

Preface

Living in biofilms is the common way of life of microorganisms, transiently immobilized in their matrix of extracellular polymeric substances (EPS), interacting in many ways and using the matrix as an external digestion and protection system. This made them the oldest, most successful and ubiquitous form of life. And this is how they have organized their life in the environment, in medical context, and in technical systems, which is acknowledged by a yearly increasing number of scientific publications, which grows exponentially. It is next to impossible to keep an overview in face of all this frequently very specialized, dispersed, and detailed information. But during this entire race for data, it is very important to sometimes take a breath and have a critical look on what is really achieved and what can be learnt from it.

Biofilms are “discovered” and re-discovered in so many different fields, that it is good to refer to their common properties, principles, and processes in order not to get lost in the huge variability of their manifestations.

In this book, aspects of current biofilm research are presented in critical and sometimes provocative chapters. The purpose is double: to give an overview and to inspire further discussions. A particular intention of this book (which is supposed to be the first of a series within the Biofilm Series) is: to stimulate lateral thinking. We hope that “Biofilm Highlights” will serve these purposes.

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