

NAD⁺ as a Hydride Donor and Reductant

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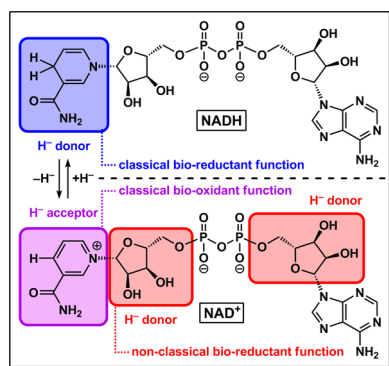
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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Reduced nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH) can generate a ruthenium–hydride intermediate that catalyzes the reduction of O₂ to H₂O₂, which endows it with potent anticancer properties. A catalyst that could access a Ru–H intermediate using oxidized nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺) as the H[−] source, however, could draw upon a supply of reducing equivalents 1000-fold more abundant than NADH, which would enable significantly greater H₂O₂ production. Herein, it is demonstrated, using the reduction of ABTS^{•−} to ABTS^{2−}, that NAD⁺ can function as a reductant. Mechanistic evidence is presented that suggests a Ru–H intermediate is formed via β-hydride elimination from a ribose subunit in NAD⁺. The insight gained from the heretofore unknown ability of NAD⁺ to function as a reductant and H[−] donor may lead to undiscovered biological carbohydrate oxidation pathways and new chemotherapeutic strategies.

Redox reactions provide the chemical motive force essential for all forms of life.^{1,2} Reduced nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH) supplies two e[−] to mitochondrial electron transport by donating H[−] from its hydroxyridine moiety (Scheme 1, blue box) to flavin mononucleotide.^{3,4} Conversely, oxidized nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺) accepts two e[−] from glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate or lactate dehydrogenase by accepting H[−] into its pyridinium moiety (Scheme 1, purple box).^{5,6} The H[−] donating ability of NADH has been harnessed for catalytic applications ranging from the reduction of O₂ to

Scheme 1. Hydride Transfer with NADH and NAD⁺

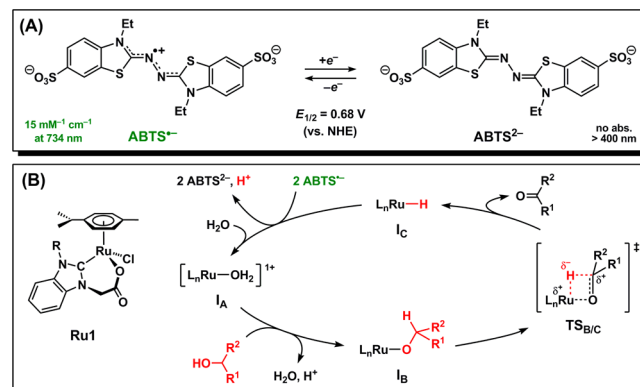


cytotoxic H₂O₂ in cancer cells^{7–9} to petroleum-free H₂ production¹⁰ to alcohol deracemization.¹¹

Free NAD⁺ is 640–1100 times more abundant in cells than free NADH;^{12–15} therefore, a catalyst that could utilize NAD⁺ would have access to a significantly greater H[−]/e[−] supply than NADH. Because catalytic carbohydrate oxidation can be performed by enzymatic¹⁶ and transition metal-based systems,^{17,18} we reasoned that oxidation of a ribose subunit (Scheme 1, red boxes) could enable NAD⁺ to function as a reductant. Catalytic oxidation of ribose has been achieved by a Ru complex to afford ribonolactone with concomitant H₂ transfer to an alkene.¹⁹ We therefore hypothesized that (1) a ribose subunit in NAD⁺ could similarly undergo oxidation by a Ru complex via some form of H[−] transfer to the metal center and (2) the resulting Ru–H species would exhibit catalytic reduction activity. Herein, we report the first instance of H[−] donation via β-hydride elimination from a ribose subunit of NAD⁺, which enables NAD⁺ to function as a reductant.

To probe for Ru–H formation, the conversion of 2,2′-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonate) radical monoanion (ABTS^{•−}, Scheme 2A) to ABTS^{2−} was selected as a spectroscopic

Scheme 2. RuI-Catalyzed ABTS^{•−} Reduction with Alcohols



ally more convenient reduction reaction than the conversion of O₂ to H₂O₂, given that ABTS^{•−} consumption can be quantified at significantly lower concentrations and longer wavelengths than H₂O₂ production.^{20–23} Furthermore, the reduction of ABTS^{•−} to ABTS^{2−} (0.68 V vs NHE)²⁴ occurs at nearly the same potential as the reduction of O₂ to H₂O₂ (0.70 V vs NHE).²⁵

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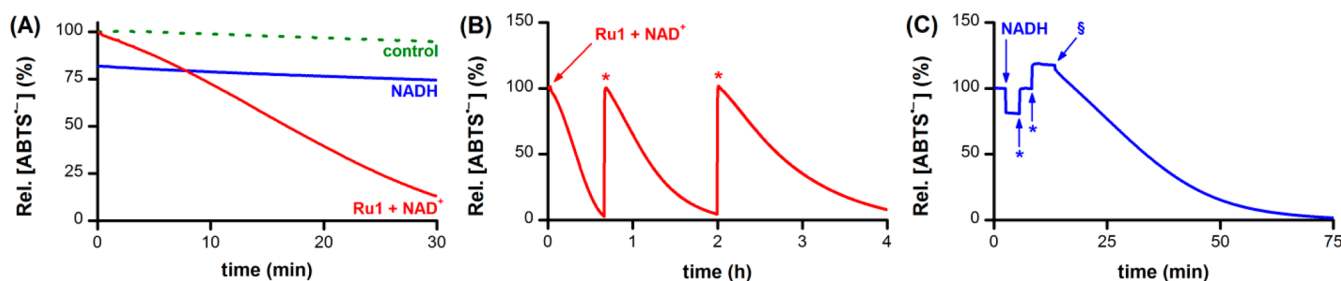


Figure 1. Plot of relative $[\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}]$ vs time, which shows the reduction of $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ to ABTS^{2-} following (A) the addition of **Ru1** and NAD^+ (red line), NADH (blue line), or **Ru1** without NAD^+ as a control (dotted green line), (B) two additional $50 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ aliquots (*) after the initial reduction by NADH , followed by **Ru1** and NAD^+ (s). Conditions: $[\text{Ru1}]_0$ or $[\text{NADH}]_0 = 5 \mu\text{M}$, $[\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}]_0 = 50 \mu\text{M}$, $[\text{NAD}^+]_0 = 25 \text{mM}$, PBS (pH 7.4), 25°C .

Therefore, from a thermodynamic perspective, the reactivity of Ru-H with $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ can provide insight into its reactivity with O_2 .

We recently reported the catalytic reduction of $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ to ABTS^{2-} in aqueous solution using biologically relevant alcohols as terminal reductants, including arabinose, a diastereomer of ribose (Scheme 2B).²⁶ Subsequent kinetic studies elucidated the mechanism: in aqueous solution, **Ru1** converts to Ru-aquo complex I_A , followed by ligand exchange with a nontertiary alcohol ($\text{R}^1\text{-CHOH-R}^2$) and deprotonation to afford Ru-alkoxide species I_B , which then undergoes β -hydride elimination ($\text{TS}_{B/C}$) to generate the catalytically active Ru-H intermediate I_C that reduces $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$.²⁷ We reasoned that a ribose subunit of NAD^+ could likewise undergo β -hydride elimination to produce I_C , whose presence could be inferred from the reduction of $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ to ABTS^{2-} .

Addition of $5 \mu\text{M}$ **Ru1** to $50 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ in phosphate buffered saline (PBS, pH 7.4) followed by the addition of 25mM NAD^+ produced an 87% decrease in radical absorbance within 30 min (Figure 1A, red line) that was 100% complete within 45 min. The UV/vis spectrum after 45 min confirmed a 1:1 correlation between $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ consumed and ABTS^{2-} produced (Figure S1). Attempts to characterize the NAD^+ oxidation product were unsuccessful, due to the low concentration constraints of the $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction reaction, but calorimetric and computational studies by others suggest that dehydrogenation of the $-\text{CHOH}-$ moiety at the ribose 2'-position would be thermodynamically the most favorable.^{28,29} No radical reduction occurred in the presence of $5 \mu\text{M}$ **Ru1** alone (Figure 1A, green line), which revealed that **Ru1** by itself could not reduce $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$. Similarly, no $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction was observed in the absence of **Ru1**, even with NAD^+ concentrations as high as 50mM , which demonstrated that NAD^+ by itself could not reduce $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$. However, addition of $5 \mu\text{M}$ NADH produced a rapid (within mixing time) 18% decrease in radical absorbance (Figure 1A, blue line), consistent with NADH functioning as a two e^- reductant. After the initial decrease, no additional $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction was observed beyond normal thermal decay.

To determine if **Ru1** remained catalytically active after the reduction of 10 equiv of $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$, two subsequent aliquots of $50 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ were added (*) and $[\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}]$ decreased to zero each time (Figure 1B). The time necessary for complete $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction increased with each successive aliquot due to the fact that ABTS^{2-} inhibits **Ru1**-catalyzed $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction.²⁷ After the initial decrease produced by NADH , however, addition of $10 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ aliquots (*) only increased absorbance proportional to the $[\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}]$ in each aliquot (Figure 1C), which indicated that the reducing ability of NADH had been exhausted.

Treatment of this solution containing $60 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ with $5 \mu\text{M}$ **Ru1** and 25mM NAD^+ (s), produced complete $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction within 1 h.

The ability of **Ru1** to catalyze $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction was assayed with the individual components of NAD^+ : nicotinamide, adenine, and ribose. No $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction occurred upon treatment of $50 \mu\text{M}$ $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ and $5 \mu\text{M}$ **Ru1** with either 25mM nicotinamide or 1.0mM adenine, which indicated that neither component afforded NAD^+ its terminal reductant ability. In contrast, the addition of 25mM D-ribose or 1.0mM $\text{D-ribose phosphate}$ produced complete $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction within 20 min (Figures S2–S3). The faster reactivity with $\text{D-ribose phosphate}$ is consistent with the higher affinity of cationic I_A for anionic $\text{D-ribose phosphate}$ than for neutral D-ribose . Collectively, these results demonstrated that the terminal reductant function of NAD^+ is derived from its ribose subunits.

The kinetics of **Ru1**-catalyzed $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction with NAD^+ were analyzed for consistency with the mechanism in Scheme 2. Increasing the solution pH led to faster $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction, with no reduction observed in pure H_2O (Figure S4), which indicated that H^+ dissociation was necessary and was consistent with the conversion of I_A to I_B . Varying the reaction temperature revealed $\Delta S^\ddagger = 17.1 \pm 4.9 \text{ cal mol}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$ (Figure S5), which demonstrated that disorder was increasing during the rate-determining step and suggested ligand fragmentation and dissociation (i.e., $\text{TS}_{B/C}$ and $\text{R}^1\text{-C(=O)-R}^2$ elimination, respectively) was occurring. The ΔS^\ddagger value observed with NAD^+ also fell within the range of values measured for **Ru1**-catalyzed $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction with other nontertiary alcohols ($\Delta S^\ddagger = 11.4\text{--}32.8 \text{ cal mol}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$).²⁷ Collectively, these results were consistent with the formation of I_C via β -hydride elimination from a ribose subunit coordinated to **Ru** and dissociation of the oxidized NAD^+ .

The observed rate constant (k_{obs}) for **Ru1**-catalyzed $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction with NAD^+ was 2.53-fold lower in deuterio PBS (pD 7.4) than in proteo PBS. This $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction reaction exhibits a solvent kinetic isotope effect (KIE) of 1.74, which reflects the role of H_2O as an H^+ acceptor in the conversion of I_A to I_B and I_C back to I_A .²⁷ Dividing the proteo/deutero k_{obs} ratio of 2.53 by 1.74 yielded the O–H/D KIE value of 1.45 for NAD^+ . Breakage of an O–H bond in a ribose subunit of NAD^+ is essential for the formation of I_B , whereby H/D substitution causes the activation barrier to increase and the k_{obs} for $\text{ABTS}^{\bullet-}$ reduction to decrease. In our previous mechanistic study, the smaller O–H/D KIE value for EtOH (2.92) compared to *i*-PrOH (4.18) reflected the lower pK_a of EtOH (15.9 vs 16.5 for *i*-PrOH).²⁷ Increasing the acidity of the O–H group will increase the $\text{O}^{\delta-}\text{-H}^{\delta+}$ bond polarization, which will lower the activation barrier to H^+ dissociation and thus render the O–H bond less

sensitive to H/D isotopic substitution. The substantially lower O–H/D KIE value for NAD⁺ compared to EtOH and *i*-PrOH was thus consistent with the substantially greater acidity of ribose ($pK_a = 11.8$).³⁰

We next sought to demonstrate that NAD⁺ could serve as a reductant under conditions in which the biological supply of NADH had been exhausted. Treatment of a 50 μM ABTS^{•-} solution (Figure 2, *i*) with 18 μM NADH caused a rapid (within

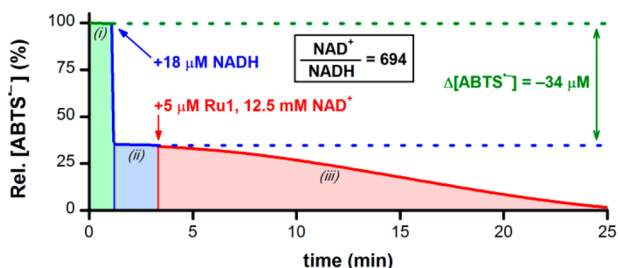


Figure 2. Plot of relative [ABTS^{•-}] vs time (*i*), which shows the 2:1 stoichiometric reduction of ABTS^{•-} by NADH (*ii*), followed by the catalytic reduction of ABTS^{•-} by Ru1 and NAD⁺ (*iii*). Conditions: [Ru1]₀ = 5 μM , or [NADH]₀ = 18 μM , [ABTS^{•-}]₀ = 50 μM , [NAD⁺]₀ = 12.5 mM, PBS (pH 7.4), 25 °C.

mixing time) decrease in radical absorbance corresponding to the reduction of 34 μM ABTS^{•-} (Figure 2, *ii*). This ABTS^{•-}/NADH reaction stoichiometry of 1.9 was consistent with NADH functioning as a two e^- reductant. Importantly, 16 μM ABTS^{•-} was not reduced, and no further decreases in [ABTS^{•-}] occurred. Subsequent addition of 5 μM Ru1 and 12.5 mM NAD⁺ caused the radical absorbance to decrease to zero within 22 min, signifying complete reduction of the remaining ABTS^{•-} (Figure 2, *iii*). The ratio of NAD⁺/NADH used in this experiment (694:1) was consistent with the ratio found in cells,^{12–15} which demonstrates that, under conditions that exhausted the free cellular NADH supply, Ru1 could utilize the substantially more abundant cellular stores of free NAD⁺ to alleviate or prevent oxidative stress.

In the presence of horseradish peroxidase (HRP), addition of H₂O₂ to ABTS²⁻ in PBS results in ABTS^{•-} formation, and the kinetics of this reaction can be used to evaluate the ability of an antioxidant to prevent or mitigate the onset of oxidative stress.³¹ Inclusion of 5 μM Ru1 and 25 mM NAD⁺ significantly inhibited ABTS^{•-} formation, which never exceeded 4.8 μM (Figure 3A, red line). After 15 min, the radical absorbance began to decrease, and complete ABTS^{•-} reduction was observed 6.6 min later. In

contrast, 5 μM NADH completely inhibited ABTS^{•-} formation for 3.3 min, whereupon the absorbance gradually increased to a maximum of 11 μM (Figure 3A, blue line). This concentration was 7 μM lower than the maximum observed in the control experiment and was consistent with NADH functioning as a two e^- reductant. The subsequent gradual decrease was due to normal ABTS^{•-} thermal decay.

After complete ABTS^{•-} reduction in the presence of Ru1 was observed following the first H₂O₂ aliquot, two additional 10 μM H₂O₂ aliquots (#) were introduced and [ABTS^{•-}] peaked at 6.4 μM before being reduced completely each time (Figure 3B), demonstrating that the catalyst and terminal reductant were both still present and active. Different behavior was observed with NADH after [ABTS^{•-}] peaked. Adding a second H₂O₂ aliquot (#) caused [ABTS^{•-}] to increase to 17 μM (Figure 3C), corresponding to 94% ABTS²⁻ oxidation (complete oxidation = 18 μM).²⁶ No change in absorbance was produced by the third H₂O₂ aliquot (#), consistent with all of the ABTS²⁻ having been completely oxidized by the previous H₂O₂ aliquots. Subsequent treatment of this solution with 5 μM Ru1 and 25 mM NAD⁺ (§) resulted in complete ABTS^{•-} reduction within 45 min.

To demonstrate that the reactivity exhibited by Ru1 and NAD⁺ in Figure 3 derived specifically from ABTS^{•-} reduction, two 10 μM aliquots of chemically synthesized ABTS^{•-} (*) were added after the initial reaction with H₂O₂ was complete (Figure 4, red line). The [ABTS^{•-}] immediately increased by 8.8 μM

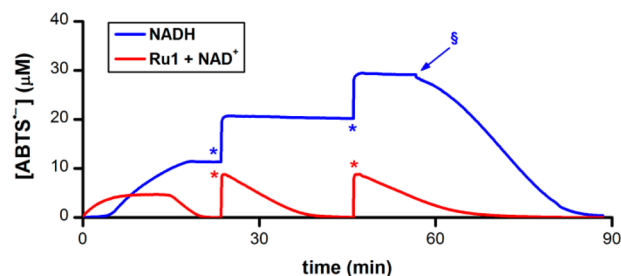


Figure 4. Plot of [ABTS^{•-}] vs time, which shows the oxidation of ABTS²⁻ to ABTS^{•-} in situ by HRP and H₂O₂ followed by subsequent ABTS^{•-} reactivity in the presence of Ru1 and NAD⁺ (red line) or NADH (blue line). After the initial reaction of Ru1 and NAD⁺ or NADH had completed, two additional aliquots of 10 μM ABTS^{•-} (*) were introduced. For the NADH experiment (blue line), 5 μM Ru1 and 25 mM NAD⁺ were added (§) after the final aliquot of 10 μM ABTS^{•-}. Conditions: [HRP]₀ = 10 nM, [Ru1]₀ or [NADH]₀ = 5 μM , [H₂O₂]₀ = 10 μM , [ABTS²⁻]₀ = 20 μM , [NAD⁺]₀ = 25 mM, PBS (pH 7.4) at 25 °C.

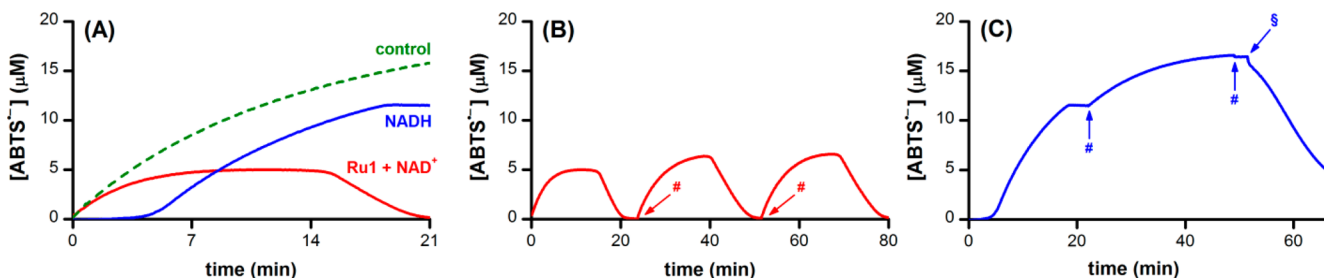


Figure 3. (A) Plot of [ABTS^{•-}] vs time, which shows the oxidation of ABTS²⁻ to ABTS^{•-} in situ by HRP and H₂O₂ in the presence of Ru1 and NAD⁺ (red line), NADH (blue line), or Ru1 without NAD⁺ as a control (dotted green line). Plot of [ABTS^{•-}] vs time, which shows ABTS^{•-} formation following two additional aliquots of 10 μM H₂O₂ (#) in the presence of (B) Ru1 and NAD⁺ or (C) NADH. For the NADH experiment shown in (C), Ru1 and NAD⁺ were added (§) after the final aliquot of 10 μM H₂O₂. Conditions: [HRP]₀ = 10 nM, [Ru1]₀ or [NADH]₀ = 5 μM , [H₂O₂]₀ = 10 μM , [ABTS²⁻]₀ = 20 μM , [NAD⁺]₀ = 25 mM, PBS (pH 7.4) at 25 °C.

each time, then decreased to zero 19 and 29 min after addition of the first and second ABTS^{•-} aliquots, respectively. We had previously shown that ABTS²⁻ is an inhibitor for RuI-catalyzed ABTS^{•-} reduction with nontertiary alcohols,²⁷ and given that the concentration of ABTS²⁻ increased as each successive ABTS^{•-} aliquot was reduced, it was unsurprising that the time required for complete ABTS^{•-} reduction likewise increased. With the NADH experiment, however, the first and second ABTS^{•-} aliquots produced 9.4 and 9.3 μM increases in [ABTS^{•-}], respectively, that were stable over time (Figure 4, blue line). Subsequent addition of 5 μM RuI and 25 mM NAD⁺ (8) then achieved quantitative ABTS^{•-} reduction in less than 39 min.

In summary, NAD⁺ is able to function as a terminal reductant for the RuI-catalyzed reduction of ABTS^{•-} to ABTS²⁻ in aerobic, aqueous solution. Because NAD⁺ typically plays the role of H⁻ acceptor in biological systems, the classical expectation would be that it could not function as an H⁻ donor. However, the ABTS^{•-} reduction reactivity observed with NAD⁺ and RuI were highly conserved with our previous studies using other nontertiary alcohols as terminal reductants,^{26,27} which suggested that the same mechanism was operative with NAD⁺. The key intermediate responsible for ABTS^{•-} reduction with NAD⁺ and RuI was therefore inferred to be a Ru–H intermediate formed via β -hydride elimination from a ribose subunit coordinated to Ru, whereby this ability of NAD⁺ to function as an H⁻ donor would give rise to its observed ability to function as a reductant. Previous studies by others have revealed that transition metal–hydride complexes formed via H⁻ transfer from NADH can react with atmospheric O₂ to generate H₂O₂,^{32,33} which in turn can produce cytotoxic effects against cancer cells.^{7–9,34–36} Given that free NAD⁺ is 640–1100 times more abundant in cells than free NADH,^{12–15} we believe that a catalyst that can utilize NAD⁺ as an H⁻ source will be able to generate significantly higher H₂O₂ levels and thus exhibit substantially greater anticancer potency. The biological applications of RuI will be detailed in subsequent reports.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

● Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/jacs.6b10451.

Detailed experimental procedures, additional UV–visible spectra and kinetics plots (PDF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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- (20) A 3.3 μM decrease in [ABTS^{•-}] would produce a measurable change in absorbance (0.050), but a comparable absorbance change would require a 1.1 mM increase in [H₂O₂]. If a catalyst concentration of 5 μM is used, it would be possible to observe the reduction of less than 1 equiv of ABTS^{•-}, but O₂ reduction would not be observable until more than 200 equiv of H₂O₂ had been produced.
- (21) In aqueous buffer, $\epsilon = 15,000 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ at $\lambda = 734 \text{ nm}$ for ABTS^{•-} vs $\epsilon = 43.6 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ at $\lambda = 240 \text{ nm}$ for H₂O₂.
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