

chapters cover the following subjects: General Survey, Stoichiometric C–H Activation, Catalytic C–H Activation, Catalytic Activation of Methane and Ethane, C–C Bond Cleavage, Activation of Si–Si Bonds, Activation of C–O Bonds, Activation of C–Cl Bonds, Dinitrogen in Organic Synthesis, and Activation of C–F Bonds. These topics are in different stages of development as techniques for practical organic synthesis.

Anyone reading about this area of chemistry for the first time will be struck by the apparent obsession of the investigators with the importance of transition metal–carbon bonds. Admittedly they are important, but the cobalt-catalysed oxidation of cyclohexane is a commercial process involving C–H activation, which probably does not involve M–C bonds although it is catalysed by a transition metal. However, I found very few errors in the book, although I was surprised to see on p.2 the derivation of the word ‘agostic’ being attributed to Crabtree, rather than to M. L. H. Green.

A detailed examination of the chapters reveals an up-to-date survey of the various areas. For example, in the chapter on C–C single-bond cleavage by M. Murakami and Y. Ito, the authors have found a surprisingly large number of examples of this reaction. This type of reaction is less developed than C=C cleavage (olefin metathesis), and a large proportion of the examples involve strained (three and four-membered) rings. There are also reactions involving a pincer-type chelating ligand, and several types of rearrangement or migration reactions. Some elements which are familiar in polymerization reactions such as lutetium, zirconium and hafnium, also undergo reverse insertion reactions, which involve C–C cleavage. Both stoichiometric and catalytic reactions are described in this chapter.

The most challenging system discussed in the book is the triple bond in dinitrogen. However, it is now emerging that the chemistry of coordinated dinitrogen is possibly more varied than the chemistry of coordinated carbon monoxide.

To summarize, this book contains the basis of much important future work which will result from developing the themes presented here. It is not so much a record of what has already been achieved, as a signpost to the areas where future developments lie.

A. W. PARKINS  
*King's College London*

### **X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy** R. Jenkins

2nd edn. John Wiley, Chichester, 1999  
xviii + 207 pages. £65  
ISBN 0-47-129942-1

This book provides a complete introduction to the subject, from the basic physics of the process through

to industrial applications. The theory sections have been significantly embellished since the first edition, with a new chapter on X-ray spectra. They are, however, pitched at a level that will make them accessible to any interested reader.

There is also a new section on the historical development of XRF, which provides an interesting insight into the way the technique has matured from an esoteric exercise in physics into a general-purpose industrial tool.

In my opinion, the book is primarily targeted at practical users of the technique, particularly newcomers. It includes, for example, chapters on specimen preparation, qualitative and quantitative work.

I felt that the book does not really do the title justice in that it also provides useful introductions to a number of related techniques such as X-ray lithography, tomography, astronomy etc. There is a full chapter devoted to X-ray diffraction. A surprising omission in this respect is the use of X-ray spectrometry in conjunction with electron microscopy, which receives scant mention.

Overall, I found the book to be very easy to read and a worthwhile addition to the literature on the subject. I am sure that, like the first edition, it will find widespread use both as a teaching aid as well as a reference book for more experienced practitioners

P. G. HARRIS  
*International Tin Research Institute Ltd, Uxbridge, UK*

### **Interrelations Between Free Radicals and Metal Ions in Life Processes**

#### **Metal Ions in Biological Systems, Vol. 36**

A. Sigel and H. Sigel (eds)  
Marcel Dekker, New York, 1999  
848 pages. \$250  
ISBN 0-8247-1956-5

There is so much of interest in this book that it is difficult to know where to begin the review. The central theme is radicals in biology, in particular the interaction of these radicals with metal ions. A wide range of radicals is considered, including superoxide and nitric oxide. There are also chapters on radical processes such as lipid peroxidation, metal-induced carcinogenesis and organo-cobalt-induced radical formation. In all there are 21 chapters, written by different authors, and five of them are concerned with aspects of the nitric oxide story. The remaining 16 cover a range of topics, some of which have been mentioned already. Although the quality of the contributions to a multi-author work varies, all the chapters are written by acknowledged experts with an air of authority and will be of particular aid to those newly entering a field of research. There is also much of interest