

# Relationship between the conformational degree of freedom of template-containing threads and slippage in the formation of [2]rotaxane building-blocks

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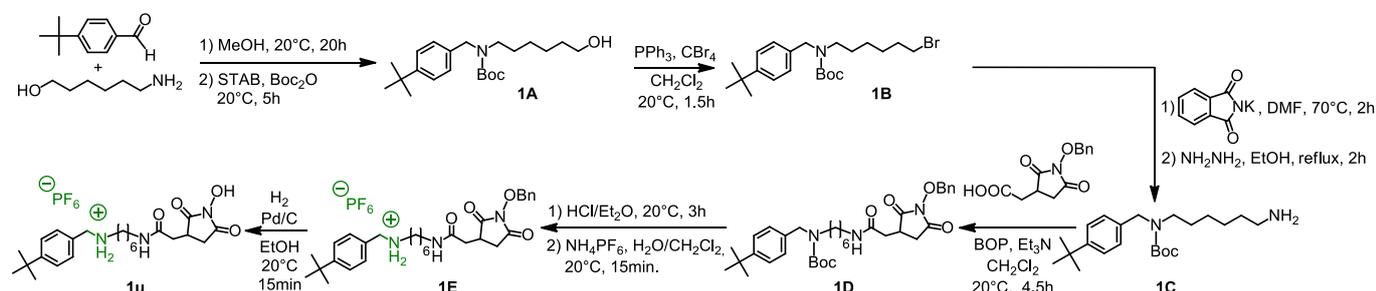
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## 1. General methods

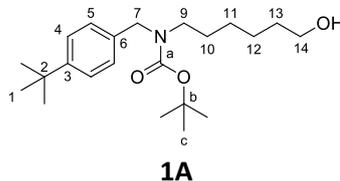
All reactions were carried out under an atmosphere of argon unless otherwise indicated. All reagents were used as received without further purification. Dichloromethane was distilled over P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and was degassed by bubbling Ar for 20 min. Analytical thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on silica gel 60 F254 plates. Compounds were visualized by dipping the plates in an ethanolic solution of 10% sulphuric acid, ninhydrine or an aqueous solution of KMnO<sub>4</sub>, followed by heating. <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were obtained on a spectrometer (respectively at 600.27, 500.17 or 400.13 MHz and 150.94, 125.77 or 100.62 MHz). Chemical shifts of <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>C NMR are given by using CHCl<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>3</sub>CN as references (7.27 ppm, 5.32 ppm, and 1.94 ppm respectively for <sup>1</sup>H spectrum, and 77.0 ppm, 54.0 ppm, and 118.26 ppm respectively for <sup>13</sup>C spectrum). <sup>1</sup>H assignments were deduced from 2D <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>1</sup>H NMR COSY experiments. <sup>13</sup>C assignments were deduced from 2D <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H NMR HSQC experiments. Coupling constants (J) are reported in hertz (Hz). Standard abbreviations indicating multiplicity were used as follows: s (singlet), br (broad), d (doublet), t (triplet), q (quartet), quint (quintuplet), m (multiplet). Mass spectra (MS) and high-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were recorded respectively on a ZQ Micromass apparatus and a Q-TOF Micro apparatus.

## 2. Synthesis of the semi rotaxane 1

### 2.1. General synthetic pathway of molecular axle 1u



### 2.2. Synthesis of the N-carbamoylated alcohol 1A



A solution of 4-*tert*-butylbenzaldehyde (4.18 mL, 25 mmol, 1 equiv.) and 6-aminohexanol (3.42 g, 30 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) in MeOH (105 mL) was stirred for 20h at room temperature. Boc<sub>2</sub>O (11.78 g, 54 mmol, 2.16 equiv.) and sodium triacetoxyborohydride "STAB" (5.75 g, 27 mmol, 1.1 equiv.) were then added and the reaction mixture was stirred for a further 5h at room temperature. MeOH was evaporated under *vacuum* and the obtained crude was purified by chromatography on a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 90:10 to 70:30) to give pure **1A** (6.13 g, 67% over 3 steps) as a light yellow oil.

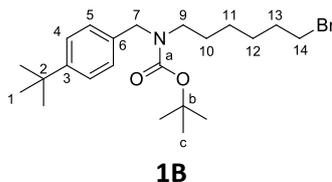
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.52 (PE/AcOEt 6/4).

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.34 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 7.9Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.19-7.12 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.44-4.34 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.60 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H8'-H9'</sub> = 6.4Hz, H<sub>14</sub>), 3.24-3.06 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.09 (br s, 1H, OH), 1.58-1.41 (m, 13H, H<sub>c</sub> H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>13</sub>), 1.40-1.21 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 155.7 (C<sub>a</sub>), 149.9 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.4 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.3 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.2 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.5 (C<sub>b</sub>), 62.6 & 62.4 (C<sub>14</sub>), 49.7 & 49.2 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.1 & 45.8 (C<sub>9</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 32.5 & 28.0 & 27.5 & 26.6 & 26.2 & 25.4 & 25.1 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub> C<sub>13</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI):** [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>37</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>Na<sup>+</sup>: 386.2671, found: 386.2679.

### 2.3. Synthesis of the *N*-carbamoylated bromo compound **1B**



To a solution of the alcohol **1A** (11.03 g, 29.6 mmol, 1 equiv.) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (150 mL) was added successively PPh<sub>3</sub> (15.5 g, 59 mmol, 2 equiv.) and CBr<sub>4</sub> (19.6 g, 59 mmol, 2 equiv.). The light brown solution was stirred for 1h30 at room temperature before being concentrated and added by a solution of PE/AcOEt 95:5. The precipitate was filtered off and the filtrate concentrated. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography using a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 100:0 to 75:35) to give the pure brominated compound **1B** (11.56 g, 89%) as a pale yellow oil.

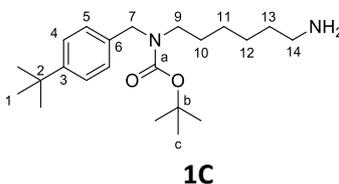
**R<sub>f</sub>:** 0.70 (PE/AcOEt 6/4).

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.35 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 7.9Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.21-7.14 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.45-4.36 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.39 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H8'-H9'</sub> = 6.6Hz, H<sub>14</sub>), 3.24-3.08 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 1.88-1.78 (m, 2H, H<sub>13</sub>), 1.56-1.37 (m, 13H, H<sub>c</sub> H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.33 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>), 1.33-1.23 (m, 2H, H<sub>11</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 155.6 (C<sub>a</sub>), 149.9 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.3 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.3 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.4 (C<sub>b</sub>), 49.9 & 49.3 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.1 (C<sub>9</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.7 (C<sub>14</sub>), 32.6 (C<sub>13</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 27.8 & 27.5 & 25.9 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI):** [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>36</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>BrNa<sup>+</sup>: 448.1827, found: 448.1824.

### 2.4. Synthesis of the primary amino compound **1C**



To a solution of the brominated compound **1B** (6.11 g, 14 mmol, 1 equiv.) in dry DMF (78 mL) was added potassium phthalimide (3.91 g, 21 mmol, 1.5 equiv.). The solution was stirred for 2h at 70°C, then cooled to room temperature, and partially concentrated. The resulting mixture was filtered through a celite pad. After abundant washing of the celite pad with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, the filtrate was concentrated to a pale orange oil, which was used for the next step without further purification.

The obtained oil was diluted in EtOH (140 mL) and added by hydrazine (2.47 g, 49 mmol, 3.5 equiv.). The reaction mixture was vigorously stirred for 2h at reflux. At the end of the reaction, an aqueous solution of KOH 1M (140 mL) was added and EtOH was evaporated. The aqueous layer was then

extracted three times with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3x70 mL). The combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated to give **1C** (5.097 g, 99%) as a pale yellow oil.

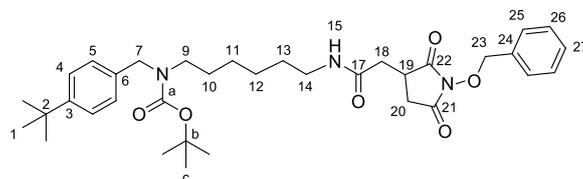
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.11 (PE/AcOEt 2/8)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.34 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 7.5Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.19-7.11 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.44-4.32 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.22-3.05 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.68 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-H13</sub> = 6.7Hz, H<sub>14</sub>), 1.74 (br s, NH<sub>2</sub>), 1.54-1.35 (m, 13H, H<sub>c</sub> H<sub>13</sub> H<sub>10</sub>), 1.34-1.21 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.30 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 155.9 (C<sub>b</sub>), 149.9 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.4 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.3 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.2 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.3 (C<sub>b</sub>), 49.8 & 49.2 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.1 (C<sub>9</sub>), 42.0 (C<sub>14</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 33.6 & 28.0 & 27.6 & 26.6 & 26.5 (C<sub>9</sub> C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>39</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>: 363.3012, found: 363.3011.

## 2.5. Synthesis of compound 1D



**1D**

The primary amine **1C** (1.124g, 3.1 mmol, 1 equiv.) and the *O*-benzyl-*N*-hydroxysuccinimide derivative (818 mg, 3.1 mmol, 1 equiv.) were dissolved in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (57 mL). To this solution was added successively BOP (1.790 g, 4.0 mmol, 1.3 equiv.) and Et<sub>3</sub>N (960 μL, 6.8 mmol, 2.2 equiv.). After checking the basicity of the solution, the mixture was stirred for 4h30 at RT. Then, an aqueous solution of HCl 1M was added until pH 1. The aqueous layer was extracted three times with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3x30 mL). The resulting organic layers were washed twice with a saturated aqueous NaHCO<sub>3</sub> solution (2x50 mL), then with brine (50 mL), dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated. The obtained crude was purified by chromatography on a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 60:40 to 40:60) to give the pure compound **1D** (1.647 g, 87%) as a white solid.

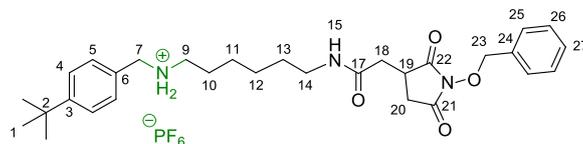
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.46 (PE/AcOEt 2/8)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>Cl, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.53-7.47 (m, 2H, H<sub>26</sub>), 7.39-7.35 (m, 3H, H<sub>25</sub> H<sub>27</sub>), 7.34 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 7.9 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.15 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 7.9 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 6.29 & 5.77 (2 br s, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 5.13 (s, 2H, H<sub>23</sub>), 4.42-4.34 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.24-3.06 (m, 4H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>14</sub>), 3.05-2.96 (m, 1H, H<sub>19</sub>), 2.84 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.9 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 9.1 Hz, H<sub>20b</sub>), 2.69-2.59 (m, 2H, H<sub>18</sub>), 2.50 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20a-H20b</sub> = 17.9Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20a-H19</sub> = 4.6Hz, H<sub>20a</sub>), 1.55-1.39 (m, 4H, H<sub>13</sub> H<sub>10</sub>), 1.45 (sl, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.35-1.20 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 173.8 (C<sub>17</sub>), 170.7 & 169.1 (C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 156.0 & 155.8 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.0 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.2 (C<sub>24</sub>), 133.4 (C<sub>6</sub>), 129.8 & 129.2 & 128.4 (C<sub>25-27</sub>), 127.1 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.6 (C<sub>b</sub>), 78.5 (C<sub>23</sub>), 49.6 & 49.1 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.1 & 45.2 (C<sub>9</sub>), 39.5 & 38.8 (C<sub>14</sub>), 35.4 (C<sub>18</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.6 (C<sub>19</sub>), 31.7 (C<sub>20</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 28.8 & 27.2 & 25.6 & 25.4 (C<sub>9</sub> C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI)**: [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>35</sub>H<sub>49</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub>Na<sup>+</sup>: 630.3519, found: 630.3523.

## 2.6. Synthesis of compound 1E



**1E**

To the *N*-carbamoylated compound **1D** (1.752 g, 2.88 mmol, 1 equiv.) was added a 1.8M solution of HCl in Et<sub>2</sub>O (40 mL, 72 mmol, 25 equiv.). After stirring for 3h at 0°C, the mixture was concentrated before being dissolved in a small volume of Et<sub>2</sub>O and concentrated three times. The resulting crude was diluted in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (20 mL), milli-Q water (20 mL) and NH<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> (1.400 g, 8.6 mmol, 3 equiv.) were added. The biphasic mixture was vigorously stirred at room temperature for 15 min. The aqueous layer was extracted three times with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3x15mL). The combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated. The resulting white solid was purified by chromatography on a silicagel column (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> /MeOH 98:2 to 94:6) to give the pure ammonium-containing product **1E** (1.628 g, 86%) as a white solid.

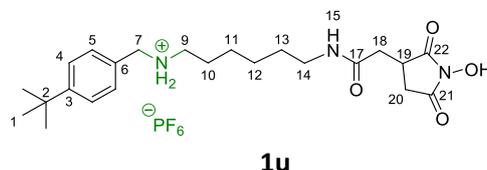
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.53 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.52-7.46 (m, 2H, H<sub>26</sub>), 7.50 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.4 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.42-7.36 (m, 3H, H<sub>25</sub> H<sub>27</sub>), 7.37 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.4 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 7.06-6.46 (br s, 2H, H<sub>8</sub>), 6.52 (br t, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 5.02 (s, 2H, H<sub>23</sub>), 4.10 (s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.11 (q, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-13</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>14-15</sub> = 6.6 Hz, H<sub>14</sub>), 3.03-2.95 (m, 3H, H<sub>19</sub> H<sub>9</sub>), 2.77 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20a-H20b</sub> = 17.8Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20a-H19</sub> = 9.2 Hz, H<sub>20a</sub>), 2.66 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H18a-H18b</sub> = 16.3Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H18a-H19</sub> = 5.9 Hz, H<sub>18a</sub>), 2.57 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H18b-H18a</sub> = 16.3Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H18b-H19</sub> = 4.6 Hz, H<sub>18b</sub>), 2.34 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.8Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 4.4 Hz, H<sub>20b</sub>), 1.63 (quint, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H10-H11</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H10-H9</sub> = 7.5 Hz, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.43 (quint, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>13-14</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>13-12</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 2H, H<sub>13</sub>), 1.38-1.25 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 175.3 & 172.3 & 170.9 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 153.7 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.2 (C<sub>24</sub>), 130.7 (C<sub>5</sub>), 130.6 & 130.0 & 129.4 (C<sub>25-27</sub>), 128.6 (C<sub>6</sub>), 126.9 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.0 (C<sub>23</sub>), 52.0 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.5 (C<sub>9</sub>), 39.4 (C<sub>14</sub>), 35.8 (C<sub>18</sub>), 35.2 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>19</sub>), 32.3 (C<sub>20</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 29.7 (C<sub>13</sub>), 26.3 & 26.2 & 26.1 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI)**: [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>42</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>: 508.3175, found: 508.3179.

## 2.7. Synthesis of the molecular axle **1u**



To a solution of **1E** (351 mg, 0.54 mmol, 1 equiv.) in EtOH (15 mL) was added 10%-Pd/C (300 mg). The solution was stirred 15 min under a hydrogen atmosphere before filtration through a celite pad. After abundant washing of the celite pad, the filtrate was concentrated to give the pure **1u** (297 mg, 98%) without any further purification.

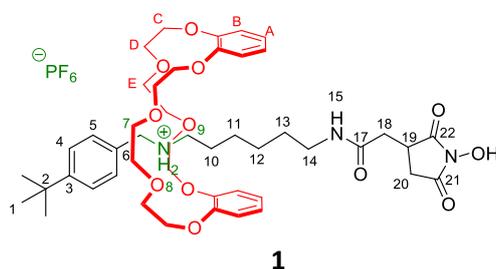
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.23 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.50 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.4 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.39 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.4 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 6.57 (br t, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 4.13 (s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.11 (q, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-H13</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-H15</sub> = 6.6 Hz, H<sub>14</sub>), 3.06-2.95 (m, 3H, H<sub>19</sub> H<sub>9</sub>), 2.75 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20a-H20b</sub> = 17.8 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20a-H19</sub> = 9.0 Hz, H<sub>20a</sub>), 2.63 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H18a-H18b</sub> = 16.2 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H18a-H19</sub> = 6.0 Hz, H<sub>18a</sub>), 2.57 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H18b-H18a</sub> = 16.2 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H18b-H19</sub> = 4.9 Hz, H<sub>18b</sub>), 2.34 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.8 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 4.4 Hz, H<sub>20b</sub>), 1.64 (quint, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H10-H11</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H10-H9</sub> = 7.5 Hz, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.43 (quint, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H13-H14</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H13-12</sub> = 6.9 Hz, 2H, H<sub>13</sub>), 1.38-1.23 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 175.7 & 172.8 & 171.3 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 153.6 (C<sub>3</sub>), 130.6 (C<sub>5</sub>), 128.6 (C<sub>6</sub>), 126.8 (C<sub>4</sub>), 52.0 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.5 (C<sub>9</sub>), 39.5 (C<sub>14</sub>), 35.7 (C<sub>18</sub>), 35.2 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>19</sub>), 32.1 (C<sub>20</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 29.5 (C<sub>13</sub>), 26.3 & 26.2 & 26.0 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI)**: [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>36</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>: 418.2706, found: 418.2694.

## 2.8. Preparation of semi rotaxane 1



**1**

A 0.12 M solution of the transporter thread **1u** (53.5 mg, 0.095 mmol, 1 equiv.) and DB24C8 (128.2 mg, 0.286 mmol, 3 equiv.) in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (2.6 mL) was stirred 12h at rt before being concentrated. The resulting solid was purified by chromatography on lipophilic sephadex LH20 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) to afford pure **1** (86.5 mg, 90%) as a white powder.

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.69 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH 9/1)

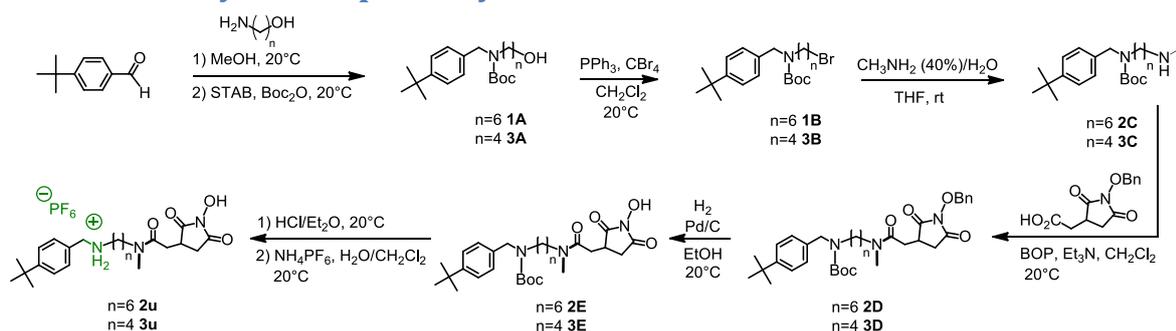
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.29 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.4Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 7.22 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.4Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.18-7.03 (br s, 2H, H<sub>8</sub>), 6.91 (s, 8H, H<sub>A</sub> H<sub>B</sub>), 6.37 (br t, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 4.57-4.51 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 4.20-4.13 & 4.10-4.02 (2m, 2x4H, H<sub>C</sub> H<sub>C'</sub>), 3.85-3.75 (m, 8H, H<sub>D</sub> H<sub>D'</sub>), 3.68-3.59 & 3.56-3.47 (2m, 2x4H, H<sub>E</sub> H<sub>E'</sub>), 3.31-3.21 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 3.03-2.92 (m, 3H, H<sub>19</sub> H<sub>14</sub>), 2.75 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20a-H20b</sub> = 17.4Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20a-H19</sub> = 8.9Hz, H<sub>20a</sub>), 2.65-2.52 (m, 2H, H<sub>18</sub>), 2.34 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.9Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 4.1Hz, H<sub>20b</sub>), 1.49-1.39 (m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.23 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>), 1.20-1.13 (m, 2H, H<sub>13</sub>), 1.07-0.98 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 175.4 & 172.5 (C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 170.5 (C<sub>17</sub>), 153.0 (C<sub>3</sub>), 148.5 (C<sub>IV</sub> arom DB24C8), 130.5 (C<sub>6</sub> C<sub>5</sub>), 126.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 122.4 & 113.6 (C<sub>A</sub> C<sub>B</sub>), 71.6 (C<sub>E</sub> C<sub>E'</sub>), 71.1 (C<sub>D</sub> C<sub>D'</sub>), 69.0 (C<sub>C</sub> C<sub>C'</sub>), 52.8 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.6 (C<sub>9</sub>), 39.6 (C<sub>14</sub>), 35.8 (C<sub>20</sub>), 35.1 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.5 (C<sub>19</sub>), 32.4 (C<sub>18</sub>), 31.4 (C<sub>1</sub>), 29.7 (C<sub>13</sub>), 27.1 (C<sub>10</sub>), 26.7 & 26.5 (C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

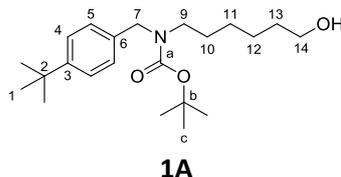
**HRMS (ESI)**: [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>47</sub>H<sub>68</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub><sup>+</sup>: 866.4803, found: 866.4799.

## 3. Synthesis of the semi rotaxanes 2 and 3

### 3.1. General synthetic pathway for molecular axles 2u and 3u

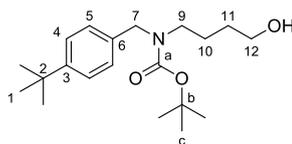


### 3.2. Synthesis of the N-carbamoylated alcohols 1A and 3A



**1A**

Synthesis of **1A** has already been described in paragraph 2.2



**3A**

A solution of 4-*tert*-butylbenzaldehyde (1.92 mL, 25 mmol, 1 equiv.) and 4-aminobutanol (1.02 g, 11.5 mmol, 1 equiv.) in MeOH (30 mL) was stirred for 19h at room temperature. Boc<sub>2</sub>O (3.01 g, 13.8 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) and sodium triacetoxyborohydride "STAB" (4.87 g, 23 mmol, 2 equiv.) were then added and the reaction mixture was stirred for a further 4h30 at room temperature. MeOH was evaporated under *vacuum* and the obtained crude was purified by chromatography on a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 85:15 to 70:30) to give pure **3A** (2.33 g, 61% over 3 steps) as a colorless oil.

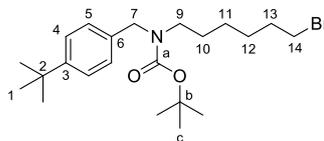
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.42 (PE/EtOAc 6/4)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.34 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.16 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.40 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.62 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H12-H11</sub> = 5.9 Hz, H<sub>12</sub>), 3.28-3.12 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 1.64-1.50 (m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.57-1.48 (m, 2H, H<sub>11</sub>), 1.47 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.32 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 155.9 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.0 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.3 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.0 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.6 (C<sub>b</sub>), 62.4 (C<sub>12</sub>), 49.9 & 49.3 (C<sub>7</sub>), 45.9 (C<sub>9</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 29.6 (C<sub>11</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 24.2 (C<sub>10</sub>).

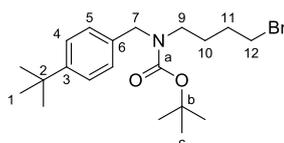
**MS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>34</sub>NO<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>: 336.25, found: 336.21.

### 3.3. Synthesis of the N-carbamoylated bromo compounds **1B** and **3B**



**1B**

Synthesis of **1B** has already been described in paragraph 2.3



**3B**

To a solution of the alcohol **3A** (413 mg, 1.23 mmol, 1 equiv.) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (12 mL) was added successively PPh<sub>3</sub> (645 mg, 2.46 mmol, 2 equiv.) and CBr<sub>4</sub> (836 mg, 2.46 mmol, 2 equiv.). The light brown solution was stirred for 30 min at room temperature before being concentrated. The obtained residue was purified by chromatography using a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 90:10) to give the pure brominated compound **3B** (460 mg, 94%) as a yellow oil.

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.43 (PE/EtOAc 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.35 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.17 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.41 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.39 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H12-H11</sub> = 6.1 Hz, H<sub>12</sub>), 3.28-3.12 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 1.89-1.75 (m, 2H, H<sub>11</sub>), 1.72-1.59 (m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.49 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.33 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

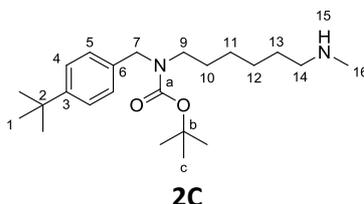
**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 155.8 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.1 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.2 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.4 & 127.1 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.4 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.7 (C<sub>b</sub>), 49.9 & 49.3 (C<sub>7</sub>), 45.2 (C<sub>9</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.3 (C<sub>12</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 30.0 (C<sub>11</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 26.4 (C<sub>10</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>33</sub>BrNO<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>: 398.17, found: 398.12.

### 3.4. Synthesis of the N-methyl amines 2C and 3C

#### General procedure:

To a 40% solution of methylamine in water (35 equiv) in THF (5 mL) was added dropwise a solution of bromide **2-3B** (1 equiv) in THF (10 mL). The mixture was stirred overnight before addition of dichloromethane (30 mL) and NaOH 1M (30 mL). The two layers were partitioned and the aqueous layer was further extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 30 mL). The organic layers were combined, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated to give the amines **2-3C** as a colourless oil without any further purification.



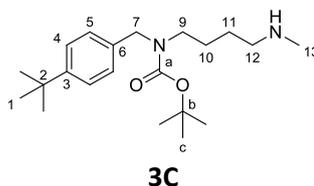
Methyl amine **2C** (1.17 g, quantitative) was obtained as a colorless oil from bromide **1B** (2.33g, 3.12 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.17 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.33 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.2 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.15 (br d, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 6.95 (br s, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 4.38 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.21-2.95 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.85 & 2.41 (2br t, 2H, H<sub>14</sub>), 2.62 & 2.27 (2s, 3H, H<sub>16</sub>), 1.83-1.73 & 1.56-1.29 (2m, 4H, H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>13</sub>), 1.46 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.31 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>), 1.32-1.20 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 156.0 & 155.6 (C<sub>a</sub>), 149.9 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.4 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.3 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 80.7 & 79.4 (C<sub>b</sub>), 55.3 & 49.8 & 49.5 & 49.3 (C<sub>7</sub> C<sub>14</sub>), 46.2 & 46.1 & 46.0 (C<sub>9</sub>), 40.4 (C<sub>16-cis</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.1 (C<sub>16-trans</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 28.0 & 27.7 & 27.5 & 27.1 & 26.7 & 26.4 & 26.2 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub> C<sub>13</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>41</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>: 377.32, found: 377.30.



Methyl amine **3C** (376 mg, 94%) was obtained as a colorless oil from bromide **3B** (440 mg, 1.15 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.15 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.34 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.16 (br d, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.40 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.27-3.10 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.55 (t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H12-H11</sub> = 6.9 Hz, H<sub>13</sub>), 2.41 (s, 3H, H<sub>12</sub>), 1.58-1.38 (m, 4H, H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>11</sub>), 1.47 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.32 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

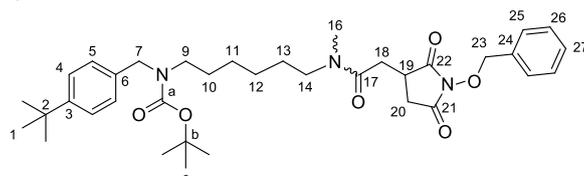
**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 155.8 & 155.4 (C<sub>a</sub>), 149.8 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.3 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.2 & 126.8 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.1 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.2 (C<sub>b</sub>), 51.5 (C<sub>12</sub>), 49.8 & 49.2 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.0 (C<sub>9</sub>), 36.1 (C<sub>13</sub>), 34.2 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.2 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.3 (C<sub>c</sub>), 26.8 (C<sub>11</sub>), 25.7 & 25.4 (C<sub>10</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>37</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>: 349.28, found: 349.25.

### 3.5. Synthesis of compounds 2D and 3D

#### General procedure:

The primary amine **2-3C** (1 equiv.) and the *O*-benzyl-*N*-hydroxysuccinimide derivative (1 equiv.) were dissolved in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (20 mL for 1.15 mmol of amine). To this solution was added successively BOP (1.3 equiv.) and Et<sub>3</sub>N (2.2 equiv.). After checking the basicity of the solution, the mixture was stirred for 4h30 at room temperature. Then, an 1M aqueous solution of HCl was added until the pH reached 1. The aqueous layer was extracted three times with dichloromethane (3 x 30 mL) and the resulting organic layers were washed with a saturated NaHCO<sub>3</sub> aqueous solution (3 x 30 mL). The aqueous layer was then extracted with dichloromethane (3 x 30 mL) and the combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated. The crude was purified by chromatography on a silica gel column (PE/AcOEt 1/1) to give compound **2-3D**.



**2D**

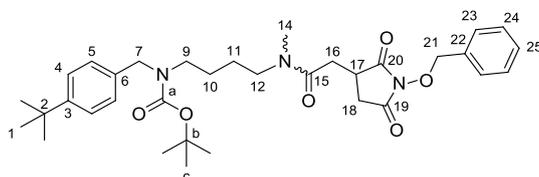
Compound **2D** (1.54 g, 79%) was obtained as a white solid from methyl amine **2C** (1.17 g, 3.12 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.77 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7,55-7.50 (m, 2H, H<sub>25</sub>), 7.40-7.31 (m, 5H, H<sub>4</sub> H<sub>26</sub> H<sub>27</sub>), 7.19-7.12 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 5.19-5.11 (m, 2H, H<sub>23</sub>), 4.45-4.33 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.40-3.32 & 3.28-3.05 (2m, 4H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>14</sub>), 3.04-2.97 (m, 1H, H<sub>19</sub>), 2.93 & 2.88 (2s, 3H, H<sub>16-trans</sub> H<sub>16-cis</sub>), 2.92-2.81 (m, 1H, H<sub>20a</sub>), 2.82-2.70 (m, 2H, H<sub>18</sub>), 2.48 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.8 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 4.7 Hz, H<sub>20b</sub>), 1.58-1.39 (m, 13H, H<sub>c</sub> H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>13</sub>), 1.32 & 1.31 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>), 1.32-1.21 (m, 4H, H<sub>11</sub> H<sub>12</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 174.1 (C<sub>17</sub>), 171.0 & 170.9 & 168.7 & 168.7 (C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 156.0 & 155.6 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.0 & 149.9 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.4 (C<sub>6</sub>), 133.7 & 133.7 (C<sub>24</sub>), 129.9 & 129.8 (C<sub>25</sub>), 129.1 & 129.1 (C<sub>27</sub>), 128.4 (C<sub>26</sub>), 127.3 & 126.9 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 79.4 & 78.6 (C<sub>b</sub>), 78.4 (C<sub>23</sub>), 49.9 & 49.7 & 49.2 & 47.7 (C<sub>7</sub> C<sub>14</sub>), 46.1 & 46.0 (C<sub>9</sub>), 35.0 (C<sub>16-trans</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.8 (C<sub>19</sub>), 33.3 & 33.2 (C<sub>16-cis</sub> C<sub>18</sub>), 32.4 & 32.4 (C<sub>20</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 28.2 & 28.0 & 27.6 & 27.1 & 26.5 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub> C<sub>13</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>36</sub>H<sub>52</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup>: 622.39, found: 622.37.



**3D**

Compound **3D** (602 mg, 88%) was obtained as a yellow oil from methyl amine **3C** (404 mg, 1.15 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.51 (PE/AcOEt 2/8)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7,55-7.50 (m, 2H, H<sub>23</sub>), 7.40-7.31 (m, 5H, H<sub>4</sub> H<sub>24</sub> H<sub>25</sub>), 7.19-7.12 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 5.18-5.11 (m, 2H, H<sub>21</sub>), 4.44-4.33 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.43-3.32 & 3.28-3.09 (2m, 4H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>12</sub>), 3.04-2.97 (m, 1H, H<sub>17</sub>), 2.91 & 2.85 (2s, 3H, H<sub>14-trans</sub> H<sub>14-cis</sub>), 2.91-2.80 (m, 1H, H<sub>18a</sub>), 2.85-2.70 (m, 2H, H<sub>16</sub>), 2.51-2.44 (m, 1H, H<sub>18b</sub>), 1.54-1.40 (m, 13H, H<sub>c</sub> H<sub>10</sub> H<sub>11</sub>), 1.32 & 1.31 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 174.1 (C<sub>15</sub>), 171.0 & 168.8 (C<sub>19</sub> C<sub>20</sub>), 155.8 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.3 & 150.0 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.4 & 135.2 (C<sub>6</sub>), 133.7 & 133.7 (C<sub>22</sub>), 129.9 & 129.9 (C<sub>23</sub>), 129.1 & 129.1 (C<sub>25</sub>), 128.4



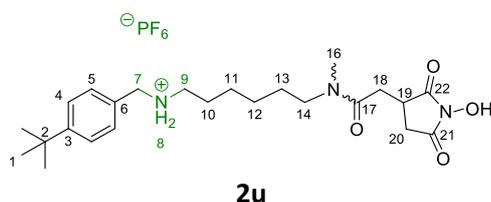
49.8 & 49.6 & 47.7 (C<sub>7</sub> C<sub>12</sub>), 45.8 & 45.5 (C<sub>9</sub>), 35.2 (C<sub>14-trans</sub>), 34.4 & 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.8 & 33.6 & 33.5 & 32.9 (C<sub>14-cis</sub> C<sub>16</sub> C<sub>17</sub>), 32.1 & 32.1 (C<sub>18</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>), 25.4 & 25.1 & 24.8 & 24.4 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub>).

**MS (ESI):** [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>42</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup>: 504.31, found: 504.29.

### 3.7. Synthesis of the molecular axles **2u** and **3u**

*General procedure:*

To the *N*-carbamoylated compound **2-3D** (1 equiv.) was added a 1.8M solution of HCl in Et<sub>2</sub>O (25 equiv.). After stirring for 2h at 0°C, the mixture was concentrated before being dissolved in a small volume of Et<sub>2</sub>O and concentrated three times. The resulting crude was diluted in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (20 mL), milli-Q water (20 mL) and NH<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> (3 equiv.) were added. The biphasic mixture was vigorously stirred at room temperature for 30 min. The aqueous layer was extracted three times with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3x15mL). The combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated to give the pure ammonium-containing product **2u-3u**.



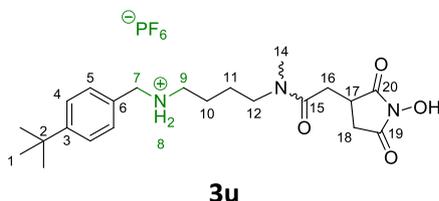
Compound **2u** (907 mg, 89%) was obtained as a white solid without any purification from compound **2D** (869 mg, 1.60 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>:** 0.43 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.53-7.48 (m, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.39 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 6.91 (br s, 2H, H<sub>8</sub>), 4.14 & 4.13 (2s, 2H, H<sub>7-trans</sub> H<sub>7-cis</sub>), 3.29 (t, 0.65x2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-H13</sub> = 7.2 Hz, H<sub>14-trans</sub>) & 3.24 (td, 0.35x2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H14-H13</sub> = 7.2 Hz, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>H14-H12</sub> = 3.6 Hz, H<sub>14-cis</sub>), 3.05-2.96 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 3.01-2.95 (m, 1H, H<sub>19</sub>), 2.91 & 2.79 (2s, 3H, H<sub>16-trans</sub> H<sub>16-cis</sub>), 2.89-2.78 (m, 2H, H<sub>18</sub>), 2.79 & 2.75 (2dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20a-H20b</sub> = 17.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20a-H19</sub> = 9 Hz, H<sub>20a-cis</sub> H<sub>20a-trans</sub>), 2.33 & 2.35 (2dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H20b-H20a</sub> = 17.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H20b-H19</sub> = 4.5 Hz, H<sub>20b-cis</sub> H<sub>20b-trans</sub>), 1.70-1.60 (m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.55 & 1.47 (2quint., 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H13-H12</sub> = <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H13-H14</sub> = 7.2 Hz, H<sub>13-cis</sub> H<sub>13-trans</sub>), 1.40-1.32 (m, 2H, H<sub>11</sub>), 1.32 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>), 1.35-1.25 (m, 2H, H<sub>12-cis</sub>), 1.28-1.17 (m, 2H, H<sub>12-trans</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K):** δ ppm = 176.1 & 175.9 (C<sub>17</sub>), 173.0 & 172.9 & 171.0 & 170.5 (C<sub>21</sub> C<sub>22</sub>), 153.8 (C<sub>3</sub>), 130.7 (C<sub>5</sub>), 128.7 & 128.6 (C<sub>6</sub>), 126.9 (C<sub>4</sub>), 52.1 & 52.0 (C<sub>7</sub>), 50.0 & 47.3 (C<sub>14</sub>), 48.7 & 48.5 (C<sub>9</sub>), 35.3 (C<sub>16-trans</sub>), 34.6 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>19</sub>), 34.0 (C<sub>18</sub>), 33.5 & 33.3 (C<sub>16-cis</sub>), 32.7 & 32.6 (C<sub>20</sub>), 31.4 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.3 (C<sub>13-cis</sub>), 27.2 (C<sub>13-trans</sub>), 26.6 & 26.5 & 26.3 & 26.1 & 26.0 (C<sub>10</sub> C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

**HRMS (ESI):** [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>38</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>: 432.2861, found: 432.2862.



Compound **3u** (629 mg, 99%) was obtained as a white solid without any purification from compound **3D** (584 mg, 1.16 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>:** 0.52 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.53-7.47 (m, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.40 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.14-4.08 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.38-3.31 & 3.30-3.21 (2m, 2H, H<sub>12</sub>) 3.09-2.98 (m, 3H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>17</sub>), 2.93 & 2.79 (2s, 3H, H<sub>14-trans</sub> H<sub>14-cis</sub>), 2.89-2.78 (m, 2H, H<sub>16</sub>), 2.79-2.71 (m, 1H, H<sub>18a</sub>), 2.37 & 2.34 (2dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H18b-H18a</sub> =

17.7 Hz,  $^3J_{H_{18b}-H_{17}} = 4.5$  Hz,  $H_{18b}$ ), 1.78-1.70 & 1.68-1.49 (2m, 2H,  $H_{10}$   $H_{11}$ ), 1.32 & 1.31 (2s, 9H,  $H_{1-cis}$   $H_{1-trans}$ ).

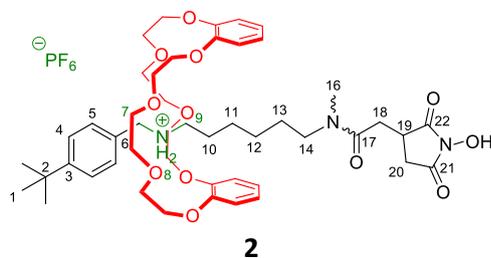
**$^{13}C$  NMR (125 MHz,  $CD_3CN$ , 298K):**  $\delta$  ppm = 176.2 & 176.0 ( $C_{15}$ ), 173.0 & 171.9 & 170.6 ( $C_{19}$   $C_{20}$ ), 153.9 & 153.7 ( $C_3$ ), 130.7 ( $C_5$ ), 128.8 ( $C_6$ ), 126.9 ( $C_4$ ), 52.1 & 52.1 ( $C_7$ ), 49.4 & 46.5 ( $C_{12}$ ), 48.1 ( $C_9$ ), 35.5 & 35.3 ( $C_{14-trans}$ ), 34.5 & 34.5 ( $C_2$   $C_{17}$ ), 33.9 ( $C_{16}$ ), 33.5 & 33.3 ( $C_{14-cis}$ ), 32.7 ( $C_{18}$ ), 31.4 ( $C_1$ ), 25.6 & 24.5 & 23.7 & 22.9 ( $C_{10}$   $C_{11}$ ).

**HRMS (ESI):**  $[M-PF_6]^+$  calcd for  $C_{22}H_{34}N_3O_4^+$ : 404.2553, found: 404.2549.

### 3.8. Synthesis of the semi rotaxanes 2 and 3

*General procedure:*

To a 0.12M solution of molecular axle **2u/3u** (1 equiv) in amylene-stabilized dichloromethane was added dibenzo-24-crown-8 (3 equiv). The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature before being concentrated. The crude residue was extensively triturated with toluene (20 x 10 mL) in order to remove most of the DB24C8 excess before being purified by chromatography on a lipophilic sephadex LH20 ( $CH_2Cl_2$ ) to give pure semi rotaxane **2/3** as a white solid.



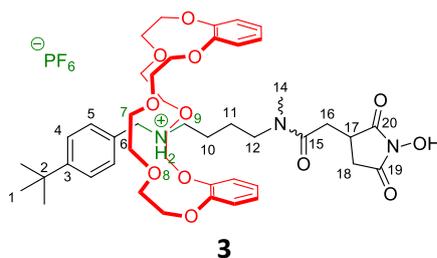
Semi rotaxane **2** (807 mg, 64%) was obtained after 209h of stirring from compound **2u** (707 mg, 1.22 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>:** 0.67 ( $CH_2Cl_2/CH_3OH$  9/1)

**$^1H$  NMR (500 MHz,  $CD_3CN$ , 298k):**  $\delta$  ppm = 7.32-7.27 (m, 2H,  $H_5$ ), 7.25-7.20 (m, 2H,  $H_4$ ), 7.13 (br s, 2H,  $H_8$ ), 6.94-6.88 (m, 8H,  $H_A$   $H_B$ ), 4.57-4.51 (m, 2H,  $H_7$ ), 4.21-4.13 & 4.10-4.02 (2m, 8H,  $H_C$   $H_C'$ ), 3.86-3.75 (m, 8H,  $H_D$   $H_D'$ ), 3.69-3.60 & 3.57-3.48 (2m, 8H,  $H_E$   $H_E'$ ), 3.34-3.23 (2m, 2H,  $H_9$ ), 3.17-3.03 (m, 2H,  $H_{14}$ ), 3.01-2.94 (m, 1H,  $H_{19}$ ), 2.86 & 2.75 (2s, 3H,  $H_{16-trans}$   $H_{16-cis}$ ), 2.85-2.69 (m, 3H,  $H_{18}$   $H_{20a}$ ), 2.31 (dd, 1H,  $^2J_{H_{20b}-H_{20a}} = 17.6$  Hz,  $^3J_{H_{20b}-H_{19}} = 4.3$  Hz,  $H_{20b}$ ), 1.49-1.39 (m, 2H,  $H_{10}$ ), 1.30-1.15 (m, 2H,  $H_{13}$ ), 1.23 & 1.24 (2s, 9H,  $H_{1-cis}$   $H_{1-trans}$ ), 1.08-1.00 (m, 2H,  $H_{11}$ ), 1.02-0.92 (m, 2H,  $H_{12}$ ).

**$^{13}C$  NMR (125 MHz,  $CD_3CN$ , 298K):**  $\delta$  ppm = 175.9 ( $C_{17}$ ), 173.0 & 170.5 & 170.3 ( $C_{21}$   $C_{22}$ ), 153.1 & 153.0 ( $C_3$ ), 148.5 ( $C_{IV}$   $DB_{24}C_8$ ), 130.4 ( $C_5$   $C_6$ ), 126.4 & 126.3 ( $C_4$ ), 122.4 & 122.3 & 113.6 ( $C_A$   $C_B$ ), 71.5 ( $C_E$   $C_E'$ ), 71.1 ( $C_D$   $C_D'$ ), 69.0 ( $C_C$   $C_C'$ ), 52.7 ( $C_7$ ), 50.0 ( $C_{14-cis}$ ), 49.6 ( $C_9$ ), 47.8 ( $C_{14-trans}$ ), 35.4 & 35.1 ( $C_{16-trans}$ ), 34.6 & 34.5 ( $C_2$   $C_{19}$ ), 34.0 ( $C_{18}$ ), 33.5 & 33.3 ( $C_{16-cis}$ ), 32.8 & 32.7 ( $C_{20}$ ), 31.4 ( $C_1$ ), 28.4 ( $C_{13-cis}$ ), 27.3 & 27.2 & 27.1 ( $C_{10}$   $C_{13-trans}$ ), 26.8 & 26.6 & 26.6 ( $C_{11}$   $C_{12}$ ).

**HRMS (ESI):**  $[M-PF_6]^+$  calcd for  $C_{48}H_{70}N_3O_{12}^+$ : 880.4967, found: 880.4959.



Semi rotaxane **3** (694 mg, 60%) was obtained after 136h of stirring from compound **3u** (629 mg, 1.15 mmol).

**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.63 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

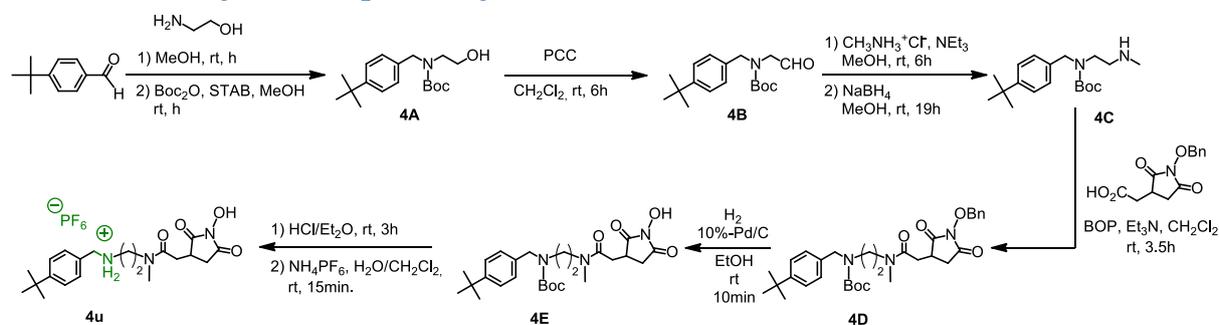
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.32-7.24 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 7.21 (br d, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.15 (br s, 2H, H<sub>8</sub>), 6.96-6.88 (m, 8H, H<sub>A</sub> H<sub>B</sub>), 4.55-4.48 (m, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 4.22-4.13 & 4.11-4.02 (2m, 8H, H<sub>C</sub> H<sub>C'</sub>), 3.85-3.75 (m, 8H, H<sub>D</sub> H<sub>D'</sub>), 3.68-3.61 & 3.56-3.48 (2m, 8H, H<sub>E</sub> H<sub>E'</sub>), 3.37-3.25 (2m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 3.13-2.90 (3m, 3H, H<sub>12</sub> H<sub>17</sub>), 2.70 & 2.58 (2s, 3H, H<sub>14-trans</sub> H<sub>14-cis</sub>), 2.80-2.52 (m, 3H, H<sub>16</sub> H<sub>18a</sub>), 2.30-2.22 (m, 1H, H<sub>18b</sub>), 1.45-1.35 (m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 1.25 & 1.23 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1-cis</sub> H<sub>1-trans</sub>), 1.30-1.16 (m, 2H, H<sub>11</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K)**: δ ppm = 175.7 & 175.7 (C<sub>15</sub>), 172.7 & 170.6 & 170.2 (C<sub>19</sub> C<sub>20</sub>), 153.2 & 153.0 (C<sub>3</sub>), 148.5 (C<sub>IV DB24C8</sub>), 130.5 & 130.5 & 130.6 (C<sub>5</sub> C<sub>6</sub>), 126.4 & 126.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 122.5 & 122.4 & 113.7 & 113.6 (C<sub>A</sub> C<sub>B</sub>), 71.5 (C<sub>E</sub> C<sub>E'</sub>), 71.1 (C<sub>D</sub> C<sub>D'</sub>), 69.1 & 69.1 (C<sub>C</sub> C<sub>C'</sub>), 52.8 & 52.8 (C<sub>7</sub>), 49.4 & 49.4 & 49.2 (C<sub>9</sub> C<sub>12-cis</sub>), 47.4 (C<sub>12-trans</sub>), 35.2 & 35.1 (C<sub>14-trans</sub>), 34.5 & 34.3 (C<sub>2</sub> C<sub>19</sub>), 33.9 (C<sub>16</sub>), 33.4 & 33.2 (C<sub>14-cis</sub>), 32.7 & 32.6 (C<sub>18</sub>), 31.4 (C<sub>1</sub>), 25.6 & 24.9 & 24.9 & 24.6 (C<sub>11</sub> C<sub>12</sub>).

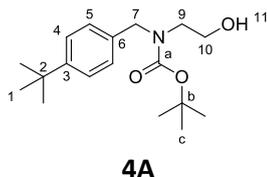
**HRMS (ESI)**: [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>46</sub>H<sub>66</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub><sup>+</sup>: 852.4651, found: 852.4646.

## 4. Synthesis of the semi rotaxane 4

### 4.1. General synthetic pathway of molecular axle 4u



### 4.2. Synthesis of the N-carbamoylated alcohol 4A



A solution of 4-*tert*-butylbenzaldehyde (2.70 mL, 16.2 mmol, 1.01 equiv.) and 2-aminoethanol (0.98 g, 16 mmol, 1 equiv.) in MeOH (27 mL) was stirred for 7h at room temperature. Boc<sub>2</sub>O (3.49 g, 16 mmol, 1 equiv.) and sodium triacetoxyborohydride “STAB” (3.39 g, 16 mmol, 1 equiv.) were then added and the reaction mixture was stirred for a further 12h at room temperature. MeOH was

evaporated under *vacuum* and the obtained crude was purified by chromatography on a silicagel column (PE/AcOEt 85/15) to give pure **4A** (6.13 g, 64% over 3 steps) as a colorless oil which solidified at low temperature.

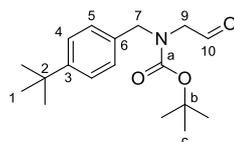
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.68 (PE/EtOAc 7/3)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 7.36 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.2 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.18 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H5-H4</sub> = 8.2 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.45 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.70 (br t, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 3.39 (br s, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 3.11 (br s, 1H, H<sub>11</sub>), 1.49 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.32 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 157.4 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.3 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.0 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.1 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.4 (C<sub>4</sub>), 80.5 (C<sub>b</sub>), 62.1 & 61.2 (C<sub>10</sub>), 51.6 & 50.6 (C<sub>7</sub>), 49.6 & 49.0 (C<sub>9</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>29</sub>NNaO<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>: 330.20, found: 330.20.

### 4.3. Synthesis of the N-carbamoylated aldehyde **4B**



**4B**

To a solution of alcohol **4A** (3.14 g, 10.2 mmol, 1 equiv.) in dichloromethane (100 mL) was added pyridinium chlorochromate "PCC" (8.70 g, 40.4 mmol, 4 equiv.). The orange solution was stirred for 5h at room temperature before being concentrated. The crude was purified by chromatography on a silica gel column (PE/EtOAc 15/85) to give pure aldehyde **4B** (1.14 g, 37%) as a colorless oil.

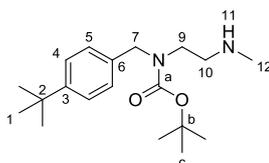
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.79 (PE/EtOAc 3/7)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 9.50 & 9.44 (2br s, 1H, H<sub>10</sub>), 7.40-7.30 (m, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.24-7.11 (2br d, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.53 & 4.48 (2br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.92 & 3.79 (2br s, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 1.52 & 1.48 (2br s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.32 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K)**: δ ppm = 199.1 & 199.0 (C<sub>10</sub>), 155.9 & 155.4 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.7 (C<sub>3</sub>), 134.1 & 134.0 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.9 & 127.4 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.6 (C<sub>4</sub>), 80.9 (C<sub>b</sub>), 56.3 & 56.2 (C<sub>9</sub>), 51.6 & 51.1 (C<sub>7</sub>), 34.5 (C<sub>2</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.3 & 28.2 (C<sub>c</sub>).

**MS (ESI)**: [M-Boc+2H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>20</sub>NO<sup>+</sup>: 206.15, found: 206.15.

### 4.4. Synthesis of the N-methyl amine **4C**



**4C**

To a solution of aldehyde **4B** (0.99 g, 3.3 mmol, 1 equiv.) and methylamine hydrochloride (1.10 g, 16.3 mmol, 5 equiv.) in MeOH (12 mL) was added triethylamine (4.5 mL, 29.6 mmol, 9.3 equiv.) and the mixture was stirred for 6h at room temperature. The solution was then cooled with an ice bath before addition of sodium borohydride (0.13 g, 3.3 mmol, 1 equiv.). The reaction mixture was allowed to warm up until room temperature and stirred for 19h before being concentrated. The crude was then purified by chromatography on a silica gel column (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 95/5) to give pure N-methylamine **4C** (0.59 g, 56 %) as a yellow viscous oil.

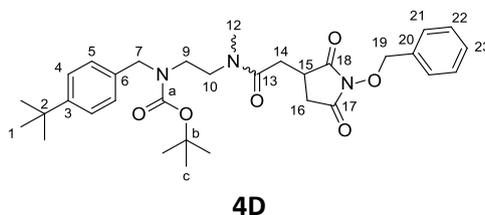
**R<sub>f</sub>**: 0.54 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 96/4)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.32 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H4-H5</sub> = 8.2 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.18 (br d, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.43 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.57 (br t, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H10-H9</sub> = 6.5 Hz, H<sub>10</sub>), 3.14-2.90 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.64 (br s, 3H, H<sub>12</sub>), 1.47 (s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.29 (s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 156.4 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.5 (C<sub>3</sub>), 134.3 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.3 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.6 (C<sub>4</sub>), 81.1 (C<sub>b</sub>), 51.4 & 50.4 (C<sub>7</sub>), 47.7 & 47.1 (C<sub>9</sub>), 43.1 (C<sub>10</sub>), 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 32.9 (C<sub>12</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.3 (C<sub>c</sub>).

**MS (ESI):** [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>33</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup>: 321.25, found: 321.25.

#### 4.5. Synthesis of compounds 4D



A solution of *N*-methylamine **4C** (0.30 g, 0.9 mmol, 1 equiv) and *O*-benzyl-NHS acid derivative (0.24 g, 0.9 mmol, 1 equiv) in dichloromethane (16 mL) was cooled with an ice bath before successive addition of BOP (0.53 g, 1.2 mmol, 1.3 equiv) and Et<sub>3</sub>N (0.20 g, 1.9 mmol, 2.1 equiv). After checking the basicity of the solution, the reaction mixture was stirred for 16h30 at room temperature. Then, an 1M aqueous solution of HCl was added until the pH reached 1. The aqueous layer was extracted three times with dichloromethane (3 x 10 mL) and the resulting organic layers were washed with a saturated NaHCO<sub>3</sub> aqueous solution (2 x 10 mL). The aqueous layer was then extracted with a dichloromethane (3 x 10 mL) and the combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated. The crude was purified by chromatography on a silica gel column (PE/AcOEt 1/1) to give compound **4D** (0.41 g, 79 %) as a slightly orange solid.

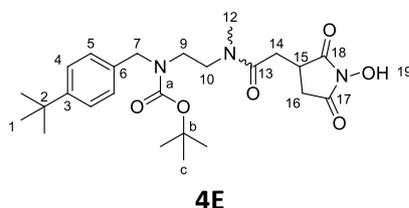
**R<sub>f</sub>:** 0.53 (PE/AcOEt 8/2)

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 7.56-7.50 (m, 2H, H<sub>21</sub>), 7.40-7.29 (m, 5H, H<sub>4</sub> H<sub>22</sub> H<sub>23</sub>), 7.22-7.10 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 5.16 (br s, 2H, H<sub>17</sub>), 4.37 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.63-3.18 (m, 4H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>10</sub>), 3.04-2.69 (m, 7H, H<sub>12</sub> H<sub>14</sub> H<sub>15</sub> H<sub>16a</sub>), 2.53-2.40 (m, 1H, H<sub>16b</sub>), 1.50 & 1.47 (2br s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.32 & 1.30 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K):** δ ppm = 174.1 (C<sub>13</sub>), 171.0 & 169.3 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>18</sub>), 155.7 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.8 & 150.2 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.0 (C<sub>6</sub>), 133.7 (C<sub>20</sub>), 129.9 & 129.8 (C<sub>21</sub>), 129.2 & 129.1 (C<sub>23</sub>), 128.4 (C<sub>22</sub>), 127.2 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.6 & 125.4 (C<sub>4</sub>), 80.6 & 80.0 (C<sub>b</sub>), 78.4 & 78.3 (C<sub>19</sub>), 51.8 & 50.7 & 50.1 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.1 & 47.5 (C<sub>9</sub>), 44.8 & 44.1 & 43.8 & 43.1 (C<sub>10</sub>), 35.8 (C<sub>15</sub>), 34.5 & 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 33.8 & 33.7 & 33.6 (C<sub>12</sub>), 32.7 (C<sub>14</sub>), 32.3 & 32.2 (C<sub>16</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>).

**MS (ESI):** [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>44</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup>: 566.32, found: 566.32.

#### 4.6. Synthesis of compound 4E



To a solution of compound **4D** (0.76 g, 1.4 mmol) in EtOH (36 mL) was added 10%-Pd-C (550 mg). The solution was stirred 10 min under a hydrogen atmosphere before filtration through a celite pad. The resulting filtrate was concentrated to give pure compound **4E** (0.64 g, quantitative) as white solid without any further purification.

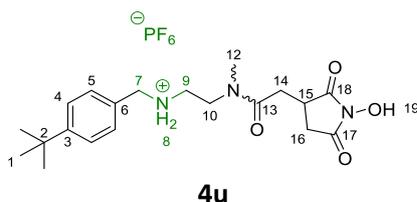
R<sub>f</sub>: 0.55 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K): δ ppm = 7.38-7.31 (m, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.22-7.10 (m, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.37 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.71-3.11 (m, 4H, H<sub>9</sub> H<sub>10</sub>), 3.10-2.68 (m, 7H, H<sub>12</sub> H<sub>14</sub> H<sub>15</sub> H<sub>16a</sub>), 2.55-2.38 (m, 1H, H<sub>16b</sub>), 1.50 & 1.47 & 1.44 (3s, 9H, H<sub>c</sub>), 1.30 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 298K): δ ppm = 175.0 & 174.8 (C<sub>13</sub>), 172.0 & 171.9 & 170.1 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>18</sub>), 155.8 & 155.6 (C<sub>a</sub>), 150.8 & 150.3 (C<sub>3</sub>), 135.0 & 134.5 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.8 & 127.6 & 127.2 (C<sub>5</sub>), 125.6 & 125.4 (C<sub>4</sub>), 80.7 & 80.2 (C<sub>b</sub>), 51.8 & 50.6 & 50.3 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.3 & 47.7 (C<sub>9</sub>), 44.7 & 44.2 & 43.9 & 43.3 (C<sub>10</sub>), 34.5 & 34.4 (C<sub>2</sub>), 36.0 & 34.0 & 33.6 & 33.4 & 32.4 & 32.0 & 31.8 (C<sub>12</sub>, C<sub>14</sub>, C<sub>15</sub>, C<sub>16</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>), 28.4 (C<sub>c</sub>).

MS (ESI): [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>38</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>6</sub><sup>+</sup>: 476.28, found: 476.28.

#### 4.7. Synthesis of the molecular axle 4u



To compound **4E** (0.29 g, 0.62 mmol, 1 equiv.) was added a 2.5 M solution chloride acid in Et<sub>2</sub>O (6.9 mL, 28 equiv.) and the mixture was stirred at room temperature until TLC analysis revealed no trace of the starting material (1h30). The mixture was evaporated to dryness and the residue was partitioned between dichloromethane (3.3 mL) and MilliQ H<sub>2</sub>O (3.3 mL). NH<sub>4</sub>PF<sub>6</sub> (0.30 g, 1.8 mmol, 3 equiv.) was added and the biphasic mixture was vigorously stirred for 30 minutes. The aqueous layer was extracted with dichloromethane (12 x 10 mL) and the combined organic layers were dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> before being concentrated to afford the molecular axle **4u** (0.30 g, 92%) as white solid without further purification.

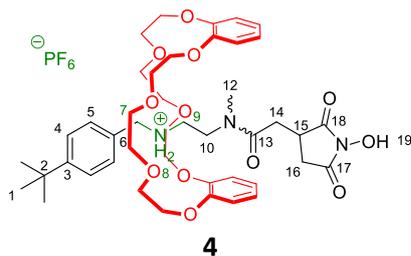
R<sub>f</sub>: 0.24 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K): δ ppm = 7.51 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H<sub>4</sub>-H<sub>5</sub></sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>4</sub>), 7.35 (d, 2H, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H<sub>5</sub>-H<sub>4</sub></sub> = 8.3 Hz, H<sub>5</sub>), 4.15 (br s, 2H, H<sub>7</sub>), 3.73-3.63 & 3.51-3.41 (2m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 3.22-3.16 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 3.09-3.02 (m, 1H, H<sub>15</sub>), 2.95 (s, 3H, H<sub>12</sub>), 2.87-2.82 (m, 2H, H<sub>14</sub>), 2.79 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H<sub>16a</sub>-H<sub>16b</sub></sub> = 17.8 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H<sub>16a</sub>-H<sub>15</sub></sub> = 8.9 Hz, H<sub>16a</sub>), 2.41 (dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H<sub>16b</sub>-H<sub>16a</sub></sub> = 17.8 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H<sub>16b</sub>-H<sub>15</sub></sub> = 4.5 Hz, H<sub>16b</sub>), 1.32 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K): δ ppm = 175.6 (C<sub>13</sub>), 174.7 & 172.7 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>18</sub>), 153.7 (C<sub>3</sub>), 130.6 (C<sub>4</sub>), 128.7 (C<sub>6</sub>), 127.1 (C<sub>5</sub>), 51.9 (C<sub>7</sub>), 48.0 (C<sub>9</sub>), 46.2 (C<sub>10</sub>), 36.8 (C<sub>12</sub>), 35.2 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.3 & 34.1 (C<sub>14</sub>, C<sub>15</sub>), 32.4 (C<sub>16</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>).

HRMS (ESI): [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>30</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>: 376.2234, found: 376.2236.

#### 4.8. Synthesis of the semi rotaxane 4



To a 0.12M solution of molecular axle **4u** (0.18 g, 0.3 mmol, 1 equiv) in amylene-stabilized dichloromethane (2.9 mL) was added dibenzo-24-crown-8 (0.46 g, 1.0 mmol, 3 equiv). The reaction mixture was stirred for 28 h at room temperature before being concentrated. The crude residue was extensively triturated with toluene (20 x 10 mL) in order to remove most of the DB24C8 excess before being purified by chromatography on a lipophilic sephadex LH20 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) to give pure semi rotaxane **4** (0.22 g, 66%) as a white solid.

R<sub>f</sub>: 0.58 (CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/CH<sub>3</sub>OH 9/1)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K): δ ppm = 7.22 (br d, 2H, H<sub>5</sub>), 7.18 (br d, 2H, H<sub>4</sub>), 6.93-6.89 (m, 8H, H<sub>A</sub> H<sub>B</sub>), 4.54-4.49 & 4.49-4.43 (2m, 2H, H<sub>7-cis</sub> H<sub>7-trans</sub>), 4.23-4.13 & 4.13-4.03 (2m, 8H, H<sub>C</sub> H<sub>C'</sub>), 3.92-3.73 (m, 8H, H<sub>D</sub> H<sub>D'</sub>), 3.74-3.55 (2m, 8H, H<sub>E</sub> H<sub>E'</sub>), 3.67-3.49 & 3.31-3.23 (2m, 2H, H<sub>10</sub>), 3.57-3.43 (m, 2H, H<sub>9</sub>), 2.95-2.88 & 2.86-2.80 (2m, 1H, H<sub>15-trans</sub> H<sub>15-cis</sub>), 2.72 & 2.68 (2s, 3H, H<sub>12-trans</sub> H<sub>12-cis</sub>), 2.73-2.65 (m, 1H, H<sub>16a</sub>), 2.68-2.54 (m, 2H, H<sub>14</sub>), 2.27 & 2.16 (2dd, 1H, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H16b-H16a</sub> = 17.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H16b-H15</sub> = 4.5 Hz, H<sub>16b-trans</sub> H<sub>16b-cis</sub>), 1.23 & 1.22 (2s, 9H, H<sub>1-cis</sub> H<sub>1-trans</sub>).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K): δ ppm = 175.4 (C<sub>13</sub>), 172.7 & 171.6 (C<sub>17</sub> C<sub>18</sub>), 153.2 (C<sub>3</sub>), 148.5 & 148.4 (C<sub>IV</sub> DB24C8), 130.7 & 130.4 (C<sub>5</sub>), 129.6 (C<sub>6</sub>), 126.5 & 126.3 (C<sub>4</sub>), 122.5 & 122.4 & 122.3 & 113.8 & 113.6 (C<sub>A</sub> C<sub>B</sub>), 71.6 (C<sub>E</sub> C<sub>E'</sub>), 71.3 & 71.1 (C<sub>D</sub> C<sub>D'</sub>), 69.0 (C<sub>C</sub> C<sub>C'</sub>), 53.1 (C<sub>7</sub>), 46.6 & 46.2 (C<sub>9</sub>), 45.1 (C<sub>10</sub>), 37.5 (C<sub>12</sub>), 35.2 (C<sub>2</sub>), 34.3 (C<sub>15</sub>), 33.7 (C<sub>14</sub>), 32.5 (C<sub>16</sub>), 31.3 (C<sub>1</sub>).

HRMS (ESI): [M-PF<sub>6</sub>]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>44</sub>H<sub>62</sub>N<sub>3</sub>O<sub>12</sub><sup>+</sup>: 824.4340, found: 824.4333.

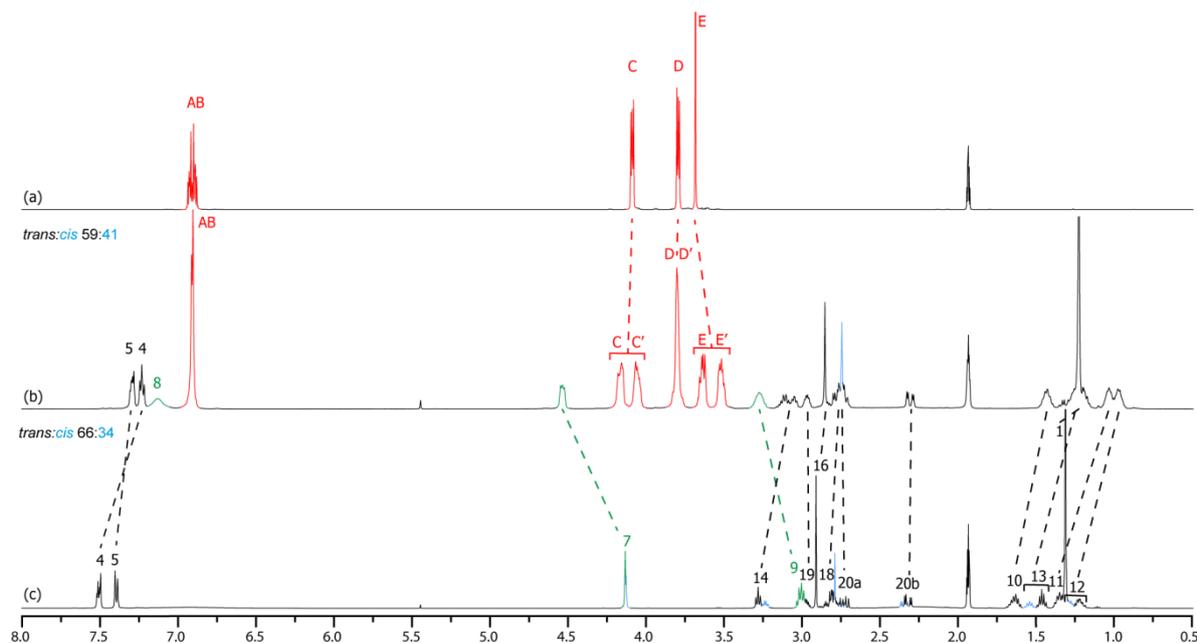
## 5. <sup>1</sup>H NMR characterization for rotaxanes 1-4

The interlocked structures of these compounds were unambiguously demonstrated by comparison between <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of free DB24C8, uncomplexed threads **2u-4u** and rotaxanes **2-4**. The following tables list the influence of DB24C8 on the <sup>1</sup>H NMR chemical shifts of the encircle threads in the rotaxanes **2-4**.

### 5.1. <sup>1</sup>H NMR characterization for rotaxane 1

Characterization of rotaxane **1** has already been described in a previous article<sup>1</sup>.

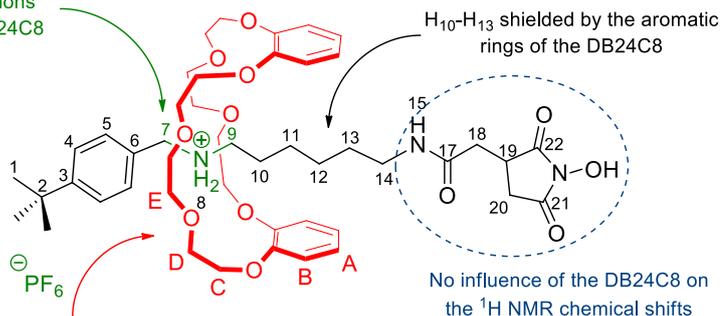
### 5.2. <sup>1</sup>H NMR characterization for rotaxane 2



<sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra (500 MHz, CD<sub>3</sub>CN, 298K) of: (a) DB24C8, (b) the rotaxane **2** and (c) the uncomplexed thread **2u**.

Downfield shift of hydrogen atoms  $H_7-H_9$  due to H-bonding interactions with the oxygen atoms of the DB24C8

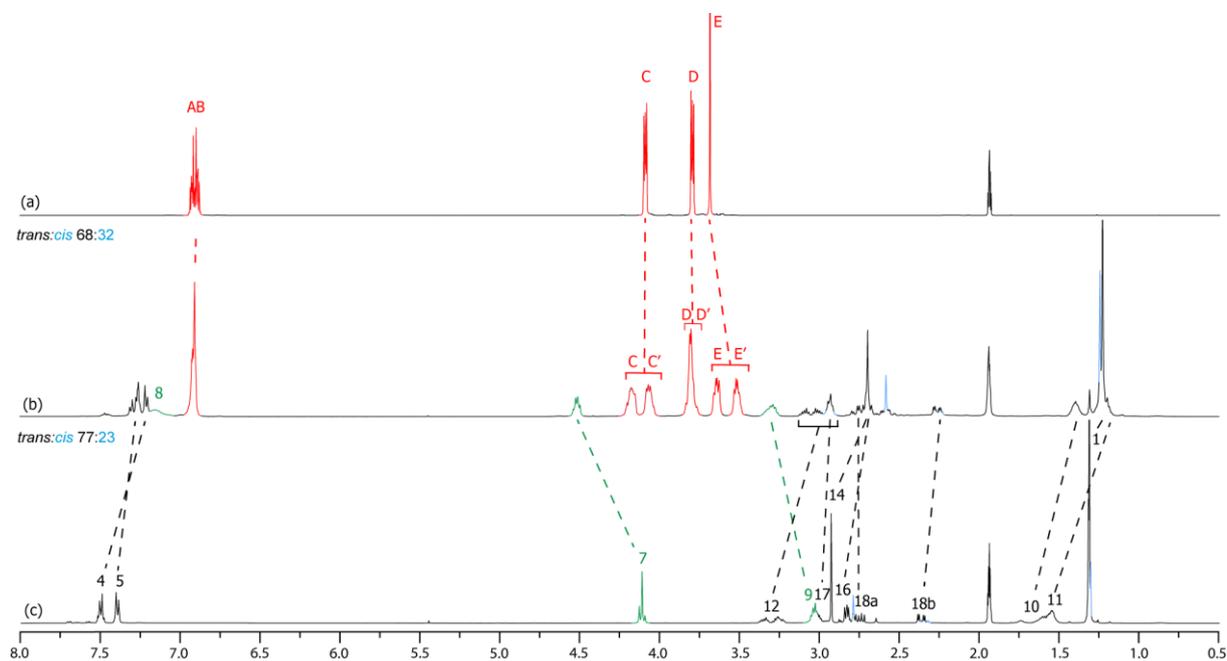
$H_7$  :  $\Delta\delta = -0.40$  ppm  
 $H_9$  :  $\Delta\delta = -0.27$  ppm



$H_{10}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.21$  ppm  
 $H_{11}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.31$  ppm  
 $H_{12}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.24$  ppm  
 $H_{13}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.28$  ppm

NMR signals of the crown-ether hydrogens  $H_{C-E}$  are split in the rotaxane structure due to the non-symmetrical ends of the thread

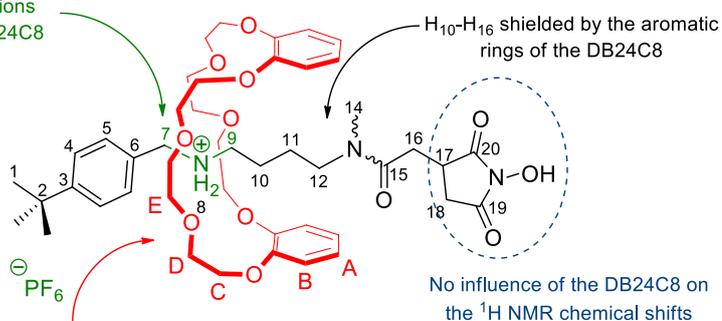
### 5.3. $^1\text{H}$ NMR characterization for rotaxane 3



$^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra (500 MHz,  $\text{CD}_3\text{CN}$ , 298K) of: (a) DB24C8, (b) the rotaxane **3** and (c) the uncomplexed thread **3u**.

Downfield shift of hydrogen atoms  $H_7-H_9$  due to H-bonding interactions with the oxygen atoms of the DB24C8

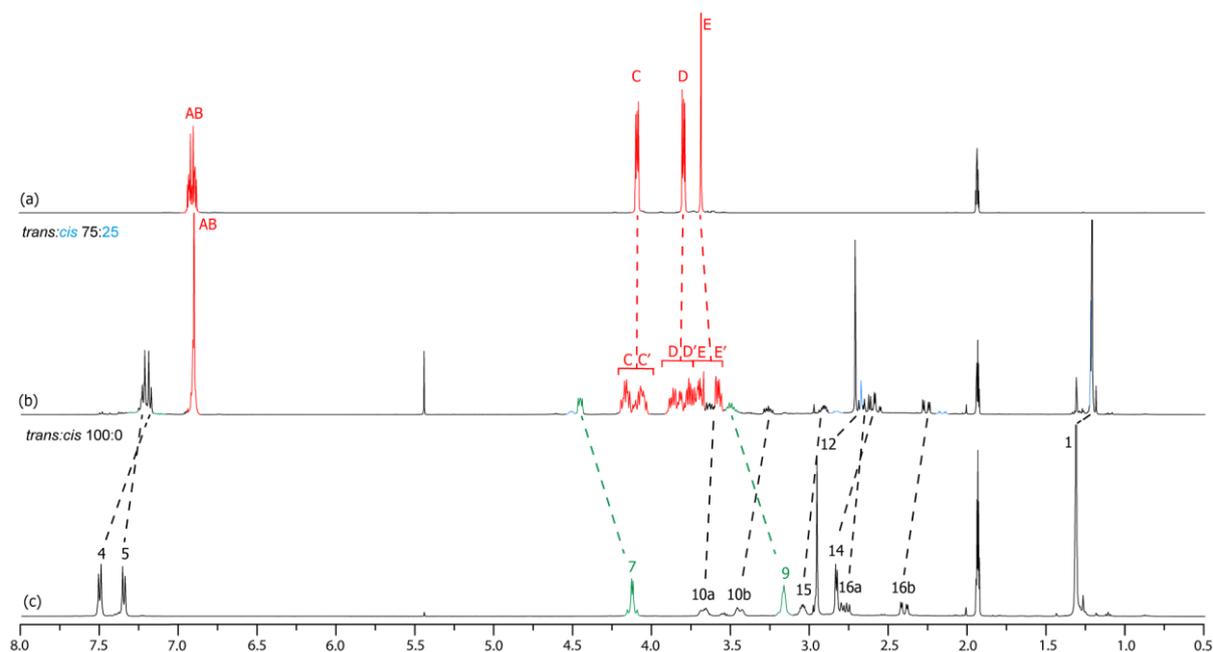
$H_7$  :  $\Delta\delta = -0.41$  ppm  
 $H_9$  :  $\Delta\delta = -0.27$  ppm



$H_{10}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.27$  ppm  
 $H_{11}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.36$  ppm  
 $H_{12}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.26$  ppm  
 $H_{14}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.23$  ppm  
 $H_{16}$  :  $\Delta\delta = 0.17$  ppm

NMR signals of the crown-ether hydrogens  $H_{C-E}$  are split in the rotaxane structure due to the non-symmetrical ends of the thread

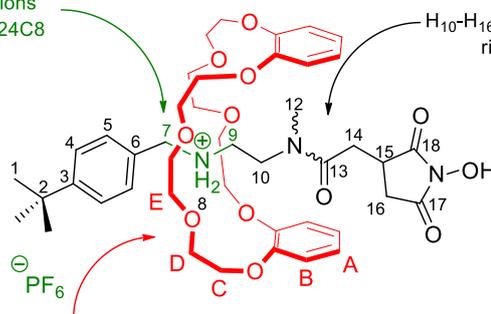
## 5.4. $^1\text{H}$ NMR characterization for rotaxane **4**



$^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra (500 MHz,  $\text{CD}_3\text{CN}$ , 298K) of: (a) DB24C8, (b) the rotaxane **4** and (c) the uncomplexed thread **4u**.

Downfield shift of hydrogen atoms  $\text{H}_7$ - $\text{H}_9$  due to H-bonding interactions with the oxygen atoms of the DB24C8

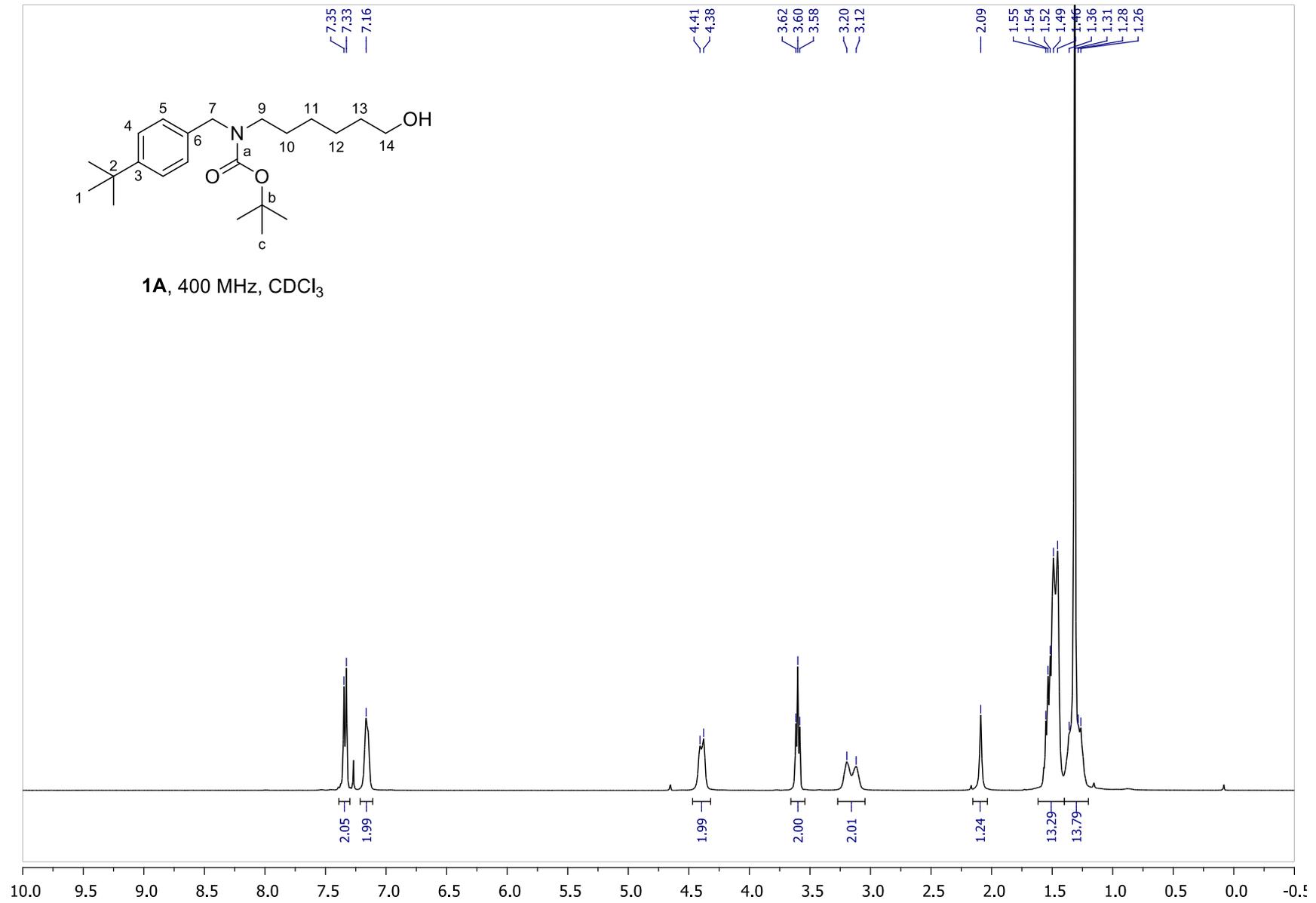
$\text{H}_7$ :  $\Delta\delta = -0.31$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_9$ :  $\Delta\delta = -0.31$  ppm

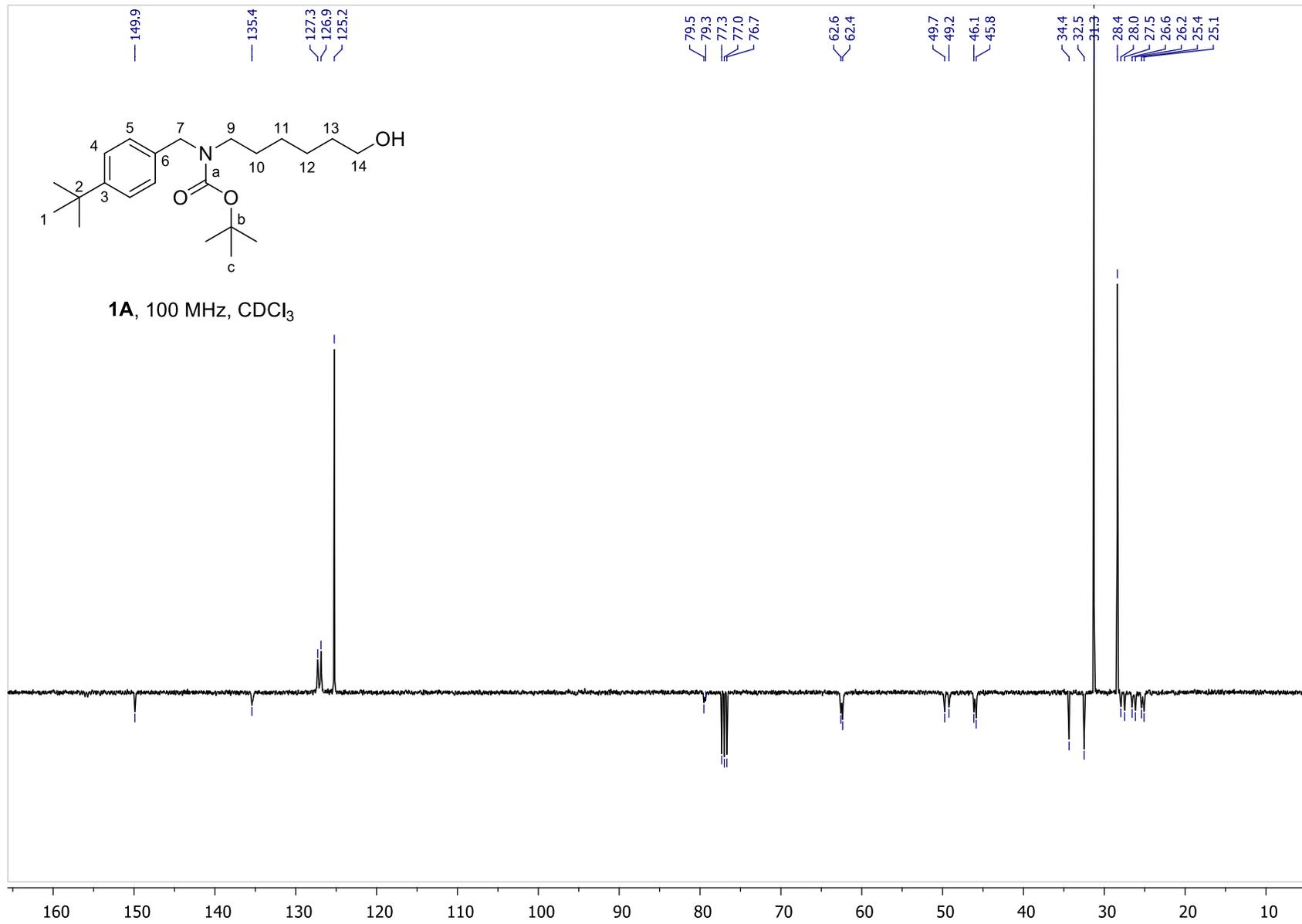


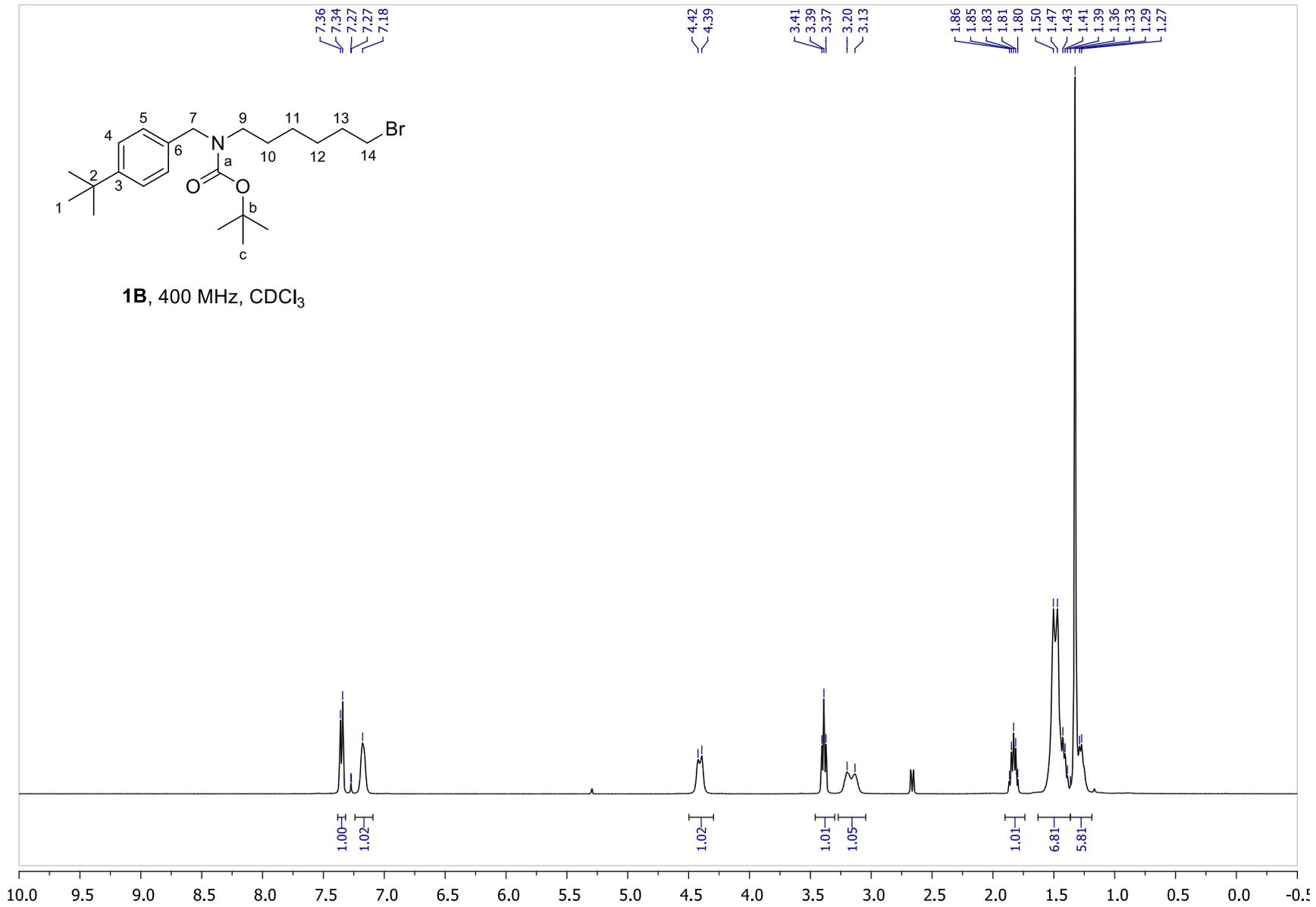
$\text{H}_{10}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.14$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_{12}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.23$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_{14}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.24$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_{15}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.14$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_{16a}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.10$  ppm  
 $\text{H}_{16b}$ :  $\Delta\delta = 0.14$  ppm

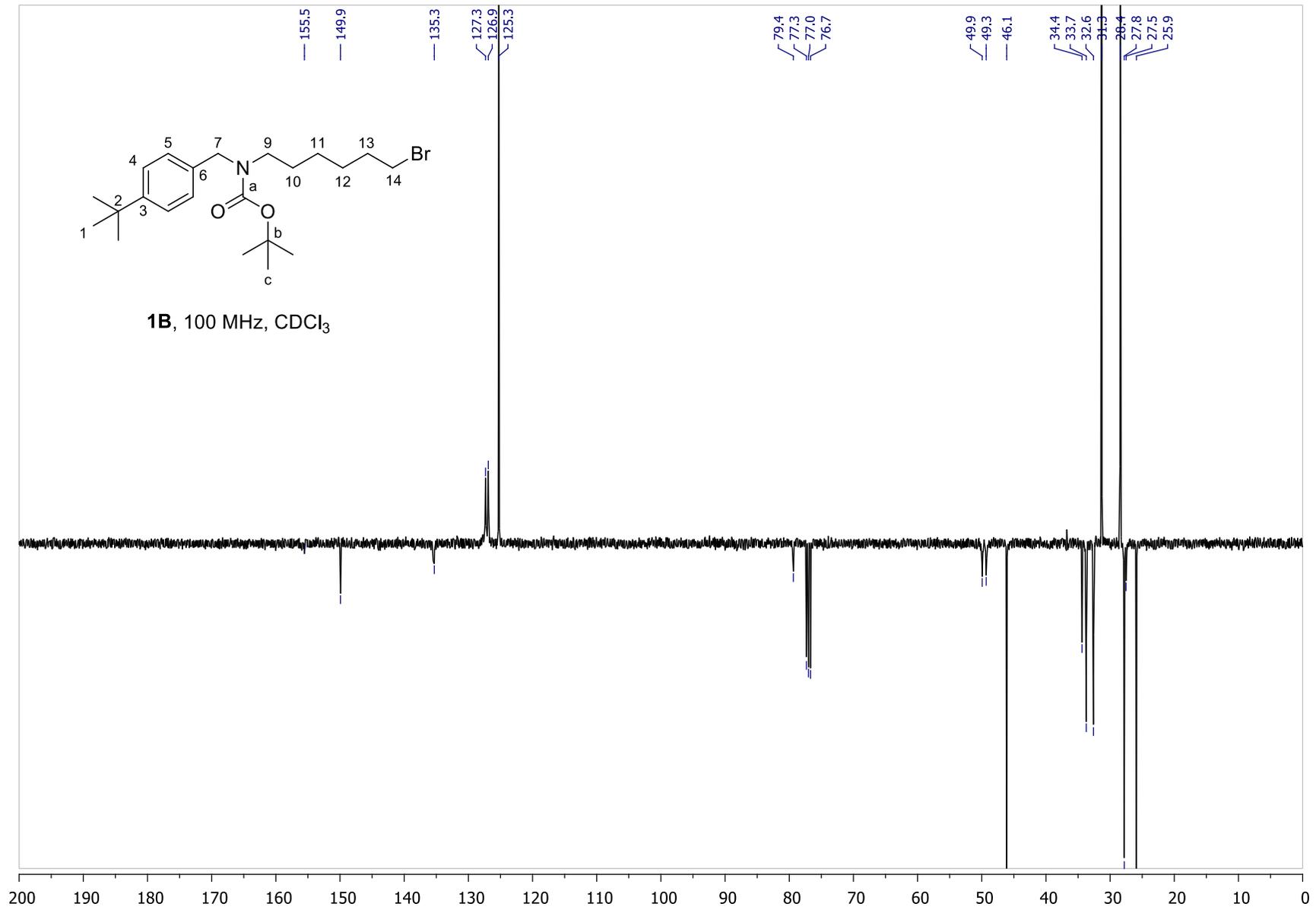
NMR signals of the crown-ether hydrogens  $\text{H}_{\text{C-E}}$  are split in the rotaxane structure due to the non-symmetrical ends of the thread

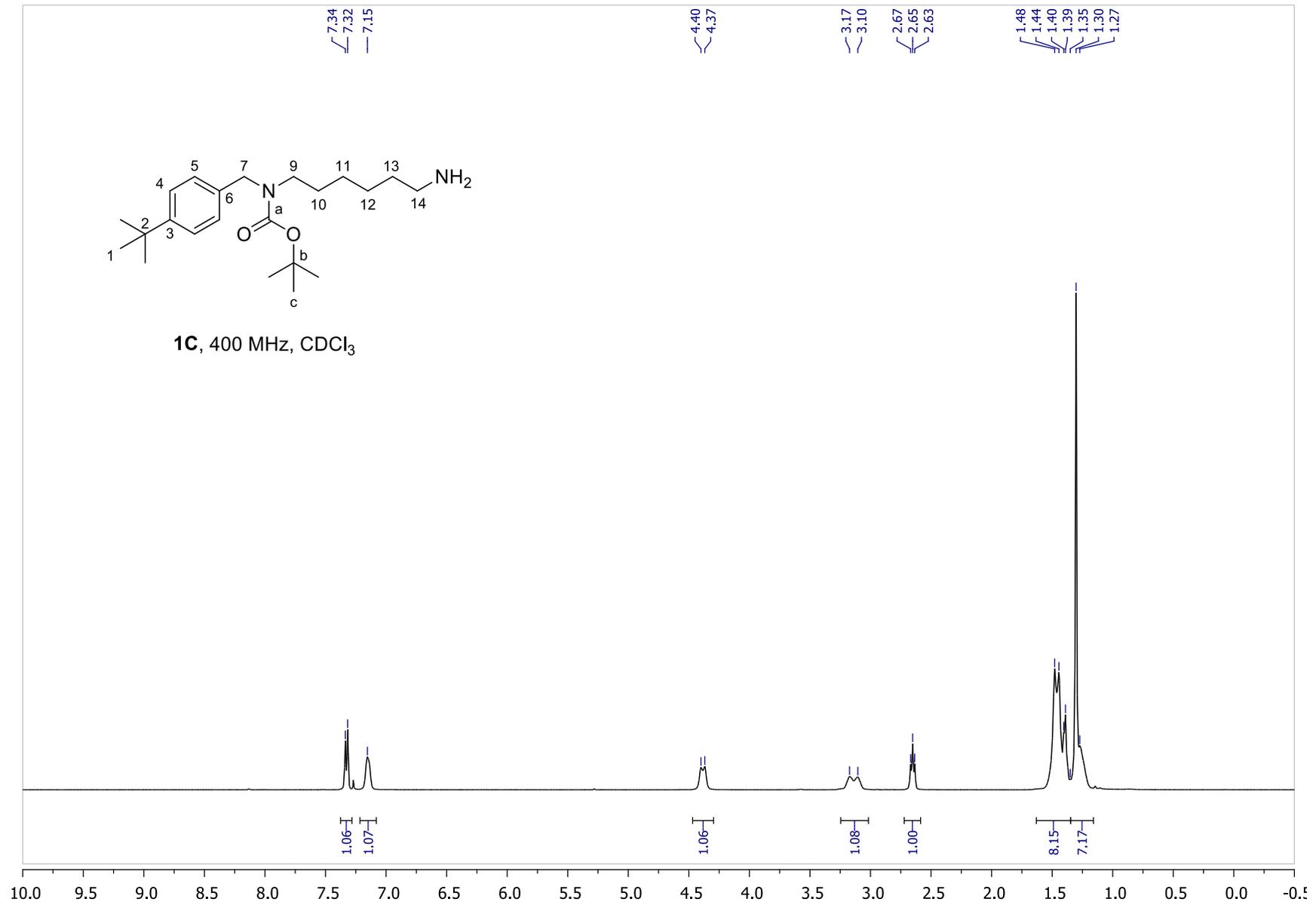
# NMR SPECTRA

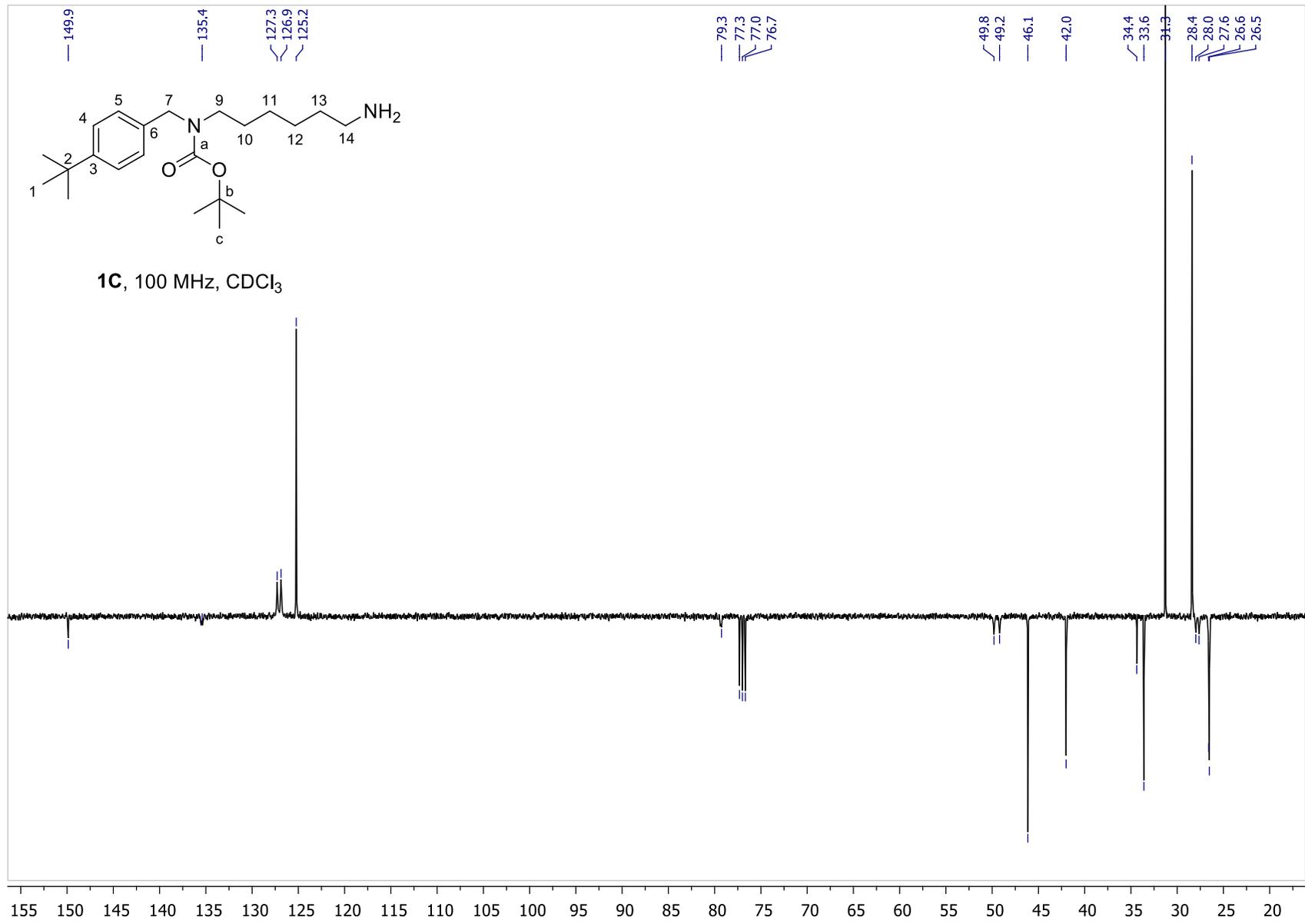


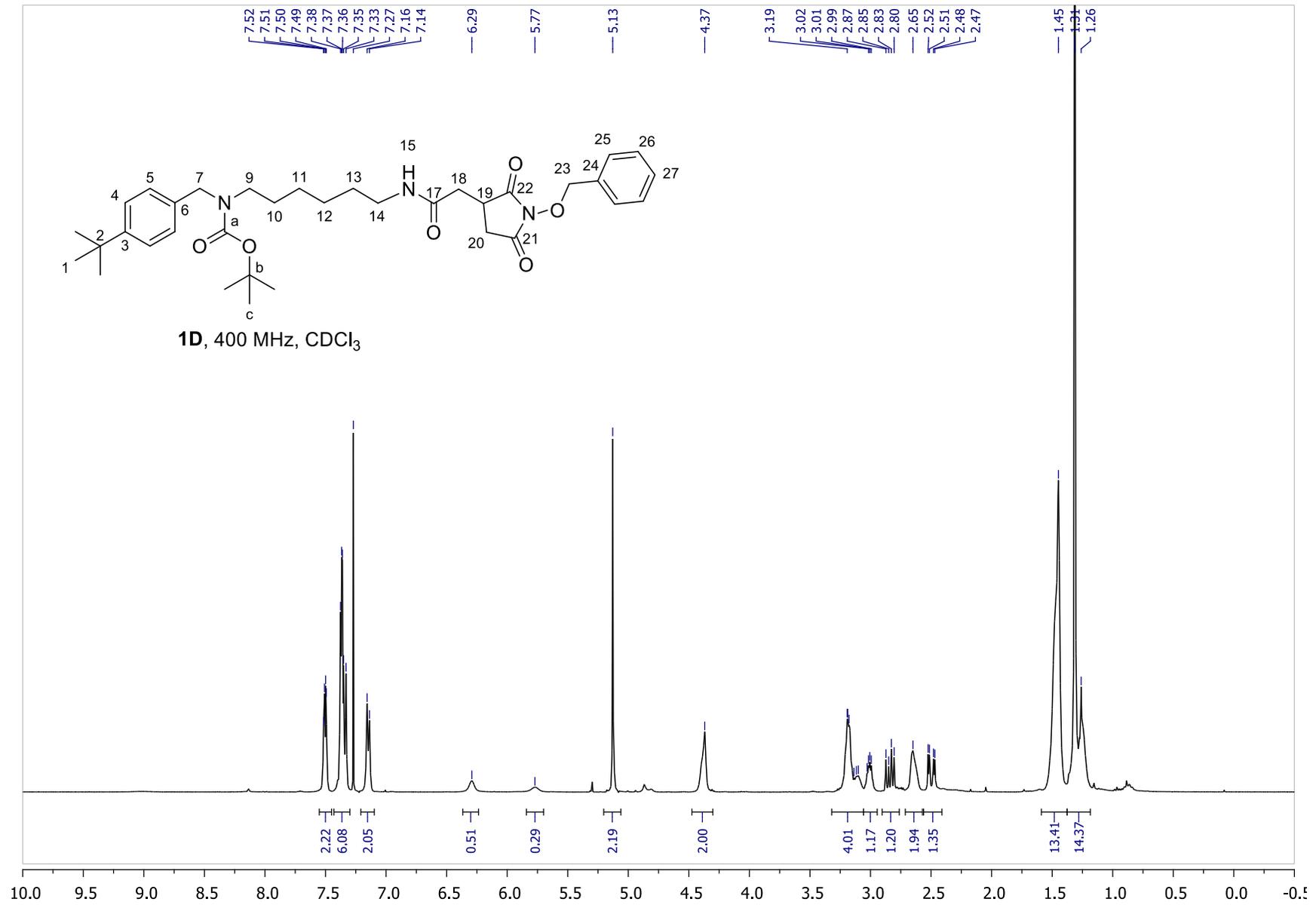


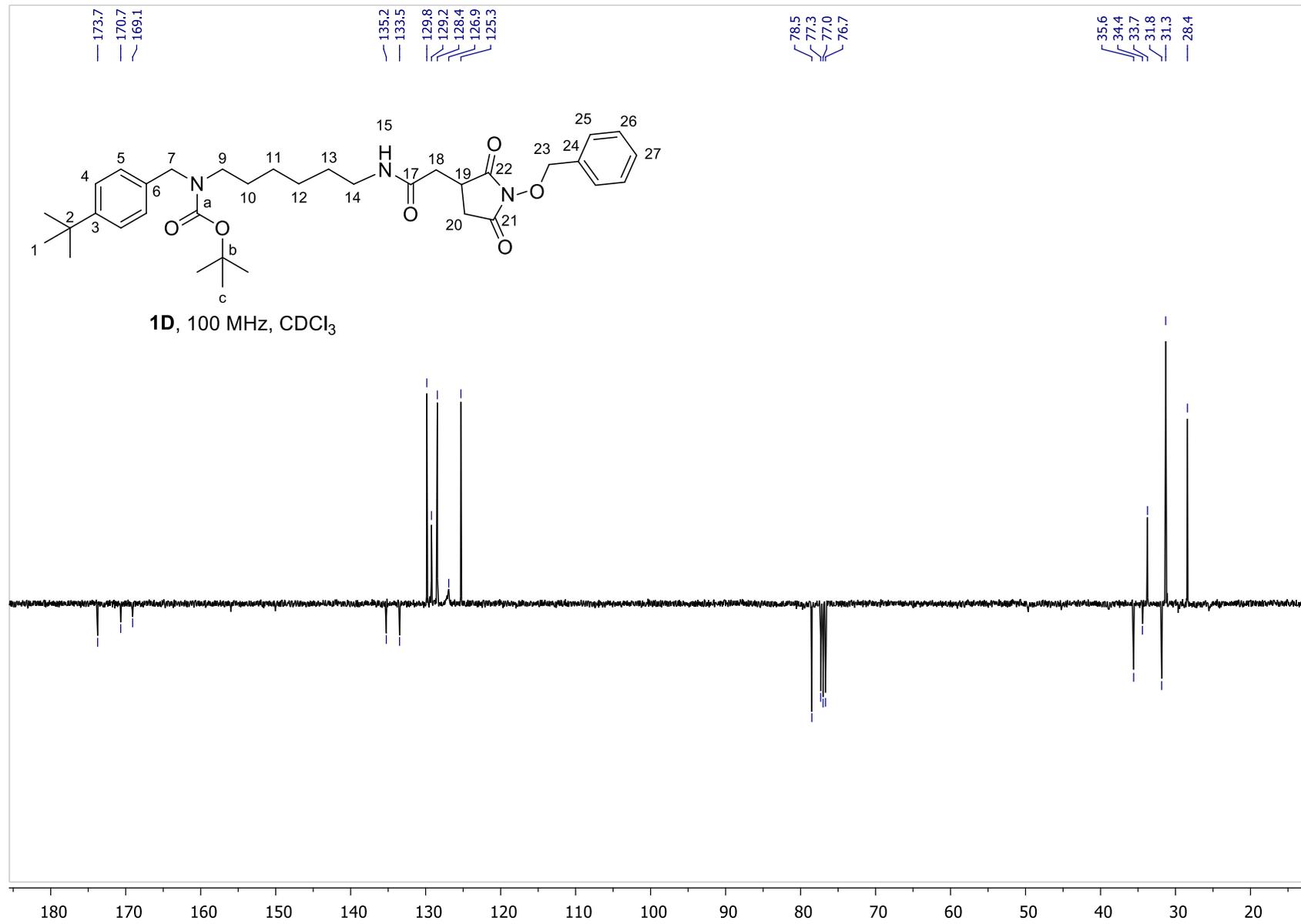




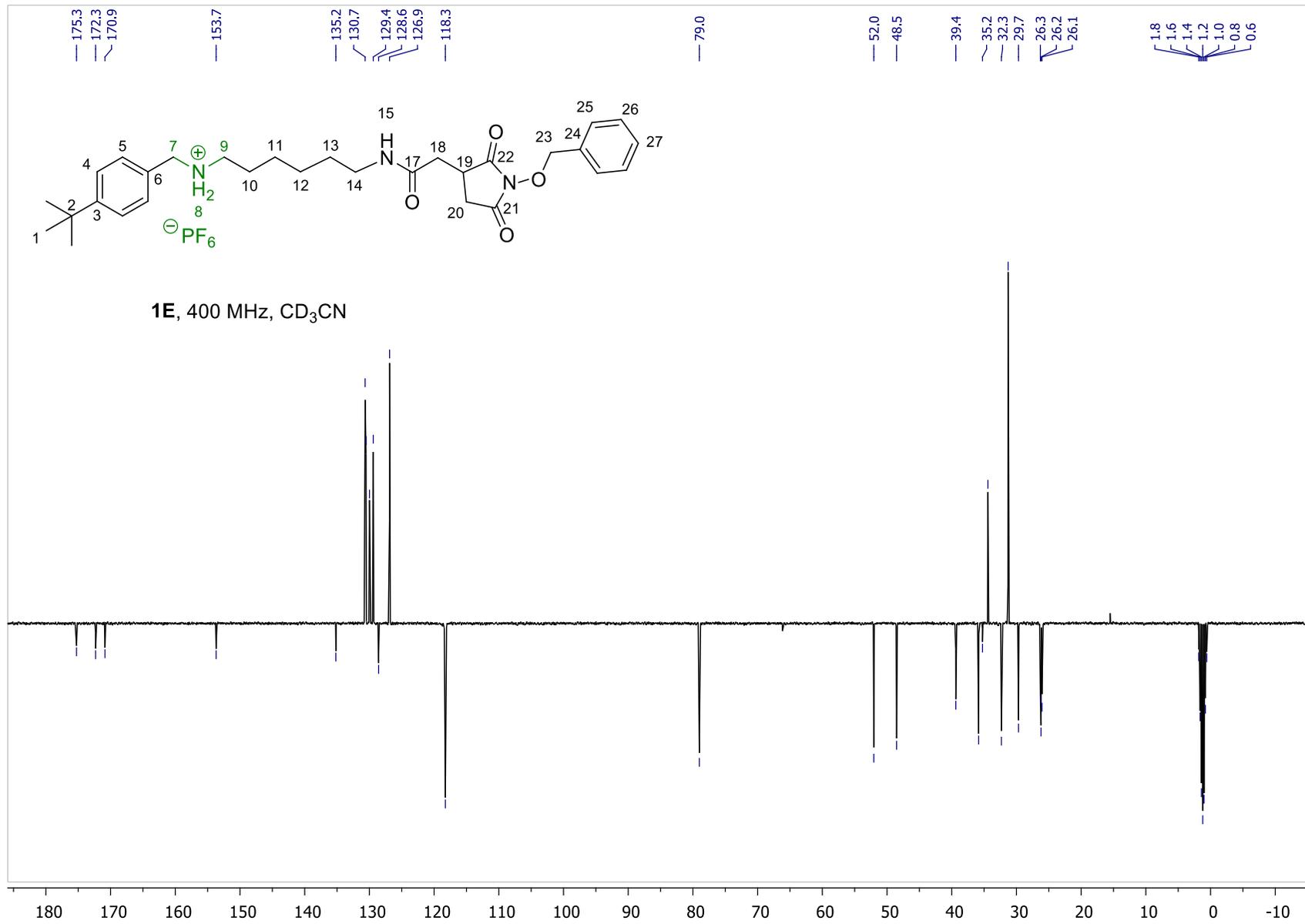


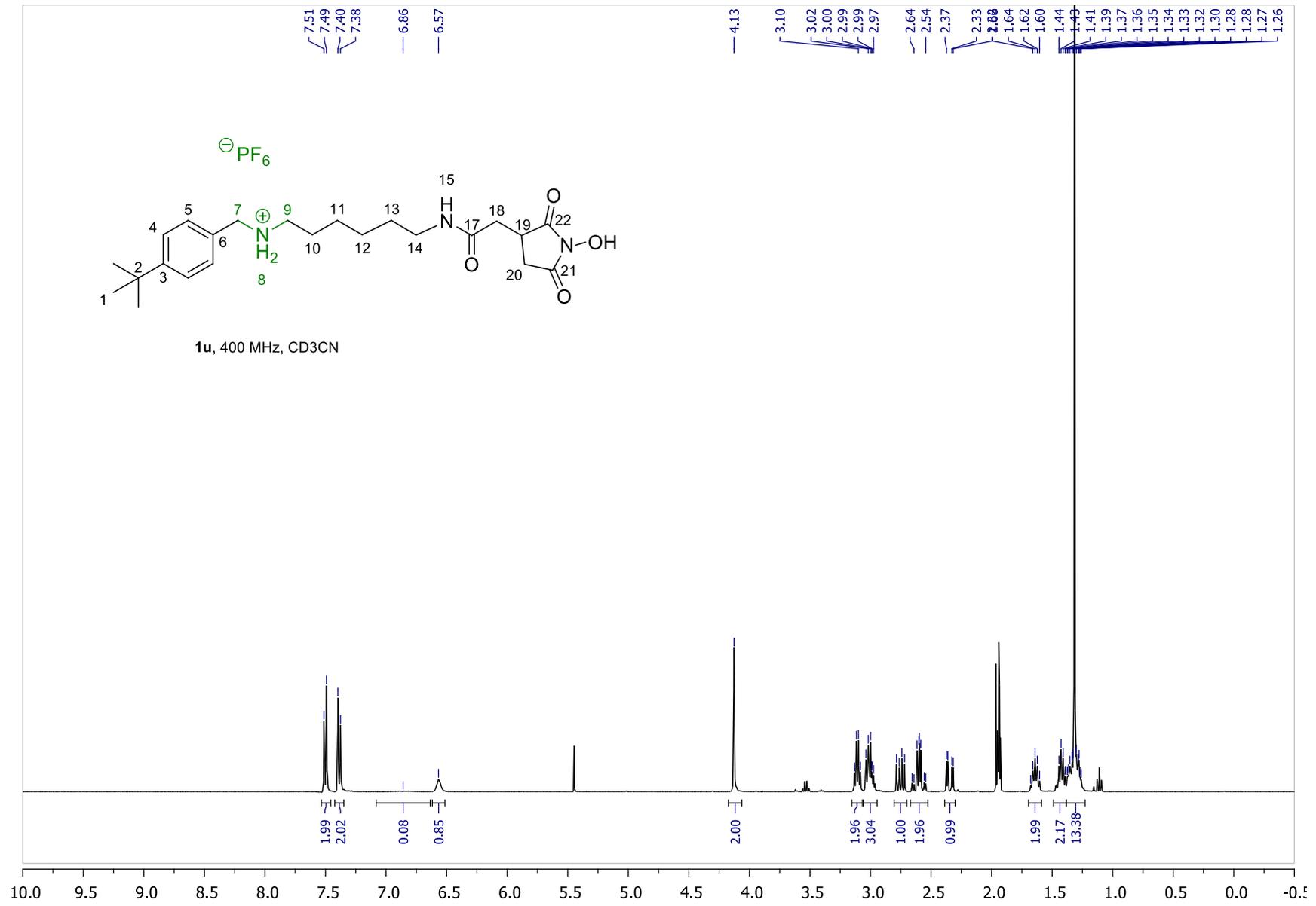


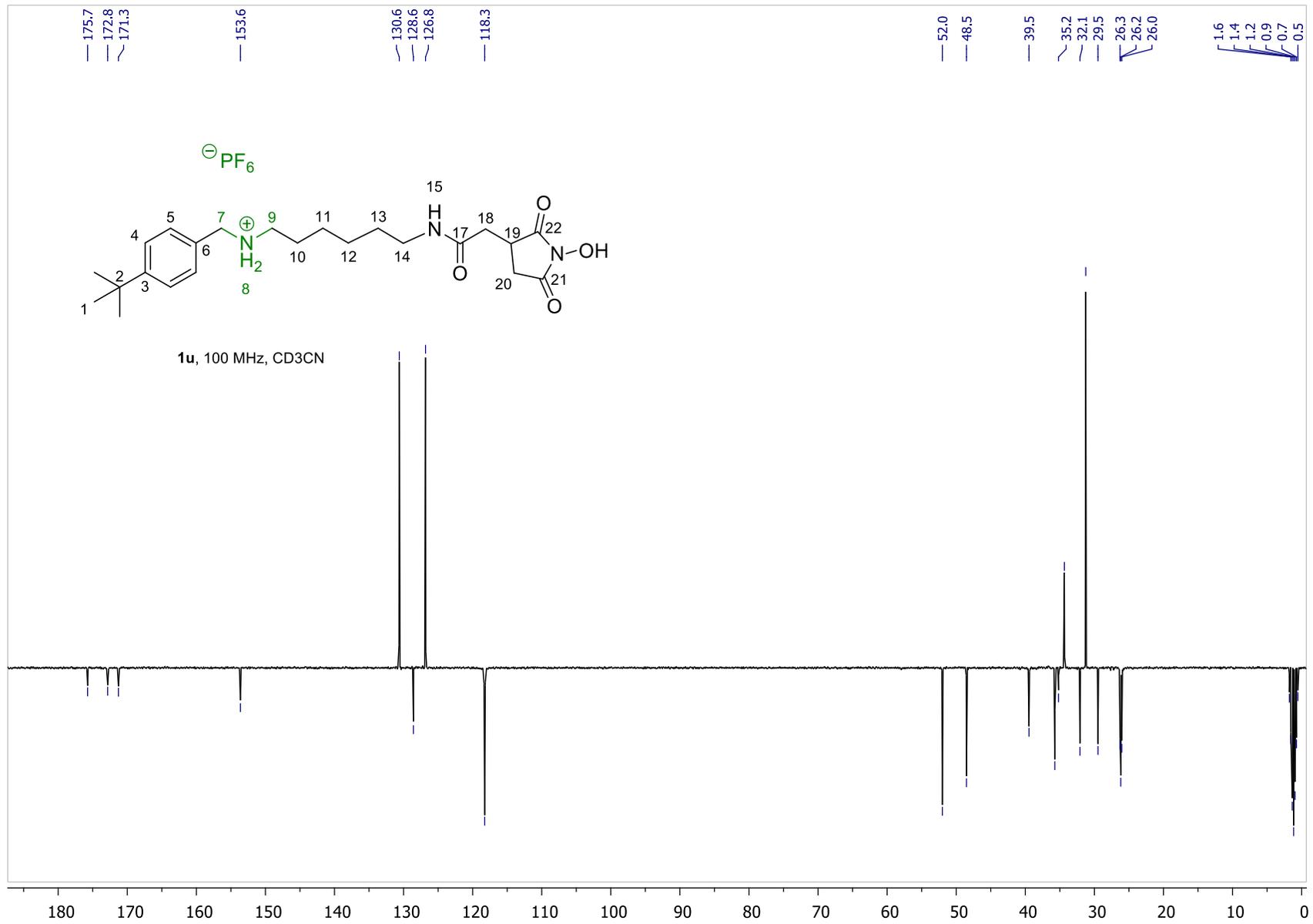


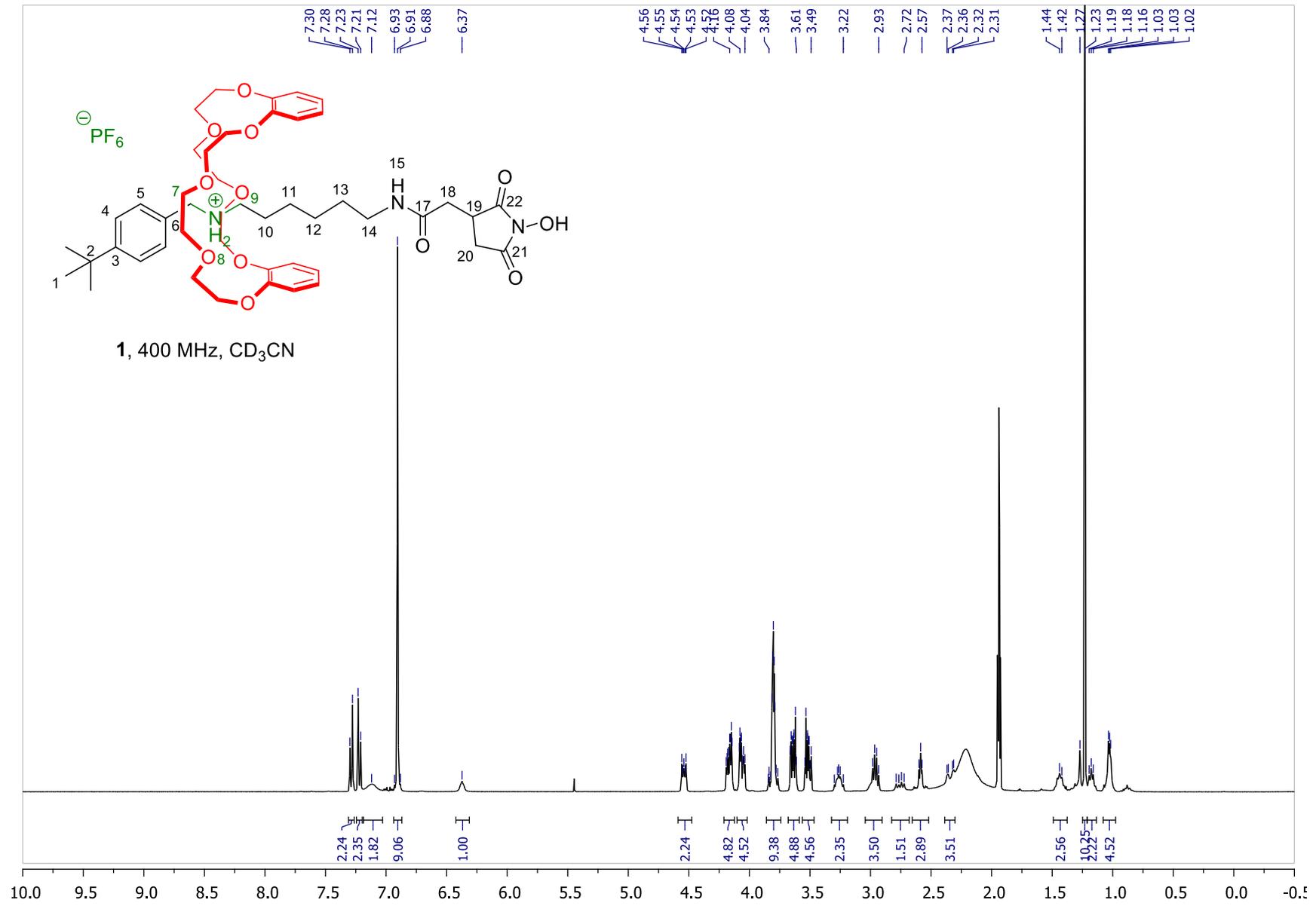


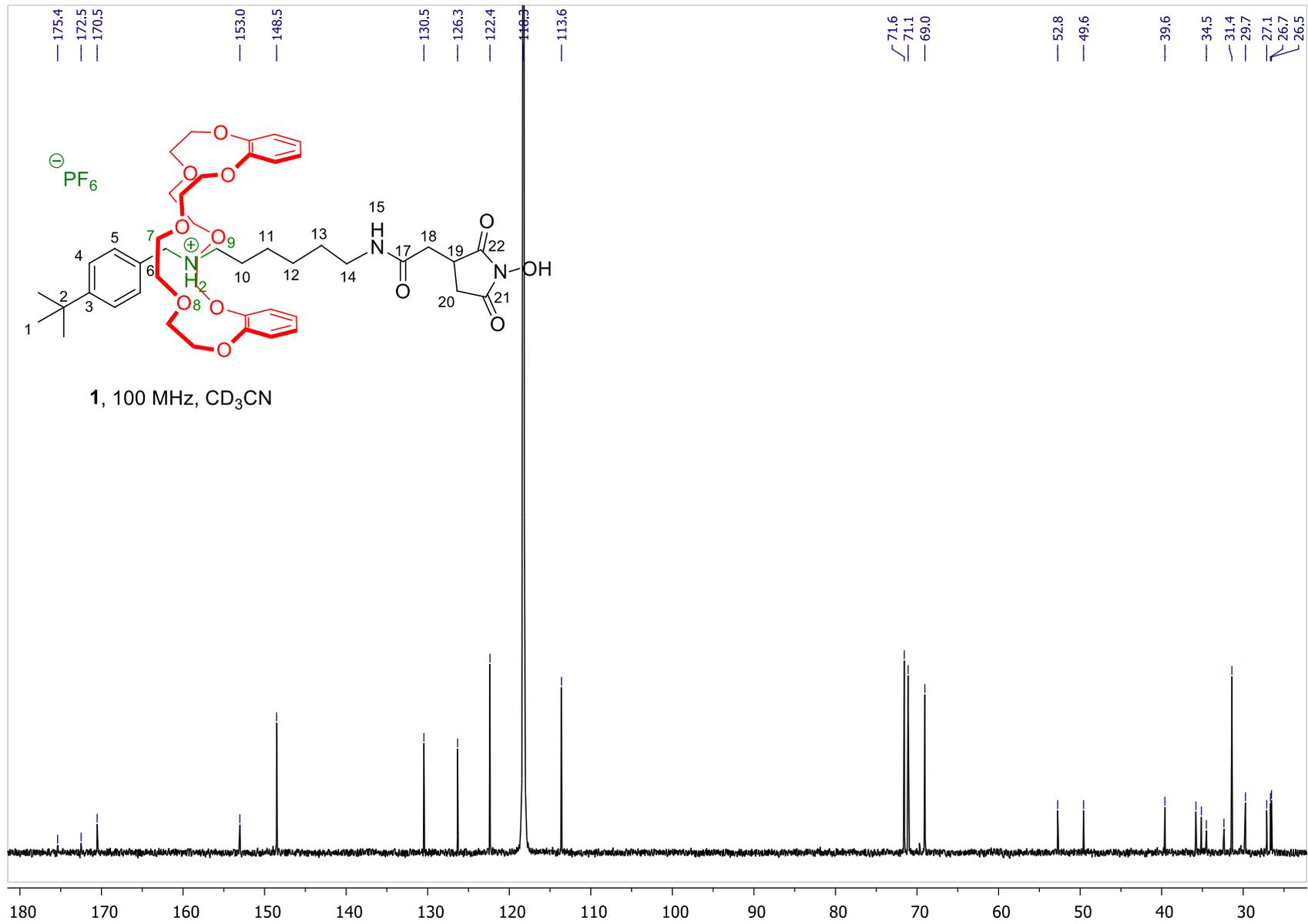


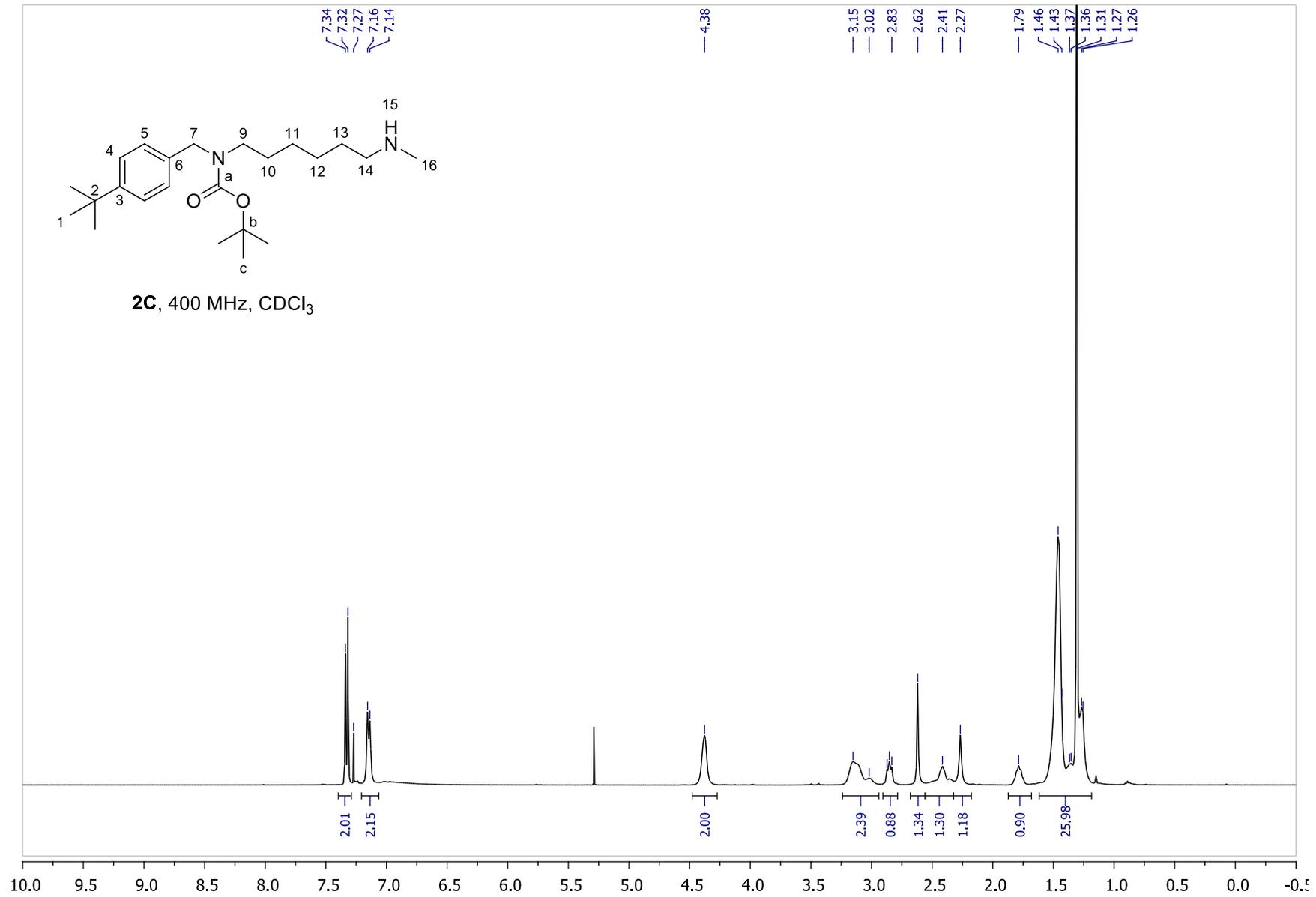


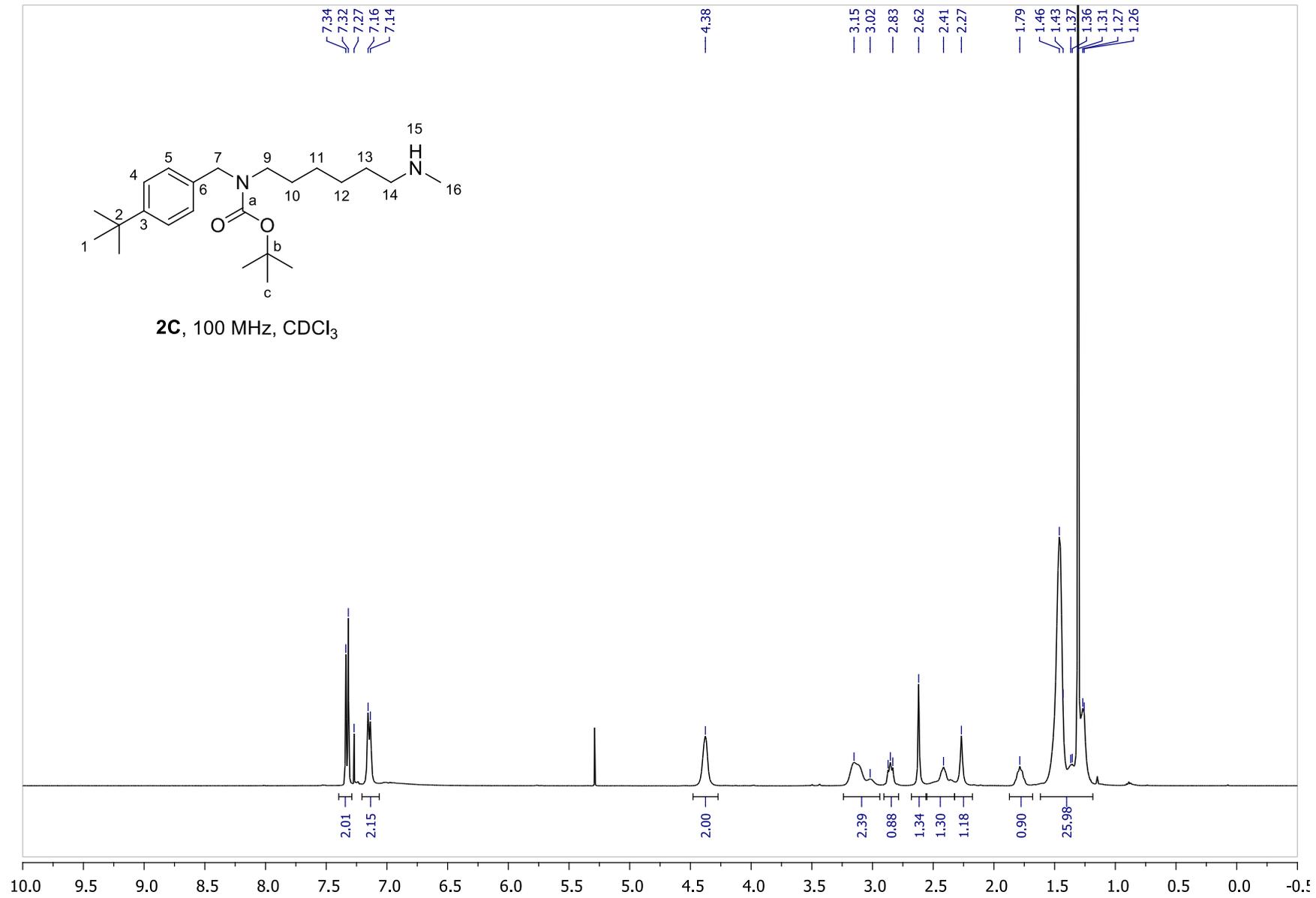


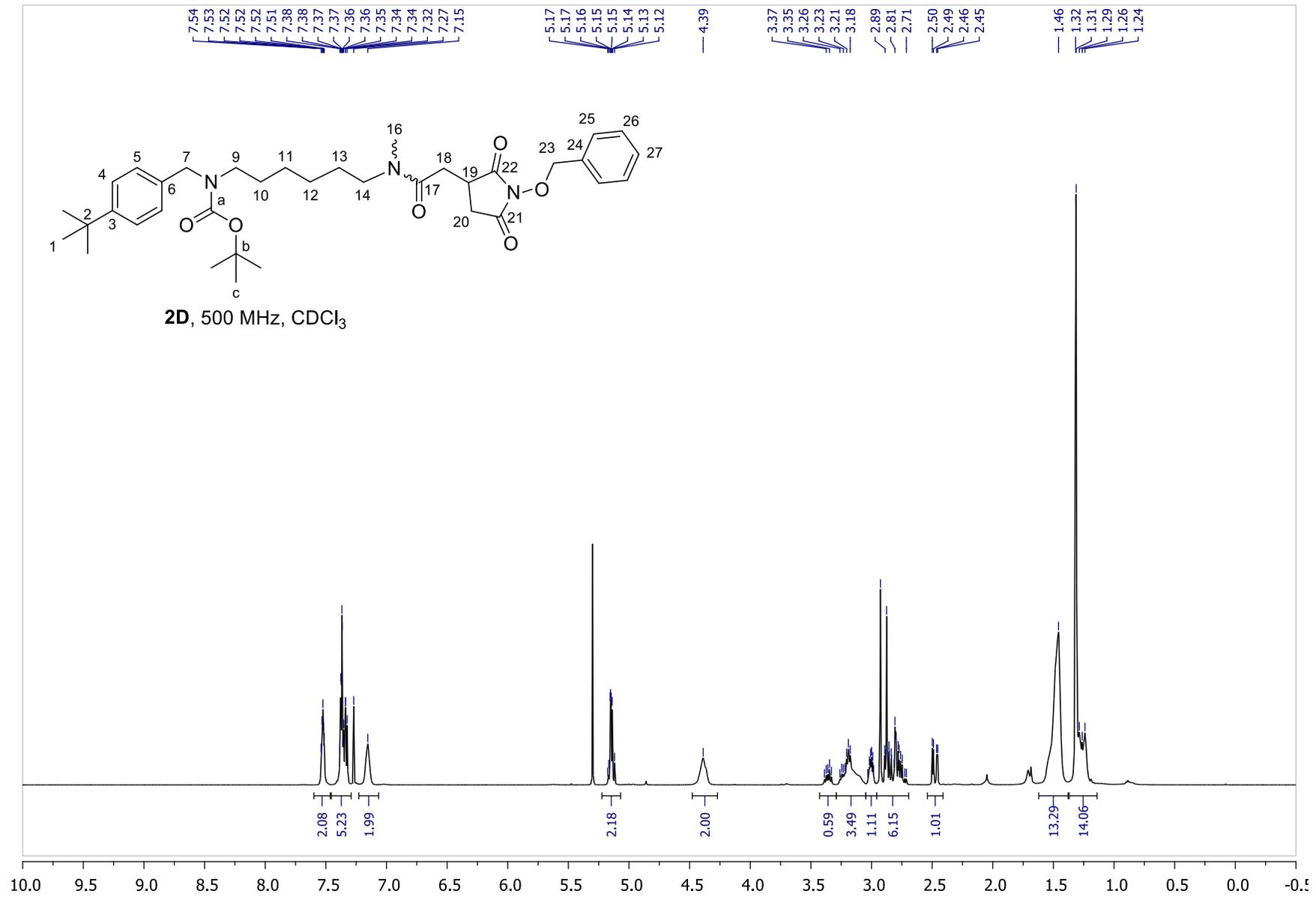


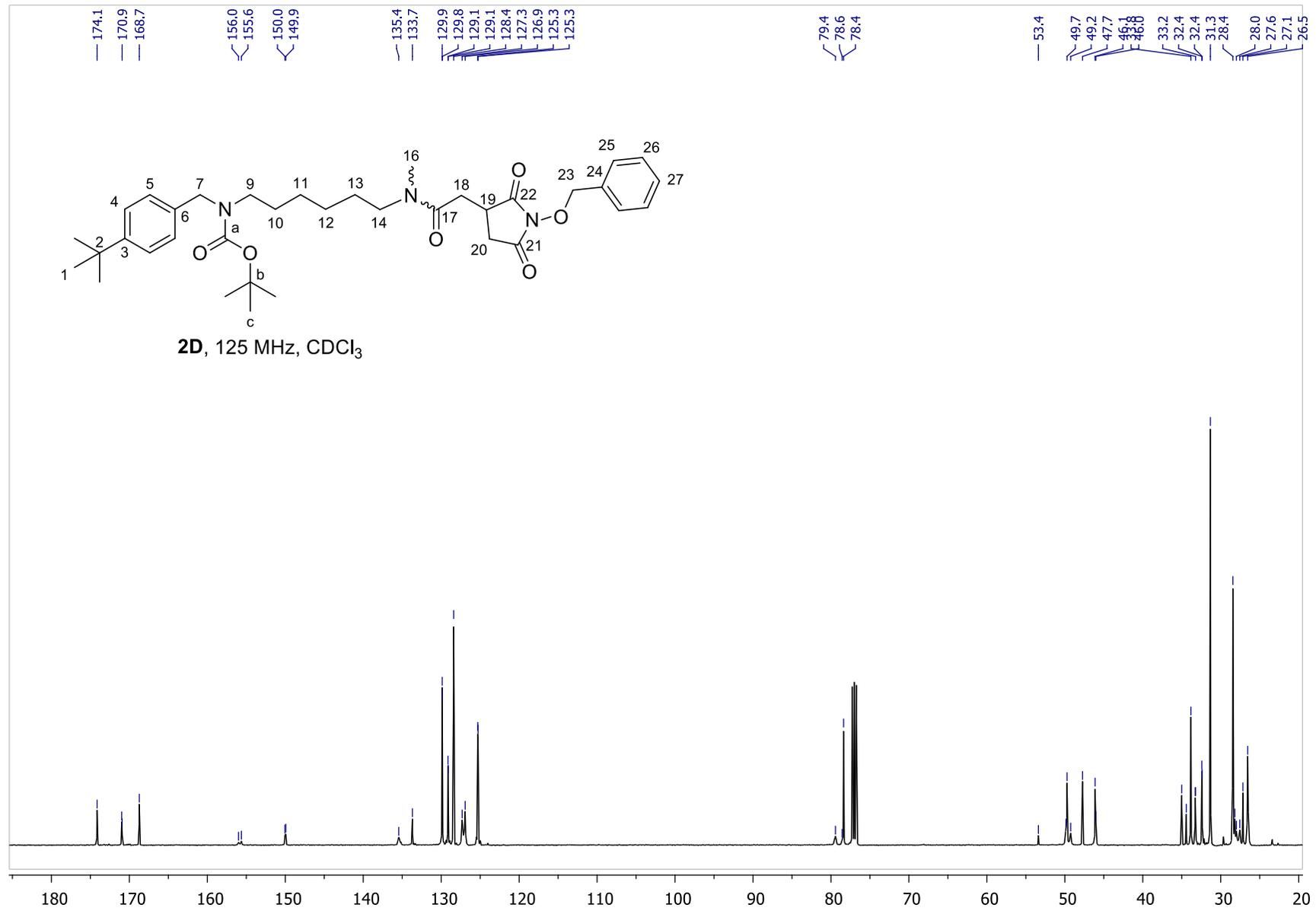


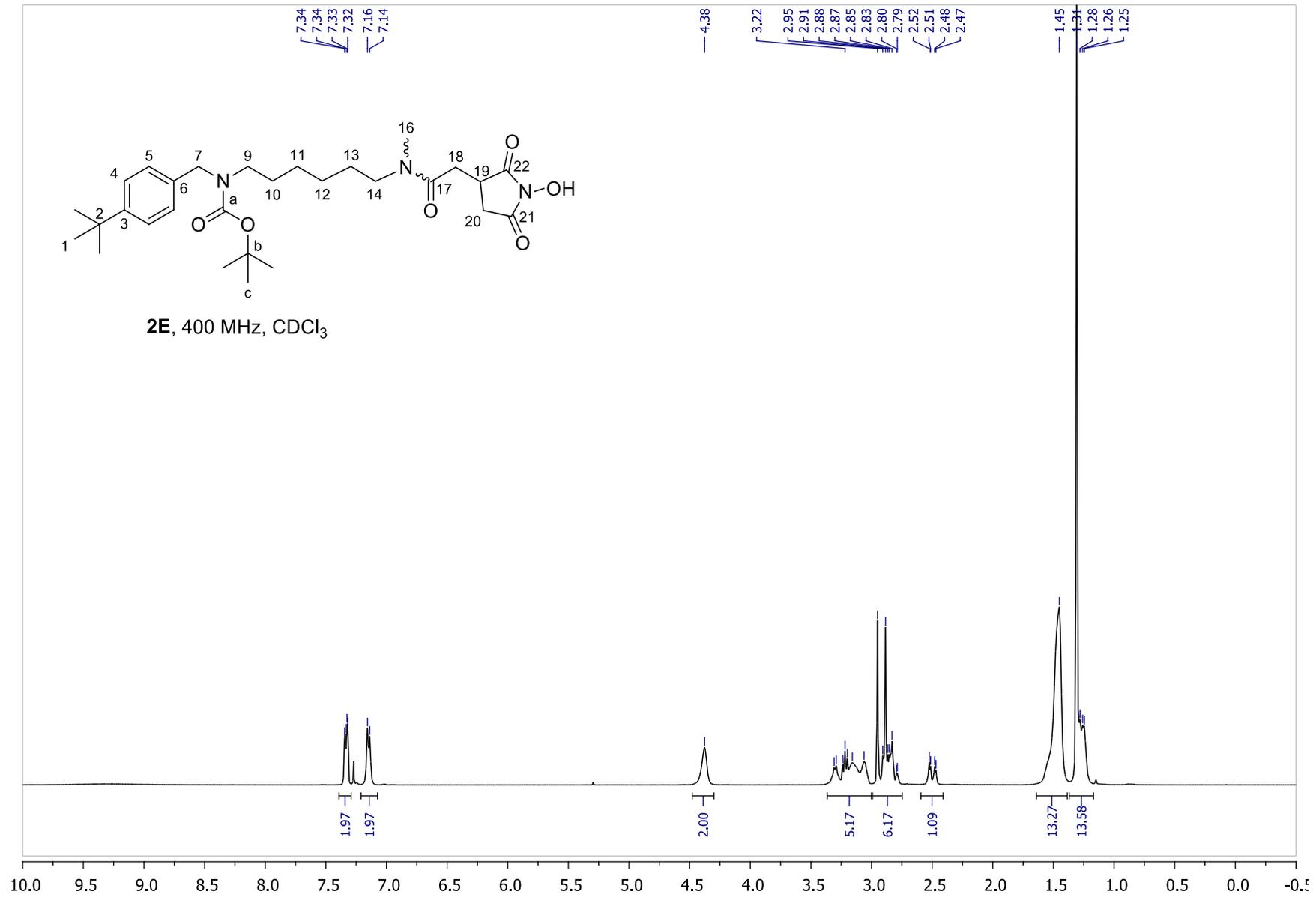


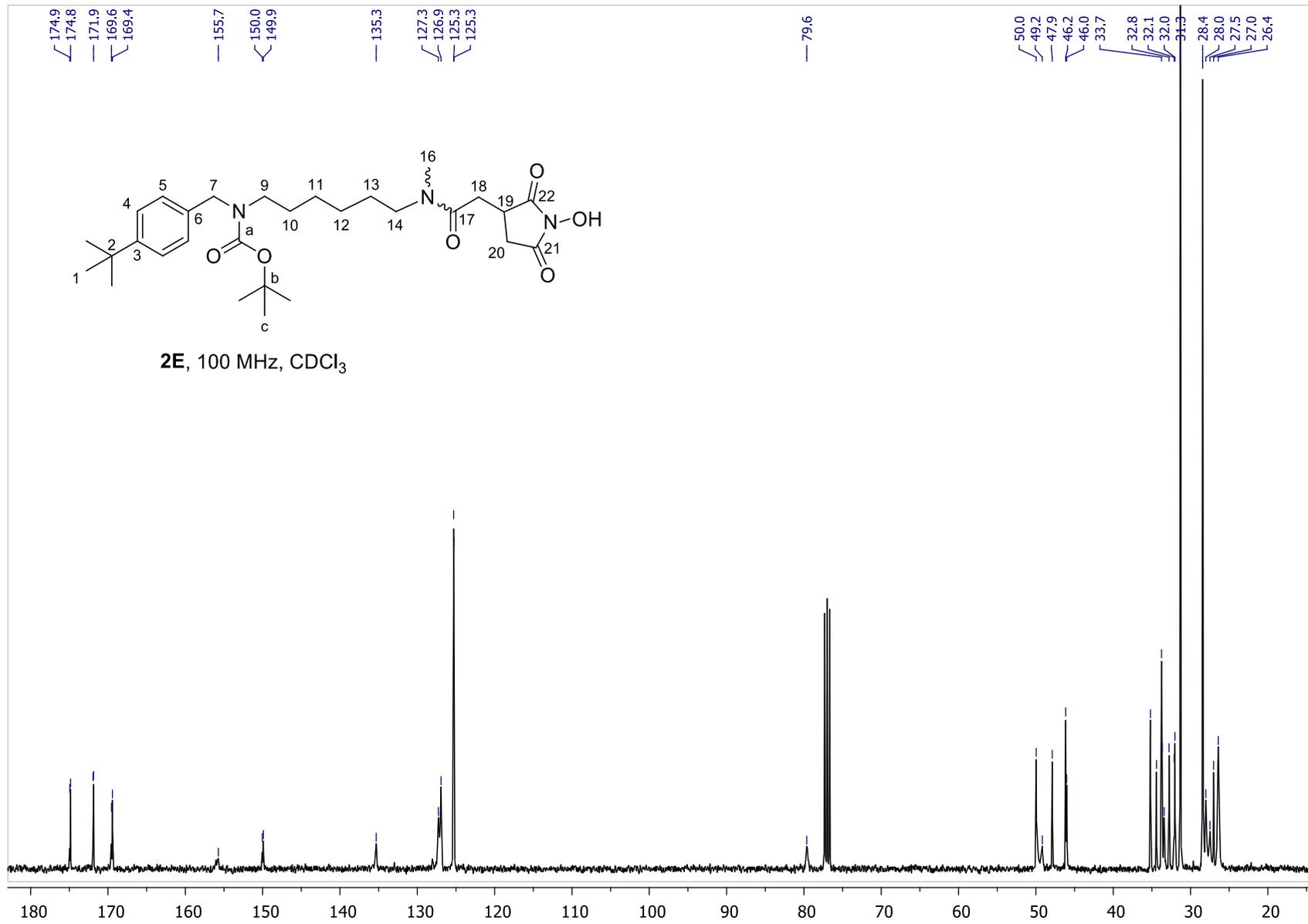


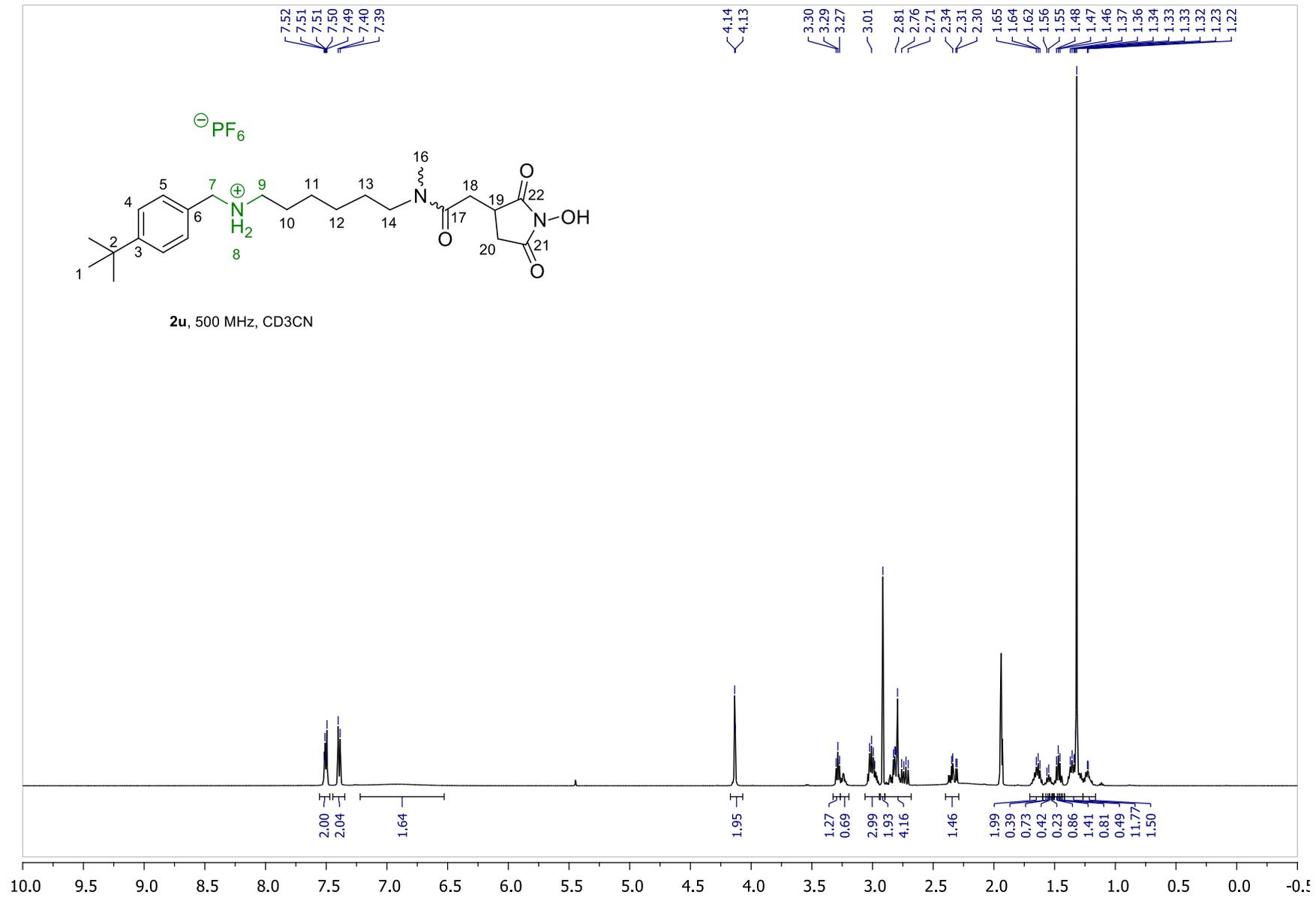


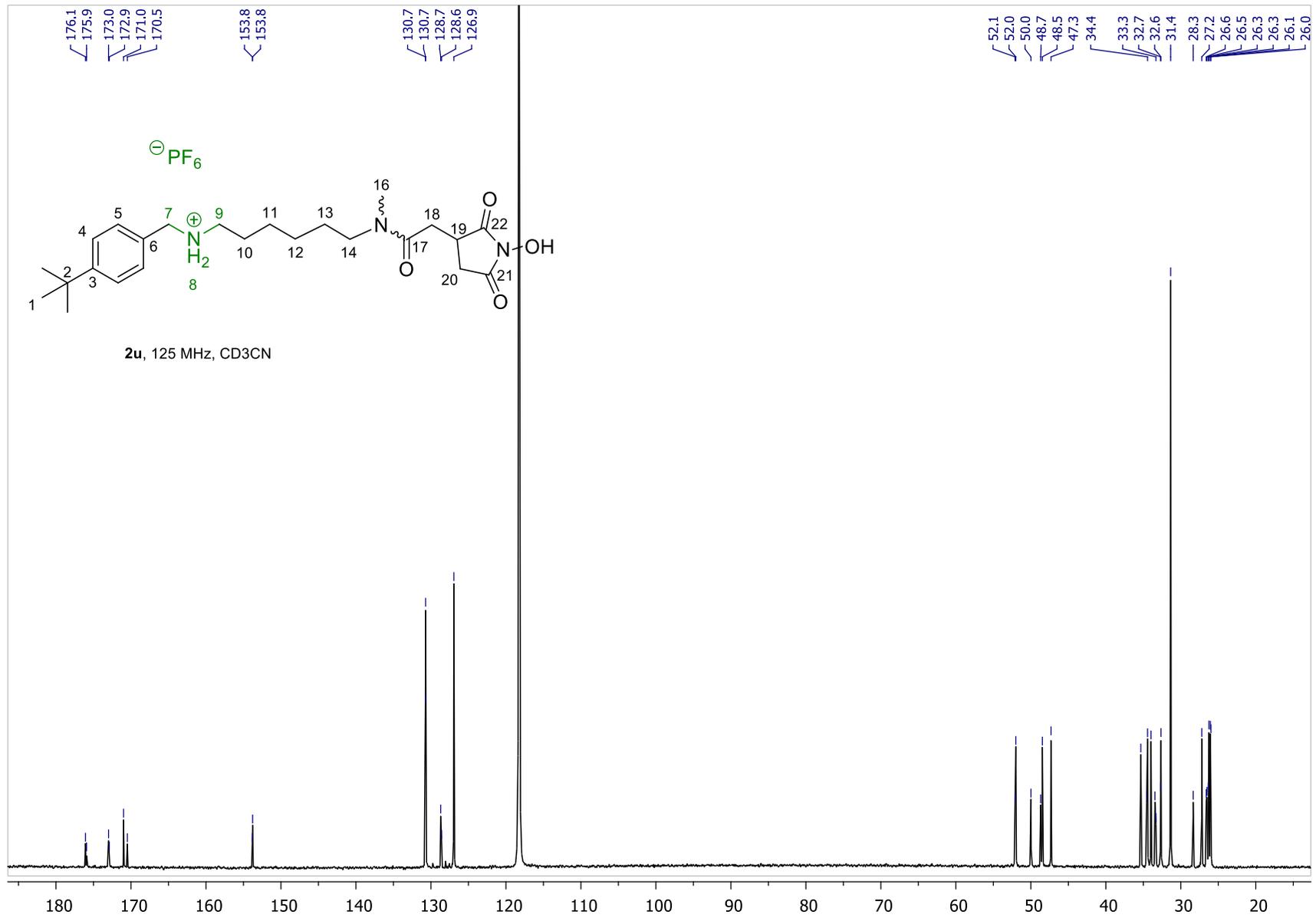


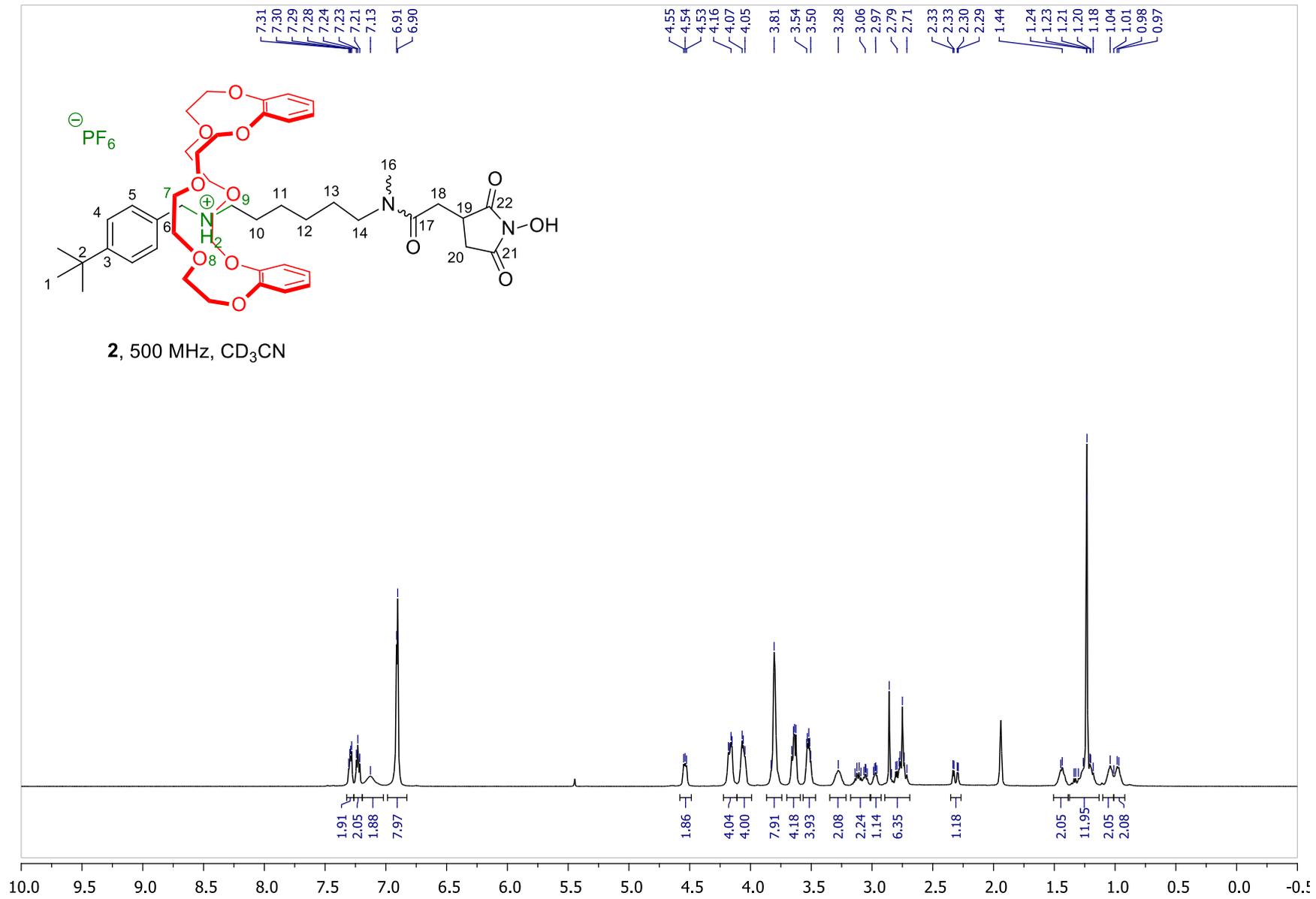


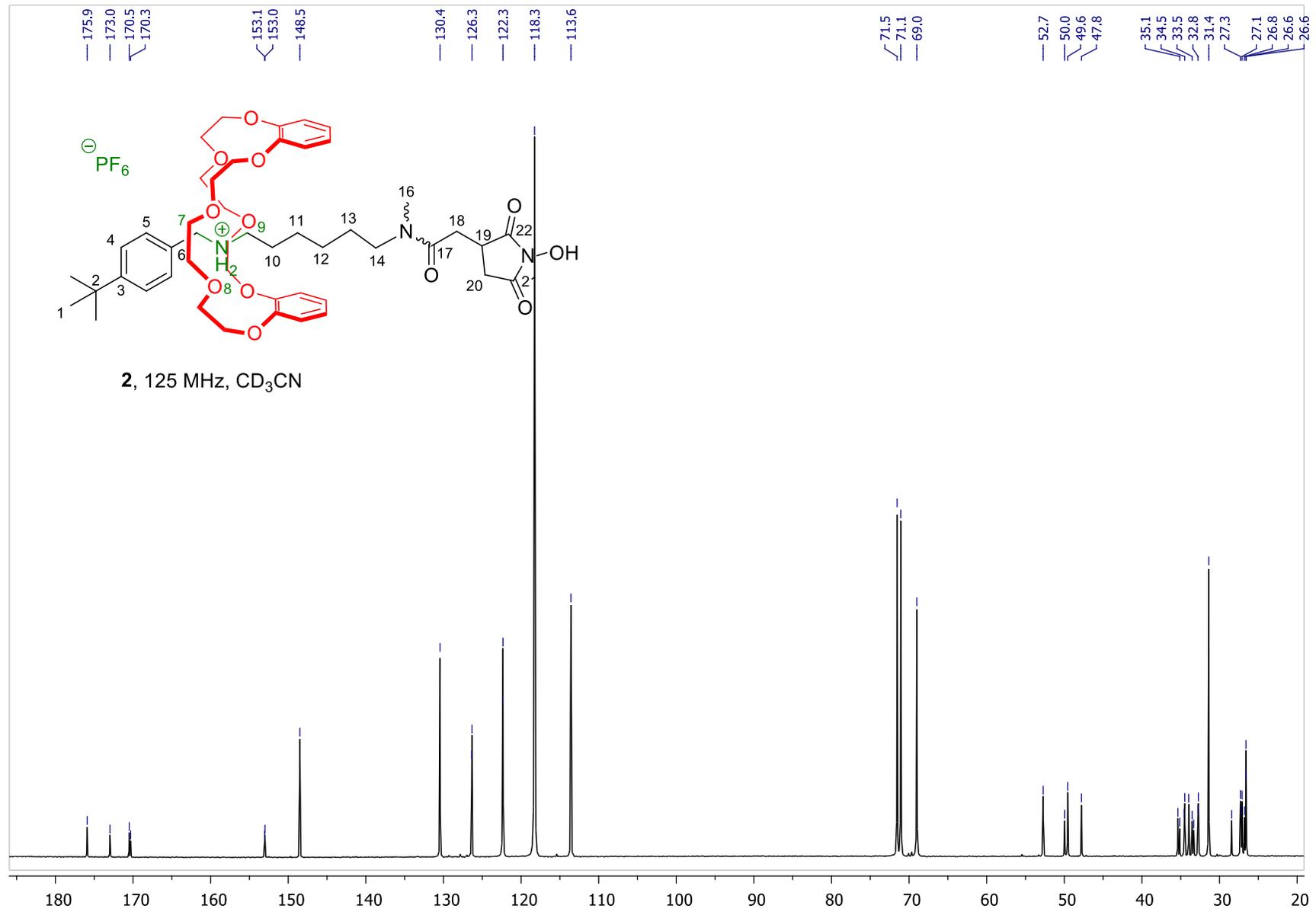


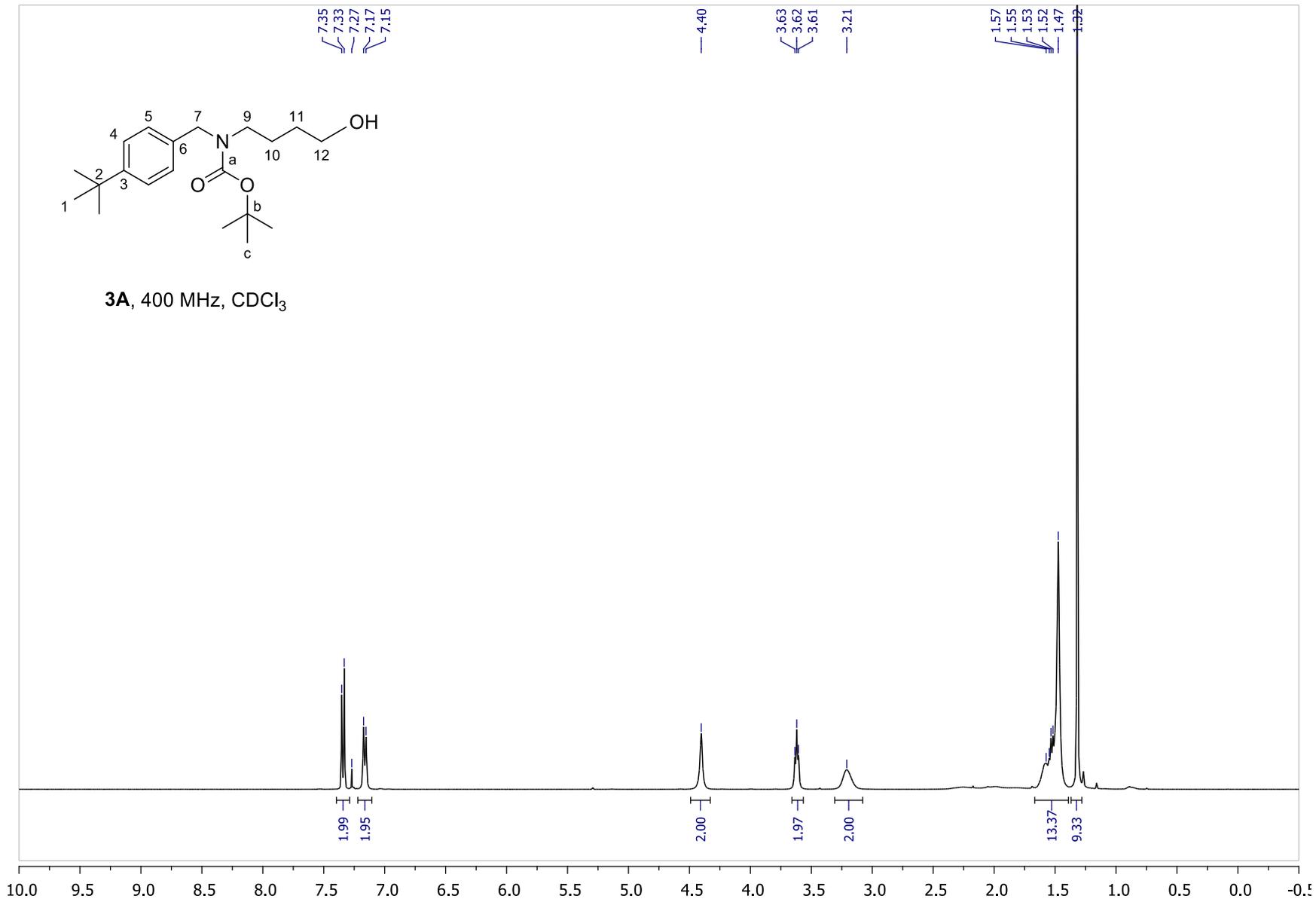


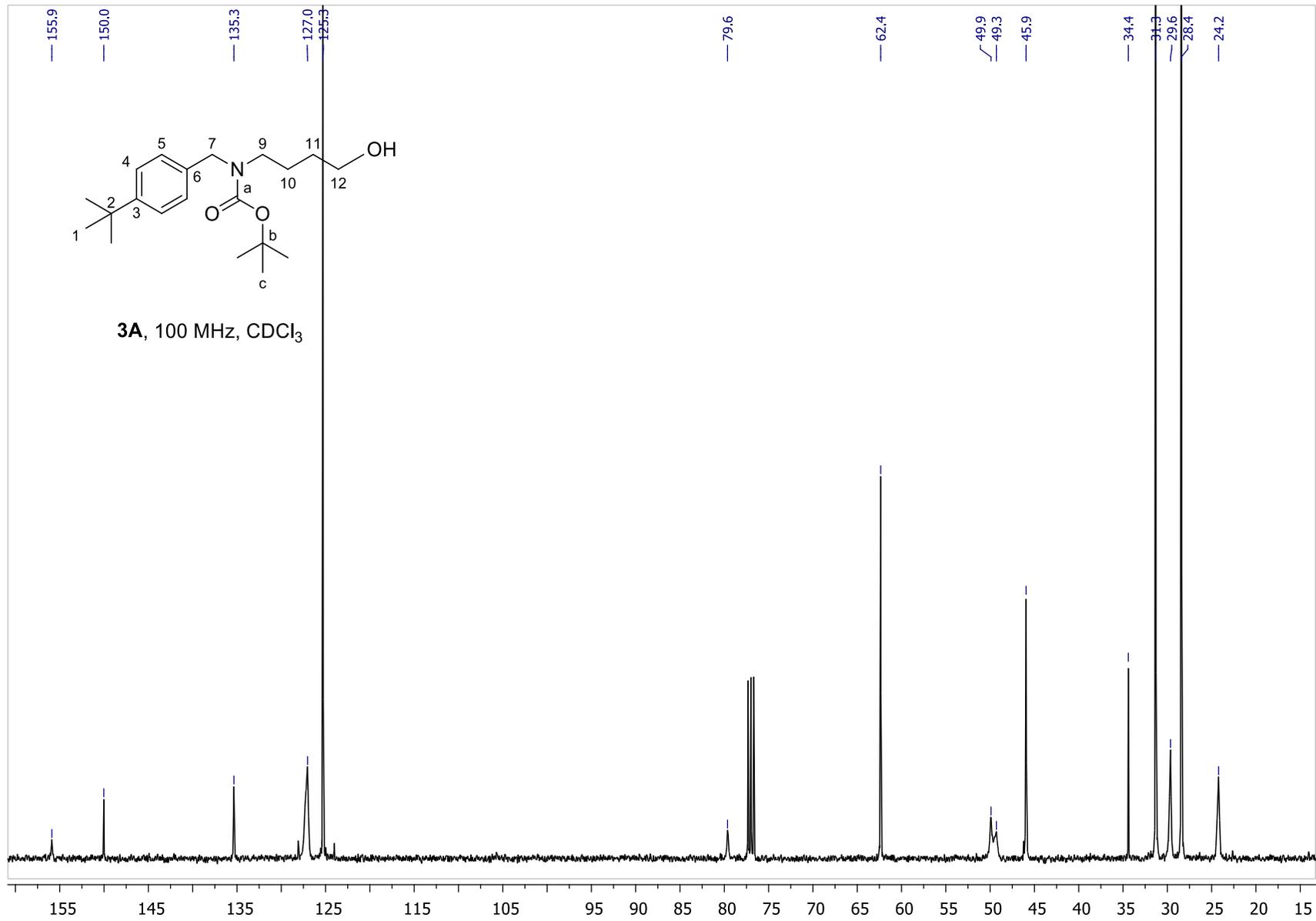


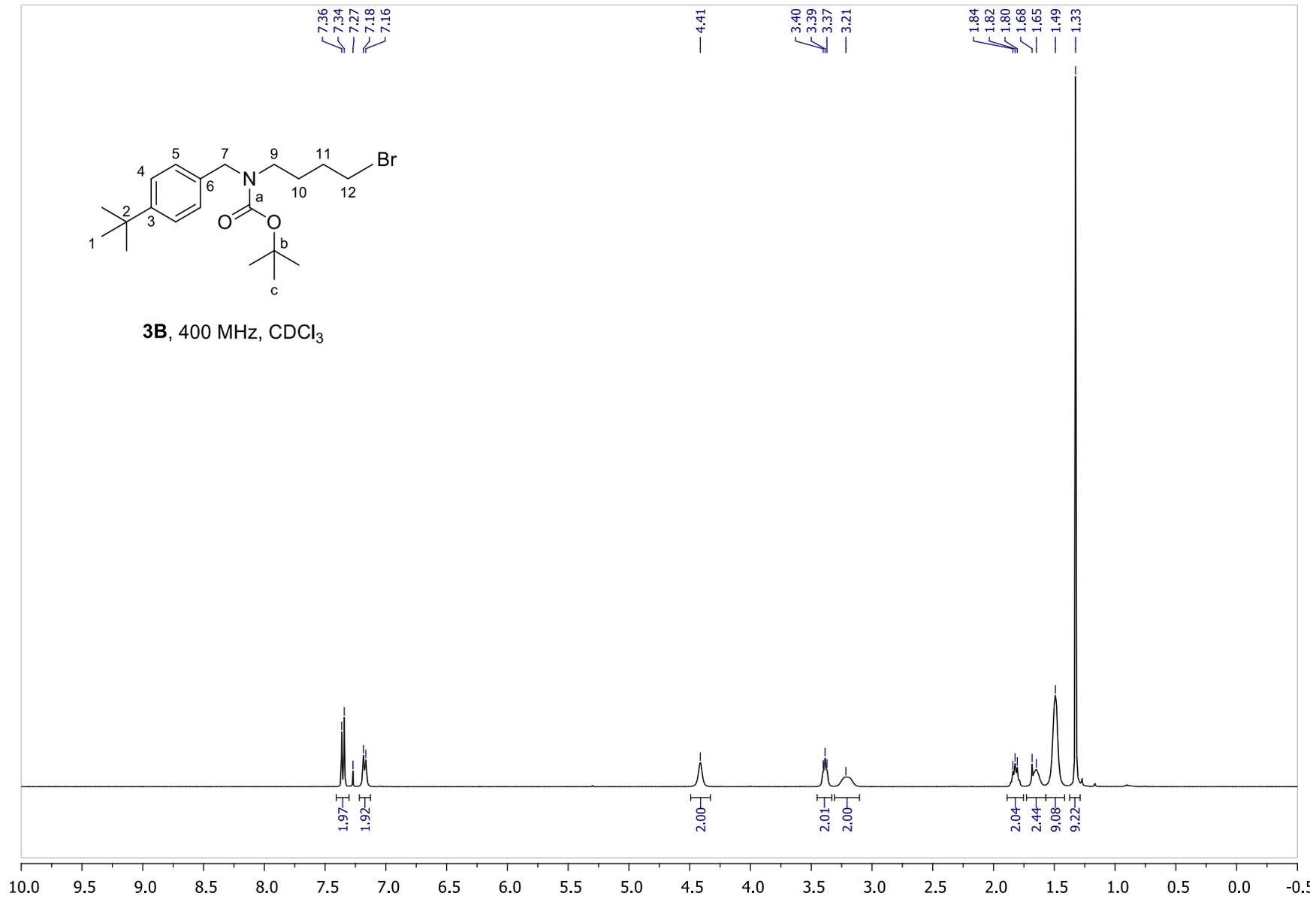


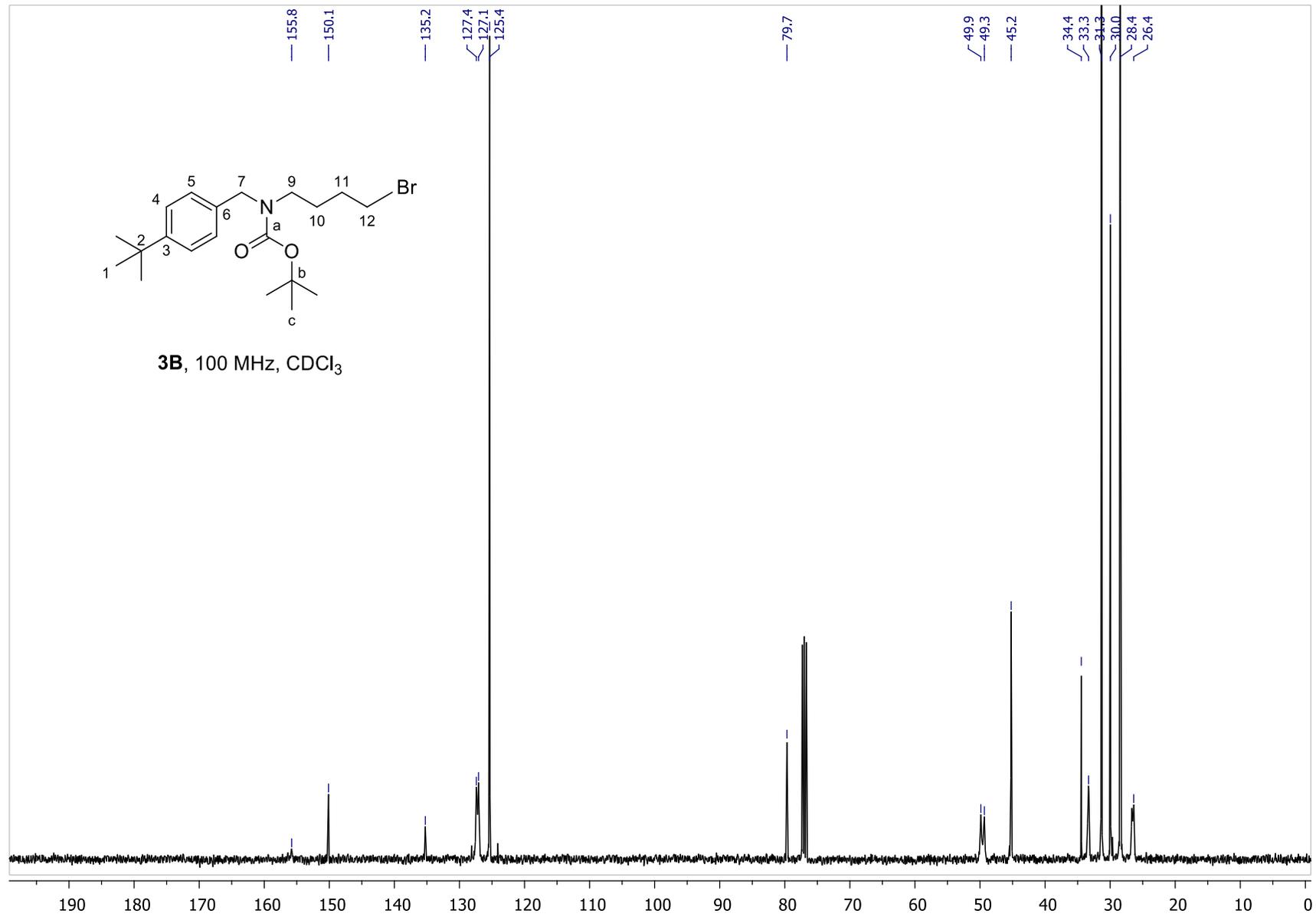


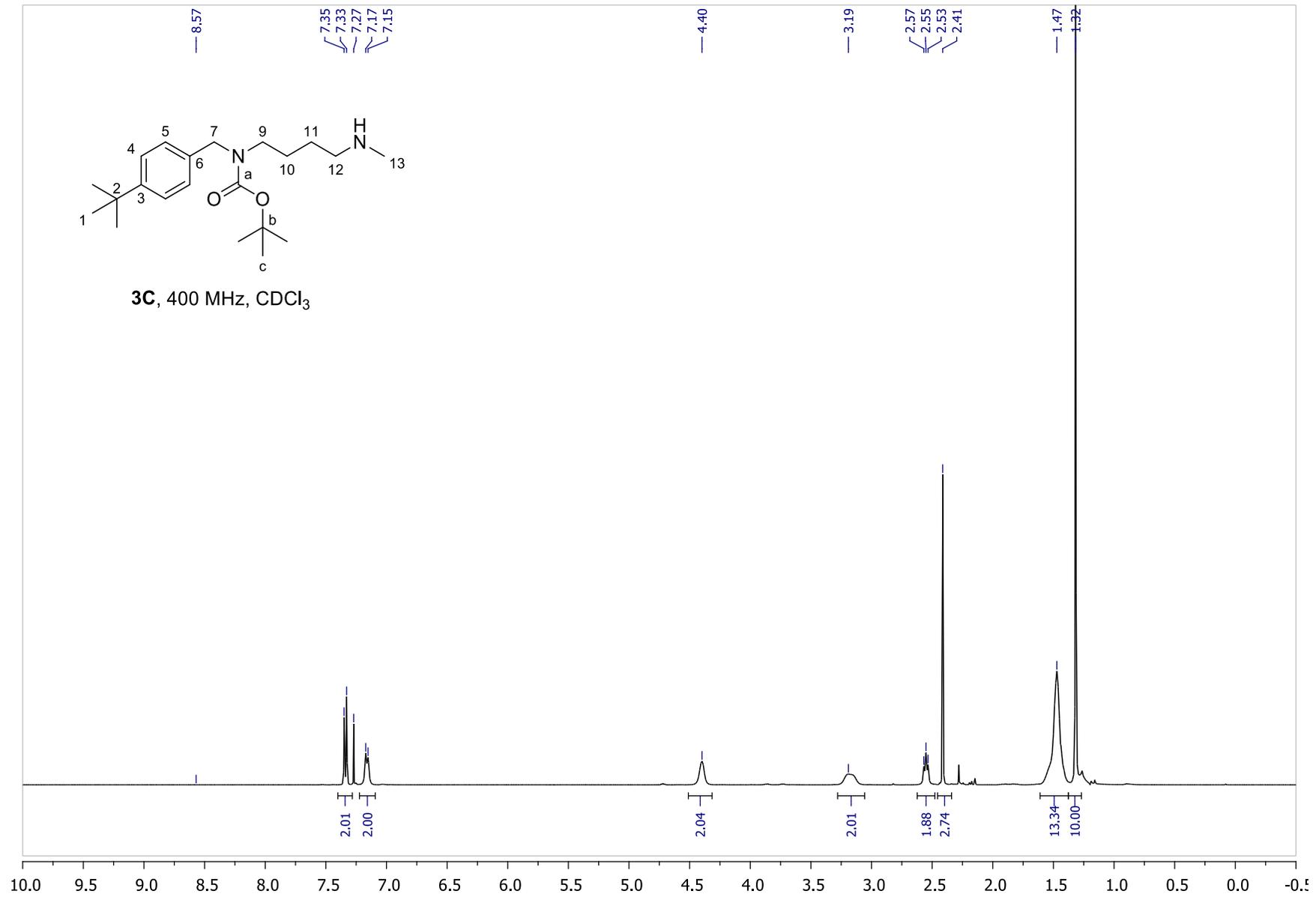


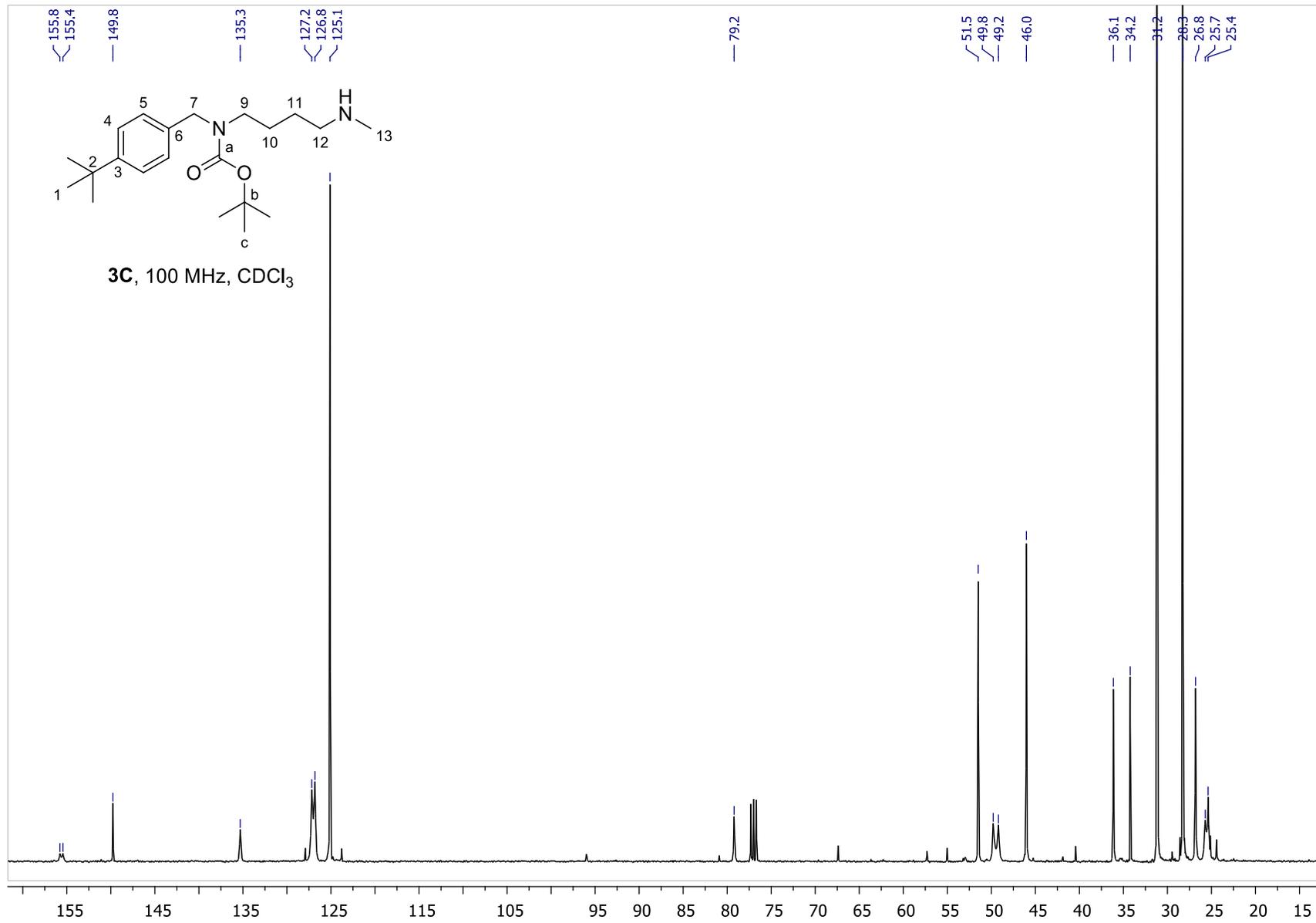


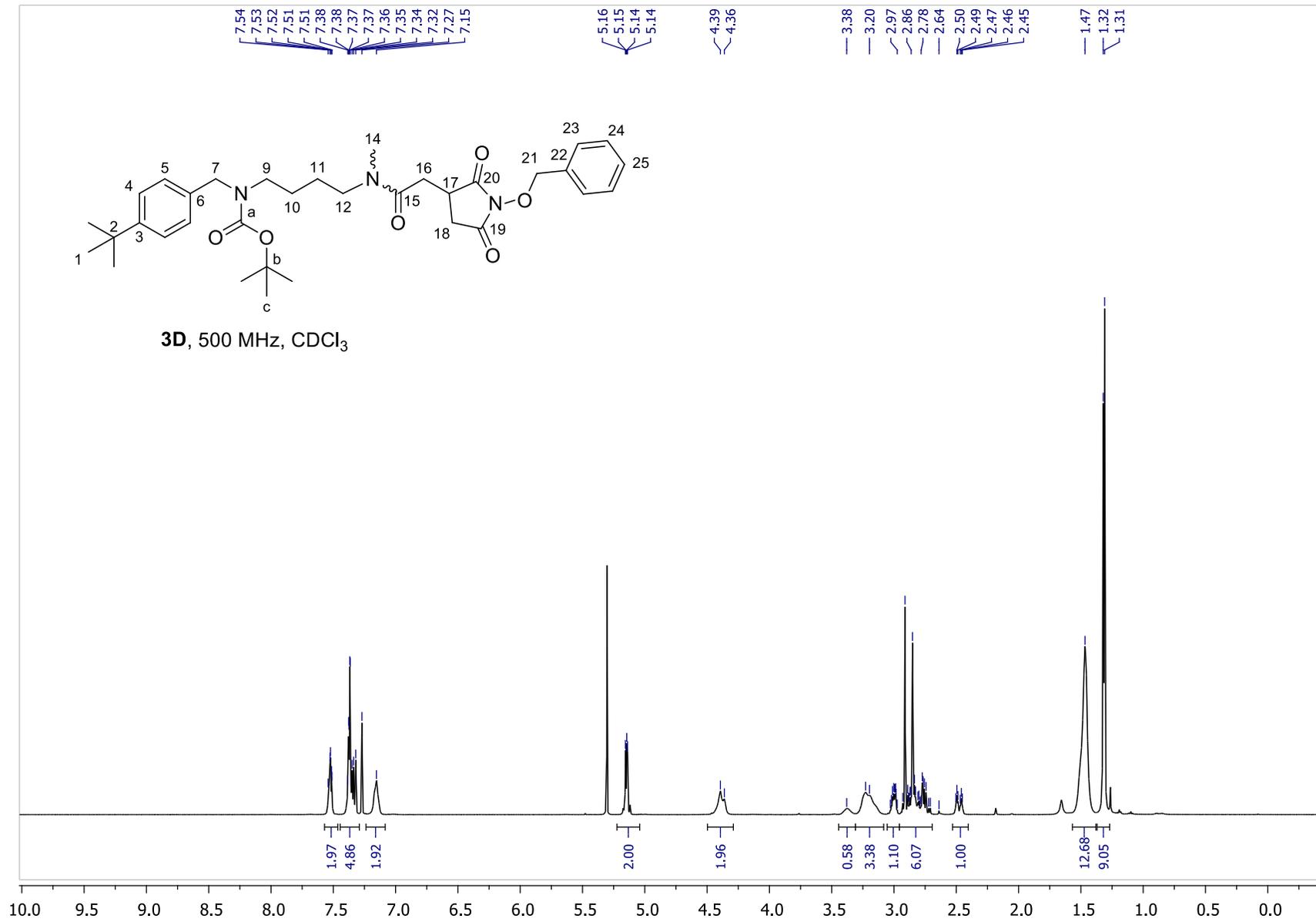


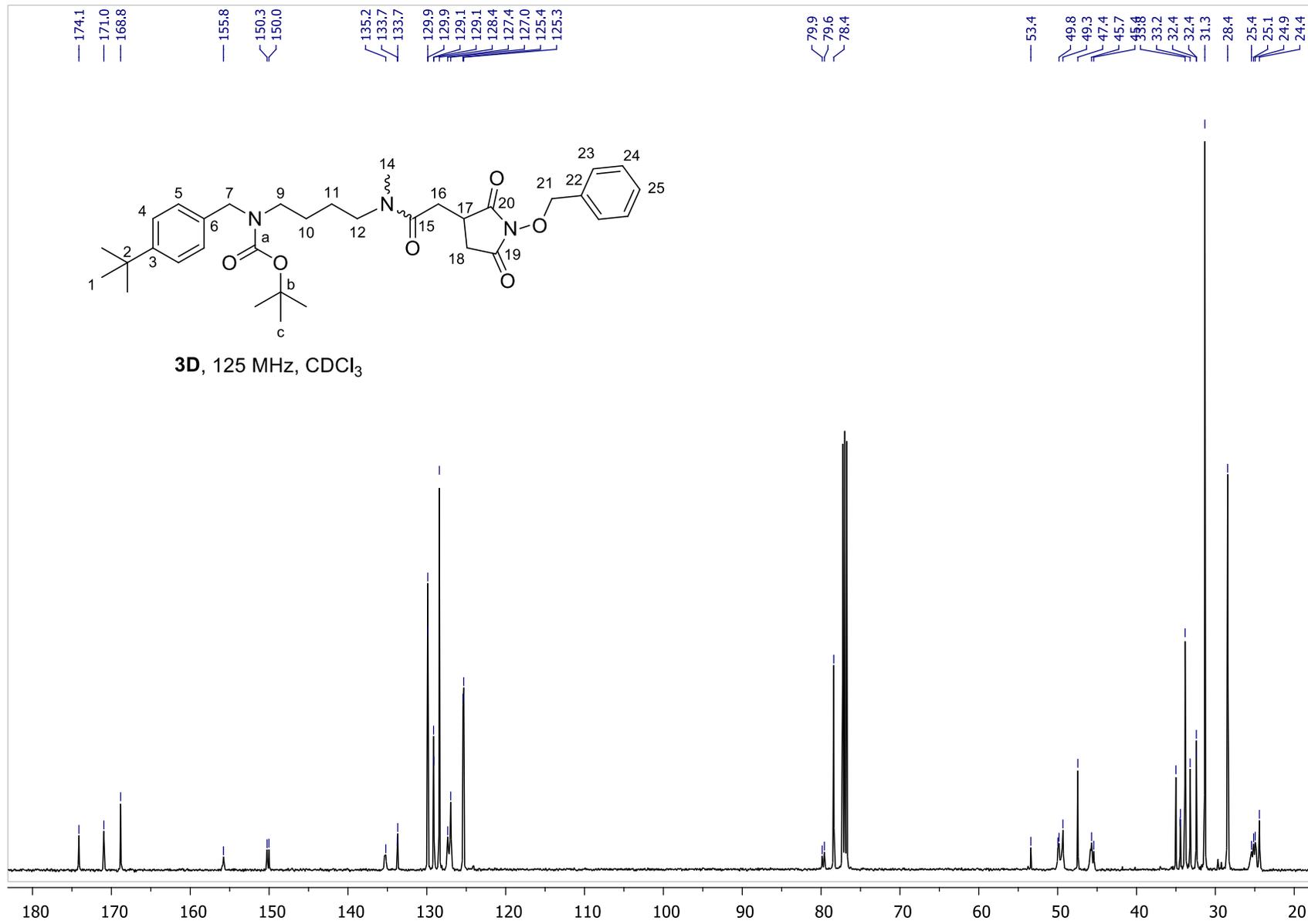


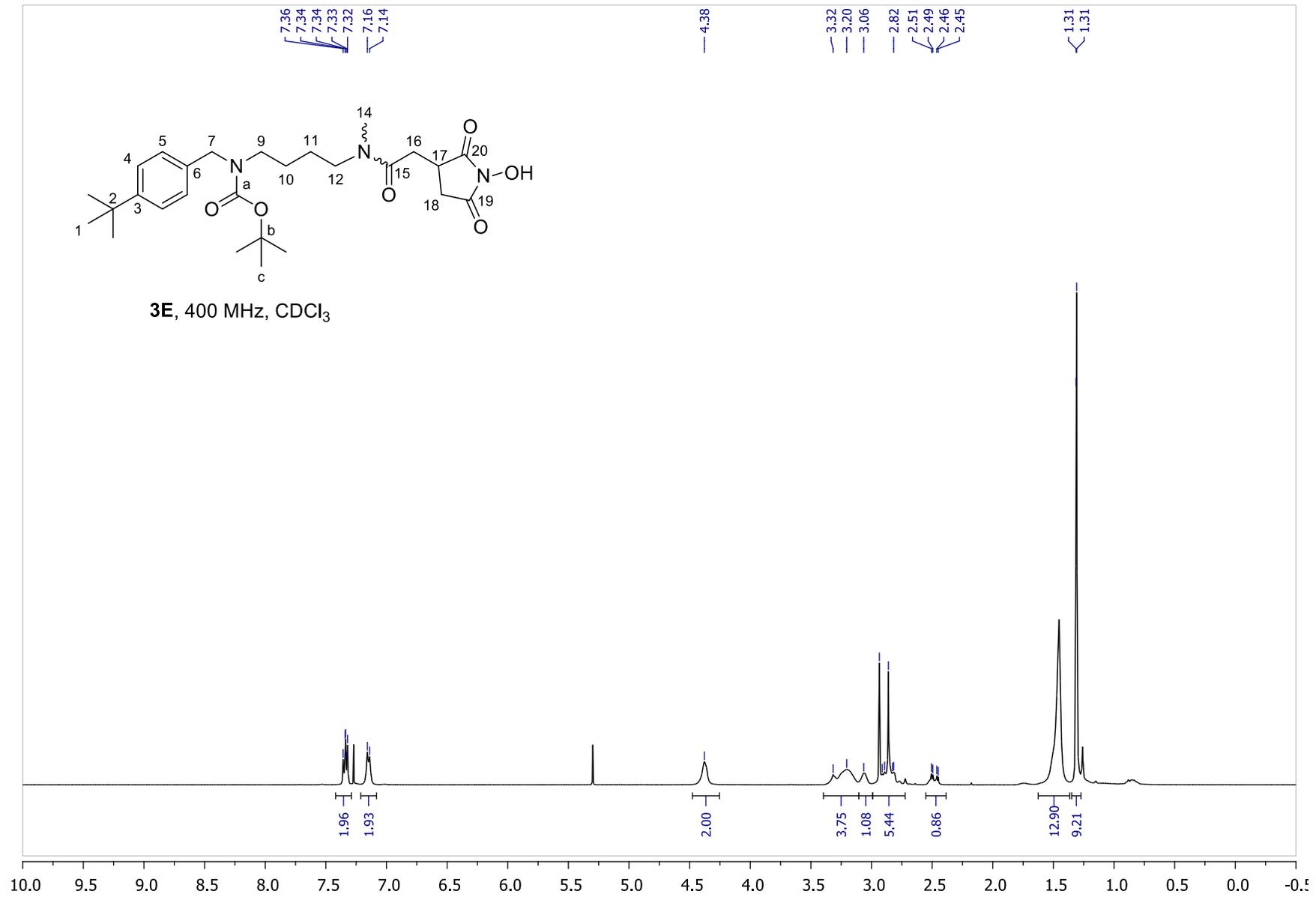


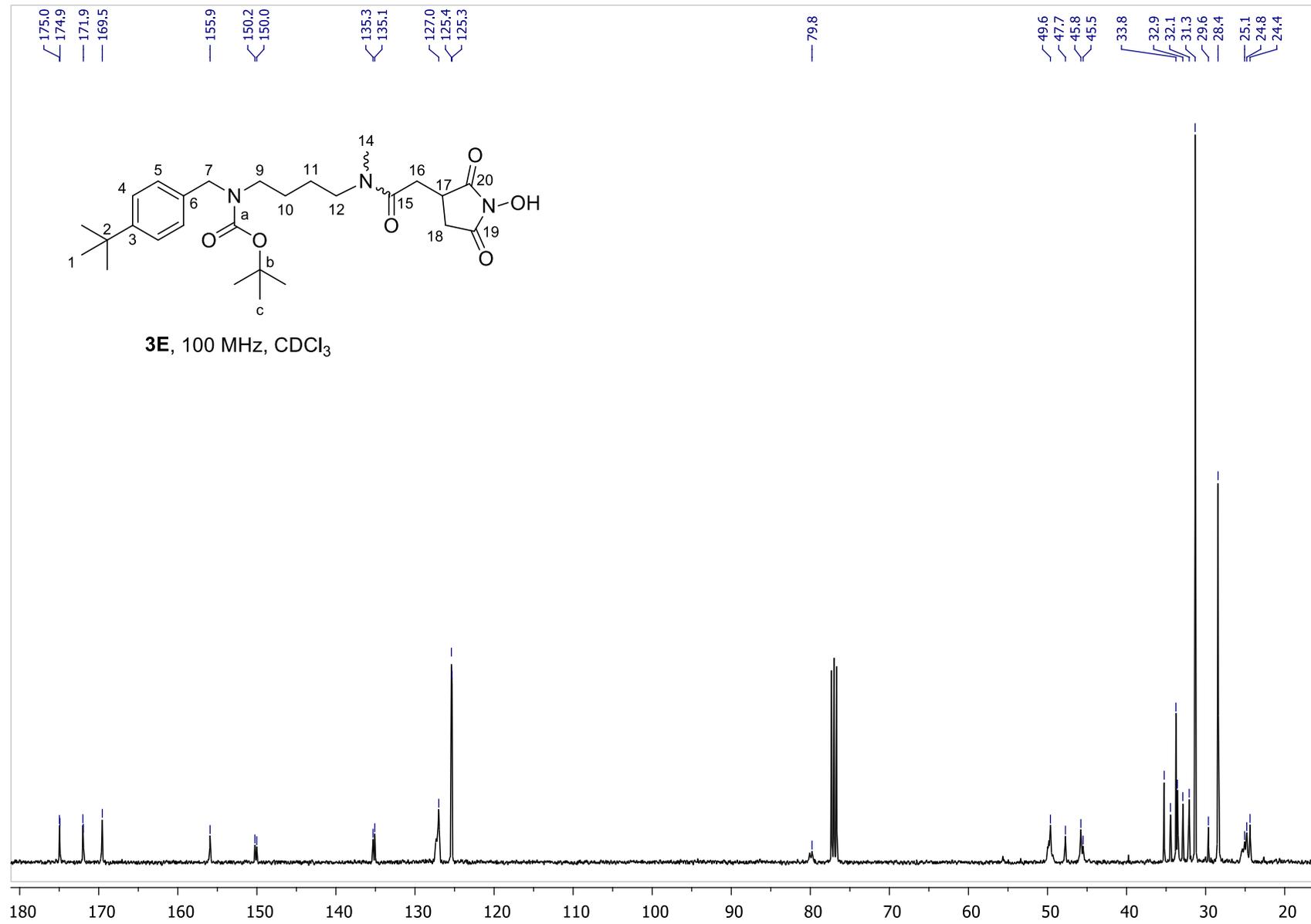


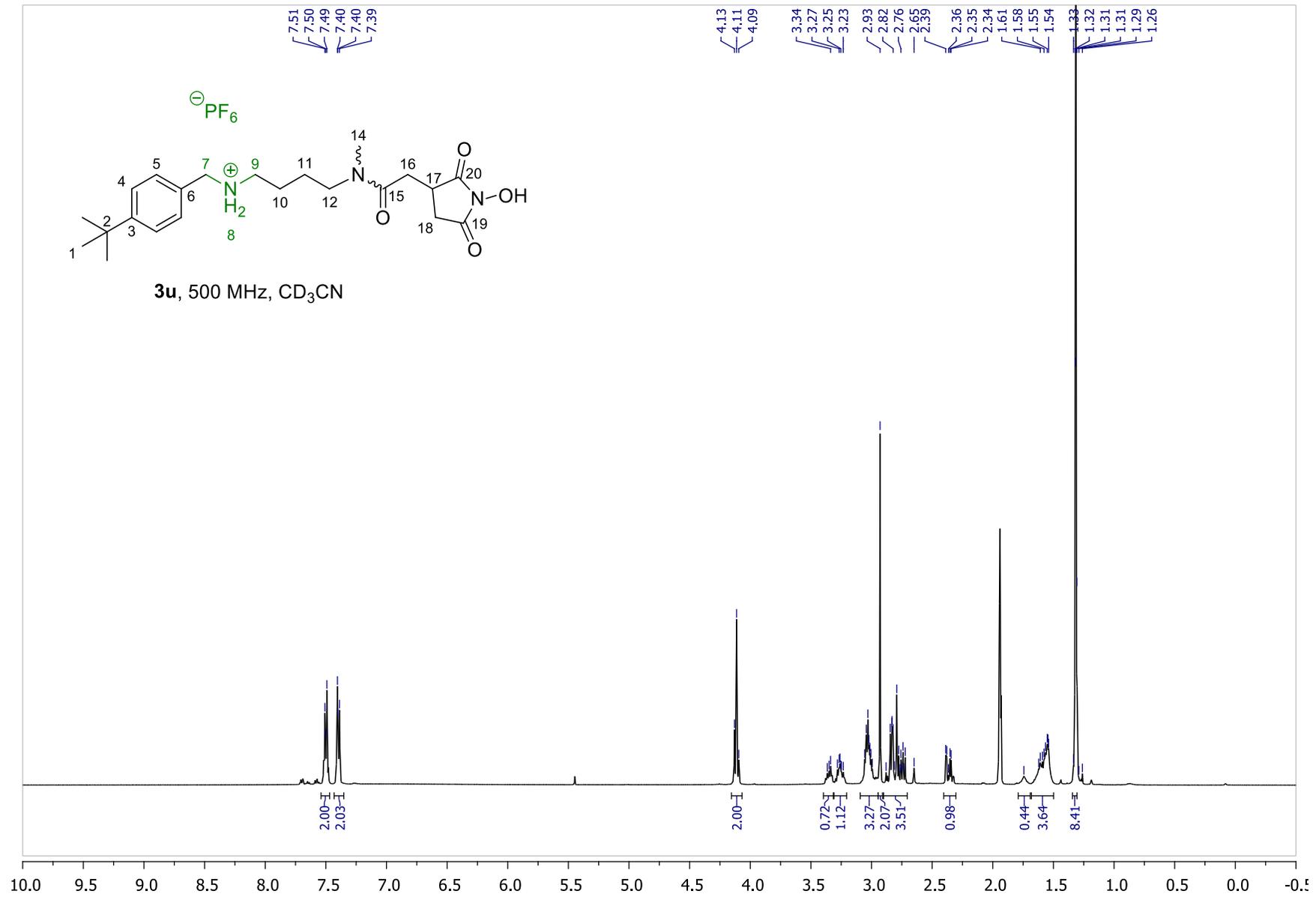


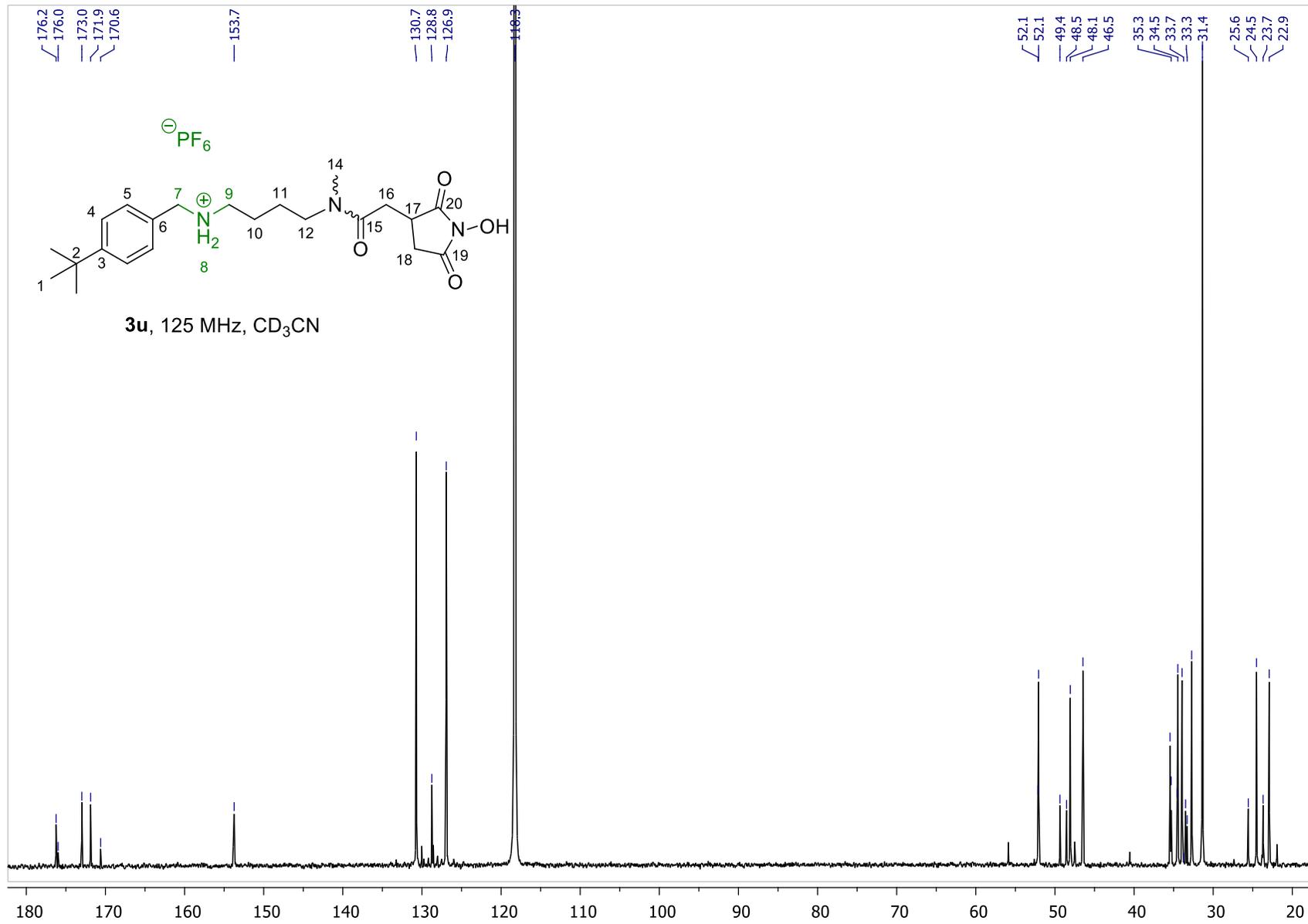


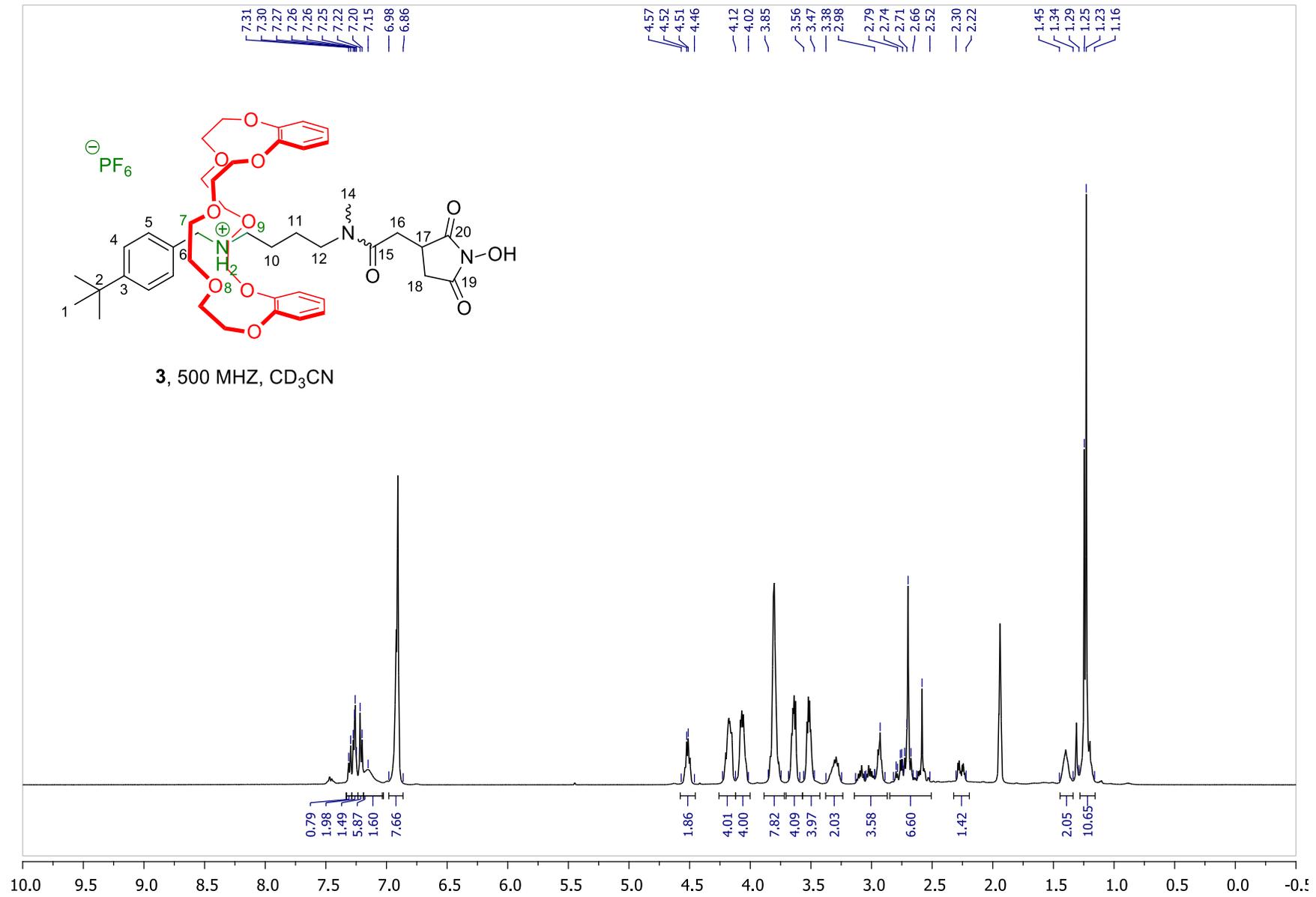


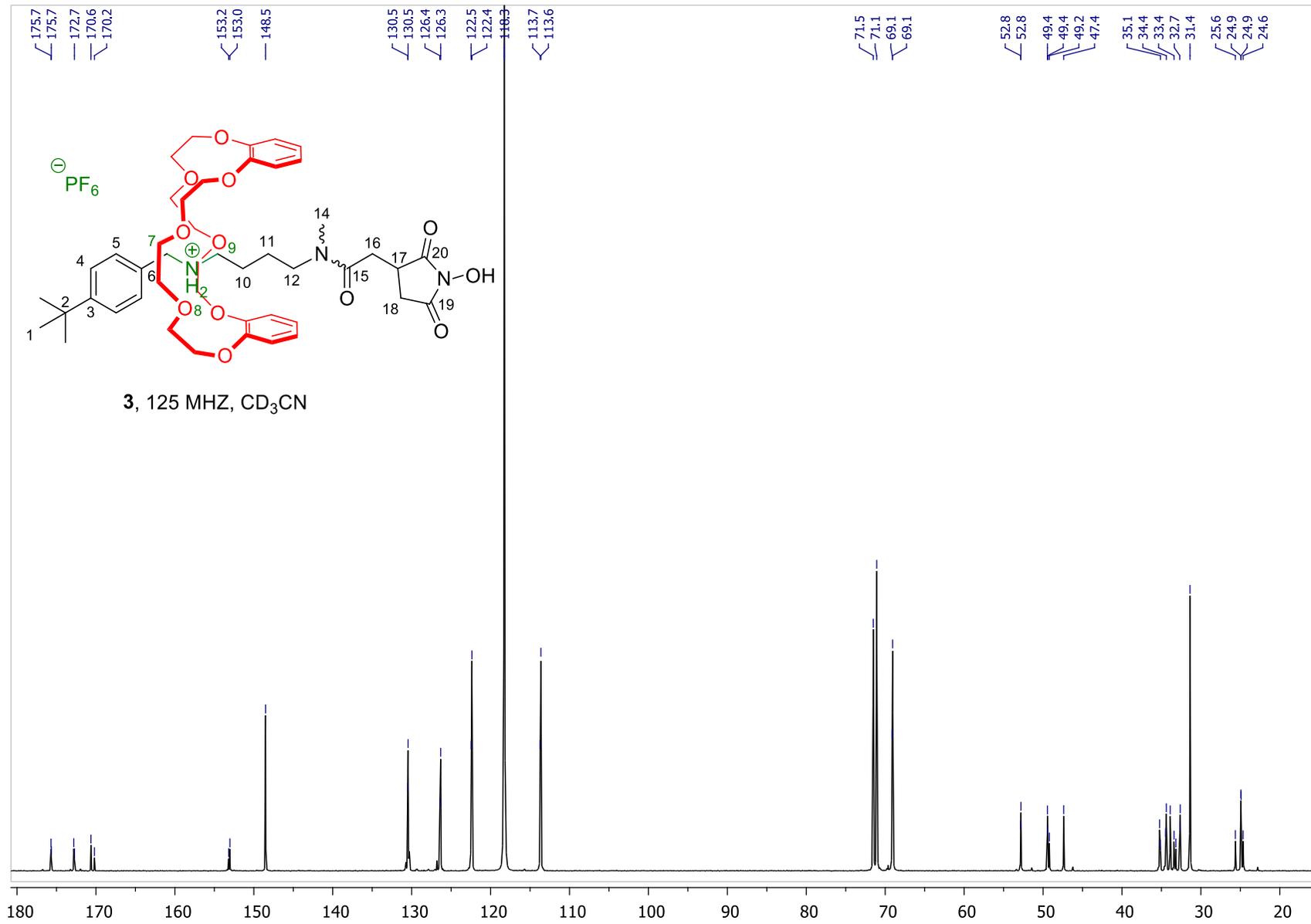


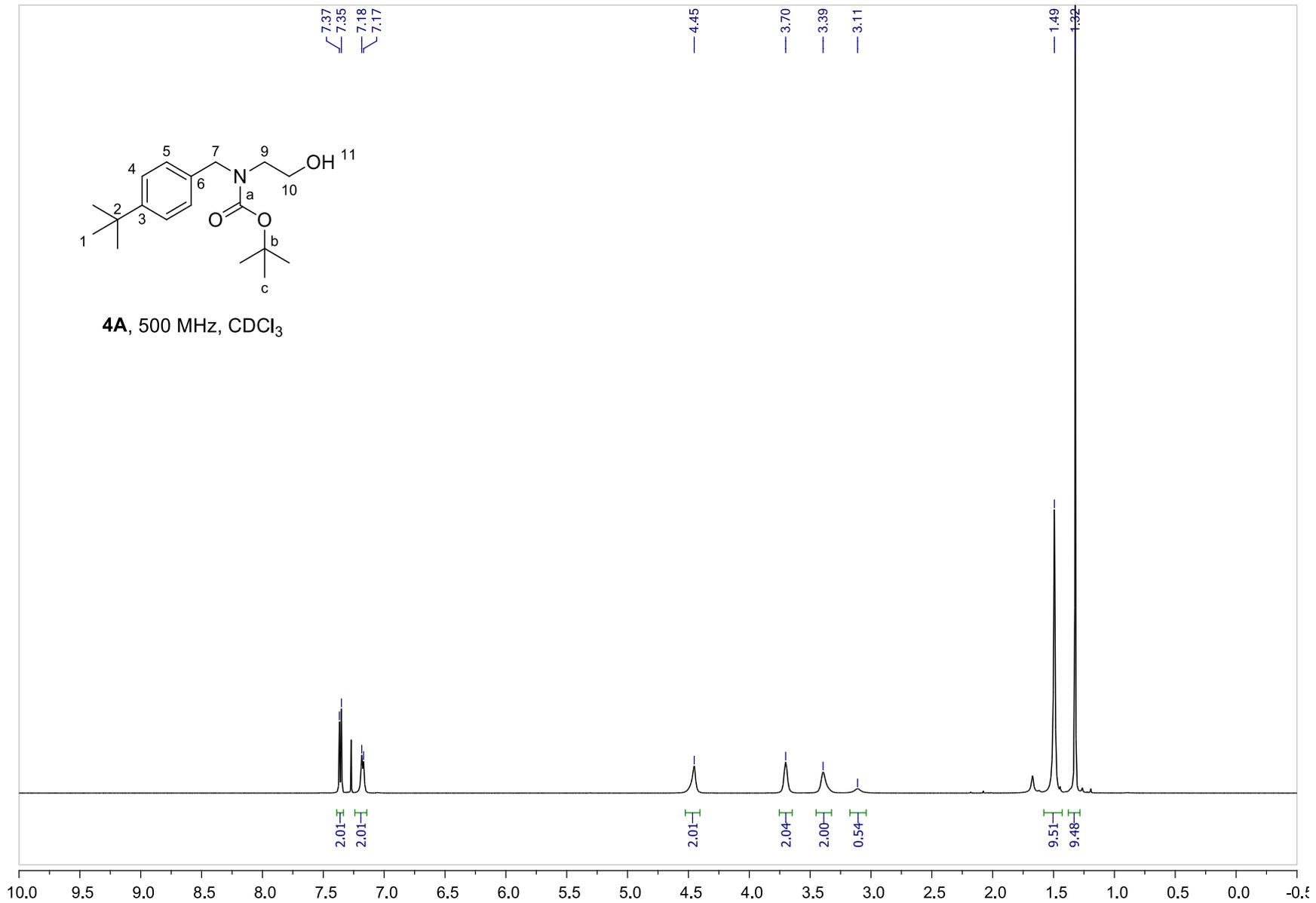


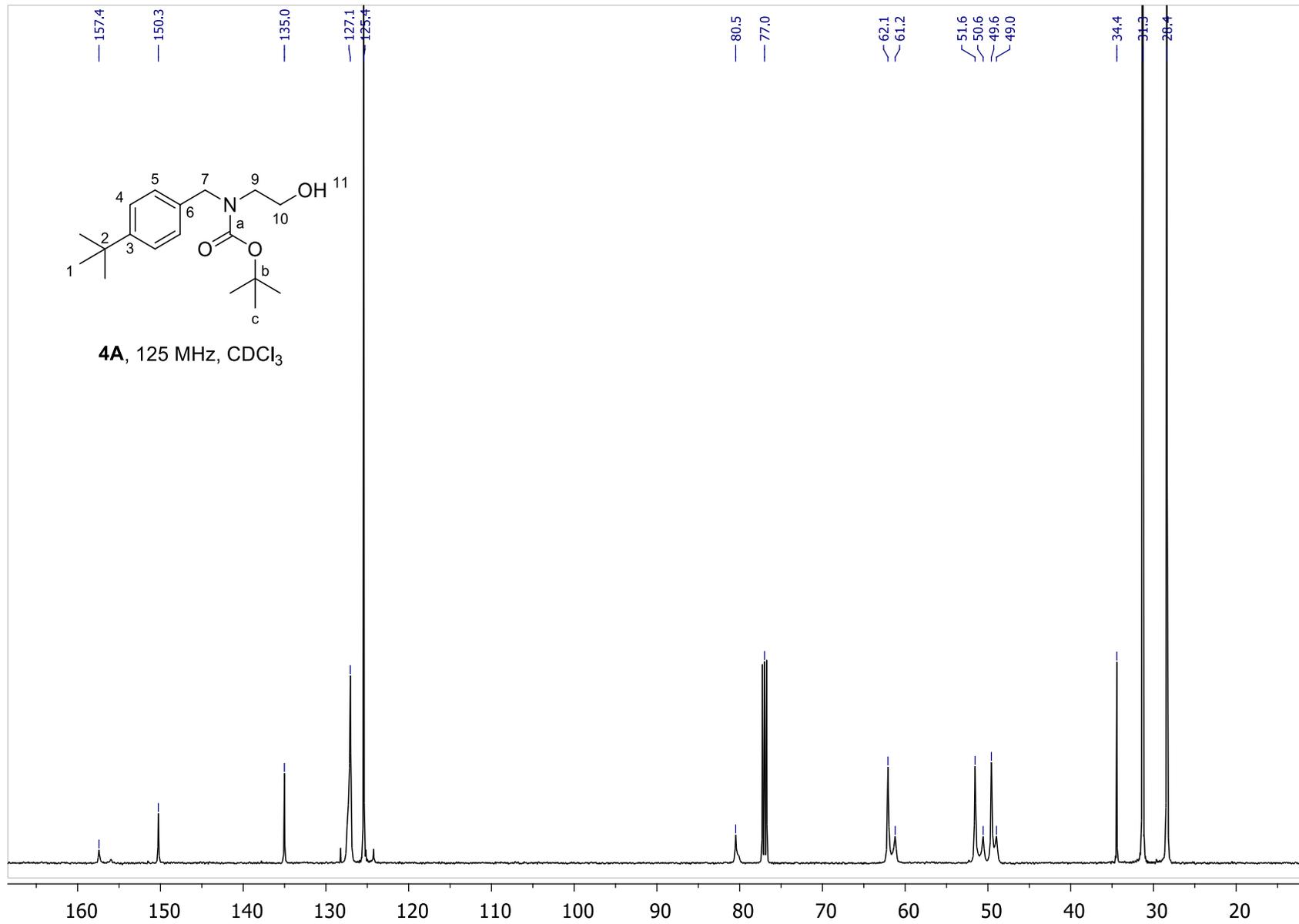


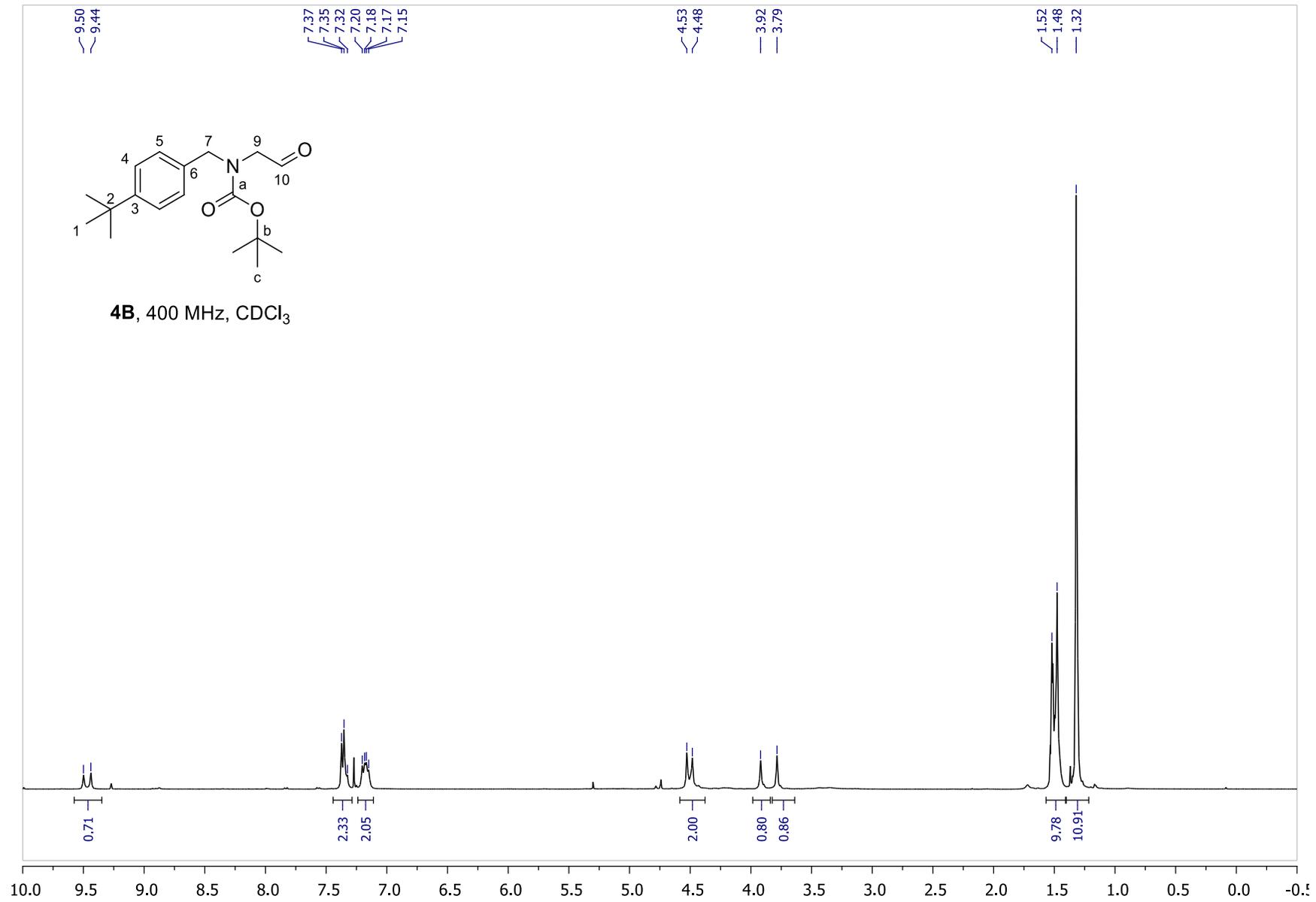


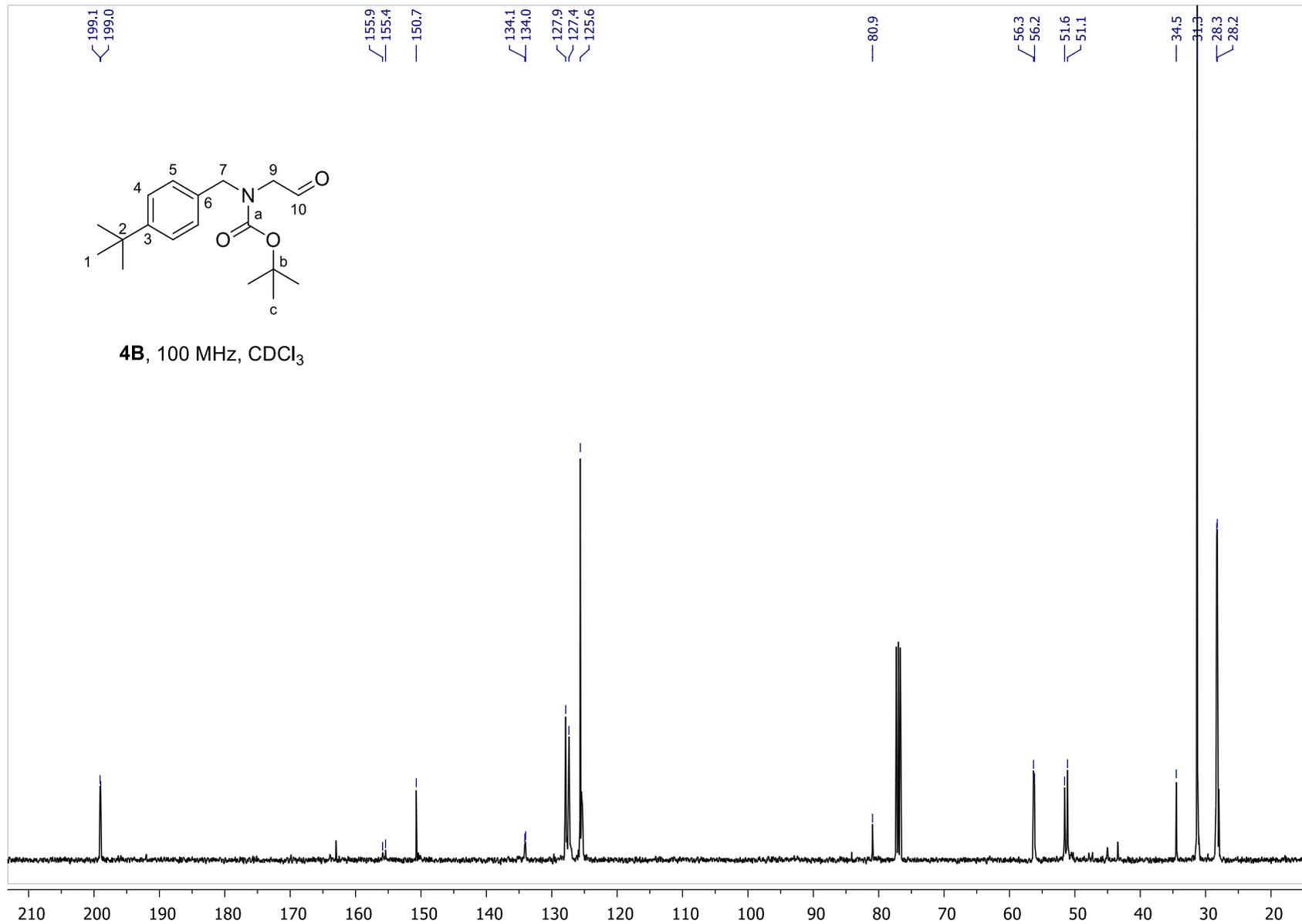


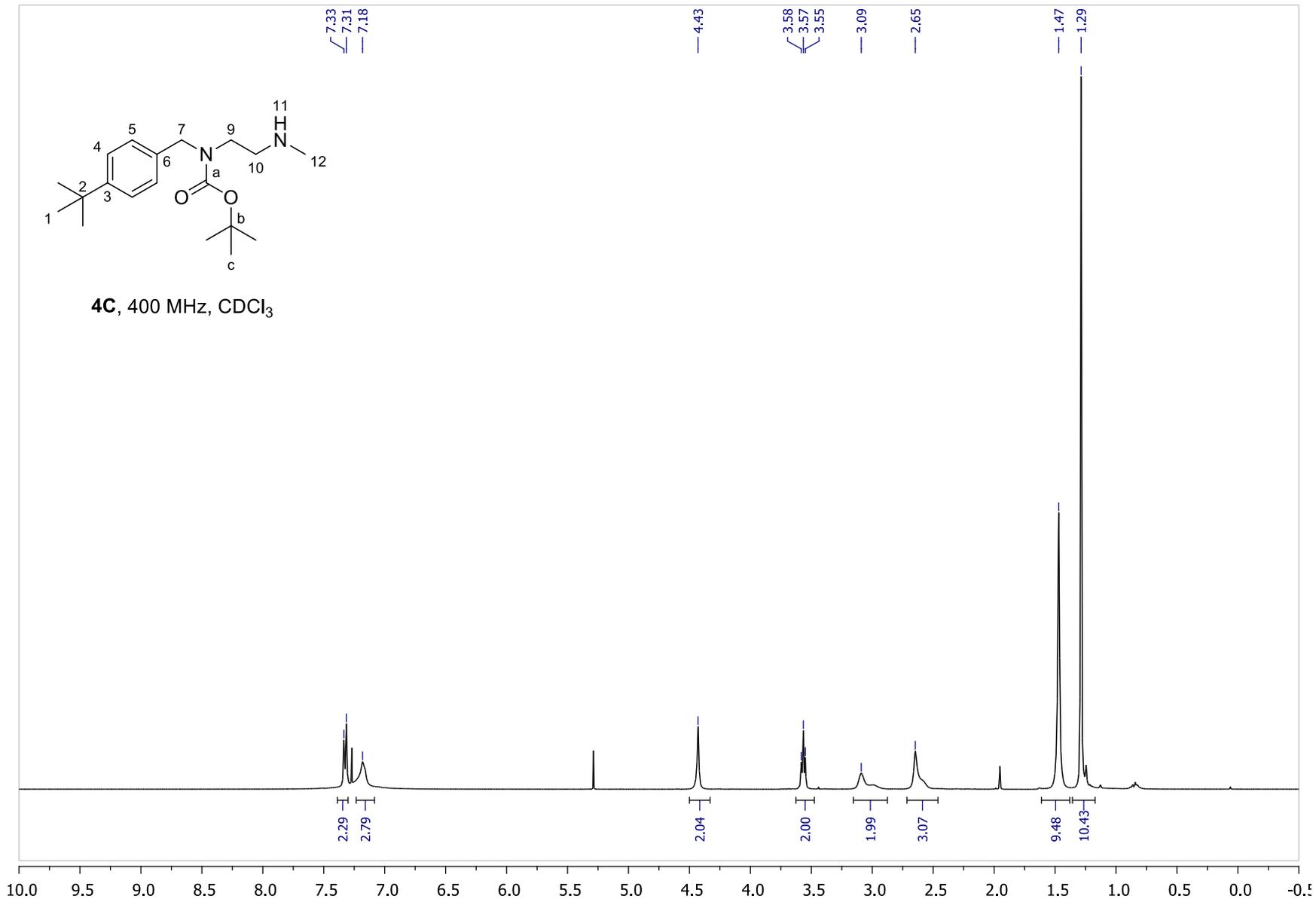


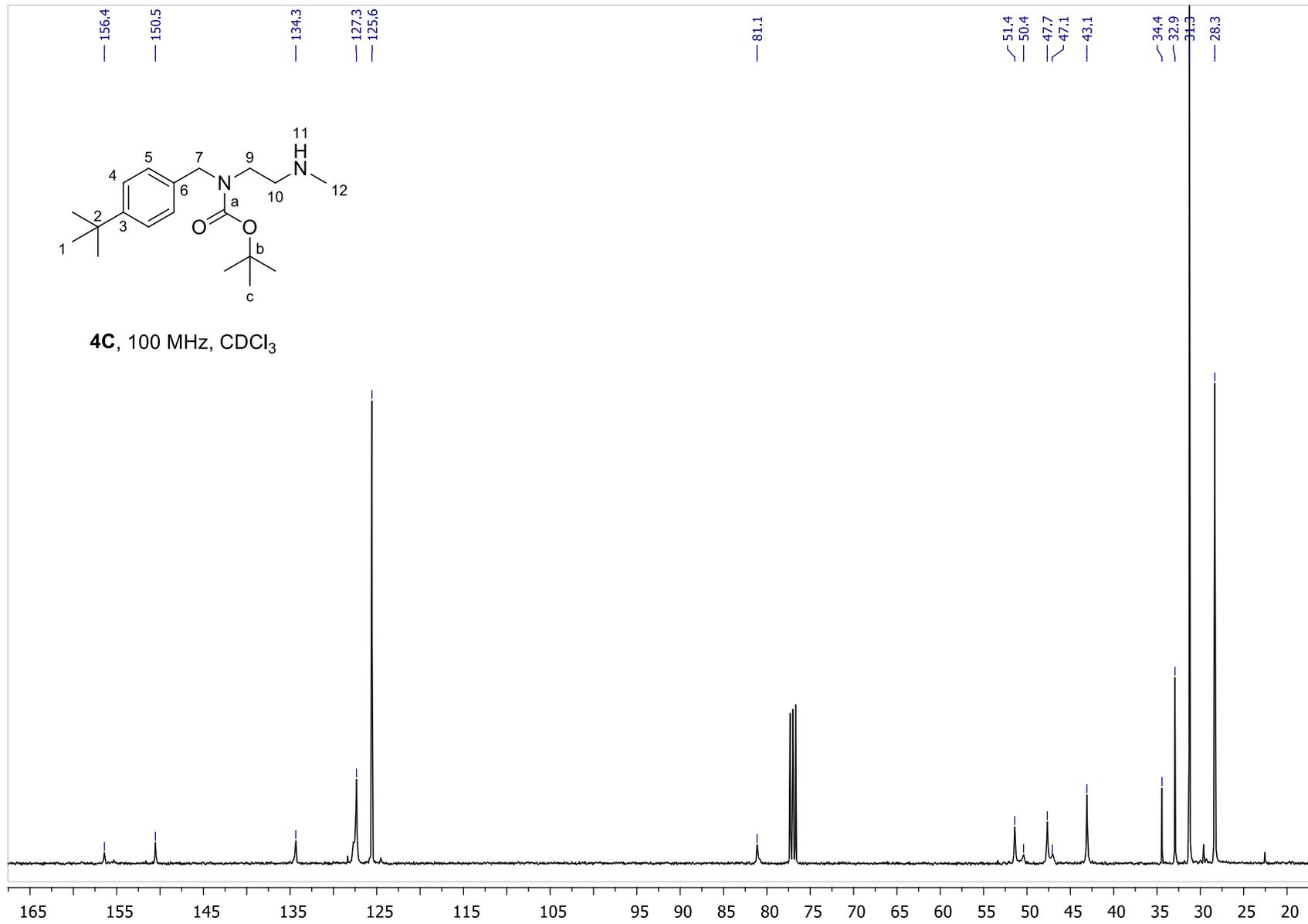


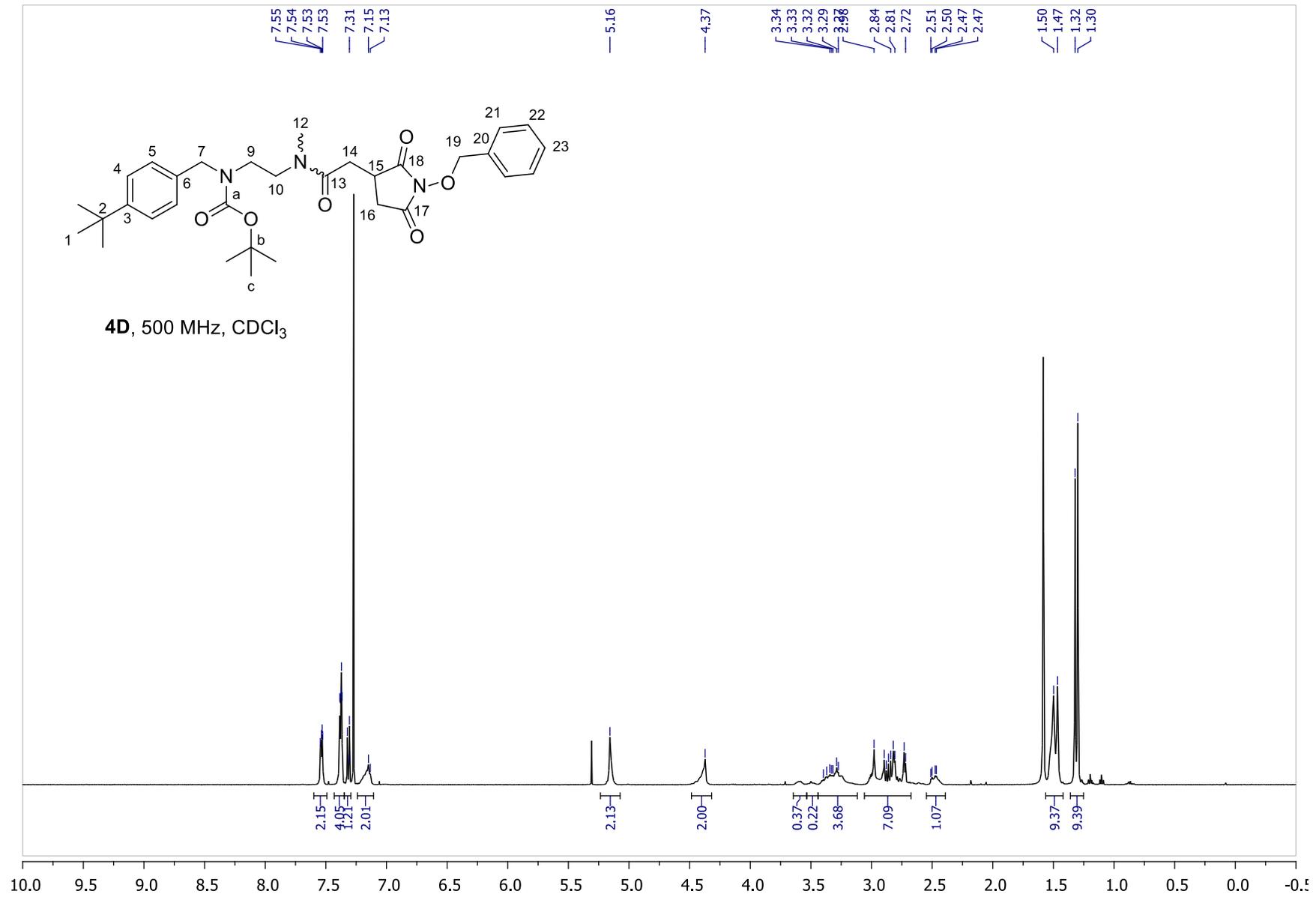


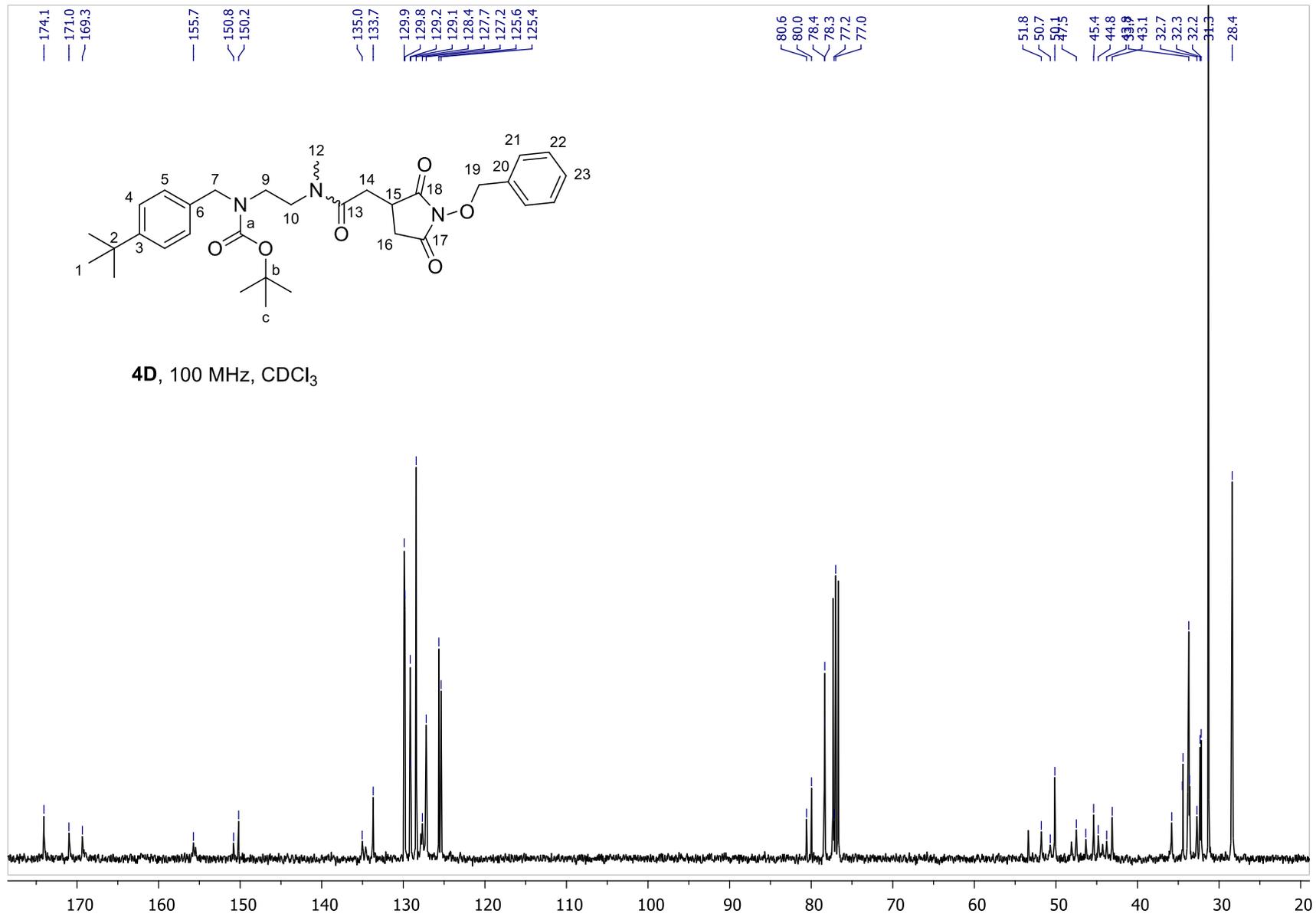


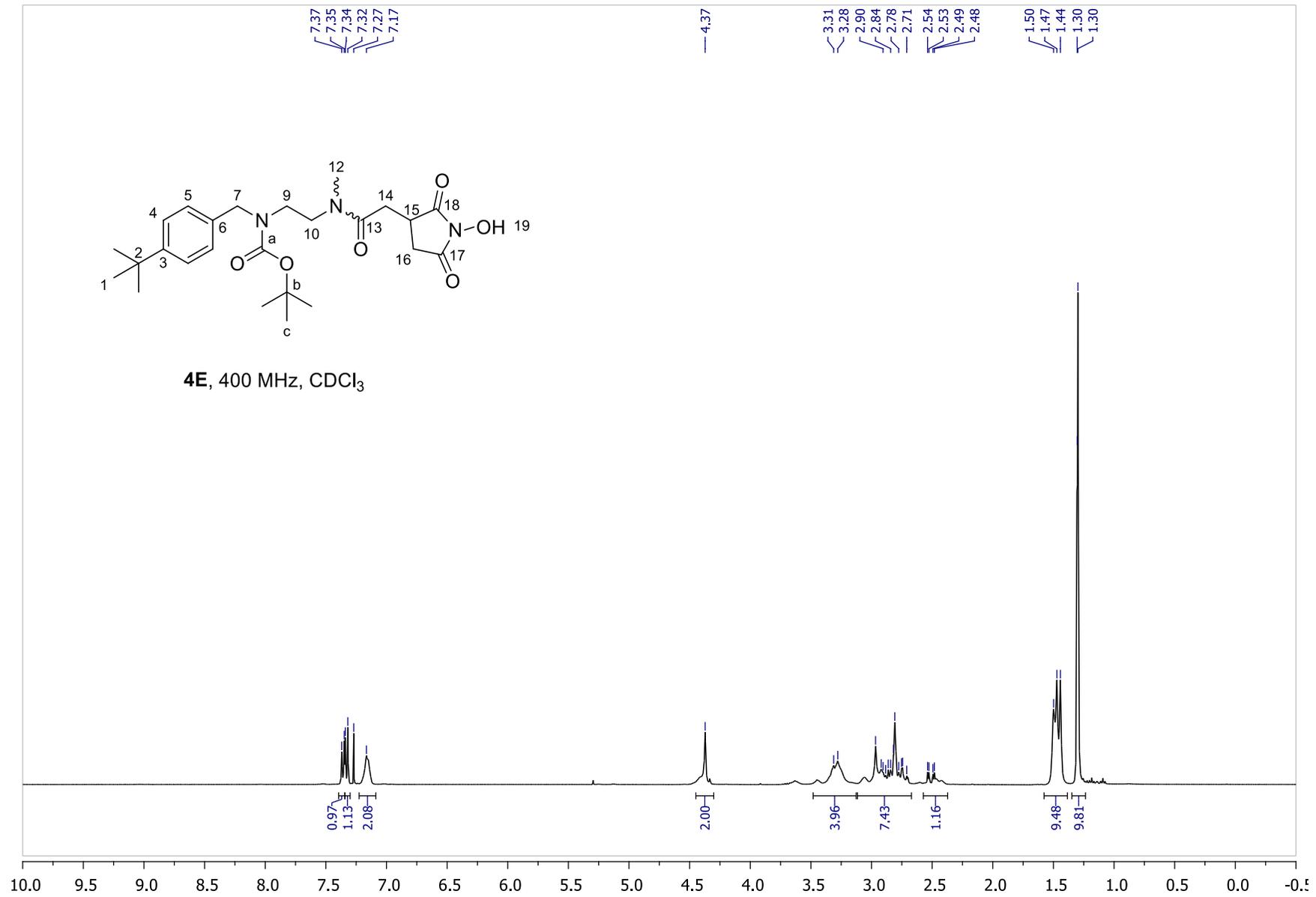


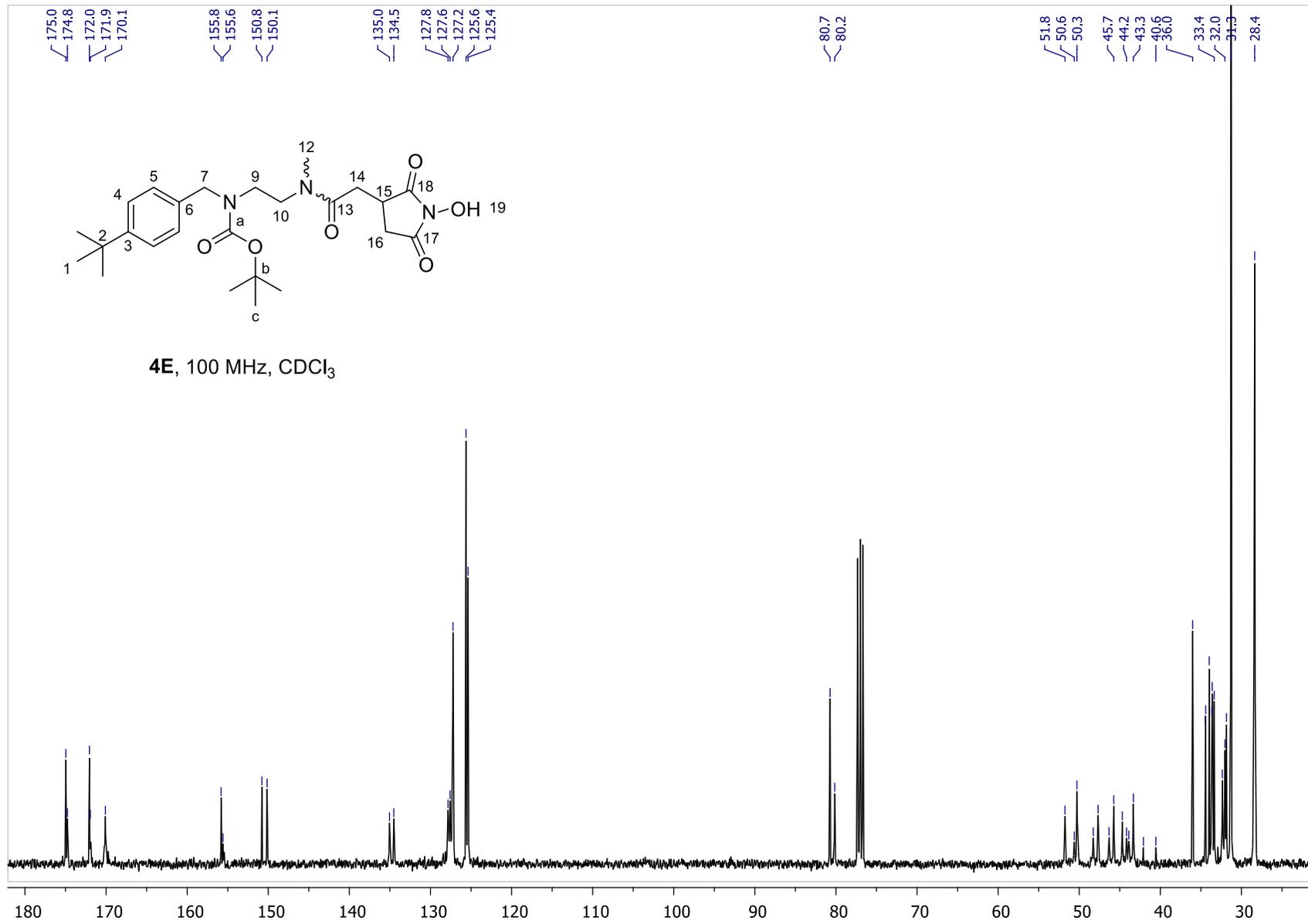


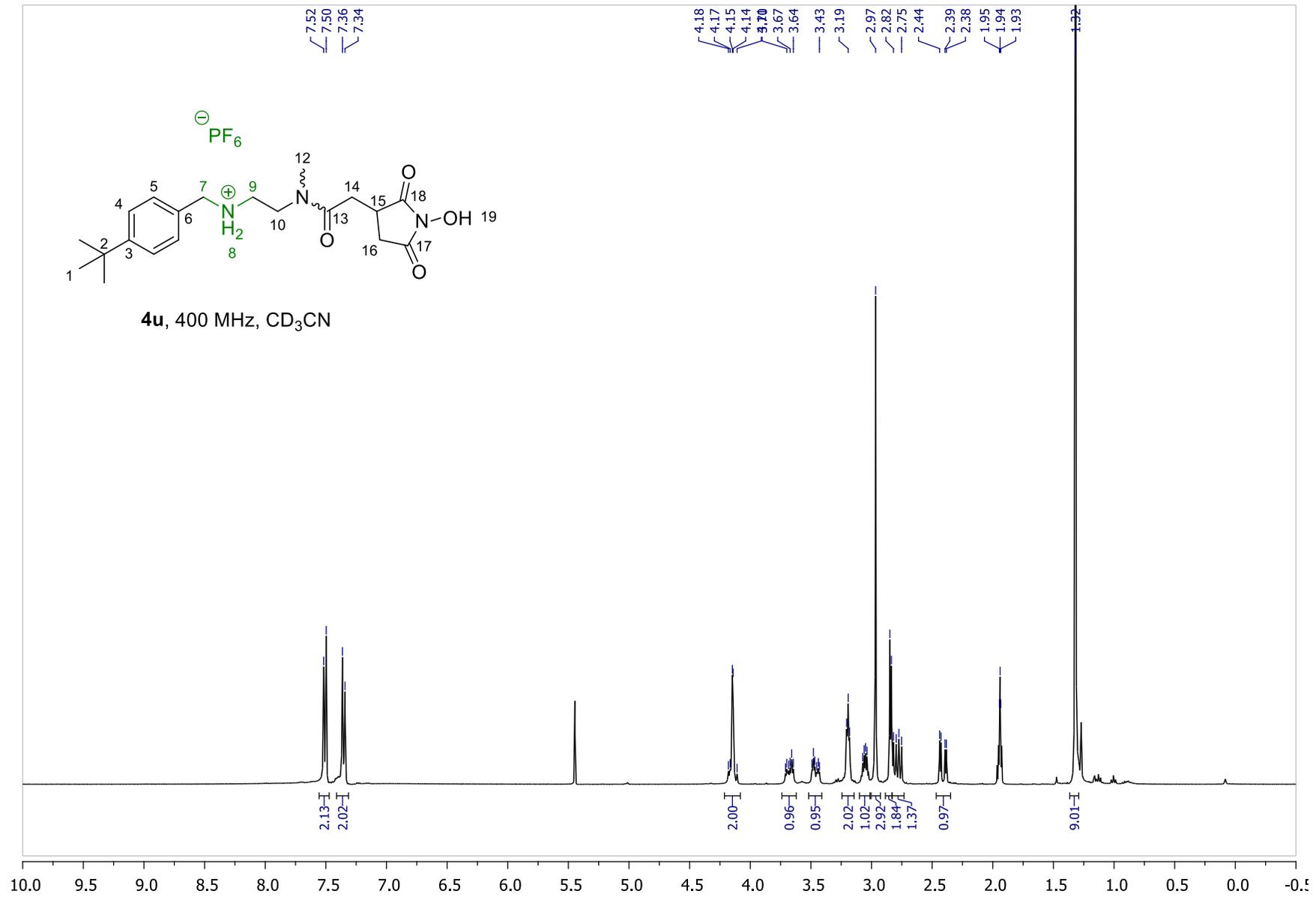


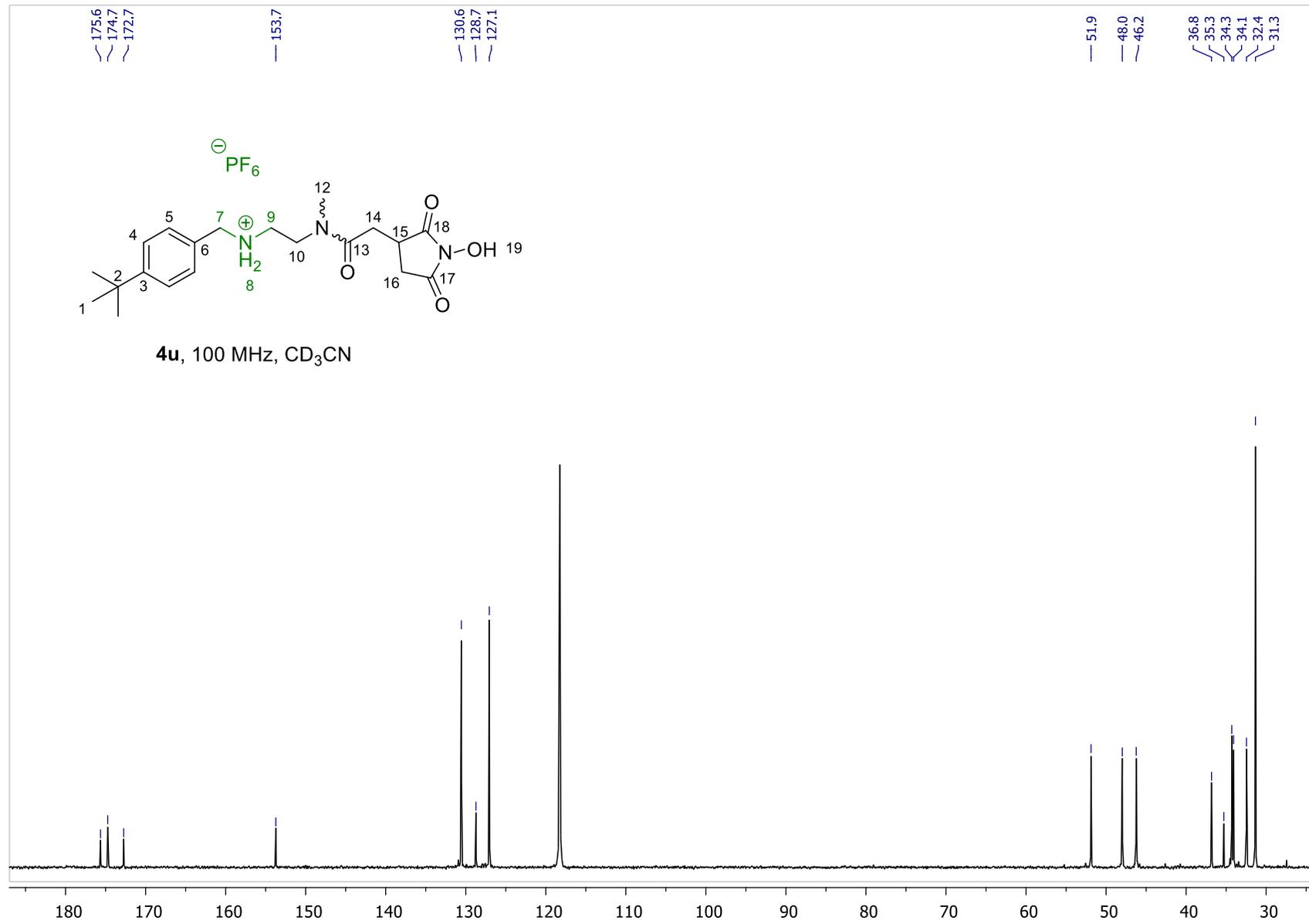


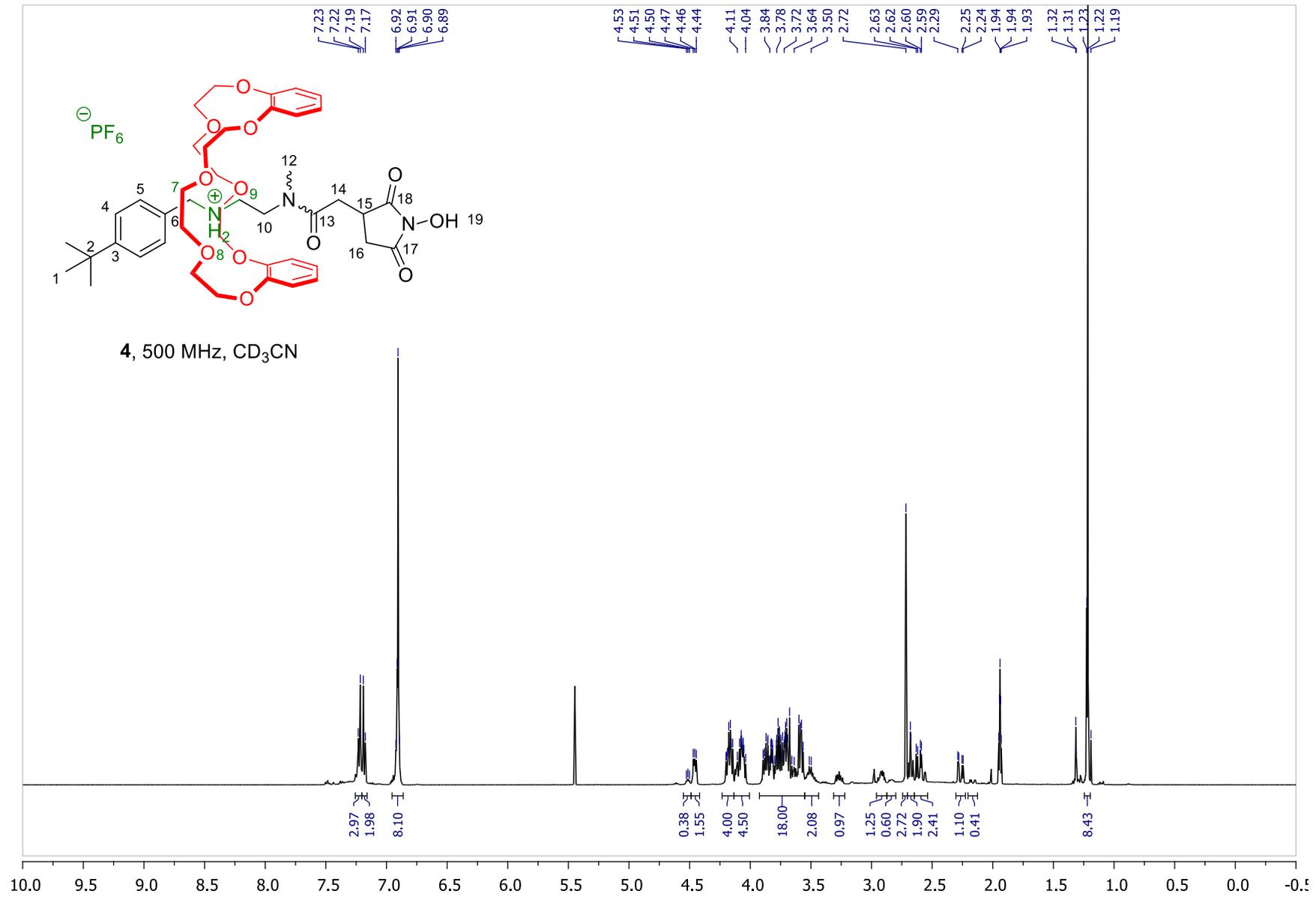


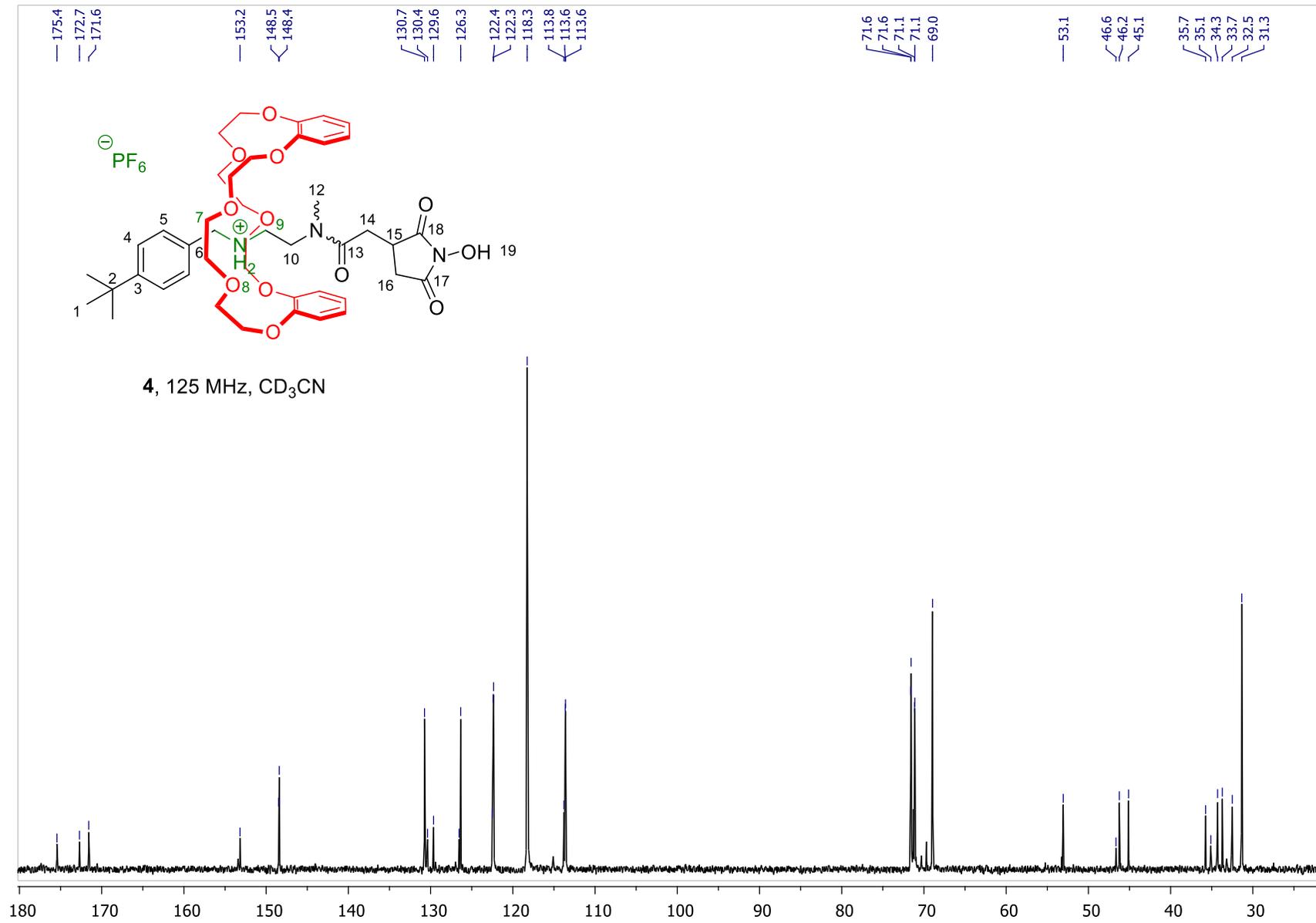












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<sup>1</sup> S. Chao, C. Romuald, K. Fournel-Marotte, C. Clavel, F. Coutrot, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2014**, *53*, 6914–6919.