

## Total Synthesis of Diazaquinomycin A

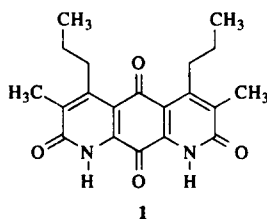
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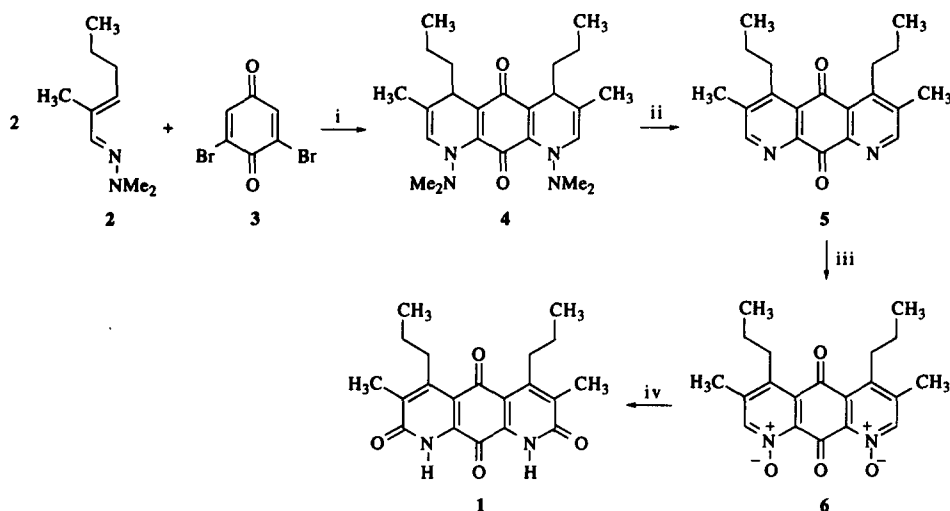
**Abstract.** Two concise total syntheses of the diazaanthraquinone antibiotic diazaquinomycin A are reported. The first route features a double hetero Diels-Alder reaction between 2,6-dibromobenzoquinone and 2-methyl-2-hexenal dimethylhydrazone, aromatization by a novel, one-pot *N*-oxidation/elimination procedure with percarbamide in trifluoroacetic acid, and double *N*-oxidation followed by rearrangement to a double lactam system. The key step of the second route is a hetero Diels-Alder reaction between 2-methyl-2-hexenal dimethylhydrazone and 3-methyl-4-propyl-1*H*-quinoline-2,5,8-trione.  
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Diazaquinomycin A (**1**) is a natural antibacterial agent, which was isolated by Omura's group<sup>1</sup> from a *Streptomyces* strain. Further research by the same group<sup>2</sup> suggested that its antibiotic activity was due to inhibition of thymidilate syntase. This mechanism, and its azaanthraquinone structure,<sup>3</sup> hinted at a potential antitumour activity. Unfortunately, this expectation was not fulfilled because of the very poor absorption of diazaquinomycin. Initial attempts to overcome this problem involved the preparation of semisynthetic derivatives,<sup>4</sup> and were followed by extensive research on the synthesis of diazaquinomycin analogues from our group.<sup>5</sup> To date, there is only one total synthesis of diazaquinomycin, with a double Knorr cyclization as the key step.<sup>6</sup>



Due to the symmetry of the target ring system, we envisaged that a double hetero Diels-Alder approach from 1-dimethylamino-1-azadienes<sup>7</sup> and a benzoquinone derivative would provide a concise approach to a 1,8-diaza-anthraquinone system, which would then be elaborated to give the double lactam. Accordingly, treatment of 2-methyl-2-hexenal dimethylhydrazone<sup>8</sup> with 2,6-dibromobenzoquinone<sup>9</sup> in the presence of triethylamine to trap the liberated hydrobromic acid afforded compound **4**. All attempts to aromatize compound **4** with concomitant double elimination of dimethylamine under literature conditions<sup>10</sup> were unsuccessful. We found, however, that

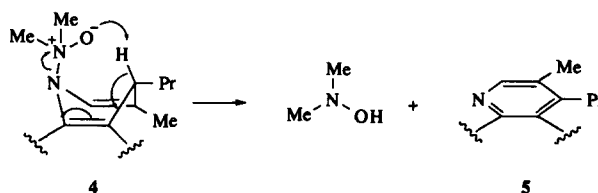
brief exposure to the hydrogen peroxide-urea adduct (percarbamide<sup>11</sup>) in trifluoroacetic acid afforded the 1,8-diazaanthraquinone **5** in 73 % yield (overall from **2**). Finally, compound **5** was transformed into the double *N*-oxide **6** with percarbamide in trifluoroacetic acid; rearrangement to the double lactam by treatment with tosyl chloride in acetonitrile-water afforded 30 % (overall from **5**) of diazaquinomycin A, which was identical to the natural product in all respects (Scheme 1).



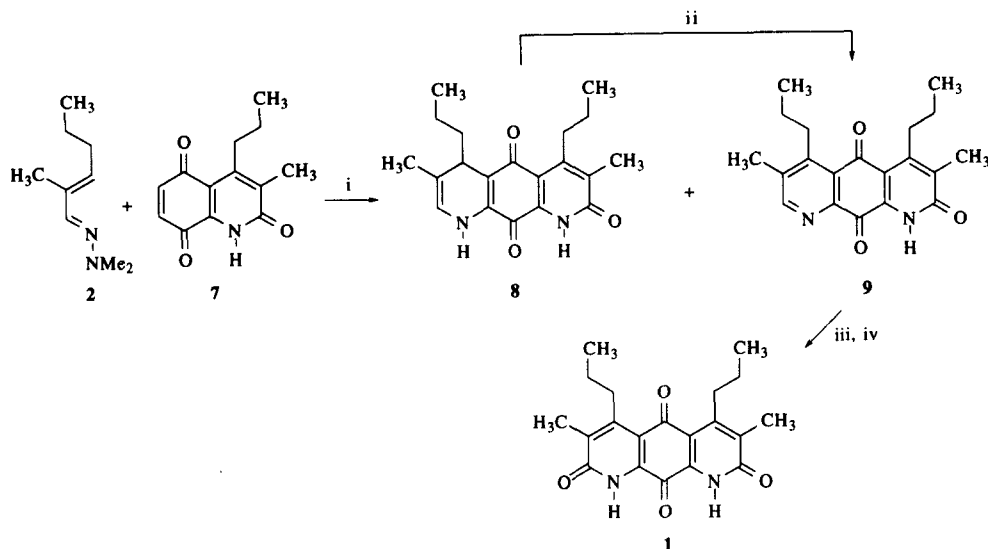
**Reagents and conditions:** i.  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ,  $\text{Et}_3\text{N}$ , r.t., 15 min. ii.  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ -urea, TFA, r.t., 10 min. iii.  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ -urea, TFA, r.t., 24 h. iv.  $\text{TsCl}$ ,  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$ - $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ,  $60^\circ\text{C}$ , 24 h.

Scheme 1

The novel aromatization of **4** to **5** is of some interest, due to the very mild conditions required and the good yield obtained. It can be rationalized as a double *N*-oxidation of both dimethylamino groups, followed by *in situ* aromatization through a vinylogous Cope mechanism:



An alternative route, also based on hetero Diels-Alder chemistry, is shown in Scheme 2. Quinone **7**, prepared from 2,5-dimethoxyaniline and *S*-*tert*butyl 2-methyl-3-oxohexanthioate by a known method,<sup>12</sup> was supported on silica gel<sup>13</sup> and treated with azadiene **2**, affording a mixture of the 5,8-dihydro-1,8-diazaanthraquinone **8** (46 %) and its aromatic derivative **9** (24 %). Aromatization of isolated **8** to **9** was performed in 63 % yield by stirring with a suspension of manganese dioxide in dichloromethane. Finally, compound **9** was transformed into diazaquinomycin A in 30 % overall yield by treatment with percarbamide in trifluoroacetic acid, followed again by tosyl chloride in acetonitrile-water (Scheme 2).



**Reagents and conditions:** i.  $\text{SiO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$ , r.t., 5 min. ii.  $\text{MnO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$ , r.t., 30 min. iii.  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ -urea, TFA, r.t., 24 h. iv.  $\text{TsCl}$ ,  $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$ - $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ,  $60^\circ\text{C}$ , 24 h.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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