

## Electronic Supplementary Information

### The Baylis-Hillman acetates in organic synthesis: Unprecedented sodium nitrite induced intramolecular Friedel-Crafts cyclization of secondary nitro compounds

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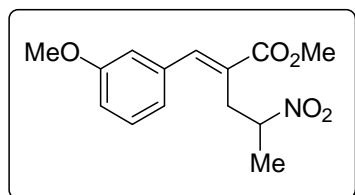
## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**General Remarks:** Melting points were recorded on a Superfit (India) capillary melting point apparatus and are uncorrected. IR spectra were recorded on a JASCO-FT-IR model 5300 spectrometer using solid samples as KBr plates and liquid sample as thin film between NaCl plates. For all the compounds  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz) and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) spectra were recorded in deuteriochloroform ( $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) on a Bruker-AVANCE-400 spectrometer using tetramethylsilane (TMS,  $\delta = 0$ ) as an internal standard at room temperature. HRMS spectra were recorded on Bruker maXis ESI-TOF spectrometer. The X-ray diffraction measurements were carried out at 298 K on a Bruker SMART APEX CCD area detector system equipped with a graphite monochromator and a Mo-K $\alpha$  fine-focus sealed tube ( $\lambda = 0.71073 \text{ \AA}$ ).

### Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (**3a**)

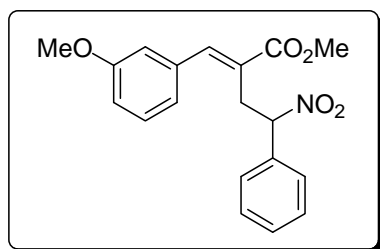
This compound was prepared following the literature <sup>1</sup> procedure known for similar compound with some modification.

To a stirred solution of methyl 3-acetoxy-3-(3-methoxyphenyl)-2-methylenepropanoate (**1a**) (3 mmol, 0.793 g) and nitroethane (**2a**) (9 mmol, 0.675 g) in DMF (12 mL) was added  $\text{K}_2\text{CO}_3$  (9 mmol, 1.25 g) and reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 4 hours. The reaction mixture was diluted with brine (12 mL), extracted with diethyl ether (3x15 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with water (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ . Solvent was evaporated and the resulting crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 5% EtOAc in hexanes) to afford **3a** in 90% (0.76 g) yield as a pale brown viscous liquid.



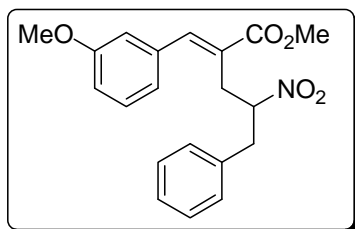
IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1632, 1556  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.48 (d, 3H,  $J$  = 6.8 Hz), 2.95 & 3.25 [dABq, 2H,  $J$  = 14.0 & 6.0 (8.0) Hz], 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 4.87-4.97 (m, 1H), 6.82 (s, 1H), 6.84-6.94 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.37 (m, 1H), 7.86 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) :  $\delta$  18.80, 32.97, 52.36, 55.33, 81.68, 113.98, 114.73, 121.13, 127.45, 129.82, 135.91, 143.46, 159.72, 167.62; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{17}\text{O}_5\text{NH}$  (M+H) $^+$  : 280.1185; Found: 280.1180.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitro-4-phenylbutanoate (3b)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 89 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1626, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.41 & 3.69 [dABq, 2H,  $J$  = 14.4 & 6.4 (7.6) Hz], 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 5.85 (t, 1H,  $J$  = 7.2 Hz), 6.70 (s, 1H), 6.78 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz), 6.91 (dd, 1H,  $J$  = 8.4 & 2.4 Hz), 7.24-7.38\* (m, 6H), 7.79 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  31.95, 52.36, 55.32, 89.10, 113.88, 114.68, 120.98, 126.96, 127.87, 128.82, 129.76, 133.91, 136.01, 143.86, 159.69, 167.57; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{19}\text{O}_5\text{NH}$  (M+H) $^+$  : 342.1341; Found: 342.1342.

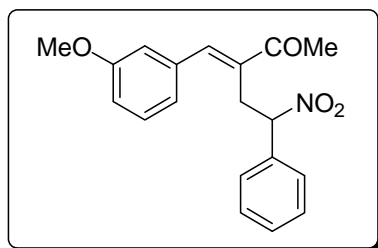
**Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitro-5-phenylpentanoate (3c)**



Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 92 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1615, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.94-3.07 (m, 2H), 3.21-3.35 (m, 2H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 5.05-5.14 (m, 1H), 6.78-6.87

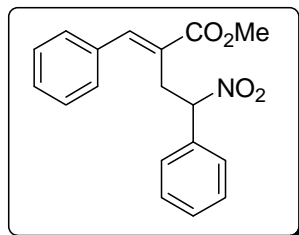
(m, 2H), 6.91 (dd, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  &  $2.4$  Hz), 7.12\* (d, 2H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.22-7.36<sup>§</sup> (m, 4H), 7.85 (s, 1H); \*unresolved doublet of doublet. § It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  31.77, 39.58, 52.38, 55.37, 88.02, 113.95, 114.83, 121.02, 127.29, 127.44, 128.82, 128.90, 129.83, 135.37, 135.85, 143.67, 159.73, 167.55; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{O}_5\text{NH}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ )<sup>+</sup>: 356.1498; Found: 356.1498.

**(E)-3-(3-Methoxybenzylidene)-5-nitro-5-phenylpentan-2-one (3d)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 88 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1665, 1626, 1544  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.42 (s, 3H), 3.35 & 3.65 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  &  $6.8$  (8.4) Hz], 3.84 (s, 3H), 5.80 (t, 1H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 6.75 (s, 1H), 6.82 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 6.94 (dd, 1H,  $J = 8.4$  &  $2.0$  Hz), 7.22-7.38\* (m, 6H), 7.62 (s, 1H); \* It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  25.95, 31.00, 55.38, 88.77, 113.87, 114.83, 120.96, 127.91, 128.79, 129.69, 129.89, 134.02, 135.97, 136.67, 144.30, 159.76, 199.71; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{19}\text{O}_4\text{NNa}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ )<sup>+</sup>: 348.1212; Found: 348.1216.

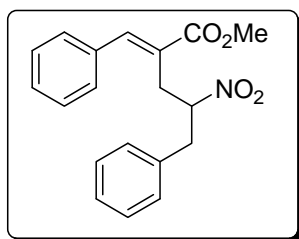
**Methyl (E)-2-benzylidene-4-nitro-4-phenylbutanoate (3e)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 90 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1726, 1638, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.40 & 3.69 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  &  $7.2$  (8.0) Hz], 3.82 (s, 3H), 5.84 (t, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.14-

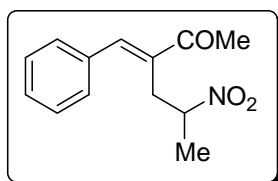
7.21 (m, 2H), 7.22-7.45\* (m, 8 H), 7.81 (s, 1H); \* It also contains CHCl<sub>3</sub> peak. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  31.86, 52.34, 89.08, 126.74, 127.81, 128.69, 128.83, 129.74, 133.90, 134.70, 143.97, 167.60; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>O<sub>4</sub>NH (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 312.1236; Found: 312.1234.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-benzylidene-4-nitro-5-phenylpentanoate (3f)**



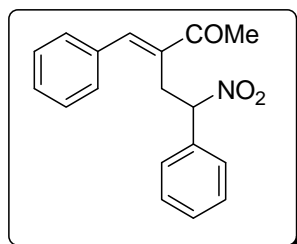
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 91 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1626, 1544 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.96-3.05 (m, 2H), 3.23 & 3.31 [dABq, 2H,  $J$  = 14.0 & 8.8 (9.6) Hz ], 3.84 (s, 3H), 5.03-5.13 (m, 1H), 7.12 (d, 2H,  $J$  = 6.8 Hz), 7.22-7.33\* (m, 5H), 7.34-7.43 (m, 3H), 7.89 (s, 1H); \* It also contains CHCl<sub>3</sub> peak. <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  31.56, 39.59, 52.40, 88.03, 127.07, 127.47, 128.79, 128.84, 128.94, 129.00, 134.55, 135.36, 143.71, 167.63; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>19</sub>O<sub>4</sub>NH (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 326.1392; Found: 326.1387.

**(*E*)-3-Benzylidene-5-nitrohexan-2-one (3g)**



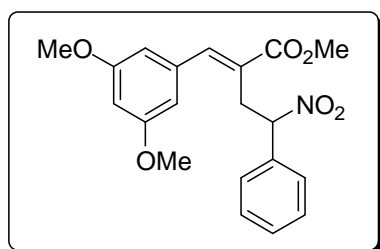
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 89 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1665, 1626, 1550 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.46 (d, 3H,  $J$  = 6.4 Hz), 2.49 (s, 3H), 2.93 & 3.15 [dABq, 2H,  $J$  = 14.0 & 5.2 (8.8) Hz], 4.77-4.90 (m, 1H), 7.29 (d, 2H,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz), 7.35-7.46 (m, 3H), 7.71 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  18.92, 25.97, 32.03, 81.55, 128.75, 128.83, 129.11, 134.57, 137.08, 143.98, 199.75; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>15</sub>O<sub>3</sub>NH (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 234.1130; Found: 234.1129.

**(E)-3-Benzylidene-5-nitro-5-phenylpentan-2-one (3h)**



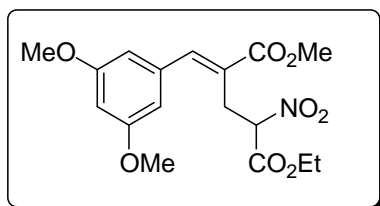
Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 93 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1665, 1621, 1544  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.42 (s, 3H), 3.35 & 3.65 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  & 7.2 (8.4) Hz], 5.79 (t, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.20-7.46\* (m, 10H), 7.65 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  25.94, 30.88, 88.75, 127.85, 128.67, 128.80, 129.08, 129.68, 134.02, 134.67, 136.49, 144.44, 199.72; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{17}\text{O}_3\text{NH}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 296.1287; Found: 296.1284.

**Methyl (E)-2-(3, 5-dimethoxybenzylidene)-4-nitro-4-phenylbutanoate (3i)**



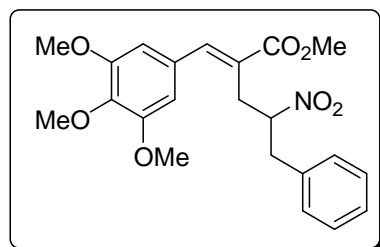
Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 88 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1704, 1610, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.39 & 3.68 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 6.8 (8.0) Hz], 3.78 (s, 6H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 5.86 (t, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 6.32 (d, 2H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 6.43-6.49 (m, 1H), 7.27-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.75 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  32.09, 52.40, 55.49, 89.16, 101.07, 106.49, 127.18, 127.95, 128.85, 129.79, 133.95, 136.54, 143.97, 160.92, 167.55; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{21}\text{O}_6\text{NNa}$  (M+Na) $^+$ : 394.1267; Found: 394.1266.

**Ethyl (4E)-5-(3, 5-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methoxycarbonyl-2-nitropent-4-enoate (3j)**



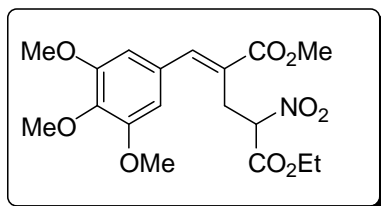
Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 83 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1753, 1709, 1620, 1572  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.25 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 3.39 & 3.53 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.8$  & 6.4 (8.8) Hz], 3.81 (s, 6H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 4.17-4.29 (m, 2H), 5.62 (dd, 1H,  $J = 6.4$  & 9.2 Hz), 6.42-6.49 (m, 3H), 7.85 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  13.82, 28.63, 52.48, 55.51, 63.14, 85.96, 101.38, 106.59, 125.74, 136.06, 144.57, 160.99, 164.15, 167.27; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{21}\text{O}_8\text{NNa}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 390.1165; Found: 390.1174.

**Methyl (E)-2-(3, 4, 5-trimethoxybenzylidene)-4-nitro-5-phenylpentanoate (3k)**



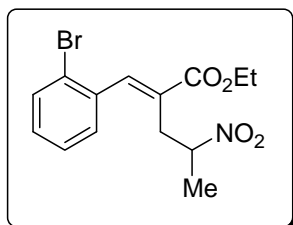
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 90 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1703, 1632, 1544  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.99 & 3.06 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 5.2 (4.8) Hz], 3.25-3.35 (m, 2H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.88 (s, 6H), 3.90 (s, 3H), 5.13-5.23 (m, 1H), 6.52 (s, 2H), 7.14 (d, 2H,  $J = 6.8$  Hz), 7.22-7.34\* (m, 3H), 7.81 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  32.14, 39.67, 52.39, 56.27, 61.00, 87.92, 106.04, 126.39, 127.50, 128.85, 128.88, 129.90, 135.31, 138.71, 143.88, 153.36, 167.65; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{25}\text{O}_7\text{NH}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$ : 416.1709; Found: 416.1712.

**Ethyl (*E*)-4-methoxycarbonyl-2-nitro-5-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)pent-4-enoate (3l)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 85 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1742, 1704, 1630, 1561  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.26 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 3.44 & 3.56 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.8$  & 6.8 (9.6) Hz], 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.88 (s, 6H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 4.24 (dq, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  & 2.0 Hz), 5.68 (dd, 1H,  $J = 6.8$  & 9.2 Hz), 6.59 (s, 2H), 7.84 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  13.87, 28.79, 52.49, 56.29, 61.00, 63.20, 85.93, 106.29, 124.51, 129.54, 138.94, 144.50, 153.41, 164.26, 167.44; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{23}\text{O}_9\text{NH}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 398.1451; Found: 398.1449.

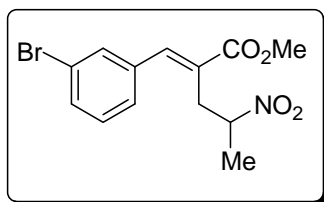
**Ethyl (*E*)-2-(2-bromobenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (3m)**



Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 91 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1704, 1620, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.38 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 1.41 (d, 3H,  $J = 6.8$  Hz), 2.81 & 3.06 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  & 6.4 (8.0) Hz], 4.32 (q, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 4.83-4.94 (m, 1H), 7.16 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.21-7.28 (m, 1H), 7.34-7.39 (m, 1H), 7.63\* (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.83 (s, 1H); \*Unresolved doublet of doublet.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  14.26, 18.80, 32.99, 61.55, 81.55, 123.50, 127.52, 129.14, 129.82, 130.13, 132.89, 135.50, 142.75, 166.61; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_4\text{NBrH}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 342.0341; Found: 342.0337.

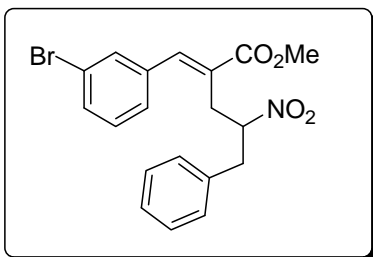


**Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-bromobenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (3n)**



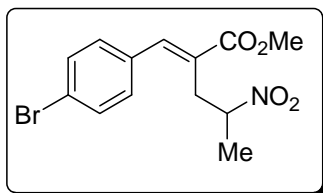
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 86 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1627, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.49 (d, 3H,  $J = 6.4$  Hz), 2.89 & 3.20 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 5.6 (8.8) Hz], 3.86 (s, 3H), 4.85-4.96 (m, 1H), 7.20 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.25-7.33 (m, 1H), 7.43 (s, 1H), 7.50 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.81 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) :  $\delta$  18.99, 32.93, 52.53, 81.67, 122.83, 127.21, 128.69, 130.34, 131.61, 131.90, 136.70, 141.89, 167.27; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_4\text{NBrH}$  (M+H) $^+$  : 328.0184; Found: 328.0185.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-bromobenzylidene)-4-nitro-5-phenylpentanoate (3o)**



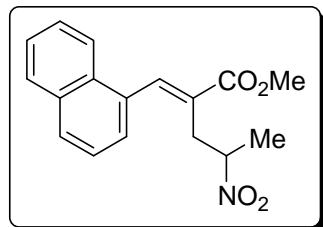
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 87 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1709, 1620, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.92 & 3.01 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 4.4 (6.0) Hz], 3.24 (ABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 9.2 Hz), 3.83 (s, 3H), 5.03-5.13 (m, 1H), 7.11-7.35 (m, 7H), 7.40 (s, 1H), 7.50 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.79 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  31.58, 39.69, 52.51, 87.94, 122.79, 127.14, 127.54, 128.48, 128.90, 130.31, 131.59, 131.88, 135.18, 136.59, 142.00, 167.15; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{18}\text{O}_4\text{NBrH}$  (M+H) $^+$  : 404.0497; Found: 404.0493.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(4-bromobenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (3p)**



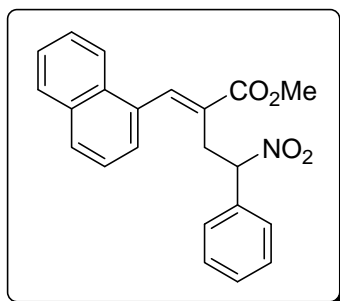
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 90 %; m.p. 73-74 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1715, 1638, 1539  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.48 (d, 3H,  $J = 6.4$  Hz), 2.90 & 3.20 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 5.6 (8.4) Hz], 3.85 (s, 3H), 4.85-4.97 (m, 1H), 7.16 (d, 2H,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.54 (d, 2H,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 7.79 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  18.97, 32.93, 52.50, 81.66, 123.29, 128.00, 130.39, 132.06, 133.52, 142.32, 167.42; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_4\text{NBrH}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ ) $^+$  : 328.0184; Found: 328.0184.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(naphthalen-1-yl)methylidene-4-nitropentanoate (3q)**



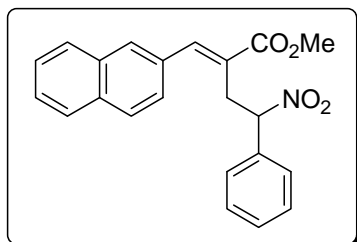
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 89 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1715, 1632, 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.34 (d, 3H,  $J = 6.4$  Hz), 2.84 & 3.09 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 6.0 (8.0) Hz], 3.92 (s, 3H), 4.82-4.94 (m, 1H), 7.26 (d, 1H,  $J = 6.8$  Hz), 7.48-7.59 (m, 3H), 7.76-7.83 (m, 1H), 7.86-7.92 (m, 2H), 8.34 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  18.78, 33.42, 52.46, 81.67, 124.54, 125.29, 125.88, 126.44, 126.71, 128.66, 129.18, 129.57, 131.18, 132.05, 133.43, 142.69, 167.29; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{17}\text{O}_4\text{NNa}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$  : 322.1055; Found: 322.1064.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(naphthalen-1-yl)methylidene-4-nitro-4-phenylbutanoate (3r)**



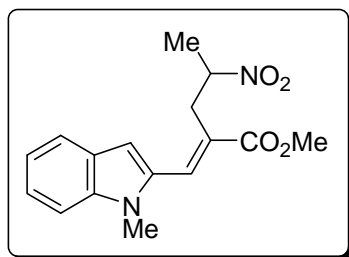
Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 92 %; m.p. 66-67 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1709, 1632, 1545  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.40 & 3.51 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  & 7.6 (7.2) Hz], 3.89 (s, 3H), 5.81 (t, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.01-7.11 (m, 4H), 7.12-7.19 (m, 2H), 7.38-7.54 (m, 4H), 7.87 (d, 2H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 8.24 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  32.21, 52.46, 88.96, 124.56, 125.20, 125.91, 126.35, 126.57, 127.71, 128.48, 128.55, 128.63, 129.21, 129.55, 131.16, 132.04, 133.34, 133.56, 143.15, 167.30; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{19}\text{O}_4\text{NNa}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 384.1212; Found: 384.1215.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(naphthalen-2-yl)methylidene-4-nitro-4-phenylbutanoate (3s)**



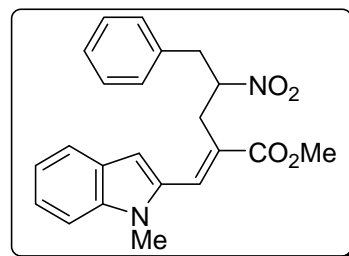
Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 88 %; m.p. 97-98 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1704, 1632, 1545  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.48 & 3.77 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  & 6.8 (8.0) Hz], 3.85 (s, 3H), 5.89 (t, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.21-7.27\* (m, 4H), 7.28-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.50-7.57 (m, 2H), 7.61 (s, 1H), 7.77-7.82 (m, 1H), 7.83-7.89 (m, 2H), 7.97 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  32.19, 52.44, 89.19, 125.99, 126.71, 126.90, 127.06, 127.80, 127.86, 128.44, 128.56, 128.87, 129.80, 132.17, 133.09, 133.18, 133.99, 144.05, 167.68; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{19}\text{O}_4\text{NNa}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 384.1212; Found: 384.1212.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(1-methyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)methylidene-4-nitropentanoate (3t)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 93 %; m.p. 81-82 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1698, 1632, 1539  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.58\* (d, 3H,  $J = 6.8$  Hz), 3.20 & 3.51 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.0$  & 7.2 (8.0) Hz], 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 4.92-5.07 (m, 1H), 6.88 (s, 1H), 7.11-7.18 (m, 1H), 7.23-7.37<sup>§</sup> (m, 2H), 7.66 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.91 (s, 1H); \*It also contains moisture peak. § It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) :  $\delta$  18.75, 30.08, 33.54, 52.47, 81.29, 105.51, 109.63, 120.49, 121.62, 123.86, 126.40, 127.64, 130.67, 132.93, 138.20, 167.62; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{18}\text{N}_2\text{O}_4\text{H}^+$ : 303.1345; Found: 303.1343.

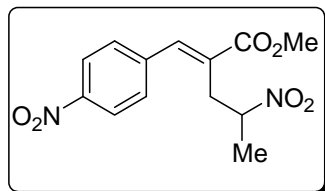
**Methyl (*E*)-2-(1-methyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)methylidene-4-nitro-5-phenylpentanoate (3u)**



Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 84 %; m.p. 116-117 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1693, 1621, 1545  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.11 & 3.20 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 6.0 (4.8) Hz], 3.38 & 3.56 [dABq, 2H,  $J = 14.4$  & 8.4 (9.2) Hz], 3.75 (s, 3H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 5.07-5.19 (m, 1H), 6.58 (s, 1H), 7.09-7.22 (m, 3H), 7.23-7.36 (m, 5H), 7.58 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.87 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  30.10, 32.16, 39.70, 52.48, 87.51, 105.50, 109.64, 120.45, 121.68, 123.87, 126.25, 127.58, 127.64,

128.93, 129.14, 130.68, 132.86, 135.41, 138.23, 167.56; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{22}H_{22}N_2O_4H$  (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 379.1658; Found: 379.1661.

**Methyl 2-(4-nitrobenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (3v)**

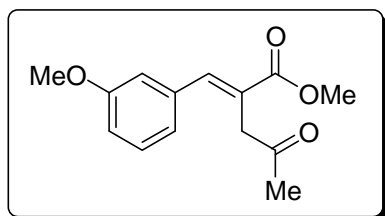


Reaction time: 2 h; Yield: 45 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1720, 1600, 1550  $cm^{-1}$ ;  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.49 (d, 3H,  $J$  = 6.4 Hz), 2.85 & 3.15 [dABq, 2H,  $J$  = 14.4 & 4.8 (5.2) Hz], 3.89 (s, 3H), 4.87-5.00 (m, 1H), 7.42 (d, 2H,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz), 7.89 (s, 1H), 8.27 (d, 2H,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz);  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.17, 33.12, 52.72, 81.66, 124.00, 129.55, 130.35, 141.01, 141.27, 147.74, 166.80; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{13}H_{14}N_2O_6H$  (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 295.0930; Found: 295.0927.

**Methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-oxopentanoate (5a)**

This molecule was prepared following the Nef reaction procedure reported in the literature for similar compounds, with some modification<sup>1</sup>

To a stirred solution of methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (**3a**) (2 mmol, 0.558 g) in ethanol (4 mL) was added a solution of sodium ethoxide (2.2 mmol, 0.150 g) in ethanol (2 mL) at 0 °C. After stirring for 30 min at the same temperature, ethanolic  $H_2SO_4$  solution was carefully added to the reaction mixture at 0 °C and continued stirring for 30 minutes. The reaction mixture was diluted with water and extracted with EtOAc (2x 15 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with aqueous saturated  $NaHCO_3$  solution, water and dried over anhydrous  $Na_2SO_4$ . The residue, thus obtained, was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 10 % EtOAc in hexanes) to afford the title compound (**5a**) in 52% (0.258 g) as pale yellow viscous liquid.

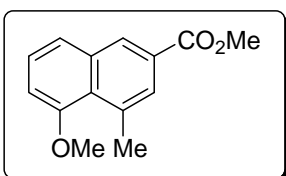


IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1720, 1704, 1632  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.25 (s, 3H), 3.63 (s, 2H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.80 (s, 3H), 6.82-6.92 (m, 3H), 7.25-7.32\* (m, 1H), 7.90 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  30.15, 42.72, 52.33, 55.32, 114.06, 114.76, 121.16, 126.93, 129.71, 136.47, 142.29, 159.69, 167.92, 206.11. HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_4\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 271.0946; Found: 271.0948.

**Sodium nitrite induced intramolecular Friedel-Crafts reaction of methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (**3a**):**

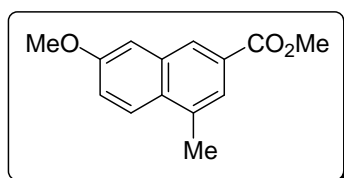
A solution of methyl (*E*)-2-(3-methoxybenzylidene)-4-nitropentanoate (**3a**) (1 mmol, 0.279 g) and sodium nitrite (1 mmol, 0.069 g) in DMF (4 mL) was heated with stirring at 100 °C for 8 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, diluted with brine (4 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3x10 mL). The combined organic layer was washed with water (10 mL), dried over anhydrous  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  and concentrated. The resulting crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 2 % EtOAc in hexanes) to afford methyl 5-methoxy-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*ortho*-**4a**) and methyl 7-methoxy-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*para*-**4a**) in 13 % (0.030 g) and 71 % (0.164 g) respectively. The compound *ortho*-**4a** (less polar and eluted first) is collected first and *para*-**4a** (more polar) is collected later.

**Methyl 5-methoxy-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*ortho*-**4a**)**



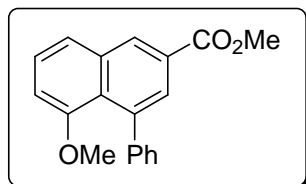
m.p. 51-52 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1714, 1604, 1582  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.92 (s, 3H), 3.93 (s, 3H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 6.89 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.36-7.42 (m, 1H), 7.49 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.76 (s, 1H), 8.35 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  25.28, 52.23, 55.44, 107.43, 122.61, 126.42, 127.10, 127.21, 127.37, 129.20, 135.41, 136.13, 158.01, 167.41; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_3\text{H}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 231.1021; Found: 231.1015.

**Methyl 7-methoxy-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*para*-4a)**



m.p. 48-49 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1703, 1626, 1604  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.66 (s, 3H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.95 (s, 3H), 7.20 (d, 1H,  $J = 2.4$  Hz), 7.25\* (dd, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  & 2.4 Hz), 7.75 (s, 1H), 7.88 (d, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  Hz), 8.34 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.42, 52.18, 55.37, 107.64, 120.74, 123.71, 125.67, 127.50, 128.34, 130.28, 134.04, 134.75, 157.80, 167.56; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_3\text{H}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 231.1021; Found: 231.1018.

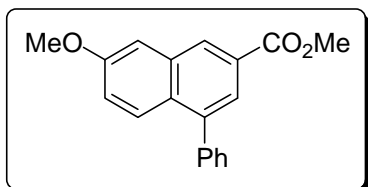
**Methyl 5-methoxy-4-phenylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*ortho*-4b)**



Reaction time: 6 h; Yield: 14 %; m.p. 98-99 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1714, 1625, 1572  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.49 (s, 3H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 6.89 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.29-7.40 (m, 5H), 7.44-7.50 (m, 1H), 7.61 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.85 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 8.55 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.31, 55.34, 108.41, 122.55, 125.56, 126.12, 126.82, 126.93, 128.12, 128.70,

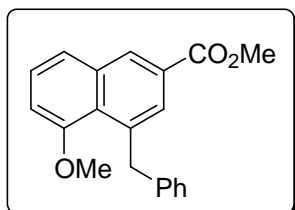
130.48, 135.12, 139.61, 144.69, 156.66, 167.16; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>16</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 315.0997; Found: 315.0993.

**Methyl 7-methoxy-4-phenylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*para*-4b)**



Reaction time: 6 h; Yield: 72 %; m.p. 89-90 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1714, 1626, 1599 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.95 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 7.19 (dd, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  & 2.4 Hz), 7.29 (d, 1H,  $J = 2.4$  Hz), 7.41-7.55 (m, 5H), 7.82 (d, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  Hz), 7.88 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz), 8.51 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.29, 55.45, 107.32, 121.14, 124.15, 127.48, 127.60, 127.68, 128.41, 129.30, 129.99, 134.49, 140.16, 140.67, 157.98, 167.39; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>16</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 315.0997; Found: 315.0997.

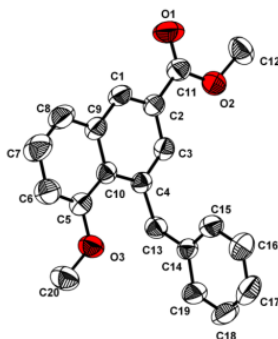
**Methyl 4-benzyl -5-methoxynaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*ortho*-4c)**



Reaction time: 12 h; Yield: 17 %; m.p. 90-91 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1725, 1604, 1577 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.68 (s, 3H), 3.95 (s, 3H), 4.71 (s, 2H), 6.83 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.05 (d, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.08-7.15 (m, 1H), 7.17-7.25 (m, 2H), 7.33-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.52 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.85 (s, 1H), 8.44 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  43.24, 52.28, 55.18, 107.87, 122.74, 125.37, 126.56, 126.95, 127.15, 128.12, 128.14, 128.73, 130.22, 135.74, 137.30, 142.66, 157.24, 167.29; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O<sub>3</sub>Na (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 329.1154; Found: 329.1159.



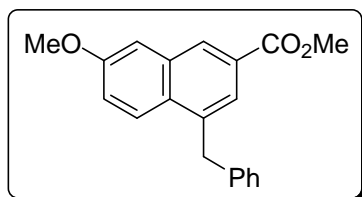
**Crystal data** for *ortho-4c* Empirical formula, C<sub>20</sub> H<sub>18</sub> O<sub>3</sub>; formula weight, 306.34; crystal color, habit: colorless, block; crystal dimensions, 0.40 X 0.35 X 0.30 mm<sup>3</sup>; crystal system, triclinic; lattice type, primitive; lattice parameters,  $a = 8.1761(14)$  Å,  $b = 8.3698(19)$  Å,  $c = 12.1493(14)$  Å;  $\alpha = 76.098(15)$ ;  $\beta = 80.854(12)$ ;  $\gamma = 89.732(16)$ ;  $V = 796.3(2)$  Å<sup>3</sup>; space group, P -1;  $Z = 2$ ;  $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.278$  g / cm<sup>3</sup>;  $F_{000} = 324$ ;  $\lambda(\text{Mo-K}\alpha) = 0.71073$  Å;  $R(I \geq 2\sigma_1) = 0.0535$ ,  $wR^2 = 0.1369$ . Detailed X-ray crystallographic data is available from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK (**for compound *ortho-4c* CCDC # 982203**).



**Figure 1** ORTEP diagram of compound *ortho-4c*

(Hydrogen atoms were omitted for clarity)

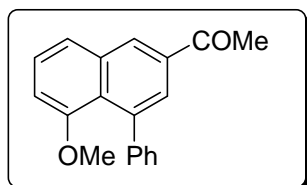
**Methyl 4-benzyl -7-methoxynaphthalene-2-carboxylate (*para-4c*)**



Reaction time: 12 h; Yield: 67 %; m.p. 87-88 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1714, 1621, 1610 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.89 (s, 3H), 3.95 (s, 3H), 4.42 (s, 2H), 7.14-7.21 (m, 4H), 7.22-7.28 (m, 3H), 7.81 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 7.87 (d, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  Hz), 8.43 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  39.28, 52.27, 55.40, 107.82, 121.06, 124.69, 126.06, 126.24, 127.60, 128.56, 129.17, 129.85, 134.62, 137.10,

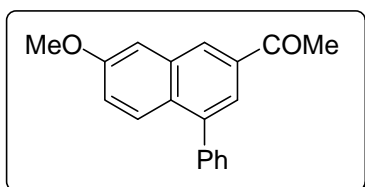
140.33, 157.79, 167.50; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{20}H_{18}O_3Na$  (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 329.1154;  
Found: 329.1152.

**2-Acetyl-5-methoxy-4-phenylnaphthalene (*ortho*-4d)**



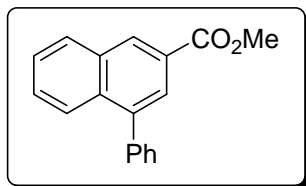
Reaction time: 6 h; Yield: 14 %; m.p. 74-75 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1676, 1620, 1577  $cm^{-1}$ ; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.71 (s, 3H), 3.49 (s, 3H), 6.90 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.27-7.40 (m, 5H), 7.44-7.52 (m, 1H), 7.63 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.79 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz), 8.42 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  26.88, 55.37, 108.66, 122.77, 125.62, 126.18, 126.86, 126.91, 127.08, 128.69, 129.44, 133.78, 135.18, 139.86, 144.69, 156.69, 198.18; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{19}H_{16}O_2Na$  (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 299.1048; Found: 299.1047.

**2-Acetyl-7-methoxy-4-phenylnaphthalene (*para*-4d)**



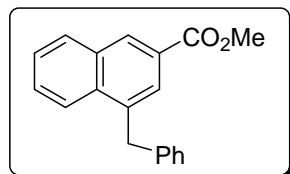
Reaction time: 6 h; Yield: 70 %; m.p. 86-87 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1671, 1627, 1594  $cm^{-1}$ ; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.73 (s, 3H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 7.19 (dd, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  & 2.4 Hz), 7.31 (d, 1H,  $J = 2.4$  Hz), 7.42-7.53 (m, 5H), 7.80-7.84 (m, 2H), 8.38 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  26.87, 55.48, 107.59, 127.31, 122.93, 127.66, 127.73, 128.34, 128.44, 129.41, 129.97, 134.51, 134.56, 140.16, 140.91, 158.09, 198.38; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{19}H_{16}O_2Na$  (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 299.1048;  
Found: 299.1048.

### Methyl 4-phenylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4e)



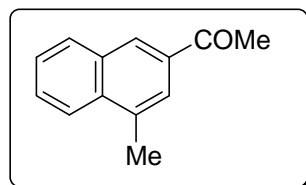
Reaction time: 9 h; Yield: 73 %; m.p. 93-94 °C [lit.<sup>2</sup> m.p. 93.0-94.3 °C]; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1720, 1594  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.98 (s, 3H), 7.41-7.58 (m, 7H), 7.90-7.95 (m, 1H), 7.99-8.04 (m, 2H), 8.61 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.35, 126.15, 126.19, 126.61, 126.95, 127.66, 128.45, 129.85, 130.08, 130.64, 133.10, 133.87, 140.02, 140.76, 167.31; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{14}\text{O}_2\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ )<sup>+</sup>: 285.0891; Found: 285.0885. This compound is known in the literature.<sup>2</sup> Melting point and  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectral data are reported. Our data is in agreement with that of literature.

### Methyl 4-benzyl-naphthalene-2-carboxylate (4f)



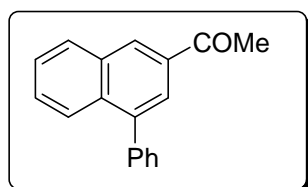
Reaction time: 20 h; Yield: 66 %; m.p. 43-44 °C; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1714, 1626, 1593  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.98 (s, 3H), 4.49 (s, 2H), 7.16-7.30\* (m, 5H), 7.49-7.59 (m, 2H), 7.94-8.04 (m, 3H), 8.54 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  39.24, 52.32, 124.55, 126.30, 126.43, 126.68, 127.06, 128.46, 128.61, 130.28, 130.45, 133.23, 134.43, 137.21, 140.25, 167.42; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_2\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ )<sup>+</sup>: 299.1048; Found: 299.1048.

### 2-Acetyl-4-methylnaphthalene (4g)



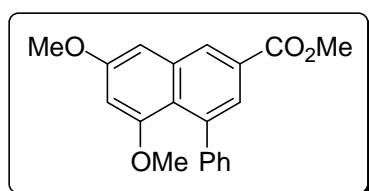
Reaction time: 12 h; Yield: 65 %; m.p. 37-38 °C [lit.<sup>3</sup> m.p. 35-36 °C]; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1676, 1621, 1599  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.73 (s, 3H), 2.74 (s, 3H), 7.54-7.61 (m, 1H), 7.62-7.70 (m, 1H), 7.89 (s, 1H), 7.98 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 8.03 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.4$  Hz), 8.33 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) :  $\delta$  19.51, 26.71, 124.26, 126.52, 128.47, 128.94, 130.29, 132.75, 134.15, 135.02, 135.17, 198.47; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{12}\text{OH}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ )<sup>+</sup> : 185.0966; Found: 185.0959.

### 2-Acetyl-4-phenylnaphthalene (4h)



Reaction time: 9 h; Yield: 73 %; m.p. 89-90 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1676, 1616  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.75 (s, 3H), 7.43-7.61 (m, 7H), 7.90-7.96 (m, 1H), 7.98 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 8.01-8.08 (m, 1H), 8.49 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz) :  $\delta$  26.82, 124.88, 126.19, 126.74, 127.70, 128.46, 128.67, 129.71, 130.04, 133.12, 133.97, 140.00, 140.99, 198.18; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{14}\text{OH}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{H}$ )<sup>+</sup> : 247.1123; Found: 247.1122.

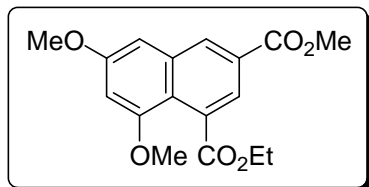
### Methyl 5, 7-dimethoxy-4-phenylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4i)



Reaction time: 5 h; Yield: 91 %; m.p. 92-93 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1715, 1616, 1583  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.46 (s, 3H), 3.93 (s, 3H), 3.94 (s, 3H), 6.53 (d, 1H,  $J = 2.4$  Hz), 6.90 (d, 1H,  $J = 2.0$  Hz), 7.26-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.69 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 8.43 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.22, 55.22, 55.43, 100.07, 101.24, 121.61, 126.07, 126.10, 126.77, 127.32, 128.67,

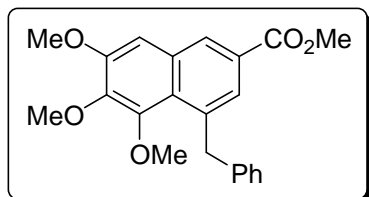
129.24, 135.90, 139.63, 144.58, 157.71, 158.46, 167.22; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{20}H_{18}O_4H (M+H)^+$ : 323.1283; Found: 323.1281.

**Ethyl methyl 6, 8-dimethoxynaphthalene-1, 3-dicarboxylate (4j)**



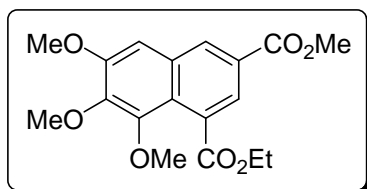
Reaction time: 4 h; Yield: 86 %; m.p. 112-113 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1715, 1627, 1589  $cm^{-1}$ ;  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.42 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 3.93 (s, 6H), 3.97 (s, 3H), 4.44 (q, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 6.65 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 6.87 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 7.85 (d, 1H,  $J = 0.8$  Hz), 8.47 (s, 1H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  14.42, 52.40, 55.56, 56.14, 61.56, 99.92, 101.51, 119.49, 121.93, 127.65, 130.55, 130.89, 135.13, 155.83, 159.12, 166.54, 170.82; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{17}H_{18}O_6H (M+H)^+$ : 319.1182; Found: 319.1178.

**Methyl 5, 6, 7-trimethoxy-4-benzyl-naphthalene-2-carboxylate (4k)**



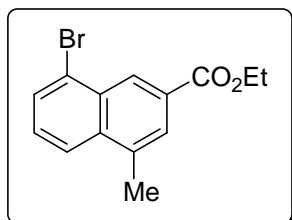
Reaction time: 8 h; Yield: 78 %; m.p. 62-63 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1709, 1600, 1572  $cm^{-1}$ ;  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.59 (s, 3H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 3.94 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 4.68 (s, 2H), 7.04-7.17 (m, 4H), 7.19-7.28\* (m, 2H), 7.70 (s, 1H), 8.34 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz); \*It also contains  $CHCl_3$  peak.  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  41.82, 52.19, 55.88, 60.91, 61.14, 104.76, 125.59, 125.70, 126.53, 127.39, 128.24, 128.35, 129.11, 131.58, 136.15, 142.25, 143.90, 150.44, 152.96, 167.32; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{22}H_{22}O_5H (M+H)^+$ : 367.1546; Found: 367.1543.

**Ethyl methyl 6, 7, 8-trimethoxynaphthalene-1, 3-dicarboxylate (4l)**



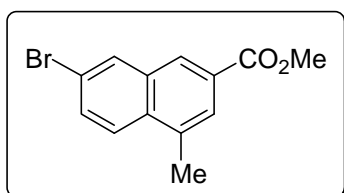
Reaction time: 5 h; Yield: 84 %; m.p. 84-85 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1715, 1700, 1605  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.43 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 3.95 (s, 3H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 3.99 (s, 3H), 4.45 (q, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.08 (s, 1H), 7.88 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz), 8.47 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  14.26, 52.31, 55.98, 61.02, 61.28, 61.56, 104.05, 122.34, 122.89, 126.40, 129.98, 130.31, 130.65, 143.66, 147.52, 153.96, 166.47, 170.63; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{20}\text{O}_7\text{H} (\text{M}+\text{H})^+$ : 349.1287; Found: 349.1285.

**Ethyl 8-bromo-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4m):**



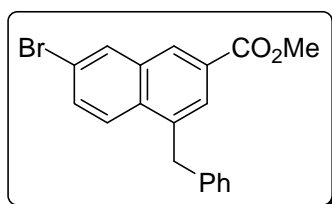
Reaction time: 12 h; Yield: 65 %; m.p. 63-64 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1714, 1615, 1500  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  1.47 (t, 3H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 2.73 (s, 3H), 4.46 (q, 2H,  $J = 7.2$  Hz), 7.41-7.48 (m, 1H), 7.84 (d, 1H,  $J = 7.6$  Hz), 7.97 (s, 1H), 7.98 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 8.87 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  14.46, 19.68, 61.29, 123.98, 124.97, 126.69, 128.13, 128.49, 130.50, 131.51, 135.35, 135.98, 166.58; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{13}\text{BrO}_2\text{Na} (\text{M}+\text{Na})^+$ : 314.9997; Found: 315.0003.

**Methyl 7-bromo-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4n):**



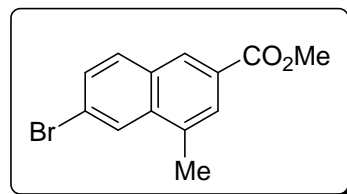
Reaction time: 15 h; Yield: 61 %; m.p. 73-74 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1719, 1588  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.71 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 7.69 (dd, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  & 2.0 Hz), 7.89 (d, 1H,  $J = 9.2$  Hz), 7.92 (s, 1H), 8.10 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.2$  Hz), 8.36 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.38, 52.40, 120.50, 126.01, 126.19, 128.13, 128.52, 131.40, 131.86, 133.28, 133.98, 135.17, 167.08; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{11}\text{BrO}_2\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 300.9840; Found: 300.9836.

**Methyl 4-benzyl-7-bromonaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4o):**



Reaction time: 24 h; Yield: 63 %; m.p. 99-100 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1726, 1594  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.97 (s, 3H), 4.45 (s, 2H), 7.12-7.21 (m, 3H), 7.23-7.29\* (m, 2H), 7.58 (dd, 1H,  $J = 8.8$  & 2.0 Hz), 7.85 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.96 (s, 1H), 8.10 (d, 1H,  $J = 1.6$  Hz), 8.42 (s, 1H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  39.20, 52.46, 120.56, 126.36, 126.45, 127.12, 128.20, 128.51, 128.68, 129.33, 131.66, 132.01, 132.83, 134.49, 137.51, 139.85, 166.97; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{15}\text{BrO}_2\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ ) $^+$ : 377.0153; Found: 377.0156.

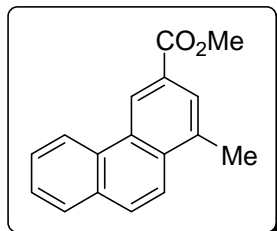
**Methyl 6-bromo-4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (4p):**



Reaction time: 10 h; Yield: 66 %; m.p. 79-80 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1725, 1626  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.69 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H), 7.62 (dd, 1H,  $J = 8.4$  & 1.6 Hz), 7.81 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 7.93 (s, 1H), 8.18 (s, 1H), 8.42 (s, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.38, 52.37, 122.86, 126.76,

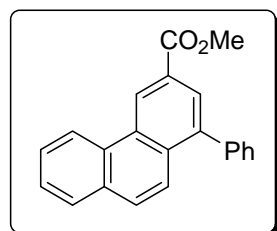
126.81, 127.44, 129.37, 129.87, 131.18, 131.60, 134.16, 135.93, 167.14; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{13}H_{11}BrO_2Na$  (M+Na)<sup>+</sup>: 300.9840; Found: 300.9835.

**Methyl 1-methylphenanthrene-3-carboxylate (4q):**



Reaction time: 10 h; Yield: 75 %; m.p. 104-105 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1709, 1610  $cm^{-1}$ ; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.79 (s, 3H), 4.02 (s, 3H), 7.61-7.67 (m, 1H), 7.68-7.75 (m, 1H), 7.86-7.98 (m, 3H), 8.06 (s, 1H), 8.81 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz), 9.32 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.94, 52.25, 122.38, 123.13, 123.37, 126.94, 127.10, 127.18, 127.34, 128.61, 129.21, 129.80, 130.94, 131.70, 133.70, 135.18, 167.56; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{17}H_{14}O_2H$  (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 251.1072; Found: 251.1074.

**Methyl 1-phenylphenanthrene-3-carboxylate (4r):**

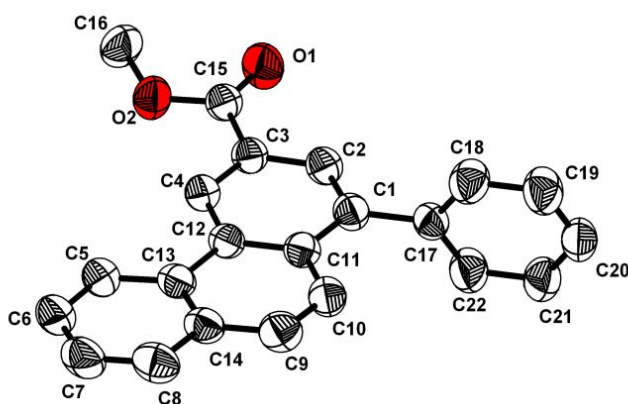


Reaction time: 8 h; Yield: 78 %; m.p. 133-134 °C [lit.<sup>4</sup> m.p. 147-148 °C]; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1709, 1605  $cm^{-1}$ ; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  4.03 (s, 3H), 7.43-7.58 (m, 5H), 7.62-7.69 (m, 1H), 7.71-7.87 (m, 3H), 7.90 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz), 8.17 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 1.2 Hz), 8.86 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz), 9.48 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.40, 123.23, 124.24, 124.50, 127.17, 127.29, 127.36, 127.65, 127.68, 128.46, 128.65, 129.42, 130.20, 130.36, 130.74, 131.82, 132.88, 140.35, 141.28, 167.44; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $C_{22}H_{16}O_2H$  (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 313.1229; Found: 313.1237. This compound is



known in the literature.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectral data is reported. Our data is in agreement with that of literature.<sup>4</sup>

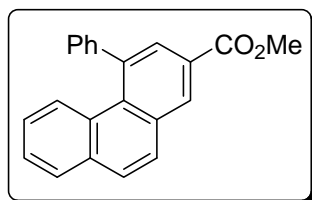
**Crystal data for 4r:** Empirical formula,  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_2$ ; formula weight, 312.22; crystal color, habit: colorless, block; crystal dimensions,  $0.60 \times 0.40 \times 0.28 \text{ mm}^3$ ; crystal system, monoclinic; lattice type, primitive; lattice parameters,  $a = 11.092(4) \text{ \AA}$ ,  $b = 17.545(6) \text{ \AA}$ ,  $c = 17.517(5) \text{ \AA}$ ;  $\alpha = 90$ ;  $\beta = 110.638(18)$ ;  $\gamma = 90$ ;  $V = 3190.2(18) \text{ \AA}^3$ ; space group, P 21/c;  $Z = 8$ ;  $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.300 \text{ g/cm}^3$ ;  $F_{000} = 1312$ ;  $\lambda(\text{Mo-K}\alpha) = 0.71073 \text{ \AA}$ ;  $R (I \geq 2\sigma_1) = 0.0450$ ,  $wR^2 = 0.1160$ . Detailed X-ray crystallographic data is available from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK (for compound 4r CCDC # 982204).



**Figure 2** ORTEP diagram of compound **4r**

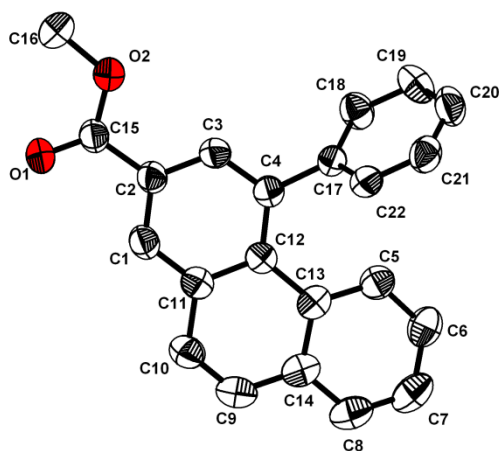
(Hydrogen atoms were omitted for clarity)

**Methyl 4-phenylphenanthrene-2-carboxylate (4s):**



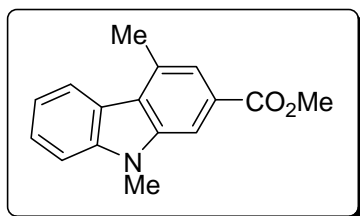
Reaction time: 6 h; Yield: 77 %; m.p. 97-98 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1715, 1600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.99 (s, 3H), 7.09-7.17 (m, 1H), 7.38-7.53 (m, 6H), 7.71-7.81 (m, 2H), 7.84 (d, 2H,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz), 8.07 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 1.6 Hz), 8.59 (d, 1H,  $J$  = 1.6 Hz);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  52.34, 125.32, 126.92, 127.10, 127.49, 127.76, 128.46, 128.58, 128.62, 128.98, 129.16, 129.97, 130.41, 130.48, 131.74, 133.27, 134.34, 140.92, 144.61, 167.04; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_2\text{H} (\text{M}+\text{H})^+$ : 313.1229; Found: 313.1230.

**Crystal data** for 4s: Empirical formula,  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_2$ ; formula weight, 312.35; crystal color, habit: colorless, plate; crystal dimensions, 0.40 X 0.36 X 0.28  $\text{mm}^3$ ; crystal system, monoclinic; lattice type, primitive; lattice parameters,  $a = 9.057(2)$  Å,  $b = 7.6437(18)$  Å,  $c = 23.756(5)$  Å;  $\alpha = 90$ ;  $\beta = 90.458(4)$ ;  $\gamma = 90$ ;  $V = 1644.5(7)$  Å<sup>3</sup>; space group, P 21/c;  $Z = 4$ ;  $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.262$  g /  $\text{cm}^3$ ;  $F_{000} = 656$ ;  $\lambda(\text{Mo-K}\alpha) = 0.71073$  Å;  $R (I \geq 2\sigma_1) = 0.0792$ ,  $wR^2 = 0.2351$ . Detailed X-ray crystallographic data is available from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK (**for compound 4s CCDC # 982657**).



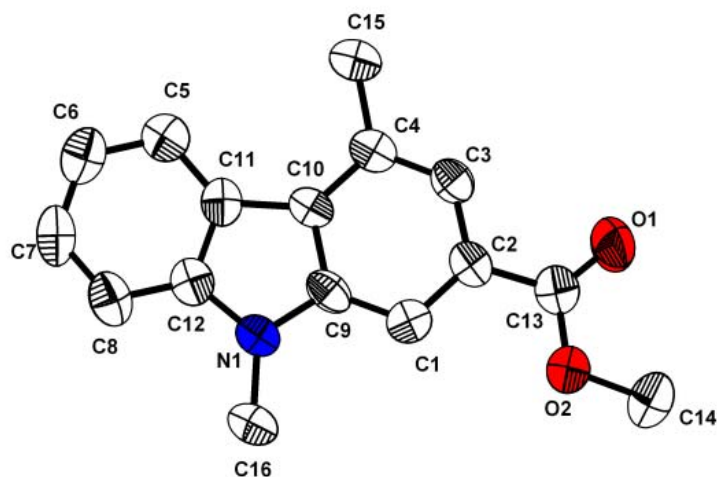
**Figure 3** ORTEP diagram of compound 4s  
(Hydrogen atoms were omitted for clarity)

**Methyl 4, 9-dimethyl-9H-carbazole-2-carboxylate (4t)**



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 92 %; m.p. 131-132 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1698, 1615, 1572  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.93 (s, 3H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 3.99 (s, 3H), 7.25-7.32\* (m, 1H), 7.46 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.52-7.59 (m, 1H), 7.74 (s, 1H), 8.02 (s, 1H), 8.23 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  20.79, 29.23, 52.17, 108.03, 108.60, 119.34, 121.45, 122.69, 123.25, 125.05, 126.43, 126.69, 133.08, 140.47, 142.18, 168.06; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_2\text{H}$  (M+H) $^+$ : 254.1181; Found: 254.1175.

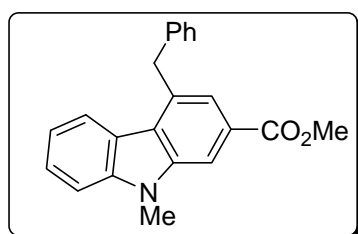
**Crystal data** for **4t**: Empirical formula,  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{15}\text{N O}_2$ ; formula weight, 253.29; crystal color, habit: colorless, block; crystal dimensions, 0.45 X 0.38 X 0.25  $\text{mm}^3$ ; crystal system, monoclinic; lattice type, primitive; lattice parameters,  $a = 8.526(6)$  Å,  $b = 38.83(3)$  Å,  $c = 7.910(6)$  Å;  $\alpha = 90$ ;  $\beta = 94.242(14)$ ;  $\gamma = 90$ ;  $V = 2612(3)$  Å $^3$ ; space group, P2 (1)/c;  $Z = 8$ ;  $D_{\text{calcd}} = 1.288$  g /  $\text{cm}^3$ ;  $F_{000} = 1072$ ;  $\lambda(\text{Mo-K}\alpha) = 0.71073$  Å;  $R(I \geq 2\sigma_1) = 0.0707$ ,  $wR^2 = 0.1665$ . Detailed X-ray crystallographic data is available from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK (**for compound 4t CCDC # 982658**).



**Figure 4** ORTEP diagram of compound **4t**

(Hydrogen atoms were omitted for clarity)

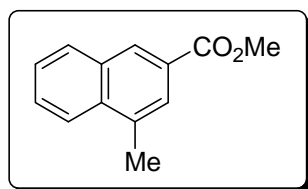
**Methyl 4-benzyl-9-methyl -9H-carbazole-2-carboxylate (4u)**



Reaction time: 10 h; Yield: 87 %; m.p. 147-148 °C; IR (KBr):  $\nu$  1704, 1621, 1572  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  3.92 (s, 3H), 3.95 (s, 3H), 4.67 (s, 2H), 7.13-7.28\* (m, 6H), 7.43 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 7.47-7.53 (m, 1H), 7.71 (s, 1H), 8.03-8.10<sup>s</sup> (m, 2H); \*It also contains  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak. <sup>s</sup>It looks like a singlet at 8.08 (1H) and doublet at 8.06 (1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  29.27, 39.84, 52.18, 108.69, 119.47, 121.98, 123.45, 125.05, 126.27, 126.59, 126.95, 128.62, 128.66, 135.21, 139.50, 140.89, 142.30, 167.92; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for  $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_2\text{Na}$  ( $\text{M}+\text{Na}$ )<sup>+</sup>: 352.1313; Found: 352.1318.

### Methyl 4-methylnaphthalene-2-carboxylate (**6**):

To a stirred solution of methyl 3-acetoxy-3-(2-nitrophenyl)-2-methylenepranoate (**1m**) (3 mmol, 0.837 g) and nitroethane (**2a**) (9 mmol, 0.675 g) in DMF (12 mL) was added K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (9 mmol, 1.25 g) and reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 3 hours. The reaction mixture was diluted with brine (12 mL), extracted with diethyl ether (3x15 mL) and the combined organic layer was washed with water (10 mL), dried over anhydrous Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. Solvent was evaporated and the resulting crude product was purified by column chromatography (silica gel, 3% EtOAc in hexanes) to afford **6** in 57% (0.34g) yield as a colorless viscous liquid.



Reaction time: 3 h; Yield: 57 %; IR (Neat):  $\nu$  1715, 1627 cm<sup>-1</sup>; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz):  $\delta$  2.72 (s, 3H), 3.97 (s, 3H), 7.51-7.58 (m, 1H), 7.59-7.66 (m, 1H), 7.91 (s, 1H), 7.95 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.0$  Hz), 8.01 (d, 1H,  $J = 8.8$  Hz), 8.47 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz):  $\delta$  19.41, 52.22, 124.15, 125.65, 126.34, 126.96, 128.16, 129.59, 130.09, 132.70, 134.85, 167.46; HRMS (ESI) exact mass calc'd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>12</sub>O<sub>2</sub>H (M+H)<sup>+</sup>: 201.0916; Found: 201.0912.

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