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## Peroxidase-like activity of cytochrome $b_5$ is triggered upon hemichrome formation in alkaline pH



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#### ARTICLE INFO

# Keywords: Hemichromes Peroxidase Low spin state Hydrogen peroxide Alkaline pH Cytochrome $b_5$

#### ABSTRACT

In alkaline media (pH 12) a catalytic peroxidase activity of cytochrome  $b_5$  was found associated to a different conformational state. Upon incubation at this pH, cytochrome  $b_5$  electronic absorption spectrum was altered, with disappearance of characteristic bands of cytochrome  $b_5$  at pH 7.0. The appearance of new electronic absorption bands and EPR measurements support the formation of a cytochrome  $b_5$  class B hemichrome with an acquired ability to bind polar ligands. This hemichrome is characterized by a negative formal redox potential and the same folding properties than cytochrome  $b_5$  at pH 7. The acquired peroxidase-like activity of cytochrome  $b_5$  found at pH 12, driven by a hemichrome formation, suggests a role of this protein in peroxidation products propagation.

#### 1. Introduction

Heme protein autoxidation processes are associated in vivo to many factors (such as, globin matrix, pH, oxygen pressure and denaturant agents) [1,2]. Hemichromes originate in oxidized heme proteins and present a distorted iron coordination site [3,4]. Although these complexes have been associated to protein denaturation, hemichromes are distinguishable from those generated by denaturation leading to precipitation [5] and loss of the heme [6]. Indeed, a fraction of these complexes is present in the normal heme protein blood population being related to blood diseases [2,7,8,9]. Moreover, in some cases hemichromes have been linked to formation of peroxidation products [10,11]. The most studied protein forming hemichromes upon oxidation is hemoglobin [2,12]. In some of the hemichrome complexes, accessibility of exogenous ligands like water may occur by rearrangement of distal histidines with iron in the heme plane facilitating the access to the heme pocket [2,4,12]. Therefore a role of distal histidines in suiting the barrier for exogenous ligands coordination to the heme has been suggested [2].

Substrate accessibility is crucial for an efficient enzymatic catalysis. In metalloproteins, ligand accessibility is associated to alteration of the coordination properties, sometimes involving conformational changes [8]. In this way, peroxidase activity gained by some hemeproteins

depends upon a change on the heme coordination state that allows the interaction with peroxides. An interaction of small anions, promoting or inhibiting peroxidase activity in these enzymes has also been described [0.10]

Cytochrome  $b_5$  ( $Cb_5$ ) enzymatic properties have been overlooked since the labile not covalently heme bond present in the protein has an inherent inefficiency to interact with substrates, due to a full coordination sphere. However,  $Cb_5$  mutants in the coordinating histidines are capable to form complexes with oxygen [13,14] and CO [15] and a peroxidase-like activity associated to adoption of a non-native state conformation has been reported for an artificial designed c-type  $Cb_5$  mutant, with the heme covalently bound to the protein matrix but keeping the coordinating histidines intact [16].

Under alkaline conditions, catalytic activities of metallocompounds have been detected [17–19]. This support that alkaline media is an alternative condition to generate novel reactive species in order to study catalytic reactions mediated in metalloproteins [20,21]. In this communication, we report the acquisition of a peroxidase-like activity by human soluble  $Cb_5$  driven by a hemichrome formation at alkaline pH. Under these conditions, the oxidized form of the protein undergoes a conformational rearrangement allowing hydrogen peroxide to interact with its redox center and triggers this activity.

Abbreviations: CO, Carbon monoxide; Cytochrome  $b_5$ , C $b_5$ ; Cyt c, Cytochrome c; EDTA, Ethylene diamine tetra acetic acid; EPR, Electron paramagnetic resonance; HS, High spin; H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, hydrogen peroxide; LS, Low spin; LSpH7, pH 7 signal; LSpH12, pH 12 signal; MPO, Myeloperoxidase; NHE, Normal hydrogen electrode; NO, nitric oxide; NOS, Nitric oxide synthase; OH $^-$ , hydroxide anion; P450, cytochrome P450

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#### 2. Material and methods

#### 2.1. Purification recombinant human erythrocyte Cb<sub>5</sub>

Purification of recombinant human erythrocyte Cb5 was performed by overexpression of the protein using transformed BL21 (DE3)-derived strains of *E. coli* containing the recombinant plasmid [22]. Briefly, after expression, cells were harvested and disrupted by the use of lysozyme, detergents and protease inhibitors. After precipitation in ammonium sulfate 50%, the lysate was extensively dialyzed against Tris 10 mM, EDTA 1 mM pH 8.1, and loaded in diethylaminoethyl sepharose column  $(2.5 \times 30 \text{ cm})$  previous equilibrated in 10 mM Tris. EDTA 1 mM pH 8.1. A step gradient with increasing concentrations of Tris up to 200 mM was performed in the presence of 0.2% deoxycholate and 0.5% Triton X-100. Cb<sub>5</sub> was eluted from the column using a buffer composed by 10 mM Tris, 1 mM EDTA and 250 mM sodium thiocyanate. A final solution of ammonium sulfate 1.1 M was added to the sample and after mixing, the solution was loaded in a CL sepharose 4B column  $(2.5 \times 10 \text{ cm})$  previously equilibrated in Tris 200 mM, EDTA 1 mM pH 8.1. Cb<sub>5</sub> was eluted without retention. To further purify the protein, the concentrated eluent was loaded in a Sephadex G75 column  $(2.5 \times 50 \text{ cm})$  equilibrated with Tris 150 mM pH 7.5. The sample was concentrated by filtration and glycerol was added before freezing.

#### 2.2. Unfolding measurement

Tryptophan fluorescence of  $Cb_5$  (5  $\mu$ M) was measured using a fluorescence spectrophotometer (Perkin Elmer 650–40; Perkin Elmer, Norwalk, CT, USA) using quartz thermostated cuvettes (2 ml) at 25 °C. The spectra were recorded using an excitation wavelength of 290 nm. The excitation and emission slits were 2 and 5 nm, respectively. The buffer used in the measurements was potassium phosphate 100 mM, Borate 50 mM, KCl 150 mM, EDTA 1 mM prepared at different pHs, or urea 10 M, under stirring.

#### 2.3. EPR measurements

X-band EPR spectra were recorded using a Bruker EMX 6/1 spectrometer and a dual mode ER4116DM rectangular cavity (Bruker); the samples were cooled with liquid helium in an Oxford Instruments ESR900 continuous-flow cryostat, fitted with a temperature controller. The spectra were acquired at 10 K, with a modulation frequency of  $100 \ \text{kHz}$ , modulation amplitude of  $0.5 \ \text{mT}$  and microwave power of  $635 \ \mu\text{W}$ . Assays conditions are described in figures captions.

#### 2.4. Electronic absorption measurement

 $Cb_5$  spectra (5  $\mu M)$  were recorded at 25 °C in buffer: Potassium phosphate 100 mM, Borate 50 mM, KCl 150 mM, EDTA 1 mM at pH 12 using a UV-mini 1240 Shimadzu spectrophotometer.

#### 2.5. Electrochemistry

 $Cb_5$  formal potential was calculated by direct electrochemistry, using cyclic voltammetry (CV); setup: one compartment electrochemical cell, three electrodes configuration, anaerobic conditions (anaerobic chamber). The gold electrode was modified by immersion in a 5% mercaptopropionic acid solution for 30 min in order to promote the formation of a self-assembled layer on the surface. The protein was immobilized on the modified gold working electrode using a cellulose membrane (3.5 kDa cut-off), in a thin-layer configuration. Samples of protein (2.5 mM) were exchanged into potassium phosphate buffer 100 mM, Borate 50 mM, KCl 150 mM, EDTA 1 mM, Neomycin 2.5 mM, used as supporting electrolyte solution being all reagents analytical grade. Blank assays were performed using the modified electrode prepared by the same procedure but without the protein. The experiments

were attained using a PGSTAT12 Autolab potentiostat/galvanostat and analysis of the data was performed using GPES (Eco Chimie) software. To obtain the formal potential, blanks were subtracted to the signals obtained in the presence of the protein before calculation. CV assays were performed at different scan rates to define the best conditions (5 mV/s) to measure  $Cb_5$  redox features at the selected pH values. Second scans were used for the analysis. All the potentials were converted and are presented in reference to the normal hydrogen electrode scale (NHE).

#### 2.6. Peroxidase activity measurement

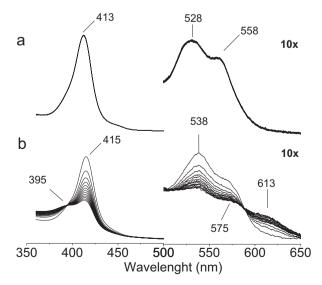
Peroxidase activity of Cb5 was measured using a fluorimetric method based on the increase of fluorescence induced by Amplex Red (Invitrogen (Carlsbad, CA)) oxidation. The increase of fluorescence was monitored in time using a 2 ml quartz cuvette, after incubation of Cb<sub>5</sub> (20 nM), during 10 min, at 25 °C in potassium phosphate 100 mM, Borate 50 mM, KCl 150 mM, EDTA 1 mM, prepared at pH 12. The fluorescence increment present upon oxidation of Amplex red was measured using a spectrofluorimeter Perkin-Elmer 650-40 with the following set up: excitation and emission wavelengths of 530 nm and 590 nm, with excitation and emission slits of 5 and 10 nm and normal gain. The assay was started by addition of Amplex red and the specific H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> concentrations indicated in the figure. A calibration curve was prepared with resorufin (the oxidation product of Amplex Red) to calculate the peroxidase activity. The curves for the peroxidase activity dependence upon H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and Amplex Red concentration have been fitted to a two substrate Michaelis-Menten kinetic model in accordance with a typical peroxidase cycle expected for Cb<sub>5</sub> at this pH. The data were analyzed with the following equation:

$$v = \frac{[E_0]}{\left(\frac{1}{k_{\text{cat}}}\right) + \left(\frac{K \text{mA}}{k_{\text{cat}} [\text{A}]}\right) + \left(\frac{K \text{mB}}{k_{\text{cat}} [\text{B}]}\right)}$$

where  $\nu$  is the initial rate concentration, E the concentration of enzyme, A is the concentration of peroxide, B the reducing agent concentration (in this case Amplex Red) concentration.

#### 3. Results and discussion

We characterized the effect of pH on the electronic absorption spectrum of  $Cb_5$  (Fig. 1).  $Cb_5$  electronic spectra at pH 7.0 (panel a) are characterized by the typical  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and Soret band of this protein at 558, 528 and 413 nm respectively. Identical spectra were obtained in



**Fig. 1.**  $Cb_5$  electronic spectra were recorded at 25 °C every 5 min during 1 h, using a UV-mini 1240 Shimadzu spectrophotometer from 360 to 650 nm in aerobic conditions.

samples prepared from pH 7 to 11 (Supp. Fig. S1). The electronic absorption spectrum of freshly prepared  $Cb_5$  at pH 12 (panel b) shows a displacement of the Soret band from 413 to 415 nm, with shifts in  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  bands to 538 and 575 nm.  $Cb_5$  incubation, during 1 h at pH 12, induced a time dependent disappearance of all bands being the major changes produced after 10–20 min incubation. After this time, bands at 395 and 620 nm also appeared. After changing the pH back from 12 to 7 the characteristic spectra of  $Cb_5$  at pH 7 was recovered suggesting this experiment that the protein changes acquired at pH 12 are reversible (Supp. Fig. S1).

To characterize the coordination properties of the  $Cb_5$  heme at different pH values, we used EPR spectroscopy (Fig. 2A). At pH 7, the  $Cb_5$  EPR spectrum is dominated by a single low spin (S=1/2) Fe<sup>3+</sup> species, with  $g_{1,2}=3.05$ , 2.20 (hereafter designated "pH 7 signal", abbreviated as  $LS_{\rm pH7}$ ; Fig. 2A, black line). The experimental determination of the  $g_3$  value is difficult (because it occurs at high field and is very broad and weak) and its value was calculated from the Taylor's theorem to be 1.36. These g values ( $g_{1,2,3}=3.05$ , 2.20, 1.36) are in agreement with the ones previously described for the pig liver and human erythrocyte  $Cb_5$  ( $g_{1,2,3}=3.03$ , 2.23, 1.43, [23] and  $g_{1,2,3}=3.03$ , 2.23, 1.39 [24], respectively).

The "Truth Diagram", derived originally by Blumberg and Peisach [25] is useful to predict the heme axial ligands. The "Truth Diagram" correlates the electronic effect of the axial ligands ( $\Delta/\lambda$ ) with the heme rhombicity (V/ $\Delta$ ) for various heme complexes and provides empirical guidance for the assignment of axial ligands of unknown samples. The "pH 7 signal"-giving species has an axial field strength,  $|\Delta/\lambda|$ , of 2.73 and a heme rhombicity,  $|V/\Delta|$ , of 0.86 and, thus, falls in the "B" region on the "Truth Diagram", what is in agreement with the known bis-histidinyl coordination of the b-type hemes. The EPR spectra of samples prepared from pH 7 to 11 showed an equivalent spectrum.

At pH 12, under aerobic conditions, the EPR spectrum of  $Cb_5$  is dependent on time (Fig. 2A). After 3 min, at pH 12 and room temperature (approximate time needed to freeze the samples), the  $Cb_5$ 

spectrum shows, besides the "pH 7 signal" ( $\approx$  45%, determined based on the intensity of the  $g_1$  feature), two other low spin (S=1/2) Fe<sup>3+</sup> species, one with  $g_{1,2}=2.77$ , 2.25 and  $g_3$  calculated to be 1.68 and the other with  $g_{1,2}=2.83$ , 2.25 and  $g_3$  calculated to be 1.62 (hereafter designated "pH 12 signal" and "pH 12' signal", respectively; abbreviated as  $LS_{pH12}$  and  $LS_{pH12'}$ , respectively; Fig. 2A, red line). A similar signal was described for the pig liver  $Cb_5$  at pH 12 ( $g_{1,2,3}=2.82$ , 2.28, 1.68) [23]. The species giving rise to both  $LS_{pH12}$  and  $LS_{pH12'}$  (with  $|\Delta / \lambda| = 3.80$  and 3.52 and  $|V/\Delta| = 0.74$  and 0.75, respectively) falls in "H" region of the "Truth Diagram", as also previously described (for pH 12) [12,25,26], supporting the presence of a *bis*-histidinyl coordinated b-type heme. Moreover, the  $LS_{pH12}$  signals are similar to the one described for the hemichrome formed during the autoxidation of oxyhemoglobin [12].

After 60 min at pH 12, at room temperature, the proportion of  $LS_{pH12} + LS_{pH12'}$  species relatively to the  $LS_{pH7}$  increased, but the  $LS_{pH7}$ signal did not disappear (Fig. 2A, pink line). In addition to the low spin signals, the Cb5 EPR spectrum after 60 min at pH 12 displays a very weak axial high spin (S = 5/2) signal, with the main component at  $g_{\perp} = 5.8$ , for which a  $g_{//} \approx 2$  is expected (not resolved here; abbreviated as HS). A similar spectrum was obtained when Cb<sub>5</sub> was incubated at pH 12 and room temperature for 10 min (Fig. 2A, blue line). The presence of a high spin species at high pH had also been described for the pig liver  $Cb_5$  ( $g_{\perp}=6.2$ , pH 12), together with a signal equivalent to our  $LS_{pH12}/LS_{pH12'}$  ( $g_{1,2,3} = 2.82, 2.28, 1.68$ ) [23]. The effect of  $H_2O_2$ added to Cb<sub>5</sub> prepared at pH 7 and 12 is shown in Fig. 2B. Left panel shows the EPR spectra of the protein prepared and immediately frozen, at pH 7 in presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (10 mM) (black line) in comparison to pH 12 in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (red line). H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> addition to samples at pH 12 induced a prominent sharp peak (Δpp = 1.1 mT) centered at g = 2.005 (zoomed EPR spectra shown in the right panel), that correlates with the presence of organic radical species. Moreover, a decrease of the HS signal ( $g \perp = 5.8$  related to the axial high spin (S = 5/2) signal) was also observed (left panel, indicated by an arrow). Cb<sub>5</sub> EPR

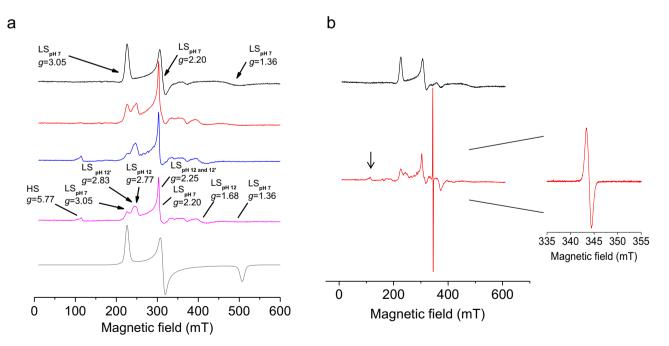


Fig. 2. A. X-band EPR spectra of 2.5 mM  $Cb_5$  at pH 7 and 12. The samples at pH 7 and 12 (black and red lines, respectively) were frozen after 3 min (approximate time needed to freeze the samples). In the case of pH 12, the spectrum was also acquired after the sample being incubated at room temperature for 10 and 60 min (blue and pink lines, respectively). The g values are indicated, as well as, their positions. The simulated spectrum at pH 7 (with  $g_{1,2,3} = 3.05$ , 2.20, and 1.36) is present in grey. Spectra were recorded at 10 K, with a microwave power of 635 μW and modulation amplitude of 0.5 mT. B. Organic free radical detection by EPR, after  $H_2O_2$  addition to  $Cb_5$  prepared at pH 12. Left panel shows  $Cb_5$  EPR spectra recorded from frozen samples as indicated previously and prepared at pH 7.0 +  $H_2O_2$  (10 mM) (black line) and pH 12.0 +  $H_2O_2$  (10 mM) (red line). Right panel shows the zoomed  $Cb_5$  EPR spectra obtained at pH 12 +  $H_2O_2$  (10 mM) from 335 to 355 mT (magnetic field region) and obtained with the following conditions: temperature 40 K, with a modulation frequency of 100 kHz, modulation amplitude of 0.5 mT and microwave power of 635 μW.

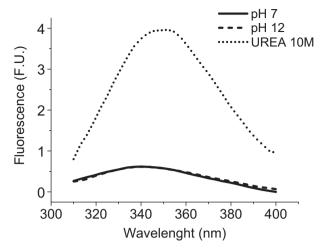


Fig. 3. Maintenance of the native Cb<sub>5</sub> folding state was monitored by measurement of the tryptophan fluorescence intensity. Cb<sub>5</sub> (5 μM) was incubated at pH 7 (continuous line) and 12 (dashed line) during 10 min and its fluorescence was compared to samples prepared in urea 10 M (dotted line) corresponding to the unfolded protein. Fluorescence measurements were performed at 25 °C with excitation wavelength of 290 nm and excitation and emission slits of 2 and 5 nm, respectively.

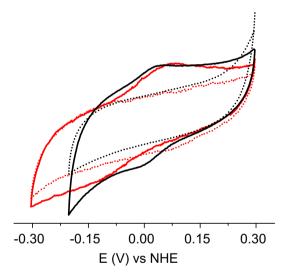


Fig. 4. Cyclic voltammograms of  $Cb_5$  (continuous lines) vs its respective controls in the absence of protein (dotted lines), recorded at pH 7 (black lines) and pH 12 (red lines) at 5 mVs<sup>-1</sup> scan rate, 25 °C. Voltammograms were normalized to the current intensity, for better visualization of the shift in the formal potential.

spectra prepared at pH 7.0, in absence and presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> shows no significant changes, correlating H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> interaction dependence with the protein upon the presence of hemichrome species found at pH 12.

Cb<sub>5</sub> maintain a folded state in alkaline buffer (potassium phosphate 100 mM, borate 50 mM, KCl 100 mM, EDTA 1 mM, pH 12) as confirmed by tryptophan fluorescence measurement (Fig. 3). As shown by the effect of 10 M urea, which is known to elicit  $Cb_5$  denaturation [27], Cb<sub>5</sub> unfolding leads to a large increase of the Trp fluorescence intensity like in many other proteins [27,28]. However, the Trp fluorescence intensity of Cb<sub>5</sub> prepared at pH 12 and 7 after 60 min (Supp. Fig. S2) incubation in the buffer was the same and much lower than that measured in the presence of denaturing 10 M urea conditions.

To further characterize  $Cb_5$  properties at pH 12, we observed its electrochemical behavior by cyclic voltammetry and calculated the center formal potential (Fig. 4). A shift of the formal potential from  $+13 \pm 1$  mV at pH 7 (black line) toward  $-66 \pm 7$  mV at pH 12 (red line) was perceived which may be associated to conformational changes, namely a higher solvent exposure [29]. The decrease of reversibility found by the increase of the separation between anodic and cathodic peaks is also in line with such alterations. Lower potentials are usually associated to proteins upon charge, electrostatic and conformational alterations [30,31]. The negative shift of the formal potential of  $Cb_5$  observed at pH 12, is, as so, also consistent with conformational changes in the protein and probably a more exposed heme group.

Reaction of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with Cb<sub>5</sub> prepared at pH 12 and incubated during 10 min, induced a prominent increase of Amplex Red oxidation associated to the presence of protein, being dependent upon H2O2 concentration. The interaction of Cb5 with H2O2 upon hemichrome formation is based on the assumption that this peroxidase follows the classical peroxidase cycle where peroxidases (E) consume peroxide and oxidize organic molecules (like Amplex red) to radicals [32]. Therefore the curve obtained for the dependence upon H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was fitted to a two substrates Michaelis-Menten equation (Fig. 5). For the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> dependence with the peroxidase activity keeping constant protein and Amplex red concentration (AH2) (0.02 µM and 5 µM, respectively) we obtained the following values:  $k_{\rm cat}=0.7\pm0.1\,{\rm s}^{-1},$  a  $K_{\rm m22}^{\rm ~HO}=951\pm106\,\mu{\rm M}$  and a  $K_{\rm m2}^{\rm ~AH}=4.2\pm0.6\,\mu{\rm M}$ . This equation was also applied for the dependence of Amplex Red with the peroxidase activity of Cb<sub>5</sub>, keeping the enzyme and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> concentration constant (0.02 µM and 2 mM, respectively) the following kinetic parameter were obtained: a  $k_{\rm cat}=0.8\pm0.1\,{\rm s}^{-1}$ , a  $K_{\rm m22}^{\rm HO}=624\pm50\,\mu{\rm M}$  and a  $K_{\rm m2}^{\rm AH}=7.2\pm0.1\,\mu{\rm M}$ . This activity was independent on the time the protein was incubated at pH 12 and a practical lack of peroxidase activity was found at pHs below 12 (Supp. Fig. S3), showing the strong correlation with the appearance of the hemichrome signal. The measured peroxidase values obtained were higher than those reported for the same activity found in heme proteins of the *b*-type family [33].

In summary, the loss of the electronic spectral properties characteristics of Cb<sub>5</sub> at pH 7.0 supports the hypothesis that the protein

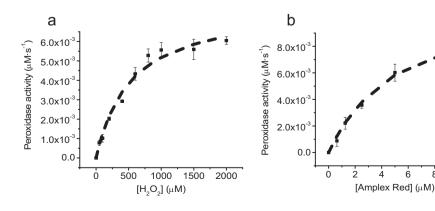


Fig. 5. Initial rates for Cb5 peroxidase activity dependence upon H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> were measured with a constant Amplex Red (5  $\mu$ M) and Cb<sub>5</sub> (20 nM) concentration at pH 12 at 25 °C (panel a). In parallel, initial rates for Cb5 peroxidase activity dependence upon Amplex Red were measured with a constant H2O2 (2 mM) and Cb5 (20 nM) concentration in buffer at pH 12 at 25  $^{\circ}$ C (panel b). The kinetic was started after addition of Amplex red or H2O2. Averages ± SD of triplicate measurements are shown in the figure and the discontinuous line is the non-linear regression fit to the two substrates Michaelis-Menten model as indicated in Material and Methods.

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Fig. 6. Bis-histidine coordinated hemichromes complexes [2]. Two classes of bis-histidine coordinated hemichromes have been documented. Reversible class B (scheme a) with  $g_1$  values around 2.83–2.75,  $g_3$  1.69–1.63 and water present in the ligand pocket (scheme a). Class C (scheme b) with  $g_1$  values around 3.08–2.89,  $g_3 \leq 1.51$  with water ejected from the ligand pocket. In some hemeproteins with ability to bind oxygen, superoxide anion has been found to displace oxygen by nucleophilic attack of the distal histidine, being superoxide retained in the ligand pocket (scheme c). In this case, the g values found are similar to the ones or reversible class B hemichrome [4].

itself is a target for oxidation. In addition, appearance of bands at 538 nm, 575 nm and 620 nm has also been found in hemichromes [4,12,34] being reminiscent to that found for compounds III in peroxidases [35]. The lower redox potential of  $\mathrm{C}b_5$  when incubated at pH 12 also supports the tendency to a more oxidized state of the protein at this pH. Moreover, the more negative formal potential value correlates with the values reported for some heme proteins upon interaction with anions, triggering their peroxidase activity, namely, Cyt c [36–38] and MPO [39].

The EPR spectra at pH 12 support the formation of a hemichrome. Hemichromes can be classified in different classes depending on the ligand associated to the iron. Bis-histidinyl coordinated hemichromes can be categorized in class B, with g<sub>1</sub> values around 2.83-2.75 and g<sub>3</sub> 1.69–1.63 with ligand field parameters of reversible hemichrome H and water and or its conjugated ions (OH- and H+) retained in the ligand pocket [12]; and class C with  $g_1$  values around 3.08–2.89 and  $g_3 \le 1.51$ with ligand fields falling in the group of irreversible B and C-type hemichromes, with water ejected from the ligand pocket (Fig. 6) [2]. Therefore our LS<sub>pH12</sub> and LS<sub>pH12</sub> species and the electronic absorption bands found are correlative to the reversible type B hemichromes suggesting the opening of an interacting site for polar compounds and/ or water [4,12,34] (that at pH 12 would be hydroxyl ion). Similar high spin species to those found in our spectra had also been described in aqua high spin complexes in hemichromes with  $g_{\perp} = 5.86$  and  $g_{//} \approx 1.99$  [12]. Our EPR data support formation of a radical upon hydrogen peroxide addition that could be attributed to the shorted halflife of compound I. Amplex red oxidation catalysis upon addition of hydrogen peroxide to the buffer in the presence of protein support formation of this type of radical. Formation of an amino acid based radical is needed as the driven factor leading to compound I or II transformation to the resting state in the catalytic cycle of some per-

In addition, measurement of the folding properties of  $Cb_5$  through tryptophan fluorescence indicates that the protein keeps its folding properties at pH 12, being this non-native state conformation different from those complexes associated to precipitation or loss of the heme [2,5,6].

#### 4. Conclusions

Our experimental results support a peroxidase like activity of human soluble  $Cb_5$  in alkaline conditions upon formation of a hemichrome. The redox potential and the electronic absorbance spectra found for  $Cb_5$  incubated in these conditions are in concordance with the expected for a more oxidized state of the protein. Therefore, the protein has an acquired ability to bind oxygenated species and to be able to catalyze a peroxidase reaction suggesting the opening of ligand site for  $H_2O_2$  as a substrate. The initial steps that promote peroxidase activity are related to low spin signals assigned to class B hemichrome with a reversible acquired accessibility to water like ligands and other polar molecules [4,12,34]. Since hemichromes have been related to

formation of peroxidation products [10,11], our results suggest a role of  $Cb_5$  hemichromes in amplification of peroxidase reactions upon its formation.

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbapap.2017.09.010.

#### Transparency document

The Transparency document associated with this article can be found, in online version.

#### Acknowledgment

Recombinant plasmid for human erythrocyte  $Cb_5$  was kindly provided by Dr. A. Grant Mauk from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. This work was supported by the Unidade de Ciências Biomoleculares Aplicadas-UCIBIO, which is financed by national funds from FCT/MEC (UID/Multi/04378/2013) and co-financed by the ERDF under the PT2020 Partnership Agreement (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007728). Experimental work was also partially supported by funding from Ayuda a Grupos de la Junta de Extremadura (GR15139 to Group BBB008) co-financed by the European Funds for Structural Development (FEDER). AKSA and LBM also thank FCT/MCTES for the post-doctoral fellowship grants (SFRH/BPD/100069/2014 and SFRH/BPD/111404/2015, respectively), which are financed by national funds and co-financed by FSE.

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