*trans*-**5a**), 77% (*trans*-**5b**), 47% (*cis*-**5a**), 57% (*cis*-**5b**); (c) MeOH-HCl, then H₂/Pd(OH)₂, 75% (*trans*-**6a**), 86% (*trans*-**6c**), 78% (*cis*-**6**).

respective cis epimers, as a consequence of γ -gauche effects. The same criterion was used in the **b** series (see below).

In this manner, as a consequence of the different facial stereoselectivity in the above alkylations, it is possible to prepare either trans or cis enantiopure 3,5-dialkylpiperidines. It is simply a matter of using either the kinetic lactam 2, formed through a dynamic kinetic resolution during the cyclocondensation process, or the most stable isomer 3, formed by a subsequent equilibration.

The above results prompted us to study similar alkylations using a bromoacetate ester to prepare 5-ethyl-3-piperidineacetate derivatives, which were envisaged as synthetic precursors of 20R- and 20S-dihydrocleavamine. These tetracyclic indole alkaloids,⁴ embodying a 3,5-disubstituted piperidine moiety, differ in the configuration of the piperidine carbon bearing the ethyl substituent.

As could be expected from the above results, alkylation of the lithium enolates derived from lactams 2 and 3 with *tert*-butyl bromoacetate also took place with opposite diastereofacial selectivity to give the respective lactams 4b (*endo* alkylation) and 7b (*exo* alkylation) as the major products. Both the chemical yields and stereoselectivities were excellent (84%, 5:1 *endo/exo* ratio from 2; 75%, 1:4 *endo/exo* ratio from 3).

Treatment of lactams **4b** and **7b** with borane brought about both the reductive opening of the oxazolidine ring and the reduction of the lactam carbonyl to give the corresponding piperidines, *trans*-**5b** and *cis*-**5b**, which were converted to the 5-ethyl-3-piperidineacetic derivatives *trans*-**6c** and *cis*-**6** by catalytic debenzylation in methanol solution in the presence of HCl.

The synthesis of dihydrocleavamines from the above 5-ethyl-3-piperidineacetate derivatives required the introduction of the 2-(3-indolyl)ethyl chain on the piperidine nitrogen,

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the closure of the nine-membered ring taking advantage of the acetate moiety at the piperidine 3-position, and the adjustment of the oxidation level of the resulting tetracyclic keto lactam.

In the event, debenzylation of *trans*-**5b** by hydrogenolysis with Pd(OH)₂ as the catalyst in the presence of the mixed anhydride of indole-3-acetic acid and pivalic acid⁵ gave (83%) *N*-(indolylacetyl)piperidine *trans*-**8**, which was converted (95%) to the piperidineacetic acid *trans*-**9** by treatment with TFA (Scheme 3). The key cyclization of the acetate



^{*a*} Reagents and conditions: (a) H₂, Pd(OH)₂, then mixed anhydride of indole-3-acetic acid and pivalic acid, 83%; (b) TFA, rt, 15 min, 95%, (c) PPA, 90 °C, 30 min, 64%; (d) LAH, dioxane, rfx, 18 h, 34%.

moiety upon the indole 2-position took place in 64% yield by heating *trans*-**9** in the presence of PPA.⁶ The resulting tetracyclic keto lactam **10** was then reduced with LiAlH₄ to give (–)-20*S*-dihydrocleavamine (34% yield), $[\alpha]^{22}_{\rm D}$ –97 (*c* 0.9, CHCl₃) { $[\alpha]_{\rm D}$ –87 (CHCl₃)^{4a}}, thus completing the first enantioselective synthesis⁷ of this natural product. The ¹³C NMR data of our synthetic (–)-20*S*-dihydrocleavamine were in complete agreement with those previously reported.^{4b,8} Interestingly, indoloindolizidine **11** was also isolated as a byproduct (~15% yield) from the above reduction. Its formation can be accounted for by considering a transannular cyclization followed by a ring opening of the resulting quaternary ammonium salt by a Hofmann-type elimination, as depicted in Scheme 4.⁹



The synthesis of (+)-20*R*-dihydrocleavamine was accomplished simply by following a similar reaction sequence starting from a *cis*-5-ethyl-3-piperidineacetate derivative. Thus, exchange of the chiral inductor on the piperidine nitrogen of *cis*-**5b** for an indolylacetyl substituent as in the above trans series followed by treatment of the resulting amido ester *cis*-**8** with TFA gave acid *cis*-**9** (Scheme 5).



^{*a*} Reagents and conditions: (a) H_2 , Pd(OH)₂, then mixed anhydride of indole-3-acetic acid and pivalic acid, 80%; (b) TFA, rt, 5 min., 95%.

Taking into account that *cis*-**9** has previously been converted to (+)-20*R*-dihydrocleavamine,¹⁰ the above synthesis constitutes an enantioselective formal total synthesis of this natural product.¹¹

The above results expand the potential of chiral nonracemic phenylglycinol-derived bicyclic lactams as building blocks for the enantioselective construction of piperidine-

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containing natural and nonnatural products.¹ Most of these syntheses are based on the successive stereocontrolled

formation of C–C bonds at the carbon atom positions of the nitrogen heterocycle. Advantageously, in the procedure described herein, the first stereocenter is generated, with control of its absolute configuration, during the cyclocondensation step. The subsequent diastereoselective alkylation of the resulting γ -substituted δ -lactams provides a simple and practical route for the generation of either cis or trans enantiopure 3,5-disubstituted piperidines (Scheme 6). Taking into account that (*S*)-phenylglycinol is also commercially available, the procedure can provide access to *cis*- and *trans*-3,5-disubstituted piperidines in both enantiomeric series.

Acknowledgment. This work was supported by the DGICYT, Spain (BQU2000-0651). Thanks are also due to the DURSI Generalitat de Catalunya, for Grant 2001SGR-0084, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport for a fellowship to O.L., and the SCT of the University of Barcelona for recording the NMR and mass spectra. We thank DSM Deretil (Almería, Spain) for the generous gift of (*R*)-phenylglycine.

Supporting Information Available: ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of compounds 1–11. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

OL035199+