



State-of-the-art mass spectrometry methods for the analysis of secondary metabolites

Pascal Gerbaux

Organic Synthesis & Mass Spectrometry Laboratory

University of Mons, Belgium

What do you need ?

Molecular Mass & Composition

Structure & connectivity

*(Stereo)Isomer
discrimination*

Mass Spectrometry

```
graph TD; MS[Mass Spectrometry] --> MM[Molecular Mass & Composition]; MS --> SC[Structure & connectivity]; MS --> IS[(Stereo)Isomer discrimination]; MS --> QA[Quantitative analysis]; MS --> ITA[Imaging & on-tissue analysis]; MS --> TUA[Targeted vs untargeted analysis];
```

Imaging & on-tissue analysis

Quantitative analysis

Targeted vs untargeted analysis

Mass spectrometry : an indirect analytical method !

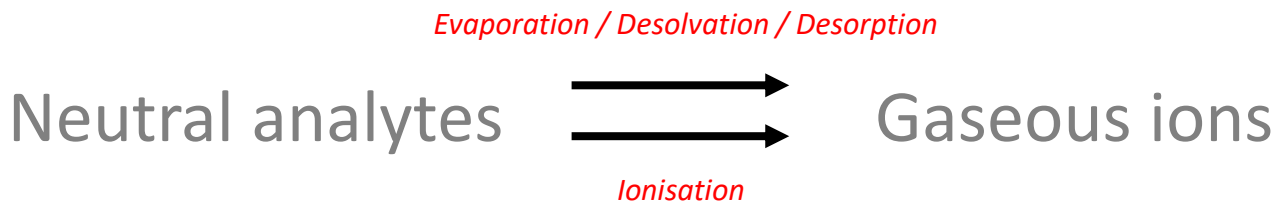
Mass spectrometry is

- an analytical technique based on the measurement of the m/z ratio of ions in the gas phase
- an analytical technique that allows the determination of the composition of ions in the gas phase
- an analytical technique that affords information on the structure of the gas phase ions
- an analytical technique that allows to determine the quantity of gaseous ions associated with a given m/z

in order to

- determine the molecular mass of a molecule (neutral) in the condensed phase (solid / liquid / solution)
- determine the elemental composition of a molecule (neutral)
- determine the structure of the molecule (neutral)
- determine the concentration of a molecule within a complex mixture / matrix

But ...





so many



benchtop ...

Really expensive ...



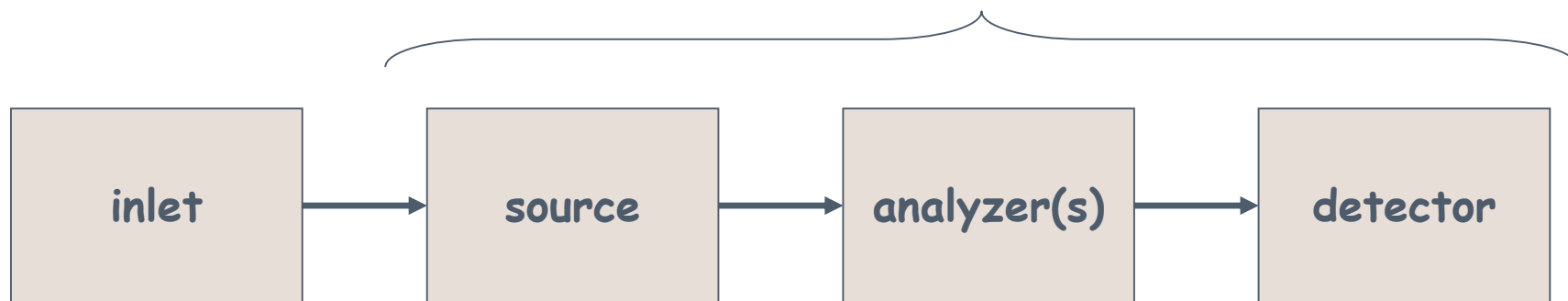
portable ...



There are all the same...

Mass spectrometer

... in principle



- direct introduction
DI

- solid
- liquid
- gas
- solution

- hyphenated methods

GC-MS
LC-MS

- Electron ionization
EI

- Chemical ionization
CI

- ElectroSpray ionization
ESI

- Matrix-assisted laser
desorption/ionization
MALDI

- Sector instruments **B / E**

- Quadrupole **Q**

- Ion trap **IT / LIT**

- Time-of-Flight instruments **ToF**

- Ion Cyclotron Resonance **ICR / FT-MS**

- orbitrap

The selection of the instrument is analyte dependent and is motivated by the objectives of the analysis !!!

Source & Analyzer

Nature of the analytes ?

Mass range limit ?

20 MDa

nano-objects

- Virus capsids

macromolecular assemblies

- ds-DNA
- Protein assemblies
- Protein/DNA

macromolecules

- Polymers
- DNA
- Proteins

molecules

source selection

atoms

- Organic molecules
- Organometallic complexes
- Non covalent complexes

1 Da

? volatile or non volatile molecules ?

Studying 18 MDa Virus Assemblies with Native Mass Spectrometry**

*Joost Snijder, Rebecca J. Rose, David Veesler, John E. Johnson, and Albert J. R. Heck**

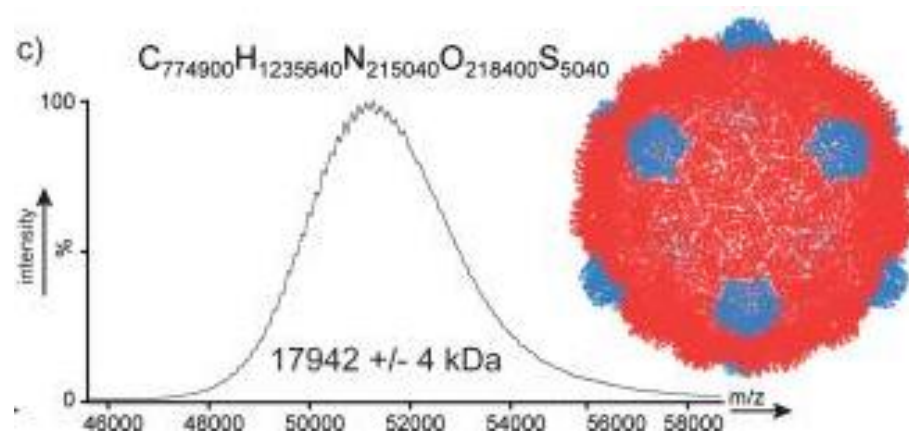
Following John Fenn's Nobel Laureate lecture ("Electrospray Wings for Molecular Elephants"),^[1] native mass spectrometry (MS) has been developed as a powerful analytical technique to study large noncovalent protein complexes.^[2] Using soft nano-electrospray ionization (nESI), these protein complexes can be transferred intact into the gas phase without significant loss of quaternary or tertiary structure. Minor modifications of commercially available MS instruments^[3] can greatly improve the transmission of large ions, therefore yielding accurate and precise mass analysis of intact protein com-

Although there is no theoretical upper mass limit for a ToF analyzer, achieving good-quality spectra of assemblies several MDa in size has proven not to be trivial.

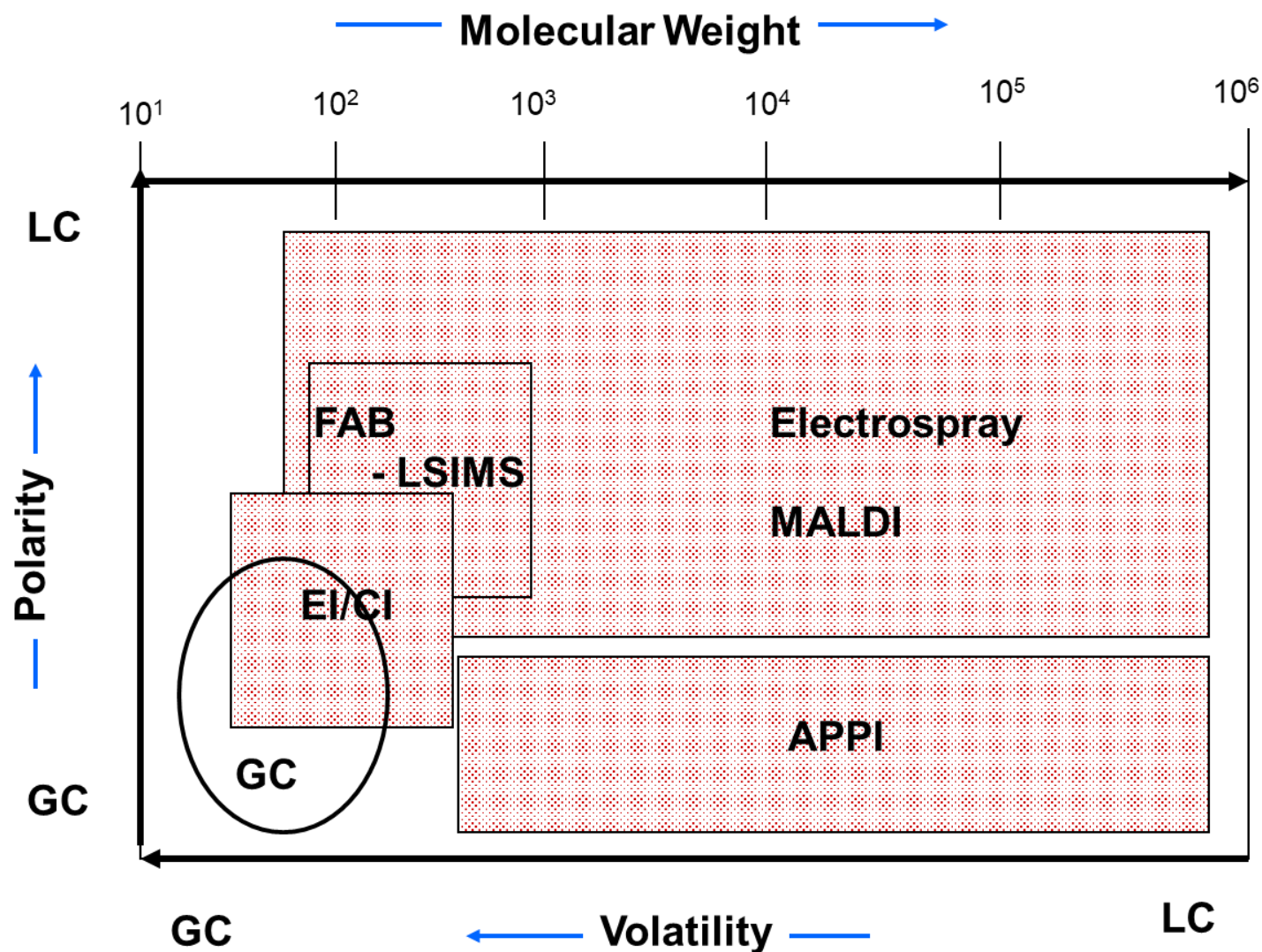
We used a modified QToF instrument for the analysis of intact 18 MDa capsids from the bacteriophage HK97. HK97 is an important model system for studying bacteriophage assembly and maturation.^[8] In vitro, the $T=7$ capsid assembles from a mixture of pentameric and hexameric capsomers (made of the capsid protein gp5) and the viral protease gp4 to form a first icosahedral intermediate termed Prohead-1.



Prof Albert Heck – Utrecht
655 papers / h-index 86



How to select the ionization method ?



What do you want to know about your samples ?

Molecular Mass & Composition

Accurate mass measurement & high resolution
ToF / Orbitrap / ICR

Structure & connectivity

Tandem mass spectrometry
& ion activation

Mass Spectrometry

Selection of the analyzer(s)

Imaging & on-tissue analysis

MALDI imaging – fast scanning analyzers

Quantitative analysis

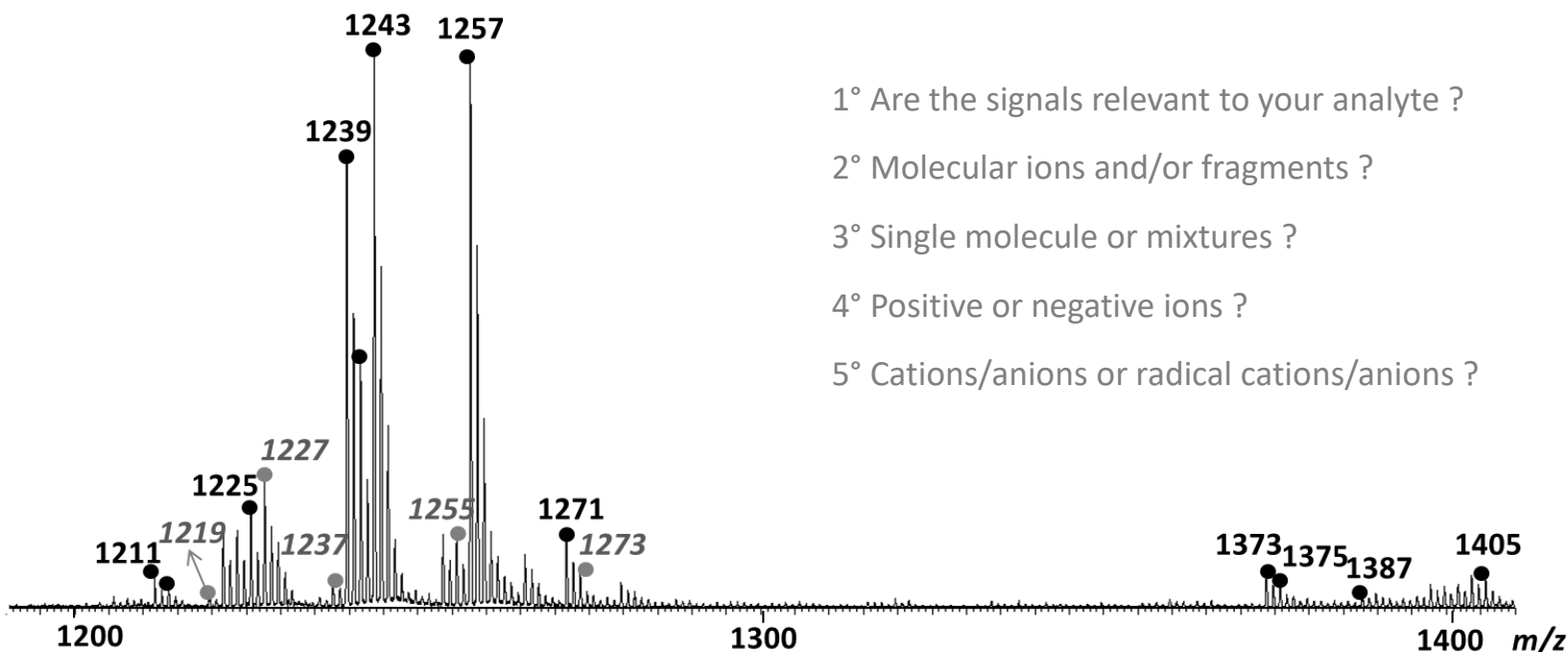
Large dynamic range, sensitivity & selectivity
LC-MS / GC-MS

Targeted vs untargeted analysis

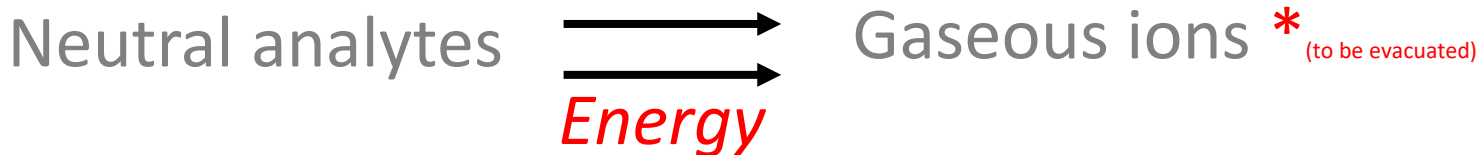
Large dynamic range & selectivity / HRMS / LC-MS / GC-MS / tandem MS

Then you get a mass spectrum

and a huge set of questions...



Highly dependent on the source conditions, including the pressure conditions



What about MS and research ?

Research *with* Mass Spectrometry



Mass Spectrometry



- Natural products
- Synthetic Macromolecules
- Non covalent interactions

Research *in* Mass Spectrometry

Research & Development of the MS-based- methods

Ionization processes / analyzer development / ion activation and ion decomposition / energetics and kinetics / gaseous ion structure vs solution phase structure

State-of-the-art mass spectrometry methods for the analysis of secondary metabolites

- the saponin case -

What is a saponin ?

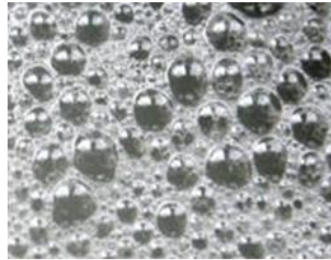
- Natural products in plants and marine animals
- Secondary metabolites
(defense, reproduction, symbiosis)
- **Amphiphilic molecules**
- Natural surfactants



Quillaja saponaria (Chili)



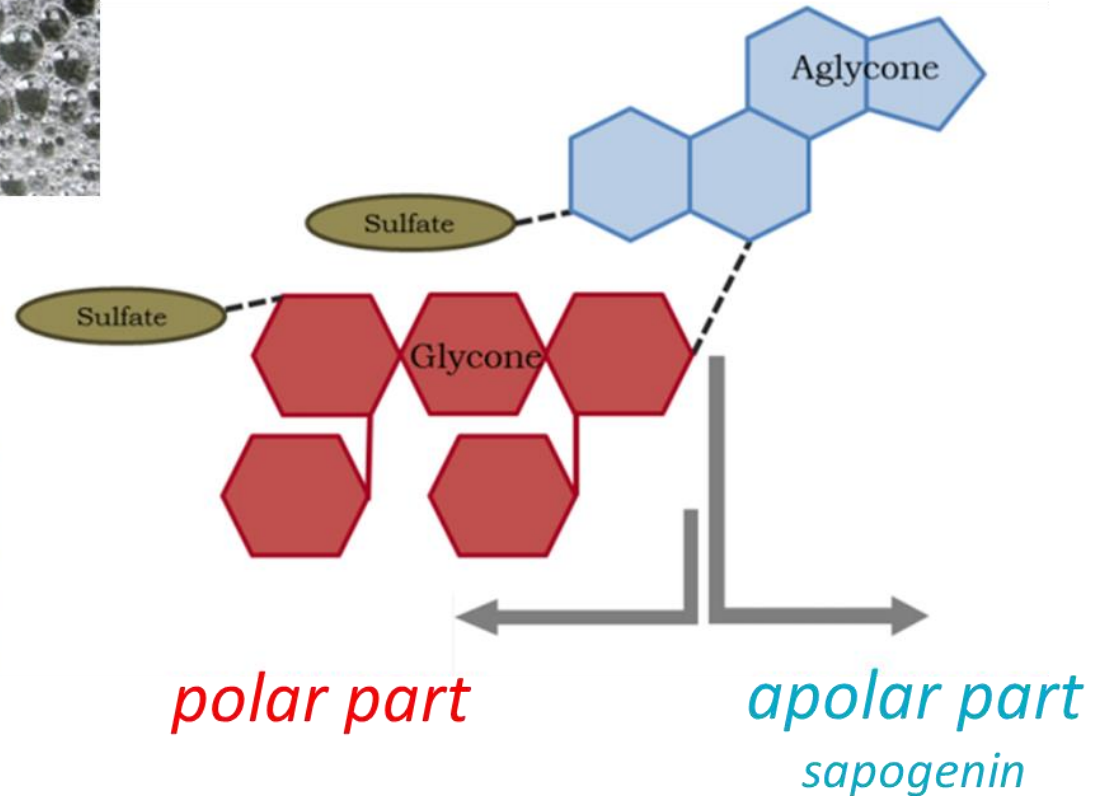
Sapindus mukorossi (Inde)



Sea cucumbers
Holothuries



Sea stars - Starfishes



How complex is the saponin structure ?

Asteroside C



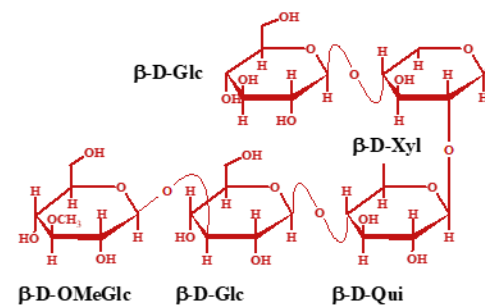
Sulfate

HO₃SO

Steroid (Aglycone)

Oligosaccharide
(Glycone)

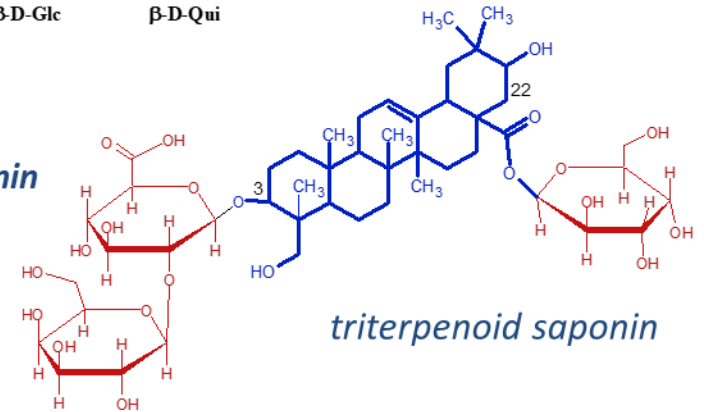
monodesmosidic saponin



triterpenoid saponin



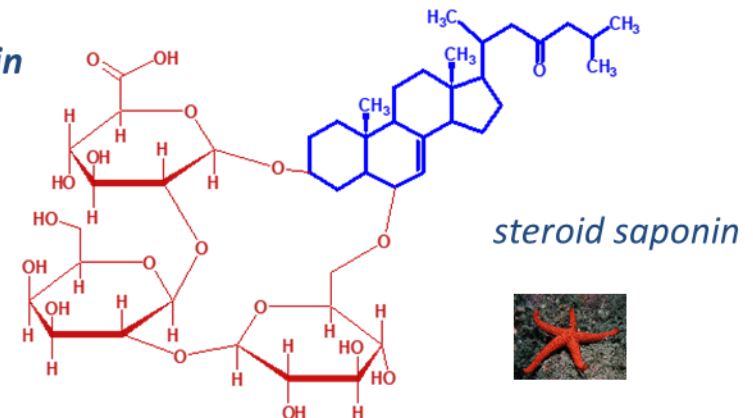
bidesmosidic saponin



triterpenoid saponin

Huge structural diversity

- sapogenin : steroid / triterpenoid *macrocylic saponin*
- oligosaccharide chain :
n = 1 – 10 / linear or branched
- topology :
mondesmosidic / bidesmosidic / macrocylic

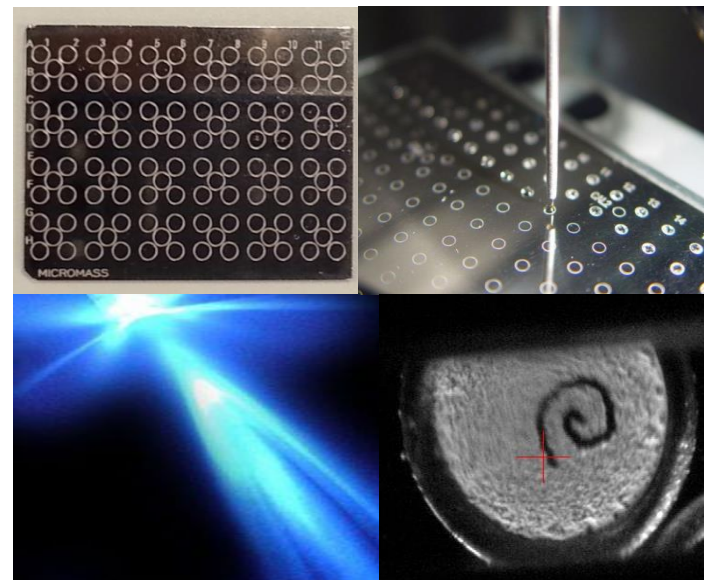
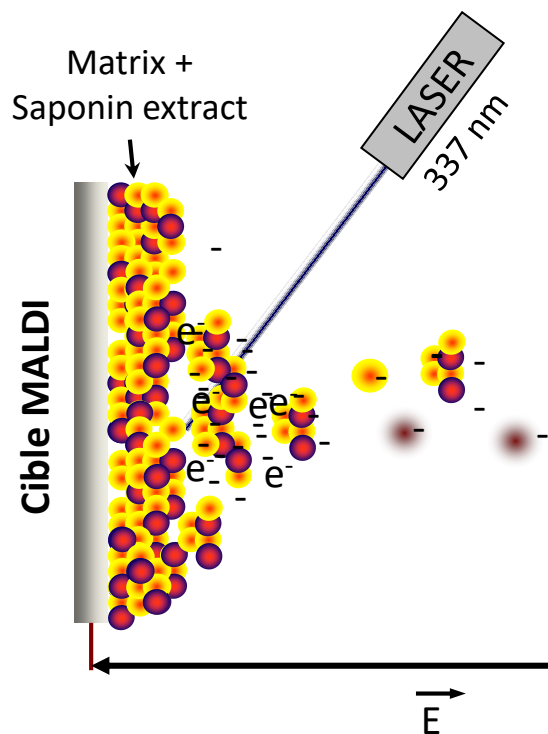
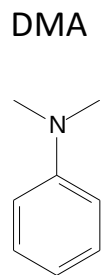
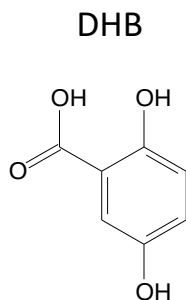


steroid saponin



STEP 1 - Screening of the saponin compositions by MALDI-MS

Matrix based on ionic liquid



Waters Q-ToF Premier

MS



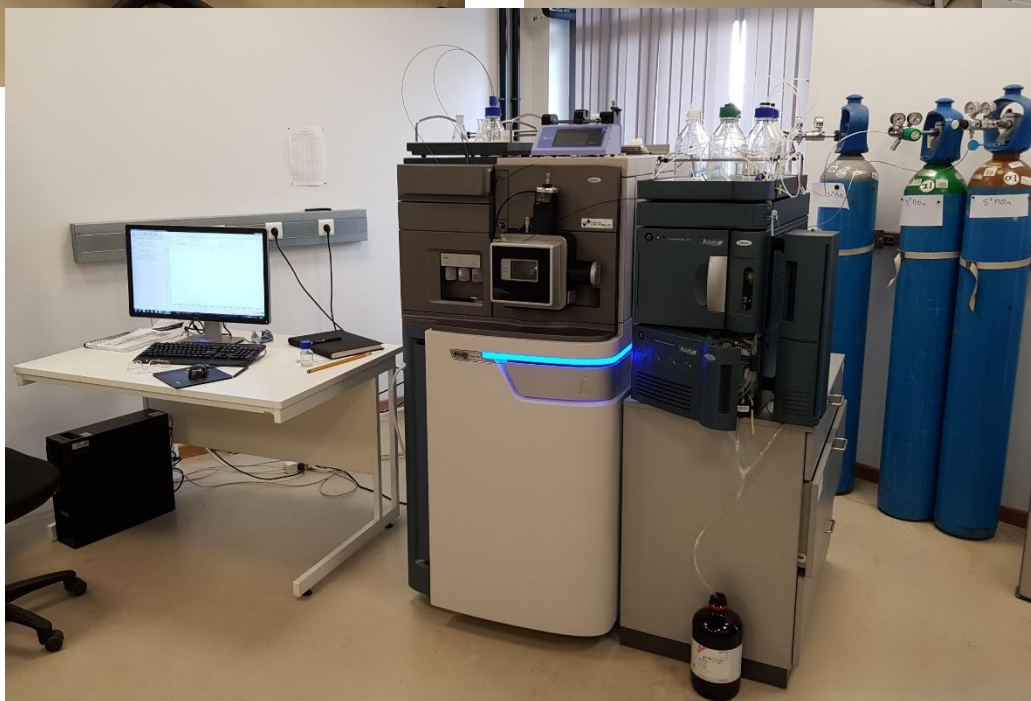
Our favorite mass spectrometers are the Q-ToF instruments



MALDI Q-ToF Premier

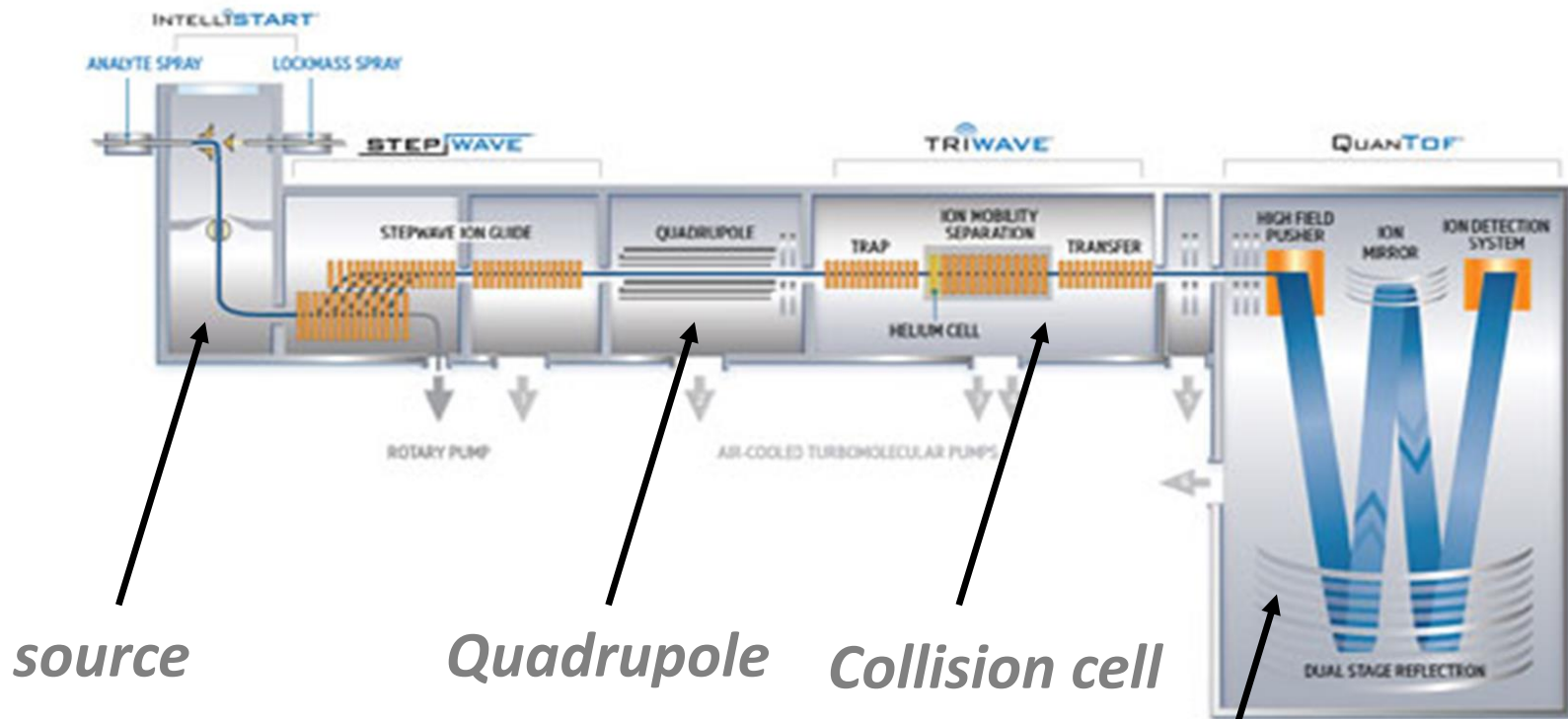
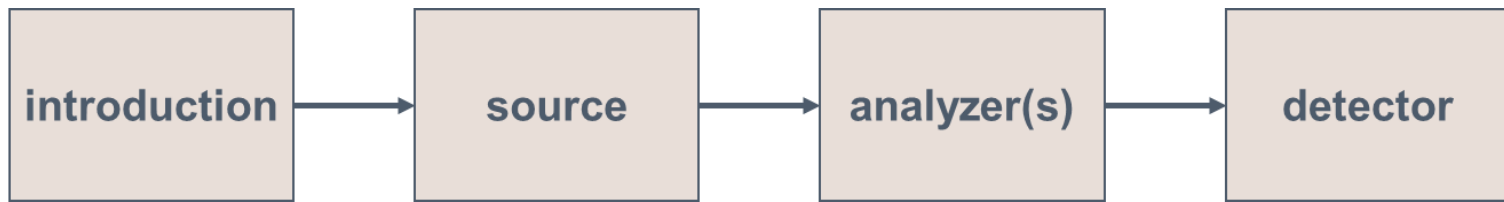


ESI Q-ToF API-US



ESI Synapt G2-Si

Q-ToF mass spectrometers



source

Quadrupole

Collision cell

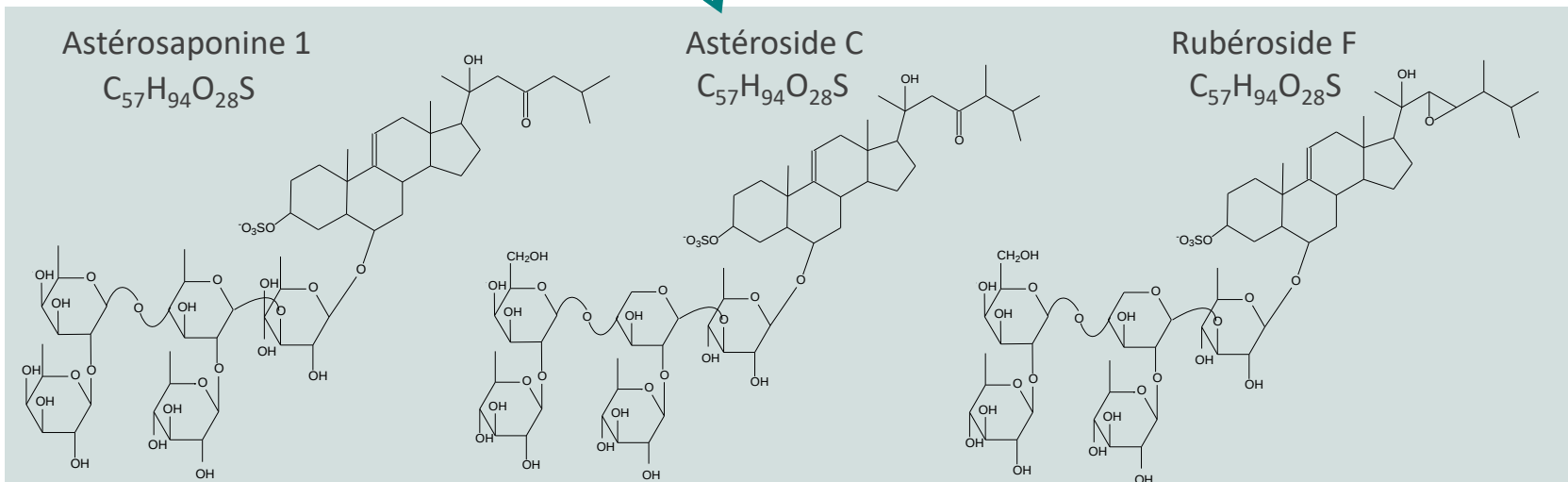
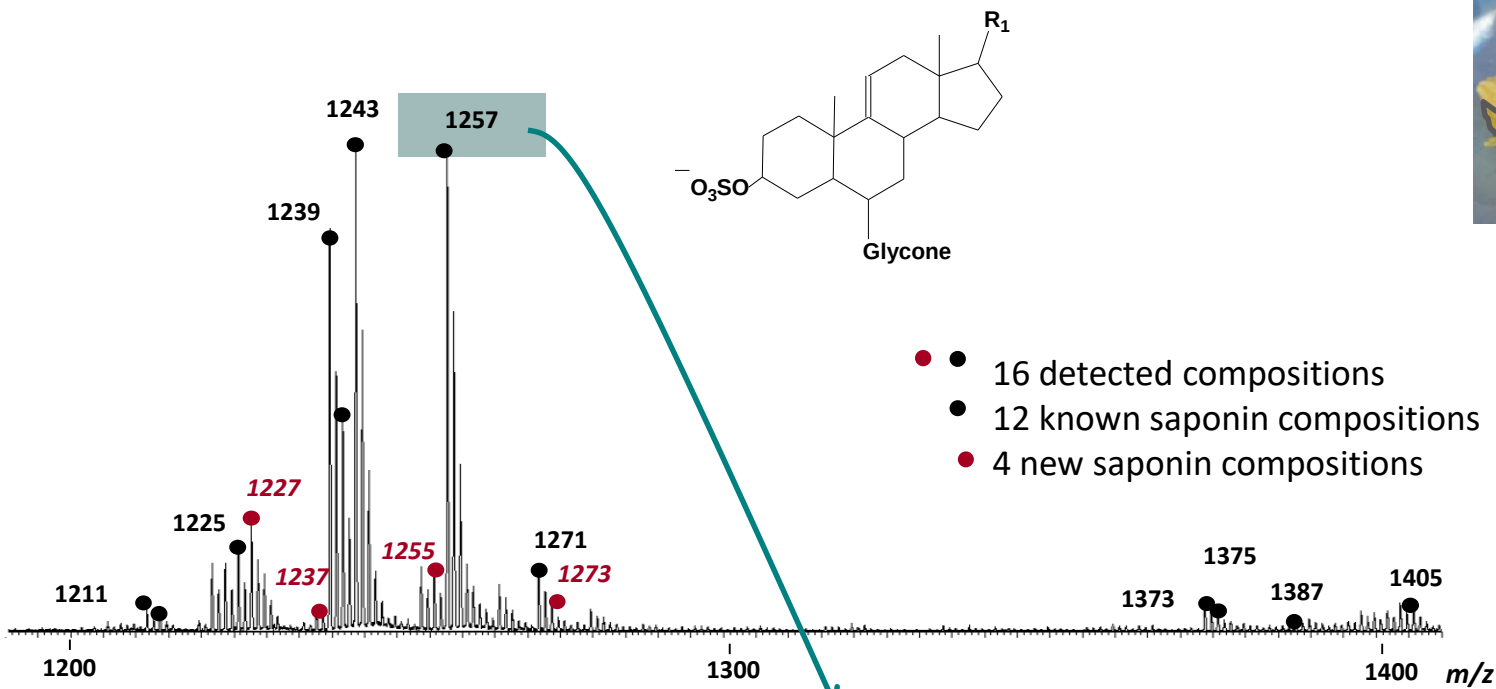
Q-ToF mass spectrometer

=> HRMS
=> MSMS
=> ion mobility

=> composition
=> structure
=> structure

Time-of-Flight analyzer

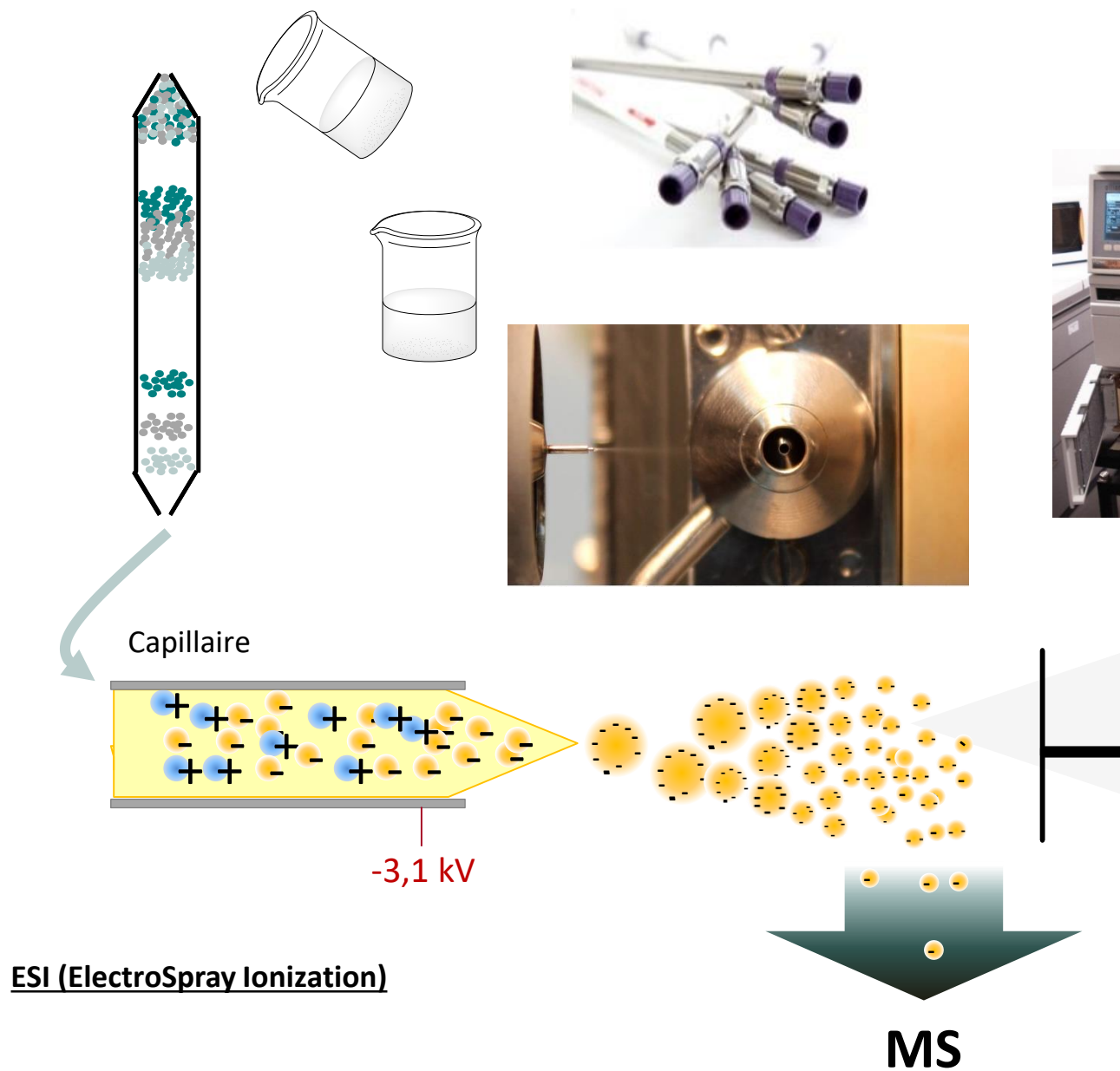
MALDI(-)-MS podia extract from *Asterias ruben*



⇒ **3 isomers are proposed in the literature ?**

⇒ **LC-ESI(-)-MSMS**

STEP 3 –LC-MS analysis of the podia extract



HPLC or UPLC

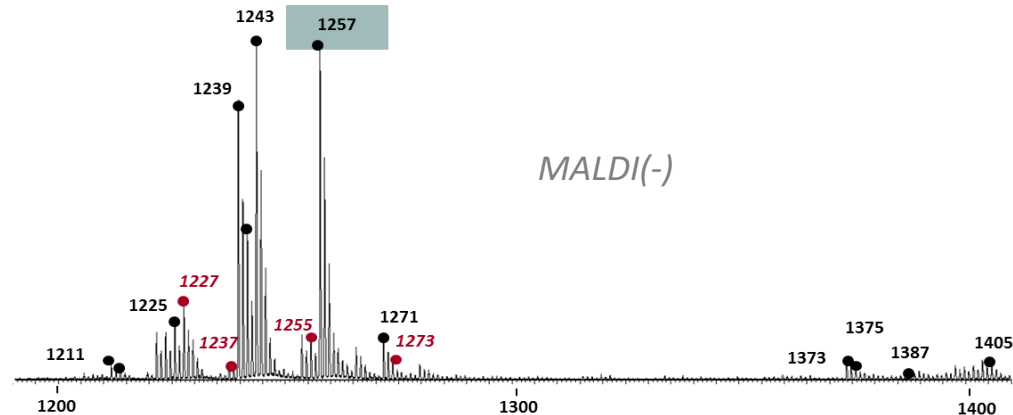
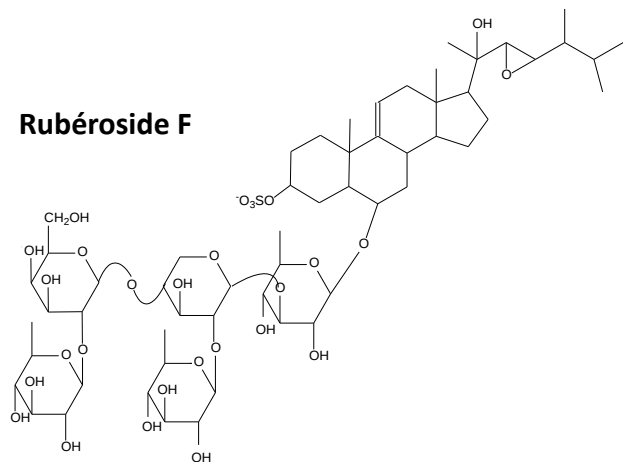


Waters Synapt G2-Si

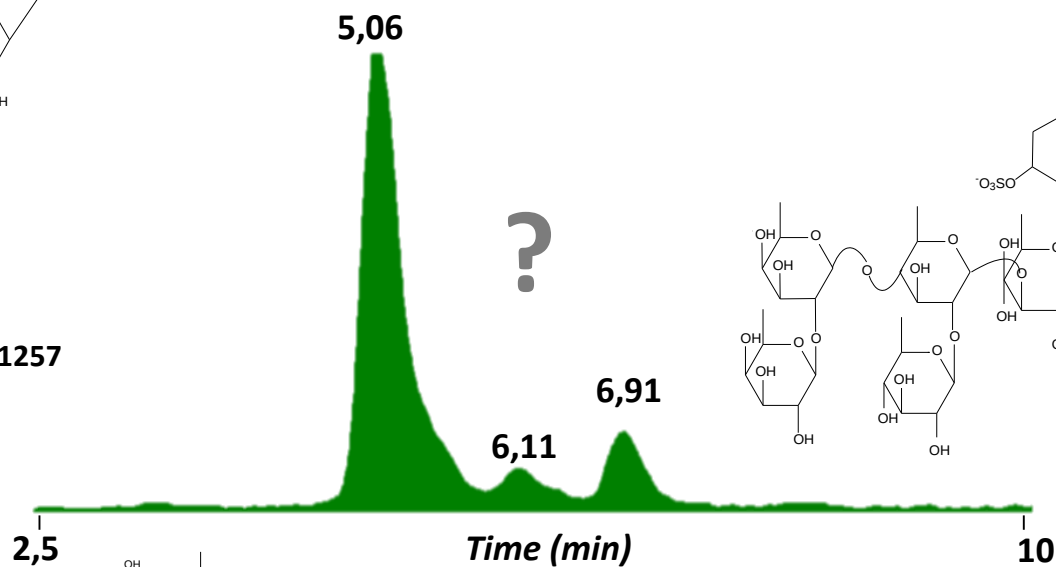


LC-ESI(-)-MS podia extract

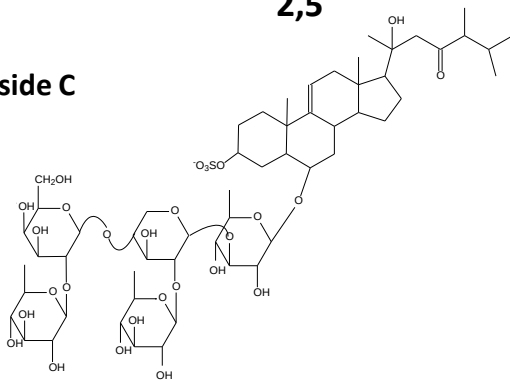
Rubéroside F



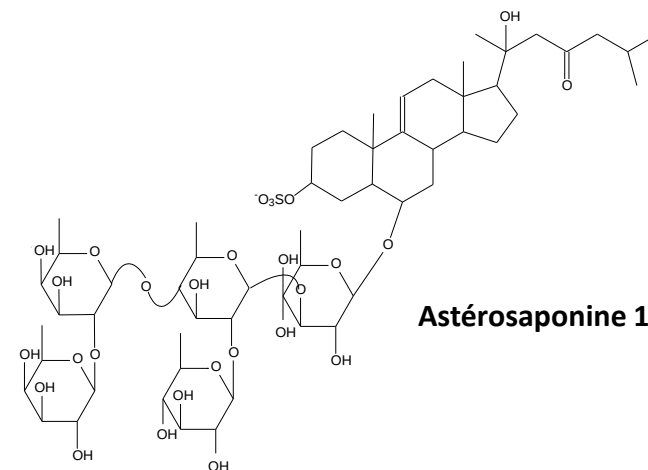
Extracted Ion Current for m/z 1257



Astéroside C



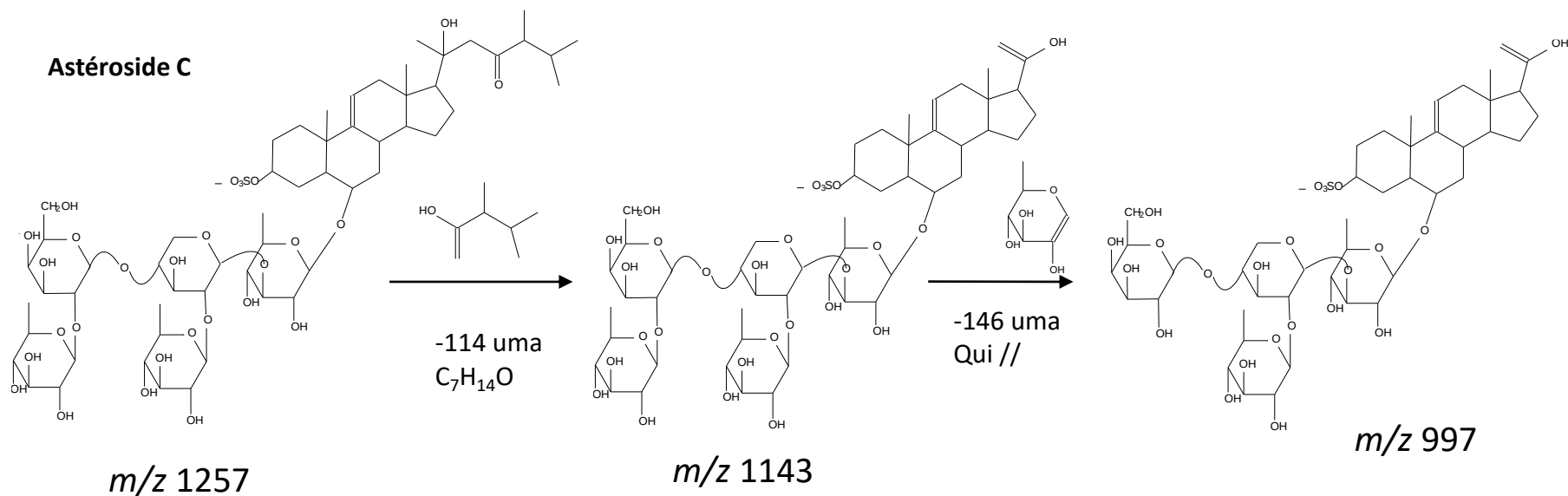
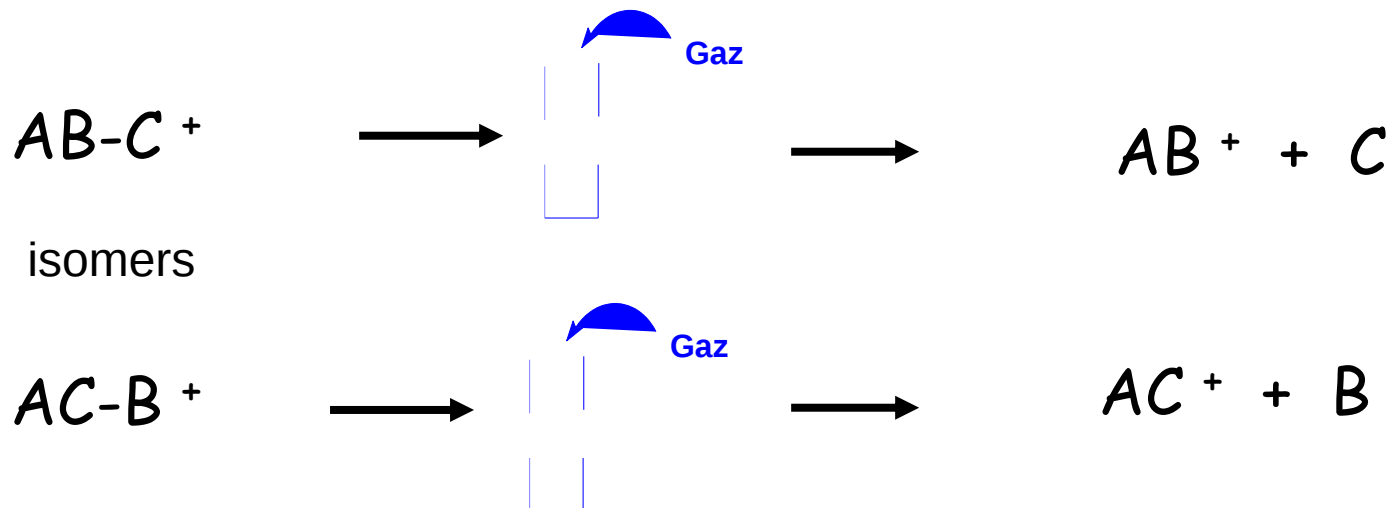
Astérosaponine 1



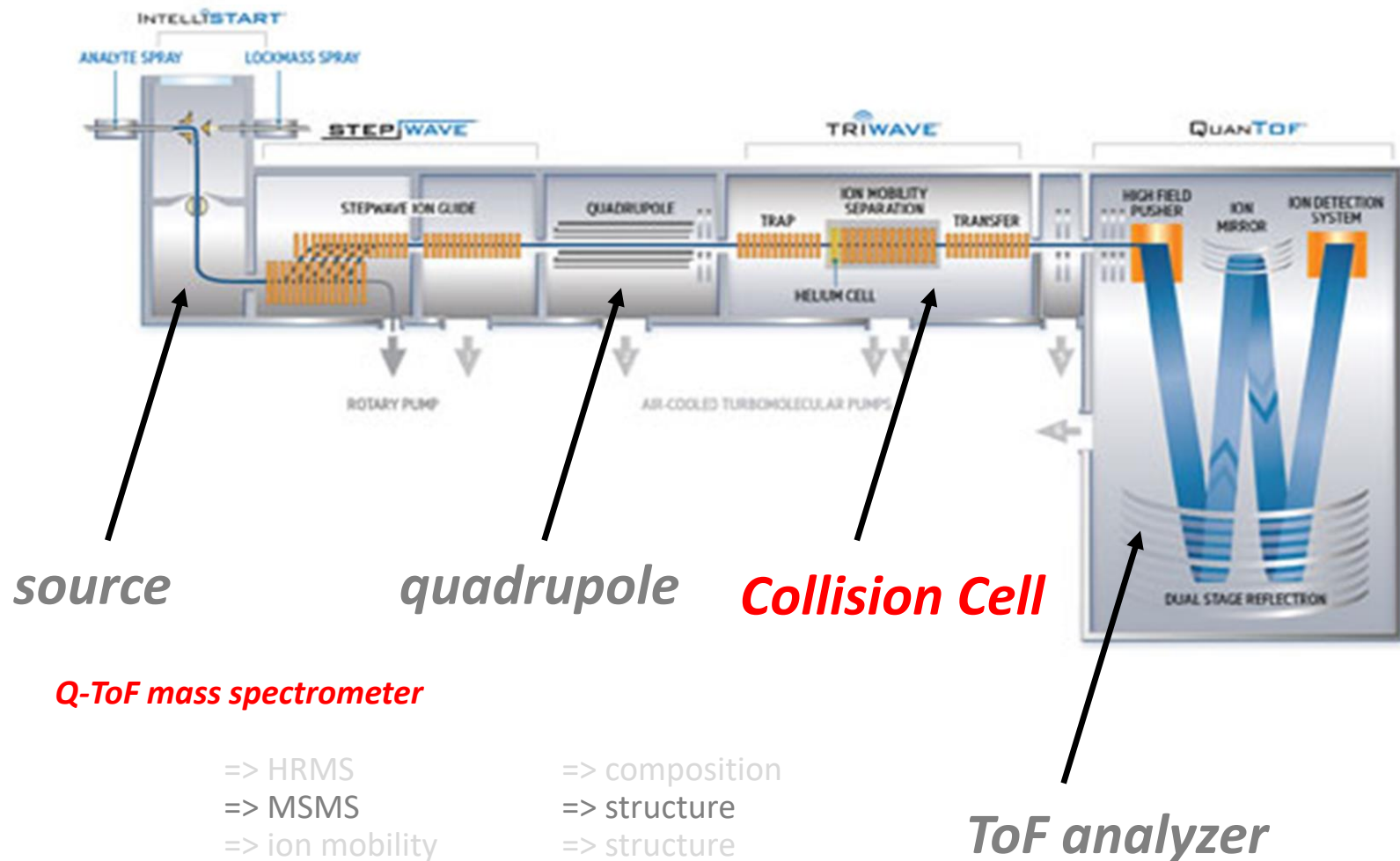
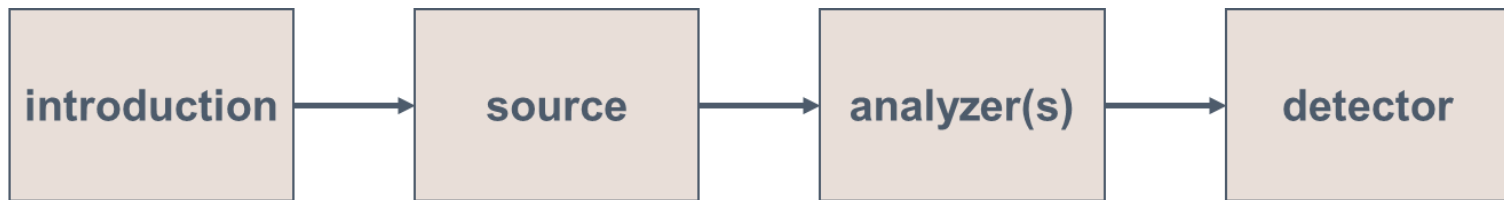
⇒ **LC-ESI(-)-MSMS**

⇒ **Tandem Mass spectrometry**

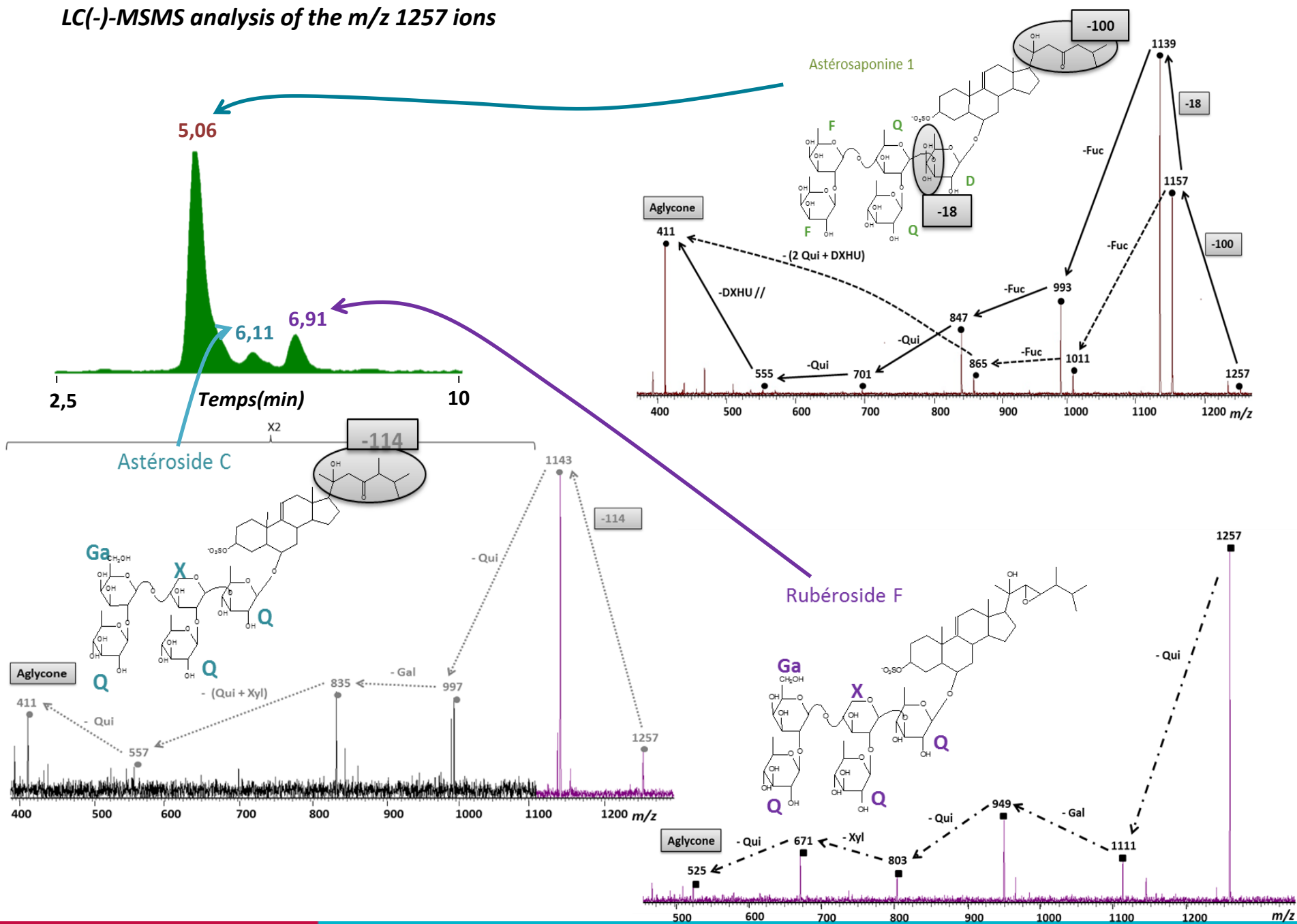
⇒ **Collision-induced dissociation (CID)**



Q-ToF mass spectrometers

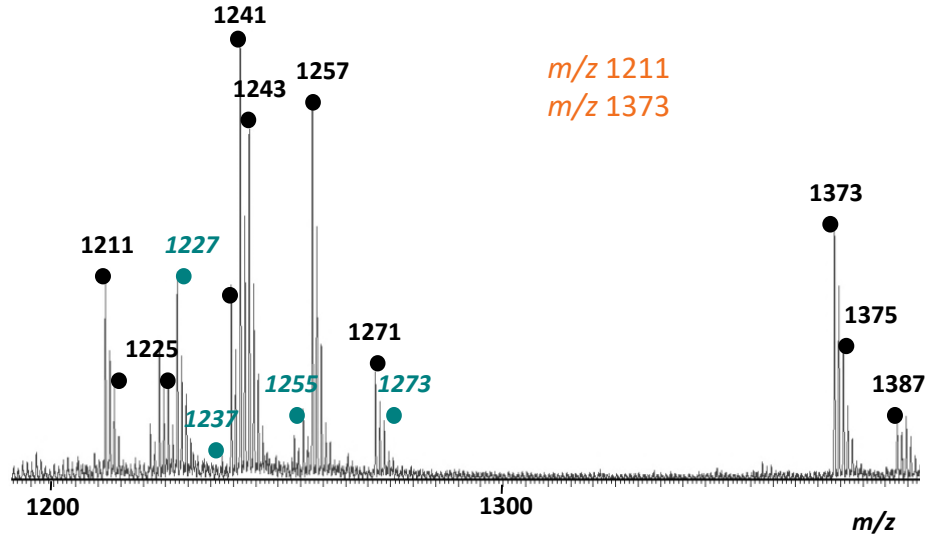


LC(-)-MSMS analysis of the m/z 1257 ions

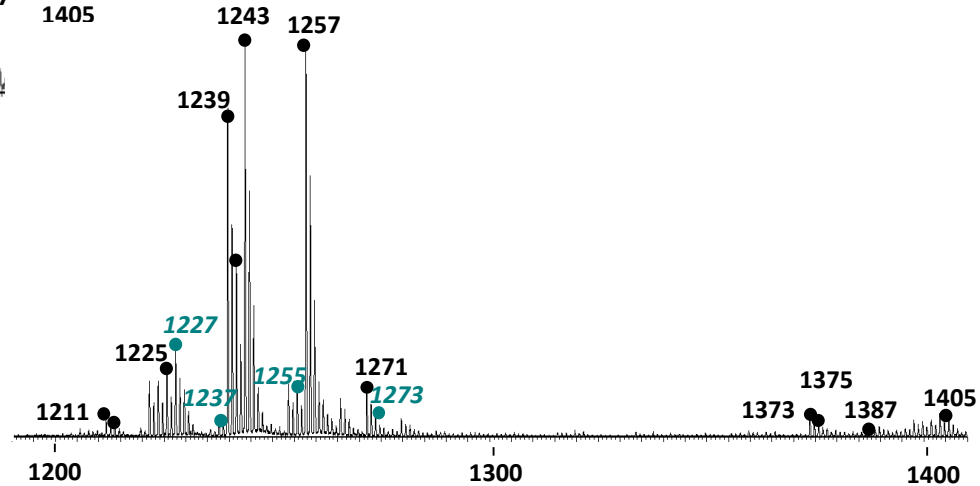


STEP 4 – Inter-organ distribution of saponins

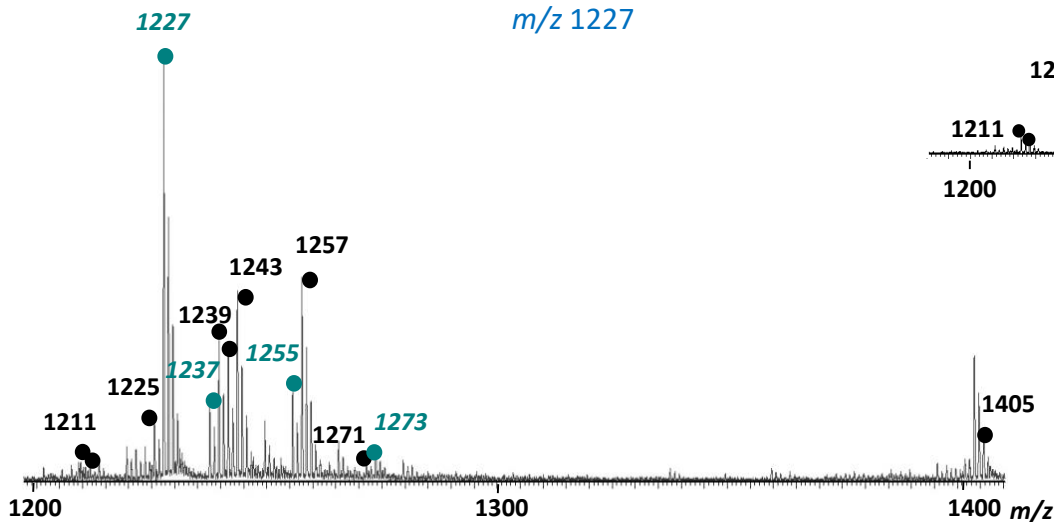
MALDI(-)-MS of *tegument extract*



MALDI(-)-MS of *podia extract*



MALDI(-)-MS *gonad extract*

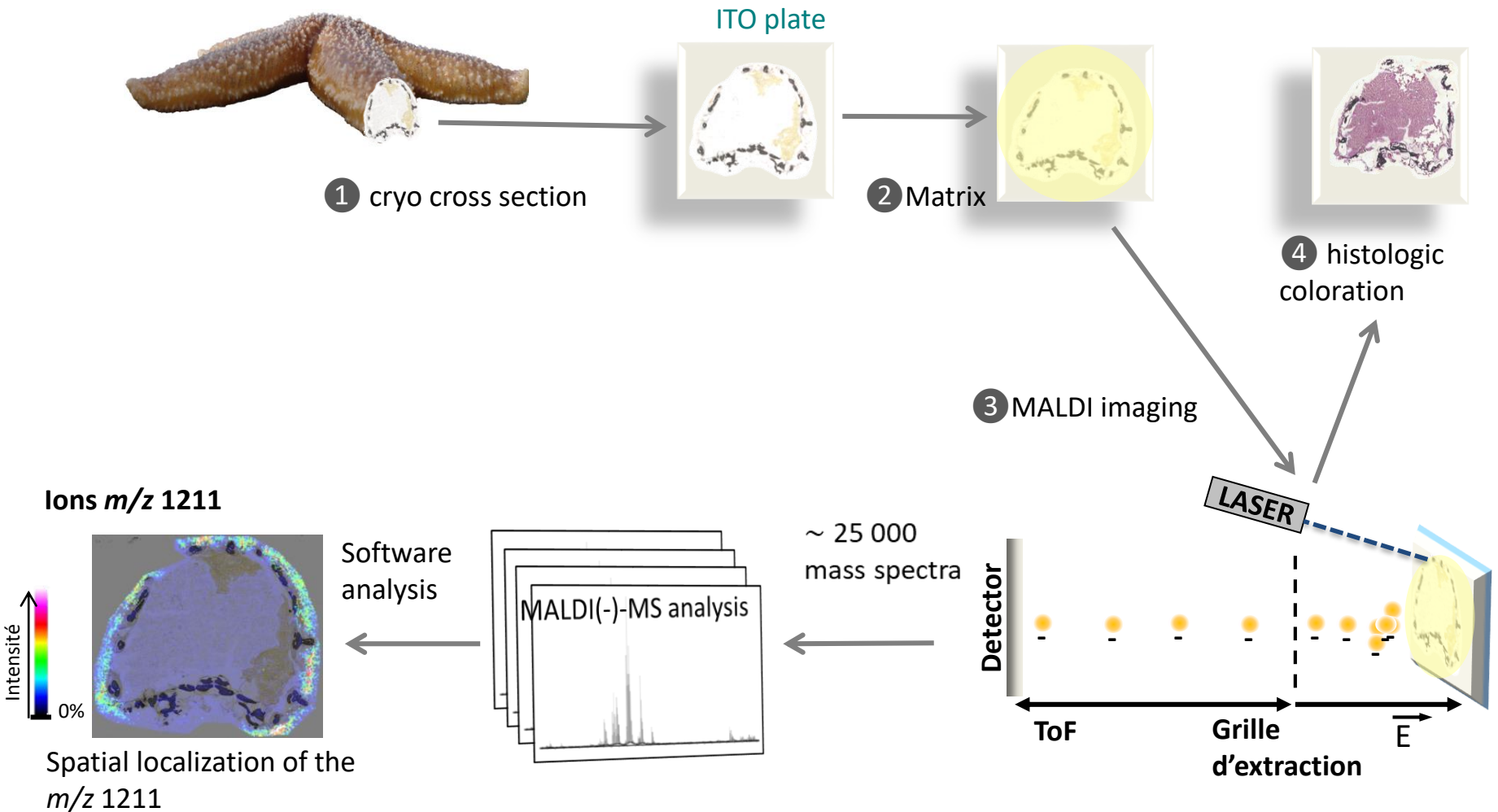


Specific saponin content in function of

- the organ
- the season
- female / male
- animal development

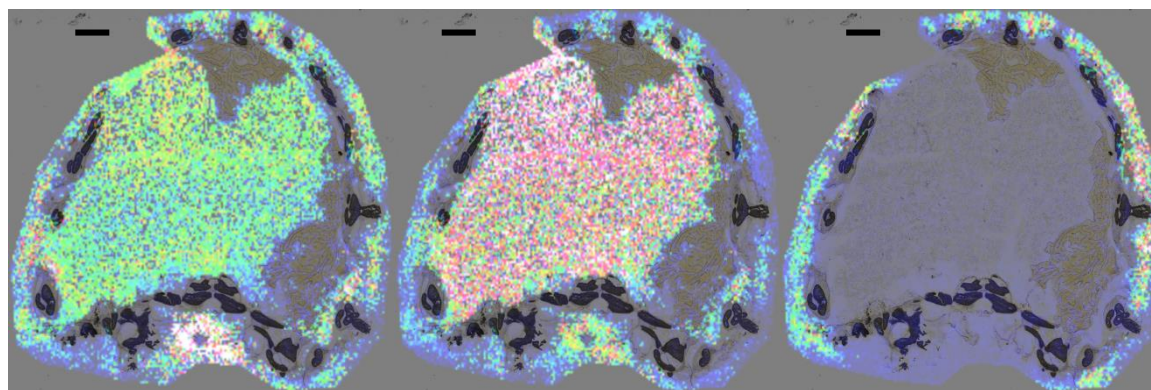
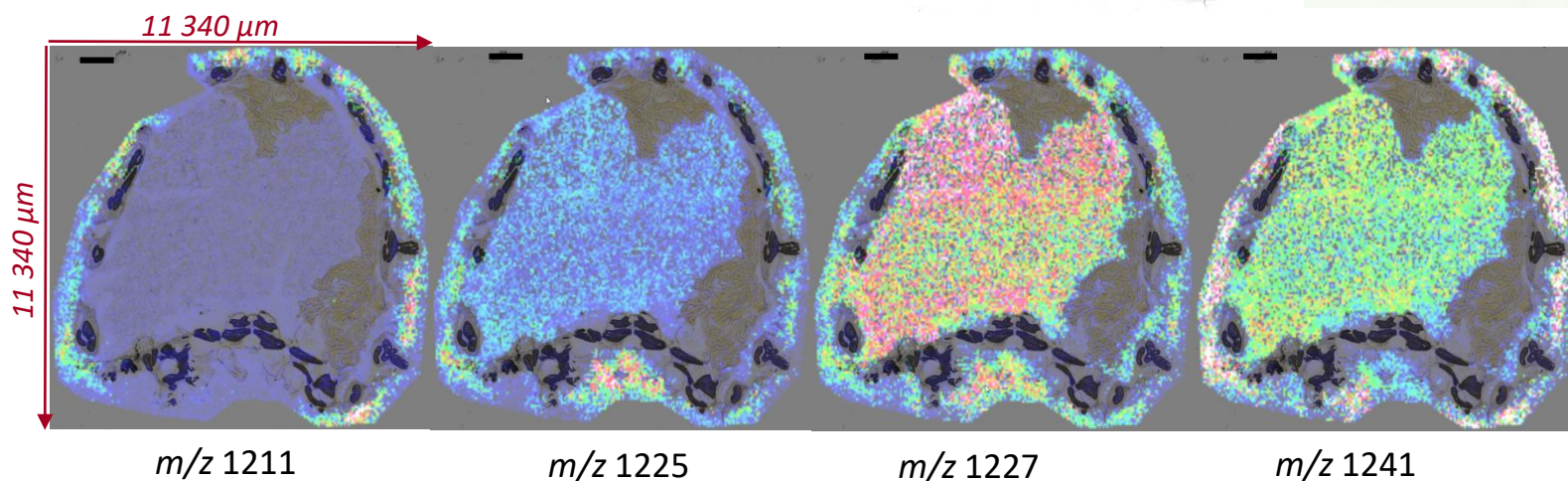
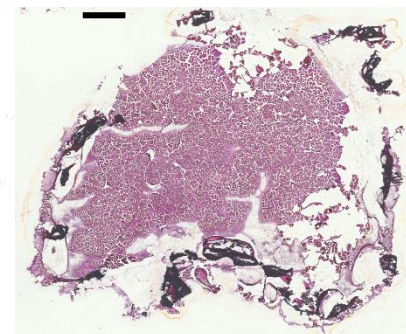
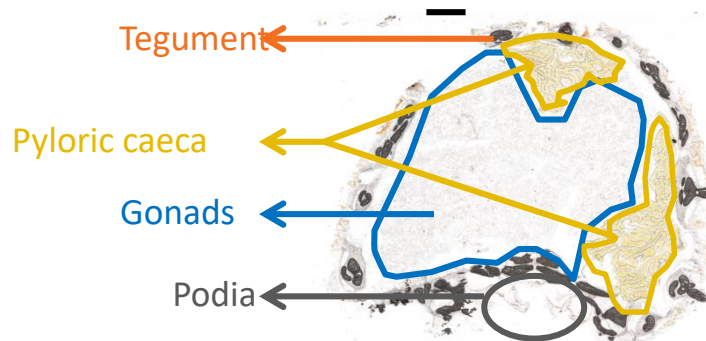
STEP 5 - intra-organ distribution with MALDI imaging

Prof Fournier (ULille)



MALDI-imaging of *A. ruben*

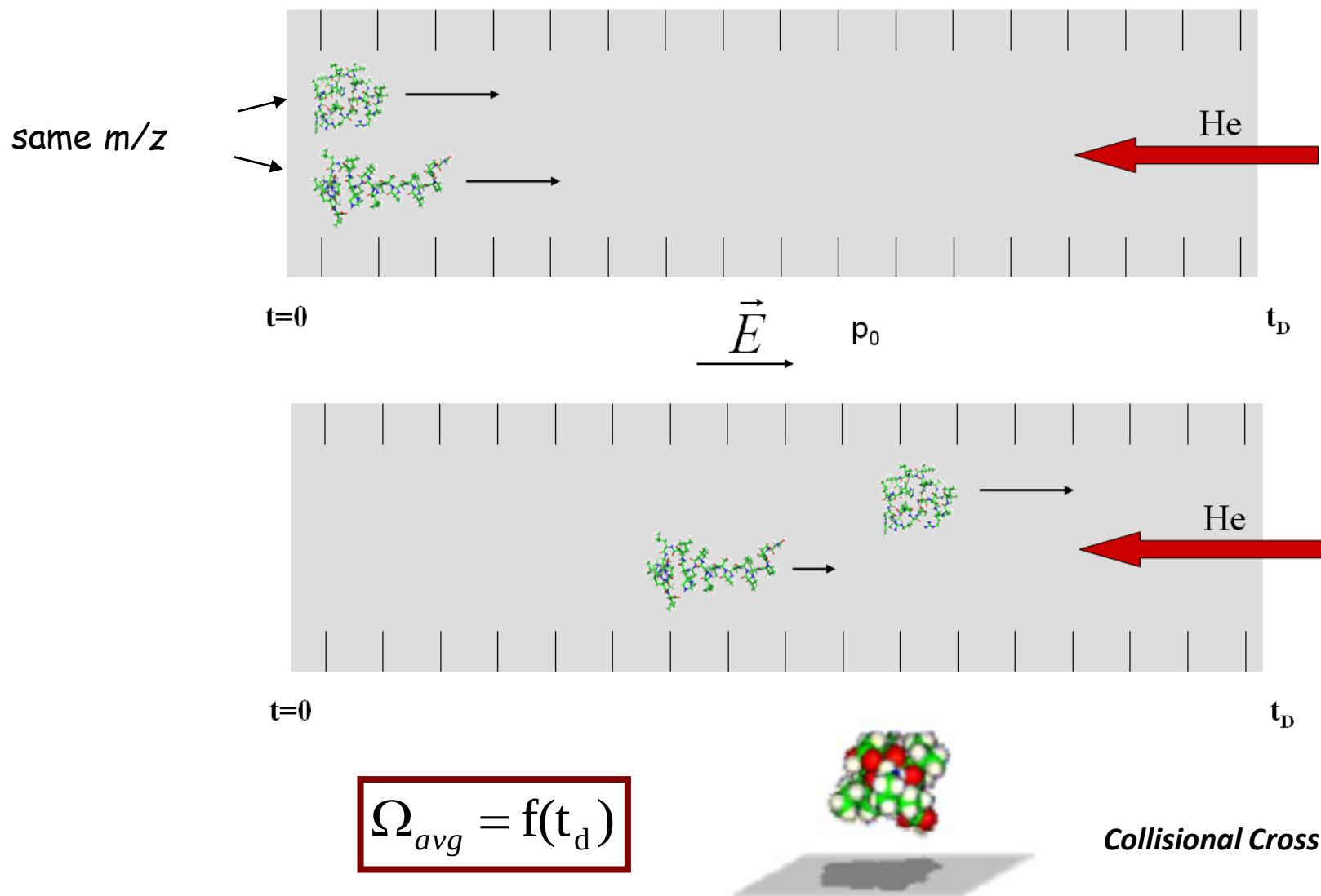
Spatial resolution of $120 \times 120 \mu\text{m}^2$



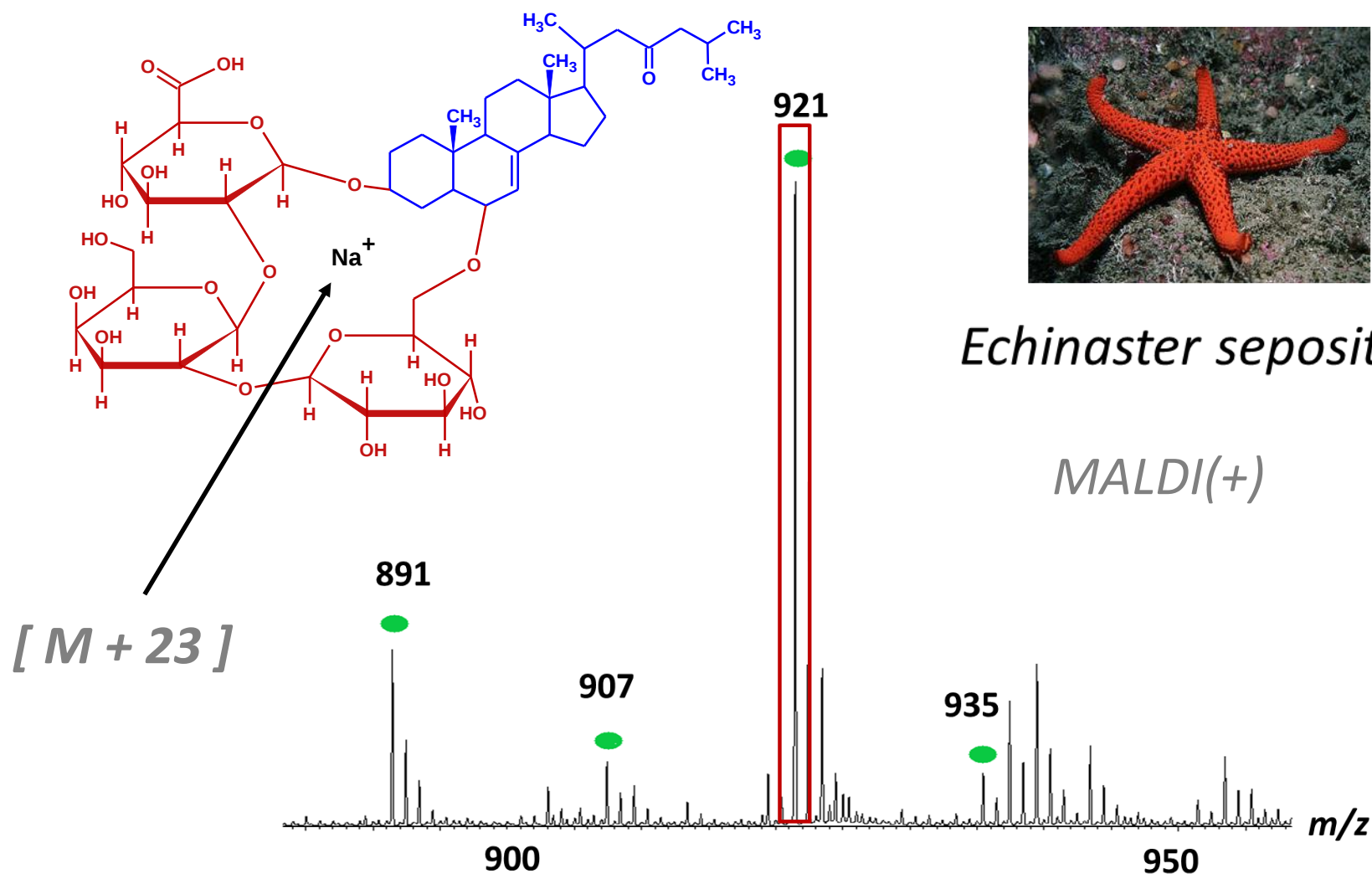
—1 000 μm

STEP 6 – Ion mobility for structural characterization

3D structure : ion mobility spectrometry – mass spectrometry



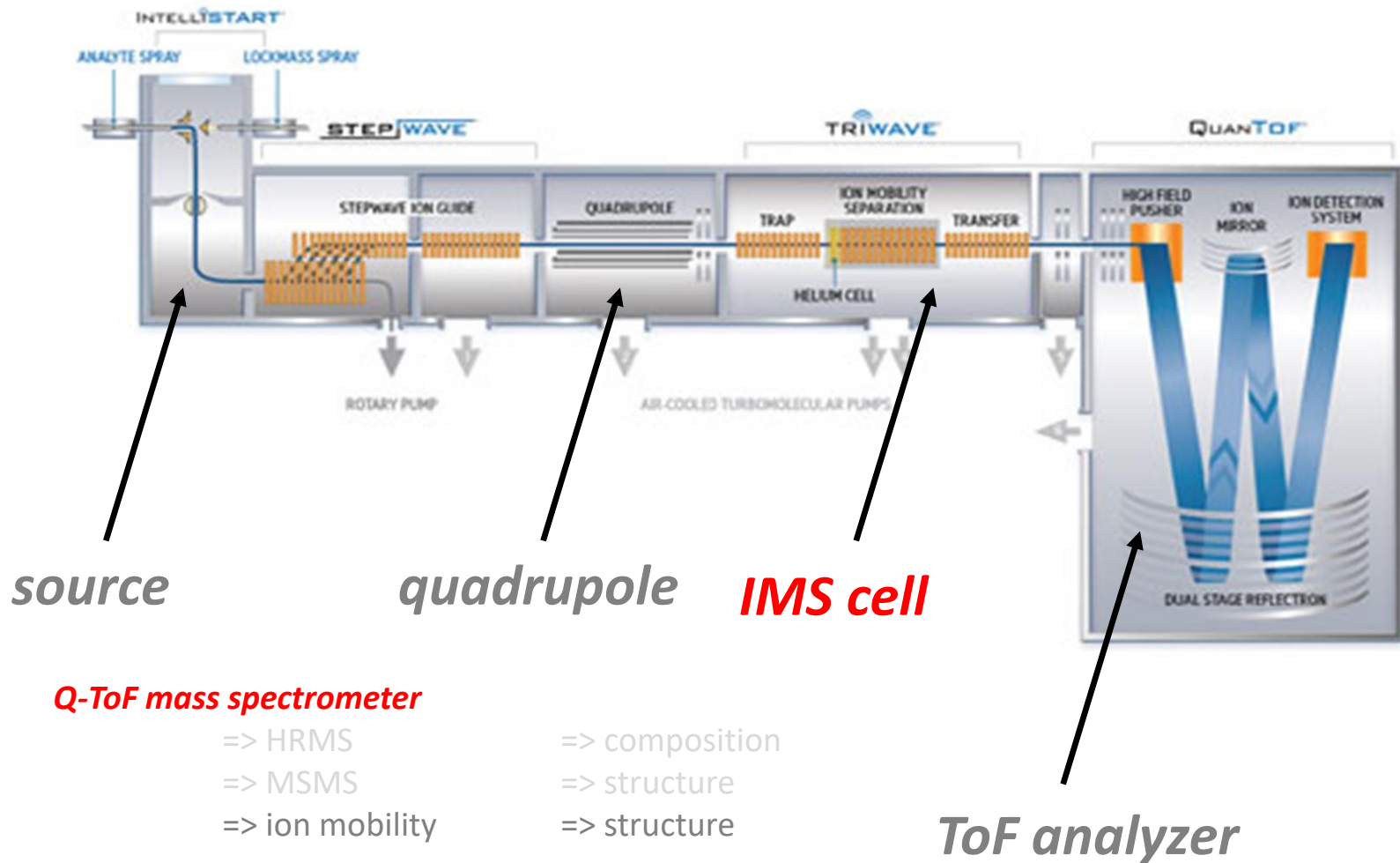
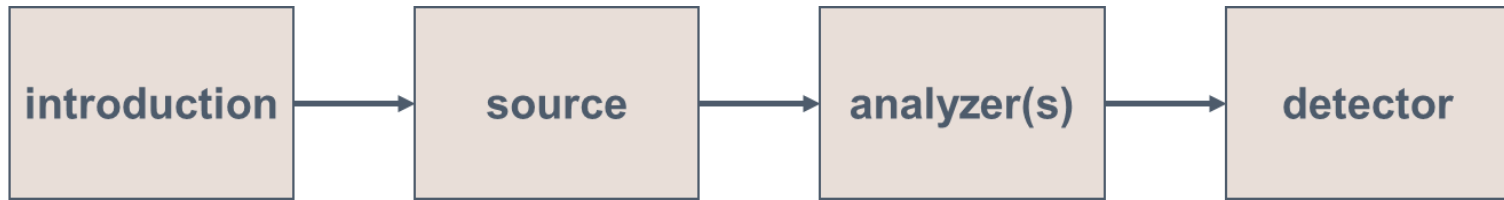
IMS-MS analysis of saponins from *Echinaster sepositus*



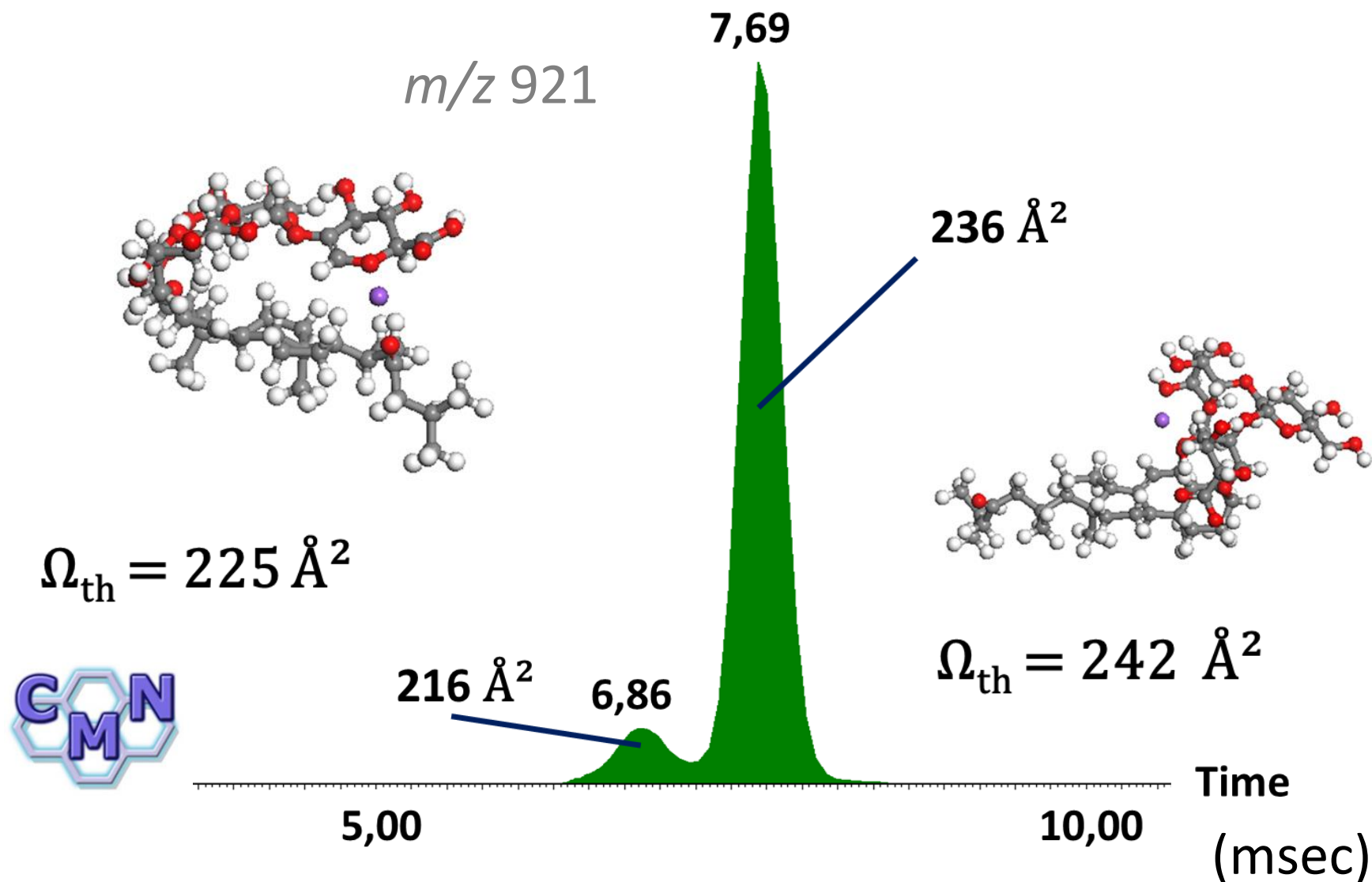
Echinaster sepositus

MALDI(+)

Q-ToF mass spectrometers

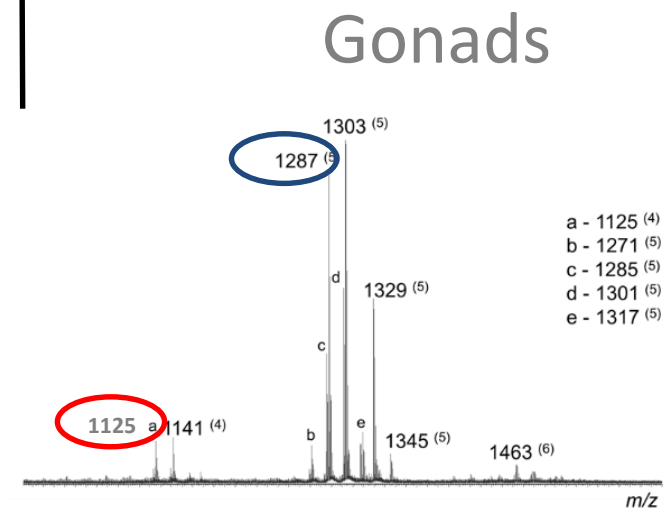
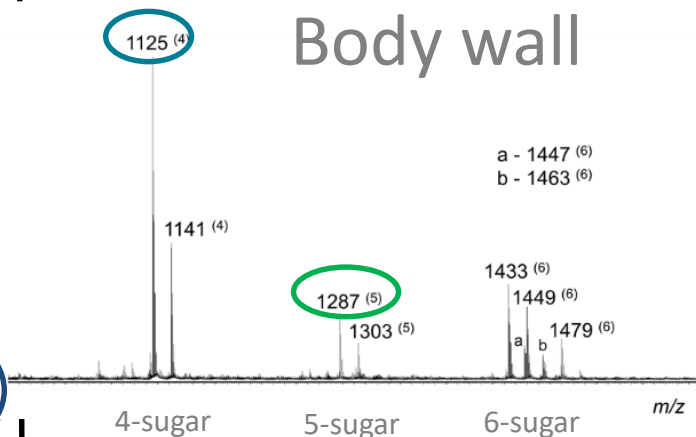
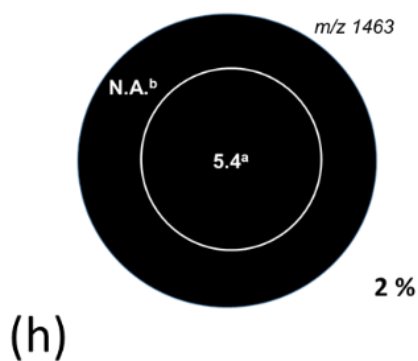
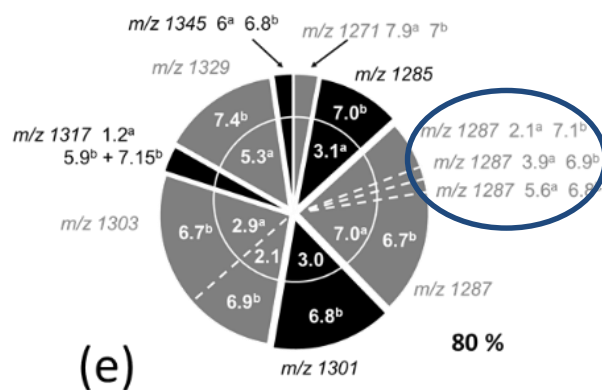
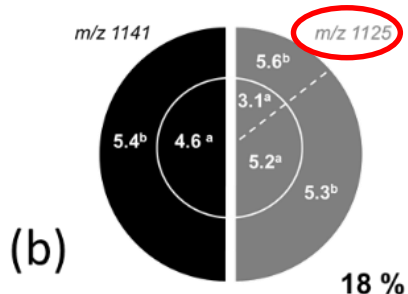
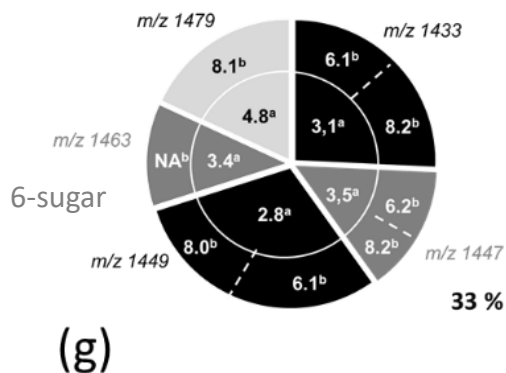
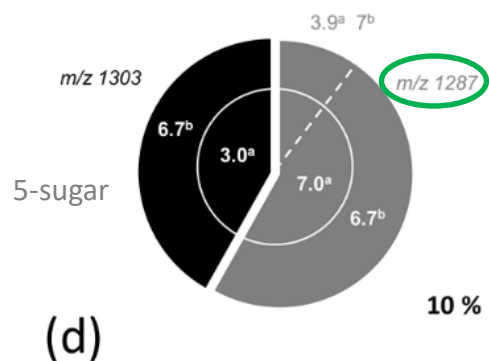
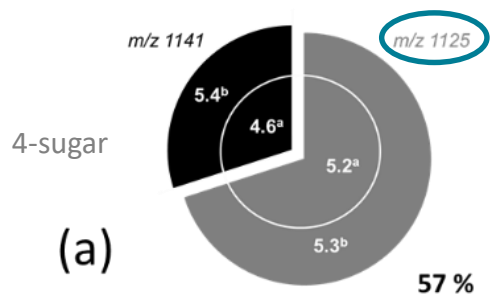


Ion mobility – Arrival Time Distribution



Molecular Dynamics simulation (Prof Cornil – CMN)

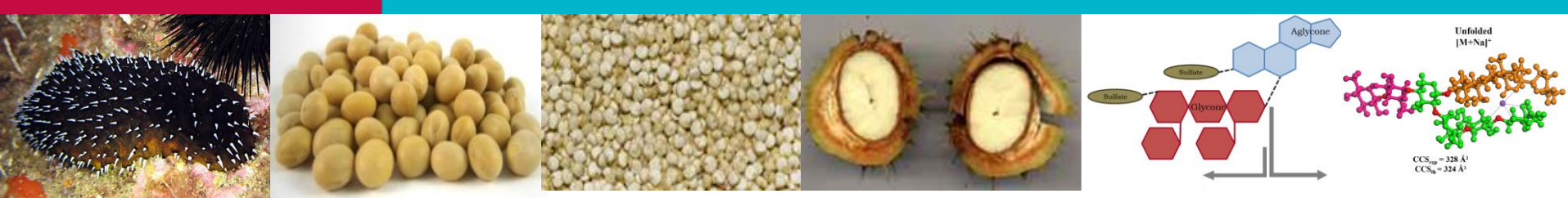
STEP 7 – Data compilation : MALDI + LC + CID + IMS



Body wall

Gonads

Anal.Bioanal.Chem., 409, (2017), 3115-3126



- Saponins are secondary metabolites in plants and marine animals
- Saponins are amphiphilic molecules and the saponin family is characterized by a huge structure diversity
- Saponins are membranolytic molecules

Elucidation of the structure/activity relationship is a multidisciplinary research project

- To build the structure/activity relationship, structural characterization is also mandatory
- We are developing MS-based methods for saponin characterization
by associating MALDI-MS, LC-MS, CID and ion mobility / MD
- We evaluate the biological activities of saponin extracts & pure saponins

hemolytic activity / bactericidal activity / fungicide activity / antioxydant activity...

Many thanks to ...

S²MOs Laboratory :

Dr Julien De Winter

Corentin Decroo
Emmanuel Colson

Emilie Halin
Sébastien Hoyas
Glenn Carroy
Quentin Duez
Romain Liénard
Tiffani Bounatti
Sébastien Delpierre
Fabrice Sainmont
Perrine Weber
Irène Semay
Eric Weverbergh

CMN Laboratory :

Prof Jérôme Cornil
Dr Vincent Lemaure

BOMB laboratory:

Prof Igor Eeckhaut
Prof Patrick Flammang
Emily Claereboudt



Financial support:

University of MONS

FNRS & FRIA

Waters UK

UMONS
Université de Mons

Thank you for your attention