



Book Review

Jonathan W. Steed (King's College, London) and Jerry L. Atwood (University of Missouri, Columbia), *Supramolecular Chemistry*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, England, 2000, ISBN 0-471-98831-6 (hardback), ISBN 0-471-98791-3 (paperback, 745 pp, GBP 29-95)

Supramolecular chemistry has been described by Lehn as the designed chemistry of the intermolecular bond, and by the authors in their Preface as one of the most popular and fastest growing areas of experimental chemistry. These accurate comments highlight the importance of this exciting area of science, but also illustrate the difficulties inherent in setting out to write a book about this rapidly-evolving interdisciplinary topic. Jonathan Steed and Jerry Atwood have succeeded admirably in this undertaking.

Their book is organised into ten chapters entitled: Concepts; The Supramolecular Chemistry of Life; Cation-Binding Hosts; Binding of Anions; Binding of Neutral Molecules; Crystal Engineering; Templates and Self-Assembly; Molecular Devices; Biological Mimics; and Liquid Interfaces, Liquid Crystals and Liquid Clathrates. Under these headings the authors introduce the key concepts of supramolecular chemistry and illustrate them using significant contributions from the research literature. Some selectivity

is inevitable here given the enormous scope of the field, and the need to create a coherent story, but little of crucial importance seems to have been missed.

A minor problem in my paperback copy was that many of the page numbers listed in the Contents section differed by a few pages from the correct ones but, in practice, I found that these discrepancies did not greatly hinder locating information.

The cover of the book illustrates the Rosetta Stone, a historic information transfer device with interesting intellectual parallels to the molecular information concepts underpinning supramolecular assembly processes.

One aim of the authors has been to provide the first teaching textbook for supramolecular science. This has been achieved by providing clear accounts of the ideas, jargon, and techniques involved in this area. Steed and Atwood's excellent book is highly recommended as a latter-day Rosetta Stone for those students and professional chemists wishing to become fluent in the exciting new language of supramolecular chemistry.

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