Total Synthesis of α-C-Mannosyltryptophan, a Naturally Occurring C-Glycosyl Amino Acid

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Received 18 January 2001
Dedicated to Professor Ryoji Noyori in recognition of his significant contributions to the art of organic synthesis

Abstract: A stereocontrolled synthesis of α-C-mannosyltryptophan, a new type of glycosyl amino acid, was achieved by Sc(ClO₄)₃ mediated coupling between α-C-mannosylindole and l-serine-derived 2-aziridinecarboxylate as a key step.

Key words: C-glycoside, aziridine, scandium perchlorate, natural product, total synthesis

Carbohydrate parts of glycoprotein and glycolipid have been found to play an important role in a variety of biological events such as cell-cell recognition, immune response, stabilization of protein, local conformational change of protein backbone, etc. Most of the carbohydrate moiety are linked to protein through N-glycosidic bond with asparagine and O-glycosidic bond with serine or threonine. However, in 1994, Trp 7 of ribonuclease (RNase 2) isolated from human urine was found to be α-C-mannosylated at 2 position of the indole (1 in Scheme 1). This is the first example of naturally occurring C-glycosyl amino acid found in protein, although many synthetic C-glycosyl amino acids have been reported. This post-translational modification is catalyzed by microsome-associated enzyme, "C-mannosyltransferase", which recognized an amino acid sequence Trp-x-x-Trp to glycosylate the first tryptophan of this motif. These studies imply that this linkage is more common than expected in the early stage of this study. In fact, C-mannosylated protein was also found in recombinant interleukin 12 and later in human complement system. Furthermore C-mannosyltransferase activity was detected in many organisms such as mammals, birds, amphibians and fish. On the other hand, monomeric α-C-mannosyltryptophan was isolated not only from human urine but also from marine organisms.

We have studied the synthesis of α-C-mannosyltryptophan and its analogs in order to investigate the generality and distribution in nature and to elucidate the biological functions of this new type of sugar chain. Herein we describe an efficient stereocontrolled synthesis of α-C-mannosyltryptophan (2). In our previous paper, a dehydrotryptophan intermediate was synthesized from C-mannosylindole 3, which was prepared from d-mannose derivative 5 through ethynylmannonse 4 by stereoselective α-C-glycosidation with tinacetylene and Castro indole synthesis as the key steps (Scheme 1). However, hydrogenation of the dehydrotryptophan gave a diastereomeric mixture, whose absolute stereochemistry has not been determined. In order to synthesize an α-C-mannosyltryptophan with the definite absolute configuration, we would exploit a coupling reaction between indole and chiral aziridine-2-carboxylate, originally developed by Kozikowski and then Bennani. Before going on the synthesis of 2, we would examine the coupling of 2-methylindole as a model substrate with L-serine-derived methyl N-Cbz-2-aziridinecarboxylate (6) under the conditions reported (Scheme 2). Representative results are shown in the Table. With Zn(OTf)₂ as a promoter, 2-methyltryptophan 7 was obtained in moderate yield with high selectivity (entry 1). On the other hand, the same reaction in the presence of Sc(OTf)₃ gave a 3:1-3:2 mixture of the desired product 7 and the regiosomer 8 formed by opening of the aziridine at the more substituted position (entry 2). We were concerned whether the quality of Sc(OTf)₃ was different from those used in literature, which might affect the selectivity. In spite of changing the sources of reagent Sc(OTf)₃ from various suppliers, and prepared by procedures, no significant improvement was observed with the regioselectivity. After many experiments, however, we found that...
Sc(ClO$_4$)$_3$ was superior Lewis acid (entry 3). That is, the reaction proceeded at 0 °C to give the desired product 7 in good yield and high selectivity.

Finally, two step deprotections were carried out: alkaline hydrolysis of esters (62%) followed by hydrogenolysis of benzyl groups. The resulting hydrochloride salt was purified by a reversed phase column chromatography (Cosmosil 75C$_18$-OPN, nacalai tesque) to afford 2 in 50% yield. $^1$H- and $^{13}$C-NMR spectra of synthetic 2 were in good agreement with those of literature.\textsuperscript{11a}

In summary, an efficient total synthesis of 2 was achieved in 10 steps from commercially available α-methyl-d-mannoside.\textsuperscript{29} This route should provide a practical route to 2 and its analogs for the future biological studies.\textsuperscript{30}

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to Dr. J. Hofsteenge (FMI) for valuable discussions. We thank Dr. Y. Bennani (Abbot Laboratories) for the experimental details of Sc(OTf)$_3$ mediated reaction, Professor A. Murai and Dr. K. Fujisawa (Hokkaido University) for valuable suggestions. We also thank Drs. K. Adachi (Marine Biotechnology Institute Co., Ltd., Japan)\textsuperscript{11b} and M. Herderich (Würzburg University) for informing us about the revised structure of α-C-mannosyltryptophan. This work was financially supported by JSPS-RFTF and a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture of Japan.

References and Notes

(1) This study was presented at the annual meeting of Japan Society for Bioscience, Biotechnology and Agrochemistry, Abstract p 21, Tokyo, Japan, April, 2000.


(11) Horiiuchi et al. reported isolation and structure elucidation of tetrahydro-β-calbinone compound from human urine,\textsuperscript{11c} whose structure was revised to be α-C-mannosyltryptophan (2).\textsuperscript{11b, 11e}

We have checked commercially available Sc(OTf)₃ from Aldrich. Personal communication from Dr. Y. L. Bennani, Y. L.; Zhu, G.-D.; Freeman, J. C. Synlett 1998, 754.

A very similar reaction of 2-methylindole with benzylester of 3-methoxybenzoic acid purchased from Aldrich was used. Personal communication from Dr. Y. L. Bennani.

We have checked commercially available Sc(OTf)₃ from Aldrich, TCI and Taiheiyo-Kinzoku Corporation.

A very similar reaction of 2-methylindole with benzylester of 6 was reported to give the corresponding product 7 exclusively in 66% yield, in which Sc(OTf)₃ purchased from Aldrich was used. Personal communication from Dr. Y. L. Bennani.

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