



Organic Reactions

I do vividly remember seeing the 50th anniversary volume of *Organic Reactions* as a new arrival in the library, a gold-covered book. It is hundreds of pages thick but only contains a single chapter dedicated to a named reaction, the Stille reaction. It is still a major reference, and is still available as an independently published paperback. One and a half decades later, we do not go to the library that often anymore as almost all literature is now available online but the 75th volume of *Organic Reactions* is also bound in a noticeable color, not the usual dark blue but white. To celebrate the diamond anniversary, editor-in-chief S. E. Denmark strategically invited former and current members of the board of editors as these would be well aware of the struggles of an editor, that is securing quality and meeting timelines. The editor-in-chief succeeded to win T. V. Rajan-Babu, H. M. L. Davies, himself (not keeping the deadline), and L. E. Overman for the diamond volume. It is in the tradition of *Organic Reactions* that leading experts contribute authoritative chapters on reactions largely shaped by themselves, and the present volume comprises four chapters on reactions closely connected to these names.

But before going into the chemical details, the book begins with the usual classic and a more recent introduction to the series by the founding editor-in-chief R. Adams (1942) and S. E. Denmark (2008), respectively and is followed by the usual preface by the editor-in-chief and an additional preface on the occasion of the 75th anniversary. The latter is a nice retrospect with useful statistical data, e.g., demographics of authors. It provides a list with names of all individuals having edited chapters and photos of the editorial board members serving since the golden volume; a full list of researchers recognized by the Roger Adams Award

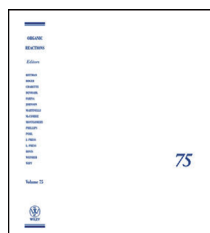
(11 out of 27 are Chemistry Nobel Prize winners) and by the Organic Reactions Lectureship as well as the names of recent Organic Reactions Graduate Fellowship recipients are also included.

Chapter 1 (73 pages) written by T. V. Rajan-Babu summarizes the facets of C–C multiple bond hydrocyanation. Chapter 2 (137 pages) is a timely treatise of intermolecular carbenoid C–H insertion authored by H. M. L. Davies. Chapter 3 (533 pages) is the heart of the book, and could have been a separate volume by itself. S. E. Denmark with his team of coworkers provide a long-awaited chapter on silicon-based cross-couplings, i.e., the Hiyama(–Denmark) reaction. Chapter 4 (74 pages) by L. E. Overman is an overview of the aza-Cope/Mannich reaction, a cascade reaction that has found wide application in complex molecule synthesis.

Returning to my opening statement that online resources are our main reference today, the obvious questions are “Is it still worth investing time and effort in writing and editing these chapters?” and “Is a book series such as *Organic Reactions* still useful to the chemical community?” in the era of the modern media. My answer is “Yes!” for several reasons. The combination of a concise critical analysis (with selected experimental procedures) of a broadly applicable transformation and a comprehensive tabular collection of reported examples supplies information beyond a simple list of hits from a search engine. *Organic Reactions* is the distillate of this flood of data, competently organized by an expert. And, trawling the endless tables is also a source of inspiration for both the unexperienced and likewise experienced synthetic chemist. Number 75 and all previous volumes ought to be on the shelves of any chemistry library and are, by the way, all available online.

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