Demethylation of 2,4-dimethoxyquinolines: the synthesis of atanine

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The synthesis of the quinoline alkaloid atanine 6, by selective demethylation of the 2,4-dimethoxyquinoline 11 is presented. An alternative demethylation utilising a thiolate anion leads to the regioisomeric 4-hydroxyquinoline 13.

Introduction

The Rutaceae family of plants is the source of over 500 alkaloids containing the quinoline ring system.^{1,2} The pharmacological properties of this class of compounds have received only limited Nevertheless, a wide range of medicinal investigation. properties has already been identified including anti-protozoal, ³ anti-bacterial, 4 anti-fungal⁵ and anti-viral⁶ activities. Among the compounds isolated from Rutaceae, a range of structural types is identifiable. These include the furanoquinolines such as dictamine 1, the dihydrofuranoquinolines such as platydesmine 2, the isomeric dihydrofuranoquinolines such as araliopsine 3, the dihydropyranoquinolines such as geibalansine 4, the isomeric dihydropyranoquinolines such as ψ-ribalinine 5 and the simple 2,4-dioxygenated quinolines such as atanine 6 (fig. 1). Atanine was first isolated in 1968⁷ although it had been postulated to be a plausible biosynthetic intermediate of the quinoline alkaloids prior to its isolation. Since 1968, it has been found in many members of the Rutaceae family and its biosynthetic involvement has been demonstrated. ⁸ Our interest in this area was triggered by the discovery of atanine in Evodia rutaecarpa and the demonstration of its anthelmintic activity particularly against *Schistosoma mansoni*. ⁹ As a consequence, we required quantities of atanine and structurally related compounds for testing against a range of parasites. The first synthesis of atanine was reported by Grundon in 1966 and involved treatment of 4hydroxyquinoline **7** with diazomethane to give atanine **6** in 80% yield (scheme 1). ¹⁰ This approach has recently been used by Boyd in an investigation into the absolute configuration of several of the alkaloids referred to above. 11 In 1973, Grundon published an alternative synthesis of atanine which avoided involved diazomethane and ortholithiation of dimethoxyquinoline 8, alkylation with prenyl bromide and selective demethylation at the 4-position using dry HCl gas in di-isopropyl ether (scheme 2). ¹² This latter approach appeared ideal for our purposes.

Results and Discussion

Reaction of aniline with malonic acid in an excess of phosphorus oxychloride at reflux to give 2,4-dichloroquinoline **9** was first reported by Ziegler and Gelfert. ¹³ Although a reaction time of 24 to 40 hours has been reported, we found that the best yield of **9** (48%) was obtained after only 5 hours at reflux (scheme 3). Reaction of 2,4-dichloroquinoline **9** with sodium methoxide at reflux for 24 hours gave 2,4-dimethoxyquinoline **8** in 70% yield along with some 12% of 4-chloro-2-methoxyquinoline **10**. Substitution at C-2 is known to be favoured kinetically and the second substitution is slowed considerably by the methoxy group at C-2 making bis-substitution difficult to drive to completion. ¹⁴ Ortho-lithiation of **8** using n-butyllithium at 0 °C and addition of

excess prenyl bromide gave the desired 3-alkylated quinoline 11 in 88% yield. However, reaction with dry HCl in di-isopropyl ether failed to give any atanine 6. A range of conditions was investigated without success. The reaction was repeated (in CDCl $_{\rm 3}$) in an nmr tube. After a very short period, the alkene proton at $\delta 5.22$ disappeared strongly suggesting that the fastest reaction was addition of HCl to the double bond of the sidechain. Reaction with various dilute mineral acids gave complex mixtures of products from which no atanine could be isolated.

At this point we chose to explore an alternative strategy in which 2,4-dimethoxyquinoline **8** was selectively demethylated to give 12 followed by ortholithiation and alkylation to give atanine 6 (scheme 3). Treatment of 8 with dry HCl in di-isopropyl ether at reflux for 4 hours led to no reaction and starting material was isolated. The lack of nucleophilicity of the chloride ion was felt to be the problem and so we used HBr instead. Treatment of 8 with 48% HBr led to double demethylation but reaction with 3% HBr in a 1:1 mixture of THF and water at reflux for 3 hours gave 54% of 12 along with some 40% of starting material 8. Reaction of 12 with 2 equivalents of n-butyllithium at -78 °C followed by addition of prenyl bromide gave atanine 6 but in only 3% yield along with starting material and decomposition products. The use of prenyl triflate in place of prenyl bromide led to similar results. Clearly this was not a viable method for the synthesis of atanine and analogues and so we turned our attention back to the selective demethylation of 11.

Boron tribromide is well known to demethylate aromatic methyl ethers and being a Lewis acid should avoid problems of addition to the double bond in the sidechain. Treatment of 11 with boron tribromide gave an intractable red solid that could not be characterised. This appeared to confirm the sensitivity of the side chain to acid. A non-acidic approach was investigated using thiolate ion, which is known to cleave aryl methyl ethers in solvents such as DMF. 15 Treatment of 11 with sodium isopropyl thiolate in DMF at reflux, gave 13 in 38% yield after chromatography (scheme 3). The structure of 13 was assigned on the basis that the spectral data differed from the published data for atanine and that a correlation between the O-H proton at δ11.5 and the C-5 proton at δ7.98 was observed in the NOESY spectrum. Presumably, this reaction proceeds via an S_N2 process and favours 4-demethylation as the leaving group from this site of attack is more stable owing to greater charge delocalisation. On the basis of this result, trimethylsilyl iodide (TMSI) was explored as we felt the first step in the reaction of TMSI with quinoline 11 would be silylation of the nitrogen in a manner similar to protonation. In order to prevent addition of a proton (from any HI either in the reagent or generated in the reaction) to the double bond, one equivalent of pyridine was added along

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with the TMSI. To our delight stirring 11 with TMSI and pyridine in dry dichloromethane at -78 °C to room temperature gave a 2:1 mixture (as determined by ¹H nmr) of atanine 6 and pyranoquinoline 14¹⁶ formed by protonation of the sidechain double bond and subsequent cyclisation onto the 2-quinolone oxygen. The reaction was repeated using the stronger base 4-(dimethylamino)pyridine (DMAP) and atanine 6 was obtained in 62% yield after recrystallisation. The spectroscopic data of the synthetic material matched that of the material isolated from *Evodia* fruits.⁹

In summary, we have clarified the synthesis of atanine 6 via ortholithiation/demethylation and have developed the TMSI/DMAP reagent system for the demethylation of such acid-sensitive aryl methyl ethers. We have also been able to synthesise selectively *via* thiolate promoted demethylation the regioisomer 13 of atanine.

Experimental¹⁷

2,4-Dichloroquinoline, 9

Aniline (6.7 g, 72 mmol) and malonic acid (11.7 g, 112 mmol) were heated under reflux in phosphorus oxychloride (60 ml), with stirring, for 5 hours. The mixture was cooled, poured into crushed ice with vigorous stirring and then made alkaline with 5M sodium hydroxide. Filtration gave the crude product as a brown solid. A four hour continuous (Soxhlet) extraction with hexane followed by evaporation of solvent under reduced pressure yielded a pale yellow powder. Column chromatography (95:5 hexane:EtOAc) yielded the pure dichloroquinoline as off-white needles (6.8 g, 48%), mp 66-67 °C(lit. 18 66 °C); $R_{\rm f}$ (95:5 hexane:EtOAc) 0.51; $v_{\rm max}$ /cm $^{-1}$: 1580 (s, C=N); $\delta_{\rm H}$ 8.18 (1H, dd, J 8.4, 1.3, H-5), 8.03 (1H, dd, J 8.5, 1.0, H-8), 7.79 (1H, ddd, J 8.5, 7.0, 1.3, H-7), 7.65, (1H, ddd, J 8.4, 7.0, 1.0, H-6), 7.50 (1H, s, H-3); $\delta_{\rm C}$ 149.8 (C-2), 148.1 (C-8a), 144.4 (C-4), 131.5 (C-7), 129.0 (C-8), 127.9 ($G_{\rm 7}$ 60, 125.2 (C-4a), 124,2 ($G_{\rm 7}$ 5.5), 121.9 (C-3); $m/z_{\rm 5}$ 201 (15%, M $^+$ Cl₂), 199 (72, M $^+$ Cl Cl), 197 (100, M $^+$ Cl₂), 162 (69, M $^+$ - Cl) (Found: M $^+$ (35 Cl₂) 196.9792. C₉H₅ 35 Cl₂N requires 196.9799).

2,4-Dimethoxyquinoline, 8 and 4-chloro-2-methoxyquinoline,

2,4-Dichloroquinoline (2.8 g, 14 mmol) was heated under reflux in methanolic sodium methoxide solution (from 2.0 g, 86 mmol Na in 50 mL MeOH) for 24 hours. The reaction mixture was cooled and poured into ice-cold water, and the resulting white precipitate was filtered off. Column chromatography (9:1 hexane:EtOAc) yielded the two products 2,4-dimethoxyquinoline, (1.85 g, 70%) and 4-chloro-2methoxyquinoline, (0.32 g, 12%), both as white needles. 2,4-dimethoxyquinoline, mp 78-80 °C (lit. 19 81-82 °C); R_f (9:1 hexane:EtOAc) 0.48; v_{max} /cm⁻¹: 1640, 1580 (s, C=C, C=N); δ_H 8.04 (1H, dd, J 8.2, 1.5, H-5), 7.78 (1H, dd, J 8.5, 1.2, H-8), 7.60 (1H, ddd, J 8.5, 7.0, 1.5, H-7), 7.33 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 7.0, 1.2, H-6), 6.21(1H, s, H-3), 4.05 (3H, s, 2-OMe), 3.97 (3H, s, 4-OMe); δ_C 163.9 (C-4), 163.84 (C-2), 147.1 (C-8aC, 130.0 (C-7), 126.9 (C-8), 123.3 (C-6), 121.8 (C-5), 119.3 (C-4a), 90.7 (C-3), 55.7 (4-OMe), 53.4 (2-OMe); m/z 189 (100%, M⁺), 188 (93, M⁺ - H) (Found: M⁺ 189.0797. C₁₁H₁₁NO₂ requires 189.0790). 4-chloro-2-methoxyquinoline, mp 70-72 °C (lit.¹⁹ 70-71°C); R_f (9:1 hexane:EtOAc) 0.61; v_{max} /cm⁻¹: 1610, 1580 (s, C=N and C=C); δ_H 8.10 (1H, dd, J 8.2, 1.3, H-5), 7.86 (1H, dd, J 8.0, 1.2, H-8), 7.67 (1H, ddd, J 8.0, 7.0, 1.3, H-7), 7.46 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 7.0, 1.2, H-6), 7.03 (1H, s, H-3), 4.06 (3H, s, -OCH₃); δ_C 161.9 (C-2), 147.0 (C-8a), 143.7 (C-4), 130.5 (C-7), 127.6 (C-8), 124.8 (C-6), 124.1 (C-5), 3123.3 (C-4a), 112.9₅ (C-3), 53.8 (OCH₃); m/z 195 (33%, M⁺ Cl), 193 (100, M⁺ Cl), 192 (67, M⁺ C₃₅ - H), 163 (33, M⁺ - CH₂O) (Found M⁺: 193.0298. C₁₀H₈ ClNO requires 193.0294)

2,4 -Dimethoxy-3-(3methylbut-2-enyl)quinoline, 11

2,4-Dimethoxyquinoline (2.0 g, 11 mmol) in dry THF (10 ml) was cooled to 0 °C under argon and n-butyllithium (6.2 ml of a 2.5M solution in hexane) was added dropwise, with stirring. The mixture was stirred at 0 °C under argon for 30 minutes, then 1bromo-3-methylbut-2-ene (2.8 g, 19 mmol) was added dropwise over 5 minutes. The mixture was stirred at 0 °C for 30 minutes and then allowed to warm to room temperature with stirring for a further hour. The reaction mixture was poured into water and extracted with ether (4 × 30 ml) to give the crude product as a yellow/brown oil. Column chromatography (4:1 hexane:EtOAc) yielded the pure product as a yellow-brown oil (2.4 g, 88%); R_f (4:1 hexane:EtOAc) 0.57; v_{max} /cm⁻¹: 3070 (s, C-H), 1620, 1605, 1575 (s, C=C and C=N); δ_H 7.92 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 1.5, 0.5, H-5), 7.82 (1H, ddd, J 8.5, 1.2, 0.5, H-8), 7.56 (1H, ddd, J 8.5, 6.9, 1.5, H-7), 7.35 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 6.9, 1.2, H-6), 5.22 (1H, br t, J 6.9, C=CH), 4.08 (3H, s, 2-OMe), 3.95 (3H, s, 4-OMe), 3.45 (2H, d, J 6.9, CH₂), 1.81 (3H, d, J 0.7, =CCH₃), 1.69 (3H, d, J 1.2, $=CCH_3$); δ_C 162.5 (C-4), 161.6 (C-2), 146.1 (C-8a), 132.3 (=<u>C</u>Me₂), 128.9, 127.3, (C-7, C-8) 123.6, 121.9, 121.8, (C-5, C-6 and =CH), 121.2 (C-3), 116.9 (C-4a), 62.3 (OMe), 53.8 (OMe), 25.8 (CH₃), 23.3 (CH₂), 18.0 (CH₃); m/z 257 (100%, M⁺), 242 (82, M⁺- Me), 202 (52, M⁺ - Me₂C=CH) (Found: M⁺ 257.1417. C₁₆H₁₉NO₂ requires 257.1416).

4-Methoxy-1*H*-quinolin-2-one, 12

2,4-Dimethoxyquinoline (2.0 g, 11 mmol) was dissolved in 3% HBr in a 1:1 mixture of H₂O/THF (100 ml). The solution was heated under reflux for 3 hours, then cooled and neutralised with aqueous NaHCO3. The THF was removed under reduced pressure, precipitating a white solid, which was filtered and dried under suction. Tlc (4:1 hexane:EtOAc) showed the presence of starting material and a polar material (baseline). A 5 hour Soxhlet extraction with hexane separated these two compounds. The starting material was extracted into the reaction flask leaving the product as cream needles in the thimble (1.0 g, 54%), mp 249-252 °C (lit.²¹ 250-253 °C); v_{max} /cm⁻¹: 3100 (w, N-H), 1674 (s, C=O), 1634, 1607 (s, C=C); δ_{H} 7.90 (1H, dd, J 8.1, 1.1, H-5), 7.52 (1H, dd, J 8.1, 1.1, H-7), 7.40 (1H, dd, J 8.1, 1.1, H-8), 7.20 (1H, dd, J 8.1, 1.1, H-6), 6.03 (1H, s, H-3), 3.99 (3H, s, OMe); δ_C 166.3 (C-2), 165.0 (C-4), 138.4 (C-8a), 131.2 (C-7), 122.8 (C-8), 122.2 (C-6), 116.1 (C-5), 115.6 (C-4a), 96.0 (C-3), 56.0 (O-Me); m/z 175 (100%, M⁺), 132 (63, M⁺ - CONH), 76 (28, C₆H₄⁺) (Found M⁺: 175.0629. C₁₀H₉NO₂ requires 175.0633).

4-Hydroxy-2-methoxy 3-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)quinoline, 13

Sodium hydride (0.67 g of a 60% mineral oil dispersion, washed with hexane, 17 mmol) was suspended in dimethylformamide (10 ml). 2-Propanethiol (0.51 g, 6.7 mmol) was added and the mixture was stirred for 10 minutes. Then a solution of 2,4dimethoxy-3-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)quinoline (0.7 g, 2.7 mmol) in DMF (10 ml) was added, and the mixture heated under reflux for 4 hours. After cooling and neutralisation with 2M HCl the solution was extracted with ether (4 × 50 ml), the combined ether extracts were dried over \mbox{MgSO}_4 , and the solvent removed in vacuo to give a brown oil. Column chromatography (4:1 hexane:ethyl acetate) followed by recrystallisation (ethanol) yielded the pure product (0.25 g, 38%) as off-white needles, mp 154-155 °C (lit. 22 137-138 °C); R_f (4:1 hexane:EtOAc) 0.30; v_{max} /cm⁻¹: 3200-3000 (br, O-H), 1627, 1580 (s, C=C, C=N); δ_H 7.98 (1H, dd, J 8.2, 1.3, H-5), 7.75 (1H, dd, J 8.2, 1.2, H-8), 7.56 (1H, ddd, J 8.3, 6.9, 1.3, H-7), 7.32 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 6.9, 1.2, H-6), 5.38 (1H, tq, J 7.3, 1.2, CH=), 4.06 (3H, s, OCH₃), 3.51 (2H, d, J 7.3, CH₂CH=), 1.86 (3H, s, CH=CCH₃), 1.81 (3H, d, J 1.2, CH=CCH3), OH not observed in CDCl3; NOESY (d6 DMSO) correlation between the OH proton at $\delta 11.5$ ppm and the C-5 proton at δ 7.98 ppm; δ _C 161.4 (C-2), 145.0 (C-8a), 137.0 $(=C(CH_3)_2)$, 129.3, 126.5, 123.2, 121.6, 121.1 (C-5,-6,-7,-8 and

= $\underline{\text{C}}\text{H}$), 119.0 (C-4a), 105.2 (C-3), 53.9 (OMe), 25.9 (CH₃), 23.0 (CH₂), 18.0 (CH₃), no signal observed for C4; m/z 243 (26%, M⁺), 228 (12, M⁺ - CH₃), 188 (5% M⁺ - CH=C(CH₃)₂), 83 (100) (Found: M⁺ 243.1246. C₁₅H₁₇NO₂ requires 243.1259).

4-Methoxy-3-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)-1*H*-quinolin-2-one (atanine), 6

2,4-Dimethoxy-3-(3-methylbut-2-enyl)quinoline (0.50 g, 2.0 mmol) and 4-dimethylaminopyridine (0.24 g, 2.0 mmol) were dissolved in dry dichloromethane (30 ml) and cooled to -78 °C under argon. Iodotrimethylsilane (0.40 g, 2.0 mmol) was added dropwise, and the mixture stirred at -78 °C for 2 hours. Then the flask was left to warm to room temperature, with stirring, for a further 40 hours. The solution obtained was washed with 1M aqueous sodium thiosulfate $(2 \times 30 \text{ ml})$, and then dried (MgSO₄) and the solvent removed under reduced pressure. A brown oil was obtained which crystallised overnight to give a pale brown solid. Recrystallisation (EtOH) gave the title compound as offwhite needles (0.3 g, 62%), mp 130-132 °C (lit. 12 132-134 °C) (Found: C, 72.44, H, 6.87, N, 5.69. $C_{15}H_{17}NO_2.0.3H_2O$ requires C, 72.44, H, 7.13, N, 5.63%); v_{max} / cm $^{-1}$ 3250 (w, N-H), 1653 (s, C=O), 1568 (m, C=C); δ_H 12.11 (1H, br s, NH/OH), 7.76 (1H, dd, J 8.1, 1.2, H-5), 7.47 (1H, ddd, J 8.2, 7.0, 1.2, H-7), 7.42 (1H, dd, J 8.2, 1.2, H-8), 7.22 (1H, ddd, J 8.1, 7.0, 1.2, H-6), 5.32 (1H, t, J 6.9, CH=CMe₂), 3.95 (3H, s, OMe), 3.45 (2H, d, J 6.9, CH2-CH=CMe2), 1.86 (3H, s, CH3), 1.71 (3H, s, CH₃); δ_C 165.9 (C-2), 162.1 (C-4), 137.6, 132.5 (C-8a, C=<u>C</u>Me₂), 130.0 (CH), 122.8 (CH), 122.6, 122.2 (CH), 121.6 (CH), 117.2, 116.1 (CH), 61.8 (OCH3), 25.8 (CH=C(<u>C</u>H3)2), 23.5 (<u>C</u>'H₂), 18.1 (CH=C(<u>C</u>H₃)₂); *m/z* 243 (89%, M⁺), 228 (39, M^+ - OMe), 188 (100, $C_{11}H_{10}NO_2^+$) (Found: M^+ 243.1252. C15H17NO2 requires 243.1259).

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Fig. 1 Representative quinoline alkaloids.

Scheme 1

Scheme 2

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Scheme 3