CHEMICAL STUDIES ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF PENICILLINS - I: SYNTHESIS OF CYCLIC DISULFIDES AND THIOSULFINATES RELATED TO ASPARAGUSIC ACID

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Abstract - The synthesis of cyclic disulfides and thiosulfinates related to Asparagusic acid from penicillin sulfoxides are described.

In connection with our synthetic program on immunomodulating disulfides \textsuperscript{1a} and thiosulfinates \textsuperscript{1b} related to Asparagusic acid \textsuperscript{1c}, we have initiated studies in the preparation of various substituted analogs of the general structure \textsuperscript{A}. Availability of these derivatives might provide insight into the understanding of the mode of action as well as structure-activity relationships of this interesting class of compounds. In addition, we are intrigued by the possibility of preparing such compounds from readily available starting materials of type \textsuperscript{B}, which is derived from 6-aminopenicillanic acid (6-APA). Herein we report some of our preliminary results.

\begin{align*}
&\text{\textsuperscript{A}} \quad n = 0, \quad R = H \\
&\text{\textsuperscript{B}} \quad x = \text{O, S}
\end{align*}

Our strategy was based on the Morin reaction \textsuperscript{4a} in which a penicillin sulfoxide is thermolysed and undergoes a "retro-ene" reaction to give a sulfenic acid, which could then be captured by an internal or external nucleophile (or electrophile) to give new penams and cephams structures. One important application of this process is the trapping of the sulfenic acid with mercaptans to form disulfides \textsuperscript{4b}.
We envision that by subjecting 6-substituted penicillin sulfoxides of type ζ to similar thermolytic conditions, we could obtain bycyclic β-lactams 5 of type δ, which should enable us to further elaborate into our desired products (Scheme I).

Scheme I

6-[(1-Acetylthioethyl)penicillinates 2b/ζ appeared to be attractive targets because their synthesis should be straightforward from the corresponding hydroxyethyl analogs, which are important intermediates in the synthesis of penems and carbapenems 6. Thus, the acetylthioethyl-sulfide 2a 7 was obtained in 73 % yield (based on recovery of starting material) from 3a 3 using the Mitsunobu/Volante conditions 8 [2 equiv triphenylphosphine, 2 equiv diethylazodicarboxylate (DEAD), 1.2 equiv thioacetic acid]. In contrast, the corresponding (S)-isomer 3c 3 failed to give any substitution product 9.

Oxidation of 2a with sodium metaperiodate, (THF/water/2-propanol) gave an easily separable mixture of the isomeric sulfoxides 2b and 2c (31 % and 53 % respectively), together with only 4 % of the sulfone 2d. We thought that the deprotection to generate the free mercaptan function is not necessary if the acetyl group could be removed after the cyclization.
Indeed, heating a mixture of either the α- or β-sulfoxide with imidazole (2.1 equiv) in dioxane (3h/100°C) gave the bicyclic β-lactam 48 in 20 % yield, together with 8 % of the unstable unsaturated disulfide 5 (Scheme II). On the other hand, refluxing a solution of 2b or 2c in toluene (20 h) was sufficient to produce the unconjugated disulfide 4b in 40 % yield. However, the most expedient method for the preparation of 4b was heating a solution of the sulfoxide in dioxane (120°C, 16 h, 1 g/10 ml, 78 %) with approximately two equiv of water. Disulfide 4b was then isomerized into 4a quantitatively by stirring a methylene chloride solution of 4b for 1 h, in the presence of a catalytic amount of triethylamine.

Scheme II

[Chemical structures and reactions are shown in the diagram.]

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The formation of disulfide $\sim$ in slightly basic medium could best be explained by the intermediacy of the sulfine $\sim$ (Scheme II), which underwent subsequent isomerization to the unsaturated sulfenic acid $\sim$. Taking this into account, we prepared analogously the trans-6(S)-(1(S)-acetylthioethyl) sulfoxide $\sim$ from $\sim^3$. Treating $\sim$ under similar conditions (120°C, dioxane, 1.2 equiv imidazole), disulfide $\sim$ was obtained as the exclusive product, although in low yield (18 %)$^{12}$. The competing cyclization reaction as observed before in the cis-isomer could not have taken place in the latter case.

$\sim$ was converted to a mixture of the thiosulfinates $\sim^g/\sim^a$ by sodium metaperiodate oxidation and they were isolated in 20 % and 40 % yields after column chromatography. Ozonolysis of $\sim^g/\sim^a$ (dichloromethane/-78°C), followed by reductive work-up (dimethylsulfide, methanol/triethylamine) gave the N-unsubstituted derivatives $\sim^b/\sim^b$ in 50 % and 30 % yields respectively$^{13}$. Alternatively ozonolysis of $\sim$ (dichloromethane/-78°C) followed by the usual reductive work-up afforded directly $\sim^b/\sim^b$ in 61 % overall yield, and in the ratio of 3:1, with preference for the isomer $\sim^b$. It is interesting to note that the $\alpha$-sulfoxides are formed predominately$^{14}$, and is probably due to preferential attack of the oxidants from the sterically less hindered side.

These bicyclic thiosulfinates are stable crystalline compounds and the $\beta$-lactam nitrogen behave similarly to the other mono and bicyclic azetidinones$^{15}$. More noteworthy is the reaction with benzyl chloroformate (dichloromethane/triethylamine/20°C) to give the N-carbobenzyloxy derivatives $\sim^c/\sim^c$. In spite of their seemingly high reactivity ($\gamma_{CO}$: 1840 cm$^{-1}$), they could be isolated in moderate yield by silica gel chromatography (49 % and 37 % from $\sim^b$ and $\sim^b$ respectively). The corresponding monocyclic amides $\sim^f$ (57 %) and $\sim^g$ (45 %) were obtained directly from $\sim^b$ and $\sim^b$ respectively when the reaction was performed in the presence of one equiv of cyclohexylmethylamine.

![Chemical structures](image-url)
The biological properties of these derivatives are being evaluated and will be reported in due course.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank Mr. Karl Wagner for his expert technical assistance and Dr. Hans Fliri for many helpful discussions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Present address: Chemical Development Pharma/Agro, Sandoz AG, Basel, Switzerland.


5. Intramolecular trapping of the sulfenic acid intermediate by sulfur nucleophiles has been described. See for example: H. Tanida, R. Muneyuki and T. Tsushima, Tetrahedron Lett., 1975, 16, 3063.

7. Selected physical data:

2a) mp 116-118°C, [α]_D^20 +266.5° (c 0.89, CH₂OH)

2b) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.33 (s, 3), 1.60 (d, 3, J = 6.5 Hz), 1.62 (s, 3), 2.40 (s, 3), 3.82 (s, 3), 3.87 (dd, 1, J = 12.5, 4 Hz), 3.91 (dq, 1, J = 12.5, 6.5 Hz), 4.35 (s, 1), 4.60 (d, 1, J = 4 Hz).

2c) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.21 (s, 3), 1.56 (d, 3, J = 7 Hz), 1.68 (s, 3), 2.35 (s, 3), 3.81 (s, 3), 4.02 (dd, 1, J = 12.5, 5 Hz), 4.21 (dq, 1, J = 12.5, 7 Hz), 4.59 (s, 1), 4.69 (d, 1, J = 5 Hz).

4a) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.37 (d, 3, J = 7.5 Hz), 2.10 (s, 3), 2.27 (s, 3) 3.79 (s, 3), 3.92 (dq, 1, J = 7.5, 0.8 Hz), 3.98 (dd, 1, J = 4, 0.8 Hz), 5.83 (d, 1, J = 4 Hz).

4b) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.34 (d, 3, J = 7 Hz), 1.91 (br s, 3), 3.78 (s, 3), 3.87 (dq, 1, J = 7, 0.8 Hz), 3.91 (dd, 1, J = 3.5, 0.8 Hz), 4.86 (s, 1), 4.97 (br s, 1), 5.15 (br d, 1, J = 1 Hz), 5.86 (d, 1, J = 3.5 Hz).

5. Uv(CH₃OH) λ max: 220 (14210), 267 (sh, 5790), 311 (5580), 376 (15800),

nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.58 (d, 3, J = 6.8 Hz), 1.86 (s, 3), 2.18 (d, 3, J = 0.5 Hz), 3.66 (s, 3), 4.80 (dq, 1, J = 6.8, 0.5 Hz), 6.97 (br, 1), 7.12 (d, 1, J = 0.5 Hz).

9a) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.73 (d, 3, J = 7 Hz), 1.91 (s, 3), 2.24 (s, 3), 3.82 (s, 3), 4.38 (dq, 1, J = 7, 0.8 Hz), 4.60 (dd, 1, J = 3.5, 0.8 Hz), 5.97 (d, 1, J = 3.5 Hz).

9b) Nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.44 (d, 3, J = 7 Hz), 2.29 (s, 3), 2.45 (s, 3), 4.00 (s, 3), 4.51 (dq, 1, J = 7, 0.8 Hz), 4.76 (dd, 1, J = 4.5, 0.8 Hz), 6.57 (d, 1, J = 4.5 Hz).

9c) Ir(KBr) 1830, 1740, 1380, 1330 cm⁻¹; nmr(CDC₁₃) δ 1.73 (d, 3, J = 7 Hz), 4.40 (dq, 1, J = 7, 1 Hz), 4.54 (dd, 1, J = 4, 1 Hz), 5.30 (s, 2), 5.86 (d, 1, J = 4 Hz), 7.40 (s, 5).
10c. Nmr(CDC$_3$) $\delta$ 1.42 (d, 3, $J = 7$ Hz), 4.40 (dq, 1, $J = 7$, 1 Hz), 4.48 (dd, 1, $J = 5$, 1 Hz), 5.26 (d, 1, $J = 12.5$ Hz), 5.34 (d, 1, $J = 12.5$ Hz), 6.21 (d, 1, $J = 5$ Hz), 7.40 (m, 5).

11. Nmr(CDC$_3$) $\delta$ 0.9-1.83 (m, 11), 1.52 (d, 3, $J = 7$ Hz), 3.12 (m, 2), 3.41 (dd, 1, $J = 11.5$, 10 Hz), 4.46 (dq, 1, $J = 10$, 7 Hz), 4.92 (d, 1, $J = 12.5$ Hz), 5.14 (d, 1, $J = 12.5$ Hz), 5.58 (dd, 1, $J = 11.5$, 9 Hz), 6.90-7.10 (br, 2), 7.42 (s, 5).

12. Nmr(CDC$_3$) $\delta$ 0.80-1.80 (m, 11), 1.44 (d, 3, $J = 6.5$ Hz), 3.12 (m, 2), 3.77 (m, 2), 5.09 (s, 2), 6.23 (m, 1), 6.52 (br, d, 1, $J = 7.5$ Hz), 7.02 (br, 1), 7.33 (m, 5).


9. Only olefinic products were obtained.

10. Similar results were obtained when the thermolysis was performed in the presence of one equiv of pyridine.


12. This compound is unstable on silica gel.

13. Yields were not optimized.

14. We have observed in a sample of $\alpha\beta$, proton signals (<5 %) which could be attributed to the $\beta$-isomer. Structural assignment of these thiosulfimates was based mainly on evidences derived from the NMR chemical shifts of the respective compounds.

15. Unpublished results: e.g. alkylation at nitrogen with bromoacetates.

Received, 5th October, 1987