



# Photoinduced energy and electron transfer in porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads bridged with a triazine group

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## ABSTRACT

Porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads containing a triazine group as linker were synthesized and characterized by <sup>1</sup>H NMR, UV–visible, fluorescence and transient spectra and ESI-MS. Absorption spectra revealed that there was no appreciable interaction between the ground-state porphyrin moiety and the ground-state anthraquinone moiety. Fluorescence spectra illustrated that energy transfer takes place from the excited anthraquinone moiety to the porphyrin moiety when excited at 250 nm, whilst efficient electron transfer occurs from the singlet excited porphyrin moiety to the anthraquinone moiety in the case of excitation at 420 nm. A long-lived, charge-separated state H<sub>2</sub>P<sup>+</sup>–EQ<sup>−</sup> was observed by transient absorption spectra with a lifetime of 1.42 μs and 1.33 μs. These photochemical events were explained from electrochemical studies and suggest that the compounds have the ability to simulate electron transfer from chlorophylls to electron acceptors.

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## 1. Introduction

Photosynthetic reaction centers, which convert solar energy into useful chemical energy, consist of a protein matrix and donor-acceptor redox active pigments. During photosynthesis, the primary electron transfer (ET) step occurs from a porphyrin-based complex [1,2] and, subsequently, the excited porphyrin–base complex donates an electron to (bacterio) chlorophylls or their corresponding dimers and thence to bacteriopheophyrins and quinone acceptors Q<sub>A</sub> and Q<sub>B</sub> [3], resulting in a long-lived, charge-separated state. To gain better insight into the photosynthetic process, numerous model molecules have been reported [3–8] and the dependencies of both the intramolecular/intermolecular ET rate and the charge-separated-state lifetime on donor-acceptor distance, relative orientation and coupling energies have been investigated using different optical and magnetic resonance techniques [3,9–11].

Porphyrin dyads/triads have received much attention owing to their variety and their important role in biology, particularly photosynthesis [1]. Quinone [12–15], anthraquinone [16], and recently fullerenes [1,17,18] are common electron acceptors in these molecules because of their wide absorption range, low LUMO–(lowest unoccupied molecular orbital), and small reorganizational

energies which can accelerate the forward ET process and retard the back ET process [19]. However, electronic coupling of the donor and acceptor depends not only on the donor-acceptor distance, but also on the electronic properties of the linkers as described by Marcus [20]. Thus, different bridging groups have been explored as linkages between donors and acceptors and the influence of the electronic properties of the linkers on the ET process have been investigated.

The present authors have investigated the synthesis and optical properties of porphyrin-oxadiazole dyads bridged by either an azo group or a triazine group and found that the triazine linker favours intramolecular photoinduced ET from the excited oxadiazole moiety to the porphyrin moiety but effectively blocks ET from the excited porphyrin moiety to the oxadiazole moiety [21]. This paper concerns the synthesis of porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads linked by a triazine group (Fig. 1) and the study of their spectral properties, intramolecular energy and electron transfer.

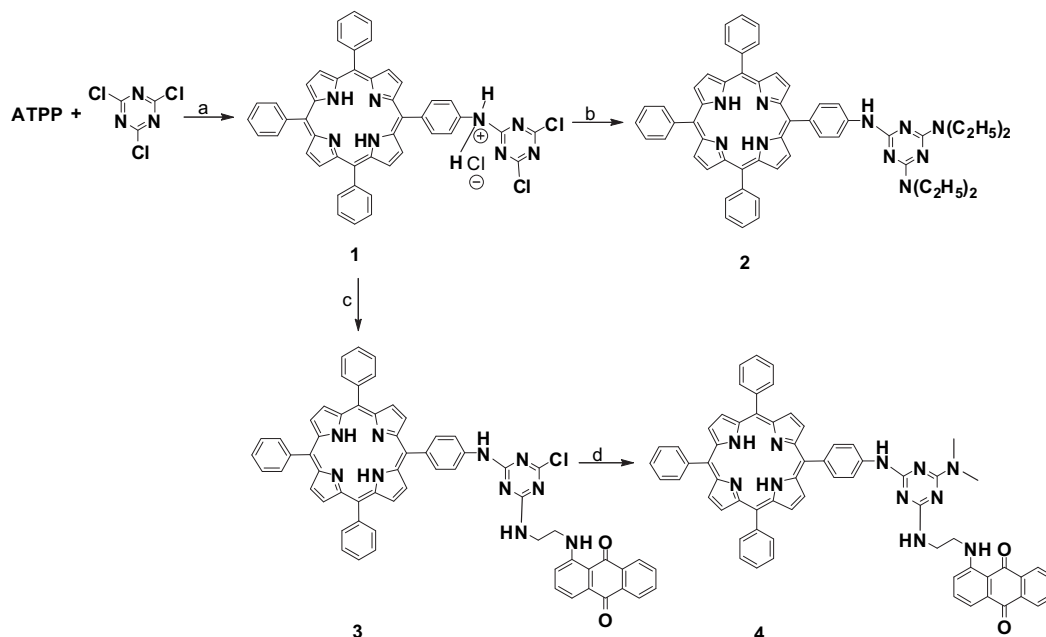
## 2. Experimental

### 2.1. General

5-(4-Aminophenyl)-10,15,20-triphenylporphyrin (ATPP) and aminoethyl amino-anthraquinone (AEAQ) were prepared as

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a. THF, TEA, 0°C, 10min, then, RT, 30min; b. DEA, CHCl<sub>3</sub>, rf, 8h;

c. AEAQ, THF, TEA, 80°C, 5h; d. DMF, TEA, 110°C, 8h.

Fig. 1. Synthesis of porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads connected with a triazine group.

reported [22,23]. All other reagents and solvents were reagent grade and further purified by the standard methods if necessary. Infrared spectra were recorded on a Bio-rad FTS3000. <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra were obtained on a Varian UNITY-PLUS400 spectrometer. FAB and ESI mass spectra were obtained on a VG ZAB-MS mass spectrometer and Finnigan LCQ mass spectrometer respectively. Absorption spectra were taken on a Thermo Spectronic, Helios Gamma spectrometer. Fluorescence spectra were recorded on a Varian CARY ECLIPSE fluorospectrophotometer. Electrochemical properties were measured using a BAS 100W electrochemical analyzer and performed in a three-electrode cell. A glassy carbon electrode was used as working electrode, Ag/AgNO<sub>3</sub> electrode as reference electrode and platinum as auxiliary electrode. Scan rates were 100 mV/s. Dichloromethane with 0.05 mol/L tetrabutylammonium hexafluorophosphate (TBAPF<sub>6</sub>) was employed as the medium for all the cyclic voltammetric experiments. Nanosecond transient absorption spectra were recorded by LP920 laser-flash photolysis apparatus with 532 nm light, Nd: YAG laser used as the

exciting source and a pulsed xenon flash lamp as monitor light. All the solutions were purged using nitrogen gas prior to the transient absorption spectral and electrochemical measurement.

## 2.2. Synthesis

### 2.2.1. 5-(4-(3,5-Dichloro triazine) aminophenyl)-10,15,20-triphenyl porphyrin hydrochloride (**1**)

A solution of 5-(4-aminophenyl)-10,15,20-triphenylporphyrin (ATPP) 25 mg (0.04 mmol) in THF (1.0 mL) was added to a THF (2.0 mL) solution of cyanuric chloride (7.3 mg, 0.04 mmol) and triethanolamine (TEA) (4.8 mg, 0.048 mmol) at 0 °C. After stirring at 0 °C for 10 min, the solution was left to warm to room temperature and react for 30 min with thin layer chromatography (TLC) monitoring to indicate the completion of the reaction. After the reaction completed, the mixture was evaporated in vacuum. Compound **1** was purified by column chromatography on silica gel eluted with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (2:1 v/v). The title product was

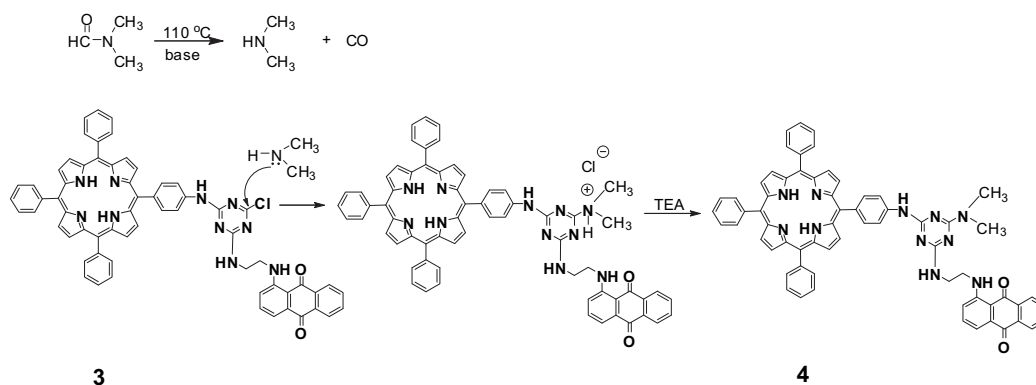


Fig. 2. Reaction mechanism for the conversion of **3** to **4**.

isolated as blue violet solid 29 mg (90.6%) yield, mp > 300 °C;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm),  $\delta$ : 8.92–8.91 (d,  $J = 4.8$  Hz, 2H,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_5\text{N}$   $\beta$ -H), 8.88–8.86 (d,  $J = 6.0$  Hz, 6H,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_5\text{N}$   $\beta$ -H), 8.24–8.19 (m, 8H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 8.01–7.99 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 2H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 7.79–7.74 (m, 10H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ,  $-\text{NH}\cdot\text{HCl}$ ), 7.45 (s, 1H,  $-\text{NH}$ ),  $-2.72$  (s, 2H, NH); ESI-MS ( $m/z$ ): 814.4 ( $\text{M}^+ + \text{HCl}$ ).

#### 2.2.2. 5-[4-(3,5-Bi-diethylamino triazine) aminophenyl]-10,15,20-triphenyl porphyrin (**2**)

Compound **1** (32 mg, 0.04 mmol) was dissolved in  $\text{CHCl}_3$  (15 mL), while stirring, diethylamine (DEA, 7.3 mg, 0.1 mmol) were added. The mixture was stirred at refluxing temperature for 8 h. The reaction mixture was washed with water and dried overnight with  $\text{MgSO}_4$ . The compound was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using  $\text{CHCl}_3/\text{acetone}$  (30:1 v/v) as eluent. The title product was isolated as blue violet solid 31 mg (88.6%) yield, mp > 300 °C.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm),  $\delta$ : 8.90 (s, 8H,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_5\text{N}$   $\beta$ -H), 8.23–8.21 (d,  $J = 4.0$  Hz, 8H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 7.80–7.77 (m, 11H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 5.30 (s, 1H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}$ ), 3.68 (s, 12H,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ), 1.80 (s, 8H,  $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ),  $-2.76$  (s, 2H, NH); FAB-MS ( $m/z$ ): 851.0 ( $\text{M}^+$ ).

#### 2.2.3. 5-[4-[3-Chloro-5-(aminoethyl amino-anthraquinone) triazine] aminophenyl]-10,15,20-triphenyl porphyrin (**3**)

**AEAQ** (26.7 mg, 0.1 mmol) and TEA (4.8 mg, 0.048 mmol) were added to the THF (5.0 mL) solution of compound **1**. The mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 5 h with TLC monitoring the completion of the reaction. The solvent was removed and the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{ethyl acetate}$  (100:1 v/v) as eluent. The title product was isolated as blue violet solid 27 mg (72%) yield, mp > 300 °C.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm),  $\delta$ : 9.90 (s, 1H,  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_7\text{O}_2\text{NH}$ ), 8.95 (s, 8H,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_5\text{N}$   $\beta$ -H), 8.57 (s, 1H, ArH), 8.21 – 8.14 (m, 10H, ArH), 7.88 – 7.84 (m, 4H, ArH), 7.77 – 7.68 (m, 12H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 3.82 (s, 1H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}$ ), 3.68 – 3.72 (m, 4H,  $-\text{CH}_2$ ),  $-2.77$  (s, 2H, NH); ESI-MS ( $m/z$ ): 1007.5 ( $\text{M}^+$ ); Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{63}\text{H}_{43}\text{ClN}_{10}\text{O}_2$ : C, 75.10; H, 4.30; N, 13.90. Found: C, 74.52; H, 4.34; N, 13.79.

#### 2.2.4. 5-[4-[3-Dimethylamino-5-(aminoethyl amino-anthraquinone) triazine] aminophenyl]-10,15,20-triphenyl porphyrin (**4**)

Compound **3** (40 mg, 0.04 mmol) was dissolved in DMF (4 mL), while stirring, **AEAQ** (26.7 mg, 0.1 mmol) and TEA (4.8 mg, 0.048 mmol) were added. The mixture was heated to 110 °C for 8 h. The solvent was removed and the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel using  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$  (30:1 v/v) as eluent. The title product was isolated as blue violet solid 17 mg (42%) yield, mp > 300 °C.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ , ppm),  $\delta$ : 9.92 (s, 1H,  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_7\text{O}_2\text{NH}$ ), 8.89–8.88 (m, 8H,  $\text{C}_4\text{H}_5\text{N}$   $\beta$ -H), 8.40 (s, 1H, ArH), 8.22–8.10 (m, 12H, ArH), 8.00 (s, 2H, ArH), 7.76–7.70 (m, 12H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ), 3.88 (s, 1H,  $-\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}$ ), 3.64–3.60 (m, 2H, ArH- $\text{CH}_2$ ), 3.30 (s, 2H, ArH- $\text{CH}_2$ ), 3.21–3.17 (m, 6H,  $-\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)_2$ ),  $-2.78$  (s, 2H, NH); FAB-MS ( $m/z$ ): 1016.4 ( $\text{M}^+$ ); Anal. Calcd. for  $\text{C}_{65}\text{H}_{49}\text{N}_{11}\text{O}_2$ : C, 76.83; H, 4.86; N, 15.16. Found: C, 76.21; H, 4.92; N, 15.29.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Synthesis

Compound **1** was synthesized in high yield from aminoporphyrin **ATPP** and cyanuric chloride with TEA as the acid binding agent. The obtained compound **1** exists as the hydrochloride form (Fig. 1), which could be confirmed by the ESI-MS determination. The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum of compound **1** shows an additional H atom at  $\delta = 7.79 - 7.74$ , which is assigned to the hydrochloride H atom. Compound **2** and **3** were prepared from compound **1** by introduction

of additional group in the triazine circle. Compound **4** was synthesized conveniently through heating compound **3** in DMF. The mechanism was suggested in Fig. 2 and might be relative to the decomposition of DMF under heating [24–26]. And this decomposition reaction is catalysed by acidic and basic materials [24].

#### 3.2. Absorption property of porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads

The steady-state absorption spectra of dyad **4** along with reference compounds **AEAQ** and **ATPP** in dichloromethane are shown in Fig. 3. The absorption spectrum of dyad **4** is identical with the sum of the spectra of porphyrin **ATPP** and compound **AEAQ**, indicating that there is no appreciable interaction between porphyrin moiety and anthraquinone moiety in the dyad **4** in the ground-state [1]. The band in the UV region is primarily due to the absorption of the anthraquinone moiety. The band at about 420 nm is the Soret band of the porphyrin moiety, which is an  $a_{1u}(\pi) \rightarrow e_g(\pi^*)$  electron transition, assigned to the second excited state  $S_2$  generated by  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transition. The weak absorption bands between 500 nm and 660 nm are the Q band of the porphyrin moiety and corresponds to an  $a_{2u}(\pi) \rightarrow e_g(\pi^*)$  electron transition, belonging to the first excited state  $S_1$  generated by  $\pi \rightarrow \pi^*$  transition [27,28]. Furthermore, the absorption of **AEAQ** at 250 nm had no overlap with the absorption of **ATPP**. Hence, the **AEAQ** moiety of the dyad is expected to be selectively excited by irradiation at 250 nm; while the porphyrin moiety could be excited under exposure to light of 420 nm, 517 nm, 554 nm, 592 nm, or 648 nm.

#### 3.3. Energy transfer and electron transfer of porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads

##### 3.3.1. Excitation on the anthraquinone moiety

Fig. 4 shows the fluorescence emission spectra of dyad **4**, along with that of porphyrin **ATPP** and compound **AEAQ** excited at 250 nm. The bands at about 500 nm and 600 nm are the double waves of excited and emission bands. The dyad **4** revealed three emission bands: one is at 306 nm which corresponds to the emission of anthraquinone moiety, and the others are at 650 nm and 717 nm in accord with the emission of the porphyrin moiety. The emission intensity of the 306 nm band in the dyad **4** was found to be quenched almost completely as compared to the reference compound **AEAQ**. However the intensity at 650 nm, 720 nm bands

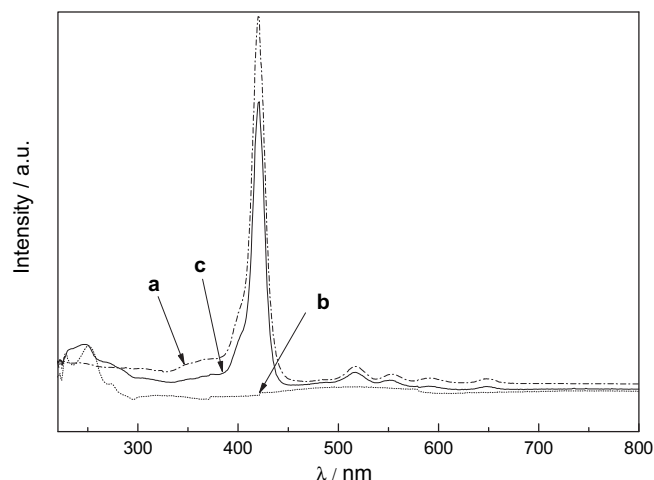
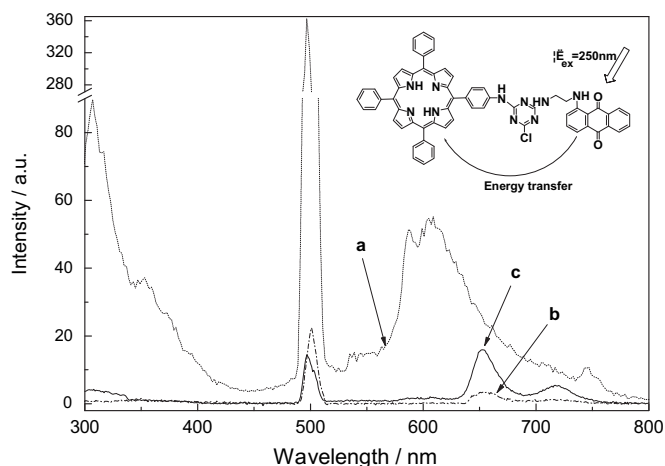


Fig. 3. Steady-state absorption spectra of (a) 5-(4-aminophenyl)-10,15,20-triphenylporphyrin (**ATPP**), (b) aminoethyl amino-anthraquinone (**AEAQ**), and (c) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad **4** in dichloromethane. The concentrations were held at  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L.

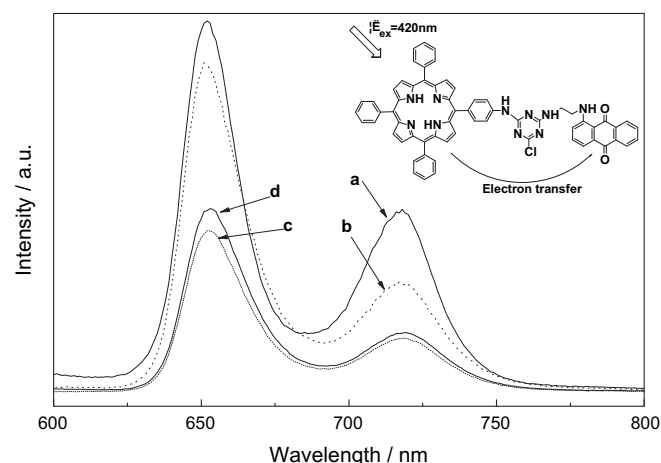


**Fig. 4.** Fluorescence emission spectra of (a) AEAQ, (b) ATPP and (c) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad **4** in dichloromethane. The concentrations were held constant to  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L for all of the species.  $\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 250$  nm.

increased compared to compound **ATPP**. These results clearly indicated that photoinduced energy transfer from the anthraquinone moiety to the porphyrin moiety occurred [1,29] in the dyad **4** (Fig. 4, inset).

### 3.3.2. Excitation on the porphyrin moiety

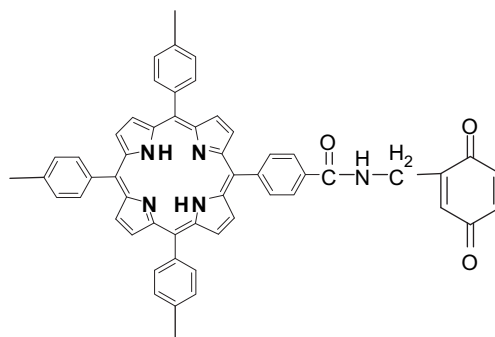
Fluorescence emission spectra of compound **2** and the dyads (**3** and **4**) in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  excited at 420 nm are shown in Fig. 5. The fluorescence intensity of compound **2** was calculated as 90% in comparison with the fluorescence intensity of original porphyrin **ATPP** at equal concentration. However the fluorescence quenching efficiency of porphyrin in the dyad **3** and **4** was found as 43% and 49% respectively. This could be explained by the introduction of the anthraquinone group as the electron acceptor, resulting in the photoinduced intramolecular electron transfer from the excited porphyrin to the appended anthraquinone moiety [1,29,30]. This could be further confirmed by the observation of the charge-separated state of dyads through the followed transient absorption spectra [1].



**Fig. 5.** Fluorescence emission spectra of (a) **ATPP**, (b) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad **2**, (c) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad **3**, and (d) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad **4** in dichloromethane. The concentrations were held constant to  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L for all of the species.  $\lambda_{\text{ex}} = 420$  nm.

Transient absorption spectra observed at 0–20  $\mu\text{s}$  after laser pulse irradiation for a deoxygenated dichloromethane solution of the original porphyrin **ATPP**, compound **1** and the porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads **3**, **4** is shown in Fig. 6. Compound **1**, similar to **ATPP**, exhibits absorption peaks at 450 nm, 540 nm, 570 nm, 620 nm, 675 nm and 780 nm, which are assigned to the triplet excited state of porphyrin (Fig. 6a and b) [27,31]. In the transient absorption spectrum of the dyads **3** at 2  $\mu\text{s}$ , the absorption intensity of triplet (peaks at 460 nm, 570, and 780 nm) decayed quickly; simultaneously a new band corresponding to the porphyrin cation radical ( $\text{H}_2\text{P}^{+\bullet}$ ) appeared at 600 nm and 650 nm (Fig. 6c). This indicated that, in the dyad **3**, the electron transfer occurred from the porphyrin moiety to the anthraquinone moiety [1,28,32].

The absorption intensity of the transient product of dyad **3** at 650 nm are fitted according to the first-order exponential decay function,  $I = I_0 + A \cdot e^{-t/\tau}$ , in which the  $\tau$  is the lifetime of transient product. Results show that the lifetime and the decay rate constant ( $k = 1/\tau$ ) of the porphyrin cation radical ( $\text{H}_2\text{P}^{+\bullet}$ ) in the dyad **3** were 1.42  $\mu\text{s}$  and  $7.04 \times 10^5 \text{ s}^{-1}$  respectively (Fig. 7). Herein the  $k$  value is smaller than that obtained from the simple porphyrin-quinone (compound **5**) with an amide linker reported in the literature [4]. Thus a faster transfer reaction occurs in the dyad **3** than in the simple porphyrin-quinone [4], indicating that the anthraquinone might be a better acceptor than the simple parent quinone group for the porphyrin compounds.

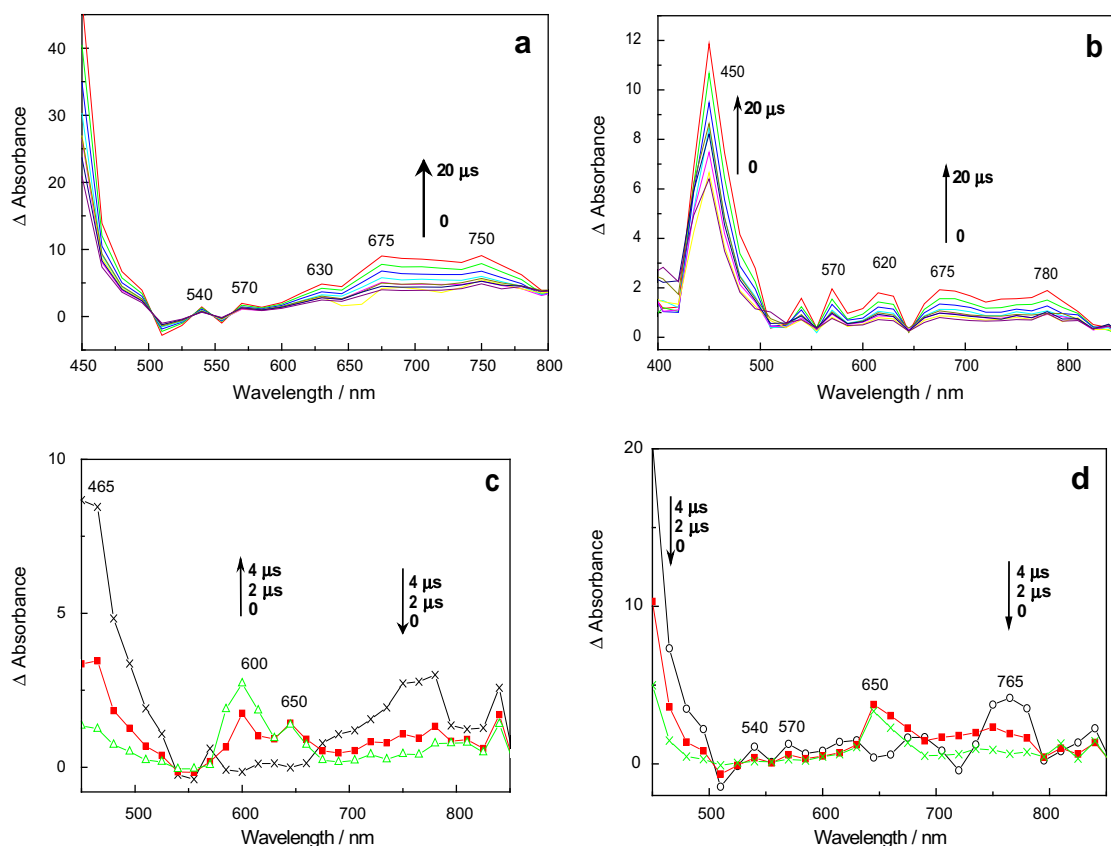


Similar results were obtained with dyad **4** and the lifetime of the charge-separated state  $\text{H}_2\text{P}^{+\bullet} - \text{EQ}^{-\bullet}$  was determined as 1.33  $\mu\text{s}$  (Fig. 6d).

### 3.4. Energy level diagram of the anthraquinone-porphyrin dyads

Electrochemical studies using cyclic voltammetry were performed to arrive at the redox potentials of the investigated compounds. Compound **1** exhibited four one-electron redox processes at  $E_{1/2} = 0.76 \text{ V}$ ,  $1.08 \text{ V}$ ,  $-1.53 \text{ V}$ , and  $-1.86 \text{ V}$  vs  $\text{Ag}/\text{Ag}^+$  (Fig. 8a), corresponding to the redox of the ground-state porphyrin ring. All of the peak-peak separation values of the redox peaks are larger than 59 mV, therefore, they are quasi-reversible redox processes [33]. In the dyad **4**, the oxidation processes were irreversible (Fig. 8b). The first and second oxidation of the ground-state porphyrin ring were located at  $E_{\text{pa}} = 0.77 \text{ V}$  and  $1.19 \text{ V}$  vs  $\text{Ag}/\text{Ag}^+$  respectively. Two one-electron reversible processes at  $E_{1/2} = -1.52 \text{ V}$  and  $-1.81 \text{ V}$  were also observed, corresponding to the reduction of the porphyrin ring. Further, additional reversible reduction of the ground-state anthraquinone was also observed at  $E_{1/2} = -1.23 \text{ V}$  vs  $\text{Ag}/\text{Ag}^+$  under the experimental conditions. From the electrochemical data coupled with the absorption and emission spectra, an energy-level diagram (Fig. 9) could be constructed to explain the different photochemical events observed.

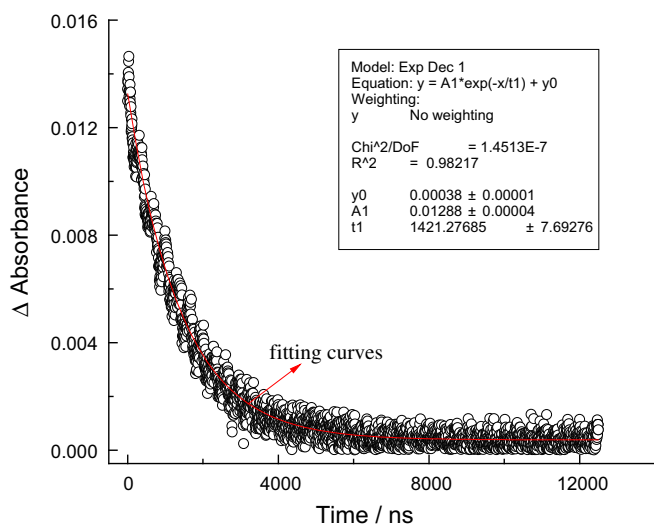
The triplet state energy of a tetraphenyl porphyrin free base ( $\text{H}_2\text{P}$ ) was cited from the literature [29]. The free-energy change for



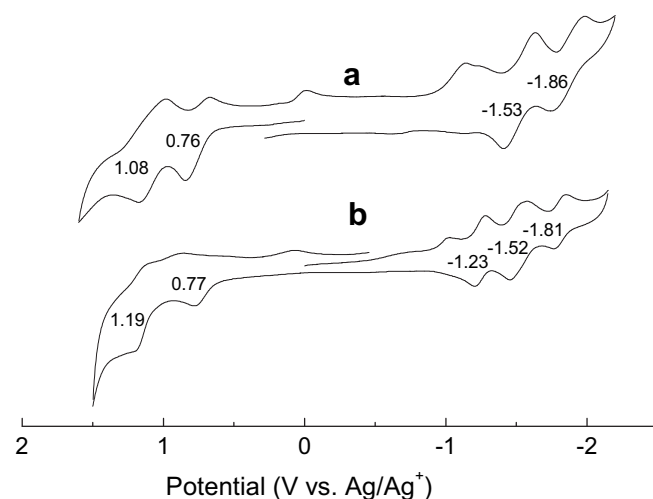
**Fig. 6.** Transient absorption spectra of (a) ATPP, (b) Compound 1, (c) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad 3, and (d) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad 4 at different times after the 532 nm laser irradiation in  $N_2$ -saturated dichloromethane. The concentrations were held at  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L.

the singlet energy transfer ( $G_{ENT}$ , the energy difference between the excited singlet state of anthraquinone and that of porphyrin as evaluated from the fluorescence peaks) was calculated as  $-2.15$  eV. This is the driving force for the occurrence of energy transfer from the excited anthraquinone moiety to the excited porphyrin moiety. It was calculated that the LUMO of the porphyrin moiety ( $-3.20$  eV) is higher than that of the anthraquinone moiety ( $-3.47$  eV). Hence

the electron would be unlikely to transfer from the anthraquinone moiety to the porphyrin moiety. The driving force for the electron transfer process from the excited porphyrin moiety to the anthraquinone moiety is the free-energy change of charge separation ( $\Delta G_{CS}$ ), which was calculated as  $-0.34$  eV from the Weller equation [34]. The relatively low quantum yield of 42% for the process could also be explained because of such a low  $\Delta G_{CS}$  ( $-0.34$  eV). Upon excitation of porphyrin in the dyad 4, the major process

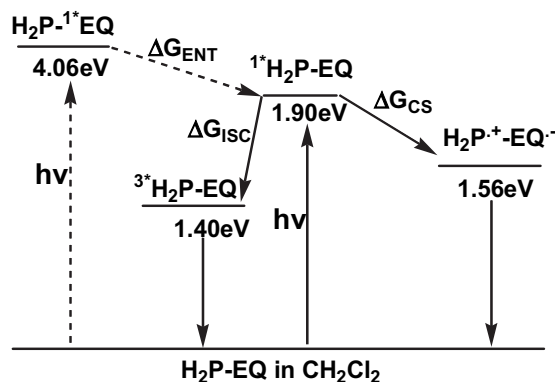


**Fig. 7.** Time resolved absorption-time-profile of porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad 3 at 650 nm in  $N_2$ -saturated dichloromethane.



**Fig. 8.** Cyclic voltammogram of (a) compound 1, and (b) porphyrin-anthraquinone dyad 4 in dichloromethane, 0.05 mol/L  $TBAPF_6$ . Scan rate = 100 mV/s.





**Fig. 9.** Energy level diagram showing the different photochemical events of the **H<sub>2</sub>P-EQ** dyads in dichloromethane after excitation of the porphyrin moiety (—) or the anthraquinone moiety (---).

involves charge separation from  $^1\text{H}_2\text{P}$  to form  $\text{H}_2\text{P}^+-\text{EQ}^-$  because of the appropriate exothermic conditions, resulting in the fluorescence quenching of porphyrin moiety. The energy-level diagram of dyad **3** is similar.

#### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the porphyrin-anthraquinone dyads linked by a triazine group were successfully shown to be a model photo-synthetic reaction center to simulate the electron transfer from chlorophylls to the electron acceptors. In the ground state, there is no appreciable interaction between porphyrin moiety and anthraquinone moiety in the dyads. But, efficient photoinduced energy transfer from the singlet excited anthraquinone to the porphyrin as well as the photoinduced electron transfer from the singlet porphyrin to the anthraquinone entity was observed in the dyads, resulting in the formation of the charge-separated state  $\text{H}_2\text{P}^+-\text{EQ}^-$ . The lifetime of the charge-separated state was found as long as 1.42 and 1.33  $\mu\text{s}$  for dyads **3** and **4** respectively.

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