



## Across the Tree of Life: Radiation Resistance Gauged by High-Field EPR

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### Introduction

This report provides evidence that small high-symmetry antioxidant complexes of manganous ions with metabolites (H-Mn<sup>2+</sup>) are responsible for cellular resistance to gamma ionizing irradiation (IR), and that H-Mn<sup>2+</sup> protects the proteome from IR-induced reactive oxygen species. The cellular content of H-Mn<sup>2+</sup>, as measured by EPR of live, non-irradiated Mn-replete cells, is now the strongest known gauge of biological IR resistance between and within organisms representing all three domains of life. To establish that antioxidant H-Mn<sup>2+</sup> complexes, not the antioxidant enzyme, Mn superoxide dismutase (MnSOD), governs IR survival, required characterization of the spin Hamiltonian of MnSOD and quantitation of the enzyme in cells. X-band and even Q-band measurements are unable to acquire this information satisfactorily. In this study HFHF EPR provided this key information

### Experimental

The HFEP EPR spectra of frozen aqueous solutions of MnSOD (Mn-superoxide dismutase) as well as cultures of bacteria *Deinococcus Radiodurans* (*Dr*) and *Escherichia coli* (*Ec*) (Fig.1) were recorded on the transmission instrument of the EMR facility at temperatures 3 – 20 K and frequencies up to 416 GHz. The maximum magnetic field reached was 14.9 T.

### Results and Discussion

The sextet ( $S = 5/2$ ) spectra of the d<sup>5</sup> Mn(II) ions were interpreted in terms of the spin Hamiltonian

$$\hat{H} = \mu_B \mathbf{B} \{g\} \hat{S} + D \left\{ \hat{S}_z^2 - \frac{1}{3} S(S+1) \right\} + E (\hat{S}_x^2 - \hat{S}_y^2) + \hat{S} A \hat{I} \quad [1]$$

Relatively large zero-field splitting parameters,  $D = -0.350 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $E = -0.026 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  were found for MnSOD, while the EPR spectra of *Dr* and *Ec* (Fig.1) are characteristic of the low zero-field splitting and high symmetry H-Mn<sup>2+</sup>. EPR spectra intensity measurements revealed that the concentration of MnSOD in the bacterial cultures was negligible, compared to the high-symmetry Mn<sup>2+</sup> species.

### Conclusions

This study shows that the amount of H-Mn<sup>2+</sup> in non-irradiated living cells is readily gauged by absorption-display electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy at Q band, and is highly diagnostic of DNA repair efficiency and survival after gamma radiation exposure. Importantly, the high resolving power of high-field EPR was essential for proving that the enzyme manganese superoxide dismutase (MnSOD) is present in negligible amounts in the bacterium *Deinococcus Radiodurans*, which is capable of surviving radiation doses 20-fold greater than *Escherichia coli*, thereby disproving previous assertions that MnSOD is critical in the IR survival of *Dr*. The results of this work were published in [1].

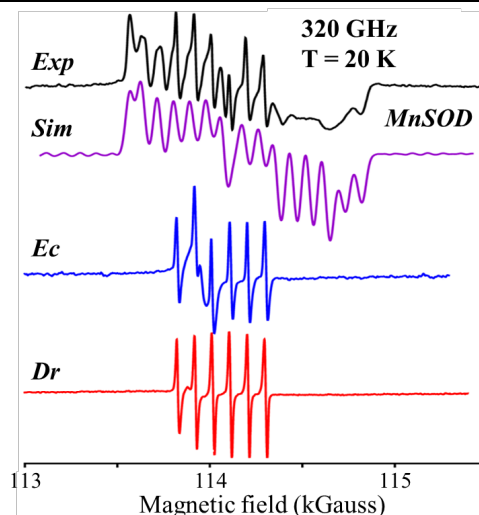
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### References

[1] Sharma, A., et al., Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA, **114**, E9253-E9260 (2017).



**Fig.1** HFEP EPR spectra at 320 GHz and 20 K. The MnSOD spectrum was simulated (magenta) with parameters given in the text.