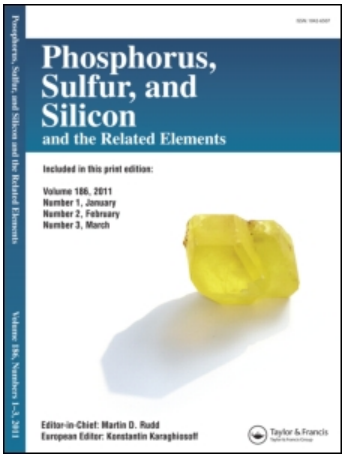

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A Review of: "Beilstein Handbook of Organic Chemistry, Fourth Edition, Fifth Supplementary Series, Volume Seventeen, Part one, LXXXVIII, 858 pages, bound, Price DM 1620, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo 1984"

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BOOK REVIEW

Beilstein Handbook of Organic Chemistry,
Fourth Edition, Fifth Supplementary Series, Volume Seventeen,
Part one, LXXXVIII, 858 pages, bound, Price DM 1620,
Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo 1984

Ever since the birth of true scientific research, scientists have been confronted with an ever-increasing flood of new information and data. This problem has become acute over the past two decades, and particularly in the field of organic chemistry, where data are produced in laboratories all over the world, using a constantly improving methodology.

As early as 1881, F. Beilstein pointed out a way to solve this problem for the discipline of organic chemistry, where an extremely high diversification of activities was involved, even then. This method centered on the principle of arranging data on organic compounds of known structure according to the structural features (constitution) of the compound concerned.

In the fourth edition of the work which bears his name, the Basic Series and four Supplementary Series have been published since 1918. This year, however, the first volume of the fifth Supplementary Series (EV) of the Beilstein Handbook of Organic Chemistry has been published, and (for the first time) in the English language. The Series begins with the volume 17/1, i.e. in the heterocyclic field.

The decision to publish in English was jointly taken by the executive editor, Prof. R. Luckenbach, his staff, and the publishing house Springer Verlag; the importance of this decision for those scientific workers who understand little or no German cannot be overstated.

In volume 17/1 of EV, over 100 scientists in full-time employment at the Beilstein Institute have collected, examined and critically evaluated data for over 5700 compounds from the original literature from the period 1960–1979, named these according to the IUPAC rules, and labelled each item of information with a reference to the original literature, using modern journal abbreviations. In summary the quality of content and density of information have both been increased, and the up-to-dateness of Beilstein has been improved at a stroke.

One other general advantage is worth mentioning: any chemist who does not have access to a universal library will often find so much information in a Beilstein entry that he need look no further in the original literature.

After having made these general comments, the reviewer would like to point out special features for all sulfur and phosphorus chemists:

Sulfur (and its homologues) has an important role in heterocyclic chemistry. Often the presence of a sulfur atom modifies the properties of heterocycles in a quite unexpected manner, and sulfur is also a prominent element in many natural products. Since the beginning of organic chemistry, all published sulfur compounds have appeared in Beilstein. This tradition is now being carried on, as painstaking as ever, but *faster*, and in *English*.

Organic phosphorus compounds are similarly extracted from the current literature. Volume 17 will contain those heterocycles with boron, silicon or phosphorus

ring atoms. All other organophosphorus compounds are incorporated in the Beilstein ordering system, and will be found in the relevant subvolumes.

Till now, "Beilstein" has always been a faithful helper for organic chemists and all those working in disciplines with an interest in the fast compilation of data on organic compounds, ordered according to structure. The producers of this Handbook have now intensified the service to the scientific world by introduction of the English language.

The organization of the Beilstein Handbook is unique in the world. It deserves the effective support of all scientific disciplines interested in data on organic and bio-organic compounds.

L. Horner
Mainz