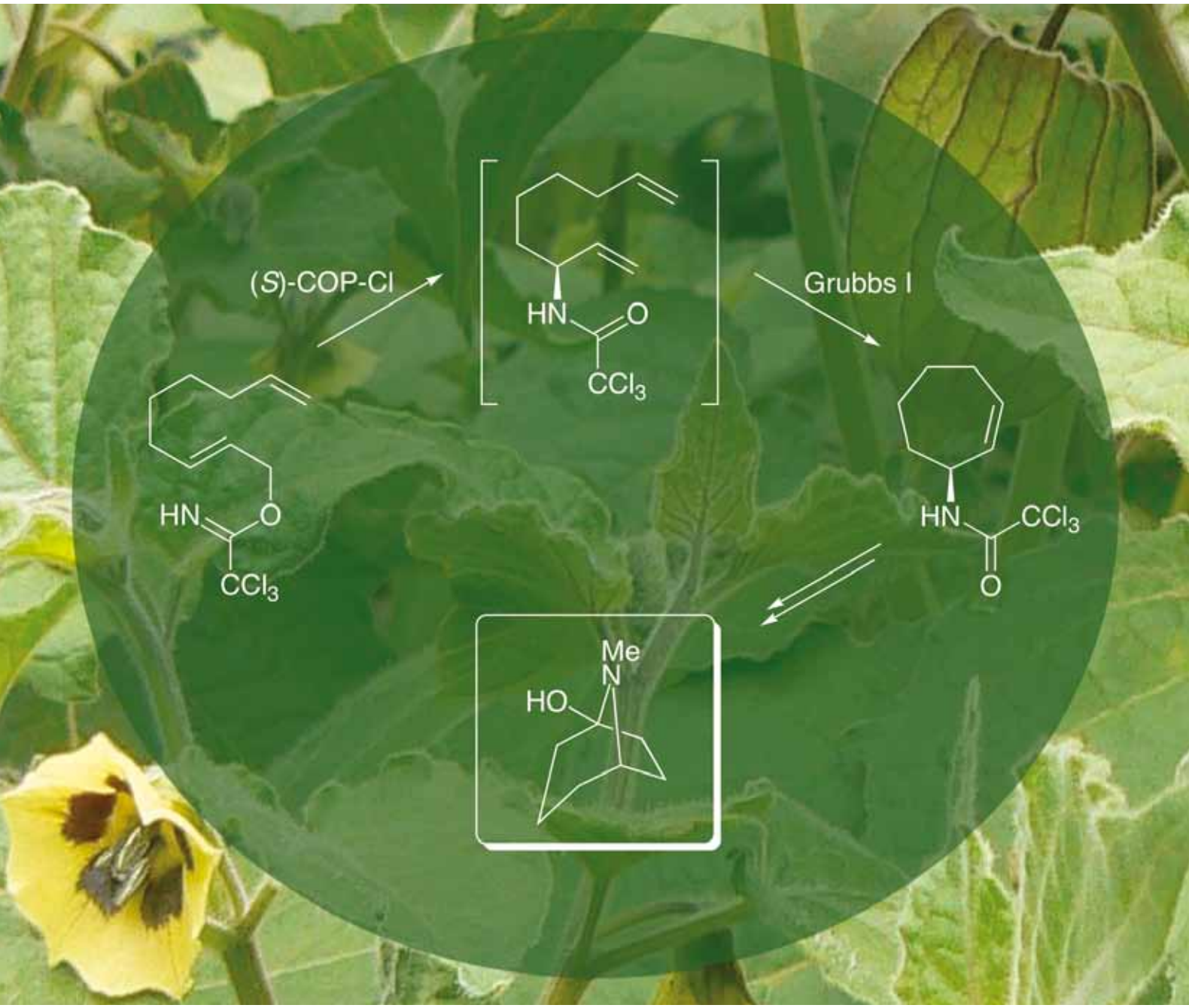
Organic & Biomolecular Chemistry

www.rsc.org/obc

Volume 7 | Number 13 | 7 July 2009 | Pages 2657–2820



ISSN 1477-0520

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Chemical Biology

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1477-0520(2009)7:13;1-E

A stereoselective synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine using a tandem aza-Claisen rearrangement and ring closing metathesis reaction†

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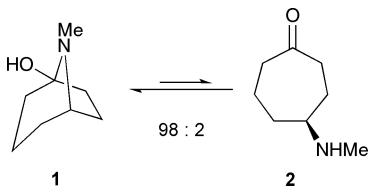
Received 14th April 2009, Accepted 6th May 2009
First published as an Advance Article on the web 13th May 2009
DOI: 10.1039/b907341h

A stereoselective synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine, a tropane alkaloid from *Physalis peruviana* Linne has been developed using a one-pot tandem aza-Claisen rearrangement and ring closing metathesis reaction to form the key amino-substituted cycloheptene ring.

Introduction

(+)-Physoperuvine **1** is a tropane alkaloid found in the leaves and roots of the Indian plant *Physalis peruviana* Linne.[1] Based on chemical and spectroscopic studies, the structure of (+)-physoperuvine was originally assigned as 3-methylaminocycloheptanone.[1] A re-investigation using primarily, X-ray crystallography allowed determination of the absolute configuration and showed that the structure is (*S*)-4-methylaminocycloheptanone **2**, which is in equilibrium with the bicyclic tautomer **1** (Scheme 1).[2,3] Analysis of the equilibrium using both CD and NMR spectroscopy revealed that (+)-physoperuvine exists almost entirely in the bicyclic form.[2,4]

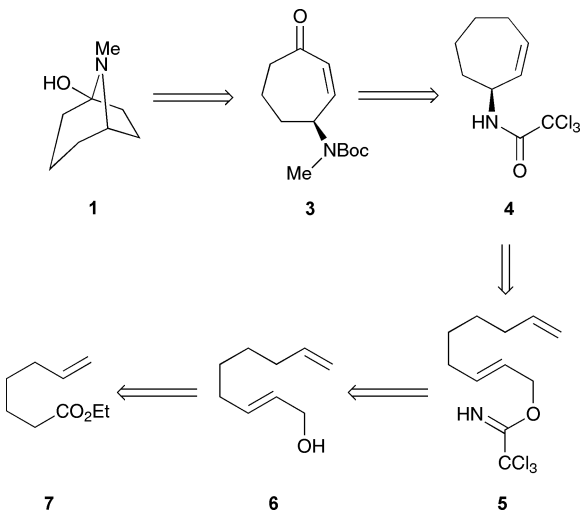


Scheme 1

Elucidation of the bicyclic hemiaminal structure of **1** has resulted in a number of stereoselective syntheses of (+)-physoperuvine and its enantiomer.[5] The groups of Ogasawara[5a] and Majewski[5b,c] synthesised (+)-physoperuvine by desymmetrisation of *meso*-intermediates while Wightman and co-workers synthesised (−)-physoperuvine by cycloaddition of cyclohepta-1,3-diene with an α-chloronitroso derived carbohydrate.[5d,e] Recently, we reported the highly efficient synthesis of 5-, 6-, 7- and 8-membered carbocyclic amides from allylic trichloroacetimidates using a one-pot tandem Overman rearrangement and ring-closing metathesis (RCM) reaction.[6] A stereoselective version of this process was also achieved for the preparation of *N*-(cyclohexenyl)-trichloroacetamides using chiral palladium(II)-catalysts.[6] In this paper, we report the first use of the asymmetric version of this one-pot tandem process for the highly efficient synthesis of an *N*-(cycloheptenyl)-trichloroacetamide and the elaboration of this carbocyclic amide to complete a novel total synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine.

Results and discussion

As outlined in Scheme 2, our strategy for synthesising **1** required the asymmetric synthesis of (*S*)-*N*-(cycloheptenyl)-trichloroacetamide **4**. It was proposed that this could be achieved using an asymmetric one-pot tandem Overman rearrangement and RCM reaction of allylic trichloroacetimidate **5**, which in turn could be easily prepared from commercially available ethyl 6-heptenoate **7** using standard procedures. After the one-pot process, the final stage would then involve an allylic oxidation of the cycloheptene ring leading to ketone **3**. Hydrogenation and deprotection of **3** would then give aminoketone **2**, which would cyclise to form (+)-physoperuvine **1**.



Scheme 2 Retrosynthesis of (+)-physoperuvine **1**.

Synthesis of key allylic trichloroacetimidate **5** started from commercially available ethyl 6-heptenoate **7** which was reduced to 6-hepten-1-ol **8** in 94% yield using DIBAL-H (Scheme 3). 6-Hepten-1-ol **8** was then subjected to a one-pot Swern oxidation and Horner–Wadsworth–Emmons reaction[7] which gave (*E*)-α,β-unsaturated ester **9** in 85% yield over the two steps. Allylic alcohol **6** was then formed by DIBAL-H reduction of **9** and this was converted to allylic trichloroacetimidate **5** using trichloroacetonitrile and catalytic amounts of DBU. With allylic trichloroacetimidate **5** in hand, this was then subjected to a one-pot Overman rearrangement and RCM reaction using commercially available

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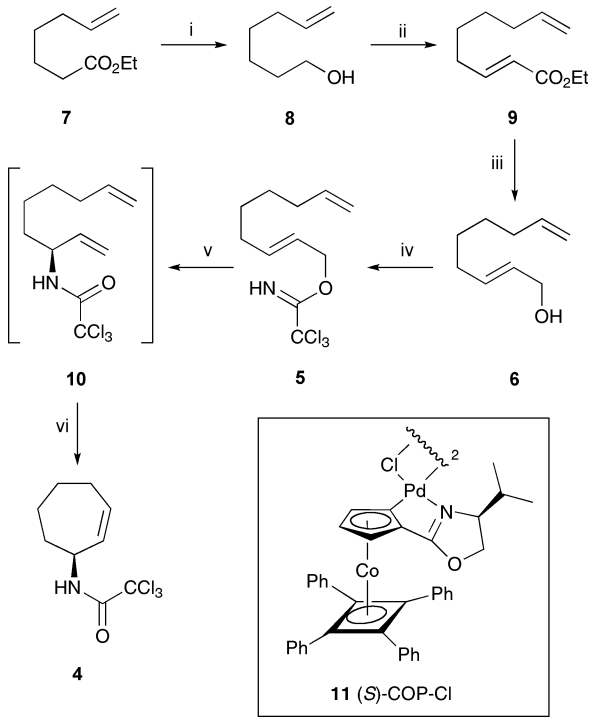
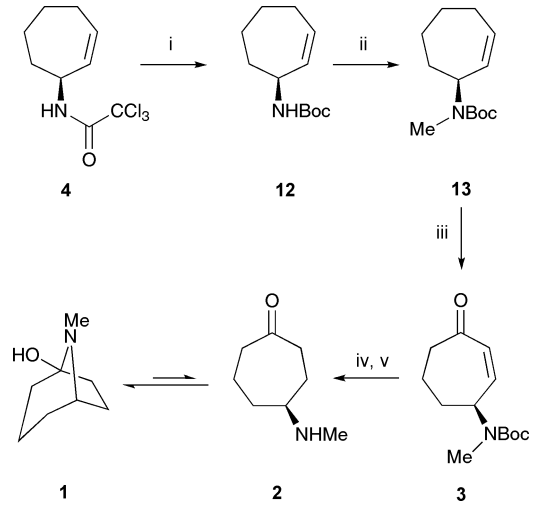
† Electronic supplementary information (ESI) available: Experimental procedures and spectroscopic data for all compounds. See DOI: 10.1039/b907341h



Scheme 3 *Reagents and conditions*: i. DIBAL-H (2.2 eq.), Et_2O, −78 °C to RT, 94%; ii. $(COCl)_2$, Et_3N, DMSO, CH_2Cl_2, −78 °C to RT, then triethyl phosphonoacetate, LiCl, DBU, MeCN, 85%; iii. DIBAL-H (2.2 eq.), Et_2O, −78 °C to RT, 100%; iv. DBU, Cl_3CCN, CH_2Cl_2; v. (*S*)-COP-Cl **11** (10 mol%), CH_2Cl_2, 45 °C; vi. Grubbs' 1st generation catalyst (10 mol%), Δ, 82% from **6**.

(*S*)-COP-Cl[8] **11** to catalyse the rearrangement and Grubbs' first generation catalyst to effect the RCM reaction. This gave (*S*)-*N*-(cycloheptenyl)-trichloroacetamide **4** in an excellent 82% yield from allylic alcohol **6** and in 84% ee.[9] The enantiomeric excess of **4** was improved to >99% on recrystallisation from a mixture of ethyl acetate and petroleum ether. It should be noted that the facile synthesis of dienol substrates such as **6** in combination with this one-pot tandem process allows the highly efficient and rapid synthesis of allylic carbocyclic amides (e.g. 66% overall yield of **4** from **7**).

The next stage of the synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine required introduction of the *N*-methyl group and this was initially attempted by methylating the amide of trichloroacetamide **4** using the standard conditions of sodium hydride and iodomethane.[10] However, treatment of **4** with sodium hydride led to hydrolysis of the trichloroacetamide functional group and recovery of the corresponding amine. This problem was easily overcome by the one-pot conversion of **4** to Boc-analogue **12** in quantitative yield (Scheme 4).[11] Subsequent methylation then proceeded smoothly to give **13** in 84% yield. The last key transformation in the synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine involved the allylic oxidation of the cycloheptene ring. While a number of general procedures do exist for the mild and efficient allylic and benzylic oxidation of organic compounds,[12] relatively few have been utilized for the oxidation of cycloheptenes.[13] Initial attempts of allylic oxidation of **13** utilised a manganese(III) acetate catalysed procedure with *t*-BuOOH as the oxidant under an atmosphere of oxygen.[12c] Despite investigating various conditions and increasing amounts of oxidant, this gave



Scheme 4 *Reagents and conditions*: i. 2 M NaOH then Boc_2O, 100%; ii. NaH, MeI, THF, 84%; iii. 10% Pd/C, *t*-BuOOH, K_2CO_3, CH_2Cl_2, 45%; iv. 10% Pd/C, H_2, MeOH, 66%; v. TFA, CH_2Cl_2, 60%.

α,β-unsaturated ketone **3** in only 22% yield. A second attempt at the allylic oxidation of **13** used a protocol reported by Yu and Corey which involved a palladium mediated oxidation with *t*-BuOOH as the oxidant under basic conditions.[12b] This gave α,β-unsaturated ketone **3** in an improved yield of 45%. Hydrogenation of **3** under standard conditions then gave the saturated ketone in 66% yield and TFA deprotection of the amine completed the eleven-step synthesis of (+)-physoperuvine **1**. The optical rotation and spectroscopic data of our synthetic material was in complete agreement with those reported for the naturally derived (+)-physoperuvine.[2–5]

Conclusions

In summary, we have developed a novel approach for the synthesis of the tropane alkaloid, (+)-physoperuvine using for the first time a highly efficient one-pot tandem Overman rearrangement and RCM reaction for the asymmetric preparation of a *N*-(cycloheptenyl)-trichloroacetamide.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Libyan People's Bureau, London (studentship to A.M.Z.), EPSRC (studentship to M.D.S.) and the University of Glasgow.

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