

Book Review

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**Classics in Total Synthesis II: More
Targets, Strategies, Methods**

Wiley-VCH, 2003,
658 pp; price £70.00/€105.00.
ISBN 3-527-30685-4 (hardcover)

This book follows on from the first *Classics in Total Synthesis* by K. C. Nicolaou and E. J. Sorensen (Wiley-VCH, 1996). The theme is again the total synthesis of complex naturally occurring molecules. The present volume is divided into 22 chapters. The first chapter gives an overall perspective of total synthesis placed it in the context of target molecules, the importance played by retrosynthetic analysis, and the development of new methodologies and new reagents that enable very specific transformations to take place. Chapters 2–22 are dedicated to the description of the total synthesis of named natural products accomplished between 1993 and 2003. Starting with the synthesis of *Isochrysohermidin* by D.

L. Boger in 1993 and ending with the synthesis of *Okaramine N* by E. J. Corey in 2003, the contents of this volume give a true picture of the enormous advances made recently in this field of Organic Chemistry.

Each new chapter begins with the structure of the target molecule and a list of key concepts. These key concepts inform the reader about the most important chemical transformations due to take place, all named reactions to be utilized in the strategy, and other key processes involved in the total synthesis. The text is generously illustrated with reaction schemes showing the retrosynthetic analysis and the forward steps towards the target molecule. New reagents are particularly highlighted in the overall strategy. Each chapter has its own conclusion and extensive up-to-date references and bibliography.

Although the original total synthesis of the target molecule occupies most of the work in each chapter, the real innovation of this volume is the inclusion of alternative pathways to the same

target molecule by other researchers. This enables the reader to appreciate that there are also other solutions to certain structural problems than those of the original synthesis.

In his forward to the present volume, E. J. Corey suggests that 'the careful study of *Classics in Total Synthesis I* and *II* will help to show the way to the new syntheses of the future'. A large number of worthy synthetic targets still remain to be 'unlocked'. Hopefully, in the next 10 years we shall witness impressive and unique total synthesis of naturally occurring substances to rival those presented in this volume. Let us hope that K. C. Nicolaou and his associates will present us with these future achievements in the same clear, informative and innovative format they have with the previous two volumes.

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DOI:10.1002/aoc.984