

Electronic Supporting Information

Unified biogenesis of ambiguine, fischerindole, hapalindole and welwitindolinone: Identification of a monogeranylated indolenine as a cryptic common biosynthetic intermediate by an unusual magnesium-dependent aromatic prenyltransferase

Xinyu Liu^{*a}, Matthew L. Hillwig^b, Leonardus M. I. Koharudin^b and Angela M. Gronenborn^b

a. Department of Chemistry, University of Pittsburgh, 219 Parkman Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA.

b. Department of Structural Biology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, 3501 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA

*To whom correspondence should be addressed: xinyuliu@pitt.edu

ESI Materials and Methods

General methods. All polymerase chain reactions (PCRs) were carried out on a C1000 thermal cycler (Bio-Rad). DNA sequencing was performed by Elim BioPharm Inc. Preparative-scale reverse-phase HPLC was performed using a Dionex instrument equipped with Luna C18 columns (21 x 250 mm and 4.6 x 250 mm) (Phenomenex). Analytical reverse-phase HPLC was performed using a Dionex UHPLC with a photo-diode array UV/Vis detector (Thermo Fisher Scientific) and a 4.6 x 250 mm Luna C18 column (Phenomenex). HRMS analysis was conducted using a Q Exactive Benchtop Quadrupole-Orbitrap mass spectrometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific) equipped with a Dionex RSLC (Thermo Fisher Scientific). NMR spectrum was recorded on a Bruker Avance III 700 MHz spectrometer equipped with a ¹H/¹³C/¹⁵N triple-resonance inverse probe (1.7mm 'microprobe').

Materials. Synthetic oligonucleotides for gene amplification by PCR were purchased from Life Technologies or Integrated DNA Technology. Kappa HiFi DNA polymerase was obtained from Kappa Biosystems. Restriction endonucleases, T4 DNA ligase and Antarctic phosphatase were purchased from New England Biolabs. LB broth and agar used for culturing *E. coli* were obtained from Teknova. All other reagents including inorganic salts and cofactors were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich or Fisher Scientific unless otherwise stated.

Strains and plasmids. *E. coli* TOP10 cell (Life Technologies) was used for routine cloning and plasmid propagation. *E. coli* C43(DE3) cell (Lucigen) was used for protein expression. pQTEV cloning plasmid was obtained from Addgene.

Protein expression. AmbP1, and its homologs WelP1 and FidP1, were cloned and expressed in *E. coli* as previously described.¹ Cell pellets were re-suspended in 10 mL of protein lysis buffer (50 mM Tris, 500 mM NaCl, 20 mM imidazole, 10 mM beta-mercatoethanol, and 0.1 % Tween 20) and

sonicated for 10 s three times on ice and transferred to 50 mL tubes and centrifuged for 30 min at 30,000g at 4 °C to pellet cell debris. The cleared lysate was transferred to 2 mL of pre-washed nickel-NTA bead (Qiagen, Valencia, CA) slurry and incubated for 1 h at 4 °C. Thereafter, the nickel-NTA beads were rinsed three times with 20 mL of binding buffer (50 mM Tris, 500 mM NaCl, 0.1% TWEEN20, 20 mM imidazole, 10 mM β-mercatoethanol, pH=7). The His-tagged proteins were then eluted by addition of 5 mL of elution buffer (50 mM Tris, 500 mM NaCl, 250 mM imidazole, 10 mM beta-mercatoethanol) to the bead bed. Eluted protein was subjected to dialysis (50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 10% glycerol, 0.5 mM DTT) in a 10-kDa molecular weight cutoff membrane (Spectrum Laboratory Products, Inc., Gardena, CA) to remove the imidazole and exchange buffer. The purified proteins were analyzed by SDS-PAGE to ensure homogeneity, concentrated with 30 kDa cutoff concentrator tubes, assayed, and the remainder was flash-frozen using liquid nitrogen and stored at -80 C for later assays.

AmbP1/WelP1/FidP1 in vitro assay. For a typical AmbP1 assay, 5 µM of AmbP1 was added to a 50 µL reaction containing 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 0.5 mM (*Z*)-**1** or (*E*)-**1**, 0.5 mM GPP, 5 mM MgCl₂, at 30 °C. All assays were stopped at indicated time by extraction with ethyl acetate (0.5 mL x 2). The combined organic layer was dried under a stream of N₂ gas, and redissolved in methanol (100 µL). A 40-µL aliquot was used for HPLC and LC-HRMS analysis for product identification. For optimizing assay conditions, alternative buffers (MES buffer for pH <7 and Tris buffer for pH>7), metal ions (ZnCl₂, CaCl₂, MnCl₂) or EDTA were used as indicated. For substrate scope studies, DMAPP, NPP and FPP were used as GPP alternative. (*E*)-**1**, **4** and **5** were used as (*E*)-**1** alternative. For kinetics, AmbP1 concentration was fixed at 0.1 µM, GPP concentration was fixed at 0.5 mM and (*Z*)-**1** concentration was varied from 1 µM to 200 µM. Reactions were stopped after 2 min and conversions were estimated based on HPLC with analytical standards.

Structure determination of the AmbP1 enzymatic products. For product **2**, assays were scaled to 5 mL. Enzymatic mixtures containing 50 mM Tris buffer (pH 9.0), 20 mM MgCl₂, 1 mM (Z)-**1**, 1mM GPP with 1 µM AmbP1 were incubated overnight at 30 °C. For **3**, assays were scaled to 5 mL. Enzymatic mixtures containing 50mM MES (pH 6.0), 10 mM EDTA, 1 mM (Z)-**1**, 1mM GPP with 1 µM AmbP1 were incubated overnight at 30 °C. Each of the enzymatic products were extracted from the buffer with equal volume ethyl acetate twice, dried, redissolved in methanol, filtered and further purified using a 250 x 4.6 mm Luna C18 5 micron HPLC column (Phenomenex, Torrance, CA), with a gradient from 50-80% acetonitrile in 2-35 min. The dried products were re-dissolved in 40 µL of CD₃OD or CD₃Cl and analyzed in a 1 mm capillary NMR tube using a Bruker 700 MHz NMR spectrometer equipped with a capillary probe. The structure of product **5** was determined in an analogous manner.

AmbP1 expression and purification for NMR study: AmbP1 gene encoding residues 1–309 was inserted into the pET-15b(+) expression vector (Novagen), using NdeI and XbaI restriction sites at the 5' and 3' ends, respectively. For protein expression, *E. coli* Rosetta2 (DE3) cells (Novagen) were transformed with the pET-15b(+)–AmbP1 vector. Cells were grown using auto-induction medium, initially at 37°C until the cell density reaches an OD₆₀₀ value of ~1.50 and a further ~20 h at 15°C for protein expression. ¹⁵N-isotopic labeling of the protein for NMR studies was carried out by growth in a modified auto induction minimal medium, containing ¹⁵NH₄Cl as sole nitrogen source and succinate for pH balance. The protein was isolated from the soluble fraction of *E. coli* after opening the cells in a microfluidizer, followed by removal of cell debris by centrifugation. Purification involved an affinity chromatography on a Ni²⁺(HP) column (GE Healthcare) in 40 mM Tris.HCl (pH 8.0), 40 mM NaCl, 1 mM NaN₃, and 2.88 mM sodium lauroyl sarcosinate, using a linear gradient of imidazole (20–500 mM) for elution, followed by gel filtration on Superdex75 (GE Healthcare) in the same binding/washing buffer for the Ni²⁺(HP) column. Purified protein fractions were collected and concentrated to ~10 mg/ml using centriprep devices (Millipore).

Mg²⁺ binding studies by NMR Spectroscopy: Spectra were recorded on a Bruker AVANCE900 spectrometer, equipped with a z-axis gradient, triple-resonance cryoprobe. Binding of Mg²⁺ to Orf2-1 was investigated at 25°C by ¹H-¹⁵N 2D HSQC spectroscopy, using a 0.20 mM ¹⁵N-labeled Orf2-1 sample in 40 mM Tris-HCl buffer (pH 8.0), 40 mM NaCl, 1 mM NaN₃, 2.88 mM sodium lauroyl sarcosinate, and 90/10% H₂O/D₂O. Two 2D ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectra were recorded: one in the absence of Mg²⁺ and the other in the presence of a 10 fold molar excess of Mg²⁺. Both spectra were processed with NMRPipe² and analyzed using NMRView³.

Fig. S1. Protein sequence alignment of AmbP1, FidP1 and WelP1.

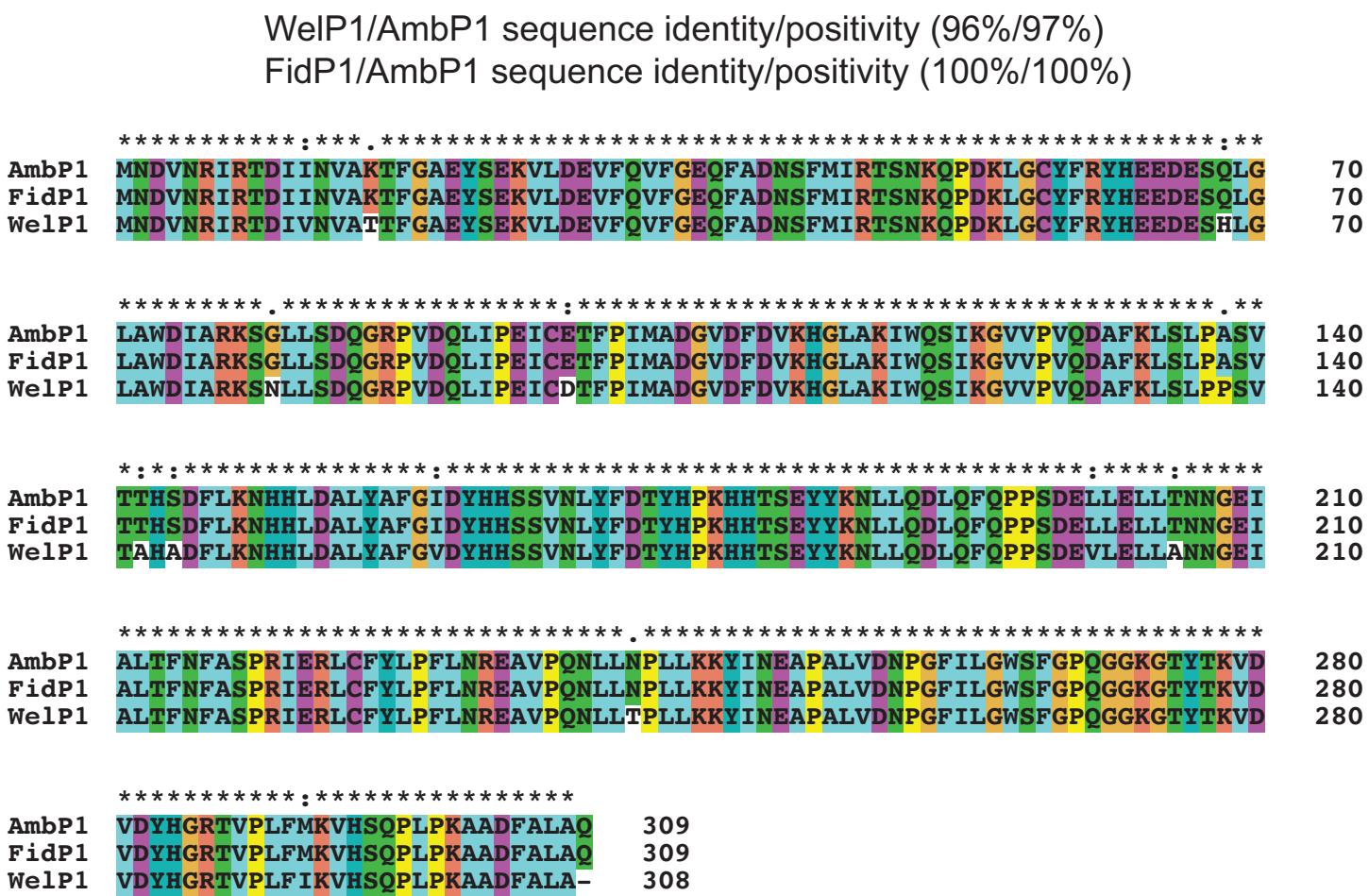
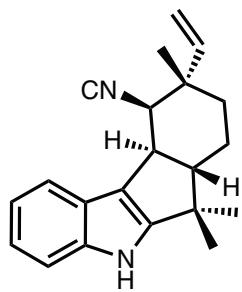
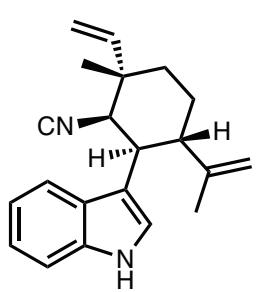
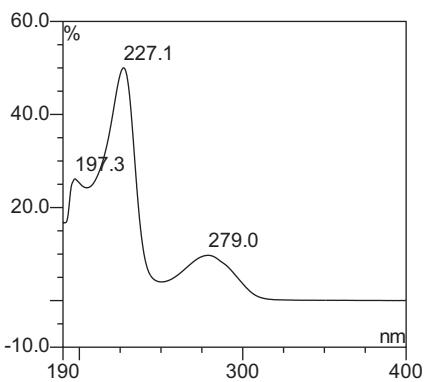


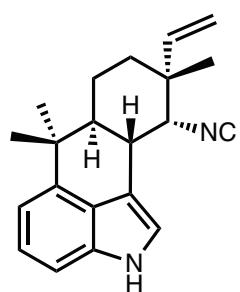
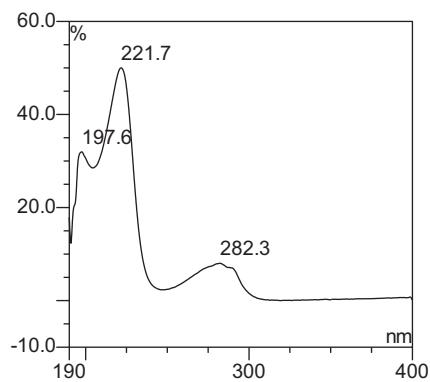
Fig. S2. UV absorption spectra of selected tri- or tetracyclic hapalindoles and fischerindoles.



12-*epi*-fischerindole U



12-*epi*-hapalindole C



hapalindole U

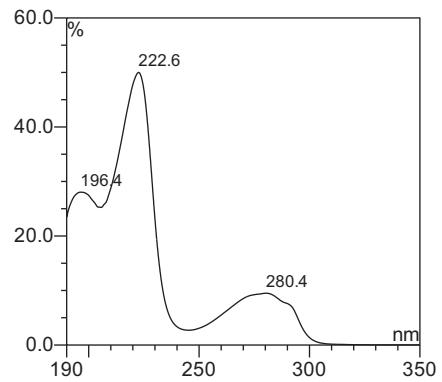


Fig. S3. Evaluation of the roles of varied pH and metal cofactors in AmbP1-mediated conversion of **(Z)-1** to **2** and **3**.

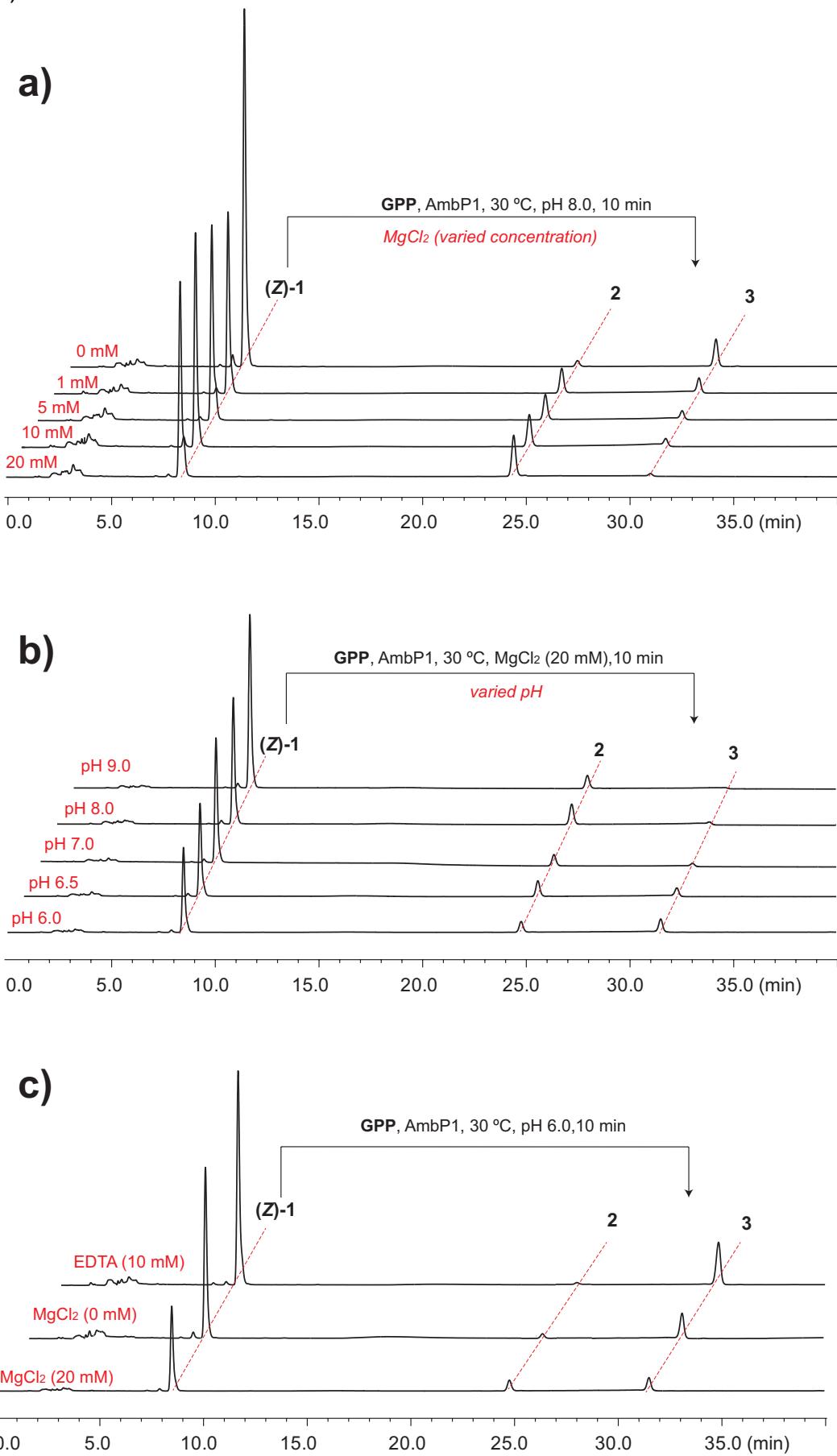


Fig. S4. ^1H NMR (CD_3OD , 700 MHz) of compound 2

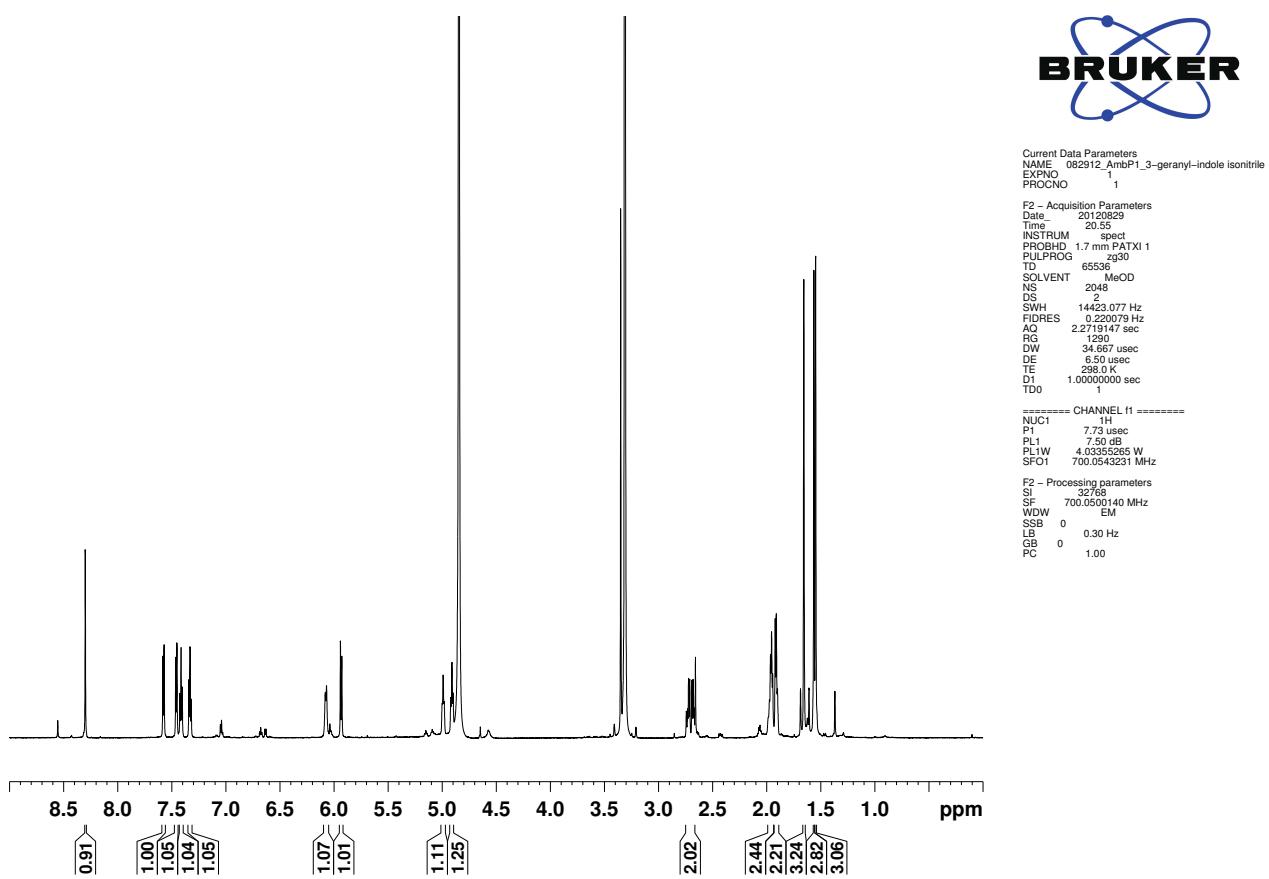


Fig. S5. ^1H - ^1H COSY NMR (CD_3OD , 700 MHz) of compound **2**

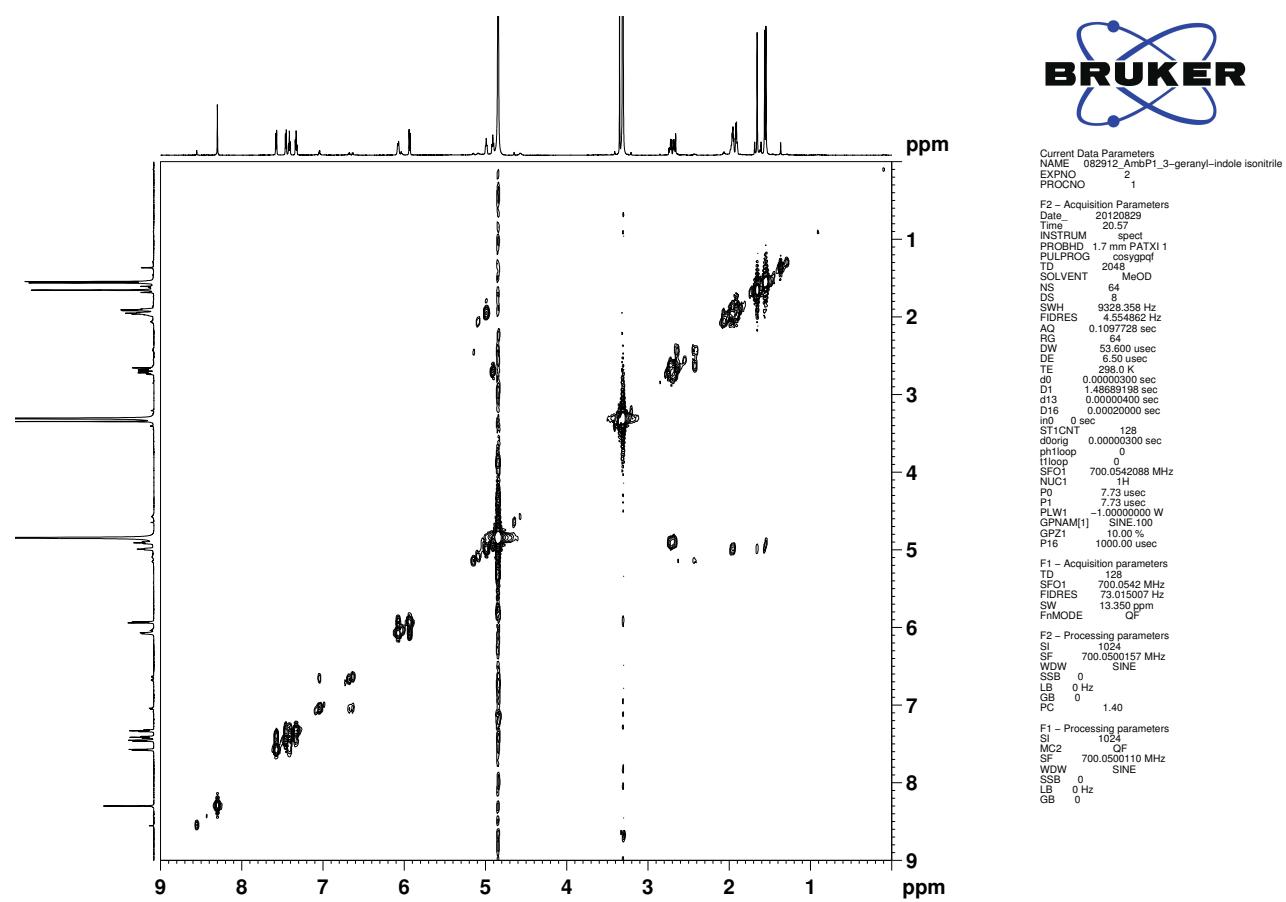


Fig. S6. ^1H - ^{13}C HSQC NMR (CD_3OD , 700 MHz) of compound **2**

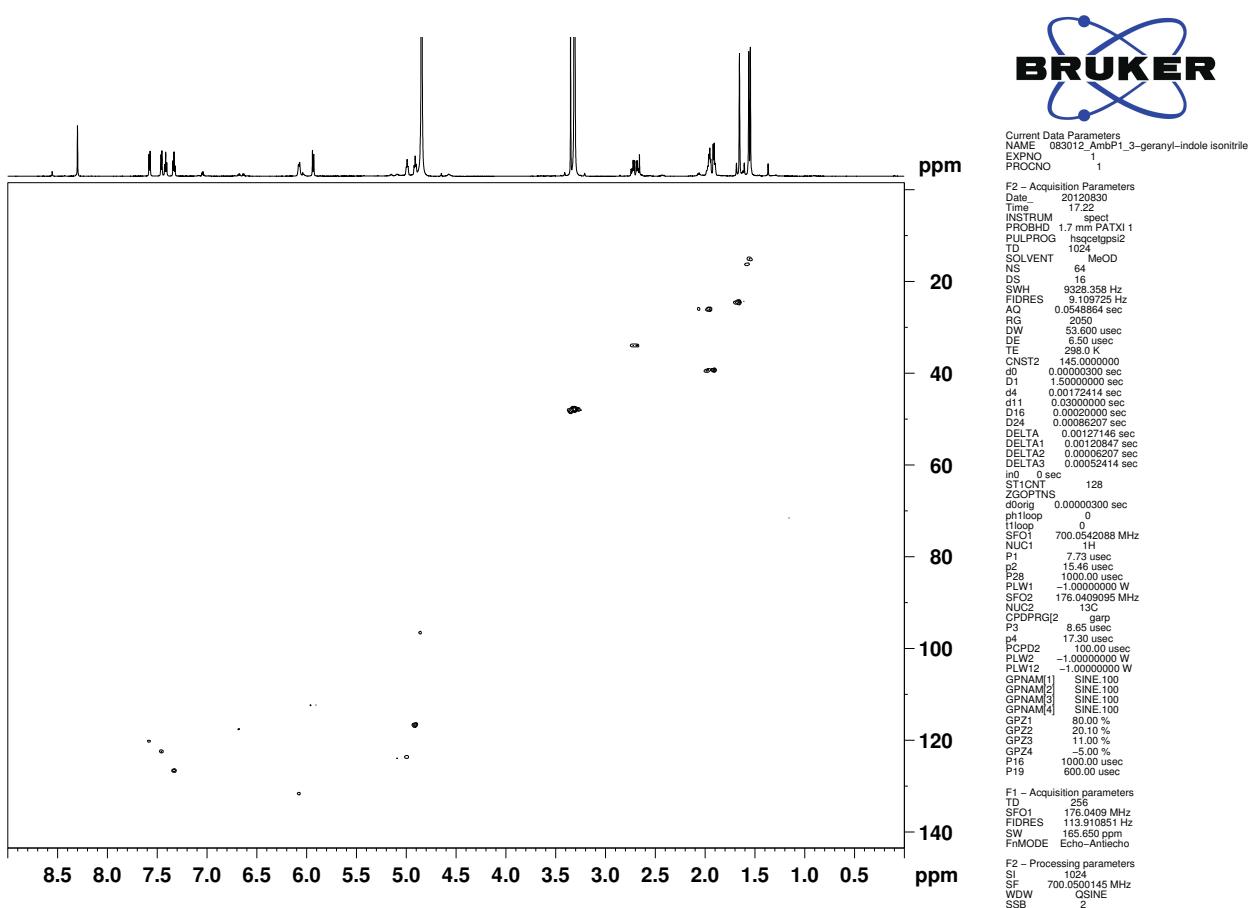


Fig. S7. ^1H - ^{13}C HMBC NMR (CD_3OD , 700 MHz) of compound **2**

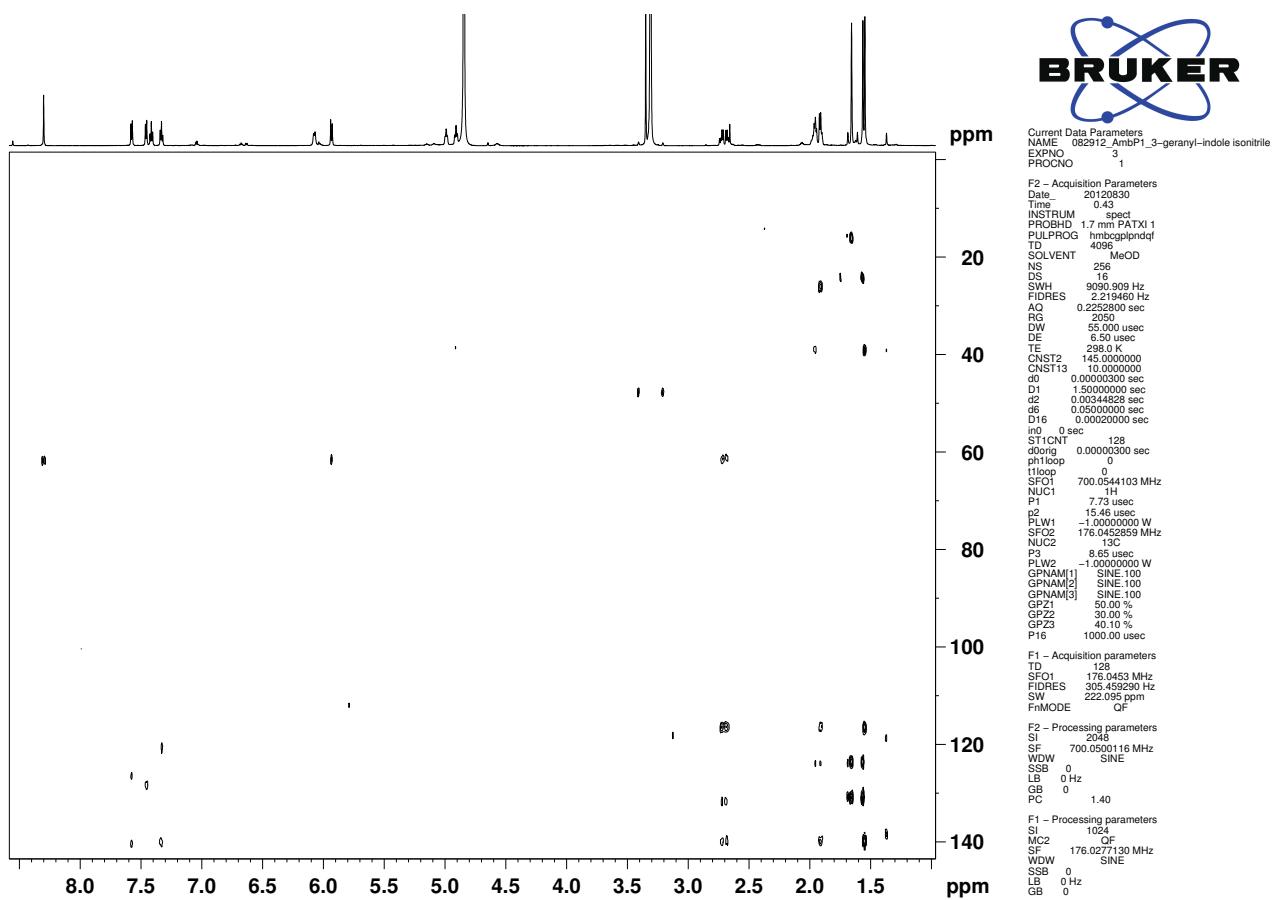


Fig. S8. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound 3

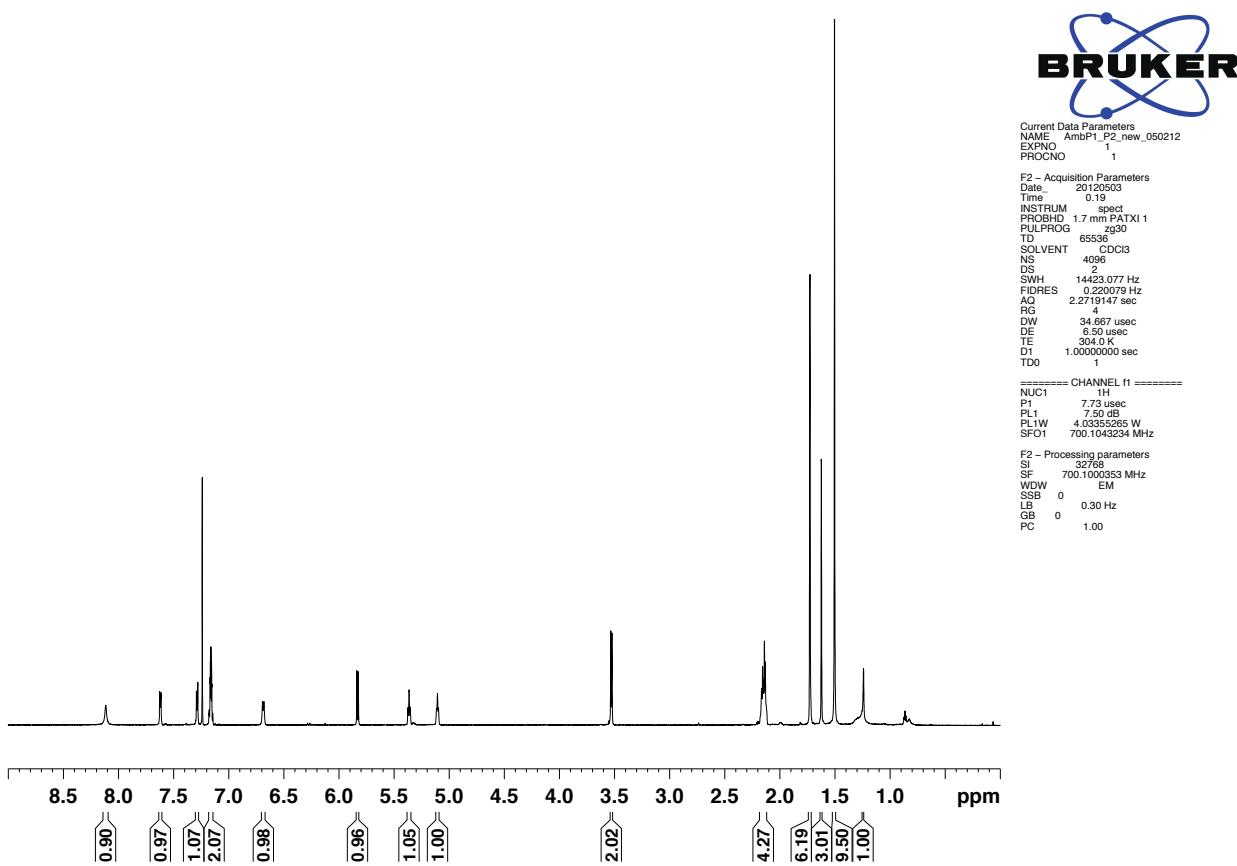


Fig. S9. ^1H - ^1H COSY NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound 3

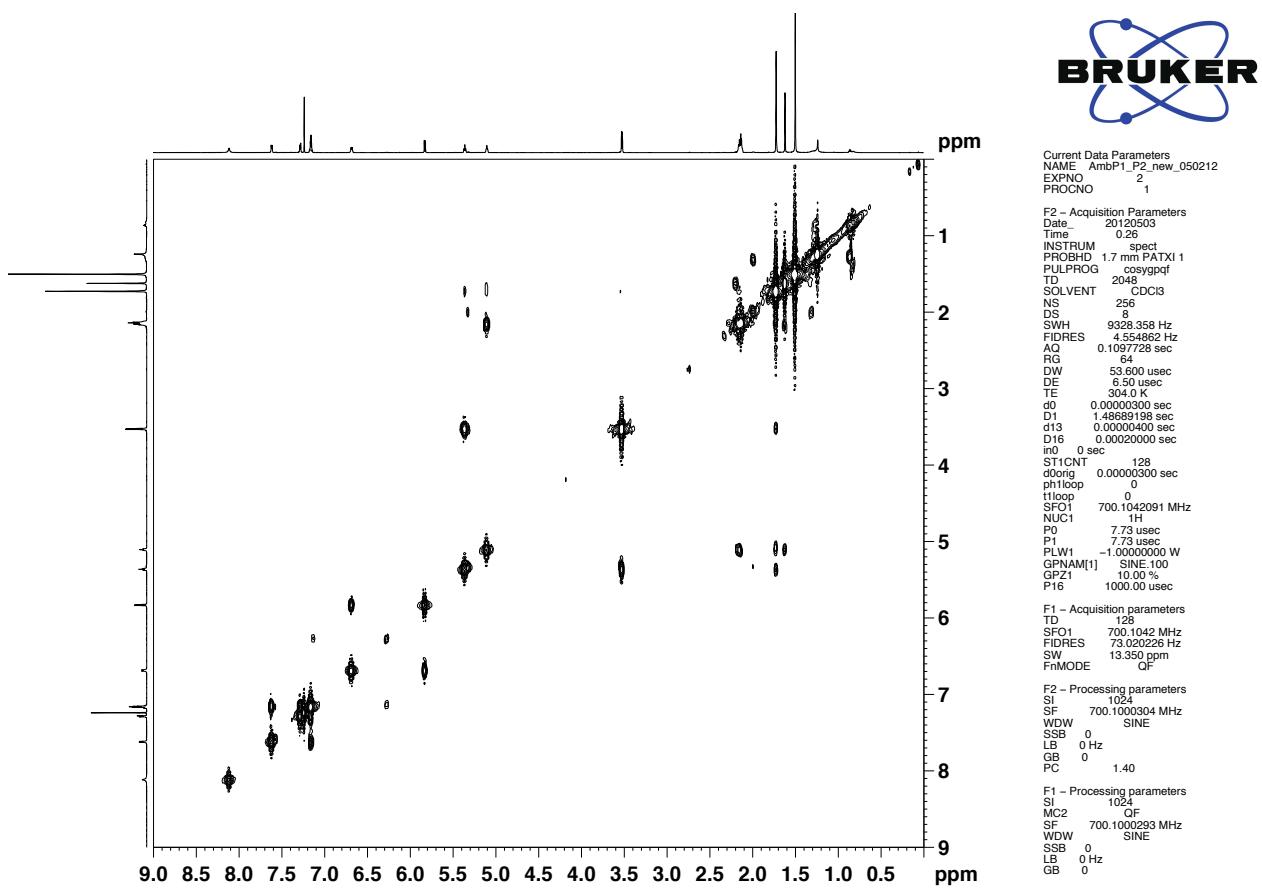


Fig. S910. ^1H - ^{13}C HSQC NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound 3

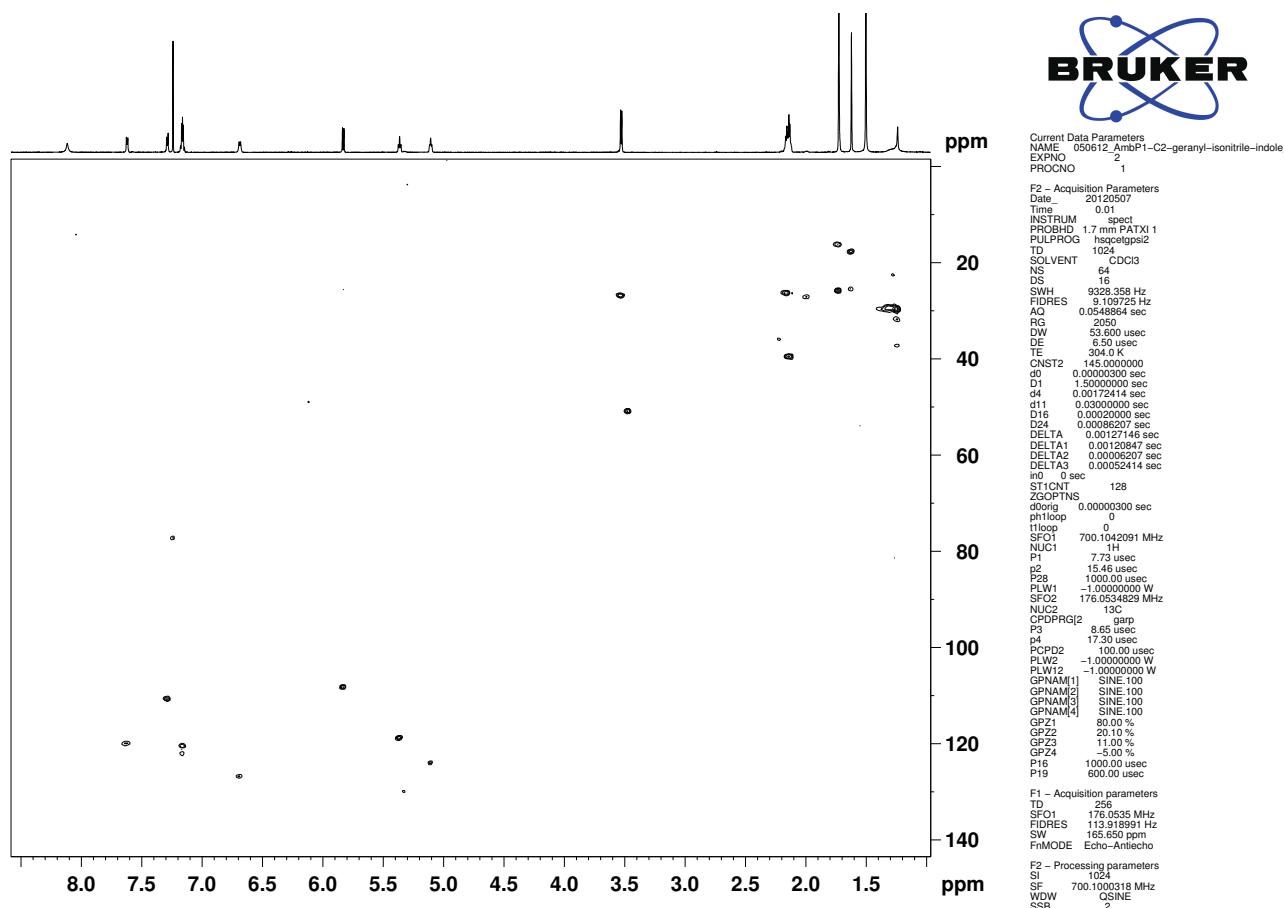


Fig. S11. ^1H - ^{13}C HMBC NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound **3**

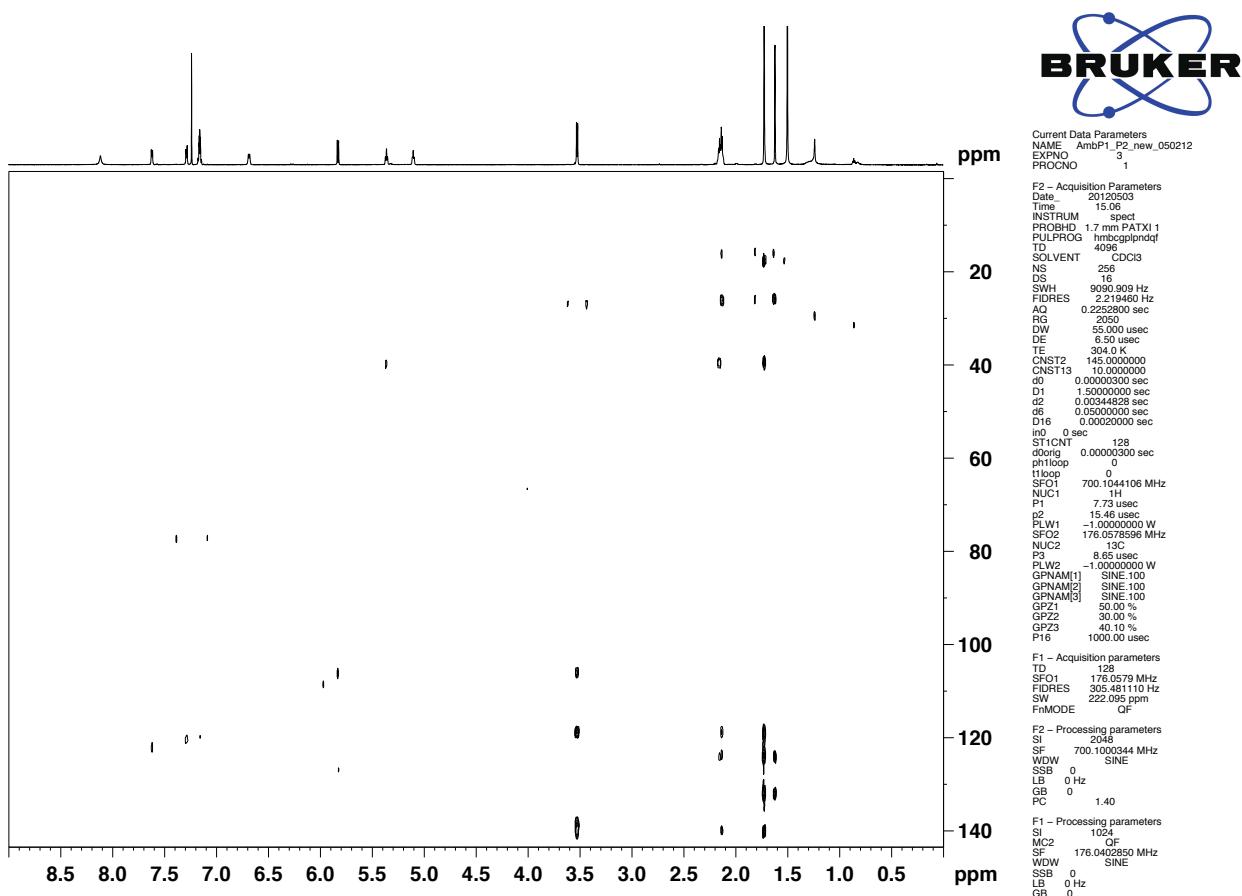


Fig. S12. Nonenzymatic conversion of **2** to **3** at pH 6.5: a time course analysis.

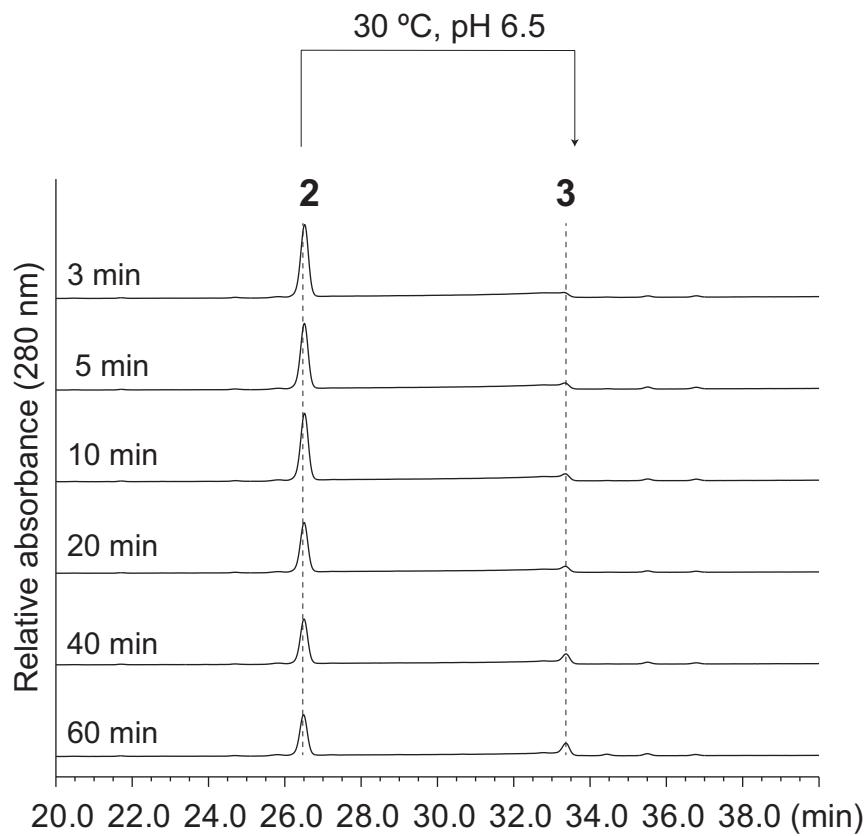


Fig. S13. UV absorption spectra of **2a** and **3a**

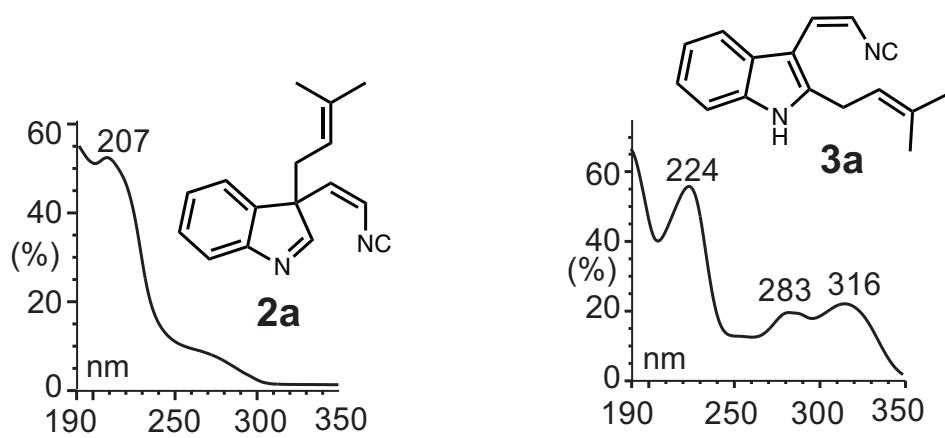


Fig. S14. HPLC chromatographs showing the enzymatic reaction outcomes of **(Z)-1** in combination of NPP or FPP in the presence of AmbP1 and MgCl₂.

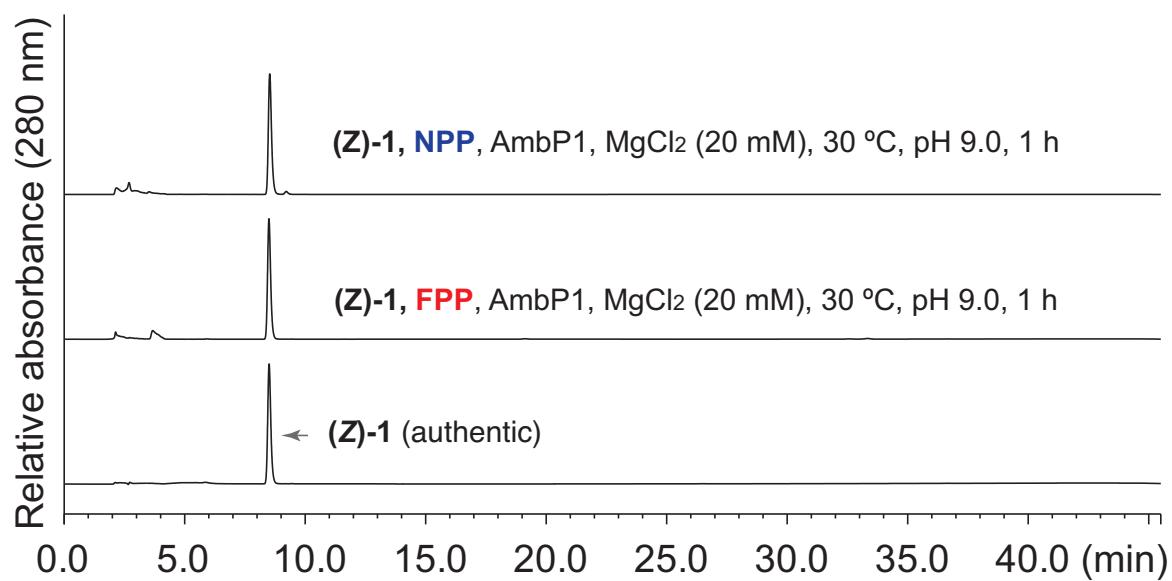


Fig. S15. ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound **6**

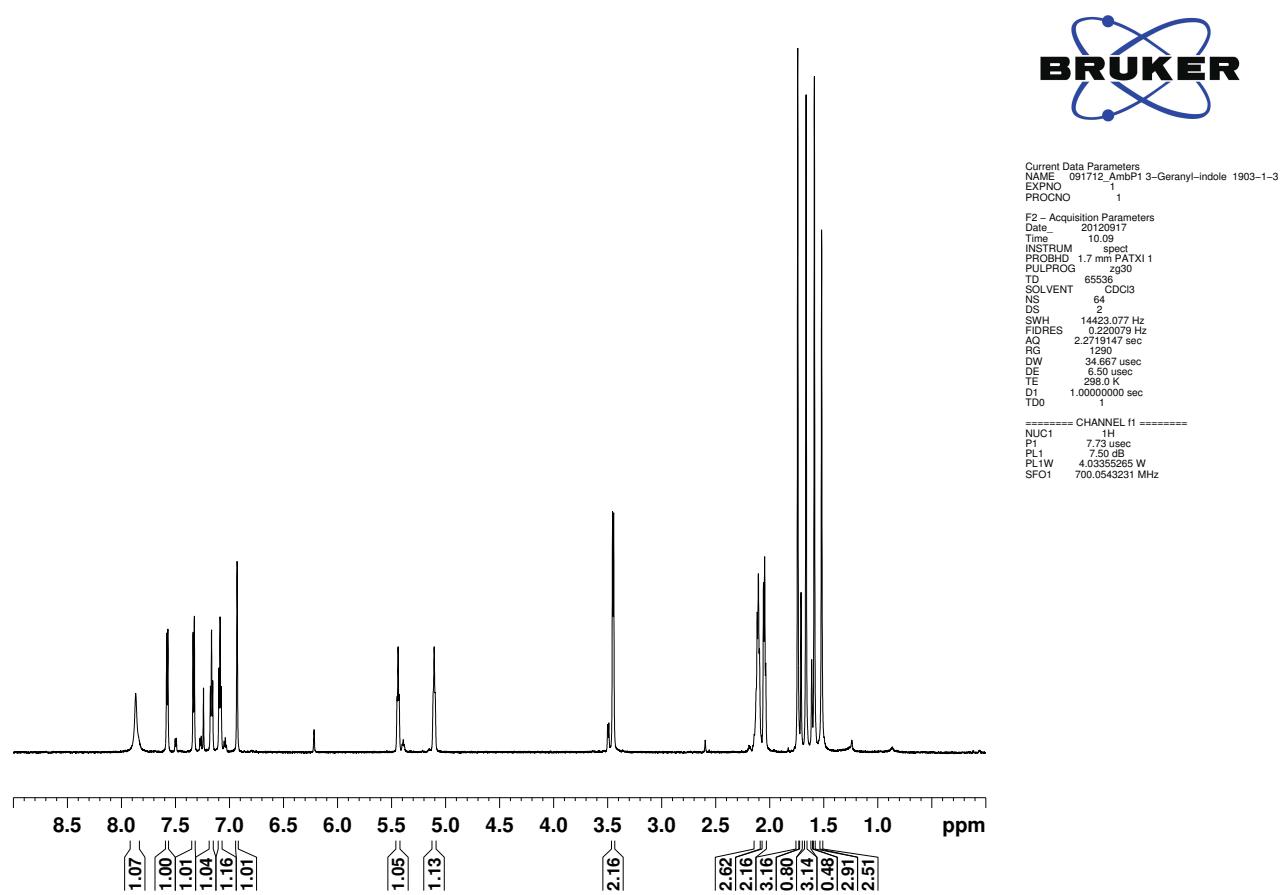


Fig. S16. ^1H - ^1H COSY NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound **6**

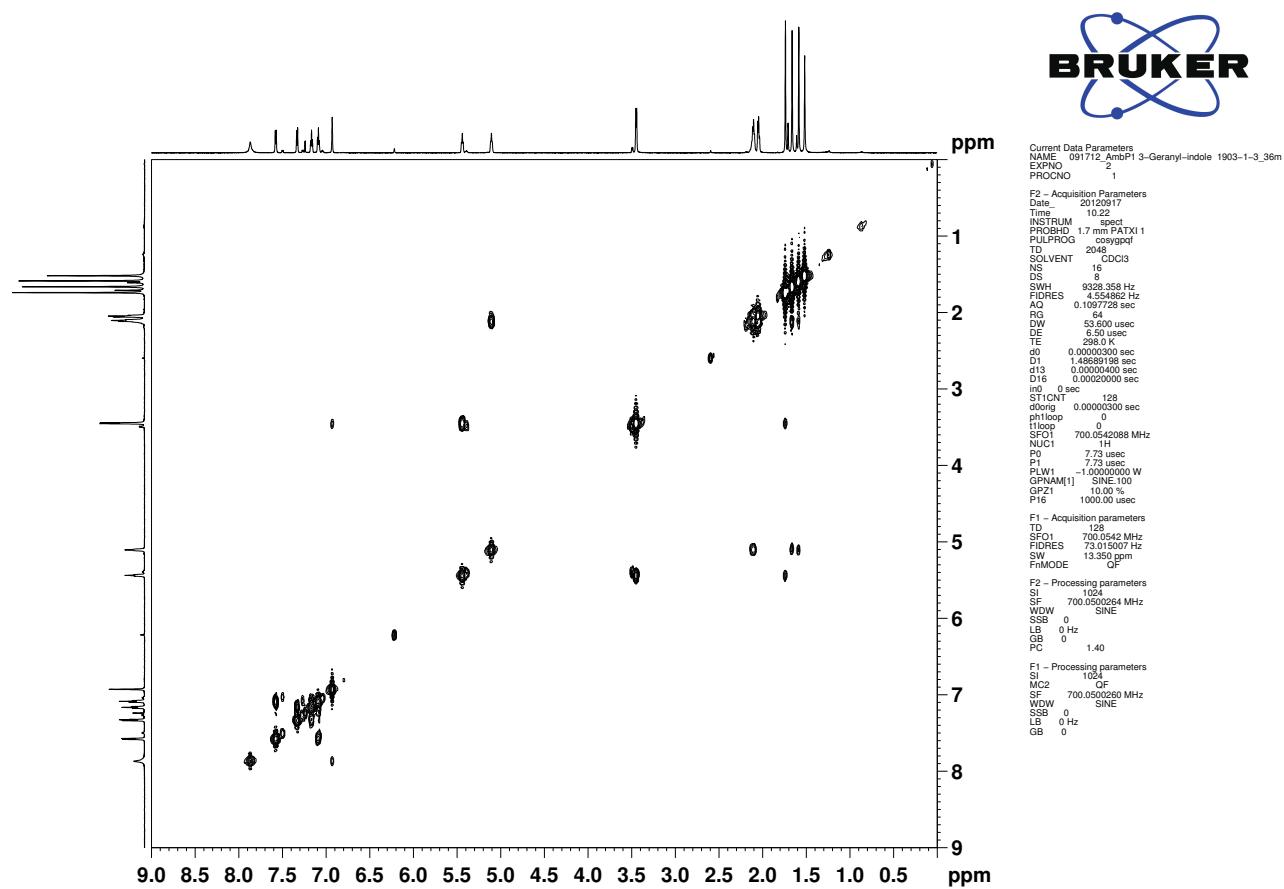


Fig. S17. ^1H - ^{13}C HSQC NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound **6**

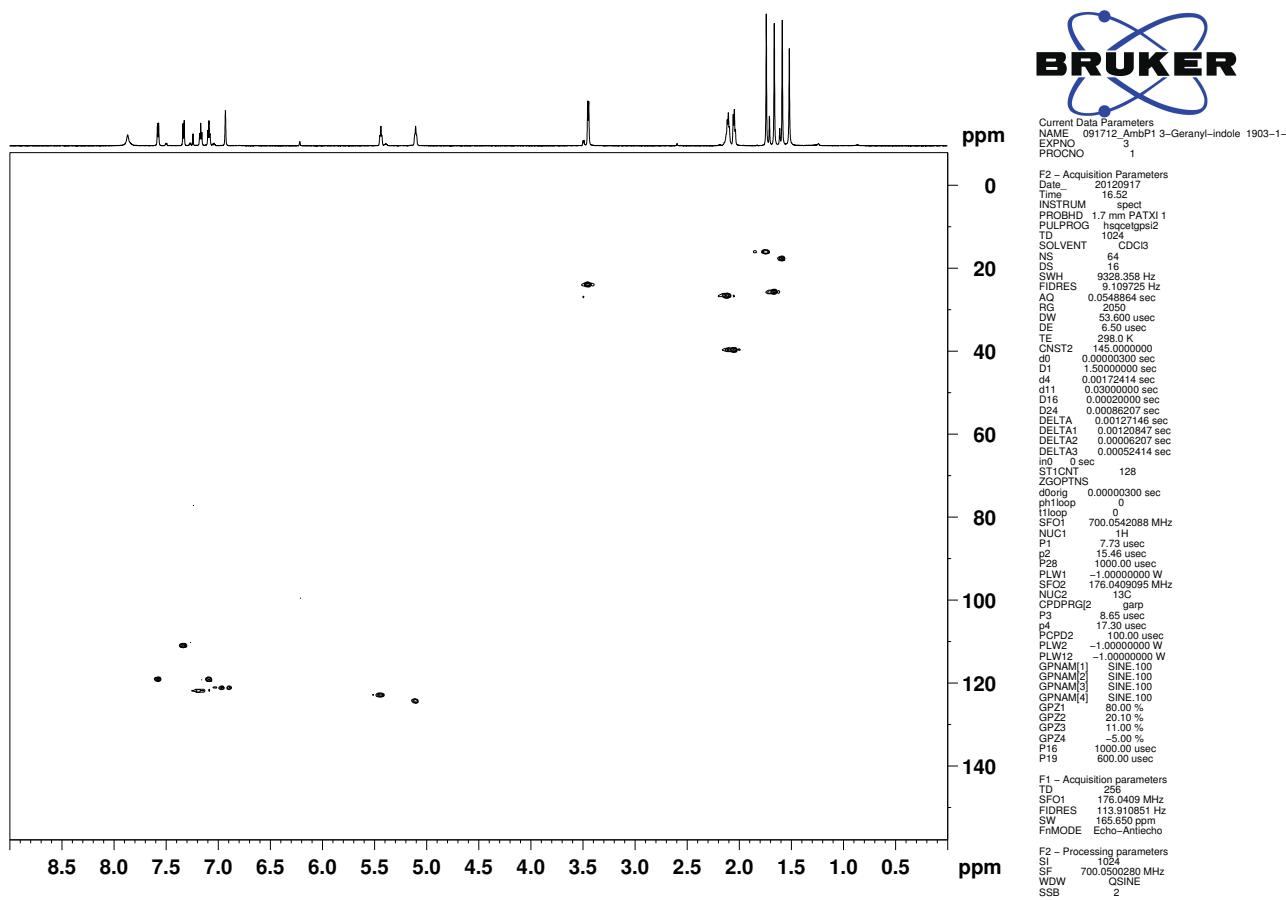


Fig. S18. ^1H - ^{13}C HMBC NMR (CDCl_3 , 700 MHz) of compound **6**

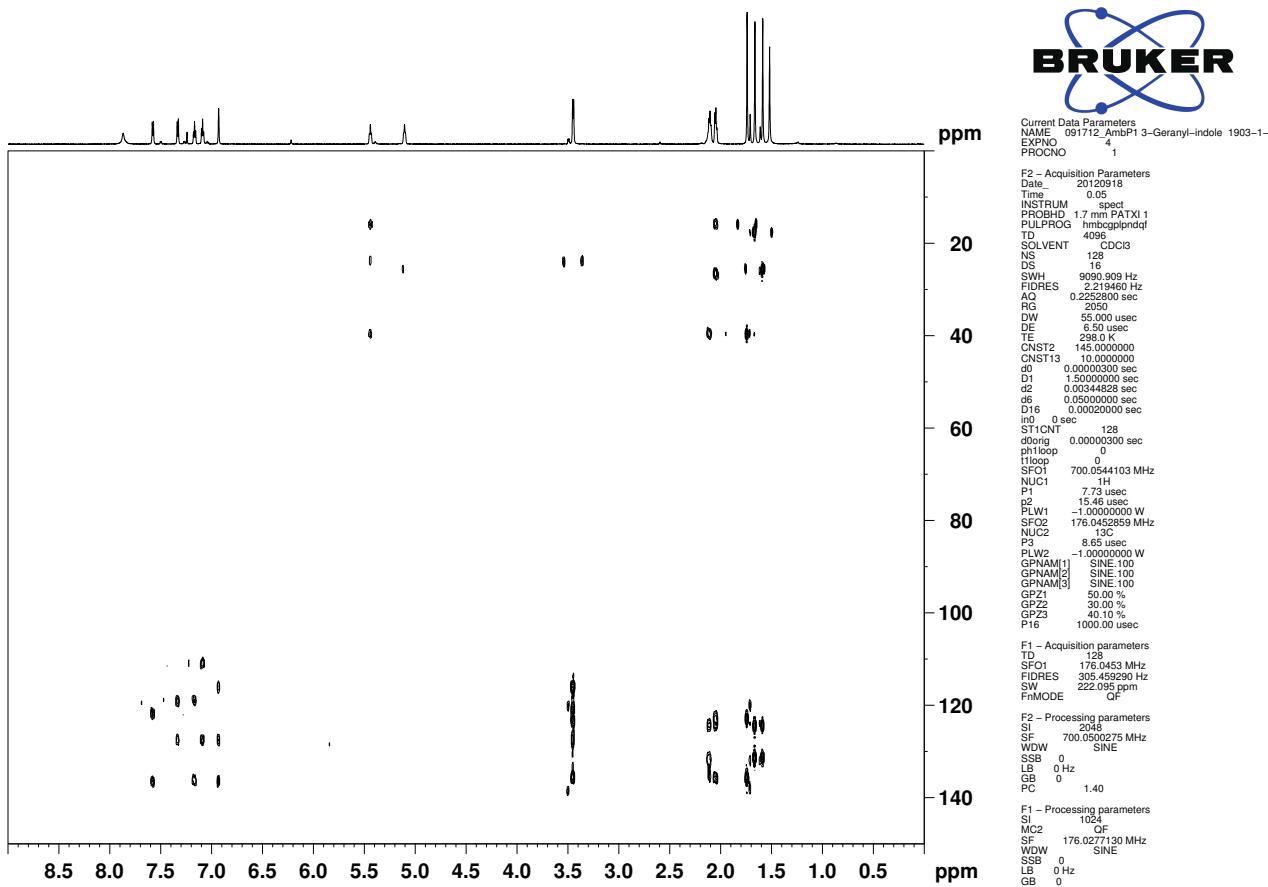
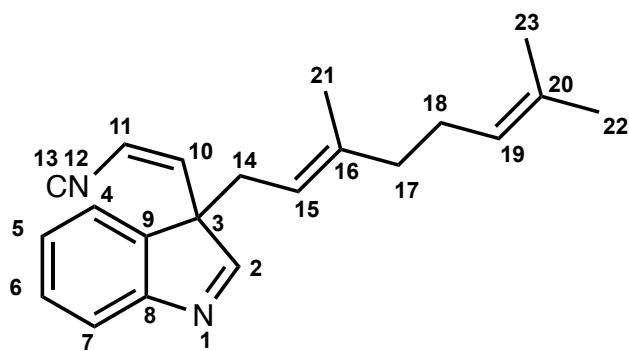
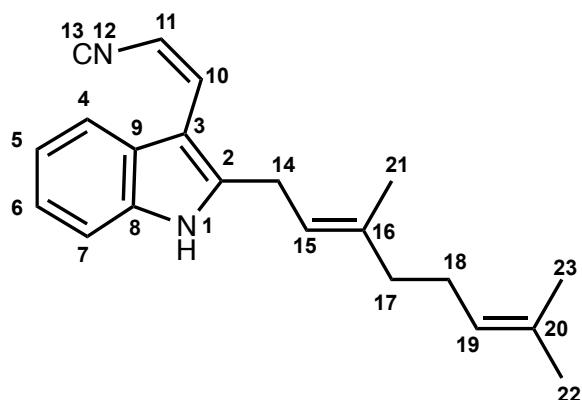
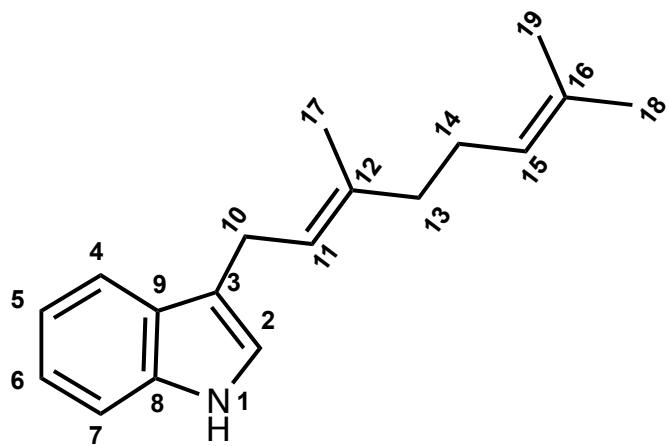


Table S1. Compound **2** NMR peak assignments

C,N	δ_c (ppm)	δ_h (ppm), multiplicity	J (Hz)
N1			
2	174.3	8.299(s)	
3	62.8		
4	121.5	7.577(d)	7.7
5	127.9	7.330(t)	7.6
6	121.6	7.414(t)	7.6
7	123.3	7.456(d)	7.7
8	155.4		
9	141.2		
10	132.8	6.075(d)	9.0
11	113.7	5.932(d)	9.0
N12			
13			
14	35.2	2.700(d), 2H	7.4
15	117.3	4.908(t)	7.3
16	141.7		
17	40.5	1.907(t), 1.975(t)	7.3
18	27.2	1.959(m), 2H	
19	124.9	4.989(t)	6.4
20	132.3		
21	16.3	1.546(s)	
22	25.7	1.657(s)	
23	17.5	1.562(s)	

Table S2. Compound 3 NMR peak assignments

C,N	δ_{C} (ppm)	δ_{H} (ppm), multiplicity	J (Hz)
N1		8.11(s)	
2	138.7		
3	105.9		
4		7.620(m)	
5	122.0	7.161(m)	
6	120.3	7.154(m)	
7	110.4	7.289(m)	
8	150.6		
9	126.5		
10	126.4	5.830(d)	8.9
11	108.2	6.687(d)	8.6
N12			
13			
14	27.1	3.528(d), 2H	7.4
15	118.7	5.364(t)	7.5
16	140.1		
17	39.3	2.132(m), 2H	
18	26.1	2.151(m), 2H	
19	124.0	5.107(t)	6.8
20	131.9		
21	16.2	1.728(s)	
22	25.7	1.727(s)	
23	17.7	1.625(s)	

Table S3. Compound **6** NMR peak assignments

C,N	δ_c (ppm)	δ_h (ppm), multiplicity	J (Hz)
N1		7.865(s)	
2	120.8		
3	116.1		
4	119.0	7.576(d)	7.7
5	121.8	7.171(t)	7.2
6	119.0	7.087(t)	7.26
7	110.4	7.331(d)	8
8	136.4		
9	127.5		
10	24.0	3.450(d), 2H	7.4
11	123.2	5.445(t)	7.5
12	135.5		
13	39.3	2.046(m), 2.105(m)	
14	26.6	2.110(m), 2H	
15	124.3	5.107(t)	6.6
16	131.4		
17	16.0	1.740(s)	
18	25.5	1.587(s)	
19	17.6	1.663(s)	

Reference:

1. Hillwig, M. L., Zhu, Q. & Liu, X. Biosynthesis of ambiguine indole alkaloids in cyanobacterium *Fischerella ambigua*. *ACS Chem. Biol.* 2014, **9**, 372-377.
2. Delaglio, F.; Grzesiek, S.; Vuister, G. W.; Zhu, G.; Pfeifer, J.; Bax, A. NMRPipe: a multidimensional spectral processing system based on UNIX pipes. *Journal of biomolecular NMR* **1995**, *6*, (3), 277-93.
3. Johnson, B. A.; Blevins, R. A. NMR View: A computer program for the visualization and analysis of NMR data. *Journal of biomolecular NMR* **1994**, *4*, (5), 603-14.