

Total Synthesis of Siphonazoles by the
Use of a Conjunctive Oxazole Building
Block

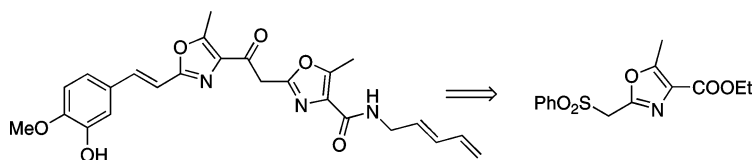
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ABSTRACT



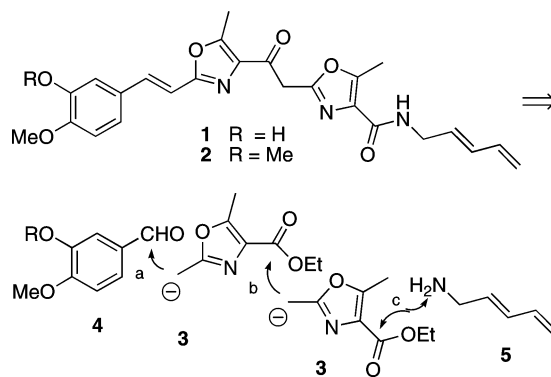
The preparation of 4-carbomethoxy-5-methyl-2-(phenylsulfonyl)methyloxazole and its use in the elaboration of more complex oxazoles are described. A total synthesis of the unique natural products, siphonazoles A and B, illustrates an application of the new building block.

Siphonazole, **1**, and its methylated congener, **2** (Scheme 1), are structurally novel natural products isolated from a Gram-negative filamentous gliding bacterium of the *Herpetosiphon* genus.¹ Their uniqueness derives from the fact that they incorporate a pair of oxazole subunits connected by a two-carbon tether. As of yet, no information is available concerning the bioactivity of **1–2**, which we propose to distinguish with the names siphonazole A, **1**, and siphonazole B, **2**.

The unusual structure of siphonazoles has not escaped the attention of the synthetic community, and efforts in this field have recently culminated in Moody's landmark syntheses of **1–2**.² This successful route to the target molecules demonstrates yet another application of elegant oxazole-forming processes, which rely on the reaction of a ketocarbenoid with an amide³ or a nitrile.⁴ On the other hand, siphonazoles provide ample opportunity for further methodology development. To illustrate (Scheme 1), an alternative avenue could be envisioned based on the iterative use of

oxazole nucleophile **3**. This synthon would enable both the olefination of aldehyde **4** (bond-forming step *a*), resulting in formation of a 1,2-diarylethylene motif and the condensation with an ester, yielding a (2-oxazolyl)methyl ketone (step *b*). The product of C–C bond-forming steps *a* and *b* would

Scheme 1. Structure and Retrosynthetic Disconnection of Siphonazoles A and B



then be advanced to the ultimate **1** or **2** by condensation with amine **5** (step *c*).

(1) Nett, M.; Erol, Ö.; Kehrhaus, S.; Köck, M.; Krick, A.; Eguereva, E.; Neu, E.; König, G. M. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2006**, *45*, 3863.

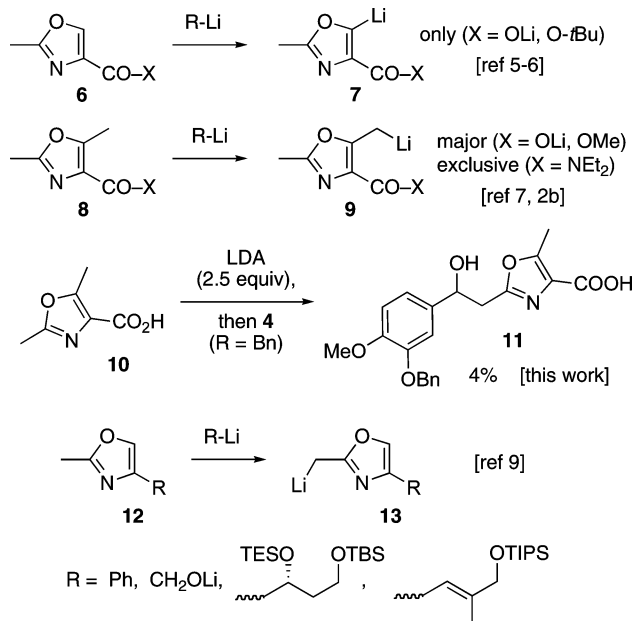
(2) (a) Linder, J.; Moody, C. J. *Chem. Commun.* **2007**, 1508. (b) Linder, J.; Blake, A. J.; Moody, C. J. *Org. Biomol. Chem.* **2008**, *6*, 3908.

(3) Davies, J. R.; Kane, P. D.; Moody, C. J. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **2004**, *60*, 3967. See refs 2 for a thorough bibliography.

(4) Connell, R. D.; Tebbe, M.; Helquist, P.; Åkermark, B. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1991**, *32*, 17. See also refs 2.

Precedent foreshadowed numerous difficulties with the strategy depicted in Scheme 1. Briefly, the oxazole C-4 carboxy substituent opposes the formation of anion **3**. As shown in Scheme 2, metalation of 2-methyloxazole-4-

Scheme 2. Problematic Behavior of Oxazole-4-carboxylic Acid Derivatives



carboxylic acid⁵ or the corresponding *tert*-butyl ester⁶ (**6**) occurs exclusively at the unsubstituted C-4 ring position (**7**). Deprotonation of 2,4-dimethyloxazole-4-carboxylic acid or ester (**8**) takes place preferentially (ca. 2:1) at the C-4 methyl group (**9**),^{7,2b} while the corresponding diethylamide is metalated exclusively there.⁷ Finally, and in accord with Moody,^{2b} we found that deprotonation of **10**, followed by capture of the intermediate organometallic species with aldehyde **4**, resulted in a complex mixture of products from which adduct **11** was isolated in 4% yield.⁸ The behavior of 2-methyloxazole-4-carboxylic acid derivatives thus deviates from that of analogues lacking the 4-carboxy group. The latter, e.g., **12**, are smoothly deprotonated at the C-2 Me group, and the ensuing anions **13** perform well in nucleophilic processes, including olefination reactions.⁹

(5) (a) Meyers, A. I.; Lawson, J. P. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1981**, 22, 3163. (b) Meyers, A. I.; Lawson, J. P.; Walker, D. G.; Lindermann, R. J. *J. Org. Chem.* **1986**, 51, 5111.

(6) (a) Nagao, Y.; Yamada, S.; Fujita, E. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1983**, 24, 2287. (b) Nagao, Y.; Yamada, S.; Fujita, E. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1983**, 24, 2291.

(7) Cornwall, P. Dell, C. P. Knight, D. W. *J. Chem. Soc., Perkin Trans. I* **1991**, 2417. These authors report that under particular conditions it is possible to generate a 1:1 mixture C-2 and C-4 lithiomethyl derivatives of the oxazole 4-carboxylic acid.

(8) These difficulties may be ascribed to the unfavorable positioning of the 4-COOR substituent: the 5-COOR isomer is smoothly deprotonated at the C-2 Me group (ref 7), arguably because of good mesomeric stabilization of the resulting anion. In a later step of the synthesis of **1** and **2** (ref 2), Moody bypassed the problem by employing an organozinc reagent prepared from the 2-(iodomethyl) analogue of oxazole **8**.

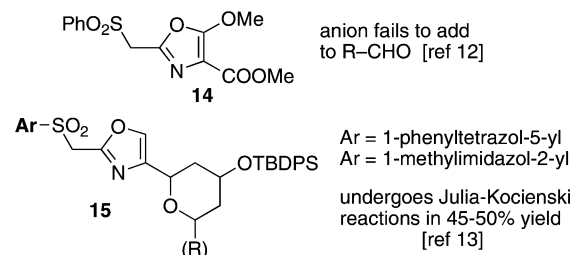
(9) Evans, D. A.; Cee, V. J.; Smith, T. E.; Santiago, K. *J. Org. Lett.* **1999**, 1, 87.

In principle, the foregoing ills could be cured by activating the C-2 Me with an appropriate anion-stabilizing unit. A sulfonyl group would be a logical choice, given that the acylation of a 2-(arylsulfonyl)methyl oxazole, in a fashion reminiscent of step *b* in Scheme 1, finds precedent in the work of Fujita,⁶ and that a sulfonyl group should permit the execution of step *a* in a Julia¹⁰ mode.

In practice, such a remedy creates a new set of problems.

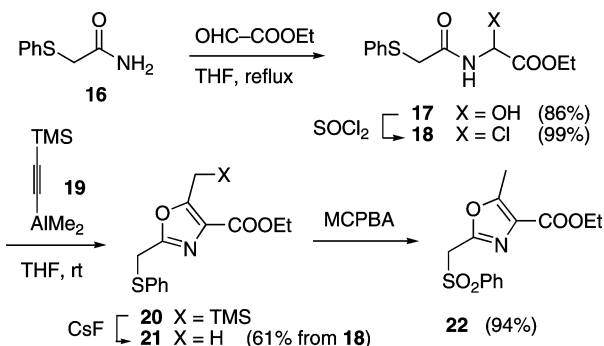
The exiguous volume of literature on the chemistry of 2-(sulfonyl)methyloxazole-4-carboxylates¹¹ suggests that the anions of these species are exceedingly poor nucleophiles. To wit, the anion of **14** (Scheme 3) fails to add to

Scheme 3. Problematic Behavior of 2-(Sulfonyl)methyloxazole-4-carboxylic Acid Derivatives



aldehydes,¹² preventing the occurrence of Julia reactions. Once again, the peculiar behavior of these compounds is attributable to the effect of the 4-COOR functionality in that analogues lacking a 4-carbonyl group, e.g., **15**, do participate in Julia-type processes,¹³ though not very efficiently. Indeed, Wittig technology is superior for olefination reactions involving 2-methyloxazole donors.¹²⁻¹⁴ Clearly, in order to reach **1-2** by the intended route, it was necessary to circumvent the unfavorable reactivity profile of 2-(sulfonyl)methyloxazole-4-carboxylates.

Scheme 4. Preparation of Building Block **22**

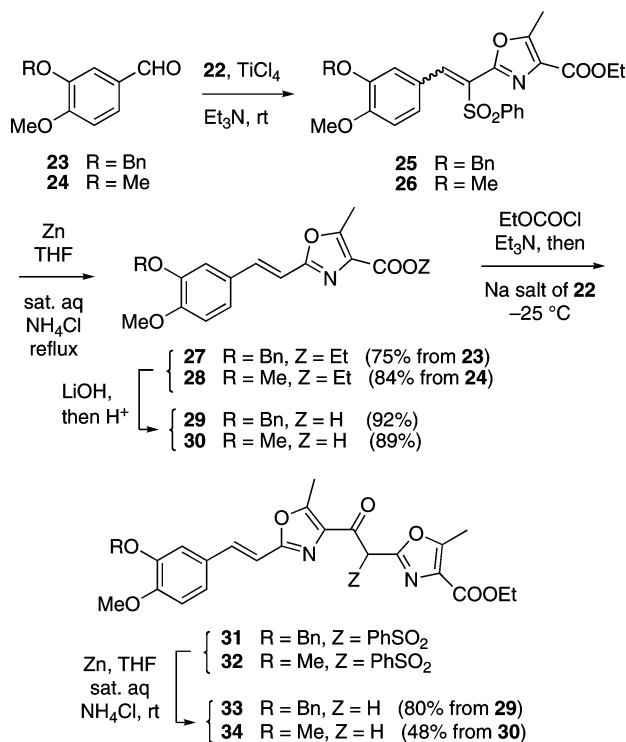


The first goal of this study was oxazole conjunctive agent **22** (Scheme 4). The synthesis of this material relied on an oxazole-forming reaction developed in this laboratory.¹⁵ Accordingly, addition of 2-(phenylthio)acetamide **16** to ethyl

glyoxylate provided **17**, which was then converted into chloride **18** in excellent yield. The action of alkynylaluminum reagent **19** on **18** resulted in formation of an alkynylglycinate intermediate, which is isolable, but that in the present case was more conveniently allowed to cyclize in situ to oxazole **20**. The desired **22**, a white solid of mp 154–155 °C, emerged upon desilylation and *m*-CPBA oxidation of **20**.

Both **21** and **22** underwent facile deprotonation of the activated C-2 substituent upon exposure to LDA (**21**) or NaH (**22**).¹⁶ While the anion of **21** added to aldehydes to form the anticipated adducts in modest yield,¹⁷ that of sulfone **22** failed to undergo the same reaction. This is in accord with the observations of Hoffmann.¹² Fortunately, it transpired that the combination of TiCl₄ and Et₃N promotes a smooth Knoevenagel-type condensation of **22** with aldehydes, leading to alkylidene derivatives in excellent yield, albeit as mixtures of geometric isomers. This is exemplified in Scheme 5 by the conversion of aldehydes **23** and **24** into olefinic

Scheme 5. Preparation of Key Intermediates **29** and **30**



sulfones **25** (1:5 mixture of *E*- and *Z*-isomers) and **26** (4:5 mixture of *E*- and *Z*-isomers), respectively. These conditions are reminiscent of the Masamune–Roush variant of the Wadsworth–Emmons olefination reaction.¹⁸ However, we are unable to find literature precedent for the application of a similar protocol in the Knoevenagel-like condensation of sulfones with aldehydes. The closest recorded example involves the reaction of an activated sulfone with PhCHO in the presence of piperidine.¹⁹ With less reactive sulfones, bases such as BuLi,²⁰ LiHMDS,²¹ NaH,²² tBuOK,²³ or NaOH²⁴ are necessary, though in one case, the weaker base, TBAF,²⁵ did promote condensation in modest yield.

A potential drawback of the above process is that the release of the sulfonyl group from the olefinic products may be difficult. However, such a concern proved to be unfounded: efficient reduction of **25**–**26** to olefins **27**–**28** was readily achieved by treatment with Zn and aqueous saturated NH₄Cl solution in THF. This technique for the desulfonylation of olefinic sulfones such as **25**–**26** appears to be undocumented. When the reaction was carried out at room temperature for 30 min, the emerging **27**–**28** were obtained as mixtures of *E*- and *Z*-isomers, but conduct of the same step in refluxing THF for 6 h afforded exclusively (within the limits of 300 MHz ¹H NMR spectroscopy) the *E*-isomer of the products. The chemistry of Scheme 5 had thus resolved all the reactivity issues outlined earlier.

The weak nucleophilicity of the anion of **22** precluded a direct condensation with esters **27**–**28**. Therefore, the corresponding carboxylic acids **29**–**30**, prepared by the customary LiOH saponification of the esters, were activated with EtOCOCI/Et₃N, and the resulting mixed anhydrides were intercepted in situ with sodiated **22**, which had been generated separately by deprotonation of the parent compound with NaH. The ensuing Fujita-like reaction⁶ resulted in the formation of α-sulfonyl ketones **31**–**32**, which existed as mixtures of keto (shown) and enol tautomers in a ratio that appeared to be a function of solvent, moisture content, time and pH. Inferior results were obtained in this step when the acids were activated as the corresponding acyl chlorides (SOCl₂) or imidazole derivatives (CDI).²⁶ Desulfonylation of **31**–**32** was once again best carried out by treatment with

(10) (a) Julia, M.; Paris, J.-M. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1973**, *14*, 4833 Reviews. (b) Kelly, S. E. Alkene Synthesis. In *Comprehensive Organic Synthesis*; Trost, B. M., Fleming, I., Eds.; Pergamon Press: Oxford, UK, 1991; Vol. 1, pp 729–817. (c) Blakemore, P. R. *J. Chem. Soc., Perkin Trans. 1* **2002**, 2563.

(11) Comprehensive bibliography beyond refs 6 and 12: (a) Fujita, E. *Heterocycles* **1984**, *21*, 41. (b) Yokoyama, M.; Menjo, Y.; Ubukata, M.; Irie, M.; Watanabe, M.; Togo, H. *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.* **1994**, *67*, 2219. (c) White, J. D.; Kranemann, C. L.; Kuntiyong, P. *Org. Synth.* **2003**, *79*, 244. In addition, the following patents describe the preparation of some 2-(arylsulfonyl)methylloxazole-4-carboxylic esters: (d) Jpn. Kokai Tokkyo Koho (1984) JP 59108772 A 19840623 Showa (Taiho Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.), CAN 101:171238. (e) Dehmlow, H.; Kuhn, B.; Masciadri, R.; Panday, N.; Ratni, H.; Wright, M. B. U.S. Pat. Appl. Pub. (2005), US 2005215577 A1 20050929, CAN 143:347051.

(12) (a) Wolbers, P.; Misske, A. M.; Hoffmann, H. M. R. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1999**, *40*, 4527. (b) Wolbers, P.; Misske, A. M.; Hoffmann, H. M. R. *Synlett* **1999**, 1808.

(13) Williams, D. R.; Clark, M. P. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1999**, *40*, 2291.

(14) Paterson, I.; Arnott, E. A. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1998**, *39*, 7185.

(15) (a) Coqueron, P. Y.; Didier, C.; Ciufolini, M. A. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed.* **2003**, *42*, 1411. See also: (b) Sano, S.; Shimizu, H.; Kim, K. Lee, W. S. Shiro, M. Nagao, Y. *Chem. Pharm. Bull.* **2006**, *54*, 196. Reference a above contains an extensive bibliography of oxazole-forming reactions. Subsequent representative examples of oxazole construction via the cyclization of *N*-propargylamide intermediates. (c) Wipf, P.; Aoyama, Y.; Benedum, T. E. *Org. Lett.* **2004**, *6*, 3593. (d) Hashmi, A. S. K. Weyrauch, J. P. Frey, W. Bats, J. W. *Org. Lett.* **2004**, *6*, 4391. (e) Milton, M. D. Inada, Y. Nishibayashi, Y. Uemura, S. *Chem. Commun.* **2004**, 2712. (f) Hashmi, A. S. K. Rudolph, M. Schymura, S. Visus, J. Frey, W. *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* **2006**, 4905. (g) Kang, J.-E. Kim, H.-B. Lee, J.-W. Shin, S. *Org. Lett.* **2006**, *8*, 3537. (h) Merkul, E. Grotkopp, O. Müller, T. J. *Synthesis* **2009**, 502. It is important to note that among these methods only the chemistry of refs a and b permits access to the 2,5-dialkylloxazole-4-carboxylate series.

(16) The deprotonation of **22** with NaH is in accord with ref 6.

(17) These results shall be detailed in a forthcoming full paper.

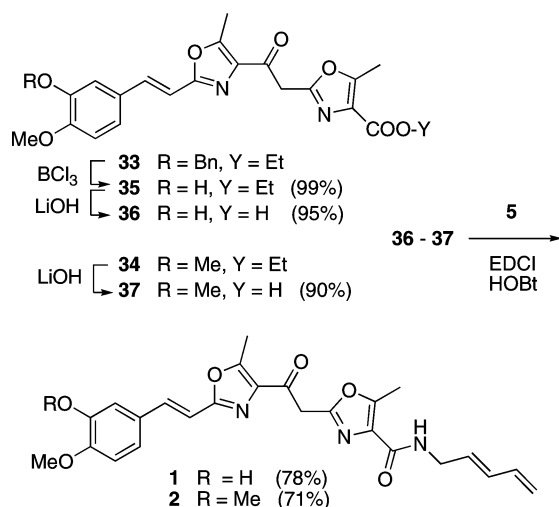
(18) Blanchette, M. A.; Choy, W.; Davis, J. T.; Esserfeld, A. P.; Masamune, S.; Roush, W. R.; Sakai, T. *Tetrahedron Lett.* **1984**, 2183.

(19) Nikolae, A.; Florea, S.; Rudolf, W.-D.; Perjessy, A. *Rev. Chim.* **2005**, *56*, 524; CAN 144:412344.

Zn/NH₄Cl. Contrary to the case of **25–26**, the desulfonylation of α -sulfonyl ketones by this method finds precedent in the work of Holton.²⁷ Reductants like Na/Hg amalgam or SmI₂ performed poorly in the present case. Ketones **33–34** and derivatives thereof, including the ultimate **1–2**, existed in equilibrium with the relative enols, the proportion of which once again varied as a function of experimental parameters (solvent, temperature, etc.).

The synthesis of siphonazoles was completed as delineated in Scheme 6. Compound **33** was debenzylated (BCl₃) to

Scheme 6. Total Synthesis of Siphonazoles A and B



afford ester **35**. The latter as well as its congener **34** underwent saponification to the corresponding acids, **36** and **37**, which combined with dienic amine **5**^{2,28} under the

(20) (a) Ager, D. J. *Chem. Commun.* **1984**, 486. (b) Ager, D. J. *J. Chem. Soc., Perkin Trans. 1* **1986**, 183. (c) Antelo, B.; Castedo, L.; Delamano, J.; Gomez, A.; Lopez, C.; Tojo, G. *J. Org. Chem.* **1996**, *61*, 1188. (d) Uno, H.; Inoue, K.; Inoue, T.; Fumoto, Y.; Ono, N. *Synthesis* **2001**, 2255. (e) Orita, A.; Ye, F.; Doumoto, A.; Otera, J. *Chem. Lett.* **2003**, 32, 104. (f) Ye, F.; Orita, A.; Doumoto, A.; Otera, J. *Tetrahedron* **2003**, *59*, 5635.

(21) (a) Orita, A.; Hasegawa, D.; Nakano, T.; Otera, J. *Chem.—Eur. J.* **2002**, *8*, 2000. (b) Babu, G.; Orita, A.; Otera, J. *Org. Lett.* **2005**, *7*, 4641.

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influence of EDCI to deliver fully synthetic **1** and **2**, respectively. The ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra of siphonazoles A and B thus obtained (mostly keto tautomers)²⁹ were identical to the published spectra of the natural products.^{1,2}

Synthetic siphonazoles were tested for antibiotic activity against representative pathogens. However, a standard paper disk assay (10 $\mu\text{g/mL}$) showed no activity against typical Gram-positive [methicillin-sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA)] or Gram-negative (*Escherichia coli*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*) bacteria, as well as fungi (*Candida albicans*).

In summary, a straightforward synthesis of siphonazoles has been completed by the iterative use of the oxazole conjunctive reagent **22**. Additional aspects of the chemistry of this reagent and of the synthesis of siphonazoles will be discussed in detail in a forthcoming full paper.

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Supporting Information Available: Experimental procedures and characterization data for new compounds, plus hardcopy NMR (¹H and ¹³C) spectra of several molecules. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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(25) Antelo, B.; Castedo, L.; Delamano, J.; Gomez, A.; Lopez, C.; Tojo, G. *J. Org. Chem.* **1996**, *61*, 1188.

(26) (a) Staab, H. A. *Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. Engl.* **1962**, *1*, 351 Review. (b) Armstrong, A.; Li, W. N. N'-Carbonyldiimidazole. In *e-EROS Encyclopedia of Reagents for Organic Synthesis*; Wiley: New York, 2006. <http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/eros/articles/rc024/frame.html>; DOI, 10.1002/047084289X.rc024.pub2.

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(29) The enol tautomer of **1–2** was recognizable from a characteristic ¹³C signal at 85 ppm. See the spectra provided in the Supporting Information.