A regio- and stereoselectivity and molecular mechanism study on the addition reactions of morpholine and m-CPBA to 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene using DFT calculations

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Abstract: The chemoselectivity and stereospecificity of the addition of the morpholine and the meta-chloroperoxybenzoic acid (m-CPBA) onto 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene were studied using Density Functional Theory (DFT) calculations with the B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p) computational level within the Molecular Electron Density Theory (MEDT), to demonstrate the key role of the Global Electron Density Transfer (GEDT) and to examine the polar character of these reactions. This work is divided into two parts; the first part concerns the reaction between the morpholine and the 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene. The second part deals with the epoxidation of the 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene by m-CPBA followed by the addition of the morpholine to the major product resulting from the epoxidation step. The obtained results show that the reaction between the morpholine and the 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene takes place on the double bond C1=C2. On the other hand, when 9α-hydroxyyparthenolene is attacked by m-CPBA, the epoxidation reaction is carried out on the double bond C1=C2.

Keywords: 9α-Hydroxyyparthenolene; Epoxidation; DFT; GEDT; Polar reactions.

1. Introduction

The regio and stereoselectivity in organic synthesis are crucial parameters, especially when the reaction product must be a particular regio- or stereoisomer, such as pharmaceutically active compounds. Therefore, it is interesting to understand the parameters that induce the different types of selectivity and thus be able to control them. To fully understand the chemical process of these reactions and provide valuable predictions to the experimenters, a theoretical study seems necessary.

It is important to point out that the study of the chemical reactivity of the compounds used in the manufacture of drugs has been the subject of enormous experiments carried out by researchers to find drugs effective against cancer, which remains one of the leading causes of death. Many chemotherapeutic agents have been developed to treat different types of cancer, but the use of these agents causes many undesirable effects. This underlines the urgent need to develop novel chemotherapeutic agents with higher bioactivity and fewer side effects. One of the most promising approaches for obtaining novel therapeutic agents in medicinal chemistry is the functionalization of natural products.

In this context, the parthenolide (PTL), which is purified initially from the shoots of feverfew (Tanacetum parthenium), has shown potent anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory activities. However, this compound is faintly soluble in water, which limited its potential therapeutic use in the human body. For this reason, the fixation of amine groups to the parthenolide is necessary to make it more soluble and more biologically active. Given the high biological activity of aminoparthenolides, series of their hydroxy and epoxy-analogs types II and III (Scheme 1) were synthesized.

Generally, understanding the changes in molecules structure during a chemical reaction is not easy in many cases because these changes take place in a short time. For this reason, specific theories are important to examine and understand the molecular reactivity and to study the reaction mechanisms.

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.13171/mjc10502005221429nb

Received April 3, 2020
Accepted April 18, 2020
Published May 22, 2020
With the increase in computing power of computers, the improvement of algorithms and the development of original approaches in the methods of numerical resolution of the equations of quantum mechanics have made it possible to obtain numerical parameters that can explain the results obtained in experiments. It is possible to access with very high precision all the electronic properties of chemical systems and to calculate their variations along the reaction paths. In particular, quantum theories of reactivity currently make it possible not only to develop reaction mechanisms and energy profiles but also to justify and predict experimental chemo-, stereo- and regioselectivity.
In this study, we present theoretical justifications for the regio- and stereoselectivity experimentally observed during the addition of morpholine to the 9α-hydroxyxyparthenolide in the first step. Then, the epoxidation of the 9α-hydroxyxyparthenolide by the m-CPBA followed by the addition of the morpholine according to the reaction sequences proposed in the diagram. Different theoretical approaches were used, such as the frontier molecular orbital theory (FMO), the calculation of activation energies, and the reactivity indices derived from DFT.

2. Theoretical and computational methods

2.1. Global and local reactivity indices
Organic reactions can be classified as non-polar or polar; it depends on the overall electronic character of the bond formation and/or bond-breaking along with the reaction. The electrophilic or nucleophilic power of a molecule is related to its ability to exchange electron density along with a reaction. The description of this power requires taking into consideration the electronic structure of the system, which could be possible only with a quantum description.

Furthermore, to solve the problem of the chemical reactivity of organic and pharmaceutical molecules and to explain why some sites of the molecules are more reactive than others, several theories have been established for the study of chemical reactivity. This is following the transition state theory (developed by Eyring in 1931), frontier molecular orbital theory (initiated by K. Fukui in 1952), and the density functional theory (proposed by G. Klopman in 1968).

With the application of the quantum or molecular mechanics, it is possible to obtain several parameters such as the structural parameters (bond lengths, valence angles, hydrogen bonds), the energy parameters (binding energy, enthalpy of formation), and the electronic parameters (charges, orbital energies (Highest Occupied Molecular Orbital (HOMO), Lowest Unoccupied Molecular Orbital (LUMO)), E_{ip} (energy difference between E_{HOMO} and E_{LUMO})...).

The calculated levels of energy of HOMO and LUMO can be used for the calculation of other parameters related to the stability of the molecule, such as ionization energy (I), electron affinity (A), electronegativity (χ), electronic chemical potential (µ), chemical hardness (η), chemical softness (S), and electrophilicity index (ω). These parameters can be calculated using the following equations:

- Ionization Energy (I) = -E_{HOMO},
- Electron Affinity (A) = -E_{LUMO},
- Electronegativity (χ) = (E_{HOMO}+E_{LUMO})/2,
- Electronic Chemical Potential (µ) = - (χ) = (E_{HOMO}+E_{LUMO})/2,
- Chemical Hardness (η) = (E_{LUMO} - E_{HOMO})/8,
- Electrophilicity Index (ω) = µ^2/2η and molecular softness (S) = 1/2η.

The nucleophilicity index N is referenced to the HOMO energy of tetracyanoethylene (TCE) as N = E_{HOMO}(Nu) - E_{HOMO}(TCE).

In a polar reaction, the breaking and formation of bonds take place at a specific site of a reactive molecule. If a molecule has several points with similar reactivity, we can talk of regio or chemoselectivity as in the case of cycloaddition reactions. In these reactions, the different approach modes of a reagent towards the other can yield two competitive regioisomers. The most favorable regioisomeric channel is that involving the bond formation between the most electrophilic and the most nucleophilic center of the reagents. Consequently, it is desirable to have local reactivity indices able to characterize these relevant centers and their position in organic molecules. The local electrophilicity index ω_k, the local nucleophilicity index N_k, the Parr functions (P^+_k, P^-_k) and the Fukui function (f^+_k, f^-_k) have been confirmed to be useful tools in the study of the regioselectivity in cycloaddition reactions. The local electrophilicity and nucleophilicity indices were calculated as ω_k = ω_k, P^+_k and N_k = N_k, P^-_k, respectively. The electrophilic P^+_k and nucleophilic P^-_k Parr functions are obtained by the analysis of the Mullikan atomic spin density (ASD) of the radical anion and radical cation of the reactants. The Fukui functions (FF) are calculated using the procedure proposed by Yang and Mortier, based on a finite difference method: f^+_k = P^+_k(N+1) − P^+_k(N) (for nucleophilic attack), f^-_k = P^-_k(N) − P^-_k(N−1) (for electrophilic attack) and f^0_k = P^0_k(N+1) − P^0_k(N−1)/2 (for radical attack), where P^+_k(N), P^-_k(N−1) and P^0_k(N+1) are the gross electronic populations of the site k in neutral, cationic, and anionic systems, respectively.

2.2. Computational details

DFT calculations were carried out using the Becke three-parameter hybrid exchange functional and the Lee-Yang-Parr correlation functional (B3LYP) together with the standard 6-311+G(d,p) basis set. Optimizations were carried out using the Berny analytical gradient optimization method. Frequency calculations characterized the stationary points to verify that the transition state (TS) has one and only one imaginary frequency. The IRC was performed and plotted to confirm that the TS is well connected to both minima (reagents and products).

The electronic structures of the stationary points and the bond orders were analyzed using the natural bond orbital method (NBO).
The values of enthalpies, entropies, and free energies were calculated using standard statistical thermodynamics. The Gaussian 09W suite of programs was used in all calculations.  

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Addition of morpholine and m-CPBA onto 9α-hydroxyparthenolide

3.1.1. Analysis of the CDFT indices of the reagents

Several studies devoted to organic reactions have shown that the analysis of the reactivity indices defined within the conceptual density functional theory (CDFT) is a powerful tool to understand the reactivity in polar reactions. Global DFT reactivity indices, namely, the electronic chemical potential \( \mu \), chemical hardness \( \eta \), softness \( S \), electrophilicity \( \omega \), nucleophilicity \( N \) indices and the maximum number of electrons transferred \( \Delta N_{\text{max}} \) of reagents are given in Table 1.

This Table indicates that the electrophilic and nucleophilic character of 9α-hydroxyparthenolide changes from one reaction to the other, depending on the attacking reagent. In the first reaction, the electronic chemical potential of morpholine, \( \mu = -3.103 \text{ eV} \), is higher than that of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide, \( \mu = -4.239 \text{ eV} \). This result indicates that the global electron density transfer (GEDT) will go from the morpholine towards the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide. The morpholine presents an electrophilicity \( \omega \) index of 0.755 eV and a nucleophilicity \( N \) index of 2.851 eV, being classified as strong nucleophile than the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide, which has an electrophilicity \( \omega \) index of 1.890 eV and a nucleophilicity \( N \) index of 2.524 eV. Consequently, the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide behaves as an electrophile, while the morpholine behaves as a nucleophile.

In the reaction between 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and m-CPBA, the electrophilicity \( \omega \) index, the nucleophilicity \( N \) index, and the electronic chemical potential \( \mu \) of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide were 1.878, 2.495 and -4.246 eV, respectively. While those corresponding to m-CPBA were 2.147, 1.779, and -4.748 eV, respectively, these results indicate that the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide is a nucleophile, while, m-CPBA is an electrophile. The electrophilicity \( \omega \) and nucleophilicity \( N \) values indicate that the epoxidation reaction will have a high polar character, in agreement with the high difference between their electronic chemical potentials \( \mu \).

On the other hand, the prediction of the electrophilic/nucleophilic character is also well confirmed by the frontier molecular orbital theory. So, the formation of the complex resulted in an exchange of electrons between the two-molecular orbital HOMO of the donor (nucleophile) and LUMO of the acceptor (electrophile). The reaction corresponding to the lowest difference of energy between the two orbital HOMO and LUMO is always favored. The energy gap in reaction (1) between HOMO of the morpholine and LUMO of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide (\( \Delta E_{\text{gap}1} = 4.427 \text{ eV} \)) is smaller than the energy gap between HOMO of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and LUMO of the morpholine (\( \Delta E_{\text{gap}1'} = 6.699 \text{ eV} \)). This confirms that the global electron density transfer will go from the morpholine towards the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide. But in the reaction (2), \( \Delta E_{\text{gap}} \) between HOMO of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and LUMO of the m-CPBA (\( \Delta E_{\text{gap}2} = 4.522 \text{ eV} \)) is smaller than the energy gap between HOMO of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and LUMO of the m-CPBA (\( \Delta E_{\text{gap}2'} = 5.516 \text{ eV} \)) indicating that the GEDT will go from the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide towards the m-CPBA (Figure 1).

Table 1. Electronic chemical potential \( \mu \), chemical hardness \( \eta \), electrophilicity \( \omega \), nucleophilicity \( N \) and softness \( S \) calculated using B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p) (eV).

|                   | Reaction 1 (In DCM) | Reaction 2 (In Ethanol) |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
|                   | 9α-hydroxyparthenolide | Morpholine             | 9α-hydroxyparthenolide | m-CPBA       |
| \( \mu \)        | -4.239              | -3.103                  | -4.246                  | -4.748          |
| \( \eta \)       | 4.754               | 6.372                   | 4.799                   | 5.238          |
| \( \omega \)     | 1.890               | 0.755                   | 1.878                   | 2.147          |
| \( N \)          | 2.524               | 2.851                   | 2.495                   | 1.779          |
| \( S \)          | 0.105               | 0.078                   | 0.104                   | 0.095           |
| \( \Delta N_{\text{max}} \) | 0.891              | 0.486                   | 0.884                   | 0.905           |
3.1.2. Prediction of the regio and stereoselectivity of the reactions

In the reactions involving the participation of non-symmetric reagents, the most favorable reactive channel was associated with the initial two-center interaction between the greatest electrophilic center of the electrophile unit and the greatest nucleophilic one of the nucleophile entities. Recently, Domingo et al. proposed the electrophilic $P_{k}^{+}$ and nucleophilic $P_{k}^{-}$Parr functions derived from the changes of spin electron-density reached via the GEDT process from the nucleophile to the electrophile as a powerful tool for the study of the local reactivity in polar processes. Accordingly, the nucleophilic $P_{k}^{-}$ Parr functions of morpholine and the electrophilic $P_{k}^{+}$ Parr functions of the compound (II) were analyzed in order to characterize the most electrophilic and nucleophilic centers of the species involved in this reaction and, thus, to explain the regioselectivity experimentally observed. Figure 2 shows the Mulliken atomic spin densities of the radical cation and radical anion, together with the nucleophilic $P_{k}^{-}$ Parr functions of morpholine and the electrophilic $P_{k}^{+}$ Parr functions of (II).

Figure 1. Energy gap between HOMO and LUMO of reagents in path reactions

Figure 2. Three-dimensional representations of the Mulliken atomic spin densities (ASD) of the radical anion (II) and radical cation (Morpholine), together with the nucleophilic $P_{k}^{-}$ of morpholine and electrophilic $P_{k}^{+}$ Parr functions of (II)
Analysis of the nucleophilic P\textsubscript{N} Parr functions at the reactive sites of morpholine indicate that the azote atom, with a P\textsubscript{N} value of 0.743 is nucleophilically activated more than the other atoms. On the other hand, the electrophilic P\textsubscript{E} Parr functions at the reactive sites of 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide indicate that the more electrophilic center is the C\textsubscript{3} carbon atom, which possessed the maximum value of 0.540 followed by the C\textsubscript{5} carbon atom, with a P\textsubscript{E} value of 0.022. These results indicate that the most reactive fragment of 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide is the C\textsubscript{3}–C\textsubscript{4} double bond than the other double bond C\textsubscript{1}–C\textsubscript{2}. While in the second reaction, the analysis of the nucleophilic P\textsubscript{N} Parr functions for 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide indicates that the two carbons of the C\textsubscript{1}–C\textsubscript{2} double bond are more nucleophilically activated (P\textsubscript{N} = 0.318 and 0.466) than those of the C\textsubscript{3}–C\textsubscript{4} double bond (P\textsubscript{N} = 0.018 and 0.005) as shown in Figure 3. Consequently, the attack will take place on C\textsubscript{1}–C\textsubscript{2} double bond rather than C\textsubscript{3}–C\textsubscript{4} double bond of the 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide. The asymmetric nucleophilic activation of the exocyclic double bond accounts for the asynchronicity found in the formation of the two C–O single bonds in these epoxidation reactions. Therefore, it is expected that the attack of m-CPBA takes place on the C\textsubscript{1}–C\textsubscript{2} double bond of 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide, in excellent agreement with experimental outcomes 2. Analysis of the electrophilic P\textsubscript{E} Parr functions for m-CPBA indicates that the oxygen atom O* is the most electrophilic center of this molecule (P\textsubscript{E} = 0.018).

![Figure 3. Three-dimensional representations of the (ASD) of the reagents (II) and m-CPBA, together with the nucleophilic P\textsubscript{N} of (II) and electrophilic P\textsubscript{E} Parr functions of m-CPBA](image)

3.1.3. Analysis of the potential energy surface and prediction of the reaction mechanism

Due to the asymmetry of the reagents, two competitive channels are feasible for the reaction between 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide and morpholine. They are related to the two stereoisomeric approach modes of C\textsubscript{3}–C\textsubscript{4} double bond, named endo P\textsubscript{a} and exo P\textsubscript{b} as shown in Scheme 3. At the same time, the epoxy reaction of the 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide with the m-CPBA leads to a regio-stereoselective reaction with two products P\textsubscript{a} and P\textsubscript{b} in C\textsubscript{1}–C\textsubscript{2} double bond (Scheme 3).

In ethanol, the activation energies associated with the reaction between the 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide and the morpholine has occurred on the two faces of C\textsubscript{3}–C\textsubscript{4} double bond. This reaction possesses activation energy of 33.25 kcal/mol via TS\textsubscript{a1}, leading to the formation of the most favorable, P\textsubscript{a1}, and 37.02 kcal/mol passing by TS\textsubscript{b1}, leading to the formation the least favorable, P\textsubscript{b1}. In dichloromethane, the epoxidation of 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide by the m-CPBA presents activation energy of 10.63 kcal/mol via TS\textsubscript{a2}, with the formation the most favorable, P\textsubscript{a2}, and 15.02 kcal/mol via TS\textsubscript{b2}, with the formation the least favorable, P\textsubscript{b2}. These results of energies calculated by CDFT of transition states indicated that the two reactions proceed through a concerted pathway, and were in agreement with the experimentally observed regio and stereoselectivity 2.

An analysis of the stationary points involved in the two stereoisomeric paths indicates that these reactions take place through a one-step mechanism. Consequently, four transition states (TS\textsubscript{a1}, TS\textsubscript{b1}, TS\textsubscript{a2}, and TS\textsubscript{b2}) were located and characterized by the potential energy surface (PES) of these reactions. Relative enthalpies, \textDelta H, and Gibbs free energies, \textDelta G, for the species involved in the reaction between the 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide and the morpholine in the presence of ethanol and the reaction between the 9\textalpha-hydroxyparthenolide and the m-CPBA in the presence of dichloromethane are displayed in Table 2.
Scheme 3. Reaction between (II) and morpholine (1), (II) and m-CPBA (2), B3LYP/6-311+G (d,p) relative energies, in kcal/mol, are given in parentheses

Table 2. B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p) relative enthalpies and Gibbs free energies, computed at room temperature and 1 atm for the stationary points involved in the reaction between morpholine, m-CPBA and (II).

| System       | G (a.u)   | H (a.u)   | ΔG(Kcal/mol) | ΔH(Kcal/mol) | v (cm⁻³) |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Reaction 1   |           |           |              |              |          |
| II           | -884.441  | -884.376  | -            | -            |          |
| Morpholine   | -287.771  | -287.735  | -            | -            |          |
| TSα1         | -1172.140 | -1172.061 | 45.18        | 31.37        | -1768.97 |
| TSβ1         | -1172.134 | -1172.054 | 48.94        | 35.76        | -1740.68 |
| Pα1          | -1172.225 | -1172.131 | -8.15        | -12.55       |          |
| Pβ1          | -1172.222 | -1172.122 | -6.27        | -6.90        |          |
| Reaction 2   |           |           |              |              |          |
| II           | -884.439  | -884.440  | -            | -            |          |
| m-CPBA       | -955.649  | -955.602  | -            | -            |          |
| TSα2         | -1840.060 | -1840.030 | 17.57        | 7.53         | -371.67  |
| TSβ2         | -1840.020 | -1840.011 | 42.67        | 19.45        | -359.20  |
| Pα2          | -959.662  | -959.597  | -49.57       | -10.04       |          |
| Pβ2          | -959.649  | -959.584  | -41.41       | -1.88        |          |

Some appealing conclusions can be drawn from the energy results relative to the enthalpies and Gibbs free energies of the stationary points and the transition states for the two reactions:

i) The enthalpy energy associated with the most favorable product performed by the reaction of the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and the morpholine shows that TSα1 is located 4.39 kcal/mol below TSβ1.

ii) The Gibbs free energy associated with the most adequate (Pα1) reaction channel was -8.15 kcal/mol. This value shows that the reaction between 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and morpholine is energetically exergonic.

For the epoxy reaction, the calculation of the energies of the reactants, the products obtained (TSα2 and TSβ2), transition states energies at the C₁=C₂ double bond of 9α-hydroxyparthenolide and the difference in transition energy show that the attack is kinetically preferred at α side. This result shows that:

i) The activation energies corresponding to the attack at the two sides of the C₁=C₂ double bond of 9α-hydroxyparthenolide are 17.57 kcal/mol at α side and 42.67 kcal/mol at β side, suggesting that the formation of α isomers is kinetically preferred compared to the formation of β isomers;

ii) The formation of Pα2 and Pβ2 is an exergonic reaction, with -49.57 and -41.41 kcal/mol, respectively.
We also notice that the energy barrier corresponding to the approach to the α-side in the two reactions is less than that corresponding to the β-side (Figure 4). This result allows us to conclude that the α-attack is kinetically and thermodynamically favored. It also explains the great stereoselectivity observed experimentally

Figure 4. Energy profile of reactions between morpholine, m-CPBA, and 9α-hydroxyparthenolide

3.2. Addition of morpholine onto major product Pα2
The epoxidation reaction of 9α-hydroxyparthenolide by m-CPBA was followed by the addition of morpholine to the major product of the reaction (Pα2). The attack was carried out on the remaining C3-C4 double bond with two possible products Pα3 and Pβ3 (Scheme 4).

Scheme 4. Addition reaction of morpholine onto Pα2 product

3.2.1. Analysis of intramolecular chemical descriptors of the reaction between Pα2 and morpholine
To predict the reactivity of reagents in the reaction between morpholine and the major product, Pα2, founded as from the epoxy reaction of (II), we used B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p) level to calculate the global reactivity indices. Table 3 summarizes the obtained values of energy of HOMO and LUMO, the difference between ε(HOMO) and ε(LUMO) ΔEgap, electronic chemical potential μ, chemical hardness η, global electrophilicity ω, nucleophilicity N and softness S of Pα2 and morpholine.

The big difference between Pα2 and morpholine in electronic chemical potential 1.65 eV, indicating that this reaction has an important polar character. The morpholine behaves as a nucleophile with an electrophilicity ω index of 0.755 eV and a nucleophilicity N index of 2.851 eV. In comparison,
\( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) is classified as strong electrophile by \( \omega \) index of 1.975 eV and a nucleophilicity \( N \) index of 1.527 eV. To confirm the electrophilic/nucleophilic character of reagents, we have calculated the energy gap between HOMO and LUMO of the reactive molecules in this reaction. \( \Delta E_{\text{gap}} \) between HOMO of \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) and LUMO of morpholine, \( \Delta E_{\text{gap}} = 6.531 \text{ eV} \) is higher than the energy gap between HOMO of morpholine and LUMO of \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}}, \Delta E_{\text{gap}}' = 4.396 \text{eV} \). This result confirms that the GEDT will go from the morpholine towards \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \).

### Table 3. Intramolecular chemical descriptors (eV) for \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) and morpholine, taking the HOMO energy of tetracyanoethylene (TCE) as a reference \( \varepsilon_{\text{HOMO}}(\text{TCE}) = -0.3359 \) (a.u) = -9.1413 (eV).

|               | \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) | Morpholine |
|---------------|----------------|------------|
| \( \varepsilon(\text{HOMO}) \) | -7.613 | -6.289 |
| \( \varepsilon(\text{LUMO}) \) | -1.893 | -1.527 |
| \( \mu \)    | -4.753 | -3.103 |
| \( \eta \)   | 5.719  | 6.372 |
| \( \omega \) | 1.975  | 0.755 |
| \( N \)      | 1.527  | 2.851 |
| \( S \)      | 0.087  | 0.078 |
| \( \Delta N_{\text{max}} \) | 0.831 | 0.486 |

#### 3.2.2 Kinetic and thermodynamic study

The stereoselectivity of the addition of morpholine to the major product obtained from the epoxidation reaction of 9\( \alpha \)-hydroxyparthenolide (\( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \)) has been examined for both \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) sides. Calculated energies using the DFT method for the reagents, the obtained products (TS\( \alpha_3 \) and TS\( \beta_3 \)), and the difference in transition energy are listed in Table 4.

From Table 4 we can deduce that:

i) The transition state energy of the \( \beta \) side of double bond \( \text{C}_3=\text{C}_4 \) is located in front of 32.80 and 30.34 kcal/mol above the transition state energy of the \( \alpha \) side respectively;

ii) The formation of products \( \text{P}_{\alpha_3} \) and \( \text{P}_{\beta_3} \) are an exothermic reaction by -16.16 and -10.13 kcal/mol, respectively.

We can also notice that the energy barrier corresponding to the approach of the \( \alpha \)-side is less than that corresponding to the \( \beta \)-side. These results allow us to conclude that \( \alpha \)-attack is kinetically and thermodynamically favored.

Therefore, these energy results calculated by CDFT of the transition states showed that the reaction proceeds through a concerted pathway, in agreement with the experimentally observed regio and stereoselectivity in previous studies by our co-authors.

### Table 4. Thermodynamic energies of the reaction between \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) and morpholine calculated using B3LYP/6-311+G (d,p) basis set.

|               | \( \text{E (a.u)} \) | \( \text{G (a.u)} \) | \( \text{H (a.u)} \) | \( \Delta E(\text{Kcal/mol)} \) | \( \Delta G(\text{Kcal/mol)} \) | \( \Delta H(\text{Kcal/mol)} \) |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) | -959.953 | -959.665 | -959.600 |                |                |                |
| Morpholine    | -287.876 | -287.771 | -287.735 |                |                |                |
| TS\( \alpha_3 \) | -1247.780 | -1247.369 | -1247.285 | 30.34 | 44.55 | 31.37 |
| TS\( \beta_3 \) | -1247.777 | -1247.369 | -1247.289 | 32.80 | 42.04 | 28.86 |
| \( \text{P}_{\alpha_3} \) | -1247.855 | -1247.438 | -1247.358 | -16.16 | -1.25 | -14.43 |
| \( \text{P}_{\beta_3} \) | -1247.845 | -1247.429 | -1247.348 | -10.13 | 4.39 | -8.15 |

#### 3.2.3 Analysis of the IRC of the reaction between \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) and morpholine

The cycloaddition reaction may have one of the two main mechanisms, concerted or stepwise. The concerted mechanism involves a single step with the asynchronous formation of two bonds, or a single step with two phases, characterized by the formation of the first bond followed by the closure of the cycle without the formation of a stable intermediary reactant, while the two-step mechanism involves an intermediary reactant. Moreover, we studied the molecular system as it develops during the reaction between \( \text{P}_{\text{a2}} \) and morpholine by calculating the intrinsic reaction coordinate (IRC) to show that the transition state is indeed linked to the two minima (reactants and product).
The plots E=f(IRC) corresponding to all possible pathways are shown in Figure 5. IRC calculation shows that this reaction follows a concerted mechanism in a single step but two phases. Analysis of the IRC calculated using B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p) basis set shows that whatever quantity of morpholine is used in the interaction with $P_{\alpha 2}$, the transition states are reached without going through a stable intermediary stage.

**Figure 5.** IRC profiles of the reaction between $P_{\alpha 2}$ and morpholine calculated using B3LYP/6-311+G (d,p) level

### 3.3. Structural analysis of the transition states of all reactions

The geometries of the TS associated with the reaction between $P_{\alpha 2}$ and morpholine are shown in Figure 6. The lengths of the two forming bonds at the TS associated with the reaction between the $9\alpha$-hydroxyparthenolide in each reaction are different, indicate that they are associated with slightly asynchronous.

To evaluate the polar nature of the all studied reaction. The GEDT values computed at the TS of the reaction between $9\alpha$-hydroxyparthenolide and morpholine are: 0.378e at TS$_{\alpha 1}$ and 0.396e at TS$_{\beta 1}$, and TS of the reaction of $9\alpha$-hydroxyparthenolide with m-CPBA are: 0.580e and 0.593e at TS$_{\alpha 2}$ and TS$_{\beta 1}$, respectively. While, for the TS of the reaction between $P_{\alpha 2}$ and morpholine are: 0.342e and 0.368e at TS$_{\alpha 3}$ and TS$_{\beta 3}$, respectively. These very high values indicate the polar character of these reactions, in a perfect agreement with the analysis of the CDFT reactivity indices of the reagents.
4. Conclusion

The mechanism of the chemoselectivity for the addition of morpholine and m-CPBA onto 9α-hydroxyparthenolide was studied using B3LYP/6-311+G(d,p). The theoretical results obtained enabled us to conclude that the activation energies and reactivity indices calculated correctly predicted the chemoselectivity experimentally observed for the studied reactions. In the first step, the reaction between the morpholine and the 9α-hydroxyparthenolide takes place on the double bond C₃=C₄ giving two products Pα₁ and Pβ₁, with Pα₁ as the major product according to kinetic and thermodynamic calculations. On the other hand, when 9α-hydroxyparthenolide is attacked by m-CPBA, the epoxidation reaction is carried out on the double bond C₁=C₂ of the compound (II), producing a minority of the β-stereoisomer, referred as Pβ₂ and a majority of the α-stereoisomer, referred to here as Pα₂. This latter was thereafter treated with morpholine via an exothermic reaction leading to the formation of the two products Pα₃ and Pβ₃ who are formed at the α and β sides, respectively, of the C₃=C₄ double bond of Pα₂. The product Pα₃ is kinetically and thermodynamically favored with high stereoselectivity.

The results we found do affirm that the density functional theory has given a conceptual framework to the study of the reactivity and selectivity of a chemical reaction through local and global descriptors and the polar character of these reactions is correlated with the course of the corresponding GEDT to TS in such a way that the higher the GEDT implies that the activation energy is low and the reaction is polar.

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