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# Collisional excitation of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$by $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ : new interaction potential and scattering calculations 

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Interstellar anions play an important role in astrochemistry as being tracers of the physical and chemical conditions in cold molecular clouds and circumstellar gas. The local thermodynamic equilibrium (LTE) is generally not fulfilled in media where anions are detected and radiative as well collisional data are required to model the observed lines. The $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$anion has not yet been detected in the interstellar medium; however, collisional data could be used for non-LTE models that would help in identifying the most intense lines. For this purpose, we have computed the first 4D potential energy surface (PES) of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ complex using an explicitly correlated coupled-cluster approach. The PES is characterized by a single deep minimum with a well-depth of $924.96 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. From this interaction potential, we derived excitation cross sections and rate coefficients of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$induced by collisions with para- and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$. The results obtained for collisions with para $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ are compared to previous calculations performed using a 2D-PES obtained from an average over $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ rotations.

[^0]
## I. INTRODUCTION

Although the presence of anions in astrophysical environments was predicted theoretically and introduced into chemical models in the 80 's, ${ }^{1,2}$ the first negative anion, $\mathrm{C}_{6} \mathrm{H}^{-}$, was detected only in $2006,{ }^{3}$ solving a problem of unidentified lines discovered by Kawaguchi et al. ${ }^{4}$ This was followed by the detection of other anions, such as $\mathrm{C}_{4} \mathrm{H}^{-},{ }^{5-7} \mathrm{C}_{8} \mathrm{H}^{-},{ }^{8-10}$ $\mathrm{CN}^{-},{ }^{11} \mathrm{C}_{3} \mathrm{~N}^{-},{ }^{12} \mathrm{C}_{5} \mathrm{~N}^{-},{ }^{13}$ and very recently $\mathrm{C}_{7} \mathrm{~N}^{-} .{ }^{14}$ The majority of these species were first detected and observed in the circumstellar envelope of IRC+10216, and later in cold molecular clouds. ${ }^{7}$

The discovery of carbon chain anions in interstellar and circumstellar environments has stimulated a lot of theoretical and experimental work. Indeed, their role in interstellar chemistry has been the object of many studies. ${ }^{15-19}$ However, the formation of negative ions in space is still not well understood.

In 1980, Sarre discussed ${ }^{15}$ the formation and the possible detection of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$in the interstellar medium (ISM) but did not calculate its abundance. Although $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$has been observed in the laboratory, ${ }^{10,20}$ and its neutral form $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}$ is a well-known interstellar molecule discovered in $1974,{ }^{21}$ the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$anion seems to be a very low-abundant species and has not been detected until now, with only a low upper limit in IRC +10216 being given. ${ }^{6}$ Despite that the formation of many of the hydrocarbon anions is not yet solved, the very low abundance of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$seems to be justified by the very high chemical reactivity of this anion leading to its destruction very quickly after its formation. In fact, in addition of its highest reactivity, current numerical models predict that this anion is not efficiently formed through the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}+\mathrm{e}^{-}$association, while, even if debated, the formation rates increase with increasing size of the carbon chain. ${ }^{22,23}$

In the laboratory, cooling and controlling molecular ions in cold traps is an important topic as anions are, through photodetachment, precursors of cold molecules with many applications. ${ }^{24,25}$ Collisions with a He buffer gas in the trap play a major role for the preparation of the ions in specific vibrational and rotational states. However, in a recent study, Mant et al. ${ }^{26}$ consider possible cooling by $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ instead of He as collisional cross sections by $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ are much larger than cross sections with noble gas atoms, leading to faster thermalization times. ${ }^{27}$

The $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ collisional data are then needed in cold physics studies and they can also
help in searching for $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$by informing non-Local Thermodynamic Equilibrium (LTE) models, which would predict the most intense lines. Recently, rate coefficients for collisions with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ were obtained using a reduced 2D-Potential Energy Surface (PES) averaged over three $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ orientations. ${ }^{28}$ However, because of the strong anisotropy of the interaction PES with respect to the orientation of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ usually found for ionic species, the use of a reduced dimension PES could lead to inaccuracies in the determination of para $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ rate coefficients, as found recently for $\mathrm{NS}^{+}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ collisions. ${ }^{29}$ Moreover, calculations with a 2D-PES do not allow to obtain the data for collisions with ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$, much needed for the non-LTE modeling of media where both para- and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ are considered important colliders.

In this paper, we report the first $4 \mathrm{D} \mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ interaction PES and inelastic cross sections and rate coefficients for $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$induced by both para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$. The ab initio PES was computed using an explicitly-correlated coupled-cluster $a b$ initio approach. Quantum scattering calculations were performed to compute collisional cross sections and rate coefficients between the lowest 11 rotational levels of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$. Details of the electronic structure calculations are given in Section 2 while Section 3 provides a brief description of the scattering calculations. The results are shown and discussed in Section 4 and concluding remarks are given in Section 5.

## II. POTENTIAL ENERGY SURFACE



FIG. 1. Coordinates used to describe the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ interaction. See the text for details.

In the ground electronic state, $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$is a linear singlet $\left(\mathrm{X}^{1} \Sigma^{+}\right)$. As depicted in Fig. 1,
the coordinates used to describe the four-dimensional (4D) $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ PES are the Jacobi coordinates $R, \theta_{1}, \theta_{2}$, and $\varphi . \quad \vec{R}$ is the vector between the centers of mass of the two fragments, and $\vec{r}_{1}$ and $\vec{r}_{2}$ are vectors aligned with each molecule. Coordinate $R$ is the length of vector $\vec{R}$, while coordinates $\theta_{1}$ and $\theta_{2}$ represent (respectively) the angles between $\vec{R}$ and the vectors $\vec{r}_{1}$ and $\vec{r}_{2}$. The fourth coordinate is the dihedral (out of plane) torsional angle, labeled $\varphi$, which is the angle between the vectors $\vec{R} \times \vec{r}_{1}$ and $\vec{R} \times \vec{r}_{2}$. Notice that for $\theta_{1}=0^{\circ}$ the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$molecule aligns with the H atom pointing to the center-of-mass of the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ molecule.

## A. Electronic structure calculations

For the construction of the PES, both monomers were held rigid. The bond distance for $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ was fixed at $r_{H H}=0.76665 \AA$, the vibrationally-averaged bond distance for the ground rovibrational state of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$. For $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$, the equilibrium geometry is linear, and the distances employed in this study $\left(r_{C C}=1.25164 \AA\right.$ and $\left.r_{C H}=1.05963 \AA\right)$ were obtained by geometry optimization at the $(\mathrm{AE}) \mathrm{CCSD}(\mathrm{T})$-F12b/CVQZ-F12 level where (AE) indicates that all electrons were included in the correlation treatment. The final high-level PES was computed using explicitly-correlated coupled-cluster theory ${ }^{30}$ ( $\left.\operatorname{CCSD}(\mathrm{T})-\mathrm{F} 12 \mathrm{~b}\right)$. The complete basis set limit was estimated by extrapolating calculations at the (AE)CCSD(T)-F12b/CVTZ-F12 and (AE)CCSD(T)-F12b/CVQZ-F12 levels ${ }^{31}$ using the $l^{-3}$ formula. ${ }^{32}$ A geminal beta coefficient value of 1.5 was specified for the F12 calculations which include the correlation of core electrons. As mentioned below, to avoid placing expensive high-level data in energetically inaccessible regions, a lower-level guide surface was first constructed. This was done using data at the CCSD(T)-F12b/VDZ-F12 level of theory. Exploiting the system's symmetry, energies were only computed in the reduced angular range: $0<\theta_{1}<180^{\circ}$, $0<\theta_{2}<90^{\circ}$, and $0<\varphi<180^{\circ}$. All ab initio calculations were performed using the Molpro electronic structure code package. ${ }^{33}$

## B. Analytical representation and characterization of the PES

As we have done in the past for other van der Waals (vdW) linear dimers, ${ }^{34-41}$ the PES's analytical representation was constructed using an automated interpolating moving least squares (IMLS) methodology, freely available as a software package under the name


FIG. 2. 1D cuts of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ interaction energy as a function of angle $\theta_{2}$ for four different intermolecular separations: $R=25.0,15.0,10.0$, and $5.0 \AA$. The angles $\theta_{1}$ and $\varphi$ are fixed (at left) at $180^{\circ}$ and $0^{\circ}$, and (at right) at $90^{\circ}$ and $0^{\circ}$ respectively. Lines represent the fitted PES , and crosses represent $a b$ initio data (not used in the fit).
autosurf. ${ }^{42}$ As usual, ${ }^{43,44}$ a local fit was expanded about each data point, and the final potential is obtained as the normalized weighted sum of the local fits. This interpolative approach can accommodate arbitrary energy-surface topographies, being particularly advantageous in systems with large anisotropy. The fitting basis and most other aspects of the IMLS procedure were the same as for other previous systems and have been described in detail elsewhere. ${ }^{42,44,45}$

The shortest intermonomer center-of-mass distance considered is $R=1.6 \AA$, with the additional restriction of a maximum repulsive energy of $6 \mathrm{kcal} / \mathrm{mol}\left(\sim 2100 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}\right)$ above the separated monomers' asymptote. The ab initio data coverage in the fitted PES extends to $R=20 \AA$, which is extended by an analytic form, with the zero of energy set at infinite separation between the monomers. Additional data extending as far as $R=60 \AA$ was used to determine and confirm the correct behavior of the long range form. As shown in Fig. 2, there is still a strong sensitivity to the orientation of the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ in the long range of the

PES, due to its leading electrostatic moment (quadrupole) interacting with the charge of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$molecule. Indeed, $c f$. Fig. 2, the interaction energy still varies by more than $1.5 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ with respect to $\theta_{2}$ at $R=25 \AA$. A similar behavior has been previously observed when studying the $\mathrm{CF}^{+}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and $\mathrm{HCS}^{+}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ vdW ion-molecule complexes. ${ }^{35,41}$ In this system the dependence on the orientation of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$was also found to be significant, and so the analytic form of the long-range was constructed including both the charge-quadrupole and dipolequadrupole (two leading) terms, which vary as $R^{-3}$ and $R^{-4}$ respectively. The impact of the dipole-quadrupole term and its $R^{-4}$ dependence can be appreciated by comparing each pair of panels in Fig. 2. At $R=25 \AA$ the two most attractive poses of $\theta_{2}=0$ or $180^{\circ}$ (at the edges of the plots) are similar for $\theta_{1}=180^{\circ}$ and $90^{\circ}$ (left and right panels). However, following the same comparison at $R=15,10$ and $5 \AA$ the $\theta_{1}=90^{\circ}$ orientation plotted in the panels at right, becomes rapidly increasingly less attractive, highlighting the growing importance of the dipole-quadrupole term. The two-term form is sufficient to match the $a b$ initio data well. Thus the global fit switches smoothly from interpolated ab initio data in the close interaction region to the analytic long range via a hyperbolic tangent function centered at $R=15 \AA$.

For the high-level PES, the global estimated root-mean-squared fitting error tolerance was set to $0.50 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$, and the total number of automatically generated symmetry-unique points needed to reach that target was 2400 (the final estimated error is $0.13 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ for energies below the asymptote). To guide the placement of high-level data, as previously mentioned, a lower-level guide surface was constructed using 2614 symmetry-unique points, distributed using a Sobol sequence ${ }^{46}$ biased to sample the short-range region more densely. The analytical representation of the PES is available as supplementary material.

Figure 3 shows a 2D representation of the PES (denoted $R$-optimized) as a function of the angles $\theta_{1}$ and $\theta_{2}$ for planar configurations $\left(\varphi=0^{\circ}\right)$. The plot describes the complete ranges of $\theta_{1}$ and $\theta_{2}$, relaxing the intermonomer distance coordinate $R$ for each pair of angles. The PES is characterized by a single minimum (the two molecules aligned, with the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ at the C-end of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$) with a well-depth of $924.96 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. The center-of-mass distance at the minimum is quite short for a collinear complex, at $R=3.686 \AA$ (cf. Fig. 4).


FIG. 3. $R$-optimized contour plot of the PES as a function of the angles $\theta_{1}$ and $\theta_{2}$ for planar configurations $\left(\varphi=0^{\circ}\right)$. For each pair of angles, the energy (given in $\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$ ) is optimized with respect to the center-of-mass distance $R$.

## III. SCATTERING CALCULATIONS

The MOLSCAT nonreactive scattering code ${ }^{47}$ was used to carry out scattering calculations of the rotationally inelastic cross sections for collisions between $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$and both para- and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$. The cross sections were computed using the quantum close coupling approach and the modified log-derivative Airy propagator ${ }^{48}$ starting from $R_{\min }=4.8 \mathrm{a}_{0}(2.54 \AA)$ to $R_{\text {mid }}=40 \mathrm{a}_{0}(21.16 \AA)$ for the log-derivative integration method and from $\mathrm{R}_{\text {mid }}$ to $R_{\max }=100 \mathrm{a}_{0}(52.8 \AA)$ for the Airy propagator integration. In the following, the rotational states of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$and $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ molecules are denoted $j_{1}$ and $j_{2}$ respectively, other moleculerelated parameters are labeled 1 for $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$and 2 for $\mathrm{H}_{2}$.

The expansion of the potential $V\left(R, \theta_{1}, \theta_{2}, \varphi\right)$ over a suitable basis of angular functions for any intermolecular distance $R$ was performed according to Green (1975) ${ }^{49}$

$$
\begin{equation*}
V\left(R, \theta_{1}, \theta_{2}, \varphi\right)=\sum_{l_{1} l_{2} l} v_{l_{1} l_{2} l}(R) A_{l_{1} l_{2} l}\left(\theta_{1}, \theta_{2}, \varphi\right) \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

where functions $A_{l_{1} l_{2 l} l}\left(\theta_{1}, \theta_{2}, \varphi\right)$ are contracted normalised spherical harmonics, $v_{l_{1} l_{2 l} l}(R)$ are the radial coefficients. In this work, the potential was expanded including $0 \leq l_{1} \leq 15$ for the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$molecule and $0 \leq l_{2} \leq 4$ for the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ molecule.


FIG. 4. Various radial cuts defined by different orientational poses of the monomers. In all cases, energies are in $\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$, lines represent the fitted PES, and points represent $a b$ initio calculations (not used in the fit).

For $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$, we used the molecular constants of Brünken et al., ${ }^{10} B_{e}=1.3889354 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ and $D_{e}=3.2345 \times 10^{-6} \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. The molecular constants of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ were set to $B_{e}=60.853 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$, $\alpha_{e}=3.062 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$, and $D_{e}=0.0471 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. Inelastic cross sections were obtained between the first 11 rotational levels of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}\left(0 \leq j_{1} \leq 10\right)$. The parameters of integration were chosen to ensure convergence of these cross sections for collisional kinetic energies ranging from $0.1 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ up to $1000 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. At each energy, the maximum value of the total angular momentum $J_{t o t}$ needed to obtain cross sections converged to better than $5.0 \times 10^{-3} \AA^{2}$ was automatically set by the MOLSCAT program. The size of the rotational basis was studied carefully in order to ensure convergence of the cross sections and to optimize the calculation in terms of CPU time.

The first 16 rotational levels of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}\left(0 \leq j_{1} \leq 15\right)$ were included in the basis set as the cross sections resulting from larger basis sets (20 and 25 levels) differ by less than a few percent from the 15 -levels choice (see Table I). Concerning the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ basis, two sets of calculations were performed for collisions with para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ : calculations were done either with only the ground rotational state of para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0\right.$ and $j_{2}=1$

TABLE I. Cross sections at a collision energy of $E_{c}=200 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ as a function of the size ( $j_{1 \max }$ ) of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$rotational basis. The rotational basis of para $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ includes $j_{2}=0,2$ and $j_{2}=1$, respectively.

|  |  | para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ |  | ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $j_{1}$ | $j_{1}^{\prime}$ | $j_{1 \text { max }}=15$ | $j_{1 \max }=20$ | $j_{1 \max }=25$ | $j_{1 \max }=15$ | $j_{1 \max }=20$ |
| 1 | 0 | 12.6 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 14.6 | 14.6 |
| 3 | 2 | 20.2 | 19.9 | 19.9 | 21.4 | 21.3 |
| 5 | 3 | 14.9 | 14.8 | 14.8 | 13.7 | 13.8 |
| 10 | 9 | 29.7 | 30.4 | 30.4 | 31.2 | 31.0 |

respectively) or including the two first $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ rotational states ( $j_{2}=0,2$ and $j_{2}=1,3$ ). As illustrated in Fig. 5, including only the first rotational state of para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ leads to inaccuracies higher than $30 \%$, in particular at low collision energies where the cross sections exhibit strong resonances. Considering collisions with ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$, the cross sections obtained with only the first rotational level $\left(j_{2}=1\right)$ of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ or the two first levels $\left(j_{2}=1,3\right)$ lead to differences generally lower than $10 \%$ while a large increase by two orders of magnitude of the computational time is found. Hence, we have retained for the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ rotational basis set the first two rotational states $\left(j_{2}=0,2\right)$ of para $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and only one rotational state $\left(j_{2}=1\right)$ of ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$.

The collisional rate coefficients $k_{j_{1}, j_{2} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}, j_{2}}(T)$ were derived for temperatures up to 100 K by averaging the computed cross sections $\sigma_{j_{1}, j_{2} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}, j_{2}}\left(E_{k}\right)$ as:

$$
\begin{align*}
k_{j_{1}, j_{2} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}, j_{2}}(T)= & \left(\frac{8 k_{B} T}{\pi \mu}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}\left(\frac{1}{k_{B} T}\right)^{2}  \tag{2}\\
& \times \int_{0}^{\infty} E_{k} \sigma_{j_{1}, j_{2} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}, j_{2}}\left(E_{k}\right) e^{\frac{-E_{k}}{k_{B} T}} d E_{k}
\end{align*}
$$

where $E_{k}$ is the collision energy, $\mu=1.86555$ au is the reduced mass of the complex, and $k_{B}$ is the Boltzmann constant. In this paper, we only consider transitions where $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ remains in its first rotational level $\left(j_{2}=0\right)$, as rotational excitation of $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=2\right)$ has a very low probability at the considered range of energies.



FIG. 5. Comparison of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$rotational de-excitation cross sections for selected rotational transitions $j_{1} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}$, including only the first (lines) or the two first (symbols) rotational states in the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ basis.

## IV. RESULTS

Figure 6 (upper panel) displays the energy variation of the cross sections for de-excitation of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$by collision with para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ for selected transitions. The cross sections present the same behavior for both $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ species with a decrease with increasing energy, following a quasi-linear dependence as a function of the energy logarithm. This behavior, predicted by the Langevin theory, is typical of ion-molecule collisions. ${ }^{35,50-54}$ The cross sections exhibit large resonances for kinetic energies up to $100 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$. This is a consequence of the formation of bound and quasi-bound states within the deep well of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ complex before



FIG. 6. Variation of the rotational cross sections and rate coefficients (in $\mathrm{cm}^{3} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$ ) for selected transitions of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$induced by collisions with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0,2\right)$ (solid lines) and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=1\right)$ (dashed lines).
it dissociates. At higher energies, resonances tend to wash out due to the contribution of high values of the total angular momentum $J_{t o t}$ with no more bound or quasi-bound states. Moreover, as was also found for other ionic systems in collision with para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$, both projectiles lead to similar cross sections. Consequently, the corresponding rate coefficients (see Fig. 6, lower panel) have a very similar magnitude and show a relatively flat temperature dependence, in agreement with the Langevin theory. It is worth noting that, as found for the cross sections, the rate coefficients for collisions with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ obtained using an $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ basis set with only the first $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ level differ from those obtained with two $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ levels,



FIG. 7. Rotational de-excitation rate coefficients of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$in collision with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ from $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}\left(j_{1}=8\right)$ to $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}\left(j_{1}^{\prime}\right)$.
with differences up to $20-30 \%$.
In Fig. 7, we present de-excitation rate coefficients out of the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}\left(j_{1}=8\right)$ level induced by para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ collisions and at temperatures of 10,50 and 100 K . As can be seen in the figure, transitions with $\Delta j_{1}=1$ and 2 are dominant for both para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ projectiles, with rate coefficients close in magnitude and with a slight propensity for $\Delta j_{1}=2$ at low temperatures. For larger values of $\Delta j_{1}$, the rate coefficients decrease with increasing $\Delta j_{1}$, with a propensity for even $\Delta j_{1}$. Such propensity was also found by Toumi et al. ${ }^{28}$ in their study of the rotational excitation of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$by collision with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0\right)$ using a 2D-PES. This averaged PES exhibits an almost near-homonuclear symmetry leading to
propensity rules in favor of even $\Delta j_{1}$. Figure 8 displays the rate coefficients obtained by Toumi et al. ${ }^{28}$ as a function of those obtained in this work for all collisional transitions of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$by para $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0\right)$ at 50 K .

Differences within $30 \%$ are observed between the two sets of rate coefficients. These differences are either due to the different levels of electronic structure theory used to generate the PESs, or to the use of an averaged 2D-PES neglecting the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ orientation. To differentiate the impact of these 2 possibilities, we have derived a 2D-PES (hereafter PES-2D-AV) from an average of our full 4D-PES using the same three $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ orientations reported by Toumi et $a l .{ }^{28}$ Figure 9 presents a comparison of the rate coefficients from Toumi et al. as a function of those obtained using our averaged potential PES-2D-AV. The agreement between the two sets of data is good. This highlights that, for this system, the use of a 2D-PES obtained by an average over three $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ orientations does not allow to obtain results with an accuracy better than $30 \%$. Bop et al. ${ }^{29}$ obtain a similar conclusion in the study of rotational excitation of $\mathrm{NS}^{+}$by para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$. This shows the need for using a PES describing all orientations of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ in cases where the PES exhibits large anisotropies at $R$-distances dominant for the nuclear dynamics. It is worth noting that this result is unusual as, for other ionic systems, a better agreement ( $20 \%$ or less) is found between full and dimensionality-reduced approaches. ${ }^{52,54,55}$

Finally, as previously found by Toumi et al., ${ }^{28}$ the present results show that collisional rate coefficients with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ differ by large factors, up to ten, from values obtained for collisions with He, ${ }^{56}$ that cannot be used to reliably model the rate coefficients with $\mathrm{H}_{2}$.

## V. CONCLUSION

We have computed the first 4D PES for the $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ vdW system at the $\operatorname{CCSD}(\mathrm{T})-\mathrm{F} 12 \mathrm{~b}$ level of theory, extrapolated to the complete basis set limit. The global minimum corresponds to a linear geometry with $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ at the C -end of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$with a well-depth of $924.96 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$ and a distance between the two centers-of-mass of $R=3.686 \AA$. Close-coupling scattering calculations for collisional excitation by para- and ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ were performed using this new high-level PES. State-to-state cross sections between the first 11 rotational levels of $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$ were computed for energies up to $1000 \mathrm{~cm}^{-1}$, leading to rate coefficients for temperatures in the $1-100 \mathrm{~K}$ range. The results can be summarized as follows:

- The inelastic cross sections for collisions with para- and ortho- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ are very similar in

FIG. 8. Comparison between rate coefficients at 50 K obtained in the present work with the PES4D and those of Toumi et al. ${ }^{28}$ for collisional excitation with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0\right)$ of all the $j_{1} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}$ $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$transitions. The two black lines delimit the region where the sets of data differ by less than a factor of 2 and the dashed line corresponds to equal values of the data.
magnitude; except at low energies, where many resonances are present. A similar conclusion is found for the rate coefficients.

- Rate coefficients for transitions with $\Delta j_{1}=1,2$ are dominant for both species. For larger $\Delta j_{1}$ transitions, the rate coefficients decrease with a propensity for even $\Delta j_{1}$.
- Accurate calculation of cross sections and rate coefficients require the inclusion of $j_{2}=0$ and $j_{2}=2$ in the $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ basis set for collision with para $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$ and, while for collisions with ortho $-\mathrm{H}_{2}$, the inclusion of $j_{2}=1$ is sufficient.
- The explicit description of the anisotropy of the PES with respect to the orientation of $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ is required, as using an averaged 2D-PES led to deviations of $20-30 \%$ of the corresponding para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}$ rate coefficients.

The data presented in this work could help in searching $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$via non-LTE models which could indicate the most intense lines.


FIG. 9. Comparison between rate coefficients obtained at 50 K with the present averaged PES-2DAV with those of Toumi et al. ${ }^{28}$ for collisional excitation with para- $\mathrm{H}_{2}\left(j_{2}=0\right)$ of all the $j_{1} \rightarrow j_{1}^{\prime}$ $\mathrm{C}_{2} \mathrm{H}^{-}$transitions. The two black lines delimit the region where the sets of data differ by less than a factor of 2 and the dashed line corresponds to equal values of the data.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

A Fortran routine of the potential energy surface is available as the supplementary material.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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