propane and 5, as well as 2 and butyraldehyde, are formed at 90 $^{\circ}C$ (5/2 = 10.5¹⁹), but propylene is not observed. This difference is consistent with an essentially irreversible formaldehyde elimination process compared with a reversible β -hydride elimination of an olefin, which ultimately leads to propane by irreversible C-H reductive elimination.

Further investigation of reactions of hydroxyacetyl complexes is now in progress.

Supplementary Material Available: Crystal structure analysis summary and tables of positional and thermal parameters of compound 3 (24 pages). Ordering information is given on any current masthead page.

(19) No attempt was made to remove the product aldehyde from the equilibrium mixture

Synthesis of Crystalline (\pm) -Fecapentaene

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Since their discovery¹ and the structure elucidation^{1,2} the fecapentaenes have gained worldwide scientific interest. These mutagenic glyceryl ether lipids can occur in trace amounts in the feces of people living in industrialized countries and are suspected to be a cause for colon cancer.³

For the relevant carcinogenicity testing the mutagenic substances must be available in gram quantities, most desirably in pure form. Recently published syntheses⁴ using Wittig and Horner-Wittig condensations to construct the polyene moiety lacked in stereochemical control and produced mixtures of cistrans isomers which were extremely instable and difficult to handle.

We wish to communicate the first stereospecific route leading to the crystalline parent compound all-trans-fecapentaene-12 (1).

To avoid the difficulties encountered with the aforementioned nonselective preparations,⁴ we chose an entirely different approach. In its key step, a modified⁵ Whiting reaction⁶ $2 \rightarrow 3$, two of the



total five trans-oriented C=C double bonds in 1 are formed. This stereoselective reaction proceeds in one step starting with the

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precursor 2, a derivative of an acetylenic diol.

According to a known method? lithium acetylide was added to trans, trans-hepta-2,4-dienal (4) to afford nona-4,6-dien-1-yn-3-ol (5) (bp 58-65 °C (0.01 mm), mp 8-10 °C, yield 67%), which in turn was transformed by 3,4-dihydro-2H-pyran together with a catalytic amount of hydrogen chloride to the tetrahydropyranyl derivative 6 (bp 108 °C (0.005 mm), yield 89%). Naturally, the



trans-trans geometry of 4 was retained during these reactions. In the ¹H NMR spectrum of 6 no signals due to an isomer could be detected. Therefore 6 was most suitable to serve as the first building block in our synthesis.

To synthesize the other half of a precursor of the target molecule 1, glyceryl p-toluenesulfonate (7) was protected⁸ with tert-butyldimethylsilyl chloride and imidazol in dimethylformamide (room temperature, 6 h) to afford 2,3-bis(tert-butyldimethylsilyloxy)propyl p-toluenesulfonate (8) in 91% yield after chromatography (silica gel, petroleum ether-ethyl acetate 98:2).

Up to now there existed no direct and convenient method⁹ for the O-alkylation of malondialdehyde. We have found that the novel tetrabutylammonium salt 9 (mp 129-130 °C from glyme)-prepared in 67% yield from 1,1,3,3-tetraethoxypropane and 0.3 N aqueous hydrogen chloride (50 °C, 25 min) followed by addition of methanolic tetrabutylammonium hydroxide solution-easily reacted with the protected tosylate 8 (dry dimethylformamide, 1.5 equiv of 9, concentrated solution, 50 °C, 22 h) to afford trans-3-[(2,3-bis[(tert-butyldimethylsilyl)oxy]propyl)oxy]propenal (10) in 82% yield after chromatography



(silica gel, petroleum ether-ethyl acetate 9:1 and 4:1). Its ^{1}H NMR spectrum in CCl₄ showing a clean doublet of the -O-CH= resonance at 7.3 ppm with a coupling constant of 12.5 Hz revealed that the (oxopropenyl)oxy moiety had been linked with the complete trans stereoselectivity desired in the production of the second building block 10.

At this stage the two units 6 and 10 were combined. Adding the preformed lithium derivative of 6-prepared with 1.1 equiv of lithium bis(trimethylsilyl)amide (fresh colorless solution in tetrahydrofuran, $-78 \rightarrow 0$ °C)—to the aldehyde 10 ($-78 \rightarrow -30$ °C) furnished the liquid key compound 1110 in 72% yield after



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a low-temperature (-20 °C) chromatography on florisil (petroleum ether-ethyl acetate 9:1 and 2:1).

Containing the hydroxy and the tetrahydropyranyloxy function destined to serve as leaving groups properly positioned, 11 was converted by lithium aluminum hydride (5 molar equiv, room temperature, 2.5 h, argon atmosphere¹¹) in dry tetrahydrofuran to the pale yellow liquid [(2,3-bis[(tert-butyldimethylsilyl)oxy]propyl)oxy]dodeca-1,3,5,7,9-pentaene (12) in quantitative crude yield.12

As chromatography of the sensitive crude reaction product (11 \rightarrow 12) was fairly inefficient, even at low temperature, it was conveniently used without purification in the final reaction step. With a technique previously employed^{4,8} the protecting groups of 12 were removed by tetrabutylammonium fluoride (2.2 molar equiv, room temperature, 1.5 h, argon atmosphere¹¹) in tetrahydrofuran-ether. From the resulting crude reaction product the hardly soluble,13 analytically and isomerically pure all-trans-3-(dodeca-1,3,5,7,9-pentaenyloxy)propane-1,2-diol (1) crystallized



from hot butyl acetate as a pale yellow solid in 47% yield (based on 11) and thus was easily separated from minor amounts of better soluble isomers and impurities.

With exclusion of air crystalline 1 was found to be stable at room temperature over a months period.¹⁴ The following physical data of 1 are typical: mp 194-196 °C (sealed tube, argon atmosphere);¹⁵ $R_f 0.33$ (ethyl acetate);¹⁶ Mass spectrum, m/z 250 (M⁺); UV (methylene chloride) λ_{max} 323 (ϵ 48 000), 338 (ϵ 74000), 357 (e 67000) nm; IR (KBr) 3417, 3012, 2965, 2934, 2879, 1643, 1186, 1115, 1049, 1002 cm⁻¹; 500-MHz ¹H NMR (dimethyl sulfoxide- d_6) δ 6.77 (d, J = 12.5 Hz, 1 H, ==CHO), (differentiation of the J_{0} of J_{0} Hz, 1 H, CH₂OH), 3.78-3.84 (m, 1 H, HCHOC), 3.62-3.69 (m, 2 H, HCHOČ, CHOH),¹⁷ 3.30-3.40 (m, 2 H, CH₂OH), 2.08 (dq, $J_{11,12} = 7.5, J_{10,11} = 7$ Hz, 2 H, CH_2CH_3), 0.96 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 3 H, CH₃).

Acknowledgment. We take pleasure in acknowledging the generous support received from the German Research Society and the Funds of the Chemical Industry. Especially we would like to thank Professor Johann Sonnenbichler (Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry, Munich) for recording and discussion of the 500-MHz ¹H NMR spectrum.

Note Added in Proof. In the Ames bacterial assay 1 was found to be a very potent direct mutagen.¹⁸

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Molecular Hydrogen Complexes of the Transition Metals. 2. Evidence for a New Complex, $M_0(CO)(dppe)_2(H_2)$, and for Solution Equilibrium between Dihydrogen and Dihydride Forms, $M-\eta^2-H_2 \rightleftharpoons$ H-M-H, in $W(CO)_3(PR_3)_2(H_2)$

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Coordination of molecular hydrogen to transition metals is now firmly established, initially in the stable, structurally characterized complexes $M(CO)_3(PR_3)_2(\eta^2 - H_2)^1$ (M = Mo, W; R = Cy, *i*-Pr), then in low-temperature stable $Cr(CO)_5(H_2)_2^2$ and recently in $[IrH(H_2)(PPh_3)_2(C_{13}H_8N)]SbF_{6,3} [IrH_2(H_2)_2L_2]^{+,3}$ and [FeH- $(H_2)(dppe)_2]BF_4.^4$ In order to better define the steric and electronic requirements for H₂ to bind in molecular fashion rather than being cleaved to hydride ligands, we report a new stable H_2 complex, $Mo(CO)(dppe)_2(H_2)$ (dppe = diphenylphosphinoethane) (1). Also, NMR evidence is presented for a dynamic equilibrium between the H₂ complex W(CO)₃(P-*i*-Pr₃)₂(η^2 -H₂), and an apparent dihydride complex, WH₂(CO)₃(P-i-Pr₃)₂, derived by oxidative addition of the H_2 ligand.

The formally 16-electron complex, Mo(CO)(dppe)₂, contains a weak, agostic interaction of a phenyl hydrogen with the metal and adds a sixth ligand such as N_2 .⁵ These features are similar to those of $M(CO)_3(PR_3)_2$,⁶ the precursors to the first H_2 complexes, and suggest that $Mo(CO)(dppe)_2$ is likely to bind H_2 also. Addition of H_2 (1 atm) to deep brown $Mo(CO)(dppe)_2$ in benzene or toluene gives an orange solution from which well-formed solvated orange prisms of 1 slowly crystallize.⁷ Solutions of 1 reversibly lose H_2 in a manner similar to $M(CO)_3(PR_3)_2(H_2)$. 1 crystallized in two forms depending on solvent, and both have been examined by single-crystal X-ray methods.⁸ Both structures show normal octahedral geometry for the complex with CO trans to the presumed η^2 -H₂ ligand (Figure 1); i.e., the agostic hydrogen interaction present in the structure of Mo(CO)(dppe)₂ is no longer evident. The shortest distance between Mo and phenyl hydrogen (calculated on the basis of idealized hydrogen positions) in 1 is 3.4 Å compared to 2.98 Å for the parent Mo species. In both forms, the CO ligand is disordered across a crystallographic 2-fold axis and obscures the presumed H₂ ligand. Although the H₂ atom positions were not located, ¹H NMR (toluene- d_8 , 25 °C, 300

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(7) ν (CO) 1815 cm⁻¹ (Nujol) for 1·3C₆H₆. We find ν (CO) for Mo-(CO)(dppe)₂ at 1723 cm⁻¹ rather than at 1807 cm⁻¹ as previously reported.^{5a} (8) (a) X-ray data for 1·3C₆H₆: Space group: P22₁2₁; cell constants: *a* = 12.114 (8) Å, *b* = 14.214 (5) Å, *c* = 17.491 (6) Å determined from 25

high-order reflections; Z = 4, $D_x = 1.28$ g/cm³; crystal size $0.25 \times 0.25 \times$ 0.30 mm. Refinement included anisotropic temperature factors on all atoms heavier than hydrogen and converged to an unweighted R value of 0.070. No attempt was made to locate hydrogen atoms. Further details of data collection and the structural determination are presented as supplementary data. (b) X-ray data (-125 °C) for 1-2C₂H₃: space group P2/c(Pc); cell constants, a = 12.125 (6) Å, b = 12.154 (8) Å, c = 19.133 (7) Å, $\beta = 96.30$ (3)°. Xtl size, 0.08 × 0.28 × 0.36 mm, Z = 2, $D_x = 1.31$ g/cm³. Least squares refinements including anisotropic thermal parameters for all atoms heavier than carbon converged to an unweighted \hat{R} value of 0.075.

⁽¹¹⁾ All transformations with polyene derivatives were carried out with strict exclusion of air. Before workup a trace of the radical inhibitor 3-tert-butyl-4-hydroxy-5-methylphenyl sulfide was added to the reaction solution

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