# Supporting information for

### Bio-inspired copper complexes with Cu<sub>2</sub>S cores: (Solvent)Effects on Oxygen

### Reduction Reactions.

Jordan Mangue,<sup>a</sup> Iris Wehrung,<sup>b</sup> Jacques Pécaut,<sup>c</sup> Stéphane Ménage,<sup>a</sup> Maylis Orio<sup>\*b</sup> and

Stéphane Torelli\*<sup>a</sup>

a Univ. Grenoble Alpes, CNRS, CEA, IRIG, Laboratoire de Chimie et Biologie des Métaux, 17 rue des Martyrs, 38054 Grenoble Cedex 9, France.

**b** Aix Marseille Univ. Centrale Med, ISM2, Marseille, France.

<sup>c</sup>Univ. Grenoble Alpes, CEA, CNRS, IRIG, SYMMES, UMR 5819, F-38000 Grenoble, France.

Correspondence should be addressed to stephane.torelli@cea.fr or maylis.orio@univ-amu.fr

## Table of Contents

Experimental section.

Computational details.

Determination of the extinction coefficients of Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> in acetone.

Catalytic experiments and  $H_2O_2$  detection.

Figure S1. ESI spectrum of 6 in acetone.

Figure S2. Selected views for the occupied natural orbital relevant to the Cu–Cu bond in DFToptimized structure of 6.

Figure S3. Selected views for the occupied natural orbital relevant to the Cu–Cu bond of 6 (X-ray crystal structure).

Figure S4. Singly occupied molecular orbital (SOMO, left) and spin density plot (right) of 6 (DFToptimized structure).

Figure S5. Difference electron density sketches of the main TD-DFT calculated absorptions of 6 (DFT-optimized structure).

Figure S6. Solid-state (black) and TD-DFT calculated (red) UV-Vis/NIR spectra of 6 (X-ray crystal structure).

Figure S7. Comparison between the CV curves recorded from the open-circuit potential toward the cathodic (A) and anodic (B) directions for 6 in acetone.

Figure S8. Stack plots of UV-Vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 1 in air-saturated acetone (A) and 6 in air-saturated acetone (B) and MeCN (C) at 298 K by monitoring the absorbance values at 750 nm corresponding to the accumulation of Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup>.

Figure S9. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 1 (1 molar eq.) with LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) and Me $_8$ Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone.

Figure S10. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 1 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me $_8$ Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone.

Figure S11. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) with LutHBF4 (400 molar eq.) and Me $_8$ Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone.

Figure S12. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone.

Figure S13. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) with LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) and Me $_8$ Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated MeCN.

Figure S14. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated MeCN.

Figure S15. H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> calibration curve using the TiO-tpyp reagent and corresponding UV-vis traces.

**Figure S16.** Comparison of the CV curves recorded from the open-circuit potential toward the cathodic (A) and anodic (B) directions for 6 in MeCN.

Figure S17. CVs of 6 (0.7 mM) in acetone at different scan rates and experimental plot of  $\Psi$  vs  $v^{1/2}$  for the redox Cu $^{\text{II}}$ Cu $^{\text{II}}$ Cu $^{\text{II}}$  process in **6**.

Figure S18. CVs of 6 (0.6 mM) in MeCN at different scan rates and experimental plot of  $\Psi$  vs v<sup>-1/2</sup> for the redox  $Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>II</sup>/Cu<sup>II</sup>$  process in 6.

Table S1. Crystal data and structure refinement for 6.

Table S2. Bond length [Å] for 6.

Table S3. Bond angles [deg] for 6

Table S4. NBO analysis of the Cu-Cu bond in mixed-valent Cu<sup>II</sup>-Cu<sup>I</sup> species: Comparison of the results obtained for DFT-optimized and X-ray crystal structures of 6 featuring different metalmetal bond lengths.

Table S5. Mulliken spin population analysis for 6 (DFT-optimized structure).

Table S6. Computed g-values and copper hyperfine coupling constants for 6 (DFT-optimized structure).

Table S7. Theoretical assignments of the main bands of the UV-Vis/NIR spectrum of 6 based on the DFT-optimized structure.

Table S8. Theoretical assignments of the main bands of the UV-Vis/NIR spectrum of 6 based on the X-ray crystal structure.

Table S9. Calculated redox potentials for the Fc<sup>+/0</sup> couple.

Table S10. Calculated redox potential for the Cu(II)Cu(I)/Cu(I)Cu(I) couple of 6 (DFT-optimized structure).

Table S11. ORR experiments performed with 1 and 6 in acetone or MeCN at room temperature using Me $_8$ Fc and LutHBF<sub>4</sub> as electron and proton sources.

Table S12. Crystal data and structure refinement for II.

Table S13. Bond length [Å] for II.

Table S14. Bond angles [deg] for II

#### Cartesian coordinates from DFT calculations

#### Experimental section

All chemicals are from Acros Organics, Merck, or Lancaster. Acroseal<sup>®</sup> purity solvents were used for air-sensitive experiments. Complex 1 was prepared according to our reported procedure.<sup>1</sup> LutHBF<sub>4</sub>, Me<sub>8</sub>Fc, Me<sub>2</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup>, Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> and Me<sub>10</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> were prepared according to reported procedures.<sup>2-</sup> <sup>4</sup> Air-sensitive materials were manipulated in an Argon flushed glove box (O<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O < 2 ppm). Electrospray ionization mass spectrometry (ESI-MS) spectra were recorded with a Bruker Daltonics Esquire 3000 Plus device. X-ray crystallography data were acquired at 150 K using an Oxford-diffraction XCalibur S diffractometer with graphite monochromated MoK $\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda$  = 0.71073 Å). Molecular structure was solved by direct methods and refined on  $F^2$  by full matrix least squares techniques using SHELX TL package. All non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically, and hydrogen atoms were placed in ideal positions and refined as riding atoms with individual isotropic displacement parameters. **X-band EPR** spectra were obtained on a Bruker EMX spectrometer equipped with an Oxford ESR 910 cryostat for low temperature studies. The microwave frequency was calibrated with a frequency counter and the magnetic field with an NMR gaussmeter. Spectra were analyzed with the WIN-EPR software and numerical simulation was conducted using the Matlab toolbox EasySpin  $5.2.3<sup>5</sup>$  Electrochemical experiments were performed in an argon-flushed glove box. A three-electrode setup was used, and consists of a glassy carbon (3mm in diameter) disk as a working electrode, a platinum wire serves as auxiliary electrode and a leakless Ag/AgCl electrode (Model ET069 from EDAQ) as reference electrode directly dipped into the solution. Cyclic voltammograms were recorded with a Bio-logic SP-300 potentiostat piloted by the EC-Lab software. All measurements were externally referenced to ferrocene. Solution UV-Vis/NIR spectra were recorded on a Perkin Elmer Lambda 1050 Spectrophotometer operating at room temperature equipped with appropriate optic fibres and connected to a glovebox. Spectral adjustments were performed using the Origin software. Solidstate UV-Vis/NIR spectra were acquired on a Perkin Elmer Lambda 1050 Spectrophotometer

operating at room temperature equipped with a 150 nm integration sphere. Kinetics were recorded with a Lambda 465 (PerkinElmer) diode array spectrophotometer and  $H_2O_2$ concentrations were determined according to the procedure described below using a Shimadzu 1800 device.

Evaluation of the electron self-exchange rate constants  $k_{el}$  and  $k_{hom}$ . The method of Nicholson<sup>6</sup> was used to determine the standard electrochemical electron self-exchange rate constant kel (cm s <sup>-1</sup>) for 6 (Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>I</sup>  $\rightarrow$  Cu<sup>I</sup>Cu<sup>I</sup> monoelectronic reduction process). k<sub>el</sub> can be obtained, under "quasireversible" conditions, from:

$$
\Psi = k_{\rm el} (D_{\rm R}/D_{\rm O})^{\alpha/2} (RT/nFTD_{\rm R})^{1/2}/v^{1/2}
$$

Where n is the number of electrons exchanged  $(1 \text{ in this case})$ , v is the potential scan rate (V s -1),  $\alpha$  is the transfer coefficient, and  $\pi$ , F, R, and T have their usual significance. D<sub>R</sub> and D<sub>O</sub> are the diffusion coefficients of the reduced and oxidized species in each solvent. D<sub>R</sub> values of 7.7(2)⋅10<sup>-6</sup> cm<sup>2</sup>s<sup>-1</sup> and 7.1(3)⋅10<sup>-6</sup>⋅cm<sup>2</sup>⋅s<sup>-1</sup> where obtained in acetone and MeCN, respectively using the Randles-Sevcik equation:

$$
i_p = 2.69 \cdot 10^5 \times n^{3/2} \times A \times C \times (D \cdot v)^{1/2}
$$
 at 25°C

where  $i_p$  is the current maximum in amps, n is the number of electrons transferred in the redox event (1 in our case), A is the electrode area in cm2, C in the concentration of the given complex, D is the diffusion coefficient of the complex in cm<sup>2</sup>⋅s<sup>-1</sup> and v is the scan rate in V⋅s<sup>-1</sup>.

Confirmation that  $D_0 \approx D_R$  was obtained in both solvents from the nearly identical values of i<sub>pa</sub> and i<sub>pc</sub>. (D<sub>R</sub>/D<sub>O</sub>)<sup> $\alpha$ /2</sup> was consequently set to 1.

Cyclic voltammograms of 6 (0.7 mM in acetone + 0.1 M Bu<sub>4</sub>NPF<sub>6</sub> and 0.6 mM in MeCN + .1 M Bu<sub>4</sub>NPF<sub>6</sub>) were recorded at different potential scan rates in the appropriate potential region (Figures S17 and S18). Under these conditions, an increase of ∆Ep as a function of v was observed (from 130 to 180 mV in the 0.025 – 0.4 V s<sup>-1</sup> range in acetone and from 77 to 88 mV in the 0.05 – 0.4 V s<sup>-1</sup> range in MeCN). For each ΔEp value, Ψ can be calculated using the empirical equation:<sup>7</sup>

#### Ψ = (-0.6288+0.0021n∆Ep)/(1-0.017n∆Ep)

From all that, plotting  $\Psi$  vs  $v^{1/2}$  allows an estimate of  $k_{el}$  in both solvents (Figures S17 ad S18)

Then, the homogeneous electron self-exchange rate constant khom can be calculated as it is correlated with  $k_{el}$  as described by Weaver<sup>8</sup> by:

$$
k_{\text{hom}} = 4\pi \times N_A \times rh^2 \times k_{\text{el}} 10^{-19}
$$

where  $N_A$  is the Avogadro constant (mol-1) and rh is the internuclear distance for self-exchange  $(A)$ . The value of rh was set to 2r (14 Å), where r is the radius of 6, approximated to a sphere from the X-ray crystal structure.

#### Computational details.

All theoretical calculations were based on the Density Functional Theory (DFT) and were performed with the ORCA program package.<sup>9, 10</sup> Full geometry optimizations were carried out using the BP86 functional<sup>11, 12</sup> in combination with the def2-TZVP basis sets<sup>13</sup> for all atoms. Increased integration grids (Grid2 in ORCA convention) and tight SCF convergence criteria were used. To resemble the experimental conditions as closely as possible, all calculations including geometry optimizations were performed in acetone solvent by invoking the Control of the Conductor-like Polarizable Continuum Model (CPCM).<sup>14</sup> To ensure that the resulting structures converged to a local minimum on the potential energy surface, frequency calculations were performed and resulted in only positive normal vibrations. The Gibbs free energies were computed from the optimized structures as a sum of electronic energy, solvation, and thermal corrections to the free energy. Redox potentials were obtained from the calculated free energy change between oxidized and reduced species in solution. They are relative potentials referenced to the ferrocene couple and, as such, a computed value of 4.893 V was subtracted to make direct comparisons to experimental data.<sup>15</sup> NBO analysis was performed using the Gaussian09 package<sup>16</sup> with inclusion of the 3-center bond option in the search algorithm.<sup>17, 18</sup> Electronic structures were obtained from single-point DFT calculations using the B3LYP functional<sup>19, 20</sup>

together with the def2-TZVP basis sets.<sup>13</sup> EPR parameters, namely  $q$ -tensors, were obtained from single-point calculations using a modified version of B3PW91 $^{19, 21}$ , with 40% exact (Hartree–Fock) exchange.<sup>22</sup> The large aug-cc-pVTZ-Jmod basis set<sup>23</sup> was applied for the metal center while the def2-TZVP basis sets<sup>13</sup> were used for all other atoms. Hyperfine tensors were obtained from single-point calculations using the B3PW91 functional<sup>19, 21</sup> together with the aug-cc-pVTZ-Jmod basis set<sup>23</sup> for the metal center and the def2-TZVP basis sets<sup>13</sup> for all other atoms. UV-vis spectral features were predicted using TD-DFT using the CAM-B3LYP functional<sup>19, 20, 24</sup> and the def2-TZVP basis sets.<sup>13</sup> Vertical electronic transitions were calculated using time-dependent DFT within the Tamm-Dancoff approximation (TDA).25-28 To increase computational efficiency, the RI approximation<sup>29</sup> was used in calculating the Coulomb term, and at least 70 excited states were calculated in each case. Spin density plots, molecular orbitals as well as difference density plots for each transition were generated using the orca plot utility program and were visualized with the Chemcraft program (http://chemcraftprog.com).

Determination of the extinction coefficients of Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> in acetone. Electron-transfer oxidation of Me8Fc in acetone with cerium(IV) ammonium nitrate (CAN) was performed in a UV cell at 298 K. A ε values of 460 M<sup>-1</sup>cm<sup>-1</sup> at 750 nm for Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> was determined with Beer's Law.

Catalytic  $H_2O_2$  production, detection and quantification. The formation of Me<sub>8</sub>Fc<sup>+</sup> in the presence of 1 or 6 and 2,6-lutidinium tetrafluoroborate (LutHBF4) was monitored in air-saturated acetone or MeCN at 298 K by visible absorption spectroscopy. In a typical experiment (1/40/400 Cat/Me<sub>8</sub>Fc/LutH), an air-saturated solution of LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (25 µL, 2.0 M, 50 µmol, 400 molar eq.) was added to an air-saturated solution of Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (2.225 mL, 2.24 mM, 4.98  $\mu$ mol, 40 molar eq.) in a septum-sealed quartz cuvette (1 cm). An Ar-saturated solution of 1 or 6 (250  $\mu$ L, 0.5mM, 0.125 µmol, 1 molar eq.) was then added. Kinetics traces at  $\lambda_{\sf max}$ <sup>Me8Fc+</sup> ( $\lambda_{\sf max}$  = 785 nm,  $\varepsilon$  = 390 M<sup>-1</sup> cm<sup>-1</sup>

8

in MeCN and 460  $M^{-1}$  cm<sup>-1</sup> in acetone) were monitored using a Lambda 465 (PerkinElmer) diode array spectrophotometer. Control experiments were performed in an identical manner by adding 250  $\mu$ L of MeCN or  $\lceil Cu(CH_3CN)_4 \rceil$ OTf at 1 mM (to take into account the dinuclearity of 1 and 6). All the experiments were triplicated, yielding highly reproducible data (95% identity). The amount of hydrogen peroxide produced was determined by spectroscopic titration with an acidic solution of TiO(tpypH<sub>4</sub>)<sup>4+</sup> complex (TiO-tpyp reagent).<sup>30, 31</sup> The TiO-tpyp reagent (~4.5. 10<sup>-5</sup> M) was prepared by dissolving 3.45 mg of the [TiO(tpyp)] complex (≥90%, from TCI) in 100 mL of 0.05 M HCl(aq) and stored at 277 K. A small portion (15  $\mu$ L) of each sample solution (collected after observing stable absorbance values along time) was added to a mixture of TiO-tpyp reagent (250 µL), 4.8 M perchloric acid (250 µL) and water (235 µL). The resulting solution was stirred for 5 min at 298 K. After dilution to 2.5 mL with distilled water, the solution was transferred in a quartz UVvis cell (1 mm) and the absorbance at  $\lambda$  = 433 nm was read using a Shimadzu 1800 device. For the blank experiments, MeCN  $(15 \mu)$  was used in place of the reaction mixture. All the experiments were triplicated (97% identity). The  $H_2O_2$  content for sample (n) follows:



A calibration curve (Fig S14) was independently obtained using the same procedure (1 mm cuvette) and  $H_2O_2$  solutions (prepared by cascade dilutions of commercial 30%  $H_2O_2$  titrated at 9.8 M with the KMnO<sub>4</sub> method.<sup>30</sup> The obtained ΔA values ( $\Delta$ Acal<sub>(n)</sub>) were plotted against H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> concentration in the final sample,  $[H_2O_2]_{final\_sample}(\mu M)$ , giving the following calibration curve equation:



Based on eqn. 2, the amount of hydrogen peroxide in the catalytic reactions was determined based on  $\Delta$ Asample<sub>(n)</sub>. [H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>] in the reaction mixture was calculated considering the dilution factor:



The results were then confronted to the theoretical  $[H_2O_2]$  for a 100% yield and the remaining electron consumption finally attributed to  $H_2O$  production.

#### Preparation of [(benzylamino)methyl]pyridine.

Under inert atmosphere, benzaldehyde (981 mg, 9.25 mmol, 1 eq.) and 6-methylaminepyridine (1.00 g, 9.25 mmol, 1 eq.) were dissolved in EtOH (20 mL) and stirred for 1 h at room temperature. Solid NaBH4 (700 mg, 18.5 mmol, 2 eq.) was then slowly added portion wise over 30 min. The mixture was stirred for an additional 30 min and then refluxed for 12 h. After cooling to room temperature, the solution was diluted with EtOH (5 mL) and carefully hydrolyzed with 4 M HCl (10 mL). 20 % aq. NaOH solution was then added until pH = 12. The medium was extracted with CH2Cl2 and dried over Na2SO4. After evaporation of the solvents, the title compound was obtained as a green/yellow oil (1.69 g, 93 %) and used without further purification.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, δ ppm): 8.57 (d, 3J = 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (dt, 3J = 7.8 Hz, 4J = 1.8 Hz,

1H), 7.28 (m, 7H), 3.95 (s, 2H), 3.87 (s, 2H), 2.24 (broad, 1H).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, δ ppm): 159.9, 149.4, 140.3, 136.5, 128.5, 128.3, 127.1, 122.4, 122.0, 54.6, 53.6.

ESI-MS:  $m/z = 199.3 [M + H^+]^+$ .

#### Preparation of II.

Under inert atmosphere, I (246 mg, 0.98 mmol, 1 eq.)<sup>1</sup> was suspended into a degassed NaOH solution (1 M, 75 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at 50°C. The resulting orange mixture was filtered while cannulated. After cooling at 0°C, 6 M HCl (15 mL) was added dropwise until the orange color disappeared and a white solid (free thiol) precipitated. The solid was filtered and dissolved in a minimum of  $CH_2Cl_2$  (about 150 mL), dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and the solvent evaporated. The residue was then dissolved in THF (50 mL) and the solution degassed with argon. Et3N (250 μl, 1.79 mmol, 1.8 eq.) was added under argon to give a bright orange solution (thiophenolate). Freshly prepared and degassed  $I_2$  solution (0.05 M in THF) was then added dropwise until the orange color disappeared. Addition of few drops of  $Et_3N$  followed by  $I_2$  solution (10 mL in total) was subsequently repeated until addition of  $Et_3N$  no longer affords the orange colored solution (reaction completion). THF was evaporated, the residue extracted with  $CH_2Cl_2/H_2O$  and the combined organic layers dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. After evaporation, the residue was filtered over a short SiO<sub>2</sub> column using CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> as eluent. II was recovered as a yellow solid (120 mg, 70 %) and used without further purification. X-ray quality crystal were obtained by slow

evaporation of a CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> solution of II (CCDC deposition number 2347077, Tables S12-S14 for details)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>,  $\delta$  ppm): 10.24 (s, 4H), 7.93 (s, 4H), 2.51 (s, 6H).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, δ ppm): 189.3, 143.1, 138.2, 136.4, 134.9, 21.4.

ESI-MS:  $m/z = 381.0$  [M + Na+]<sup>+</sup>.

Anal. calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O<sub>4</sub>S<sub>2</sub>•0.5 CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>: C, 55.43%; H, 3.77%. Found: C, 55.21%; H, 3.85%.



ORTEP diagram (30 % probability) for II. Non-representative hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity; see Tables S12- S14 for full details.

#### Preparation of  $(BAMP)_2^{S-S}$ .

Under inert atmosphere, Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> (2 g) and glacial acetic acid (77  $\mu$ L, 1.34 mmol, 3.2 eq.) were added to a solution of II (150 mg, 0.42 mmol, 1 eq.) in (ClCH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (8 mL). A solution of [(benzylamino)methyl]pyridine (410 mg, 2.09 mmol, 5 eq.) in 7 mL of  $(CICH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>$  was added dropwise and the mixture stirred for 15 min. Na[HB(OAc)<sub>3</sub>] (541 mg, 2.51 mmol, 6 eq.) was then introduced portion wise within 30 min and the reaction stirred at room temperature for 48 h. After filtration

and evaporation, the crude oil was dissolved in a biphasic  $Et_2O/H_2O$  solution (15 mL/15 mL) and extracted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (2\*15 mL). The combined organic layers were washed with water, NaHCO<sub>3(sat)</sub> and dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. After evaporation, the crude oil was purified by column chromatography  $(SIO<sub>2</sub>, Et<sub>2</sub>O 100 %  $\rightarrow$  AcOEt 100%). (BAMP)<sub>2</sub><sup>5-S</sup> was obtained as a yellowish oil (100 mg, 43 %).$ <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>,  $\delta$  ppm): 8.42 (d, <sup>3</sup>J = 3.9 Hz, 4H), 7.48 (dt, <sup>3</sup>J = 7.8 Hz, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.8 Hz, 4H), 7.40 (s, 2H), 7.37 (s, 2H), 7.29 (s, 4H), 7.23 (m, 14H), 7.16 (m, 4H), 7.00 (dt, <sup>3</sup>J = 6.0 Hz, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.2 Hz, 4H), 3.53 (s, 14H), 3.39 (s, 8H) 2.30 (s, 6H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, δ ppm): 160.2, 148.8, 143.8, 139.4, 139.1, 136.2, 132.4, 129.0, 128.9, 128.2, 126.9, 122.6, 121.7, 59.7, 58.6, 56.8, 21.8. ESI-MS:  $m/z = 1087.0$  [M + H<sup>+</sup>]<sup>+</sup>. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>70</sub>H<sub>70</sub>N<sub>8</sub>S<sub>2</sub>·0.2 AcOEt: C, 76.95; H, 6.53; N, 10.14. Found: C, 76.57; H, 6.47; N, 10.29.

#### Preparation of 6.

In the glove box, a solution of  $[Cu(CH_3CN)_4]$ OTf (73.0 mg, 0.19 mmol, 4.1 eq) in acetone (2 mL) was added to a solution of the ligand (50 mg, 0.046 mmol, 1 eq.) in acetone (1.5 mL). The reaction mixture immediately turned violet. After 5 min stirring, the solution was filtered over millipore and half of the solvent evaporated. Slow addition of diethyl ether induced precipitation of 6 that was collected by filtration as a dark colored powder. X-ray quality crystals were obtained by layering pentane onto a concentrated acetone solution of the complex. The CCDC deposition number for 6 is 2347081.

Anal. Calcd for C<sub>70</sub>H<sub>70</sub>N<sub>8</sub>S<sub>2</sub>•0.1 Et<sub>2</sub>O: C, 46.01; H, 3.72; N, 5.74. Found: , 45.79; H, 3.91; N, 5.98.



Figure S1. ESI spectrum of 6 in acetone.

12



Figure S2. Selected views for the occupied natural orbital relevant to the Cu–Cu bond in DFToptimized structure of 6. Color scheme: Cu brown, S yellow, O red, N dark blue, F green and C light grey. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.



Figure S3. Selected views for the occupied natural orbital relevant to the Cu–Cu bond of 6 (Xray crystal structure). Color scheme: Cu brown, S yellow, O red, N dark blue, F green and C light grey. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.



Figure S4. Singly occupied molecular orbital (SOMO, left) and spin density plot (right) of 6 (DFToptimized structure). Color scheme: Cu brown, S yellow, O red, N dark blue, F green and C light grey. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.



Figure S5. Difference electron density sketches of the main TD-DFT calculated absorptions of 6 (DFT-optimized structure). Yellow = negative density, donor state; red = positive density, acceptor state. Color scheme: Cu brown, S yellow, O red, N dark blue, F green and C light grey. Hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity.



Figure S6. Solid-sate (black) and TD-DFT-calculated (red) UV-Vis/NIR spectrum of 6 (X-ray crystal structure).



Figure S7. Comparison between the CV curves recorded from the open-circuit potential toward the cathodic (A) and anodic (B) directions. Conditions 6 at 0.7 mM in acetone + 0.1 M TBAPF<sub>6</sub> as supporting electrolyte and glassy carbon as working electrode. The curves corresponds to the initial scan at 100 mV.s<sup>-1</sup>.





4000

2000

1/80/400 /60/400

/ 40 / 400 1/20/400 1/10/400

6000

Time (s)

8000

 $0.4$ 

 $0.2$ 

 $0.0$ 

 $\pmb{0}$ 



Figure S9. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 1 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF4 (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone. For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me<sub>8</sub>Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S10. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 1 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me8Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone together with the blank experiments (green dots) performed with commercial  $[Cu(CH<sub>3</sub>CN)<sub>4</sub>](OTf)$ . For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me $_8$ Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S11. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF4 (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone. For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me<sub>8</sub>Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S12. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated acetone together with the blank experiments (green dots) performed with commercial  $[Cu(CH<sub>3</sub>CN)<sub>4</sub>](OTf)$ . For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me<sub>8</sub>Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S13. Typical UV-vis changes for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me<sub>8</sub>Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated MeCN. For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me<sub>8</sub>Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S14. Kinetic profiles (Abs<sub>max</sub><sup>750nm</sup>) for the catalytic ORR by 6 (1 molar eq.) / LutHBF<sub>4</sub> (400 molar eq.) / Me $_8$ Fc (10, 20, 40, 60, 80 and 100 molar eq.) in air-saturated MeCN together with the blank experiments (green dots) performed with commercial  $[Cu(CH<sub>3</sub>CN)<sub>4</sub>](OTf)$ . For each dataset, the theoretical absorbance value corresponding for full Me $_8$ Fc consumption is indicated.



Figure S15.  $H_2O_2$  calibration curve using the TiO-tpyp reagent and corresponding UV-vis traces.



Figure S16. Comparison of the CV curves recorded from the open-circuit potential toward the cathodic (A) and anodic (B) directions. Conditions 6 at 0.6 mM in MeCN + 0.1 M TBAPF<sub>6</sub> as supporting electrolyte and glassy carbon as working electrode. The curves corresponds to the initial scan at 100 mV.s−1 starting from the open-circuit potential.



Figure S17. CVs of 6 (0.7 mM) in acetone at different scan rates and experimental plot of Ψ vs v<sup>-1/2</sup> for the redox Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>I</sup>/Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>II</sup> process in 6.



Figure S18. CVs of 6 (0.6 mM) in MeCN at different scan rates and experimental plot of Ψ vs v<sup>-1/2</sup> for the redox Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>I</sup>/Cu<sup>II</sup>Cu<sup>II</sup> process in **6**.

## Table S1. Crystal data and structure refinement for 6.



# Table S2. Bond length [Å] for 6.









Table S4. NBO analysis of the Cu-Cu bond in mixed-valent Cu<sup>II</sup>-Cu<sup>I</sup> species: Comparison of the results obtained for DFT-optimized and X-ray crystal structures of 6 featuring different metalmetal bond lengths.



Table S5. Mulliken spin population analysis for 6 (DFT-optimized structure).



Table S6. Computed g-values and copper hyperfine coupling constants for 6 (DFT-optimized structure).



Table S7. Theoretical assignments of the main bands of the UV-Vis/NIR spectrum of 6 (DFToptimized structure).



Table S8. Theoretical assignments of the main bands of the UV-Vis/NIR spectrum of 6 in the Cu<sup>ll</sup>Cu<sup>l</sup> form (X-ray crystal structure).



Table S9. Calculated redox potentials for  $Fc^{+/0}$  couple.



Table S10. Calculated redox potential for the Cu(II)Cu(I)/Cu(I)Cu(I) couple of 6 (DFT-optimized structure).



Table S11. ORR experiments performed with 1 and 6 in acetone or MeCN at room temperature using Me<sub>8</sub>Fc and LutHBF<sub>4</sub> as electron and proton sources. The values obtained for 1 in MeCN (already reported) $32$  are listed for comparison.



; <sup>(a)</sup> after 6000 s reaction time; nd: not determined; (b) determined for the first kinetic event in the case of multi regimes

## Table S12. Crystal data and structure refinement for II.



S <sub>1</sub>	S <sub>2</sub>	2.0814(5)	C <sub>4</sub>	C8	1.4993(17)
S <sub>1</sub>	C1	1.7823(12)	C <sub>5</sub>	C <sub>6</sub>	1.3932(17)
S <sub>2</sub>	C10	1.7826(12)	C <sub>6</sub>	C <sub>9</sub>	1.4871(17)
01	C7	1.2087(16)	C10	C11	1.4062(16)
02	C <sub>9</sub>	1.2116(16)	C10	C15	1.4053(16)
O <sub>3</sub>	C16	1.2059(16)	C11	C12	1.3931(17)
O <sub>4</sub>	C18	1.2126(15)	C11	C16	1.4894(17)
C1	C <sub>2</sub>	1.4020(17)	C12	C13	1.3965(17)
C1	C <sub>6</sub>	1.4094(17)	C13	C14	1.3913(17)
C <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	1.3980(16)	C13	C17	1.5020(17)
C <sub>2</sub>	C7	1.4917(17)	C14	C15	1.3959(17)
C <sub>3</sub>	C <sub>4</sub>	1.3891(17)	C15	C18	1.4890(16)
C <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>5</sub>	1.3947(17)			

Table S13. Bond length [Å] for II.





### Cartesian coordinates from DFT calculations

Optimized structure for 6 in the Cu(II)-Cu(I) state













- Optimized structure for  $CF_3SO_3^-$  S 5.53252468385583 14.74213967093031 8.76550065995040 F 3.21135484747413 13.90192821137391 7.69744833284823 F 4.87529194084137 13.97673903705700 6.27461662052024 F 3.90276374650052 15.82997345237664 6.92140966665604 O 5.84126996999772 13.33791363410357 9.07116630688613 O 4.75962469275274 15.44907075050451 9.79641307418497 O 6.64081030100358 15.51096296090092 8.18151918344603
	- C 4.31505081757410 14.60559528275311 7.33903315550796

#### References.

- 1. S. Torelli, M. Orio, J. Pécaut, H. Jamet, L. Le Pape and S. Ménage, Angew. Chem. Int. Ed., 2010, 49, 8249-8252.
- 2. M. Roemer, B. W. Skelton, M. J. Piggott and G. A. Koutsantonis, *Dalton Trans.*, 2016, 45, 18817-18821.
- 3. H. Ohmori, T. Takanami, H. Shimada and M. Masui, *Chem. Pharm. Bull.*, 1987, 35, 2558-2560.
- 4. C. L. Ford, Y. J. Park, E. M. Matson, Z. Gordon and A. R. Fout, Science, 2016, 354, 741-743.
- 5. S. Stoll and A. Schweiger, Journal of magnetic resonance (San Diego, Calif. : 1997), 2006, 178, 42-55.
- 6. R. S. Nicholson, Anal. Chem., 1965, 37, 1351-1355.
- 7. I. Lavagnini, R. Antiochia and F. Magno, *Electroanalysis*, 2004, 16, 505-506.
- 8. M. J. Weaver, The Journal of Physical Chemistry, 1990, 94, 8608-8613.
- 9. F. Neese, WIREs Computational Molecular Science, 2018, 8, e1327.
- 10. F. Neese, F. Wennmohs, U. Becker and C. Riplinger, The Journal of Chemical Physics, 2020, 152.
- 11. A. D. Becke, Physical Review A, 1988, 38, 3098-3100.
- 12. J. P. Perdew, Physical Review B, 1986, 33, 8822-8824.
- 13. F. Weigend and R. Ahlrichs, Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys., 2005, 7, 3297-3305.
- 14. V. Barone and M. Cossi, J. Phys. Chem. A, 1998, 102, 1995-2001.
- 15. A. Barrozo and M. Orio, ChemSusChem, 2019, 12, 4905-4915.
- 16. M. J. Frisch, G. W. Trucks, H. B. Schlegel, G. E. Scuseria, M. A. Robb, J. R. Cheeseman, G. Scalmani, V. Barone, G. A. Petersson, H. Nakatsuji, X. Li, M. Caricato, A. V. Marenich, J. Bloino, B. G. Janesko, R. Gomperts, B. Mennucci, H. P. Hratchian, J. V. Ortiz, A. F. Izmaylov, J. L. Sonnenberg, Williams, F. Ding, F. Lipparini, F. Egidi, J. Goings, B. Peng, A. Petrone, T. Henderson, D. Ranasinghe, V. G. Zakrzewski, J. Gao, N. Rega, G. Zheng, W. Liang, M. Hada, M. Ehara, K. Toyota, R. Fukuda, J. Hasegawa, M. Ishida, T. Nakajima, Y. Honda, O. Kitao, H. Nakai, T. Vreven, K. Throssell, J. A. Montgomery Jr., J. E. Peralta, F. Ogliaro, M. J. Bearpark, J. J. Heyd, E. N. Brothers, K. N. Kudin, V. N. Staroverov, T. A. Keith, R. Kobayashi, J. Normand, K. Raghavachari, A. P. Rendell, J. C. Burant, S. S. Iyengar, J. Tomasi, M. Cossi, J. M. Millam, M. Klene, C. Adamo, R. Cammi, J. W. Ochterski, R. L. Martin, K. Morokuma, O. Farkas, J. B. Foresman and D. J. Fox, Journal, 2016.
- 17. A. E. Reed, L. A. Curtiss and F. Weinhold, Chem. Rev., 1988, 88, 899-926.
- 18. K. B. Wiberg, Tetrahedron, 1968, 24, 1083-1096.
- 19. A. D. Becke, The Journal of Chemical Physics, 1993, 98, 5648-5652.
- 20. C. Lee, W. Yang and R. G. Parr, Physical review. B, Condensed matter, 1988, 37, 785-789.
- 21. J. P. Perdew and Y. Wang, Physical Review B, 1992, 45, 13244-13249.
- 22. M. Drosou, C. A. Mitsopoulou, M. Orio and D. A. Pantazis, *Magnetochemistry*, 2022, 8, 36.
- 23. R. J. Gómez-Piñeiro, D. A. Pantazis and M. Orio, ChemPhysChem, 2020, 21, 2667-2679.
- 24. T. Yanai, D. P. Tew and N. C. Handy, Chem. Phys. Lett., 2004, 393, 51-57.
- 25. M. E. CASIDA, in Recent Advances in Density Functional Methods, DOI: 10.1142/9789812830586\_0005, pp. 155-192.
- 26. S. Hirata and M. Head-Gordon, Chem. Phys. Lett., 1999, 302, 375-382.
- 27. S. Hirata and M. Head-Gordon, Chem. Phys. Lett., 1999, 314, 291-299.
- 28. R. E. Stratmann, G. E. Scuseria and M. J. Frisch, The Journal of Chemical Physics, 1998, 109, 8218-8224.
- 29. F. Neese, The Journal of Chemical Physics, 2001, 115, 11080-11096.
- 30. N. V. Klassen, D. Marchington and H. C. E. McGowan, Anal. Chem., 1994, 66, 2921-2925.
- 31. C. Matsubara, N. Kawamoto and K. Takamura, Analyst, 1992, 117, 1781-1784.
- 32. J. Mangue, C. Gondre, J. Pécaut, C. Duboc, S. Ménage and S. Torelli, Chem. Commun., 2020, 56, 9636-9639.