



## Supporting Information

for

### Electrochemical formal homocoupling of sec-alcohols

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### Experimental procedure, characterization data, and copies of NMR spectra of the products

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## 1. General information

Unless otherwise noted, all reaction were performed under air atmosphere. Commercially available chemicals were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., Nacalai Tesque, Inc., and FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation and used as received unless otherwise noted. Anhydrous MeCN (“super dehydrated” grade) was purchased from FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation and used as received. The products were isolated by flash column chromatography (CHROMATOREX 60B, *Fuji silysia*).

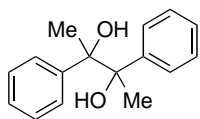
Infrared (IR) spectra were recorded on a *SHIMADZU* IRAffinity-1 spectrometer and expressed as frequency of absorption ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ).  $^1\text{H}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ , and  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR spectra were recorded on a *JEOL* JNM-ECZ400R (400 MHz for  $^1\text{H}$  NMR, 100 MHz for  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR, 375 MHz for  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR). Chemical shift values are expressed in parts per million (ppm) relative to internal TMS ( $\delta$  0.00 ppm for  $^1\text{H}$  NMR) or deuterated solvent peaks ( $\delta$  77.0 ppm for  $\text{CDCl}_3$  and  $\delta$  39.5 ppm for  $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ ). Abbreviations are as follows: s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet; br, broad. High-resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were obtained on *JEOL* JMS-700N (EI) or *JEOL* JMS-T100TD (DART or ESI) spectrometers.

## 2. Experimental section

### 2.1. General procedure for the electrochemical synthesis of *vic*-1,2 diols

A cylinder-type undivided cell was charged with Et<sub>4</sub>NBr (21 mg, 0.1 mmol) and imidazole (3.4 mg, 0.05 mmol). Anhydrous MeCN (5 mL), water (0.125 mL), and *sec*-alcohol **1** (1.0 mmol) was successively added. The reaction vessel was equipped with two Pt electrodes (1 × 2 cm<sup>2</sup>). Then, 4 F/mol of electricity was passed through the mixture at 0 °C under constant current conditions (50 mA). The reaction was quenched with saturated aqueous Na<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and the most of MeCN was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with AcOEt. The combined organic layers were dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, filtered, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to afford the desired product **2** as a mixture of *dl* and *meso* isomers. The *dl:meso* ratio was determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis.

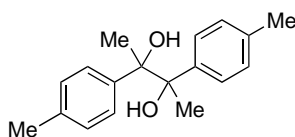
#### 2,3-Diphenylbutane-2,3-diol (**2a**)<sup>1</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:2) gave **2a** (94.3 mg, 0.389 mmol, 78% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 90:10; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.26-7.19 (m, 10H + 10H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.54 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.25 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.59 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.51 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 143.7, 143.3, 127.3, 127.2, 127.04, 126.96, 126.9, 126.8, 78.8, 78.5, 25.0, 24.8.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

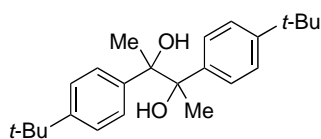
#### 2,3-Di-*p*-tolylbutane-2,3-diol (**2b**)<sup>2</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 5:1) gave **2b** (77.7 mg, 0.287 mmol, 57% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* = 91:9; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.17-7.05 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.51 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.34 (s, 6H, *dl*), 2.33 (s, 6H, *meso*), 2.17 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.54 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.47 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 140.8, 140.5, 136.5, 136.3, 127.9, 127.8, 127.3, 126.8, 78.7, 78.5, 25.1, 24.9, 20.94, 20.91.

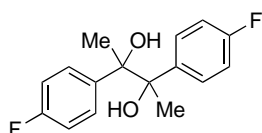
The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>2</sup>

### 2,3-Bis(4-(*tert*-butyl)phenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2c**)



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:1) gave **2c** (79.6 mg, 0.225 mmol, 45% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 87:13;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.30-7.18 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.53 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.11 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.53 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.48 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.32 (s, 18H, *dl*), 1.31 (s, 18H, *meso*);  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  149.8, 149.6, 140.9, 140.6, 126.9, 126.5, 124.14, 124.07, 78.6, 78.3, 34.4, 34.3, 34.2, 31.4, 31.3, 25.1; IR (ATR): 3555, 2955, 2901, 1510, 1458, 1400, 1360, 1269, 1215, 1157, 1111, 1091, 1045, 1014  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$ :  $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{34}\text{NaO}_2$  377.2457, found 377.2464.

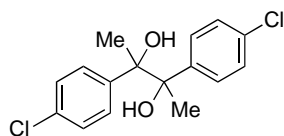
### 2,3-Bis(4-fluorophenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2d**)<sup>3</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:2) gave **2d** (98.0 mg, 0.352 mmol, 70% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 90:10;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.20-7.17 (m, 4H, *meso*), 7.14-7.10 (m, 4H, *dl*), 6.95-6.89 (m, 4H + 4H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.49 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.25 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.57 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.49 (s, 6H, *dl*).  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  162.0 (d,  $^1J_{\text{CF}} = 245.6$  Hz), 161.9 (d,  $^1J_{\text{CF}} = 245.6$  Hz), 139.4 (d,  $^4J_{\text{CF}} = 3.9$  Hz), 139.0 (d,  $^4J_{\text{CF}} = 2.9$  Hz), 129.0 (d,  $^3J_{\text{CF}} = 8.7$  Hz), 128.6 (d,  $^3J_{\text{CF}} = 7.7$  Hz), 113.92 (d,  $^2J_{\text{CF}} = 20.2$  Hz), 113.87 (d,  $^2J_{\text{CF}} = 21.2$  Hz), 78.6, 78.3, 20.1, 24.8;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (375 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  -115.8, -116.1; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$ :  $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{16}\text{NaO}_2$  301.1016, found 301.1031.

The  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

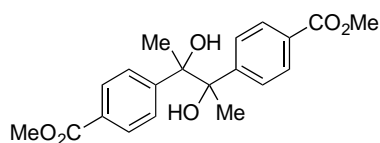
### 2,3-Bis(4-chlorophenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2e**)<sup>3</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:2) gave **2e** (88.3 mg, 0.283 mmol, 57% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 89:11;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.23-7.09 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.48 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.19 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.55 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.48 (s, 6H, *dl*);  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  142.1, 141.6, 133.1, 132.9, 128.8, 128.4, 127.3, 127.2, 78.4, 78.2, 24.9, 24.6.

The  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

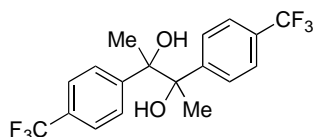
### 2,3-Bis(4-methoxycarbonylphenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2f**)<sup>2</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 3:1) gave **2f** (127.3 mg, 0.355 mmol, 71% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 89:11; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 7.85 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 4H, *meso*), 7.64–7.62 (m, 4H + 4H, *dl* and *meso*), 7.20 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 4H, *dl*), 5.37 (s, 2H, *dl*), 5.21 (s, 2H, *meso*), 3.85 (s, 6H, *meso*), 3.79 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.60 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.27 (s, 6H, *meso*); <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 166.4, 166.3, 152.4, 152.0, 128.0, 127.5, 127.4, 127.1, 126.9, 77.2, 76.9, 51.93, 51.85, 24.8, 24.6; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>22</sub>NaO<sub>6</sub> 381.1314, found 381.1324.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>2</sup>

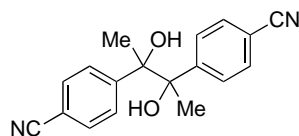
### 2,3-Bis(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2g**)<sup>1</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:2) gave **2g** (135.6 mg, 0.358 mmol, 72% yield) as a yellow amorphous; *dl:meso* 85:15; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.52–7.50 (m, 4H + 4H, *dl* and *meso*), 7.45 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H, *meso*), 7.30 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 4H, *dl*), 2.57 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.18 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.57 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.54 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 147.6, 147.1, 129.5 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 32.4 Hz), 129.3 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 32.1 Hz), 127.7, 127.4, 124.2 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 272.0 Hz), 124.14 (q, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 3.9 Hz), 124.12 (q, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 272.0 Hz), 78.6, 78.3, 25.0, 24.7; <sup>19</sup>F NMR (375 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ –62.4.

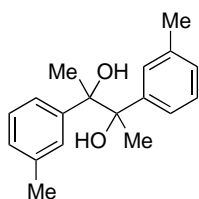
The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

### 2,3-Bis(4-cyanophenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2h**)<sup>4</sup>



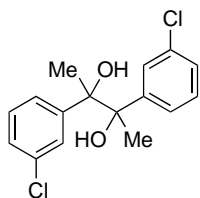
Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 2:1) gave **2h** (64.3 mg, 0.220 mmol, 44% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 74:26; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 7.74 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H, *meso*), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H, *meso*), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H, *dl*), 7.23 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H, *dl*), 5.55 (s, 2H, *dl*), 5.38 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.61 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.23 (s, 6H, *meso*); <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 152.4, 152.0, 130.6, 130.1, 128.6, 127.9, 119.20, 119.16, 108.9, 108.5, 77.0, 76.7, 24.6, 24.3; HRMS (ESI) *m/z*: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> 293.1290, found 293.1281.

### 2,3-Di-*m*-tolylbutane-2,3-diol (**2i**)<sup>5</sup>



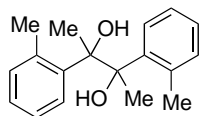
Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:1) gave **2i** (88.9 mg, 0.329 mmol, 66% yield) as a colorless amorphous; *dl:meso* 91:9; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.15-7.00 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.52 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.30 (s, 6H, *dl*), 2.29 (s, 6H, *meso*), 2.20 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.56 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.48 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 143.6, 143.3, 136.6, 136.4, 128.2, 127.8, 127.6, 127.5, 127.1, 126.9, 124.4, 123.9, 78.8, 78.6, 25.0, 24.9, 21.5; IR (ATR): 3447, 2984, 1607, 1487, 1450, 1369, 1238, 1136, 1065, 1043 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (DART) *m/z*: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>23</sub>O<sub>2</sub> 271.1698, found 271.1687.

### 2,3-Bis(3-chlorophenyl)butane-2,3-diol (**2j**)<sup>5</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 8:2) gave **2j** (116.8 mg, 0.375 mmol, 75% yield) as a colorless amorphous; *dl:meso* 88:12; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.32-6.98 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.51 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.16 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.54 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.49 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 145.7, 145.2, 133.4, 133.3, 128.5, 128.4, 127.6, 127.3, 127.1, 125.5, 125.2, 78.5, 78.2, 25.0, 24.7; IR (ATR): 3431, 2990, 1595, 1568, 1411, 1373, 1200, 1144, 1061 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (EI) *m/z*: [M+H]<sup>+</sup> calcd for C<sub>16</sub>H<sub>16</sub><sup>35</sup>Cl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> 310.0527, found 310.0520.

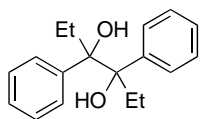
### 2,3-Di-*o*-tolylbutane-2,3-diol (**2k**)<sup>6</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 5:1) gave **2k** (47.5 mg, 0.176 mmol, 35% yield) as a colorless amorphous; *dl:meso* 87:13; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.18-7.00 (m, 8H + 8H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.40 (s, 2H, *meso*), 2.36 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.08 (br s, 6H, *meso*), 2.06 (br s, 6H, *dl*), 1.733 (s, 6H, *meso*), 1.727 (s, 6H, *dl*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 141.44, 141.38, 137.4, 132.74, 132.69, 129.9, 129.4, 127.3, 127.1, 124.83, 124.79, 82.7, 82.3, 27.3, 23.3, 23.1.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>6</sup>

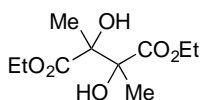
### 3,4-Diphenylhexane-3,4-diol (**2l**)<sup>1</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 20:1) gave **2l** (71.1 mg, 0.263 mmol, 53% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 87:13; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.29-7.15 (m, 10H + 10H, *dl* and *meso*), 2.56 (s, 2H, *dl*), 2.35 (dq, *J* = 14.7, 7.2 Hz, 2H, *meso*), 2.12-2.03 (m, 2H + 2H, *dl* and *meso*), 1.70 (dq, *J* = 14.6, 7.4 Hz, 2H, *dl*), 1.60-1.53 (m, 2H, *meso*), 0.60 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 6H, *dl*), 0.59 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 6H, *meso*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 141.2, 140.2, 128.3, 127.6, 127.3, 127.1, 126.8, 126.6, 81.9, 81.8, 28.1, 27.6, 7.7, 7.5.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

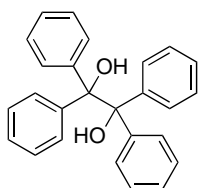
### Diethyl 2,3-dihydroxy-2,3-dimethylsuccinate (**2m**)<sup>1</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 2:1) gave **2m** (70.1 mg, 0.299 mmol, 60% yield) as a white solid; *dl:meso* 61:39; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 4.34-4.21 (m, 4H + 4H, *dl* and *meso*), 3.83 (s, 2H, *dl*), 3.59 (s, 2H, *meso*), 1.53 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.51 (s, 6H, *dl*), 1.35-1.29 (m, 6H + 6H, *dl* and *meso*); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 174.8, 174.3, 78.6, 78.5, 62.3, 62.2, 20.5, 20.4, 14.02, 13.96.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

### 1,1,2,2-Tetraphenylethane-1,2-diol (**2n**)<sup>3</sup>

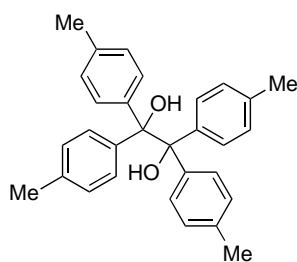


Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 20:1) gave **2n** (115.2 mg, 0.314 mmol, 63% yield) as a white solid; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.32-7.27 (m, 8H), 7.21-7.14 (m, 12H), 3.02 (s, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 144.1, 128.6, 127.3, 126.9, 83.0.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>



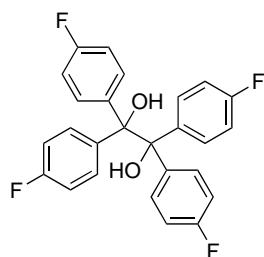
### 1,1,2,2-Tetra-*p*-tolylethane-1,2-diol (**2o**)<sup>3</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 20:1) gave **2o** (105.3 mg, 0.249 mmol, 50% yield) as a white solid; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.15 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 8H), 6.96 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 8H), 2.95 (s, 2H), 2.27 (s, 12H); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 141.5, 136.3, 128.4, 127.9, 82.8, 21.0.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

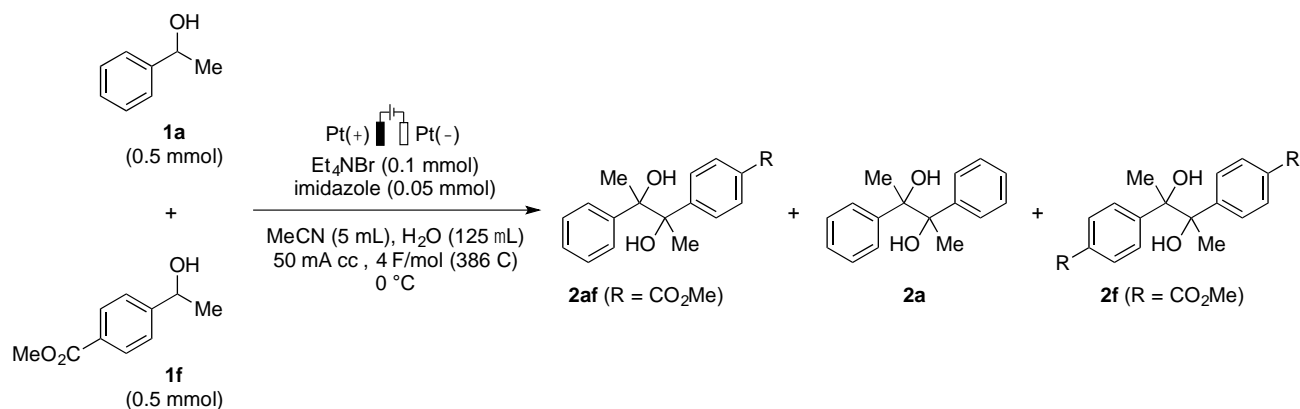
### 1,1,2,2-Tetrakis(4-fluorophenyl)ethane-1,2-diol (**2p**)<sup>3</sup>



Silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 20:1 ) gave **2p** (133.0 mg, 0.303 mmol, 61% yield) as a white solid; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.27-7.21 (m, 8H), 6.90-6.84 (m, 8H), 2.86 (s, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 161.8 (d, <sup>1</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 247.6 Hz), 139.6 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 2.9 Hz), 130.3 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 7.7 Hz), 114.3 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>CF</sub> = 21.2 Hz), 82.5; <sup>19</sup>F NMR (375 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): -114.9.

The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR spectra are in accordance with those reported in the literature.<sup>3</sup>

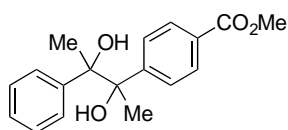
## 2.2. Cross-coupling reaction



A cylinder-type undivided cell was charged with Et<sub>4</sub>NBr (21 mg, 0.1 mmol) and imidazole (3.4 mg, 0.05 mmol). Anhydrous MeCN (5 mL), water (0.125 mL), **1a** (61 mg, 0.5 mmol), and **1f** (90 mg, 0.5 mmol) was successively

added. The reaction vessel was equipped with two Pt electrodes ( $1 \times 2 \text{ cm}^2$ ). Then, 4 F/mol (386 C) of electricity was passed through the mixture at  $0^\circ\text{C}$  under constant current conditions (50 mA). The reaction was quenched with saturated aqueous  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3$ , and the most of MeCN was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with AcOEt. The combined organic layers were dried over  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ , filtered, and concentrated under reduced pressure. Purification on silica gel column chromatography (hexane/AcOEt = 4:1) afford **2af** (50.4 mg, 0.165 mmol, 33%), **2a** (27.8 mg, 0.114 mmol), and **2f** (36.8 mg, 0.105 mmol). The diastereomeric ratios were determined by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR analysis.

#### *Methyl 4-(2,3-dihydroxy-3-phenylbutan-2-yl)benzoate (2af)*



Yellow amorphous;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.91-7.88 (m, 2H + 2H, *major* and *minor*), 7.34-7.14 (m, 7H + 7H, *major* and *minor*), 3.90 (s, 3H, *major*), 3.91 (s, 3H, *minor*), 2.68 (br s, 1H, *major*), 2.49 (br s, 1H, *major*), 2.39 (br s, 1H, *minor*), 2.21 (br s, 1H, *minor*), 1.59 (s, 3H, *minor*), 1.58 (s, 3H, *minor*), 1.52 (s, 3H, *major*), 1.49 (s, 3H, *major*);  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  167.1, 149.2, 148.7, 143.4, 143.0, 128.6, 128.4, 128.32, 128.26, 127.5, 127.35, 127.27, 127.2, 127.1, 126.8, 78.9, 78.7, 78.5, 52.1, 25.0, 24.9, 24.73, 24.69; IR (ATR): 3482, 2991, 2949, 1703, 1609, 1437, 1277, 1190, 1113,  $1017 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$ :  $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{20}\text{NaO}_4$  301.1259, found 323.1260.

### 2.3. Large-scale experiment

A 100 mL round bottom two-neck flask was charged with  $\text{Et}_4\text{NBr}$  (210 mg, 1 mmol) and imidazole (51.1 mg, 0.75 mmol). Anhydrous MeCN (50 mL), water (1.25 mL), and 1-phenylethanol (**1a**, 1.22 g, 10 mmol) was successively added. The reaction vessel was equipped with two Pt electrodes ( $5 \times 5 \text{ cm}^2$ ; submerged area, approximately  $20 \text{ cm}^2$ ). Then, 4 F/mol of electricity was passed through the mixture at  $0^\circ\text{C}$  under constant current conditions (500 mA). The reaction was quenched with saturated aqueous  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3$ , and the most of MeCN was removed under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with AcOEt. The combined organic layers were dried over  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ , filtered, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to afford the desired product **2a** (866.1 mg, 3.58 mmol, 72% yield, *dl:meso* 90:10) as a white solid.

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#### 4. $^1\text{H}$ , $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$ , and $^{19}\text{F}$ NMR spectra

