

## An Efficient Synthetic Route to ( $\pm$ )-Altholactone via Cis-2,5-disubstituted Dihydrofuran

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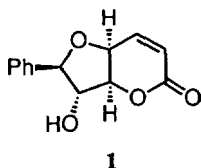
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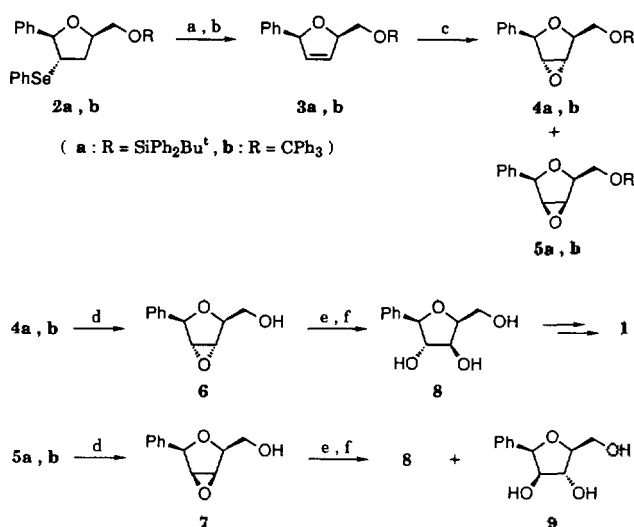
Received April 21, 1993

In principle, there are two possible approaches to the synthesis of tetrahydrofuran-based molecules. While one is the construction of properly functionalized acyclic derivatives followed by cyclization,<sup>1</sup> the other is the formation of tetrahydrofuran followed by requisite functionalization. Since more stereocontrolled functionalization can be achieved in a ring system, probably the latter approach is sometimes advantageous depending on the target structures. In this regard we developed the stereoselective routes to 2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofurans.<sup>2</sup> In this paper we wish to describe the successful application of the second approach to the synthesis of ( $\pm$ )-altholactone **1**<sup>3</sup> using cis-2,5-disubstituted tetrahydrofuran, of which (+)-enantiomer displays cytotoxicity *in vitro* (BS, 9KB) and inhibitory activity *in vivo* against P388 leukemia.<sup>4</sup>



Phenylselenenyl ethers **2a** and **2b**<sup>2a</sup> reacted with MCPBA in the presence of potassium carbonate and 3-*t*-butyl-4-hydroxy-5-methylphenyl sulfide (BHMPs), and then the resulting selenoxides were heated at 55°C to furnish 2,5-dihydrofurans **3a** and **3b** in 74% and 77% overall yield, respectively (Scheme 1).<sup>5</sup> Epoxidation of **3a** with MCPBA in the presence of sodium bicarbonate and BHMPs<sup>6</sup> produced epoxides **4a** and **5a** in 48% yield along with 17% of recovered **3a** after 3 days at room temperature, and in 58% yield at 50°C. On the other hand, 2,5-dihydrofuran **3b** under the same reaction conditions afforded epoxides **4b** and **5b** in 73% yield at room temperature, and in 77% yield at 50°C.<sup>5,7</sup> After chromatographic separation, **4a** and **5a** were treated with tetra-*n*-butylammonium fluoride to provide alcohols **6** and **7** in 96% and 94% yield, respectively. On the other hand, **4b** and **5b** were deprotected with *p*-toluenesulfonic acid in methanolic THF to give **6** and **7** in 91% and 88% yield, respectively.

The next sequence by our original plan was to oxidize **6** to the corresponding aldehyde followed by *cis*-olefination using *t*-butyl (phosphoranylidene)acetate<sup>8</sup> and acid-catalyzed cyclization. However, much efforts to convert **6** into the desired aldehyde failed, and instead 5-phenyl-2-furaldehyde was obtained as the major product. Accordingly, hydrolysis of the epoxy groups of **6** and **7** was attempted. Epoxides



Reagents: a. MCPBA (10 eq.)/K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>/BHMPs (0.2 eq.)/THF-H<sub>2</sub>O (3 : 1)/0°C. b. 55°C. c. MCPBA (2.5 eq.)/NaHCO<sub>3</sub>/BHMPs (0.2 eq.)/ClCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>Cl/RT, 3d or 50°C, 8 h. d. **4a**→**6** and **5a**→**7**: *n*-Bu<sub>4</sub>NF/aq. THF/RT. **4b**→**6** and **5b**→**7**: *p*-TsOH (1.5 eq.)/THF-MeOH (3 : 1)/RT. e. ZnCl<sub>2</sub> (0.1 eq.)/HCOOH/RT. f. K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>/MeOH/RT.

### Scheme 1.

**6** was solvolyzed in formic acid in the presence of zinc chloride<sup>9</sup> and the resulting formates in methanol in the presence of potassium carbonate to furnish only the desired triol **8** in 95% overall yield. The same sequential treatment of **7** produced the desired **8** in 73% overall yield along with 11% of the isomeric triol **9**.<sup>10</sup> Since **8** was already transformed into (+)-altholactone **1**,<sup>3b</sup> our synthetic route to triol **8** corresponds to a formal synthesis of ( $\pm$ )-altholactone.

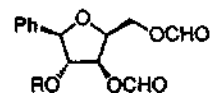
**Acknowledgement.** This work was supported by the Organic Chemistry Research Center sponsored by the Korea Science and Engineering Foundation

### References and Notes

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2. (a) S. H. Kang, T. S. Hwang, W. J. Kim, and J. K. Lim, *Tetrahedron Lett.*, **32**, 4015 (1991); **31**, 5917 (1990); (b) *idem*, *Bull. Korean Chem. Soc.*, **11**, 455 (1990).
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5. Carefully controlled reaction conditions were necessary to minimize the formation of 2-alkoxymethyl-5-phenyl-furan.
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S. Inoue, S. Sugiura, and H. Kakoi, *Chem. Commun.*, 64 (1972).

7. Other peroxides including dimethyldioxirane did not produce the desired epoxides cleanly.
8. J. M. Tronchet and B. Gentile, *Hel. Chim. Acta.*, **62**, 2091 (1979).
9. In the absence of zinc chloride the reaction was very slow and did not proceed cleanly. The resulting products were a mixture of **8**, **8a** and **8b** (5 : 30 : 65).



**8a**: R = H  
**8b**: CHO

10. All new compounds and triol **8** showed satisfactory spectral data.