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Synthesis of 5-aza-analogues of angucyclines: manipulation of the 2-deoxy-*C*-glycoside subunit

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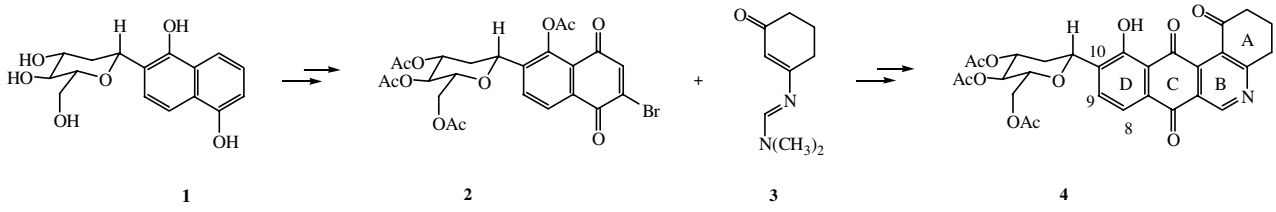
Abstract—Based on a heterocyclic Diels–Alder strategy, a concise synthesis of 5-aza-analogues of angucyclines bearing a 2-deoxy-*C*-glycoside subunit is reported. Starting from a common intermediate, a peracetylated D-2-deoxyglucose could be linked to carbons C9 or C10 of the tetracyclic framework. Further manipulations of the sugar residue allowed the installation of bromo and azido substituents at carbon C6′.

1. Introduction

Angucyclines belong to an ever-growing class of natural products characterized by a unique benz[*a*]anthraquinone core structure.[1] Angucyclines and their aglycones (angucyclinones) often display a broad range of interesting biological and pharmaceutical activities. Therefore, this class of compounds represents a source of inspiration for the design and synthesis of structural analogues, which could be of value for SAR studies. In this regard, we recently disclosed a simple and efficient strategy for the synthesis of 5-aza-analogues of angucyclines having the B-ring fully aromatized.[2] Our synthetic route, which relies on a hetero Diels–Alder reaction between a 2-bromo-[1,4]naphthoquinone and the 'push–pull' aza diene **3**, allows the extremely direct formation of 5-aza-analogues of angucyclines in good to excellent chemical yields. This strategy is particularly promising since structural diversity could be easily introduced by varying the nature and position of substituents on the diene and (or) the dienophile. As a first demonstrative example, we reported[2] the synthesis of the 5-aza-analogue **4**, bearing a 2-deoxy-*C*-glycoside unit at carbon C10 (angucycline numbering), by reaction of diene **3** with dienophile **2** prepared in few steps from **1** (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1.

Keywords: Angucycline; Angucyclinone; Angucycline-5-aza-analogue; 2-Aza-1,3-diene; 2-Bromo-naphthoquinone; Hetero-Diels–Alder reaction; *C*-Glycoside.
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In continuation of our efforts to find 5-aza-analogues of angucyclines with significant biological activities, we next focused our attention on the possibility of introducing different substituents at carbon C6′ of the 2-deoxy-*C*-glycoside unit. These modifications could affect the bioactivity of the corresponding compounds as a result, inter alia, of alteration of hydrophilicity or lipophilicity. Additionally, we were also interested to find conditions that would allow the linkage of the 2-deoxy-*C*-glycoside unit at carbon C9, instead of C10 as previously realized.[3,4]

2. Substitution at C6′: synthesis of the angucycline 5-aza-analogues 9 and 13

We first envisaged to synthesize the angucycline 5-aza-analogue **9** having a bromine atom at carbon C6′ of the sugar moiety. The introduction of a versatile bromine atom at C6′ of **9** is particularly attractive since its displacement with various nucleophilic species (thiol, amine, etc.) should allow synthetic access to several other angucycline 5-aza-analogues. According to our hetero Diels–Alder protocol, compound **9** should be formed by reacting the 2-bromo-[1,4]naphthoquinone **7** with aza-diene **3**, followed by selective deacetylation at C11 (Scheme 2).

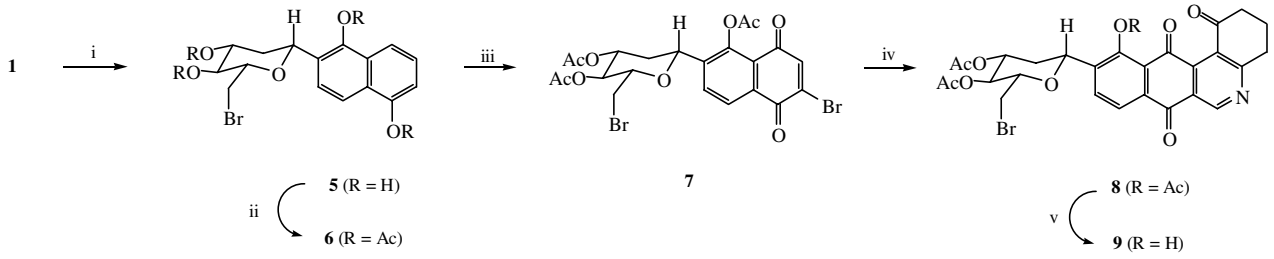
A possible precursor of **7** being the 1,5-naphthalene derivative **5**, we first attempted to reach this compound by treating the unprotected Toshima coupling product **1**[5] with PPh_3–Br_2, following a protocol developed for selective C6 halogenation of α-D-methyl glycosides.[6] Under these conditions, however, compound **5** was accompanied, inter alia, with di-bromo compounds from which it could only be separated after transformation to the peracetylated derivative **6**. Applying the Grunwell conditions[7] to **6** next afforded the key 2-bromo-[1,4]naphthoquinone **7** in good yield. Its subsequent condensation with diene **3** led, after in situ transformation of the primary adduct, to the tetracyclic trione **8**, which was selectively deacetylated to provide the angucycline 5-aza-analogue **9**[8] (84% yield for the two steps).

At this stage, we planned to introduce an azido group at C6′ by effecting a nucleophilic substitution of the bromine atom in **9**. Toward this end **9** was treated with sodium azide in DMSO at room temperature. These conditions, however, failed to give any traces of the expected angucycline 5-aza-analogue **13**. Fortunately, application of these same conditions to **6** effected the desired transformation to give **10** in moderate yield. As for the synthesis of **9**, the transformation of **10** to **13**[9] proceeded without incident over the course of three steps as outlined in Scheme 3.

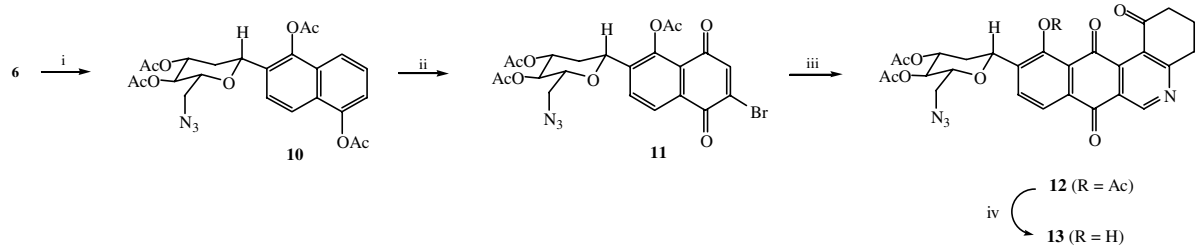
3. Introduction of a sugar unit at C9: synthesis of the angucycline 5-aza-analogue 14

Our next effort aimed at synthesizing the angucycline 5-aza-analogue **14** bearing a peracetylated D-2-deoxy-glucose residue linked at carbon C9. A retrosynthetic analysis based on a hetero Diels–Alder cycloaddition strategy allows to discern 2-bromo-[1,4]naphthoquinone **15** and diene **3** as key intermediates (Scheme 4).

Prior experience gained in the synthesis of dienophile **2** from 1,5-naphthalene diol **16** suggested that its isomer



Scheme 2. Synthesis of the angucycline 5-aza-analogue **9**. Reagents and conditions: (i) Br_2 (1.5 equiv), PPh_3 (1.5 equiv), rt, 15 h; (ii) Ac_2O, Py, rt, 15 h (28%, two steps); (iii) NBS (6 equiv), AcOH–H_2O (1:2), 70 °C, 3 h, 77%; (iv) **3** (1.2 equiv), MeCN, 60 °C, 60 h; (v) NH_4OAc (8 equiv), MeOH–H_2O (4:1), rt, 7 h, 84% (two steps).



Scheme 3. Synthesis of the angucycline 5-aza-analogue **13**. Reagents and conditions: (i) NaN_3 (1.5 equiv), DMSO, rt, 12 h, 55%; (ii) NBS (6 equiv), AcOH–H_2O (1:2), 70 °C, 3 h, 38%; (iii) **3** (1.2 equiv), MeCN, 60 °C, 60 h; (iv) NH_4OAc (8 equiv), MeOH–H_2O (4:1), rt, 7 h, 84% (two steps).