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# Unusual Coexistence of Nickel(II) and Nickel(IV) in the Quadruple Perovskite Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>2</sub>Ir<sub>2</sub>O<sub>12</sub> Containing Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> Mixed-Metal-Cation **Trimers**

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Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: The crystal chemistry and magnetic properties of two hexagonal nickel(IV)-containing perovskites, Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub> and BaNiO<sub>3</sub>, are reported. The 12R perovskite, Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1.94</sub>Ir<sub>2.06</sub>O<sub>12</sub>, possesses an unexpected coexistence of nickel(II) and nickel(IV). This quadruple perovskite structure contains Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> mixed-metal-cation units in which direct metal-metal bonding between nickel(IV) and iridium(V) is inferred. X-ray absorption near-edge spectroscopy and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy measurements were conducted to confirm the simultaneous presence of nickel(II) and nickel(IV).

ridium-containing oxides have attracted significant interest as model systems in which to study unusual electronic and magnetic ground states that can lead to properties such as superconductivity, topological insulation, and spin-liquid states.<sup>3</sup> Complex iridates serve as a playground for studying how small changes in the chemical environment can affect the electronic structure because of iridium's typical strong spinorbit coupling that competes with crystal-field effects from the surrounding oxygen. 4-9 In addition to these competing interactions, the large orbital extent and high valence attainable in the heavy 5d elements are responsible for the possibility of direct metal-metal bonding in iridium-containing solid-state materials and the associated changes to the electronic structures. 10-14 For these and other reasons, iridium-containing oxides, including complex perovskites, continue to be of interest.

The perovskite structure ABO<sub>3</sub> is quite versatile and, in oxides, can accommodate various ratios of A:B and B:B' cations by forming double  $A_2BB'O_6$  (B  $\neq$  B'), triple  $A_3BB'_2O_9$ , and hexagonal quadruple A<sub>4</sub>BB'<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub> perovskites. <sup>15</sup> Within this diverse structural assortment, numerous nickel-containing perovskites are known, where typically nickel is present in the 2+ oxidation state, such as in Sr<sub>2</sub>Ni<sub>2</sub>OsO<sub>6</sub><sup>16</sup> and Sr<sub>2</sub>NiWO<sub>6</sub>; <sup>17</sup> however, nickel can adopt higher oxidation states in perovskites, such as 3+ in LaNiO<sub>3</sub> and 4+ in BaNiO<sub>3</sub>. Similarly, iridium is well represented in perovskites in a number of oxidation states, including 4+, 5+, and 6+ in double, triple, and quadruple perovskites. 12,13,18-23

A significant number of quadruple perovskites containing iridium of the type Ba<sub>4</sub>BIr<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub> have been prepared and studied for their magnetic behavior, which is often dominated by the Ir<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub> trimer unit. 12,13 Quadruple perovskites of the type  $Ba_4B_2Ir_2O_{12}$ , containing a  $Ir_2BO_{12}$  trimer (B  $\neq$  Ir), have not been reported to date. One reason for this absence is that it is rare to have a B:B' ratio of 2:2 that forms a quadruple hexagonal instead of a cubic or distorted double perovskite. One condition that would favor the formation of a quadruple perovskite instead is the presence of mixed-valent B cations. Mixed valency in perovskites is not unknown; however, unless a charge disproportionation takes place, where one of the cations is present in a significantly different oxidation state from the other, it is unlikely for them to charge-order in the structure.<sup>24</sup> Herein we communicate the synthesis and crystal structure of a new 12R quadruple perovskite, Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub>, that possesses an unexpected coexistence of Ni<sup>II</sup>O<sub>6</sub> and Ni<sup>IV</sup>O<sub>6</sub> units that for size reasons lead to structural ordering and that allow for the formation of the unusual Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> trimer.

Phase-pure single crystals of Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1.94</sub>Ir<sub>2.06</sub>O<sub>12</sub> were synthesized via a wet hydroxide flux growth using 1.5 mmol of Ba(OH)<sub>2</sub>·8H<sub>2</sub>O (Alfa Aesar; 98+%), 0.33 mmol of NiO (Alfa Aesar; 99%), 1.0 mmol of iridium metal (Engelhard; 99.9995%), 5.0 g of KOH (BDH; ACS grade), and 1.0 mL of distilled water contained in a sealed silver tube. The reaction was heated to 700 °C at a ramp rate of 600 °C/h, held for 24 h, and cooled to 300 °C at a rate of 6 °C/h. The flux was dissolved in water, and the crystals were isolated by vacuum filtration. Phase-pure single crystals of BaNiO<sub>3</sub> were synthesized and isolated in the same way as  $Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}$ , with the exception of an increased dwell temperature of 750  $^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the absence of iridium metal as a reagent. See the Supporting Information for details on the experimental setup of single-crystal structural determination, Xray absorption near-edge spectroscopy (XANES), and SQUID measurements.

In order to confirm the oxidation states of the first-row cations, XANES and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) were performed. The hexagonal perovskite BaNiO3, which contains nickel(IV) in a chemical environment similar to that of nickel(IV) in Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub>, was also synthesized for comparative purposes, both as an appropriate model for the rare Ni<sup>IV</sup>O<sub>6</sub> coordination environment and as a reference for the magnetism of nickel(IV) in an oxide environment. The presence of the different nickel oxidation states in Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub>,

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combined with the presence of mixed cation  $Ir_2NiO_{12}$  units, results in an overall magnetic moment that can be explained by invoking the presence of direct metal—metal bonding between Iridium(V) and Irickel(IV).

The 12R quadruple perovskite structure contains  $B'_3O_{12}$  units consisting of three face-sharing octahedra; these units are connected to each other via corner-sharing  $BO_6$  octahedra, as shown in Figure 1. By comparison, the structurally related 2H

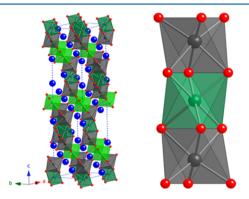
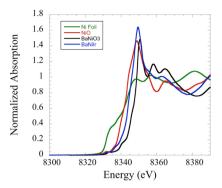


Figure 1. (Left) Polyhedral representation of  $Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}$  with nickel(II) shown in light green, nickel(IV) shown in dark green, iridium(V) shown in gray, barium shown in blue, and oxygen shown in red. (Right) Local coordination environment of nickel(IV) octahedra, shown in dark green, face-shared with two distorted iridium(V) octahedra, shown in gray.

hexagonal perovskite BaNiO<sub>3</sub> contains infinite chains of facesharing octahedra, as shown in Figure S1, with crystallographic information for both structures found in Table S1. A scanning electron microscopy (SEM) image of representative single crystals of both compositions is shown in Figure S2.

Unlike generic 12R quadruple perovskites, A<sub>4</sub>BB'<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub>, which have two crystallographically unique sites with one metal on each site (BO<sub>6</sub> octahedra and B'<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub> trimers: B  $\neq$  B'), the mixed valence of nickel(II) and nickel(IV) "forces" nickel to be present on both sites for size reasons. This results in Ni<sup>II</sup>O<sub>6</sub> octahedra in addition to mixed Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> units, which contain both nickel(IV) and iridium(V) (Figures 1 and S3). To assess the nickel oxidation states, bond-valence-sum (BVS) calculations were carried out on both NiO<sub>6</sub> and IrO<sub>6</sub> octahedral environments, as shown in Table S2. The six Ni-O bonds in the corner-shared octahedra, which bridge the Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> trimers, are 2.056(3) Å, corresponding to a BVS value of 2.05, indicating nickel(II). The six Ni-O bonds in the Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> trimers are 1.925(3) Å, corresponding to a BVS value of 3.95, indicating nickel(IV). The iridium cations have three long [2.020(3) Å] and three short [1.952(3) Å] bonds each, resulting in a BVS sum of 5.12, indicating iridium(V).

This result was corroborated by XANES measurements performed at Beamline 20-BM at the APS at ANL, as shown in Figure 2. Higher binding energies are expected for higher oxidation states, and thus three nickel-containing compounds ranging from zero valent to tetravalent nickel were measured for reference, in addition to the title compound. The binding energies for all measured compounds are included in Table S3. The observed binding energy for Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub> is 1 eV lower than that of BaNi(IV)O<sub>3</sub>, consistent with the presence of both nickel(II) and nickel(IV) in the title compound. The binding energy of Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1,94</sub>Ir<sub>2,06</sub>O<sub>12</sub> is 1 eV higher than that of Ni<sup>II</sup>O, as expected for a mixed nickel(IV/II)-containing compound, thus supporting the BVS findings. XANES measurements (Table S4

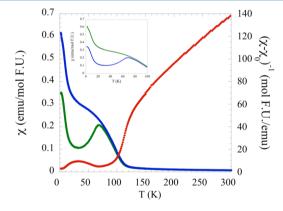


**Figure 2.** XANES measurement of binding energies plotted against normalized absorption for metallic nickel metal, NiO, BaNiO<sub>3</sub>, and  $Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}$ .

and Figure S4) comparing the title compound to  $IrO_2$  confirmed the presence of iridium(V). XPS measurements were conducted and are consistent with the presence of nickel(IV) (Figure S5 and Table S5).

The simultaneous presence and charge ordering of nickel(II) and nickel(IV) is unexpected, but one might suspect that the presence of  $Ir_2NiO_{12}$  mixed-metal-cation units stabilize nickel(IV) in the presence of nickel(II). It also suggests that the iridium cations strongly favor 5+ over 4+ oxidation state under the synthetic conditions used because otherwise a  $Ba_2Ni^{IV}Ir^{IV}O_6$  double perovskite would potentially have formed. The formation of the titled composition over the possible double perovskite is supported by the Goldschmidt tolerance factor for the theoretical double perovskite of t=1.027, indicating that a hexagonal phase is favored over a cubic one. <sup>25</sup>

A plot of the temperature dependence of the field-cooled (FC) and zero-field-cooled (ZFC) magnetic susceptibility data collected at 0.1 T is shown in Figure 3, with a clean powder X-



**Figure 3.** Temperature dependence of the magnetic susceptibility for  $Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}$  at 0.1 T, with FC data shown in blue, ZFC data shown in green, and the inverse magnetic susceptibility shown in red.

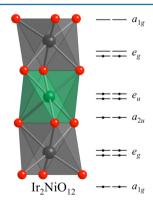
ray diffraction (PXRD) confirming the accuracy of these results, as shown in Figure S6. Significant field dependence and multiple magnetic transitions are observed, with the highest being at 115 K. Although the negative Weiss temperature ( $\theta_{\rm cw}=-33~{\rm K}$ ) is indicative of antiferromagnetic interactions, a number of ferromagnetic-like interactions are observed at T=30 and 115 K, likely indicating competing ferromagnetic and antiferromagnetic interactions. This ferromagnetic-like behavior is further observed in Figures S7–S10. The presence of hysteresis at 2 and 45 K is indicative of possible ferrimagnetic order or spin canting.

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The  $\chi_{\rm M}T$  versus T plots at both 0.1 and 1 T indicate ferromagnetic-like interactions, corroborating possible ferrimagnetic order. It should be noted, however, that, in the absence of magnetic neutron diffraction investigations, an unambiguous assignment of the magnetic order cannot be made.

When the high-temperature paramagnetic regime of the 1 T magnetic susceptibility data of  $\mathrm{Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}}$  is fit to the Curie—Weiss law, with a  $\chi_0$  term, as shown in Figure S11, an effective magnetic moment of 4.40  $\mu_\mathrm{B}$  is obtained. Given that in  $\mathrm{Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}}$  nickel(II) has two unpaired electrons, that nickel(IV) has a low-spin  $\mathrm{t_{2g}}^6$  electron configuration, and that iridium(V) adopts a nonmagnetic ground state  $^{5,7-9,26,27}$  due to spin orbit coupling, as shown in Figure S12, we would expect a calculated spin-only moment of 2.83  $\mu_\mathrm{B}$ . This value is significantly lower than the measured value of 4.40  $\mu_\mathrm{B}$ . To confirm that nickel(IV) in an octahedral coordination environment is nonmagnetic, unlike recent reports of ferromagnetic nickel(IV) in the cubic perovskite  $\mathrm{SrFe_{0.6}Ni_{0.4}O_3}$ ,  $^{28}$  we collected magnetic susceptibility data for  $\mathrm{BaNiO_3}$  (Figure S13), confirming the expected diamagnetic result for  $\mathrm{Ni^{IV}O_6}$ .

To rationalize the measured magnetic moment of 4.40  $\mu_{\rm B}$ , we need to treat the nickel(IV) and two iridium(V) cations as an independent Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> trimeric unit. The description of nickel-(IV) and iridium(V) behaving as one Ir<sub>2</sub>NiO<sub>12</sub> can be understood as resulting from direct metal-metal bonding, leading to a new electronic structure. The short distance between the iridium(V) and nickel(IV) [2.562(3) Å] makes direct metal metal bonding probable. The resultant electronic structure can be estimated using the previously reported schematic energylevel diagrams published to model the 14-electron Ir<sub>3</sub><sup>4,33+</sup>O<sub>12</sub> trimers in the quadruple perovskite  $Ba_4LnIr_3O_{12}$  (Ln = La, Nd-Gd, Dy–Lu). <sup>13</sup> Using the local  $D_{3d}$  symmetry model, appropriate for the trigonal space group of Ba<sub>4</sub>Ni<sub>1.94</sub>Ir<sub>2.06</sub>O<sub>12</sub>, and populating the energy states with 14 electrons [4 electrons for each iridum(V) and 6 electrons for nickel(IV)] results in two unpaired electrons in the  $e_g^2$  highest occupied molecular orbital, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Schematic energy-level diagram of an  $Ir_2NiO_{12}$  trimer with local  $D_{3d}$  symmetry, approximated from  $Ir_3^{4,33}O_{12}$  trimers with comparable  $D_{3d}$  symmetry.

Combining these two unpaired electrons with the two unpaired electrons in the Ni<sup>II</sup>O<sub>6</sub> units results in a calculated magnetic moment of 3.94  $\mu_{\rm B}$ , close to the measured moment of 4.40  $\mu_{\rm B}$ . One could contemplate the formal oxidation states resulting from this arrangement; depending on which cation provides the final electrons, an oxidation state distribution of  ${\rm Ir_2}^{\rm V}{\rm Ni}^{\rm IV}$  or  ${\rm Ir_2}^{\rm IV}{\rm Ni}^{\rm VI}$  could be envisioned. On the basis of the

XANES and XPS data, it seems clear that the former is a better description of the trimer's oxidation state distribution.

In summary, we have reported on the preparation and characterization of single crystals of the new iridium-containing quadruple perovskite,  $Ba_4Ni_{1.94}Ir_{2.06}O_{12}$ , with an unusual coexistence of nickel(II) and nickel(IV). The measured magnetic susceptibility was explained by the combined effect of a magnetic  $Ir_2NiO_{12}$  trimer and two unpaired electrons residing on the nickel(II) cation.

### ASSOCIATED CONTENT

## **S** Supporting Information

The material is available free of charge via the Internet at The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.inorgchem.8b00249.

Experimental setup, crystallographic structure information, XANES, XPS spectra, magnetic data plots and tables, PXRD patterns, SEM images, temperature dependence plots, and energy-splitting diagram (PDF)

#### **Accession Codes**

CCDC 1544900–1544901 contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data\_request/cif, or by emailing data\_request@ccdc.cam.ac.uk, or by contacting The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK; fax: +44 1223 336033.

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#### Note:

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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