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D.N. Schulz · C.Thies
Editors

Macromolecular Complexes in Chemistry and Biology



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Preface

Throughout most of this century, progress in Polymer Science took place by way of studies of dilute polymer solutions and of the solid state. More recently, attention has been focused on the semi-dilute regime. The elucidation of transient network and temporal gel states under conditions of moderate concentration by numerous hydrodynamic and optical techniques is now well established and a solid theoretical underpinning for these phenomena is in place. However, in most of the systems studied, interpolymer interactions are relatively weak forces, because in solutions of typical polymers, strong interpolymer interactions lead to bulk phase separation. However, polymers that form highly associating structures in equilibrium solution now constitute an important class of synthetic macromolecules, and it is evident that strong intermacromolecular interactions – without accompanying phase separation – are prevalent in biopolymer systems as well. This behavior is generally characteristic of amphiphilic polymers, which contain both hydrophilic and hydrophobic repeat units. It is also characteristic of systems in which two macromolecular species are complementary, such as hydrogen-bond-donating and hydrogen-bond-accepting polymers, or polycations and polyanions.

Interest in associating polymer systems currently derives from both applied and fundamental questions. Synthetic water-soluble polymers bearing hydrophobic groups exhibit special rheological properties that make them well-suited as thickeners and viscosity-modifiers. Drag-reduction effects may arise in such polymer solutions, and may also be observed in polymer complexes based on hydrogen-bonding. Viscosity-modification has also been the motivation for many detailed studies of ionomer solutions, in which association via ion-pairing leads to aggregate formation in non-aqueous solvents. Complexes in which one component is a biological polymer also represent technological possibilities. These include protein separation via interactions with synthetic polyions, and modifications of the properties of DNA via complexation.

In this variety of associating polymer systems, a few central questions emerge as universal themes. One concerns the structure of multipolymer aggregates. In any system with strong interpolymer forces, one could anticipate interpolymer collapse, gelation, and phase separation as three reasonable consequences of these forces. Why then do many systems exhibit stable equilibrium aggregate

states? In other words, the question “why do chains associate” must always be followed by another, often more difficult query: “how do they know when to stop?” If the association is at least partly open-ended, characterization of these complexes poses a set of related challenges. Since most techniques probe structure in a limited dimensional range (e.g. short range for absorption and fluorescence spectroscopy, medium range – long range for scattering methods, and long-range for rheology and viscometry) the use of a variety of experimental techniques becomes especially valuable.

This book originated from a symposium on “Soluble Polymer Complexes” sponsored by the Polymer Division of the American Chemical Society. To the editors of this volume it seemed clear that polymeric materials that can form ordered aggregates or complexes carry the potential for some novel commercial applications in both polymer chemistry and biotechnology. Consideration of the properties of these materials also raises some interesting scientific questions. These questions, which were formerly the basis for only hypothesis and speculation, appear now to be ideal subject matter for modern instrumental methods such as fluorescence probe studies and dynamic and total intensity scattering. Despite the fact that polymer complexes are of interest to a broad range of specialists, including chemical engineers, synthetic chemists, polymer physicists and biological chemists, the literature in this area is rather fragmented. Two previous books attempted to collect the material in this field. *Inter-macromolecular Complexes*, by E. Tsuchida and K. Abe (Springer, 1982) surveyed the literature on both soluble and insoluble complexes and offer extensive descriptions of many specific polymer systems. *Microdomains in Polymer Solutions*, edited by one of us (PD) in 1985 (Plenum) contained reports about amphiphilic polymers and polymer-surfactant systems, about ordering in polyelectrolytes, and about association and aggregation in synthetic and natural polymers. Several new developments have taken place since the publication of those texts: the growth of biotechnology and the related interest in technological applications of polymer-protein interactions; the expansion of fluorescence and scattering techniques for the study of intra- and interpolymer association; and the study of ionomers in solution. These new developments reinforce two points about associating macromolecular systems: (1) they are important in both natural and abiotic systems, and (2) contrary to earlier thought, they are neither so inherently irreversible nor so heterogeneous as to preclude fundamental study.

In organizing the contributions to this volume, the editors first considered that the fundamental driving forces for association provide the best guide to sub-topical arrangement. Thus, we first discuss *hydrophobically* associating polymers, and secondly, *Coulombic* polyelectrolyte complexes. In the case of *Complexes involving proteins*, the subtleties of protein structure preclude the specification of a single type of interaction, but the motivation for grouping these papers together is clear, especially given the focus on protein separations. Lastly, we consider studies of the association of *Ionomers in organic media*, which occupies an important position between the long-standing literature on

weakly ionic polymers in the bulk state and investigations of charged polymers in water.

The first seven chapters deal with complexes formed by the association of hydrophobic groups on water-soluble polymer backbones. These polymers pose a synthetic problem because of the incompatibility of the two monomer types. Characterization is also challenging, especially for polymers with low hydrophobe content.

Schulz, Bock and Valint begin by reviewing synthetic routes, through both direct copolymerization and post-polymerization reaction. NMR, UV and pyrolysis-GC methods of characterization are discussed. In the second chapter, *Varadaraj, Branham, McCormick and Bock* report on the use of emission and absorption probes to characterize the microstructure of hydrophobically associating polymers. The results suggest that interpolymer domains are more polar and less organized than conventional micelles. In chapter three, *Bock, Varadaraj, Schulz and Maurer* describe the unusual properties of hydrophobically associating water-soluble polymers. Examples of such properties are enhanced viscosification, shear thickening rheology, decreased sensitivity to salts, and increased mechanical stability. In chapter four, *Magny, Illiopoulos and Audebert* describe the dilute-solution viscometry and fluorescence of random copolymers of sodium acrylate and alkyl (octyl to octadecyl) acrylamide. Upon salt addition, a transition from nonaggregated to aggregated coils occurs. Interchain association and polyelectrolyte effects are superimposed in apparent molecular weight changes. *Varelas, Dualeh and Steiner* discuss, in chapter five, hydrogel networks formed from hydrophobically modified cellulose. Cluster formation is found to depend upon solvent composition, and the number of side-chains per cluster in turn influences the rheology of the network. The hydrophobic microdomains so formed act as solubilization sites for apolar solutes. In chapter six, *Fife* reviews the role of macromolecular association on the polymerization of alkylvinylpyridinium ions. For example, Coulombic interactions control copolymerization with anionic monomers, while hydrophobic forces influence copolymerization with water insoluble monomers. Lastly, *Zhang, Hwang and Hogen-Esch* describe, in chapter seven, the synthesis, characterization and viscosity behavior of “fluorophobe” modified polyacrylamide and cellulose derivatives. These polymers are found to be more efficient viscosity-enhancers than conventional alkyl hydrophobic polymers.

Soluble complexes involving polyelectrolytes are the subject of chapters seven through thirteen. These complexes display structural complexity and sensitivity to environment resulting from their ionic groups. The consequent structures range from colloidal droplets to semicrystalline fibers, in dilute solution, to gels and conducting solids at high concentrations. Two main classes of polyelectrolyte complexes (PEC) are discussed: those governed principally by Coulombic forces, and those strongly influenced by hydrogen bonding.

Dautzenberg, Koetz, Linow, Philipp and Rother describe in chapter eight the use of light scattering to probe the structure of PECs formed from oppositely charged polyacrylamides, thereby addressing what has been a long-standing

problem. In chapter nine, *Frugier and Audebert* explore the solution behavior of oppositely charged polyacrylamides of low charge density, with special emphases on the effects of salt and polymer MW on phase separation. Their results point out the need for improved theories in this area. The kinetics of polyelectrolyte complexation and the role of PECs in biology are addressed in chapter ten by *Kabanov*. It is suggested that DNA complexed with polycations may be a “synthetic virus” with exciting applications in transgenic experiments. *Bystricky and Malovikova* examine the role of stereochemistry in a study of the complexation of D- and L-polylysine with anionic polysaccharides; their results in chapter may bear on the understanding of molecular recognition in biological systems. *Tsuchida and Takeoka* review, in chapter twelve, PEC formation – in both solution and solid states – between polyethylene oxide and polyacrylic or polymethacrylic acid. The intriguing application of the solid complexes in electrochromic devices is discussed. Interactions via hydrogen bonds are also the subject of *Kim and Choi’s* work in chapter thirteen. Structures formed by high MW polyacrylic acid under high shear are elucidated by the use of fluorescent dyes.

The five subsequent chapters are devoted to protein-polymer complexes. These species are viewed in some cases as providing novel routes to protein separation, but in other situations the protein complex itself may have unique value.

In chapter fourteen, *Hubert and Dellacherie* review the features and limitations of several protein separation techniques based on complex formation. In one case, the hydrodynamic volume of the complex may be the key to enhanced separation. Complexation also can change the protein charge density, lead to the technique of affinophoresis. Two-phase polymeric aqueous systems allow the protein to exhibit preferential partitioning. In a fourth approach to protein separation, insoluble protein-polymer complexes may be isolated and then redissolved. In chapter fifteen, *Xia and Dubin* provide a review of “polyelectrolyte-protein” complexes, emphasizing the different experimental techniques that have been employed and discussing some of the molecular models put forward. *Shieh and Glatz* in chapter sixteen also describe similar phase separation methods for the case of lysozyme purification by precipitation with polyacrylic acid. The authors discuss the critical pH for precipitation, the stoichiometry of the complex, the precipitate’s particle size, and the overall protein yield. The phenomenon of coacervation is reviewed by *Burgess* in chapter seventeen from both theoretical and experimental perspectives. The system of gum-arabic and serum albumin is the subject of experimental studies in microcapsule formation. In chapter eighteen, *Kokufuta* summarizes the complexation of proteins with strong polycations and polyanions in salt-free solution. Of special interest is the ability of precipitated proteins to display enzymatic activity.

The final section of the book deals with association of weakly ionic polymers (ionomers) in non-aqueous solvents. This area of study may bridge the gap between the fields of polyelectrolytes and ionomers. In the former case, the

charged moieties are dissociated and ionized and their presence leads to chain expansion and interchain repulsion. In the latter case, the low dielectric environment in the solid state polymer precludes dissociation, and the ionic residues interact attractively through dipole-dipole forces, leading to intermacromolecular cohesion. Thus the ways these two systems behave are very different.

Ionomer solutions may display both types of behavior, depending on the dielectric constant of the medium. This question is specifically addressed in chapter nineteen by *Gebel*. The properties of lightly sulfonated polystyrene (LSPS) in polar and nonpolar solvents are discussed in terms of polyelectrolyte and ionomer behavior, respectively. In these two cases, rheological and scattering data are rationalized according to different structural models. Similar analyses are carried out for new data on perfluorinated ionomers. In chapter twenty, *Bodycomb and Hara* use dynamic and static light scattering to study the dependence of the aggregation of LSPS in toluene on ion content and ionomer concentration. They conclude that very large species can form at increased ion content.

We close this preface with expressions of appreciation for the support of the initial symposium from the American Chemical Society, for professional guidance from the staff of Springer, and for the extended cooperation of the contributors.

November 1993

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Table of Contents

Part I. Hydrophobically Associating Polymers

1	Synthesis and Characterization of Hydrophobically Associating Water-Soluble Polymers	
	<i>D.N. Schulz, J. Bock, and P.L. Valint Jr.</i>	3
1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Synthesis	3
1.3	Copolymerization	4
1.4	Postpolymerization Modification	6
1.5	Characterization-Hydrophobe Incorporation	10
1.6	Summary	12
1.7	References	12
2	Analysis of Hydrophobically Associating Copolymers Utilizing Spectroscopic Probes and Labels	
	<i>R. Varadaraj, K.D. Branham, C.L. McCormick, and J. Bock</i> . . .	15
2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	Emission Probes and Labels	16
2.3	Absorption Probes	27
2.4	Concluding Remarks	30
2.5	References	30
3	Solution Properties of Hydrophobically Associating Water-Soluble Polymers	
	<i>J. Bock, R. Varadaraj, D.N. Schulz, and J.J. Maurer</i>	33
3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Polymer Systems	34
3.3	Solubility Characteristics	35
3.4	Solution Stability	37
3.5	Solution Rheological Properties	41
3.6	Summary	49
3.7	References	50

4	Aggregation of Hydrophobically Modified Polyelectrolytes in Dilute Solution: Tonic Strength Effects	
	<i>B. Magny, I. Iliopoulos, and R. Audebert</i>	51
4.1	Introduction	51
4.2	Experimental	52
4.3	The Polymers	53
4.4	Dilute Solution Viscosity	54
4.5	Fluorescence Spectroscopy	56
4.6	Intrinsic Viscosity	58
4.7	Concluding Remarks	61
4.8	References	61
5	Microdomain Composition in Two-Phase Hydrogels	
	<i>C.G. Varelas, A.J. Dualeh, and C.A. Steiner</i>	63
5.1	Introduction	63
5.2	Background	64
5.2.1	Microphase Separation in Polymers	64
5.2.2	Importance of Graft Polymers	65
5.3	Results	65
5.3.1	Hydrogels from Surfactant Solutions	65
5.3.2	Hydrogels from Ethanol/Water Solutions	67
5.3.3	Solute Uptake by Gels	69
5.4	Conclusions	69
5.5	References	69
6	Molecular Association and Polymerization of 1-Alkyl-4-vinylpyridinium Ions	
	<i>W.K. Fife</i>	71
6.1	Complexation in 1-Alkyl-4-vinylpyridinium Ions and Related Polymers	71
6.2	Homopolymerization of 1-Alkyl-4-vinylpyridinium Ions	77
6.3	Copolymerization of 1-Alkyl-4-vinylpyridinium Ions	85
6.4	Conclusion	91
6.5	References	91
7	Fluorocarbon-Modified Water Soluble Polymers	
	<i>Y.-X. Zhang, F.S. Hwang, and T.E. Hogen-Esch</i>	95
7.1	Introduction	95
7.2	Experimental	97
7.3	Results and Discussion	101
7.4	Conclusions	115
7.5	References	116

Part II. Polyelectrolyte Complexes

8	Static Light Scattering of Polyelectrolyte Complex Solutions	
	<i>H. Dautzenberg, J. Koetz, K.-J. Linow, B. Philipp, and G. Rother</i>	119
8.1	Introduction	119
8.2	Survey of Static Light Scattering Studies on PEC Solutions ..	120
8.3	Interpretation of Light Scattering Experiments	122
8.4	Experimental	124
8.4.1	Materials	124
8.4.2	Methods of Investigation	125
8.5	Results and Discussion	126
8.6	Conclusion	133
8.7	References	133
9	Interaction Between Oppositely Charged Low Ionic Density Polyelectrolytes: Complex Formation or Simple Mixture?	
	<i>D. Frugier and R. Audebert</i>	135
9.1	Introduction	135
9.2	Material and Techniques	138
9.2.1	Polymer Synthesis	138
9.2.2	Polymer Characterization	138
9.2.3	Other Techniques	139
9.3	Phase Diagram	139
9.3.1	Phase Diagram Representation	139
9.3.2	Influence of the Charge Density	139
9.3.3	Influence of the Ionic Strength	140
9.3.4	Influence of the Molecular Weight of the Samples	141
9.3.5	Phase Diagram and Complex Formation	141
9.4	Polymer-Polymer Affinity and Phase Diagram	144
9.5	Conclusion	148
9.6	References	148
10	Basic Properties of Soluble Interpolyelectrolyte Complexes Applied to Bioengineering and Cell Transformations	
	<i>V.A. Kabanov</i>	151
10.1	Introduction	151
10.2	Kinetic and Equilibrium Properties of Interpolyelectrolyte Complexes	153
10.3	Interpolyelectrolyte Complexes as Protein Carriers	161
10.4	Complexes of DNA with Synthetic Polycations for Cell Transformation	167
10.5	Conclusion	173
10.6	References	173

11	Conformation Presumption for Polysaccharide-Polylysine Complexation	
	<i>S. Bystricky and A. Maloviková</i>	175
11.1	Introduction	175
11.2	Complex Formation	175
11.3	Pectate-Polylysine Interaction	176
11.4	Polyguluronate Rich Alginate-Polylysine Interaction	178
11.5	Polymannuronate Rich Alginate-Polylysine Interaction	180
11.6	Conclusion	181
11.7	References	182
12	Interpolymer Complexes and their Ion-Conduction	
	<i>E. Tsuchida and S. Takeoka</i>	183
12.1	Introduction	183
12.2	Classification of Interpolymer Complexes	184
12.3	Formation of Interpolymer Complexes from PAA with POE .	186
12.4	Thermodynamics of Interpolymer Complexes from PAA (or PMMA) with POE	192
12.5	Selective and Substitution Interpolymer Complexation	195
12.6	Solid Properties of a Hydrogen-Bonding Complex	200
12.7	Ion Conduction and Solid Polymer Electrolytes	202
12.8	Ion Conduction of Hydrogen-Bonding Complexes	206
12.9	References	211
13	Fluorescence Probe Studies of Poly(acrylic acid) Interchain Complexation Induced by High Shear Flow and Influence of Cationic Surfactants on the Complexation	
	<i>O.-K. Kim and L.-S. Choi</i>	215
13.1	Introduction	215
13.2	Experimental	216
13.2.1	Materials	216
13.2.2	Flow Processing	217
13.2.3	Fluorescence Measurements	217
13.3	Results and Discussion	217
13.3.1	Drag Reduction (DR) and PAA Conformation	217
13.3.2	Local Chain Rigidity	220
13.3.3	Hydrophobic Association	221
13.3.4	Hydrophobe-Assisted Rigidity	222
13.4	References	226

Part III. Biopolymer Systems

14	Water-Soluble Biospecific Polymers for New Affinity Purification Techniques	
	<i>P. Hubert and E. Dellacherie</i>	229

14.1	Introduction	229
14.2	Discrimination on the Basis of High Molecular Weight	231
14.2.1	Biospecific Ultrafiltration	231
14.2.2	Biospecific Gel Filtration	232
14.3	Discrimination on the Basis of High Density of Charges: Affinophoresis	236
14.4	Discrimination on the Basis of Surface Tension Properties: Affinity Partition	237
14.5	Discrimination on the Basis of Reversible Solubility: Affinity Precipitation	241
14.6	Advantages and Drawbacks of Techniques Involving Water- Soluble Biospecific Polymers	243
14.7	References	245
15	Protein-Polyelectrolyte Complexes	
	<i>J. Xia and P.L. Dubin</i>	247
15.1	Introduction	247
15.2	Investigation Methods	247
15.3	Factors Influencing Protein-Polyelectrolyte Complexation and Structures of the Protein-Polyelectrolyte Complexes	260
15.4	Protein Separation by Polyelectrolytes	265
15.5	Enzymes in Polyelectrolyte Complexes	268
15.6	Conclusion	269
15.7	References	270
16	Precipitation of Proteins with Polyelectrolytes: Role of Polymer Molecular Weight	
	<i>J.-Y. Shieh and Ch.E. Glatz</i>	273
16.1	Introduction	273
16.2	Materials and Methods	274
16.3	Results and Discussion	276
16.4	Conclusions	283
16.5	References	284
17	Complex Coacervation: Micro-Capsule Formation	
	<i>D.J. Burgess</i>	285
17.1	Introduction and Terminology	285
17.2	Simple Coacervation	286
17.3	Complex Coacervation	287
17.4	Theory of Complex Coacervation	289
17.5	Coacervation as a Method of Microencapsulation	291
17.6	Materials and Methods	294
17.7	Results	296
17.8	Conclusions	299
17.9	References	299