

# Preparatory Study for the Synthesis of the Marine Sponge Alkaloids Asmarines A-F: Synthesis of Their Heterocyclic Portions

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journal or publication title	Heterocycles
volume	57
number	7
page range	1235-1238
year	2002-01-01
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2297/3276">http://hdl.handle.net/2297/3276</a>

PREPARATORY STUDY FOR THE SYNTHESIS OF THE MARINE SPONGE  
ALKALOIDS ASMARINES A-F: SYNTHESIS OF THEIR HETEROCYCLIC  
PORTIONS

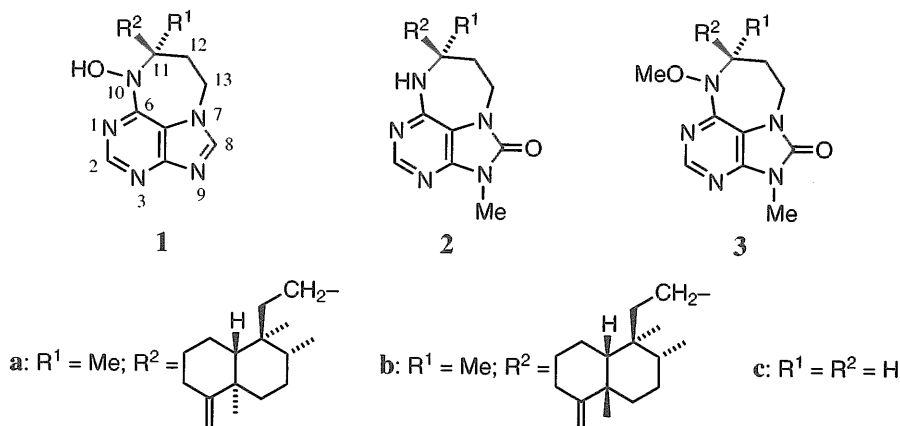
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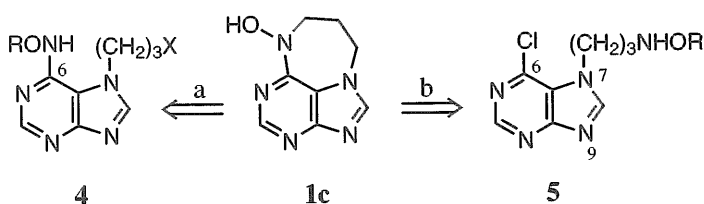
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**Abstract** - A synthesis of three tricyclic compounds (**1c**), (**2c**), and (**3c**), selected as models for the heterocyclic portions of the marine sponge alkaloids asmarines A-F, has been accomplished through cyclization of the 7-alkyl-6-chloropurine derivatives.

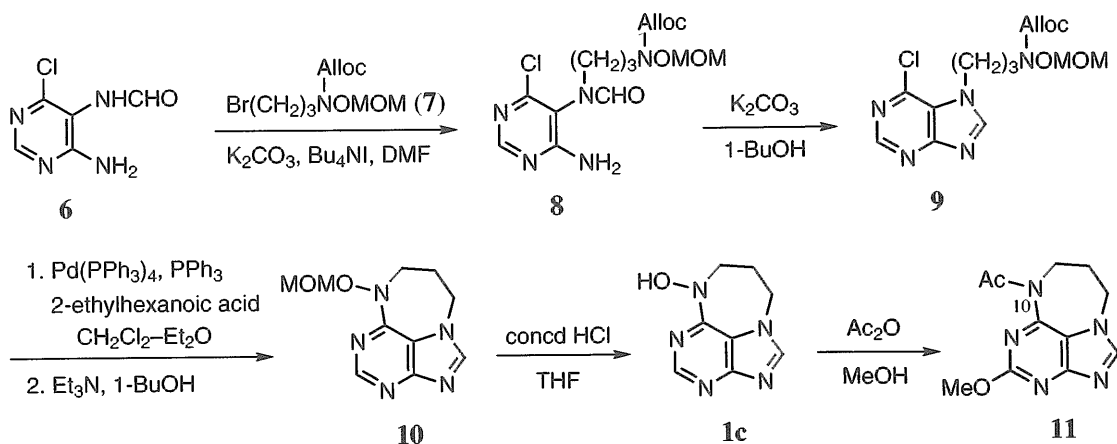
Asmarines A (**1a**) and B (**1b**), novel purine-related alkaloids<sup>1</sup> isolated from the Red Sea sponge *Raspailia* sp., display significant cytotoxicity against four human cancer cell lines.<sup>2</sup> The same sponge is further known to contain four closely related alkaloids, *i.e.*, asmarines C (**2b**), D (**2a**), E (**3a**), and F (**3b**), although none of them have been isolated in pure forms.<sup>2b</sup> The structures of these alkaloids were elucidated through extensive spectral studies in conjunction with an X-Ray crystallographic analysis of asmarine A (**1a**).<sup>2a</sup> In connection with our ongoing interest in the synthetic study of purine alkaloids,<sup>3</sup> we sought possible synthetic routes to the heterocyclic models (**1c**), (**2c**), and (**3c**) possessing a [1,4]diazepino[1,2,3-*gh*]purine skeleton as a preliminary to the total synthesis of asmarines A-F.



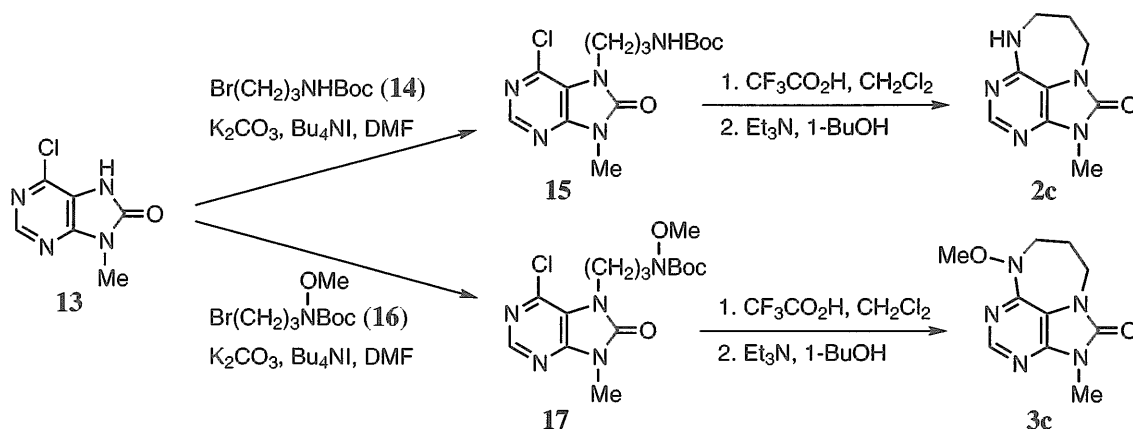
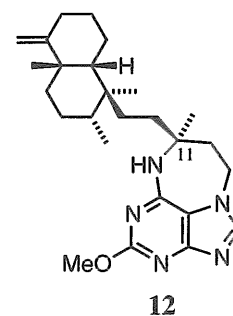
The synthesis of the tricyclic hydroxylamine (**1c**), selected as a model for a common heterocyclic portion of asmarines A and B, was first investigated. Kashman and co-workers have recently reported the construction of a [1,4]diazepino[1,2,3-*gh*]purine system *via* intramolecular alkylation at the *N*<sup>6</sup>-position of 9-benzyl-*N*<sup>6</sup>-benzyloxy-7-(3-chloropropyl)adeninium salt without description of the removal of two benzyl groups.<sup>4</sup> Toward the development of a route applicable to the synthesis of asmarines, we envisioned that intramolecular amination at the 6-position of an appropriate 7-(3-hydroxyaminopropyl)-6-chloropurine (**5**) (route b) would be preferable to cyclization at the *N*<sup>6</sup>-position of the adenine derivative (**4**) (route a), because the latter route is presumed to be more difficult in constructing the stereogenic center at the 11-position of asmarines. At the outset of the present synthesis, therefore, we needed the 7-alkylated 6-chloropurine (**5**).<sup>5</sup>



Since direct alkylation of 6-chloropurine using alkyl halide and a base<sup>6</sup> or under Mitsunobu conditions<sup>7</sup> has been reported to occur at the 9-position predominantly over the 7-position, we investigated an alternative route *via* cyclization of pyrimidine derivative to obtain the requisite purine (**5**). On treatment of the formamide (**6**) in DMF with the bromide (**7**) ( $K_2CO_3$ ,  $Bu_4NI$ , room temperature, 24 h) according to a precedent,<sup>8</sup> the *N*-alkylated formamide (**8**) was obtained in 74% yield. Subsequent base-promoted cyclization of **8** was very slow in DMF, but proceeded smoothly in 1-BuOH (35–40 °C, 2 h) to afford the desired 7-alkylated 6-chloropurine (**9**) in 87% yield. Removal of the Alloc group of **9** with Pd catalyst in the presence of 2-ethylhexanoic acid<sup>9</sup> ( $CH_2Cl_2$ – $Et_2O$ , room temperature, 1.5 h) and intramolecular amination at the 6-position of the resulting amine using  $Et_3N$  (1-BuOH, reflux, 2 h) provided the tricyclic compound (**10**) containing a [1,4]diazepino[1,2,3-*gh*]purine skeleton in 75% yield. Finally, deprotection of **10** with concd HCl (THF, 55 °C, 1.5 h) gave the first target (**1c**) (mp 204–205 °C)<sup>10</sup> in 86% yield.



In connection with the structure elucidation of asmarine B (**1b**), Kashman and co-workers further described the reaction of **1b** with excess acetic anhydride in MeOH to produce **12** via a four-step mechanism: acetylation of the NOH group, a [3,3] sigmatropic rearrangement, 1,6-addition of MeOH, and elimination of acetic acid.<sup>2b</sup> On treatment with excess acetic anhydride in MeOH at room temperature for 30 h, the hydroxylamine (**1c**) also afforded **11** in 71% yield. Concomitant acetylation at the 10-position in the latter is probably due to no sterically congested environment compared to **12**, which possesses two substituents at the 11-position.



Our attention was next turned to the synthesis of two heterocyclic models (**2c**) and (**3c**) for asmarines C (**2b**), D (**2a**) and asmarines E (**3a**), F (**3b**), respectively. Based on the results obtained with **1c**, we selected the 8-oxopurine (**13**)<sup>11,12</sup> as a starting material. Alkylation of **13** with the bromide (**14**) in DMF ( $K_2CO_3$ ,  $Bu_4NI$ , room temperature, 22 h) proceeded at the 7-position, giving **15** in 99% yield. Removal of the Boc group and subsequent cyclization with  $Et_3N$  (1-BuOH, reflux, 2 h) produced the second target (**2c**) (mp 286.5–287.5 °C) in 98% yield. A parallel sequence of reactions starting from **13** and the bromide (**16**) provided the third target (**3c**) (mp 146–147 °C) through **17** in 76% overall yield. The  $^1H$ - and  $^{13}C$ -NMR spectral signals of the model compounds (**1c**), (**2c**), and (**3c**) thus synthesized were similar, except for those affected by two substituents at the 11-position, to the corresponding signals of **1a,b**, **2a,b**, and **3a,b**, respectively.

In conclusion, we have achieved the synthesis of three tricyclic models (**1c**), (**2c**), and (**3c**) for the heterocyclic portions of the marine sponge alkaloids asmarines A–F. The correctness of the structures proposed for the heterocyclic moieties in these alkaloids has been supported as a result of the present synthesis.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (No. 12672051) from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan.

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Received, May 13th, 2002