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# Hydrogen production from water by visible light using zinc porphyrinsensitized platinized titanium dioxide ☆

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## Abstract

The rate of  $H_2$  evolution from aqueous suspensions of Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> with deposited zinc porphyrin in the presence of an electron donor (EDTA, triethanolamine, ascorbic and oxalic acids) during irradiation by visible light ( $\lambda > 520$  nm) was optimized with respect to the concentrations of platinum, zinc porphyrin and electron donor. The relationship between the rate of hydrogen evolution and pH has a maximum at pH 4-5 for EDTA, ascorbic and oxalic acids, as does the adsorption of these donors on TiO<sub>2</sub>. In the case of triethanolamine, H<sub>2</sub> production increases sharply in alkaline solutions when the triethanolamine molecules are deprotonated. The photostability of the photosensitizer increases on the semiconductor. Turn-over numbers for the zinc porphyrins varied from 50 for water-soluble zinc porphyrin up to 150–185 for water-insoluble sensitizers.

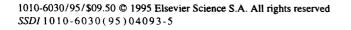
Keywords: Hydrogen production; Photosensitization; Titanium dioxide; Electron donor; Irradiation

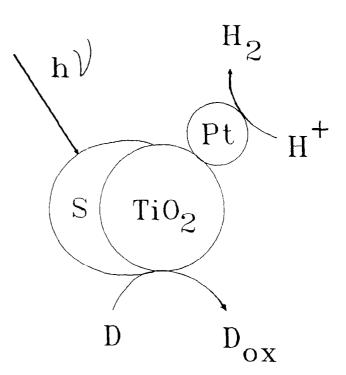
# 1. Introduction

Spectral sensitization of wide band gap semiconductors in visible light for the photolysis of water has been a subject of investigation from the viewpoint of photochemical solar energy conversion. Dyes [1-5], Ru(II) bipyridyl [2,6-11], Ti(IV), Pt(II), Ir(III), Bi(III) and Pb(II) 8-quinolinol [11,12] and Pt(alizarine)<sub>2</sub> [13] complexes and water-soluble metalloporphyrins [2,14] have been shown to sensitize the production of hydrogen from water (Scheme 1).

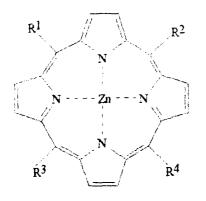
The present work deals with the sensitization of  $TiO_2$  by both water-soluble and insoluble zinc porphyrins. The effects of the concentrations of platinum, sensitizer and electron donor and the pH and temperature of the suspension on the rate of H<sub>2</sub> evolution, *R*, were investigated. These results were compared with data obtained for Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> upon UV illumination. The photostability of zinc porphyrins was also tested. Previously it has been found that these zinc porphyrins sensitize H<sub>2</sub> production from aqueous suspensions of Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> in the presence of a sacrificial electron donor [15,16].

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Scheme 1. S is the sensitizer; D is the electron donor.



$R^1 = R^2 = R^3 = R^4 = R_1$	ZnTMPyP4+		
$R^1 = R^2 = R^3 = R_1, R^4 = R_2$	ZnP3+		
$R^1 = R^2 = R_1, R^3 = R^4 = R_2$	$ZnP_u^{2+}$		
$R^1 = R^3 = R_1, R^2 = R^4 = R_2$	ZnP <sub>s</sub> <sup>2+</sup>		
where $R_1 = N$ -methyl-4-pyridyl and $R_2 = n$ -nonyl;			

$R^1 = R^2 = R^3 = R^4 = R$ , where R =	
benzo-12-crown-4	ZnTCP(4)
benzo-15-crown-5	ZnTCP(5)
benzo-18-crown-6	ZnTCP(6)
p-carboxyphenyl	ZnTPPC

Fig. 1. Structure of zinc porphyrins.

Excited metalloporphyrin molecules adsorbed on  $TiO_2$  colloids are known to inject electrons into the conduction band of the semiconductor [17,18]. On the other hand, the anion radicals of metalloporphyrins formed by photoreduction of a metalloporphyrin with a donor evolve hydrogen from water on platinum [19,20].

## 2. Experimental details

## 2.1. Materials

All chemicals were at least reagent grade and were used as supplied. Details of the synthesis of zinc porphyrins (Fig. 1) – zinc(II) 5,10,15,20-tetrakis(4-*N*-methylpyridyl)porphine tetratosilate (ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup>), zinc(II) 5-monokis(*n*-nonyl)-10,15,20-trikis(4-*N*-methylpyridyl)porphine tritosylate (ZnP<sup>3+</sup>), zinc(II) 5,10-dikis(*n*-nonyl)-15,20dikis(4-*N*-methylpyridyl)porphine ditosylate (ZnPu<sup>2+</sup>), zinc(II) 5,15-dikis(*n*-nonyl)-10,20-dikis(4-*N*-methylpyridyl)porphine ditosylate (ZnPs<sup>2+</sup>), zinc(II) 5,10,15,20tetrakis(*p*-carboxyphenyl)porphine (ZnTPPC), zinc(II) 5,10,15,20-tetrakis(benzo-12-crown-4)porphine (ZnTCP-(4)), zinc(II) 5,10,15,20-tetrakis(benzo-15-crown-5)porphine (ZnTCP(5)) and zinc(II) 5,10,15,20-tetrakis(benzo-18-crown-6)porphine (ZnTCP(6)) – were given elsewhere [21-24].

TiO<sub>2</sub> powder (particle size 0.1–5  $\mu$ m, surface area about 150 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup>) was prepared by thermal hydrolysis of titanium(IV) sulphate in a concentrated solution of sulphuric acid. Colloidal Pt was obtained by the reduction of H<sub>2</sub>PtCl<sub>6</sub> with citrate at 90 °C according to Ref. [25]. Excess citrate was removed by an ion exchange resin at 0 °C. The Pt sol was mixed with the TiO<sub>2</sub> powder, the dispersion was sonicated and water was removed by using a vacuum rotary evaporator. The dried Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> powder was resuspended in alcoholic zinc porphyrin solution and the photosensitizer was deposited on the surface of the Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> particles by evaporation of ethanol.

Doubly distilled water was used to prepare all solutions and suspensions. The pH of the solutions was adjusted with either NaOH or HCl. Oxalic and ascorbic acids, triethanolamine (TEOA) and the disodium salt of ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) served as electron donors.

## 2.2. Apparatus and analysis

Photolysis experiments were carried out in a cylindrical Pyrex glass cell (18 ml) equipped with a rubber septum. After sonication of  $Pt/TiO_2$  with deposited zinc porphyrin in 7 ml aqueous solution of an electron donor, the suspensions were placed in the cell and stirred magnetically. Oxygen was removed by argon bubbling. The suspensions were irradiated by visible light ( $\lambda > 520$  nm) from a 1000 W xenon lamp through water and a glass filter OS-11 (LOMO). The temperature of all suspensions was about 35 °C.

The volume of evolved hydrogen was measured by gas chromatography. The spectra of solutions and powders were recorded on a Perkin–Elmer Lambda 9 spectrophotometer. The changes in pH values were monitored using a model 340 pH meter.

# 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Effect of Pt concentration

Fig. 2 shows that the dependence of R on the amount of platinum has a maximum at 0.2–0.4 wt.% Pt. These maxima occurred for the Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>-electron donor systems upon band gap illumination of the semiconductor [25–28]. The optimum Pt content varied from 0.05% to 5%. This is probably because Pt, TiO<sub>2</sub> and Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> were prepared by various methods.

### 3.2. Effect of electron donor concentration

Fig. 3 presents the dependence of R on the initial concentration of electron donor, C. Taking into account the maximal

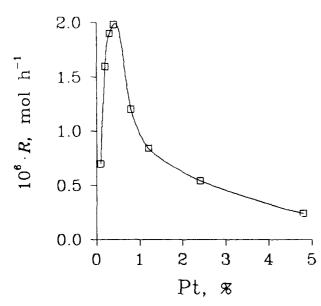
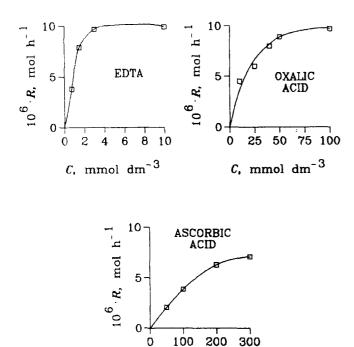


Fig. 2. Rate of H<sub>2</sub> evolution, R, as a function of Pt loading (1.33 g dm<sup>-3</sup>  $ZnP_u^{2+}/Pt/TiO_2$  (20  $\mu$ mol  $ZnP_u^{2+}$  per 1 g Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>) and 0.05 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> EDTA).



C, mmol dm<sup>-3</sup>

Fig. 3. Rate of H<sub>2</sub> evolution, *R*, as a function of electron donor concentration *C* (3 g dm<sup>-3</sup> ZnP<sup>3+</sup>/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> (20  $\mu$ mol ZnP<sup>3+</sup> per 1 g Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>, 0.4% Pt) and 0.05 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> electron donor).

rates of hydrogen evolution,  $R_{max}$ , and the C values at which the concentration dependences of R reach a plateau, the efficiency of the electron donors follows the order EDTA > oxalic acid > ascorbic acid. Furthermore, the adsorption isotherms of EDTA, oxalic and ascorbic acids on TiO<sub>2</sub> [29-31] show that the near-saturation coverage of the electron donors also follows the above order. These facts suggest that R is determined by the surface concentration of electron donor on the semiconductor. For the  $Pt/TiO_2$ -EDTA system upon band gap irradiation [28,31] *R* was determined by the surface concentration of electron donor and the dependence of *R* on the EDTA concentration was of a similar type to the dependences in Fig. 3.

#### 3.3. Effect of pH

Fig. 4 shows that the relationship between R and pH has a maximum at pH 4–5 for EDTA, oxalic and ascorbic acids. The adsorption maxima of these donors on TiO<sub>2</sub> were also observed at the same pH [32–34]. Thus R and the adsorption of electron donor on the photocatalyst exhibit similar pH dependences. These findings also indicate that R is determined by the surface concentration of electron donor on the semiconductor.

The results for the  $ZnP_u^{2^+}/Pt/TiO_2$ -EDTA system are in contrast with the behaviour of the ruthenium(II) bipyridyl complex/Pt/TiO\_2-EDTA system, where the efficiency of sensitized hydrogen production was reduced when the pH was increased from 3 to 7 because of sensitizer desorption [9]. If ZnTPPC is used instead of  $ZnP_u^{2^+}$ , the observed behaviour of the dependence of R on pH is similar to that seen in Ref. [9]: R = 1.4, 0.5 and 0.2  $\mu$ mol h<sup>-1</sup> at pH 3, 5 and 7 respectively. This is because ZnTPPC has -COOH groups like the ruthenium complex. ZnTPPC is practically insoluble at pH < 5, because the -COOH groups are protonated in acid solution [17], and the maximum coverage of ZnTPPC on TiO<sub>2</sub> is attained at pH 3. Desorption of ZnTPPC from the TiO<sub>2</sub> surface in neutral and alkaline solutions is known to reduce the efficiency of sensitization of the colloidal

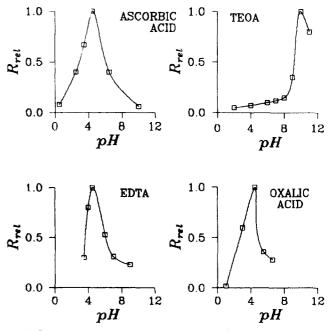


Fig. 4. Relative rate of H<sub>2</sub> evolution,  $R_{rel} (R_{rel} = R/R_{max})$ , as a function of pH (the maximal rate  $R_{max}$  was taken for each electron donor separately) (1.33 g dm<sup>-3</sup> ZnP<sub>u</sub><sup>2+</sup>/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> (20  $\mu$ mol) ZnP<sub>u</sub><sup>2+</sup> per 1 g Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>, 0.4% Pt)) + 0.05 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> electron donor.

 $TiO_2$  particles [17]. However, the  $ZnP_u^{2+}$  concentration on  $TiO_2$  is not changed when the pH is varied, since  $ZnP_u^{2+}$  is insoluble in water.

Fig. 4 shows that *R* increases sharply at pH > 8 in the case of TEOA as electron donor. Similar dependences were observed for the dibromofluorescein/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>-TEOA system upon visible light illumination [3] and for the Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>-TEOA system upon UV illumination [34]. To explain this dependence, we proposed [34] that the rate of oxidation of the amine in alkaline solution is higher than that of the protonated amine in acid solution, since the rate constant for oxidation of the amine is known to be significantly lower in acid solutions [35].

# 3.4. Effect of zinc porphyrin concentration

The diffuse reflectance spectra of the zinc porphyrins deposited on the  $TiO_2$  surface exhibit the same absorbance bands as the visible absorption spectra in solution (the Soret band and two Q bands). However, as can be seen in Table 1, the spectra show a red shift of all absorption bands. This shift of the absorbance bands was attributed to the interaction between porphyrins and supports [17,36].

In organic solvents in the presence of  $K^+$  ions ZnTCP(5) forms a twisted face-to-face dimer owing to the formation of a complex between four  $K^+$  ions and eight benzo-15-crown-5 meso substituents of two molecules of ZnTCP(5) [37]. The formation of the dimer is followed by broadening, a red shift of the Q bands and a blue shift of the Soret band in the visible absorption spectra. There is no blue shift of the Soret band in the diffuse reflectance spectrum of ZnTCP(5)/TiO<sub>2</sub> when ZnTCP(5) is deposited on TiO<sub>2</sub> from an ethanolic solution containing the K<sup>+</sup>-induced dimer (see Table 1). The spectrum is very similar to those observed for ZnTCP(4)

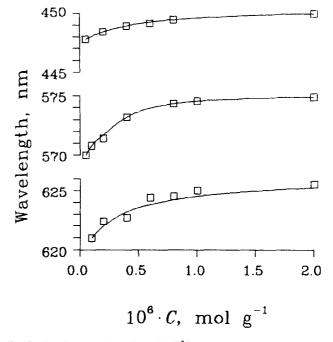


Fig. 5. Absorbance band maxima of  $ZnP^{3+}$  deposited on  $TiO_2$  as a function of  $ZnP^{3+}$  concentration on support.

and ZnTCP(6) as well as ZnTCP(5) in the absence of  $K^+$  ions. These facts indicate that the face-to-face dimers with the blue-shifted Soret band are absent on the TiO<sub>2</sub> surface.

Fig. 5 and Table 1 show that increasing the zinc porphyrin concentration on a support causes a bathochromic shift of the band maxima in the diffuse reflectance spectrum. Chlorophyll on some supports demonstrated the same behaviour owing to pigment aggregation [36]. The formation of aggregates was also found for zinc 5,10,15,20-tetraphenylporphine and  $H_2TMPyP^{4+}$  on glasses covered by SnO<sub>2</sub> or In<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>/SnO<sub>2</sub>

Table 1

Band maxima of zinc porphyrins in visible absorption and diffuse reflectance spectra

Zinc porphyrin	Soret (B) and Q bands of zinc porphyrin, $\lambda_{max}$ (nm)							
	Ethanol			Zinc porphyrin on TiO <sub>2</sub>				
	В	Q(1,0)	Q(0,0)	Conc. *	В	Q(1,0)	Q(0,0)	
ZnTCP (4)	426	559	599	A	430	559	601	
				В	_	564	605	
ZnTCP (5)	427	559	599	Α	431	562	602	
				В		566	607	
ZnTCP (5)	413	564	610	А	432	562	605	
(dimer)				В	-	566	610	
ZnTCP (6)	427	559	599	Α	432	562	605	
				В	-	566	610	
ZnTMPyP <sup>4+ b</sup>	433	561	606	Α	453	575	613	
ZnP <sup>3+ b</sup>	436	565	614	Α	447	571	621	
				В	449	576	626	
ZnPu <sup>2+</sup>	427	568	620	В	448	575	624	
ZnP <sup>2+</sup>	426	564	628	В	442	571	639	
ZnTPPC	420	556	594	Α	436	566	608	

\* A and B denote 2 and 20 µmol zinc porphyrin per 1 g TiO<sub>2</sub> respectively.

<sup>b</sup> The spectra were recorded in aqueous solutions.

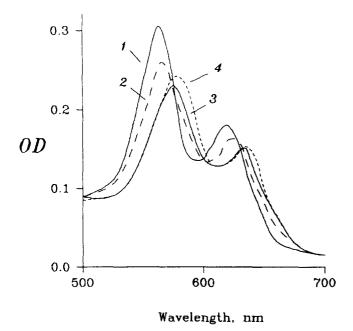


Fig. 6. Absorption spectra of (1)  $2.5 \times 10^{-5}$  mol dm<sup>-3</sup> ZnP<sup>3+</sup> and (2–4) electrolyte-induced aggregates of ZnP<sup>3+</sup> (0.45, 2.25 and 4.5 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> LiCl respectively) in aqueous solutions.

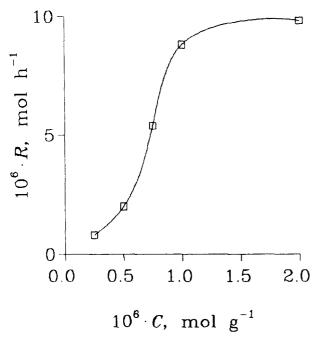


Fig. 7. Rate of  $H_2$  evolution, R, as a function of zinc porphyrin concentration (3 g dm<sup>-3</sup> ZnP<sup>3+</sup>/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> (0.4% Pt) and 0.05 mol dm<sup>-3</sup> EDTA).

[38] and for porphyrins containing alkyl and pyridyl meso substituents on SiO<sub>2</sub> [39].

The red shift and broadening of all adsorption bands are also observed upon addition of LiCl to an aqueous solution of  $ZnP^{3+}$  owing to the formation of electrolyte-induced aggregates [e.g. 40,41]. Fig. 6 illustrates these spectral changes. More than one type of particle is present in solution, since there are no isobestic points in the spectra. Fig. 7 presents the dependence of R on the concentration of  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$ . R increases with increasing  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$  concentration up to 10  $\mu$ mol  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$  per 1 g Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>. Comparison with Fig. 5 shows that a plot of  $\lambda_{\text{max}}$  against the concentration of  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$ reaches a plateau at the same  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$  concentration. This is probably because aggregation is complete at this concentration of  $\text{ZnP}^{3+}$ .

Since  $ZnP_u^{2+}/Pt/TiO_2$  powder is hydrophobic, ultrasonic treatment in water is required in order to make it hydrophilic. The porphyrin molecules may have a flat or stacked orientation on the support with respect to its surface. A model with the stacked orientation of porphyrin on the SiO<sub>2</sub> surface was proposed for a porphyrin containing two long-chain alkyl and two methylpyridyl meso substituents [42]. We believe that ultrasonic treatment changes the orientation of zinc porphyrin on the SiO<sub>2</sub> surface of a porphyrin containing alkyl and methylpyridyl meso substituents depends on its concentration and this dependence is complex [42].

## 3.5. Effect of temperature

The apparent activation energy of hydrogen evolution is 36 kJ mol<sup>-1</sup> for the  $ZnP_u^{2+}/Pt/TiO_2$ -EDTA system. This value is nearly half that for platinum(II) oxinate as a photosensitizer (about 65 kJ mol<sup>-1</sup>) in the same system [12].

## 3.6. Photostability of zinc porphyrins

The turn-over numbers for the zinc porphyrins are collected in Table 2. The metalloporphyrins photobleach because their  $\pi$  ion radicals are unstable in aqueous solutions. Thus water-soluble ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup> forms hydroproducts in the presence of EDTA during prolonged illumination [19,20,43]. Some improvement in the photostability of ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup> in the ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup>/Pt-EDTA system was obtained at high concentrations of Pt catalyst owing to faster scavenging of electrons by Pt from the anion radical of the porphyrin [19].

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Turn-over	numbers	(TN)	for	photosensitizers	

Zinc porphyrin <sup>a</sup>	TN <sup>b</sup>	Time (h)		
ZnTMPyP <sup>4 + c</sup>	50	12		
ZnP <sup>3+</sup>	182	9 a		
$ZnP_{\mu}^{2+}$	154	9 d		
$ZnP_{u}^{2+}$ $ZnP_{s}^{2+}$	148	9 a		

 $^{a}$  1.33 g dm  $^{-3}$  zinc porphyrin/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> (20  $\mu$ mol zinc porphyrin per 1 g Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>, 0.4% Pt) and 0.05 mol dm  $^{-3}$  EDTA.

<sup>b</sup> TN = 2(moles of  $H_2$  evolved)/(moles of zinc porphyrin).

° 10<sup>-4</sup> mol dm<sup>-3</sup> ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> The zinc porphyrin/Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst was removed from suspension every 3 h and then added to fresh EDTA solution, since the donor concentration decreased and the pH increased during prolonged irradiation; such changes in both parameters results in decreasing R, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

Some retardation of zinc porphyrin degradation is also observed when the photosensitizers are deposited on the Pt/ TiO<sub>2</sub> surface. For example, about 70% of  $ZnP_{u}^{2+}$  is removed into solution from the Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> particles by organic solvents (DMF, DMSO or ethanol) after irradiation of the  $ZnP_{n}^{2+}/$ Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub>-EDTA suspension for 9 h. However, irradiation of the Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> suspensions containing  $ZnP_u^{2+}$  and  $ZnP_s^{2+}$  solubilized with Triton X-100 leads to colourless products after 1 h. In the case of ZnTMPyP<sup>4+</sup>, R drops to about 1–1.5  $\mu$ mol  $h^{-1}$  owing to the photobleaching of zinc porphyrin in solution and this steady value of R is maintained for 7-8 h. The same rate is observed for a light green photocatalyst which is filtered and placed in fresh EDTA solution. These results indicate that during prolonged illumination H<sub>2</sub> evolution is sensitized by adsorbed ZnTMPyP4+ molecules, since a Pt/TiO<sub>2</sub> sample does not evolve H<sub>2</sub> during visible light irradiation.

## 4. Conclusions

The rate of hydrogen production depends on the surface concentrations of platinum, zinc porphyrin and electron donor on titanium dioxide. The adsorption of the electron donor is determined by the pH value of the suspension. The photostability of zinc porphyrins increases on the semiconductor surface.

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