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The MPI-Mainz UV/VIS Spectral Atlas of Gaseous Molecules of Atmospheric Interest

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Abstract

We present the MPI-Mainz UV/VIS Spectral Atlas, which is a large collection of absorption cross sections and quantum yields in the ultraviolet and visible (UV/VIS) wavelength region for gaseous molecules and radicals primarily of atmospheric interest.

- 5 The data files contain results of individual measurements, covering research of almost a whole century. To compare and visualize the data sets, multicoloured graphical representations have been created. The Spectral Atlas is available on the internet at <http://www.uv-vis-spectral-atlas-mainz.org>. It now appears with improved browse and search options, based on new database software. In addition to the web pages, 10 which are continuously updated, a frozen version of the data is available under the doi:10.5281/zenodo.6951.

1 Introduction

The MPI-Mainz UV/VIS Spectral Atlas is a large collection of cross sections and quantum yields for gaseous molecules and radicals, primarily relevant to atmospheric re-

- 15 search. The project started in the early nineteen eighties when such data became increasingly important for the precise determination of kinetic and photochemical data of many elementary reactions. At our laboratory, we started with the collection of papers related to the determination of absorption cross sections and quantum yields, and proceeded to produce a digital database of these parameters. In cooperation with the 20 Forschungszentrum Jülich and the Deutsche Fernerkundungsdatenzentrum, a first collection of absorption spectra was published in two volumes for 80 inorganic and 120 organic molecules (Röth et al., 1997a,b), together with the corresponding numerical data on a CD-ROM (Nölle et al., 1998).

- 25 The collection of spectral data was extended when one of the authors (GKM) joined the JPL-NASA Evaluation Panel “Chemical Kinetic and Photochemical Data for Use in the Atmosphere” in 1998. For the evaluation of the photochemical parameters, it

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became evident that an up-to-date collection was needed in order to recommend absorption cross sections and quantum yields for many species of atmospheric relevance.

An advanced collection together with a set of numerical data was created, subdivided into molecular categories and further augmented with multicoloured representations.

- 5 The initial MPI-Mainz UV/VIS Spectral Atlas of Gaseous Molecules was first presented at the EGU-meeting in 2003, and made available to the scientific community by interactive access through the web in 2005. This first online MPI-Mainz Spectral Atlas consisted of a collection of nearly 4000 numerical data files and about 1300 graphical representations for about 600 species. Although the database and the web pages were
- 10 continuously updated since 2005, it became evident and necessary to update and improve the software, data handling and search options, so to create a more modern up-to-date easy-to-handle user interface.

The current Spectral Atlas is now available at <http://www.uv-vis-spectral-atlas-mainz.org>. As of May 2013, the database contains approximately 5500 cross section data files for 900 species, 150 quantum yield data files for 30 reactions, 1600 references, and 2400 graphical representations.

This paper describes the latest development of the MPI-Mainz-UV/VIS Spectral Atlas. It is structured as follows: Sect. 2 describes the scientific background of the presented data, whereas Sects. 3 and 4 present the cross sections and the quantum yields in the database, respectively. Finally, in Sect. 5 we show some technical details about the current implementation.

2 Scientific background

The photolysis rates of gaseous trace species in the atmosphere are important parameters of profound interest to all atmospheric scientists. This is especially true for modeling atmospheric chemistry, as most chemical reactions are directly or indirectly driven by the sun's radiation. Photolysis rates not only depend on the intensity of the actinic flux, but also on the photochemical and photophysical properties

of the absorbing molecules. Photodissociation rate coefficients are governed by the wavelength-dependent absorption cross section σ of the absorbing species and the quantum yield ϕ of the photolysis process.

The absorption cross section σ is defined by the Beer-Lambert law describing the attenuation of light by a homogeneous absorbing system:

$$\ln\left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right) = -\sigma n d \quad (1)$$

where I_0 and I are the intensity of incident and transmitted monochromatic light, n is the number concentration of the absorber (in molecule cm^{-3}), d is the absorption path length (in cm), and σ is the absorption cross section (in $\text{cm}^2 \text{molecule}^{-1}$).

A similar quantity is the extinction coefficient ε (in $\text{L mol}^{-1} \text{cm}^{-1}$, also called molar absorption coefficient or molar absorptivity) which uses the molar concentration c (in mol L^{-1}) of the absorber instead of the number concentration:

$$\ln\left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right) = -\varepsilon c d \quad (2)$$

Some (mostly older) original papers use absorption coefficients k (unit cm^{-1}) with a definition based on the molar volume V_m of an ideal gas ($\text{cm}^3 \text{mol}^{-1}$) at some reference state and the Avogadro constant $N_A = 6.022 \times 10^{23}$ molecules mol^{-1} :

$$\ln\left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right) = -k \frac{V_m}{N_A} n d \quad (3)$$

Typical choices for the reference state are a temperature of 273 K or 298 K and a pressure of either 1 atm or 1 Torr. Without a clearly defined reference state, k is ambiguous.

Instead of the natural logarithm, the decadic logarithm can be used for all these equations. This results in a conversion factor of $\ln 10$:

$$\log_{10}\left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right) = \ln\left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right) / \ln 10 \quad (4)$$

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in the range of the very weak Huggins-Chappuis minimum (using broadband cavity enhanced absorption spectrometry) during recent years.

Also important are the categories “Oxygen” with studies in the ultraviolet (UV), vacuum ultraviolet (VUV) and extreme ultraviolet (EUV) carried out over the last seventy years, and “Nitrogen oxides” of which NO₂ shows the greatest number of studies in the visible and UV region.

3.2 File format and naming conventions

Metadata associated with each data set (formula and name, category, reference, temperature, wavelength range, comments) is presented as shown in the example in Table 2. ASCII text files (*.txt) with two columns contain the numerical data (see Table 3 for an example). The first column gives the wavelength λ (in nm) (generally in air unless vacuum wavelengths are specified). The second column contains the absorption cross section σ (in cm² molecule⁻¹). The “E notation” is chosen for the absorption cross sections in the data files, e.g., “1.5e-18” is to be read as 1.5×10^{-18} . In some cases, a third column shows the uncertainties of the measured values. Each data set refers to an individual measurement per species. The names of the data files consist of four parts, separated by the underscore character:

formula_author(year)_T_λ.txt

where T denotes the temperature and λ the wavelength range. Here, *author* is the name of the first author. If there are two authors, both names are concatenated without space, e.g.:

O3_ClyneCoxon(1968)_294K_250nm.txt

The file names do not contain non-ASCII characters, thus some author names had to be modified, e.g.: Jiménez → Jimenez, Limão-Vieira → Limao-Vieira, and Mössinger → Mossinger. Spaces in last names are omitted, e.g.: Le Bras → LeBras and El Dib → ElDib. Hyphens in names are not modified, e.g.:

c-C4F8_Limao-Vieira(2007)_298K_115–204nm.txt

In some cases, additional specifications are added in brackets after the wavelength,

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e.g.:

O3_Brion(1998)_295K_345–830nm(1nm).txt

which indicates 1 nm intervals, or

O3_JPL-2010(2011)_293–298K_121.6–827.5nm(rec).txt

- 5 where (rec) indicates that the cited publication is a recommendation, not original laboratory work. There are several other specifications in brackets which are explained in the comments on the web page.

3.3 Unit conversion

10 The absorption cross sections σ in the database are consistently given in units of $\text{cm}^2 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ (base e) according to the Beer-Lambert law as described above in Eq. (1) (an exception is the collision-induced absorption spectrum of the oxygen dimer O_4 where the Beer-Lambert law no longer holds. Here, the binary absorption cross sections are given in $\text{cm}^5 \text{ molecule}^{-2}$).

15 Molar extinction coefficients ε are given in $\text{L mol}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ (base 10), however often written as α in terms of natural logarithm (base e), where $\alpha = \ln 10 \times \varepsilon$. Unfortunately, the symbols α and ε are often used in the literature without referring to base 10 or base e . The conversion factors that have been used are listed in Table 4. Another unit used in the literature is Megabarn (Mb). The conversion is:

$$1 \text{ Mb} = 10^{-18} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$$

20 3.4 Data acquisition

The individual data sets were collected from the original publications, i.e. mostly peer-reviewed journal articles, sometimes Ph.D.-theses, reports, conference proceedings, or books dealing with photochemistry. The articles originate from journals dealing with atmospheric kinetics and photochemistry or molecular spectroscopy including also astronomical research. Data were also obtained by personal communication from the authors if the numerical data were not given in the publication. In addition to the original

data, for a great number of species, evaluated and recommended cross sections published in the NASA-JPL Reports (Sander et al., 2011, and references cited therein) and by the IUPAC Group (Atkinson et al., 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008) are also presented. Data points in the spectral atlas are always the original data from the cited publication unless noted otherwise in the comments. The data have either been copied from tables, or read from figures in those cases where numerical data were not available. More recently, large data sets published as “supplementary information” or “auxiliary material” could be downloaded directly. Finally, many spectral data were downloaded from databases open to the public of several research centers, such as:

- 10 – <http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/amp/tools.html>
- <http://www.iup.physik.uni-bremen.de/gruppen/molspec/index.html>
- <http://www.lisa.univ-paris12.fr/GPCOS/SCOOPweb/SCOOP.html>
- <http://ams-bmc.nsrrc.org.tw>

3.5 Graphical representations

15 The graphical representations show the absorption cross sections σ vs. wavelength λ . In contrast to the individual numerical data sets, the plots combine the data from different measurements. Links to the plots are shown on the pages of the individual species. Two kinds of plots are presented, with linear (lin) and logarithmic (log) scaling of the σ axis, respectively. The linear plots precisely depict the absorption cross sections near the absorption maxima, while the logarithmic plots emphasize the wings of the absorption curve. For example, small differences in the recently measured cross sections of ClOOCl at long wavelengths can be seen much better in logarithmic plots. Another example is BrO, as shown in Fig. 1. The names of the plot files are characterized by the notation *formula*_lin.jpg or *formula*_log.jpg, e.g., BrO_lin.jpg or
20 BrO_log.jpg.

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These plots refer to measurements at room temperature and show the entire UV/VIS wavelength range covered by the various experiments. For plots showing a particular wavelength range, a temperature range, or a publication period, the name of the file contains additional specifications after the formula, e.g.:

5 CH2Br2_250–348K.lin.jpg

CH2Br2_VUV.lin.jpg

Br2_504–553nm.lin.jpg

O3_Chappuis_400–800nm(1986–2003).lin.jpg

10 Plots containing more than one species (e.g., H₂O, HDO, and D₂O) are duplicated and saved for each species, e.g., the following plots are identical:

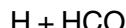
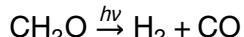
H₂O_and_HDO,D2O_140–196nm.lin.jpg

HDO_and_H2O,D2O_140–196nm.lin.jpg

D2O_and_H2O,HDO_140–196nm.lin.jpg

4 Quantum yields

15 In many cases, the photolysis of a molecule branches into several product channels, each with different quantum yields at different wavelengths. A classic example is formaldehyde (CH₂O), which possesses two product channels:



20 In the database the dimensionless quantum yields are grouped into the same categories and subcategories as the cross sections. Each product channel is treated separately. The names of the quantum yield data files are similar to those for the cross sections but contain the product channels in curly braces directly after the formula:
formula{products}_author(year)_T_λ.txt

25 For the example CH₂O, the total quantum yield is also listed and the names are:

CH2O{H₂+CO}_author(year)_T_λ.txt

CH₂O{H+HCO}_author(year).T_λ.txt
CH₂O{total}_author(year).T_λ.txt

An example for quantum yield metadata associated with the data set by Smith et al. (2002) is given in Table 5, together with the corresponding datafile in Table 6. The quantum yields are stored as plain ASCII files within two columns: one for the wavelength, and the other for the quantum yield, respectively. A third column occasionally indicates the error limits of the quantum yields. Figure 2 represents the overview plot of the quantum yields for the product channel CH₂O $\xrightarrow{h\nu}$ H + HCO.

It is worthwhile to mention that the ozone category covers nearly 30 quantum yield studies for a single molecule, whereas other categories, such as nitrogen oxides and halogen oxides report many data sets for a variety of molecules, such as NO₂, NO₃, N₂O₅ and the chlorine oxides Cl₂O, ClOOCl and OCIO, respectively.

5 Technical implementation of the new version of the spectral atlas

Recently, the database and the web pages have been completely redesigned and restructured.

5.1 The database

All absorption cross section and quantum yield data sets are stored as plain ASCII files. The metadata (formula and name, category, reference, temperature, wavelength range, comments) are stored as tables in a PostgreSQL database system¹, as shown in Fig. 3. One-to-many relations are implemented as foreign keys. Access to the database is implemented via the Django web framework², written in the Python programming language.

¹<http://www.postgresql.org/>

²<https://www.djangoproject.com/>

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5.2 The web pages

To browse the Spectral Atlas, clicking the links to Cross Sections and Quantum Yields in the left column will show molecular categories and subcategories. Inside these (sub)categories are the species. The pages for the species contain links to the graphical representations and the individual measurements. Three search options are provided in the right column:

- 5 1. **Species Search:** find the search string in the species' name or formula.
- 10 2. **Reference Search:** find the search string somewhere in the reference (author, title, journal) and return all data sets from that article.
- 15 3. **Full Text Search:** search the species, the references, and also the comments.

All searches are case-insensitive.

6 Summary and outlook

We have presented the MPI-Mainz UV/VIS Spectral Atlas, which now appears on the web with a new look, a clear structure and improved search functions. To the best of our knowledge, it is the most comprehensive collection of UV/VIS absorption spectra and an advanced collection of quantum yield data sets. Here at the Max-Planck Institute for Chemistry, we will continue to maintain, update and extend the various sections of the Atlas. As a new feature, we plan to add CAS Registry Numbers³ to the database which will further improve the search function and facilitate the connection to other databases.

- 20 *Author contributions.* G. K. Moortgat has been collecting and contributing spectra to this database since the 1990s. H. Keller-Rudek has been adding data, creating plots, updating, and maintaining the spectral atlas on the previous web server from 1998 until 2012. R. Sørensen

³<http://www.cas.org/content/chemical-substances/faqs>

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and R. Sander converted the database to PostgreSQL and implemented the new web pages. Current contact persons are H. Keller-Rudek for the cross sections, G. K. Moortgat for the quantum yields, and R. Sørensen and R. Sander for the database and the web interface.

Acknowledgements. We would like to thank T. Wagner for hosting the spectral atlas on the web server of the satellite group. K. Egenolf and E. Uherek helped us to retrieve the database from the previous, now obsolete, web server. Last but not least we are looking forward to receiving comments and additional data sets from the scientific community to further expand our collection.

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category	subcategories	species	data files	plots
Alcohols		24	61	65
Alkali compounds	Li, K, Rb, Cs compounds/Na compounds	23	39	11
Alkanes+alkyl radicals	Alkanes/Aalkyl radicals	27	127	48
Alkanes+radicals with O		5	5	6
Alkenes,dienes+radicals	Alkene radicals/Alkenes/Dienes	37	157	100
Alkynes,polyynes+radicals	Alkyne radicals/Alkynes/Polyynes	11	87	35
Aromatic compounds	Aldehydes/Aalkyl-,vinyl/benzenes/Aromatic Radicals/Benzene/Benzene oxide/oxyepin,toluene oxide-methyloxepin/Halogenated benzenes/Heterocyclic/Ketones/Nitro compounds/Phenol, alkylphenols	141	366	384
Boron compounds		7	11	14
Carbon-oxides		3	92	23
Ethers+alkyl radicals	Cyclic ethers/Linear and branched ethers	28	49	52
Halogenated N-compounds(inorg)		19	127	44
Halogeno-alkanes+radicals	Bromoalkanes/Chloroalkanes/Fluoroalkanes/Freons-CFC(C,H,F,Cl)/Freons-HCFC(C,H,F,Cl)/Halons(C,H,F,Cl,Br)/Iodoalkanes(C,H,F,Cl,Br,I)	106	1033	323
Halogeno-alkenes+radicals	Bromoalkenes/Bromofluoroalkenes/Chloroalkenes/Chlorofluoroalkenes/ Fluoroalkenes/ Iodoalkenes	35	73	55
Halogeno-alkynes+radicals		2	2	8
Halogen oxides	Br oxides/Cl oxides/F oxides/I oxides/Mixed oxides	23	307	60
Halogens+mixed halogens		9	139	34
Hydrogen halides		6	61	24
Hydrogen+water		5	92	41
Hypohalides		7	35	13
Nitrogen+compounds(N,H,O)		12	171	52
Nitrogen oxides		7	390	58
Organics (acids)		20	65	49
Organics (carbonyls)	Aldehydes(aliphatic)/Amides/Bicarbonyls/Cyanocarbonyls/Esters/Halogenated aldehydes/Ketones,ketenes/Organic radicals	119	673	321
Organics (N-compounds)	Amines/Azides/Azoalkanes/Carbazoles/Cyanogen halides/Dinitrates/Nitrates/Nitriles/Nitrites/Nitroktones/Nitro-, nitrosoalkanes/Nitrooxy-alcohols/Peroxynitrates	71	247	145
Oxygen		2	181	30
Ozone		1	209	37
Peroxides	Alkyl peroxides/Halogenated peroxides/Hydrogen peroxide H ₂ O ₂ /Hydroxalkylperoxides/Ketohydroperoxides	14	62	33
Peroxy radicals	Acetonylperoxy/Acylperoxy/Aalkylperoxy/Aalkylperoxy+Br,I/ Alkylperoxy+Cl/Aalkylperoxy+F/Aalkylperoxy+F+Cl/ Hydroperoxy HO ₂ and DO ₂ /Hydroxy-, methoxyalkylperoxy/Others/Vinyl,-allylperoxy	58	254	98
Phosphor compounds		14	22	25
Silicon compounds		16	25	32
Sulfur compounds	Inorganic S-compounds/ Organic S-compounds	53	288	125
Terpenes		3	3	6
Unclassified		6	6	10

Table 2. Example for metadata associated with a cross section data set. The corresponding data file is shown in Table 3.

Cross Sections → Halogen oxides → Br oxides →

BrO → Cox(1982)_298K_300-375nm(5nm,int-c)

DATAFILE:	BrO_Cox(1982)_298K_300-375nm(5nm,int-c).txt
NAME:	bromine monoxide
FORMULA:	BrO
AUTHOR(YEAR):	Cox(1982)
T:	298K
λ :	300-375nm(5nm,int-c)
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	R. A. Cox, D. W. Sheppard, and M. P. Stevens, “Absorption coefficients and kinetics of the BrO radical using molecular modulation,” J. Photochem., 19, 189–207 (1982)
COMMENTS:	300-375nm(int-c), i.e., averaged over spectral intervals of 5 nm at 300–305, 305–310,370–375 nm; first column: center of interval

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Table 3. As an example for a cross section data file, the contents of BrO_Cox(1982)_298K_300–375nm(5nm,int-c).txt is shown here. It belongs to the data set from Cox et al. (1982) shown in Table 2.

302.5	2.00e-18
307.5	2.59e-18
312.5	4.54e-18
317.5	3.91e-18
322.5	6.00e-18
327.5	7.53e-18
332.5	6.28e-18
337.5	5.89e-18
342.5	5.15e-18
347.5	3.99e-18
352.5	2.28e-18
357.5	1.72e-18
362.5	1.61e-18
367.5	9.20e-19
372.5	5.10e-19

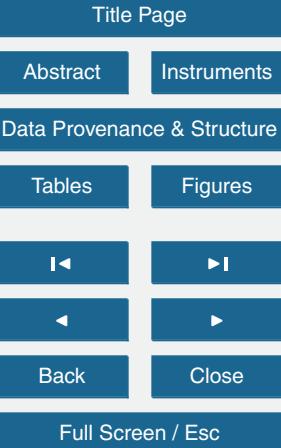


Table 4. Conversion factors from absorption coefficients k and extinction coefficients ε to absorption cross sections σ in $\text{cm}^2 \text{molecule}^{-1}$.

quantity (unit)	log base	reference state	conversion formula*	conversion factor
absorption coefficient $k (\text{cm}^{-1})$	base e	298 K, 1 atm	$V_m(298\text{K},1\text{atm}) / N_A$	$4.06 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$
	base e	273 K, 1 atm	$V_m(273\text{K},1\text{atm}) / N_A$	$3.72 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$
	base 10	298 K, 1 atm	$\ln 10 \times V_m(298\text{K},1\text{atm}) / N_A$	$9.35 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$
	base 10	273 K, 1 atm	$\ln 10 \times V_m(273\text{K},1\text{atm}) / N_A$	$8.57 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$
	base 10	298 K, 1 Torr	$\ln 10 \times V_m(298\text{K},1\text{Torr}) / N_A$	$7.11 \times 10^{-17} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$
extinction coefficient $\varepsilon (\text{L mol}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1})$	base e		f / N_A	$1.66 \times 10^{-21} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$
	base 10		$f \times \ln 10 / N_A$	$3.82 \times 10^{-21} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ mol L}^{-1}$

* Here, $N_A = 6.022 \times 10^{23}$ molecules mol^{-1} is the Avogadro constant, $\ln 10 = 2.303$ is the natural logarithm of 10, $f = 1000 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ L}^{-1}$ is the factor converting from cubic centimeter to liter, and V_m is the molar volume of an ideal gas at the reference state, i.e. $V_m(273\text{K},1\text{atm}) = 22\,414 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$, $V_m(298\text{K},1\text{atm}) = 24\,465 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$, and $V_m(298\text{K},1\text{Torr}) = 1.8593 \times 10^7 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1}$.

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Table 5. Example for metadata associated with a quantum yield data set. The corresponding data file is shown in Table 6.

Quantum Yields → Organics (carbonyls) → Aldehydes(aliphatic)

→ CH₂O{H+HCO} → Smith(2002)_298K_268.75-338.75nm

DATAFILE: CH₂O{H+HCO}_Smith(2002)_298K_268.75-338.75nm.txt

NAME: formaldehyde{H+HCO}

FORMULA: CH₂O{H+HCO}

AUTHOR(YEAR): Smith(2002)

T: 298K

λ: 268.75-338.75nm

BIBLIOGRAPHY: G. D. Smith, L. T. Molina, and M. J. Molina, "Measurement of radical quantum yields from formaldehyde photolysis between 269 and 339 nm," J. Phys. Chem. A, 106, 1233–1240 (2002)

COMMENTS: The relative quantum yields of the radical products H and HCO were obtained by conversion to HO₂ using chemical amplification and subsequent detection by CIMS (chemical ionization mass spectrometry). The quantum yields were normalized to 0.753 at 303.75 nm based on the recommendation of JPL Publ. 97-4 (DeMore et al. 1997).

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Table 6. As an example for a quantum yield data file, the contents of CH2O{H+HCO}_Smith(2002)_298K_268.75–338.75nm.txt is shown here. It belongs to the data set from Smith et al. (2002) shown in Table 5.

268.75	0.41 ± 0.06
278.75	0.55 ± 0.06
283.75	0.65 ± 0.07
288.75	0.72 ± 0.07
293.75	0.67 ± 0.07
298.75	0.62 ± 0.07
301.75	0.70 ± 0.11
303.75	0.753
306.25	0.66 ± 0.07
308.75	0.71 ± 0.08
311.25	0.68 ± 0.09
313.75	0.69 ± 0.07
316.25	0.65 ± 0.07
321.25	0.64 ± 0.08
326.25	0.51 ± 0.05
328.75	0.36 ± 0.04
331.25	0.46 ± 0.06
333.75	0.30 ± 0.07
336.25	0.07 ± 0.01
338.75	0.04 ± 0.01

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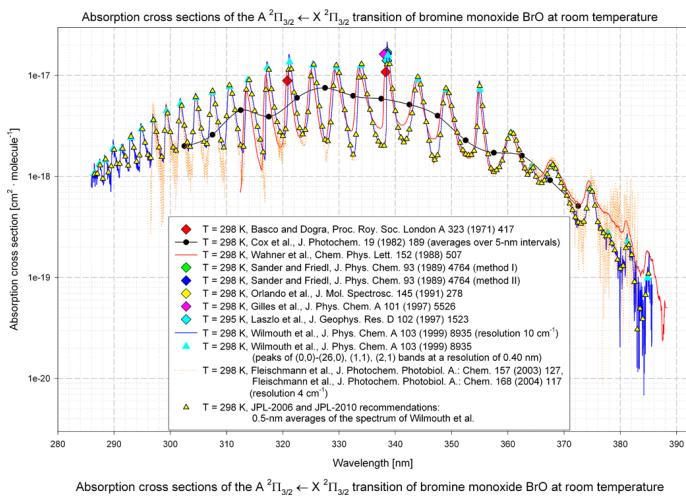
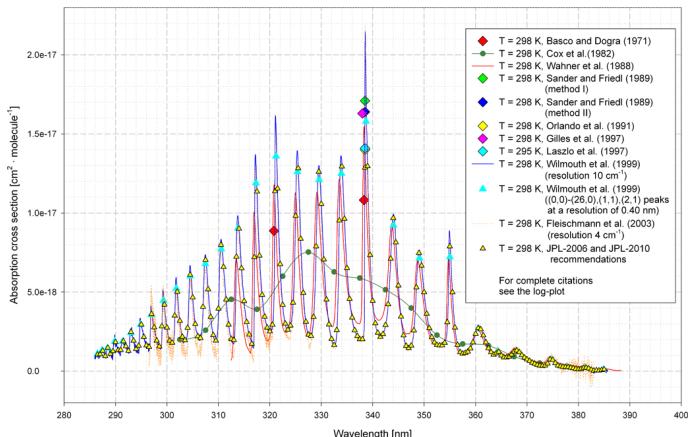


Fig. 1. Overview plots of measured BrO spectra (top = linear, bottom = logarithmic).

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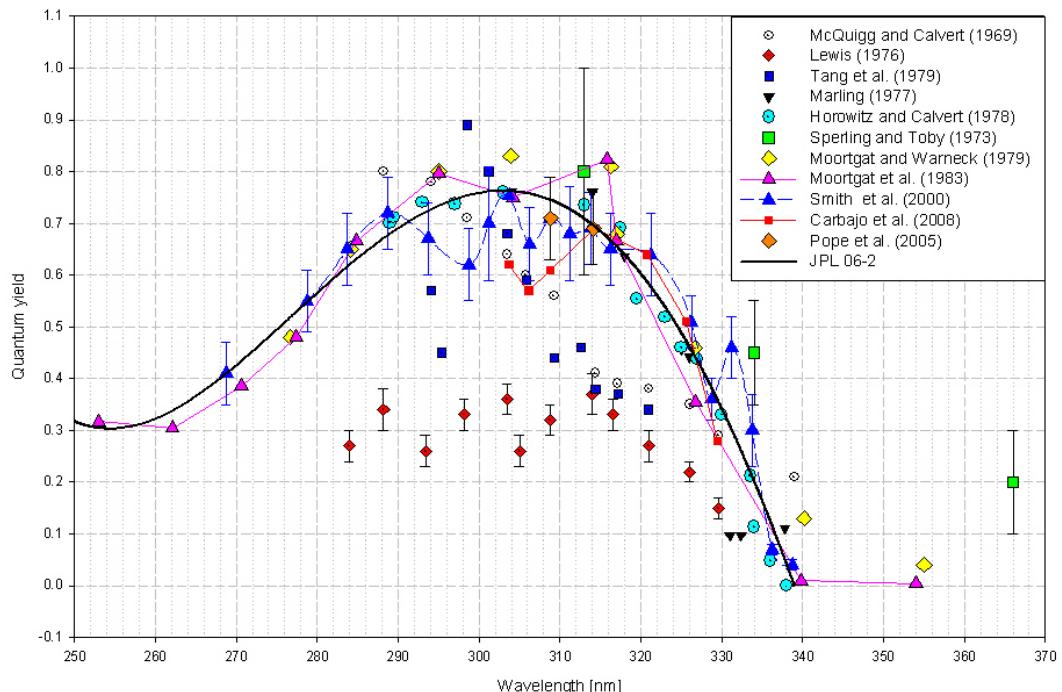


Fig. 2. Overview plot of measured quantum yields $\text{CH}_2\text{O} \xrightarrow{h\nu} \text{H} + \text{HCO}$.

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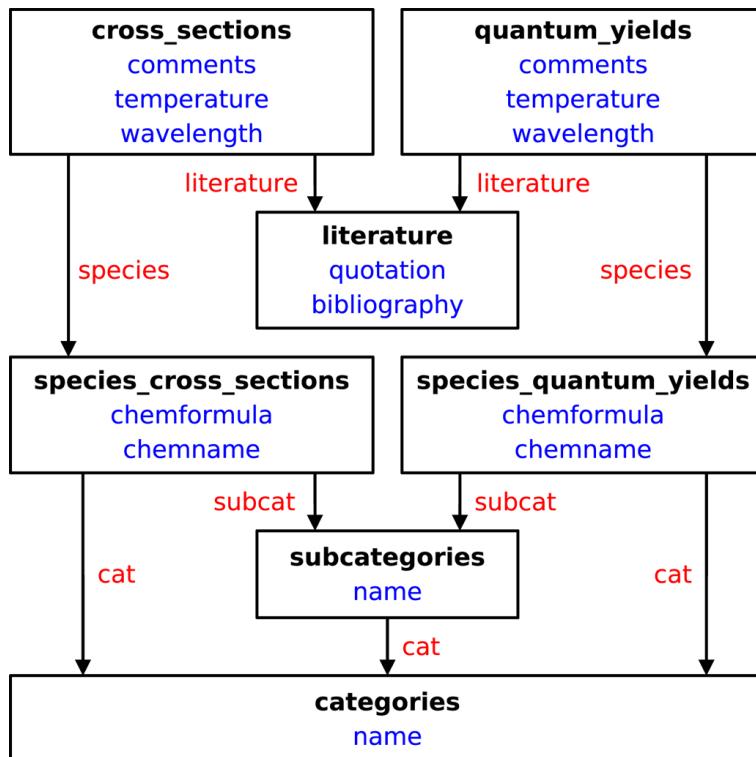


Fig. 3. Structure of the PostgreSQL database. Black = table names. Blue = table columns. Red = foreign keys pointing to other tables.