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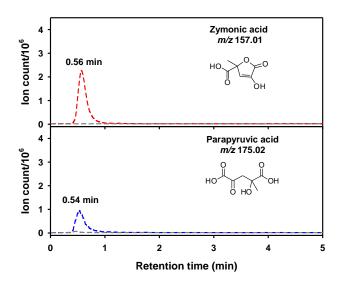
## **Additional Experimental Section**

Fourier transformed infrared (FTIR) Spectroscopy. Gas phase products were analyzed by performing the photolysis in a sealed 200 mL quartz reactor. Aliquots of the headspace above the reaction mixture were withdrawn through a septum using a syringe with a stainless steel needle and injected into a 2.4 m path length infrared gas cell with ZnSe windows (PIKE) and a capacity of  $100 \text{ cm}^3$ . The cell was mounted in an iZ10 FTIR module connected to an infrared microscope (Thermo Scientific Nicolet iN10). Absorption spectra (and the background) were recorded at 1 cm<sup>-1</sup> resolution after allowing the cell to equilibrate for 30 min and purging the optics continuously with  $N_2(g)$ . In addition, photoproducts were spiked with acetoin vapor for qualitative analysis.

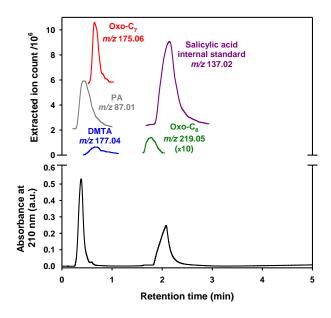
UHPLC Analysis of Non-derivatized Samples. Samples were analyzed with the same Accela 1250 LC-MS described in the main experimental section after diluting them 100 times in ultrapure water. Separation used solvents A (methanol) and B (water) both with 0.1 mM formic acid. Initially a 5% solvent A was kept for 2 min, followed by a 3 min gradient reaching a 50% composition. The samples were spiked with 100 μM salicylic acid (Fluka, 99.6%) as an internal standard. Figure S2 shows good separation of 2,3-dimethyltartaric acid (*m/z* 177.04) and the oxo-C<sub>8</sub> product (*m/z* 219.05) confirming the observation made in Figure 1 of the main paper by IC-MS.

**Tandem Mass Spectrometry (MS/MS).** Figure S4 shows the fragmentation patterns for pyruvic acid (m/z 87), the oxo- $C_7$  product (m/z 175), DMTA (m/z 177) and the oxo- $C_8$  product (m/z 219). Figure S4A shows that pyruvic acid fragments into acetic acid (m/z 59) by decarbonylation. Figure S4B shows that the oxo- $C_7$  product easily produces a pyruvic acid like fragment with m/z 87 corresponding to  $C_3H_3O_3^-$ , which is easily obtainable by breaking one of the ether bonds in

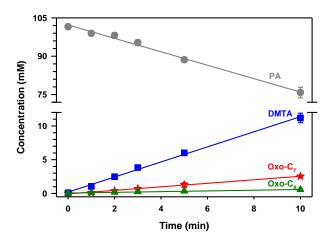
the proposed structure shown in Scheme 1 of the main paper. This fragmentation pattern is consistent with what was observed in the past, where it was speculated that the lack of a second ESI(-) detectable fragment indicated there should only be one carboxyl group in the structure of the oxo-C<sub>7</sub> product. The IC-MS analysis presented in Figures 1 and 2 of the main text confirms this conjecture, and demonstrates that the dicarboxylic acid impurity parapyruvic acid (also with m/z 175) does not contribute to the MS/MS spectrum of the products. Figure S4C shows the MS/MS of DMTA (m/z 177) has fragments at m/z 131, 115, and 87, consistent with previous work. In addition, this peak at m/z 177 loses a water giving m/z 159 and the fragment at m/z 115 can decarboxylate to form an ion at m/z 71. This secondary decarboxylation provides additional support indicating that the product with m/z 177 has two carboxyl groups as in the structure of DMTA. In Figure S4D, the oxo-C<sub>8</sub> product shows multiple ions arising from a labile species. The fragment at m/z 201 results from water loss from m/z 219. The fragments at m/z 175 (matching the oxo- $C_7$  product) and 157 result from decarboxylation of m/z 219 and 201, respectively. Confirmation of the presence of a remaining carboxyl group in m/z 175 is shown by its decarboxylation into m/z 131. The peak at m/z 201 easily breaks into m/z 117 by loss of C<sub>4</sub>H<sub>4</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (neutral mass 84 amu) or vice versa generating a weak peak at m/z 83 from the loss at 118 amu. The m/z 113 fragment can be produced by consecutive loss of a pyruvic acid monomer (88 amu) and water (18 amu) directly from the oxo-C<sub>8</sub> product. This pyruvic acid loss can also be observed at m/z 87. Finally, the oxo-C<sub>8</sub> product can fragment into the two halves m/z 147 and neutral 72 amu or m/z 71 and neutral 148 amu.



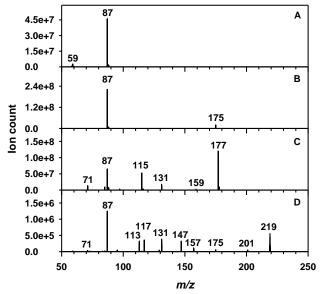
**Figure S1.** UHPLC-MS extracted ion chromatograms (EIC) for impurities in pyruvic acid reagent. Top panel: EIC at m/z 157.01 for zymonic acid (red dashed line) before and (gray dashed line) after vacuum distillation. Bottom panel: EIC at m/z 175.02 for parapyruvic acid (blue dashed line) before and (gray dashed line) after vacuum distillation.



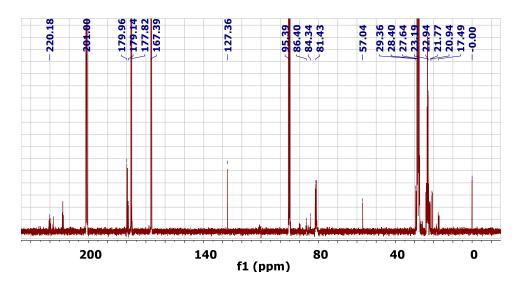
**Figure S2.** UHPLC (black line) UV chromatogram and ESI(-)/MS EIC for 100.9 mM pyruvic acid photolyzed to a 19.3% conversion. EICs at (gray line) m/z 87.01 for pyruvic acid; (red line) m/z 175.06 for oxo-C<sub>7</sub> product eluting at 0.65 min, (blue line) m/z 177.04 for 2,3-dimethyltartaric acid (DMTA), (green line) m/z 219.05 for oxo-C<sub>8</sub> product, and (purple) m/z 137.02 for salicylic acid internal standard.



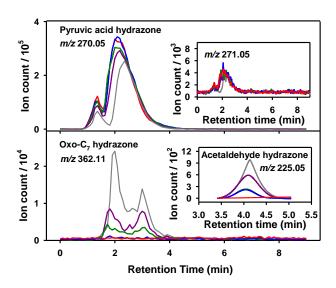
**Figure S3.** Time series of (gray circle) pyruvic acid loss, (red star) oxo- $C_7$  product, (blue square) DMTA, and (green triangle) oxo- $C_8$  product for the experiment in  $D_2O$  at pD = 1.0 and 298 K. Initial slopes were used for the calculation of KIE reported in Table 1 of the main text.



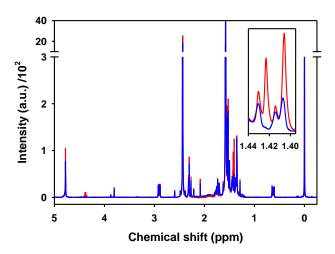
**Figure S4.** High resolution MS/MS fragmentation patterns for (A) pyruvic acid (m/z 87); (B) oxo-C<sub>7</sub> (m/z 175); and (C) DMTA (m/z 177) in a solution of 100 mM pyruvic acid after photolysis to 20 % conversion.



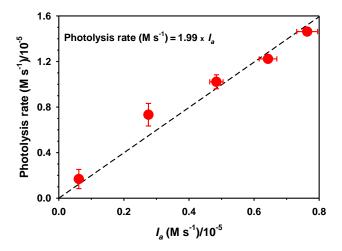
**Figure S5.** 150 MHz  $^{13}$ C NMR spectrum of 97.9 mM  $^{13}$ C labeled PA at pD = 1.0 for a 9 min photolysis corresponding to a 50.2% conversion.



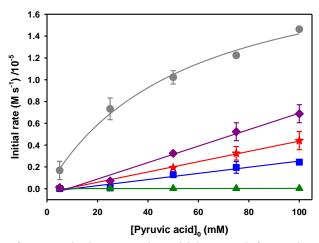
**Figure S6.** UHPLC-MS chromatograms from hydrazones of (top panel)  $^{13}$ C labeled PA (m/z 270.05) and (bottom panel) oxo-C<sub>7</sub> product (m/z 362.11) from an experiment with [ $^{13}$ C PA] = 115.2 mM photolyzed during (red) 0, (blue) 1, (green) 3, (purple) 5, and (gray) 10 min. Top panel inset: EIC for m/z 271.05. Bottom panel inset: Trace production of  $^{13}$ C acetaldehyde (m/z 225.05) after smoothing with a Gaussian function.



**Figure S7.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of 99.9 mM PA photolyzed to 20.0 % conversion (blue) before and (red) after spike addition of lactic acid to a final concentration of 2.24 mM. The inset shows an expansion of the –CH<sub>3</sub> region for the doublet where lactic acid does not overlap well with the signal of the photoproducts.



**Figure S8.** Dependence of the photolytic rate of pyruvic acid,  $k_{hv} \times [PA]_0$ , on the photon absorption rate,  $I_a$ , during direct photolysis of aqueous solutions ( $\lambda \ge 305$  nm) at pH = 1.0 and 298 K. Incident photon rate  $I_0 = 1.14 \times 10^{-5}$  M s<sup>-1</sup>.



**Figure S9.** Initial rates of (gray circle) pyruvic acid loss and formation of (red star) the  $oxo-C_7$  product, (blue square) 2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, (green triangle) the  $oxo-C_8$  product, and (purple diamond) the sum for the three products at variable initial pyruvic acid concentration. Experimental conditions are the same reported in Figure S7.

**Table S1.** Infrared Assignment of Gas Phase Products for Photolyzed ( $\lambda \ge 305$  nm) 50 mM Pyruvic Acid in Water, Predicted Oxo-C<sub>7</sub> Product, and Acetoin.<sup>2</sup>

Wavenumber (cm <sup>-1</sup> )		Strength	Assignment	
Photolyzed	Oxo-C <sub>7</sub> Product	Acetoin	_	
1033	1055-870	-	S	C-O-C symmetric stretch
1056	1125-1000	1124	S	C-O stretch, secondary alcohol
1085	1300-1100, 1120	-	S	C-O-C, asymmetric stretch
1316	1320-1210	-	m	C-O stretch, carboxylic acid
1265	1300-1100	1266	m	carbonyl bend
Indist.	1375	1372	S	methyl bend
Indist.	1715	1736	S	C=O stretch, ketone
Indist.	1800-1740	-	S	C=O stretch, carboxylic acid
Indist.	2872	2872	S	methyl C-H symmetric stretch
2967	2962	2987	S	methyl C-H asymmetric stretch
-	3550-3500	-	m	carboxylic acid OH stretch
-	3650-3590	3530	m	O-H stretch

**Table S2.** Assignment of the 150 MHz  $^{13}$ C NMR spectrum of 97.88 mM fully labeled  $^{13}$ C PA at pD = 1.0 photolyzed for 9 min for a 50.2% conversion.

Chemical shift (ppm)	Assignment <sup>a</sup> (molecule, functionality)
220.18	oxo-C <sub>7</sub> , CH <sub>3</sub> <u>C</u> (O)CH(CH <sub>3</sub> )O-
201.00	pyruvic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> C(O)COOH
179.96	$oxo-C_{7,}-C(OH)(CH_3)\underline{C}OOH$
179.14	2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, -C(OH)(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <u>C</u> OOH
177.82	gem-diol of pyruvic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> C(OH) <sub>2</sub> COOH
167.39	pyruvic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> C(O) <u>C</u> OOH
127.36	carbon dioxide
95.39	gem-diol of pyruvic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> C(OH) <sub>2</sub> COOH
86.40	$oxo-C_{7,}CH_3C(O)\underline{C}H(CH_3)O-$
84.34	2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, - <u>C(OH)(CH<sub>3</sub>)COOH</u>
81.43	oxo- $C_{7,}$ - $\underline{C}$ (OH)(CH <sub>3</sub> )COOH
57.04	DSS, (CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> -Si-CH <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -SO <sub>3</sub>
29.36	$oxo-C_{7}$ , $CH_3C(O)CH(CH_3)O-$
28.40	pyruvic acid, <u>C</u> H <sub>3</sub> C(O)COOH
27.64	gem-diol of pyruvic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> C(OH) <sub>2</sub> COOH
23.19	$oxo-C_{7,}CH_3C(O)CH(\underline{C}H_3)O-$
22.94	oxo- $C_{7,}$ - $C(OH)(\underline{C}H_3)COOH$
21.77	2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, -C(OH)( <u>C</u> H <sub>3</sub> )COOH
20.94	DSS, (CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> -Si-CH <sub>2</sub> - <u>C</u> H <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -SO <sub>3</sub>
17.49	DSS, (CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> -Si- <u>C</u> H <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -SO <sub>3</sub>
0.000	DSS, $(\underline{C}H_3)_3$ -Si-CH <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -SO <sub>3</sub>

**Table S3.** Assignment of the 600 MHz  $^1$ H NMR spectrum of 322 mM photolyzed pyruvic acid for a 20.3 % Conversion.

Chemical shift (ppm)	Multiplicity	Assignment <sup>a</sup> (molecule, functionality, diastereomer <sup>b</sup> )	
4.420	q	$oxo-C_7, O-C\underline{H}-C(O)CH_3, A \text{ and } B$	
2.463	S	pyruvic acid, C <u>H</u> <sub>3</sub> C=O	
2.910	t	DSS, $-C\underline{H}_2$ -SO <sub>3</sub>	
2.322	S	oxo- $C_7$ , O-CH- $C(O)C\underline{H}_3$ , $A$	
2.309	S	oxo- $C_7$ , O-CH- $C(O)C\underline{H}_3$ , $B$	
2.271	S	$C_8$ , $C\underline{H}_3C(O)C$ -, $A$	
2.217	S	$C_8$ , $C\underline{H}_3C(O)C$ -, $B$	
2.086	S	acetic acid, CH <sub>3</sub> COOH	
1.686	m	DSS, $(CH_3)_3$ -Si- $CH_2$ - $C\underline{H}_2$ -	
1.581	S	pyruvic acid gem-diol, CH <sub>3</sub> C(OH) <sub>2</sub>	
1.551	S	oxo- $C_7$ , O-CH(C $\underline{H}_3$ )-C=O, $A$	
1.533	S	2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, HO-C( $\underline{CH}_3$ )-C( $\underline{CH}_3$ )-OH, $A$	
1.527	S	oxo- $C_7$ , O-CH(C $\underline{H}_3$ )-C=O, $B$	
1.499	S	2,3-dimethyltartaric acid, HO-C( $C\underline{H}_3$ )-C( $C\underline{H}_3$ )-OH, $B$	
1.472	S	$C_8$ , HOOC-C(OH)-C $\underline{H}_3$ , $A$	
1.451	s, broad	$C_8$ , HOOC-C(OH)-C $\underline{H}_3$ , B and $CH_3$ -C(O)-C-C $\underline{H}_3$ , A	
1.435	S	$C_8$ , $CH_3$ - $C(O)$ - $C$ - $C\underline{H}_3$ , $B$	
1.354	S	oxo-C7, HOOC-C(OH)-C $\underline{H}_3$ , $A$ and $B$	
0.624	t	DSS, (CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>3</sub> -Si-C <u>H</u> <sub>2</sub> -CH <sub>2</sub> -	
0.000	S	DSS, $(C\underline{H}_3)_3$ -Si-	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup>Structures are given in Scheme 1 of the main paper. <sup>b</sup>Two diastereomers (labeled A and B) exist for each product.

## References

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- (2) Eugene, A. J.; Xia, S.-S.; Guzman, M. I. Negative production of acetoin in the photochemistry of aqueous pyruvic acid. *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA* **2013**, *110*, E4274-E4275.