## AN ABSTRACT OF THE CAPSTONE REPORT OF

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Title: <u>Asymmetric Oxidative Coupling of 2-Hydroxycarbazoles</u>

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The biscarbazole skeleton is present in compounds produced by the plants of the *Rutaceae* family with over 20 naturally occurring molecules. Bishydroxycarbazoles, an important class of these alkaloids, are garnering increased interest for their potential antimalarial, cytotoxic, anti-HIV, and antimicrobial activity. Previous methods to form biscarbazoles are limited to racemic couplings to form the biaryl linkage. The goal of the project is to use a chiral vanadium catalyst and oxygen to achieve high enantioselectivity in a more efficient oxidative coupling. For a range of five substrates, enantioselectivies of 72-79% ee and yields up to 87% were obtained. This technique provides a potential route to various natural products, such as bismurrayfoline E. With the ability to synthesize these natural products, avenues are opened for further study of their biological activity.

Asymmetric Oxidative Coupling of 2-Hydroxycarbazoles

by

# Paul D. Sung A CAPSTONE REPORT submitted to the University of Pennsylvania

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Chemical Sciences

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I understand that my Capstone Report will become part of the permanent collection of the University of Pennsylvania Master of Chemical Sciences Program. My signature below authorizes release of my final report to any reader upon request.

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Paul D. Sung, Author

### Table of Contents

1.	Pretext Pages	
	a. Abstract Page	i
	b. Title Page	ii
	c. Approval Page	iii
	d. Table of Contents	iv
	e. List of Figures	v
	f. List of Tables	v
	g. List of Schemes	v
	h. List of Tables	v
2.	Scientific Report	
	a. Introduction	1
	b. Materials and Methods	7
	c. Results and Discussion	17
	d. Conclusion	22
3.	References	23
4.	Appendix	25
	11	

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Natural Products with Biscarbazoles Skeletons	1
Figure 2. Possible Enantiopure Biaryl Molecules	2
Figure 3. C,C-coupling Using an N-Protected Carbazoles	2
Figure 4. Bringmann's Synthesis of Bis-2-hydroxy-3-methylcarbazole	3
Figure 5. Oxidative Coupling Patterns of 1-Hydroxycarbazoles	4
Figure 6. Asymmetric Phenol Coupling	5
Figure 7. Proposed Mechanism of Oxidative Couplings	6
Figure 8. Proposed Work	7
Figure 9. Supplementary Catalysts	7
Figure 10. Benzylation of Carbazoles	20
Figure 11. Failed Carbazole Substrates	21

### List of Schemes

Scheme 1. Bringmann Enantioselective Carbazole Synthesis	3
Scheme 2. Synthesis of Primary Substrate for Reaction Screening	17
Scheme 3. Synthesis of Primary Vanadium Catalyst	18

### List of Tables

Table 1. Oxidative Coupling Optimization	19
Table 2. Additional Substrates for Asymmetric Oxidative Coupling	21
Table 3. Substrate Scope	22

### Introduction

Biaryl compounds are commonly found in natural products as well as various chiral ligands. The biscarbazole skeleton, a biaryl derived from carbazoles, is seen in various alkaloid-based natural products. As highlighted in red in **Figure 1**, the biscarbazole carbon skeleton is a dimer of a carbazole, an indole like structure with an additional aromatic ring.

Figure 1. Natural Products with Biscarbazoles Skeletons



Bismurrayafoline E

Most of these natural products, including bismahanine, bis-7-hydroxygirinimbine-A and bismurrayfoline E (**Figure 1**), are obtained from the *Murraya koenigii* leaf.<sup>1,2,3</sup> This plant is from the family Rutaceae, which is native to India. Besides use as a flavoring and traditional medicine, the natural products from these leaves have cytotoxic, anti-HIV, and antiradical properties.

Most stereocenters in molecules arise from sp<sup>3</sup>-hybridized carbons with four different substituents. The biscarbazoles possess a different form of chirality called, axial chirality. Due to the steric bulk of individual monomers, there is a high energy barrier to

rotation around the biaryl bond via the planar conformation. Enantiopure biaryl molecules have proven useful because they make good targets for ligands. Examples of these include BINAP, BINOL, and MOP (**Figure 2**).<sup>4</sup> The natural products in Figure 1 also possess this axial chirality. Bisisomahanine is found to be axially racemic, while the other two natural products have unknown chirality.<sup>5,6</sup>





There are currently many syntheses of carbazoles monomers, but the corresponding dimerization is a challenging task. In addition, the reported methods to form these dimers do not allow generation of biscarbazoles with stereocontrol.<sup>7</sup> For example, the Bringmann group reported the first total synthesis of a biscarbazole, based on the Murraya alkaloid murrastifoline-F structure, in the year 2000 (**Figure 3**). In this study, it was noticed that protecting the nitrogen together with the use of lead tetraacetate, boron trifluoride etherate, and acetonitrile allowed C-C bonds to form between the carbazoles instead of C-N bonds. Problems with this method include the stoichiometric use of harmful reagents such as lead acetate. In 2013, the Knolker group developed a method to dimerize carbazoles to generate the biscarbazole alkaloids murrafoline A, murrafoline B, murrafoline C, and murrafoline D through the use of palladium and copper.<sup>8</sup> However, none of these products have a chiral biaryl bond.

Figure 3. C,C-coupling Using an N-Protected Carbazole<sup>7</sup>



Other approaches to form chiral biaryl biscarbazoles have been reported, including common oxidants such as, di-*tert*-butyl peroxide, copper chloride, *para*-chloroanil, benzoyl peroxide, and copper sulfate.<sup>9,10,11</sup> For example, the dimerization of bis-2-hydroxy-3-methylcarbazole has been studied by Bringmann. As expected, the achiral

oxidant *para*-chloranil generated only racemic product. In fact, very few methods to provide enantiocontrol have been demonstrated in the formation of the chiral biaryl bonds.<sup>12</sup> In addition, there is no work showing the stereoselective coupling of *ortho-ortho*, C1-C1 bonds. (**Figure 4.**) Notably, a methyl group substituent prevents coupling at the aromatic carbon that is both *ortho* to the phenol and *para* to the carbazole nitrogen.



65 °C

он

38%

Bringmann developed a route to an axially chiral biscarbazole in 2001.<sup>13</sup> His approach does not use an oxidative coupling to generate the biaryl bond, but uses a palladium catalyzed C-H insertion. Furthermore, the two substrates **1** and **2** are first united via an ester bond to generate **3** for a more facile intramolecular coupling to form **4**. The strained ester bridge causes facile isomerization of the chiral axis yielding an opportunity to use dynamic kinetic resolution. The chiral axis is significantly more stable once formed because of the strain caused by the bulk of the methyl group interfering with the ester. Thus, the stereochemistry of the biaryl bond was established after its formation by means of a dynamic kinetic resolution of **4** via reduction of the ester with BINAL to form **5** with 64% ee and 20% yield. While this strategy was ultimately successful for forming the targeted compound with enantiocontrol, the selectivity levels were only moderate and the method required several additional functional group manipulations.



Recently, the Kozlowski lab has developed a complementary coupling method to provide regioselective *ortho-ortho*', C1-C3, coupling of unsubstituted carbazoles (**Figure** 

**5**).<sup>1</sup> In Lei's work, the *ortho-ortho*', C1-C3, coupling pattern was found to be favored over the *ortho-ortho*, C1-C1, pattern resulting in **7.1**. The *ortho-ortho* product, **7.2**, was initially expected to form because of the electron donation from the aniline. Together with electron donation from the alcohol, the C1-position is the most electron-rich, and the most readily oxidized; however, only one of the monomers reacts at the *ortho* position while the other monomer reacts at the *ortho*' position. This outcome is attributed to the increased steric hindrance between the two monomers during bond formation between the two *ortho*-sites. To override this inherent selectivity, methyl groups are installed at C3 to force the *ortho-ortho*, C1-C1, coupling as had been shown to be effective previously (**Figure 4**).



In the past, the Kozlowski group used copper-diaza-*cis*-decalin catalysts for asymmetric oxidative coupling of naphthols.<sup>14</sup> However, copper has proved ineffective in enantioselective phenol couplings. With electron-rich phenols, no enantioselectivity was seen although the copper catalysts were high reactive. Addition of a coordinating ester adjacent to the phenol, as was successful with the naphthols, led to low reactivity due to the electron-withdrawing character of the ester.<sup>14</sup>

As a result the Kozlowski group surveyed other catalysts for phenol coupling. The primary issue is that phenols are much less reactive than 2-naphthols, because of an intrinsically lower oxidation potential of phenols which do not have the same means of electron delocalization as is possible with 2-naphthols. Encouragingly, literature reports indicated that VO(acac)<sub>2</sub> is effective as a racemic catalyst for phenol couplings in 62-66% yield after 48-120 h.<sup>15</sup> In addition, chiral vanadium catalysts have been reported to form BINOL from 2-naphthol with a 90% ee.<sup>16</sup>

Using this starting point, the Kozlowski group developed a promising asymmetric couplings of phenols.<sup>17</sup> The optimal vanadium catalyst **V1** was determined after testing various other ligands as shown in **Figure 6**. Catalyst **V2** provided an initial result of 37% ee in Lee's phenol couplings, followed by an improved 60% ee after additive optimization. The ligands (**V3**, **V4**, **V5**) were also explored. **V3** resulted in a 77% ee, but modification to catalyst **V4** provided a drop in selectivity resulting from the loss of a sterically hindering group. **V5** provided a significant improvement in selectivity.

The dimeric scaffold was abandoned because the monomer was more easily tunable, while also maintaining a competitive enantiomeric excess. Interestingly, such vanadium Schiff base monomers are only moderately effective in naphthol coupling.<sup>15</sup> Catalyst **V1** was discovered by testing various R groups on the aromatic ring. Electron withdrawing groups destabilize the vanadium (V) oxidation state that forms during the redox reaction thereby forming a more reactive catalyst.

### Figure 6. Asymmetric Phenol Coupling





Oxidative couplings can proceed via a range of different mechanisms, including radical-radical, radical anion, and cationic variants. There is evidence that vanadium catalyzed oxidative couplings of phenol substrates can proceed via a radical-radical pathway.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Gong and Sasai undertook extensive studies of a vanadium catalyzed asymmetric naphthol couplings and compiled compelling evidence of a metal bound radical-radical coupling.<sup>18</sup>,<sup>19</sup>

On the basis of this prior work, a catalytic cycle is proposed where phenol coordinates to the vanadium (**I1**) and becomes oxidized to keto radical equivalent **I2**. This coordination is followed by the radicals coupling to form **I3**. Afterwards, the vanadium catalyst is released and re-oxidized using oxygen gas, while the coupled product tautomerizes in order to form the final product (**Figure 7**). According to this mechanism, we proposed that carbazoles would be more reactive in an oxidative coupling reaction as they are more electron rich and, hence, more oxidizable.<sup>17</sup>



The goal of this research is to develop a process to form biscarbazoles with high yields, above 80%, and enantioselectivity, above 80%. The work in this thesis uses a very different approach to this type of structure where the axial chiral bond is established in an intermolecular oxidative asymmetric coupling rather than by a resolution after bond formation (see **Scheme 1**). Specifically, the *ortho-ortho*, C1-C1, coupling of the 3,9-dimethyl-9*H*-carbazol-2-ol (**Figure 8**) will be attempted.

Chiral vanadium catalysts have been previously used by the Kozlowski group in the dimerization of phenols and indoles, and this work centers on expanding that reactivity to carbazoles. The monomeric units of the biscarbazole natural products contain a phenol group and an amine. Because of these two electron-donating groups, oxidation of the corresponding monomers is expected to be more facile than with phenol allowing generation of intermediates that can undergo dimerization.<sup>20</sup>

The vanadium catalyst **V1** works best with phenols having substitution at the C2 and C5 positions. The C5 substitution is necessary to create a chiral axis. The C2 methyl groups were found to be necessary to achieve high selectivity with the corresponding C2 hydro compound give very low selectivity. This same methyl substitution will be employed with 3,9-dimethyl-9*H*-carbazol-2-ol, **8.1**, the simplest and initial carbazole substrate used in the series. Other alterations to each individual step in carbazole formation will be indicated as structure **x.1-4**.

Also vanadium catalysts with similar ligands will be employed to couple the carbazoles. It is unclear if the carbazole nitrogen in either its free *N*-H or protected *N*-Me forms would allow similar selectivities to those seen with the phenols from **Figure 6**.

With the biscarbazole compounds, a high enantiomeric excess, above 90% ee (95:5 enantiomeric ratio) is the desired result.



If the primary vanadium catalyst **V1**, does not provide adequate enantiomeric excess and yields, these other catalysts, as shown in **Figure 9**, will be used in hopes of improving the reactivity. These derivatives of **V1** are the next logical screening targets based on the fact that they provided some selectivity in the coupling of phenols. Once the biscarbazole is formed, with a yield above 80% and an enantiomeric excess above 80%, other substrates with the basic carbazole structure will be explored (**18.1-18.5**). The substituents will test how electronics affect the reactivity of carbazole with the vanadium catalysts. These substituents will include electron donating as well as electron withdrawing groups such as methyl and fluoro.

### Figure 9. Supplementary Catalysts



### **Materials and Method**

**General Consideration:** Unless otherwise noted, all non-aqueous reactions were carried out under an atmosphere of dry Argon in dried glassware. When necessary, solvents and reagents were dried prior to use. THF was distilled from sodium benzophenone ketyl. Toluene, dioxane, and methylene chloride were distilled from CaH<sub>2</sub>. Analytical thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on EM Reagents 0.25 mm silica0gel 254-F plages. Visualization was accomplished with UV light. Chromatography was performed using a forced flow of the indicated solvent system on EM Reagents Silica Gel 60 (230-400 mesh). <sup>1</sup>H NMR Spectra were recorded on a <u>Brüker AM -500 (500 MHz)</u> spectrometer. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm from tetramethylsilane (0 ppm) or from the solvent resonance (CDCl<sub>3</sub>) 7.26 ppm, acetone- $d_6$  2.05 ppm). Data are reported as follows: chemical shifts, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, br= broad, m = multiplet), coupling constants. IR spectra were taken on a Jaso FT/IR-480 Plus spectrometer or an Applied Systems React IR1000. Mass spectra were obtained on a

Waters LC-TOF mass spectrometer (model LCT-XE Premier) with ionization mode of either CI or ES. An analytical Chiralpak IA column (4.6 mm x 250 mm, 5  $\mu$  m) from Daicel was used with an Agilent 1100 series. Enantiomeric excesses were determined using analytical high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) with UV detection at 254 nm. Optical rotations were taken on a Jasco polarimeter with a sodium lamp.

### 2-Chloro-5-methoxy-4-methylaniline

4-Amino-5-chloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid (3.05 g, 15.1 mmol) was suspended in chlorobenzene (30 mL) and cooled to 0 °C. Neat BH<sub>3</sub>•SMe<sub>2</sub> (4.3 mL, 45.3 mmol) was added with vigorous stirring. When effervescence ceased, the mixture was heated for 3 h at 80 °C and then for 18 h at 130 °C. The reaction was quenched by addition of aqueous Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (aq) (1 M, 50 mL). The mixture was extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (3 × 50 mL), dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>), filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure to give a yellow solid. The product was purified by column chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>) to yield a white powder: (2.10 g 81%): <sup>1</sup>H NMR (360 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  6.90 (s, 1H), 6.40 (s, 1H), 5.05 (s, 2H), 3.68 (s, 3H), 1.96 (s, 3H). Spectra are in accord with those previously reported.<sup>21</sup>



### **General Procedure A**

A mixture of NaOt-Bu (0.24 g, 2.5 mmol),  $Pd(OAc)_2$  (0.004 g, 0.020 mmol), and  $HP(t-Bu)_3BF_4$  (0.008 g, 0.025 mmol) was suspended in toluene (0.83 M). 2-Chloro-5-methoxy-4-methylaniline (0.086 g, 0.5 mmol) and an aryl bromide (0.51 mmol) were added, and the mixture was heated at reflux for 18 h. The mixture was quenched by addition of HCl (aq) (2 M). The mixture was extracted with dichloromethane, dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>), filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The product mixture was subjected to column chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>)



Following **General Procedure A**, Brown oil, 770 mg, 76%,  $R_f = 0.6$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone)  $\delta$  (ppm) 7.30 (t, J = 6.3, 2H), 7.13-7.10 (m, 3H), 6.99 (s, 1H), 6.8 (s, 1H), 5.94 (s, 1H), 3.71 (s, 3H), 2.13 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone)  $\delta$  157.1, 143.3, 138.8, 130.7, 129.2, 120.9, 120.0, 118.2, 113.8, 101.3, 55.0, 14.5 IR (KBr) 3420, 1512, 1200, 605 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>14</sub>ClNO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 248.0842, found 248.0842



Following **General Procedure A**, Yellow oil, 440 mg, 22%,  $R_f = 0.75$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 7.12 (d, J = 8.0, 2H), 7.08 (s, 1H), 7.04 (d, J = 8.5, 2H), 6.72 (s, 1H), 6.72 (s, 1H), 5.88 (br s, 1H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 2.12 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 2 rotamers, IR (KBr) 3420, 2921, 1589, 606 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>17</sub>ClNO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 262.0999, found 262.1003.



Following **General Procedure A**, Brown oil, 1550 mg, 99%,  $R_f = 0.55$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 7.20-7.17 (m, 2H), 7.12 (s, 1H), 7.07-7.04 (m, 2H), 6.83 (s, 1H), 6.78 (s, 1H), 3.72 (s, 3H), 2.09 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.2 (d, J = 219), 156.9, 139.0, 130.7, 121.0 (d, J = 8.0), 119.6, 115.7 (d, J = 22), 112.2, 98.8, 97.7, 55.5, 15.2; IR (KBr) 3420, 1609, 1200, 602, cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>14</sub>ClFNO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 266.0748, found 266.0743.



Following **General Procedure A**, Brown oil, 768 mg, 50%,  $R_f = 0.45$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 7.24 (dd, J = 7.0, 15.0, 1H), 7.18 (s, 1H), 7.11 (s, 1H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 6.90 (dd, J = 2.0, 8.0, 1H), 6.79 (td, J = 2.5, 12.0), 6.58 (dt, J = 2.5, 8.0), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.13 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 163.8 (d, J = 243), 156.9, 144.6 (d, J = 10.0), 137.1, 131.0, 130.6 (d, J = 10.0), 121.3, 114.2, 113.6 (d, J = 2.5), 108.0 (d, J = 21.3), 104.7 (d, J = 25.0), 101.3, 55.7, 15.4 IR (KBr) 1604, 1582, 1518, 834, 815, 776, 767, 678, 615 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>14</sub>NOFCl [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 266.0748, found 266.0740.



### **General Procedure B**

A mixture of NaOt-Bu (0.24, 2.5 mmol), Pd $(OAc)_2$  (0.004, 0.02 mmol), and HP $(t-Bu)_3BF_4$  (0.008, 0.025 mmol) was suspended in dioxane (0.328 mL, 1.25 M). The chlorobiphenylaniline (0.41 mmol) was added as a solution in dioxane (0.164 mL, 2.5 M). The mixture was heated at reflux for 18 h. After cooling, the mixture was quenched by addition of HCl (aq) (2 M, 3 mL). The organic phase was extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (2 × 20 mL), dried (MgSO<sub>4</sub>), filtered, and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. The product mixture was subjected to column chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>)



Prepared following **General Procedure B**. Spectral data were in agreement with those reported.<sup>22</sup>



Following **General Procedure B**, Brown solid, 1.39 g, 83%,  $R_f = 0.3$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 7.79 (s, 1H), 7.74 (s, 1H), 7.25 (d, J = 8.0, 1H), 7.12 (d, J = 7.0), 6.84 (s, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H), 2.56 (s, 3H), 2.35 (s, 3H); C<sup>13</sup> NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.3, 140.3, 138.2, 127.5, 125.0, 123.5, 121.0, 118.9, 117.9, 115.8, 110.1, 92.6, 54.8, 20.6, 15.0; IR (KBr) 3390, 2920, 1634, 1615, 818, 746 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>16</sub>NO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 226.1232, found 226.1229.



Following **General Procedure B**, Yellow solid, 240 mg, 18%,  $R_f = 0.2$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 10.08 (s, 1H), 7.81 (s, 1H), 7.69 (dd, J = 2.5, 9.3, 1H), 7.40 (dd, J = 4.4, 8.8, 1H), 7.04 (td, J = 2.6, 9.35, 1H), 7.01 (s, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 2.30 (3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 157.9, 157.3 (d, J = 231), 141.2, 136.3, 123.9 (d, J = 9.7), 121.4, 118.5, 115.7 (d, J = 3.8), 111.1, 111.0 (d, J = 14.6), 104.4 (d, J = 23.8), 92.6, 54.9, 16.0; IR (KBr) 1486, 847, 822, 803, 783, cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for  $C_{14}H_{13}NOF [M+H]^+ 230.0981$ , Found 230.0986.



Following **General Procedure B**, Yellow solid, 60 mg 5%,  $R_f = 0.5$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 10.18 (s, 1H), 7.92 (dd, J = 5.0, 5.0, 1H), 7.78 (s, 1H), 7.15 (dd, J = 2.4, 10.0, 1H), 7.03 (s, 1H), 6.90-6.86 (m, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H), 2.30 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 161.0 (d, J = 235), 157.2, 140.4 (d, J = 12.7), 140.4, 120.9, 120.0, 119.8 (d, J = 10.6), 118.6, 115.5, 106.2 (d, J = 24.3), 97.2 (d, J = 26.3), 92.8, 54.9, 15.9; IR (KBr) 3396, 2921, 1611, 841, 808, 742 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NOF [M-H]<sup>-</sup> 228.0825, Found 228.0822.



### **General Procedure C**

The methoxycarbazole (4.92 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (49.2 mL, 0.1 M). After cooling to -78 °C, a solution of boron tribromide (1 M in dichloromethane, 7.9 mmol) was added over a period of 11 min and the solution was allowed to warm to room temperature. The reaction mixture was stirred for 15.5 h at room temperature. The mixture was subsequently quenched with methanol under cooling, transferred to a separation funnel with ethyl acetate, and washed several times with water and brine. After extraction of the aqueous layer with ethyl acetate, the combined organic layers were dried over sodium sulfate, the solvent was evaporated, and the mixture was purified by chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>) to provide the product.



Following **General Procedure C**, Brown solid, 510 mg, 94%;  $R_f = 0.05$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 9.77 (s, 1H), 8.18 (s, 1H), 7.73 (s, 1H), 7.71 (d, J = 0.5, 1H), 7.24 (d, J = 8.0, 1H), 7.05 (dd, J = 1.2, 8.2, 1H), 6.92 (s, 1H), 2.44 (s, 3H), 2.33 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 154.7, 140.5, 138.4, 127.4, 125.0, 123.9, 121.3, 118.9, 116.6, 116.1, 110.1, 96.2, 20.7, 15.9; IR (KBr) 3398, 1603, 826, 744, 719, 640 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>14</sub>NO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 212.1075, Found 212.1080.



Following **General Procedure C**, Brown solid, 166 mg 90%;  $R_f = 0.1$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 9.94 (s, 1H), 8.34 (s, 1H), 7.78 (s, 1H), 7.66 (dd, J = 2.6, 9.5, 1H), 7.35 (dd, J = 4.5, 8.8, 1H), 7.03-6.99 (dt, J = 2.6, 9.0, 1H), 6.97 (s, 1H), 2.35 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.0 (d, J = 231), 155.3, 141.3, 136.3, 124.2 (d, J = 10.0), 121.6, 117.2, 115.8 (d, J = 3.8), 110.9, 110.7 (d, J = 14.8), 104.4 (d, J = 23.8), 96.2, 15.8; IR (KBr) 3406, 1485, 1406, 1257, 1146, 1013, 600 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>9</sub>NOF [M-H]<sup>+</sup> 214.0668, Found 214.0672.



Following **General Procedure C**, Brown solid, 69 mg, 99%;  $R_f = 0.1$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 10.06 (s, 1H), 8.26, (s, 1H), 7.89 (dd, J = 5.5, 8.5, 1H), 7.74 (s, 1H), 7.11 (dd, J = 2.5, 10.5), 6.96 (s, 1H), 6.86 (dt, J = 2.5, J = 8.5, 1H) 2.33

(s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 161.0 (d, J = 235), 154.6, 140.6 (d, J = 14.8), 140.6, 121.2, 120.3, 119.7 (d, J = 10.5), 117.4, 115.7, 106.2 (d, J = 24.1), 97.0 (d, J = 26.3), 96.5, 15.9; IR (KBr) 3406, 1486, 1293, 834, 820, 810, 781, 600, cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for  $C_{13}H_9NOF$  [M-H]<sup>+</sup> 214.0668, Found: 214.0669.



A solution of 2-hydroxycarbazole (0.092 g, 0.47 mmol) and DMF (0.07 mL) in dry THF (1 mL) was added drop-wise to NaH (0.028 g, 1.17 mmol) under a nitrogen atmosphere with stirring at room temperature. After 10 min, a 1 M solution of MeI (0.067 mL, 0.47 mmol) was added and stirring was continued for 2 h. The resulting mixture was cooled to 0 °C and quenched with water (0.4 mL). After removing the solvent under vacuum, the product was washed with acidic aqueous solution and purified by column chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>) to provide the product. Brown solid, 10 mg 23%;  $R_f = 0.4$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 8.29 (s, 1H), 7.94 (d, J = 7.5, 1H), 7.80 (s, 1H) 7.39 (d, J = 8.0, 1H), 7.30 (dt, J = 1.0, 7.5, 1H), 7.10 (dt, J = 0.5, 8.0, 1H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 2.35 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.3, 139.8, 123.6, 123.2, 120.9, 118.8, 118.4, 118.0, 115.8, 110.3, 110.2, 92.4, 54.7, 15.7; IR (KBr) 2922, 2853, 1634, 1604, 815, 740, 719, 621 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>12</sub>NO [M-H]<sup>-</sup> 212.1075, Found 212.1083.



### **General Procedure D**

A solution of 2-hydroxycarbazole (0.092 g, 0.47 mmol) and DMF (0.07 mL) in dry THF (1 mL) was added drop-wise to NaH (0.028 g, 1.17 mmol) under a nitrogen atmosphere with stirring at room temperature. After 10 min, a 1 M solution of BnCl (0.067 mL, 0.47 mmol) was added and stirring was continued for 2 h. The resulting mixture was cooled to 0 °C and quenched with water (0.4 mL). After removing the solvent under vacuum, the product was washed with acidic aqueous solution and purified by column chromatography (SiO<sub>2</sub>) to provide the product.



Following **General Procedure D**, Yellow solid, 81 mg, 53%;  $R_f = 0.4$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 9.82 (s, 1H), 7.73 (s, 1H), 7.70 (s, 1H), 7.28-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.23 (d, J = 8.0, 1H), 7.19 (t, J = 7.5, 2H), 7.10 (t, J = 7.8, 1H), 7.03 (dd, J = 1.0, 8.0, 1H), 4.34 (s, 2H), 2.43 (s, 3H), 2.42 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 151.7, 140.7, 139.8, 138.5, 128.3, 128.0, 127.4, 125.6, 125.0, 124.1, 119.3, 118.9, 116.8, 116.3, 110.1, 109.0, 30.5, 20.6, 16.5. IR (KBr) 3421, 2919, 2852, 1494, 863, 796, 735, 697 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>20</sub>NO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 302.1545, Found: 302.1545.



Following **General Procedure D**, Yellow solid, 193 mg, 81%;  $R_f = 0.35$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 8.40 (s, 1H), 7.85 (s, 1H), 7.73 (dd, J = 5.0, 9.0, 1H), 7.41 (dd, J = 5.0, 10.0, 1H), 7.28-7.19 (m, 3H), 7.15-7.13 (m, 2H), 7.05 (td, J = 1.0, 10.0, 1H), 6.89 (s, 1H), 5.50 (s, 2H), 2.34 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.4 (d, J = 231), 155.6, 141.7, 137.9, 137.0, 128.6, 127.2, 126.5, 123.9, (d, J = 10.0), 122.0, 117.5, 115.3, 110.9 (d, J = 25.0), 109.3 (d, J = 8.7), 104.6 (d, J = 23.8), 94.9, 46.1, 15.7; IR (KBr) 1633, 862, 828, 791, 729, 696, 626 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>17</sub>FNO [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 306.1494 Found: 306.1497



Following **General Procedure D**, Yellow solid, 57 mg, 83%;  $R_f = 0.17$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 8.38 (s, 1H), 7.84 (s, 1H), 7.28-7.19 (m, 5H), 7.14 (d, J = 7.0, 2H), 6.91 (s, 1H), 6.84 (ddd, J = 1.5, J = 7.0, J = 8.5, 1H), 5.50 (s, 2H), 2.33 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 157.6, 155.0, 143.0, 140.3, 137.5, 128.5, 127.2, 126.4, 124.5 (J = 8.25), 123.7 (J = 3.0), 117.9, 112.8, 111.0, (J = 21.0), 104.9, 104.4 (J = 19.3), 94.3, 46.2, 15.5; IR (KBr) 1470, 883, 776, 741, 715, 702, 693 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for  $C_{20}H_{15}FNO$  [M-H]<sup>-</sup>304.0876 Found: 304.0875



### General Procedure for Asymmetric Oxidative Hydroxycarbazole Coupling (E)

To a 5 mL microwave vial was added hydroxycarbazole (0.10 mmol, 2.0 mg) and catalyst **11a** (0.020 mmol, 4.0 mg). The vial was sealed with a septum and solvent (0.20 mL) was added. Afterwards, AcOH (6.25 equiv, 20  $\mu$ L). Oxygen was added *via* active purge. The septum was replaced with a crimping cap and the vessel was sealed and stirred for the indicated time at the indicated temperature. The reaction mixture was then directly chromatographed on silica gel using ethyl acetate/hexane to elute the product. The product was prepared for analysis by dissolving in pure methanol to provide a clear solution. Afterwards the product was filtered through a glass frit to filter off solids.

Analysis was done by Chiralpak IA 1.0 mL/min 90:10 hexanes:i-PrOH or Chiralpak IA 1.0 mL/min 95:5 hexanes:i-PrOH.



Following **General Procedure E**, Yellow solid, 4.1 mg, 83%;  $R_f = 0.53$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 8.03 (dt, J = 0.8, 7.8, 2H), 8.00 (q, J = 1.0, 2H), 7.31-7.30 (m, 4H), 7.25 (s, 1H), 7.16 (ddd, J = 2.9, 5.2, 7.9, 2H), 3.45 (s, 6H), 2.45 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 153.9, 141.7, 139.8, 123.9, 122.9, 122.1, 118.8, 118.6, 117.0, 116.3, 108.4, 101.7, 29.3, 16.3; IR (KBr) 3509, 2924, 2854, 1626, 1603, 882, 768, 737 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>25</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 421.1916, found: 421.1928. [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>22</sup> –31.80; CSP HPLC (Chiralpak AD, 1.0 mL/min, 90:10 hexanes:i-PrOH): t<sub>R</sub>(*I*) = 16.6 min, t<sub>R</sub>(2) = 20.9 min.



Following **General Procedure E**, Yellow solid, 4.8 mg 95%;  $R_f = 0.47$  (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 7.94 (s, 2H), 7.78 (dd, J = 2.5, 9.0, 2H), 7.06 - 6.98 (m, 6H), 6.85-6.84 (m, 6H), 6.45-6.44 (m, 4H), 4.82 (d, J = 17.3, 2H), 4.69 (d, J = 17.3), 2.20 (s, 6H) <sup>13</sup>C NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 157.6 (d, J = 231), 154.4, 140.0, 138.0, 137.9, 127.6, 126.2, 125.3, 123.7 (d, J = 10.0), 122.5, 117.8, 116.5, 111.1 (d, J = 2.5), 109.8 (d, J = 10.0), 104.2 (d, J = 25.0), 100.9, 46.8, 16.2; IR (KBr) 3515, 2923, 1627, 856, 796, 781, 703 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>40</sub>H<sub>31</sub>F<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 609.2354, found 609.2368; [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>22</sup> -24.167, CSP HPLC (Chiralpak IA, 1.0 mL/min, 90:10 hexanes:i-PrOH): tR(*1*) = 8.9 min, tR(*2*) = 9.7 min.



Following **General Procedure E**, Yellow solid, 17.2 mg, 86%;  $R_f = 0.60$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 8.07, (d, J = 8.0, 2H), 7.96 (s, 2H), 7.33 (t, J = 7.5, 2H), 7.27 (t, J = 7.5, 2H), 7.11 (d, J = 8.0, 2H), 6.70 (t, J = 7.0, 2H), 6.83 (t, J = 7.0, 4H), 6.24 (d, J = 7.0, 4H), 4.73 (s, 2H), 4.71 (d, J = 17.5, 2H), 4.62 (d, J = 17.5, 2H), 2.17 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz,  $d_6$ -acetone) 153.6, 141.7, 139.0, 138.0, 127.5, 126.0, 125.4, 123.9, 123.1, 122.0, 119.0, 118.6, 117.5, 116.8, 109.0, 101.0, 46.5, 16.2; IR (KBr) 3513, 2923, 1603, 736, 706 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for  $C_{40}H_{33}N_2O_2$  [M-H]<sup>+</sup>  $C_{40}H_{32}N_2O_2$  571.2386, found 571.2380 [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>22</sup> –36.480; CSP HPLC (Chiralpak IA, 1.0 mL/min, 90:10 hexanes:i-PrOH): tR(*1*) = 7.8 min, tR(2) = 11.2 min.



Following **General Procedure E**, Yellow solid, 16.9 mg, 83%;  $R_f = 0.6$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4) <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 7.89 (s, 2H), 7.84 (s, 2H), 7.06 (dd, J = 1.8, 7.5, 2H), 6.97 (d, J = 8.0, 2H), 6.86-6.82 (m, 6H), 6.71 (s, 2H), 6.45 (s, 2H), 6.46-6.42 (m, 2H), 4.77 (d, J = 17.1, 2H), 4.58 (d, J = 17.1, 2H), 2.49 (s, 6H), 2.19 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 140.0, 139.2, 138.3, 128.1, 127.3, 126.1, 125.4, 125.2, 123.3, 121.9, 118.6, 117.2, 116.7, 108.9, 108.8, 100.9, 46.6, 20.5, 16.2. IR (KBr) 2920, 1608, 793, 733, 701 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS(ES-TOF) calcd for C<sub>42</sub>H<sub>37</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 601.2855, found 601.2849 [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>22</sup> –146.593; CSP HPLC (Chiralpak IA, 1.0 mL/min, 90:10 hexanes:i-PrOH): tR(*I*) = 9.5 min, tR(*2*) = 14.1 min.



Following **General Procedure E**, Yellow solid, mg, 17.8 mg, 93%;  $R_f = 0.6$ (EtOAc/Hexanes = 1/4); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 7.95 (s, 2H), 7.21 (td, J = 5.5, 8.1, 2H), 7.06 (s, 2H), 6.91 (d, J = 8.1, 2H), 6.89 (d, J = 8.1, 2H), 6.84-6.82 (m, 6H), 6.45-6.43 (m, 4H), 4.85 (d, J = 17.9, 2H), 4.60 (d, J = 17.4, 2H), 2.21 (s, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, d<sub>6</sub>-acetone) 157.7 (J = 243), 153.9 144.1 (J = 10.6), 138.7.137.5, 127.5, 126.1, 125.2, 124.6 (J = 20.1), 124.4 (J = 20.1), 118.4, 114.1, 110.8, 105.3, 104.7 (J = 18.7), 101.0, 47.0, 16.2; IR (KBr) 3519, 1601, 965, 709 cm<sup>-1</sup>; HRMS (ES-TOF) calcd for  $C_{40}H_{29}F_2N_2O_2$  [M-H]<sup>-</sup> 607.2197, found 607.2191, [ $\alpha$ ]<sub>D</sub><sup>22</sup> –1.9753; CSP HPLC (Chiralpak IA, 1.0 mL/min, 95:5 hexanes:i-PrOH): tR(*I*) = 5.1 min, tR(2) = 5.6 min.



Dry formaldehyde (0.7 g, 23.3 mmol) was added in portions to a mixture of 4-*tert*butylphenol (1.0 g, 6.66 mmol), triethylamine (2.6 mL, 18.8 mmol) and anhydrous MgCl<sub>2</sub> (2.0 g, 20.6 mmol) in 50 mL of THF. The mixture was refluxed for 8 h, cooled to room temperature, acidified with 3N HCl (70 mL), and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 30 mL). The ether layer was washed with water (50 mL), and brine (50 mL), and dried using MgSO<sub>4</sub>. Removal of solvent yielded a crude product and it was purified by column chromatography to yield a 3-(*tert-butyl*)-2-hydroxy-benzaldehyde as yellow oil (710 mg, 61% yield). Spectral data matched those reported in the literature.



In a 100 mL round-bottomed flask was placed 3-(*tert*-butyl)-2-hydroxybenzaldehyde (710 mg, 4.0 mmol) in HOAc (12 mL). Nitric acid (4.0 mL, 96 mmol) was added dropwise at 0 °C and stirred for 1 hour at ambient temperature. The resulting mixture was poured into iced water (100 mL) with vigorous stirring. The orange precipitate formed was filtered through a sintered glass, then washed with water (10 mL). The crude product was recrystallized from ethanol to give 360 mg (65% yield) Spectral data matched those reported in the literature.



All glassware was flame dried. A mixture of L-*tert*-leucine (0.34) and 3-*tert*-butyl-5nitro-2-hydroxybenzaldehyde (0.34 mmol) in MeOH:CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (2 mL, 1:1) was heated to reflux and monitored by TLC. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and VO(OEt)<sub>3</sub> (0.34 mmol) was added. After 3 h under argon atmosphere, solvent was removed under reduced pressure to afford the catalyst.

### **Results and Discussion**

The initial substrate is **8.1**, 2-hydroxy-3,9-dimethyl-9*H*-carbazole (**Scheme 2**) was prepared following literature reports as outlined in Scheme 1. Starting with 4-amino-5chloro-2-methoxybenzoic acid 1, reduction provided the methyl group needed in  $2^{21}$  The reduction is necessary to form the methyl group that will be block off the potential formation of *ortho-ortho*' biscarbazole during the oxidative coupling. Subsequent Buchwald Hartwig amination and concerted metallation deprotonation formed the carbazole moiety of **12**.<sup>21</sup> Demethylation with boron tribromide is used to form the known compound 3-hydroxycarbazole, **13**.<sup>23</sup> Based on past research from the Kozlowski group, it is necessary to have a hydroxyl group in order for the catalyst to bind to the substrate and to oxidize readily.<sup>1</sup> A methoxy group will not allow for a mild, selective coupling to occur. Finally, previous research revealed that the regioselective coupling would not occur in the presence of the free pyrrole,  $^{1}$  which could also oxidize at the nitrogen. Thus, methylation of the pyrrole nitrogen is necessary to form the starting material for the project, 8.1. Specifically, compound 14.1 was doubly deprotonated with sodium hydride, and the more nucleophilic functional group, nitrogen, was selectively methylated by adding one equivalent of methyl iodide.<sup>24</sup> Optimization of these routes was not performed as the primary goal was to probe the asymmetric oxidative coupling.



Scheme 2. Synthesis of Primary Substrate for Reaction Screening

The first set of conditions that was examined in the asymmetric coupling of carbazoles, **14.1** and **8.1**, mirrored those used in asymmetric phenol couplings in our

group. Namely, vanadium catalyst **V1** was used (**Scheme 3**).<sup>20</sup> This catalyst was prepared by treatment of 2-(*tert*-butyl)phenol **15** with paraformaldehyde and magnesium chloride to generate the formylation product **16**.<sup>17</sup> Subsequent, nitric acid treatment yielded the nitrated product **17**. L-*tert*-Leucine was condensed with this aldehyde to yield a Schiff base that is treated with VO(OEt)<sub>3</sub> to generate catalyst **V1**.

In order to properly evaluate the selectivity of the reaction through HPLC, a racemic standard was required. To make the racemic standard, the carbazoles were subjected to 50 mol % VO(acac)<sub>2</sub> under 1 atm oxygen in a 1 M solution of toluene. After purification, standards were obtained that gave two peaks of equal area upon passage through an analytical chiral stationary phase HPLC column.



Carbazole couplings were examined using the same protocol as for the asymmetric phenol couplings except that 20 mol % catalyst **V1** was employed rather than 10 mol% catalyst. As expected from prior work, the substrate lacking a blocking group on nitrogen (**14**, R = H) did not undergo coupling due to oxidation of the nitrogen to other byproducts (**Table 1, entry 1**).<sup>1</sup> With **8.1** (R = Me), initial results were promising (**Table 1, entry 2**) providing the product in 58% ee with 100% conversion after 48 hours (half-life ~ 6 h).

# $HO \xrightarrow{R} (20 \text{ mol } \% \text{ V. Cat.}) \xrightarrow{HO \xrightarrow{R}} (20 \text{ mol } \% \text{ V. Cat.}) \xrightarrow{HO \xrightarrow{R}} HO \xrightarrow{R} HO \xrightarrow{R$

### Table 1. Oxidative Coupling Optimization<sup>a</sup>

/9

-F-Bu

<sup>*a*</sup>Conditions = 1 mmol carbazole, 0.2 mmol vanadium catalyst, toluene (0.5 M). <sup>*b*</sup> Conversions were estimated by TLC, yields were not taken before ee optimization

V1

		11 Guil	Additive	$\Gamma(C)$	Conversion $(\%)^{\circ}$	ee (%)
l	Н	<b>V1</b>	none	rt	0	n/a
2	Me	<b>V1</b>	none	rt	100	58
3	Me	<b>V1</b>	0.2 LiCl	rt	100	52
1	Me	<b>V1</b>	6.5 equiv AcOH	rt	100	62
5	Me	<b>V1</b>	6.5 equiv AcOH	0	85	72
5	Me	<b>V9</b>	6.5 equiv AcOH	0	85	69
7	Bn	<b>V1</b>	6.5 equiv AcOH	0	85	73
3	Bn	<b>V9</b>	6.5 equiv AcOH	0	85	62
2 3 4 5 5 7 3	Me Me Me Me Bn Bn	V1 V1 V1 V1 V1 V9 V1 V9	none 0.2 LiCl 6.5 equiv AcOH 6.5 equiv AcOH 6.5 equiv AcOH 6.5 equiv AcOH 6.5 equiv AcOH	rt rt rt 0 0 0 0	100 100 100 85 85 85 85 85	58 52 62 72 69 73 62

Other variables to improve the enantioselection were investigated. Lithium chloride, which was found to improve enantioselectivity in the asymmetric phenol coupling (see **Figure 6**), did not cause a significant change in this case (**Table 1, entry 3**).<sup>17</sup> However, the addition of another additive that had been successful in the phenol asymmetric coupling, acetic acid, was beneficial providing the product with 62% ee (**Table 1, entry 4**). Lowering the temperature to 0 °C improved the selectivity further to 72% ee (**Table 1, entry 5**). This result seemed reasonable because lowering the temperature decreases the possibility of reaching the higher energy transition state to the minor product. Use of the more complex catalyst that exhibited good enantioselectivity in naphthol and phenol coupling, **V9**, did not improve the enantioselectivity<sup>17</sup> (**Table 1, entry 6**).

At this juncture, we speculated that the low enantioselectivity might arise from insufficient steric interactions between the catalyst and substrate in the transition state leading to the minor product. To increase these steric interactions with the aims of further destabilizing the pathway to the minor enantiomer, a larger alkyl group was investigated on the nitrogen center, which is directly adjacent to the axial chiral bond being formed. An *N*-benzyl group was thus surveyed which was obtained by treating compound **5** with 2.5 equivalents of sodium hydride to generate the dianion. Subsequent treatment with 1 equivalent of 1 M benzyl chloride in THF allowed for nucleophilic attack onto benzyl chloride by the more basic anilide vs phenoxide anion to generate **18.1** (Figure 10).





Initial trials with the N-benzyl analog 18 were very promising showing high selectivity (>95%ee). However, Houng Kang in our lab noted that some of the product did not fully dissolve in the 10% isopropanaol/hexane solution that was being analyzed by chiral phase HPLC. After fully dissolving the reaction product in 100% chloroform and analyzing, the *N*-benzyl analog **18** (**Table 1**, entry **7**) was found to only give slightly higher selectivity (73% ee) relative to the *N*-methyl compound (Table 1, entry 5) under the same conditions. Again, the use of catalyst **V9** results in poorer enantiomeric excess with this compound (Table 1, entry 8). The differential solubility, however, indicates that the racemate can be removed by trituration to afford highly enantioenriched product. It should also be noted that during Lei Liu's work that N-benzyl protected carbazoles were one of the few substrates that decreased the selectivity for *ortho-ortho*' coupling and improved ortho-ortho coupling.<sup>1</sup> Normally, in Lei's work, the ortho-ortho coupling remained at 2-3% yield, but with a benzyl coupling, the yield went up to 8%, while simultaneously lowering the ortho-ortho' yield from 70% to 56%. This result could potentially arise from  $\pi$ -stacking interactions between the two benzyl groups from the separate monomers.

The optimal conditions, based off of enantiomeric excess, [20 mol % catalyst V1, 1 M toluene, 0° C, 6.5 equiv AcOH,  $O_2$ ] were established. With these conditions in hand, a series of substrates was screened, **18.1-18.3**. To form each of these new carbazoles substrates, it is only necessary to change the bromobenzene used in the initial Buchwald Hartwig coupling step (**Table 2**). This change will result in various groups on carbons C5 to C8 of the final carbazoles.

MeC			Pd(OAc) <sub>2</sub> (4 n NaOtBu (2.5 n [HPtBu <sub>3</sub> ][BF <sub>4</sub> ] (5 dioxane reflux 18 h BnCl (1 equi NaH (2.5 equ THF 2 h	nol%) is mol%) m MeO iv) iv) HO	N H 13 N H Bn 18	HR HR HR	a, (1 equiv) -78-20 ℃ .5 h		
Substitution	12	Yield	13	Yield	14	Yield	18	Yield	
	12.2	(%)	12.0	(%)	5.2	(%)	10.0	(%)	
6-Fluoro	12.2	33	13.2	27	5.3	81	18.2	82	
6-Methyl	12.3	61	13.3	20	5.4	98	18.3	67	
7-Fluoro	12.4	95	13.4	9	5.5	88	18.4	56	



There was significant difficulty when attempting to make some of these substrates. The 6-phenyl, 7-methyl, 8-fluoro, 5,7-dimethyl, 8-hydroxy, 6-nitro, 7-phenacyl, and 6-trimethylsilyl, were attempted, but did not yield sufficient amounts of substrate for study in the asymmetric coupling. Specifically, these compounds decomposed during various steps of the synthesis step of the synthesis (**Figure 11**). Most substrates had difficulty during the cyclization to form the carbazole, or during the benzylation process. The benzylation did not occur with the 7-methyl, 8 fluoro, nor the 5,7-dimethyl compounds. The 8-hydroxy and 7-phenacyl did not undergo cyclization in usable yield. Lastly, the TMS group on the 6-trimethylsilyl carbazole was cleaved after attempting to demethylate using BBr<sub>3</sub>, resulting in the loss of the silyl group.

With three additional substrates in hand (**18.2-18.4**), the same conditions as from Table 1, entry 7 were applied. Overall, the addition of fluoro groups to the distal ring at C7 or C8 slightly enhanced the enantiomeric excess, whereas a methyl group did not indicating that electron withdrawing groups are benefical (**Table 3, entries 2-4**). The

I Laite III I anea Carcalore Daobhate	Figure 11	I. Failed	Carbazole	Substrates
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yield for some of the reactions was not as high, because of the significantly slower rates caused by the decrease in temperature from 25 to 0 °C which resulted in significant amounts of starting material remaining even after 48 h.

### Table 3. Substrate Scope

		HO N Bn	20 mol % Ac toluene	V. Cat V1. OH $O_2$ , 0 °C Bh	$ \begin{array}{c}                                     $
Entry	R	Position	Substrate	Yield (%)	ee (%)
1	Н	n/a	18.1	86	73
2	F	6	18.2	82	79
3	F	7	18.3	83	76
4	Me	6	18.4	67	73

### Conclusion

In summary, an effective system to catalyze asymmetric coupling of carbazoles has been developed. This work describes the first enantioselective coupling of carbazoles using a chiral catalyst. Specifically, the coupling of 2-hydroxy-3-methylcarbazoles proceeds with moderate enantioselectivity under very mild reaction conditions. The original hypothesis that catalyst **V1** would be effective for carbazoles based upon its selectivity in the coupling of phenols is correct. It can be claimed that **V1** is an appropriate catalyst for a variety of carbazoles as well as aromatic phenol-based couplings.

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Appendices



























































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49

Director: Ma Rakesh K. Kohli	ass Spectrometry Center Request for Analysis	Department of Chemistry University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA 19104 Phone: (215) 898-8164
Name: Paul Sung	Date: 7/25/18 12/4/1	
Room:IAST 4070	Sample Title: Au-I-47 5	5
Phone: 3-4249	Formula: CI4 HIA CINO	
Professor: Marisa Kozlowski	Purchase Order:	
Info Required:	Molecular Weight ("C sta	andard):
Low Res.:	FVV = 247.720	
Other:V	(Exact Mass f 147	rom ChemDraw) د ۲۵۶۹
	Sample Locatio Hood #: Refrig. #: Freezer:	on: ** ** 29
Safety Information: Harmful: Yes / No If Yes, Specify:	Solvents: Use MeOH CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub> Hexane Acetonitrile Other Acetone V	Don't Use
90	Solvent: Approx. Concentration:	
For MS Lab Use:	Calculated Value: _2 Observed Value: _2 Error (ppm):	48,0 842 48,0 842
,	(M+H] S	+ ing-Em

emental Composition Report

Single Mass Analysis Tolerance = 5.0 mDa / DBE: min = -1.5, max = 50.0 Element prediction: Off Number of isotope peaks used for i-FIT = 3

Monoisotopic Mass, Even Electron lons 227 formula(e) evaluated with 3 results within limits (up to 50 best isotopic matches for each mass) Elements Used: C: 0-200 H: 0-200 N: 0-10 O: 0-13 CI: 1-1 06-Dec-2016 PDS-I-55 47 (2.333) 1: TOF MS ES+

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			248.084	12				
213.1175 221.1516	230.1209 <sup>233</sup>	.0639 246.	2074	250.0830 251.0855	262.17	90 _263.1864	273.1610	277.1682
220.0	230.0	240.0	2	50.0	260.0	270	0.0	280.0
m : m :	5.0	10.0	-1.5 50.0			_		

Minimum: Maximum:		5.0	10.0	-1.5 50.0		
Mass	Calc. Mass	mDa	PPM	DBE	i-FIT	Formula
248.0842	248.0842 248.0802 248.0874	0.0 4.0 -3.2	0.0 16.1 -12.9	7.5 3.5 -0.5	42.0 151.9 393.8	C14 H15 N O Cl C9 H15 N3 O3 Cl C3 H15 N7 O4 Cl

Page 1

1.08e+004

289.1140

⊷ + m/z 290.0

Director: Ma Rakesh K. Kohli	ss Spectrometry Center Request for Analysis	Department of Chemistry University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA 19104 Phone: (215) 898-8164			
Name: Paul Sung	Date: 7/25/16				
Room:IAST 4070	Sample Title: Pp(-1-14	4			
Professor: Mariaa Kazlawaki	Formula: Bal Car HaNO				
Info Required:	Molocular Woight (12C at	andard):			
Low Res.:	FW = 30 max	$FW = 301_{M97}$			
High Res.:V	00113610				
Other:	(Exact Mass f	from ChemDraw)			
Ctructure	201.1417				
Suuclure:	Sample Location	on: v∕r			
	Refrig #:	<u>2</u>			
I- 1, 1-1	Freezer:				
HO	Call:				
Safety Information	Solvents: Use	Don't Use			
	MeOH				
Harmful: Yes / No	CH <sub>2</sub> Cl <sub>2</sub>				
If Yes, Specify:	Hexane				
	Other Acetone V				
	If in Solution:				
117	Solvent:				
	Approx. Concentration:				
For MS Lab Use:	Calculated Value: 3	12 1545			
	Observed Value: 20	2.1545			
	Error (ppm):				
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### Elemental Composition Report

### Single Mass Analysis Tolerance = 5.0 PPM / DBE: min = -1.5, max = 80.0 Element prediction: Off Number of isotope peaks used for i-FIT = 2

Monoisotopic Mass, Even Electron Ions 740 formula(e) evaluated with 1 results within limits (all results (up to 1000) for each mass) Elements Used: C: 0-52 H: 0-70 B: 0-3 N: 0-4 O: 0-4 CI: 0-1 01-Sep-2016 PaulS\_2\_74 57 (2.823) 1: TOF MS ES+



Page 1