nuclei such as ¹⁵N and ²⁹Si where the Overhauser enhanced the signal is inverted and where an incomplete Overhauser effect can result in signal cancellation. One solution to this problem has been to suppress the nuclear Overhauser effect in ¹⁵N spectra; under such conditions the polarization transfer experiment would provide an enhancement factor K of ~ 10 , in addition to the benefits of faster spin-lattice relaxation.

The proposed polarization transfer experiment bears a superficial resemblance to another technique for sensitivity enhancement which also employs spin echoes and restores the focussed magnetization to the Z axis.¹⁵ This is the "driven equilibrium Fourier transform method" (DEFT). We have consequently adopted the code name INEPT (insensitive nuclei enhanced by polarization transfer).

Acknowledgments. This work was made possible by an equipment grant from the Science Research Council and a Research Studentship to G.A.M. Dr. Moniz kindly provided a copy of his manuscript⁴ prior to publication.

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Stereospecific Synthesis of (\pm) -Trisporol B, a Prohormone of Blakeslea Trispora, and a Facile Synthesis of (\pm) -Trisporic Acids

Sir:

Sexual differentiation in Mucoraceous fungi is mediated by a system of C_{18} apocarotenoid hormones based on the trisporic acids (e.g., 1) and congeners such as (9Z)-methyl trisporate B(2).¹ Extensive studies with plus and minus mating types of



B. trispora has led to the identification of certain prohormones² which are characteristic of the mating strain and are converted to a trisporic acid by the sexual partner. Trisporol B (3) is produced in very small amounts by minus cultures of this organism and has proven to be the most biologically active of the mating prohormones so far isolated.³ The chemical synthesis

of 3 and related members of the trisporic acid group is likely to be a key element in elucidating the reproductive process in fungi of the Mucorales, and we have therefore sought a practical, synthetic solution to the stereochemical and functional group problems posed by these regulatory substances.⁴

The requirement for 9Z stereochemistry in 3, coupled with the desirability of fashioning the corresponding olefinic link in the trisporic acid and esters in a geometrically defined manner, dictated an approach strategically different from that adopted in previous syntheses of methyl trisporates.⁵ First, a unit functionally equivalent to the C(8)-C(14) segment of 3 was prepared from ketal aldehyde 4, readily obtainable from ethyl levulinate.^{5a} Thus, 4 was treated with ethylidenetri-



phenylphosphorane (THF, -78 °C, 5 min), and the derived oxido ylide (n-BuLi, THF, 0 °C) was allowed to react with paraformaldehyde (1 h at 0 °C and then 8 h at room temperature) to give the Z alcohol 5: 69%; NMR δ 5.28 (1 H, t, J = 7 Hz), 4.10 (2 H, s), 3.92 (4 H, s), 2.66 (1 H, s, disappears in D₂O), 1.78 (3 H, s), 1.30 (3 H, s).⁶ This alcohol was converted via its tosylate (MeLi, Et₂O-HMPA (3:1) and then $C_7H_7SO_2Cl-Et_2O$, 0 °C) to chloride 6 (82%; NMR δ 5.38 (1 H, t J = 7 Hz), 4.01 (2 H, s)) with LiCl (15 h, room temperature)⁷ and then to bromide 7 (85%; NMR δ 5.41 (1 H, t, J = 7 Hz), 3.93 (2 H, s)) with NaBr (DMF, 3 h, room temperature).

The dianion 8a of α -methyltetronic acid (8)⁸ was generated using sodium hydride (1 equiv, THF-HMPA (1:1)), followed by butyllithium (1 equiv in hexane). A consideration of the resonance forms of this species, which logically include the furanoid structure 8b as a major contributor, suggested that alkylation should occur with high selectivity at the γ position.⁹ In fact, treatment of 8 with 7 (THF, -60 °C and then 24 h at room temperature) afforded the γ -substituted tetronic acid **9** (NMR δ 8.8 (1 H, br), 5.23 (1 H, t, J = 7 Hz), 4.67 (1 H, m),



0002-7863/79/1501-0762\$01.00/0

3.86 (4 H, s), 2.06 (3 H, s), 1.73 (3 H, br s), 1.22 (3 H, s)) as the sole alkylation product in 63% yield after chromatography. Subsequent annelation of 9 was accomplished by condensation with ethyl vinyl ketone (97%, Et₃N, THF), to yield 10, followed by acid-catalyzed dehydration $(p-C_7H_7SO_3H, benzene, re$ flux) to give the cyclohexenone 11 as two epimers which were not separated: 59%; ν_{max} 1780, 1715, 1675 cm⁻¹; NMR δ 4.0-4.4 (2 H, m), 2.06 (3 H, s), 1.81 (3 H, s), 1.72 (3 H, s). 1.57 (3 H, s). After protection of **11** as its bis(ethylene ketal) 12 ((CH₂OH)₂, HC(OEt)₃, p-TsOH, Et₂O, 25 °C), reduction with lithium aluminum hydride (THF-Et₂O), followed by hydrolysis (AcOH, H₂O) of the ketal functions, afforded an epimeric mixture of diols 13: 53% from 11; ν_{max} 3380 (br), 1710, 1665 cm⁻¹; NMR δ 5.26 (1 H, br t), 4.95 (1 H, d of d, J = 2, 11 Hz, 3.86 (1 H, d, J = 11 Hz), 3.65 (1 H, d, J = 11Hz), 2.18 (3 H, s), 1.91 (3 H, s), 1.80 (3 H, s), 1.39 (3 H, s)

The allylic, secondary hydroxyl function in 13 proved surprisingly resistant to dehydration under a variety of conditions and an indirect method for this transformation was therefore devised. The diol function in this system was found to undergo selective monoacetylation (Ac₂O, pyridine, room temperature) to 14 (56%), which was converted to mesylate 15 (90%) with methanesulfonyl chloride (pyridine, 12 h). This substance, like alcohol 13, resisted elimination with acidic and basic reagents. However, when 15 was warmed at 80 °C in Me₂SO for 2 h,¹⁰ the 7E,9Z triene 16 was produced isomerically pure in 34%yield. Saponification (K₂CO₃, H₂O-EtOH, 25 °C) then gave trisporol **B** (3) (98%; $\lambda_{\text{max}}^{\text{EtOH}}$ 298 nm (log ϵ 4.0); ν_{max} 3460, 1710, 1665 cm^{-1} ; NMR δ 6.63 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 6.20 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 5.40 (1 H, br t), 3.68 (1 H, d, J = 10 Hz), 3.37 (1 H, d, J = 10 Hz), 2.08 (3 H, s), 1.89 (3 H, s), 1.81 (3 H, s), 1.11 (3 H, s)), with the anticipated spectral properties. 3,11

In principle, the bicyclic intermediate 11 affords entry to the 9-cis trisporic acid system (1), as well as the reduced trisporols, through hydrolysis of the γ -lactone and dehydration of the resulting allylic alcohol. In practice, this approach was thwarted by the extremely facile closure of the derived hydroxyl acid, and a modification of this scheme, utilizing lactol 19, was therefore employed. The tetronic acid 8,8 after Michael



addition (98%) to ethyl vinyl ketone (Et₃N, THF) and condensation (catalytic p-TsOH, C_6H_6 , 36 h) of the resulting diketone, afforded 17 (mp 58-60 °C; ν_{max} 1780, 1680 cm⁻¹; NMR δ 5.01 (2 H, s), 1.74 (3 H, s), 1.51 (3 H, s)) following chromatography in 95% yield. Treatment of 17 with N-bromosuccinimide (CCl₄, (PhCO₂)₂, 3 h) quantitatively gave bromide 18 as a single crystalline isomer, which was cleanly hydrolyzed in boiling water (5 min) to the crystalline lactol 19 (80%; dec >146 °C; ν_{max} 1740, 1670 cm⁻¹; NMR δ 6.43 (1 H, s), 1.78 (3 H, s), 1.50 (3 H, s)).

A Wittig reaction (-78 °C for 2 h and then 0 °C for 0.5 h)of 19 with the ylide prepared from E phosphonium salt 20^{5c} gave acid 21 (61%) containing, as expected, only E geometry at the newly generated olefin. This substance, upon hydrolysis (5% HCl, THF, 0 °C, 5 h), furnished (9*E*)-trisporic acid B (22) (95%; λ_{max}^{EtOH} 322 nm; ν_{max} 3150 (br), 1715, 1665, 1595 cm^{-1} ; NMR δ 6.39 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 6.19 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 5.52(1 H, t, J = 7 Hz), 2.09(3 H, s), 1.89(3 H, s), 1.82 $(3 H, s), 1.48 (3 H, s)), ^{12}$ which was further characterized as its methyl ester 23 (CH₂N₂).^{5a} The Z phosphonium bromide 24, prepared from 7 (Ph₃P, Et₂O, 65 h), afforded an ylide (BuLi, -78 °C) which unfortunately underwent isomerization to the E form at a rate competitive with that of the Wittig reaction with 19. Hence, a mixture of 25 and 21 (53%, \sim 1:1) was produced, although the proportion of 25 could be enhanced to >80% at the expense of yield with short reaction times (20 min at 0 °C). Hydrolysis of 25 (5% HCl, THF) gave (7E,9Z)trisporic acid (1) (88%; NMR δ 6.82 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 6.36 (1 H, d, J = 16 Hz), 5.47 (1 H, m), 2.08 (3 H, s), 1.88 (3 H, s)s), 1.80 (3 H, s), 1.46 (3 H, s)),¹² which was also characterized as its methyl ester 2. Bioassays with plus and minus strains of Mucor mucedo revealed, as expected, that synthetic (\pm) trisporol B (3) was effective on only the plus mating type.¹³ However, zygophore induction was much more prominent in the minus strain with synthetic acids 1 and 22, and their esters 2 and 23.¹⁴ Quantitatively similar activity (down to 3 μ g per dose) was found for all four of these substances in minus M. mucedo.

Acknowledgment. We are indebted to the National Science Foundation for financial support through grants CHE77-04379 and CHE74-01286.

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- Both plus and minus mating cultures of *M. mucedo* have typically responded to naturally derived trisporic acids (see ref 1), although the methyl trispo-
- rates are more effective in zygophore induction with the minus strain. National Institutes of Health Research Career Development Awardee, (15) 1976-81.

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Received October 3, 1978