

1 **Circularly polarized luminescence on dinuclear Tb(III) and Eu(III) complexes with (S-) and (R-)**  
2 **2-phenylpropionate†**

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33 **ABSTRACT:**

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35 The reaction of  $\text{Ln}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  ( $\text{Ln} = \text{Tb}$  and  $\text{Eu}$ ) with (S)-(+)-2-phenylpropionic acid (S-HL) and  
36 1,10-phenanthroline (phen) in EtOH/H<sub>2</sub>O allows the isolation of the dinuclear chiral compounds of the  
37 formula  $[\text{Ln}_2(\text{S-L})_6(\text{phen})_2] \cdot 2.5 \cdot \text{S-HL}$  in which  $\text{Ln} = \text{Tb}$  (S-1),  $\text{Ln} = \text{Eu}$  (S-2). The same synthesis by  
38 using (R)-(-)-2-phenylpropionic acid (R-HL) instead of (S)-(+)-2-phenylpropionic acid allows the  
39 isolation of the enantiomeric compounds with the formula  $[\text{Ln}_2(\text{R-L})_6(\text{phen})_2] \cdot 2.5 \cdot \text{R-HL}$  where  $\text{Ln} =$   
40  $\text{Tb}$  (R-1),  $\text{Ln} = \text{Eu}$  (R-2). All compounds show sensitized luminescence. The luminescence study,  
41 including the circularly polarized luminescence spectra of the four compounds, is reported. The  
42 magnetic behavior of S-1 and S-2 is also reported.

43

## 44 INTRODUCTION

45

46 Currently, lanthanide compounds are mainly studied for their magnetic and luminescence properties.  
47 From the magnetic point of view, since the discovery of mononuclear lanthanide complexes functioning  
48 as single molecule magnets (SMMs),<sup>1</sup> an increasing number of mono and polynuclear SMM complexes  
49 derived from lanthanide ions with large orbital momentum and strong magnetic anisotropy have been  
50 reported.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, luminescent lanthanide complexes are of interest due to their wide range  
51 of applications in materials and biosciences.<sup>3</sup> Due to their potential use in nonlinear optics or circularly  
52 polarized luminescent materials, the preparation of chiral lanthanide coordination compounds is of high  
53 current interest.<sup>4</sup>

54 Moreover, the first observation of magnetochiral dichroism was made on the emission properties of a Eu  
55 complex<sup>5</sup> and also recently there is significant interest in lanthanide compounds for studying  
56 magnetochiral effects.<sup>6</sup> For similar applications, the simultaneous evaluation of magnetic and  
57 chiroptical properties of one complex is a necessary pre-requisite.

58 The reported examples of chiral lanthanide complexes are mainly limited to the mono- and bi-nuclear  
59 structures,<sup>7</sup> although higher nuclearity systems were also reported.<sup>8</sup> In general, three approaches are  
60 available for the introduction of chirality into metal complex assemblies: (i) spontaneous chiral  
61 symmetry breaking, (ii) chiral induction, and (iii) ligand chirality. We have used the ligand chirality  
62 approach to synthesize dinuclear 4f-metal ion complexes by employing simultaneously bidentate  
63 bridging carboxylate ligands generated from (S)-(+)- or (R)-(-)-2-phenylpropionic acid (S- and R-HL  
64 respectively) with neutral chelating 1,10-phenanthroline ligands which block two coordination sites per  
65 Ln(III) ion and terminate further aggregation or potential polymerization. The 1,10-phenanthroline  
66 ligands also play the role of sensitizing the luminescence of the lanthanide ion, through the so-called  
67 antenna effect. In fact, because of the weak f-f absorption of trivalent lanthanide ions, a suitable  
68 chromophoric organic ligand should be employed to populate the lanthanide emitting states through an  
69 energy transfer process.<sup>9</sup>

70 The chiral ligands naturally induce a dissymmetric environment around Ln(III), which determines the  
71 onset of chiroptical properties allied to the f-f transitions of the ion. In emission this is sensitively  
72 monitored through circularly polarized luminescence (CPL), which can be conveniently quantified by  
73 means of the dissymmetry factor  $g_{lum}$ :

74

$$g_{lum} = 2 \frac{I_L - I_R}{I_L + I_R} = \frac{\Delta I}{I}$$

75

76

77 where  $I_L$  and  $I_R$  are the left and right circularly polarized components of the emission.

78 Usually non-aggregated organic molecules or d-metal complexes display  $g_{lum}$  factors of the order of  
79  $10^{-4}$ – $10^{-3}$ ,<sup>10</sup> while much higher values ( $10^{-1}$ – $1$ )<sup>11</sup> are reported for lanthanide complexes. For such  
80 outstanding CPL properties, chiral Ln complexes are used in several applications such as responsive  
81 bioprobes<sup>12</sup> or more recently in electronic devices able to directly emit circularly polarized  
82 electroluminescence.<sup>13</sup> Usually, CPL is measured for mononuclear Eu complexes, while reports of CPL  
83 from complexes with higher nuclearity, such as binuclear helicates<sup>14</sup> or trinuclear<sup>15</sup> and heptanuclear<sup>16</sup>  
84 systems, remain rare.

85 Moreover, polydentate and often macrocyclic ligands are commonly used in this context,<sup>17</sup> while to the  
86 best of our knowledge, simple monofunctional (i.e. monotopic) chiral carboxylates seem to be  
87 unprecedented in this context.

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## 90 **EXPERIMENTAL SECTION**

91

### 92 **Starting materials**

93 Ln(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O salts, (S)-(+)- or (R)-(-)-2-phenylpropionic acid and 1,10-phenanthroline (Aldrich)  
94 were used as received.

95

### 96 **Synthesis**

97 Preparation of dinuclear complexes [Ln<sub>2</sub>(R/S-L)<sub>6</sub>(phen)<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub>·2.5·R/SHL (S/R-1–S/R-2). The preparation  
98 of compounds S/R-1–S/R-2 was achieved via the reactions of the corresponding enantiomerically pure  
99 (S)-(+)- or (R)-(-)-2-phenylpropionic acid (S or R-HL, 1.5 mmol) and 1,10-phenanthroline (phen, 0.3  
100 mmol) dissolved in 20 mL of EtOH/H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 50 : 50) with a solution of 0.25 mmol of the  
101 corresponding Ln(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O salt in 10 mL of EtOH (S-HL and Ln = Tb in S-1, S-HL and Ln = Eu in  
102 S-2, R-HL and Ln = Tb in R-1, R-HL and Ln = Eu in R-2). The mixture was stirred for 1 hour at room  
103 temperature. Good crystals suitable for X-ray analysis of compounds S/R-1–S/R-2 were obtained within  
104 5–10 days after the slow evaporation of the mixture. Anal. calc. (%) for S-1 C, 61.94; H, 4.91; N, 2.87.  
105 Found: C, 62.7; H, 5.4; N, 2.9, calc. (%) for S-2 C, 62.39; H, 4.95; N, 3.19. Found: C, 62.4; H, 5.1; N,  
106 3.2, calc. (%) for R-1 C, 61.94; H, 4.91; N, 2.87. Found: C, 62.4; H, 5.3; N, 3.0. calc. (%) for R-2 C,  
107 62.39; H, 4.95; N, 3.19. Found: C, 63.5; H, 5.4; N, 2.9.

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### 109 **IR and magnetic measurements**

110 Infrared spectra (4000–400 cm<sup>-1</sup>) were recorded from KBr pellets on a PerkinElmer 380-B  
111 spectrophotometer.

112 Magnetic measurements were performed on solid polycrystalline samples with a Quantum Design  
113 MPMS-XL SQUID magnetometer at the Magnetic Measurements Unit of the University of Barcelona.  
114 Pascal's constants were used to estimate the diamagnetic corrections, which were subtracted from the  
115 experimental susceptibilities to give the corrected molar magnetic susceptibilities.

116

### 117 **Chiroptical spectroscopy measurements**

118 ECD spectra. ECD spectra were recorded with a Jasco J-710 spectropolarimeter on the same samples  
119 used for CPL measurements. In order to rule out the occurrence of contributions from linear  
120 dichroism/linear birefringence, different spectra recorded after rotating the sample by 90° around the  
121 optical axis or around an axis perpendicular to the optical axis were recorded and compared; all the  
122 spectra were averaged.

123 CPL spectra. We ran simultaneously the fluorescence and circularly polarized luminescence  
124 measurements with our home-built CPL spectrofluoropolarimeter<sup>18</sup> under UV irradiation (λ<sub>max</sub> = 365  
125 nm) on quartz plate depositions. The depositions of the complexes were obtained from CH<sub>3</sub>CN  
126 dispersions. CH<sub>3</sub>CN was chosen as a dispersant because it does not dissolve compounds S/R-1–S/R-2,

127 in this way the complexes are deposited as a microcrystalline powder film (see Fig. S4a and S4b†). This  
128 ensures that the complexes do not change their structures, as it happens in solution (see Results and  
129 discussion). Several spectra were acquired rotating the sample as described above for ECD.

130

### 131 **X-ray crystallography**

132 Good quality crystals of S/R-1–S/R-2 were selected and mounted on a D8VENTURE (Bruker)  
133 diffractometer with a CMOS detector. The crystallographic data, conditions retained for the intensity  
134 data collection, and some features of the structure refinements are listed in Table 1. All the structures  
135 were refined by the least-squares method. Intensities were collected with multilayer monochromated  
136 Mo-K $\alpha$  radiation. Lorentz polarization and absorption corrections were made for S/R-1–S/R-2. The  
137 structures were solved by direct methods, using the SHELXS-97 computer program<sup>19</sup> and refined by  
138 the full-matrix least-squares method, using the SHELXL-2014 computer program.<sup>20</sup> The non-hydrogen  
139 atoms were located in successive difference Fourier syntheses and refined with anisotropic thermal  
140 parameters on F2. For hydrogen atoms isotropic temperature factors have been assigned as 1.2 or 1.5  
141 times the respective parent.

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### 143 **NMR spectra**

144 NMR spectroscopy was performed with an Agilent INOVA 600 spectrometer operating at 600 MHz for  
145 <sup>1</sup>H. Temperature was set to 25.0  $\pm$  0.1 °C. The spectra were measured in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.

146

## 147 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

148

### 149 General syntheses

150 The solvothermal method has been extensively employed to produce polymeric lanthanide compounds  
151 with bridging carboxylate ligands with diverse interesting structures although the mechanism is not  
152 completely clear so far.<sup>3a</sup> In our experiment, we used a straightforward room temperature synthetic  
153 procedure avoiding the solvothermal process.

154 Complexes S/R-1–S/R-2 exhibit very similar IR spectra and, thus, only the IR spectrum of S-1 will be  
155 discussed. The characteristic bands of carboxyl groups appear at 1599 cm<sup>-1</sup> for asymmetric stretching  
156 (*vas*) and 1426 cm<sup>-1</sup> for symmetric stretching (*vs*). Absorption bands observed in the range 3060–2934  
157 cm<sup>-1</sup> are ascribed to the C–H stretching from the methyl group of S-(+)-2-phenylpropionate. In  
158 addition, the presence of a strong absorption peak at 1725 cm<sup>-1</sup> (–COOH) and a broad band at 3433  
159 cm<sup>-1</sup> (*v*(O–H)) confirms the presence of the protonated S-HL ligand.

160

### 161 Molecular structures of S/R-1–S/R-2

162 Single-crystal X-ray analysis of complexes S/R-1–S/R-2 reveals that all the complexes crystallize in the  
163 monoclinic P21 space group. The asymmetric unit of S/R-1–S/R-2 consists of two dinuclear [Ln<sub>2</sub>(R/S-  
164 L)<sub>6</sub>(phen)<sub>2</sub>] units named A and B. The difference between the dinuclear A–B entities increases based on  
165 the number and the acceptor oxygen atom of the hydrogen bonds with the five S-HL or R-HL non-  
166 coordinated ligands. Molecule A exhibits two hydrogen bonds at O9A and O11A, meanwhile molecule  
167 B forms three hydrogen bonds with O9B, O11B and O12B for compounds S-1 and S-2 (S-L), and with  
168 O10B, O11B and O12B for compounds R-1 and R-2 (R-L). The hydrogen bonds between the dinuclear  
169 entities and the S- or R-HL carboxylic acids do not promote 1D, 2D or 3D supramolecular arrangement  
170 between the dinuclear fragments.

171 As mentioned above, S/R-1–S/R-2 exhibit the same structure with only differences in the structural  
172 parameters and thus, only the structure of dinuclear unit A from compound S-1 will be discussed.

173 [Tb<sub>2</sub>(S-L)<sub>6</sub>(phen)<sub>2</sub>]·2.5·S-HL (S-1) A labelled plot of the structure of the dinuclear fragment A of  
174 compound S-1 is shown in Fig. 1. Selected bond distances of the dinuclear fragment A for S/R-1–S/R-2  
175 are listed in Table 2. The same structural parameters for the fragment B and hydrogen bonds and angles  
176 for all compounds are given in Tables S1 and S2<sup>†</sup> respectively.

177 The structure consists of dinuclear molecules in which each Tb(III) is TbN<sub>2</sub>O<sub>7</sub> nonacoordinated (Fig.  
178 2).

179 In each unit, the two Tb(III) atoms are bridged through four (S)-(+)-2-phenylpropionate ligands, Fig. 1  
180 and Scheme 1. The Tb1A···Tb2A distance is 3.963 Å. There are two different kinds of coordination  
181 modes for the bridging ligands (Scheme 2). One of them is a symmetrical *syn,syn* bridge ( $\eta^1:\eta^1:\mu$  or  
182 2.11 using Harris notation) (Scheme 2a) with the Tb1A–O1A, Tb1A–O5A, Tb2A–O2A, Tb2A–O6A  
183 bond lengths being 2.317(4), 2.339(4), 2.363(4) and 2.330(4) Å, respectively. The second kind of (S)-

184 (+)-2-phenylpropionate bridging ligand is best described as chelating-bridging ( $\eta^1:\eta^2:\mu$  or 2.21),  
185 Scheme 2b, in which O3A and O7A act as bridges between the two Tb atoms with distances of 2.869(4)  
186 for Tb1A–O3A, 2.343(4) Å for Tb2A–O3A, 2.610(4) for Tb2A–O7A and 2.324(4) Å for Tb1A–O7A,  
187 meanwhile O4A and O8A are bonded only with a Tb atom with distances for Tb1A–O4A and Tb2A–  
188 O8A of 2.365(4) and 2.433(4) Å respectively. The coordination sphere of each metal is completed by  
189 the two N atoms of the 1,10-phenanthroline ligand with bond lengths of Tb1A–N1A, Tb1A–N2A,  
190 Tb2A–N3A and Tb2A–N4A of 2.545(5), 2.579(5), 2.608(5) and 2.576(5) Å, respectively, and by the  
191 two carboxylic oxygen atoms from terminal chelating (S)-(+)-2-phenylpropionate anions, Scheme 2c,  
192 with bond lengths for Tb1A–O9A, Tb1A–O10A, Tb2A–O11A and Tb2A–O12A of 2.479(4), 2.446(4),  
193 2.465(4) and 2.439(4) Å respectively. The hydrogen bonds between the complex and the ligand do not  
194 promote 2D or 3D supramolecular arrangement.

195

### 196 **Magnetic properties**

197 Solid-state direct-current (dc) magnetic susceptibility ( $\chi_M$ ) data on the powder samples of complexes S-  
198 1 and S-2 were collected under the applied fields of 0.3 T (300–2.0 K) and 0.5 T (300–2.0 K),  
199 respectively. The data are plotted as  $\chi_M T$  products versus T in Fig. 3. Magnetization dependence of the  
200 applied field at 2 K for compounds S-1 and S-2 is shown in Fig. 4a and b, respectively.

201 The room-temperature value of  $\chi_M T$  for S-1 is 23.62 cm<sup>3</sup> K mol<sup>-1</sup>, in good agreement for the  
202 calculated values of two free Tb(III) ions with the 7F<sub>6</sub> ground state (23.64 cm<sup>3</sup> K mol<sup>-1</sup>).<sup>3a</sup> The value  
203 of the  $\chi_M T$  product remains almost constant down to ~50 K and then decreases to 13.02 cm<sup>3</sup> K mol<sup>-1</sup>  
204 at 2.0 K. This behaviour can be attributed to weak antiferromagnetic interactions between the metal  
205 centers of the same dinuclear unit (the hydrogen bonds offered by the S- or R-HL molecules do not  
206 connect the dinuclear entities) in conjunction with a thermal depopulation of the mJ sublevels of the  
207 Tb(III) ion, which arise from the splitting of the ground term by the ligand field in Ln(III) ions with an  
208 unquenched orbital momentum.<sup>21</sup> The magnetization in front of the applied field in compound S-1  
209 reaches a maximum value of 10.12 N $\mu_B$  at 5 T. The non-saturation of the magnetization is due to the  
210 magnetic anisotropy of the Tb(III) ion and/or to the partially populated excited states.<sup>22</sup>

211 Compound S-2 presents a  $\chi_M T$  of 2.67 at 300 K, a lower value than expected for two Eu(III) free  
212 isolated ions (3.06 cm<sup>3</sup> K mol<sup>-1</sup>).<sup>3a,23</sup> With cooling,  $\chi_M T$  decreases gradually, reaching a value of  
213 0.04 cm<sup>3</sup> K mol<sup>-1</sup> at 2 K, which should be explained through the depopulation of the excited states  
214 (7F<sub>J</sub>=1–6) to the ground state 7F<sub>0</sub>.<sup>23</sup> Magnetization measurements for complex S-2 show a value of  
215 0.1 N $\mu_B$  under an applied field of 5 T without saturation.

216 With the aim to investigate whether Tb(III) complexes show slow relaxation of the magnetization,  
217 alternating-current (ac) magnetic measurements for compound S-1 were performed on polycrystalline  
218 samples in the 2–10 K range and under a dc field of 0, 1500, 2000, 3000 and 4000 G with an ac field  
219 oscillating at 10 and 1000 Hz (Fig. S1†). No maxima in the out-ofphase ( $\chi''_M$ ) signal were observed  
220 without the static applied field, as a consequence of the low energy barrier of the flipping of the



221 magnetization, not energetically high enough to maintain single configuration of the magnetization<sup>24</sup> or  
222 due to the quantum tunnelling of magnetization effect (QTM) on the diminution of the energy barrier.<sup>25</sup>  
223 Frequency dependence of the susceptibility for compound S-1 is observed under high dc applied fields  
224 (>2000 G) but without a net maximum above 2 K demonstrating that the QTM effect is not completely  
225 vanished.

226

### 227 **Photophysical studies: emission spectral analysis**

228 Circular dichroism. Electronic circular dichroism (ECD) spectra in the solid state of complexes S-1 and  
229 R-1 and S-2–R-2 are shown in Fig. 5 and 6, respectively, and display rather weak Cotton effects. In the  
230 ECD spectra of Tb(III) compounds S-1 and R-1, the bands between 320 and 360 nm can be assigned to  
231 Tb  $f \rightarrow f$  transitions (probably  $7F_4 \rightarrow 5D_3/5G_5/5D_2$ ). Only a small contribution from the 1,10-  
232 phenanthroline ligands is visible, despite 1,10-phenanthroline transitions having a much greater  
233 absorption cross section than Ln(III) ones. Similarly, in the ECD spectra of Eu(III) compounds S-2, R-2,  
234 the bands around 300 nm can be attributed to  $f \rightarrow f$  transitions, since their width and spacing are not  
235 compatible with 1,10-phenanthroline transitions.

236 Emission spectra analysis. Emission spectra of microcrystalline compounds S/R-1–S/R-2 on a quartz  
237 plate deposition ( $\lambda_{\text{exc}} = 365$  nm) at room temperature are shown in Fig. 7 and 8. The corresponding solid  
238 state absorption spectra are shown in Fig. S2 and S3,<sup>†</sup> respectively. The sensitized Ln(III) based  
239 luminescence from the 1,10-phenanthroline ligand leads to the observation of the  $f-f$  transition of  
240 Tb(III) complexes S-1 and R-1 (Fig. 7). The spectra show the corresponding emission peaks due to the  
241 electronic transitions from the excited spectroscopic level  $5D_4$  to the fundamental sublevels  $7F_J$  at 489 (  
242  $J = 6$ ), 544 ( $J = 5$ ), 584 ( $J = 4$ ) and 620 nm ( $J = 3$ ). The emission peaks from the 1,10-phenanthroline  
243 antenna ligand are not observed confirming the efficiency of the phen-Ln energy transfer process (Fig.  
244 S4c<sup>†</sup>). Similarly, upon exciting 1,10-phenanthroline at 365 nm, the Eu(III) compounds S-2 and R-2 (Fig.  
245 8) display a set of transitions  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_J$  at  $\lambda_{\text{em}} = 579$  nm ( $J = 0$ ), 592 nm ( $J = 1$ ), 614 nm  
246 (hypersensitive transition  $J = 2$ ), 656 nm ( $J = 3$ ) and 697 ( $J = 4$ ). The  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_2$  hypersensitive  
247 transition is electric-dipole allowed and can be extremely sensitive to the geometry of the first  
248 coordination sphere of the Eu center.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary the magnetic dipole transition  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_1$  at  
249 592 nm is rather insensitive to the coordination environment and provides a normalization to the  
250 hypersensitive transition. The fact that the total emission is stronger at 614 nm than at 593 nm indicates  
251 that the coordination sphere of Eu(III) does not present an inversion center.<sup>27</sup> The emission shows only  
252 one peak for the  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_0$  transition indicating the presence of a single chemical environment around  
253 the Eu(III) ion. As in the Tb(III) compound, the sensitization from the ligand to Eu(III) is nearly  
254 complete as also in this case no ligand based emission bands are observed. Is it worth noting that the  
255 emission spectra recorded on quartz plate depositions, casted from acetonitrile dispersion (Fig. 7 and 8),  
256 closely retrace the spectra measured on the crystalline powder (Fig. S4a and b<sup>†</sup>), thus confirming that  
257 the crystal structure and packing do not change significantly upon dispersing the sample in acetonitrile.

258 The solid state CPL spectra of Tb(III) compounds S-1 and R-1 appear rather weak but measurable,  
259 yielding the expected mirror image spectra for the two enantiomers (Fig. 9). Only the CPL of the most  
260 intense  $5D_4 \rightarrow 7F_5$  band at 544 nm is reliably detectable. The glum factor of this band is around  $\pm 3.5 \times$   
261  $10^{-3}$  (see Table 3).

262 The CPL spectra of Eu(III) compounds S-2 and R-2 display mirror image bands corresponding to  $5D_0$   
263  $\rightarrow 7F_J$  ( $J = 1, 2, 4$ ) transitions (Fig. 10).

264 The luminescence spectrum in Fig. 8 clearly shows that the hypersensitive transitions have at least two  
265 resolved components. In the CPL spectrum (Fig. 10) all the  $2J + 1$  components of the  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_2$   
266 manifold can be recognized. Indeed, the couplet-like structure around 617 nm displays two bands in the  
267 lower energy region (negative component compound S-2) and a bifid structure in the higher energy  
268 region (exactly reproduced in the mirror image by the enantiomer R-2). This structure calls for at least  
269 three unresolved bands with different signs (negative–positive–negative for the S enantiomer, compound  
270 S-2). This is again consistent with a low symmetry coordination environment.

271 Interestingly, the  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_1$  transition is less intense than the hypersensitive transition in terms of  
272 glum, (Table 3). Usually the magnetically allowed–electrically forbidden  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_1$  transition yields a  
273 higher glum than forced electrical dipole transitions (including  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_2$ ). An explanation for this  
274 unusual behaviour may lie in the fact that up to 3 non-degenerate transitions can be hidden under the  
275 band around 593 nm in a  $C_2$  environment. It is possible that these unresolved transitions have opposite  
276 signs, partially cancelling out the total intensity of this band.

277 At this point, we investigated the CPL properties of the same compounds in  $CH_2Cl_2$  solution.

278 Interestingly, under such conditions the CPL spectra of both Tb(III) and Eu(III) are significantly  
279 different from the ones measured on the deposition.

280 In the case of Tb compounds a bright green luminescence and a rather strong CPL spectrum (Fig. S5†)  
281 can be recorded. The dominant feature is again the band around 544 nm. This transition displays a rich  
282 CPL spectrum with a glum factor of about  $\pm 1.6 \times 10^{-2}$ , higher than the solid state value by almost an  
283 order of magnitude.

284 Again, in the case of Eu(III) compounds (Fig. S6†), the CPL spectra show a relatively intense couplet-  
285 like band around 593 nm ( $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_1$ ) with a glum factor about  $\pm 2.5 \times 10^{-2}$ . The glum corresponding  
286 to the  $5D_0 \rightarrow 7F_2$  transition is of the order of magnitude of  $10^{-3}$ .

287 The differences between the CPL spectra in solution and in the solid state are a strong indication that the  
288 geometry of the complexes in the solid state determined by X-ray diffraction undergoes a deep change  
289 upon dissolution in a good solvent. It is known that Ln complexes can undergo a wealth of fast  
290 equilibria in solution, losing the well-ordered crystal structure.

291 In order to obtain a deeper insight into the processes that such compounds undergo in solution, we  
292 recorded the  $^1H$ -NMR spectra of Eu<sub>2</sub> and Tb<sub>2</sub> complexes in  $CDCl_3$ . In both cases, the NMR spectra  
293 display very broad bands (HWHM  $\approx 1000$ – $10\,000$  Hz). This confirms the fluxional nature of the  
294 compounds and the presence of more than one species in fast/intermediate equilibrium on the NMR time

295 scale in solution (Fig. S7 and S8<sup>†</sup>). In all the spectra, the resonances due to the unbound (S)-(+)- or (R)-  
296 (-)-2-phenylpropionic acid ligand are clearly visible, while the unbound 1,10-phenanthroline bands are  
297 not visible in the case of Tb. In the Eu spectrum instead, they are visible but their relative intensity is  
298 much smaller than expected from the intensity of free (S)-(+)- or (R)-(-)-2- phenylpropionic acid  
299 signals.

300 This suggests that in all cases, most of the 1,10-phenanthroline is complexed with the lanthanide.  
301 This is in agreement with CPL data. Indeed, since it is possible to measure luminescence and CPL  
302 spectra also in solution under 365 nm irradiation, it is necessary that each Ln(III) giving rise to a CPL  
303 signal interacts with both 1,10-phenanthroline (acting as the sensitizer) and (S)-(+)- or (R)-(-)-2-  
304 phenylpropionic acid (acting as the chirality source).

305

306 **CONCLUSIONS**

307

308 We have successfully isolated dinuclear chiral compounds of the formula  $[\text{Ln}_2(\text{S-L})_6(\text{phen})_2] \cdot 2.5\text{S-HL}$   
309 in which  $\text{Ln} = \text{Tb}$  (S-1),  $\text{Ln} = \text{Eu}$  (S-2) and  $[\text{Ln}_2(\text{R-L})_6(\text{phen})_2] \cdot 2.5\text{R-HL}$  where  $\text{Ln} = \text{Tb}$  (R-1),  $\text{Ln} = \text{Eu}$   
310 (R-2). S/R-HL = (S)-(+)- and (R)-(-)-phenylpropionic acid respectively. Magnetic and luminescence  
311 studies of compounds S-2 and S-2 indicate the ground states  $7F_6$  for Tb(III) and  $7F_0$  for Eu(III) centres.  
312 In the Tb(III) compounds ac magnetic measurements have been carried out showing the frequency  
313 dependence of  $\chi''M$  only under very high dc fields demonstrating that the QTM is not completely  
314 vanished. The neutral chelating 1,10-phenanthroline ligands block two coordination sites per Ln(III) ion  
315 and terminate further aggregation or potential polymerization, playing also the role of sensitizing the  
316 luminescence of the lanthanide ion, through the so-called antenna effect. S/R-1–S/R-2 show sensitized  
317 luminescence. We have reported the luminescence study of the new chiral compounds including the  
318 circularly polarized luminescence spectra of S/R-1–S/R-2. Usually, CPL is measured for mononuclear  
319 Eu complexes, while reports of CPL from complexes with higher nuclearity, such as binuclear  
320 helicates<sup>14</sup> or trinuclear<sup>15</sup> and heptanuclear<sup>16</sup> systems, remain rare. Moreover, in the context of chiral  
321 luminescent complexes commonly polydentate and often macrocyclic ligands have been used,<sup>17</sup> while  
322 to the best of our knowledge, simple monofunctional (i.e. monotopic) chiral carboxylates seem to be  
323 unprecedented.

324

325 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

326

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328

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412 **Legends to figures**

413

414 **Figure. 1** Partially labeled plot of fragment A from compound S-1.

415

416 **Figure. 2** Coordination polyhedron of the Tb(III) ions in S-1A.

417

418 **Scheme 1** Partially labeled diagram of the dinuclear fragment of compound S-1.

419

420 **Scheme 2** Coordination modes of the S/R-2-phenylpropionate ligand.

421

422 **Figure. 3**  $\chi_{MT}$  vs. T plot for compounds S-1 and S-2.

423

424 **Figure. 4** Magnetization vs. applied field in Gauss at 2 K for compounds S-1 (a) and S-2 (b).

425

426 **Figure 5.** Solid state ECD spectra of S-1 and R-1 complexes.

427

428 **Figure 6** Solid state ECD spectra of S-2 and R-2 complexes.

429

430 **Figure 7** Solid state emission spectra of Tb(III) complexes S-1 and R-1 on a quartz plate deposition.

431

432

433 **Figure 8** Solid state emission spectra of Eu(III) complexes S-2 and R-2 on a quartz plate deposition.

434

435 **Figure 9** Solid state CPL spectra of Tb(III) complexes S-1 and R-1 on a quartz plate deposition.

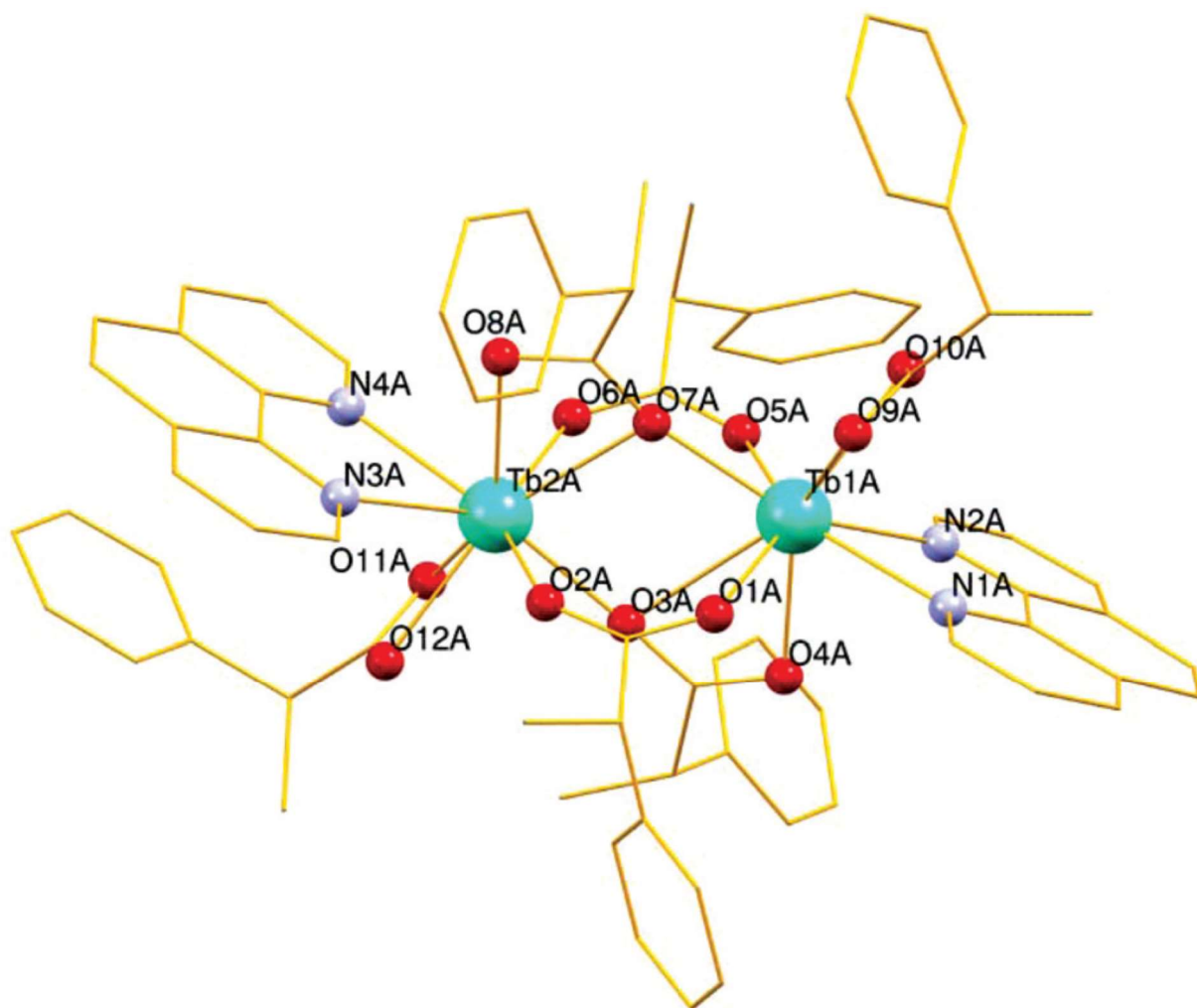
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437 **Figure 10** Solid state CPL spectra of Eu(III) complexes S-2 and R-2 on a quartz plate deposition.

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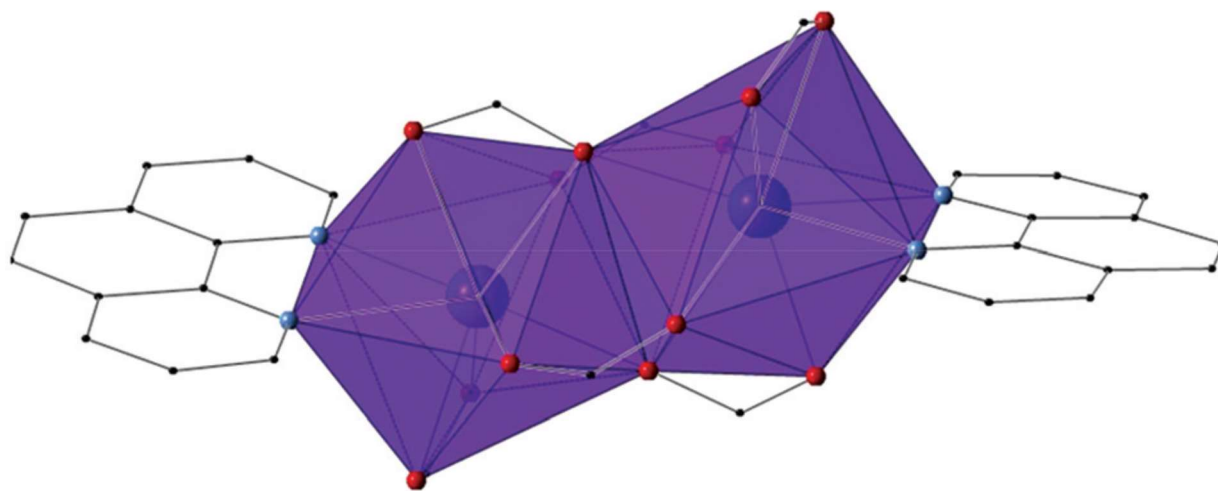
FIGURE 1



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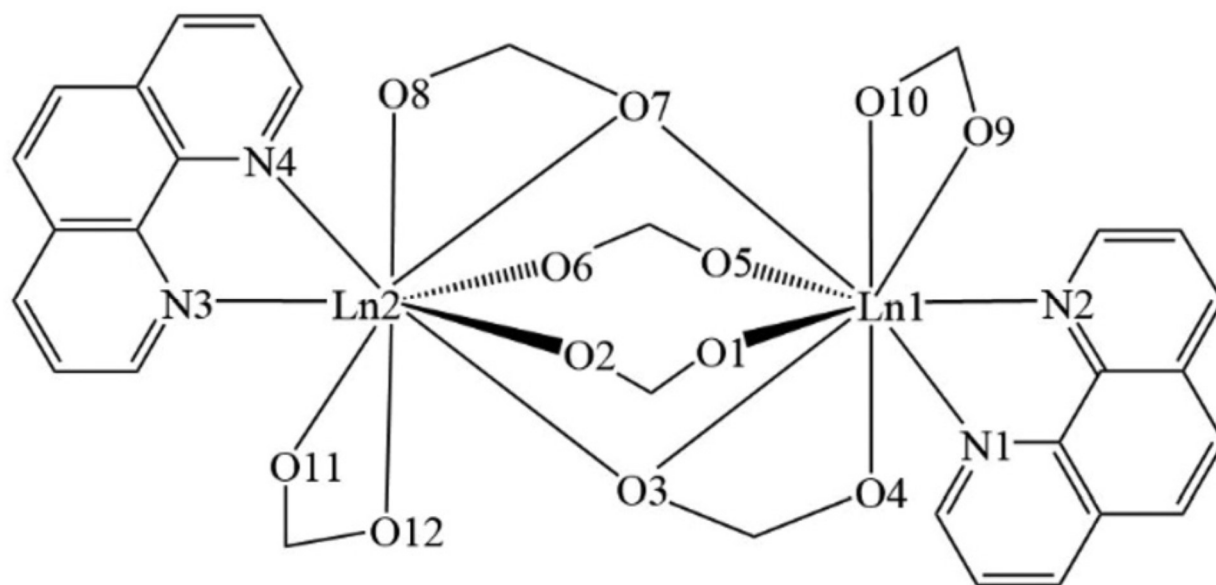
**FIGURE 2**



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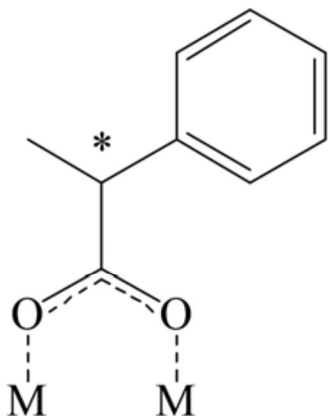
SCHEM 1



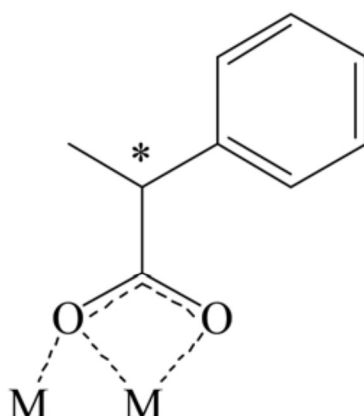
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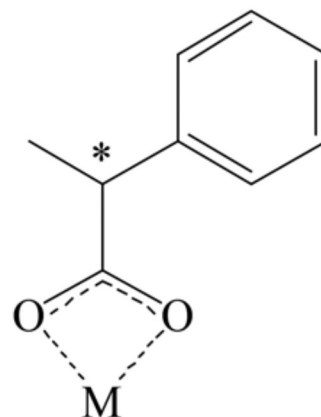
SCHEM 2



a) *syn, syn* bridge



b) chelating-bridging

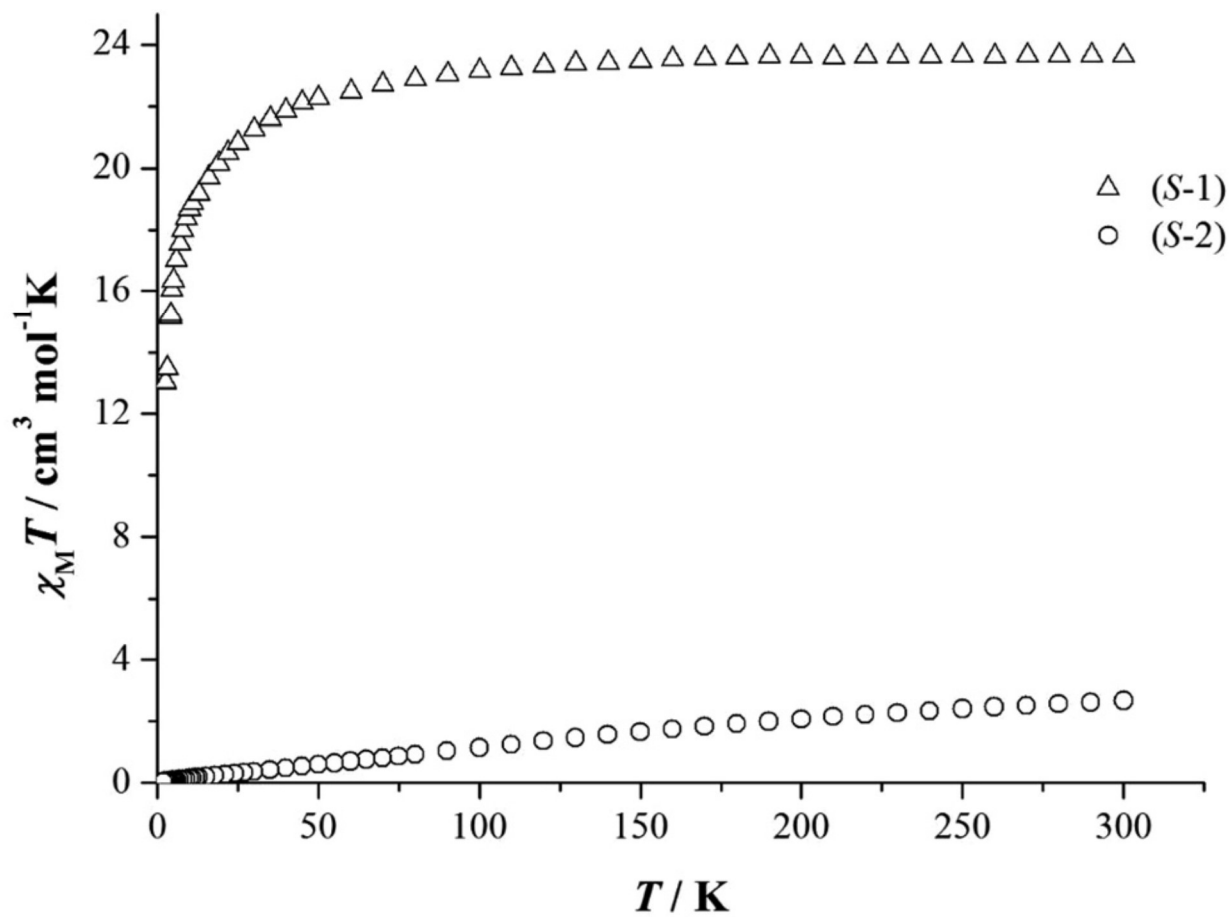


c) chelating

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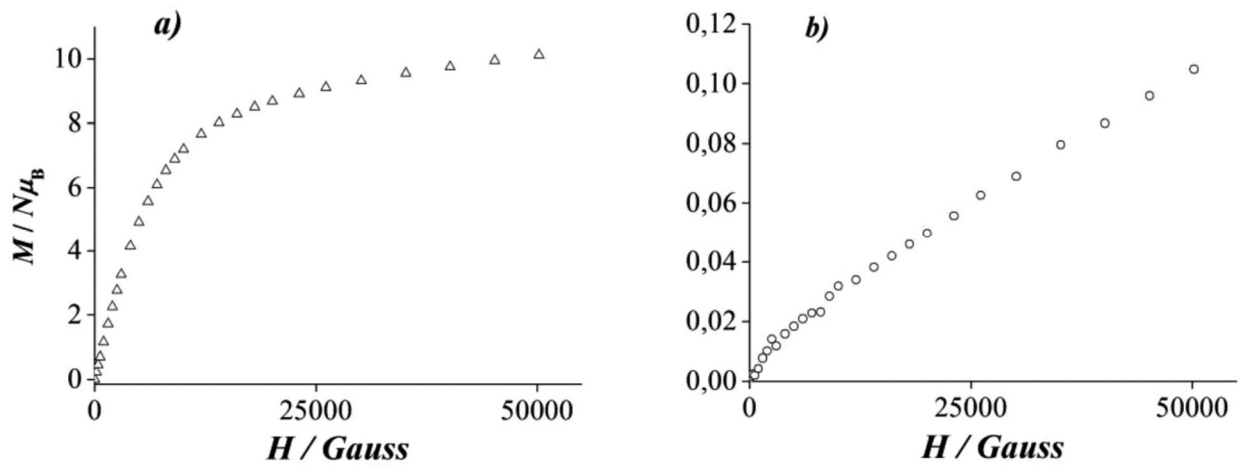
FIGURE 3



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FIGURE 4



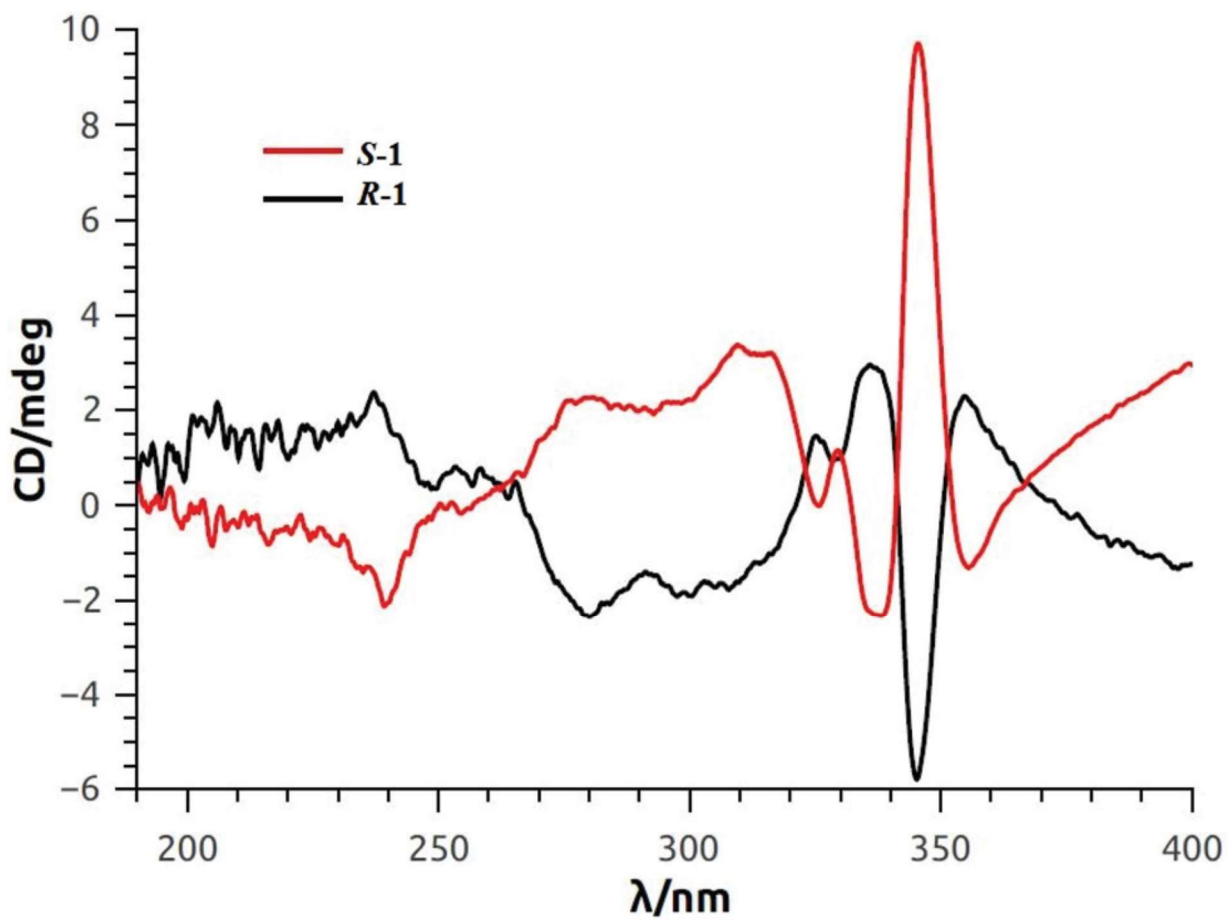
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FIGURE 5

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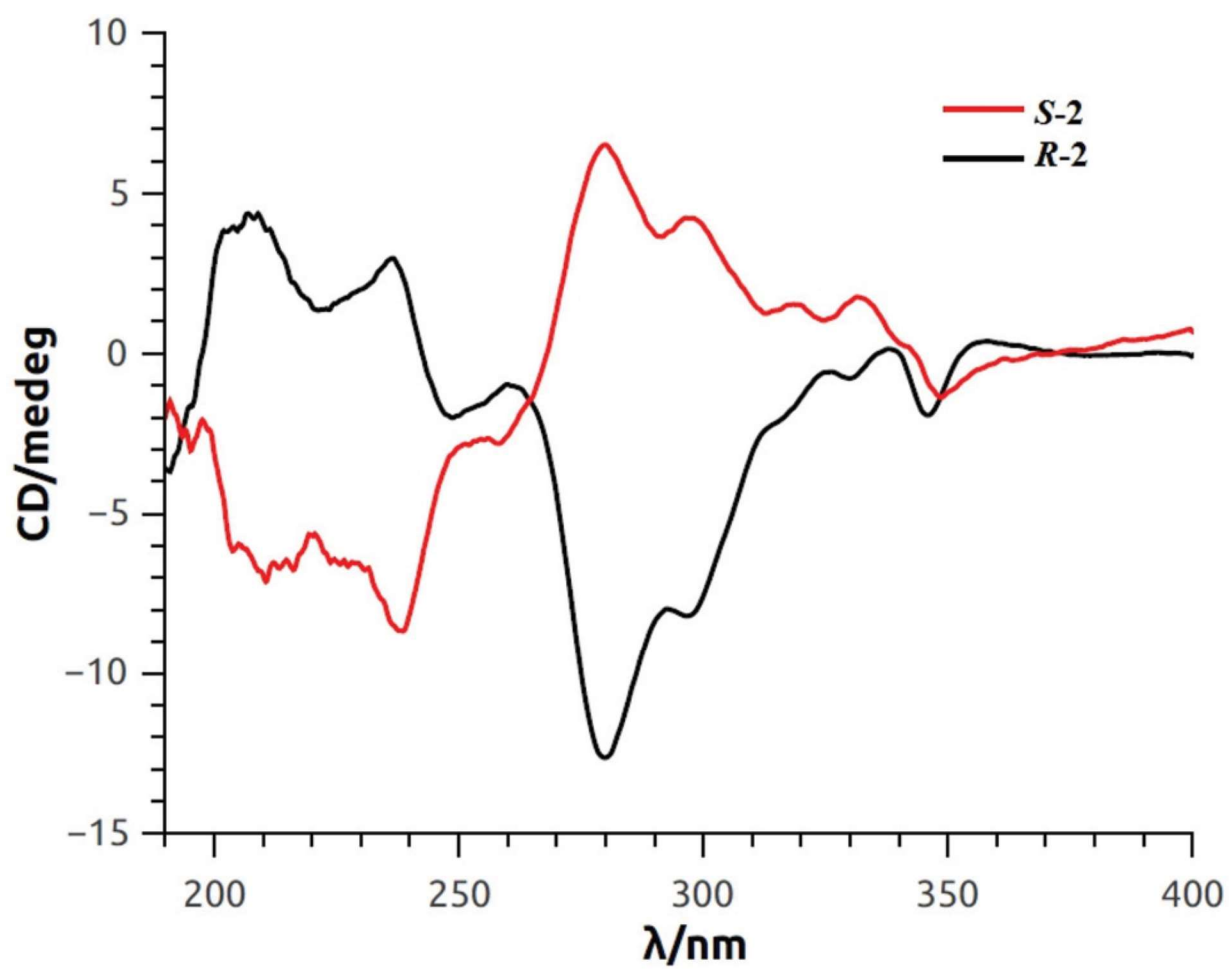
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FIGURE 6

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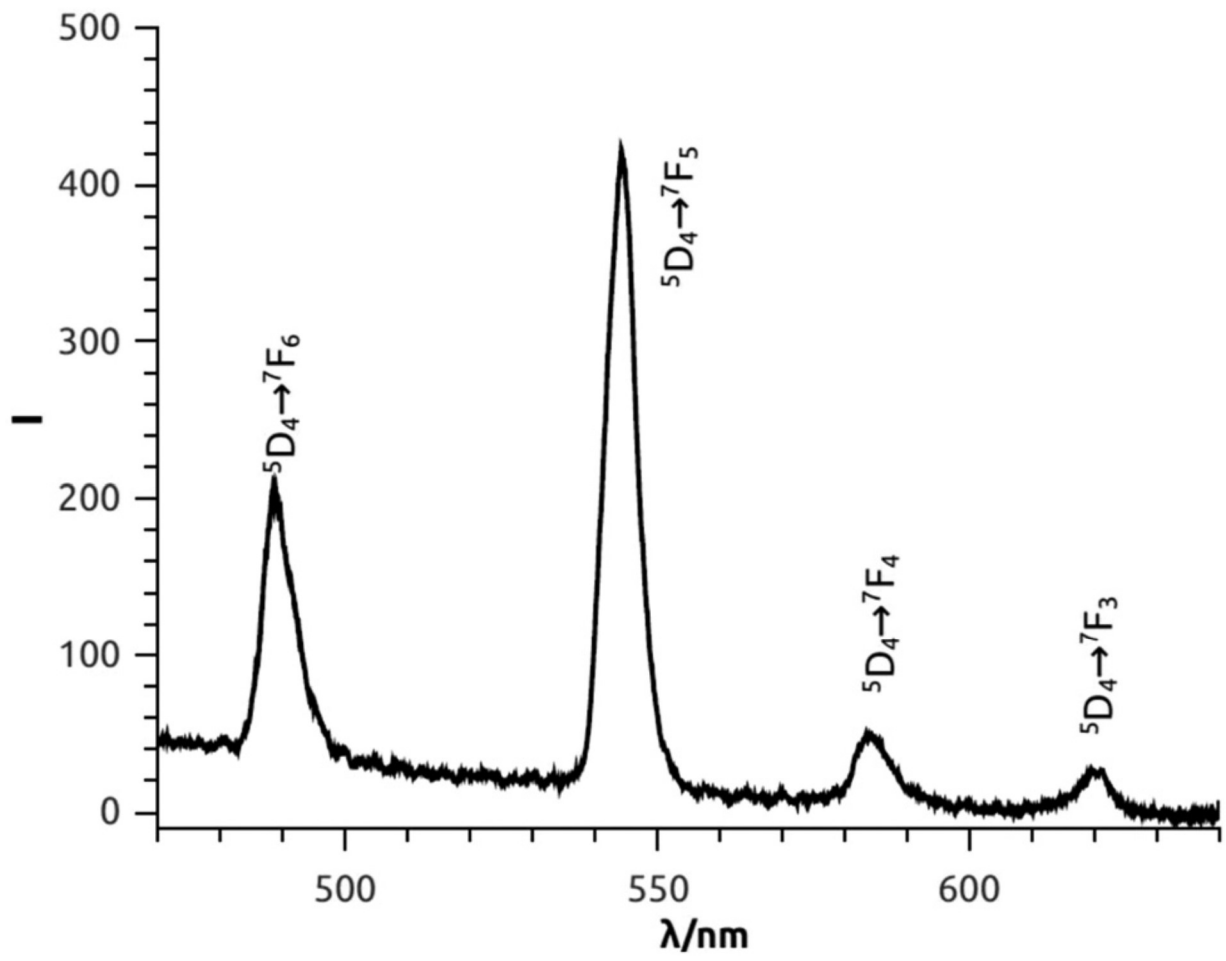
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FIGURE 7

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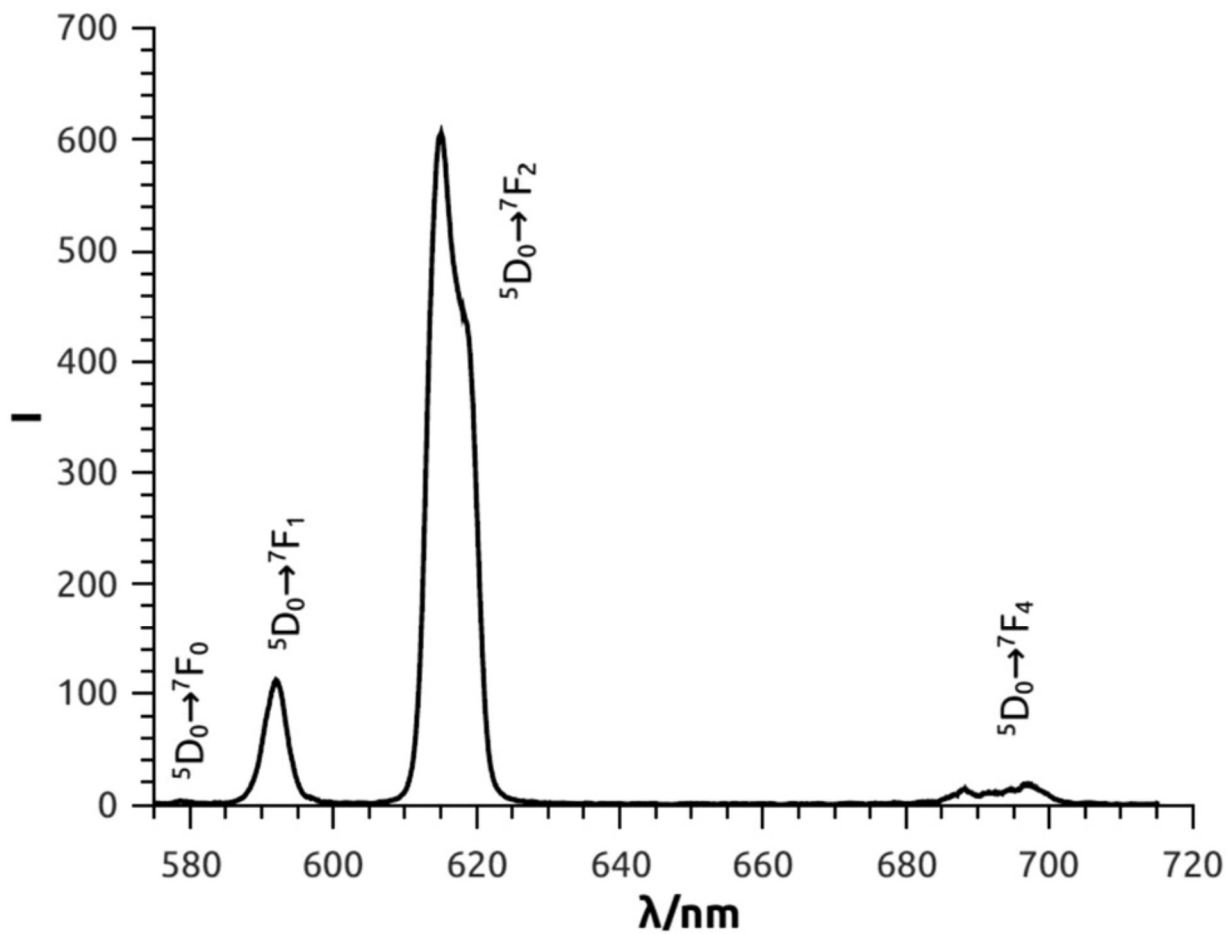
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FIGURE 8

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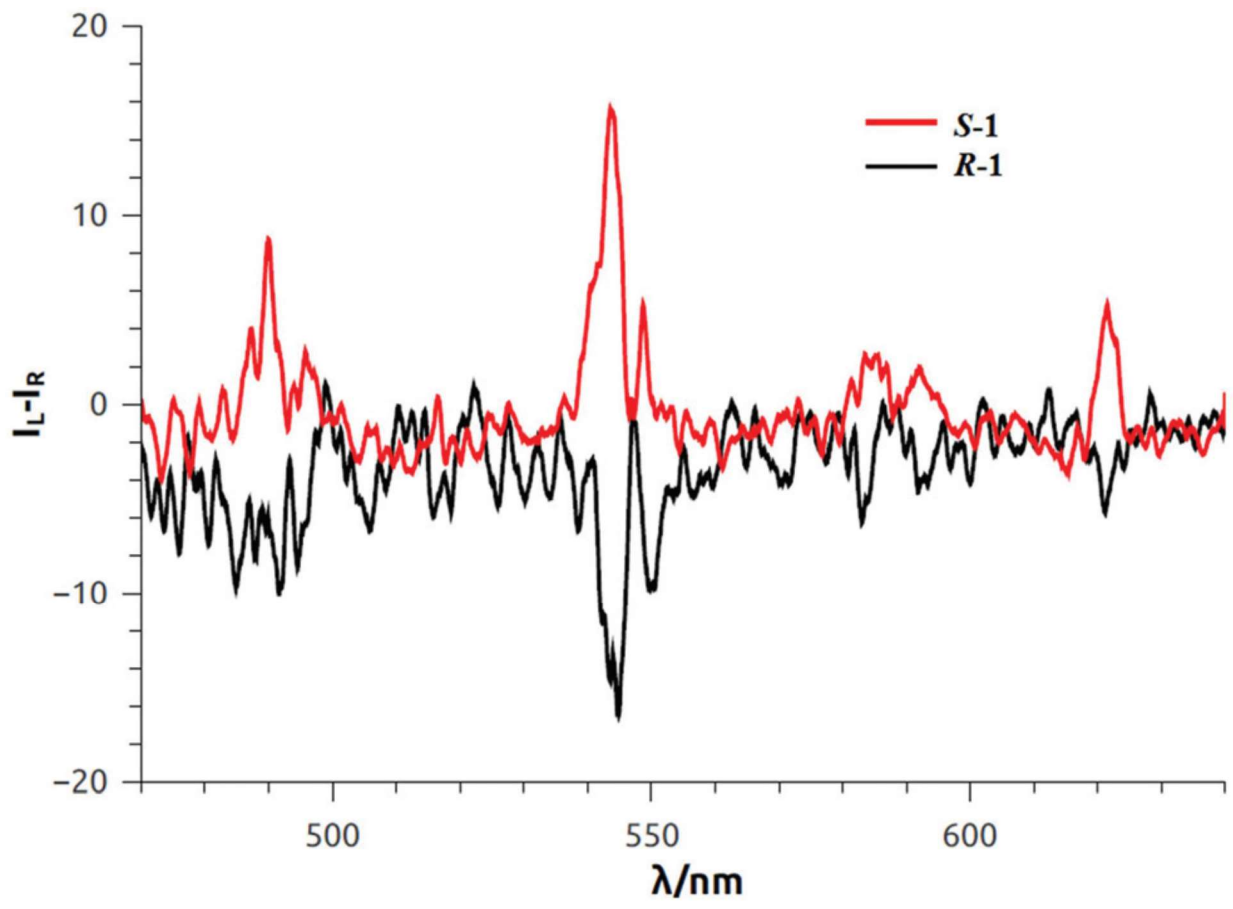
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FIGURE 9

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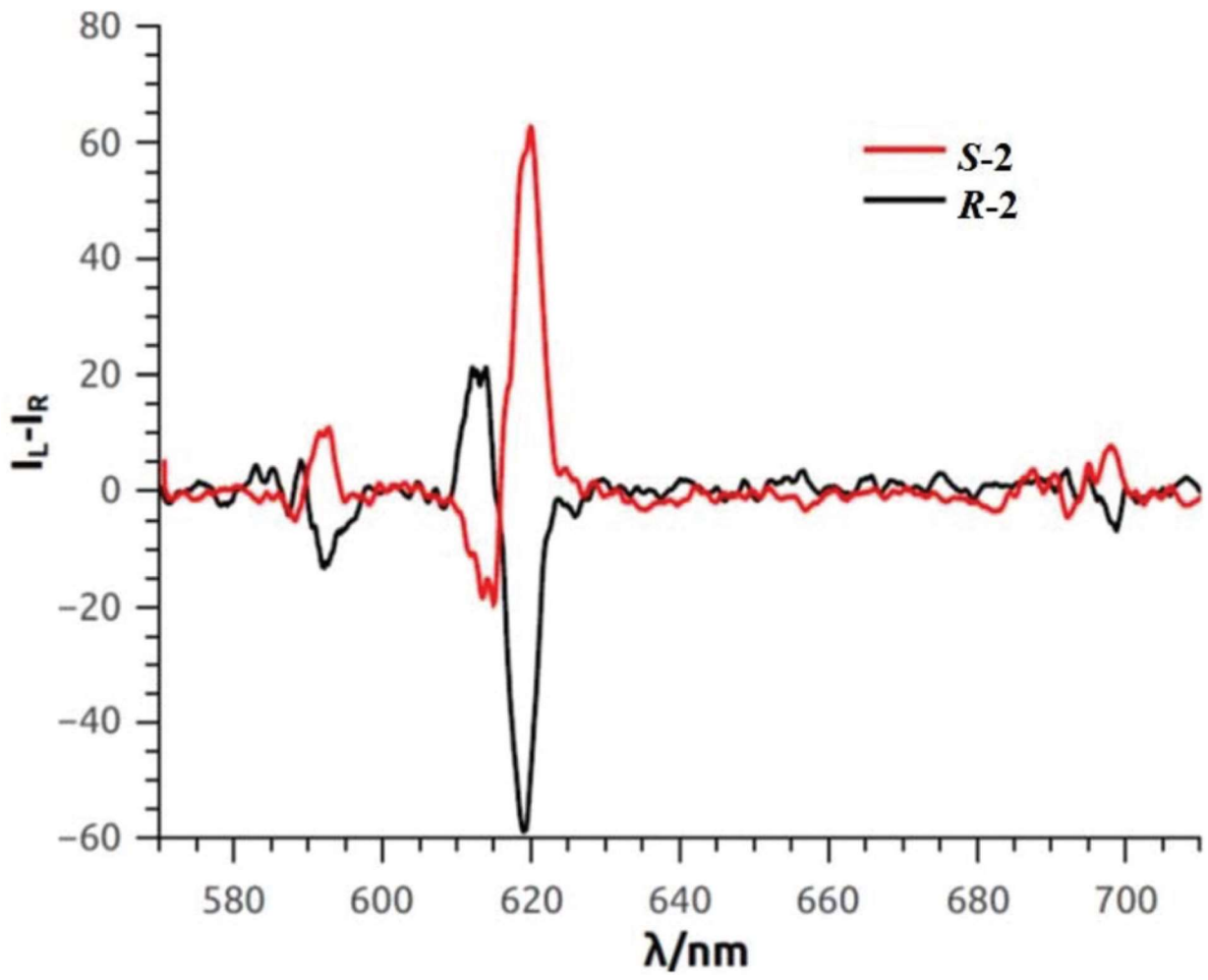
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FIGURE 10

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498 **Table 1** Crystal data and collection details for the X-ray structure of complexes S/R-1–S/R-2  
 499

	S-1	S-2	R-1	R-2
Formula	2(C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>20</sub> N <sub>4</sub> O <sub>12</sub> Tb <sub>2</sub> ) 5(C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>2</sub> )	2(C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>20</sub> N <sub>4</sub> O <sub>12</sub> Eu <sub>2</sub> ) 5(C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>2</sub> )	2(C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>20</sub> N <sub>4</sub> O <sub>12</sub> Tb <sub>2</sub> ) 5(C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>2</sub> )	2(C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>20</sub> N <sub>4</sub> O <sub>12</sub> Eu <sub>2</sub> ) 5(C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>2</sub> )
FW	3897.34	3869.46	3897.34	3869.46
System	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic
Space group	P21	P21	P21	P21
<i>a</i> /Å	17.6062(11)	17.5649(9)	17.5693(9)	17.5789(10)
<i>b</i> /Å	19.2507(12)	19.2624(10)	19.2449(10)	19.2932(11)
<i>c</i> /Å	26.6339(15)	26.7346(12)	26.6290(13)	26.7404(13)
$\alpha$ /°	90	90	90	90
$\beta$ /°	99.980(2)	100.137(2)	99.938(2)	99.993(2)
$\gamma$ /°	90	90	90	90
<i>V</i> /Å <sup>3</sup>	8890.5(9)	8904.2(8)	8868.7(8)	8931.5(8)
<i>Z</i>	2	2	2	2
<i>T</i> , K	100(2)	100(2)	100(2)	100(2)
$\lambda$ (MoK $\alpha$ ), Å	0.71073	0.71073	0.71073	0.71073
<i>D</i> <sub>calc</sub> (g cm <sup>-3</sup> )	1.4546	1.443	1.459	1.439
$\mu$ (MoK $\alpha$ ), mm <sup>-1</sup>	1.649	1.467	1.653	1.462
<i>R</i>	0.0427	0.0283	0.0394	0.0317
w <i>R</i> <sub>2</sub>	0.0887	0.0493	0.0894	0.0695

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503 **Table 2** Selected bond distances (Å) in the dinuclear fragment A for compounds S/R-1–S/R-2  
 504

	S-1	S-2	R-1	R-2
Ln1A–O1A	2.317(4)	2.341(3)	2.333(4)	2.361(3)
Ln1A–O3A	2.869(4)	2.806(3)	2.615(4)	2.606(3)
Ln1A–O4A	2.365(4)	2.394(3)	2.433(4)	2.466(3)
Ln1A–O5A	2.339(4)	2.364(3)	2.359(4)	2.388(3)
Ln1A–O7A	2.324(4)	2.349(3)	2.343(4)	2.382(3)
Ln1A–O9A	2.479(4)	2.488(3)	2.465(4)	2.479(3)
Ln1A–O10A	2.446(4)	2.469(3)	2.435(4)	2.462(3)
Ln1A–N1A	2.545(5)	2.587(4)	2.579(4)	2.604(3)
Ln1A–N2A	2.579(5)	2.576(4)	2.606(5)	2.630(3)
Ln2A–O2A	2.363(4)	2.395(3)	2.336(4)	2.369(3)
Ln2A–O3A	2.343(4)	2.370(3)	2.318(3)	2.352(2)
Ln2A–O6A	2.330(4)	2.342(3)	2.312(4)	2.343(3)
Ln2A–O7A	2.610(4)	2.596(3)	2.872(4)	2.821(3)
Ln2A–O8A	2.433(4)	2.465(3)	2.365(4)	2.401(3)
Ln2A–O11A	2.465(4)	2.477(3)	2.478(4)	2.500(3)
Ln2A–O12A	2.439(4)	2.463(3)	2.441(4)	2.476(3)
Ln2A–N3A	2.608(5)	2.623(4)	2.575(5)	2.598(3)
Ln2A–N4A	2.576(5)	2.588(4)	2.550(5)	2.576(3)
Ln1A···Ln2A	3.963	3.965	3.963	3.971

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 506

507 **Table 3** g lum factors for different transitions of the compounds S/R-1–S/R-2 on a quartz plate  
508 deposition  
509

	$(R) \xi_{lum}$	$(S) \xi_{lum}$
<b>Tb</b>		
544 nm	$-3.5 \times 10^{-2}$	$+3.5 \times 10^{-2}$
<b>Eu</b>		
593 nm	$-9 \times 10^{-2}$	$+9 \times 10^{-2}$
613 nm	$+7 \times 10^{-2}$	$-7 \times 10^{-2}$
620 nm	$-1.2 \times 10^{-2}$	$+1.3 \times 10^{-2}$
698 nm	$-1.8 \times 10^{-2}$	$+2.0 \times 10^{-2}$

510  
511