## **ARTICLE TYPE**

## HERFD-XANES probes of electronic structures of iron $^{II/III}$ carbene complexes $^{\dagger}$

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[FeIII(btz)<sub>3</sub>]<sup>3+</sup>-GS-Orb







Fig. S1 The ground-state valence orbitals selected in the active space for  $[Fe^{II}(bpy)(btz)_2]^{2+}$ ,  $[Fe^{III}(btz)_3]^{3+}$  and  $[Fe^{III}(phtmeimb)_2]^{1+}$ .



Fig. S2 The calculated K pre-edge XAS of  $[Fe^{III}(phtmeimb)_2]^{1+}$  with basis set ANO-RCC-MB, ANO-RCC-VDZ and ANO-RCC-VDZP. The 40 core-excited states are included.



**Fig. S3** The spectra calculated with 80 and 120 core-excited states for  $[Fe^{II}(bpy)(btz)_2]^{2+}(left), [Fe^{III}(btz)_3]^{3+}(middle)$  and  $[Fe^{III}(phtmeimb)_2]^{1+}(right)$ .



**Fig. S4** The comparison between the RASSCF and RASPT2 spectrum of  $[Fe^{III}(phtmeimb)_2]^{1+}$  with 40 core-excited states. RASPT2 calculations have been performed using multi-state (MS) RASPT2<sup>1</sup> including all states from the RASSCF calculation. The default ionization-potential electron-affinity shift of 0.25 hartree has been used.<sup>2</sup> To reduce problems with intruder states an imaginary shift of 0.3 hartree has been applied throughout the calculations.<sup>3</sup>

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**Fig. S5** The experimental iron full HERFD-XAS spectra of  $[Fe^{II}(bpy)(btz)_2](PF_6)_2$ ,  $[Fe^{III}(btz)_3](PF_6)_3$  and  $[Fe^{III}(phtmeimb)_2]PF_6$ . The data was normalized to one at 7129.3 eV. The normalization can have an effect on the relative height of the pre-edge features. From the statistical error size and precision with which we can estimate this normalization factor we estimate that this procedure adds approximately 1% of the measured signal at this position to the error. In this plot we give the 2- $\sigma$  error marginals as derived from the combination of statistical fluctuation or the measurement/shot noise and the above mentioned estimated normalization error.



**Fig. S6** The peak fitting for the metal K edge XAS in the energy range from 7110 to 7120 eV. Fitting of K pre-edge features was performed using the EDG-FIT module of the EXAFSPAK suite using pseudo-Voigt line shapes with a fixed 50:50 ratio of Lorentzian to Gaussian functions where the peak positions, width and intensities were varied.