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Phthalimido-ferrocidiphenol cyclodextrin complexes: characterization and anticancer activity

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30

Abstract

35

Several ferrocenyl analogues of tamoxifen have already showed strong antiproliferative activity in experimental glioma models. Nevertheless, these compounds are very poorly soluble in water and an adapted formulation is needed.

40 In this work, we have tailored and optimized methylated cyclodextrin soluble complexes of phthalimido-ferrocidiphenol for the first time. The complexes were characterized, and the optimized formulation was tested for *in vitro* efficacy and cell proliferation assays on U87, human glioblastoma cancer cells.

Molecular modeling can provide accurate information about the inclusion process. The 45 inclusion of all the moieties at the same time (i.e., ferrocene, phthalimidylpropyl, 2 phenols) is not possible due to the steric hindrance of the 1:4 system. The 1:3 systems are possible but do not seem very relevant. However, various 1:2 and 1:1 complexes are mostly present in aqueous solutions.

Some experiments have confirmed our hypothesis. First, interactions between the 50 phenol, phthalimidylpropyl and ferrocenyl groups have been observed in our NMR experiments. Second, the inclusion of phthalimidylpropyl was detected by UV-vis spectrophotometry with an apparent 1:1 interaction, which was observed through the Benesi-Hildebrand method.

The complex is readily soluble in water and keeps its pharmacological activity against 55 U87 tumor cells ($IC_{50} = 0.028 \pm 0.007 \mu\text{M}$ vs. $0.018 \pm 0.003 \mu\text{M}$ for PhtFerr).

Keywords: ferrocene; organometallic; anticancer drug; glioma; cyclodextrin

Ferrocene has gained tremendous attention in the scientific and technical community because of its captivating chemistry (Rosenblum, 1965; Togni and Hayashi, 1994). Different strategies have been adopted to develop ferrocene derivatives and to explore their wide-ranging scientific applications.

Ferrocenyl compounds have gained much popularity in biological applications because of their stability in aqueous and aerobic media, access to a great variety of derivatives, and their promising electrochemical properties: the toxic agent in the cell can eventually transform into an oxidized and reactive molecule. Thus, we have proven that molecules bearing the [ferrocenyl-ene-phenol] motif can be oxidized into a quinone methide (Buries et al., 2008; Messina et al., 2012; Wang et al., in press) able to react with a SH moiety, as in some proteins, or on the selenocysteine residue of thioredoxin reductases (Citta et al., 2014). The formation of this molecule is due to the redox properties of ferrocene (Hillard et al., 2010; Swarts et al., 1994). More specifically, recent studies have shown a high activity of ferrocene derivatives *in vitro* and *in vivo* against a variety of fungal and bacterial infections (Biot et al., 2000; Zhang, 2008), e.g., malaria (Biot et al., 1997; Fouda et al., 2007; Itoh et al., 2000), HIV (Kondapi et al., 2006) and cancer (Hillard et al., 2010; Swarts et al., 1994). After these results, the medicinal use of ferrocene became plausible.

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Consequently, a variety of ferrocenyl compounds are being synthesized and tested for their anticancer properties. Among all ferrocene derivatives, ferrocifens (Jaouen and Top, 2013) have encouraging effects against breast cancer (Hillard et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2007). Recently, the non-steroidal selective estrogen receptor modulator (SERM), tamoxifen, has been commonly prescribed for patients diagnosed with estrogen-receptor-positive (or ER+) breast cancer (Craig Jordan, 1992). The first coupling of ferrocene to the active metabolite of tamoxifen was done by G. Jaouen and his co-workers by replacing a phenyl group of 4-hydroxytamoxifen with ferrocene (Ornelas, 2011). These hydroxyferrocifens were intended to combine the antiestrogenic properties

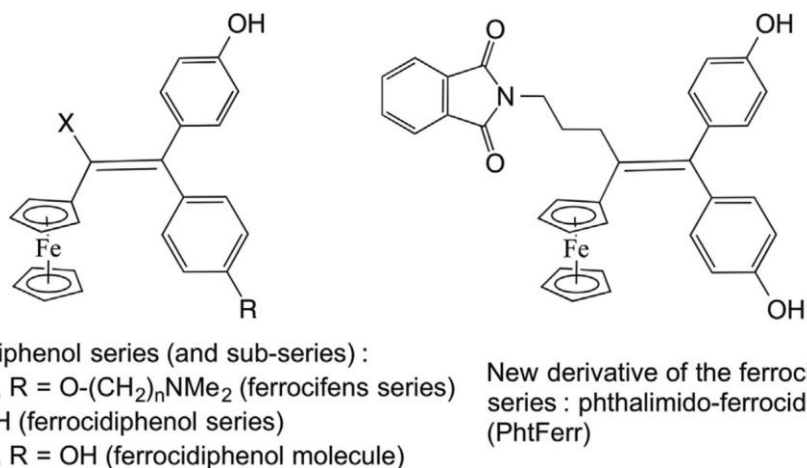
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90 of tamoxifen while targeting the ferrocenyl moiety to the receptor and thus to DNA for a possible gain in therapeutic benefits (Top et al., 1996; Top et al., 2003).

In addition to the effect of the quinone methide, it was also suggested that DNA damage due to hydroxyl radical production causes the toxicity of the ferrocenium cation (Tamura and Miwa, 1997). To bring ferrocene in close proximity to DNA, the ferrocenyl group can
95 be attached to molecules that bind DNA, which might enhance the probability of DNA damage and cell apoptosis (Ornelas, 2011).

The molecules bearing the [ferrocenyl-ene-phenol] motif, which are needed to form the reactive quinone methides *in vivo*, are called the ferrociphenol series. The
100 hydroxyferrocifen series bearing this motif (and also a dimethylaminoalkyl chain inherited from the tamoxifen) belong to this larger family. The replacement of this chain by a second phenol group led to the ferrocidiphenol family, a sub-series of the ferrociphenol series (Figure 1), without many change in the activity, and with the advantage of having a smaller size and avoiding formation of a Z/E isomers mixture.
105 Thus, a series of ferrociphenols [ferrocifens (Top et al., 2003), ferrocidiphenol (Vessieres et al., 2005), and cyclic ferrocidiphenols (Plazuk et al., 2009)] that was evaluated for their antiproliferative activity against breast cancer displayed low IC₅₀ values (between 0.09 and 13 μM) (Hillard et al., 2010). Additionally, several ferrocenyl analogues of tamoxifen have already showed a strong antiproliferative activity on experimental glioma
110 models (Laine et al., 2013; Roger et al., 2012). This property is a matter of interest, as glioblastoma, which is the most common malignant glioma, has only been associated to date with a median survival of 12–15 months. In fact, the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) has published a study on the concomitant use of radiation therapy and adjuvant temozolomide, which slightly improved survival
115 (overall survival: 9.8% after 5 years). This treatment is now adopted as the new standard treatment, but it is still not satisfactory (Stupp et al., 2009). Temozolomide is an oral drug that is rapidly metabolized into methyltriazeno-imidazole-carboxamide (MTIC), a DNA-methylating drug. A DNA repair enzyme, methyl-guanine methyltransferase (MGMT), can remove the methyl group and overcome the modification of cells that lack MGMT,
120 which have been shown to have a higher sensitivity to temozolomide. Intrinsic or

acquired resistance often defines the poor efficacy of chemotherapy in malignant gliomas.



125 **Fig. 1.** The chemical structure of phthalimido-ferrocidiphenol: N-{4-ferrocenyl-5,5-bis-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-pent-4-enyl}phthalimide—C₃₅H₂₉FeNO₄—Molecular weight: 583.45 g/mol.

Having fixed 3 of the 4 substituents of the central alkene double bond of the ferrocidiphenol molecule (ferrocenyl and 2 phenol moieties), the only degree of freedom was to modify the ethyl group, inherited from the tamoxifen. Fortunately, recent work showed us that modifications sometimes permitted a sensible gain in activity [hydroxylation (Pigeon et al., 2014; Richard et al., 2015; Wang et al., in press) or formation of a ferrocenophane cycle (Plazuk et al., 2009)]. Thus, with this encouraging research on the modification of this ethyl group, a new substituted ferrocidiphenol, a “phthalimido-ferrocidiphenol” (replacement of the ethyl group by a phthalimidylpropyl moiety, PhtFerr, Figure 1), has emerged and become the most effective agent according to *in vitro* antiproliferative assays (on glioma cells U87). Interestingly, PhtFerr was tested on breast cancer cells (0.20 μM on MDA-MB231; 3-fold better than the original ferrocidiphenol molecule) and on human glioblastoma cancer cells (U87), where it was shown to be very active (unpublished results). To date, its mechanism of action is not fully understood, but an oxygenated polar moiety seems to be needed on the alkyl chain replacing the ethyl group (SAR in progress).

This compound (Figure 1) is a highly lipophilic molecule (Log P_{o/w}: 5.30) that is very poorly soluble in water (solubility < 0.001 μg/ml). In the last decade, many solutions

145 have been proposed for the administration of poorly soluble drugs (Bittner and
Mountfield, 2002): pH adjustment and co-solvent solutions (Alvarez-Nunez and
Yalkowsky, 1999), cyclodextrins (CD) (Buriel et al., 2008; Petrovski et al., 2008),
surfactants, mixed micelles (Nguyen et al., 2008; Wei et al., 2010), emulsions (Gibaud
and Attivi, 2012), and nanosuspensions (Ben Zirar et al., 2008).

150 Lipid nanocapsules (LNC) of approximately 50 nm were also used to encapsulate the
active ferrocenyl diphenol (ferrocidiphenol or Fc-diOH; Figure 1) tamoxifen derivative in
order to allow for a parenteral administration (Allard et al., 2009; Allard et al., 2008). The
Fc-diOH (ferrocidiphenol molecule) was encapsulated in high loading because of the
large hydrophobic core in the LNC structure. The loaded LNCs were taken up by 9L-
155 glioma cells, and the cytostatic activity of the Fc-diOH was conserved presenting an IC₅₀
value of approximately 0.6 μ M.

Currently, CD complexes represent one of the most promising and most investigated
delivery systems for various lipophilic drugs (Madan et al., 2014; Rodgers et al., 2011),
160 including cancer therapy (Becherirat et al., 2013; Xiong et al., 2014). They are bucket-
shaped, cyclic oligosaccharides, comprising 6, 7, or 8 glucopyranose units, linked by α ,
1-4-glycosidic bonds (El-Maradny et al., 2008). β -CD has the ability to form stable
soluble aggregates with a broad range of lipophilic molecules (Çelik et al., 2011; Soares
da Silva et al., 2011). However, the restricted aqueous solubility of β -CD (18.5 mg/ml)
165 presents hurdles in the design and development of soluble complexes of lipophilic drugs
(Chatjigakis et al., 1992). Because of their wider cavity size and higher aqueous
solubility (>2,000 mg/ml), methylated CDs produce more wettable amorphous
complexes with improved water solubility (Banchero et al., 2013). Other derivatives of β -
CD, such as hydroxypropyl- β -cyclodextrin (HP β CD) and SBE β CD, have similar
170 properties and can be used to improve the solubility of lipophilic drugs.

Therefore, in the present investigation, we have tailored and optimized, for the first time,
methylated CD soluble complexes of phthalimido-ferrocidiphenol. The complexes were
characterized, and the optimized formulation was tested for *in vitro* efficacy and cell
proliferation assays on U87, human glioblastoma cancer cells.

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Materials and methods

1.1. Materials

1.1.1. Chemistry

180 The starting materials for the synthesis of PhtFerr were phthalimide, potassium carbonate, *N,N*-dimethylformamide, zinc, titanium tetrachloride, tetrahydrofuran (THF) and 4,4'-dihydroxybenzophenone, which were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich (L'Isle d'Abeau Chesnes, 38297 Saint-Quentin, Fallavier, France), TCI EUROPE N.V. (Boerenveldseweg 6, Haven 1063, 2070 Zwijndrecht, Belgique), and Alfa Aesar
185 France (2 allée d'Oslo, 67300 Schiltigheim, France).

All reactions and manipulations were carried out under an argon atmosphere using standard Schlenk techniques. THF was distilled over sodium/benzophenone prior to use. Thin-layer chromatography was performed on silica gel 60 GF₂₅₄. IR spectra were obtained on a FT/IR-4100 JASCO 180 spectrometer. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra
190 were obtained on a Bruker 300 MHz spectrometer. Mass spectrometry was carried out at the Service de Spectrométrie de Masse at ENSCP, Paris. High-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) and RX structures were acquired in the Institut Parisien de Chimie Moléculaire (IPCM – UMR 8232) at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris.

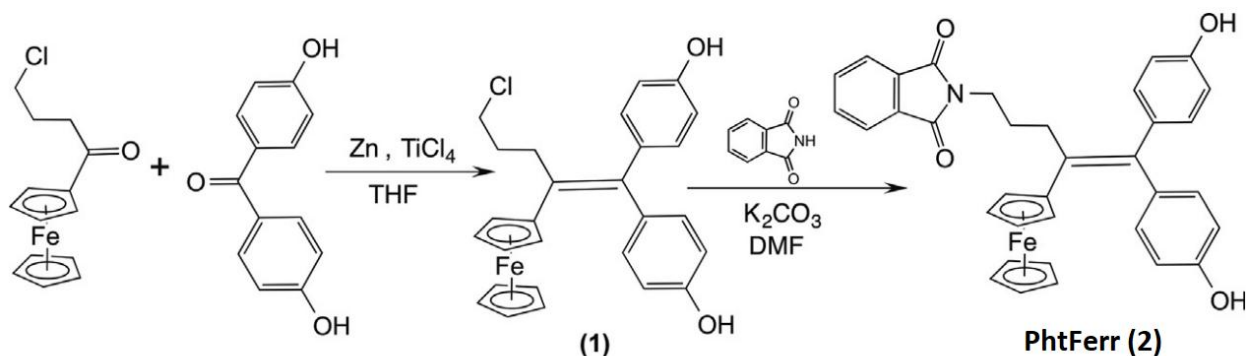
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1.1.2. Other materials

SBE β CD (CAPTISOL[®]) was donated by CyDexInc (Lenexa, United States). Other CDs [HP β CD (mean substitution degree = 4.4), randomly methylated- β -cyclodextrin
200 (1.6–2.0 methyl unit per anhydroglucose unit; RAME β CD), hydroxyethyl- β -cyclodextrin (HE β CD), 2,6-di-O-methyl- β -cyclodextrin (DM β CD), alpha cyclodextrin (α CD) and gamma cyclodextrin (γ CD)] were purchased from Sigma–Aldrich (St. Quentin-Fallavier, France).

All other reagents were of analytical grade from either Merck Eurolab (Fontenay-sous-
205 Bois, France) or Acros organics (Noisy-le-Grand, France) and were used as received.

1.2. Synthesis of phthalimido-ferrocenylphenol (PhtFerr)



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Fig. 2. Synthesis of PhtFerr.

PhtFerr was prepared in three steps. In the first step, the chlorinated ketone was synthesized by the Friedel-Crafts reaction. Then, the chlorinated alkene (1) was prepared by the McMurry coupling reaction. Finally, the imide ferrocenylphenol (2) was obtained by substitution of the chlorine atom by the phthalimide. The synthesis (Figure 2) was done as follows:

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5-chloro-2-ferrocenyl-1,1-bis-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-pent-1-ene (1)

Titanium chloride (11.41 g, 6.6 ml 60.2 mmoles) was added dropwise to a suspension of zinc powder (5.9 g, 90.2 mmoles) in dry THF (500 ml) at 10-20 °C. The mixture was heated at reflux for 2 hours. A second solution was prepared by dissolving 4-chloro-1-ferrocenyl-1-butanone (4.37 g, 15 mmoles) (Elečko et al., 1974), and 4,4'-dihydroxybenzophenone (3.222 g, 15 mmoles) in dry THF (50 ml). This latter solution was added dropwise to the first solution, and the reflux was then continued overnight. After cooling to room temperature, the mixture was stirred with water and dichloromethane. The mixture was acidified with diluted hydrochloric acid until the dark color disappeared and then decanted. The aqueous layer was extracted with dichloromethane and the combination of organic layers was dried on magnesium sulfate. After concentration under reduced pressure, the crude product was

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chromatographed on silica gel column with dichloromethane/acetone 90/10 as the
eluent and crystallized from dichloromethane, to afford **1** in a yield of 68%, as an
230 orange solid. ^1H NMR (acetone- d_6): δ 1.89-2.02 (m, 2 H, CH_2), 2.84 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2
H, CH_2), 3.54 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2 H, CH_2), 4.00 (t, $J = 1.9$ Hz, 2 H, C_5H_4), 4.12 (t, $J = 1.9$
Hz, 2 H, C_5H_4), 4.17 (s, 5 H, Cp), 6.74 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 6.86 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz,
2 H, C_6H_4), 6.90 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 7.10 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 8.29 (s, 1
H, OH), 8.34 (s, 1 H, OH). ^{13}C NMR (acetone- d_6): δ 33.8 (CH_2), 35.1 (CH_2), 46.7
235 (CH_2Cl), 69.5 (2 CH C_5H_4), 70.6 (5CH Cp), 70.7 (2 CH C_5H_4), 89.1 (C C_5H_4), 116.5 (2
CH C_6H_4), 116.7 (2 CH C_6H_4), 132.0 (2 CH C_6H_4), 132.5 (2 CH C_6H_4), 134.7 (C),
137.6 (C), 138.0 (C), 140.7 (C), 157.5 (2 C). IR (KBr, cm^{-1}): 3433 (OH), 3085, 2951,
2868 (CH, CH_2). MS (CI, NH_3) m/z : 473 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$. HRMS (ESI, $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{25}\text{ClFeO}_2$: $[\text{M}]^+$)
calcd: 472.0892, found: 472.0887.

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***N*-{4-ferrocenyl-5,5-bis-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-pent-4-enyl}phthalimide (PhtFerr) (2).**

A mixture of potassium carbonate (0.69 g, 5.0 mmoles) and phthalimide (0.977 g, 6.6
mmoles), in 100 ml of *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF) was heated at 80 °C for 15 min.
Compound **1** (1.57 g, 3.32 mmoles) was added and the stirring was continued at
245 80°C overnight. The mixture was allowed to cool to room temperature, poured into
diluted hydrochloric acid, and extracted twice with diethyl ether. Then, the organic
layer was dried on magnesium sulfate and evaporated under reduced pressure. The
residue was purified by flash-chromatography to afford the imide **PhtFerr (2)** that was
recrystallized from a diethyl ether/pentane mixture and was obtained as an orange
250 solid with a yield of 83% (1.6 g). mp: 226 °C. ^1H NMR (acetone- d_6): δ 1.83-1.97 (m, 2
H, CH_2), 2.71 (t, $J = 8.3$ Hz, 2 H, CH_2), 3.62 (t, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 2 H, CH_2N), 3.92 (t, $J = 1.9$
Hz, 2 H, C_5H_4), 4.07 (t, $J = 1.9$ Hz, 2 H, C_5H_4), 4.10 (s, 5 H, Cp), 6.70 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2
H, C_6H_4), 6.72 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 6.89 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 7.02 (d, $J =$
8.7 Hz, 2 H, C_6H_4), 7.88 (s, 4 H, phthalimide), 8.14 (s, 1 H, OH), 8.26 (s, 1 H, OH).
255 ^{13}C NMR (acetone- d_6): δ 30.6 (CH_2), 33.8 (CH_2), 39.2 (CH_2), 69.4 (2 CH C_5H_4), 70.6
(5CH Cp), 70.7 (2 CH C_5H_4), 89.1 (C C_5H_4), 116.4 (2 CH C_6H_4), 116.5 (2 CH C_6H_4),
124.4 (2 CH phthalimide), 131.8 (2 CH C_6H_4), 132.5 (2 CH C_6H_4), 133.8 (2 C
phthalimide), 135.0 (C), 135.7 (2 CH phthalimide), 137.4 (C), 138.0 (C), 140.5 (C),

157.4 (C), 157.5 (C), 169.6 (2 CO). IR (KBr, cm^{-1}): 3429 (OH), 3085, 2944, 2874 (CH,
260 CH₂), 1700 (CO). MS (CI, NH₃) m/z: 584 [M+H]⁺, 601 [M+NH₄]⁺. HRMS (ESI,
C₃₅H₂₉FeNO₄: [M]⁺) calcd: 583.1446, found: 583.1466.

1.3. Analytical methods for PhtFerr quantification

Determinations of the included ferrocidiphenol were carried out by high performance
265 liquid chromatography (HPLC) or UV-vis spectrophotometry after dissociation by an
initial dilution (1%) with pure dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO); the appropriate final
adjustments were done with distilled water.

For HPLC determinations, a 20- μl sample was injected into a C₁₈ column (5 μm ,
4.6 \times 25 cm, Macherey-Nagel, Eckbolsheim, France) using an autosampler (WISP 712,
270 Waters, Guyancourt, France). The mobile phase was a mixture of acetonitrile and
water (65/35, v/v) at a flow rate of 1.5 ml/min (SP8800 pump, Spectra Physics, TSP,
CA). Detection was performed with a UV spectrophotometer at 286 nm (Waters 490E
detector) using a SP-800 integrator (Spectra Physics). The limit of detection (LOQ)
was 2.3 mg/l and the limit of quantification (LOQ) was 7.6 mg/l. Standard curves were
275 drawn between 7.8 and 125 mg/l ($r > 0.99$).

1.4. Complexation studies in aqueous phase

1.4.1. Phase solubility studies of PhtFerr complexation

PhtFerr complexation with various CDs was evaluated using the phase-solubility
280 method (Higuchi and Connors, 1965). A suspension of a large excess of phthalimido-
ferrocidiphenol (30 mg) in 2 ml of aqueous solutions of the appropriate CD
(concentrations ranging from 0.125 to 160 mM, pH adjusted to 7) was stirred in
screw-capped amber vials during 24 h on a rock-and-roller agitator at 25 °C.
Preliminary time-dependence experiments showed that the equilibrium was reached
285 after this stirring period. Each suspension was then centrifuged at 9000 g for 10 min
and diluted from 1/10 to 1/1000 with acetonitrile, and the amount of dissolved PhtFerr
was assessed by HPLC at 286 nm.

Phase solubility curves (i.e., solubility of PhtFerr as a function of the CD concentration) were drawn for each CD.

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1.4.2. UV-visible experiments - Benesi Hildebrand method

First, UV-vis spectra (Cary 50 spectrophotometer, Varian, Les Ulis, France) were obtained for a concentration of $2.5 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M of phthalimido-ferrocenediphenol and various concentrations of CDs (0 to $1.1 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M). RAME β CD or HP β CD were added and the phthalimido-ferrocenediphenol concentration was kept at $2.5 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M. All experiments were done in 1% (v/v) DMSO/water mixture (the first dissolution of PhtFerr was done in pure DMSO) to avoid precipitation, and the measurement was taken after 10 min to account for the kinetics of the complex formation.

Then, the mole-ratio titration method was used to calculate the values of the apparent binding constant (K_a) (Benesi and Hildebrand, 1949; Dotsikas et al., 2000; Yoe and Jones, 1944). The experiments were done at various wavelengths obtained from the spectra (low concentration of CD). Another series of experiments was performed with higher CD concentrations ($2 \cdot 10^{-6}$ to $25 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M, or high concentration of CD) to confirm the binding constants.

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1.4.3. $^1\text{H-NMR}$ measurements

All experiments were performed on a Bruker Avance DRX-NMR spectrometer operating at 9.4 T (proton frequency: 400.133 MHz) and at a sample temperature of 300 K.

The lyophilized PhtFerr:RAME β CD complex and pure PhtFerr were dissolved in $\text{D}_2\text{O}:\text{DMSO-d}_6$ (99:1) adjusted at pD=10.9 with NaOD. This mixture was used for solubility reasons: an alkaline pH can transform phenol in ionized form (phenolates). Chemical shifts were given in parts per million (ppm) relative to the solvent signal (HOD at 4.84 ppm).

310

315 2.5. Molecular modeling

Molecular modelling calculations were performed on (and limited to) the well-defined 2,6-di-O-methyl- β -cyclodextrin (DM β CD), by opposition to the undefined randomly substituted- β -cyclodextrins, using the program Spartan14 (Wavefunction Co., Irvine, CA, USA). After building the CD model, an energy minimisation was carried out using the Merck molecular force field (MMFF) method. The PhtFerr molecule was then edited in the same window, and a short energy minimisation was then carried out (MMFF method). To evaluate the affinity of each of the 4 substituents of the alkene double bond for the DM β CD, the calculations were performed to a 1:1 PhtFerr:DM β CD ratio (Table 1, entries 1-4). The file was thus duplicated in 4 files. In each of the files, the PhtFerr molecule was oriented in a way where each of the 4 moieties of the double bond (one moiety tested per file: ferrocenyl, phthalimidylpropyl, phenol #1 -*cis* with the ferrocenyl- and phenol #2) were moved closer to the entry of the CD, approximately in its axis.

For each, an energy minimisation was then carried out using the Merck molecular force field (MMFF) method, and the geometry was then optimized using the semiempirical PM3 quantum-mechanical method. Semiempirical PM3 quantum-mechanical methods were used to determine the affinity of PhtFerr with the CD. This requires calculation of the energies of the (PhtFerr-CD) group, of the CD itself, and of PhtFerr, the latter two in the conformations they had in the molecular assemblies to give the $\Delta_r H^\circ$ enthalpy variations of the reactions: PhtFerr + CD \rightarrow molecular assembly.

In the case of a 1:2 **PhtFerr**/CD inclusion complex, we can suppose that one of both CDs (CD1) make an inclusion complex with the ferrocenyl moiety, due to its better affinity, and thus, we limited the calculations to three possibilities (entries 5-7). The file of entry 1 was copied 3 times, and in each copy, a second CD (CD2) was placed in forced inclusion for each of the 3 other substituents. For each, an energy minimisation was then carried out using the Merck molecular force field (MMFF) method, and the geometry was then optimized using the semiempirical PM3 quantum-mechanical method. Semiempirical PM3 quantum-mechanical methods were used to determine the affinity as before. This required calculation of the energies of the reactions: **PhtFerr** + CD1 + CD2 \rightarrow molecular assembly (Table 1, entries 5-7).

The same procedure was used for the calculations with 3 CD (Table 1, entries 8-9).

Table 1

350 Calculations of PhtFerr with inclusion of each of its substituents into 1CD separately (entries 1–4), combination with 2CD (one inclusion being with the ferrocenyl group, entries 5–7) and inclusion with 3CD (at least with ferrocenyl and phthalimidyl groups, entries 8–9). Inclusions were done by the wide side of the CD, except for the values between parentheses where inclusion were done by the narrow side of the CD.

Entr	Ferrocenyl	Phenol #1	Phenol #2	Phthalimidyl	$\Delta_r H^\circ$ (kJ/mol) wide (narrow)
1	CD				-52 (-83)
2		CD			-26 (-34)
3			CD		-27 (-30)
4				CD	-38 (-33)
5	CD1	CD2			-93 (-113)
6	CD1		CD2		-92 (-73)
7	CD1			CD2	-83 (-108)
8	CD1	CD2		CD3	-134 (-134)
9	CD1		CD2	CD3	-106 (-135)

355 2.6. Solid phase analysis of PhtFerr:RAME β CD

To obtain a lyophilized sample, an excess of PhtFerr (30 mg) was stirred (25 °C; 24 h) in distilled water (2 ml) containing 160 mM of RAME β CD or HP β CD and filtered through a 0.22 μ m membrane filter (Millipore HA). The filtrate was freeze-dried and stored at +4 °C until use. The complexation efficiency of PhtFerr was 360 determined by HPLC as previously described.

The solid phase analysis of the complexes was performed on these lyophilized samples.

2.6.1. X-ray diffraction (XRD)

365 The PXRD measurements were performed using a PanalyticalX'Pert Pro diffractometer equipped with a Cu tube, a Ge(111) incident-beam monochromator ($\lambda = 1.5406 \text{ \AA}$) and an X'Celerator detector. Data collection was carried out in the scattering angle range 3-70° with a 0.0167° step over 90 min.

2.6.2. Differential scanning calorimeter (DSC)

370 The DSC thermograms were obtained on a scanning calorimeter (DSC Q10, TA
Instruments). The instrument was calibrated at various temperatures before starting
the procedure. Each sample weighed 5 mg and was heated in sealed aluminum pans
under nitrogen environment at 50 ml/min. The limit of detection was controlled from
10 °C to 300 °C and the ramp was 10 °C/min.

375

2.7. Pharmaceutical properties of the PhtFerr:RAME β CD complex

2.7.1. Dissolution and diffusivity across a dialysis membrane

380 To investigate the dissolution, an amount (5 mg) of the lyophilized
PhtFerr:RAME β CD complex was suspended in water. The suspension was incubated
at 25 °C in a shaking-bath (200 strokes/min, Heito, France). Aliquots (1 ml) were
taken at various time intervals up to 24 h and centrifuged (7200 g, 5 min, Denver
Instruments, MA). Each supernatant was analyzed by HPLC to assess the drug
385 contents. The results are presented as mean \pm SD of triplicate experiments.

A dialysis was also realized. The bag (cut-off: 14 000 daltons) contained an aqueous
solution of 5 mg/2 ml of PhtFerr:RAME β CD, and 498 ml of distilled water was added
under magnetic stirring. Aliquots were taken and analyzed as previously described.

390

2.7.2. Cell culture: *in vitro* cytotoxicity on U87 cell lines

The cytotoxic activity of PhtFerr and the PhtFerr:RAME β CD complex was tested on
glioblastoma cell lines (U87).

395 The concentration of PhtFerr and PhtFerr:RAME β CD required to induce a decrease in
cell viability was assessed by determining the ability of the U87 cells to reduce the
tetrazolium dye (MTT). The assay is based on the reduction of the MTT, by
mitochondrial succinate dehydrogenase to a colored, soluble formazan complex,
which is quantified spectrophotometrically at 560 nm (Hansen and Nielsen, 1989).

400 The U87 suspension was seeded in 96-well culture plates with 100 μ l of medium (5. 10^3) per well. After 12 hours, varying amounts of PhtFerr and PhtFerr:RAME β CD, ranging from 10^{-3} to 10^{-9} M, were added to the wells, and the culture plates were incubated for 72 h at 37 $^{\circ}$ C. For the MTT assay, 100 μ l of MTT (5 mg/ml stock solution in phosphate-buffered saline, PBS) was added to each well and cells were
405 incubated for 3 h at 37 $^{\circ}$ C. Viable cells convert the soluble yellow MTT to insoluble purple formazan by the action of mitochondrial succinate dehydrogenase. A 100 μ l volume of dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) was added to dissolve the formazan crystals. The optical density was measured at 560 nm with a microplate reader. The absorbance is proportional to viable cell number, and survival was calculated as the
410 percentage of the staining values of the untreated cultures.

2.7.3. Hemolytic activity

Hemolytic activity of the protein was tested using erythrocytes from a human source.
415 Freshly collected blood samples were immediately mixed with an anticoagulant (Alsever's solution, pH 7.4) to prevent blood coagulation. To obtain a pure suspension of erythrocytes, 1 ml of whole blood was diluted to 20 ml in phosphate buffered saline (PBS, pH 7.4), and centrifuged at 250 g for 5 min at 4 $^{\circ}$ C. The supernatant and buffy coats were removed by gentle aspiration, and the above process was repeated
420 two more times. Erythrocytes were finally re-suspended in PBS to obtain a 1% solution for hemolytic assay. For this, various concentrations of PhtFerr and PhtFerr:RAME β CD (0.05–1 mg/ml) were added to the suspension of red blood cells. The PhtFerr and PhtFerr:RAME β CD–erythrocyte mixtures were incubated at 37 $^{\circ}$ C for 1 hour in water bath and then centrifuged at 250 g for 5 min at 4 $^{\circ}$ C. The absorbance of the
425 supernatants was determined at 545 nm to measure the extent of red blood cell lyses. Positive control (100% hemolysis) and negative control (0% hemolysis) were also run by incubating erythrocytes in PBS containing 1% Triton X-100 and PBS alone, respectively (Malagoli).

430 3. Results and discussion

PhtFerr is very lipophilic and has a complex structure with 4 main moieties (i.e., 3 aromatic rings and a ferrocene) that could be included in the cavity of CDs (Figure 1). A recent study demonstrated that hydroxyferrociphenol could be complexed by methylated CDs (Buriez et al., 2008). These experiments were done by cyclic voltammetry, which allows quantifying a strong interaction with the organometallic. The complexation has been attributed to the very hydrophobic ferrocenyl moiety. In other circumstances, phenol groups have also been described to be able to interact with CDs in many compounds (Chelli et al., 2007), and the phthalimidyl-group, which is also hydrophobic, is another candidate for complexation. This particular structure makes the study difficult, but we were able to propose a possible structure for each complex coexisting in solution using phase solubility studies, UV-visible experiments, ¹H-NMR studies and a molecular modeling approach.

445 3.1. Phase solubility studies of PhtFerr

The first experiment, which is usually done to test the dissolving properties of the complexation, is the phase solubility study first described by Higuchi and Connors in 1965 (Higuchi and Connors, 1965).

450 In our experiment (Figure 3), α CD did not significantly improve the solubility of PhtFerr; this is probably due to the lack of incorporation of the PhtFerr in the small cavity of α CD (internal diameter: 0.57 nm). However, methylated β -cyclodextrins (RAME β CD and DM β CD), which have an internal diameter of 0.68 nm, showed significant solubilization properties: the curve exhibited a positive curvature described as Ap-type by Higuchi (Higuchi and Connors, 1965) (Figure 3). This type of curve is observed if more than one CD can complex the drug corresponding to 1:2, 1:3, 1:4 (or more) stoichiometries. The determination of the binding constant can be performed for up to 1:2 complexes (Alfonsi et al., 2013), but the combinations of 1:2 complexes and even higher stoichiometries are possible for PhtFerr complexes. We consider that 455 the determination of the binding constant by this method would be unreliable.

Nevertheless, the phase solubility studies allowed us to select the PhtFerr:RAME β CD for further experiments. The PhtFerr:HP β CD complex was studied for comparison.

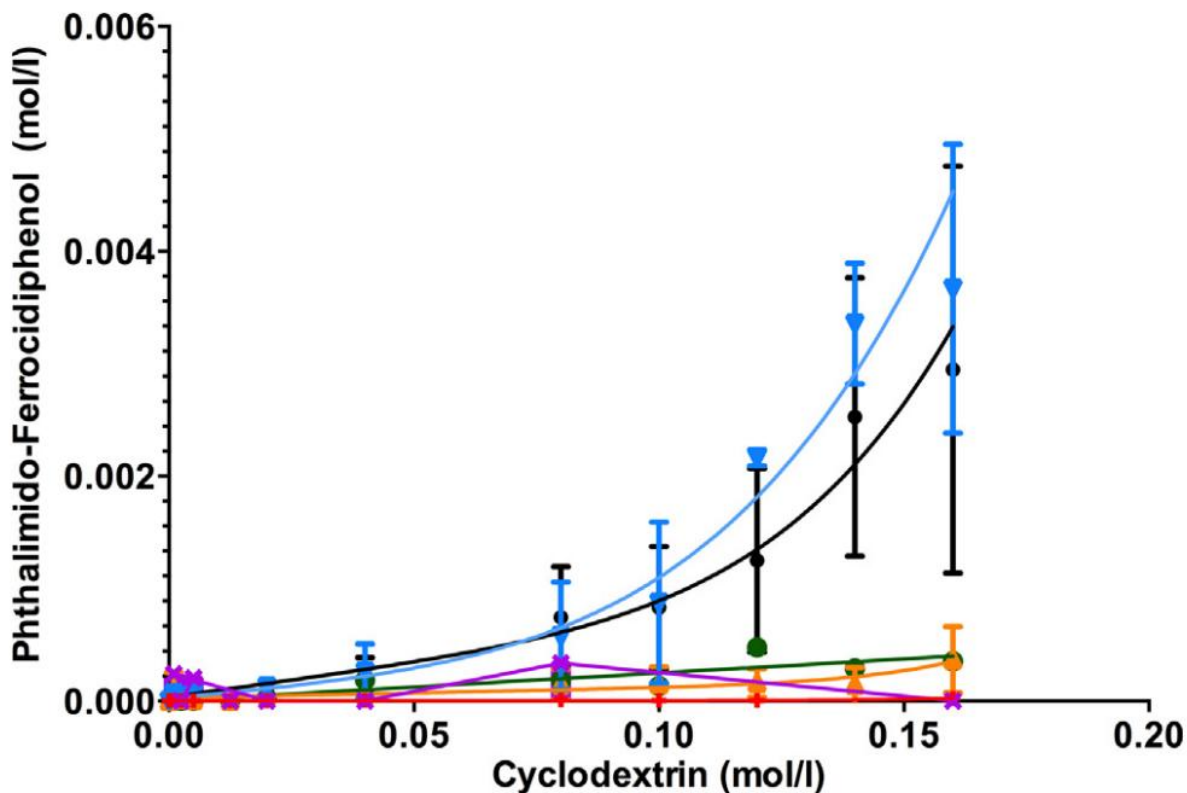


Fig. 3. Phase solubility diagrams of PhtFerr in the presence of α CD(-+-), RAME β CD (-●-), DM β CD (-▼-), HP β CD (-▲-); HE β CD (-■-), SBE β CD (-■-) and γ -CD (-●-).

465

3.2. Molecular modeling

Calculations for a 1:1 PhtFerr:CD ratio:

470 For the four moieties, binding to the CD (wide side) is thermodynamically favoured, as evidenced by the modest but negative enthalpies of formation for the **PhtFerr**-CD assemblies. The most negative value for the ferrocenyl moiety (-52 kJ/mol, Table 1) shows clearly its best affinity for the CD compared to the other moieties. This is due to hydrophobic interactions between the cyclopentadienyl rings and the methoxy groups

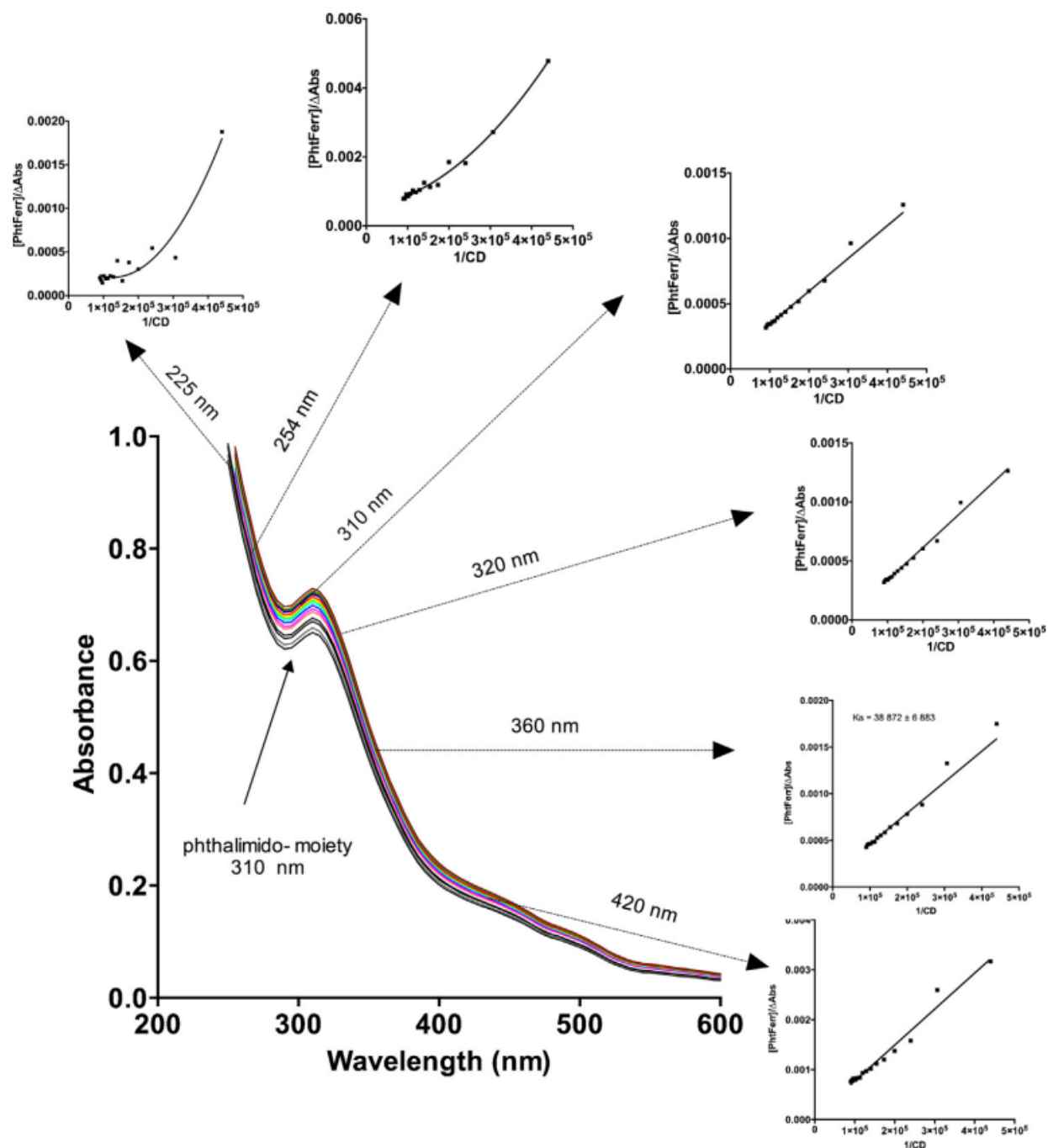
475 (Buriiez et al., 2008). The orientation of the ferrocenyl group in the CD is neither parallel
nor perpendicular to the molecular axis of the CD. Instead, it is intermediate due to the
hindrance of the others moieties. The affinity of the CD for the phthalimidopropyl group
(-38 kJ/mol) is the second best one, followed by quite similar affinities for phenyl groups
#1 and #2 (-26 and -27 kJ/mol, respectively). For all of these inclusions, one of the
phenol group forms a hydrogen bond between its hydrogen atom and an oxygen atom
480 of the CD.

For comparison, entering the moieties by the narrow side of the CD was also calculated.
Again, the ferrocenyl group had the best inclusion affinity, and its absolute value
increased, as for both phenyl groups (even though no hydrogen bond was formed with
one of the phenol groups for these three inclusions). However, the affinity slightly
485 decreased for the phthalimidopropyl group, even though a hydrogen bond exists with
phenyl group #2.

Calculations for a 1:2 PhtFerr:CD ratio:

The 1:2 systems (wide side and narrow side) are the most favored in comparison to 1:1
490 systems, but their energies differences are quite small. Therefore, there is a possible
competition between all of these systems and the presence of a complex mixture where
inclusions with two CDs, one being with the ferrocenyl group, predominate. This should
be increasingly complex because of the possibility of inclusion by the narrow side of the
CD too and wide side – narrow side mixtures. For example, calculations for inclusion by
495 the narrow sides of two CD (one being with the ferrocenyl group) gave the best affinity
for inclusion of the phenyl groups #1 and the phthalimidylpropyl group in comparison to
inclusion by 2 wide sides of CDs (entries 5 and 7).

The case of inclusion of the ferrocenyl and the phthalimidopropyl moieties by the wide
side of the CD, selected as an example (Supplementary Figure 1), shows that the four
500 moieties of **PhtFerr** are influenced by the inclusion. Indeed, in addition to the inclusion
of ferrocenyl and phthalimidylpropyl moieties, each of the two phenol groups makes a
hydrogen bond with a CD. We can see that the ferrocenyl group is nearly perpendicular
to the molecular axis of the CD.



505

Fig. 4. Spectra of PhtFerr ($2.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{M}$). The first spectrum (i.e. the lower curve) was obtained in water with 1% DMSO. The addition of various amount of RAME β CD produced a hyperchromic effect especially at 310 nm. Insets: Benesi–Hildebrand plots for the complexation PhtFerr in RAME β CD. The formation of the complex(es) was monitored at various wavelengths from the spectra data.

510

Calculations for a 1:3 PhtFerr :CD ratio:

Although the affinities are better than for the 1:1 or 1:2 ratios, the modeling (Table 1, entries 8-9) shows that the steric hindrance of the CD makes the moieties in a less deep inclusion inside the CD. These values could be more an indication of the clustering effect of the CD than of the inclusion and could be not very relevant.

3.3. UV-visible experiments

In further experiments, we tried to confirm the various hypotheses deduced from the molecular modeling, but our major concern was the insolubility of the PhtFerr in aqueous media. Consequently, the introduction of 1% DMSO was necessary to dissolve PhtFerr and reach detectable concentrations. This can lead to variations compared to the results that would be obtained in pure water. Hence, the binding constant must be considered as “the binding constant in 1% DMSO.”

In 1% (v/v) aqueous DMSO solution, PhtFerr exhibited a typical spectrum. The λ_{\max} of the phthalimidyl group is at 310 nm mainly due to the conjugation of the maleimide ring with the benzene nucleus (Supplementary Figure 1). The phenol groups are known to produce a λ_{\max} of approximately 270 nm and correspond to the left part of the spectrum. The λ_{\max} of the ferrocenyl moiety is approximately 200 nm in various solvents (Scott and Becker, 1961) and can impact the spectrum mainly below 250 nm. Another minor peak of absorbance is usually observed at approximately 445 nm for ferrocene derivatives, but this peak was undetectable in our conditions.

After addition of various amounts of CD (Figure 4), the spectrum shows an important concentration-dependent hyperchromic effect at 310 nm, likely corresponding to the complexation of the RAME β CD with the phthalimidyl moiety. Double reciprocal Benesi-Hildebrand plots ($[\text{PhtFerr}]/\Delta\text{Abs}$ vs. $1/[\text{CD}]$) were first drawn with the spectra data obtained at 310 nm, fitting a linear regression model ($R>0.99$) (Figure 4, inset). This wavelength of 310 nm corresponds to the maximum of absorbance of the phthalimidyl group, but a significant absorbance due to phenol groups can still be

present. To limit this problem, the experiment was repeated at higher wavelengths (i.e., 320, 340, 360, 380, 400 and 420 nm; Figure 4, insets). In our first hypothesis, we assumed that the phthalimidyl group is the only one that can possibly have an impact on the absorbance between 340 and 380 nm. Nevertheless, the curves were linear ($R > 0.99$) between 310 and 400 nm, leading to a similar apparent binding constant (Table 2).

550 **Table 2**

Apparent binding constants obtained by the modified Benesi-Hildebrand method.

Wavelength	Apparent binding constant (K_a)— M^{-1}	R
310	$36,959 \pm 4894$	0.9964
320	$32,150 \pm 5665$	0.9953
340	$36,310 \pm 4738$	0.9969
360	$38,433 \pm 6159$	0.9949
380	$30,440 \pm 8687$	0.9941
400	$34,328 \pm 7674$	0.9918
<u>420</u>	<u>$33,534 \pm 9622$</u>	<u>0.9467</u>

In the phase solubility study, PhtFerr:RAME β CD has been demonstrated to be at least a 1:2 complex; hence, it is necessary to explain why we have an apparent 1:1 interaction deduced from the Benesi Hildebrand plots.

As previously mentioned, between 310 and 400 nm, the variation of absorbance is only due to the interaction on the phthalimidyl moiety, and this phenomenon allowed us to isolate the interaction with this group in the spectra. This is a highly unusual situation in the field of CD, which can interact with several aromatic groups in the same molecule, but these aromatics are usually the same (i.e., 2 phenols (Chalumot et al., 2009)) or have very similar UV absorbances (i.e., para chloro- vs. ortho chloro- (Alfonsi et al., 2013)).

To find the equation that is related to the 1:1 apparent constant that we observed, we have to take in account the interaction with multiple complexes already in the solution. All of the “starting compounds” (Figure 5) include PhtFerr and various complexes, but we had to exclude the complexes showing an interaction with the phthalimidyl group;

hence, we can assume that the molar absorption coefficient of these starting compounds is similar to that of PhtFerr between 310 and 400 nm. These complexes are named PhtFerr:(CD₀)_n (Figure 5); each CD₀ corresponds to a CD that does not interact with the phthalimidyl group.

On the contrary, the final compounds are the corresponding complexes that interact with the phthalimidyl group (PhtFerr:(CD₀)_n:CD_{Pht}, Figure 5); the molar absorption coefficient at 310 – 400 nm of all these compounds (i.e., of the phthalimidyl group) is modified by the complexation.

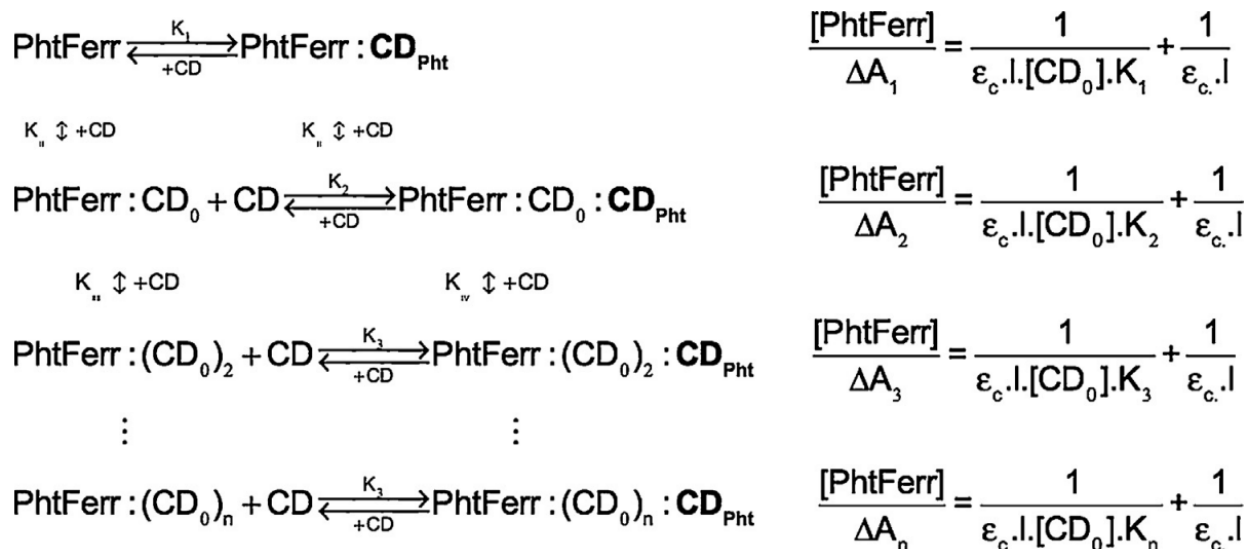


Fig. 5. Complexation of the phthalimidyl moiety (on the left) and corresponding Benesi–Hildebrand equations (on the right). The wavelength has to be chosen to get a variation of absorbance only due to the interaction with the phthalimidyl group. We also assume that the molar absorption coefficient is the same for each Pht:(CD₀)_n:CD_{Pht} complex.

The corresponding Benesi Hildebrand equations are given in Figure 4, and the sum of these equations gives:

$$[\text{PhtFerr}] \cdot \sum_{n=0}^{i=1} \frac{1}{\Delta A_i} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_c \cdot l \cdot [\text{CD}_0]} \cdot \sum_{n=0}^{i=0} \frac{1}{K_i} + \frac{n}{\epsilon_{\text{CompPht}} \cdot l} \quad (\text{Eq.1})$$

Therefore,

$$[\text{PhtFerr}] \cdot \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{\Delta A_i}}{n} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_c \cdot l \cdot [\text{CD}_0]} \cdot \frac{\sum_{i=0}^n \frac{1}{K_i}}{n} + \frac{1}{\epsilon_c \cdot l} \quad (\text{Eq.2})$$

590 The harmonic mean can be used to find average speeds. This has been described, for example, for agglomeration and aggregation processes (Gadomski and Ausloos, 2006). For a method of calculation of average speeds, see Gadomski et al. (Gadomski and Ausloos, 2006; Gadomski et al., 2007; Gadomski et al., 2005). Here, the observed variation of absorbance ΔA is the harmonic mean of the ΔA_i of

595 each complexation reaction ($\Delta A = \frac{n}{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{\Delta A_i}}$) and the apparent binding constant K_a can

also be defined as a harmonic mean ($K_a = \frac{n}{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{K_i}}$).

Therefore, Eq.2 gives:

$$\frac{[\text{PhtFerr}]}{\Delta A} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_c \cdot l \cdot [\text{CD}_0] \cdot K_a} + \frac{1}{\epsilon_c \cdot l} \quad (\text{Eq.3})$$

The equation is similar to the Benesi Hildebrand equations and is linear for $[\text{PhtFer}]/\Delta A$ as a function of $1/[\text{CD}_0]$. Consequently, we can confirm that the linear curves obtained for double reciprocal curves of Benesi-Hildebrand correspond to a 1:1 apparent complexation with the phthalimidyl group. The apparent binding constant (K_a , Table 2) is a harmonic mean value of various K_n due to the interaction with several complexes. Between 310 and 420 nm, the variation of the wavelength does not have an effect on the results (Table 2).

605 Because the spectra have been obtained with relatively low concentration, the same experiment has been repeated at a higher concentration of CD (Supplementary Figure 2), and similar results have been obtained with a K_a of $34\,237 \pm 7\,905 \text{ M}^{-1}$. These results allow us to propose an apparent binding constant (K_a) of approximately 610 34.10^3 M^{-1} in 1% DMSO.

It is of note that 1:2 complexes have already been studied with mole titration methods (Chalumot et al., 2009). Nevertheless, in each case, both guest moieties are symmetrical, with similar molar absorption coefficients for both moieties.

615 Consequently, ΔA can be used to study a global effect of both interactions.

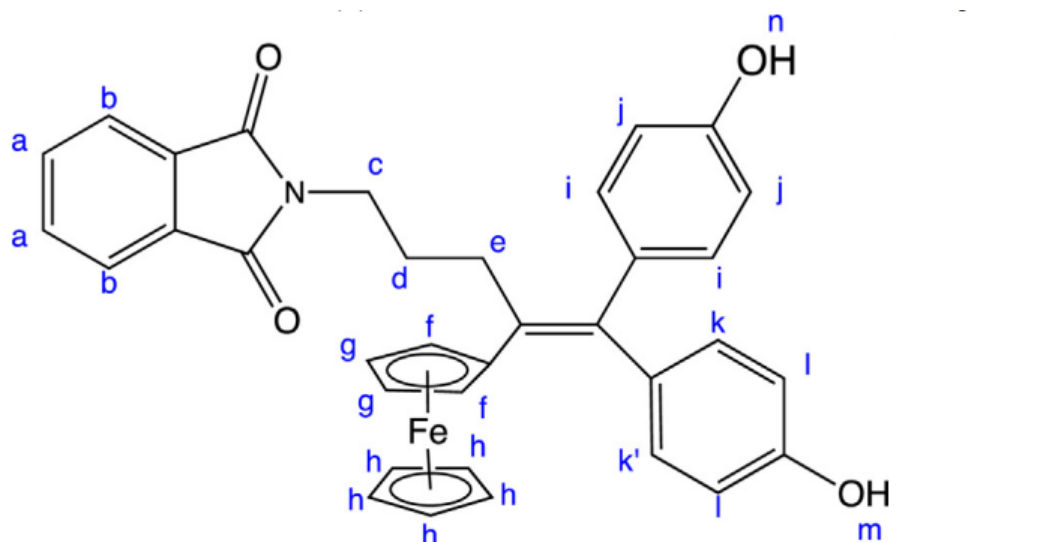
For example, Chalumot et al. have complexed polyaromatic compounds (naphthalene, fluorine, biphenyl, and phenanthrene) that can give symmetrical 1:2 complexes. In this specific case, modified Benesi-Hildebrand plots do not follow a linear regression but can be fitted with the quadratic equation:

$$620 \quad \frac{[\text{Drug}]}{\Delta A} = \frac{1}{\epsilon l [\text{CD}]^2 K_{\alpha}} + \frac{1}{\epsilon l} \quad \text{with } K_{\alpha} = K_{1:1} \times K_{1:2} \quad (\text{Eq.4})$$

The interaction with both phenol groups of PhtFerr [$\text{PhtFerr} : (\text{CD}_0)_n + 2\text{CD}_0 \xrightleftharpoons{K_{\alpha}} \text{PhtFerr} : (\text{CD}_0)_n : (\text{CD}_{\text{phenol}})_2$] probably has a role in the quadratic curves that we observed at 254 nm and below. The demonstration would follow the same demonstration but this time with a quadratic function and the apparent K_{α} would be the medium value of various $K_{\alpha n}$. Nevertheless, the absorbance of the ferrocenyl and phthalimidyl groups at 254 nm is possible, and we consider that the determination of K_{α} is not possible.

625 The use of HP β CD for the solubilisation of PhtFerr is less efficient (Supplementary Figure 3); nevertheless, a low amount of PhtFerr could be dissolved. The spectra (Supplementary Figure 3) show that the variation of absorbance is much lower at 310 nm. This is consistent with the results obtained with NMR and phase solubility studies. Due to the low variation of absorbance between 310 and 420 nm, it was not possible to draw meaningful curves.

635

Table 3 ^1H NMR chemical shifts (δ) of free and complexed phthalimido–ferrocidiphenol


	PhtFerr	PhtFerr:RAME β CD	$\Delta\delta^a$
a,b (phthalimide)	7.453	7.418	-0.035
c	3.210	ND	-
d	ND	ND	-
e	1.710	1.749	0.039
f,g (ferrocene)	4.075	ND	-
g,h (ferrocene)	4.115	4.118	0.003
i,k (phenol)	6.402	6.285	-0.117
j,l (phenol)	6.499	6.510	0.011
m	-	-	-
m	-	-	-

^a $\Delta\delta = \delta(\text{complex}) - \delta(\text{free})$.

3.4. ^1H -NMR experiments

640

NMR spectrometry is known to be one of the most useful methods to obtain information about the geometry of inclusion complexes. Nevertheless, the solubility of PhtFerr is too low in D_2O to reach the limit of detection. Consequently, the use of low concentrations of DMSO-d_6 was necessary in this experiment. In a first attempt, we dissolved each

645 compound in 1% of DMSO-d_6 , but even in these conditions, the concentration of PhtFerr was too low. The only solution was to use also an alkaline solvent (NaOD , $\text{pD} = 10.9$) to transform phenol in phenolate and to obtain a more soluble form of PhtFerr. The results are presented in table 3 where the corresponding shifts are $\Delta\delta = \delta(\text{complex}) - \delta(\text{free})$. In

the presence of the CD, phenols H_i and H_k protons are strongly up field shifted (Table 3).

650 The partial spectrum corresponding to the aromatic peaks (phenols and phthalimidyl) is shown in Figure 6. Lower shifts are observed for the other aromatic protons (i.e., phthalimidyl and ferrocenyl groups), confirming an interaction with these groups.

Small new peaks were also observed in the aromatic area (Figure 6), and this was attributed to the detection of a degradation of the phthalimidyl group at pD = 10.9. When
655 the experiment is done immediately after the addition of the basic solvent, the degradation is negligible and does not impact the other peak of the spectrum.

Another drawback of this experiment is the transformation of phenols in phenolates at pD 10.9. This can significantly impact the interaction with the phenol groups. Nevertheless, phenolates are more hydrophilic than non-ionized phenols, and the
660 interaction should be weaker. Hence, our experiment is in favor of an interaction of the RAME β CD with the phenol of the PhtFerr. The interaction of the RAME β CD with the ferrocenyl and the phthalimidyl groups is also confirmed.

Due to the degradation of the molecule, it was not possible to do 2D experiments and obtain accurate information on the conformation.

665

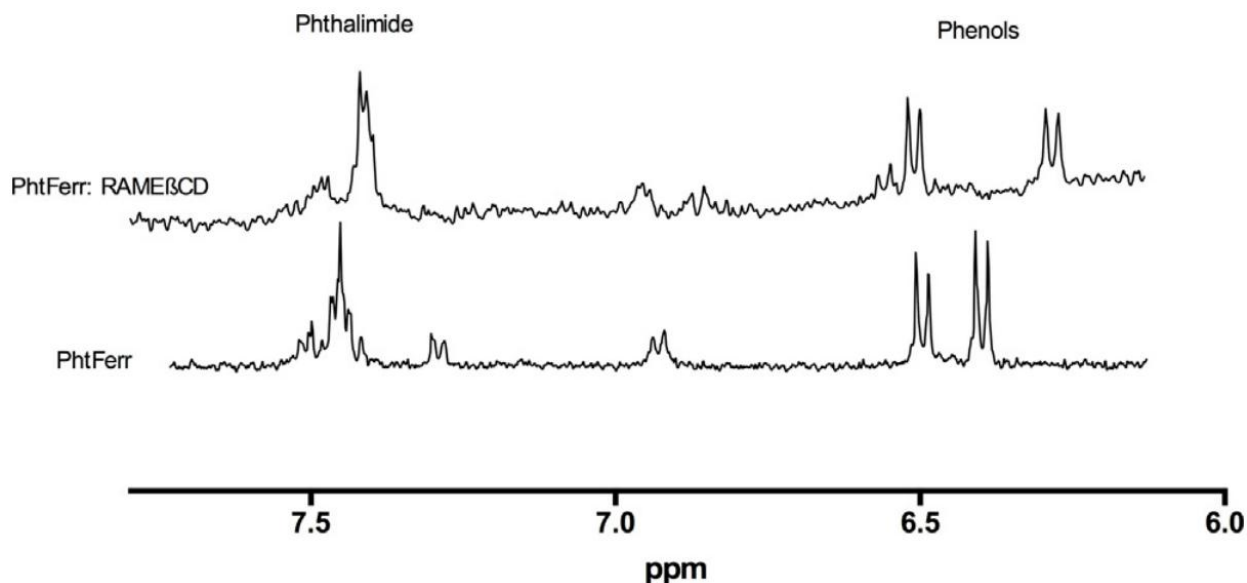


Fig. 6. Partial ¹H-NMR spectra of RAME β CD/PhtFerr and pure PhtFerr in D₂O: DMSO-d₆ (99:1) at pD = 10.9 corresponding to the aromatic ring part (phenols and phthalimidyl).

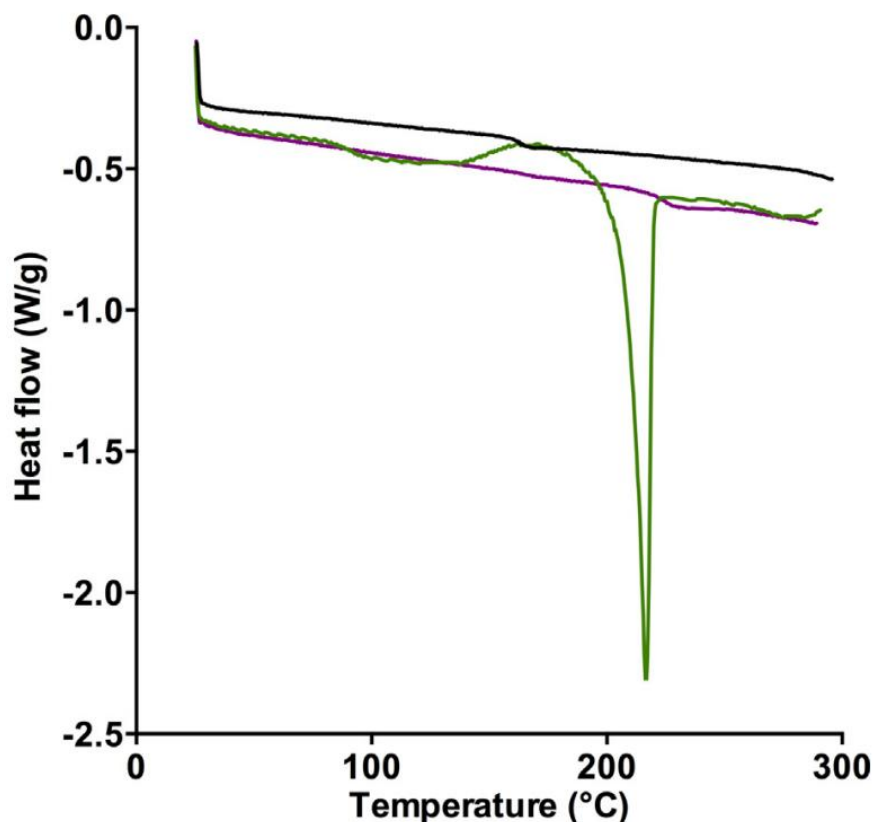
670

3.5. Solid phase analysis

The solid phase analysis of the complexes was performed on these lyophilized samples (frozen overnight at -20 °C and freeze-dried in a SMH15 freeze-drier (Usifroid, 675 Maurepas, France). The concentration of PhtFerr determined by HPLC was 3.51 ± 0.10 mg/g.

The DSC and XRD are widely used to study the complexation of this kind of compound. In fact, these analytical methods were used to ascertain the inclusion process in solid complexes obtained by freeze-drying.

680 The DSC profile (Figure 7) of pure RAME β CD exhibited a large endothermic event from 90 to 140°C, attributed to the evaporation of the absorbed water, whereas the melting point of PhtFerr occurred at 216°C. The DSC profile of the two raw materials, compared to the thermogram of the PhtFerr:RAME β CD, confirms that there was a real inclusion of the PhtFerr into the RAME β CD; the formation of an inclusion complex is suggested by 685 the absence of both melting endotherms in the DSC thermogram of the complex. This was already described for other drugs, such as melarsoprol (Gibaud et al., 2005) or zolpidem (Trapani et al., 2000).



690 Fig. 7. DSC curves for PhtFerr, PhtFerr:RAME β CD and RAME β CD.

The XRD (Figure 8) also demonstrated the formation of an amorphous inclusion complex between RAME β CD and PhtFerr. The diffractogram of pure PhtFerr exhibited numerous peak characteristics of its crystalline form, its high and rising background is due to fluorescence as iron present in PhtFerr fluoresces in the X-rays produced by a copper target (Tahri et al., 2012). RAME β CD showed only a broad amorphous band.

The diffraction pattern of PhtFerr:RAME β CD shows no Bragg peaks as the compound is amorphous. Furthermore, no sign of crystalline PhtFerr is present in the complex. PhtFerr is present but it has lost its crystalline state and may be present as isolated molecules.

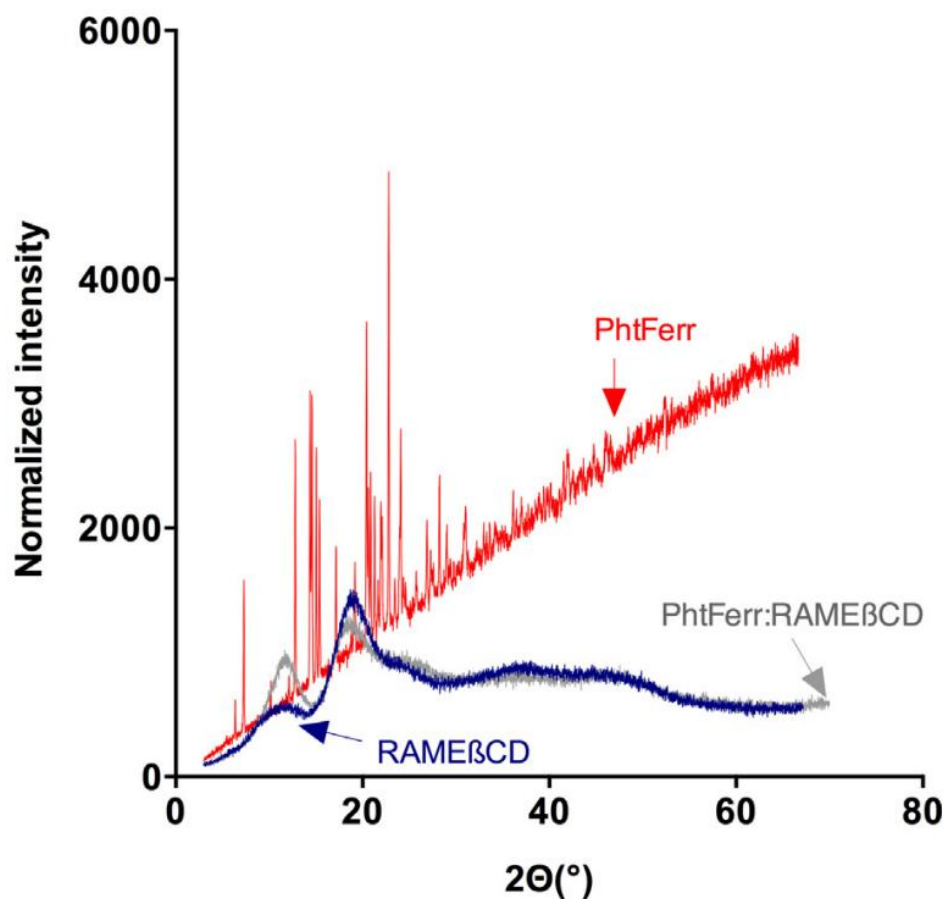
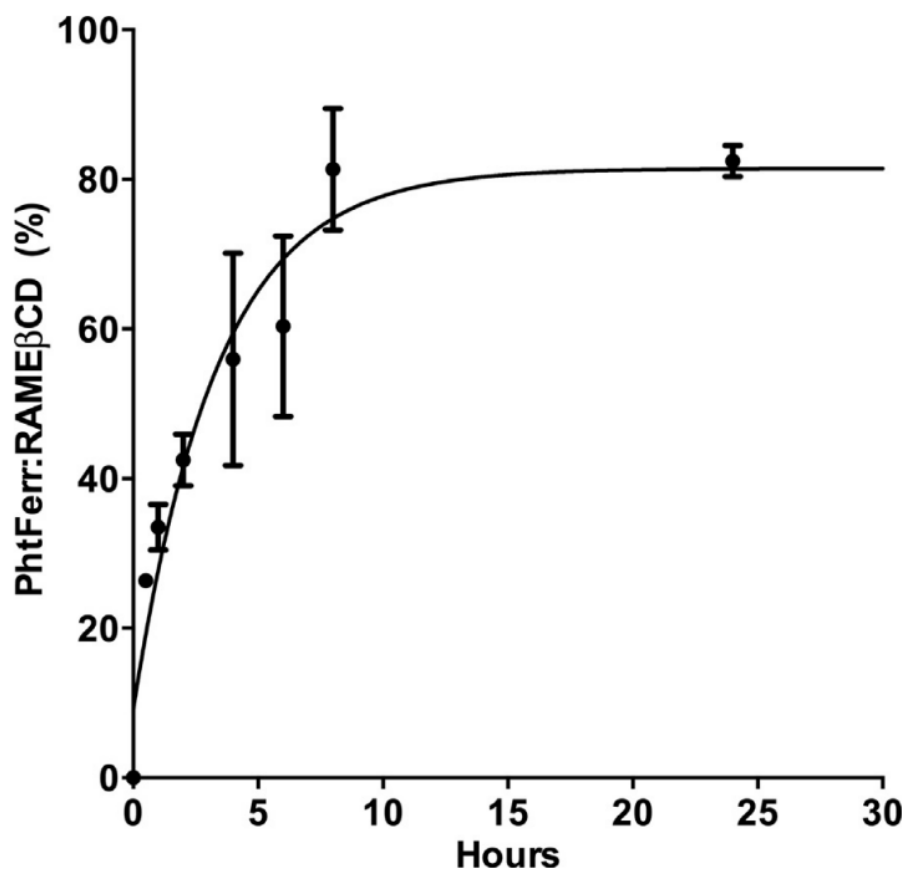


Fig. 8. XRD diffraction spectra of PhtFerr, PhtFerr:RAME β CD and RAME β CD.

705 3.6. Pharmaceutical properties

3.6.1. Dissolution and diffusibility studies of PhtFerr:RAME β CD and HP β CD complexes

710 The aim of this work was to develop a soluble formulation of PhtFerr. Therefore, the dissolution profile and the diffusibility are key pharmaceutical parameters. An immediate dissolution of PhtFerr:RAME β CD was observed in water (100%). However, pure PhtFerr cannot be dissolved and was not detectable. Another experiment was realized in a dialysis bag to take into account the diffusibility properties of the complex. Figure 9
715 illustrates the dissolution profile obtained with PhtFerr:RAME β CD. The diffusion of the complex through the dialysis membrane was quite slow, but more than 70% are in the external phase after 8 h.



720 Fig. 9. Dialysis of PhtFerr:RAMEβCD in a dialysis bag (final concentration : 5 mg/ 500 ml)—cutoff
14,000 Da.

3.6.2. *In vitro* cytotoxicity of PhtFerr:RAMEβCD for U87 cell lines

In vitro cytotoxicity of PhtFerr:RAMEβCD for U87 cell lines (Figure 10) was very low,
725 indicating a very good cytotoxic activity compared to the Fc-diOH ($IC_{50} = 0.5 \mu M$)
(unpublished work). Moreover, the growth inhibition of cells exposed to
PhtFerr:RAMEβCD ($0.028 \pm 0.007 \mu M$) was similar to that of the free PhtFerr ($0.018 \pm$
 $0.003 \mu M$). The slightly higher value of PhtFerr:RAMEβCD could be explained by the
730 protection of the ferrocenyl moiety, which is considered as the pharmacologically active
group (Hillard et al., 2010; Jaouen and Top, 2013). Our results suggest that the
complexation of PhtFerr by RAMEβCD does not impair its pharmacological activity.
Hence, the CDs complexes of PhtFerr are good candidates for the treatment of glioma.

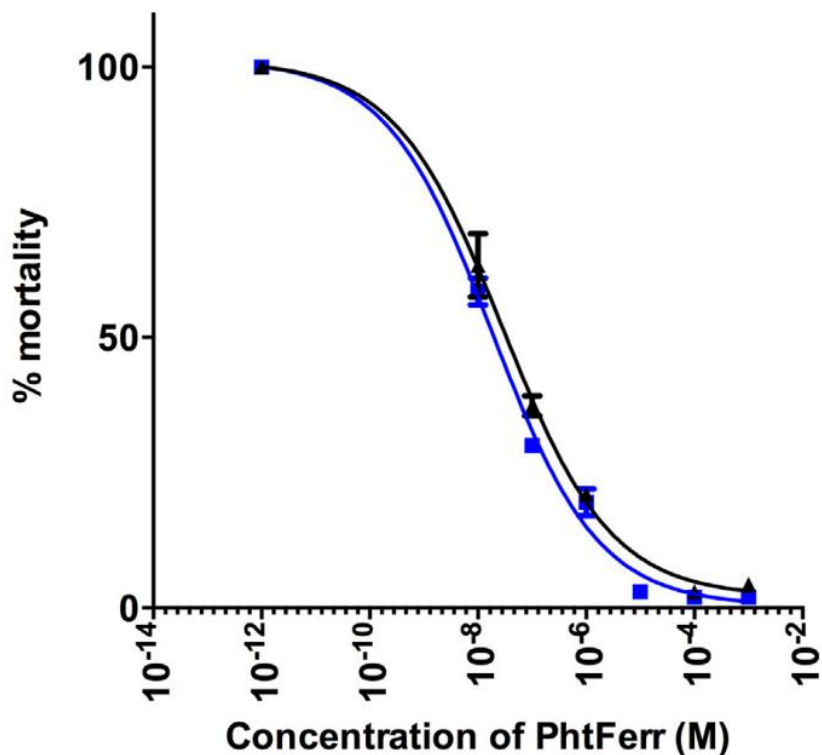


Fig. 10. Cytotoxicity of PhtFerr (-▲-) and PhtFerr:RAMEβCD(-■-): representative cytotoxicity dose response curves.

735

3.5.3. Hemolytic activity

Methylated CDs are known to have hemolytic properties (Jodál et al., 1988).

The comparison of hemolytic properties between the free drug and the complex is necessary before any injection. In our experiment, PhtFerr:RAMEβCD was slightly more hemolytic than PhtFerr (Figure 11), but in any case, the maximal concentration leading to the absence of hemolytic activity was 10 μM. This concentration is high compared to the IC₅₀ (0.028 ± 0.007 μM), and we consider that an intravenous administration is possible.

An oral administration is also possible with this kind of complex, but the intestinal absorption needs to be investigated.

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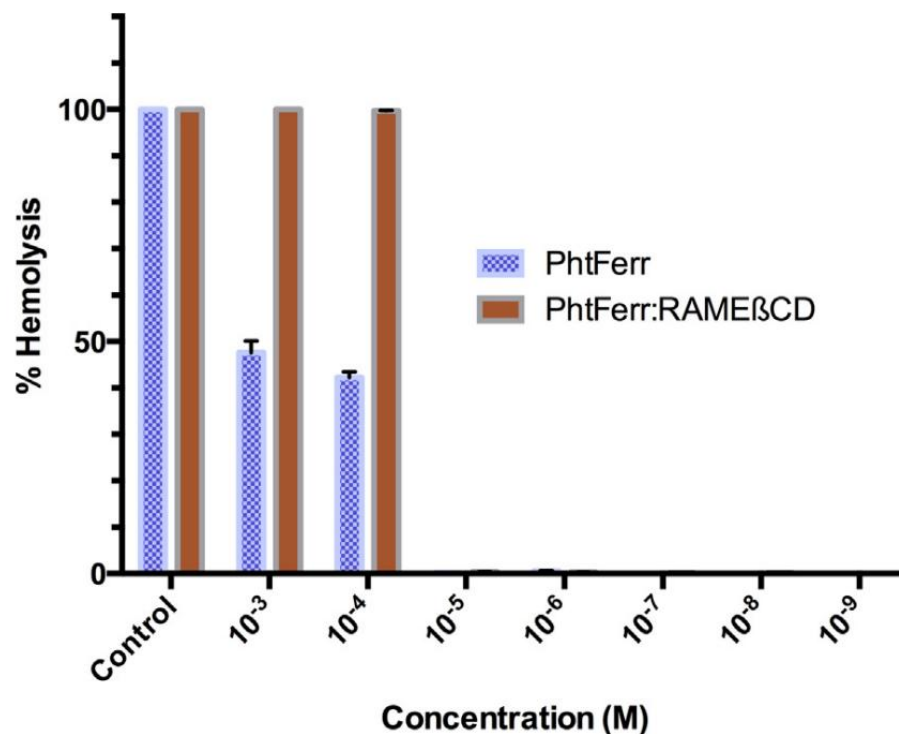


Fig. 11. Hemolysis properties of PhtFerr and PhtFerr:RAMEβCD after 1 h incubation-doses ranging from 10⁻³M to 10⁻⁹M. Data are expressed in percentage of hemolysis compared to the positive control (100%). Triton X-100 (1%) was used as positive control.

Conclusion

PhtFerr is very lipophilic and has a complex structure that, at first glance, could be complexed by 4 CDs. This kind of complex has rarely been completely studied, as many interactions can occur leading to a complex interpretation. The complete insolubility in water (i.e., below detectable concentration with usually analytical methods) increases the difficulty of its characterization.

The first experiment usually done to test the solubilization properties of CDs is the phase-solubility study initially described by Higuchi and Connors in 1965 (Higuchi and Connors, 1965). The best effect was obtained with methylated CDs and confirmed the results obtained by Buriez et al. (Buriez et al., 2008), who have demonstrated that the complexation of the ferrocene moiety is due to its very high lipophilicity.

It is also well known that methylated CDs have good solubilization properties. This solubility increases as the number of methyl groups reaches approximately 13-14 and then decreases as the number of substituents approaches 21 (Szente and Szejtli, 1999).

770 The phase-solubility experiment also demonstrated that the complexation does not have a 1:1 stoichiometry. This was not surprising because at least 3 other moieties could interact with the PhtFerr, but this possibility has not been previously demonstrated.

Molecular modeling can provide accurate information about the inclusion process
775 (Stefano Alcaro and Ortuso, 2004). The inclusion of all moieties at the same time (i.e., ferrocene, phthalimidylpropyl, 2 phenols) is not possible due to the steric hindrance of the 1:4 system. The 1:3 systems are possible but do not seem very relevant; the hindrance leads to less deep inclusion into the CD cavity. However, various 1:2 and 1:1 complexes seem mostly present in aqueous solutions.

780 Some experiments have confirmed our hypothesis. First, an interaction of the phenol, phthalimidylpropyl and ferrocenyl groups have been observed in our NMR experiment. Second, the inclusion of the phthalimidylpropyl was detected using UV-vis spectrophotometry with an apparent 1:1 interaction observed by the Benesi-Hildebrand method.

785 The final PhtFerr:RAME β CD was freeze-dried and tested for its pharmaceutical properties. The complex is readily soluble in water and keeps its pharmacological activity against U87 tumor cells ($IC_{50} = 0.028 \pm 0.007 \mu\text{M}$ vs. $0.018 \pm 0.003 \mu\text{M}$ for PhtFerr). Nevertheless, the intravenous administration of this kind of complex can be
790 limited by the hemolytic properties of methylated cyclodextrins. Hence, hemolysis was assessed and observed above 10^{-4} M. Due to the strong efficiency of PhtFerr, we think that it is possible to maintain the concentration of CD below 10^{-5} M. Blood brain barrier transport (BBB) is another hurdle. It is well known that pure CDs cannot cross the blood brain barrier. In the case of complexes, CDs increase the
795 permeability by increasing the drug solubility (Vyas and Saraf, 2008), making the drug available at the surface of the of biological barrier. Even after the necessary

dissociation, the molecular mass of PhtFerr (583 Da) can limit the BBB transport: the concept of molecular mass threshold (400 – 600 Da) limiting BBB transport was advanced by Levin et al. (1980); nevertheless, there are occasional exceptions such
800 as 2',7'-bis(2-carboxyethyl)-5(6)-carboxyfluorescein tetraacetoxymethyl ester (BCECF-AM), which has a molecular mass of 809 Da (Hirohashi et al., 1997; Pardridge, 1998) and crosses the BBB.

This complex must be tested in further experiments on a murine glioma model.

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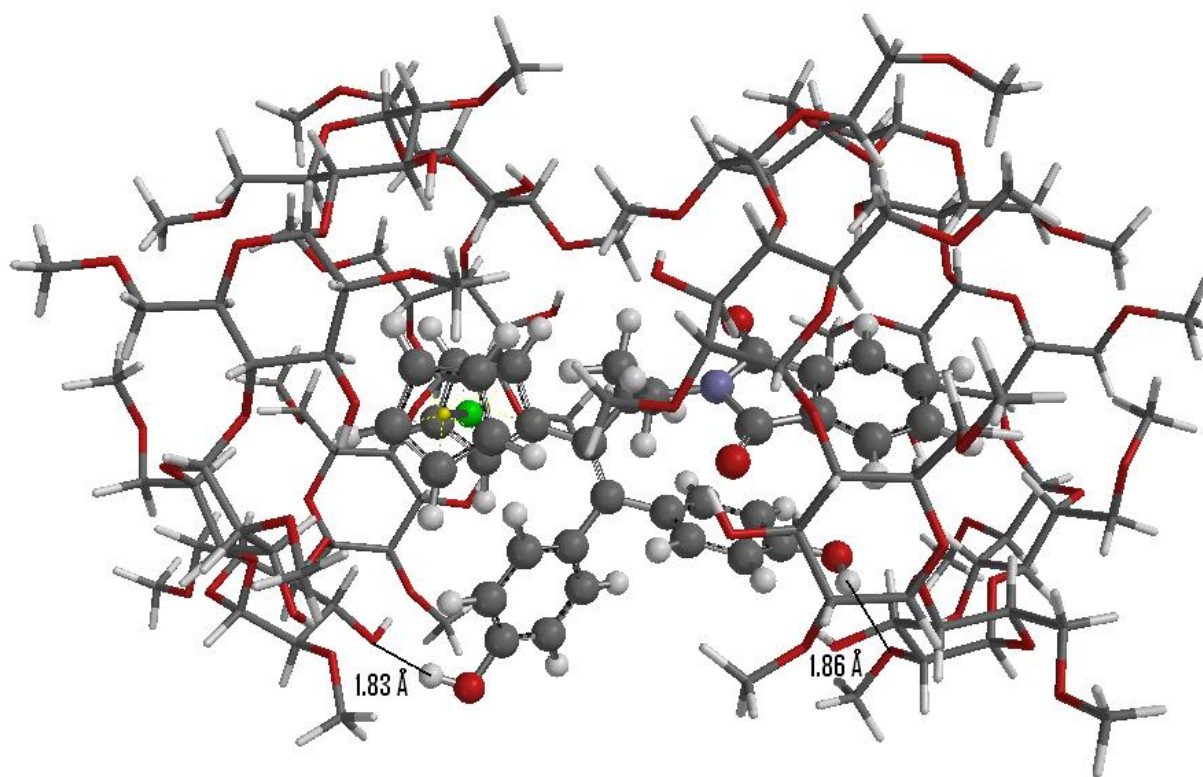
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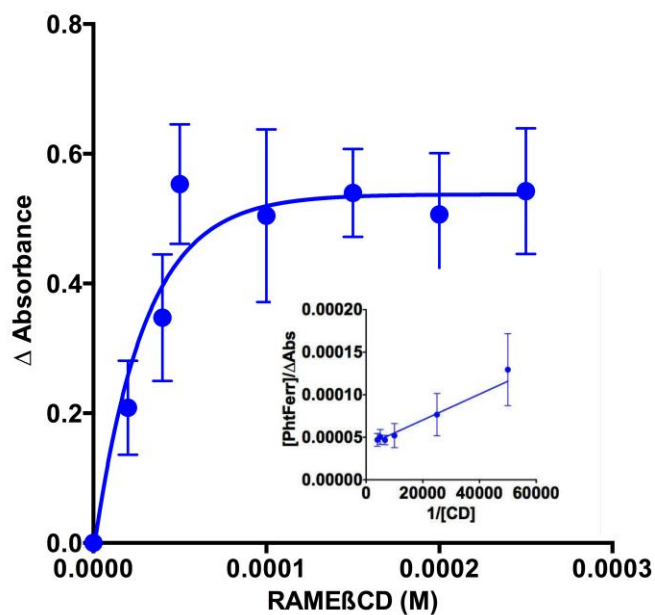
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Supporting information



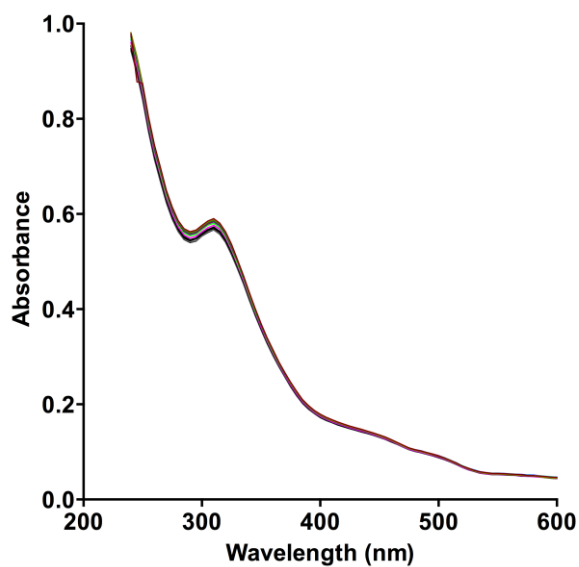
Supplementary Fig. 1. Inclusion of ferrocenyl and phthalimidyl groups with two CD (DMβCD, wide side), with indication of the hydrogen bonds between the phenol groups and the CD.

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Supplementary Fig. 2. Mole-ratio titration plots of PhtFerr (2.5×10^{-5} M in 1% (v/v) DMSO/water) by RAME β CD. The formation of the complex was monitored at 310 nm. Inset: Double reciprocal plots (Benesi-Hildebrand plots).

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Supplementary Fig. 3. Spectra of PhtFerr ($2.5 \cdot 10^{-5}$ M). The first spectrum was obtained in water with 1%DMSO. The addition of various amount of HP β CD produced a hyperchromic effect especially at 310 nm.