Biocatalytic Deracemization of 1,4-Benzodiazepines in the Synthesis of Enantiomerically Pure Serine

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An efficient stereocontrolled synthesis of (S)-N-Cbz-serine (Cbz = benzyloxycarbonyl; 12) and of its (R)-enantiomer is reported. Kinetic resolution of the easily available racemic 3-(hydroxymethyl)-1,4-benzodiazepin-2-ones is performed in the key step via acetylation by the immobilized $Mucor\ miehei$ lipase ($Lipozyme\ IM$) at 60° . This method is characterized by high enantiomer purity (ee's $\geq 99\%$) of the intermediary alcohols (+)-8 and (+)-9 and acetates (-)-10 and (-)-11, as well as of the final products (S)- and (R)-N-Cbz-serine, simple recycling of the biocatalyst, complete recovery of 2-aminobenzophenones (3 and (4)) and their recycling into production of 1,4-benzodiazepines, and possibility to selectively racemize 'wrong' enantiomers of the alcohols (4) and (4) and (4) in the presence of (4)-

1. Introduction. -1,4-Benzodiazepines enjoy a privileged structure status, with derivatives shown to have activity against a wide range of therapeutical targets. They are of general interest as central nervous system (CNS) active drugs [1], some derivatives are shown to possess anticancer [2] and antiviral activity [3]. Effective combinatorial synthesis of the libraries of these biologically active compounds has, therefore, been developed [4]. Peculiarity of the structure of 1,4-benzodiazepines resides in the glycine subunit incorporated via an amide and azomethine bond into conformationally rigid, nonplanar seven-membered ring. Because of their commercial availability in the ton-quantities and their specific structural and conformational features, we envisioned them as suitable precursors for the synthesis of enantiomerically pure α -amino acids and their congeners, based on their stereocontrolled functionalization at C(3)-atom. We have already reported one specific example of this concept for non-catalytic chirality transfer within 1,4-benzodiazepines [5]. Here, we report an efficient stereocontrolled approach to enantiomerically pure (S)- and (R)-serine, which is amenable to large-scale production of both enantiomers. (S)-Serine is cited in the recent US pharmacopeia [6], and, nowadays, used in parenteral nutriation as dietary supplement. It is starting material in the partial synthesis of unusual amino acids [7], of (S)- and (R)-prolinol derivatives [8], and in particular of new HIV protease inhibitors [9], whereas (R)-serine was used in the synthesis of 3-amino- β -lactam derivatives, the intermediates in preparation of the mimetics of HIV V3 loop [10], of some dipeptide mimetics [11], and recently in the combinatorial synthesis of the library of inhibitors of protein-DNA interactions. One congener of 3-(hydroxymethyl) derivatives described here exhibited therapeutically highly promising biological activity [4d].

Results and Discussion. – The approach outlined in *Scheme 1* is based on efficient synthesis and enzymatic kinetic resolution of racemic 3-(hydroxymethyl)-1,4-benzodi-

azepin-2-ones **8** and **9**. It is prompted by our previous studies of conformational and chiroptical (CD) properties of enantiomerically pure 3-substituted 1,4-benzodiazepines [12].

In principle, enantioselective substitution of enantiotopic methylene protons in glycine (1), or elimination of the enantiotopic EtOCO groups in diethyl 2-alkyl-2-aminomalonate (2, R' = alkyl), afford enantiomerically pure α -substituted amino acids. Only the first concept was developed to practical synthetic approach [13], whereas compounds 2 (R' = alkyl) were decarboxylated to racemic α -amino acids [14]. It occurred to us that either precursor, 1 or 2, could be used in preparation of racemic compounds 8 and 9 as the substrates for the enzyme-catalyzed kinetic resolution. Regioselective reduction of 7 by NaBH₄ afforded 8, whereas formylation 6 by gaseous HCHO in the presence of LDA afforded 9, both in high yields. In the resulting 3-(hydroxymethyl)-1,4-benzodiazepines, racemic serine is thus formally incorporated (*Scheme 2*).

Screening of 14 enzymes for acetylation of **8** and **9** by vinyl acetate revealed, as the only active one, the immobilized *Mucor miehei* lipase (Lipozyme IM, commercialized by *Novo Nordisk*), and to much less extent *Pseudomonas species* lipase. Lipozyme IM afforded acetates (-)-10 and (-)-11 in 76.0 and 76.5% ee, and alcohols (+)-8 and (+)-9 in 92.6 and 92.4% ee, respectively. After single crystallization from the appropriate solvent, (+)-8 and (+)-9, and (-)-10 and (-)-11 were obtained with over 99% ee. All ee values were determined on chiral HPLC columns, selected on the basis of complete separation of the racemic compounds 8-11. AcOEt was the solvent of choice, since it assured high activity of the enzyme and solubility of the substrates and products. *Fig. 1* shows conversion in the three most effective solvents. Conformational stability of the

a) ClCH₂COCl/Py; hexylamine, EtOH/ Δ . b) LDA/THF/ -70° ; formaldehyde/ -25° . c) HN₂CH(COOEt)₂/ Δ / solv. d) NaBH₄/THF, r.t. e) Lipozyme IM/AcOEt/60°. f) HCl/MeOH/H₂O/75°. g) Cbz/pH 9.8 $-10/5^{\circ}$.

substrates and chemical stability of *Lipozyme IM* at elevated temperature led to effective resolution after 5 h at 60° ; at 30° , nearly the same conversion and ee values were achieved as after 30 h (*Fig. 2*).

It is interesting to note that non-immobilized *Mucor miehei* lipase did not show any acylating activity for racemic substrates 8 and 9. Obviously, *Mucor miehei* immobilized on *Duolit 568*-phenol-formaldehyde-type resin, commercialized as *Lipozyme IM*, is activated for acceptance of the conformationally rigid, reactive enantiomers of 8 and 9. This activation presumably resides in the conformational change of the enzyme, and could be compared to interfacial activation by micelles or drop-like lipids [15]. As demonstrated in recent crystallographic studies, in this latter case the interfacial activation is the consequence of the opening of closed, inactive form of an enzyme in organic solvents [16] [17].

Comparison of the CD spectrum of (+)-8, which shows strong positive *Cotton* effect (exciton coupling) for the bands at ca. 260 and 240 nm ($\Delta \Delta \varepsilon$ + 35), and of (+)-10, which

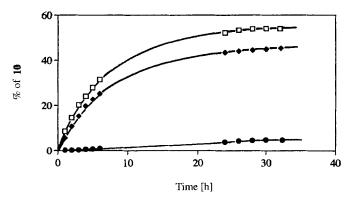


Fig. 1. Solvent effect on the progress curves for acetylation of (\pm)-8 by Lypozyme IM. AcOEt: - \Box - \Box -, CH₂Cl₂: $-\bullet$ - \bullet -.

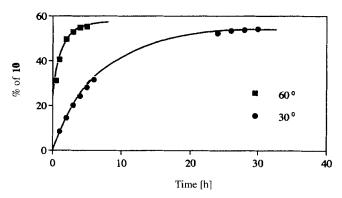


Fig. 2. Temperature effect on the progress curves for acetylation of (\pm)-8 by Lipozyme IM

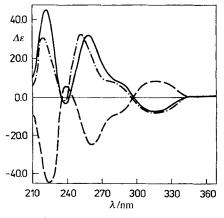


Fig. 3. CD Spectra of (+)-8 (----), (-)-10 (----), and (+)-(S)-14 ($-\cdot -\cdot -\cdot$)

shows a nearly mirror-image CD curve to that of (+)-8 and to that of (3S)-14, derived from (S)-alanine [12], revealed that (+)-8 possesses the (3S)-configuration and acetate (-)-10 the (3R)-configuration (Fig. 3). It is known that (S)-enantiomers of 3-substituted 1,4-benzodiazepines possess (M)-absolute conformation [12] (Scheme 3). CD Spectra thus revealed that stable (P)-conformer of (R)-8 and (R)-9 is preferred for acylation by the immobilized (P)-conformation.

R = H, Me; $R^1 = Me$, Me₂CH, PhCH₂ etc.

After chromatographic separation of acetates (-)-10 and (-)-11 from alcohols (+)-8 and (+)-9, and their subsequent hydrolysis, the isolation of (S)-serine in its N-protected form turned out to be particularly convenient in view of high solubility of the non-protected serine in H_2O (36 g/l at 20°) [14b]. Optically active compounds (+)-compounds (+)-(S)- and (+)-(S)-9 are hydrolyzed under acidic conditions without any loss of optical purity, since $\geq 99\%$ ee was found for the final product (+)-12. 2-Aminobenzophenones 3 and 4 are recovered in ca. 95% yield, and can be recycled into 1,4-benzodiazepines. N-Protecting benzyloxycarbonyl (Cbz) group is introduced according to the standard procedure [18], without isolation of crude(S)-serine, and optically pure (+)-12 was isolated in ca. 70% overall yield from (±)-8.

Though both (S)- and (R)-serine are valuable products [4c][6-10], in the case that (S)-8 and (S)-9, or (R)-8 and (R)-9 are regarded as the precursors of the 'wrong' enantiomer, they can be racemized by heating in AcOEt in the presence of Amberlite CG 400, and recycled into enzymatic kinetic resolution. Interestingly, less basic Amberlite IRA-68 or Et₃N proved ineffective for racemization. This finding confirms high configurational stability of 3-substituted 1,4-benzodiazepines, though they could be regarded as vinylogous congeners of configurationally unstable imidazol-4-ones and oxazol-4-ones [14c][19]. One of the origins of higher configurational stability of 3-substituted 1,4-benzodiazepines presumably resides in their reluctance to adopt highly strained planar conformation in the enamide form. The above-mentioned, specific racemization conditions can be applied only to alcohols 8 and 9, however, since, under the same conditions, acetyl derivative 10, possessing a better leaving group, undergoes base-catalyzed elimination to the methylidene derivative 13.

We have already shown that H-C(3) acidity of $N(1)-\alpha$ -phenylethyl analogue of 7 is high enough to assure fast H/D exchange at C(3), and we have also demonstrated complete retention of deuterium on reduction of ethoxycarbonyl group [5]. Thus, the stereocontrolled method reported here also represents an elegant entry to α -deuterated enantiomerically pure (S)- and (R)-serine.

In conclusion, we completed a simple and efficient stereocontrolled synthesis of both enantiomers of serine, starting from the easily available 1,4-benzodiazepines, comprising a high-yield C(3)-formylation, followed by the Lipozyme-IM-catalyzed kinetic resolution, recycling of the enzyme, recovery of 2-aminobenzophenone derivatives for production of 1,4-benzodiazepines, and isolation of optically pure N-CBz-serines. We are presently extending this method to preparation of therapeutically interesting congeners of 1,4-benzodiazepines and various non-natural α -amino acids.

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Experimental Part

General. HPLC: $HP\ 1050$ chromatograph with $C18\ RP$ (Supelco, $250 \times 4.6\ mm$) reverse phase column; separation was monitored by $HP\ 1050$ UV detector set up at 254 nm and connected to $HP\ 3396A$ integrator. The following chiral columns were used in this work: Chiralcel OD-R for separation of (\pm) -8 and (\pm) -10, Chiralpak AS for separation of (\pm) -9 and (\pm) -11, and Chiralcel OD-H for separation of (\pm) -12. Using these columns, ee values were determined for enantiomerically enriched compounds. M.p.: Electrothermal Apparatus, not corrected. Optical rotations: Optical Activity AA-10 automatic polarimeter in a 1-dm cell; c in g/100 ml. IR: Perkin-Elmer 297 spectrometer for K Br pellets. 1 H- and 1 3C-NMR: Varian Gemini XL 300 spectrometer for CDCl₃ solns., δ in ppm relative to TMS as internal reference, J in Hz.

Enzymes from the following microorganisms were screened for enzymatic acetylation: Penicillium camemberti, Candida lipolytica, Humicola lanuginosa, Penicillium roqueforti, Pseudomonas species, Mucor javanicus, Geotrichum candidum, Rhizopus niveus, Rhizopus delemar, Aspergillus niger, Candida cylindracea, Rhizopus oryzae (all from Amano), Candida cylindracea Type VII (from Sigmu), Candida cylindracea, Mucor miehei, and Pseudomonas fluorescens (all from Fluka), Mucor miehei, Lipolase, Lipozyme IM (all from Novo Nordisk), and Palatase (from Novo Ferment).

1,4-Benzodiazepines 5, 6, and 7 were samples from CRC, Compagnia di Ricerca Chimica. All commercial reagents were used as received.

During usual workup, all org. extracts were dried over Na₂SO₄ or MgSO₄, and evaporated *in vacuo* on a *Büchi* rotavapor.

 (\pm) -7-Chloro-3-(hydroxymethyl)-5-phenyl-2,3-dihydro-1H-1.4-benzodiazepin-2-one (8). Ethyl 7-chloro-2-oxo-5-phenyl-2,3-dihydro-1H-dihydro-1,4-benzodiazepine-3-carboxylate (1.0 g, 2.92 mmol) is dissolved in dry THF (10 ml), and, to the resulting soln., NaBH₄ (0.3 g, 7.9 mmol) was added. After 2.5 h, ice-water (30 ml) was added to the mixture, and resulting slurry was extracted by AcOEt (3 × 20 ml). Org. extracts were washed with H₂O (3 × 20 ml), and submitted to usual workup. Crude product was recrystallized from the solvent mixture MeOH/Et₂O/light petroleum affording crystalline 8 (0.66 g, 75.3 %). M.p. 197 – 199°. IR: 1700, 1620, 1480, 1330, 700. 1 H-NMR: 3.07 (s, 1 H); 3.79 (t, J = 7.0, 1 H): 4.26 (dd, J = 1.5, 5.3, 1 H); 4.43 (dd, J = 11.5, 7.3, 1 H); 7.10 – 7.64 (m, 8 H); 9.78 (s, 1 H). 13 C-NMR: 62.44; 63.75; 122.74; 128.40; 128.81; 129.08; 129.69; 130.57; 130.81; 131.98; 136.55; 138.30, 169.27, 172.38. Anal. calc. for $C_{16}H_{13}$ CIN₂O₂ (300.74): C 63.90, H 4.36, N 9.31; found: C 64.08, H 4.54, N 9.20.

 (\pm) -7-Chloro-3-(hydroxymethyl)-1-methyl-5-phenyl-2,3-dihydro-1H-1,4-benzodiazepin-2-one (9). To the soln. of (i-Pr)₂NH (0.84 ml, 6 mmol) in dry THF (8 ml), 2.5M soln. of BuLi (2.54 ml, 6 mmol) was added at 0°. After 30 min under N₂, the mixture was cooled to -78° (dry ice i-PrOH), and a soln. of 6 (1.0 g, 3.51 mmol) in THF (5.0 ml) was added by syringe. After 30 min, the mixture was warmed up to -25° , and dry HCOH, obtained by thermal decomposition of paraformaldehyde (0.29 g, 9.7 mmol), was bubbled by the N₂ stream. After 30 min, the reaction was quenched by addition of 10% aq. HCl (3 ml). The mixture was extracted by CH₂Cl₂ (3 × 15 ml), and, after usual workup, crude product was purified by FC (CH₂Cl₂/AcOEt 7:3): 0.77 g (69.7%) of 9. Pale-yellow crystals. M.p. 112–115°. IR: 1750, 1680, 1480, 1330, 700. ¹H-NMR: 2.88 (s, 1 H); 3.41 (s, 3 H); 3.76 (dd, J = 7.3, 5.3, 1 H); 4.18–4.22 (m, 1 H); 4.42–4.46 (m, 1 H); 7.27–7.62 (m, 8 H). ¹³C-NMR: 34.73; 62.94; 63.97; 122.74; 128.34; 128.40; 129.54; 129.77; 130.48; 130.81; 131.58; 137.80; 141.84; 168.20; 170.75. Anal. calc. for C_{1.7}H_{1.5}ClN₂O₂ (314.77): C 64.87, H 4.80, N 8.90; found: C 64.63, H 4.95, N 8.99.

(±)-(7-Chloro-2-oxo-5-phenyl-2,3-dihydro-1H-1,4-benzodiazepin-3-yl)methyl Acetate (10). Alcohol 8 (75 mg, 0.25 mmol) was dissolved in DMF (3 ml), and, to this soln., pyridine (0.2 ml) and, after 10 min, AcCl (0.05 ml,

0.76 mmol) were added. After 2 h, the reaction was stopped by addition of H_2O (5 ml), and resulting slurry was extracted by AcOEt (3×10 ml). Org. layer was washed with H_2O (2×10 ml) and worked up. Crystallization of the crude product from (i-Pr)₂NH afforded 78 mg (91.2%) of **10**. M.p. 157–160°. IR: 1750, 1690, 1440, 1230, 700. 1 H-NMR: 2.16 (s, 3 H); 3.88 (t, J = 6.5, 1 H); 4.82 (dd, J = 11.2, 6.5, 1 H); 4.94 (dd, J = 11.2, 6.6, 1 H); 7.16–7.53 (m, 8 H); 9.83 (s, 1 H). 13 C-NMR: 20.77; 61.77; 63.94; 122.97; 128.41; 128.66; 129.08; 129.72; 130.55; 130.81; 132.06; 136.70; 138.24; 169.00; 170.37; 171.04. Anal. calc. for $C_{18}H_{15}CIN_2O_3$ (342.78): C 63.07, H 4.41, N 8.17; found: C 63.12, H 4.30, N 8.31.

 (\pm) -(7-Chloro-1-methyl-2-oxo-5-phenyl-2,3-dihydro-1H-1,4-benzodiazepin-3-yl)methyl Acetate (11). Starting from **9** (75 mg, 0.24 mmol), and using the method described for **10**, crude **11** was obtained. Crystallization from (i-Pr)₂NH afforded 76 mg (89.3%) of pure **11**. M.p. 205–207°. IR: 1750, 1685, 1250, 830, 700. 1 H-NMR: 2.08 (s, 3 H); 3.42 (s, 3 H); 3.87 (t, t = 6.5, 1 H); 4.82 (t = 11.2, 6.5, 1 H); 4.94 (t = 11.2, 7.0, 1 H); 7.31–7.62 (t = 11.2, 7.0

Enantioselective Acetylation of (\pm)-8. Compound (\pm)-8 (2.0 g, 6.64 mmol) and Lipozyme IM (4.0 g) were slurried in AcOEt (80 ml) and, at 30°, shaked at 225 rpm. The reaction was initiated by addition of vinyl acetate (10 ml). The samples (20 µl) were taken off over regular time intervals, filtered through *Teflon* filter, and analyzed by HPLC. The reaction was stopped after 16 h, when 60.1% conversion to 3-AcO derivative was reached, the catalyst was filtered off, and solvent evaporated to dryness. Crude product was purified by FC (CH₂Cl₂/AcOEt 7:3). On crystallization from THF/light petroleum, 670 mg (33.5%, ee 99%) of (+)-8 in the form of colorless crystalls were obtained. M.p. 198-200°. [α]_D = + 310.7 (c = 0.90, THF). Compound (-)-(R)-10 (990 mg, 43.4%, ee 97.8%) was isolated from crystallization from (i-Pr)₂NH as colorless crystals. M.p. 156-158°. [α]_D = - 278.2 (c = 0.90, THF).

Effect of the Temperature on the Enantioselective Acetylation by Lipozyme IM. Using the same quantities of (\pm) -8, Lipozyme IM, acylating agent, and solvents as in the previous procedure, the reaction was performed over 5 h and stopped at 55.2% conversion. After usual workup and crystallization from THF/light petroleum, 634 mg (31.7%, ee 99%) of (+)-8 were obtained. Compound (-)-10 (935 mg, 41%, ee 97.6%) was isolated by crystallization from (i-Pr)₂NH.

Enantioselective Acetylation of (\pm) -9. Using the same molar quantities and conditions as described for enzymatic acetylation of **8**, (\pm) -9 was acylated for 20 h at 30° to reach, after 59.4% conversion, \geq 99% ee of the remaining alcohol. Alcohol (+)-(S)-9 (704 mg, 35.2%, ee 99%) was isolated as colorless crystalline substance. M.p. 113-115°. $[\alpha]_D = +309.5$ (c = 0.84, THF). Acetate (-)-(R)-11 was isolated after two crystallizations from EtOH as colorless crystals (1.02 g, 45.0%, ee 99%). M.p. 204-206°. $[\alpha]_D = -284.3$ (c = 0.83, THF).

(+)-(S)-N-(Benzyloxy) carbonyl) serine (12) Preparation from (+)-(S)-8. Alcohol (+)-(S)-8 (0.5 g, 1.66 mmol) is dissolved in MeOH/conc. HCl/H₂O 3:3:0.5, and the mixture is warmed up to 70°. Hydrolysis is completed in 3 h, the solvent mixture was evaporated nearly to dryness, H₂O was added (5 ml), and pH adjusted to 9.8 by 2M NaOH. The product mixture was extracted by CH₂Cl₂ (3 × 10 ml), and, after usual workup, 2-amino-5-chlorobenzophenone (361 mg, 93.7%) was obtained. Aq. phase is placed into a reaction vessel equipped by a pH-meter, cooled to $5-8^{\circ}$, and benzyl chloroformate (0.3 ml, 2.16 mmol) was added in small portions over 6 h. The pH was maintained at 9.8–10 by addition of 1M NaOH. After 6 h, the mixture was warmed up to 12°, and, under stirring pH was adjusted to 10-10.5 in order to decompose O, N-bis(benzyloxycarbonyl)serine. Thereafter, the mixture was extracted by Et₂O (2×10 ml), aq. layer was separated, and AcOEt (10 ml) was added. Under vigorous stirring, the resulting emulsion was adjusted to pH 3 by addition of conc. HCl. Org. phase was separated, and aq. layer was extracted by AcOEt (2×10 ml). After usual workup of the extract, 12 (268 mg, 67.3%, ee 99%) was obtained. Colorless crystals. M.p. $117-119^{\circ}$. [α]_D = +5.7 (c = 6.0, AcOH). IR: 3300, 1700, 1530, 1250, 1060, 700. 1H-NMR ((D₂)DMF): 4.04 (d, d, d, d, d, d, 4.42–4.48 (m, 1 H); 5.27 (g, 2 H); 7.33–7.57 (m, 5 H). 13C-NMR ((D₂)DMF): 58.60; 63.71; 67.34; 129.42; 129.49; 130.09; 139.14; 158.16; 173.95. Anal. calc. for C₁₁H₁₃NO₅ (225.21): C 55.23, H 5.48, N 5.85; found: C 55.15, H 5.63, N 5.93.

Preparation from (+)-(S)-9. Alcohol (+)-(S)-9 (0.5 g, 1.59 mmol) was dissolved in MeOH/conc. HCl/H₂O 1:4:1, and the mixture was warmed up to $70-75^{\circ}$. Hydrolysis was completed in 9 h and followed by HPLC. From workup as described above, 5-chloro-2-(methylamino)benzophenone (356 mg, 94.2%) was obtained. Treatment of the aq. phase as described for (+)-(S)-8 afforded (+)-(S)-12 (245 mg, 64.5%, ee 99%). M.p. $117-119^{\circ}$. [α]_D = + 5.8 (c = 6.0, AcOH).

7-Chloro-5-phenyl-3-methylidene-2,3-dihydro-1H-1,4-benzodiazepin-2-one (13). Acetate (-)-10 (0.32 g, 0.95 mmol, ee 78.9) and Amberlite CG-400 (1.5 g, OH form) are slurried in AcOEt (30 ml) at 60-65° under magnetic stirring. After 24 h, reaction was stopped, Amberlite CG-400 was filtered off, and solvent evaporated to

dryness. Crude product was purified by FC (CH₂Cl₂/AcOEt 8:2). From crystallization from (i-Pr)₂NH, 165 mg (61.3%) of **13** was obtained. Colorless crystals. M.p. 153–155°. IR: 1680, 1630, 1485, 1320, 700. ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃): 5.13 (s, 1 H); 5.40 (s, 1 H); 6.93–7.73 (m, 8 H); 9.62 (s, 1 H). ¹³C-NMR (CDCl₃): 108.49; 122.77; 128.05; 128.29; 128.41; 128.69; 129.83; 130.14; 130.69; 131.03; 132.00; 138.24; 147.42; 172.18. Anal. calc. for C₁₆H₁₁ClN₂O (282.73): C 67.97, H 3.93, N 9.90; found: C 67.85, H 3.98, N 9.97.

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