

Heterosupramolecular Chemistry: Self-Assembly of an Electron Donor (TiO₂ Nanocrystallite)–Acceptor (Viologen) Complex

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Dedicated to Dr. Satoshi Ushioda on the occasion of his 65th birthday

Abstract: A TiO₂ nanocrystallite has been modified to recognise and selectively bind, by complementary hydrogen bonding, a uracil substrate incorporating a viologen moiety. Band-gap excitation of the self-assembled donor (TiO₂ nanocrystallite)–acceptor (viologen) complex results in electron transfer. Some implications of these findings for the self-assembly of functional nanostructures containing both condensed phase and molecular components are considered.

Keywords

electron transfer · heterosupramolecules · self-assembly · titanium oxide · viologens

Introduction

A heterosupramolecule is formed by linking a condensed phase and molecular components.^[1] As is the case for a supermolecule, the properties of the constituent components largely persist^[2] and an associated heterosupramolecular function is observed.^[2] Specifically, a heterosupramolecule consisting of covalently linked TiO₂ nanocrystallite, viologen and anthraquinone components has been described,^[3] and the associated heterosupramolecular function demonstrated, namely, light-induced vectorial electron flow.^[4] The potentiostatic modulation of this function has also been demonstrated.^[5] The potential advantages of heterosupramolecular chemistry in the construction of practical molecular devices have been noted.^[5]

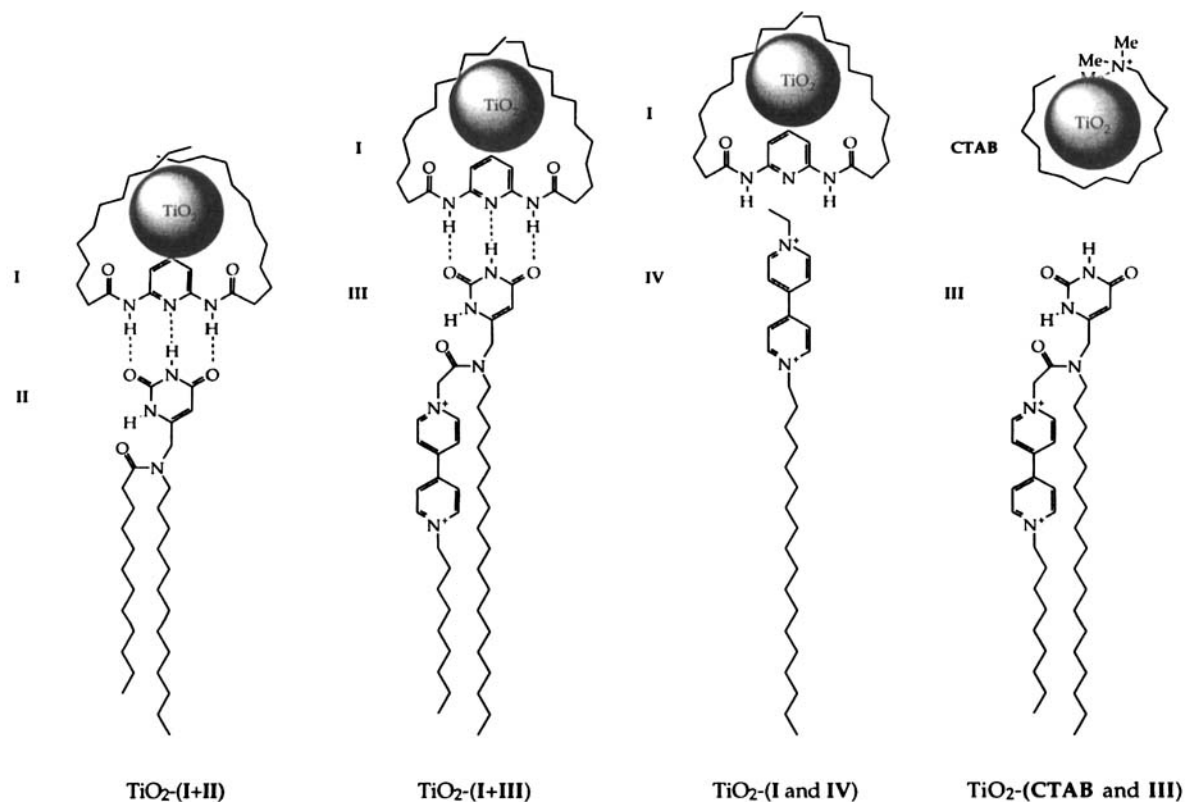
To date, the constituent components of a heterosupramolecule have been covalently linked.^[1, 3–5] As a consequence, their self-assembly has been precluded.^[6] Recently, however, TiO₂ nanocrystallites stabilised by the modified pyridine **I**^[7] (Scheme 1, TiO₂–**I**) have been prepared. These nanocrystallites selectively bind, by complementary hydrogen bonding, the modified uracil (**II**) to form the heterosupramolecule TiO₂–(**I**+**II**).^[8] In a further development of these studies, the self-assembly of the electron donor (TiO₂ nanocrystallite)–acceptor (viologen) heterosupramolecular complex TiO₂–(**I**+**III**) is reported.

Results and Discussion

The ¹H NMR spectra recorded for TiO₂–**I**, **III** and TiO₂–(**I**+**III**) in CDCl₃/[D₆]acetone are shown in Figure 1 a–c. The amidic proton resonances of TiO₂–**I** are observed at δ = 8.67. The amidic and imidic proton of **III** resonate at δ = 9.35 and 9.70, respectively. For TiO₂–(**I**+**III**), the above resonances are observed at δ = 8.76, 9.36 and 9.88, respectively. The basis for these assignments have previously been discussed in detail for TiO₂–(**I**+**II**).^[8] The measured down-field shifts in the resonances assigned to the amidic protons of **I** and the imidic proton of **III** are consistent with self-assembly, by complementary hydrogen bonding, of the heterosupramolecular complex TiO₂–(**I**+**III**) (Scheme 1).^[17–9] Also shown in Figure 1 are the ¹H NMR spectra in CDCl₃/[D₆]acetone recorded for a mixture of TiO₂–**I** and **IV**, denoted TiO₂–(**I** and **IV**), and a mixture of TiO₂–**CTAB** and **III**, denoted TiO₂–(**CTAB** and **III**). For TiO₂–(**I** and **IV**), the amidic proton resonances of TiO₂–**I** are observed at δ = 8.67 both prior to and following addition of **IV**. This observation is consistent with the assertion that TiO₂–**I** and **IV** do not self-assemble to form a heterosupramolecule by complementary hydrogen bonding. Similarly, for TiO₂–(**CTAB** and **III**), the imidic proton resonance of **III** is observed at δ = 9.79 prior to and following its addition to TiO₂–**CTAB**. This observation is again consistent with the assertion that TiO₂–**CTAB** and **III** do not self-assemble to form a heterosupramolecule by complementary hydrogen bonding.

Based on these findings it was expected that band-gap excitation of the TiO₂ nanocrystallite in TiO₂–(**I**+**III**) would result in electron transfer to the viologen, whereas in TiO₂–(**I** and **IV**) and TiO₂–(**CTAB** and **III**) it would not. Transient and steady-state absorption experiments were performed to test this expectation.

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Scheme 1. $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+II)}$ [8] and the three systems examined in this study.

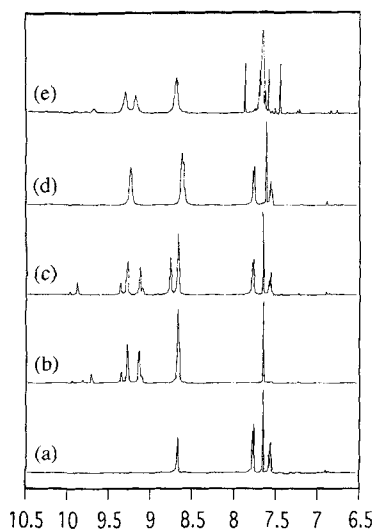


Figure 1. $^1\text{H NMR}$ spectra in a $\text{CDCl}_3/[\text{D}_6]\text{acetone}$ mixture (1:1 v/v) at 20°C : a) $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$; b) **III**; c) $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$; d) $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I and IV)}$; e) $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(CTAB and III)}$.

- While the visible spectrum measured following band-gap irradiation of degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ agrees with that reported for photogenerated electrons trapped in a TiO_2 nanocrystallite,^[10, 11] no spectrum is measured for aerated $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ under the same conditions.
- Based on the final amplitude of the ms transient for degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ (0.0001 a.u.), an irradiation volume of 0.4 cm^3 (effective path-length of 0.7 cm) and a sample volume of

Figure 2 shows the μs and ms absorption transients and steady-state absorption spectra measured following band-gap excitation of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ in chloroform/acetone. We note that:

- The μs transient is not measurably dependent on the extent to which $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ is degassed.
- While the ms transient for degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ decays to about 50% of its initial amplitude between pulses, the same transient for aerated $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ decays fully.

1.8 cm^3 , one predicts a steady-state absorption of 0.003 a.u. at 600 nm.

On this basis, the μs transient in Figure 2a is assigned to long-lived electrons trapped in the TiO_2 nanocrystallite of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$. Finally, as there is no measurable absorption by the molecular component **I** at 355 nm, no transients are measured for **I**.

Also shown in Figure 2 are the μs and ms absorption transients and steady-state absorption spectra measured following band-gap excitation of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ in chloroform/acetone. We note that:

- The μs transient is not measurably dependent on the extent to which $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ is degassed.
- While the ms transient for degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ rises initially within the laser pulse and slowly during 10 ms, the ms transient for aerated $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ rises only within the laser pulse.
- While the ms transient for degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ decays to about 80% of its initial amplitude, the same transient for aerated $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ decays fully.
- The visible spectrum measured following band-gap irradiation of degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ agrees well with that reported for the radical cation of viologens^[12] and, as expected, is offset from the baseline by about 0.003 a.u. due to the presence of long-lived electrons trapped in the TiO_2 nanocrystallites of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$.^[10, 11] In contrast, no spectrum is measured for aerated $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$ under the same conditions.
- Based on the final amplitude (0.0015 a.u.) of the ms transient for degassed $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$, an irradiation volume of 0.4 cm^3 and a sample volume of 1.4 cm^3 , one predicts a steady-state absorption of about 0.06 a.u. at 600 nm.

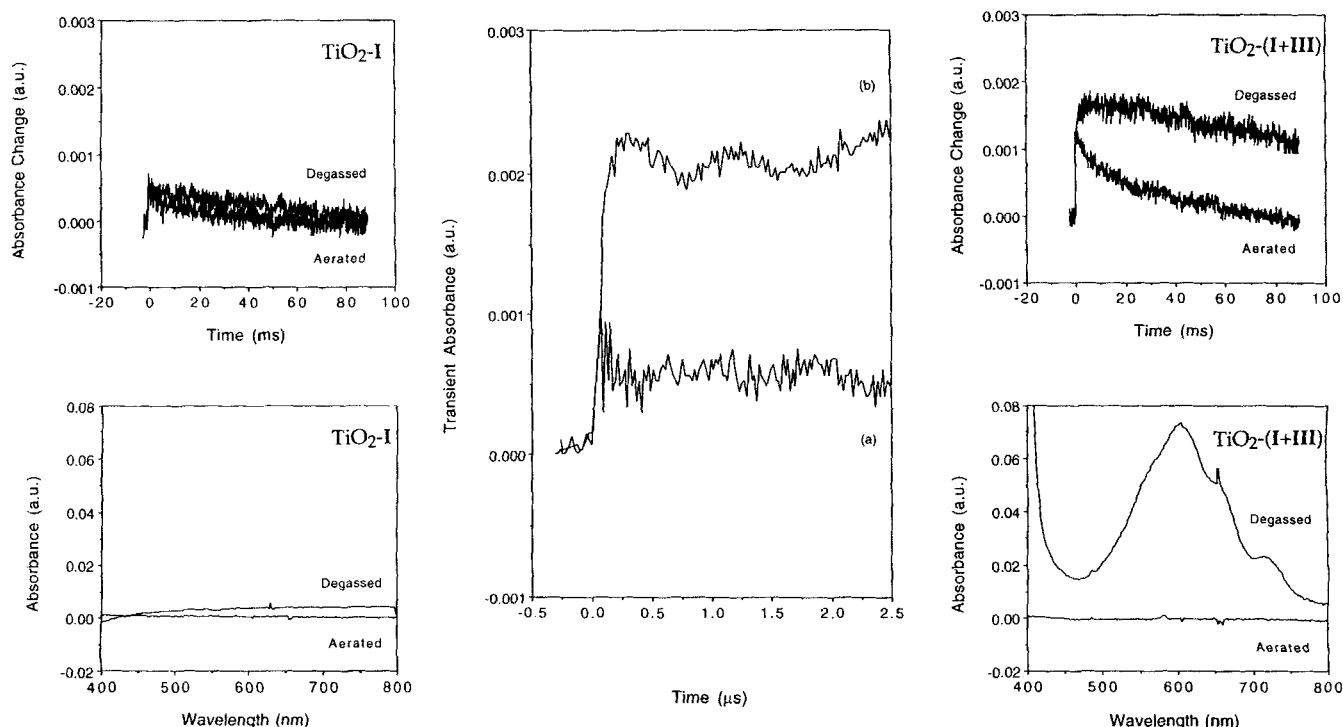


Figure 2. a) Transient absorption at 600 nm for degassed TiO₂-I in a chloroform/acetone mixture (1:1; v/v) at 20 °C on the μs timescale following band-gap excitation at 355 nm (average of 10 pulses of 5 ns duration at 2 mJ per pulse). Also shown are the absorption transients for degassed and aerated TiO₂-I in a chloroform/acetone mixture (1:1; v/v) at 20 °C on the ms timescale (average of 100 pulses of 5 ns duration at 2 mJ per pulse) (top left) and the corresponding absorption spectra following irradiation (bottom left). b) and spectra on the right: as above for TiO₂-(I+III).

On this basis, the μs transient in Figure 2b is assigned to radical cation of **III** and to long-lived electrons trapped in the TiO₂ nanocrystallite of TiO₂-(I+III). The slow component of the ms transient for degassed TiO₂-(I+III) is assigned to the radical cation of **III** formed by diffusion to TiO₂-I.^[13] It is noted that the contribution by trapped electrons to the measured transient for degassed TiO₂-(I+III) may be accurately deduced from the transient measured for degassed TiO₂-I. Finally, as there is no measurable absorption by the molecular components **I** or **III** at 355 nm, no transients are measured for **I**, **III** or (I+III).

Figure 3 shows the μs and ms absorption transients and steady-state absorption spectra measured for TiO₂-(I and IV) in chloroform/acetone. We note that:

- 1) The μs transient is not measurably dependent on the extent to which TiO₂-(I and IV) is degassed.
- 2) While the ms transient for degassed TiO₂-(I and IV) rises within the laser pulse and slowly during 10 ms, the ms transient for aerated TiO₂-(I and IV) rises only within the laser pulse.
- 3) While the ms transient for degassed TiO₂-(I and IV) decays to about half its maximum amplitude, the same transient for aerated TiO₂-(I and IV) decays fully and agrees well with that for aerated TiO₂-I.
- 4) The visible spectrum measured following band-gap irradiation of degassed TiO₂-(I and IV) agrees well with that reported for the radical cation of viologens,^[12] and is offset from the baseline by about 0.003 a.u. due to the presence of long-lived electrons trapped in the TiO₂ nanocrystallites of TiO₂-I.^[10, 11] In contrast, no spectrum is measured for aerated TiO₂-(I and IV) under the same conditions.

- 5) Based on the difference of the final amplitudes of the ms transients (0.0005 a.u.), an irradiation volume of 0.4 cm³ and a sample volume of 1.4 cm³, one predicts a steady-state absorption of 0.02 a.u. at 600 nm for degassed TiO₂-(I and IV) by reduced **IV**.

On this basis, the μs transient in Figure 3a is assigned to electrons trapped in a TiO₂ nanocrystallite and to the radical cation of **IV** formed by diffusion to the surface of TiO₂-I.^[13] Finally, as there is no measurable absorption by the molecular components **I** or **IV** at 355 nm, no transients are measured for **I**, **IV** or (I and IV).

Also shown in Figure 3 are the μs and ms absorption transients and steady-state absorption spectra measured for TiO₂-(CTAB and III) in chloroform/acetone. Qualitatively, they agree with those measured for TiO₂-(I and IV) although, the following quantitative differences are noted: Firstly, the ms transients for degassed and aerated TiO₂-(CTAB and III) decay more slowly.^[14] Therefore, while the visible spectrum measured following band-gap irradiation of degassed TiO₂-(CTAB and III) agrees well with that reported for the radical cation of viologen,^[12] it is offset from the baseline by about 0.006 a.u., twice the value for degassed TiO₂-(I and IV), owing to the presence of longer-lived electrons trapped in the TiO₂ nanocrystallites of TiO₂-I.^[10, 11] Consistent with the above and in contrast to aerated TiO₂-(I and IV), a spectrum is measured for aerated TiO₂-(CTAB and III), which agrees well with that reported for photogenerated long-lived electrons trapped in TiO₂ nanocrystallites.^[10, 11] Secondly, based on the difference of the final amplitudes of the ms transients (0.0005 a.u.), an irradiation volume of 0.4 cm³ and a sample volume of 1.4 cm³, one predicts a steady-state absorption of 0.02 a.u. at 600 nm for degassed

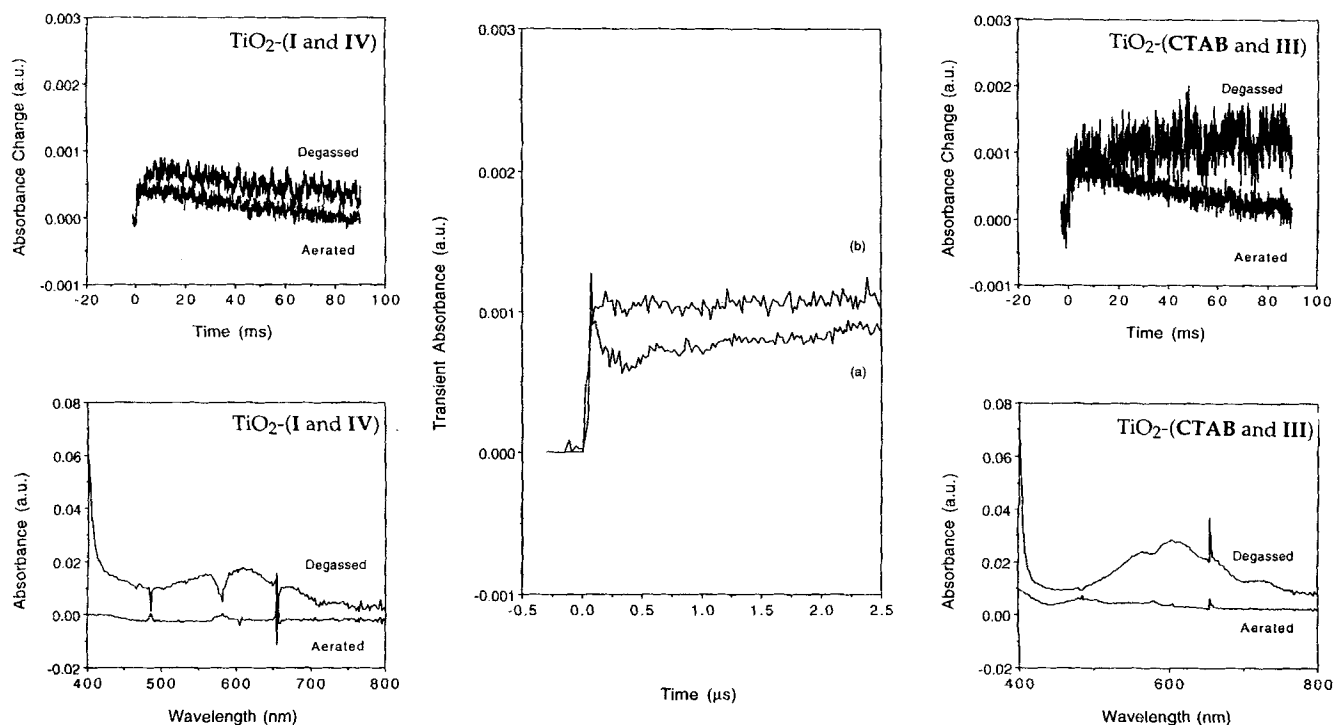


Figure 3. a) Transient absorption at 600 nm for degassed TiO_2 -(**I** and **IV**) in a chloroform/acetone mixture (1:1: v/v) at 20 °C on the μs timescale following band-gap excitation at 355 nm (average of 10 pulses of 5 ns duration at 2 mJ per pulse). Also shown are the absorption transients for degassed and aerated TiO_2 -(**I** and **IV**) in a chloroform/acetone mixture (1:1: v/v) at 20 °C on the ms timescale (average of 100 pulses of 5 ns duration at 2 mJ per pulse) measured following irradiation (bottom left) and spectra on the right: as above for TiO_2 -(**CTAB** and **III**).

TiO_2 -(**CTAB** and **III**) by reduced **III**. On this basis, the μs transient in Figure 3 b) is assigned to electrons trapped in a TiO_2 nanocrystallite and to the radical cation of **III** formed by diffusion to the surface of TiO_2 -**CTAB**. Finally, as there is no measurable absorption by the molecular components **CTAB** or **III** at 355 nm, no transients are measured for **CTAB**, **III** or (**CTAB** and **IV**).

As the optical absorption at 355 nm of the nanocrystallite in TiO_2 -**I** nm is 0.1 a.u., the pulse energy is 2 mJ, the cross-sectional area for irradiation is 0.4 cm^2 and assumed reflection losses are 20%, it is estimated that six electron-hole pairs are generated in each TiO_2 nanocrystallite. From the initial amplitude of the μs transient in Figure 2 b) for degassed TiO_2 -(**I**+**III**) and the known extinction coefficient for the reduced form of viologen,^[12] it is estimated that one radical cation of **III** is formed per particle. That is, the charge separation efficiency is about 6% with the majority of the photogenerated electron-hole pairs being lost by recombination or trapping.^[10, 11] From the initial amplitudes of the μs transients for degassed TiO_2 -(**I** and **IV**) and TiO_2 -(**CTAB** and **III**), equal to that for degassed TiO_2 -**I**, it is clear that no radical cations of **IV** and **III** are formed within the laser pulse, although, as for TiO_2 -(**I**+**III**), they are subsequently formed on the ms timescale by diffusion. It is noted that the molecular components of TiO_2 -(**I**+**III**), TiO_2 -(**I** and **IV**) or TiO_2 -(**CTAB** and **III**) may undergo oxidative degradation under prolonged irradiation in the absence of a suitable hole scavenger.^[15] However, no evolution of the transients was observed in Figures 2 or 3 that might be attributed to oxidative photodegradation of the molecular components.

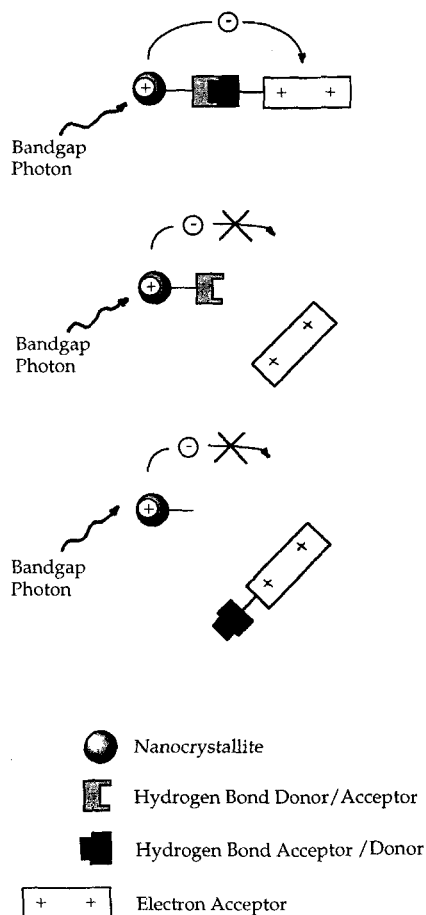
Conclusions

In short and as represented pictorially in Scheme 2 (top), TiO_2 -**I** containing a diaminopyridine moiety recognises and selectively binds the modified viologen **III** containing a uracil moiety. Light-induced vectorial electron flow is observed for the resulting donor-acceptor complex. There is ample precedent for electron transfer over long distances in supermolecules and their organised assemblies.^[16] In the absence of a uracil moiety (Scheme 2, middle) the modified nanocrystallite TiO_2 -**I** does not recognise or selectively bind the viologen **IV**. Similarly, in the absence of a diaminopyridine moiety (Scheme 2, bottom) the modified nanocrystallite TiO_2 -**CTAB** does not recognise or selectively bind the modified viologen **III**. In neither of these last two cases is direct light-induced electron transfer to the viologen moiety observed. Our current studies are directed toward modifying the surface of a TiO_2 nanocrystallite to selectively bind another condensed-phase component.^[17] Looking further to the future, analogous approaches involving many condensed phase and molecular components may be envisaged and offer the prospect of self-assembling complex heterosupramolecular structures.

Experimental Procedure

TiO_2 nanocrystallites ($d = 22 \pm 2 \text{ \AA}$ and $\lambda_{\text{onset}} = 360 \text{ nm}$) were prepared in CDCl_3 in the presence of **I** or **CTAB** to form the stable sols denoted TiO_2 -**I** or TiO_2 -**CTAB** respectively [18].

I and **II** have been prepared and characterised previously [7,8]. A summary of their ^1H NMR spectra is given.



Scheme 2. Pictorial representation of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I+III)}$, $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(I and IV)}$ and $\text{TiO}_2\text{-(CTAB and III)}$.

I (CDCl_3): $\delta = 0.88$ (t, 6H, $J = 7.0$ Hz), 1.25–1.74 (m, 36H), 2.36 (t, 4H, $J = 7.6$ Hz), 7.52 (s, 2H, -NH amidic), 7.69 (t, 1H, $J = 8.2$ Hz), 7.88 (d, 2H, $J = 8.2$ Hz).

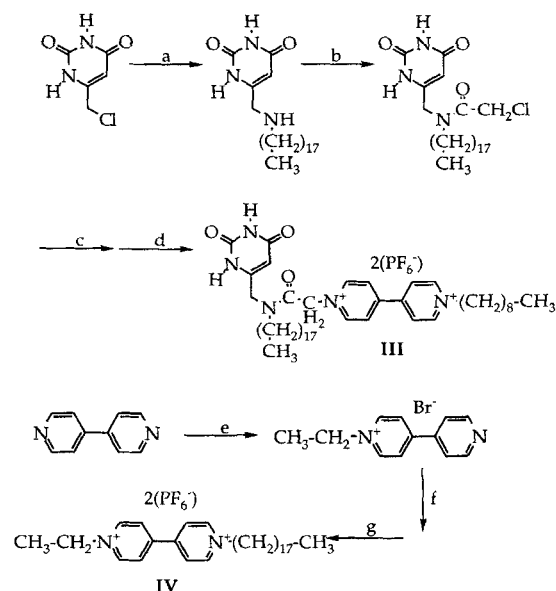
II (CDCl_3): $\delta = 0.88$ (t, 6H, $J = 7.0$ Hz), 1.26–1.58 (m, 40H), 2.36 (t, 2H, $J = 7.8$ Hz), 4.16 (s, 2H), 5.52 (s, 1H); 8.14 (s, 1H, -NH amidic); 9.51 (s, 1H, -NH imidic).

III· $(\text{PF}_6)_2$ and **IV**· $(\text{PF}_6)_2$ were synthesised as shown in Scheme 3 and characterised by elemental analysis and $^1\text{H NMR}$.

III· $(\text{PF}_6)_2$: Calculated C, 52.42; H, 7.10; N, 6.95. Found: C, 52.02; H, 7.02; N, 6.83. $^1\text{H NMR}$ ($[\text{D}_6]$ acetone): $\delta = 0.86$ (t, 6H, $J = 6.7$ Hz), 1.28–1.39 (m, 46H), 3.60 (t, 2H, $J = 7.8$ Hz), 4.52 (s, 2H), 5.00 (t, 2H, $J = 7.6$ Hz), 5.52 (s, 1H), 6.32 (s, 2H), 7.5 (brs, 1H, -NH amidic), 8.87–8.91 (dd, 4H, $J = 5.1$, 2.0 Hz), 9.35 (d, 2H, $J = 7.3$ Hz), 9.49 (d, 2H, $J = 7.1$ Hz), 9.90 (s, 1H, NH imidic).

IV· $(\text{PF}_6)_2$: Calculated C, 49.44; H, 6.92; N, 3.85. Found: C, 50.00; H, 7.11; N, 3.84. $^1\text{H NMR}$ ($[\text{D}_6]$ acetone): $\delta = 0.88$ (t, 3H, $J = 6.6$ Hz), 1.28–1.32 (m, 32H), 1.80 (t, 3H, $J = 7.4$ Hz), 4.96 (q, 4H, $J = 7.4$ Hz), 8.85 (dd, 4H, unresolved coupling), 9.43 (d, 2H, unresolved coupling), 9.46 (d, 2H, unresolved coupling). **CTAB** was used as supplied without further purification. A summary of its $^1\text{H NMR}$ spectrum (CDCl_3): $\delta = 0.88$ (t, 3H, $J = 6.6$ Hz), 1.25–1.36 (m, 28H), 1.78 (m, 2H), 3.50 (s, 9H).

General procedure: A solution of the required molecular component, either **III** or **IV**, was prepared in acetone or $[\text{D}_6]$ acetone and added to an equal volume of $\text{TiO}_2\text{-I}$ or $\text{TiO}_2\text{-CTAB}$ in chloroform or CDCl_3 . The final (particle) concentration of TiO_2 nanocrystallites was 4×10^{-7} mol dm $^{-3}$. The final (molecular) concentration of **I**, **III**, **IV** and **CTAB** was, in each case, 4×10^{-4} mol dm $^{-3}$. It is noted, that under these conditions, about 70% of **I** or **CTAB** are adsorbed at the nanocrystallite surface [8]. The above sols were studied by $^1\text{H NMR}$ and transient optical absorption spectroscopy at 20 °C. All NMR spectra were recorded on either a JEOL JNM-GX 270 FT or Varian



Scheme 3. Reaction conditions for synthesis of **III** and **IV**: a) Octadecylamine, *i*PrOH, reflux, N_2 ; b) chloroacetic anhydride, pyridine–chloroform, RT; c) 4-nonylbipyridinium bromide, acetonitrile, reflux; d) methanolic ammonium hexafluorophosphate; e) excess ethyl bromide (neat), RT; f) octadecyl bromide, acetonitrile, reflux; g) as in (d).

500 FT spectrometer. All absorption transients were recorded, unless otherwise stated, at 600 nm following pulsed excitation at 355 nm (5 ns, 2 mJ pulse $^{-1}$) of a rigorously degassed samples contained in a vacuum-tight 1 cm by 1 cm quartz cell. The transient absorption spectrometer, a double-beam laser-based system capable of measuring absorption changes of 5×10^{-5} absorbance units, has been described in detail elsewhere [19]. Transients reported on the μs timescale are the average of ten measurements, those reported on the ms timescale are the average of one hundred measurements. Absorption spectra were measured using a Hewlett-Packard 8452 A diode array spectrophotometer.

Acknowledgements: This work was supported by a grant from the Commission of the European Union under the Joule III programme (Contract JOR 3-CT 960107). The authors thank D. Harris of Cell Media for the cover design.

Received: June 13, 1996 [F 478]

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