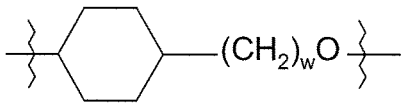
cyclopentyl, norbornyl, allyl, phenyl, benzyl, 2-, 3- or 4-pyridylmethyl, N-methylpiperidin-4-yl, tetrahydrofuran-3-yl or methoxyethyl;

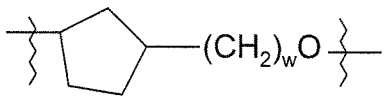
R_2 is selected from benzyl, phenyl, cyclohexylmethyl, pyridin-3-ylmethyl, tert-butoxymethyl, iso-butyl, sec-butyl, tert-butyl, 1-benzylthio-1-methylethyl, 1-methylthio-1-methylethyl, and 1-mercapto-1-methylethyl, phenylethyl;

R_3 is H or **R_2**;

the radical **$-Y-L-X-(CH_2)_z$** is selected from $-(CH_2)_v-$, $-(CH_2)_vO-$, $(CH_2)_wO-$



and



wherein v is 1, 2, 3 or 4 and w is 1, 2 or 3, and from $-(CH_2)_x-Het^2-$, $-CH_2-Ph-(Het^1)_{yy}-(CH_2)_x-(Het^2)_{zy}-$ and $-CH_2-Ph-CH=CH-$, wherein Ph is a 1,4-phenylene group, Het^1 is -O- or -NH-, Het^2 is -O-, -NH- or -NHC(=O)-, x is 0, 1 or 2, y is 0 or 1 and yy is 0 or 1.

6. An imaging agent according to claim 2 wherein the alpha mono- or di-substituted amino acid ester is indirectly linked to the imaging agent by a radical of formula (IB) wherein: **ring D** is a saturated, non-fused 5- to 6-membered heterocyclyl group containing, in addition to the nitrogen atom depicted in ring D, none, one or two heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, the ring being substituted with a group R^1 and optionally a group R^2, wherein R_1 is linked to a ring carbon atom adjacent the ring nitrogen atom shown, and wherein R^2 is carried on the same carbon atom which carries the group R^1, and wherein the ring D is further unsubstituted or substituted by 1 or 2 groups selected from halogen atoms and C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy and hydroxyl groups;

R_1 is ester group of formula $-(C=O)OR_{14}$ wherein R_{14} is

$R_8R_9R_{10}C-$ wherein

(i) R_8 is hydrogen or optionally substituted (C_1-C_3)alkyl-$(Z^1)_a-[(C_1-C_3)alkyl]_b-$ or (C_2-C_3)alkenyl-$(Z^1)_a-[(C_1-C_3)alkyl]_b-$ wherein a and b are independently 0 or 1 and Z^1 is –O-, -S-, or $–NR_{11}-$ wherein R_{11} is hydrogen or (C_1-C_3)alkyl; and R_9 and R_{10} are independently hydrogen or (C_1-C_3)alkyl-;