

# Towards Engineering Chiral Rodlike Metal-Organic Frameworks with Rare Topologies

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## Supporting Information Placeholder

**ABSTRACT:** The establishment of novel design strategies to target chiral rodlike MOFs, elusively faced until now, is one of the most straightforward manners to widen the scope of MOFs. Here we describe our last advances on the application of the metalloligand design strategy towards the development of efficient routes to obtain chiral rodlike MOFs. To this end, we have used as precursor an enantiopure homochiral hexanuclear wheel (**1**), derived from the amino acid *D*-valine, which after a supramolecular reorganization into a one-dimensional homochiral chain – with the same configuration as **1** – lead to the formation of an homochiral rodlike MOF (**2**) exhibiting rare **etd** topology.

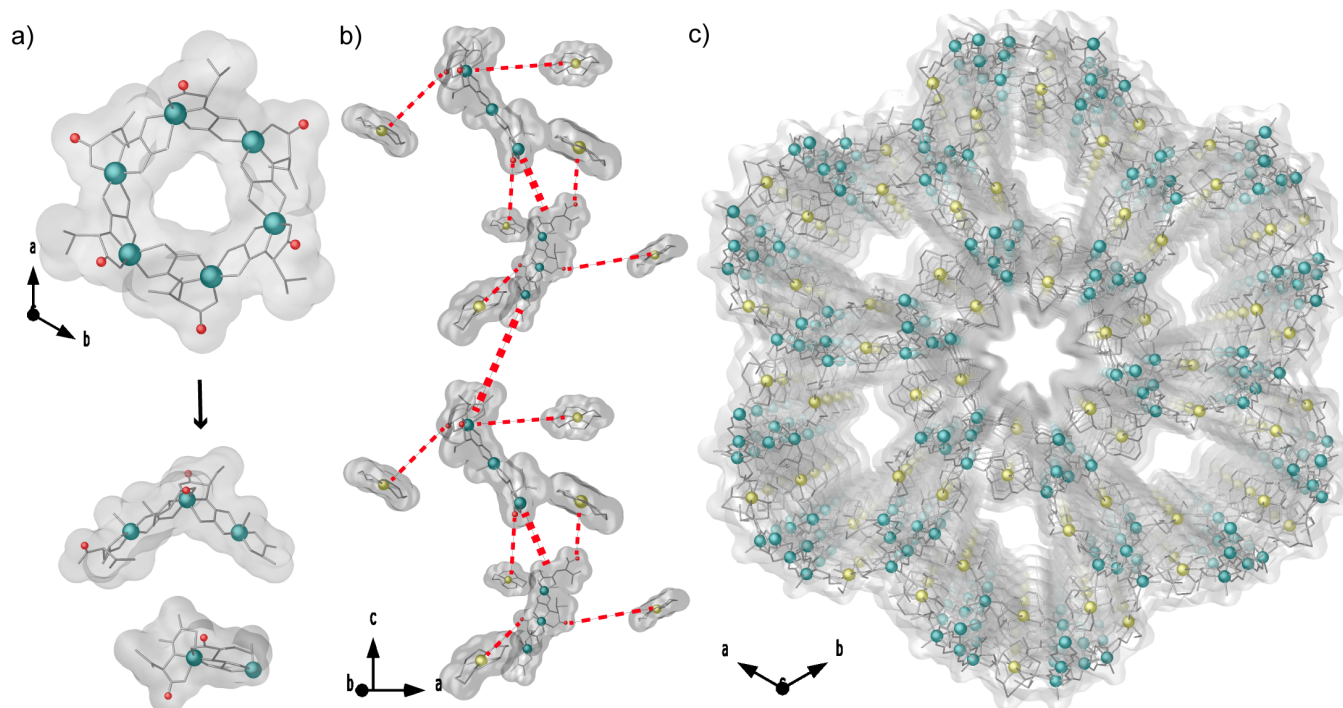
Metal-organic frameworks (MOFs)<sup>1-5</sup> are a class of porous crystalline materials, with fascinating architectures and a myriad of interesting physical and chemical properties,<sup>6-10</sup> which have situated them in an advantageous position among other materials. This exponential growth has been underpinned, to some extent, on the thorough quest of rational design strategies to build/functionalize – in a controlled manner – MOFs with predetermined dimensionalities and topologies,<sup>11-13</sup> and the possibility to use X-ray crystallography to follow and rationalize the proposed synthetic methodology.<sup>14-16</sup> These have enable MOFs to find applications in such diverse fields as gas adsorption and separation,<sup>17-20</sup> catalysis,<sup>21,22</sup> molecular recognition processes,<sup>23,24</sup> drug delivery,<sup>25,26</sup> magnetism<sup>27,28</sup> and water remediation.<sup>29-31</sup>

However, this has not been the case for MOFs constructed from one-dimensional (1D) rod-like Secondary Building Units (SBUs).<sup>32</sup> Despite the thrilling physical properties exhibited by rod MOFs,<sup>18,33-35</sup> the efforts to implement efficient design strategies to target them have been scarce, and the most common method has been based on trial and error assays. At the same time, the number of chiral MOFs<sup>36,37</sup> is quite limited when compared to non-chiral ones, which is

intimately connected to the synthetic difficulties and the resultant necessity to improve the current used approaches.<sup>38-41</sup> This lacuna becomes even more significant when dealing with chiral rod-based MOFs, where the investigations are in its infancy.<sup>32,42-44</sup> At this respect, the only two remarkable advances have been based on the use of a heterotopic ligand, with preference to form helical rods,<sup>43</sup> and the use by our group of preformed chiral chains as building blocks.<sup>44</sup>

In this work, aiming at shedding some more light on the required self-assembly conditions leading to chiral rod-like MOFs, we have continued our investigations on the potential of the metalloligand<sup>45</sup> design strategy with oxamato-based ligands derived from natural amino acids.<sup>16,22,37,41,46</sup> Thus, we have further explored this strategy based on the use of enantiopure ligands able to efficiently transmit, in a first stage, the encoded chiral information to an homochiral wheel. Then, in a second stage, it takes place a supramolecular reorganization leading to homochiral 1D rodlike building blocks, which exhibits free carbonyl groups able to further coordinate to square planar metal complexes,<sup>47</sup> yielding a three-dimensional (3D) chiral rodlike MOF.<sup>44</sup> Despite in this case the chiral 1D polymeric SBU is not isolated, the cornerstone of the design strategy – to efficiently transfer the chiral information from the ligands to the MOF through a molecular-based preformed building block – is maintained. This new finding broadens the range of precursors able to assemble, in a controlled manner, chiral rod MOFs and represents another evidence of the potential of supramolecular adaptive chemistry.<sup>48</sup>

Here, we report the use of a previously reported enantiopure hexanuclear copper(II) wheel – prepared using an oxamato-based ligand derived from the amino acid *D*-valine<sup>49</sup> – with formulae  $(\text{Me}_4\text{N})_6\{\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}_6[(R)\text{-valma}]_6\} \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (**1**) [where *(R)*-valma = *(R)*-*N*-(ethyl oxoacetate)valine] (Figure 1 and Scheme S1, Supporting Information) as a chiral preformed metalloligand.



**Figure 1.** (a-c) Chemical “metalloligand” approach: Perspective views of the precursor compound **1**<sup>49</sup> (top a) and of **2** (c). Supramolecular reorganization from an enantiopure homochiral hexanuclear copper(II) wheel into a homochiral 1D rodlike building block and suggested self-assembling process consisting of the coordination of the free carbonyl groups of **1** towards  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  cations (b). Perspective view of the 3D homochiral MOF **2** (c). The copper(II) and nickel(II) ions and the free carbonyl groups are represented by cyan, gold and red spheres, respectively, whereas the ligands are depicted by sticks. Thin and thick dotted lines simulate the approach of  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  cations to the free carbonyl groups and the self-assembly of oligomers (bottom a) forming the chain, respectively.

After reacting the hexacopper(II) units, with free carbonyl groups, towards square planar mononuclear cations  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  (Figures 1-4 and S1-S8, Supporting Information), a new homochiral 3D MOF of formula  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})][\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}(\text{R})\text{-valma}]_2 \cdot 15\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (**2**) with rare **etd** topology was obtained (Figures S8-S10).

The chemical identity of **2** was established by the combination of ICP-AES, EDX, elemental, PXRD and TGA analyses (Figures S11-S13 Supporting Information). In addition, the crystal structure of **2** could be determined by single crystal X-ray diffraction (see Experimental Section, Supporting Information)

**Crystal Structure.** **2** crystallizes in the hexagonal chiral space group  $P6_5$ . Overall, 3D framework of **2** is built by chiral left-handed copper(II) parallel chains, interconnected by  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  ions (Figure 1c and Figures S1-S7), to give a nanosized tubule with an opening size of 1.2 nm – measured from van der Waals surfaces – along the *c* axis (Figure S4). Each tubule/channel shares metal-carboxylate chains – grasped by  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  complexes acting as ditopic *metallolinkers* – with neighboring ones, leading to a chiral porous three-dimensional framework (Figure 1c and Figures S3-S5). PLATON analysis revealed that the three-dimensional structure is composed of large solvent-accessible voids of 29348.8 Å<sup>3</sup> which constitute 65% of volume per unit cell [44954.0 (2)].

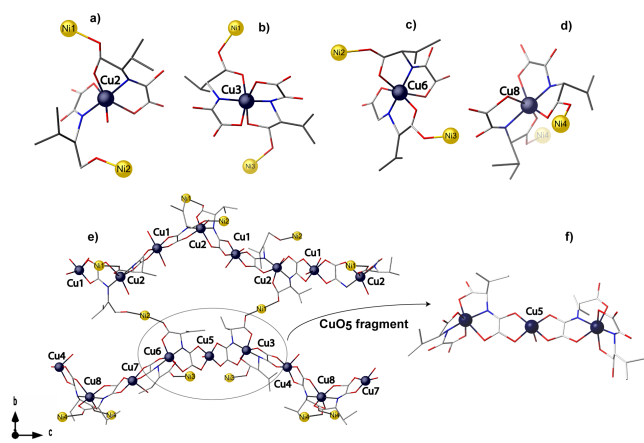
Eight  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ , eight L [(*R*)-valma<sup>3-</sup>] ligands, and four  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  ions are present in the asymmetric unit of **2** (Figure S1). All  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  metal ions are axially coordinated by two oxygen atoms of two free carbonyl groups from consecutive

valine amino acid residues [Ni-O bond lengths ranging from 2.04(1) to 2.23(2) Å], whereas four nitrogen atoms of the cyclam ligand define the equatorial plane [Ni-N distances ranging from 1.90(2) to 2.34(1) Å] of a distorted octahedral geometry (Figure S1). For the sake of clarity, copper(II) metal cations can be divided in two groups depending on their local environment. Four of them – Cu(2), Cu(3), Cu(6) and Cu(8) – exhibit a highly distorted octahedral environment ( $\text{CuN}_2\text{O}_4$ ), being coordinated to two tridentate valine residues of (*R*)-valma<sup>3-</sup> ligand. Conversely, Cu(1), Cu(4), Cu(5) and Cu(7) are coordinated only by oxygen atoms from both the carboxylate groups of two valma<sup>3-</sup> ligands and terminal water molecules (Figure 2).

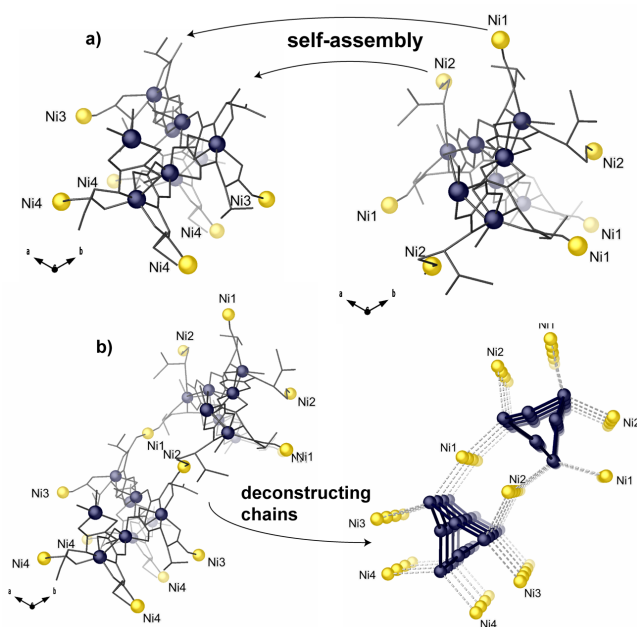
Overall, not equivalent  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  alternate in two independent helical chains with *M* handedness of the type  $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{L})_2]_n$  growing along the *c* axis, and are sequentially linked by two bridging/bidentate carboxylate groups and two bridging/tridentate oxalamino (Figures 2e-4 and Figures S1 and S5c). As shown in Figure 4, the  $[\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}(\text{R})\text{-valma}]^{2-}$  chains, constituting the 1D-SBUs, are connected by  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  complexes acting as ditopic *metallolinkers*.

MOFs build by rod-like SBUs are usually described by looking at the packing of the rods and how they are linked.<sup>32,42,50</sup> It is common to find structures built by parallel rods to exhibit axes on symmetric square (**sqI**), honeycomb (**hcb**) or Kagomé (**kgm**) nets.<sup>51</sup> Looking at **2** down the *c* axis the rods describe an **hcb** pattern but with some remarkable features. The two crystallographically different  $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{L})_2]_n$  polymers, growing along *c* axis (Figures 4-5a), intersect the *ab* plane forming four crystallographically distinct chiral

channels (Figure 5) of different size and shape. Two large hexagonal channels aligned parallel to the *c* axis (Figures S6 and S7), with accessible diameters of *ca.* 1 and 0.8 nm, one of them being more regular (Figure 5b, pore A, including equivalent chains) respect to a second one highly distorted (Figure 5b, pore B, comprising crystallographically distinct chains), and two rectangular (C and D in Figure 5b) very small channels with a narrow window of approximately 5 × 4 Å – not so accessible considering the van der Waals radii of carbon and nitrogen atoms of the cyclam ligand of the pore's walls filling the space.



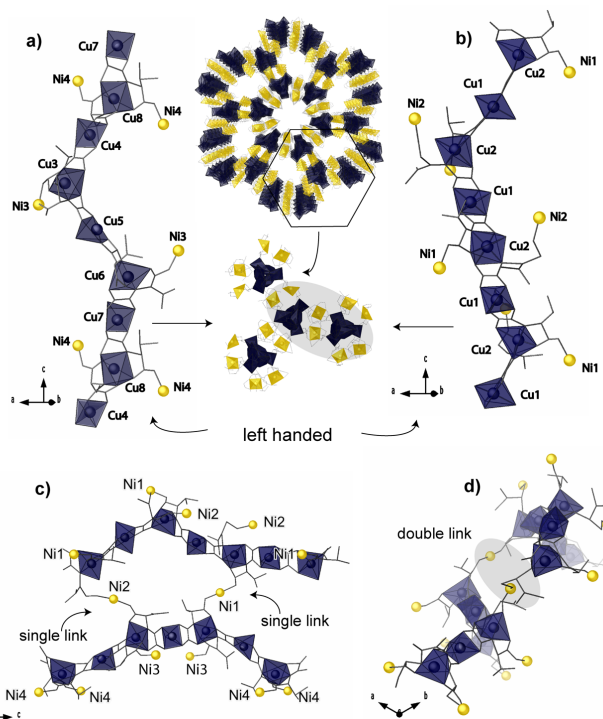
**Figure 2.** Details of copper environments in **2**. (Copper: dark blue; Nickel: gold; Carbon: grey; Nitrogen: blue and Oxygen: red).



**Figure 3.** Suggested self-assembly in **2** of *M* helical chains and  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  complexes. Colors are as in Figure 2.

The hexagonal channels are not interlocked to any of the other channels and are delimited by a double wall of  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  complexes acting as ditopic *metallo*linkers. In fact, the structure of **2** can be seen as a really fashionable packing of diverse helical chains generated by the coordina-

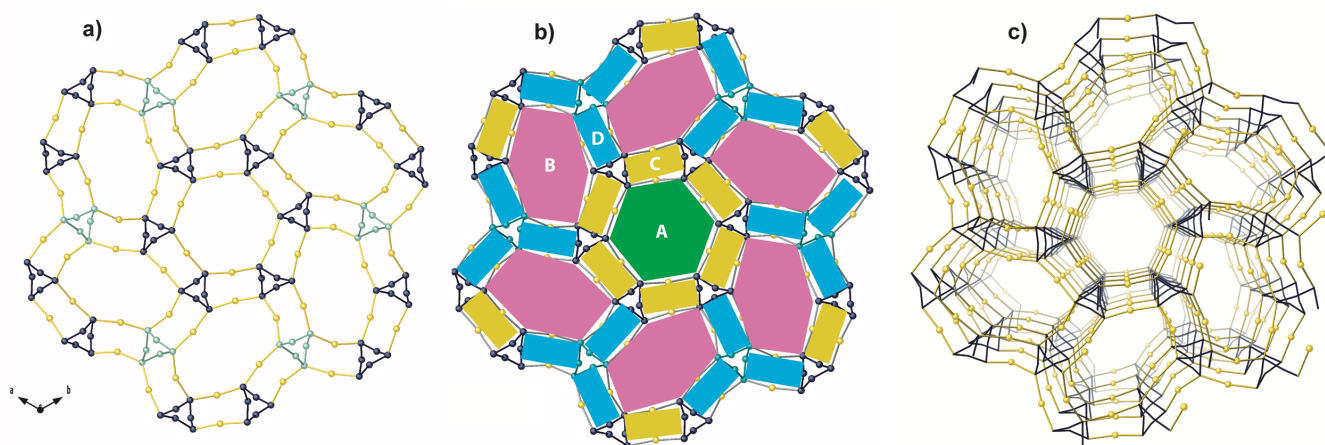
tion of  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  with valma amino acid residues (Figure 6 and Figures S6-S7). Bearing in mind the description of channels and their double walls, it is possible to define four helices generating inner and outer walls of the two hexagonal channels (Figure 6, see also Figures S6-S7), where the double link of  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  units is most likely at its origin.



**Figure 4.** Perspective views of a fragment of the two crystallographic distinct chains in **2** (a and b). Views along  $[011]$  and  $[110]$  directions of the two assembled chains (c and d). Copper–oxygen/nitrogen polyhedra are colored in blue whereas  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  cations are represented as gold spheres.

Those double walls are stabilized by C–H...H–C interactions between neighboring cyclam ligands with C...C distances in the range 3.5–4.3 Å (Figure S2).

Further insights of the structure of **2** can be gained by an in depth topological analysis with ToposPro<sup>52</sup> following the guidelines recently outlined by a IUPAC task group.<sup>53</sup> The 3D underlying network is obtained with the “standard simplification” method that associate a node to both metals and ligands. In our case, the Ni and Cu are 2-coordinated nodes, while the ligands are 3-c (linking two copper and one nickel). Thus, it reduces the rod packing MOF to the rare uninodal chiral 3-c *etd* (Figure 5c and Figure S8),<sup>51</sup> very distorted when compared to the ideal *etd* (Figure S9). As far as we know only three chiral MOFs, showing an *etd* underlying net have been reported so far in the ToposPro Toris database.<sup>54</sup> But, what is the relation between this rare net and the *hcb* rod packing observed in **2**? *etd* could be described from three different packing *hcb*, *hxl* and *kgm* as shown in Figure S10. The choice of the description depends on the shape and position of the infinite rod-like SBU. The program ToposPro extract unambiguously the infinite Cu...Cu SBU, using the procedure called “the cluster representation”,<sup>53,55</sup> assigning the *hcb* rod-packing.

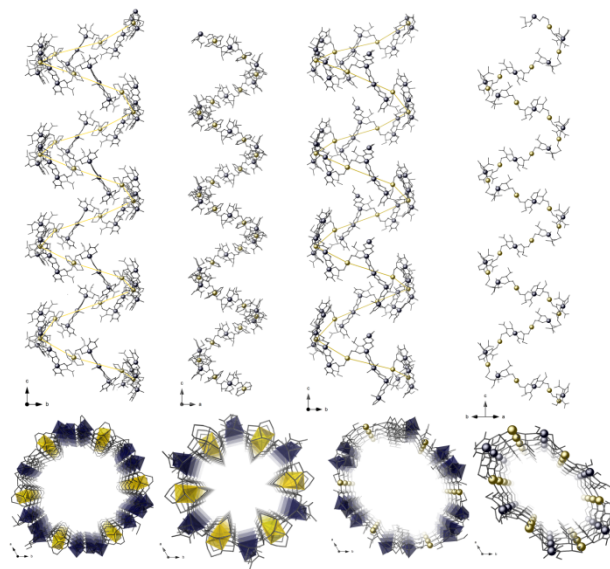


**Figure 5.** (a-c) Views of the packing of chains in the 2-periodic net. Different colors in b) underline the four different types of polygons/channels in **2** (a and b). Blue and green spheres represent copper metal ions in crystallographically distinct deconstructed chains. c) Perspective view of the 3D underlying 3-coordinated **etd** net, where chiral chains (blue lines) – all with same handedness *M* – are brought together by  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  complexes (gold spheres) acting as ditopic *metallo*linkers.

Recently we have reported the use of a preformed chiral 1D polymeric SBU for the construction of a new chiral rod-based 3D MOF, exploiting the ability of the oxamato-based derivative of the amino acid *D*-phenylglycine, when reacting the preformed chains towards the square planar mononuclear cation  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$ .<sup>44</sup> Despite both *valma*<sup>3-</sup> and *pegma*<sup>3-</sup> ligands – where (*R*)-*pegma* = (*R*)-*N*-(ethyl oxoacetate)phenylglycine – exhibit the same exo-hexadentate coordination fashion, the unusual coordination of *valma*<sup>3-</sup> ligand leading to the alternation of  $\text{CuNO}_4$  and  $\text{CuO}_6$  entities makes the overall net in **2** very different and extraordinarily intricate respect to previously reported by us with *pegma*. Indeed in this latter one MOF, helices are all right-handed and linked by  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  cationic complexes to generate an **eta** net.

In order to have better insights both in structure assembly and in reasons of diversity of **2** respect to *pegma* one,<sup>44</sup> we analyzed in detail the importance that may play weak C-H...H-C interactions between neighboring valine isopropyl residues and also cyclam ligands on the self-assembling process (Figure S2). Despite the weakness of C-H...H-C interactions,<sup>56</sup> when many are present, they can play a stabilizing role in a range of materials, e.g. in lipid membranes,<sup>57</sup> based on their cumulative effect. On this basis, we infer that such C-H...H-C interactions impose the *syn* conformation of valine isopropyl residues (C...C distances of 3.5-4.3 Å, Figure S2) and drive to the unusual coordination of *valma* ligands (Figure 3), which, in turn, is responsible of the alternation of copper metal ions with different environments (Figures 2 and 4) and, ultimately, dictates the nature of the self-assembled entity (Figures 1c and 5). In fact, as  $[(\text{CH}_3)_4\text{N}]^+$  cations play a crucial role in templating wheel precursors for *valma* – again according to effectiveness of alkyl-alkyl interactions – and chain SBUs for *pegma*,<sup>44</sup> it is not hard to believe that also ultimate self-assembly of chiral rod-based MOFs could be driven by ‘supramolecular rules’ supported on C-H...H-C interactions, in a reminiscent way of the complex functional architectures observed in living beings based in weak supra-

molecular interactions.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the observed self-organization and adaptive chemistry<sup>48</sup> to obtain **2** represent another level of complexity on the self-assembly of intricate structures and another elegant example towards the emergence of evolutive chemistry.



**Figure 6.** Side and top view of the two chiral hexagonal channels constructed by four helices generating inner and outer walls as a consequence of a double link of  $[\text{Ni}(\text{cyclam})]^{2+}$  units. (See also Figures S6-S7 in Supporting Information)

**Thermogravimetric Analysis and X-Ray Powder Diffraction.** A consistent powder X-ray diffractogram of the bulk sample with the theoretical one extracted from the crystal selected to single-crystal X-ray diffraction evidence the purity of the bulk sample (Figure S11). Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) under a dry  $\text{N}_2$  flow was used to confirm

the solvent content of **2** (Figure S12 in the Supporting Information).

**Circular Dichroism, Electronic Absorption and Diffuse Reflectance Spectroscopy and Mass Spectrometry.** Solid circular dichroism (CD) spectrum of **2** was carried out in order to further confirm its enantiomeric nature and it is collected in Figure S13. It exhibits maximum positive Cotton effects at 344 nm, whereas maximum negative effects are observed at 312, 390 and 619 nm. The band in the visible region is attributed to a copper(II) d-d transition, which arises from a chirality induced effect on the copper centers by the enantiopure ligands and it is very similar to that observed in the enantiopure precursor wheels<sup>49</sup> (inset of Figure S13). In turn, those bands observed in the UV region can be assigned to metal-to-ligand (ML) charge-transfer transitions. The electronic spectrum of **1** shows one intense band in the high-energy UV region, together with a Vis band of lower intensity, which correspond to the typical d-d transition of a copper(II) complex. The diffuse reflectance spectrum of **2** shows one intense band in the low-energy UV-region, together with a quite intense Vis band, slightly red shifted respect **1**.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the stable oligomeric species in solution and supramolecular reorganization of **1** into a 1D chiral chains were carried out ESI-MS experiments. H<sub>2</sub>O/CH<sub>3</sub>CN solutions of **1** and **1** plus [Ni(cyclam)]Cl<sub>2</sub> suggest a higher stability of the hexanuclear wheels (inferred by the most intense peak at *m/z* 1531.9, Figure S14) and its reorganization into oligomeric species – trimeric [H<sup>+</sup>·Cu<sub>3</sub>L<sub>3</sub>(TMA)<sub>3</sub>] and dimeric species [Cu<sub>2</sub>L<sub>2</sub>(TMA)<sub>3</sub>]<sup>+</sup> for peaks at *m/z* 970 and 720 (Figures S15-S16, when [Ni(cyclam)]<sup>2+</sup> complexes are present, which may be consider as precursors of the 1D chiral chains.

## Conclusions

We report a novel highly intricate porous chiral bimetallic rod-MOF (**2**), which has been synthesized by using a rational programmed “complex as ligand” approach. Thus – in the presence of cationic mononuclear square-planar complexes with free axial positions such as [Ni(cyclam)]<sup>2+</sup>– anionic enantiopure hexacopper(II) wheels acting as metalloligands disassemble in solution to form enantiopure copper(II) 1D polymers capable to further coordinate the [Ni(cyclam)]<sup>2+</sup> units to yield the homochiral 3D MOF, where the encoded chiral information of the starting ligands is efficiently transmitted to the final MOF. Indeed, the crystal structure of **2** shows that the MOF is built of helical chains that are connected by [Ni(cyclam)]<sup>2+</sup> complexes acting as ditopic *metallolinkers*. The result is a fascinating crystal structure with rare 3-coordinated **etd** net. Overall, the crystal structure exhibits four crystallographically independent channels comprising inner and outer walls as result of the binding mode of ditopic metallolinker employed towards rods. A detailed comparison of chains packing in **2** respect to an analogue MOF constructed with similar strategy, previously reported by us, reveals how subtle modifications of the employed ligand can dictate self-assembly finely tuned by apparently weakly but highly efficient supramolecular interactions. Current efforts in our group are devoted to further explored this new adaptive chemistry towards the self-assembly of chiral rod-based MOFs.

## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

**Preparation of [Ni(cyclam)][Cu<sup>I</sup>(*R*)-valma]<sub>2</sub> · 15H<sub>2</sub>O (**2**).** A multigram scale synthesis of **2** was carried out by direct reaction of 1/9 water/methanol solutions (v/v) of compound **1** and [Ni(cyclam)]Cl<sub>2</sub>: a 5 mL portion of the [Ni(cyclam)]Cl<sub>2</sub> solution (0.83 g, 0.5 mmol) was added dropwise over 10 mL of another solution containing compound **1** (2.07 g, 1 mmol). The mixture was stirred at r.t. for 48 h. The resulting pale green polycrystalline powder was filtered off, gently washed with 1/9 water:methanol (v/v) and air-dried. Yield: 0.36 g, 70 %; Anal.: calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>70</sub>Cu<sub>2</sub>Ni<sub>6</sub>O<sub>25</sub> (1028.65): C, 28.02; H, 6.86; N, 8.17%. Found: C, 28.11; H, 6.82; N, 8.19%; IR (KBr):  $\nu = 1639$  and  $1595\text{ cm}^{-1}$  (C=O).

X-ray quality cubic prisms of **2** were obtained by slow diffusion in an H-shaped tube of 1/9 water:methanol (v/v) containing stoichiometric amounts of **1** in one arm and [Ni(cyclam)]Cl<sub>2</sub> in the other one. The crystals were collected by filtration and air-dried.

**Single-Crystal X-ray Diffraction.** Crystal data for **2**: C<sub>96</sub>Cu<sub>8</sub>Ni<sub>4</sub>H<sub>280</sub>N<sub>24</sub>O<sub>100</sub>, hexagonal, space group P6<sub>5</sub>, *a* = 44.286(3) Å, *c* = 26.467(2) Å, *V* = 44954(6) Å<sup>3</sup>, *T* = 100(2) K, *Z* = 6,  $\rho_{\text{calc}} = 0.912\text{ g}\cdot\text{cm}^{-3}$ ,  $\mu = 0.864\text{ mm}^{-1}$ , of the 316825 reflections collected, 50725 are unique and 17518 observed with *I* > 2σ(*I*). Refinement of 331 parameters gave *R* = 0.1254 and *R*<sub>w</sub> = 0.2744 for reflections with *I* > 2σ(*I*) with *S* = 1.631. CCDC 1849587.

**X-ray Powder Diffraction.** Polycrystalline sample of **2** was introduced into 0.5 mm borosilicate capillary prior to being mounted and aligned on a Empyrean PANalytical powder diffractometer, using Cu Kα radiation ( $\lambda = 1.54056$  Å). Five repeated measurements were collected at room temperature (2θ = 2–60°) and merged in a single diffractogram.

**Thermogravimetric analysis.** The TGA measurement was performed on a crystalline sample of **2** under a dry N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere with a Mettler Toledo TGA/STDA 851<sup>e</sup> thermobalance operating at a heating rate of 10 °C min<sup>-1</sup>.

## ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### Supporting Information

Additional preparations and physical characterization data (Circular Dichroism and Mass Spectrometry). Additional Figures (Figures S1-S16) and scheme of ligand. Crystallographic refinement for **2** (Table S1). CCDC 1849587. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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We report on the application of the metalloligand design strategy towards the development of efficient routes to obtain chiral rodlike MOFs. The as-made homochiral rodlike MOF (**2**) exhibits rare **etd** topology.

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