A Convenient Approach to Enantioenriched Cyclopropanes Bearing Electron-Withdrawing Functionalities

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Abstract: 1,2-Disubstituted cyclopropanes with different electronwithdrawing groups were accessed stereospecifically from similarly functionalized γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated compounds.

Key words: cyclopropanation, intramolecular nucleophilic substitution, chiral allylic alcohols, stereoselective synthesis

Cyclopropane ring is a basic structural element in a wide range of biologically active natural products and their unnatural analogues.¹ With the offer of versatility both as intermediates, and as building blocks within organic synthesis,² the development of efficient methods to access these strained subunits is considered to be of significant importance. In recent years substantial synthetic effort has been focused on enantioselective synthesis of cyclopropanes.³

Although base-promoted intramolecular S_N2 substitution reaction of γ -haloalkanoates and their analogues with different leaving groups constitutes one of the simplest routes to the appropriate cyclopropane derivatives, it has not attracted much attention up to date.⁴ On the other hand, this type of ring closure is a crucial step in a couple of more complex but commonly applied cyclopropanation reactions. For example, sequential conjugate addition of nucleophiles to γ -halo- α , β -unsaturated esters followed by the $S_N 2$ intramolecular alkylation of the resulting adducts (MIRC) easily provides appropriate cyclopropanecarbox-Homologous Horner-Wadsworth-Emmons vlates.5 (HWE) reaction of phosphonoacetate anions with epoxides leading to the same carboxylates involves similar ring forming process of γ-phosphoryloxyalkanoate intermediates.⁶ Some time ago we demonstrated that these particular intermediates are easily produced and converted to the cyclopropane products by base-catalyzed ethanolysis of α -phosphono- γ -lactones.⁷

Guided by the presented knowledge, we envisioned that the reaction sequence consisting in enantioselective preparation of γ -hydroxyalkanoates followed by transformation of their hydroxy functionality in a good leaving group and further intramolecular S_N2 substitution reaction of the resulting alkanoate enolates would allow the enantiospecific synthesis of substituted cyclopropanecarboxylates.

SYNTHESIS 2009, No. 9, pp 1473–1476 Advanced online publication: 25.03.2009 DOI: 10.1055/s-0028-1088034; Art ID: Z27608SS © Georg Thieme Verlag Stuttgart · New York We have recently described a method for the preparation of various γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated compounds by HWE reaction of α -hydroxy aldehydes with differently activated methylphosphonates.⁸ We have also found that this particular method can be easily used for the synthesis of enantiomerically enriched γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated octenoates **1**, octenenitriles **2**, and heptenylphosphonates **3**. The latter approach required use of α -hydroxyhexanal of high optical purity as the starting material. Both enantiomeric α -hydroxyhexanals were obtained by asymmetric Sharpless dihydroxylation of (*E*)-hex-1-enyl methanesulfonate.

Outlined in this paper is the development of a highly efficient and general method for the transformation of enantioenriched compounds 1, 2, and 3 into the corresponding *trans*-2-*n*-butylcyclopropanecarboxylates 12, cyclopropanenitriles 13, and cyclopropanephosphonates 14 respectively, in a diastereoselective manner.

The requisite enatioenriched γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated esters 1, nitriles 2, and phosphonates 3 were obtained according to the previously reported procedure.⁸ The transγ-hydroxyoctenoates formation of 1 into γdiethoxyphosphoryloxyoctanoates 9 was examined initially, however, routine phosphorylation of the hydroxyl group in esters 1 with diethyl chlorophosphate failed to yield the desired product. Nevertheless, we found that treatment of γ -hydroxyoctenoates 1 with diethyl chlorophosphite, followed by oxidation of the resulting phosphites with nitrogen dioxide in a one-pot process, gave rise to the desired γ -phosphoryloxyoctenoates 4 in good overall yield (Scheme 1).



Subsequent catalytic hydrogenation of the unsaturated esters 4 did not provide the expected γ -phosphoryloxyoc-tanoates 9, instead, ethyl octanoate (5) was isolated as the

sole product. This, somewhat unexpected result can be explained by envisaging the reductive elimination of a phosphoryloxy group from the unsaturated ester **4** to afford the observed saturated ester **5**. Despite this unexpected result, the desired γ -phosphoryloxy saturated compounds **9**, **10**, and **11** were prepared from the γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated compounds **1**, **2**, and **3** via catalytic hydrogenation of the C=C bond, followed by phosphorylation of the saturated alcohols **6**, **7**, and **8** using the protocol already described for the synthesis of γ -phosphoryloxy- α , β -unsaturated esters **4** (Scheme 2 and Scheme 3).



^b ee determined by ¹H NMR

Scheme 2 Reagents and conditions: (a) EtOH, 10% Pd/C (cat.), H_2 , 3 h; (b) Et₃N (1.1 equiv), (EtO)₂PCl (1 equiv), CH₂Cl₂, 0 °C, then r.t., 2 h; (c) 2 M N₂O₄ in CH₂Cl₂, 0 °C, then r.t., 20 h; (d) NaH (1 equiv), THF, reflux, 5 h or LDA (1 equiv), THF, r.t., 20 h.



Scheme 3 Reagents and conditions: (a) EtOH, 10% Pd/C (cat.), H_2 , 3 h; (b) Et₃N (1.1 equiv), (EtO)₂PCl (1 equiv), CH₂Cl₂, 0 °C, then r.t., 2 h; (c) 2 M N₂O₄ in CH₂Cl₂, 0 °C, then r.t., 20 h; (d) NaH (1 equiv), THF, reflux, 5 h or LDA (1 equiv), THF, r.t., 20 h.

With phosphates 9, 10 and 11 in hand, the applicability of these substrates in the intramolecular ring closure reaction was investigated. Thus, treatment of γ -phosphoryloxyesters (*R*)-9 and (*S*)-9 with sodium hydride in THF at reflux led to the expected cyclopropanecarboxylates (1*S*,2*S*)-12, and (1*R*,2*R*)-12 respectively. In addition to this, reaction of nitriles (*R*)-10 and (*S*)-10, as well as phosphates (*R*)-11 and (*S*)-11 with LDA resulted in an efficient cyclization at room temperature to afford cyclopropanenitriles (1*S*,2*S*)-

13 and (1R,2R)-13, and cyclopropanephosphonates (1S,2S)-14 and (1R,2R)-14, respectively. In all the cases, the ring closure occurred in completely diastereoselective manner giving 1,2-disubstituted cyclopropanes as single diastereoisomers. The trans stereochemistry of the cyclopropanecarboxylates 12 obtained was confirmed by ¹H and ¹³C NMR data and was in agreement with the results of our previous investigations.⁷ The relative stereochemistry of the cyclopropanephosphonates 14 was established by ¹H NMR analysis. The observed value of coupling constant ${}^{3}J_{PH-2} = 15.7$ Hz clearly proved the *trans* arrangement of the phosphoryl and butyl groups.⁹ Unfortunately, the spectra of cyclopropenenitriles 13 could not be interpreted so unequivocally. Therefore, taking into account analogous method of preparation and structural similarity, we assigned *trans* stereochemistry to these compounds.

Chiral gas chromatography analysis revealed that the transformation of optically active γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated compounds 1, 2, and 3 into the corresponding cyclopropanes 12, 13, and 14, respectively, proceeded without change of the enantiopurity. Hydrolysis of (+)-trans-cyclopropenecarboxylate derived from ester (R)-1 gave the known (1S,2S)-2-*n*-butylcyclopropenecarboxylic acid.¹⁰ Thus, the S-absolute configuration of alkyl substituted stereogenic center in cyclopropanecarboxylate (1S,2S)-12 although apparent from stereospecific S_N2 attack of the enolate could be confirmed by stereochemical correlation. Therefore, the cyclization of phosphoryloxyoctanoate (S)-9 undoubtedly leads to (1R,2R)-12 enantiomer. As a consequence of this, the absolute configurations of the cyclopropanes obtained from nitrile (R)-10 and phosphonate (R)-11 was assigned to be (1S,2S)-13 and (1S,2S)-14, respectively. The cyclopropanes obtained from nitrile (S)-10 and phosphonate (S)-11 must be (1R,2R)-14 and (1*R*,2*R*)-15 isomers.

In summary, our studies have clearly demonstrated the potential of a synthetic strategy that employs various enantioenriched γ -hydroxy- α , β -unsaturated compounds for efficient enantiospecific synthesis of substituted cyclopropanes bearing the same electron-withdrawing group. We believe that broad access to highly enantioenriched starting materials of this type will be useful in the synthesis of a wide range of structurally and biologically interesting substituted cyclopropanes.

NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker DPX 250 instrument at 250.13 MHz for ¹H and 62.9 MHz for ¹³C and 101.3 MHz for ³¹P NMR, respectively, using tetramethylsilane as internal and 85% H₃PO₄ as external standard. The multiplicities of carbons were determined by DEPT experiments. IR spectra were measured on a Specord M80 (Zeiss) instrument. Gas chromatographic analyses were obtained on a Hewlett-Packard 5890 II instrument equipped with γ -Dex 225 column. Elemental analyses were performed on a Perkin-Elmer PE 2400 analyzer.

Alcohols 6, 7, and 8; General Procedure

A corresponding olefin 1, 2, or 3 (5.0 mmol) was added to a stirred suspension of 10% Pd/C in EtOH (5 mL). The stirring was continued under H_2 atmosphere for 3 h. Then, the catalyst was filtered off

and the filtrate was concentrated under vacuum to give the crude product, which was used in the next step.

Ethyl 4-Hydroxyoctanoate (6)

Yield; 95%; colorless oil.

IR (film): 1748 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.87 (t, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.22 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3 H, CH₃CH₂O), 1.27–1.40 (m, 4 H, 2 × CH₂), 1.45–1.70 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 1.80–2.04 (m, 3 H, CH₂, OH), 2.25 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, CH₃), 4.10 (q, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂O), 4.15–4.26 (m, 1 H, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 13.87 (CH₃), 14.08 (CH₃CH₂O), 22.12 (CH₂), 23.89 (CH₂), 28.15 (CH₂), 29.00 (CH₂), 32.69 (CH₂), 60.22 (CH₃CH₂O), 69.40 (CH), 172.93 (C=O),

4-Hydroxyoctanenitrile (7)¹¹

Yield: 95%; colorless oil.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.22–1.48 (m, 6 H, 3 × CH₂), 1.67–1.80 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 2.00 (br s, 1 H, OH), 2.48 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, CH₂), 3.63–3.74 (m, 1 H, CH).

Diethyl 3-(Hydroxy)heptanephosphonate (8)

Yield: 96%; pale-yellow oil.

IR (film): 1224, 1032 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 (t, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.33 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 6 H, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 1.57–1.76 (m, 4 H, 2 × CH₂), 1.79–1.92 (m, 3 H, CH₂, OH), 4.18 (dq, ${}^{3}J_{\text{H,H}} = {}^{3}J_{\text{P,H}} = 7.0$ Hz, 4 H, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 4.20–4.29 (m, 1 H, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 12.94 (CH₃), 15.97 (d, ³ $J_{C,P}$ = 6.0 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 20.34 (d, ¹ $J_{C,P}$ = 144.7 Hz, PCH₂), 21.41 (CH₂), 23.86 (CH₂), 26.57 (CH₂), 30.58 (CH), 33.61 (d, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 3.9 Hz, CH₂), 62.78 (d, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 7.0 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 71.08 (d, ³ $J_{C,P}$ = 17.2 Hz, CH).

³¹P NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 31.21.

Phosphates 9, 10, and 11; General Procedure

To a solution of a corresponding alcohol **6**, **8**, or **9** (3 mmol) in CH_2Cl_2 (10 mL) were added Et_3N (0.63 mL, 4.5 mmol) and diethyl chlorophosphite (0.64 g, 4.2 mmol) at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at r.t. Then 2 M N_2O_4 in CH_2Cl_2 (2.1 mL, 9 mmol) was added at 0 °C. The stirring was continued for 20 h at r.t. Et_2O (10 mL) was added, the solid formed was collected by filtration, and the filtrate was evaporated. The residue was purified by column chromatography (eluent: $CHCl_3$ -acetone 90:10).

Ethyl 4-(Diethoxyphosphoryloxy)octanoate (9)

Yield: 88%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.30$ (CHCl₃-acetone, 90:10).

IR (film): 1764, 1254, 1024 cm⁻¹

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 (t, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.26 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3 H, CH₃CH₂O), 1.34 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 6 H, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 1.30–1.40 (m, 4 H, 2 × CH₂), 1.48–1.70 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 1.80–2.16 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 2.45 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2 H, CH₂), 4.11 (dq, ${}^{3}J_{P,H} = {}^{3}J_{H,H} = 7.2$ Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂OP), 4.12 (dq, ${}^{3}J_{P,H} = {}^{3}J_{H,H} = 7.2$ Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂OP), 4.13 (q, ${}^{3}J_{H,H} = 7.0$ Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂O), 4.34–4.46 (m, 1 H, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 13.74 (CH₃), 14.02 (CH₃CH₂O), 15.90 (CH₃CH₂OP), 16.01 (CH₃CH₂OP), 22.34 (CH₂), 26.80 (CH₂), 29.62 (CH₂), 29.86 (d, ${}^{3}J_{P,C}$ = 4.9 Hz, CH₂), 34.63 (d, ${}^{3}J_{P,C}$ = 3.7 Hz, CH₂), 60.22 (CH₃CH₂O), 63.41 (d, ${}^{2}J_{P,C}$ = 6.0 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 78.40 (d, ${}^{2}J_{P,C}$ = 6.2 Hz, CH), 172.93 (C=O).

³¹P NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = -1.18$.

Anal. Calcd for $C_{14}H_{29}O_6P$: C, 51.84; H, 9.01. Found: C, 51.94; H, 9.05.

4-(Diethoxyphosphoryloxy)octanenitrile (10)

Yield: 85%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.33$ (CHCl₃-acetone, 90:10). IR (film): 2225 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = 0.92$ (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.35 (dt, J = 7.0 Hz, ⁴ $J_{P,H} = 0.50$ Hz, 6 H, $2 \times CH_3CH_2OP$), 1.36–1.48 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 1.54–1.75 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 1.91–2.03 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 2.51 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2 H, CH₂), 4.12 (dq, ³ $J_{P,H} = 7.2$ Hz, ³ $J_{H,H} = 7.0$ Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂OP), 4.14 (dq, ³ $J_{P,H} = 7.2$ Hz, ³ $J_{H,H} = 7.0$ Hz, 2 H, CH₃CH₂OP), 4.37–4.45 (m, 1 H, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 13.23 (CH₃), 13.84 (CH₂), 16.10 (d, ³*J*_{C,P} = 6.8 Hz, 2×CH₃CH₂OP), 22.39 (CH₂), 26.86 (CH₂), 30.91 (d, ³*J*_{C,P} = 4.8 Hz, CH), 34.59 (d, ³*J*_{C,P} = 3.2 Hz, CH₂), 63.92 (d, ²*J*_{C,P} = 7.0 Hz, 2×CH₃CH₂OP), 77.34 (CH₂), 119.30 (CN).

³¹P NMR (CDCl₃): δ = -1.20.

Anal. Calcd for $C_8H_{15}NO$: C, 68.04; H, 10.71; N, 11.25. Found: C, 68.24; H, 10.66; N, 11.29.

Diethyl 3-(Diethoxyphosphoryloxyheptanephosphonate (11)

Yield: 82%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.15$ (CHCl₃-acetone, 80:20).

IR (film): 1242, 1032 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.33 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 6 H, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 1.34 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 6 H, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 1.57–1.70 (m, 4 H, 2 × CH₂), 1.79–1.92 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 4.16 (dq, ${}^{3}J_{\rm H,H} = {}^{3}J_{\rm P,H} = 7.0$ Hz, 8 H, 4 × CH₃CH₂OP), 4.34–4.42 (m, 1 H, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 12.94 (CH₃), 15.11 (d, ³ $J_{C,P}$ = 6.7 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 15.40 (d, ³ $J_{C,P}$ = 6.0 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 20.16 (d, ¹ $J_{C,P}$ = 143.2 Hz, PCH₂), 21.48 (CH₂), 23.48 (CH₂), 26.83 (CH₂), 30.58 (CH), 33.72 (d, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 3.80 Hz, CH₂), 60.83 (d, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 6.5 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 62.78 (d, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 5.8 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 78.19 (dd, ³ $J_{C,P}$ = 18.5 Hz, ² $J_{C,P}$ = 6.30 Hz, PCH).

³¹P NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 32.30, -1.20.

Anal. Calcd for $C_{15}H_{34}O_7P_2$: C, 46.39; H, 8.82. Found: C, 46.17; H, 8.78.

Cyclopropanes 12, 13, and 14; General Procedure

To a suspension of NaH (0.072g, 3 mmol) in THF (10 mL) was added the ester **9**, **10**, or **11** (3 mmol) at r.t. and the mixture was stirred at reflux for 5 h. H_2O (5 mL) was added and THF was evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with Et_2O (3 × 10 mL) and dried (MgSO₄). Evaporation of the solvent afforded crude product, which was purified by column chromatography.

Ethyl trans-n-Butylcyclopropanecarboxylate (12)⁷

Yield: 75%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.63$ (CHCl₃).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = 0.68$ (ddd, ³*J* = 9.7 Hz, ³*J* = 5.7 Hz, ²*J* = 4.0 Hz, 1 H, CHH), 0.89 (t, ³*J* = 6.7 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 1.11–1.17 (m, 1 H, CHH), 1.26 (t, ³*J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, CH₃CH₂O), 1.30–1.38 (m, 8 H, CH, CH, 3 × CH₂), 4.11 (q, ³*J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, CH₂O).

(1S, 2S)-12

 $[\alpha]_{D}^{20}$ +72.2 (*c* = 1.00, CHCl₃).

(1R, 2R)-12

 $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -64.7 (*c* = 1.00, CHCl₃).

trans-2-n-Butylcyclopropanenitrile (13)

Yield: 72%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.38$ (CHCl₃).

IR (film): 2225 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 0.87–1.14 (m, 5 H, CH₃, CH₂), 1.24–1.54 (m, 8 H, $3 \times$ CH₂, $2 \times$ CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 13.23 (s, CH₃), 17.64 (CH₂), 22.64 (CH₂), 25.28 (CH₂), 27.00 (CH₂), 29.14 (CH), 31.45 (CH), 118.11 (CN).

Anal. Calcd for C₈H₁₃N: C, 77.99; H, 10.64. Found: C, 77.71; H, 10.60.

(15,25)-13 $[\alpha]_{D}^{20}$ +58.4 (c = 1.05, CHCl₃).

(1R,2R)-13 $[\alpha]_D^{20}$ -52.9 (c = 1.05, CHCl₃).

Diethyl trans-2-n-Butylcyclopropanephosphonate (14)

Yield: 70%; colorless oil; $R_f = 0.28$ (CHCl₃-acetone, 90:10).

IR (film): 1224, 1048 cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = 0.89-1.18$ (m, 5 H, CH₃, CH₂), 1.21 (dt, J = 7.2 Hz, ⁴ $J_{P,H} = 0.5$ Hz, 6 H, $2 \times CH_3CH_2OP$), 1.30–1.38 (m, 8 H, $3 \times CH_2$, $2 \times CH$), 4.19 (dq, ³ $J_{H,H} = {}^{3}J_{P,H} = 7.2$ Hz, 4 H, $2 \times CH_3CH_2OP$).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 13.23 (CH₃), 16.10 (d, ${}^{3}J_{C,P}$ = 6.5 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP), 17.64 (d, ${}^{2}J_{P,C}$ = 10.0 Hz, CH₂), 21.84 (CH₂), 22.64 (CH₂), 25.28 (CH₂), 27.00 (CH₂), 29.14 (d, ${}^{2}J_{P,C}$ = 17.1 Hz, CH), 31.45 (d, ${}^{1}J_{P,C}$ = 141.2 Hz, PCH), 62.92 (d, ${}^{2}J_{C,P}$ = 7.1 Hz, 2 × CH₃CH₂OP).

³¹P NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 25.18.

Anal. Calcd for $C_{11}H_{23}O_3P$: C, 56.39; H, 9.90. Found: C, 56.27; H, 9.97.

(1S, 2S)-14

 $[\alpha]_{D}^{20}$ +56.4 (*c* = 1.20, CHCl₃).

(1R, 2R)-14

 $[\alpha]_{D}^{20}$ –50.1 (*c* = 1.20, CHCl₃).

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