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Studies on the Chemical Constituents of Rutaceous Plants. XLIX.¹⁾

**Development of a Versatile Method for the Synthesis of
Antitumor-Active Benzo[c]phenanthridine Alkaloids.**

**(1). Preparation of Various 2,4-Bisaryl-4-oxo-
butyronitriles and 2,4-Bisaryl-
4-oxobutyramides**

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For the sake of establishment of a versatile synthetic method for benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids, improvement of the Robinson synthetic method was examined. Thirteen chalcones (**7a—m**) were prepared by condensation of two acetophenone derivatives (**15** and **16**) with eleven benzaldehyde derivatives (**19a—k**) as fundamental starting materials. Hydrocyanation of these chalcones (**7a—l**) except one (**7m**) gave the corresponding 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitriles (**8a—l**). Eleven 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyramides (**9a—k**) were also prepared.

Keywords—synthesis; Robinson pathway improved; antileukemic activity; chalcone; hydrocyanation; 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitrile; 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyramide

It is well known that benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids²⁾ naturally occur in Papaveraceous (several species) and in Rutaceous [*Xanthoxylum* (*Fagara*) and *Toddalia*] plants. Alkaloids of this kind can be classified into two groups, one having a partially hydrogenated benzo[c]phenanthridine skeleton [*e.g.* chelidonine (**1**)] (group I) and the other having a fully aromatized one (group II). The latter can be subdivided into the 7,8-oxygenated alkaloid group [*e.g.* chelerythrine (**2**)] (group IIa) and the 8,9-oxygenated one [*e.g.* nitidine (**3**)] (group IIb). All of the alkaloids belonging to group I have oxygen functions at the C₇ and C₈ positions and have been isolated only from Papaveraceous plants. Among the fully aromatized alkaloids, 7,8-oxygenated ones occur in both Papaveraceous and Rutaceous plants, while 8,9-oxygenated ones occur only in Rutaceous plants.

In 1971, Wall *et al.*³⁾ reported that nitidine (**3**) shows antileukemic activity against L1210 mouse leukemia. One year later, Farnsworth *et al.*⁴⁾ found that fagaronine (**4**), one of the 8,9-oxygenated alkaloids, also shows a high order of activity against P388 leukemia in mice, but sanguinarine (**5**), one of the 7,8-oxygenated alkaloids, is not effective.⁵⁾ These reports stimulated us to investigate the structure-activity relationship among these alkaloids and related compounds. For this purpose, a practical synthetic method for benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids and related compounds was required.

Robinson *et al.*^{6b)} reported the first success in the synthesis of this type of alkaloid in 1950 (Chart 2). Although, it has been applied to total syntheses of various naturally occurring alkaloids and/or their derivatives [chelerythrine⁷⁾ (**2**), nitidine⁸⁾ (**3**), and avicine⁹⁾ (**6**)] with

Chart 1

Chart 2

some minor modifications, this reaction sequence still involves five troublesome steps: i) synthesis of the 2-aryl-1-tetralone derivative (10) from the chalcone (7) via 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitrile (8), ii) preparation of the 1-formamido-1,2,3,4-tetrahydronaphthalene (11) from the tetralone (10), iii) Bischler-Napieralski reaction of the formamide (11), iv) aromatization of the Bischler-Napieralski product (12), and v) quaternization of the benzo[c]phenanthridine skeleton (13) by *N*-alkylation. We therefore tried to establish a versatile synthetic pathway for this type of alkaloids and related compounds by improvement of this reaction sequence. In this paper, we describe syntheses of various 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitriles (8) and 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyramides (9), the fundamental starting materials in this reaction sequence.

Chart 3

As materials for syntheses of the starting chalcones (7) two acetophenone derivatives (**15** and **16**) were prepared. Acetopiperone (**15**) is the most commonly required starting acetophenone (which will be led to the alkaloid ring D) inasmuch as all of the known benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids except three [fagaronine (**4**), sanguirubine (**17**), and sanguilutine (**18**)] have a methylenedioxy group at the 2,3-positions in the D ring. In spite of the expectation that acetopiperone (**15**) could be prepared by treatment of piperonal (**19a**) with methyl magnesium iodide followed by oxidation of the resulting alcohol (**20**), many research groups have avoided the Grignard reaction of piperonal (**19a**) because of erroneous descriptions in the literature.¹⁰⁻¹² Actually, Mameli¹⁰) and Béhal¹¹) independently claimed at the beginning of this century that the Grignard reaction of piperonal (**19a**) resulted in formation of a dimerized product (**21**), bis-1-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)diethyl ether, because of facile dimerization¹²) of the secondary alcohol (**20**), 1-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)ethanol, under basic conditions. Moreover, Klages¹³) recommended isolation of the complex formed by the Grignard reaction by filtration, followed by hydrolysis with a large amount of water. Consequently, some earlier research groups^{8a, 8c, 14}) working on the synthesis of benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids prepared acetopiperone (**15**) by other methods. However, we doubted the early reports, since, generally speaking, this type of dimerization takes place not under basic conditions, but under acidic conditions. The desired secondary alcohol (**20**) was confirmed to be stable under basic conditions, whereas it readily dimerized on treatment with mineral acid even at room temperature. The complex isolated by filtration of the Grignard reaction mixture could be easily decomposed by an aqueous solution of ammonium chloride to give the corresponding secondary alcohol (**20**), which was convertible into acetopiperone (**15**) by treatment with Jones reagent without formation of the dimerized product (**21**) in excellent yield [overall 70–84%].

In order to synthesize sanguirubine (**17**) and sanguilutine (**18**), acetoveratrone (**16**) was prepared by methylation¹⁵) of commercially available acetovanillone (**22**) and from veratraldehyde (**19b**) according to the same reaction sequence as in the case of acetopiperone (**15**).

Several benzaldehyde derivatives other than piperonal (**19a**) and veratraldehyde (**19b**) were also prepared for use as synthetic starting materials. i) 3,5-Dimethoxybenzaldehyde¹⁶) (**19c**) was prepared by methylation of 3,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid (**24**) with dimethyl sulfate in acetone in the presence of potassium carbonate followed by reduction with lithium aluminium hydride and by oxidation with Collins reagent¹⁷) in 80.3% overall yield. ii) 3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzaldehyde¹⁸) (**19d**) was also prepared by methylation of gallic acid (**27**) with

Chart 4

Chalcone (7)	Chemical shifts of olefinic protons of chalcones				Substituents				Keto nitrile (8)		Keto amide (9)	
	H _A	H _B	J(Hz)	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	X	R	R		
7a	7.26	7.73	16.0	OCH ₃	OCH ₂ O	H	H	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9a	9a
7b	7.31	7.73	16.0	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	H	H	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9b	9b
7c	7.39	7.68	16.0	OCH ₃	H	OCH ₃	H	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9c	9c
7d	7.31	7.69	16.0	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	H	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9d	9d
7e	7.31	8.09	16.0	OCH ₂ O	OCH ₂ O	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9e	9e
7f	7.40	7.98	16.0	OCH ₂ Ph	OCH ₂ Ph	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9f	9f
7g	7.16-7.68	8.00	15.5	OCH ₂ Ph	OCH ₂ Ph	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₃	CH ₃	9g	9g
7h	7.38	8.10	16.0	OCH ₂ Ph	OCH ₂ O	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₃	CH ₃	9h	9h
7i	7.44	8.03	16.0	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₃	CH ₃	9i	9i
7j	7.92	8.05	15.0	OCH ₂ O	OCH ₂ O	H	OCH ₃	Br	CH ₂	CH ₂	9j	9j
7k	7.66	7.66	—	OCH ₃	H	OCH ₂ O	OCH ₂ O	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	9k	9k
7l	7.36	8.01	16.0	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	H	OCH ₃	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	—	—
7m	7.51	8.09	16.0	OCH ₃	H	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	H	CH ₂	CH ₂	—	—

Chart 5

the same reagent followed by reduction with Vitride¹⁹⁾ and by oxidation²⁰⁾ with pyridinium dichromate²¹⁾ (PDC) in 80.7% overall yield. iii) 2-Methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxy-²²⁾ (19e) and 2,4,5-trimethoxy-²³⁾ (19f) benzaldehydes were obtained by Vilsmeier–Haack reaction of *O*-methylsesamol²²⁾ (30) and 1,2,4-trimethoxybenzene²⁴⁾ (31), respectively. iv) 5-Methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxy- (19g) and 2,3,5-trimethoxy-²⁵⁾ (19k) benzaldehydes were derived from 5-methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxy²⁶⁾- (32) and 2,3,5-trimethoxy²⁷⁾- (33) bromobenzenes by treatment with ethyl lithium followed by formylation with *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF).

In the course of our synthetic study of the 7,8-oxygenated benzo[*c*]phenanthridine alkaloids, some 2-aryl-1-tetralones having a hydroxy group at the C₃ position or a bromine atom at the C₂ position of the aryl substituent were required. For this purpose, 3,4-dibenzoyloxybenzaldehyde²⁸⁾ (34) and benzylvanillin (35) were converted into 3,4-dibenzoyloxyanisole (38) and 4-benzoyloxy-1,3-dimethoxybenzene (39), respectively, by Baeyer–Villiger oxidation followed by methylation. Vilsmeier–Haack reaction of these products provided 4,5-dibenzoyloxy-2-methoxybenzaldehyde²⁹⁾ (19h) and 5-benzoyloxy-2,4-dimethoxybenzaldehyde (19i). 2-Bromo-6-methoxy-3,4-methylenedioxybenzaldehyde²⁶⁾ (19j) was used as a representative of 2-bromobenzaldehyde derivatives, which would be useful starting materials for synthesis of 7,8-oxygenated alkaloids *via* the Robinson synthetic sequence with minor modifications.⁷⁾

The thirteen chalcones (7a–m) shown in Chart 5 were prepared by condensation of the acetophenone (15 or 16) with the aldehyde (19a–k) using sodium hydroxide in alcohol according to the reported procedure.⁶⁾ In the proton nuclear magnetic resonance (¹H-NMR) spectrum, each of these chalcones (7) except one (7k) shows a pair of doublets having *J* values of 15–16 Hz due to olefinic protons at relatively low field, indicating that these desired chalcones (7) are *trans*. However, the 5-methoxy-2,3,3',4'-bis(methylenedioxy)chalcone (7k) shows, instead of a pair of doublets, a 2H singlet at δ 7.66. Since this signal raised some doubt as to whether the assignment of a *trans* configuration to the chalcone (7k) was appropriate, the related chalcone (7m), in which the 2,3-methylenedioxy group of the questionable chalcone (7k) was replaced with two methoxy groups, was prepared from acetopiperone (15) and 2,3,5-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19k). In the ¹H-NMR spectrum, the newly prepared chalcone (7m) clearly shows two doublets having *J* values of 16.0 Hz at δ 7.51 and 8.09, demonstrating a *trans* configuration. Comparison of the ultraviolet (UV) spectrum of the questionable chalcone (7k) with that of the newly prepared chalcone (7m) suggested the *trans* configuration for the questionable chalcone (7k). Therefore, the 2H singlet at δ 7.66 in the ¹H-NMR spectrum of the chalcone (7k) can reasonably be assigned to its olefinic protons. It is of interest that the signals of the α - and β -protons in an α,β -unsaturated ketone were observed at the same chemical shift in this case.

Fig. 1.

—, the 5-methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxychalcone (7k); ----, the 2,3,5-trimethoxychalcone (7m); —x—, the 2-methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxychalcone (7e).

The desired twelve 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitriles (**8a—l**) were obtained by cyanation of these chalcones (**7a—l**) without any difficulty according to the reported procedure^{6,8a,8b} in excellent yields.

In the Robinson synthetic sequence,^{6,8a,8b,9} the 2,4-bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitriles (**8**) were hydrolyzed to the corresponding keto-amides (**9**) by treatment with mixed sulfuric and acetic acids. Similar treatment of the eleven keto-nitriles (**8a—k**) shown in Chart 5 according to the reported procedure^{6,8a,8b} provided the desired 2,4-bisaryl-2-oxobutyramides (**9**). Syntheses of benzo[c]phenanthridine alkaloids from these keto-nitriles (**8**) or keto-amides (**9**) according to our modification of the Robinson synthetic pathway will be reported in subsequent papers.

Experimental

All melting points were measured on a micro melting point hot stage apparatus (Yanagimoto) and are uncorrected. Infrared (IR) and UV spectra were recorded on a Hitachi EPI-G3 spectrometer (in Nujol) and on a Hitachi 340 spectrophotometer (as solutions in 95% ethanol), respectively. ¹H-NMR spectra³⁰ were recorded on a JEOL JNM-4H-100 spectrometer in deuteriochloroform, with tetramethylsilane as an internal reference. Mass spectra (MS) were measured on a Hitachi RMU-6E spectrometer at 70 eV chamber voltage with a direct inlet system. For chromatography (column), silicic acid (100 mesh), Mallinckrodt Chemical Works, Silica gel 60 (70—230 mesh ASTM), Merck, and aluminium oxide (neutral, grade I), Woelm, and for preparative thin layer chromatography (TLC), Silica gel GF₂₅₄, Merck, were used. All identification of products was done by IR and TLC comparisons, and by mixed melting point determination. The abbreviations used are as follows: s, singlet; d, doublet; dd, double doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet; br, broad; dif, diffused; sh, shoulder. The assignment of NH or OH signals was confirmed by disappearance of the signals after addition of deuterium oxide.

3,4-Methylenedioxyacetophenone (Acetopiperone) (15)—A solution of piperonal (**19a**) (9.98 g) in abs. Et₂O (60 ml) was added dropwise at 5 °C to a stirred solution of MeMgI prepared from MeI (11 ml) in abs. Et₂O (45 ml) and Mg metal (3.25 g). The mixture was allowed to stand at room temperature for 45 min. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with abs. hexane, and then suspended in water. After addition of Et₂O, the suspension was clarified by addition of 20% NH₄Cl aq. and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal layer was collected, washed with sat. NaCl aq., dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated *in vacuo*. The oily residue [ca. 10.7 g; 1-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)ethanol] was dissolved in acetone (300 ml). Jones reagent³¹ (51 ml) was added to the stirred solution below 10 °C and stirring was then continued for a further 1 h. After decomposition of the excess reagent with MeOH, the mixture was poured into a large quantity of water and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was washed with 5% NaHCO₃ aq., dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. Recrystallization of the residue from cyclohexane–Et₂O or benzene–hexane gave colorless prisms (8.99 g), mp 85—87 °C (lit. mp 85 °C;^{6a}) mp 86—87 °C;⁷) mp 87 °C;¹³) mp 84—85 °C¹⁴). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1665 (CO).

3,4-Dimethoxyacetophenone (Acetoveratrone) (16)—i) Methylation of Acetovanillone (**22**): A solution of commercial acetovanillone (**22**) (39.4 g) in 10% KOH aq. (150 ml) was heated at 55 °C and then Me₂SO₄ (30 ml) was added to the mixture for 5 min. The reaction was brought to completion by using additional 10% KOH aq. (270 ml) and Me₂SO₄ (44 ml), then the excess Me₂SO₄ was decomposed with 10% KOH aq. (330 ml). The mixture was extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was dried over K₂CO₃ and evaporated to dryness. Distillation of the residue at 136—138 °C (4 mmHg) gave colorless prisms (36.9 g), mp 48—50 °C (lit.¹⁵) mp 48—49 °C), which were recrystallized from Et₂O–hexane. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1665 (CO).

ii) Grignard Reaction of Veratraldehyde (**19b**) with Methyl Magnesium Iodide Followed by Jones Oxidation: A solution of MeMgI in abs. Et₂O was prepared by addition of a solution of MeI³² (7.5 ml) in abs. Et₂O (50 ml) to Mg metal³² (2.47 g). A solution of veratraldehyde (**19b**) (1.00 g) in abs. Et₂O³² (50 ml) was added dropwise to the MeMgI solution at 5 °C with stirring. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 45 min. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with abs. hexane, and then suspended in water. After dilution with Et₂O, the suspension was clarified by addition of 20% NH₄Cl aq. and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal layer was collected, dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated *in vacuo*. The oily residue [ca. 0.91 g; 1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)ethanol] was dissolved in acetone (18.3 ml). Jones reagent³¹ (3.5 ml) was added to the stirred solution below 5 °C and stirring was then continued for a further 1 h at 5—10 °C. After decomposition of the excess reagent with MeOH, the mixture was poured into a large quantity of water and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was washed with 5% NaHCO₃ aq., dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. Recrystallization of the residue from hexane–Et₂O gave colorless prisms (0.58 g), mp 44—47 °C, which were identical with a sample prepared by the above method.

3,5-Dimethoxybenzaldehyde (19c)—i) Methyl 3,5-Dimethoxybenzoate (**25**): A solution of 3,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid (**24**) (1.01 g) and Me₂SO₄ (4 ml) in acetone (20 ml) containing K₂CO₃ (5.02 g) was refluxed for 4 h. After removal of K₂CO₃ by filtration, the excess reagent was decomposed with conc. NH₄OH aq. The mixture was diluted

with a large quantity of water and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was washed with water, dried over Na₂SO₄, and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. Recrystallization of the residue from MeOH–H₂O gave colorless pillars (1.16 g), mp 41 °C (lit. mp 42–44 °C^{33a}); mp 41 °C^{33b}).

ii) 3,5-Dimethoxybenzyl Alcohol (**26**): A suspension of LiAlH₄ (1.22 g) in abs. Et₂O (12.8 ml) was gradually added to a solution of the ester (**25**) (5.02 g) in abs. Et₂O (19.4 ml). The suspension was refluxed for 3 h. After decomposition of the excess of the LiAlH₄ with wet Et₂O followed by water, the ethereal layer was separated. The ethereal layer was dried over K₂CO₃ and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo* to give colorless needles (4.58 g), mp 48 °C (lit.¹⁶ mp 47–48 °C).

iii) 3,5-Dimethoxybenzaldehyde (**19c**): A solution of the alcohol (**26**) (5.04 g) in CH₂Cl₂ (100 ml) was added to the complex prepared from CrO₃ (17.9 g) and pyridine (28.3 g) in CH₂Cl₂ (400 ml). The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 15 min. The precipitate was removed by decantation and washed with Et₂O. The organic layers were combined and diluted with Et₂O. After being washed with 5% NaOH aq., 5% HCl aq., 5% NaHCO₃ aq., and sat. NaCl aq. successively, the ethereal solution was dried over MgSO₄ and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. The residue was chromatographed on Al₂O₃ with benzene to give colorless pillars (4.37 g), mp 46–47 °C (lit.¹⁶ mp 45–46 °C).

3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19d)—i) Methyl 3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzoate (**28**): A solution of gallic acid · H₂O (**27**) (29.9 g) in DMF (100 ml) was added to a suspension of K₂CO₃ (97 g) in DMF (200 ml) with vigorous stirring. Dimethyl sulfate (66 ml) was added dropwise to the above mixture at 20–25 °C. After completion of the addition, the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2.5 h. The above procedure was repeated using a further amount of K₂CO₃ (44 g) and Me₂SO₄ (30 ml), then the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for a further 4.5 h, poured into water, and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was dried over K₂CO₃ and evaporated to dryness. Recrystallization of the residue from MeOH gave pale yellow prisms (32.7 g), mp 85–86 °C (lit.³⁴ mp 83–84 °C). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1710 (CO).

ii) 3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzyl Alcohol (**29**): A solution of the ester (**28**) (9.86 g) in abs. benzene (40 ml) was added dropwise to Vitride¹⁹ (22 ml) under ice cooling. After the mixture had been stirred at room temperature for a further 1 h, the complex was decomposed with 25% H₂SO₄ aq. (290 ml). The benzene layer was separated from the aqueous layer, which was extracted with benzene. The organic layers were combined, washed with 5% NaHCO₃ aq., and then dried over MgSO₄. Evaporation of the benzene solution gave an oily product (7.84 g). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 3500 (OH).

iii) 3,4,5-Trimethoxybenzaldehyde (**19d**): Pyridinium dichromate²¹ [(C₅H₅N⁺H)₂ · Cr₂O₇²⁻] (16.9 g) was added to a solution of the crude alcohol (**29**) (5.92 g) in dry CH₂Cl₂ (43 ml) at 18–19 °C with stirring. After stirring at room temperature for 3.5 h, further PDC (3.38 g) was added to the mixture and the whole was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. The reaction mixture was diluted with benzene and the diluted solution was filtered through a column packed with Celite 545 with the aid of an air-pump. Evaporation of the benzene filtrate under reduced pressure gave colorless prisms (5.74 g), mp 76–78 °C (lit.¹⁸ mp 77 °C), which were recrystallized from benzene–hexane. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1680 (CO).

2-Methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxybenzaldehyde (19e)—Phosphorus oxychloride (26 ml) was added to a solution of *O*-methylsesamol²² (**30**) (34.60 g), bp 110–115 °C (22 mmHg) [lit.²² bp 110–114 °C (18 mmHg)], in DMF (67 ml) under ice cooling for 1.5 h. After the addition, the mixture was heated at 80 °C for 1 h with stirring, then cooled. Saturated AcONa aq. (170 ml) was added to the reaction mixture under ice cooling to give colorless needles (36.4 g), mp 115–117 °C (lit.²² mp 111.5–112 °C), which were recrystallized from EtOH. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1650 (CO).

2,4,5-Trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19f)—Phosphorus oxychloride (5.5 ml) was added to a stirred solution of 1,2,4-trimethoxybenzene²⁴ (**31**) (8.42 g) in DMF (17 ml) under ice cooling. After the addition, the mixture was heated at 80 °C for 1 h with stirring, then cooled. Saturated AcONa aq. (30 ml) was added to the reaction mixture under ice cooling to give colorless needles (9.80 g), mp 114–115.5 °C (lit.²³ mp 114 °C), which were recrystallized from EtOH. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1660 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.83, 3.88, and 3.92 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 6.44 and 7.26 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 10.23 (1H, s, CHO).

5-Methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxybenzaldehyde (19g)—A solution of EtBr (3.3 ml) in abs. Et₂O (12 ml) was added to a suspension of Li metal (0.40 g) in abs. Et₂O (13 ml) between –20 and –30 °C for 10 min with stirring. When the Li metal had completely dissolved, a solution of 5-methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxybromobenzene²⁶ (**32**) (5.10 g) in abs. Et₂O (15 ml) was added dropwise to the solution at –20––30 °C. The mixture was stirred at the same temperature for 1.4 h, then a mixed solution of DMF (19 ml) and abs. Et₂O (20 ml) was added and the reaction mixture was allowed to stand at room temperature for 2 h, poured into water, and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was dried over K₂CO₃ and evaporated to dryness.

A solution of NaHSO₃ (21.5 g) in water (33 ml) was added to the residue and the mixture was heated at 100 °C for 2 h to give the bisulfite compound as a precipitate. The precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with benzene, and dissolved in water (70 ml). The aqueous solution was made alkaline with 10% NaOH aq. (13 ml), heated at 100 °C for 30 min, then cooled. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration and recrystallized from MeOH to give slightly yellow needles (2.62 g), mp 79–80 °C. Anal. Calcd for C₉H₈O₄: C, 60.00; H, 4.48. Found: C, 59.91; H, 4.37. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1685 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.79 (3H, s, OCH₃), 6.08 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.68 (2H, s, arom. H), 10.11 (1H, s, CHO).

4,5-Dibenzyloxy-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (19h)—i) 3,4-Dibenzyloxyphenol (**36**): A solution of 3,4-dibenzyl-

oxybenzaldehyde ²⁸⁾ (**34**) (70.0 g), mp 83–85 °C (lit. ²⁸⁾ mp 87.5–89 °C), in abs. CHCl₃ (150 ml) was added to a solution of *m*-chloroperbenzoic acid (45.5 g) in CHCl₃ (550 ml) under ice cooling. The mixture was allowed to stand at room temperature overnight and the excess of the peracid was decomposed with Na₂SO₃ (10.0 g). After removal of the precipitate by filtration, the filtrate was evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. A solution of KOH (20.0 g) in MeOH (280 ml) was added to the residue. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 2 h and then evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. The residue was dissolved in water. After addition of an excess of dry ice, the aqueous solution was extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was dried over MgSO₄ and evaporated to dryness. Recrystallization of the residue from benzene gave colorless needles (57.6 g), mp 111–112 °C (lit. ³⁵⁾ mp 110.5–111.5 °C), IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 3250 (OH).

ii) 3,4-Dibenzyloxyanisole (**38**): Dimethyl sulfate (111.4 ml) was added to a solution of 3,4-dibenzyloxyphenol (**36**) (68.2 g) in MeOH (120 ml). The mixture was stirred at 70–80 °C for 30 min and the pH of the reaction mixture was kept slightly alkaline by addition of 50% NaOH aq. (80 ml). After decomposition of the excess reagent with 50% NaOH aq. (50 ml), the mixture was extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was washed with 5% NaOH aq., dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated to dryness. Recrystallization of the residue from cyclohexane–hexane gave colorless needles (70.1 g), mp 55–57.5 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₁H₂₀O₃: C, 78.72; H, 6.29. Found: C, 78.92; H, 6.31. ¹H-NMR δ : 3.72 (3H, s, OCH₃), 5.07 and 5.12 (each 2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.34 (1H, dd, *J*=9.0 and 3.0 Hz, C₆-H), 6.55 (1H, d, *J*=3.0 Hz, C₂-H), 6.85 (1H, d, *J*=9.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.40 (10H, dif. s, arom. H).

iii) 4,5-Dibenzyloxy-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (**19h**): Phosphorus oxychloride (3.8 ml) was added to dry DMF (13.6 ml) under ice cooling. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 min, then cooled again to 0 °C. A solution of 3,4-dibenzyloxyanisole (**38**) (12.4 g) in dry DMF (10 ml) was added to the above solution below 10 °C, and the mixture was stirred at room temperature for 4 d and poured into ice-cooled saturated Na₂CO₃ aq. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration. Recrystallization of the precipitate from cyclohexane gave colorless needles (12.9 g), mp 86–87 °C³⁶⁾ (lit. ²⁹⁾ mp 69–70 °C). *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₂H₂₀O₄: C, 75.84; H, 5.79. Found: C, 75.76; H, 5.80. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1668 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.82 (3H, s, OCH₃), 5.11 and 5.24 (each 2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.52 (1H, s, C₃-H), 7.40 (11H, dif. s, arom. H), 10.22 (1H, s, CHO).

5-Benzyloxy-2,4-dimethoxybenzaldehyde (19i)—i) 4-Benzyloxy-3-methoxyphenol (**37**): Commercial hydrogen peroxide (35% in H₂O: 43.5 ml) was added to 85% HCOOH (180 ml) under ice cooling with stirring. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 1 h. After addition of a solution of benzylvanillin (**35**) (75.0 g) in 98% HCOOH (200 ml) at 0 °C with stirring, the above solution was stirred at 0 °C for a further 3 h. After decomposition of the excess reagent with Na₂SO₃ (70 g), the mixture was poured onto ice and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was concentrated to ca. 500 ml and 5% NaOH aq. (550 ml) was added. The mixture was vigorously stirred at room temperature for 30 min. The aqueous solution was separated from ether and the ethereal solution was washed with 5% NaOH aq. The original 5% NaOH aq. solution and the washings were combined and acidified with 10% HCl aq. The resulting precipitate was collected by filtration. Recrystallization of the precipitate from Et₂O–hexane gave slightly brown needles (61.2 g), mp 87–88 °C (lit. mp 86–87 °C, ^{37a)} mp 87 °C^{37b)}).

ii) 4-Benzyloxy-1,3-dimethoxybenzene (**39**): A 50% aqueous solution of NaOH (130 ml) was slowly added to a solution of 4-benzyloxy-3-methoxyphenol (**37**) (57.1 g) in MeOH (200 ml) containing Me₂SO₄ (71 ml) over a period of 1 h. The reaction proceeded exothermically with refluxing. After the addition, the mixture was refluxed for 40 min, poured into water, and extracted with Et₂O. The ethereal solution was washed with 10% NaOH aq., dried over K₂CO₃, and evaporated to dryness. Recrystallization of the residue from Et₂O–hexane gave colorless needles (57.8 g), mp 45–45.5 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₅H₁₆O₃: C, 73.75; H, 6.60. Found: C, 73.72; H, 6.65. ¹H-NMR δ : 3.73 and 3.84 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 5.03 (2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.28 (1H, dd, *J*=9.0 and 3.0 Hz, C₆-H), 6.48 (1H, d, *J*=3.0 Hz, C₂-H), 6.76 (1H, d, *J*=9.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.20–7.48 (5H, m, arom. H).

iii) 5-Benzyloxy-2,4-dimethoxybenzaldehyde (**19i**): A solution of POCl₃ (24 ml) in DMF (80 ml) was stirred at room temperature for 30 min. A solution of 4-benzyloxy-1,3-dimethoxybenzene (**39**) (57.8 g) in DMF (100 ml) was added to the above solution at room temperature. The mixture was heated at 55 °C for 6 h and poured into ice-cooled saturated Na₂CO₃ aq. The precipitate was collected by filtration. Recrystallization of the precipitate from benzene–hexane gave colorless fine needles (61.0 g), mp 103–104 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₆H₁₆O₄: C, 70.57; H, 5.92. Found: C, 70.43; H, 5.93. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1660 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.88 and 3.92 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 5.05 (2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.45 (1H, s, C₃-H), 7.18–7.52 (6H, m, arom. H), 10.23 (1H, s, CHO).

2,3,5-Trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19k)—A solution of EtBr (24 ml) in abs. Et₂O (125 ml) was added to a suspension of Li metal (4.35 g) in abs. Et₂O (190 ml) between –20 and –30 °C over 10 min with stirring. After the Li metal had completely dissolved, a solution of 2,3,5-trimethoxybromobenzene²⁷⁾ (**33**) (5.10 g) in abs. Et₂O (125 ml) was added dropwise to the above solution between –20 and –30 °C. After the mixture had been stirred at the same temperature for 1.4 h, a mixture of DMF (62.6 ml) and abs. Et₂O (190 ml) was added. The whole was stirred for 1 h, then poured into a large quantity of water. After Et₂O extraction, the ethereal solution was dried over K₂CO₃ and evaporated to dryness. Distillation of the residue at 140–148 °C (5 mmHg) gave colorless needles, mp 60–64 °C [lit. mp 71 °C, ^{25a)} mp 61–62 °C, ^{25b)} mp 63 °C^{25c)}].

General Method for Syntheses of Chalcone Derivatives (7)—Equivalent amounts of an acetophenone (**15** or **16**) and a benzaldehyde (**19**) were dissolved in a minimum amount of EtOH. The mixture was made alkaline with NaOH

aq. and allowed to stand at room temperature overnight. The precipitate was collected by filtration. Recrystallization from a suitable solvent gave the desired product.

3,4;3',4'-Bis(methylenedioxy)chalcone (7a)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (0.50 g) and piperonal (19a) (0.46 g) in EtOH (8.2 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (0.82 ml). Yellow needles (0.68 g), mp 177.5–178.5 °C (benzene–hexane) (lit.⁹⁾ mp 174 °C. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1670 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ (DMSO- d_6) δ : 6.09 and 6.14 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.95 (1H, d, $J=8.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.05 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.30 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 7.59 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.63 and 7.66 (each 1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.80 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$), 7.84 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$).

3,4-Dimethoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7b)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (70.0 g) and veratraldehyde (19b) (78.0 g) in EtOH (350 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (112 ml). Yellow prisms (122.2 g), mp 137–139 °C (benzene–hexane) (lit. mp 133–135 °C;^{6a)} mp 135 °C;^{8a)} mp 133–135 °C^{8c)}). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1640 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.91 and 3.94 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 6.02 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.86 (2H, d, $J=8.2$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_5\text{'-H}$), 7.13 (1H, dif. d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-H}$), 7.19 (1H, d, $J=8.2$ Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 7.31 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.54 (1H, dd, $J=8.2$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 7.65 (1H, s, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.73 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

3,5-Dimethoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7c)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (19.8 g) and 3,5-dimethoxybenzaldehyde (19c) (20.0 g) in EtOH (300 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (70 ml). Pale yellow pillars (27.9 g), mp 105–107 °C (EtOH). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_5$: C, 69.18; H, 5.17. Found: C, 69.22; H, 5.16. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1640 (CO) sh. $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.84 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 6.04 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.48 (1H, t, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_4\text{-H}$), 6.73 (2H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.86 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.39 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.48 (1H, d, $J=1.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.61 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 1.5 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 7.68 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

3,4,5-Trimethoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7d)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (8.4 g) and 3,4,5-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19d) (10.0 g) in EtOH (140 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (13.8 ml). Yellow needles (15.0 g), mp 154–156 °C (EtOH). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{18}\text{O}_6$: C, 66.66; H, 5.30. Found: C, 66.38; H, 5.23. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1665 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.88 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.92 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 6.50 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.85 (2H, s, $\text{C}_2\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.91 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.31 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.52 (1H, d, $J=1.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.63 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 1.5 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 7.69 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

2-Methoxy-4,5;3',4'-bis(methylenedioxy)chalcone (7e)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (9.20 g) and 6-methoxypiperonal (19e) (10.0 g) in EtOH (150 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (15 ml). Yellow needles (16.5 g), mp 205.5–206.5 °C (dioxane–EtOH). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_6$: C, 66.25; H, 4.32. Found: C, 66.13; H, 3.97. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1650 (CO). UV $\lambda_{\max}$ nm (log ϵ): 246 (4.12), 310 (4.01), 399 (4.28). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.82 (3H, s, OCH_3), 5.95 and 6.02 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.52 and 7.08 (each 1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.85 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.31 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.49 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.61 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 8.09 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

4,5-Dibenzoyloxy-2-methoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7f)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (15) (6.25 g) and 4,5-dibenzoyloxy-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (19h) (13.3 g) in EtOH (68 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (13.7 ml). Recrystallization of the crude product from a large quantity of MeOH or CHCl_3 –hexane gave yellow needles (17.4 g), mp 118–119 °C. Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_6$: C, 75.29; H, 5.30. Found: C, 75.35; H, 5.24. IR $\nu_{\text{CHCl}_3}^{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1653 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.81 (3H, s, OCH_3), 5.12 and 5.21 (each 2H, s, OCH_2Ph), 6.04 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.54 (1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-H}$), 6.87 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.40 (12H, dif. s, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$ and arom. H), 7.48 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.58 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 7.98 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

5-Benzoyloxy-2,4,3',4'-tetramethoxychalcone (7g)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetoveratrone (16) (20.0 g) and 5-benzoyloxy-2,4-dimethoxybenzaldehyde (19i) (30.0 g) in EtOH (100 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (40 ml). Yellow prisms (43.5 g), mp 128–131 °C (EtOH). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_6$: C, 71.87; H, 6.03. Found: C, 71.66; H, 6.01. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1645 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.89 and 3.93 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 3.96 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 5.10 (2H, s, OCH_2Ph), 6.50 (1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-H}$), 6.92 (1H, d, $J=10.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.16–7.68 (9H, m, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$ and arom. H), 8.00 (1H, d, $J=15.5$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

2,3',4'-Trimethoxy-4,5-methylenedioxychalcone (7h)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetoveratrone (16) (26.7 g) and 6-methoxypiperonal (19e) (26.8 g) in EtOH (350 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (55 ml). Yellow needles (44.0 g), mp 173–174 °C (MeOH– CHCl_3). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{18}\text{O}_6$: C, 66.66; H, 5.30. Found: C, 66.68; H, 5.34. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1650 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.84 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.96 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 5.94 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.52 and 7.10 (each 1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.90 (1H, d, $J=8.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.38 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.59 (1H, s, $\text{C}_2\text{'-H}$), 7.64 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{'-H}$), 8.10 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

2,3',4,4',5-Pentamethoxychalcone (7i)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetoveratrone (16) (4.68 g) and 2,4,5-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (19f) (5.08 g) in EtOH (40 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (12 ml). Yellow needles (8.24 g), mp 145–147 °C (EtOH). Anal. Calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{22}\text{O}_6$: C, 67.02; H, 6.19. Found: C, 67.03; H, 6.21. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm^{-1} : 1645 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.89 (9H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 3$), 3.95 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 6.48 and 7.10 (each 1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.89 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.44 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{CH}=\text{CHCO}$), 7.56–7.72 (2H, m, arom. H), 8.03 (1H, d, $J=16.0$ Hz, $\text{ArCH}=\text{CH}$).

2-Bromo-6-methoxy-3,4;3',4'-bis(methylenedioxy)chalcone (7j)—The general method was applied to a solution

of acetopiperone (**15**) (15.7 g) and 2-bromo-6-methoxy-3,4-methylenedioxybenzaldehyde²⁶ (**19j**) (25.0 g) in EtOH (2500 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (250 ml). Yellow needles (25.4 g), mp 188–190 °C (CHCl₃–hexane). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₈H₁₃BrO₆: C, 53.36; H, 3.23. Found: C, 53.38; H, 3.22. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1655 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.91 (3H, s, OCH₃), 6.00 and 6.04 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.56 (1H, s, C₃-H), 6.88 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.53 (1H, d, *J*=1.0 Hz, C₂-H), 7.64 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 1.0 Hz, C₆-H), 7.90 (1H, d, *J*=15.0 Hz, CH=CHCO), 8.05 (1H, d, *J*=15.0 Hz, ArCH=CH).

5-Methoxy-2,3;3',4'-bis(methylenedioxy)chalcone (7k)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (**15**) (7.50 g) and 5-methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxybenzaldehyde (**19g**) (9.85 g) in EtOH (90 ml) with 30% KOH aq. (15 ml). In this case, after the reaction was completed, dilution of the reaction mixture with a large amount of water was required. Yellow needles (13.9 g), mp 130–131 °C (benzene). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₈H₁₄O₆: C, 66.25; H, 4.32. Found: C, 66.19; H, 4.36. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1644 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.79 (3H, s, OCH₃), 6.05 and 6.07 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.40 and 6.54 (each 1H, d, *J*=2.5 Hz, C₄- and C₆-H), 6.89 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.54 (1H, d, *J*=2.0 Hz, C₂-H), 7.65 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H), 7.66 (2H, s, ArCH=CHCO).

2,4,5-Trimethoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7l)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (**15**) (16.8 g) and 2,4,5-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (**19f**) (20.0 g) in EtOH (300 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (37.0 ml). Yellow prisms (29.8 g), mp 112–114 °C (benzene–hexane). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₈O₆: C, 66.66; H, 5.30. Found: C, 66.70; H, 5.25. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1650 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.86 (6H, s, OCH₃ × 2), 3.91 (3H, s, OCH₃), 6.00 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.47 and 7.07 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.82 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.36 (1H, d, *J*=16.0 Hz, CH=CHCO), 7.46 (1H, d, *J*=2.0 Hz, C₂-H), 7.58 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H), 8.01 (1H, d, *J*=16.0 Hz, ArCH=CH).

2,3,5-Trimethoxy-3',4'-methylenedioxychalcone (7m)—The general method was applied to a solution of acetopiperone (**15**) (0.13 g) and 2,3,5-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (**19k**) (0.15 g) in EtOH (2.2 ml) with 10% NaOH aq. (0.34 ml). Yellow needles (0.228 g), mp 127–128 °C (benzene–hexane). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₈O₆: C, 66.66; H, 5.30. Found: C, 66.71; H, 5.33. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 1655 (CO). ¹H-NMR³⁸ δ : 3.86 (6H, s, OCH₃ × 2), 3.88 (3H, s, OCH₃), 6.59 and 6.73 (each 1H, d, *J*=3.0 Hz, C₄- and C₆-H), 6.91 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.51 (1H, d, *J*=16.0 Hz, CH=CHCO), 7.54 (1H, d, *J*=2.0 Hz, C₂-H), 7.67 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H), 8.09 (1H, d, *J*=16.0 Hz, ArCH=CH).

General Method for Hydrocyanation of the Chalcone (7) [2,4-Bisaryl-4-oxobutyronitrile (8)]—The starting chalcone (**7**) was dissolved in a minimum amount of hot ethyl cellosolve (EtOCH₂CH₂OH) containing AcOH. An aqueous solution of KCN was added to the mixture at about 120 °C. The mixture was heated at the same temperature with monitoring by TLC, and finally poured into a large amount of water. The precipitate was collected by filtration and recrystallized from a suitable solvent.

2,4-Bis(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8a)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7a**) (11.0 g) in ethyl cellosolve (77 ml) containing AcOH (2.8 ml) with a solution of KCN (5.50 g) in H₂O (9.9 ml). The reaction time was 15 min. Slightly brown needles (11.0 g), mp 142–143 °C (EtOH) (lit.⁹ mp 141 °C). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2260 (CN), 1670 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.34 and 3.63 (each 1H, dd, *J*=17.5 and 7.0 Hz, CHCH₂CO), 4.45 (1H, t, *J*=7.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.96 and 6.04 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.70–6.94 (4H, m, arom. H), 7.38 (1H, d, *J*=2.0 Hz, C₂-H), 7.48 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H).

2-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8b)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7b**) (50.0 g) in ethyl cellosolve (200 ml) containing AcOH (11 ml) with a solution of KCN (23.5 g) in H₂O (75 ml). The reaction time was 20 min. Colorless leaflets (50.8 g), mp 146–148 °C (MeOH–CHCl₃) (lit. mp 144–146 °C;^{6a} mp 146 °C;^{8a} mp 145–146 °C^{8b}). IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2240 (CN), 1670 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.37 and 3.64 (each 1H, dd, *J*=17.0 and 7.0 Hz, CHCH₂CO), 3.86 and 3.89 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 4.48 (1H, t, *J*=7.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 6.01 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.81 (2H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅- and C₅-H), 6.90 (1H, s, C₂-H), 6.96 and 7.47 (each 1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 2.0 Hz, C₆- and C₆-H), 7.37 (1H, d, *J*=2.0 Hz, C₂-H).

2-(3,5-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8c)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7c**) (9.7 g) in ethyl cellosolve (75 ml) containing AcOH (3.04 ml) with a solution of KCN (4.58 g) in H₂O (12 ml). The reaction time was 15 min. Pale yellow plates (8.85 g), mp 81–84 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₇NO₅: C, 67.26; H, 5.03; N, 4.09. Found: C, 67.25; H, 5.05; N, 4.13. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2235 (CN), 1660 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.36 (1H, dd, *J*=18.0 and 7.0 Hz, CHCH₂CO), 3.63 (1H, dd, *J*=18.0 and 8.0 Hz, CHCH₂CO), 3.81 (6H, s, OCH₃ × 2), 4.46 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 7.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 6.03 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.37 (1H, t, *J*=1.5 Hz, C₄-H), 6.52 (2H, d, *J*=1.5 Hz, C₂- and C₆-H), 6.82 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.38 (1H, d, *J*=1.5 Hz, C₂-H), 7.47 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 1.5 Hz, C₆-H).

4-(3,4-Methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxo-2-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)butyronitrile (8d)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7d**) (10.0 g) in ethyl cellosolve (70 ml) containing AcOH (2.6 ml) with a solution of KCN (4.4 g) in H₂O (small amount). The reaction time was 15 min. Colorless needles (8.3 g), mp 132–134 °C (EtOH or EtOH–CHCl₃). *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₀H₁₉NO₆: C, 65.03; H, 5.19; N, 3.79. Found: C, 64.91; H, 5.19; N, 3.79. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2240 (CN), 1680 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.35 and 3.63 (each 1H, dd, *J*=17.5 and 6.5 Hz, CHCH₂CO), 3.80 (3H, s, OCH₃), 3.85 (6H, s, OCH₃ × 2), 4.47 (1H, t, *J*=6.5 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 6.02 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.59 (2H, s, C₂- and C₆-H), 6.82 (1H, d, *J*=8.0 Hz, C₅-H), 7.38 (1H, d, *J*=1.5 Hz, C₂-H), 7.49 (1H, dd, *J*=8.0 and 1.5 Hz, C₆-H).

2-(2-Methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8e)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7e**) (18.6 g) in ethyl cellosolve (450 ml) containing AcOH (3.9 ml) with a solution of KCN (7.45 g) in H₂O (30 ml). The reaction time was 15 min. Colorless prisms (18.2 g), mp 130—133.5 °C (EtOH–CHCl₃). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₅NO₆: C, 64.58; H, 4.28; N, 3.96. Found: C, 64.74; H, 4.37; N, 3.96. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2250 (CN), 1670 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.32 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 7.5 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.54 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 10.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.80 (3H, s, OCH₃), 4.64 (1H, dd, $J=10.0$ and 7.5 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.93 and 6.04 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.53 and 6.93 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.82 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.41 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C₂-H), 7.52 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H).

2-(4,5-Dibenzoyloxy-2-methoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8f)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7f**) (0.90 g) in ethyl cellosolve (12 ml) containing AcOH (0.5 ml) with a solution of KCN (1.40 g) in H₂O (2.7 ml). The reaction time was 30 min. Colorless needles (0.70 g), mp 133—134 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for C₃₁H₂₇NO₆: C, 73.69; H, 5.22; N, 2.69. Found: C, 73.63; H, 5.19; N, 2.56. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2230 (CN), 1672 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.25 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 6.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.48 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 9.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.75 (3H, s, OCH₃), 4.60 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.09 and 5.14 (each 2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.02 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.53 and 7.06 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.80 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.39 (12H, dif. s, arom. H).

2-(5-Benzoyloxy-2,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8g)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7g**) (40.5 g) in ethyl cellosolve (150 ml) containing AcOH (6.5 ml) with a solution of KCN (14.1 g) in H₂O (40 ml). The reaction time was 40 min. Colorless cotton-like needles (38.1 g), mp 105—108 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₇H₂₇NO₆: C, 70.27; H, 5.90; N, 3.04. Found: C, 70.53; H, 5.93; N, 3.04. IR $\nu_{\max}^{\text{CHCl}_3}$ cm⁻¹: 2240 (CN), 1670 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.32 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 6.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.54 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 8.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.81, 3.85, 3.88, and 3.91 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 4.62 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.04 (2H, s, OCH₂Ph), 6.49 and 7.02 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.83 (1H, d, $J=9.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.22—7.60 (7H, m, arom. H).

4-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8h)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7h**) (44.0 g) in ethyl cellosolve (600 ml) containing AcOH (8.8 ml) with a solution of KCN (16.7 g) in H₂O (40 ml). The reaction time was 2 h. Colorless needles (43.8 g), mp 156—158 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₀H₁₉NO₆: C, 65.03; H, 5.19; N, 3.79. Found: C, 64.77; H, 5.21; N, 3.91. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2250 (CN), 1665 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.37 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 6.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.59 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 7.5 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.79, 3.90, and 3.92 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 4.64 (1H, dd, $J=7.5$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.88 (2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.49 and 6.92 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.84 (1H, d, $J=8.5$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.47 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C₂-H), 7.48 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H).

4-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-oxo-2-(2,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)butyronitrile (8i)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7i**) (7.47 g) in ethyl cellosolve (30 ml) containing AcOH (1.44 ml) with a solution of KCN (2.71 g) in H₂O (10 ml). The reaction time was 50 min. Slightly brown needles (7.02 g), mp 154—156 °C (EtOH–CHCl₃). *Anal.* Calcd for C₂₁H₂₃NO₆: C, 65.44; H, 6.02; N, 3.63. Found: C, 65.07; H, 6.00; N, 3.55. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2250 (CN), 1680 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.40 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 6.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.62 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 8.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.84, 3.86, 3.89, 3.91, and 3.93 (each 3H, s, OCH₃), 4.68 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 6.54 and 7.01 (each 1H, s, C₃- and C₆-H), 6.87 (1H, d, $J=9.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.51 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C₂-H), 7.52 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H).

2-(2-Bromo-6-methoxy-3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8j)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7j**) (10.0 g) in ethyl cellosolve (100 ml) containing AcOH (2.2 ml) with a solution of KCN (4.40 g) in H₂O (8 ml). The reaction time was 30 min. Colorless needles (10.0 g), mp 144—146 °C (MeOH–benzene). *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₄BrNO₆: C, 52.79; H, 3.26; N, 3.24. Found: C, 53.03; H, 3.12; N, 3.49. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2250 (CN), 1682 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.25 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 6.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.90 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 9.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.90 (3H, s, OCH₃), 5.06 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 6.00 and 6.04 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.55 (1H, s, C₅-H), 6.84 (1H, d, $J=9.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.44 (1H, d, $J=1.5$ Hz, C₂-H), 7.55 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 1.5 Hz, C₆-H).

2-(5-Methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutyronitrile (8k)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7k**) (5.35 g) in ethyl cellosolve (18.7 ml) containing AcOH (1.1 ml) with a solution of KCN (2.13 g) in H₂O (7.7 ml). The reaction time was 2 h. Purification of the crude material by column chromatography on Al₂O₃ using benzene as a solvent followed by recrystallization from MeOH gave colorless prisms (4.51 g), mp 104—107 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for C₁₉H₁₅NO₆: C, 64.58; H, 4.28; N, 3.96. Found: C, 64.31; H, 4.30; N, 3.90. IR $\nu_{\max}$ cm⁻¹: 2245 (CN), 1680 (CO). ¹H-NMR δ : 3.46 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 7.0 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.68 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 7.5 Hz, CHCH_AH_BCO), 3.77 (3H, s, OCH₃), 4.54 (1H, dd, $J=7.5$ and 7.0 Hz, ArCHCH₂), 5.95 and 6.04 (each 2H, s, OCH₂O), 6.43, 6.45, and 7.43 (each 1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C₄-, C₆-, and C₂-H), 6.85 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C₅-H), 7.54 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C₆-H).

4-(3,4-Methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxo-2-(2,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)butyronitrile (8l)—The general method was applied to a solution of the chalcone (**7l**) (22.2 g) in ethyl cellosolve (88 ml) containing AcOH (4.4 ml) with a solution of KCN (8.4 g) in H₂O (22 ml). The reaction time was 1 h. Colorless prisms (19.7 g), mp 164—165 °C (MeOH–

CHCl_3). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_6$: C, 65.03; H, 5.19; N, 3.79. Found: C, 65.12; H, 5.23; N, 3.76. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 2260 (CN), 1680 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.35 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 6.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.58 (1H, dd, $J=17.5$ and 8.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.85, 3.87, and 3.90 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 4.66 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 6.02 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.53 and 6.99 (each 1H, s, C_3 - and C_6 -H), 6.82 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 7.40 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.51 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

General Method for Syntheses of the Keto-Amides (9) from the Keto-Nitriles (8)—Mixed acid [conc. H_2SO_4 -AcOH (1:3, v/v)] was added dropwise to a solution or suspension of the keto-nitrile (8) in AcOH at room temperature. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 20–30 min, then poured into a large quantity of water. The precipitate was collected by filtration and recrystallized from a suitable solvent to give the desired keto-amide (9).

2,4-Bis(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9a)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8a) (5.00 g) in AcOH (80 ml) with the mixed acid (6.8 ml). Colorless prisms (5.10 g), mp 169–171 °C (EtOH) (lit.⁹ mp 164 °C). IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3470, 3230 (NH_2), 1670, 1650 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$) δ : 3.04 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 4.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.60–4.10 (2H, m, $\text{ArCHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 5.96 and 6.10 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.75 (1H, brs, $\text{NH}(\text{H})$), 6.82 (2H, s, arom. H), 6.95 (1H, s, arom. H), 7.01 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 7.42 (1H, brs, $\text{NH}(\text{H})$), 7.44 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.64 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

2-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9b)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8b) (1.00 g) in AcOH (25 ml) with the mixed acid (1.89 ml). Colorless needles (1.11 g), mp 188–190 °C (EtOH- CHCl_3) (lit. mp 177 °C;^{8a}) mp 178–180 °C^{6a,8b}). IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3420, 3180 (NH_2), 1685, 1645 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.09 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 4.5 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.73–4.06³⁹) (1H, m, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.83 and 3.85 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 4.17 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 4.5 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.53 (2H, brs, NH_2), 5.97 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.70–6.96 (4H, m, arom. H), 7.40 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.56 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

2-(3,5-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9c)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8c) (12.0 g) in AcOH (83 ml). In this experiment, instead of the mixed acid, conc. H_2SO_4 (12 ml) was used. Colorless plates (9.97 g), mp 200–202 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_6$: C, 64.14; H, 5.39; N, 3.84. Found: C, 63.86; H, 5.36; N, 3.92. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3420, 3190 (NH_2), 1680sh, 1640 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ ($\text{DMSO}-d_6$) δ : 2.60–3.20 (1H, m $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.75–4.10 (2H, m, $\text{ArCHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.75 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 6.08 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.28 (1H, t, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_4 -H), 6.52 (2H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 - and C_6 -H), 6.66 and 7.31 (each 1H, dif. s, NH_2), 6.91 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 7.48 (1H, d, $J=1.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.52 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 1.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

4-(3,4-Methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxo-2-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)butylamide (9d)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8d) (28.2 g) in AcOH (200 ml) with the mixed acid (17 ml). Colorless needles (28.4 g), mp 202–203 °C (EtOH or CHCl_3 -MeOH). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_7$: C, 62.01; H, 5.46; N, 3.62. Found: C, 61.96; H, 5.51; N, 3.64. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3400, 3160 (NH_2), 1680, 1645 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.08 (1H, dd, $J=16.3$ and 3.8 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.81 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.83 (6H, s, $\text{OCH}_3 \times 2$), 3.75–4.25 (2H, m, $\text{ArCHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 5.63 (2H, brs, NH_2), 6.01 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.58 (2H, s, C_2 - and C_6 -H), 6.82 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 7.42 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.58 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

2-(2-Methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9e)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8e) (16.1 g) in AcOH (140 ml) with the mixed acid (10 ml). Recrystallization of the crude product from MeOH- CHCl_3 gave pure crystals (15.1 g). The dimorphism of this compound, colorless needles, mp 120–125 °C, and colorless prisms, mp 177–179 °C, was confirmed by a cross-seeding experiment. *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_7 \cdot 1/3\text{CHCl}_3$: C, 56.48; H, 4.25; N, 3.41. Found: C, 56.28; H, 4.08; N, 3.30. IR $\nu_{\text{max}}^{\text{CHCl}_3} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3540, 3425 (NH_2), 1680 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.06 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 4.4 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.81 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.90 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 8.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 4.56 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 4.4 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.30 and 5.85 (each 1H, m, NH_2), 5.89 and 6.01 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.53 (1H, s, C_3 -H), 6.81 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 6.84 (1H, s, C_6 -H), 7.44 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, C_2 -H), 7.60 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

2-(4,5-Dibenzyloxy-2-methoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9f)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8f) (0.25 g) in AcOH (2.5 ml) with the mixed acid (0.5 ml). Colorless plates (0.26 g), mp 165.5–167 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{32}\text{H}_{29}\text{NO}_7$: C, 71.23; H, 5.42; N, 2.60. Found: C, 71.26; H, 5.42; N, 2.56. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3450, 3240, 3190 (NH_2), 1679, 1650 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 2.94 (1H, dd, $J=16.5$ and 5.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.77 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.85 (1H, dd, $J=16.5$ and 9.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 4.52 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 5.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.07 and 5.14 (each 2H, s, OCH_2Ph), 5.30 and 5.75 (each 1H, brs, NH_2), 6.01 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.55 (1H, s, C_3 -H), 6.81 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 6.92 (1H, s, C_6 -H), 7.40 (11H, dif. s, arom. H), 7.55 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 2.0 Hz, C_6 -H).

2-(5-Benzyloxy-2,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9g)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (8g) (25.1 g) in AcOH (260 ml) with the mixed acid (12 ml). Colorless cotton-like needles (24.5 g), mp 142–144 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{29}\text{NO}_7$: C, 67.63; H, 6.10; N, 2.92. Found: C, 67.24; H, 6.07; N, 2.88. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3450, 3375, 3225 (NH_2), 1660 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.03 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 5.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.72–4.08³⁹) (1H, m, $\text{CHCH}_\text{A}\text{H}_\text{B}\text{CO}$), 3.84, 3.86, 3.88, and 3.92 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 4.54 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 5.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.03 (2H, s, OCH_2Ph), 5.32 and 5.74 (each 1H, brs, NH_2), 6.51 (1H, s, C_3 -H), 6.84 (1H, d, $J=8.0$ Hz, C_5 -H), 6.90 (1H, s, C_6 -H), 7.20–7.68 (7H, m, arom. H).

4-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxy-4,5-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9h)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (**8h**) (3.41 g) in AcOH (80 ml) with the mixed acid (1.9 ml). The collected precipitate was dissolved in CHCl_3 , and the solution was washed with sat. NaHCO_3 aq., dried over K_2CO_3 , and evaporated to dryness *in vacuo*. Recrystallization of the residue from $\text{MeOH}-\text{CHCl}_3$ gave colorless needles (3.55 g), mp 188–190 °C. *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{NO}_7$: C, 62.01; H, 5.46; N, 3.62. Found: C, 61.87; H, 5.47; N, 3.58. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3500, 3370 (NH_2), 1660 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.12 (1H, dd, $J=18.0$ and 5.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 3.80, 3.88, and 3.91 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 3.72–4.06³⁹⁾ (1H, m, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 4.57 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 5.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.44 and 5.85 (each 1H, br s, NH_2), 5.85 (2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.51 (1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-H}$), 6.83 (1H, s, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.84 (1H, d, $J=8.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.48 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-H}$), 7.62 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$).

4-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-4-oxo-2-(2,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)butylamide (9i)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (**8i**) (7.02 g) in AcOH (180 ml) with the mixed acid (3.9 ml). Colorless cotton-like needles (6.80 g), mp 186–188 °C ($\text{EtOH}-\text{CHCl}_3$). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{25}\text{NO}_7$: C, 62.52; H, 6.25; N, 3.47. Found: C, 62.23; H, 6.27; N, 3.44. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3455, 3350, 3240 (NH_2), 1670 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ δ : 3.14 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 6.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 3.56–4.12³⁹⁾ (1H, m, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 3.79, 3.82, 3.85, 3.87, and 3.90 (each 3H, s, OCH_3), 4.58 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 6.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 5.44 and 5.80 (each 1H, br s, NH_2), 6.49 (1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-H}$), 6.83 (1H, d, $J=9.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 6.86 (1H, s, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 7.47 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-H}$), 7.60 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$).

2-(2-Bromo-6-methoxy-3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9j)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (**8j**) (10.0 g) in AcOH (50 ml). In this experiment, instead of the mixed acid, conc. H_2SO_4 (5 ml) was used. The reaction time was 5 min. Colorless needles (8.99 g), mp 228–230 °C (dec.) (CHCl_3 –hexane). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{16}\text{BrNO}_7$: C, 50.68; H, 3.58; N, 3.11. Found: C, 50.36; H, 3.59; N, 3.04. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3490, 3375 (NH_2), 1690, 1680 (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ (CF_3COOH) δ : 3.50 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 5.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 3.88 (3H, s, OCH_3), 4.18 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 8.0 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 5.14 (1H, dd, $J=8.0$ and 5.0 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 6.05 and 6.09 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.66 (1H, s, $\text{C}_3\text{-H}$), 6.95 (1H, d, $J=9.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.51 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-H}$), 7.76 (1H, dd, $J=9.0$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$). MS m/z : 451 ($\text{M}^+ + 2$, 102.8% of M^+), 449 (M^+ , 11.2%), 149 (100%).

2-(5-Methoxy-2,3-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-(3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl)-4-oxobutylamide (9k)—The general method was applied to a solution of the keto-nitrile (**8k**) (4.51 g) in AcOH (36 ml) with the mixed acid (18 ml). Colorless prisms (3.47 g), mp 212 °C (EtOH). *Anal.* Calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_7$: C, 61.45; H, 4.61; N, 3.77. Found: C, 61.31; H, 4.55; N, 3.66. IR $\nu_{\text{max}} \text{ cm}^{-1}$: 3425, 3200 (NH_2), 1667, 1690sh (CO). $^1\text{H-NMR}$ ⁴⁰⁾ (CF_3COOH) δ : 3.98 (3H, s, OCH_3), 3.74 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 5.5 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 4.16 (1H, dd, $J=17.0$ and 8.2 Hz, $\text{CHCH}_A\text{H}_B\text{CO}$), 4.62 (1H, dd, $J=8.2$ and 5.5 Hz, ArCHCH_2), 6.04 and 6.10 (each 2H, s, OCH_2O), 6.62 and 6.68 (each 1H, d, $J=2.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_4\text{-}$ and $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$), 6.97 (1H, d, $J=8.5$ Hz, $\text{C}_5\text{-H}$), 7.53 (1H, d, $J=2.0$ Hz, $\text{C}_2\text{-H}$), 7.80 (1H, dd, $J=8.5$ and 2.0 Hz, $\text{C}_6\text{-H}$).

References and Notes

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- 19) A 70% solution of sodium bis(2-methoxyethoxy)aluminium hydride $[\text{NaAlH}_2(\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_3)_2]$ in benzene: Eastman Kodak Co., Ltd.
- 20) We also tried the oxidation of the alcohol (**29**) with Jones reagent. In the case of PDC, the desired benzaldehyde (**19d**) was obtained almost quantitatively, but in the case of Jones reagent, the yield of the desired product (**19d**) was decreased to 82.5% due to over-oxidation. For the oxidation of benzyl alcohols to the corresponding benzaldehydes, PDC is almost always the preferred reagent in our experience.
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Chart 6

- 31) Jones reagent was prepared by the addition of conc. H_2SO_4 (61 ml) to a solution of CrO_3 (70 g) in H_2O (500 ml).
- 32) Dilution and a large excess of MeMgI were absolutely necessary. Otherwise, the starting material (**19b**) was recovered as a co-precipitate with the resulting Grignard complex.
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- 38) This ^1H -NMR spectrum was recorded on a Hitachi R-24B machine (60 MHz) in CDCl_3 .
- 39) The precise splitting pattern of this signal could not be observed because of overlapping with the signals due to a methoxy group.
- 40) This material is sparingly soluble in various solvents. CF_3COOH had to be used as a solvent for the ^1H -NMR measurement. However, this material gradually decomposed in the solvent.