



Isolation of a Triplet Benzene Dianion

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Funding Grants: G.S. Boebinger (NSF DMR-1644779); J. R. Long (NSF CHE-1610226); S. Hill (NSF DMR-1610226); R. D. Britt (NIH 1R35GM126961); V. Vieru (Flemish Science Foundation)

Baird's rule predicts that cyclic molecules with $4n$ π -electrons (n = positive integer) should be aromatic in the triplet state; aromaticity implies complete delocalization of the two unpaired electron spins associated with the $S = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$ (triplet) state and an undistorted planar ring system. Unfortunately, efforts to realize such ring systems have been stymied by their tendency to distort into structures favoring a fully spin-paired singlet ($S = 0$) ground state, with a large energy gap to the excited triplet state.

This work demonstrates that the elusive benzene diradical dianion can be stabilized through creation of an unusual metallo-ligand that enforces a tightly constrained inverse sandwich structure, with a metal ion (orange in the Figure) on each face of the central ring system. The benzene dianion possesses two additional electrons in the π -system, i.e., a total of $6 + 2 = 8$ π -electrons. High-field EPR measurements were then employed in which the metal ions are non-magnetic yttrium(III), revealing paramagnetic signals consistent with a triplet ($S = 1$) benzene diradical at temperatures down to 5 K. Meanwhile, X-ray diffraction finds aromaticity, consistent with Baird's rule.

This fundamental research demonstrates how molecular symmetry, rigidity and even magnetic exchange coupling can be leveraged to preferentially stabilize and study a desired electronic/magnetic state in an organic molecule.

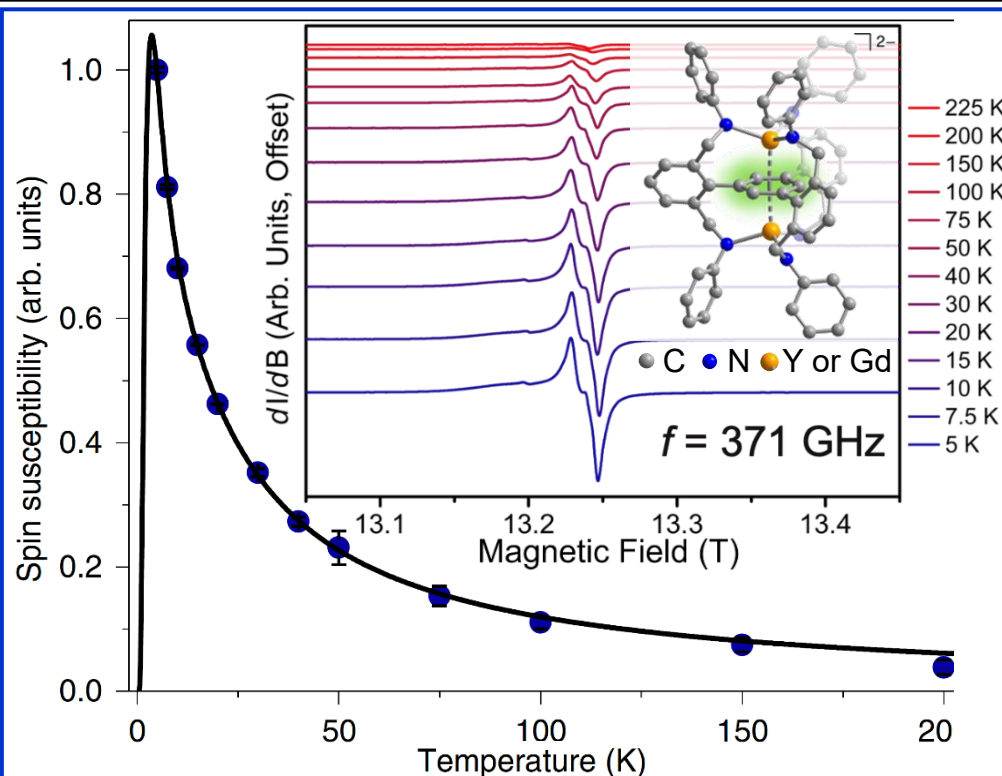


Figure: (main panel) Spin susceptibility deduced from the high-field EPR spectra in the inset, for the compound: $[K(18\text{-crown-6})(\text{THF})_2]_2[M_2(\text{BzN}_6\text{-Mes})]$ ($M = \text{Y, Gd}$; $\text{BzN}_6\text{-Mes} = 1,3,5\text{-tris}[2',6'\text{-(N-mesityl)dimethan-amino-4'-tert-butylphenyl}]benzene$), also shown in the inset. The EPR spectra were recorded in derivative mode, dI/dB , where I is the microwave intensity transmitted through the sample and B the applied magnetic field. The spin susceptibility is obtained via double-integration of the dI/dB signal.

Facilities and instrumentation used: EMR program, 15/17 Tesla Transmission Spectrometer, 371GHz Microwave Source.

Citation: Gould, C.A.; Marbey, J.; Vieru, V.; Marchiori, D.A.; Britt, R.D.; Chibotaru, L.; Hill, S.; Long, J.R., *Isolation of a Triplet Benzene Dianion*, *Nature Chemistry*, **13**,1001-1005 (2021) doi.org/10.1038/s41557-021-00737-8