

Highly efficient transformation of levulinic acid into pyrrolidinones by iridium catalysed transfer hydrogenation

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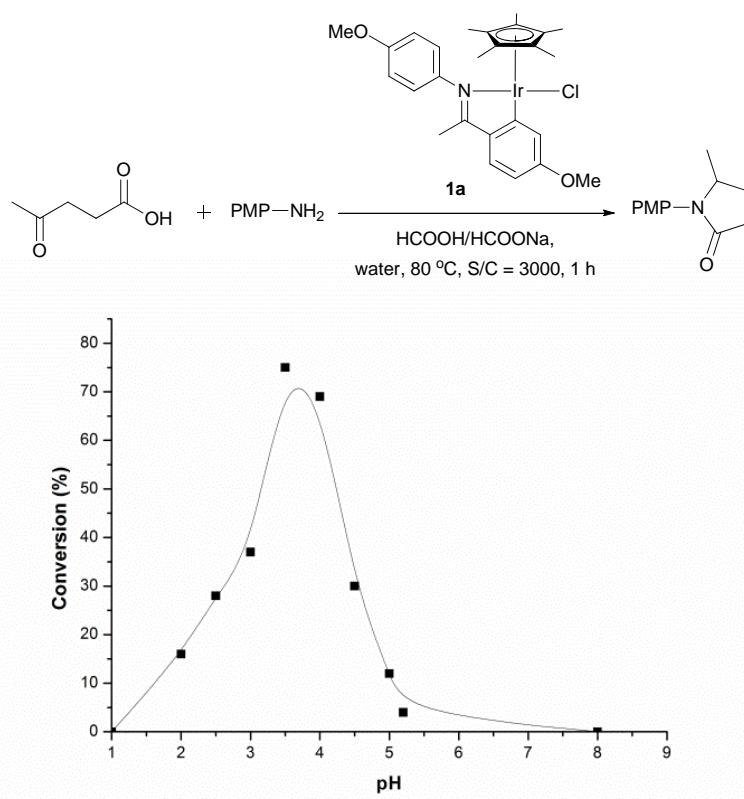
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1. General information

Unless otherwise specified, the chemicals were obtained commercially and used without further purification. MeOH was dried over magnesium and distilled prior to use. Dichloromethane (DCM) was dried over CaH_2 and distilled prior to use. Water was distilled water. NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker 400 Hz NMR spectrometer with TMS as the internal standard. Imines were prepared according to the literature¹. pH was measured with a Sartorius PB-10 pH meter at 25 °C. HRMS data were recorded on a Bruker Apex IV FTMS spectrometer using ESI method and Bruker Maxis with EI method.

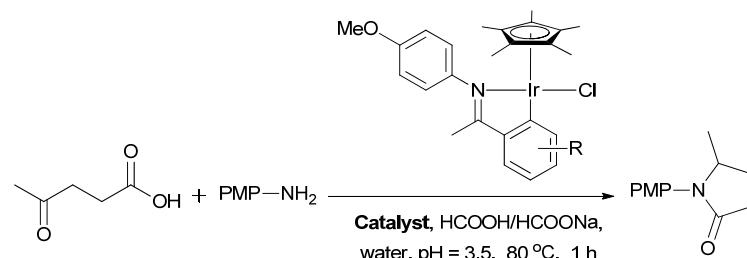
2. Effect of pH on RA of LA



Scheme S1 The effect of pH on RA of LA with *p*-anisidine catalysed by **1a** using HCOOH/HCOONa as hydrogen source. Reaction conditions: LA (7.5 mmol), *p*-anisidine (15 mmol), **1a** (0.0025 mmol), aqueous HCOOH/HCOONa solution (14.5 mol/L, 8 mL), 80 °C, 1 h. PMP = *para*-methoxyphenyl

3. Effect of different catalysts on RA of LA

Table S1 Effects of different catalysts on RA of LA^a

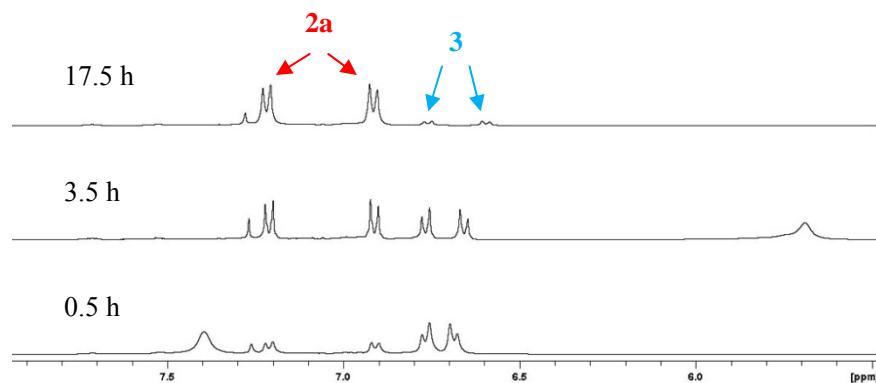


Entry	R	Catalyst	Conversion ^b (%)
1	<i>p</i> -OMe	1a	75
2	<i>p</i> -Me	1b	41
3	<i>p</i> -H	1c	44
4	<i>p</i> -Cl	1d	44
5	<i>p</i> -Br	1e	34
6	<i>p</i> -NO ₂	1f	35
7	<i>p</i> -CN	1g	30
8 ^c	-	[Cp*IrCl ₂] ₂	22
9 ^c	-	[Cp*RhCl ₂] ₂	30
10 ^{c,d}	-	[(<i>p</i> -cymene)RuCl ₂] ₂ /Ts-DPEN	9
11 ^{c,d}	-	[Cp*RhCl ₂] ₂ /Ts-DPEN	15
12 ^c	-	Pd/C	0

^a Reaction conditions: LA (7.5 mmol), *p*-anisidine (15 mmol), catalyst (0.0025 mmol), aqueous HCOOH/HCOONa solution (14.5 M, 8 mL), 80 °C, 1 h, S/C = 3000.

^b Determined by ¹H NMR. ^c 1 mmol LA, S/C = 200. ^d Catalyst was prepared in situ, Ts-DPEN = *N*-(*p*-toluenesulfonyl)-1,2-diphenylethylenediamine.

4. Spontaneous cyclisation of 3 to 2a in NMR tube



Scheme S2 The change of aromatic region for ^1H NMR of **3** with time in CDCl_3 at r. t.. **3** was prepared by RA of LA via $\text{NaBH}(\text{OAc})_3$ reduction in THF with 1 equiv. of HOAc.

5. General procedure for preparation of cyclometalated iridium complexes^[2, 3, 4]

To $\text{IrCl}_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.5 g, 1.35 mmol) in 13 mL methanol was added excess pentamethylcyclopentadiene (0.4 mL). The mixture was refluxed for 36 h. After the mixture was cooled to room temperature, the product $[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$ was isolated by filtration and washed with cold methanol and dried in *vacuo*.

$[\text{Cp}^*\text{IrCl}_2]_2$ (1 equiv.), an imine ligand (2.2 equiv.) and NaOAc (10 equiv.) were placed into a Schlenk tube. The tube was then degassed and recharged with argon three times. DCM was then added and the resulting mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was filtered through celite, and dried over Na_2SO_4 . Following removal of the solvent under vacuum the resulting solid was washed with diethyl ether/petroleum ether to afford cyclometalated iridium complexes.

6. General procedure for preparation HCOOH/HCOONa aqueous solution

Aqueous HCOONa solution ($c = 0.714$ g/mL) and HCOOH (88 w/w %) were mixed in a beaker at 25 °C. After stirring for 5 minutes, the pH of the mixed solution was measured by a pH meter. Different pHs were obtained by varying the volume of the aqueous HCOONa solution and that of

HCOOH. For example, to obtain a solution of pH 2.5, 17 mL of aqueous HCOONa solution was mixed with 25 mL of HCOOH.

7. Typical procedure for reduction amination

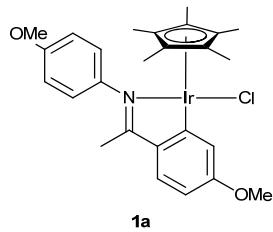
(1) Procedure for screening the reaction conditions

p-Anisidine (15 mmol), catalyst (0.0025mmol), levulinic acid (7.5 mmol; S/C = 3000), and a magnetic stir bar were placed in a pressure tube. To the mixture was injected 8 mL of HCOOH/HCOONa aqueous solution. The mixture was bubbled with argon for 15 min, and then stirred at 80 °C for 1 h. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was basified with saturated NaOH solution, and 1,3,5-trimethoxybenzene (0.5 mmol) was added as internal standard. The resulting mixture was extracted with DCM (10×3 mL). The organic layers were washed with brine and dried over Na_2SO_4 . After removing DCM in *vacuo*, the conversion was determined by ^1H NMR using CDCl_3 as solvent.

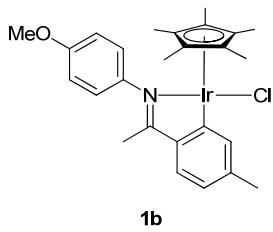
(2) Procedure for expanding the substrate

Amine (7.6 mmol), complex **1a** (0.0016 mmol), levulinic acid (3.2 mmol; S/C = 2000), and a magnetic stir bar were placed in a pressure tube. To the mixture was injected 3 mL of pH 3.5 HCOOH/HCOONa aqueous solution. The mixture was bubbled with argon for 15 min, and then stirred at 80 °C for 2-24 h. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was basified with saturated NaOH solution, and extracted with DCM (10×3 mL). The organic layers were washed with brine and dried over Na_2SO_4 . After removing DCM in *vacuo*, the product was purified by flash chromatography using petroleum ether and ethyl acetate with 1% triethylamine as elute. The volume of aqueous HCOOH/HCOONa solution was 4 mL and 2 mL for S/C = 1000 and 500, respectively.

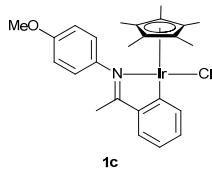
8. Analytic data of iridium complexes



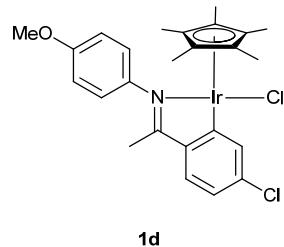
Iridium complex 1a:^[4] Yellow solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 7.45 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (d, J = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 6.58 (dd, J = 8.8 Hz, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 2.38 (s, 3H), 1.44 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 180.1, 170.4, 162.1, 157.6, 144.3, 141.3, 130.0, 124.7, 119.2, 113.6, 107.8, 89.0, 55.5, 55.0, 16.8, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{31}\text{ClIrNO}_2$ [M-Cl] $^+$: m/z calc.: 582.1984. Found: 582.1979.



Iridium complex 1b: Orange solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 7.62 (s, 1H), 7.39 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 2.44 (s, 3H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 181.1, 168.2, 157.6, 145.4, 144.3, 142.1, 135.8, 128.3, 124.3, 122.5, 113.1, 107.8, 88.9, 55.5, 22.0, 16.8, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{31}\text{ClIrNO}$ [M-Cl] $^+$: m/z calc.: 566.2035. Found: 566.2066.

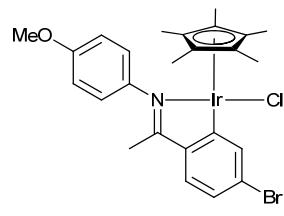


Iridium complex 1c: Yellow solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 7.82 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.27 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.04-7.00 (m, 1H), 6.95 (d, J = 6.2 Hz, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 2.44 (s, 3H), 1.44 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 181.6, 168.1, 157.7, 147.8, 144.3, 135.1, 132.0, 128.4, 124.0, 121.4, 113.7, 89.1, 55.5, 16.8, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{29}\text{ClIrNO}$ [M-Cl] $^+$: m/z calc.: 552.1878. Found: 552.1908



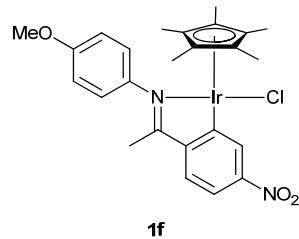
1d

Iridium complex 1d: Yellow solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 7.74 (s, 1H), 7.42 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.96-6.94 (m, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 180.7, 169.7, 157.9, 146.3, 144.0, 137.8, 134.4, 129.5, 124.3, 121.6, 115.4, 89.4, 55.6, 17.0, 8.56; HRMS for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{28}\text{Cl}_2\text{IrNO} [\text{M-Cl}]^+$: m/z calc.: 586.1489. Found: 586.1473.



1e

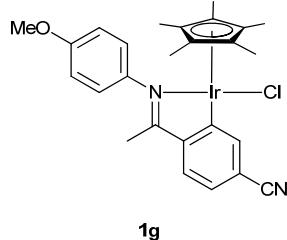
Iridium complex 1e: Yellow solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 7.91 (d, J = 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.16 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.95-6.94 (m, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 2.40 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 180.9, 170.2, 157.9, 146.6, 144.0, 137.3, 129.8, 127.4, 124.4, 124.2, 122.6, 89.4, 55.6, 17.0, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{28}\text{BrClIrNO} [\text{M-Cl}]^+$: m/z calc.: 630.0984. Found: 630.0949.



1f

Iridium complex 1f: Black solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 8.62 (s, 1H), 7.87 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 6.99-6.97 (m, 2H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 2.84 (s, 3H), 1.46 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 180.4, 168.6, 158.2, 153.4, 149.0, 143.7, 129.2, 128.5, 123.7, 116.8, 113.4, 90.1, 55.6, 17.5, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{28}\text{ClIrN}_2\text{O}_3 [\text{M-Cl}]^+$: m/z calc.:

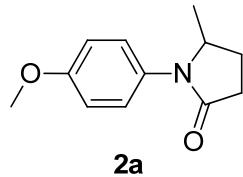
597.1729. Found: 597.1721.



1g

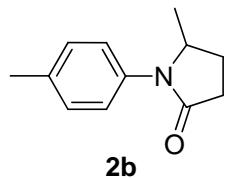
Iridium complex 1g:^[4] Red solid; ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 400 MHz) δ (ppm): 8.04 (s, 1H), 7.54 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.98-6.97 (m, 2H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 2.45 (s, 3H), 1.44 (s, 15H); ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 100 MHz) δ (ppm): 180.9, 167.6, 158.2, 151.7, 143.7, 138.3, 128.0, 125.0, 123.7, 119.8, 114.3, 113.3, 89.9, 55.6, 17.2, 8.6; HRMS for $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{28}\text{ClIrN}_2\text{O} [\text{M}-\text{Cl}]^+$: m/z calc.: 577.1831. Found: 577.1818.

9. Analytic data of products.



2a

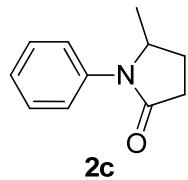
1-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2a:^[5] 617 mg; 94% yield (S/C=2000); White solid; mp. = 59~60 °C; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.22 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.91 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.17 (sextet, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.64-2.47 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.31 (m, 1H), 1.77-1.72 (m, 1H), 1.17 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm) 174.3, 157.7, 130.4, 126.1, 114.4, 56.1, 55.4, 31.1, 26.8, 20.3; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_2 [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 228.1000. Found: 228.1005.



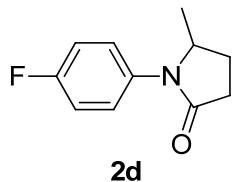
2b

5-Methyl-1-p-tolylpyrrolidin-2-one 2b:^[5] 565 mg; 93% yield (S/C=2000); White solid; mp. = 75~76 °C; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.23 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, J = 8.4 Hz,

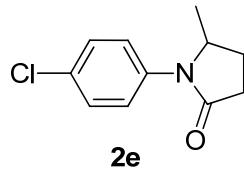
2H), 4.24 (sextet, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 1H), 2.66-2.48 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.34 (m, 4H), 1.78-1.71 (m, 1H), 1.19 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.2, 135.6, 135.0, 129.6, 124.2, 55.8, 31.3, 26.8, 21.0, 20.2; IR (KBr): 1690 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 212.1051. Found: 212.1052.



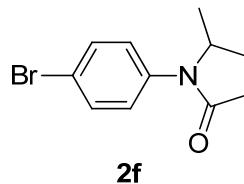
5-Methyl-1-phenylpyrrolidin-2-one 2c:^[5] 510 mg; 91% yield (S/C=2000); White solid; mp. = 49~50 °C; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.37-7.34 (m, 4H), 7.20-7.18 (m, 1H), 4.28 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 2.67-2.48 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.31 (m, 1H), 1.78-1.72 (m, 1H), 1.19 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.2, 137.6, 129.0, 125.7, 124.0, 55.6, 31.3, 26.8, 20.2; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 198.0895. Found: 198.0894.



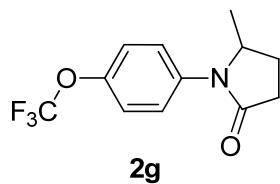
1-(4-Fluorophenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2d:^[5] 544 mg; 88% yield (S/C=2000); White solid; mp. = 74~75 °C; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.33-7.30 (m, 2H), 7.10-7.06 (m, 2H), 4.23 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 2.67-2.49 (m, 2H), 2.42-2.33 (m, 1H), 1.80-1.73 (m, 1H), 1.19 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.2, 160.4 (d, $^1J_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 243.8$ Hz), 133.6 (d, $^4J_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 3.0$ Hz), 126.0 (d, $^3J_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 8.1$ Hz), 115.8 (d, $^2J_{\text{C}-\text{F}} = 22.4$ Hz), 55.8, 31.1, 26.8, 20.1; IR (KBr): 1690 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{12}\text{FNO}$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 216.0800. Found: 216.0802.



1-(4-Chlorophenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2e.^[6] 489 mg; 73% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.33 (s, 4H), 4.26 (sextet, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.67-2.47 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.31 (m, 1H), 1.79-1.74 (m, 1H), 1.19 (d, *J* = 6.2 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 174.2, 136.2, 130.9, 129.0, 124.9, 55.4, 31.2, 26.6, 20.0; IR (KBr): 1700 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₁H₁₂ClNO [M+Na]⁺: calc.: 232.0505. Found: 232.0511.

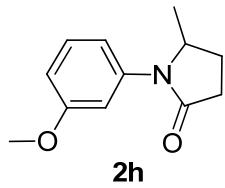


1-(4-Bromophenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2f: 698 mg; 86% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.49 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 4.27 (sextet, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.67-2.47 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.32 (m, 1H), 1.79-1.74 (m, 1H), 1.20 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 174.1, 136.7, 132.0, 125.2, 118.6, 55.3, 31.2, 26.6, 20.0; IR (KBr): 1690 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₁H₁₂BrNO [M+Na]⁺: calc.: 276.0000. Found: 276.0006.

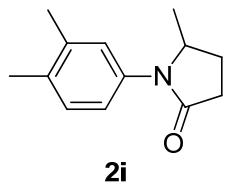


5-Methyl-1-(4-(trifluoromethoxy)phenyl)pyrrolidin-2-one 2g: 596 mg; 72% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.42 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 7.22 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.28 (sextet, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.68-2.48 (m, 2H), 2.41-2.32 (m, 1H), 1.80-1.75 (m, 1H), 1.21 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 174.2, 146.3, 136.2, 124.9, 121.5, 120.5 (q, *J*_{C-F} = 255.6 Hz), 55.5, 31.2, 26.6, 20.0; IR (KBr): 1700 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for

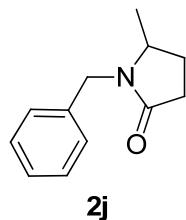
$C_{12}H_{13}F_3NO_2 [M+Na]^+$: calc.: 282.0718. Found: 282.0727.



1-(3-Methoxyphenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2h: 251 mg; 76% yield (S/C=1000); Yellow oil; 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ (ppm): 7.28 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.03-7.02 (m, 1H), 6.93 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 6.75 (dd, J = 8.2, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 4.27 (sextet, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 2.67-2.48 (m, 2H), 2.40-2.31 (m, 1H), 1.78-1.70 (m, 1H), 1.21 (d, J = 6.2 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ (ppm): 174.2, 160.1, 138.8, 129.6, 116.0, 111.3, 110.1, 55.7, 55.3, 31.4, 26.7, 20.1; IR (KBr): 1630 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $C_{12}H_{15}NO_2 [M+Na]^+$: calc.: 228.1000. Found: 228.1005.

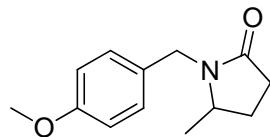


1-(3,4-Dimethylphenyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2i: 530 mg; 82% yield (S/C=2000); White solid; mp. = 85~87 °C; 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ (ppm): 7.14-7.11 (m, 2H), 7.02 (m, 1H), 4.21 (m, 1H), 2.65-2.47 (m, 2H), 2.39-2.32 (m, 1H), 2.26 (s, 3H), 2.23(s, 3H), 1.77-1.68 (m, 1H), 1.18 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ (ppm): 174.2, 137.3 135.2, 134.5, 130.1, 125.9, 121.9, 55.9, 31.3, 26.9, 20.3, 19.9, 19.3; IR (KBr): 1670 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $C_{13}H_{17}NO [M+Na]^+$: calc.: 226.1208. Found: 226.1212.



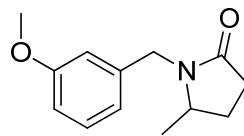
1-Benzyl-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2j:^[5] 523 mg; 86% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ (ppm): 7.32-7.21 (m, 5H), 4.95 (d, J = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 3.97 (d, J = 15.2 Hz,

1H), 3.51 (sextet, $J = 6.2$ Hz, 1H), 2.48-2.34 (m, 2H), 2.18-2.11 (m, 1H), 1.61-1.55 (m, 1H), 1.14 (d, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.9, 136.9, 128.6, 127.9, 127.4, 52.8, 43.9, 30.2, 26.7, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1630 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 212.1051. Found: 212.1056.



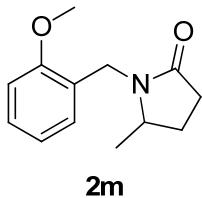
2k

1-(4-Methoxybenzyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2k:^[5] 659 mg; 94% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.15 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 4.90 (d, $J = 14.8$ Hz, 1H), 3.90 (d, $J = 14.8$ Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 3.49 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 2.51-2.32 (m, 2H), 2.16-2.07 (m, 1H), 1.61-1.52 (m, 1H), 1.15 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.8, 159.0, 129.3, 129.0, 114, 55.2, 52.6, 43.3, 30.3, 26.6, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 242.1157. Found: 242.1164.



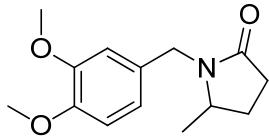
2l

1-(3-Methoxybenzyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2l: 654 mg; 94% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.22 (t, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 1H), 6.81-6.76 (m, 3H), 4.93 (d, $J = 15.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.95 (d, $J = 15.0$ Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 3.54 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 2.54-2.36 (m, 2H), 2.19-2.10 (m, 1H), 1.63-1.54 (m, 1H), 1.16 (d, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.9, 159.9, 138.5, 129.6, 120.3, 113.6, 112.8, 55.2, 52.8, 43.9, 30.2, 26.7, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 242.1153. Found: 242.1162.



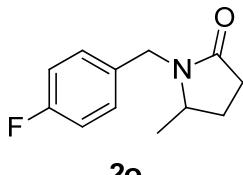
2m

1-(2-Methoxybenzyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2m: 169 mg; 96% yield (S/C=200); Yellow oil;
 ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.24-7.17 (m, 2H), 6.91-6.83 (m, 2H), 4.80 (d, J = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 4.20 (d, J = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.53 (sextet, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.47-2.31 (m, 2H), 2.16-2.10 (m, 1H), 1.60-1.54 (m, 1H), 1.16 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.9, 157.3, 129.4, 128.5, 125.0, 120.6, 110.3, 55.3, 53.2, 38.2, 30.2, 26.7, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1690 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_2$ [$\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 242.1157. Found: 242.1161.



2n

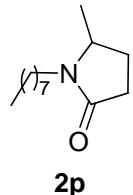
1-(3,4-Dimethoxybenzyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2n: 679 mg; 84% yield (S/C=2000);
Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 6.78 (m, 3H), 4.90 (d, J = 14.8 Hz, 1H), 3.90 (d, J = 14.8 Hz, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.51 (sextet, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.52-2.32 (m, 2H), 2.17-2.08 (m, 1H), 1.58-1.56 (m, 1H), 1.16 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.8, 149.2, 148.5, 129.5, 120.4, 111.4, 111.1, 55.9, 55.8, 52.7, 43.7, 30.3, 26.6, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_3$ [$\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 272.1263. Found: 272.1272.



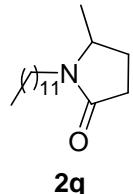
2o

1-(4-Fluorobenzyl)-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2o: 602 mg; 91% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil;
 ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.17 (m, 2H), 6.95 (m, 2H), 4.83 (d, J = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 3.96 (d, J = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 3.47 (sextet, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.45-2.32 (m, 2H), 2.14-2.09 (m, 1H), 1.59-1.53 (m, 1H), 1.11 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.9, 162.1

(d, $^1J_{C-F} = 244.2$ Hz), 132.7 (d, $^4J_{C-F} = 3.0$ Hz), 129.6 (d, $^3J_{C-F} = 8.0$ Hz), 115.4 (d, $^2J_{C-F} = 21.2$ Hz), 52.9, 43.2, 30.2, 26.7, 19.6; IR (KBr): 1690 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{14}\text{FNO} [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 230.0957. Found: 230.0964.

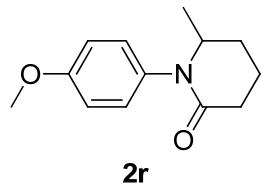


1-Ethyl-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2p: 150 mg; 88% yield (S/C=500); Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 3.64 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 3.57-3.50 (m, 1H), 2.89-2.84 (m, 1H), 2.36-2.28 (m, 2H), 2.16-2.11 (m, 1H), 1.54-1.47 (m, 2H), 1.40-1.37 (m, 2H), 1.25-1.22 (m, 10H), 1.16 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 3H), 0.83 (m, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.6, 53.2, 40.0, 31.7, 30.3, 29.2, 29.1, 27.4, 26.9, 26.8, 22.6, 19.7, 14.0; IR (KBr): 1690 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{25}\text{NO} [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 234.1834. Found: 234.1838.



2q

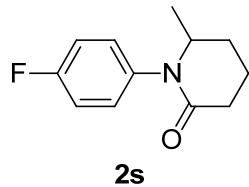
1-Ethyl-5-methylpyrrolidin-2-one 2q: 68 mg; 73% yield (S/C=500); Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 3.66 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 3.57-3.50 (m, 1H), 2.90-2.83 (m, 1H), 2.41-2.24 (m, 2H), 2.18-2.09 (m, 1H), 1.55-1.45 (m, 2H), 1.42-1.32 (m, 1H), 1.21 (s, 18H), 1.16 (d, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 3H), 0.84 (t, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 174.8, 53.4, 40.2, 31.9, 30.3, 29.59, 29.58, 29.54, 29.51, 29.31, 29.29, 27.4, 27.0, 26.9, 22.6, 19.7, 14.0; IR (KBr): 1680 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{33}\text{NO} [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 290.2460. Found: 290.2465.



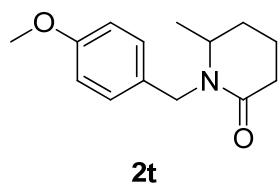
2r

1-(4-Methoxyphenyl)-6-methylpiperidin-2-one 2r: 587 mg; 84% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil;

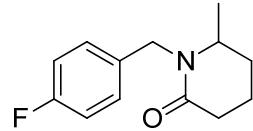
¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.06 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 6.91 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 3.85 (sextet, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 2.52 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 2.13-2.05 (m, 1H), 2.02-1.93 (m, 1H), 1.88-1.78 (m, 1H), 1.75-1.67 (m, 1H), 1.07 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 170.5, 158.3, 134.3, 129.0, 114.4, 55.9, 55.4, 32.8, 30.9, 20.9, 18.4; IR (KBr): 1650 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₃H₁₇NO₂ [M+Na]⁺: calc.: 242.1157. Found: 242.1162.



1-(4-Fluorophenyl)-6-methylpiperidin-2-one 2s: 654 mg; 98% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil;
¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.14-7.05 (m, 4H), 3.87 (sextet, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 2.51 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 2.14-2.06 (m, 1H), 2.04-1.94 (m, 1H), 1.88-1.79 (m, 1H), 1.76-1.68 (m, 1H), 1.06 (d, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 170.5, 161.4 (d, ¹J_{C-F} = 247.1 Hz), 137.4(d, ⁴J_{C-F} = 3.2 Hz), 129.7 (d, ³J_{C-F} = 8.5 Hz), 116.0 (d, ²J_{C-F} = 22.7 Hz), 55.9, 32.7, 30.9, 20.9, 18.4; IR (KBr): 1640 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₂H₁₄FNO [M+Na]⁺: calc.: 230.0957. Found: 230.0961.

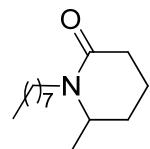


1-(4-Methoxybenzyl)-6-methylpiperidin-2-one 2t: 611 mg; 82% yield (S/C=1000); Yellow oil;
¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 7.16 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 5.27 (d, *J* = 14.8 Hz, 1H), 3.91 (d, *J* = 14.8 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 3.44 (sextet, *J* = 6.2 Hz, 1H), 2.46-2.43 (m, 2H), 1.99-1.85 (m, 1H), 1.83-1.75 (m, 1H), 1.73-1.66 (m, 1H), 1.62-1.56 (m, 1H), 1.19 (d, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ (ppm): 170.1, 158.8, 129.9, 129.1, 113.9, 55.2, 50.6, 46.5, 32.2, 30.2, 19.5, 17.5; IR (KBr): 1630 cm⁻¹; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₄H₁₉NO₂ [M+Na]⁺: calc.: 256.1313. Found: 256.1319.



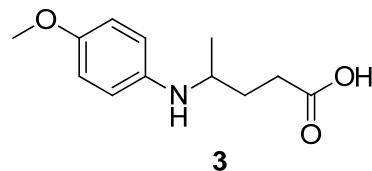
2u

1-(4-Fluorobenzyl)-6-methylpiperidin-2-one 2u: 567 mg; 81% yield (S/C=2000); Yellow oil;
 ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 7.21-7.18 (m, 2H), 6.97 (m, 2H), 5.20 (d, $J = 14.8$ Hz, 1H),
4.00 (d, $J = 14.8$ Hz, 1H), 3.43 (sextet, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 2.46-2.43 (m, 1H), 1.94-1.77 (m, 2H),
1.75-1.67 (m, 1H), 1.63-1.57 (m, 1H), 1.18 (d, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ
(ppm): 170.2, 162.0 (d, $^1J_{\text{C-F}} = 246.0$ Hz), 133.7 (d, $^4J_{\text{C-F}} = 3.2$ Hz), 129.3 (d, $^3J_{\text{C-F}} = 8.1$ Hz),
115.3 (d, $^2J_{\text{C-F}} = 21.5$ Hz), 51.2, 46.6, 32.2, 30.2, 19.6, 17.5; IR (KBr): 1630 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI)
for $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{16}\text{FNO} [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$: calc.: 244.1119. Found: 244.1114.



2v

1-Ethyl-6-methylpiperidin-2-one 2v: 155 mg; 86% yield (S/C=500); Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 3.77-3.69 (m, 1H), 3.55-3.48 (m, 1H), 2.90-2.83 (m, 1H), 2.35-2.32 (m, 2H), 1.88-1.83 (m, 2H), 1.71-1.66 (1, 1H), 1.64-1.48 (m, 3H), 1.26-1.20 (m, 13H), 0.86 (t, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ (ppm): 169.6, 51.8, 45.1, 32.2, 31.8, 30.2, 29.4, 29.2, 27.7, 27.1, 22.6, 20.0, 17.5, 14.0; IR (KBr): 1640 cm^{-1} ; HRMS (ESI) for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{27}\text{NO} [\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$:
calc.: 248.1990. Found: 248.1993.



3

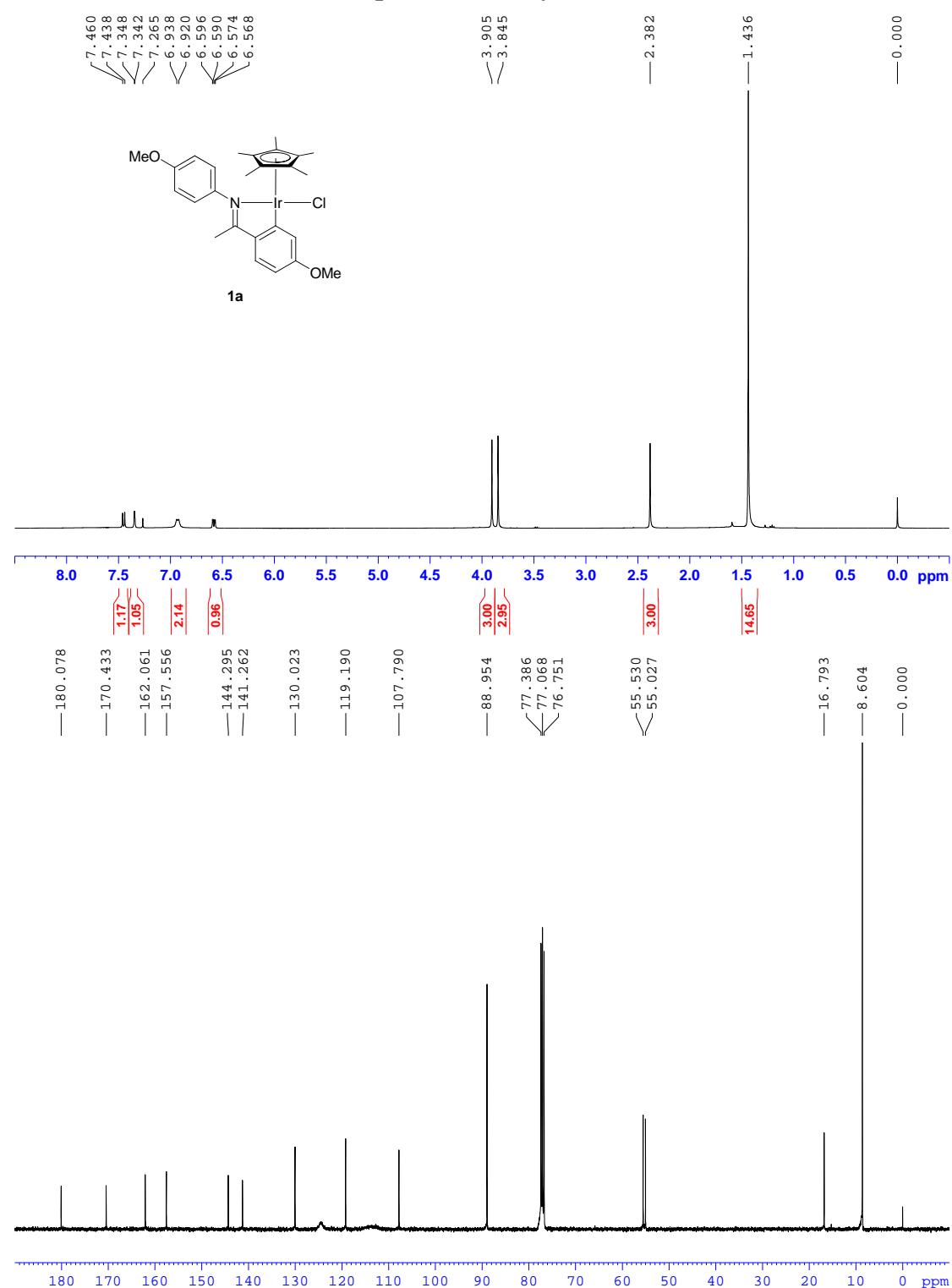
4-(4-Methoxyphenyl)amino pentanoic acid 3: Yellow oil; ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CD_3SOCD_3) δ
(ppm): 6.69 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 6.51 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 3.62 (s, 3H), 3.32 (sextet, $J = 6.2$ Hz,
1H), 2.31-2.24 (m, 2H), 1.75-1.56 (m, 2H), 1.05 (d, $J = 6.2$ Hz, 3H); ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz,

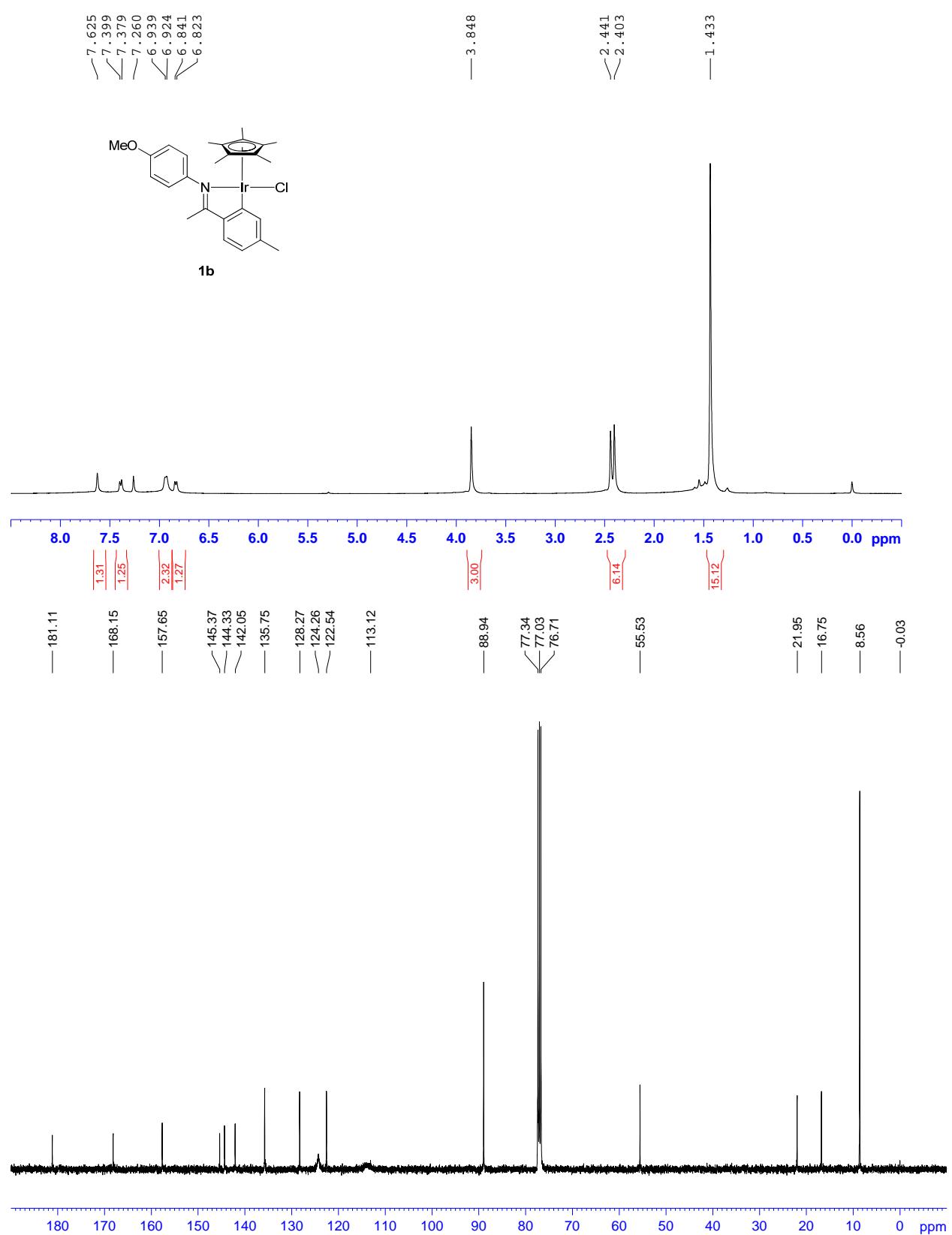
CD₃SOCD₃) δ (ppm): 174.6, 150.4, 142.4, 114.6, 113.6, 55.3, 47.5, 31.3, 30.5, 20.1; HRMS (ESI) for C₁₂H₁₇NO₃ [M-H]⁻: calc.: 222.1130. Found: 222.1129.

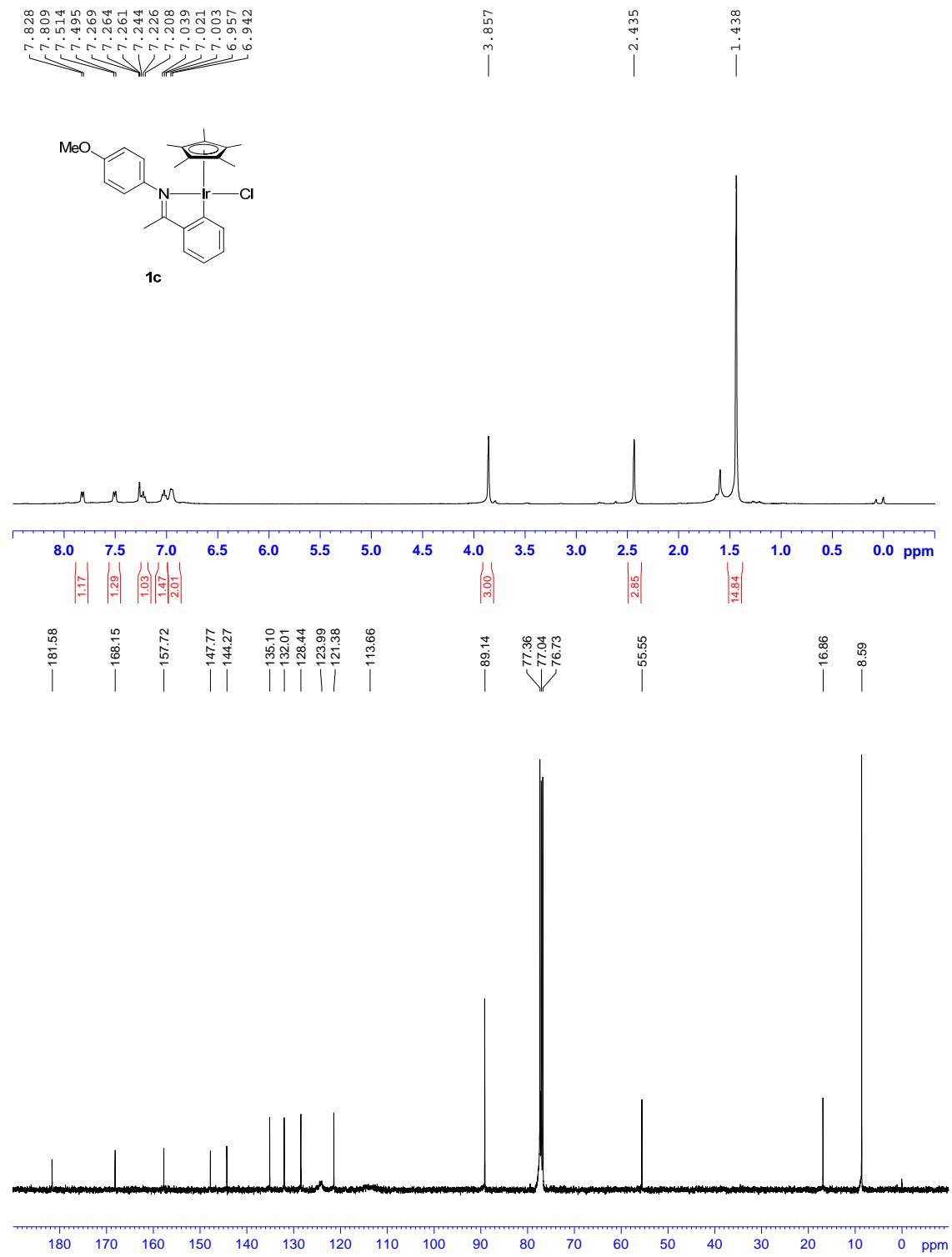
10. References

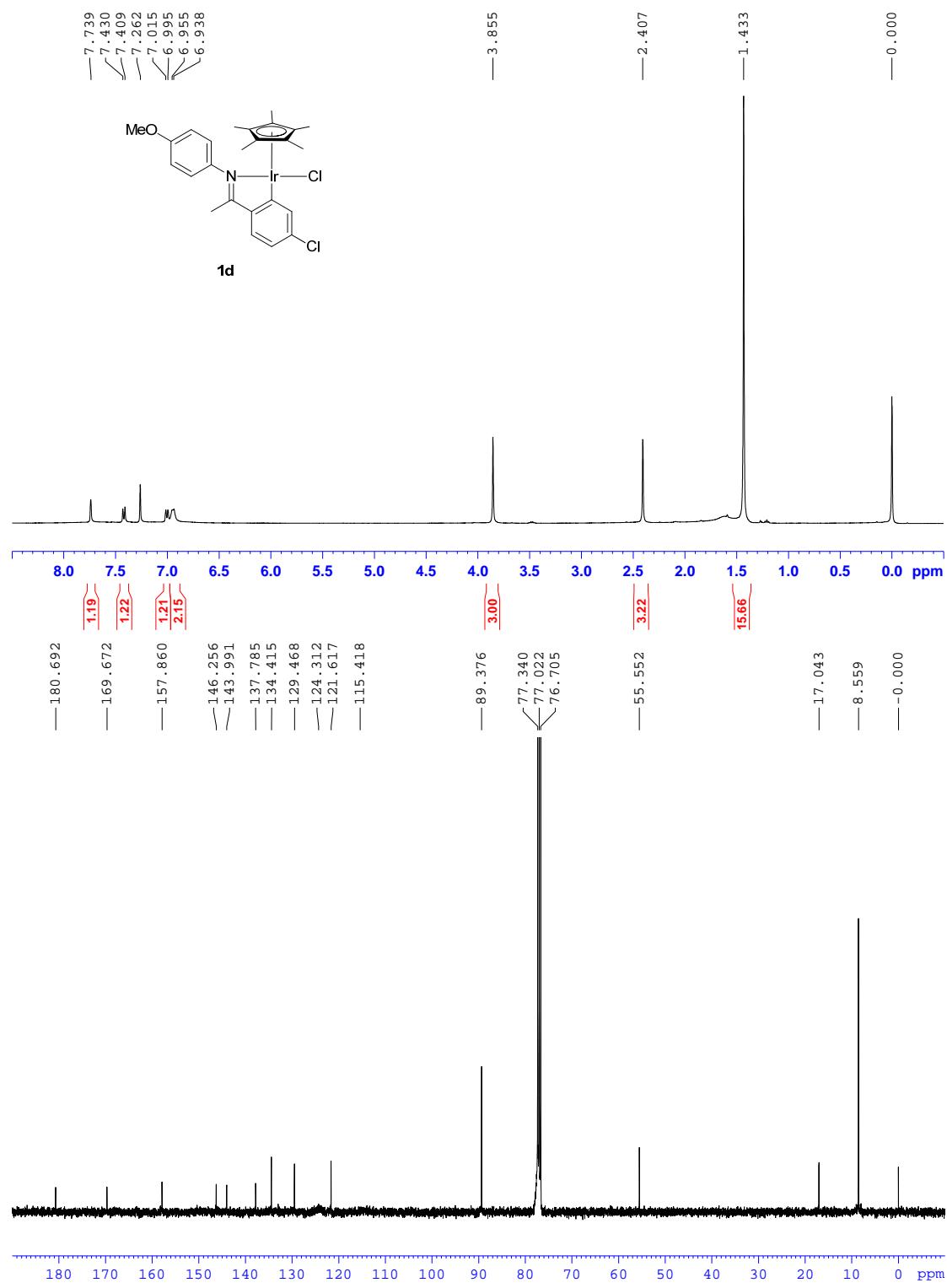
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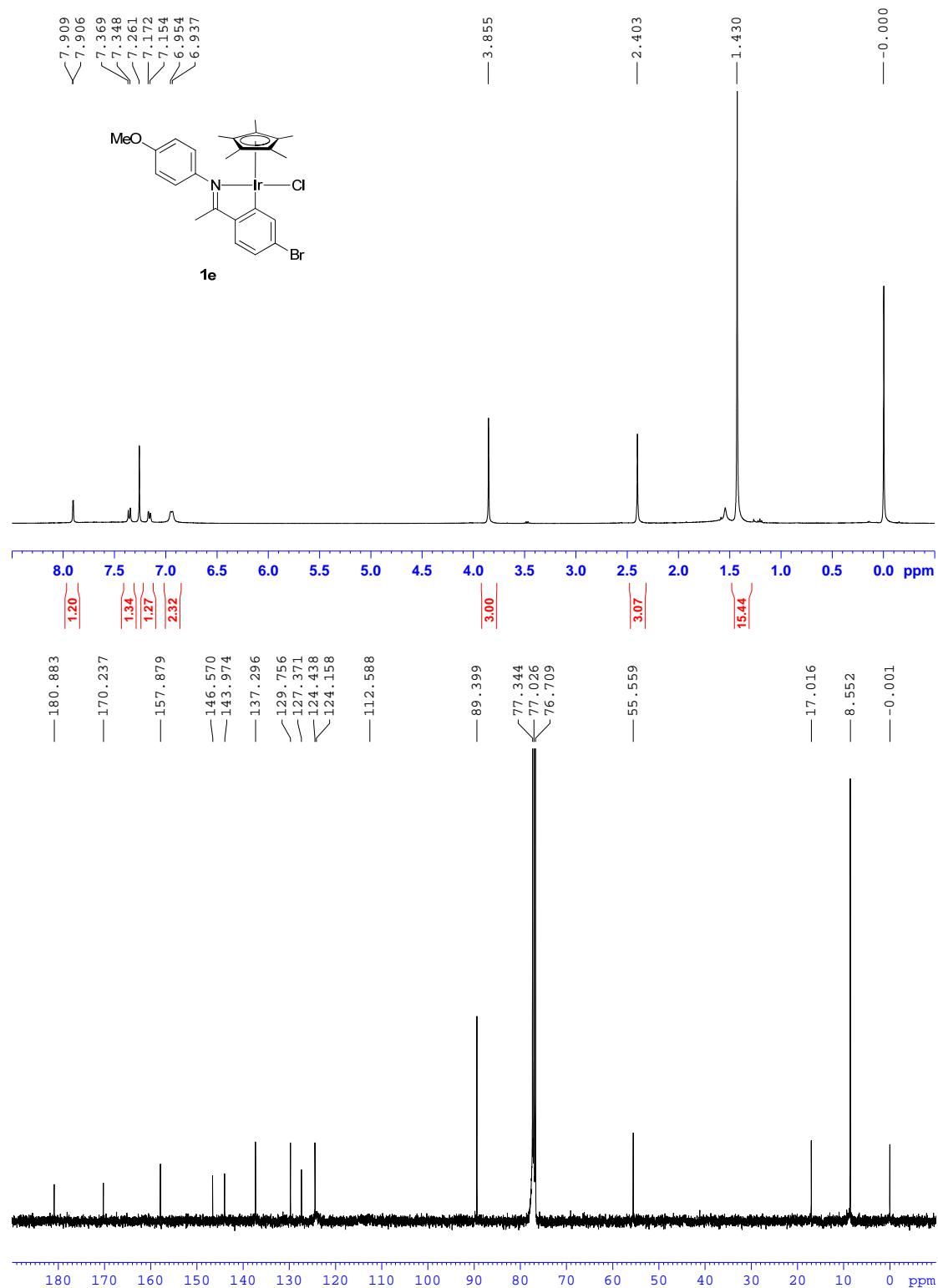
11. Traces of ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra of catalysts

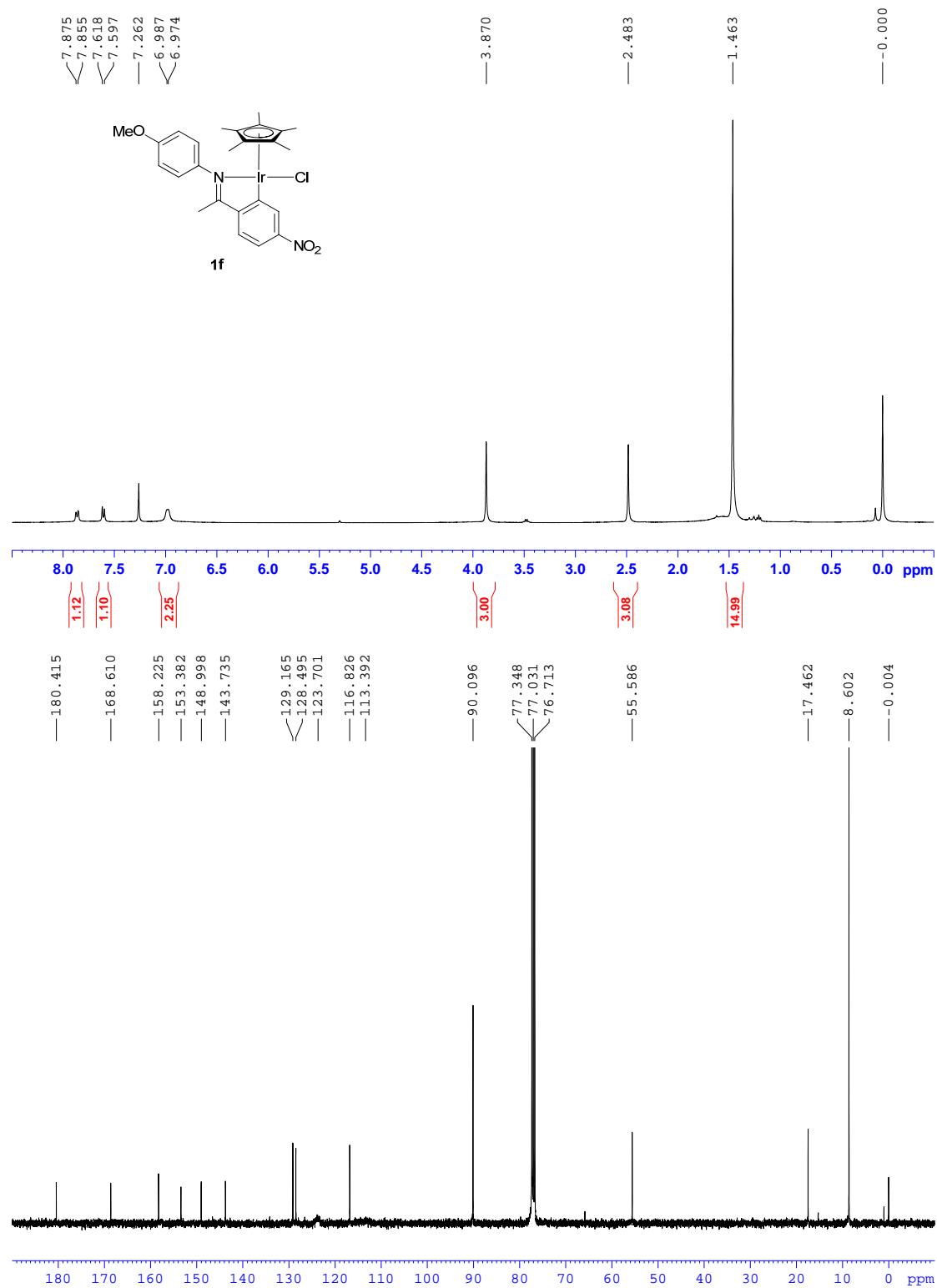


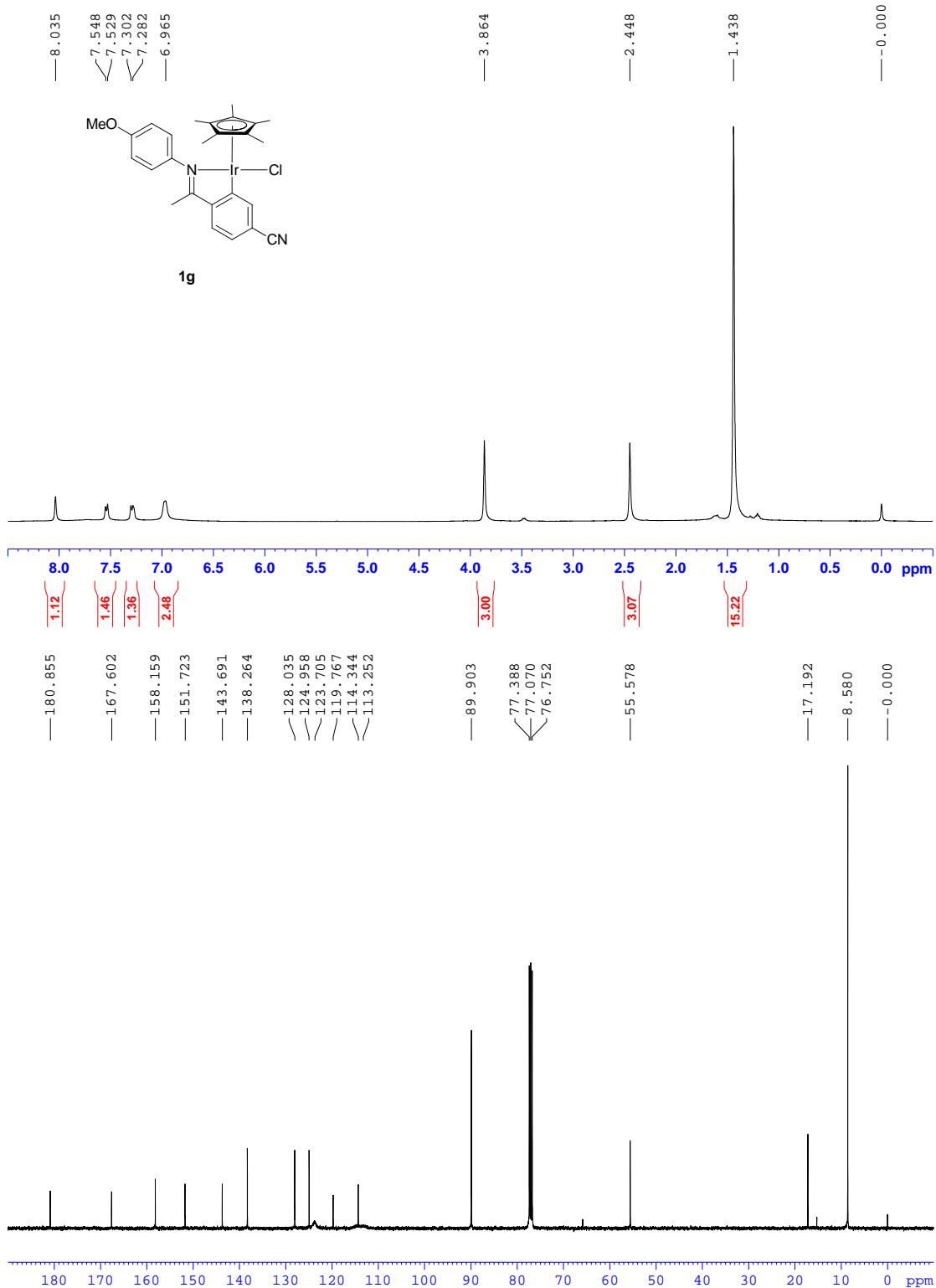












12. Traces of ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra of products

