

Electronic Supplementary Information for,

A broad view at the complexity involved in water oxidation  
catalysis based on Ru-bpn complexes

Abolfazl Ghaderian,<sup>1,2</sup> Alicja Franke,<sup>3</sup> Marcos Gil-Sepulcre,<sup>1</sup> Jordi Benet-Buchholz,<sup>1</sup> Antoni Llobet,<sup>1,4\*</sup> Ivana Ivanovic'-Burmazovic',<sup>3,5\*</sup> Carolina Gimbert-Suriñach,<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Chemical Research of Catalonia (ICIQ), Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Av. Països Catalans 16, 43007 Tarragona, Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Departament de Química Física i Inorganica, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Campus Sescelades, C/Marcel·lí Domingo, s/n, 43007 Tarragona, Spain

<sup>3</sup> Department of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg, 91058 Erlangen, Germany

<sup>4</sup> Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Departament de Química, Cerdanyola del Vallès, 08193 Barcelona, Spain

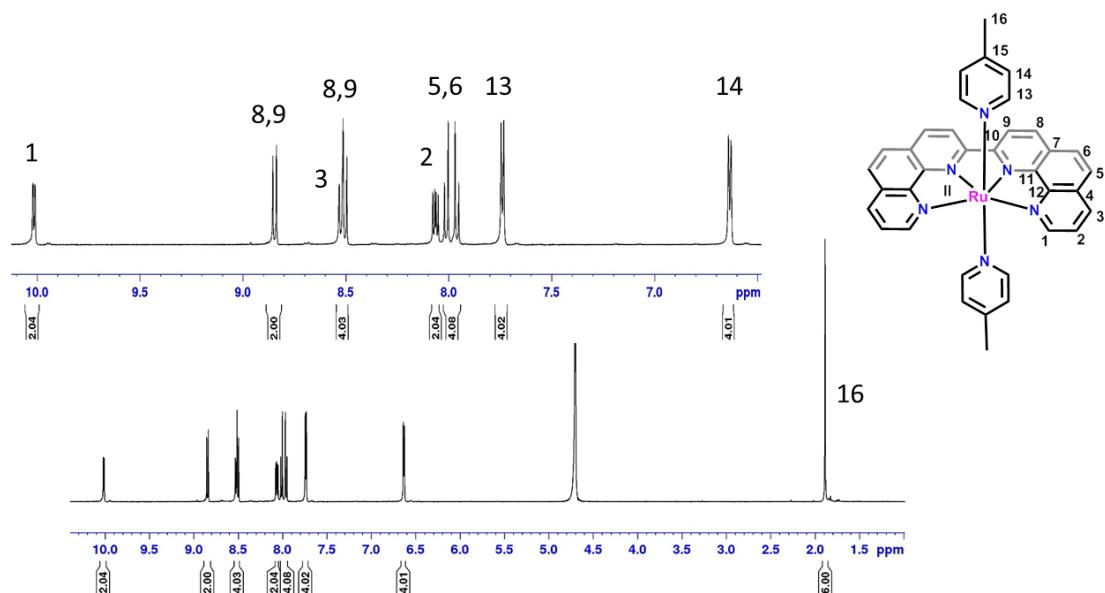
<sup>5</sup> Department Chemie, Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität, Butenandtstraße 5–13, 81377 München, Germany

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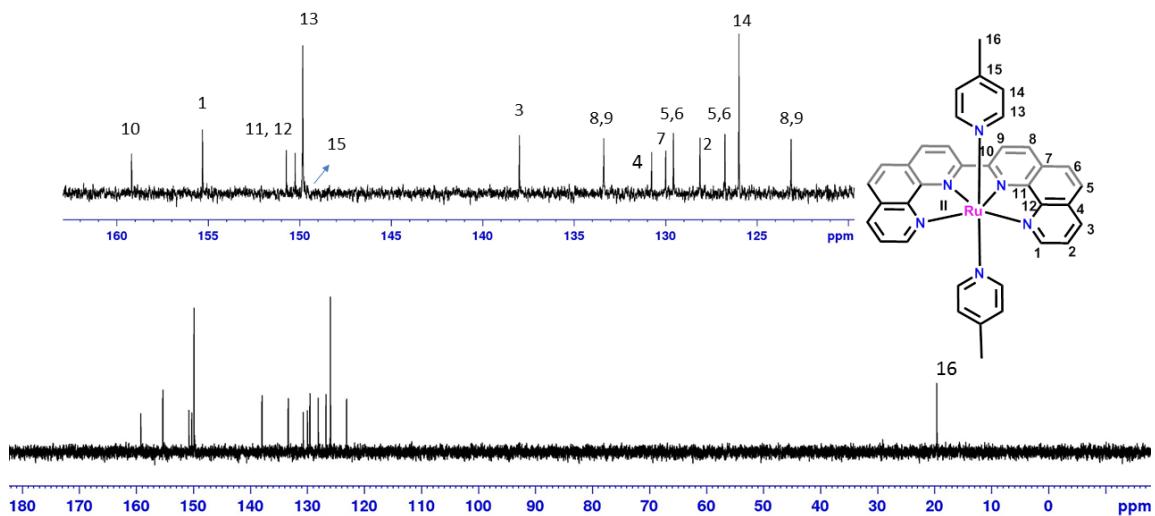
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## Spectroscopy

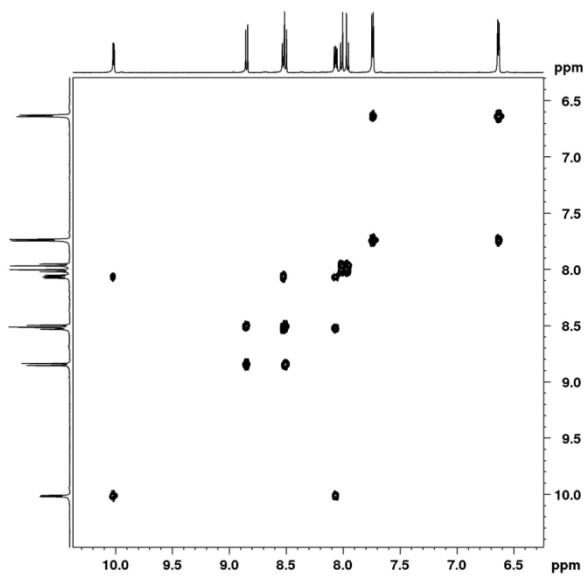
### Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR)



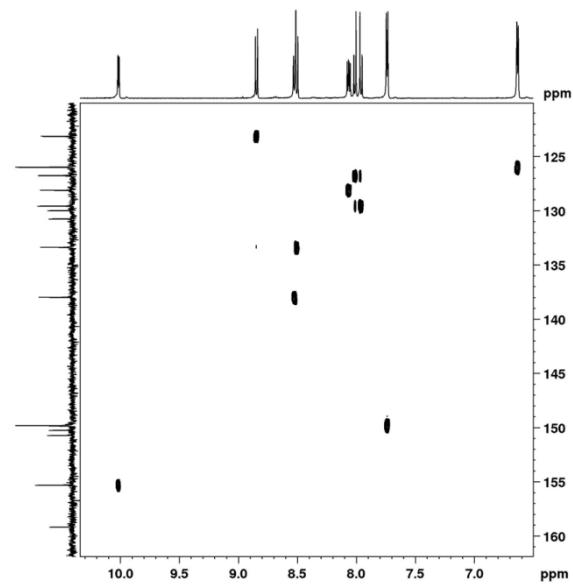
**Figure S1.**  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectrum of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  in  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$  at  $T = 298\text{K}$ . Inset, enlargement of aromatic region.



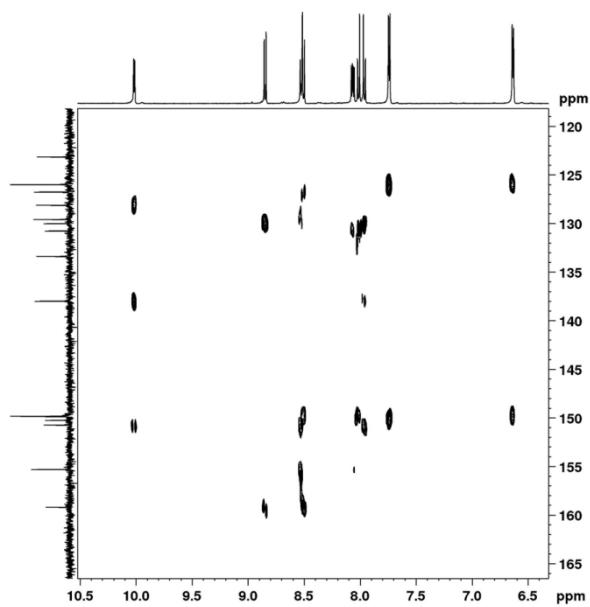
**Figure S2.**  $^{13}\text{C}\{\text{H}\}$  NMR of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  in  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$  at  $T = 298\text{K}$ . Inset, enlargement of aromatic



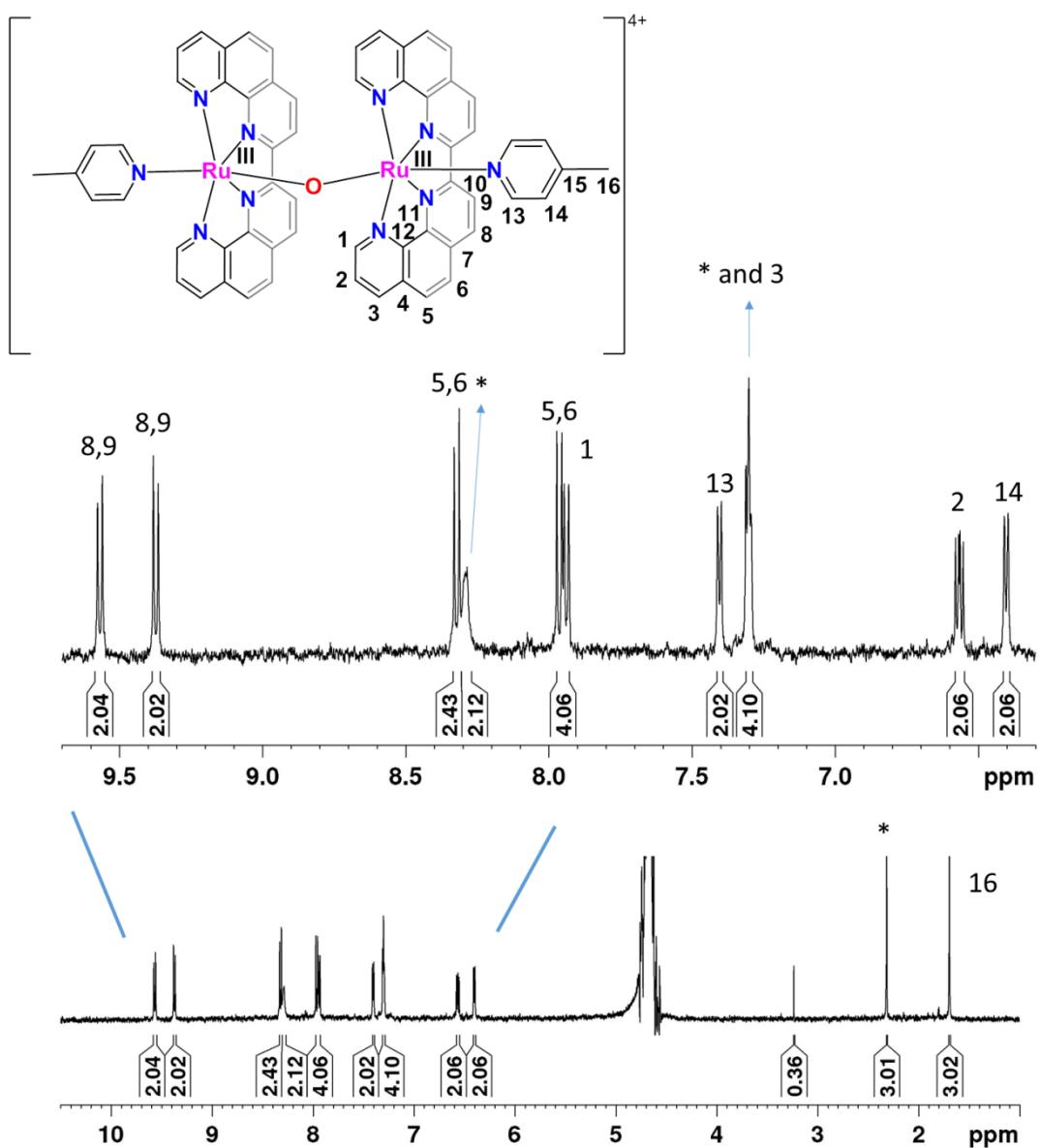
**Figure S3.** <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>1</sup>H COSY of **1**<sup>2+</sup> in D<sub>2</sub>O at T = 298K.



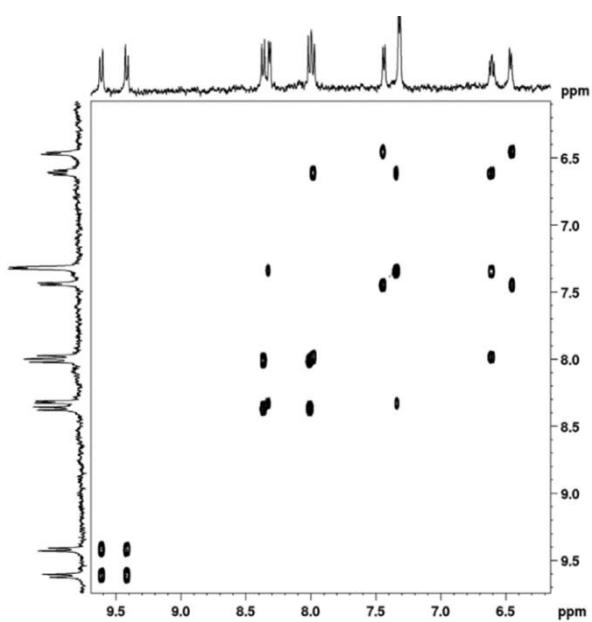
**Figure S4.** <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>13</sup>C HSQC NMR of **1**<sup>2+</sup> in D<sub>2</sub>O at T= 298K.



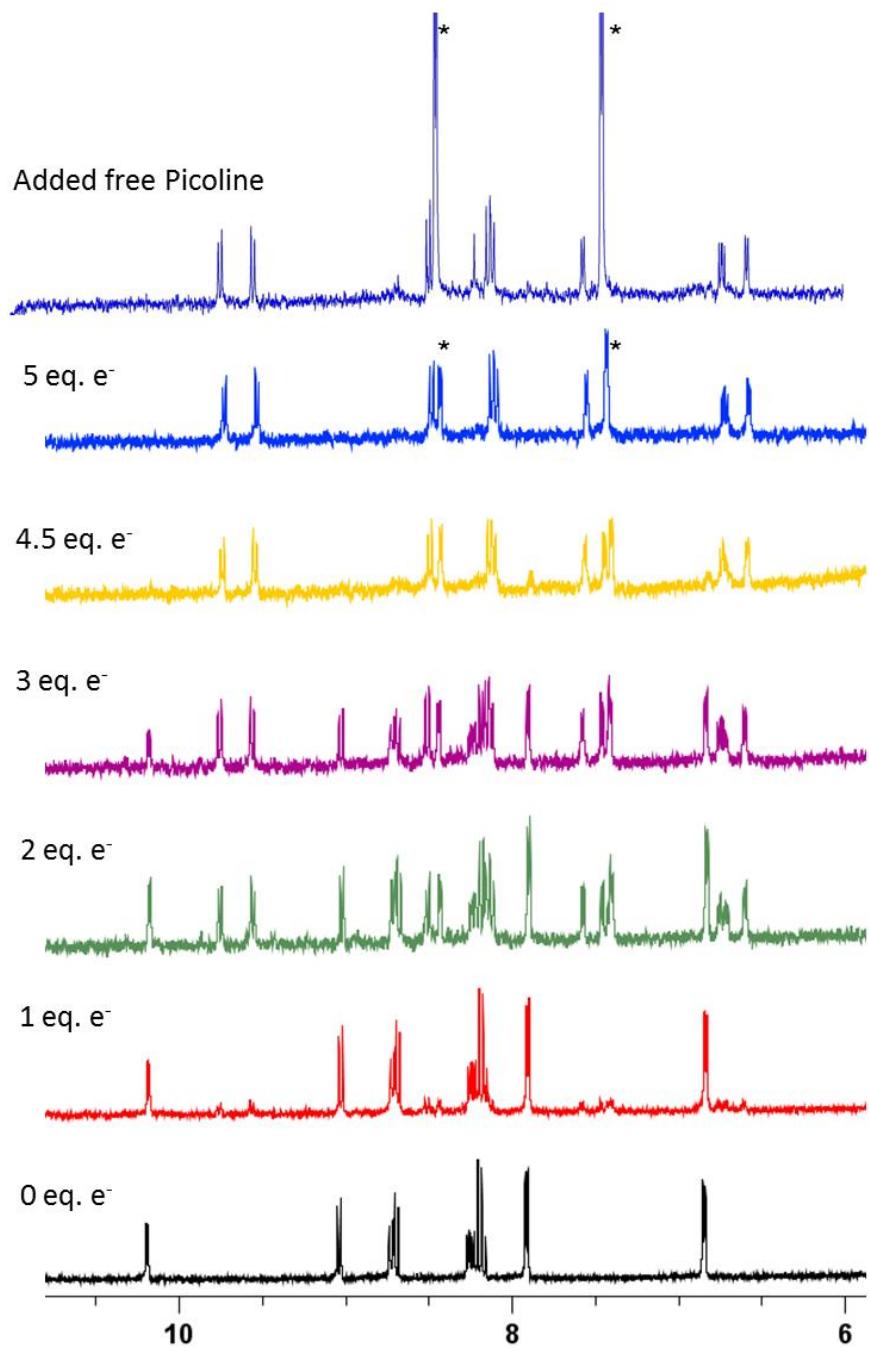
**Figure S5.**  $^1\text{H}$ - $^{13}\text{C}$  HMBC NMR of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  in  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$  at  $T = 298\text{K}$ .



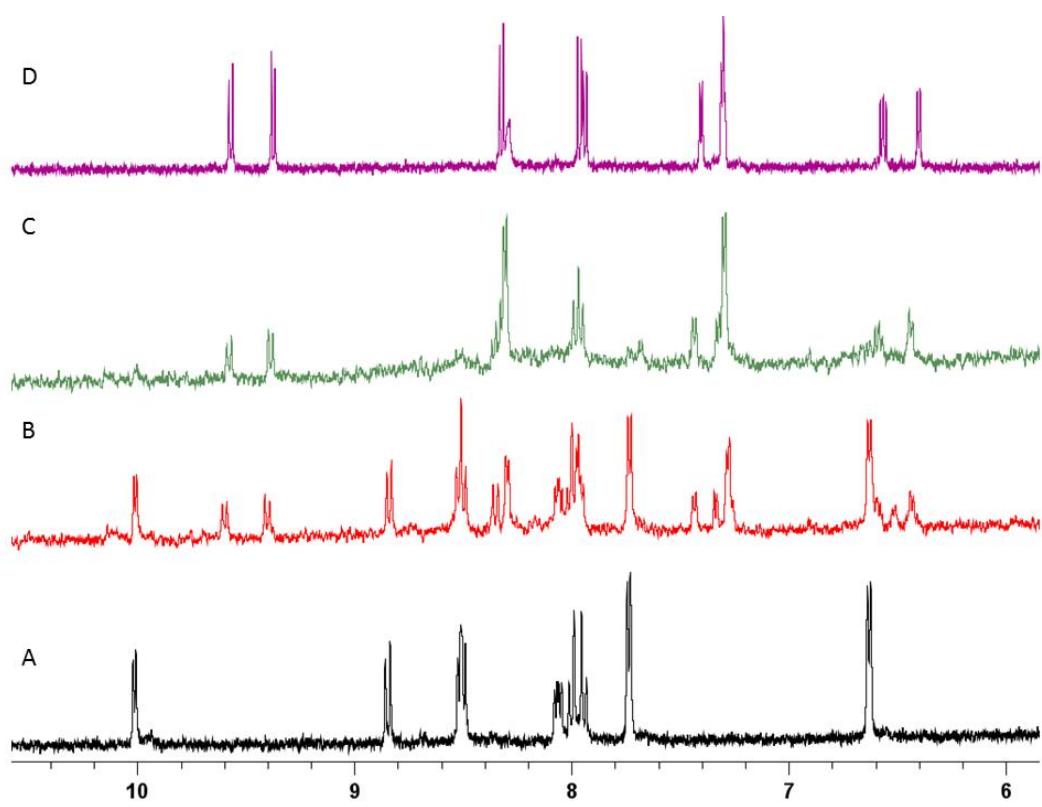
**Figure S6.** <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectrum of electrochemically generated **3**<sup>4+</sup> from **1**<sup>2+</sup> in a phosphate buffer (phbf) aqueous solution at pH 7 see (Figure S28 for CPE details). Asterisks indicate resonances of free picoline. *Inset*, enlargement of the aromatic region.



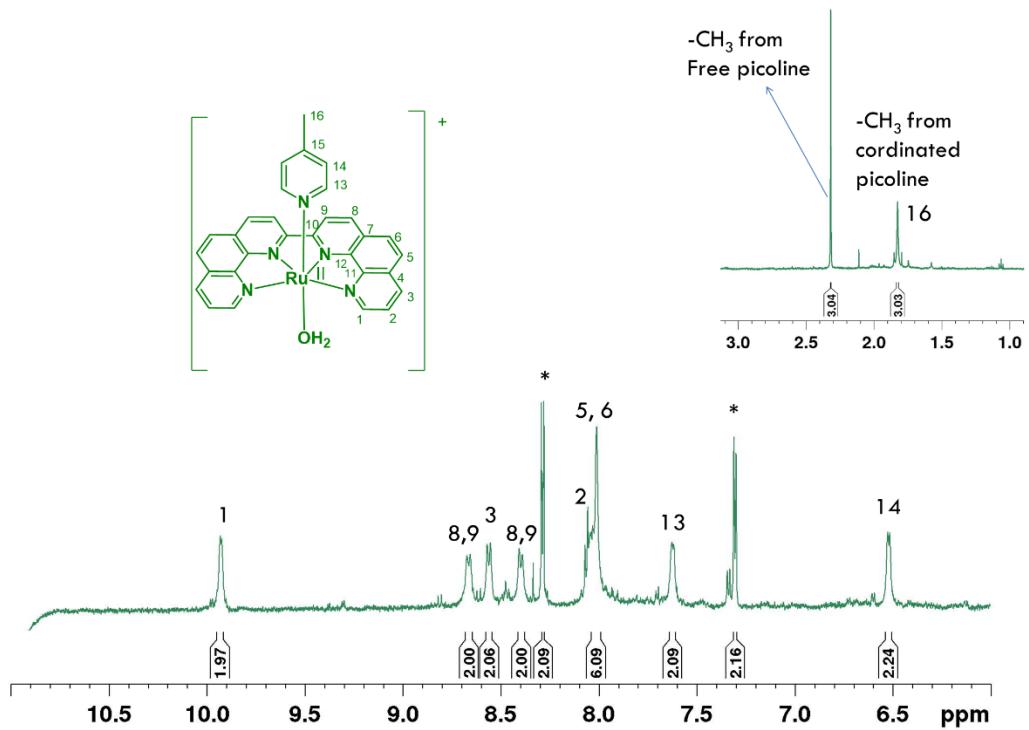
**Figure S7.**  $^1\text{H}$ - $^1\text{H}$  COSY of  $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$  in a phbf aqueous solution at pD 7.



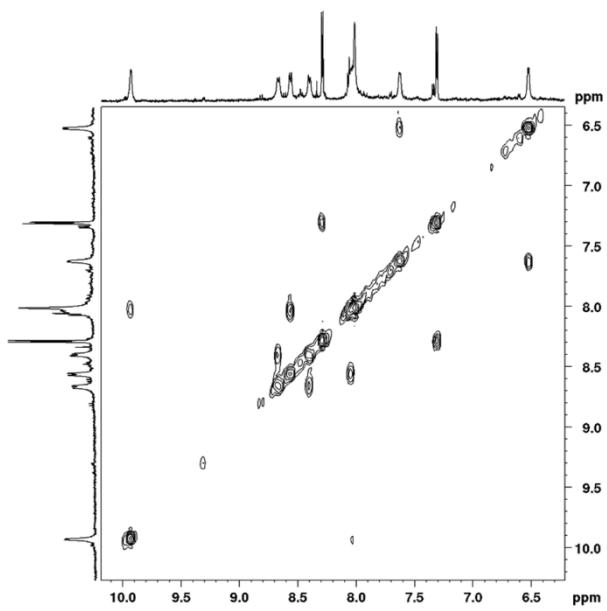
**Figure S8.** <sup>1</sup>H-NMR monitoring of the electrochemical conversion of **1**<sup>2+</sup> into **3**<sup>4+</sup> in a phbf solution at pD 7 (see Figure S28 for CPE details). Asterisks indicate resonances of free picoline.



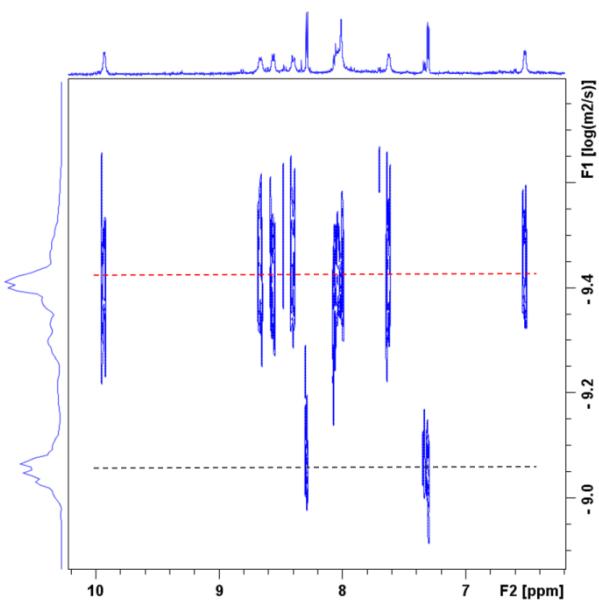
**Figure S9.**  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectra in a phbf aqueous solution at pD 7 of: A) **1** $^{2+}$ , B) **1** $^{2+}$  + 2 eq.  $\text{NaIO}_4$ , C) **1** $^{2+}$  + 4.5 eq.  $\text{NaIO}_4$  and D) **3** $^{4+}$  after CPE at  $E_{\text{app}}=1.45$  V vs. NHE.



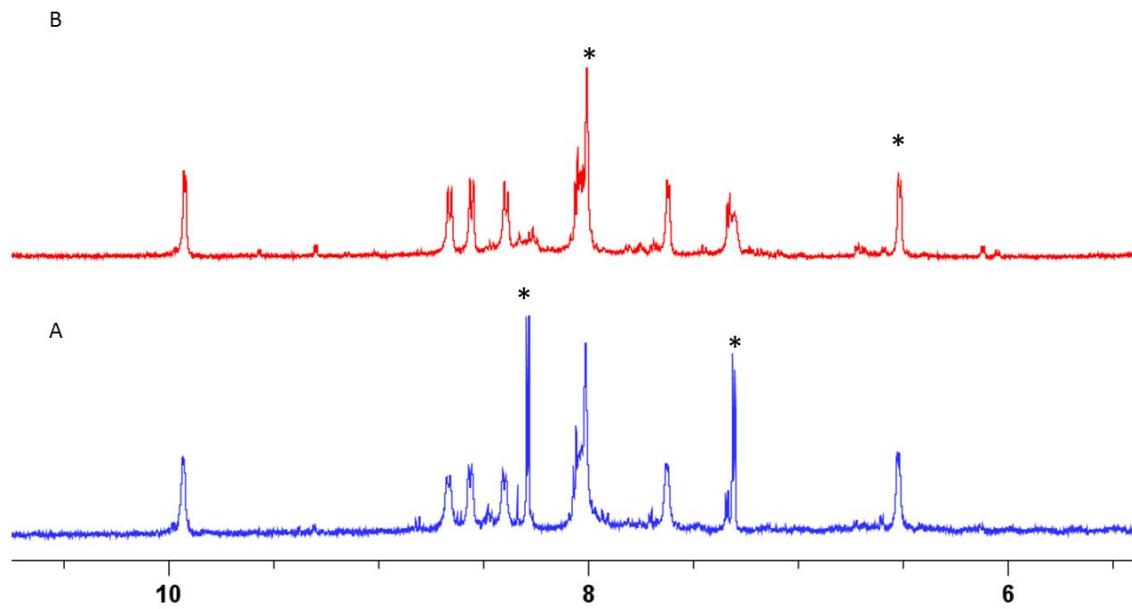
**Figure S10.**  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectrum of electrochemically generated  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  from  $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$  in a phbf aqueous solution at pH 7 (see Figure S29 for CPE details). Asterisks indicate resonances of free picoline. Inset, enlargement of the aliphatic region.



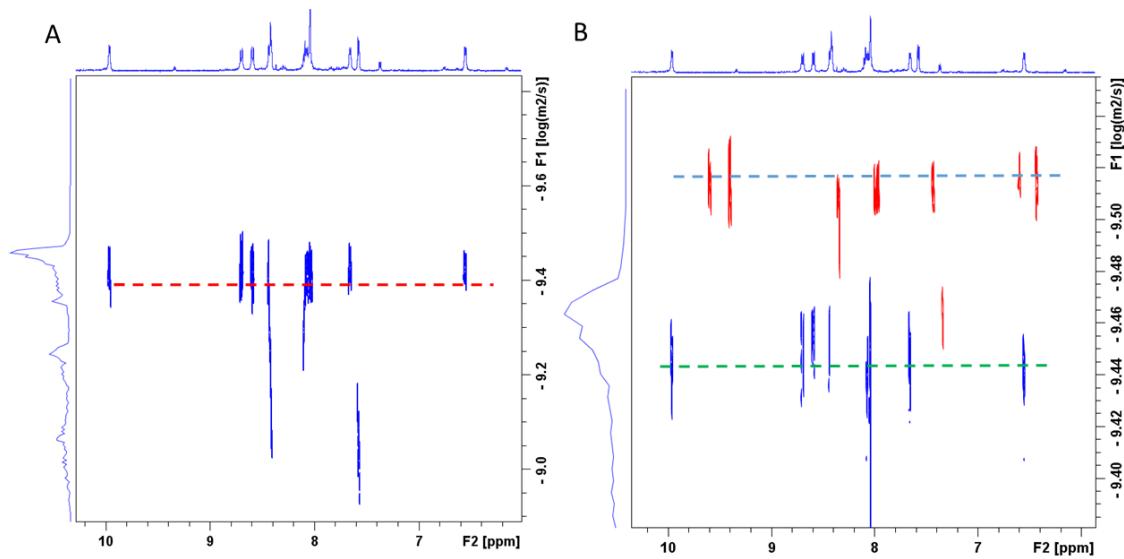
**Figure S11.**  $^1\text{H}$ - $^1\text{H}$  COSY of  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  at pH 7 at  $T = 298\text{ K}$ .



**Figure S12.** DOSY of  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  at pD 7. Free picoline appears at  $\log D = -9.05$ .

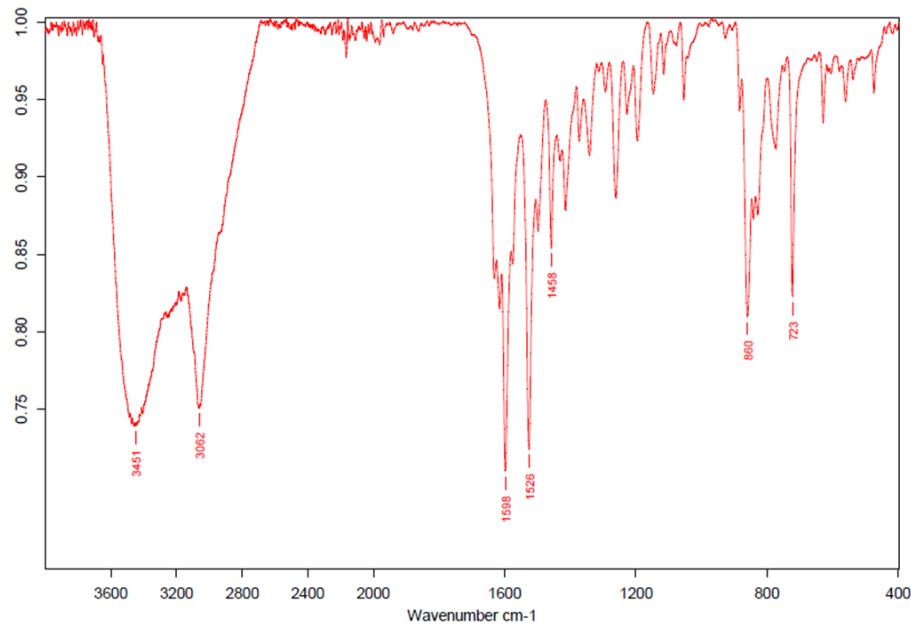


**Figure S13.**  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectra of electrochemically (CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 0.35$  in a solution of  $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$ ) A) and chemically (addition of L-ascorbic acid) B), generated  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  at pD 7. Asterisk indicate resonances of free picoline.



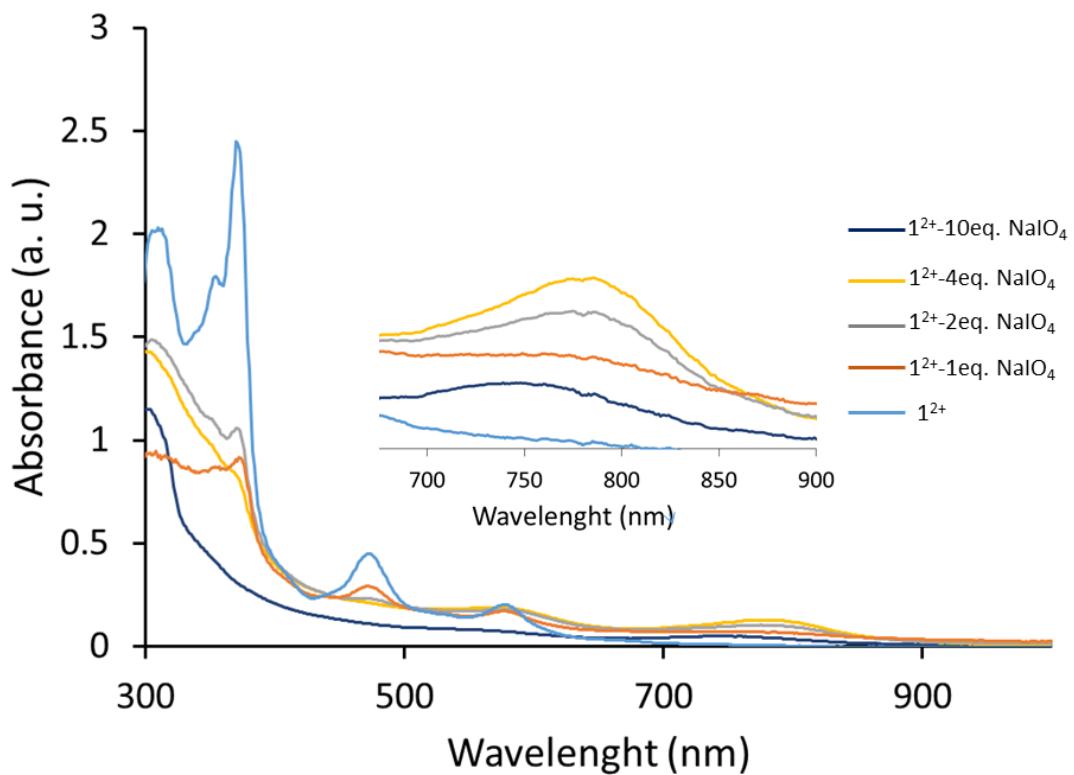
**Figure S14.** DOSY at pD 7 of: A)  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  and B)  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  (blue trace) +  $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$  (red trace).

### IR Spectroscopy

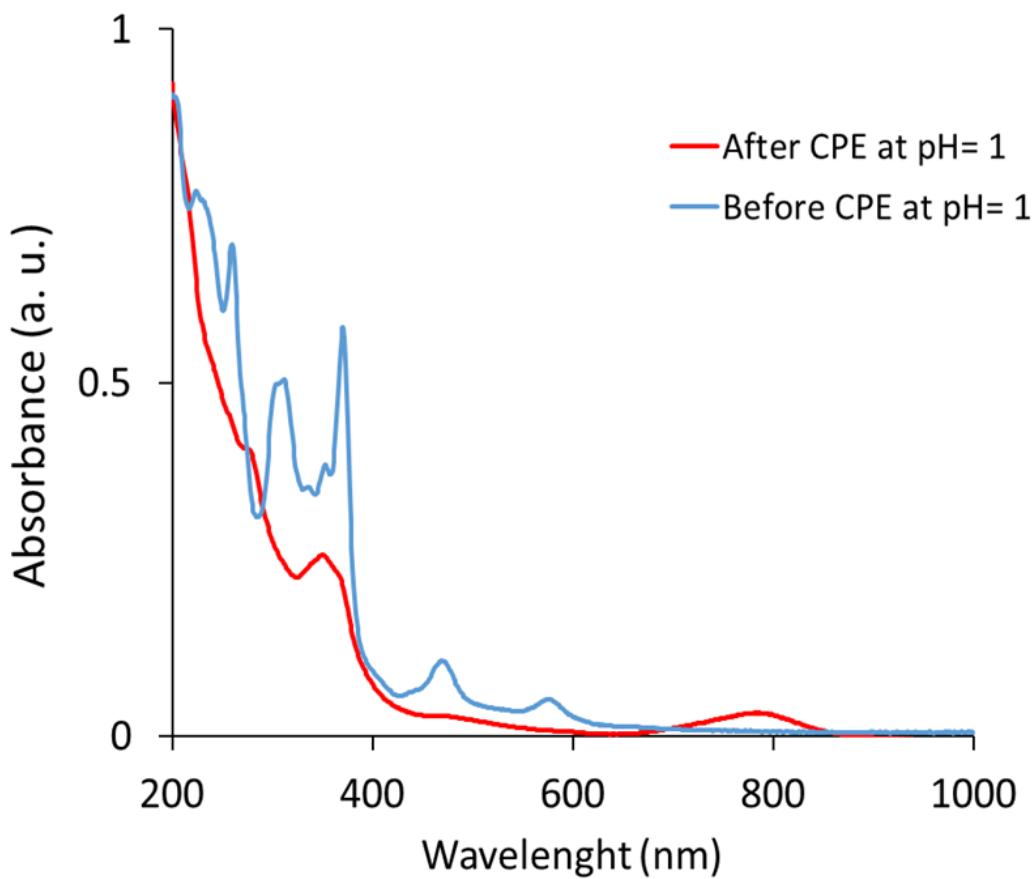


**Figure S15.** IR spectrum of  $[\text{Ru}(\text{bpn})(\text{Cl})_2]\text{Cl}$ .

### UV-Vis

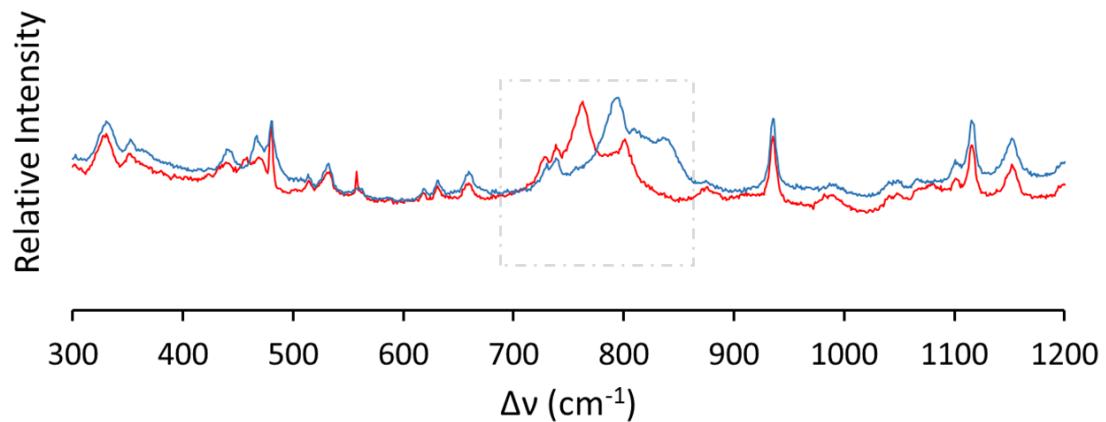


**Figure S16.** Recorded UV-vis spectra in a solution of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  (1mM) after addition of 1 to 10 eq of  $\text{NaIO}_4$  in a phbf aqueous solution at pH 7. Inset enlargement of the 700-900 nm region.



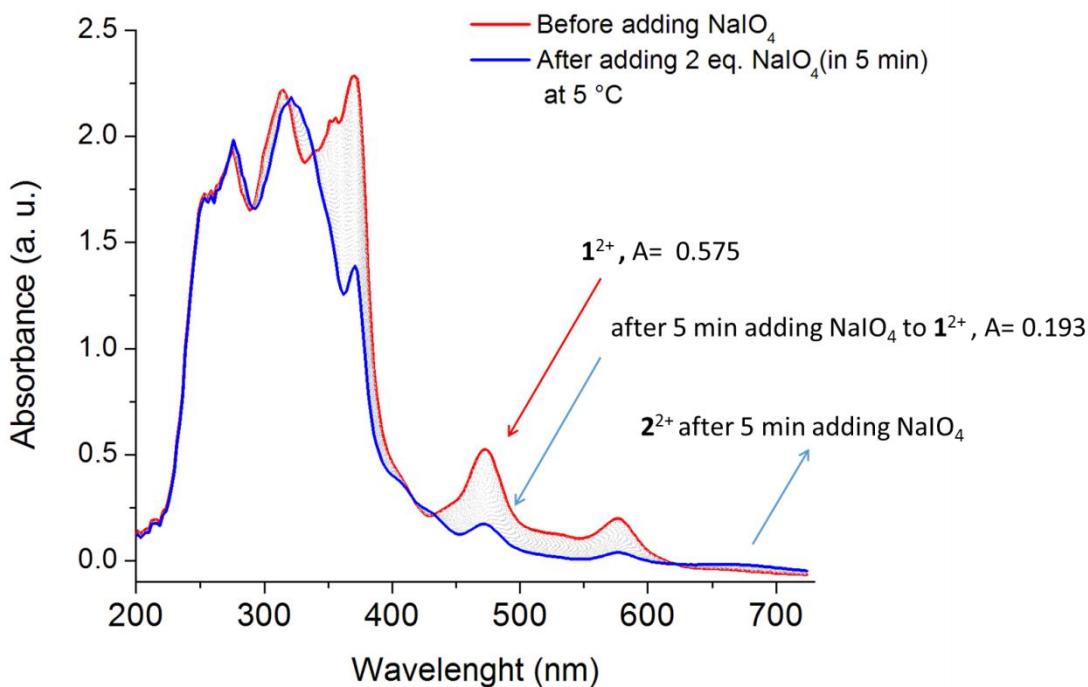
**Figure S17.** Recorded UV-vis spectra of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  (blue color) and new compound (red color) after CPE at  $E_{app}= 1.65$  V in a 1 mM solution of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  at pH 1 (TA-TFE (2:1) ( $[TA]= 0.1$  M).

### Resonance Raman Spectroscopy



**Figure S18.** rRaman spectra of an aqueous solution of **3**<sup>4+</sup> prepared *in situ* from **1**<sup>2+</sup> after a CPE electrolysis at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.45$  V at pH 7 phbf solution in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}^{16}$  (blue) and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}^{18}$  (red).

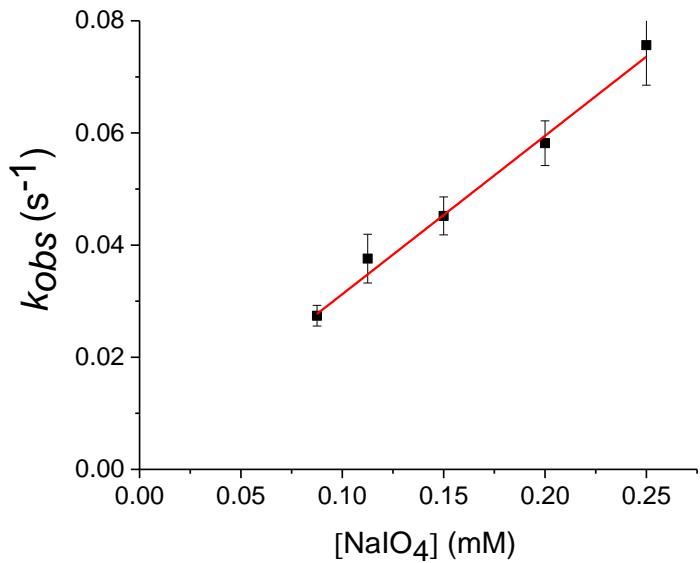
## Kinetics and Thermodynamics



**Figure S19.** Spectral changes recorded after stopped-flow mixing (1:1 volume ratio, 113  $\mu$ l of each reagent) of  $8 \times 10^{-4}$  mM NaIO<sub>4</sub> with  $4 \times 10^{-4}$  mM solution of **1**<sup>2+</sup> in phbf at pH 7.2 and 5 °C. 0 min (Red color (**1**<sup>2+</sup>)) and 5 min (blue color (**2**<sup>2+</sup>)). The gray traces show the spectral changes every 10 seconds.

**Table S1.** [NaIO<sub>4</sub>],  $k_{\text{obs}1}$  with St. deviation (SD) for  $k_{\text{obs}1}$  and SD for the fits taken from Figure 4C

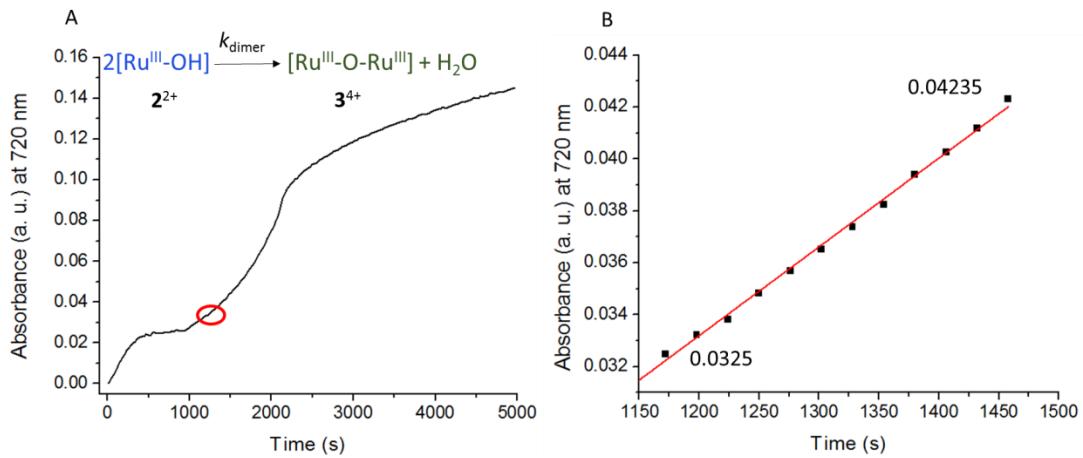
[NaIO <sub>4</sub> ], M	Mean value of $k_{\text{obs}1}$ (s <sup>-1</sup> )	SD of $k_{\text{obs}1}$	SD of fits
$8.75 \times 10^{-5}$	0.0274	0.00185	$(2.718 - 4.073) \times 10^{-4}$
$1.125 \times 10^{-4}$	0.0376	0.00435	$(3.370 - 5.147) \times 10^{-4}$
$1.50 \times 10^{-4}$	0.0452	0.00338	$(3.621 - 4.008) \times 10^{-4}$
$2.00 \times 10^{-4}$	0.0582	0.00399	$(3.919 - 4.166) \times 10^{-4}$
$2.5 \times 10^{-4}$	0.0757	0.00713	$(3.994 - 4.132) \times 10^{-4}$



**Figure S20.** Linear plot of  $k_{\text{obs}1}$  ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ ) values vs.  $[\text{NaIO}_4]$ . 7–20 equivalent excesses of  $\text{NaIO}_4$  ( $[\text{NaIO}_4] = (0.875 - 2.5) \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) used over the concentration of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  ( $0.125 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) at pH 7.2 phbf solution and 25 °C. The values of  $k_{\text{obs}1}$  ( $\text{s}^{-1}$ ) were obtained from the experimental data shown in Fig. 4C. The regression parameters to linear function  $y = ax + b$ ,  $a = 295.44 \pm 10.31$ ,  $b = 0.0013 \pm 0.0016$ ,  $R^2 = 0.9952$ .

**Table S2.** Spectroscopic data for the calculation of  $[\mathbf{2}^{2+}]$  is taken from Figure S19.

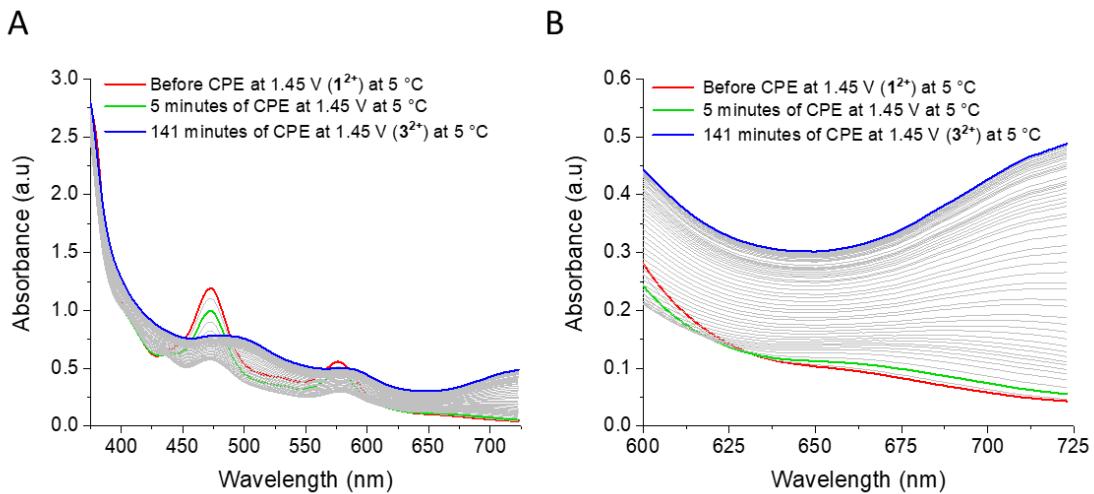
$\Delta A [\mathbf{1}^{2+}]$	$\epsilon (\mathbf{1}^{2+})$	L	$[\mathbf{2}^{2+}] = \Delta A / \epsilon L$
0.382	$6472.52 \text{ M}^{-1} \cdot \text{cm}^{-1}$	1 cm	$5.9 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$



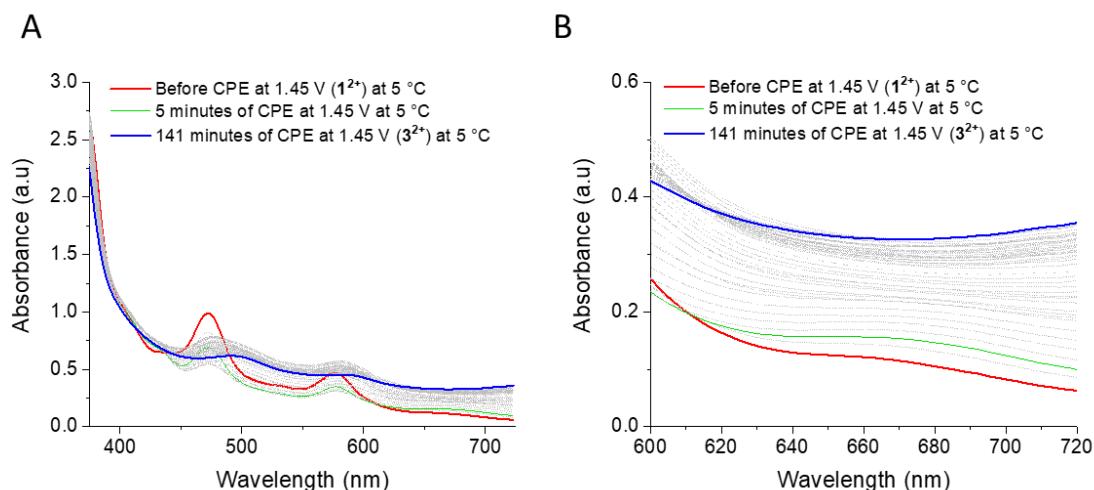
**Figure S21.** Left, Kinetic traces recorded at 720 nm during 82 min after stopped-flow mixing (1:1 volume ratio, 113  $\mu\text{l}$  of each reagent) of  $8 \times 10^{-4}$  mM NaIO<sub>4</sub> with  $4 \times 10^{-4}$  mM solution of **1**<sup>2+</sup> in phbf at pH 7.2 and 5 °C. Right, enlargement of the 1170–1460 s zone used for the calculation of [3<sup>4+</sup>]. Fit of experimental data to the linear function  $y = ax + b$ ;  $a = 3.419 \times 10^{-5} \pm 5.162 \times 10^{-7}$ ;  $b = -7.8 \times 10^{-3} \pm 6.7 \times 10^{-4}$ ;  $R^2 = 0.9975$ .

**Table S3.** Spectroscopic data for the calculation of  $k_{\text{dimer}}$  for the dimerization reaction (optical path length used, L = 1 mm). The data is taken from Figure S21.

$\epsilon(3^{4+})$	Slope = $\Delta C/\Delta t$	$v_{\text{initial}} = \text{slope}/\epsilon_{\text{dim.}}L$	[2 <sup>2+</sup> ]	$k_{\text{dimer}} = v_{\text{initial}}/[2^{2+}]^2$
7281.6 $\text{M}^{-1}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$	$(3.42 \pm 0.05) \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}^{-1}$	$(4,696 \pm 0.069) \times 10^{-9} \text{ M s}^{-1}$	$5.9 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$	$1.349 \pm 0.020 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$



**Figure S22.** Spectral changes recorded with UV-Vis probe during a CPE at  $E_{app} = 1.45$  V in a phosphate buffer solution at pH 7 ( $T = 5$  °C), Red ( $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$ ), Green ( $\mathbf{2}^{2+}$ ), Blue ( $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$ ). Conditions: 50 mL of buffered solution (phbf, pH = 7) of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  ( $[\mathbf{1}^{2+}] = 0.2$  mM, 10  $\mu\text{mol}$ ). WE: Pt net electrode (simple cylindrical Pt wire electrode, diameter: 35 mm and cylinder height: 50 mm); CE: Pt wire; RE: silver wire, the potential reported vs. NHE.



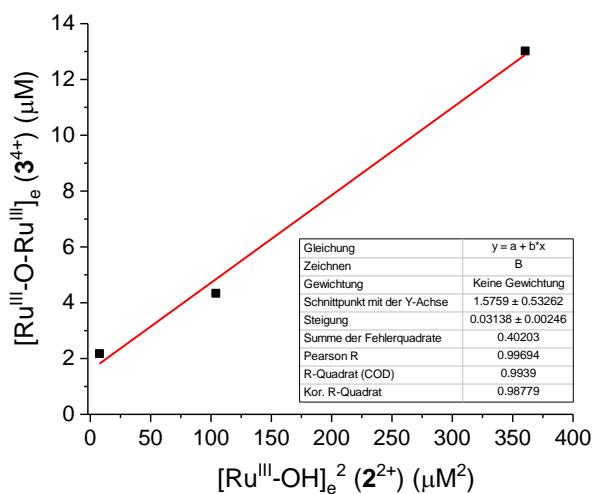
**Figure S23.** Spectral changes recorded with UV-Vis probe before (red) and after (blue) a CPE at  $E_{app} = 1.45$  V in a phosphate buffer solution at pH 9 ( $T = 5$  °C). Conditions: 50 ml of buffered solution (sodium borate buffer, pH 9) of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  ( $[\mathbf{1}^{2+}] = 0.2$  mM, 10  $\mu\text{mol}$ ). WE: Pt net electrode (simple cylindrical Pt wire electrode, diameter: 35 mm and cylinder height: 50 mm); CE: Pt wire; RE: silver wire, the potential reported vs. NHE.

The equilibrium concentrations of Ru<sup>III</sup>-O-<sup>III</sup>Ru<sup>4+</sup>, [Ru<sup>III</sup>-O-<sup>III</sup>Ru<sup>4+</sup>]<sub>e</sub>, were calculated from the spectral changes after adding various concentrations of oxidant (NaIO<sub>4</sub>) and the known dimer extinction coefficient at  $\lambda = 791$  nm ( $7281.6 \text{ M}^{-1} \cdot \text{mm}^{-1}$ ). In order to calculate [Ru<sup>III</sup>-OH<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>e</sub>, first the starting concentration of Ru<sup>III</sup>-OH<sup>2+</sup>, [Ru<sup>III</sup>-OH<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>0</sub>, was calculated from spectral changes of [1<sup>2+</sup>] after adding various amounts of oxidant and the known extinction coefficient of 1<sup>2+</sup> at  $\lambda = 472$  nm ( $\epsilon = 6472.52 \text{ M}^{-1} \cdot \text{mm}^{-1}$ ). Then, [Ru<sup>III</sup>-OH<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>e</sub> was calculated from Eq S1 (Table S4).

$$[\text{Ru}^{\text{III}}\text{-OH}^{2+}]_e = [\text{Ru}^{\text{III}}\text{-OH}^{2+}]_0 - 2 [\text{Ru}^{\text{III}}\text{-O-}^{\text{III}}\text{Ru}^{4+}]_e \quad (\text{Eq. S1})$$

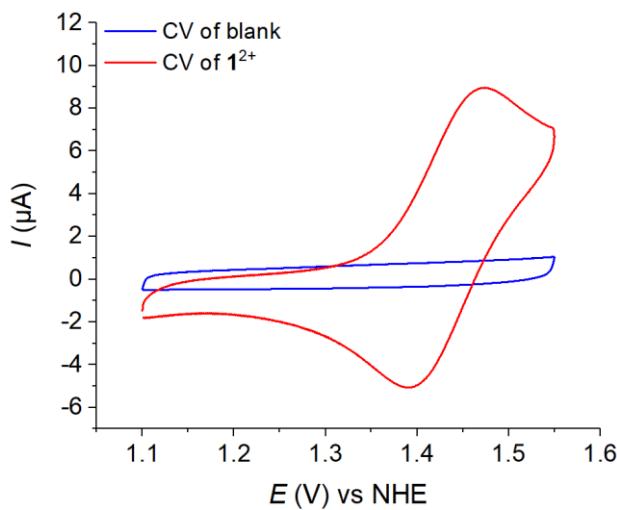
**Table S4.** Absorbance changes for after addition of various concentrations of oxidant NaIO<sub>4</sub> to 1<sup>2+</sup>.

<b>1<sup>2+</sup>:NaIO<sub>4</sub></b>	A (471 nm)	$\Delta A$ (at 471 nm)	$\Delta A$ (at 791 nm)
	(1 <sup>2+</sup> )	(2 <sup>2+</sup> )	(3 <sup>4+</sup> )
1-0.5	0.616	0.570	0.02032
1-1	0.621	0.4883	0.0405
1-2	0.605	0.3081	0.12150
1-3	0.564	0.1852	0.12239

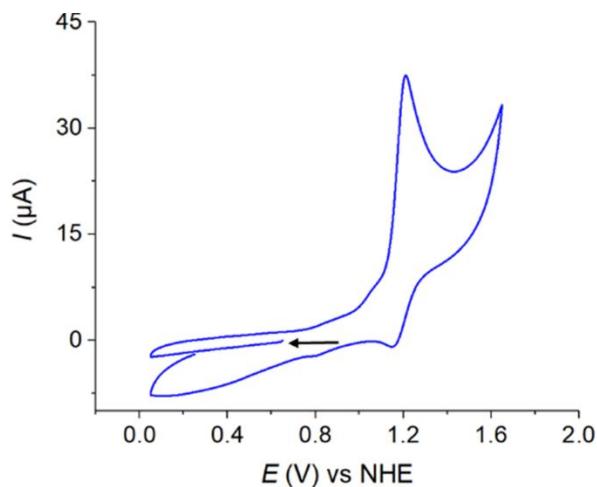


**Figure S24.** Linear plot of [Ru<sup>III</sup>-O-<sup>III</sup>Ru<sup>4+</sup>]<sub>e</sub> ([3<sup>4+</sup>]<sub>e</sub>) vs. [Ru<sup>III</sup>-OH<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>e</sub><sup>2</sup>, ([2<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>e</sub><sup>2</sup>) to estimate the value of equilibrium constant K<sub>e</sub> for the dimerization reaction.

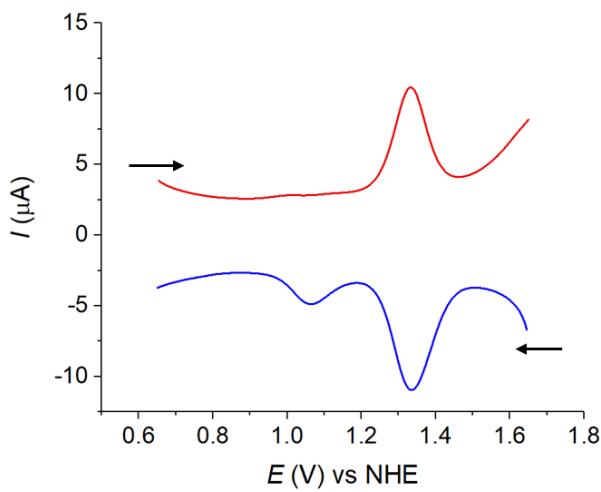
## Electrochemistry in organic and aqueous solutions



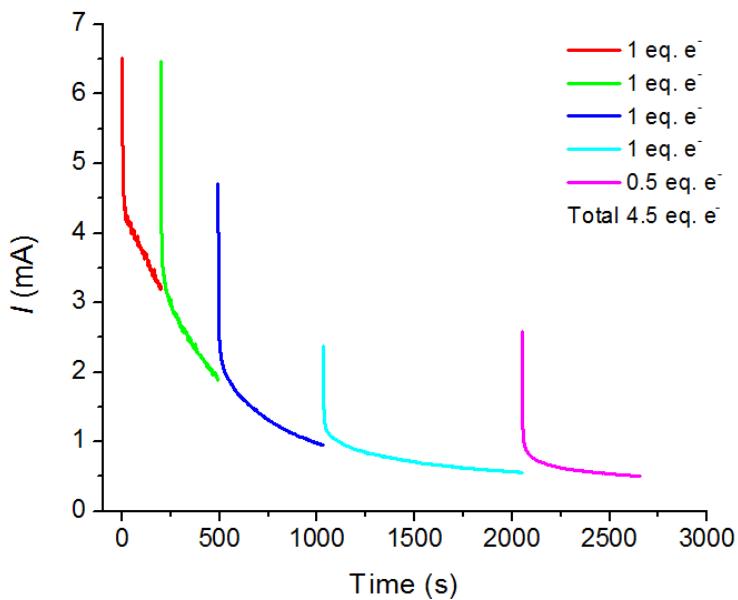
**Figure S25.** CV of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  (1 mM) in a solution of TFE and 0.1 M ( $\text{Bu}_4\text{N}$ ) $\text{PF}_6$  at scan rate of 100 mV/s  
WE: glassy carbon electrode; CE: platinum electrode; RE:  $\text{Hg}/\text{Hg}_2\text{SO}_4$ .



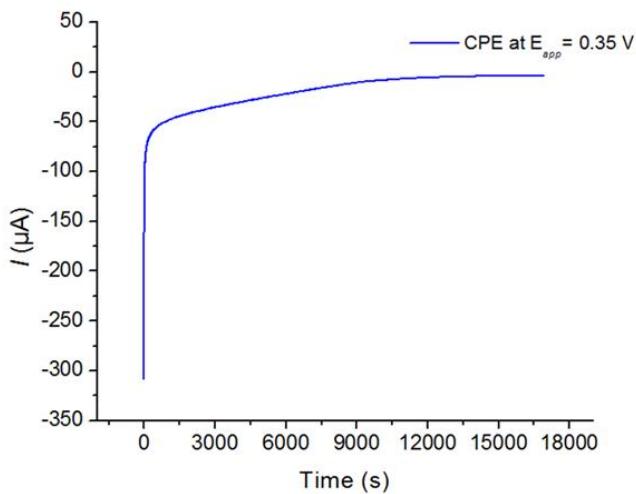
**Figure S26.** CV of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  in a phbf aqueous solution at pH 7 in cathodic direction. Conditions:  $[\mathbf{1}^{2+}]$ : 1mM, scan rate: 100 mV/s. WE: glassy carbon electrode; CE: platinum electrode; RE:  $\text{Hg}/\text{Hg}_2\text{SO}_4$ . Black arrows show the scan direction.



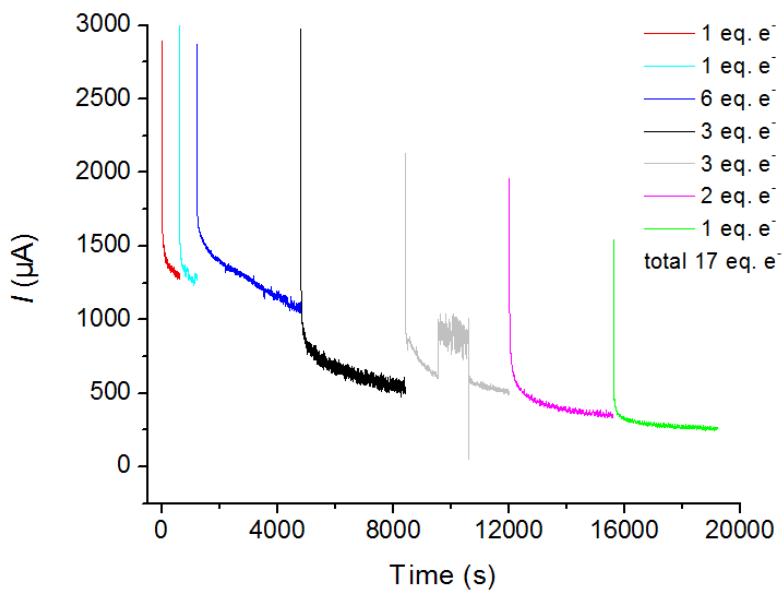
**Figure S27.** DPV of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  in anodic (red line) and cathodic (blue line) directions. WE: glassy carbon electrode; CE: platinum electrode; RE:  $\text{Hg}/\text{Hg}_2\text{SO}_4$ . Black arrows show the scan direction.



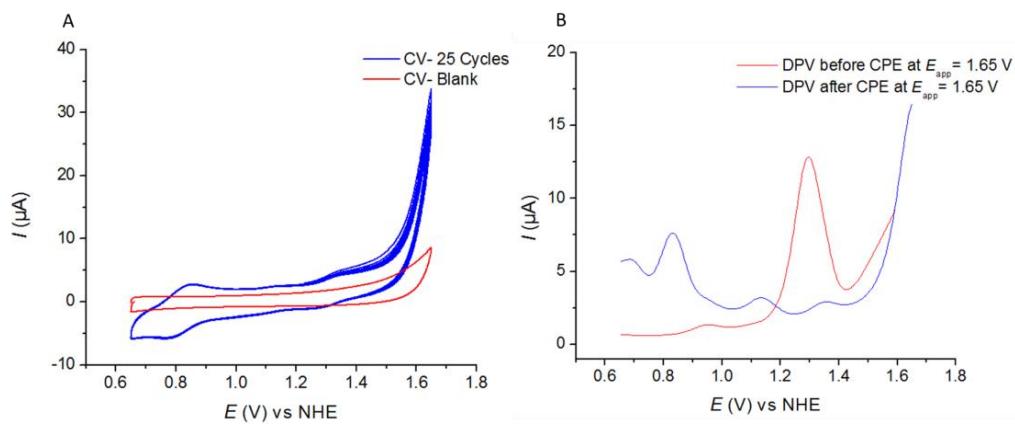
**Figure S28.** CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.45$  V vs. NHE of a solution of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  (1.34 mM, 5 mL, pD 7 phbf; 6.7  $\mu$ mol) using a Pt net electrode (simple cylindrical Pt net electrode, diameter: 10 mm and cylinder height: 30 mm) as a working electrode,  $\text{Hg}/\text{Hg}_2\text{SO}_4$  as reference electrode and a Pt mesh as auxiliary electrode (simple square mesh net 20\*20 mm). The charge passed was integrated to be 3.37 C, giving 5 equivalents of electrons.



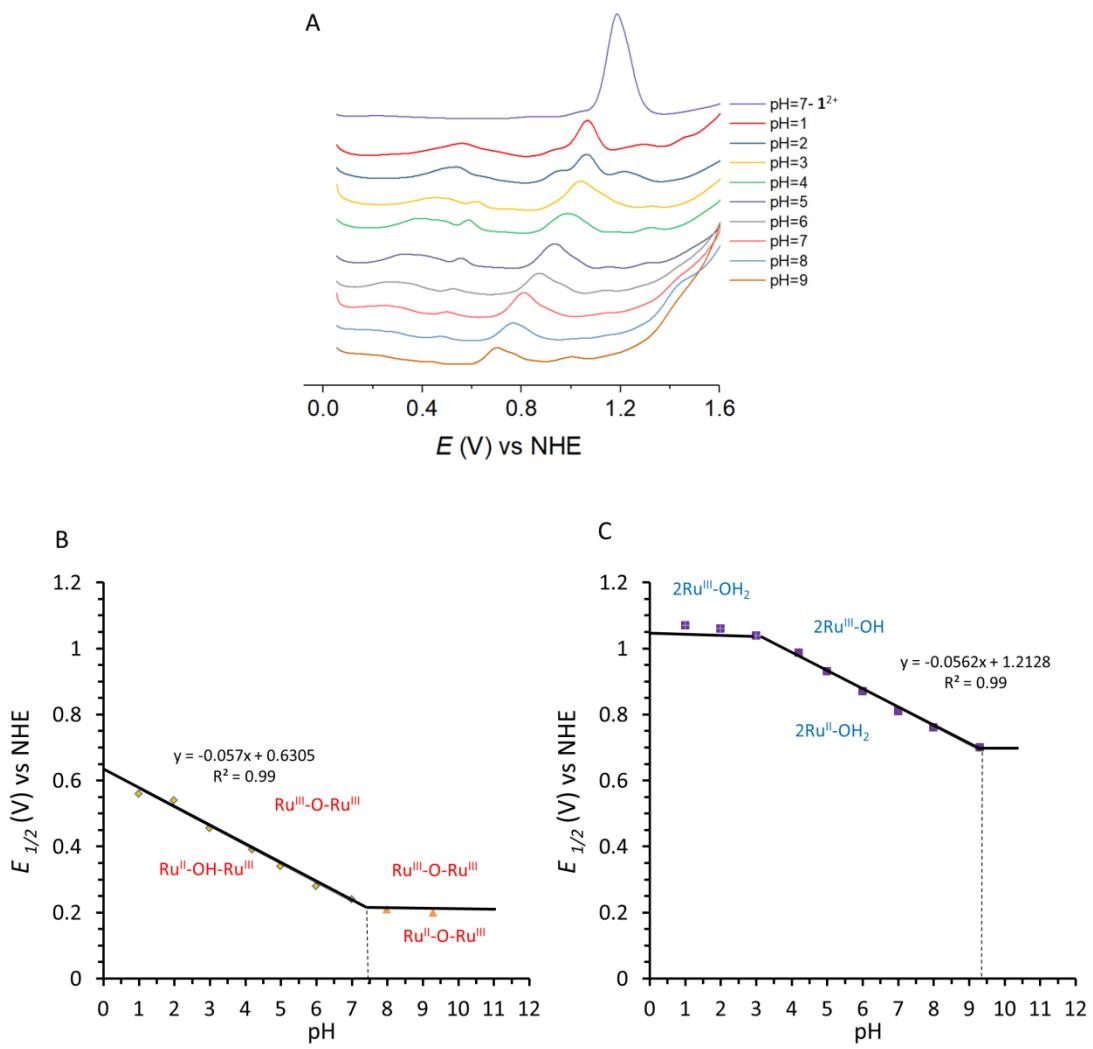
**Figure S29.** CPE at  $E_{app} = 0.35$  V vs. NHE of a solution of **3<sup>4+</sup>** (0.67 mM, 2 mL, pD 7 phbf; 1.34  $\mu$ mol) using a Pt net electrode (simple cylindrical Pt net electrode, diameter: 10 mm and cylinder height: 30 mm) as a working electrode, Hg/Hg<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> as reference electrode and a Pt mesh as auxiliary electrode (simple square mesh net 20\*20 mm). The charge passed was integrated to be 0.32 C, giving 2.5 equivalents of electrons.



**Figure S30.** CPE at  $E_{app} = 1.65$  V vs. NHE of a solution of **1<sup>2+</sup>** (1 mM, 6 mL, pH 1 (TA:TFE/2:1); 8.04  $\mu$ mol) using a Pt net electrode (simple cylindrical Pt net electrode, diameter: 10 mm and cylinder height: 30 mm) as a working electrode, Hg/Hg<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> as reference electrode and a Pt mesh as auxiliary electrode (simple square mesh net 20\*20 mm). The charge passed was integrated to be 13.52 C, giving 16.8 equivalents of electrons.



**Figure S31.** A) 25 Consecutive CVs after CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.65 \text{ V}$  (Figure S30) in a solution of **1**<sup>2+</sup> at pH 1 (TA:TFE (2:1), [TA]= 0.1 M) at scan rate 100 mV/s that generates complex **4**<sup>2+</sup>. B) DPV of **1**<sup>2+</sup> (1 mM) before and after CPE. WE: glassy carbon electrode; CE: platinum electrode; RE: Hg/Hg<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Black arrows show the scan direction.



**Figure S32.** A) DPV of  $\mathbf{1}^{2+}$  before CPE at pH 7 (light purple) and DPVs after CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.45$  V at different pH values (pH 1-9), the pH of CPE solution was changed from 7 to 1 and from 7 to 12 gradually by adding phosphoric acid and concentrated NaOH, respectively. DPV was measured at each different pH and the redox waves were taken from DPVs. B) Pourbaix diagram for  $\mathbf{3}^{4+}$  after CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.45$  V in a phbf aqueous solution at pH 7, C) Pourbaix diagram for  $\mathbf{4}^{2+}$  after CPE at  $E_{\text{app}} = 1.45$  V in a phosphate buffer solution at pH 7.

## Crystallographic data

**Table S5.** Crystal data and structure refinement for **1Cl<sub>2</sub>**.

Identification code	mo_Abi3903b_0m	
Empirical formula	C76 H64 Cl12 N12 Ru2	
Formula weight	1772.93	
Temperature	100(2)K	
Wavelength	0.71073 Å	
Crystal system	monoclinic	
Space group	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub>	
Unit cell dimensions	a = 10.6462(13)Å b = 9.5942(13)Å c = 17.992(2)Å	a = 90°. b = 98.317(5)°. γ = 90°.
Volume	1818.4(4) Å <sup>3</sup>	
Z	1	
Density (calculated)	1.619 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>	
Absorption coefficient	0.911 mm <sup>-1</sup>	
F(000)	896	
Crystal size	0.150 x 0.100 x 0.050 mm <sup>3</sup>	
Theta range for data collection	1.144 to 25.426°.	
Index ranges	-12 ≤ h ≤ 12, -9 ≤ k ≤ 11, -21 ≤ l ≤ 21	
Reflections collected	14827	
Independent reflections	6104[R(int) = 0.0681]	
Completeness to theta = 25.426°	99.1%	
Absorption correction	Multi-scan	
Max. and min. transmission	0.74 and 0.55	
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F <sup>2</sup>	
Data / restraints / parameters	6104/ 49/ 463	
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.032	
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0544, wR2 = 0.1095	
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0732, wR2 = 0.1172	
Largest diff. peak and hole	1.148 and -0.566 e.Å <sup>-3</sup>	







**Table S8.** Crystal data and structure refinement for **4**(CF<sub>3</sub>SO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>.

Identification code	mo_Abi914_0m	
Empirical formula	C33.60 H27.80 F6 N5 O7.80 Ru S2	
Formula weight	905.60	
Temperature	100(2)K	
Wavelength	0.71073 Å	
Crystal system	monoclinic	
Space group	C2/c	
Unit cell dimensions	a = 23.8599(17)Å b = 13.0679(9)Å c = 26.5063(18)Å	a= 90°. b = 93.5948(19)°. γ = 90°.
Volume	8248.4(10) Å <sup>3</sup>	
Z	8	
Density (calculated)	1.458 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>	
Absorption coefficient	0.559 mm <sup>-1</sup>	
F(000)	3654	
Crystal size	0.100 x 0.050 x 0.010 mm <sup>3</sup>	
Theta range for data collection	1.710 to 27.922°.	
Index ranges	-31 ≤ h ≤ 31, -17 ≤ k ≤ 14, -34 ≤ l ≤ 33	
Reflections collected	64035	
Independent reflections	9835[R(int) = 0.0570]	
Completeness to theta =27.922°	99.6%	
Absorption correction	Multi-scan	
Max. and min. transmission	0.74 and 0.46	
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F <sup>2</sup>	
Data / restraints / parameters	9835/ 2080/ 912	
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.082	
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0735, wR2 = 0.2088	
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0962, wR2 = 0.2302	
Largest diff. peak and hole	1.345 and -0.784 e.Å <sup>-3</sup>	











