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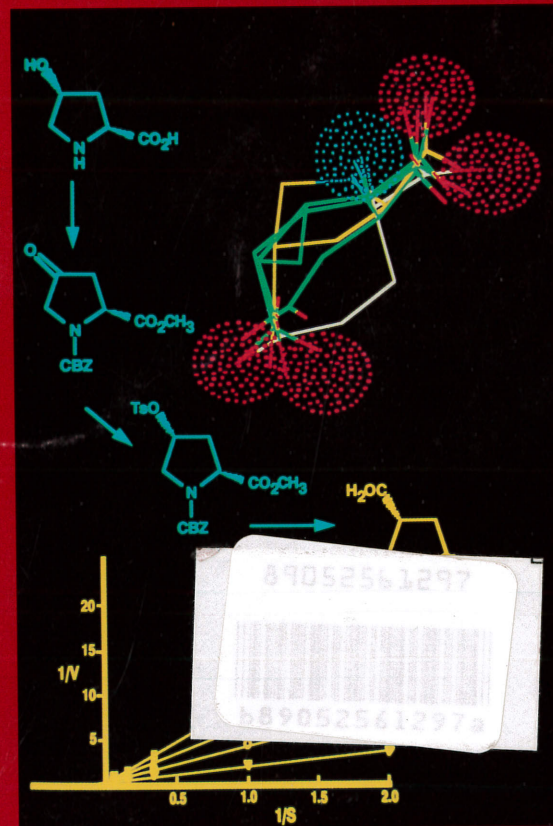
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Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters Vol. 4, No. 20, 1994

Contents

- 2365 Contributors to this Issue
- 2367 Graphical Abstracts
- J. Bermudez, L. Gaster, J. Gregory,
J. Jerman, G. F. Joiner, F. D. King and
S. K. Rahman 2373 Synthesis and 5-HT₃ receptor antagonist potency of novel (*endo*) 3,9-diazabicyclo[3.3.1]nonan-7-amino derivatives
- R. Shimazawa, R. Shirai, Y. Hashimoto
and S. Iwasaki 2377 DNA-Binding ability of non-diyne class of dynemicins and aza-anthraquinones
- P. Demonchaux, P. Lenoir, G. Augert
and P. Dupassieux 2383 Design of pyrrolo-1,4-benzoxazine derivatives as inhibitors of 5-lipoxygenase and PAF antagonists with antihistaminic properties
- N.-H. Lin, Y. He, D. J. Anderson,
J. T. Wasicak, R. Kasson, D. Sweeney
and J. P. Sullivan 2389 Synthesis and structure-activity relationships of pyrrolidine-modified analogs of the potent cholinergic channel activator, ABT 418
- T.-S. Wu, S.-C. Huang, P.-L. Wu and
K.-H. Lee 2395 Structure and synthesis of clausenaquinone-A. A novel carbazolequinone alkaloid and bioactive principle from *Clausena excavata*
- G. Romeo, F. Russo, S. Guccione,
R. Chabin, D. Kuo and W. B. Knight 2399 Synthesis of new thiazinoindole derivatives and their evaluation as inhibitors of human leukocyte elastase and other related serine proteases
- J. Lee, N. E. Lewin, P. M. Blumberg and
V. E. Marquez 2405 Conformationally constrained analogues of diacylglycerol—IX. The effect of side-chain orientation on the protein kinase C (PK-C) binding affinity of δ -lactones
- E. K. Lehnert, K. E. Miller,
J. S. Madalengoitia, T. J. Guzi and
T. L. Macdonald 2411 DNA Topoisomerase II inhibition by substituted 1,2,3,4-tetrahydro- β -carboline derivatives
- S. J. Steiner, J. T. Bien and B. D. Smith 2417 Diphenylborinic acid is a strong inhibitor of serine proteases
- J. A. Hartley, M. D. Wyatt,
B. J. Garbiras, C. Richter and M. Lee 2421 Probing the importance of the second chloroethyl arm of a benzoic acid mustard derivative of an imidazole-containing analogue of distamycin
- P. Pradhan, D. L. Luthria and A. Banerji 2425 Pimolin, a new class of natural product from *Pimpinella monoica*: a novel dimeric furochromone
- B. König and M. Grätzel 2429 An immunosensor for the detection of human B-lymphocytes
- G. Adlam, I. S. Blagbrough, S. Taylor,
H. C. Latham, I. S. Haworth and
A. Rodger 2435 Multiple binding modes with DNA of anthracene-9-carbonyl-N¹-spermine probed by LD, CD, normal absorption, and molecular modelling compared with those of spermidine and spermine
- S. K. Thompson, A. M. Eppley,
J. S. Frazee, M. G. Darcy, R. T. Lum,
T. A. Tomaszek, Jr, L. A. Ivanoff,
J. F. Morris, E. J. Sternberg,
D. M. Lambert, A. V. Fernandez,
S. R. Petteway, Jr, T. D. Meek,
B. W. Metcalf and J. G. Gleason 2441 Synthesis and antiviral activity of a novel class of HIV-1 protease inhibitors containing a heterocyclic P₁'-P₂' amide bond isostere

[Continued on inside back cover]



0960-894X(1994)4:20;1-I

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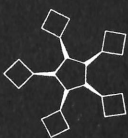


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Contents [Continued from outside back cover]

K. A. Alvi, M. Jaspars, P. Crews, B. Strulovici and E. Oto	2447	Penazetidine A, an alkaloid inhibitor of protein kinase C
J. P. Demers, W. E. Hageman, S. G. Johnson, D. H. Klaubert, R. A. Look and J. B. Moore	2451	Selective inhibitors of protein kinase C in a model of Graft-vs-Host disease
S. Sabesan	2457	Synthesis and neuraminidase inhibition studies of 4-azido, amino and acetamido substituted sialosides
J. Aubé, B. Gülgeze and X. Peng	2461	Synthesis of <i>cis</i> - δ -phenylmethyl-D-proline using a nitrogen-centered radical derived from a chiral oxaziridine
R. B. Greenwald, A. Pendri, D. Bolikal and C. W. Gilbert	2465	Highly water soluble taxol derivatives: 2'-polyethyleneglycol esters as potential prodrugs
R. P. Iyer, D. Yu and S. Agrawal	2471	Stereospecific bio-reversibility of dinucleoside S-alkyl phosphorothiolates to dinucleoside phosphorothioates
R. D. Clark, A. Jahangir, J. A. Langston, K. K. Weinhardt, A. B. Miller, E. Leung and R. M. Eglon	2477	Ketones related to the benzoate 5-HT ₄ receptor antagonist RS-23597 are high affinity partial agonists
R. D. Clark, A. Jahangir, J. A. Langston, K. K. Weinhardt, A. B. Miller, E. Leung, D. W. Bonhaus, E. H. F. Wong and R. M. Eglon	2481	Synthesis and preliminary pharmacological evaluation of 2-benzyloxy substituted aryl ketones as 5-HT ₄ receptor antagonists
T. Nakajima, T. Kashiwabara, T. Izawa and S. Nakajima	2485	Structure-activity studies of <i>N</i> -cyano-3-pyridinecarboxamides and their amide and thioamide congeners
	2489	Additions and Corrections
	I	Instructions to Contributors

First
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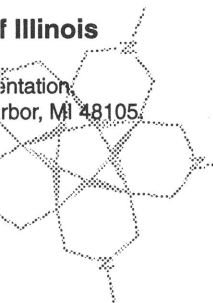
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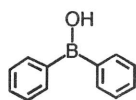
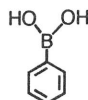
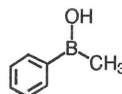
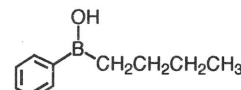
**DIPHENYLBORINIC ACID IS A STRONG INHIBITOR OF SERINE
PROTEASES[‡]**Steven J. Steiner,[‡] Jeffrey T. Bien, Bradley D. Smith*

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA

Abstract. Diphenylborinic acid, a commercially available and reasonably air stable compound, was found to be a strong competitive inhibitor of three serine proteases. Compared to phenylborinic acid, it was a thirty-fold better inhibitor of α -chymotrypsin, a fifteen-fold better inhibitor of subtilisin BPN', and a sixty-fold better inhibitor of bovine trypsin. The pK_a and inhibitory ability of methylphenylborinic acid was also determined.

Boronic acids have been studied as competitive inhibitors of serine proteases for more than twenty-five years.¹ Nonetheless, interest in these compounds remains high due to their potential clinical uses,² and their ability to act as structural probes of enzyme binding sites.³ Despite numerous X-ray and NMR studies, some of the details concerning the structures of the enzyme/inhibitor complexes remain controversial, particularly when the inhibitors are simple, "non substrate-like" boronic acids.⁴ In some cases there is clear evidence for a covalent tetrahedral adduct with the active-site serine hydroxyl.^{4,5} In other cases there is no doubt that the boron is coordinated to the active-site histidine.⁶

Our interest in this area stems from our recent efforts to develop molecular transport devices using boron acids.⁷ While conducting experiments with diphenylborinic acid, **1**, we became curious about its ability to inhibit serine proteases. Inhibition with asymmetric boronic acids has been reported before,⁸ the most recent study by the Jones research group.⁹ In general, borinic acids are better inhibitors than boronic acids. The major detraction with borinic acids is their susceptibility to air oxidation. Diarylborinic acids, however, are reasonably air stable compounds. For example, a solution of **1** in phosphate buffer, at pH 7.4, was found to be > 90 % pure after standing on the bench top for 24 hours. Compound **1** has a pK_a of 6.2.¹⁰ At neutral pH it readily combines with vicinal diols to form anionic, tetrahedral "ate" complexes.⁷ The expected inhibitory ability of **1** was hard to predict, *a priori*, since it was difficult to estimate the relative importance of various opposing factors such as increased acidity, enzyme binding site specificity, inhibitor hydrophobicity, loss of a potential active-site hydrogen, etc. We felt that if **1** were a good protease binder then it may have utility in clarifying some of the structural and mechanistic ambiguities concerning this class of transition-state-analogue inhibitors.

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