

Synthesis and Hypnotic Activities of 4-Thio Analogues of N^3 -Substituted Uridines

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Reaction of tri-*O*-acetyluridine (1) with benzyl bromide or 2-chloroacetophenone in the presence of K_2CO_3 gave the N^3 -substituted analogues 2a,c. Condensation of 1 with (\pm)-1-phenylethanol or 3,5-dimethylbenzyl alcohol using the Mitsunobu reaction also gave 2b, d in good yields. These compounds were allowed to react with Lawesson's reagent and were subsequently treated with ammonia to afford the 4-thiouracil derivatives 5a—d. Compounds 5a—c showed moderate hypnotic activity in mice. However, N^3 -(3,5-dimethyl)benzyl derivatives 3d, 5d were found to be almost inactive in this assay.

Key words 4-thiouridine; hypnotic activity; central nervous system depressant; Mitsunobu reaction

It has been reported that uridine shows depressant effects toward the central nervous system (CNS). For instance, uridine decreased spontaneous activity in mice and showed protection against seizures caused by penicillin or metrazol.^{1,2)} In addition, uridine was extracted from the brainstems of 24 h sleep-deprived rats³⁾ and caused natural sleep following nocturnal infusion into the rat brain.^{4,5)} However, uridine itself does not possess any hypnotic activity, as determined by loss of the righting reflex in experimental animals. In 1985, it was demonstrated that N^3 -benzyluridine exerts hypnotic activity on mice by intracerebroventricular (i.c.v.) administration,⁶⁾ and the structure–activity relationship has been further explored.^{7–9)} It became clear that the introduction of methylbenzyl, as well as a benzyl group, at N^3 of uridine is effective in producing CNS depressant effects.^{7b,c)} Trials to modify the sugar showed a diminished effect,^{7b,e–g)} except for N^3 -substituted thymidine^{7d)} and arabinofuranosyluracil.^{7h)} It has been proven that N^3 -phenacyluridine strongly intensifies the sleep induced by pentobarbital (PB) or diazepam.^{8a,b)} Although N^1 -allyl-5,6-substituted 2-thiouracil derivatives have been synthesized and evaluated in terms of sedative-hypnotic activity,⁹⁾ no report concerning N^3 -substituted 4-thiouridines has appeared. Barbiturates have been in use as a sedative hypnotic since 1903, and 2-thiobarbituric acids (2-thioxohexahydropyrimidine-4,6-dione) continue to be used as short-acting barbiturates. This background prompted us to explore the 4-thio analogues of N^3 -substituted uridine. In this paper, we wish to report the synthesis and CNS-depressant effect of N^3 -substituted 4-thiouridines (**5a—d**).

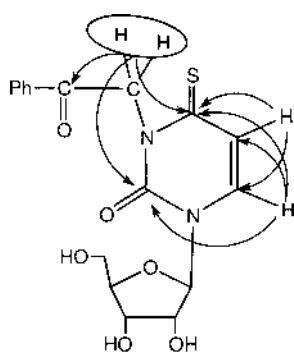
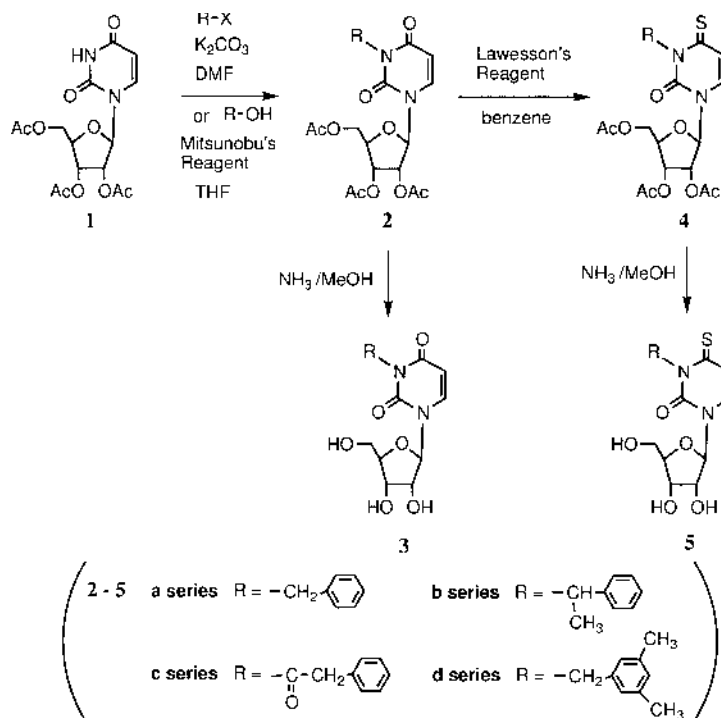
Synthesis Tri-*O*-acetyl derivatives of N^3 -benzyluridine (**2a**) and N^3 -phenacyluridine (**2c**) were prepared by the nucleophilic displacement of 2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyluridine (**1**) with benzyl bromide or 2-chloroacetophenone in the presence of K_2CO_3 in *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF), according to the published method.^{7a,8a)} In the case of **2d**, condensation of **1** with 3,5-dimethylbenzyl alcohol using diisopropyl azodicarboxylate and tributylphosphine was employed,¹⁰⁾ since aralkyl halide was not commercially obtainable. Also, (\pm)-1-phenylethanol was similarly reacted with **1** to give a 1-phenylethyl derivative (**2b**) as a mixture of diastereomers. Compound **2d** was deprotected by treatment with ammonia in MeOH to give **3d**. Next, the synthesis of N^3 -substituted 4-

thiouridines was explored as follows. Methods concerning the thiation of uracil or uridine have been universally reported. However, the introduction of an alkyl group on N^3 of 4-thiouridine has been difficult because 4-alkylthio derivatives were inevitably formed.¹¹⁾ Recently, 3-alkyluracils were successfully converted to the 4-thio congener by Lawesson's reagent.¹²⁾ We adopted this method for the synthesis of compounds **5a—d**. Thus, compound **2a** was refluxed with Lawesson's reagent in benzene to give **4a** in 52% yield, and subsequent treatment of the product with ammonia in MeOH gave N^3 -benzyl-4-thiouridine **5a**, which showed an absorption maximum at 330 nm on UV.¹³⁾ In a similar manner, compounds **5b—d** were prepared from the corresponding N^3 -substituted tri-*O*-acetyluridine (**2b—d**). To confirm the site of alkylation, the most biologically active compound, **5c**, was subjected to heteronuclear multiple bond connectivity (HMBC) study. As shown in Fig. 1, this compound was demonstrated to be the 3-phenacyl analogue, since correlation between the methylene protons of the phenacyl group and C(4) as well as C(2) was observed.

Pharmacological Results

The hypnotic activities of the N^3 -substituted 4-thiouridines were assayed according to previously established procedures,⁷⁾ and the results are presented in Table 1 and Fig. 2. By comparison with the earlier result of N^3 -benzyluridine (**3a**, 36 ± 2 min),^{7b)} 4-thio congener (**5a**) exhibited better hypnotic activity (84 ± 10 min) when administered to mice by i.c.v. injection at $2.0 \mu\text{mol}/\text{mouse}$. This is the first demonstration that N^3 -substituted 4-thiouridine has CNS-depressant activity. In contrast, **5a** reduced a prolongation of PB-induced sleep by 24% compared with **3a**. In the series of N^3 -(1-phenylethyl) derivatives, it was reported that a uracil congener (**3b**) caused only 7 min sleep at the same dosage.^{7b)} However, the 4-thiouridine derivative (**5b**) showed moderate hypnotic activity (58 ± 15 min). The PB-induced sleep-promoting activity of **5b** was similar to that **3b**.^{7b)} These results indicate that N^3 -benzyl (**5a**) or the N^3 -(1-phenylethyl) derivative (**5b**) of 4-thiouracil show enhanced hypnotic activity and decreased PB-induced sleep-promoting activity compared to the corresponding uracil congener (**3a, b**). Although **5c** showed the most potent hypnotic activity (96 ± 19 min)

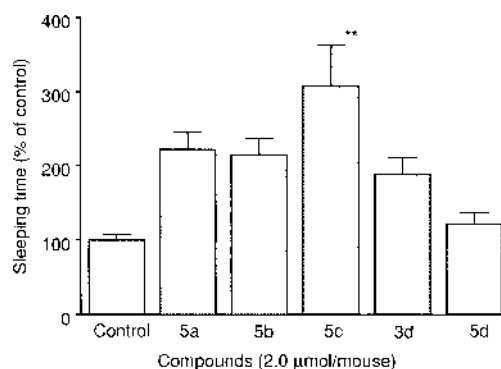
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Fig. 1. Selected HMBC Correlations of **5c** in DMSO-*d*₆Table 1. Hypnotic Activities of *N*³-Substituted 4-Thiouridines and Related Compounds by i.c.v. Injection to Mice

Compound ^{a)}	Hypnotic activity ^{b)} (min)	n/n ^{c)}
Control	None	0/8
3a ^{7b)}	36±2	6/8
5a	84±10	6/8
3b ^{7b)}	7	5/6
5b	58±15	5/6
3c	184±13	7/7
5c	96±19	6/7
3d	None	0/8
5d	None	0/8

a) Compounds were administered by i.c.v. injection at the dose of 2.0 μmol/mouse. b) Results are expressed as the mean sleeping time (min)±S.E.M. "None" indicates no hypnotic activity. c) Ratio of animals which slept to animals tested.

among the 4-thio series, its activity was almost half that of **3c** (184±13 min). It is indicated that the oxygen of the 4 position of the uracil ring is important in the hypnotic activity of **3c**. However, **5c** caused a prolongation of PB-induced sleep

Fig. 2. Effects of *N*³-Substituted 4-Thiouridine and Related Compounds on Pentobarbital-Induced Sleep by i.c.v. Injection to Mice

***p*<0.01 vs. control. The reported data for compounds **3a**, **3b** and **3c** is 292, 231 and 230%, respectively.^{7b,8a)}

and its activity was more than 30% stronger compared with the reported data of **3c**.^{8a)} Since *N*³-benzyluridines bearing a methyl group onto the benzene ring, *i.e.* *o*-, *m*- and *p*-methylbenzyl derivatives, have been proved to be better CNS-depressants than *N*³-benzyluridine (**3a**),^{7b,c)} the activity of *N*³-(3,5-dimethylbenzyl)uridine (**3d**) and its 4-thio congener (**5d**) was also examined. However, the hypnotic activity of **3d** and **5d** was poor, and **3d** showed the weakest PB-induced sleep-prolonging activity in this series.

In conclusion, *N*³-benzyl- (**5a**) or *N*³-(1-phenylethyl)-4-thiouridine (**5b**) enhanced hypnotic activity compared with the original compounds **3a** and **5a**, respectively. However, the strong hypnotic activity of *N*³-phenacyluridine (**3c**) was reduced to half by 4-thio modification, as shown in Table 1. This tendency was reversed in the PB-induced sleep-prolonging activity. The PB-induced sleeping time of **5a** was shorter than that of **3a**, and **5c** showed more prolongation than **3c**.

Experimental

Melting points (mp) were determined using a Yanagimoto micro-melting point apparatus (hot stage type) and are uncorrected. UV spectra were recorded with a Shimadzu UV-190 digital spectrometer. Low-resolution mass spectra were obtained on a Shimadzu-LKB 9000B mass spectrometer in the direct-inlet mode. ¹H-NMR spectra were recorded on a Varian UNITY 200 (200 MHz) or UNITY 600 (600 MHz) in CDCl₃ [or dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO)-*d*₆] with tetramethylsilane as an internal standard. Merck Art 5554 plates precoated with Silica gel 60 containing fluorescent indicator F₂₅₄ were used for thin-layer chromatography, and Silica gel 60 (Merck 7734, 60—200 mesh) was employed for column chromatography.

N³-Benzyl-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyluridine (2a). General Procedure for 2c To a solution of 2',3',5'-*O*-triacetyluridine (**1**, 3.7 g, 10 mmol) in DMF (50 ml) was added potassium carbonate (1.04 g, 7.5 mmol) and benzyl bromide (1.62 ml, 15 mmol), and they were stirred at 50 °C for 1 h; then acetic acid (0.9 ml) was added and the mixture was concentrated to a small volume. The residue was partitioned between CHCl₃ (50 ml) and water (50 ml). The organic layer was dried over MgSO₄, and the residual solution was chromatographed over a column of Silica gel G (3.1×40 cm) using 33—66% AcOEt in hexane (11) to give a caramel (3.8 g, 83%). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.27—7.46 (6H, m, H₆, C₆H₅), 6.04 (1H, d, *J*=4.4 Hz, H1'), 5.84 (1H, d, *J*=8.1 Hz, H5), 5.29—5.34 (2H, m, H 2', H3'), 5.09 (2H, d, *J*=2.7 Hz, CH₂), 4.34 (3H, brs, H4', H5'), 2.12 (3H, s, Ac), 2.11 (3H, s, Ac), 2.05 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 258.5. MS *m/z*: 460 (M⁺).

N³-Phenacyl-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyluridine (2c). Compound 2c was obtained as a caramel (2.34 g, 96%) from **1** (1.85 g, 5 mmol). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.98—8.01 (2H, m, two of C₆H₅), 7.46—7.62 (4H, m, H₆, three of C₆H₅), 6.03 (1H, d, *J*=4.6 Hz, H1'), 5.90 (1H, d, *J*=8.1 Hz, H5), 5.33—5.42 (4H, m, H 2', H3', CH₂), 4.36—4.36 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.15 (3H, s, Ac), 2.11 (3H, s, Ac), 2.10 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 246. High-resolution mass spectrometry (HR-MS) *m/z*: 488.1423 (M⁺, C₂₃H₂₄N₂O₁₀ requires 488.1431).

N³-(1-Phenylethyl)-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyluridine (2b). General Procedure for 2d To a mixture of **1** (3.7 g, 10 mmol) and (±)-1-phenylethanol (2.4 ml, 20 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (THF) (100 ml) was added triphenylphosphine (5.25 g, 20 mmol) and diisopropyl azodicarboxylate (4 ml, 20 mmol). The solution was stirred at 50 °C for 6 h, then concentrated over a small volume. The residual solution was chromatographed over a column of Silica gel G (4.2×30 cm) using 20—75% AcOEt in hexane (21) to give a caramel (2.86 g, 60%). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.21—7.41 (6H, m, H₆, Ph), 6.24—6.28 (1H, m, CH), 6.07 (1H, dd, *J*=3.7, 5.4 Hz, H1'), 5.82 (1H, d, *J*=8.1 Hz, H5), 5.21—5.28 (2H, m, H 2', H3'), 4.31—4.33 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.13 (3H, d, *J*=2.2 Hz, Ac), 2.10 (3H, s, Ac), 2.09 (3H, s, Ac), 1.82—1.88 (3H, m, CH₃). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 260. HR-MS *m/z*: 474.1628 (M⁺, C₂₃H₂₆N₂O₉ requires 474.1638).

N³-(3,5-Dimethylbenzyl)-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyluridine (2d). Compound 2d was obtained as a caramel (10.5 g, 72%) from **1** (11.1 g, 30 mmol). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.36 (1H, d, *J*=8.1 Hz, H6), 7.04 (2H, brs, two of C₆H₃), 6.89 (1H, brs, one of C₆H₃), 6.07 (1H, dd, *J*=2.2, 2.6 Hz, H1'), 5.84 (1H, d, *J*=8.1 Hz, H5), 5.31—5.36 (2H, m, H 2', H3'), 5.02 (2H, dd, *J*=13.6, 21.2 Hz, CH₂), 4.35 (3H, brs, H4', H5'), 2.28 (6H, s, CH₃ (2) 2.13 (3H, s, Ac), 2.11 (3H, s, Ac), 2.06 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 259. HR-MS *m/z*: 488.1783 (M⁺, C₂₄H₂₈N₂O₉ requires 488.1795).

N³-Benzyl-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyl-4-thiouridine (4a). General Procedures for 4b—d A mixture of **2a** (460 mg, 1 mmol) and Lawesson's Reagent (0.80 g, 2 mmol) in dry benzene (20 ml) was refluxed overnight, then filtered to remove the precipitation. The filtrate was concentrated over a small volume and chromatographed over a column of Silica gel G (2.3×37 cm) using 16—33% AcOEt in hexane (11) to give a caramel (247 mg, 52%). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.24—7.47 (5H, m, C₆H₅), 7.17 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 6.66 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 6.00 (1H, d, *J*=4.4 Hz, H1'), 5.65 (2H, d, *J*=13.9 Hz, CH₂), 5.31—5.38 (2H, m, H2', H3'), 4.36—4.38 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.12 (3H, s, Ac), 2.11 (3H, s, Ac), 2.05 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 333. MS *m/z*: 476 (M⁺).

N³-(1-Phenylethyl)-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyl-4-thiouridine (4b). Compound 4b was obtained as a caramel (1.03 g, 90%) from **2b** (1.10 g, 2.3 mmol). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.16—7.42 (6H, m, CH, Ph), 7.12 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 6.73 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 5.92—5.99 (1H, m, H1'), 5.14—5.28 (2H, m, H 2', H3'), 4.28—4.40 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.13 (3H, d, *J*=2.2 Hz, Ac), 2.08 (3H, s, Ac), 2.07 (3H, s, Ac), 1.86 (3H, d, *J*=7.0 Hz, CH₃). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 329.5. HR-MS *m/z*: 490.1404 (M⁺, C₂₃H₂₆N₂O₈S requires 490.1410).

N³-Phenacyl-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyl-4-thiouridine (4c). Compound 4c was obtained as a caramel (1.22 g, 60%) from **2c** (1.95 g, 4 mmol). ¹H-NMR

(CDCl₃) δ: 7.46—8.04 (5H, m, C₆H₅), 7.28 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 6.68 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 5.84—6.07 (3H, m, H1', CH₂), 5.30—5.45 (2H, m, H2', H3'), 4.38—4.40 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.15 (3H, s, Ac), 2.12 (3H, s, Ac), 2.10 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 325. HR-MS *m/z*: 504.1205 (M⁺, C₂₃H₂₄N₂O₉S requires 504.1203).

N³-(3,5-Dimethylbenzyl)-2',3',5'-tri-*O*-acetyl-4-thiouridine (4d). Compound 4d was obtained as a caramel (2.17 g, 84%) from **2d** (2.50 g, 5.1 mmol). ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.17 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 7.01 (2H, brs, two of C₆H₃), 6.88 (1H, brs, one of C₆H₃), 6.66 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 6.02 (1H, d, *J*=4.4 Hz, H1'), 5.63 (2H, dd, *J*=13.9, 31.1 Hz, CH₂), 5.31—5.38 (2H, m, H 2', H3'), 4.36 (3H, m, H4', H5'), 2.28 (6H, s, CH₃×2), 2.13 (3H, s, Ac), 2.11 (3H, s, Ac), 2.05 (3H, s, Ac). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 329.5. HR-MS *m/z*: 504.1584 (M⁺, C₂₄H₂₈N₂O₉S requires 504.1567).

N³-Benzyl-4-thiouridine (5a). General Procedures for 3b, 5b—d A solution of **4a** (220 mg, 0.46 mmol) in MeOH (5 ml) saturated with ammonia at 0 °C was stirred at room temperature overnight. The solution was concentrated to a small volume, and crystallization from EtOH gave yellowish crystals (157 mg, 97%). mp 160—162.5 °C. ¹H-NMR (DMSO-*d*₆) δ: 7.93 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 7.29 (5H, m, Ph), 6.61 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 5.20—5.74 (4H, m, H1', 2'OH, CH₂), 5.09—5.20 (2H, m, 3'OH, 5'OH), 3.90—4.10 (3H, m, H2', H3', H4'), 3.55—3.73 (2H, m, H5'). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 330. MS *m/z*: 350 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₆H₁₈N₂O₅S: C, 54.85; H, 5.18; N, 7.99. Found: C, 55.02; H, 5.30; N, 8.29.

N³-(1-Phenylethyl)uridine (3b). Compound 3b was obtained as white crystals (506 mg, 97%) from **2b** (712 mg, 1.5 mmol). mp 152.5—154.5 °C. ¹H-NMR (CDCl₃) δ: 7.61 (1H, dd, *J*=6.8, 8.0 Hz, H6), 7.21—7.38 (5H, m, Ph), 6.26 (1H, ddd, *J*=7.1, 14.3, 17.0 Hz, CH₂), 5.74 (1H, dd, *J*=2.7, 8.0 Hz, H5), 5.61 (1H, dd, *J*=3.8, 18.7 Hz, H1'), 4.16—4.25 (2H, m, H2', H3'), 4.09—4.13 (1H, m, H4'), 3.91 (1H, ddd, *J*=2.7, 8.8, 11.7 Hz, H5'a), 3.76 (1H, ddd, *J*=2.7, 9.1, 11.8 Hz, H5'b), 1.83 (3H, dd, *J*=4.9, 7.1 Hz, CH₃). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 264. MS *m/z*: 348 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₇H₂₀N₂O₆: C, 58.61; H, 5.79; N, 8.04. Found: C, 58.94; H, 5.91; N, 8.22.

N³-(1-Phenylethyl)-4-thiouridine (5b). Compound 5b was obtained as yellowish crystals (317 mg, 87%) from **4b** (490 mg, 1 mmol). mp 169—170.5 °C. ¹H-NMR (DMSO-*d*₆) δ: 7.89 (1H, d, *J*=7.5 Hz, H6), 7.19—7.32 (6H, m, Ph, CH), 6.68 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 5.58 (1H, d, *J*=3.7 Hz, H1'), 5.01—5.49 (3H, m, 2'OH, 3'OH, 5'OH), 3.83—3.97 (3H, m, H2', H3', H4'), 3.52—3.73 (2H, m, H5'), 1.79 (3H, d, *J*=6.8 Hz, CH₃). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 334. MS *m/z*: 364 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₇H₂₀N₂O₆S: C, 56.03; H, 5.53; N, 7.69. Found: C, 55.83; H, 5.60; N, 7.81.

N³-Phenacyl-4-thiouridine (5c). Compound 5c was obtained as yellowish crystals (514 mg, 68%) from **4c** (1.00 g, 2 mmol). mp 157.5—159 °C. ¹H-NMR (600 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ: 8.01—8.09 (2H, m, two of C₆H₃), 8.01 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H6), 7.72—7.74 (1H, m, one of C₆H₃), 7.58—7.61 (2H, m, two of C₆H₃), 6.65 (1H, d, *J*=7.7 Hz, H5), 5.94 (2H, dd, *J*=17.3, 44.8 Hz, CH₂), 5.76 (1H, d, *J*=4.4 Hz, H1'), 5.54 (1H, d, *J*=5.5 Hz, 2'OH), 5.21 (1H, dd, *J*=4.9, 5.2 Hz, 5'OH), 5.16 (1H, d, *J*=5.8 Hz, 3'OH), 4.09 (1H, dd, *J*=4.9, 10.2 Hz, H2'), 4.01 (1H, q, *J*=5.2 Hz, H3'), 3.91—3.93 (1H, m, H4'), 3.71 (1H, ddd, *J*=3.5, 12.4 Hz, H5'a), 3.61 (1H, ddd, *J*=3.3, 4.9, 12.4 Hz, H5'b). ¹³C-NMR (150 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ: 191.2 (C=O), 189.6 (C4), 148.6 (C2), 133.8 (C6), 134.4, 134.1, 129.0 and 127.9 (C₆H₃), 112.9 (C5), 89.9 (C2'), 84.9 (C4'), 74.1 (C1'), 69.3 (C3'), 60.3 (C5'), 53.4 (CH₂). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 330.3. MS *m/z*: 378 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₇H₁₈N₂O₆S: C, 53.96; H, 4.79; N, 7.40. Found: C, 54.14; H, 4.85; N, 7.55.

N³-(3,5-Dimethylbenzyl)-4-thiouridine (5d). Compound 5d was obtained as yellowish crystals (580 mg, 61%) from **4d** (1.26 g, 2.5 mmol). mp 155.5—157 °C. ¹H-NMR (DMSO-*d*₆) δ: 7.92 (1H, d, *J*=7.3 Hz, H6), 6.88 (3H, brs, C₆H₃), 6.61 (1H, d, *J*=7.3 Hz, H5), 5.73 (1H, d, *J*=3.3 Hz, H1'), 5.43—5.63 (3H, m, 2'OH, CH₂), 5.09—5.20 (2H, m, 3'OH, 5'OH), 3.91—4.07 (3H, m, H2', H3', H4'), 3.52—3.77 (2H, m, H5'), 2.22 (6H, s, CH₃×2). UV λ_{max} (MeOH) nm: 332. MS *m/z*: 378 (M⁺). Anal. Calcd for C₁₈H₂₂N₂O₅S: C, 57.13; H, 5.86; N, 7.40. Found: C, 57.22; H, 5.75; N, 7.65.

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