

The Application of New Chiral Ferrocene Ligands in Asymmetric Transfer Hydrogenation of Ketones

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Abstract

Four easily available ferrocenyl chiral ligands have been screened firstly for ruthenium (II)-catalyzed asymmetric transfer hydrogenation of acetophenone with HCOOH/Et₃N azeotrope as the hydrogen source. A moderate chemical yield of 1-phenylethanol with 83% ee was obtained when (*R*_C, *S*_{Fe})-1-(Diphenylphosphino)-2-[1-*N*-(3-methylpyridin-2-ylmethyl) ethyl] ferrocene (**L**₁) was used. Particularly, both ruthenium and iridium could coordinate with **L**₁ to accomplish the asymmetric reduction of series of aromatic ketones separately. The desired products were achieved with up to 86% ee.

Keywords

Asymmetric Transfer Hydrogenation, Ferrocene, Ligand, Ketone

1. Introduction

Asymmetric transfer hydrogenation (ATH) often has been achieved by the help of the combination of transition metal and chiral ligands [1] [2] [3]. In the field, the exploration of new ligands or the new utilization of reported ones always attracted researcher's interest. Ferrocene-based chiral complexes generally played important roles in asymmetric reactions due to ferrocene's highly electron donating property as well as the unique structure [4] [5] [6] [7]. However, it should be noticed that most of the ATH catalyzed by chiral ferrocene derived catalysts used isopropanol as the hydrogen donor. Formic acid, as a more effective hydrogen donor for its irreversible kinetic enantioselectivity seldom collocated with ferrocenyl chiral ligands in ATH [8]-[13]. Furthermore, as far as transition metal in ATH was concerned, ruthenium and iridium could both be employed

in ATH [14] [15] [16] [17]. Commonly, different transition metals' coordination with the same chiral ligand provides more possibility for more stereoselection [18] [19] [20] [21] [22]. Therefore, chiral ferrocenyl derivatives' (L_1 - L_4 , **Figure 1**) combination with the HCOOH hydrogen donor and its integration with two transition metals are both investigated. The results indicated that the ATH of aryl ketone could proceed smoothly at the presence of L_1 - L_4 and formic acid. Among them, the reaction with L_1 -metal complex existed gave the best chemical yield and optical yield.

2. Experimental

2.1. General

All reactions involving air- or moisture-sensitive species were finished under N_2 atmosphere. Solvents were dried by standard methods and freshly distilled before use if needed. All other chemicals were used as purchased. L_1 - L_4 were prepared from (*R*)-Ugi's amine according the published reports [23]. NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AV-400 spectrometer with TMS as an internal reference. Chiral High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) analyses were completed with an Agilent 1200 series apparatus and Chiralpak OD-H and OJ-H columns. The configuration of the products was determined by comparison to the literature data.

2.2. The General Procedure for ATH in HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2)

A Schlenk flask was charged with substrate (1 mmol), [Ru (*p*-cymene) Cl₂]₂ (0.0025 mmol) or [{IrCl (COD)}₂] (0.0025 mmol), chiral ligand (0.005 mmol) in 1 mL solvent and stirred at r.t. for 4 hours under N_2 atmosphere. After that, 4 mL HCOOH/Et₃N azeotrope was injected by syringe. The mixture went on stirring at -20°C for 48 h under N_2 . Subsequently, saturated NaHCO₃ (5 mL) and H₂O (5 mL) were added and the mixture was then extracted with EtOAc (10 mL) for three times and dried over by Na₂SO₄. Then after column chromatography, the pure product was got and identified by ¹H NMR. The analytical data

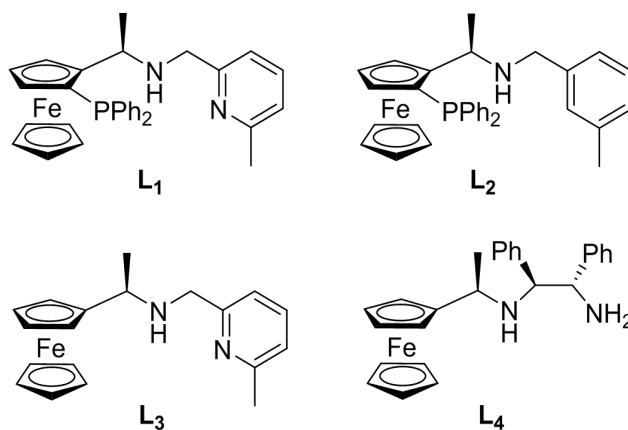


Figure 1. Ferrocene-based chiral ligands L_1 - L_4 .

were given in supporting information.

3. Results and Discussion

L₁-**L**₄'s synthesis could be accomplished according to our published report [23]. Once these ligands in hands, a preliminary study should be carrying out. Firstly, we have used **L**₁ with RuCl₂(*p*-cymene) as catalyst while acetophenone (**1a**) was substrate to optimize the reaction efficiency. Various solvents, different temperatures and the ratios of catalyst/substrate (C/S) were tested. The results were listed in **Table 1**.

The data in **Table 1** showed that the solvent had influence on the experiment. For example, only trace conversion happened in MeOH, CH₂Cl₂ and THF (**Table 1**, entry 1-3). Another three solvents (EtOAc, *t*-BuOMe, DMF) gave better chemical yields and better enantioselectivities. Among them, DMF provided the highest ee and chemical yield (**Table 1**, entry 1-6). So DMF was chosen as the optimized solvent for further experiments.

In DMF, ATH of **1a** were conducted at different temperatures that ranged from r.t. to -40°C. Compared with r.t., -20°C was proved to be a suitable reaction temperature with the improved ee value (**Table 1**, entry 6 vs. 7). However, when the temperature decreased to -40°C, only trace products could be observed (**Table 1**, entry 8). So the rest of experiments were completed at -20°C.

Table 1. The ATH reactions catalyzed by **L**₁ with [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂.

Entry	Solvent	C/S	Temp.	Yield (%) ^d	Ee (%) ^e
1 ^a	MeOH	0.5%	r.t.	Trace	ND
2 ^a	CH ₂ Cl ₂	0.5%	r.t.	Trace	ND
3 ^a	THF	0.5%	r.t.	Trace	ND
4 ^a	EtOAc	0.5%	r.t.	27	45
5 ^a	<i>t</i> -BuOMe	0.5%	r.t.	42	60
6 ^a	DMF	0.5%	r.t.	74	79
7	DMF	0.5%	-20°C	66	84
8	DMF	0.5%	-40°C	Trace	ND
9 ^b	DMF	0.25%	-20°C	38	75
10 ^c	DMF	1%	-20°C	72	83

^aThe mixture of 1 mmol of **1a**, 0.0025 mmol of [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂ and 0.005 mmol of **L**₁ in 4 mL HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2) azeotrope and 1 mL solvent at r.t. was stirred for 48 h; ^bCat. (0.25 mol %); ^cCat. (1 mol %); ^dIsolated yields after column chromatography; ^eThe ee values was determined by chiral HPLC with Chiralpak OD-H column and the configuration was assigned by comparing the optical rotation with reported values [24] [25] [26] [27].

Additionally, the change of C/S from 0.5% to 0.25% caused a lower chemical yield and lessened ee (**Table 1**, entry 9). But the bigger ratio did not mean the improved results. When the ratio was 1%, the yield was raised slightly and the ee value was almost the same as that of 0.5% C/S (**Table 1**, entry 7 vs. entry 10). Therefore, the 0.5% of C/S was reasonable for next work.

Under the optimized conditions, the ligands structure effect on the ATH was also screened. The corresponding results were shown in **Table 2**. **L**₁ with P, N, N elements and planar chirality gave the best optical selectivity (84% ee) (**Table 2**, entry 1). **L**₂'s result (81% ee) was a little worse than **L**₁'s (**Table 2**, entry 2). It implied that N atom on pyridine unit of **L**₁ had positive effect on the stereoselection and the yield. The behaviors of **L**₃, **L**₄ were both worse. **L**₃'s racemic result was not surprising for the reason that there was only one stereogenic center in **L**₃ (**Table 2**, entry 3). **L**₄ gave (*S*)-products with 37% ee (**Table 2**, entry 4). The configuration of moiety in **L**₄ is also (*S*, *S*). This indicated that the configuration of the product was controlled by the chiral diamine moiety in ligand structure. The chirality of Uig's amine had not apparent contribution to the stereocontrol. Altogether, the planer chiral elements and the P unit on the ferrocene ring were essential for a higher enantioselectivities. As far as the chemical yields were concerned, the four ligands' performance was almost similar. Lastly, **L**₁ was chosen to be examined for various ketones' ATH.

As **Table 3** summarized, for **L**₁-Ru or **L**₁-Ir catalyst, the reactions of acetophenone derivatives proceed smoothly. The ee values ranged from 66% to 86%. First, the position of the ring substituents had influence on the enantioselectivity. Then it seems that electronic properties of the ring substituents had no effect on the results because 3-methoxyacetophenone or 3'-(trifluoromethyl) acetophenone almost obtained the paralleled stereoselectivity (**Table 3**, entry 4, 5). Furthermore, for halogen substituted substrates, with the increase of atomic number of halogen, the ees of the reaction had a little increase (**Table 3**, entry

Table 2. The screen of **L**₁-**L**₄ with [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂ in the ATH.

Entry ^a	Ligand	Yield (%) ^b	Ee (%) (Conf.) ^c
1	L ₁	66	84(<i>R</i>)
2	L ₂	55	81(<i>R</i>)
3	L ₃	65	<i>Rac</i>
4	L ₄	50	37(<i>S</i>)

^a1 mmol of **1a** with 0.0025 mmol of [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂, 0.005 mmol of ligand, 4 mL HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2) and 1 mL DMF was stirred for 48 h at -20°C; ^bIsolated yields after column chromatography; ^cThe ee and configuration of product were determined by chiral HPLC and according to literature [24] [25] [26] [27].

Table 3. The ATH of aromatic ketones catalyzed by L_1 -Ru or L_1 -Ir catalyst.

Entry	R	Product	Yield/ee (%) ^a	Yield/ee (%) ^b
1 ^c	H	2a	66/84(<i>R</i>)	60/83(<i>R</i>)
2 ^c	2-Br	2b	60/66(<i>R</i>)	65/77(<i>R</i>)
3 ^c	3-Br	2c	63/76(<i>R</i>)	65/82(<i>R</i>)
4 ^c	3-CF ₃	2d	57/79(<i>R</i>)	62/85(<i>R</i>)
5 ^c	3-OMe	2e	60/80(<i>R</i>)	68/81(<i>R</i>)
6 ^c	4-F	2f	55/67(<i>R</i>)	60/70(<i>R</i>)
7 ^c	4-Cl	2g	65/84(<i>R</i>)	60/72(<i>R</i>)
8 ^c	4-Br	2h	66/86(<i>R</i>)	55/76(<i>R</i>)

^a1 mmol of **1** with 0.0025 mmol of [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂, 0.005 mmol of **L**₁, 4 mL HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2) and 1 mL DMF was stirred for 48 h at -20 °C; ^b1 mmol of **1** with 0.0025 mmol of [IrCl₂(COD)₂], 0.005 mmol of **L**₁, 4 mL HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2) and 1 mL DMF was stirred for 48 h at -20 °C; ^cThe yield was isolated yields after column chromatography. The ee and configuration of product were determined by chiral HPLC with Chiralpak OD-H or OJ-H. The absolute configuration was determined by comparison of the sign of optical rotation or retention time with literature data [24] [25] [26] [27].

6-8). All the chemical yields reached moderate (55% - 68%). In addition, almost no difference existed between the performance of Ru and Ir catalyst in the ATH of various substrates.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have demonstrated four chiral ferrocene-based ligands' utilization in ATH of aromatic ketones. Herein, HCOOH/Et₃N (5:2) system was firstly applied in this kind of reduction with chiral ferrocenyl ligands complexes existed. Both ruthenium and iridium could coordinate with **L**₁ and could realize the reduction of acetophenone derivatives. Moderate to good enantiomeric excesses and medium isolated yields were achieved. Further studies of these ligands in other catalytic reactions are currently underway.

Acknowledgments

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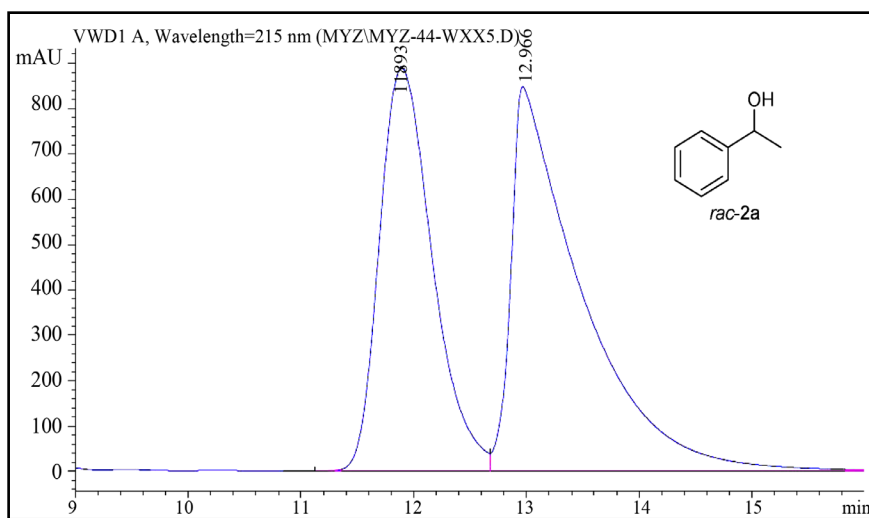
Supplementary Materials

1. Copies of the HPLC spectra of the catalysis products 2 [catalysts were ferrocene-based chiral ligands with Ru-complex]

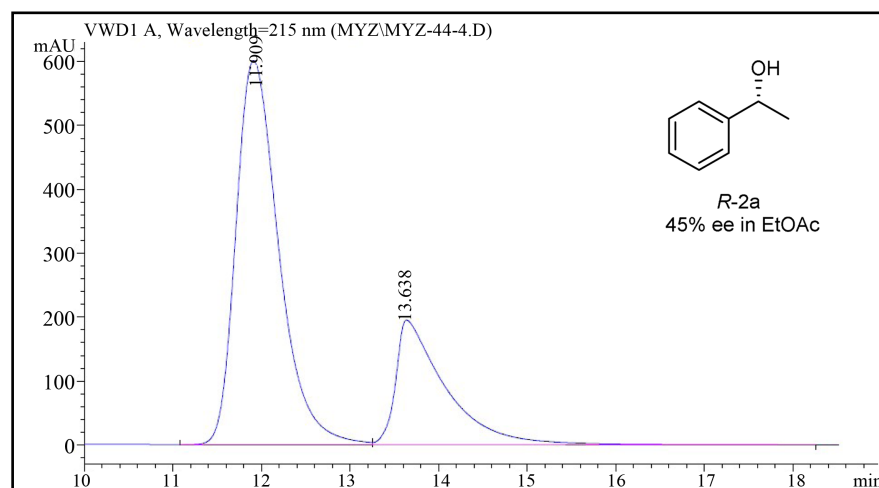
1) Table 1

1-Phenylethanol (2a)

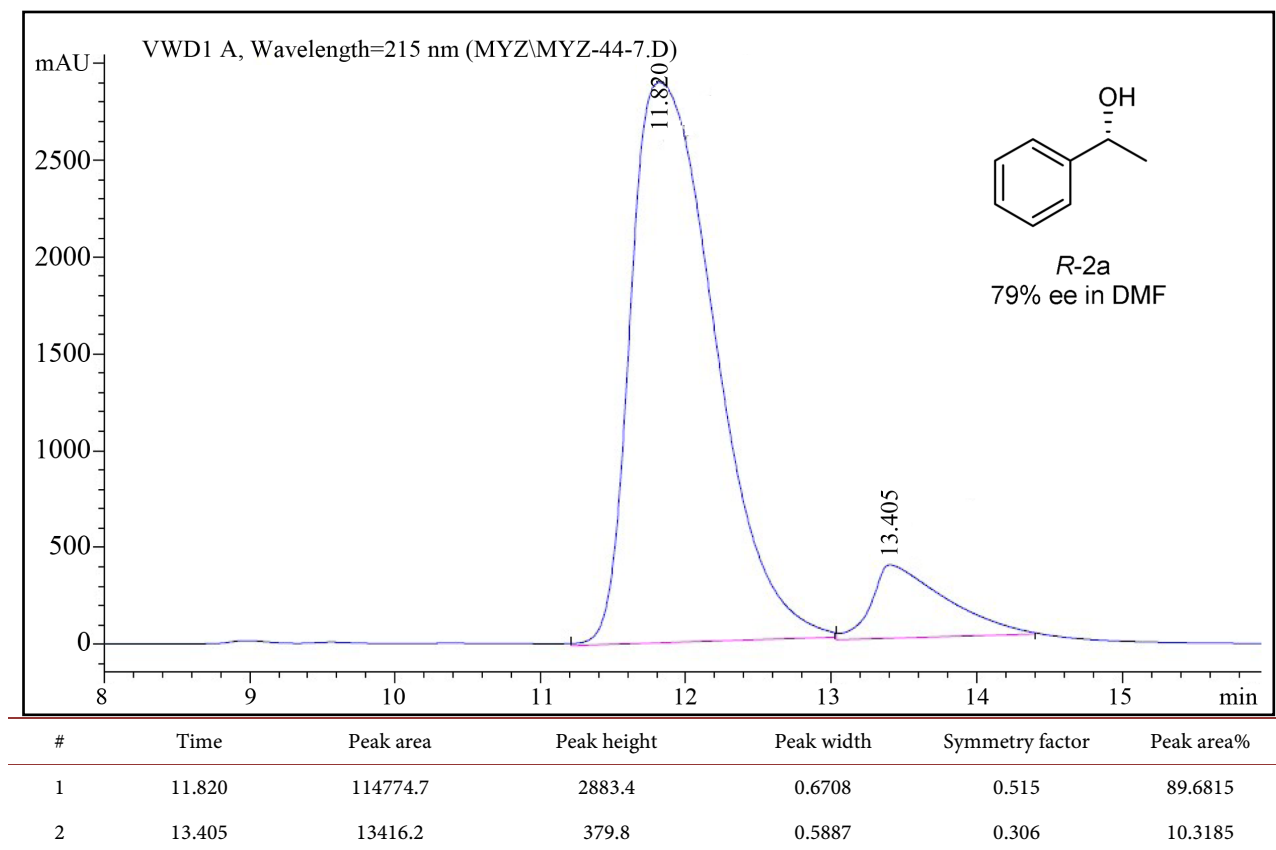
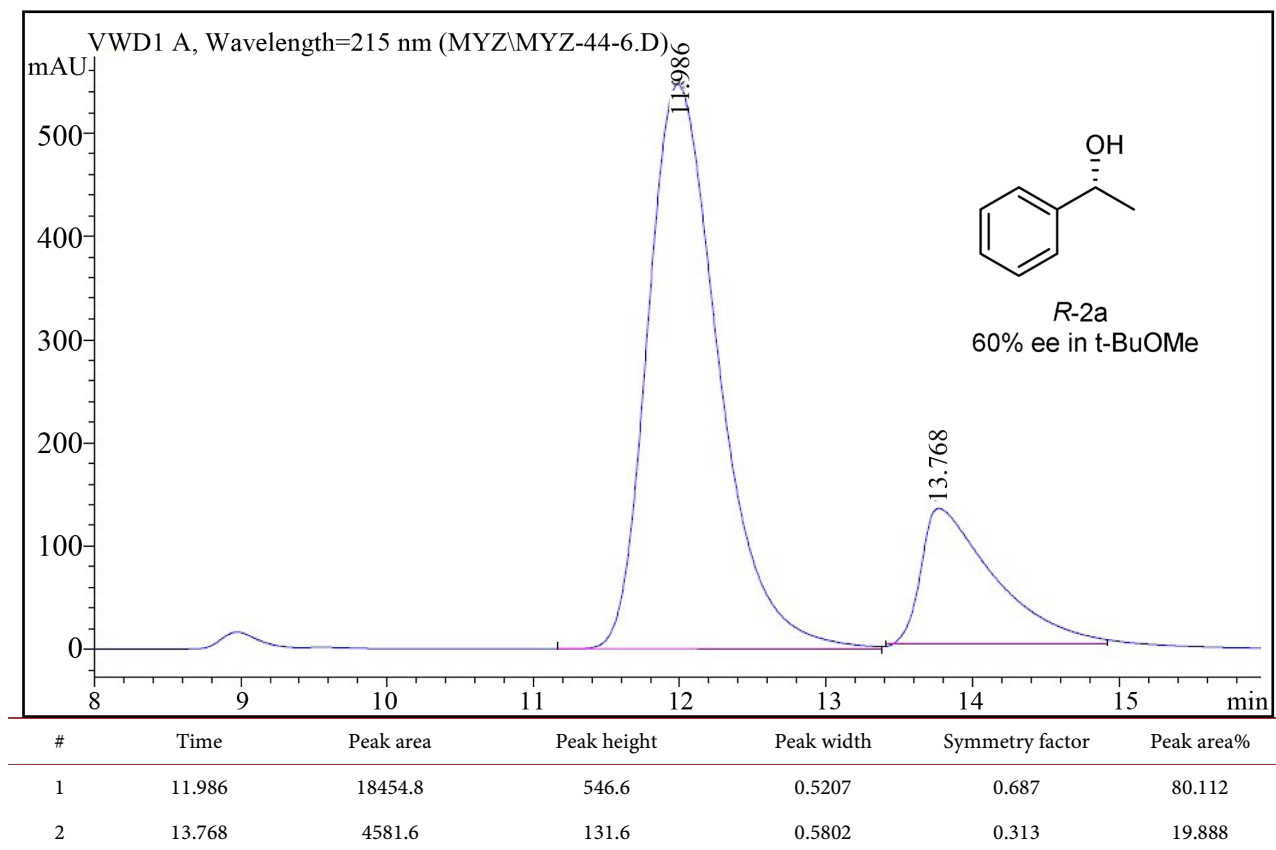
27% yield, 45% ee in EtOAc. 42% yield, 60% ee in *t*-BuOMe. 74% yield, 79% ee in DMF at r.t. 66% yield, 84% ee in DMF at -20°C . 38% yield, 75% ee in DMF at -20°C with C/S = 0.25%, 72% yield, 84% ee in DMF at -20°C with C/S = 1% for 48 h (ligand is L_1), determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OD-H column, Hexane/*i*-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

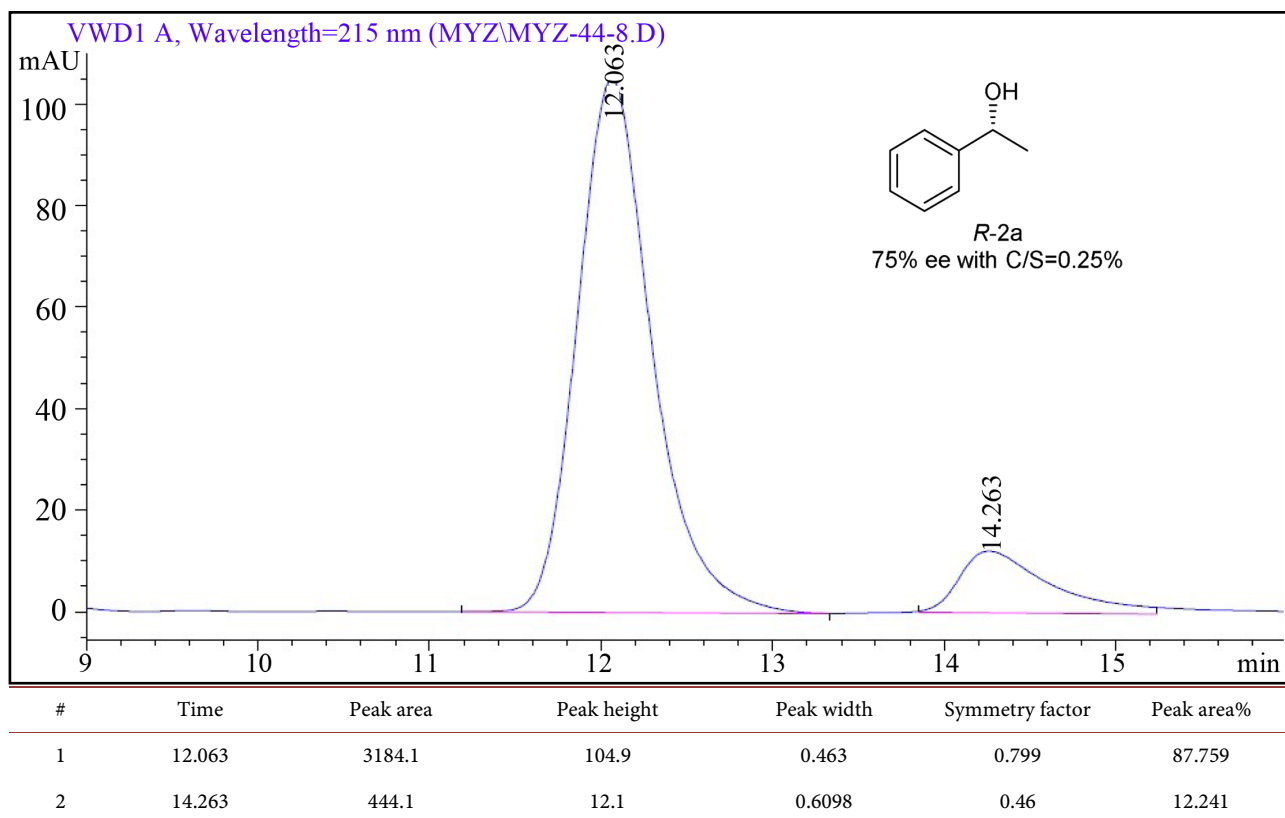
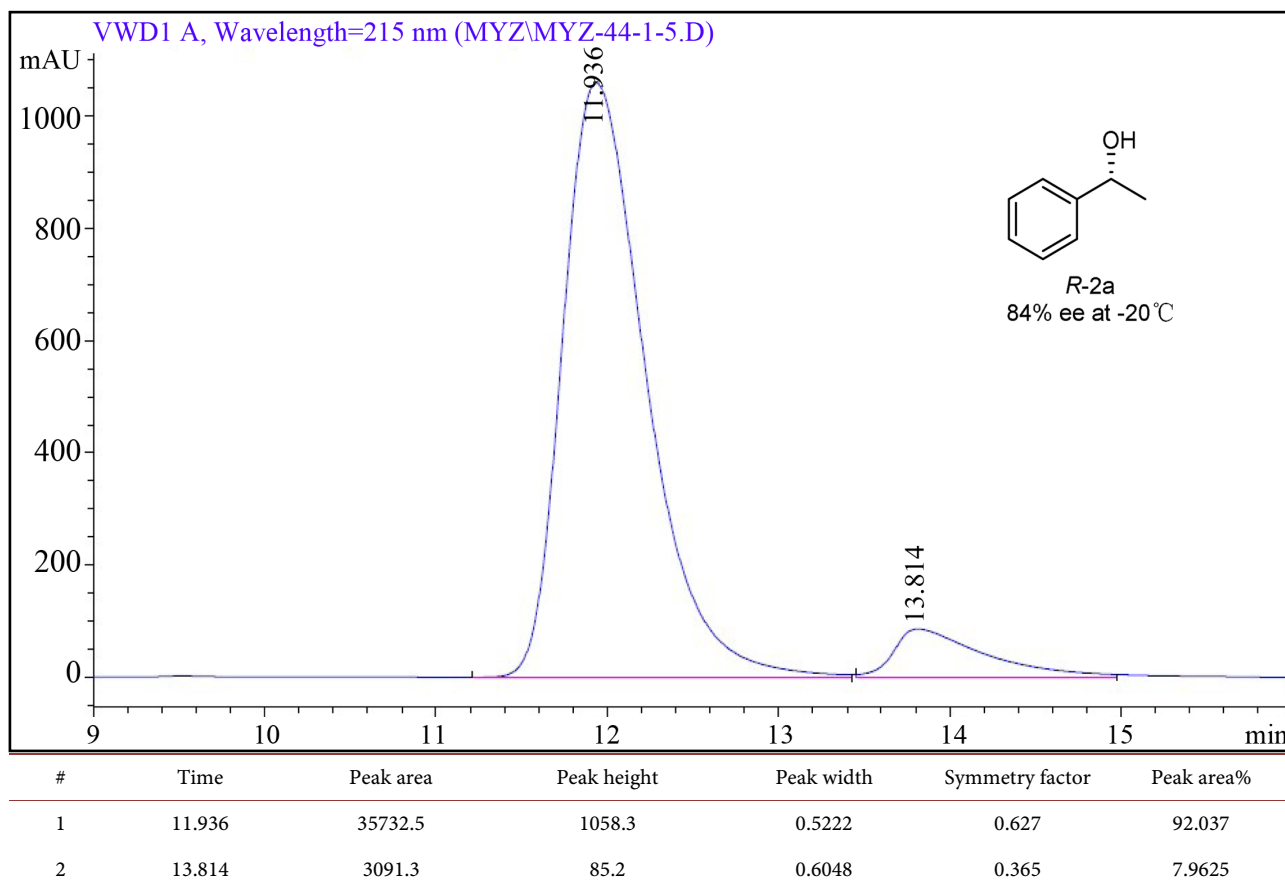


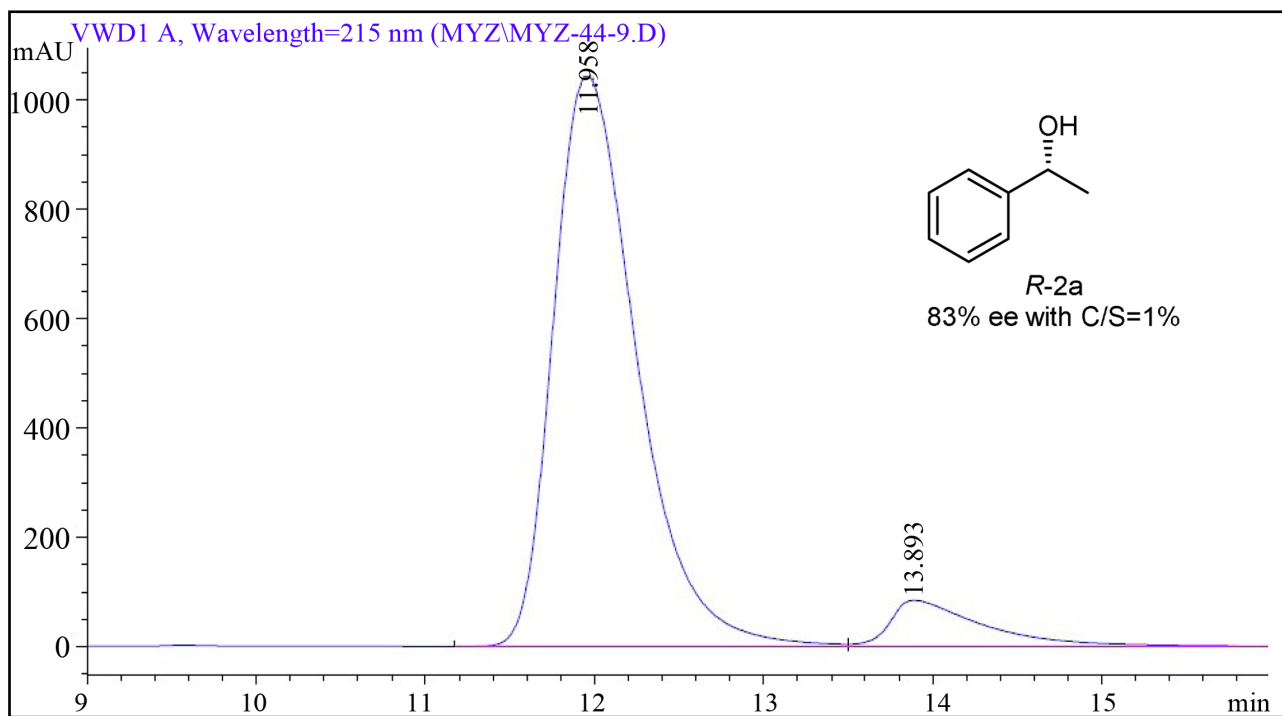
#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	11.893	29038.4	888.2	0.5074	0.686	43.997
2	12.966	36961.5	847.8	0.5816	0.206	56.002



#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	11.986	18454.8	546.6	0.5207	0.687	80.112
2	13.768	4581.6	131.6	0.5802	0.313	19.888







#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	11.958	35762.6	1043.1	0.5299	0.628	91.557
2	13.893	3297.7	84.5	0.5524	0.327	8.442

2) Table 2

55% yield, 81% ee by L2 determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 90/10, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).
 65% yield, racemic by L3. 50% yield, 37% ee by L4 determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OD-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

3) Table 3

a) 1-(2-bromophenyl)ethanol (2b)

60% yield, 66% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

b) 1-(3-bromophenyl)ethanol (2c)

63% yield, 76% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OD-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH=98/2, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

c) 1-(3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)ethanol (2d)

57% yield, 79% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OD-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 98/2, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

d) 1-(3-methoxyphenyl)ethanol (2e)

60% yield, 80% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OD-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

e) 1-(4-fluorophenyl)ethanol (2f)

55% yield, 67% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

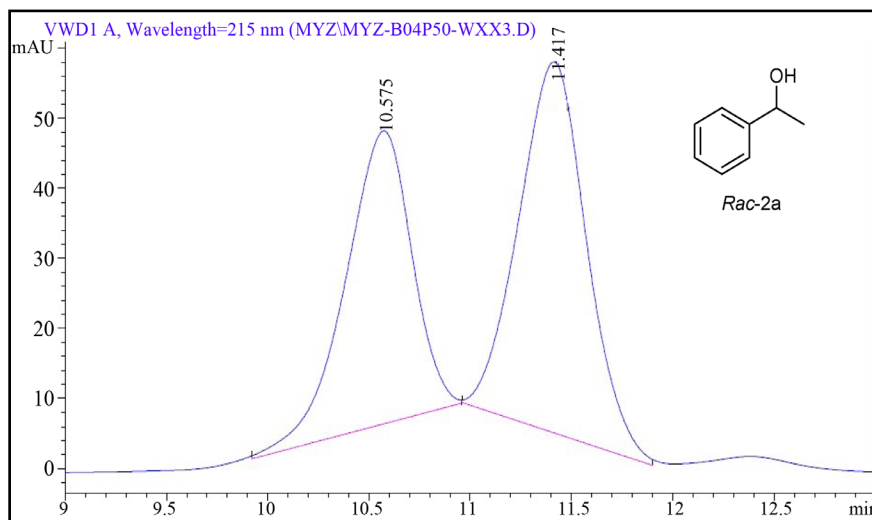
f) 1-(4-chlorophenyl)ethanol (2g)

65% yield, 84% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

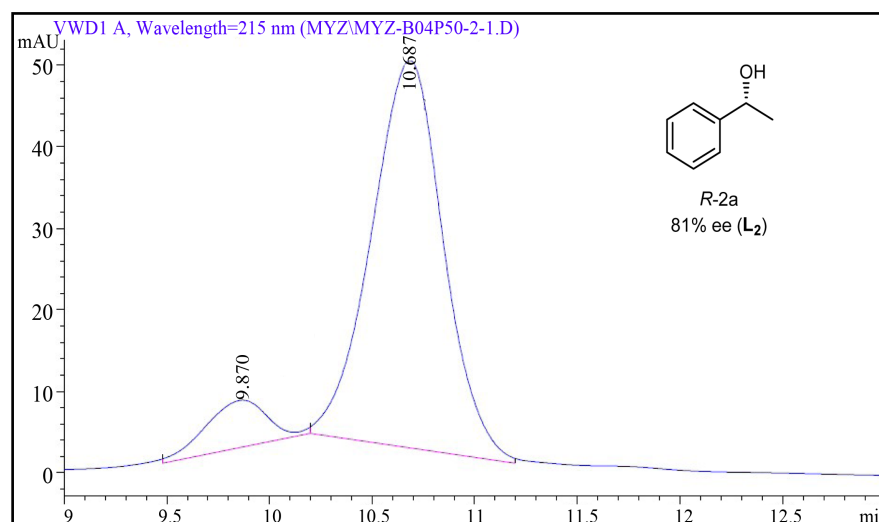
g) 1-(4-bromophenyl)ethanol (2h)

66% yield, 86% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

2. Copies of the HPLC spectra of the catalysis products 2 [catalysts were ferrocene-based chiral ligands with Ir-complex]



#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	10.575	955.4	41.9	0.3803	1.352	43.628
2	11.417	1234.5	53	0.3882	1.022	56.372



#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	9.87	122.6	5.8	0.3552	1.523	9.581
2	10.687	1157.5	47.5	0.4058	1.093	90.419

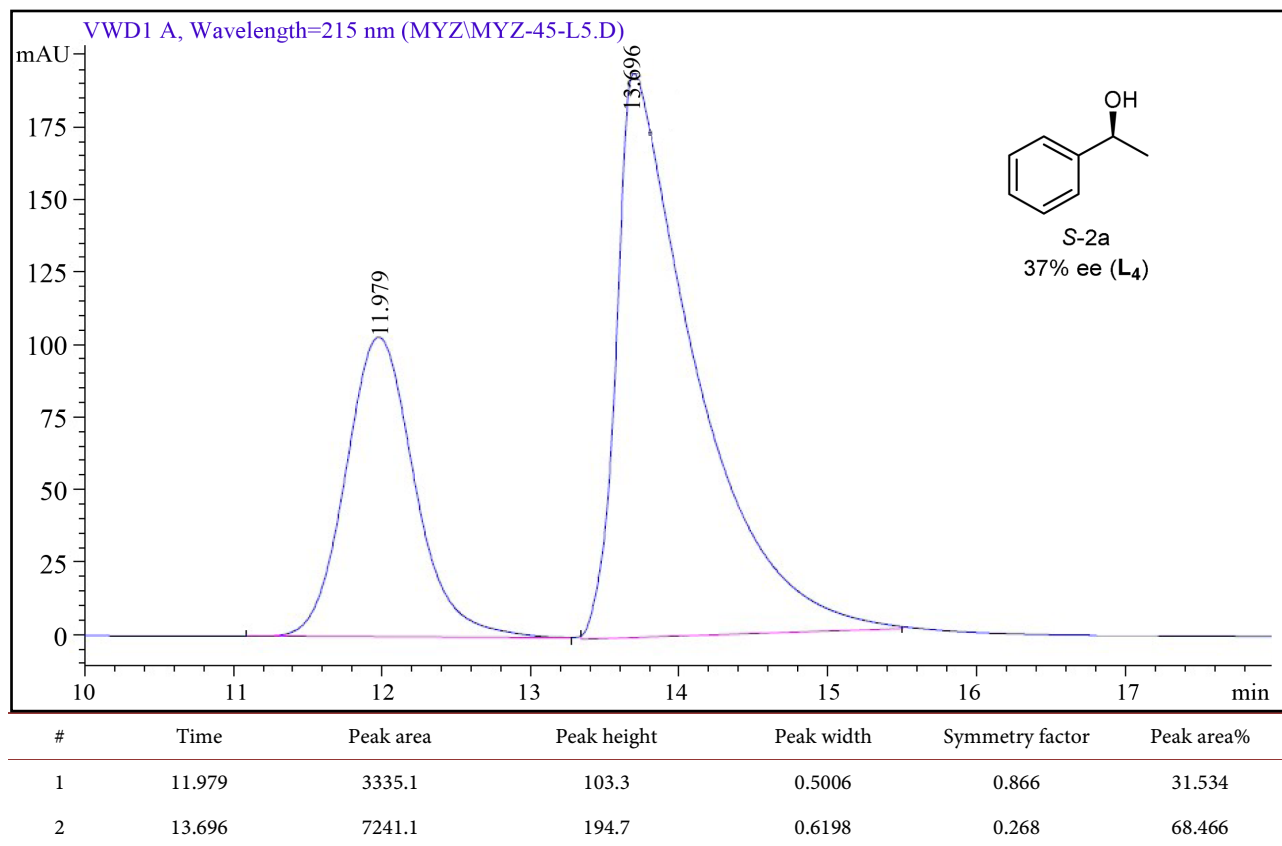
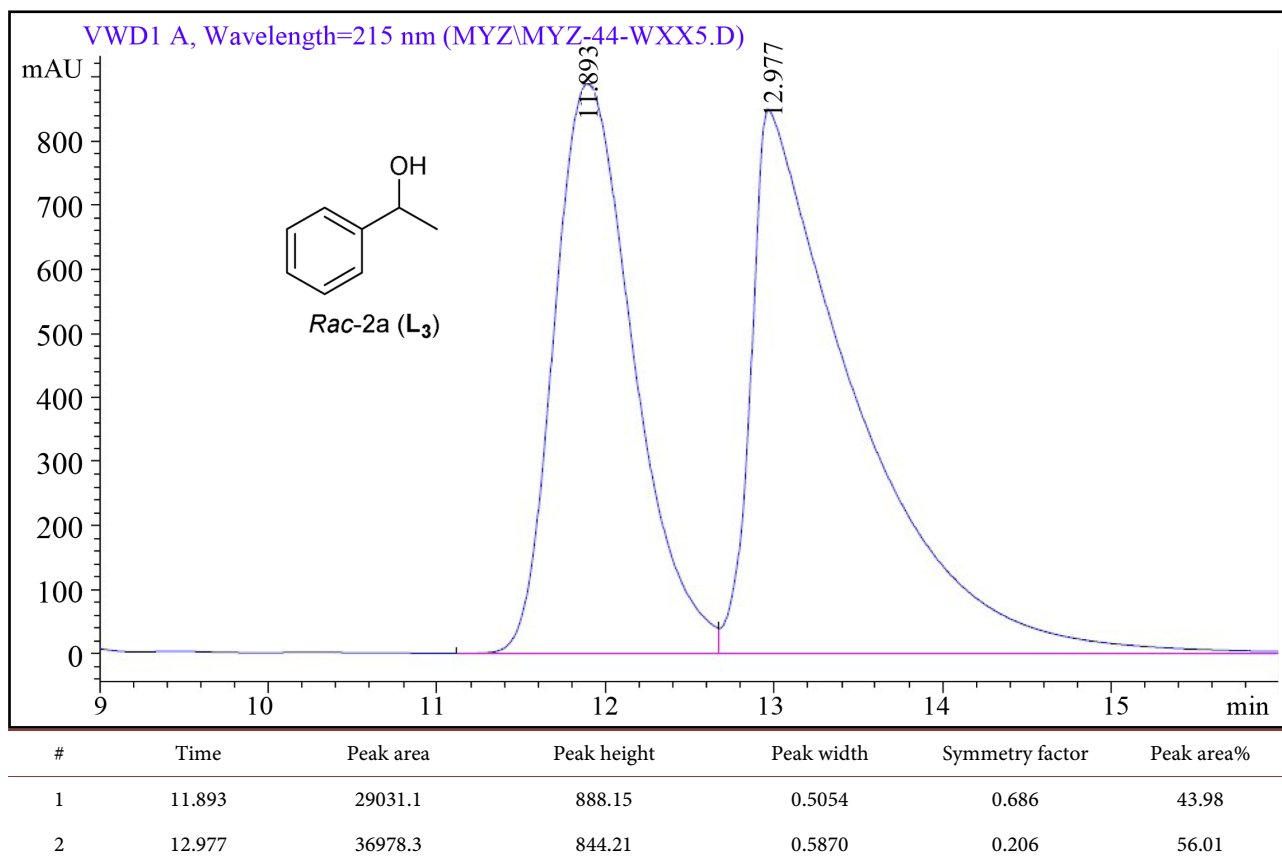


Table 3**1) 1-Phenylethanol (2a)**

60% yield, 83% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 90/10, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm)

2) 1-(2-bromophenyl)ethanol (2b)

65% yield, 77% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 95/5, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

3) 1-(3-bromophenyl)ethanol (2c)

65% yield, 82% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 99/1, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

4) 1-(3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)ethanol (2d)

62% yield, 85% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 99/1, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

5) 1-(3-methoxyphenyl)ethanol (2e)

68% yield, 81% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 98/2, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

6) 1-(4-fluorophenyl)ethanol (2f)

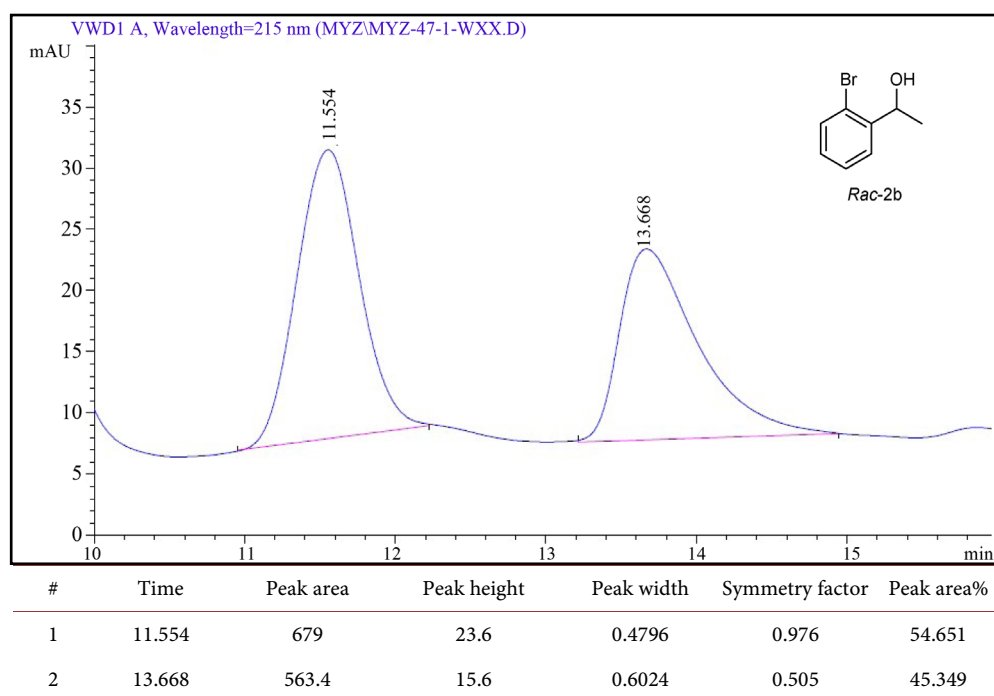
60% yield, 70% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 99/1, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

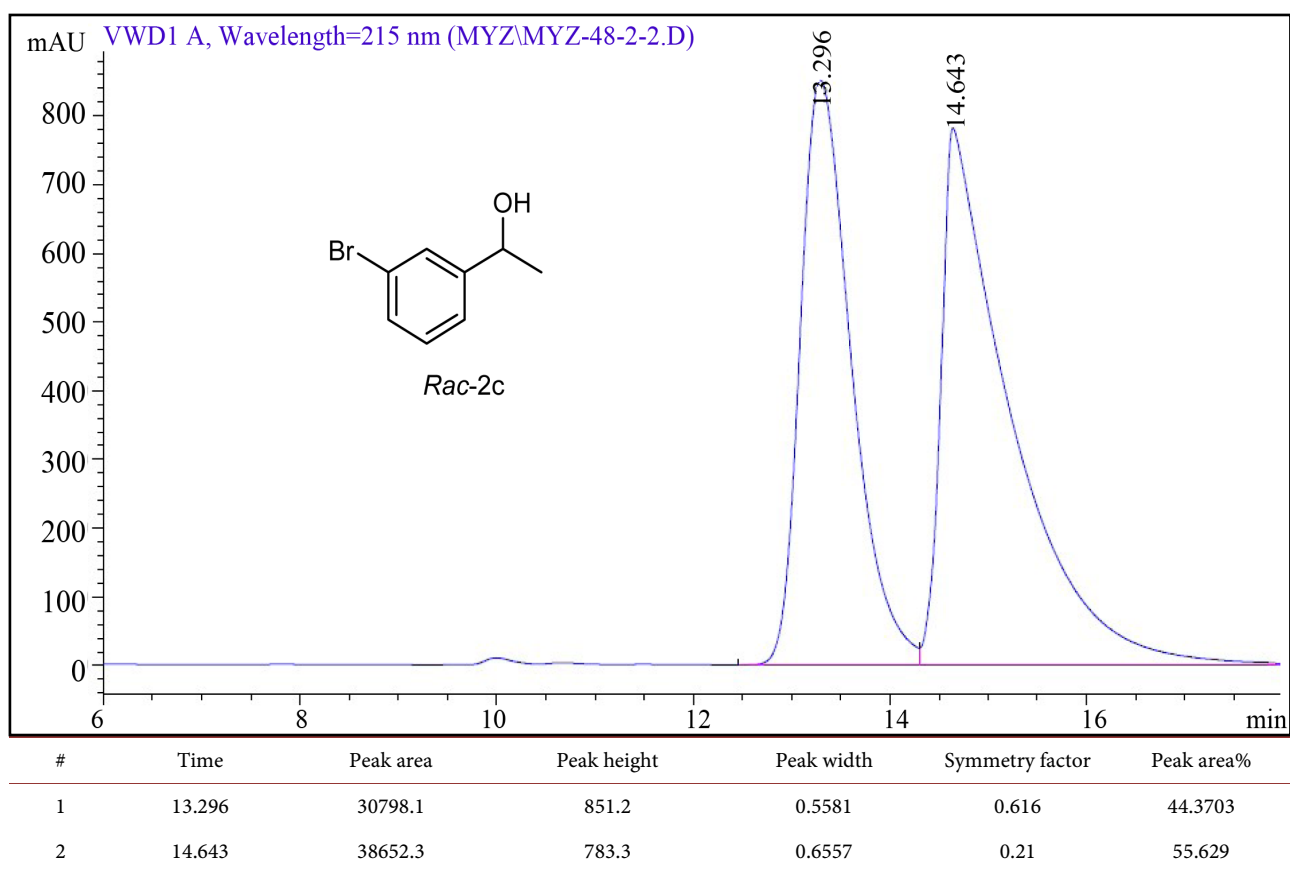
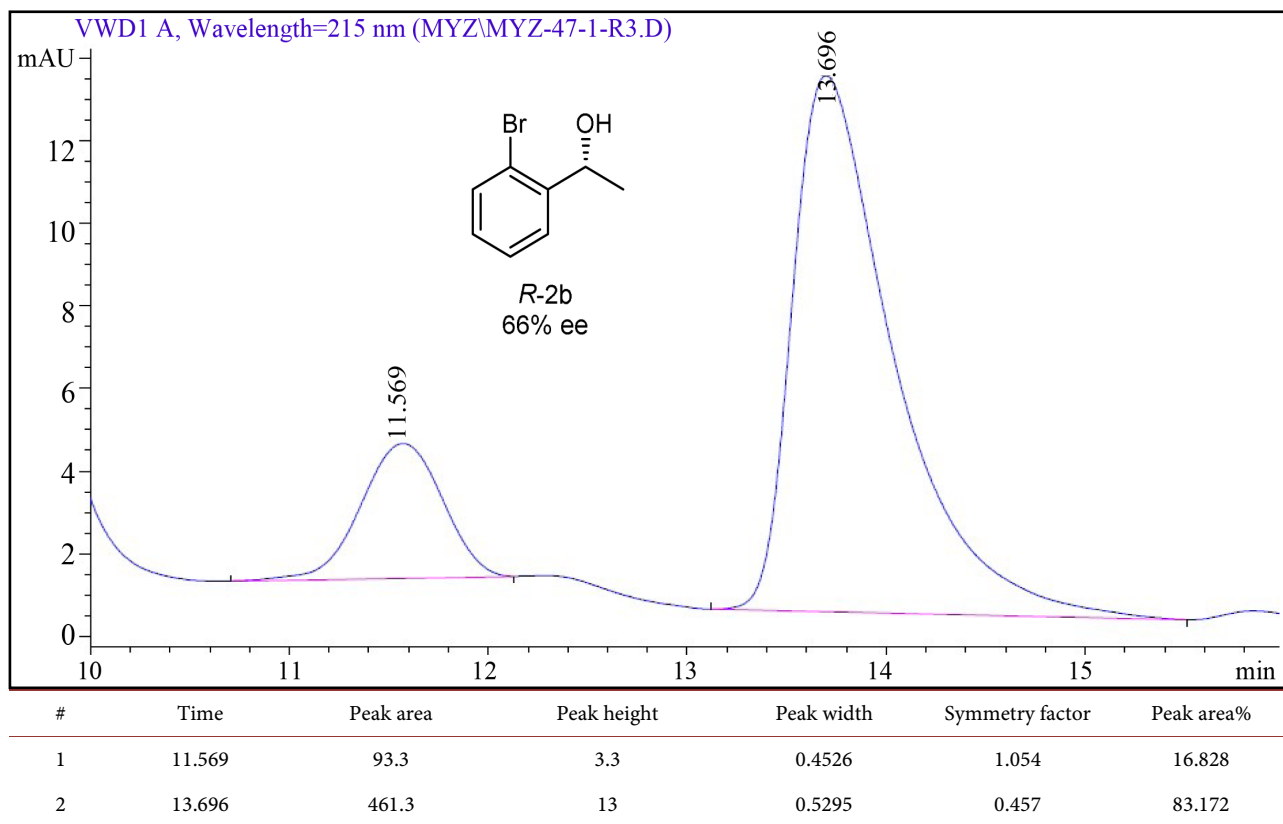
7) 1-(4-chlorophenyl)ethanol (2g)

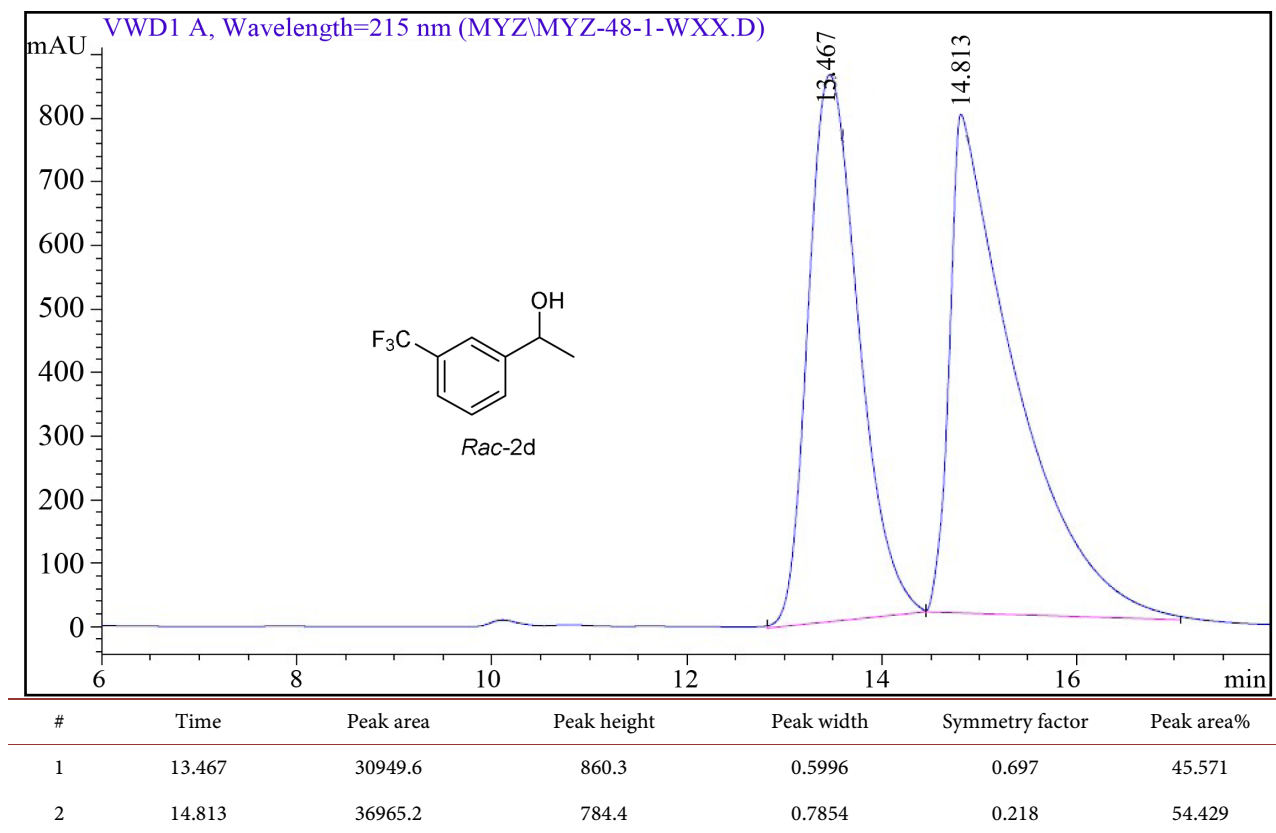
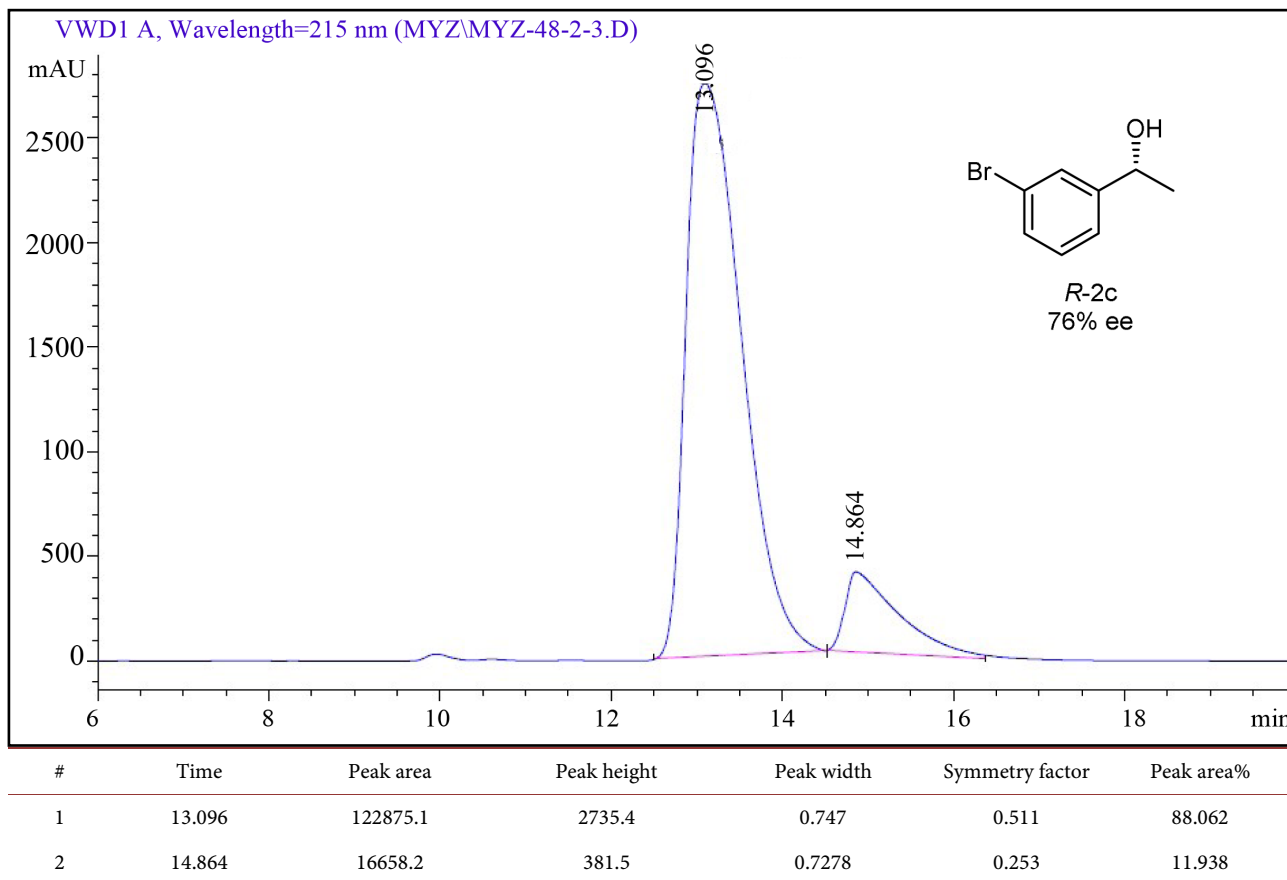
60% yield, 72% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH = 99/1, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

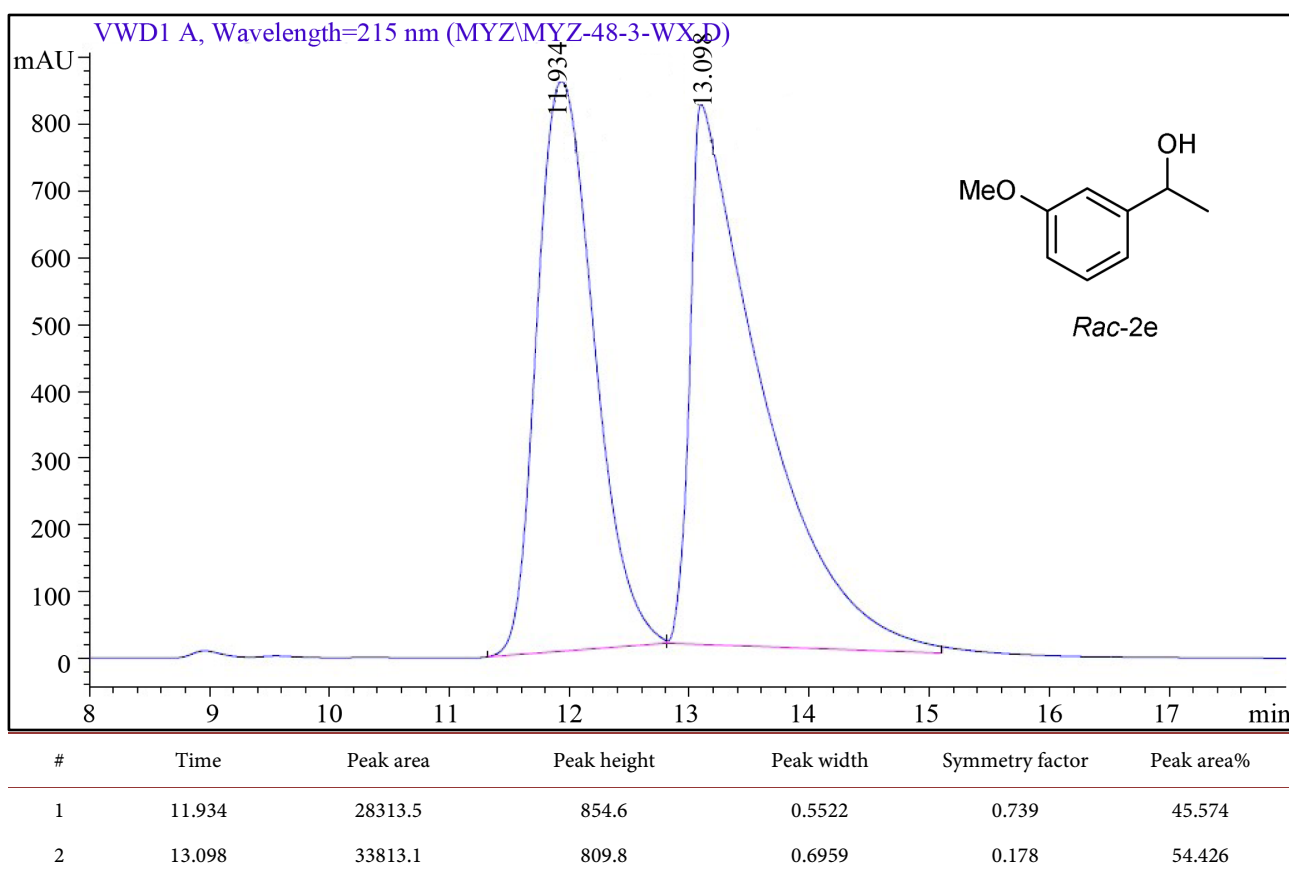
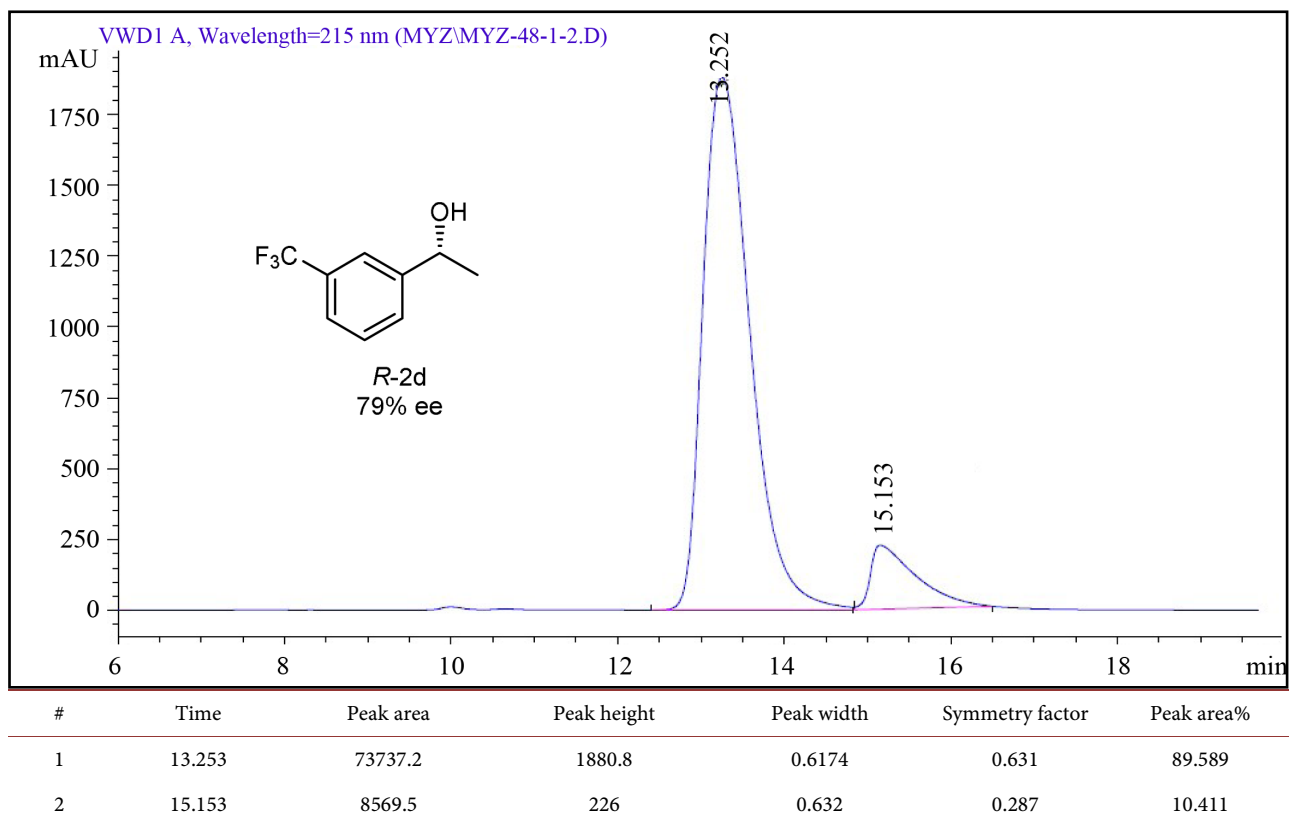
8) 1-(4-bromophenyl)ethanol (2h)

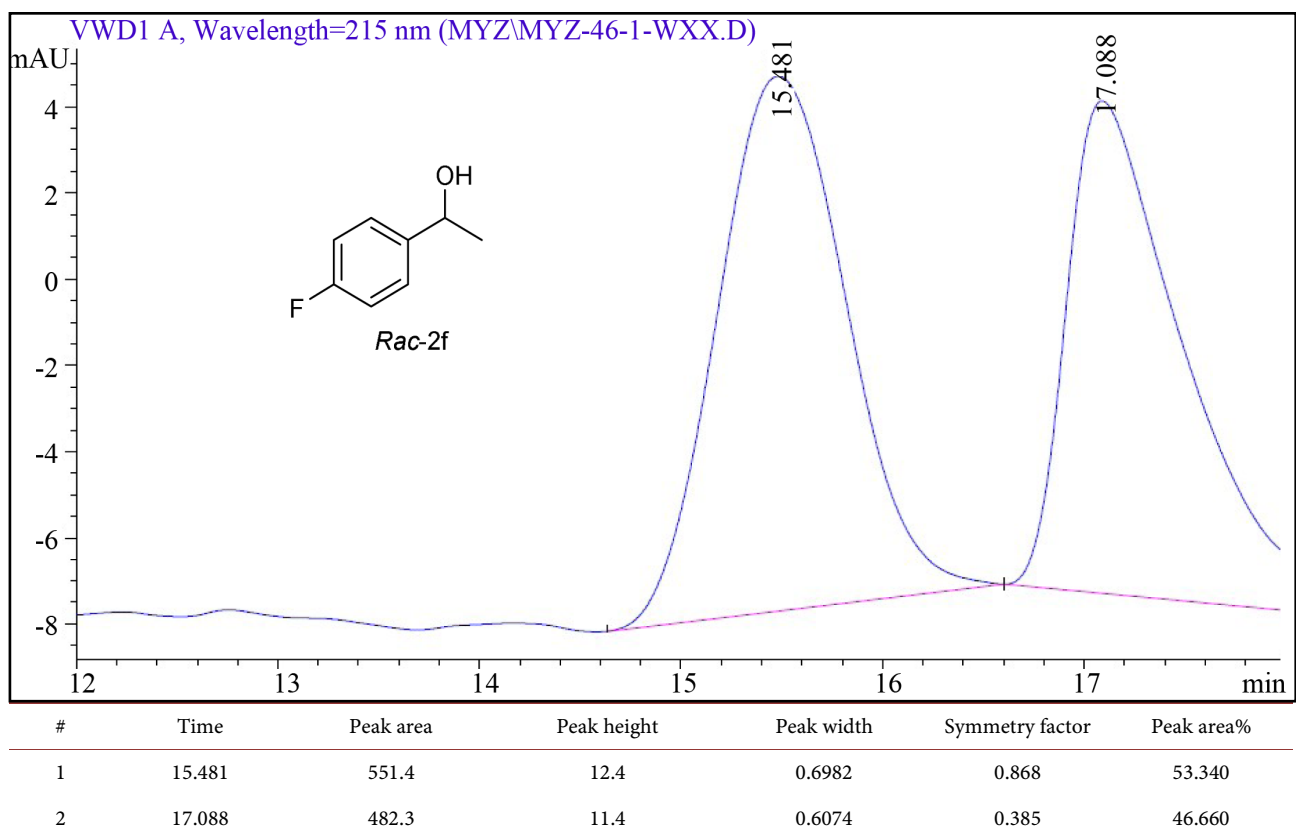
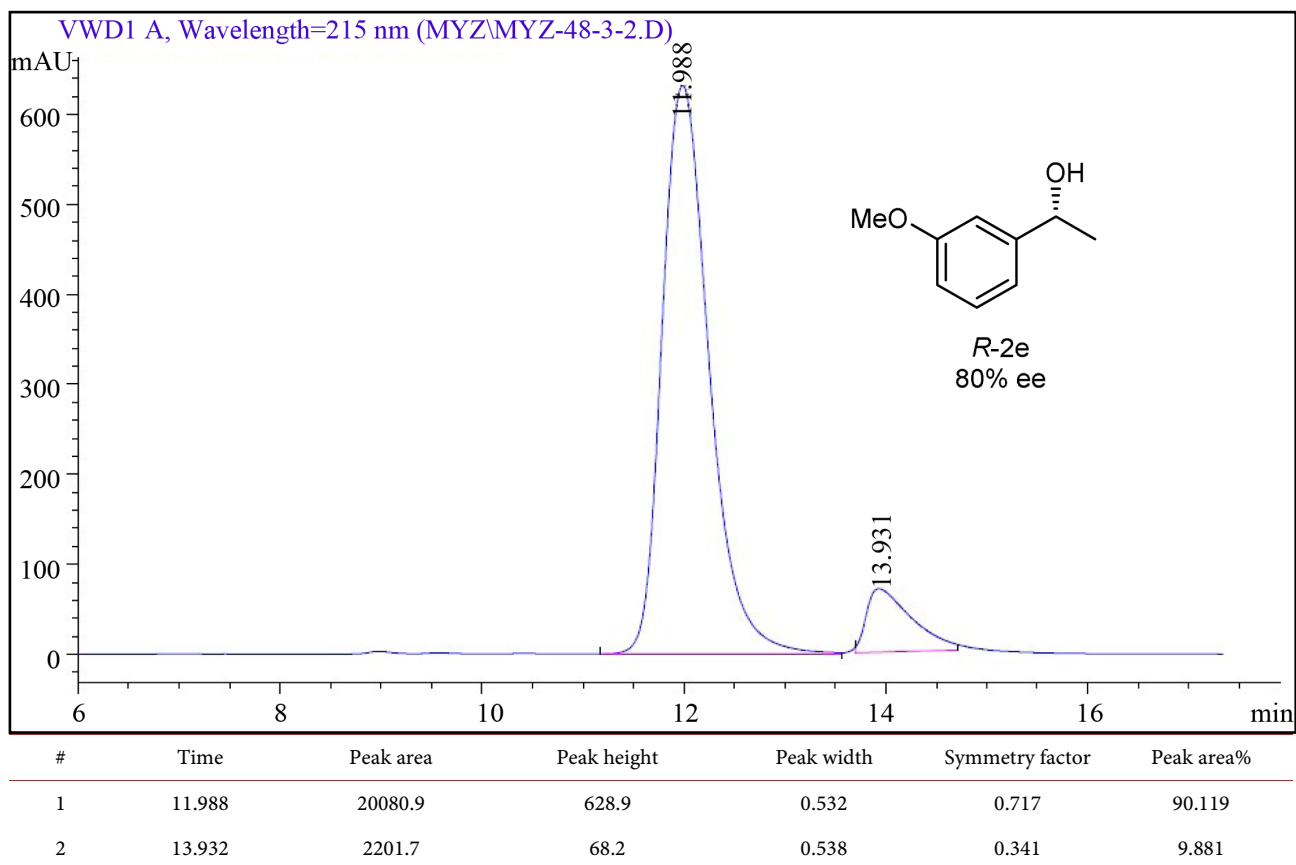
55% yield, 76% ee determined by HPLC analysis (Chiralcel OJ-H column, Hexane/i-PrOH=98/2, Flow rate: 1 mL/min, UV detection at 215 nm).

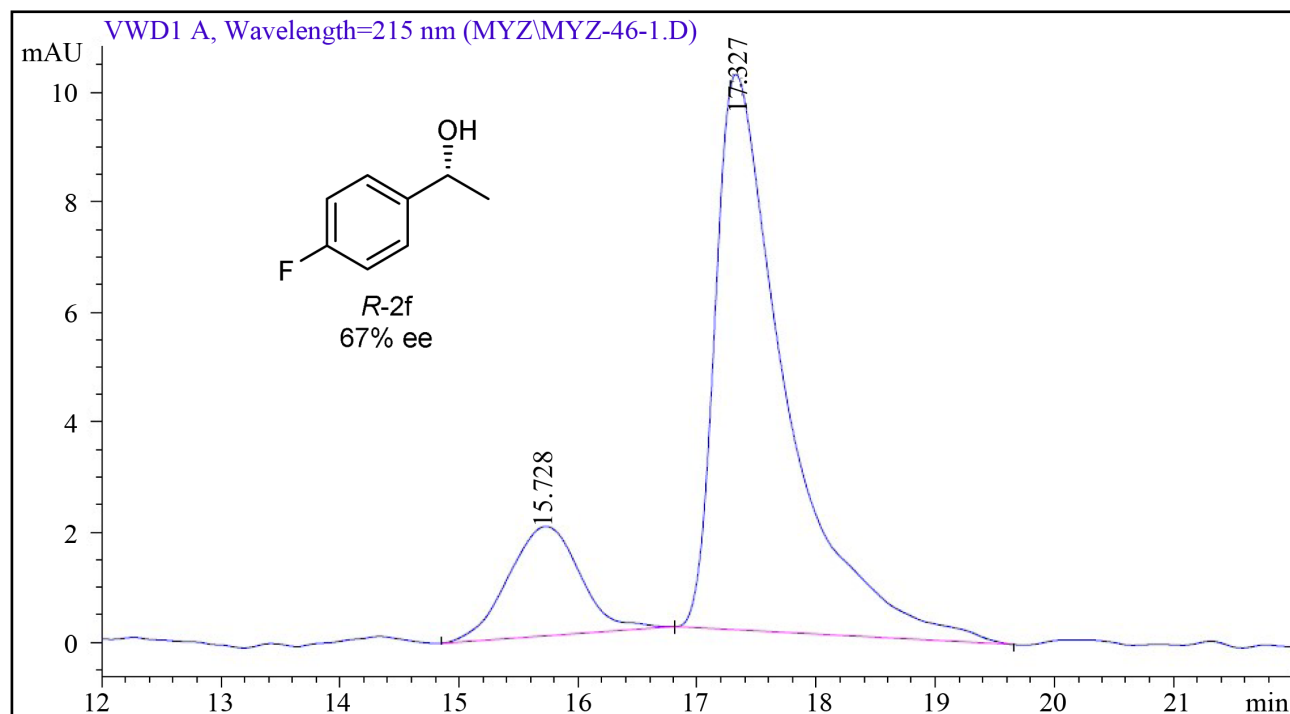




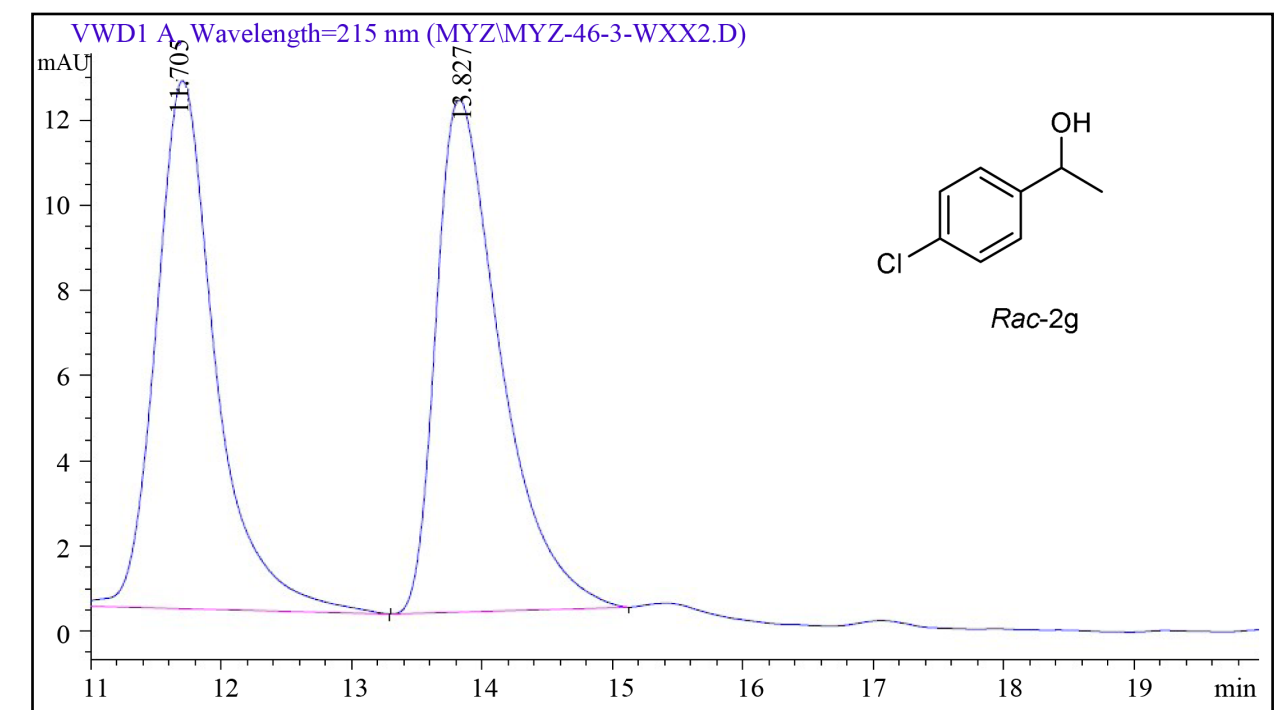




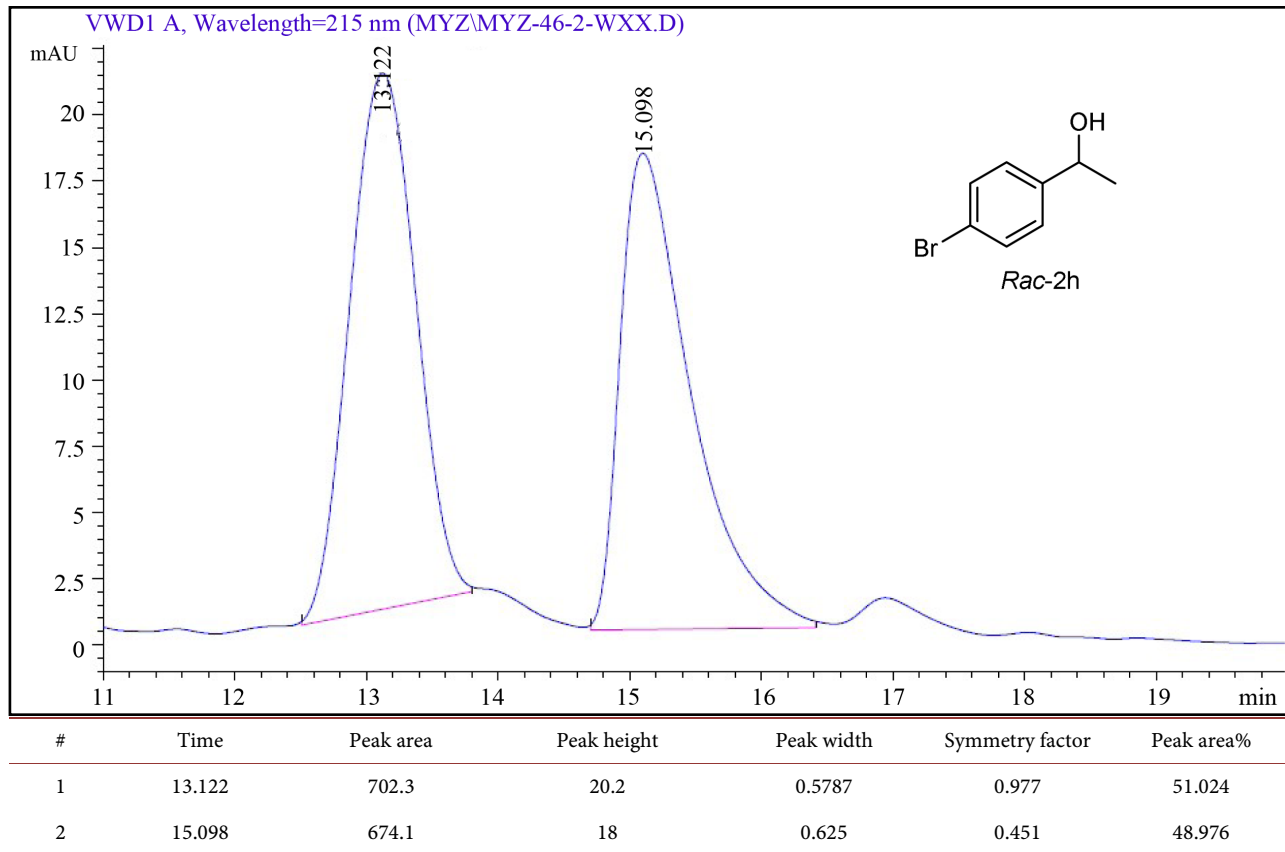
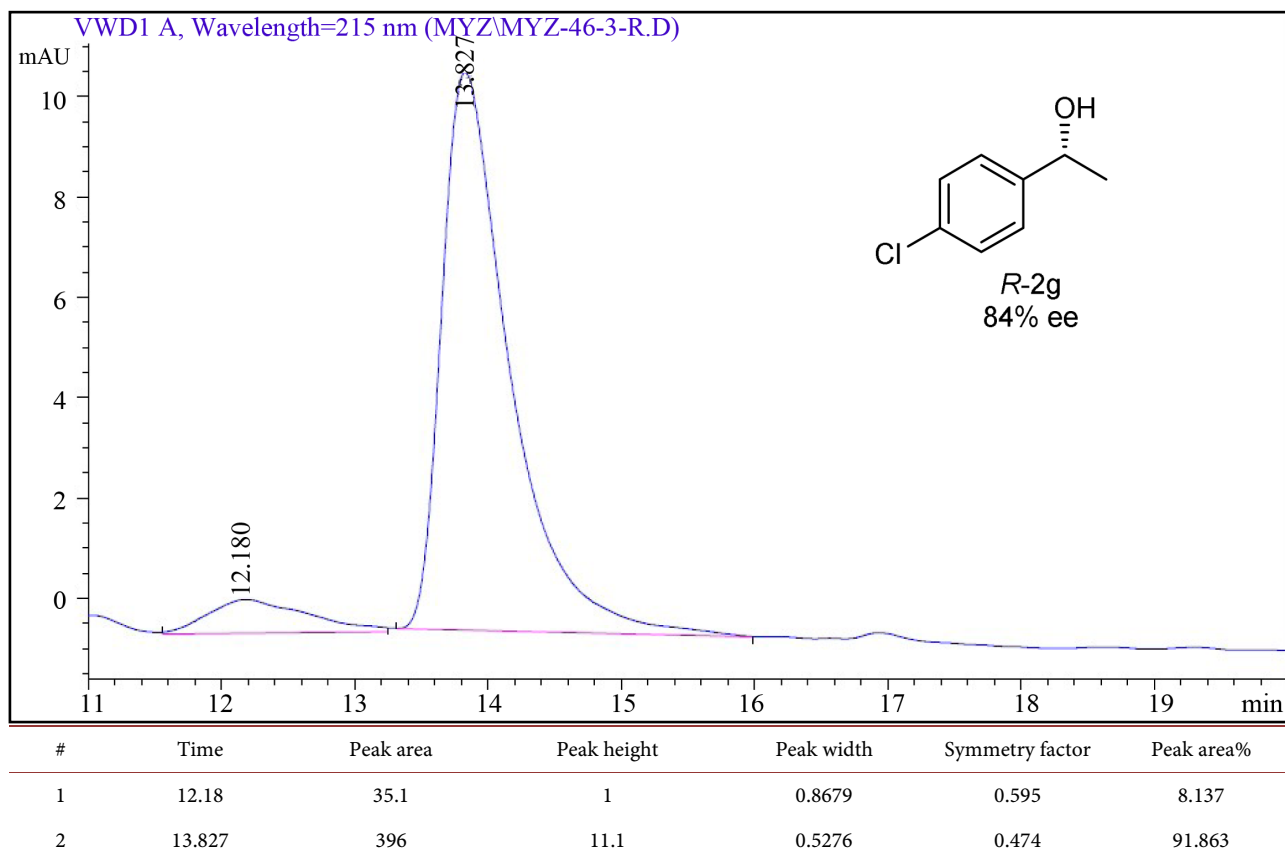


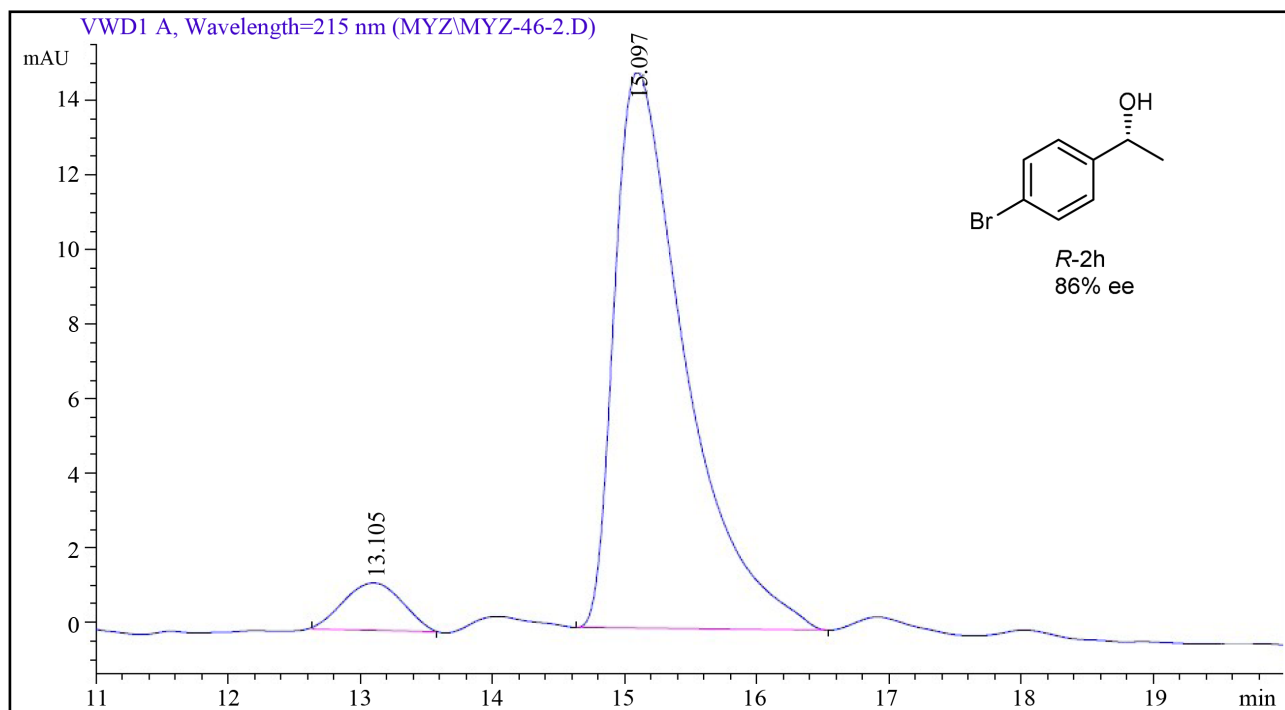


#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	15.728	83.5	2	0.6044	1.034	16.703
2	17.327	416.4	10.1	0.5859	0.379	83.297

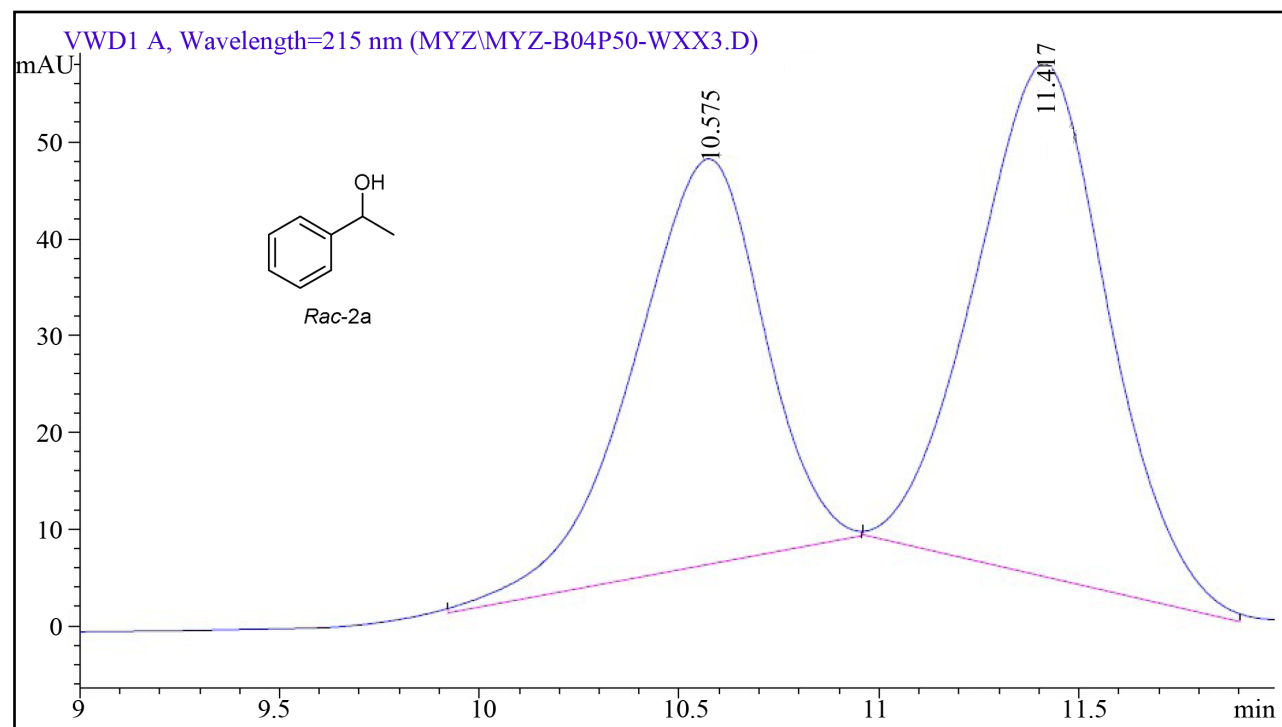


#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	11.705	396.3	12.4	0.4755	0.737	48.865
2	13.827	414.7	12.1	0.5104	0.517	51.135

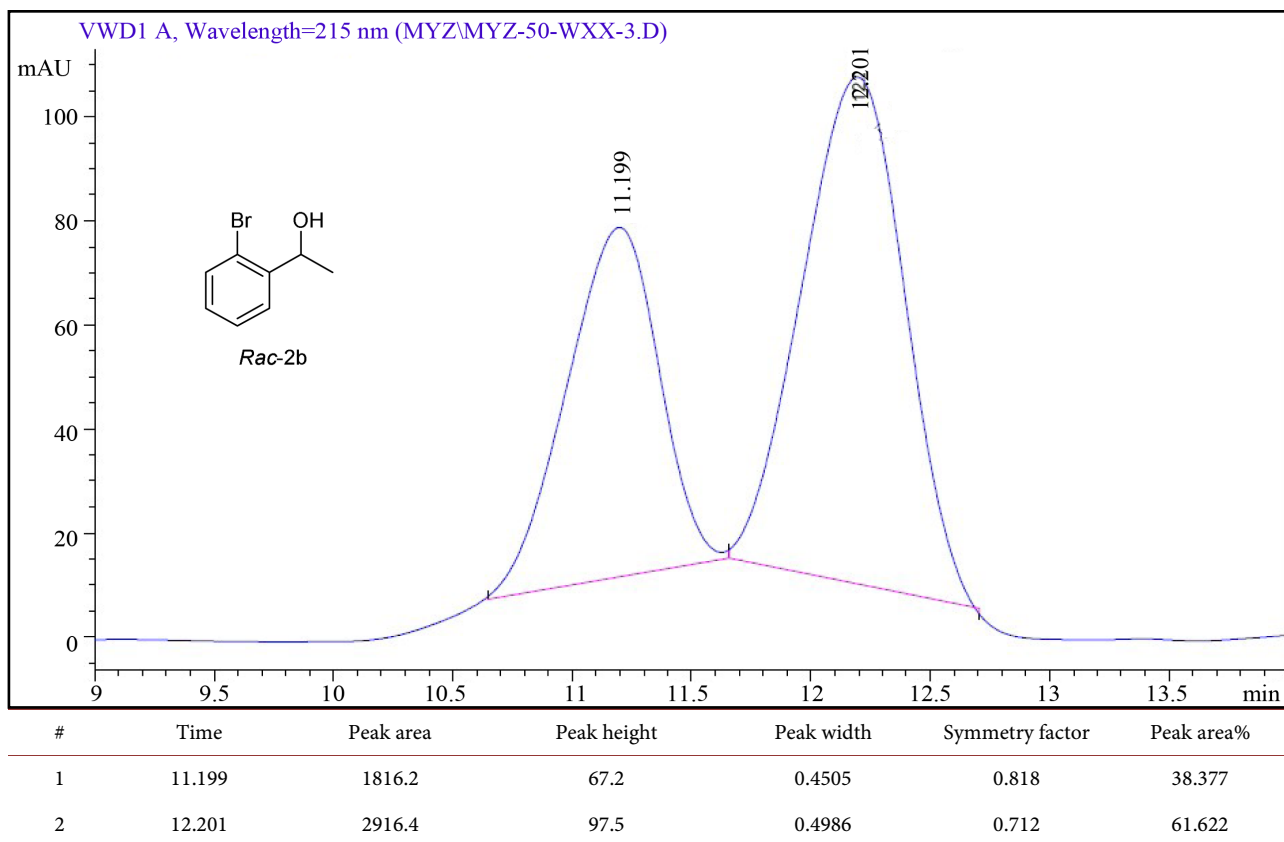
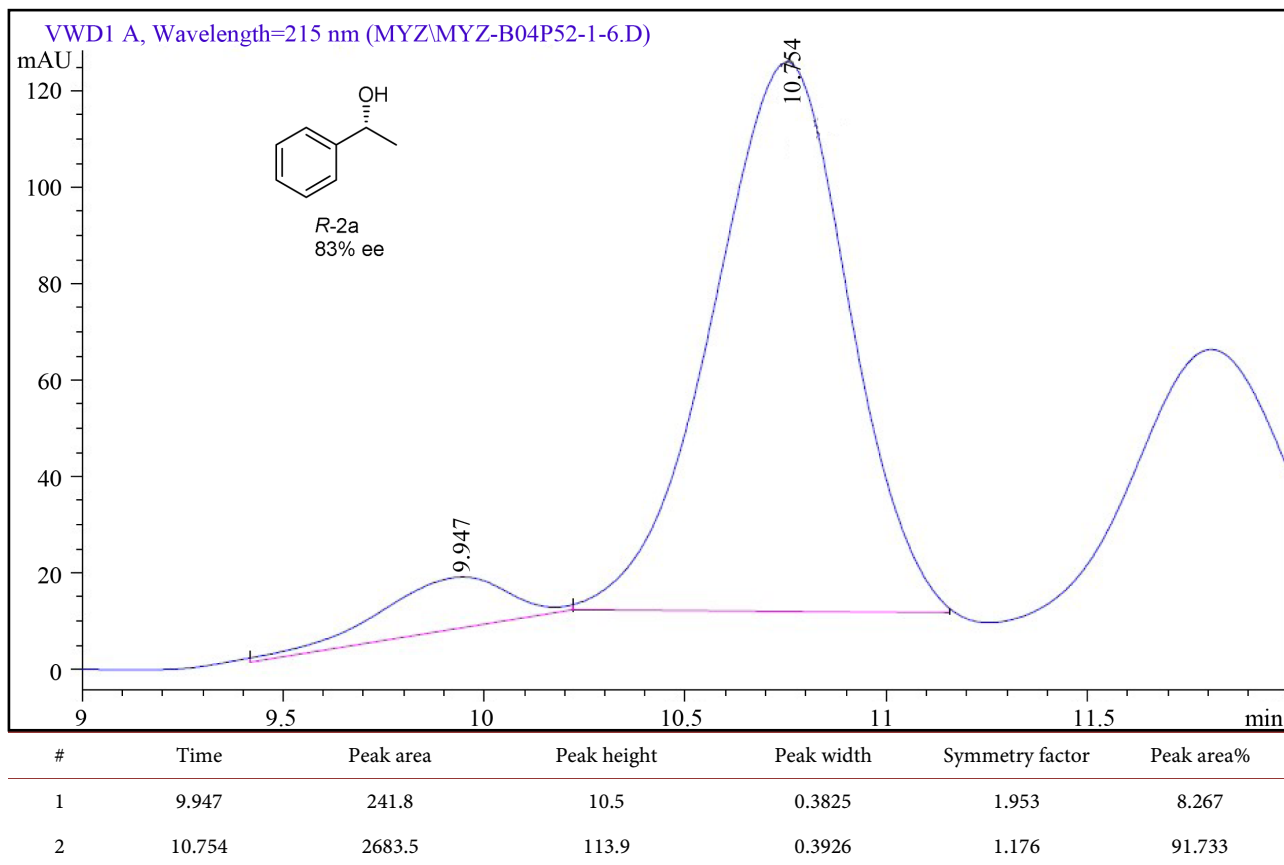


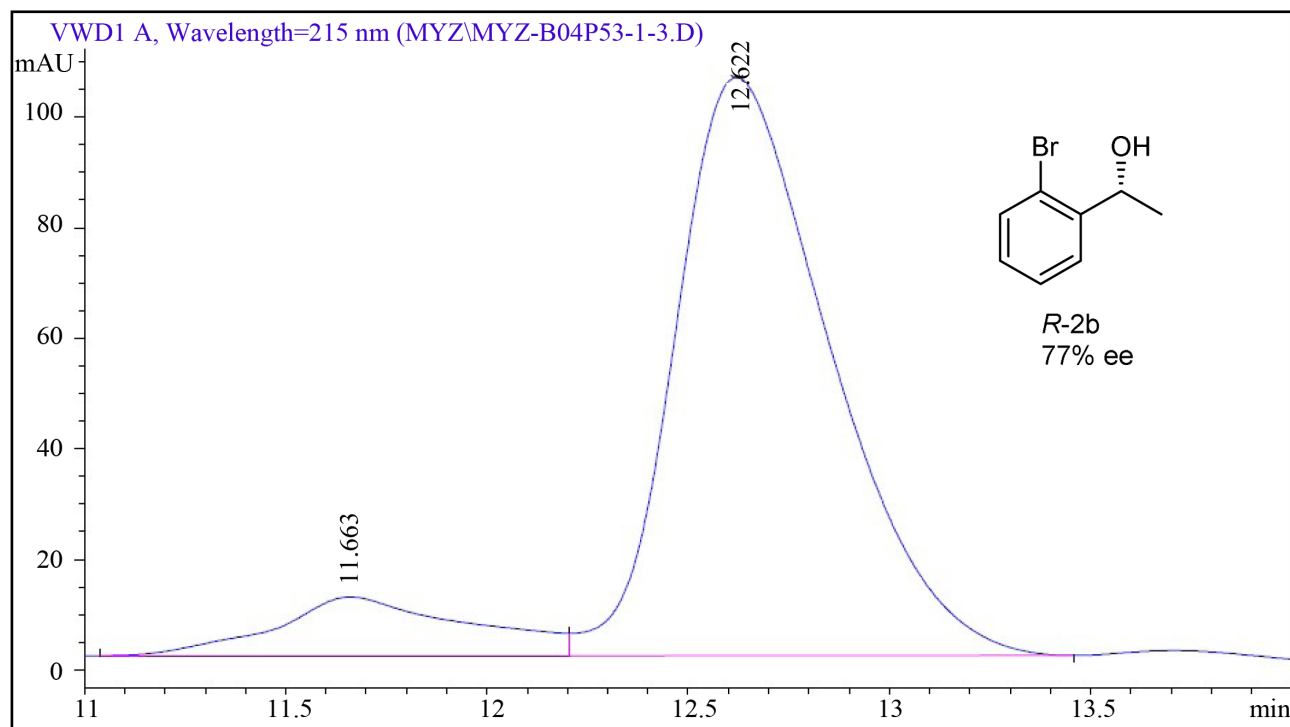


#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	13.118	41.8	1.3	0.5369	0.768	6.991
2	15.097	556	14.9	0.5539	0.435	93.009

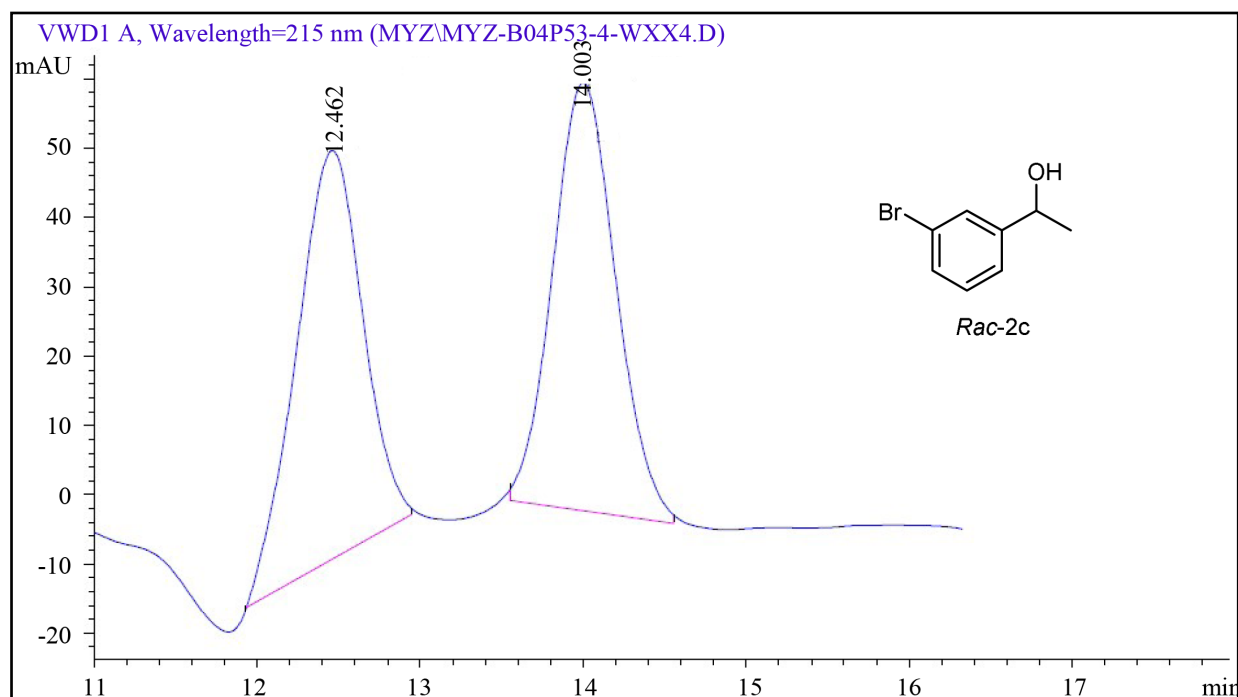


#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	10.575	955.4	41.9	0.3803	1.352	43.628
2	11.417	1234.5	53	0.3882	1.022	56.372

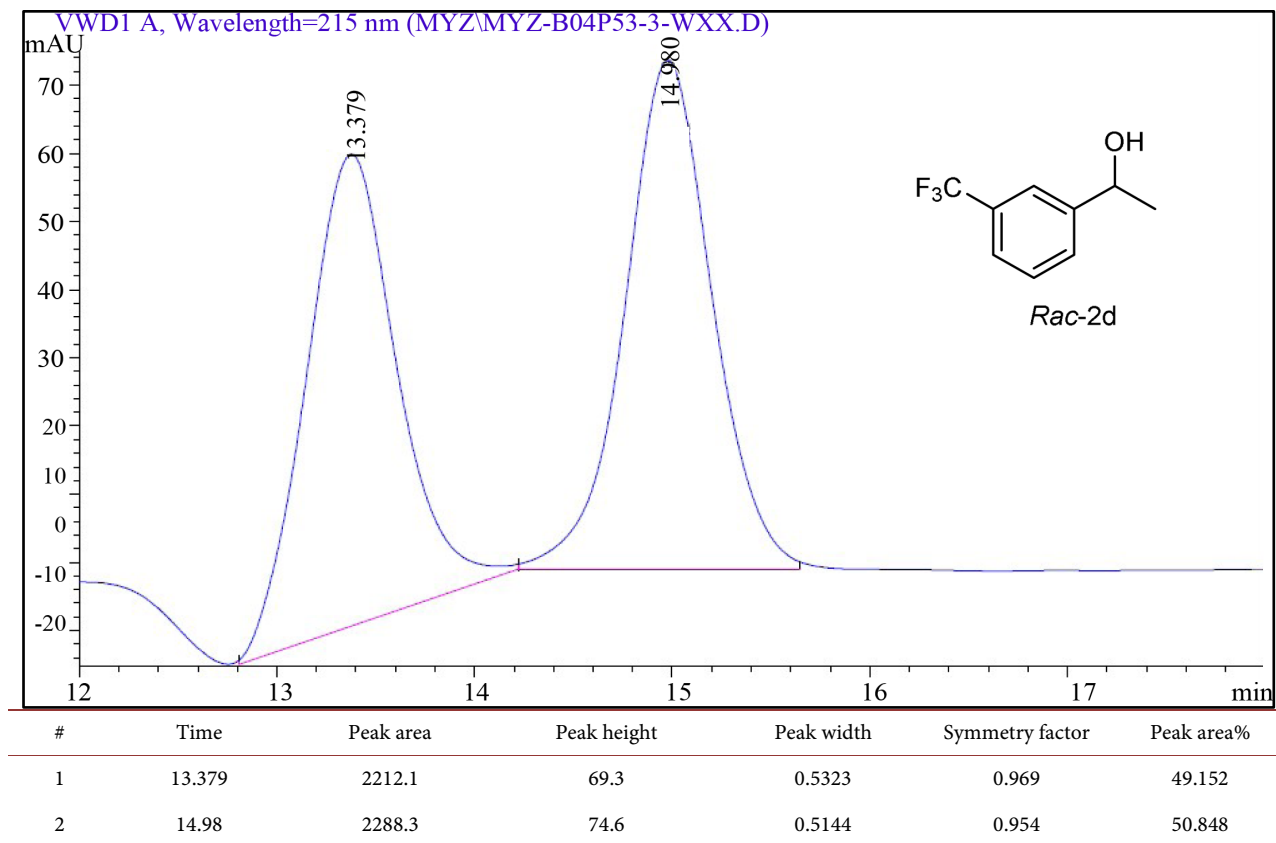
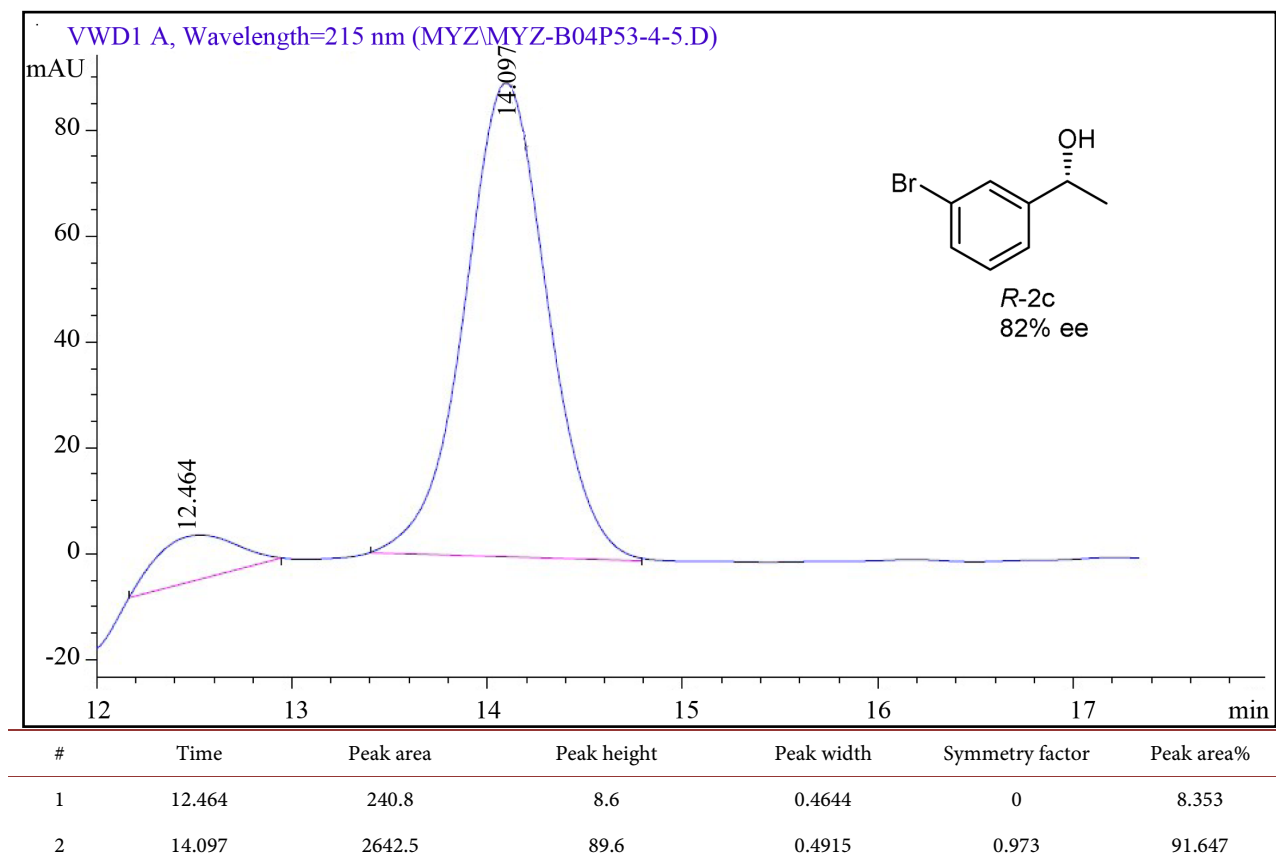


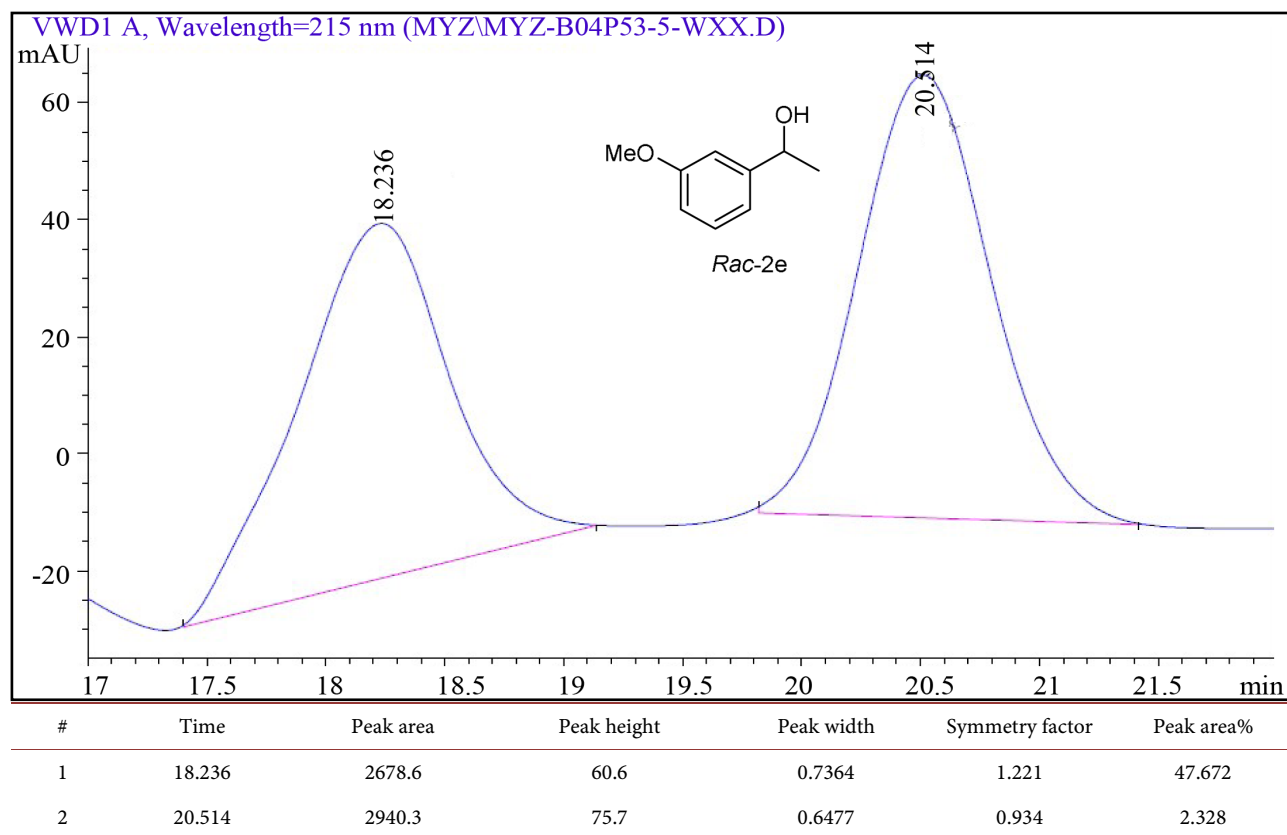
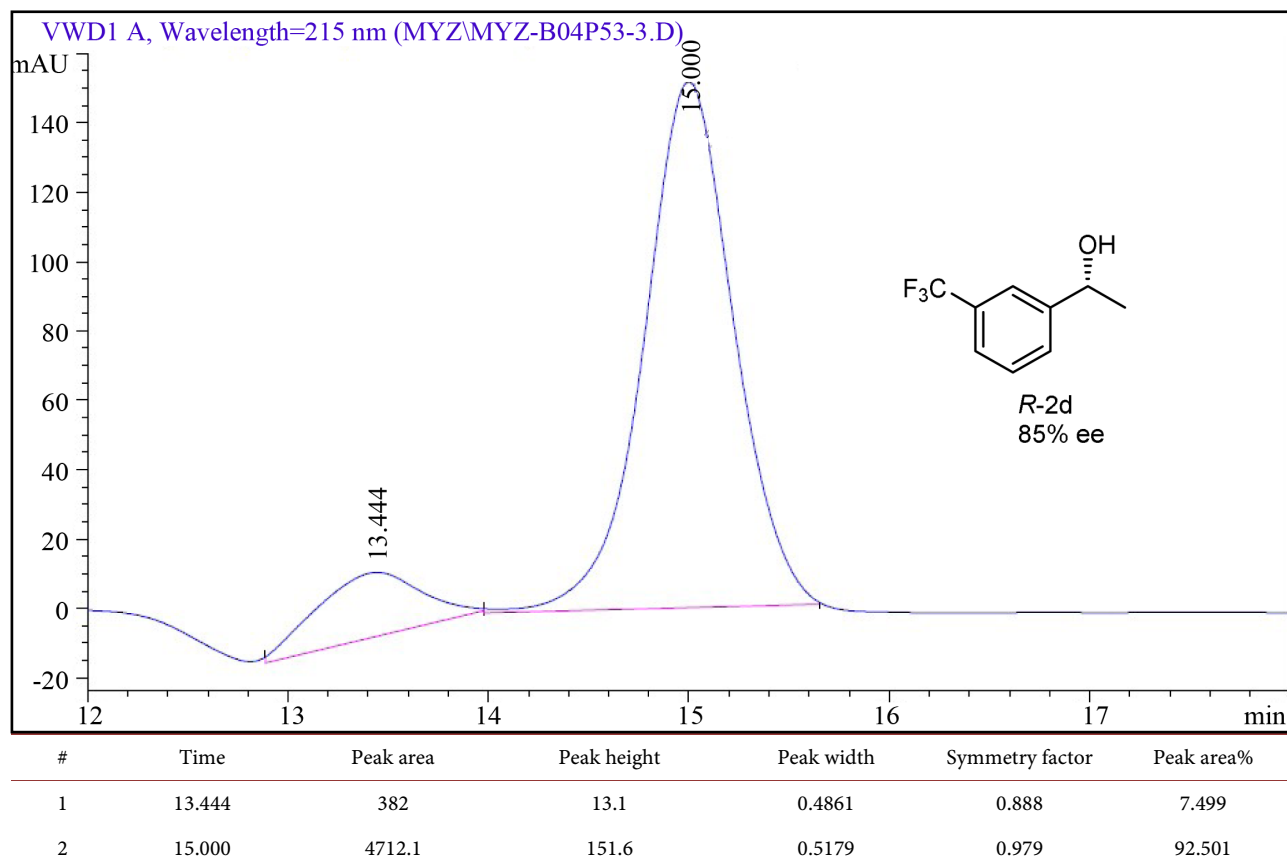


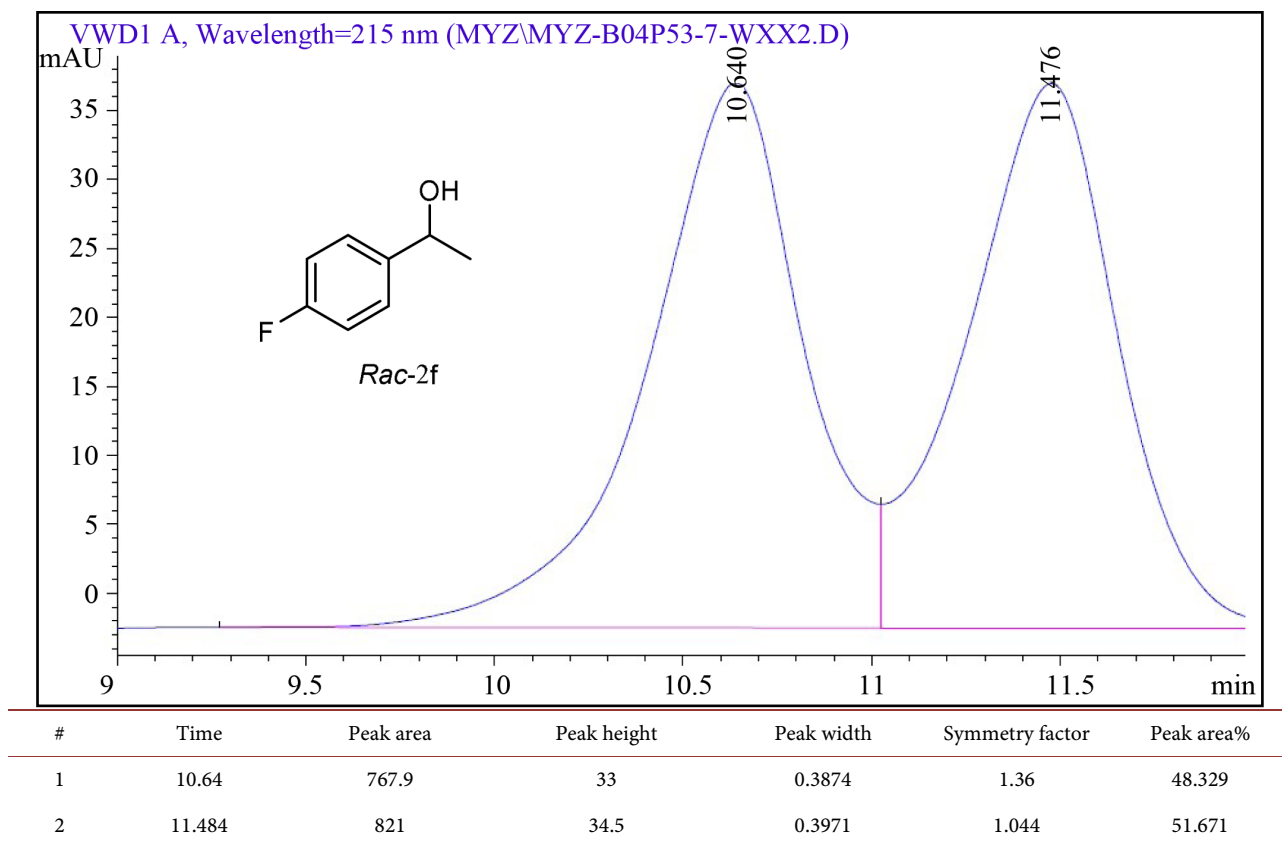
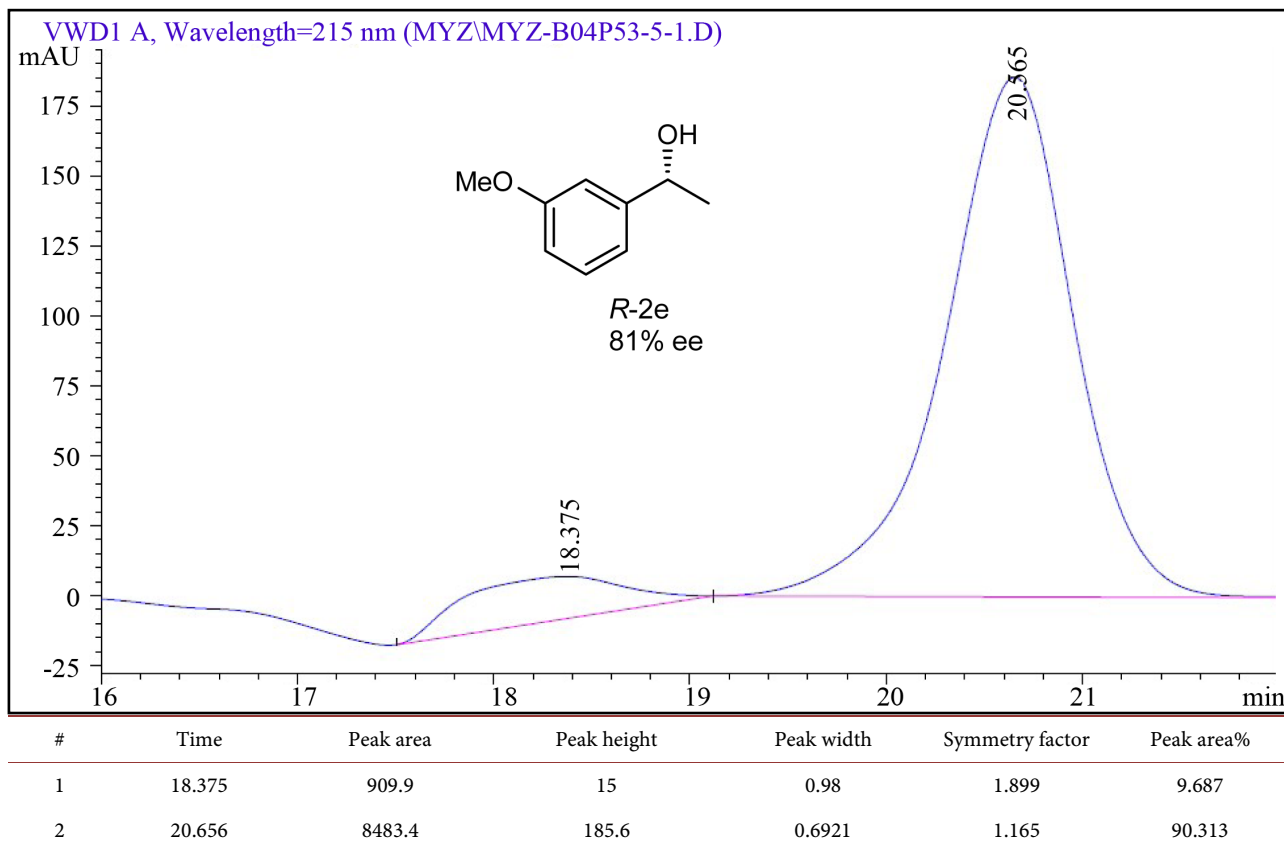
#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	11.663	379.9	11	0.4614	0.619	11.640
2	12.622	2883.6	105.6	0.4147	0.612	88.360

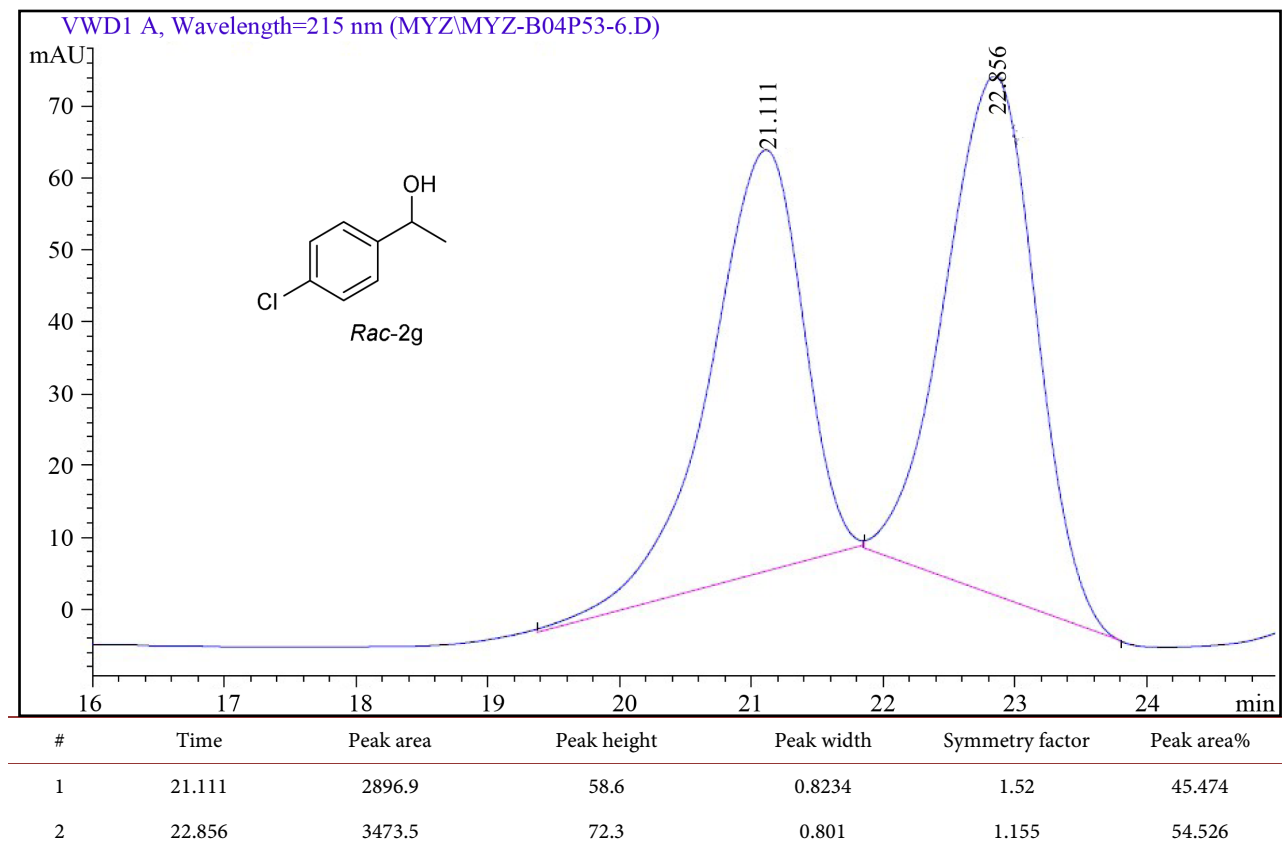
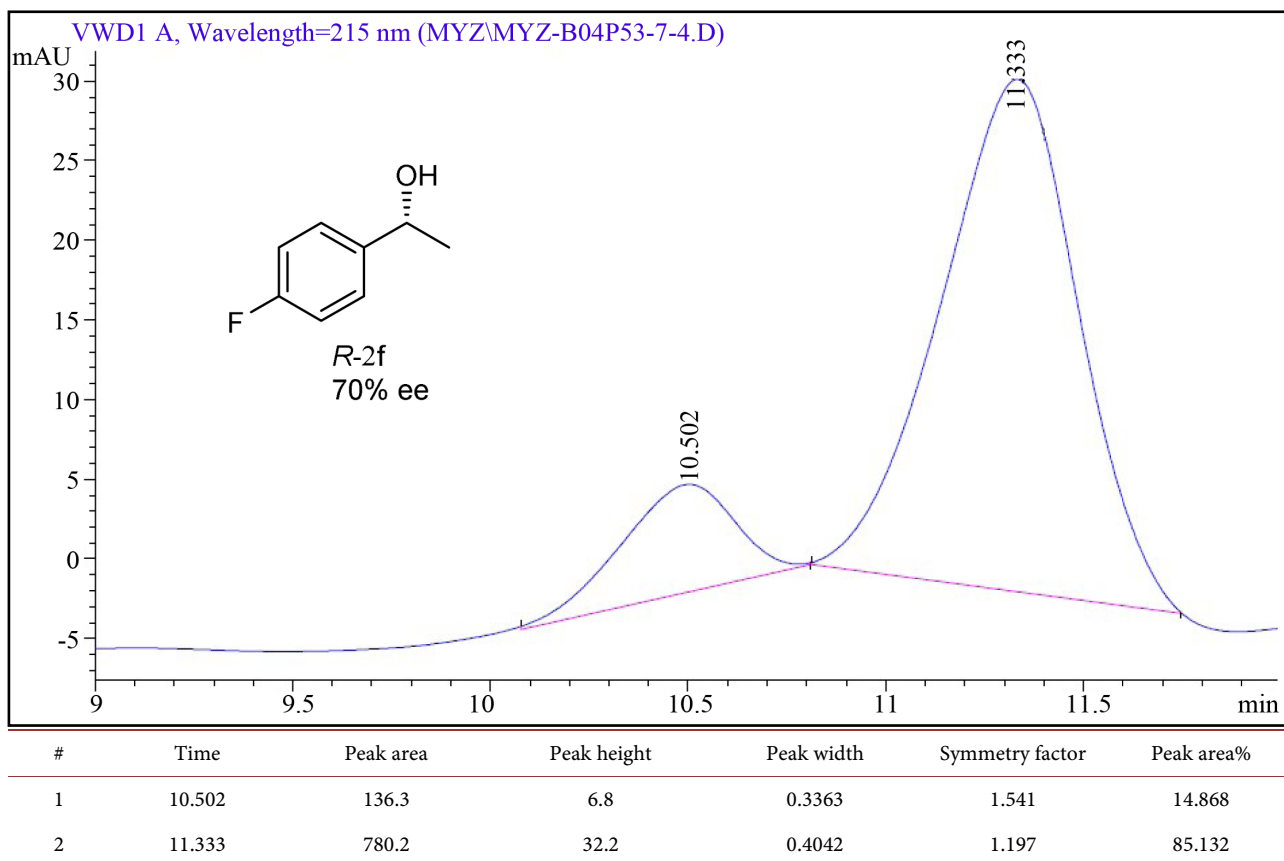


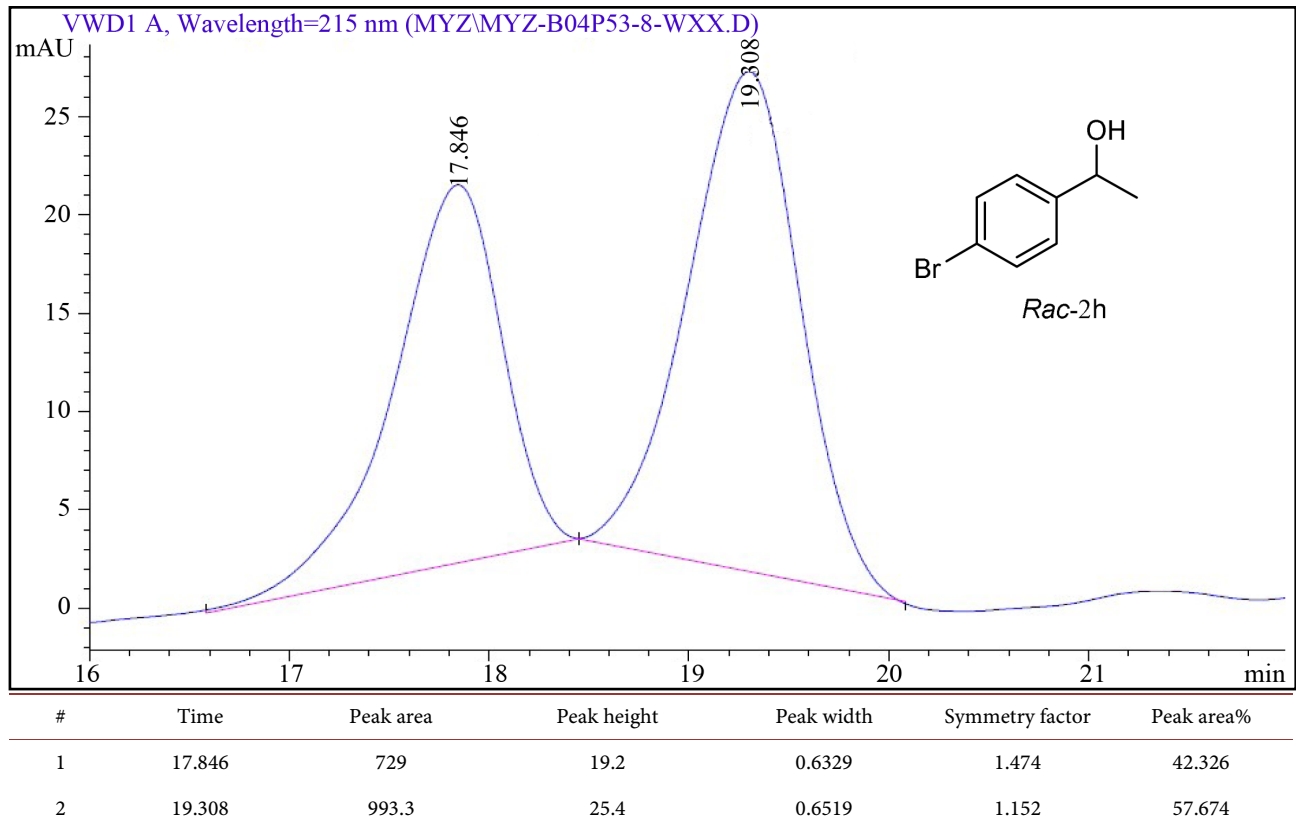
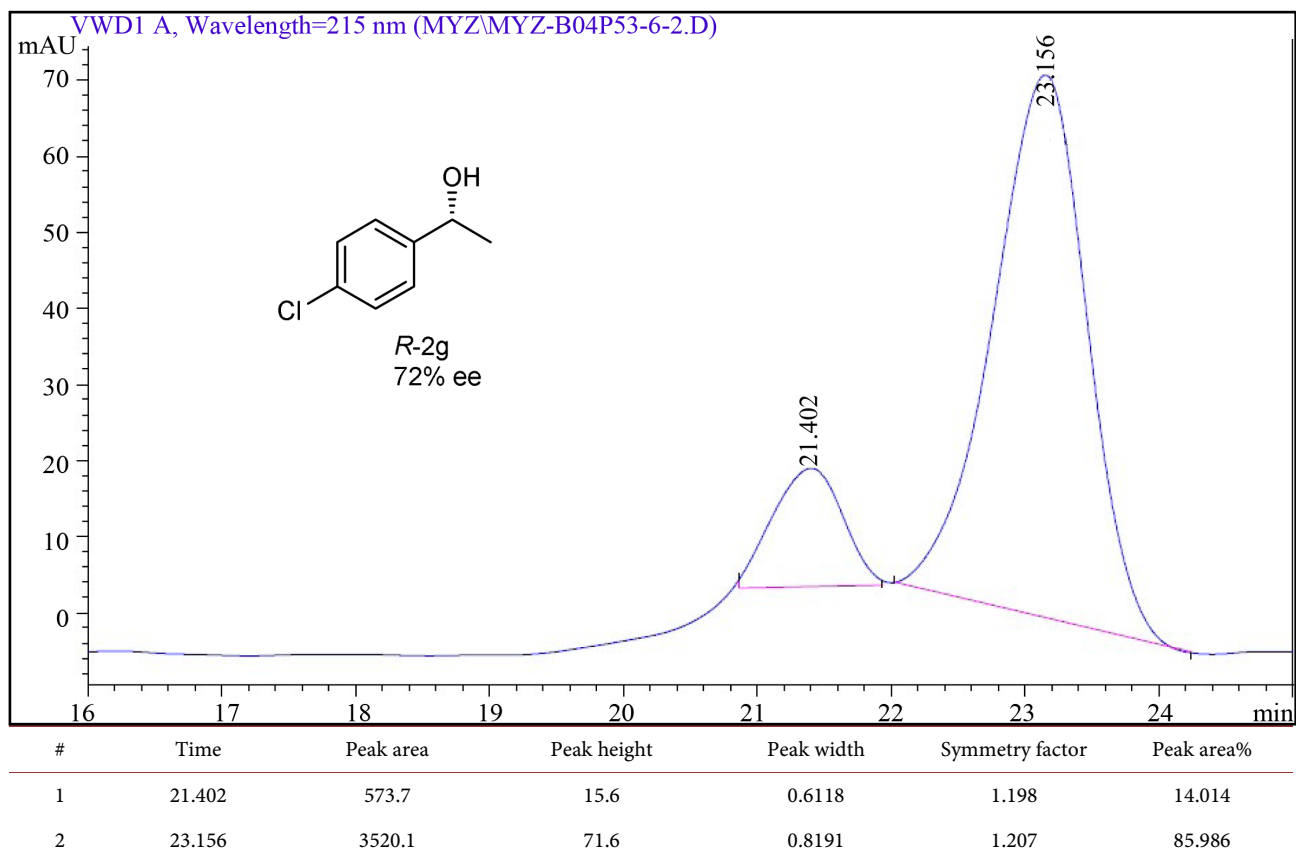
#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	12.462	1674	59	0.4731	1.191	50.192
2	14.00.	1661.2	61.8	0.4479	0.9	49.808

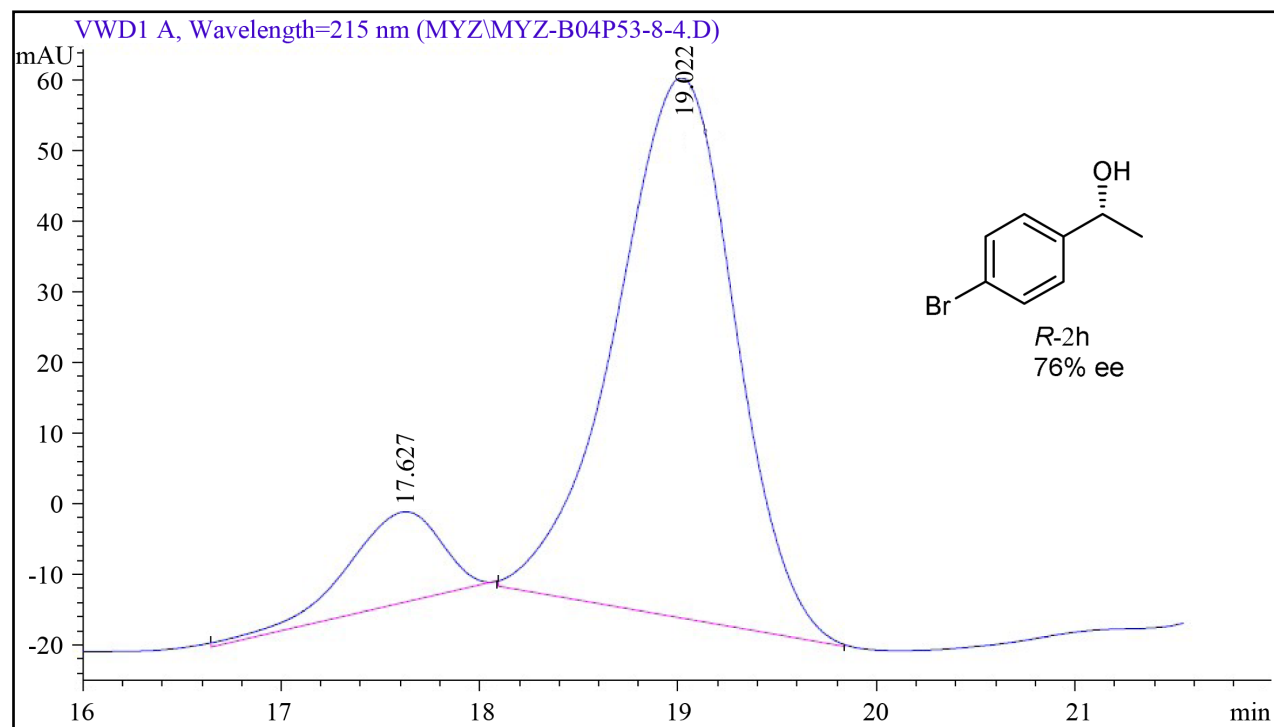












#	Time	Peak area	Peak height	Peak width	Symmetry factor	Peak area%
1	17.627	427.2	12.8	0.5551	1.741	11.747
2	19.016	3209.4	76.6	0.6981	1.334	88.253