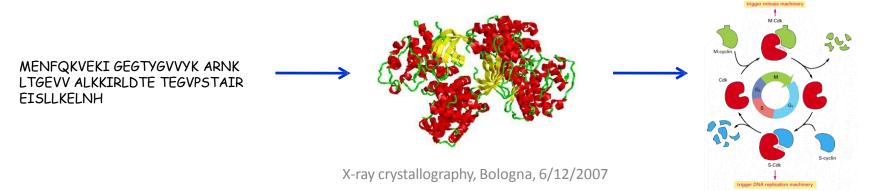
X-ray crystallography: understanding protein structures

Proteins play a variety of fundamental roles in life processes:

- there are structural proteins (for example the horny outer layer of human and animal skin and proteins of the cytoskeleton)
- proteins that catalyze chemical reactions (enzymes)
- transport and storage proteins (haemoglobin, ferritin)
- regulatory proteins, including hormones and receptor/signal transduction proteins
- proteins that control gene transcription
- and proteins involved in recognition, such as antibodies and proteins of the immune system

We derive our understanding of protein functions from protein structures resolved at the atomic detail.

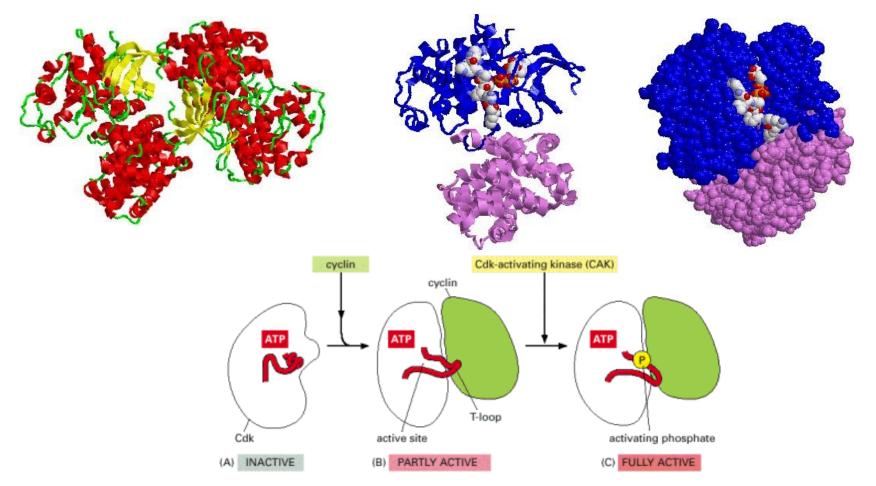
The amino acid sequence of a protein dictates its three dimensional structure. The functions of proteins depend on their adopting native three dimensional structure.



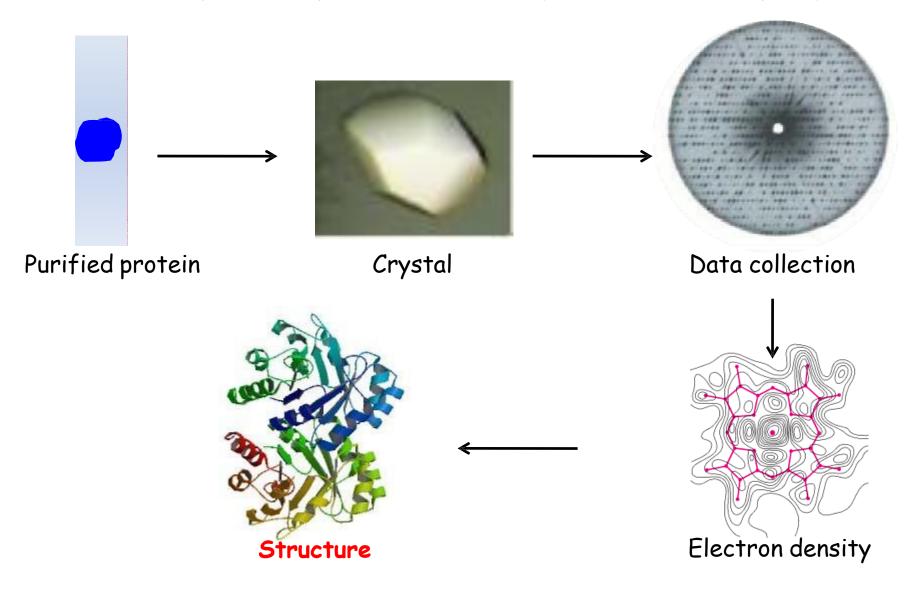
An example...

The native structure of an enzyme may have a cavity in its surface that binds a small molecule and juxtaposes it to catalytic residues.

PHOSPHORYLATED CDK2-CYCLYIN A-SUBSTRATE PEPTIDE COMPLEX



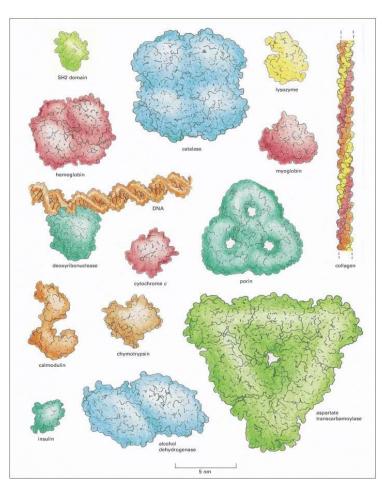
Steps in protein crystallography

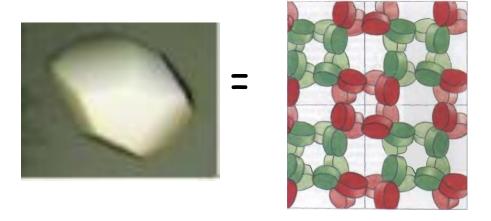


Protein crystals are difficult to grow

Without crystals there can be no X-ray structure determination of a protein!

you need a regular cristal to have a good resolution



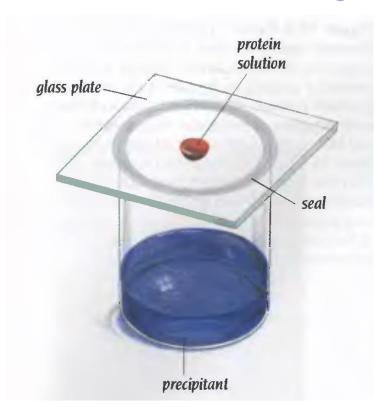


A crystal is a three-dimensional regular structure formed by many identical molecules.

Proteins are large objects with irregular shapes and it is impossible to pack them into a crystal without forming large holes or channels between the individual molecules.

Growing crystals: the hanging drop method

the solution must be saturated to form a cristal





The formation of a crystal strongly depends on a number of different parameters, such as pH, temperature, protein concentration....

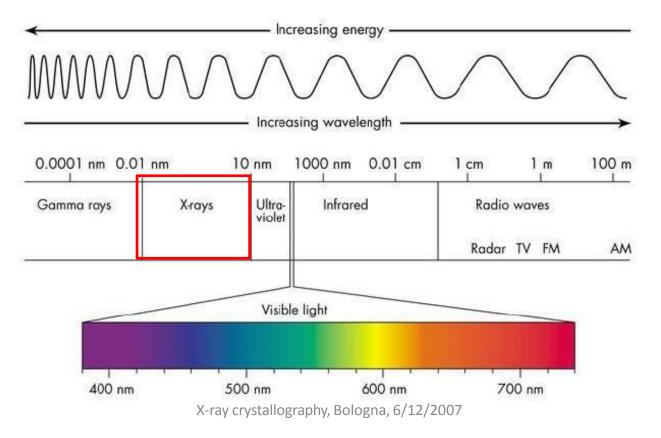
Well ordered protein crystals diffract X-rays.

Why X-rays?

In order to measure something accurately you need the appropriate ruler.

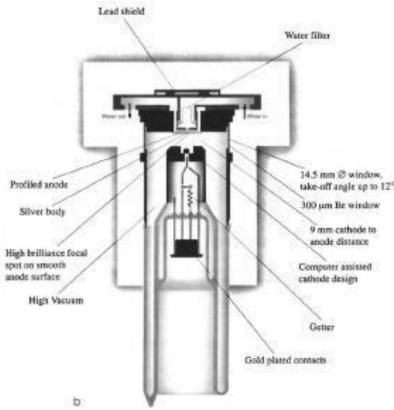
The X-rays wavelength (typically between 10^{-11} and 10^{-8} m) [10 Å and 0.01 Å] has the same order of magnitude of a covalent bond.

The type of X-rays used by crystallographers are ~ 0.5 to 1.5 Å long.



Obtaining X-rays: rotating anode tube





Within a high voltage tube a cathode emits electrons. Because the tube is under vacuum and the cathode is at high negative potential with respect to a metal plate (anode), the electrons are accelerated and reach the anode at high speed.

Most of the energy is converted to heat. The anode can be a rotating cylinder.

Obtaining X-rays: the synchrotron

It is a supermicroscope:

it is capable of resolving the structure of matter down to the level of atoms and molecules.

X-rays are the emission of accelerated charged particles moving in a magnetic field.

http://www.esrf.eu/AboutUs/GuidedTour/Anim2

The three largest and most powerful synchrotrons in the world



APS, Usa

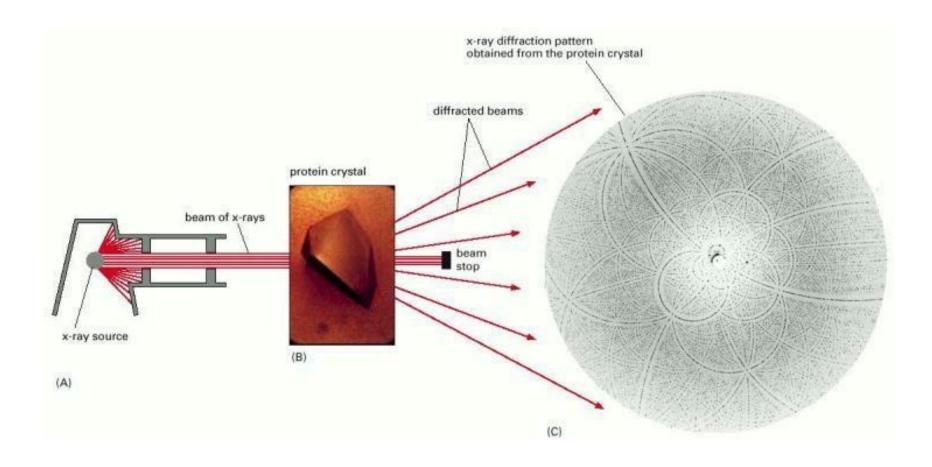


ESRF Europe-France

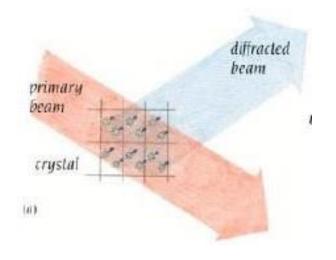


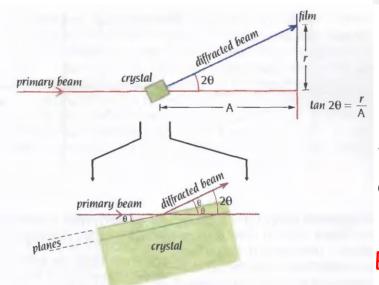
Spring-8, Japan

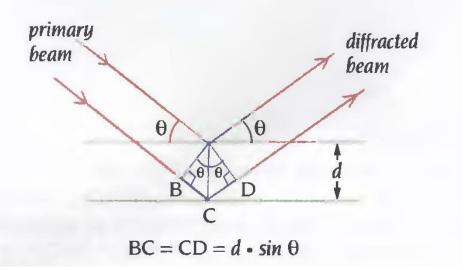
The experiment



The Bragg's law for diffraction







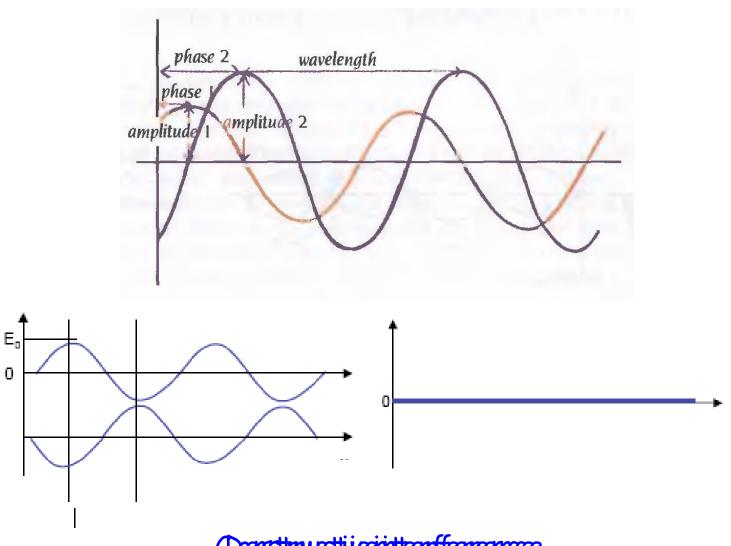
X-rays reflected from the lower plane travel a farther distance of BC+CD

$$BC+CD = 2d \sin\theta$$

We observe a reflected wave only if this distance is equal to an integer number of the wavelength λ .

Bragg's law for diffraction: $2d \sin\theta = n\lambda$

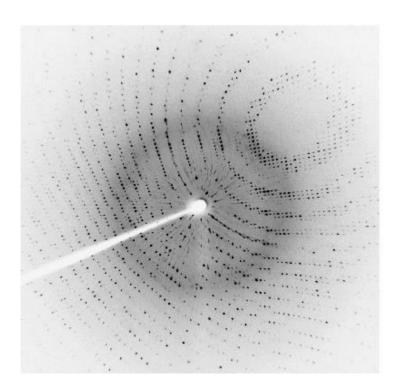
Wave basics



Donsthructhiveeritheauffeareaucce

Extract the information

Each atom in a crystal scatters X-rays in all directions. Only those that positively interfere with one another, accordingly to the Bragg's law, give rise to diffracted beams that are recorded as different diffraction spots.

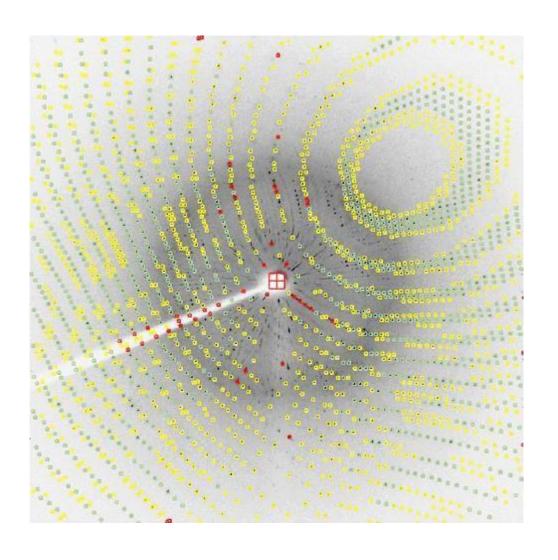


Each spot is the result of interference of all X-rays with the same diffraction angle emerging from all atoms.

In a typical protein crystal (myoglobin), each of the about 20000 diffracted beams measured contains scattered X-rays from each of the around 1500 atoms of the protein.

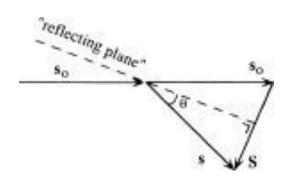
How can we extract information about individual atoms from such a system?

Data collection



Н	K	L	I
-29	6	-12	220.4
- 25	- 4	-14	482.7
-30	13	-10	1012.2
-26	-1	- 13	1069.2
-24	- 5	-14	6299.6
-29	11	-10	1017.9
-29	10	-10	3558.4
- 25	- 3	- 13	22.0
-23	-6	-14	7385.6
-29	15	- 9	226.4
-26	0	-12	271.8
-29	14	- 9	2370.3
-29	13	- 9	396.2
-29	20	-8	1108.8

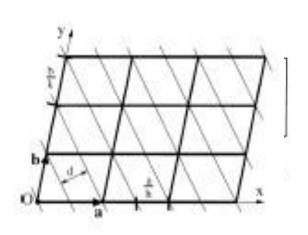
Bragg's interpretation



The wave can be regarded as being reflected against a plane with θ as the reflecting angle and \vec{S} is perpendicular to the "imaginary relfecting plane".

$$|S| = 2(\sin A) / Z$$

This planes split the x-axis in a/h pieces, the y-axis in b/k pieces and the z-axis in c/l pieces. A set of lattice planes is thus determined by three indices $h_i k_i l_i$. The projection of a/h, b/k and c/l on the line perpendicular to the corresponding lattice plane is equal to the distance d between the planes.



All the planes with $\vec{r} \cdot \vec{S}$ equal to an integer are reflecting in phase and form a series of Bragg planes.

$$\frac{1}{|S|} = d \quad |S| = 2(\sin A)/Z \longrightarrow \frac{2d(\sin A)}{Z} = 1$$

Calculating the electron density: Fourier transform

$$\vec{F}(\vec{S}) = \sum_{j=1}^{n} f_j \exp(2 \nu i \vec{r}_j \cdot \vec{S})$$

Instead of summing over all separate atoms, we can integrate over all electrons in the unit cell

$$\vec{F}(\vec{S}) = \int_{cell} \theta(r) \exp(2 \nu i \vec{r} \cdot \vec{S}) d\nu$$

where $\theta(r)$ is the density at position ${\bf r}$ at the unit cell.

If x,y and z are fractional coordinates in the unit cell $(0 \le x \le 1$, the same for y and z) and V is the volume of the unit cell

$$dv = V \cdot dxdydz \qquad \vec{r} \cdot \vec{S} = (\vec{a} \cdot x + \vec{b} \cdot y + \vec{c} \cdot z) \cdot \vec{S} = \vec{a} \cdot \vec{S} \cdot \vec{a}x + \vec{b} \cdot \vec{S} \cdot \vec{b}y + \vec{c} \cdot \vec{S} \cdot \vec{c}z$$

$$= hx + ky + lz$$

$$\vec{F}(hkl) = V \int_{x=0}^{1} \int_{y=0}^{1} \int_{z=0}^{1} \theta(x, y, z) \exp[2vi(hx + ky + lz)]dxdydz$$

Calculating the electron density: Fourier transform

The goal of X-ray crystallography is NOT to calculate the diffraction pattern BUT to calculate the electron density at every position x,y,z in the unit cell.

This can be done by Fourier transformation.

$$\vec{F}(hkl) = V \int_{x=0}^{1} \int_{y=0}^{1} \int_{z=0}^{1} \theta(x, y, z) \exp[2\nu i(hx + ky + lz)] dx dy dz$$

 \vec{F} (hkl) is the Fourier transform of $\theta(x, y, z)$ but the reverse is also true: $\theta(x, y, z)$ is the Fourier transform of $\vec{F}(hkl)$

$$\theta(x, y, z) = \frac{1}{V} \sum_{h} \sum_{k} \sum_{l} \vec{F}(hkl) \exp[-2 vi(hx + ky + lz)]$$

Laue conditions tell us that diffraction occurs only in discrete directions and for this reason the integration can be replaced by a summation.

Calculating the electron density: the phase problem

OLD PROBLEM

The Fourier transform provides a mathematical correspondence between two physical spaces: one we wish to know about (molecular structure) but not directly accessible to us, and another in which measurements are made.

$$\theta(x, y, z) = \frac{1}{V} \sum_{h} \sum_{k} \sum_{l} \vec{F}(hkl) \exp[-2\nu i(hx + ky + lz)]$$

because
$$\vec{F} = F \exp(i\alpha)$$

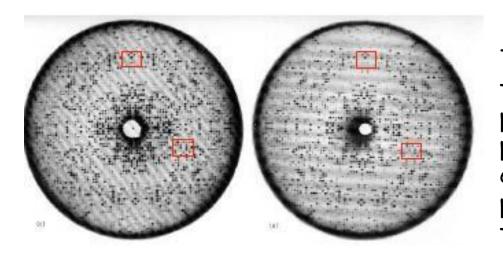
$$\theta(x, y, z) = \frac{1}{V} \sum_{h} \sum_{k} \sum_{l} |F(hkl)| \exp[-2vi(hx + ky + lz) + i\alpha(hkl)]$$

The intensity of a diffracted beam is proportional to the square of its amplitude, so we can obtain the |F(hkl)| measuring the intensities of the spots.

The phase angles $\alpha(hkl)$ cannot be derived from the diffraction pattern.

A possible solution of the phase problem: the isomorphous replacement method

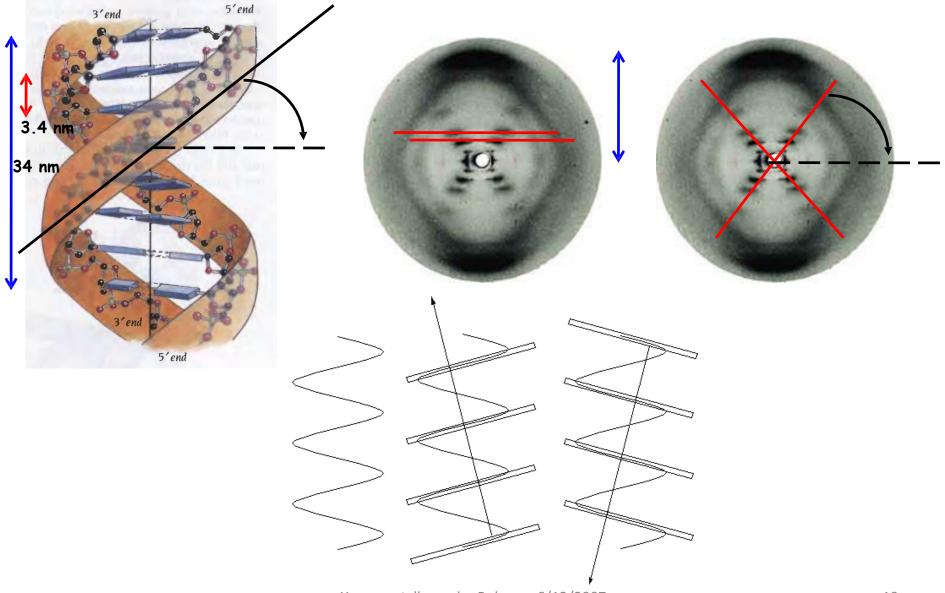
This technique requires the attachment of heavy atoms to the protein molecules in the crystal. These atoms scatter X-rays more strongly and they give a significant contribution to the diffraction pattern.



The intensity differences are used to deduce the heavy atoms positions in the unit cell. From the positions of the heavy atoms we can calculate the amplitudes and phases of their contributions to the diffracted beam.

We know the amplitude and the phase of the heavy atoms, the amplitude of the protein alone and the amplitude of protein + heavy atoms: one phase and three amplitudes.

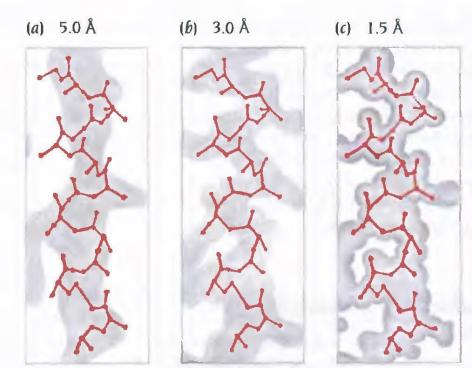
DNA diffraction pattern



Building the model

RESOLUTION

Now the electron density map has to be interpreted as a polypeptide chain having a particular amino acid sequence.

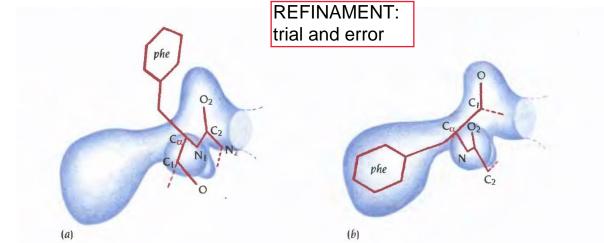


One a-helix from a small protein

This process is complicated because by several limitations of the data:
-the map contains errors, mainly due to errors in phase angles
-the quality of the map depends on the resolution of the diffraction data, which in turn depends on how well-ordered crystals are.

The resolution is measured in \mathring{A} and it indicates the amount of detail that can be seen. The smaller the number is the great the resolution.

Building the model: trial and error



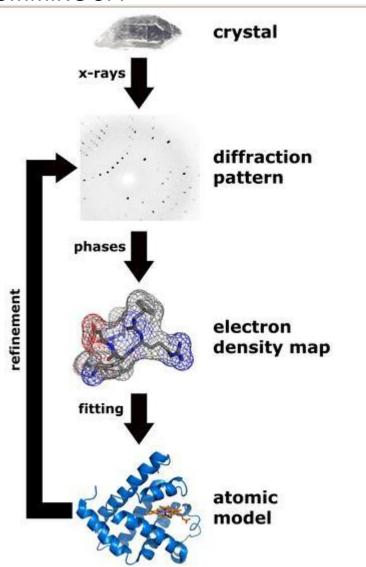
The electron density map is interpreted by fitting into it pieces of a polypeptide chain with known stereochemistry.

The units of the chain are initially arbitrarily orientated and then they can be rotated and translated relative to the electron density until a god fit is obtained.

This is not easy! A map showing continuous density from N-terminus to C-terminus is rare. A number of matches between the electron density map and discontinuous regions of the sequence are produced to build the model.

A refinement procedure removes errors from the model (provided high enough resolution, that is 2.5 Å or better).

SUMMING UP:



PDB file

```
HEADER COMPLEX (PROTEIN KINASE/CYCLIN) 11-OCT-99 1QMZ
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COMPND MOL ID: 1;
COMPND 2 MOLECULE: CELL DIVISION PROTEIN KINASE 2;
COMPND 3 CHAIN: A, C;
COMPND 4 SYNONYM: CYCLIN-DEPENDENT KINASE-2, CDK2, P33 PROTEIN
COMPND 5 KINASE;
COMPND 6 EC: 2.7.1.-;
COMPND 7 ENGINEERED: YES:
COMPND 8 OTHER DETAILS: PHOSPHORYLATED;
COMPND 9 MOL ID: 2;
COMPND 10 MOLECULE: G2/MITOTIC-SPECIFIC CYCLIN A:
COMPND 11 CHAIN: B, D;
COMPND 12 FRAGMENT: RESIDUES 174-432;
COMPND 13 SYNONYM: CCNA, CCN1;
COMPND 14 MOL ID: 3;
COMPND 15 MOLECULE: SUBSTRATE PEPTIDE:
COMPND 16 CHAIN: E, F;
COMPND 17 FRAGMENT: 1-7
ATOM 1 N SER A 0 30.751 78.499 13.070 1.00 56.01
                                                                           Ν
ATOM 2 CA SER A 0 31.820 77.511 13.078 1.00 57.14
ATOM 3 C SER A 0 32.187 76.999 11.672 1.00 55.54
ATOM 4 0 SER A 0 33.420 76.858 11.379 1.00 56.80
ATOM 5 CB SER A 0 31.586 76.367 14.057 1.00 58.43
ATOM 6 OG SER A 0 32.344 76.601 15.261 1.00 60.79
ATOM 7 N MET A 1 31.314 76.108 11.171 1.00 51.11
ATOM 8 CA MET A 1 31.359 75.777 9.762 1.00 47.09
ATOM 9 C MET A 1 30.736 76.955 9.022 1.00 45.17
      10 O MET A 1 30.254 76.757 7.930 1.00 39.77
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ATOM 12 CG MET A 1 31.103 73.201 10.126 1.00 48.44
      13 SD MET A 1 32.931 73.080 9.964 1.00 48.07
ATOM
ATOM 14 CE MET A 1 32.848 72.799 8.179 1.00 50.18
ATOM 15 N GLU A 2 30.731 78.163 9.626 1.00 43.86
ATOM 16 CA GLU A 2 30.057 79.281 8.983 1.00 44.38
      17 C GLU A 2 30.589 79.578 7.591 1.00 40.48
ATOM
                                    X-ray crystallography, Bologna, 6/12/200/
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November Molecule of the Month Aspartate Transcarbamoylase



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Upcoming meetings and events RCSB will hold



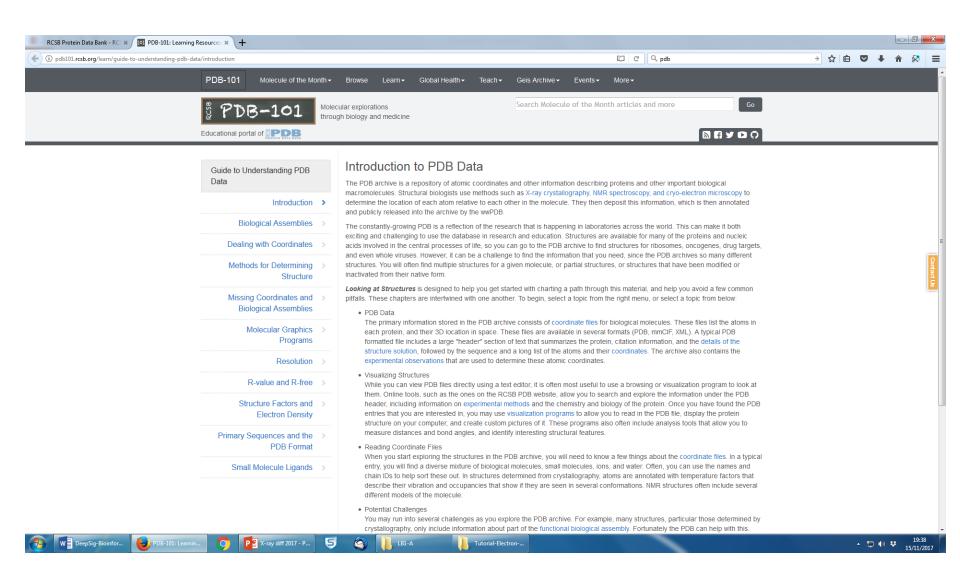
Guide to PDB Data

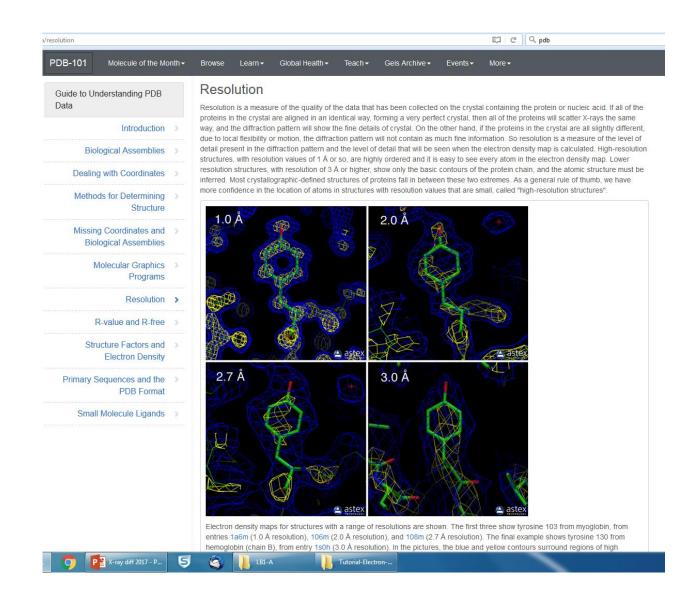
Understanding PDB Data is a reference to help explore and interpret individual PDB entries.

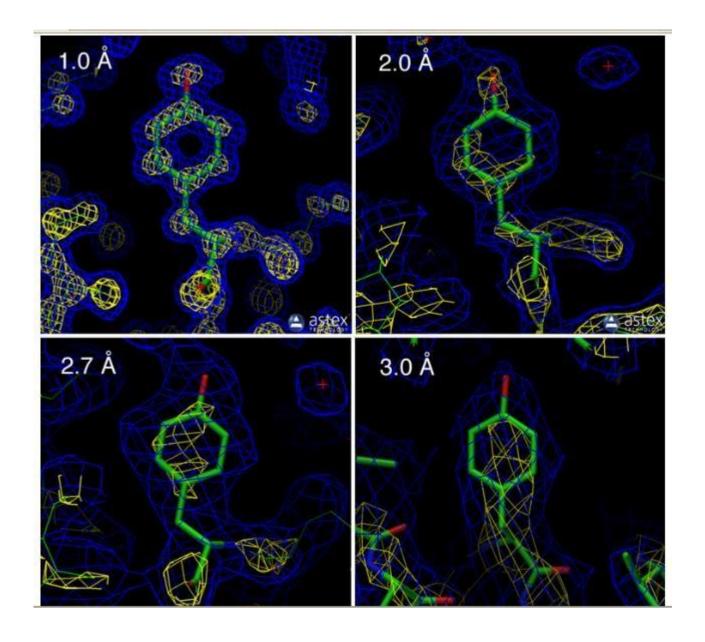


Geis Digital Archive

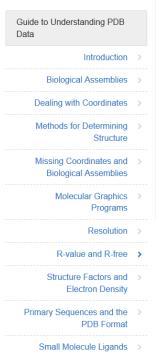
View iconic illustrations by the gifted artist Irving Geis (1908-1997) in context with PDB structures and educational information.







RESOLUTION



R-value and R-free

R-value is the measure of the quality of the atomic model obtained from the crystallographic data. When solving the structure of a protein, the researcher first builds an atomic model and then calculates a simulated diffraction pattern based on that model. The R-value measures how well the simulated diffraction pattern matches the experimentally-observed diffraction pattern. A totally random set of atoms will give an R-value of about 0.63, whereas a perfect fit would have a value of 0. Typical values are about 0.20.

A fit may not be perfect for many reasons. One major reason is that protein and nucleic acid crystals contain large channels of water. The water does not have a defined structure and is not included in the atomic model. Other reasons include disorder and vibration that is not accounted for in the model.

There is one potential problem with using R-values to assess the quality of a structure. The refinement process is often used to improve the atomic model of a given structure to make it fit better to the experimental data and improve the R-value. Unfortunately, this introduces bias into the process, since the atomic model is used along with the diffraction pattern to calculate the electron density. The use of the R-free value is a less biased way to look at this. Before refinement begins, about 10% of the experimental observations are removed from the data set. Then, refinement is performed using the remaining 90%. The R-free value is then calculated by seeing how well the model predicts the 10% that were not used in refinement. For an ideal model that is not over-interpreting the data, the R-free will be similar to the R-value. Typically, it is a little higher, with a value of about 0.26.

For more information on bias and R-values, see "Model Building and Refinement Practice" by G. J. Kleywegt and T. A. Jones, Methods in Enzymology 277, 208-230 (1997).

About PDB-101

PDB-101 helps teachers, students, and the general public explore the 3D world of proteins and nucleic acids. Learning about their diverse shapes and functions helps to understand all aspects of biomedicine and agriculture, from protein synthesis to health and disease to historical pergry.

RCSB PDB (citation) is managed by two members of the Research Collaboratory for Structural Bioinformatics (RCSB):













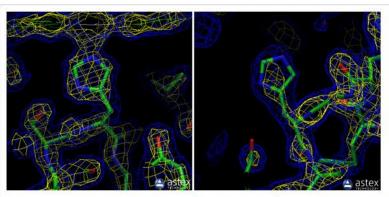


Temperature Factors

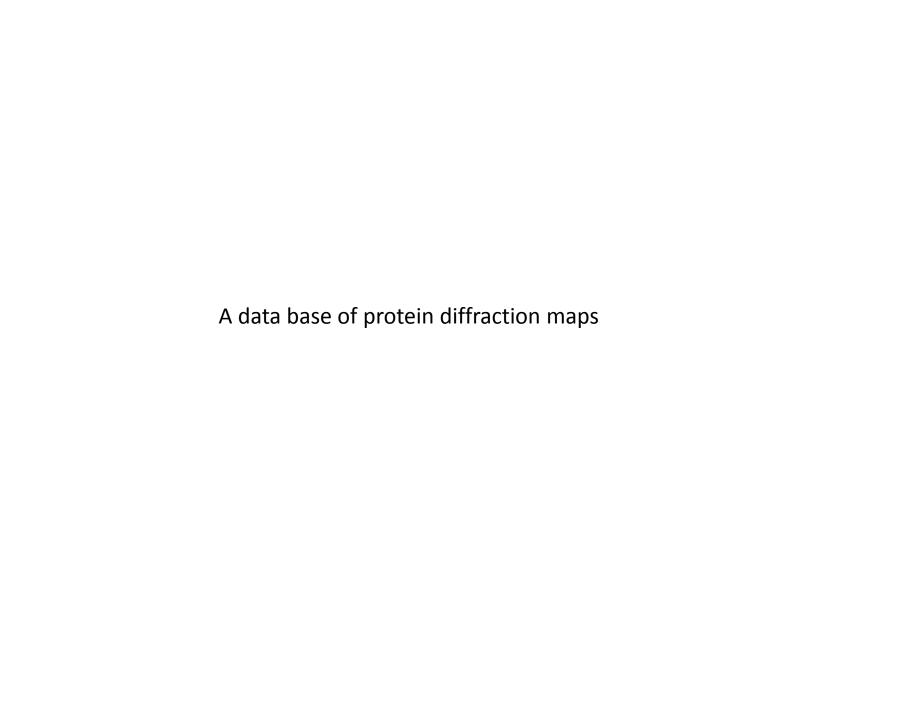
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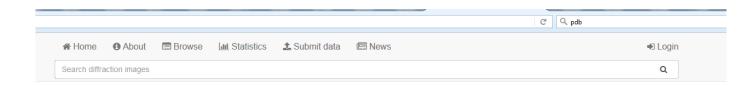
If we were able to hold an atom rigidly fixed in one place, we could observe its distribution of electrons in an ideal situation. The image would be dense towards the center with the density falling off further from the nucleus. When you look at experimental electron density distributions, however, the electrons usually have a wider distribution than this ideal. This may be due to vibration of the atoms, or differences between the many different molecules in the crystal lattice. The observed electron density will include an average of all these small motions, yielding a slightly smeared image of the molecule.

These motions, and the resultant smearing of the electron density, are incorporated into the atomic model by a B-value or temperature factor. The amount of smearing is proportional to the magnitude of the B-value. Values under 10 create a model of the atom that is very sharp, indicating that the atom is not moving much and is in the same position in all of the molecules in the crystal. Values greater than 50 or so indicate that the atom is moving so much that it can barely been seen. This is often the case for atoms at the surface of proteins, where long sidechains are free to wag in the surrounding water.



The example shown is from a myoglobin structure solved at a 2.0 Å resolution (PDB entry 1mbi). Two histidine amino acids are shown. On the left is HIS93, which coordinates with the iron atom and thus, is held firmly in place. It has B-values in the range of 15-20 -- notice how the contours nicely surround the whole amino acid, revealing a sharp electron density. On the right is HIS81, which is exposed on the surface of the protein and has higher B-values in the range of 22-74. Notice how the contours enclose a smaller space, showing a smaller region with high electron density for this amino acid because the overall electron density is weakly smeared in the space around the contours. These pictures are created using the Astex viewer, which is available on the Structure Summary page for this PDB entry (just click the "EDS" link in the "Experimental Method" section).





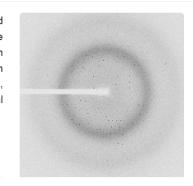


Integrated Resource for Reproducibility in Macromolecular Crystallography

This project is being funded by the Targeted Software Development award 1 U01 HG008424-01 as part of the BD2K (Big Data to Knowledge) program of the National Institute of Health. The project is developing tools for "wrangling" data from protein diffraction experiments. We are also creating a growing repository of diffraction experiments used to determine protein structures in the PDB, contributed by the CSGID, SSGCID, JCSG, MCSG, SGC, and other large-scale projects, as well as individual research laboratories

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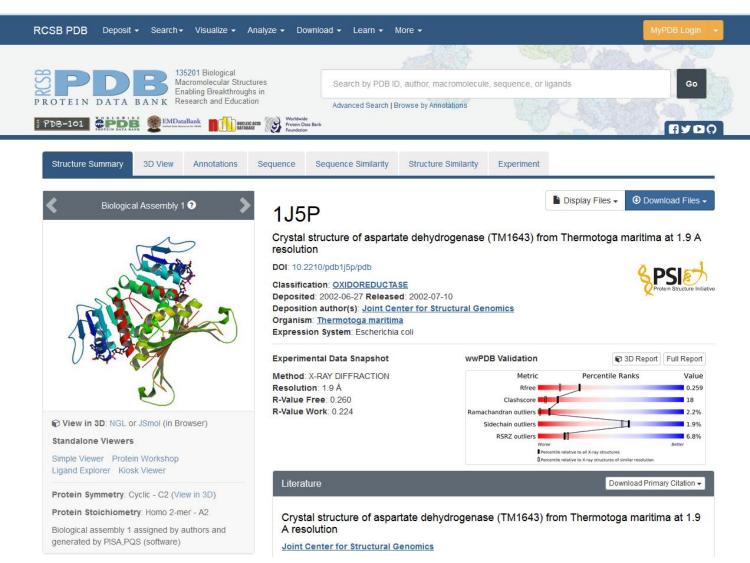
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Beamline



Educational resources



http://www.rcsb.org/pdb/explore.do?structureId=1j5p