

Bioinspired self-assembled mixed gels and helicoidal nanocomposites

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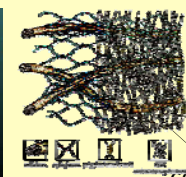
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We propose to use natural structures as an inspiring source for the design of innovative nanomaterials. Living organisms elaborate at low energy costs these hierarchical structures with complex self-organisation that can be reproduced with natural and renewable elementary bricks.

The goal of the project is the elaboration of man-made biomimetic materials within a bottom-up approach and their multi-scale characterization. The targeted properties are inspired by their natural analogue: highly deformable mixed gels with osmotic pressure resistance and permeability properties, and nanocomposites with adjustable mechanical or photonic properties.

The biological context

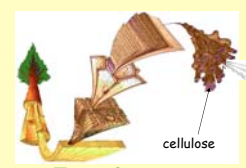
Primary walls



Elasticity

cellulose

Secondary walls



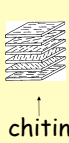
Tenacity

cellulose

Exoskeleton

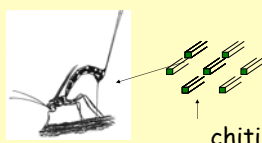


Iridescence



chitin

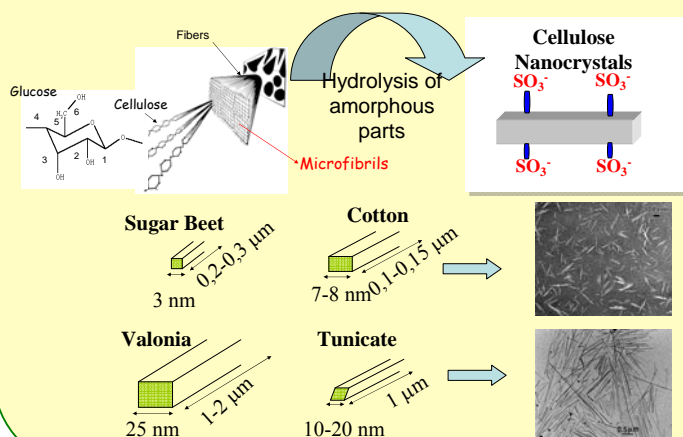
Stinger/Spines



High modulus

chitin

Cellulose Whiskers / Nanocrystals

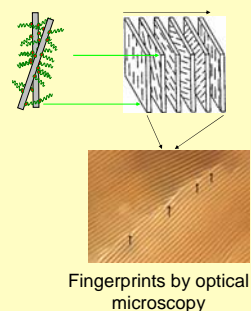
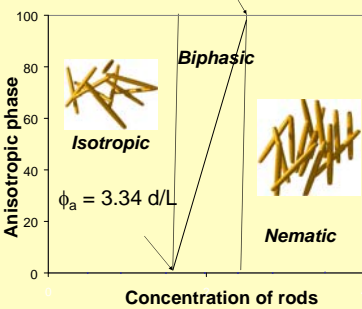


Self-organization

With surfactant in organic solvent

$$\phi_a = 4.49 \text{ d/L}$$

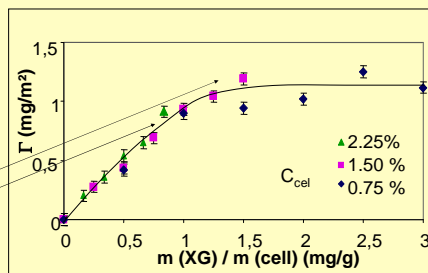
nematic + chirality \Rightarrow cholesteric



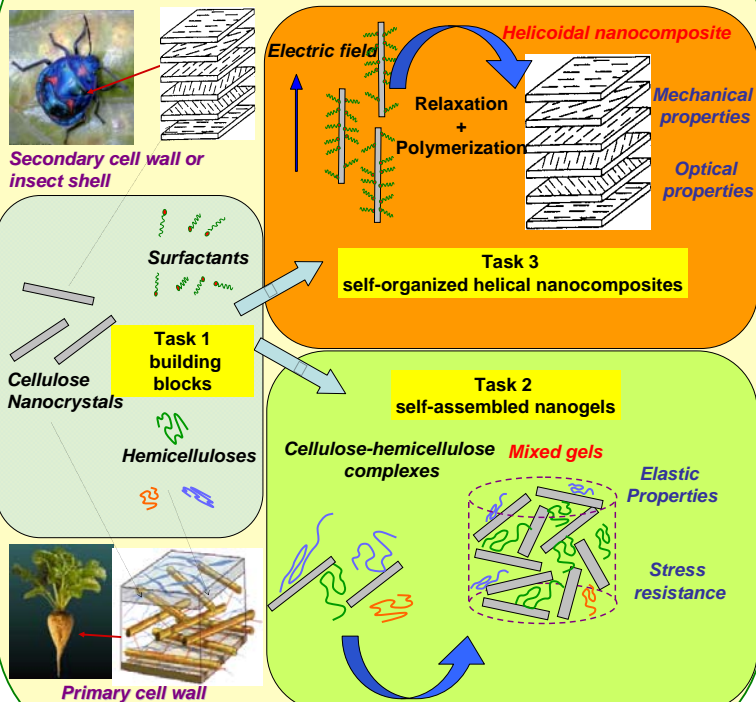
With hemicelluloses in aqueous suspension

Langmuir isotherm
 \Downarrow
Quantitative adsorption

Gel formation



Biomimetic approach



References

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S. Elazzouzi-Hafraoui, J.-L. Putaux, L. Heux*, *Self-assembling and Chiral Nematic Properties of Organophilic Cellulose Nanocrystals* **J. Phys. Chem.**, **113**, 11069-11075 (2009)
S. Berlioz, S. Molina-Boisseau, Y. Nishiyama, L. Heux*, *Gas-Phase Surface Esterification of Cellulose Microfibrils and Whiskers* **Biomacromolecules**, **10**, 2144-2151(2009)