

the ene reaction, electrophilic aromatic substitution, rearrangements and isomerizations, cleavage of ethers, cyclization reactions, and aromatization. Organometallic reactions discussed include the synthesis of alkyltin(IV) compounds, hydrosilylation, catalytic reduction of alkenes, hydroformylation of alkenes, and Fischer-Tropsch reactions. If I have listed some of these reactions at length, it is for the specific purpose of emphasizing the tremendous breadth of chemistry which is possible in these unusual solvents. This is an article that will repay the attention of any organometallic chemist, and would alone justify the purchase of the volume.

This volume is reasonably well produced and remarkably well illustrated (considering that it is camera-ready copy format). The index is poor, but the articles themselves are well organized. It is four years since the previous volume in this series (which was, and still is, an invaluable aid to any workers in the field) appeared: it is to be hoped that we will not have to wait another four years until we see Volume 7. This book should be in all chemistry libraries, irrespective of whether they possess earlier volumes in the series.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Warren Grimes, and is available (in North America) from Elsevier Science Publishing Co. Inc., PO Box 1663, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, in addition to the normal Amsterdam outlet.

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Advances in Inorganic Chemistry, Volume 31; edited by H.J. Emeléus and A.G. Sharpe, Academic Press, Orlando, San Diego, New York, Austin, Boston, London, Sydney, Tokyo and Toronto, 1987, vi + 224 pages, \$65.00, £48.50. ISBN 0-12-023631-1.

This volume belongs to the series which, until recently, was known as *Advances in Inorganic Chemistry and Radiochemistry*. The last two words of the title have now been dropped, presumably to project a more '80s image for the series (is radiochemistry really so passé?). There is a not so subtle irony here, then, that the first two reviews in this current volume concern the preparation and purification of actinide metals (J.C. Spirlet, J.R. Peterson and L.B. Asprey, 41 pages, 124 refs.) and the organonuclear chemistry and biomedical applications of astatine (I. Brown, 46 pages, 180 refs.). The best laid schemes o'mice an' men gang aft a-gley!

The remaining three reviews in this volume describe metal-polysulfide complexes (A. Müller and E. Diemann, 34 pages, 195 refs.), iminoboranes (P. Paetzold, 48 pages, 91 refs.), and the synthesis and reactions of phosphorus-rich silylphosphanes (G. Fritz, 44 pages, 54 refs.). All these reviews are well written, well produced, well illustrated, and contain exactly the material that their titles suggest. They are also, I am sure, welcome to the practitioners in their fields, manna to graduate students with an opening thesis chapter to write. Why, then, did I feel so little excitement in opening and reading this volume? Each article is a model of its type, a concise, and not discursive, account of a rather specialized area of inorganic chemistry. In looking back to the early years of this series, I still find the articles invigorating. Now, the series (despite its streamlined title) feels tired, old, and past in its time.

What is the current editorial policy? What is the series trying to do? How does it differ from *Structure and Bonding*, *Progress in Inorganic Chemistry*, *Topics in Current Chemistry*, and *Transition Metal Chemistry*, apart from its publisher? Throwing five darts at the periodic table somehow does not seem an adequate basis for a book, despite the essential worthiness of each article. The ease of modern computer searches could keep this series going indefinitely, but I hope not. Surely what we need as we approach the '90s are fewer specialist factual reviews, not more. After all, we can all now access the Chemical Abstracts computerized data base. A review which acts simply as a comprehensive guide to the literature is not as valuable as it used to be. What is required today is more insight. The overview and perspective of an expert in his field cannot be abstracted from a computer, a list of references can.

Should libraries buy this volume? Yes, of course. Will the answer to this question still be the same in ten years time? Probably not.

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