

## Supporting Information

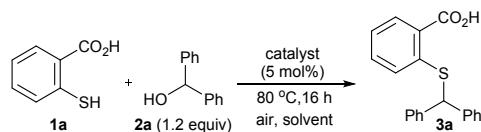
### Cationic palladium(II)-catalyzed dehydrative nucleophilic substitutions of benzhydryl alcohols with electron-deficient benzenethiols in water

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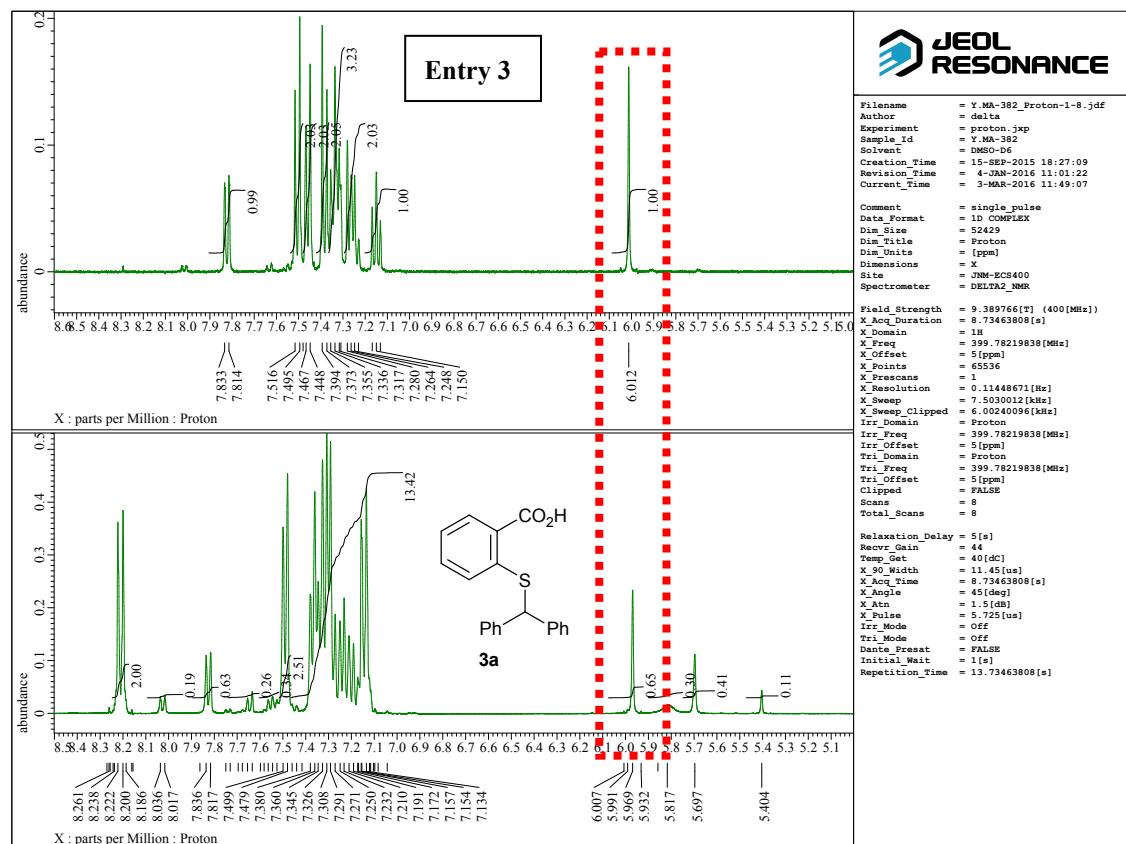
**Table 1, Entry 3** (The yield was determined by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR analysis of the crude product using *p*-nitroanisole as an internal standard.)



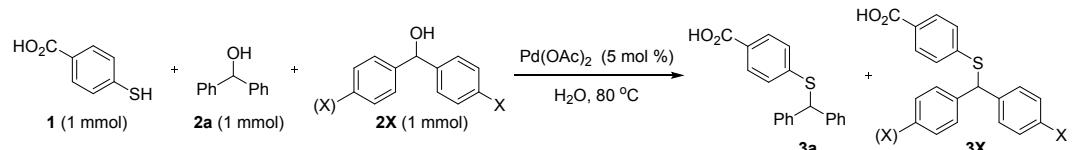
A mixture of 2-mercaptopbenzoic acid **1a** (77 mg, 0.5 mmol),  $\text{PdCl}_2(\text{MeCN})_2$  (6.7 mg, 0.025 mmol), and benzhydrol **2a** (110 mg, 0.6 mmol) in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (2 mL) was heated at 80 °C for 16 h in a sealed tube under air. After the reaction mixture was cooled, *p*-nitroanisole (77 mg, 0.5 mmol, internal standard) was added to the reaction mixture, which was extracted with  $\text{AcOEt}$ . The organic layer was washed with brine, and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was analyzed by  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR spectroscopy.

Conversion yield was calculated by integration.

	desired <b>3a</b>	<i>p</i> -nitroanisole internal standard
Signal $\delta$	5.97 (methin-H)	8.21 (Ar-H)
Integral value	0.63 (1H)	2.00 (2H)
Calculated ratio	65% from <b>1a</b>	77 mg (0.5 mmol)

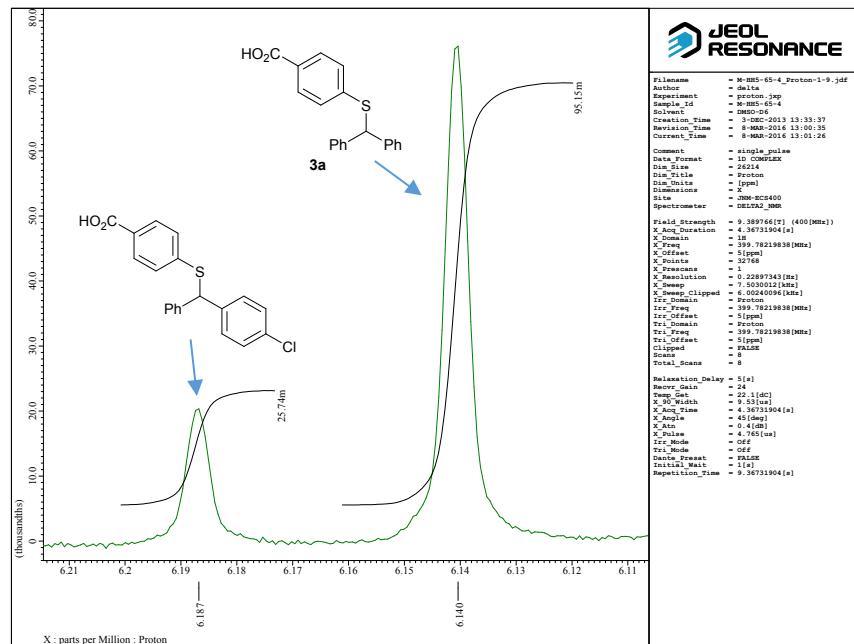
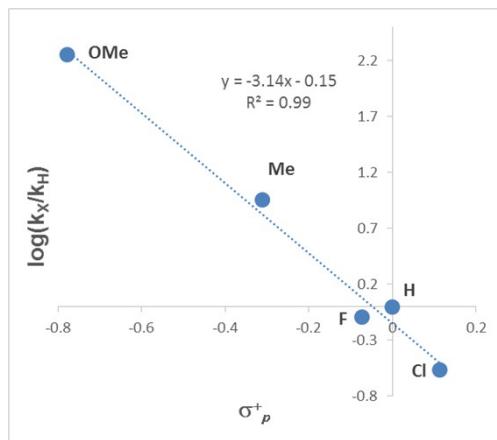


### Hammett study (A)



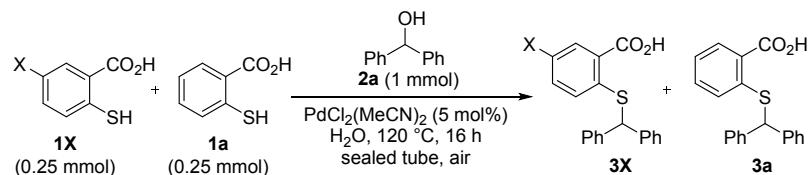
A mixture of 4-mercaptobenzoic acid **1** (154 mg, 1 mmol),  $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$  (11 mg, 0.05 mmol), benzhydrol **2a** (184 mg, 1 mmol), and benzhydryl alcohols **2X** (1 mmol) in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (4 mL) was heated at  $80^\circ\text{C}$  in a sealed tube under air. After cooling, the reaction mixture was poured into water and extracted with  $\text{EtOAc}$ . The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over  $\text{MgSO}_4$  and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was analyzed by  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  spectroscopy.

X	$\sigma^+$	$\log(k_X/k_H)$
OMe	-0.778	2.25
Me	-0.311	0.96
diF	-0.073	-0.09
H	0	0
Cl	0.114	-0.57



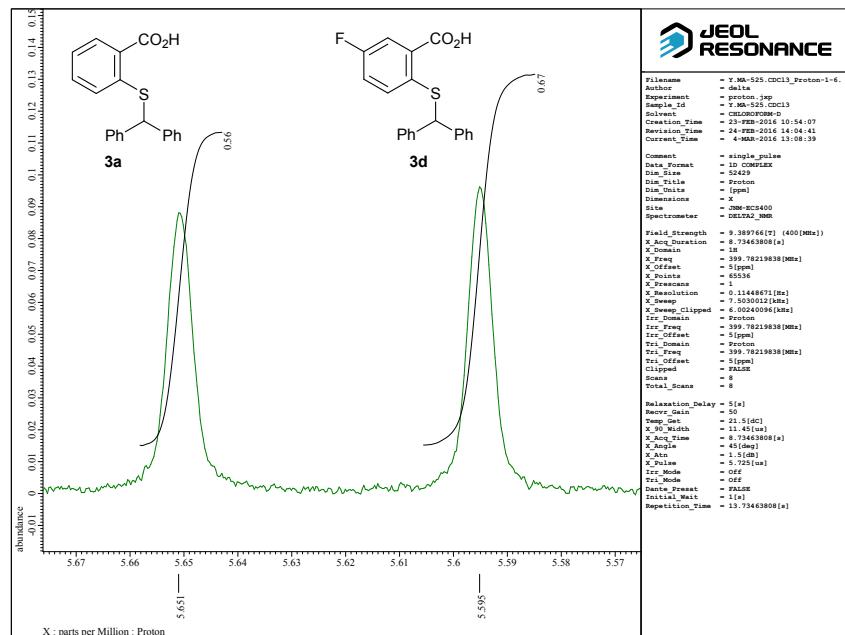
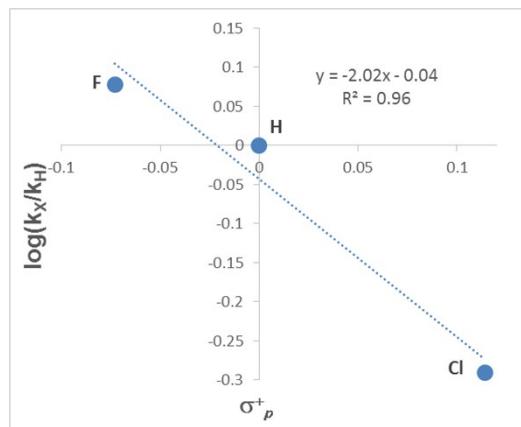
$$\log(k_X/k_H) = \log(25.74/95.15) = -0.57$$

### Hammett study (B)



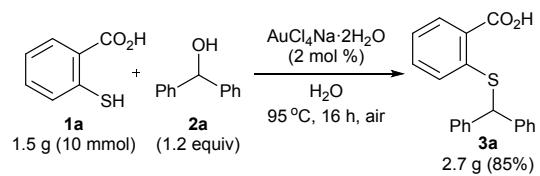
A mixture of 5-substituted thiosalicylic acid **1X** (0.25 mmol), **1a** (34.0 mg, 0.25 mmol),  $\text{PdCl}_2(\text{MeCN})_2$  (4.1 mg, 0.016 mmol), and benzhydrol **2a** (45.9 mg, 0.25 mmol) in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (1 mL) was heated at 120 °C in a sealed tube under air. After cooling, the reaction mixture was poured into water and extracted with  $\text{EtOAc}$ . The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over  $\text{MgSO}_4$  and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was analyzed by  $^1\text{H-NMR}$  spectroscopy.

X	$\sigma^+$	$\log(k_X/k_H)$
F	-0.073	0.08
H	0	0
Cl	0.114	-0.29

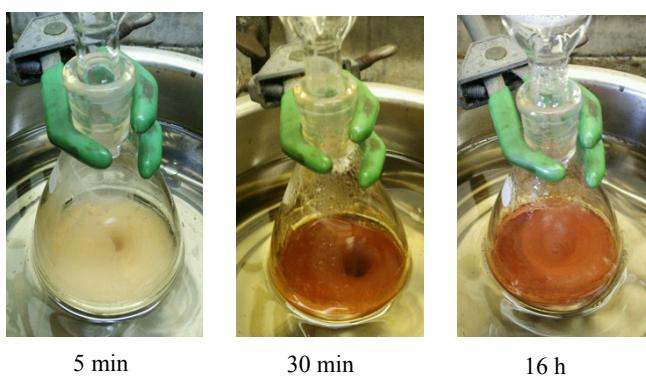


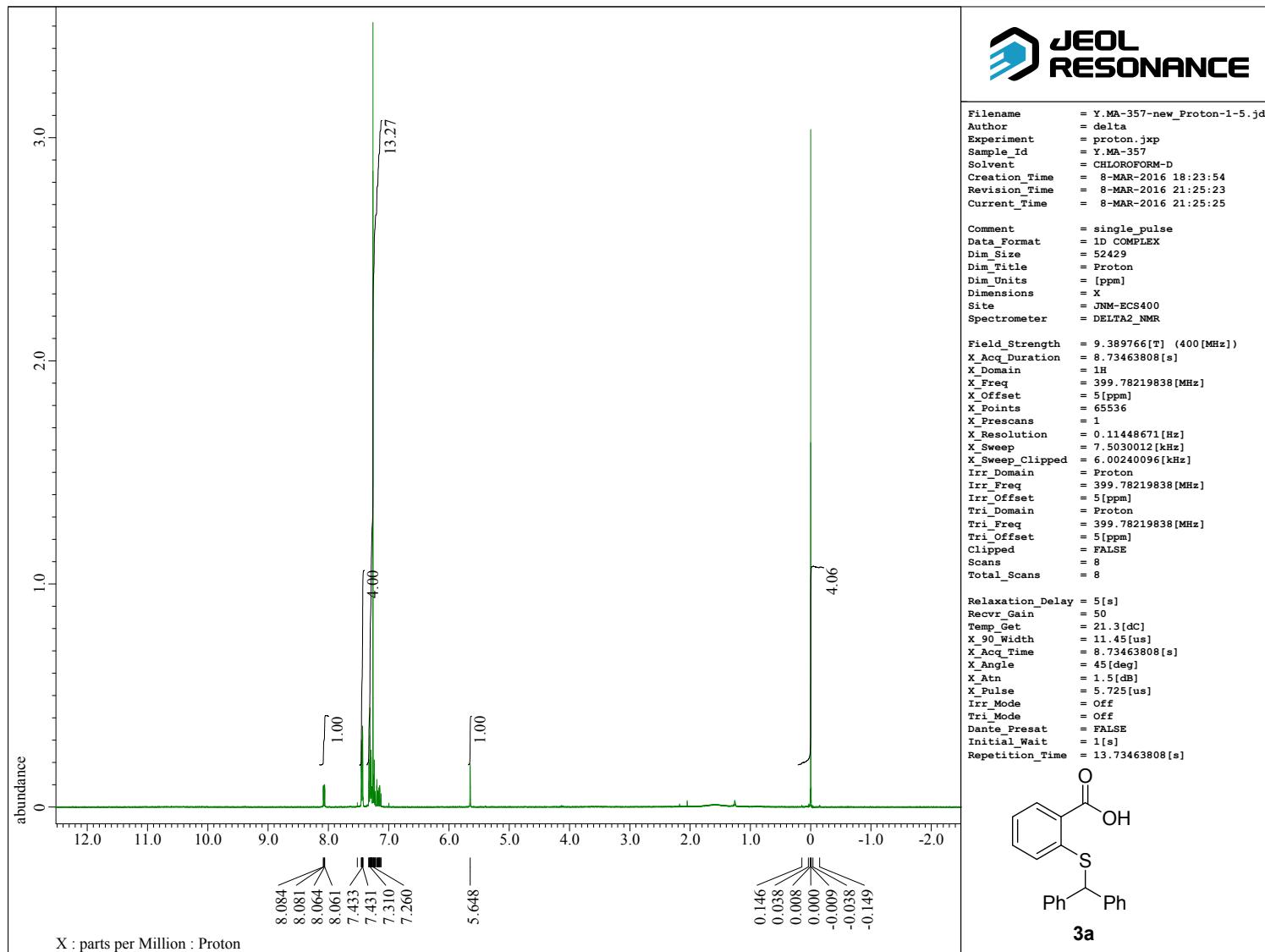
$$\log(k_X/k_H) = \log(0.67/0.56) = 0.08$$

### Scale-up experiment



A mixture of 2-mercaptopbenzoic acid **1a** (1.54 g, 10 mmol), PdCl<sub>2</sub>(MeCN)<sub>2</sub> (129.8 mg, 0.5 mmol), and benzhydrol **2a** (2.20 g, 12 mmol) in H<sub>2</sub>O (40 mL) was heated at 95 °C for 16 h under air. After cooling, the reaction mixture was poured into water and extracted with EtOAc. The organic layer was washed with brine, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated in vacuo. The residue was recrystallized from hexane/AcOEt to give desired product **3a** (2.31 g, 72%).





X : parts per Million : Proton

