

# Planarizing cytosine: The $S_1$ state structure, vibrations, and nonradiative dynamics of jet-cooled 5,6-trimethylenecytosine

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# Planarizing cytosine: The $S_1$ state structure, vibrations, and nonradiative dynamics of jet-cooled 5,6-trimethylenecytosine

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We measure the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectrum and time-resolved  $S_1$  state nonradiative dynamics of the “clamped” cytosine derivative 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (TMCyt) in a supersonic jet, using two-color resonant two-photon ionization (R2PI), UV/UV holeburning, and ns time-resolved pump/delayed ionization. The experiments are complemented with spin-component scaled second-order approximate coupled cluster (SCS-CC2), time-dependent density functional theory, and multi-state second-order perturbation-theory (MS-CASPT2) *ab initio* calculations. While the R2PI spectrum of cytosine breaks off  $\sim 500$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above its  $S_0^0$  band, that of TMCyt extends up to  $+4400$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  higher, with over a hundred resolved vibronic bands. Thus, clamping the cytosine  $C^5-C^6$  bond allows us to explore the  $S_1$  state vibrations and  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  geometry changes in detail. The TMCyt  $S_1$  state out-of-plane vibrations  $\nu'_1$ ,  $\nu'_3$ , and  $\nu'_5$  lie below  $420$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , and the in-plane  $\nu'_{11}$ ,  $\nu'_{12}$ , and  $\nu'_{23}$  vibrational fundamentals appear at  $450$ ,  $470$ , and  $944$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  vibronic simulations based on SCS-CC2 calculations agree well with experiment if the calculated  $\nu'_1$ ,  $\nu'_3$ , and  $\nu'_5$  frequencies are reduced by a factor of 2–3. MS-CASPT2 calculations predict that the ethylene-type  $S_1 \rightsquigarrow S_0$  conical intersection (CI) increases from  $+366$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in cytosine to  $>6000$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in TMCyt, explaining the long lifetime and extended  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectrum. The lowest-energy  $S_1 \rightsquigarrow S_0$  CI of TMCyt is the “amino out-of-plane” ( $OP_X$ ) intersection, calculated at  $+4190$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The experimental  $S_1 \rightsquigarrow S_0$  internal conversion rate constant at the  $S_1(v' = 0)$  level is  $k_{IC} = 0.98\text{--}2.2 \cdot 10^8$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ , which is  $\sim 10$  times smaller than in 1-methylcytosine and cytosine. The  $S_1(v' = 0)$  level relaxes into the  $T_1(^3\pi\pi^*)$  state by intersystem crossing with  $k_{ISC} = 0.41\text{--}1.6 \cdot 10^8$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ . The  $T_1$  state energy is measured to lie  $24\,580 \pm 560$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $S_0$  state. The  $S_1(v' = 0)$  lifetime is  $\tau = 2.9$  ns, resulting in an estimated fluorescence quantum yield of  $\Phi_f = 24\%$ . Intense two-color R2PI spectra of the TMCyt amino-enol tautomers appear above  $36\,000$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . A sharp  $S_1$  ionization threshold is observed for amino-keto TMCyt, yielding an adiabatic ionization energy of  $8.114 \pm 0.002$  eV. © 2017 Author(s). All article content, except where otherwise noted, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4989465>]

## I. INTRODUCTION

A number of femtosecond (fs) pump-probe studies of cytosine (Cyt), 1-methylcytosine (1-MCyt), and 5-fluorocytosine (5-FCyt) in the gas-phase have yielded ultrashort excited-state  $S_1$  lifetimes that range from  $\tau = 0.2$  to  $3.2$  ps.<sup>1–5</sup> However, more recent measurements of supersonically jet-cooled amino-keto Cyt, 5-methylcytosine (5-MCyt), and 5-FCyt based on Lorentzian lifetime broadening measurements at their respective  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  electronic origins yielded lower limits on the  $S_1$  lifetimes of  $45$  ps for Cyt and  $75$  ps for 5-FCyt.<sup>6–8</sup> More recent direct lifetime measurements of Cyt, 1-MCyt, and 1-ethylcytosine (1-ECyt) using the picosecond (ps) excitation/ionization delay technique revealed even longer values between  $\tau = 450\text{--}900$  ps, which decrease rapidly with increasing vibrational excess energy ( $E_{exc}$ ).<sup>9</sup>

Computational studies of the excited-state dynamics and nonradiative decay of amino-keto Cyt<sup>10–20</sup> have located three different conical intersections (CIs) between the ground and lowest excited  $^1\pi\pi^*$  states. The lowest of these, which dominates the  $S_1 \rightsquigarrow S_0$  nonradiative decay, is called ( $Eth$ )<sub>X</sub> since the intersection structure is similar to the CI structure of ethylene. This CI is characterized by a puckering of the  $C^6$  atom and a twist around the  $C^5-C^6$  bond, with a  $H-C^5-C^6-H$  torsional angle of  $\sim 120^\circ$ .<sup>10–13,15,16,19,21,22</sup> The next higher CI involves an  $N^3$  out-of-plane bending and a large out-of-plane amino deformation and is called ( $OP$ )<sub>X</sub>.<sup>10,16,19,22</sup> The third CI, called ( $n_O, \pi^*$ )<sub>X</sub>, has a semi-planar structure with  $sp^3$  hybridization of the  $C^6$  atom, shortening of the  $C^2-N^3$  bond, and stretching of the  $C^2-O$  bond relative to the ground state minimum.<sup>10–16,19,21,22</sup>

Zgierski *et al.* have shown that covalently clamping the  $C^5-C^6$  bond of Cyt with a trimethylene bridge in 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (TMCyt) increases the  $S_1$  state fluorescence lifetime and quantum yield in room-temperature

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aqueous solution by  $\sim 1000$  times relative to Cyt,<sup>23–25</sup> to  $\tau = 1.2$  ns and  $\Phi_{fl} \sim 10\%$ .<sup>26</sup> Their configuration interaction singles (CIS) and second-order approximate coupled cluster (CC2) excited-state calculations predicted that this clamping shifts the  $(Eth)_X$  conical intersection of cytosine to  $\sim 1500$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $S_1$  minimum, making this CI energetically less accessible.<sup>26</sup> The trimethylene bridge in TMCyt hardly affects the  $\pi$ -electron framework of Cyt, so the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  absorption band shifts from  $\lambda_{max} = 267$  nm for Cyt to 280 nm in TMCyt.<sup>26</sup> In the clamped cytosine derivative pyrrolocytosine (PC), the  $C^4$ -amino group (see Fig. 1) and the  $C^5$  atom are covalently connected, resulting in a pyrrole ring fused to the Cyt chromophore.<sup>27</sup> This extension of the  $\pi$ -electron framework significantly shifts the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  excitation maximum to  $\lambda_{max} = 330\text{--}345$  nm, or about 70–80 nm to the red, compared to Cyt.<sup>28,29</sup> For PC, Thompson and co-workers have measured a lifetime of  $\tau = 2.9$  ns and a quantum yield of  $\Phi_{fl} \sim 0.038$  in pH 7 phosphate buffer.<sup>29</sup>

Intrigued by these observations, we have measured and analyzed the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  vibronic spectrum of supersonic jet-cooled TMCyt using two-color resonant two-photon ionization (2C-R2PI), UV/UV holeburning, and depletion spectroscopies. We also measured the  $S_1$  state lifetime and triplet-state formation kinetics as a function of  $E_{exc}$ , using the nanosecond excitation/ionization delay technique, and report  $S_1$  state nonradiative rate constants for internal conversion and inter-system crossing. In addition to the amino-keto tautomer **1** of TMCyt, we have also observed an intense R2PI spectrum that we assign to the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  transitions of the hydroxy-enol tautomers **2a/2b**, see Fig. 1 for the tautomer structures. The measurements are accompanied by calculations of the lowest excited singlet ( $^1\pi\pi^*$ ) and triplet ( $^3\pi\pi^*$ ) states of TMCyt using time-dependent (TD) density functional theory (DFT) (TD-CAMB3LYP), spin-component scaled CC2 (SCS-CC2),

complete-active-state self-consistent field (CASSCF), and multi-state second-order perturbation-theory (MS-CASPT2) methods.

## II. METHODS

### A. Experimental methods

TMCyt was synthesized in three steps from adiponitrile according to Ref. 30 and characterized by  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  spectroscopy,  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  spectroscopy, and electrospray ionization (ESI) mass spectrometry as described in the [supplementary material](#). The experimental setup for two-color resonant two-photon ionization (2C-R2PI) measurements has been previously described.<sup>31,32</sup> Neon carrier gas at  $\sim 1.8$  bar backing pressure was passed through a 20 Hz pulsed nozzle (0.4 mm diameter) heated to 230 °C that contains the TMCyt sample. 2C-R2PI spectra were measured by crossing the skimmed supersonic jet with the unfocused UV excitation and ionization laser beams in the source of a linear time-of-flight mass spectrometer (TOF-MS). Excitation was performed with 0.4–0.6 mJ UV pulses from a frequency-doubled Radiant Dyes NarrowScan D-R dye laser with a bandwidth of 0.05  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  (1500 MHz) or with an Ekspla NT342B optical parametric oscillator (UV-OPO) with a bandwidth of 4–6  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The frequency scale was calibrated by measuring the fundamental frequency with the WS6 wavemeter.

Ionization light of  $\sim 100$   $\mu\text{J/pulse}$  at 225 or 245 nm was produced by an Ekspla NT342B (UV-OPO). The measurements were typically done with 10–30 mV ion signal at the most intense vibronic band. A second frequency-doubled dye laser ( $\sim 400$   $\mu\text{J/pulse}$ ) was used as the UV-depletion laser for UV/UV holeburning and depletion experiments. Excitation and ionization were performed as for the R2PI experiments. The depletion laser was fired 300 ns before the excitation/ionization laser pulses.

### B. Computational methods

A uniform theoretical treatment of the ground- and excited-state potential energy surfaces of TMCyt is difficult, and we have combined several methods following a similar approach to our recent work on 1-MCyt.<sup>33</sup> The electronic ground state of all 14 tautomers and rotamers of TMCyt was first optimized using density functional theory (B3LYP) with the TZVP basis set. The ground state structures of the six most stable tautomers are shown in Fig. 1; these were re-optimized at the correlated level, using the second-order Møller-Plesset (MP2) method in the resolution-of-identity (RI) approximation, the SCS-MP2 method, and the CC2 method in the RI approximation, using the aug-cc-pVTZ basis set.

The adiabatic and vertical transition energies were calculated at the SCS-CC2 level of theory with the aug-cc-pVDZ basis set. Normal-mode calculations were performed for all geometry-optimized structures to assure that they correspond to true potential energy surface minima. The transition energies were also calculated at the MS-CASPT2 level of theory. For the  $\pi\pi^*$  and  $^1n\pi^*$  states, we used TD-CAM-B3LYP/6-311G\*\* optimized geometries, whose MS-CASPT2 energy is lower than that of their CASSCF and SCS-CC2 analogues. For the optimization of  $(OP)_{Min}$ , we used the CASSCF(12,12)/

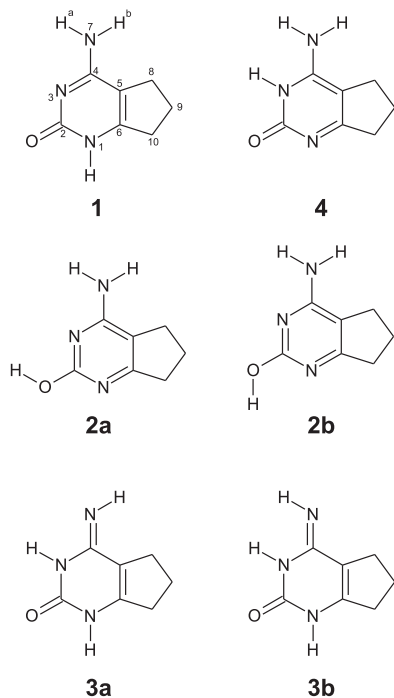


FIG. 1. The six most stable tautomers of gas-phase 5,6-trimethylenecytosine. The cytosine tautomer labels are analogous to that defined in Ref. 45.

6-311G\*\* geometry because the other methods failed to converge to a minimum for that state.

For the calculation of the decay paths and conical intersections, we follow the MS-CASPT2//CASSCF approach, where the paths and structures are optimized at the CASSCF level of theory and the energy profiles along the paths are recalculated at the MS-CASPT2 level to include dynamic correlation energy (see our previous study of 1-MCyt<sup>33</sup>). For the CASSCF and MS-CASPT2 calculations, we used, respectively, the 6-311G\*\* basis and the ANO-L basis set contracted to 4s3p2d for C, N, and O and 3s2p1d for H. For the CASPT2 calculations, we used an imaginary level shift<sup>34</sup> of 0.1 a.u. and the standard ionization potential–electron affinity correction<sup>35</sup> of 0.25 a.u.

To calculate the reaction path to  $(OP)_X$ , we optimized the transition structure (TS) on  $S_1$  and obtained the path by combining the intrinsic reaction coordinate<sup>36</sup> and initial relaxation direction<sup>37</sup> techniques. The calculated barrier includes the vibrational zero-point energy (ZPE) correction, which amounts to  $-475\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , based on CASSCF frequencies at  $(^1\pi\pi^*)_{Min}$  (with  $3N - 6$  vibrational modes) and at the corresponding TS (including  $3N - 7$  modes). The CI was optimized using the recently developed double Newton-Raphson algorithm.<sup>38</sup> The active space of the CASSCF and MS-CASPT2 calculations was specifically tailored for each path; for details, see the [supplementary material](#). We use (10,10) and (12,12) active spaces for the ethylene- and OP-type paths, respectively. With this approach, the MS-CASPT2  $S_1/S_0$  energy gaps at the CI structures were 1973 and  $2265\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (0.24 and 0.28 eV) at  $(Eth)_X$  and  $(OP)_X$ , respectively. The path to  $(Eth)_X$ , which has a sloped topology and does not involve a TS, was approximated with a linear interpolation in internal coordinates.

Density functional theory and CC2 calculations were performed using Turbomole 6.4.<sup>39,40</sup> The CASSCF optimizations were performed with a modified version of Gaussian09<sup>41</sup> and the MS-CASPT2 calculations with Molcas 7.8.<sup>42,43</sup> Vibronic band simulations were done with the PGOPHER program.<sup>44</sup> As inputs, we used the SCS-CC2 calculated  $S_0$  ground and  $S_1$  excited state geometries and the corresponding normal-mode  $I$  matrices, employing conformer **1a**. Additional diagonal anharmonicity constants<sup>44</sup> were included for some modes. The vibronic band intensities are based on full multidimensional Franck-Condon factors, including both mode displacements and mixing between modes (Dushinsky effect).<sup>44</sup> The vibronic simulations for conformer **1b** are very similar to those for **1a**.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Computational results

##### 1. Tautomers and relative energies

Figure 1 shows the six most stable calculated tautomers and rotamers of TMCyt, and Table I summarizes their relative energies calculated at different levels of theory. All the correlated wave function methods predict the *trans*-amino-enol **2b** tautomer to be the most stable one, with the corresponding *cis*-rotamer **2a**  $\sim 0.6\text{ kcal/mol}$  higher. The amino-keto N1H tautomer **1** that is experimentally investigated below exists in conformer **1a**, where the amino group and trimethylene

TABLE I. Calculated relative energies (in kcal/mol) of 5,6-trimethylene-cytosine tautomers and rotamers (see Fig. 1 for definitions). The bold font indicates the most stable (lowest energy) tautomer/rotamer.

	B3LYP TZVP	MP2 aVTZ	CC2 aVTZ	SCS-MP2 aug-cc-pVTZ
Amino-keto N1H ( <b>1a</b> )	<b>0.00</b>	2.69	1.08	1.54
Amino-keto N1H ( <b>1b</b> )	0.02	2.69	1.09	1.55
Amino-enol- <i>trans</i> ( <b>2b</b> )	0.42	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Amino-enol- <i>cis</i> ( <b>2a</b> )	1.01	0.56	0.57	0.57
Imino-keto- <i>trans</i> ( <b>3a</b> )	0.58	2.87	2.05	0.60
Imino-keto- <i>cis</i> ( <b>3b</b> )	2.20	4.55	3.68	2.20
Amino-keto N3H ( <b>4</b> )	5.52	8.46	6.64	7.39
Imino-enol- <i>cis-trans</i> N1H	27.8			
Imino-enol- <i>cis-cis</i> N1H	18.2			
Imino-enol- <i>trans-trans</i> N1H	32.5			
Imino-enol- <i>trans-cis</i> N1H	21.9			
Imino-enol- <i>cis-trans</i> N3H	15.4			
Imino-enol- <i>cis-cis</i> N3H	24.6			
Imino-enol- <i>trans-trans</i> N3H	12.5			
Imino-enol- <i>trans-cis</i> N3H	20.6			

ring are out-of-plane in the same direction, denoted Up-up (or Down-down), where the first (capitalized) orientation refers to the  $\text{NH}_2$  group. In conformer **1b**, the  $\text{NH}_2$  group and trimethylene ring are arranged in opposite directions (Up-down or Down-up). The **1a** and **1b** forms are close in energy with **1b** calculated to lie  $3\text{--}4\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above **1a**. In the gas phase, both **1a** and **1b** are less stable than amino-enol conformers by 1.08 kcal/mol (CC2) or 1.54 kcal/mol (SCS-MP2). The B3LYP density functional method predicts the amino-keto N1H tautomer to be the most stable tautomer; however, it is known that this method predicts the order of the cytosine tautomers incorrectly.<sup>6,45</sup>

The other TMCyt tautomers **2b**, **2a**, and **4** also exist as pairs of conformers analogous to **1a/1b**, but only one form was calculated since the energy difference is expected to be very small. All the imino-enol forms lie  $>13\text{ kcal/mol}$  above the most stable tautomer **2b** at the B3LYP/TZVP level; hence, we do not consider them any further.

##### 2. Electronic transition energies

Table II summarizes the calculated adiabatic and vertical transition energies of the **1a**, **1b**, **2a**, **2b**, and **3a** conformers predicted by the SCS-CC2 method, together with the MS-CASPT2 transitions for **1a**. Both methods are in good agreement, which validates our computational approach. They predict that the  $S_1$  state minimum has  $^1\pi\pi^*$  character. The calculated adiabatic transition of **1a** is  $31\,534\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (SCS-CC2) and  $31\,831\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (MS-CASPT2), in excellent agreement with the experimental value of  $31\,510\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The vertical excitation energy of the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  state with the SCS-CC2 and MS-CASPT2 methods is  $36\,610$  and  $36\,500\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. There are two low-lying  $^1n\pi^*$  states which arise from excitations out of the oxygen and nitrogen lone pairs, whose vertical excitation energies are  $7000\text{--}10\,000\text{ cm}^{-1}$  higher. The structure of the  $^1n_o\pi^*$  state was optimized at the TD-CAMB3LYP level. It is a minimum on  $S_2$  with adiabatic energy of  $37\,597\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (MS-CASPT2 single point). The structure optimization of the  $^1n_o\pi^*$

TABLE II. SCS-CC2 and MS-CASPT2 calculated adiabatic and vertical transition energies (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and electronic oscillator strengths  $f_{el}$  for five tautomers of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (see Fig. 1).

Tautomer	Transition	SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ			MS-CASPT2/ANO-L			Expt.
		Adiab.	Vert.	$f_{el}^a$	Adiab.	vert. <sup>b</sup>	$f_{el}^a$	
<b>1a</b>	$^1\pi\pi^*$	31 534	36 610	0.091 8	31 831	36 500	0.1174	31 510
	$^1n\pi^*$		42 349	0.001 52	37 597 <sup>c</sup>	43 580 <sup>d</sup>	0.0410	
	( <i>OP</i> )				33 017 <sup>f</sup>	46 288 <sup>e</sup>	0.0032	
	$^3\pi\pi^*$ Ion	27 978 65 975	30 671		27 774 <sup>g</sup>	31 217		24 020–25 140
<b>1b</b>	$^1\pi\pi^*$	31 483	36 580	0.091 8				31 510
	$^1n\pi^*$		42 352	0.001 91				
	$^3\pi\pi^*$		30 654					24 020–25 140
	Ion							65 440
<b>2a</b>	$^1n\pi^*$	38 631 <sup>h</sup>	43 035	0.006 08				
	$^1\pi\pi^*$	34 508	38 589	0.102				
	$^3\pi\pi^*$		35 415					
<b>2b</b>	$^1n\pi^*$	39 319 <sup>h</sup>	43 631	0.006 58				
	$^1\pi\pi^*$	35 008	38 871	0.101				35 930
	$^3\pi\pi^*$		35 446					
<b>3a</b>	$^1n\pi^*$		43 312	0.009 25				
	$^1\pi\pi^*$	41 401	41 862	0.250				
	$^3\pi\pi^*$		29 432					

<sup>a</sup>Vertical excitation from  $S_0$  equilibrium geometry, length.

<sup>b</sup>At SCS-CC2 optimized geometry.

<sup>c</sup> $n_O\pi^*$  minimum optimized at the TD-CAMB3LYP level,  $S_1$  energy 35 282  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .

<sup>d</sup>Mixed  $n_O\pi^*/n_N\pi^*$  with predominant  $n_N\pi^*$  character.

<sup>e</sup>Mixed  $n_O\pi^*/n_N\pi^*$  with predominant  $n_O\pi^*$  character.

<sup>f</sup>Optimized at the CASSCF level.

<sup>g</sup>Optimized at the TD-CAMB3LYP level.

<sup>h</sup>Not fully converged.

state did not converge with SCS-CC2 because it reached a region of  $S_2/S_1$  degeneracy, which is consistent with the small  $S_2/S_1$  energy gap found at the  $^1n_O\pi^*$  minimum at the MS-CASPT2 level. Optimization of the  $^1n_N\pi^*$  state at the CASSCF level leads to (*OP*)<sub>Min</sub>, with an adiabatic energy of 33 017  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The electronic configuration at this structure is analogous to that described in our previous work on 1-MCyt.<sup>33</sup>

The adiabatic transition energy of conformer **1a** is calculated to lie slightly above that of **1b**, differing by 51  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  at the SCS-CC2 level. With this method, the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  transitions of the major tautomers **2b** and **2a** are calculated to be  $^1\pi\pi^*$  and to lie at  $\sim 35\,000$  and  $\sim 34\,500$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , respectively, or about 3500  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  further to blue than the transitions of the **1a/1b** conformers. The lowest-energy electronic transition of the imino-keto tautomers **3a** and **3b** is predicted at 41 400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and 40 970  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. This is above the experimental spectral range covered in this work. On the other hand, the lowest  $^1\pi\pi^*$  transition of the **4** (N3H) tautomer is predicted to lie very close to that of the **1** (N1H) tautomer. However, tautomer **4** is calculated to be 5.5–5.8 kcal/mol less stable than tautomer **1**; hence, we do not expect this tautomer to be observable in the supersonic jet.

### 3. Ground- and excited-state structures

In the SCS-CC2  $S_0$  optimized structure of **1a**, the pyrimidinone framework is  $C_s$  symmetric, and the amino group and

the trimethylene ring are bent slightly out of the ring plane. In the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  excited state, the SCS-CC2 and TD-CAMB3LYP methods predict (i) a stronger pyramidalization of the amino group, (ii) an in-plane deformation of the pyrimidinone framework, and (iii) an out-of-plane bend at the  $C^6$  atom (see Fig. 1 for the atom numbering). Figure 2 shows the SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ calculated geometries and geometry changes of TMCyt for both amino-keto N1H conformers. The TD-CAM-B3LYP optimized structure has similar out-of-plane deformations, see Fig. S1 in the [supplementary material](#). This is in line with previous results for 1-MCyt,<sup>33</sup> for which both methods predict a substantial deplanarization at the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  state minimum.

### 4. Interconversion between the 1a and 1b isomers

As shown in Table I, three correlated quantum-chemical methods (MP2, CC2, and SCS-MP2) predict the energy difference between conformers **1a** and **1b** to be very small (1–10  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ). At the typical  $T_{vib} = 5$ –7 K in our supersonic jet expansions, the relative population of **1a** and **1b** should thus be within a factor of 2–3. Given the computed adiabatic transition frequencies of 31 534  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for **1a** and 31 483  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for **1b** (see Table II), we should observe two spectra that are mutually shifted by about 50  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . However, the R2PI and UV/UV holeburning spectra discussed below show only a *single* ground-state species. The reason for this is the

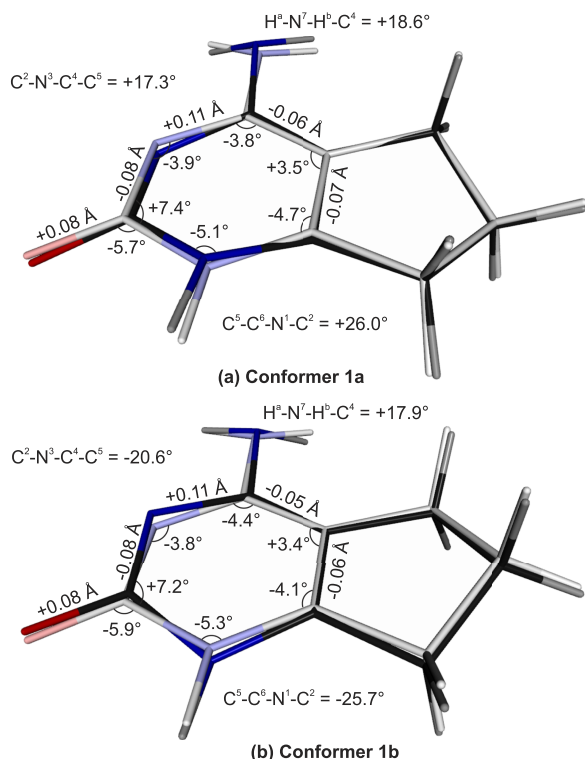


FIG. 2. SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ calculated geometries and geometry changes of amino-keto 5,6-trimethylenecytosine upon  $^1\pi\pi^*$  excitation (ground state is light-colored and the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  state is darker). Bond length changes  $\geq 0.05$  Å and bond angle changes  $\geq 3^\circ$  are indicated.

large-amplitude amino-inversion of TMCyt, which interconverts the conformers **1a** and **1b**.

In the  $S_0$  state, the SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ calculated barrier height between **1a** and **1b** is  $\sim 30$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . We calculated the one-dimensional (1D) inversion potential at the same level by incrementing the  $\text{H-N-C}^4\text{-N}^3$  and  $\text{H-N-C}^4\text{-C}^5$  angles  $\theta_{inv}$  from  $\theta_{inv} = 0^\circ$  by  $5^\circ$  in the positive and negative directions, relaxing all other internal coordinates at every point. The resulting 1D potential is shown in Fig. 3. The inversion eigenfunctions in this potential were calculated by numerically solving the 1D vibrational Schrödinger equation. The

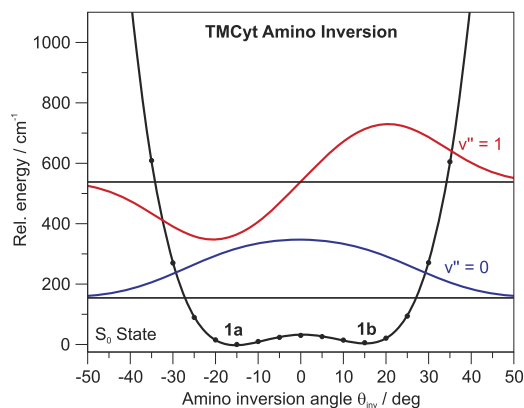


FIG. 3. SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ calculated  $S_0$  state amino inversion potential energy curve of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine plotted along the inversion coordinate  $\theta$ , see the text. The minima correspond to the **1a** and **1b** conformers, which are inequivalent; thus their energies differ by  $\sim 6$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The **1a**  $\rightarrow$  **1b** barrier height is  $30$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The wave functions of the  $v'' = 0$  and  $v'' = 1$  inversion levels are shown in blue and red.

reduced mass  $\mu_{red,\theta}$  was determined by calculating the SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ amino-inversion imaginary normal-mode frequency at  $\theta_{inv} = 0^\circ$ ; the central five points of the inversion potential were taken to represent the harmonic potential at this angle, and  $\mu_{red,\theta}$  for the 1D calculation was fixed such that the calculated normal-mode and 1D frequencies in this harmonic potential were the same. Figure 3 shows that the lowest-energy  $v_{inv} = 0$  level lies  $\sim 130$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the barrier. Its wave function is delocalized over both the **1a** and **1b** geometries with its maximum near planarity ( $\theta_{inv} = 0^\circ$ ). The fact that the vibrational ground state of TMCyt is quasiplanar (delocalized over both **1a** and **1b**) explains why the UV/UV holeburning spectra, discussed in Sec. III B, reflect the presence of a single ground-state species only. The second amino-inversion level  $v_{inv} = 1$  lies  $380$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  higher. It will be collisionally cooled out in the supersonic expansion and will not be considered further.

In the  $S_0$  state, the planar ( $C_s$  symmetric) structure of TMCyt is an index-2 stationary point. Normal-mode analysis at this point yields imaginary frequencies for both the  $\text{NH}_2$  inversion and trimethylene-ring out-of-plane vibrations. The  $S_0$ -state barrier to planarity is  $307$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  at the SCS-CC2 level. In the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  excited state, the barrier to planarity is much higher,  $1297$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Four imaginary frequencies are obtained at the  $C_s$  stationary point.

## B. Experimental results: Two-color resonant two-photon ionization, UV/UV holeburning, and depletion spectra

Figure 4(a) shows a two-color R2PI overview spectrum of jet-cooled TMCyt in the  $31\,300\text{--}38\,500$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  range, recorded with the UV-OPO. The  $0_0^0$  transition of the amino-keto **1a/1b** tautomer is observed at  $31\,510$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . At the  $\sim 5$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  resolution of the UV-OPO, vibronic bands are resolved up to  $+2100$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $0_0^0$  band. The R2PI signal extends up  $4000$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above, but due to the high density of vibronic excitations and the moderate  $\sim 5$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  resolution, the band structure

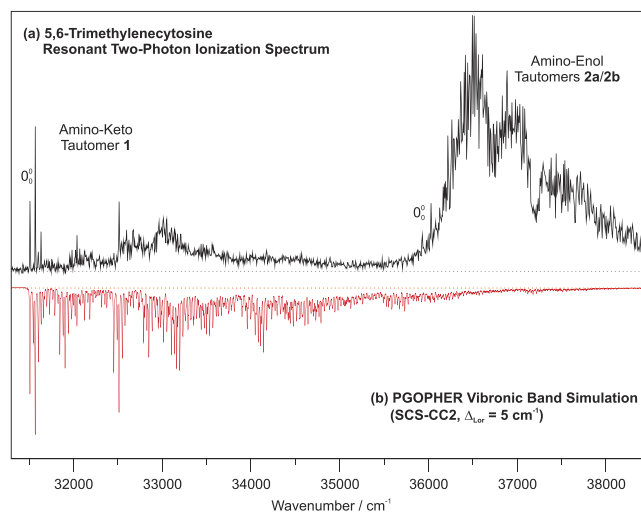


FIG. 4. (a) Two-color resonant two-photon ionization spectrum of jet-cooled TMCyt recorded with an UV-OPO as an excitation laser and (b) simulated vibronic spectra (with PGOPHER, plotted in the negative direction) based on the SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ  $S_0$  and  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state calculations.

is washed out in this range. In Fig. 4(b), we show a PGOPHER vibronic band simulation based on SCS-CC2 structures and normal modes of TMCyt. They are seen to be in qualitative agreement with the R2PI spectrum and will be discussed in more detail in Sec. III F.

Starting at  $35\,930\text{ cm}^{-1}$  or  $4420\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the amino-keto  $0_0^0$  band in Fig. 4(a), further intense narrow-band absorption features are observed. Based on the SCS-CC2 calculations of Sec. III A 2, we assign these to the amino-enol tautomers **2b** predicted at  $34\,508\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and **2a** predicted at  $35\,008\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , see also Table II.

Figure 5(a) shows a higher-resolution 2C-R2PI spectrum of the amino-keto tautomers over the lowest  $1500\text{ cm}^{-1}$  range ( $31\,400\text{--}32\,900\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) using a narrow-band frequency-doubled dye laser for excitation. Because of its  $0.05\text{ cm}^{-1}$  bandwidth, the vibronic bands are much better resolved in this spectrum. Detailed vibronic assignments are given in Sec. III C. A high-resolution UV/UV holeburning spectrum is shown in Fig. 5(b) and was recorded with the burn laser at the intense band at  $0_0^0 + 59\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , marked with an asterisk in Fig. 5(a). It reproduces the 2C-R2PI spectrum in Fig. 5(a) in great detail. From this we conclude that all the observed vibronic bands originate from the ground-state level that gives rise to the transition at  $0_0^0 + 59\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Figure 5(c) shows the corresponding UV/UV depletion spectrum in which the holeburning laser is scanned with the detection laser fixed at the intense  $0_0^0 + 59\text{ cm}^{-1}$  band. The UV/UV depletion spectrum also reproduces the R2PI spectrum, although the signal/noise ratio is lower than that in the UV holeburning spectrum. At  $900\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the electronic origin, the widths of the vibronic bands begin to increase, which indicates the onset of rapid non-radiative processes, see Sec. III F. Although no further bands can be observed in the depletion spectrum above  $+1000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , the signal remains slightly below the baseline, indicating a constant depletion of the ion signal.

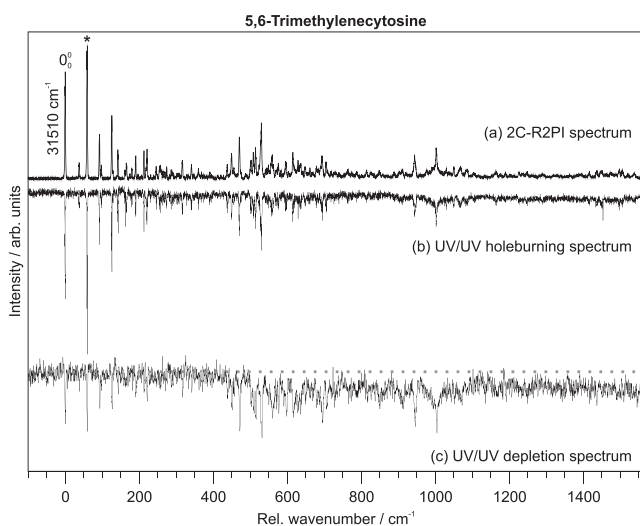


FIG. 5. (a)  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  two-color resonant two-photon ionization spectrum of supersonic-jet cooled amino-keto 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (ionization at 245 nm). (b) UV/UV holeburning spectrum with the holeburning laser at the  $0_0^0 + 59\text{ cm}^{-1}$  band (marked with an asterisk). (c) UV/UV depletion spectrum with the detection laser fixed at the  $0_0^0 + 59\text{ cm}^{-1}$  band. The wavenumber scale is relative to the  $0_0^0$  band at  $31\,510\text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

### C. Vibronic band assignments

We first attempted to assign the vibronic bands in the R2PI spectrum of TMCyt in Fig. 5(a) based on the SCS-CC2, CC2, and TD-B3LYP harmonic frequencies of the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  state given in Table III. The lowest-frequency in-plane vibration is predicted to be  $\nu'_1 = 254\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (SCS-CC2),  $\nu'_1 = 248\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (CC2), or  $\nu'_1 = 262\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (TD-B3LYP); hence, the vibronic bands below  $\sim 250\text{ cm}^{-1}$  must arise from out-of-plane vibrations. Experimentally, the two lowest-frequency bands at  $38\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $59\text{ cm}^{-1}$  cannot belong to the same progression, so we assign these as fundamentals of the lowest-frequency out-of-plane vibrations  $\nu'_1$  and  $\nu'_2$  (that is, as  $1_0^1$  and  $2_0^1$ ). Table III shows that the lowest two frequencies calculated with the SCS-CC2, CC2, and TD-B3LYP methods are two to three times larger. Previous experience with SCS-CC2, CC2, and TD-B3LYP excited-state calculations of cytosine derivatives and pyrimidinones has shown that while the in-plane  $S_1$  state vibrational frequencies are well reproduced, the calculated out-of-plane vibrational frequencies are often 2-3 times higher than that observed experimentally.<sup>6-8,31,33</sup>

For the PGOPHER<sup>44</sup> vibronic band simulations (see Sec. II B), we therefore decreased the out-of-plane frequencies to the experimental values. Figures 6(a)–6(c) show the simulated vibronic bands in red for the 0–420, 420–870, and 870–1320  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  sections of the spectrum and compare these to the high-resolution 2C-R2PI spectrum in black. We first fitted the  $S_1$  state in-plane vibrational frequencies. The SCS-CC2 calculation predicts the lowest four in-plane fundamentals  $\nu'_6$ ,  $\nu'_{11}$ ,  $\nu'_{12}$ , and  $\nu'_{15}$  at 254, 461, 472, and  $618\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , respectively, see Table III. These normal-mode eigenvectors are shown in Fig. 7. The  $\nu'_{11}$  and  $\nu'_{12}$  normal-modes correspond to the  $\nu'_{6a}$  and  $\nu'_{6b}$  in-plane vibrations that are characteristic of the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectra of benzene and its derivatives. We therefore assigned the bands at  $449\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $471\text{ cm}^{-1}$  as  $12_0^1$  and  $11_0^1$ , respectively, see Fig. 6(b); the order of these two vibrations was interchanged to obtain a better fit with the experimental R2PI spectrum. The  $6_0^1$  transition was fitted to the band at  $257\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; its intensity is rather small and it does not contribute further to the spectrum. The band at  $615\text{ cm}^{-1}$  was assigned to the  $15_0^1$  fundamental. The band at  $944\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is assigned as the in-plane fundamental  $\nu'_{23}$ , as the overtone  $1\,1_0^2$  had no intensity, see Fig. 6(c).

We then fitted the out-of-plane vibrations, see Fig. 6(a). The weak band at  $38\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is assigned as the  $\nu'_1$  fundamental. Since the  $\nu'_2$  and  $\nu'_4$  vibrations involve structural changes of the trimethylene ring, see Table III, and hardly appear in the simulation, the intense  $59\text{ cm}^{-1}$  band is assigned as the  $3_0^1$  “butterfly” vibrational fundamental. The  $3_0^2$  overtone was fitted to the band at  $126\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The fundamentals of  $\nu'_5$  and  $\nu'_7$  were fitted to the bands at  $93\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $221\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. The out-of-plane normal-mode eigenvectors  $\nu'_1$ ,  $\nu'_3$ ,  $\nu'_5$ , and  $\nu'_7$  are shown in Fig. 8. Note that the SCS-CC2, CC2, and TD-B3LYP harmonic frequencies in Table III differ from the fitted frequencies (Table IV) by a factor of 2–3, indicating that the  $S_1$  state potential-energy surface is much flatter and more anharmonic along these coordinates than that predicted by the excited-state calculations.

TABLE III. CC2, TD-B3LYP, and SCS-CC2 calculated normal-modes and wavenumbers (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) for the lowest  $^1\pi\pi^*$  excited state of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine.

Irrep. <sup>a</sup>	Description <sup>b</sup>	Conformer <b>1a</b>			Conformer <b>1b</b>			Expt.
		CC2 aVDZ	B3LYP TZVP	SCS-CC2 aVDZ	CC2 aVDZ	B3LYP TZVP	SCS-CC2 aVDZ	
$\nu_1$	$a''$ Boat	90.9	95.7	76.6	91.7	108.3	67.3	37.6
$\nu_2$	$a''$ Pyrimidine/five-ring twist	120.1	122.7	119.8	119.8	136.6	120.9	
$\nu_3$	$a''$ Butterfly	157.8	170.5	146.6	156.2	212.8	145.9	59.2
$\nu_4$	$a''$ $\gamma\text{N}_1$ /five-ring planarization	212.1	203.2	191.1	212.0	221.9	186.2	
$\nu_5$	$a''$ $\gamma_{as}\text{NH}_2/\delta\text{C}_2\text{O}$	319.4	373.2	232.6	323.6	471.4	224.1	92.4
$\nu_6$	$a'$ $\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2/\beta_{as}$ five-ring	247.7	261.5	253.8	246.8	270.1	248.9	256.7
$\nu_7$	$a''$ $\gamma_{as}\text{NH}_2/\gamma\text{C}_6$	326.5	403.6	288.0	270.2	448.6	274.9	221.0
$\nu_8$	$a''$ $\gamma_s\text{NH}_2/\gamma\text{C}_5/\gamma\text{C}_6$	367.5	343.1	336.1	327.6	372.0	345.1	
$\nu_9$	$a''$ $\gamma\text{N}_1\text{H}/\gamma\text{C}_4/\gamma_s\text{NH}_2$	528.6	625.5	352.8	550.6	722.3	357.7	
$\nu_{10}$	$a''$ $\gamma\text{N}_1/\gamma_{as}\text{NH}_2$	269.2	301.8	434.7	377.6	287.6	425.2	
$\nu_{11}$	$a'$ 6a	455.3	473.2	461.4	454.8	471.4	466.4	470.5
$\nu_{12}$	$a'$ 6b/ $\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\delta\text{C}_2\text{O}$	469.1	497.2	471.5	470.2	536.7	453.9	449.3
$\nu_{13}$	$a''$ $\gamma\text{N}_1\text{H}$	495.5	538.4	504.9	502.6	645.2/600.7	500.2	501.8
$\nu_{14}$	$a''$ 6b $?$ / $\gamma_s\text{NH}_2/\gamma\text{N}_1\text{H}/\gamma\text{C}_4/\gamma\text{C}_5$	559.1	579.5	553.0	532.1	579.9	552.0	
$\nu_{15}$	$a'$ 3/ $\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}$	603.2	640.2	617.7	603.0	640.9	618.0	615.1
$\nu_{16}$	$a''$ $\gamma\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\gamma_s\text{NH}_2$	628.5	670.1	636.5	633.2	680.6	639.9	
$\nu_{17}$	$a''$ 5	676.1	744.6	668.2	673.8	769.8	665.7	
$\nu_{18}$	$a''$ $\text{NH}_2$ inversion	649.1	483.7	691.3	647.6	532.7	700.5	
$\nu_{19}$	$a'$ $\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\delta\text{N}_1\text{C}_2\text{N}_3/\nu\text{C}_2\text{O}$	742.2	777.0	736.6	743.2	781.1	740.3	
$\nu_{20}$	$a'$ $\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\nu\text{N}_1\text{C}_2/\nu\text{N}_3\text{C}_4/\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2$	1056.6	1090.9	771.1	1055.6		770.6	
$\nu_{21}$	$a''$ Five-ring stretch/ $\gamma\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_8\text{H}_2$	846.7	847.5	847.9	845.6	848.0	847.7	
$\nu_{22}$	$a'$ $\gamma\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta\text{C}_8\text{H}_2$ shear/ $\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2/\nu\text{N}_3\text{C}_4$	879.8	883.4	868.0	882.5	905.1	866.6	
$\nu_{23}$	$a'$ $\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2/\delta\text{N}_1\text{C}_2\text{N}_3/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}$	858.4	926.1	901.8	858.1	888.7	900.2	944.4
$\nu_{24}$	$a'$ Five-ring stretch/ $\nu\text{C}_2\text{O}$	913.1	901.2	912.9	912.5	925.0	912.4	
$\nu_{25}$	$a'$ $\delta\text{C}_8/\delta\text{C}_8\text{H}/\text{five-ring deformation (as)}$	1006.1	997.1	999.6	1006.2	1000.8	999.2	
$\nu_{26}$	$a''$ Five-ring planar./ $\gamma\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta\text{C}_6\text{N}_1\text{C}_2$	1033.7	1058.6	1025.0	1032.6	1073.0	1027.3	
$\nu_{27}$	$a''$ Five-ring planar./ $\gamma\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\gamma\text{C}_9\text{H}_2$	1030.1	1052.1	1034.0	1031.9	1065.4	1033.9	
$\nu_{28}$	$a'$ $\nu\text{C}_2\text{O}/\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2/\delta\text{C}_7\text{C}_8\text{C}_9$	919.4	1105.9	1058.5	918.4	1092.4	1056.6	
$\nu_{29}$	$a'$ $\delta\text{C}_7\text{H}_2$ shear/ $\delta\text{C}_8\text{H}_2$ shear/ $\delta\text{C}_9\text{H}_2$ shear	1113.8	1135.6	1119.2	1114.2	1171.6	1119.3	
$\nu_{30}$	$a'$ $\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\delta\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\delta_s\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta_{as}\text{C}_8\text{H}_2$	1176.8	1210.9	1184.0	1176.5	1213.5	1183.2	
$\nu_{31}$	$a'$ $\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\delta\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\delta\text{C}_9\text{H}_2$	1185.4	1196.8	1194.1	1183.8	1193.3	1192.0	
$\nu_{32}$	$a'$ $\delta_{as}\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\delta_{as}\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\delta_{as}\text{C}_9\text{H}_2$	1216.8	1230.0	1223.8	1218.5	1234.6	1224.9	
$\nu_{33}$	$a'$ $\nu\text{N}_1\text{C}_6/\delta\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\delta\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}$	1231.8	1268.4	1233.3	1232.4	1155.7	1237.7	
$\nu_{34}$	$a'$ $\delta_s\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\delta_s\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\nu\text{C}_6\text{NH}_2$	1325.8	1362.7	1273.1	1325.9	1360.4	1274.6	
$\nu_{35}$	$a'$ $\delta_s\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta_{as}\text{C}_8\text{H}_2/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}$	1284.5	1313.4	1291.6	1284.5		1291.5	
$\nu_{36}$	$a'$ $\delta_s\text{C}_7\text{H}_2/\beta_{as}\text{NH}_2$	1273.0	1299.8	1315.4	1272.2	1295.9	1313.8	
$\nu_{37}$	$a'$ $\delta_s\text{C}_8\text{H}_a$	1311.6	1335.7	1328.0	1311.9		1326.7	
$\nu_{38}$	$a'$ $\nu\text{N}_1\text{C}_2/\nu\text{C}_5\text{C}_6/\delta\text{N}_1\text{H}/\delta\text{C}_9\text{H}_2/\delta\text{C}_7\text{H}_2$	1393.8	1465.7	1392.1	1395.2	1180.8	1401.2	

<sup>a</sup>Irreducible representation in the  $C_s$  point group.<sup>b</sup>Based on SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ eigenvectors;  $\nu$  = stretching vibration;  $\delta$  = in-plane bending vibration;  $\gamma$  = out-of-plane bending vibration;  $\beta_s$  = scissoring vibration;  $\beta_{as}$  = in-plane rocking vibration;  $\gamma_s$  = out-of-plane wagging vibration;  $\gamma_{as}$  = torsion vibration.

#### D. Photoionization efficiency curves

Figure 9 shows the photoionization efficiency (PIE) curves of the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state, which were recorded at 0 ns delay of the ionization laser, and of a long-lived state, which was recorded at 50 ns delay. The PIE curve of the long-lived state shown in Fig. 9 is scaled according to the relative signal heights discussed in Sec. III E, where the  $T_1$  ion signal reaches 25% of the  $S_1$  signal when ionizing at 225 nm.

The PIE curve of the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state in Fig. 9 exhibits a step-like ionization threshold at  $33\,930 \pm 20 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , indicating that the geometry change between the  $v' = 0$  level of the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state and the TMCyt<sup>+</sup> ion ground state  $D_0$  is small. The Franck-Condon factor for adiabatic ionization

from the  $S_1$  state is sufficiently large, so the adiabatic ionization energy (AIE) threshold can be observed. The sum of the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1 0_0^0$  excitation energy of  $31\,510 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and the PIE threshold in Fig. 9 is  $65\,440 \pm 20 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , giving an AIE =  $8.114 \pm 0.002 \text{ eV}$ . The SCS-CC2 calculated AIE = 8.18 eV of tautomer **1a** is in good agreement with this value (see Table II).

The delayed-ionization PIE curve of the long-lived state shown in Fig. 9(b) is relatively noisy; since the UV spectrum of the TMCyt amino-enol forms begins around  $\sim 36\,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , this contribution to the signal had to be subtracted. The PIE curve exhibits a gradual signal onset at  $40\,320 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  followed by a slow rise. We interpret the long-lived state as the lowest triplet state  $T_1$  and this slow onset as



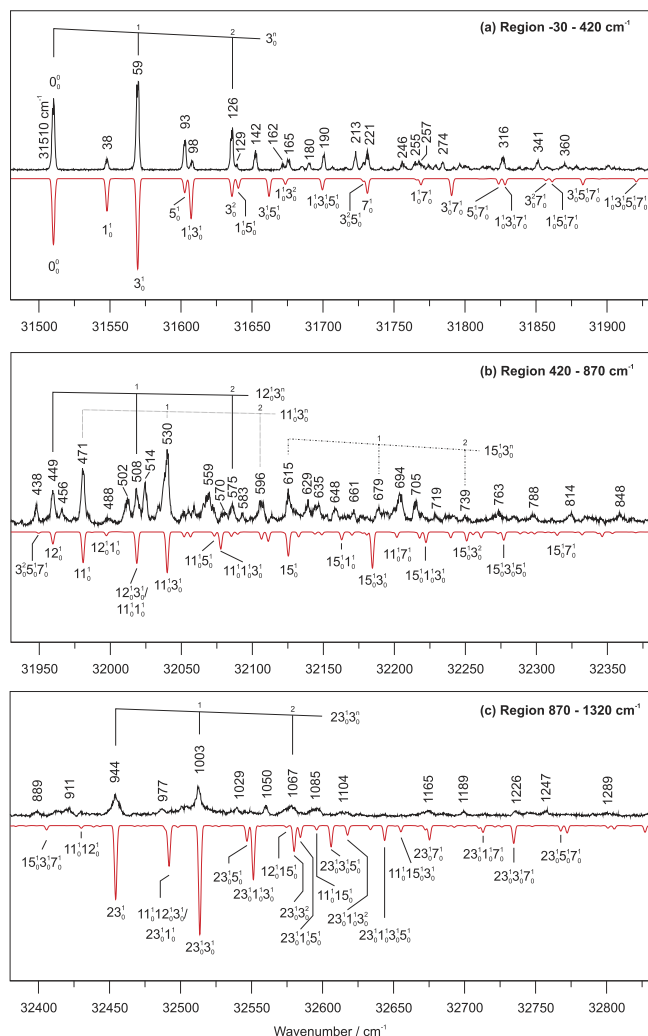


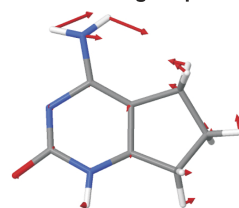
FIG. 6. 2C-R2PI spectrum of jet-cooled TMCyt (upper traces, in black) and PGOPHER simulated vibronic spectrum (lower red traces, plotted in the negative direction) for (a) the region  $-30$ – $420$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , (b) the region  $420$ – $870$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  (enhanced by factor 2), and (c) the region  $870$ – $1320$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  (enhanced by factor 1.5). For details of the PGOPHER simulation see Fig. 4.

photoionization of the hot vibrational levels of  $T_1$  that are formed by  $S_1 \rightsquigarrow T_1$  intersystem crossing (ISC); the  $S_1 \leftrightarrow T_1$  energy difference is converted to vibrational energy of the  $T_1$  state during the ISC process. The signal onset at  $40\,320$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  is thus interpreted as the lower limit to the AIE of the  $T_1$  state. The upper limit to the AIE is estimated by back-extrapolation of the linear part of the PIE curve to the zero-signal line at  $41\,400$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Subtracting these two values from the AIE of the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state ( $65\,440 \pm 20$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) places the  $T_1$  state between  $24\,020$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and  $25\,140$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $S_0$  ground state. The SCS-CC2 calculations (see Table II) support this assignment; the calculated adiabatic  $T_1$  state adiabatic energy is  $\sim 27\,800$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , whereas the alternative of a dark  $^1n\sigma\pi^*$  state can be discarded because its estimated energy is much higher,  $37\,597$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , see Table II.

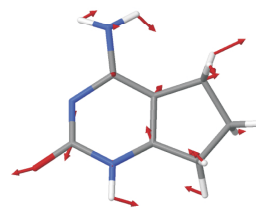
### E. ns pump/ionization delay scan measurements and nonradiative kinetics

We measured the excited-state lifetime and nonradiative kinetics of TMCyt using ns laser pump/delayed ionization measurements by ionizing at  $225$  nm. The convolution of the

### SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ



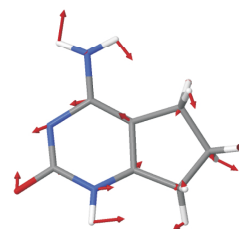
(a)  $\nu'_6 = 253.8$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$



(b)  $\nu'_{11} = 461.4$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$



(c)  $\nu'_{12} = 471.5$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$



(d)  $\nu'_{15} = 617.7$   $\text{cm}^{-1}$

FIG. 7. SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ normal-mode eigenvectors of the four lowest-frequency  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  in-plane vibrations of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine.

pulse widths of the pump and ionization laser yields a Gaussian instrument response function (IRF) with a full width at half-maximum (FWHM) of  $4.2$  ns. We modeled the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state kinetics as

$$\frac{d[S_1]}{dt} = -(k_{rad}^{S_1} + k_{IC}^{S_1} + k_{ISC}^{S_1}) \cdot [S_1], \quad (1)$$

where  $k_{rad}$  is the  $S_1 \rightarrow S_0$  radiative decay rate. The SCS-CC2 calculated oscillator strength of TMCyt is  $f_{el} = 0.0918$ , giving  $\tau_{rad} \sim 12$  ns or  $k_{rad} = 8.3 \cdot 10^7$   $\text{s}^{-1}$ . This value is in good agreement with the  $\tau_{rad} = 13$  ns that Zgierski *et al.* estimated from the integrated  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  absorption spectrum of TMCyt in aqueous solution.<sup>26</sup> The  $S_1$  state is assumed to decay nonradiatively to  $S_0$  by internal conversion (IC) with the rate constant  $k_{IC}^{S_1}$  and by intersystem crossing (ISC) to the  $T_1$  state with the rate constant  $k_{ISC}^{S_1}$ .  $T_1$  is assumed to relax to  $S_0$  by  $T_1 \rightsquigarrow S_0$  reverse ISC and also by phosphorescence; these two pathways are combined into a single rate constant  $k_T$ ,

$$\frac{d[T_1]}{dt} = k_{ISC}^{S_1} \cdot [S_1] - k_T \cdot [T_1]. \quad (2)$$

## SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ

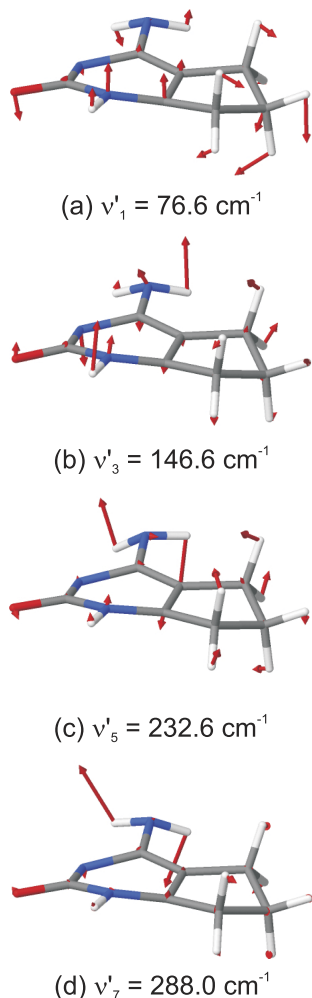


FIG. 8. SCS-CC2/aug-cc-pVDZ normal-mode eigenvectors of the  $S_1(^1\pi\pi^*)$  state out-of-plane modes of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine.

However,  $k_T$  is very low ( $<5 \cdot 10^6 \text{ s}$ ) and we cannot determine it by delay measurements on the  $\sim 50 \text{ ns}$  time scale, so it is set to zero. The simulated time-dependent concentrations  $[S_1]$  and  $[T_1]$  were convoluted with the IRF and were least-squares fitted to the experimental pump/ionization signal traces.

Note that because of the 4.2 ns width of the IRF, which is similar to the inverse of the  $k_{IC}$  and  $k_{ISC}$  rate constants, the ratio of the ionization efficiencies of molecules in the  $S_1$  and  $T_1$  states,  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1)$ , can only be estimated within certain limits discussed below. If the width of the two laser pulses was significantly shorter than the inverse of the  $k_{IC}$  and  $k_{ISC}$  rates, then the experimental pump/ionization transient would exhibit a much more intense  $S_1$  signal that would peak close to 100% on the scale as shown in Fig. 10, and the observed  $S_1:T_1$  signal ratio would be correspondingly larger.

In Figs. 10(a)–10(c), we show the experimental pump/ionization transient with excitation at the  $0_0^0$  band and ionization at 225 nm, marked by a dashed vertical line in Fig. 9. This transient is fitted for three different assumptions for the ionization efficiency ratio  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1)$ . In Fig. 10(a), we assume  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 1$ , giving the nonradiative rate constants  $k_{IC} = 2.2 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $k_{ISC} = 4.1 \cdot 10^7 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . Note, however, that this ratio is unrealistically low since ionization

TABLE IV. Experimental  $^1\pi\pi^*$  state vibrational wavenumbers of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (in  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) measured by 2C-R2PI spectroscopy.

Assignment	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency		
Region I		Region II	Region III		
$0_0^0$	(31 510.2)	$\nu'_{12}$	449.3	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_{12}$	919.8
$\nu'_1$	37.7	$\nu'_{11}$	470.6	$\nu'_{23}$	944.4
$\nu'_3$	59.3	$\nu'_{12} + \nu'_1$	488.2	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_{12} + \nu'_3$	976.5
$\nu'_5$	92.5			$\nu'_{23} + \nu'_3$	1002.5
$\nu'_1 + \nu'_3$	97.7	$\nu'_{12} + \nu'_3$	508.0		
$2\nu'_2$	125.7	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_1$	514.1	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_{12} + 2\nu'_3$	1049.7
$\nu'_1 + \nu'_5$	128.7	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_3$	529.6	$\nu'_{23} + 2\nu'_3$	1067.1
$\nu'_3 + \nu'_5$	142.4			$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_{15}$	1085.1
$\nu'_1 + 2\nu'_3$	165.4	$\nu'_{12} + 2\nu'_3$	575.6	$\nu'_{23} + \nu'_7$	1164.5
$\nu'_1 + \nu'_3 + \nu'_5$	190.3	$\nu'_{11} + 2\nu'_3$	596.0	$\nu'_{23} + \nu'_3 + \nu'_7$	1225.6
?	212.7	$\nu'_{15}$	615.1	$\nu'_{12} + \nu'_{23}$	1392.5
$2\nu'_3 + \nu'_5$	218.4			$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_{23}$	1415.8
$\nu'_7$	221.0	$\nu'_{15} + \nu'_3$	678.7	$\nu'_{12} + \nu'_{23} + \nu'_1$	1436.0
$\nu'_3 + \nu'_7$	274.1	$\nu'_{11} + \nu'_7$	693.9		1447.0
		$\nu'_{15} + 2\nu'_3$	739.4		1473.8

at 225 nm is  $10\,000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the  $S_1$  ionization threshold but only  $2700 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the  $T_1$  ionization threshold. For the fit in Fig. 10(b), we assume that the ionization efficiency ratio  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 4$ , which is the *apparent* experimental ratio between the  $S_1$  and  $T_1$  ion signals at 225 nm shown

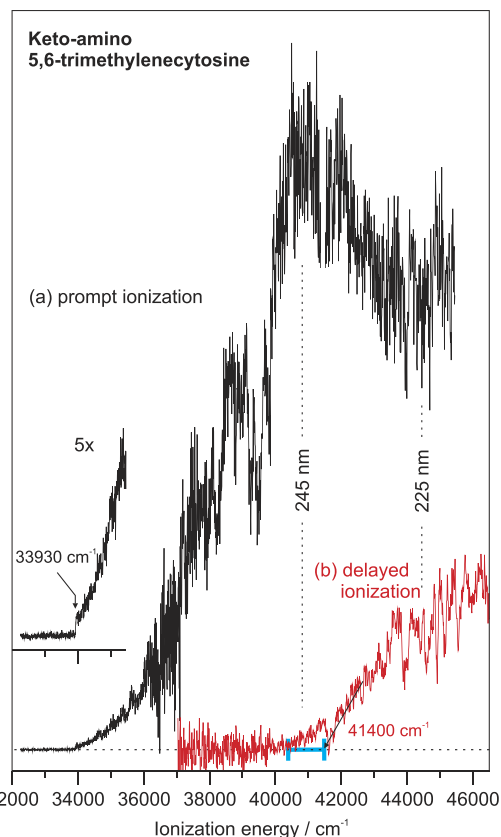


FIG. 9. Photoionization efficiency curves of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine following excitation at the  $S_1 0_0^0$  band (a) with prompt ionization (0 ns delay); the step-like adiabatic photoionization threshold is shown in the inset (5x). (b) PIE curve with the ionization laser delayed by 50 ns, relative to the excitation. The uncertainty of the  $T_1$  photoionization threshold is indicated with a blue bar.

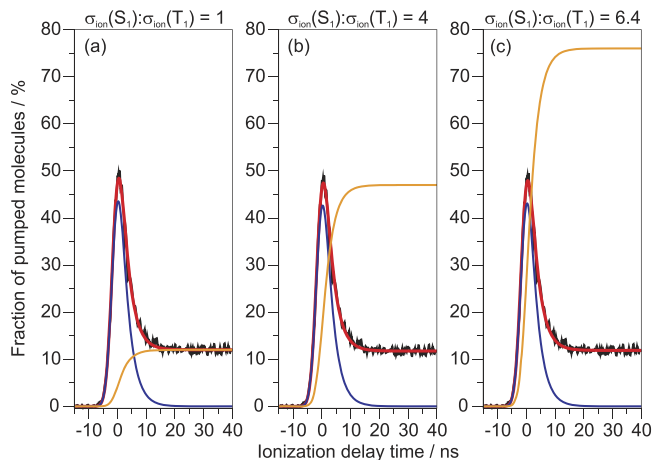


FIG. 10. ns laser excitation/delayed ionization lifetime measurements of TMCyt (in black). Excitation at the  $0_0^0$  band, ionization at 225 nm. The kinetic fits assume that the ratios of  $S_1$  and  $T_1$  ionization cross sections are (a) 1:1, (b) 4:1, and (c) 6.4:1, for details see the text. The  $S_1$  state signal contribution is plotted in blue and that of the  $T_1$  state is in yellow; the fit of the total ion signal is in red.

in Fig. 9 and between the ion signals at 0 ns delay and 40 ns delay shown in Fig. 10. This fit gives the nonradiative rate constants  $k_{IC} = 9.8 \cdot 10^7 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $k_{ISC} = 1.6 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . If—as the other limiting case—we assume  $k_{IC}$  to be zero and fit  $k_{ISC}$  and the  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1)$  ratio, we obtain the fit curves shown in Fig. 10(c). The resulting  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 6.4$  is the maximum possible ratio, and the fitted  $k_{ISC} = 2.6 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$  is an upper limit for the ISC rate.

These IC and ISC rate constants of TMCyt can be compared to those of 1-MCyt, which are  $k_{IC} = 2 \cdot 10^9 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and  $k_{ISC} = 2 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$  near the  $S_1(v' = 0)$  level.<sup>33</sup> The main difference lies in the decrease of  $k_{IC}$  by a factor of 10–20. The ISC rate constant probably changes little upon rigidization of the pyrimidinone, but the uncertainty is large. Thus the increase in excited-state lifetime at the  $0_0^0$  band upon clamping the  $C^5-C^6$  bond originates mainly from the decrease of the IC rate.

The pump/ionization transients were also measured at an ionization wavelength of 245 nm, which is the same wavelength as used to record the 2C-R2PI spectra. The measured  $0_0^0$  band transient was well fitted with the three sets of  $k_{IC}$  and  $k_{ISC}$  constants that correspond to Figs. 10(a)–10(c). However, Fig. 9 shows that ionization of the  $T_1$  state at 245 nm is very inefficient; thus, the  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1)$  ratio was re-fitted and is 15.5 times larger than that for ionization at 225 nm. These fits are shown in Figs. S3(a)–S3(c) of the [supplementary material](#). ns pump/ionization transients were also measured for the bands at  $0_0^0 + 530$ ,  $0_0^0 + 1174$ , and  $0_0^0 + 1646 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , but only with ionization at 245 nm, see Figs. S3(d)–S3(f) of the [supplementary material](#). These transients were fitted with a fixed  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 15.5$ , which corresponds to assuming  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 1$  and  $T_1$  states at 225 nm. All fitted  $k_{IC}$  and  $k_{ISC}$  values assuming  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1) = 1$  at 225 nm are collected in Table V.

Summarizing, one sees that although the ns time resolution of the pump/ionization transient measurement and the unknown ratio  $\sigma_{ion}(S_1):\sigma_{ion}(T_1)$  lead to considerable uncertainty,  $k_{IC}$  is determined within a factor of 2.5 between  $k_{IC} = 9.8 \cdot 10^7$  and  $2.2 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . Similarly, the limits of the

TABLE V. Internal conversion (IC) and intersystem crossing (ISC) rate constants, decay lifetimes, fluorescence quantum yields  $\Phi_{fl}$ , and ISC quantum yields  $\Phi_{ISC}$ , from fits to the ns excitation/ionization transients in Fig. 10 and Fig. S3 of the [supplementary material](#), assuming the relative ionization efficiencies of the  $S_1$  and  $T_1$  states at 225 nm to be equal.

Band ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ )	$k_{IC}/10^8$ ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )	$k_{ISC}/10^7$ ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ )	Lifetime $\tau >$ (ns)	$\Phi_{fl}$	$\Phi_{ISC}$
$0_0^0$	2.2	4.1	$2.9 \pm 0.2$	0.24	0.12
+530	3.4	6.6	$2.0 \pm 0.3$	0.17	0.13
+1174	4.6	9.4	$1.6 \pm 0.2$	0.13	0.15
+1646	12	12	$0.7 \pm 0.4$	0.06	0.09

ISC rate constant are determined within a factor of four as  $k_{ISC} = 4.1 \cdot 10^7$  to  $1.6 \cdot 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . For all three fits, the lifetime at the  $0_0^0$  band is  $\tau = 2.9 \text{ ns}$ . Given the calculated radiative rate constant  $k_{rad} = 8.3 \cdot 10^7 \text{ s}^{-1}$  and that  $\tau = 1/(k_{rad} + k_{ISC} + k_{IC})$ , one finds that the fluorescence quantum yield of TMCyt is  $\Phi_{fl} = 24\%$ . This value does not depend on the exact  $k_{IC}$  and  $k_{ISC}$  rate constants. For TMCyt in room-temperature aqueous solution, Zgierski *et al.* determined  $\Phi_{fl} \sim 10\%$  from the lifetime of  $\tau = 1.2 \text{ ns}$ .<sup>26</sup> The fact that the fluorescence quantum yield at room temperature is lower than that at the low temperature in the supersonic jet is very reasonable and to be expected from the increase of  $k_{IC}$  with increasing vibrational energy, as is documented in Table V.

## F. The $S_1 \leftrightarrow S_0$ conical intersections

In contrast to the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  vibronic spectra of Cyt and its derivatives 1-MCyt, 5-MCyt, and 5-FCyt,<sup>6–8,33</sup> which exhibit sharp break-offs at 450–1200  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $0_0^0$  bands, indicating the onset of an ultrafast process, the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  2C-R2PI spectrum of TMCyt **1a/1b** extends up to 4400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  above the  $0_0^0$  band and does not show a spectral break-off. The vibronic bands either merge or become diffuse at  $\sim 2100 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the  $0_0^0$  band of the amino-keto tautomer. To investigate the reason for the broadening, we modeled the complete vibronic spectrum for TMCyt using PGOPHER 8.0,<sup>44</sup> the simulated spectrum is shown in Fig. 4(b). In addition to the nine optically active vibrational modes  $\nu'_1, \nu'_3, \nu'_5, \nu'_7, \nu'_6, \nu'_{11}, \nu'_{12}, \nu'_{15}$ , and  $\nu'_{23}$  that were employed for the simulation in Fig. 6 in Sec. III C, we included the fundamental excitations of all vibrations with calculated Franck-Condon factors  $>15\%$  of the  $0_0^0$  band. These are the in-plane vibrations  $\nu'_{33}, \nu'_{39}, \nu'_{43}, \nu'_{44}$ , and  $\nu'_{45}$ , and the  $\nu'_8$  out-of-plane vibration. These frequencies were *not* fitted to experimental transitions but were taken from the SCS-CC2 calculations. The overtones and combination tones of these six vibrations could not be included because of the limited array sizes of PGOPHER.

A Gaussian line shape with a FWHM of 5  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  was employed, reflecting the bandwidth of the UV-OPO. When setting the Lorentzian linewidth contribution  $\Delta_{Lor}$  to zero, the simulated spectrum exhibits resolved vibronic bands up to +4400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . If we include a Lorentzian linewidth contribution  $\Delta_{Lor} = 5 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  in the simulation, which corresponds to a lifetime of 1 ps, we see in Fig. 4(b) that the bands broaden and merge into a semi-continuous background that is similar to the experimental spectrum in Fig. 4(a). This suggests

that the broadening of the spectrum at excess energies above  $+2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$  does not reflect just spectral congestion but arises from a decrease in the excited-state lifetime.

To account for the additional broadening observed in the experimental spectrum, we have calculated the two most energetically favorable excited-state decay paths that are analogous to those for cytosine and 1-MCyt.<sup>10,16,18,19,46–49</sup> According to expectations and in line with the calculations of Zgierski *et al.*,<sup>26</sup> the access to the ethylene-type intersection is hindered by the trimethylene modification. The calculated energy of the  $(Eth)_X$  CI is approximately  $6800\text{ cm}^{-1}$  relative to the  $0_0^0$  transition. The path from  ${}^1\pi\pi^*_{Min}$  to that CI has a sloped topology, and the barrier for the decay is given by the energy of the CI itself, see Fig. S2 in the [supplementary material](#).

The energetically favored decay path involves out-of-plane deformation of  $N^3$  and the amino group. The calculated energy profile along this path is shown in Fig. 11. The path leads from the  $S_1({}^1\pi\pi^*_{Min})$  structure through a transition state (TS) to a second minimum,  $(OP)_{Min}$ , which is similar to that previously characterized for Cyt and 1-MCyt.<sup>10,16,18,19,46–49</sup> The MS-CASPT2 barrier over the TS is  $1935\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , and the energy of  $(OP)_{Min}$  relative to  ${}^1\pi\pi^*_{Min}$  is  $1056\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The decay path leads further to the  $(OP)_X$  CI, which has a relative energy of approximately  $4300\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The  $(OP)_{Min}$  and  $(OP)_X$  structures are characterized by a large out-of-plane bending of  $N^3$ , with a  $C^2-N^3-C^4-C^5$  angle of  $60.1^\circ$  and  $58.2^\circ$ , respectively. The ring puckering and out-of-plane bending of the amino group also increase from  $(OP)_{Min}$  to  $(OP)_X$  (see the  $O^8-C^2-N^1-C^6$  and  $N^7-C^4-C^5-C^6$  angles in Fig. 12), which is consistent with the decay path where  $(OP)_{Min}$  lies before the  $(OP)_X$  CI.

The fact that broadening of the vibronic bands in the R2PI spectrum sets in at around  $\sim 2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , but a semi-continuous spectrum continues up to  $4400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the electronic origin, is in qualitative agreement with the calculated decay path topology. We interpret the additional broadening beyond  $\sim 2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$  due to the coupling between the vibrations belonging to the  $S_1(\pi\pi^*)$ - and the  $OP_{Min}$ -minima below the barrier. The density of vibronic states belonging to both minima rises enormously when the energy exceeds this barrier (MS-CASPT2 barrier  $1935\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ). The

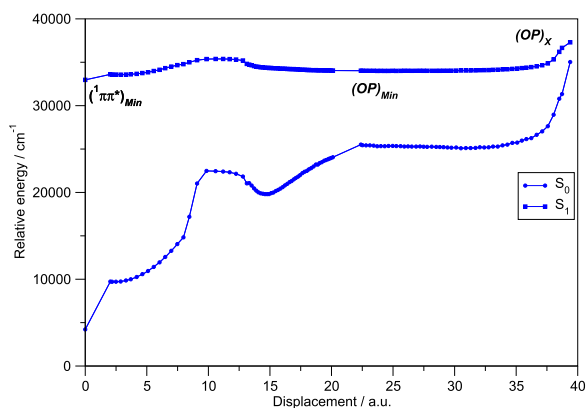


FIG. 11. MS-CASPT2 energy profile of the  $S_0$  and  $S_1$  singlet states along the CASSCF optimized paths for radiationless decay on  $S_1$  from  $({}^1\pi\pi^*)_{Min}$  to  $(OP)_X$  through  $(OP)_{Min}$ . Blue squares:  $S_1$ ; blue dots:  $S_0$ .

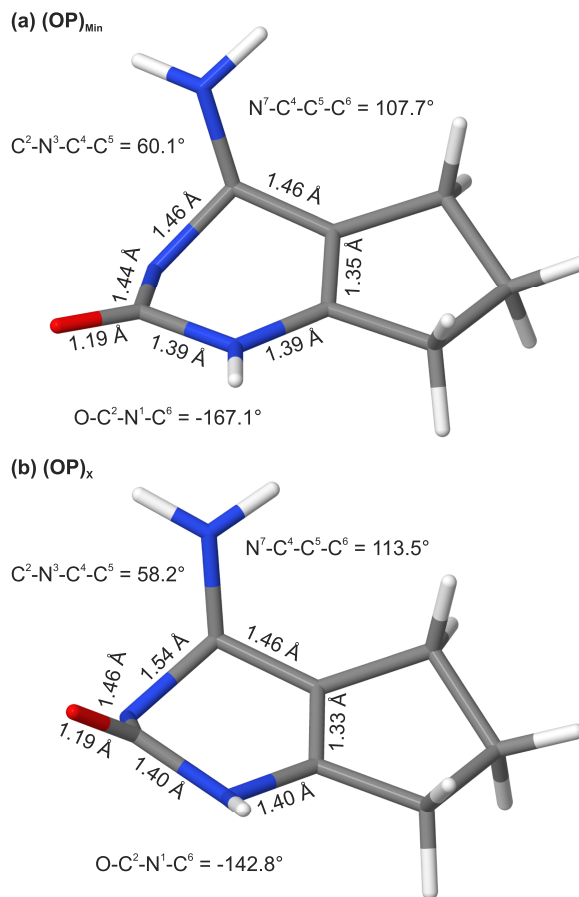


FIG. 12. (a) Structure of the  $(OP)_{Min}$  minimum in the  $S_1$  energy surface of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine. (b) Structure of the  $(OP)_X$  conical intersection.

semi-continuous spectrum that reaches up to at least  $4400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is also in good agreement with the calculated CI at  $4300\text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

We have measured the UV vibronic spectra of jet-cooled amino-keto 5,6-trimethylenecytosine (TMCyt) using two-color resonant two-photon ionization, UV/UV holeburning, and depletion spectroscopies. The  $0_0^0$  band is identified at  $31510\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The lowest  $400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  of the  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectrum is dominated by fundamentals, overtone excitations, and combination bands of four out-of-plane vibrations. Based on the energetic sequence of the SCS-CC2 calculated vibrational frequencies and on their predicted Franck-Condon factors, we assign these as  $\nu'_1$ ,  $\nu'_3$ ,  $\nu'_5$ , and  $\nu'_7$ . Similar to the spectra of cytosine, 5-methylcytosine, and 5-fluorocytosine,<sup>6–8</sup> the longest vibronic progression is observed for the butterfly vibration  $\nu'_3$ . Combination progressions in  $\nu'_3$  are also built on the in-plane vibrational fundamentals  $\nu'_{11}$ ,  $\nu'_{12}$ ,  $\nu'_{15}$ , and  $\nu'_{23}$ . In contrast to unsubstituted cytosine, whose  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectrum breaks off above  $\sim 500\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , the R2PI spectrum of TMCyt extends to  $\sim 4400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above, with more than 100 resolved vibronic bands. This is the most extended  $S_0 \rightarrow S_1$  spectrum of any cytosine derivative measured so far. We have also observed the R2PI spectra of the amino-enol tautomers **2a** and **2b** starting at  $\sim 36000\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , but these will be discussed elsewhere.

Sharp vibronic bands can be observed up to  $+2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the  $0_0^0$  band. Hence, bridging of the  $\text{C}^5\text{-C}^6$  bond with the trimethylene ring strongly raises the barrier to the ethylene-type ( $\text{Eth}$ )<sub>X</sub> conical intersection. Above  $+2100\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , a semi-continuous R2PI spectrum is observed up to at least  $+4400\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . The vibronic band simulation performed with the PGOPHER program<sup>44</sup> nicely reproduces the vibronic band structure and intensities of the R2PI spectrum up to  $+1320\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . Towards higher frequencies, the simulations predict resolved vibronic transitions, whereas in the R2PI spectrum, an increased density of bands leads to an intense continuous signal.

From a mechanistic perspective, our computational work shows that, by blocking the twist of the  $\text{C}^5\text{-C}^6$  bond, we not only change the energetically favored decay path but also the topology. In Cyt and 1-MCyt, the decay path leads from the  $^1\pi\pi^*$  minimum via a TS to the ethylene-type ( $\text{Eth}$ )<sub>X</sub> CI. The CI can be reached as soon as enough energy is available to go over the TS, and this is observed as a sharp break-off of the R2PI spectrum above  $\sim 500\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in these systems. In contrast, in TMCyt, the lowest CI is the amino out-of-plane bend ( $\text{OP}$ )<sub>X</sub> and the ( $\text{Eth}$ )<sub>X</sub> CI is raised  $\sim 6800\text{ cm}^{-1}$  above the  $S_1$  vibrationless level. The path to ( $\text{OP}$ )<sub>X</sub> involves an additional minimum that lies before the intersection. As a consequence, the R2PI spectrum does not completely break off when enough energy is available to go over the TS. This suggests that the broad, shapeless spectral region between  $2100$  and  $4300\text{ cm}^{-1}$  is a signature of the calculated topology.

The excited-state lifetime of amino-keto TMCyt at the  $0_0^0$  band is  $\tau = 2.9\text{ ns}$ , which is a fourfold increase relative to that of cytosine at its  $0_0^0$  band. Additionally, the lifetime  $\tau$  drops off much more slowly with increasing vibrational excess energy, being  $\tau = 1.6\text{ ns}$  even at a vibrational excess energy  $E_{exc} = 1174\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . From the calculated  $S_1$  state radiative lifetime and experimental lifetime  $\tau$ , we infer that the fluorescence quantum yield at the  $v' = 0$  level is  $\Phi_{fl} = 24\%$ , which makes TMCyt the strongest fluorescing cytosine derivative in the gas phase known to date.  $\Phi_{fl}$  drops to  $\sim 6\%$  at  $E_{exc} = 1646\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . These fluorescence lifetimes and quantum yields are in qualitative agreement with the  $\tau = 1.2\text{ ns}$  and  $\Phi_{fl} \sim 10\%$  values that Zgierski *et al.* determined for TMCyt in room-temperature aqueous solution.<sup>26</sup> The availability of a strongly fluorescent gas-phase cytosine derivative opens exciting new research opportunities based on fluorescence measurements.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

See [supplementary material](#) for the synthesis of 5,6-trimethylenecytosine, additional computational details on the MS-CASPT2 calculations, and additional ns pump/ionization transients.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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