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# Benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones: A Novel Class of Potent and Selective Nonsteroidal Inhibitors of Human Steroid $\mathbf{5} \boldsymbol{\alpha}$-Reductase 1 

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The synthesis and biological evaluation of a series of novel, selective inhibitors of isoenzyme 1 of human $5 \alpha$-reductase ( $5 \alpha$ R) (EC 1.3.99.5) are reported. The inhibitors are $4 \mathrm{aH}-(\mathbf{1 9 - 2 9}$ ) or 1H-tetrahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones (35-47) bearing at positions 1, 4, 5, and 6 a methyl group and at position 8 a hydrogen, methyl group, or chlorine atom. All these compounds were tested toward 5 2 R-1 and 5aR-2 expressed in CHO cells (CHO 1827 and CHO 1829, respectively) resulting in selective inhibitors of the type 1 isoenzyme, with inhibitory potencies ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ ) ranging from 7.6 to 9100 nM . The inhibitors of the 4 aH -series, having a double bond at position 1,2, were generally less active than the corresponding inhibitors of the 1 H -series having the double bond at position 4,4a on the A ring. The presence of a methyl group at position 4 (as in compounds 39-40 and 45-47), associated with a substituent at position 8, determined the highest inhibition potency ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ from 7.6 to 20 nM ). Compounds 39 and $\mathbf{4 0}$, having $\mathrm{K}_{\mathrm{i}}$ values of $5.8 \pm 1.8$ and $2.7 \pm 0.6 \mathrm{nM}$, respectively, toward $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ expressed in CHO cells, were also tested toward native $5 \alpha$ R-1 in human scalp and $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ in human prostate homogenates, in comparison with finasteride and the known 5 R R-1-selective inhibitor LY191704, and their mechanism of inhibition was determined. They both inhibited the enzyme through a reversible competitive mechanism and again were selective inhibitors of $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ with I $\mathrm{C}_{50}$ values of 41 nM . These specific features make these inhibitors suitable candidates for further devel opment as drugs in the treatment of DHT-dependent disorders such as acne and androgenic alopecia in men and hirsutism in women.

## Introduction

Dihydrotestosterone (DHT), the most potent circulating androgen hormone, is produced by the NADPHdependent, stereosel ective reduction of testosterone ( $T$ ) under catalysis of the enzyme steroid $5 \alpha$-reductase ( $5 \alpha$ R) (EC 1.3.99.5). ${ }^{1,2}$ The DHT production is in many cases related to the maintenance of some pathological human diseases and endocrine disorders, ${ }^{3-8}$ so that the use of $5 \alpha$ R inhibitors for the possible control or suppression of DHT formation, without significant changes in the circulating testosterone, became some years ago a therapeutic target for the treatment of benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH), androgenic alopecia, and acne in men and hirsutism in women. ${ }^{9,10}$

Because of the discovery that two different DNAencoded isoenzymes of $5 \alpha$ R, named type 1 and type 2 ( $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ and $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ ), transform T into DHT with different efficacy and that these two isozymes are not equally distributed in the human tissues, $5 \alpha$ R-1 being present mainly in scalp, skin, and liver, and $5 \alpha$ R-2 in the

[^0]prostate, different therapeutic approaches were later developed. The synthesis and use of selective $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ inhibitors was initially envisioned for the specific treatment of a prostate disease such as BPH, culminating with the discovery of the first class of steroidal $5 \alpha$ R inhibitors, the4-azasteroids, and the introduction on the market by Merck of finasteride (Proscar) (Figure 1), the first drug for BPH treatment based on the concept of $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}$ inhibition. ${ }^{11}$ However, after the observation that finasteride was not equally efficacious in all treated patients and that only in 30-40\% of the treated cases the circulating level of DHT decreases up to $20 \%$ of the basal level, ${ }^{12}$ the synthesis and use of double $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2 inhibitors became a therapeutic model to completely reducing the circulating DHT. This new approach has brought to development by Glaxo of dutasteride (Figure 1), a double inhibitor which entered phase III clinical trials in 1997 and presumably will be on the market for the treatment of BPH in 2000-2001. ${ }^{13}$
Although the role of $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ is not completely clear, its diffuse presence in the scalp and skin of men suffering from alopecia or acne and skin of women suffering from hirsutism and polycistic ovarian syn-


Finasteride IC50: 5 $\alpha$ R-1 410 nM 5 $\alpha$ R-2 9.4 nM


Dutasteride $I_{50}$ : $5 \alpha R-12.4 \mathrm{nM}$
$5 \alpha$ R-2 0.5 nM


Figure 1.
drome (PCOS) suggested a strong implication of $5 \alpha$ R-1 in these disorders. ${ }^{14}$ Therefore, the possibility of reducing the DHT level in those tissues by using selective $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibitors (not affecting 5 $\alpha$ R-2, mainly located in prostate tissue) could be a new therapeutic approach for the treatment of the above skin disorders. ${ }^{15}$ In particular, the use of a "pure" $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ inhibitor is essential for the treatment of hirsutism and PCOS because of the well-known risks of pseudohermafroditism for the male fetus associated with $5 \alpha$ R-2 blockade in pregnant women. ${ }^{16}$ To date, few compounds (one of them, a nonsteroidal benzoquinoline synthesized by EliLilly, LY191704, is reported in Figure 1) have been reported to have this selectivity but their clinical development has not yet reached completion. ${ }^{17}$

On the basis of the above considerations, we started some years ago a project aimed at the design and synthesis of new inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2, ${ }^{18-22}$ focusing in particular on the development of selective $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ inhibitors. We thus discovered that 19 -nor-10azasteroids (Figure 1), designed by us as possiblemimics of a substrate-like transition state involved in the $T$ to DHT reduction, were dual inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R, with a potency tightly dependent on the presence, position, and number of unsaturations on the A-C rings, as well as the type of substituent at position 17. ${ }^{18}$
The observation that an increase of potency could be associated with the presence of unsaturations on the C ring, which determined a certain flatness of the azasteroidal skeleton, prompted us to design a novel class of nonsteroidal inhibitors based on the benzo[c]quin-olizin-3-ones structure (Figure 1). ${ }^{23,24}$ These compounds, while maintaining the A ring enaminone moiety as an essential feature of the 19-nor-10-azasteroids, lacked the D ring and incorporated a benzene ring in place of the C ring to have a more planar overall structure. In analogy to Eli Lilly compounds and on the basis of the above observations on 19-nor-10-azasteroids, we anticipated that these novel compounds could be selective inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R-1. In the present paper we therefore describe the synthesis and structure-activity relationship (SAR) of a series of benzo[c]quinol izin-3-ones 1-47 (Chart 1), differentiated by the presence and position

Chart 1. Compounds of the 1 H - and 4 aH -Series


## Scheme 1


of double bonds on the A ring and the type and number of substituents introduced at positions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8, which resulted in potent and selective $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibitors.

## Chemistry

The preparation of the new class of benzo[c]quinolizin3 -one inhibitors 1-47 required the study and development of a synthetic strategy different from that employed in the synthesis of 19-nor-10-azasteroids. The latter were in fact prepared through the tandem thermal rearrangement-annulation of suitably functionalized isoxazol ine-5-spirocyclopropanes, ${ }^{18,25}$ a methodology devel oped in our laboratory which allows the sequential construction of the $A$ and $B$ rings of the azasteroids (Scheme 1). However it is a matter of course that this procedure is inapplicable to the synthesis of benzo[c]-quinolizin-3-ones due to the presence of an aromatic $C$ ring in the structure.
As an alternative to the isoxazol ine methodol ogy, we recently reported a different synthesis of 19-nor-10azasteroids based on the TMSOTf-promoted tandem Mannich-Michael reaction of 2 -silyloxy-1,3-dienes with N -(acyloxy)iminium ions generated in situ from the corresponding N -Boc- $\alpha$-ethoxy derivatives ${ }^{20-22}$ (Scheme 1). If applied to the synthesis of benzo[c]quinolizinones 1-47 (Scheme 2), this methodology would require the preparation, from lactams 48-53, of bicyclic N-Boc- $\alpha$ ethoxy quinolines $\mathbf{6 0}-\mathbf{6 5}$ to be reacted in turn with the suitable silyl oxydienes $\mathbf{6 6 - 6 9}$ in the presence of a Lewis acid. This would generate the corresponding iminium ion which undergoes tandem Mannich-Michael attack by the silyloxydiene. In the case Danishefsky's diene 67 ( $\mathrm{R}^{1}=\mathrm{OMe}, \mathrm{R}^{2}=\mathrm{H}$ ) the reaction would lead directly to 1,2-unsaturated compounds 19-34 (wherein $\mathrm{R}^{1}=\mathrm{H}$, $\mathrm{R}^{2}=\mathrm{H}$ ); otherwise oxidation of intermediates $\mathbf{1 - 1 8}$ is necessary to introduce a double bond that conjugates the bridgehead N and the 3 -oxo group. As we have already found in 19-nor-10-azasteroids, the lack of conjugation between N and $\mathrm{C}=\mathrm{O}$ causes a loss of inhibitory potency, and this, if the inhibition mechanism is similar for the two classes of compounds, is likely to occur also in benzo[c]quinolizinones 1-18.

## Scheme 2



The synthesis of $N$-Boc- $\alpha$-ethoxyquinolines $60-65$ is reported in Scheme 3. Lactams 49-53 were prepared according to known procedures, ${ }^{26}$ whereas Iactam 48 ( $R^{3}, R^{4}, R^{5}=H$ ) is commercially available. Aldehyde 70 (Scheme 3), treated with 2-(tri phenylphosphanylidene)propionic acid methyl ester ${ }^{27}$ gave cynnamate 71 as a mixture of diastereoisomers in 90\% yield, which was converted into 3-methyl-substituted Iactam 51 by hydrogenation over $\mathrm{PtO}_{2}$ in AcOH .4 -Substituted anilines 72-73 were reacted with 3-chloropropanoyl or 3-chlorobutanoyl chlorides to give the corresponding $\beta$-chloroamides 74-77 in quantitative yield. Lactams 49-50 and 52-53 were obtained after the intramolecular Friedel-Craft alkylation that ami des 74-77 underwent in the presence of $\mathrm{AlCl}_{3}$ at $120-130{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. In the case of 6-methyl-substituted amides 74 and 76, a strict control of the temperature was necessary to avoid migration of the methyl group on the aromatic ring and thus the formation of isomers. After protection of N atom as N -Boc to give compounds 54-59, reduction of the 2-oxo group by $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}$ in ethanol at $-25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, followed by acidic quench with 2 N HCl in ethanol, afforded N -Boc-2ethoxy derivatives 60-65 in 94-100\% overall yield. In the case of 3- and 4-methyl-substituted derivatives 6365, these compounds were obtained as $1: 1$ mixtures of diastereoi somers.

In a previous communication ${ }^{23}$ we have reported that TMSOTf catalyzes the tandem Mannich-Michael cyclization of unsubstituted N -t-Boc derivative $\mathbf{6 0}(\mathrm{X}, \mathrm{R}=$ $H$ ) with silyloxydienes $66\left(R^{1}=R^{2}=H\right)$ and $67\left(R^{1}=\right.$ OMe, $\mathrm{R}^{2}=\mathrm{H}$ ) providing benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones $\mathbf{1}$ and 19 in moderate yields. To extend this methodology to N-Boc- $\alpha$-ethoxy derivatives such as 62, 63, or 65, bearing a chlorine atom on the benzene ring, we studied

Scheme 3a

${ }^{\text {a }}$ (a) $\mathrm{Ph}_{3} \mathrm{P}=\mathrm{C}(\mathrm{Me}) \mathrm{COOMe}$, toluene, $80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 3 \mathrm{~h}$; (b) $\mathrm{H}_{2}, 10 \mathrm{~atm}, \mathrm{PtO}{ }_{2}, \mathrm{AcOH}, 60^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 14 \mathrm{~h}$; (c) $(\mathrm{BOC})_{2} \mathrm{O}, \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{DMAP}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 18 \mathrm{~h}, 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; (d) $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}, \mathrm{EtOH},-25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 2-5 \mathrm{~h}$, then 2 N HCl in $\mathrm{EtOH}, \mathrm{pH} 3-4,-25 \rightarrow 0{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 1.5-7 \mathrm{~h}$; (e) $\mathrm{RCH}(\mathrm{Cl}) \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{COCl}$, acetone, reflux, 1 h ; (f) $\mathrm{AlCl}_{3}, 120-160{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 3-24 \mathrm{~h}$.
the use of different Lewis acids to promote the formation of N -(acyloxy)iminium ions, finding out that $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ promoted the iminiumion formation and the succeeding cyclization step better than TMSOTf. The new procedure applied to N -Boc- $\alpha$-ethoxy derivative $62(\mathrm{X}=\mathrm{Cl}$, $\mathrm{R}=\mathrm{H})$ and diene 66 afforded $3(\mathrm{X}=\mathrm{CI}, \mathrm{R}=\mathrm{H})$ in $34 \%$ yield, whereas the same compound was obtained in 17\% yield employing TMSOTf as a Lewis acid. ${ }^{24}$

The $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ methodol ogy was applied to the synthesis of $8-\mathrm{H}-, 8-\mathrm{Cl}-$, and $8-\mathrm{CH}_{3}$-substituted benzo[c]quinolizinones 1-3, 10-12, 19, and 27 (Scheme 4), bearing no substituents on the A ring and therefore deriving from cyclization of 60-65 with Danishefky diene 67 and 2-trimethylsilyloxy-1,3-butadiene (66). Only in the case of compound $\mathbf{2}$ theTMSOTf procedure furnished higher yield (44\%) than $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$.

The reaction of 3 - and 4 -substituted iminium ions from 63-65 with diene 66 was stereoselective, providing the isomer with the methyl group and the bridgehead 4a proton in a cis relative position as the major product. These (and the following) stereochemical assignments were possible by inspection of the coupling constants in the ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} N M R$ spectrum of the saturated and, then, the corresponding $\Delta^{1}$ - or $\Delta^{4}$-oxidized derivatives. A complete discussion on the attribution of the relative stereochemistry is reported in the Supporting I nformation. Compounds 10-12 were isolated in 29-35\% yield after chromatographic purification, while their trans isomers were only detected ( $<3 \%$ ) by ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR analysis of the crude reaction mixtures. The reactions of $\mathbf{6 3}$ and 64 with Danishefsky's diene 67, which afforded $\Delta^{1}$ unsaturated compounds 27 (29\%) and 19 (28\%), occurred with similar stereoselectivity. Since strong Lewis acids are able to remove the $\mathrm{N}-\mathrm{t}-\mathrm{Boc}$ protection, the stereochemical outcome of these reactions could be explained by the formation, after the addition of $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ to the $\alpha$-ethoxy carbamate, of a planar imine in which the N atom coordinates a titanium complex. ${ }^{21}$ The methyl group at position 3 or 4 then leads to a preferred less hindered anti attack by the dienes.

The oxidation of compounds 1-3 and 10-12 to the 1,2- or 4,4a-unsaturated analogues (Scheme 4) was

## Scheme $4^{\text {a }}$



$$
7_{66}^{\text {Messio }} \mid a \text { or } b
$$



${ }^{\text {a (a) }} 1 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{TiCl} 4$ in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2},-30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, 10 min , then $\mathbf{6 6}$ or $\mathbf{6 7}$, $-30 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 30 \mathrm{~min}$; then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ (satd), 45 min ; (b) methyl vinyl ketone, TMSOTf, $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 30 \mathrm{~min}$; then $\mathbf{6 0 - 6 5}$, TMSOTf, $0 \rightarrow 25{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, 45 min ; then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}, 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 36 \mathrm{~h}$; (c) $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}$, EDTA tetrasodium salt, $5-50 \% \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{COOH}(\mathrm{aq}), 90^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, $2 \mathrm{~h} ;(\mathrm{d}) \mathrm{LDA}, \mathrm{Me} \mathrm{e}_{3} \mathrm{SiCl}, \mathrm{THF},-78 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; then DDQ, $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 18 \mathrm{~h}$.
performed by treatment with $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{AcO})_{2}$ as already reported for the 19-nor-10-azasteroid synthesis. ${ }^{28}$ As an alternative, after formation of the corresponding silyl enol ethers by treatment with LDA and TMSCI in THF at $-78^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, oxidation can be achieved by employing DDQ at room temperature. ${ }^{29}$ Usually, the latter conditions afforded almost equimolar amounts of $\Delta^{1 \text { - }}$ and $\Delta^{4}$ isomers (as in the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$ and $\mathbf{2}$ ) and lower yields than $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}$, which instead provided always mixtures containing compounds of the 1H-series (35, 37, 41-43)

## Scheme 5a


a (a) 3-Penten-2-one, TMSOTf, $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 30 \mathrm{~min}$, then 62, TMSOTf, $0 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 45 \mathrm{~min}$, then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}, 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 36 \mathrm{~h}$; (b) 1 M TiCl 44 in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, \mathrm{rt}, 3 \mathrm{~h}$, then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}($ satd $), 45 \mathrm{~min}$; (c) $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}$, EDTA tetrasodium salt, $45 \% \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{COOH}(\mathrm{aq}), 90^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 2$ $\mathrm{h} ;(\mathrm{d}) \mathrm{LDA}, \mathrm{Me}_{3} \mathrm{SiCl}, \mathrm{THF},-78 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, then DDQ, $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, 18 h .

## Scheme 6a


a (a) 1-Penten-3-one, TMSOTf, $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 30 \mathrm{~min}$, then 60-62, TMSOTf, $0 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 45 \mathrm{~min}$, then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}, 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 36 \mathrm{~h}$; (b) LDA, Me3SiCl, THF, $-78 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, then DDQ, $25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 18 \mathrm{~h}$; (c) $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}$, EDTA tetrasodium salt, $5-8 \% \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{COOH}(\mathrm{aq}), 9{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, 2 h.
as the major isomers. On the other hand, complete oxidation of the A ring was in some cases observed (oxidation of $\mathbf{1 0}$ and the $\mathbf{4 - 5}$ mixture) under the more drastic conditions required with mercuric acetate, and compounds 79 (Scheme 4) and 80 (Scheme 6) were obtained in 16 and $12 \%$ yield.
While employing $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ as a Lewis acid requires the addition of a preformed pure diene to the reaction mixture, in the TMSOTf-promoted Mannich-Michael cyclization process the reacting silyloxydiene may be generated in situ using the corresponding alkyl vinyl ketone. Thus, we found more convenient to employ the TMSOTf procedure in the preparation of 1 - and 4 -meth-yl-substituted benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones (Schemes 5 and 6) by the in situ generation of 4-methyl-2-(trimethylsi-lyloxy)-1,3-butadiene (68) from 3-penten-2-one with the TMSOTf/Et ${ }_{3} \mathrm{~N}$ system in dichloromethane. The addition of $\mathbf{6 2}$ and a further amount of TMSOTf (Scheme 5) to the solution of 68, afforded an approximatively 1:1 mixture of 1-methyl-substituted compounds 13 and 14, together with a smaller amount of open chain product
78. Treatment of this mixture with $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ caused complete cyclization of $\mathbf{7 8}$ to a mixture of $\mathbf{1 3}$ and $\mathbf{1 4}$. Oxidation of 14 was carried out by $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}$, providing $\Delta^{4}$-compound $\mathbf{4 4}$ in $96 \%$ yield and its $\Delta^{1}$-isomer 30 in $4 \%$ yield ( $18 \%$ and $9 \%$ yield, respectively, by the DDQ oxidation).
With a similar procedure, $\alpha$-ethoxy carbamates 6062 were reacted with silyloxydiene 69 derived from 1-penten-3-one (Scheme 6), yielding 4 -methyl-substituted compounds 4-5, 6-7, and 8-9 in 22-30\% yield as $4 \alpha / \beta$-variable mixtures. Only in the case of the 6-7 mixture were we able to obtain, after chromatograophy, pure $\beta$-isomer 7. A portion of each mixtures was then oxidized by $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAC})_{2}$, affording $\Delta^{4}$-unsaturated compounds 38-40 (35-71\%), whereas another portion was subjected to the DDQ procedure, obtaining only $\Delta^{1-}$ unsaturated compounds 22-25 in 44-46\% yield as epimeric $4 \alpha / \beta$-mixtures. Compound 26 was obtained as a single $4 \beta$-isomer, but taking into account the very low final yield (18\%), the other isomer might have been lost during the chromatographic purification.
Diene 69 was employed for the synthesis of 4,5 - and 4,6-dimethyl-substituted benzo[c]quinolizinones 15-18 (Scheme 7) according to the TMSOTf procedure. However, very complex isomeric mixtures were obtained after reaction of 69 with 3 - and 4-methyl-substituted carbamates 63-65. A careful chromatographic separation allowed the recovery of the 1:2 mixture of epimers 15 and 16, having the methyl at C5 in a cis relative position with the $4 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{H}$ proton, but in low yield (20\%). Both 4,6-dimethyl derivatives $\mathbf{1 7}(\mathrm{X}=\mathrm{Me})$ and $\mathbf{1 8}(\mathrm{X}=$ Cl ) were obtained in $14 \%$ yield as mixtures in which the diastereoisomer having both the methyl groups $\alpha$ orientated with respect to the $4 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{H}$ hydrogen was prevailing. Usual oxidation of the $\mathbf{1 5} / \mathbf{1 6}$ mixture by Hg ( OAC$)_{2}$ yielded $\Delta^{4}$-compound 45 (14\%) besides the 1:2 mixture of $\Delta^{1}$-isomers 31 and 32 (11\%) which were separated after repeated chromatographies. Similarly, oxidation of $\mathbf{1 7}$ and $\mathbf{1 8}$ gave rise to $\Delta^{4}$-compounds $\mathbf{4 6}$ (27\%) and 47 (34\%), respectively, together with $\Delta^{1-}$ isomers 33 and 34.
The stereochemical outcome of the reaction of 69 with the iminium ions generated from 63 seems to be in accordance with the initial anti approach of the diene as already discussed, as well as the formation of compounds $\mathbf{1 7}$ and $\mathbf{1 8}$, which apparently derive from the anti approach of 69 to the iminium ions from 64 and 65.

Finally, also the HCl salts of two unsaturated benzo-[c]quinolizin-3-ones were prepared by dissolving compounds 38 and $\mathbf{4 0}$ in a solution of HCl in anhydrous methanol, obtaining after evaporation of the solvent salts 81 and $\mathbf{8 2}$, both tested toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2.

## Results

Inhibition toward Human Recombinant 5aR-1 and $5 \alpha \mathbf{R - 2}$ in CHO Cells. Most of the synthesized compounds were tested toward the two human recombinant isozymes of $5 \alpha$ R to evaluate the inhibitory potency and isozyme selectivity using finasteride as a control (Table 1). The assays were performed using stably transfected CHO cells (CHO 1827 for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ and CHO 1829 for $5 \alpha$ R-2, respectively ${ }^{30}$ incubated for 30 min with $\left[{ }^{3} \mathrm{H}\right]$ testosterone at the $\mathrm{K}_{\mathrm{m}}$ concentration (2

Scheme 7a


63





${ }^{\text {a }}$ (a) 1-Penten-3-one, TMSOTf, $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 30 \mathrm{~min}$, then $63-65$, TMSOTf, $0 \rightarrow 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, 45 min , then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}, 25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 36 \mathrm{~h}$; (b) $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAC})_{2}$, EDTA tetrasodium salt, $50 \% \mathrm{CH}_{3} \mathrm{COOH}(\mathrm{aq}), 9{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}, 2 \mathrm{~h}$.

Table 1. Inhibition of Compounds of the 1 H - and 4 aH -Series toward Recombinant $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ Expressed in CHO Cells


4aH series

$1 H$ series


| $\mathrm{R}^{2}$ | $\mathrm{R}^{3}$ | $\mathrm{R}^{4}$ | $\mathrm{R}^{5}$ | $I \mathrm{C}_{50}(\mathrm{nM})$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: |
| H | H | H | H | $298 \pm 75$ |
| H | H | H | Me | $376 \pm 185$ |
| H | H | H | Cl | $49 \pm 19$ |
| Me | H | H | H | $185 \pm 62$ |
| Me | H | H | Me | $20 \pm 8$ |
|  |  |  |  | $5.8 \pm 1.8^{\mathrm{a}}$ |
| Me | H | H | Cl | $7.6 \pm 0.9$ |
|  |  |  |  | $2.7 \pm 0.6^{\mathrm{a}}$ |
| H | Me | H | Cl | $346 \pm 185$ |
| H | H | Me | Me | $14.3 \pm 5.9$ |
| H | H | Me | Cl | $14.4 \pm 3.4$ |
| H | H | H | Cl | $204 \pm 49$ |
| Me | Me | H | Cl | $15.6 \pm 4.0$ |
| Me | H | Me | Me | $15.8 \pm 4.6$ |
| Me | H | Me | Cl | $8.5 \pm 2.1$ |

a This is a $K_{i}$ value.
$\mu \mathrm{M}$ for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ and $0.2 \mu \mathrm{M}$ for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ ) and each inhibitor in the $10^{-9}-10^{-5} \mathrm{M}$ concentration range. Data were processed with the program ALLFIT ${ }^{31}$ using the four parameter logistic equation to calculate the $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ values. The interassay reproducibility of the method was good as assessed by cal culating the mean $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ of finasteride: $911 \pm 85 \mathrm{nM}(\mathrm{CV} \%=9.4, \mathrm{n}=15)$ and $21 \pm 1.8 \mathrm{nM}$ (CV\% $=8.6, \mathrm{n}=12$ ) for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ and $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$, respectively, consistent with the established selectivity reported for the inhibitor. ${ }^{15 a}$ All the tested molecules resulted as selective inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R-1 having $\mathrm{I}_{50}$ values (Table 1) ranging from 7.6 nM to $9.1 \mu \mathrm{M}$, whereas they displayed very poor or no inhibition toward $5 \alpha$ R-2.

The inhibitors belonging to the 1 H -series were more potent than those of the 4 aH -series. For further studies we selected the very potent compounds 39 and 40 , belonging to the 1 H -series, which being achiral compounds do not require a separation of enantiomers as for many of the other inhibitors. The $\mathrm{K}_{\mathrm{i}}$ values of $\mathbf{4 0}$ and 39 were then determined using again CHO 1827 intact cells, and a competitive mechanism of action was
demonstrated. Also for these experiments finasteride was used as a control inhibitor, resulting in a competitive inhibitor. The $\mathrm{K}_{\mathrm{i}}$ values were $2.7 \pm 0.6$ and $5.8 \pm$ 1.8 nM , respectively, for $\mathbf{4 0}$ and 39 and $366 \pm 186 \mathrm{nM}$ for finasteride, the latter in good agreement with the reported value. ${ }^{30}$
The mechanism of action of the most potent inhibitor 40 was studied on recombinant $5 \alpha$ R-1 isozyme using intact CHO 1827 transfected cells. To demonstrate the reversibility of inhibition, we applied to our cell system a method recently described by Azzol ina et al. ${ }^{32}$ for the elucidation of the mechanism of action of finasteride on the rat $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R- 2 isozymes. Intact cells were maintained in contact with the inhibitor at the $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ concentration, and the reduction of enzymatic activity was monitored at different times versus a control. After 1 h the medium containing the inhibitor was removed; cells were washed with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) solution and incubated without the inhibitor. If the enzymatic activity is restored at the control level the inhibitor is considered reversible. Finasteride, used as


Figure 2. Determination of the mechanism of inhibition for compound 40: top lines, control; bottom lines, experiments with inhibitor. Concentration of $\mathbf{4 0}$ was 10 nM .


Figure 3. Determination of the mechanism of inhibition for finasteride: top lines, control; bottom lines, experiments with inhibitor. Concentration of finasteride was 700 nM .

Table 2. Inhibition Activity toward Native $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2

| compd | inhibition |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1^{\text {a }}$ | $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2^{\text {b }}$ |
| finasteride |  | $2.2 \pm 0.2 \mathrm{nM}^{\text {c }}$ |
| LY191704 | $2.3 \pm 1.4 \mathrm{nM}^{\text {c, }} \mathrm{d}$ | $19 \%$ at $10 \mu \mathrm{M}$ |
| 39 | $41 \pm 22 \mathrm{nM} \mathrm{c}$, d | 20\% at $10 \mu \mathrm{M}$ |
| 40 | $41 \pm 17 \mathrm{nM}{ }^{\text {c,d }}$ | $20 \%$ at $10 \mu \mathrm{M}$ |

${ }^{\text {a }}$ From human scalp homogenates. ${ }^{\mathrm{b}}$ From human prostate
 was used to block $5 \alpha$ R-2 present in the scalp tissue.
a control inhibitor, showed an irreversible behavior as expected under these conditions, whereas $\mathbf{4 0}$ displayed a reversible mechanism of action. In Figures 2 and 3 are reported the graphs of the experiments conducted with 40 and finasteride.

Inhibitory Activity toward Native 5 $\alpha$ R-1 and $\mathbf{5} \alpha \mathbf{R}-\mathbf{2}$. To confirm the complete selectivity observed for these compounds toward the recombinant enzymes, we selected 39 and 40 for determining their inhibitory activity and selectivity versus native $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2 using human scalp and human prostate tissues, respectively (Table 2).
To have an in vitro system representative of the in vivo situation, we used the total tissue homogenate without any fractionation. It is known that $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ is the prevalent isozyme in prostate tissue, while $5 \alpha$ R-1 is mainly expressed in scalp skin. However, the presence
of both $5 \alpha$ R isozymes in prostate tissue and also in scalp skin has been recently documented (mRNA, expressed protein, and functional protein). ${ }^{33}$ A major problem arises from the lack of knowledge on the exact ratio of the two isoenzymes within the different parts of the tissues. For this reason, aimed at evaluating the specific inhibition for each enzyme, we set the experimental conditions to measure the activity of desired target isozyme avoiding any possible interference due to the presence of the other isoenzyme. As a control of the assay selectivity, we tested finasteride which is a quite selective $5 \alpha$ R-2 inhibitor and LY191704 (Figure 1) as a completely selective $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibitor.

The inhibition test against $5 \alpha$ R-2 in human prostate homogenates was performed using a 50 nM testosterone concentration; only $5 \alpha$ R-2 should be active at this concentration because of the different $K_{m}$ values of the two isozymes for the substrate ( $1.7 \mu \mathrm{M}$ for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ and $0.2 \mu \mathrm{M}$ for $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ ). Under these experimental conditions the $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ value obtained for finasteride was $2.2 \pm 0.2$ nM, while LY 191704 resulted inactive (only $19 \%$ inhibition at $10 \mu \mathrm{M})$. These results are in good agreement with the data reported in the literature for $5 \alpha$ R-2 inhibition of both compounds, ${ }^{11,17}$ assessing that in the above assay only the type 2 isoenzyme was activated. Also compounds 39 and 40 resulted inactive versus $5 \alpha$ R-2, displaying only a $20 \%$ inhibition at $10 \mu \mathrm{M}$ concentration.

By contrast, when performing the inhibition tests with human scalp homogenates to measure the $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ inhibition, it is not possible to find a testosterone concentration where only the $5 \alpha$ R-1 is active. Indeed, at the micromolar concentration of testosterone required for the activation $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$, also $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ is active and works at its maximum vel ocity. However, by adding finasteride ( 10 nM ) in all inhibition experiments, we were able to selectively block the $5 \alpha$ R-2 activity without interfering with the $5 \alpha$ R-1 activity. Thus, in this assay, the reference compound LY 1917104 resulted active with an IC ${ }_{50}$ of $2.3 \pm 1.4 \mathrm{nM}$, in good agreement with the value reported for its $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibition. ${ }^{17}$ Benzo[c]quinolizinones 39 and $\mathbf{4 0}$ both displayed an $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ value of 41 nM , assessing that these compounds are therefore selective and potent inhibitors of the native $5 \alpha$ R-1 present in the scalp tissue.

## Discussion

We have already reported in a previous communication $^{23}$ on the inhibitory activity of two simple unsubstituted benzo[c]quinolizinone compounds ( 35 and 19) toward both $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$, expressed by transfected CHO cells, and native $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$, in human prostate homogenates. Both compounds were selective $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibitors with $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ values of 298 and 5130 nM , respectively, with $\Delta^{4}$ compound 35 being about 17-fold more active than its $\Delta^{1}$-isomer 19.

The introduction of substituents on different positions of the benzo[c]quinolizinone skeleton of 35 and 19 allowed us to obtain two classes ( 1 H - and 4 aH -series) of compounds differing by the position of the double bond on the A ring. In Table 1 the inhibition values of $\Delta^{1}$-compounds 19-29 and $\Delta^{4}$-compounds 35-47 toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 expressed in recombinant CHO cells are reported. All of them were inactive toward $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ in CHO cells.
In general, the compounds of the 1 H -series resulted significantly more active than those of the 4 aH -series,
the $I C_{50}$ values of the latter being approximately 10 fold higher. In fact the inhibition values ranged from 137 to 9100 nM for the 4 aH -compounds and from 7.6 to 376 nM for the 1H-compounds.

The presence of a substituent at position 8, for instance a chlorine or methyl group, generally increased the potency of the inhibitors in both series. Thus, in the $4 a \mathrm{H}$-series compounds $20\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 176 \mathrm{nM}\right)$ and $\mathbf{2 1}\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50}\right.$ 459 nM ), bearing an 8-methyl and 8-chlorine, respectively, were significantly more active than unsubstituted compound 19 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 5130 \mathrm{nM}$ ). Analogously, in the 1Hseries the chlorine atom at position 8, either alone or in the presence of other substituents on the two aliphatic rings, increased noticeably the potency toward $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$. Thus $8-\mathrm{Cl}-$ substituted compounds 37 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 49$ $\mathrm{nM})$ and $\mathbf{4 0}\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 7.6 \mathrm{nM}\right)$ were signifi cantly more active than unsubstituted compound 35 (IC50 298 nM ) and 38 (IC50 185 nM ), respectively. Instead, the methyl group at position 8 of compounds of the 1 H -series was ineffective when alone, while it increased the potency if combined with one or two methyl groups on the two aliphatic rings. In fact, 8-methyl-substituted compound 36 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 376 \mathrm{nM}$ ) was approximately as potent as the unsubstituted compound 35 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 298 \mathrm{nM}$ ), while the modification of compound 38 (IC50 185 nM ) by introducing a methyl group at position 8 led to the more potent compound 39 having an $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ of 20 nM .

The introduction of a methyl group at position 4 in both series was effective in increasing the inhibitory potency. The extent of the increase is more slight in the 4 aH -series and higher in the 1 H -series. In the 1 H -series the introduction of a methyl at 4 position determines a strong increase of potency, in particular when the 8 -position is substituted with a chlorine or methyl. Thus, whereas 4-methyl derivative 38 displayed an inhibition activity ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 185 \mathrm{nM}$ ) not too significantly different from the unsubstituted compound 35 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 298 \mathrm{nM}$ ), a very strong increase of potency is observed in 8-chloro-4methyl derivative $40\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 7.6 \mathrm{nM}\right)$ and 4,8-dimethyl derivative $39\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 20 \mathrm{nM}\right)$ with respect to the 4-methylunsubstituted compounds 37 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 49 \mathrm{nM}$ ) and 36 (I $\mathrm{C}_{50}$ 376 nM ), respectively.

The substitution with a methyl group at position 6 positively affected the potency of the inhibitors, although more markedly in the 1 H -series than in the 4aHseries. So compounds $42\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 14.3 \mathrm{nM}\right)$ and $43\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50}\right.$ 14.4 nM ) were significantly more active than the corresponding compounds 36 and 37 , not substituted at position 6 (compare also compounds 29 and 21 of the $4 a \mathrm{H}$-series). The further substitution with a methyl group at position 4 in trisubstituted compounds 46 (IC50 15.8 nM ) and 47 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 8.5 \mathrm{nM}$ ) maintained the inhibitory activity compared to 6,8-disubstituted compounds 42 and 43.

The results discussed so far are consistent with those reported for structurally related compounds, ${ }^{17}$ whose potency toward 5 5 R-1 increased noticeably by introducing a methyl group at position 4 of the skeleton and a chlorine at position 8. Also, the beneficial effect of the methyl at position 6 seems consistent with the observation that the introduction of the same group on the corresponding position 7 in 4-azasteroids increased their $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ selectivity. ${ }^{34}$ By contrast, the presence of a methyl group at position 5 in general reduced the potency


Figure 4. Qualitative structure-activity relationship for $\Delta^{4}$ -benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones as $5 \alpha$ R-1 inhibitors.
unless it was associated to another methyl group at the position 4. Finally, the introduction of a methyl at the position 1 in 8-Cl-substituted compound 44 ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 204$ nM) slightly decreased the activity toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 in comparison with the homologous derivative $37\left(\mathrm{IC}_{50} 49\right.$ $\mathrm{nM})$.

In conclusion, the contemporaneous presence of the methyl or chlorine substituent at position 8 and a methyl group at the 4 or 6 position appears to be the best combination for fitting the active site of the enzyme. This is in accordance with the inhibition values obtained in the Eli Lilly series in which the most potent inhibitor bears a methyl on position 4 and a chlorine on position 8 (LY191704, Figure 1) and with the observation that in the 4-azasteroid class the introduction of a methyl at position 4 or 7 (equivalent to the 6 position of benzoquinolizines) al ways increases the inhibition against $5 \alpha$ R-1. In Figure 4 a qualitative SAR analysis for the inhibitors of the 1 H -series is reported.

Among the saturated compounds which were intermediates in the synthesis of the 1 H - and 4 aH -inhibitors, we decided to evaluate the inhibitory potency of compound 8 bearing a methyl on position 4 and a chlorine on position 8 since these are the substituents leading to the best inhibitors in both 1 H - and 4 aH -series. As we have already observed for the 10-azasteroids, the presence of a double bond allowing the conjugation between the carbonyl group and the nitrogen atom is an essential feature for having good inhibition values. In fact, compound 8 had an $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ of $478 \pm 95 \mathrm{nM}$ toward $5 \alpha$ R-1, with potency significantly lower than those obtained for compounds 40 and 26.

In some of the oxidation reactions leading to the 1 H series we have isol ated al so the 1,2- and 4,4a-unsaturated compounds, in particular 4-Me-substituted compound 80 and $8-\mathrm{Cl}, 5-\mathrm{Me}$-substituted compound 79. These were tested toward both isozymes resulting as selective, although very weak, inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R-1 ( $\mathbf{8 0}$, $\mathrm{IC}_{50} 1.4 \pm 0.2 \mu \mathrm{M} ; 79,1.88 \pm 0.3 \mu \mathrm{M}$ ). Also the HCl salts of 38 and 40 were tested toward $5 \alpha R-1$, but they did not show any significant difference in the inhibitory activity compared to their parent compounds.

To determine a possible model accounting for the observed potency of benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones, we performed a complete conformational analysis on compounds LY 191704, 40, and 24 as already reported for 19-nor-10-azasteroids, ${ }^{19}$ i.e., a first exhaustive Monte Carlo conformational search (MM2* force field, MacroM odel software) ${ }^{35}$ followed by AM1 geometry optimiza-

Table 3. Predicted Conformers for LY191704, 40, and 24 after Monte Carlo Conformational Search (MM2* force field) and AM1 Geometry Optimization

| conformer | heat of formation <br> $(\mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol})$ | A ring | B ring | C3-C2-C1-N(C10a) <br> dihedral angle (deg) | C4a-C5-C6-C6a <br> dihedral angle (deg) | index of planarity <br> $(\AA))^{a}$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| LY191704_I | -30.70 |  |  | -46.3 | +45.9 | 0.178 |
| LY191704_II | -30.04 |  |  | +27.2 | +50.2 | +45.6 |
| 40_I | -8.07 | $1 \beta, 2 \alpha$ | $6 \alpha-$-sofa | +45.8 | +48.1 | 0.253 |
| 40_II | -6.86 | $1 \alpha, 2 \beta$ | $6 \alpha-$ sofa | -48.3 | +55.1 | +204 |
| 24_I | -3.12 |  |  |  | 0.182 |  |
| 24_II | -3.07 |  |  |  | 0.297 |  |

${ }^{\text {a }}$ Averaged distance of all skeleton atoms from the mean plane of the molecule.
tion (Spartan software). ${ }^{36}$ TheAM1 calculation produced two thermally accessible conformers for each compound, having relative energies comprised in a range of only $1.2 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol}$ with respect to the global minimum (Table 3). A third conformer of $\mathbf{2 4}$ was discarded because of its higher energy ( $>3 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol}$ with respect to the global minimum). The conformers of each compound of the $1 \mathrm{H}-$ series differed by the conformation of the A ring, which was $1 \beta, 2 \alpha$ or $1 \alpha, 2 \beta$, while the $B$ ring had a fixed $6 \alpha-$ sofa conformation (referring to the C3-C4-C4a-N11 mean plane). ${ }^{19}$ The interconversion barriers among the conformers were also calculated as al ready described. ${ }^{19}$ The low values found ( $<3 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol}$ ) suggest that, similarly to the 19-nor-10-azasteroids, $\mathbf{4 0}$ and $\mathbf{2 4}$ are very flexible molecules in the A ring portion. The same low conformational barrier was found for the Eli Lilly compound. Eli Lilly's researchers suggested that the high inhibitory activity toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 isoenzyme of their benzoquinoline compounds, such as LY 191704, could be associated to their extended planarity. ${ }^{37}$ We had also al ready observed that among the 19-nor-10-azasteroid inhibitors, those having a double bond at position 8(9), i.e., between rings A and B , were more potent than the corresponding compounds with the double bond at position 9(11). ${ }^{18}$ This result appears to be in accordance with the Eli Lilly's researcher assumption, since the 8(9) double bond forces the molecule to assume a more planar structure.
An index of the planarity of the above inhibitors could be obtained by calculating the average distance of all the skeleton atoms from the mean plane of the molecule. The global minimun conformer LY 191704_I resulted as the most planar, with an average distance of $0.178 \AA$. Therefore, because of the highest potency and selectivity of LY 191704 toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 among the Eli Lilly inhibitors, we may take conformer LY 191704_I as a reference structure and compare our benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones with it.

By the superposition of all the skeleton atoms of LY191704_I and the predicted conformers of our benzo-[c]quinolizin-3-one inhibitors, we found that 40_II was the closest ( $\mathrm{rms}=0.223$ ) to LY191704_I (Figure 5). In this case it was possible to observe a fair spatial correspondence of skeleton atoms C2, C3, and C4 and, as a consequence, of the carbonyl and methyl groups of the two molecules, of atoms C5 and C6 of the B ring, and of all atoms (included the chlorine one) of the benzene ring. Incidentally, the two conformers of the $\Delta^{4}$-compound $\mathbf{4 0}$ were also the most planar among the benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones compounds (see Table 3). Greater deviations were instead observed with the compound of the 4 aH -series when superimposing both the conformers of $\mathbf{2 4}$ with LY191704_I (rms = 0.270 and 0.300 ) (Figure 5). Therefore, the low potency of the 4 aH -


Figure 5. From the top: (a) superposition of the $A$ rings of conformers LY191704_I, 40_I, 40_II, and 24_I, showing a remarkable deviation of 24_1 from the reference conformer LY191704_I; (b) superposition of all skeleton atoms of conformers LY 191704_I and 40_II; (c) superposition of the A and B rings of 40II and the corresponding conformer of 10-azaestra-4,8(9)-diene-3,17-dione; (d) superposition of the A and B rings of 40 II and the corresponding conformer of 10-azaestra-4,9(11)-diene-3,17-dione.
inhibitors, if compared to the corresponding 1 H -compounds, could be explained on the basis of their less extended planarity. ${ }^{38}$

If we now take 40_II as a reference conformer for the inhibitors of $5 \alpha$ R-1, we can compare $\Delta^{8(9)-}$ and $\Delta^{9(11)-}$ 19-nor-10-azasteroids with that in order to find the closest one in terms of extended planarity. The superposition of the $A$ and $B$ rings of $\Delta^{8(9)-}$ and $\Delta^{9(11)-10-a z a-~}$ 3,17-androstenedione ${ }^{39}$ with the corresponding rings of 40 II (Figure 3) clearly resulted in a greater deviation of the C ring of the $\Delta^{9(11)}$-azasteroids from the aromatic

Table 4. HF-STO 3-21G(*) Partial Charges Calculated for Benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones

|  | charge |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| compd | N | C4a | C4 | C3 | O3 |
| $\mathbf{3 5}$ | -0.26 | 0.41 | -0.90 | 0.98 | -0.62 |
| $\mathbf{3 7}$ | -0.35 | 0.40 | -0.87 | 0.92 | -0.62 |
| $\mathbf{3 8}$ | -0.30 | 0.17 | -0.41 | 0.80 | -0.59 |
| $\mathbf{4 0}$ | -0.37 | 0.20 | -0.35 | 0.73 | -0.58 |

ring of the benzo[c]quinolizinone conformer. This can be quantified by calculating the average distances between the corresponding pair of atoms C7/C14, C8/ C13, C9/C12, and C10/C11, which resulted in 0.856 and $0.404 \AA$ for the $\Delta^{9(11)}$ - and $\Delta^{8(9) \text {-isomers, respectively. }}$
The introduction of the 4-methyl group increases dramatically the potency of both LY 191704 and $\mathbf{4 0}$ with respect to the 4 -unsubstituted compound. It is possible that a small hydrophobic pocket in the enzyme active site accommodates this substituent. However, also electronic effects could be taken into account to explain the increase of potency. We have shown in a previous work on 10-azasteroids ${ }^{18}$ that a growth of potency toward both isoenzymes could be associated with the increase of the el ectrostatic charge on the oxygen atom at C3, which would favor the initial interaction with an H -bond donor residue of the active site. The partial charges of benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones were determined by ab initio HF-STO 3-21G(*) calculations. The substitution of the C ring of the azasteroids with an aromatic ring did not affect the negative partial charges on the oxygen which was about -0.62 for compounds 35 and 37 unsubstituted at position 4 (the charge was -0.63 in $\Delta^{4(5)}$-10-azasteroids). When a methyl group was introduced at position 4 the negative charge decreased to -0.58 and -0.59 (Table 4), very close to the charge of the oxygen atom in saturated 10 -azasteroids. These last were poor inhibitors of $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}$, and we justified this observation with the decrease of negative charge on the oxygen. On the basis of the current results, however, it seems that the steric effects of the 4-methyl group in the benzo[c]quinolizinones series are by far more important than the electronic ones, and the presence of a hydrophobic pocket in the active site of the enzyme which accommodates small alkyl groups appears consequently possible.

## Conclusion

In this paper we have reported on the synthesis and biological evaluation of a series of potent and selective inhibitors of $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$, the isozyme involved in the transformation of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone mainly in human skin and scalp tissues and thus possibly causing the development and maintenance of disorders such as acne and androgenic alopecia in men and hirsutism in women. The synthesized inhibitors are benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones derivatives bearing at position $1,4,5$, and/or 6 a methyl group and at position 8 , i.e., on the aromatic ring, a hydrogen, methyl group, or chlorine atom. Depending on the position of the double bond on the A ring, two classes of inhibitors can be identified: i.e., those having the double bond at position 1,2 (4aH-series) and those having the double bond at position 4,4a ( 1 H -series). All these compounds were tested toward $5 \alpha$ R-1 and $5 \alpha$ R-2 expressed in CHO cells
(CHO 1827 and CHO 1829, respectively) resulting in selective inhibitors of the type 1 isoenzyme, with inhibitory potencies ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ ) ranging from 7.6 to 9100 nM . The inhibitors of the 4 aH -series were generally less active than the corresponding inhibitors of the 1 H -series, which have the double bond at position 4,4 a on the A ring, and this could be associated with the higher extended planarity of the compounds belonging to the latter series, as evidenced by a molecular modeling study carried out in comparison with the known 5 $\alpha$ R1 -selective inhibitors LY 191704. The most potent inhibitors had a chlorine atom (or a methyl group) at position 8, although it was the presence of a methyl group at position 4 (as in compounds 39-40 and 4547), associated with the substitution at position 8 , that determined the highest inhibition potency ( $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ from 7.6 to 20 nM ). This suggests the presence of a small hydrophobic pocket in the enzyme active site accommodating the methyl group at position 4 (the same substitution is present in LY 191704). The two not chiral 4-methyl-(1H)-2,3,5,6-tetrahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin-3ones 39 and 40, bearing at the 8 position a methyl group or chlorine, respectively, were selected among the most potent inhibitors as possible candidate for a lead development. They both selectively inhibited $5 \alpha$ R-1 expressed in CHO 1827 cells through a reversible competitive mechanism displaying $\mathrm{K}_{\mathrm{i}}$ values of 5.8 and 2.7 nM for 39 and 40, respectively. When they were tested toward native $5 \alpha$ R-1 in scalp homogenates and $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ in prostate homogenates, in comparison with finasteride and the known 5aR-1-selective inhibitor LY191704, both resulted as selective inhi bitors of 5aR-1 in scalp with $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ values of 41 nM , being inactive toward $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ present in human prostate tissue. Therefore, on the basis of these results, these two new potent and selective $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ inhibitors are the best candidates for the devel opment of a drug for the treatment of acne and androgenic al opecia in men and hirsutism and polycystic ovarian syndrome in women.

## Experimental Section

All the reactions were performed under nitrogen, unless otherwise stated. Chromatographic separations were performed under pressure on silica gel using flash-column techniques. $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}}$ values refer to TLC carried out on $25-\mathrm{mm}$ silica gel plates (Merck F254), with the same eluant indicated for the column chromatography. IR spectra were recorded on a PerkinElmer 881 spectrophotometer in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ solution. ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR (200 MHz ) and ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( 50.33 MHz ) spectra were recorded on a Varian XL 200 instrument in $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ solution. Mass spectra were carried out in EI at 70 eV on a 5790A-5970A HewlettPackard and QMD 1000 Carlo Erba instruments. Microanalyses were carried out with a Perkin-Elmer 240C elemental analyzer. 2-(Triphenylphosphanylidene)propionic acid methyl ester was prepared as reported. ${ }^{27}$ Diene 66 was prepared as reported. ${ }^{40}$

6-Methyl-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (49). ${ }^{26}$ To a refluxing solution of p-toluidine 73 ( $10.7 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) in acetone ( 20 mL ) was slowly added a solution of 3-chloropropanoyl chloride ( $5 \mathrm{~mL}, 50 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) in acetone ( 10 mL ). Then the solution was refluxed 1 h and finally cooled to room temperature. The resulting suspension was transferred into a flask containing a solution of 6 N HCl in water ( 40 mL ) achieving the complete precipitation of pure amide $74(9.87 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \%)$ as a white solid: mp $115{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ (lit. mp $121{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ). ${ }^{26} \mathrm{~A}$ flask equipped with a mechanical stirrer and containing compound 74 ( 7.5 g , 38 mmol ) was then put in an oil bath heated at $120-130^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and, after complete melting of $\mathbf{7 4}, \mathrm{AlCl}_{3}(5.56 \mathrm{~g}, 41.7 \mathrm{mmol})$
was added in small portions and the mixure left under stirring at $120{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 24 h . After cooling to room temperature, $10 \%$ $\mathrm{HCl}(100 \mathrm{~mL})$ was added dropwise and the mixture was extracted with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$. The organic layer was washed with brine, water, and dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$. After concentration, Iactam 49 ( $5.63 \mathrm{~g}, 92 \%$ ) was obtained as a brown solid sufficiently pure for the next step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 8.21$ (s, 1 H), 7.05-6.98 (m, 2 H), 6.70-6.66 (m, 1 H), 2.98-2.91 (m, 2 H), 2.67-2.59 (m, 2 H), 2.31 (s, 3 H ).

6-Chloro-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (50). ${ }^{26}$ It was prepared as reported for 49. Starting from p-chloroaniline $\mathbf{7 2}$ ( $12.76 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), amide $75^{26}(10.9 \mathrm{~g}$ ) was obtained in $100 \%$ yield after recrystallization from $\mathrm{MeOH}-\mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}, 1: 1$ (mp 120$122{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ ). The cyclization of $75(7.3 \mathrm{~g}, 33.5 \mathrm{mmol})$ to the corresponding lactam was carried out by heating at $140{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and using 2 equiv of $\mathrm{AlCl}_{3}(8.9 \mathrm{~g}, 66.9 \mathrm{mmol})$, obtaining 50 ( $5.70 \mathrm{~g}, 94 \%$ ) as a pale yellow solid sufficiently pure for the next step: mp $106{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 8.52(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.17-$ 7.10 (m, 2 H), 6.76-6.71 (m, 1 H), 3.00-2.92 (m, 2 H), 2.672.60 ( $\mathrm{m}, 2 \mathrm{H}$ ).

6-Chloro-3-methyl-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (51). A solution of aldehyde $\mathbf{7 0}$ ( $3.104 \mathrm{~g}, 16.7 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and 2-(triphenylphosphanylidene)propionic acid methyl ester ${ }^{27}(8.28 \mathrm{~g}, 23.77$ mmol ) in toluene ( 170 mL ), heated at $80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, was stirred for 3 $h$. The reaction mixture was then concentrated, the crude oil redissol ved in $\mathrm{Et}_{2} \mathrm{O}(250 \mathrm{~mL})$ and kept under vigorous stirring for 1 h . The resulting suspension was filtered, concentrated and the residual oil chromatographed (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 1:4, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.52$ ), affording cynnamate $71(4.20 \mathrm{~g}, 90 \%)$ as an oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ (major diastereoisomer) $\delta 8.12$ (d, $\mathrm{J}=8.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.85(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.49(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=8.7,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $7.34(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.85(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.92(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H})$.

The hydrogenation of $\mathbf{7 1}$ was then carried out in a magnetically stirred 150 mL stainless steel autoclave. $\mathrm{PtO}_{2}$ ( 160 mg ) was added to a solution of substrate $\mathbf{7 1}(4 \mathrm{~g}, 14.4 \mathrm{mmol})$ in $\mathrm{AcOH}(60 \mathrm{~mL})$, then the reactor was purged with nitrogen, pressurized with $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ (10 atm) and finally heated in a thermostated bath at $60^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 14 h . The catalyst was then filtered, the solution concentrated under vacuum and adjusted to pH 8 by addition of 0.5 N NaOH . The mixture was extracted with $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}$, dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$ and concentrated to give crude 51. Pure 51 ( $2.190 \mathrm{~g}, 78 \%$ ) was obtained by recrystallization from $\mathrm{i}-\mathrm{Pr}_{2} \mathrm{O}:{ }^{1} \mathrm{H} N M R\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 9.82(\mathrm{br} \mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.14-7.11(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ H), $6.82(d, J=9.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.00-2.83(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.79-2.64$ $(\mathrm{m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.28(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 175.0$ ( s ), 135.9 (s), 127.9 (d), 127.7 (s), 127.3 (d), 125.0 (s), 116.5 (d), 34.5 (d), 33.0 (t), 15.2 (q); MS m/z (\%) 195 ( ${ }^{+}, 90$ ), 166 (100).

4,6-Dimethyl-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (52). ${ }^{26}$ It was prepared as reported for $\mathbf{4 9}$. Starting from p-toluidine $\mathbf{7 3}$ ( $7.08 \mathrm{~g}, 66.0 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and 3-chlorobutanoyl chol ride ( $3.8 \mathrm{~mL}, 33$ $\mathrm{mmol})$, amide $76(6.0 \mathrm{~g})$ was obtained in $86 \%$ yield: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.40(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 7.21(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, $4.56(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.75(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.32(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.62(\mathrm{~d}$, $\mathrm{J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$. The cyclization of $76(5.43 \mathrm{~g}, 25.6 \mathrm{mmol})$ to the corresponding Iactam was carried out by heating at 130 ${ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 5 h and using 1 equiv of $\mathrm{AlCl}_{3}(3.50 \mathrm{~g}, 25.6 \mathrm{mmol})$, obtaining $52(4.47 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \%)$ as a pale brown solid sufficiently pure for the next step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \operatorname{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 10.11(\mathrm{br} \mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 6.99-6.81 (m, 3 H), 3.07 (m, 1 H), 2.72 (dd, J $=16.1,5.8 \mathrm{~Hz}$, 1 H ), 2.41 (dd, J $=16.1,7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $2.30(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.29(\mathrm{~d}$, $\mathrm{J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

6-Chloro-4-methyl-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (53). ${ }^{26}$ It was prepared as reported for 49. Starting from p-chloroaniline $72(8.42 \mathrm{~g}, 66.0 \mathrm{mmol})$ and 3 -chlorobutanoyl chloride ( $3.8 \mathrm{~mL}, 33 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), amide $77(7.66 \mathrm{~g})$ was obtained in quantitative yield: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.56(\mathrm{br} \mathrm{s} 1 \mathrm{H}),$, ( $\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$ ), $7.28(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 4.55(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $2.75(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.61(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$. The cyclization of 77 $(4.10 \mathrm{~g}, 17.7 \mathrm{mmol})$ to the corresponding lactam was carried out by heating at $160^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 3 h and using 2 equiv of $\mathrm{AlCl}_{3}$ $(4.80 \mathrm{~g}, 35.3 \mathrm{mmol})$, obtaining $53(3.46 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \%)$ as a pale yellow solid sufficiently pure for the next step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 9.51(\mathrm{br} \mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.26-7.17(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.81(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.0$

Hz, 1 H ), 3.11 (m, 1 H), 2.72 (dd, J = 16.4, $5.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.49$2.35(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)one (54). To a solution of $48(5 \mathrm{~g}, 34 \mathrm{mmol})$ in anhydrous $\mathrm{CH}_{2}-$ $\mathrm{Cl}_{2}(110 \mathrm{~mL})$ were added $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}(4.7 \mathrm{~mL}, 34 \mathrm{mmol}),(\mathrm{BOC})_{2} \mathrm{O}$ ( $8.9 \mathrm{~g}, 40.8 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), and DMAP ( $410 \mathrm{mg}, 3.4 \mathrm{mmol}$ ). After stirring for 18 h at room temperature, the solvent was evaporated and water ( 200 mL ) was added. The resulting mixture was extracted with $\mathrm{Et}_{2} \mathrm{O}(3 \times 150 \mathrm{~mL})$, the combined organic layers were washed with $1 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{KHSO}_{4}, \mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ (satd), brine, and dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$. After filtration and evaporation of the solvent $N$-Boc derivative 54 ( $8.23 \mathrm{~g}, 98 \%$ ) was obtained as a white solid: $\mathrm{mp} 68-69^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.22-6.93$ $(\mathrm{m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 2.97(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.67(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, 1.62 (s, 9 H ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 169.3$ (s), 151.7 (s), 137.5 (s), 128.0 (d), 127.3 (d), 125.9 (s), 124.1 (d), 116.9 (d), 85.0 ( s$), 32.3$ (t), 27.7 (q, 3 C), 25.5 (t); MS m/z (\%) 247 (M+, 4), 147 (100), 57 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1767, $1691 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-methyl-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (55). It was prepared as reported for 54 . Starting from $49(5.5 \mathrm{~g}, 34 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure $55(8.3 \mathrm{~g}, 94 \%)$ was obtained after chromatography ( $\mathrm{CHCl}_{3}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.50$ ) as a gummy solid: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.20(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.84(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.89$ (m, 2 H ), 2.64 (m, 2 H ), 2.29 (s, 3 H ), 1.59 ( $\mathrm{s}, 9 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 168.7$ (s), 151.2 (s), 134.1 (s), 133.1 (s), 128.0 (d), 127.2 (s), 125.3 (d), 116.4 (d), 84.1 (s), 31.9 (t), 27.1 ( $\mathrm{q}, 3 \mathrm{C}$ ), 24.8 (t), 20.1 (q); MS m/z (\%) 261 ( ${ }^{+}$, 2), 161 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1760,1680 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-3,4-dihydroquinolin-2(1H)-one (56). It was prepared as reported for 54 . Starting from $50(6.59 \mathrm{~g}, 36.3 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure $56(9.45 \mathrm{~g}, 92 \%)$ was obtained after chromatography ( $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}-\mathrm{MeOH}, 30: 1, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.63$ ) as a pale yellow solid: mp $95^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.21(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.91$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=9.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.93(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.66(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.61(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 168.8$ (s), 151.3 (s), 135.6 (s), 133.1 (s), 129.2 (d), 127.8 (s), 127.2 (d), 118.4 (s), 112.2 (d), 85.2 (s), 32.0 (t), 27.6 (q, 3 C), 25.2 (t); MS m/z (\%) 181 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}-100,100$ ); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1762,1692 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-3-methyl-3,4-dihy-droquinolin-2(1H)-one (57). It was prepared as reported for 54. Starting from 51 ( $1.0 \mathrm{~g}, 6.22 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), crude 57 ( $1.62 \mathrm{~g}, 88 \%$ ) was obtained sufficiently pure for the next step as a colorless oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.20-7.15(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.85(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=9.1$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.85-2.62(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.59(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.26(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.2$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 171.5$ (s), 151.7 (s), 135.5 (s), 129.1 (s), 127.9 (d), 127.3 (s), 127.2 (d), 118.1 (d), 85.2 (s), 35.7 (d), 33.1 (t), 27.5 (q, 3 C), 14.7 (q).

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-4,6-dimethyl-3,4-dihydroquin-olin-2(1H)-one (58). It was prepared as reported for 54. Starting from 52 ( $1.0 \mathrm{~g}, 5.23 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), crude 58 ( $1.44 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \%$ ) was obtained sufficiently pure for the next step as an oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.04-6.87(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.84-6.82(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.07$ ( $\mathrm{m}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.72 (dd, J $=15.3,5.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.44 (dd, J = 15.3, $6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.33(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.60(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.30(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3$ H).

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-4-methyl-3,4-dihy-droquinolin-2(1H)-one (59). It was prepared as reported for 54. Starting from 53 ( $4.0 \mathrm{~g}, 20.4 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), crude 59 ( $6.01 \mathrm{~g}, 100 \%$ ) was obtained sufficiently pure for the next step as a pale yellow oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.22-7.16(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.92-6.88(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ H), 3.09 (m, 1 H ), 2.72 (dd, J $=15.4,5.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.44 (dd, $\mathrm{J}=15.4,7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.60(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz} 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 167.9$ (s), 151.2 (s), 134.7 (s), 132.5 (s), 129.3 (s), 127.0 (d), 126.3 (d), 118.4 (d), 85.0 (s), 39.2 (d), 30.5 (t), 27.5 (q, 3 C), 18.9 (q); MS m/z (\%) 195 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}-100,89$ ), 180 (100), 152 (73), 117 (81), 89 (46).

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-2-ethoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline (60). To a solution of N -Boc lactam $54(4.35 \mathrm{~g}, 17.6$ mmol ) in absolute ethanol ( 140 mL ) cooled at $-25^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and under stirring, was added $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}(2.66 \mathrm{~g}, 70.4 \mathrm{mmol})$ in 6 portions during 1 h . After 4 h , the solution was adjusted to $\mathrm{pH} 3-4$ by adding slowly a 2 N HCl solution in absolute EtOH and the resulting suspension was left under stirring at $0{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 1.5 h . Then water ( 100 mL ) was added, the mixture was
extracted with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$ and the organic layer washed with $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ (satd), brine, and dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$. After evaporation of the solvent pure compound $60(4.74 \mathrm{~g}, 96 \%)$ was obtained as a yellow oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.55$ (d, J $=8 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 7.20-6.99(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 5.84(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=4.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.59(\mathrm{qd}$, $\mathrm{J}=7.0,3.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.96-2.80(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.74-2.60(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 2.25-2.11 (m, 1 H), 2.07-1.99 (m, 1 H), $1.53(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}) ; 1.13(\mathrm{t}$, $\mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 154.3$ (s), 136.6 (s), 130.8 ( s$), 128.8$ (d), 126.3 (d), 125.6 (d), 124.4 (d), 81.9 (d), 81.7 ( s$)$, 63.3 (t), 29.8 (t), 29.0 (q, 3 C), 23.9 ( t), 15.7 (q); MS m/z (\%) $277\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 8\right), 131$ (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1685 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-2-ethoxy-6-methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline (61). It was prepared as reported for 60, starting from 55 ( $2 \mathrm{~g}, 7.65 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}(1.74 \mathrm{~g}, 45.9$ mmol ), but the reaction was quenched with 2 N HCl in ethanol after 2 h and left under stirring at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 2.5 h before the addition of water and extraction. Pure $61(1.37 \mathrm{~g}, 62 \%)$ was obtained by chromatography (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 1:10, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.45$ ) as a colorless oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.43$ ( $\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.4$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $6.95(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 5.83(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=4.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.58(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ H), $2.84(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.67(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.29(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.05(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, $1.53(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.13(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta$ 153.5 (s), 133.2 (s), 132.7 (s), 129.7 (s), 128.5 (d), 126.2 (d), 124.6 (d), 81.1 (d), 80.7 (s), 62.4 (t), 29.0 ( $t$ ), 28.1 (q, 3 C), 23.0 (t), 20.6 (q), 14.8 (q); MS m/z (\%) 291 ( ${ }^{+}, 7$ ), 145 (100); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1709 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-2-ethoxy-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline (62). It was prepared as reported for 60, starting from $56(2.9 \mathrm{~g}, 10.65 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}(2.42 \mathrm{~g}, 63.9$ mmol ), but the reaction was quenched with 2 N HCl in ethanol after 2.5 h and left under stirring at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 2.5 h before the addition of water and extraction. Pure $62(2.44 \mathrm{~g}, 68 \%)$ was obtained by chromatography (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 1:10, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.47$ ) as a col orless oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.52(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.1$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 7.10 (m, 2 H ), $5.81(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.55(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ H), $2.84(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.66(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.11-2.01(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.53(\mathrm{~s}, 9$ $\mathrm{H}), 1.12(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 153.3(\mathrm{~s})$, 134.5 (s), 131.6 (s), 128.9 (s), 128.0 (d), 126.0 (d), 125.7 (d), 81.4 (d), 81.0 (s), 62.7 (t), 28.5 (t), 28.3 ( $\mathrm{q}, 3 \mathrm{C}$ ), 22.9 ( t$), 14.9$ (q); MS m/z (\%) 311 (M+, 6), 185 (100); IR (CDCl ${ }_{3}$ ) $1685 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-2-ethoxy-3-methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline (63). It was prepared as reported for $\mathbf{6 0}$, starting from $57(239 \mathrm{mg}, 0.81 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}$ ( $200 \mathrm{mg}, 5.3 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), but the reaction was quenched with 2 N HCl in ethanol after 3 h and left under stirring at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 7 h before the addition of water and extraction. Compound 63 ( $240 \mathrm{mg}, 91 \%$ ) was obtained as a col orless oil sufficiently pure for the next step as a 1:1 mixture of diastereoisomers: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.56(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.49(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $7.13-7.01(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 5.51(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.47(\mathrm{~d}$, $\mathrm{J}=3.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.65-3.42(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 2.95(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=$ $16.5,6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.69-2.61(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 2.40-2.33(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ $\mathrm{H}), 2.18-1.94(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.57(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.56(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.09(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=$ $7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ), $1.07(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=5.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.06(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3$ $\mathrm{H}), 0.97(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 153.9(\mathrm{~s})$, 153.1 (s), 134.0 (s), 133.8 (s), 130.4 (s), 130.3 (s), 129.4 (s), 128.7 (s), 128.4 (d), 128.2 (d), 125.9 (d), 125.7 (d), 125.5 (d, 2 C), 86.3 (d), 84.4 (d), 81.5 (s), 81.3 (s), 62.9 (t), 62.8 (t), 32.8 (d), 32.0 (d), 30.9 (t), 30.6 (t), 28.3 (q, 3 C$), 28.2$ (q, 3 C$), 17.5(\mathrm{q}), 17.2$ (q), 14.9 (q), 14.7 (q).

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-4,6-dimethyl-2-ethoxy-1,2,3,4tetrahydroquinoline (64). It was prepared as reported for 60, starting from $58(1.44 \mathrm{~g}, 5.22 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}(1.50 \mathrm{~g}$, 39.5 mmol ), but the reaction was quenched with 2 N HCl in ethanol after 5 h and left under stirring at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 3.5 h before the addition of water and extraction. Compound 64 (1.49 g, $94 \%$ ) was obtained as a colorless oil sufficiently pure for the next step as a $1: 1$ mixture of diastereisomers: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.42(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.25-7.20(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.03-6.94(\mathrm{~m}$, $2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 5.85(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=7.7,5.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.78(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=4.1 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 3.78-3.47(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 3.11-2.97(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.62-$ $2.43(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 2.34(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.30(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.13(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=$ $10.3,6.6,3.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 1.81 (ddd, J = 13.9, 9.9, $4.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $1.52(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.60-1.50(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.50(\mathrm{~s}, 9 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6$
$\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.29(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.14(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$, $1.11(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$.

N-(tert-Butoxycarbonyl)-6-chloro-2-ethoxy-4-methyl-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinoline (65). It was prepared as reported for 60 , starting from $59(2.00 \mathrm{~g}, 6.77 \mathrm{mmol})$ and $\mathrm{NaBH}_{4}$ $(1.07 \mathrm{~g}, 28 \mathrm{mmol})$, but the reaction was quenched with 2 N HCl in ethanol after 5 h and left under stirring at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 3 $h$ before the addition of water and extraction. Compound 65 ( $1.99 \mathrm{~g}, 91 \%$ ) was obtained as a col orless oil sufficiently pure for the next step as a 1:1 mixture of diastereisomers: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.57(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.31-7.26(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.20-$ $7.07(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 5.81$ (dd, J $=7.8,5.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.72(\mathrm{t}$, $\mathrm{J}=3.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.68-3.47(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}), 3.14-3.03(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ $\mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.64-2.46 (m, 2 H), 2.16 (ddd, J $=13.9,6.9,3.6 \mathrm{~Hz}$, 1 H ), 1.77 (ddd, J = 13.9, 10.3, 3.7 Hz, 1 H ), 1.53 (s, 9 H ), 1.50 ( $\mathrm{s}, 9 \mathrm{H}$ ), $1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.29(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$, 1.18-1.03 (m, $3 \mathrm{H}+3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

General Procedure for the $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$-Promoted Cyclizations. Synthesis of 1,2,3,4,5,6-Hexahydrobenzo[c]quino-lizin-3(4aH)-one (1). A 1 M solution of $\mathrm{TiCl}_{4}$ in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$ (28.84 $\mathrm{mL}, 28.84 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) was added dropwise in 10 min to a solution of $\mathbf{6 0}(4 \mathrm{~g}, 14.42 \mathrm{mmol})$ in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}(72 \mathrm{~mL})$ cooled at $-30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and under argon atmosphere, leaving under stirring for 10 min . To the resulting dark sol ution were then added diene 66 ( $3.15 \mathrm{~mL}, 17.29 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and, after 30 min at room temperature, a saturated solution of $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}(70 \mathrm{~mL}$, very carefully at the beginning). The mixture was vigorously stirred for 40 min , then it was filtered through a Celite layer, washing with $\mathrm{CH}_{2-}$ $\mathrm{Cl}_{2}$, the two layers separated and the aqueous one extracted with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$. The combined organic layers were dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2}-$ $\mathrm{SO}_{4}$, filtered and concentrated, obtaining a dark crude oil. Pure $\mathbf{1}$ ( $895 \mathrm{mg}, 31 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography (EtOAcpetroleum ether, 1:4, $R_{f} 0.32$ ) as a pale yellow solid: $m p 53-$ $54{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.19-7.02(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.87(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.1$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.74(\mathrm{td}, \mathrm{J}=7.3,1.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.22$ (ddd, J $=13.6$, $6.2,3.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 3.48 (m, 1 H ), 3.17 (ddd, J = 13.6, 11.4, 3.7 $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.84-2.36(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 2.21-2.06(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.91-1.75$ (m, 1 H ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 208.5$ (s), 144.0 (s), 129.3 (d), 127.4 (d), 124.4 (s), 118.3 (d), 112.9 (d), 55.8 (d), 47.4 (t), 47.0 (t), 40.5 ( t ), 28.6 ( t$), 25.4$ ( t ); MS m/z (\%) 201 ( ${ }^{+}$, 100); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1710 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

General Procedure for the TMSOTf-Promoted Cyclizations. Synthesis of 8 -Methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (2). To a solution of methyl vinyl ketone ( $730 \mathrm{~mL}, 9.05 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}(25 \mathrm{~mL}$ ), cooled at $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and under argon atmosphere, were added $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$ ( $1.79 \mathrm{~mL}, 12.82 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and, slowly, TMSOTf ( $2.2 \mathrm{~mL}, 11.3$ mmol ). After stirring 30 min , compound $\mathbf{6 1}$ ( $1.1 \mathrm{~g}, 3.77 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), dissolved in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}(25 \mathrm{~mL})$, was added followed by further TMSOTf ( $0.73 \mathrm{~mL}, 3.77 \mathrm{mmol}$ ). The solution was allowed to warm to room temperature and left under stirring 45 min . Then $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}($ satd ) ( 50 mL ) was added and the mixture stirred 36 h . Then water ( 50 mL ) and $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}(50 \mathrm{~mL})$ were added, the layers separated and the aqueous one extracted with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$. The combined organic layers were dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2}-$ $\mathrm{SO}_{4}$, filtered and concentrated, obtaining a dark crude oil. Pure $\mathbf{2}$ ( $353 \mathrm{mg}, 44 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right.$, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.12$ ) as a pale yellow solid: $\mathrm{mp} 85-86{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.00-6.75(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 4.20(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=13.2,6.8$, $2.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 3.41 (m, 1 H ), 3.10 (ddd, J $=15.5,11.8,3.6 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 2.85-2.00(\mathrm{~m}, 7 \mathrm{H}), 2.25(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.82(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 208.4$ (s), 141.8 (s), 129.9 (d), 127.7 (d), 127.5 (s), 124.2 (s), 113.1 (d), 56.1 (d), 47.3 ( t$), 47.1$ (t), 40.4 (t), 29.6 ( t$)$, 25.3 (t), 20.1 (q); MS m/z (\%) 215 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1710 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

8-Chloro-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin-3-(4aH)-one (3). It was prepared as reported for 1 . Starting from $62(500 \mathrm{mg}, 1.6 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure 3 ( $128 \mathrm{mg}, 34 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.28\right)$ as a pale yellow gummy solid: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.09-7.01(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, 6.76 (d, J $=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 4.12 (ddd, J = 13.2, 6.5, $3.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1$ H), $3.46(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.17$ (ddd, J = 15.5, 11.0, $4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $2.80-$ $2.37(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 2.10(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.80(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ $\delta 207.9$ (s), 142.0 (s), 127.8 (d), 126.1 (d), 125.1 (s), 121.7 (s),
113.0 (d), 55.6 (d), 46.2 (t), 45.9 (t), 39.3 (t), 27.4 (t), 25.3 ( t); MS m/z (\%) 235 (100); IR (CDCl $\left.{ }_{3}\right) 1709 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.
$4 \alpha$ - and $4 \beta$-Methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one (4 and 5). Compounds 4 and 5 were prepared as reported for 2, starting from $\mathbf{6 0}$ ( $1.75 \mathrm{~g}, 6.31 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and employing 1-penten-3-one ( $1.49 \mathrm{~mL}, 15.1 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The $3: 2$ mixture (the same ratio in the crude) of 4 and $5(407 \mathrm{mg}, 30 \%)$ was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.40\right)$ as an oil. Attempts at separating the two diastereoisomers by chromatography failed: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ (mixture) $\delta 7.21-6.57$ (m, $4 \mathrm{H}+4 \mathrm{H}), 4.27$ (ddd, J $=13.5,5.8,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 4), 4.04(\mathrm{~m}$, $1 \mathrm{H}, 5), 3.61(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 5), 3.51$ (ddd, J $=9.1,4.8,3.3$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 5), 3.33-3.15(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}, 4), 2.94-2.43(\mathrm{~m}, 5 \mathrm{H}+5 \mathrm{H})$, 2.39-2.16 (m, 1 H ), 2.06-1.81 (m, $2 \mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 1.24(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}, 5), 1.12(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}, 4)$.

4 $\alpha$ - and 4/ $\beta, 8$-Dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]-quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (6 and 7). Compounds 6 and 7 were prepared as reported for $\mathbf{2}$, starting from $\mathbf{6 1}(2.00 \mathrm{~g}, 7.05 \mathrm{mmol})$ and employing 1-penten-3-one ( $1.67 \mathrm{~mL}, 16.92 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The 7:2 (the same ratio in the crude) mixture of 6 and 7 ( $485 \mathrm{mg}, 30 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.20\right)$ as an oil. Another chromatography of a small amount of the $7: 2$ mixture, with the same eluant as above, provided $4 \alpha$-compound 6 in pure form as a thick oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} N \mathrm{NR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 6.92(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, $6.79(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.29$ (ddd, $\mathrm{J}=13.0,5.8,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1$ H), $3.15(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.82-2.09(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 2.25(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.97(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ $\mathrm{H}), 1.08(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{CNMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 209.8(\mathrm{~s})$, 141.4 (s), 130.0 (d), 127.7 (d), 127.7 (s), 124.0 (s), 112.6 (d), 62.2 (d), 47.9 (d), 47.6 (t), 39.9 (t), 25.4 (t), 24.3 (t), 20.2 (q), 9.5 (q); MS m/z (\%) 229 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1710 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

8-Chloro-4 $\alpha$ - and $4 \beta$-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydroben-zo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (8 and 9). Compounds 8 and 9 were prepared as reported for 2, starting from 62 (4.20 g, 13.47 mmol ) and employing 1-penten-3-one ( $3.22 \mathrm{~mL}, 32.33 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The $4: 1$ (the same ratio in the crude) mixture of 8 and 9 ( $731 \mathrm{mg}, 22 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.11\right)$ as pale yellow solid. Attempts of further separation by chromatography failed: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.00(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H})$, 6.75 (m, $1 \mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 4.29$ (ddd, J $=13.5,5.1,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 8$ ), 3.91 (m, $1 \mathrm{H}, 9$ ), 3.55-3.30 (m, $2 \mathrm{H}, 9$ ), 3.20 (m, $2 \mathrm{H}, 9$ ), 2.90$1.80(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}+6 \mathrm{H}), 1.20(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}, 9), 1.08(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=$ $7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}, 8) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ (major isomer 8) $\delta 209.3$ (s), 142.5 (s), 128.8 (d), 127.1 (d), 125.8 (s), 122.5 (s), 113.5 (d), 61.7 (d), 48.2 (d), 47.3 (t), 39.8 (t), 25.2 (t), 24.4 (t), 9.6 (q); MS m/z (\%) 249 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1713 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

8-Chloro-5 $\alpha$-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one (10). It was prepared as described for 1. Starting from 63 (953 mg, 2.92 mmol ), pure 10 ( $210 \mathrm{mg}, 29 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}}\right.$ 0.39) of the crude reaction mixture as a thick oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.07(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=8.8,2.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.98(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 6.74(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.15(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=13.5,5.9,3.3$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.28-3.07(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.79$ (dd, J $=15.8,4.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 2.69-2.21 (m, 5H), $1.85(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.06(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 208.0$ (s), 142.1 (s), 129.0 (d), 127.1 (d), 125.1 (s), 122.6 (s), 113.5 (d), 61.9 (d), 47.0 (t), 46.8 (t), 40.2 (t), 33.1 (t), 32.8 (d), 24.4 (t), 19.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) 249 ( ${ }^{+}$, 100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1715 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

6 $\alpha, 8$-Dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin3(4aH )-one (11). It was prepared as described for 1. Starting from 64 ( $720 \mathrm{mg}, 2.35 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 11 ( $190 \mathrm{mg}, 35 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.40\right)$ of the crude reaction mixture as an oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} N \mathrm{NR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta$ 7.01-6.98 (m, 1 H$), 6.94(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.81-6.77$ (m, 1 H$), 4.18$ (ddd, J $=12.8,6.5,2.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.41(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.09$ (td, J $=$ 12.1, 4.4 Hz, 1 H$), 2.90(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.74-2.60(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.59-$ $2.33(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.27(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.96-1.71(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.33(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=$ $7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} N \mathrm{NRR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 208.6$ (s), 141.7 (s), 129.8 (s), 128.6 (d), 127.7 (d), 127.6 (s), 113.2 (d), 53.1 (d), 47.9 (t), 47.2 (t), 40.7 (t), 36.8 (t), 28.9 (d), 22.2 (q); MS m/z (\%) 229 (100); IR ( $\left.\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1712 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

8-Chloro-6 $\alpha$-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one (12). It was prepared as described for 1. Starting from 65 ( $950 \mathrm{mg}, 2.90 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 12 ( $193 \mathrm{mg}, 27 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}, 0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}}\right.$ 0.55 ) of the crude reaction mixture as a thick oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.09-7.06$ (m, 2 H ), 6.77-6.71 (m, 1 H ), 4.10 (ddd, $\mathrm{J}=12.9,6.3,3.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.51-3.40(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.14(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=$ $15.4,11.0,4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.88(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.72-2.38(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H})$, $1.81(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta$ 208.0 (s), 142.7 (s), 131.6 (s), 127.4 (d), 126.9 (d), 125.9 (s), 114.0 (d), 52.7 (d), 47.8 ( t$), 46.7$ ( t$), 40.5$ ( t$), 36.4$ ( t$), 28.9$ (d), 21.6 (q); MS m/z (\%) 249 (M+, 100); IR ( $\left.\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1715 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

8-Chloro- $1 \alpha$ - and $1 \beta$-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydroben-zo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one ( 13 and 14). Compounds 13 and 14 were prepared as reported for 2, starting from 62 (2.99 g, 9.62 mmol ) and employing 3-penten-2-one ( 2.25 mL , 23.1 $\mathrm{mmol})$ for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 68. The 1:1.5:2 crude mixture of $\mathbf{1 3}, \mathbf{1 4}$, and $\mathbf{7 8}$, was dissolved in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$ (34 $\mathrm{mL})$ and treated with $1 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{TiCl}_{4}(3.97 \mathrm{~mL})$ in $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$ at room temperature for 3 h , obtaining after usual $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ (satd) quench ( 45 min ) a crude oil. This was chromatographed eluting with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}-$ petrol eum ether, $1: 1,0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$. The fractions having $R_{f} 0.23$ ( $864 \mathrm{mg}, 36 \%$ ) contained a complex mixture of products in which $\mathbf{1 3}$ and $\mathbf{1 4}$ were prevailing. F urther attempts of purification failed and the above mixture was thus used directly for the next oxidative step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.00-$ $6.51(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}+3 \mathrm{H}), 4.60-4.40(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.85-3.50(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}+$ $1 \mathrm{H}), 2.80-1.60(\mathrm{~m}, 9 \mathrm{H}+8 \mathrm{H}), 1.17(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.00$ (d, J = $7.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

8-Chloro-4 $\alpha, 5 \alpha$ - and $4 \beta, 5 \alpha$-dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (15 and 16). Compounds 15 and 16 were prepared as reported for 2 , starting from $63(2.20 \mathrm{~g}, 6.75 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and employing 1-penten-3-one ( $1.68 \mathrm{~mL}, 16.87 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The complex crude reaction mixture obtained was chromatographed (EtOAc-petrol eum ether, $1: 10,0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.23$ ) providing a 1:2 mixture of $\mathbf{1 5}$ and $\mathbf{1 6}(356 \mathrm{mg}, 20 \%)$ as an oil used directly in the next oxidative step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.12-7.01(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.97-6.36(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 6.80$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.70(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.27(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=$ $14.3,5.9,1.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 15$ ), 3.96 (m, $1 \mathrm{H}, 16$ ), 3.30-1.85 (m, 8 $\mathrm{H}+8 \mathrm{H}), 1.12(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.06(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$, 1.05 (d, J $=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ), 1.04 (d, J $=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

A pure sample of $4 \alpha, 5 \alpha$-compound $\mathbf{1 5}$ was recovered after $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAC})_{2}$ oxidation: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.11-7.04(\mathrm{~m}, 2), 6.79$ (d, J $=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 4.27 (ddd, J $=14.3,5.9,1.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 3.17 (ddd, J $=14.3,12.5,3.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.98(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=16.5$, $5.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.87 (dd, J $=11.0,1.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.66-2.47 (m, 1 H), 2.45-2.16(m, 4 H$), 1.05(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.04(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=$ $7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 209.0$ (s), 140.7 ( s ), 129.9 (d), 127.0 (d), 123.6 (s), 122.5 (s), 112.7 (d), 67.2 (d), 48.3 (d), 47.0 (t), 39.4 (t), 29.6 (t), 26.8 (d), 19.4 (q), 8.8 (q); MS m/z (\%) 263 $\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 73\right), 192(100)$; IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1701 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

4 $\alpha, 6 \alpha, 8$-Trimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one (17). It was prepared as reported for 2, starting from $64(1.5 \mathrm{~g}, 4.91 \mathrm{mmol})$ and employing 1-penten3 -one ( $1.17 \mathrm{~mL}, 11.8 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The crude reaction mixture obtained was chromatographed (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 1:10, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.24$ ) providing $\mathbf{1 7}$ (170 $\left.\mathrm{mg}, 14 \%\right)$, in mixture with a minor amount of its $4 \beta$-epimer, as an oil used directly in the next oxidative step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.00-6.83(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.81-$ 6.75 (d, J $=7.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 4.16 (ddd, J $=14.4,5.5,2.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1$ H), 3.10 (m, 2 H), 3.00-2.19 (m, 5 H), 2.29 (s, 3 H ), 2.00 (m, 1 H), $1.34(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.11(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$.

8-Chloro-4 $\alpha, 6 \alpha$-dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]-quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (18). It was prepared as reported for 2, starting from 65 ( $1.8 \mathrm{~g}, 5.5 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and employing 1-penten-3-one ( $1.36 \mathrm{~mL}, 13.7 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) for the generation in situ of silyloxydiene 69. The crude reaction mixture obtained was chromatographed $\left(\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}\right.$-petroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.47$ ) providing $\mathbf{1 8}$ (200 $\mathrm{mg}, 14 \%$ ), in mixture with a minor amount of its $4 \beta$-epimer, as an oil used directly in the next oxidation step: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.09-7.01(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}+2 \mathrm{H})$,
6.77-6.69 (m, 1 H + 1 H ), 4.31-4.04 (ddd, J = 14.2, 5.7, 2.3 $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.98-3.87(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.50(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.3 .30-3.00(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ $\mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 2.96-2.10(\mathrm{~m}, 5 \mathrm{H}+3 \mathrm{H}), 2.01-1.87(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}+1$ H), 1.60-1.42 (m, $1 \mathrm{H}+1 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.28$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=6.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.09(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.08(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6$ Hz, 3 H ).

## 3,4,5,6-Tetrahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH) -one (19).

 It was prepared as reported for 1, starting from $60(4 \mathrm{~g}, 14.4$ mmol ) and employing Danishefsky's diene 67 ( $3.29 \mathrm{~mL}, 17.3$ mmol ). Pure 19 ( $820 \mathrm{mg}, 28 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography (EtOAc-petroleum ether, $4: 1, \mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.35$ ) as a solid: mp $135-136{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C} ;{ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.75(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 7.23-6.95 (m, 4 H), $5.38(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.10-3.92(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ H), $2.83(\mathrm{~m} 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.58-2.52(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.27-2.15(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.87-$ 1.75 (m, 1 H); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 193.3$ (s), 146.2 (d), 138.5 (s), 129.4 (d), 127.8 (d), 126.5 (s), 122.6 (d), 114.1 (d), 104.0 (d), 57.3 (d), 43.1 (t), 28.8 (t), 27.5 (t); MS m/z (\%) 199 (M ${ }^{+}$, 100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1638, $1565 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.8-Chloro-5 $\alpha$-methyl-3,4,5,6-tetrahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one (27). It was prepared as reported for 1, starting from 63 ( $120 \mathrm{mg}, 0.37 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and employing Danishefsky's diene 67 ( $85 \mu \mathrm{~L}, 0.45 \mathrm{mmol}$ ). Pure 27 ( 27 mg , 29\%) was obtained after chromatography (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 2:1, $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.23$ ) as a thick oil: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.63$ (d, J $=7.6$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.17(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=8.7,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.08(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.92(\mathrm{~d}$, $\mathrm{J}=8.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.38(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.61(\mathrm{ddd}, \mathrm{J}=$ 15.6, 10.9, 3.4 Hz, 1 H), $2.78-2.51$ (m, 2 H ), 2.60-2.20 (m, 2 H), 2.00-1.76 (m, 1 H ), 1.15 (d, J = $6.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 193.4$ (s), 146.1 (d), 137.3 (s), 128.7 (d), 128.0 (s), 127.7 (d), 127.6 (s), 115.4 (d), 104.5 (d), 63.2 (d), 41.0 (t), 36.0 (t), 33.4 (d), 17.8 (q); MS m/z (\%) 247 ( ${ }^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $C D C l_{3}$ ) 1645, $1570 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of $\mathbf{1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 - H e x a h y d r o b e n z o [ c ] q u i n o l i z i n - ~}$ 3(4aH)-one (1). Method A: To a solution of $1(60 \mathrm{mg}, 0.3$ mmol ) in $5 \%$ AcOH ( 7.5 mL ) were added EDTA tetrasodium salt ( $500 \mathrm{mg}, 1.2 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) and $\mathrm{Hg}(\mathrm{OAc})_{2}(382 \mathrm{mg}, 1.2 \mathrm{mmol})$ under stirring and nitrogen atmosphere. The resulting mixture was heated at $90^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for 2 h . Then it was cooled to room temperature and diluted with water ( 7.5 mL ), extracted with chloroform, washed with $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ (satd), brine and dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$. After filtration and evaporation of the solvent, the crude obtained was chromatographed (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 4:1, 0.5\% $\mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$ ) affording pure $19\left(\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.38,7 \mathrm{mg}, 10 \%\right)$ and 35 ( $R_{f} 0.22,14 \mathrm{mg}, 20 \%$ ).

Method B: To a solution of freshly prepared LDA (0.68 mmol) in THF ( 3.5 mL ), cooled at $-78^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, was added dropwise a sol ution of $\mathbf{1}(130 \mathrm{mg}, 0.64 \mathrm{mmol})$ in THF ( 3.5 mL ) followed by TMSCI ( $139 \mu \mathrm{~L}, 1.09 \mathrm{mmol}$ ). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature and, after 1 h , DDQ ( $147 \mathrm{mg}, 0.64 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) was added and the mixture stirred 18 h . Then, a saturated solution of $\mathrm{NaHCO}_{3}$ was added, the white precipitate was filtered and the resulting solution extracted with $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}$. The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over $\mathrm{Na}_{2} \mathrm{SO}_{4}$, and evaporated. The crude was chromatographed as described above, providing isomers 19 ( $32 \mathrm{mg}, 25 \%$ ) and 35 ( $33 \mathrm{mg}, 25 \%$ ) in 1:1 ratio.

35: mp $53^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.23-6.95(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 5.13$ ( $\mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $4.03(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.85-2.75(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.70-$ $2.60(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 191.6$ (s), 159.3 (s), 139.5 (s), 128.1 (d), 127.8 (d), 127.1 (s), 122.5 (d), 113.5 (d), 100.8 (d), 45.4 ( t$), 35.6$ ( t$), 30.1$ ( t$), 24.9$ ( t$)$; MS m/z (\%) 199 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}$, 100); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1630 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8-Methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]-quinolizin-3(4aH )-one (2). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of 1, method B. Starting from $2(254 \mathrm{mg}, 1.18$ mmol), pure 20 ( $52 \mathrm{mg}, 21 \%$ ) and 36 ( $40 \mathrm{mg}, 16 \%$ ) were obtained after chromatography, eluting first with EtOAcpetroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, to recover compound $\mathbf{2 0}$ ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}}$ 0.26 ) and then with EtOAc-petroleum ether, $4: 1,0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, to collect 36 ( $R_{f} 0.19$ ).

20: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.72(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $7.00-6.94(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 5.34(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.00(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 2.79 (m, 2 H), $2.54(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.30(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.21(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.78$ (m, 1 H ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 193.1$ (s), 146.1 (d), 132.1 (s),
130.0 (d), 129.9 (s), 128.3 (d), 126.3 (s), 113.9 (d), 103.3 (d), 57.2 (d), 43.0 (t), 28.9 (t), 27.4 (t), 20.4 (q); MS m/z (\%) 213 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1636, $1569 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

36: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.15-7.05(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.97-$ 6.91 (m, 2 H), $5.11(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.00(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.81-$ $2.62(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 2.31(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 191.5(\mathrm{~s}), 159.4$ (s), 137.2 (s), 132.1 (s), 128.8 (d), 128.1 (d), 126.7 (s), 113.5 (d), 100.3 (d), 45.4 (t), 35.3 (t), 30.2 (t), 24.9 (t), 20.5 (q); MS m/z (\%) $213\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100\right)$; IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1627,1559 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8-Chloro-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]-quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (3). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method A, dissolving the starting material in $8 \%$ AcOH. Starting from 3 ( $498 \mathrm{mg}, 0.698 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 21 ( $R_{f} 0.37,34 \mathrm{mg}, 27 \%$ ) and 37 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.14,78 \mathrm{mg}, 54 \%$ ) were obtained after chromatography (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 4:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$ ).

21: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.66(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 7.19-7.09 (m, 2 H), $6.95(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.37(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.10-3.96(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.80(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.56-2.51(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ H), 2.25-2.17 (m, 1 H$), 1.87-1.72(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 193.1$ (s), 145.7 (d), 137.2 (s), 129.1 (d), 128.1 (s), 127.7 (d), 115.2 (d), 104.5 (d), 57.2 (d), 43.0 (t), 28.6 (t), 27.4 (t); MS m/z (\%) $233\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100\right)$; IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1650, $1575 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

37: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.24-7.11(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.91$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.14(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.99(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, 2.80-2.60 (m, 4 H); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 191.4(\mathrm{~s}), 158.4(\mathrm{~s})$, 138.1 (s), 128.6 (s), 127.8 (d), 127.4 (d), 127.2 (s), 114.6 (d), 101.1 (d), 45.4 (t), 35.4 (t), 29.7 (t), 24.7 (t); MS m/z (\%) 233 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1639,1568 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8 -Chloro-5-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (10). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of 1, method A, dissolving the starting material in $25 \%$ AcOH. Starting from $\mathbf{1 0}$ ( $200 \mathrm{mg}, 0.81$ $\mathrm{mmol})$, pure 27 ( $58 \mathrm{mg}, 29 \%$ ) and 41 ( $86 \mathrm{mg}, 43 \%$ ) were obtained after chromatography eluting first with EtOAcpetrol eum ether, 2:1, to collect $27\left(R_{f} 0.32\right)$ and $41\left(R_{f} 0.22\right)$, and then with EtOAc-MeOH, 5:1 to recover compound 79 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}}$ $0.26,16 \mathrm{mg}, 8 \%)$.

41: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.16$ (dd, J $=8.8,2.3 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 7.05(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=2.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.87(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.15$ ( $\mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $3.95(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.85(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=15.0,4.7 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 2.78-2.42(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 1.05(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 191.8$ (s), 162.5 (s), 137.7 (s), 128.5 (d), 127.4 (d), 127.2 ( $\mathrm{s}, 2 \mathrm{C}$ ), 114.3 (d), 99.6 (d), 45.6 ( t$), 35.3$ ( t$), 33.2$ (d), 31.9 (t), 17.5 (q); MS m/z (\%) 247 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100$ ); IR (CDCl ${ }_{3}$ ) 1636, $1561 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

79: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 8.03(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 7.38 (s, 2 H ), 7.30 (s, 1 H), 6.79 (dd, J $=8.0,2.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 6.61 (d, J $=2.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 3.18-2.92 (m, 2 H ), $2.68(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=15.0$, $7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 1.28 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 3 H ); MS m/z (\%) 245 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}$, 71), 202 (100).

Oxidation of 6,8-Dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo-[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (11). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, Method A , dissolving the starting material in $45 \%$ AcOH. Starting from $11(160 \mathrm{mg}, 0.70 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure $28\left(R_{f} 0.37,40 \mathrm{mg}, 25 \%\right)$ and 42 ( $R_{f} 0.16,74 \mathrm{mg}, 46 \%$ ) were obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAcpetroleum ether, 3:2, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

28: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.74(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $7.00-6.93(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 5.34(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.18-3.98(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ H), 3.07-2.89 (m, 1 H), 2.59-2.53 (m, 1 H), 2.50-2.42 (m, 2 H), $2.28(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.94(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=8.0,4.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.80(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=$ $6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 193.3$ (s), 145.9 (d), 135.1 (s), 132.2 (s), 130.9 (s), 129.7 (d), 128.4 (s), 113.9 (d), 103.3 (d), 51.7 (d), 43.0 (t), 34.5 (t), 31.0 (d), 21.5 (q), 20.4 (q); MS m/z (\%) 227 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1632, $1569 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

42: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.07-6.98(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.95$ $(\mathrm{s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.87(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.10(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.94(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.86(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.71-2.56(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.62(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.6$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.34(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=15.4,7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.28(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.23$ (d, J $=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 191.5(\mathrm{~s}), 158.4$ (s), 136.4 (s), 132.3 (s), 131.7 (s), 128.0 (d), 127.3 (d), 113.8 (d), 101.2 (d), 45.4 (t), 37.4 (t), 35.6 (t), 29.4 (d), 20.6 (q), 18.7 (q); MS m/z (\%) 227 (M+, 100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1628, $1551 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8 -Chloro-6-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (12). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, Method A , dissolving the starting material in 50\% AcOH. Starting from 12 ( $133 \mathrm{mg}, 0.53$ $\mathrm{mmol})$, pure $29\left(R_{f} 0.22,35 \mathrm{mg}, 26 \%\right)$ and $43\left(R_{f} 0.14,65 \mathrm{mg}\right.$, $51 \%$ ) were obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAcpetroleum ether, 3:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

29: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \operatorname{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.68(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $7.19-7.09(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.95(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.36(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.21-4.03(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.08-2.97(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.58-2.44$ (m, 2 H$), 1.97-1.89(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.27(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 193.1$ (s), 145.3 (d), 136.2 (s), 132.6 (s), 128.8 (d), 127.6 (d), 127.4 (s), 115.2 (d), 104.5 (d), 51.6 (d), 43.0 (t), 34.2 (t), 30.9 (d), 21.3 (q); MS m/z (\%) 247 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1646, $1568 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

43: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.23-7.13(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.91$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.14(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.99(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, 2.93 (m, 1 H ), 2.71-2.68 (m, 1 H), $2.65(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, 2.37 (dd, J $=15.0,7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 1.27 (d, J $=6.9 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 191.4$ (s), 157.5 (s), 137.4 (s), 133.5 (s), 127.6 ( s$), 127.4$ (d), 126.5 (d), 114.9 (d), 102.0 (d), 45.5 (t), 37.0 (t), 35.5 (t), 29.4 (d), 18.4 (q); MS m/z (\%) 247 ( ${ }^{+}, 100$ ); IR (CDCl $)_{3}$ ) 1640, $1567 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8-Chloro-1-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (13 and 14). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method B . Starting from the $\mathbf{1 3 - 1 4} \mathbf{~ m i x t u r e ~ ( ~} 687 \mathrm{mg}, 2.75 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 44 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.42,122 \mathrm{mg}, 18 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography, eluting with EtOAc-petroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, while compound $30\left(R_{f} 0.55,61 \mathrm{mg}, 9 \%\right)$ was obtained in 1:1 mixture with 44. Further attempts of separate $\mathbf{3 0}$ from $\mathbf{4 4}$ by chromatography failed.

The oxidation was also performed according to method A, dissolving the starting material in $45 \%$ AcOH. Starting from the $\mathbf{1 3}-\mathbf{1 4}$ mixture ( $120 \mathrm{mg}, 0.48 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure $\mathbf{4 4}$ ( $68 \mathrm{mg}, 57 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography (the same eluant as above).

30: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right)$ (from the mixture with 44) $\delta 7.26-$ 7.13 (m, 2 H), $6.87(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=9.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.39(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.10-$ $3.90(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.20-3.00(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.75-2.56(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.82-$ 1.70 (m, 2 H), 1.26 (s, 3 H).

44: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.24-7.10(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.95$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.13(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.51(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.05-2.93(\mathrm{~m}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 2.84-2.55(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 2.38-2.30(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.33(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 190.9$ (s), 155.7 (s), 137.3 (s), 128.8 (s), 128.7 (d), 127.7 (d), 123.5 (s), 114.7 (d), 100.5 (d), 51.5 (d), 41.9 (t), 30.00 (t), 25.1 (t), 15.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) 247 ( ${ }^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1637, $1567 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 4-Methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]-quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (4 and 5). It was performed as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method A, dissolving the starting material in $5 \% \mathrm{AcOH}$. Starting from the $3: 2$ mixture of 4 and 5 ( $79 \mathrm{mg}, 0.37 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 38 ( $\mathrm{Rf}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.29,30 \mathrm{mg}, 38 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAcpetroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et} \mathrm{t}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$. A small amount of $\mathbf{8 0}(9 \mathrm{mg}$, $12 \%$ ) was also obtained after chromatography by washing the silica gel with MeOH .

The oxidation was also performed according to method B. Starting from the $3: 2$ mixture of 4 and 5 ( $56 \mathrm{mg}, 0.26 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 22 ( $R_{f} 0.59,13 \mathrm{mg}, 22 \%$ ) and $23\left(R_{f} 0.36,13 \mathrm{mg}, 22 \%\right)$ were obtained after chromatography as thick oils, eluting with EtOAc-petroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

38: mp 88-89 ${ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C} ;{ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.25-6.94(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H})$, $3.93(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.80-2.63(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 1.83(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 190.7$ (s), 156.3 (s), 140.5 (s), 127.9 (d), 127.8 (d), 126.7 ( s ), 121.8 (d), 112.8 (d), 105.9 ( s$), 45.0$ (t), 35.5 ( t$)$, 26.3 (t), 24.8 (t), 10.1 (q); MS m/z (\%) 213 ( ${ }^{+}, 98$ ), 212 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1622, $1553 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

22: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.70(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.23-6.95$ $(\mathrm{m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 5.40(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.63$ (ddd, J = 12.4, 12.4, $4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.89-2.77 (m, 2 H), 2.45-2.31 (m, 2 H ), 1.82$1.61(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.23(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta$ 195.3 (s), 145.8 (d), 139.2 (s), 129.0 (d), 127.8 (d), 126.8 (s),
122.5 (d), 114.5 (d), 103.4 (d), 62.7 (d), 45.1 (d), 27.5 (t, 2 C), 10.6 (q); MS m/z (\%) 213 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $\left.\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1642,1569 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

23: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.67(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.24-6.97$ $(\mathrm{m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 5.30(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=7.7,1.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.10-3.99(\mathrm{dt}, \mathrm{J}=$ $12.4,3.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.87-2.80(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.42-2.36(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 2.10-1.87 (m, 2 H), $\left.1.04(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \mathrm{NMR} \mathrm{(CDCl} 3\right)$ $\delta 195.2$ (s), 145.7 (d), 139.5 (s), 129.2 (d), 127.9 (d), 127.3 (s), 122.7 (d), 114.5 (d), 102.2 (d), 60.2 (d), 44.3 (d), 27.7 (t), 25.3 (t), 10.1 (q); MS m/z (\%) 213 (M+100); IR ( $\left.\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1634 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

80: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.89(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.40-7.00$ $(\mathrm{m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 6.51(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.93(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 2.18(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; MS m/z (\%) 211 (M+, 25), 210 (100).

Oxidation of 4,8-Dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo-[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one ( 6 and 7). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of 1, method A, dissolving the starting material in $8 \% \mathrm{AcOH}$. Starting from the 7:2 mixture of 6 and 7 ( $151 \mathrm{mg}, 0.31 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 39 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.51,50 \mathrm{mg}, 71 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAcpetroleum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

The oxidation was also performed according to method B. Starting from the 7:2 mixture of $\mathbf{6}$ and $\mathbf{7}$ ( $243 \mathrm{mg}, 1.06 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure $24\left(R_{f} 0.60,56 \mathrm{mg}, 23 \%\right)$ and $25\left(R_{f} 0.28,56 \mathrm{mg}, 23 \%\right)$ were obtained after chromatography, eluting with EtOAcpetrol eum ether, 2:1, $0.5 \% \mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

39: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.06-6.83(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 3.91(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.7$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.73-2.61(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 2.30(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.82(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 190.3$ (s), 156.8 (s), 138.1 (s), 131.4 (s), 128.4 (d), 128.0 (d), 126.6 (s), 112.8 (d), 105.3 (s), 45.0 ( t$), 35.3$ ( t$)$, 26.4 (t), 24.7 (t), 20.4 (q), 10.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) 227 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100$ ); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $1652,1573 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

24: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.66(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 6.93 (m, 3 H ), $5.35(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.60$ (ddd, $\mathrm{J}=12.4$, 12.4, $4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $2.78(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.33(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.29(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H})$, $1.70(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.21(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C} \operatorname{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta$ 195.1 (s), 145.8 (d), 136.6 (s), 132.0 (s), 129.5 (d), 128.2 (d), 126.6 (s), 114.3 (d), 102.6 (d), 62.5 (d), 44.8 (d), 27.4 (t), 27.3 (t), 20.4 (q), 10.6 (q); MS m/z 227 (M+, 100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1644, $1572 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

25: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.70(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $6.99(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 5.34(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.02(\mathrm{dt}, \mathrm{J}=12.7,3.2$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.82(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.40(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.30(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 2.03-1.85$ $(\mathrm{m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.03(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 198.0$ (s), 145.6 (d), 137.1 (s), 132.3 (s), 129.7 (d), 128.4 (d), 127.1 (s), 114.4 (d), 101.6 (d), 60.2 (d), 44.3 (d), 27.7 (t), 25.4 (t), 20.5 (q), 10.1 (q); MS m/z 227 (M+, 100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1636, $1501 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8-Chloro-4-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (8 and 9). It was carried out as reported for the oxidation of 1, method A, dissolving the starting material in $8 \%$ AcOH. Starting from the $4: 1$ mixture of 8 and $9(212 \mathrm{mg}, 0.85 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure $40\left(R_{f} 0.18,73\right.$ $\mathrm{mg}, 35 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAc-petroleum ether, 2:1, 0.5\% $\mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

The oxidation was also performed according to method B. Starting from the $4: 1$ mixture of $\mathbf{8}$ and $\mathbf{9}(333 \mathrm{mg}, 1.33 \mathrm{mmol})$, pure $\mathbf{2 6}\left(R_{f} 0.50,47 \mathrm{mg}, 18 \%\right)$ was obtained after chromatography, eluting with EtOAc-petrol eum ether, 2:1, 0.5\% $\mathrm{ET}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$.

40: mp 108- $110{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.23-7.11(\mathrm{~m}, 2$ H), 6.87 (d, J $=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.90(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.76-$ $2.64(\mathrm{~m}, 6 \mathrm{H}), 1.82(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 190.6(\mathrm{~s}), 155.4$ (s), 139.0 (s), 128.3 (s), 127.7 (d), 127.3 (d), 126.5 (s), 113.9 (d), 106.4 (s), 45.1 ( t ), 35.3 (t), 26.1 (t), 24.7 ( t$), 10.1$ (q); MS m/z (\%) $247\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100\right)$; IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1648,1569 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

26: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.60(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 7.26-7.11 (m, 2 H ), $6.97(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.30(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=$ $7.7,1.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 4.03 (ddd, J $=12.8,12.8,3.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.84-$ 2.76 (m, 2 H ), 2.42-2.36 (m, 1 H), 2.08-1.82 (m, 2H), 1.02 (d, $\mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 197.9$ (s), 145.2 (d), 138.2 (s), 131.0 (s), 128.9 (d), 127.8 (d), 127.4 (s), 115.7 (d), 102.8 (d), 60.1 (d), 44.2 (d), 27.6 (t), 25.2 (t), 10.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) $247\left(\mathrm{M}^{+}, 100\right)$; IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1661, $1568 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

Oxidation of 8-Chloro-4,5-dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one ( 15 and 16). It was performed as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method A, dissolving the starting material in $50 \% \mathrm{AcOH}$. Starting from
the $1: 2$ mixture of $\mathbf{1 5}$ and $\mathbf{1 6}$ ( $153 \mathrm{mg}, 0.6 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), the crude was chromatographed eluting first with EtOAc-petroleum ether, $3: 2,0.1 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, obtaining a mixture of isomers 31 and 32 ( $R_{f} 0.39,17 \mathrm{mg}, 11 \%$ ), and then with EtOAc-petroleum ether, $3: 1,0.1 \% E t_{3} N$, affording compound $45\left(R_{f} 0.32,22 \mathrm{mg}\right.$, $14 \%$ ). Two successive chromatographies of the first fraction (EtOAc-petroleum ether, 2:1, $0.1 \% \mathrm{Et}_{3} \mathrm{~N}$ ) allowed the partial separation of 31 ( $4 \mathrm{mg}, 3 \%$ ) and 32 ( $8 \mathrm{mg}, 6 \%$ ), compound 31 and 32 being $98 \%$ and $75 \%$ pure, respectively, by GLC analysis.

45: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.20$ (dd, J $=8.8,2.6 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 7.11(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.25(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 4.09-3.95(\mathrm{~m}, 1$ H), 3.86-3.62 (m, 1 H ), 3.28 (ddd, J $=6.9,4.7,1.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $2.99(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=15.0,4.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $2.84-2.65(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.60-$ 2.47 (m, 2 H), 1.87 (s, 3H), $0.90(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 191.2$ (s), 158.7 (s), 138.4 (s), 128.9 (d), 127.4 (d), 126.7 (s), 126.0 (s), 113.7 (d), 105.7 (s), 45.3 (t), 35.4 ( t$), 31.6$ (d), 29.3 (t), 15.6 (q), 9.5 (q); MS m/z (\%) 261 ( ${ }^{+}$, 100); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1628,1554 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

31: oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \operatorname{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.15$ $(\mathrm{m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 7.00(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.24(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $3.14(d d, \mathrm{~J}=8.5,8.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.90(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=16.1,5.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1$ H), 2.61 (t, J $=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.54-2.48 (m, 1 H$), 2.47-2.43$ $(\mathrm{m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.31(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.03(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$; ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\left.\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 198.1$ (s), 145.6 (d), 138.2 (s), 128.7 (s), 128.5 (d), 127.8 (d), 115.7 (d), 102.7 (d), 66.1 (d), 41.8 (d), 36.0 (t), 29.8 (d), 17.3 (q), 9.51 (q); MS m/z (\%) 261 ( ${ }^{+}, 100$ ); IR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) 1637,1568 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

32: oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.58(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.20$ (dd, J = 8.5, $2.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $7.09(\mathrm{~s}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 6.95(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.5 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1$ H), $5.31(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=7.7,1.1 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.65(\mathrm{dd}, \mathrm{J}=11.4,3.0 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $1 \mathrm{H}), 2.72$ (dd, J $=15.3,3.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.59-2.44(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, $2.08-1.85(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.14(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 0.98(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.3$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

Oxidation of 4,6,8-Trimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydroben-zo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (17). It was performed as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method A , dissol ving the starting material in $50 \%$ AcOH. Starting from 17 ( $170 \mathrm{mg}, 0.7 \mathrm{mmol}$ ), pure 46 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.21,45 \mathrm{mg}, 27 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAc -petroleum ether, $1: 2,1 \% E t_{3} \mathrm{~N}$. By the same chromatography a fraction ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.37$ ) containing compound $\mathbf{3 3}$ ( $46 \mathrm{mg}, 27 \%$ ) in mixture with minor amounts of some unidentified compounds was also obtained and further attempts of purification were not successful.

46: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.05-6.94$ (m, 2 H ), 6.876.83 (m, 1 H ), 3.91 (t, J $=7.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.96-2.86 (m, 1 H ), 2.74-2.64 (m, 1 H), 2.64 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2 H), 2.49 (dd, J = $15.4,7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.31(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.82(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.29(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.9$ $\mathrm{Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}) ;{ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 190.4$ (s), 155.5 (s), 137.3 (s), 131.4 (s), 131.1 (s), 127.7 (d), 126.6 (d), 112.9 (d), 106.0 (s), 45.0 (t), 35.4 (t), 33.7 (t), 29.1 (d), 20.5 (q), 18.4 (q), 10.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) 241 ( ${ }^{+}$, 91), 226 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1628, 1561 $\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$.

33: brown thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H} \mathrm{NMR}\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.68(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}$, 1 H ), $7.25-6.80(\mathrm{~m}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 5.35$ (d, J $=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 3.69 (ddd, $\mathrm{J}=16.8,13.2,4.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.00(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 2.80-2.00(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H})$, $2.32(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.80(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.18(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=6.6 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.16(\mathrm{~d}$, $\mathrm{J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H})$.

Oxidation of 8-Chloro-4,6-dimethyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahy-drobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(4aH)-one (18). It was performed as reported for the oxidation of $\mathbf{1}$, method A , dissolving the starting material in 50\%AcOH . Starting from 18 ( $170 \mathrm{mg}, 0.7$ $\mathrm{mmol})$, pure 47 ( $\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.21,68 \mathrm{mg}, 34 \%$ ) was obtained after chromatography eluting with EtOAc-petroleum ether, 1:3, 1\% $E t_{3} \mathrm{~N}$, together with a fraction containing compound $\mathbf{3 4}\left(\mathrm{R}_{\mathrm{f}} 0.29\right.$, $20 \mathrm{mg}, 10 \%$ ) in mixture with other unidentified compounds.

47: thick oil; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.19-7.09(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.82$ $(\mathrm{d}, \mathrm{J}=8.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.89(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.91(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 2.70 (dd, J $=15.5,4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.65 (t, J $=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}$ ), 2.45 (dd, J $=15.4,8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}$ ), $1.80(\mathrm{~s}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.28(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.0 \mathrm{~Hz}$, 3 H ); ${ }^{13} \mathrm{C}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 190.5$ (s), 154.5 (s), 138.3 (s), 132.9 ( s$), 127.1$ (d), 126.8 (d), 125.8 (d), 114.1 (d), 107.0 ( d$), 45.0$ ( t$)$, 35.4 (t), 33.4 (t), 29.1 (d), 18.1 (q), 10.0 (q); MS m/z (\%) 261 ( $\mathrm{M}^{+}, 74$ ), 246 (100); IR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) 1633, $1564 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$.

34: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR $\left(\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}\right) \delta 7.63(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 7.30-7.00$ $(\mathrm{m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.93(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=8.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 5.39(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.7 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, 3.73 (ddd, J = 16.5, 13.6, $4.4 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 3.04$ (m, 1 H ), 2.80$2.00(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 1.85(\mathrm{~m}, 1 \mathrm{H}), 1.18(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}), 1.16$ (d, $\mathrm{J}=7.3 \mathrm{~Hz}, 3 \mathrm{H}$ ).

4-Methyl-2,3,5,6-tetrahydrobenzo[c]quinolizin-3(1H)one $\cdot \mathbf{H C l}$ Salt (81). Compound 38 ( $83 \mathrm{mg}, 0.39 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) was dissolved in a $\mathrm{HCl}(\mathrm{g})$ saturated solution in anhydrous MeOH ( 5 mL ), and after stirring 30 min , the solvent was evaporated and the yellow residue 81 ( $97 \mathrm{mg}, 100 \%$ ) dried under high vacuum: mp 139-145 ${ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$; ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{CDCl}_{3}$ ) $\delta 7.40-7.08(\mathrm{~m}, 4$ $\mathrm{H}), 4.08(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=8.2 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.80(\mathrm{~s}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 2.72(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=8.15 \mathrm{~Hz}$, $2 \mathrm{H}), 1.78$ (s, 3 H ).

8-Chloro-4-methyl-1,2,3,4,5,6-hexahydrobenzo[c]quin-olizin-3(4aH)-one•HCI Salt (82). It was prepared as described for compound 81. Starting from 40 ( $250 \mathrm{mg}, 1 \mathrm{mmol}$ ) compound 82 ( $282 \mathrm{mg}, 100 \%$ ) was obtained as yellow solid: ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR ( $\mathrm{d}_{6}$-DMSO) $\delta 7.00(\mathrm{~m}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 6.80(\mathrm{~d}, \mathrm{~J}=7.8 \mathrm{~Hz}, 1 \mathrm{H})$, $3.79(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2 \mathrm{H}), 2.81(\mathrm{~m}, 4 \mathrm{H}), 2.72(\mathrm{t}, \mathrm{J}=8.0 \mathrm{~Hz}, 2$ H), 1.79 (s, 3 H ).

Inhibition Tests toward Recombinant 5 $\alpha$ R-1 and 5 $\alpha$ R2. Cell routinary treatment: CHO 1827 (transfected with $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ ) and CHO 1829 (transfected with $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ ) cells were maintained in Ham's nutrient mixture F 12 supplemented with $5 \%$ of fetal bovine serum. Medium was replaced two or three times a week. At confluence, cells were washed with PBS (phosphate-buffered saline) without $\mathrm{Ca}^{2+}$ and $\mathrm{Mg}^{2+}$ and split with a solution of trypsin-EDTA. Cells were maintained in a fully humidified incubator with $95 \%$ air and $5 \% \mathrm{CO}_{2}$ at $37^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. To set up the experiments CHO 1827 ( $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ ) and CHO 1829 ( $5 \alpha$ R-2) cells were trypsinized, counted by hemocytometer and seeded in 24 -well plates at a density of 50000 cells/well in Ham's nutrient mixture F-12 supplemented with $5 \%$ fetal bovine serum until the day after.

Stock and working solution of inhibitors: Stock solutions of the inhibitors were prepared at a concentration of 1 $\mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL}$ in ethanol. To verify the stability and purity of our inhibitors, we tested the stock solutions by GC/MS. These solutions resulted unchanged after 1 year from the preparation. To avoid any possible alteration of the inhibitor solutions at the lowest concentrations, working sol utions at concentration below $1 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL}$ were freshly prepared and used within 15 days.
Inhibition test: Cells were incubated for 30 min at $37^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ in a $5 \% \mathrm{CO}_{2}$ incubator in a medium containing $2 \mu \mathrm{M}$ testosterone ( $\mathrm{T} /\left[{ }^{3} \mathrm{H}\right] \mathrm{T}=100 / 1$ ) for the $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-1$ assay or $0.2 \mu \mathrm{M}$ for the $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$ assay and the inhibitor in a concentration range from $10^{-5}$ to $10^{-9} \mathrm{M}$. Substrate and inhibitor were added in ethanol ( $1 \%$ of the final volume). Medium was removed and extracted with 3 mL of ethyl acetate. After freezing of the aqueous layer, the organic phase was removed and evaporated. Samples were supplemented with T and DHT as carriers ( $20 \mu \mathrm{~L}$ of a sol ution containing $2 \mathrm{mg} / \mathrm{mL}$ of T and DHT) and steroids were separated on TLC silica plates using $\mathrm{CH}_{2} \mathrm{Cl}_{2}-\mathrm{Et}_{2} \mathrm{O} 85 / 15$ as el uant. Steroids were visible under UV light, [2-(p-toluidino)naphthal ene-6-sulfonic acid enhancer (TNS) was necessary to identify DHT]. Lanes corresponding to T and DHT were scraped and silica extracted with 2 mL of ethyl acetate. After 30 min ethyl acetate was counted in a $\beta$-counter with 5 mL of scintillation liquid. The percentage of conversion of T into DHT is calculated as follows: C $\%=[$ DHT counts/(T counts + DHT counts)] $\times 100$. The percentage of conversion at each concentration of the inhibitor was normalized to the control (percent of conversion without the inhibitor) and data were processed with the program ALLFIT using the four-parameter logistic equation to cal culate the I $\mathrm{C}_{50}$ values. This program allows the statistical comparison of different inhibition curves through the F-test giving a probability $p$ value. With this method it was possible to compare the inhibitory potency of different inhibitors. Generally, two different compounds were tested si multaneously toward the two isozymes, using finasteride as a control inhibitor in each experiment. The total recovery of steroids was $90-100 \%$, indicating that under the above
conditions T and DHT are no further metabolized by other enzymatic systems.

Inhibition Tests toward Native $5 \alpha \mathbf{R - 1}$ and $5 \alpha \mathbf{R - 2}$. Human prostate homogenate preparation: Human benign prostatic hyperplastic tissues were obtained from different patients undergoing surgical prostatectomy. Patients had not been previously treated with finasteride. Tissues were frozen in liquid nitrogen immediately after surgical asportation and stored at $-80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ until the assay. Prostatic homogenate was obtained from 4-5 surgical pieces using a Potter homogenizer in a 5:1 (v:w) buffer ( 50 mM Tris, pH 7.4, $61 \mathrm{mM} \mathrm{NaCl}, 1.5$ $\mathrm{mM} \mathrm{KCl}, 1 \mathrm{mM} \mathrm{MgCl} 2 \cdot 6 \mathrm{H}_{2} \mathrm{O}, 1 \mathrm{mM}$ fumaric acid, 15 mM nicotinamide, 0.25 mM sucrose, 1 mM PMSF) working at 4 ${ }^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. The homogenate was filtered through a nylon membrane, fractionated and stocked at $-80^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.

Human scalp homogenate preparation: Human scalp tissues were obtained from the neurosurgery division of our hospital. The human scalp homogenate was prepared as described for the prostate homogenate.

Experimental conditions of the assay: (a) Prostate tissue: Experimental conditions were: 0.1 mg of protein per tube, incubation time 30 min, NADPH $250 \mu \mathrm{M}$ in a final volume of 1 mL . Testosterone concentration was 50 nM and inhibitors were tested in the range $10^{-9}-10^{-5} \mathrm{M}$. At the end of the incubation, samples were extracted with 3 mL of ethyl acetate and processed according to the method described in the previous paragraph
(b) Scalp tissue: Experimental conditions were: 0.1 mg of protein per tube, incubation time 30 min , NADPH $500 \mu \mathrm{M}$ in a final volume of 0.1 mL . Testosterone concentration was 1 $\mu \mathrm{M}$, a constant amount ( 10 nM ) of finasteride was used to block $5 \alpha \mathrm{R}-2$, and inhibitors were tested in the range $10^{-9}-10^{-5} \mathrm{M}$. At the end of the incubation, samples were extracted with 3 mL of ethyl acetate and processed according to the method described previously.

Evaluation of the Mechanism of Action. The experiments were performed using two 24-well plates with 50000 cells/well. In the first hour of the experiment the two plates were treated as follows: in control wells, cells were incubated with a medium containing the substrate testosterone $1 \mu \mathrm{M}$; and in test wells, the effect of the inhibitor was monitored using a medium supplemented with the substrate ( $1 \mu \mathrm{M}$ ) and the inhibitor at a concentration close to the calculated $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$.

In the first plate the enzymatic activity was evaluated at different times (after 10, 20, 40 and 60 min , respectively) by withdrawing the medium, extracting it with ethyl acetate and determining the percent of conversion. After 60 min of incubation the medium of the second plate (treated as the first plate for the first 60 min ) was withdrawn, cells were washed with medium and then fresh medium containing the substrate but not the inhibitor was added. The enzymatic activity was again monitored at different times after the wash out (after 10, 20, 40 and 60 min , respectively). If in the second phase of the experiment, when the medium without inhibitor was employed, the enzyme activity was restored to the control level, the mechanism of action of the inhibitor was considered reversible.

K $_{\mathrm{i}}$ Determination. CHO 1827 ( $5 \alpha$ R-1) cells were plated in 24-well plates at a density of 50000 cells/well in Ham's nutrient mixture F-12 supplemented with $5 \%$ fetal bovine serum. Cells were incubated for 60 min at $37^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ in a $5 \% \mathrm{CO}_{2}$ incubator in a medium containing respectively testosterone and $\left[{ }^{3} \mathrm{H}\right]$ testosterone $0.2-400 \mu \mathrm{M}$ and inhibitors at three different concentrations close to the $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ value. Medium was removed and extracted with 3 mL of ethyl acetate. After freezing of the aqueous layer, the organic phase was removed and evaporated. Samples were processed as described for the $\mathrm{IC}_{50}$ determination and the percent of conversion was calculated. Data were processed with the program GRAFIT ${ }^{41}$ to cal culate the $K_{i}$ values. The E adie-H ofstee transformation of the curves shows the mechanism of action.

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Supporting Information Available: Stereochemical assignments on substituted benzo[c]quinolizin-3-ones by ${ }^{1} \mathrm{H}$ NMR analysis. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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