# A NEW SYNTHESIS OF (±)-CANADALINE

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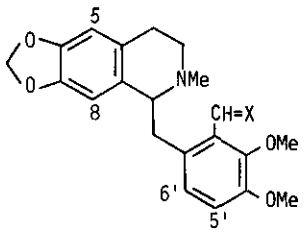
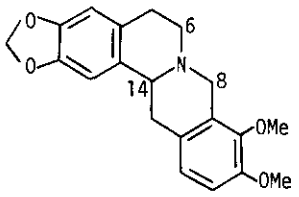
Abstract —— (±)-Canadaline was synthesized using a regioselective N-$C_8$ bond cleavage of tetrahydroberberine with ethyl chloroformate.

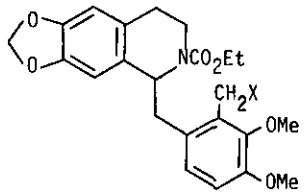
Canadaline (1),[1] an alkaloid isolated from Hydrastis canadensis L, is representative of a new group of isoquinoline alkaloids, the secoberbines.[2] In 1978, Shamma et al.[2] reported the first synthesis of its racemate from the Hofmann degradation product (2)[3] of 8-benzyltetrahydroberberine. We now wish to report an alternative and convenient synthesis of (±)-canadaline via a regioselective N-$C_8$ bond cleavage of tetrahydroberberine itself.

In boiling ethyl chloroformate, tetrahydroberberine (3) gave the urethane (4) in 81% yield as a sole product,[4] while the Hofmann degradation[5] or the von Braun reaction[6] of tetrahydroberberine has been found to result in the N-$C_6$ and/or N-$C_{14}$ bond fission. Structure of 4 was confirmed by its conversion to 5 [with $LiAlH_4$, 66%, δ 2.02 (3H, s), 2.46 (3H, s)]. Treatment of 4 with silver nitrate in aqueous acetone afforded 6 in 66% yield and subsequent lithium aluminum hydride reduction of 6 gave the amino alcohol (8) in 80% yield. The alcohol (8) was also obtained by solvolysis of 4 with acetic acid-sodium acetate followed by lithium aluminum hydride reduction (via 7) in a rather low yield (overall 31%). PCC oxidation[7] of 8 furnished (±)-canadaline (1) [68%, mp 143-143.5°, m/e 369 ($M^+$), ν ($CHCl_3$) 1680 $cm^{-1}$, δ ($CDCl_3$) 10.20 (1H, s, CHO), 6.86 and 6.68 (2H, AB-q, J=8, $C_5$,- and $C_6$,-H), 6.40 (2H, s, $C_5$- and $C_8$-H), 5.76 (2H, s, $OCH_2O$), 3.86 (3H, s, $OCH_3$), 3.82 (3H, s, $OCH_3$), 2.32 (3H, s, $NCH_3$), $\lambda_{max}^{MeOH}$ 288 nm (log ε=3.85)].

The synthetic (±)-canadaline was proved to be completely identical with natural canadaline[1] by $^1$H-NMR spectral comparison.







1 ; X=O

2 ; X=$CHC_6H_5$

5 ; X=$H_2$

8 ; X=OH,H

3

4 ; X=Cl

6 ; X=OH

7 ; X=OAc

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REFERENCES AND FOOTNOTES

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4. The product showed two spots on TLC and exhibited a complex $^1$H-NMR spectrum. This phenomenon could be attributed to the presence of two rotamers, because both isolated components gave the same reduction product (5) in excellent yields.
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