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**UNIVERSITY
OF BERN**

u^b X-ray microtomography

485018-HS2025-0: Advanced Course II Ultraprecision Engineering

David Haberthür

Institute of Anatomy, September 16, 2025

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Grüessech mitenang!

- David Haberthür
 - Physicist by trade
 - PhD in high resolution imaging of the lung, Institute of Anatomy, University of Bern, Switzerland
 - Post-Doc I: TOMCAT, Swiss Light Source, Paul Scherrer Institute, Switzerland
 - Post-Doc II: µCT group, Institute of Anatomy, University of Bern, Switzerland

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Grüessech from the µCT group



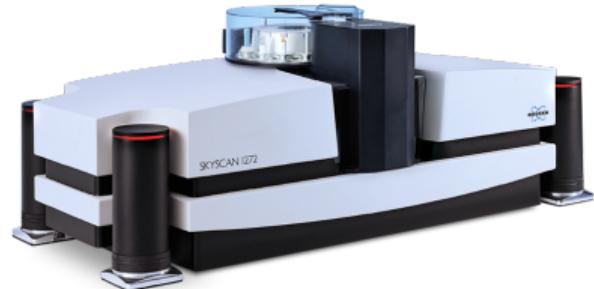
David.Haberthuer@unibe.ch

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Oleksiy.Khoma@unibe.ch

μ CT-group

- microangioCT [1]
 - Angiogenesis: heart, musculature [2] and bones
 - Vasculature: (mouse) brain [3], (human) nerve scaffolds [4], (human) skin flaps [5] and tumors
- Zebrafish musculature and gills [6]
- (Lung) tumor detection and metastasis classification [7]
- Collaborations with museums [8] and scientist at UniBe [9] to scan a wide range of specimens
- Automate *all* the things! [10, 11]



bruker.com/skyscan1272

Contents

Overview & Imaging methods

Tomography

History

Interaction of x-rays with matter

Tomography today

A scan, from *getting started* to *nice image*

Examples

A study about teeth

Overview

Materials & Methods

Results

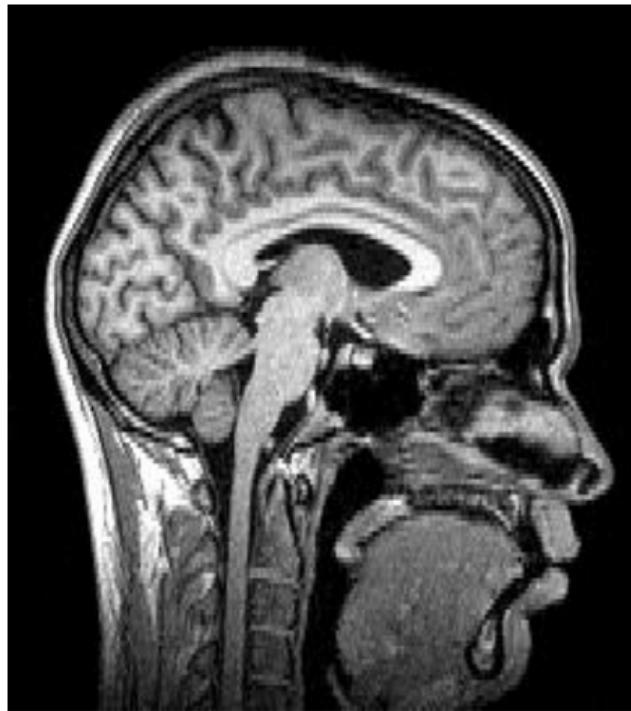
Metal foam analysis

A study on fish

- Dense and/or non-transparent samples
- Calibrated & isotropic 3D images at micron resolutions
- Covers a very large range of sample sizes
- Gives information at different length scales
- Nondestructive imaging, thus compatible with routine sample preparation.
Enables correlative imaging pipelines, scanning of museum & collection material

Biomedical imaging

- Medical research
- Non-destructive insights into the samples
- (Small) Biological samples



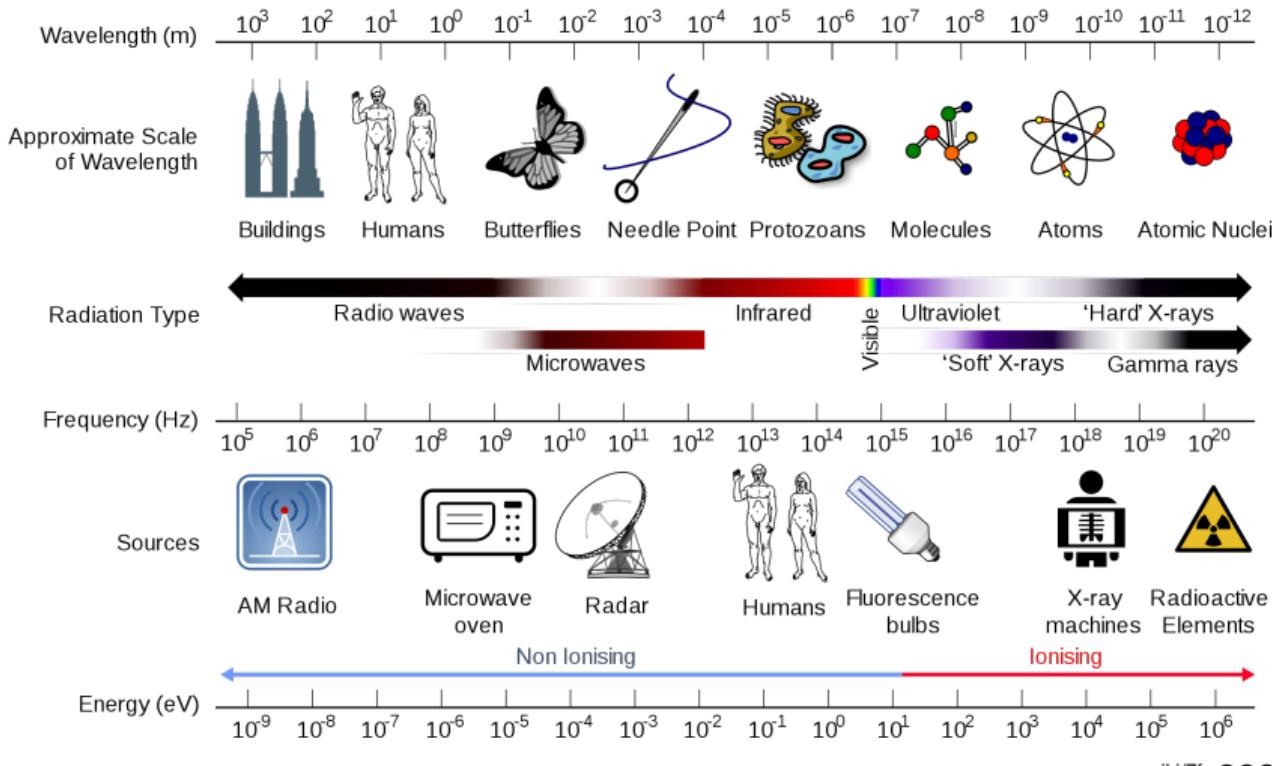
w.wiki/7g4

Biomedical imaging



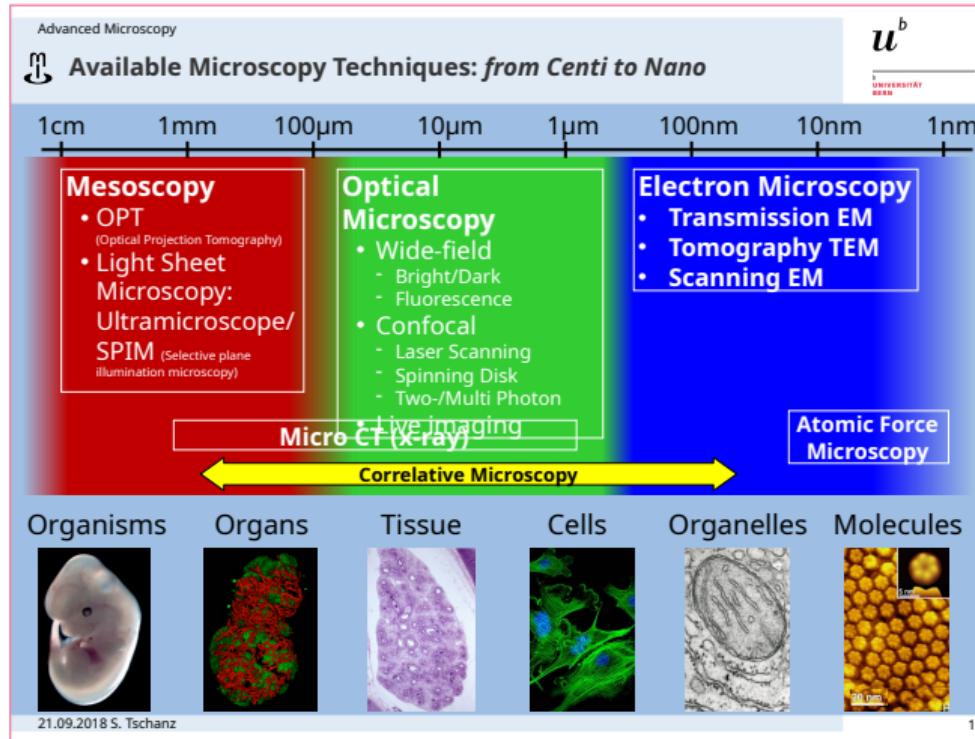
- Medical research
- Non-destructive
- (Small) Biology

u^b Wavelengths & Scales



w.wiki/7fz @①②

u^b Wavelengths & Scales



Introduction to Microscopy by Stefan Tschanz, Slide 1

Imaging methods

- Light (sheet) microscopy: see lecture of Nadia Mercader Huber
- X-ray imaging
- Electron microscopy
 - *Analytical electron microscopy* by Dimitri
 - *SEM Grundlagen* by Sabine Kässmeyer and Ivana Jaric
 - *Cryoelectron Microscopy & Serial Block Face SEM* by Ioan

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CT-Scanner



youtu.be/2CWpZKuy-NE

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CT History

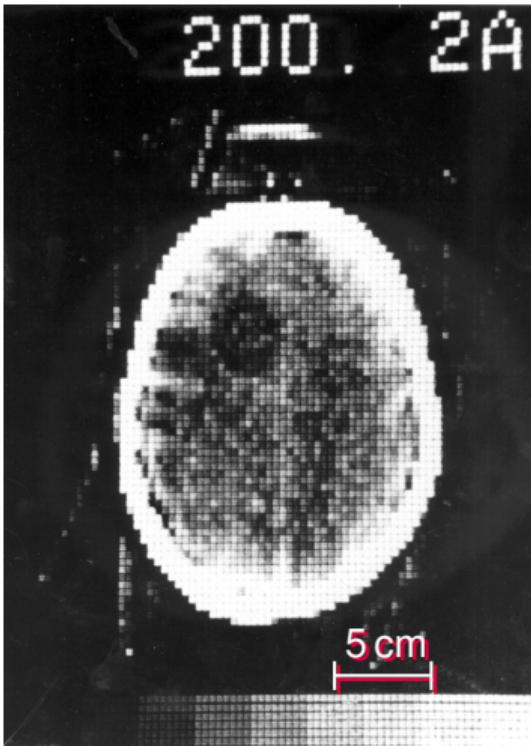
- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays



w.wiki/BHAN ©

CT History

- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
- 1963: Cormack used a collimated ^{60}Co source and a Geiger counter as a detector [12]
- 1976: Hounsfield worked on first clinical scanner [13]



From [14], Figure 5

CT History

- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
- 1963: Cormack used a collimated ^{60}Co source and a Geiger counter as a detector [12]
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- Nobel Prize in 1979, jointly for Allan Cormack and Godfrey Hounsfield

U.S. Patent Feb. 24, 1976 Sheet 1 of 2 3,940,625

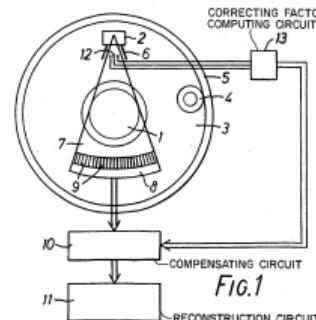


Fig.1

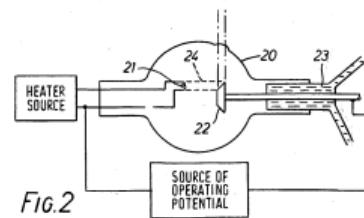
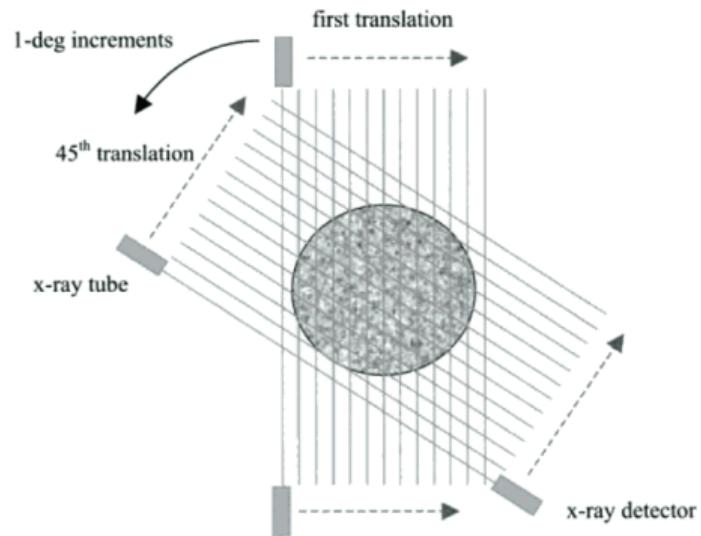


Fig.2

From [US3940625A], p. 2

CT History

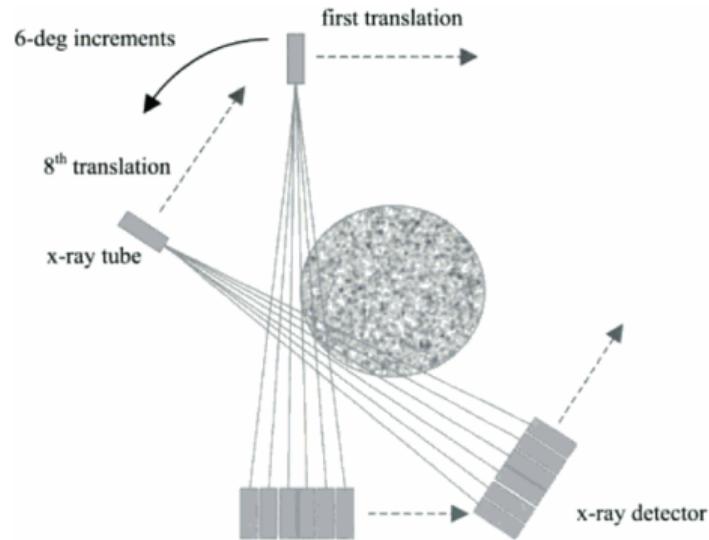
- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
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- CT scanner generations
 - First generation



From [15], Figure 1.12

CT History

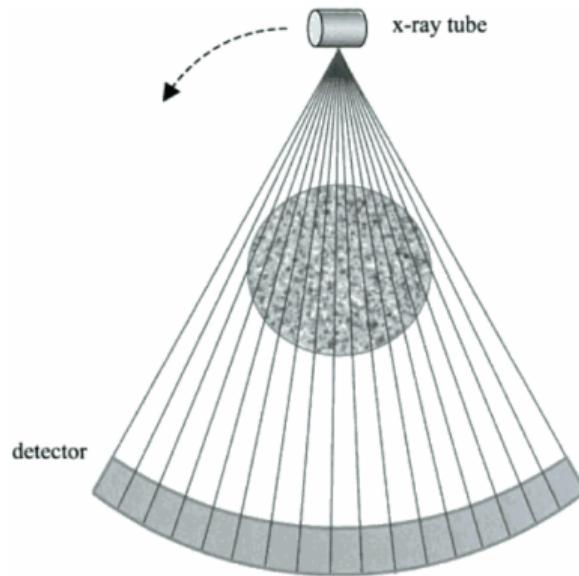
- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
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 - First generation
 - Second generation



From [15], Figure 1.13

CT History

- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
- 1963: Cormack used a collimated ^{60}Co source and a Geiger counter as a detector [12]
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- CT scanner generations
 - First generation
 - Second generation
 - Third generation



From [15], Figure 1.14

μ CT History I

- X-ray computed tomography began to replace analog focal plane tomography in the early 1970s [**Lin2019**]
- Non-medical use in the late 1970s, for detection of internal defects in fabricated parts and equipment
- Lee Feldkamp [16] developed an early laboratory microCT system by assembling a micro-focus cone beam x-ray source, specimen holder and stages, and an image intensifier at Ford Motor Company's Scientific Research Laboratory to nondestructively detect damage in ceramic manufactured automobile parts
- Feldkamp met with scientists at Henry Ford Hospital and University of Michigan interested in understanding the relationship between the microstructure and biomechanical function of trabecular bone to study osteoporotic fractures [**Feldkamp1983**]

μ CT History II

- μ CT was first reported in the 1980s, for scanning gemstones
- Early 1990s: Manufacturers like SkyScan and Scanco Medical made μ CT systems commercially available
- Today: Nondestructive imaging for quantifying the (micro)structure of (organic) materials
 - Mineralized bone tissue and the relationships between the mechanical behavior of bone to its structural and compositional properties
 - Teeth and their internal details
 - Tissues, small animals, and medical devices like stents and implants
 - Soft tissues and vasculature using radio-opaque contrast agents
 - Characterization of anatomical details in high resolution
- \approx 2500 μ CT systems are in use worldwide with over 1000 publications annually

X-ray interaction

- “X-rays interact with tissue in 2 main ways: photoelectric effect and Compton scatter. To a first approximation, the photoelectric effect contributes to contrast while the Compton effect contributes to noise. Both contribute to dose.” ([19])
 - Photoelectric absorption (τ) is strongly dependent on the atomic number Z of the absorbing material: $\tau \propto \frac{Z^4}{E^{3.5}}$
 - Compton scattering is one of the principle forms of photon interaction and is directly proportional to the (electron & physical) density of the material. It does *not* depend on the atomic number: $\lambda' - \lambda = \frac{h}{m_e c} (1 - \cos \theta)$
- Lowering x-ray energy increases contrast
- X-ray penetration decreases exponentially with sample thickness [20, i. e. Beer-Lambers law]: $I(t) = I_0 e^{-\alpha z}$

Composition of biological tissues

Tissue: content by mass percentage

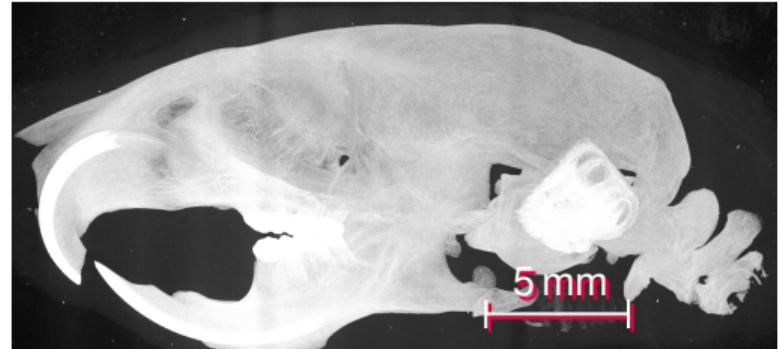
Element Atomic number	H 1	C 6	N 7	O 8	Na 11	P 15	S 16	Cl 17	K 19	Ca 20
Fat	11.4	59.8	0.7	27.8	0.1		0.1	0.1		
Water	11.2			88.8						
Blood	10.2	11	3.3	74.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	
Liver	10.2	13.9	3	71.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	
Brain	10.7	14.5	2.2	71.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	
Bone	3.4	15.5	4.2	43.5	0.1	10.3	0.3			22.5

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Why μ CT?



From [21], Subject C3L-02465



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Why μ CT?



From [21], Subject C3L-02465

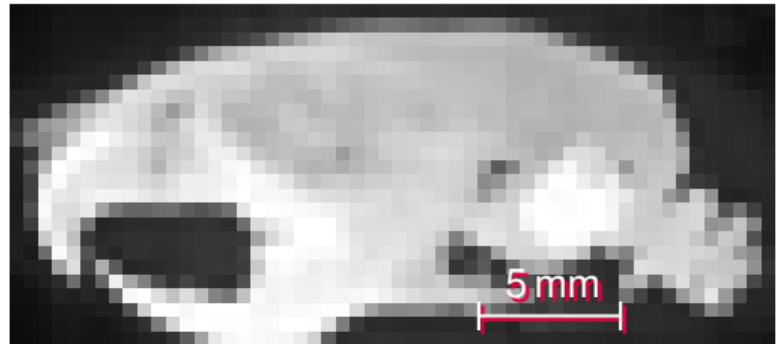


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Why μ CT?



From [21], Subject C3L-02465

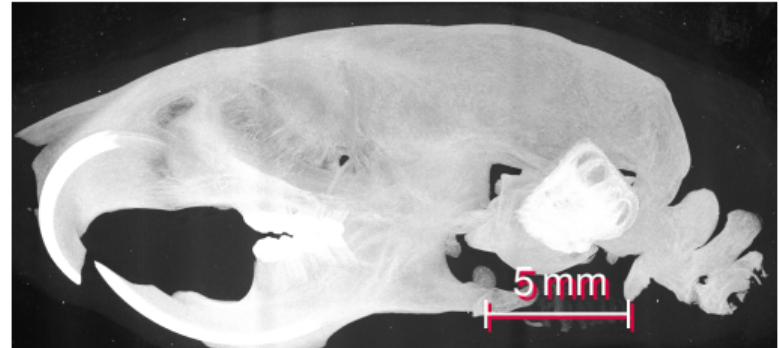


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Why μ CT?

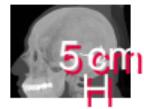


From [21], Subject C3L-02465



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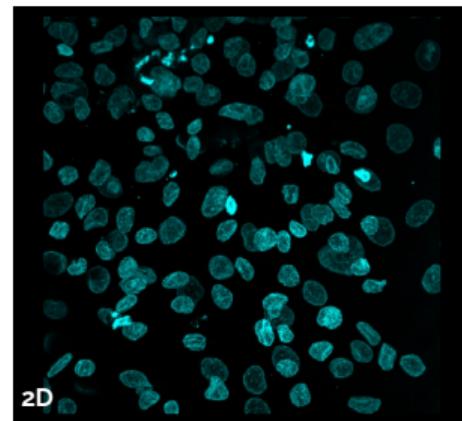
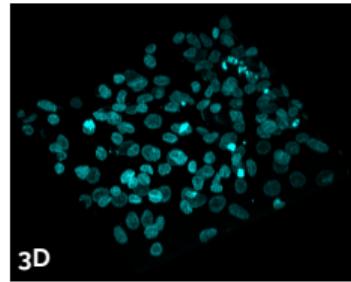
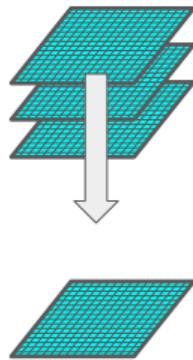
Why μ CT?



Maximum intensity projection

Projections

Reducing the dimensions of a dataset. For example projecting a volume (3D) to a surface by taking the maximum value across planes for each pixel.



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Machinery

- Hospital CT
 - Voxel size around 0.5 mm
- Lab/Desktop CT
 - Voxel size around 7 μm (*in vivo*)
 - Voxel size around 0.5 μm (*ex vivo*)
- Synchrotron CT
 - Voxel size down to 160 nm



flic.kr/p/D4rbom @①②③

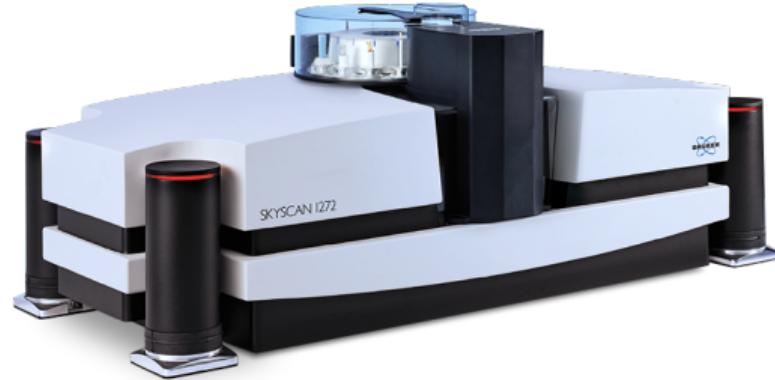
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Machinery

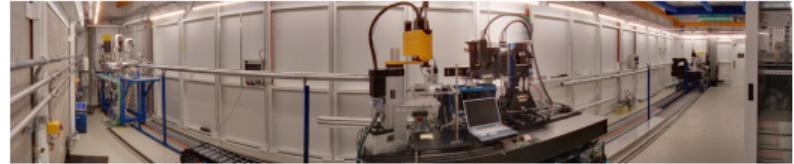
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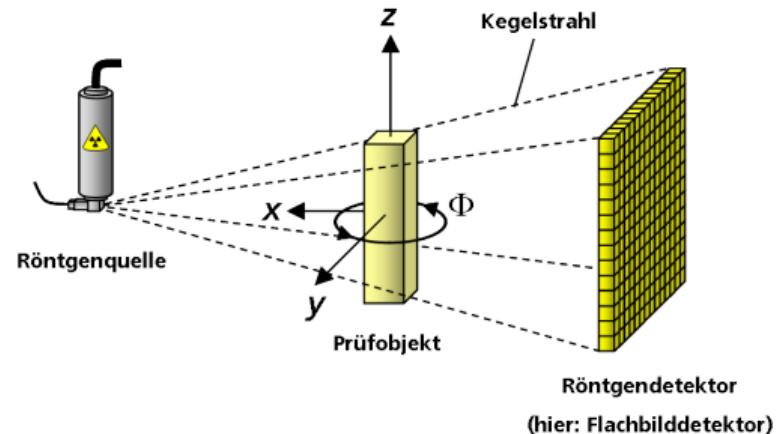
flic.kr/p/7Xhk2Y @CC BY-NC-SA

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What is happening?

No matter what kind of machine, the basic principle is always

- an x-ray source
- a sample
- a detector



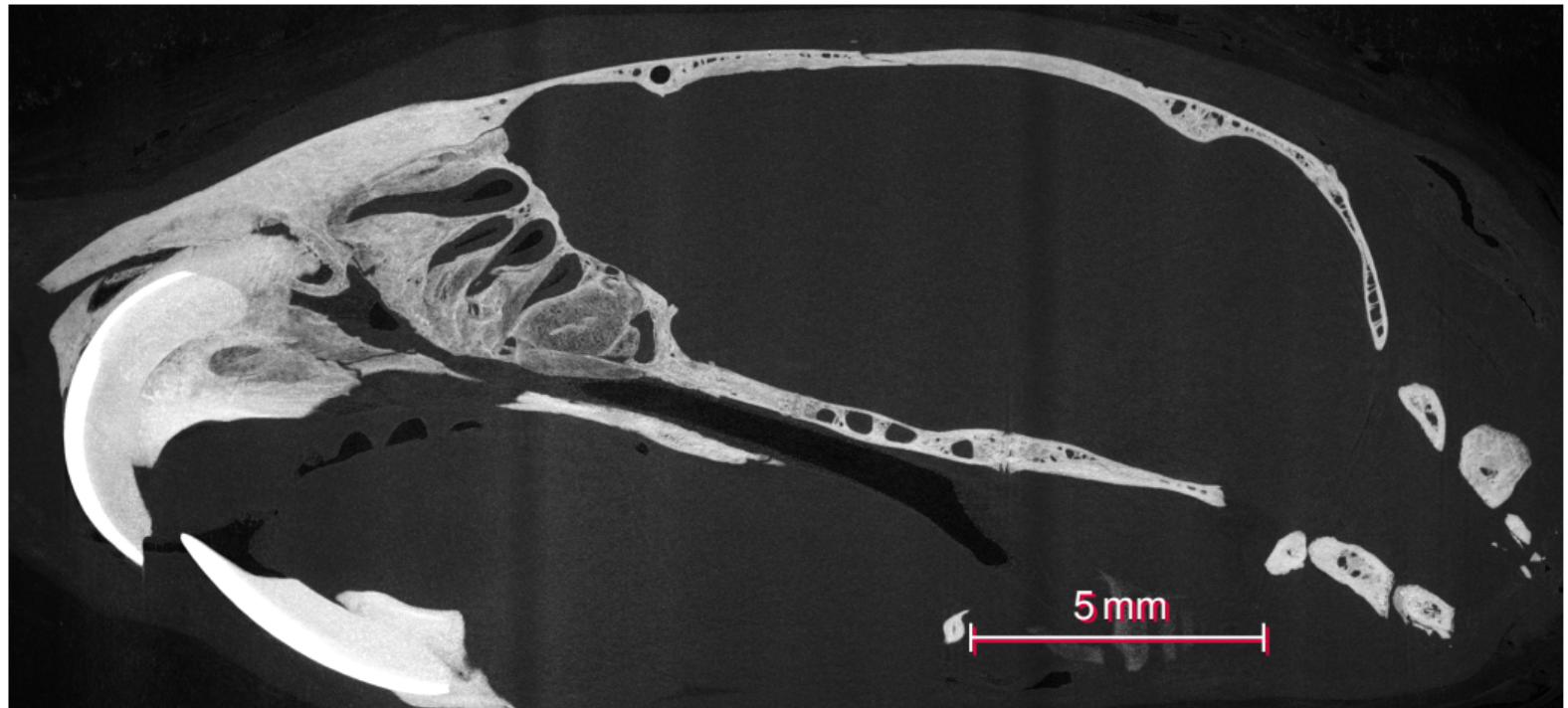
w.wiki/7g3

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Machinery

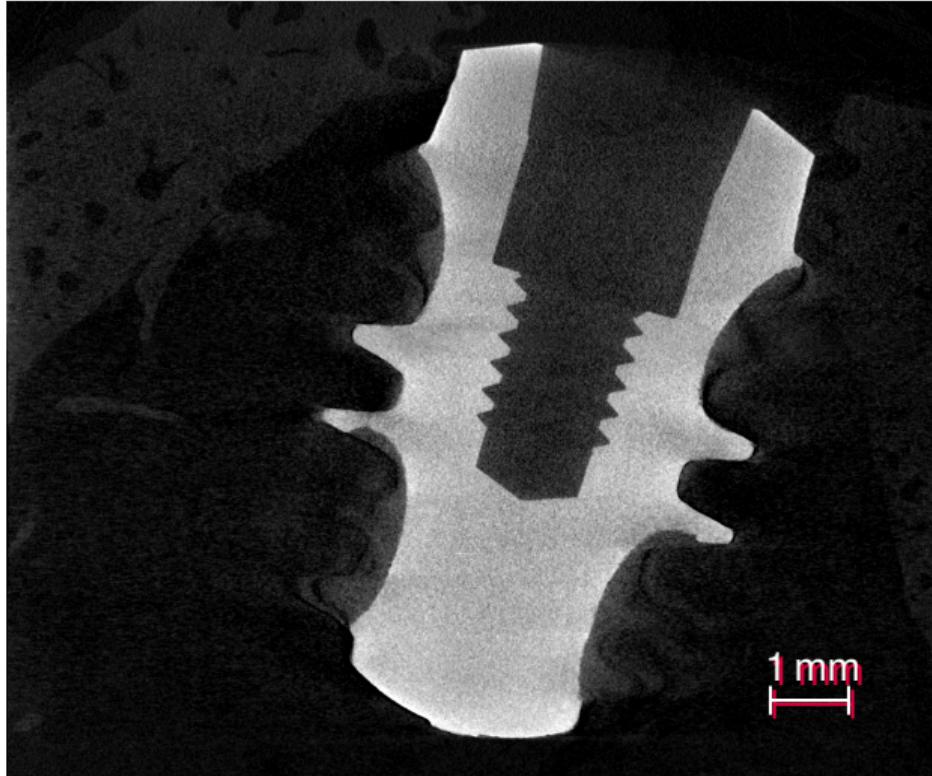
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Examples



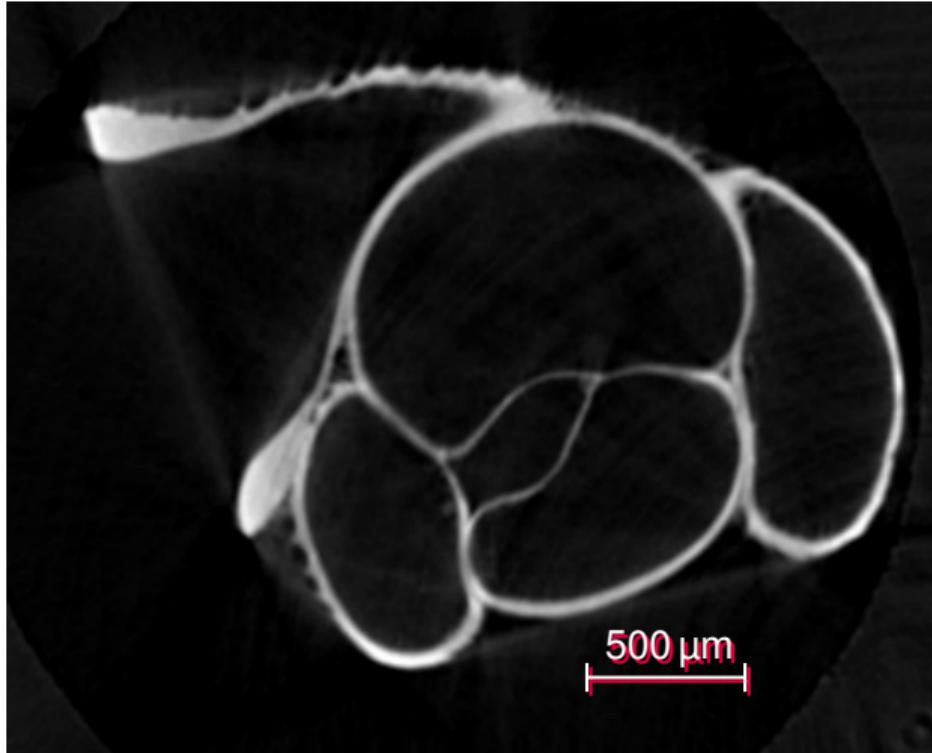
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Examples



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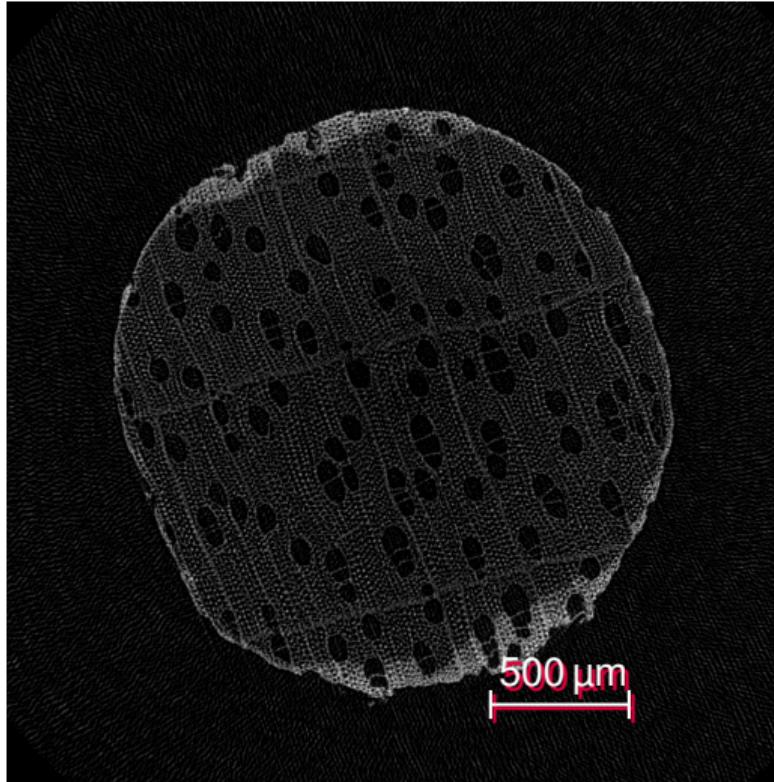
Examples



From [8], *Diancta phoenix*

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Examples



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Examples



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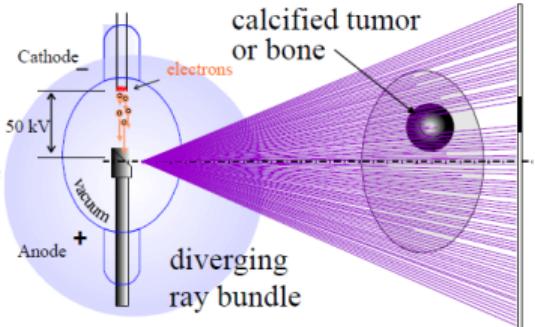
Preparation

- Study design
- Sample preparation

Projections

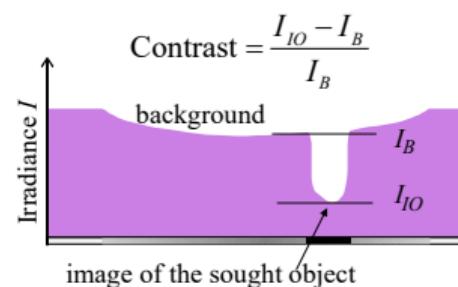
X-ray generation and contrast

X-ray tube:
nearly point like
photon source



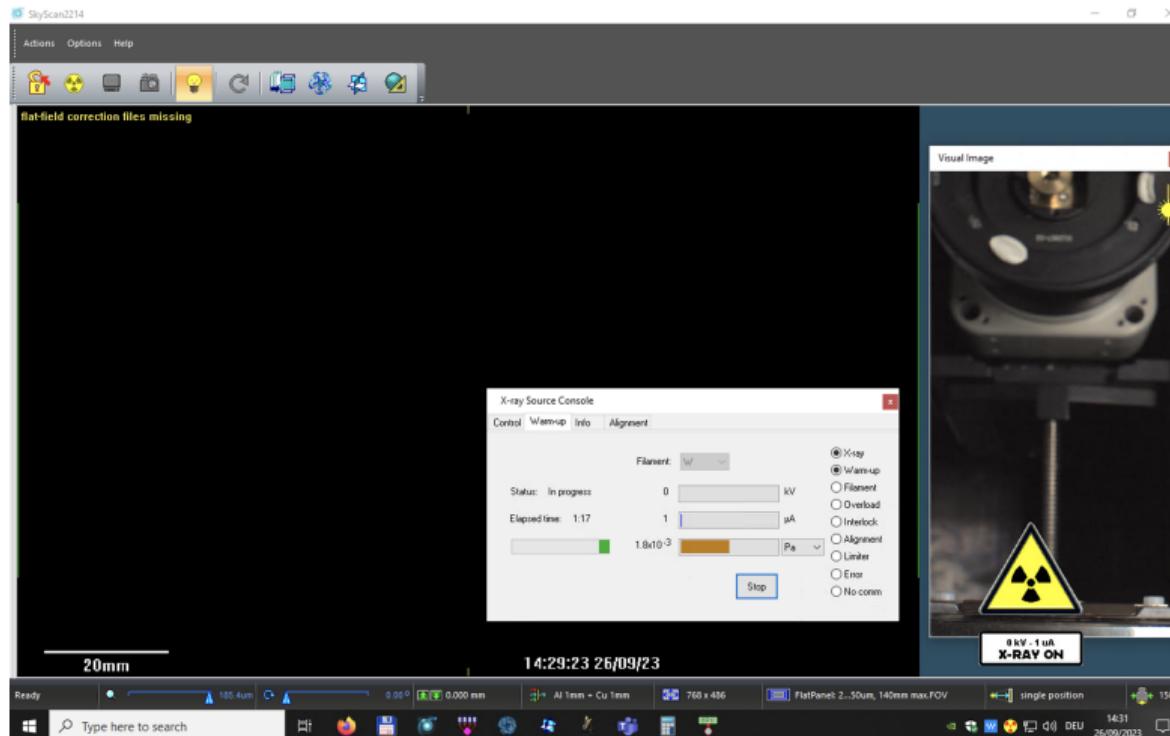
Contrast is given by
absorption of intensity I

Note that contrast is negative
X-ray shadowgraphy
is a bright field technique



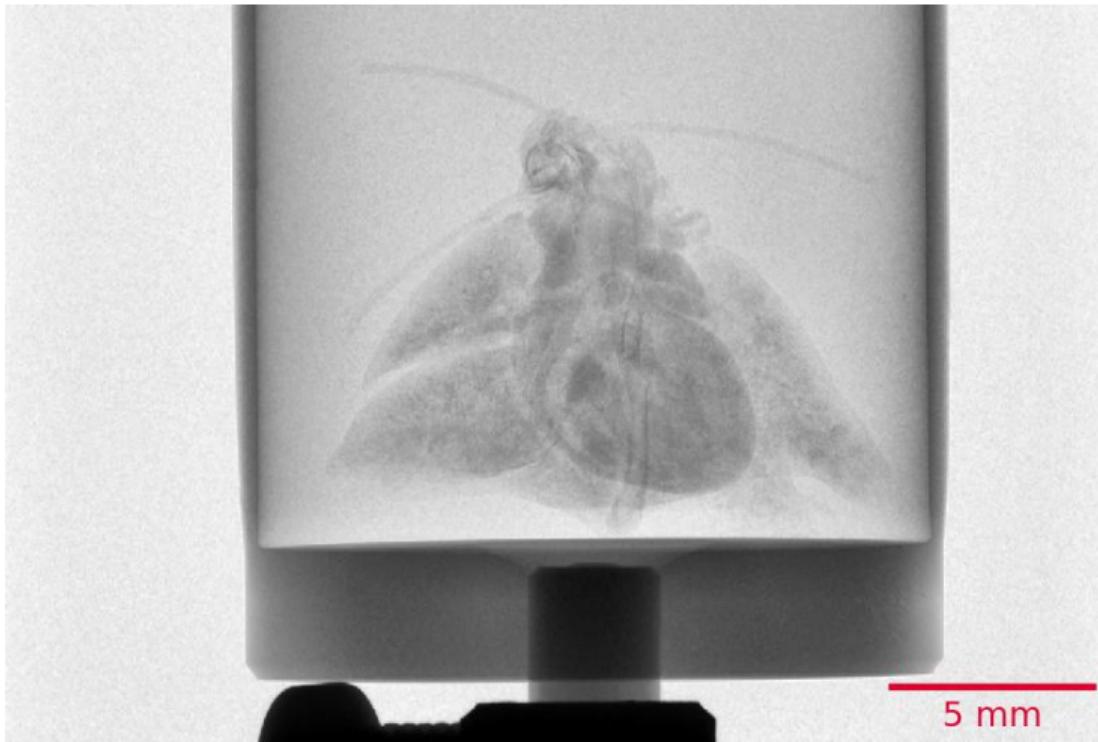
Contrast, Magnification and Resolution—Laws of Physics for Microscopists (1, 2022) by Martin Frenz, Slide 21

u^b Projection acquisition



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Projections

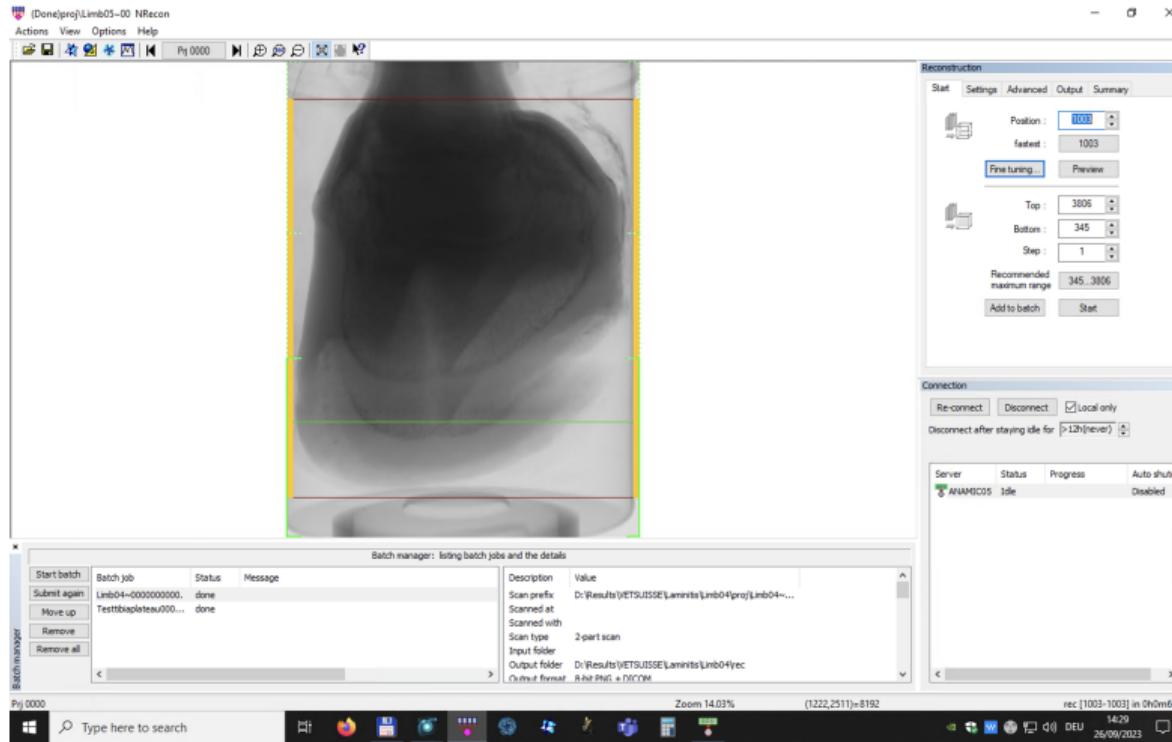


Projections

- A (micro-focus) x-ray source illuminates the object
- The x-rays penetrate the sample and are attenuated
- A scintillator converts the x-rays to visible light
- A (planar) x-ray detector collects (magnified) projection images.
- The projections are recorded on disk

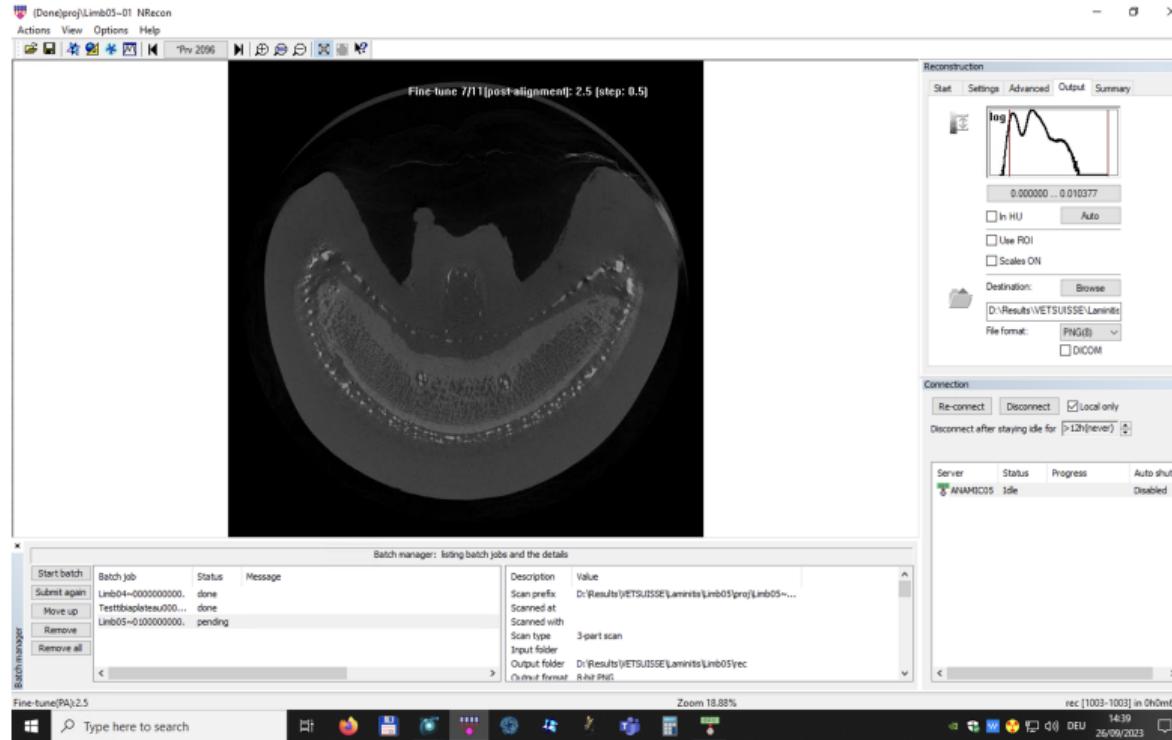
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Reconstructions



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Reconstructions



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Reconstructions



Reconstructions

- Based on hundreds of angular views acquired while the object rotates, a computer synthesizes a stack of virtual cross section slices through the object.
- Radon Transformation
- Filtered back projection
- Cone beam reconstruction [16]
- Corrections (beam hardening, etc.)
- Writing to stack

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Visualization



- Based on the reconstructions, a computer synthesizes a three-dimensional view of the scanned sample

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What to use?

- ImageJ/Fiji [22]
- Also see *Fundamentals of Digital Image Processing* by Guillaume Witz
- Reproducible research
 -  in Jupyter [23]
 - **git**
 - Script all your things!
 - Data repositories; i. e. sharing is caring!

Quantitative data

- Pretty images are nice to have, but science is built on quantitative data.
- Segmentation
- Characterization

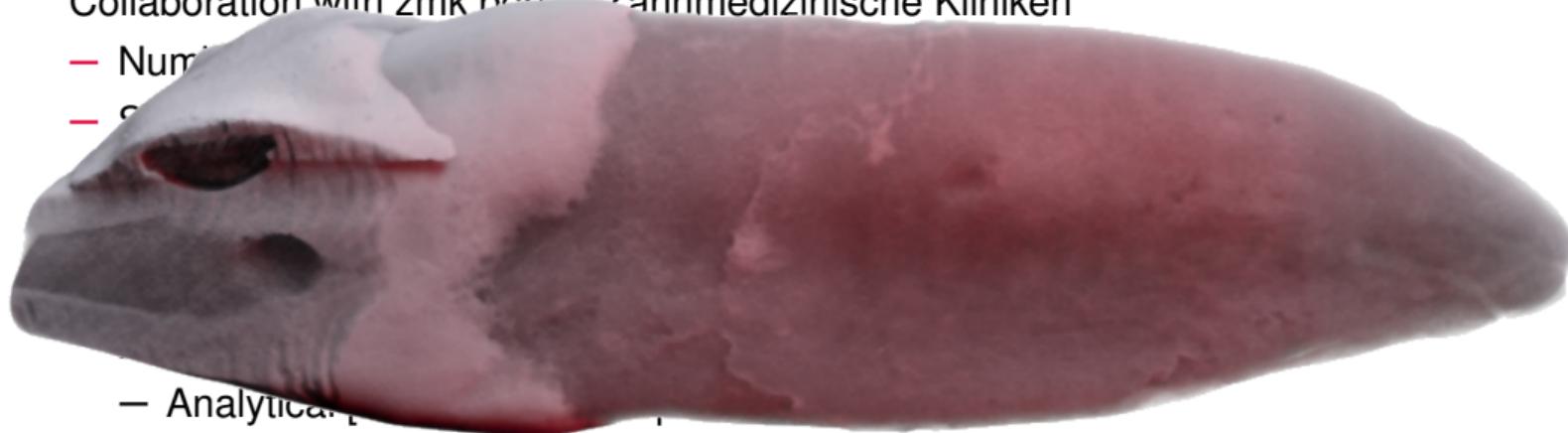
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Internal morphology of human teeth

Collaboration with zmk bern – Zahnmedizinische Kliniken

- Numerical
- Structural

– Analytical



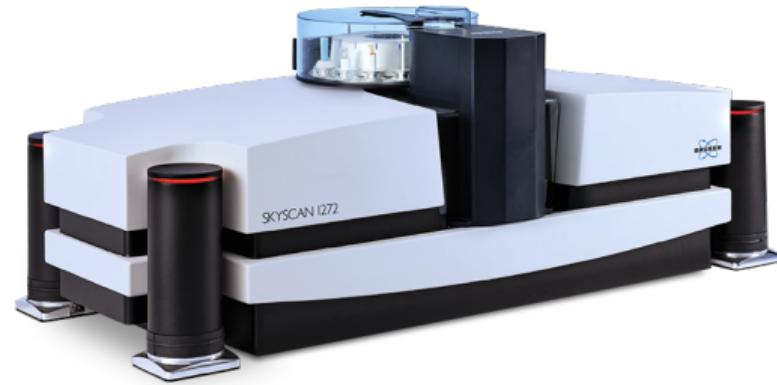
How?

- 104 extracted human permanent mandibular canines
- μ CT imaging
- Root canal configuration, according to Briseño-Marroquín et al. [25]
- *Reproducible* analysis [26], e. g. you can click a button to double-check or recalculate the results yourself!



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```
Scanner=SkyScan1272
Instrument S/N=15G09089-B
Software Version=1.1.19
Filename Prefix=Tooth045~00
Number Of Files= 482
Number Of Rows= 1092
Number Of Columns= 1632
Source Voltage (kV)= 80
Source Current (uA)= 125
Image Pixel Size (um)=9.999986
Exposure (ms)=950
Rotation Step (deg)=0.400
Frame Averaging=ON (3)
Filter=Al 1mm
Study Date and Time=02 Jul 2020
08h:23m:34s
Scan duration=0h:39m:51s
```

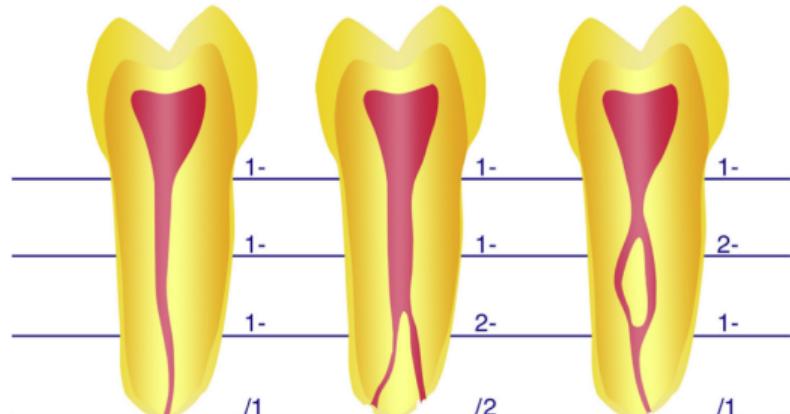
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Sample changer on the SkyScan 1272
In total:

- 13 days of *continuous* µCT scanning
- 819 GB of raw data
- 230 648 TIFF projections
- 326 GB data as input for analysis
- 282 062 PNG reconstructions

How?

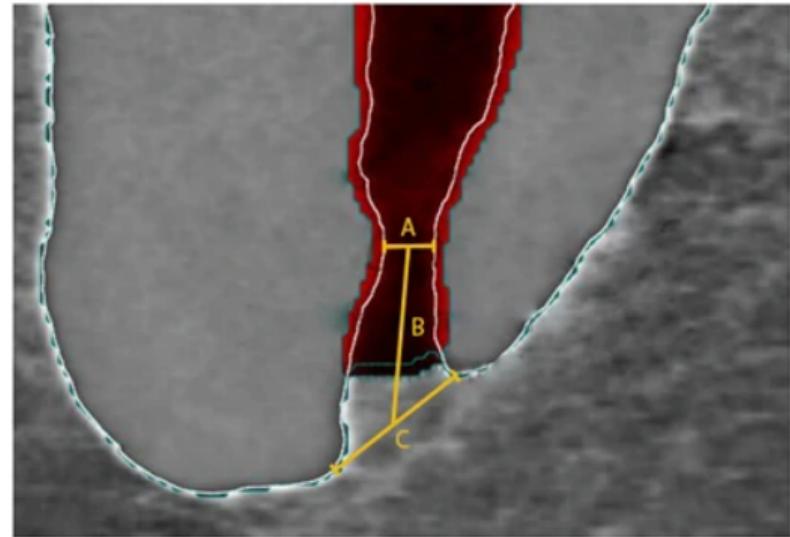
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From [25], Fig. 2

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From [27], Fig. 1

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gph.is/2nqkple

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The screenshot shows a GitHub repository page for a user named 'habi'. The repository has 1 branch and 1 tag. The commit history lists 87 commits from 20 days ago, with the most recent being 'Update actions file' by 'dd59125'. The repository contains files like '.github/workflows', '.gitignore', 'DownloadFromOSF.ipynb', 'README.md', 'Tooth.Border.jpg', 'Tooth.Characterization.jpg', 'ToothAnalysis.ipynb', 'ToothAxisSize.ipynb', 'ToothDisplay.ipynb', 'requirements.txt', and 'treebeard.yaml'. Below the repository details, there is a 'README.md' file with a DOI link (10.5281/zenodo.3999402) and a 'treebeard.yaml' status indicator. A 'Launch binder' button is also present. A section titled 'A big tooth cohort' discusses the scanning process and provides a link to a preview and analysis notebook.

File	Description	Last Commit
.github/workflows	Update actions file	20 days ago
.gitignore	Only 'mode' changes	2 months ago
DownloadFromOSF.ipynb	Clean run of download script	22 days ago
README.md	Typo in Binder badge & link to full repo on Binder	22 days ago
Tooth.Border.jpg	Only 'mode' changes	2 months ago
Tooth.Characterization.jpg	Only 'mode' changes	2 months ago
ToothAnalysis.ipynb	Only select a subset if we actually have data:wq	22 days ago
ToothAxisSize.ipynb	Clean run of notebook	22 days ago
ToothDisplay.ipynb	Display Tooth045 for manuscript	22 days ago
requirements.txt	We also need this	2 months ago
treebeard.yaml	Add treebeard configuration	20 days ago

README.md

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3999402 treebeard.yaml failing

Launch binder

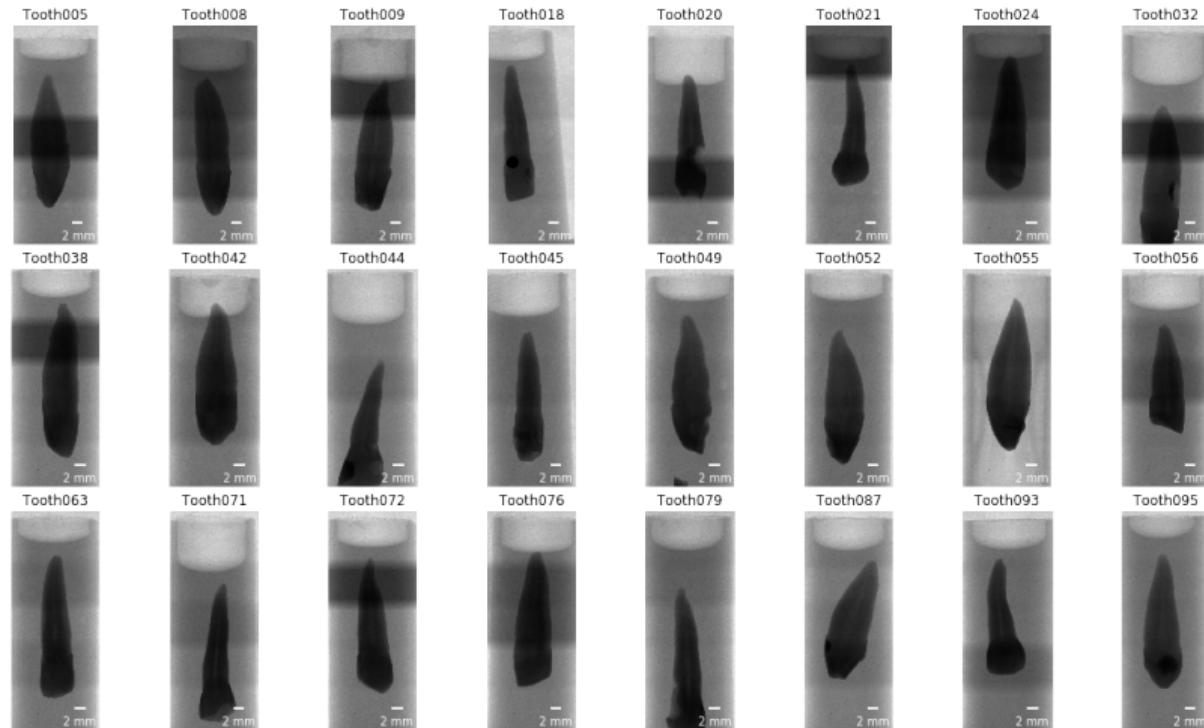
A big tooth cohort

We scanned a *big* bunch of teeth for a team of the dental clinic of the University of Bern.

To get an overview of the samples while we scanned the whole tooth cohort we generated a [preview](#) and [analysis notebook](#). The analysis notebook (with download possibility for two of the +100 teeth) can be started in your browser by clicking on the 'Binder' badge above, without installation of any software. If you'd like to start a Binder instance with the full repository, you can click [here](#).

μ b

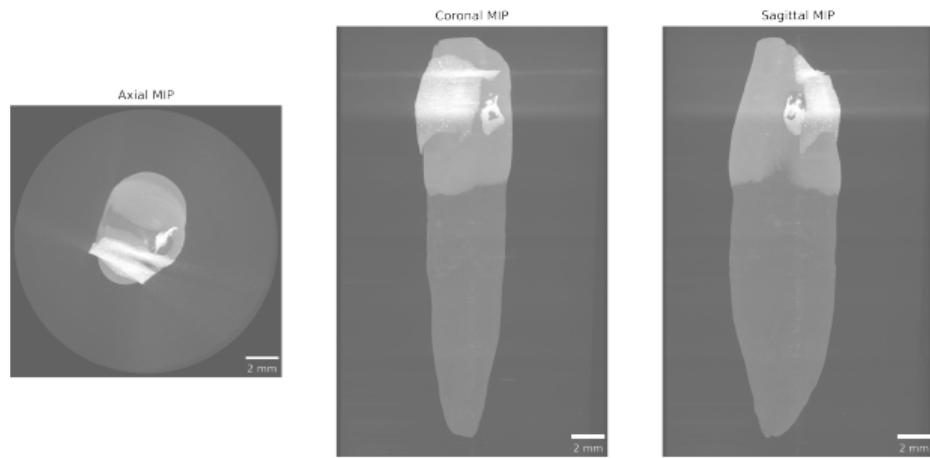
μ CT imaging



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Dataset cropping

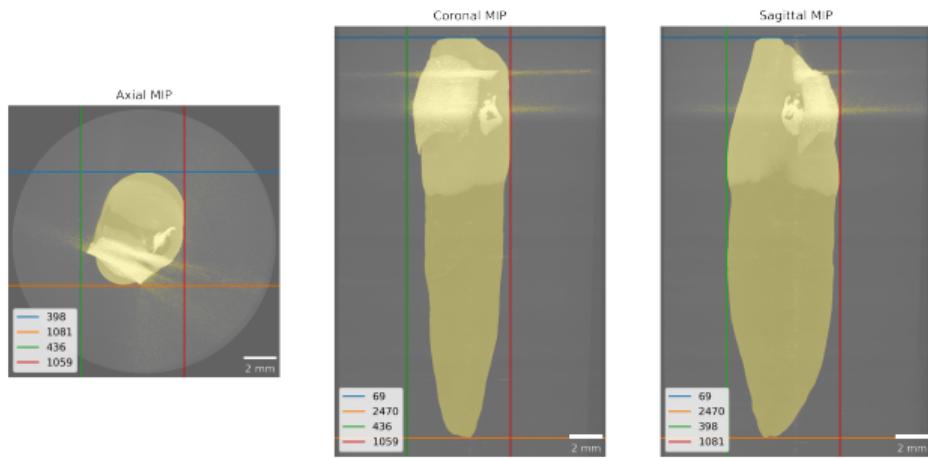
- Full datasets: 326 GB
- Cropped datasets: 115 GB



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Dataset cropping

- Full datasets: 326 GB
- Cropped datasets: 115 GB



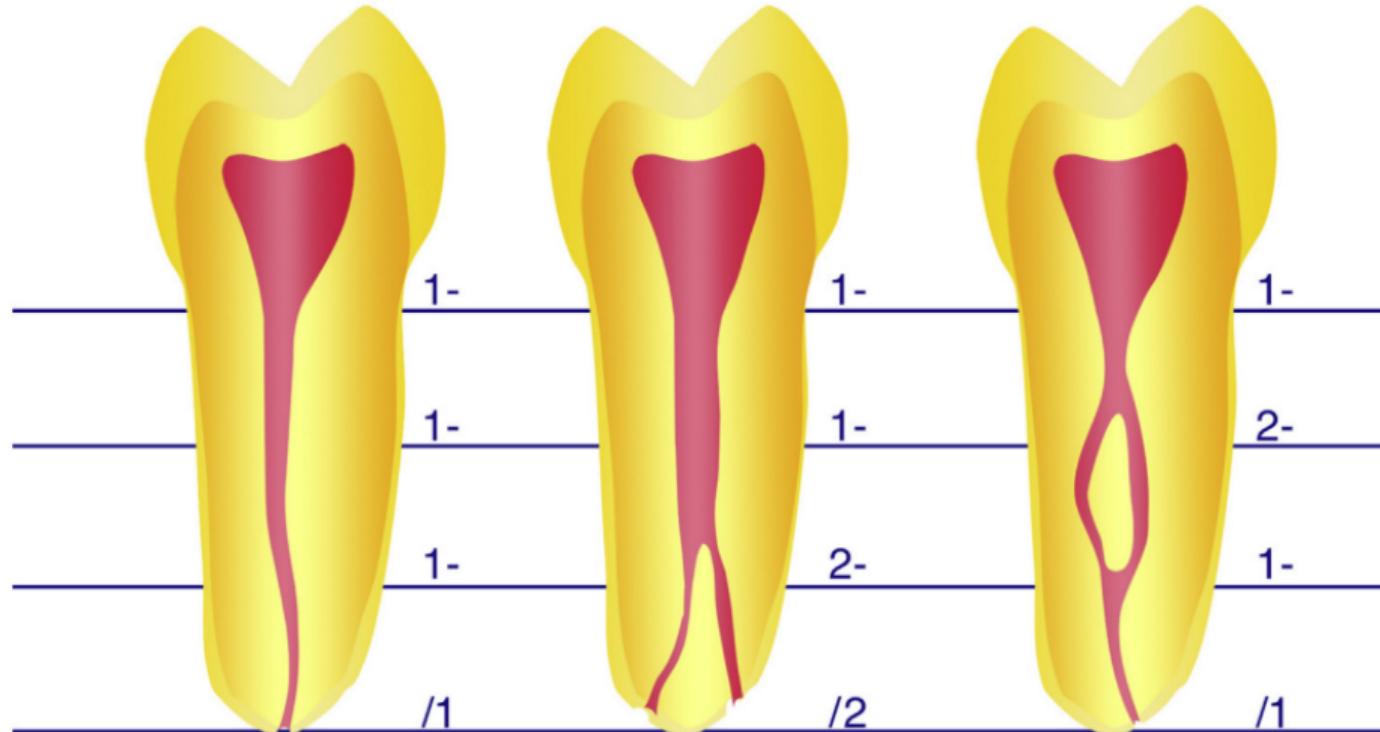
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Tooth morphology



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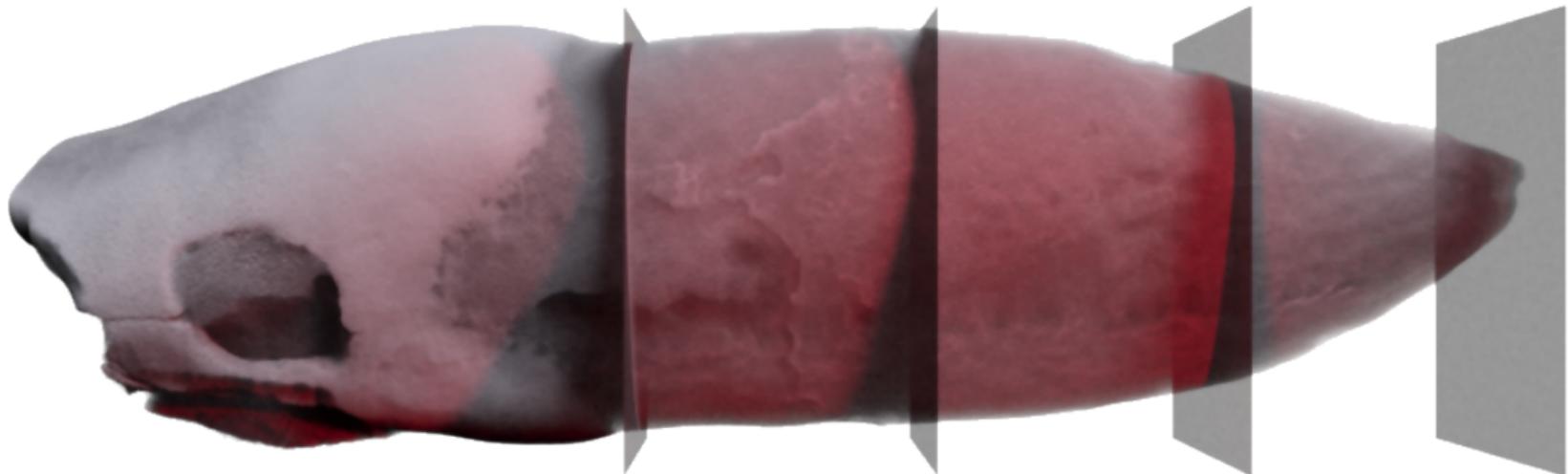
Tooth morphology



From [25], Fig. 2

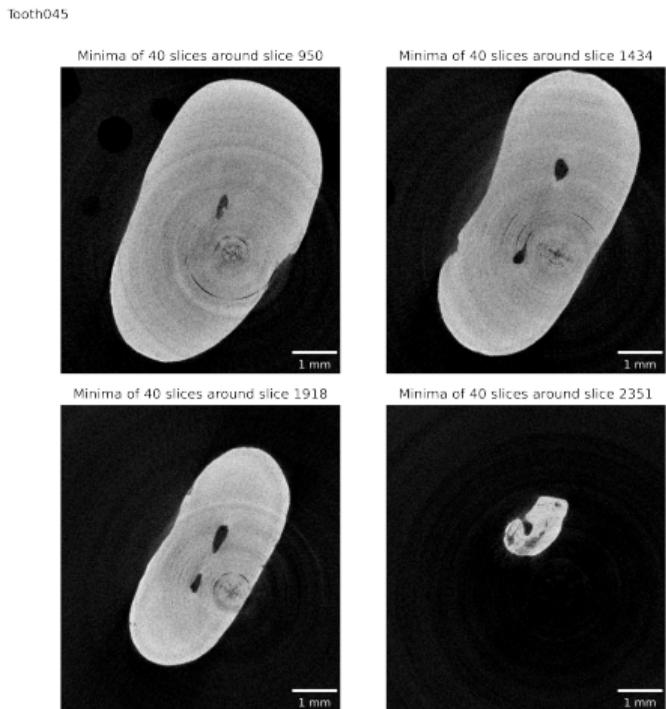
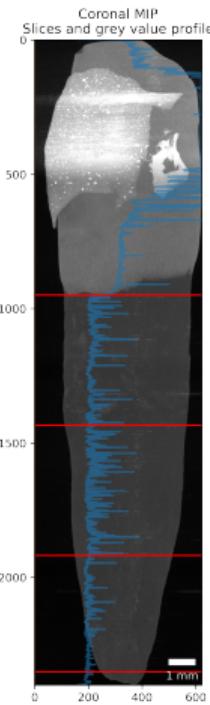
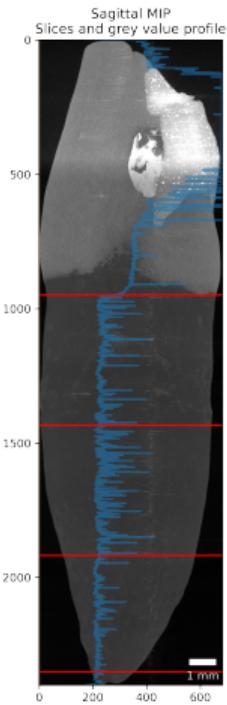
u^b

Tooth morphology



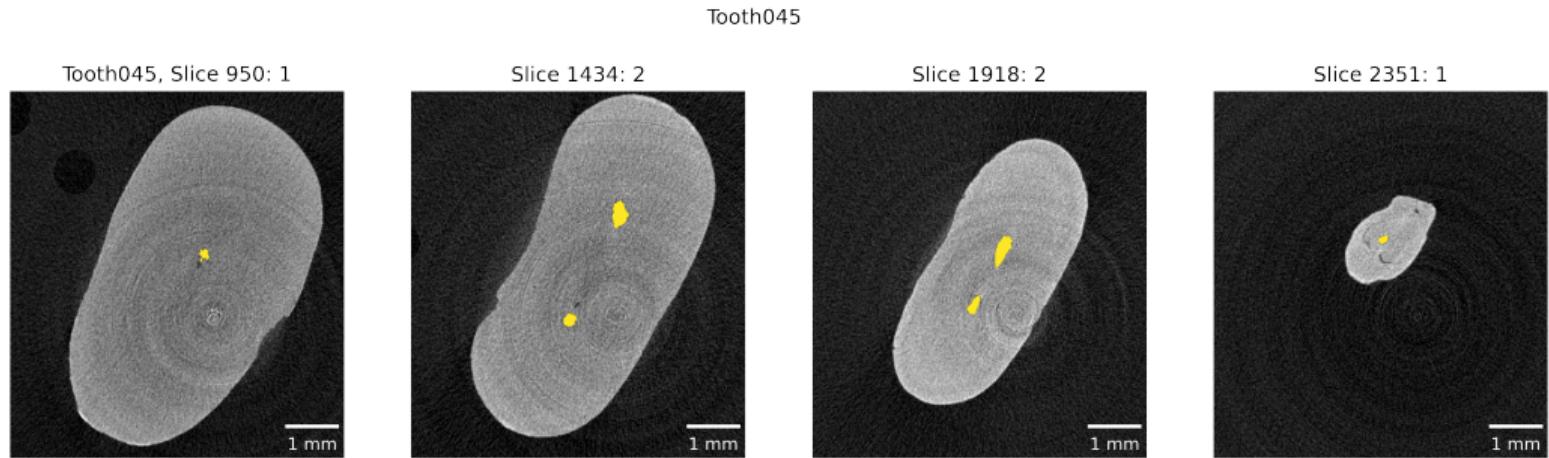
u^b

Detection of enamel-dentin border



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Detection of enamel-dentin border



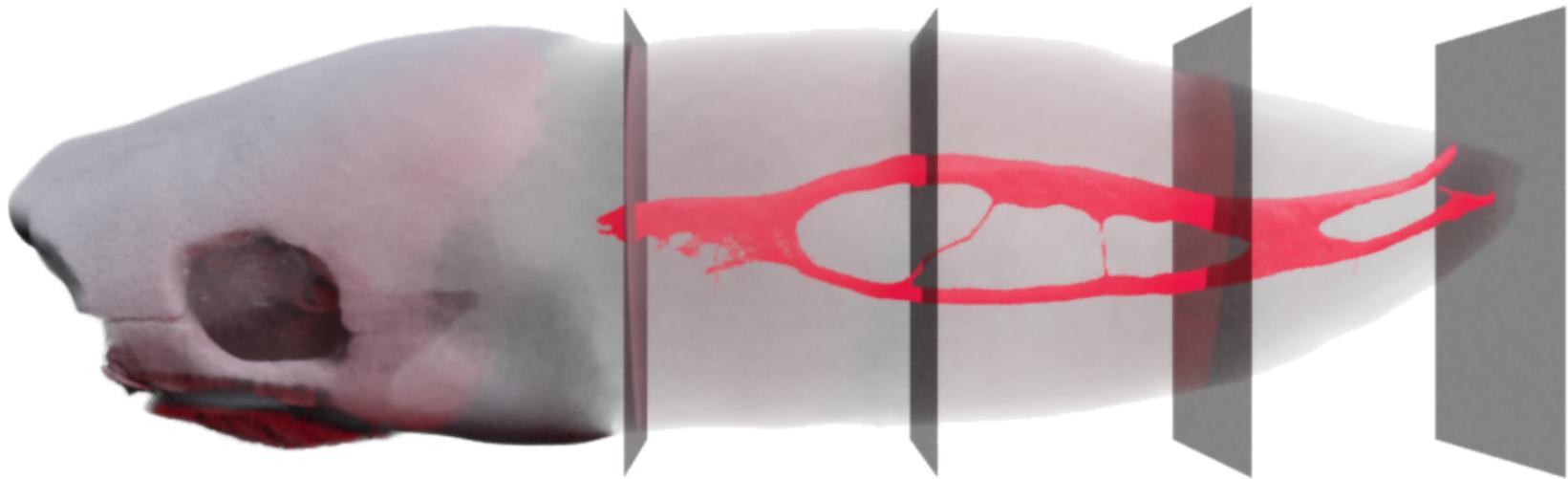
u^b

Classification of root canal configurations

Roots	RCC	#	%	
Single (N=98)	1-1-1/1	73	74.5	
	1-1-1/2	14	14.3	
	1-1-1/3	1	1.0	
	1-1-1/4	2	2.1	
	1-1-2/1	1	1.0	
	1-2-1/1	4	4.1	
	1-2-1/2	1	1.0	
	1-2-2/2	1	1.0	
	2-3-1/1	1	1.0	
Double (N=3)	Buccal	1-1-1/1	2	66.6
		1-2-1/1	1	33.3
	Lingual	1-1-1/1	2	66.6
		1-1-1/2	1	33.3

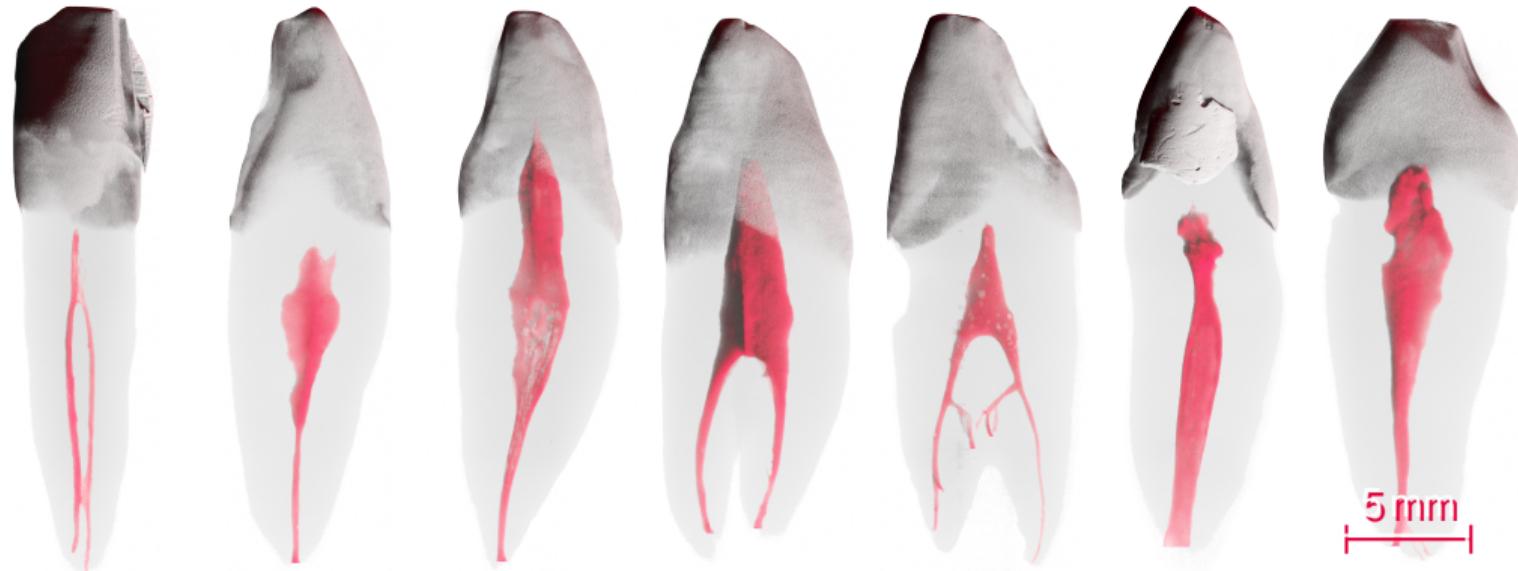
u^b

Extraction of root canal space



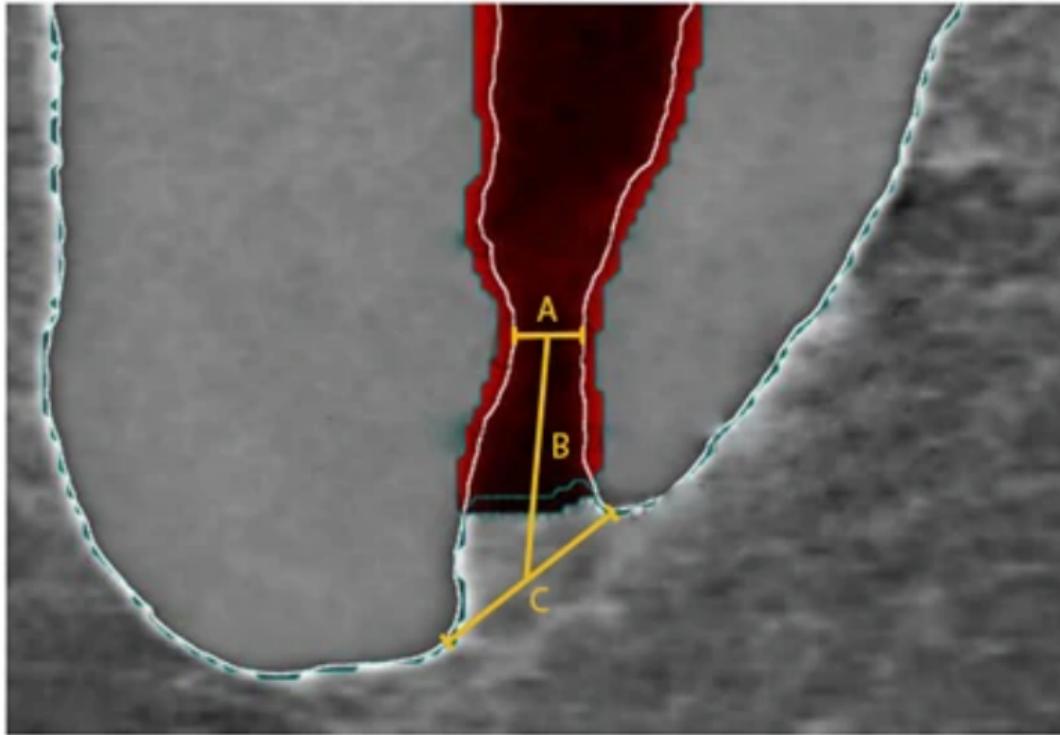
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Results of root canal space extraction



u^b

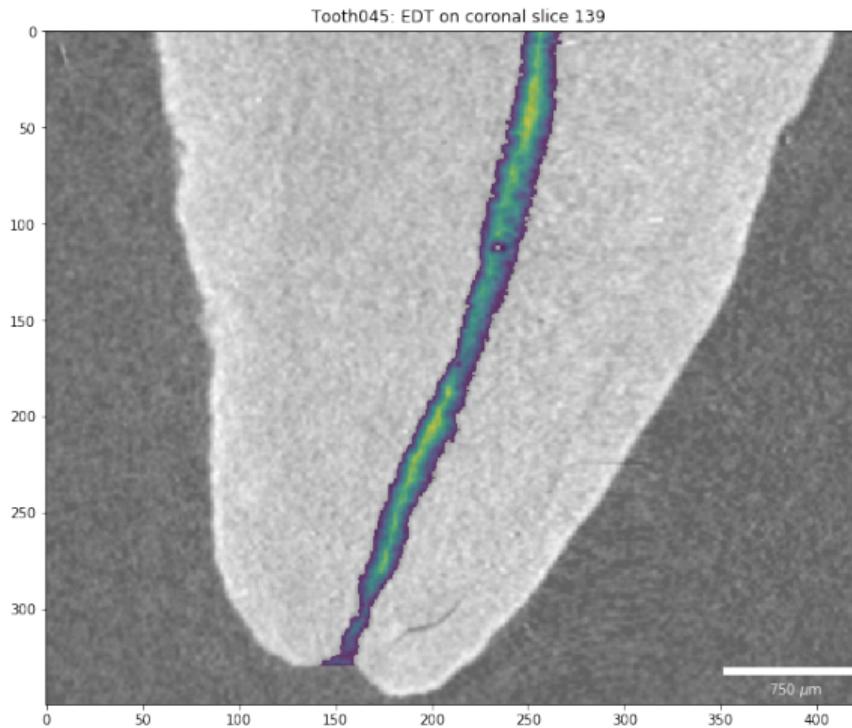
Physiological foramen geometry



From [27], Fig. 1

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Physiological foramen geometry

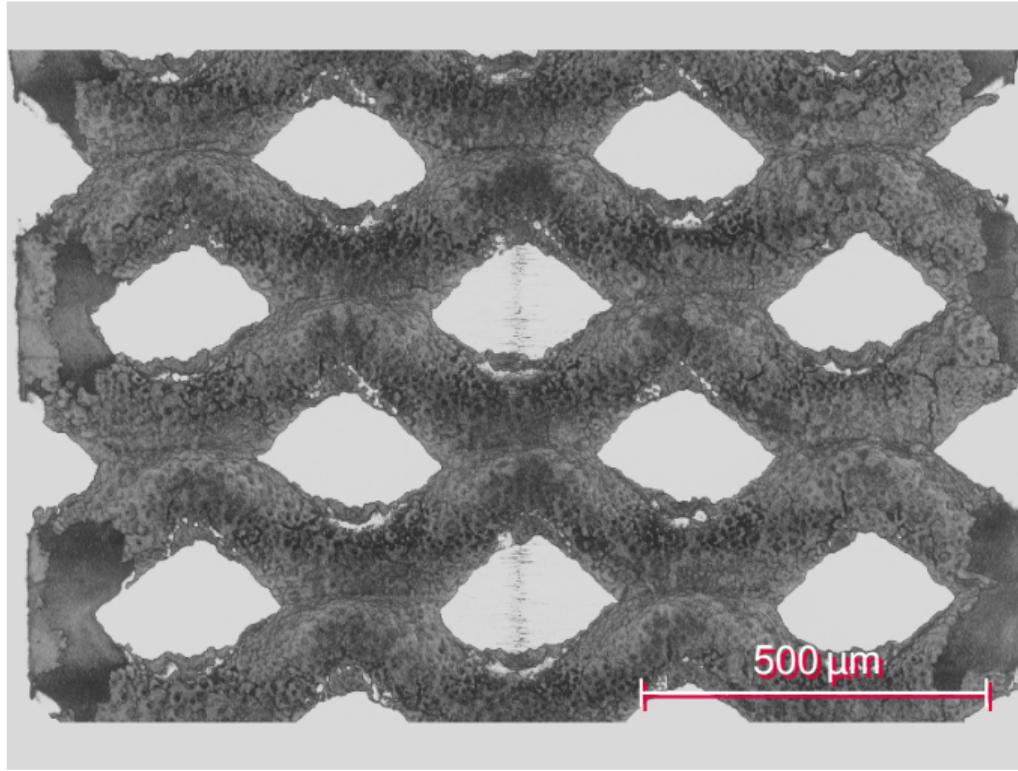


Conclusion ZMK

- Efficient use of time, e. g. more teeth does not mean more (human) work
- Reproducible analysis with *free and open-source* software, usable by *anyone*
- Objective analysis, e. g. no operator bias

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Metal foam



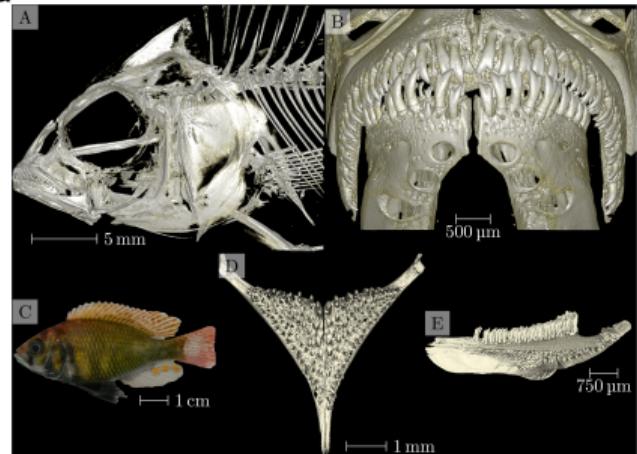
Etienne Berner NanoElectroCatalysis Group

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Data wrangling by example: Cichlids

Collaboration with team of *Aquatic Ecology & Evolution*, from the Institute of Ecology and Evolution^a

- 133 Cichlids from Lake Victoria, East Africa
 - Functional anatomy of the skulls and jaws
 - 6–18 cm in size
- 375 scans in total
 - Voxelsizes from 3.5–50 µm
 - 46 days of scanning time
 - 9.8 TB of raw data
 - 1.5 TB/+1 000 000 reconstructions

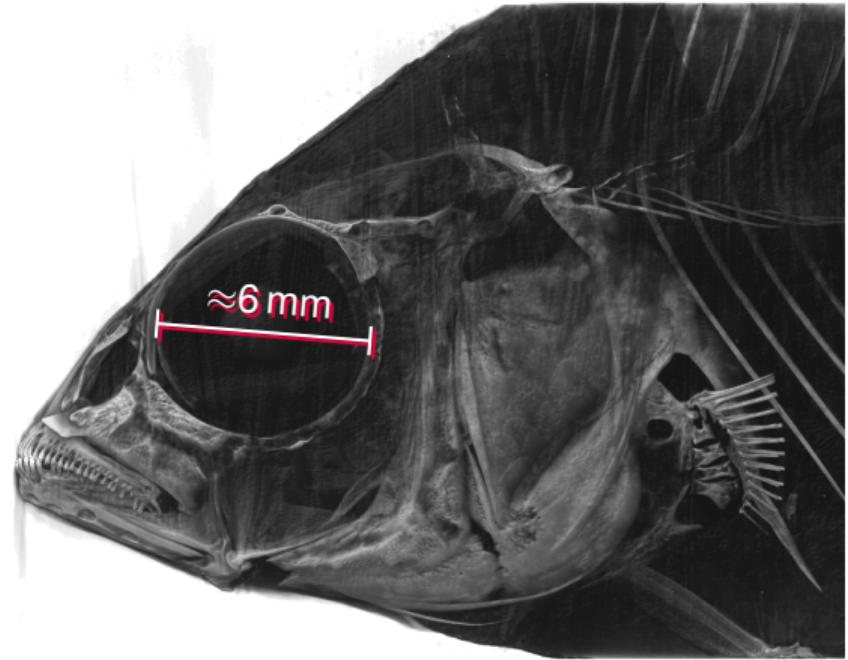


DOI:gsst8t, Fig. 1

^a11.

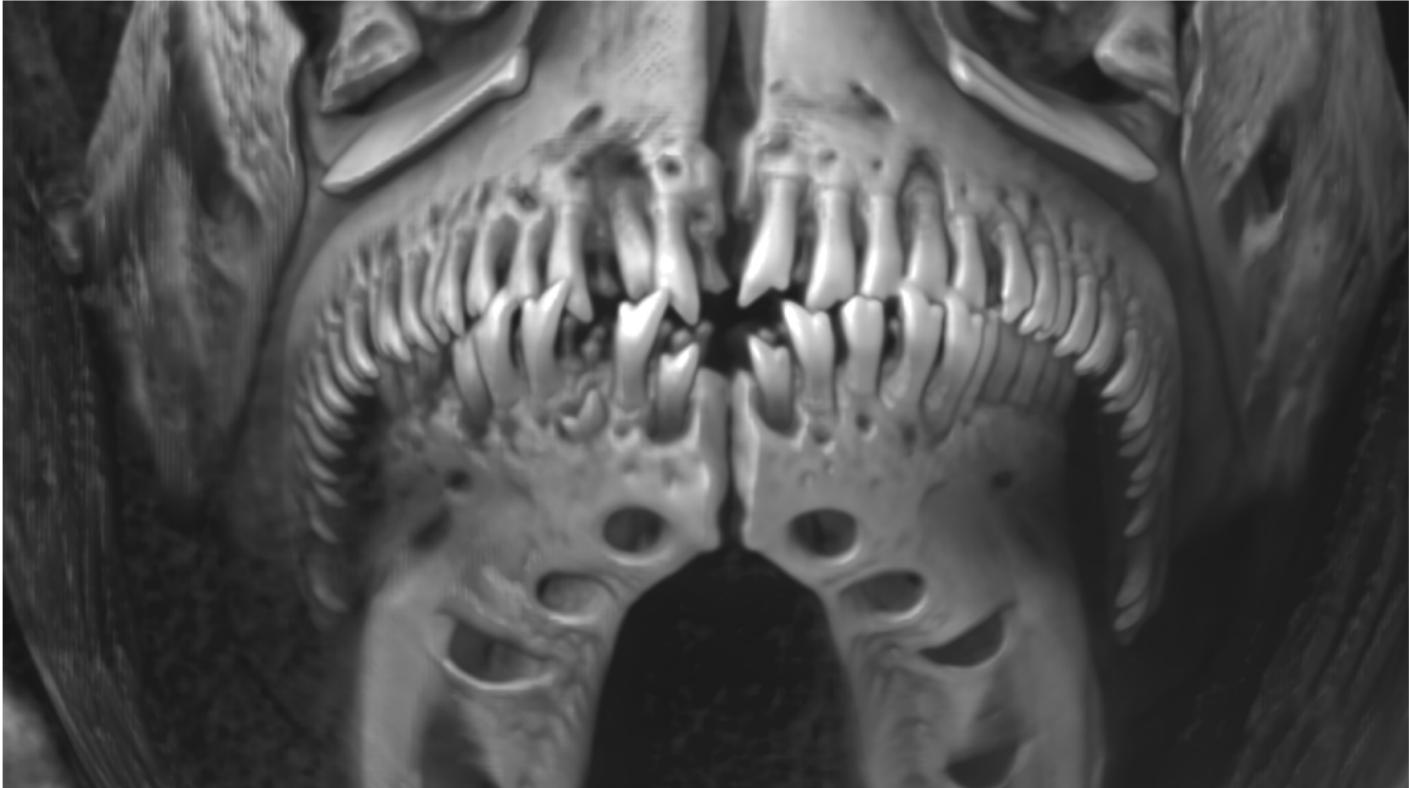
u^b

Visualization of cichlid head



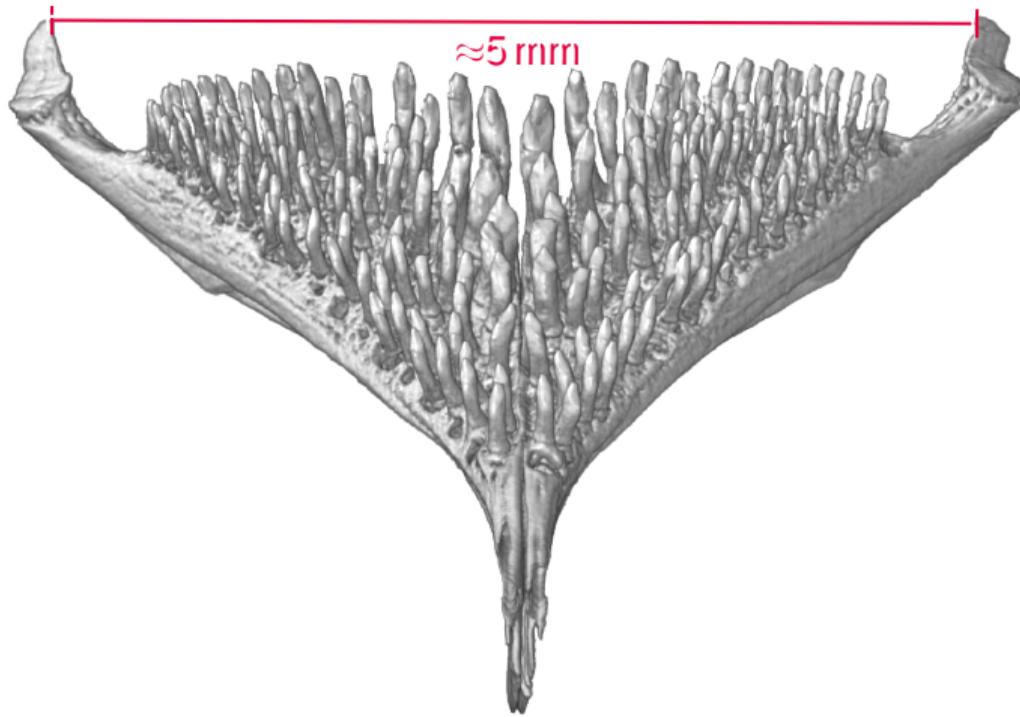
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Visualization of cichlid head



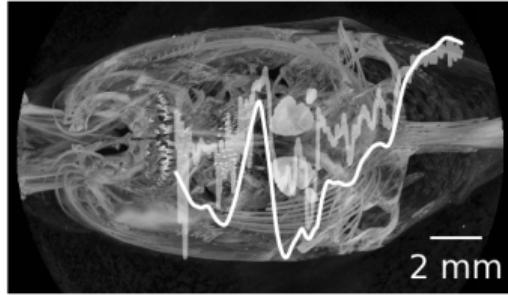
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Visualization of segmented pharyngeal jaw



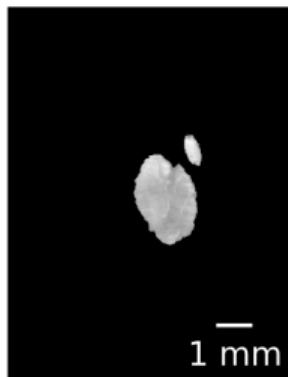
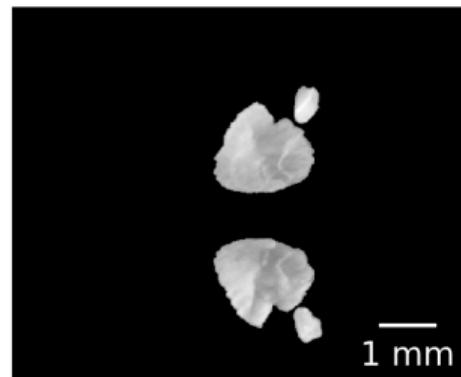
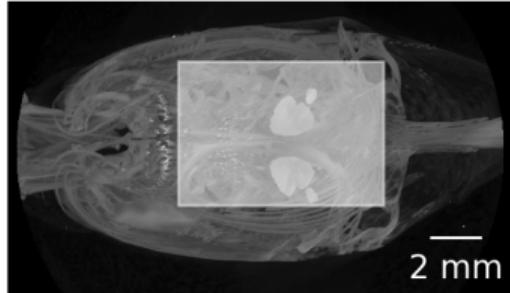
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Data wrangling by example: Cichlids



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Data wrangling by example: Cichlids



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Thanks!

- Thanks for listening to me!
- What questions do you have for me?

Colophon

- This BEAMER presentation was crafted in \LaTeX with the (slightly adapted) template from *Corporate Design und Vorlagen* of the University of Bern.
 - Complete source code: git.io/fjpP7
 - The \LaTeX code is automatically compiled with a GitHub action to a (handout) PDF which you can access here: git.io/JeQxO
- Did you spot an error?
 - File an issue: git.io/fjpPb
 - Submit a pull request: git.io/fjpPN
 - Send me an email: david.haberthuer@unibe.ch

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