

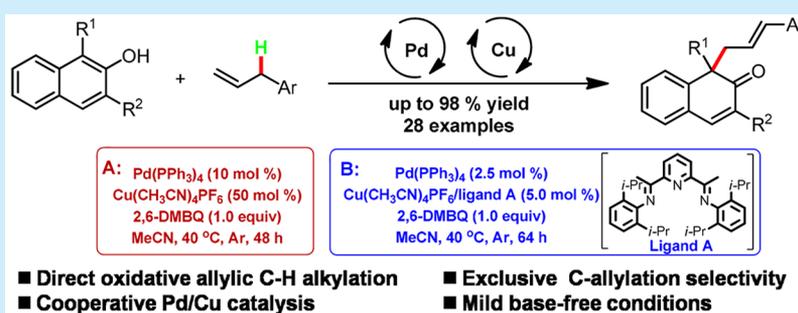
Direct Allylic C(sp³)-H Alkylation with 2-Naphthols via Cooperative Palladium and Copper Catalysis: Construction of Cyclohexadienones with Quaternary Carbon Centers

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S Supporting Information



ABSTRACT: Oxidative allylic C–H alkylation with 2-naphthols was accomplished with excellent chemoselectivities and broad substrate scope through Pd(PPh₃)₄/Cu(MeCN)₄PF₆ cooperative catalysis under mild base-free conditions. Special tolerance was observed with peptides, allowing late-stage modifications of peptides. The transformation provides a general protocol to obtain functionalized cyclohexadienones with quaternary carbon centers under two alternative sets of conditions and serves as a complementary catalysis system for the dearomatization of 2-naphthols.

Cyclohexadienones with *ortho*-quaternary carbon centers are pivotal skeletons with special bioactivities¹ for drug discovery, excellent photoelectric performance for material science,² and great importance³ in the total synthesis of natural products. Therefore, the efficient construction of cyclohexadienone motifs has been of significant synthetic interest in the chemical community.⁴ Recently, transition-metal-catalyzed asymmetric allylic dearomatization, commonly known as CADA reaction,⁵ has proven to be the most effective strategy for preparing the target molecules from simple phenol compounds.⁶ Previous work in this area focused largely on preoxidized allylic electrophiles⁷ for the dearomatization of naphthols, which required extra steps for prefunctionalization. To overcome this limitation, some elegant transformations have been developed (Scheme 1A), including two reports on iridium-catalyzed allylic dearomatization reaction by directly using allylic alcohols⁸ and one example of a palladium-hydride-mediated dearomative allylation process.⁹ Although successful, one major constraint that remained is that an alkaline system^{6b} is needed for effective dearomatization processes and good C/O-allylation selectivities; this is introduced either through the use of stoichiometric amounts of basic additives or by using preoxidized substrates in situ, which results in poor tolerance with competitive electrophiles in more complex substrates. One way to improve

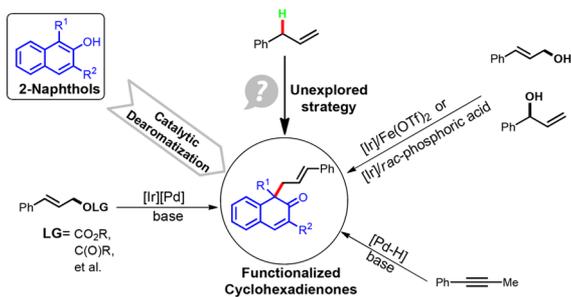
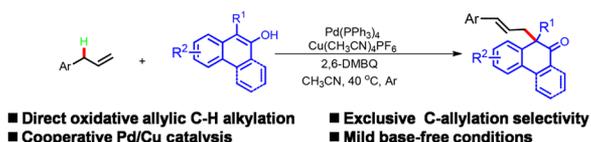
the prospects of these reactions is through the discovery of a new activation mode for phenol dearomatization.

In recent years, transition-metal-catalyzed oxidative allylic C–H activation has witnessed significant breakthroughs and diverse C–H functionalizations have been well established.^{10–12} Cooperative catalysis,¹³ in which multiple chemical interactions participate in synergy to achieve significant enhancement in catalytic activity and/or selectivity, has also enabled many new and challenging processes. Metal Lewis acid catalysis has long been established as one of the most powerful tools in organic synthesis.^{13e,14} Inspired by these advances, we hypothesized that Lewis acids might be efficient to activate naphthols for dearomatization as bases and to ensure good C/O-allylation selectivities by changing the properties¹⁵ of phenolic hydroxyl groups synchronously through coordination. With the advantage of a cooperative Lewis acid catalyst, transition-metal-catalyzed allylic C–H activation may allow direct allylic C–H dearomatization to be conducted under mild base-free conditions, allowing good chemical selectivities and functional-group tolerance. On the basis of our endeavors, a new method for the direct allylic C–H alkylation with 2-naphthols through palladium/copper cooperative catalysis

Received: September 11, 2018

Scheme 1. Strategies for Transition-Metal-Catalyzed Allylic Dearomatization of 2-Naphthols

A. Known works on transition-metal-catalyzed allylic alkylation with 2-naphthols

B. Pd/Cu cooperative catalysis for oxidative allylic C(sp³)-H alkylation with naphthols (this work)

under base-free conditions with high C-allylation selectivity was developed (Scheme 1B). The novel chemistry enables effective preparation of diverse cyclohexadienones with *ortho*-quaternary carbon centers and shows special tolerance with peptides.

Initially, naphthol **1a** and allylbenzene **2a** were chosen as model substrates for the allylic dearomatization reaction. To our delight, a palladium-BQ combination in acetonitrile was found to catalyze the reaction, albeit in low yield of dearomative product **3aa** (Table 1, entry 1) after preliminary screening. Subsequent control experiments indicated the significance of palladium catalyst (entry 2) and BQ (entry 3) for the reaction. With these initial results in hand, an extensive exploration of additives, catalysts and ligands, oxidants, and temperature was conducted (entries 4–28). The examination of Lewis acids revealed that Ag₂CO₃, Sc(OTf)₃, and CeCl₃ were ineffective in the reaction, and the yield was greatly improved to 42% with Cu₂(OH)₂CO₃ (entries 4–7). Cu(CH₃CN)₄BF₄ showed a comparable effect (entry 8) to Cu₂(OH)₂CO₃, and the best copper salt screened was Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆ (49% yield; entry 9). Elevated or reduced amounts of copper salts all provided diminished yields (entries 7–9). The catalyst was then evaluated. The combinations of PPh₃ and palladium salts such as Pd(OAc)₂, Pd(acac)₂, and Pd(dba)₂ displayed reduced reactivity (entries 10–12). Palladium chlorides failed to catalyze the reaction (entries 13–14). An extensive screening of phosphine ligands gave no improved results (see Supporting Information (SI) for details). Therefore, readily available Pd(PPh₃)₄ was chosen for further screening. Subsequently, the effects of a series of benzoquinone-type oxidants were investigated (entries 15–18) and the best result was achieved with 2,6-DMBQ (69% yield; entry 16). Notably, with the assistance of Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆, the reaction proceeded smoothly at 40 °C with a dramatic improvement on yield (87%; entry 22). Elevated temperatures provided lower yields¹⁶ (entries 19–21), and a reduction in temperature to room temperature significantly decreased the yield with the appearance of byproduct **3a'a'** (entry 23). Furthermore, a diminished yield was observed when the catalyst loading was reduced to 5 mol % (entry 24). Under air, no reaction was detected (entry 25), indicating serious adverse

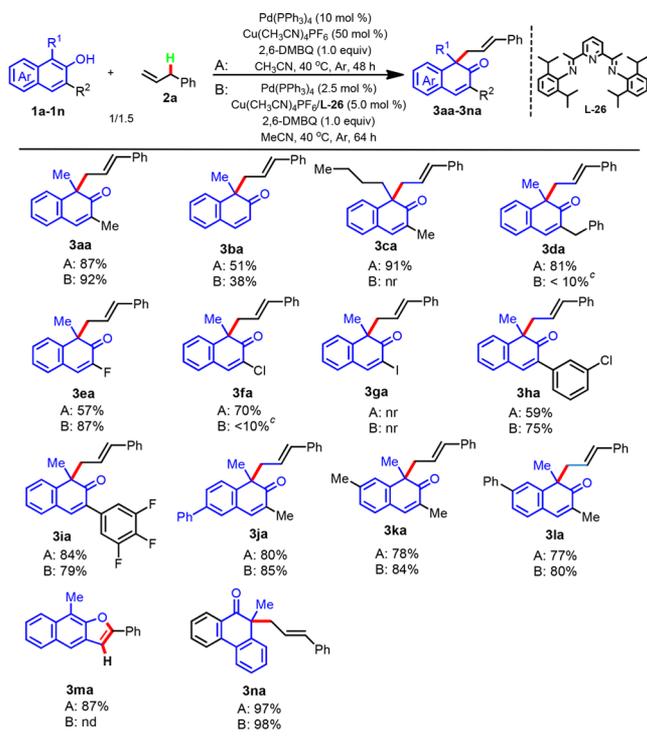
Table 1. Optimization of Reaction Conditions

entry	cat.	oxidant	additive	temp (°C)	yield (%) ^a
1	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	-	100	14
2	-	BQ	-	100	nr
3	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	-	-	100	nr
4	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	Ag ₂ CO ₃	100	nr
5	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	Sc(OTf) ₃	100	nr
6	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	CeCl ₃	100	trace
7	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	Cu ₂ (OH) ₂ (CO ₃)	100	42 (24) ^b (45) ^c
8	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ BF ₄	100	38 (14) ^b (35) ^c
9	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	49 (28) ^b (45) ^c
10	Pd(OAc) ₂ /2PPh ₃	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	17
11	Pd(acac) ₂ /2PPh ₃	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	28
12	Pd(dba) ₂ /2PPh ₃	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	45
13	PdCl ₂ /2PPh ₃	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	nr
14	Pd(PPh ₃) ₂ Cl ₂	BQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	nr
15	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,5-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	63
16	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	69
17	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DTBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	69
18	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,5-DTBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	100	30
19	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	120	59
20	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	80	76
21	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	60	80
22 ^d	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	40	87
23	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	25	25 (41) ^e
24 ^f	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	40	73
25 ^g	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	40	nr
26	-	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	40	nr
27	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	-	40	nr
28 ^h	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	2,6-DMBQ	Cu(CH ₃ CN) ₄ PF ₆	40	92

^aYield of isolated product **3aa**. ^bAdditive (20 mol %) was used. ^cAdditive (100 mol %) was used. ^dConditions A. ^eYield of isolated byproduct **3a'a'**. ^fPalladium (5 mol %) was used. ^gUnder air. ^hConditions B: Palladium (2.5 mol %), complex of copper and ligand **L-26** (5.0 mol %) was used (see the SI for details). nr = no reaction.

effects of air on the active catalyst. As demonstrated by the control experiments (entries 26–27), palladium catalyst and the copper salt were both essential to the reaction. On the basis of these results, a cooperative role of palladium catalyst and copper additive allowed us to move forward to investigating chirality and reaction optimization. Multiple chiral ligands to control enantioselective C–H dearomatization with palladium or copper catalysts were investigated, and it was found that ligands had a vital effect on the transformation; only racemic products were obtained with the screened ligands (see the SI for details). Further optimization revealed that addition of an achiral ligand **L-26** with copper catalyst dramatically enhanced the catalytic activity and 92% yield of dearomatization product was isolated with only 2.5 mol % Pd(PPh₃)₄ (Table 1, entry 28). In all, the optimization studies provided two sets of conditions for the palladium/copper-catalyzed allylic C–H dearomatization reaction: the general conditions (conditions A) and an alternative set of conditions with lower loading of catalysts (conditions B).

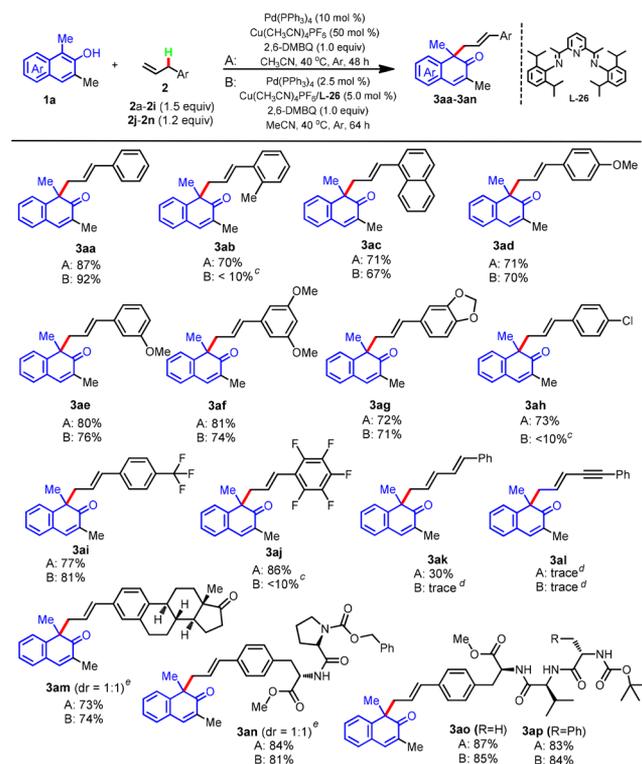
With the optimal conditions in hand, we explored the scope of Pd-catalyzed allylic C–H dearomatization of 2-naphthols under conditions A. The scope of the reaction with respect to 2-naphthols was first investigated (Scheme 2, conditions A). 1,3-Dialkyl substituted naphthols were good substrates for allylic alkylation and all gave excellent yields (81–91%, **3aa**,

Scheme 2. Scope of Substituted Naphthols^{a,b}

^aConditions A: Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.02 mmol), Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆ (0.10 mmol), 1a–n (0.20 mmol), 2,6-DMBQ (0.20 mmol), 2a (0.30 mmol), MeCN (1.0 mL), under argon for 48 h. Conditions B: Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.005 mmol), Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆ (0.01 mmol), ligand L-26 (0.01 mmol), 1a–n (0.20 mmol), 2,6-DMBQ (0.20 mmol), 2a (0.30 mmol), MeCN (1.0 mL), under argon for 64 h (see SI). ^bYield of isolated product. ^cO-Allylation byproduct was detected. nr = no reaction. nd = not detected.

3ca–da). However, a lack of substituents on the 3-position greatly diminished the yield (51%; 3ba). In view of the observations noted above, substitutes on the 3-position were examined further. Fluorine and chlorine groups were well tolerated in the reaction, but the more active iodine atom completely restrained the transformation (3ea–ga). Naphthols with substituted phenyl groups on the 3-position also reacted smoothly with good yields (3ha–ia). Furthermore, excellent yields (77–80%, 3ja–la) were also observed with methyl and phenyl groups on the other aromatic ring. Notably, alkynyl groups were not compatible with the oxidative procedure and only naphthofuran compound 3ma was obtained. Phenanthrol 1n, with weaker aromaticity, gave almost equivalent yield (97%; 3na).

The scope of the reaction with allylbenzenes was then explored (Scheme 3; conditions A). Various allylbenzenes showed good reactivities to naphthol 1a, regardless of whether they had electron-donating or -withdrawing substituents (70–86%, 3aa–aj). 1,4-Diene also worked in this reaction, albeit in low yield (3ak). In comparison, only a complex system was observed with the reaction of phenyl olefin 2l. Estrone-derived allylbenzene 2m was a good substrate for this reaction. Notably, substrates 2n–p, with peptide fragments, were well tolerated with the chemistry, and excellent yields were achieved, indicating good tolerance of the Pd/Cu catalytic system and the potential utilities in the late-stage modification of peptides.

Scheme 3. Scope of Allylbenzenes^{a,b}

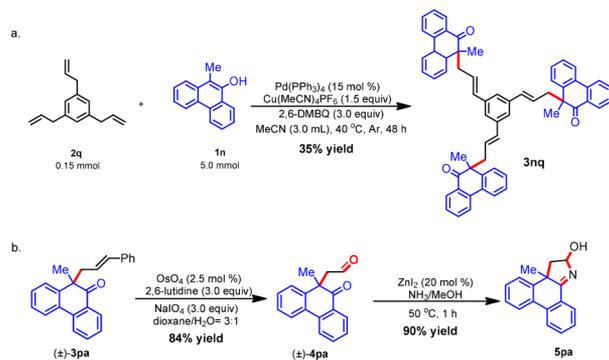
^aConditions A: Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.02 mmol), Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆ (0.10 mmol), 1a (0.20 mmol), 2,6-DMBQ (0.20 mmol), 2a–i (0.30 mmol) or 2j–n (0.24 mmol), MeCN (1.0 mL), under argon for 48 h. Conditions B: Pd(PPh₃)₄ (0.005 mmol), Cu(CH₃CN)₄PF₆ (0.010 mmol), ligand L-26 (0.010 mmol), 1a–n (0.20 mmol), 2,6-DMBQ (0.20 mmol), 2a–i (0.30 mmol) or 2j–n (0.24 mmol), MeCN (1.0 mL), under argon for 64 h (see SI). ^bYield of isolated product. ^cByproduct was detected. ^dComplex system was observed. ^eThe dr value was determined by HPLC analysis.

In comparison with conditions A, comparable or better yields were achieved under conditions B for most products (Schemes 2 and 3) and good tolerance with peptides remained (Scheme 3, 3an–ap), indicating the robustness of this catalysis system. However, for naphthol 1c with a large *n*-Bu group and electron deficient allylbenzene 2j, the transformations failed when a steric bulky ligand L-26 was introduced to the reaction. Under conditions B, the catalysis was sensitive to C–Cl bonds and substrates such as 1f and 2h were not tolerated any further.

To further demonstrate the potential utilities, transformations based on the methodology and products were made (Scheme 4). Easily accessible 1,3,5-triallylbenzene (2q) was applied to the chemistry, and the high molecular weight compound 3nq was obtained with a slight modification of conditions A (Scheme 4a). The dearomative product 3pa was also transformed into a rare and stable 5-hydroxy- Δ 1-pyrroline 5pa (Scheme 4b) in good yield through simple transformations; such species are of great synthetic and pharmaceutical importance.¹⁷

Having established the generality of the methodology, mechanism experiments were conducted to gain insight into the reaction pathway. Under the standard conditions, the byproduct 3a'a' could not be transformed into product 3aa, showing that allyl ether 3a'a' is not a reaction intermediate

Scheme 4. Synthetic Applications



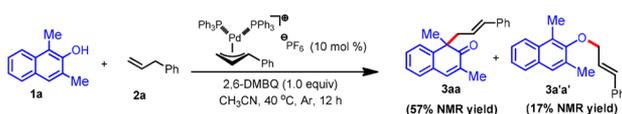
(Scheme 5a). Furthermore, to verify the allylpalladium intermediate, a π -allylpalladium(II) complex $[\text{Pd}(\eta^3\text{-cin})-$

Scheme 5. Preliminary Mechanism Investigation

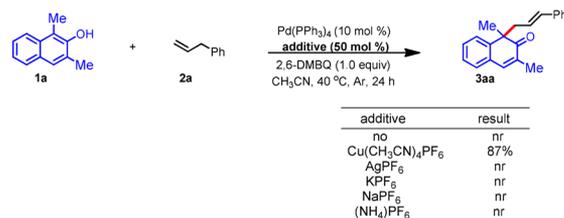
(a) Transformation between 3aa and 3a'a'



(b) Evidence of allylpalladium intermediate



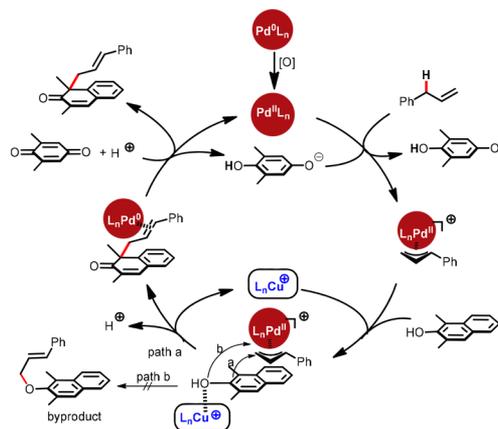
(c) Effect of hexafluorophosphate



$(\text{PPh}_3)_2\text{PF}_6]$ was synthesized and used in the reaction. The complex indeed catalyzed the reaction even in the absence of copper(I)-salt, in spite of resulting in a mixture of dearomatization product 3aa (57% yield) and allylic etherification byproduct 3a'a' (17% yield) (Scheme 5b), indicating the involvement of a highly electrophilic allylpalladium species. Furthermore, the effect of copper salt was investigated (Scheme 5c). The product was obtained in 87% yield under the standard conditions A, whereas no product was detected without $\text{Cu}(\text{CH}_3\text{CN})_4\text{PF}_6$ or with other additives such as AgPF_6 , KPF_6 , or NaPF_6 , showing the indispensable role of the copper cation for the allylic dearomatization process. The effects of copper additive were further evaluated. During the reaction, $\text{Cu}(\text{MeCN})_4\text{PF}_6$ may increase the activity of palladium catalyst through anion exchange and act as a Lewis acid to activate naphthols for dearomatization. On the other hand, copper(I) can also be oxidized to Cu^{II} and be involved in the oxidation¹⁸ of palladium(0) to palladium(II) with 2,6-DMBQ. To illustrate these processes, ESR experiments (see SI for details) were conducted to detect a possible Cu^{II} signal. The ESR spectra of the reaction system showed no signal corresponding to Cu^{II} ,¹⁹ thereby discounting a cooperative oxidation role of copper salt. On the basis of previous reports, a more likely role of copper(I) salt as a Lewis acid²⁰ for naphthol dearomatization is proposed.

With the results illustrated above in hand, a plausible catalytic pathway was proposed (Scheme 6). Initially, an

Scheme 6. Proposed Catalytic Pathway



electrophilic palladium(II) species is generated in situ through oxidation of palladium(0) precatalyst and subsequent precoordination of palladium(II) to allylbenzene and proton abstraction²¹ give rise to a highly active π -allylpalladium(II) electrophile. Synchronously, coordination of copper(I) to oxygen modulates the nucleophilic reactivity of phenolic hydroxyl group in 2-naphthol and activates the naphthol to be a *pro*-3° carbon nucleophile. Next, an electrophilic allylic substitution with naphthol at the carbon center (path a) proceeds. Finally, palladium(0) is oxidized to palladium(II) by 2,6-DMBQ under acidic conditions¹⁸ and the dearomatization product is liberated simultaneously. The byproduct is the result of allylic substitution on the nucleophilic oxygen center (path b), which is an unfavorable process under the current conditions.

In summary, we have disclosed a palladium/copper cooperative catalysis for the direct oxidative allylic C–H dearomatization of 2-naphthols under mild conditions. The introduction of a cooperative copper catalyst allows highly effective and selective C-allylation of naphthols under base-free conditions. The special tolerance of the conditions toward peptides demonstrates the high potential for synthetic applications.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

S Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.orglett.8b02910.

Experimental details and characterization data for all new compounds (PDF)

Accession Codes

CCDC 1839679 contains the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif, or by emailing data_request@ccdc.cam.ac.uk, or by contacting The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK; fax: +44 1223 336033.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the NSFC (nos. 21472076 and 21532001) and the Open Fund of the Key Laboratory of Functional Molecular Engineering of Guangdong Province (no. 2016B01017) financial support.

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