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## Combinatorial Discovery of New Photocatalysts for Water Purification with Visible Light\*\*

Christian Lettmann, Heike Hinrichs, and Wilhelm F. Maier\*

Photocatalytic conversion of air and water pollutants belongs to the most promising methods of environmental protection. Irradiation of a semiconducting oxide (SCO) with light of energy equal to or larger than the bandgap energy leads to the generation of electron–hole pairs, which can subsequently induce redox reactions at the SCO surface. Heterogeneous photocatalysis is an environmentally friendly method for the detoxification of water and air by sunlight, by which organic pollutants are converted to CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O, and mineral acids. Recent reviews were published discussing the underlying mechanisms and summarizing the state of the art.<sup>[1, 2]</sup> Research has been concentrated on anatase (TiO<sub>2</sub>), which is photostable, nontoxic, cheap, and active. Due to its large bandgap of 3.2 eV, UV light ( $\lambda < 400$  nm) is necessary to generate the electron–hole pairs. This is a major drawback for an efficient water detoxification with TiO<sub>2</sub>, since only 3 % of the solar spectrum has wavelengths shorter than 400 nm.

We have discovered recently, that a variety of dopants in sol–gel derived TiO<sub>2</sub>, such as Pt, Ir, and even coke, provide photocatalytic activity with visible light at wavelengths  $> 400$  nm.<sup>[3, 6, 7, 12]</sup> These discoveries have convinced us, that there may be more photocatalytically active materials than presently known, and we have developed a combinatorial high-throughput technique in order to search more effectively for promising novel compositions. In recent years the potential power of combinatorial approaches and high-throughput (HT) screening for materials and catalysts has already been amply demonstrated,<sup>[4]</sup> while reports on the discovery of superior novel substances are still limited.

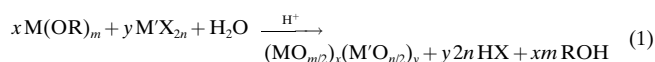
The aim of this work was to develop a reliable HT technique for the efficient discovery of new photocatalysts, capable of photodegrading water pollutants with visible light ( $\lambda > 400$  nm). Due to their well-known photocatalytic properties, doped titanium oxides were selected as reference materials during the development of the method. Since nothing is known about the photocatalytic properties of the doped SCOs WO<sub>3</sub> or SnO<sub>2</sub> with visible light, these oxides have been selected as base materials for the discovery libraries.

The “library design” chosen consists of 45 transparent HPLC glass flasks (2 mL) arranged in an addressable rack of nine rows and five columns. The potential catalysts were

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synthesized directly in the HPLC flasks by means of a synthesis robot (Tecan Miniprep 50). For synthesis, a simple sol–gel procedure [Eq. (1)] was applied, which has already been shown to provide excellent photocatalysts.<sup>[3]</sup>



Here, M stands for the base oxide (Ti, W, Sn), M' for the dopant, and X for monovalent anions. The recipes were optimized for robotic synthesis. During the whole preparation procedure the reaction mixtures were agitated by a microtiterplate–orbital shaker (Heidolph Titramax 100) to ensure rapid and complete mixing of the reagents. The sol compositions are given in Table 1. For TiO<sub>2</sub> and SnO<sub>2</sub>, isopropanol

Table 1. Calcination temperature *T* of the gels, pipetted volumes *V*, and concentrations *c* of the precursor solutions.

SCO	<i>V</i> (iPrOH) [μL]	<i>V</i> (SCO) [μL]	<i>c</i> (SCO) [mol L <sup>−1</sup> ]	<i>V</i> (dopant) [μL] ( <i>c</i> = 0.05 N)	<i>V</i> (HCl) [μL] ( <i>c</i> = 12 N)	<i>T</i> [°C]
TiO <sub>2</sub>	251.6	396.9	1.0	79.4	7.8	400
SnO <sub>2</sub>	159.3	396.9	0.282	67.6	5.7	400
WO <sub>3</sub>	600	396.9	0.5	40.4	–	400

solutions of the corresponding tetraisopropoxides were employed as precursors; for WO<sub>3</sub>, a synthesis procedure reported by Reisfeld and co-workers<sup>[5]</sup> was slightly modified, namely, a solution of H<sub>2</sub>WO<sub>4</sub> in water was employed, prepared directly before the synthesis by passing a Na<sub>2</sub>WO<sub>4</sub> solution through an acidic ion exchanger (Dowex 50WX8-400). Doping by addition of 1 or 3 mol % metal salts (0.05 N solutions in isopropanol) to the sol was used to modify the light-absorbing properties of the SCOs. For TiO<sub>2</sub> and SnO<sub>2</sub>, hydrochloric acid was added to catalyse the gelation. For Pb and Ag as dopants, nitric acid was added instead of hydrochloric acid to avoid precipitation of the corresponding metal chlorides. In the case of WO<sub>3</sub>, there was no addition of acid. This approach to doping does not require additional preparation steps and provides a mixed oxide, in which the dopant is homogeneously distributed throughout the solid matrix of the material.

After gelation, the libraries were aged at room temperature for two weeks and subsequently calcined at 400 °C for 3 h to yield the mixed oxides, which remained in the HPLC flasks and were used as obtained. To determine the activity of the catalysts for photodegradation of water pollutants upon irradiation with visible light, 4-chlorophenol (4-CP) was chosen as model pollutant. 1 mL of a 4-CP solution (*c* = 2.5 × 10<sup>−4</sup> mol L<sup>−1</sup>), previously saturated with air, was added to each HPLC flask containing a catalyst, and the whole library was then subjected to irradiation with visible light. The light was provided by eight conventional fluorescence lamps (Osram Dulux SG23, 11 W; Figure 1 A), which emit light of wavelengths >400 nm. The lamps were mounted symmetrically side by side in order to assure homogeneous light intensity. A potassium chromate solution (*c* = 1 mol L<sup>−1</sup>) was placed in a frosted-glass bath (solution depth ~1 cm) to

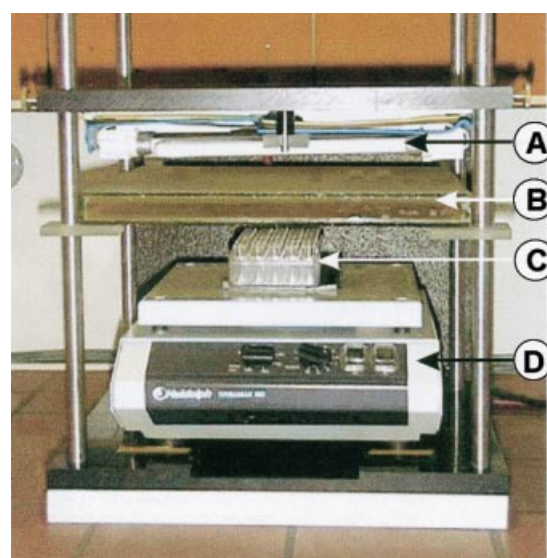
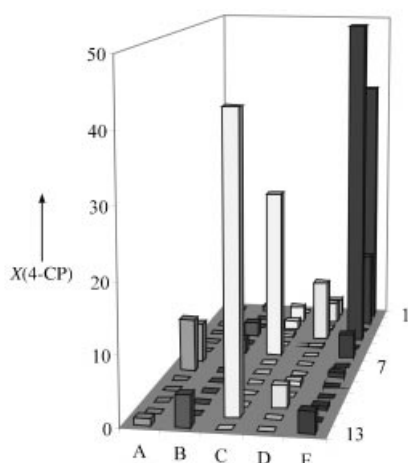


Figure 1. Front view of the experimental setup for visible-light irradiation of the libraries. A) Array of lamps (Osram Dulux S G 23, 11 W); B) bath of frosted glass filled with 1M K<sub>2</sub>CrO<sub>4</sub> solution; C) library of 45 HPLC flasks arranged in five columns and nine rows; D) orbital shaker (Heidolph Titramax 100).

remove remaining traces of UV light and to improve the homogeneity of the light-intensity distribution due to multiple scattering (Figure 1 B). The filter was positioned under the lamps, directly above the array of HPLC flasks containing the potential catalysts with aqueous pollutant solutions. The center of the flask array was aligned with the center of the lamp arrangement. The 5 × 9-library of HPLC flasks was illuminated for 2.5 h in the setup shown in Figure 1. During the whole experiment the library was agitated at the maximum shaker speed. After irradiation, the whole library was centrifuged at 4000 min<sup>−1</sup> to ensure particle-free solutions. The solutions were analysed semi-automatically by HPLC using a standard HPLC sampling robot to quantify the 4-CP conversion.

The adsorption of 4-CP on the porous mixed oxides is a potential source of error. Adsorption experiments with the most active samples on the libraries confirmed that the decrease in solution concentration of 4-CP caused by adsorption at the catalyst surface remained below 5 %. Therefore, only conversions >5 % were associated with photocatalytic degradation. Clearly, the method does not yield identical solid catalysts with respect to particle size and mass-transport conditions. The gel catalysts on the flask bottom were used “as is” after the calcination; some remained clear gels, some showed severe cracks, others were powdery. Therefore the relative activity can be strongly affected by this state of the nature of the solid. This shortcoming was accepted, after we found that no false activities occurred and that the clear as well as cracked gels exhibit photocatalytic activity. However, the relative activities detected in the high-throughput experiments should not be taken quantitatively.

**TiO<sub>2</sub> library:** In Figure 2 the results obtained from two TiO<sub>2</sub> libraries are summarized. As expected, no conversion was found with the undoped TiO<sub>2</sub> (position D5 and E10) confirming the absence of UV irradiation. For a few catalysts, high 4-CP conversions have been observed. Neglecting



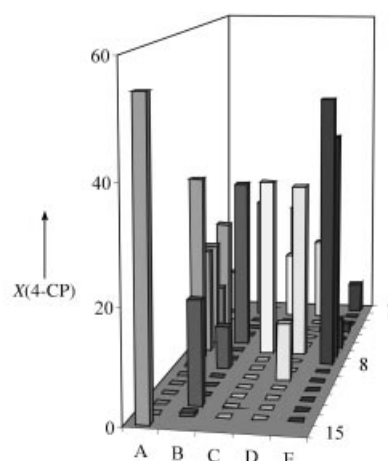
	A	B	C	D	E
1	Sc(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O	V(acac) <sub>3</sub>	VO <sub>2</sub>	OV(OiPr) <sub>3</sub>	CrCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
2	MnCl <sub>2</sub>	Mn(OAc) <sub>3</sub> · 2 H <sub>2</sub> O	FeBr <sub>2</sub>	FeCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Co(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
3	Ni(OAc) <sub>2</sub> · 4 H <sub>2</sub> O	CuBr	CuCl <sub>2</sub> · 2 H <sub>2</sub> O	ZnCl <sub>2</sub>	Y(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>
4	Zr(OnPr) <sub>4</sub>	NbBr <sub>5</sub>	MoO <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>	RuCl <sub>3</sub>	RhCl <sub>3</sub>
5	PdCl <sub>2</sub>	La(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · H <sub>2</sub> O	HfCl <sub>4</sub>	undoped	WCl <sub>4</sub>
6	WCl <sub>6</sub>	ReCl <sub>5</sub>	IrCl <sub>3</sub>	AuBr <sub>3</sub>	Ce(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>
7	PrCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	NdCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	SmCl <sub>3</sub>	Eu(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Gd(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>
8	TbCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	DyCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	HoCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Er(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O	TmCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
9	Yb(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	LuCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Ge(OEt) <sub>4</sub>	In(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · H <sub>2</sub> O	SnCl <sub>2</sub>
10	SnCl <sub>4</sub>	BiI <sub>3</sub>	Ga(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 9 H <sub>2</sub> O	Th(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>4</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O	undoped
11	BeCl <sub>2</sub>	MgCl <sub>2</sub>	CaCl <sub>2</sub>	SrBr <sub>2</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	B(OH) <sub>3</sub>
12	Al(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 9 H <sub>2</sub> O	Si(OEt) <sub>4</sub>	Na <sub>2</sub> [PtCl <sub>6</sub> ] · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	H <sub>2</sub> SeO <sub>3</sub>	TeCl <sub>4</sub>
13	LiNO <sub>3</sub>	NaClO <sub>4</sub>	KOAc	Rb(acac)	(NH <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> -Ce(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>6</sub>

Figure 2. 4-CP conversions  $X$  for TiO<sub>2</sub>-based mixed oxides after 2.5 h of irradiation. Each library member is identified by its position in the library, given by a column (A–E) and a row (1–13). The table contains the doping salts (1 mol % with respect to TiO<sub>2</sub>) added to the corresponding positions during the sol–gel preparation. The library members showing 4-CP conversions > 5% are shaded grey in the table; acac = acetylacetonate.

conversions less than 5%, the following dopands resulted in activation of the TiO<sub>2</sub> matrix: RhCl<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>[PtCl<sub>6</sub>] · 6H<sub>2</sub>O, CrCl<sub>3</sub> · 6H<sub>2</sub>O, IrCl<sub>3</sub>, Co(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> · 6H<sub>2</sub>O, RuCl<sub>3</sub>, TbCl<sub>3</sub> · 6H<sub>2</sub>O, MnCl<sub>2</sub>, PrCl<sub>3</sub>. The photosensitisation of TiO<sub>2</sub> by RhCl<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>[PtCl<sub>6</sub>] · 6H<sub>2</sub>O, and IrCl<sub>3</sub> has already been reported.<sup>[6]</sup> The activity of these materials with visible light was discovered by conventional experiments and especially the Na<sub>2</sub>[PtCl<sub>6</sub>] · 6H<sub>2</sub>O-doped TiO<sub>2</sub> was characterized in detail.<sup>[7]</sup> The same applies for the Cr- and Co-containing materials.<sup>[8,9]</sup> The excellent agreement between our combinatorial with the conventional findings confirms the reliability and reproducibility of the high-throughput method developed. The positive effects of Tb, Mn, and Pr has not been reported in the literature and can be considered new discoveries. These

materials are currently under investigation. Especially the activity of the Mn-doped material is of interest, since manganese oxide is cheap and nontoxic.

**SnO<sub>2</sub> library:** The ~3.88 eV bandgap of SnO<sub>2</sub><sup>[10]</sup> corresponds to an excitation wavelength of 326 nm. This readily explains why the undoped SnO<sub>2</sub> (position E14) is not active under the experimental conditions chosen. Doping of SnO<sub>2</sub> drastically changes the situation (Figure 3): 22 out of the 71 library materials (two arrays) exhibit 4-CP conversions higher than 5% upon visible-light irradiation. As with TiO<sub>2</sub>, the Cr-, Mn-, Ru-, Ir-, and Pr-containing samples are active. In contrast to TiO<sub>2</sub>, some other dopands also show beneficial effects: transition metals (Hf, V, Ta, Re, Au), lanthanoids (Ce, Tb, Ho), and even main-group metals (Bi, Ca). The origin of

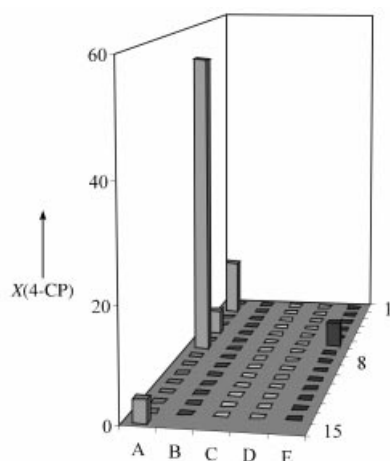


	A	B	C	D	E
1	Sc(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O	Ti(OiPr) <sub>4</sub>	V(acac) <sub>3</sub>	OV(acac) <sub>2</sub>	OV(O'Pr) <sub>3</sub>
2	CrCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Cr(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 9 H <sub>2</sub> O	MnCl <sub>2</sub>	Mn(OAc) <sub>3</sub> · 2 H <sub>2</sub> O	FeBr <sub>2</sub>
3	FeCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Co(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Ni(OAc) <sub>2</sub> · 4 H <sub>2</sub> O	CuBr	CuCl <sub>2</sub> · 2 H <sub>2</sub> O
4	ZnCl <sub>2</sub>	Y(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	Zr(OnPr) <sub>4</sub>	NbBr <sub>5</sub>	MoO <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>
5	RuCl <sub>3</sub>	RhCl <sub>3</sub>	PdCl <sub>2</sub>	AgNO <sub>3</sub>	La(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · H <sub>2</sub> O
6	HfCl <sub>4</sub>	Ta(OEt) <sub>4</sub>	WCl <sub>4</sub>	WCl <sub>6</sub>	ReCl <sub>5</sub>
7	IrCl <sub>3</sub>	Na <sub>2</sub> [PtCl <sub>6</sub> ] · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	AuBr <sub>3</sub>	Ce(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	PrCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
8	NdCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	SmCl <sub>3</sub>	Eu(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Gd(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub>	TbCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
9	DyCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	HoCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Er(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O	TmCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	Yb(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
10	LuCl <sub>3</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O	BeCl <sub>2</sub>	MgCl <sub>2</sub>	CaCl <sub>2</sub>	SrBr <sub>2</sub> · 6 H <sub>2</sub> O
11	B(OH) <sub>3</sub>	Al(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 9 H <sub>2</sub> O	Ga(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · 9 H <sub>2</sub> O	In(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> · H <sub>2</sub> O	Si(OEt) <sub>4</sub>
12	Ge(OEt) <sub>4</sub>	SnCl <sub>2</sub>	SnCl <sub>4</sub>	PbClO <sub>4</sub> · 3 H <sub>2</sub> O	SbCl <sub>3</sub>
13	SbCl <sub>5</sub>	BiI <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>2</sub> SeO <sub>3</sub>	TeCl <sub>4</sub>	Th(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>4</sub> · 5 H <sub>2</sub> O
14	LiNO <sub>3</sub>	NaClO <sub>4</sub>	KOAc	Rb(acac)	undoped
15	(NH <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> -Ce(NO <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>6</sub>				

Figure 3. 4-CP conversions  $X$  for SnO<sub>2</sub>-based mixed oxides after 2.5 h of irradiation. Each library member is identified by its position in the library, given by a column (A–E) and a row (1–15). The table contains the doping salts (1 mol % with respect to SnO<sub>2</sub>) added to the corresponding positions during the sol–gel preparation. The library members showing 4-CP conversions > 5% are shaded grey in the table.

these activities is not understood yet. It is assumed that excitation of the dopant ions by visible light results in an excited state high enough in energy to allow transfer of the electron to the conduction band of  $\text{SnO}_2$ . None of these materials have been known for their photocatalytic properties.

**$\text{WO}_3$  library:** At 2.8 eV, the bandgap energy of  $\text{WO}_3$  is much smaller than that of  $\text{TiO}_2$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$ . As a consequence, only visible light of wavelengths  $\lambda < 443$  nm is required to generate electron–hole pairs in undoped  $\text{WO}_3$  and some activity could have been expected. However, as shown in Figure 4, the undoped  $\text{WO}_3$  (position E14) and most other materials on the library are not active. This may be attributed to a high recombination rate of electron–hole pairs and/or the difficulty to photoreduce  $\text{O}_2$ .<sup>[11]</sup> Only very few dopants cause significant 4-CP conversion, among which Ir is by far the most



	A	B	C	D	E
1	$\text{Sc}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 5 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Ti}(\text{O}i\text{Pr})_4$	$\text{V}(\text{acac})_3$	$\text{OV}(\text{acac})_2$	$\text{OV}(\text{O}i\text{Pr})_3$
2	$\text{CrCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Cr}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{MnCl}_2$	$\text{Mn}(\text{OAc})_3 \cdot 2 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{FeBr}_2$
3	$\text{FeCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Ni}(\text{OAc})_2 \cdot 4 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{CuBr}$	$\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
4	$\text{ZnCl}_2$	$\text{Y}(\text{NO}_3)_3$	$\text{Zr}(\text{O}n\text{Pr})_4$	$\text{NbBr}_5$	$\text{MoO}_2\text{Cl}_2$
5	$\text{RuCl}_3$	$\text{RhCl}_3$	$\text{PdCl}_2$	$\text{AgNO}_3$	$\text{La}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$
6	$\text{HfCl}_4$	$\text{Ta}(\text{OEt})_4$	$\text{WCl}_4$	$\text{WCl}_6$	$\text{ReCl}_5$
7	$\text{IrCl}_3$	$\text{Na}_2[\text{PtCl}_6] \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{AuBr}_3$	$\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3$	$\text{PrCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
8	$\text{NdCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{SmCl}_3$	$\text{Eu}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Gd}(\text{NO}_3)_3$	$\text{TbCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
9	$\text{DyCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{HoCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Er}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 5 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{TmCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Yb}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
10	$\text{LuCl}_3 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{BeCl}_2$	$\text{MgCl}_2$	$\text{CaCl}_2$	$\text{SrBr}_2 \cdot 6 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
11	$\text{B}(\text{OH})_3$	$\text{Al}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Ga}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{In}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{Si}(\text{OEt})_4$
12	$\text{Ge}(\text{OEt})_4$	$\text{SnCl}_2$	$\text{SnCl}_4$	$\text{PbClO}_4 \cdot 3 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$\text{SbCl}_3$
13	$\text{SbCl}_5$	$\text{BiI}_3$	$\text{H}_2\text{SeO}_3$	$\text{TeCl}_4$	$\text{Th}(\text{NO}_3)_4 \cdot 5 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
14	$\text{LiNO}_3$	$\text{NaClO}_4$	$\text{KOAc}$	$\text{Rb}(\text{acac})$	undoped
15	$(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_6$				

Figure 4. 4-CP conversions  $X$  for  $\text{WO}_3$ -based mixed oxides after 2.5 h of irradiation. Each library member is identified by its position in the library, given by a column (A–E) and a row (1–15). The table contains the doping salts (1 mol % with respect to  $\text{WO}_3$ ) added to the corresponding positions during the sol–gel preparation. The library members showing 4-CP conversions  $> 5\%$  are shaded grey in the table.

active one, followed by Cr. Both materials have not been mentioned in the literature and are thus true discoveries.

To confirm the photocatalytic properties of the newly discovered materials not based on  $\text{TiO}_2$ , a conventional study was added. The mixed oxides are abbreviated as with the amorphous mixed oxide (AM) notation  $\text{AM-M}'_x\text{M}$ , where  $\text{M}'$  is the dopant and  $\text{M}$  is base oxide ( $\text{AM-Ir}_1\text{W}$  than stands for a mixed oxide composed of 1 mol % iridium oxide and 99 mol % tungsten oxide). The  $\text{AM-Ir}_1\text{W}$  and  $\text{AM-Ce}_3\text{Sn}$  mixed oxides were prepared on a 0.7 g scale by the sol–gel procedure, dried, calcined, and milled. The fine powders were used as photocatalysts in conventional experiments as described elsewhere.<sup>[12]</sup> 30 mg of the Sn- and 180 mg of the W-catalyst were dispensed in a  $2.5 \times 10^{-4}$  M aqueous solution of 4-CP in a stirred glass reactor, which was surrounded by a cooled, aqueous solution of  $\text{K}_2\text{CrO}_4$  to absorb traces of extraneous UV radiation. The solution was irradiated for 100 min by seven fluorescence lamps (Osram Dulux SG23) and maintained at 25 °C. The decrease of 4-CP concentration was followed by HPLC analysis. In control experiments without UV radiation, a lack of photocatalytic activity was confirmed with commercial  $\text{TiO}_2$  (Degussa P25). With  $\text{AM-Pt}_2\text{Ti}$ , a 30 % conversion of 4-CP was obtained after 100 min, with  $\text{AM-Ir}_1\text{W}$  8 %, and with  $\text{AM-Ce}_3\text{Sn}$  12 %. Although the activities of the newly discovered  $\text{SnO}_2$ - and  $\text{WO}_3$ -based photocatalysts are still lower compared to the well-studied  $\text{AM-Pt}_2\text{Ti}$ , the photocatalytic activity of the new materials with visible light was confirmed under conventional reaction conditions. Both catalysts were characterized by various methods and compared to the undoped  $\text{SnO}_2$  and  $\text{WO}_3$ , prepared by the same sol–gel procedure. Argon-adsorption isotherms showed these materials to be mesoporous (Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) surface areas [ $\text{m}^2\text{g}^{-1}$ ] were 112/120 and 12/10 for the doped/undoped  $\text{SnO}_2$  and  $\text{WO}_3$ , respectively). While the tin oxides are both X-ray amorphous, the tungsten oxides both show the diffraction pattern of small-particle  $\text{WO}_3$ . High-resolution transmission electron microscopy imaging revealed the presence of small (5 nm)  $\text{SnO}_2$  crystallites embedded in the amorphous bulk matrix of the tin oxides, while the size ( $\sim 10$  nm) and number of the embedded crystallites in tungsten oxides are significantly larger. However, the microstructure of both photocatalysts is identical to that of the undoped, photocatalytically inactive reference oxides, which concludes that the photocatalytic activity of both materials can be attributed to dopant effects on the electronic structure of the bulk oxides.

The high-throughput method introduced here provides a low-cost, easy to handle, and powerful tool to screen for better photocatalysts. The reliability of the method was confirmed by the excellent agreement between the conventional and the high-throughput results found for Ti-based mixed oxides. Several new photocatalytically active materials based on doped  $\text{TiO}_2$ ,  $\text{SnO}_2$ , and  $\text{WO}_3$  were discovered. In few selected cases studied under conventional conditions their unusual photocatalytic activities were confirmed. This study shows that catalysts capable of utilising visible light can be discovered readily by the pragmatic use of a high-throughput technique. The overall activity of a photocatalyst is not only related to intrinsic electronic properties. Physicochemical

characteristics are also of great importance, for example surface area, adsorption rate of pollutants and oxygen, concentration of surface hydroxyl groups, recombination rate of electron–hole pairs, crystallinity, and so forth. The complex nature of the origin of good photocatalytic properties in combination with our lack of knowledge related to the effects of oxide doping underlines the difficulty to predict the composition of the most active catalyst. The success of this simple study suggests that there may be many more photocatalytically active materials. It also indicates how little we know about the structure–activity relationship for visible-light photocatalysts.

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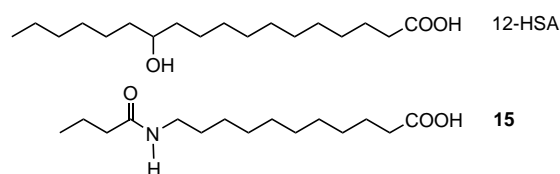
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## Rational Design of Low Molecular Mass Organogelators: Toward a Library of Functional *N*-Acyl-1, $\omega$ -Amino Acid Derivatives\*\*

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The gelation of organic fluids by low molecular mass organic gelators is a fascinating phenomenon in that it represents a spectacular macroscopic expression of molecular self-assembly.<sup>[1, 2]</sup> Organogels have especially attracted much interest as a unique class of nanostructured organic materials with far-reaching applications.<sup>[1–3]</sup> A major challenge that arises thus concerns the elaboration of novel design strategies enabling the synthesis of new series of gelator molecules. In that connection, structurally simple compounds,<sup>[4]</sup> easy to synthesize and available in large amount from cheap starting materials, are desirable from both fundamental and practical standpoints. Several design approaches have been already proven successful, that are based on the use of various self-recognition units.<sup>[5]</sup> Hydrogel formation with amphiphilic molecules was also reported recently.<sup>[6, 7]</sup>

Fatty acid compounds are known to form gelatinous and curd-fiber phases in organic solvents, but typically at high concentrations.<sup>[8]</sup> Within this series of amphiphile compounds, the behavior of 12-hydroxystearic acid (12-HSA, Scheme 1) attracted special attention.<sup>[9]</sup> Indeed, this compound displays a remarkably improved gelation ability in organic solvents as compared to analogous molecules lacking a hydrogen bonding group in the hydrophobic chains.<sup>[10]</sup> It occurred to us that *N*-acyl-1, $\omega$ -amino acid compounds presenting similar structural features to 12-HSA could also provide gelation ability,



Scheme 1. Structure of 12-HSA in comparison with the new gelator **15**.

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