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Stereoselective synthesis of dipeptides — I

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Abstract: The alkylation of 7 occurs in moderate to good *trans* stereoselection (d.e.40–98%), while a poorer d.e. (10–90%) is observed for 8. On the contrary, in both substrates the alkylation with CH₃I produces a greater amount of the *cis* isomer (d.e.48%). Cleavage of the lactims 9(a,e) gives enantiomerically pure dipeptides 14(a,e). The absolute configuration of the introduced stereogenic centres has been assigned on the basis of the ¹H-NMR data in connection with the conformational analysis. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

In previous papers we have described the stereoselective alkylation¹ and aldol condensation² of piperazine-2,5-dione derivatives and recently we have accomplished a new approach for the preparation of a wide variety of natural and unnatural α -aminoacids in good chemical yield and enantiomeric purity³. In a continuation of our studies, we have directed our interest to the stereoselective synthesis of uncommon peptides because these compounds have recently received considerable attention⁴: bioactive peptides can indeed influence several physiological processes such as neurotransmitters, neuromodulators and hormones. In recent years efforts have been made to develop and to synthesize various peptidomimetics, i.e. compounds that act as substitutes for peptides in their interaction with receptors, for their relevant biochemical and pharmacological properties. In the last two decades many biologically active peptides have been discovered and studied and an increasing number of modified peptides have been synthetized for medical and pharmacological purposes.

We therefore wish to report here a new synthetic strategy to natural and unnatural dipeptides which allows a moderate to good stereoselectivity. The procedure we followed consists in the alkylation of new chiral synthones, such as (6R)-7 and (6S)-1-((S)-phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pirazin-2-one 8, synthesized as later reported in Scheme 1. So, the stereochemical outcome of the alkylation reaction represents the most salient feature of this new approach to the synthesis of dipeptides.

The diastereomeric mixture of aminoesters 1 and 2, obtained from (1S)-phenethyl amine and (\pm) ethyl-2-bromo propionate, was easily separated by silica gel chromatography and subsequent acylation with chloropropionyl chloride gave 3 and 4, respectively. The cyclization to piperazine-2,5-dione derivatives 5 and 6 was then easily achieved with NH₃ in ethanol at r.t. in quantitative yield. The chiral lactims 7 and 8 were obtained by treating the diketopiperazine derivatives 5 and 6, respectively, with Et₃OBF₄, as previously reported for similar compounds¹. All the steps of the synthesis occurred in good yield and both diastereomeric synthones 7 and 8 were recovered in high diastereomeric excess.

In order to explain the conversion of 3 or 4 into 5 or 6, respectively, an informative study was made by submitting to ammonolysis both the possible precursors 3a (prepared by ammonolysis of 1 and subsequent acylation with chloroacetylchloride) and 3b (obtained by acid hydrolysis of lactime 7) (Scheme 2). Treatment of 3b with NH₃ in ethanol gave 5 in quantitative yield, while 3a gave a mixture of products where 5 was recovered in low yield (about 20%) (Scheme 2). Thus we may assert that the formation of 5 proceeds through the cyclization of 3b rather than of 3a. Furthermore, it is interesting to underline that the treatment of 3a with NH₃ in ethanol confirmed the unusual amidic ammonolysis assisted by the neighbouring unsubstituted amide group already observed by us on a

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Scheme 1. Synthesis of synthones 7 and 8: i) ClCH2COCl; ii) NH3/EtOH; iii) Et3OBF4.

similar substrate⁵ where the kinetics were investigated⁶. In fact, the amide 3a preferentially undergoes cleavage to chloroacetamide and a 2-amino-propionamide derivative, induced by the ammonia, rather than cyclization to 5.



The absolute configuration of the stereogenic centre C-6 both of 7 and 8 has been determined on the basis of the approach already used for piperazine-2,5-dione^{1,2} and morpholine-2,5-dione³ derivatives. As previously shown, the ¹H-NMR chemical shifts of substituents at C-6 are highly dependent on their absolute configuration owing to the phenyl shielding brought about by the adjacent chiral (S)-1-phenethyl amine moiety.

Molecular mechanics calculations⁷, performed on both 7 and 8, have shown that the preferred geometry of the heterocyclic ring is the boat conformation: the atoms N-1, C-2, N-4 and C-5 are almost



Figure 1. Different shielding suffered by (C-6)-CH₃ and (C-6)-H in 7 and 8. The (C-6)-H in (6S)-8 is significantly shielded by the Ph, resonating at downfield compared to (6R)-7; the converse is true for the (C-6)-CH₃.

coplanar, while C-3 and C-6 are out of the plane, analogously to that already observed for similar molecules¹⁻³. Furthermore, both in 7 and 8 the (C-6)-CH₃ mainly prefers the axial rather than the equatorial position, this last conformation being less stable by about 3 Kcal/mole. In this regard, from the calculated geometries appreciable torsional strains can be observed in the conformer with (C-6)-CH₃ in an equatorial arrangement: the methyl and ethoxy groups are actually quasi-eclipsed (the dihedral angle CH₃-(C-6)-(C-5)-O being $\approx 10^{\circ}$) and the dihedral angle CH₃-(C-6)-(N-1)-C* is also relatively small (about 25°).

The conformational analysis⁷, accomplished by a step to step rotation around the C*-(N-1) bond, showed that the phenethyl side chain can exist in two low energy conformers, with the benzylic hydrogen syn- or antiperiplanar to the adjacent carbonyl group, according to what was previously observed for similar derivatives¹⁻³. However, it is only the rotamer with the benzylic hydrogen synperiplanar (even though only present to a small extent) which can anisotropically influence the chemical shift of the substituents at C-6 (see Figure 1).

The analysis of ¹H-NMR spectra indeed reveals that the (C-6)-CH₃ is more shielded in (6R)-7 (0.75 ppm) than in (6S)-8 (1.4 ppm), whereas the (C-6)-H resonates at higher field in (6S)-8 (3.5 ppm) than in (6R)-7 (3.85 ppm) (see Figure 1). However the absolute configuration of C-6, assigned as described above, was confirmed by synthesising both 7 and 8 starting from the mesylates of (R)- and (S)-ethyl lactate, respectively, following the procedure summarized in Scheme 6 for the compound 15.

When one equivalent of alkylating reagent is added to Lithium enolate of pure isomer $(6R)-7(\mathbf{a}-\mathbf{g})$ or $(6S)-8(\mathbf{a}-\mathbf{g})$, cooled to -78° C, a practically total conversion into the products 9 and 10 or 11 and 12, respectively, was obtained (Scheme 3). The stereochemical results of the alkylation reaction are reported in Table 1.



Scheme 3. R= a) (CH₃)₂C=CHCH₂; b) (CH₃)₂CH; c) CH₂=CHCH₂; d) C₂H₅; e) PhCH₂; f) n-C₃H₇; g) CH₃.

V. FAVERO et al.

Alky	lating re	agent	Yield% (a)					
n°	R	<u>X</u>	9	10	11	12	_16	17
1	a	Br	≥98	-	78	22	91	9
2	<u>b</u>	1	≥98	-	≥98	-	81	19
3	с	I	92	8	80	20	84	16
4	d	I	85	15	70	30	71	29
5	e	Br	85	15	55	45	≥98	-
6	f	I	70	30	50	50	62	38
7	g	I	27	73	26	74	26	74

Table 1. Diastereoselective alkylation of 7, 8 and 15

(a) calculated by 1 H-NMR.



Figure 2. nOe registered on 9, 10, 11 and 12 derivatives.

The relative configuration of the introduced stereogenic centre C-3 of 9-12 (a-g) has been determined on the basis of the nOe measurements registered between the axial substituents at C-3 and C-6 positions. On the *trans* derivatives 9 and 11 significant nOe was observed between the (C-6)-CH₃ and the (C-3)-H, while on the *cis* isomers 10 and 12 consistent nOe was registered between the (C-6)-CH₃ and the alkyl group at C-3 (see Figure 2).

Thus, nOe experiments and molecular mechanics calculations⁷ are according to that already observed for piperazine-2,5-dione derivatives^{1,2}, i.e. in the *cis* isomers **10** and **12** the substituents at C-3 and C-6 preferentially lie in the diaxial arrangement⁸. Also for the *trans* isomers **9** and **11** energy calculations are in agreement with the nOe observed: in fact, the conformer with (C-6)-CH₃ in axial position and the alkyl substituent at C-3 in equatorial is thermodynamically favoured⁹.

It is interesting to note that both the isomers *trans* (3R,6S)-11 (c-g) and the *cis* (3S,6S)-12 (c-g) undergo isomerization in alkaline solution (LiOH/EtOH at 100°C or EtONa/EtOH at r.t.) to an approximately 1:1 mixture of *trans*- (3R,6S) and *cis*-(3S,6S) isomers, showing that the partial inversion of configuration exclusively occurs at the stereogenic centre C-3 which possesses the more acid proton (the negative charge of the corresponding anion can actually be delocalized on both the C=O and the N=C groups).

In a model study, we converted both 9a and 9e into the corresponding dipeptides 14 (a,e) through a Birch reaction (Na/NH₃) followed by acid hydrolysis in very mild conditions (Scheme 4).

Finally, in order to explore the role played by the chiral (S)-1-phenethyl group on the stereochemical outcome of the alkylation, we also performed the reaction on the substrate 15 (see Scheme 5), prepared starting from the methansulfonate of (S)-ethyl lactate as summarized in Scheme 6, in which the chiral auxiliary was substituted by the achiral sterically similar group CH₂Ph.

The results reported in Table 1 show that the alkylation of 15 preferentially afforded the *trans* isomer in all cases investigated (except the entry 7) with a diastereoselection comparable to that observed for both the 7 and 8 (except the entries 2 and 5). In addition, the stereochemical result is essentially



Scheme 4. i) Na/NH3; ii) 0.5N HCl.



Scheme 5. R= a) (CH₃)₂C=CHCH₂; b) (CH₃)₂CH; c) CH₂=CHCH₂; d) C₂H₅; e) PhCH₂; f) n-C₃H₇; g) CH₃.



Scheme 6. i) PhCH2NH2/Et3N; ii) ClCH2COCl/Et3N; iii) NH3/EtOH; iv) Et3OBF4/CH2Cl2.

according to the asymmetric induction observed by Schollkopf¹⁰ on the *trans* alkylation of similar substrates, i.e. bis-lactim ether derivatives. From the results obtained it is possible to argue that the diastereofacial bias in the alkylation both of 7 and 8 appears prevalently influenced by the C-6 center rather than by the (S)-methylbenzyl group. However, because at present we are not able to rationalize the observed results (indeed, the lithium enolates of 7 and 8 are substantially planar and the difference in energy between the *syn* and the antiperiplanar conformers appears very small, analogously to that previously observed for morpholine-2,5-dione derivatives³), further attempts are necessary in order to understand the stereochemical outcome of this asymmetric alkylation.

In conclusion, the reported strategy provides a new and versatile approach to the asymmetric synthesis of a wide variety of dipeptides with a moderate to good stereoselection, starting from easily accessible chiral synthones. Therefore further investigations are in progress in order to use this protocol for the synthesis of sterically hindered dipeptides biologically active.

Experimental

¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded at room temperature on a Gemini spectrometer at 300 Mhz using CDCl₃ as solvent, unless otherwise stated. Optical rotation values were measured at room temperature on a Perkin Elmer 343 polarimeter. Chromatographic separations were performed with silica gel 60 (230–400 mesh). Melting points were determined in open capillaries and are uncorrected.

(2R,S)-(4S)-3-Aza-2-methyl-4-phenyl-ethylpentanoate 1,2

To a solution of 32.2 ml of (S)-1-phenethylamine (250 mmol) and 41.5 ml of triethylamine (300 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (150 ml) stirred at 0°C, were dropped 32.6 ml (250 mmol) of (R,S)-ethyl-2bromopropionate in CH₂Cl₂ (25 ml). The reaction was then warmed up to room temperature and the mixture was stirred for 24 h at r.t. After addition of 2M HCl (25 ml) the reaction product was extracted with dichloromethane. The organic extract was dried, evaporated in vacuo and the residue was submitted to silica gel chromatographic separation of diastereomers 1 and 2, eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate.

(2*R*)-1. The product was isolated pure as an oil; ¹H-NMR δ 1.22 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.3 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.38 (d, 3H, J=6.6 Hz), 3.35 (q, 1H, J=6.9 Hz), 3.81 (q, 1H, J=6.6 Hz), 4.08 (m, 2H), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 18.8, 23.1, 54.0, 55.7, 60.5, 126.6, 127, 128.3, 145, 175.5. [α]_D – 16.3 (c=1.25, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₃H₁₉NO₂: C;70.56, H;8.65, N;6.33. Found: C;70.8, H;8.68, N;6.3.

(2S)-2. It was obtained as an oil; ¹H-NMR δ 1.23 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.35 (d, 3H, J=6.6 Hz), 1.85 (m,1H), 3.1 (q, 1H, J=7.1Hz), 3.75 (q, 1H, J=6.6 Hz), 4.2 (q, 2H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.2, 19.7, 25.2, 54.1, 56.5, 60.1, 126.7, 126.9, 128.3, 144.9, 176.3. [α]_D -125.9 (c=1.59, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₃H₁₉NO₂: C;70.56, H;8.65, N;6.33. Found: C;70.75, H;8.66, N;6.31.

(2R,4S)-3-Aza-3-chloroacetyl-2-methyl-4-phenyl-ethylpentanoate 3

To 8.85 g of 1 (40 mmol) dissolved in 50% water-acetone (120 ml) at O°C, Na₂CO₃.10H₂O (12 g) was added. Then chloroacetyl chloride (4 ml, 50 mmol) in 10 ml of acetone was dropped under stirring. After 3 h, the solvent was removed in vacuo and the residue was acidified with 6M HCl. After extraction with ethyl acetate and removal of the solvent, the product was recovered pure (m.p. 78–80°C) in 90% yield after silica gel chromatography elution with hexane/ethyl acetate. ¹H-NMR δ 1.04 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.26 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.74 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 3.52 (q, 1H, J=6.8 Hz), 4.15 (q, 2H, J=7.2 Hz), 4.23 (s, 2H), 5.25 (q, 1H, J=7.0 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 14.4, 17.1, 41.4, 52.7, 56.2, 61.1, 127.7, 128.3, 128.7, 138.3, 165.3, 171.0. [α]_D -3.1 (c=3.26, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀ClNO₃: C;60.5, H;6.77, Cl;11.91. Found: C;60.7, H;6.8, Cl;11.95.

(2S,4S)-3-Aza-3-chloroacetyl-2-methyl-4-phenyl-ethylpentanoate 4

The product was obtained starting from intermediate **2** following the procedure previously reported for the diastereomer **3**. ¹H-NMR δ 1.1 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.54 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.73 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 3.54 (q, 1H, J=6.9 Hz), 3.96 (q, 2H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.21 (qAB, 2H, J=12.2 Hz), 5.25 (q, 1H, J=7.0 Hz), 7.3–7.5 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C NMR δ 13.7, 15.7, 18.5, 41.4, 52.2, 56.2, 60.7, 127.8, 128.0, 128.2, 138.0, 165.1, 170.1. [α]_D – 102.7 (c=4.2, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀ClNO₃: C;60.5, H;6.77, Cl;11.91. Found: C;60.75, H;6.8, Cl;11.85.

(6R, 1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-6-methyl-piperazine-2,5-dione 5

The ester 3 (3 g, 10 mmol) was dissolved in 30 ml of 7M ammonia solution in ethanol. The flask was stopped and the reaction stirred at r.t. for 24 h. The reaction product, filtered off after evaporation of ammonia, was obtained as a solid (m.p. 145–8°C). ¹H-NMR (DMSO): δ 0.75 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.52 (d,3H, J=7.1Hz), 3.6 (dd, 1H, J=4.6, 17.2 Hz), 3.85 (dq, 1H, J=1, 7.0 Hz), 4.06 (d, 1H, J=17.2 Hz), 5.61 (q, 1H, J=7.1 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH), 8.14 (dd, 1H, J=1, 4.6 Hz); ¹³C-NMR (DMSO): δ 16.1, 17.7, 44.5, 51.1, 53.0, 127.68, 127.71, 128.4, 140.2, 164.8, 169.3. [α]_D –297.7 (c=2.5, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₃H₁₆N₂O₂: C;67.22, H;6.94, N;12.06. Found: C;67.0, H;6.9, N;12.1.

(6S, I'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-6-methyl-piperazine-2,5-dione 6

The product was obtained as a solid (m.p. 228–230°C) starting from 4 and following the procedure previously reported for the diastereomer 5. ¹H-NMR (DMSO): δ 1.41 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.57 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.50 (dq, 1H, J=1, 7.0 Hz), 3.66 (dd, 1H, J=4.6, 17.2 Hz), 4.15 (d, 1H, J=17.2 Hz),

5.67 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH), 8.15 (dd, 1H, J=1, 4.6 Hz); 13 C NMR (DMSO): δ 17.3, 18.9, 44.5, 51.1, 52.8, 126.9, 127.5, 128.6, 140.2, 165.2, 169.4. [α]_D 37.8 (c=2.13, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₃H₁₆N₂O₂: C;67.22, H;6.94, N;12.06. Found: C;67.5, H;6.95, N;12.0.

(6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 7

5.8 g of 5 (25 mmol) was dissolved in dry CH₂Cl₂ (60 ml) and added to triethyl-oxonium tetrafluoroborate prepared from BF₃ etherate (20 ml) and epichlorohydrin (10 ml)¹¹. The reaction mixture was stirred at r.t. under inert atmosphere and after about 12 h a phosphate buffer solution at pH=7 (200 ml) was added. The organic layer was separated and the aqueous solution extracted with dichloromethane. The combinated extracts were evaporated under vacuum and submitted to chromatographic separation by silica gel eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate. The lactim 7 was recovered as a solid (m.p. 208–210°C) in 80% yield. ¹H-NMR δ 0.7 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.56 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.93 (dq, 1H, J=1.2, 6.9 Hz), 4.04 (dd, 1H, J=1.2, 19.5 Hz), 4.08 (q, 2H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.23 (d, 1H, J=19.5 Hz), 5.95 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 15.7, 18.2, 49.1, 50.5, 50.8, 61.7, 127.8, 128.4, 139.9, 164, 167.6. [α]_D –288.4 (c=2.71, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀N₂O₂: C;69.2, H;7.74, N;10.76. Found: C;69.0, H;7.7, N;10.8.

(6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 8

The product was obtained as a solid (m.p. 52–4°C) starting from intermediate **6** and following the procedure previously reported for the diastereomer **7**. ¹H-NMR δ 1.18 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.38 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.64 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.61 (dq, 1H, J=1, 6.9 Hz), 4.03 (q, 2H, J=7.0 Hz), 4.09 (dd, 1H, J=1, 19.7 Hz), 4.27 (d, 1H, J=19.7 Hz), 5.87 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.5, 17.4, 19.2, 49.0, 50.4, 51.1, 61.2, 126.8, 127.3, 128.2, 138.8, 163.5, 167.5. [α]_D 37.5 (c=2.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀N₂O₂: C;69.2, H;7.74, N;10.76. Found: C;69.5, H;7.75, N;10.72.

Alkylation of 7, 8 and 15: general procedure

5 ml of LHMDS (1M solution in THF) (5 mmol) were slowly dropped to a stirred solution of 5 mmol of 7 (or 8 or 15) in dry THF (50 ml), cooled at -78° C under an inert atmosphere. After 1 h, the alkylating reagent (10 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture stirred for about 3 h. The cooling bath was then removed allowing the reaction mixture to warm up to r.t. About 10 ml of 1M HCl was added and the mixture extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic extract was dried, evaporated in vacuo and the residue submitted to silica gel chromatographic separation of diastereomers by eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-(3-methyl-2-butenyl)-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one **9a**

¹H NMR δ 0.73 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.26 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.54 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.68 (s, 3H), 1.71 (s, 3H), 2.57 (m, 1H), 2.79 (m, 1H), 3.92 (m, 2H), 4.11 (m, 2H), 5.26 (m, 1H), 5.88 (q, 1H, J=6.9 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C NMR δ 14.0, 16.0, 17.9, 18.0, 25.8, 31.6, 49.9, 51.1, 58.1, 61.6, 120.9, 127.6, 127.8, 128.4, 133.3, 140.4, 162.8, 169.7. $[\alpha]_D$ –211.2 (c=11.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₀H₂₈N₂O₂: C;73.14, H;8.59, N;8.53. Found: C;72.95, H;8.3, N;8.5.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-isopropyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9b

¹H-NMR δ 0.73 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 0.76 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.10 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.28 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.55 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 2.70 (m, 1H), 3.76 (dd, 1H, J=1.4, 2.8 Hz), 3.93 (dq, 1H, J=1.4, 6.9 Hz), 4.13 (m, 2H), 5.90 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 16.2, 16.3, 18.3, 19.9, 29.8, 49.5, 50.9, 61.3, 62.1, 127.5, 127.7, 128.3, 140.5, 162.4, 169.4. [α]_D –268.4 (c=2.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₆N₂O₂: C;71.49, H;8.67, N;9.26. Found: C;71.7, H;8.7, N;9.23.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9c

¹H-NMR δ 0.72 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.54 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 2.5–2.9 (m, 2H), 3.9 (m, 2H), 4.1 (m, 2H), 5.1 (m, 2H), 5.9 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 6.0 (m, 1H), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-

NMR δ 14.0, 16.0, 17.8, 37.1, 49.7, 50.9, 57.7, 61.7, 116.7, 127.7, 127.8, 128.4, 135.6, 140.2, 163.0, 169.4. [α]_D -264.1 (c=1.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₄N₂O₂: C;71.97, H;8.05, N;9.33. Found: C;71.75, H;8.0, N;9.36.

(3R,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 10c

¹H-NMR δ 0.91 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 2.4–2.7 (m, 2H), 4.0 (dq, 1H, J=1, 6.9 Hz), 4.08 (m, 2H), 4.25 (ddd, 1H, J=1, 5.5, 7.6 Hz), 5.1 (m, 2H), 5.8 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 5.9 (m, 1H), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 0.9, 14.0, 15.7, 40.0, 49.8, 51.2, 60.4, 61.4, 117.6, 127.4, 128.3, 134.3, 140.9, 161.2, 169.0. $[\alpha]_D$ –132.8 (c=2.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₄N₂O₂: C;71.97, H;8.05, N;9.33. Found: C;72.15, H;8.08, N;9.3.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-ethyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9d

¹H-NMR δ 0.73 (d,3H,J=6.8Hz), 0.97 (t,3H,J=7.4Hz), 1.29 (t,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.54 (d,3H,J=7.1Hz), 2.0 (m,2H), 3.89 (m,1H), 3.95 (dq,1H,J=1.1, 6.8Hz), 4.2 (q,2H,J=7.1Hz), 5.9 (q,1H,J=7.1Hz), 7.4 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 9.3, 13.7, 15.7, 17.4, 25.4, 49.4, 50.5, 58.0, 61.2, 127.3, 127.4, 128.0, 140.0, 162.6, 169.3. [α]_D -248.5 (c=6.8, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.6, H;8.38, N;9.75.

(3R,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-ethyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 10d

¹H-NMR δ 0.88 (d,3H,J=6.9Hz), 1.1 (t,3H,J=7.4Hz), 1.31 (t,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.62 (d,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.75 (m,1H), 2.0 (m,1H), 4.07 (q,1H,J=6.9Hz), 4.17 (m,1H), 4.26 (m,2H), 5.86 (q,1H,J=7.2Hz), 7.35 (m,5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 10.9, 14.0, 15.7, 21.2, 29.3, 49.7, 51, 61.4, 61.8, 127.5, 127.6, 128.4, 140.9, 161.2, 170. [α]_D -132.6 (c=1.8, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.55, H;8.36, N;9.75.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9e

¹H-NMR δ 0.69 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1,46 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.12 (dd, 1H, J=7.8, 13.4 Hz), 3.45 (dd, 1H, J=4.1, 13.4 Hz), 3.81 (dq, 1H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 4.1 (m, 3H), 5.87 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.4 (m, 10ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 15.8, 18.0, 38.8, 49.7, 51.0, 59.1, 61.6, 125.8, 127.6, 127.7, 128.3, 130.2, 139.2, 140.3, 162.4, 169.2. $[\alpha]_D$ –209.1 (c=3.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₂H₂₆N₂O₂: C;75.4, H;7.48, N;7.99. Found: C;75.6, H;7.5, N;7.97.

(3R,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 10e

¹H-NMR δ 0.16 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.62 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.13 (dd, 1H, J=4.6, 13.2 Hz), 3.35 (dd, 1H, J=5.6, 13.2 Hz), 3.86 (dq, 1H, J=1.6, 6.9 Hz), 4.1 (m, 2H), 4.96 (ddd, 1H, J=1.6, 4.6, 5.6 Hz), 5.42 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.4 (m, 10 H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.2, 16.0, 19.7, 40.2, 50.9, 52.7, 61.3, 126.6, 127.3, 127.4, 128.0, 128.1, 130.4, 137.3, 140.9, 160.7, 168.3.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3-propyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9f

¹H-NMR δ 0.72 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 0.97 (t, 3H, J=7.3 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.45 (m, 2H), 1.54 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.83 (m, 1H), 2.05 (m, 1H), 3.88 (ddd, 1H, J=1.2, 4.4, 7.3 Hz), 3.93 (dq, 1H, J=1.2, 6.9 Hz), 4.12 (m, 2H), 5.92 (q, 1H, J=7.1 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 16.0, 17.7, 18.7, 34.8, 49.6, 50.8, 57.3, 61.6, 127.7, 127.8, 128.4, 140.3, 162.9, 170.0. [α]_D -237 (c=1.9, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₆N₂O₂: C;71.49, H;8.67, N;9.26. Found: C;71.6, H;8.7, N;9.23.

(3R,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3-propyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 10f

¹H-NMR δ 0.85 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 0.95 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.25 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.5–1.8 (m, 3H), 1.58 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.85 (m, 1H), 3.95 (dq, 1H, J=1, 6.9 Hz), 4.05 (m, 3H), 5.8 (q, 1H, J=7.1 Hz), 7.3 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 16.2, 16.3, 18.3, 19.9, 29.9, 49.5, 51.0, 61.3, 62.1, 127.6, 127.7, 128.3, 140.5, 162.4, 169.5.

(3S,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3,6-dimethyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 9g

¹H-NMR δ 0.70 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.52 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.55 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.9 (dq, 1H, J=1.2, 6.9 Hz), 4.0 (dq, 1H, J=1.2, 7.2 Hz), 4.1 (m, 2H), 5.94 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 15.8, 17.2, 19.2, 49.8, 50.7, 53.6, 61.8, 127.7, 127.9, 128.4, 140.1, 163.5, 170.4. [α]_D -256 (c=1.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₂: C;70.04, H;8.08, N;10.21. Found: C;69.8, H;8.05, N;10.25.

(3R,6R,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3,6-dimethyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 10g

¹H-NMR δ 0.83 (d,3H,J=6.8Hz), 1.27 (t,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.47 (d,3H,J=7.3Hz), 1.60 (d,3H,J=7.2Hz), 3.98 (dq,1H,J=1, 6.8Hz), 4.09 (dq,2H,J=1.2, 7.2Hz), 4.25 (dq,1H,J=1, 7.3Hz), 5.87 (q,1H,J=7.2Hz), 7.4 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.9, 15.6, 21.2, 21.4, 49.4, 50.8, 56.3, 61.3, 127.4, 127.7, 128.3, 140.5, 161.6, 170.5. [α]_D -184.7 (c=3.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₂: C;70.04, H;8.08, N;10.21. Found: C;70.24, H;8.1, N;10.18.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-(3-methyl-2-butenyl)-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one **11a**

¹H-NMR δ 1.18 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.35 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.7 (s, 3H), 1.74 (s, 3H), 2.7 (m, 3H), 3.6 (dq, 1H, J=1.2, 6.9 Hz), 4.05 (m, 2H), 5.25 (m, 1H), 5.85 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.7, 18.0, 19.4, 25.8, 31.8, 49.7, 51.5, 58.0, 61.2, 120.6, 126.9, 127.3, 128.4, 133.3, 139.4, 162.2, 169.7. $[\alpha]_D$ -5.1 (c=8.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₀H₂₈N₂O₂: C;73.14, H;8.59, N;8.53. Found: C;73.34, H;8.61, N;8.5.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-(3-methyl-2-butenyl)-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one **12a**

¹H-NMR δ 1.2 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.35 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.625 (s, 3H), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.72 (s, 3H), 2.55 (m, 2H), 3.54 (dq, 1H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 4.0 (m, 2H), 4.27 (ddd, 1H, J=1.3, 5.5, 6.1 Hz), 5.15 (m, 1H), 5.75 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.9, 17.8, 21.7, 25.8, 33.6, 49.7, 52.4, 60.5, 61.1, 119.8, 127.6, 127.7, 128.5, 134.5, 138.4, 160.6, 169.1. $[\alpha]_D$ –16.0 (c=4.8, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₀H₂₈N₂O₂: C;73.14, H;8.59, N;8.53. Found: C;73.45, H;8.62, N;8.51.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-isopropyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11b

¹H-NMR δ 0.8 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.13 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.2 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.35 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.64 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 3.59 (dq, 1H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 3.83 (dd, 1H, J=1.3, 2.7 Hz), 4.1 (m, 2H), 5.85 (q, 1H, J=7.1 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 16.4, 17.8, 19.8, 19.9, 29.9, 49.5, 51.7, 61.1, 62.2, 127.1, 127.4, 128.5, 139.6, 162.2, 169.7. $[\alpha]_D$ 40.3 (c=2.2, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₆N₂O₂: C;71.49, H;8.67, N;9.26. Found: C;71.25, H;8.64, N;9.3.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11c

¹H-NMR δ 0.8 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.36 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.3 Hz), 2.75 (m,2H), 3.61 (dq, 1H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 4.05 (m, 3H), 5–5.25 (m, 2H), 5.85 (q, 1H, J=7.3 Hz), 6.0 (m, 1H), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.9, 17.7, 19.3, 37.2, 49.8, 51.6, 57.7, 61.4, 116.8, 127.1, 127.4, 128.5, 135.4, 139.4, 162.7, 169.5. [α]_D 17.1 (c=3.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₄N₂O₂: C;71.97, H;8.05, N;9.33. Found: C;71.75, H;8.04, N;9.3.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 12c

¹H-NMR δ 1.2 (t,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.39 (d,3H,J=6.9Hz), 1.65 (d,3H,J=7.1Hz), 2.6 (m,2H), 3.55 (dq,1H,J=1.2, 6.9Hz), 3.9–4.15 (m,2H), 4.28 (m,1H), 5.13 (m,2H), 5.8 (q,1H,J=7.1Hz), 5.9 (m,1H), 7.35 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 18.1, 22.3, 40.1, 49.7, 52.4, 60.2, 61.4, 117.8, 127.8, 128.7, 134.3, 138.5, 161.6, 169.0. [α]_D –14.3 (c=0.5, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₄N₂O₂: C;71.97, H;8.05, N;9.33. Found: C;72.25, H;8.07, N;9.29.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-ethyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11d

¹H-NMR δ 0.98 (t,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.36 (d,3H,J=6.9Hz), 1.63 (d,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.9 (t,3H,J=7.2Hz), 2.05 (m,2H), 3.62 (dq, 1H,J=1.2, 6.9Hz), 3.95 (m,1H), 4.09 (m,2H), 5.88 (q,1H,J=7.2Hz), 7.3 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 9.2, 13.6, 17.5, 18.9, 25.6, 49.4, 51.2, 58.0, 61.0, 126.7, 127.1, 128.2, 139.3, 162.4, 169.6. [α]_D 32.1 (c=8.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.55, H;8.37, N;9.75.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3-ethyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 12d

¹H-NMR δ 1.05 (t, 3H, J=7.4 Hz), 1.19 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.38 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.7 (m, 1H), 1.95 (m, 1H), 3.56 (q, 1H, J=6.9 Hz), 4.04 (m, 3H), 5.82 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 10.7, 13.9, 17.9, 22.1, 29.3, 49.4, 52.1, 61.2, 61.5, 127.6, 128.6, 138.6, 160.9, 169.8. [α]_D -40.1 (c=2.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.92, H;8.4, N;9.7.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11e

¹H-NMR δ 1.17 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.29 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.61 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.26 (dd, 1H, J=7, 13.3 Hz), 3.42 (dd, 1H, J=4.2, 13.3 Hz), 3.44 (dq, 1H, J=1.4, 6.9 Hz), 4.05 (m, 2H), 4.27 (ddd, 1H, J=1.4, 4.2, 7.0 Hz), 5.78 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 6.95 (m, 2ArH), 7.3 (m, 8ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 17.7, 19.8, 39.0, 49.7, 51.7, 59.2, 61.4, 125.9, 127.1, 127.7, 128.4, 130.4, 138.9, 139.2, 162.0, 169.2. $[\alpha]_D$ 156.8 (c=1.5, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₂H₂₆N₂O₂: C;75.4, H;7.48, N;7.99. Found: C;75.6, H7.5, N;7.95.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-3-benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 12e

¹H-NMR δ 0.35 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.2 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.52 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.11 (dd, 1H, J=4.5, 13.1 Hz), 3.3 (dq, 1H, J=6.9, 13.1 Hz), 3.43 (dd, 1H, J=5.2, 13.1 Hz), 4.05 (m, 2H), 4.53 (ddd, 1H, J=1.8, 4.5, 5.2 Hz), 5.75 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 10ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 17.6, 20.2, 40.3, 49.7, 52.5, 60.9, 61.1, 126.6, 127.7, 127.9, 128.0, 128.5, 130.5, 137.2, 138.0, 160.6, 168.1. [α]_D 5.5 (c=1.0, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₂H₂₆N₂O₂: C;75.4, H;7.48, N;7.99. Found: C;75.25, H7.45, N;8.0.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3-propyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11f

¹H-NMR δ 0.98 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.18 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.36 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.5 (m, 2H), 1.63 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.9 (m, 1H), 2.05 (m, 1H), 3.61 (dq, 1H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 3.95 (ddd, 1H, J=1.2, 4.5, 7.1 Hz), 4.05 (m, 2H), 5.85 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 14.1, 17.8, 18.6, 19.2, 35.1, 49.8, 51.7, 57.4, 61.4, 127.1, 127.5, 128.6, 139.7, 162.6, 170.3. [α]_D 19.6 (c=0.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₆N₂O₂: C;71.49, H;8.67, N;9.26. Found: C;71.8, H;8.7, N;9.23.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3-propyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 12f

¹H-NMR δ 0.98 (t,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.2 (t,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.4 (d,3H,J=6.8Hz), 1.5–1.7 (m,3H), 1.65 (d,3H,J=7.2Hz), 1.9 (m, 1H), 3.55 (dq,1H,J=1.2, 6.8Hz), 3.9–4.2 (m,3H), 6.85 (q,1H,J=7.2Hz), 7.35 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.96, 14.01, 18.0, 19.6, 22.2, 38.6, 49.4, 52.1, 60.3, 61.3, 127.1, 127.7, 128.7, 138.8, 161.1, 170.2. [α]_D -20.8 (c=1.0, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₈H₂₆N₂O₂: C;71.49, H;8.67, N;9.26. Found: C;71.55, H;8.72, N;9.28.

(3R,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3,6-dimethyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 11g

¹H-NMR δ 1.18 (t,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.37 (d,3H,J=6.9Hz), 1.58 (d,3H,J=7.1Hz), 1.62 (d,3H,J=7.3Hz), 3.65 (dq,1H,J=1.1, 6.9 Hz), 4.05 (dq,1H,J=1.1, 7.1Hz), 4.1 (q,2H,J=7.1Hz), 5.85 (q,1H,J=7.3Hz), 7.3 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 17.8, 18.7, 19.5, 50.1, 51.6, 53.7, 61.6, 127.1, 127.6, 128.6, 139.7, 163.3, 171.0. [α]_D 18.2 (c=0.9, CHCl₃).Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₂: C;70.04, H;8.08, N;10.21. Found: C;70.3, H;8.1, N;10.15.

(3S,6S,1'S)-1-(1'-Phenethyl)-5-ethoxy-3,6-dimethyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 12g

¹H-NMR δ 1.2 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.42 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz),1.49 (d, 3H, J=7.3 Hz), 1.65 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 3.57 (dq, 1H, J=0.8, 6.8 Hz), 4.07 (m, 2H), 4.28 (dq, 1H, J=0.8, 7.3 Hz), 5.85 (q, 1H, J=7.2 Hz), 7.4 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.8, 21.7, 22.3, 49.3, 51.9, 56.2, 61.2, 127.4, 127.6, 128.5, 138.6, 161.5, 170.6. [α]_D -20.3 (c=2.2, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₂: C;70.04, H;8.08, N;10.21. Found: C;70.25, H;8.11, N;10.25.

(3S,6R)-5-Ethoxy-3-(3-methyl-2-butenyl)-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 13a

To a stirred solution of Na (0.19 g, 8.4 mmol) dissolved in 100 ml of liquid ammonia, cooled at -60° C, was added **9a** (0.4 g, 1.2 mmol) in dry THF (10 ml) and ethanol (1 ml) under inert atmosphere. After 5 minutes the reaction was quenched with 0.5 g of NH₄Cl and the cooling bath was removed allowing the complete removal of ammonia. To the residue was added water and the solution was extracted with ethyl acetate. After removal of the organic solvent the reaction product was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate. ¹H-NMR δ 1.28 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.39 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.62 (s, 3H), 1.69 (s, 3H), 2.59 (dd, 2H, J=5.8, 6.8 Hz), 4.02 (dq, 1H, J=1.8, 6.9 Hz), 4.15 (m, 3H), 5.1 (m, 1H), 6.8 (m, 1H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.7, 19.7, 25.7, 32.5, 48.0, 58.7, 60.9, 118.6, 134.7, 159.8, 172.1. [α]_D -32.0 (c=2.8, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₂H₂₀N₂O₂: C;64.26, H;8.99, N;12.49. Found: C;64.5, H;9.1, N;12.4.

(3S,6R)-3-Benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 13e

The product was obtained starting from **9e** and following the procedure previously reported for **13a**. ¹H-NMR δ 1.22 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.28 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 3.10 (dq, 1H, J=2.1, 6.9 Hz), 3.13 (dd, 1H, J=4.7, 13.3 Hz), 3.27 (dd, 1H, J=5.1, 13.3 Hz), 4.15 (m, 2H), 4.43 (ddd, 1H, J=2.1, 4.7, 5.1 Hz), 5.95 (m, 1H), 7.2 (m,5ArH); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 19.5, 39.7, 47.7, 59.7, 61.2, 126.4, 127.7, 130.0, 136.8, 160.4, 171.4. [α]_D 23.3 (c=2.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₄H₁₈N₂O₂: C;68.27, H;7.37, N;11.37. Found: C;68.5, H;7.4, N;11.4.

(2R,5S)-2-Methyl-5-amino-3-aza-4-oxo-8-methyl-ethyl 7-nonenoate hydrochloride 14a

To the lactim 13a (0.24 gr, 1 mmol) in 5 ml of acetone was added 3 ml of 0.5M HCl and the solution stirred at r.t. After about 3 h the acetone was evaporated and to the residue was added water, then extracted with ethyl acetate. After evaporation of the aqueous solution under vacuum, the product was recovered as an oil. ¹H-NMR δ 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.42 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.66 (s, 3H), 1.71 (s, 3H), 2.75 (m, 2H), 4.2 (q, 2H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.5 (m, 2H), 5.15 (m, 1H), 8.1 (m, 3H), 8.5 (m, 1H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 17.6, 18.1, 25.8, 30.1, 48.4, 52.8, 61.7, 116.3, 137.6, 168.5, 173.0. [α]_D 28.9 (c=3.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₂H₂₃ClN₂O₃: C;51.7, H;8.32, Cl;12.72. Found: C;51.9, H;8.35, Cl;12.7.

(2R,5S)-2-Methyl-5-amino-3-aza-4-oxo-6-phenyl-ethyl hexanoate hydrochloride 14e

The product was obtained from **13e** following the procedure previously reported for **14a**. ¹H-NMR (D₂O): δ 1.10 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.15 (t,3H, J=7.1 Hz), 3.1 (m, 2H), 4.15 (m, 4H), 7.3 (m, 5ArH); ¹³C-NMR (D₂O): δ 12.7, 15.3, 36.4, 48.2, 53.9, 62.2, 127.5, 128.5, 128.9, 133.2, 168.2, 173.6.

Because the product is poor soluble for optical rotation measurement, it was converted into the corresponding acetamido derivative by treatment with acetyl chloride in CH_2Cl_2 at 0°C for 1 h in the presence of Et₃N.

The (2*R*,5*S*)-2-methyl-5-acetamido-3-aza-4-oxo-6-phenyl-ethyl hexanoate was then obtained pure after silica gel chromatography eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate: ¹H-NMR δ 1.20 (d, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.95 (s, 3H), 2.97 (dd, 1H, J=8.3, 15.4 Hz), 3.13 (dd, 1H, J=6.1, 15.4 Hz), 4.13 (q, 2H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.43 (dq, 1H, J=7.2, 7.2 Hz), 4.68 (ddd, 1H, J=6.1, 7.1, 8.3 Hz), 6.25 (m, 2H), 7.25 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR δ 14.1, 18.0, 23.2, 38.7, 48.0, 54.5, 61.5, 127.0, 128.6, 129.3, 136.5, 169.9, 170.2, 172.4. [α]_D -7 (c=1.07, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₄: C;62.73, H;7.24, N;9.14. Found: C;62.55, H;7.2, N;9.1.

V. FAVERO et al.

(2R)-2-Benzylamino-ethyl propionate 18

Methansulfonate of (*S*)-ethyl lactate (9.85 g, 50 mmol), Et₃N (7.7 ml, 55 mmol) and benzylamine (6 ml, 55 mmol) were dissolved in 50 ml of benzene/DMF (2:1) and the reaction mixture was stirred at 80°C. After 24 h was added water, the aqueous solution was extracted with ethyl acetate, was made alkaline and then extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic solution was evaporated in vacuo and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate. The pure reaction product was isolated in 90% yield. ¹H-NMR δ 1.28 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.31 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.90 (s, 1H), 3.36 (q, 1H, J=7.0 Hz), 3.73 (q_{AB}, 2H, J=12.8 Hz), 4.18 (q, 2H, J=7.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 18.8, 51.6, 55.6, 60.2, 126.7, 127.9, 128.0, 139.5, 175.3. [α]_D 31.9 (c=7.6, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₂H₁₇NO₂: C;69.54, H;8.27, N;6.76. Found: C;69.8, H;8.3, N;6.73.

(2R)-2-(Benzylchloroacetamido)-ethyl propionate 19

To a stirred solution of **18** (8.3 g, 40 mmol) and Et₃N (7 ml, 50 mmol) in 50 ml of CH₂Cl₂ cooled at 0°C, chloroacetylchloride (3.2 ml, 40 mmol) was added dropwise. After about 1 h the reaction was stopped by adding 10 ml of 1N HCl and the organic layer was then evaporated under vacuum. The product was obtained pure in 90% yield after silica gel chromatography eluting with hexane/ethyl acetate. ¹H-NMR δ 1.27 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.41 (d, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.03 (q_{AB}, 2H, J=12.6 Hz), 4.16 (q, 2H, J=7.2 Hz), 4.59 (d, 1H, J=17.6 Hz), 4.61 (q, 1H, J=7.1 Hz),4.73 (d, 1H, J=17.6 Hz), 7.35 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 14.4, 41.3, 50.7, 55.0, 61.3, 126.4, 127.0, 127.9, 128.9, 130.1, 167.4, 170.9. [α]_D 44.0 (c=5.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₄H₁₈ClNO₃: C;59.26, H;6.39, Cl;12.49. Found: C;59.5, H;6.42, Cl;12.52.

(6R)-1-N-Benzyl-6-methyl-piperazine-2,5-dione 20

10.8 g of **19** (40 mmol) were dissolved in 15 ml of 7M ammonia solution in ethanol. The flask was stopped and the reaction stirred at r.t. for about 24 h. The reaction product was recovered pure after evaporation of ammonia and cristallization from H₂O/EtOH. ¹H-NMR (DMSO) δ 1.33 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 3.69 (q, 1H, J=7.0 Hz), 3.73 (dd, 1H, J=4.0, 17.4 Hz), 4.12 (d, 1H, J=17.4 Hz), 4.18 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 4.94 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.35 (m, 5H), 8.20 (m, 1H); ¹³C-NMR (DMSO) δ 16.9, 44.1, 46.3, 55.5, 127.4, 127.7, 128.6, 137.1, 164.8, 168.7. [α]_D 37.1 (c=2.9, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₂H₁₄N₂O₂: C;59.26, H;6.39, N;12.49. Found: C;59.5, H;6.42, N;12.52.

(6R)-1-N-Benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 15

The piperazine-2,5-dione **20** was converted into the lactime **15** in 80% yield following the procedure used for **7** and **8**. ¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.36 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 3.8 (ddq, 1H, J=1.2, 1.2, 6.9 Hz), 4.0 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 4.07 (q, 2H, J=7.0 Hz), 4.13 (dd, 1H, J=1.2, 20.4 Hz), 4.29 (dd, 1H, J=1.2, 20.4 Hz), 5.3 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.2, 45.9, 49.9, 51.3, 61.4, 127.5, 127.9, 128.5, 135.8, 161.7, 167.0. [α]_D -22.5 (c=2.9, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₄H₁₈N₂O₂: C;68.27, H;7.37, N;11.37. Found: C;68.5, H;7.4, N;11.32.

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-5-ethoxy-3-(3-methyl-2-butenyl)-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16a

¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (t, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.37 (d, 1H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.68 (s, 3H), 1.71 (s, 3H), 3.7 (m, 2H), 3.77 (dq, 1H, J=1.6, 6.8 Hz), 3.93 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 4-.42 (m, 3H), 5.16 (ddd, 1H, J=1, 7.2, 7.3 Hz), 5.46 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 17.4, 18.1, 25.9, 32.5, 45.7, 51.3, 57.9, 61.1, 119.7, 127.4, 127.8, 128.5, 134.1, 136.1, 159.9, 169.1. [α]_D 12.8 (c=4.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₉H₂₆N₂O₂: C;72.58, H;8.34, N;8.91. Found: C;72.85, H;8.36, N;8.88.

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-5-ethoxy-3-isopropyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16b

¹H-NMR δ 0.76 (d, 3H, J=6.7 Hz), 1.12 (d, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.37 (d, 3H, J=6.7 Hz), 2.70 (m, 1H), 3.78 (dq, 1H, J=2, 7.0 Hz), 3.92 (dd, 1H, J=2, 2.8 Hz), 3.93 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 4.13 (m, 2H), 5.44 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 16.2, 17.4, 19.7, 30.7,

45.8, 51.1, 60.9, 62.0, 127.4, 127.9, 128.5, 136.3, 160.1, 169.2. $[\alpha]_D$ – 5.6 (c=3.1, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.52, H;8.4, N;9.88.

(3R,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-5-ethoxy-3-isopropyl-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 17b

¹H-NMR δ 0.86 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.12 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.42 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 2.35 (m, 1H), 3.81 (dq, 1H, J=2.1, 6.9 Hz), 3.95 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 3.8–4.25 (m,3H), 5.4 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.1, 17.9, 18.9, 19.9, 32.7, 46.0, 51.0, 61.1, 64.4, 127.7, 128.3, 128.7, 136.3, 159.1, 169.0.

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16c

¹H-NMR δ 1.23 (t,3H, J=7.1Hz), 1.36 (d,3H,J=6.8Hz), 2.75 (m,2H), 3.77 (dq,1H, J=1.9, 6.8Hz), 3.97 (d,1H,J=15.0Hz), 4.1 (m,3H), 5.08 (dd,1H,J=2.2, 10.2Hz), 5.17 (dd,1H,J=2.2, 17.2Hz), 5.75–5.95 (m,1H), 7.3 (m,5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.2, 29.4, 37.8, 51.4, 57.4, 61.1, 117.3, 127.3, 127.8, 128.4, 134.5, 135.9, 160.2, 168.6. [α]_D 0.4 (c=4.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₂N₂O₂: C;71.3, H;7.74, N;9.78. Found: C;71., H;7.7, N;9.82.

(3R,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-allyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 17c

¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.40 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 2.5–2.7 (m, 2H), 3.79 (dq, 1H, J=1.6, 6.9 Hz), 4.0 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 3.9–4.2 (m, 2H), 4.3 (m, 1H), 5.0–5.2 (m, 2H), 5.32 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H).

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-ethyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16d

¹H-NMR δ 0.93 (t,3H, J=7.3 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.36 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 2.05 (m, 2H), 3.79 (dq, 1H, J=1.9, 6.9 Hz), 3.96 (d, 1H, J=14.9 Hz), 4–4.2 (m, 3H), 5.38 (d, 1H, J=14.9 Hz), 7.25 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 9.1, 14.0, 17.2, 26.6, 46.0, 51.6, 58.2, 61.2, 127.5, 127.9, 128.6, 136.3, 160.4, 169.4. [α]_D –16.7 (c=2.4, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₆H₂₂N₂O₂: C;70.04, H;8.08, N;10.21. Found: C;70.23, H;8.1, N;10.2

(3R,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-ethyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 17d

¹H-NMR δ 1.04 (t, 3H, J=7.4 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.41 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.7–2.1 (m,2H), 3.79 (dq, 1H, J=1.6, 6.9 Hz), 4.0 (d, 1H, J=15.0Hz), 4–4.2 (m, 3H), 5.34 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m,5H).

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-benzyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16e

¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.30 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 3.35 (m, 2H), 3.51 (dq, 1H, J=1.8, 6.9 Hz), 3.90 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 4.13 (q, 2H, J=7.1 Hz), 4.41 (ddd, 1H, J=1.8, 5.0, 5.0 Hz), 5.33 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 6.9 (m, 3H), 7.3 (m, 7H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.8, 17.2, 31.2, 45.5, 51.0, 58.6, 60.9, 125.8, 127.0, 127.3, 127.4, 128.2, 130.2, 135.4, 137.8, 159.7, 168.1. $[\alpha]_D$ 4.9 (c=4.6, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₂₁H₂₄N₂O₂: C;74.97, H;7.19, N;8.33. Found: C;74.13, H;7.21, N;8.3.

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-propyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16f

¹H-NMR δ 0.96 (t, 3H, J=7.0 Hz), 1.24 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.36 (d, 3H, J=6.8 Hz), 1.4 (m, 2H), 1.8–2.1 (m, 2H), 3.79 (dq, 1H, J=1.8, 6.8 Hz), 3.97 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 3.95–4.15 (m, 3H), 5.37 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 17.2, 18.3, 35.9, 46.1, 51.2, 57.3, 61.2, 127.5, 127.9, 128.6, 136.3, 160.2, 169.7. [α]_D 2.5° (c=2.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₇H₂₄N₂O₂: C;70.8, H;8.39, N;9.71. Found: C;70.33, H;8.41, N;9.68.

(3R,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-propyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 17f

¹H-NMR δ 0.97 (t, 3H, J=7.2 Hz), 1.23 (t, 3H, J=7.1 Hz), 1.41 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.5 (m, 2H), 1.65 (m, 1H), 1.9 (m, 1H), 3.79 (dq, 1H, J=1.5, 6.9 Hz), 3.95 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 4.0–4.25 (m, 3H), 5.33 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.9, 14.1, 19.0, 19.4, 38.5, 46.1, 51.2, 59.6, 61.3, 127.7, 128.2, 128.7, 136.2, 159.9, 169.9.

(3S,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-methyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 16g

¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (dt, 3H, J=1.5, 6.8 Hz), 1.35 (dd, 3H, J=1.3, 6.9 Hz), 1.57 (dd, 3H, J=1.6, 7.1 Hz), 3.83 (m, 1H), 4.04 (d, 1H, J=15.1), 4.11 (m, 3H), 5.27 (d, 1H, J=15.1 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 14.0, 16.9, 20.5, 46.4, 52.1, 53.6, 61.4, 127.6, 128.0, 128.7, 136.3, 160.7, 170.4. [α]_D –12.5 (c=2.7, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀N₂O₂: C;69.2, H;7.74, N;10.76. Found: C;69.3, H;7.75, N;10.73.

(3R,6R)-1-N-Benzyl-3-methyl-5-ethoxy-6-methyl-3,6-dihydro-1H-pyrazine-2-one 17g

¹H-NMR δ 1.24 (t, 3H, J=6.9 Hz), 1.41 (d, 3H, J=6.9 Hz),1.50 (d, 3H, J=7.3 Hz), 3.78 (dq, 1H, J=1, 6.9 Hz), 3.97 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 4.09 (m, 2H), 4.28 (dq, 1H, J=1, 7.0 Hz), 5.34 (d, 1H, J=15.0 Hz), 7.3 (m, 5H); ¹³C-NMR δ 13.9, 18.9, 22.0, 45.9, 51.1, 55.5, 61.2, 127.5, 128.0, 128.6, 135.9, 160.3, 170.3. [α]_D 26.1 (c=3.2, CHCl₃). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₅H₂₀N₂O₂: C;69.2, H;7.74, N;10.76. Found: C;69.5, H;7.77, N;10.72.

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- 7. Molecular mechanics optimizations were performed by the MM+ Force Field method (HyperChem programme, 1994) by using the 'steepest descendent algorithm' with an RMS gradient 0.01 Kcal.
- 8. Energy calculations showed that both the *cis* isomers **10g** and **12g** are 1.6 and 2.1 Kcal/mole, respectively, more stable in the diaxial than in the diequatorial arrangement.
- 9. From conformational analysis performed on *trans* isomers 9d, 11d and 9g, 11g, it resulted that (C-6)-CH₃ rather than (C-3)-CH₃ or (C-3)-C₂H₅ lies in the axial position. In fact, this conformation is c.a. 2.7 Kcal/mole more stable for 9d and 11d and 3.3 Kcal/mole for 9g and 11g.
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