

Selective reductive amination of aldehydes from nitro compounds catalyzed by molybdenum sulfide clusters

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- 1. Materials and Methods.**
- 2. Advanced experimental details for the optimization of the reaction conditions.**
Table SI1. Influence of the temperature.
Table SI2. Variation of the pressure of H₂.
Table SI3. Catalyst loading variation.
- 3. Characterization of the catalyst after the catalytic reaction.**
Figure SI1. ESI mass spectrum of the catalyst in CH₃CN at 20 V after the catalytic reaction.
Figure SI2. ¹H NMR spectrum in CD₃CN of the [Mo₃S₄Cl₃(dmen)₃](BF₄) cluster (a) and ¹H NMR spectrum of the reaction mixture after the catalytic process (b).
- 4. Catalyst recycling experiments for the reductive amination between nitrobenzene and benzaldehyde.**
Figure SI3. Recycling of the catalyst for the reductive amination reaction.
- 5. Characterization data of isolated products**
- 6. References.**
- 7. ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR spectra of isolated products.**

1. Materials and Methods.

Nitro compounds, aldehydes and internal standards were obtained from commercial sources and used as received. Organic solvents were dried by standard methods before use. The ¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR spectra of the isolated anilines were recorded on a Bruker AV 300 or Bruker AV 400 spectrometer. All chemical shifts (δ) are reported in parts per million (ppm) and coupling constants (J) in Hz. For ¹H-NMR all chemical shifts are reported relative to tetramethylsilane (δ 0.0 ppm in CDCl₃) or d-solvent peaks (δ 77.16 ppm CDCl₃) for ¹³C-NMR. All measurements were carried out at room temperature unless otherwise stated. The GC yields were determined by GC-FID using *n*-hexadecane as an internal standard. Gas chromatography analyses were performed on an Agilent 7820A GC System equipped with a FID and a capillary column Agilent (HP-5, 30m x 0.32 mm x 0.25 μ m). Mass determination was carried out on a GC-Mass Agilent 5973 Network equipped with a mass selective detector.

Electrospray mass spectrum of the catalyst after the catalytic reaction was recorded with a Quattro LC (quadrupole-hexapole-quadrupole) mass spectrometer with an orthogonal Z-spray electrospray interface (Micromass, Manchester, UK). The cone voltage was set at 20 V using CH₃CN as the mobile phase solvent. Sample solutions have been infused via syringe pump directly connected to the ESI source at a flow rate of 10 μ L/min and a capillary voltage of 3.5 kV was used in the positive scan mode. Nitrogen was employed as drying and nebulizing gas. Isotope experimental patterns were compared with theoretical patterns obtained using the MassLynx 4.1 program.² ¹H spectrum of the reaction mixture was recorded on a Bruker Avance III HD 300 MHz using CD₃CN as solvent.

2. Advanced experimental details for the optimization of the reaction conditions.

Table SI1. Influence of the temperature.^[a]

		<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>
		<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>
1a	2a	[Mo ₃ S ₄ Cl ₃ (dmen) ₃](BF ₄) 20 bar H ₂ T (°C), 18 h, THF		3a	4a
					5a

Entry	Temperature [°C]	Conversion [%] ^[b]	Yield 3a [%] ^[b]	Yield 4a [%] ^[b]	Yield 5a [%] ^[b]
1	100	>99	99	1	0
2	70	>99	99	0	0
3	60	>99	42	17	38

[a]Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), H₂ (20 bar), catalyst (5 mol%), THF (2 mL), 18 h. [b] Determined by GC analysis using *n*-hexadecane as an internal standard.

Table SI2. Variation of the pressure of H₂.^[a]

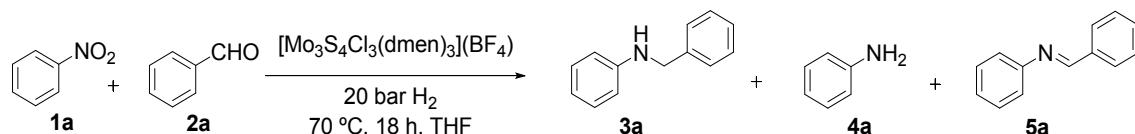
		<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>
		<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>CC(=O)c1ccc(cc1)N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>	<chem>c1ccccc1N=[O]2</chem>
1a	2a	[Mo ₃ S ₄ Cl ₃ (dmen) ₃](BF ₄) H ₂ 70 °C, 18 h, THF		3a	4a
					5a

Entry	Pressure [bar]	Conversion [%] ^[b]	Yield 3a [%] ^[b]	Yield 4a [%] ^[b]	Yield 5a [%] ^[b]
1	20	>99	99	0	0
2	15	>99	65	16	17

[a]Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), catalyst (5 mol%), THF (2 mL), 18 h, 70°C.

[b] Determined by GC analysis using *n*-hexadecane as an internal standard.

Table SI3. Catalyst loading variation.^[a]



Entry	Catalyst loading	Conversion	Yield 3a	Yield 4a	Yield 5a
	[mol%]	[%] ^[b]	[%] ^[b]	[%] ^[b]	[%] ^[b]
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	1	73	0	20	51
3	2	>99	48	18	30
4	3	>99	92	2	5
5	4	>99	95	0	3
6	5	>99	99	0	0
7 ^c	5	48	0	7	38

[a]Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), H₂ (20 bar), THF (2 mL), 18 h, 70 °C. [b] Determined by GC analysis using *n*-hexadecane as an internal standard. [c] Reaction time: 4 h.

3. Characterization of the catalyst after the catalytic reaction.

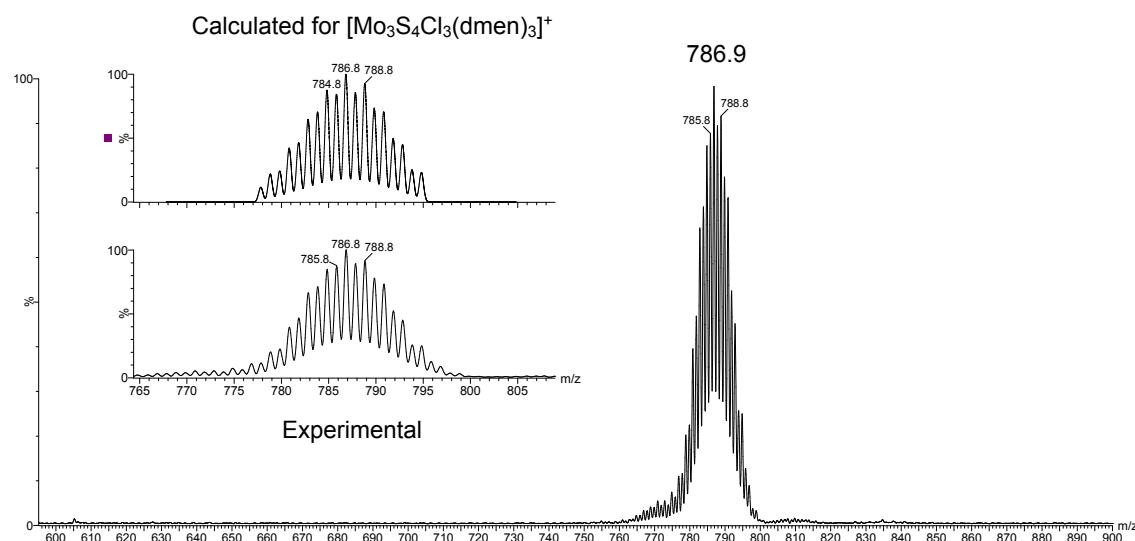


Figure SI1. ESI mass spectrum of the catalyst in CH₃CN at 20 V after the catalytic reaction between **1a** and **2a**.

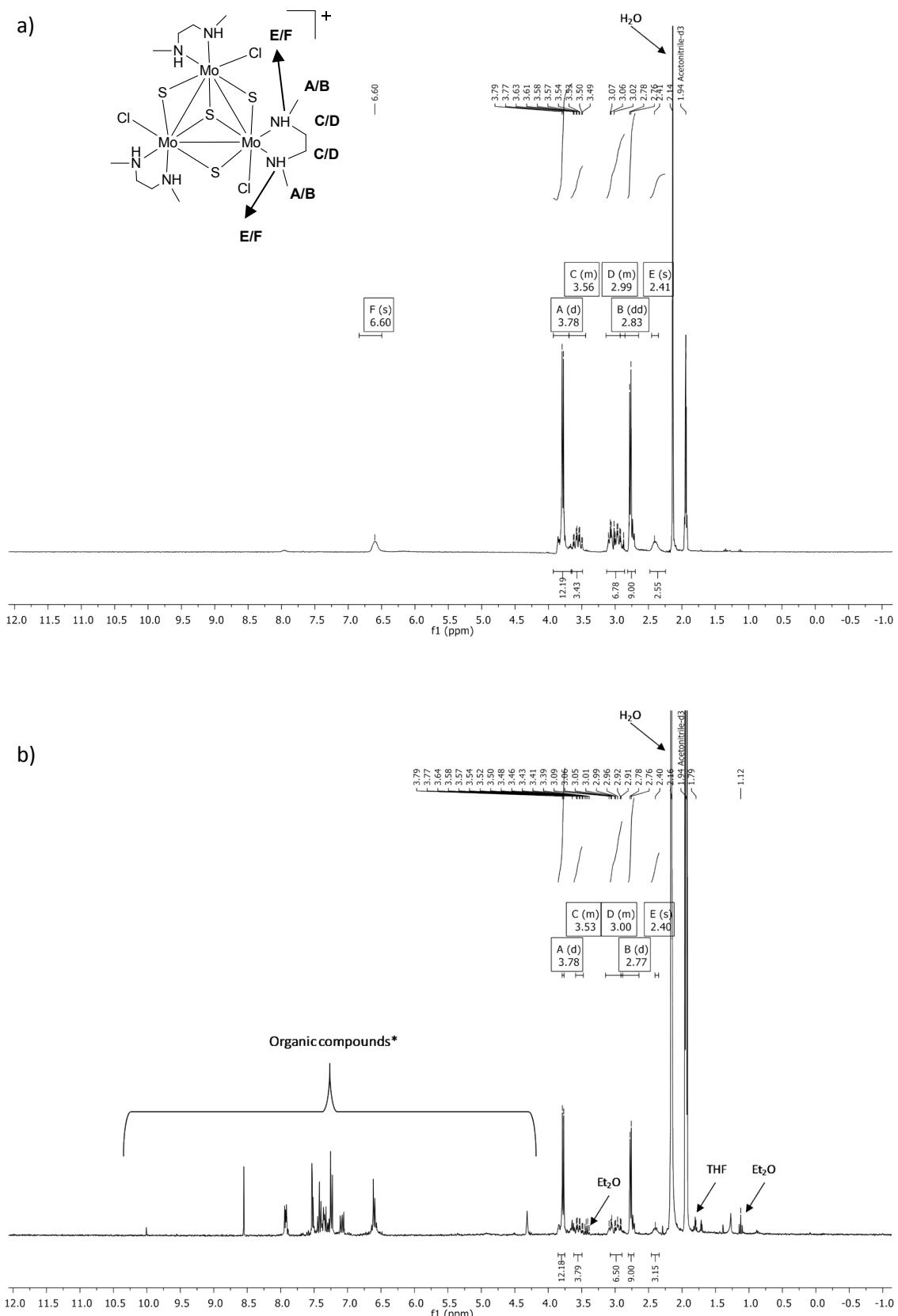


Figure S12. (a) ^1H NMR spectrum of the $[\text{Mo}_3\text{S}_4\text{Cl}_3(\text{dmen})_3](\text{BF}_4)$ cluster in CD_3CN ; (b) ^1H NMR spectrum of the reaction mixture after the catalytic process. For this last experiment, the mixture was taken to dryness, washed with diethyl ether, dried and redissolved in CD_3CN . *Organic compounds: *N*-benzylaniline (**3a**), benzaldehyde (**2a**) and aniline (**4a**).

4. Catalyst recycling experiments for the reductive amination between nitrobenzene and benzaldehyde.

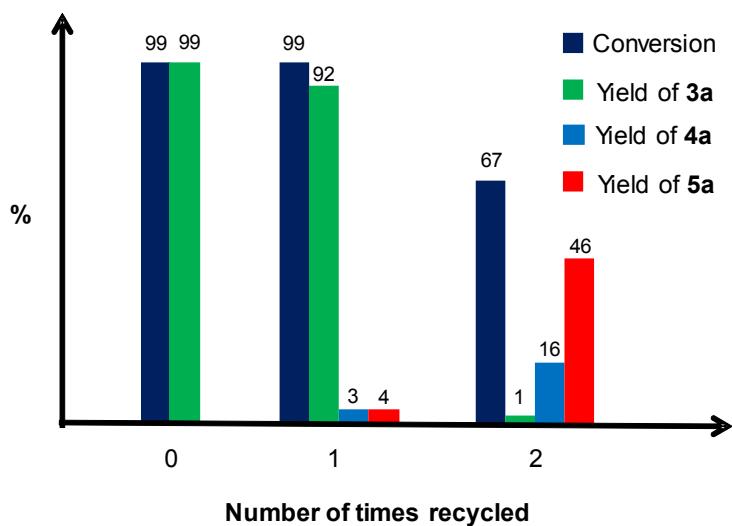
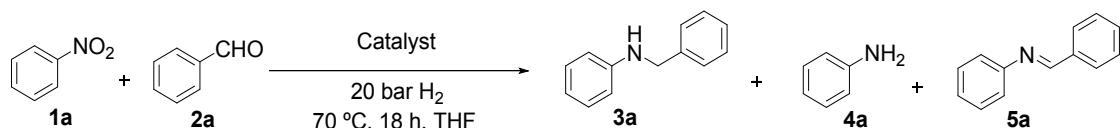
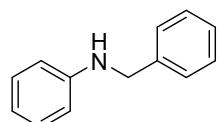


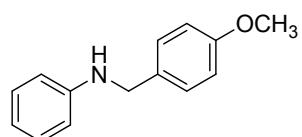
Figure SI3. Recycling of the catalyst for the reductive amination reaction.

Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), catalyst, H₂ (20 bar), THF (2 mL), 18 h, 70 °C. Conversions of **1a** and yields of **3a** were determined by GC using *n*-hexadecane as standard (15 µL).

5. Characterization data of isolated products.

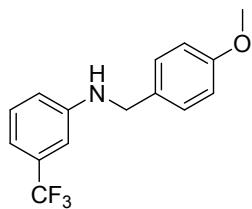


N-Benzylaniline³: ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.42 – 7.27 (m, 5H), 7.24 – 7.18 (m, 2H), 6.80 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.73 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 4.36 (s, 2H); ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 147.01, 138.66, 129.43, 128.76, 127.97, 127.55, 118.79, 114.03, 49.18; MS (EI): m/z (rel. Int) 183.



N-(4'-Methoxybenzyl)aniline³: ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.26 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 7.21 – 7.11 (m, 2H), 6.86 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.69 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.64 – 6.58 (m, 1H), 4.22 (s, 2H),

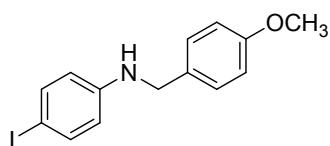
3.92 (br s, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 158.96, 148.32, 131.53, 129.35, 128.90, 117.59, 114.13, 112.94, 55.39, 47.89; MS (EI): m/z (rel. Int) 213.



N-(4-methoxybenzyl)-3-(trifluoromethyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.21 – 7.10 (m, 3H), 6.90 – 6.72 (m, 4H), 6.67 – 6.61 (m, 1H), 4.16 (s, 2H), 4.04 (br s, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 159.18, 148.39, [132.28, 131.86, 131.44, 131.02 (q, $^2J_{\text{C-F}} = 32$ Hz)], 130.67, [129.90, 126.29, 122.68, 119.14 (q, $^1J_{\text{C-F}} = 272$ Hz)], 129.75, 128.96, 115.84, 114.27, [114.02, 113.97, 113.92, 113.87 (q, $^3J_{\text{C-F}} = 4$ Hz)], [109.21, 109.16, 109.11, 109.06 (q, $^3J_{\text{C-F}} = 4$ Hz)], 55.40, 47.71; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 281.



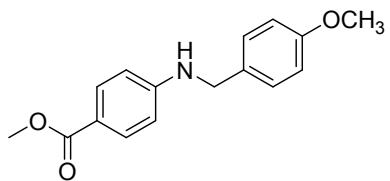
N-(4'-Methoxybenzyl)-4-Chloroaniline: ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.18 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 6.80 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, 2H), 6.45 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 4.13 (s, 2H), 3.93 (s, 1H), 3.72 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 159.06, 146.82, 131.01, 129.16, 128.84, 122.12, 114.20, 114.02, 55.42, 47.95; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 247.



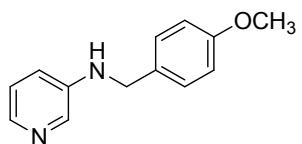
N-(4'-Methoxybenzyl)-4-Iodoaniline³: Isolated yield: X %. ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.41 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.26 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, 2H), 6.41 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 4.22 (s, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 159.10, 147.81, 137.91, 130.91, 128.84, 115.20, 114.23, 78.17, 55.45, 47.70; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 339.



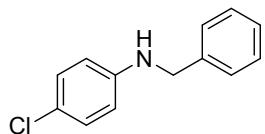
4-(4-Methoxybenzylamino) benzonitrile: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.37 – 7.27 (m, 2H), 7.24 – 7.12 (m, 2H), 6.86 – 6.76 (m, 2H), 6.55 – 6.45 (m, 2H), 4.49 (s, 1H), 4.21 (s, 2H), 3.72 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 159.27, 151.22, 133.80, 129.84, 128.79, 120.53, 114.35, 112.47, 99.02, 55.42, 47.09; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 238.



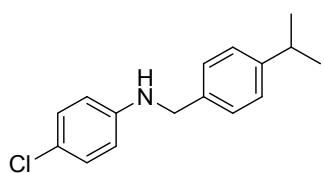
Methyl 4-((4-methoxybenzyl)amino)benzoate⁴: ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.77 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.17 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.79 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.49 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.38 (br s, 1H), 4.21 (s, 2H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 3.71 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 167.40, 159.15, 151.90, 131.64, 130.43, 128.85, 118.61, 114.25, 111.70, 55.40, 51.61, 47.23; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 271.



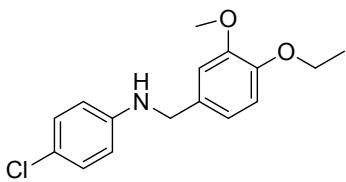
N-(4-methoxybenzyl)pyridin-3-amine⁵: ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.05 (d, J = 2 Hz, 1H), 7.95 (dd, J = 4.7, 1.3 Hz, 1H), 7.29 – 7.26 (m, 2H), 7.06 (dd, J = 8.0 Hz, 4.7 Hz, 1H), 6.91 – 6.85 (m, 3H), 4.26 (s, 2H), 4.04 (br s, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 159.13, 144.18, 138.90, 136.21, 130.57, 128.86, 123.83, 118.69, 114.25, 55.42, 47.46; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 214.



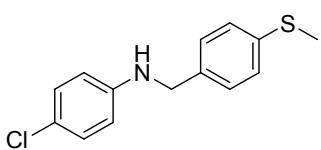
N-benzyl-4-chloroaniline⁶: ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.38 – 7.35 (m, 4H), 7.33 – 7.29 (m, 1H), 7.17 – 7.09 (m, 2H), 6.60 – 6.52 (m, 2H), 4.32 (s, 2H), 4.08 (br s, 1H); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 146.77, 139.06, 129.18, 128.82, 127.53, 127.48, 122.20, 114.03, 48.45; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 217.



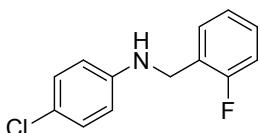
4-chloro-N-(4-isopropylbenzyl)aniline⁷: ¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.23 – 7.07 (m, 4H), 7.07 – 6.95 (m, 2H), 6.50 – 6.39 (m, 2H), 4.15 (s, 2H), 3.90 (br s, 1H), 3.05 – 2.45 (m, 1H), 1.16 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 6H); ¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 148.23, 146.88, 136.36, 129.16, 127.64, 126.86, 122.08, 113.98, 48.23, 33.92, 24.14; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 259.



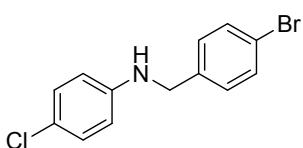
4-chloro-N-(4-ethoxy-3-methoxybenzyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.10 – 6.92 (m, 2H), 6.86 – 6.67 (m, 3H), 6.54 – 6.36 (m, 2H), 4.11 (s, 2H), 4.05 – 3.94 (m, 2H), 3.82 (s, 1H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 1.36 (*t*, $J = 7.0$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 149.55, 147.68, 146.84, 131.44, 129.08, 122.07, 119.70, 113.99, 112.81, 111.06, 64.44, 55.97, 48.32, 14.89; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 291.



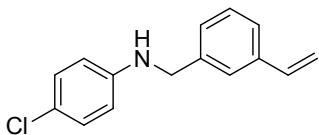
4-chloro-N-(4-(methylthio)benzyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.26 – 7.09 (m, 4H), 7.10 – 6.89 (m, 2H), 6.61 – 6.35 (m, 2H), 4.18 (s, 2H), 3.96 (s, 1H), 2.40 (s, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 146.68, 137.56, 135.99, 129.21, 128.07, 127.14, 122.29, 114.08, 48.03, 16.13; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 263.



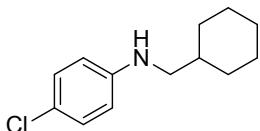
4-chloro-N-(2-fluorobenzyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.33 – 7.21 (m, 1H), 7.22 – 7.12 (m, 1H), 7.06 – 6.99 (m, 3H), 6.99 – 6.93 (m, 1H), 6.52 – 6.44 (m, 2H), 4.29 (s, 2H), 4.00 (br s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ [162.64, 159.38 (*d*, $^1\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 246.0$ Hz)], 146.43, [129.48, 129.42 (*d*, $^3\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 4.4$ Hz)], 129.21, [129.16, 129.06 (*d*, $^3\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 8.2$ Hz)], [126.06, 125.86 (*d*, $^2\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 14.4$ Hz)], [124.39, 124.34 (*d*, $^4\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 3.5$ Hz)], 122.44, [115.69, 115.41 (*d*, $^2\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 21.3$ Hz)], 114.33, [42.10, 42.04 (*d*, $^3\text{J}_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 4.3$ Hz)]; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 235.



N-(4-bromobenzyl)-4-chloroaniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.47 (*d*, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.22 (*d*, $J = 8.5$ Hz, 2H), 7.11 (*d*, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 2H), 6.52 (*d*, $J = 8.9$ Hz, 2H), 4.27 (s, 2H), 4.10 (s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 146.42, 138.14, 131.89, 129.22, 129.08, 122.49, 121.19, 114.09, 77.16, 47.79; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 296.



4-chloro-N-(3-vinylbenzyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.16 (qd, $J = 7.5, 3.7$ Hz, 4H), 7.02 – 6.94 (m, 2H), 6.58 (dd, $J = 17.6, 10.9$ Hz, 1H), 6.48 – 6.37 (m, 2H), 5.63 (d, $J = 18.4$ Hz, 1H), 5.14 (d, $J = 10.9$ Hz, 1H), 4.16 (s, 2H), 3.93 (br s, 1H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 146.66, 139.26, 138.04, 136.64, 129.12, 128.95, 126.91, 125.30, 122.18, 114.31, 113.96, 48.35; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 243.



4-chloro-N-(cyclohexylmethyl)aniline: ^1H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 7.13 – 7.07 (m, 2H), 6.54 – 6.47 (m, 2H), 3.68 (br s, 1H), 2.92 (d, $J = 6.7$ Hz, 2H), 1.83 – 1.70 (m, 4H), 1.62 – 1.49 (m, 1H), 1.34 – 1.12 (m, 4H), 1.04 – 0.88 (m, 2H); ^{13}C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 147.31, 129.12, 121.45, 113.76, 50.81, 37.61, 31.38, 26.66, 26.07; MS (EI): m/z (rel. int.) 223.

5. References.

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6. ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra of isolated products.

