

Resolution of diastereomeric flavonoid (1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters via reversed-phase HPLC

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Abstract

Prenylflavonoids are a unique class of phytochemicals found in the inflorescences of the hop plant (*Humulus lupulus*). These flavonoids have demonstrated a wide range of biological activities, which may be influenced by their stereochemical configuration. Additionally, recent studies suggest that hop prenylflavonoids are subject to biotransformations which could alter or enrich their stereochemistry. In order to facilitate studies of the stereoisomers of flavanones, a facile method was developed for resolving the diastereomeric esters of flavanones via reversed-phase HPLC. Herein, a method for forming the tri-(1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters of the 4',5,7-trihydroxy flavanones naringenin, 8-prenylnaringenin and 6-prenylnaringenin, is described. The respective diastereomers were separated using analytical reversed-phase HPLC. Diastereomeric esters were isolated by preparative HPLC to >98% d.e. based on HPLC, with their absolute configurations established by application of CD spectrometry.

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1. Introduction

Prenylflavonoids represent a unique class of phytochemicals which can be found in the vine *Humulus lupulus*, more commonly known as hops, and have demonstrated a wide range of biological activities (Gerhauser, 2005; Stevens and Page, 2004). Hops are traditionally used in beer brewing, and hop prenylflavonoids are generally found in beer as flavanones (Fig. 1), formed by isomerization of their corresponding chalcones during boiling; the most abundant prenylflavanone in beer is isoxanthohumol (**1**), followed by 6-prenylnaringenin (**2**) and 8-prenylnaringenin (**3**) (Stevens et al., 1999).

Of the most abundant flavanones found in beer, **3** has recently received a great deal of interest as a potent phytoestrogen (Milligan et al., 1999, 2000, 2002; Schaefer et al., 2003). Milligan et al. (2002) found that both enantiomers

had comparable binding affinities for the two isoforms of human recombinant estrogen receptors ER α and ER β , although (*S*)-**3** showed slightly higher affinity for ER β than (*R*)-**3**. In contrast, Schaefer et al. (2003) found racemic **3** to be selective for human recombinant ER β , and (*S*)-**3** to show moderately higher affinity for both receptors in a competitive binding assay.

Although **3** consumed directly from hops or beer is likely to be found as a racemic mixture (Stevens and Page, 2004), recent research suggests that other compounds in hops and beer may act as precursors to **3** *in vivo*. The major prenylflavonoid in beer, **1**, may be *O*-demethylated to **3** by endogenous microflora in the gut. This conversion has been observed *in vitro* using fecal cultures (Possemiers et al., 2005), and *in vivo* as demonstrated by the presence of **3** in human urine samples after oral administration of **1** (Possemiers et al., 2006). In addition, *in vitro* digestion studies using liver microsomes have shown that **1** may undergo *O*-demethylation (Nikolic et al., 2005), catalyzed by CYP1A2 enzymes (Guo et al., 2006).

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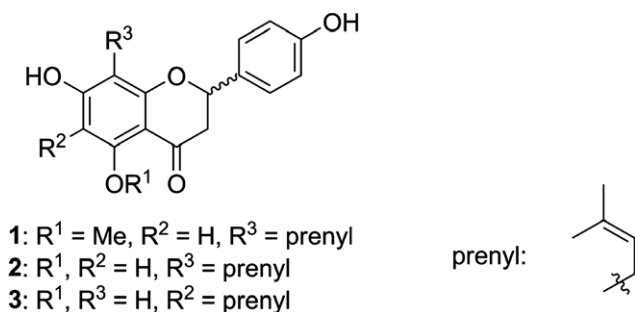
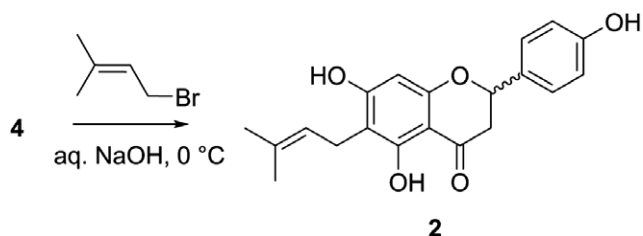


Fig. 1. Structures of the hop flavanones found in hops and beer.

The optical purity of **3** from hops has previously been examined using chiral chromatography, whereby the authors found that approximately equal levels of each enantiomer were present (Milligan et al., 2002). Although chiral chromatography may be used to determine the enantiomeric purity of compounds such as **3** (Kitaoka et al., 1998; Milligan et al., 2002), chiral columns can be costly. In order to overcome this shortcoming, we have developed a facile method for producing the diastereomeric (1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters of racemic naringenin (**4**), a flavanone derived from citrus, **2** and



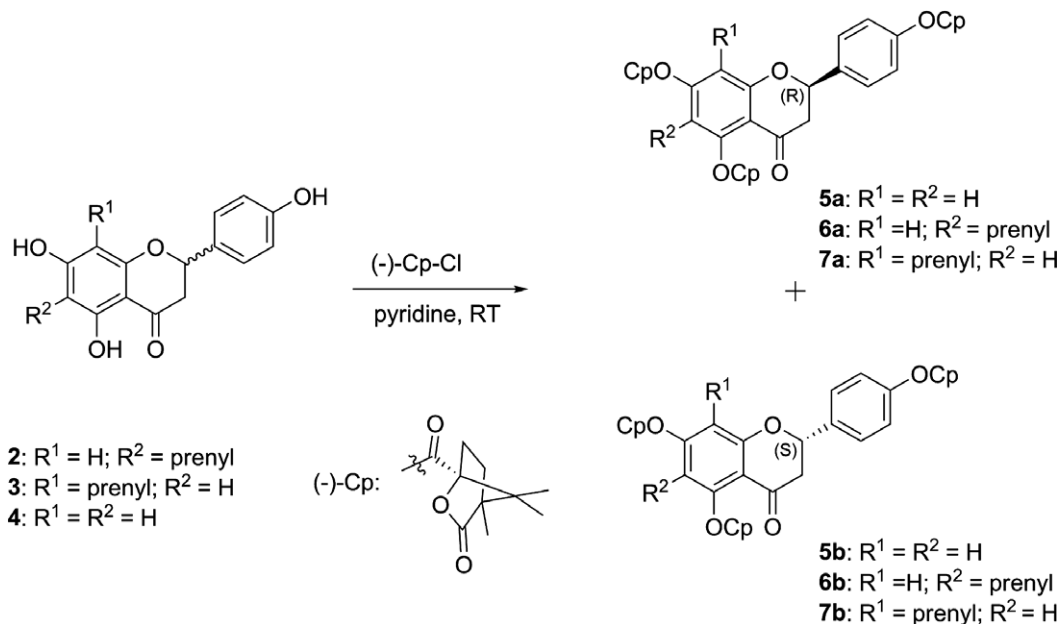
Scheme 1.

3, and subsequently separating them using reversed-phase high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC). Optically pure diastereomers were isolated using preparative chromatography, and the diastereomeric purity and absolute configuration were confirmed by HPLC and CD spectrometry.

2. Results and discussion

Racemic **3** was prepared from **4** using previously published methods (Gester et al., 2001). However, in our hands, published procedures for the synthetic preparation of **2** were unsatisfactory. Direct C-prenylation of **4** under basic conditions (Mizobuchi and Sato, 1984) and using Lewis acid catalysts (Jain et al., 1978) resulted in poor yields. A total synthesis of **2** has recently been described, but, final yields were still low (Bu et al., 1997). One drawback of direct nuclear prenylation is poor regioselectivity, yielding mixtures of various C- and O-alkylated products. It has been suggested that strongly hydrogen bonding solvents favor C-alkylation of phenoxide ions (Kornblum et al., 1963) due to solvation interactions interfering with the nucleophilic activity of the phenolate anion. By carrying out this reaction under aqueous conditions (Scheme 1), C-alkylation was favored, and at low temperatures, **2** was formed as the major product. Although over-alkylation was still apparent under these conditions, yield was satisfactory compared with previously described C-prenylation methods (Jain et al., 1978; Mizobuchi and Sato, 1984).

Naringenin (**4**) was used as a model flavonoid in order to optimize the esterification and chromatographic separation of 4',5,7-trihydroxyflavanones due to its commercial avail-



Scheme 2.

ability and established stereochemical properties (Gaffield, 1970). In order to produce diastereomeric esters that could be separated by column chromatography, (1*S*)-(–)-camphanoyl chloride was chosen as a resolving agent. (1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters have been previously employed in resolving chroman derivatives via crystallization (Estheruysen et al., 2005; Zehnter and Gerlach, 1995), as well as several different classes of compounds including carotenoids (Vecchi and Muller, 1979), binaphthols (Hua et al., 2001), and helicenols (Thongpanchang et al., 2000) either through crystallization or chromatographic methods. In order to avoid complex mixtures of mono-, di- and triesters, **4** was treated with a large excess of (1*S*)-(–)-camphanoyl chloride (Scheme 2), resulting in quantitative conversion to the tri-camphanoate (**5**) based on LCMS analysis and a characteristic hypsochromic shift in the UV spectrum.

Using a tertiary solvent system including aqueous MeOH and MeCN, near-baseline separation of **5a** and **5b** was achieved (Fig. 2a). These methods were applied to the hop prenylflavonoids **2** and **3**, and quantitative conversion to the tri-camphanoyl esters **6** and **7** was observed for all compounds based on HPLC. Due to the non-polar nature of the prenylflavonoids **6** and **7** relative to **5**, the mobile phase was adjusted accordingly to reduce retention time with minimal loss in resolution, and near-baseline separation (Fig. 2b and c).

In order to isolate each diastereomer for further analysis, several iterations of preparative HPLC were employed using chromatographic conditions analogous to analytical methods, eventually yielding diastereomers of >98% d.e., diastereomeric excess (Fig. 2). The isolated diastereomers of **5**, **6** and **7** were analyzed using CD spectrometry, and the observed spectra were similar to those previously observed for **1** (Gaffield, 1970; Prescott et al., 2002) and **3** (Kitaoka et al., 1998). It is known that 2*S* flavanones exhibit a positive Cotton effect in the $n \rightarrow \pi^*$ region, and a negative Cotton effect in the $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$ region of the CD spectrum (Gaffield, 1970). Based on the signs of the Cotton effects in these regions, absolute configurations were assigned to each diastereomer.

2.1. Concluding remarks

Herein, a facile method is thus described for the formation and chromatographic resolution of the diastereomeric (1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters of prenylated and non-prenylated flavanones using RP-HPLC. Despite the advantages in circumventing chiral chromatography via a simple and inexpensive esterification, recovering enantiomerically enriched flavanones using this method would require alkaline hydrolysis of isolated diastereomers. Further investigation is necessary to determine the extent of isomerization and racemization, which could occur via a chalcone intermediate, under various alkaline hydrolysis conditions. However, this method may be used to analyze the enantiomeric purity of various flavanones, and to

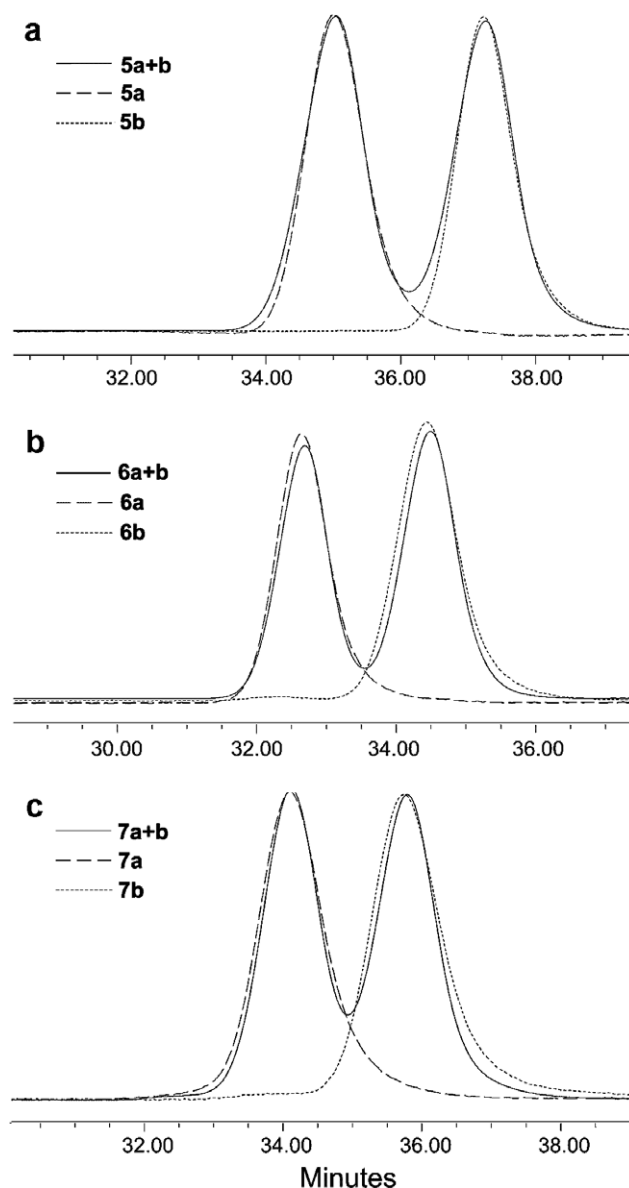


Fig. 2. Chromatographic separations of the (1*S*)-(–)-camphanic acid esters of (a) **5**, (b) **6**, and (c) **7**.

evaluate the effects of various treatments such as extractions or hydrolysis on the enantiomeric purity of those compounds when access to chiral chromatography is limited.

3. Experimental

3.1. General

All reagents were purchased from Sigma–Aldrich (St. Louis, MO) and HPLC-grade solvents were purchased from Fisher Scientific (Fairlawn, NJ). UV/Vis spectra were obtained on an HP8453 diode-array spectrophotometer (Agilent, Palo Alto, CA). ¹H NMR spectra were obtained in CDCl₃ using a Bruker 600 MHz spectrometer (Bruker

Biospin, Rheinstetten, Germany) at ambient temperatures. CD spectra were recorded using an AVIV 202 Circular Dichroism Spectrometer (AVIV Biomedical, Lakewood, NJ). ESIMS were recorded on a Micromass Q-TOF (Micromass, Manchester, UK) measured at 30 eV, coupled to an HP1100 HPLC gradient system (Agilent, Palo Alto, CA) equipped with DAD and applying the chromatographic methods described below.

3.2. HPLC methods

Analytical separations were carried out on a Waters 2695 System coupled to a 2996 PDA detector, using a 4 μ m Waters (Milford, MA) Nova-Pak[®] C18 column (3.9 \times 150 mm) equipped with a Nova-Pak[®] guard cartridge (4 μ m, 3.9 \times 20 mm). The following solvent systems were employed at a flow rate of 1 mL/min: (A) 40–80% MeCN in aq. AcOH (1%) at a flow rate of 1 mL/min over 40 min; (B) 40% MeOH, 24% MeCN, 36% aq. AcOH (1%) isocratic; (C) 50% MeOH, 20% MeCN, 30% aq. AcOH (1%) isocratic.

Preparative separations were carried out on an HP1050 quaternary gradient system coupled to a Waters 2996 PDA detector, using a 5 μ m Waters Sunfire[™] Prep C18 column (19 \times 150 mm) equipped with a Sunfire[™] Prep guard cartridge (5 μ m, 19 \times 10 mm). The following isocratic solvent systems were employed at a flow rate of 10 mL/min: (D) 40% MeCN in aq. AcOH (1%); (E) 45% MeOH, 22% MeCN, 33% 1% aq. AcOH; (F) 55% MeOH, 18% MeCN, 27% aq. AcOH (1%).

3.3. Prenylflavonoids

3.3.1. 6-Prenylnaringenin (2)

To a suspension of **4** (0.5 mmol) in H₂O (0.5 mL), stirred in an ice bath, was added dropwise 5 N aq. NaOH (2.0 mmol). The suspension was removed from the ice bath until the suspension became homogeneous, returned to the ice bath and allowed to cool to 0 °C before adding neat 3,3-dimethylallyl bromide (1.0 mmol). This emulsion became homogeneous, then heterogeneous as an insoluble tar began to form over 15 min. The heterogeneous mixture was washed with hexanes (3 \times 2 mL) before acidifying with 5% aq. HCl. The aqueous suspension was extracted with EtOAc (3 \times 4 mL), with organics combined and washed with 10% NaHCO₃ (4 \times 5 mL), dried (Na₂SO₄), filtered and the solvent removed under nitrogen flow. Crude product was subjected to preparative HPLC (Method D) and the major product was collected and recovered by lyophilization yielding 27 mg (16%) of desired product as an off-white powder. *R*_t: 11.5 min (Method A). UV $\lambda_{\text{max}}^{\text{MeOH}}$: 293, 334 sh. ¹H NMR spectroscopic data were in agreement with previously published spectra (Haensel and Schulz, 1988; Tabata et al., 1997). ESIMS (30 eV) *m/z* (rel. int.): 341.2 [MH]⁺ (32), 285.2 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (100); ESI-CAD-MS *m/z* (rel. int.): 285.2 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (42), 165.1 [MH–C₁₁H₁₂O₂]⁺ (100).

3.3.2. 8-Prenylnaringenin (3)

rac-8-Prenylnaringenin was produced synthetically from **4** (58 mg, 28% overall yield) as previously described by Gester et al. (2001). *R*_t: 7.5 min (Method A). UV $\lambda_{\text{max}}^{\text{MeOH}}$: 293, 334 sh. ¹H NMR spectroscopic data were in agreement with previously published spectra (Mizobuchi and Sato, 1984). ESIMS (30 eV) *m/z* (rel. int.): 341.2 [MH]⁺ (100), 285.2 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (9); ESI-CAD-MS *m/z* (rel. int.): 285.2 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (12), 165.1 [MH–C₁₁H₁₂O₂]⁺ (100).

3.4. Typical (1*S*)-(–)-camphanoylation of flavanones

To a solution of **3** (0.23 mmol) in pyridine (1.2 mL) was added (1*S*)-(–)-camphanoyl chloride (2.06 mmol, 9 equiv.). The resulting solution almost immediately became heterogeneous, and was stirred for 2 h. Quantitative conversion was observed by an HPLC analysis (Method B), and excess pyridine was removed under N₂. The resulting paste was dissolved in CH₂Cl₂ (5 mL) methylene chloride, washed 10% aq. NaHCO₃ (3 \times 5 mL), dried (MgSO₄) and filtered. Solvent was removed under N₂, providing crude **7a+b** (250 mg). The crude diastereomeric mixture was purified by preparative reversed-phase HPLC (Method F). Diastereomerically enriched fractions were combined and re-purified several times to yield each diastereomer >98% d.e. by HPLC (Method B). Fractions were stored at –20 °C to prevent hydrolysis of camphanic acid esters. Solvent was removed under nitrogen flow and lyophilization yielding 12 mg (35% yield) of each diastereomer.

3.4.1. (*R*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(–)-camphanoyl]-8-prenylnaringenin (7a)

*R*_t: 34.1 min (Method C). CD: [θ]₃₄₁ –15000; [θ]₃₀₉ +17000; [θ]₂₃₈ +300; [θ]₂₅₈ +7900; [θ]₂₇₅ +1800 (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\text{max}}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 258 (3.95), 319. ESIMS (30 eV) *m/z* (rel. int.): 881.6 [MH]⁺ (100); ESI-CAD-MS *m/z* (rel. int.): 881.7 [MH]⁺ (30), 825.6 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (16), 727.5 [MH–camphonolactone]⁺ (29), 645.5 [MH–Cp–C₄H₈]⁺ (100), 581.5 [MH–Cp–C₈H₈O]⁺ (63).

3.4.2. (*S*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(–)-camphanoyl]-8-prenylnaringenin (7b)

*R*_t: 35.7 min (Method C). CD: [θ]₃₄₁ +15000; [θ]₃₀₉ –17000; [θ]₂₃₈ +300; [θ]₂₅₄ –6500; [θ]₂₇₅ –800 (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\text{max}}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 258, (3.95), 319.0. ESIMS (30 eV) *m/z* (rel. int.): 881.6 [MH]⁺ (100); ESI-CAD-MS *m/z* (rel. int.): 881.7 [MH]⁺ (33), 825.6 [MH–C₄H₈]⁺ (16), 727.5 [MH–camphonolactone]⁺ (26), 645.5 [MH–Cp–C₄H₈]⁺ (100), 581.5 [MH–Cp–C₈H₈O]⁺ (71).

3.5. (1*S*)-(–)-camphanoylation of prenylflavanones

This method was used to separate the diastereomeric *tris*-(1*S*)-(–)-camphanate esters **6a** and **b** providing 7 mg (15% yield) of each diastereomer, and the diastereomeric naringenin *tris*-(1*S*)-(–)-camphanate esters **5a** and **b** were

separated using preparative chromatography (Method E), providing 10 mg (30% yield) of each diastereomer. The configuration of each respective diastereomer was characterized by CD spectrometry.

3.5.1. (*R*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(-)-camphanoyl]-naringenin (5a**)**

R_t : 35.0 min (Method B). CD: $[\theta]_{336} -9600$; $[\theta]_{307} +13000$; $[\theta]_{274} 300$; $[\theta]_{256} +3300$ (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\max}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 255 (3.90), 311. ESIMS (30 eV) m/z (rel. int.): 813.5 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (100); ESI-CAD-MS m/z (rel. int.): 813.6 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (40), 767.6 $[\text{MH}-\text{CH}_3\text{O}_2]^+$ (23), 659.4 $[\text{MH}-\text{camphonolactone}]^+$ (100), 633.4 $[\text{MH}-\text{Cp}]^+$ (22).

3.5.2. (*S*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(-)-camphanoyl]-naringenin (5b**)**

R_t : 37.3 min (Method B). CD: $[\theta]_{336} +11000$; $[\theta]_{307} -14000$; $[\theta]_{272} +600$; $[\theta]_{256} -4720$ (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\max}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 255 (3.90), 311. ESIMS (30 eV) m/z (rel. int.): 813.5 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (100); ESI-CAD-MS m/z (rel. int.): 813.6 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (50), 767.6 $[\text{MH}-\text{CH}_3\text{O}_2]^+$ (20), 659.4 $[\text{MH}-\text{camphonolactone}]^+$ (100), 633.4 $[\text{MH}-\text{Cp}]^+$ (23).

3.5.3. (*R*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(-)-camphanoyl]-6-prenylnaringenin (6a**)**

R_t : 32.7 min (Method C). CD: $[\theta]_{345} -15000$; $[\theta]_{313} +19000$; $[\theta]_{269} 0$; $[\theta]_{254} +3000$ (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\max}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 256 (3.94), 322. ESIMS (30 eV) m/z (rel. int.): 881.6 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (100); ESI-CAD-MS m/z (rel. int.): 881.7 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (25), 825.6 $[\text{MH}-\text{C}_4\text{H}_8]^+$ (75), 727.5 $[\text{MH}-\text{camphonolactone}]^+$ (15), 645.5 $[\text{MH}-\text{Cp}-\text{C}_4\text{H}_8]^+$ (100).

3.5.4. (*S*)-4',5,7-tris-*O*-[(1*S*)-(-)-camphanoyl]-6-prenylnaringenin (6b**)**

R_t : 34.5 min (Method C). CD: $[\theta]_{345} +15000$; $[\theta]_{313} -17000$; $[\theta]_{269} 0$; $[\theta]_{254} -6000$ (MeCN). UV $\lambda_{\max}^{\text{MeCN}}$ (log ϵ): 256 (3.94), 322. ESIMS (30 eV) m/z (rel. int.): 881.6 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (100); ESI-CAD-MS m/z (rel. int.): 881.7 $[\text{MH}]^+$ (30), 825.6 $[\text{MH}-\text{C}_4\text{H}_8]^+$ (76), 727.5 $[\text{MH}-\text{camphonolactone}]^+$ (15), 645.5 $[\text{MH}-\text{Cp}-\text{C}_4\text{H}_8]^+$ (100).

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