Proline Catalyzed Asymmetric Cyclization.

Theory of the Reaction Mechanism.

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The second part of the investigation is the <u>Proline Catalyzed</u> <u>Asymmetric Cyclization II.</u>

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ABSTRACT: evidence is presented in this publication for the carbinolamine mechanism illustrated by intermediate **B** for the proline catalyzed intramolecular asymmetric cyclizations to the 6,5-bicyclic ketol and its six membered ring homologue. The contents of this paper are based on experimental as well as energy minimization evidence. The minimization studies gave conclusive evidence to the divergent behavior of the 6,5- and the 6,6-bicyclic systems. The communication also contains the synthesis and characterization of the optically active 6,6-bicyclic ketol.

KEYWORDS: proline catalyzed intramolecular asymmetric cyclizations; bicyclic 6,5- and 6,6ketols; energy minimization; carbinolamine mechanism

Introduction

In the year 1971 a patent was published describing several (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed Robinson annulation reactions¹. In 1974 the contents of the patent have been incorporated into a scientific publication². In 1985 Professor Claude Agami and associates published an interpretation of this proline catalyzed Robinson annulation which they named the Hajos-Parrish reaction³. Recently Sami Bahmanyar and Kendall N. Houk published a paper on "The Origin of Stereoselectivity in Proline-Catalyzed Intramolecular Aldol Reactions"⁴. We would like to give a brief overview and discuss our own data to reach a reasonably satisfactory interpretation of the reaction mechanism.

Results and discussion

There are essentially two reaction mechanisms possible for the intramolecular asymmetric catalytic cyclizations with (S)-(-)-proline. The enamine and the carbinolamine mechanisms.We

have pictured both of these in our original publication². In a recently published essay John J.M. Wiener correctly states: "The use of chiral amines as asymmetric catalysts was first reported in 1974 by Hajos and Parrish in the context of a Robinson annulation catalyzed by L-proline"⁵. The enamine mechanism can best be presented by using Scheme 1 of Wiener's essay with the author's permission.

Scheme 1

At this point we would like to emphasize the ¹⁸O-labeled experiments described in our original publication². The asymmetric conversion of the triketone **1** with (S)-(-)-proline in the presence of ¹⁸O-labeled water showed extremely small ¹⁸O incorporation (7.2%) during the ring-closure to the optically active bicyclic ketol (S)-(+)-2. Since ¹⁸O incorporation is a prerequisite to the conversion of A2 to (S)-(+)-2 in the enamine mechanism, the very small ¹⁸O enrichment clearly contradicts this (Scheme 1). The determination involved the mass spectrometric analysis of ¹⁸O-labeled CO₂ of the respective samples. On the other hand, reasonably high ¹⁸O incorporation (33.1%) occurred in the control experiment. In this reaction the reaction product of the asymmetric cyclization, the bicyclic ketol (S)-(+)-2 was treated with ¹⁸O-labeled water in the presence of (S)-(-)-proline.

Sarkar, Jois, Kasthuri and Dasgupta in their proline mediated intramolecular studies object to an enamine mechanism based on spectroscopic evidence⁶. Rajagopal, Moni, Subramanian and Swaminathan studied the ATR-FTIR spectra of the triketone **1** and (S)-(-)-proline. They found no absorption for the double bond of an enamine. Therefore, they too excluded the enamine intermediate for the intramolecular asymmetric cyclization reaction⁷.

It is well known that it is more difficult to form enamines of aliphatic ketones. The field had

been pioneered and developed by Professor Gilbert Stork and his associates. His paper gives an excellent insight to the problems in this area of chemistry⁸. Professor Stork pointed out that "simple monosubstituted acetone (and acetone itself) are not usually satisfactorily converted into enamines by the existing methods. Pyrrolidine enamine was obtained in only 22% yield after 175 hours refluxing with benzene and p-toluenesulfonic acid. Using molecular sieves they could increase the yield to 51%".

On the other hand, Otto and Schick have described the facile addition of pyrrolidine to 2methyl-cyclopentane-1,3-dione. They obtained the reaction product of the 5-ring diketone in 87% yield in the presence of some propionic acid in refluxing toluene ⁹. It is mechanistically less likely therefore for the triketone **1** to proceed to the optically active bicyclic ketol (**S**)-(+)-**2** via an enamine mechanism. Contradicting this too is the fact that the reaction has been executed under extremely mild catalytic reaction conditions using 3 mol% of (S)-(-)-proline at ambient temperature².

There is, however, no problem to accept the enamine mechanism for the antibody-catalyzed enantioselective Robinson annulation reported by Zhong, Hoffmann, Lerner, Danishefsky and Barbas III¹⁰. It is well known that antibody catalyzed reactions may proceed contrary to the small molecule catalyzed reactions. Antibodies for instance catalyze ring closures in formal violation of Baldwin's rules¹¹.

However, for the small molecule catalyzed asymmetric Robinson annulation reaction we propose the more plausible mechanism involving the addition of (S)-(-)-proline to one of the cyclopentanedione keto groups of the triketone **1**. In the carbinolamine intermediate **B** formed the center of asymmetry of (S)-(-)-proline would be only 3 bonds away from the angular methyl

group of the prochiral center, as opposed to the 5 bond distance in the transition state **A1** of the enamine mechanism (Scheme 1). This has been described in our original paper², and ApSimon and Seguin have corroborated it¹². The stereochemistry of the carbinol-amine group of **B** is presented according to Professor Michael E. Jung's suggestion¹³.

Our energy minimization studies are in good agreement with Professor Agami's results³ involving a second (S)-(-) proline molecule. However, in agreement with the carbinolamine mechanism we position the second proline molecule near the side-chain keto group to promote the enolization of the butanone keto group in intermediate **B** (Figure 1).

Figure 1

This then represents what may be called the Unified Theory of the Proline Catalyzed Asymmetric Cyclization. It does not even contradict the template suggestion of Rajagopal, Moni, Subramanian and Swaminathan⁷. An example of the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed asymmetric Robinson annulation reaction is shown below. It involves the conversion of the triketone **1** to (S)-(+)-2, (3aS,7aS)-(+)-Hexahydro-3a-hydroxy-7a-methyl-1,5-indanedione^{2, 16} (Scheme 2).

Scheme 2

Using CambridgeSoft Corporation's Chem3D MM2 energy minimization menu¹⁴ based on Allinger's Molecular Mechanics force field version 2^{15} we determined the nearest local energy minima of several transition states of type **B**. We assume that the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed

cyclization proceeds through intermediate **B** to give the optically active ketol of type **2**. The results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

The results of Table 1 show the total minimized energies of the transition states of type **B** in the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed intramolecular aldol addition reactions leading to the optically active 6,5-bicyclic *cis*-methyl and *cis*-ethyl ketols (n=1; R=Me and R=Et). The 6,5-methyl as well as the 6,5-ethyl ketols show a preference for an (S)-oriented transition state **B** of a lower local total energy minimum (14.69 kcal with the methyl and 16.71 kcal with the ethyl ketol). Indeed, the chemical as well as the optical yields were quite high in these asymmetric catalytic conversions (100% chemical and 93.4% optical yield for the 7aS-methyl and 98.6% chemical and 94.7% optical yield for the 7aS-ethyl 6,5-bicyclic *cis* ketols)².

For comparison we have included in Table 1 our calculations based on the enamine intermediate postulated by Professor Agami ³ with the exogenous second (S)-(-)-proline molecule. Our calculations show a large preference for our carbinolamine intermediate (53.95 kcal lesser energy minimum). On the other hand we found an energy difference of 34.51 kcal between the enamine intermediates with and without the second proline molecule in favor of the original Agami postulate.

Table 1 also shows that in the case of the 6,6-bicyclic cis-methyl ketol of type **4** (n=2; R=Me) the energy difference between the (S)-oriented and (R)-oriented transition states **B** has been less (3.72 kcal) than with the 6,5-bicyclic ketols (14.69 kcal energy difference with the enantiomeric methyl and 16.71 kcal with the ethyl ketols). In agreement with these calculations

we found a lesser 73% ee in the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed cyclization leading to the 6,6-bicyclic system ¹⁷. Unaleroglu, Aviyente, and Arseniyadis investigated the energy profiles of the 6,5and 6,6-bicyclic systems in the lead tetraacetate mediated one-pot multistage transformations¹⁸. They too found a surprising difference between the energetic behavior of the two series.

It should be pointed out that it was rather difficult to isolate (S)-(-)-4. The conversion of the homologous triketone **3** to the optically active 6,6-bicyclic methyl ketol (S)-(-)-4 is shown in Scheme 3.

Scheme 3

To avoid dehydration to the enedione, the Wieland-Miescher ketone, the reaction had to be stopped at a reasonably early stage. Therefore, a sizable amount of the prochiral triketone **3** has been recovered. It was thus possible to isolate (S)-(-)-**4** in 52% chemical and approximately 73% optical yield¹⁷. The crude compound (S)-(-)-**4** has been dehydrated to the Wieland-Miescher ketone of 75% optical purity by refluxing with a catalytic amount of p-toluenesulfonic acid in benzene. This is a less impressive result than the 93.4% ee obtained with the 6,5-bicyclic system². The energy minimization studies shown in Table 1 render a theoretically important interpretation for this difference.

As already mentioned, the Wieland-Miescher ketone has been obtained in high chemical and optical yield by the antibody catalyzed enantioselective conversion of the prochiral triketone **3** by Zhong, Lerner, Danishefsky, and Barbas, III ¹⁰. Therefore, a significant difference has to exist between the antibody catalyzed and the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed reaction mechanisms. An enamine mechanism has been postulated for the antibody catalyzed reaction, and the aldol addition intermediate (S)-(-)-**4** has not been observed.

In our own synthetic studies² contrary to the synthesis of the 6,6-bicyclic ketol (S)-(-)-**4** it has been much easier to isolate and characterize the 6,5-bicyclic Pro-Me-ax-S-*cis*-ketol (S)-(+)-**2** (Scheme 2 and Table 2), and its ethyl homologue the Pro-Et-ax-S-*cis*-ketol (Table 2). The configuration of the former corresponds to the "non steroidal" that of the latter to the "steroidal" configuration as shown by circular dichroism and by X-ray diffraction studies². These results are in good agreement with the total minimized energies of these ketols obtained by using CambridgeSoft Corporation's Chem3D MM2 energy minimization menu¹⁴ based on Allinger's Molecular Mechanics force field version 2^{15} . The results of the total minimized energies of these ketols are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Conclusion

We have postulated two possible reaction mechanisms for the proline catalyzed enantioselective intramolecular aldol cyclizations: the enamine and the carbinolamine routes. We favor the carbinolamine route based on theoretical considerations, ¹⁸O incorporation studies, and last but not least on our energy minimization results presented in this paper. We determined the nearest local energy minima of several transition states of type **B** using CambridgeSoft Corporation's Chem3D MM2 energy minimization menu¹⁴. We assume that the (S)-(-)-proline catalyzed cyclization proceeds through the carbinolamine intermediate **B** to the optically active 6,5-bicyclic ketol of type **2**. Conversion to the 6,6-bicyclic ketol of type **4** proceeds similarly through the homologous intermediate **B**. Our minimization studies gave conclusive evidence to the divergent behavior of the 6,5- and the 6,6-bicyclic systems. They support the high 93.4% ee observed with the 6,5-bicyclic ketols and explain the lower 73% ee found with the 6,6-system¹⁷. The synthesis of the optically active 6,6-bicyclic ketol (S)-(-)-4 is described in the Experimental section.

Experimental¹⁹

(-)-3,4,4a, 5,8,8a-hexahydro-4aß-hydroxy-8aß-methyl-1,6-(2H,7H)-naphthalenedione ((S)-(-)-4).

A total of 19.6 g. of 2-methyl-2-(3-oxobutyl)-1,3-cyclohexanedione was dissolved in 100 ml of anhydrous N,N-dimethylformamide. The resulting solution was cooled to 0°C. and 115 mg. of S(-)proline was added in small portions over a period of 30 minutes. The reaction mixture was permitted to come to RT and a nitrogen atmosphere was maintained over the suspension, which was also protected from light. After 24 hours, 115 mg. additional S(-)proline was added to the mixture and a similar addition of S(-)proline was repeated after 48 hours. The reaction was terminated after a total of 72 hours of stirring. The solvent was evaporated by high vacuum distillation. The dark residue that was dissolved in 400 ml. diethyl ether, stirred with 5.0 g. of activated charcoal and filtered through 5.0 g. of silica gel to give an orange colored filtrate that upon storage for 16 hours at 0°C. deposited 3.4 g. (17.3%) of crude crystalline (S)-(-)-4; optical rotation $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ -19.83° (c 1.22, in chloroform); mp 131.5 - 141.5°C. Evaporation of the solvent in vacuo from the mother liquor gave an oil that subsequently produced two additional crystalline crops: one of 2.4 g. (12.2%); $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ -18.2° (c 1.015 in chloroform); mp 129 - 133°C.

Chromatography on silica gel of the remaining oil gave a total of 3.28 g. (16.2%) of the aforesaid crude product, $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ -11.57° (c 1.0, in chloroform) and 6.95 g. (35.5%) of starting trione. The overall yield of crude reaction product was calculated as 10.24 g. (52.1%).

An optically pure sample was obtained by recrystallization from ether mp 134.5 - 135.5°C; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ -21.97°, (c 1.1013 in chloroform; ir (chloroform) 3625, 3450 (OH), and 1725 cm⁻¹ (6-ring ketones);1H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ 1.31 singlet (8a-CH3), 2.52 singlet (4a-OH). Anal. Calcd. for C₁₁H₁₆O₃: C, 67.32; H, 8.22. Found: C, 67.39; H, 8.19.

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TABLE 1

Intermediate B	Configuration	Total Minimized Energy
n=1; R=Me	28, 38	-136.4687
n=1; R=Me	2R, 3R	-121-7778
n=1; R=Et	2S, 3S	-132.2760
n=1; R=Et	2R, 3R	-115.5651
n=2; R=Me	28, 38	-129.8767
n=2; R=Me	2R, 3R	-126.1602
Enamine Intermediate ^a		
n=1; R=Me	2S, 3S	-82.5194
Enamine Intermediate ^b		
n=1; R=Me	28, 38	-48.0097

^{*a*} Enamine intermediate with second (S)-(-)-proline molecule as pictured in Reference 3.

^b Enamine intermediate without the second (S)-(-)-proline molecule.

TABLE 2



^{*a*} Pro indicates (S)-(-)-proline catalyst; S refers to the configuration at 7a of the 6,5-bicyclic ketol; ax or eq refers to the stereochemistry of the alkyl group at 7a in the six membered ring of the bicyclic ketol ; cis refers to the stereochemistry of the bicyclic ketol.

^b Configuration of compound as shown by circular dichroism and X-ray studies².





Intermediate **B** n=1; R= Me or Et

n=2; R=Me





Scheme 2





(S)-(+)-2

Scheme 3



Table 1, Intermediate B; n=1;R=Me Configuration: 2S,3S



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(14)-C(3)-C(4)-C(1) C(14)-C(3)-C(4)-C(1) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(9)-C(10)-C(11)-C(13) C(9)-C(10)-C(11)-C(13) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(25)-C(26)-N(27)-C(28) C(25)-C(26)-N(27)-C(28) Adding lone pairs to O(7) Pi System: 31 30 32 Pi System: 23 22 24 O(7) Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 348: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 2.3436 Bend: 26.4459 Stretch-Bend: 0.5140 Torsion: 28.0850 Non-1,4 VDW: -1.0040 1,4 VDW: 20.1050 Charge/Charge: -198.0486 Charge/Dipole: -15.0886 Dipole/Dipole: 0.1789 Total: -136.4687 Total:

Table 1, Intermediate B; n=1; R=Me Configuration: 2R,3R



Table 1, Intermediate B; n=1;R=Et Configuration: 2S,3S



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(14)-C(3)-C(4)-C(1) C(14)-C(3)-C(4)-C(1) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(9)-C(10)-C(11)-C(13) C(9)-C(10)-C(11)-C(13) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(26)-C(27)-N(28)-C(29) C(26)-C(27)-N(28)-C(29) Adding lone pairs to O(7) 0(7) Pi System: 32 31 33 Pi System: 23 22 24 Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 385: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 2.8496 Bend: 28.2781 Stretch-Bend: 0.7006 30.3329 Torsion: Non-1,4 VDW: -0.1394 1,4 VDW: 21.1128 Charge/Charge: -198.0784 Charge/Dipole: -17.5715 Dipole/Dipole: 0.2385 Total: -132.2760

Table 1, Intermediate B; n=1;R=Et Configuration: 2R,3R



Table 1, Intermediate B; n=2;R=Me Configuration: 2S,3S



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(18)-C(17)-C(26)-C(27) C(18)-C(17)-C(26)-C(27) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(25)-C(31)-C(32)-C(34) C(25)-C(31)-C(32)-C(34) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(1)-C(2)-N(3)-C(4) C(1)-C(2)-N(3)-C(4) Adding lone pairs to O(20) O(20) Pi System: 23 22 24 Pi System: 7 6 8 Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 337: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 3.4405 Bend: 22.8281 Stretch-Bend: 0.9453 Torsion: 28.9047 Non-1,4 VDW: -2.3160 1,4 VDW: 21.4834 Charge/Charge: -195.3485 Charge/Dipole: -10.9130 Dipole/Dipole: 1.0986 Total: -129.8767

Table 1, Intermediate B; n=2; R=Me Configuration: 2R,3R



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(18)-C(17)-C(25)-C(26) C(18)-C(17)-C(25)-C(26) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(24)-C(30)-C(31)-C(33) C(24)-C(30)-C(31)-C(33) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(1)-C(2)-N(3)-C(4) C(1)-C(2)-N(3)-C(4) Adding lone pairs to O(19) O(19) Pi System: 22 21 23 Pi System: 7 6 8 Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 363: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 3.9342 Bend: 22.1939 Stretch-Bend: 0.9118 28.8000 Torsion: Non-1,4 VDW: -2.2869 1,4 VDW: 22.7496 Charge/Charge: -196.4936 Charge/Dipole: -7.0248 Dipole/Dipole: 1.0557 Total: -126.1602

Table 1, Enamine Intermediate ^a; n=1; R=Me Configuration: 2S,3S



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(5)-C(1)-C(2)-C(3) C(5)-C(1)-C(2)-C(3) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(15)-N(16)-C(17)-C(13) C(15)-N(16)-C(17)-C(13) Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(21)-C(22)-C(23)-C(24) C(21)-C(22)-C(23)-C(24) Pi System: 29 28 30 Pi System: 19 18 20 Pi System: 12 11 16 Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 326: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 1.7077 Bend: 19.6728 Stretch-Bend: 0.1821 20.2928 Torsion: Non-1,4 VDW: 1.6597 1,4 VDW: 11.9025 Charge/Charge: -139.0510 Charge/Dipole: -5.8203 Dipole/Dipole: 6.9344 Total: -82.5194

Table 1, Enamine Intermediate ^b; n=1; R=Me Configuration: 2S,3S



Warning: Arbitrary dihedral chosen for C(5)-C(1)-C(2)-C(3) C(5)-C(1)-C(2)-C(3) Pi System: 19 18 20 Warning: Some parameters are guessed (Quality = 1). Iteration 208: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 1.2752 Bend: 12.9581 Stretch-Bend: 0.1345 Torsion: 15.9097 Non-1,4 VDW: -1.0652 1,4 VDW: 10.2869 Charge/Charge: -93.1655 Charge/Dipole: 1.8925 Dipole/Dipole: 3.7640 Total: -48.0097

Table 2, Pro-Me-ax-S-cis-ketol^a

Compound

Energy minimized structure



Adding lone pairs to O(13) O(13) Note: Some parameters are not finalized (Quality = 3). Iteration 95: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 0.8888 Bend: 3.5886 Stretch-Bend: 0.1161 14.4174 Torsion: Non-1,4 VDW: -3.4784 1,4 VDW: 6.9812 Dipole/Dipole: 2.5547 Total: 25.0685

^{*a*}Pro indicates (S)-(-)-proline catalyst; S refers to the configuration at 7a of the 6,5-bicyclic ketol; *ax* or *eq* refers to the stereochemistry of the alkyl group at 7a in the six membered ring of the bicyclic ketol ; *cis* refers to the stereochemistry of the bicyclic ketol.

Table 2, Pro-Me-eq-S-cis-ketol^{*a*}

Compound

Energy minimized structure





Adding lone pairs to O(12) O(12) Note: Some parameters are not finalized (Quality = 3). Iteration 86: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 0.9328 Bend: 4.2733 Stretch-Bend: 0.1275 Torsion: 14.5096 Non-1,4 VDW: -3.0591 1,4 VDW: 6.8971 Dipole/Dipole: 1.6642 25.3454 Total:

^{*a*}Pro indicates (S)-(-)-proline catalyst; S refers to the configuration at 7a of the 6,5-bicyclic ketol; *ax* or *eq* refers to the stereochemistry of the alkyl group at 7a in the six membered ring of the bicyclic ketol ; *cis* refers to the stereochemistry of the bicyclic ketol.

Table 2, Pro-Et-ax-S-cis-ketol^a

Compound

Energy minimized structure





Adding lone pairs to O(14) O(14) Note: Some parameters are not finalized (Quality = 3). Iteration 111: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 1.2823 Bend: 5.1057 Stretch-Bend: 0.2256 Torsion: 15.4381 Non-1,4 VDW: -3.6582 1,4 VDW: 8.2665 Dipole/Dipole: 2.5232 Total: 29.1832

^{*a*}Pro indicates (S)-(-)-proline catalyst; S refers to the configuration at 7a of the 6,5-bicyclic

ketol; ax or eq refers to the stereochemistry of the alkyl group at 7a in the six membered ring of

the bicyclic ketol; *cis* refers to the stereochemistry of the bicyclic ketol.

Table 2, Pro-Et-eq-S-cis-ketol^a

Compound

Energy minimized structure





Adding lone pairs to O(13) O(13) Note: Some parameters are not finalized (Quality = 3). Iteration 99: Minimization terminated normally because the gradient norm is less than the minimum gradient norm Stretch: 1.2296 Bend: 4.7720 Stretch-Bend: 0.2119 15.4296 Torsion: Non-1,4 VDW: -2.8491 1,4 VDW: 7.5859 Dipole/Dipole: 1.6113 27.9912 Total:

^aPro indicates (S)-(-)-proline catalyst; S refers to the configuration at 7a of the 6,5-bicyclic

ketol; ax or eq refers to the stereochemistry of the alkyl group at 7a in the six membered ring of

the bicyclic ketol; cis refers to the stereochemistry of the bicyclic ketol.