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Acid-induced rearrangement of epoxygermacranolides: synthesis of furanoheliangolides and cadinanes from nobilin

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

ID 4101751

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Title Acid-induced rearrangement of epoxygermacranolides: synthesis of furanoheliangolides and cadinanes from nobilin

Journal Molecules

Volume 22

Number 12

Pages / Article-Number E2252

The acid-induced rearrangement of three epoxyderivatives of nobilin 1, the most abundant sesquiterpene lactone in Anthemisnobilis flowers, was investigated. From the 1,10-epoxyderivative 2, furanoheliangolide 5 was obtained, while the 4,5-epoxy group of 3 did not react. Conversely, when the 3-hydroxy function of nobilin was acetylated (12), the 4,5-epoxy derivative did cyclize into cadinanes (15 and 16) under Lewis acid catalysis. The reactivity of the 4,5- and 1,10-epoxy derivatives of nobilin (2 and 3) was compared with that of parthenolide, and rationalized on the basis of quantum chemical calculations. All isolated reaction products were fully characterized by spectroscopic and computational methods, and their in vitro anti-protozoal activity was evaluated. The paper could provide new insights into the biosynthesis of this class of natural products.

Publisher MDPI

ISSN/ISBN 1420-3049

edoc-URL http://edoc.unibas.ch/58302/

Full Text on edoc No;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.3390/molecules22122252

PubMed ID http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29258233

ISI-Number WOS:000419242400214

Document type (ISI) Journal Article