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New developments and possibilities of wide-pore superficially porous particle technology applied for the liquid chromatographic analysis of therapeutic proteins

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How to cite

BOBALY, Balazs et al. New developments and possibilities of wide-pore superficially porous particle technology applied for the liquid chromatographic analysis of therapeutic proteins. In: Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis, 2018, vol. 158, p. 225–235. doi: 10.1016/j.jpba.2018.06.006

This publication URL:https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:106641Publication DOI:10.1016/j.jpba.2018.06.006

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1	New developments and possibilities of wide-pore superficially porous particle
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16 New developments and possibilities of wide-pore superficially porous particle

technology applied for the liquid chromatographic analysis of therapeutic proteins

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- 19

20 Abstract

21 This review paper discusses about the success of columns packed with superficially porous 22 particles (SPP) in liquid chromatography for the analysis of peptides and proteins. First, it 23 summarizes the history of SPP, including the development of different SPP generations from 24 particles of 50 µm to sub-2 µm. It also critically discusses the improved kinetic performance of 25 SPP particles in comparison to fully porous particles. The current trends and applications of columns packed with SPPs for the analysis of peptides and proteins (including mAbs and ADC 26 27 at the intact and sub-unit levels) are shown, as well. Finally, some of the potential perspectives 28 for this technology are also described, including the radially oriented mesopores or the 29 applicability of the technology for chiral separations.

30

31 Keywords:

32 Superficially porous particles, core-shell, wide-pore, protein, monoclonal antibody, antibody-

- 33 drug-conjugate
- 34
- 35

36 **1. History of columns packed with SPP particles**

37 In the recent development of particle technology targeted for liquid chromatography (LC), the 38 use of superficially porous (SPP or often called as shell, core-shell, fused-core or partially-39 porous) particles has received considerable attention [1,2]. SPPs manifest the advantages of 40 porous and nonporous particles. Knox was the first to recommend the use of thin films of the 41 stationary liquid phase in liquid-liquid chromatography [3]. The concept of superficial stationary 42 phases in LC, was first introduced Horváth and co-workers in the late 1960s [4,5]. Horváth 43 applied 50 µm glass bead particles covered with styrene-divinylbenzene based ion exchange 44 resin, known as pellicular packing material for the separation of nucleotides. Later, Kirkland 45 showed, that 30-40 µm diameter SPPs provide much faster separations, compared to the 46 large porous particles used earlier in LC [6]. The motivation behind the development of such 47 materials was that columns packed with partially porous particles would have a higher 48 efficiency than those packed with fully porous particles, because diffusion through the thin 49 porous layer surrounding the particles would be faster than diffusion through the whole 50 particles [2]. This acceleration of diffusion would reduce the time required for solute 51 equilibration between the porous layer and the mobile phase or, more exactly, would effectively 52 reduce the resistance to mass transfer through the stationary phase [2]. This feature should 53 be especially beneficial for the separation of large molecules possessing low diffusivity. This 54 idea made sense at a time when the average particle sizes were ca. 80 µm. Therefore 30-50 55 µm particles with very thin porous shell have been commercialized in the 1970s under different 56 brand names such as Zipax, Corasil and Pellicosil [6,7,8].

In the 1990s, non-porous particles have also been considered as a valuable option for protein 57 58 separations. Issaeva et al. showed an extremely high speed separation of proteins and 59 peptides using 1.5 µm non-porous particles (Micra) [9]. Barder et al. also demonstrated that 60 the efficiency of columns packed with non-porous silica particles was considerably higher than 61 that of columns packed with porous particles, especially at high flow-rates [10]. Non-porous 62 particles can indeed provide lower mass transfer resistance and higher efficiency than porous 63 particles, but they are suffering from a lower specific volume and sample loading capacity. 64 Seifar et al. estimated a 50-fold higher sample capacity for porous particles compared to non-65 porous particles of the same size [11]. In another work, the loading capacity for the 1.7 µm fully 66 porous Acquity C18 particles was found to be 16 times larger than for non-porous 1.5 µm 67 particles [12]. Another issue related to the use of non-porous particles is its very low retention 68 capacity compared to fully porous ones. It was shown that the average carbon load for 1.5 µm 69 non-porous particles was about 56 times lower than for 1.7 µm Acquity C18 porous particles 70 [12]. The lower carbon load provides a lower phase ratio for non-porous particles, which leads 71 to significantly lower retention. Due to the above mentioned limitations, non-porous materials 72 never had too much success.

73 SPP materials had had a regain interest in the year 2000 and the second generation of SPPs 74 then appeared [13]. At this time, the commercial 5 µm particles, having an average pore size 75 of 300 Å and 0.25 µm shell thickness (it was called Poroshell), showed excellent efficiency for 76 macromolecule separations. Few years later a new generation of SPPs has been developed 77 and particles having standard-pores (90 and 100 Å) were successfully applied for small molecules separations. These were the so-called sub-3 µm SPPs and their structure was very 78 79 close to the optimum morphology, offering a good compromise between column efficiency and 80 loadability. They were commercialized under the brand names of Halo, Ascentis Express and 81 Kinetex [14,15,16]. A sub-3 µm particle with the pore size of 160 Å packing was introduced in 82 2010 by Advanced Material Technology (AMT) and Supelco under the brand names of Halo 83 Peptide ES-C18 and Ascentis Express Peptide ES-C18, respectively [17,18]. An average pore 84 size of 160 Å allowed the unrestricted access of molecules up to approximately 15 kDa, 85 depending on the molecular conformation [19]. Kirkland et al. compared the efficiency of the 86 160 Å and 90 Å SPPs for mixtures of peptides and small proteins [18]. Small proteins (i.e., 87 ribonuclease, insulin, cytochrome C and lysozyme) exhibited broadened peaks with the 90 Å SPP, indicating restricted diffusion, but they eluted in narrow peaks from the 160 Å SPP 88 89 column.

90 In 2012, a larger (3.6 µm) SPP wide-pore material (0.2 µm shell thickness) was launched under 91 the name Aeris Widepore, and seemed to be particularly promising for large protein 92 separations including monoclonal antibody (mAb) fragments [20,21]. Its relatively large particle 93 diameter afforded low column pressures, which could help to minimize potential on-column 94 degradation of pressure sensitive proteins, by avoiding high shear forces, and to minimize 95 pressure induced increases in hydrophobic retention that can contribute to peak broadening 96 [22,23]. To analyse intact large proteins and their sub-units, the particle size and shell 97 thickness were further optimized [24]. Both theory and previous experimental studies indicated 98 that a thin shell should be used to compensate for the low diffusion coefficients of large molecules. To find the optimum particle morphology, three different batches of 3.4 µm particles 99 100 with 400 Å pores and thick shells of 0.15, 0.20 or 0.25 µm were compared in an experimental 101 study [24]. It was found that a 0.20 µm shell thickness (400 Å) provided the highest 102 chromatographic performance for proteins. This material is now commercially available under 103 the brand name HALO Protein. It was found that the larger pore size actually had more impact 104 on the kinetic performance achieved with mAbs, than the particle size and shell thickness. The 105 SPPs with larger particle size (3.5 µm) and pore size (450 Å) showed the highest resolution 106 for mAbs [25]. This results led to the optimal particle design with a particle size of 3.5 µm, a 107 thin shell of 0.25 µm and pore size of 450 Å. This material is now commercialized as 108 AdvanceBio RP-mAb. Later, SPPs with 1000 Å pores designed specifically for separating large 109 biomolecules and industrial polymers have been described and showed benefits compared to

110 300-400 Å SPPs [26]. Very recently, another wide-pore silica-based SPP with a high coverage 111 phenyl bonding has been released and successfully applied for the analysis of mAbs and 112 antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) [27]. This new material (BioResolve RP mAb polyphenyl) is 113 based on 2.7 µm particles having a shell thickness of 0.40 µm and average pore size of 114 approximately 450 Å.

As shown, there is still a continuous development in SPP technology and more and more efficient stationary phases are regularly released. Various particle morphologies (i.e. particle size, shell thickness, pore size) are now available for protein separations, and figure 1 illustrates the history of SPP development. The aim of this paper is to review the latest developments and applications of wide-pore SPPs applied for large molecule separations and provide some guidelines for method development. Some future perspectives are also presented.

122 123

2. Advantages of SPP technology

124 The peak dispersion in chromatography is generally characterized by the theoretical plate 125 height (H) and the number of theoretical plates (N). The treatment of mass transfer processes 126 and the distribution equilibrium between the mobile and stationary phase in a column lead to 127 equations which link the theoretical plate height to the properties of the chromatographic 128 systems, such as the linear velocity. First, Van Deemter proposed an equation, which 129 described the column performance as a function of the linear velocity [28]. Since then, several 130 plate height and rate models were derived for LC, by numerous researchers. Knox suggested 131 a useful empirical three term equation to describe the dependency of the theoretical plate 132 height of a column as a function of linear velocity [29]. In this well-known equation, the three 133 parameters A, B, and C are determined by the magnitude of band broadening due to eddy 134 dispersion, longitudinal diffusion, and mass transfer resistance, respectively. The A-term 135 depends on the quality of the column packing including: (1) the homogeneity of the packed 136 bed structure, (2) the arrangement of the particles in the wall and the central regions of the 137 column and probably (3) on the particle size distribution. The B- and C-terms of the plate height 138 equation depend on analyte retention. The B-term increases with analyte retention, as more 139 time is available for diffusion to take place in the stationary phase (surface diffusion). The C-140 term expresses the resistance to mass transfer and can be divided into trans-particle (or intra-141 particle) and external- (or film-) mass transfer resistance contributions. It is expected by the 142 theory that the eddy dispersion contributions to the efficiency of columns packed with SPPs 143 would correspond to the external diameter of the particle, but the internal mass-transfer 144 resistances and longitudinal diffusion would correspond to the thickness and pore diameter of 145 the porous layer. The initial idea of preparing SPPs was to increase the column efficiency by 146 reducing the mass transfer resistance across the particles. However, it seems that trans-

particle mass transfer resistance is far from being the dominant contribution to band
broadening in HPLC [1,2]. Indeed, the columns packed with the new generation of SPPS are
successful, but for other reasons [2].

150 According to the theory, the intra-particle diffusivity depends on the ratio of the solid core 151 diameter to that of the particle diameter in a SPP. This ratio is often called as *rho* (*p*) and used 152 as a measure of particle morphology of SPPs. As this ratio increases, the mass transfer 153 kinetics becomes faster through the particles. Similarly, the external mass transfer also 154 depends on the structure of the particles. According to some recent experimental 155 measurements, the mass transfer kinetic is mostly accounted for the external film mass 156 transfer resistance across the thin layer of the mobile phase surrounding the external surface 157 area of the particles [2]. This suggests that, the initial idea of preparing SPPs with the purpose 158 to increase column efficiency by reducing the mass transfer resistance across the particles 159 might provide only modest practical gains for the separation of low or medium molecular weight 160 compounds [2]. To conclude on the mass transfer resistance, approximately 2 times lower C-161 term is expected with current SPP than with the same size fully porous particles. The gain in 162 the C-term is more important for large biomolecules and less for small molecules possessing 163 high diffusivity.

164 On the other hand, the presence of a solid core inside the particles has a direct consequence 165 on the longitudinal diffusion term (B-term), since it decreases this contribution to the plate 166 height by about 20 % when the ratio of the core to the particle diameter is $\rho \sim 0.6$ (which is 167 very common for normal pore SPPs) [1,2]. However, the reduced internal porosity of the SPPs 168 brings a limited improvement in their efficiency. Experimentally, it was implied that the solid 169 core reduced the B-term by not more than 30 % in comparison to fully porous particles [30]. 170 As a conclusion, it can be stated that recent SPPs manifest a gain of approximately 20-30 % 171 in the longitudinal diffusion. This causes only a gain of a ~10 % increase in the total column 172 efficiency compared to that of columns packed with fully porous particles. However, we have 173 to keep in mind that for large molecules (possessing low diffusivity), the B-tem contribution is 174 practically negligible. This benefit is only important for small molecules and for separations 175 performed at low flow rates (long separations).

176 Finally, according to several experimental results, the eddy dispersion term (A-term) of the 177 columns packed with SPPs is significantly smaller (~30-40 %) than that of the columns packed 178 with fully porous particles [1,2]. It is surprising, since particle morphology should not affect the 179 zig-zag multipath dispersion of solutes occurring in the interstitial column volume. It is still 180 unclear whether this significant improvement in efficiency is due to the narrow particle size 181 distribution (PSD) of SPPs [31]. Some recent studies have indeed suggested that particles 182 displaying a very narrow PSD can lead to unprecedented low minimal plate heights [1,2]. It is 183 however uncertain whether this finding can be purely related, because there are also other factors that might influence the packing quality. Superficially porous particles have indeed a
higher density and some of them are rougher than fully porous particles [32]. This might also
have had an influence on the achieved packing quality, apart from the PSD.

187 To conclude on the efficiency of SPPs, the success of these materials in the separation of 188 small molecules is not primarily a result of the decrease of the C-term, as it is often claimed in 189 commercial brochures. Most importantly, the exceptional performance of columns packed with 190 SPPs is probably caused by the important reduction of the eddy dispersion term. For large 191 molecules, however the decrease of the C-term is the most important benefit of SPPs. 192 Theoretically, as the ρ -value increases (the thinner the porous shell is), significantly lower C 193 term contribution is expected. This is probably the reason why commercial wide-pore SPP 194 materials possess higher ρ -values (0.70 < ρ < 0.94) than standard pore SPPs (0.62 < ρ < 0.76) 195 [27,33]. On the other hand, wide-pore SPPs possess larger particle diameter (2.7 μ m $\leq d_{o} \leq 5$ 196 μ m) compared to standard pore ones (1.3 μ m \leq $d_p \leq$ 5 μ m), to avoid very high pressures which 197 can drastically affect protein separations (retention, degradation, conformation).

198 199

3. Commercially available wide-pore SPPs

200 Currently available SPPs for proteins and peptides applications are predominantly RPLC 201 phases, but some SPPs are also available for HILIC peptide applications [34]. RPLC offers the 202 highest separation efficiency for mAb and related protein separations [35]. Its robustness, ease 203 of use and possibility to hyphenate with mass spectrometry (MS) made RPLC well suited both 204 for routine applications and R&D environment. Current RPLC SPP stationary phases applied 205 for the separation of proteins and peptides are silica based, hydrophobically modified particles. 206 For the analysis of moderate size proteins (15 - 20 kDa) and peptides, 1.3 - 3.6 μ m (ρ = 0.60 207 - 0.76), 100 - 200 Å pores size SPPs can be used with mechanical and thermal stability of 600 208 - 1000 bar and 45 - 90°C, respectively. For the separation of larger proteins up to ~400 - 500 209 kDa, 2.7 - 5.0 μ m (ρ = 0.63 - 0.90), 200 - 1000 Å pores size SPPs are available and can be 210 operated at 400 - 1000 bar and 60 - 90 °C. All of these materials are well suited for use in 211 acidic and neutral conditions, and some of them can also withstand slightly basic mobile 212 phases as well. Where no stability data is available, columns are suggested to be operated in 213 conditions commonly used for similar particles (e.g. max. ~600 bar for 2.6 - 3.5 µm particles, 214 pH 2 - 7 and the lowest possible temperature at which adsorption can be avoided). Most of 215 these widepore SPPs are modified with C18, C8 or C4 chains, some are C3, or phenyl modified 216 using various bonding technologies. An exhaustive list of the RPLC SPPs commercially 217 available for peptides and proteins applications are shown in Table 1.

218 219

4. Current applications of wide-pore SPPs

4.1. SPPs for the analysis of intact proteins and subunits

When separating proteins and peptides, several additional features have to be considered, compared to what is typically encountered with small molecules. One of the most important differences is the need for larger pores, to have full access to the surface and unrestricted intra-pore diffusion for large solutes. Thus, peptide separations generally require 100 - 200 Å pores, while 300 - 1000 Å pores are suitable for larger protein fragments and intact proteins.

226 The second generation of widepore core-shell particles (Poroshell 300) showed excellent 227 performance in bio-macromolecule separations [13]. Roth et al. packed these particles into 75 228 µm x 150 mm capillaries and applied state-of-the-art MS analysis enabling the determination 229 of intact proteins from complex matrices at sub-femtomole levels with excellent peak shapes 230 and loading capacity [36]. The same material has been used for the separation of human IgG2 231 disulfide isomers. The method has been qualified and allowed a fast separation of the isoforms, 232 substantially improving the throughput [37]. Li et al. used a Poroshell 300 column for IgG 233 biosimilarity studies [38]. Staub et al. compared the possibilities of 2.6 - 2.7 µm SSPs and 1.7 234 µm fully porous materials using model peptides, tryptic digest and moderate size model 235 proteins. In their work, 120 Å Poroshell and 100 Å Kinetex particles showed very similar 236 performance to the 1.7 µm fully porous phase when separating ~12 - 64 kDa model proteins 237 and peptides [39].

238 Variants of recombinant human Interferon alpha-2a have been analyzed using an Aeris 239 Widepore C18 column. The method has been qualified and enabled the separation of the N-240 methionylated and oxidized variants in slightly degraded samples, more efficiently compared 241 to the European Pharmacopeia RPLC method [40]. Separation performance of the same Aeris 242 material was systematically evaluated in other studies and found to outperform various 243 reference stationary phases when separating G-CSF oxidized and reduced variants [20], mAbs 244 and mAb fragments [35,41]. Aeris Widepore columns have also been used for the separation 245 of ADCs [27,42] and interferon related proteins [21]. It was demonstrated that depending on 246 the gradient conditions (i.e. column length, gradient span and temperature), Aeris Widepore 247 SPPs are suitable for both ultra-fast and ultra-high resolution separations of therapeutic 248 proteins [41,43]. Loading capacity and kinetic efficiency of the latter was comparable to fully 249 porous 1.7 µm particles. Interestingly, retention mechanism seemed to consist of a mixture of 250 weak hydrophobic and pronounced strong polar interactions [21].

Morphology of wide pore SPP materials has been systematically optimized for intact protein and IgG subunit separations. It was found that 400 Å, 3.4 μ m particles with 0.2 μ m shell thickness and 1000 Å, 2.7 μ m particles with 0.35 μ m porous shell provided superior chromatographic performance for the separation of proteins up to ~ 400 kDa [24]. SPP particles of 1000 Å and 2.7 μ m with 0.35 μ m porous shell have been developed for the analysis of large proteins up to ~ 500 kDa and its efficiency has been compared to existing SPP and fully porous materials using a model mAb and various other model proteins [26]. Halo Protein columns (3.4 µm particles with 0.20 µm shell thickness and 400 Å) have been used for the
analysis of IgGs and their fragments [27,44] and for the analysis of antibody drug conjugates
[27,42].

Possibilities of new 3.5 µm particles possessing 0.25 µm shell and 450 Å pores (AdvanceBio
RP-mAb) have been demonstrated by analyzing various model proteins, intact mAbs, their
fragments and peptides [25,27,45], as well as ADCs [46,47].

Recently, a high coverage phenyl bonded SPP has been introduced under the name BioResolve RP-mAb. The material has been characterized and compared to reference widepore RPLC phases using intact and fragmented IgGs and ADC. It was found that this column advantageously marries the kinetic properties of modern SPPs with desirable chemical properties of some polymeric material (such as the Agilent PRLP-1 column) [27,48]. Figure 2 shows some optimized separations of mAb and ADC subunits on a few selected columns packed with SPPs [27].

271

4.2. SPPs for the analysis of peptides

SPPs with 160 Å pores (Halo Peptide) have been successfully applied for the analysis of peptides and moderate size proteins up to 15 kDa [17-19,49]. Staub *et al.* reported similar results for 2.6 µm Kinetex and 2.7 µm Poroshell 120 particles when separating model and tryptic peptides and comparing the separation power of these shell particles to 1.7 µm fully porous ones [39]. Li *et al.* applied AdvanceBio (Poroshell 120) column for peptide mapping in biosimilarity studies [38].

279 Columns containing 2.6 µm Kinetex particles were coupled into series to explore the 280 possibilities of high resolution peptide mapping in 1D LC. The best kinetic performance was 281 observed when coupling six columns of 150 mm, and operating the system at 1200 bar, 282 vielding a flow rate close to the optimum of the van Deemter curve and resulting in peak 283 capacity of 1360 for a 480 min gradient [50]. Kinetex 2.6 µm column was used for the analysis 284 of polypeptide antibiotics from food matrices [51]. Very fine prototype core-shell particles of 1.0 285 - 1.4 µm were also produced and tested using various analytes including tryptic digest. The 286 finally commercialized 1.3 µm SPPs showed 20 – 40 % higher peak capacities compared to 287 the reference 1.7 µm fully porous particles [52]. On the other hand, UHPLC systems with very 288 low extra-column variance (< 10 μ l²) and high operating pressures (e.g. 1200 - 1500 bar) must 289 be used with such columns packed with 1.3 µm SPP to attain their full benefits [53]. Tryptic 290 mAb peptides were successfully separated on columns containing small core-shell particles of 291 1.3, 1.6 and 1.7 µm. The 1.3 µm particles provided the best separation, but suffered from low 292 permeability. Alternatively, 1.6 or 1.7 µm shell particles can be applied since they showed 293 comparable peak capacity at only two third of the operating pressure of 1.3 µm particles [54]. 294 Indeed, 1.7 µm SPPs showed ~50% improvement in plate heights compared to 1.7 µm fully

porous materials when separating peptides and moderate size proteins, offering the possibility to achieve faster separations [16]. Figure 3 shows the separation of panitumumab tryptic peptides mAbs obtained on 1.3, 1.6 and 1.7 µm SPPs using the same chromatographic conditions [54]. Interestingly, due to differences in diffusion properties, 1.3 µm particles seemed to be more favourable for the separation of peptides than for small molecules when using longer columns and longer gradient times [55]. Finally, the 1.6 µm SPPs have been used for the determination of PEGprotein from biological matrix following tryptic digestion [56].

For interested readers, numerous further applications can be found in brochures of manufacturers reflecting that widepore SPP technology has gained more and more interest in modern analytical laboratories. Stability of wide pore SPPs at high temperatures and acidic conditions, generally applied in peptides and proteins separations are also demonstrated in many of those documents.

307

308 5. Current trends and possible developments in SPP technology

309 The thickness of the porous shell of SPPs influences both the separation power and retention. 310 Decreasing the thickness of the porous layer potentially results in lower values of the C-term 311 and minimum plate heights [57]. Poppe plots calculated for various shell thickness predict that 312 the analysis time to attain a given peak capacity decreases significantly with decreasing 313 thickness of the porous layer, but this gain is more important for large molecules [57]. However 314 the eluent strength has to be reduced to compensate for the decrease in retention caused by 315 the reduction of the stationary phase surface area (decrease of volume fraction). Figure 4 316 shows the impact of shell thickness on the plate height (h) as a function of mobile phase velocity (v) for peptides and proteins. 317

- An interesting idea was suggested by Guiochon and co-workers to increase efficiency with SPPs for large molecules [58]. Mass transfer kinetics of proteins was found to be the fastest for columns packed with SPP particles having either a large core-to-particle ratio or having a second, external shell (bi-shell particle) made of a thin porous layer with large mesopores (200 -300 Å) and high porosity (50 -70 %). The structure of this external shell seems to speed up the penetration of proteins into the particles.
- All the above mentioned fundamental studies suggest that thinner shells and larger pore diameters can further improve the efficiency of current SPPs for large molecule separations. As today, mAbs and related compounds (MW \geq 150 kDa) seem to be the most promising candidates of protein therapeutics, the common wide-pore SPPs (possessing 200 – 300 Å pore diameter) need to be revised. To further optimize the efficiency of commercially available wide-pore SPPs, recently 400, 450 and 1000 Å SPPs were commercialized to analyse large proteins in reversed phase (RP) chromatography [24,25,26,27].

331 Today, SPPs are mostly used for RP of proteins however obviously, SPP advantages exist in 332 most modes of liquid chromatography (sorptive modes) and therefore new SPPs are expected 333 hydrophobic interaction chromatography (HIC), hydrophilic interaction in liquid 334 chromatography (HILIC) and ion-exchange (IEX), as these modes are routinely used for 335 protein characterization. Recently a HILIC 2.6 µm SPP was introduced for released and 336 labelled glycan analysis of proteins [59]. This column contains a unique titanium based 337 biocompatible hardware and frits.

338 Surprisingly, it seems that SPPs can provide high efficiency in size exclusion chromatography 339 (SEC) as well. The thermodynamic retention factor and therefore the useful elution window is 340 indeed limited by the ratio of pore porosity (internal) and external porosity in SEC. Therefore, 341 large pore volume is thermodynamically advantageous in SEC, and this is why porous particles 342 provide wider elution window and more chance to separate compounds (improved selectivity). 343 Despite this expected behaviour, a few recent publications showed that the loss of pore volume 344 of SPPs can be compensated by the shortening of the solute diffusion length inside the pores 345 [26,60,61]. Then, even if the elution window is narrower, similar efficiency can be achieved due 346 to the narrower peaks. Moreover, the analysis time can be shortened in proportion to the 347 internal porosity.

348

349 5.1. Radially oriented mesopores (ROM-SPP)

350 Very recently, the so-called radially oriented mesoporous SPPs were proposed to decrease 351 longitudinal diffusion and hence to improve the overall separation efficiency. A new process 352 was developed (called as pseudomorphic transformation (PMT)), which is a form of micelle 353 templating. This PMT technology produces straight, unconnected, and radially-oriented 354 mesopores (ROMs) (Figure 5.). SPP particles with ROMs possess many advantages such as 355 a narrower particle size distribution, thinner porous layer with high surface area and - most 356 importantly - highly ordered, non-tortuous pore channels oriented perpendicular to the particle 357 surface [62]. The improved efficiency of such ROMs mostly related to a smaller B-term 358 probably due to the thinner porous layer and/or the unique, ordered porous straight channels. 359 In addition, Poppe plot calculations showed superior performance of these PMT-SPPs across 360 the entire analysis time range compared to conventional SPPs and fully porous particles. A 361 theoretical study also confirmed the gain in longitudinal diffusion, but this gain is only 362 interesting for molecules possessing high diffusivity (small molecules) [63].

363 Gritti assumed various pore shapes for ROMs in a fundamental study [64]. It was found that 364 the eddy dispersion does not depend on neither the pore structure nor the shape. However, 365 when assuming conical mesopore shape a decrease in *C*-term is expected. Therefore, this 366 conical shape ROM material suits well for protein separations.

In agreement with the theory, some ROM SPPs have already been recently applied for large molecule separations. The pore size of silica SPPs with fibrous shell structure could be tuned by using organic solvents of different polarities [65]. By using benzene as oil phase, SPPs with pore size of up to 370 Å and surface area of 61 m²/g were prepared and successfully applied for the rapid separation of small solutes, peptides, and proteins. The wide pores of the porous spheres were especially useful for separating large proteins with excellent efficiency without restricted diffusion [65].

374

375 5.2. Molecularly imprinted polymers

376 Molecularly imprinted polymers (MIPs) have been utilized as recognition elements for a wide 377 range of analytes due to their high stability and remarkable mechanical properties. However, 378 the traditional MIPs suffered from some limitations for practical applications. To broaden the 379 application scope, multifunctional SPP MIPs have attracted increasing attention in separation. 380 A current review discusses the recent developments of MIPs with a nonimprinted core 381 (Core@MIP particles) and MIPs with a non-imprinted shell (MIP@Shell particles) [66]. In 382 addition, other novel miscellaneous SPP MIPs with a hollow-core, a semi-shell, or an empty-383 shell are summarized.

384

385 5.3. Magnetic materials

386 The separation and enrichment of proteins and peptides from complex mixtures is of great 387 importance to provide a successful identification. Core-shell structured magnetic 388 microspheres have been widely used for the enrichment and isolation of proteins and peptides, 389 thanks to their unique properties such as strong magnetic responsiveness, outstanding binding 390 capacity, excellent biocompatibility, robust mechanical strength and admirable recovery [67]. 391 The advances in the application of core-shell structured magnetic materials for proteomic 392 analysis, including the separation and enrichment of low-concentration proteins and peptides, 393 the selective enrichment of phosphoproteins and the selective enrichment of glycoproteins 394 were recently reviewed by Deng et al. [67]. Although much progress has been made in the 395 application of core-shell structured magnetic microspheres to the enrichment of low-396 abundance peptides, the design of novel functionalized magnetic nanocomposites with well-397 defined nanostructures and surface properties for the application in proteomics remains an 398 area of intense research interest.

399

400 5.4. Chiral separations

In the field of enantioseparations by LC, we can expect a real revolution thanks to the use of
chiral SPPs of latest generation [68]. Over the years, this field has fallen behind compared to
achiral RP separations as regards ultrafast and highly efficient separations. However, new

404 developments in chiral particle technology may change this trend. In particular, extraordinary 405 results and very fast enantioseparations are expected by the employment of latest generation 406 chiral particles in supercritical fluid chromatography (SFC) [69]. Moreover, chiral stationary 407 phases made on SPPs could be suitable, thanks to their high efficiency, in the case of 408 challenging enantiomeric separations (e.g., chiral impurity profiling), where an extremely low 409 concentration of one enantiomer has to be detected [70].

410

411 **6. Conclusion**

412 Columns packed with superficially porous particles are widely used in LC and gain more and 413 more interest over the years thanks to their excellent kinetic performance and moderate 414 operating pressure. Standard pore materials (90 – 120 Å) became very successful in the last 415 decade for small molecule separations. Thanks to new developments, widepore SPPs are now 416 also available and offer new possibilities for large molecule separations.

As the pore diameter is larger and shells are thinner, the mass transfer kinetics becomes faster for large solutes (possessing low diffusivity). For such reasons, very efficient separations are routinely achieved on these materials. Current particle structures and pore sizes applied for peptides (100 – 200 Å) and proteins (200 – 1000 Å) separations with very thin porous layer seem to be close to the optimal morphology. Various chemistries are being developed to avoid undesired secondary interactions which often lead to significant band broadening and poor recovery.

Second and third generation SPPs are now regularly used for the analysis of therapeutic proteins, mAbs, ADCs and related proteins at intact, sub-unit and peptide levels. Very high peak capacity can be attained on 50 – 150 mm long columns, typically within 5 – 15 minutes. When combining the exceptional kinetic performance of wide pore SPPs with the reliability of computer assisted retention modeling, significant resources can be saved during method development. From initial experiments to robustness testing and documentation of the optimized method, the whole process usually takes only few working days.

Future trends in SPP developments are focused on further morphology optimizations and finding new fields of application. Radially oriented mesopores with various shapes show significant advantages in diffusion properties which can be beneficial for the separation of large molecules.

435

436 Acknowledgements

437 Davy Guillarme wishes to thank the Swiss National Science Foundation for support through a438 fellowship to Szabolcs Fekete (31003A 159494).

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- 633 9. Figure/Table captions
- Table 1. List and physico-chemical properties of currently available SPPs applied for peptidesand proteins separations.
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Figure 1. History of the development of SPP phases. The source of pictures/drawings (papers)
used for this figure are referred during the text of this review. The particles (spheres) in colour
are taken from available (free) brochures from different column providers.

- 641
- Figure 2. Optimized separations of mAb (A) and ADC (B) subunits on selected columns packedwith SPP. Illustration is based on a figure published in ref [27].
- 644

645 Figure 3. Chromatograms of a tryptic digest of Panitumumab on Cortecs 1.6 μm (A), Kinetex

 $1.7 \ \mu m$ (B) and Kinetex 1.3 μm (C). Mobile phase A: 0.1% TFA in water, B: 0.1% TFA in ACN.

647 Flow rate: 0.5 mL/min, gradient: 10–30% B in 10 min. Column temperature 30 °C, detection:

- 648 UV at 210 nm (with permission from ref [54]).
- 649

Figure 4. Structure of a SPP (A) and calculated plate height curves for model peptide (B) and model protein (C) assuming various SPP structure with $\rho = 0, 0.5, 0.7, 0.85$ and 1 (with permission from ref [57]).

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Figure 5. Schematic view of radially oriented SPP (A) and conventional SPP (B) (cross sectionview). Black arrows indicate the solute diffusion.

column name			particle size (µm)	core (µm)	rho	pore size (Å)	max Temperature (°C)	pH range	max pressure (bar)	total porosity	permeabilit y (cm ² *10 ⁻ ¹¹)
Aeris (Phenomenex)		XB-C18							600		
	Widepore	XB-C8 ^{\$}	3.6	3.2	0.89	~ 200	90			0.52	21 [25]
		C4 ^{\$}	-				60 1.5-9				
		XB-C18	1.7\$	1.3	0.76		100 90		1000	0.56	3.1 [40]
	Peptide/Kinetex		2.6\$	1.9	0.73	100				0.52	5.8 [39]
			3.6	2.6	0.72			600	n.a.	n.a.	
		ES-C18	3.4#	3	0.88	400	90	1-8 2-9 60	- 600	0.58	26 [25]
	Protein		2.7	2	0.74	1000				0.35	6.4 [39]
		C4	3.4#	3	0.88	400			000	0.58	26 [25]
			2.7#	2	0.74	1000				0.35	6.4 [39]
			2.0#	1.2	0.6			2-9	1000	n.a.	n.a.
Haio (Advanced Materials Technology)		ES-C18	2.7*#	1.7	0.63				600	0.35	6.4 [39]
	Dautida		4.6#	3.3	0.72	100	00			n.a.	n.a.
	Peptide		2.7#	1.7	0.63	160	90			0.35	6.4 [39]
		ES-CN	4.6#	3.3	0.72					n.a.	n.a.
		Pheny-Hexyl	2.7	1.7	0.63					0.35	6.4 [39]
	RP-mAb	C4					90	1-8	600		
AdvanceBio (Agilent)		SB-C8	3.5	3	0.86	450				0.56	18 [25]
		Diphenyl									
	Peptide Mapping	EC-C18	2.7	1.7	0.63	100	60	2-8	600	0.37	4.6 [39]
	Peptide Plus	charged C18				120					
Accucore (Thermo)	150	C18	2.6	1.6	0.62	150	60	1-11	1000	n 2	na
	150	C4	2.0		2-9	1000	n.a.	n.a.			
Poroshell (Agilent)	300	SB-C18	5	4.5	0.9	300	90	1-8	400	0.62	73 [41]
		SB-C8									
		SB-C3									
Die Deserbus (Mateure)	DD as Als	Extend-C18	0.7	10	0.7	450	00	0.7	(00	0.45	44[05]
BIORESOIVE (Waters) RP mAb Po		Polypnenyi	2.7	1.9	0.7	450	90	2-7	089	0.65	14 [25]
Cortecs (Waters)		C18	1.0	1.1	0.7	90	45	2-8	1000	0.56	3.5 [40]
Meteoric Core (YMC)	BIO	C18	2.7	1.5	0.7	160	70	1 5-10	600	n a	n a
	Pentide	C18	2.7	2	0.7	160	10	1.5 10	000	n.a.	n.a.
SpeedCore Bio (Fortis)	Protein	C18	2.0	<u> </u>	0.11	100	80	1-8		na	na
		C8	3.5	3.1	0.80	300			600	n.a.	n.a.
		C4			0.00					n.a.	n.a.
Capcell (Shiseido) Core	MP			L		160			600	n.a.	n.a.
	WP	C18	2.7	1.7	0.63	300	n.a.	2-10	480	n.a.	n.a.
SunShell (Chromanik Technologies)	WP	C18	2.6	1.6	0.62	160	n.a.	1.5-10	600	n.a.	n.a.
Aurashell (Horizon)	PEP	C18	2.7	1.7	0.63	200	n.a.	1-9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	PRO	C18	3.5	3	0.86	300	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

^sthese phases are available packed into biocompatible titanium infused flow path column hardware under the name of bioZen

*this phase is available under the brand names of Ascentis (Supelco) Express Petide ES-C18 and Brownlee (Perkin Elmer) SPP Peptide ES-C18

[#]these phases are available under the brand names of Bioshell (Supelco) A160 Peptide, A400 Protein and IgG 1000Å

Knox: Idea of thin films for stationary phase

Horvath and co-workers:

50 µm pellicular particles



Kirkland: 30-40 µm controlled surface porosity supports



5 µm and sub-3 µm 2nd generation SPPs:

Poroshell® (Agilent)



Halo[®] (AMT)



Kinetex® (Phenomenex)



Widepore SPPs:

Halo[®] Protein and Peptide (AMT)



Aeris[®] (Phenomenex)



AdvanceBio® (Agilent)



Accucore® (Thermo)



BioResolve® (Waters)

Sub-2 µm 3rd generation SPPs:

Kinetex[®] (Phenomenex)



Cortecs® (Waters)

Market diversification for sub-3 µm SPPs

1960s

1970-1990s

Commercially available

30-50 µm, 1st generation SPPs:

Zipax[®] (DuPont)

Corasil[®] (Waters Associates)

Pellicosil® (Macherey-Nagel)

POROUS

2000s

2010s





Figure 3



