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Manzer

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(54) **SYNTHESIS OF ALKENOATE ESTERS
FROM LACTONES AND ALCOHOLS**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **560/205; 560/211; 560/214;**
560/217

(58) **Field of Search** 560/205, 211,
560/214, 217

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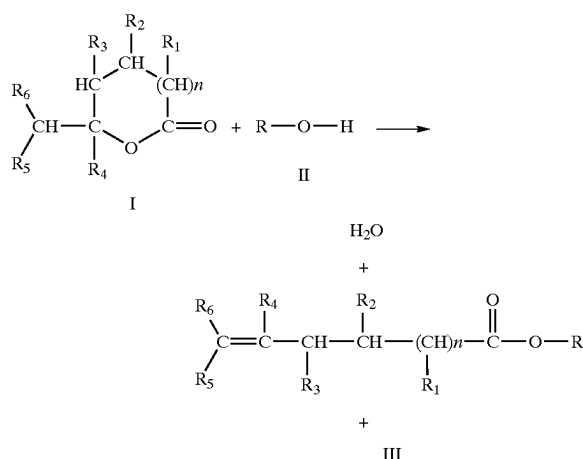
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to the synthesis of alkenoate esters from a corresponding lactone and an alcohol in the presence of a basic catalyst. More specifically, this invention relates to the synthesis of methyl-4-pentenoate ester from 5-methyl butyrolactone and methanol.

15 Claims, No Drawings

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wherein: $n=0-2$; $R_1, R_2, R_3,$ and R_4 taken independently are hydrogen, hydrocarbyl or substituted hydrocarbyl, C_1-C_{18} unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted alkenyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl containing at least one heteroatom, unsubstituted or substituted aryl, and unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl, R_5 and R_6 taken independently are hydrogen or alkyl with 1 to 5 carbon atoms, wherein the total number of carbons of R_5 and R_6 do not exceed 5, and R is alkyl with 1 to 6 carbon atoms.

This invention specifically relates to a process for preparing alkyl-4-pentenoate ester isomer in high yields by contacting gamma-valerolactone with alcohol in presence of heterogeneous basic catalyst in the temperature range of from about 250° C. to about 500° C.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The following abbreviations are used in the discussion that follows and are useful in understanding the meaning and scope of the invention.

“Alkyl” refers to an alkyl group up to and including 12 carbons. Common examples of alkyl groups include methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, s-butyl, isobutyl, pentyl, neopentyl, hexyl, heptyl, isoheptyl, 2-ethylhexyl, cyclohexyl and octyl.

“Aryl” refers to a group defined as a monovalent radical formed by removal of a hydrogen atom from a hydrocarbon that is structurally composed entirely of one or more benzene rings. Common examples of aryl groups include benzene, biphenyl, terphenyl, naphthalene, phenyl naphthalene, and naphthylbenzene.

“Heteroaryl” refers to unsaturated rings of 5 or 6 atoms containing one or two O and S atoms and/or one to four N atoms provided that the total number of hetero atoms in the ring is 4 or less, or bicyclic rings wherein the five or six membered ring containing O, S, and N atoms as defined above is fused to a benzene or pyridyl ring. Common examples are furan and thiophene.

“Hydrocarbyl” refers to monovalent groups of atoms containing only carbon and hydrogen, and may be chiral or achiral. Unless otherwise stated, it is preferred in the method of the invention that hydrocarbyl (and substituted hydrocarbyl) groups contain 1 to 30 carbon atoms.

“Substituted” refers to a group attached to a reactant containing one or more substituent groups that do not cause

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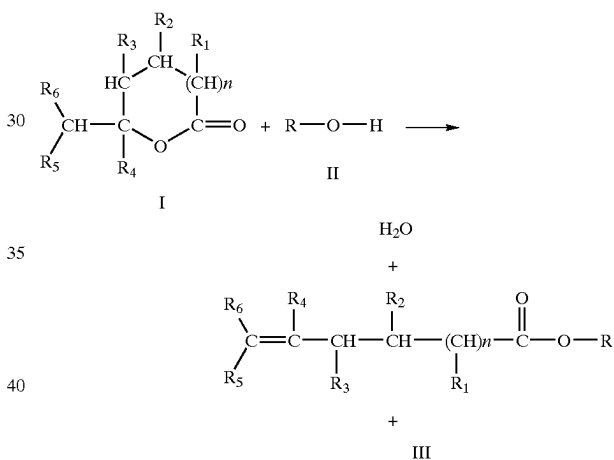
the compound to be unstable or unsuitable for the use of reaction intended. Substituent groups useful in the method of the invention include nitrile, ether, ester, halo, amino (including primary, secondary and tertiary amino), hydroxy, oxo, vinylidene or substituted vinylidene, silyl or substituted silyl, nitro, nitroso, sulfinyl, sulfonyl, sulfonic acid alkali metal salt, boranyl or substituted boranyl, and thioether groups.

“Distribution” refers to the weight percent of a particular methyl pentenoate ester in total amount of methyl pentenoate product.

“Selectivity” refers to the weight percent of a particular methyl pentenoate in the total product weight including the weight of unreacted reactants).

“Conversion” refers to the weight percent of a particular reactant that is converted to product.

The present invention provides a process for the preparation of one or more pentenoate esters and isomers thereof of a general Formula III comprising contacting at least one lactone of Formula I with at least one alcohol of Formula II, in the presence of a heterogeneous base catalyst to form a reaction mixture containing the corresponding isomers of alkenoate esters, as represented by the following reaction equation,



wherein: $n=0-2$; $R_1, R_2, R_3,$ and R_4 taken independently are hydrogen, hydrocarbyl or substituted hydrocarbyl, C_1-C_{18} unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted alkenyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl containing at least one heteroatom, unsubstituted or substituted aryl, and unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl, R_5 and R_6 taken independently are hydrogen or alkyl with 1 to 5 carbon atoms, wherein the total number of carbons of R_5 and R_6 do not exceed 5. R is alkyl with 1 to 6 carbon atoms.

In a preferred embodiment, $n=0$. More preferably, $n=0$ and $R_1, R_2, R_3,$ and $R_4,$ taken independently, are hydrogen or alkyl. In a further preferred embodiment, $n=0,$ and $R_1, R_2, R_3,$ and $R_4,$ taken independently, are hydrogen.

In another preferred embodiment, $n=0,$ and $R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5,$ and R_6 taken independently, are hydrogen. It is further preferred that where $n=0, R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5,$ and R_6 independently are hydrogen in the lactone precursor, the R group of the alcohol precursor is a methyl group. The unsaturated pentenoate esters that are produced by the instant process can be one particular compound or a mixture of isomers. In this particular embodiment, the lactone is gamma-valerolactone (Formula IV) (also known as gamma-

employed for continuous process (see for example, H. S. Fogler, Elementary Chemical Reaction Engineering, Prentice-Hall, Inc., N.J., USA). The condensate water formed as the product of the reaction is removed by separation methods customarily employed for such separations.

It will be appreciated that the selectivities and yields of product may be enhanced by additional contact with the catalyst. For example, yields and selectivities may be increased where the reactor effluent containing a mixture of reactant and product may be contacted additional times over the catalyst under the reaction conditions set forth herein to enhance the conversion of reactant to product.

The process of the instant invention may additionally comprise the recovery or isolation of one or more of the pentenoate esters. This can be done by any method known in the art, such as distillation, decantation, recrystallization, or extraction.

EXPERIMENTAL

Materials and Methods

The following abbreviations are used herein:

Magnesol®	magnesium silicate (registered trademark of The Dallas Group of America, Inc.
VL	gamma-valerolactone or 5-methyl-butylrolactone
MP	methyl pentenoate ester
M4P	methyl-4-pentenoate ester
t-M2P	trans-methyl-2-pentenoate ester
t-M3P	trans-methyl-3-pentenoate ester
c-M3P	cis-methyl-3-pentenoate ester
cc	cubic centimeters
Temp.	temperature
TOS	time on stream
Dist.	distribution
Sel.	selectivity
Conv.	conversion

The following procedure is illustrative of the procedure used to prepare base catalysts on silica supports. All metals were used as the acetate salts.

Procedure for Preparation of 20% Cesium on Silica

Cesium acetate (2.91 g; Sigma-Aldrich Corporation St. Louis, Mo.) was dissolved in H₂O (14 ml) and the solution was added dropwise into silica (8.07 g; W. R. Grace, Columbia, Md.; Grade 55, 12×20 mesh). The mixture was allowed to stand at room temperature for 2 hours and then the mixture was transferred into an alumina dish. The dish was placed in a horizontal quartz tube and purged with air. The supported catalyst was heated at 120° C. for 4 hours and then at 450° C. for 16 hours in a stream of air. The sample was then cooled to yield 9.87 g of 20% cesium on silica.

EXAMPLES 1-49

8 cc of catalyst was charged into a ½ inch outer diameter Inconel® (International Nickel Co. of Canada Ltd., Beamsville, Ontario, Canada) tubular reactor heated by a tube furnace. A (weight ratio of 50:50 methanol:VL) aqueous solution of gamma-valerolactone and methanol was pumped into the reactor at a flow rate of 2-6 ml/hr at a rate of 2 cc/hr. The reactor effluent was quenched in a cold solution of methanol (approximately 10° C.). The sample was then analyzed on a HP 5890 gas chromatograph using a flame ionization detector (with a RTX-1701 column 30 m×0.53 mm inner diameter from Restek Co., Bellefonte, Pa.). The detector was held at 50° C. for 3 minutes then heated to 165° C. at a rate of 30° C./min and held for 8 minutes. The selectivity and conversion were then calculated based on normalized area percents. The results are shown in Table 1 below. The table includes the percent VL converted, the percent selectivity to total pentenoate esters, and the distribution of the various pentenoate ester isomers in the total pentenoate esters.

TABLE 1

Ex. No.	Reaction Catalyst	Reaction							
		Temp. (° C.)	TOS (hrs)	% VL Conv.	% MP Sel.	% M4P Dist.	% t-M2P Dist.	% t-M3P Dist.	% c-M3P Dist.
1.	Magnesol	300	1	62.9	72.7	48.0	13.4	24.5	14.1
2.	Magnesol	325	0.5	64.1	76.3	43.6	15.9	25.6	14.9
3.	Magnesol	325	1	68.6	75.8	43.9	15.8	25.5	14.8
4.	Magnesol	350	1	85.5	72.8	40.4	18.7	25.7	15.3
5.	Magnesol	375	1	97.4	64.0	39.9	21.3	24.3	14.5
6.	Magnesol	400	1	99.3	44.5	38.9	23.5	23.6	14.1
7.	15% CsOAc/SiO ₂	300	1	58.5	77.3	96.0	1.7	1.4	0.9
8.	15% CsOAc/SiO ₂	325	1	62.8	93.7	93.9	2.5	2.2	1.3
9.	15% CsOAc/SiO ₂	350	1	69.1	95.5	90.7	3.7	3.5	2.1
10.	15% CsOAc/SiO ₂	375	1	70.3	94.0	84.0	6.3	6.1	3.6
11.	15% CsOAc/SiO ₂	425	1.5	95.5	37.2	61.2	14.0	14.4	8.7
12.	20% CsOAc/SiO ₂	300	1	24.8	53.6	90.5	5.0	4.5	0.0
13.	20% CsOAc/SiO ₂	325	1	27.7	51.4	73.1	8.8	10.7	7.4
14.	20% CsOAc/SiO ₂	350	1	31.1	49.2	60.6	14.8	15.7	8.9
15.	20% CsOAc/SiO ₂	375	1	29.5	35.8	50.6	18.1	19.8	11.5
16.	20% CsOAc/SiO ₂	425	1	42.9	19.4	44.8	19.0	21.9	13.3

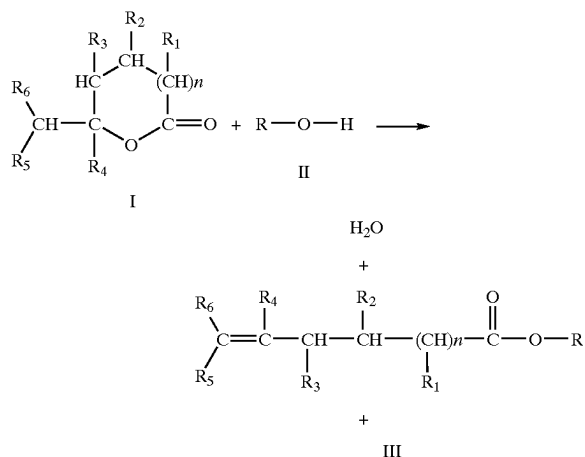
TABLE 1-continued

Ex. No.	Catalyst	Reaction							
		Temp. (° C.)	TOS (hrs)	% VL Conv.	% MP Sel.	% M4P Dist.	% t-M2P Dist.	% t-M3P Dist.	% c-M3P Dist.
17.	15% RbOAc/SiO ₂	300	1	23.4	26.4	90.4	4.7	4.9	0.0
18.	15% RbOAc/SiO ₂	325	1	26.7	29.3	72.3	10.7	10.1	7.0
19.	15% RbOAc/SiO ₂	350	1.5	30.5	27.4	54.4	15.1	19.1	11.4
20.	15% RbOAc/SiO ₂	375	1	29.4	28.8	50.7	17.0	20.6	11.7
21.	15% RbOAc/SiO ₂	425	1	34.5	18.8	38.3	20.7	25.5	13.7
22.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	300	1	49.6	14.3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
23.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	325	1	52.9	17.4	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
24.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	350	1.5	48.2	35.9	64.6	12.9	13.5	9.0
25.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	375	1	45.4	44.7	57.9	14.5	16.9	10.8
26.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	425	1	44.7	34.4	43.9	18.0	23.0	14.1
27.	15% KOAc/SiO ₂	475	1	68.0	21.1	41.9	17.5	24.5	14.5
28.	15% NaOAc/SiO ₂	300	1	40.8	55.5	92.1	3.9	4.0	0.0
29.	15% NaOAc/SiO ₂	325	1	39.1	62.3	82.0	6.9	6.9	4.2
30.	15% NaOAc/SiO ₂	350	1	38.8	66.5	71.6	11.0	10.8	6.6
31.	15% NaOAc/SiO ₂	375	1	44.6	64.7	65.4	12.8	13.6	8.2
32.	15% NaOAc/SiO ₂	425	1	65.7	22.4	40.8	20.9	24.8	12.2
33.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	300	1	55.4	90.8	92.7	3.1	2.6	1.6
34.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	325	1	57.2	93.1	90.4	3.9	3.6	2.1
35.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	350	1	64.8	94.7	86.1	5.5	5.3	3.1
36.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	375	1	58.4	90.1	80.0	7.9	7.6	4.6
37.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	425	1	89.6	67.1	61.8	14.3	14.9	9.0
38.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	325	0.5	57.9	91.6	90.7	3.8	3.4	2.1
39.	15% Ba(OAc) ₂ /SiO ₂	325	6	57.0	90.9	91.1	3.5	3.3	2.0
40.	15% Mg(OAc) ₂ -4H ₂ O/SiO ₂	300	1	60.9	92.2	65.9	12.2	14.1	7.8
41.	15% Mg(OAc) ₂ -4H ₂ O/SiO ₂	325	1	63.0	89.5	60.5	14.0	16.3	9.2
42.	15% Mg(OAc) ₂ -4H ₂ O/SiO ₂	350	1	69.1	86.1	56.8	15.3	17.6	10.3
43.	15% Mg(OAc) ₂ -4H ₂ O/SiO ₂	375	1	77.0	82.9	54.2	16.2	18.5	11.1
44.	15% Mg(OAc) ₂ -4H ₂ O/SiO ₂	425	1	96.4	49.9	48.0	19.8	20.1	12.1
45.	15% Ca(OAc) ₂ -H ₂ O/SiO ₂	300	1	55.5	89.9	89.7	3.9	4.0	2.3
46.	15% Ca(OAc) ₂ -H ₂ O/SiO ₂	325	1	61.6	92.4	88.8	4.2	4.4	2.6
47.	15% Ca(OAc) ₂ -H ₂ O/SiO ₂	350	1	61.3	92.1	86.0	5.3	5.4	3.3
48.	15% Ca(OAc) ₂ -H ₂ O/SiO ₂	375	1	68.8	90.7	83.2	6.3	6.5	4.0
49.	15% Ca(OAc) ₂ -H ₂ O/SiO ₂	425	1	85.5	62.2	75.7	9.3	9.4	5.6

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What is claimed is:

1. A process for preparing alkyl alkenoate ester represented by Formula III, comprising contacting a lactone of Formula I with an alkanol of Formula II in the presence of a heterogeneous base catalyst, the base catalyst being optionally supported on a catalyst support, to form the corresponding alkyl alkenoate ester,



wherein:

n=0-2;

R₁, R₂, R₃, and R₄, independently are hydrogen, hydrocarbyl or substituted hydrocarbyl, C₁-C₁₈ unsubstituted or substituted alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted alkenyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl, unsubstituted or substituted cycloalkyl containing at least one heteroatom, unsubstituted or substituted aryl, and unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl;

R₅ and R₆ taken independently are hydrogen or alkyl with 1 to 5 carbon atoms, wherein the total number of carbons of R₅ and R₆ do not exceed 5; and

R is alkyl with 1 to 6 carbon atoms.

2. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein n=0 and R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄, R₅, and R₆, taken independently, are hydrogen.

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3. The process as recited in claim 2 wherein R is a methyl group.

4. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein the lactone is gamma-valerolactone and the alkanol is methanol.

5. The process as recited in claim 1 or claim 4 wherein the ratio of weight content of the lactone to the alkanol is in the range of from 1/100 to 100/1.

6. The process as recited in claim 1 or claim 4 wherein the ratio of weight content of the lactone to the alkanol is in range of from 40/60 to 60/40.

7. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein the base catalyst is selected from the group consisting of metal silicates, metal carbonates, metal oxides, metal hydroxides, metal phosphates, metal aluminates or combinations thereof.

8. A process as recited in claim 1 wherein the base catalyst is selected from the group consisting of Group 1, Group 2 or rare earth silicates; Group 1, Group 2 or rare earth oxides; Group 1, Group 2 or rare earth carbonates; and combinations thereof.

9. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein the process is performed at a temperature in the range of from 250° C. to 500° C.

10. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein the process is performed at a temperature in the range of from 325° C. to 400° C.

11. The process as recited in claim 6 wherein said metal is selected from the group consisting of barium, cesium, rubidium and magnesium.

12. The process as recited in claim 7 wherein the base catalyst content is of from about 1% to about 30% by weight of the reactants.

13. The process as recited in claim 7 wherein the base catalyst content is of from about 10% to about 25% by weight of the reactants.

14. The process as recited in claim 7 wherein the base catalyst content is of from about 12% to about 22% by weight of the reactants.

15. The process as recited in claim 1 wherein the process is performed in a vapor phase.

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