

## Supporting Information

### NIR squaraine dyes for the dual colorimetric and fluorescent determination of Fe<sup>3+</sup>, Cu<sup>2+</sup> and Hg<sup>2+</sup> ions

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Table S1 Summary of organic materials-based colorimetric and fluorimetric sensors for metal ions detection.

Sensor No.	Sensing ions	$\lambda_{ex}/\lambda_{em}$ [nm]	LOD	Response time	Core Structure	Sensor type	Ref.
1	Fe <sup>3+</sup>	520/582	41 nM	10 min	Rhodamine	Turn-on	1
2	Fe <sup>3+</sup>	390/440	75 nM	1 min	Pyrene	Turn-on	2
3	Fe <sup>3+</sup> , Hg <sup>2+</sup>	384/438	98 nM 27.2 nM	-	Rhodamine naphthalimide	Turn-on	3
4	Fe <sup>3+</sup>	448/488 ,561	4.3 $\mu$ M	2 min	Coumarin	Turn-on	4
5	Fe <sup>3+</sup>	530/551	9.2 nM	6 min	Rhodamine	On-off Turn-off	5
6	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	420/408	10 $\mu$ M	-	Naphthol	Colorimetric response Turn-on 25-fold	6
7	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	680/700	29 nM	15 min	2-picolinic ester	fluorescence enhancement	7
8	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	435/532	52 $\mu$ M	60 min	Naphthalene imide	Turn-on	8
9	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	426/590	0.2 $\mu$ M	20 min	Rhodamine	Turn-on	9
10	Cu <sup>2+</sup>	510/596	42.3 nM	3 min	Coumarin	Turn-on	10
11	Hg <sup>2+</sup>	530/580	1 ppb	5 min	Rhodamine B	On-off	11
12	Hg <sup>2+</sup>	540/575	70 nM	30 min	Schiff-base	Turn-on	12
13	Hg <sup>2+</sup>	530/582	0.18 $\mu$ M	5 s	Rhodamine	Turn-on	13
14	Hg <sup>2+</sup>	370/420 370/530	49 nM	150 min 50 min	8-amino BODIPY	Turn-on	14
15	Fe <sup>3+</sup> Cu <sup>2+</sup> Hg <sup>2+</sup>	663/686	Fe <sup>3+</sup> :14.17 $\mu$ M Cu <sup>2+</sup> :6.06 $\mu$ M	A few seconds	Squaraine	Turn-off	This work

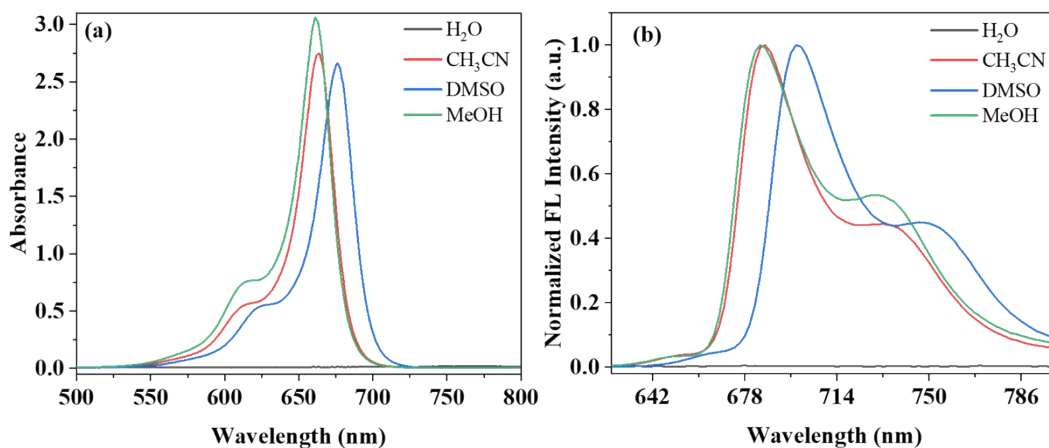


Figure S1 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (10  $\mu$ M) with different solvents.

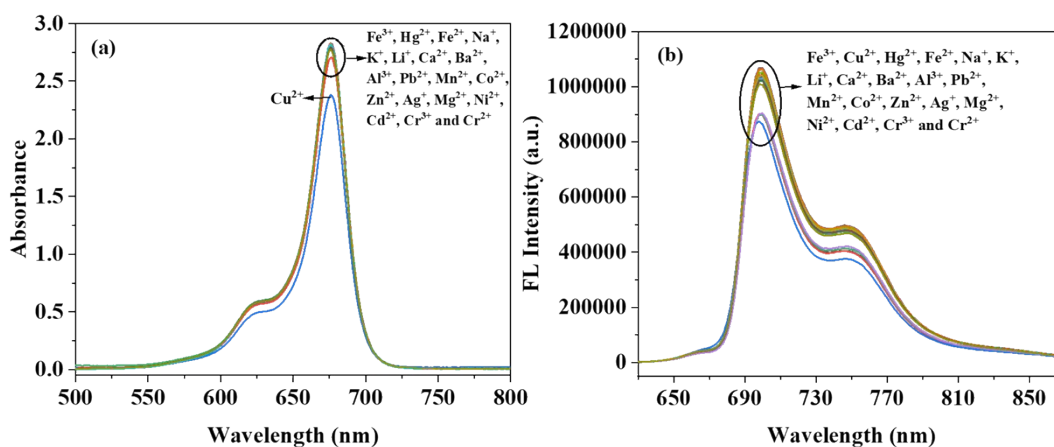


Figure S2 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (DMSO, 10  $\mu$ M) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

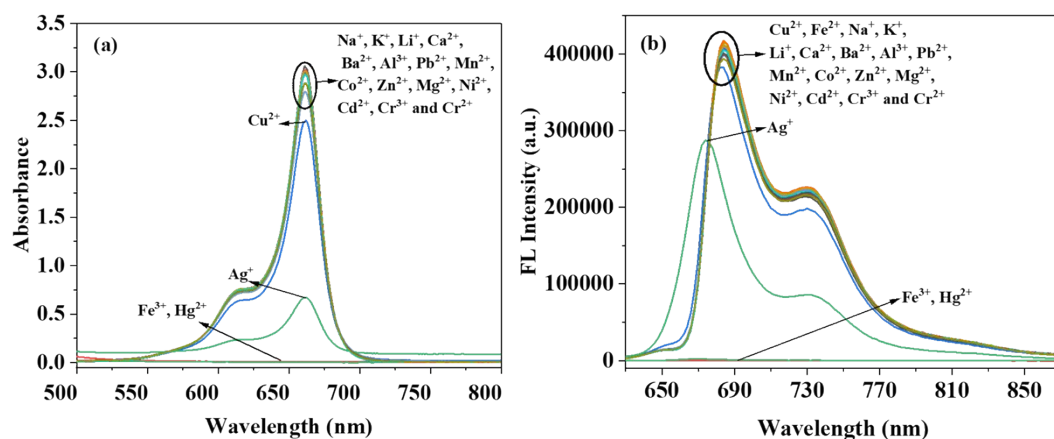


Figure S3 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (MeOH, 10  $\mu$ M) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

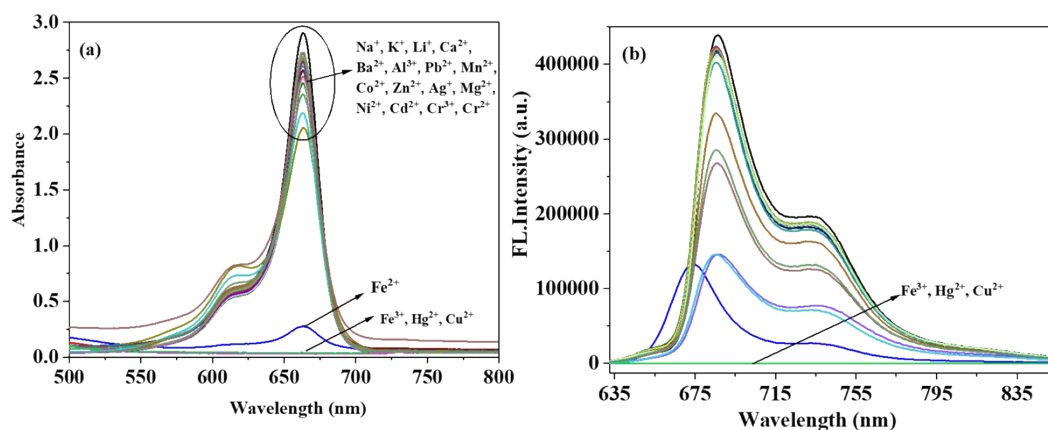


Figure S4 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (CH<sub>3</sub>CN, 10 μM) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

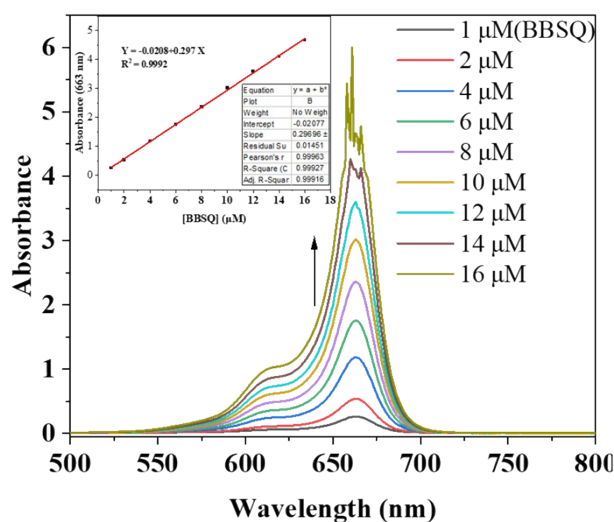


Figure S5 UV-vis absorption spectra of BBSQ (CH<sub>3</sub>CN) with different concentration; inset: the linear correlation curve of absorbance at 663 nm with increasing BBSQ concentration.

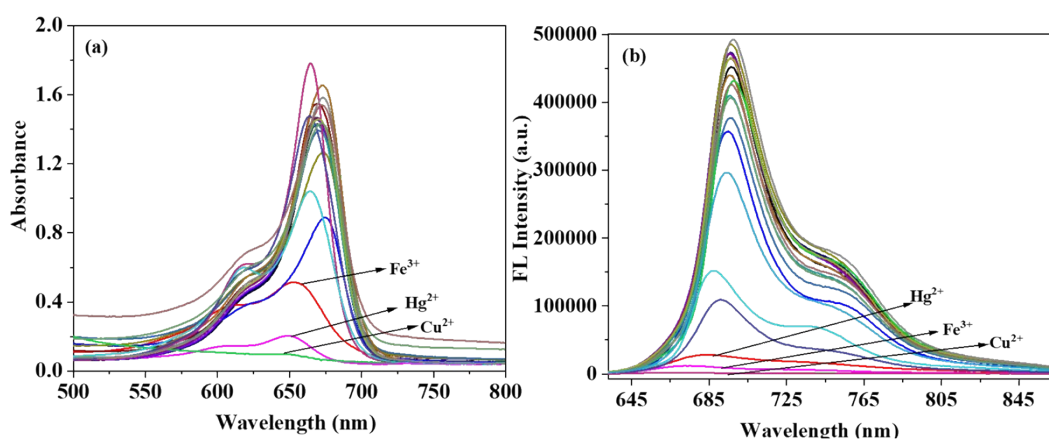


Figure S6 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ-S (CH<sub>3</sub>CN, 10 μM) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

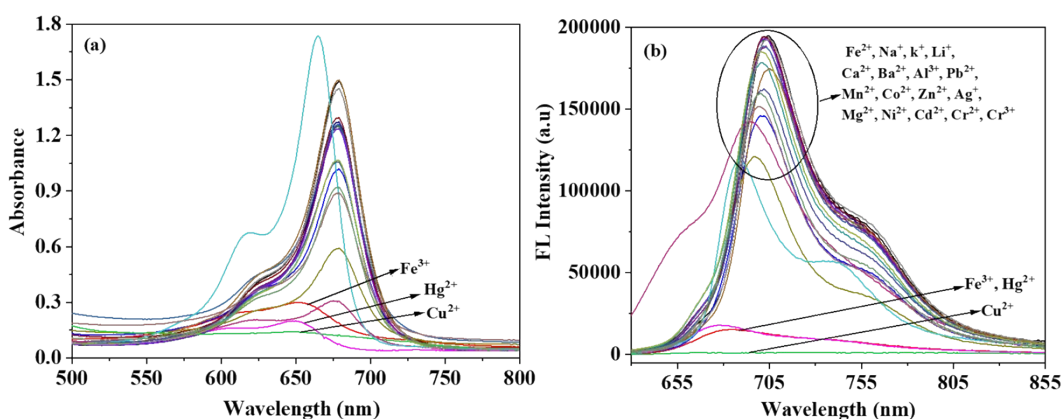


Figure S7 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ-SS ( $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$ ,  $10 \mu\text{M}$ ) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

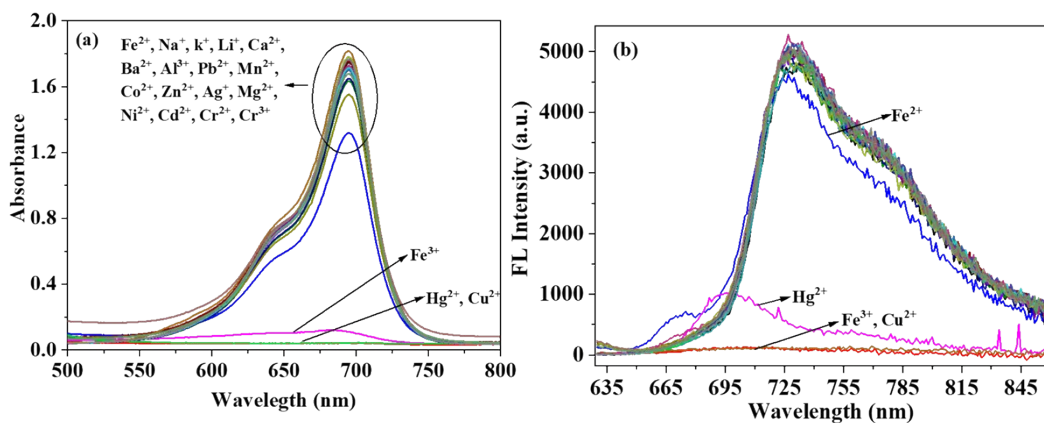


Figure S8 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ-NET ( $\text{CH}_3\text{CN}$ ,  $10 \mu\text{M}$ ) with different metal ions (20 equiv.).

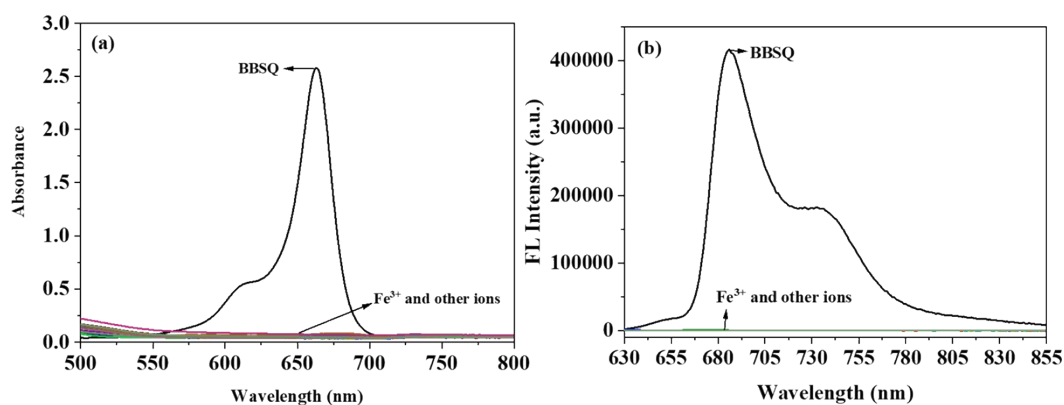


Figure S9 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ ( $10 \mu\text{M}$ ) in presence of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  (20 equiv.) along with other metal ions (20 equiv.).

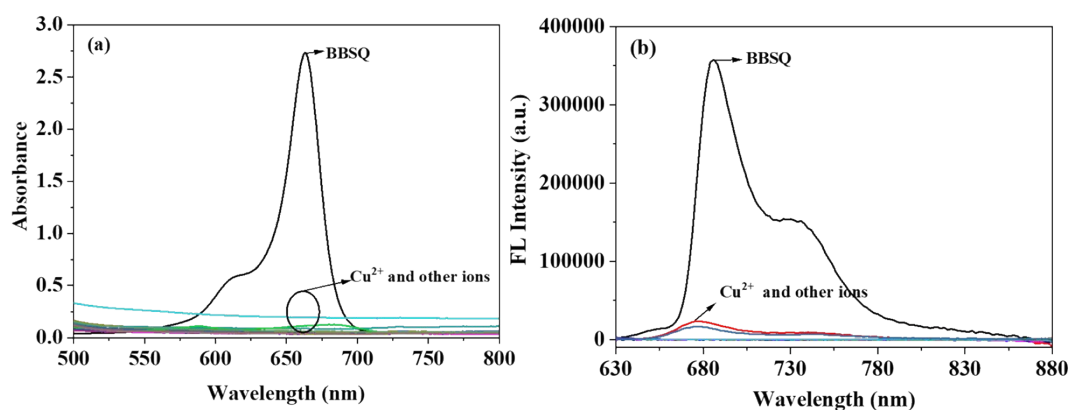


Figure S10 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) in presence of  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  (20 equiv.) along with other metal ions (20 equiv.).

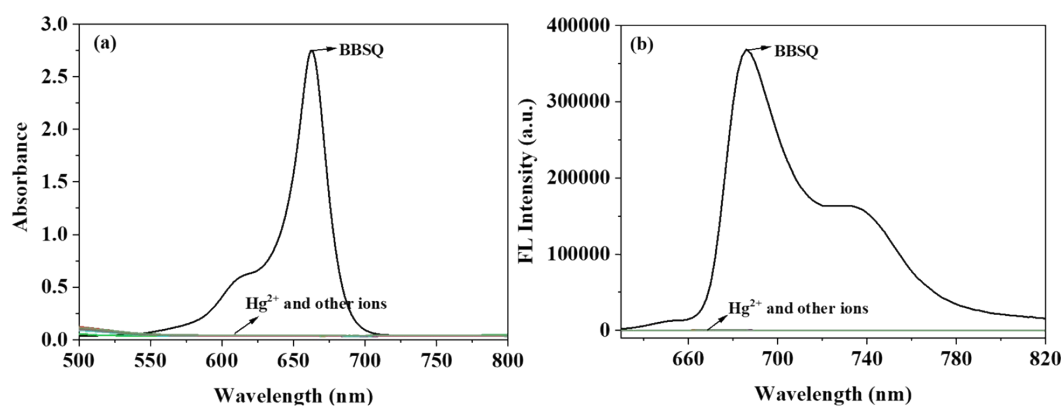


Figure S11 (a) UV-vis absorption spectra and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) in presence of  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  (20 equiv.) along with other metal ions (20 equiv.).

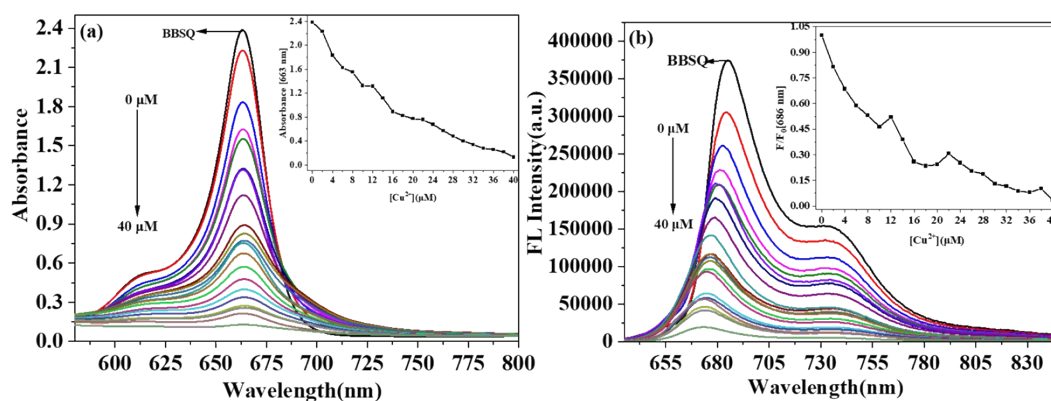


Figure S12 (a) UV-vis absorption and (b) fluorescence spectral titrations of BBSQ acetonitrile solution (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) with  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  (0-40  $\mu\text{M}$ ); inset: the concentration titration curves of absorbance at 663 nm (a) and fluorescence emission intensity at 686 nm (b) with increasing  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  concentration.

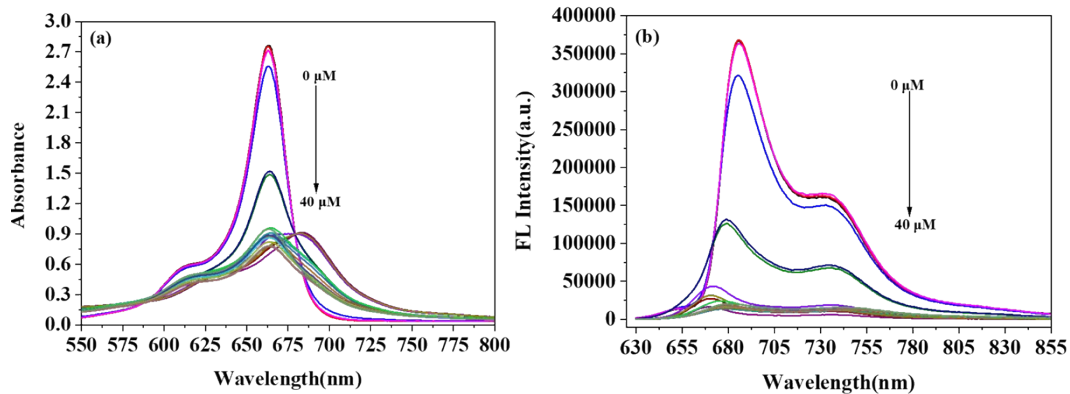


Figure S13 (a) UV-vis absorption and (b) fluorescence spectral titrations of BBSQ acetonitrile solution (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ) with  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  (0-40  $\mu\text{M}$ ).

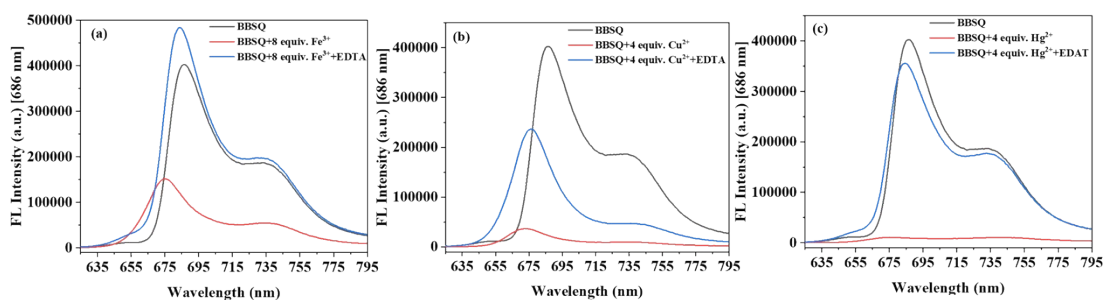


Figure S14 Fluorescence emission spectra of BBSQ and BBSQ in response to (a)  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , (b)  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  and (c)  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  ions with/ without adding EDTA.

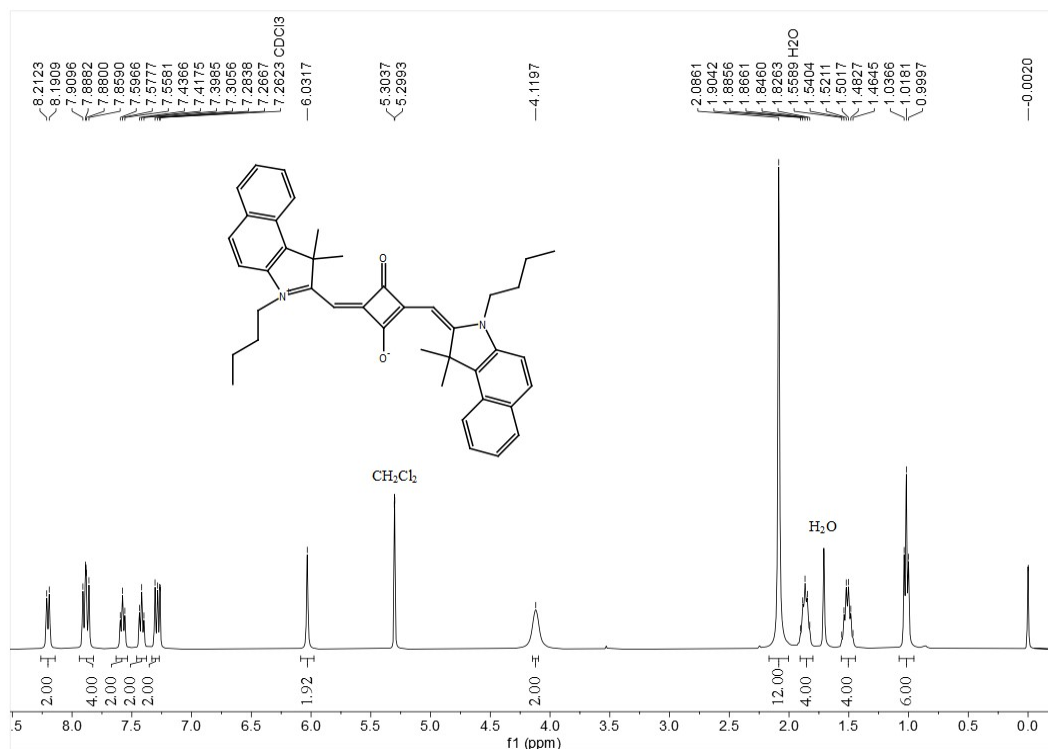


Figure S15  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) of BBSQ.



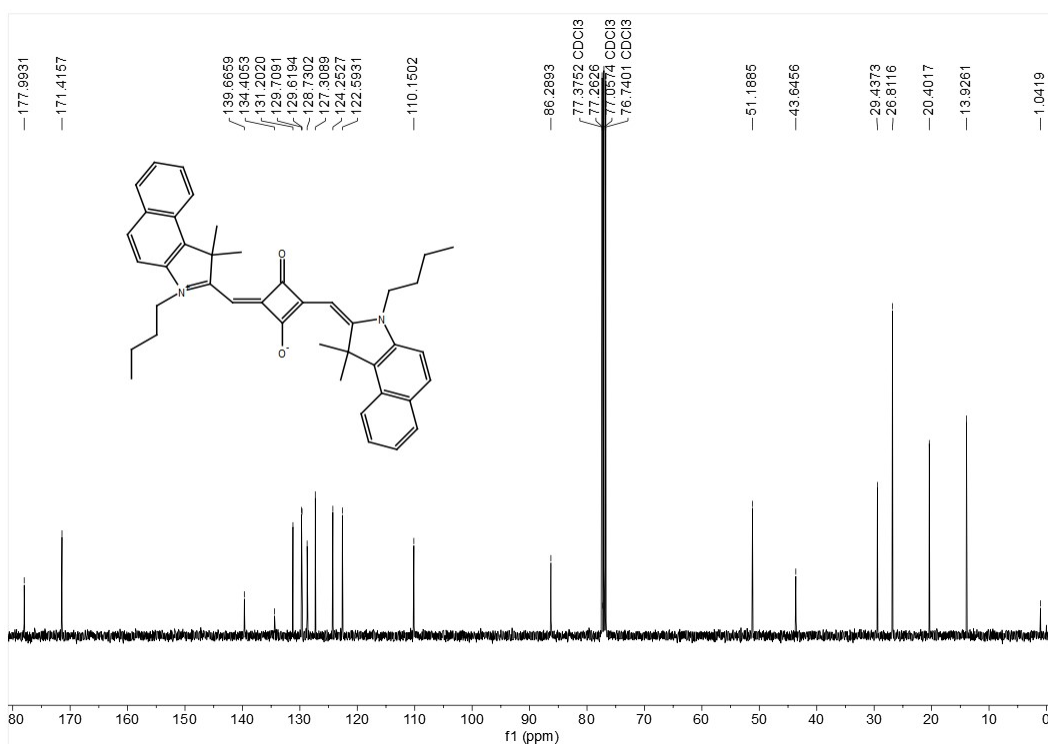


Figure S16 <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ.

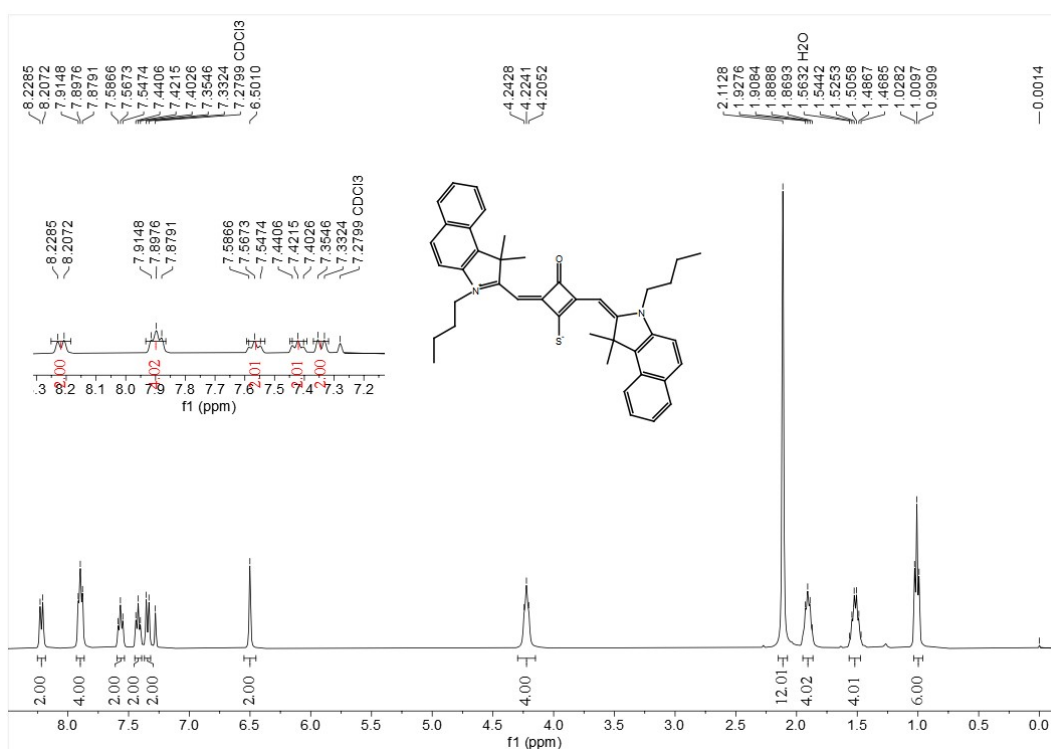


Figure S17 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-S.

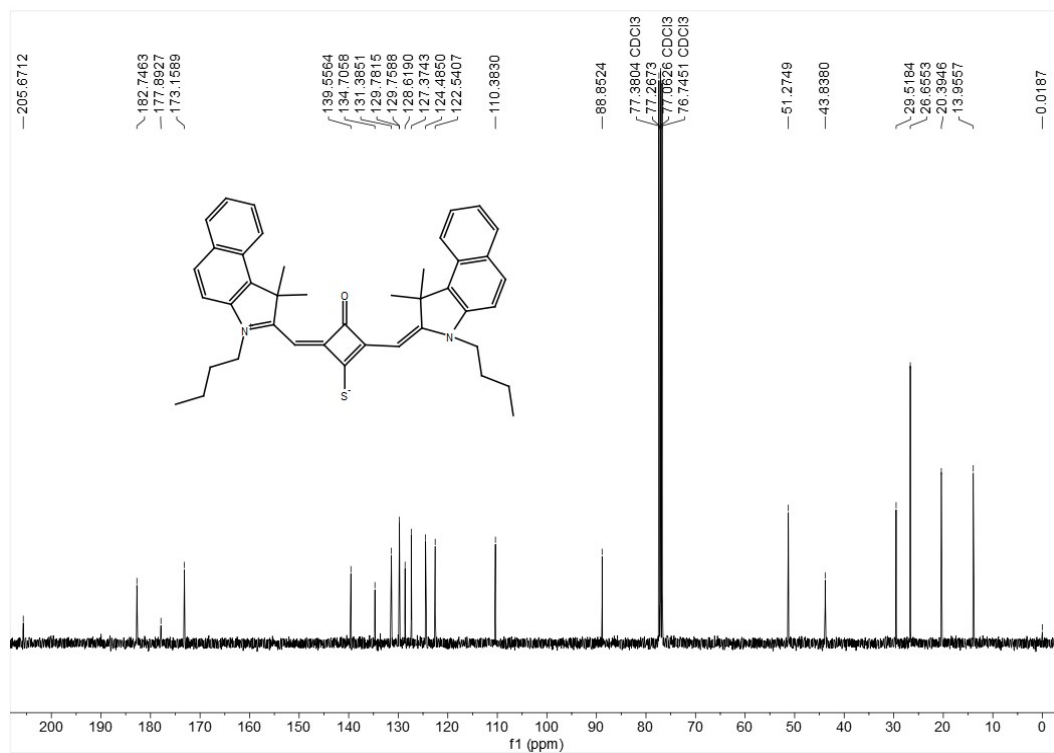


Figure S18 <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-S.

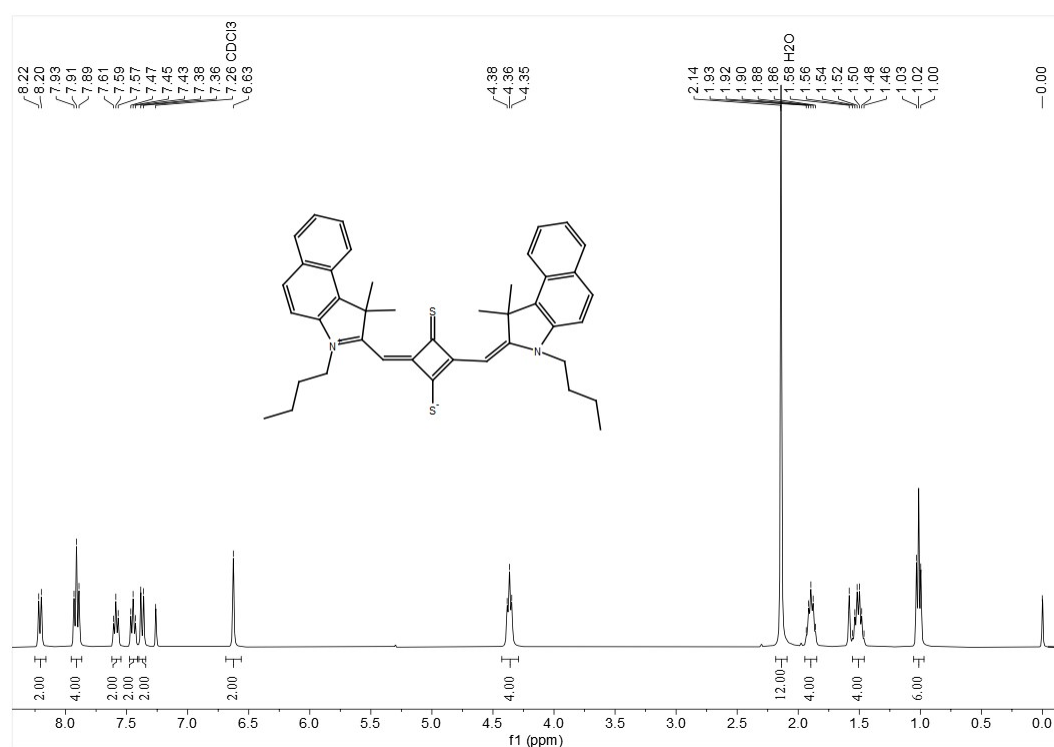


Figure S19 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-S.

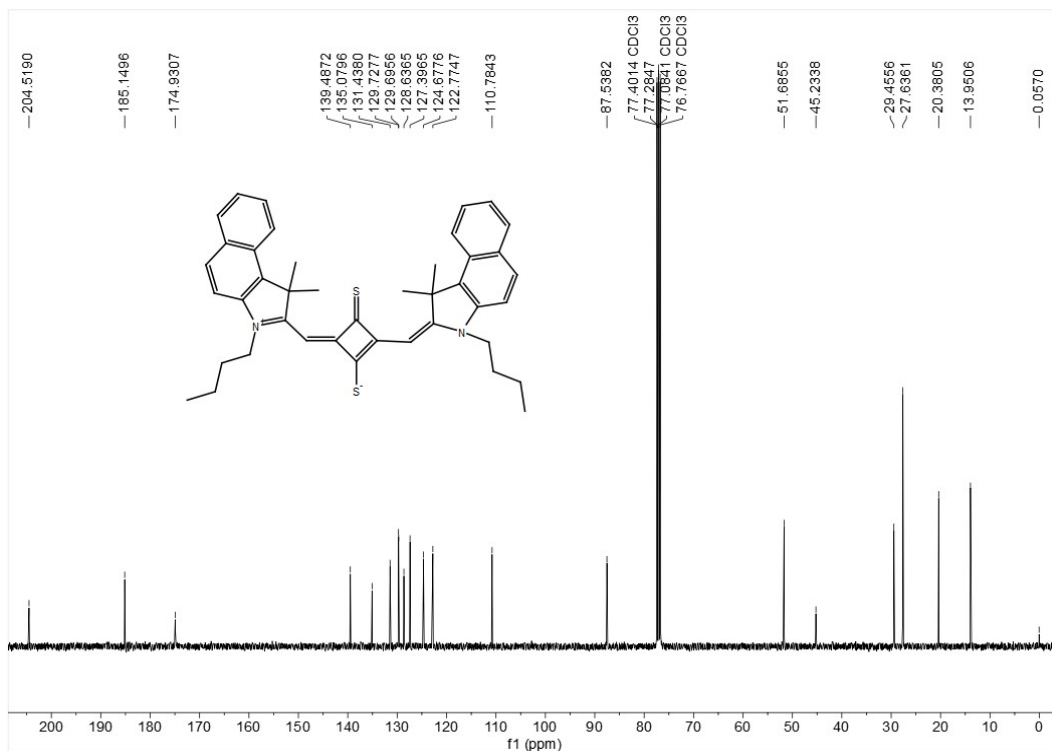


Figure S20 <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-SS.

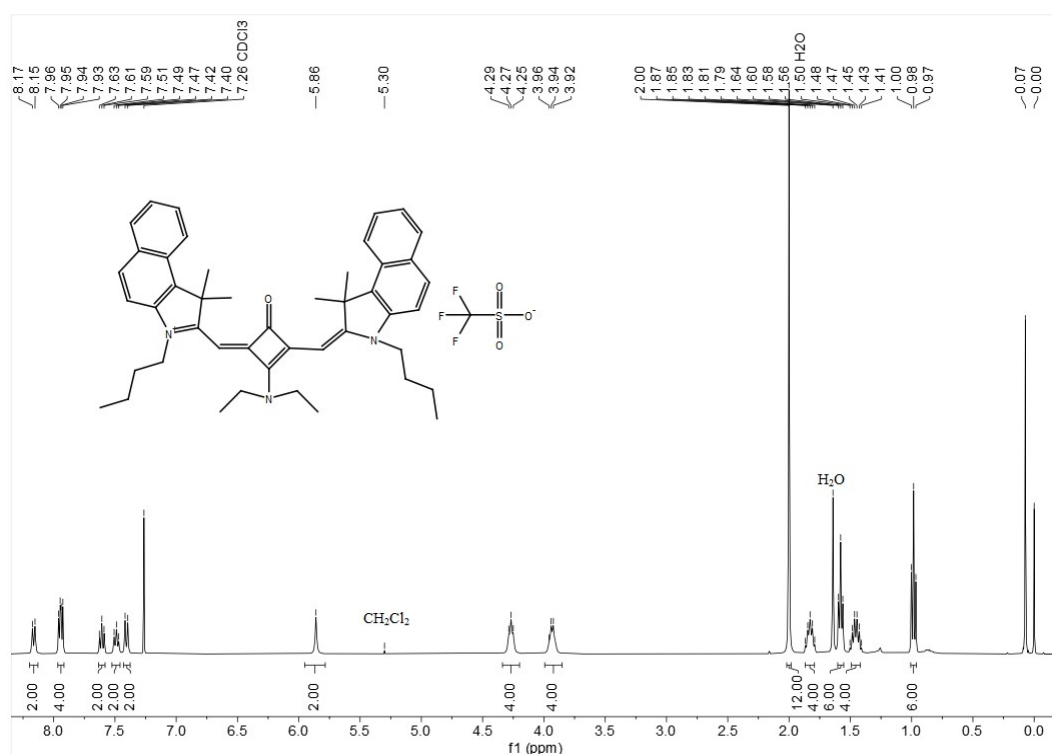


Figure S21 <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-NEt.

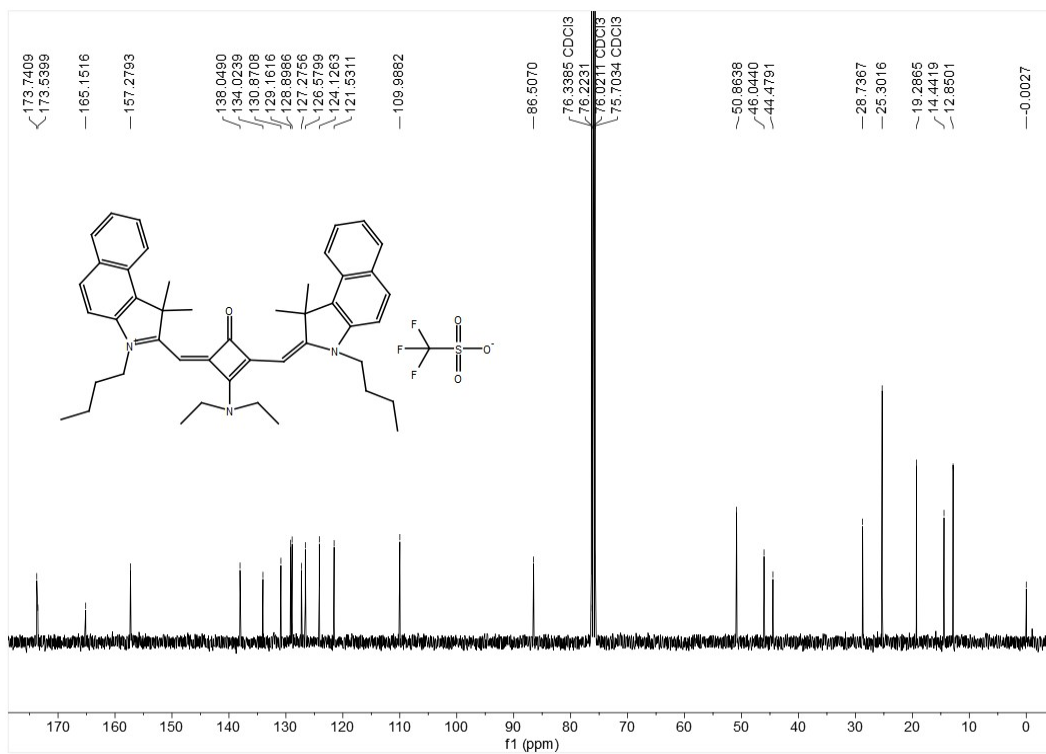


Figure S22 <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-NEt.

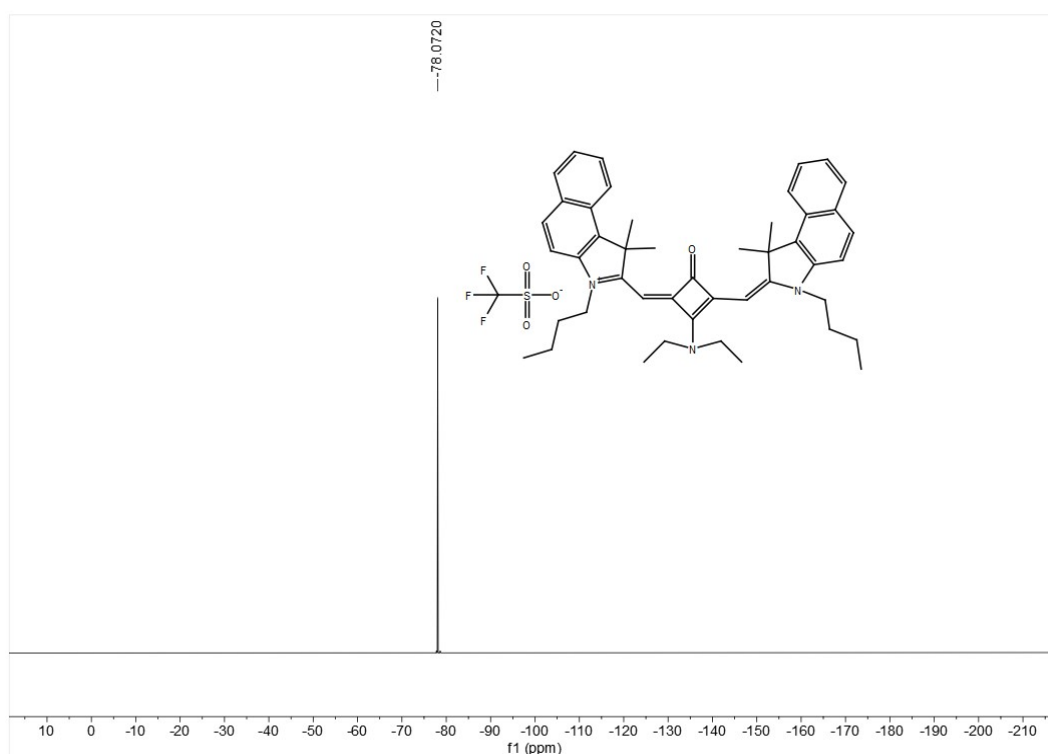


Figure S23 <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectrum (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) of BBSQ-NEt.

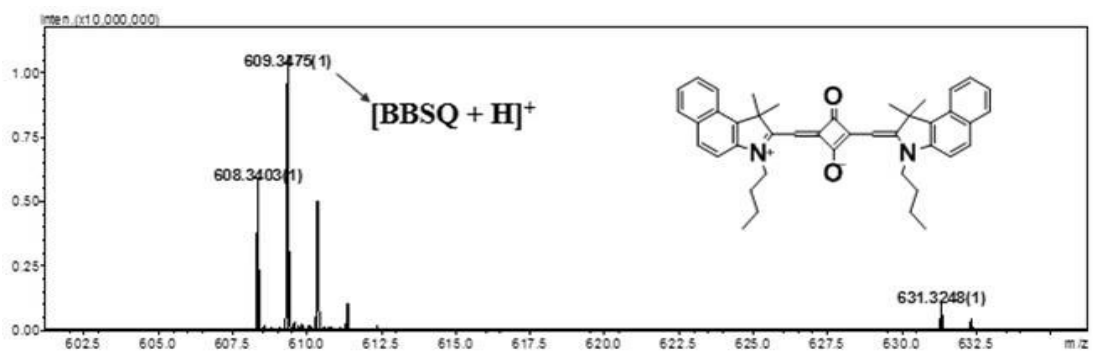


Figure S24 HRMS (ESI) of [BBSQ+H]<sup>+</sup>: 609.3475.

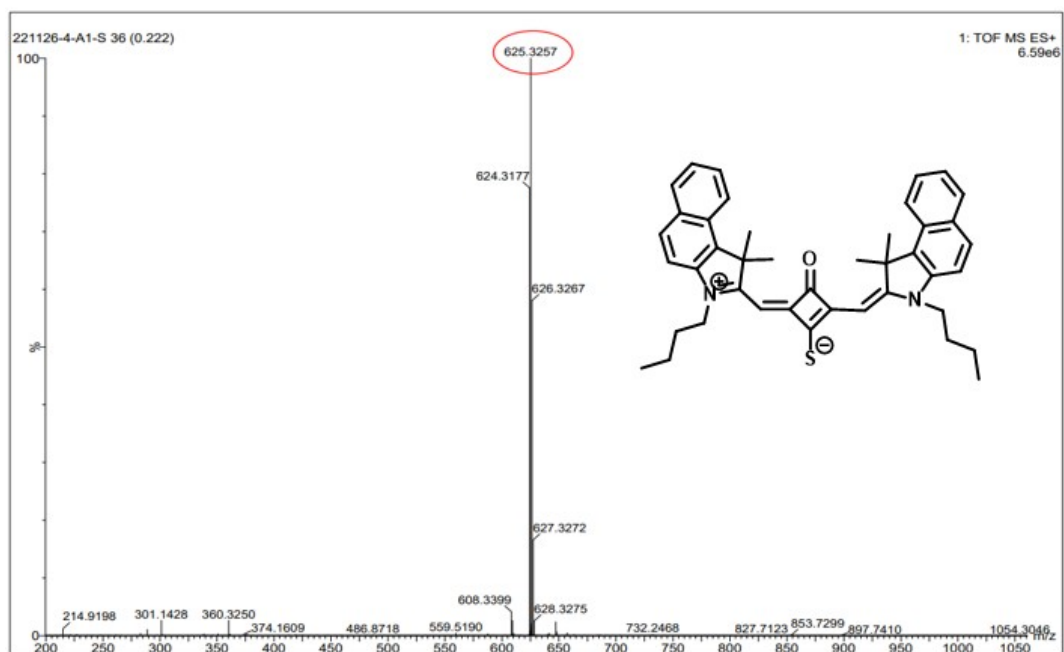


Figure S25 HRMS (ESI) of [BBSQ-S+H]<sup>+</sup>: 625.3257.

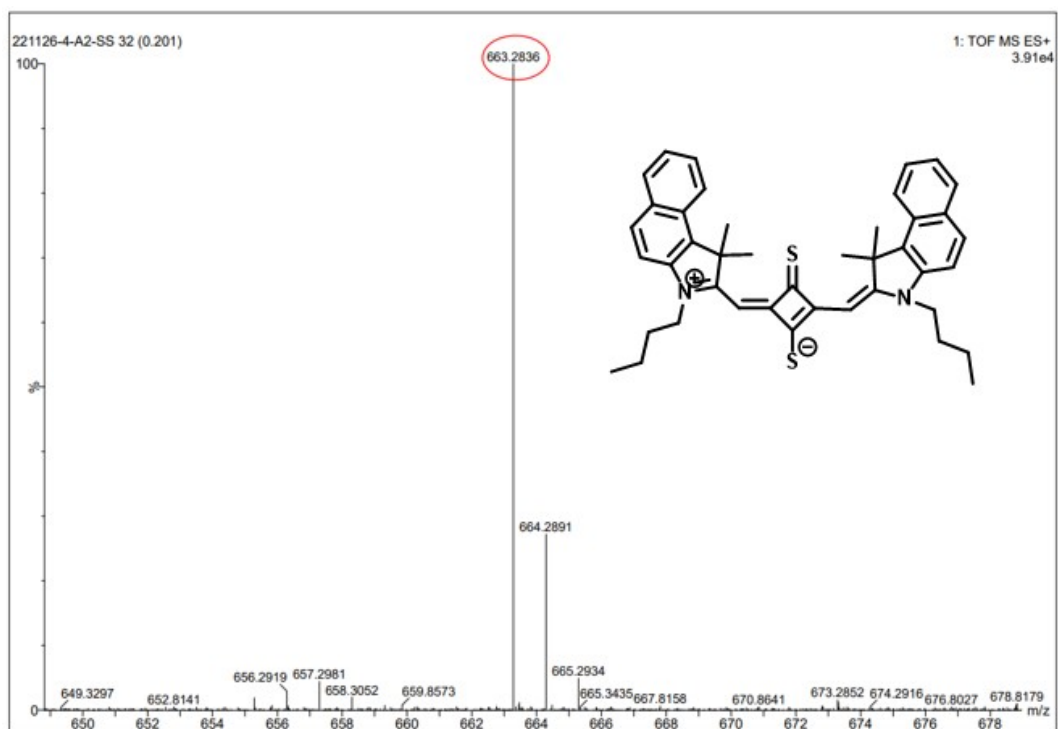


Figure S26 HRMS (ESI) of  $[BBSQ-SS+Na]^+$ : 663.2836.

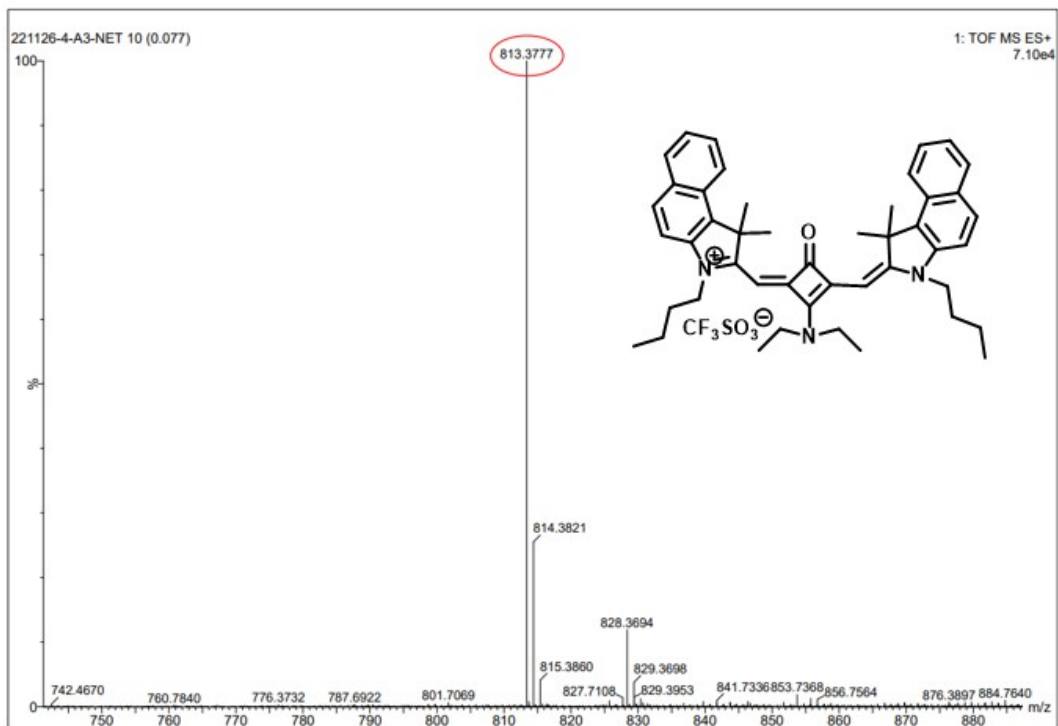


Figure S27 HRMS (ESI) of  $[BBSQ-NEt]^+$ : 813.3777.

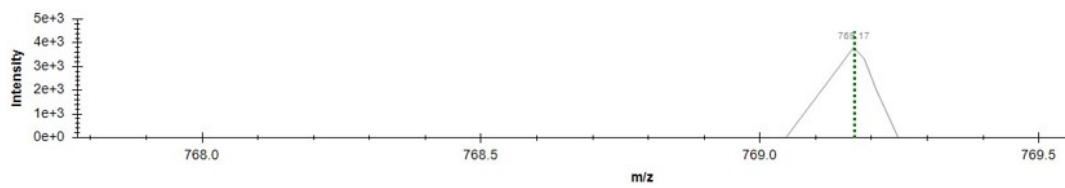


Figure S28 HRMS (ESI) of [BBSQ-FeCl<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup>]: 769.17.

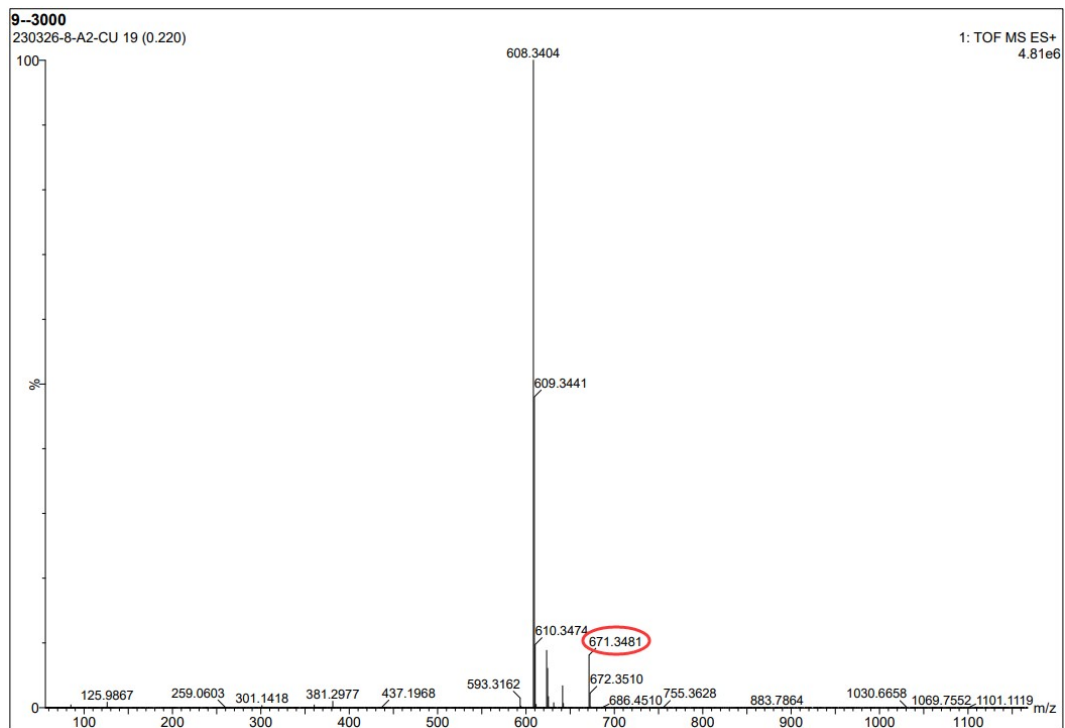


Figure S29 HRMS (ESI) of [BBSQ-Cu<sup>2+</sup>]: 671.3481.

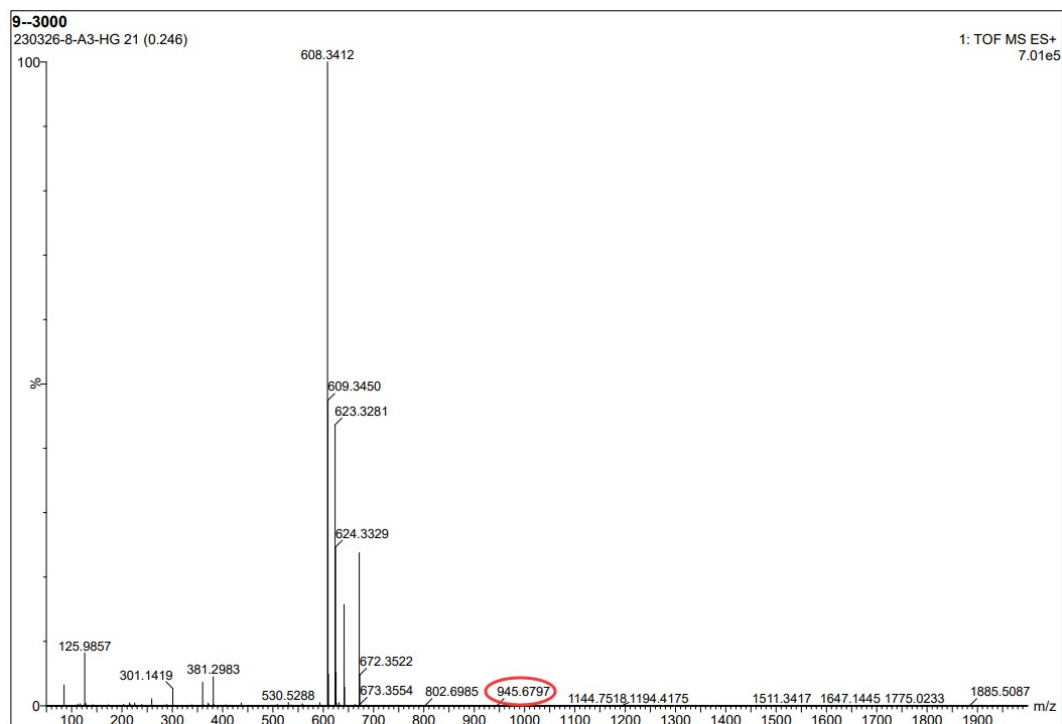


Figure S30 HRMS (ESI) of [BBSQ-Hg<sup>2+</sup>+2CH<sub>3</sub>CN+2H<sub>2</sub>O+OH<sup>-</sup>]: 945.6797.

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