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Supplementary Information

A simple protocol for Cu-catalyzed protodecarboxylation of (hetero)aromatic carboxylic acids

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General considerations. The Reagents used for experiments were commercially available and were used as received unless otherwise noted. DMSO were distilled from CaH₂ under reduced pressure and stored under nitrogen. All Reactions were performed under nitrogen with the strict exclusion of moisture using Schlenk techniques. Column chromatography was performed on silica gel 300-400 mesh. The yields reported are the isolated yields and the average of two runs. Except for ¹³C spectrum of product **2v**, ¹H, ¹³C and ¹⁹F NMR spectra of all protodecarboxylation products were recorded at 400, 100 and 377 MHz of Agilent 400MR DD2 with CDCl₃ as solvent respectively; ¹³C spectrum of product **2v** was recorded at 100 MHz of Bruker Ascend400MR with CDCl₃ as solvent. All coupling constants (*J* values) were reported in Hertz (Hz). HRMS were performed by Shanghai Mass Spectrometry Centre, Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, Chinese Academic of Sciences.

General procedure for Copper-Catalyzed Protodecarboxylation of (Hetero)Aromatic Carboxylic Acids. An oven-dried Schlenk tube equipped with a stir bar was charged with aryl carboxylic acid (0.2 mmol) and CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv). The tube was fitted with a rubber septum, and then it was evacuated and refilled with nitrogen three times. Under nitrogen, the solution of Et_3N in DMSO (2 mL) was added via syringe. The rubber septum was replaced with a Teflon screwcap under nitrogen flow, and the Schlenk tube was pressurized to 1 atm. With stirring, the reaction mixtures were heated at 120 °C for the indicated amount of time (unless otherwise specified), and then cooled down to room temperature. The resultant mixture was filtered through a short plug of silica gel and then concentrated in vacuo. The residue was then purified by flash chromatography on silica gel to provide the corresponding product.

1-chloro-3-nitrobenzene (2a, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 4-chloro-2-nitrobenzoic acid (40.3 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et_3N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 24.9 mg (79%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with

previous report.¹ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.23 (t, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 8.14 (dd, J = 7.2, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (ddd, J = 7.2, 1.8, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (t, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 135.4, 134.7, 130.4, 123.9, 121.7, 110.0.

1-chloro-4-nitrobenzene (2b, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 5-chloro-2-nitrobenzoic acid (40.3 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 27.7 mg (88%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.² ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.18 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 141.4, 129.6, 124.9.

1-(methylsulfonyl)-3-nitrobenzene (2c, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 4-(methylsulfonyl)-2-nitrobenzoic acid (49.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (40% ether in hexane) to afford 35.0 mg (87%) of the product as a yellow solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.³ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.80 (s, 1H), 8.51-8.54 (m, 1H), 8.30 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.84 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 3.14 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 132.9, 130.9, 128.2, 122.9, 44.3.

1,3-dinitrobenzene (2d, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 2,4-dinitrobenzoic acid (42.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (10% ether in hexane) to afford 22.5 mg (67%) of the product as a white solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{4 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 9.08 (s, 1H), 8.59 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.2 Hz, 2H), 7.83 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 130.7, 128.9, 119.1.

3-nitrobenzoic acid (2e, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 2-nitroterephthalic acid (42.2 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (30% ether in hexane) to afford 13.7 mg (41%) of the product as a white solid. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO): δ 8.56 (s, 1H), 8.41 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 8.29 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.76 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO): δ 166.0, 148.3, 135.8, 132.9, 131.0, 127.8, 124.1. HRMS (MALDI-TOF) m/z: [M]⁺ Calcd for C₇H₅NO₄ 167.0219; Found: 167.0215.

1-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)benzene (2f, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 2-nitro-4-(trifluoromethyl)benzoic acid (47.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 20.6 mg (54%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.⁵ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.52 (s, 1H), 8.45 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 131.2-131.1 (m), 130.3, 126.6, 124.2, 121.5, 120.9-120.8 (m). ¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl₃): δ -63.0 (s, 3F).

1-fluoro-3-nitrobenzene (2g, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 4-fluoro-2-nitrobenzoic acid (37.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 14.7 mg (52%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{6 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.06 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.94 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.56-7.52 (m, 1H), 7.45-7.41 (m, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 163.6, 161.1, 130.7 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz), 121.9 (d, *J*=22 Hz), 119.3 (d, *J* = 3.4 Hz), 111.4 (d, *J*=26 Hz). ¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl₃): δ -109.0 - 109.1 (m, 1F).

1-fluoro-4-nitrobenzene (2h, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 5-fluoro-2-nitrobenzoic acid (37.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 15.2 mg (54%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.⁷¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.29-8.26 (m, 2H), 7.26-7.19 (m, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 167.5, 165.0, 126.4 (d, *J* = 10.0 Hz), 116.4 (d, *J* = 24.0 Hz). ¹⁹F NMR (377 MHz, CDCl₃): δ -101.9 - -102.0 (m, 1F).

nitrobenzene (2i, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 2-nitrobenzoic acid (33.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 15.5 mg (63%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.⁸ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.24 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.72-7.69 (m, 1H), 7.57-7.53 (m, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 134.6, 129.3, 123.5.

1-methyl-2-nitrobenzene (2j, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 3-methyl-2-nitrobenzoic acid (36.2 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 8.2 mg (30%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.⁹ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.97 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.35-7.34 (m, 2H), 2.61 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 133.5, 133.0, 132.7, 126.9, 124.6, 20.4.

1-methyl-3-nitrobenzene (2k, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 4-methyl-2-nitrobenzoic acid (36.2 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 23.3 mg (85%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with

previous report.¹⁰ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.02 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 2.46 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 139.8, 135.3, 129.0, 123.8, 120.6, 21.2.

1-methyl-4-nitrobenzene (2l, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 5-methyl-2-nitrobenzoic acid (36.2 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 24.1 mg (88%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{11 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.11 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 2.46 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 145.9, 129.8, 123.4, 21.7.

1-methoxy-3-nitrobenzene (2m, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 4-methoxy-2-nitrobenzoic acid (39.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (3% ether in hexane) to afford 27.3 mg (89%) of the product as a yellow liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{8 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.84-7.81 (m, 1H), 7.73 (s, 1H), 7.43 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23 (dd, *J* = 8.4, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 160.1, 129.9, 121.3, 115.7, 108.1, 55.8.

1-methoxy-4-nitrobenzene (2n, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 5-methoxy-2-nitrobenzoic acid (39.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (3% ether in hexane) to afford 26.0 mg (85%) of the product as a yellow solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.¹² ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.17 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 164.6, 125.9, 114.0, 56.0.

1,2-dimethoxy-4-nitrobenzene (**20, Table 2**). Procedure was followed using 4,5-dimethoxy-2nitrobenzoic acid (45.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), and CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (10% ether in hexane) to afford 34.1 mg (93%) of the product as a yellow solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{13 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.92-7.89 (m, 1H), 7.73 (d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 1H), 6.90 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 3.97 (s, 3H), 3.95 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 154.5, 148.8, 141.5, 117.8, 109.8, 106.4, 56.4, 56.3.

4-nitroaniline (2p, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 5-amino-2-nitrobenzoic acid (36.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (10% ether in hexane) to afford 24.3 mg (88%) of the product as a yellow solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.¹⁴ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.06 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 6.62 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 4.39 (s, 2H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 152.5, 126.4, 113.4.

N-(3-nitrophenyl)acetamide (**2q, Table 2**). Procedure was followed using 4-acetamido-2nitrobenzoic acid (44.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (2% ether in hexane) to afford 23.1 mg (64%) of the product as a white solid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{15 1}H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO): δ 10.53 (s, 1H), 8.14 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.76 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 2.06 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO): δ 169.8, 145.9, 142.4, 125.4, 118.9, 24.7.

1-chloro-2,4-dimethoxy-5-nitrobenzene (2r, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 3-chloro-2,6-dimethoxy-5-nitrobenzoic acid (52.3 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et_3N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on

silica gel (10 % ether in hexane) to afford 38.7 mg (89%) of the product as a yellow solid. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 8.05 (s, 1H), 6.54 (s, 1H), 3.99 (s, 3H), 3.98 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 160.0, 154.6, 127.9, 113.9, 97.0, 56.9, 56.7. HRMS (MALDI-TOF) m/z: [M]⁺ Calcd for C₈H₈NO₄Cl 217.0142; Found: 217.0140.

2*H*-chromen-2-one (2s, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 2-oxo-2H-chromene-3-carboxylic acid (38.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (5 % ether in hexane) to afford 16.7 mg (57%) of the product as a white solid.Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{16 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 9.6 Hz, 1H), 7.54-7.47 (m, 2H), 7.33-7.25 (m, 2H), 6.42 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 160.7, 154.0, 143.3, 131.8, 127.8, 124.4, 118.8, 116.9, 116.7.

3-chlorobenzo[b]thiophene (2t, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 3-chlorobenzo[b]thiophene-2-carboxylic acid (42.5 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 29.7 mg (88%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.^{17 1}H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.86 (t, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.50-7.41(m, 2H), 7.32 (s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 138.4, 136.1, 125.4, 124.9, 122.9, 121.9, 121.2, 120.8.

3-methylbenzo[b]thiophene (**2u, Table 2**). Procedure was followed using 3methylbenzo[b]thiophene-2-carboxylic acid (38.4mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et_3N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 26.4 mg (89%) of the product as a colourless liquid. Exhibited spectral data in accordance with previous report.¹⁸ ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.89 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.45-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.10 (s, 1H), 2.47 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 140.3, 139.7, 132.2, 124.1, 123.9, 122.8, 121.8, 121.5, 14.0.

2,3,4-trichlorothiophene (2v, Table 2). Procedure was followed using 3,4,5-trichlorothiophene-2carboxylic acid (46.3 mg, 0.2 mmol), CuI (11.4 mg, 0.06 mmol, 0.3 equiv) and Et₃N (14 uL, 0.1 mmol, 0.5 equiv). The reaction mixtures were purified by flash column chromatography on silica gel (1% ether in hexane) to afford 21.7 mg (58%) of the product as a yellow solid. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 7.06 (s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ 125.2, 124.0, 123.6, 117.5. HRMS (MALDI-TOF) m/z: [M]⁺ Calcd for C₄HSCl₃ 185.8865; Found: 185.8863.

Mechanism discussion. some observations have been performed to gain insights into the reaction mechanism. Firstly, as shown in the entries of 14-15 of Table 1, the control experiments showed that both CuI and Et₃N were essential to this protodecarboxylation of (hetero)aromatic carboxylic acids. Secondly, when the model reaction was carried out under the standard conditions in the presence of radical inhibitor, such as 2,6-ditert-butyl-4-methylphenol (BHT), the reaction was obviously unaffected and gave the desired product in 92% yield. Thus, the result ruled out a radical pathway in our protocol. According to the above result and previous reports,^{19,20} a tentative mechanism of our protocol (Fig S1) is proposed that copper catalyst was believed to initially react with aryl carboxylic acid substrate under heating to form copper carboxylate **I**, followed by coordination of copper atom to C-COO bond of the intermediate **II** via oxidative addition immediately and then a reductive elimination generated aryl-copper intermediate **IV** from the intermediate **III**, which ultimately led to protodecarboxylation product and Cu(I) species. Therefore, it's understandable that the benefits of Et₃N in catalytic cycle is to assistant oxidative addition via its electron donating ability and accelerate reductive elimination through its steric hindrance.





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