

## Hydrogen Peroxide Adducts

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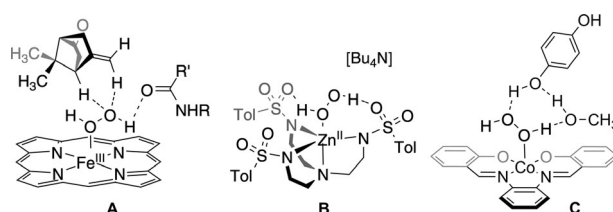
## Hydrogen Peroxide Coordination to Cobalt(II) Facilitated by Second-Sphere Hydrogen Bonding

Christian M. Wallen, Lukáš Palatinus, John Bacsá, and Christopher C. Scarborough\*

**Abstract:**  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adducts have been postulated as intermediates in biological and industrial processes; however, only one observable  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adduct has been reported, where  $M$  is redox-inactive zinc. Herein, direct solution-phase detection of an  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adduct with a redox-active metal, cobalt(II), is described. This  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  compound is made observable by incorporating second-sphere hydrogen-bonding interactions between bound  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and the supporting ligand, a trianionic trisulfonamido ligand. Thermodynamics of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  binding and decay kinetics of the  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species are described, as well as the reaction of this  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species with Group 2 cations.

Hydrogen peroxide is an attractive and green industrial oxidant that is readily prepared from  $\text{H}_2$  and  $\text{O}_2$ .<sup>[1,2]</sup> Applications of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  include bleaching of cotton and wood pulp<sup>[3,4]</sup> and oxygenation of propylene to propylene oxide.<sup>[5]</sup> Oxidations by  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  often employ metal catalysts, possibly involving  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  intermediates, as such adducts have been computationally<sup>[6–9]</sup> and kinetically<sup>[10–13]</sup> implicated. An  $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species has been proposed in cytochromes P450 as or en route to the ill-defined “second oxidant”, the key intermediate in a minor oxidation pathway typically overshadowed by the canonical pathway proceeding through Compound I.<sup>[14–17]</sup> A computational study by Shaik et al.<sup>[18]</sup> predicted that longevity of  $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adducts in cytochromes P450 is increased when hydrogen-bonding interactions are present between bound  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and basic moieties in the active-site pocket (**A**, Figure 1). In 2015, we reported the first  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adduct, a  $\text{Zn}^{\text{II}}$  species (**B**, Figure 1), made observable by incorporating second-sphere hydrogen-bonding interactions between  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and a trianionic trisulfonamido ancillary ligand.<sup>[19]</sup> Given the presence of a redox-active metal in the putative  $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species in cytochromes P450, we became interested in studying the viability of coordination of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  to redox-active metals. Herein, we detail the first observable  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adduct bearing a redox-active metal.

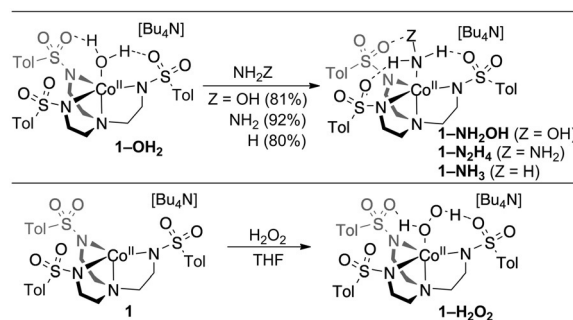
The disproportionation of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  into  $\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  is accelerated by redox-active metals,<sup>[1]</sup> so we anticipated that analogues of **B** incorporating redox-active metals would be



**Figure 1.** Computed structure<sup>[18]</sup> demonstrating the importance of hydrogen bonding in an  $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species in cytochromes P450 (**A**); the first  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  coordination compound (**B**);<sup>[19]</sup> and a calculated  $\text{Co}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  intermediate in aerobic hydroquinone oxidation (**C**).<sup>[9]</sup>

shorter-lived. We chose to explore a  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}$  analogue of **B**, as a  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species (**C**, Figure 1) had recently been computationally implicated as reactive for oxidation of hydroquinone to benzoquinone.<sup>[9]</sup> As described below, our observed  $\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  species is shorter-lived than **B**, but its accessibility corroborates the existence of  $M(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2)$  adducts with redox-active metals and provides a platform for developing catalysts for oxidation reactions with  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .

We initiated our studies with  $[\text{Bu}_4\text{N}][(\text{Ts}_3\text{tren})\text{Co}^{\text{II}}]$  (**1**) and  $[\text{Bu}_4\text{N}][(\text{Ts}_3\text{tren})\text{Co}^{\text{II}}(\text{OH}_2)]$  (**1-OH<sub>2</sub>**)<sup>[20]</sup> (Scheme 1;



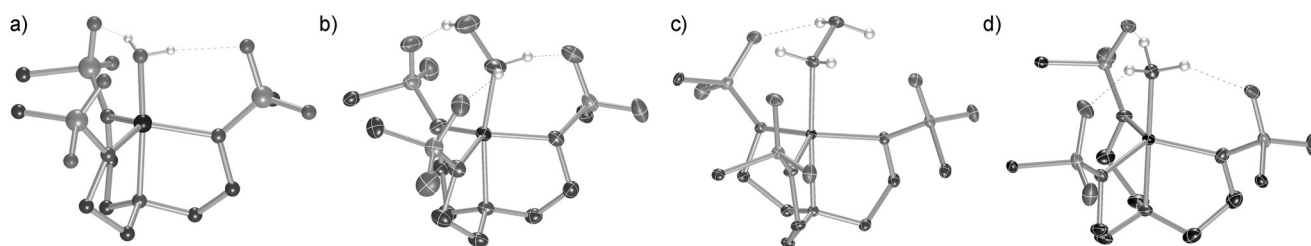
**Scheme 1.** Synthesis of **1** and **1-L**. Yields are of crystalline product.

$(\text{Ts}_3\text{tren})^{3-}$  is the ancillary ligand on  $\text{Zn}^{\text{II}}$  in **B**, Figure 1). The  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  ligand in **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** is readily displaced by  $\text{NH}_2\text{OH}$ ,  $\text{N}_2\text{H}_4$ , or  $\text{NH}_3$  to afford **1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH**, **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>**, and **1-NH<sub>3</sub>**, respectively. X-ray crystallographic characterization of these species<sup>[35]</sup> revealed the presence of hydrogen-bonding interactions between the sulfonyl oxygen atoms and the axial-ligand protons (Figure 2), including the protons of the distal heteroatom in  $\text{N}_2\text{H}_4$  and  $\text{NH}_2\text{OH}$ . **1** and **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** are differentiated by electronic absorption spectroscopy,<sup>[20]</sup> however, **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** is not distinguishable from its 5-coordinate nitrogenous analogues **1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH**, **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>**, and **1-NH<sub>3</sub>** by this technique

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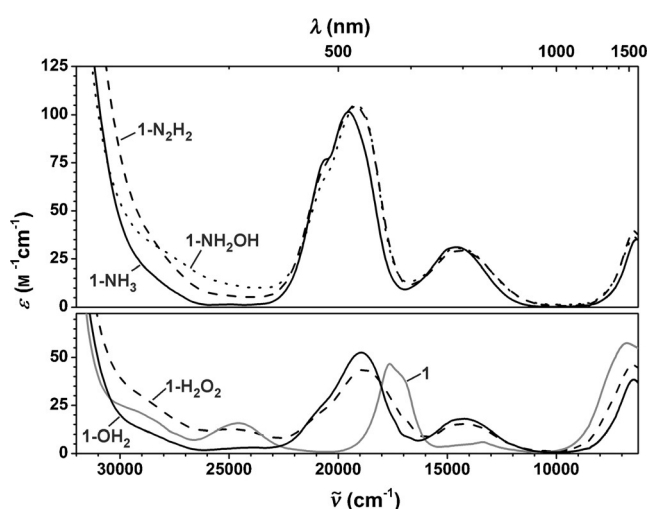
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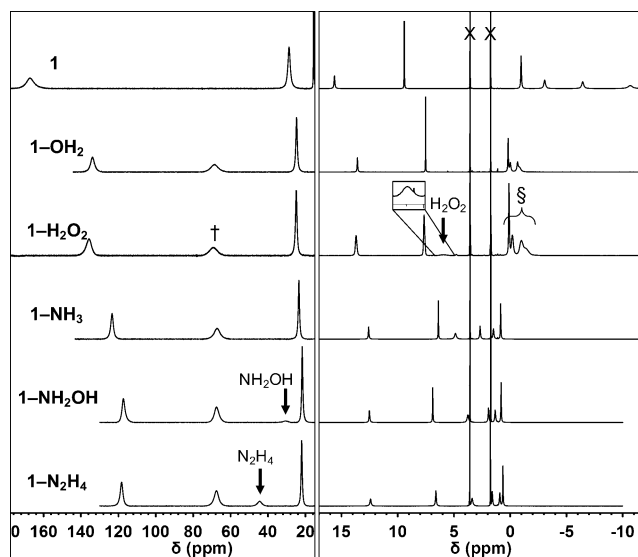
**Figure 2.** Structures of the anions in **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** (a), **1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH** (b), **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>** (c), and **1-NH<sub>3</sub>** (d) in the crystalline state, demonstrating intramolecular hydrogen bonding with the axial ligand ([Bu<sub>4</sub>N]<sup>+</sup> ions omitted).<sup>[35]</sup> Tolly groups of the (Ts<sub>3</sub>tren)<sup>3-</sup> ligand are truncated for clarity. Only hydrogen atoms of the axial ligands are shown. **1-OH<sub>2</sub>**, which is very similar to a complex reported by Borovik et al.,<sup>[22]</sup> is an incommensurately modulated structure and is therefore represented as a ball-and-stick model.

except by band intensity, where complexes with axial nitrogen ligands show more intense d-d transitions than **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Electronic absorption spectra of **1-NH<sub>3</sub>**, **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>**, **1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH**, **1-OH<sub>2</sub>**, **1**, and **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>**.

In 2015, we reported a method for accessing anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in THF.<sup>[19]</sup> Although we have not encountered problems with such solutions, they should be handled with care, as formation of radicals and/or organic peroxides is possible, particularly upon heating or irradiation. Addition of anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in THF to **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** did not result in any notable changes in the electronic absorption spectrum, and addition of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to **1** provided an absorption spectrum of a five-coordinate Co<sup>II</sup> species that was indistinguishable from that of **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** (Figure 3). Despite the redox potential of **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** (+78 mV vs. Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>),<sup>[20]</sup> no cobalt oxidation products were spectroscopically observable on addition of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to **1** or **1-OH<sub>2</sub>**.<sup>[21]</sup> Generation of 5-coordinate Co<sup>II</sup> on addition of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to **1** is consistent with either formation of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** or formation of **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** as a consequence of immediate H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> disproportionation by Co<sup>II</sup>. Distinguishing between these possibilities required a method of directly detecting H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in these **1**/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solutions. Despite the paramagnetic nature of the complexes studied, <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy

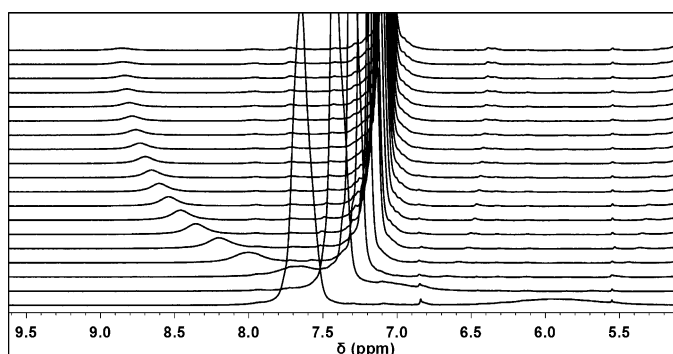


**Figure 4.** <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectra (in [D<sub>8</sub>]THF) of cobalt complexes scaled to show resonances for visible axial ligands (N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, NH<sub>2</sub>OH, and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>), the presence of alkyl-bridge signals in the 5-coordinate complexes (†), and positions of [Bu<sub>4</sub>N]<sup>+</sup> resonances (§), which are dependent on the number of second-sphere hydrogen bonds (0, 2, or 3). Residual [D<sub>8</sub>]THF signals are indicated by X.

proved a viable technique for studying coordination of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to **1** (Figure 4).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR resonances associated with **1-L** were assigned by comparing spectra of related complexes (see the Supporting Information). All 5-coordinate Co<sup>II</sup> species showed a CH<sub>2</sub> resonance near 65 ppm, and the presence of this signal in a solution containing H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and **1** (†, Figure 4) corroborates the electronic absorption data (Figure 3) revealing a 5-coordinate Co<sup>II</sup> ion. The positions of the Bu proton resonances of the [Bu<sub>4</sub>N]<sup>+</sup> counterion are affected by the presence of axial ligands on cobalt. In the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of **1**, the Bu signals are spaced between 1 and –11 ppm, where the large paramagnetic shifting is consistent with interaction between the [Bu<sub>4</sub>N]<sup>+</sup> cation and the cobalt complex in solution, likely through hydrogen bonding between the α-hydrogen atoms on Bu and the sulfonyl oxygen atoms as seen in the solid state. For derivatives **1-L** with three second-sphere hydrogen bonds (**1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH**, **1-NH<sub>3</sub>**, and **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>**) the Bu signals are less paramagnetically shifted (0 to 5 ppm), consistent with axial coordination disrupting hydrogen bond-

ing between the ions in solution. For **1-OH<sub>2</sub>**, which only contains two second-sphere hydrogen bonds, the Bu proton resonances overlap between 1 and –1 ppm. When anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is combined with **1**, the Bu proton resonances appear between 1 and –2 ppm, similar to **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** (S, Figure 4). These data suggest that the axial ligand in a solution of **1** and anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is diprotic, which could be explained by binding of H<sub>2</sub>O or H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. For complexes **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** and **1-NH<sub>3</sub>**, the proton resonances corresponding to the axial ligand are not observable by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy, even upon addition of excess ligand (see the Supporting Information). However, <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of **1-N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>** and **1-NH<sub>2</sub>OH** show signals at 44 ppm and 30 ppm, respectively, corresponding to the axial-ligand protons (Figure 4). The spectrum of a solution of **1** and anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> contains a broad signal at 5.9 ppm (Figure 4). Over time, this signal shifts to 8.8 ppm (closer to that of free H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> at 9.4 ppm) and decreases in intensity following a first-order pathway with a half-life of (353 ± 33) s (Figure 5). This



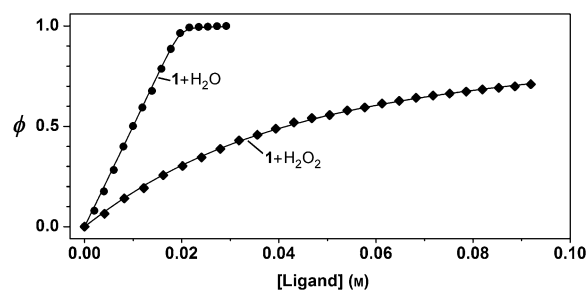
**Figure 5.** Room-temperature decay of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** measured by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy (in [D<sub>8</sub>]THF). The H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resonance shifts from 5.9 ppm to 8.8 ppm. The decay product was confirmed by X-ray crystallography to be **1-OH<sub>2</sub>**.<sup>[35]</sup> The tall signal at 7.7 ppm shifting to 7.1 ppm is a methyl group on the sulfonamidate ligand.

shifted H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resonance is the first direct evidence that H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is binding to Co<sup>II</sup> in **1**, as the <sup>1</sup>H NMR and electronic spectra demonstrate that Co<sup>II</sup> is five-coordinate under these conditions. The decay product of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** was identified as **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** by crystallization of the bulk material. The shifting H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resonance throughout decay of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** points to an equilibrium between free and bound H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> that is perturbed by H<sub>2</sub>O formed upon H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> disproportionation, leading us to examine the equilibrium constants of binding H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O to **1**.

To probe whether H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> binding is perturbed by the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O, H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was added to **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** and its decay monitored by <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectroscopy. Initially, the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resonance appeared at 8.8 ppm (c.f. 5.9 ppm in the absence of H<sub>2</sub>O) and then shifted toward 9.1 ppm [*t*<sub>1/2</sub> = (1190 ± 10) s]. When H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was added to **1-NH<sub>3</sub>**, the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resonance remained at 9.5 ppm and decayed with a half-life of (13700 ± 200) s. These data are consistent with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> disproportionation occurring upon coordination to **1**, and with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> being a weaker ligand for **1** than H<sub>2</sub>O or NH<sub>3</sub>, consistent with descriptions of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> as a very poor ligand.<sup>[23–27]</sup> The first-order decay of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** contrasts the second-order decay mechanism

of **B**, which bears the same ligand and counterion, and at the same starting concentration has a half-life of 10<sup>4</sup> s.<sup>[19]</sup> This comparison suggests that the redox-active nature of M has a dramatic effect on the stability of M(H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) species.

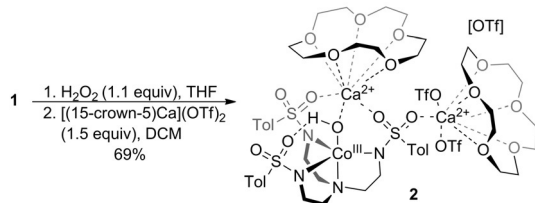
We sought to quantify binding affinities of **1** for H<sub>2</sub>O and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> has been described as a poor ligand<sup>[23–27]</sup> such that its coordination to metals was not unambiguously detected until 2015.<sup>[19]</sup> Prikhodchenko et al. demonstrated that H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is a more effective hydrogen-bond donor than H<sub>2</sub>O, clarifying the importance of second-sphere hydrogen bonding in H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> coordination.<sup>[27–30]</sup> Because of the short lifetime of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>**, we turned to photometric titrations using electronic absorption spectroscopy to determine the binding constants for H<sub>2</sub>O and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> to **1** at –70 °C, as decay of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** cannot be detected within one hour at temperatures below –40 °C by NMR spectroscopy. Titration of **1** with H<sub>2</sub>O or anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in THF at –70 °C afforded the curves shown in Figure 6, from which *K*<sub>eq</sub> values for the coordination of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O to **1** are derived: (31.3 ± 0.2) M<sup>–1</sup> and (31 600 ± 12 600) M<sup>–1</sup> at –70 °C, respectively. These data establish a preference for binding of **1** to H<sub>2</sub>O over H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, where *K*<sub>eq</sub> for displacing H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** by H<sub>2</sub>O at –70 °C is (1010 ± 400) (Δ*G* = –2.8 kcal mol<sup>–1</sup>). To our knowledge, this is the first H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>/metal binding constant measured.



**Figure 6.** Photometric titrations of **1** with H<sub>2</sub>O and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in THF at –70 °C. Data are plotted as fractional saturation vs. concentration of the ligand (H<sub>2</sub>O or H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>). The curves, which are nonlinear fits to the data, enable calculation of *K*<sub>eq</sub> [(3.16 ± 1.26) × 10<sup>4</sup> M<sup>–1</sup> for H<sub>2</sub>O and (31.3 ± 0.2) M<sup>–1</sup> for H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>].

Finally, we probed the reactivity of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>**. Borovik et al. reported that a species closely related to **1** is inert to PhIO, but upon addition of Group 2 ions, oxidation of the Co<sup>II</sup> center by PhIO afforded an isolable Co<sup>III</sup>(μ-OH)Ca<sup>2+</sup> species.<sup>[22]</sup> This transformation may involve a transient Co<sup>IV</sup> intermediate, as redox-inert cations are known to facilitate two-electron oxidation of Co<sup>II</sup> to Co<sup>IV</sup>.<sup>[31,32]</sup> We probed whether Group 2 ions could similarly promote cobalt oxidation and cleavage of the O–O bond of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>**. We have shown that **1** and related species react readily with Group 2 ions to afford heterotrimetallic sandwich compounds.<sup>[20]</sup> Addition of M(OTf)<sub>2</sub> (M = Ca<sup>2+</sup>, Sr<sup>2+</sup>, or Ba<sup>2+</sup>) to **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** resulted in rapid conversion into intensely green products, each with nearly identical electronic absorption spectra. The spectroscopic properties of these green species did not satisfactorily agree with Borovik's report of a red-brown Co<sup>III</sup>(μ-OH)Ca<sup>2+</sup> species;<sup>[22]</sup> however, combination of [(15-crown-5)Ca](OTf)<sub>2</sub>

and **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** afforded X-ray-quality crystals of a Co<sup>III</sup>(μ-OH)Ca<sup>2+</sup> complex (**2**, Scheme 2),<sup>[35]</sup> demonstrating Group 2 ion induced oxidation of Co<sup>II</sup> to Co<sup>III</sup> by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>. The oxidation potential of **1-OH<sub>2</sub>** is +78 mV vs. Fc/Fc<sup>+</sup> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>,<sup>[20]</sup> so the oxidative stability of the Co<sup>II</sup> ion in **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** suggests that one-electron redox processes involving **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** are not preferred.



**Scheme 2.** Reaction of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** with Ca<sup>2+</sup> to form **2**. The crystal structure analysis of **2** is included in the Supporting Information. DCM: dichloromethane.

We expect that the Group 2 ions are brought into close proximity with coordinated H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>**, as we<sup>[20]</sup> and Borovik et al.<sup>[22,33]</sup> have shown that such sulfonyl oxygen atoms bind Group 2 metal ions without significantly impacting the electronic properties of Co<sup>II</sup>. We hypothesize that the Group 2 ion induced oxidative conversion of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** into **2** may involve a transient Co<sup>IV</sup>(oxo)/Ca<sup>2+</sup>(OH<sub>2</sub>) or Co<sup>IV</sup>(OH)/Ca<sup>2+</sup>(OH) species that rapidly reacts with a hydrogen-atom donor, likely THF, to afford the observed Co<sup>III</sup> species **2**. Rapid decomposition of Co<sup>IV</sup> has been demonstrated in the instability of related Co<sup>IV</sup>(oxo)<sup>[22,31,32]</sup> and Co<sup>IV</sup>(nitrido)<sup>[34]</sup> species. Regardless of mechanism, the Group 2 ion induced conversion of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** into **2** provides a new approach to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> activation involving coordination to one metal center and activation by a second metal center. We are currently exploring this dual activation of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> for use in oxidation catalysis.

In summary, we have obtained the first direct evidence for formation of an M(H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) complex with a redox-active metal. Mixing **1** and anhydrous H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> resulted in coordination of an axial ligand to cobalt(II) at temperatures where H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is not disproportionated by **1**, and low-temperature photometric titration of **1** with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> or H<sub>2</sub>O, as well as decay kinetics of **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O, revealed that H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> is a weaker ligand for the Co<sup>II</sup> center in **1** than H<sub>2</sub>O. **1-H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>** is stable to oxidation of the Co<sup>II</sup> center, but addition of [(15-crown-5)Ca](OTf)<sub>2</sub> induced oxidation to afford the Co<sup>III</sup>(μ-OH)Ca<sup>2+</sup> complex **2**. Activation of coordinated H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> by a secondary metal is a novel approach to developing oxidation reactions with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and our efforts on expanding the coordination chemistry of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and exploiting the reactivity of M(H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) adducts are on-going.

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**Keywords:** cobalt · hydrogen bonds · peroxides · peroxido ligands · second-sphere interactions

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