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**Synthesis of Spiro-Ketal Pheromones\****Živorad Čeković and Jovan Bošnjak**Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Belgrade,  
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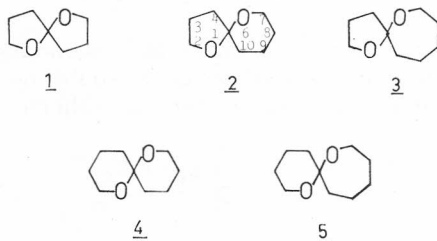
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Pheromones possessing a spiro-ketal skeleton, such as 2-ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonane (chalcogran) and 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane, were synthesized by silver oxide-bromine and by lead tetraacetate oxidation of 1,7- and 1,8-nanediols, respectively.

Since the identification of 2-ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]-nonane as the principal aggregation pheromone of the bark beetle *Pityogenes chalcographus* L (in 1977),<sup>1</sup> five different systems (1—5) possessing spiro-ketal skeleton have been found in insects, and fully characterized.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the interest in the isolation, structure elucidation and synthesis of spiro-ketal pheromones has been permanently increasing<sup>2-7</sup> and the following types of spiro-ketal pheromones have been discovered: 1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonanes 1,<sup>1,5,8</sup> 1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decanes 2,<sup>9-11</sup> 1,6-dioxaspiro[4,6]undecanes 3,<sup>3</sup> 1,7-dioxaspiro[5,5]undecanes 4,<sup>6,8,10</sup> and 1,7-dioxaspiro[5,6]dodecanes 5.<sup>12</sup>



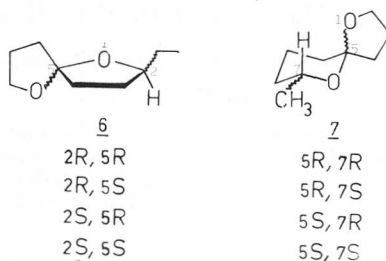
All hitherto known pheromones possessing spiro-ketal moiety contain unbranched carbon skeletons usually consisting of nine, eleven or thirteen carbon atoms, thus showing close relationships to a large number of other

\* Dedicated to Professor Mihailo Lj. Mihailović on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

pheromones which presumably derive from fatty acids.<sup>13</sup> Most of these compounds appear as mixtures of enantiomers, diastereomers or geometrical enantiomers.

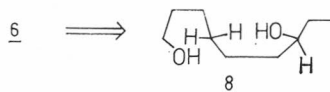
The spiro-ketal moiety plays a very important role as a structural element not only of insect pheromones,<sup>2</sup> but also of many other biologically active natural products, such as polyether antibiotics,<sup>14</sup> hence, new and efficient synthetic methods for the construction of such skeletons are becoming increasingly important.<sup>2,5-7</sup>

In this paper we wish to report a new and facile method for the construction of spiro-ketal pheromones of type 1 and 2 by silver oxide-bromine and by lead tetraacetate oxidation of the corresponding diols. By applying this methodology we decided to prepare the following two spiro-ketal insect pheromones: 2-ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonane named — chalcogran 6, known as the principal aggregation pheromone of *Pityogenes chalcographus* L,<sup>1,5,15</sup> and 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane 7, a common wasp pheromone from *Paravespula vulgaris* L.<sup>9,16,17</sup>



Spiro-ketal pheromones of type 1 and 2, deriving from an unbranched aliphatic chain, suggest that bifunctional compounds may be used as synthetic precursors of the 1,6-dioxaspiro skeleton function, which could be formed by intramolecular regioselective double functionalization of the  $\delta$ -carbon atom. It is known that cyclic ether functional group can be easily introduced by lead tetraacetate or silver oxide-bromine oxidation of aliphatic alcohols.<sup>18-21</sup> Since these oxidative cyclizations of alcohols to cyclic ethers are simple and mild reactions, we used them as the key synthetic step in the synthesis of spiro-ketal pheromones 6 and 7.

By applying these reactions to primary and secondary diols, *e. g.* 1,7-nonanediol, a spiro-ketal pheromone-chalcogran 6 could be prepared in several steps from easily available starting materials (Scheme 1).

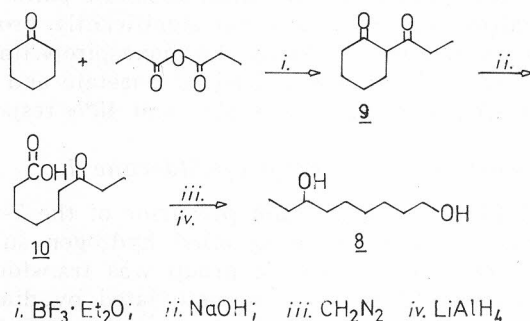


Scheme 1.

#### *i. Synthesis of 2-Ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonane-Chalcogran 6*

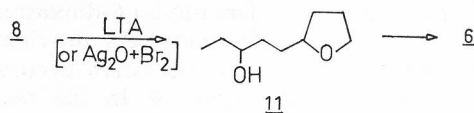
As already pointed out, the synthetic precursor in our methodology for the construction of the 2-ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonane 6 was 1,7-nonanediol 8. The diol 8 was obtained by the reduction of methyl 7-ketononanoate with

lithiumaluminium hydride. 7-Ketononanoic acid **10**, was prepared by the ring opening of 2-propionyl cyclohexanone **9** with sodium hydroxide.<sup>22</sup> This cleavage reaction was followed by esterification of the keto-acid **10** to the corresponding methyl ester. 2-Propionyl cyclohexanone **9** was prepared by acylation of cyclohexanone with propionic acid anhydride in the presence of an excess of borontrifluoride etherate (Scheme 2).<sup>23</sup>

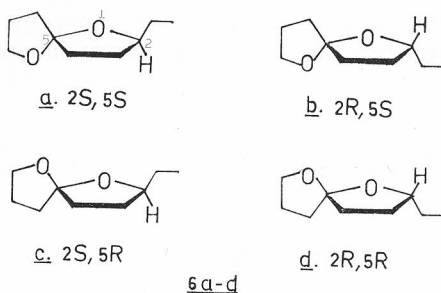


Scheme 2.

The key step in our approach to spiro-ketal skeleton synthesis is the spiroketalisation of 1,7-nonanediol **8** by silver oxide-bromine or by lead tetraacetate oxidation. The bicyclic ether ring closure occurs successively. The rate of cyclization of a primary alcoholic group to a monosubstituted tetrahydrofuran was found to be several times higher than that of a secondary hydroxylic group.<sup>18,19</sup> The progress of the reaction of lead tetraacetate with 1,7-nonanediol **8** was monitored by gas chromatography. It was expected that also in this case the oxidation of the primary hydroxyl group would be much faster than that of the secondary one, and that the detection of the intermediary tetrahydrofuran derivative **11** might be possible. However, no full selective oxidation of the primary hydroxyl group was achieved, because the alkoxy radical generated from the secondary hydroxyl group reacts with the



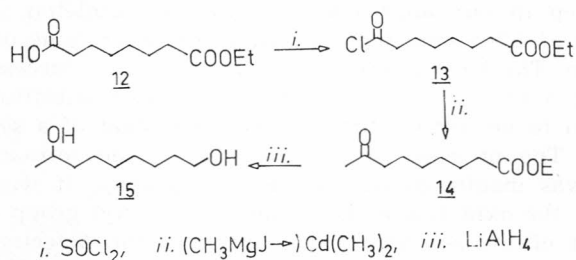
Scheme 3.



activated C—H bond, adjacent to ether oxygen, thus forming a spiro-ketal bicyclic ether **6**. The ether oxygen atom activates the adjacent C—H bond and the abstraction of such hydrogen is a preferable reaction of the intermediary alkoxy radical.<sup>24</sup> In the first cyclization reaction, equal amounts of the two diastereomeric pairs of 2-(3-hydroxypentyl)-tetrahydrofuran **11** were obtained. In the second cyclization step, the stereochemical difference between the two transition states, deriving from diastereomeric pairs of alkoxy radical generated from hydroxy-ether **11**, was not significantly pronounced, so that a mixture of four diastereomeric 2-ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonanes **6a-d** was obtained. The yield of chalcogran **6** in lead tetraacetate and silver oxide-bromine oxidations of 1,7-nonanediol **8** was 61% and 48% respectively.

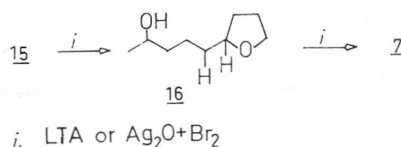
### ii. Synthesis of 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane **7**

1,8-Nonanediol **15**, as an open chain precursor of the 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane was prepared by using ethyl hydrogen suberate **12** as the starting material.<sup>25</sup> The free carboxylic group was transformed to the corresponding acyl chloride **13**, which was methylated by dimethyl cadmium<sup>26</sup> and ethyl 8-ketononanoate **14** was obtained in a fair yield. The keto-ester **14** was reduced by lithiumaluminium hydride and 1,8-nonanediol **15** was obtained (Scheme 4).



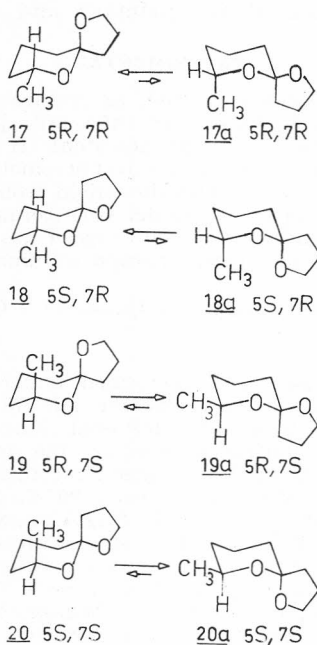
Scheme 4.

By treatment of 1,8-nonanediol **15**, either with silver oxide-bromine reagent or with lead tetraacetate, the 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane was obtained in 49% and 60% yields, respectively. As previously discussed, the formation of spiro-ketal moiety involves a successive cyclization to the intermediary 2-(4-hydroxypentyl)-tetrahydrofuran **16**. In the reaction of hydroxy-ether **16** with oxidants, the 1,6-transfer of hydrogen, adjacent to the ether oxygen, to the radicalic oxygen is energetically more favourable than hydrogen abstraction from the non-activated carbon atom in position 1 of the side chain of the intermediate **16**; thus, the six-membered cyclic ether ring is closed (Scheme 5).<sup>21,24</sup>



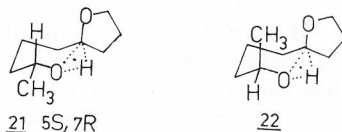
Scheme 5.

Due to the presence of two chiral carbon atoms (positions 5 and 7), 7-methyl-1,6-dioxyspiro[4,5]decane can exist in two diastereomeric pairs, 17—20, which can be in equilibrium with their four conformational isomers 17a—20a. The most favourable are the conformers possessing the equatorial methyl group in position 7 (17, 18, 19a and 20a). The axial ether oxygen in position 1 (e.g. 17 and 20a) is preferred by 3.35 kJ/mole, since the equatorial oxygen (e.g. in 18 and 19a) may cause a considerable polar interaction between the two oxygen atoms.<sup>27,28</sup> From these considerations it follows that the isomer 17 (with 5R and 7R configuration) and its energetical equivalent 20a (with 5S and 7S configuration) are the most stable conformers. The conformer 18 (having 5S and 7R configuration) is enantiomeric and energetically equivalent to the conformer 19a (with 5R and 7S configuration), but they are less stable (by about 3.35 kJ/mole) than the isomers 17 and 20a, having the oxygen atom



in position 1 in equatorial orientation. The isomers 19 and 20 and their energetical equivalents 18a and 17a are not favourable because of a strong 1,3-diaxial interaction between the methyl group and ether oxygen (1) in 19 and 18a and between the methyl group and methylene (4) in 20 and 17a.

The transition state for the intramolecular 1,6-hydrogen abstraction of type 21 (5S,7R) leading to the tetrahydropyran ring closure, is preferable when the methyl group is in a quasi-equatorial position and isomers 17 (5R,7R) and 20a (5S,7S) can easily be formed. Quite similar transition states are involved when enantiomers 18 and 19a are formed. However, the transition state of type 22, in which the methyl group is in a quasi-axial position, is unfavourable and isomers 19 and 20 cannot be formed; and only their conformational isomers may be present in the reaction mixture. By the Dreiding model inspection and by applying the conformational parameters on final



products and transition states, we assumed that in both applied reactions the diastereomers 17 and 20 predominate, while the formations of isomers 18 and 19a are less favourable.

This approach to the synthesis of 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane can be also applied to the preparation of other spiro-ketals of type 2, possessing an alkyl substituent in position 7; however, spiro-ketals of the same skeleton but with an alkyl group in position 2, *i. e.* attached to the five-membered cyclic ether ring, cannot be prepared by this sequence of reactions because of different oxidation rates of the primary and the secondary hydroxylic groups.

#### EXPERIMENTAL

Boling points have not been corrected, IR spectra (CCl<sub>4</sub> solution, if not stated otherwise) were taken on a Perkin-Elmer Infracord spectrophotometer, model 337 (only strong and characteristic bands are indicated). <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra were recorded on a Varian FT-80A (80 mHz in CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectrophotometer with TMS as the internal standard; shifts are given in ppm values downfield from TMS. Gas chromatography was performed on a Varian apparatus, model 1400 (column, 10% XE-60, 2 m × 2 mm at 70–200 °C, temperature gradient 6 °C/min, carrier gas H<sub>2</sub>), while separations were performed on a Varian 90-P gas chromatograph (column, XE-60, 2 m × 5 mm).

#### *i. Synthesis of 2-Ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nonane - Chalcogarn*

##### *2-Propionyl cyclohexanone 9*

Acylation of cyclohexanone was performed under acidic conditions.<sup>23</sup> A cold mixture of 29.5 g (0.3 mole) of cyclohexanone and 78.1 g (0.6 mole) of propionic acid anhydride was added from an additional funnel to cold borontrifluoride etherate (84.8 g, 0.6 mole) during 5 minutes, the temperature of the reaction mixture being kept below 10 °C. The reaction mixture was stirred for additional 4 hrs and the temperature allowed to reach 20 °C. Hydrolysis was carried out by pouring the reaction mixture into 1.2 l of 13% aqueous sodium acetate solution. Ether was removed by distillation under reduced pressure, and the mixture was then heated to reflux for 30 min. The mixture was then treated with sodium bicarbonate and extracted with petrolether (40–70 °C). The organic layer was washed successively with aqueous saturated sodium bicarbonate and water, and then dried over anhydrous MgSO<sub>4</sub>. Petrolether was removed by distillation in vacuo and the residue was distilled at 123–125 °C/22 mm Hg, giving 27 g (58%) of 2-propionyl cyclohexanone. Satisfactory IR and NMR spectra were obtained.

##### *7-Ketononanoic acid 10<sup>22</sup>*

A mixture containing 88 ml of 5% aqueous sodium hydroxide (4.4 g, 0.11 mole) and 15.4 g (0.1 mole) of 2-propionyl cyclohexanone was stirred and refluxed during 2 hrs. The cold reaction mixture was acidified with conc. hydrochloric acid and saturated with sodium chloride. From a white suspension the keto-acid 10 was extracted with ether (3 × 30 ml), and the ethereal solution was washed with water and dried. The solvent was removed by distillation under reduced pressure and the oily residue was distilled in vacuo (7-ketononanoic acid boils at 150–151 °C/2 mm Hg). The yield of the keto-acid 10 was 10.5 g (61%). Satisfactory spectral data were obtained.

##### *Methyl 7-ketononanoate*

A solution of 8.6 g (0.05 mole) of 7-ketononanoic acid dissolved in 10 ml of ether was treated with dry ethereal solution of diazomethane until the solution

became pale yellow. The excess of diazomethane and ether was removed by distillation in vacuo and the ester was then distilled at 106–108 °C/2 mm Hg. Methyl 7-ketononanoate was obtained in quantitative yield. IR (film): 2925, 2850, 1730, 1705, 1455, 1430, 1410, 1355, 1250, 1190, 1170, 1110 and 1010  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; NMR  $\delta$ : 0.95 (3H, t), 1.25–1.75 (6H, m), 2.10–2.50 (6H, m), 3.60 (3H, s).

Methyl 7-ketononanoate was also obtained directly from 2-propionyl cyclohexanone by using sodium methoxide as the base for the cyclohexanone ring opening. The yield of methyl 7-ketononanoate was also satisfactory, but its purification was troublesome.

#### 1,7-Nonanediol 8

To a suspension of 0.4 g of lithium-aluminum hydride in 50 ml of dry ether, a solution of 1.88 g (0.01 mole) of methyl 7-ketononanoate in 20 ml of dry ether was added from the dropping funnel during 15 min. The mixture was then heated to reflux with stirring for 2 hrs. The cold mixture was then successively treated with 0.5 ml of ethyl acetate, 5 ml of cold water and 10% sulfuric acid to make the mixture acidic. Ethereal solution was separated and water solution was extracted with ether (5  $\times$  25 ml). Combined ethereal solutions were then washed with water, aqueous sodium bicarbonate and dried over anhydrous  $\text{MgSO}_4$ . Ether was removed in vacuo and the oily residue was distilled at 134–135 °C/2 mm Hg. The yield of 1,7-nonanediol 8 was 1.4 g (75%). IR (film): 3320, 2910, 2840, 1450, 1430, 1370, 1110, 1050, 955  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; NMR:  $\delta$  0.90 (3H, t), 1.25–1.70 (10H, m) 3.25–3.50 (2H, b), 3.55–3.70 (3H, m).

#### 2-Ethyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,4]nanone — Chalcogram 6a-d

##### i. By Lead Tetraacetate

A heterogeneous mixture containing 11.0 g (0.022 mole) of lead tetraacetate (92% purity), 2.2 g of dry calcium carbonate, 40 ml of dry benzene and 1.6 g (0.01 mole) of 1,7-nonanediol was stirred under reflux during 4.5 hrs. The formation of the intermediary ether 11 and the final product 6 was controlled by gas chromatography, while the consumption of lead tetraacetate was checked by the KI-starch testing paper. The cold mixture was filtered off and the precipitated salts were washed with ether. Combined solutions were washed with aqueous saturated sodium bicarbonate and water, and then dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. Ether was removed by distillation while the residue was analyzed and separated by gas chromatography. The chalcogram 6, was obtained in 61% yield. IR: 2960, 2920, 2870, 1460, 1440, 1380, 1345, 1240, 1175, 1155, 1115, 1050, 1020, 960, 930, 920, 870 and 830  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; NMR  $\delta$ : 0.92 (3H, t), 1.25–1.70 (4H, m), 1.80–2.15 (6H, m), and 3.75–4.19 (3H, m).

##### ii. By Silver Oxide-Bromine Reagent

To a heterogeneous mixture containing 1.6 g (0.01 mole) of 1,7-nonanediol 8, 9.7 g (0.042 mole) of freshly prepared silver oxide and 40 ml of *n*-pentane, a solution of 6.4 g (0.04 mole) of bromine in 20 ml of *n*-pentane was slowly added (about 1.2 hrs) under vigorous stirring. When the addition of bromine solution was over, the mixture was stirred at room temperature for further 1.5 hrs. The precipitated silver salts were filtered off and the precipitate washed with *n*-pentane. The filtrate and the washing were united and washed successively with water, aqueous sodium thiosulfate and aqueous sodium bicarbonate, and then dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The solvent was carefully removed by distillation through an efficient column and the residue analyzed and purified by gas chromatography, as described previously. The yield of chalcogram 6a–d was 48%.

##### ii. Synthesis of 7-Methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane 7

##### Ethyl Hydrogen Suberate 12<sup>25</sup>

The mixture of 17.4 g (0.1 mole) of suberic acid, 13.3 g (0.058 mole) of diethyl suberate, 10 ml of di-*n*-butyl ether, 2.5 ml of conc. hydrochloric acid and 8 ml of ethyl alcohol (95%) was refluxed for 5 hrs. The course of the reaction was monitored by TLC. When equilibrium was reached, the reaction mixture was cooled

to room temperature, and ether (100 ml) was added. The ethereal solution was washed with saturated aqueous sodium bicarbonate in order to remove acidic compounds. The alkaline solution, containing sodium ethyl suberate and di-sodium suberate, was acidified with dilute hydrochloric acid and extracted by ether. The ethereal solution was washed with water and dried. After removal of ether, the semi-solid residue was purified on silica gel (0.063—0.200 mesh) column by using chloroform as eluent. We obtained 10.8 g (53%) of pure ethyl hydrogen suberate, m. p. 25 °C, (b. p. 192 °C/17 mm Hg), displaying satisfactory spectral data.

#### *Ethyl Suberoyl Chloride 13*

To a solution of 10.8 g (0.044 mole) of ethyl hydrogen suberate in petrolether (40—70 °C) (50 ml), freshly distilled thionyl chloride (5.95 g, 0.05 mole) was added and the mixture was heated on a water bath to reflux gently for 20 hrs. The petrolether and the excess of thionyl chloride were removed by distillation under reduced pressure. It was shown by IR that the free carboxyl group was completely transformed into the corresponding acyl chloride, which was used in the following step without further purification.

#### *Ethyl 8-ketononanoate 14<sup>26</sup>*

To a solution of methyl magnesium iodide [prepared from 1.7 g (0.07 g/mole) of magnesium turnings and 10.9 (0.07 mole) of methyl iodide] cooled to -5 °C, 8.2 g (0.045 mole) of anh. cadmium chloride was added at once, in an inert atmosphere and with constant stirring. When the exothermic reaction ceased, the ice-bath was removed and ether was removed by distillation under reduced pressure. The oily residue was dissolved in dry benzene by gentle heating and stirring. When the oil was dissolved, the heating was stopped and a solution of ethyl suberoyl chloride (from previous step) in dry benzene was added from a dropping funnel. When the exothermic reaction ceased, the reaction mixture was heated for 1 h to reflux gently. To the cooled mixture, a solution of cold dilute sulfuric acid was added and the aqueous solution was extracted by benzene and the solution dried by anh. magnesium sulfate. After removal of solvents the oily residue was distilled under reduced pressure. The fraction collected at 132—135 °C/10 mm Hg was pure ketoester 14; 7 g (70%) were obtained. IR (film): 2920, 2840, 1725, 1710, 1450—1400, 1360, 1290, 1250, 1170, 1080, 1020, 850, 810, 710 cm<sup>-1</sup>. NMR:  $\delta$  1.20 (3H, t), 1.25—1.75 (8H, m), 2.10 (3H, s), 2.10—2.50 (4H, m), 3.95—4.25 (2H, q).

#### *1,8-Nonanediol 15*

Ethyl 8-ketononanoate 14 (5 g, 0.025 mole) was reduced with lithiumaluminium hydride (1.45 g) in dry ether. By distillation 3.7 g (92%) of 1,8-nonanediol was obtained, b. p. 142—145 °C/15 mm Hg. IR (film): 3300, 2910, 2840, 1450, 1365, 1050 cm<sup>-1</sup>. NMR:  $\delta$  1.15 (3H, d), 1.20—1.70 (12H, m), 2.20 (2H), 3.45—3.70 (3H, m).

#### *7-Methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro[4,5]decane 7*

##### *i. By Silver Oxide-Bromine Reagent*

To a suspension of 1.6 g (0.01 mole) of 1,8-nonanediol and 10.2 g of silver oxide (freshly prepared) in 75 ml of *n*-pentane, 7.4 g (2.3 ml) of bromine in 20 ml of *n*-pentane was added from a dropping funnel during 3 hrs at room temperature with stirring of the mixture. After the bromine solution was added, the stirring of the mixture was continued for additional 1.5 hrs. The mixture was then filtered and the filtrate was successively washed with aqueous sodium thio-sulfate, sodium bicarbonate solution and water, and then it was dried with anh. MgSO<sub>4</sub>. Pentane was removed by distillation and the residue was purified by gas chromatography (column XE-60, 2 m). IR: 2930, 2860, 1450, 1435, 1370, 1365, 1350, 1305, 1280, 1265, 1210, 1150, 1105, 1075, 1035, 1005, 970, 935, 905, 890, 855 cm<sup>-1</sup>. NMR:  $\delta$  1.20—1.90 (13H, m) and 3.50—3.90 (3H, m). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>): 20.41, 23.80, 25.39, 33.59, 37.76, 61.31, 66.98 and 105.67 ppm.



## ii. By Lead Tetraacetate

A mixture containing 1.0 g (0.006 mole) of 1,8-nonanediol, 5.8 g (0.012 mole +10% excess) of lead tetraacetate in 30 ml of dry benzene was refluxed during 6 hrs with stirring, by which time the oxidant was completely consumed. The mixture was treated as described above. The yield of 7-methyl-1,6-dioxaspiro-[4,5]-decane was 60%. The spectral data were identical with those obtained from the mixture prepared by the silver oxide-bromine oxidation of diol 15.

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**IZVOD****Sinteze spiro-ketalnih feromona**

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Izvršene su sinteze nekih feromona koji sadrže spiro-ketalnu strukturu. Feromon izolovan iz insekta *Pityogenes chalcografus* L, 2-etil-1,6-dioksaspiro[4,4]nonan, sintetizovan je reakcijom 1,7-nonadiola sa srebro-oskid-bromnim reagensom ili s olovo-tetraacetatom. Spiro-ketalni feromon 7-methyl-1,6-dioksaspiro[4,5]dekan izolovan iz insekta *Paravespula vulgaris* L. dobiven je također dvostrukom intramolekulskom ciklizacijom 1,8-nonadiola pomoću navedenih reagenasa.