

## Silver-Catalyzed Direct Benzylation of Acetanilide: A Highly Efficient Approach to Unsymmetrical Triarylmethanes

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### ***Supporting Information***

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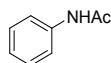
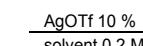
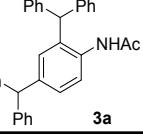
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**1. Reagents:** Unless otherwise noted, all reagents were purchased from Acros, Alfa, Adamas and used without further purification. Column chromatography purifications were performed using 300–400 mesh silica gel.

**2. Instruments:** NMR spectra were recorded on Varian Inova-400 MHz, Inova-300 MHz, Bruker DRX-400 or Bruker DRX-500 instruments and calibrated using residual solvent peaks as internal reference. Multiplicities are recorded as: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, dd = doublet of doublets, m = multiplet. HRMS analysis were carried out using TOF-MS instrument with EI source.

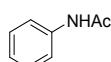
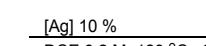
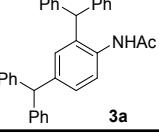
### 3. Optimization of reaction conditions

**Table S1.** Screening of solvent<sup>a</sup>

				<b>3a</b>
<b>Entry</b>		<b>Solvent</b>	<b>Yield (%)<sup>b</sup></b>	
1		DCE	78	
2		HFIP	0	
3		<i>t</i> -Amyl-OH	0	
4		<i>t</i> -BuOH	0	
5		toluene	6	
6		1,4-dioxane	5	
7		MeCN	0	
8		THF	0	
9		DMSO	0	

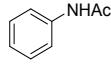
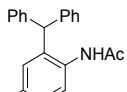
<sup>a</sup>**1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), AgOTf (10 mol%), solvent (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.<sup>b</sup>Yields were based on LC-MS analysis using acetyl benzene as an internal standard.

**Table S3.** Screening of Ag<sup>a</sup>

				<b>3a</b>
<b>Entry</b>		<b>Additive</b>	<b>Yield (%)<sup>b</sup></b>	
1		AgNTf	15	
2		AgNO <sub>2</sub>	0	
3		AgOAc	0	
4		Ag <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	0	
5		Ag <sub>2</sub> O	0	
6		AgCl	0	
7		AgTFA	5	
8		AgO	0	
9		AgOTs	Trace	
10		AgOTf	78	
11		PhCOOAg	0	
12		AgBF <sub>4</sub>	Trace	
13		AgOPiv	0	
14		Ag <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub>	0	
15		AgSbF <sub>6</sub>	Trace	

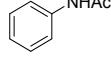
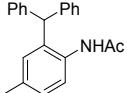
<sup>a</sup>**1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), [Ag] (10 mol%), DCE (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.<sup>b</sup>Yields were based on LC-MS analysis using acetyl benzene as an internal standard.

**Table S4.** Control experiment<sup>a</sup>

		
<b>1a</b>	<b>2a</b>	<b>3a</b>
<b>Entry</b>	<b>Cat (10 %)</b>	<b>Yield (%)<sup>b</sup></b>
1	AgOTf	78
2	-	0

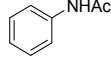
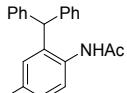
<sup>a</sup>**1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), cat (10 mol%), DCE(1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.<sup>b</sup>Yields were based on LC-MS analysis using acetyl benzene as an internal standard.

**Table S5.** Screening of cat<sup>a</sup>

		
<b>1a</b>	<b>2a</b>	<b>3a</b>
<b>Entry</b>	<b>Cat</b>	<b>Yield (%)<sup>b</sup></b>
1	FeCl <sub>3</sub> 20%	5
2	AgOTf 10%	78
3	Fe(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	64
4	Mg(OTf) <sub>2</sub> 20%	0
5	Ni(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	0
6	Zn(OTf) <sub>2</sub> 20%	5
7	InBr <sub>3</sub> 20%	trace
8	NaOTf 20%	0
9	Cu(OTf) <sub>2</sub> 20%	15
10	In(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	trace
11	Sn(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	0
12	Sc(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	0
13	Al(OTf) <sub>3</sub> 20%	10
14	AgF <sub>2</sub> 20%	0

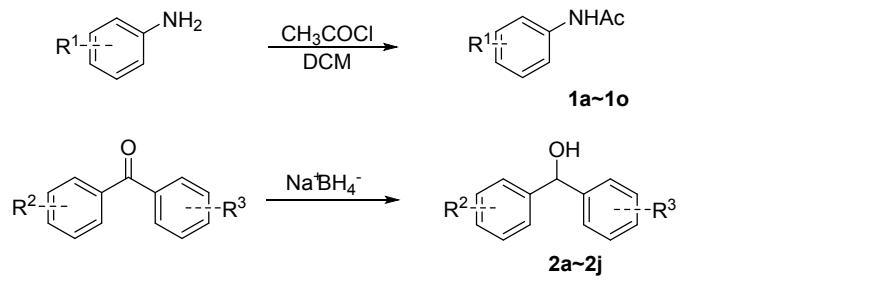
<sup>a</sup>**1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), cat (x mol%), DCE (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.<sup>b</sup>Yields were based on LC-MS analysis using acetyl benzene as an internal standard.

**Table S5.** Screening the load of cat<sup>a</sup>

		
<b>1a</b>	<b>2a</b>	<b>3a</b>
<b>Entry</b>	<b>The load of cat (%)</b>	<b>Yield (%)<sup>b</sup></b>
1	5	60
2	10	78
3	20	76

<sup>a</sup>**1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), AgOTf (x mol%), DCE (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.<sup>b</sup>Yields were based on LC-MS analysis using acetyl benzene as an internal standard.

#### 4. Preparation of substrates

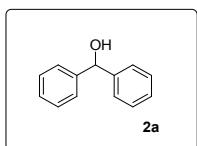


##### Representative procedure for the preparation of acetanilides 1a~1o<sup>1</sup>

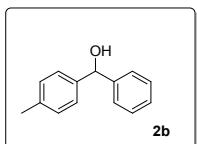
The amine (20.0 mmol) was dissolved in 40 mL of CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> and cooled to 0 °C using an ice bath. NEt<sub>3</sub> (22.0 mmol, 1.10 equiv) was added to the amine solution followed by the corresponding acid chloride (20.0 mmol, 1.00 equiv) drop-wise over 30 min. Then the mixture was stirred for 3.0–24 h at rt. The mixture was then poured into a separatory funnel and washed with 3 x 10.0 mL of saturated NaHCO<sub>3</sub>(aq) followed by washing with 15.0 mL of saturated NaCl (aq). The organic layer was then dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Evaporation and column chromatography on silica gel afforded corresponding amide substrates as white or yellow solid with >80 % yield.

##### Preparation of 2a~2j<sup>2</sup>

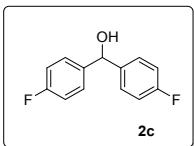
Sodium borohydride (22 mmol, 1.1 eq.) was added portion-wise to a solution of the corresponding carbonyl compound (20 mmol, 1 eq.) in methanol (100 mL), cooled with an ice bath. Then the mixture was stirred for 1 h at rt. The mixture was then poured into a separatory funnel and washed with saturated NH<sub>4</sub>Cl(aq) followed by washing with 20.0 mL of saturated NaCl (aq). The organic layer was then dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Evaporation and column chromatography on silica gel afforded corresponding amide substrates as white or yellow solid with >80 % yield.



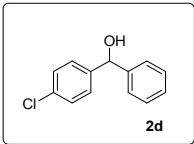
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.21 – 7.07 (m, 10H), 5.55 (s, 1H), 2.68 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2a** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



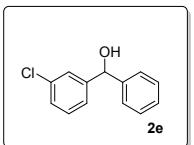
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.25 – 7.17 (m, 4H), 7.16 – 7.10 (m, 3H), 7.01 (d, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 5.62 (s, 1H), 2.34 (s, 1H), 2.21 (s, 3H).  
This compound **2b** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



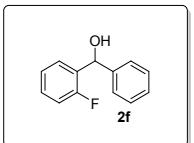
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.18 – 7.12 (m, 4H), 6.93 – 6.85 (m, 4H), 5.61 (s, 1H), 2.59 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2c** is known.<sup>[4]</sup>



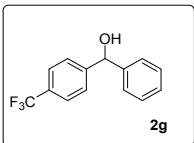
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.26 – 7.14 (m, 9H), 5.63 (s, 1H), 2.35 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2d** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



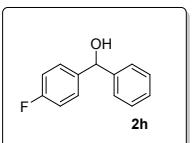
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.23 – 7.03 (m, 9H), 5.52 (s, 1H), 2.69 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2e** is known.<sup>[5]</sup>



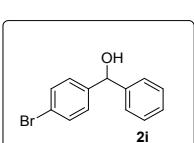
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.41 – 7.36 (m, 1H), 7.30 – 7.10 (m, 6H), 7.06 – 7.00 (m, 1H), 6.93 – 6.87 (m, 1H), 5.99 (s, 1H), 2.32 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2f** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



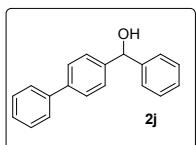
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.42 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.28 – 7.18 (m, 5H), 5.78 (s, 1H), 2.06 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2g** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.42 – 7.27 (m, 7H), 7.09 – 7.00 (m, 2H), 5.83 (s, 1H), 2.26 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2h** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>

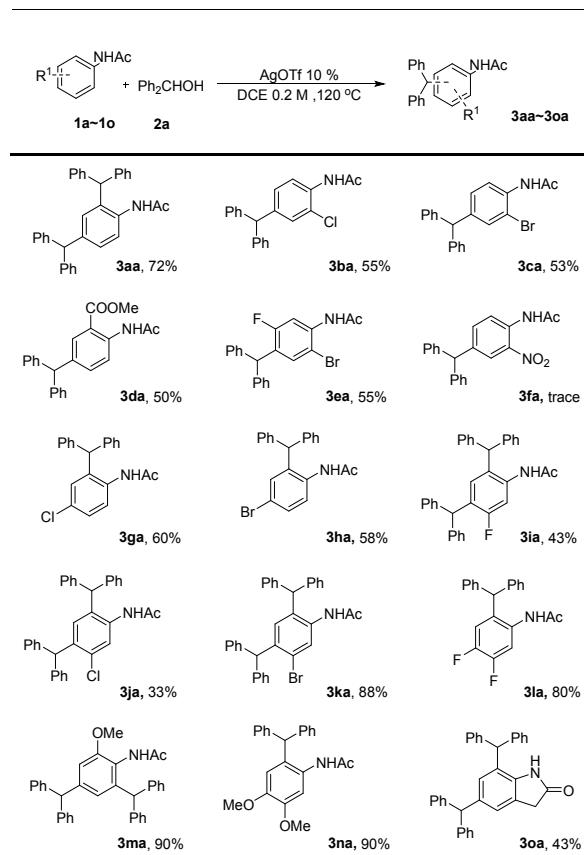


**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.36 – 7.29 (m, 2H), 7.25 – 7.13 (m, 5H), 7.11 – 7.07 (m, 2H), 5.59 (s, 1H), 2.44 (s, 1H).  
This compound **2i** is known.<sup>[3]</sup>



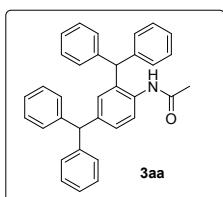
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.51 – 7.43 (m, 4H), 7.38 – 7.15 (m, 10H), 5.77 (s, 1H), 2.20 (s, 1H). This compound **2j** is known.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 5. Dibenzylation with different acetanilide<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>**1a~1o** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.2 mmol), AgOTf (10 mol%), DCE (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.

A mixture of **1a~1o** (0.1 mmol, 1.0 equiv), **2a** (0.2 mmol, 2.0 equiv), AgOTf (2.6 mg, 10 mol%) and 1 mL DCE in a 15 mL glass vial was heated at 120 °C with vigorous stirring for 8 hours. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, and filtered through celite. The filtrate was concentrated in vacuo and purified by column chromatography on silica gel (Ethyl acetate/Petroleum ether = 1:5 to 1:1) to give product **3aa~3oa**.

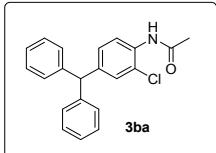


White solid. Isolated yield: 33.6 mg, 72 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.22 – 7.00 (m, 11H), 6.91 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 10H), 6.69 (s, 1H), 6.51 (s, 1H), 5.42 (s, 1H), 5.27 (s, 1H), 1.77 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.37, 143.80, 141.78, 140.79, 135.71, 133.53, 131.32, 129.29, 129.23, 128.77, 128.40, 128.24, 126.91, 126.23, 124.75, 56.37, 52.74, 24.02.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>29</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 490.2141; Found: 490.2131.

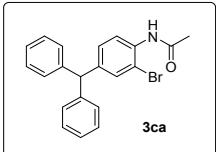


White solid. Isolated yield: 18.4 mg, 55 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.13 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (s, 1H), 7.19 – 7.14 (m, 4H), 7.12 – 7.07 (m, 2H), 7.01 – 6.96 (m, 5H), 6.91 (dd, *J* = 8.5, 1.9 Hz, 1H), 5.36 (s, 1H), 2.08 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.32, 143.08, 140.88, 132.83, 129.64, 129.31, 128.71, 128.47, 126.60, 122.87, 121.78, 56.00, 24.69.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>18</sub>ClNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 358.0969; Found: 358.0975.

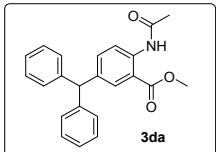


White solid. Isolated yield: 20.0 mg, 53 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.09 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (s, 1H), 7.21 – 7.13 (m, 5H), 7.13 – 7.06 (m, 2H), 7.01 – 6.92 (m, 5H), 5.36 (s, 1H), 2.07 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.27, 143.13, 141.38, 133.99, 132.84, 129.49, 129.38, 128.54, 126.68, 121.89, 113.47, 56.01, 24.91.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>18</sub>BrNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 402.0464; Found: 402.0473.

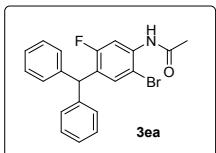


White solid. Isolated yield: 18.0 mg, 50 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 10.88 (s, 1H), 8.52 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.73 (d, *J* = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 7.20 – 7.07 (m, 7H), 6.99 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 4H), 5.42 (s, 1H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 2.10 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 169.05, 168.74, 143.36, 139.99, 138.15, 135.67, 131.41, 129.36, 128.51, 126.59, 120.52, 114.93, 56.16, 52.34, 25.47.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>21</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 382.1414; Found: 382.1409.



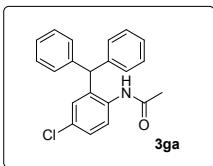
White solid. Isolated yield: 21.8 mg, 55 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.12 (d, *J* = 12.0 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (s, 1H), 7.25 – 7.11 (m, 6H), 7.02 – 6.95 (m, 5H), 5.65 (s, 1H), 2.12 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.32, 161.14, 158.68, 141.93, 135.42 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 12.2 Hz), 133.31 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 5.1 Hz), 129.25, 128.66, 126.90, 109.21 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 29.9 Hz), 106.94 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 2.3 Hz), 49.21 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 2.1 Hz), 25.02.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -113.53.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrFNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 420.0370; Found: 420.0369.

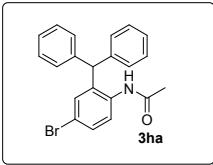


White solid. Isolated yield: 20.1 mg, 60 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.64 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 7.29 – 7.19 (m, 6H), 7.19 – 7.11 (m, 1H), 7.01 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 4H), 6.71 – 6.65 (m, 2H), 5.42 (s, 1H), 1.82 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.37, 141.10, 137.66, 133.98, 130.77, 129.90, 129.31, 129.10, 127.60, 127.39, 126.07, 52.69, 24.10.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>18</sub>ClNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 358.0969; Found: 358.0975.

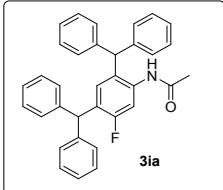


White solid. Isolated yield: 22.0 mg, 58 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.60 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.33 – 7.15 (m, 7H), 7.01 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 4H), 6.85 (s, 1H), 6.67 (s, 1H), 5.42 (s, 1H), 1.81 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.31, 141.07, 137.78, 134.53, 132.79, 130.65, 129.33, 129.15, 127.45, 126.28, 118.67, 52.72, 24.17.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>18</sub>BrNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 402.0464; Found: 402.0461.



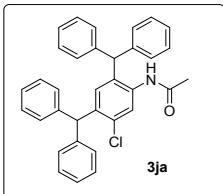
White solid. Isolated yield: 20.9 mg, 43 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.60 (d, *J* = 11.5 Hz, 1H), 7.19 – 7.03 (m, 12H), 6.93 – 6.80 (m, 8H), 6.70 (s, 1H), 6.25 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 5.59 (s, 1H), 5.30 (s, 1H), 1.78 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.18, 160.56, 158.11, 142.48, 141.41, 134.93 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 10.9 Hz), 132.55 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 4.8 Hz), 129.81, 129.10 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.3 Hz), 128.98, 128.35, 127.19, 126.97 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 15.0 Hz), 126.44, 110.90 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 27.4 Hz), 52.46, 49.38, 24.30.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -116.89.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>28</sub>FNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 508.2047; Found: 508.2048.

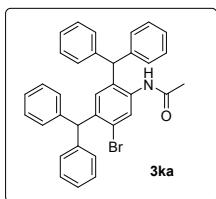


White solid. Isolated yield: 16.7 mg, 33 %.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.78 (s, 1H), 7.11 – 6.99 (m, 12H), 6.84 – 6.76 (m, 9H), 6.28 (s, 1H), 5.71 (s, 1H), 5.31 (s, 1H), 1.71 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.28, 142.35, 141.18, 137.92, 134.42, 133.64, 132.90, 129.20, 128.97, 128.84, 128.26, 127.03, 126.31, 124.88, 53.08, 52.27, 24.02.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>28</sub>ClNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 524.1752; Found: 524.1758.

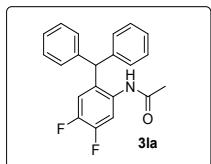


White solid. Isolated yield: 48.2 mg, 88 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.98 (s, 1H), 7.13 – 7.04 (m, 12H), 6.85 – 6.79 (m, 8H), 6.65 (s, 1H), 6.28 (s, 1H), 5.71 (s, 1H), 5.29 (s, 1H), 1.78 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.24, 142.52, 141.12, 139.74, 134.56, 134.22, 133.13, 129.38, 129.08, 128.98, 128.35, 128.11, 127.19, 126.40, 123.69, 55.64, 52.54, 24.20.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>28</sub>BrNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 568.1246; Found: 568.1231.



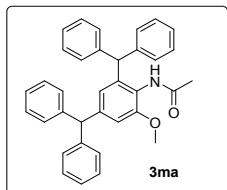
White solid. Isolated yield: 27.0 mg, 80 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.50 (dd, *J* = 11.7, 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.21 – 7.07 (m, 7H), 6.95 – 6.93 (m, 4H), 6.50 (dd, *J* = 11.5, 8.8 Hz, 1H), 5.41 (s, 1H), 1.71 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.30, 149.97 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 13.3 Hz), 147.51 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 13.2 Hz), 147.32 (dd, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 12.7, 12.8 Hz), 140.99, 132.31, 131.45 (dd, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 11.0, 5.0 Hz), 129.22 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 2.1 Hz), 127.56, 118.45 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 19.4 Hz), 113.86 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 20.9 Hz), 52.24, 24.09.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -138.12 – -138.41 (m), -140.65 – -140.99 (m).

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>F<sub>2</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 360.1170; Found: 360.1166.

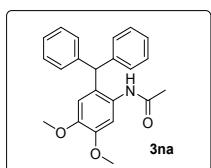


White solid. Isolated yield: 44.8 mg, 90 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.87 (s, 1H), 7.51 (s, 1H), 7.21 – 7.08 (m, 12H), 6.91 – 6.83 (m, 8H), 6.27 (s, 1H), 5.52 (s, 1H), 5.44 (s, 1H), 3.48 (s, 3H), 1.98 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.02, 146.09, 143.68, 143.59, 137.71, 135.25, 129.54, 129.51, 128.44, 128.42, 126.55, 126.47, 125.84, 121.96, 112.17, 55.53, 52.46, 52.29, 24.82.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>35</sub>H<sub>31</sub>NO<sub>2</sub> [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 520.2247; Found: 520.2240.

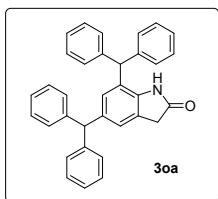


White solid. Isolated yield: 32.5 mg, 90 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.20 – 7.16 (m, 4H), 7.13 – 7.09 (m, 3H), 6.99 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 4H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 6.24 (s, 1H), 5.47 (s, 1H), 3.69 (s, 3H), 3.47 (s, 3H), 1.77 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.56, 147.84, 146.51, 142.27, 129.37, 128.91, 128.58, 128.41, 127.08, 113.29, 109.22, 56.10, 56.03, 52.48, 24.05.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>23</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 384.1570; Found: 384.1557.



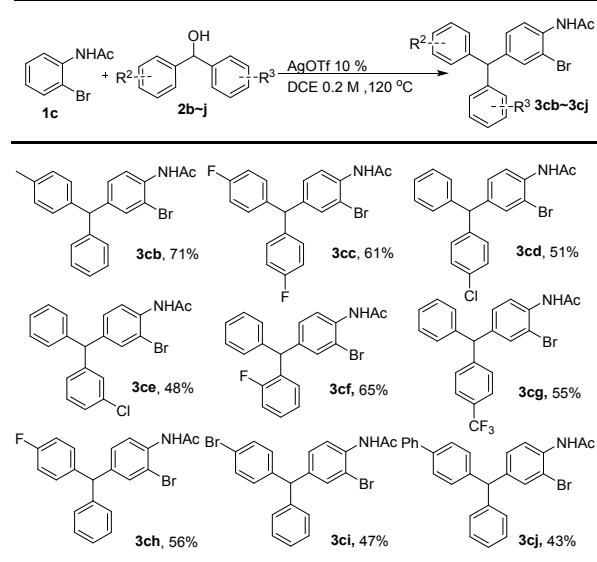
Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 20.0 mg, 43 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.61 (s, 1H), 7.11 – 7.00 (m, 12H), 6.94 – 6.88 (m, 8H), 6.70 (s, 1H), 6.51 (s, 1H), 5.39 (s, 1H), 5.27 (s, 1H), 3.23 (s, 2H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 177.79, 144.07, 141.84, 139.59, 137.96, 130.10, 129.28, 129.24, 128.53, 128.28, 126.74, 126.27, 125.67, 125.51, 123.76, 56.40, 52.10, 36.40.

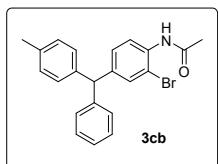
**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>34</sub>H<sub>27</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 488.1985; Found: 488.1968.

## 6. Dibenzylation with different benzhydrol.<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> **1c** (0.1 mmol), **2b~2j** (0.2 mmol), AgOTf (10 mol%), DCE (1 mL), 120 °C, 8 h.

A mixture of **1c** (0.1 mmol, 1.0 equiv), **2b~2j** (0.2 mmol, 2.0 equiv), AgOTf (2.6 mg, 10 mol%) and 1 mL DCE in a 15 mL glass vial was heated at 120 °C with vigorous stirring for 8 hours. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, and filtered through celite. The filtrate was concentrated in vacuo and purified by column chromatography on silica gel (Ethyl acetate/Petroleum ether = 1:5 to 1:1) to give product **3cb~3cj**.

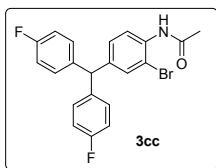


Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 27.9 mg, 71 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.11 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (s, 1H), 7.21 – 7.16 (m, 3H), 7.14 – 7.07 (m, 1H), 7.03 – 6.94 (m, 5H), 6.89 – 6.87 (m, 2H), 5.34 (s, 1H), 2.22 (s, 3H), 2.10 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.26, 143.34, 141.63, 140.15, 136.21, 133.91, 132.79, 129.42, 129.32, 129.23, 128.49, 128.43, 126.58, 121.91, 113.50, 55.64, 24.83, 21.10.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>20</sub>BrNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 416.0620; Found: 416.0621.



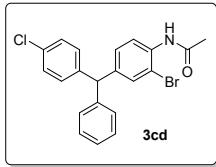
White solid. Isolated yield: 25.3 mg, 61 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.16 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (s, 1H), 7.15 (d, *J* = 1.5 Hz, 1H), 6.97 – 6.87 (m, 9H), 5.36 (s, 1H), 2.15 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.33, 161.68 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 244.0 Hz), 140.94, 138.75, 134.29, 132.67, 130.76 (dd, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 7.9, 1.9 Hz), 129.29, 122.01, 115.49 (dd, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 21.3, 1.9 Hz), 113.55, 54.45, 24.90.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -88.11 – -138.99 (m).

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>16</sub>BrF<sub>2</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 438.0276; Found: 438.0263.

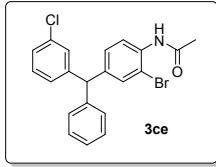


Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 21.1 mg, 51 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.14 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (s, 1H), 7.24 – 7.10 (m, 6H), 7.00 – 6.90 (m, 5H), 5.35 (s, 1H), 2.13 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.33, 142.60, 141.71, 140.81, 134.20, 132.74, 132.50, 130.69, 129.34, 129.26, 128.66, 126.88, 122.03, 113.59, 55.32, 24.81.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrClNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 436.0074; Found: 436.0075.

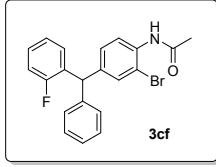


Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 19.8 mg, 48 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.13 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (s, 1H), 7.22 – 7.12 (m, 4H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, 2H), 7.00 – 6.92 (m, 4H), 6.89 – 6.84 (m, 1H), 5.33 (s, 1H), 2.10 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.30, 145.24, 142.28, 140.48, 134.42, 134.25, 132.74, 129.76, 129.39, 129.34, 129.26, 128.67, 127.58, 126.94, 126.92, 122.01, 113.58, 55.61, 24.82.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrClNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 436.0074; Found: 436.0077.



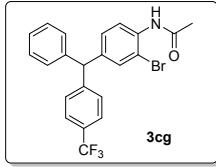
Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 25.8 mg, 65 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.15 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (s, 1H), 7.28 – 7.10 (m, 5H), 7.05 – 6.93 (m, 5H), 6.85 – 6.81 (m, 1H), 5.67 (s, 1H), 2.13 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.31, 160.70 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 247.1 Hz), 141.87, 140.07, 134.24, 132.72, 130.79 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 3.8 Hz), 130.42 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 14.3 Hz), 129.35, 129.28, 128.66, 128.59, 124.16 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 3.6 Hz), 121.88, 115.71, 115.49, 113.48, 48.66 (d, *J<sub>C-F</sub>* = 3.2 Hz), 24.92.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -116.24.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrFNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 420.0370; Found: 420.0368.



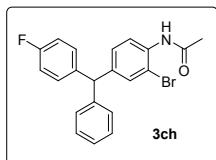
White solid. Isolated yield: 24.6 mg, 55 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.16 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.51 – 7.42 (m, 3H), 7.25 – 7.10 (m, 6H), 7.01 – 6.93 (m, 3H), 5.43 (s, 1H), 2.13 (s, 3H)

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.21, 147.18, 142.12, 140.19, 134.30, 132.69, 129.64, 129.35, 129.23, 128.94 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 32.5 Hz), 128.70, 127.00, 125.44 (q, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.8 Hz), 122.79, 121.85, 113.41, 55.72, 24.84.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -62.42.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrF<sub>3</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 470.0338; Found: 470.0326.



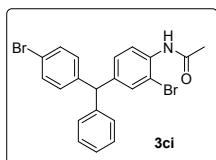
White solid. Isolated yield: 22.2 mg, 56 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.12 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (s, 1H), 7.22 – 7.09 (m, 4H), 7.00 – 6.92 (m, 5H), 6.90 – 6.83 (m, 2H), 5.35 (s, 1H), 2.10 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.31, 161.55 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 245.4 Hz), 142.91, 141.16, 138.87 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.1 Hz), 134.11, 132.72, 130.79 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 7.9 Hz), 129.30, 129.23, 128.59, 126.78, 122.04, 115.31 (d, *J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.3 Hz), 113.59, 55.16, 24.78.

**<sup>19</sup>F NMR** (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -116.12.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrFNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 420.0370; Found: 420.0371.

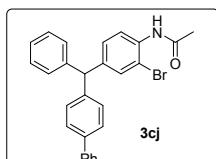


Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 21.5 mg, 47 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.12 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (s, 1H), 7.33 – 7.27 (m, 2H), 7.22 – 7.10 (m, 4H), 6.98 – 6.91 (m, 3H), 6.86 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 5.32 (s, 1H), 2.11 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.30, 142.50, 142.24, 140.68, 134.21, 132.73, 131.61, 131.08, 129.33, 129.25, 128.66, 126.89, 122.01, 120.64, 113.57, 55.37, 24.83.

**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>17</sub>Br<sub>2</sub>NO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 479.9569; Found: 479.9556.



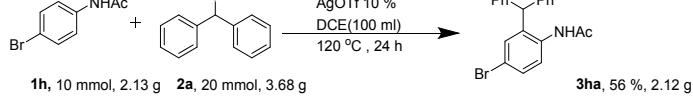
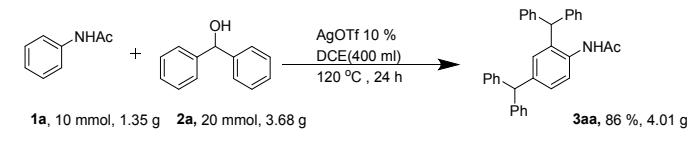
Yellow solid. Isolated yield: 19.6 mg, 43 %

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.10 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.48 – 7.37 (m, 5H), 7.29 – 7.25 (m, 2H), 7.21 – 7.14 (m, 4H), 7.12 – 7.06 (m, 1H), 7.05 – 6.94 (m, 5H), 5.37 (s, 1H), 2.05 (s, 3H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR** (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.26, 142.99, 142.18, 141.28, 140.61, 139.40, 134.01, 132.78, 129.71, 129.37, 129.30, 128.77, 128.53, 127.25, 127.14, 126.98, 126.67, 122.06, 113.63, 55.62, 24.68.

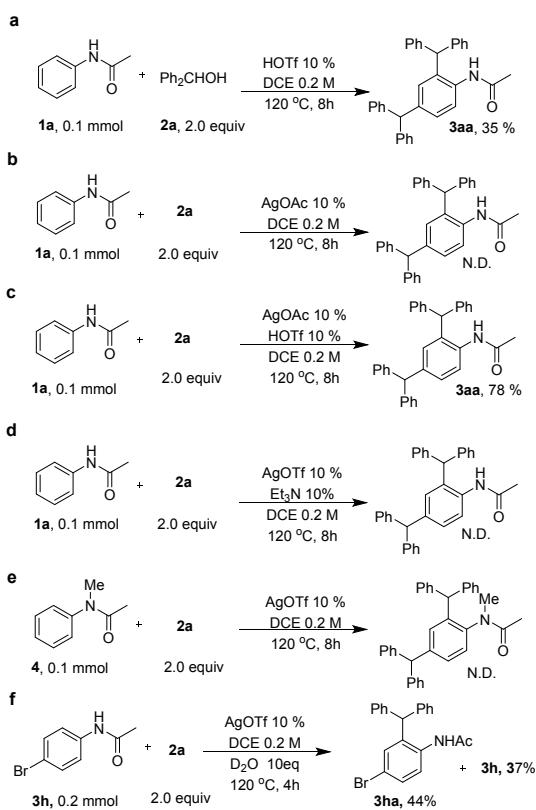
**HRMS** Calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>22</sub>BrNO [M+Na<sup>+</sup>]: 478.0777; Found: 478.0755.

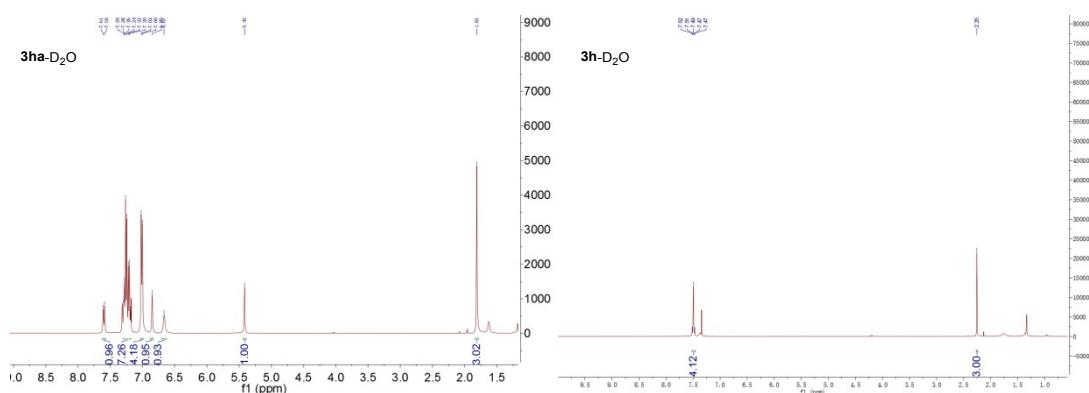
## 7. Gram-Scale Reactions.



A mixture of **1a** or **1h** (10 mmol), **2a** (20 mmol, 2.0 equiv), AgOTf (260 mg, 10 mol%) and 100 mL DCE in a 500 mL glass vial was heated at 120 °C with vigorous stirring for 24 hours.. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, and diluted with ethyl acetate and filtered through celite. The filtrate was concentrated in vacuo and purified by column chromatography on silica gel to give product **3aa** 4.01 g, **3ha** 2.12 g.

## 8. Preliminary mechanistic study

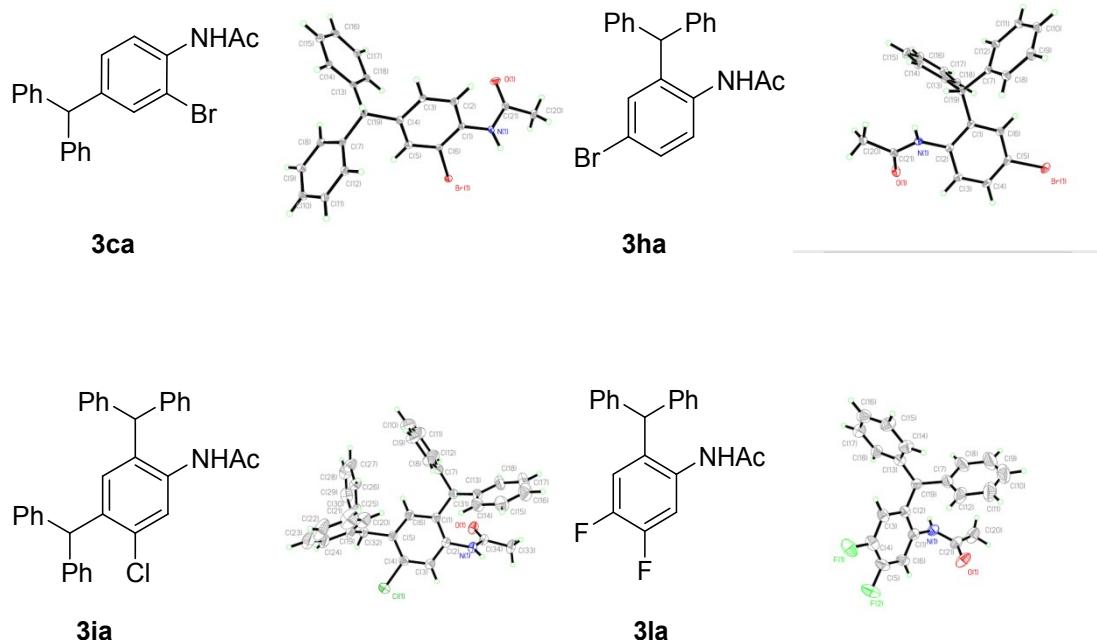




## 9. References

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- [2] I. Šolić, P. Seankongsuk, J. K. Loh, T. Vilaivan, R. W. Bates, *Org. Biomol. Chem.*, **2018**, *16*, 119.
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- [5] C. H. Xing, Q. S. Hu, *Tetrahedron Letters*, **2010**, *51*, 924.
- [6] F. Stieber, U. Grether and H. Waldmann, *Chem. Eur. J.* **2003**, *9*, 3270.

## 10. XRD data of the compound 3ca, 3ha, 3ja, 3la



Intensity data were collected with a Rigaku Mercury CCD area detector in  $\omega$  scan mode using Mo K $\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda = 0.71070 \text{ \AA}$ ). The diffracted intensities were corrected for Lorentz polarization effects and empirical absorption corrections. Details of the intensity data collection and crystal data are given in Table 2. The structures were solved by direct methods and refined by fullmatrix least-squares procedures based on  $|F|^2$ . All the non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically. All the H atoms were held stationary and included in the structure factor calculation in the final stage of full-matrix least-squares refinement. The structures were solved and refined using OLEX-2 programs.

**3ca** (CCDC number: 1842262)

**Supplementary Table 3**

Empirical formula	C <sub>21</sub> H <sub>18</sub> BrNO
Formula weight	380.27
Temperature	120(2) K
Wavelength	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	Triclinic, P -1
Unit cell dimensions	a = 9.5843(5) Å alpha = 77.8330(10) deg b = 10.5582(5) Å beta = 83.4690(10) deg c = 19.2410(9) Å gamma = 66.8000(10) deg
Volume	1748.39(15) Å <sup>3</sup>
Z, Calculated density	4, 1.445 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>
Absorption coefficient	2.358 mm <sup>-1</sup>
F(000)	776
Crystal size	0.400 × 0.320 × 0.230 mm
Thata range for data collection	2.134 to 25.344 deg.
Limiting indices	-11 ≤ h ≤ 11, -12 ≤ k ≤ 12, -23 ≤ l ≤ 23
Reflections collected / unique	40862 / 6413 [R(int) = 0.0885]
Completeness to theta = 25.00	100.0 %
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents
Max. and min. transmission	0.581 and 0.421
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F <sup>2</sup>
Data / restraints / parameters	6413 / 0 / 433
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.098
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0351, wR2 = 0.0925
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0544, wR2 = 0.1003

**3ha** (CCDC number: 1842261)

**Supplementary Table 3**

Empirical formula	C <sub>21</sub> H <sub>18</sub> BrN O
Formula weight	380.27
Temperature	120(2) K
Wavelength	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	Monoclinic, P 21/n
Unit cell dimensions	a = 11.3526(6) Å alpha = 90 deg. b = 38.9014(18) Å beta = 114.621(2) deg. c = 13.5468(7) Å gamma = 90 deg.
Volume	5438.8(5) Å <sup>3</sup>
Z, Calculated density	12, 1.393 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>
Absorption coefficient	2.274 mm <sup>-1</sup>
F(000)	2328
Crystal size	0.25 × 0.23 × 0.20 mm

Thata range for data collection	2.24 to 25.35 deg.
Limiting indices	-13≤h≤13, -46≤k≤46, -16≤l≤16
Reflections collected / unique	124077 / 9951 [R(int) = 0.0739]
Completeness to theta = 25.00	99.9 %
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents
Max. and min. transmission	0.6591 and 0.6003
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F^2
Data / restraints / parameters	9951 / 0 / 649
Goodness-of-fit on F^2	1.033
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0384, wR2 = 0.0873
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0517, wR2 = 0.0916

**3ja** (CCDC number: 1842260)

**Supplementary Table 3**

Empirical formula	C34 H28 Cl N O
Formula weight	502.02
Temperature	304(2) K
Wavelength	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	Monoclinic, P 21/c
Unit cell dimensions	a = 13.5024(11) Å alpha = 90 deg. b = 9.0647(8) Å beta = 97.115(2) deg. c = 22.691(2) Å gamma = 90 deg.
Volume	2755.8(4) Å^3
Z, Calculated density	4, 1.210 Mg/m^3
Absorption coefficient	0.165 mm^-1
F(000)	1056
Crystal size	0.60×0.50×0.45 mm
Thata range for data collection	2.214 to 25.347 deg.
Limiting indices	-15≤h≤16, -10≤k≤10, -27≤l≤27
Reflections collected / unique	50395 / 5020 [R(int) = 0.0469]
Completeness to theta = 25.00	99.6 %
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents
Max. and min. transmission	0.928 and 0.906
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F^2
Data / restraints / parameters	5020 / 0 / 335
Goodness-of-fit on F^2	1.090
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0439, wR2 = 0.1254
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0693, wR2 = 0.1448

**3ca** (CCDC number: 1842259)

**Supplementary Table 3**

Empirical formula	C21 H17 F2 N O
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Formula weight	337.36
Temperature	304(2) K
Wavelength	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	Monoclinic, P 21/n
Unit cell dimensions	a = 10.143(4) Å alpha = 90 deg. b = 9.497(3) Å beta = 99.453(11) deg. c = 19.050(7) Å gamma = 90 deg.
Volume	1810.1(11) Å^3
Z, Calculated density	4, 1.238 Mg/m^3
Absorption coefficient	0.090 mm^-1
F(000)	704
Crystal size	0.250 × 0.230 × 0.200 mm
Thata range for data collection	2.403 to 25.348 deg.
Limiting indices	-12 ≤ h ≤ 12, -11 ≤ k ≤ 11, -22 ≤ l ≤ 22
Reflections collected / unique	23003 / 3302 [R(int) = 0.0733]
Completeness to theta = 25.00	99.7 %
Absorption correction	Semi-empirical from equivalents
Max. and min. transmission	0.927 and 0.886
Refinement method	Full-matrix least-squares on F^2
Data / restraints / parameters	3302 / 0 / 227
Goodness-of-fit on F^2	1.064
Final R indices [I>2sigma(I)]	R1 = 0.0615, wR2 = 0.1708
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.1079, wR2 = 0.1998

## 11. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra

