Stereocontrolled synthesis of (3Z,5E)-6-aryl-3-methylhexa-3,5-dien-1-ols, intermediates in the synthesis of strobilurin antibiotics

N. Ya. Grigorieva,* V. A. Popovsky, A. V. Stepanov, and N. G. Kolotyrkina

N. D. Zelinsky Institute of Organic Chemistry, Russian Academy of Sciences, 47 Leninsky prosp., 119991 Moscow, Russian Federation. Fax: +7 (499) 135 5328. E-mail: ves@ioc.ac.ru

(2E,4E)-5-Aryl-2-(2-benzyloxyethyl)penta-2,4-dien-1-als (aryl is phenyl and 4-methoxyphenyl) were reduced with NaBH₄ quantitatively and stereospecifically to the corresponding penta-2(E),4(E)-dien-1-ols. The hydroxymethyl group in the latter was transformed into a methyl one with a stereoselectivity of 92—97%. Debenzylation of the resulting (1E,3Z)-1-aryl-6-benzyloxy-4-methylhexa-1,3-dienes with AlCl₃ in the presence of PhNMe₂ afforded the target (3Z,5E)-6-aryl-3-methylhexa-3,5-dien-1-ols; the configuration of the C=C bonds in the conjugated aryl diene systems was retained at 95%.

Key words: stereocontrolled synthesis, strobilurins, dienols, debenzylation, dehydroxylation.

Recently, we have demonstrated that condensation of cinnamaldehyde and 4-methoxycinnamaldehyde with deprotonated N-(tert-butyl)-4-benzyloxybutanimine stereoselectively (\geq 98%) gives (2E,4E)-dienals 1a and 1b, respectively, in high yields (Scheme 1). With the aim of

using these compounds² for the design of the (1E,3Z)-1-aryl-4-methylalkadiene system of strobilurin antibiotics of the general formula $2,^{3,4}$ we studied a transformation of the formyl group of aldehydes 1a,b into a methyl one through the formation of intermediate dienols 3a,b and

Scheme 1

R = H(a), OMe(b)

Reagents and conditions: *i.* NaBH₄/EtOH, 3 h, 20 °C; *ii.* Py·SO₃/THF, 2.5 h, 0 °C; *iii.* LiAlH₄, 24 h, 20 °C; *iv.* BuLi/C₆H₁₄, 0 °C; ν . TsCl/HMPA—Et₂O (1:3), 0 °C, 2.5 h.

benzyloxyalkadienes **4a,b** followed by debenzylation of the latter (see Scheme 1). The present communication is concerned with detailed analysis of the above transformations.

Reduction of dienals 1a,b with NaBH₄ according to a standard procedure gives dienols 3a,b in quantitative yields. Their structures were confirmed by elemental analysis and physicochemical methods (primarily, ¹H NMR spectroscopy). For instance, C—H correlation methods and COSY revealed the following parameters of the H atoms of the diene system in dienol 3a, δ: 6.33 (d, J = 11.0 Hz); 6.61 (d, J = 15.5 Hz); 7.01 $(dd, J_1 = 11.0 \text{ Hz})$ $J_2 = 15.5$ Hz). Out of the pair of the aforementioned doublets, only the former at δ 6.33 shows NOE (2.2%) with $H_2C(1)$. Therefore, this signal can be assigned to HC(3)and, second, the (E)-configuration of the C(2)=C(3) bond can be concluded. This conclusion was confirmed by NOE (3.1%) between the H₂C(1') and H₂C(4) atoms. The latter doublet in the ¹H NMR spectrum of dienol **3a** (δ 6.61) was assigned to HC(5). Its coupling constant with HC(4)(J = 15.5 Hz) suggests the (E)-configuration of the C(4)=C(5) bond. The (E,E)-configuration of dienol **3b** was proved in a similar way.

Treatment of dienols 3a,b with the complex $Py \cdot SO_3$ followed by *in situ* reduction of the resulting sulfates with LiAlH₄ (method A)⁵ gives dienes 4a,b as major reaction products. Their structures were confirmed by NMR spectroscopy using C—H correlation, COSY, and NOE experiments as described above for compounds 3a,b.

However, dienes 4a,b are not the sole reaction products. According to ¹H NMR data, the final mixtures contain two by-products. Their total content does not exceed 10% in the reduction of dienol 3a and is ~25% in the case of compound **3b**. Since the high-resolution mass spectra of the reduction products show only the ions [M]⁺, $[M + Na]^+$, and $[M + K]^+$, we assume that the by-products are isomeric with compounds 4a and 4b regarding the position of the C=C bonds. Based on ¹H NMR data, we assigned structures 5a,b to the major dienes of the mixtures and structures 6a,b to the minor dienes of the mixtures. Indeed, the ¹H NMR spectra of the final mixture in the reduction of dienol 3a show two minor doublets for the terminal methylidene group at δ 5.04 and 4.93 with an integral intensity ratio of $\sim 2:1$. In addition, the spectra exhibit a doublet for the CH₂ group between the Ph ring

and the C=C bond (δ 3.46)⁶ and a signal for the CH₂ group between two C=C bonds (δ 2.98).⁶ Their integral intensity ratio is also ~2:1. A similar pattern was observed in the ¹H NMR spectra of the final mixture upon the reduction of dienol **3b**. Apart from the signals for diene **4b**, the spectra contain two doublets for the =CH₂ group at δ 5.0 and 4.90 with an integral intensity ratio of ~3:1 and doublets for the groups ArCH₂C=C (δ 3.40) and C=CCH₂C=C (δ 2.96) with an integral intensity ratio of ~3:1.

Variation of the conditions of the synthesis of sulfates from dienols $\bf 3a,b$ and their reduction (reaction temperature, reaction time, and replacement of LiAlH₄ by LiAl(OEt)H₃ or [AlH₃]) did not make the reaction more selective. The content of side dienes in compound $\bf 4a$ was lowered to ~5–7% by reversing the order of mixing of the reagents (see Experimental).

The high content of impurities in diene 4b and considerable losses of the target dienes during their purification by column chromatography prompted us to search for an alternative way of converting dienols 3a,b into compounds **4a,b**. For this purpose, we obtained tosylates from dienols **3a,b** and studied their reduction with LiAlH₄ (method B). In the case of dienol 3b, the target diene 4b contained no impurities 5b or 6b. However, the product was contaminated with (E)-isomer 7b (1 H NMR): the spectrum showed additional minor signals for the groups $H_2C(2)$ (t, δ 2.45) and HC(4) (d, δ 6.08). By comparing the integral intensities of these signals with the corresponding signals for diene 4b, we estimated the ratio of 4b: 7b at \sim 95: 5. Analytically pure diene 4b was isolated by flash chromatography. The content of (E)-isomer 7a in the transformation 3a→4a according to method B was ~20% (¹H NMR).

Thus, method A is preferred for the reduction of dienol 3a and method B, for the reduction of dienol 3b.

Debenzylation of benzyloxyalkadienes **4a,b** was *a priori* a difficult problem. Out of a number of methods recommended for deprotection of various benzyl ethers, ^{7–12} only one⁹ provided a satisfactory result: treatment of diene **4a** with AlCl₃ in the presence of PhNMe₂ afforded a mixture of the target dienol **8a** and its (*E*)-isomer **9a** in a ratio of 9:1 (Scheme 2). Similar treatment of diene **4b** gave a mixture of dienols **8b** and **9b** in a ratio of 9.5:0.5 (¹H NMR). Note that the deprotection of benzyl ethers containing a conjugated aryl diene system of C=C bonds

is not described in the references cited above. The target dienols **8a,b** were isolated by flash chromatography and characterized using physicochemical methods, including high-resolution mass spectrometry and ¹H NMR spectroscopy (C—H correlation, COSY, and NOE, as described for compound **3a**).

Experimental

UV spectra were recorded on a Specord UV-Vis instrument in ethanol. IR spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 577 spectrometer in thin films or in solutions in CHCl₃ (for alcohols). ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AC-200 spectrometer in CDCl₃ with reference to the signals of the solvent (δ 7.27 and 77.0, respectively). The signals for the olefinic protons in the ¹H NMR spectra were assigned from the NOE experiment. In the ¹³C NMR spectra of the compounds described, the signals for the C atoms of the benzene rings are omitted. Mass spectra (EI, 70 eV) were measured on a Kratos MS-30 instrument; peaks with $I_{\rm rel} > 10\%$ are cited only (except for molecular ion peaks). High-resolution mass spectra were measured on a micrOTOF II instrument (Bruker Daltonics) (ESI, m/z scan range 50—3000, positive ions (capillary voltage 4500 V)). Samples were syringed as solutions in acetonitrile, flow rate 3 μL min⁻¹, interface temperature 180 °C, nitrogen as a spraying gas (4.0 L min^{-1}) . Melting points were determined on a Kofler microscope stage. Column chromatography was performed on Silica gel 60 (0.04-0.06 mm, Fluka). Main solvents were purified as follows: diethyl ether and THF were kept over KOH, distilled successively over metallic Na and LiAlH₄, refluxed with sodium benzophenone ketyl until the solvent turned stable blue, and distilled immediately to a reaction vessel; hexane was distilled over metallic Na. A solution of BuLi in hexane was prepared according to a standard procedure. Experiments involving unstable reagents were carried out under argon in glassware kept at 160 °C for 12 h and cooled in an argon flow.

"Routine workup" of organic extracts consisted of washing to pH \sim 7, drying with Na₂SO₄, and concentration *in vacuo* on a rotary evaporator.

(2E,4E)-2-(2-Benzyloxyethyl)-5-phenylpenta-2,4-dien-1-ol (3a) was obtained by reduction of compound 1a (see Ref. 1) with NaBH₄ according to a standard procedure. Yield ~100%, b.p. 185 °C (6 • 10^{-2} Torr (bath)). Found (%): C, 81.55; H, 7.62. $C_{20}H_{22}O_2$. Calculated (%): C, 81.60; H, 7.53. UV, λ_{max}/nm (ϵ): 211 (22 570), 297 (25 070). IR, v/cm⁻¹: 3400, 3060, 3028, 2924, 2860, 2244, 1716, 1592, 1492, 1452, 1360, 1204, 1180, 1004, 960, 904, 696, 648. ¹H NMR, δ : 2.70 (t, 2 H, H₂C(1'), J = 6.2 Hz); 3.67 (t, 2 H, $H_2C(2')$, J = 6.2 Hz); 4.17 (s, 2 H, $H_2C(1)$); 4.57 (s, 2 H, $\underline{\text{H}}_2\text{CPh}$); 6.33 (d, 1 H, HC(3), J = 11.0 Hz); 6.61 (d, 1 H, HC(5), J = 15.5 Hz); 7.01 (dd, 1 H, HC(4), $J_1 = 11.0 Hz$, $J_2 = 15.5 \text{ Hz}$); 7.22–7.45 (m, 10 H, Ph). ¹³C NMR, δ : 29.82 (C(1')); 67.93 (C(1)); 69.56 C(2'); 73.19 $(\underline{C}H_2Ph)$; 124.00 (C(4)); 126.34 (C(3)); 133.27 (C(5)); 139.29 (C(2)). MS, m/z (I_{rel} (%)): 294 [M]⁺ (1.5), 186 (10), 157 (10), 155 (24.5), 143 (13), 141 (11), 130 (10.5), 129 (21), 128 (26), 117 (10), 115 (32), 107 (17.5), 105 (11.5), 104 (12.5), 101 (15), 95 (13), 92 (57), 91 (100), 88 (17), 80 (31), 78 (54.5), 77 (30), 76 (40), 69 (24), 67 (43), 65 (78), 63 (14).

(2E,4E)-2-(2-Benzyloxyethyl)-5-(4-methoxyphenyl)penta-2,4-dien-1-ol (3b) was obtained as described for compound 3a,

yield ~100%, m.p. 59-61 °C (from hexane-ether, 1:1). Found (%): C, 77.70; H, 7.57. C₂₁H₂₄O₃. Calculated (%): C, 77.75; H, 7.46. UV, $\lambda_{\text{max}}/\text{nm}$ (ϵ): 215 (12 000), 303 (31 500). IR, v/cm^{-1} : 3425, 3032, 3012, 2840, 1610, 1512, 1456, 1360, 1304, 1252, 1176, 1096, 1036, 964, 892, 852, 820, 700. ¹H NMR, δ : 2.68 (t, 2 H, H₂C(1'), J = 6.2 Hz); 2.82 (br.s, 1 H, OH); 3.66 (t, 2 H, H₂C(2'), J = 6.2 Hz); 3.83 (s, 3 H, MeO); 4.15 (s, 2 H, MeO); $H_2C(1)$; 4.56 (s, 2 H, \underline{H}_2CPh); 6.29 (d, 1 H, HC(3), J = 10.9 Hz); 6.54 (d, 1 H, HC(5), J = 15.4 Hz); 6.85 (dd, 1 H, HC(4), $J_1 = 10.9 \text{ Hz}, J_2 = 15.4 \text{ Hz}$; 6.88 (d, 2 H, Ar, J = 8.8 Hz); 7.25—7.46 (m, 7 H, Ar). ¹³C NMR, δ: 29.88 (C(1')); 55.27 (MeO); 68.10 $(C(1)); 69.71 (C(2)); 73.21 (\underline{CH}_{2}Ph); 122.06 (C(4)); 128.17$ (C(3)); 132.93 (C(5)); 138.24 (C(2)). MS, m/z (I_{rel} (%)): 324 $[M]^+$ (5), 187 (10), 185 (22), 160 (17.5), 147 (15), 134 (33.5), 121 (68.5), 115 (14), 92 (14), 91 (100), 77 (19), 65 (28), 55 (16), 51 (11), 43 (32.5), 42 (15), 39 (13).

(1E,3Z)-6-Benzyloxy-4-methyl-1-phenylhexa-1,3-diene (4a). Method A. A suspension of Py \cdot SO₃ (1.10 g, 7 mmol) in THF (50 mL) was vigorously stirred at −15 °C while a solution of dienol 3a (1.30 g, 4.42 mmol) in THF (20 mL) was added for 20 min. The reaction mixture was warmed to 0 °C, stirred at this temperature for 2.5 h, and cooled to −10 °C. A solution of LiAlH₄ (26.4 mmol) in THF (22 mL) was added dropwise. Then the mixture was slowly warmed to ~20 °C, stirred at this temperature for 24 h, and recooled to −10 °C. Water (1 mL), 15% NaOH (1 mL), and again water (3 mL) were successively added dropwise. The precipitate that formed was filtered off and thoroughly washed with tert-butyl methyl ether (TBME). After routine workup of the combined organic phases, the residue (1.15 g) was chromatographed on SiO₂ (50 g). Gradient elution from hexane to 10% TBME gave diene 4a (0.58 g, 50%) contaminated with dienes **5a** and **6a** (total content 6%) in a ratio of $\sim 2:1$ (¹H NMR). Analytically pure diene **4a** was isolated by HPLC, $R_{\rm f}$ 0.48 (10%) TBME in hexane). UV, $\lambda_{\text{max}}/\text{nm}$ (ϵ): 211 (18 120), 296 (26 170). IR, v/cm^{-1} : 3060, 3028, 2960, 2856, 1644, 1596, 1496, 1456, 1364, 1176, 1100, 1028, 960, 748, 696. ¹H NMR, δ: 1.90 (s, 3 H, MeC(4); 2.65 (t, 2 H, H₂C(5), J = 6.2 Hz); 3.62 (t, 2 H, H₂C(6), J = 6.27 Hz); 4.55 (s, 2 H, $\underline{\text{H}}_2\text{CPh}$); 6.11 (d, 1 H, HC(3), J = 11.0 Hz); 6.48 (d, 1 H, HC(1), J = 15.5 Hz); 7.05 (dd, 1 H, HC(2), $J_1 = 11.0 \text{ Hz}$, $J_2 = 15.5 \text{ Hz}$); 7.20-7.50 (m, 10 H, Ph). ¹³C NMR, δ: 24.46 (Me); 33.21 (C(5)); 68.91 (C(6)); 72.96 (CH₂Ph); 125.29 (C(2)); 126.19 (C(3)); 127.01 (C(1)); 136.71 (C(4)). MS, m/z (I_{rel} (%)): 278 [M]⁺ (14), 187 (13), 169 (10), 157 (47.5), 144 (10), 143 (10), 142 (15), 141 (14), 130 (31.5), 129 (26.5), 115 (19.5), 91 (100), 81 (14), 79 (13), 77 (12.5), 65 (10), 51 (16), 43 (10). High-resolution MS. Found: $[M + K]^{+}$. 317.1313. $C_{20}H_{22}O$. Calculated: $[M + K]^+$, 317.1302.

Method *B*. Sequential treatment of compound 3a with BuLi, TsCl, and LiAlH₄ as described below for compound 3b gave a ~4:1 mixture of dienes 4a and 7a (^{1}H NMR).

(1E,3Z)-6-Benzyloxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-4-methylhexa-1,3-diene (4b). Method A. Treatment of alcohol 3b with Py·SO₃ followed by *in situ* reduction of the resulting sulfate with LiAlH₄ as described above for compound 3a gave a mixture of dienes 4b, 5b, and 6b in a ratio of 4: 1.2: 0.4 (1 H NMR). The mixture was not separated by flash chromatography.

Method *B*. A solution of dienol **3b** (0.87 g, 2.7 mmol) in a mixture of Et₂O (17.5 mL) and HMPA (2.6 mL) was vigorously stirred at 0 °C while a solution of BuLi (3.23 mmol) in hexane (1.9 mL) and a solution of TsCl (0.62 g, 3.24 mmol) in HMPA (2.6 mL) were successively added. The reaction mixture was

stirred at 0 °C for 2.5 h and cooled to -15 °C. A solution of LiAlH₄ (18.7 mmol) in THF (11 mL) was added dropwise and the mixture was slowly warmed to ~20 °C, stirred at this temperature for 20 h, and subjected to the same workup as for compound 4a (method A) to give an oily mixture (0.9 g) containing dienes 4b and 7b in a ratio of ~95:5 (1H NMR). Flash chromatography of this mixture on SiO₂ with gradient elution from hexane to 50% benzene gave analytically pure benzyloxyhexadiene **4b** (0.5 g, 50%), b.p. 165 °C (0.1 Torr (bath)). Found (%): C, 81.65; H, 7.60. C₂₁H₂₄O₂. Calculated (%): C, 81.78; H, 7.84. UV, $\lambda_{\text{max}}/\text{nm}$ (ϵ): 215 (8600), 303 (22 200). IR, ν/cm^{-1} : 3032, 2984, 2856, 1604, 1512, 1460, 1360, 1300, 1248, 1180, 1100, 1032, 960, 880, 864, 850, 812, 736, 696. ¹H NMR, δ: 1.89 (s, 3 H, MeC(4); 2.63 (t, 2 H, H₂C(5), J = 7.2 Hz); 3.61 (t, 2 H, H₂C(6), J = 7.2 Hz); 3.83 (s, 3 H, MeO); 4.57 (s, 2 H, C $\underline{\text{H}}_2\text{Ph}$); 6.08 (d, 1 H, HC(3), J = 10.9 Hz); 6.42 (d, 1 H, HC(1), J = 15.5 Hz);6.87 (d, 2 H, Ar, J = 8.8 Hz); 6.90 (dd, 1 H, HC(2), $J_1 = 10.9$ Hz, $J_2 = 15.5 \text{ Hz}$; 7.20–7.50 (m, 7 H, Ph). ¹³C NMR, δ : 24.46 (MeC(3)); 33.11 (C(5)); 55.29 (MeO); 68.88 (C(6)); 72.94 $(\underline{CH_2Ph}); 123.30 (C(2)); 128.36 (C(3)); 130.00 (C(1)); 138.42$ (C(4)). MS, m/z (I_{rel} (%)): 308 [M]⁺ (51), 188 (21), 187 (96), 174 (13), 173 (22), 172 (13), 160 (60), 159 (44), 158 (31), 157 (24), 145 (17), 144 (21), 141 (24), 135 (10), 134 (32), 131 (32), 129 (39), 128 (28), 122 (10), 121 (45), 115 (14), 92 (19), 91 (100), 79 (29), 77 (49), 69 (18), 65 (15), 55 (20), 44 (11), 42 (17).

(3Z,5E)-3-Methyl-6-phenylhexa-3,5-dien-1-ol (8a). A solution of benzyl ether 4a (0.41 g, 1.51 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (1.5 mL) was vigorously stirred at 20 °C while PhNMe₂ (0.8 mL, 6.04 mmol) and anhydrous AlCl₃ (0.61 g, 4.53 mmol) were successively added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 1 h and then cooled to 0 °C. Dilute HCl (1:10, 12 mL) was added dropwise and the resulting layers were separated after 10 min. The product from the aqueous layer was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (3×7 mL). After routine workup of the combined extracts, the residue (0.42 g) contained a mixture of dienol 8a and its (E,E)-isomer 9a in a ratio of ~9:1 (¹H NMR). Flash chromatography of this mixture on SiO₂ (25 g) with gradient elution from hexane to 40% TBME gave dienol **8a** (0.12 g). UV, λ_{max}/nm (ϵ): 235 (15 040), 301 (33 840). IR, v/cm⁻¹: 3620, 3445, 3036, 3008, 2960, 2928, 2884, 1700, 1640, 1596, 1496, 1448, 1380, 1364, 1232, 1196, 1044, 964, 884, 808, 620. ¹H NMR, δ: 1.56 (br.s, 1 H, OH); 1.93 (s, 3 H, MeC(3)); 2.59 (t, 2 H, $H_2C(2)$, J = 6.6 Hz); 3.78 (t, 2 H, $H_2C(1)$, J = 6.6 Hz); 6.20 (d, 1 H, HC(4), J = 10.9 Hz); 6.50 $(d, 1 H, HC(6), J = 15.4 Hz); 7.05 (dd, 1 H, HC(5), J_1 = 10.9 Hz,$ $J_2 = 15.4 \text{ Hz}$); 7.08–7.42 (m, 5 H, Ph). ¹³C NMR, δ : 24.12 (MeC(3)); 35.87 (C(2)); 60.90 (C(1)); 124.93 (C(5)); 126.27 (C(4)); 131.09 (C(6)); 137.78 (C(3)). High-resolution MS. Found: $[M + H]^+$, 189.1255; $[M + Na]^+$, 211.1083; $C_{13}H_{16}ONa$. Calculated: $[M + H]^+$, 189.1274; $[M + Na]^+$, 211.1093.

(3Z,5E)-6-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-3-methylhexa-3,5-dien-1-ol (8b) was obtained as described above for compound 8a. Yield

70%, m.p. 55–57 °C (from hexane—ether, 1:1). Found (%): C, 77.02; H, 8.10. C₁₄H₁₈O₂. Calculated (%): C, 77.03; H, 8.31. UV, $\lambda_{\text{max}}/\text{nm}$ (ϵ): 224 (10 900), 303 (35 000). IR, v/cm^{-1} : 3640, 3450, 3008, 2960, 2840, 1604, 1512, 1460, 1448, 1384, 1304, 1248, 1176, 1040, 960, 840, 816, 664. ¹H NMR, δ: 1.67 (t, 1 H, OH, J = 5.8 Hz); 1.88 (s, 3 H, MeC(3)); 2.56 (t, 2 H, H₂C(2), J = 6.4 Hz); 3.76 (dt, 2 H, H₂C(1), $J_1 = 5.8 \text{ Hz}$, $J_2 = 6.4 \text{ Hz}$); 3.81 (s, 3 H, MeO); 6.19 (d, 1 H, HC(4), J = 10.9 Hz); 6.44 (d, 1 H, HC(6), J = 15.5 Hz); 6.86 (d, 2 H, Ar, J = 8.7 Hz); 6.91(dd, 1 H, HC(5), $J_1 = 10.9$ Hz, $J_2 = 15.5$ Hz); 7.35 (d, 2 H, Ar, J = 8.7 Hz). ¹³C NMR, δ : 24.04 (MeC(3)); 35.82 (C(2)); 55.29 (MeO); 60.89 (C(1)); 122.97 (C(5)); 128.79 (C(4)); 130.64 (C(6)), 134.53 (C(3)). MS, m/z (I_{rel} (%)): 219 [M + 1]⁺ (20), 218 [M]⁺ (100), 188 (16), 187 (70), 173 (14), 172 (34), 159 (22), 158 (21), 144 (18), 134 (12), 121 (29), 115 (29), 101 (10), 91(13), 78 (15), 76 (11), 59 (41), 56 (11), 45 (10), 43 (26), 42 (19), 41 (11).

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