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## Dynamic Kinetic Resolution of alpha-Substituted beta-Ketoesters Catalyzed by Baeyer-Villiger Monooxygenases

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Supporting Information

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**Dynamic Kinetic Resolution of  $\alpha$ -Substituted  $\beta$ -Ketoesters Catalyzed by Baeyer–Villiger Monooxygenases: Access to Enantiopure  $\alpha$ -Hydroxy Esters\*\***

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# Supporting Information

## Contents:

1. General.....	S2
2. Experimental procedures.....	S3
3. GC and HPLC analyses.....	S12
4. Determination of absolute configurations.....	S13
5. Supporting references.....	S14
6. NMR spectra of compounds <b>4a</b> , <b>7a</b> , <b>9a</b> , <b>3b</b> , <b>4b</b> , <b>5b</b> , <b>6b</b> , <b>7b</b> , <b>8b</b> , <b>9b</b> , <b>10b</b> , <b>3c</b> , <b>7c</b> , and <b>9c</b> ....	S15

## 1. General

Recombinant histidine-tagged phenylacetone monooxygenase (PAMO), its M446G mutant (M446G-PAMO) and recombinant 4-hydroxyacetophenone monooxygenase (HAPMO) were overexpressed and purified as previously described.<sup>[1]</sup> 1.0 Unit of BVMO will oxidise 1.0  $\mu\text{mol}$  of phenylacetone to benzyl acetate per minute at pH 9.0 and room temperature in the presence of NADPH. Glucose 6-phosphate dehydrogenase from *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* was obtained from Fluka-Biochemika. Starting racemic  $\alpha$ -alkyl- $\beta$ -ketoesters *rac-2a*, *rac-6a* and enantiopure hydroxyesters (*S*)-**1-3c** and (*S*)-**10c** were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich-Fluka, whereas *rac-5a* was purchased from Alfa Aesar. All other reagents and solvents were of the highest quality grade available and were acquired from Sigma-Aldrich-Fluka and Acros Organics. Chemical reactions were monitored by analytical TLC, performed on Merck silica gel 60 F<sub>254</sub> plates and visualised by UV irradiation. Flash chromatography was carried out with silica gel 60 (230-240 mesh, Merck). IR spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 1720-X infrared Fourier transform spectrophotometer using KBr pellets. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR, <sup>13</sup>C-NMR and DEPT spectra were recorded with tetramethylsilane (TMS) as the internal standard with a Bruker AC-300 DPX (<sup>1</sup>H: 300.13 MHz; <sup>13</sup>C: 75.5 MHz) spectrometer. The chemical shift values ( $\delta$ ) are given in ppm. Optical rotations were measured using a Perkin-Elmer 241 polarimeter and are quoted in units of  $10^{-1} \text{ deg cm}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ . APCI<sup>+</sup> and ESI<sup>+</sup> using a Hewlett Packard 1100 chromatograph mass detector or EI<sup>+</sup> with a Hewlett Packard 5973 mass spectrometer were used to record mass spectra (MS). High-resolution mass spectra were obtained with a Bruker Microtof-Q-spectrometer. Kinetic determinations were performed with a Varian Cary50Bio UV/Vis spectrophotometer.

## 2. Experimental procedures

### 2.1. Enzymatic Baeyer-Villiger oxidation of racemic $\alpha$ -alkyl- $\beta$ -ketoesters.

Racemic compounds *rac*-**1-10a** (10 mM) were dissolved in a Tris-HCl buffer (50 mM, pH 8.0 or 9.0, 1.0 mL) containing 1% *v v*<sup>-1</sup> DMSO. Then, NADPH (0.2 mM), glucose-6-phosphate (20 mM), glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (5 U) and the BVMO (1 U) were added. The mixture was shaken at 250 rpm at the selected temperature. Reactions were stopped by extraction with ethyl acetate (2  $\times$  0.5 mL) and the organic layer was dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Conversions and enantiomeric excesses of compounds (*S*)-**1-10b** were determined by GC or HPLC analysis (Table S1).

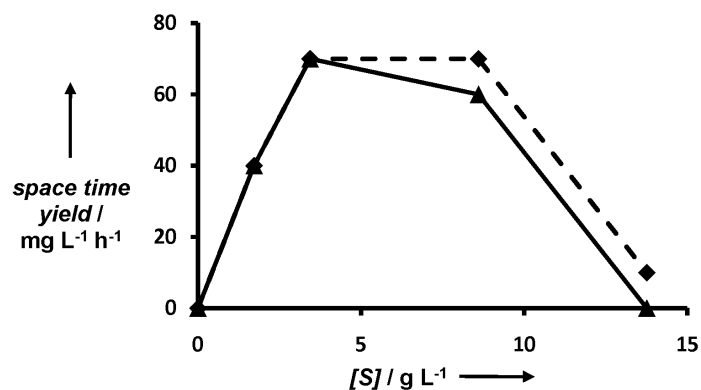
**Table S1.** BVMO-catalysed Baeyer-Villiger oxidation of racemic  $\alpha$ -alkyl- $\beta$ -ketoesters.

Entry	Substrate	BVMO	T (°C)	<i>c</i> [%] <sup>[a]</sup>	<i>ee</i> [%] <sup>[b]</sup>
1 <sup>[c]</sup>	<i>rac</i> - <b>1a</b>	PAMO	30	28	$\geq 99(S)$
2	<i>rac</i> - <b>1a</b>	M446G	30	15	$\geq 99(S)$
3	<i>rac</i> - <b>2a</b>	HAPMO	20	28	$\geq 99(S)$
4	<i>rac</i> - <b>2a</b>	M446G	30	25	$\geq 99(S)$
5	<i>rac</i> - <b>3a</b>	HAPMO	20	5	$\geq 99(S)$
6	<i>rac</i> - <b>3a</b>	M446G	30	36	$\geq 99(S)$
7	<i>rac</i> - <b>4a</b>	HAPMO	20	30	82( <i>S</i> )
8	<i>rac</i> - <b>4a</b>	M446G	30	7	$\geq 99(S)$
9	<i>rac</i> - <b>8a</b>	M446G	30	59	$\geq 99(S)$
10	<i>rac</i> - <b>10a</b>	M446G	30	22	$\geq 99(S)$

<sup>[a]</sup> Determined by GC. <sup>[b]</sup> Determined by GC or HPLC. <sup>[c]</sup> Reaction carried out at pH 8.0.

### 2.2. Study of the substrate concentration in the PAMO-catalysed oxidation of *rac*-**7a** employing two different reaction media.

Racemic isopropyl 2-ethyl-3-oxobutanoate (1.7-13.8 g L<sup>-1</sup>) was dissolved in two different reaction media: a) Tris-HCl buffer (50 mM, pH 9.0, 1.0 mL) containing 1% *v v*<sup>-1</sup> DMSO or b) Tris-HCl buffer (50 mM, pH 9.0, 0.95 mL) containing 5% *v v*<sup>-1</sup> TBME (50  $\mu$ L) and 1% *v v*<sup>-1</sup> DMSO. Then, NADPH (0.2 mM), glucose-6-phosphate (20 mM), glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (5 U) and PAMO (1 U) were added. The mixture was shaken at 250 rpm at 30°C during 48 hours. Reactions were then stopped by extraction with EtOAc (2  $\times$  0.5 mL) and the organic layer was dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Conversions and enantiomeric excesses of compounds (*S*)-**7b** were determined by GC or HPLC analysis. The space time yields (expressed as mg of **7a** consumed per L of solution per h) are indicated in Figure S1.



**Figure S1.** Effect of *rac-7a* concentration in the space time yield while using as reaction medium: Tris-HCl 50 mM pH 9.0 ( $\blacktriangle$ , solid line) and Tris-HCl 50 mM pH 9.0 containing 5%  $v v^{-1}$  TBME ( $\blacklozenge$ , dashed line).

### 2.3. Baeyer-Villiger oxidation of *rac-1-10a* at multimilligram scale catalysed by PAMO.

$\alpha$ -Alkyl- $\beta$ -ketoesters *rac-1-10a* (50 mg, 1 equiv.) were dissolved in a Tris-HCl buffer (50 mM, pH 9.0, 13.0 mL) containing 1%  $v v^{-1}$  DMSO. Then, NADPH (0.2 mM), glucose-6-phosphate (40 mM), glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (150 units) and PAMO (30 units) were added. The reactions were stirred at 250 rpm and 30°C and stopped after 24 hours by extraction with ethyl acetate ( $3 \times 10$  mL). The organic layer was dried over  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and the solvent was evaporated. No further purification was required, except for substrates *rac-4b* and *rac-5b*, which were purified by *flash* chromatography on silica gel using hexane/ethyl acetate 9:1 as eluent. All the final products (*S*)-**1-10b** were achieved enantiopure except (*S*)-**9b**, which was isolated with  $ee=50\%$ : (*S*)-**1b** (70% yield, 39.3 mg), (*S*)-**2b** (62% yield, 35.1 mg), (*S*)-**3b** (59% yield, 32.8 mg), (*S*)-**4b** (68% yield, 38.3 mg), (*S*)-**5b** (65% yield, 36.0 mg), (*S*)-**6b** (61% yield, 33.4 mg), (*S*)-**7b** (63% yield, 34.4 mg), (*S*)-**8b** with (65% yield, 35.6 mg), (*S*)-**9b** (74% yield, 39.6 mg), and (*S*)-**10b** with (76% yield, 41.0 mg).

Compounds **1a**,<sup>[2a]</sup> and **2b**<sup>[2b]</sup> exhibit physical and spectral properties in accord with those reported.

**(S)-Methyl 2-acetoxypropanoate, (S)-1b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.28. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2998, 1741, 1643, 1454, and 1237  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.46 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 2.11 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 5.07 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  16.8 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 20.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 52.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 68.4 (CH), 170.3 (CO), 171.2 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>,  $m/z$ ): 169 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 24%].

**(S)-Ethyl 2-acetoxypropanoate, (S)-2b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.32. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2997, 1743, 1640, 1441, and 1370  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.26 (t,

$^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.47 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.12 (s, 3H), 4.19 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 2H), 5.10 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  14.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 16.8 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 20.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 61.3 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 68.6 (CH), 170.3 (CO), 171.2 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 183 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 100%].

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-acetoxypropanoate, (S)-3b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.34. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2986, 1745, 1455, 1386, and 1200  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.23 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.24 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.45 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.11 (s, 3H), 4.97-5.08 (m, 2H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  16.8 (2 $\text{CH}_3$ ), 20.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.5 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 68.7 (CH), 68.9 (CH), 166.3 (CO), 170.3 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 197 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 92%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{14}\text{NaO}_4$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 197.0784; found: 197.0776.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -37.9$  ( $c$  1.00,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Methyl 2-propionyloxypropanoate, (S)-4b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.34. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2991, 1746, 1461, 1305, and 1277  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.15 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.5 Hz, 3H), 1.47 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.36-2.47 (m, 2H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 5.08 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  8.8 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 16.9 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 27.2 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 52.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 68.3 (CH), 171.3 (CO), 173.8 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 183 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 50%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{12}\text{NaO}_4$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 183.0628; found: 183.0619.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -34.6$  ( $c$  1.00  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Methyl 2-acetoxybutanoate, (S)-5b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.34. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2957, 1746, 1440, 1376, and 1235  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  0.96 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.4 Hz, 3H), 1.79-1.90 (m, 2H), 2.11 (s, 3H), 3.72 (s, 3H), 4.91-4.95 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  9.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 20.5 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 24.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 52.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 73.2 (CH), 170.5 (CO), 170.6 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 183 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 34%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{12}\text{NaO}_4$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 183.0628; found: 183.0637.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -25.0$  ( $c$  0.90,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Ethyl 2-acetoxybutanoate, (S)-6b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.36. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2980, 1744, 1464, 1375, and 1234  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  0.96 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.4 Hz, 3H), 1.25 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.79-1.90 (m, 2H), 2.10 (s, 3H), 4.17 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 2H), 4.88-4.92 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  9.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 14.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 20.5 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 24.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 61.1 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 73.3 (CH), 170.1 (CO), 170.5 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 197 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 70%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{14}\text{NaO}_4$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 197.0782; found: 197.0784.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -28.7$ . ( $c$  1.00,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-acetoxybutanoate, (S)-7b.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.41. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2989, 1745, 1464, 1426, 1375, 1234, and 1207  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  0.96 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.4 Hz, 3H), 1.22 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.3 Hz, 3H), 1.23 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.8 Hz, 3H), 1.77-1.88 (m, 2H), 2.10 (s, 3H), 4.84-4.88 (m, 1H), 4.99-5.08 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):

$\delta$  9.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 20.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 24.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 68.8 (CH), 73.4 (CH), 169.6 (CO), 170.5 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>,  $m/z$ ): 211 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 52%]. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>16</sub>NaO<sub>4</sub> (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 211.0946; found: 211.0948.  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -38.7$  ( $c$  0.98, CHCl<sub>3</sub>),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Ethyl 2-acetoxypent-4-enoate, (S)-8b.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.44. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3080, 2983, 1800, 1643, 1469, and 1431 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  1.25 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.20 (s, 3H), 2.54-2.60 (m, 2H), 4.18 (q, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.0 Hz, 2H), 5.01-5.06 (m, 1H), 5.08-5.28 (m, 2H), 5.72-5.79 (m, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  14.0 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 20.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 35.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 61.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 71.6 (CH), 118.6 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 131.9 (CH), 169.5 (CO), 170.3 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>,  $m/z$ ): 209 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 30%]. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>14</sub>NaO<sub>4</sub> (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 209.0784; found: 209.0767.  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -17.3$  ( $c$  1.12, CHCl<sub>3</sub>),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-acetoxy-3-phenylpropanoate, (S)-9b.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.29. Pale yellow liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3030, 2934, 1731, 1496, 1455, and 1375 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  1.17 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.23 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.4 Hz, 3H), 2.09 (s, 3H), 3.10 (dd, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 11.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 8.6 Hz, 1H), 3.16 (dd, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 11.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 5.0 Hz, 1H), 4.98-5.07 (m, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.4 Hz, 1H), 5.16 (dd, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 8.6 Hz, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 5.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23-7.31 (m, 5H). <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  20.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.5 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 37.2 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 69.1 (CH), 73.1 (CH), 126.9 (CH<sub>ar</sub>), 128.3 (2CH<sub>ar</sub>), 129.3 (2CH<sub>ar</sub>), 135.9 (C<sub>ar</sub>), 169.1 (CO), 170.3 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>,  $m/z$ ): 273 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 100%]. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>18</sub>NaO<sub>4</sub> (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 273.1097; found: 273.1105.  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -5.7$  ( $c$  1.05, CHCl<sub>3</sub>),  $ee = 54\%$ .

**(S)-Benzyl 2-acetoxypropanoate, (S)-10b.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.31. Pale yellow liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3035, 2994, 1744, 1455, 1305, 1257, and 1196 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  1.49 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.12 (s, 3H), 5.09-5.16 (m, 1H), 5.17 (s, 2H), 7.33-7.36 (m, 5H). <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  16.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 20.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 66.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 68.5 (CH), 128.0 (2CH<sub>ar</sub>), 128.3 (2CH<sub>ar</sub>), 135.3 (CH<sub>ar</sub>), 166.3 (C<sub>ar</sub>), 170.3 (CO), 170.6 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>,  $m/z$ ): 245 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 55%]. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>12</sub>H<sub>14</sub>NaO<sub>4</sub> (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 245.0784; found: 245.0795.  $[\alpha]_D^{25} = -91.4$  ( $c$  1.00, CHCl<sub>3</sub>),  $ee = 99\%$ .

#### 2.4. General procedure for the enzymatic hydrolysis of rac-isopropyl 2-acetoxybutanoate, rac-7b.

In a typical experiment, to a solution of compound *rac*-7b (9.4 mg, 1.0 equiv) in a Tris-HCl buffer (50 mM, pH 9.0, 500  $\mu$ L), 9.4 mg of commercially available hydrolase (CAL-A, CRL, PPL, SD, PLE, subtilisin, CAL-B, AK, IM) was added. The reaction was shaken at 30°C and 250 rpm in a rotator shaker for the times established (3.5 hours or 7 hours), stopped by extraction with EtOAc



containing 1 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> mesitylene (2 x 400  $\mu$ L) and dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Conversions and enantiomeric excesses of the reactions were measured by GC and HPLC analysis.

For CRL, PLE, subtilisin and CAL-B, it was observed the disappearance of *rac*-**7b**, but expected product *rac*-**7c** was not obtained. PPL led to *rac*-**7c** with very low conversions. Lipases AK and IM were not able to hydrolyse the *S* enantiomer of *rac*-**7b** while lipases CAL-A and SD were not regioselectivity in the process, being achieved other hydrolysis products.

### 2.5. Procedure for the chemical hydrolysis of diesters (*S*)-**3-9b**.

To a solution of the corresponding diester (25 mg, 1.0 equiv.) in 5.0 mL of MeOH, EtOH or *i*PrOH, traces of HCl were added. The reaction was refluxed and followed by TLC using CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> as eluent. After disappearance of the starting product, the reaction was stopped and the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure. (*S*)- $\alpha$ -hydroxyesters were obtained without any further purification. All the products were achieved enantiopure except for (*S*)-**9c**, isolated with *ee*=54%. (*S*)-**3c** (60% yield, 11.3 mg), (*S*)-**4c** (60% yield, 9.8 mg), (*S*)-**5c** was obtained with 64% yield (11.8 mg), (*S*)-**6c** with 70% yield (13.2 mg), (*S*)-**7c** with 65% yield (12.6 mg), (*S*)-**8c** with 70% yield (13.5 mg), and (*S*)-**9c** with 85% yield (17.6 mg).

Compounds **5c**,<sup>[3a]</sup> and **6c**<sup>[3b]</sup> exhibit physical and spectral properties in accordance with those reported.

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-hydroxypropanoate, (S)-3c.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.20. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3480, 2984, 1651, 1463, 1376, and 1271 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  1.24 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.1 Hz, 3H), 1.25 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.37 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 6.4 Hz, 3H), 2.94 (s, 1H), 4.15-4.23 (m, 1H), 5.02-5.10 (m, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  20.3 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 21.6 (2CH<sub>3</sub>), 66.7 (CH), 69.3 (CH), 175.2 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>, *m/z*): 155 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 73%]. HRMS (ESI<sup>+</sup>) calcd. for C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>12</sub>NaO<sub>3</sub> (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 155.0684; found: 155.0687. [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>25</sup> = -5.20 (*c* 1.00, CHCl<sub>3</sub>), *ee* = 99%.<sup>[4a]</sup>

**(S)-Methyl 2-hydroxybutanoate, (S)-5c.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.20. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3433, 2969, 1738, 1645, 1420, 1296, and 1135 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  0.95 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.4 Hz, 3H), 1.60-1.89 (m, 2H), 2.77 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 5.9 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 4.15 (q, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 5.9 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (75.5 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  8.8 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 27.4 (CH<sub>2</sub>), 52.4 (CH<sub>3</sub>), 71.4 (CH), 175.6 (CO). MS (ESI<sup>+</sup>, *m/z*): 141 [(M+Na)<sup>+</sup>, 40%]. [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>25</sup> = -6.4 (*c* 1.15, CHCl<sub>3</sub>), *ee* = 99%.<sup>[4b]</sup>

**(S)-Ethyl 2-hydroxybutanoate, (S)-6c.** R<sub>f</sub> (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.21. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3429, 2980, 1733, 1600, 1464, and 1212 cm<sup>-1</sup>. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (300.13 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 25°C):  $\delta$  0.96 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.3 Hz, 3H), 1.29 (t, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 7.1 Hz, 3H), 1.63-1.88 (m, 2H), 2.77 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>H,H</sub> 5.7 Hz, 1H),

4.10-4.16 (m, 1H), 4.24 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.1 Hz, 2H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  8.7 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 14.1 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 27.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 61.6 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 71.3 (CH), 175.2 (CO). MS (ESI $^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 155 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 36%].  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -5.95$  ( $c$  1.20,  $\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .<sup>[3b]</sup>

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-hydroxybutanoate, (S)-7c.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.31. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3413, 2982, 1731, 1463, 1376, and 1107  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  0.94 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.4 Hz, 3H), 1.25 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.3 Hz, 3H), 1.27 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.3 Hz, 3H), 1.64-1.71 (m, 1H), 1.77-1.81 (m, 1H), 2.80 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  5.7 Hz, 1H), 4.09-4.10 (m, 1H), 5.09 (m,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.3 Hz, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  8.7 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.7 (2 $\text{CH}_3$ ), 27.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 69.3 (CH), 71.3 (CH), 174.7 (CO). MS (ESI $^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 169 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 61%]. HRMS (ESI $^+$ ) calcd for  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{14}\text{NaO}_3$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 169.0835; found: 169.0838.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -6.1$  ( $c$  0.85,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Ethyl 2-hydroxy-4-enoate, (S)-8c.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.23. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3409, 2984, 1747, 1376, and 1243  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.29 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 2.38-2.48 (m, 1H), 2.52-2.61 (m, 1H), 2.81 (d, 1H), 4.20-4.28 (m, 3H), 5.11-5.18 (m, 2H), 5.73-5.87 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  14.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 38.5 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 61.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 69.8 (CH), 118.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 132.4 (CH), 174.2 (CO). MS (ESI $^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 167 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 67%].  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -4.2$  ( $c$  0.95,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

**(S)-Isopropyl 2-hydroxy-3-phenylpropanoate, (S)-9c.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.23. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3359, 3088, 2982, 1731, 1496, 1375, and 1273  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.26 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.1 Hz, 3H), 1.28 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.1 Hz, 3H), 2.99 (dd,  $^2J_{\text{H,H}}$  13.8 Hz,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.8 Hz, 1H), 3.15 (dd,  $^2J_{\text{H,H}}$  13.8 Hz,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  4.8 Hz, 1H), 4.43 (m, 1H), 5.08 (m,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.1 Hz, 1H), 7.20-7.36 (m, 5H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  21.6 (2 $\text{CH}_3$ ), 40.3 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 69.4 (CH), 71.1 (CH), 126.7 ( $\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 128.1 (2 $\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 129.4 (2 $\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 136.3 ( $\text{C}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 173.6 (CO). MS (ESI $^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 231 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 100%]. HRMS (ESI $^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{16}\text{NaO}_3$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 231.0992; found: 231.0995.  $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{25} = -9.7$  ( $c$  0.78,  $\text{CHCl}_3$ ),  $ee = 99\%$ .

## 2.6. General procedure for the synthesis of racemic $\alpha$ -alkyl- $\beta$ -ketoesters rac-1a, rac-3-4a, rac-7-10a.<sup>[5]</sup>

A mixture of the corresponding alkyl acetoacetate or methyl-3-oxo-pentanoate (2.0 g, 1.0 equiv) and anhydrous powdered  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$  (1.3 equiv) in 20.0 mL of dry acetone was stirred under nitrogen atmosphere for five minutes. Then, methyl iodide, ethyl iodide, allyl bromide or benzyl bromide (1.3 equiv) was added carefully. The reaction was refluxed for 18 hours. The crude mixture was then filtered and the solvent evaporated under reduced pressure. The residues were purified by *flash* chromatography on silica gel with hexane/ethyl acetate 9:1 to afford methyl 2-methyl-3-

oxobutanoate *rac-1a* (67% yield, 1.54 g), isopropyl 2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate *rac-3a* (81% yield, 1.80 g), methyl 2-methyl-3-oxopentanoate *rac-4a* (29% yield, 0.64 g), isopropyl 2-ethyl-3-oxobutanoate *rac-7a* (42% yield, 0.91 g), ethyl 2-acetylpent-4-enoate *rac-8a* (84% yield, 1.84 g), isopropyl 2-benzyl-3-oxobutanoate *rac-9a* (53% yield, 1.13 g), and benzyl 2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate *rac-10a* (47% yield, 1.01 g).

Compounds *rac-1a*,<sup>[6a]</sup> *rac-3a*,<sup>[6b]</sup>, *rac-8a*,<sup>[6c]</sup> and *rac-10a*,<sup>[6d]</sup> exhibit physical and spectral properties in accord with those reported.

***rac*-Methyl 2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate, *rac-1a*.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.27. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2999, 1750, 1720, 1380, and 1359  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.35 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 3.51 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  12.7 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 28.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 52.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 53.3 (CH), 170.8 (CO), 203.5 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 153 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 56%].

***rac*-Isopropyl 2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate, *rac-3a*.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.41. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2942, 1738, 1715, 1455, 1376, and 1359  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.24 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.1 Hz, 6H), 1.28 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.20 (s, 3H), 3.44 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 1H), 4.27-5.29 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  12.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.4 (2 $\text{CH}_3$ ), 28.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 53.8 (CH), 68.8 (CH), 170.0 (CO), 203.6 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 181 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 53%].

***rac*-Methyl 2-methyl-3-oxopentanoate, *rac-4a*.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.37. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2984, 2940, 1747, 1594, 1455, and 1435  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.06 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.34 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.52-2.59 (m, 2H), 3.52 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 1H), 3.71 (s, 3H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  7.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 12.8 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 34.6 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 52.3 (CH), 52.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 171.1 (CO), 206.3 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 167 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 76%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd for  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{12}\text{NaO}_3$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 167.0679; found: 167.0671.

***rac*-Isopropyl 2-ethyl-3-oxobutanoate, *rac-7a*.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.46. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  2980, 1736, 1714, 1463, 1375, and 1359  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  0.82 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.5 Hz, 3H), 1.14 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.4 Hz, 3H), 1.15 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  6.2 Hz, 3H), 1.71-1.82 (m, 2H), 2.10 (s, 3H), 3.18-3.22 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 1H), 4.94-5.22 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  11.5 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.2 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.4 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 28.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 61.3 (CH), 68.4 (CH), 169.0 (CO), 203.6 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 195 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 28%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_9\text{H}_{16}\text{NaO}_3$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 195.0992; found: 195.0993.

***rac*-Ethyl 2-acetylpent-4-enoate, *rac-8a*.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.28. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3081, 2983, 1743, 1715, 1643, 1441, and 1367  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.25 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 3H), 2.21 (s, 3H), 2.54-2.59 (m, 2H), 3.50 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.5 Hz, 1H), 4.18

(q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.0 Hz, 2H), 5.01-5.28 (m, 2H), 5.65-5.79 (m, 1H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  14.0 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 28.9 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 32.1 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 59.1 (CH), 61.3 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 117.3 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 132.1 (CH), 169.1 (CO), 202.4 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 193 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 100%].

***rac*-Isopropyl 2-benzyl-3-oxobutanoate, *rac*-9a.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.43. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3056, 2982, 1738, 1715, 1496, and 1455  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.14-1.29 (m, 6H), 2.20 (s, 3H), 3.14 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 2H), 3.76 (t,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.2 Hz, 1H), 4.98-5.12 (m, 1H), 7.18-7.31 (m, 5H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  21.4 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 21.5 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 29.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 33.7 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 61.4 (CH), 69.0 (CH), 128.0 ( $2\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 128.5 ( $2\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 128.7 ( $\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 138.1 ( $\text{C}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 168.6 (CO), 202.3 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 257 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 100%]. HRMS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ) calcd. for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{18}\text{NaO}_3$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 257.1148; found: 257.1169.

***rac*-Benzyl 2-methyl-3-oxobutanoate, *rac*-10a.**  $R_f$  (8:2 hexane-EtOAc): 0.35. Colourless liquid. IR (KBr):  $\nu$  3050, 2990, 1744, 1715, 1498, 1455, and 1359  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  (300.13 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  1.36 (d,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.1 Hz, 3H), 2.19 (s, 3H), 3.55 (q,  $^3J_{\text{H,H}}$  7.1 Hz, 1H), 5.17 (s, 2H), 7.32-7.37 (m, 5H).  $^{13}\text{C-NMR}$  (75.5 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ , 25°C):  $\delta$  12.6 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 28.3 ( $\text{CH}_3$ ), 53.5 (CH), 70.0 ( $\text{CH}_2$ ), 128.2 ( $\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 128.4 ( $2\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 128.5 ( $2\text{CH}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 134.0 ( $\text{C}_{\text{ar}}$ ), 170.3 (CO), 203.3 (CO). MS ( $\text{ESI}^+$ ,  $m/z$ ): 229 [(M+Na) $^+$ , 100%].

## 2.7. General procedure for the synthesis of racemic diesters *rac*-1-7b and *rac*-9-10b.

For the preparation of the diesters *rac*-2-3b, *rac*-5-7b and *rac*-9b, a two-step procedure starting from commercially available *rac*-lactic acid, *rac*-2-hydroxybutanoic acid or *rac*-phenyllactic acid was carried out.

### Step 1: Synthesis of $\alpha$ -hydroxy esters *rac*-2-3c, *rac*-5-7c, and *rac*-9c.

To a solution of the corresponding acid (1.0 g, 1.0 equiv) in 40.0 mL of MeOH, EtOH,  $i$ PrOH or benzyl alcohol, traces of HCl were added. The reaction was refluxed and followed by TLC  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}$  95:5. After 24 hours, the reaction was stopped; the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure. The crude mixture was then solved in 20 mL  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$ , washed with a saturated solution of  $\text{NaHCO}_3$  ( $2 \times 15$  mL) and extracted with  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  ( $3 \times 15$  mL). The combined organic layers were dried over  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ , filtered and the solvent evaporated under reduced pressure. Racemic  $\alpha$ -hydroxy esters were obtained without any further purification: *rac*-2c (29% yield, 328.4 mg), *rac*-3c (27% yield, 395.6 mg), *rac*-5c (52% yield, 589.0 mg), *rac*-6c (66% yield, 836.3 mg), *rac*-7c (76% yield, 1.06 g), and *rac*-9c (72% yield, 893 mg).

For the preparation of *rac*-1b and *rac*-10b, this step was not necessary since *rac*-methyl lactate and *rac*-benzyl 2-hydroxypropanoate were commercially available.

Step 2: Synthesis of diesters rac-1-7b and rac-9-10b.

$\alpha$ -Hydroxy esters *rac-1-3c*, *rac-5-7c*, and *rac-9-10c* (300 mg, 1.0 equiv) were acylated with acetic anhydride (2.0 equiv) or propionic anhydride (in case of **4b**) and a catalytic amount of *N,N*-dimethylaminopyridine in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (6.0 mL). Racemic diesters were achieved without any further purification: *rac-1b* (75% yield, 315.9 mg), *rac-2b* (21% yield, 85.4 mg), *rac-3b* (46% yield, 181.9 mg), *rac-4b* (22% yield, 101.5 mg), *rac-5b* (74% yield, 301.0 mg), *rac-6b* (61% yield, 241.2 mg), *rac-7b* (69% yield, 266.5 mg), *rac-9b* (35% yield, 126.2 mg), and *rac-10b* (45% yield, 166.5 mg).

2.8. *Experimental procedure for obtaining rac-ethyl 2-acetoxypent-4-enoate, rac-8b.*

For the preparation of the diester *rac-8b*, a two-step procedure starting from commercially available ethyl glyoxilate was employed.

Step 1: Synthesis of rac-ethyl 2-hydroxypent-4-enoate, rac-8c.<sup>[7]</sup>

To a solution of ethyl glyoxilate (500 mg, 1.0 equiv) and allyltrimethylsilane (2.0 equiv) in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (25 mL) at 0°C, boron trifluoride diethyl etherate (2.0 equiv) was added dropwise. The solution was allowed to warm up to room temperature and then stirred for 1.5 h. The reaction was then quenched with a saturated aqueous solution of NH<sub>4</sub>Cl and extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3 × 20 mL). The combined organic extracts were washed with brine (50 mL), dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated by reduced pressure to yield a crude mixture that was purified by *flash* chromatography on silica gel with hexane/ethyl acetate 7:3 as eluent to afford ethyl 2-hydroxypent-4-enoate, *rac-8c* (59% yield, 300 mg) as a colourless liquid.

Compound **8c**<sup>[7]</sup> exhibits physical and spectral properties in accordance with those reported.

Step 2: Acylation of rac-ethyl 2-hydroxypent-4-enoate rac-8c.

Racemic 2-hydroxypent-4-enoate *rac-8c* (300 mg, 1.0 equiv) was acylated with acetic anhydride (2 equiv) and catalytic *N,N*-dimethylaminopyridine in dry CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (6.0 mL) in order to obtain pure *rac*-ethyl 2-acetoxypent-4-enoate *rac-8b* in quantitative yield (373.1 mg) and without further purification.

### 3. GC and HPLC analyses

The following columns were used for the determination of conversions and enantiomeric excesses (Table S2) of some  $\alpha$ -alkyl- $\beta$ -keto esters, their corresponding oxidation and hydrolysis products: A: Restek RT-BetaDEXse (30 m x 0.25 mm x 0.25  $\mu$ m, 12 psi N<sub>2</sub>) and B: Hewlett Packard HP-1 (30 m x 0.32 mm x 0.25  $\mu$ m, 12.2 psi N<sub>2</sub>).

**Table S2.** Determination of conversions and enantiomeric excesses by employing GC.

Substrate	Program <sup>[a]</sup>	Column	t <sub>R</sub> [min] <b>a</b>	t <sub>R</sub> [min] <b>b</b>	t <sub>R</sub> [min] <b>c</b>
<b>1</b>	50/20/3/110/0	A	35.9, 36.1	32.8 ( <i>S</i> ), 33.5 ( <i>R</i> )	27.1 ( <i>S</i> ), 29.0 ( <i>R</i> )
<b>2</b>	50/20/3/110/0	A	37.9	35.7 ( <i>S</i> ), 36.2 ( <i>R</i> )	26.6 ( <i>S</i> ), 28.5 ( <i>R</i> )
<b>3</b>	50/20/1/90/0	A	52.2, 52.6	49.3 ( <i>S</i> ), 50.2 ( <i>R</i> )	34.8 ( <i>S</i> ), 39.7 ( <i>R</i> )
<b>4</b>	50/20/1/110/0	A	54.2, 57.9	51.0 ( <i>S</i> ), 52.1 ( <i>R</i> )	21.4 ( <i>S</i> ), 27.5 ( <i>R</i> )
<b>5</b>	50 Isotherm	B	6.0	7.5	2.4
<b>6</b>	50 Isotherm	B	10.2	12.8	3.5
<b>7</b>	50 Isotherm	B	13.3	16.3	5.7
<b>8</b>	50/25/20/200/0	B	22.7	26.6	6.6
<b>9</b>	70/5/1/120/0	B	44.3	46.0	25.5
<b>10</b>	70/5/1/123/0	B	35.7	37.7	33.1

<sup>[a]</sup> Program: initial T (°C)/ time (min)/ slope (°C/min)/ T (°C)/ time (min)/

For the determination of the enantiomeric excesses of compounds **5-10b** (Table S3), the following columns were employed: column A: Chiralcel OB-H (0.46 cm x 25 cm) and column B: Chiralcel OD (0.46 cm x 25 cm), both from Daicel.

**Table S3.** Determination of enantiomeric excesses by HPLC.

Substrate	Column	Flow rate [mL min <sup>-1</sup> ]	T [°C]	Eluent <sup>[a]</sup>	Retention time [min]
<b>5b</b>	A	0.7	25	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 99:1	12.9 ( <i>R</i> ); 17.7 ( <i>S</i> )
<b>6b</b>	A	0.5	25	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 99:1	17.8 ( <i>R</i> ); 21.1 ( <i>S</i> )
<b>7b</b>	A	0.5	20	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 99:1	12.7 ( <i>R</i> ); 14.3 ( <i>S</i> )
<b>8b</b>	A	0.5	20	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 99:1	22.6 ( <i>R</i> ); 26.3 ( <i>S</i> )
<b>9b</b>	B	1.0	25	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 99:1	25.8 ( <i>R</i> ); 34.8 ( <i>S</i> )
<b>10b</b>	A	0.8	20	<i>n</i> -hexane-IPA 95:5	23.8 ( <i>R</i> ); 26.3 ( <i>S</i> )

<sup>[a]</sup> All the experiments were performed with isocratic eluent.

#### 4. Determination of absolute configurations

Absolute configurations of acylated 2-hydroxy esters **1-7b** and **9-10b** were established by comparison of their HPLC or GC retention times with the ones obtained after the esterification and/or acetylation of the corresponding commercial chiral  $\alpha$ -hydroxy esters/acids.

Absolute configuration of ethyl 2-acetoxypent-4-enoate **8b** was obtained comparing the retention times on HPLC with the product achieved after hydrolysis of the racemic compound **8b** employing lipase AK from *Pseudomonas fluorescens*.<sup>[8]</sup>

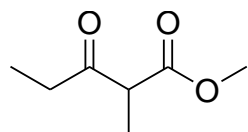
Absolute configurations of  $\alpha$ -hydroxy esters were achieved by its previous derivatisation into the corresponding acetate or propionate derivatives.

## 5. Supporting references

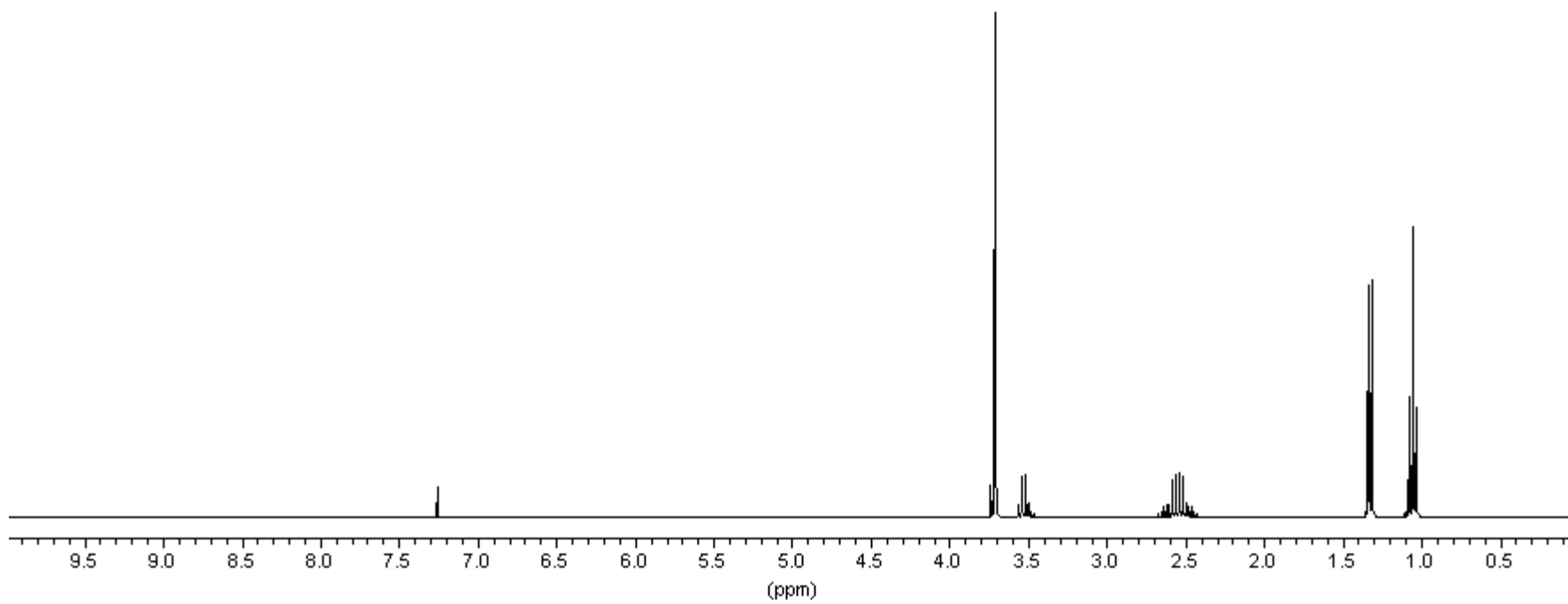
- [1] a) M. W. Fraaije, J. Wu, D. P. H. M. Heuts, E. W. van Hellemond, J. H. Lutje Spelberg, D. B. Janssen, *Appl. Microbiol. Biotechnol.* **2005**, *66*, 393-400; b) N. M. Kamerbeek, M. J. H. Moonem, J. G. M. van der Ven, W. J. H. van Berkel, M. W. Fraaije, D. B. Janssen, *Eur. J. Biochem.* **2001**, *268*, 2547-2557; c) D. E. Torres Pazmiño, R. Snajdrova, D. V. Rial, M. D. Mihovilovic, M. W. Fraaije, *Adv. Synth. Catal.* **2007**, *349*, 1361-1368.
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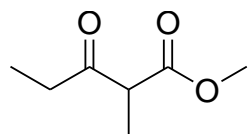


## 6. NMR Spectra

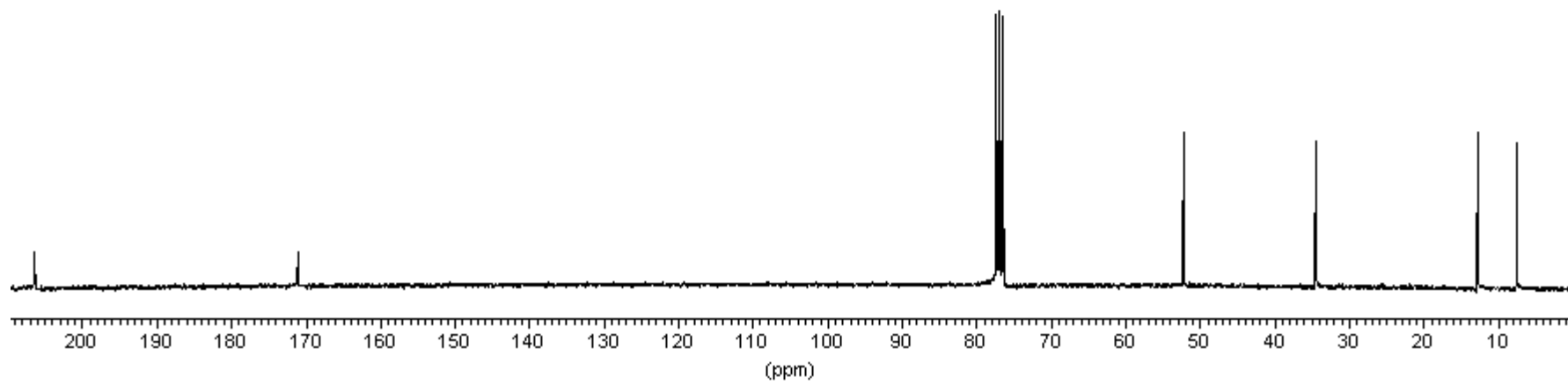


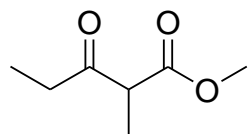
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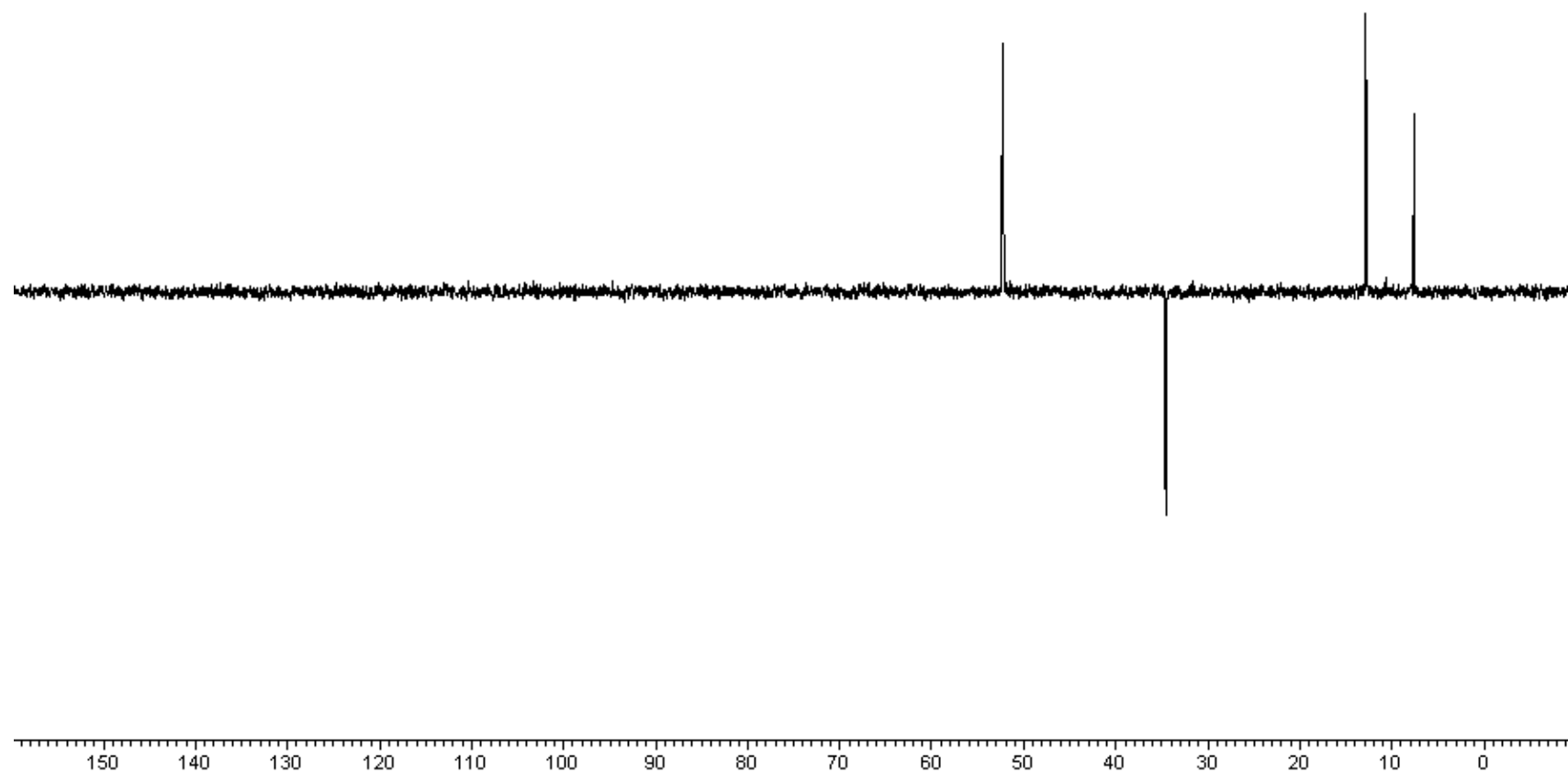


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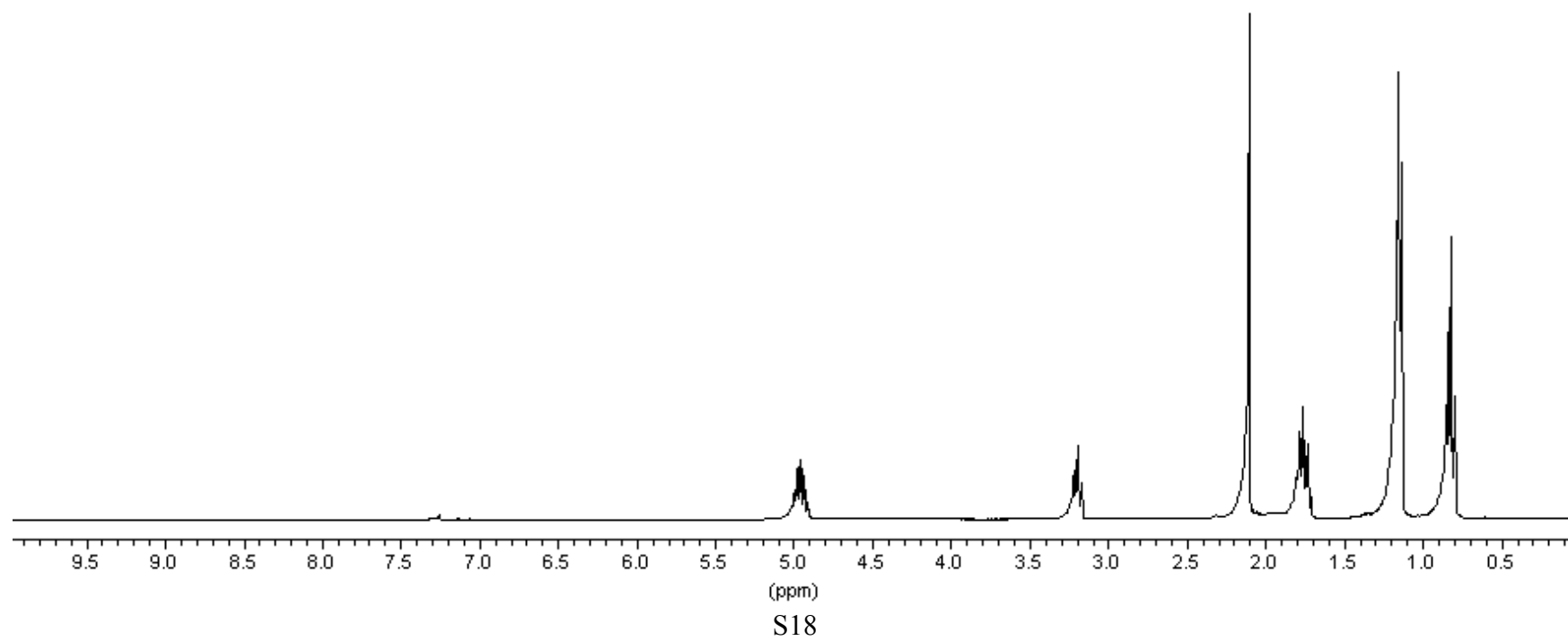
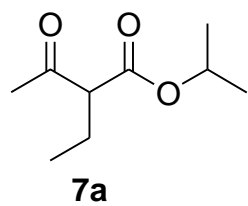


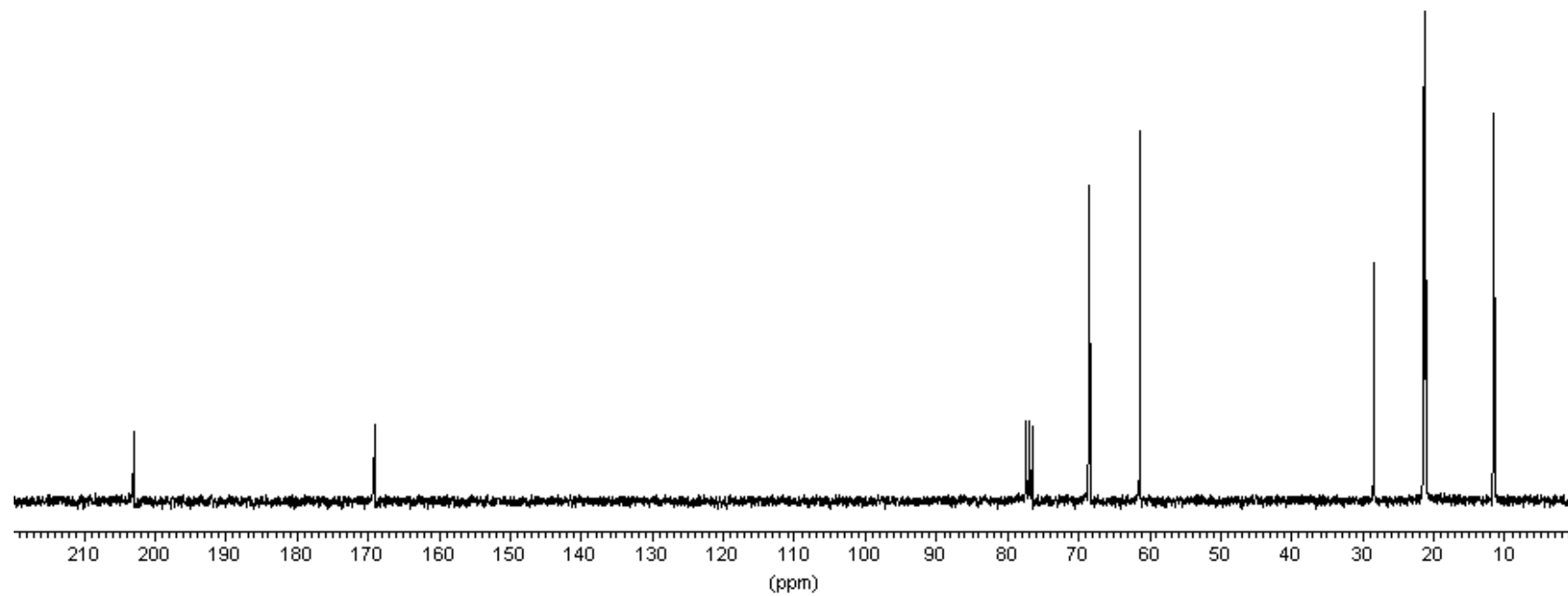
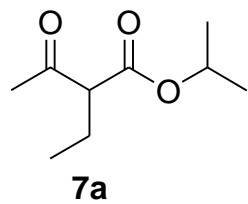


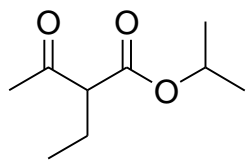
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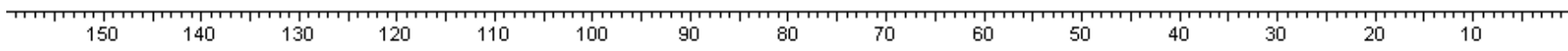
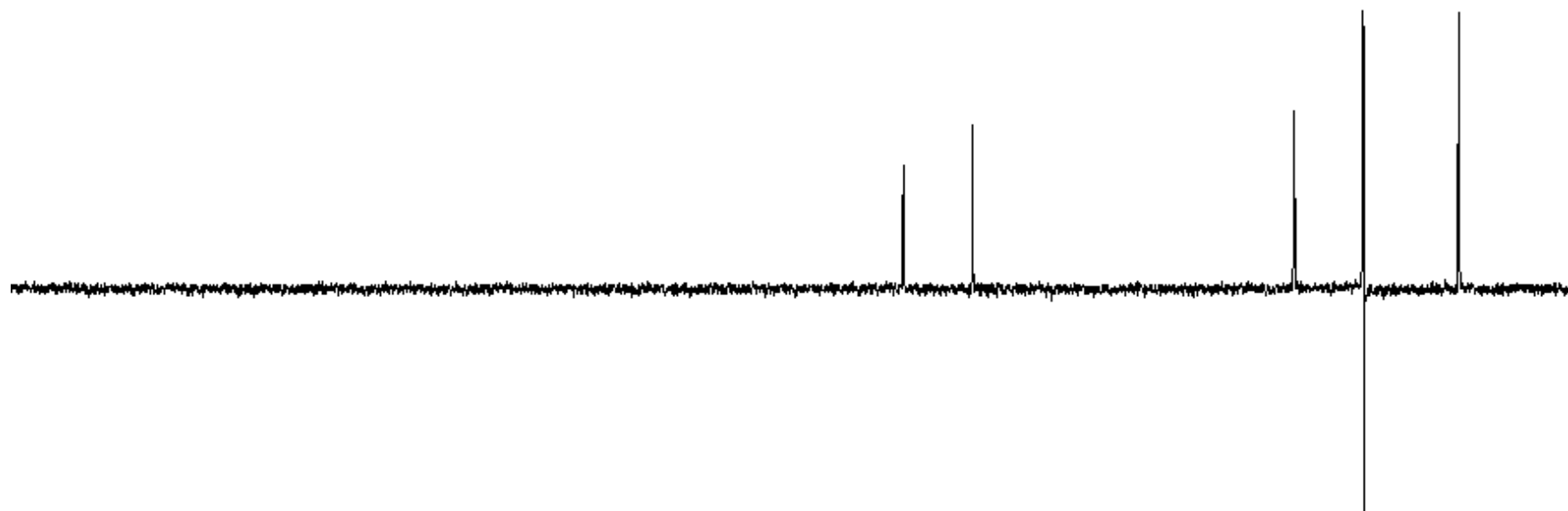
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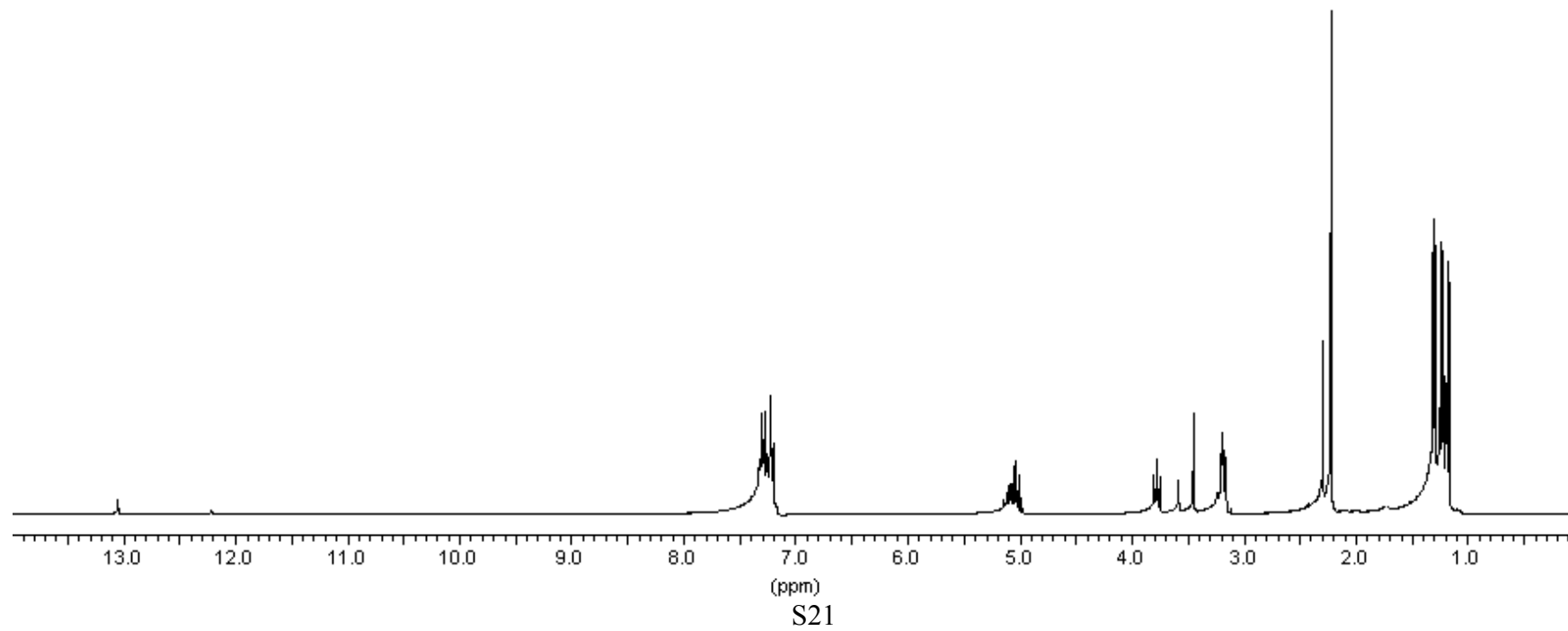
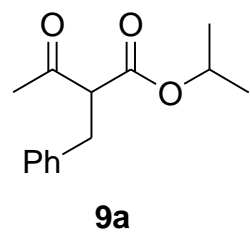


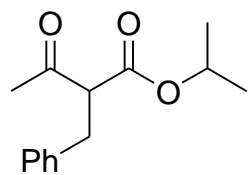


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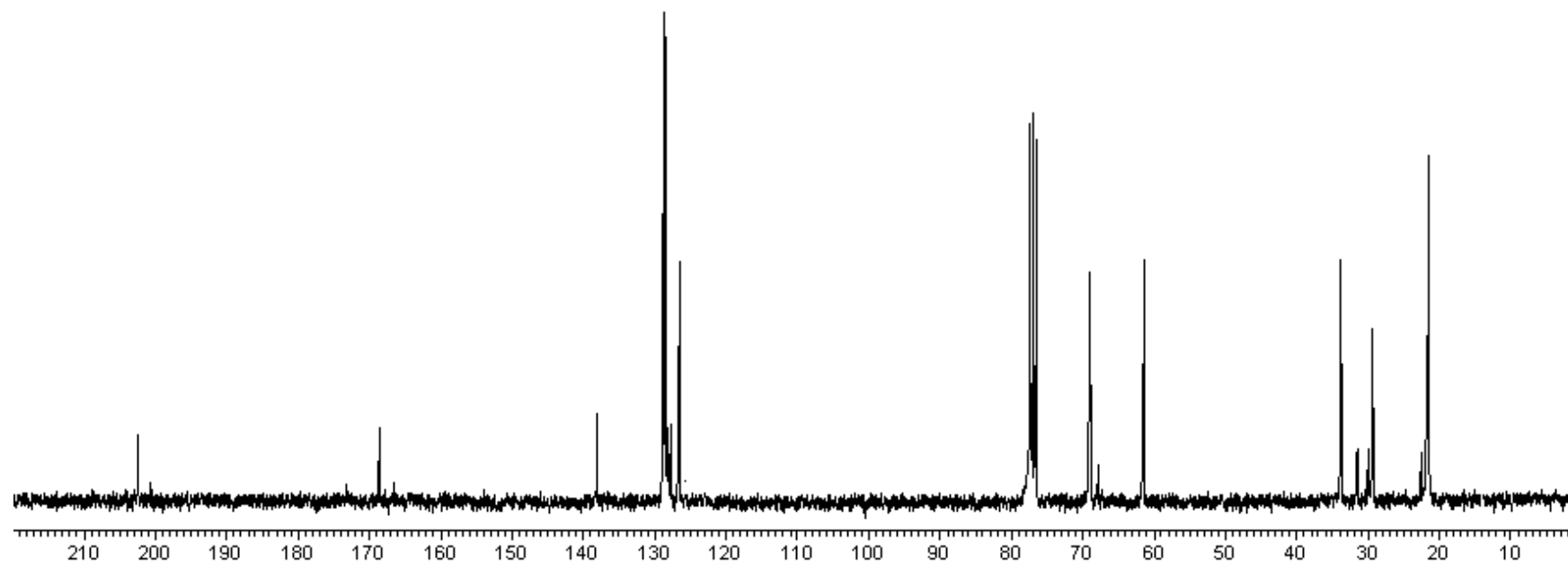


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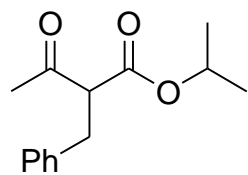


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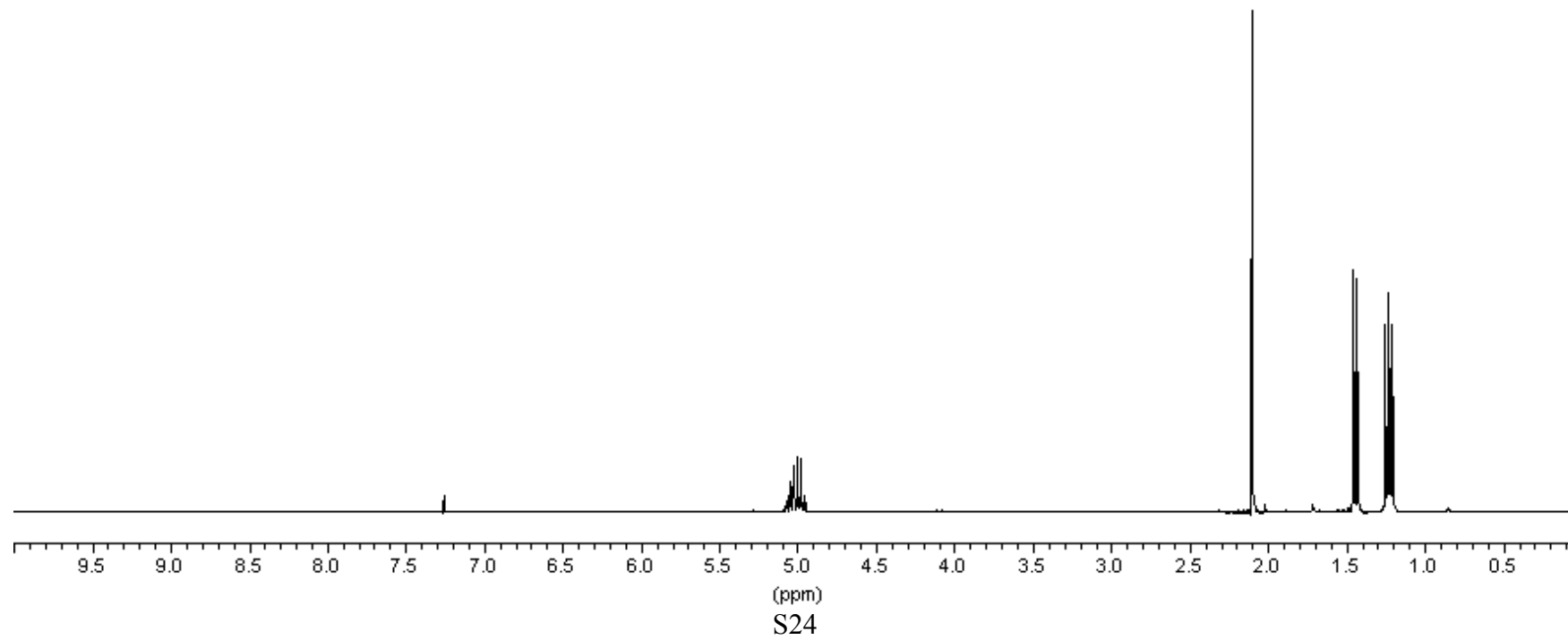
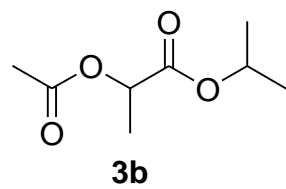


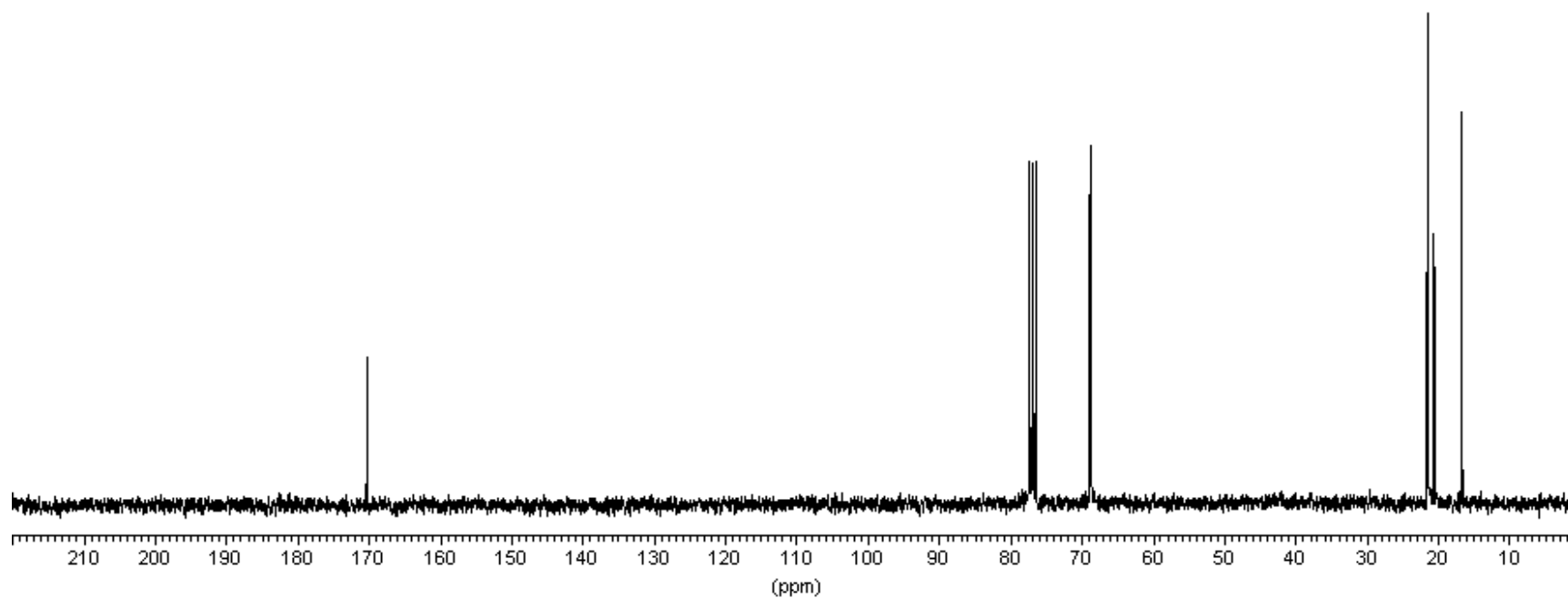
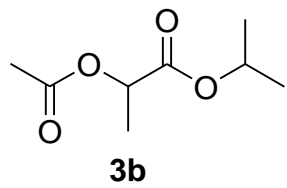


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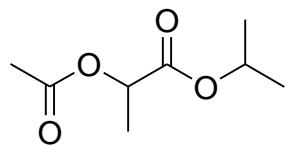


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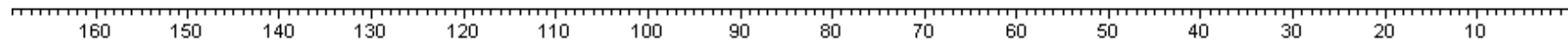
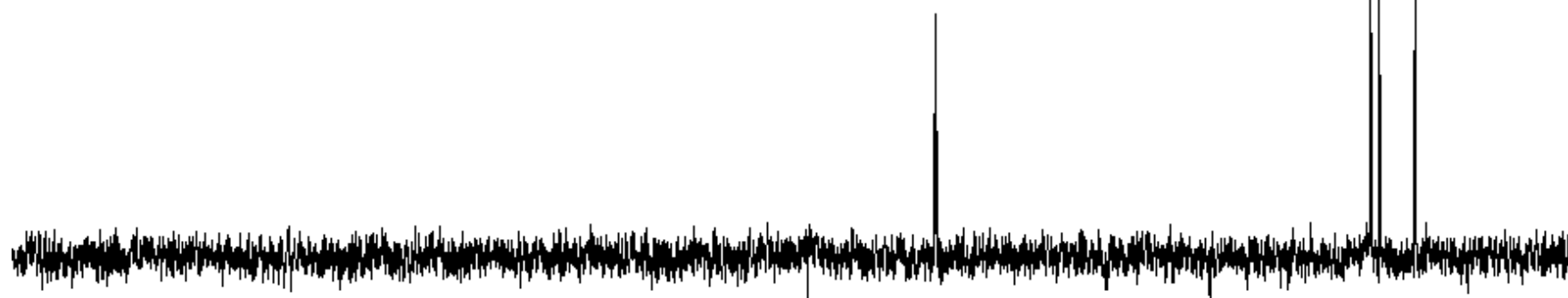




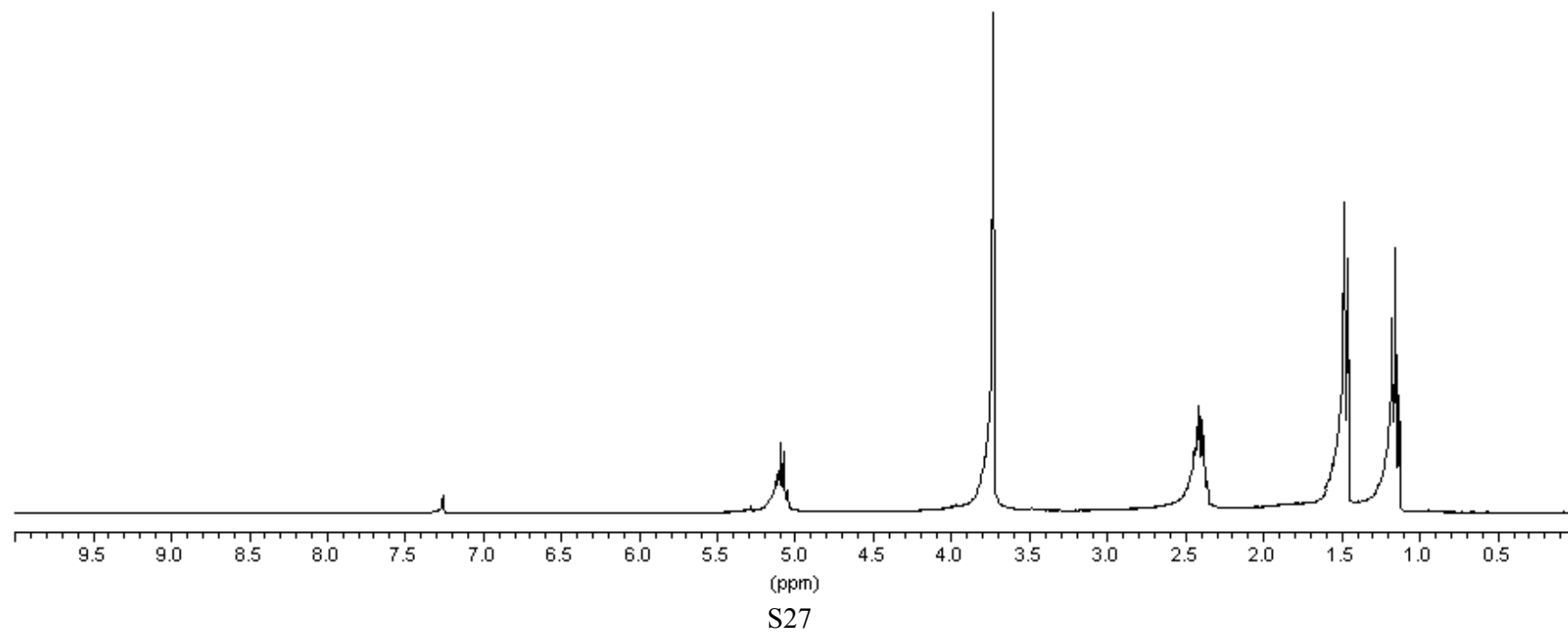
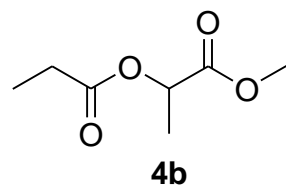
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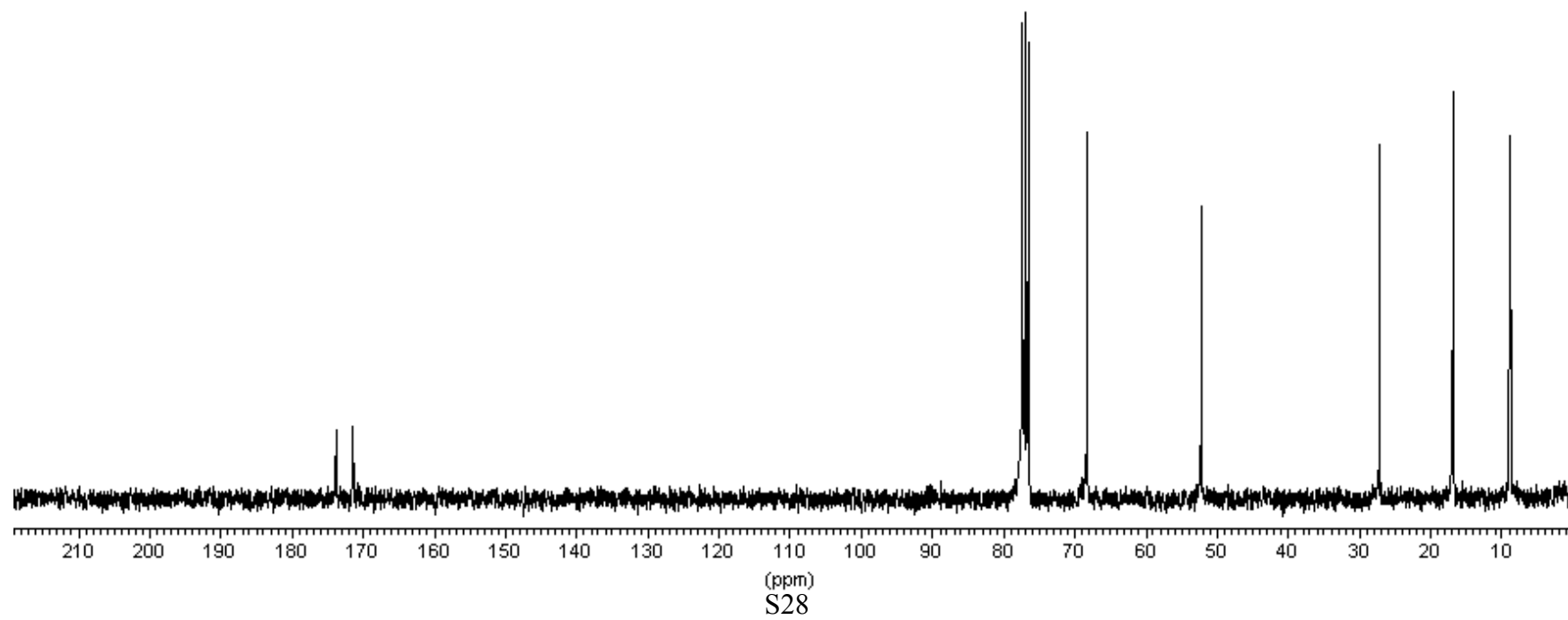
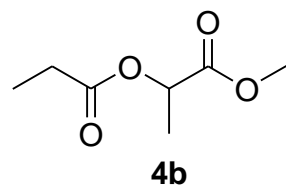


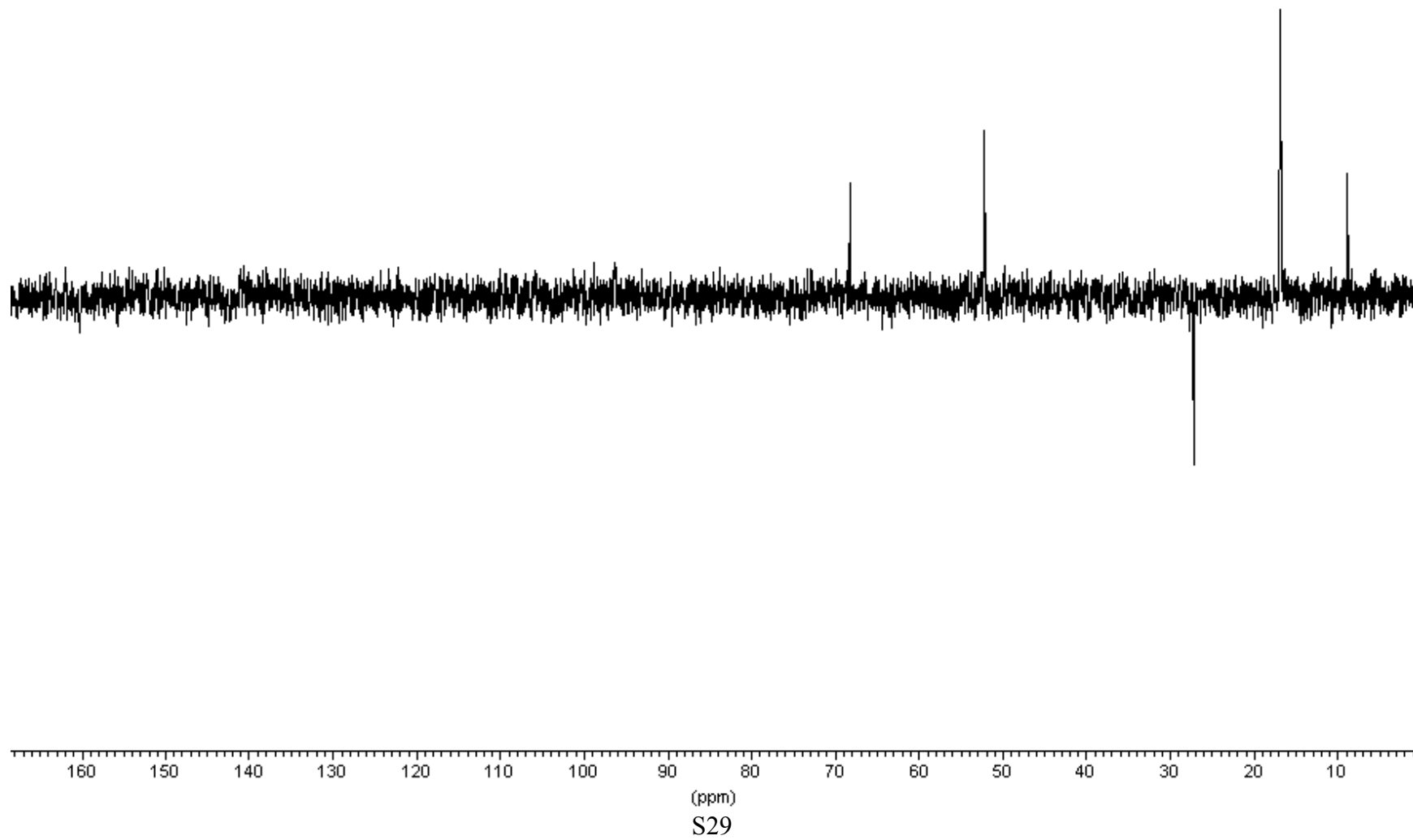
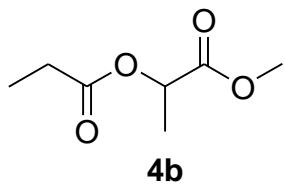
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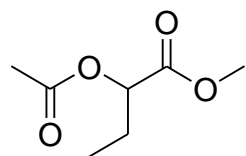


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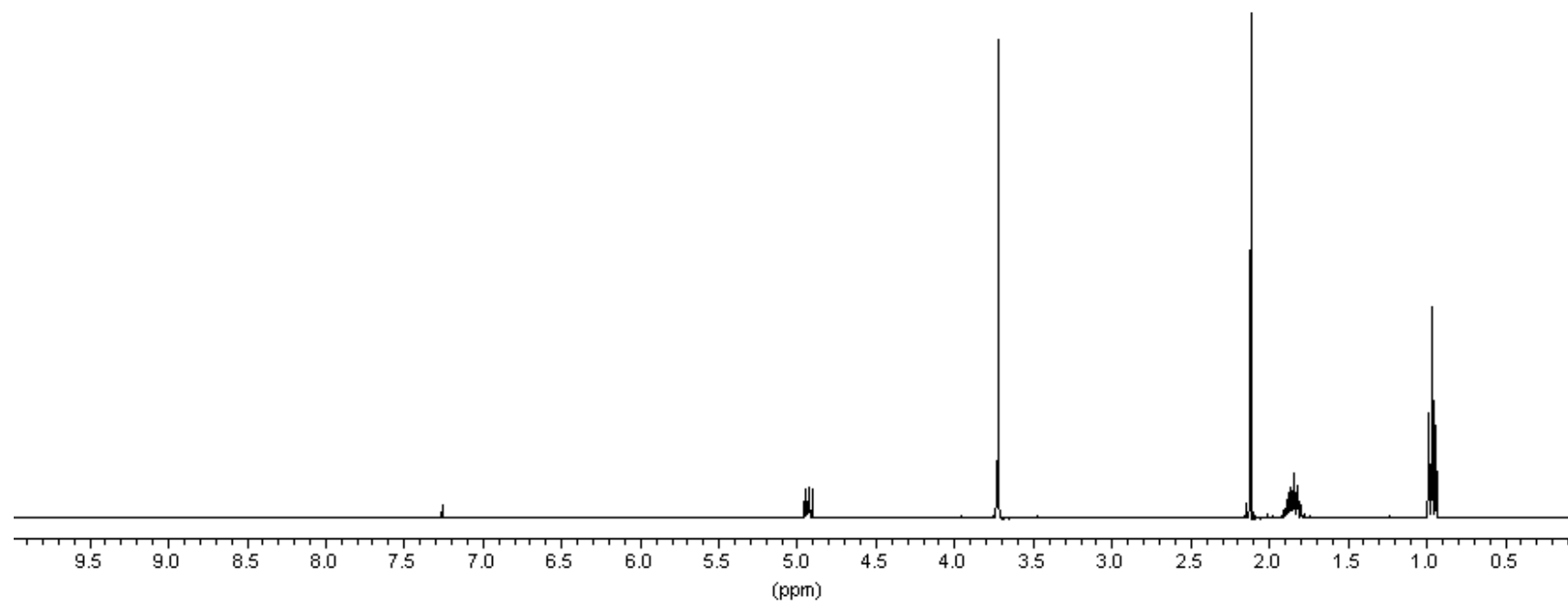






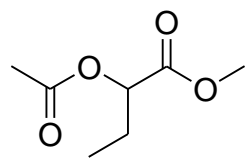


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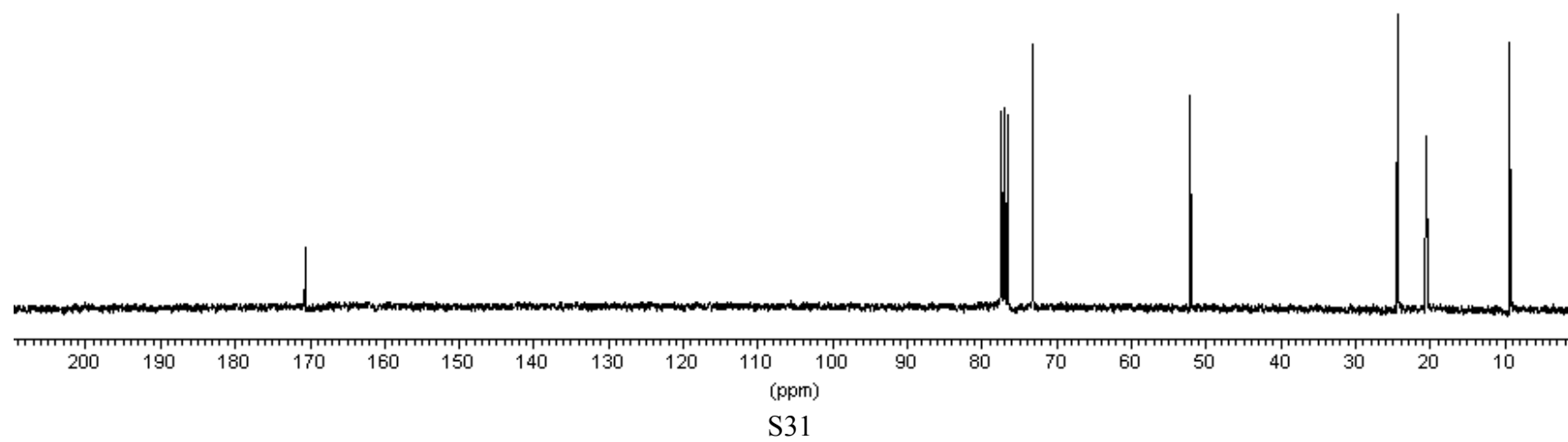


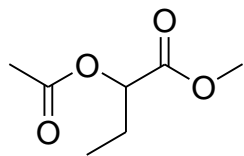
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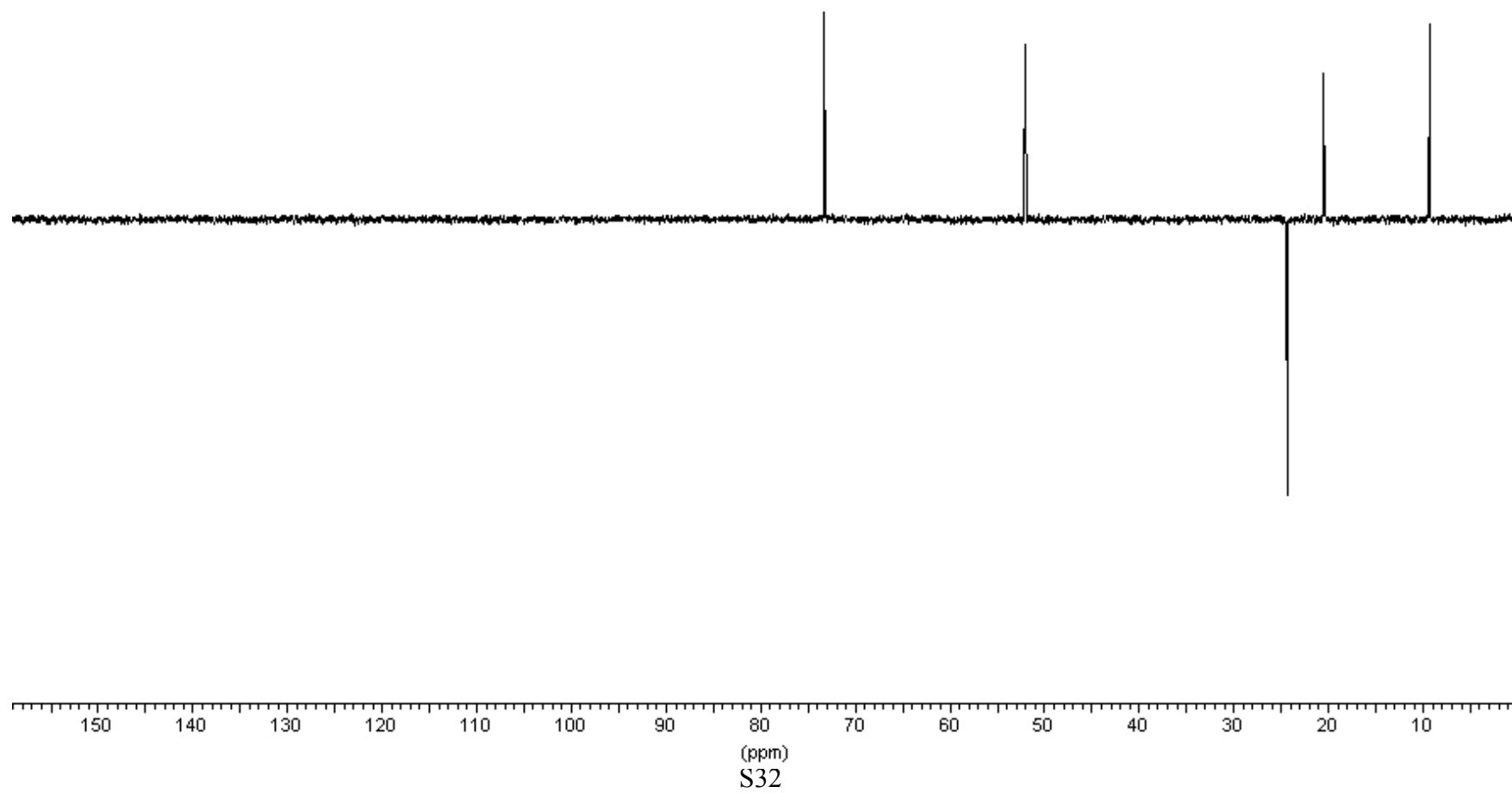


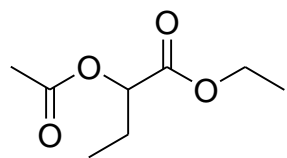
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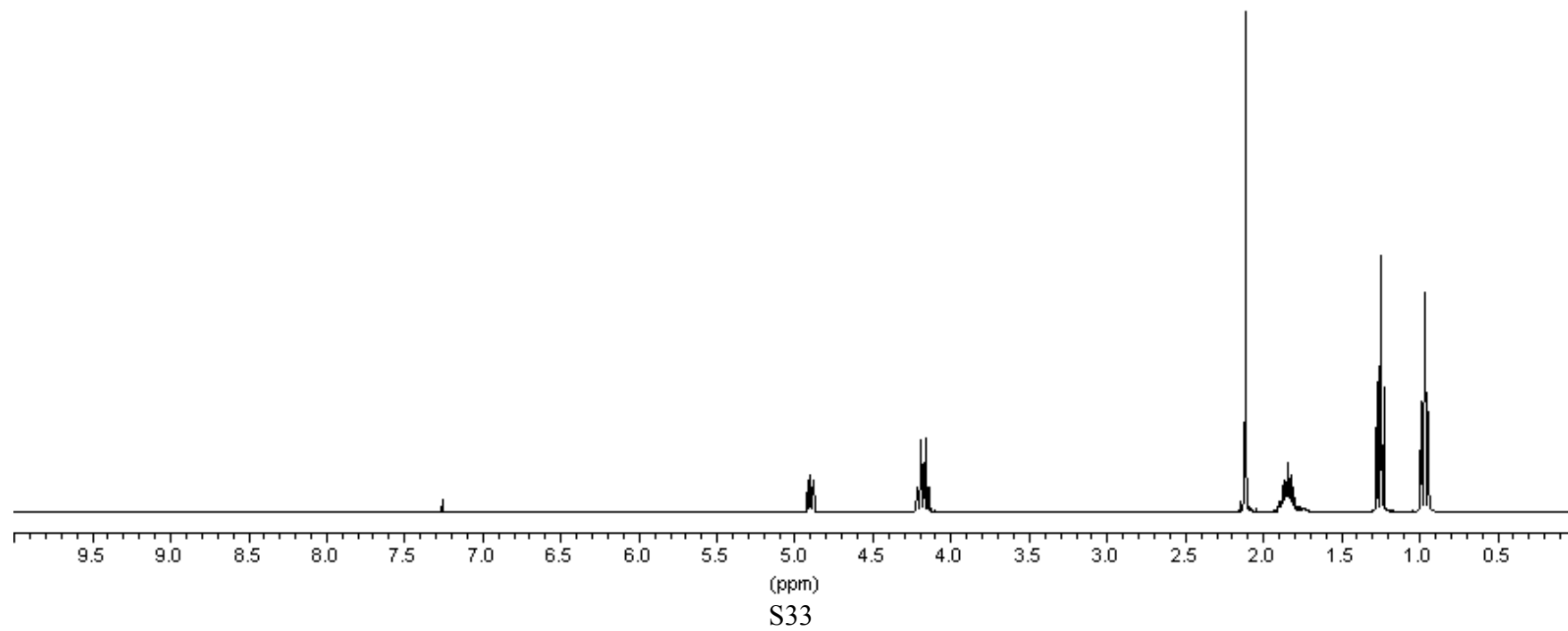


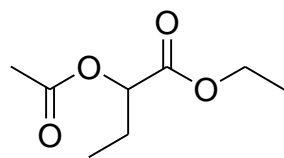
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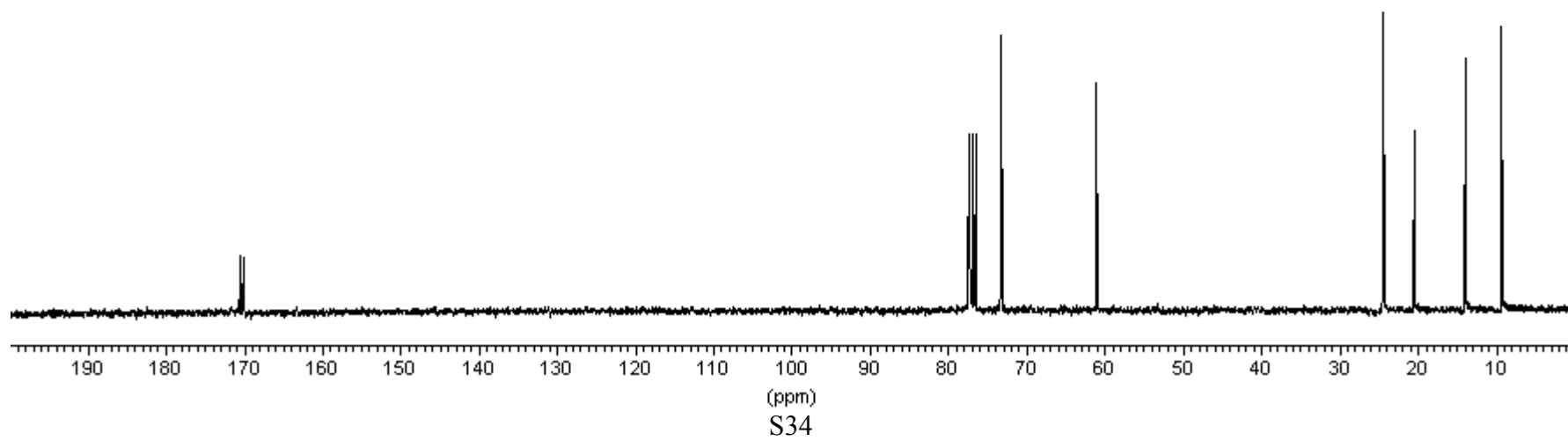


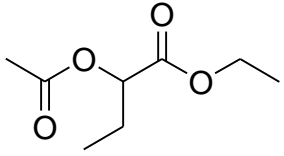
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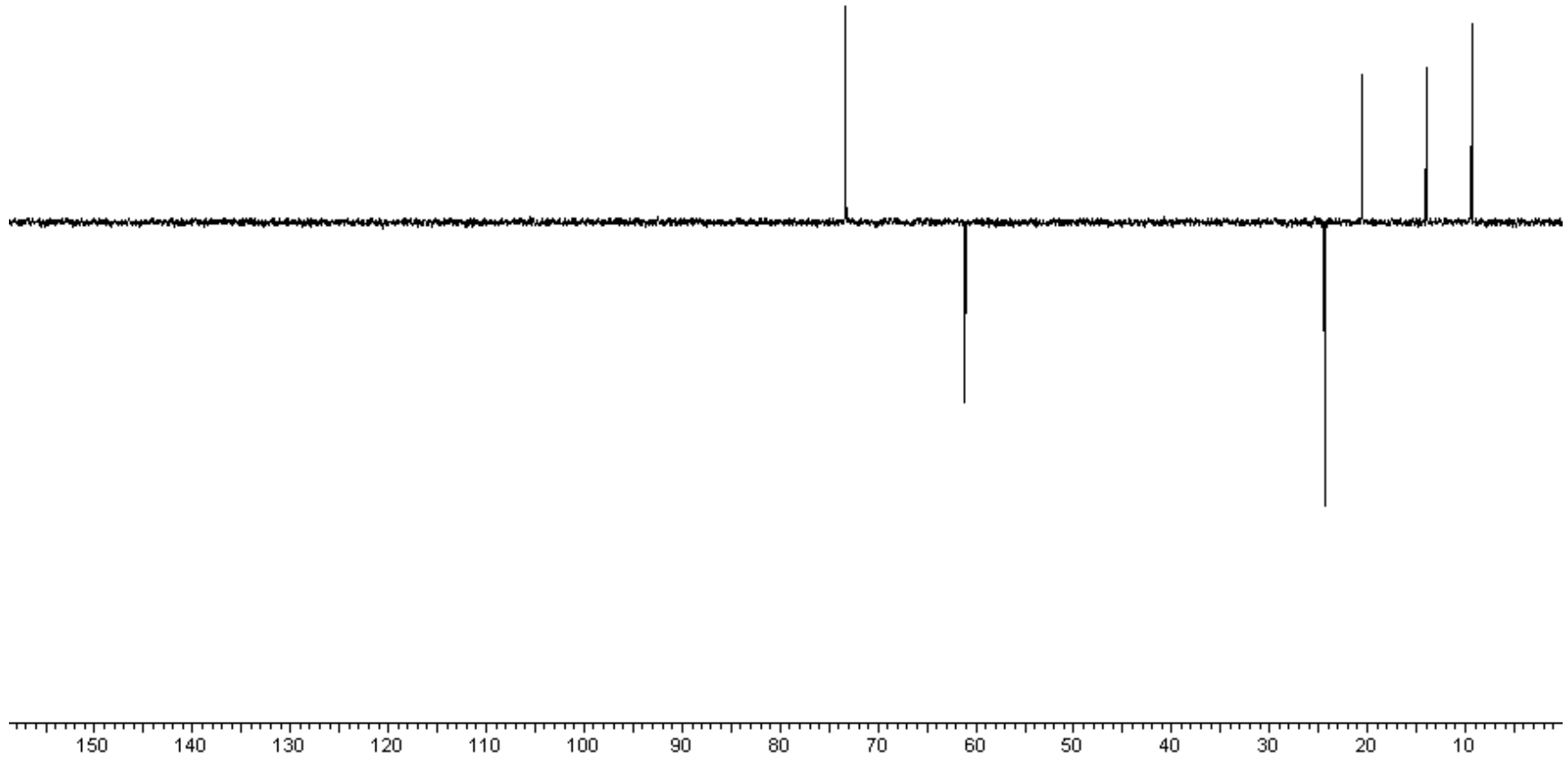


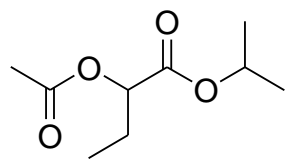
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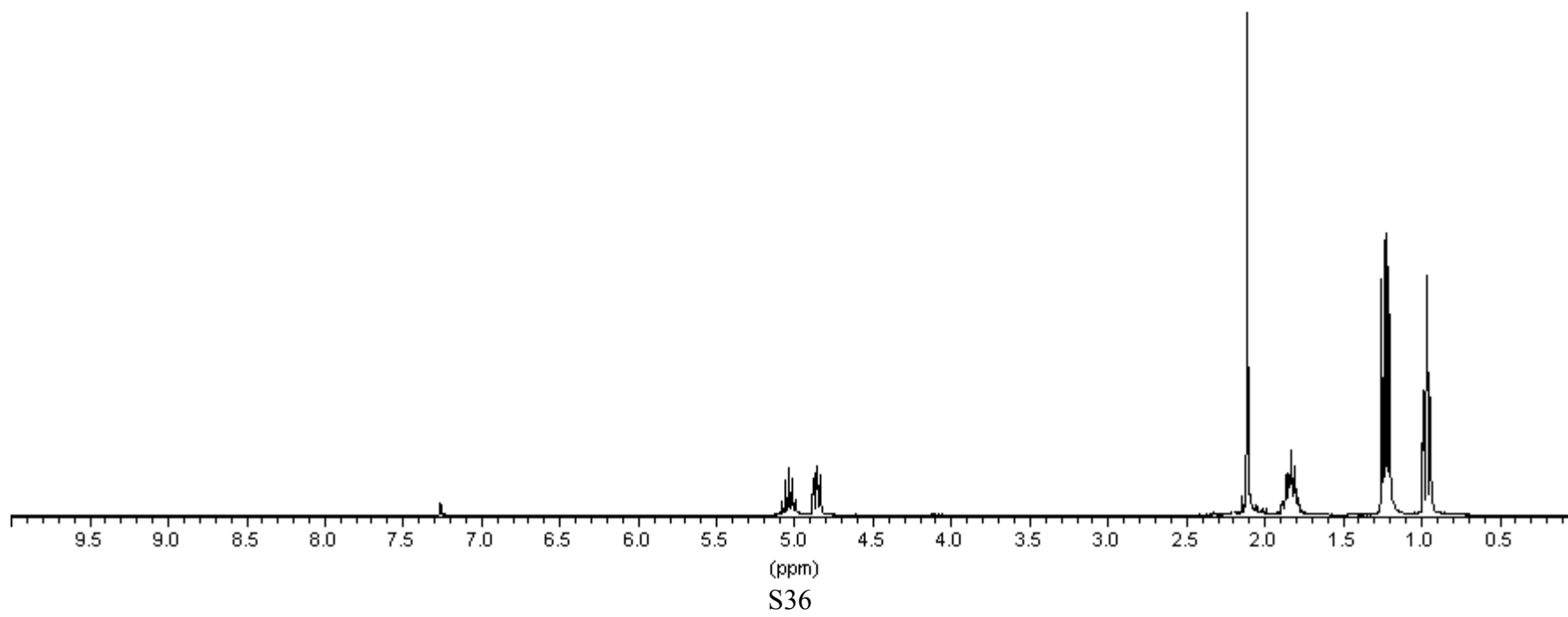


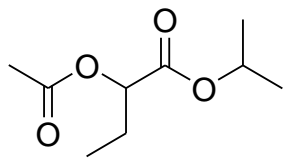
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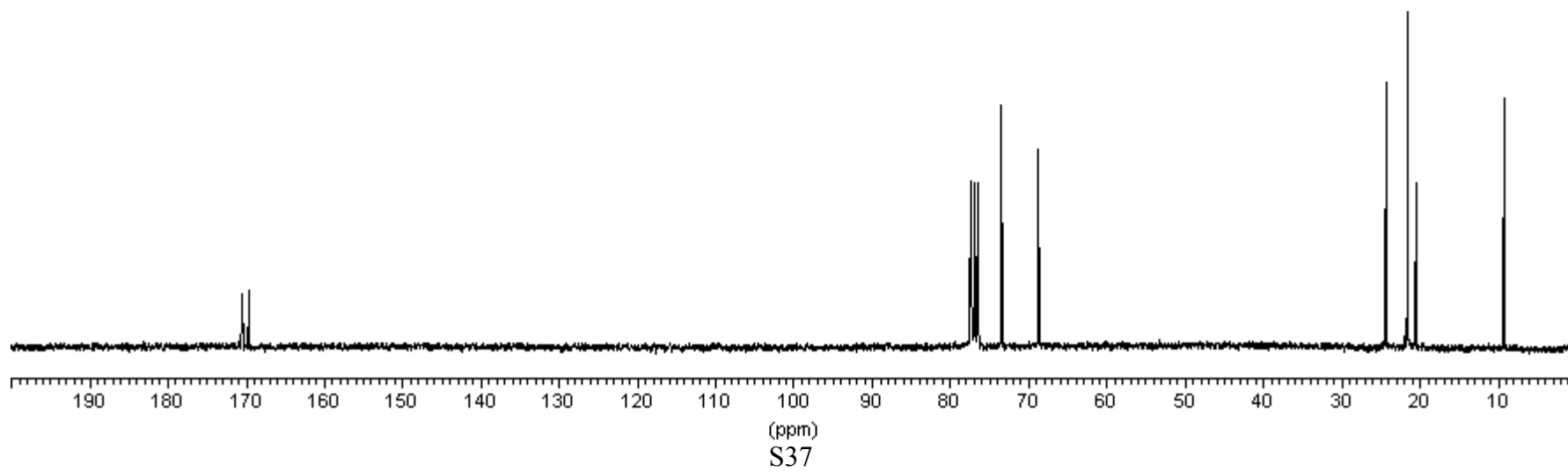


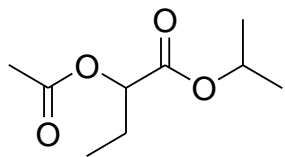
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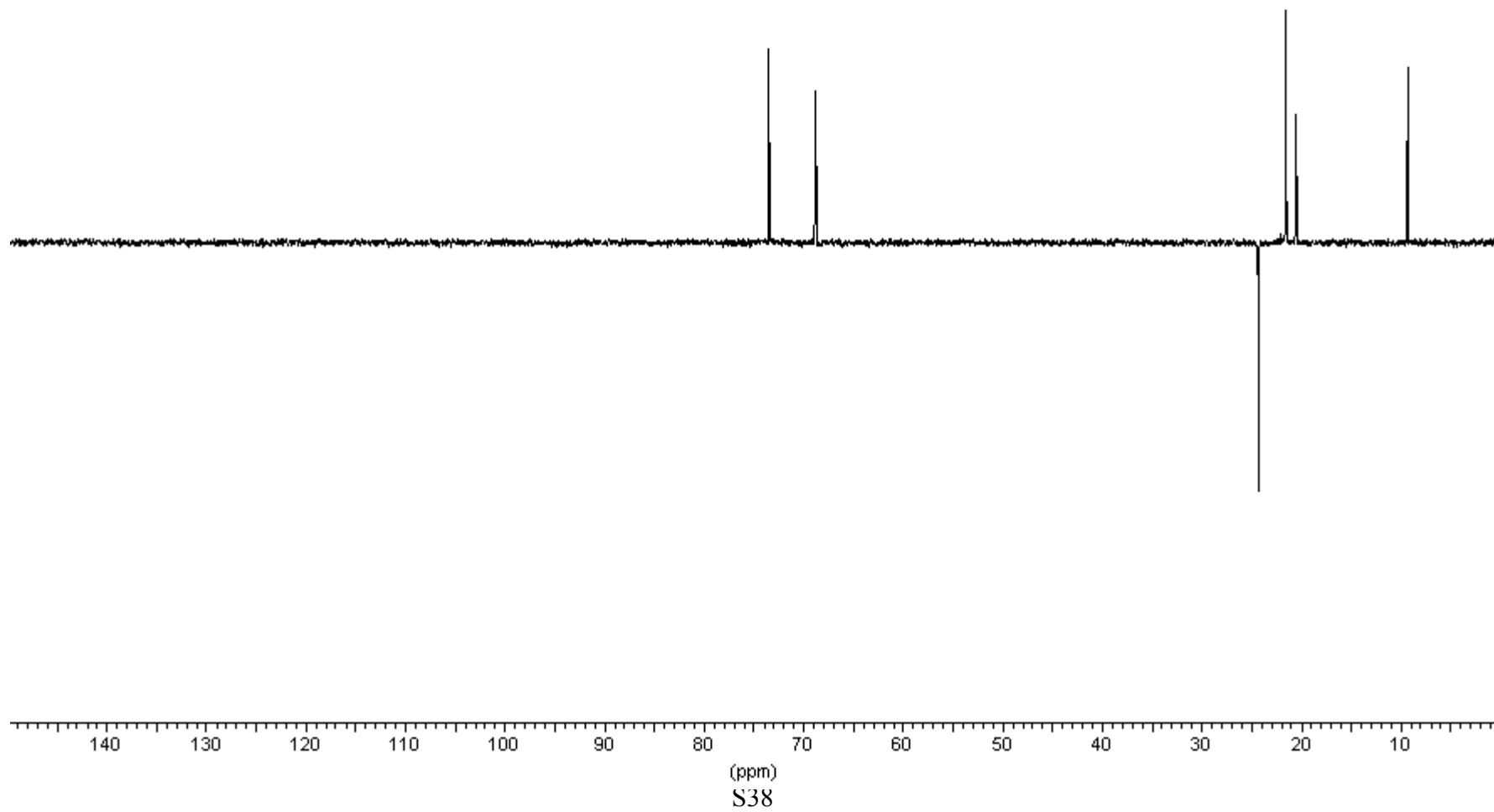


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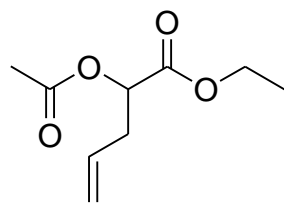




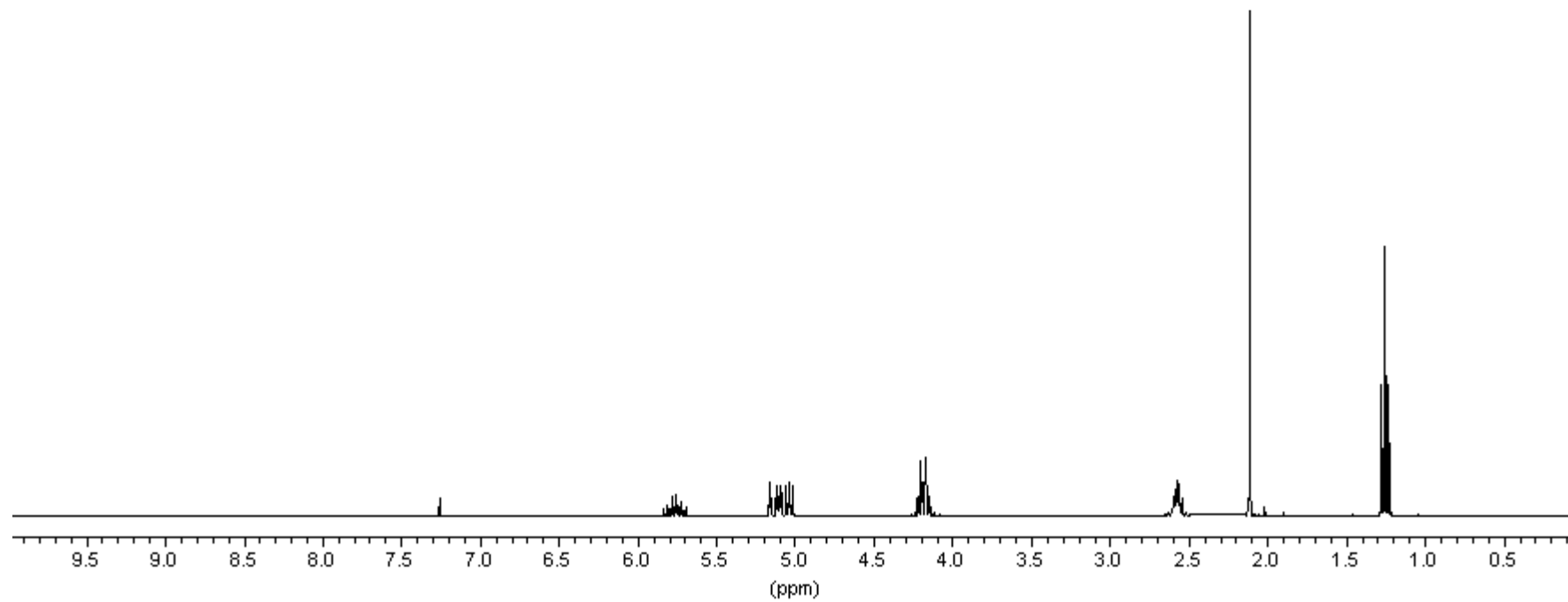
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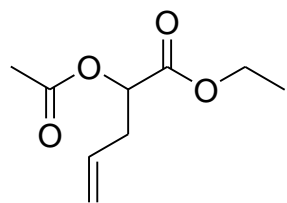




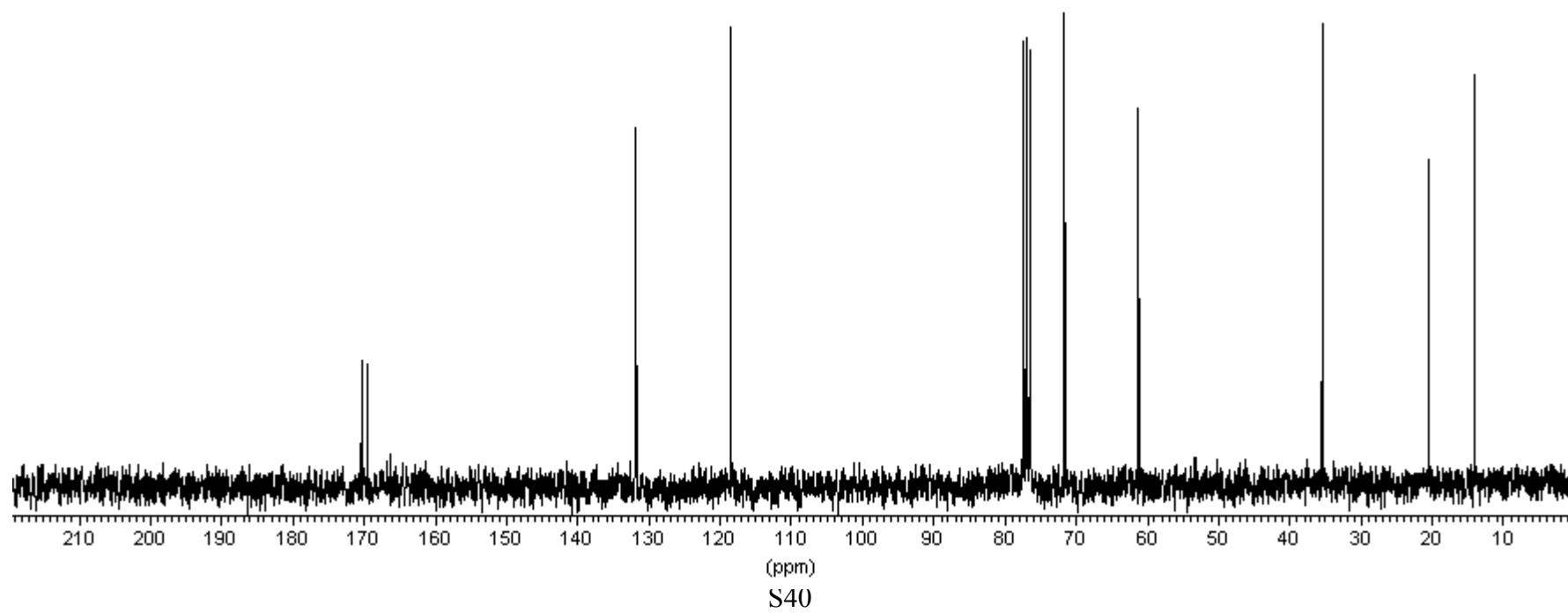
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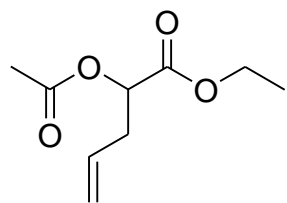


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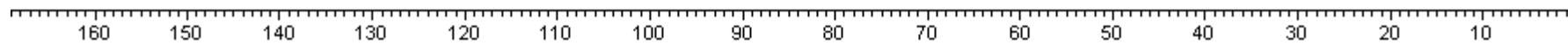
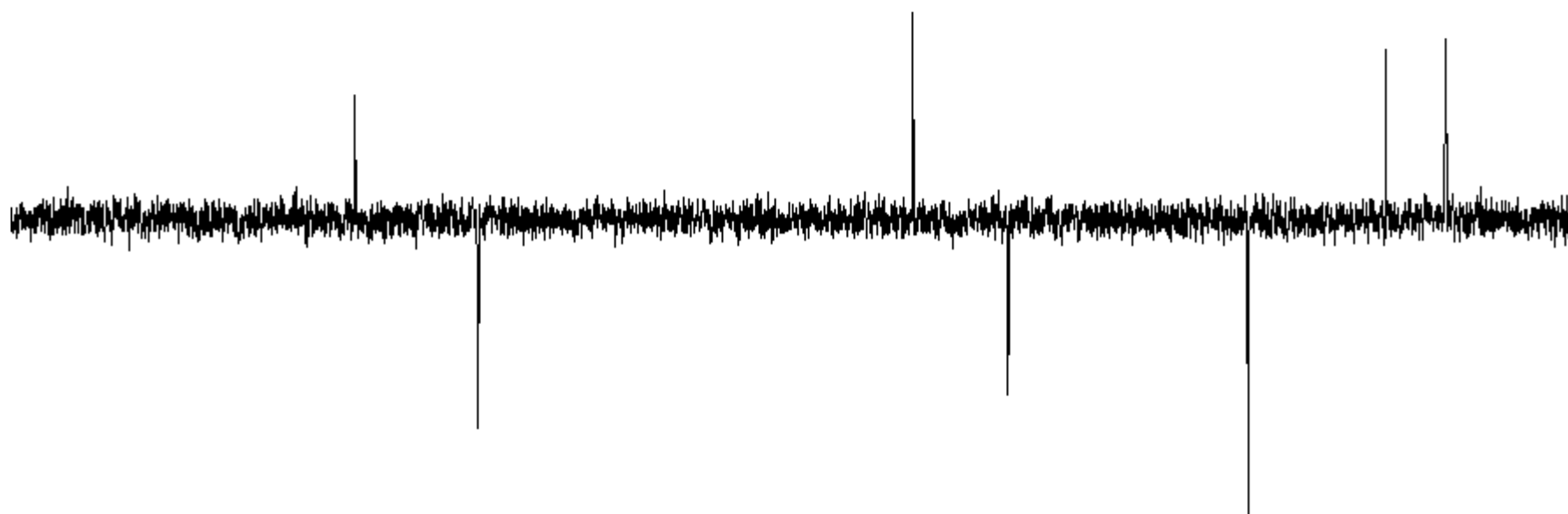


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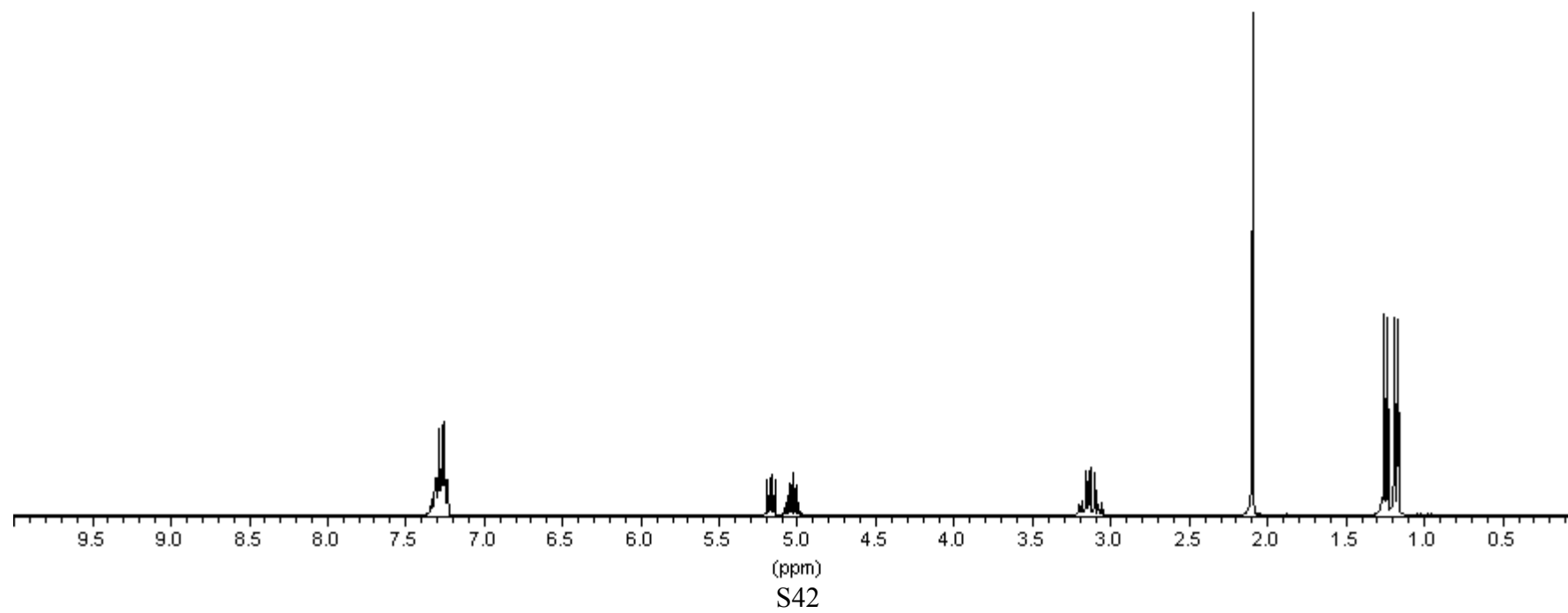
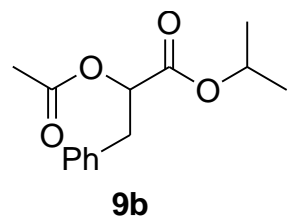


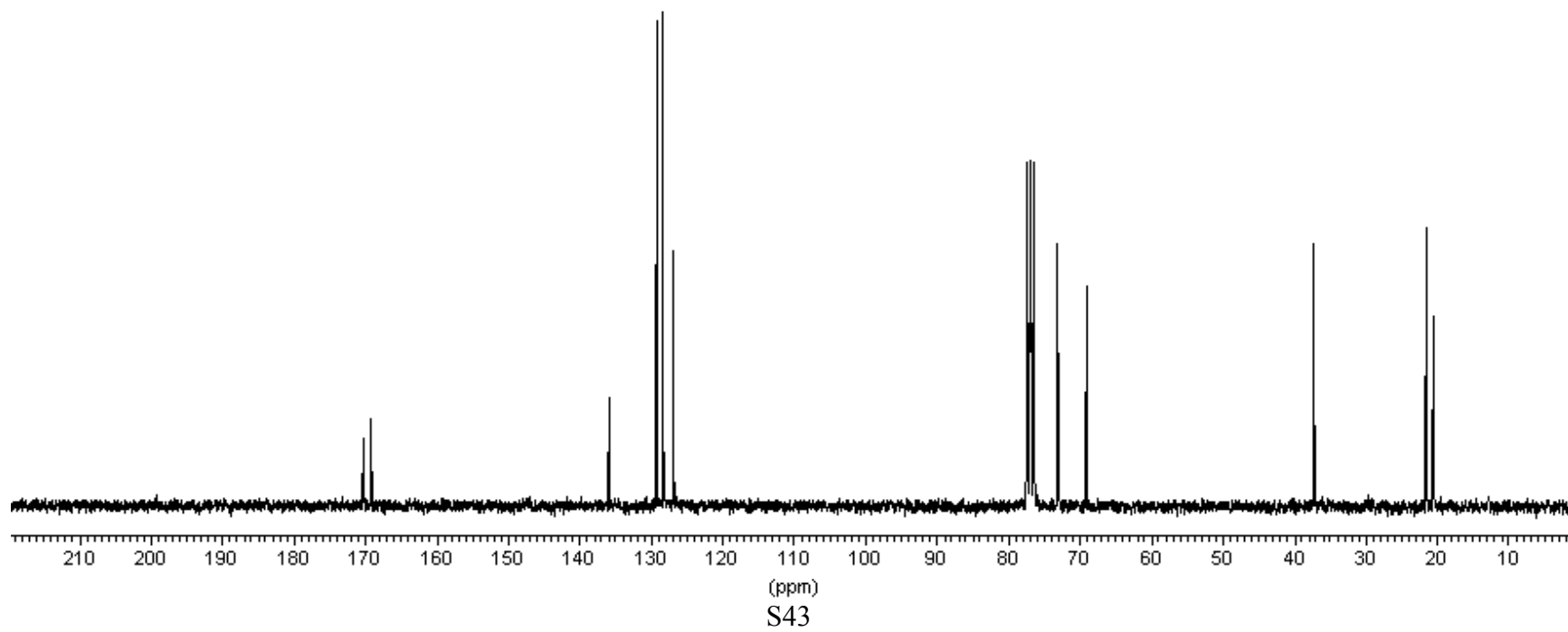
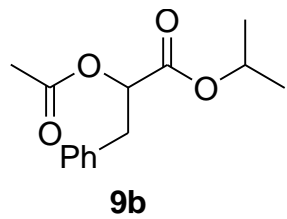


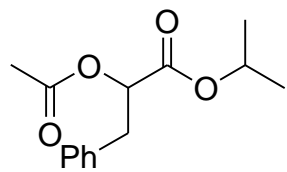
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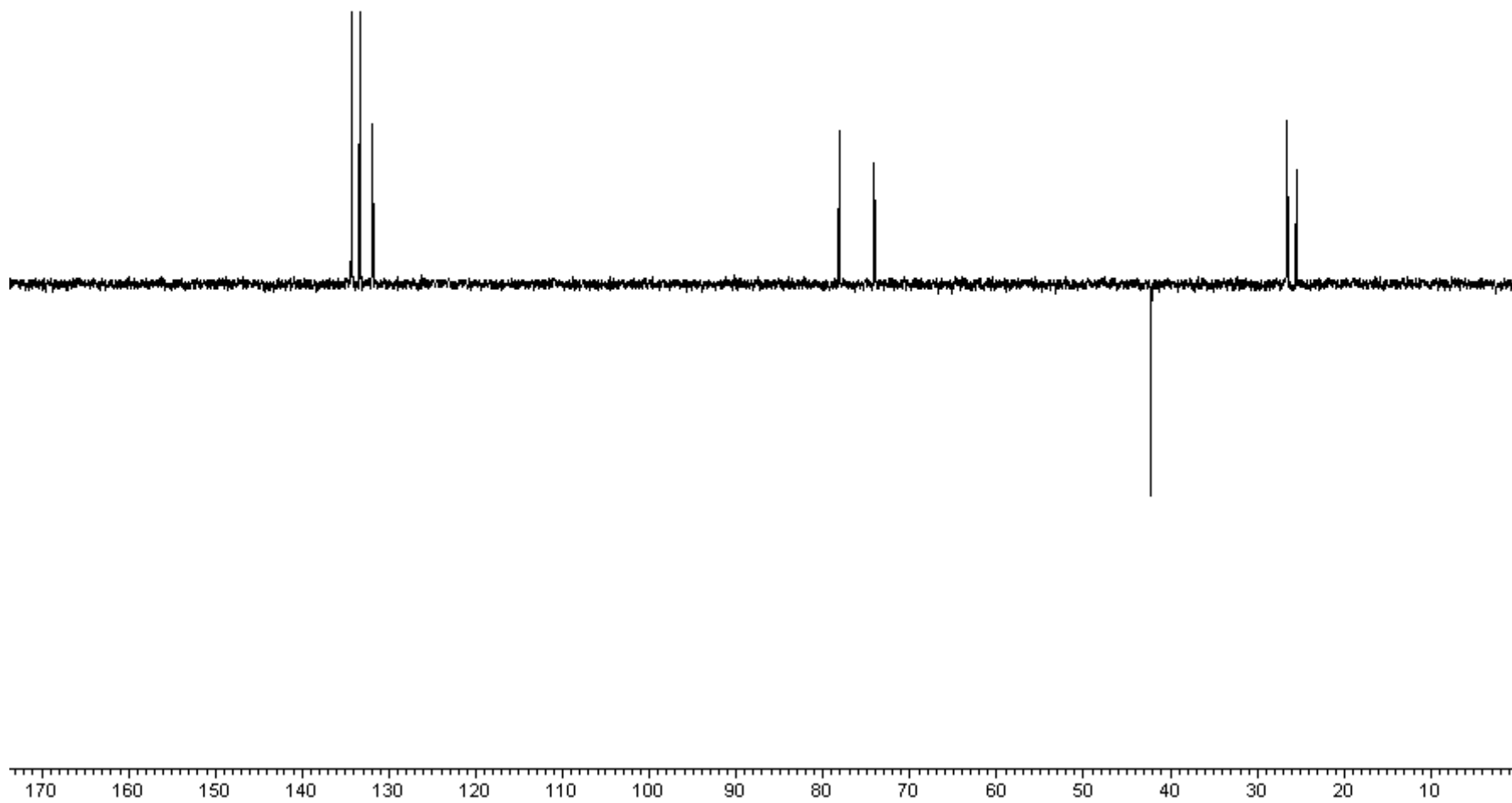
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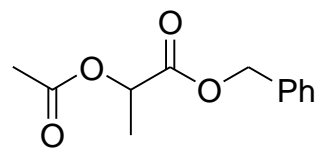




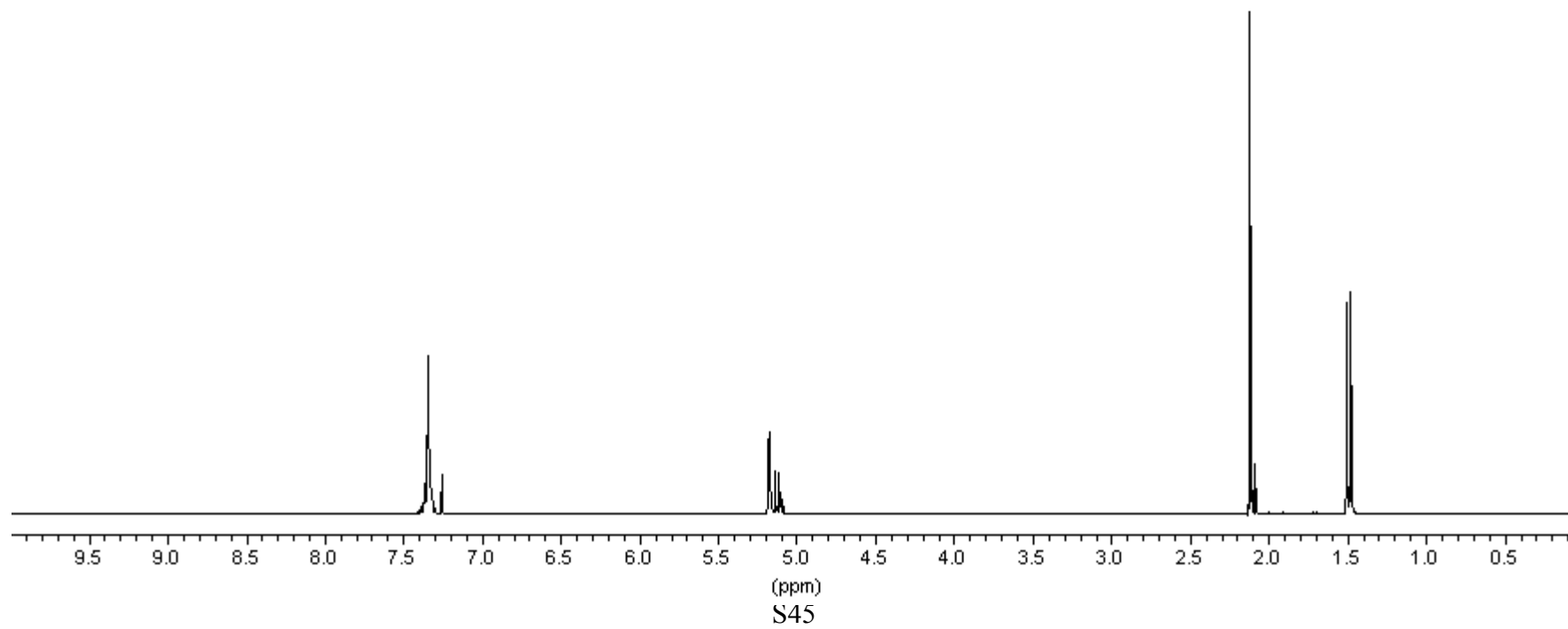
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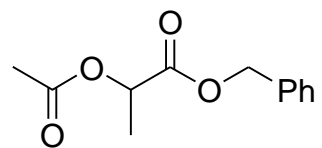


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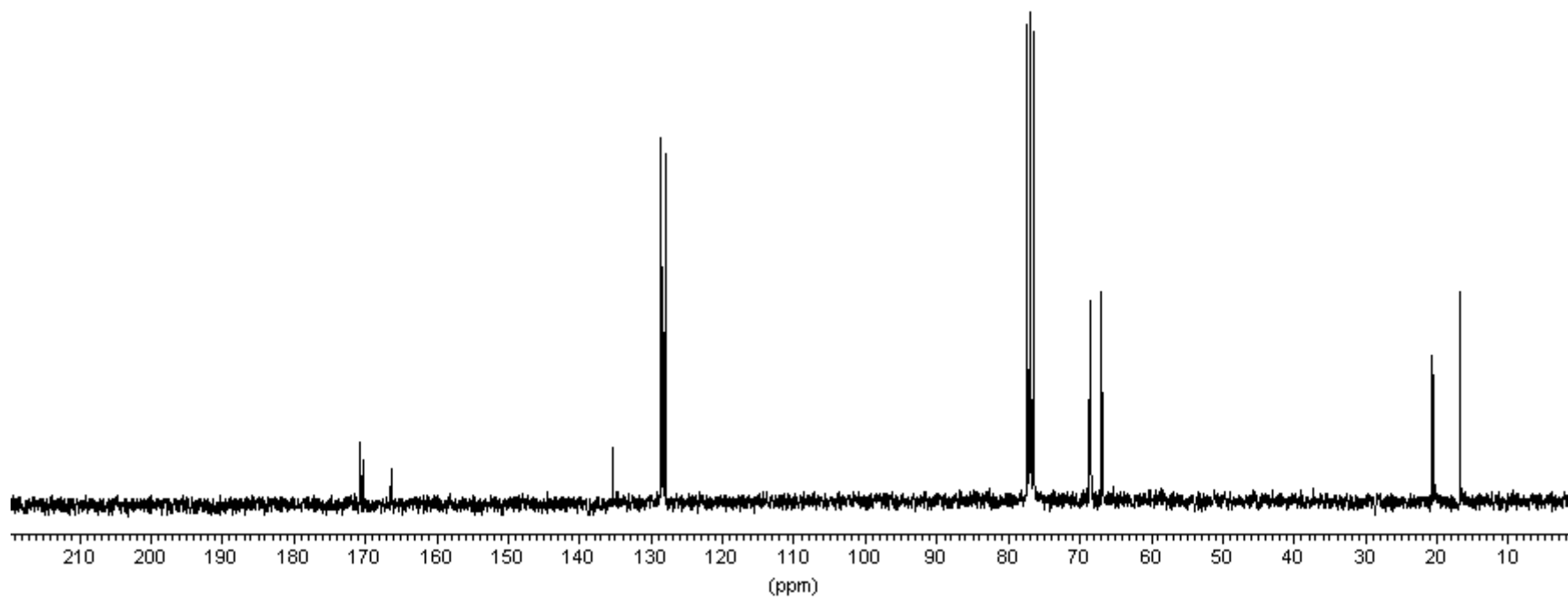


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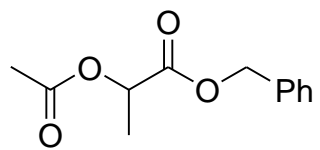




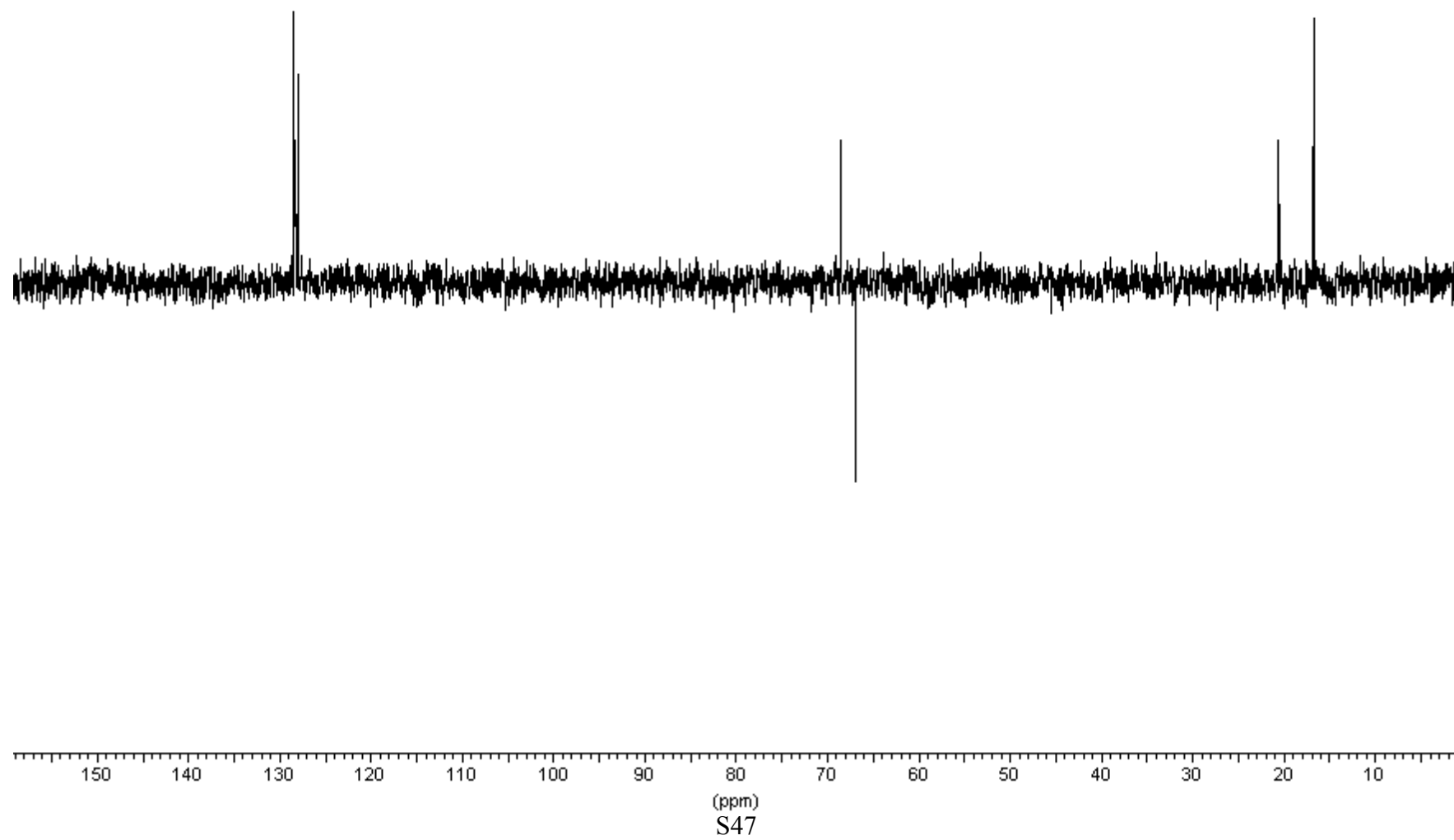
**10b**

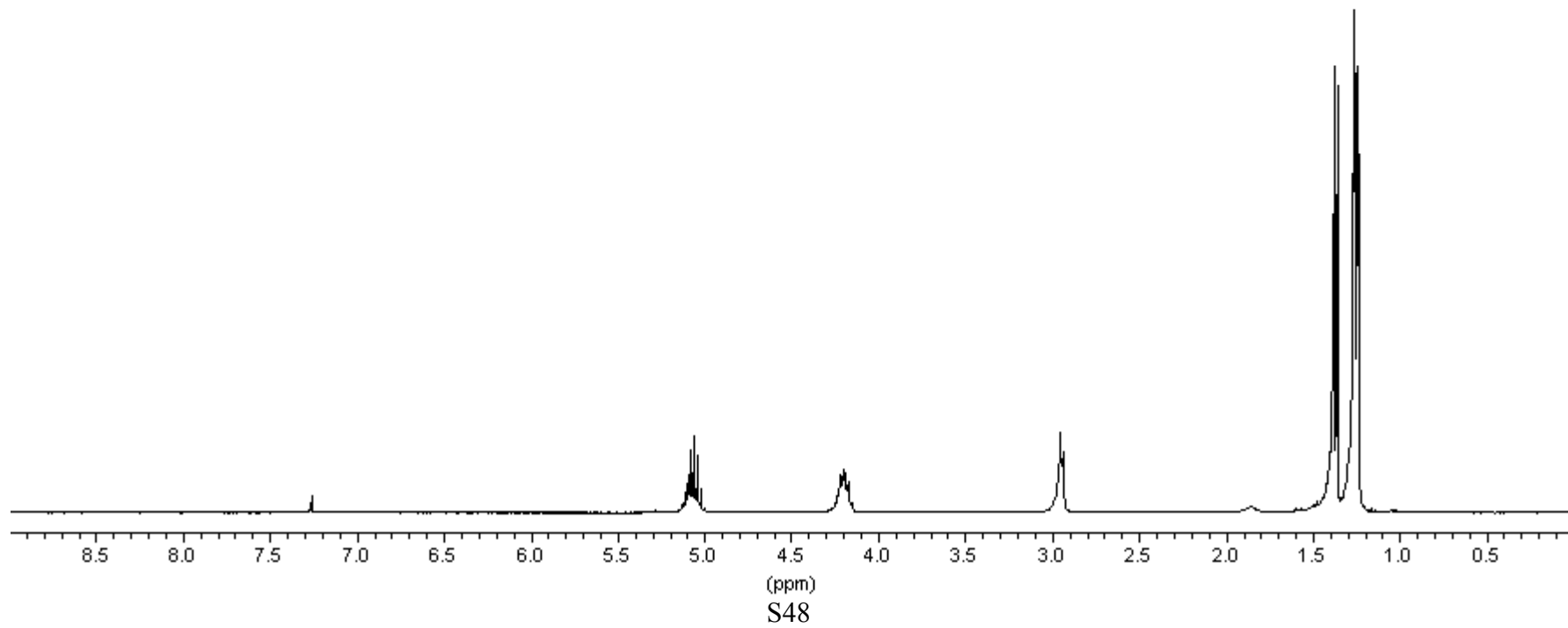
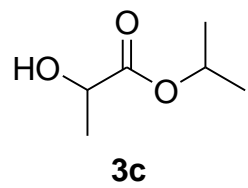


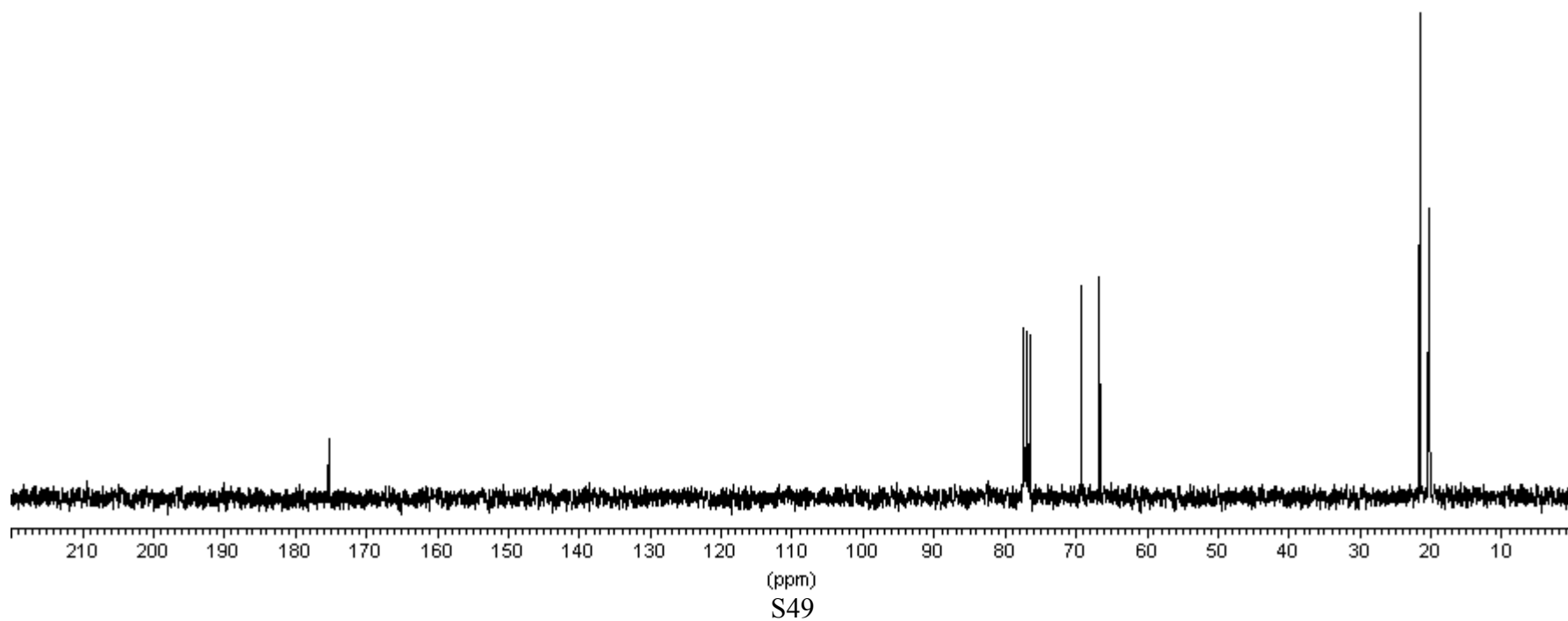
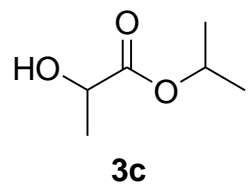


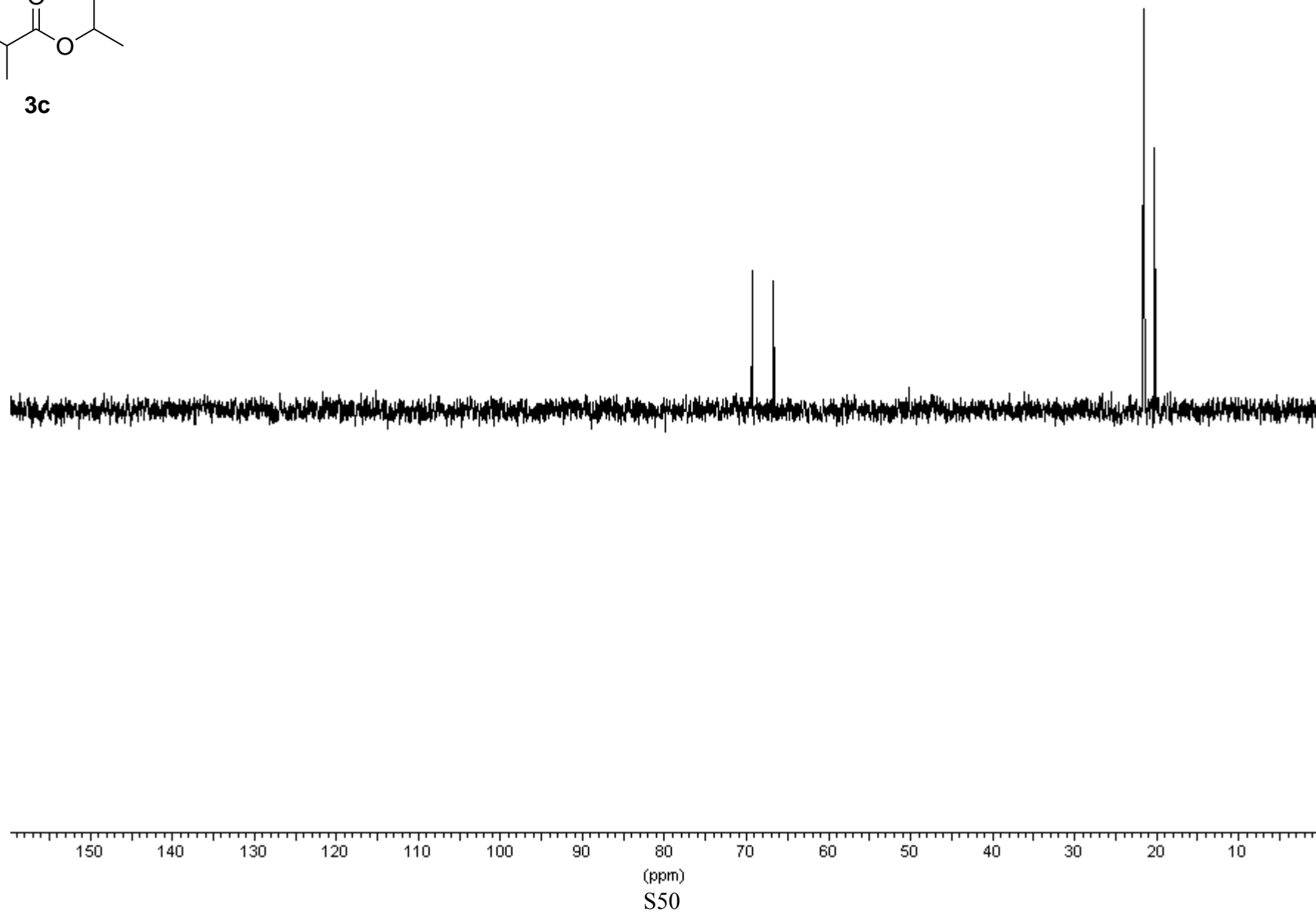
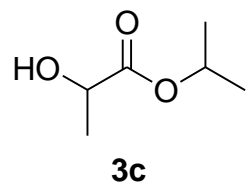


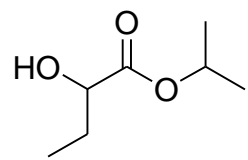
**10b**



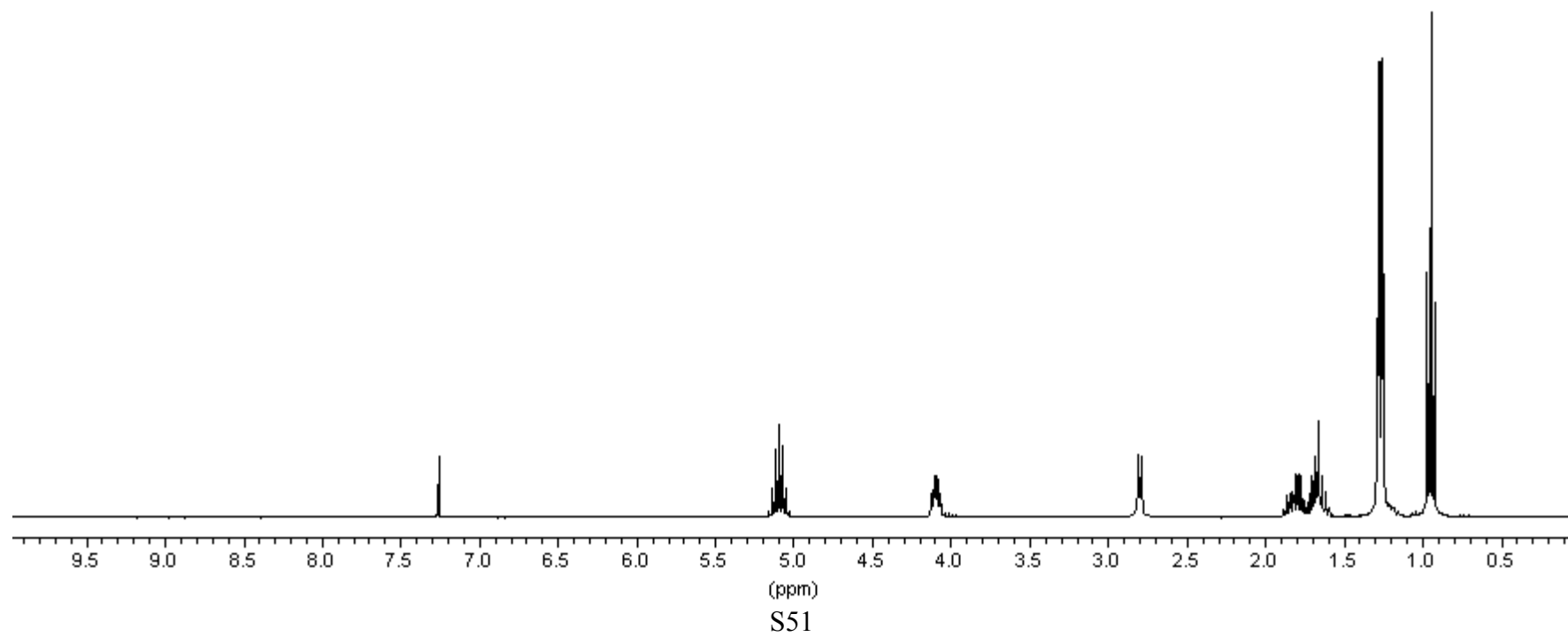


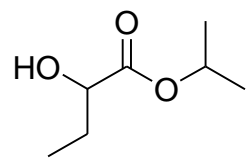




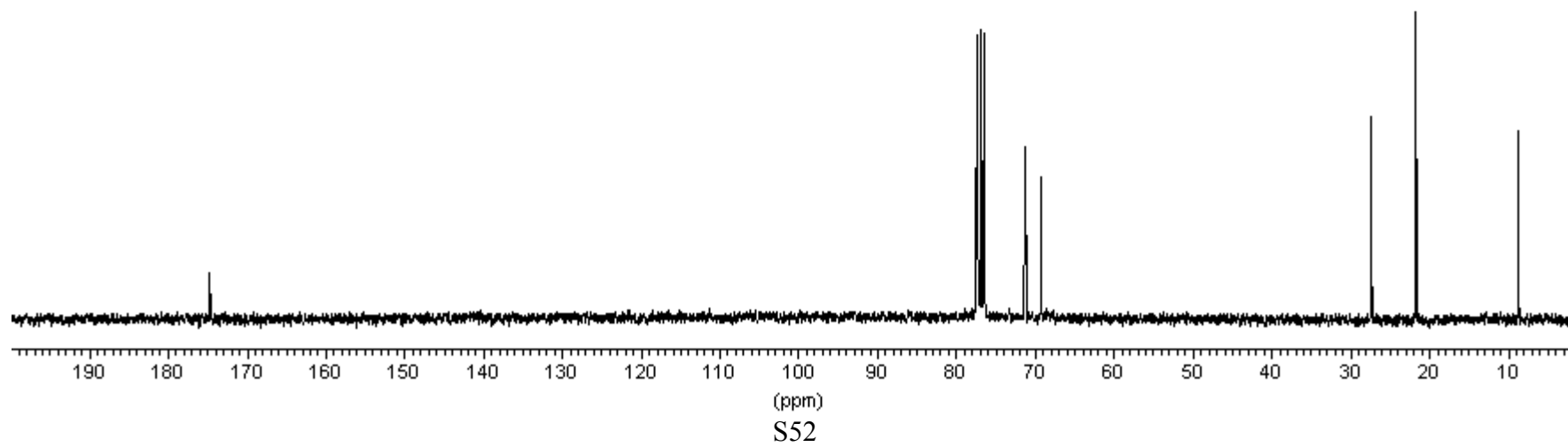


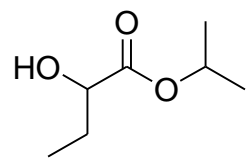
**7c**



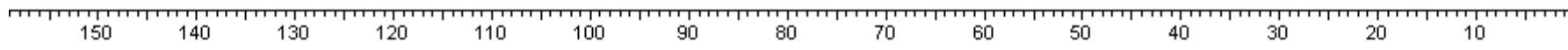
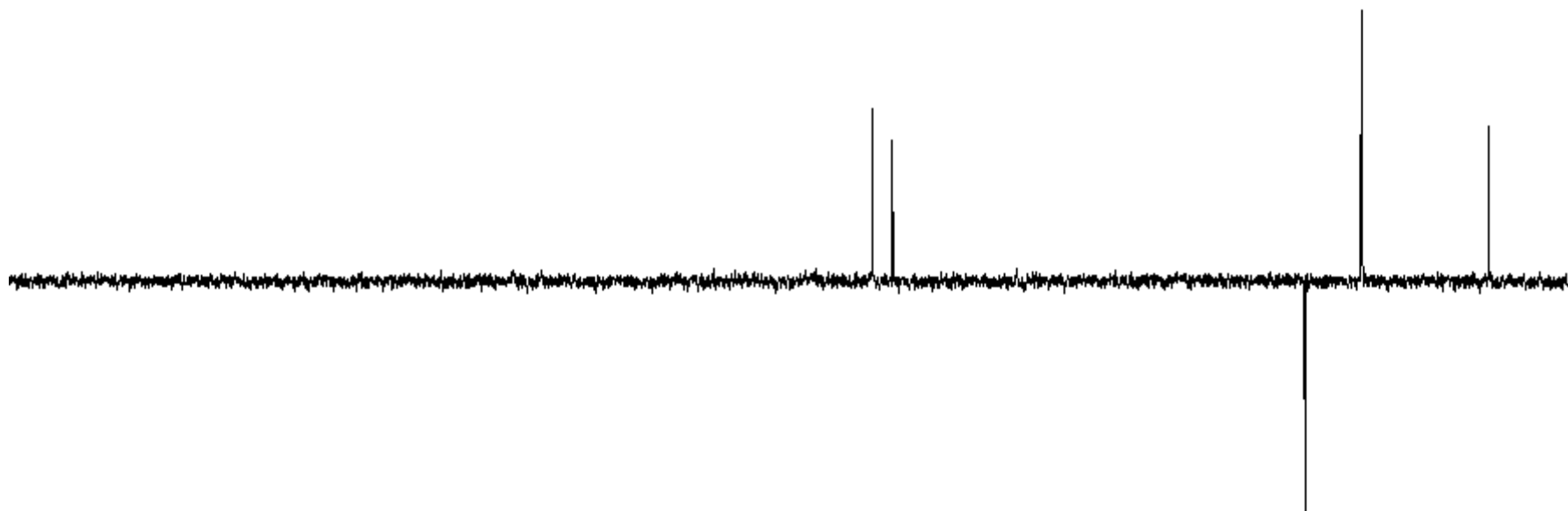


7c





7c



(ppm)  
S53

