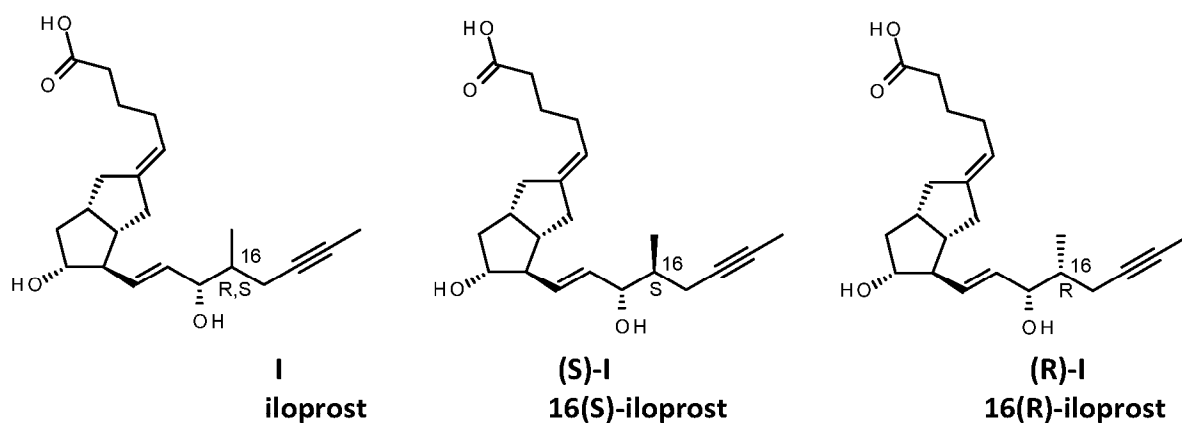


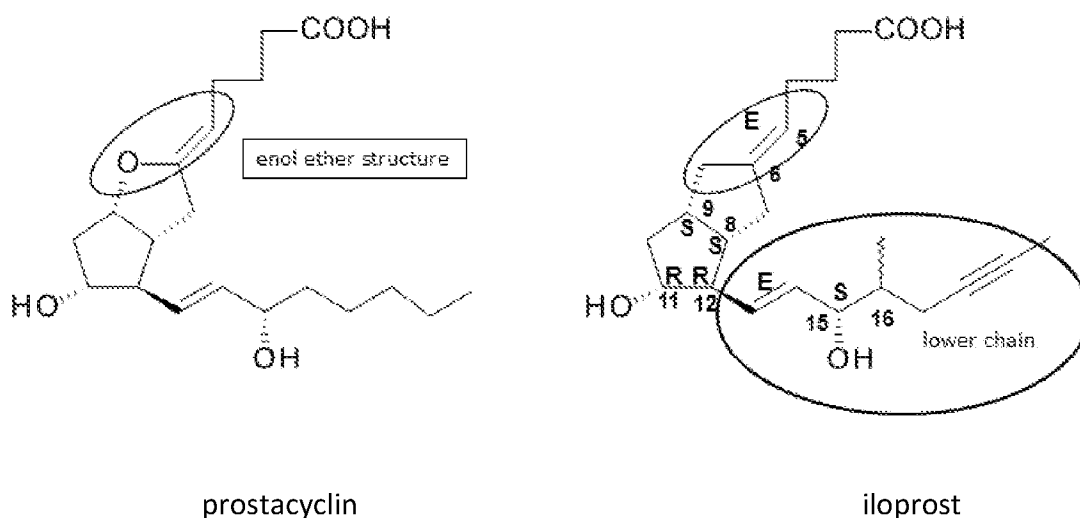
Process for the preparation of iloprost

The subject of our invention is a process for the preparation of iloprost of formula I through new intermediates, isolation of iloprost in solid form, as well as preparation of the 16(S)-iloprost and 16(R)-iloprost isomers of formulae (S)-I and (R)-I and isolation of the 16(S)-iloprost of formula (S)-I in solid, crystalline form.



Prior art

Iloprost is a carbacyclin derivative. The carbacyclin skeleton is a modified prostacyclin, where the oxygen atom of the oxygen-containing five-membered ring is replaced with a carbon atom. Carbacyclins do not contain the very sensitive enol ether structural part, therefore they are chemically more stable than prostacyclins. Chemical and biochemical properties of the carbacyclin structure, as well as the early syntheses are summarized in publication R. C. Nickolson, M. H. Town, H. Vorbrüggen, Prostacyclin-analogues, *Medicinal Research Reviews*, Vol. **1985**, 5 (1), 1-53.



Iloprost contains 6 asymmetric centres and it is an approximately 1:1 ratio mixture of two diastereoisomers, as the configuration of the carbon atom in position-16 may be (R) or (S) with

The image displays two chemical structures of iloprost diastereomers. The left structure is labeled 16(S)-iloprost, and the right structure is labeled 16(R)-iloprost. Both structures consist of a cyclopentane ring with a hydroxyl group (HO) and a side chain. The side chain includes a double bond, a chiral center at C16, and a terminal alkyne group. In the 16(S)-iloprost structure, the C16 center is bonded to a hydrogen atom (H) with a wedge bond and a propargyl group with a dash bond. In the 16(R)-iloprost structure, the C16 center is bonded to a hydrogen atom (H) with a dash bond and a propargyl group with a wedge bond. The structures are labeled 'iloprost diastereomers' at the bottom.

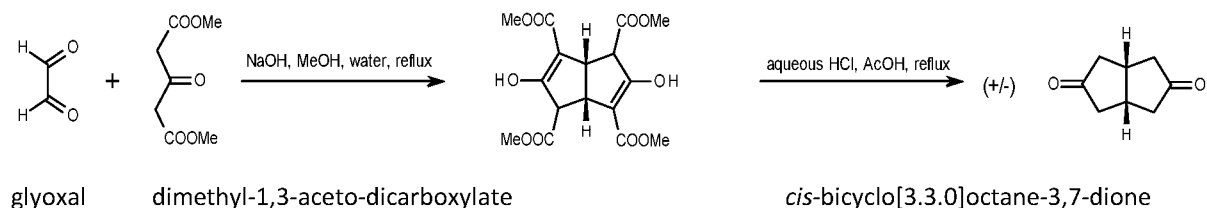
The key-step of the iloprost syntheses is the construction of the appropriately substituted bicycle containing two five-membered rings.

S. Chandrasekhar, Ch. Sridhar, P. Srihari, *Tetrahedron Asymmetry*, **2012**, 23, 388-394;

H-J. Gais, G. J. Kramp, D. Wolters, L. R. Reddy, *Chem. Eur. J.*, **2006**, *12*, 5610-5617;

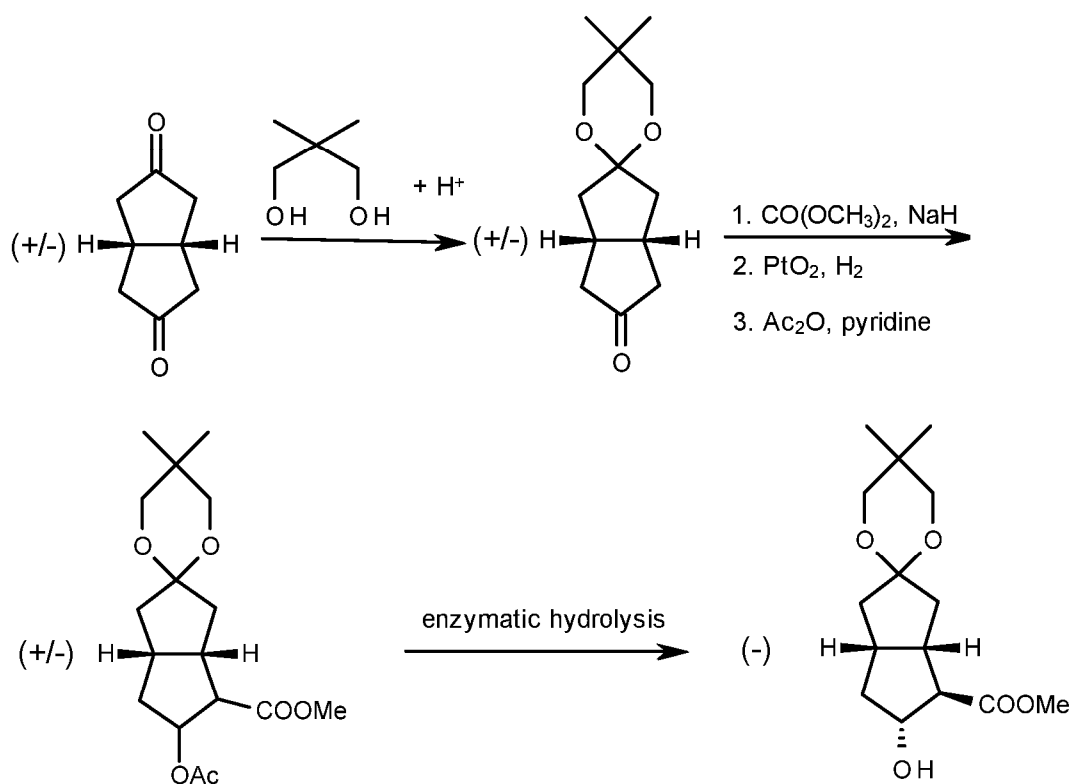
G. J. Kramp, M. Kim, H.-J. Gais, C. Vermeeren, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, **2005**, *127*, 17910-17920.

The bicyclic ketone was synthesized by reacting glyoxal with dimethyl-1,3-aceto-dicarboxylate (A. Gawish, U. Weiss, *Org. Synth.*, **1986**, 64, 27-38; H. Dahl (Schering AG), DE 3816801, J. A. Caedieux, D. J. Buller, P. D. Wilson, *Org. Lett.*, **2003**, 5, 3983-3986). (Scheme 1.)



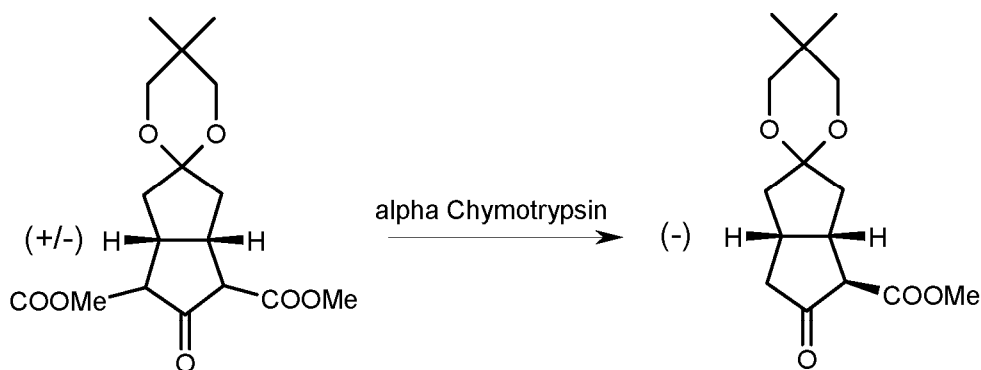
Scheme 1.

The *cis*-bicyclo[3.3.0]octane-3,7-dione was selectively ketalized with neopentyl glycol, the monoketal was reacted with dimethyl carbonate in the presence of sodium hydride, the oxo group was reduced, the alcohol was acetylated and the acetate was resolved by enzymatic hydrolysis (H. Dahl (Schering AG), DE 3816801). (Scheme 2.)



Scheme 2.

Researchers of Schering also worked out the enzymatic, selective mono-methoxycarbonylation of the monoketal disubstituted with methoxycarbonyl group (K. Petzoldt, H. Dahl, W. Skuballa, M. Gottwald, *Liebigs. Ann. Chem.*, **1990**, 1087-1091.). (Scheme 3.)

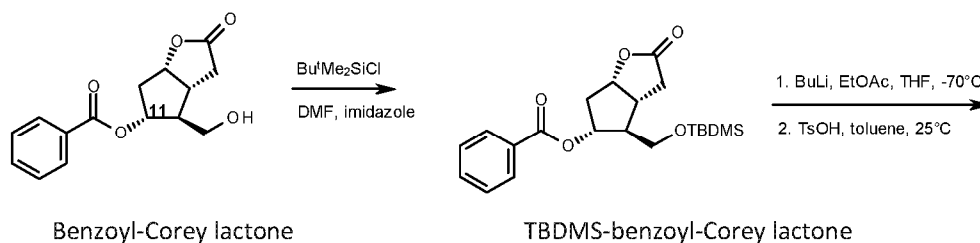


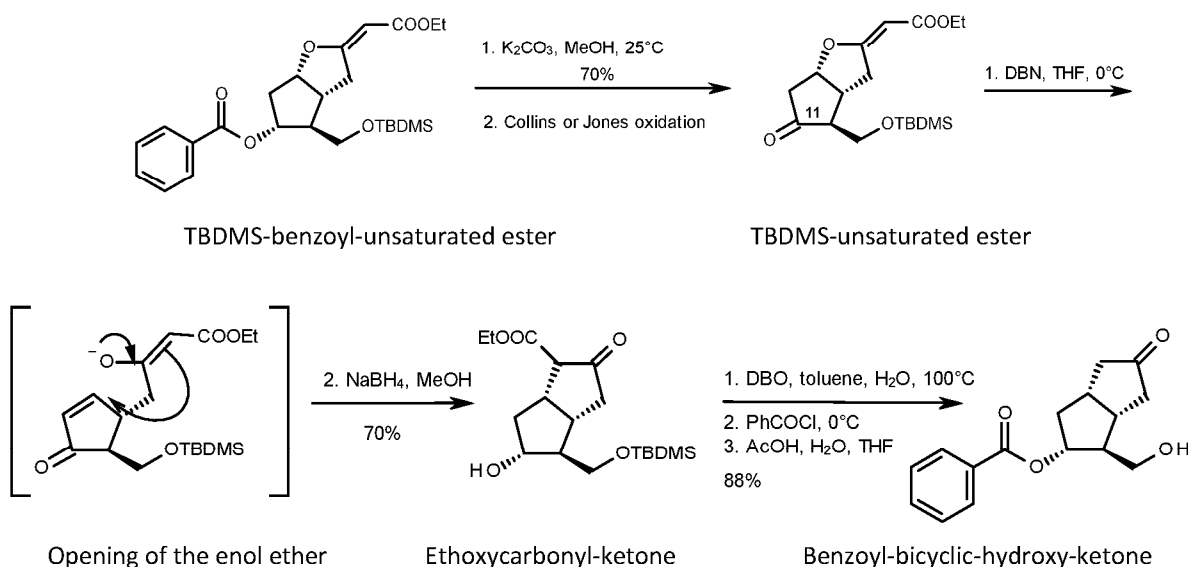
Scheme 3.

The appropriately substituted bicycle may also be formed from the appropriately substituted chiral Corey lactone, which is the most frequently used starting material for prostacyclin derivatives.

In the method of Skuballa and Vorbrüggen (*Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. Engl.*, **1981**, 20, 1046-1048) the primary hydroxyl group of the Corey lactone containing benzoyl protecting group was protected with *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl chloride (TBDMSCl).

The TBDMS-benzoyl-Corey lactone was reacted with lithiated ethyl acetate in THF at (-)70°C, then water was eliminated from the resulting hydroxy ester. The benzoyl protecting group of the TBDMS-benzoyl-unsaturated ester was cleaved by methanolysis in the presence of potassium carbonate, the secondary hydroxyl group was converted to the oxo group by oxidation with chromium. The reactive enol ether ring of the TBDMS-unsaturated ester on treatment with 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.3.0]non-5-ene (DBN) underwent ring-opening and cyclisation to the ketone. The 11-oxo-group was reduced into the secondary alcohol group with sodium borohydride in one-pot reaction. Selectivity of the reduction was assured by neighbouring-group participation, but the epimeric purity was not given, although this is of key importance for the optical purity and for the amount of optical isomers. Summa yield of the ring-opening and the oxo group reduction was 70%. Ethoxycarbonyl group of the ethoxycarbonyl ketone was removed by reflux in aqueous toluene in the presence of 1,4-diazabicyclo[2.2.2]octane (DBO), the secondary hydroxyl group was protected with benzoyl group, the silyl protecting group of the primary hydroxyl group was cleaved. Summa yield of these three steps was 43%. (Scheme 4.)





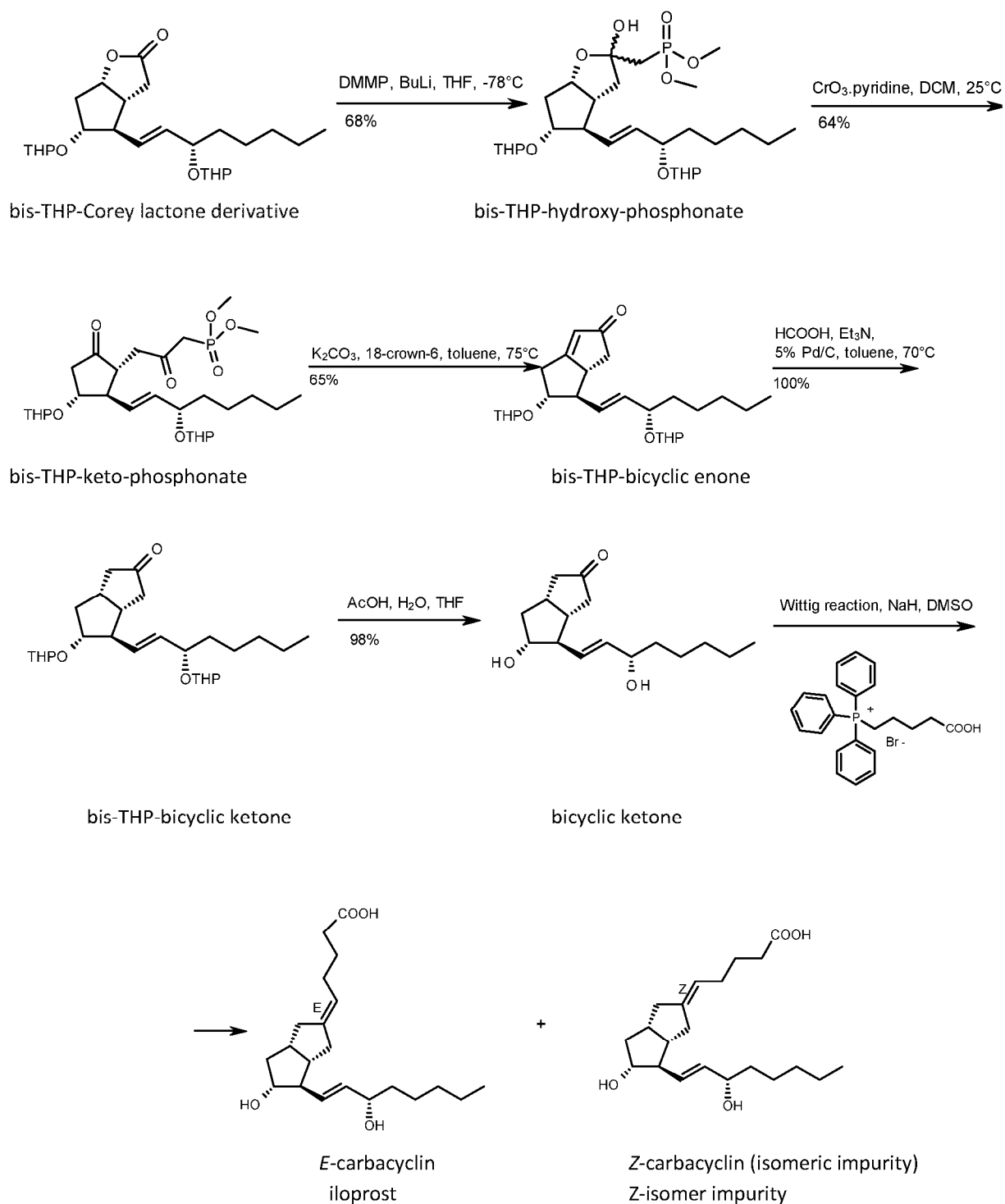
Scheme 4.

From the protected bicyclic hydroxy-ketone the lower and upper chains of iloprost may be formed by Wittig or modified Wittig reactions.

The advantage of the method is that the optically active bicyclic ketone intermediate, needed for the synthesis of carbacyclins, is formed starting from the optically active Corey lactone which is widely used in prostaglandin chemistry. Disadvantage is, however, that the reaction of Corey lactone with the lithium compound of ethyl acetate also gives numerous by-products, which significantly decrease the yield (in the referred publication the yield of that step is not given).

According to the Upjohn method (P. A. Aristoff, P. D. Johnson, A. W. Harrison, *J. Org. Chem.*, **1981**, 46, 1954-1957.) the protected Corey lactone, already containing the lower chain, is converted into the intermediate suitable for the preparation of carbacyclins.

In the first step the bis-THP-Corey lactone derivative (THP = tetrahydropyranyl) was treated with the lithium salt of dimethyl methylphosphonate (DMMP). The resulting bis-THP-hydroxy-phosphonate was oxidized by modified Collins oxidation into the bis-THP-keto-phosphonate. Intramolecular Horner-Wadsworth-Emmons (HWE) reaction of the bis-THP-keto-phosphonate provided the bis-THP-bicyclic enone. The double bond of the enone was saturated by transfer hydrogenation (bis-THP-bicyclic ketone), the THP protecting groups were then removed by acidic hydrolysis (bicyclic ketone). The upper chain of the bicyclic ketone, already containing the lower chain, was formed by Wittig reaction. The phosphoran needed for the reaction was prepared *in situ* from 4-carboxybutyltriphenylphosphonium bromide. The reaction, beside the desired product with the double bond of *E*-geometry (65%), also produced significant amount of *Z*-isomer (35%) (Scheme 5.)



Scheme 5.

The process contains scalable steps with good yields, its disadvantage is that the formation of the upper chain is not selective, the product contains significant amount of Z-isomer contamination. In a later publication (P. A. Aristoff, P. D. Johnson, A. W. Harrison, *J. Org. Chem.*, **1983**, 48, 5341-5348.) the authors describe the above chemical steps with higher yields.

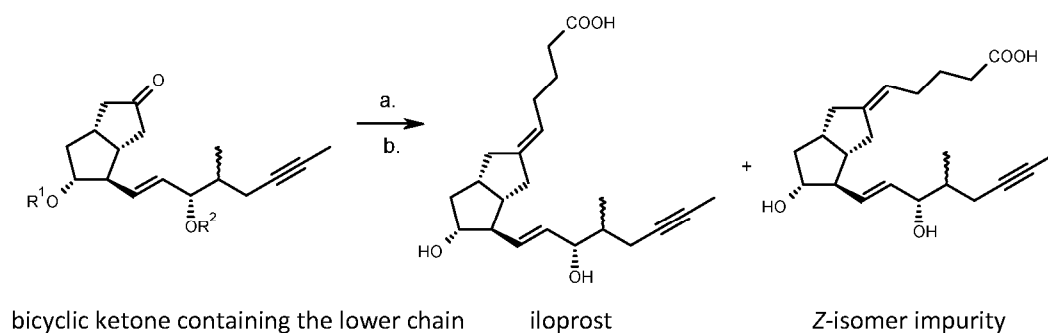
Chemical step	<i>J. Org. Chem.</i> , 1981 , 46, 1954	<i>J. Org. Chem.</i> , 1983 , 48, 5341	Yield calculated for the desired intermediate in JOC publications	Chinoïn process of the present application
a) formation of the phosphonate	68% (20% starting material)	99% (20% starting material)	79%	96%
b) oxidation	64% (29% of eliminated product III)**	64% (29% of eliminated product III)**	35%	63% (≤ 5% of eliminated product)**
c) HWE reaction	65%	77%	77%	65%*
Wittig reaction (E/Z isomer %)		65%:35%		60%:40%
Summa yield of II-VII			21.3%	39.3%

*with recycling (together with the UV isomerization)

**structure of the eliminated product III is shown in Scheme 9.

Many attempts have been made to improve the selectivity of the Wittig reaction forming the upper chain.

Researchers of Schering (J. Westermann, M. Harre, K. Nickish, *Tetrahedron Letters*, **1992**, 33, 8055-8056.) investigated how the protecting groups of the bicyclic ketone, already containing the lower chain, and the reaction conditions of the Wittig reaction influenced the selectivity of the reaction.



Scheme 6.

- a. Wittig reaction; 4-carboxybutyltriphenylphosphonium bromide/ potassium-*tert*-butylate
- b. deprotection, if R¹ and/or R² is not hydrogen

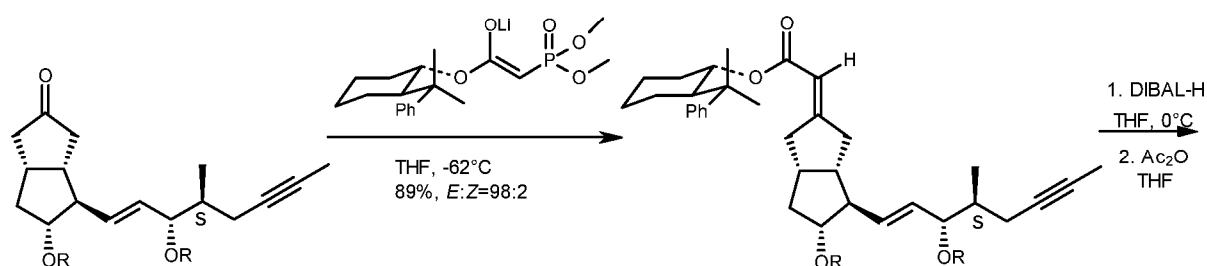
Based on the experiments they stated that the worst isomeric ratio (**E: Z= 60:40**) was obtained by use of THP protecting group (R¹=R²=THP) and DMSO-THF solvent mixture.

The best isomeric ratio (**E: Z= 90:10**) was achieved when the bicyclic ketone did not contain protecting group (R¹=R²=H) and dimethoxyethane was chosen as solvent.

H-J. Gais and his co-workers (*J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, **2005**, 127, 17910-17920) repeated that reaction starting from Corey lactone which contained the chiral lower chain of iloprost, but they obtained a much less favourable isomeric ratio (**E: Z= 62:38**).

Surveying the literature data, the hitherto known most selective method to construct the upper chain was worked out by H-J. Gais and his co-workers (G. J. Kramp, M. Kim, H-J. Gais, C. Vermeeren, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, **2005**, 127, 17910-17920; H-J. Gais, G. J. Kramp, D. Wolters, L. R. Reddy, *Chem. Eur. J.*, **2006**, 12, 5610-5617). The method was worked out for the synthesis of iloprost containing chiral lower chain.

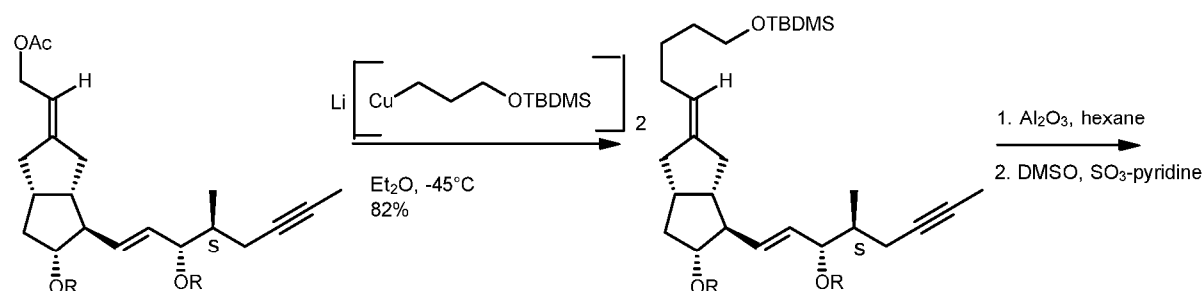
The upper chain was constructed in two steps. The first step, assuring the selectivity, was carried out with chiral phosphonate. The lithium salt of the chiral phosphonate was reacted at (-)78-(-)62°C with the protected bicyclic ketone corresponding to iloprost, but containing chiral lower chain. The chiral HWE reaction was carried out starting from 300 mg of bicyclic ketone. In the reaction only 2% of Z-isomer was formed. The ester group was reduced to the alcohol with diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBAL-H), the alcohol was protected with acetyl group. The upper chain, with the appropriate number of carbon atoms, was built by treating the acetyl derivative with cuprate reagent protected with *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl (TBDMS) group. The protecting group of the primary alcohol was removed by mild desilylation (by treatment with neutral aluminum oxide in hexane), the primary alcohol was oxidized to the aldehyde with DMSO-pyridine reagent. The aldehyde was oxidized to the acid with silver nitrate, to obtain after removal of the protecting groups, the (16S)-iloprost which contains chiral lower chain (Scheme 7.).



R=*tert*-butyldimethylsilyl

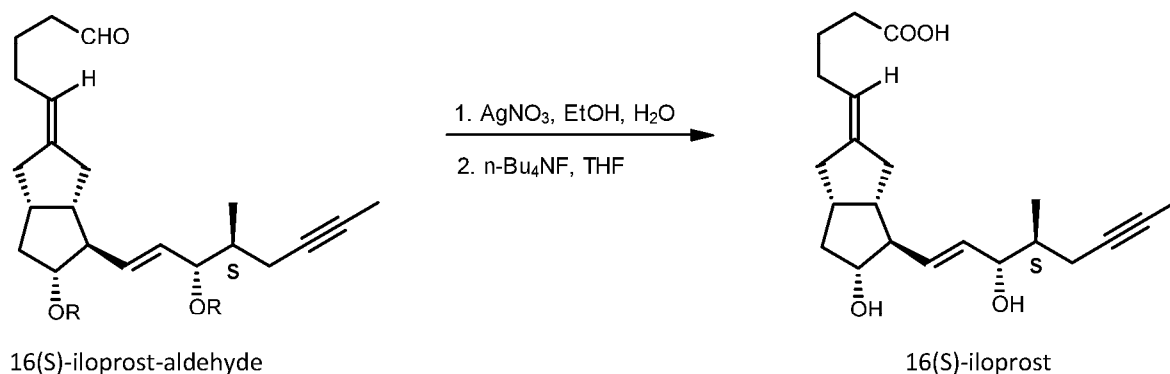
16(S)-iloprost intermediate with chiral lower chain

upper chain containing chiral ester



16(S)-acetyl derivative

16(S)-TBDMS-iloprost-alcohol



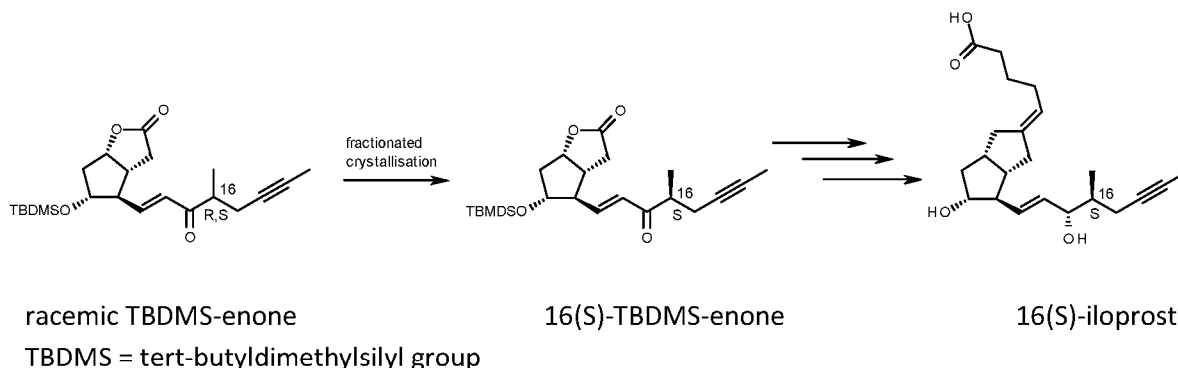
Scheme 7.

The prepared amount of 16(S)-iloprost was 20 mg, its physical state was not characterized.

Advantage of the above process is that during the construction of the upper chain only 2% of Z-isomer impurity is formed. Disadvantages: it is hard to scale-up, it applies extreme reaction conditions and uses expensive reagents prepared in many-step syntheses.

In patent specification CN 107324986 preparation of the chiral (S)-TBDMS-enone is described, which is obtained by fractionated crystallisation of the racemic TBDMS-enone (Figure 8.).

From the chiral (S)-TBDMS-enone the 16(S)-iloprost may be prepared.



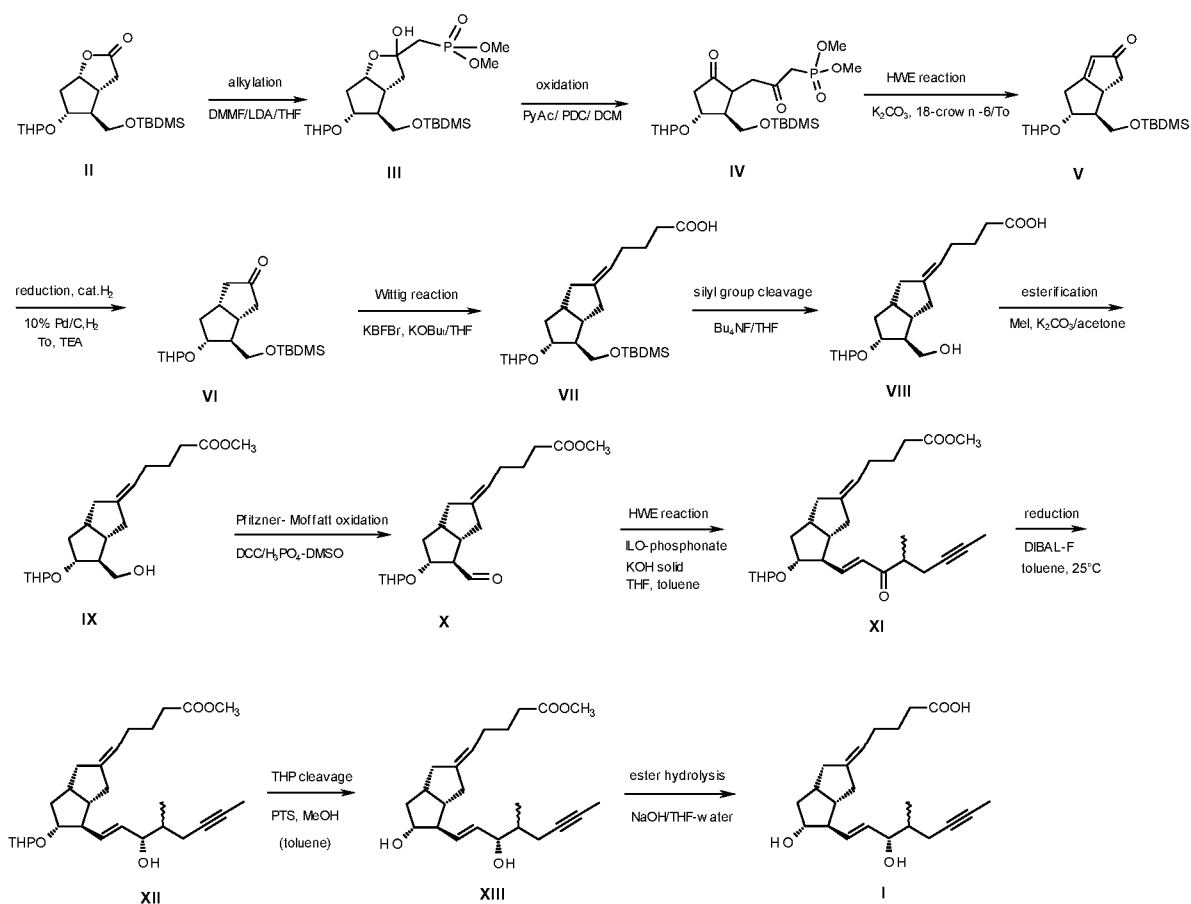
Scheme 8.

The process is the formal synthesis of 16(S)-iloprost. The patent application contains only the preparation of the chiral enone. As regards preparation and physical characterisation of the 16(S)-iloprost, neither a preparation example nor physical characteristics are given.

We aimed to work out an alternative synthesis for iloprost, which provides better yield than the hitherto known methods .

Description of the invention

The process according to the invention claimed in the present application is outlined in Scheme 9.



Scheme 9.

In the process according to the invention first the upper chain is built into the protected Corey lactone of formula II.

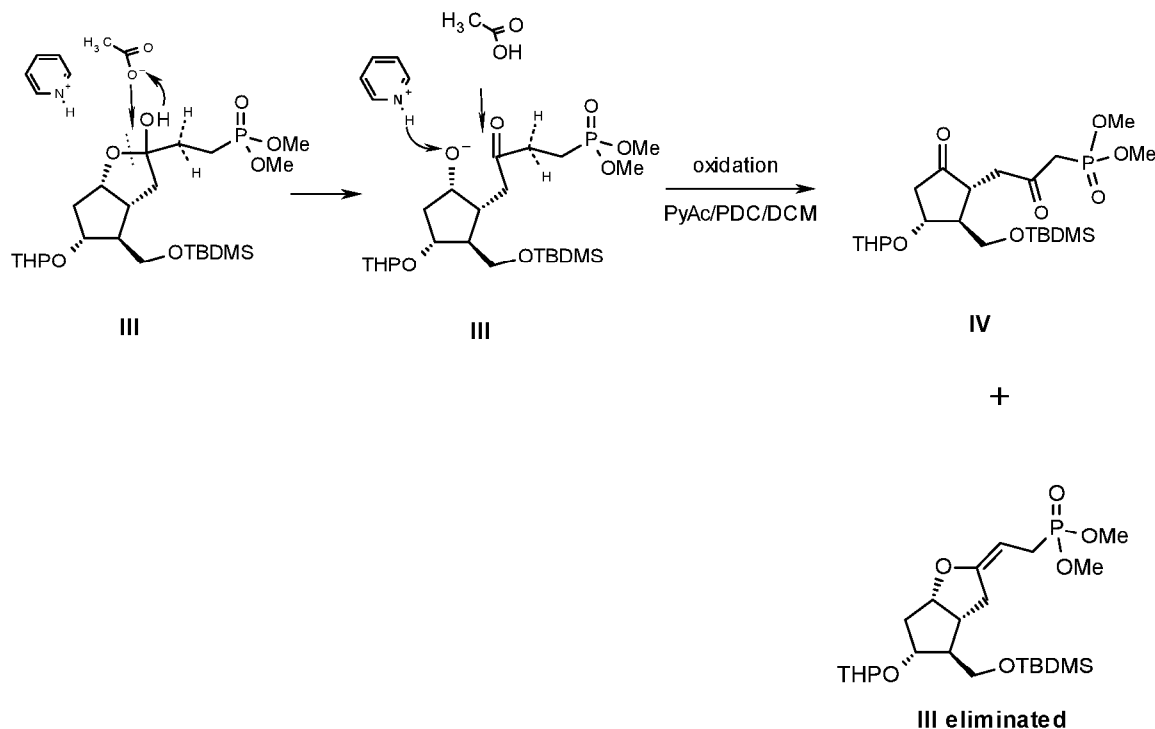
In the course of the preparation of compound III, to form the phosphonate, a strong base is required to deprotonate the dimethyl methylphosphonate. However, a strong base, as for example butyl lithium, applied in excess amount, will open the lactone ring (a latent carboxylic acid ester).

When a strong base, for example butyl lithium is used, the anion formed from the opened lactone ring will not be alkylated by the phosphonate and after work-up the starting material will be obtained back, depending on the reaction conditions in as much as 20% amount.

In the process according to the invention lithium diisopropylamide or lithium dialkylamides are applied which selectively deprotonate the methyl dimethylphosphonate, the lactone ring will not open (remains intact) thus the whole amount of compound II is alkylated by the phosphonate and the phosphonic acid ester is formed, the amount of the starting material after work-up remains below 2%.

In the case of the above compounds preferably lithium diisopropylamide is applied, as the diisopropylamine released from the reagent can be removed from the product.

During the preparation of the compound of formula **IV**



Scheme 10.

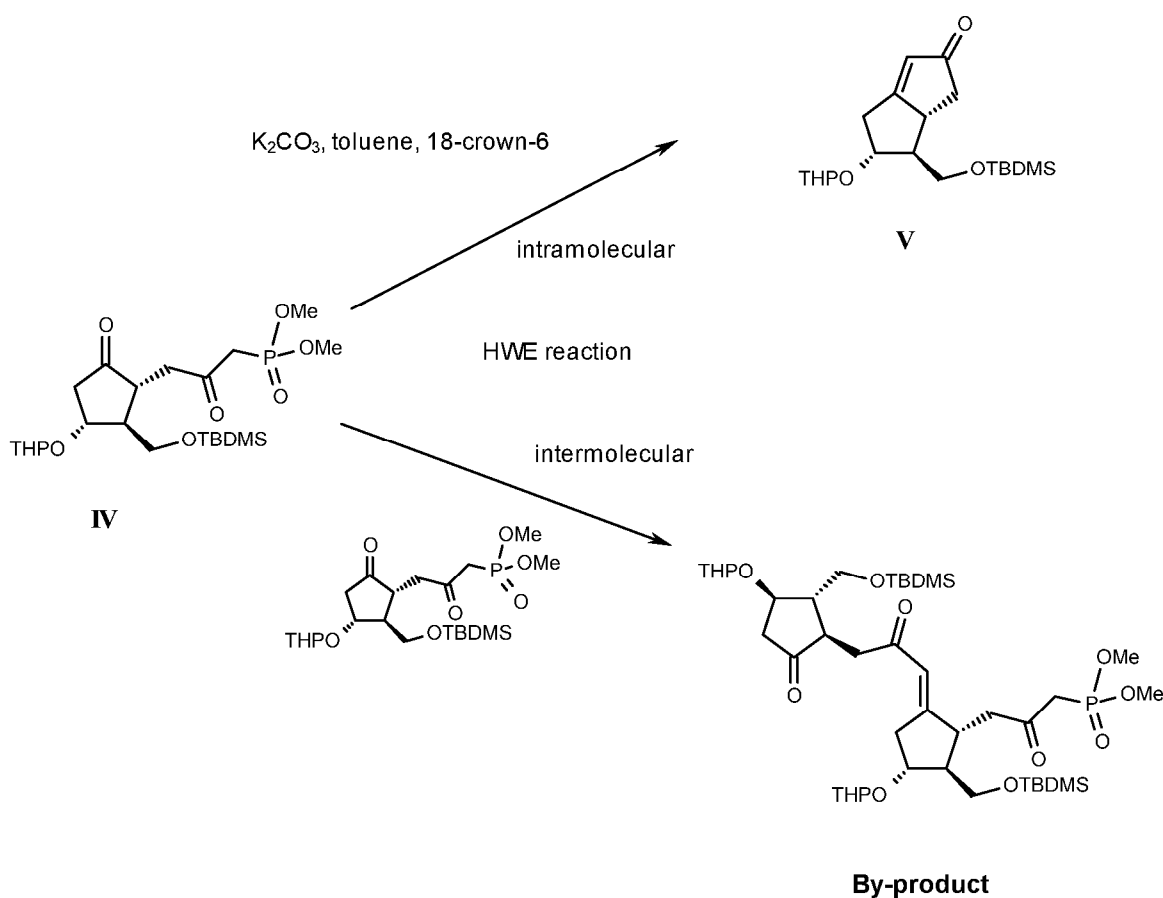
the lactol ring has to be opened (ketal cleavage) and the liberated secondary hydroxyl group has to be oxidized. The reaction clearly has to be performed in acidic medium, since under basic conditions an uncontrolled HWE reaction will start supplying the **III eliminated** side-product (Scheme 10.)

In the literature („Synthesis of a carbaprostacyclin intermediate -6 β -[(tert-butyldimethylsiloxy)methyl]-7- α -[(tetrahydropyran-2-yl)oxy]bicyclo[3.3.0]octan-3-one”, *Huaxue Xuebao*, **1987**, 45(7), 727-9; US4420632 A1, US 9831213, GB 2070596, GB 2070596) simply the acidic conditions of Collins oxidant: CrO₃.pyridine, Jones reagent: CrO₃.aqueous sulfuric acid, PCC and PDC oxidations are utilized to open the ring, however, under strong acidic conditions the ketal affords via dehydration in about 20-30% the so-called eliminated compound **III** containing double bond.

In the process according to the invention the lactol ring is opened under very mild acidic conditions with pyridinium acetate, and following lactol opening, the liberated hydroxyl group is oxidized with PDC, which works under much milder conditions than PCC. The oxidation takes place slowly, but the amount of the so-called eliminated impurity and the decomposition products is much less, less than 5%.

For the preparation of the compound of formula **V**, similarly to the methods known from the literature, the process according to the invention also uses potassium carbonate in toluene medium, the catalyst of the intramolecular HWE (Horner–Wadsworth–Emmons) reaction is 18-crown-6

reagent. However, the known method has been developed by us. In this reaction step, two reactions, the intramolecular and the intermolecular HWE reaction are competing. Appropriate conditions, like high (preferably 30-45-fold) dilution, high temperature (90-110°C) and the applied addition method will favour the intramolecular HWE reaction. In our method of addition, to the refluxing solution of the reagents is added dropwise the solution of **IV** very slowly, therefore it immediately reacts intramolecularly. Since there is no excess of **IV**, there is no possibility to form dimers and participate in intermolecular Wittig reaction. The result: the ratio of dimers dropped from 15% to less than 3%. The yield increased from 35% to 50% (Scheme 11.)

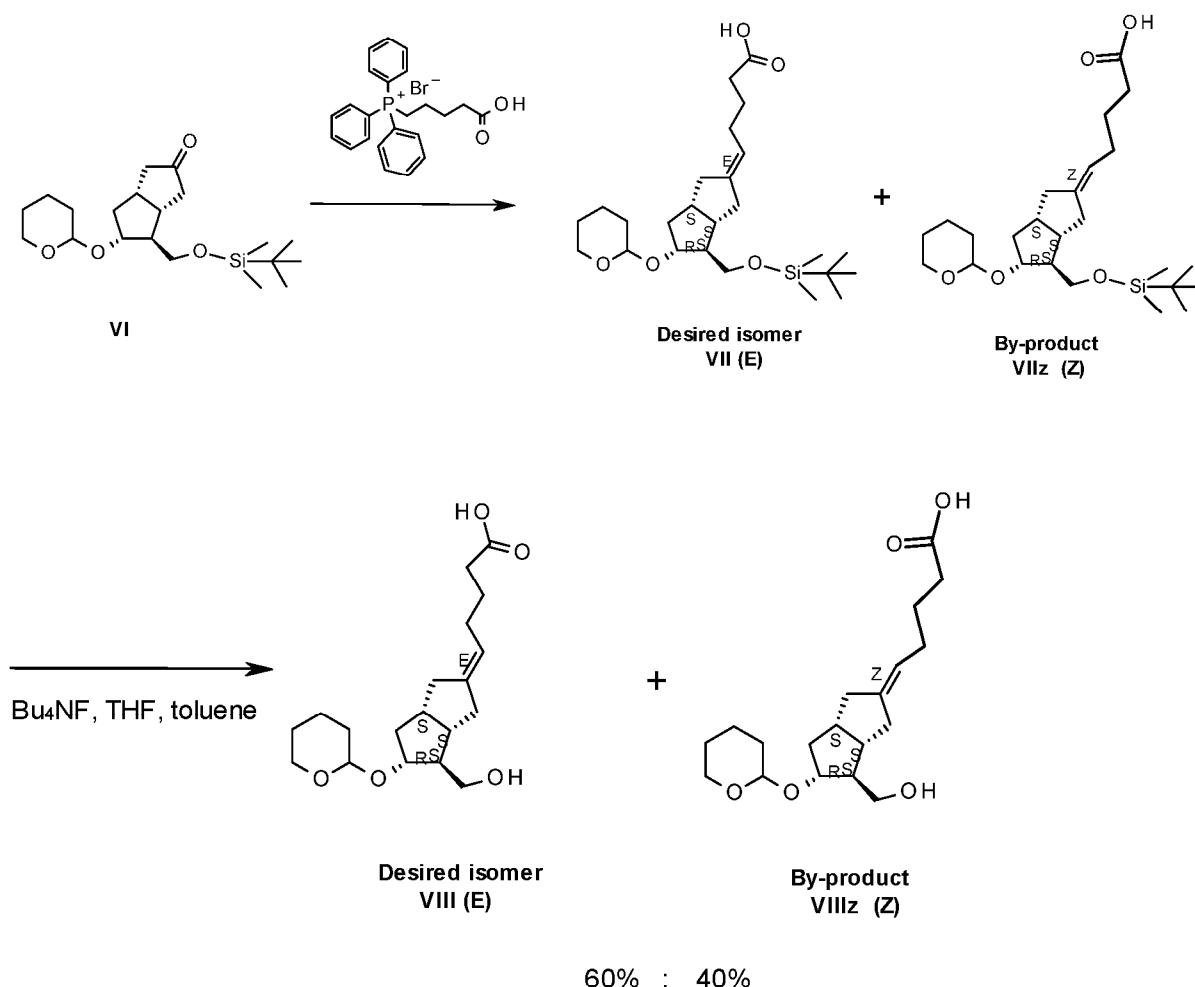


Scheme 11.

To prepare the compound of formula **VI**, reduction with palladium on charcoal, the method also used in the literature is applied, as solvent toluene is applied which contains triethylamine to protect the THP protecting groups. The intermediate is purified by chromatography. The reduction may also be carried out using Raney-Nickel catalyst.

In the process according to the invention the upper chain is constructed in the step where compound of formula **VII** is prepared by Wittig reaction. The TBDMS protecting group of the desired compound **VII** and that of the undesired isomeric impurity **VIIz**, obtained as by-product, is removed with tetrabutylammonium fluoride (Bu₄NF), the resulting compound **VIII** (*E*-isomer) and the *Z*-isomer impurity **VIIIz** are separated by gravitational chromatography. By high performance chromatographic

purification the amount of the Z-isomer impurity may be decreased to 0.2-0.5% (optical purity, diastereomeric excess (de)=99.0-99.6%). For comparison: the purity reached in the stereoselective Wittig reaction, the method described in the literature, was only de=96%. (Scheme 12.)



Scheme 12.

In the process according to the invention the undesired Z-isomer (**VIIIz**) may be recycled into the synthesis. In our recycling method the undesired Z-isomer is isomerized in UV reactor, in toluene medium in the presence of sensibiliser (10 mol% of dimethyl disulfide) and from the mixture containing 10-30% of E-isomer we obtain a product with approx. 55% E-isomer content, which after chromatographic purification provides the E-isomer (**VIII**) in 41% yield, which is can be recycled into the purification process. The yield of intermediate **VIII** starting from intermediate **VI** is 65%. Comparing technical feasibility and expenses of our method with that of H-J. Gais and his co-workers, where in the HWE reaction chiral phosphonate is applied, we can state that the process according to the present invention is more economical, it does not require the expensive chiral phosphonate prepared in many steps.

The compound of formula **VIII** is esterified by known method, in acetone with methyl iodide in the presence of potassium carbonate providing the ester of formula **IX**.

To prepare the compound of formula **X** from compound **IX** three methods have been elaborated, Pfitzner-Moffatt oxidation with DMSO and phosphoric acid containing DCC or DIC, as well as Anelli oxidation (sodium hypochlorite, TEMPO catalyst). From the obtained compound of formula **X** the lower chain was built by HWE method.

When Pfitzner-Moffatt oxidation is applied, during the HWE reaction the phosphonate is preferably liberated one-pot. After the oxidation the compound of formula **X** is in toluene solution, to the solution a small amount of THF, then the ILO-phosphonate and then solid KOH are added. The favourable effect of the KOH is that it does not dissolve in the reaction mixture, thus it solely reacts with the ILO-phosphonate and gives practically no reaction with the aldehyde **X**, therefore the amount of the impurity formed from the aldehyde is very low.

The advantage of the oxidation with TEMPO catalyst, as compared to the Pfitzner-Moffatt oxidations, is that it does not produce a high amount of carbamide derivative which is difficult to remove.

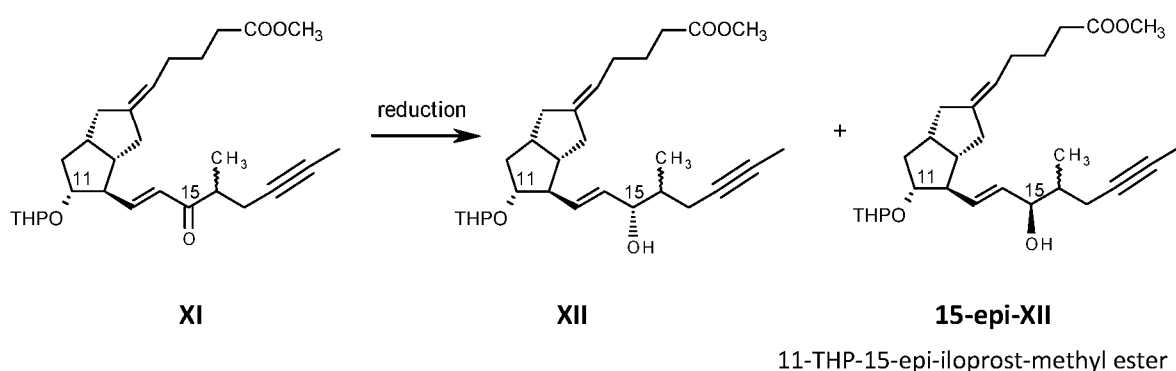
The compounds of formulae **X** and **XI** are new compounds.

In the method according to the invention the compounds of formula **XI** are reduced.

Four different reducing agents have been tried (Cerium(III)chloride/ NaBH_4 , catecholborane-CBS-oxazaborolidine catalyst, diisoborneol-oxy-diisopropyl aluminate, DIBAL-F). Effects of other parameters (e.g. temperature) were also investigated.

The most favourable reducing agent turned to be the DIBAL-F, this reagent was prepared by reacting diisobutylaluminum hydride with 2,6-di-*tert*-butyl-4-methylphenol.

The main impurity is the by-product of the reduction, 11-THP-15-*epi*-iloprost methyl ester. (Scheme 13.)



Scheme 13.

The ratio of the product and the 15-*epimer* in the reduction was 75:25 by use of DIBAL-F reducing agent (in the first experiments, using cerium chloride/sodium borohydride reagents this isomeric ratio was 60:40).

After decomposition of the reducing agent and removal of the water-soluble by-products, the THP-group is cleaved with methanol and *para*-toluenesulfonic acid. In a preferred method the toluene

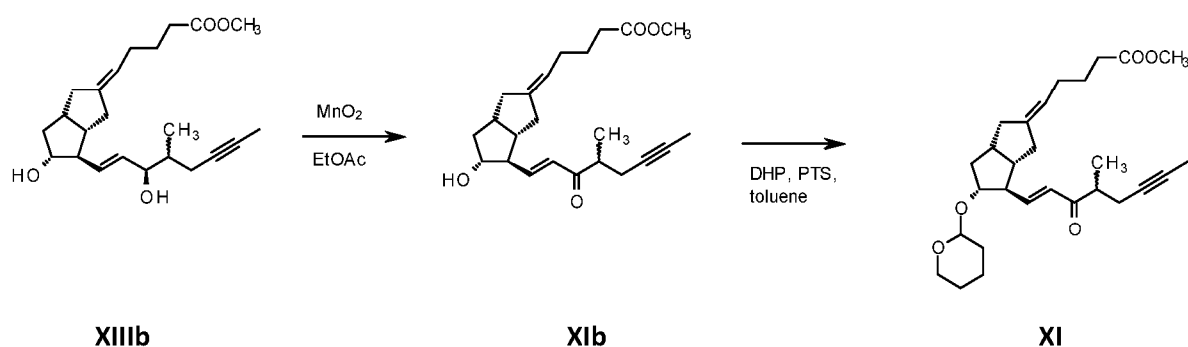
solution is not worked-up, but the protecting group is removed without isolation of the compound of formula **XII**.

The compound of formula **XII** is new.

The compounds of formula **XIII** can be purified by chromatography. During normal phase gravitational chromatography (n-hexane: ethyl acetate) purification from the main by-product of the reduction, the epimer impurity, takes place in approx. 95%, in addition, the amount of some impurities which make the purification of iloprost difficult, are also decreased significantly.

The compound of formula **XIII** may also be purified by reverse phase- and preparative HPLC methods. Both on C18 silica gel, and on polystyrol resin, by using eluents applicable on reverse phase, first of all acetonitrile:water or methanol:water eluents, compound **XIII** (iloprost methyl ester) can be purified excellently from related and other impurities. To remove related impurities the most powerful method is the purification of iloprost by preparative HPLC.

In the process according to the invention compound **XIIIb**, obtained as by-product, may be recycled into the synthesis, by oxidation it gives compound **XIb** which after protection of the 11-OH group with THP, provides the intermediate of formula **XI**. (Scheme 14.)



Scheme 14.

Compound **XIIIb** is dissolved in ethyl acetate and filtered through activated manganese dioxide packing. The filtrate is repeatedly poured onto the packing and filtered. After the second filtration the product **XIb** is washed from the packing with ethyl acetate saturated with water, the liquid filtrate is combined with the washings and evaporated. The evaporated crude product is dried from water by adding and distilling off toluene.

Dihydropyran and the catalyst, para-toluene sulfonic acid are added into the toluene solution to protect the 11-hydroxyl group with THP group. The reaction is terminated with triethylamine and the reaction mixture is evaporated. The obtained concentrate is recycled into the stereoselective reduction step to prepare **XII**.

By recycling the intermediate **XI** obtained from the by-product **XIIIb**, the yield of the selective reduction increases from 56% to 63% (**XI-XIII**).

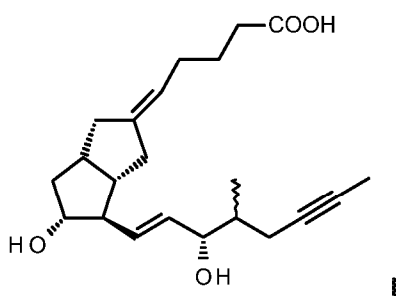
Hydrolysis of the methyl ester of formula **XIII** provides iloprost, the hydrolysis is carried out in THF with aqueous NaOH solution under intensive agitation.

Iloprost, obtained at the end of the reaction still contains at a measurable level related impurities, 15-epi-iloprost and 15-oxo-iloprost and the by-products from the oxidation. Purification of iloprost is carried out by preparative HPLC. Two methods have been worked out, for the material not contaminated with 15-oxo-iloprost, an eluent containing acetonitrile:water, for iloprost contaminated with high level of 15-oxo-iloprost, an eluent containing alcohol:water is applied. During purification isomer Z of iloprost is also removed.

Our method is equally applicable for the preparation of 16(S)-iloprost and 16(R)-iloprost, if instead of the racemic ILO-phosphonate the HWE reaction is carried out using chiral (S)-ILO-phosphonate or chiral (R)-ILO-phosphonate.

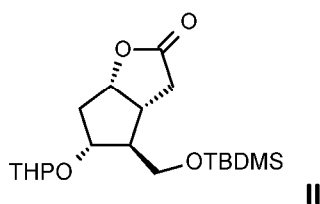
The 16(S)-iloprost prepared in the enantioselective synthesis using chiral (S)-ILO-phosphonate, may also be isolated in crystalline form.

In accordance with the above, the invention relates to a process for the preparation of iloprost of formula I



in a way that

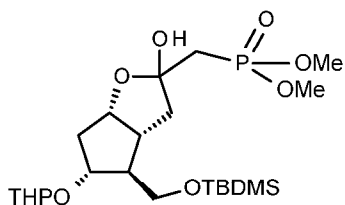
a.) The Corey lactone of formula II



is selectively alkylated with dimethyl methylphosphonate in the presence of lithium dialkylamide,

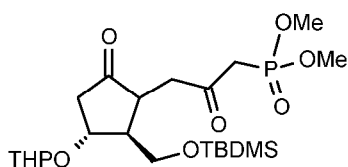
b.) the ring of the resulting lactol of formula III

17



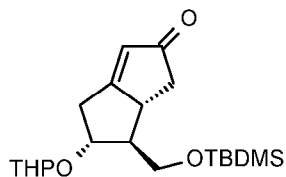
III

is opened with pyridinium acetate in mild acidic medium, then the obtained secondary hydroxyl group is then oxidized with pyridinium dichromate,
c.) the resulting compound of formula **IV**



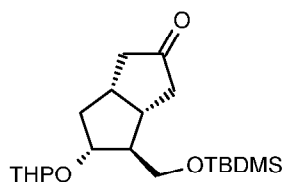
IV

is reacted with potassium carbonate in the presence of 18-crown-6 reagent,
d.) the obtained compound of formula **V**



V

is reduced,
e.) the resulting compound of formula **VI**

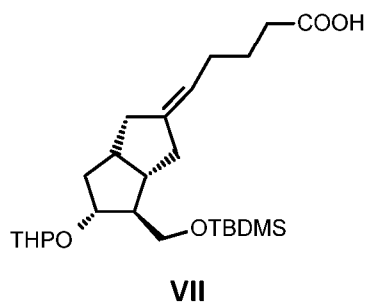


VI

is reacted with carboxybutyltriphenylphosphonium bromide in the presence of potassium tertiary-butyrate,

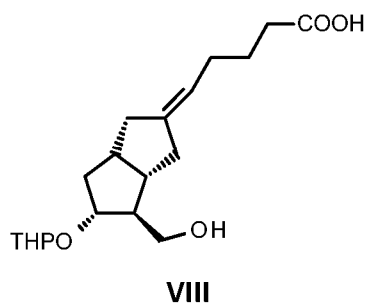
f.) the TBDMS protecting group of the obtained E- and Z-isomers of formula **VII**

18

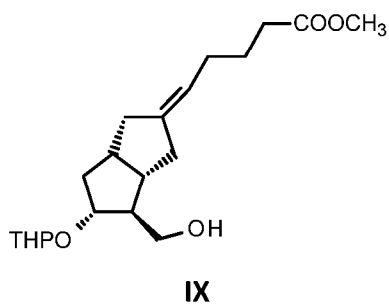


is removed, the isomers are separated by gravitational chromatography, if desired the Z-isomer (VII₁₂) is isomerized into the E-isomer,

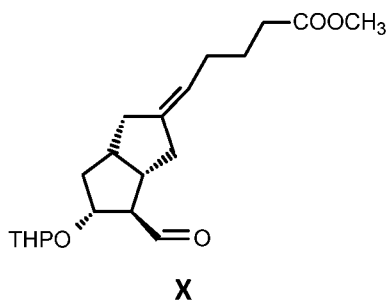
g.) the resulting compound of formula VIII



is esterified,
h.) the obtained compound of formula IX

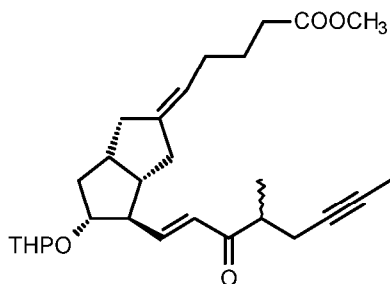


is oxidized,
i.) the resulting compound of formula X



is transformed in HWE reaction in the presence of solid potassium hydroxide into the compound of formula **XI**,

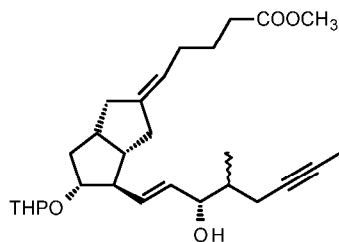
j.) the oxo group of the thus obtained compound of formula **XI**



XI

is reduced with DIBAL-F,

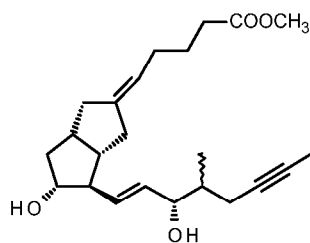
k.) the tetrahydropyranyl protecting group of the compound of formula **XII**



XII

is removed and the compound is purified by gravitational column chromatography, if desired further purified by preparative HPLC,

l.) the ester group of the compound of formula **XIII**



XIII

is removed and the obtained compound of formula **I** is purified.

In a preferred embodiment of the process according to the invention as lithium dialkylamide, lithium diisopropylamide or lithium dicyclohexylamide is applied. For preparation of the compound of formula **V** the HWE reaction is carried out in high dilution and at high temperature, preferably at 90-110°C, in a way that the solution of the compound of formula **IV** is added dropwise to the refluxing solution of the reagents.

Separation of the E- and Z-isomers of formula **VIII** is carried out using step-gradient mixtures of toluene: methyl tertiary-butyl ether as eluent.

Isomerisation of the Z-isomer is carried out by irradiation in the presence of dimethyl disulfide sensibiliser, cleavage of the silyl protecting group is effected with tetrabutylammonium fluoride trihydrate.

Oxidation of the compound of formula **IX** is carried out by Pfitzner-Moffatt oxidation with phosphoric acid-DMSO mixture containing DCC or DIC, or by Anelli oxidation (sodium hypochlorite, TEMPO catalyst).

In a preferred version of the process according to the invention compounds of formulae **X** and **XII** are not isolated.

In another preferred embodiment of the process according to the invention the 15R isomer of formula **XIIIb**, is separated by chromatography, and after oxidation then THP protection of the 11-OH group recycled into the synthesis.

The crude final product of formula **I** is purified by gravitational chromatography and/or preparative HPLC.

The compounds of formulae **X**, **XI** and **XII** are new compounds.

For iloprost final product the purity is the most important parameter, since products of different purity behave differently. From iloprost reaching a certain level of purity a solid-phase product can be prepared.

A further subject of our invention is preparation of the solid form of iloprost by dissolving the purified oily compound of formula **I** in the same amount of polar solvent as the mass of the oily product, adding such an amount of alkane to it that the solution turns opalescent, then solidifying the solution to a glassy mass at from (-)60°C to (-)20°C and removing the solvent in high vacuum.

Preferably the iloprost, already purified from its impurities, is subjected to a special treatment, it is dissolved in acetone, then pentane is added till the solution turns opalescent, the solution is then rapidly cooled to (-)60°C where the oil fully precipitates from the acetone-pentane solution and the obtained precipitate solidifies, turns into a translucent, glassy, amorphous solid. After solidification iloprost is kept at (-)20°C, during this period, in the acetone-pentane medium the glassy solid transforms into a white, lumpy solid material. During solidification the solvent is several time removed by decantation and n-pentane is added to mixture in order to decrease the acetone content.

After the last decantation the solvents are removed from the suspension in high vacuum at (-)20°C, wherein the product transforms into a solid powder.

A: Crude iloprost (available purity: 93%)

Iloprost methyl ester is dissolved in THF and hydrolysed with 1M NaOH solution into the acid. After hydrolysis, iloprost is in the aqueous alkaline phase in solution, in the form of its sodium salt. The mixture is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether in order to decrease the amount of apolar impurities, then iloprost is liberated from its sodium salt with sodium hydrogen sulfate and extracted from the aqueous solution with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. After drying of the organic phase and evaporation, the crude iloprost is obtained in the form of an oil, which cannot be solidified, turn into its solid form, because of the high level of impurities. Purity of the obtained crude iloprost: 93% (oil).

For purification of the crude iloprost, obtained in the process according to the invention, we developed several methods:

Purification method		Product		Sum of impurities	
		Appearance	Quality	Related	Non-identified
B	1. gravitational chromatography 2. solidification	oil	≥95.0%	≤3.5%	≤2.5%
C	1. preparative chromatography 2. filtration on silica gel 3. solidification	solid powder	≥98.0%	≤1.6%	≤1.0%
D	1. gravitational chromatography 2. preparative chromatography 3. filtration on silica gel 4. solidification	solid powder (crystal)	≥98.5%	≤1.6%	≤0.5%

B: Purification of crude iloprost by gravitational chromatography and solidification (achieved purity: 95,0%)

Crude iloprost is purified by gravitational chromatography using step-gradient eluent mixtures and irregular silica gel of particle size 0.063-0.2mm and pore size 60 Angström as packing. The material is dissolved in acetone, then such an amount of alkane is added to it that it turns opalescent. The solution is poured on the column, rinsed with the eluent and eluted. The eluents are mixtures of alkane:acetone, alkane:methyl ethyl ketone, alkane:ethyl acetate or alkane:isopropanol, where the alkane is n-pentane, n-hexane, cyclohexane, or heptane.

The main product of the gravitational chromatography, after evaporation of the solvents, has a purity higher than 95,0%, this product is already suitable for the preparation of solid iloprost by applying the techniques described below.

Iloprost oil, purified by gravitational chromatography, is dissolved in the same amount of acetone (or ethyl acetate or methyl ethyl ketone or isopropanol) as the mass of the oil, to the solution such an amount of normal pentane (or hexane, or cyclohexane or heptane) is added that it turns opalescent, the solution is then stored at (-)60°C, without agitation. After 6 hours the solution solidifies in the form of a glassy product. This glassy, solidified material is then stored at (-)20°C for at least 16 hours, wherein it transforms into a white, lumpy solid form. The main part of the solvent is removed by decantation. At the end of the solidification the remaining solvent is removed in high vacuum at from (-)10°C to (-)30°C.

The obtained purified iloprost is a white powder with a purity of 95.0%.

C: Purification of crude iloprost by preparative HPLC, followed by filtration on silica gel and solidification (achieved purity: 98.0%)

The crude iloprost is directly purified by preparative HPLC method. The material is dissolved in the same amount of acetonitrile as its mass, then water is added to it. The solution is filtered through a reverse phase pre-column made of C18 silica gel of particle size 10 micron and pore size 120 Angström. Purification of the filtered stock-solution is performed by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography, in reverse phase, using C8 or C18 packing or polystyrol resin packing and water-organic solvent mixtures as eluents. The organic solvent component of the eluent is acetonitrile, methanol, ethanol or isopropanol.

The combined main fraction of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with saturated salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuum at 30°C.

To the concentrated solution first acetone, then carefully, until it turns opalescent, n-pentane is added. The solution thus obtained is then further purified by normal phase chromatography using 0.063-0.2mm particle size and 60 Angström pore size irregular silica gel bed, and step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane:acetone as eluent. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum (0.1 mbar) at 30°C. The iloprost oil, filtered through silica gel, is transformed into the solid product as described under method B.

Iloprost, purified by the above method, is a white powder with a purity of 98.0%.

D: Purification of crude iloprost by gravitational and preparative HPLC, followed by filtration on silica gel and solidification

Crude iloprost is purified by gravitational chromatography as described in method B. The obtained iloprost oil is further purified by preparative HPLC method as described in method C. To the obtained concentrated solution acetone, and then carefully, until it turns slightly opalescent, n-pentane is

added. The resulting solution is then further purified by normal phase chromatography on a bed made of 0.063-0.2mm particle size and 60 Angström pore size irregular silica gel, using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone as eluent. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum at 30°C. The resulting iloprost oil filtered through silica gel is then transformed into the solid product as described under method B.

Iloprost, purified by the above method, is a white crystal with a purity of 98.5%.

Of the diastereomers separated by preparative HPLC, the 16(S)-iloprost may be crystallized. Preferably by dissolution in acetone and precipitation with pentane, it separates in crystalline form.

The further subject of the invention, the 16(S)-iloprost in crystalline form is novel.

In agreement with the above, by the process according to the invention, the followings may be prepared:

16(S)-iloprost isomer in crystalline phase.

Iloprost of oily or solid powder phase, with a purity of at least 98.5%, wherein the total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6%, the total amount of non-identified impurities is not more than 0.5% and the amount of non-identified impurities, each is not more than 0.1%.

Iloprost of oily or solid powder phase with a purity of at least 98.5% meets the following quality requirements:

Related impurities (HPLC)	
Iloprost Z-isomers, total	≤ 0.60 %
other impurities, total	≤ 1.0 %
of which	
- 15-epi-Iloprost	≤ 0.10 %
- 15-oxo-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost methyl ester	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost ethyl ester	≤ 0.05 %
- Iloprost dimer 1	≤ 0.10 %
- Iloprost dimer 2	≤ 0.10 %
- non-identified impurities, each	≤ 0.10 %

Iloprost of oily or solid powder phase with a purity of at least 98.0%, wherein the total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6%, the total amount of non-identified impurities is not more than 1.0% and the amount of non-identified impurities, each is not more than 0.1%.

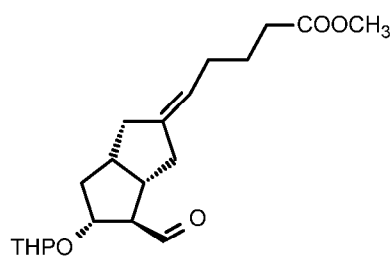
Iloprost of oily or solid powder phase with a purity of at least 98.0% satisfies the following quality requirements:

Related impurities (HPLC)	
Iloprost Z-isomers, total	≤ 0.60 %
other impurities total	≤ 1.0 %
of which	
- 15-epi-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- 15-oxo-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost methyl ester	≤ 0.10 %
- Iloprost ethyl ester	≤ 0.10 %
- Iloprost dimer 1	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost dimer 2	≤ 0.20 %
- non-identified impurities, each	≤ 0.10 %

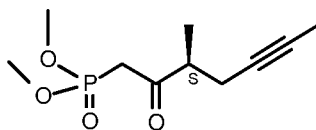
Iloprost of oily or solid powder phase with a purity of at least 95.0%, wherein the total amount of related impurities is not more than 3.5% and the total amount of non-identified impurities is not more than 2.5%.

The 16(S)-iloprost in crystalline phase may also be prepared by the demonstrated chemical route,

m.) if the aldehyde of formula **X** is transformed into the compound of formula (S)-**XI** by reaction with (S)-ILO-phosphonate in the presence of solid potassium hydroxide,

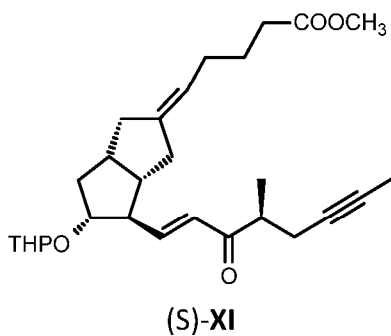


X aldehyde



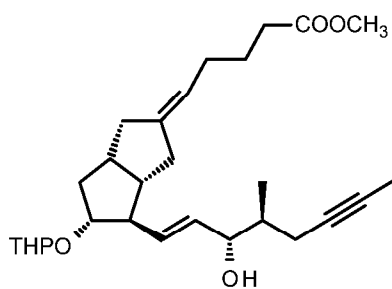
(S)-ILO-phosphonate

n.) the oxo group of the obtained compound of formula (S)-**XI**



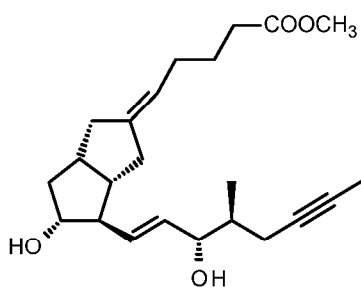
is reduced with DIBAL-F,

o.) the tetrahydropyranyl protecting group of the compound of formula (S)-**XII**



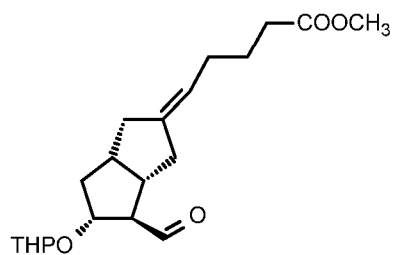
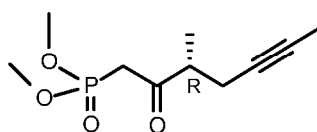
is cleaved and the compound is purified by chromatography,

p.) the ester group of the resulting compound of formula (S)-**XIII**

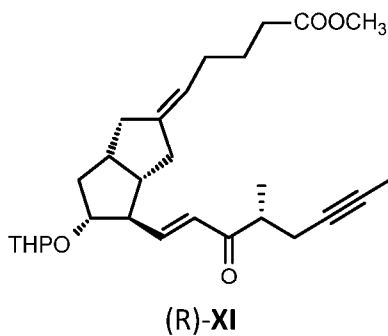


is removed and the obtained compound of formula (S)-**I** is purified.

q.) If the aldehyde of formula **X** is transformed into the compound of formula (R)-**XI** by reaction with (R)-ILO-phosphonate in the presence of solid potassium hydroxide,

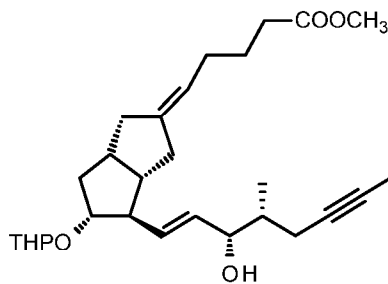
**X aldehyde****(R)-ILO-phosphonate**

r.) the oxo group of the obtained compound of formula **(R)-XI**

**(R)-XI**

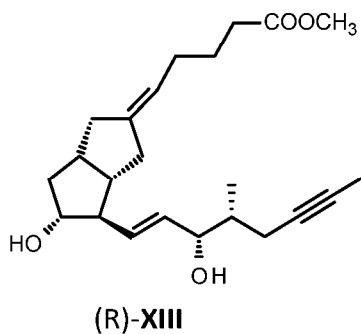
is reduced with DIBAL-F,

s.) the tetrahydropyranyl protecting group of the compound of formula **(R)-XII**

**(R)-XII**

is cleaved and the compound is purified by chromatography,

t.) the ester group of the resulting compound of formula **(R)-XIII** is removed



and the obtained compound of formula (R)-I is purified, then the 16-(R)-iloprost isomer may also be prepared.

Brief description of drawings/figures

Figure 1: XRPD pattern of iloprost (example 1m.)

Figure 2: XRPD pattern of 16-(S)-iloprost (example 1n.)

Figure 3: DSC curve of iloprost (peak: 67.58°C, example 1m.)

Figure 4: DSC curve of 16-(S)-iloprost (peak: 104.62°C, example 1n.)

Figure 5: ^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of iloprost acquired at 500 MHz in DMSO (example 1m.)

Figure 6: ^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of compound of formula **XI** acquired at 500 MHz in DMSO (example 1h.)

Figure 7: ^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of compound of formula (S)-**XI** acquired at 500 MHz in DMSO (example 1 o.)

Figure 8: ^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of compound of formula (S)-**XII** acquired at 500 MHz in DMSO (example 1 p.)

Figure 9: ^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of 16-(S)-iloprost acquired at 500 MHz in DMSO (example 1n.)

Examples

The subject of the invention is detailed in the examples, without limiting the claims to the variants of methods described in the examples.

Conditions of the measurements applied in the processes according to the invention:

X-ray diffractions:

Starting position [$^{\circ}2\text{Theta}$]: 2.0074

End position [$^{\circ}2\theta$]: 39.9854

Temperature of measurement [$^{\circ}\text{C}$]: 25.00

Material of the anode: Cu

K-Alpha1 [λ]: 1.54060

K-Alpha2 [λ]: 1.54443

DSC:

Instrument: METTLER TOLEDO DSC1 STARE System, Stare basic V9.30

Method: Starting temperature: 30°C

Final temperature: 200°C

Heating rate: $5^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$

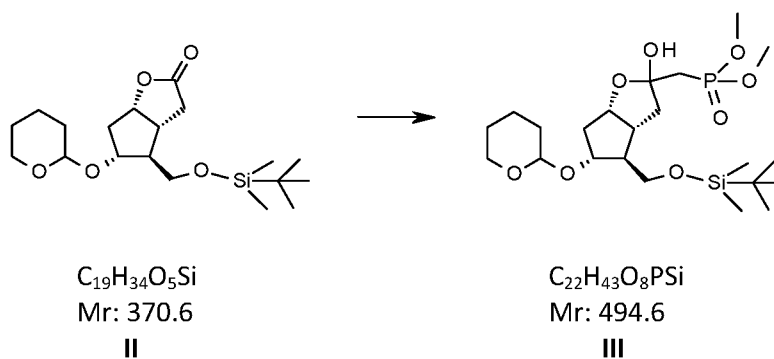
Amount: 5-9 mg, perforated aluminum crucible (40 μl)

NMR:

Instrument: Bruker Avance III 500 MHz

Solvent: DMSO

1a/ Preparation of the [[4-[[[(1,1-dimethylethyl)dimethylsilyl]oxy]methyl] hexahydro-2-hydroxy-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2H-cyclopenta[b]furan-2-yl]methyl] phosphonic acid dimethyl ester (III)]



In 50L of anhydrous tetrahydrofuran, under inert atmosphere, 4.2L of dimethyl methylphosphonate is dissolved and the reaction mixture is cooled to (-75°C) . While keeping the prescribed temperature, 22.5L of n-butyl lithium in 1.6M hexane solution, then 7.5kg of **II** in 15L of anhydrous tetrahydrofuran solution are added. At the end of the reaction the reaction mixture is quenched with 1M sodium

hydrogen sulfate. The quenched reaction mixture is extracted with toluene, the organic phase is washed with sodium hydrogen carbonate solution containing sodium chloride and the toluene solution is evaporated in vacuum at 50°C.

Yield: 9.6kg (96%), oil.

1a/B

LDA solution is prepared: into 28.7kg of tetrahydrofuran 5.8kg of diisopropylamine is added, the solution is cooled to 0±5°C, then in a period of 1 hour, under nitrogen flow, continuous agitation and cooling 21kg of 1.6M butyl lithium solution is added thereto while keeping the temperature at 0±5°C. After the addition cooling is stopped and the mixture is agitated at 5± 10°C for 1 hour.

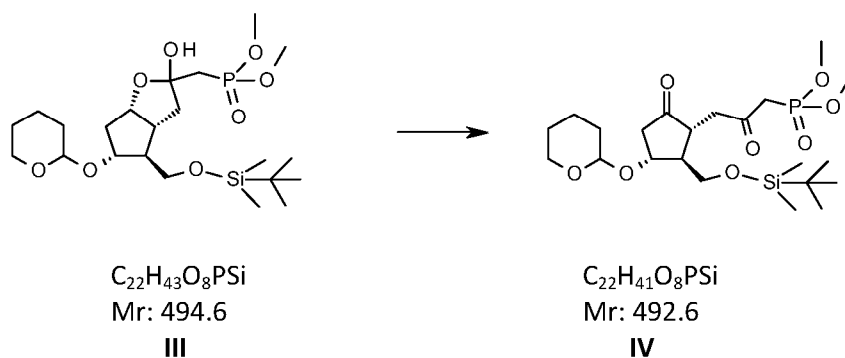
In a second apparatus, in 32.3kg of tetrahydrofuran 7.5kg of **II** is dissolved, to the solution 4.2L of dimethyl methylphosphonate is added, the mixture is cooled to (-)5±5°C under nitrogen flow and agitation, then the previously prepared LDA solution is added to the mixture while keeping the temperature between (-)5°C and (+)5°C.

The reaction is followed by TLC. Expected reaction time: 60 minutes.

At the end of the reaction the mixture is transferred by suction onto 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution and toluene is added to it. The aqueous phase is extracted twice with toluene, the combined organic phase is washed sequentially with 15% sodium chloride solution and 1N sodium hydrogen carbonate solution. The organic phase is evaporated in vacuum.

Yield (corrected to dry material content): 9.6kg (96%). Colorless oil.

1b.Preparation of [1R-(1α,2β,3α)]-[3-[2-[[[(1,1-dimethylethyl)dimethylsilyl]oxy]methyl]-5-oxo-3-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]cyclopentyl]-2-oxopropyl] phosphonic acid dimethyl ester (**IV**)



Preparation of the pyridinium acetate reagent:

To 170kg of distilled dichloromethane 11.5kg of pyridine is weighed and under agitation 6.9kg of acetic acid is added. The mixture is cooled under agitation to 25±5°C.

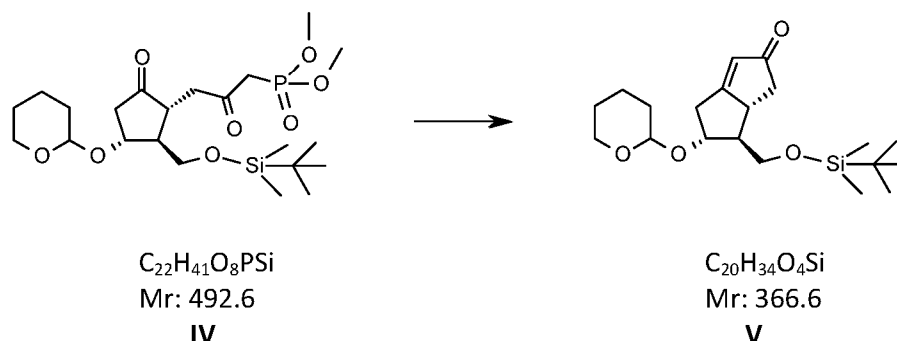
Ketal hydrolysis and oxidation

To the pyridinium acetate solution 9.6kg of **III** dissolved in 14L of dichloromethane is added. The mixture is agitated under nitrogen atmosphere.

After 30 minutes of agitation 9.6kg of pyridinium dichromate is added and the mixture is agitated at $25\pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ till the prescribed conversion is reached. The reaction is followed by TLC. Expected reaction time: 24-48 hours. When the desired conversion is reached the reaction mixture is heated to $40\pm 5^\circ\text{C}$, agitated for 30 minutes, cooled back to $25\pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ and then toluene and perfol are added. The solid materials are removed by centrifugation. The filtrate which contains the product is washed with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution, the phases are separated. The aqueous phase is extracted with toluene, the combined organic phase is washed sequentially with sodium hydrogen carbonate solution containing sodium chloride and 20% sodium chloride solution, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuum at 50°C to the defined volume. The concentrated residue is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of diisopropyl ether : acetone eluent.

Yield: 6.0kg (62.8%), oil.

1c. Preparation of [5R-(5 α ,6 β ,6 $\alpha\alpha$)]-6-[[[(1,1-dimethylethyl)dimethylsilyl]oxy]methyl]-4,5,6,6a-tetrahydro-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2(1H)-pentalenone (**V**)



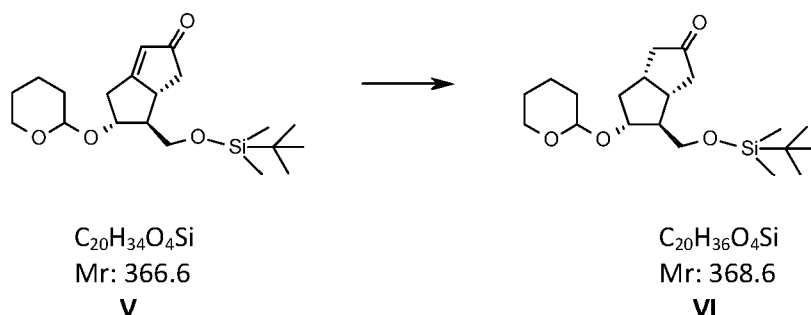
To 50L of anhydrous toluene under inert atmosphere 0.34kg of 18-crown-6 and 3.4kg of potassium carbonate are weighed. The reaction mixture is heated to 90°C and the solution of 6kg of **IV** in anhydrous toluene is added to it.

The reaction mixture is agitated while keeping the temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the mixture is cooled to room temperature, potassium carbonate is filtered off, the filtrate is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C .

Yield: 4.4kg (98.5%), oil. The oily product may be used in the next step without purification.

If desired, the product may be purified by chromatography using gradient mixtures of hexane: diisopropyl ether, yield of the main fraction: 2.23kg oil (50%).

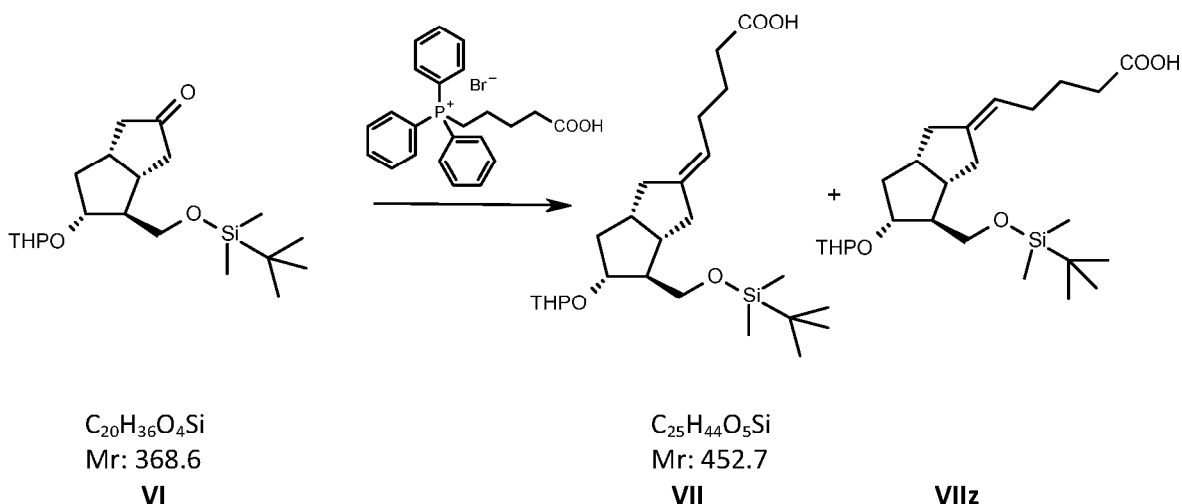
1d. Preparation of [3aS-(3a α ,4 α ,5 β ,6a α)]-4-[[[(1,1-dimethylethyl)dimethylsilyl]oxy]methyl]hexahydro-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2(1H)-pentalenone (VI)



To 6.5kg of **V** dissolved in 50L of toluene, 100ml of triethylamine is added and the mixture is hydrogenated at room temperature, under 3.5bar pressure, using palladium on carbon catalyst containing 10% of palladium. At the end of the reaction the catalyst is filtered off, washed with toluene and the filtrate is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C. The concentrated residue is purified by chromatography on silica gel column using n-hexane: diisopropyl ether and diisopropyl ether: acetone mixtures as eluents. To the n-hexane: diisopropyl ether solvent mixture used for the preparation of the column, 0.03% amount by volume of triethylamine is added.

Yield: 1.5kg (23%), oil.

1e. Preparation of [3aS-(2E,3a α 4 α ,5 β ,6a α)]-5-[4-[[[(1,1-dimethylethyl)dimethylsilyl]oxy]methyl]hexahydro-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2(1H)-pentalenyldiene] pentanoic acid (VII)

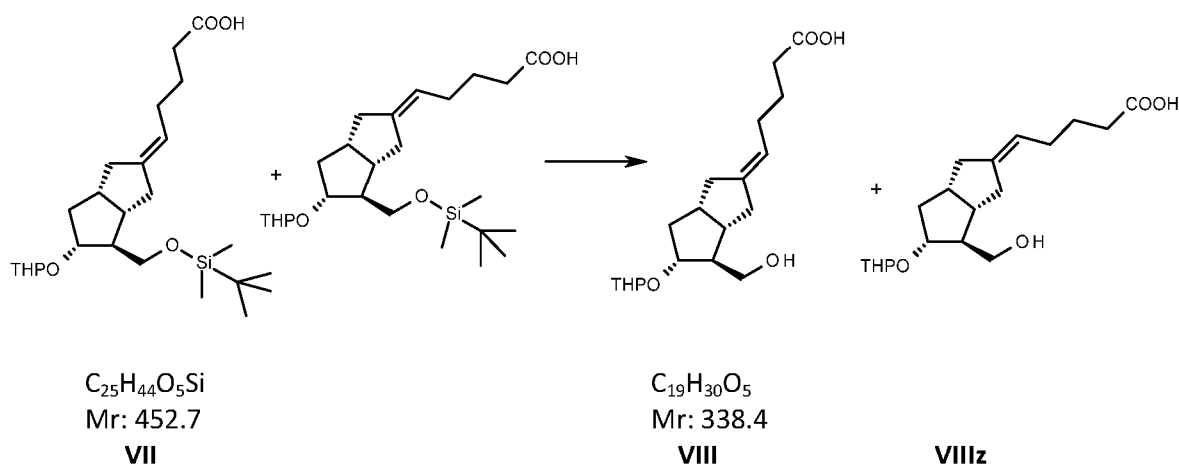


7.0kg of carboxybutyltriphenylphosphonium bromide is weighed into 35L of anhydrous tetrahydrofuran, the reaction mixture is cooled to 5°C and 3.8kg of potassium *tert*-butylate is added. The mixture is agitated at room temperature for 15 minutes, then cooled to 5°C and the solution of 1.7kg of **VI** in 8L of tetrahydrofuran is added. Agitation is continued while keeping the temperature

until the desired conversion is reached, then water is added and the mixture is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C. The concentrated reaction mixture is cooled to 10°C, the precipitated solid material is filtered off, the liquid filtrate is diluted with water, washed with methyl ethyl ketone : n-hexane mixture. The pH of the aqueous phase is set to pH=7-7.5 with 1N sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The aqueous phase is extracted with diisopropyl ether. The organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and after addition of triethylamine it is evaporated in vacuum at 45°C.

Yield: 1.71kg (82%, mixture of **VII** and **VIIIz**), oil.

1f/A Preparation of [3aS-(2E,3a α ,4 α ,5 β ,6a α)]-5-[hexahydro-4-(hydroxymethyl)-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2(1H)-pentalenylidene] pentanoic acid (**VIII**)



3kg of tetrabutylammonium fluoride trihydrate is suspended in 10L of toluene and dried from water by distilling off toluene. The anhydrous suspension is cooled to 20°C and 2.3kg of **VII** dissolved in 24L of tetrahydrofuran is added. The mixture is agitated at 60°C. When the desired conversion is reached, water, toluene and triethylamine are added to the reaction mixture. After agitation the phases are separated, the aqueous phase is washed with toluene, the combined organic phase is extracted with water. The pH of the combined aqueous phase is set to pH=4-6 with 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The acidified aqueous phase is extracted with diisopropyl ether. The combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and after addition of pyridine it is evaporated in vacuum at 45°C. The residue of the evaporation is dried from water by azeotropic distillation with toluene, and then purified by chromatography.

During the chromatographic purification the undesired Z-isomer (**VIIIz**) is also separated, it is then subjected to double bond isomerisation in UV reactor.

Elution of **VIII** and **VIIIz** is carried out using step-gradient mixtures of toluene:methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The eluent mixtures contain pyridine in 0.5% amount by volume.

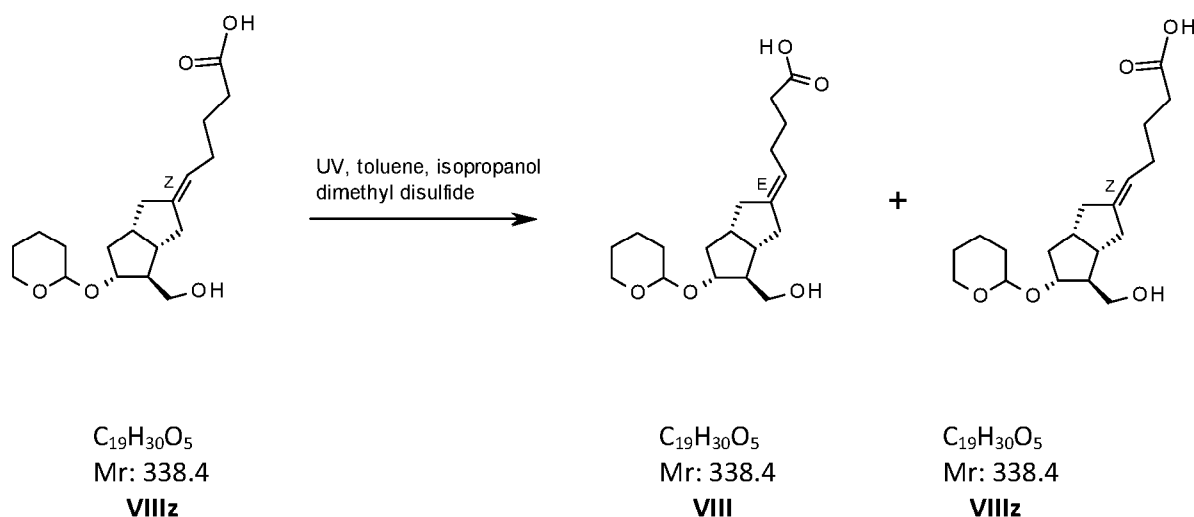
During the chromatography the undesired Z-isomer is washed off with acetone containing 0.2% amount by volume of acetic acid. To the fraction which contains the Z-isomer triethylamine is added and the solution is concentrated. The concentrate is then diluted with 10-fold amount of methyl

tertiary-butyl ether and in order to remove the inorganic salts from the product it is extracted with water, and with saturated salt solution. The organic phase is evaporated (**VIIIz** isomer).

The concentrated main fraction of compound **VIII** obtained after chromatographic purification is extracted with 1M potassium carbonate solution, the combined organic phase is washed with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The pH of the aqueous phase is set to pH=4-6 with 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The acidified solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and after addition of triethylamine it is evaporated in vacuum at 45°C.

Yield: 0.7kg (41%) **VIII**, oil. By recycling **VIIIz**, a further 0.41kg of intermediate **VIII** may be prepared, the yield of intermediate **VIII** is thus 65%.

1f/B. Preparation of **VIII** by recycling **VIIIz** by UV irradiation



Isomer **VIIIz** is isomerized by UV irradiation and **VIII** (E-isomer) is prepared from it in toluene solution in the presence of dimethyl disulfide sensiliser. The reaction proceeds until the equilibrium ratio is reached and results a 1:1 ratio mixture. Work-up of the reaction mixture and purification is carried out by column chromatography.

Irradiation:

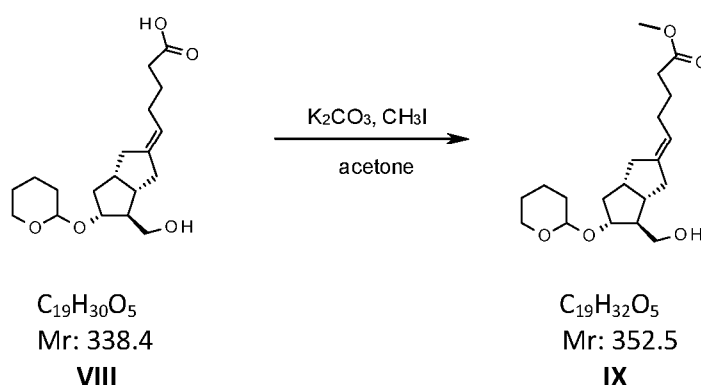
Irradiation is performed in a multi-neck flask under nitrogen atmosphere at 17-19°C. Into the flask 0.99kg of **VIIIz** is weighed, then 130.7ml of methanol and 19.8L of toluene, and after complete dissolution 99mL of dimethyl disulfide sensiliser are added. Cooling is started, the medium-pressure mercury vapour lamp is switched on and the reaction mixture is irradiated for 1.5 hours. The reaction is followed every 15 minute by TLC. When the ratio of the isomers reaches 50: 50%, the reaction is terminated. The solution is evaporated at max. 45°C in a vacuum of max. 10 mbar. The concentrated residue is purified by column chromatography.

Elution is carried out using step-gradient mixtures of toluene:methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The eluent mixtures contain pyridine in 0.5% amount by volume.

The evaporated main fraction of the chromatographic purification is extracted with 1M potassium carbonate solution, the combined aqueous phase is washed twice with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The pH of the aqueous phase is set to pH=4-6 with 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The acidified solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and after addition of triethylamine it is evaporated in vacuum at 45°C.

Yield: 0.41kg (41%), oil.

1g. Preparation of [3 α S-(2E,3 α ,4,5,6 α)]5-[hexahydro-4-(hydroxymethyl)-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-2(1H)-pentalenylidene] pentanoic acid methyl ester (IX)

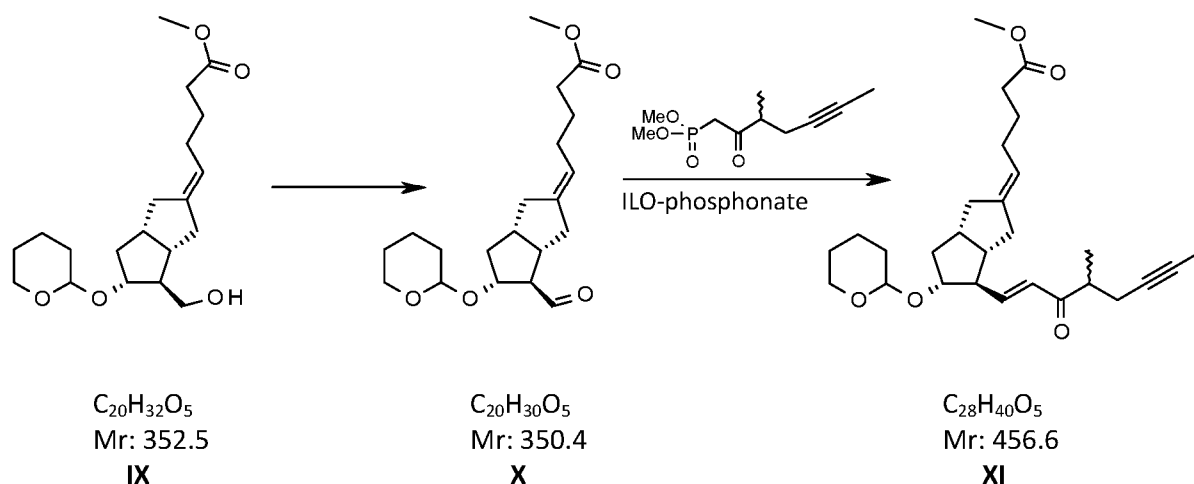


To the acetone solution of 0.7kg of **VIII**, 0.75kg of potassium carbonate and 1.4kg of methyl iodide are added, the mixture is heated to 45°C and agitated at that temperature. When the desired conversion is reached the reaction mixture is cooled to room temperature, diluted with water and extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether. The combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and after adding triethylamine it is evaporated in vacuum, at 45°C.

Yield: 0.69kg (95%), oil.

1h. Preparation of (5E)-5-[(3 α S,4R,5R,6 α S)-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-4-[(1E,3S,4RS)-4-methyl-3-oxo-octen-6-in-1-yl]hexahydropentalen-2(1H)-ylidene] pentanoic acid methyl ester (XI)

A. method: Pfitzner Moffatt oxidation followed by one-pot HWE reaction



282g of **IX** is dissolved in 1L of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere. The reaction mixture is cooled to 13°C, 473g of dicyclohexylcarbodiimide dissolved in 1.5L of toluene and then 238mL of 1M phosphoric acid in DMSO solution are added. The reaction is heated to 45°C and agitated at that temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the reaction mixture which contains the obtained **X** aldehyde* is cooled to room temperature and under inert atmosphere 78g of potassium hydroxide and 218g of ILO-phosphonate dissolved in 1L of tetrahydrofuran are added. The reaction is agitated while keeping the temperature. When the desired conversion is reached perfl is added to the reaction mixture, it is then filtered off, the solid filtrate is washed with toluene, the liquid filtrate is concentrated in vacuum at 50°C. The concentrated residue, after addition of n-hexane, is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of toluene:diisopropyl ether. The evaporated main fraction is further purified by repeated chromatography.

Yield: 282g (77%), oil.

*if desired, the aldehyde **X** may be isolated by chromatographic purification.

¹³C and ¹H NMR data of compound of formula **XI** is shown in Figure 6.

B. method: oxidation by DMSO-phosphoric acid and DIC, followed by one-pot HWE reaction

28g of **IX** is dissolved in 100mL of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere. The reaction mixture is cooled to 13°C, 50g of diisopropyl carbodiimide dissolved in 150mL of toluene and 24mL of 1M phosphoric acid in DMSO solution are added. After the addition the reaction mixture is heated to 45°C and agitated at that temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the reaction mixture is cooled to room temperature, under inert atmosphere 8g of potassium hydroxide and 22g of ILO-phosphonate dissolved in 100mL of tetrahydrofuran are added. The reaction is agitated while keeping the temperature. When the desired conversion is reached perfl is added to the reaction mixture, then filtered off and the filtered solid is washed with toluene. The liquid filtrate is concentrated in vacuum at 50°C, the residue, after addition of n-hexane, is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of toluene: diisopropyl ether. The evaporated main fraction is further purified by repeated chromatography.

Yield: 27g (74%), oil.

C. method: Anelli oxidation (TEMPO and sodium hypochlorite)

The oxidant solution is prepared from 100mL of water, 100mL of 5% sodium hypochlorite solution and 36g of sodium bicarbonate. The pH of the solution is 9.4 ± 0.2 . If the pH > 9.6, it is adjusted with sodium bicarbonate.

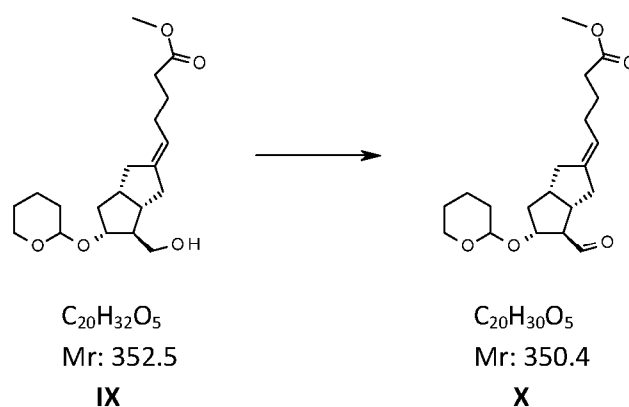
6g of **IX** is dissolved in 70mL of dichloromethane (DCM), then 0.01g of TEMPO catalyst and 0.2g of potassium bromide are added. The mixture is cooled to 0°C and the oxidant solution is added to it at a rate that the temperature remains below 10°C. Expected reaction time 30 minutes.

The reaction mixture is then quenched with 10% sodium thiosulfate solution, agitated at 10-15°C for 30 minutes. The aqueous phase is extracted 3-times with DCM. The organic phases are combined and washed with 15% sodium chloride solution.

Under inert atmosphere 20mL of 1M sodium hydroxide solution and 4g of ILO-phosphonate dissolved in 20mL of tetrahydrofuran are added. The reaction mixture is agitated while keeping the temperature. At the end of the reaction the phases are separated, the organic phase is washed sequentially with 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution, 15% sodium chloride solution and saturated salt solution. The organic phase is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C. The residue is, after the addition of n-hexane, purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of toluene: diisopropyl ether. The evaporated main fraction is further purified by repeated chromatography.

Yield: 5.75g (74%), oil.

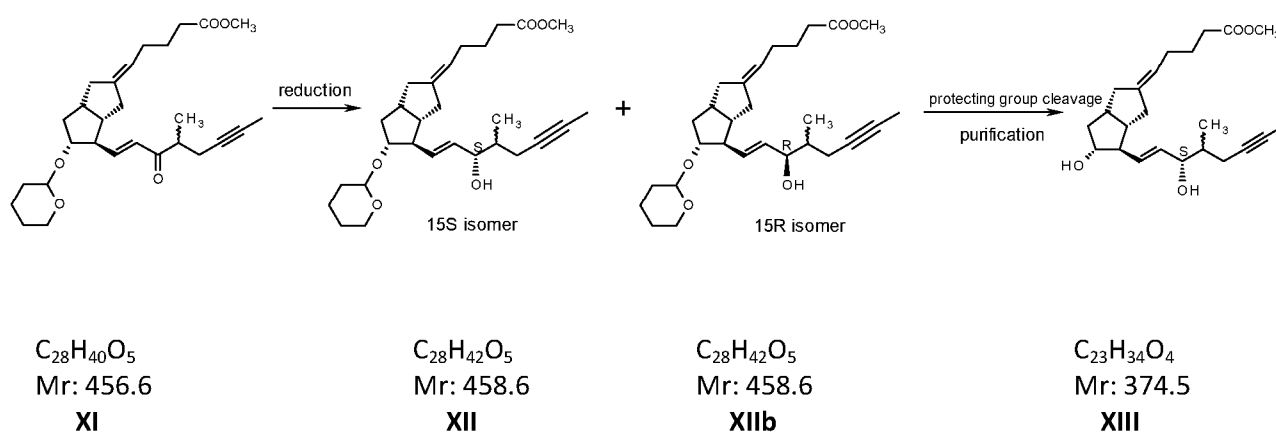
Preparation of (5E)-5-[(3aS,4R,5R,6aS)-4-formyl-5-tetrahydropyran-2-yloxy-3,3a,4,5,6,6a-hexahydro-1H-pentalen-2-ylidene] pentanoic acid methyl ester (**X**)



28.2g of **IX** is dissolved in 100mL of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere. The reaction mixture is cooled to 13°C, then 47.3g of dicyclohexylcarbodiimide dissolved in 150mL of toluene, and 23.8mL of 1M phosphoric acid in DMSO solution are added. After the addition the reaction mixture is heated to 45°C and agitated at that temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the reaction mixture is cooled to room temperature, washed with water (2 x 300mL), the organic phase is dried from water

by concentration in vacuum at 50°C to approx. 80mL volume. The toluene concentrate is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and toluene, toluene: diisopropyl ether= 3:1 and 1:1 eluent mixtures. The fractions containing the aldehyde **X** are combined and evaporated.
Yield: 23.82 g (85%).

1i. Preparation of methyl (5E)-5-[(3aS,4R,5R)-5-hydroxy-4-[(E,3S)-3-hydroxy-4-methyl-oct-1-en-6-ynyl]-3,3a,4,5,6,6a-hexahydro-1H-pentalen-2-ylidene]pentanoate (**XIII**)



To prepare the DIBAL-F reagent 350g of di-*tert*-butylmethylphenol is dissolved in 650mL of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere, at room temperature, and to the obtained solution the toluene solution of 102.8g of diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBAL-H) is added. The reagent is prepared at 0°C, but at the end of the addition the reaction mixture is agitated for 1 hour at room temperature, then for 6 hours at 45°C, under inert atmosphere. The reagent mixture is then cooled to 5°C and under inert atmosphere 94g of **XI** in toluene solution is added. During the addition the temperature is elevating. The reaction mixture is agitated at room temperature until the desired conversion is reached, then quenched with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The quenched mixture is extracted with toluene to obtain the protected enol isomers **XII*** and **XIIb** which are reacted further without isolation. To the combined organic phase the methanol solution of 7.05g of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid is added. The reaction mixture is agitated at room temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the pH of the reaction mixture is set to pH ≥ 7.5 with triethylamine and concentrated in vacuum, at 45°C. The concentrated residue is dissolved in *n*-hexane and purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of *n*-hexane: ethyl acetate.

Yield: 43.1g (56%), oil.

*If desired, the protected enol **XII** may be isolated by chromatographic purification.

Purification of **XIII** by preparative HPLC

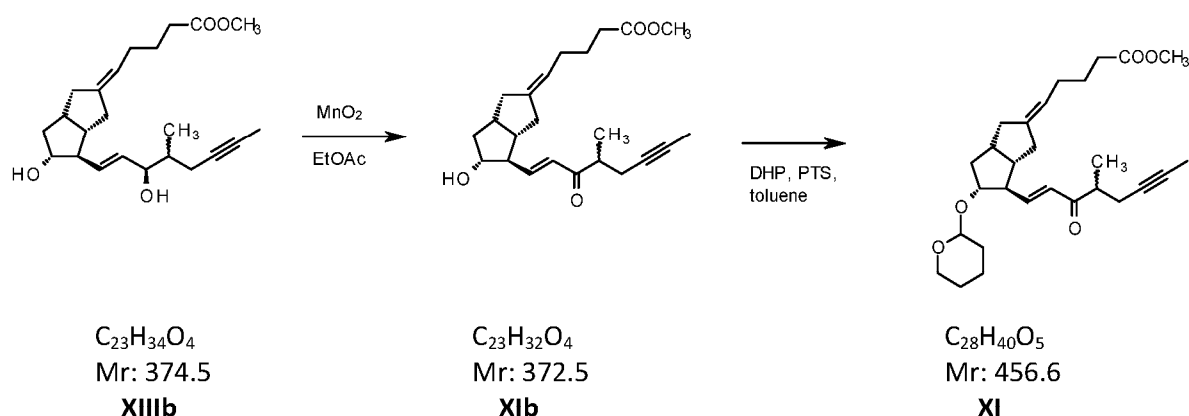
50g of **XIII** is dissolved in 100mL of acetonitrile, to the solution water is dropped until the acetonitrile: water= 3:1 ratio is reached. The stock-solution is filtered through a pre-column made of 5g 10 micron particle size and 120 Å pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel. The filtered stock-solution is purified by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography using 400g of 10 micron

particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel packing and water: acetone eluent mixtures. The combined main fraction of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated in vacuum at 30°C.

Yield of the preparative HPLC: 32g (64%), oil.

Preparation of XI from XIIIb

Oxidation of XIIIb to XIb and THP-protection

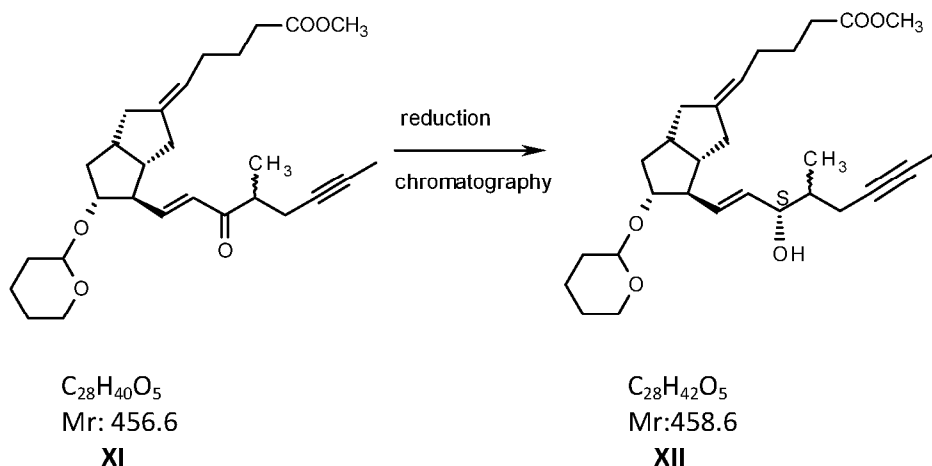


7g of **XIIIb** is dissolved in 75mL of ethyl acetate and filtered through a filter-bed made of 110g of activated MnO_2 , wetted with ethyl acetate. The filtrate is repeatedly let through the filter-bed. The MnO_2 bed is washed twice with ethyl acetate previously saturated with water.

The conversion is checked with TLC, if it is not sufficient, the filtrate is repeatedly filtered through a fresh MnO_2 filter-bed. The filtrate is evaporated, the obtained crude product is dried from water by distilling off toluene. To the concentrate 100mL of toluene, 4g of dihydropyran and 0.01g of *para*-toluenesulfonic acid are added, the THP-protection is followed by TLC. At the end of the reaction it is stopped by addition of triethylamine, the reaction mixture is poured onto water, the organic phase is extracted twice with water, then the organic phase is evaporated.

Yield: 4.8g (56.3%), oil. The product may be used in the selective reduction step.

Preparation of (5E)-5-[(3aS,4R,5R,6aS)-4-[(E)-3S-hydroxy-4-methyl-oct-1-en-6-ynyl]-5-tetrahydropyran-2-yloxy-3,3a,4,5,6,6a-hexahydro-1H-pentalen-2-ylidene] pentanoic acid methyl ester (**XII**)



To prepare the DIBAL-F reagent, 35g of di-*tert*-butylmethylphenol is dissolved in 65mL of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere, at room temperature. To the obtained solution the toluene solution of 10.3g of diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBAL-H) is added. The reagent is prepared at 0°C, but at the end of the addition the reaction mixture is agitated for 1 hour at room temperature, then for 6 hours at 45°C, under inert atmosphere. The reagent mixture is cooled to 5°C and under inert atmosphere 9.4g of **XI** in toluene solution is added. During the addition the temperature of the mixture is elevating. The reaction mixture is agitated at room temperature until the desired conversion is reached, then it is quenched with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The quenched reaction mixture is extracted with toluene. The toluene phase is concentrated in vacuum at 50°C to about 30mL. The concentrated toluene residue is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of n-hexane: ethyl acetate. The fractions containing the protected enol **XII** are combined, the combined main fraction is evaporated.

Yield: 7.22g (76.5%).

1j. Preparation of crude iloprost

43.1g of **XIII** is dissolved in 22mL of tetrahydrofuran under inert atmosphere at room temperature, then 520mL of 1M sodium hydroxide solution is added to it, at a rate that the temperature of the reaction mixture remains between 20-30°C. After reaching the desired conversion the phases are separated, the aqueous phase is extracted twice with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the organic phases are combined and washed twice with 1M sodium hydroxide solution. The combined alkaline phase is diluted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether and under agitation the pH is set to pH ≤ 3 with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The acidified aqueous phase is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and evaporated in vacuum, at 30°C.

Purity of the product is 93%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 5%, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 4%.

From this material it is not possible to prepare the solid form of iloprost because of the level of purity detailed above.

1k. Purification of crude iloprost by gravitational chromatography and solidification

Purification of crude iloprost, method B.

64.5g of crude iloprost is dissolved in 25mL of dist. acetone, to the solution approx. 50mL of n-pentane is added until it turns opalescent, then it is purified on gravitational column packed with Si60 normal phase (particle size 0.063-0.2 mm) silica gel, using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The fractions are combined after investigation by TLC. The main fraction solution is filtered through a 5 micron teflon membrane and then evaporated in vacuum at max. 35°C bath temperature.

To 50g of the chromatographed iloprost phase-product 200mL of filtered, dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at 20-25°C till complete dissolution, then under continuous shaking 1080mL of filtered pentane is added to the solution, wherein iloprost fully precipitates from the mixture in the form of oil.

The mixture is cooled without agitation to (-)60°C, after 6 hours it is allowed to warm to (-)20°C and kept at that temperature without agitation for at least 16 hours. The solvent is then removed from the oily crystal mass by decantation, 650mL of filtered pentane is poured onto the product, and the crystal mass is kept at (-)20°C for minimum 2 hours. The solvent is again removed by decantation.

The solvent is distilled off from the product in high vacuum at (-)30°C, the temperature is kept between (-)20 - (-)30°C. During removal of the solvent the solid product is stirred through from time to time. Solvent removal is performed under inert atmosphere, it takes approx. 120 hours.

Purity of the product is 95.0%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 3.5 %, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 2.5%.

1l. Purification of crude iloprost by preparative HPLC, followed by filtration through silica gel and solidification

Purification of crude iloprost, method C.

64.5g of crude iloprost is dissolved in 100mL of acetonitrile, to the solution water is dropped until the acetonitrile: water= 3:1 ratio is reached. The stock-solution is filtered through a pre-column made of 5g 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel. Purification of the filtered stock-solution is carried out by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography using 400g of 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel packing and water: acetonitrile eluent mixtures. The combined main fraction of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with saturated salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuum at 30°C to 100mL. The concentrated solution is completed with acetone to 150g, carefully n-pentane is added until it turns slightly opalescent. The obtained solution is

further purified by filtration through silica gel using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The main fraction is evaporated at 30°C in high vacuum.

To 50g of iloprost phase-product purified by preparative HPLC and filtered through silica gel, 200mL of filtered, dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at room temperature till complete dissolution, then 1080mL of filtered pentane is added, wherein iloprost fully precipitates from the mixture, in the form of oil.

The mixture is cooled without agitation to (-)60°C, after 6 hours it is allowed to warm to (-)20°C and kept at that temperature without agitation for at least 16 hours. The solvent is then removed from the oily crystal mass by decantation, 650mL of filtered pentane is poured on it and the crystal mass is kept at (-)20°C for minimum 2 hours. The solvent is removed again by decantation.

The solvent is distilled off from the product in high vacuum at (-)30°C, the temperature is kept between (-)20 - (-)30°C. During this removal of solvent the solid product is stirred through from time to time. Solvent removal is performed under inert atmosphere, it takes approx. 120 hours.

Purity of the product is 98.0%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6%, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 1.0%.

Related impurities (HPLC)	
Iloprost Z-isomers, total	≤ 0.60 %
other impurities, total	≤ 1.0 %
of which	
- 15-epi-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- 15-oxo-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost-methyl ester	≤ 0.10 %
- Iloprost-ethyl ester	≤ 0.10 %
- Iloprost dimer 1	≤ 0.20 %
- Iloprost dimer 2	≤ 0.20 %
- non-identified impurities, each	≤ 0.10 %

1m. Purification of crude iloprost by gravitational and preparative HPLC chromatographies, filtration through silica gel and solidification

Purification of crude iloprost, method D.

80g of crude iloprost is dissolved in 40mL of dist. acetone, approx. 70mL of n-pentane is added until the solution turns opalescent, then it is purified on gravitational column packed with Si60 normal phase (particle size 0.063-0.2 mm) silica gel, using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The fractions are combined after investigation by TLC. The main fraction solution is filtered through a 5 micron teflon membrane and evaporated in vacuum at max. 35°C bath temperature.

60g of crude iloprost phase-product purified by gravitational chromatography, is dissolved in 110mL of acetonitrile, to the solution water is dropped until the acetonitrile: water= 3:1 ratio is reached. The stock-solution is filtered through a pre-column made of 5g 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel. Purification of the filtered stock-solution is carried out by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography using 400g of 10 micron particle size, 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase packing and water:acetonitrile mixtures as eluent. The combined main fraction of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with saturated salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and concentrated to 100mL in vacuum at 30°C. The concentrated solution is completed with acetone to 150g, then carefully n-pentane is added until it turns slightly opalescent and then filtered through silica gel. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum, at 30°C.

To 50g of iloprost phase-product purified by preparative HPLC and filtered through silica gel, 200mL of filtered, dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at room temperature till complete dissolution, then 1080mL of filtered pentane is added, wherein iloprost fully precipitates from the mixture, in the form of oil.

The mixture is cooled without agitation to (-)60°C, after 6 hours it is allowed to warm to (-)20°C and kept at that temperature without agitation for at least 16 hours. The solvent is then removed from the oily crystal mass by decantation, 650mL of filtered pentane is poured onto the product and the crystal mass is kept at (-)20°C for minimum 2 hours. The solvent is removed again by decantation.

The solvent is distilled off from the product in high vacuum at (-)30°C, keeping the temperature between (-)20 - (-)30°C. During solvent removal the solid product is stirred through from time to time. Solvent removal is carried out under inert atmosphere, it takes approx. 120 hours.

The solid product obtained is a powder that crystallizes on standing.

Purity of the obtained product is 98.5%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6 %, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 0.5%.

X-ray powder diffractogram is shown in Figure 1, DSC curve in Figure 3, ¹³C and ¹H NMR data in Figure 5.

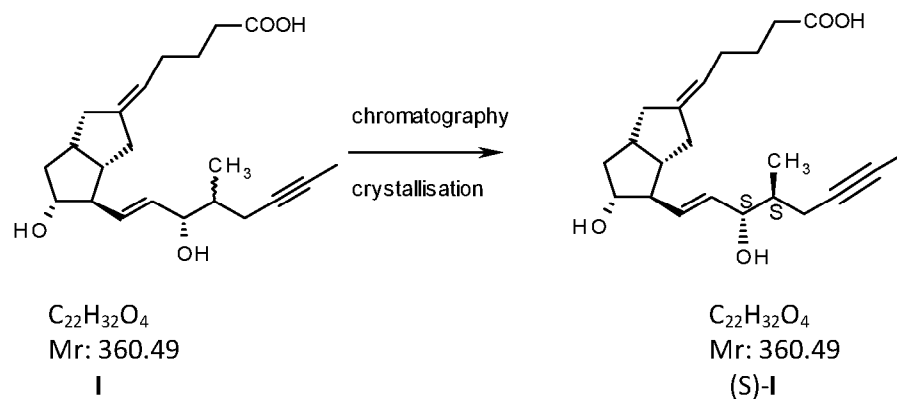
The XRPD pattern of the product contains characteristic peaks at the following values (degrees ± 0,2° 2-theta): 5.43, 7.51, 7.81, 15.19, 15.57, 15.85, 16.25, 16.84, 17.08, 17.26, 18.14, 18.59, 19.17, 20.32, 20.53, 21.69, 22.12, and 23.28

Related impurities (HPLC)	
Illoprost Z-isomers, total	≤ 0.60 %
other impurities, total	≤ 1.0 %
of which	
- 15-epi-Iloprost	≤ 0.10 %
- 15-oxo-Iloprost	≤ 0.20 %
- Illoprost methyl ester	≤ 0.20 %
- Illoprost ethyl ester	≤ 0.05 %
- Illoprost dimer 1	≤ 0.10 %
- Illoprost dimer 2	≤ 0.10 %
- non-identified impurities, each	≤ 0.10 %

1n. Preparation of 16(S)-iloprost ((S)-I)

A: by chromatographic separation and crystallisation

A1: chromatography using acetonitrile: water eluent mixture



50g of crude **I** ((S)-I content: 20g) is dissolved in 100mL of acetonitrile and to the solution water is dropped until the acetonitrile: water= 3:1 ratio is reached. The stock-solution is filtered through a pre-column made of 5g 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel. Purification of the filtered stock-solution is carried out by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography using 400g of 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel packing and water: acetonitrile eluent mixtures.

Of the diastereomers of iloprost, the 16(S)-iloprost diastereomer has higher retention time. By preparative HPLC it may be separated with good efficiency from the 16(R)-iloprost diastereomer eluting before it.

The combined main fraction of 16(S)-iloprost of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with saturated salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated in vacuum at 30°C. The residue is dissolved in 32mL of acetone, then carefully n-pentane is added until the solution turns slightly opalescent. The solution thus obtained is further purified by filtrating through silica gel using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum at 30°C.

To 15g of 16(S)-iloprost phase-product purified by preparative HPLC and filtered through silica gel, 15mL of filtered dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at room temperature till complete dissolution, then under continuous shaking 100mL of filtered pentane is added, until the solution turns opalescent. The mixture is cooled to (-) 40°C and while keeping that temperature it is agitated under inert atmosphere for 16 hours. The precipitated crystalline material is filtered off.

The product is dried at a temperature between (-)10 and (+)10°C in high vacuum, under inert atmosphere. Drying takes approx. 120 hours.

Purity of the product is 98.0%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6 %, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 1.0%.

X-ray powder diffractogram is shown in Figure 2, DSC curve in Figure 4, ¹³C and ¹H NMR data in Figure 9.

The XRPD pattern of the product contains characteristic peaks at the following values (degrees ± 0,2° 2-theta): 7.46, 7.80, 12.69, 14.91, 15.58, 16.82, 17.27, 20.31, 20.62, 23.30, 28.13, 31.38, 32.05, 34.88, and 38.88.

A2: Chromatography using methanol:2-propanol: water eluent mixture

64.5g of crude I is dissolved in 100mL of 2-propanol, to the solution water is dropped until the 2-propanol: water= 1:1 ratio is reached. The stock-solution is filtered through a pre-column made of 5g 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel. Purification of the filtered stock-solution is carried out by high pressure preparative liquid chromatography using 400g of 10 micron particle size and 120 Angström pore size C18 reverse phase silica gel packing and water: methanol: 2-propanol eluent mixtures.

The combined main fraction of the chromatography is concentrated in vacuum at 40°C, the concentrated solution is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with saturated salt solution, dried over sodium sulfate and evaporated in vacuum, at 30°C. The residue is dissolved in 32mL of acetone and carefully n-pentane is added until the solution turns slightly opalescent. The solution thus obtained is further purified by filtrating through silica gel using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum at 30°C.

To 15g of 16(S)-iloprost phase-product purified by preparative HPLC and filtered through silica gel, 15mL of filtered dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at room temperature till complete dissolution, then 100mL of filtered pentane is added until the solution turns opalescent. The mixture is cooled to (-)40°C and while keeping that temperature it is agitated under inert atmosphere for 16 hours. The precipitated crystalline material is filtered off.

The product is dried at a temperature between (-)10 and (+)10°C in high vacuum, under inert atmosphere. Drying takes approx. 120 hours.

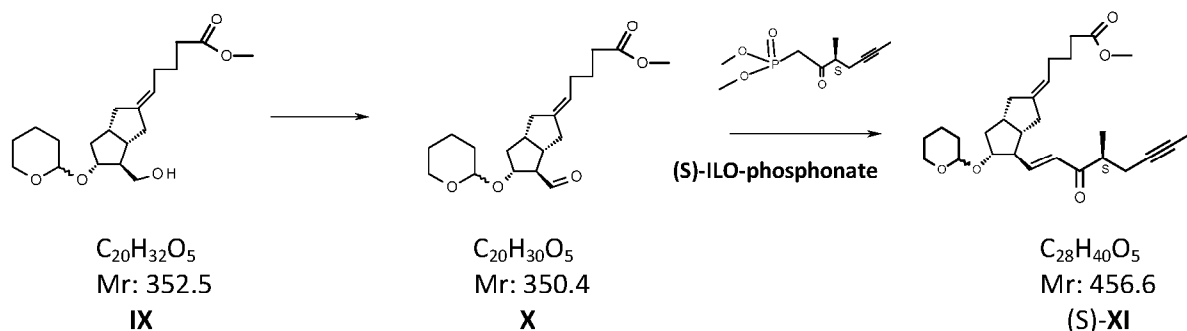
Purity of the product is 98.0%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6 %, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 1.0%.

1o. Preparation of 16(S)-iloprost by chemical synthesis

(5E)-5-[(3aS,4R,5R,6aS)-5-[(tetrahydro-2H-pyran-2-yl)oxy]-4-[(1E,4S)-4-methyl-3-oxo-octen-6-in-1-yl]hexahydropentalen-2(1H)-ylidene] pentanoic acid methyl ester ((S)-**XI**)

B: by chemical synthesis

B1: Pfitzner Moffatt oxidation followed by one-pot HWE reaction



140g of **IX** is dissolved in 1L of distilled toluene under inert atmosphere. The reaction mixture is cooled to 13°C and the solution of 235g of dicyclohexylcarbodiimide in 0.75L of toluene and 118mL of 1M phosphoric acid in DMSO solution are added. After addition the reaction is heated to 45°C and agitated at that temperature. After reaching the desired conversion the reaction mixture containing the obtained **X** aldehyde is cooled to room temperature, under inert atmosphere 39g of potassium hydroxide and 109g of (S)-ILO-phosphonate (optically active) dissolved in 0.5L of tetrahydrofuran are added. The reaction mixture is agitated while keeping the temperature. When the desired conversion is reached, perfl is added to the reaction mixture, then it is filtered off, the filtered solid is washed with toluene, the liquid filtrate is concentrated in vacuum at 50°C. The concentrated residue, after addition of n-hexane, is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of toluene: diisopropyl ether. The evaporated main fraction is further purified by repeated chromatography.

Yield: 140g (77%), oil.

^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of compound of formula (S)-**XI** is shown in Figure 7.

B2: Anelli oxidation (TEMPO and sodium hypochlorite)

The oxidant solution is prepared from 100mL of water, 100mL of 5% sodium hypochlorite and 36g of sodium bicarbonate. The pH of the solution is 9.4 ± 0.2 . If the $\text{pH} > 9.6$, it is adjusted with sodium bicarbonate.

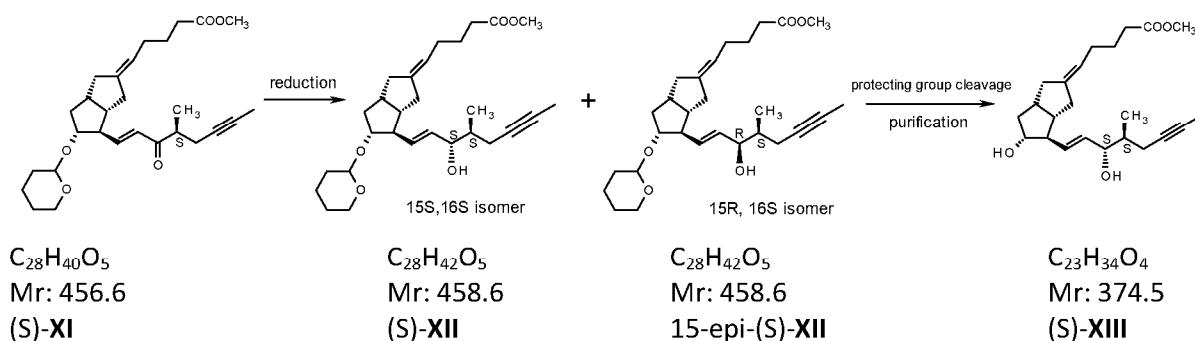
6g of **IX** is dissolved in 70mL of dichloromethane (DCM), then 0.01g of TEMPO catalyst and 0.2g of potassium bromide are added. The mixture is cooled to 0°C and the oxidant solution is added to it at a rate that the temperature remains below 10°C . Expected reaction time is 30 minutes.

The reaction mixture is then quenched with 10% sodium thiosulfate solution, agitated at $10\text{--}15^\circ\text{C}$ for 30 minutes. The aqueous phase is extracted 3-times with DCM. The organic phases are combined and washed with 15% sodium chloride solution.

Under inert atmosphere 20mL of 1M sodium hydroxide solution and 4g of (S)-ILO-phosphonate dissolved in 20mL of tetrahydrofuran are added. The reaction is agitated while keeping the temperature. At the end of the reaction the phases are separated, the organic phase is washed sequentially with 1M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution, 15% sodium chloride solution and saturated salt solution. The organic phase is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C . The residue, after the addition of n-hexane, is purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of toluene: diisopropyl ether. The evaporated main fraction is further purified by repeated chromatography.

Yield: 5.75g (74%), oil.

1p. Preparation of methyl (5E)-5-[(3aS,4R,5R)-5-hydroxy-4-[(E,3S,4S)-3-hydroxy-4-methyl-oct-1-en-6-ynyl]-3,3a,4,5,6,6a-hexahydro-1H-pentalen-2-ylidene]pentanoate ((S)-**XIII**)



To prepare the DIBAL-F reagent 350g of di-*tert*-butyl methylphenol is dissolved in 650mL of distilled toluene at room temperature, under inert atmosphere, and to the obtained solution the toluene solution of 102.8g of diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBAL-H) is added. The reagent is prepared at 0°C , but at the end of the addition the reaction mixture is agitated for 1 hour at room temperature, then

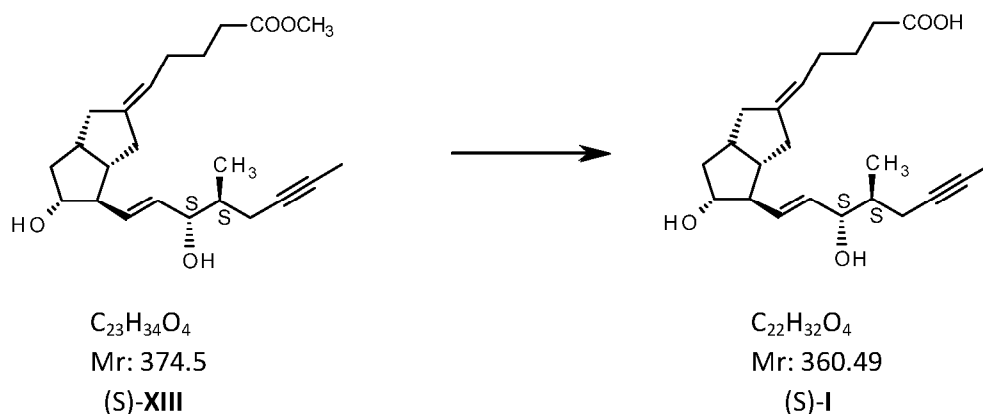
for 6 hours at 45°C, under inert atmosphere. The reagent mixture is then cooled to 5°C and under inert atmosphere 94g of (S)-**XI** in toluene solution is added. During the addition the temperature is elevating. The reaction mixture is agitated at room temperature until the desired conversion is reached, then quenched with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The quenched reaction mixture is extracted with toluene to obtain the protected enol isomers (S)-**XII*** and 15-epi-(S)-**XII** which are reacted further without isolation. To the combined organic phase the methanol solution of 7.05g of p-toluenesulfonic acid is added. The reaction mixture is agitated at room temperature. When the desired conversion is reached, the pH of the reaction mixture is set to pH $\geq$ 7.5 with triethylamine and it is concentrated in vacuum at 45°C. The residue is dissolved in n-hexane and purified by chromatography using silica gel column and step-gradient mixtures of n-hexane: ethyl acetate.

Yield: 43.1g (56%), oil.

*If desired, the protected enol, (S)-**XII** may be isolated by chromatographic purification.

^{13}C and ^1H NMR data of compound of formula (S)-**XII** is shown in Figure 8.

Preparation of crude 16(S)-iloprost



43.1g of (S)-**XIII** is dissolved in 50mL of tetrahydrofuran at room temperature, under inert atmosphere. To the solution 520mL of 1M sodium hydroxide solution is added at a rate that the temperature of the reaction mixture remains between 20-30°C. After reaching the desired conversion the phases are separated, the aqueous phase is extracted twice with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the organic phases are combined and washed twice with 1M sodium hydroxide solution. The combined alkaline phase is diluted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether and under agitation the pH is set to pH $\leq$ 3 with 2M sodium hydrogen sulfate solution. The acidified aqueous phase is extracted with methyl tertiary-butyl ether, the combined organic phase is washed with 20% sodium chloride solution and evaporated in vacuum at 30°C.

Purity of the product is 93%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 5%, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 4%.

Purity of this material already allows to prepare the solid 16(S)-iloprost.

Purification of crude 16(S)-iloprost by gravitational chromatography and crystallisation

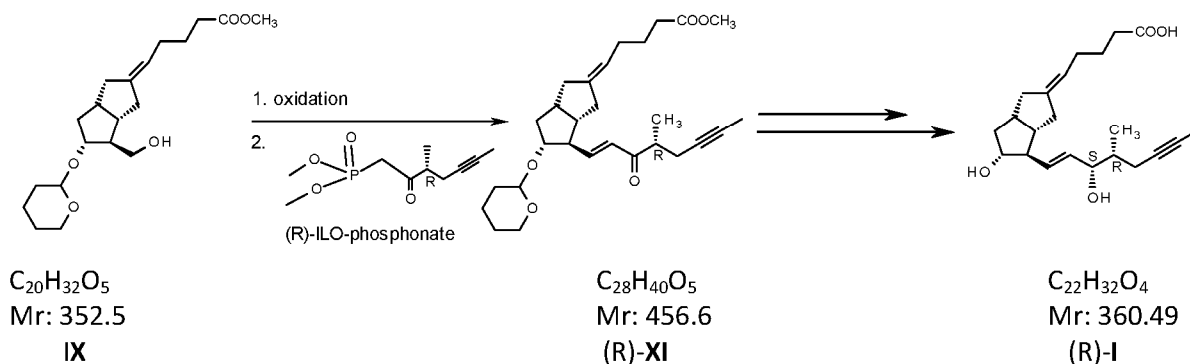
40.2g of crude 16(S)-iloprost is dissolved in 60mL of acetone and carefully n-pentane is added until the solution turns slightly opalescent. The obtained solution is purified by filtration through silica gel using step-gradient mixtures of n-pentane: acetone. The main fraction is evaporated in high vacuum at 30°C.

To 37g of 16(S)-iloprost phase-product, filtered through silica gel, 12mL of filtered dist. acetone is added. The mixture is shaken at room temperature till complete dissolution, then under continuous shaking 90mL of filtered pentane is added, until the solution turns opalescent. The mixture is cooled to (-)40°C and while keeping that temperature it is agitated under inert atmosphere for 16 hours. The precipitated crystalline material is filtered off.

The product is dried in high vacuum at a temperature between (-)10°C and (+)10°C under inert atmosphere. Drying takes approx. 120 hours.

Purity of the product is 98.0%, total amount of related impurities is not more than 1.6 %, total amount of other, non-identified impurities is not more than 1.0%.

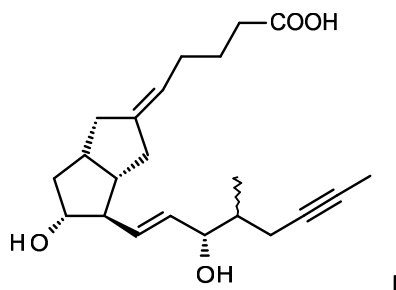
1q. Preparation of (R)-iloprost ((R)-I) by chemical synthesis



Starting from the toluene solution of 140mg of (R)-IX, carrying out the above described chemical steps using (R)-ILO-phosphonate, 51.1mg of 16(R)-iloprost was prepared.

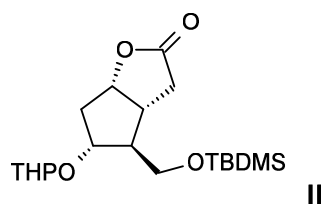
Claims

1. Process for the preparation of iloprost of formula I



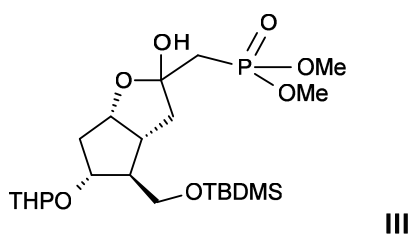
comprising that

- a.) the Corey lactone of formula II



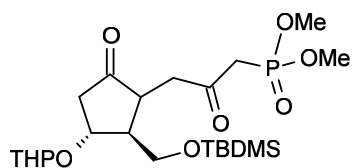
is selectively alkylated with dimethyl methylphosphonate in the presence of lithium dialkylamide,

- b.) the ring of the resulting lactol of formula III

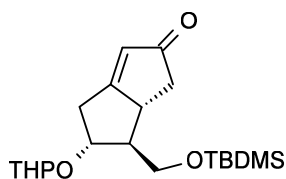


is opened with pyridinium acetate in weak acidic medium, then the obtained secondary hydroxyl group is oxidized with pyridinium dichromate,

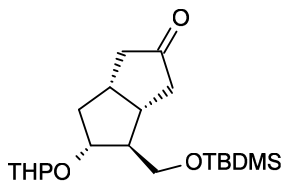
- c.) the resulting compound of formula IV

**IV**

is reacted with potassium carbonate in the presence of 18-crown-6 reagent,
d.) the thus obtained compound of formula **V**

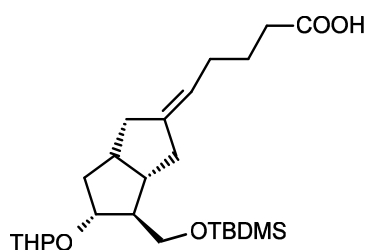
**V**

is reduced,
e.) the resulting compound of formula **VI**

**VI**

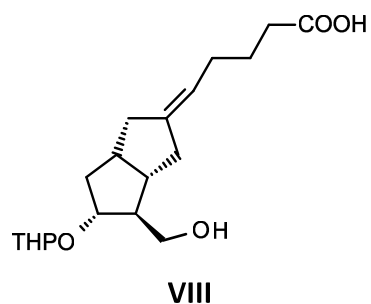
is reacted with carboxybutyltriphenylphosphonium bromide in the presence of potassium tertiary-butyrate,

f.) the TBDMS protecting group of the resulting E- and Z- isomers of formula **VII**

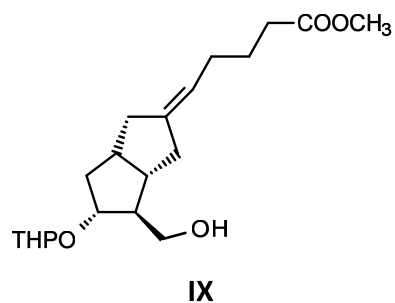
**VII**

is removed, the isomers are separated by gravitational chromatography, if desired the Z-isomer (**VIIIz**) is isomerized into the E-isomer,

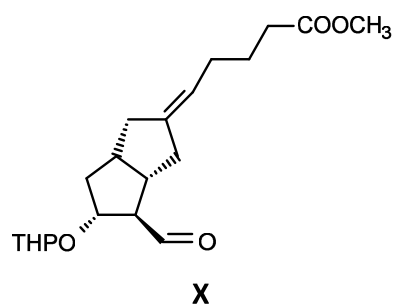
g.) the resulting compound of formula **VIII**



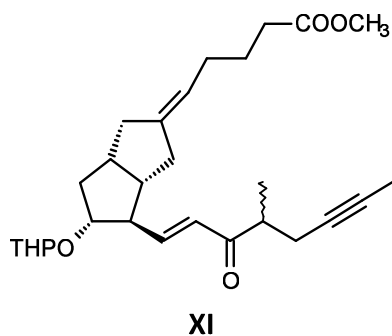
is esterified,
h.) the resulting compound of formula **IX**



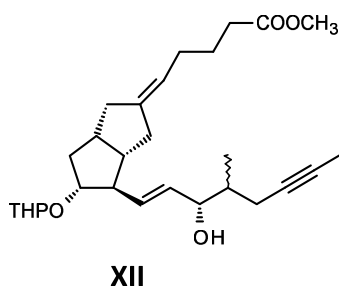
is oxidized,
i.) the resulting compound of formula **X**



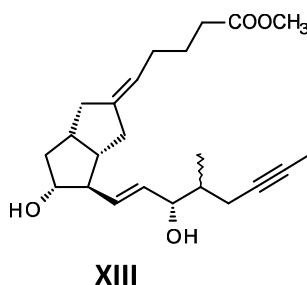
is transformed in HWE reaction in the presence of solid potassium hydroxide into the compound of formula **XI**,
j.) the oxo group of the resulting compound of formula **XI**



is reduced with DIBAL-F,
k.) the tetrahydropyranyl protecting group of the thus obtained compound of formula **XII**



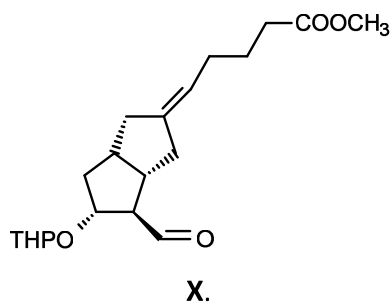
is removed and the compound is purified by gravitational column chromatography, if
desired further purified by preparative HPLC,
l.) the ester group of the resulting compound of formula **XIII**



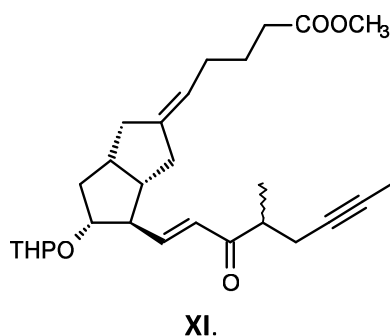
is removed and the obtained compound of formula **I** is purified.

2. Process according to claim 1 wherein the lithium dialkylamide is lithium diisopropylamide or lithium dicyclohexylamide in step a).
3. Process according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the reaction in step c) is carried out in high dilution, preferably in 30-45-fold dilution, at high temperature, preferably at 90-110°C.
4. Process according to any of claims 1 to 3 wherein the reaction in step c) is carried out in a way that the solution of the compound of formula **IV** is added dropwise into the refluxing solution of the reagents.
5. Process according to any of claims 1 to 4 wherein the removal of the silyl protecting group in step f) is effected with tetrabutylammonium fluoride trihydrate.
6. Process according to any of claims 1 to 5 wherein the separation of the E- and Z- isomers in step f) is carried out applying step-gradient eluent mixtures, using toluene: methyl tertiary-butyl ether mixture as eluent.

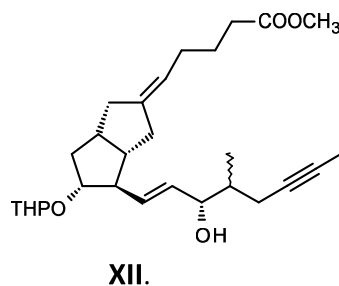
7. Process according to any of claims 1 to 6 wherein the isomerisation of the Z- isomer in step f) is carried out by irradiation in the presence of dimethyl disulfide sensibiliser.
8. Process according to any of claims 1 to 7 wherein the oxidation in step h) is carried out by Pfitzner-Moffatt oxidation with phosphoric acid-DMSO mixture containing DCC or DIC, or by Anelli oxidation (sodium hypochlorite, TEMPO catalyst).
9. Process according to any of claims 1 to 8 wherein the compound of formula **X** is transformed in step i) into compound of formula **XI** without isolation.
10. Process according to any of claims 1 to 9 wherein in step i) the 15R isomer of formula **XIIb**, separated by chromatography, after oxidation and THP-protection of the 11-OH group is recycled into the synthesis.
11. Process according to any of claims 1 to 10 wherein the compound of formula **XII** is not isolated in step k).
12. Process according to any of claims 1 to 11 wherein the crude final product of formula **I** is purified by gravitational chromatography and/or preparative HPLC.
13. The compound of formula **X**



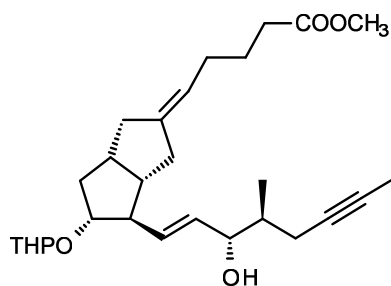
14. The compound of formula **XI**



15. The compound of formula **XII**

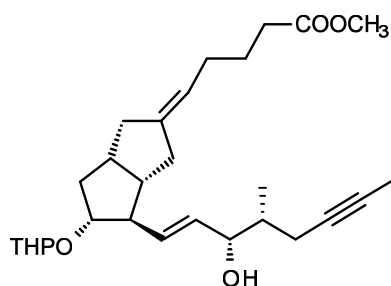


16. Compound of formula (S)-**XII**



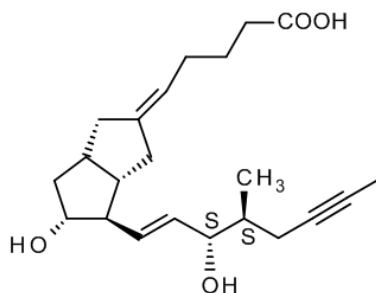
(S)-XII.

17. Compound of formula (R)-XII



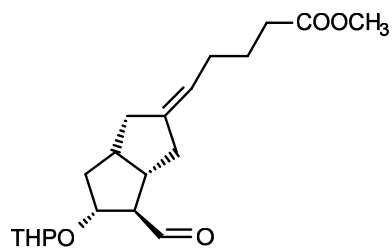
(R)-XII.

18. Process according to claim 1, where the iloprost is 16(S)-iloprost



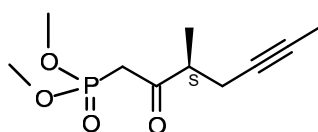
16(S)-iloprost

and the process comprising that the compound of formula X



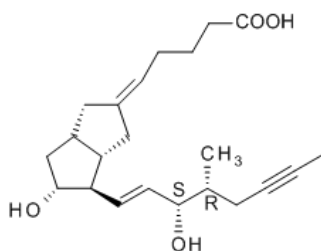
X

is reacted with (S)-ILO-phosphonate



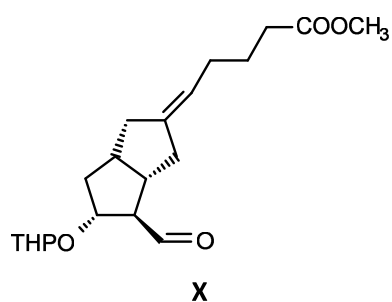
(S)-ILO-phosphonate.

19. Process according to claim 1, where the iloprost is 16(R)-iloprost



16(R)-iloprost

and the process comprising that the compound of formula **X**



is reacted with (R)-ILO-phosphonate

