



Process Chemistry at the Interface of Chemistry and Biology

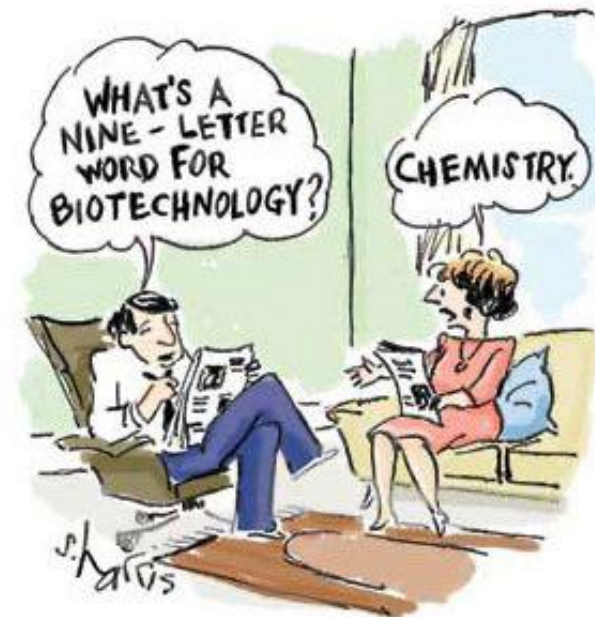
Andreas Liese



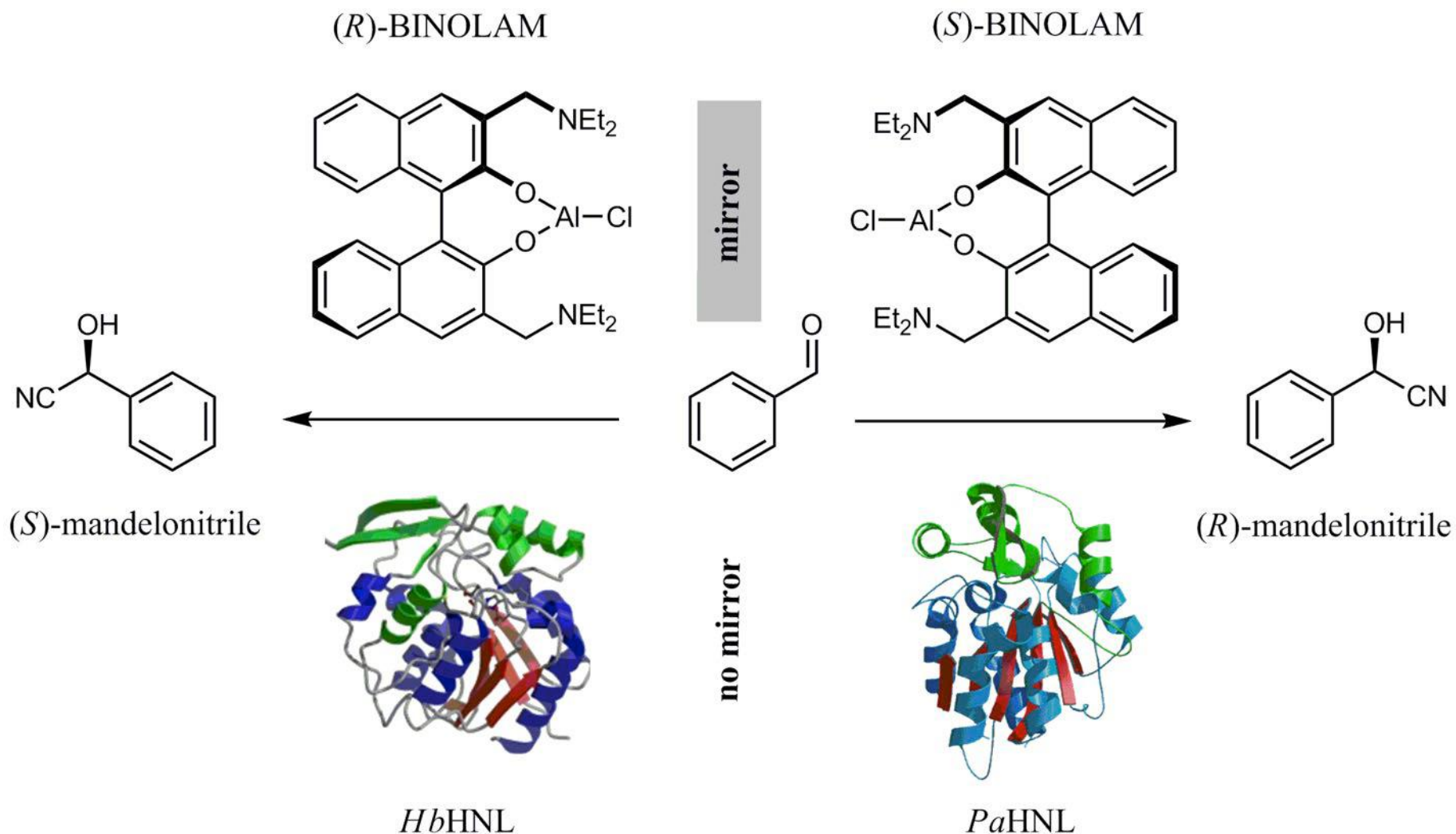
Nordic-Irish Process Chemistry Forum 2023, Belfast, 6.-8.6.2023

Outline

- introduction
- batch processes - moving from aqueous to solvent free synthesis
- intensification of aeration
- continuous processes
of reaction sequences
- take home message

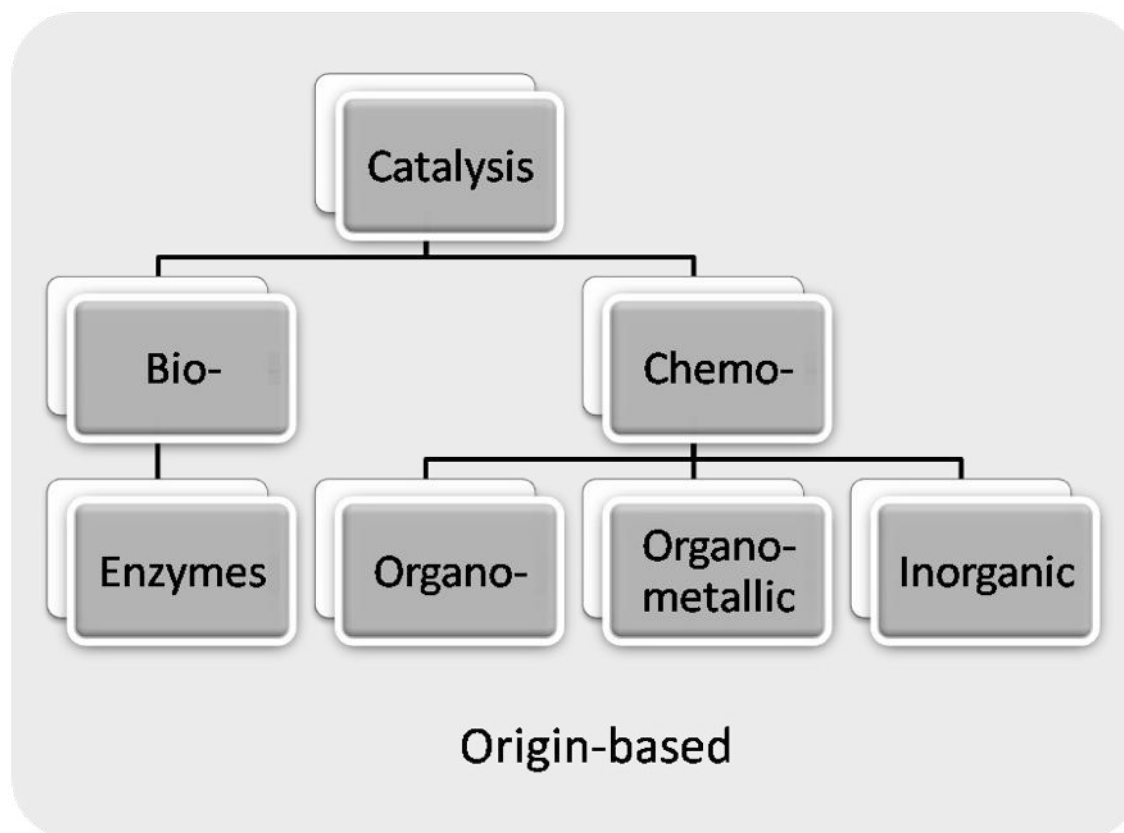
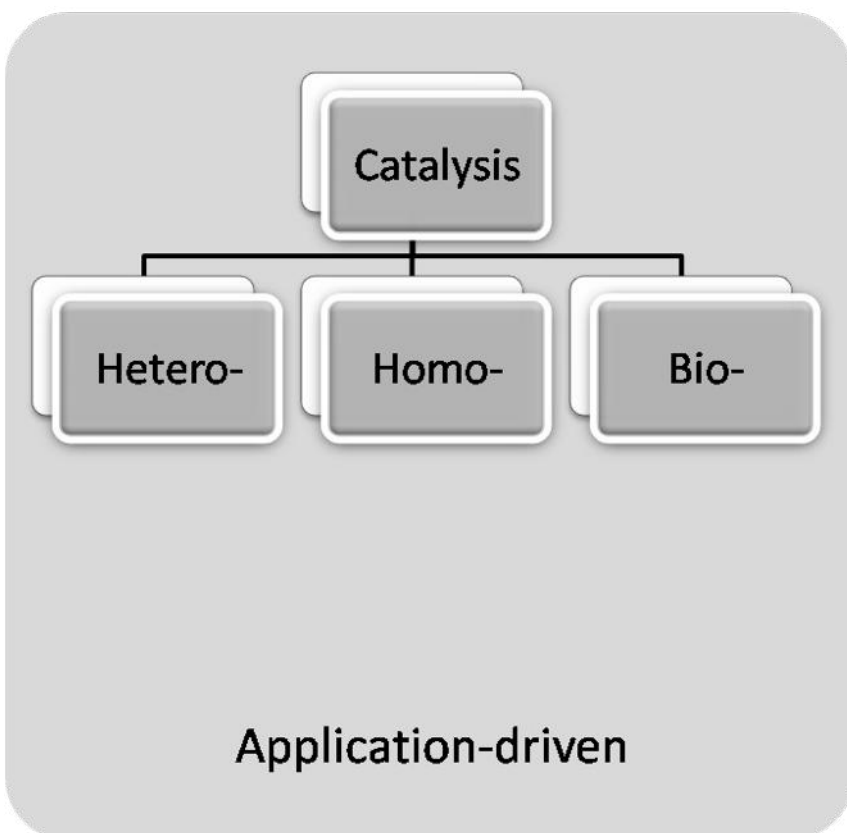


Differences: Chemocatalysis - Biocatalysis

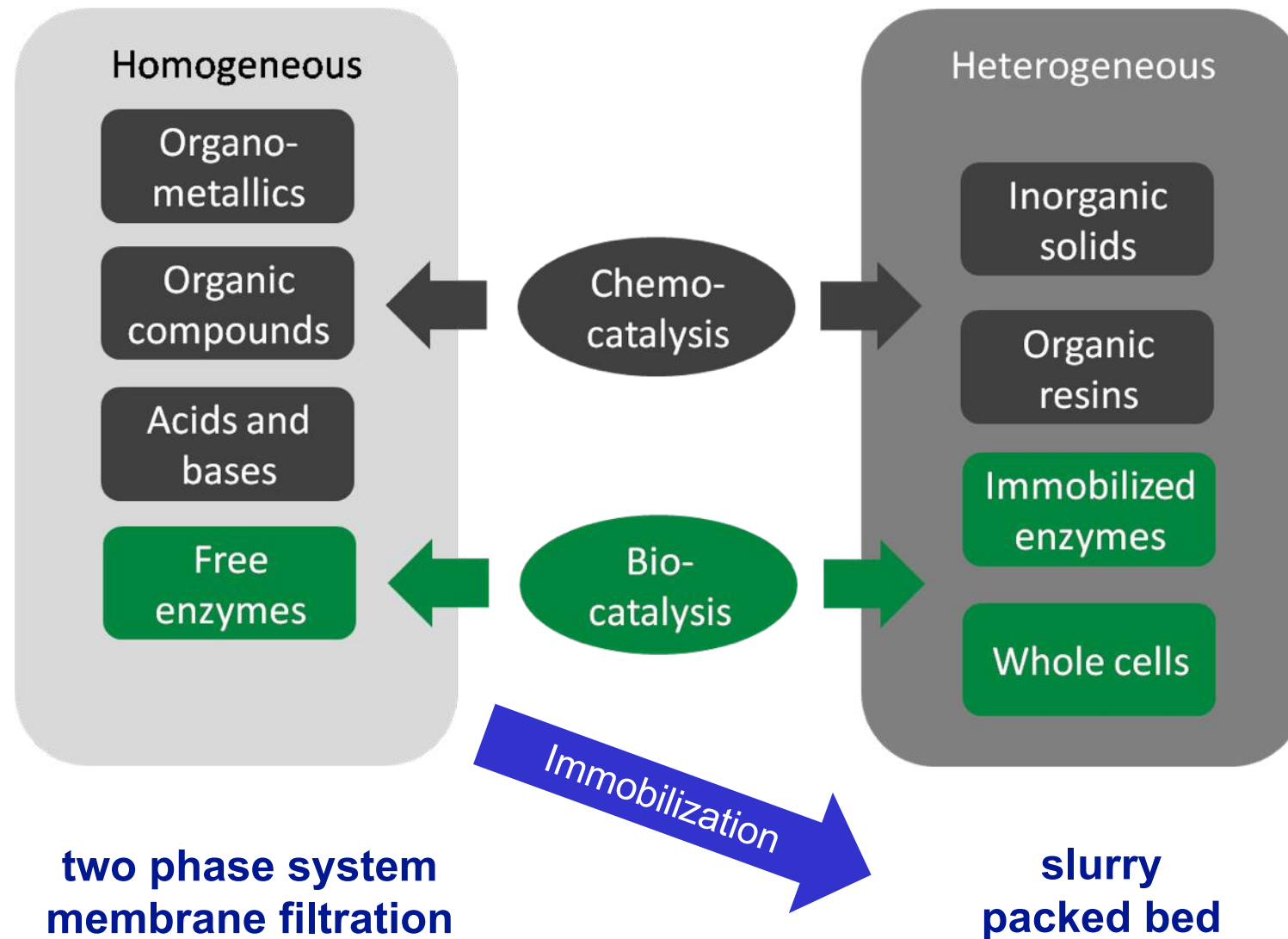


Classification of Catalysis

Classification of catalysis



Similarities: Catalyst Preparation



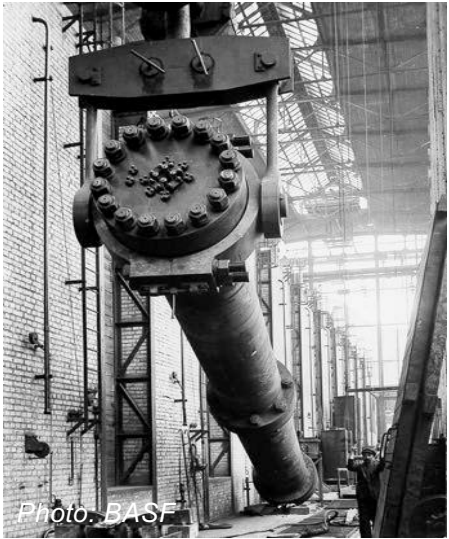
Missing Technology Developments

passenger airplane



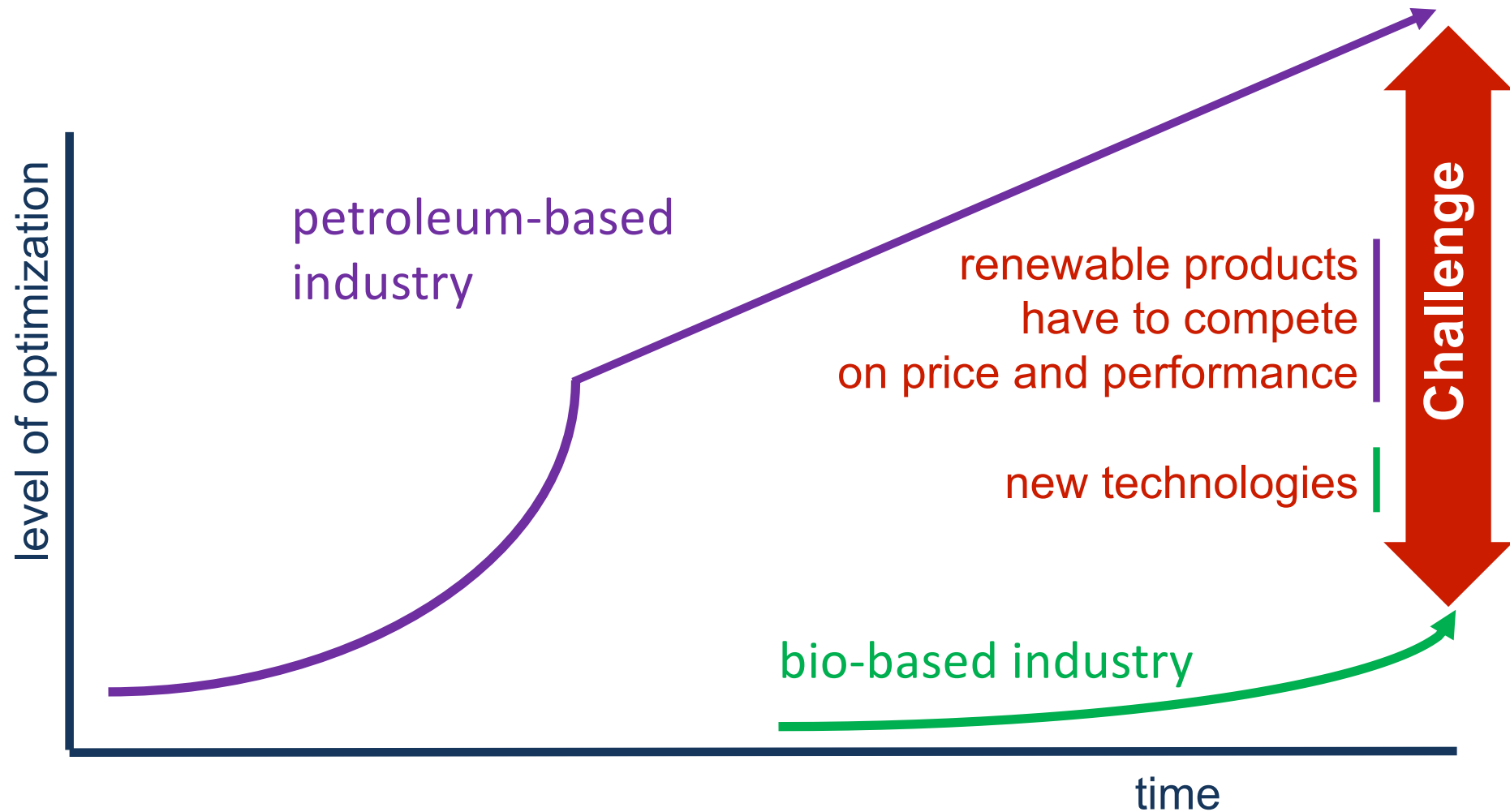
100 years ago

chemical reactor



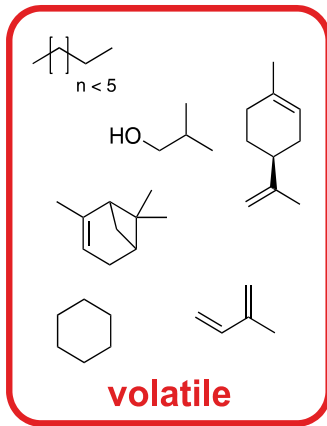
today

Technology Gap as Challenge

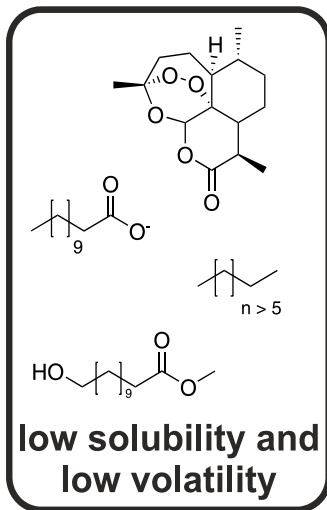


Change of Raw Material Base

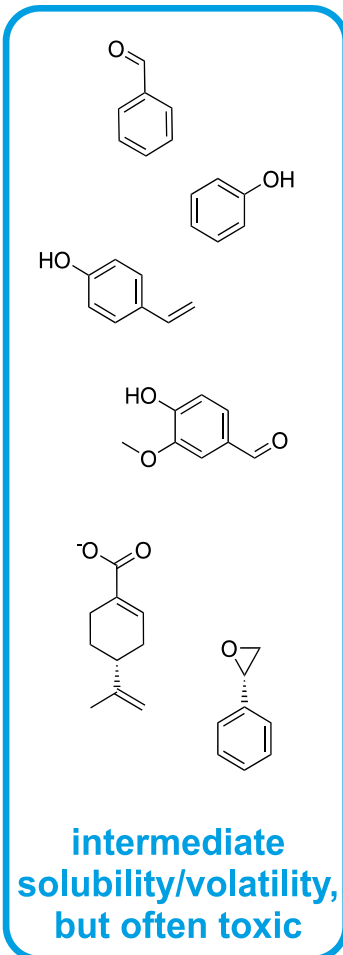
Technical



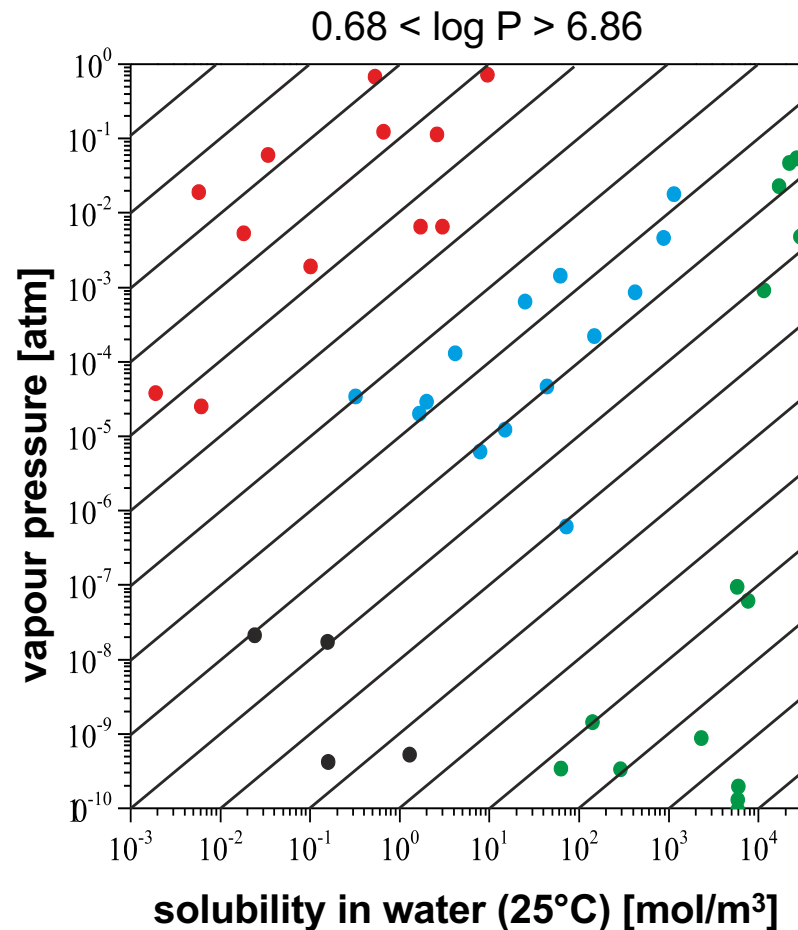
volatile



low solubility and low volatility

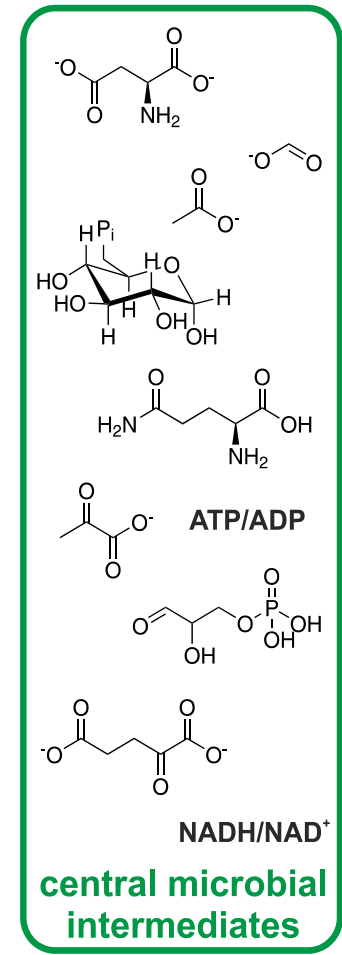


intermediate solubility/volatility, but often toxic



-3.98 < log P > -0.17

Natural



central microbial intermediates



Process Engineering and Integrated Biotechnology

fundamental understanding of the interaction of **biotechnology, chemistry** and **process engineering** to realize chemical / biological processes

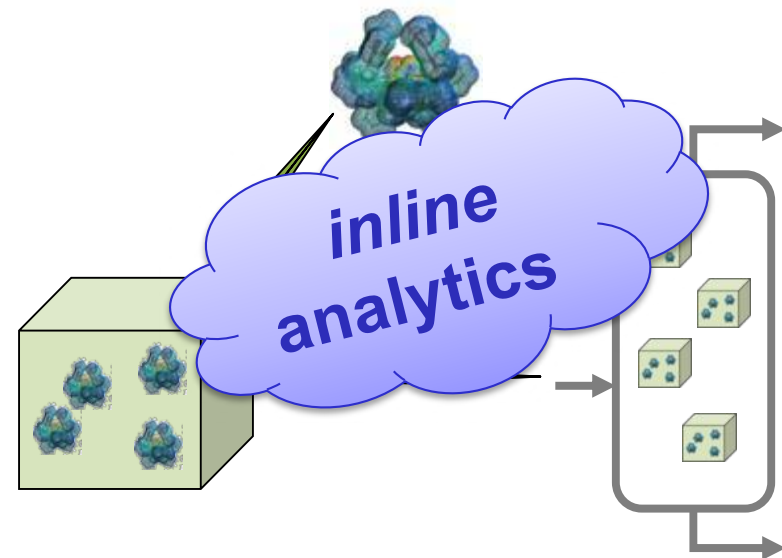
A development & adjustment of catalytic steps

- ➔ new bio- /chemocatalysts
- ➔ kinetics

B directed adjustment to microenvironment

C process engineering integration of catalytic steps and separation processes in a process sequence

- ➔ multiphase mass transport



Bioprocess Intensification Challenges

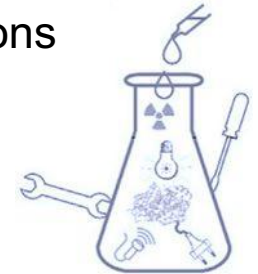
enzyme engineering



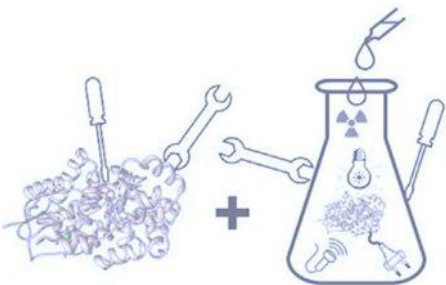
- limited specific activity
- unfavorable kinetics
- limited biocatalyst stability


process engineering

- unfavorable reaction thermodynamics
- selectivity in multistep reactions
- challenging reactants:
poor water solubility,
viscosity, volatility, foaming



Σ solution: combined approaches



- **complementary: substrate inhibition**
→ improve biocatalyst tolerance to the substrate and 
- **complementary: product inhibition**
→ improve biocatalyst tolerance to the product and *in situ* product removal
- **synergistic: thermodynamic limitation**
→ improve biocatalyst tolerance to substrate to enable shift of equilibrium

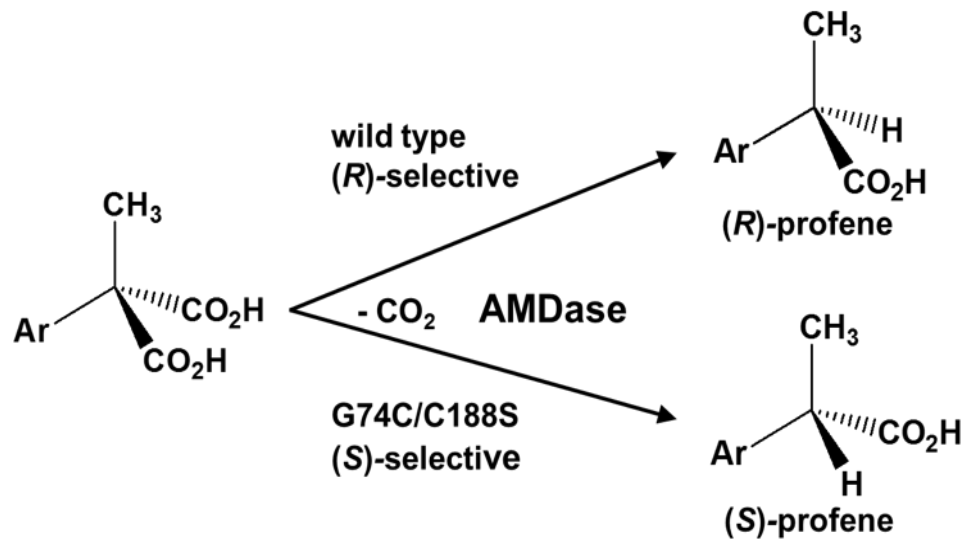
Profen Synthesis by Arylmalonate Decarboxylase

Profenes

- α -arylpropionic acid derivatives
- chiral, (*S*)-enantiomer is active
- **50 % yield by chemical synthesis**



Non-steroidal anti
inflammatory drugs
(NSAID)

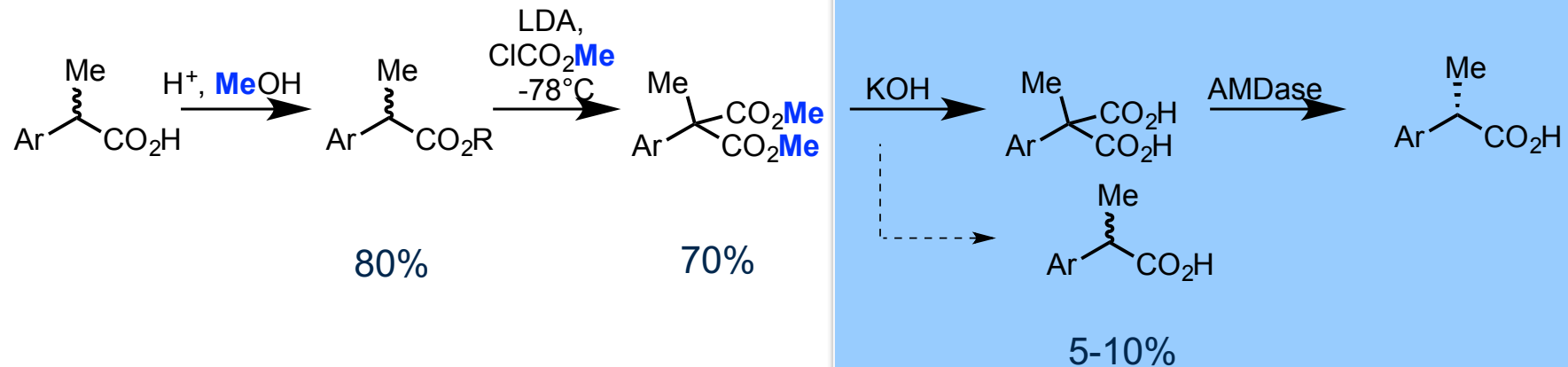


Asymmetric Biocatalysis

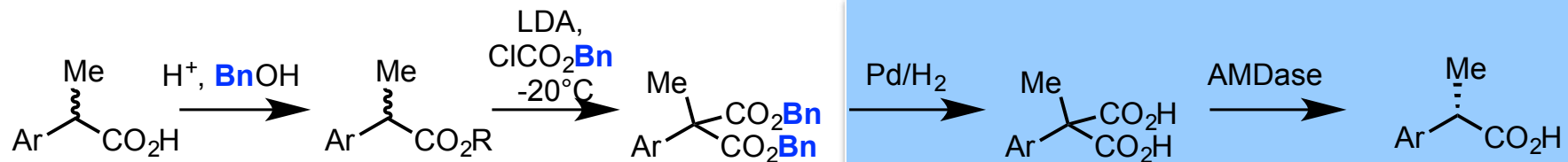
- **up to 100 % yield**
- > 99.5% ee
- fewer reaction steps
- mild reaction conditions
- environmentally friendly

Access to Malonates: Optimization of Synthesis

Saponification: The arylmalonic acid undergoes spontaneous decarboxylation



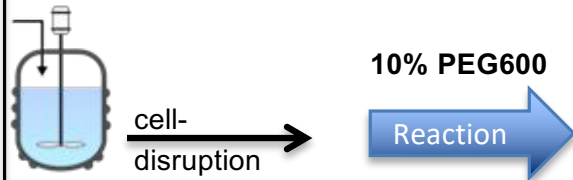
Hydrogenolysis: The side reaction can be suppressed!



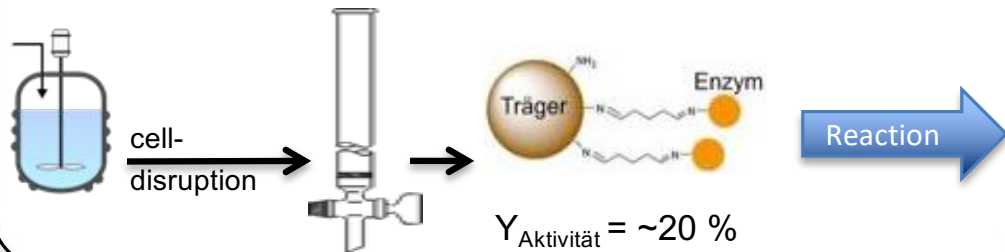
- less recrystallization required
- improved scalability

Biocatalyst Preparation

Cell-lysate



Purified enzyme immobilised on Amino C2 Acrylate

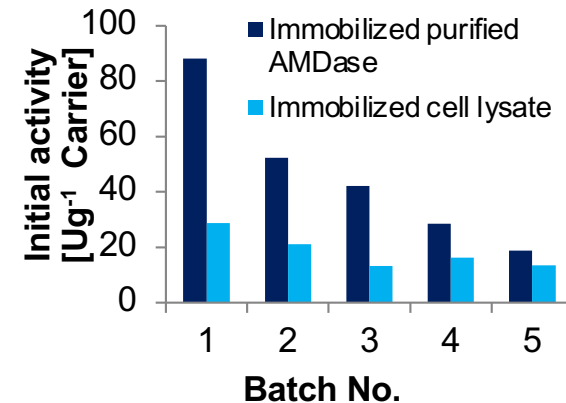
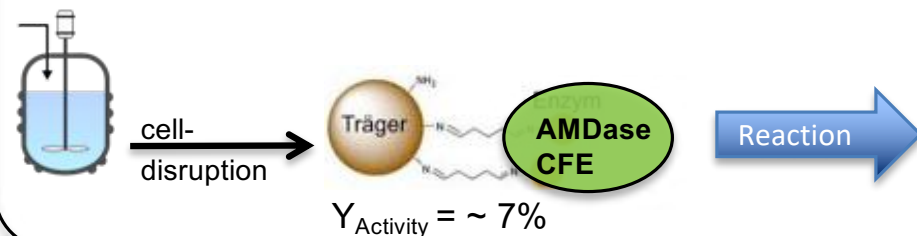


Increase of stability

$t_{1/2}$ (free enzyme) = 1.5 h

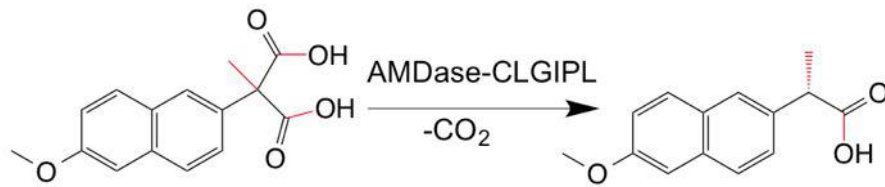
$t_{1/2}$ (imm.) = 226 h
(174-fold increase)

Cell-lysate immobilised on Amino C2 Acrylate

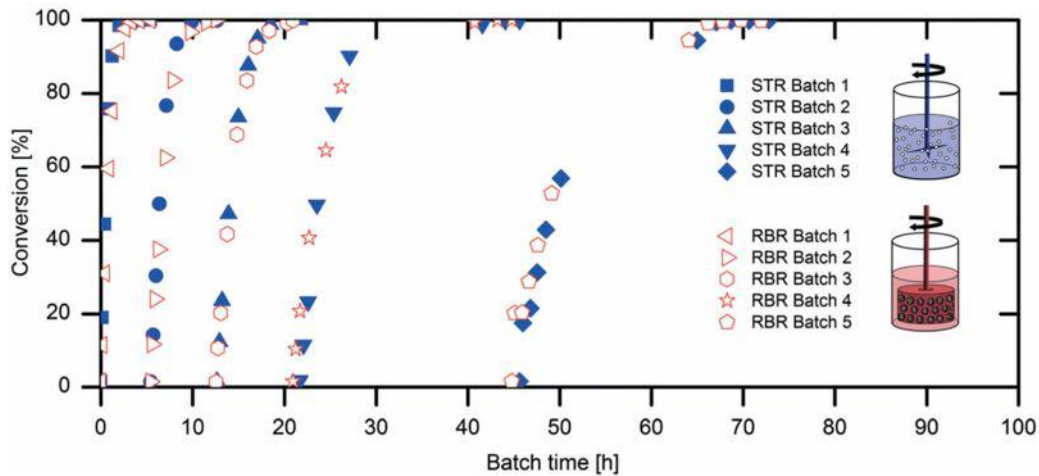


Conditions: Test cell-lysate cell-lysate: 20 mM phenylmalonic acid, 200 mg Amino C2 Acrylate, 30°C, 500 rpm, pH 8, 50 mL
 Test PEG600: 20 mM phenylmalonic acid, 9,96 g/L Amino C2 Acrylate, 30°C, 400 rpm, pH 8, 50 mL, with and w/o 10 % (v/v) PEG600.

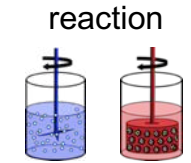
(S)-Naproxen Biosynthesis



- isolated yield: 92%
- 99% ee (S)-Naproxen



100 mL reaction volume, pH 8, 700 rpm, 30 °C, 45 g/L immobilised AMDase-CLGIPL on Amino C2 Acrylat, 48.6 mM Naproxen malonic acid, 8.6 mg_{AMDase Mutant}/g_{carrier}



precipitation



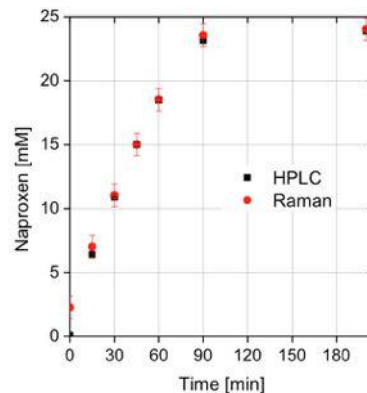
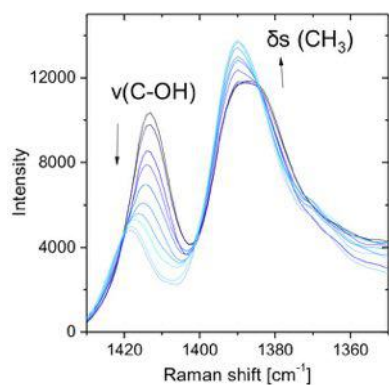
separation



drying



inline Analytics

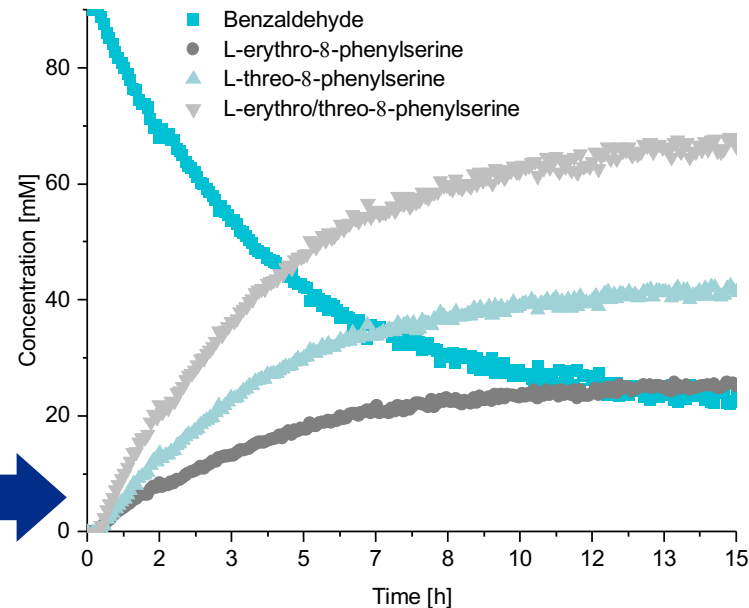
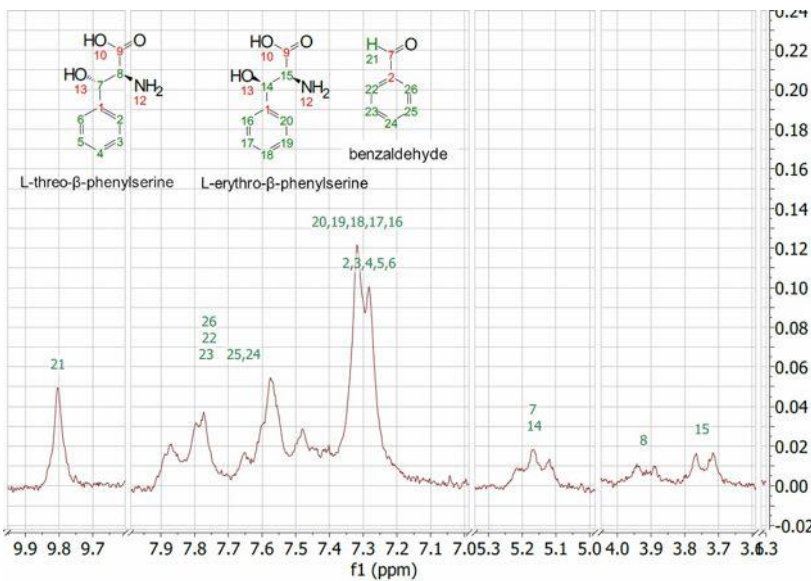
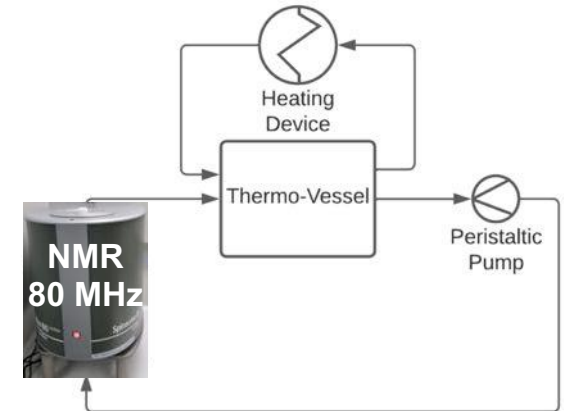
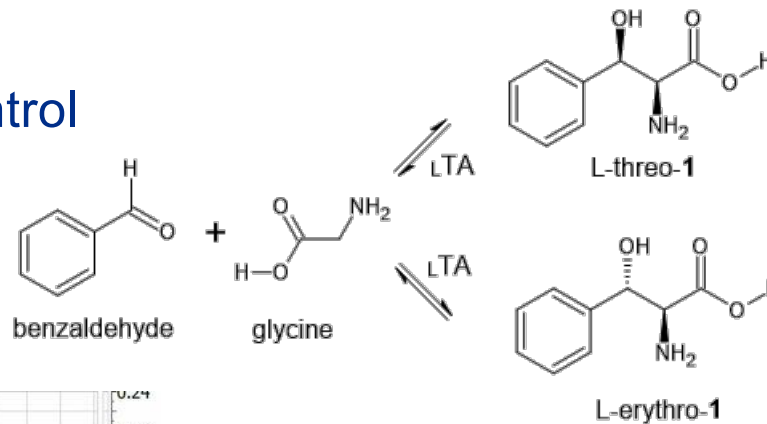


PLS modeling:
RMSEP: 0.8 mM

inline Analytics of Diastereomers in Biocatalysis

Threonine Aldolase (TA)

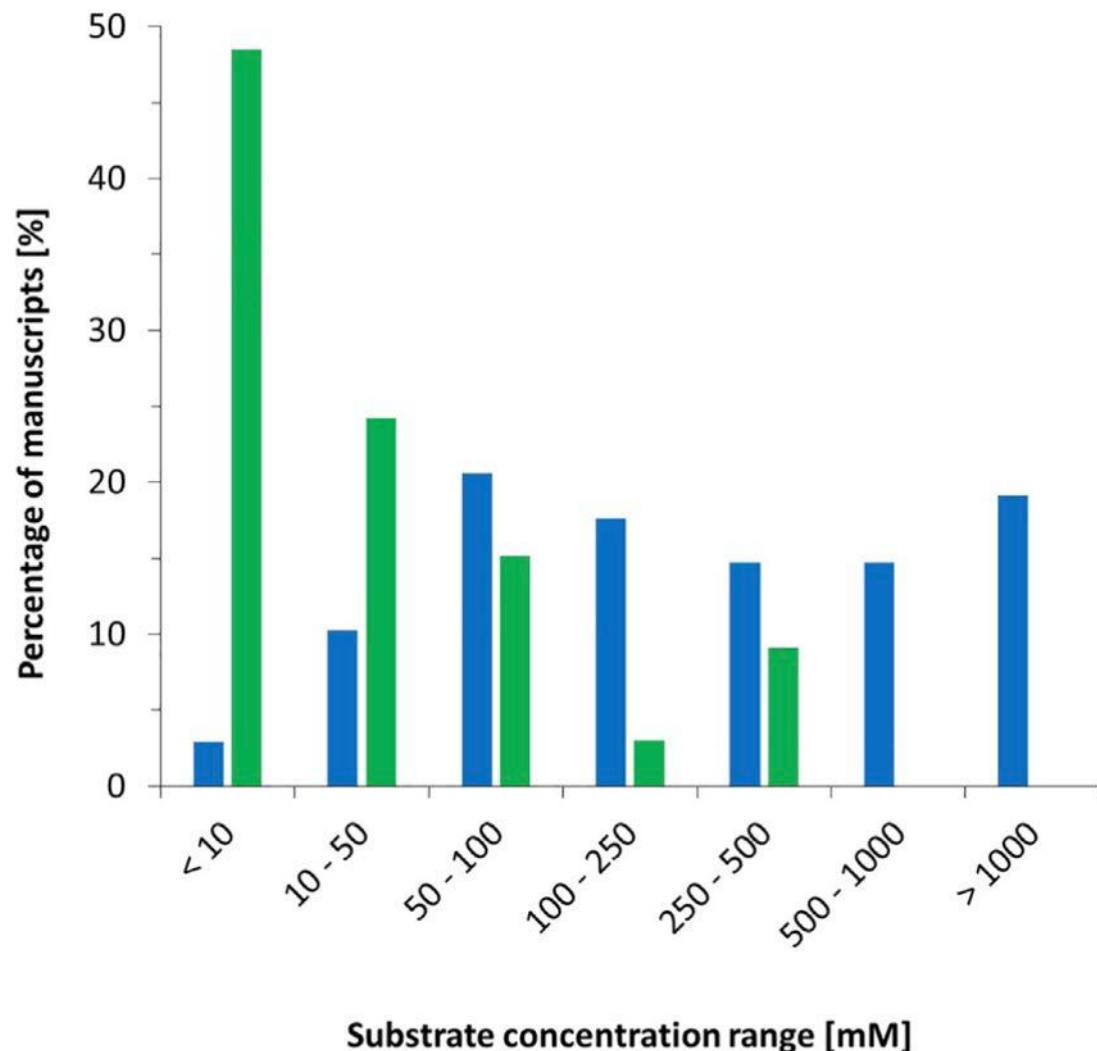
- kinetic/thermodynamic control
- high selectivity at α -C
- low selectivity at β -C



chemometrics

Solvents as Key Drivers

for Intensified Biocatalysis



comparison of typical starting material concentrations used in

- chemocatalysis
- biocatalysis

→ data from publications in *ChemCatChem* vol. 12 (2020), issues 1–12

Neat Conditions Where Reactants Become Solvents



- **change of kinetics**
 - high rate
 - prone to inhibition
 - effect on determination of kinetics
- **reactants** themselves become **solvents**
- **shift from concentrations** to
 - weight % (mol %)
 - thermodynamic activities



multidisciplinary

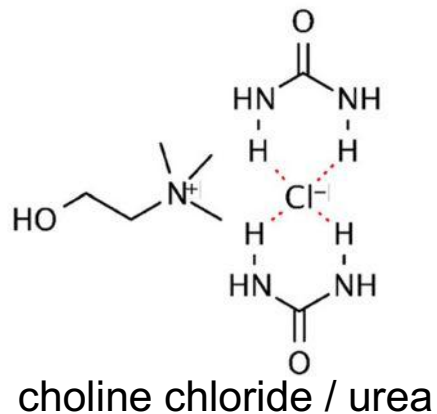
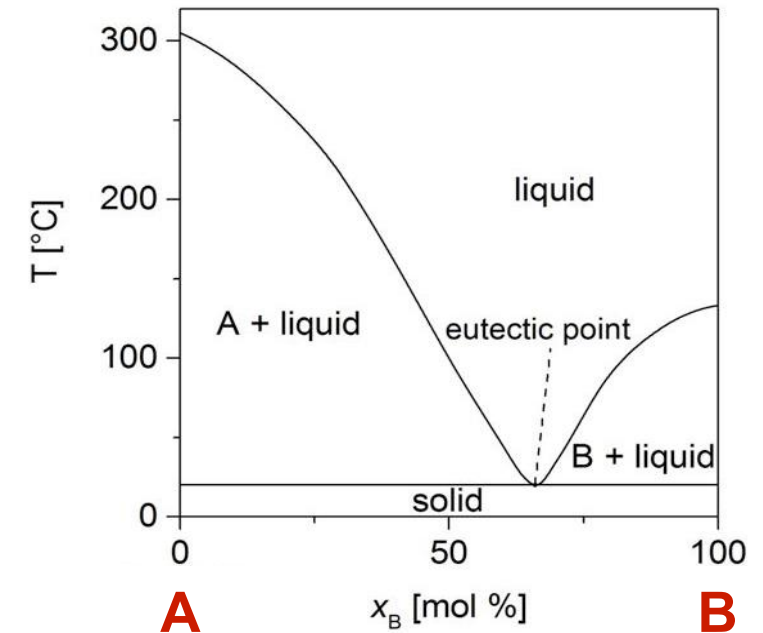
Changing Reaction Media: Deep Eutectic Solvent (DES)

H-bond donor + H-bond acceptor = DES



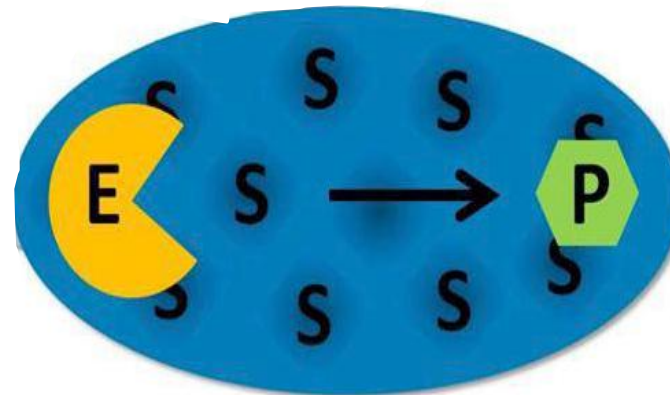
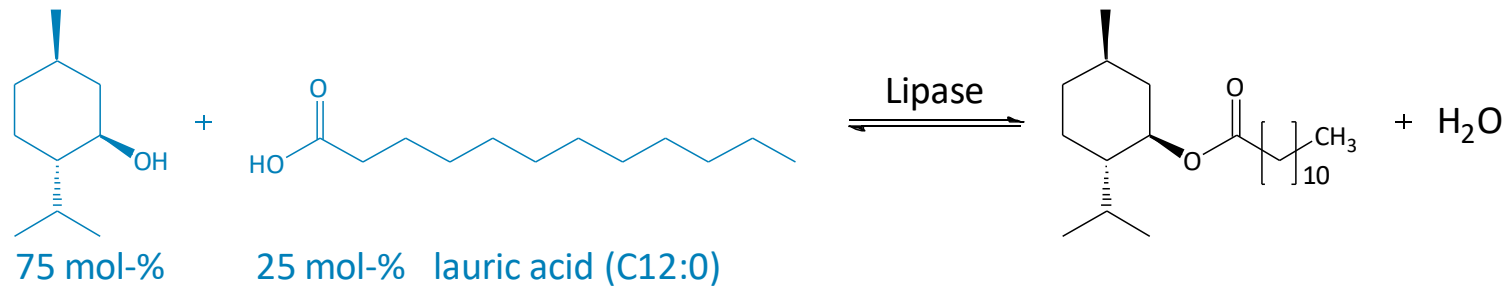
- Certain **molar ratio** required
- Prepared by **heating** and **stirring**

Viscous liquid due to strong **H-bond network**



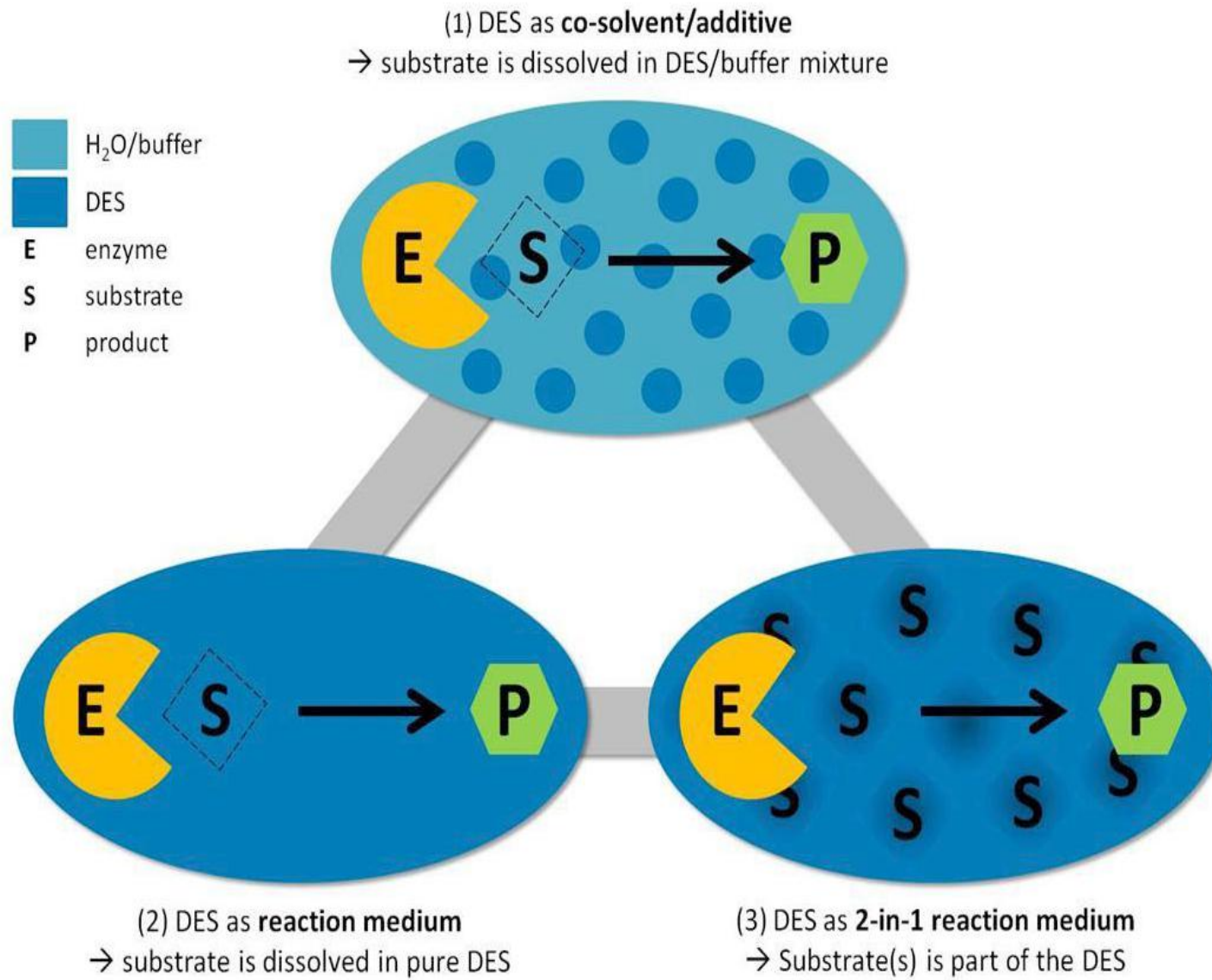
- + **physicochemical properties are tuneable**
- + **natural precursors → biodegradability**
- + **synthesis is straightforward and cheap**

Application Principles of DES in Biocatalysis

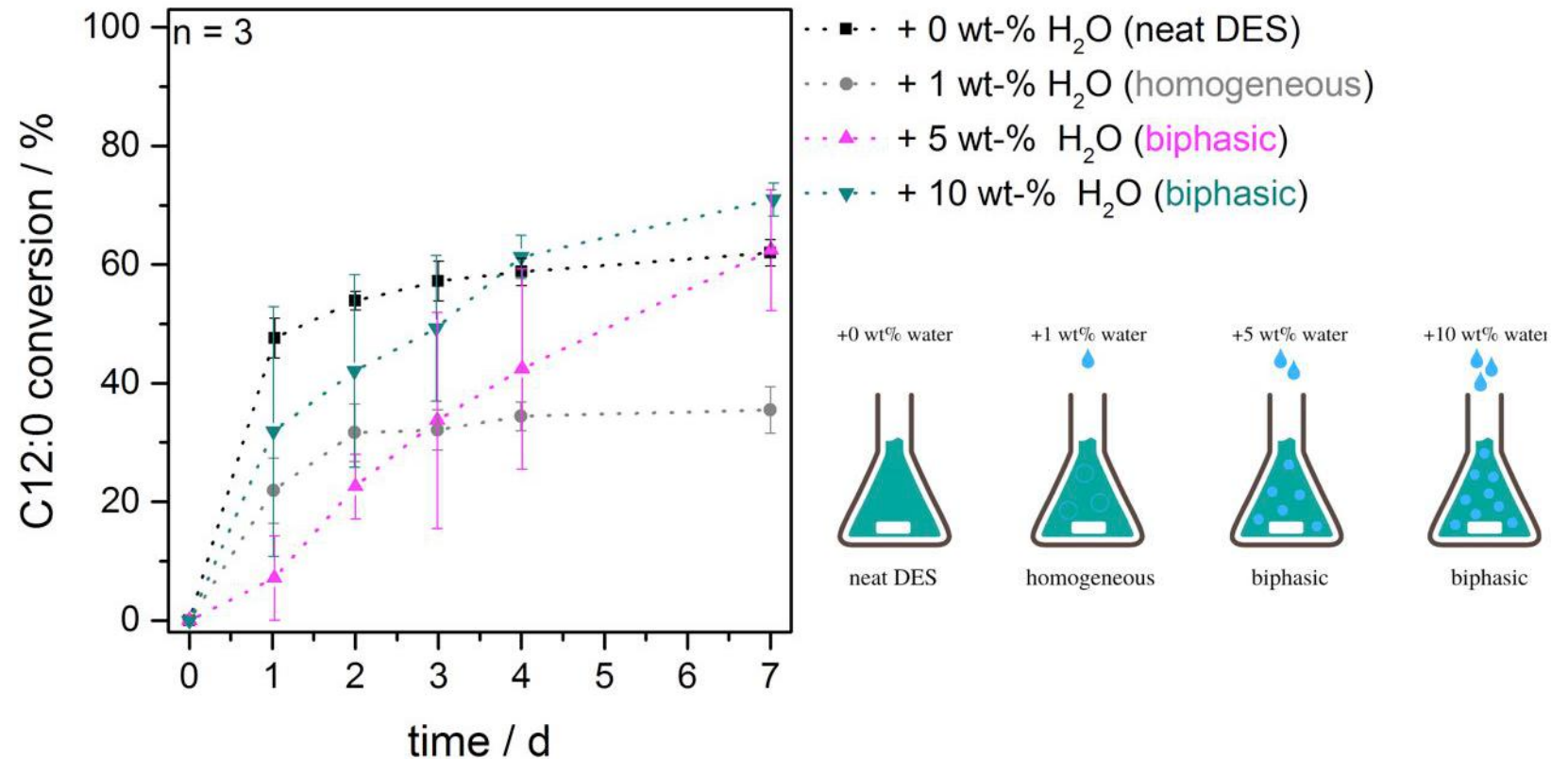


(3) DES as 2-in-1 reaction medium
→ Substrate(s) is part of the DES

Application Principles of DES in Biocatalysis



Influence of Water on DES Esterification



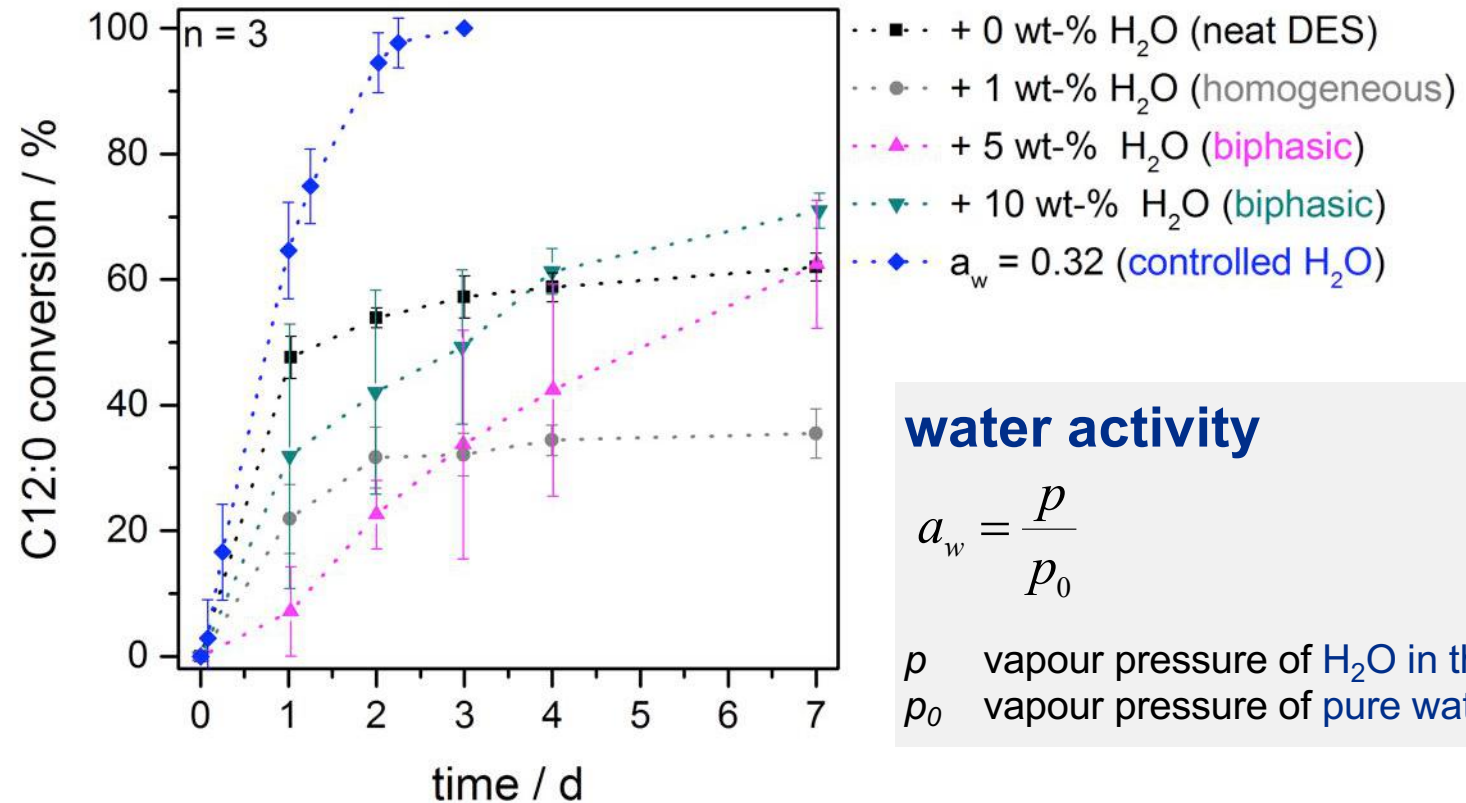
- **biphasic reaction systems**
 - saturated with water
 - formed water in equilibrium with aqu. phase
- **neat DES:** water accumulates

(-)-menthol:lauric acid 3:1 mol/mol, $m_{DES} = 0.5$ g, 5 mg CRL, 700 rpm, $T = 35^{\circ}\text{C}$, $n = 3$

M. Hümmer, S. Kara, A. Liese, I. Huth, J. Schrader, D. Holtmann, Mol. Cat. **458** (2018) 67-72

M. Pätzold, A. Weimer, A. Liese, D. Holtmann, Biotechnol. Reports **24** (2019) DOI: 10.1016/j.btre.2019.e00333

Effect of Water Activity Controlled Esterification



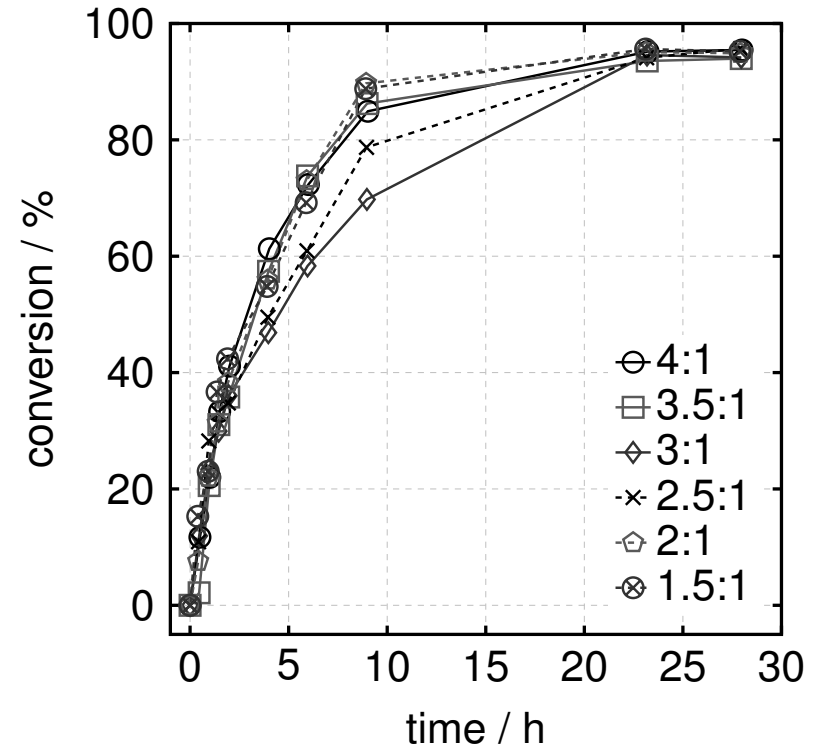
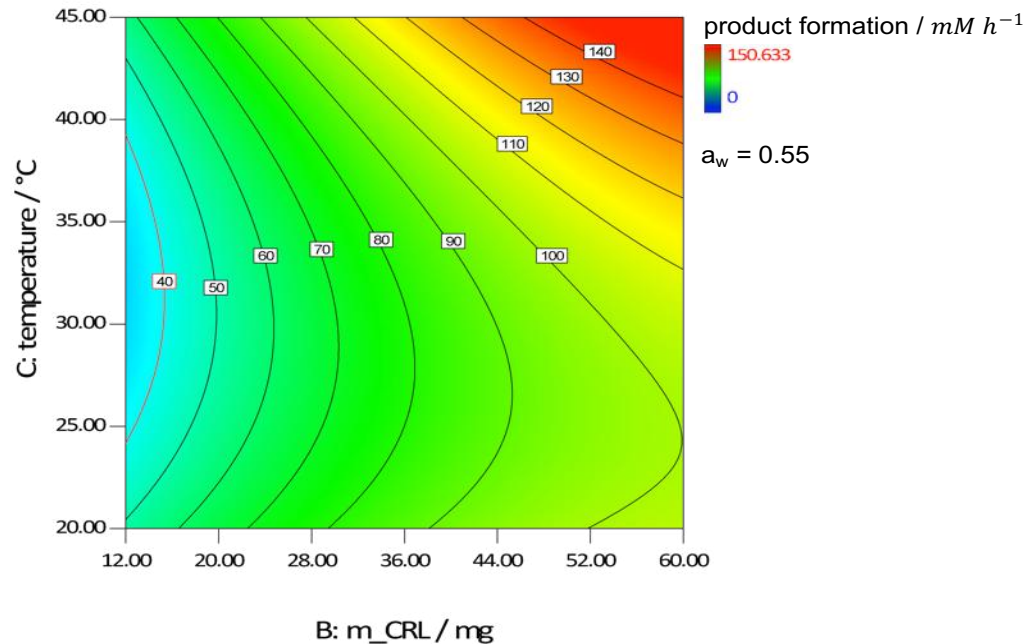
→ **water content** of the DES is controlled **during reaction**

→ **optimal water levels** generated with $a_w = 0.22 - 0.55$

→ **full conversion** with $a_w = 0.32$ after 3 d

DoE Based Process Optimization

Design of Experiment (DoE)



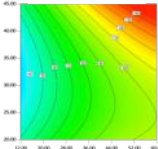


model calculates conditions:

- $a_w = 0.55$
- $m_{\text{CRL}} = 60 \text{ mg}$
- $T = 45^{\circ}\text{C}$

→ **95% conversion (23 h)**
for all compositions

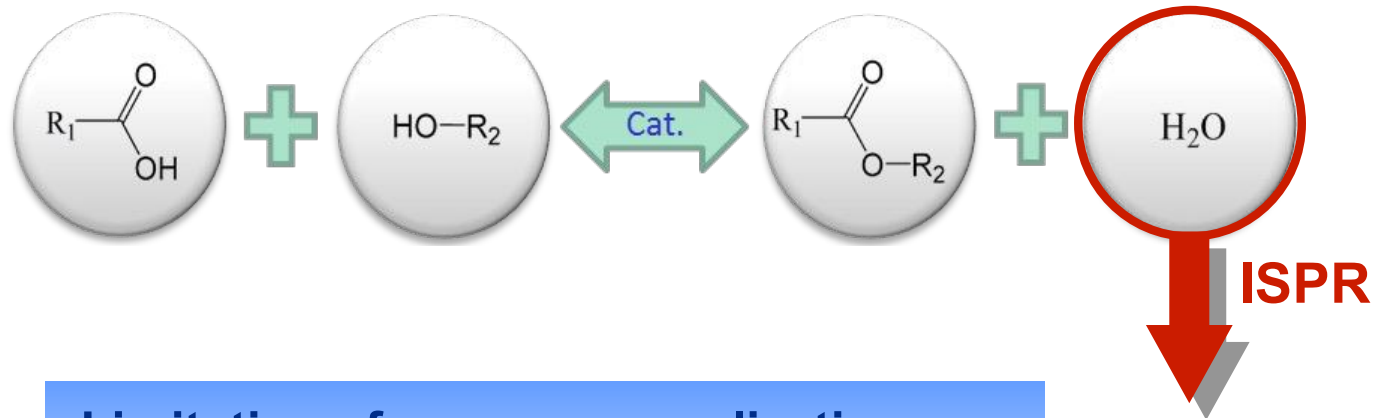
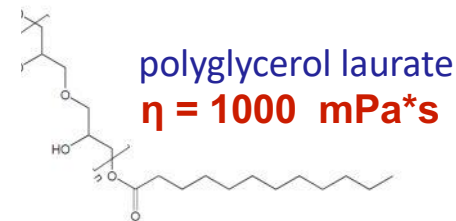
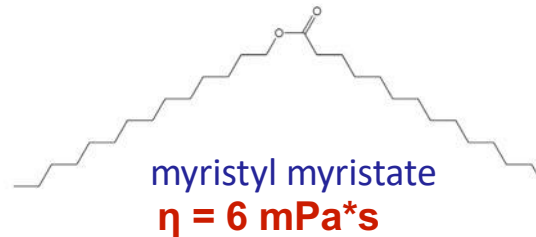
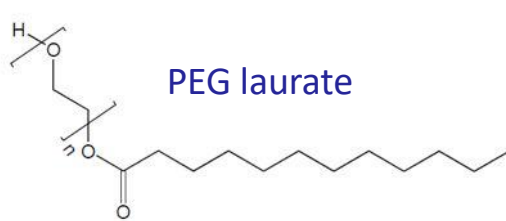
Comparison of Reaction Systems

Reaction system	Productivity $g L^{-1} d^{-1}$	E-factor
 DES	205	2.2
 biphasic DES + water	133	1.8
 controlled water activity	443	1.1


$$E\text{-factor} = \frac{m_{waste}}{m_{product}}$$

bulk	< 1 – 5
fine	up to 50
pharma	up to 100

Fatty Acid Esters – NEAT Synthesis



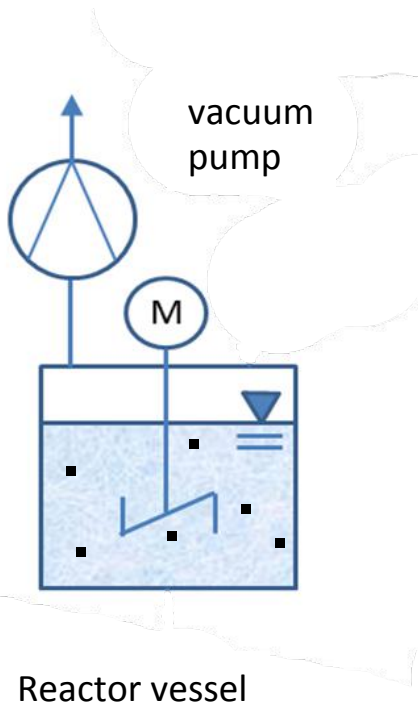
Limitations for process realization

- equilibrium of reaction
- difference in polarity
- viscosity  **high temperature**

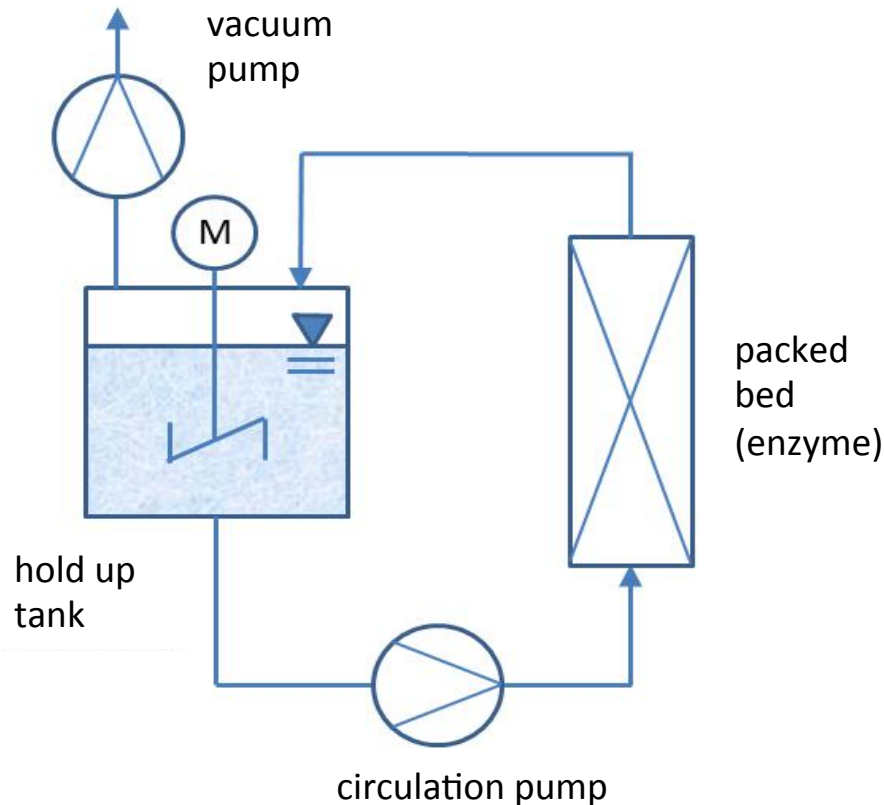


Multiphase Reactor Types

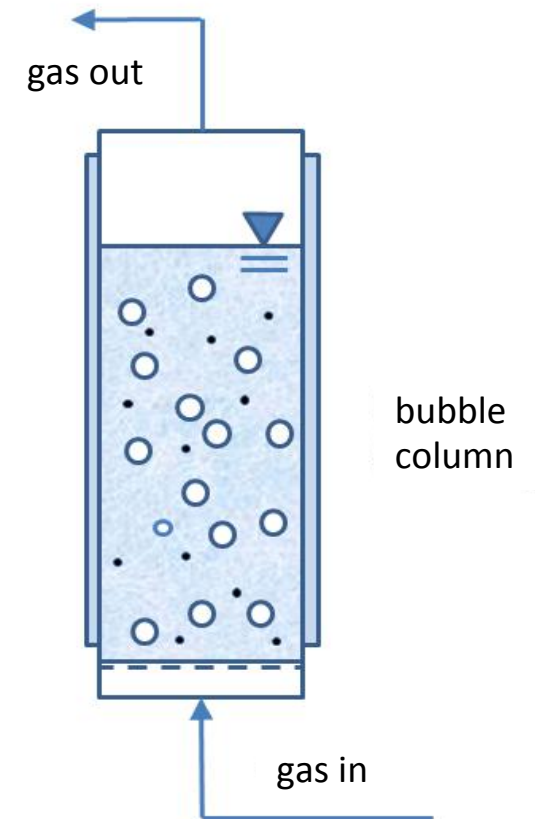
STR



packed bed reactor



bubble column reactor

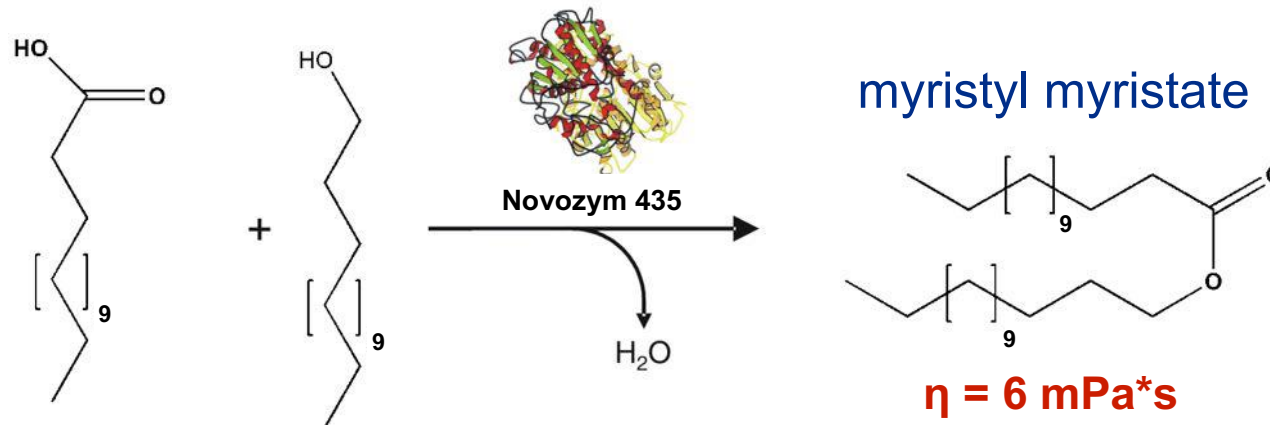


simultaneous water removal & reaction

separated water removal & reaction

simultaneous water removal & reaction

Comparison of Reactor Concepts



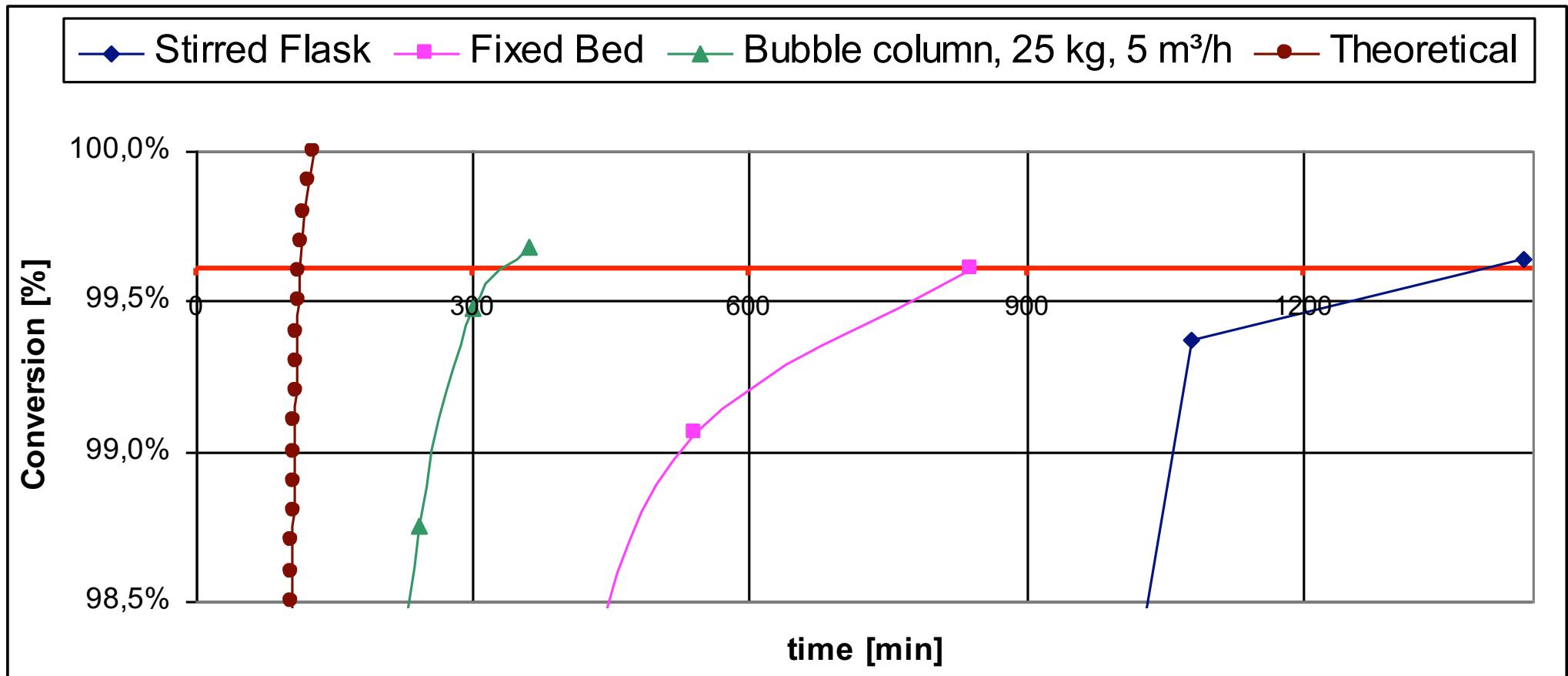
nonpolar substrates & product

- all reactions: 0.4 weight-% Novo 435
- “stirred tank”: 1 L stirred flask, 60°C, 5 mbar
- “fixed bed”: fresh enzyme
- “bubble column”: pilot plant scale
- ”theoretical”: integrated Michaelis Menten equation:

$$TR_n = \frac{[S_0] - [S]}{v_{\max}} + \frac{K_M}{v_{\max}} \cdot \ln \frac{[S_0]}{[S]}$$

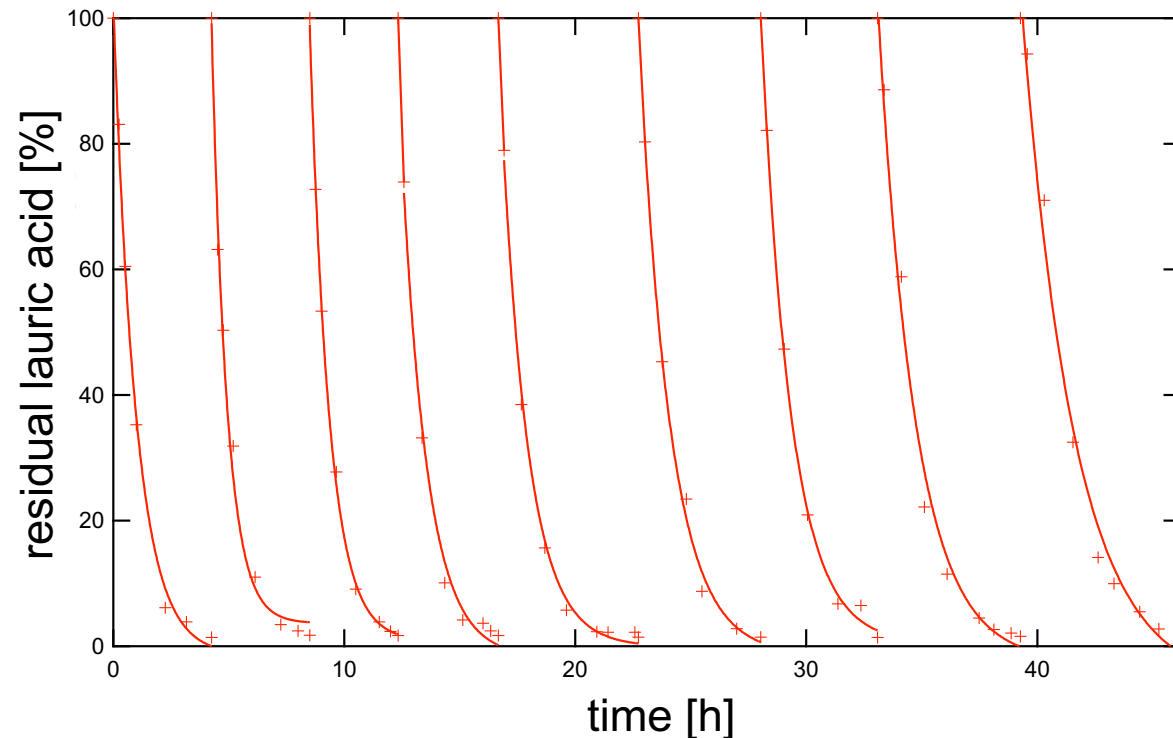
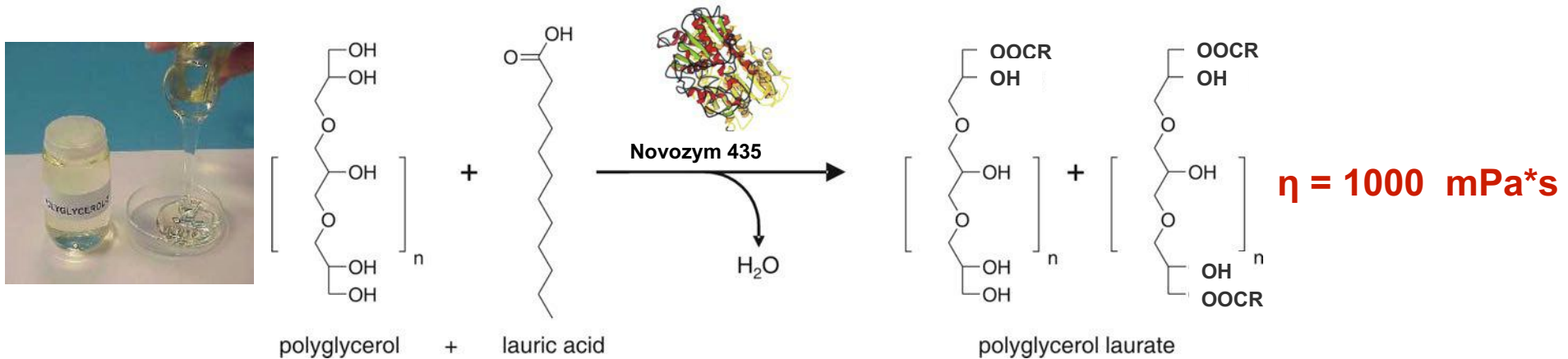


Comparison of Reactor Concepts

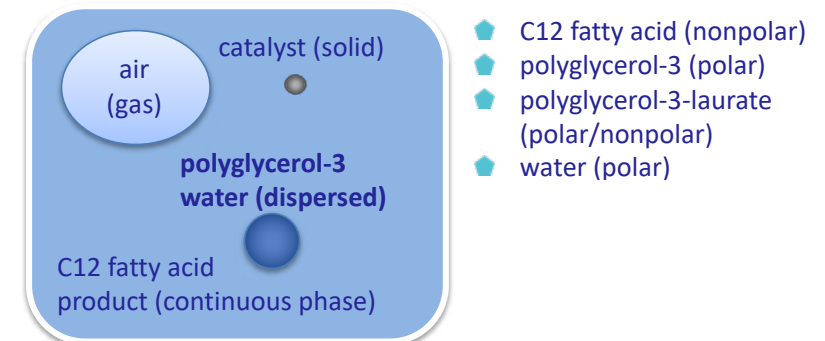


- bubble column in pilot scale cuts reaction time by half

Repetitive Batch @ High Viscosity @ 75 °C



- polar & nonpolar substrates
- 4-phase system



- **Bubble Column Reactors for Enzymatic Esterification**

Pilot trial

Lab Scale (1-2 kg)

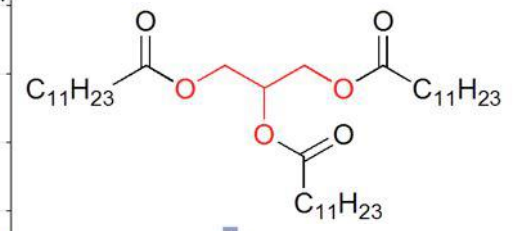
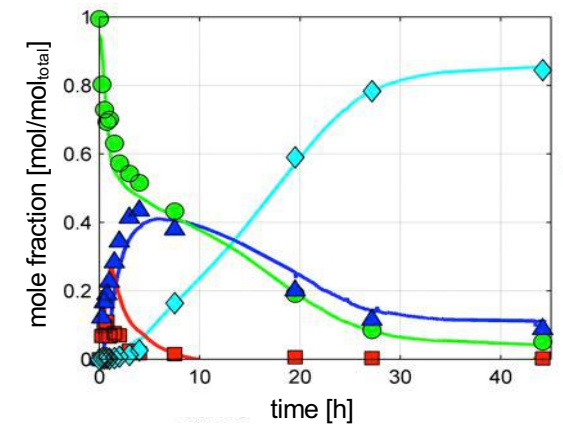
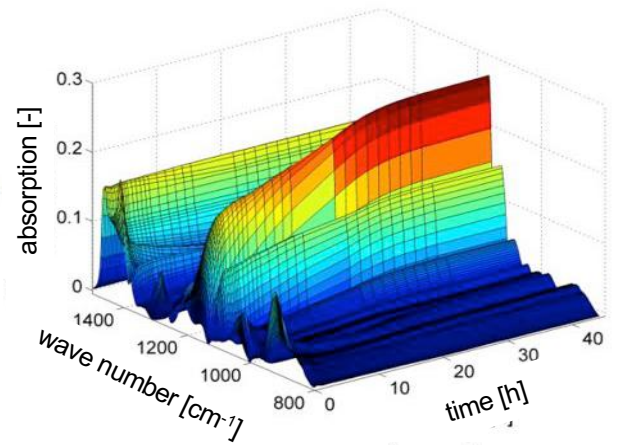
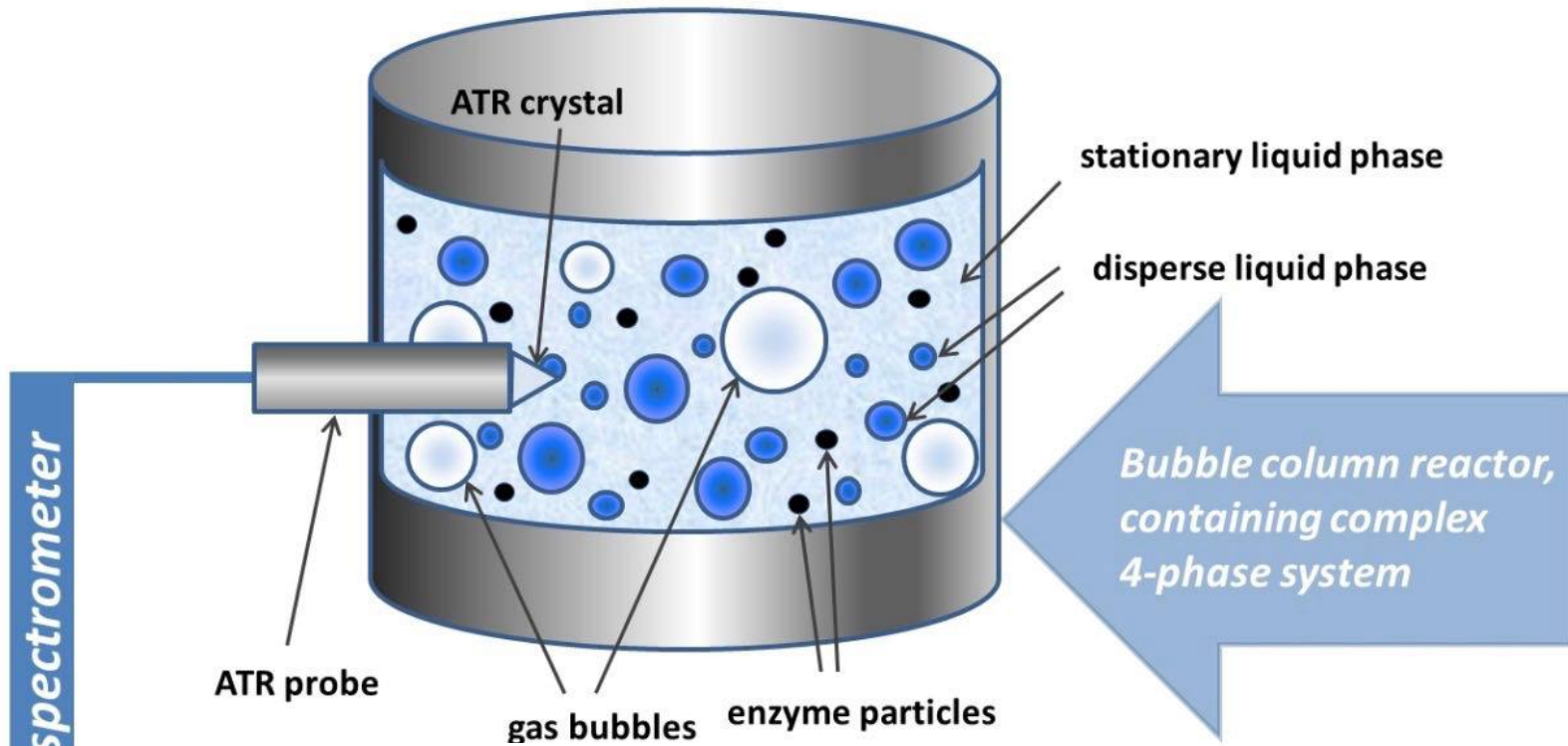


- Efficient mixing of highly viscous mixture (solvent free).
- Avoids high mechanical stress on enzyme carriers and facilitates product water removal.
- Pilot reactor put into operation in 2009.

O. Thum, L. Hilterhaus, A. Liese, **2008**, Ger. Pat. Appl. 102008004726.0, DE 2008P00002

O. Thum, L. Hilterhaus, A. Liese, **2008**, Ger. Pat. Appl. 102008004725.2, DE 2008P00003

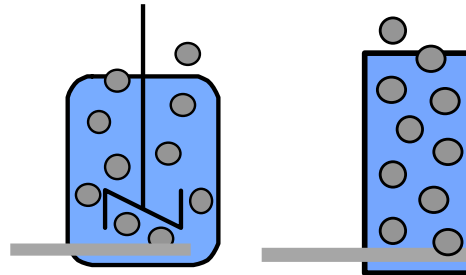
FTIR Inline Analysis in 4-Phase System



J. Müller, M. Neumann, P. Scholl, L. Hilterhaus, M. Eckstein, O. Thum, A. Liese, Anal. Chem. **82** (2010) 6008

J. Müller, S. Baum, L. Hilterhaus, M. Eckstein, O. Thum, A. Liese, Anal. Chem. **83** (24) (2011) 9321

Intensification of Aeration in Biocatalysis

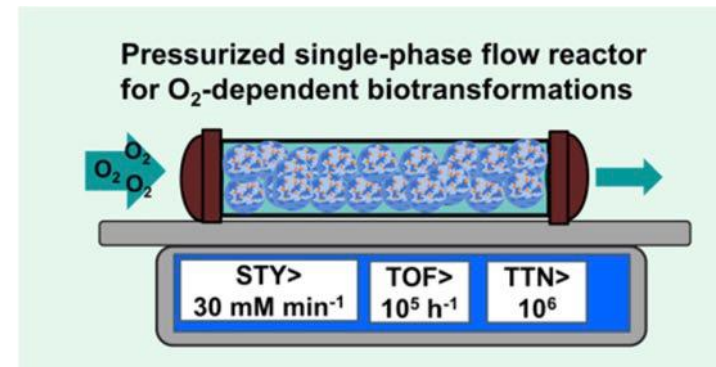


Challenges

- mass transport limitation
- foaming
- high gas consumption
- biocatalyst deactivation

Solutions in Literature

- bubbling with macrobubbles
- diffusive aeration
- *in situ* generation of gas reactant
- overpressure



Intensification of Aeration

diameter $\leq 100 \mu\text{m}$ - fine bubbles

used in various fields

- aquaculture
- agriculture
- water treatment purposes

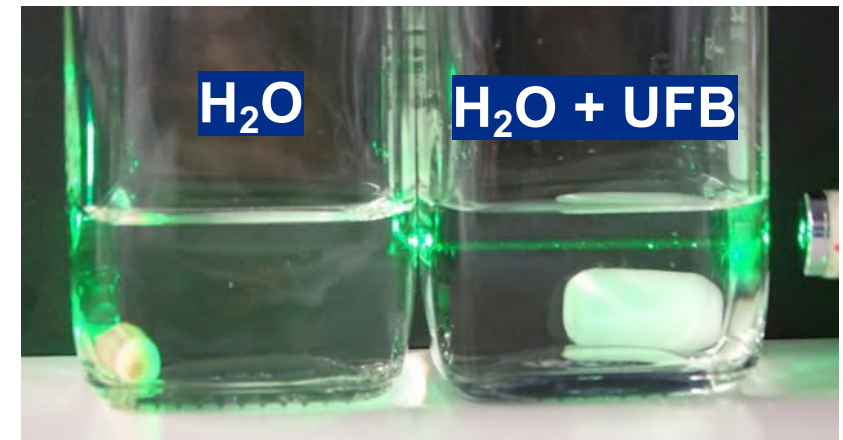
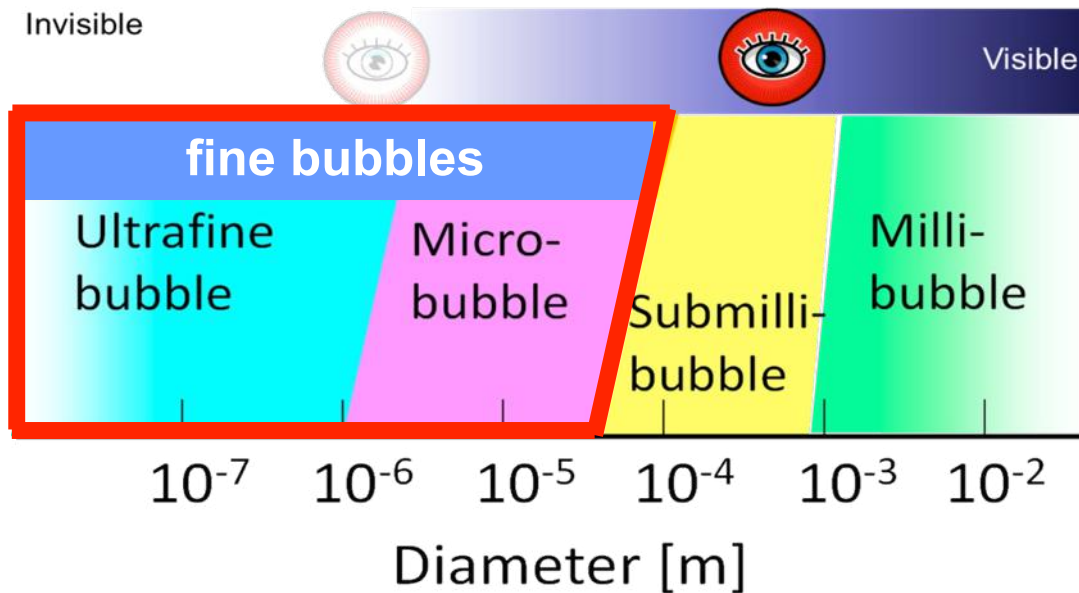
TUHH
Institute of
Multiphase Flows

Prof. Schlüter

Keio University

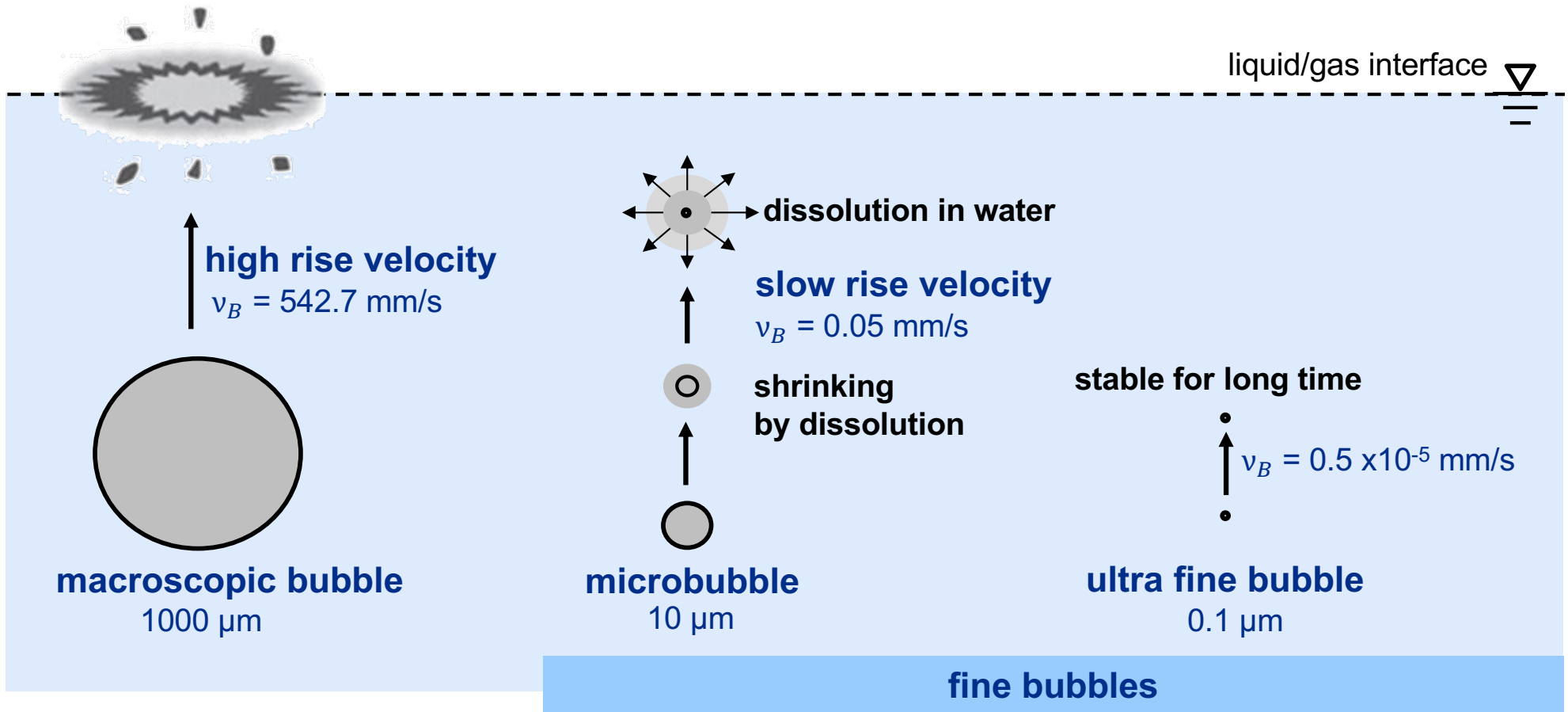


Prof. Terasaka



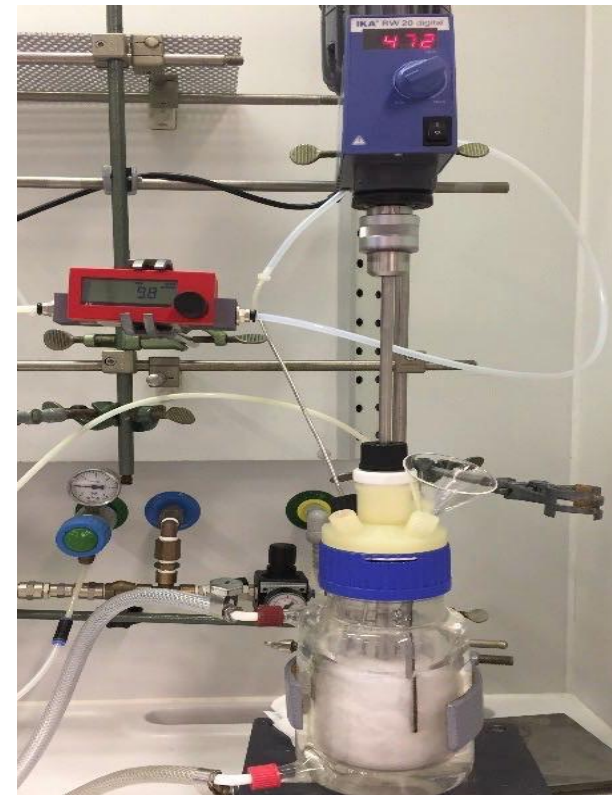
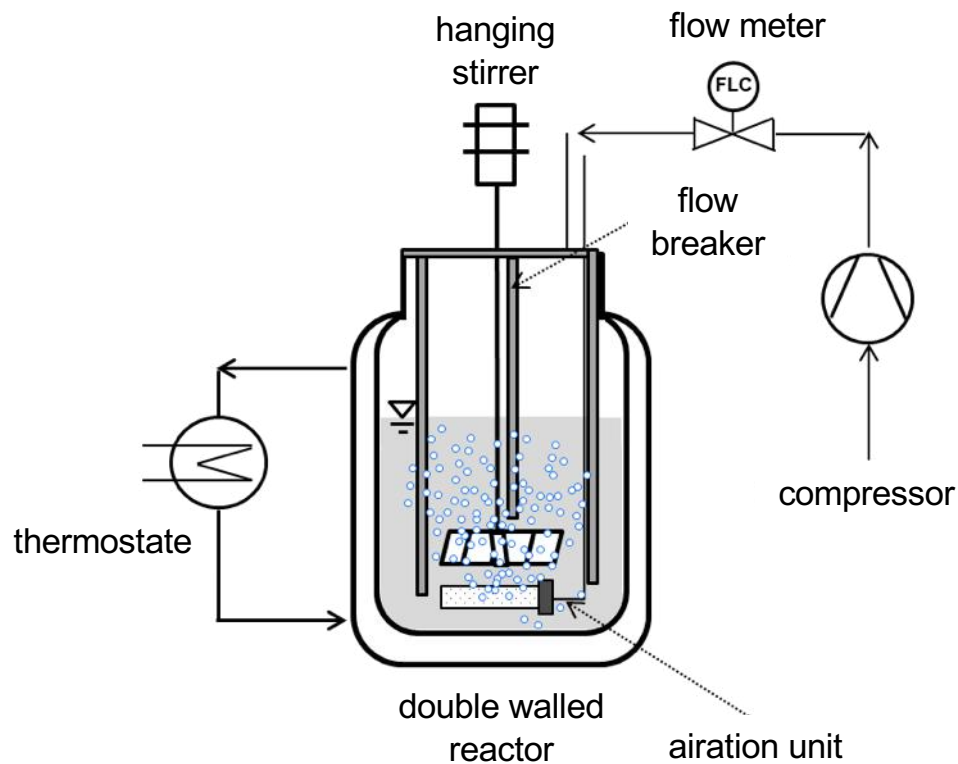
Comparison of Bubble Properties

bursting of bubble (high local shear stress)



- high residence time
- high specific interfacial area
- low foaming / reactant evaporation

Variation of Power Input: Aerators



1 μm SPG membrane

2 μm sintered frit

6 mm open pipe

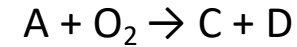
pitched blade impeller



fine bubbles

Oxygen Mass Transfer Performance

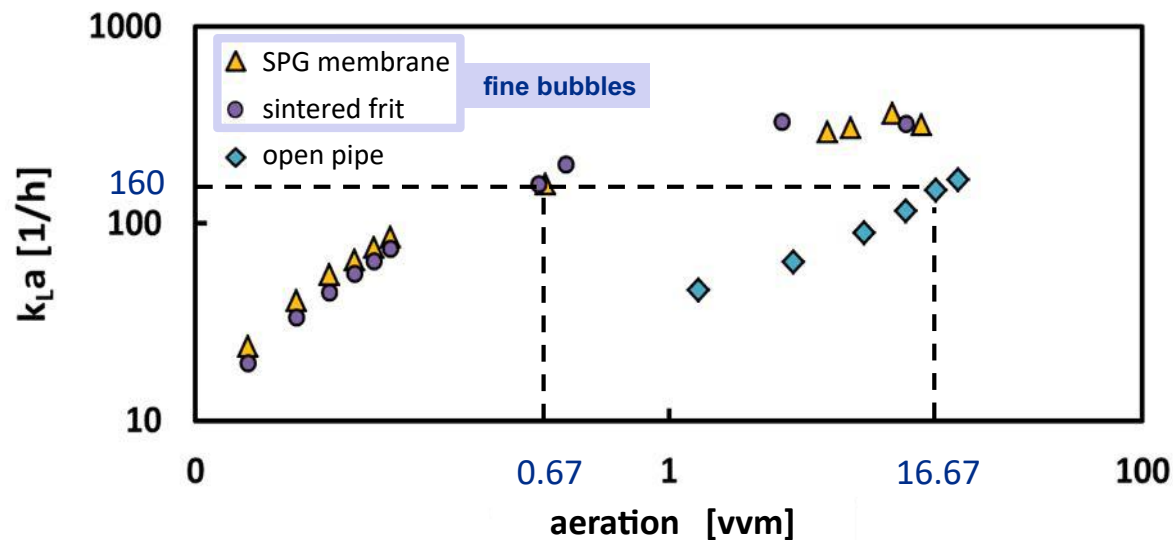
$$\text{OTR} = k_L a \left(C_{\text{O}_2 \text{sat}}^* - C_{\text{O}_2}(t) \right)$$



$$\text{reaction rate} = \frac{V_{\text{max}} \cdot C_A \cdot C_{\text{O}_2}}{K_{m,A} \cdot C_{\text{O}_2} + K_{m,\text{O}_2} \cdot C_A + C_A \cdot C_{\text{O}_2}}$$

- the lower the O_2 mass transfer rate, the slower the reaction rate occurs

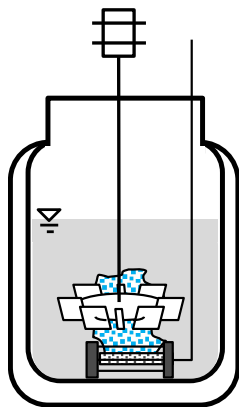
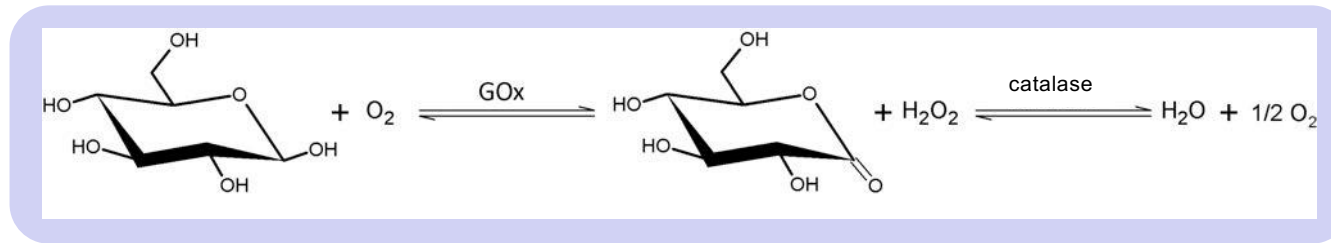
no reaction:



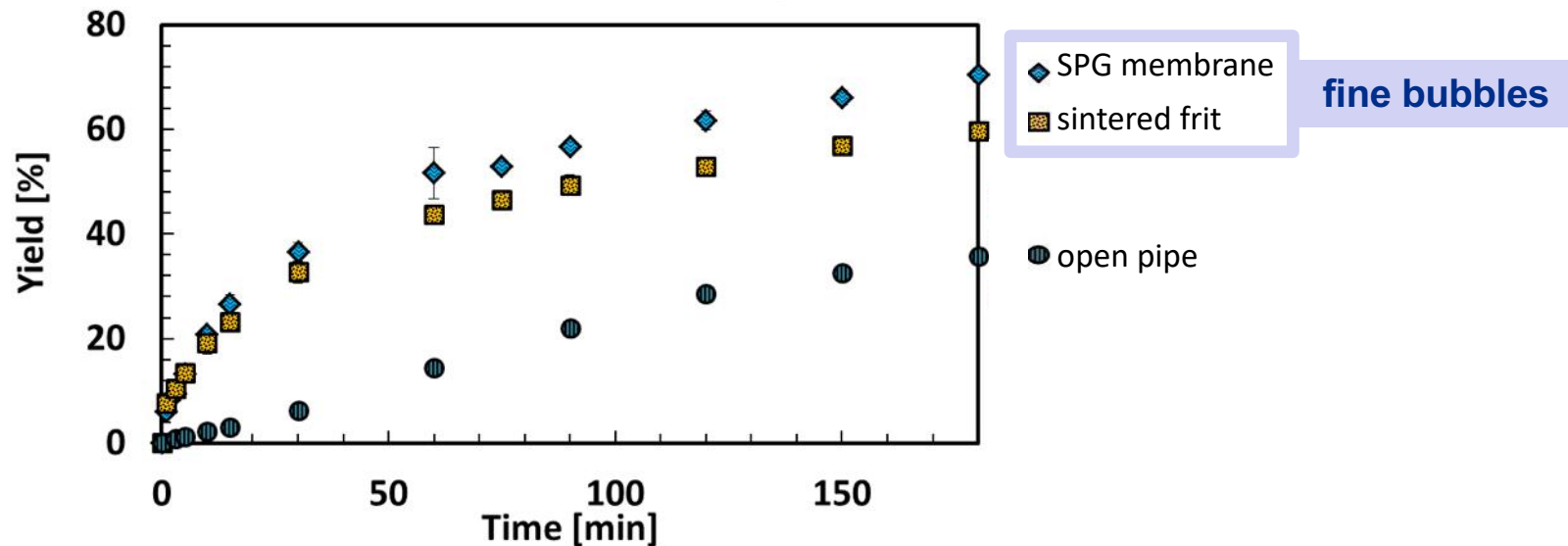
- at 160 h^{-1} **25 times higher gas utilization**

$T = 25^\circ\text{C}$, $V = 300 \text{ ml}$, 500 ml glass double walled reactor, 86 mg/l BSA, 10 mM Na-acetate buffer pH = 5.3, 400 rpm pitch blade turbine

Comparison of Macro / Fine Bubble Aeration



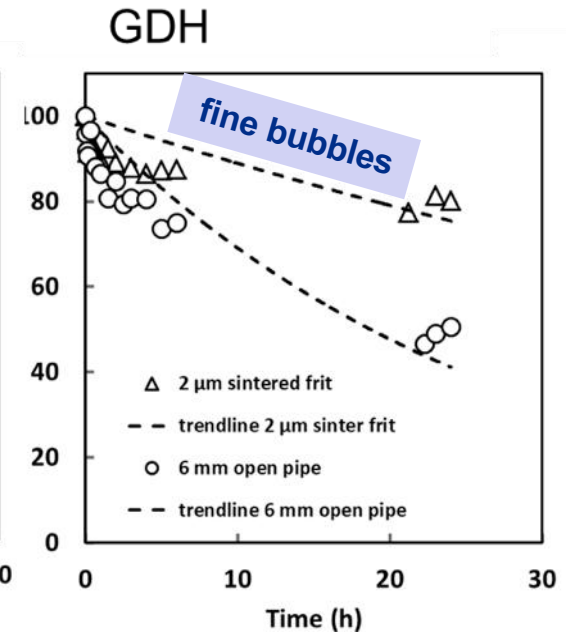
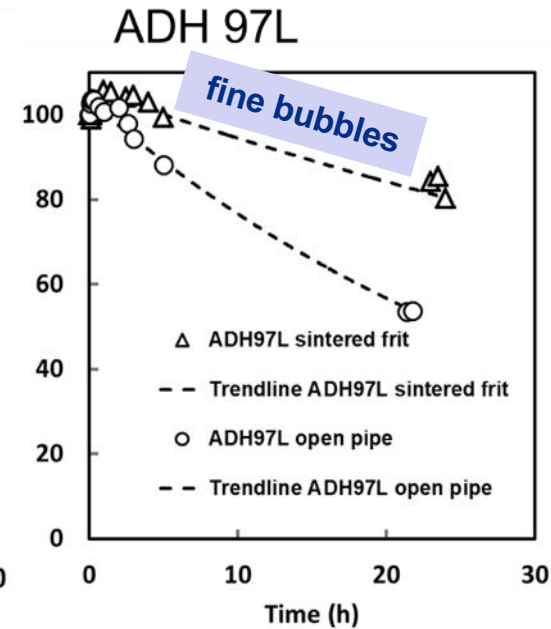
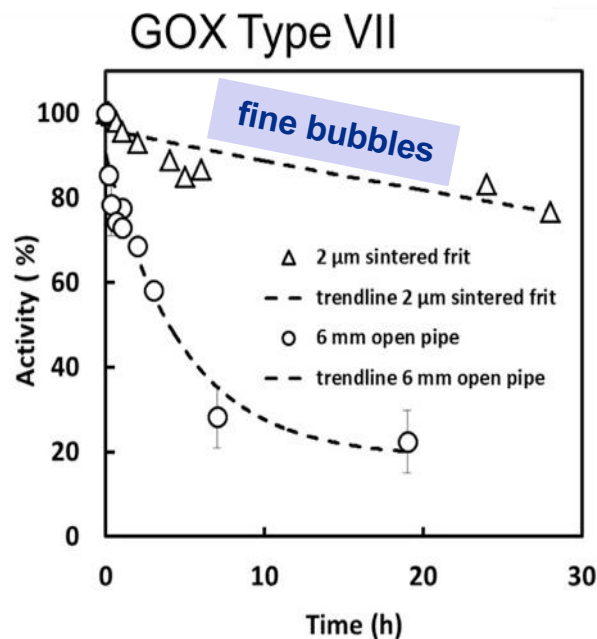
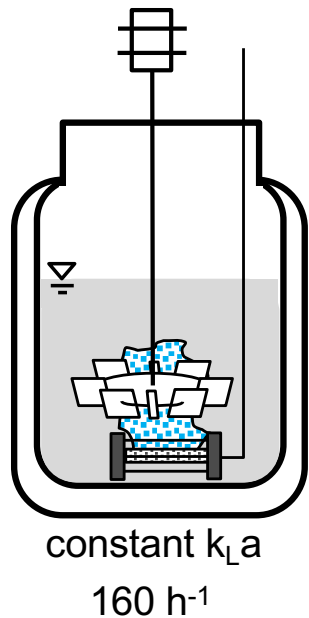
$k_L a$ of 160 h⁻¹



- microbubble aeration with fine bubbles :
equal $k_L a$ performance results in higher yield of 75% after 3 h

T = 35°C, V = 300 ml, 500 ml glass double walled reactor, 0.04 mol glucose, 25 mg GOx, 0.5 mg catalase, pH stat. titration (1 M KOH), 400 rpm Rushton turbine

Intensified Aeration: Enhanced Biocatalyst Stability



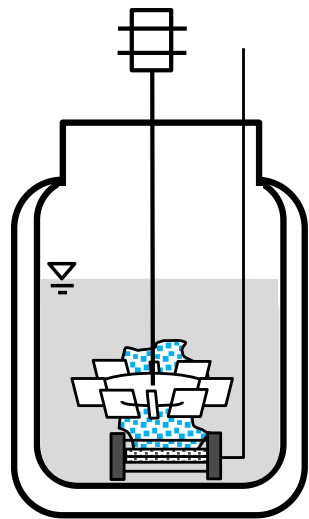
- aeration with fine bubbles

significant increase in enzyme stability

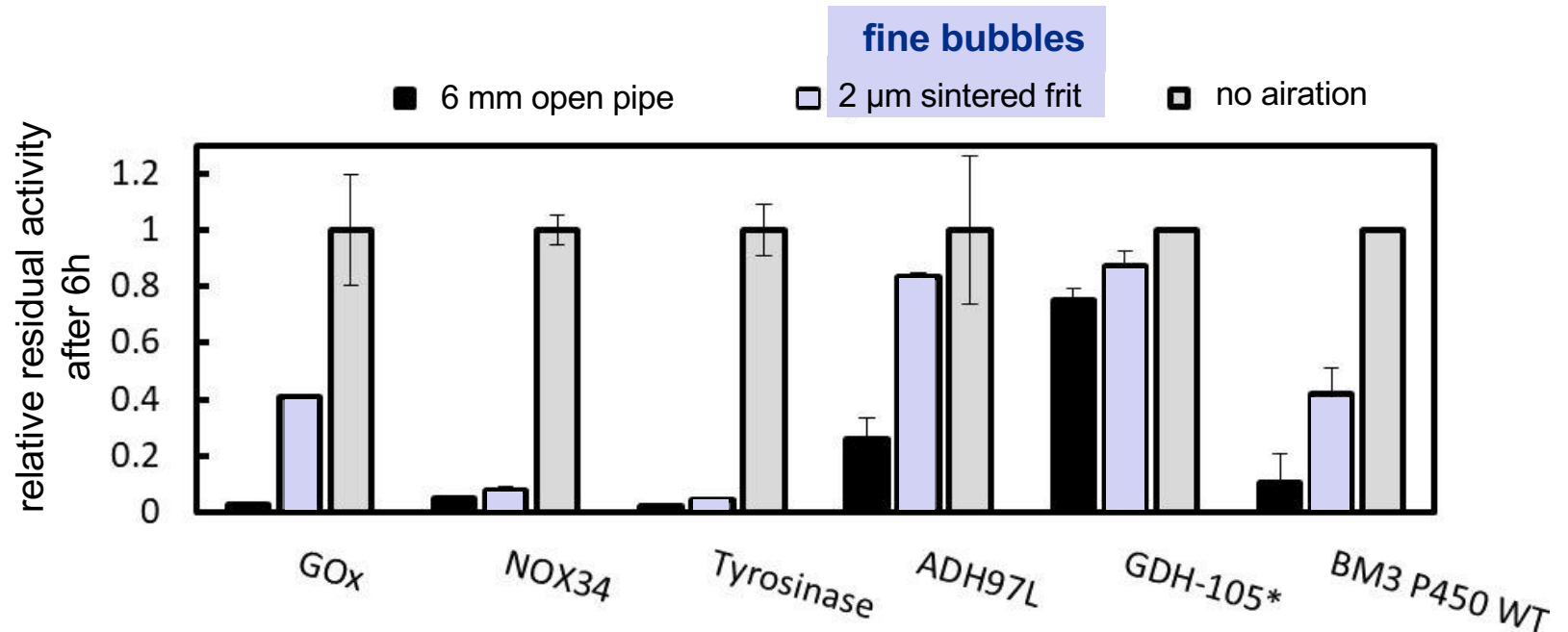
& gas utilization



Intensified Aeration: Enhanced Biocatalyst Stability



constant $k_L a$
 160 h^{-1}



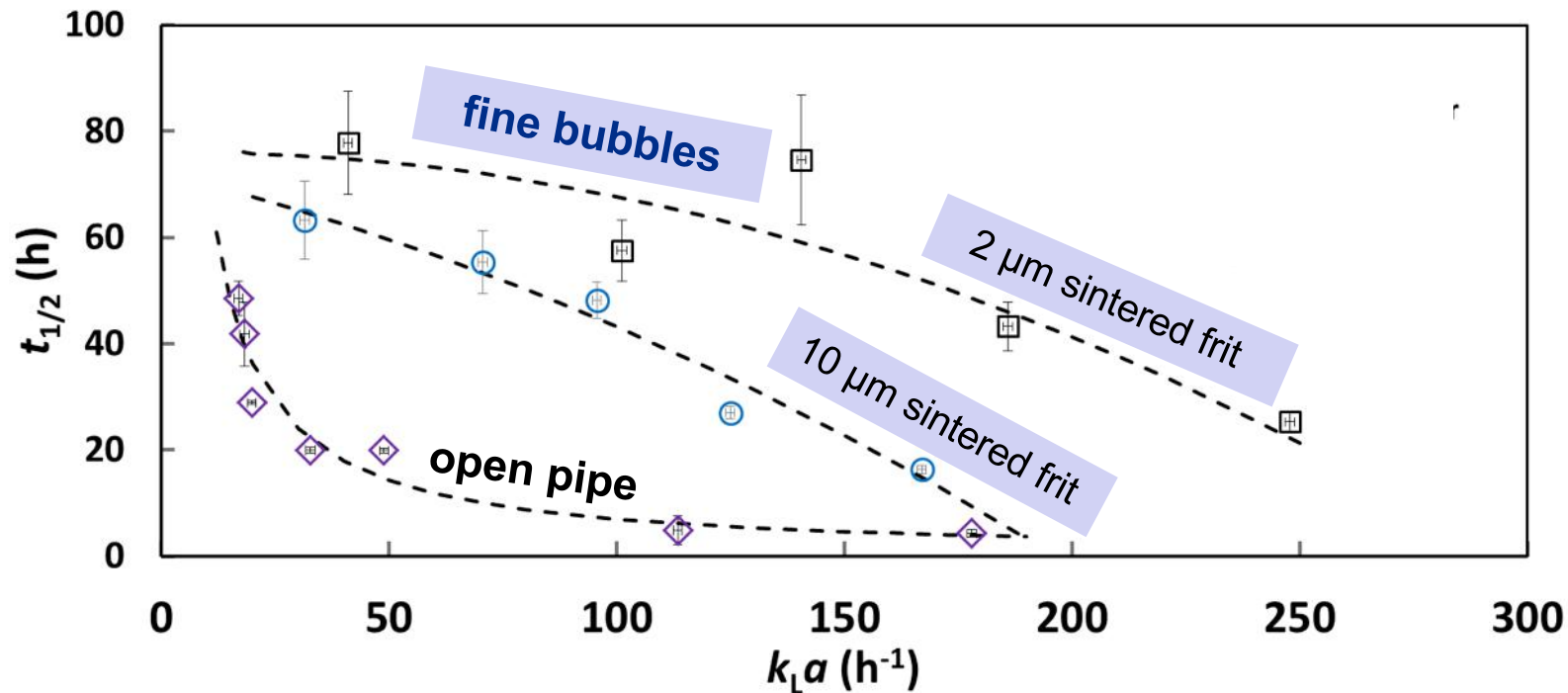
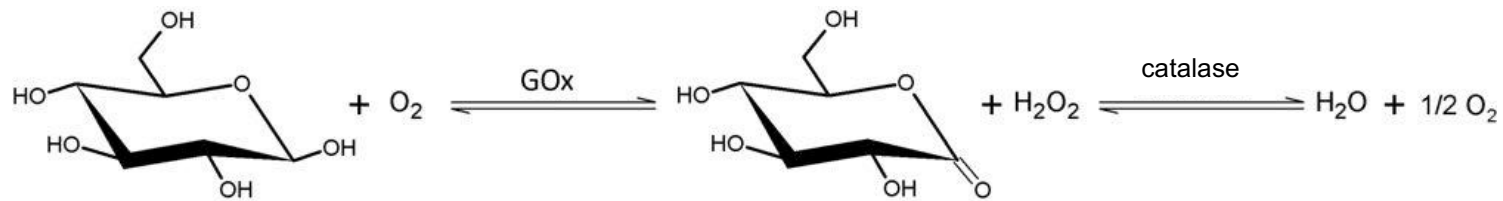
- aeration with fine bubbles

significant increase in enzyme stability

& gas utilization



Enzyme Stability as Function of k_La



optimizing enzyme stability based on k_La and type of aeration

... to be complemented by enzyme engineering

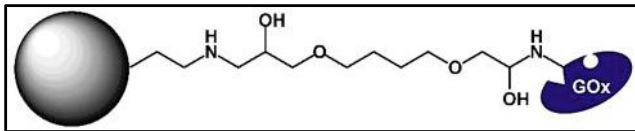
... and immobilization



Establishment of Repetitive Batch

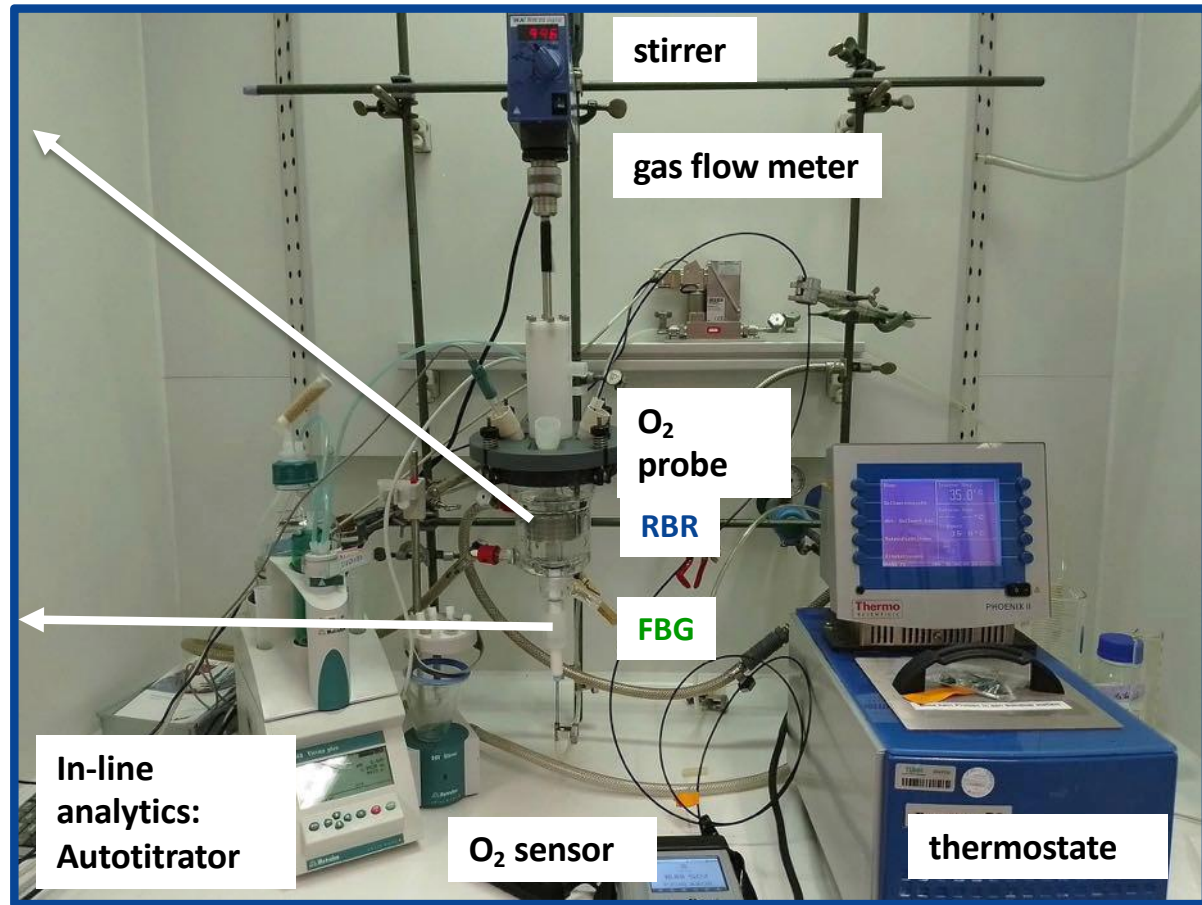
RBR

Rotating packed bed reactor is created.



FBG

pore size 2 μm



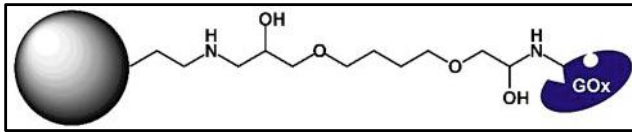
immobilized GOx 8.2 g (Resindion ReliZyme™, 200-500 μm , pore diameter of Resindion ReliZyme™: 40 - 60 nm), 35°C, catalase: 20 U/L, 1000 rpm, 10 mM Na-acetate buffer pH 5.3, glucose 600 mM, V 200 mL, 1 vvm, saturation level of O₂ 21%

Z. Percin, L. Kursula, P. Bubenheim, M. Schlüter, A. Liese, (2023) unpublished

Applicability of FB with Packed Bed in RBR

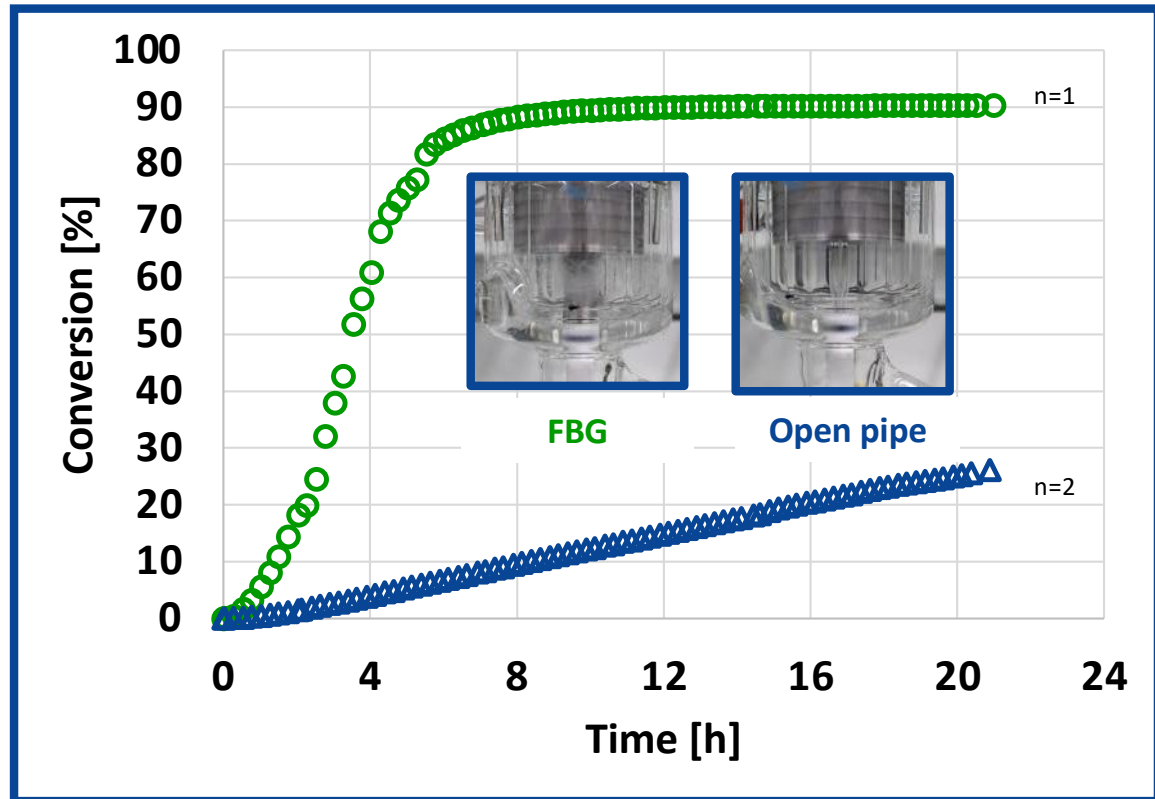
RBR

Rotating packed bed reactor is created.



FBG

pore size 2 μm



- reaction rate: increased 14.5 fold with fine bubble aeration
- significant increase in productivity

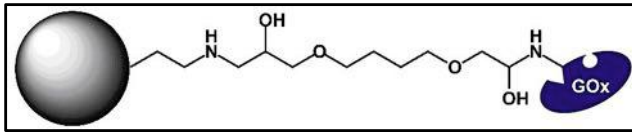
immobilized GOx 8.2 g (Resindion ReliZyme™, 200-500 μm , pore diameter of Resindion ReliZyme™: 40 - 60 nm), 35°C, catalase: 20 U/L, 1000 rpm, 10 mM Na-acetate buffer pH 5.3, glucose 600 mM, V 200 mL, 1 vvm, saturation level of O₂ 21%

Z. Percin, L. Kursula, P. Bubenheim, M. Schlüter, A. Liese, (2023) unpublished

Validation in Repetitive Batch

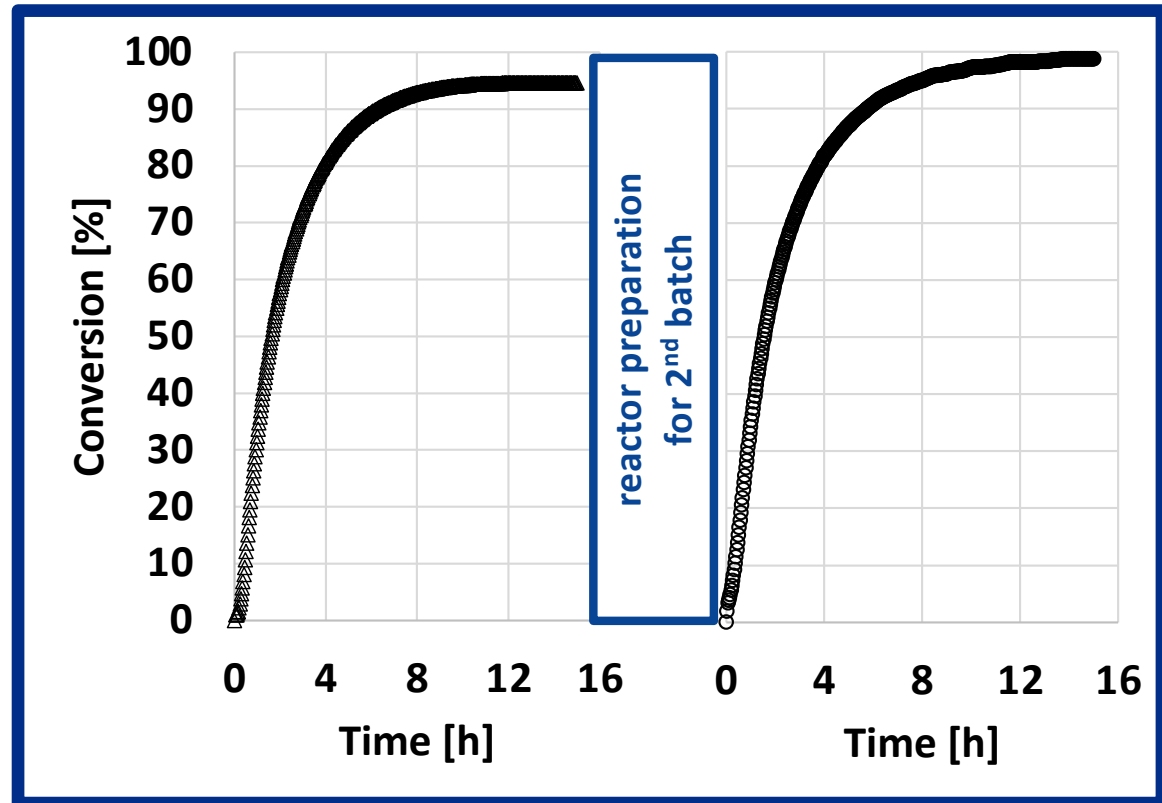
RBR

Rotating packed bed reactor is created.



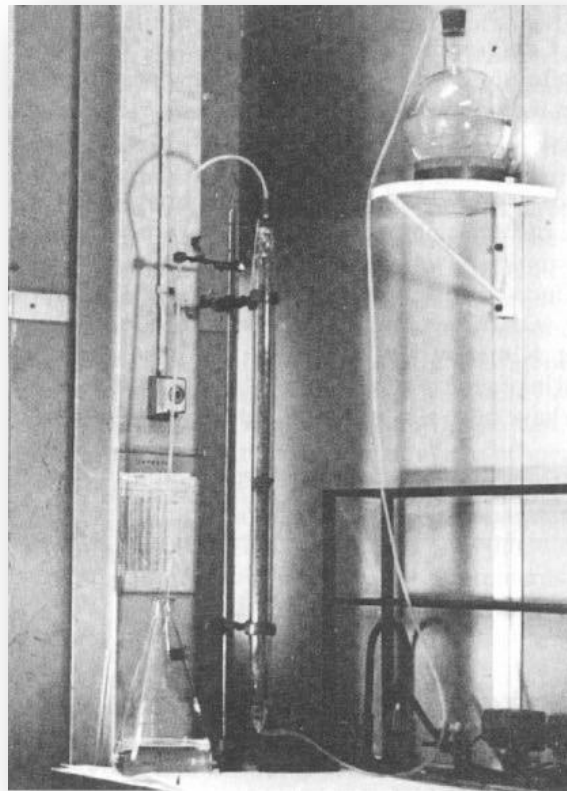
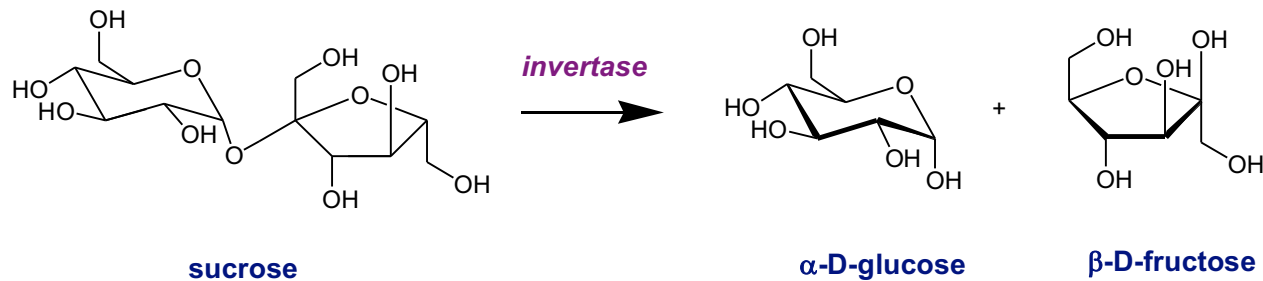
FBG

pore size 2 μm



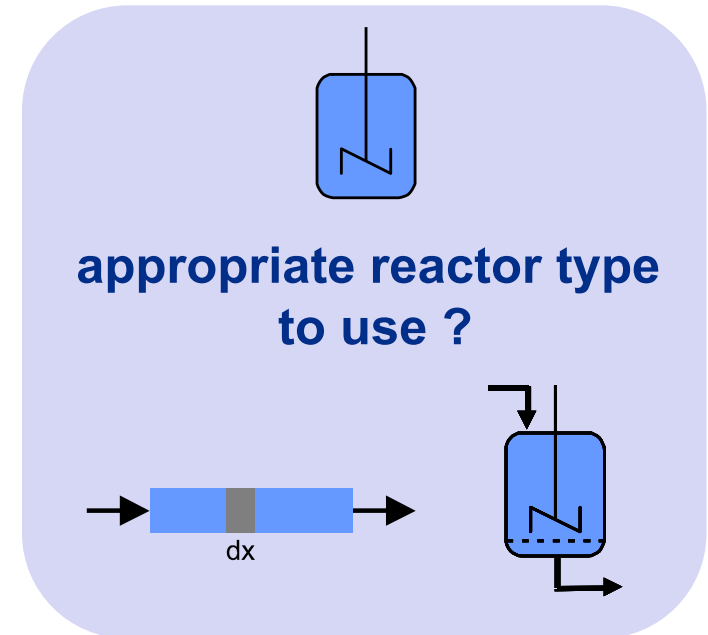
- **fine bubble aeration** leads to **less gas consumption / foaming**
- significant increase in **enzyme stability by fine bubbles**
- opens up **new operation windows** for biotransformations

Flow Chemistry in Biocatalysis – A New Old Topic ?!



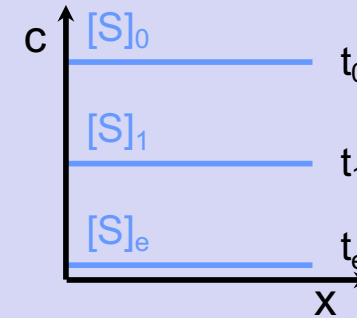
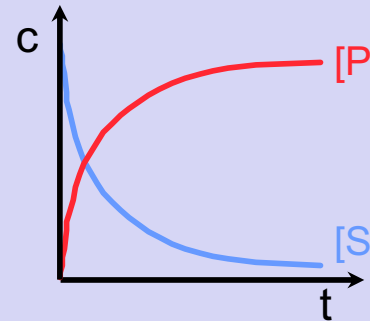
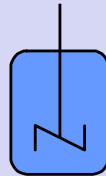
Immobilization of
invertase on
charcoal
demonstrated
with retention of
activity

*(Nelson and
Griffin, 1916)*

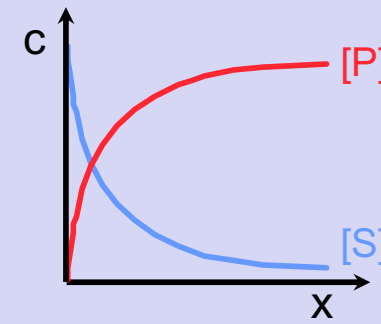
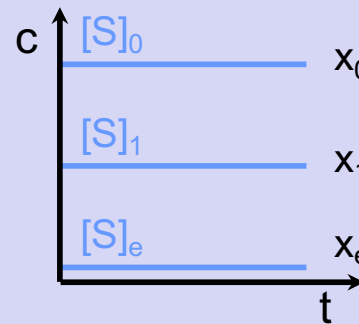


Characterization of Fundamental Reactor Types

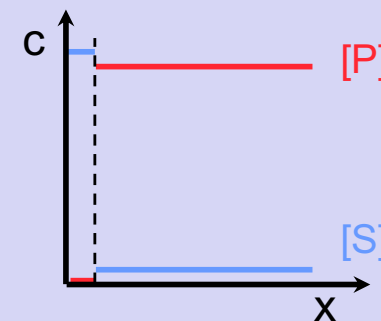
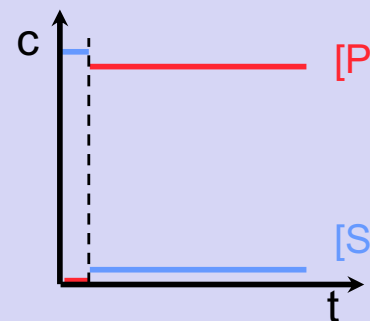
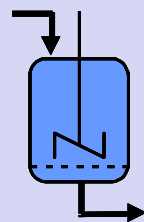
batch reactor:



plug flow reactor (PFR):



continuously operated stirred tank reactor (CSTR):



Characterization of Fundamental Reactor Types

batch reactor:



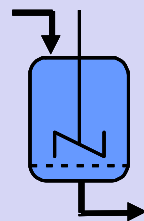
Learning Points

plug flow reactor (PFR):



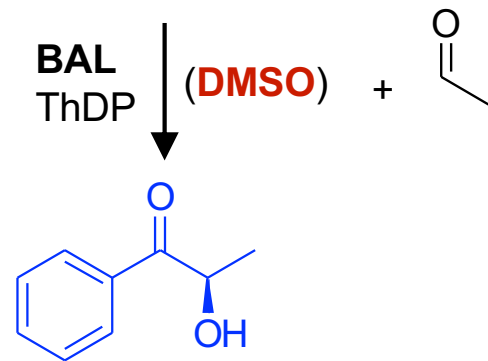
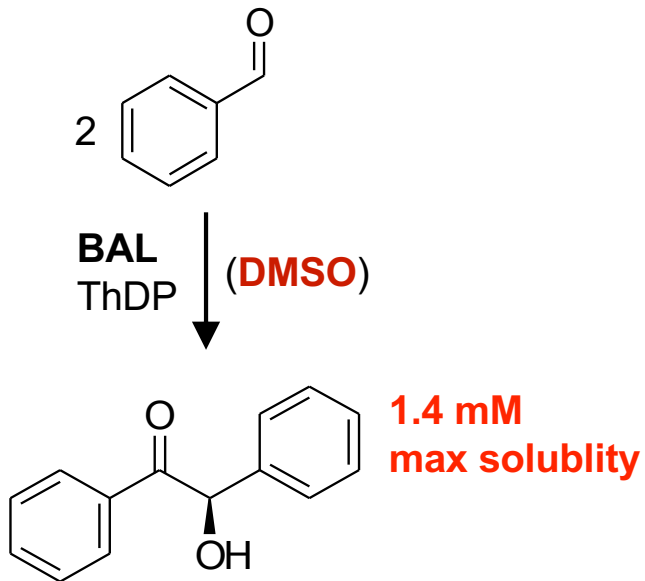
performance = batch
continuous version
of batch

continuously operated stirred
tank reactor (CSTR):



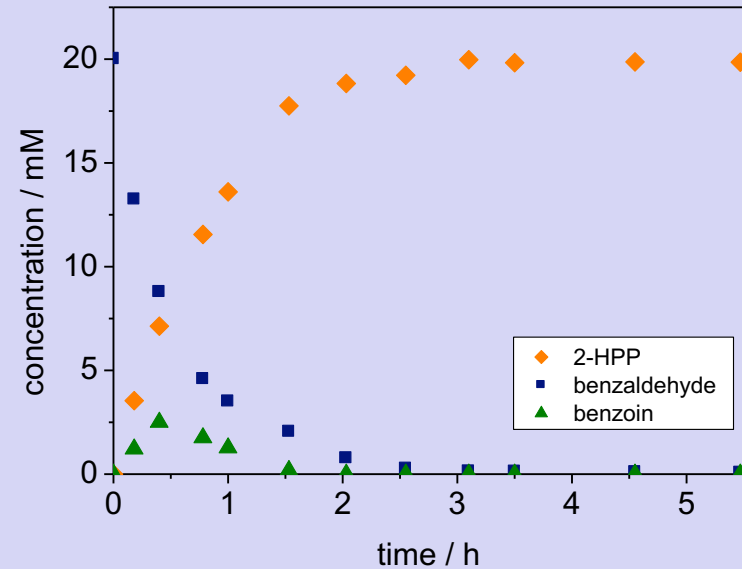
performance \neq batch
outflow conditions

Appropriate Reactor For Continuous Synthesis



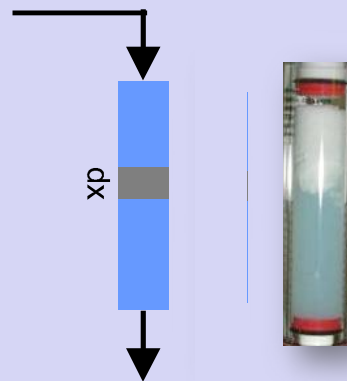
(*R*)-2-Hydroxy-1-phenylpropanon
ee > 99%

batch

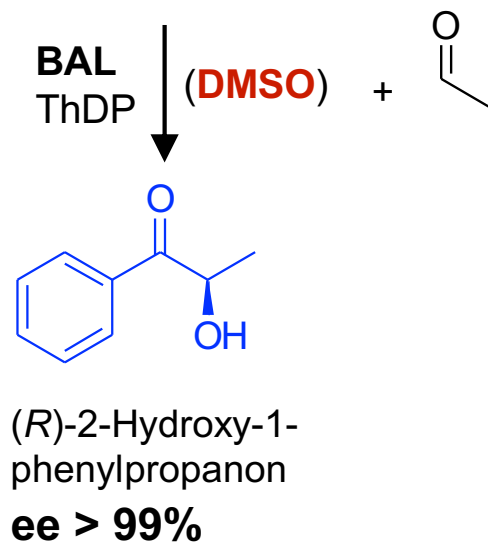
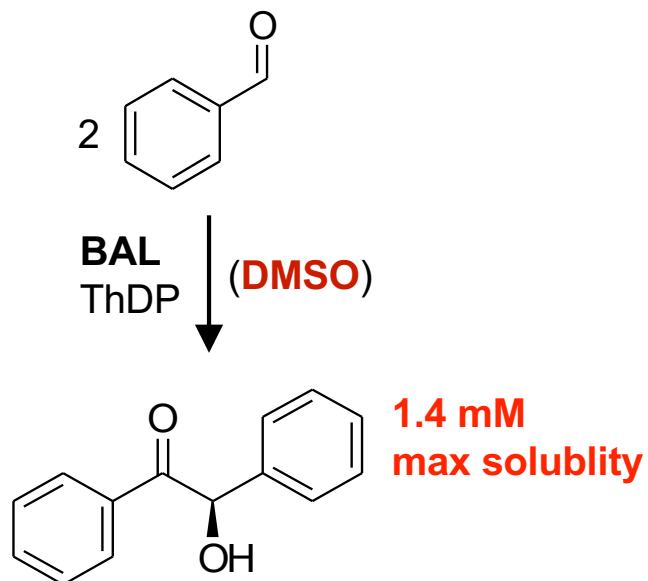


20 mM benzaldehyde,
60 mM acetaldehyde,
30 vol% DMSO,
100 mg BAL on 11 mL NiNTA,
35 mM TEA (pH 8.0),
0.5 mM ThDP/MgSO₄

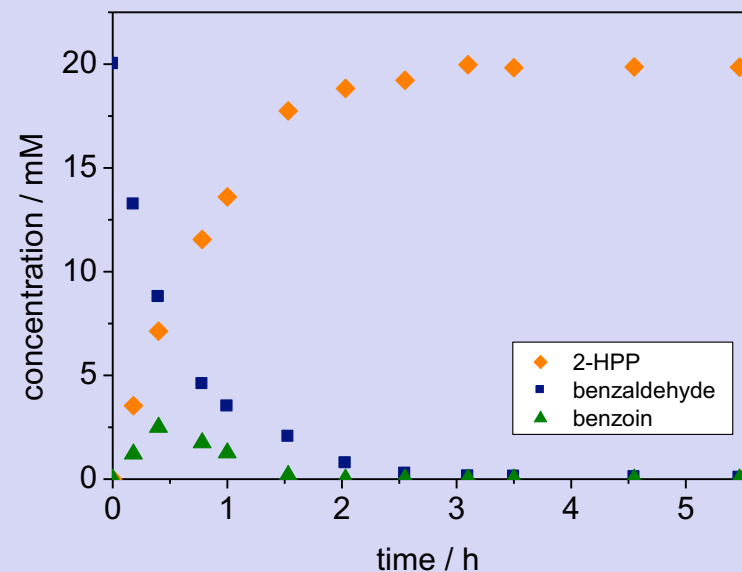
continuous (PFR)



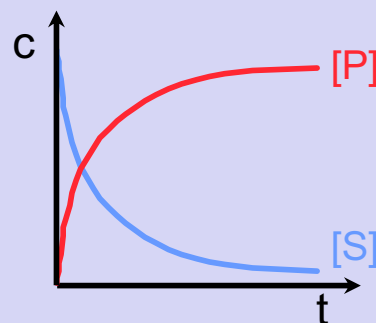
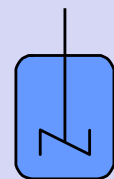
Appropriate Reactor For Continuous Synthesis



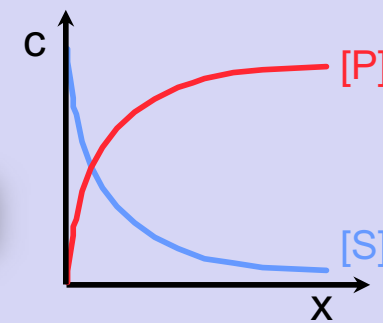
batch



batch:

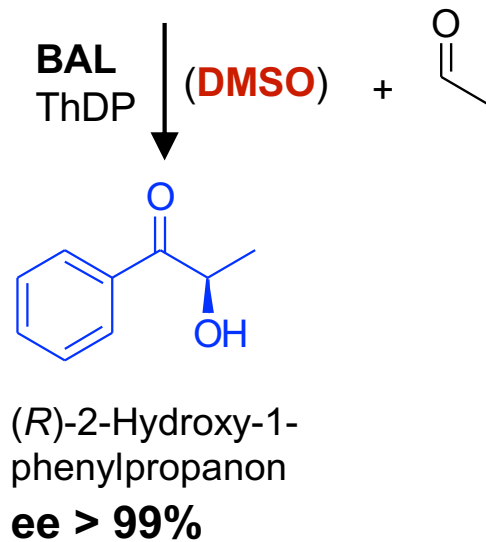
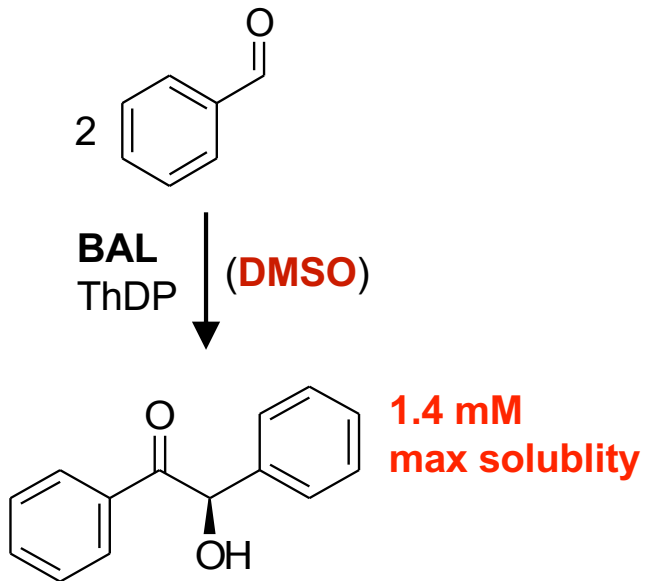


PFR = CPBR:

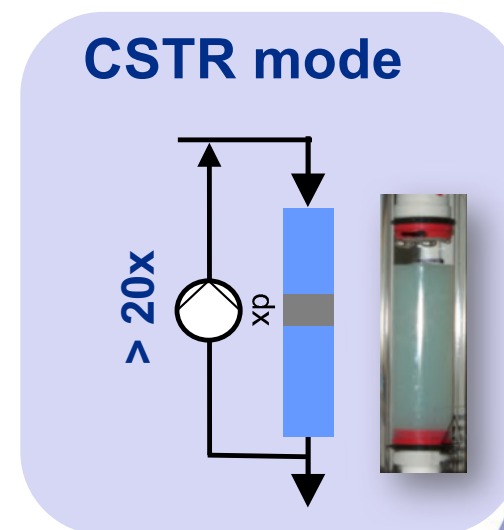
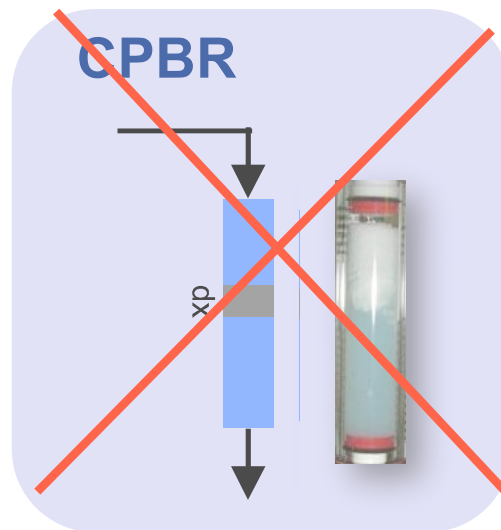
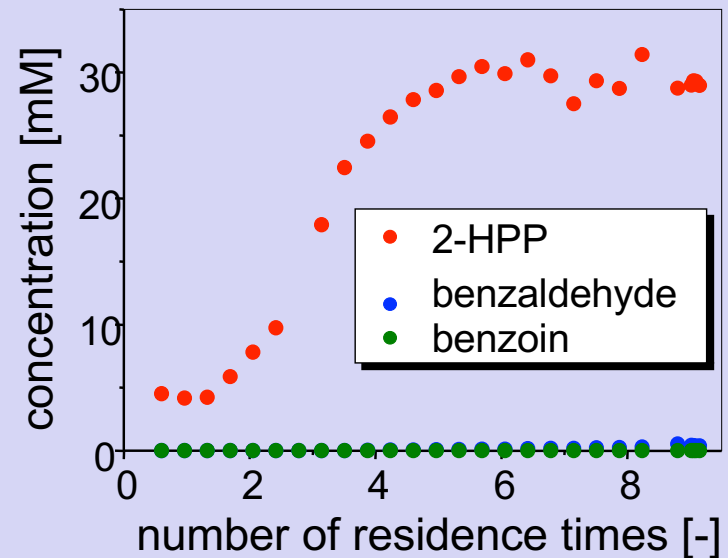


Redesign of Reactor Operation

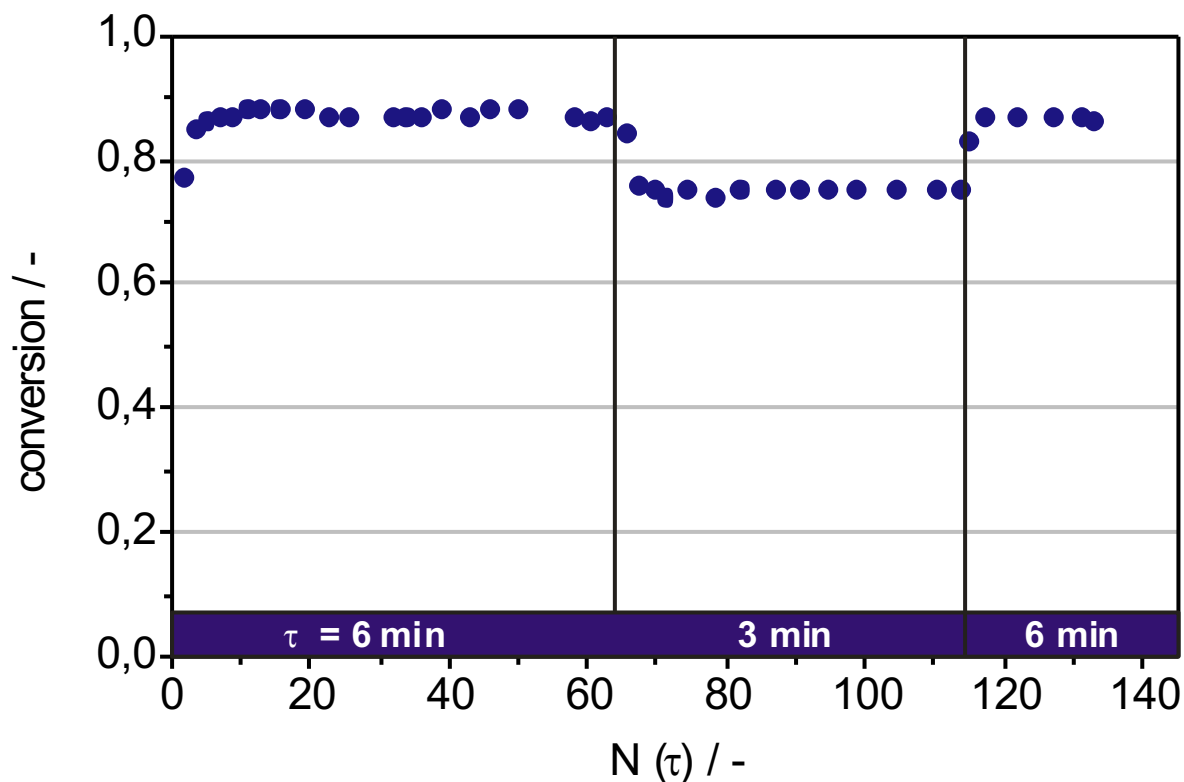
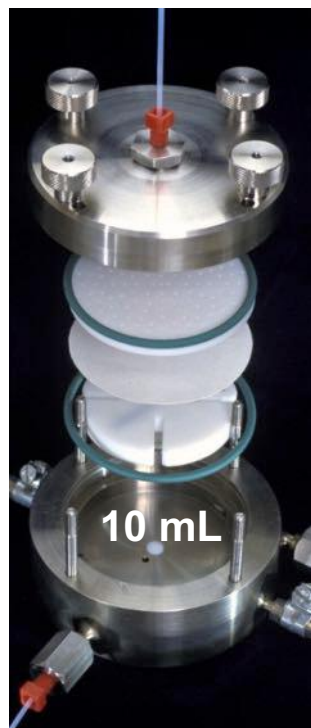
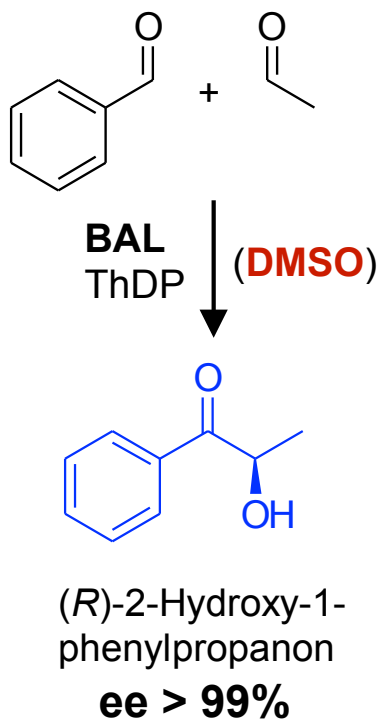
PFR → CSTR



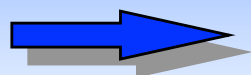
CSTR



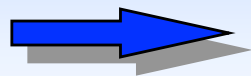
Flow Chemistry: (*R*)-2-HPP Synthesis



space-time yield



τ = 6 min : 650 g L⁻¹ d⁻¹



τ = 3 min : 1120 g L⁻¹ d⁻¹

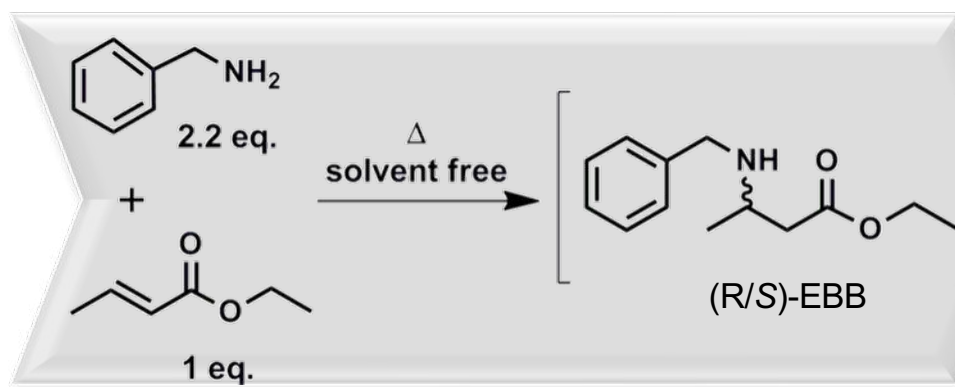
20	mM	benzaldehyde
80	mM	acetaldehyde
35	mM	TEA buffer (pH 8.0)
0.35	mM	ThDP
0.35	mM	MgSO ₄
30	vol%	DMSO
285	U/mL	BAL

One-pot Chemoenzymatic Reaction Sequence

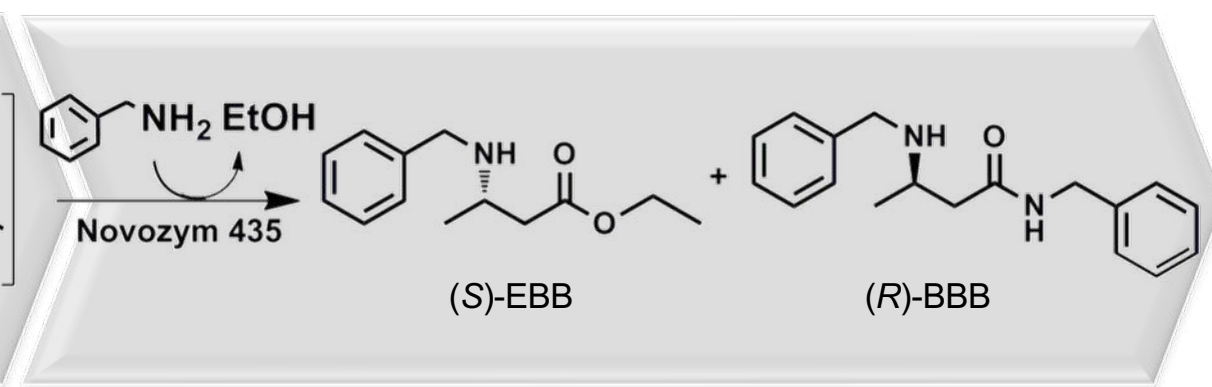
cooperation with Dr. M. Weiß, Prof. H. Gröger

Universität Bielefeld

1. aza-Michael addition

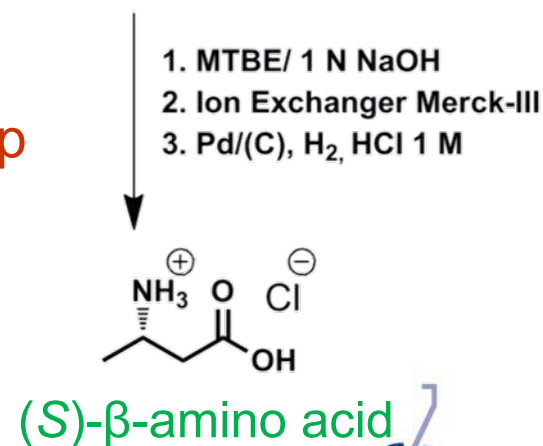


2. selective aminolysis



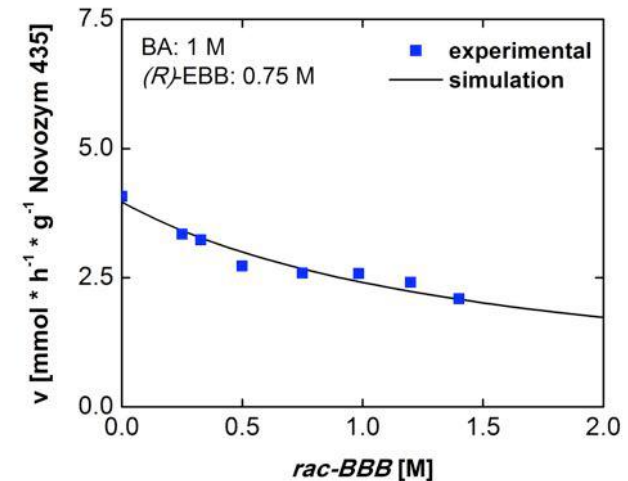
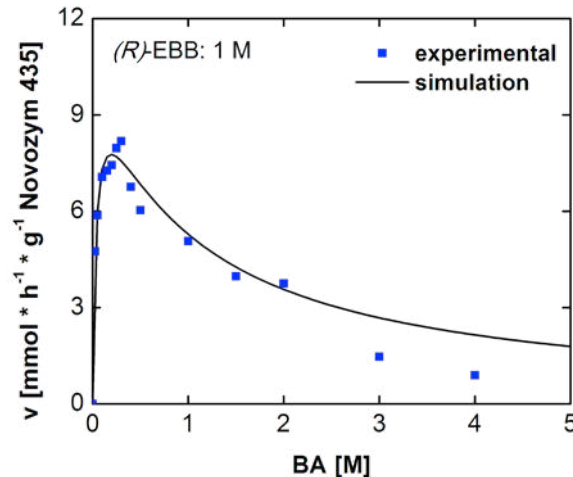
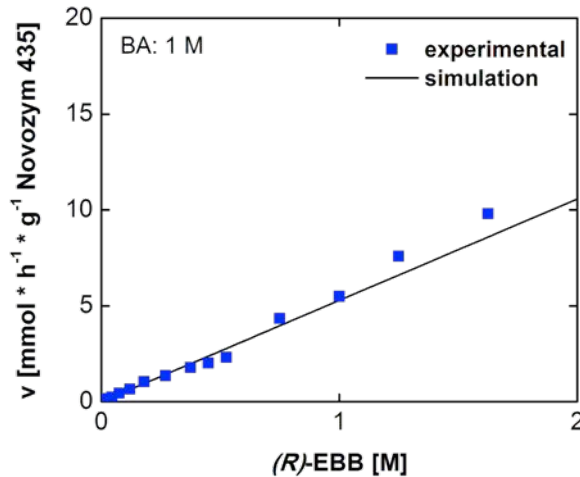
- solvent free
- high enantiomeric excess (99%)
- aim: setup of continuous process

3. work-up

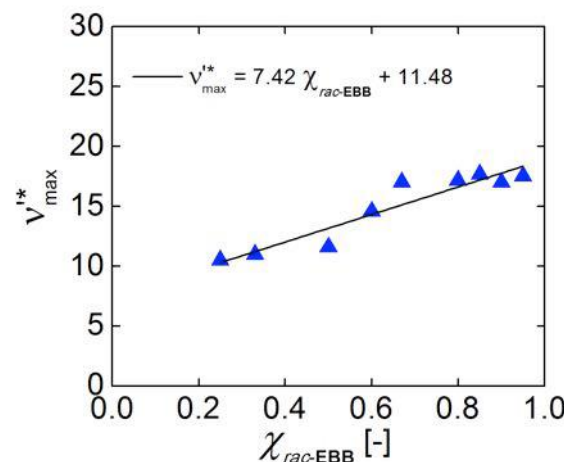
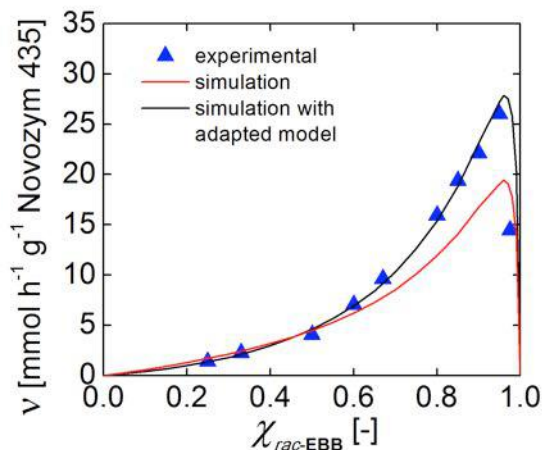


Transfer from Solvent to Neat Kinetics (Aminolysis)

THF: Kinetics “as usual”



- Neat: Kinetic parameters affected by solvent effects of reactants

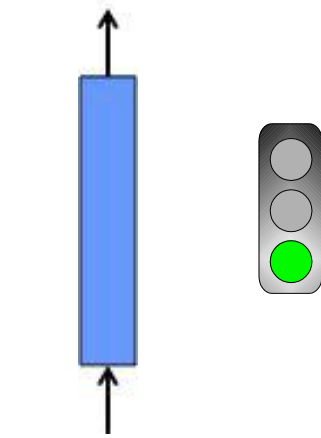


➔ neat substrates = solvents

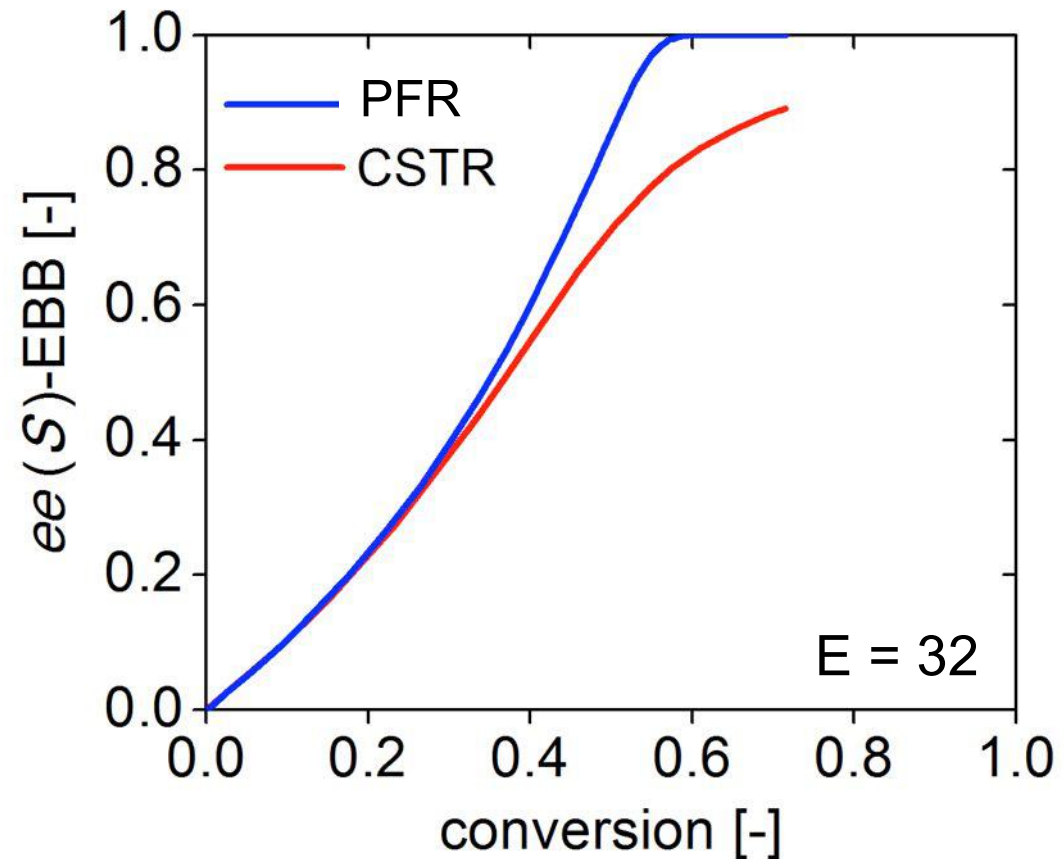
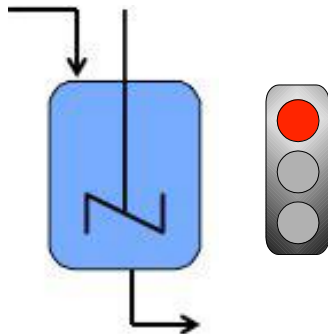
Selection of Continuously Operated Reactor Type

Application of kinetic model for prediction of enantiomeric excess

PFR



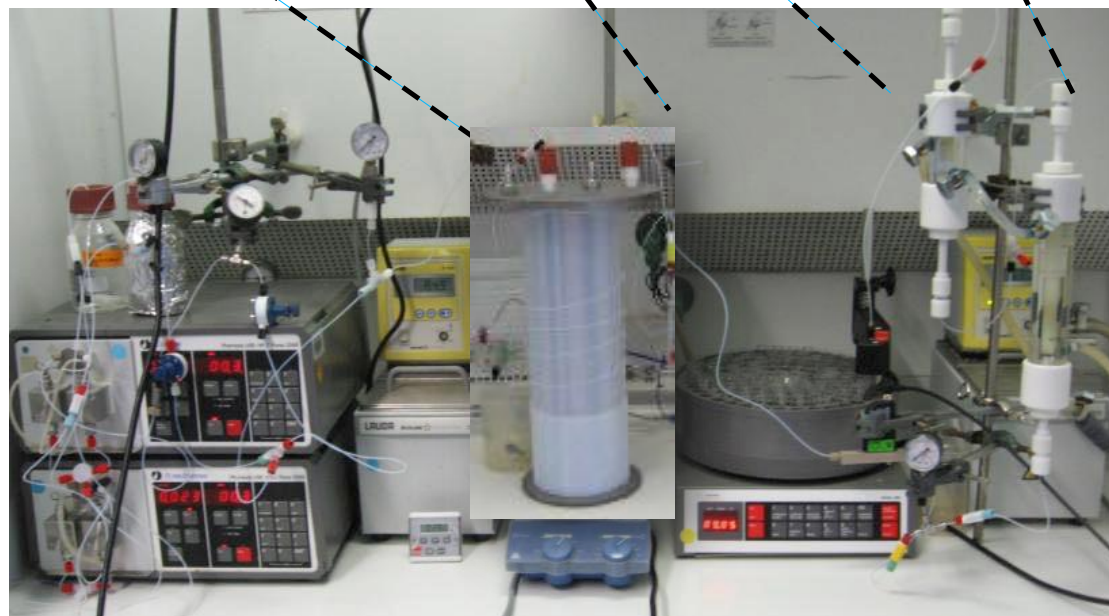
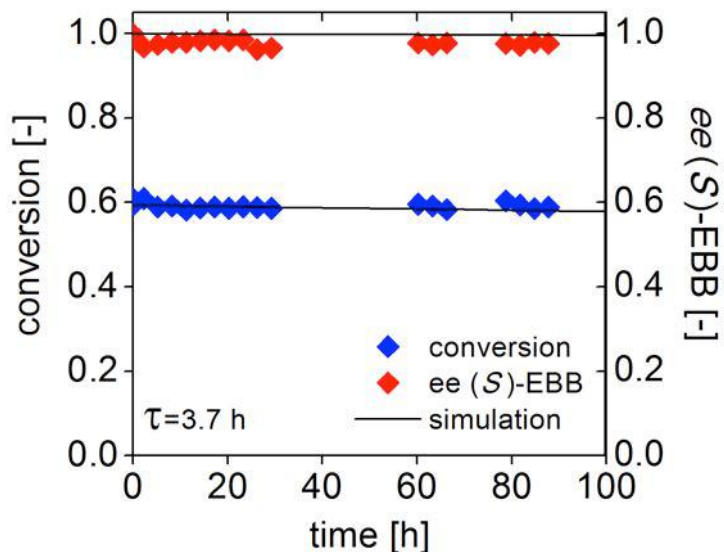
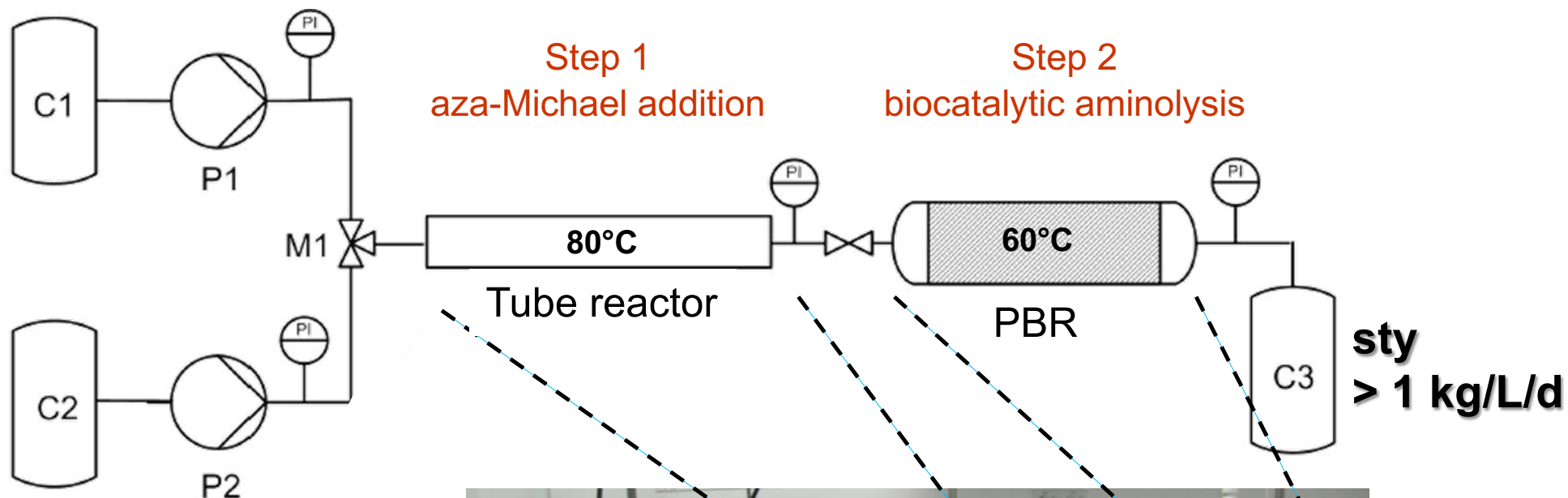
CSTR



CSTR (Continuous Stirred Tank Reactor)
PFR (Plug Flow Reactor)

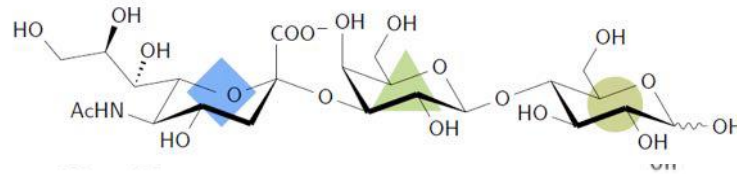
S. Strompen, M. Weiss, H. Gröger, L. Hilterhaus, A. Liese, *Adv. Synth. Cat.* 355 (2013) 2391
U. Kragl, A. Liese, *Chem. Ing. Techn.* 85(6) (2013) 826

Reactor Setup: Continuous Operation

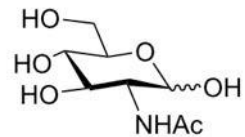
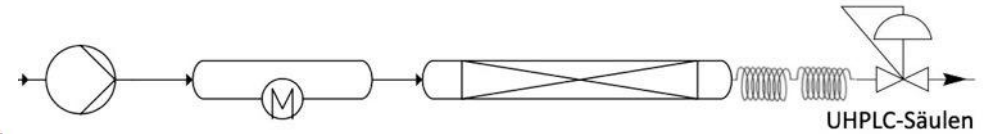


Overcoming Thermodynamic Limitations

Continuous Processes @ High Pressure (120 MPa)



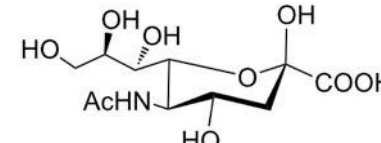
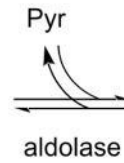
2,3-Sialyllactose (oder 2,6-Sialyllactose)



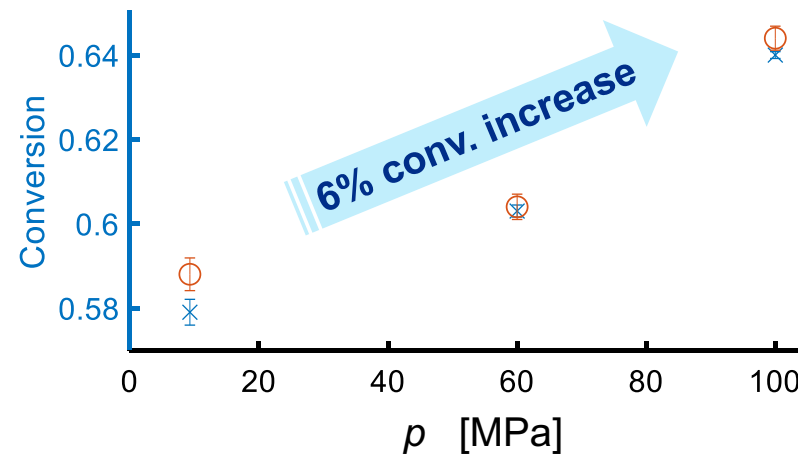
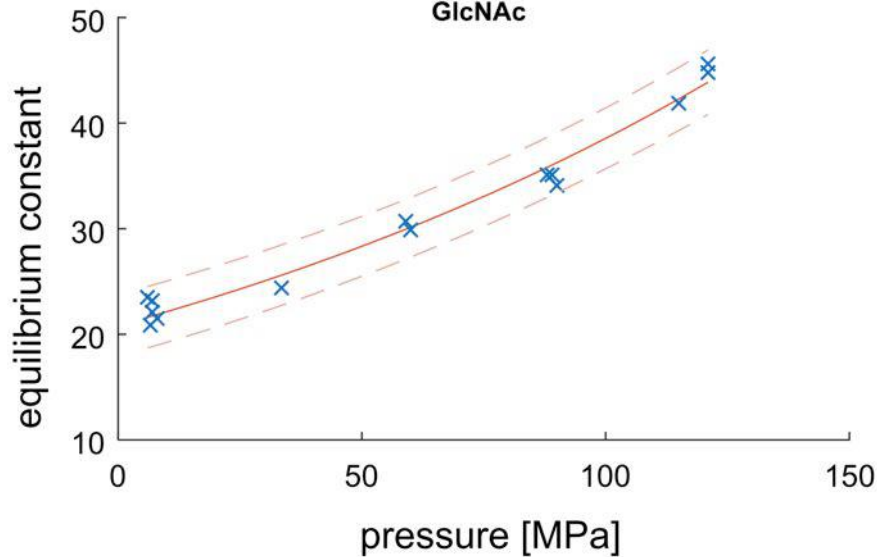
GlcNAc



ManNAc

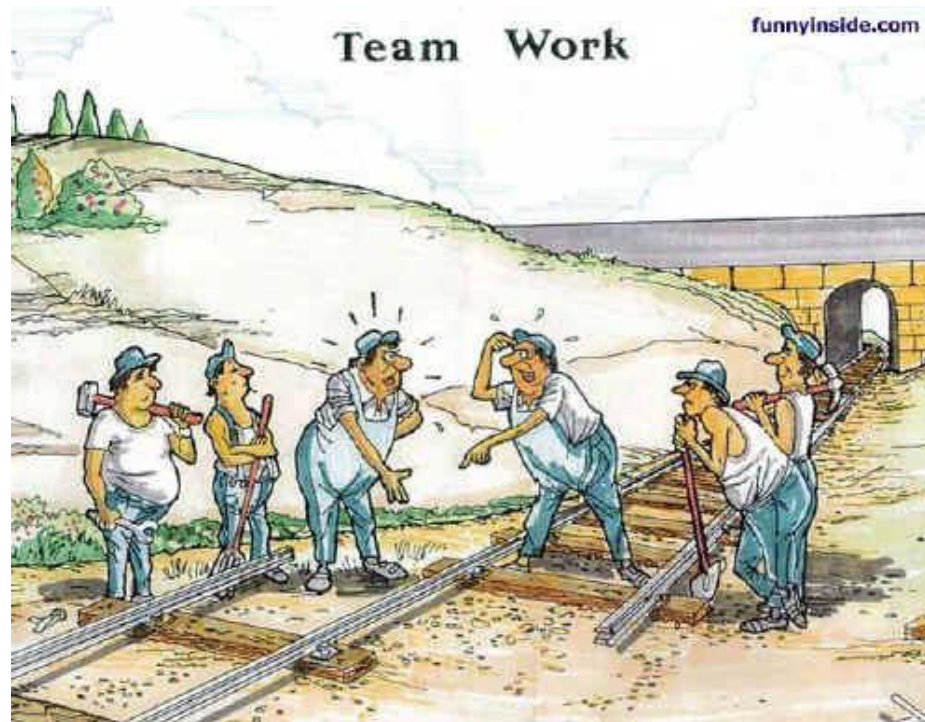


Neu5Ac



Process Intensification Challenges

Communication Challenges



multidisciplinarity

requires interdisciplinary understanding

Inspiring Youths Ages 8-18+ for STEM

STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Nachwuchs campus

13-18 years

School-Company STEM cooperation
educational material & projects
www.nachwuchscampus.de



KINDERFORSCHER AN DER TUHH

8-13 years

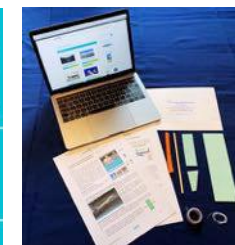
Experiment boxes & projects
250 rentable boxes to 30 topics
for 24 pupils/box in schools or companies
www.kinderforscher.de



KNIFFELIX

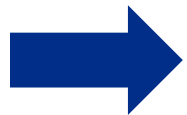
8-99+ years

STEM educational website
videos, edugames & experiments
for at home and/or the classroom
www.kniffelix.de



Take Home Messages

- ***inline* analytics** is key to **process optimization**.
- Consider biotransformations under **neat conditions**.
- Consider **fine bubble aeration** to **enhance stability** and **reduce gas consumption**.
- **Continuous** version of the **batch** is the **plug flow reactor**.
- Consider **influence of reactor type** on **reaction selectivity**.



**Process Engineering Needs to Complement
Chemistry and Biomolecular Engineering**

Acknowledgements



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