

Unimolecular Chemistry of Li⁺- and Na⁺-Coordinated Polyglycol Radicals, a New Class of Distonic Radical Cations

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Abstract: The lithium and sodium ion complexes of the polyglycol-derived radicals (R[•]) HOCH₂CH₂O[•] (**1**[•]), H(OCH₂CH₂)₂O[•] (**2**[•]), HOCH₂CH₂OCH₂[•] (**3**[•]), H(OCH₂CH₂)₂OCH₂[•] (**4**[•]), HOCH₂CH₂OCH₂CH₂[•] (**5**[•]), and H(OCH₂CH₂)₂OCH₂CH₂[•] (**6**[•]) are produced in the gas phase by fast atom bombardment ionization and their structures and unimolecular chemistry are investigated by tandem mass spectrometry. Parallel ab initio MO calculations show that the [R[•] + X]⁺ (X = Li, Na) complexes carry their positive charge and unpaired electron at distinct centers, thus representing a novel type of distonic radical cations. Radical reactions prevail for all [R[•] + X]⁺ species studied. The predominant dissociation of metalated **1**[•]–**4**[•] (–O[•] or –OCH₂[•] terminus) involves cleavage of CH₂=O via ion–molecule complexes in which the newly detached formaldehyde molecule remains bound to the metal ion. With Li⁺ cationization, H[•] transfer within these intermediate complexes also takes place, leading to the elimination of OCH[•]; this reaction is particularly competitive at low internal energy. In sharp contrast to **1**[•]–**4**[•], metalated **5**[•] and **6**[•] (–OCH₂CH₂[•] terminus) primarily decompose by 1,4- and 1,5-H[•] rearrangements, followed by cleavage of [•]CH₃ and [•]C₂H₅ radicals, and with **6**[•], also HOCH₂[•] and HOCH₂CH₂[•] radicals; at higher internal energies, the direct cleavage of CH₂=CH₂ becomes a further significant dissociation channel. Although the metal ion does not directly participate in the observed reactions, it plays an important role in either promoting or impeding specific radical-induced bond cleavages and H[•] rearrangements by (1) preventing bond rotations in R[•] (through coordination), (2) allowing for the formation of intermediary metal ion-bound heterodimer complexes, and (3) influencing the energetics of the radical site decompositions.

Introduction

Radical cations, in which the charge and radical sites reside at different locations, have been termed *distonic*;^{1,2} they formally arise by electron removal from diradicals or zwitterions of the same connectivity.^{1,2} Since theory predicted in the early eighties that distonic ions should exist as stable species in the gas phase,^{3,4} the intrinsic chemistry of a large number of such ions has been studied extensively by both computations as well as mass spectrometry experiments.^{4–21} The considerable interest

devoted so far to distonic ions is due to several reasons, inter alia: (a) they are key intermediates in the fragmentation of the molecular ions of many organic molecules;^{3–9,12–14,16–18} (b) they often are thermodynamically and kinetically more stable than isomeric conventional radical ions, thereby causing the latter to readily rearrange into distonic forms;^{3,6,12,13,16–18} (c) the separate charge and radical sites make distonic ions ideally suitable reagents for tailored ion–molecule reactions that specifically probe the chemistry of either reactive center;^{10,12,15} and (d) with well-stabilized charge centers, radical reactivity prevails.^{7,11,15,19} In such systems, the charge provides a means to study the gas-phase chemistry of radical sites by mass spectrometry, an ideally suitable method for the separation and identification of the complex mixtures usually generated in radical reactions.^{7,19}

The distonic radical cations characterized so far have mainly been organic ions or ions containing elements from groups 4A–5A.^{1–19} The only metalated species known are the organometallic ions ⁺FeC₆H₄[•] (C₆H₄ = *o*-, *m*-, or *p*-benzyne).^{20,21} This article presents the first comprehensive gas-phase study of distonic ions carrying main group metals, involving the com-

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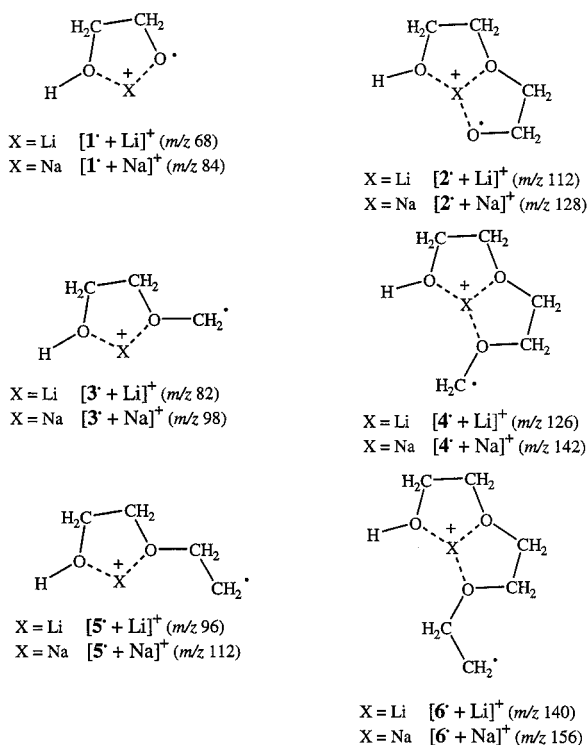
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Scheme 1



plexes between the alkali metal ions Li⁺ and Na⁺ and the poly-(ethylene glycol)-derived methyl, ethyl, and ethoxy radicals (R^{*}) HOCH₂CH₂O^{*} (2-hydroxyethoxy, **1**^{*}), H(OCH₂CH₂)₂O^{*} (2-(2'-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy, **2**^{*}), HOCH₂CH₂OCH₂^{*} ((2-hydroxyethoxy)methyl, **3**^{*}), H(OCH₂CH₂)₂OCH₂^{*} (2-(2'-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxymethyl, **4**^{*}), HOCH₂CH₂OCH₂CH₂^{*} (2-(2'-hydroxyethoxy)ethyl, **5**^{*}), and H(OCH₂CH₂)₂OCH₂CH₂^{*} (2-[2'-(2''-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy]ethyl, **6**^{*}). The unimolecular chemistry of these metal ion-coordinated radicals is explored by a palette of tandem mass spectrometry methods,^{22,23} including metastable ion (MI) characteristics,²⁴ collisionally activated dissociation (CAD),^{22,23} and three-stage mass spectrometry (MS³).²³

Previous studies in this²⁵ and other^{26,27} laboratories have shown that CAD of the alkali metal ion adducts of polyglycols produces a series of fragments by elimination of radicals from one chain end. These decompositions proceed with maximum efficiency at high (keV) collision energy;²⁵ under such conditions, the most abundant products from the Li⁺ and Na⁺ adducts of poly(ethylene glycol) oligomers encompass the putative distonic radical ions depicted in Scheme 1, which are the subject of our investigation. Depending on the number of O atoms in these distonic ions, the metal ion can be ligated in a bi- or tridentate fashion.^{28,29} Further, based on the polyglycol bond

cleaved upon distonic ion formation, three different types of radical termini are possible, viz. -O^{*} (oxy), -OCH₂^{*} (methyl), and -OCH₂CH₂^{*} (ethyl), cf. Scheme 1. Here, we examine in detail the effects of radical type and degree of metal ion ligation on the unimolecular reactions of the radical complexes [R^{*} + Li]⁺ and [R^{*} + Na]⁺. The experiments are complemented by ab initio molecular orbital theory to corroborate the viability of the [R^{*} + X]⁺ (X = Li, Na) structures given in Scheme 1 and elucidate selected fragmentation pathways of such distonic ions.

Methods

Tandem Mass Spectrometry. All experiments were conducted with a modified Micromass AutoSpec mass spectrometer of E₁BE₂ geometry.¹³ This instrument houses one collision cell (Cls-1) in the field-free region preceding E₁ (FFR-1) and two more (Cls-2 and Cls-3), with an intermediate ion deflector, in FFR-3. For metastable ion (MI) and collisionally activated dissociation (CAD) spectra of source-generated ions (MS²), E₁B was used for precursor ion selection (MS-1) and E₂ for m/z analysis of the products formed in FFR-3 (MS-2). The precursor ions were accelerated to 8 keV (or as stated) before mass-selection by MS-1. Their CAD (MS²) spectra were obtained by pressurizing Cls-3 with O₂. In MS³ experiments, the precursor ion was generated in FFR-1 by CAD with He (Cls-1) and transmitted, by proper adjustment of E₁ and B, into FFR-3 where its CAD (MS³) spectrum was acquired.

Kinetic energy releases of MI signals were calculated from peak widths at half-height ($T_{0.5}$) using established procedures.^{24,30,31} In CAD (MS² and MS³) experiments, the pressure of each collision gas was raised until the precursor ion intensity was reduced by ca. 20%. The spectra shown are multiscan summations and reproducible to within ±10%. The compounds introduced into the mass spectrometer were purchased from Aldrich and the collision gases from Linde (oxygen) and Liquid Carbonic (helium); all chemicals were used as received.

Molecular Orbital Calculations. The structures of the smaller [R^{*} + Li]⁺ radical cations included in Scheme 1 as well as plausible isomeric structures were optimized by ab initio calculations at the HF/6-31G level; vibrational frequencies and zero-point vibrational energies were also obtained at this level. The energetics of selected dissociations of [R^{*} + X]⁺ were evaluated at the same level to substantiate proposed mechanisms. All calculations were performed on a pentium PC using Gaussian 94³² for Windows interfaced with CHEM-3D.³³

Results and Discussion

Synthesis of the Metalated Distonic Ions. The metal ion-coordinated radicals were formed via fast atom bombardment (FAB) ionization of poly(ethylene glycol) 200 (PEG 200) saturated with Li or Na salts. A few (1–2) microliters of the appropriate mixture were placed on the stainless steel probe tip, inserted into the mass spectrometer, and bombarded with 12 keV Cs⁺ ions. The secondary ions ejected upon this process include [M + X]⁺ (M = PEG oligomer; X = Li or Na) and their fragments, among them the nominal [R^{*} + X]⁺ distonic radical ions depicted in Scheme 1. The most abundant [M + X]⁺ contain the PEG tetramers, pentamers, and hexamers.

As mentioned in the Introduction, CAD of [M + X]⁺ gives rise to abundant metalated radical ions via radical losses from one end of the polyglycol chain.²⁵ This is exemplified for

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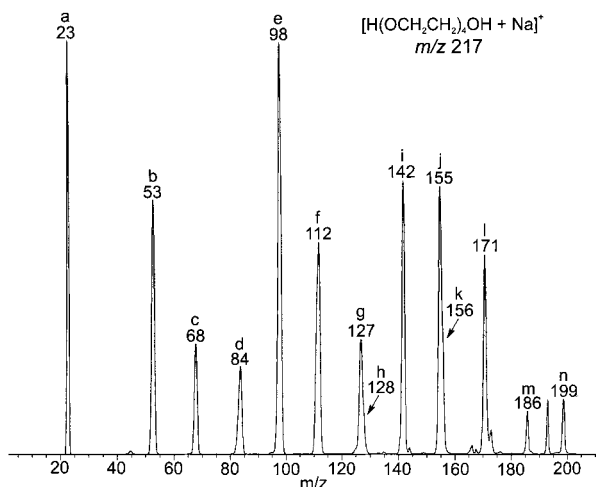


Figure 1. CAD spectrum of FAB-generated $[H(OCH_2CH_2)_4OH + Na]^+$. The fragments marked a–n correspond to the following: (a) Na^+ ; (b) $^+NaO=CH_2$; (c) loss of $^+O(CH_2CH_2O)_3H$; (d) loss of $^+CH_2CH_2O(CH_2CH_2O)_2H$, $[1^+ + Na]^+$; (e) loss of $^+CH_2O(CH_2CH_2O)_2H$, $[3^+ + Na]^+$; (f) loss of $^+O(CH_2CH_2O)_2H$, $[5^+ + Na]^+$; (g) loss of $CH_3CH_2OCH_2CH_2OH$; (h) loss of $^+CH_2CH_2OCH_2CH_2OH$, $[2^+ + Na]^+$; (i) loss of $^+CH_2OCH_2CH_2OH$, $[4^+ + Na]^+$; (j) loss of $HOCH_2CH_2OH$; (k) loss of $^+OCH_2CH_2OH$, $[6^+ + Na]^+$; (l) loss of CH_3CH_2OH ; (m) loss of $^+CH_2OH$; and (n) loss of H_2O .

$[H(OCH_2CH_2)_4OH + Na]^+$ in Figure 1, where the radical losses and all other dominant fragment ions are annotated in the figure legend. The sodiated radicals investigated (1^+ – 6^+) are also identified in the figure legend. CAD (MS^3) on any of these $[R^+ + Na]^+$ ions leads to spectra that are indistinguishable from those obtained by CAD of source-generated ions of the same m/z and kinetic energy. This also applies to the $[R^+ + Li]^+$ ions studied. Hence, FAB ionization of PEG 200 generates the same metalated distonic ions as CAD of mass-selected $[M + X]^+$ oligomers. In the present study, the metalated radicals were formed by direct FAB ionization which produces $[R^+ + X]^+$ with higher yields and higher kinetic energies (higher transmission and collection efficiencies) than the alternative synthetic route via CAD.

Theoretical Assessment of the $[R^+ + X]^+$ Structures. To corroborate the postulated $[R^+ + X]^+$ structures, the geometries and electronic properties of the smaller lithiated complexes $[1^+ + Li]^+$, $[3^+ + Li]^+$, and $[5^+ + Li]^+$ (left side of Scheme 1) as well as of selected isomers of these ions were investigated by ab initio theory. Radicals 1^+ , 3^+ , and 5^+ contain two oxygen atoms, either of which is a potential binding site for the alkali metal cation. The optimized structures resulting after Li^+ attachment at just one or both of these basic centers are displayed in Figure 2. All isomers correspond to energy minima, but the relative energies of the bidentate species are substantially lower than those of their isomeric monodentate complexes. From the monodentate arrangements, the one resulting from Li^+ attachment to the hydroxyl group (center row) is more stable because it permits the formation of a hydrogen bond between the hydroxyl proton and the ether (or O^*) oxygen. Such H bonding, which lowers the energy by ~ 30 kJ mol $^{-1}$, cannot take place when Li^+ is bound to the ether (or O^*) oxygen (top row) due to the decreased electron-donating capabilities of this O atom. Interconversion of the linear to the more stable cyclic isomers should be facile, as it only requires bond rotations and the disruption of weak hydrogen bonds. The much higher thermodynamic stability of the multidentate isomers supports our proposition that the $[R^+ + X]^+$ ions synthesized from PEG 200

Table 1. Charge and Electron Spin Distributions in $[R^+ + Li]^+$ ^a

	$[1^+ + Li]^+$		$[3^+ + Li]^+$		$[5^+ + Li]^+$	
	charge	spin	charge	spin	charge	spin
α -O	-0.877	0.000	-0.872	0.000	-0.868	0.000
α -H	+0.487	0.000	+0.484	0.000	+0.480	0.000
β -C	-0.021	+0.014	-0.010	0.000	-0.009	0.000
β_1 -H	+0.240	0.000	+0.235	0.000	+0.225	+0.001
β_2 -H	+0.239	-0.003	+0.231	0.000	+0.230	0.000
γ -C	-0.078	-0.133	+0.012	-0.007	+0.023	+0.009
γ_1 -H	+0.270	+0.065	+0.232	+0.002	+0.214	-0.001
γ_2 -H	+0.266	+0.025	+0.231	+0.005	+0.219	-0.001
δ -O	-0.387	+1.044	-0.846	-0.009	-0.855	+0.024
ϵ -C		+0.042	+1.214	-0.006	-0.159	
ϵ_1 -H		+0.200	-0.108	+0.213	+0.035	
ϵ_2 -H		+0.201	-0.098	+0.209	+0.007	
ζ -C					-0.323	+1.280
ζ_1 -H					+0.201	-0.107
ζ_2 -H					+0.216	-0.108
Li	+0.861	-0.012	+0.860	+0.001	+0.831	+0.020

^a Mulliken charge distributions and atomic spin densities based on ab initio MO calculations at the HF/6-31G level. Within each ion, the sum of Mulliken charges or spin densities is equal to 1. The bold numbers give the locations of highest charge and spin density within each ion.

have cyclic structures with the maximum possible number of ligands, as shown in Scheme 1.

Strong interactions between the metal ion and the O atoms of R^* are also predicted by the Mulliken charge distributions of the $[R^+ + Li]^+$ ions, which are given in Table 1. The largest positive charge is concentrated on Li, while the oxygens carry the largest negative charges, indicating favorable electrostatic bonding between these centers.

Based on the atomic spin densities of the $[R^+ + Li]^+$ radical cations (Table 1), the unpaired electron is essentially localized at the O^* atom in $[1^+ + Li]^+$ and the C atom of the terminal $^+CH_2$ group in $[3^+ + Li]^+$ and $[5^+ + Li]^+$. As mentioned above, the positive charge primarily resides on the metal atom and, hence, at a location distant from the radical site. As a result, $[R^+ + X]^+$ indeed represent distonic ions and $[1^+ + X]^+$, where the charge and radical centers are adjacent, also qualifies as an ylide ion.¹

Metal Ion-Coordinated Radicals 1^+ and 2^+ (Oxy Terminus).

Both metastable $[1^+ + X]^+$ ions ($X = Li$ or Na) eliminate a $[C,H_3,O]^*$ radical (m/z 37 or 53, respectively, in insets of Figure 3); the lithiated complex also undergoes $[C,H,O]^*$ loss (m/z 39). Such products necessitate breakup of the C–C bond in $[1^+ + X]^+$. A plausible pathway involves radical-induced cleavage of this bond to generate the metal ion-bound dimer $^+CH_2OH \cdots X^+ \cdots O=CH_2$ (**1a/1b** in Scheme 2) followed by either direct expulsion of $^+CH_2OH$ or (with Li^+ only) interligand H^* transfer to yield $CH_3OH \cdots X^+ \cdots O=CH^*$ (**1a'**) and subsequent OCH^* cleavage. This chemistry is similar to that observed for metastable ethylene glycol radical ion, which has been shown to dissociate via the proton-bound complexes $^+CH_2OH \cdots H^+ \cdots O=CH_2$ and $CH_3OH \cdots H^+ \cdots O=CH^*$ to $CH_3OH_2^+ + OCH^*$.³⁴ It is noteworthy that metastable decomposition generates CH_3O-

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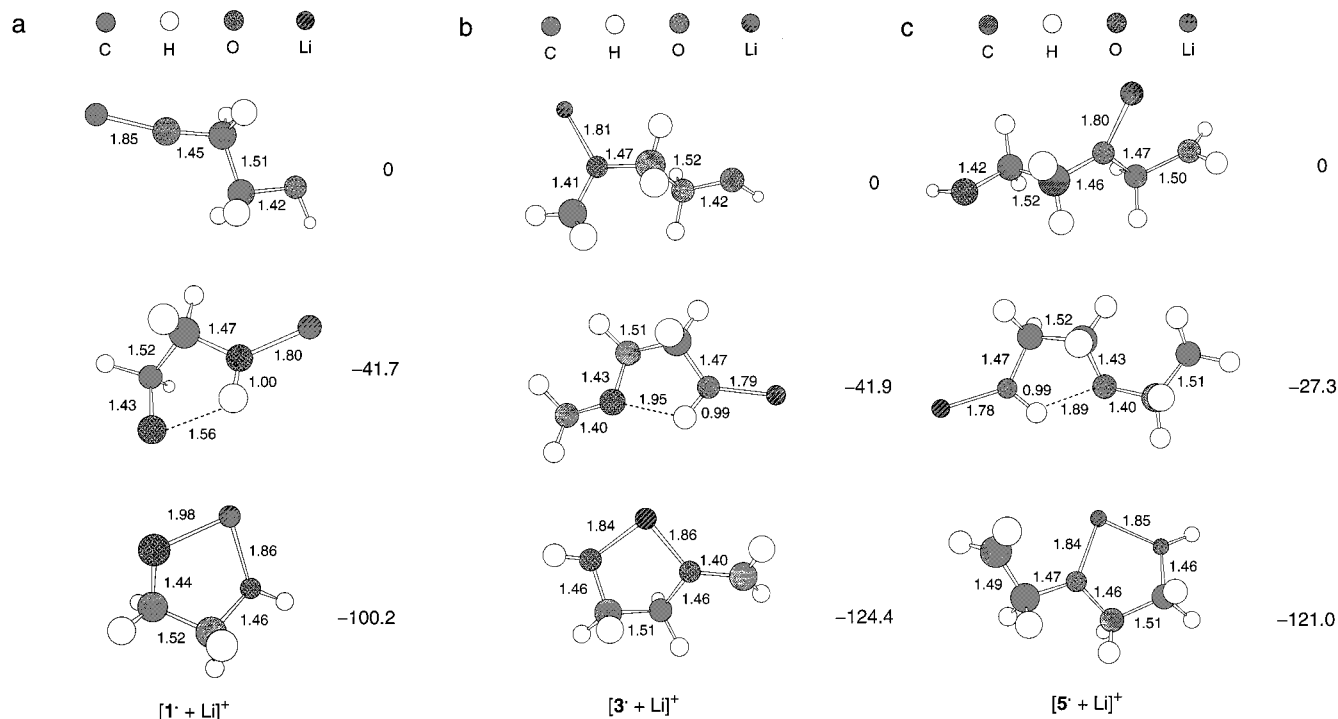


Figure 2. Optimized geometries and relative energies of mono- and bidentate isomers of $[R^\bullet + Li]^+$ ($R^\bullet = 1^\bullet, 3^\bullet, 5^\bullet$). The bond lengths between heavy atoms are given in Å and the relative energies between isomers are given next to the structures in kJ mol⁻¹; the quoted values include zero-point vibrational corrections. (a) Isomers of lithiated **1**[•]; (b) isomers of lithiated **2**[•]; (c) isomers of lithiated **5**[•]. Middle row: Li⁺ attachment to alcohol oxygen. Bottom row: Li⁺ attachment to both O sites.

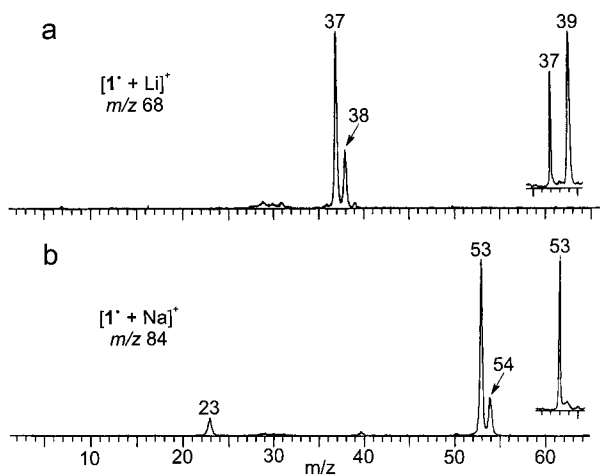


Figure 3. CAD (MS²) spectra of $[1^\bullet + X]^+$: (a) X = Li (m/z 68) and (b) X = Na (m/z 84). The insets show the corresponding MI spectra. All MI peaks have Gaussian shape and their widths yield $T_{0.5}$ values of 0.1 (m/z 37), 30 (m/z 39), and ≤ 0.1 meV (m/z 53).

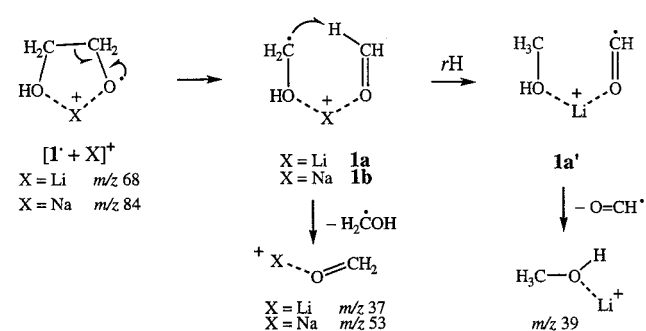
(H)X⁺ if X = H and ⁺XO=CH₂ if X = Na, and both these fragments if X = Li. In all cases, the products CH₃O(H)X⁺ + OCH[•] are thermodynamically more stable than [•]CH₂OH + ⁺XO=CH₂.^{35–39} The differences originate from substantially

(35) Based on the known heats of formation (kJ mol⁻¹) of CH₃OH₂⁺ [567],³⁶ CH₃O(H)Li⁺ [321],^{36,37} CH₃O(H)Na⁺ [301],^{36,38} OCH[•] [45],³⁶ [•]CH₂OH [-26],³⁶ ⁺HO=CH₂ [703],³⁶ ⁺LiO=CH₂ [426],^{36,39} and ⁺NaO=CH₂ [398],^{36,38} the products CH₃O(H)X⁺ + OCH[•] lie lower in energy than the products [•]CH₂OH + ⁺XO=CH₂ by 65, 34, and 26 kJ mol⁻¹ for X = H, Li, and Na, respectively.

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Scheme 2



different barriers for the formation of [•]CH₂OH^{••}X⁺^{••}O=CH₂ and CH₃OH^{••}X⁺^{••}OCH[•]. Ion HOCH₂CH₂OH^{••} contains an elongated C–C bond (~ 2 Å), collapsing to more stable [•]CH₂OH^{••}H⁺^{••}O=CH₂.³⁴ Further isomerization to CH₃OH^{••}H⁺^{••}OCH[•] proceeds at energies that permit only the formation of CH₃OH₂⁺ + OCH[•];³⁴ hence, only this reaction takes place at threshold. On the other hand, the isomerizations $[1^\bullet + X]^+ \rightarrow 1a/1b$ cleave relatively strong bonds (see C–C bond length in Figure 2), which requires appreciable activation energies (vide infra), thereby making the higher energy dissociation channel (⁺XO=CH₂ formation) accessible to metastable $[1^\bullet + X]^+$.

Whereas both X⁺-bound dimers lose the O=CH₂ ligand, only the Li⁺-containing ion undergoes OCH[•] cleavage. This difference is attributed to the higher metal ion–ligand binding energy in **1a** vis à vis **1b**; this increases the lifetime of the former complex, enabling it to attain the geometry needed for interligand H[•] transfer to the isomeric complex **1a'**, so that OCH[•] loss can take place (Scheme 2). If $[1^\bullet + Li]^+$ is collisionally activated, the internal energy of **1a** is raised, which should

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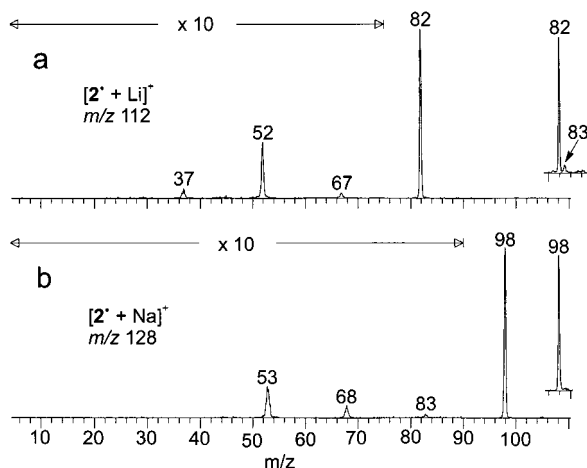
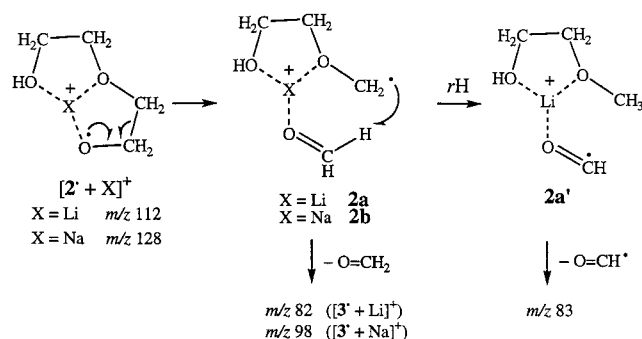


Figure 4. CAD (MS^2) spectra of $[2^\bullet + X]^+$: (a) $X = \text{Li}$ (m/z 112) and (b) $X = \text{Na}$ (m/z 128). The insets show the corresponding MI spectra. All MI peaks have Gaussian shape and their widths yield $T_{0.5}$ values of 4 (m/z 82), 22 (m/z 83), and 6 meV (m/z 98).

Scheme 3



decrease its lifetime^{23,24,31} and, thus, the extent of OCH^\bullet loss; indeed, this reaction almost disappears in the CAD spectrum (Figure 3a).

In contrast to the MI spectra of $[1^\bullet + X]^+$, the corresponding CAD spectra (Figure 3) show very similar fragmentation patterns, displaying two significant fragment ions from the losses of HOCH_2^\bullet (m/z 37/53 for Li/Na) and $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ (m/z 38/54). Such products can arise by direct cleavages from $[1^\bullet + X]^+$, most likely via the metal ion-bound dimer $^\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{OH}\cdots\text{X}^+\cdots\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ (**1a/b**) and subsequent release of either ligand. The lower relative intensities of $^\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{X}^+$ (m/z 38/54) vs $^\bullet\text{XO}=\text{CH}_2$ (m/z 37/53) point out that the hitherto unknown Li^+ and Na^+ affinities of the hydroxymethyl radical are lower than those of formaldehyde which are 145³⁹ and 96 kJ mol^{-1} ,³⁸ respectively.

The analogous, heavier radical cations $[2^\bullet + X]^+$ dissociate in the metastable time window by elimination of formaldehyde; additionally, $[2^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ loses OCH^\bullet (Figure 4, insets). As with the smaller analogues, this behavior can be accounted for by radical site reactions commencing with scission of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to generate the X^+ -bound dimers **2a** or **2b** (Scheme 3). Again, only the lithiated dimer undergoes consecutive interligand H^\bullet rearrangement to the isomeric complex **2a'**, from which OCH^\bullet can be lost, and this reaction is suppressed during CAD due to an unfavorable entropy.

Collisionally activated $[2^\bullet + X]^+$ show completely parallel characteristics, dissociating extensively by loss of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to form the smaller metalated radicals $[3^\bullet + X]^+$ (m/z 82 for Li and 98 for Na). Consecutive $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ loss from these major fragments leads to m/z 52 and 68, respectively (see next section

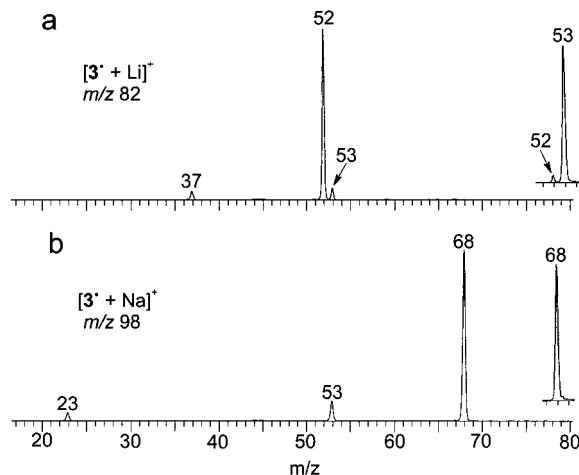
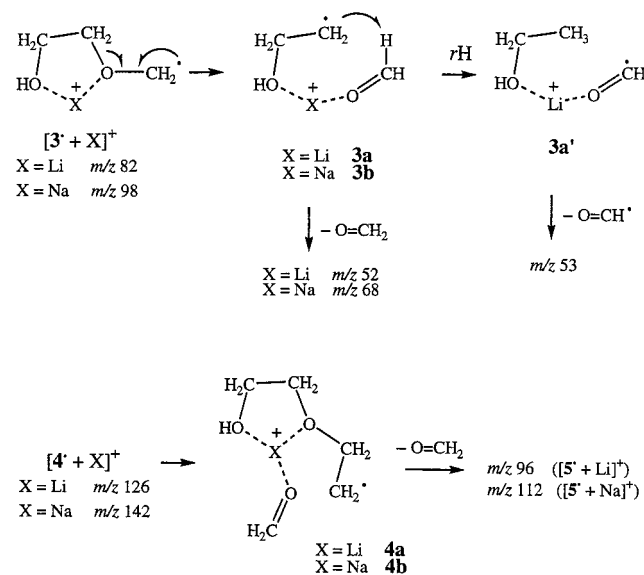


Figure 5. CAD (MS^2) spectra of $[3^\bullet + X]^+$: (a) $X = \text{Li}$ (m/z 82) and (b) $X = \text{Na}$ (m/z 98). The insets show the corresponding MI spectra. All MI peaks have Gaussian shape and their widths yield $T_{0.5}$ values of 8 (m/z 52), 12 (m/z 53), and 8 meV (m/z 68).

Scheme 4



for the chemistry of $[3^\bullet + X]^+$). Other minor CAD products include $^\bullet\text{XO}=\text{CH}_2$ at m/z 37/53 and the loss of $[\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{O}]^\bullet$ at m/z 67/83.

Metal Ion-Coordinated Radicals 3^\bullet and 4^\bullet (Methyl Terminus). Metastable $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ undergoes two spontaneous decompositions (Figure 5a, inset), involving the losses of formaldehyde (minor channel, m/z 52) and formyl radical (major channel, m/z 53). The reaction sequence shown in Scheme 4 (top) resembles that proposed for $[1^\bullet + X]^+$ and $[2^\bullet + X]^+$, starting with a radical-induced cleavage of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ from the polyglycol residue to create the Li^+ -bound complex of $^\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{-CH}_2\text{OH}$ and $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ (**3a**); in the second step, the radical site in **3a** abstracts an H^\bullet atom from $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to yield complex **3a'**, in which $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{Li}^+$ interacts with the OCH^\bullet radical. Subsequent elimination of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ from **3a** or OCH^\bullet from **3a'** leads to the observed products (Scheme 4).

The reactivity of metastable $[4^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ reverses (Figure 6a, inset), with the $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ loss (m/z 96) becoming the principal fragmentation channel. Dissociation through an ion-molecule complex analogous to **3a** can explain this cleavage. In this complex (ion **4a** in Scheme 4), the newly formed $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ ligand interacts with a Li^+ ion carrying two instead of one ligand,

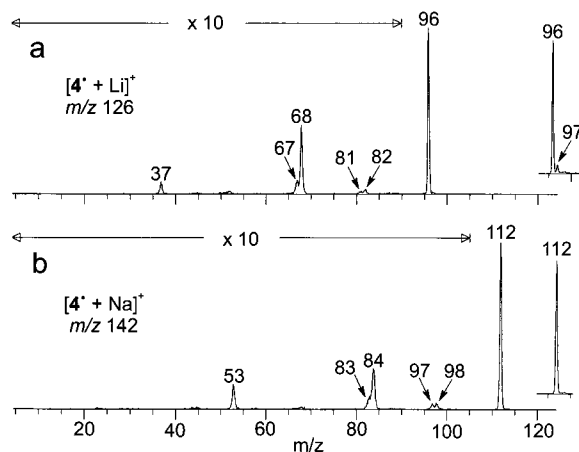


Figure 6. CAD (MS^2) spectra of $[4^\bullet + X]^+$: (a) $X = \text{Li}$ (m/z 126) and (b) $X = \text{Na}$ (m/z 142). The insets show the corresponding MI spectra. The MI peaks have Gaussian shape and their widths yield $T_{0.5}$ values of 8 (m/z 96) and 14 meV (m/z 112); m/z 97 is not well resolved from m/z 96 to measure a reliable peak width.

which decreases the electrostatic attraction of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ by the metal ion, thereby promoting bond cleavage to m/z 96 and reducing the extent of H^\bullet rearrangement to m/z 97. Note that **4a** (from $[4^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$) and **2a** (from $[2^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$), which carry similarly coordinated Li^+ ions (tridentate), lose $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ and OCH^\bullet in a comparable abundance ratio (cf. insets of Figures 4a and 6a).

The only spontaneous reaction of the sodiated radicals $[3^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ and $[4^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ is loss of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ (insets of Figures 5b and 6b). These features agree well with dissociation through the Na^+ -bound complexes **3b** and **4b** (Scheme 4) that arise by radical site-initiated cleavage of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ in $[3^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ and $[4^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$, respectively. The absence of OCH^\bullet elimination from the sodiated radicals should be due to the weaker binding energy of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to Na^+ within **3b** and **4b**, vis à vis its binding energy to Li^+ within **3a** and **4a**. As indicated above, this reduces the lifetime of **3b/4b** (vs **3a/4a**), hindering the occurrence of slow rearrangements in them.

For a better understanding of the trends observed in the MI spectra of $[3^\bullet + X]^+$ and the other radical cations discussed so far, ab initio MO calculations were performed on the parts of the potential energy surfaces of $[3^\bullet + X]^+$ that are traversed during $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ loss according to Scheme 4 (top); the results are depicted in Figures 7 and 8. The isomerizations $[3^\bullet + X]^+ \rightarrow \mathbf{3a/b}$ are found to be exothermic. The higher stabilities of **3a/b** vs $[3^\bullet + X]^+$ are ascribed to a more optimal metal ion coordination by $\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$ and $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ than by 3^\bullet due to a better alignment of the dipole moments of the separate ligands. The activation energy for $[3^\bullet + X]^+ \rightarrow \mathbf{3a}$ or **3b** is independent of the metal ion (90 vs 91 kJ mol^{-1} for the two complexes), consistent with no charge involvement in the radical-induced C–O bond cleavages leading to **3a/b**. In contrast, the energy needed for elimination of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ from **3a/b** does depend on X^+ and is significantly smaller for the sodiated than the lithiated complex (89 vs 127 kJ mol^{-1} , respectively). A consequence of these features is that the radical-induced rearrangements $[3^\bullet + X]^+ \rightarrow \mathbf{3a/b}$ produce **3a** below but **3b** above the dissociation threshold to $\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{X}^+ + \text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ (Figures 7 and 8). Under these circumstances, the sodiated dimer **3b** should decompose immediately and lacks the lifetime needed for further rearrangement to **3b'** (i.e. $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}\cdots\text{Na}^+\cdots\text{OCH}^\bullet$) for OCH^\bullet loss. Indeed, this reaction is not observed from $[3^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ or all other sodiated precursor ions encountered so far. On the other hand, the lithiated dimer **3a** emerging from $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ must

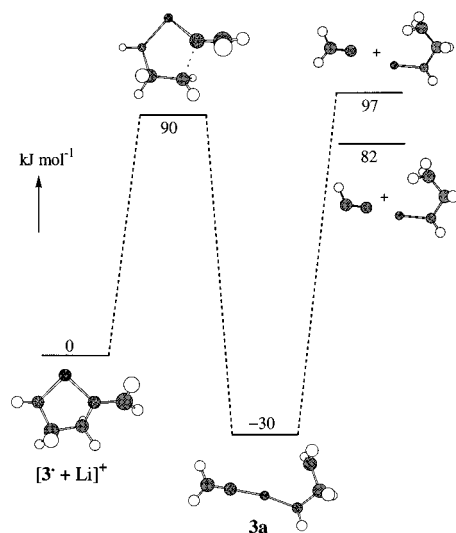


Figure 7. Potential energy diagram for the elimination of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ from $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ according to Scheme 4. Energy levels are given relative to that of the precursor ion and include zero-point vibrational corrections.

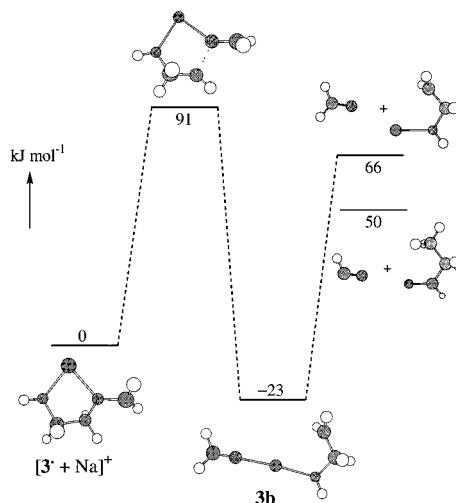


Figure 8. Potential energy diagram for the elimination of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ from $[3^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ according to Scheme 4. Energy levels are given relative to that of the precursor ion and include zero-point vibrational corrections.

surmount a further barrier for $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ loss and, hence, should be capable of surviving long enough for the occurrence of the competitive OCH^\bullet elimination.

Due to computational limitations, we were unable to locate the transition state of the interligand H^\bullet transfer $\mathbf{3a} \rightarrow \mathbf{3a}'$ (Scheme 4). This reaction produces more stable products than the OCH_2 cleavage (Figure 7);⁴⁰ since OCH^\bullet loss from $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ dominates at threshold, the transition state for $\mathbf{3a} \rightarrow \mathbf{3a}'$ should lie below 97 kJ mol^{-1} , which is the energy of the rate-determining transition state of the competitive $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ loss (Figure 7). Overall, the calculations confirm that the extent of OCH^\bullet elimination is mainly determined by the binding energy of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ within the X^+ -bound dimers of type **a** or **b**. A reduced binding energy and, hence, discrimination against OCH^\bullet loss results by switching the metal ion from Li^+ to Na^+ ,^{37,38} or by increasing the degree of coordination at the Li^+ ion,^{28b,41} as observed for $[4^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ vs $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ as well as $[2^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ vs

(40) Transformation of $\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{X}^+ + \text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{X}^+ + \text{OCH}^\bullet$ is exothermic, because it replaces a relatively weak $\text{OCH}-\text{H}$ bond with a stronger $\text{H}-\text{CH}_2$ bond in β -position to a positive charge.³⁶

(41) Rodgers, M. T.; Armentrout, P. B. *J. Phys. Chem. A* **1997**, *101*, 1238–1249.

$[1^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$. The calculations also corroborate that the precursor ions produced upon FAB are the cyclic species $[3^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$, not the X^+ -bound complexes $3\text{a}/3\text{b}$; in the latter case, metastable 3b would eliminate OCH^\bullet , which does not take place (no detectable m/z 69 in the inset of Figure 5b).

Collisional activation of $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ and $[3^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ induces very similar unimolecular reactions (Figure 5), the common major decomposition being cleavage of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ to yield the smaller distonic ion $^\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{H})\text{X}^+$ (m/z 52 with Li^+ and 68 with Na^+). These fragments most likely emerge through the Li^+ -bound complexes 3a and 3b (Scheme 4), respectively, a proposition supported by the appreciable yield in the CAD spectra of the competitive channel $^\bullet\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OH} + ^+\text{XO}=\text{CH}_2$ (m/z 37 with Li^+ and 53 with Na^+). The only significant difference between lithiated and sodiated 3^\bullet is the elimination of OCH^\bullet from the former (m/z 53), which was the principal decomposition of metastable $[3^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ (vide supra). Note that the yield of OCH^\bullet loss decreases markedly from MI to CAD conditions, as also observed for the other lithiated precursors. This decrease attests once more that interligand H^\bullet rearrangement ($3\text{a} \rightarrow 3\text{a}'$) is a slow, entropy-constrained process, proceeding efficiently only at threshold energies.

The CAD spectra of the homologous radicals $[4^\bullet + \text{Li}]^+$ and $[4^\bullet + \text{Na}]^+$ show equivalent fragmentations with strikingly similar relative abundances (Figure 6). The dominant unimolecular reaction is again cleavage of $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ which produces the distonic ion $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ (cf. Scheme 4, bottom). Sequential decomposition of the major $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ fragment (see following section for its chemistry) contributes m/z 81/97, 68/84 ($[1^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$), 67/83, and 37/53 ($^\bullet\text{XOCH}_2$); the appreciable $^\bullet\text{XOCH}_2$ ions can also be formed directly from $[4^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ (via $4\text{a}/\text{b}$) as well as by consecutive cleavage of HOCH_2^\bullet from the sizable m/z 68 and 84 ions, respectively (cf. Figure 3). Finally, the minor CAD products at m/z 82/98 ($[3^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$; $\text{X} = \text{Li}/\text{Na}$) can be explained by homolysis of the β -bond in respect to the radical site (Scheme 1); their low yield points out that β -bond scission requires a considerably higher critical energy than the favored α -bond cleavages to m/z 96/112.

The unimolecular chemistry of the charged oxy and methyl radicals discussed so far ($1^\bullet/2^\bullet$ and $3^\bullet/4^\bullet$, respectively) is dominated by simple cleavages near the radical site to release $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ which temporarily stays attached to the metal ion. The emerging metal ion-bound dimer between $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ and the remainder of R^\bullet undergoes $\text{O}=\text{CH}_2$ expulsion (main channel for heavier analogues $[2^\bullet/4^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$) as well as other competitive and consecutive fragmentations whose nature and extent depend on the metal ion and the precursor ion internal energy.

Metal Ion-Coordinated Radicals 5^\bullet and 6^\bullet (Ethyl Terminus). In this group of $[\text{R}^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ (Scheme 1), the radical sites are more flexible in approaching other H atoms, which brings upon substantial changes in the ensuing reactivity of these complexes. In the metastable time window (Figure 9, insets), both $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ ions lose $^\bullet\text{CH}_3$ (m/z 81/97 for Li/Na) and $^\bullet\text{C}_2\text{H}_5$ (m/z 67/83);⁴² the lithiated ion shows an additional, minor channel, involving the loss of C_2H_4 . Upon CAD, $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ still form sizable fragment ions by the loss of methyl and ethyl radicals (Figure 9). Other notable fragments appear at m/z 68/84 (C_2H_4 loss, basepeaks) and 37/53 ($^\bullet\text{XO}=\text{CH}_2$). The elimination of C_2H_4 corresponds to a direct cleavage of the ethylene side chain, producing the smaller distonic ions $[1^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$

(42) The much larger kinetic energy release for $^\bullet\text{C}_2\text{H}_5$ loss compared to $^\bullet\text{CH}_3$ loss (see legend of Figure 9) could be due to the cleavage of an $\text{O}-\text{C}$ bond during the former vs a $\text{C}-\text{C}$ bond during the latter process. $\text{O}-\text{C}$ (or $\text{O}-\text{H}$) bond cleavages, followed by elimination of an alkyl radical (or H^\bullet), are known to have large reverse barriers, resulting in large $T_{0.5}$ values.⁴³

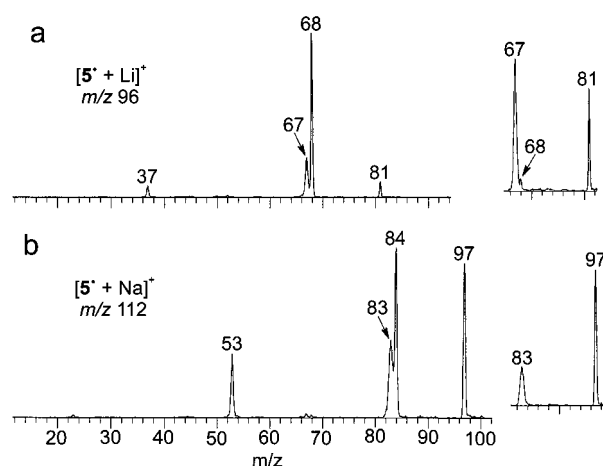
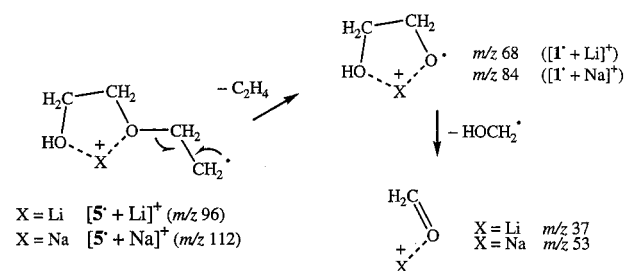
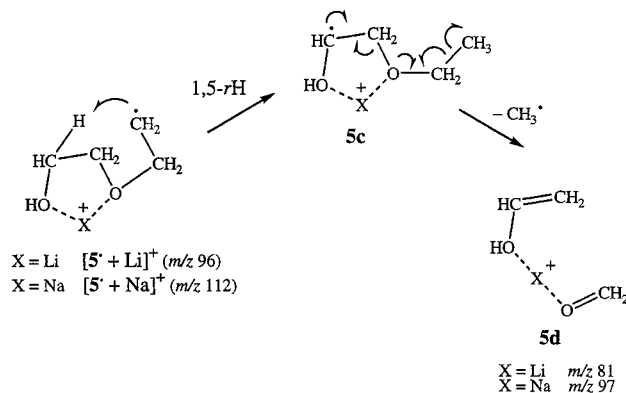


Figure 9. CAD (MS^2) spectra of $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$: (a) $\text{X} = \text{Li}$ (m/z 96) and (b) $\text{X} = \text{Na}$ (m/z 112). The insets show the corresponding MI spectra. The MI peaks have Gaussian shape and their widths yield $T_{0.5}$ values of 70 (m/z 67), 13 (m/z 81), 110 (m/z 83), and 31 meV (m/z 97).⁴²

Scheme 5



Scheme 6



(Scheme 5). Consecutive HOCH_2^\bullet loss from the latter can yield m/z 37/53; this proposition is supported by the CAD spectra of authentic $[1^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$, which are dominated by m/z 37/53 (Figure 3).

Since the $[5^\bullet + \text{X}]^+$ ions do not bear a methyl or ethyl group, the major eliminations of $^\bullet\text{CH}_3$ and $^\bullet\text{C}_2\text{H}_5$ require prior H^\bullet rearrangement. Radicals generally favor 1,4- and 1,5- H^\bullet migrations which proceed through five- and six-membered-ring transition states, respectively;⁴⁴ such processes are feasible with the polyglycol frame of 5^\bullet , as illustrated in Schemes 6 and 7. The new radical emerging from 1,5- H^\bullet transfer (5c in Scheme 6) can initiate a series of simple bond cleavages that ultimately

(43) (a) Burgers, P. C.; McGibbon, G. A.; Terlouw, J. K. *Eur. Mass Spectrom.* **1995**, *1*, 261–268. (b) Bouma, W. J.; Burgers, P. C.; Holmes, J. L.; Radom, L. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **1986**, *108*, 1767–1770.

(44) Wentrup, C. *Reactive Intermediates: The Neutral Reactive Intermediates in Organic Chemistry*; Wiley-Interscience: New York, 1984; pp 23–127.

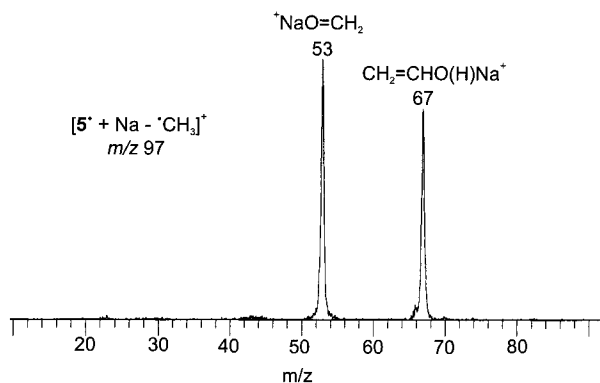


Figure 10. CAD (MS³) spectrum of [5[•] + Na - •CH₃]⁺ (*m/z* 97) in Figure 9b. It agrees well with structure 5d (Scheme 6).

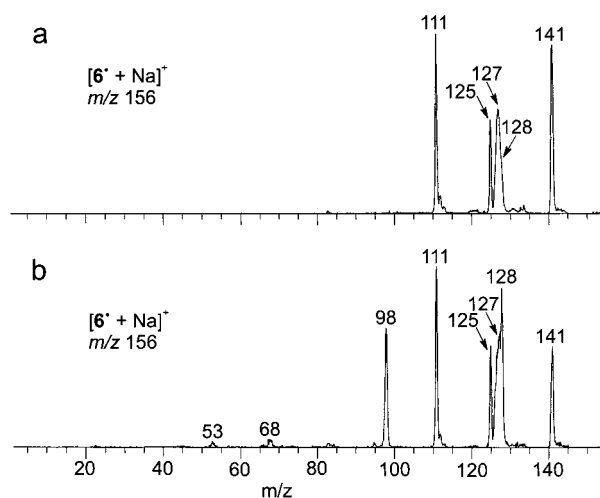
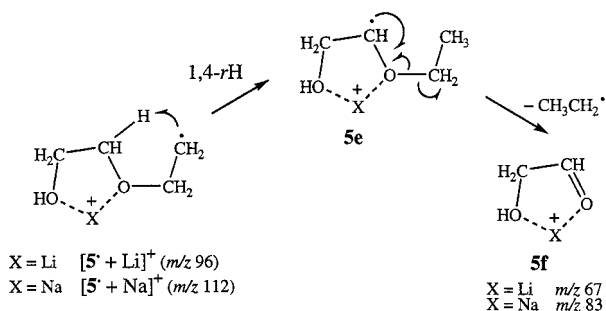


Figure 11. (a) MI and (b) CAD (MS²) spectra of [6[•] + Na]⁺ (*m/z* 156). The MI peaks have Gaussian shapes and $T_{0.5}$ values of 11 (*m/z* 111), 16 (*m/z* 125), ≤ 220 (*m/z* 127), and 66 meV (*m/z* 141).⁴⁵

Scheme 7



lead to the expulsion of a methyl radical to form the X⁺-bound complex of CH₂=CHOH (vinyl alcohol) and O=CH₂ (5d). To substantiate this proposal, the MS³ spectrum of [5[•] + Na - •CH₃]⁺ was obtained (Figure 10); it basically contains two fragment ions, ⁺NaO=CH₂ (*m/z* 53) and CH₂=CHO(H)Na⁺ (*m/z* 67), in agreement with structure 5d. The 1,4-H[•] rearrangement alternatively moves the radical site to a position that can launch the cleavage of an ethyl radical (Scheme 7). The MS³ spectrum of the [5[•] + Na - •C₂H₅]⁺ product (not shown) contains fragments at *m/z* 23 (100%), 31 (HOCH₂[•]; 13%), 52 ([•]CH=ONa⁺; 23%), and 54 (⁺Na(H)OCH₂[•]; 32%), which support the structure 5f depicted in Scheme 7.

The MI and CAD data of the analogous distonic ions [6[•] + Li]⁺ and [6[•] + Na]⁺ are qualitatively indistinguishable; only the sodiated radical, which is produced with higher flux and purity, will be presented here. Metastable [6[•] + Na]⁺ undergoes

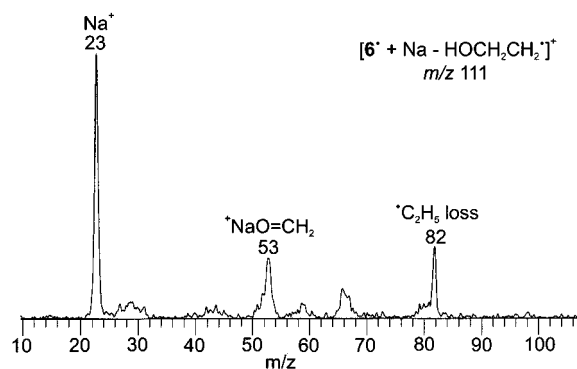
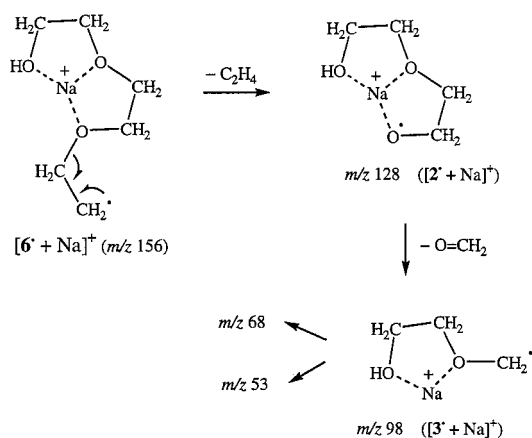
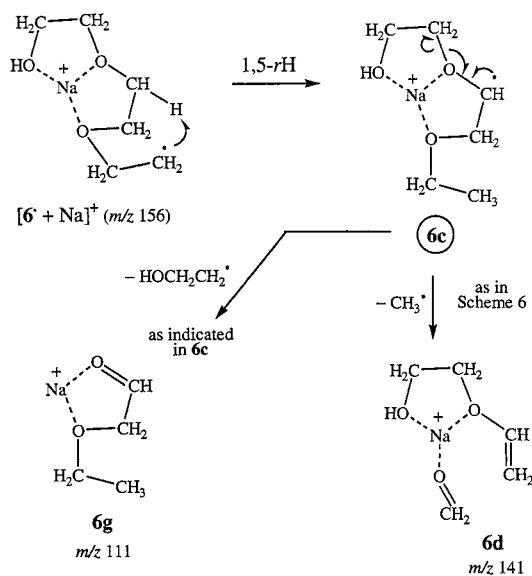


Figure 12. CAD (MS³) spectrum of [6[•] + Na - HOCH₂CH₂]⁺ (*m/z* 111) in Figure 11b. It agrees well with structure 6g (Scheme 9).

Scheme 8



Scheme 9



four major competitive dissociations (Figure 11a), leading to the eliminations of •CH₃ (*m/z* 141), •C₂H₅ (127), HOCH₂[•] (125), and HOCH₂CH₂[•] (111);⁴⁵ an additional, minor channel involves

(45) The losses of •CH₃ and (especially) •C₂H₅ are associated with considerably larger kinetic energy releases than the losses of HOCH₂[•] and HOCH₂CH₂[•] (Figure 11). The $T_{0.5}$ values observed suggest that the reverse barriers of the alkyl eliminations are significant,⁴² while those of the hydroxyalkyl eliminations are small or negligible. Compared to •C_nH_{2n+1} cleavages, the cleavages of HO(CH₂)_n remove a potential metal ion binding site, yielding fragments with fewer ligands around the metal ion (cf. Schemes 9 and 10). Such fragments might be sufficiently high in energy that overall reverse barriers become negligible.

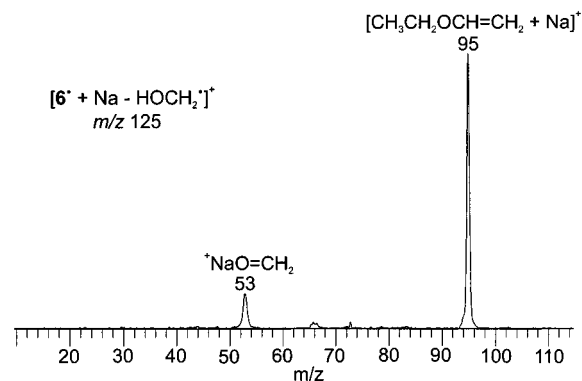
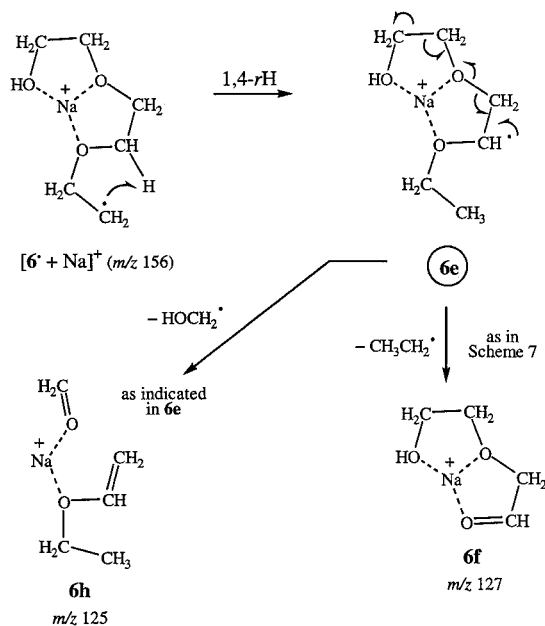


Figure 13. CAD (MS^3) spectrum of $[6^\bullet + Na - HOCH_2^\bullet]^+$ (m/z 125) in Figure 11b. It agrees well with structure **6h** (Scheme 10).

Scheme 10



the loss of C_2H_4 (m/z 128; unresolved from adjacent m/z 127). The major MI processes continue to proceed abundantly upon CAD (Figure 11b). Collisional activation also enhances substantially the formation of m/z 128 and 98. The m/z 128 ion most likely arises by radical-induced cleavage of C_2H_4 , which truncates $[6^\bullet + Na]^+$ to the shorter distonic ion $[2^\bullet + Na]^+$ (Scheme 8). Consecutive direct cleavage of $O=CH_2$ from $[2^\bullet + Na]^+$ can produce m/z 98 with the structure $[3^\bullet + Na]^+$; such a sequence is supported by the CAD spectrum of authentic $[2^\bullet + Na]^+$ which is dominated by m/z 98 (Figure 4b). Similarly, the CAD spectrum of authentic $[3^\bullet + Na]^+$ (Figure 5b) strongly suggests that further decomposition of the m/z 98 fragment ion is the source of m/z 68 and (at least partly) of m/z 53 (Scheme 8).

A 1,5- H^\bullet rearrangement in $[6^\bullet + Na]^+$ leads to isomer **6e** (Scheme 9), where the radical can induce the cleavage of either $\bullet CH_3$ (15 u) or $HOCH_2CH_2^\bullet$ (45 u) radicals to yield fragment

ions **6d** (m/z 141) and **6g** (m/z 111), respectively (cf. Figure 11). The MS^3 spectrum of $[6^\bullet + Na - \bullet CH_3]^+$ (not shown) is very simple, consisting of peaks at m/z 53 ($^+NaO=CH_2$; 7%) and 111 ($O=CH_2$ loss; 100%); these characteristics are in consent with the structure of Na^+ -bound dimer **6d**. Similarly, the MS^3 spectrum of $[6^\bullet + Na - HOCH_2CH_2^\bullet]^+$ (Figure 12) shows important fragment ions at m/z 82 ($\bullet C_2H_5$ loss), 53 ($^+NaO=CH_2$), and 23 (Na^+), which are in consent with the connectivity **6g**.⁴⁶

A 1,4- H^\bullet rearrangement in $[6^\bullet + Na]^+$, on the other hand, creates the isomeric distonic radical cation **6e** (Scheme 10). This can initiate the cleavage of ethyl to produce **6f** (m/z 127; an analogue of **5f** in Scheme 7). An alternative direct cleavage can progress toward the opposite direction, expelling a hydroxymethyl radical from the other terminus to yield ion **6h** (m/z 125), the Na^+ -bound complex of formaldehyde, and ethyl vinyl ether. Corroborative evidence for this pathway is provided by the MS^3 spectrum of $[6^\bullet + Na - HOCH_2^\bullet]^+$ (Figure 13), which is dominated by the sodiated monomers of **6h**, viz. $^+NaO=CH_2$ (m/z 53) and $[CH_3CH_2OCH=CH_2 + Na]^+$ (m/z 95).

Conclusions

Distonic $[R^\bullet + X]^+$ ions with sufficient internal energy to decompose undergo typical radical site decompositions, viz. direct cleavages in the α -position to the radical center and 1,4- or 1,5- H^\bullet rearrangements. Although these reactions are induced by the unpaired electron, the metal ion is not just a spectator. It rather acts as a mediator, promoting or hindering certain pathways. The metal ion accomplishes these tasks by disabling bond rotations in the R^\bullet segment involved in the coordination of the metal ion, so that the radical site cannot abstract nearby H atoms; as a charged particle, the metal ion also makes possible the formation of ion-molecule complexes, in which cleaved molecules with heteroatoms continue to interact with the metal. Interligand H^\bullet transfer may take place in the latter complexes, depending on their lifetimes which in turn are influenced by the X^+ -ligand binding energies.

Our studies are currently expanded to probe metalated radicals derived from crown ethers (they are more unsaturated as compared to the $[R^\bullet + X]^+$ ions discussed here), metal ion-coordinated peptide radicals (of biological interest),⁴⁷ and the ion-molecule reactions of $[R^\bullet + X]^+$ with double-bond-containing reagents (which confirm the distonic nature of the metalated radicals).⁴⁸

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(46) The latter MS^3 data also reveal that $[6^\bullet + Na - 45]^+$ (m/z 111 in Figure 11) is *not* formed in any significant extent by successive losses of $CH_3^\bullet + O=CH_2$ (i.e. through **6c** and **6d**) or by elimination of $\bullet OCH_2CH_3$ from **6c**; in such a case, $[6^\bullet + Na - 45]^+$ would have had the structure $[HOCH_2CH_2OCH=CH_2 + Na]^+$ (i.e. $[6d - O=CH_2]^+$) which is incompatible with the MS^3 spectrum of Figure 12.

(47) Talley, J. M.; Polce, M. J.; Wesdemiotis, C. Proceedings of the 47th ASMS Conference, June 13–17, 1999, Dallas, TX, WOD 11:15.

(48) Talley, J. M.; Polce, M. J.; Wesdemiotis, C. Proceedings of the 48th ASMS Conference, June 11–15, 2000, Long Beach, CA, MOF 11:15.