The Identification of Drugs

VI. Nitration of Acetarsol *

K. ILVER, J. BERGER and A. JACEROTT

Laboratory of the Pharmacopoeia Commission, and The Royal Danish School of Pharmacy, Chemical Laboratory B, Copenhagen, Denmark

In order to obtain a suitable derivative of acetarsol (3-acetamido-4-hydroxyphenylarsenic acid) as an identity test in the Scandinavian Pharmacopoeia nitration was tried. Burschkies and Rothermundt ¹ state that acetarsol treated with a mixture of concentrated nitric acid and concentrated sulphuric acid at a temperature below 6°C yields 5-nitrocacetarsol (m.p. 218—220°C).

In the present work 2 M nitric acid was added to acetarsol and the solution was boiled for 15 sec and then cooled. A yellow derivative immediately crystallised and it did not contain arsenic.

We have now proved that the derivative is identical with 2-acetamido-4,6-dinitrophenol which means that besides the expected introduction of a nitro group ortho to the hydroxyl group another nitro group has replaced the arsenic group to give a dinitro derivative. The identity was confirmed by quantitative titration with titaunous chloride and mixed melting point determination with an authentic sample prepared by nitration of 2-acetamidophenol. Furthermore, the free phenol group of the derivative was acetylated and the resulting product was found to be identical with O,N-diacetylpicramic acid. This compound was prepared by acetylation of picramic acid.

The proposed derivative is specific for acetarsol as none of the other arsenicals used as drugs will give this derivative.

Experimental, 2-Acetamido 4,6-dinitrophenol from acetarsol. 0.1 g acetarsol is added 5 ml of 2 M nitric acid and the solution is boiled about 15 sec. and then immediately cooled with tap-water. The yellow precipitate is recrystallised from 10 ml of water. M.p. (corr.) 206—207°C (lit.² 205—206°C). Titrometric equiv. weight, found: 20.2, 20.1. Calc. for C₆H₄O₄N₂: 20.1. If the mixture is boiled for 5 min no precipitate is formed, probably due to an oxidation.

Acetylation of picramic acid and 2-acetamido-4,6-dinitrophenol. The substance is refluxed for 30 min with acetic anhydride and a few drops of pyridine. After cooling water is added and the precipitate is recrystallised from glacial acetic acid. Nearly colourless crystals, m.p. (corr.) 191°C (lit.³ 190—191°C).


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Correction to "Least Square Method for Computer Calculations of Stability Constants" *

JAN RYDBERG and JAMES C. SULLIVAN

Chemistry Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Lemont, Illinois, USA

P. 187, right column, first line from above, for L = 35 read L = 46.


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