Azaspiracid (1)

DOI: 10.1002/anie.200701515

Total Synthesis of (+)-Azaspiracid-1. Part I: Synthesis of the Fully Elaborated ABCD Aldehyde**

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Dedicated to Professor Dieter Seebach on the occasion of his 70th birthday

(−)-Azaspiracid-1 (**2**, Figure 1) is a structurally complex marine neurotoxin that is implicated in seafood poisoning.

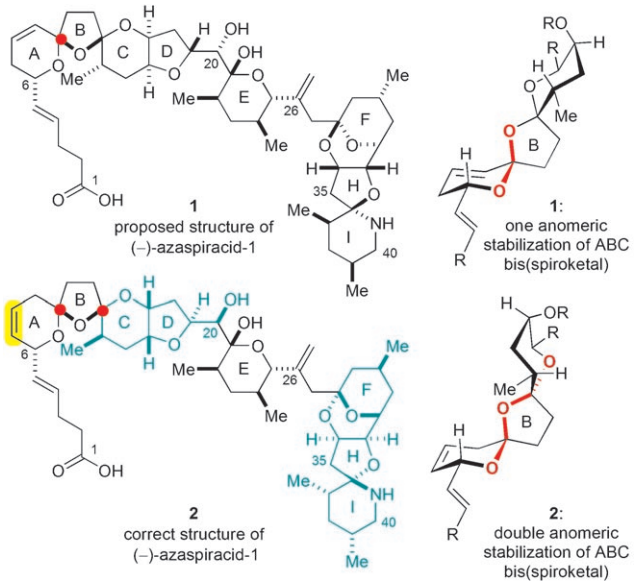
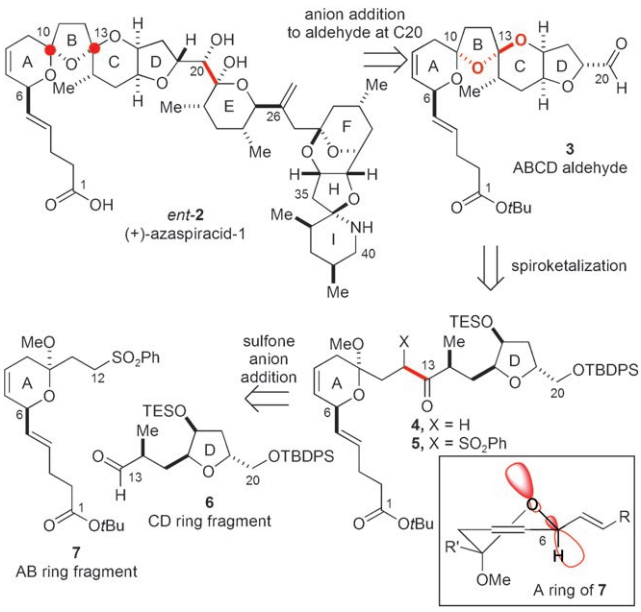


Figure 1. Originally proposed structure (**1**)[2] and correct structure of (−)-azaspiracid-1 (**2**).[5]

Outbreaks of azaspiracid poisoning were first reported in 1995[1] and in 1998 the causative toxin was isolated in minute amounts from blue mussels (*Mytilus edulis*). Extensive NMR spectroscopic studies resulted in the proposed structural assignment **1**, in which the relative configurations between the ABCDE and FGHI domains, as well as the absolute configuration, remained uncertain.[2] The intriguing chemical structure of azaspiracid-1, in combination with its scarcity in nature, has spurred considerable interest among the chemical community.[3] These efforts resulted in a synthesis of the proposed structure **1** in 2003 by the research group of Nicolaou with the finding that this structure did not match that of the natural product.[4] Subsequent efforts in the research group of Nicolaou involving numerous degradation studies and the synthesis of multiple diastereomers resulted in a significant structural revision that allowed the unambiguous structural assignment of (−)-azaspiracid-1 (**2**) in 2004.[5] Based on these impressive studies, an improved total synthesis of azaspiracid-1 in 39 linear steps was recently reported by Nicolaou and co-workers.[6]

Herein and in the following Communication,[7] we describe our efforts, which culminated in a synthesis of (+)-azaspiracid-1 (*ent*-**2**, Scheme 1). This target requires only minimal changes in our original synthesis plan that targeted the originally proposed structure **1** of (−)-azaspiracid-1, namely the design of a new AB ring fragment and the synthesis of the enantiomer of the E ring fragment. Herein we



Scheme 1. Retrosynthetic analysis of the ABCD aldehyde **3** of (+)-azaspiracid-1 (*ent*-**2**). See Ref.[9] for abbreviations.

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[**] Financial support has been provided by the National Institutes of Health (GM-33328-20), the Merck Research Laboratories, Amgen, and Eli Lilly. Fellowships were provided to L.K. by the Villum Kann Rasmussen and the Carlsberg Foundations (Denmark), to J.A.M. by the National Institutes of Health, to T.B.D. by the National Science Foundation, to A.B. by the NSERC (Canada), and to M.J. by the Technical University of Denmark.

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address the asymmetric syntheses of the AB and CD ring fragments and their assembly into the fully elaborated ABCD portion of this natural product.

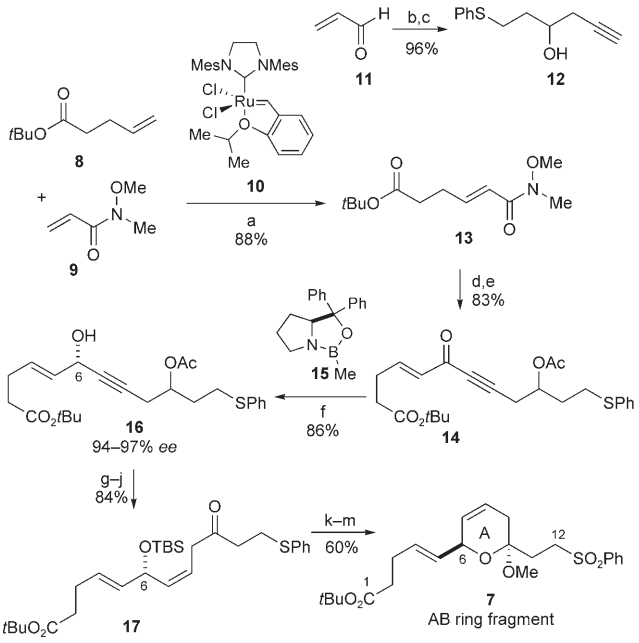
The corrected (−)-azaspiracid structure (**2**)[5] contains an ABC bis(spiroketal) synthon, now containing two stabilizing anomeric effects, that is presumed to be in its favored configuration (Figure 1). Accordingly, a thermodynamically controlled spiroketalization should be effective in controlling both the spiroketal stereocenters at C10 and C13. The plan for the deconstruction of the ABCD synthon **3** is outlined in Scheme 1 and affords fragments **6** and **7** of comparable complexity. The selection of the lactol methyl ether **7** rather than an equivalent acyclic divinylcarbinol synthon was made in response to the extreme lability of the hydroxy group at C6 in acyclic intermediates under a range of conditions.[8] It was reasoned that the inclusion of the hydroxy group at C6 as its corresponding lactol methyl ether **7** would influence its stability in a positive manner. As depicted in Scheme 1, the double bond in the ring is taken out of conjugation with the C–O bond at C6 in ketal **7**, thus eliminating the impact of this π bond toward hyperconjugative donation and chemical labilization.

To preserve the desired oxidation state of the carboxy terminus, the synthesis plan included the AB ring fragment **7** with the carboxylic acid protected as its *tert*-butyl ester (Scheme 2). The synthesis was initiated with the cross-metathesis[10] of alkene **8**[11] and unsaturated Weinreb amide **9**,[12] which proceeded smoothly in the presence of the Grubbs–Hoveyda catalyst **10**[13] to provide unsaturated Weinreb amide **13** (88%). The remaining six-carbon-atom fragment was introduced as the racemic alkyne **12**, which was readily prepared from acrolein (96%, 2 steps) and added chemoselectively as its dianion to the unsaturated Weinreb amide **13**. This alkyne addition required some experimentation before it was eventually found that transmetalation in the presence of $MgBr_2{\cdot}OEt_2$[14] as a mild Lewis acid, as well as the addition of THF at a late stage of the reaction, were both crucial in achieving the desired transformation. Thus, after acetylation of the unpurified mixture, ene-ynone **14** was obtained in 83% yield (2 steps).

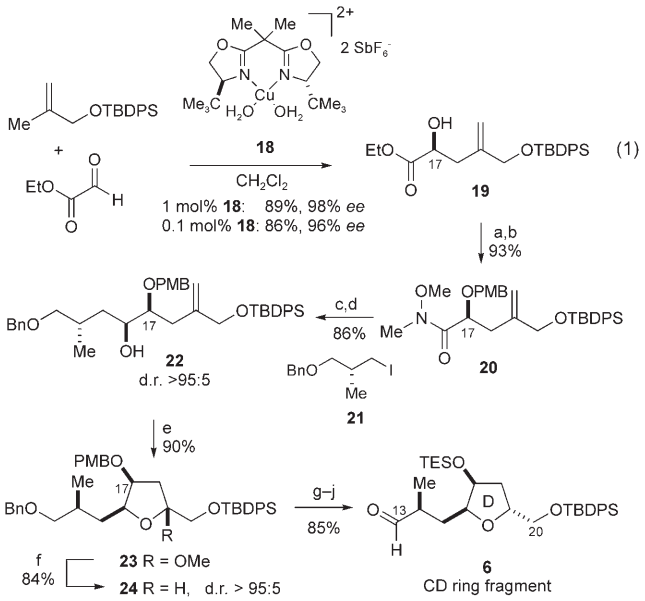
Introduction of the stereocenter at C6 was then effected in high yield and enantioselectivity using a stoichiometric CBS reduction[15] (**15**, $BH_3{\cdot}SMe_2$, 86%, 94–97% *ee*) to afford alcohol **16**. The subsequent semihydrogenation of the alkyne under Lindlar conditions proceeded readily, although the product was contaminated with 3–5% of the undesired alkane that was separated from the major product at a later stage. After protection of the alcohol as a TBS ether under standard conditions (92%, 2 steps), the acetate was removed (K_2CO_3, MeOH), and a subsequent Parikh–Doering oxidation[16] gave the bisallylic silyl ether **17** ($SO_3{\cdot}$py, DMSO, 91%, 2 steps). The crucial formation of the lactol was subsequently effected with HF·pyridine buffered with excess pyridine (74%). To our relief, this lactol was smoothly transformed into the desired lactol methyl ether in excellent yield (PPTS, MeOH, 92%), thus validating the anticipated stability of the lactol at C6 to acidic conditions (vide infra). Finally, the sulfide moiety was oxidized to the derived sulfone (H_2O_2, $[(NH_4)_6Mo_7O_{24}]$, 88%) to conclude the synthesis of the desired AB ring fragment **7** in 11 linear steps and 32% overall yield.

In the synthesis of the CD ring fragment **6**, the enantioselective Cu^{2+}-catalyzed glyoxylate-ene reaction reported by our research group[17] provided the first stereocenter at C17 [Eq. (1), Scheme 3]. This reaction could routinely be conducted on a 20 g scale in good yields and enantioselectivities using 1 mol% of the Cu^{2+} complex **18** (89% yield, 98% *ee*). In the presence of 0.1 mol% of **18**, almost identical results were obtained (86% yield, 96% *ee*) although the reaction times to reach full conversion in the latter case increased considerably (5 days compared with 12 h). Subsequently, the resultant hydroxy ester **19** was converted into the corresponding Weinreb amide[18] (MeNH(OMe)·HCl, Me_3Al, 98%) for which $A^{1,3}$ strain is presumed to allow for a PMB protection under standard basic conditions (PMBBr, NaH, 95%) with no detrimental epimerization of the stereocenter at C17 (Scheme 3).

Metalation of the known iodide **21**[19] with *t*BuLi[20] provided the remaining four-carbon-atom subunit (−78°C, 90%). The resulting α-alkoxyketone was reduced with L-Selectride with Felkin control to afford alcohol **22** as the only detectable diastereomer (96%, d.r. > 95:5). Careful ozonolysis of the 1,1-disubstituted olefin in the presence of Sudan III dye as an indicator[21] allowed for the selective oxidative cleavage of the olefin (O_3, −78°C, then Me_2S) without any



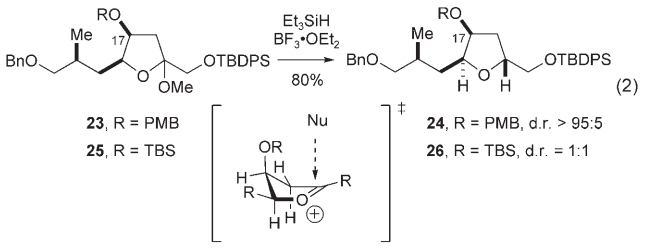
Scheme 2. Synthesis of the AB Ring Fragment **7**. Reagents and conditions: a) **10** (5 mol%), CH_2Cl_2, 40°C, 88%; b) PhSH, Et_3N, CH_2Cl_2; c) allenylMgBr, Et_2O, 0°C, 96% (2 steps); d) **12**, *n*BuLi, Et_2O, −78°C, then $MgBr_2{\cdot}OEt_2$, then **13**, −78 to 0°C, THF added, then RT; e) Ac_2O, DMAP, py, CH_2Cl_2, 83% (2 steps); f) **15** (2 equiv), $BH_3{\cdot}SMe_2$, THF, 0°C, 86%, 94–97% *ee*; g) H_2 (1 atm), $Pd/CaCO_3/Pb$ (5%), py, benzene; h) TBSCl, DMAP, imidazole, DMF, 92%, 3–5% alkane (2 steps); i) K_2CO_3, MeOH; j) $SO_3{\cdot}$py; DMSO, iPr_2NEt, CH_2Cl_2, −25°C, 91% (2 steps); k) HF·py, py, THF, 0°C, 74%; l) PPTS, $HC(OMe)_3$, MeOH, CH_2Cl_2, −10°C, 92%; m) H_2O_2, $[(NH_4)_6Mo_7O_{24}]$, MeOH, 0°C, 88%. See Ref. [9] for abbreviations.



Scheme 3. Synthesis of the CD ring fragment **6**. Reagents and conditions: a) MeNH(OMe)·HCl, Me_3Al, THF, 98%; b) PMBBr, NaH, DMF, 95%; c) **21**,[19] *t*BuLi, Et_2O, −78°C, 90%; d) L-Selectride, THF, −78°C, 96%; e) 1. O_3, py, CH_2Cl_2/MeOH (5:1 v/v), −78°C, then Me_2S, −78°C to RT; 2. PPTS, MeOH, 90%; f) Et_3SiH, $BF_3{\cdot}OEt_2$, CH_2Cl_2, −78°C, 84%; g) DDQ, CH_2Cl_2/pH 7 buffer, 0°C (9:1 v/v), 94%; h) TESCl, imidazole, DMF, 97%; i) LiDBB, THF, −78°C, 96%; j) SO_3·py, DMSO, *i*Pr_2NEt, CH_2Cl_2, −30°C, 97%. See Ref. [9] for abbreviations.

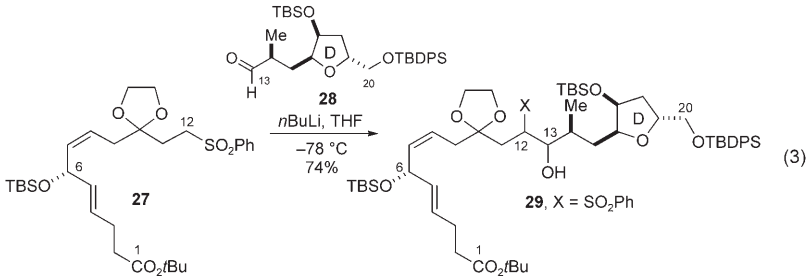
undesired oxidation of the benzylic ether protecting groups. Subsequent ketalization (PPTS, MeOH) afforded the methyl ketal **23** (90% yield, 2 steps). The desired trisubstituted tetrahydrofuran **24** could be readily obtained by stereoselective reduction with Et_3SiH mediated by $BF_3{\cdot}OEt_2$ (84% yield, d.r. > 95:5), with the primary by-product derived from an elimination reaction to the corresponding undesired furan.

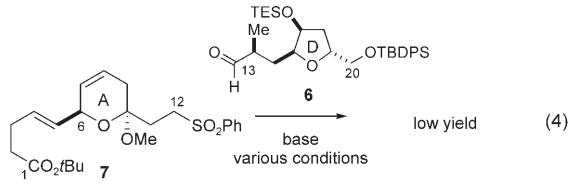
The observed diastereoselectivity in the reduction of the oxocarbenium ion of **23** to give **24** is in good agreement with the model for nucleophilic additions to five-membered cyclic oxocarbenium ions proposed by Woerpel and co-workers.[22] It is noteworthy that the analogous reduction of the methyl ketal **25** with TBS protection at O17 proceeded with no diastereoselectivity to give the tetrahydrofuran **26** [Eq. (2)], which suggests that steric factors also play a significant role for these sterically rather encumbered substrates.



As a silyl ether protecting group at C17 was required for the global synthesis plan, the next two transformations of tetrahydrofuran **24** (Scheme 3) comprised an oxidative removal of the PMB group (DDQ, 94%) and a silylation of the secondary alcohol at C17 (TESCl, 97%). Finally, the benzyl group was best removed under radical anion conditions (LiDBB,[23] 96%), followed by a Parikh–Doering oxidation[16] to give aldehyde **6** (97%). Altogether, this sequence efficiently provided the desired CD ring fragment **6** in 12 steps and 46% overall yield.

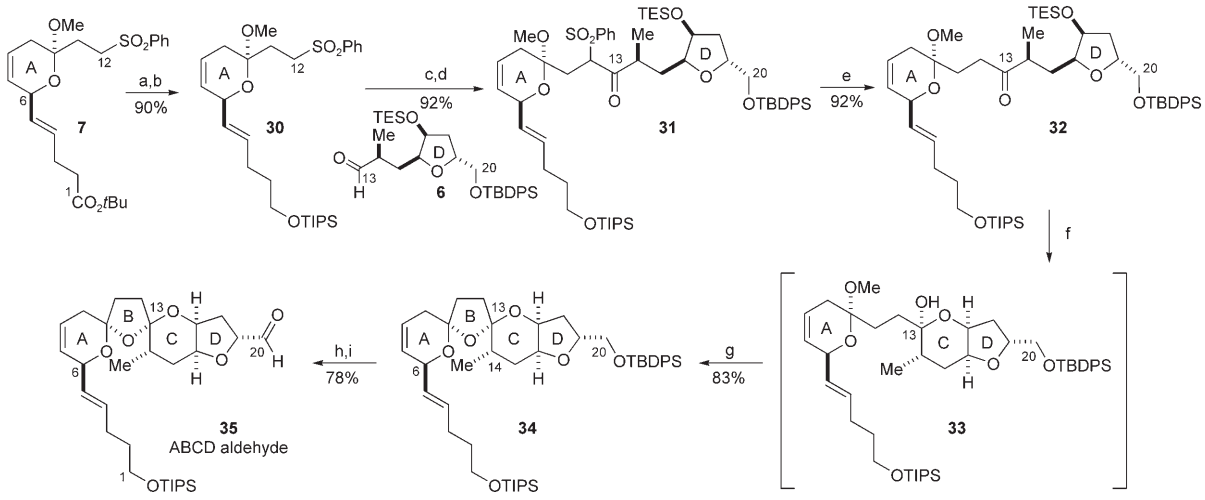
Although the α protons of the C1-ester and C12-sulfone termini of the AB ring fragment are of comparable thermodynamic acidity, we anticipated that a selective kinetic deprotonation α to the sulfone might be feasible under the appropriate experimental conditions. This expectation was indeed borne out by experiment in the selective addition of sulfone **27** to the TBS-protected aldehyde **28** [74% yield, Eq. (3)]. Unfortunately, adduct **29** proved too unstable to successfully participate in the subsequent derivatization into the ABCD bis(spiroketal) and was abandoned for further studies.[8] However, much to our surprise, the corresponding addition of the lactol derivative **7** to aldehyde **6** was very unselective for deprotonation at C12 under a variety of experimental conditions [Eq. (4)]. These findings thus suggest that although α deprotonation of the sulfone is generally kinetically favored, subtle steric differences may have a negative impact on the kinetics in such α deprotonations.





A solution to this obstacle was the reduction of the carboxy terminus of **7** and protection as its silyl ether **30**, as depicted in Scheme 4 ($LiAlH_4$, 92%; TIPSCl, 98%). Subsequent sulfone deprotonation with LDA and addition to aldehyde **6** readily proceeded to give the two C12-diastereomeric ketosulfones **31** after Dess–Martin oxidation[24] of the initial mixture of the four hydroxy sulfones (92% yield, 2 steps). Sodium amalgam excision of the sulfone moiety[25] then provided ketone **32** as a single diastereomer in excellent overall yield for the fragment coupling sequence (92%).

In the crucial spirocyclization event, optimal yields were obtained when the TES ether was selectively removed with



Scheme 4. Synthesis of the ABCD aldehyde **35**. Reagents and conditions: a) $LiAlH_4$, Et_2O, −20 °C, 92%; b) TIPSCl, imidazole, DMF, 98%; c) **6**, LDA, THF, −78 °C; d) DMP, py, CH_2Cl_2, 92% (2 steps); e) Na/Hg (5%), NaH_2PO_4, THF/MeOH, −10 °C, 92%; f) TBAF, THF, −20 °C (workup); g) PPTS, CH_2Cl_2, 0 °C (83%, 2 steps); h) TBAF, AcOH, DMF, 86%; i) SO_3·py; DMSO, iPr_2NEt, CH_2Cl_2, −30 °C, 91%. See Ref. [9] for abbreviations.

one equivalent of TBAF at low temperature to form the intermediary lactol **33**, followed by treatment of the unpurified mixture with PPTS in a nonpolar solvent such as CH_2Cl_2. Thus, the major and desired bis(spiroketal) isomer **34** was obtained in overall 83% yield (2 steps).[26] The desired bis(spiroketal) configuration of **34** was established by a key NOE interaction between H6 and the methyl group at C14, as also previously reported for analogous azaspiracid-derived bis(spiroketal) structures.[2,5] Finally, chemoselective removal of the TBDPS ether[27] (TBAF, AcOH, 86%) and subsequent Parikh–Doering oxidation[16] (91%) afforded the desired tetracyclic aldehyde **35**.

In summary, the convergent sequence afforded the fully elaborated ABCD aldehyde **35** in 20 linear steps and 16% overall yield. These advances led to the completion of the synthesis of (+)-azaspiracid-1 (*ent*-**2**) as detailed in the following Communication.[7]

Received: April 6, 2007

Keywords: ene reaction · natural products · nucleophilic addition · spiroketalization · total synthesis

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[7] See the following Communication: D. A. Evans, T. B. Dunn, L. Kværnø, A. Beauchemin, B. Raymer, E. J. Olhava, J. A. Mulder, M. Juhl, K. Kagechika, D. A. Favor, *Angew. Chem.* **2007**, *119*, 4782 – 4787; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2007**, *46*, 4698 – 4703.

[8] A full account of these studies, including the first-generation syntheses of fragments, will subsequently be published.

[9] Abbreviations: Bn = benzyl, CBS = Corey–Bakshi–Shibata, DDQ = 2,3-dichloro-5,6-dicyano-1,4-benzoquinone, DMAP = 4-dimethylaminopyridine, DMF = *N,N*-dimethylformamide, DMP = Dess–Martin periodinane, DMSO = dimethylsulfoxide, LDA = lithium diisopropylamide, LiDBB = lithium di-*tert*-butyl biphenylide, Mes = 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl, Nu = nucleophile, PMB = 4-methoxybenzyl, PPTS = pyridinium *p*-toluenesulfonate, py = pyridine, TBAF = tetrabutylammonium fluoride, TBDPS = *tert*-butyldiphenylsilyl, TBS = *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl, TES = triethylsilyl, TIPS = triisopropylsilyl.

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