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Dedicated to Professor P. J. Kocienski for the experience in allene chemistry we gained under his guidance at the University of Southampton.

Abstract: 2,3-Disubstituted oxepanes **3** and **4** were stereoselectively synthesized from methoxyallene (1) and iodide **2**. The *trans* stereochemistry of diol **3** was established by NMR studies of the bicyclic precursor **10**, while the *cis* stereochemistry of **4** was secured by using the highly diastereoselective reducing agent L-Selectride.

Key words: natural products, methoxyallene, Michael addition, oxepanes, toxins

Fused polycyclic ethers with *trans-syn-trans* stereochemistry are the common framework of various marine polyether compounds, including brevetoxins,¹ maitotoxin,² and ciguatoxins.³ Their unusual molecular architecture makes them challenging synthetic targets for organic chemists. We recently reported a new method for the synthesis of oxacycles using either methoxyallene^{4a} or furan^{4b,c} as starting material. In this paper, we report a full account of the methoxyallene approach, describing the stereoselective synthesis of *trans*- and *cis*-2,3-disubstituted oxepanes **3** and **4** following the retrosynthetic analysis depicted in Scheme 1.





trans-2,3-Disubstituted oxepane **3** was synthesized from propargyl alcohol (**6**) via methoxyallene (**1**) as detailed in Scheme 2.

Propargyl alcohol (6) was O-methylated with dimethyl sulfate giving 3-methoxyprop-1-yne (7).⁵ Isomerization of 7 with potassium *tert*-butoxide afforded methoxyallene (1) in high yield.⁶ Sequential metalation, alkylation, metalation and carboxylation of 1 afforded, after acidic work-

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Scheme 2 Reagents and conditions: (i) Me_2SO_4 , NaOH; (ii) *t*-BuOK (10%); (iii) *n*-BuLi/THF, -30 °C, **2**; (iv) *t*-BuLi/THF, -70 °C, 1 h, CO₂; 10% H_2SO_4 -Et₂O, 0 °C, 1 h; (v) TBAF/THF, r.t., 2 h; (vi) TMSOTF, Et₃SiH, CH₂Cl₂, r.t., 6 h; (vii) LAH, Et₂O, r.t.

up,⁷ butenolide **9** (78% from **1**). Removal of the TBS group of **9** with TBAF then gave the bicyclic compound **5** as a single isomer through an intramolecular Michael addition (63% yield). Finally, reduction of **5** with Et₃SiH (3.0 equiv) in the presence of TMSOTf (2.4 equiv)⁸ in CH₂Cl₂ gave compound **10** in 53% yield, presumably via oxonium ion intermediate **11** (Scheme 3; note that the stereochemical course of this reaction does not depend on whether the ring junction of **5** is *cis* or *trans*).



Scheme 3

The structure of **10** was determined from its ¹H and ¹³C NMR, NOE, NOESY, COSY and HMBC spectra (Figure 1).



Figure 1 NOE correlations for 10

The synthesis of *cis*-oxepane diol **4** was achieved using the highly diastereoselective L-Selectride reduction of ketone **13** (Scheme 4).

Bicyclic lactone **5** was opened using LiAlH_4 in the presence of $\text{BF}_3 \cdot \text{OEt}_2$ to afford a 91% yield of **11** as a mixture of diastereoisomeric diols (**3** and **4**). Selective protection of the primary alcohol of **11** afforded **12** in 86% yield, which was oxidized with tetrapropylammonium perruthenate (TPAP) to give ketone **13** in 95% yield. Reduction of **13** with L-Selectride afforded stereoselectively alcohol **14** (76% yield). The *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl (TBS) protecting group of **14** was removed by tetrabutylammonium fluoride (TBAF) to give finally the desired *cis*-diol **4** in 78% yield.

In conclusion, a new and efficient method for the stereoselective synthesis of *trans*- and *cis*-2,3-disubstituted oxepanes **3** and **4** from methoxyallene has been developed. Work is now in progress towards the enantioselective synthesis of highly substituted oxepanes, precursors of biologically active natural products.

IR spectra were recorded in a Perkin-Elmer 1640FT spectrometer. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AMX spectrometer at 400 and 100.61 MHz, respectively, using TMS as internal standard (chemical shifts in δ values, *J* in Hz). Mass spectrometry was carried out with a Hewlett Packard 5988A spectrometer. Flash chromatography (FC) was performed on silica gel (Merck 60, 230–400 mesh); analytical TLC was performed on plates precoated with silica gel (Merck 60 F254, 0.25 mm).

3-Methoxypropyne (7)

To a mixture of propargyl alcohol **6** (168 g, 174 mL, 2.99 mol) and H_2O (132 mL) was added a 50% aq solution of NaOH (330 g), and the mixture was stirred with a mechanical stirrer. The temperature was brought from 70 °C to which it had risen to 40 °C, and was kept below 60 °C during addition of dimethyl sulfate (225 g, 169 mL, 1.78 mol). After stirring at 50–60 °C for 2 h, distillation gave a product that came over at 61–62 °C, which was dried (CaCl₂) overnight. Finally, redistillation of this product at atmospheric pressure using a Dufton column and a cooled receiver afforded 166.4 g of **7** (79%); colorless oil; bp 60 °C/760 Torr.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 4.01 (2 H, s, CH₂), 3.31 (3 H, s, OCH₃), 2.35 (1 H, s, CH).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 79.2 (C), 74.3 (CH), 59.2 (CH₂), 57.0 (CH₃).

1-Methoxypropadiene (1)

t-BuOK (13.8 g, 0.118 mol) was added in one portion to propargyl ether **7** (83 g, 1.18 mol) in a 250 mL round-bottomed flask fitted with a double surface condenser and a mechanical stirrer. After heating in an oil bath at 70 °C for 3 h, the mixture was allowed to cool to r.t., the condenser and the mechanical stirrer were removed and the reaction flask was connected to a receiver cooled with liquid N₂. Vacuum distillation without heating afforded a colorless oil that was dried over KOH, kept in a refrigerator for 1 h, and then distilled under N₂, affording 64.8 g of **1** (78%); colorless oil; bp 50 °C/760 Torr.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 6.75 (1 H, t, *J* = 5.9 Hz, CH), 5.45 (2 H, d, *J* = 5.9 Hz, CH₂), 3.39 (3 H, s, OCH₃).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 201.8 (C), 122.8 (CH), 91.0 (CH₂), 55.7 (CH₃).

4-Dimethyl-tert-butylsiloxy-1-iodobutane (2)

A solution of *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl chloride (25 g, 0.166 mol) in MeCN (200 mL) was added to a solution of NaI (37.3 g, 0.249 mol) in THF (50 mL). The mixture was stirred for 7 days at r.t. in the dark, poured into hexane (200 mL), and the hexane layer was



Scheme 4 *Reagents and conditions*: (i) BF₃·OEt₂, LiAH₄, Et₂O, r.t.; (ii) TBSCl, DMF, imidazole, DMAP; (iii) TPAP, NMO, CH₂Cl₂; (iv) L-Selectride, THF, -78 °C; (v) TBAF/THF, r.t., 2 h.

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washed with NaHCO₃ solution containing a little Na₂S₂O₃ (100 mL). The aqueous and MeCN layers were separated and sequentially extracted with hexane (2 × 100 mL). The combined hexane layers were washed with brine (50 mL), dried (Na₂SO₄), and the solvent was removed. Vacuum distillation of the residue afforded 40 g of **2** (76%); bp 132–134 °C/15 Torr.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 3.61 (2 H, t, *J* = 6.2 Hz, CH₂-4), 3.20 (2 H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, CH₂-1), 1.88 (2 H, m, CH₂), 1.61 (2 H, m, CH₂), 0.87 (9 H, s, t-C₄H₉), 0.02 [6 H, s, (CH₃)₂Si].

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): $\delta = 61.9$ (C-4), 33.4 (C-2), 30.2 (C-3), 25.9 [C(CH₃)₃], 25.7 [C(CH₃)₃], 25.6 [C(CH₃)₃], 18.2 (C), 7 (C-1), -5.4 (CH₃Si).

LRMS: *m*/*z* (%) = 257 (100), 215 (94), 189 (14), 185 (62), 147 (27), 129 (19), 85 (15), 83 (23), 75 (35), 73 (21).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₀H₂₃IOSi: 314.0563; found: 314.0550.

3-Methoxy-7-tert-butyldimethylsiloxyhepta-1,2-diene (8)

n-BuLi (28.5 mL of a 2.6 M solution in hexane, 0.075 mol) was added at -25 °C to 1-methoxypropadiene (**1**; 5.4 g, 0.078 mol) in THF (30 mL). The mixture was stirred for 1 h at -25 °C and then cooled to -30 °C. Iodide **2** (18.03 g, 0.057 mol) was added to the mixture at this temperature, and after stirring for a further 4 h, the mixture was poured into a separating funnel containing sat. aq NaHCO₃ solution (33 mL) and hexane (66 mL). The organic layer was washed with H₂O (16 mL), brine (33 mL), and dried (Na₂SO₄). The solvent was removed, and the residue was filtered through basic alumina using 5% Et₃N in hexane as eluent, affording 9.5 g of **8** (97%); colorless oil.

IR (KBr): 2970, 2940, 2860, 1965, 1470, 1265, 1110, 840, 780 $\rm cm^{-1}.$

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 5.35 (2 H, d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, CH₂-1), 3.36 (3 H, s, OCH₃), 2.12–2.31 (2 H, m, CH₂-4), 1.46–1.66 (6 H, m), 0.86 (9 H, s, *t*-C₄H₉), 0.02 [6 H, s, (CH₃)Si].

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 199.5 (C), 135.2 (C), 89.8 (CH₂), 63.1 (CH₂), 56.0 (OCH₃), 32.5 (CH₂), 31.8 (CH₂), 26.1 [C(*C*H₃)₃], 23.1 (CH₂), 18.5 (C), -5.2 (CH₃Si).

5-[4-(*tert*-Butyldimethylsiloxy)butyl]-**5-**methoxy-**5***H*-furan-**2**one (**9**)

t-BuLi (6.9 mL of a 1.7 M solution in pentane, 11.7 mmol) was added to a solution of **8** (2.9 g, 11.3 mmol) in THF (15 mL) at -70 °C, and the mixture was stirred for 1 h. Dry CO₂ was then bubbled through it for 15 min, after which it was poured into a mixture of 10% H₂SO₄ (10%, 75 mL) and Et₂O (30 mL) at 0 °C. After stirring at this temperature for 1 h, the organic layer was separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with Et₂O (2 × 50 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine and dried (Na₂SO₄). The solvent was evaporated, and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel with 1:3 Et₂O–hexane as eluent, affording 1.9 g of **9** (80%); yellowish oil; R_f 0.65 (40% EtOAc–hexane).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 7.11 (1 H, d, *J* = 5.7 Hz, CH-4), 6.21 (1 H, d, *J* = 5.7 Hz, CH-3), 3.58 (2 H, t, *J* = 6.0 Hz, OCH₂), 3.20 (3 H, s, OCH₃), 1.38–1.93 (6 H, m), 0.86 (9 H, s, *t*-C₄H₉), 0.02 [6 H, s, (CH₃)₂Si].

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 169.9 (C=O), 153.4 (CH-4), 124.8 (CH-3), 111.2 (C), 62.6 (CH₂), 51.1 (OCH₃), 36.7 (CH₂), 32.5 (CH₂), 25.9 [C(CH₃)₃], 19.7 (CH₂), 18.9 (C), -5.3 (CH₃Si), -5.4 (CH₃Si).

LRMS: m/z (%) = 269 (38), 253 (25), 243 (20), 216 (18), 215 (100), 213 (11), 211 (11), 201 (14), 187 (21), 185 (10), 171 (35), 155 (14), 154 (12).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₅H₂₉O₄Si: 301.1835; found: 301.1845.

7-Methoxy-2,8-dioxabicyclo[5.3.0]decan-9-one (5)

TBAF (0.83 mL of 1.0 M in THF, 0.83 mmol) was added to a solution of furanone **9** (125 mg, 0.416 mmol) in THF (5 mL) and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 2.5 h. It was then poured into sat. aq NaHCO₃ solution (10 mL) and extracted with Et₂O (3×10 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with brine (10 mL), dried (Na₂SO₄), and the solvent was evaporated. The residue was chromatographed on silica gel with 1:2.5 Et₂O–hexane as eluent, affording 50 mg of **5** (63%); yellowish oil; R_f 0.52 (40% EtOAc–hexanes).

IR (KBr): 2960, 2880, 1780, 1470, 1310, 1220, 1120, 1100, 1000, 960, 905 $\rm cm^{-1}.$

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 4.17 (1 H, ddt, *J* = 12.2, 2.15, 1.79 Hz, CH-1), 3.91 (1 H, dd, *J* = 7.9, 2.0 Hz, CH_a-3), 3.37 (1 H, m, CH_b-3), 3.31 (3 H, s, OCH₃), 3.01 (1 H, dd, *J* = 18.7, 7.8 Hz, CH_a-10), 2.46 (1 H, dd, *J* = 18.7, 2.0 Hz, CH_b-10), 2.39 (1 H, dd, *J* = 14.7, 8.1 Hz, CH_a-6), 1.65–1.85 (4 H, m), 1.45 (1 H, m).

 ^{13}C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 174.6 (C=O), 114.5 (C-7), 84.4 (CH-1), 74.7 (CH₂), 50.0 (OCH₃), 36.6 (CH₂), 31.6 (CH₂), 30.3 (CH₂), 20.8 (CH₂).

LRMS: m/z (%) = 187 ([M⁺ + 1], 13), 186 ([M⁺], 16), 167 (11), 165 (14), 163 (13), 161 (10), 159 (10), 156 (14), 154 (52), 153 (100).

HRMS: *m*/*z* calcd for C₉H₁₅O₄: 187.0970; found: 187.0970.

2,8-Dioxabicyclo[5.3.0]decan-9-one (10)

TMSOTf (0.09 mL, 0.48 mmol) and Et₃SiH (0.09 mL, 0.597 mmol) were added dropwise to a solution of **7** (37 mg, 0.20 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (5 mL) at r.t., and the mixture was stirred for 6 h. H₂O (5 mL) and a few drops of pyridine were added, and the product was extracted with Et₂O (5 × 5 mL). The organic layer was washed with H₂O (2 × 5 mL) and dried (Na₂SO₄). The solvent was evaporated, and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel with 30–50% EtOAc–hexanes as eluent, affording 16 mg of **10** (52%); colorless oil; R_f 0.54 (60% EtOAc– hexanes).

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 4.20 (1 H, ddd, *J* = 10.7, 8.0, 5.7 Hz, CH-1), 4.09 (1 H, dt, *J* = 10.7, 8.0 Hz, CH-7), 3.90 (1 H, m, CH_a-3), 3.77 (1 H, m, CH_b-3), 2.74 (1 H, dd, *J* = 16.9, 7.8 Hz, CH_a-10), 2.59 (1 H, dd, *J* = 16.9, 10.5 Hz, CH_b-10), 2.34 (1 H, m, CH_a-6), 1.7–2.0 (4 H, m), 1.5–2.0 (1 H, m, CH_b-6).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 173.4 (C=O), 84.4 (H-7), 77.0 (H-1), 71.1 (CH₂-3), 36.5 (CH₂-10), 30.4 (CH₂-6), 28.2 (CH₂-4), 22.3 (CH₂-5). HRMS: *m*/*z* calcd for C₈H₁₂O₃: 156.0786; found: 156.0780.

trans-2-(2-Hydroxyethyl)-3-hydroxyoxepane (3)

To a solution of lactone **10** (0.028 g, 0.18 mmol) in anhyd Et₂O (3 mL) at 0 °C was added LiAlH₄ (0.033 g, 0.89 mmol) and the mixture was stirred at 0 °C to r.t. for 18 h. Excess of LiAlH₄ was destroyed by adding a few drops of H₂O at 0 °C. After filtration and extraction with EtOAc, the aqueous phase was saturated with NaCl and extracted with EtOAc. The combined organic phases were dried (Na₂SO₄). Filtration and evaporation of solvent afforded a residue, which was chromatographed on silica gel with EtOAc as eluent, affording 23 mg of diol **3** (81%); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 3.96 (1 H, q, *J* = 4.9 Hz, CH-3), 3.32–3.72 (2 H, m, CH₂), 3.63–3.52 (2 H, m, CH₂-7), 3.40–3.35 (1 H, m, CH-2), 2.03–1.90 (2 H, m, CH₂), 1.80–1.52 (6 H, m, CH₂-4, CH₂-5, CH₂-6). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 84.7 (H-2), 75.3 (H-3), 71.2 (CH₂-7), 60.7 (CH₂-2'), 36.3 (CH₂-1'), 35.8 (CH₂-4), 30.3 (CH₂-6), 20.5 (CH₂-5). HRMS: *m*/*z* calcd for C₈H₁₄O₂ [M - H₂O]: 142.0994; found: 142.0991.

cis- and trans-2-(2-Hydroxyethyl)-3-hydroxyoxepane (11)

To a solution of **5** (4.4 g, 23.5 mmol) in anhyd Et₂O (200 mL) at r.t. was added BF₃·OEt₂ (7 mL, 56.4 mmol) and the mixture was stirred for 1 h. It was then cooled to 0 °C before adding LiAlH₄ (8.9 g, 235 mmol). The end of the reaction was monitored by TLC analysis. At the end of the reaction, excess LiAlH₄ was carefully destroyed by adding a few drops of H₂O at 0 °C. After filtration and extraction with EtOAc, the aqueous phase was saturated with NaCl and extracted with EtOAc. The combined organic phases were dried (Na₂SO₄). Filtration and evaporation of solvent afforded a residue which was chromatographed on silica gel with EtOAc as eluent, giving 3.4 g of diol **11** (as an inseparable mixture of diols **3** and **4**); yield: 91%; colorless oil.

*cis- and trans-*2-(2-*tert*-Butyldimethylsilyloxyethyl)-3-hydroxy-oxepane (12)

To a solution of diol **11** (2.2 g 13.5 mmol) in DMF (80 mL) were added imidazole (1.8 g, 27 mmol), DMAP (catalytic amount) and TBSCl (2.2 g, 14.8 mmol). The mixture was stirred at r.t. overnight, quenched with aq NH₄Cl solution and extracted with Et_2O . The organic phase was washed with H₂O and brine. After drying (Na₂SO₄) and evaporation of solvent, the residue was chromatographed on silica gel using 20% EtOAc–hexane as eluent, to afford 3.2 g of diastereomeric alcohols **12** (86%); colorless oil.

2-(2-tert-Butyldimethylsilyloxyethyl)oxepane-3-one (13)

To a solution of alcohol **12** (4.79 g, 17.48 mmol) in anhyd CH₂Cl₂ (250 mL) at r.t. were added powdered molecular sieves (10.6 g), 4methylmorpholine *N*-oxide (NMO, 4.09 g, 34.96 mmol) and a catalytic amount of TPAP. The mixture was stirred at r.t. for 48 h, the solvent was removed by rotary evaporation, and the residue was chromatographed on silica gel using 15% EtOAc–hexane as eluent to afford 4.06 g of ketone **13** (95%); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 4.24–4.18 (1 H, ddt, *J* = 8.5, 4.8, 1.8 Hz, CH-2), 3.89–3.86 (1 H, dd, *J* = 8.8, 4.2 Hz, CH-4), 3.73–3.70 (2 H, dd, *J* = 6.8, 5.4 Hz, CH₂-2'), 3.32–3.25 (1 H, dt, *J* = 2.3, 9.1 Hz, CH-7), 2.94–2.87 (1 H, dt, *J* = 9.9, 2.6 Hz, CH-7), 2.40–2.35 (1 H, dq, *J* = 5.0, 1.9 Hz, CH-1'), 1.96–1.86 (3 H, m, CH-1', CH₂-6), 1.85–1.69 (2 H, m, CH₂-5), 0.87 (9 H, s, *t*-C₄H₉Si), 0.03 (6 H, s, CH₃Si).

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 274.1 (C=O), 84.0 (CH), 73.1 (CH₂), 58.5 (CH₂), 41.5 (CH₂), 36.0 (CH₂), 31.2 (CH₂), 25.9 [C(*C*H₃)₃Si], 23.8 (CH₂), 18.3 (CSi), -5.4 (CH₃Si).

HRMS: *m*/*z* calcd for C₁₄H₂₉O₃Si: 273.1886; found: 273.1894.

2-(2-tert-Butyldimethylsilyloxyethyl)-3-hydroxyoxepane (14)

To a solution of ketone **13** (0.03 g, 0.111 mmol) at -78 °C was added L-Selectride (0.278 mL of 1.0 M solution in THF, 0.278 mmol). At the end of the reaction (TLC control), aq sat. NH₄Cl solution (2 mL) was added and the mixture was stirred at r.t. for 30 min and extracted with EtOAc. After drying (Na₂SO₄) the extract and evaporation of the solvent, the residue was chromatographed on silica gel using 10% EtOAc–hexane to afford 23 g of alcohol **14** (76%); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 3.80–3.61 (6 H, m), 1.92–1.80 (2 H, m), 1.72–1.53 (6 H, m), 0.88 (9 H, s, *t*-C₄H₉Si), 0.04 [6 H, s, (CH₃)₂Si].

¹³C NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 76.0 (CH-2), 71.8 (CH-3), 69.3 (CH₂-7), 59.5 (CH₂-2'), 36.6 (CH₂-1'), 36.0 (CH₂-4), 30.1 (CH₂-6), 25.9 [C(CH₃)₃Si], 19.6 (CH₂-5), 18.2 (CSi), -5.4 [(CH₃)₂Si).

HRMS: m/z calcd for $C_{14}H_{31}O_3Si$: 275.2042; found: 275.2051.

cis-2-(2-Hydroxyethyl)-3-hydroxyoxepane (4)

TBAF (0.055 mL of a 1.0 M sln in THF, 0.055 mmol) was added to a solution of alcohol 14 (0.015g, 0.055 mmol) in THF (1 mL) and

the mixture was stirred at r.t. At the end of the reaction (TLC control), aq sat. solution of NaHCO₃ (3 mL) was added and the product was extracted with EtOAc. The aqueous phase was saturated with NaCl and extracted with EtOAc. The combined organic phases were dried (Na₂SO₄). Filtration and evaporation of solvent afforded a residue, which was chromatographed on silica gel with EtOAc as eluent, providing 8.7 mg of diol **4** (78%); colorless oil.

¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 3.82–3.65 (6 H, m), 2.49 (2 H, br s), 2.04–2.00 (4 H, m), 1.99–1.51 (4 H, m).

 $^{13}\mathrm{C}$ NMR (CDCl₃): δ = 77.9 (CH-2), 71.9 (CH-3), 69.3 (CH₂-7), 60.3 (CH₂-2'), 36.7 (CH₂-1'), 35.5 (CH₂-4), 29.8 (CH₂-6), 19.4 (CH₂-5).

HRMS: m/z calcd for C₈H₁₆O₃: 160.1099; found: 160.1107.

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