

## Supporting Information

### Acetals from Primary Alcohols with the Use of Tridentate Proton Responsive Phosphinepyridonate Iridium Catalysts

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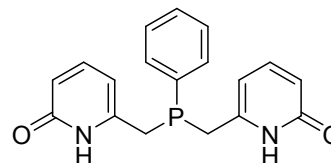
## A. General Experimental Methods

All reactions were carried out under an inert argon atmosphere with standard schlenk techniques. Solvents were degassed and stored in argon atmosphere before use. Reagents were used as received without further purification, unless otherwise stated.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra were recorded using a Bruker GPX 400 MHz NMR spectrometer. All  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR data are reported in  $\delta$  units, parts per million (ppm) and were calibrated relative to the reported residual solvent signals in the corresponding deuterated solvents. All  $^{13}\text{C}$ -NMR and  $^{31}\text{P}$ -NMR data are reported in ppm and were recorded with  $^1\text{H}$  decoupling. The following abbreviations or combinations thereof were used to explain the multiplicities: s = singlet, d = doublet, dd = doublet of doublet, dt = doublet of triplet, t = triplet, q = quartet, quint = quintet, br = broad, m = multiplet. High resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were recorded on a Bruker microTOF mass spectrometer using ESI-TOF (electrospray ionization-time of flight).

## B. Synthesis of the ligands:

### 6,6'-(phenylphosphinediyl)bis(methylene)dipyridin-2(1H)-one [P(NO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>] L2-H:

6-methylpyridin-2-ol **L1-H** (1.0 g, 9.16 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in 10.0 mL THF, cooled at 0 °C followed by the slow addition of *n*-BuLi (12 mL, 19.2 mmol, 2.1equiv.). This solution was stirred for an hour. Then it was cooled to -78°C and was added to another solution containing dichloro(phenyl)phosphine (0.6 mL, 4.58 mmol, 0.5 equiv.) in 2.5 mL of THF at -78 °C. This solution was stirred at -78 °C for one hour and was allowed to warm up naturally to room temperature and was stirred at room temperature for 16 hours. After the completion of reaction, solvent was evaporated followed by addition of 15 mL degassed water. This solution was acidified slowly with 5% HCl solution (degassed) till the pH was around 2. Off-white solid gradually appeared with acidification. This solution was allowed to stir for 5 minutes. Removal of the water layer yielded off-white solid which was further washed with degassed acetone (3×10 mL) to afford the desired product with 74 % yield (1.1g) as off-white powder.



**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>OD):** δ 7.56 (dt,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 1.6$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 7.43-7.34 (m, ArCH, 5H), 6.29 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 6.01 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 3.16 (s, CH<sub>2</sub>, 4H);

**<sup>31</sup>P {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>OD):** δ -14.17;

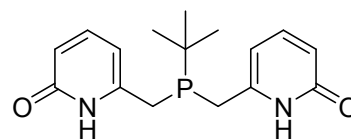
**<sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>OD):** δ 166.5, 147.2 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 7.2$  Hz), 143.7, 135.8 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 17.3$  Hz), 134.4 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 22.1$  Hz), 131.7, 130.0 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 7.7$  Hz), 117.6 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 1.7$  Hz), 108.7 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 6.8$  Hz), 33.8 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 21.6$  Hz).

**HRMS(ESI-TOF) :** calc'd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>PNa [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 347.0925; found 347.0928.

**6,6'-(tert-butylphosphinediyl)bis(methylene)dipyridin-2(1H)-one [tBuP(NO<sub>2</sub>H)<sub>2</sub>]**

**L3-H:**

6-methylpyridin-2-ol **L1-H** (1.0 g, 9.16 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in 10.0 mL THF, cooled at 0 °C followed by the slow addition of *n*-BuLi (12 mL, 19.2 mmol, 2.1equiv.). This solution was stirred for an hour. Then it was cooled to -78 °C and was added to another solution containing *tert*-butyldichlorophosphine (0.95 mL, 4.58 mmol, 0.5 equiv.) in 2.5 mL of THF at -78 °C. This solution was stirred at -78 °C for one hour and was allowed to warm up naturally to room temperature and was stirred at room temperature for 16 hours. After the completion of reaction, solvent was evaporated followed by addition of 10 mL degassed water. This solution was acidified slowly with 5% HCl solution (degassed) till the pH was around 2. This solution was extracted with degassed DCM (3×5 mL). The collected organic layer was dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Evaporation of the solvent yielded a solid which was further washed by 1:1 mixture of diethyl ether and acetone at -30 °C to get the desired product with 65% yield (900mg) as yellowish white powder.



**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):** δ 13.41 (br, NH, 2H), 7.17 (t,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 6.24 (d,  $J = 9.0$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 6.17 (d,  $J = 6.9$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 3.06 (dd,  $J_1 = 14.7$  Hz,  $J_2 = 4.0$  Hz, 2H), 2.87 (dd,  $J_1 = 14.8$  Hz,  $J_2 = 3.9$  Hz, 2H), 1.20 (d,  $J = 12.0$  Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>, 9H);

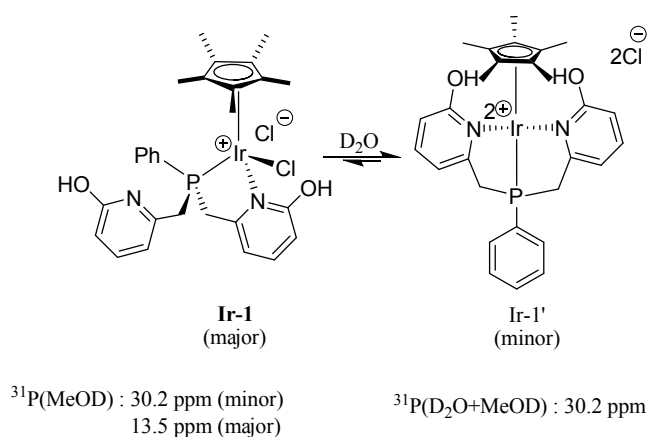
**<sup>31</sup>P {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (162 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):** δ 6.5;

**<sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):** δ 165.7, 147.4 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 8.7$  Hz), 141.4, 116.3, 106.7 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 9.8$  Hz), 28.9 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 13.1$  Hz), 27.2 (d,  $J_{P-C} = 13.5$  Hz), 24.8.

### C. 1. Synthesis of the complex Ir-1

The ligand **L2-H** (81 mg, 0.25 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in well degassed methanol (5 mL) under argon atmosphere at room temperature. After stirring the solution for 5 minutes,  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$  (100 mg, 0.13 mmol, 0.5 equiv.) was added to the solution. The solution became clear yellow after 16 h of stirring. Disappearance of the peak at -14 ppm in the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR indicated the completion of the reaction. Then solvent was evaporated using vacuum. The solid was washed with degassed diethylether ( $3 \times 0.5$  mL) to afford the desired Ir-complex with 95% yield (163 mg) as yellow solid. The complex was crystallized from methanol and diethyl ether to obtain crystals suitable for x-ray diffraction studies.

$^1\text{H}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR analyses in  $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$  showed the presence of two species in dynamic equilibrium. Use of  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$  as NMR solvent shifted the equilibrium completely towards a single species. VT NMR analyses (25 °C to 60 °C) conducted in  $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$  demonstrated that the Ir-1/Ir-1' remained unaltered.



(Dynamic behaviour of well-defined Ir-complex)

**$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ):** (mixture where the half open form is major)  $\delta$  8.03-7.98 (m, 2H, *minor*), 7.83-7.79 (m, 3H, *minor*), 7.72-7.70 (m, 5H, *major*), 7.70 (t,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H, *minor*), 7.31 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 6.8$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 7.15 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 2H, *minor*), 7.10 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 6.86 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 6.78 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H, *minor*), 6.23 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 0.8$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 6.04 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.8$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 4.64 (d,  $J = 11.6$  Hz, 1H, *minor*), 4.59 (d,  $J = 12.0$  Hz, 1H, *minor*), 4.36 (d,  $J = 14.4$  Hz, 1H, *minor*), 4.31 (d,  $J = 14.8$  Hz, 1H, *minor*), 4.20-4.10 (m, 2H, *major*), 3.83 (dd,  $J_1 = 16.0$  Hz,  $J_2$

= 10.8 Hz, 1H, *major*), 3.58 (dd,  $J_1 = 12.4$  Hz,  $J_2 = 12.0$  Hz, 1H, *major*), 1.61 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 15H, *minor*), 1.49 (d,  $J = 2.5$  Hz, 15H, *major*);

$^{31}\text{P}$  { $^1\text{H}$ } NMR (162 MHz,  $\text{CD}_3\text{OD}$ ): (mixture where the half open form is major)  $\delta$  30.2 (*minor*), 13.5 (*major*);

$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ): (closed form)  $\delta$  7.96-7.90 (m, 2H), 7.84-7.77 (m, 3H), 7.68 (t,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 2H), 7.14 (d,  $J = 7.4$  Hz, 2H), 6.80 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 2H), 4.55 (d,  $J = 11.5$  Hz, 1H), 4.50 (d,  $J = 11.5$  Hz, 1H), 4.31 (d,  $J = 14.4$  Hz, 1H), 4.26 (d,  $J = 14.4$  Hz, 1H), 1.56 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 15H);

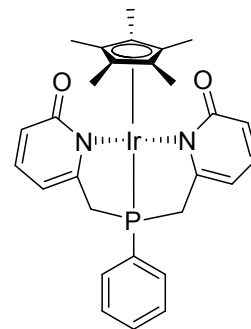
$^{31}\text{P}$  { $^1\text{H}$ } NMR (162 MHz,  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ): (closed form)  $\delta$  30.2;

$^{13}\text{C}$  { $^1\text{H}$ } NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{D}_2\text{O}$ ):  $\delta$  (closed form) 164.6 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 2.5$  Hz, *quat-C*), 156.4 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 2.8$  Hz, *quat-C*), 140.4 (CH), 131.8 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 3.5$  Hz, CH), 130.5 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 9.7$  Hz, CH), 128.4 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 12.1$  Hz, CH), 120.3 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 66.1$  Hz, *quat-C*), 112.7 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 11.5$  Hz, CH), 109.5 (CH), 94.6 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 2.7$  Hz, *quat-C*), 39.1 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 38.0$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_2$ ), 7.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ );

HRMS(ESI-TOF): calc'd for  $\text{IrC}_{28}\text{H}_{32}\text{ClN}_2\text{O}_2\text{P}$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$  687.15136; found 687.1506.

## C. 2. Synthesis of the complex Ir-2

The ligand **L2-H** (40 mg, 0.12 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was dissolved in well degassed water (2 mL) under argon atmosphere at room temperature. After stirring the solution for 5 minutes, KO<sup>t</sup>Bu (28 mg, 0.25 mmol, 2.1 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred for 30 minutes. After  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$  (45 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.5 equiv.) was added to the solution. The reaction mixture was allowed to stir at room temperature for 16h. Disappearance of the peak at -14 ppm in the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR indicated the completion of the reaction. Then solvent was evaporated using vacuum. The solid was dissolved in degassed DCM and was cannulated to remove KCl. The collected solution was dried under vacuum to afford the desired Ir-complex with 75% yield (60 mg) as yellow solid.



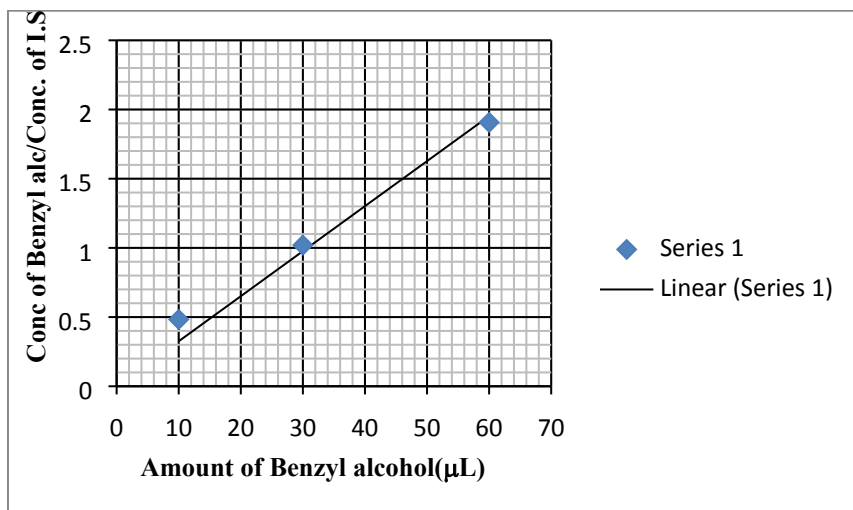
$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.65-7.60 (m, 5H), 6.93-6.88 (m, 2H), 5.99 (t,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 4H), 3.89 (dd,  $J_1 = 16.7$  Hz,  $J_2 = 11.2$  Hz, 2H), 3.61 (dd,  $J_1 = 16.8$  Hz,  $J_2 = 13.7$  Hz, 2H), 1.64 (d,  $J = 2.7$  Hz, 15H);

$^{31}\text{P}$  { $^1\text{H}$ } NMR (162 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  27.0;

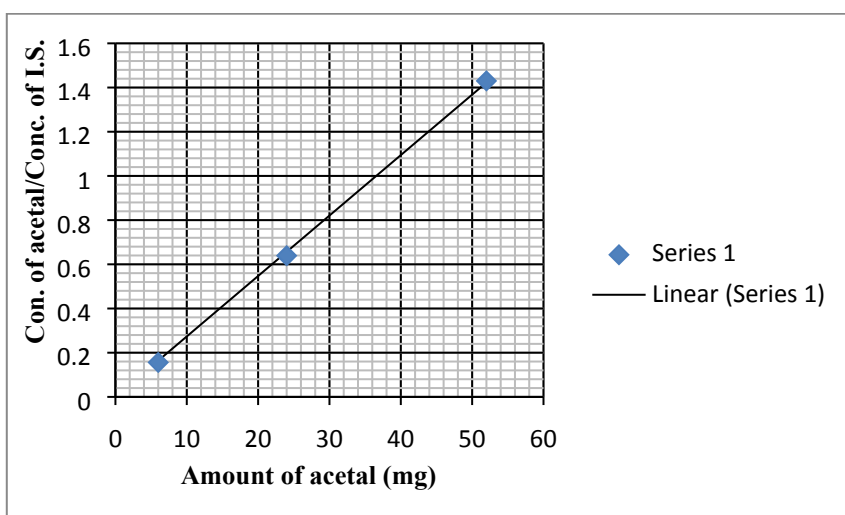
$^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  154.11 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 2.8$  Hz, *quat-C*), 136.3 (CH), 132.6 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 3.3$  Hz, CH), 131.3 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 9.2$  Hz, CH), 130.0 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 11.2$  Hz, CH), 115.2 (br, CH), 105.4 (CH), 102.7 (br, CH), 94.8 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 3.1$  Hz, *quat-C*), 41.9 (d,  $J_{\text{P-C}} = 37.7$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_2$ ), 10.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ );

## D. Optimization of reaction conditions

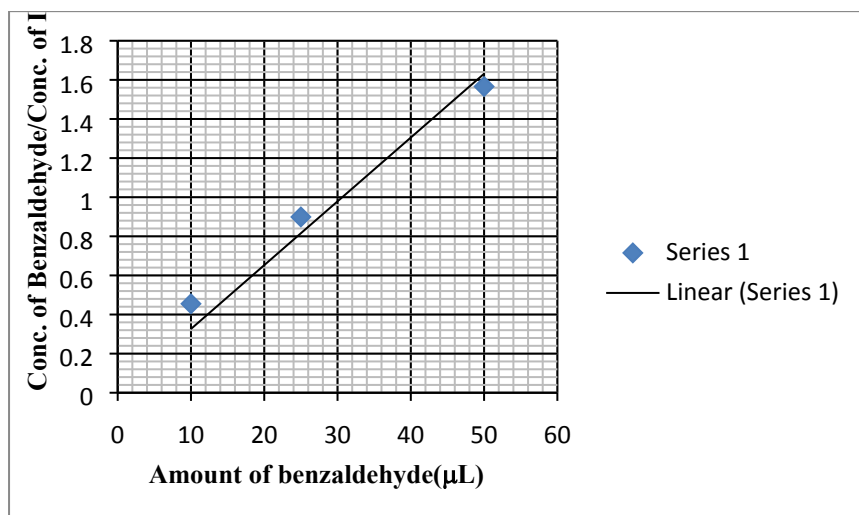
### 1) Internal Standard Studies



Internal Standard graph for calculation of conversion of benzyl alcohol



Internal Standard graph for calculation of yield of acetal from benzyl alcohol



**E. 1.**

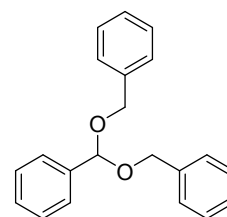
Internal Standard graph for calculation of yield of benzaldehyde

## General procedure for the direct synthesis of acetals from primary alcohols

To a stirred solution of ligand **L2-H** (0.01 mmol, 1 mol%) in dry and degassed THF (0.5 mL),  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$  (0.005 mmol, 0.5 mol%) was added. After stirring this solution for 5 min, the appropriate alcohol (1.0 mmol) was added. This reaction mixture was stirred in a preheated oil bath at required temperature. The reaction was monitored by GC analysis. After reaction was complete (or further improvement in the product peak was not observed), the reaction was stopped. Then the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and solvent was evaporated. The crude reaction mixture was purified by column chromatography using silica gel columns using petroleum ether and ethyl acetate mixture as eluent to get the desired acetals.

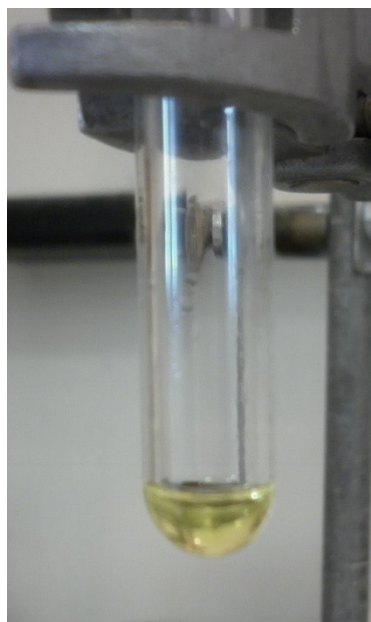
## E. 2. Analytical data

**(phenylmethylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)dibenzene** : Prepared by stirring benzyl alcohol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 170 °C for 16h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 94% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.64-7.62 (m, ArCH, 2H), 7.48-7.33 (m, ArCH, 13H), 5.82 (s, OCHO, 1H),



4.67 (s, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 139.0 (*quat-C*), 138.7 (*quat-C*), 128.9 (ArCH), 128.8 (ArCH), 128.7 (ArCH), 128.2 (ArCH), 128.0 (ArCH), 127.3 (ArCH), 101.2 (OCHO), 67.7 (OCH<sub>2</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>20</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 327.1361; found 327.1359 (1 ppm).

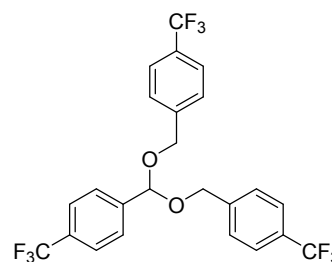
Below a picture of the resulting mixture after reaction.



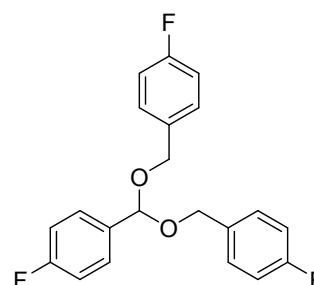
**4,4'-((4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)methylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis((trifluoromethyl)benzene)** :

Prepared by stirring (4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)methanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 68% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ

7.71 (dd (AB type), *J*<sub>1</sub> = 14.6 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 8.6 Hz, ArCH, 4H), 7.62 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, ArCH, 4H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, ArCH, 4H), 5.87 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.68 (dd (AB type), *J*<sub>1</sub> = 15.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 13.2 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 142.5 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 1.1 Hz, *quat-C*), 142.3 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 1.2 Hz, *quat-C*), 131.2 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 33.2 Hz, ArC), 130.2 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 32.0 Hz, ArC), 128.1 (ArCH), 127.8 (ArCH), 125.8-125.7 (m, CF<sub>3</sub> and ArCH), 100.7 (OCHO), 67.0 (OCH<sub>2</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>17</sub>F<sub>9</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 531.0977; found 531.0982.



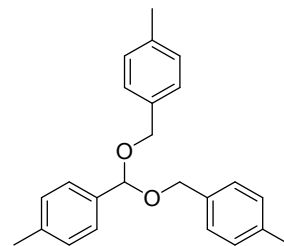
**4,4'-((4-fluorophenyl)methylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(fluorobenzene)**



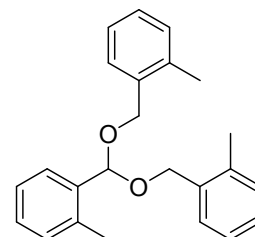


**nzene):** Prepared by stirring (4-fluorophenyl)methanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 170 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 61% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 7.54-7.50 (m, ArCH, 2H), 7.34-7.30 (m, ArCH, 4H), 7.11-7.02 (m, ArCH, 6H), 5.71 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.54 (s, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 163.3 (d, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 244.7 Hz, ArC), 162.7 (d, <sup>1</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 243.4 Hz, ArC), 134.8 (d, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.1 Hz, ArC), 134.4 (d, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.2 Hz, ArC), 130.0 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.1 Hz, ArCH), 129.1 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.2 Hz, ArCH), 115.5 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.3 Hz, ArCH), 115.5 (d, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.5 Hz, ArCH), 100.5 (OCHO), 67.0 (OCH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz): δ -114.3, -115.6; HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>F<sub>3</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 381.1078; found 381.1075 (1 ppm).

**4,4'-(p-tolylmethylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(methylbenzene) :** Prepared by stirring *p*-tolylmethanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 60% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 7.46 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, ArCH, 2H), 7.28-7.18 (m, ArCH, 10H), 5.72 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.58 (s, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H), 2.39 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 3H), 2.38 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 138.7 (*quat-C*), 137.7 (*quat-C*), 136.2 (*quat-C*), 135.7 (*quat-C*), 129.4 (ArCH), 129.3 (ArCH), 128.3 (ArCH), 127.2 (ArCH), 101.0 (OCHO), 67.5 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 21.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 369.1830; found 369.1828 (1 ppm).

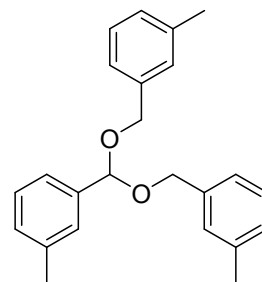


**2,2'-(o-tolylmethylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(methylbenzene) :** Prepared by stirring *o*-tolylmethanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 63% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 7.68-7.66 (m, ArCH, 1H), 7.32-7.14 (m, ArCH, 11H), 5.83 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.58 (s, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H), 2.36 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 3H), 2.30 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 137.1 (*quat-C*), 136.9 (*quat-C*), 136.6 (*quat-C*), 136.6 (*quat-C*), 130.9 (ArCH), 130.4 (ArCH), 129.0 (ArCH), 128.8 (ArCH), 128.1 (ArCH), 127.2 (ArCH), 126.1 (ArCH), 125.8 (ArCH), 100.0 (OCHO), 66.4

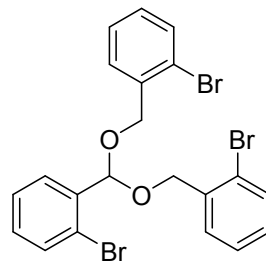


(OCH<sub>2</sub>), 19.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 19.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 369.1825; found 369.1825.

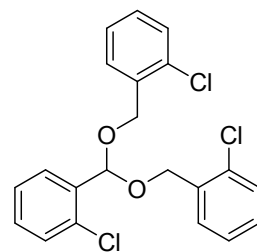
**3,3'-(*m*-tolylmethylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(methylbenzene)** : Prepared by stirring *m*-tolylmethanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 68% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 7.36-7.10 (m, ArCH, 12H), 5.67 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.56 (s, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H), 2.38 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 3H), 2.35 (s, ArCH<sub>3</sub>, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 138.9 (*quat-C*), 138.6 (*quat-C*), 138.5 (*quat-C*), 138.4 (*quat-C*), 129.6 (ArCH), 129.0 (ArCH), 128.6 (ArCH), 128.6 (ArCH), 128.5 (ArCH), 127.8 (ArCH), 125.3 (ArCH), 124.3 (ArCH), 101.3 (OCHO), 67.8 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 21.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 369.1830; found 369.1833 (1 ppm).



**2,2'-((2-bromophenyl)methylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(bromobenzene)** : Prepared by stirring (2-bromophenyl)methanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 61% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 7.82 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 1.6 Hz, ArCH, 1H), 7.60 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 0.8 Hz, ArCH, 1H), 7.54 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, ArCH, 4H), 7.40 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, ArCH, 1H), 7.33 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, ArCH, 2H), 7.26 (dt, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 1.6 Hz, ArCH, 1H), 7.17 (dt, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 1.2 Hz, ArCH, 2H), 6.06 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.75 (dd (AB type), *J*<sub>1</sub> = 16.0 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 12.4 Hz, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 4H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 137.6 (*quat-C*), 137.2 (*quat-C*), 133.4 (ArCH), 132.8 (ArCH), 130.8 (ArCH), 130.0 (ArCH), 129.5 (ArCH), 129.1 (ArCH), 127.9 (ArCH), 127.8 (ArCH), 123.4 (*quat-C*), 123.2 (*quat-C*), 101.6 (OCHO), 68.4 (OCH<sub>2</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>Br<sub>3</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 560.8676; found 560.8673 (1 ppm).

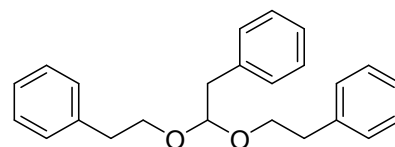


**2,2'-((2-chlorophenyl)methylene)bis(oxy)bis(methylene)bis(chlorobenzene)** : Prepared by stirring (2-chlorophenyl)methanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by



silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 58% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.83 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.4$  Hz, ArCH, 1H), 7.53 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 1.8$  Hz, ArCH, 2H), 7.42-7.32 (m, ArCH, 5H), 7.30-7.22 (m, ArCH, 4H), 6.11 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.77 (dd (AB type),  $J_1 = 14.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 13.6$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2$ , 4H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  136.0 (*quat-C*), 135.8 (*quat-C*), 133.7 (*quat-C*), 133.4 (*quat-C*), 130.5 (ArCH), 130.1 (ArCH), 129.8 (ArCH), 129.6 (ArCH), 129.3 (ArCH), 128.8 (ArCH), 127.3 (ArCH), 127.2 (ArCH), 99.6 (OCHO), 66.1 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for  $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{17}\text{Cl}_3\text{O}_2\text{Na}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$  429.0192; found 429.0188 (1 ppm).

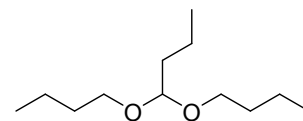
**(2,2'-(2-phenylethane-1,1-diyl)bis(oxy)bis(ethane-2,1-diyl)dibenzene** : Prepared by stirring 2-phenylethanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 170 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 19 : 1) afforded



the product as a colourless oil with 69% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.29-7.16 (m, ArH, 15H), 4.64 (t,  $J = 5.6$  Hz, OCHO, 1H), 3.78-3.72 (m,  $\text{OCH}_2$ , 2H), 3.59-3.53 (m,  $\text{OCH}_2$ , 2H), 2.88 (d,  $J = 5.6$  Hz,  $\text{CHCH}_2$ , 2H), 2.80 (t,  $J = 5.6$  Hz,  $\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2$ , 4H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  139.7 (*quat-C*), 137.7 (*quat-C*), 130.0 (ArCH), 129.4 (ArCH), 128.6 (ArCH), 128.5 (ArCH), 126.6 (ArCH), 126.5 (ArCH), 104.3 (OCHO), 67.4 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 40.9 ( $\text{CHCH}_2$ ), 36.7 ( $\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2$ ); HRMS (ESI-TOF) for  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_2\text{Na}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : calcd : 369.1825. Found : 369.1828.

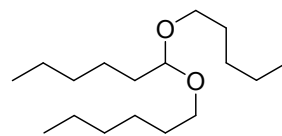
**1,1-dibutoxybutane** : Prepared by stirring 1-butanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 130 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere.

Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pentane : diethyl ether = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil

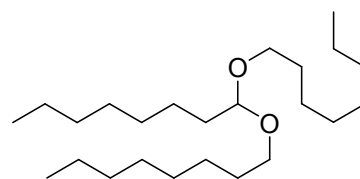


with 74% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  4.42 (t,  $J = 5.6$  Hz, OCHO, 1H), 3.57-3.52 (m,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 2H), 3.39-3.35 (m,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 2H), 1.55-1.48 (m,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 6H), 1.40-1.32 (m,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 6H), 0.93-0.89 (two overlapped triplets,  $J_1 = 7.2$  Hz,  $J_2 = 7.2$  Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ , 9H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  103.4 (OCHO), 66.7 ( $\text{OCH}_2$ ), 36.2 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 32.5 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 19.9 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 18.5 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 14.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 14.1 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ); HRMS (ESI) for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_2\text{Na}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : calcd : 225.1825. Found : 225.1823.

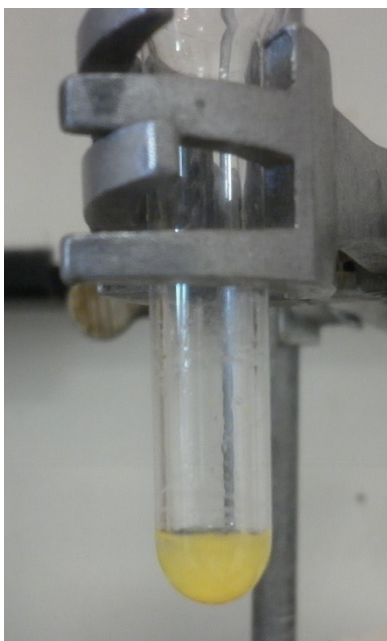
**1,1-bis(hexyloxy)hexane** : Prepared by stirring 1-hexanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 150 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pentane : diethyl ether = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 76% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 4.41 (t, *J* = 5.6 Hz, OCHO, 1H), 3.56-3.51 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 3.40-3.35 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 1.60-1.50 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 6H), 1.38-1.24 (br, CH<sub>2</sub>, 18H), 0.89 (t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>, 9H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 103.7 (OCHO), 66.0 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 34.0 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 30.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 26.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 24.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 23.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 23.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 14.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 14.2 (CH<sub>3</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>38</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 309.2770; found 309.2770.



**1,1-bis(octyloxy)octane** : Prepared by stirring 1-octanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in THF at 170 °C for 24h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pentane : diethyl ether = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless oil with 71% yield. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 4.41 (t, *J* = 5.6 Hz, OCHO, 1H), 3.56-3.51 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 3.40-3.34 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 1.58-1.50 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 6H), 1.28 (br, CH<sub>2</sub>, 30H), 0.89 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, CH<sub>3</sub>, 9H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>): δ 103.7 (OCHO), 66.0 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 34.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 32.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 30.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 29.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 26.8 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 25.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 23.1 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 14.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>); HRMS (ESI-TOF) : calc'd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>50</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Na [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 393.3703; found 393.3704.



Below a picture of the reaction after completion

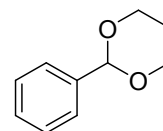


## F. Procedure for the synthesis of cross acetal from benzyl alcohol and propanediol

To a stirred solution of ligand P(NO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (0.01 mmol, 1 mol%) in dry and degassed THF (0.5 mL), [Cp\*IrCl<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (0.005 mmol, 0.5 mol%) was added. After stirring this solution for 5 min, benzyl alcohol (1.0 mmol) and propanediol (1.5 mmol) were added. This reaction mixture was stirred in a preheated oil bath at 170 °C for 24 hours under argon atmosphere. The reaction was monitored by GC analysis. The reaction was stopped when no further

improvement in the product peak was observed. After the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and solvent was evaporated. The crude reaction mixture was purified by silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether and ethyl acetate mixture (9 : 1) as eluent to get the desired acetal as a colourless oil with 30% yield.

**2-phenyl-1,3-dioxane** :  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.46-7.43 (m, ArH, 2H), 7.38-7.31 (m, ArH, 3H), 5.48 (s, OCHO, 1H), 4.25-4.20 (m, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 4.01-3.94 (m, OCH<sub>2</sub>, 2H), 2.23-2.11 (m, CH<sub>2</sub>, 1H), 1.44 (doublet of septet,  $J_1 = 13.6$  Hz,  $J_2 = 1.6$  Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  139.6 (*quat-C*), 129.0 (ArCH), 128.5 (ArCH), 126.4 (ArCH), 101.9 (OCHO), 67.8 (OCH<sub>2</sub>), 26.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>); HRMS (ESI) for  $\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_2\text{Na}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : calcd : 187.0730. Found : 187.0730.

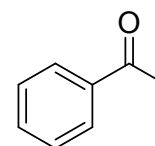


## G. 1. General procedure for the dehydrogenation of secondary alcohols

To a stirred solution of ligand  $\text{P}(\text{NOH})_2$  (0.01 mmol, 1 mol%) in dry and degassed toluene (0.5 mL),  $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$  (0.005 mmol, 0.5 mol%) was added. After stirring this solution for 5 min, the appropriate secondary alcohol (1.0 mmol) was added. This reaction mixture was stirred in a preheated oil bath at 170 °C. The reaction was monitored by GC analysis. After reaction was complete (or further improvement in the product peak was not observed), the reaction was stopped. Then the reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and solvent was evaporated. The crude reaction mixture was purified by column chromatography using silica gel columns using petroleum ether and ethyl acetate mixture as eluent to get the desired ketones.

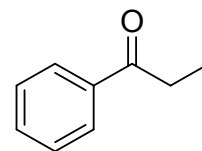
## G. 2. Analytical data

**Acetophenone** : Obtained by stirring 1-phenylethanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in toluene at 170 °C for 16h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pentane : diethyl ether = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless liquid with 98% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.98-7.96 (m, ArH, 2H), 7.59-7.55 (m, ArH, 1H), 7.49-7.45 (m, ArH,

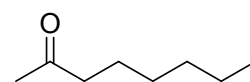


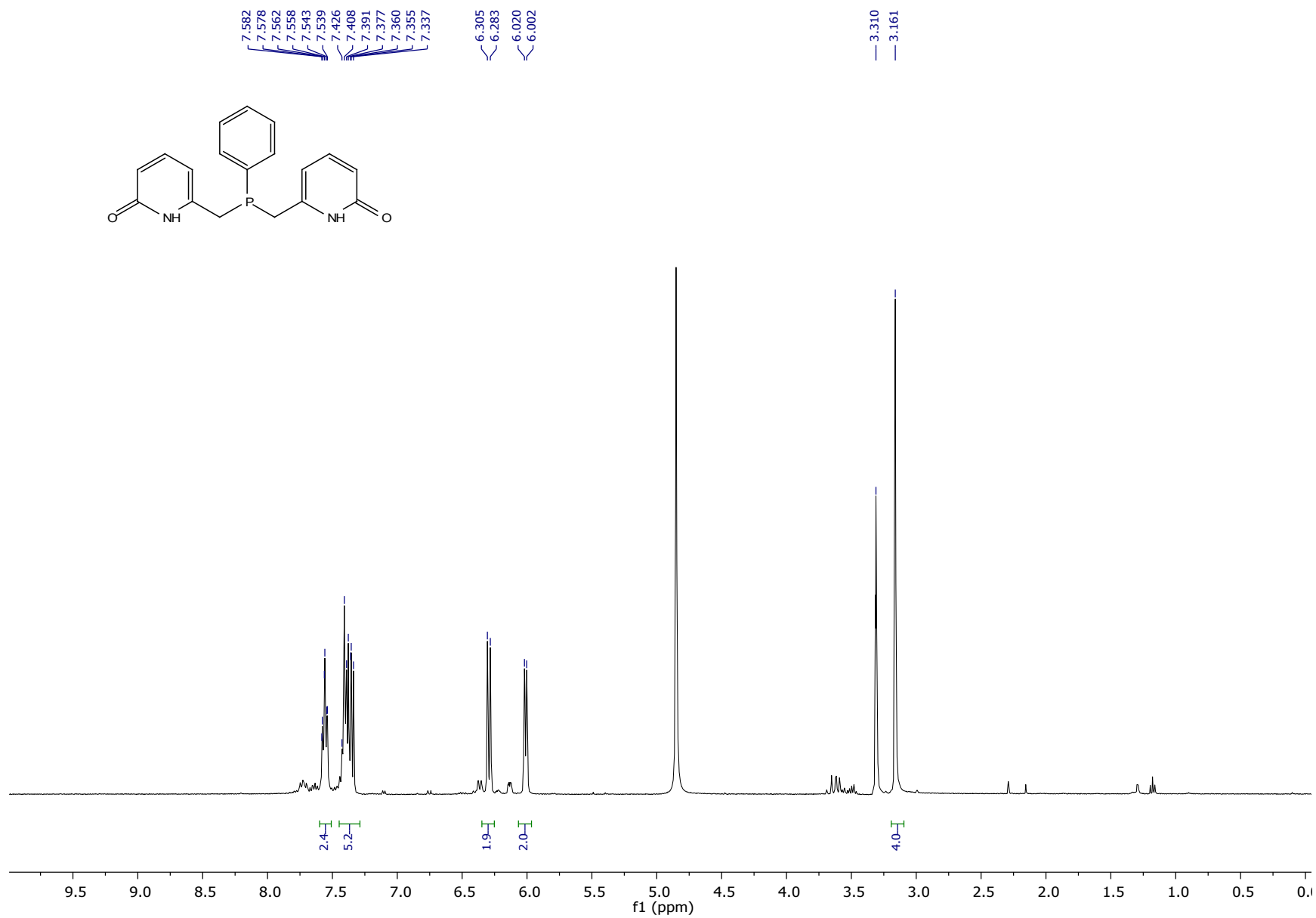
2H), 2.61 (s,  $\text{CH}_3$ , 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  198.2 (*quat-C*), 137.1 (*quat-C*), 133.1 (ArCH), 128.6 (ArCH), 128.3 (ArCH), 26.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ).

**Propiophenone** : Obtained by stirring 1-phenylpropan-1-ol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in toluene at 170 °C for 18h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pentane : diethyl ether = 9 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless liquid with 60% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  7.97-7.95 (m, ArH, 2H), 7.59-7.55 (m, ArH, 1H), 7.49-7.45 (m, ArH, 2H), 3.00(q,  $J$  = 7.2 Hz,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 2H), 1.20 (t,  $J$  = 7.2 Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ , 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  200.8 (*quat-C*), 137.5 (*quat-C*), 133.1 (ArCH), 128.9 (ArCH), 128.2 (ArCH), 32.1 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 8.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ).



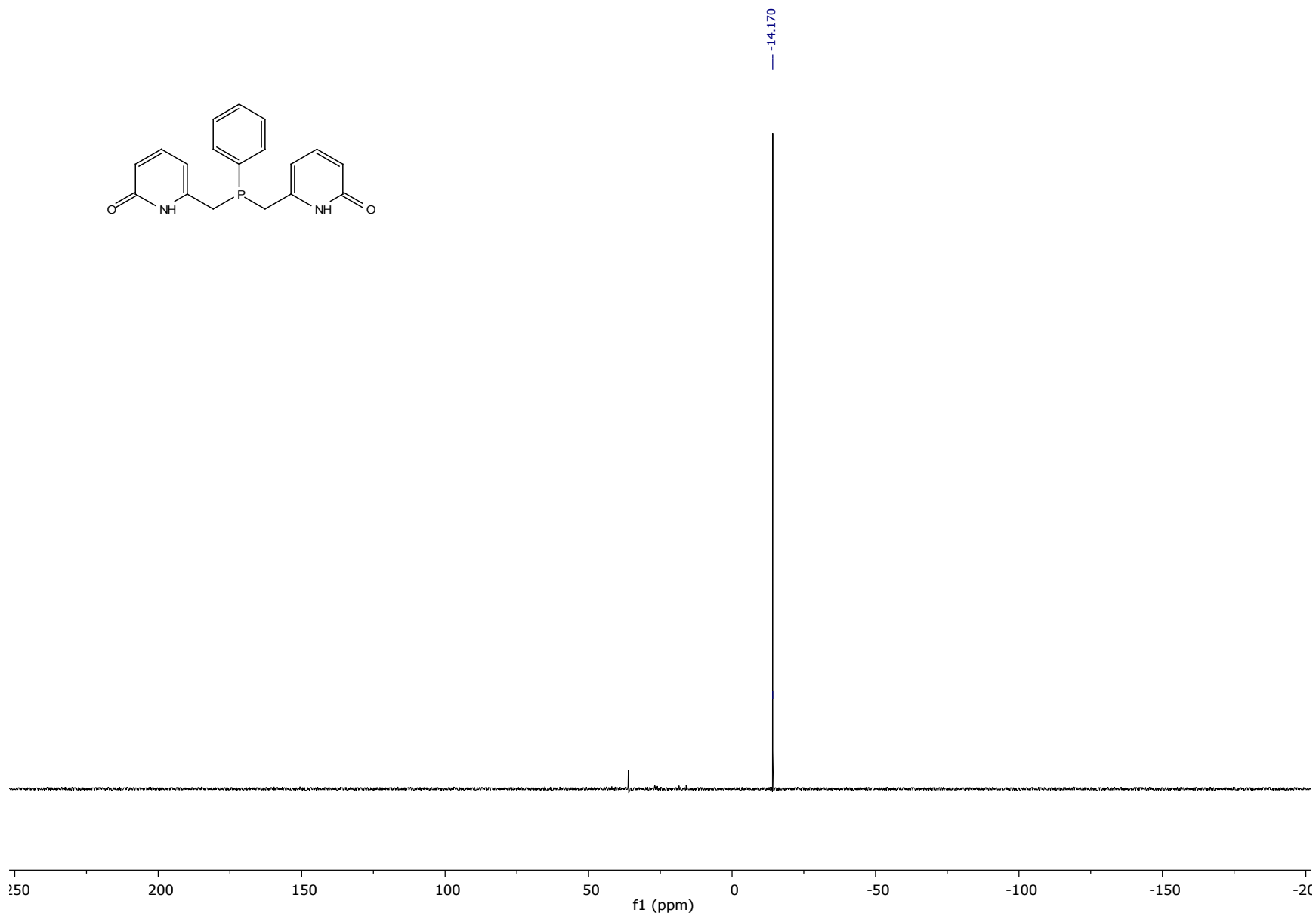
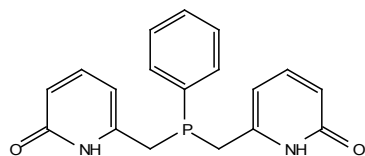
**Octan-2-one** : Obtained by stirring 2-octanol (1.0 mmol) with the precatalyst and ligand in toluene at 170 °C for 18h under argon atmosphere. Purification by silica gel column chromatography (pet. ether : EtOAc = 19 : 1) afforded the product as a colourless liquid with 75% yield.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  2.41 (t,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 2H), 2.12 (s,  $\text{CH}_3$ , 3H), 1.58-1.52 (m,  $\text{CH}_2$ , 2H), 1.30-1.27 (m,  $3\text{CH}_2$ , 6H), 0.87 (t,  $J$  = 6.8 Hz,  $\text{CH}_3$ , 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  209.5 (*quat-C*), 44.0 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 31.7 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 30.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 29.0 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 24.0 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 22.6 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 14.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ).



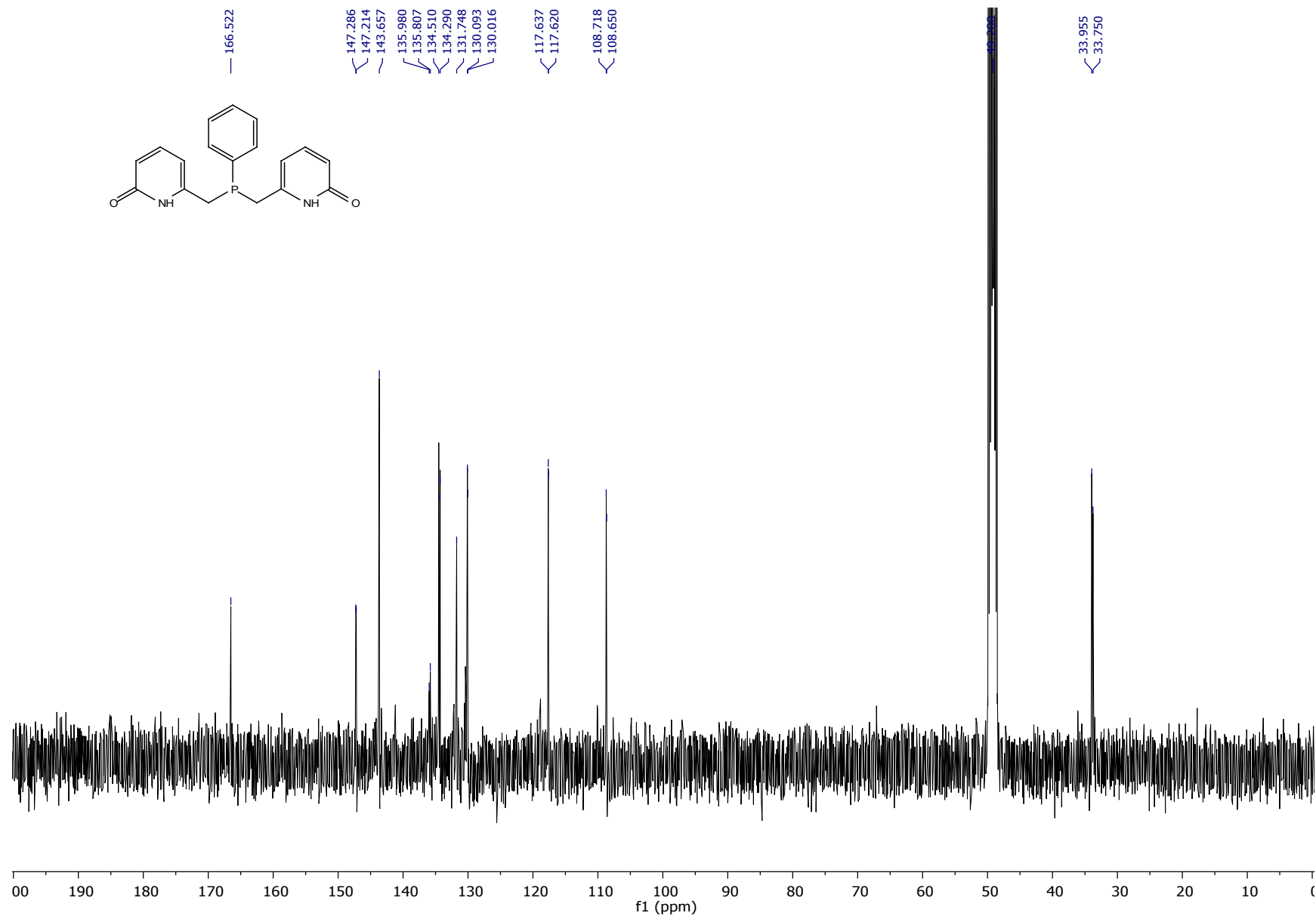
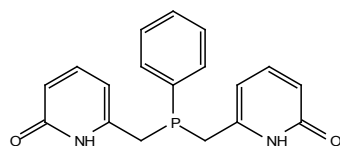


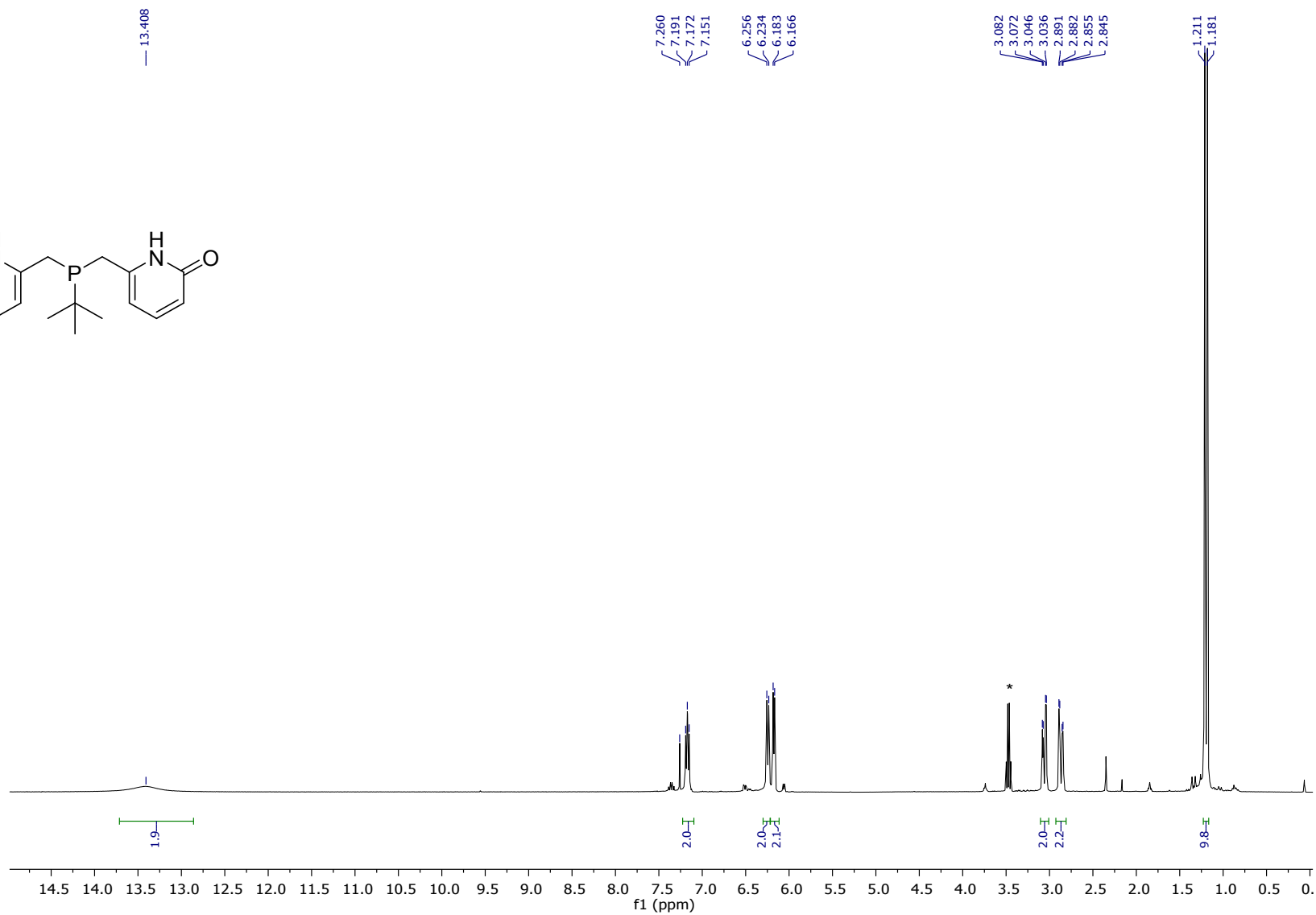
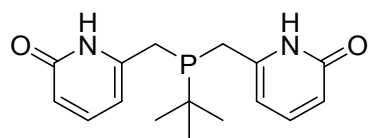
S15



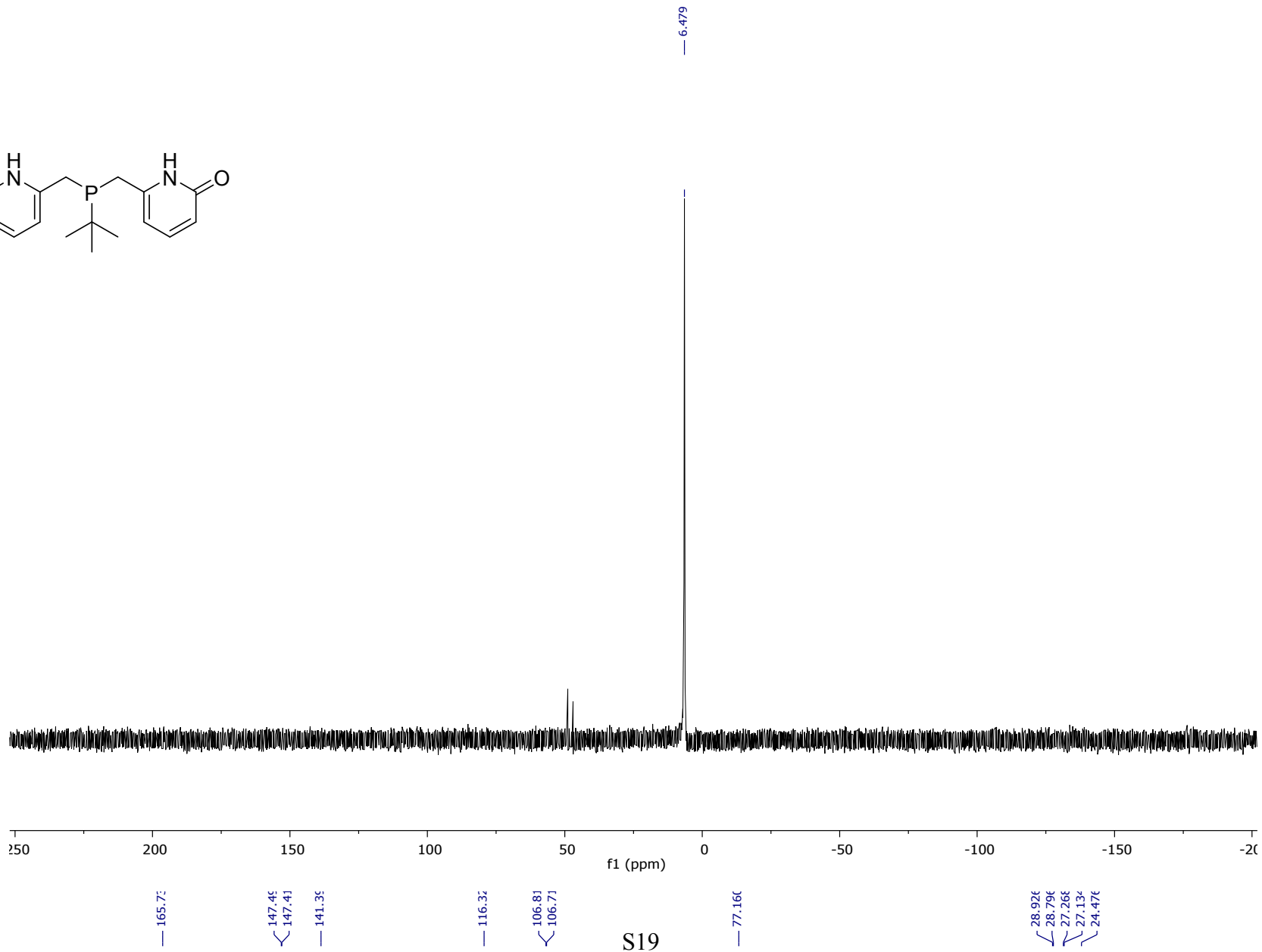
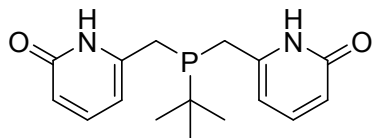


S16

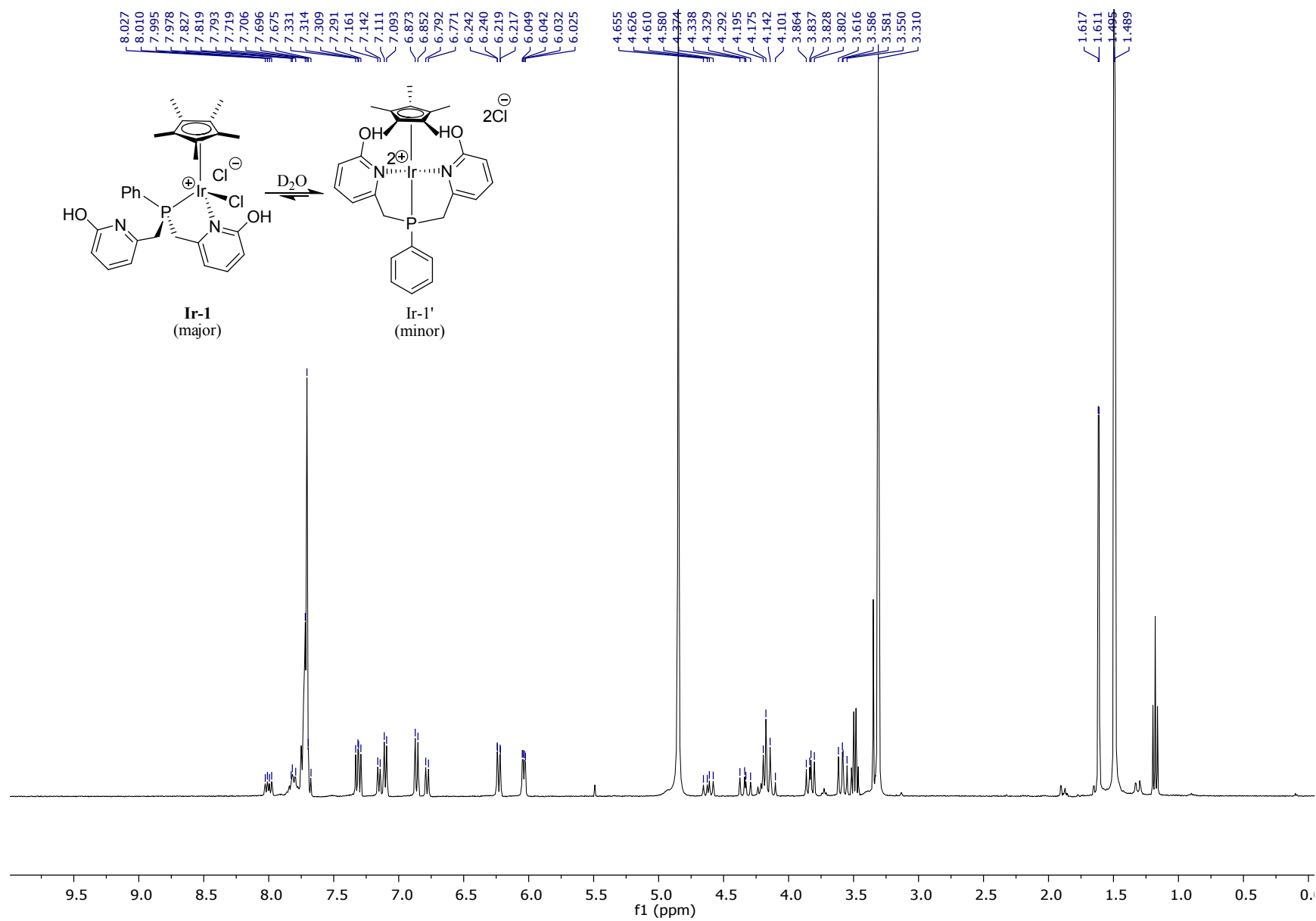


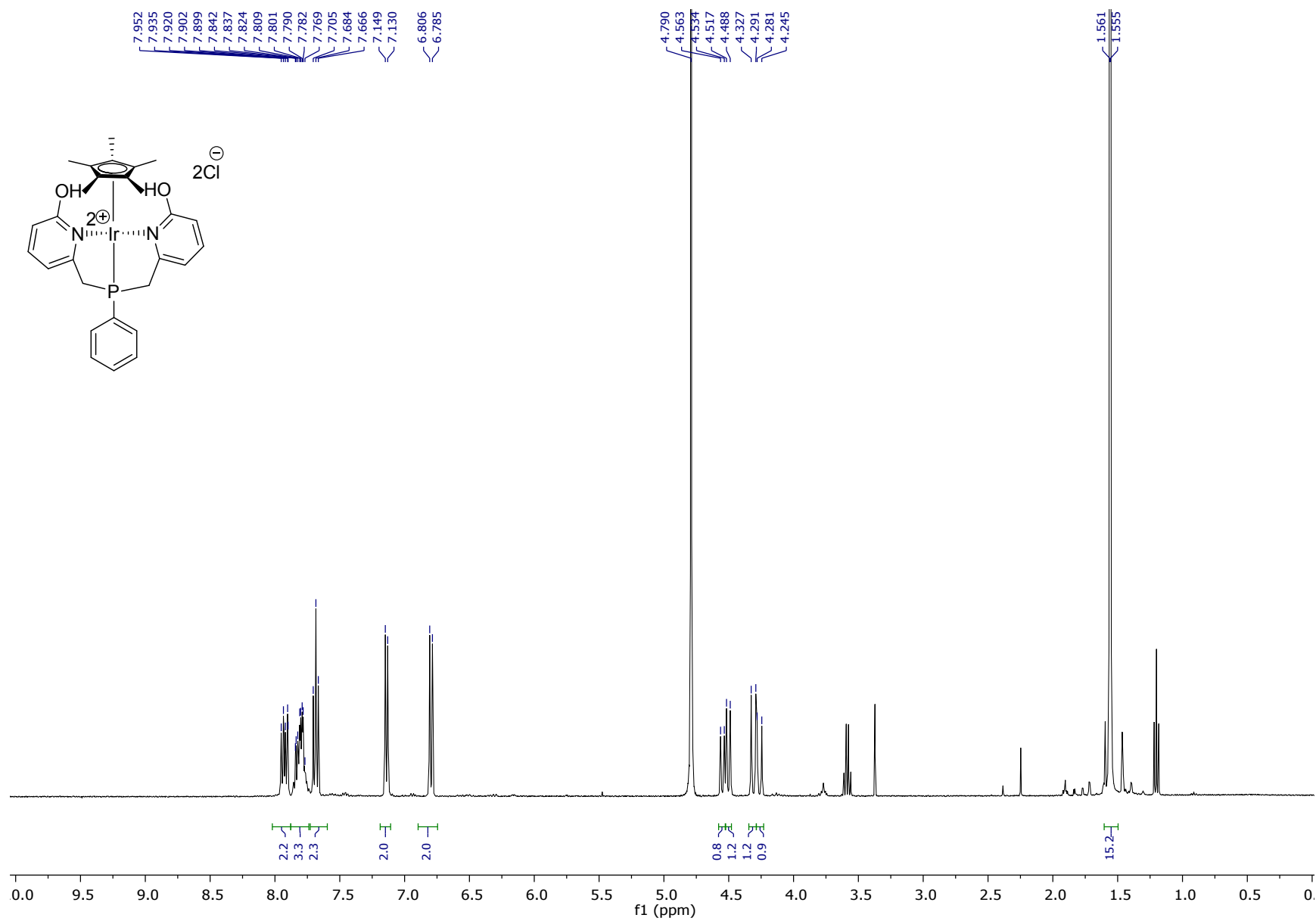


\* - peak from Diethylether

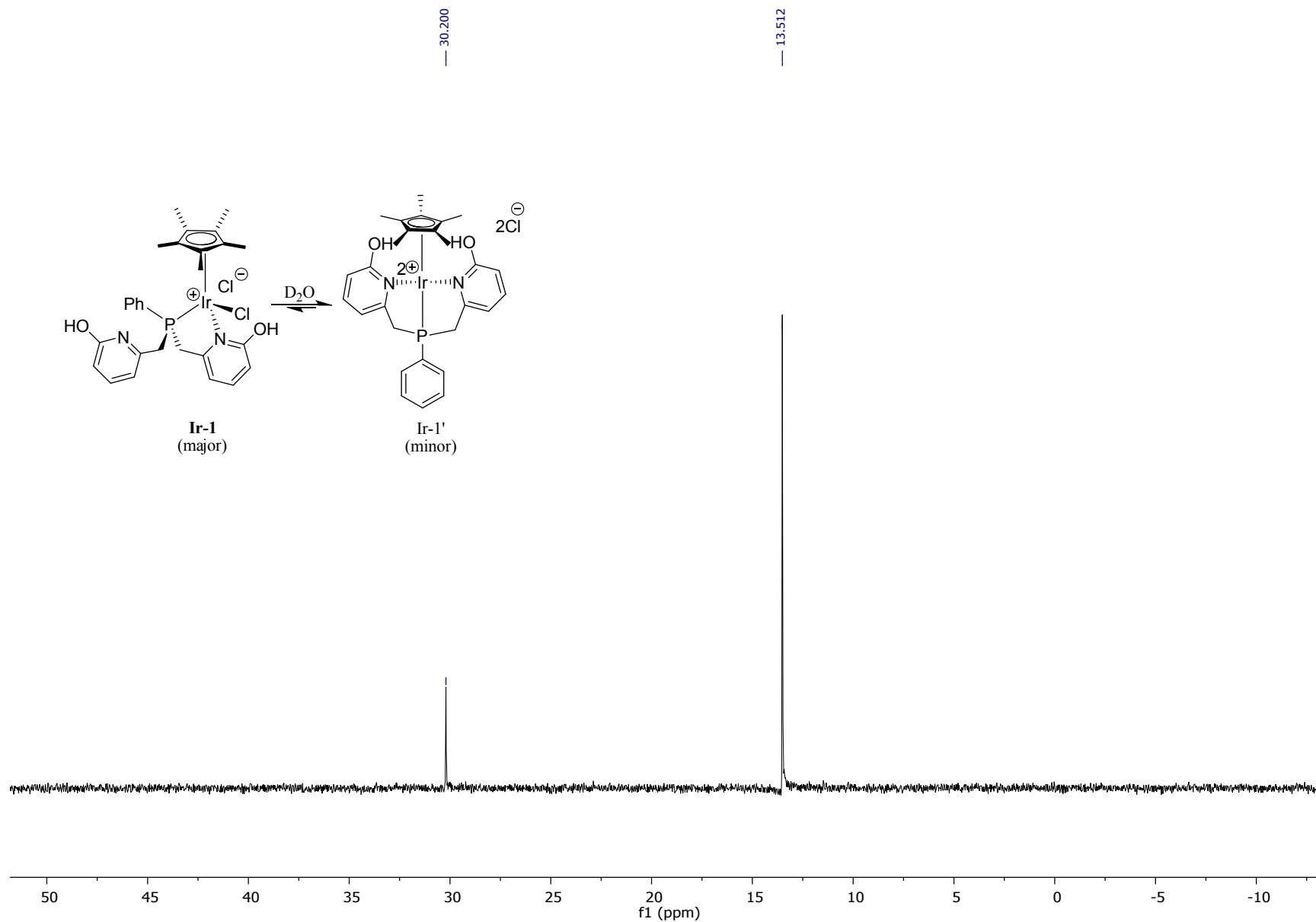
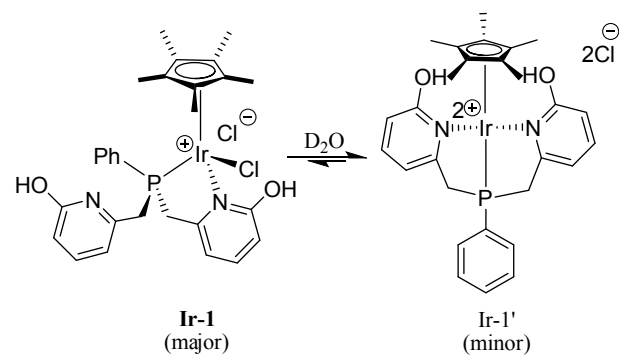


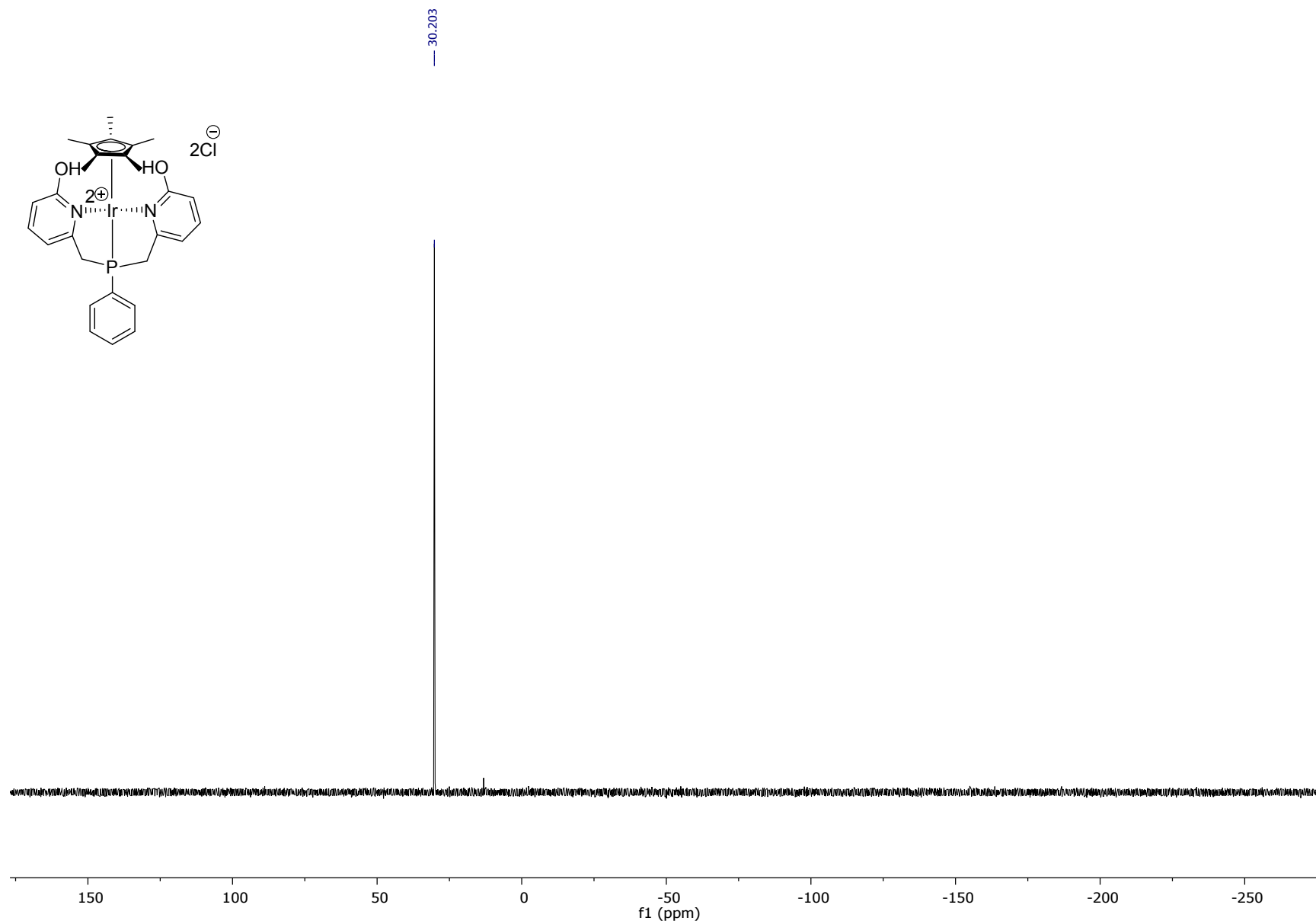
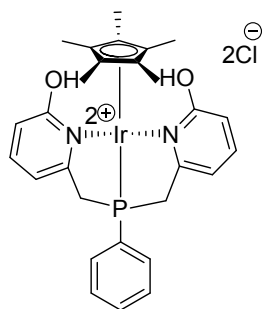
S19



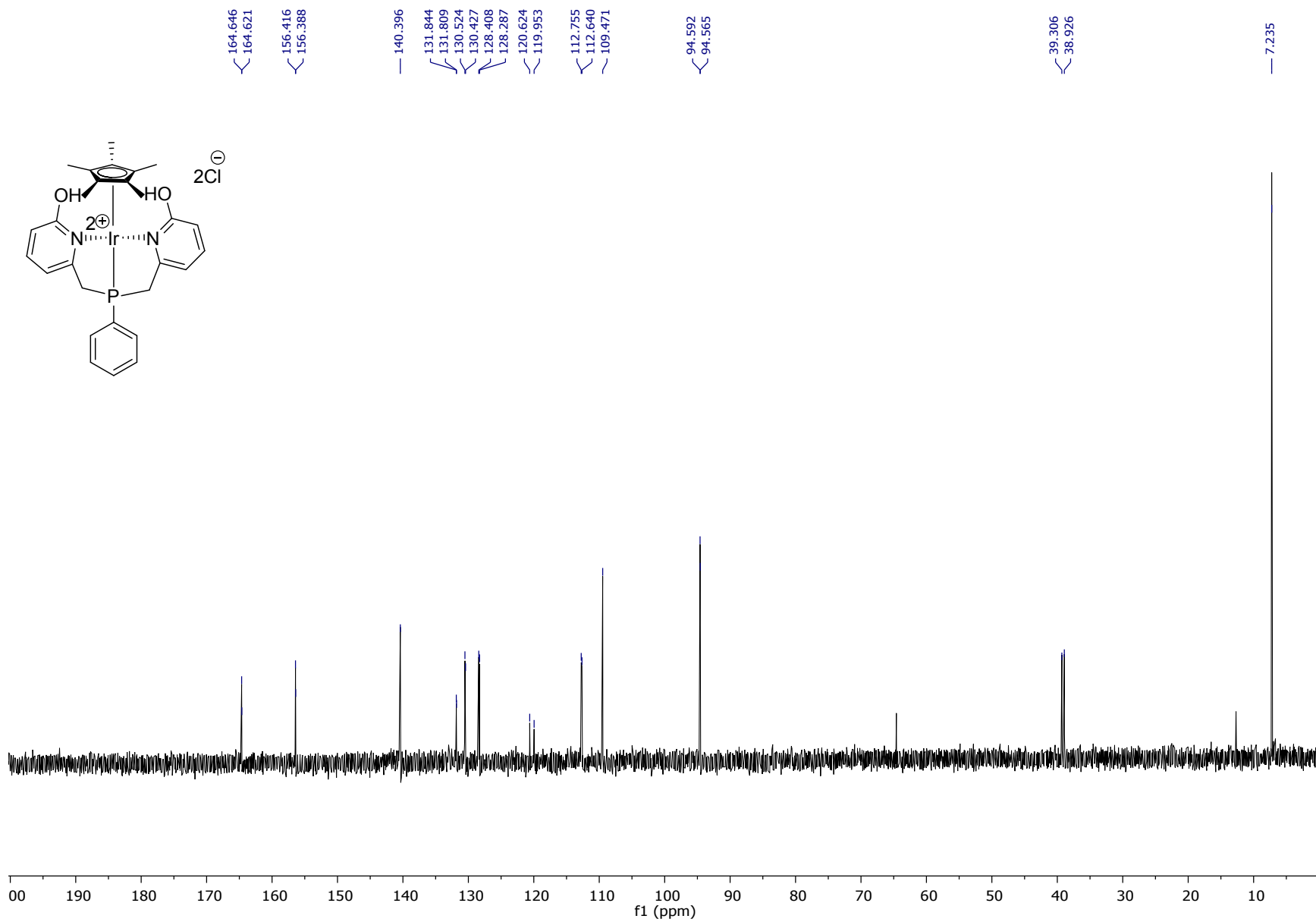


S21

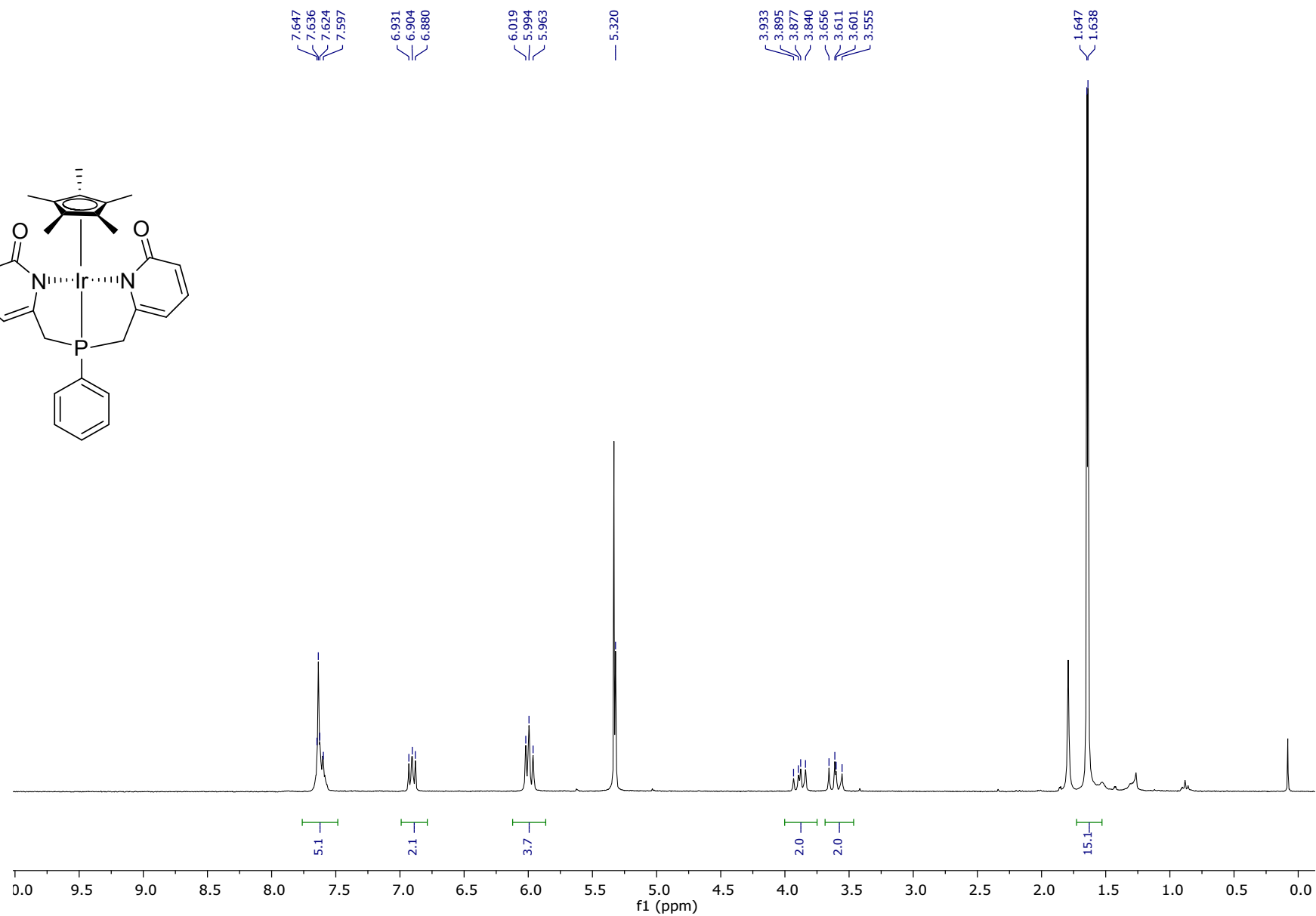
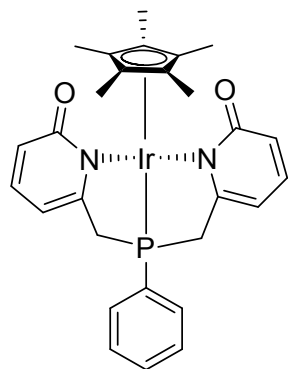




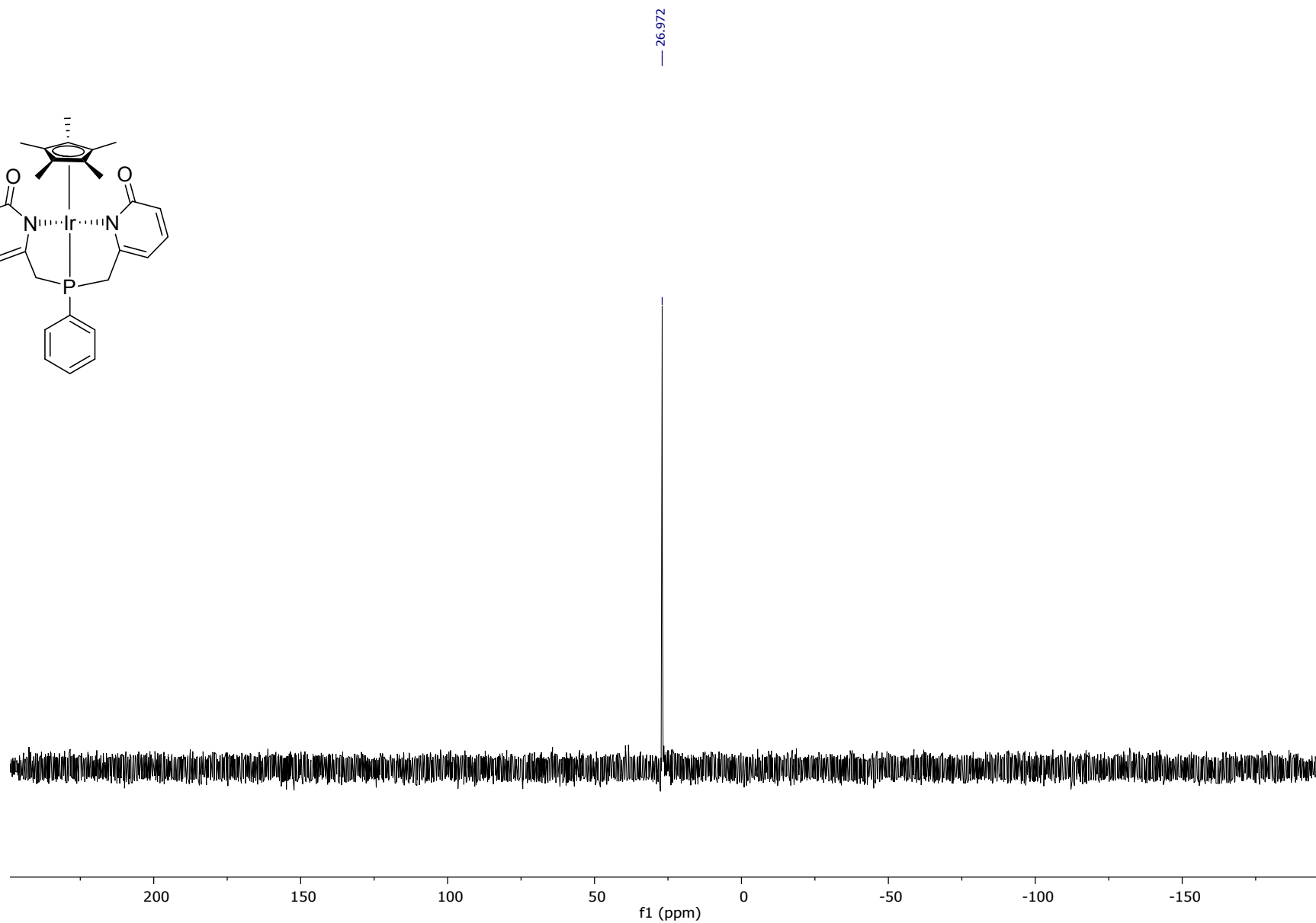
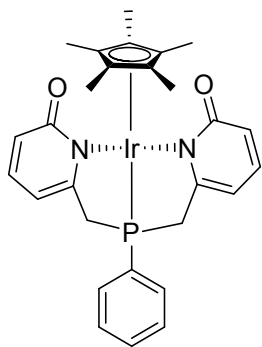




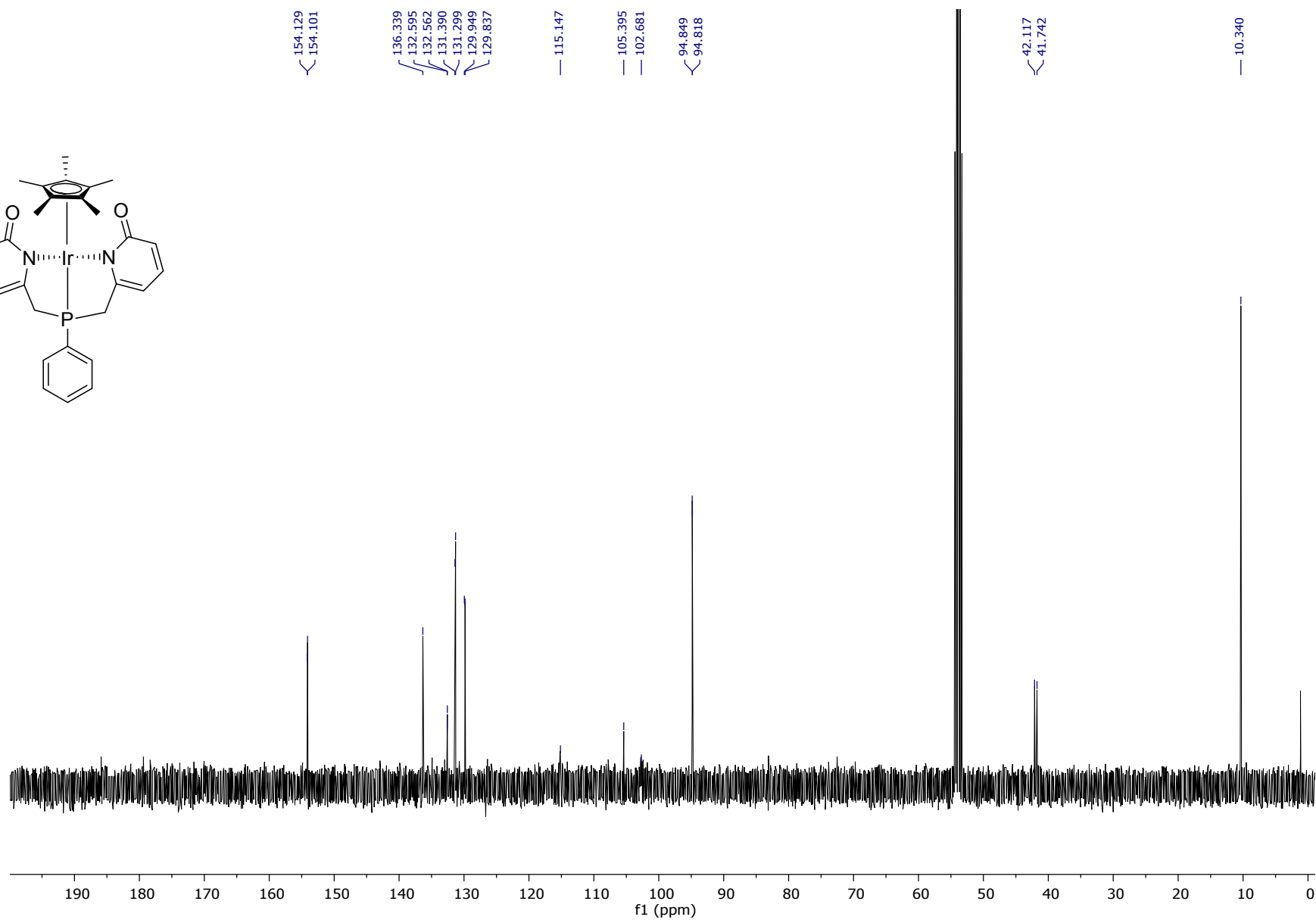
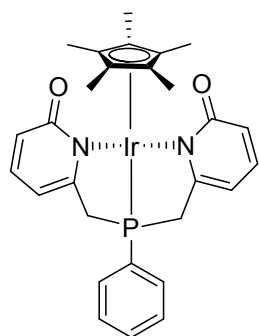
S24

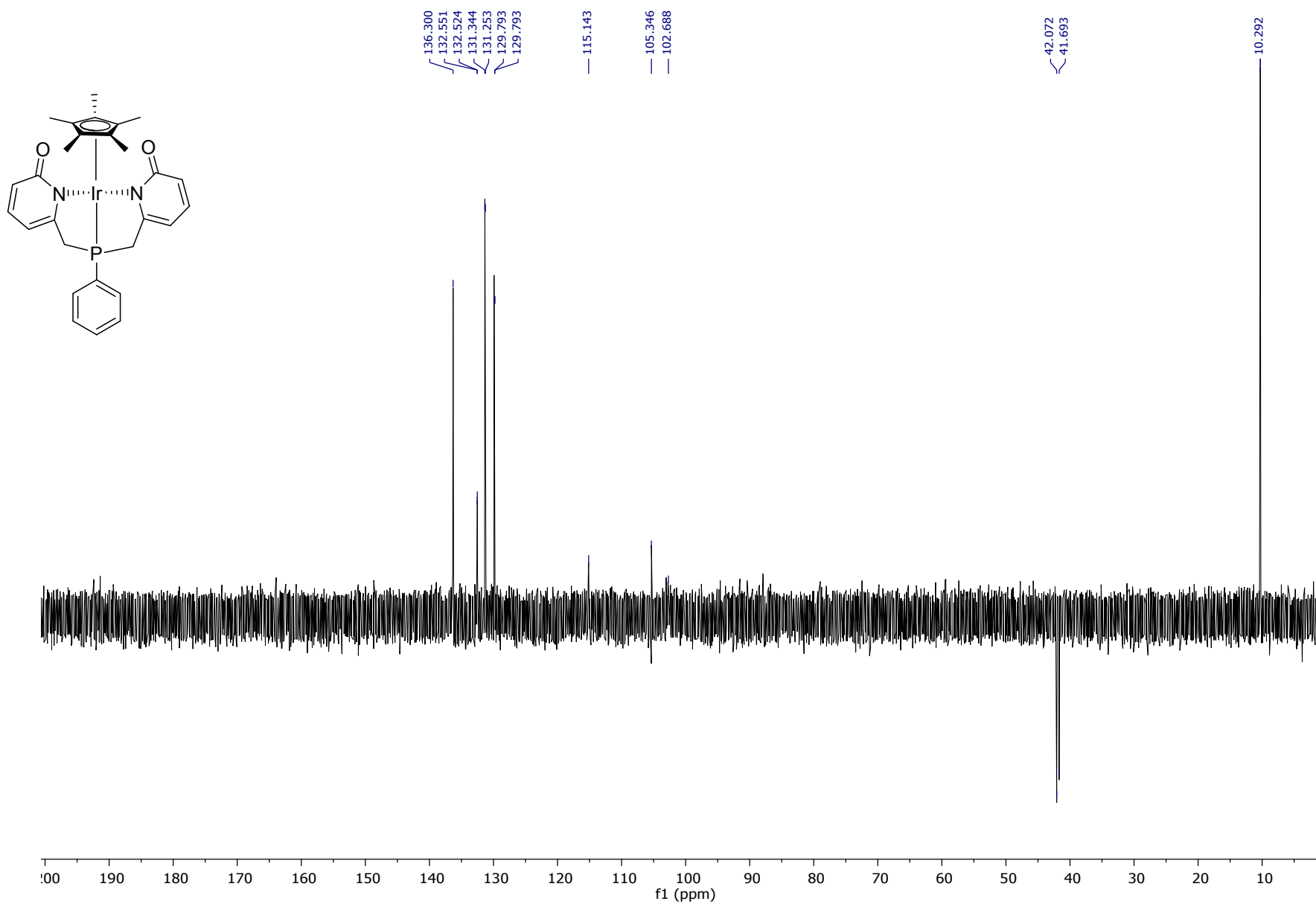


S25

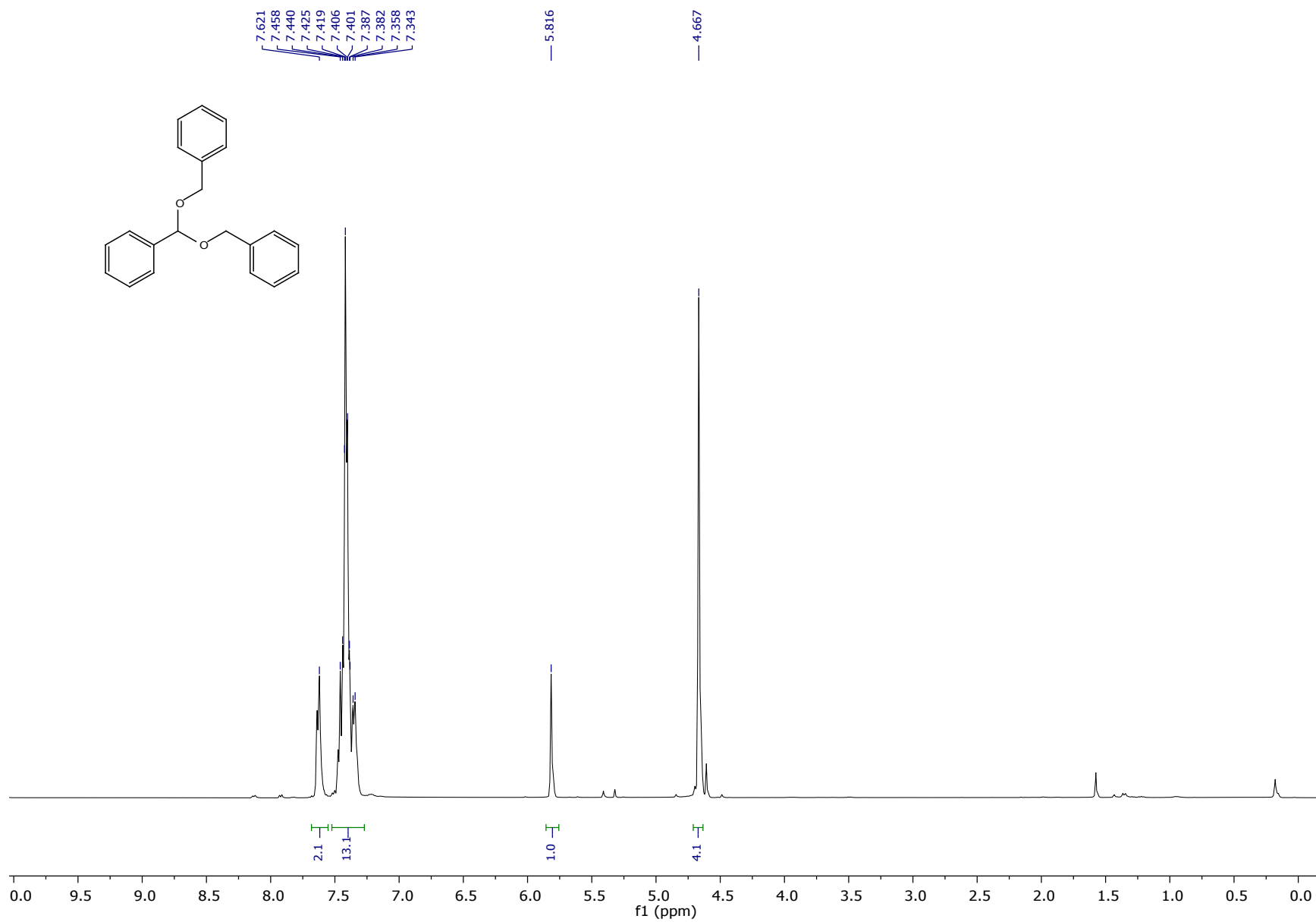


S26

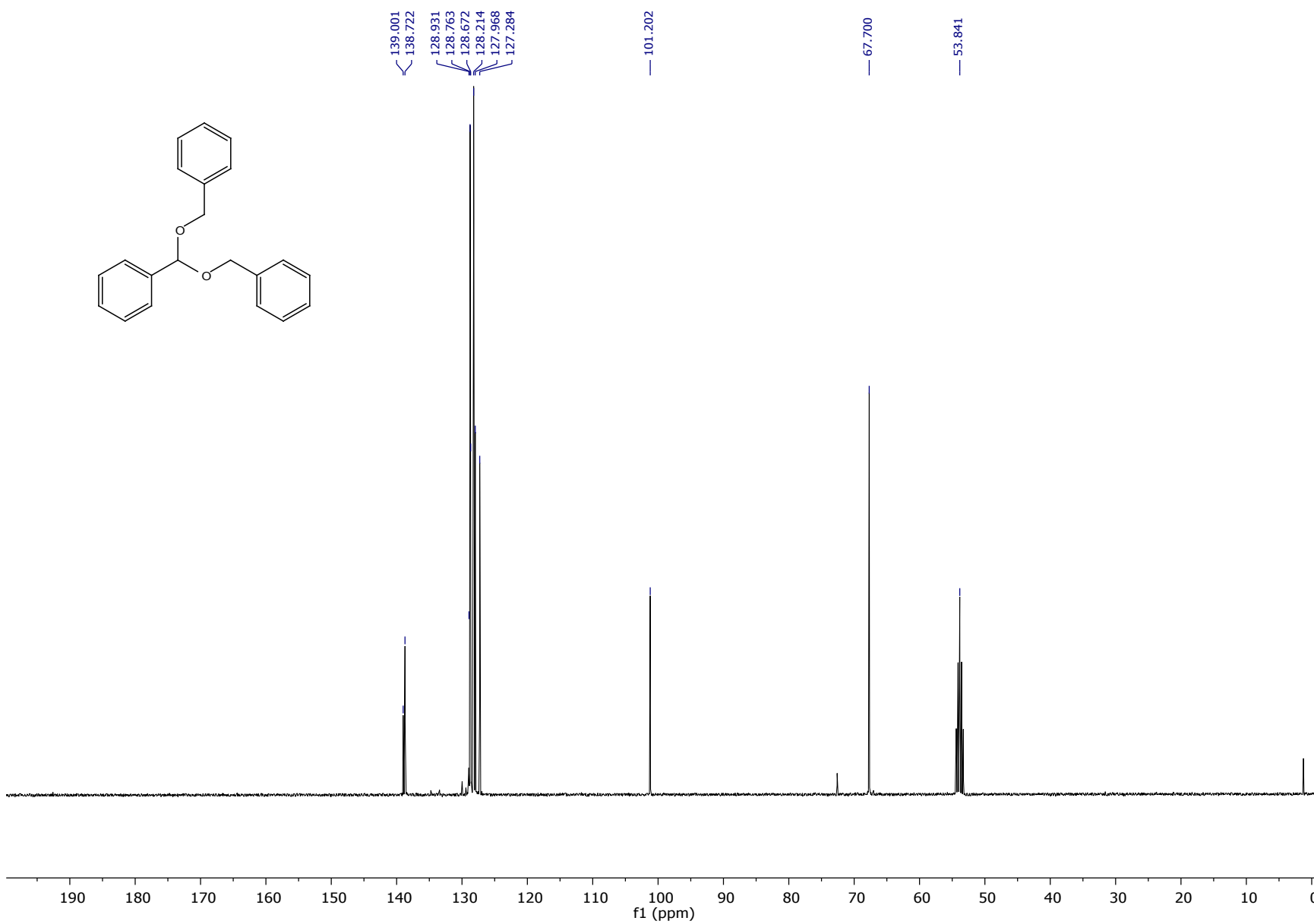




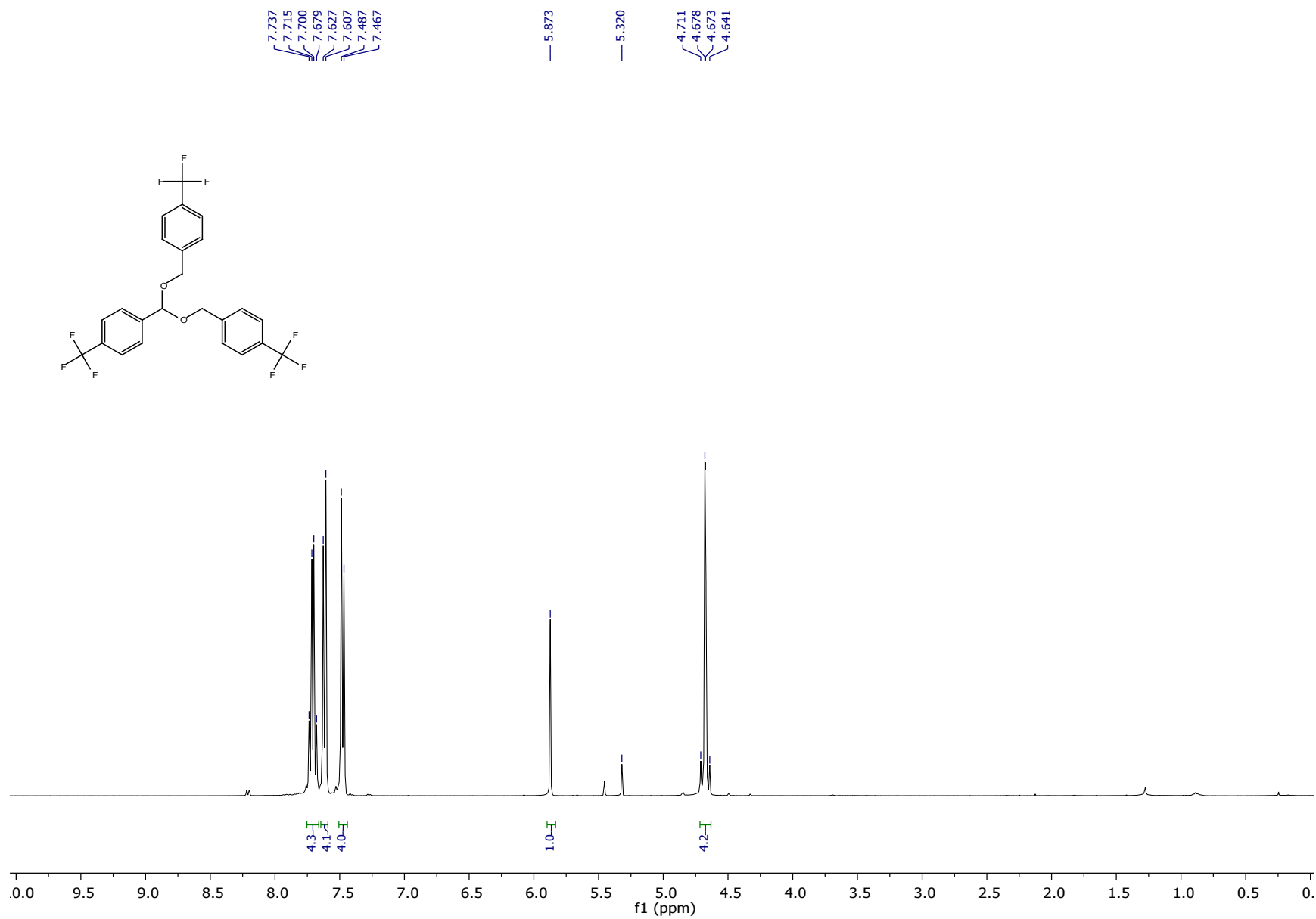
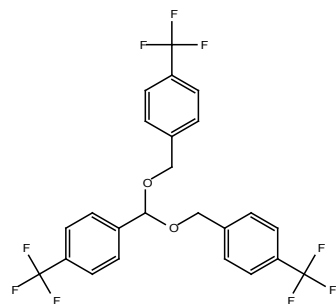
S28



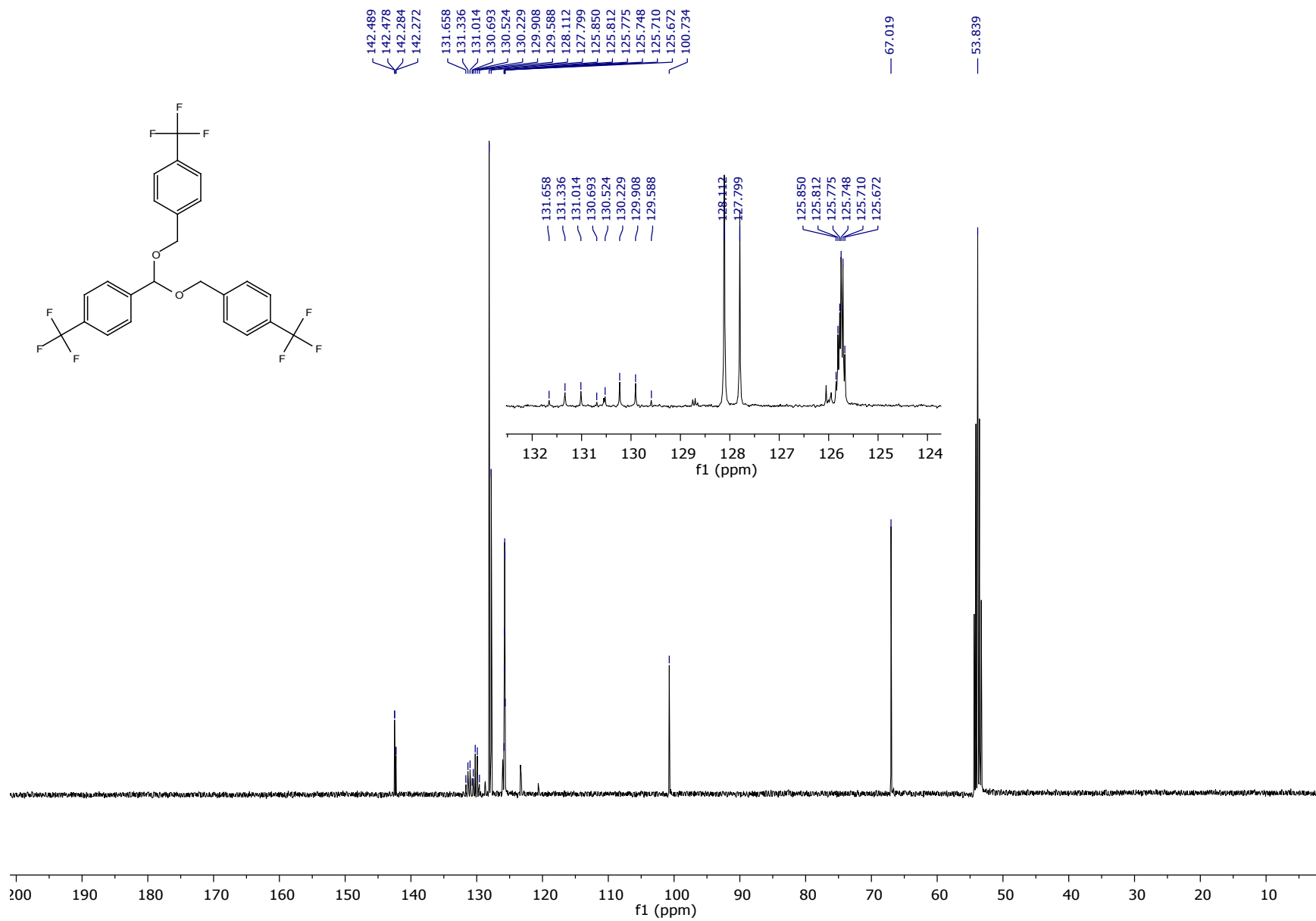
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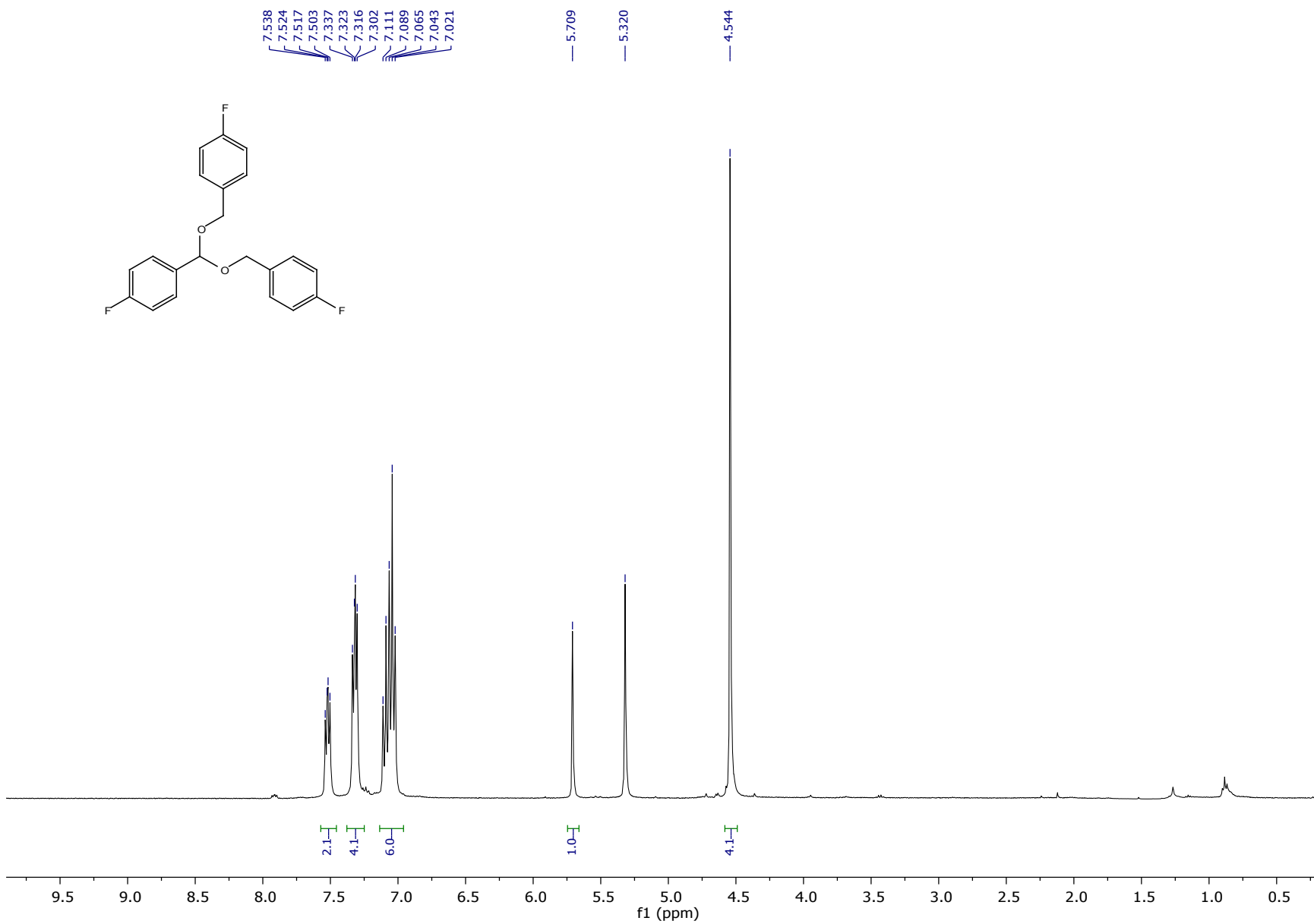


S30



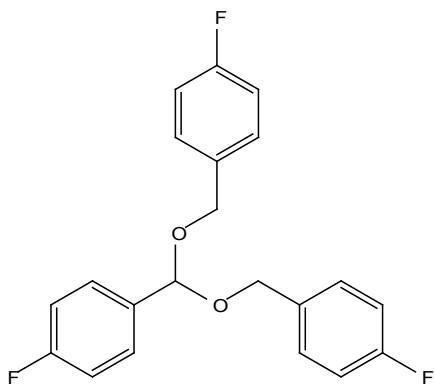




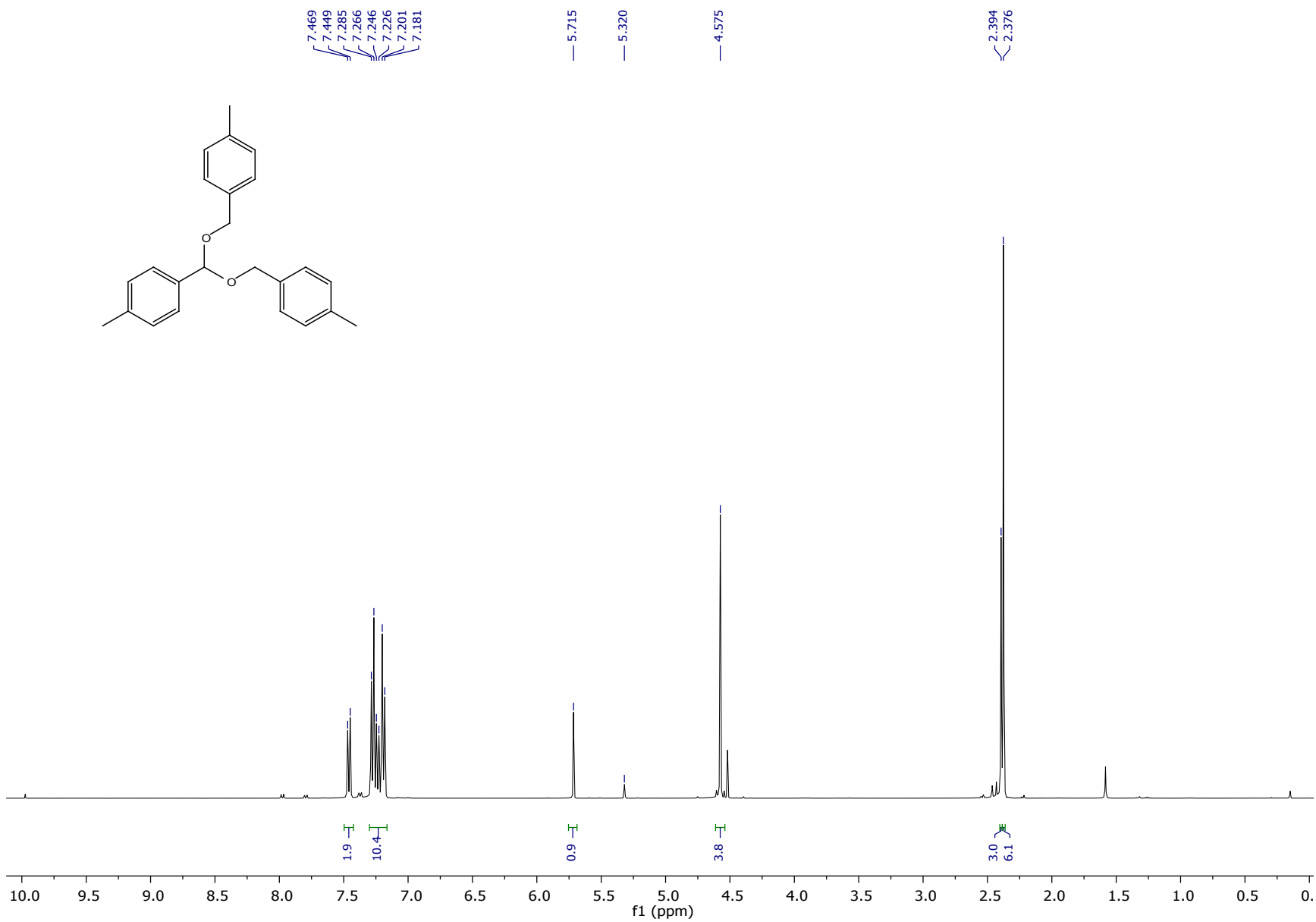


S33

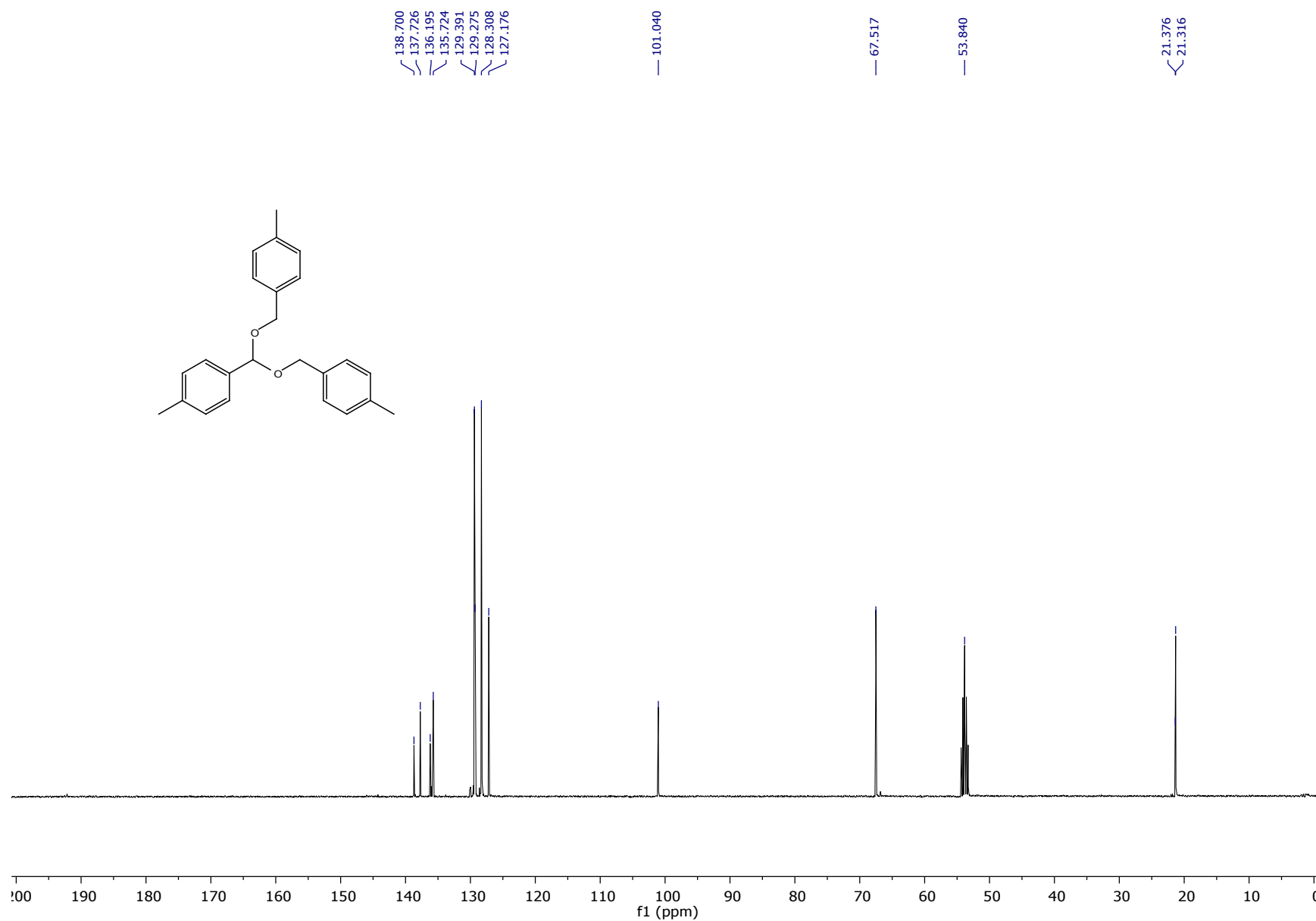




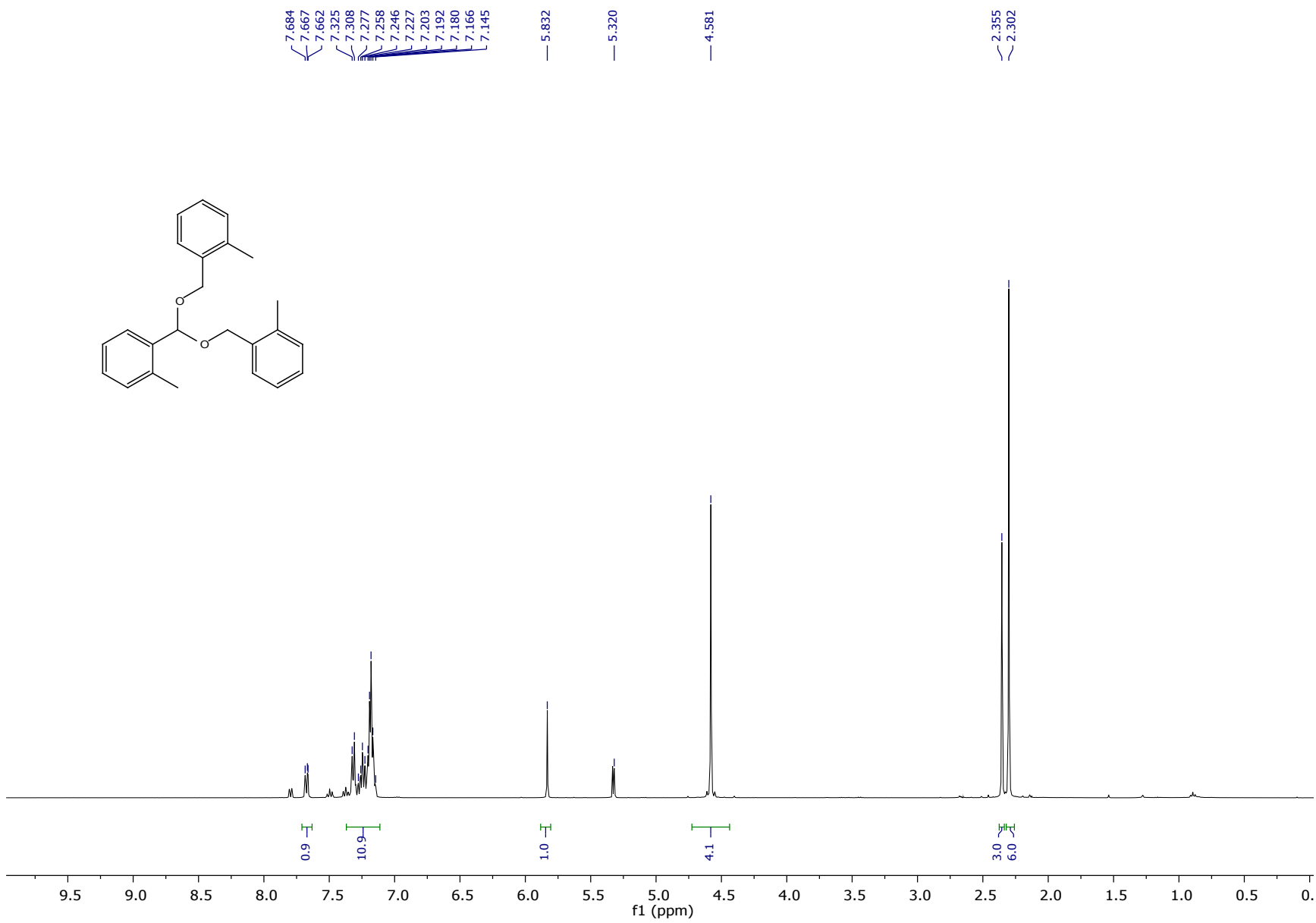
S35



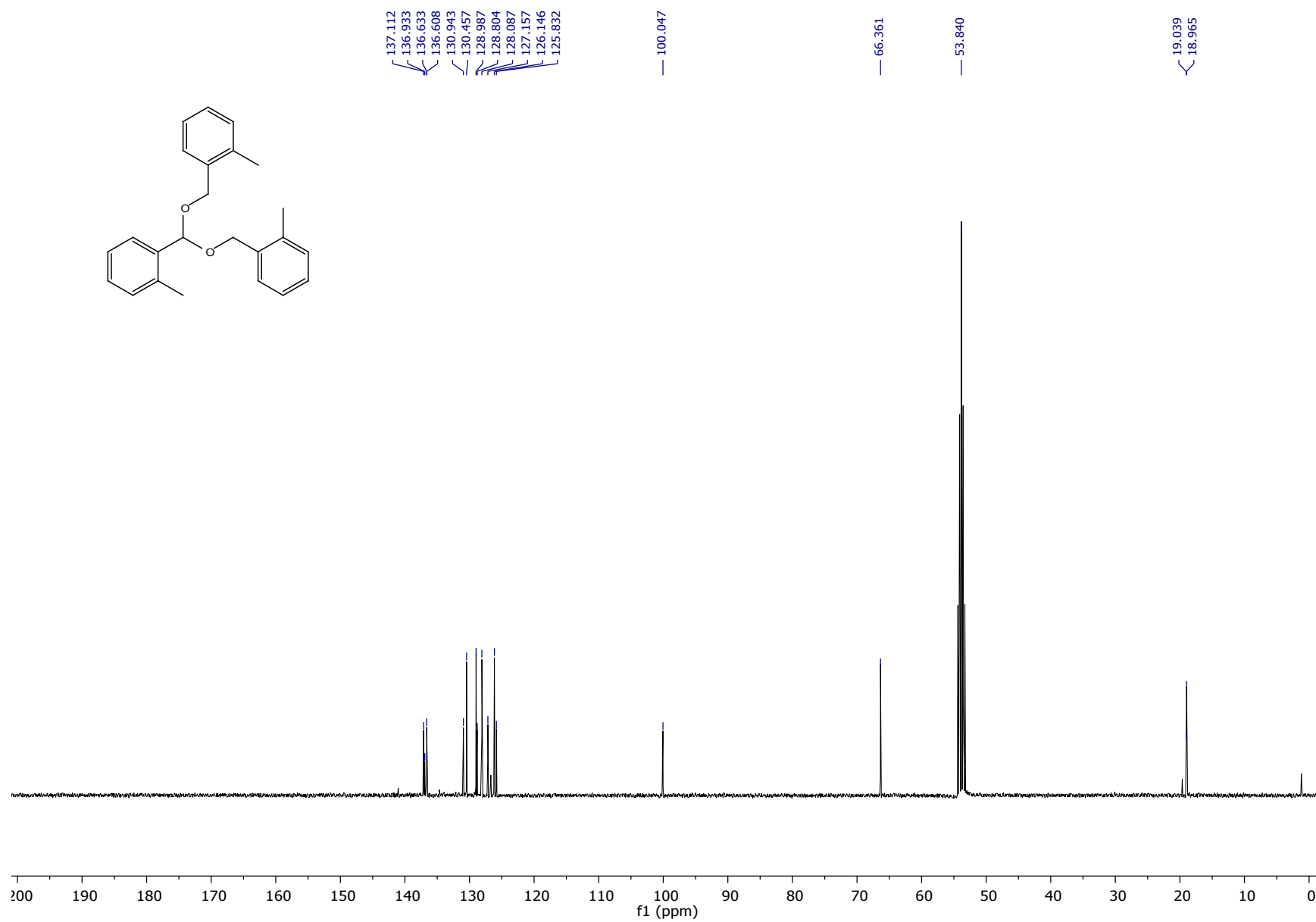
S36



S37

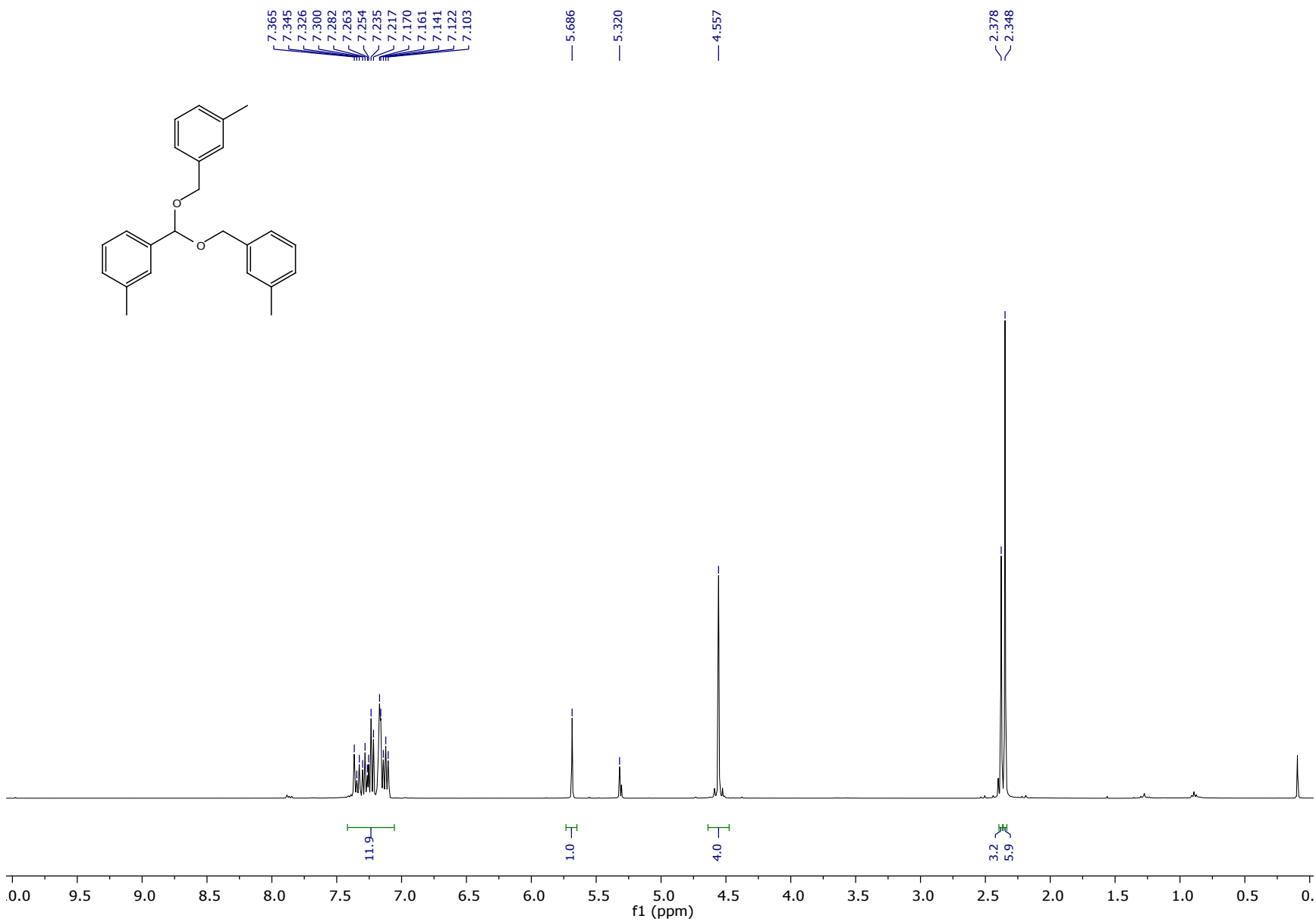


S38

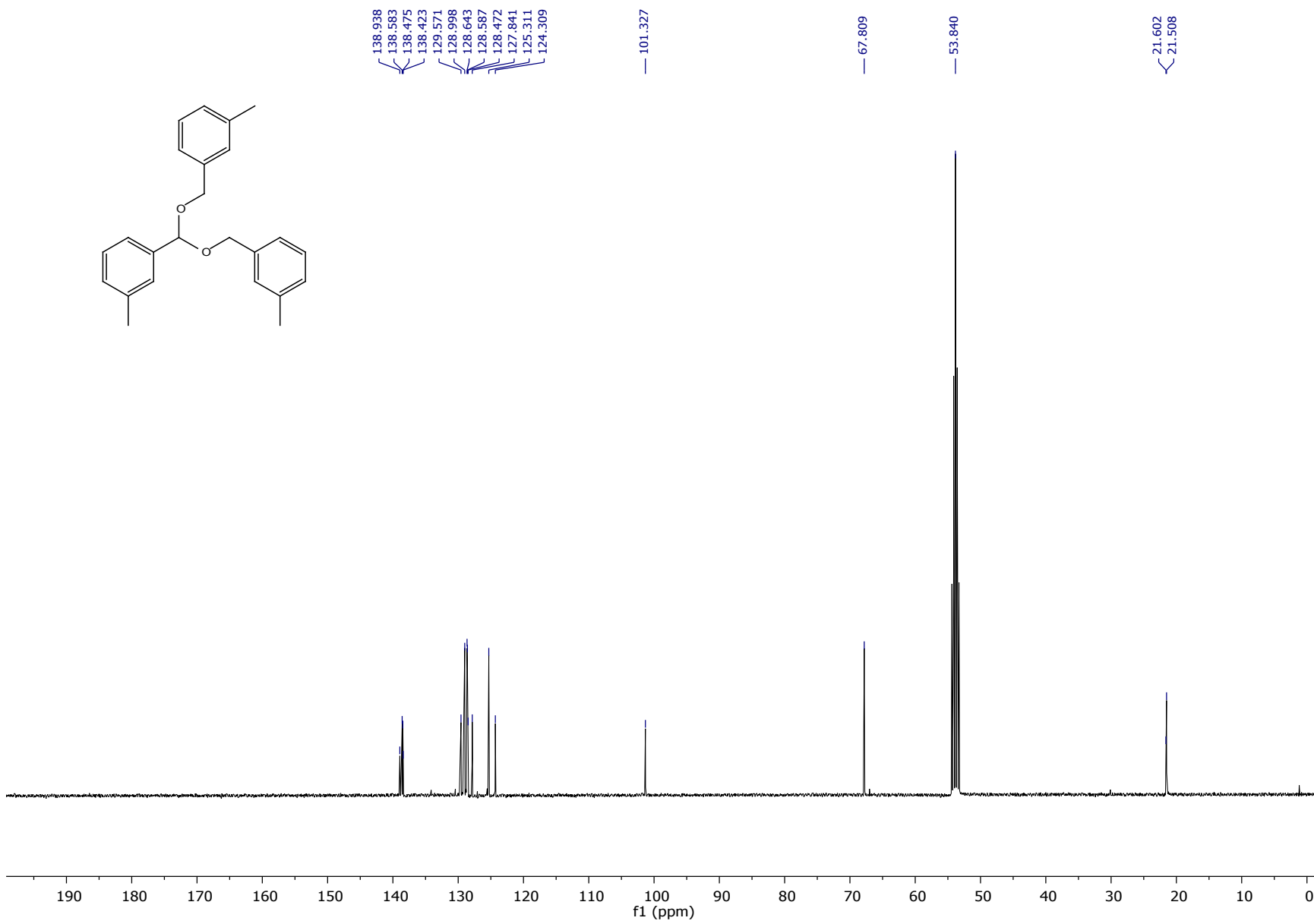


S39

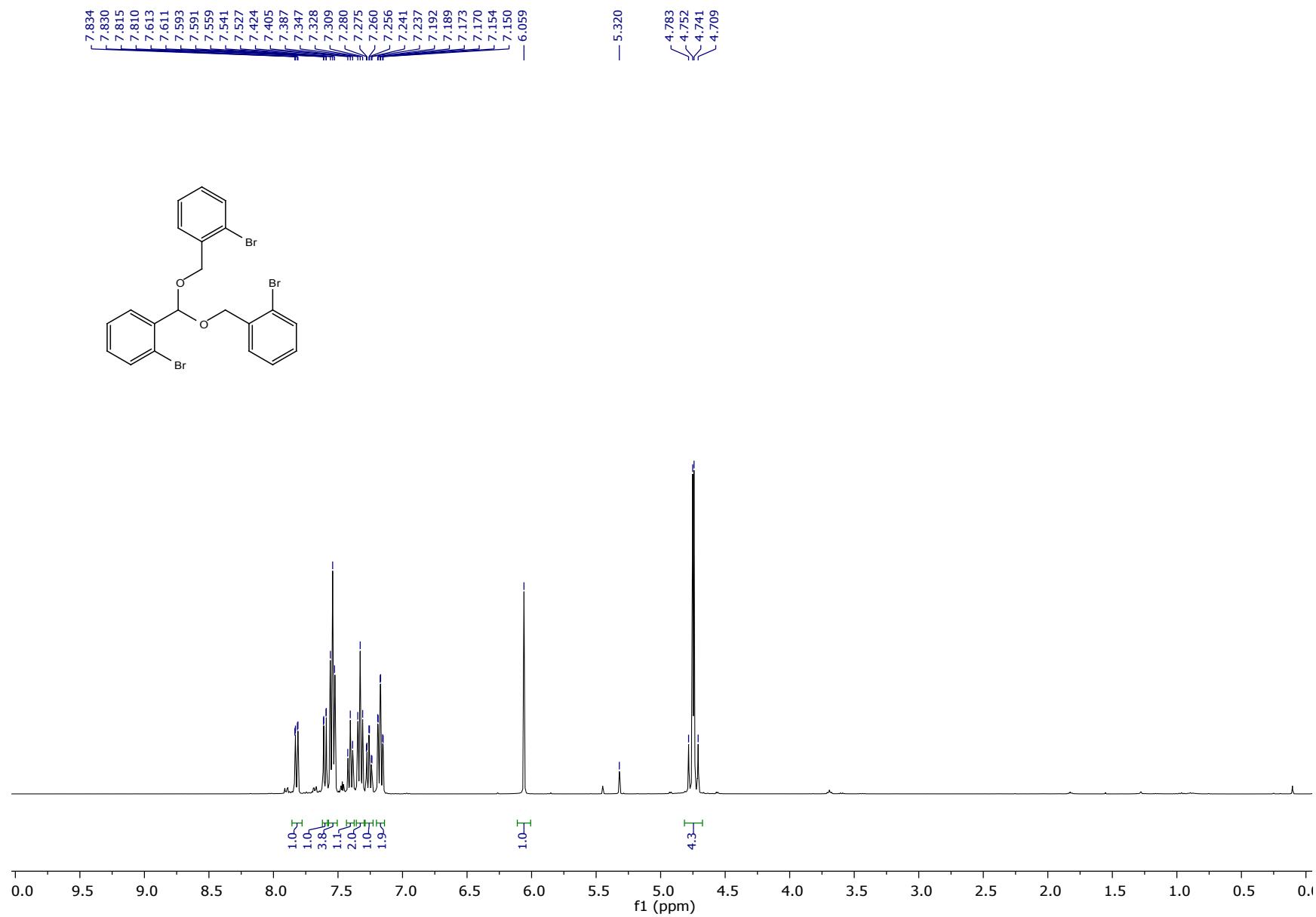


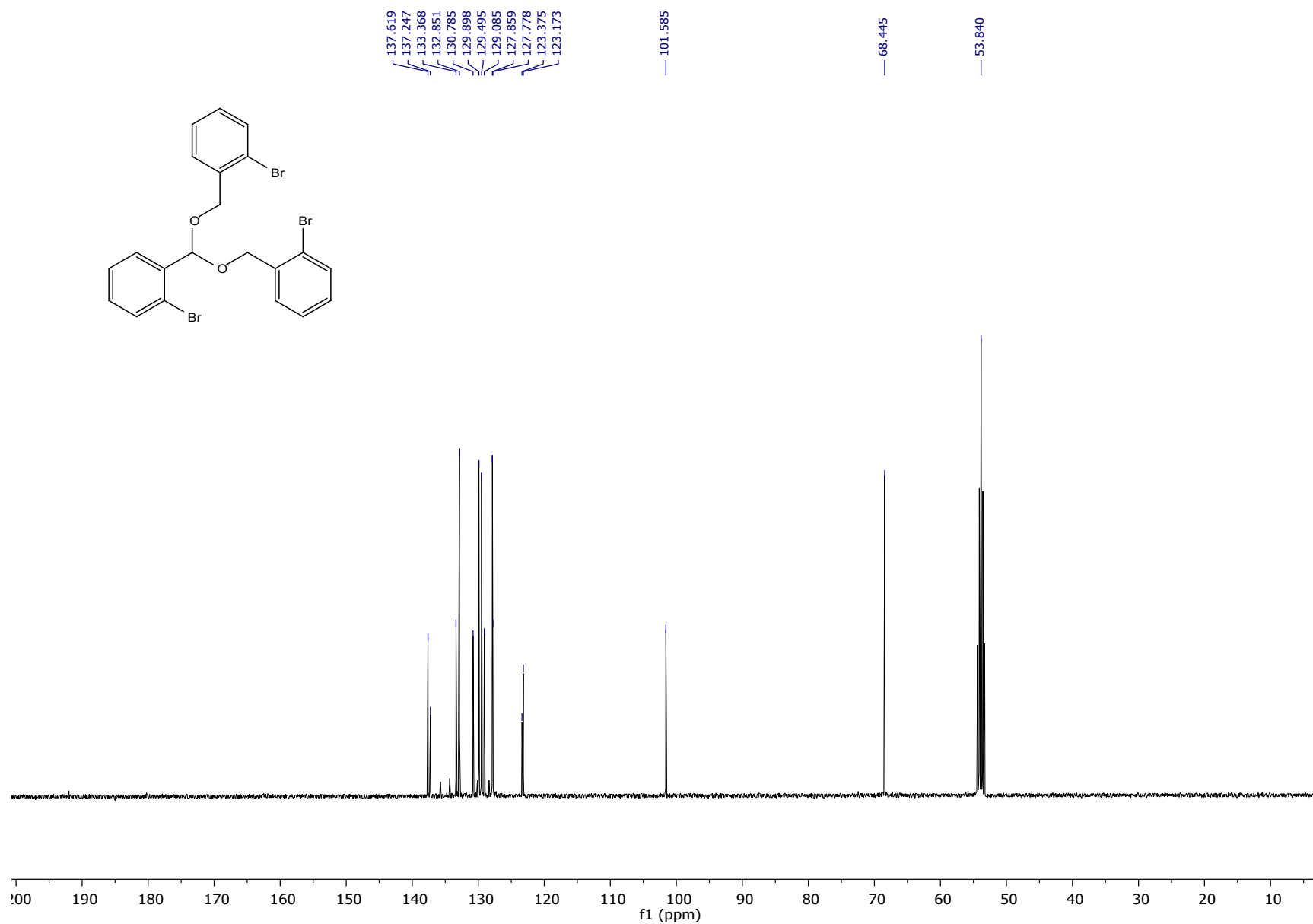


S40

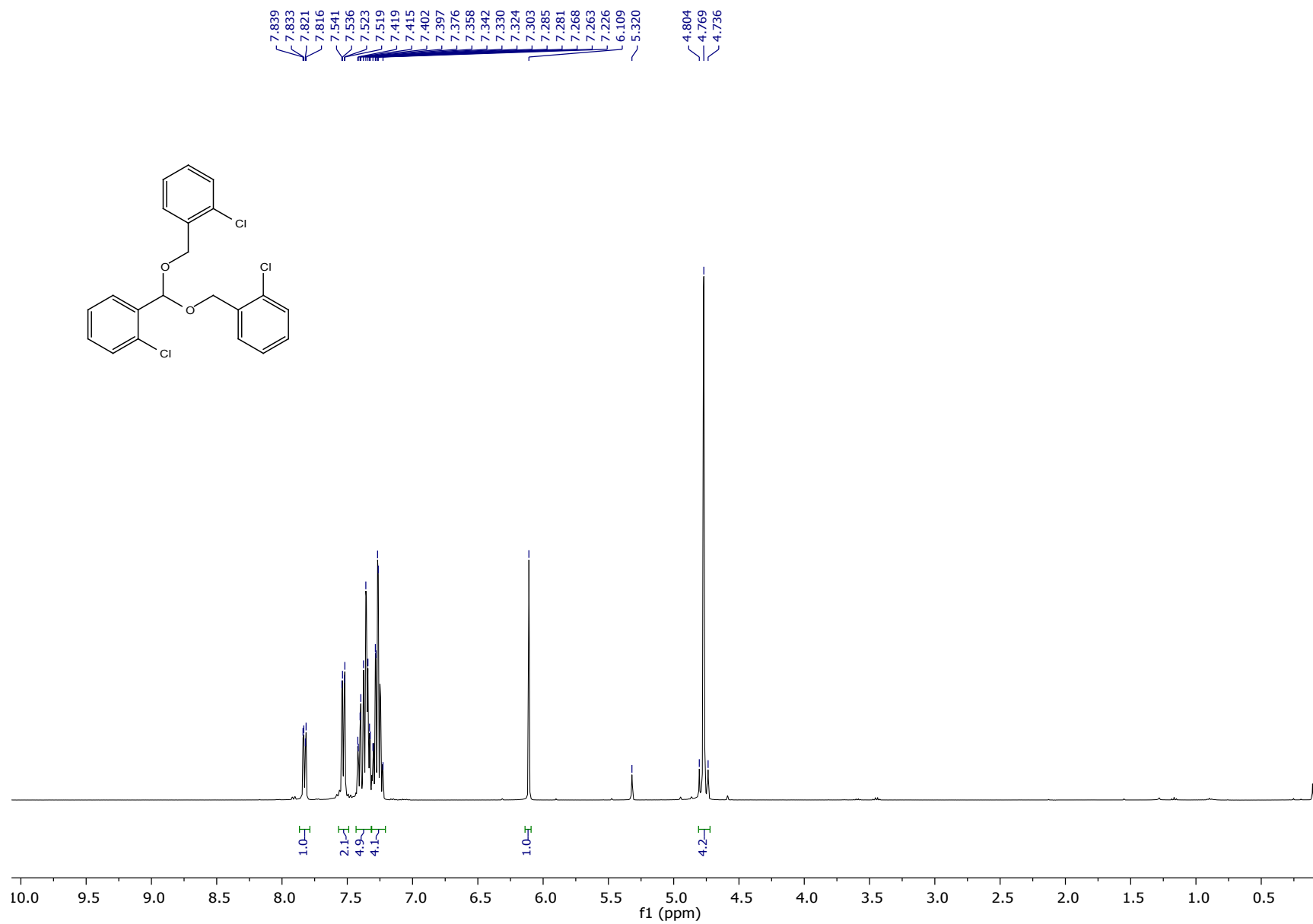


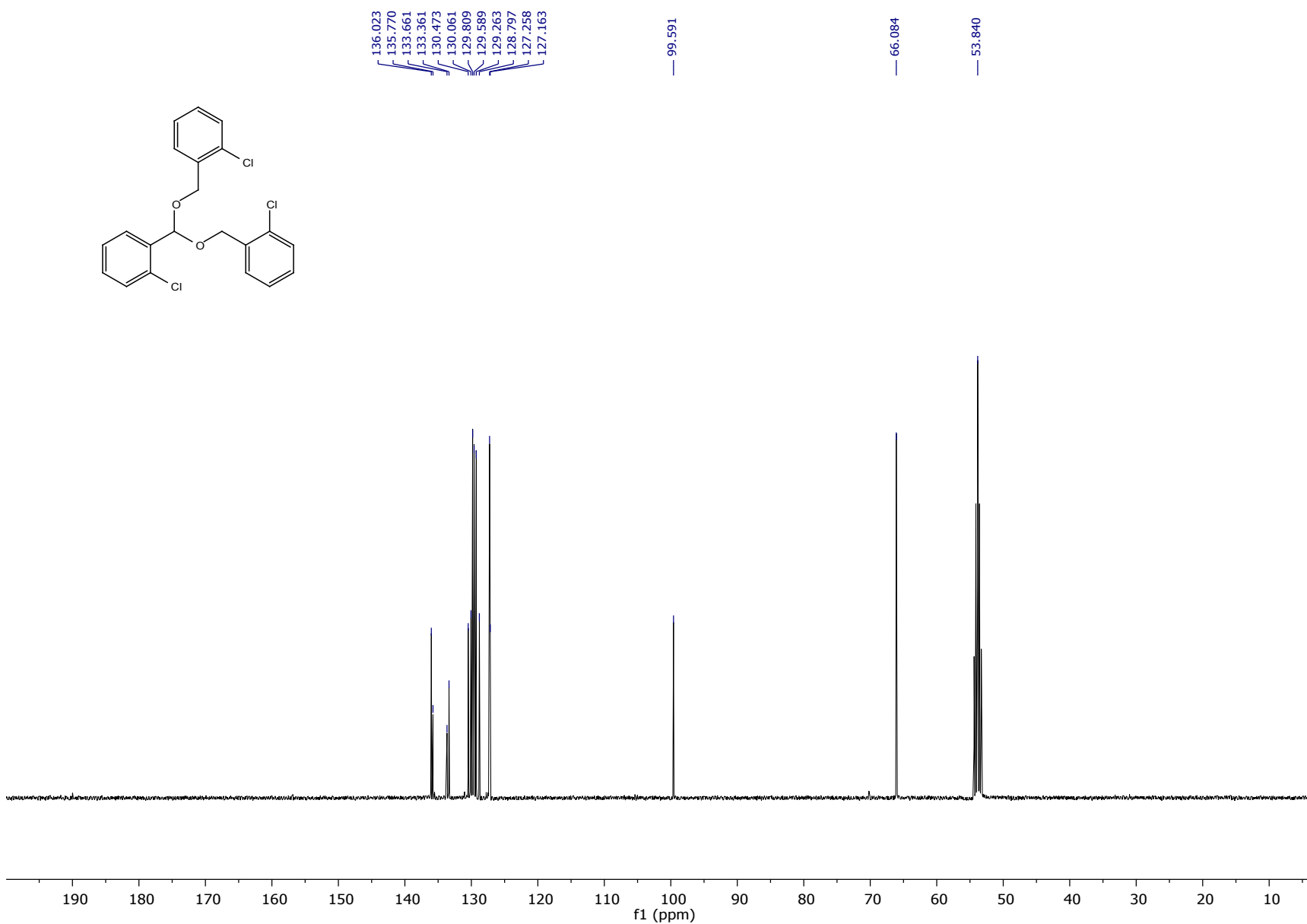
S41



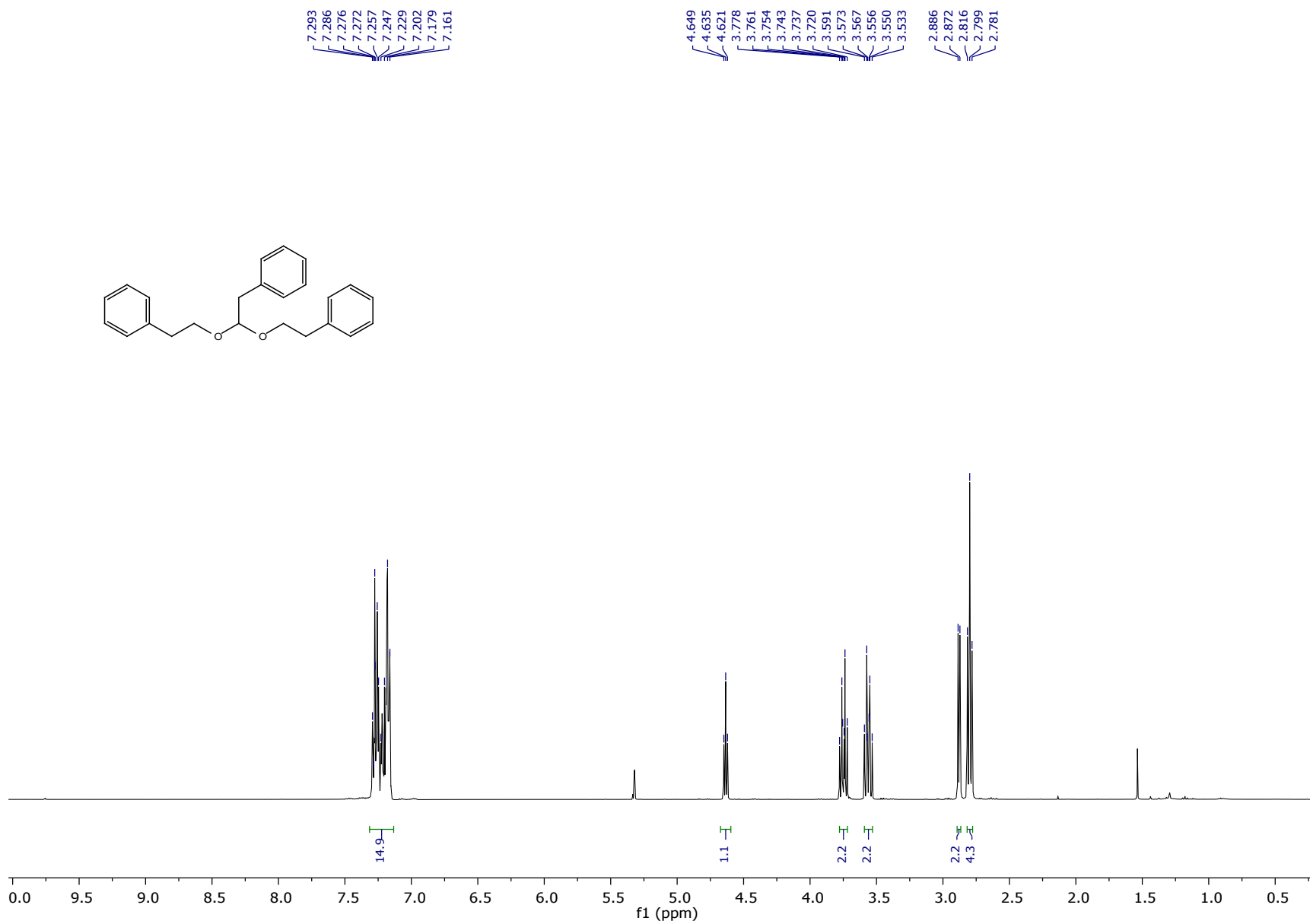


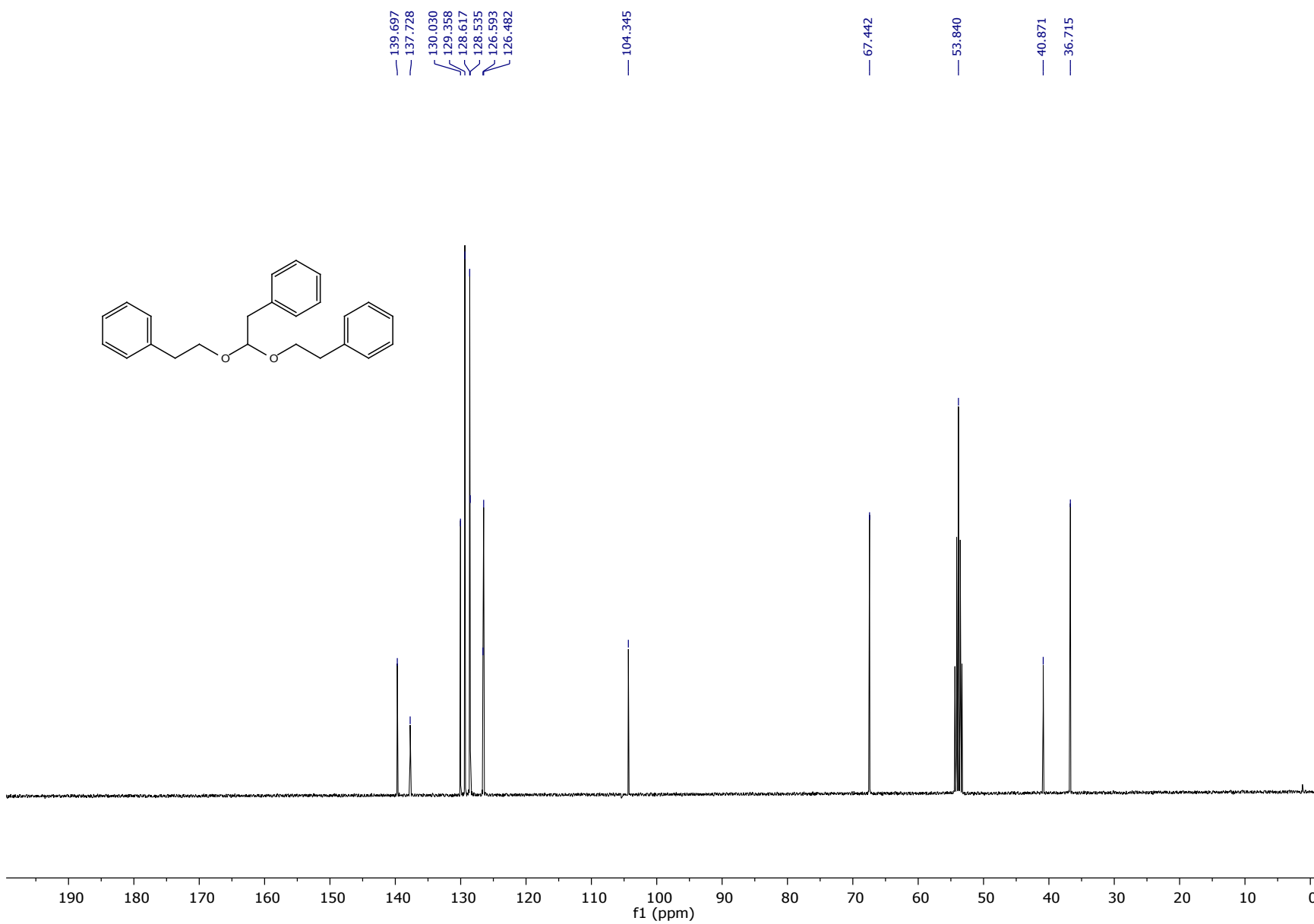
S43





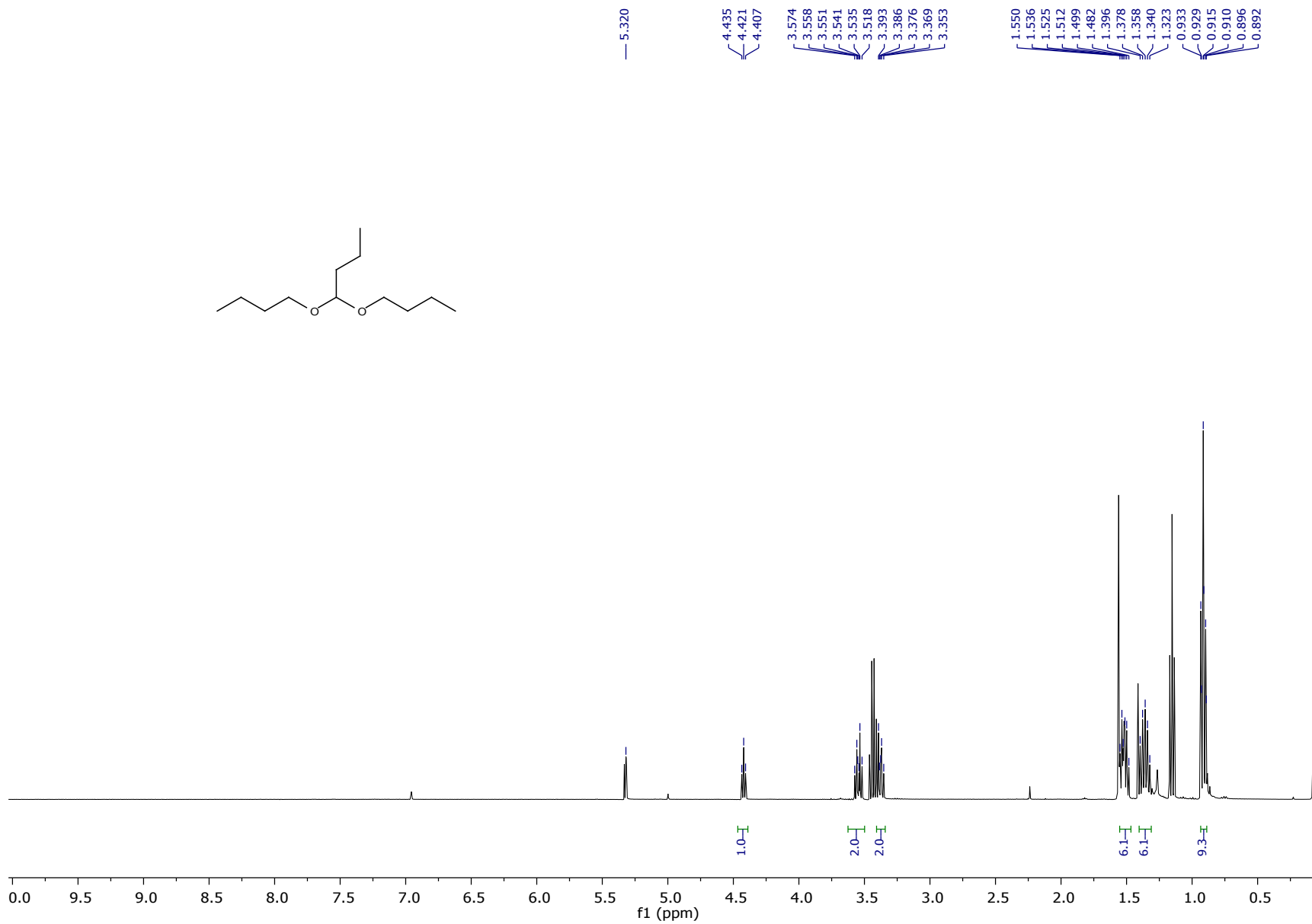
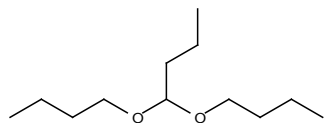
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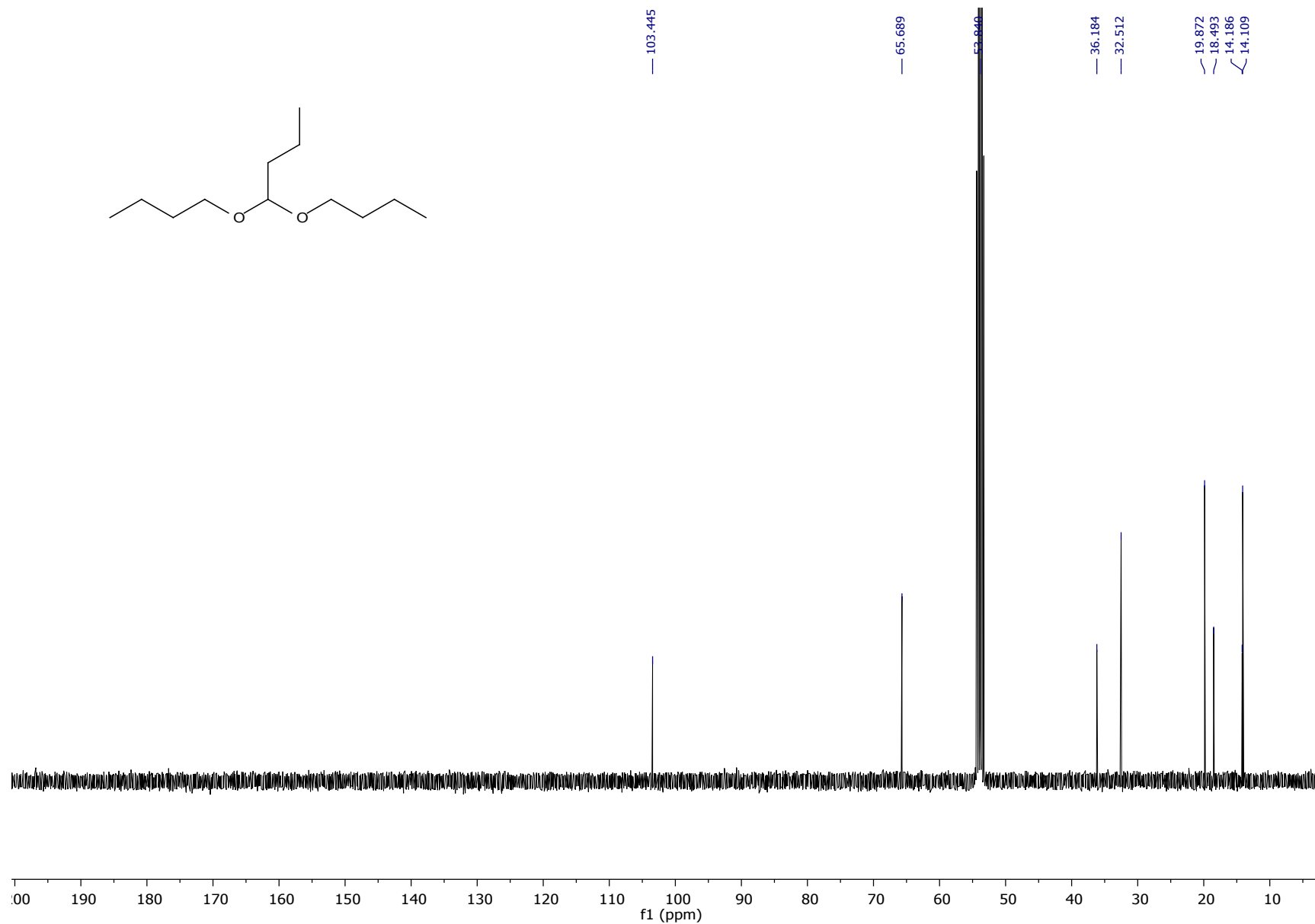
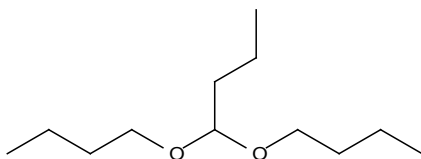




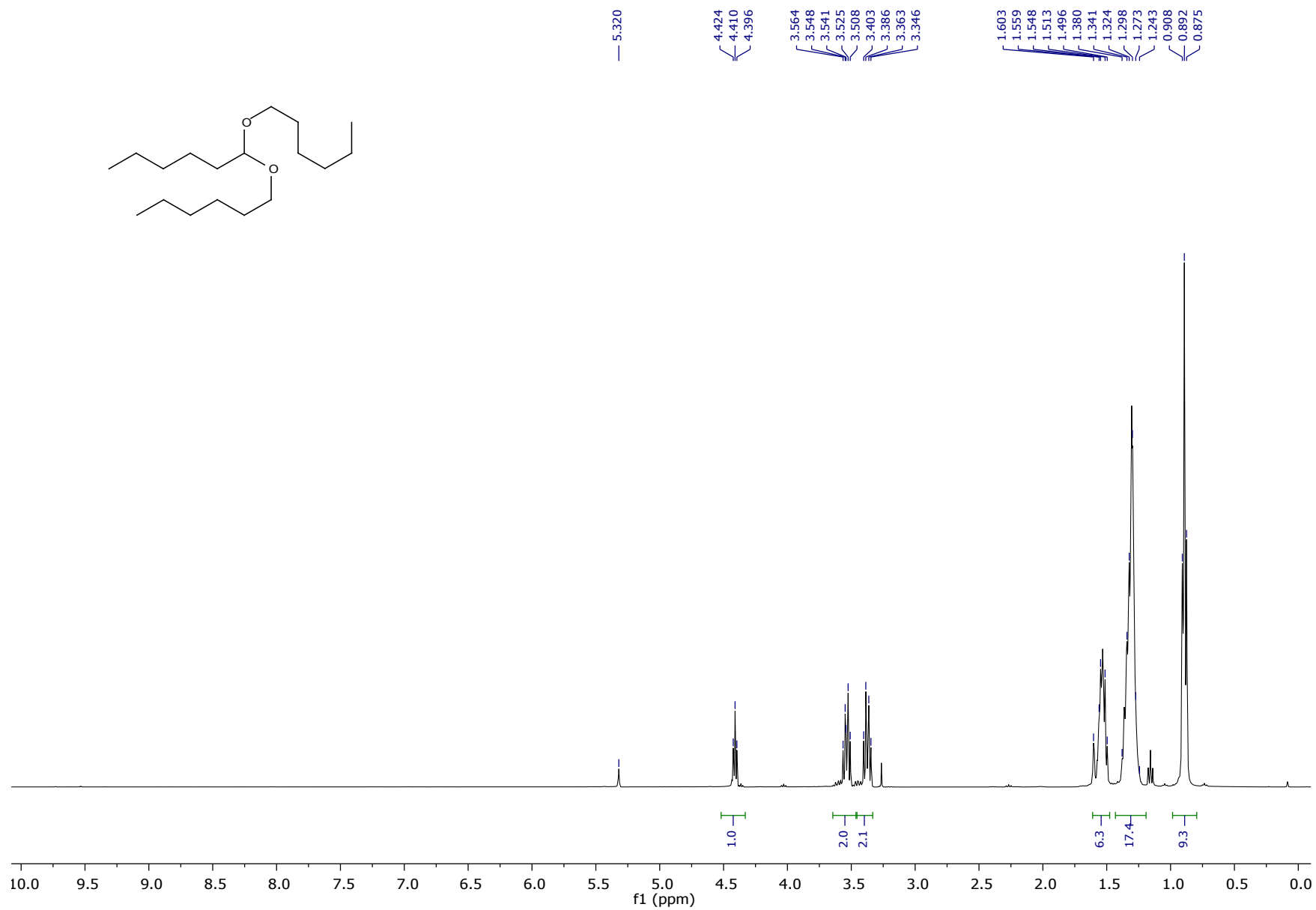
S47



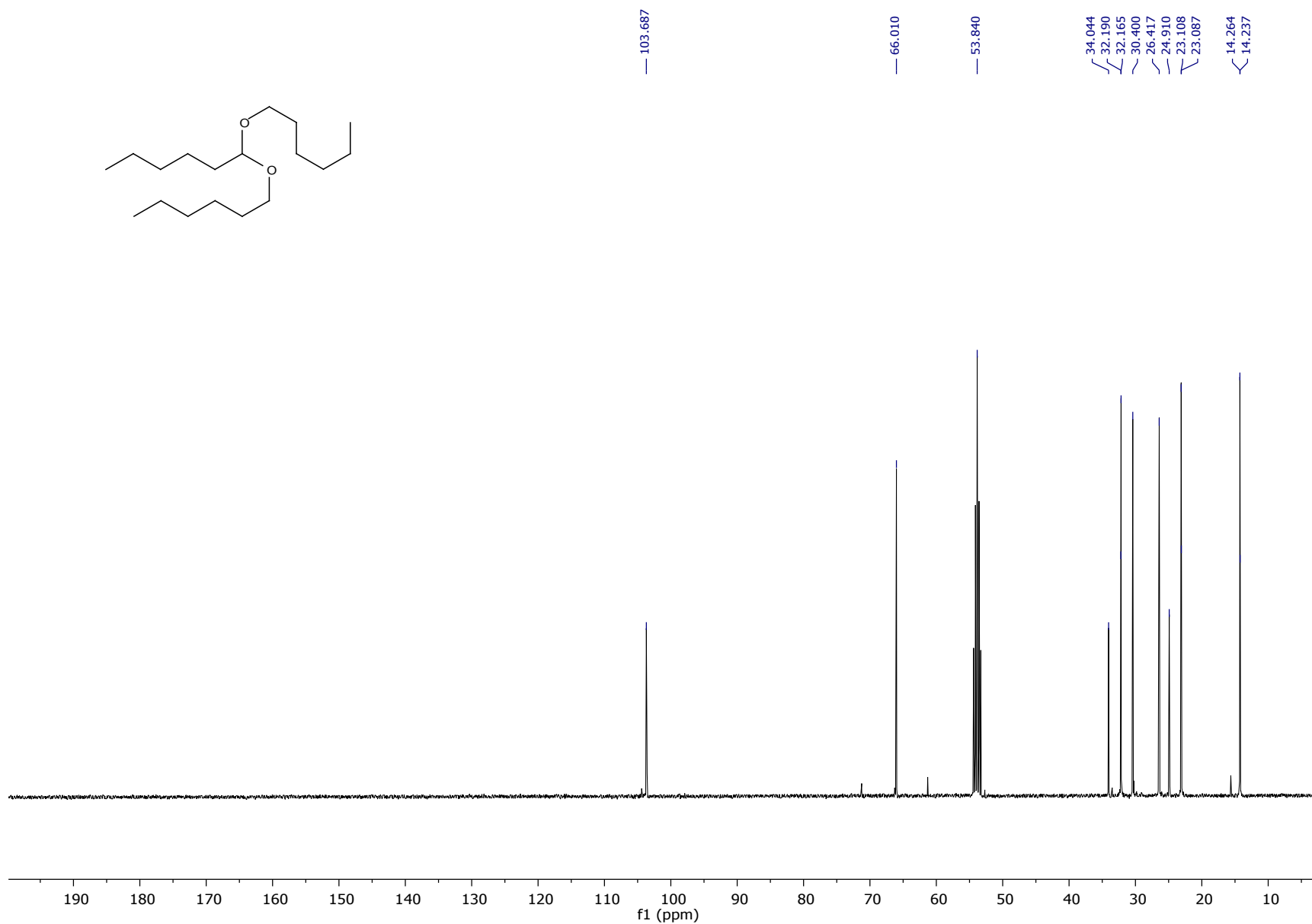
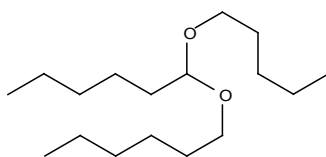




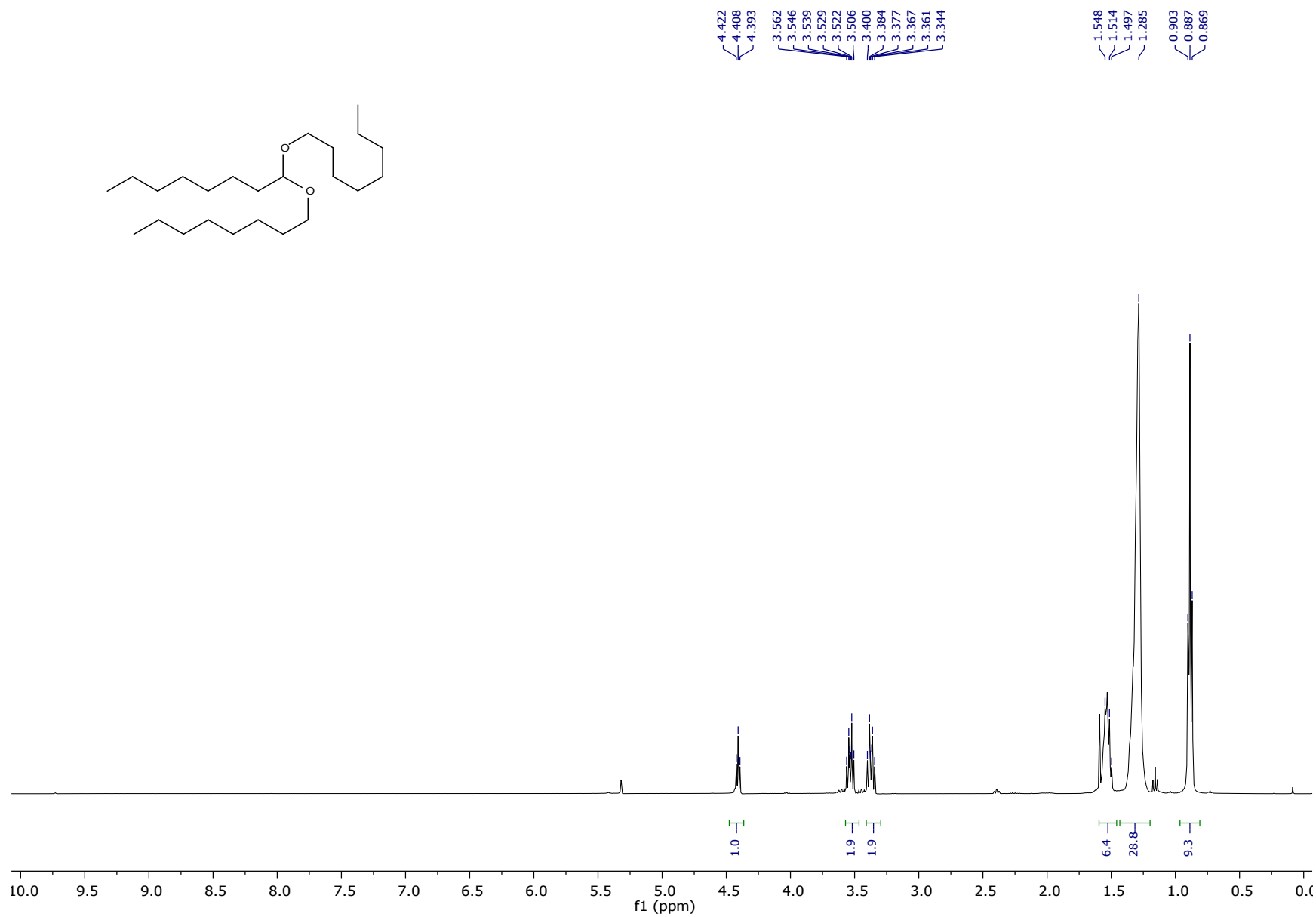
S49



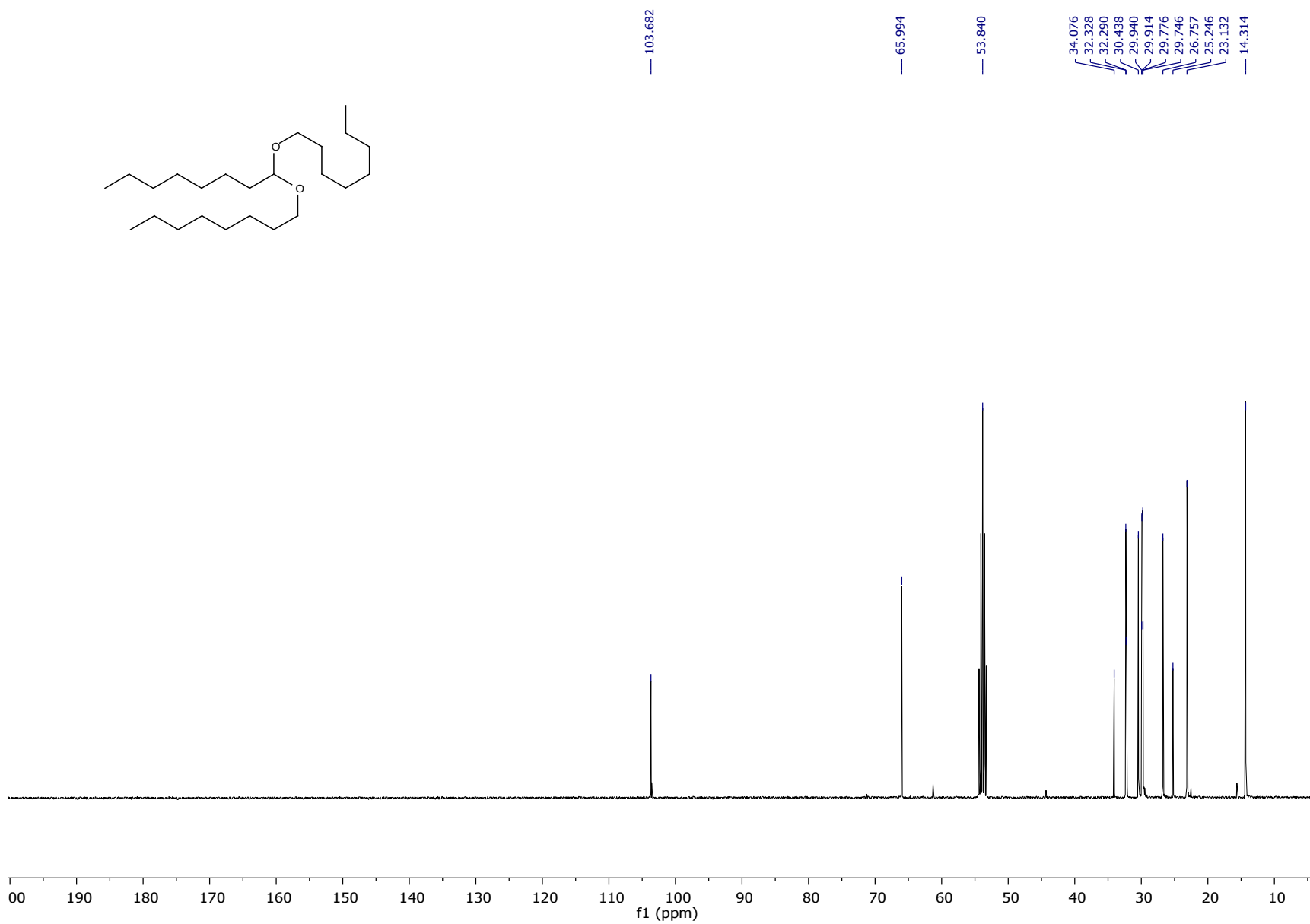
S50



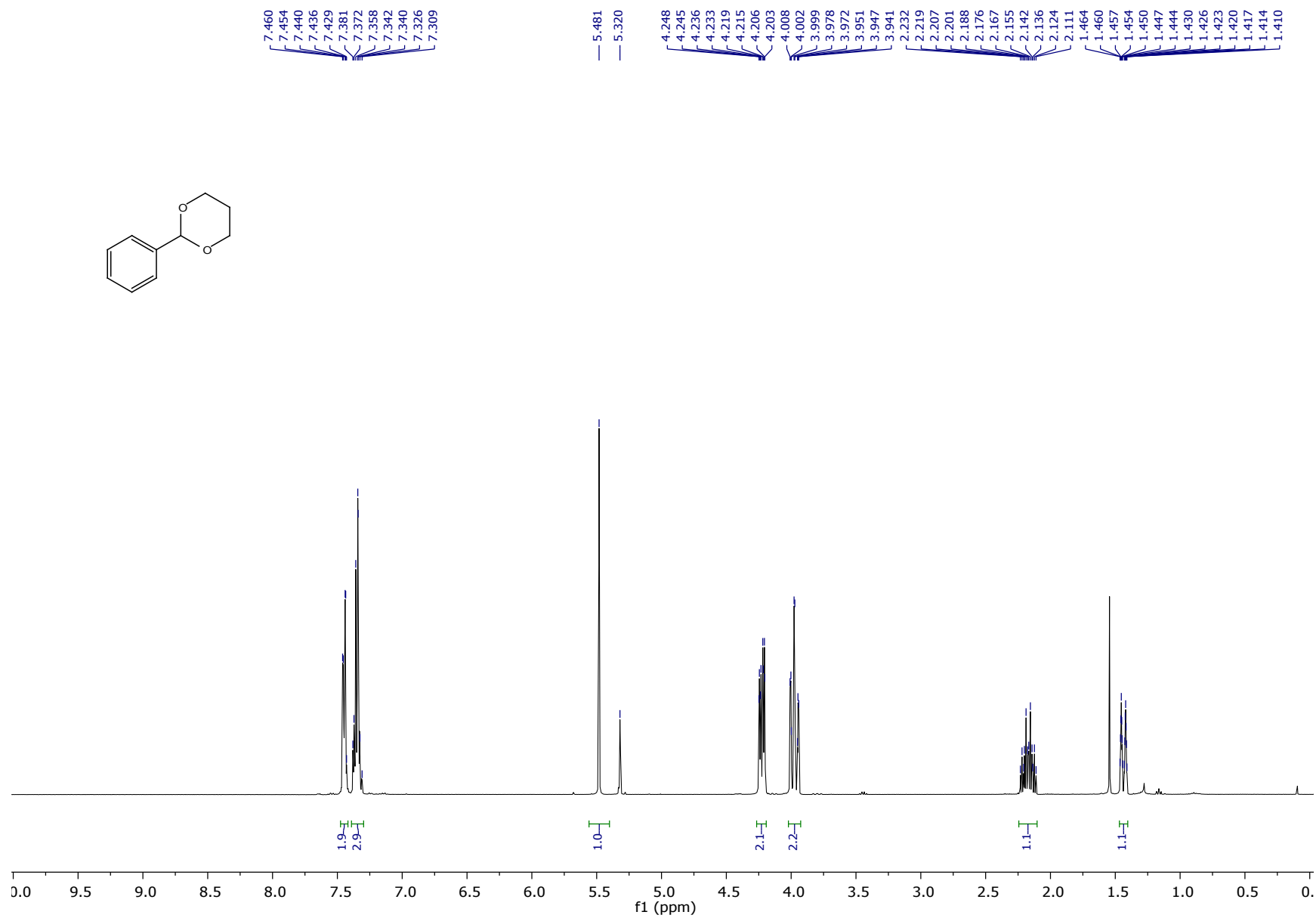
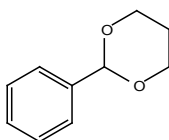
S51



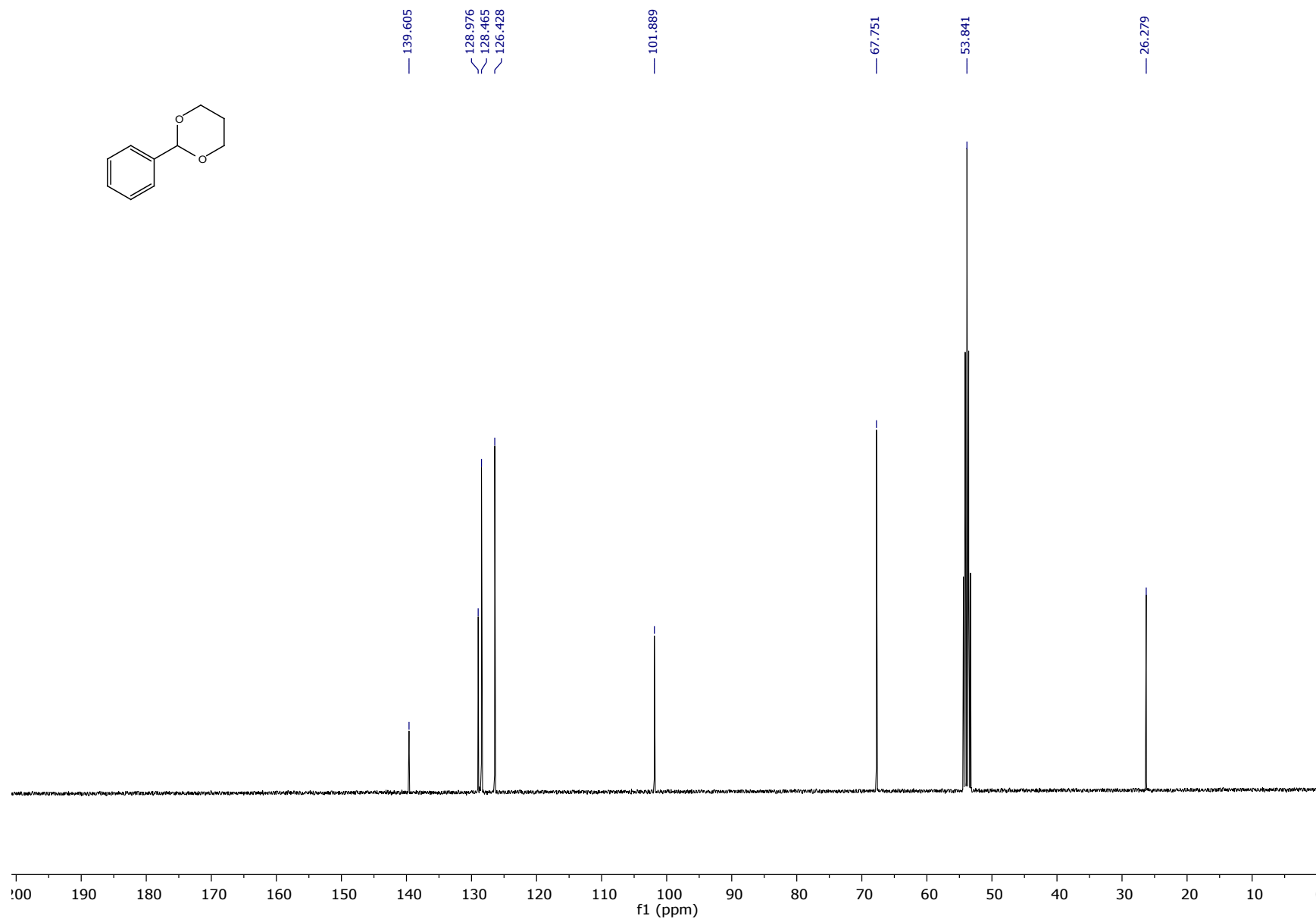
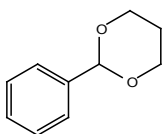
S52



S53

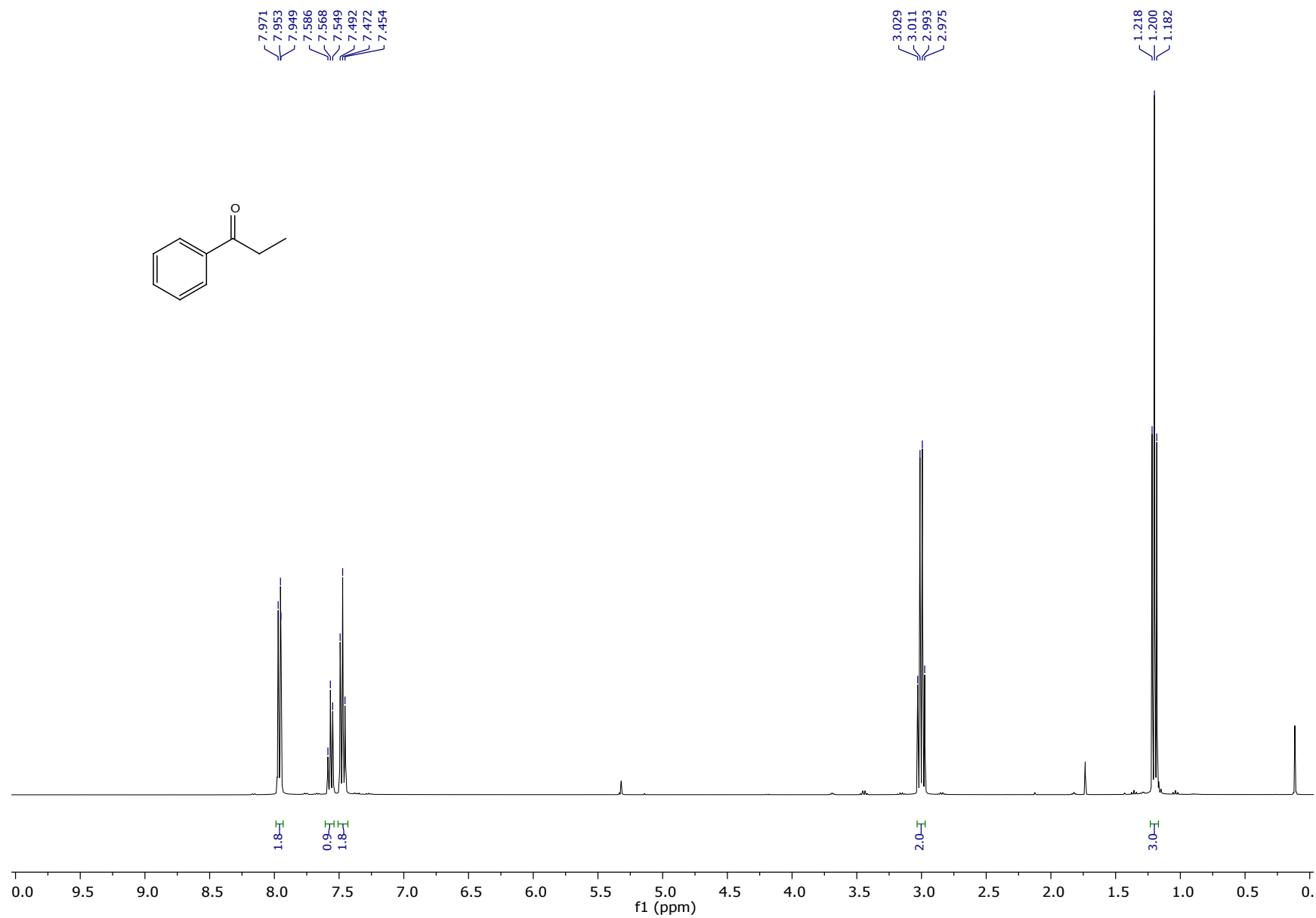


S54

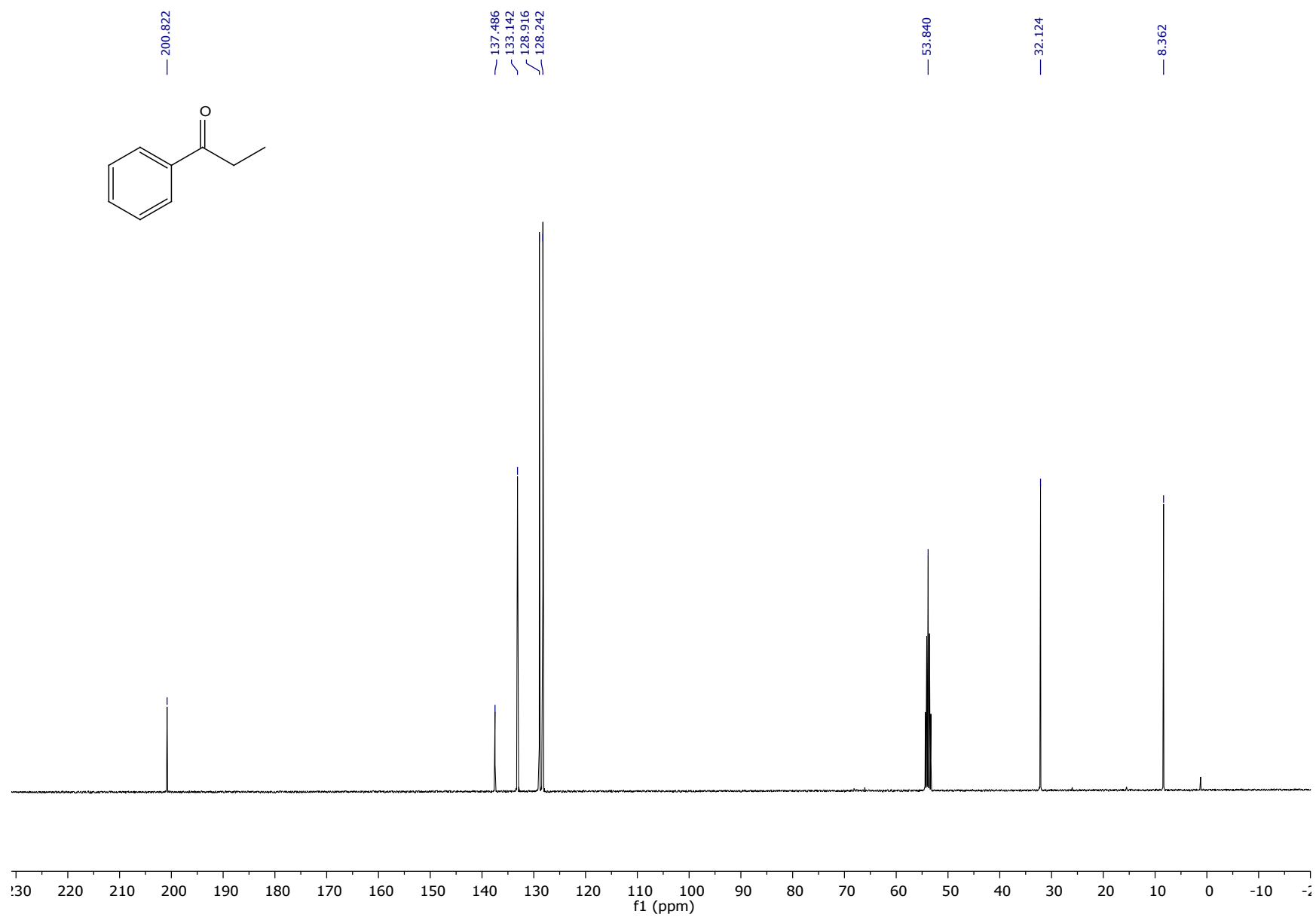


S55

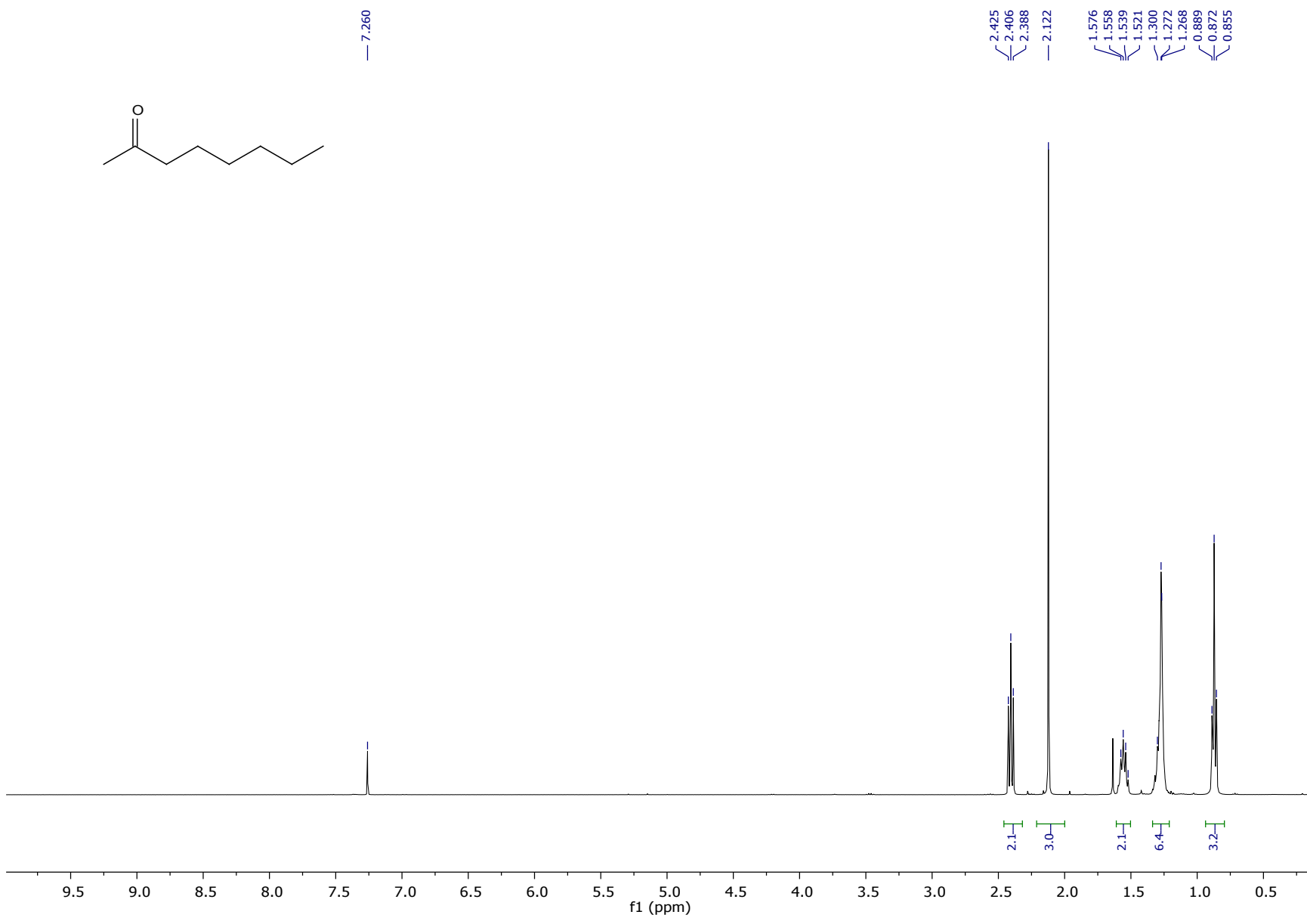




S56



S57



S58

