

Book review

Strategies and Tactics in Organic Synthesis, Volume 2, edited by Thomas Lindberg, xv + 469 pages, Academic Press, New York, 1988, \$75. ISBN 0-12-450281-4.

The object of this book is to describe the way in which various syntheses evolved, examining the initial strategies, the obstacles that were encountered during the work and the ways in which these were surmounted. Each chapter is written by a participant in the synthesis that it describes. The accounts convey both the challenges and the frustrations in the work. The importance of organometallic chemistry in synthesis is evident throughout; there is barely a synthesis which does not have a step which utilizes an organometallic reagent or catalyst. However a book of this kind reveals facets of organometallic chemistry that are not always apparent from an examination of the flow-chart of a synthesis as it is finally described in a communication in one of the leading journals. The first is the way in which organometallic catalysis, such as the use of palladium(0), may facilitate a reaction and improve the regioselectivity of a step. The second feature that a book of this kind reveals are those steps which are still difficult to do, and where new methods are required.

Many of the synthetic targets are terpenoid molecules and some chapters describe continuation of work which was described in the first volume. One chapter of particular interest to organometallic chemists describes the development of an organozinc reagent which overcame a particularly difficult step in the synthesis of a mycotoxin, α -cyclopiazonic acid.

The book is well-produced. It provides an interesting and readable account of a number of synthetic achievements and certainly fulfills its objective of showing that the syntheses of stereofunctionally complex molecules are never as direct as implied by the primary literature accounts.

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