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Asymmetric Polyene Cyclization Via Episulfonium Ion

HIROSHI KOSUGI, HIROSHI TANAKA, ISSEI TSUKAMOTO and MICHIHARU KATO

Institute for Chemical Reaction Science, Tohoku University Katahira 2–1–1, Aoba-ku, Sendai 980–8577 Japan

Treatment of enantiomerically pure β -acetoxy sulfides, having alkene functionality in the side chain, with SnCl₄ or TMSOTf, resulted in a stereoselective cyclization by a reaction initiated by an episulfonium cation.

Keywords: polyene cyclization; β-acetoxy sulfide; episulfonium cation; sulfonium salt

Cationic polyene cyclization has become widely utilized for the synthesis of naturally occurring ring systems. However the chiral version of this methodology is limited only to use of chiral epoxides or acetals as the initiating group. Here we report the first examples of chiral polyene cascade cyclizations initiated by a "chiral" episulfonium ion (Scheme 1).

Chiral β -oxy sulfides 1 as the substrates for the cyclization reaction were readily prepared from the corresponding β -keto sulfoxides as reported earlier [1]. When 1 (R=SO₂Ph) was subjected to cyclization with SnCl₄ in CH₂Cl₂, the enantiomerically pure bicyclic product 2 was obtained in 58% yield along with the monocyclic product 3. It is worth to note that the monocyclic products 3 were derived, during alkaline work-up, from a bridged sulfonium salt 4 which was formed by intramolecular trapping of a tertiary cation by the tolylthio group. The formation of the sulfonium salt 4 is confirmed by the NMR study of a model

compound (Scheme 2).

Application of the process to β -acetoxy sulfide 5 yields the tricyclic compound 6, a promising intermediate for the synthesis of triptoquinones, a novel diterpenoid quinone with significant inhibitory activity against interleukin-1 release⁽²⁾ (Scheme 3).

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