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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

u^b 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 μ CT group



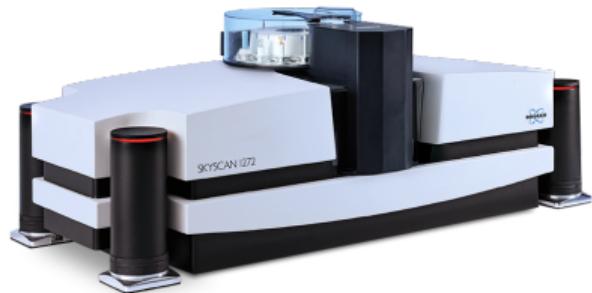
David.Haberthuer@unibe.ch

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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

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Interaction of x-rays with matter

Tomography today

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

Examples

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Overview

Materials & Methods

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Metal foam analysis

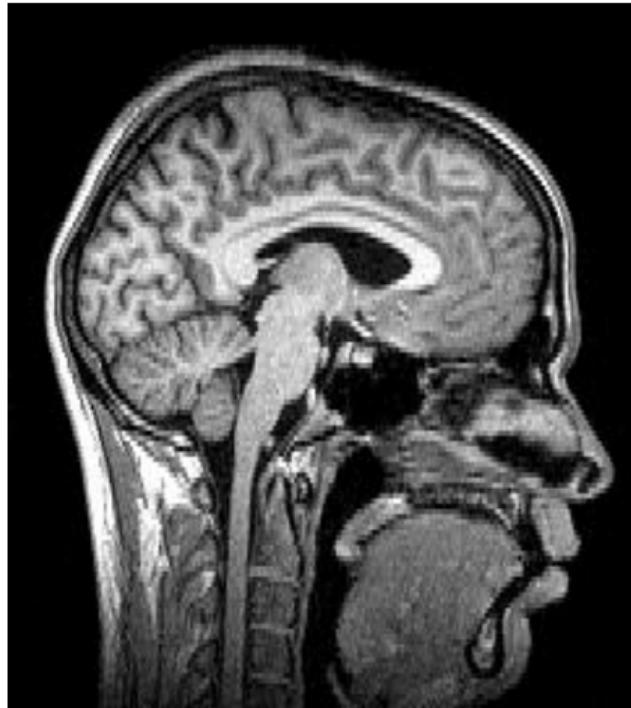
A study on fish

μ CT^b

- 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

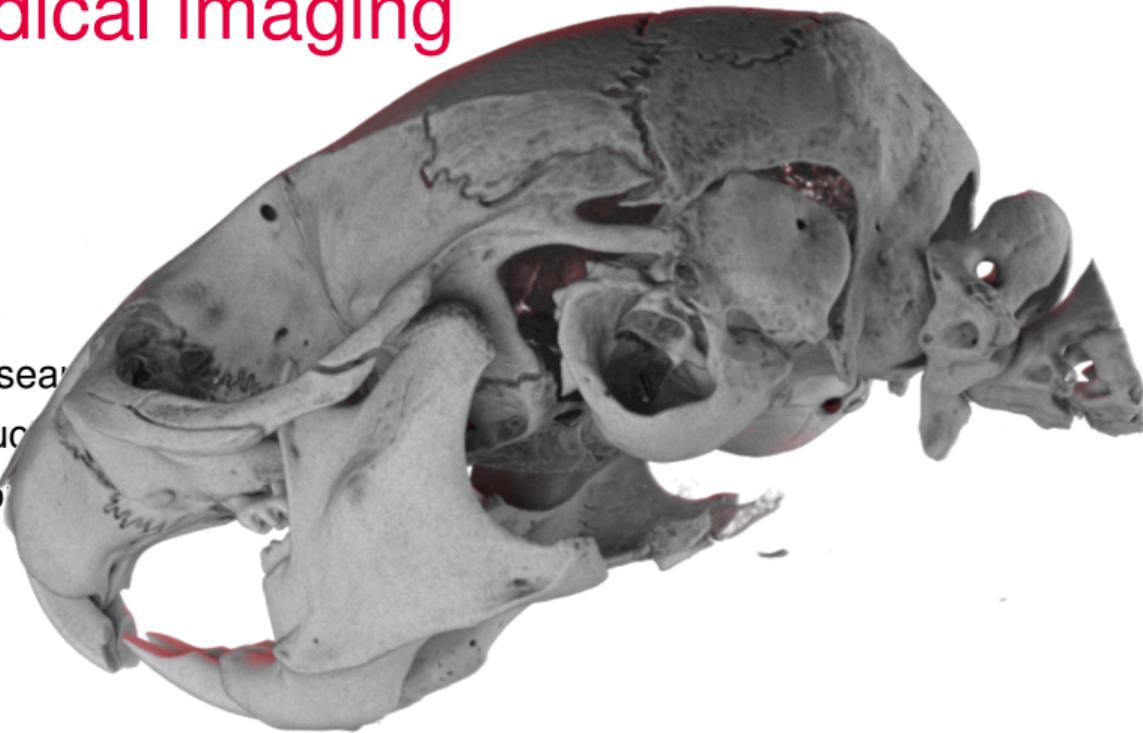
Biomedical imaging

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



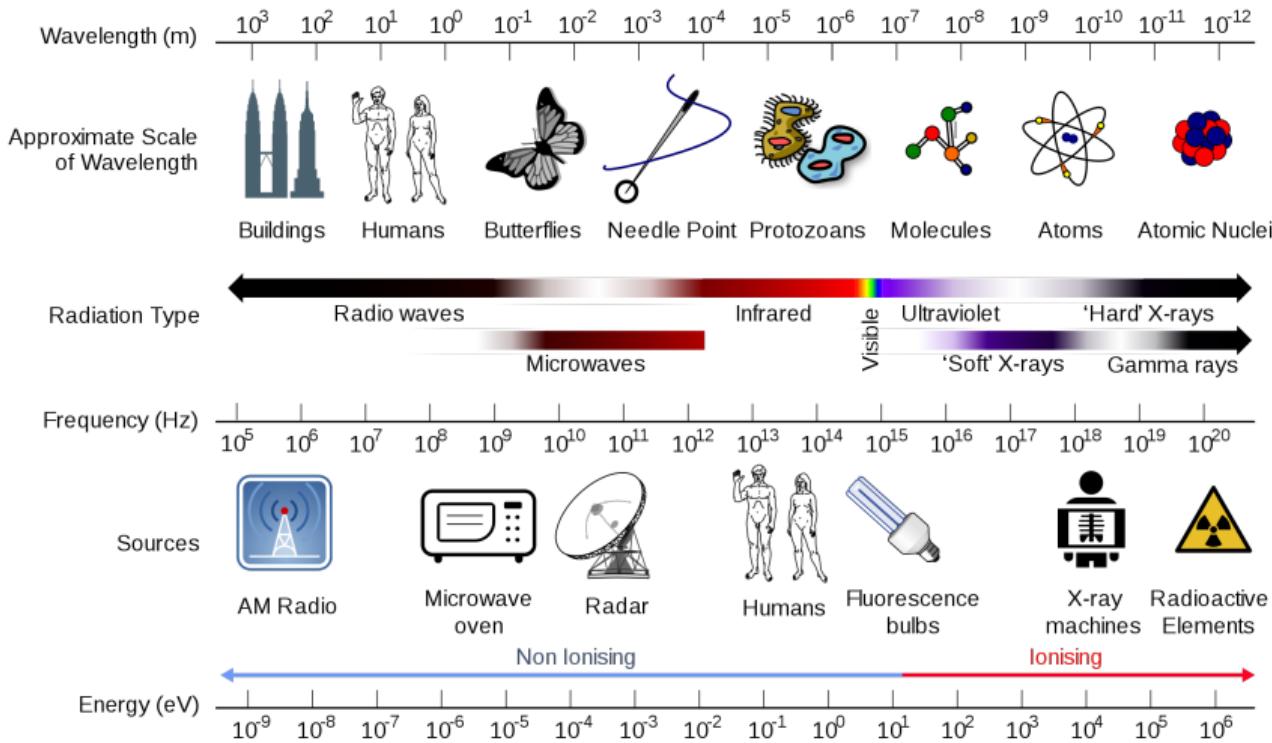
w.wiki/7g4 CC BY-NC-SA

Biomedical imaging



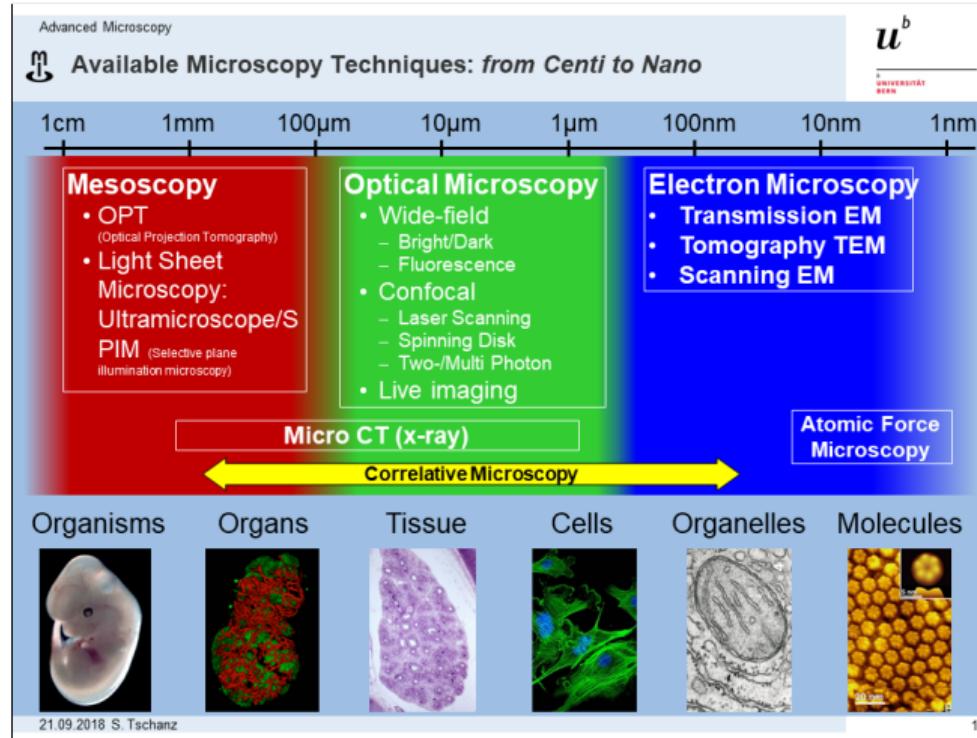
- Medical research
- Non-destructive
- (Small) Biology

u^b Wavelengths & Scales



w.wiki/7fz

u^b Wavelengths & Scales



Stefan Tschanz, with permission

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

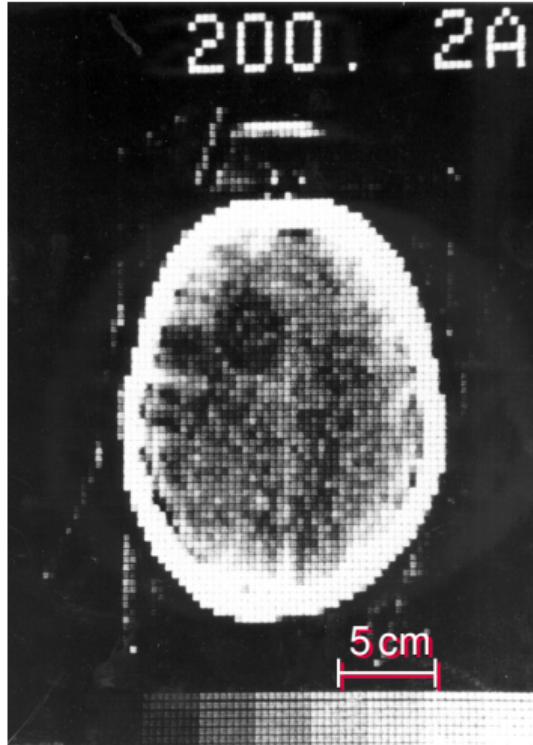
- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays



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

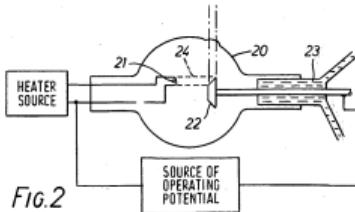
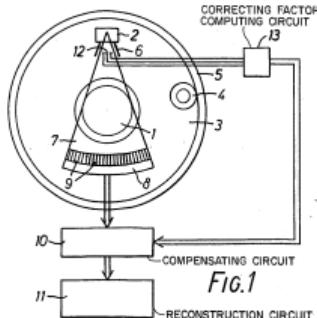
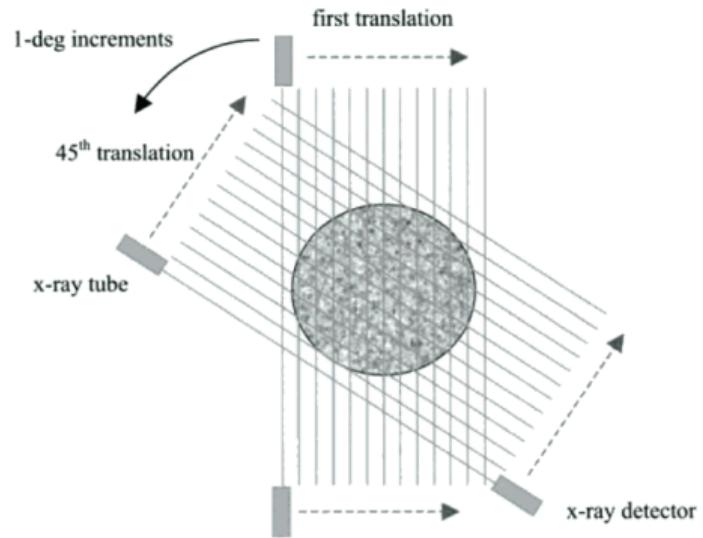


FIG.2

From [US3940625A], p. 2

CT History

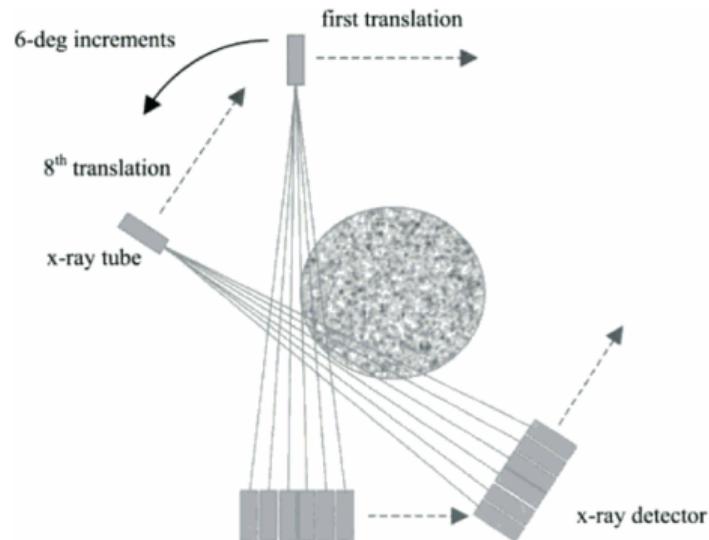
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- CT scanner generations
 - First generation



From [15], Figure 1.12

CT History

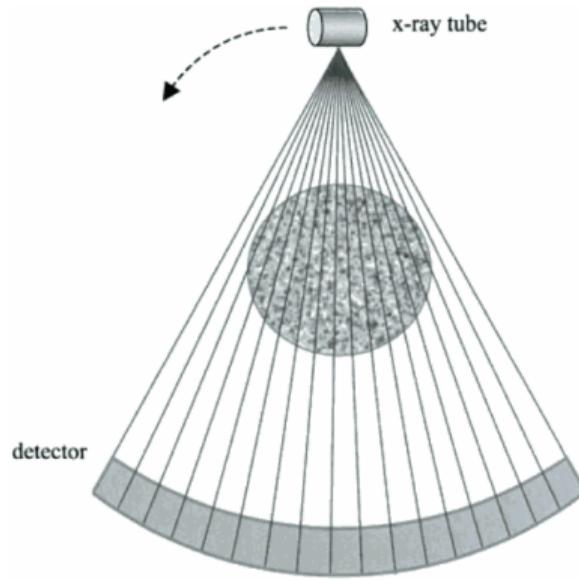
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- CT scanner generations
 - First generation
 - Second generation



From [15], Figure 1.13

CT History

- 1895: Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X-rays
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 - 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-Lamberts law]: $I(t) = I_0 e^{-\alpha z}$

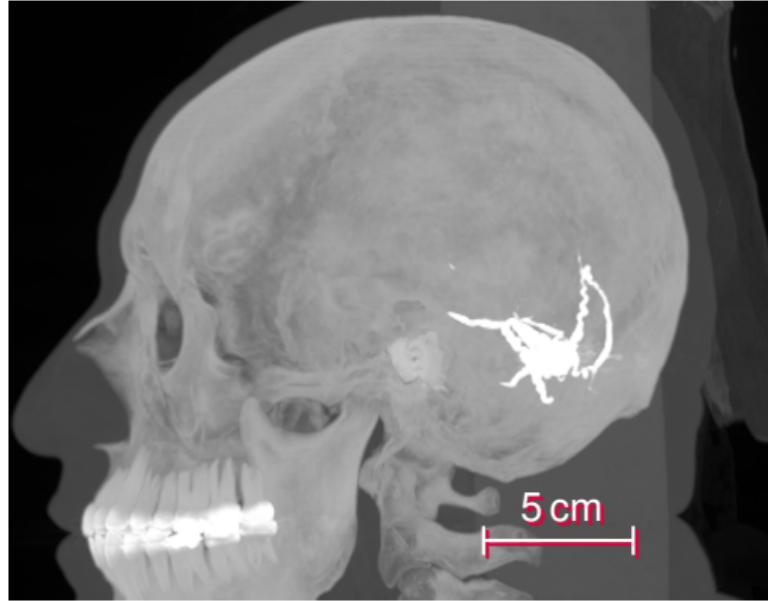
Composition of biological tissues

Tissue: content by mass percentage

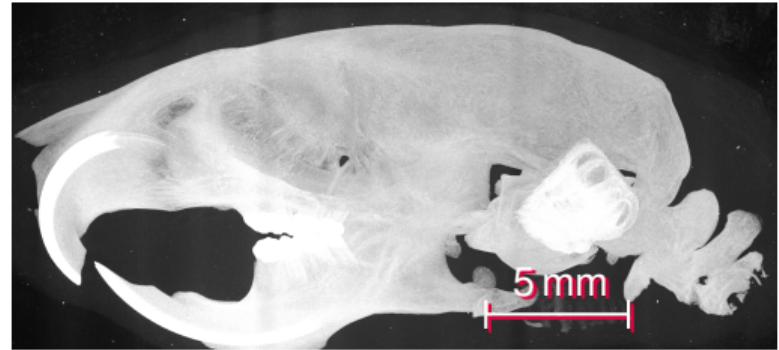
| Element Atomic number | H 1 | C 6 | N 7 | O 8 | Na 11 | P 15 | S 16 | Cl 17 | K 19 | Ca 20 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| Fat | 11.4 | 59.8 | 0.7 | 27.8 | 0.1 | | 0.1 | 0.1 | | |
| Water | 11.2 | | | 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?

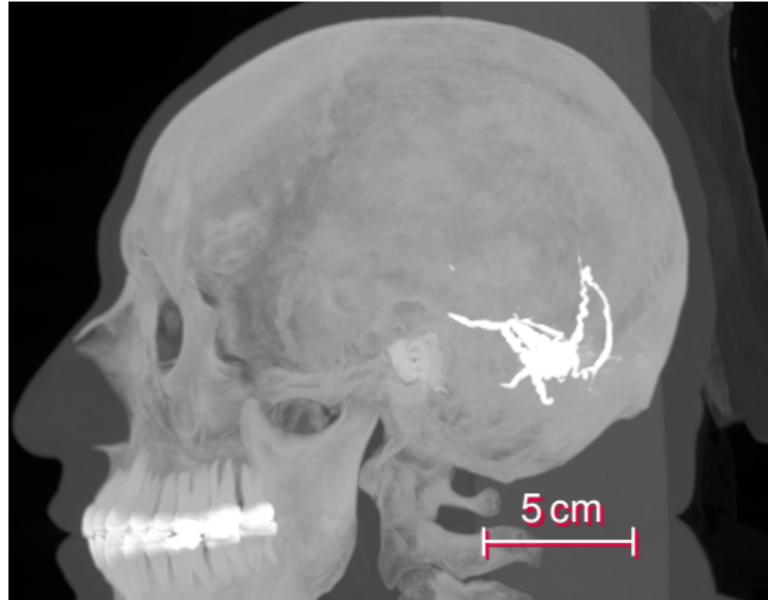


From [21], Subject C3L-02465

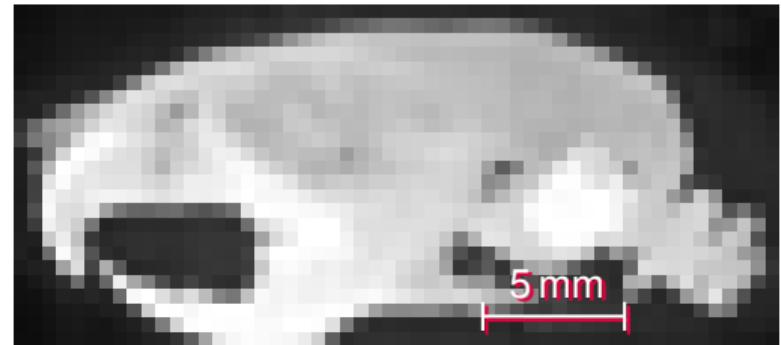


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Why μ CT?

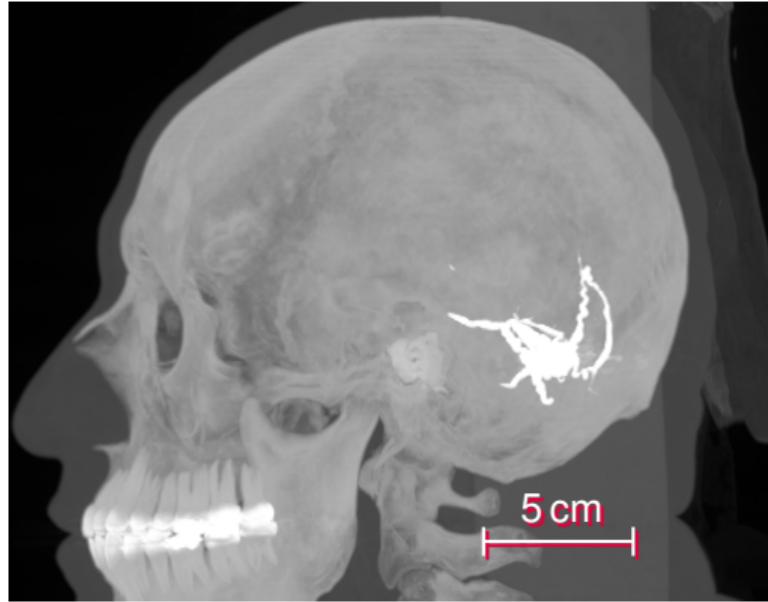


From [21], Subject C3L-02465



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Why μ CT?

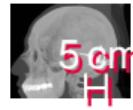


From [21], Subject C3L-02465

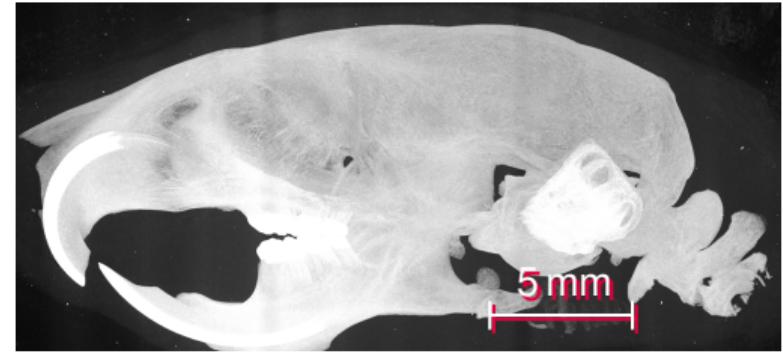


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Why μ CT?



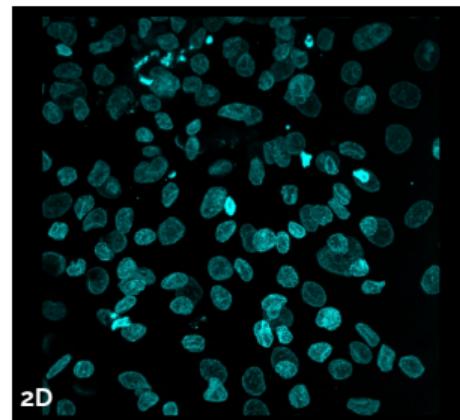
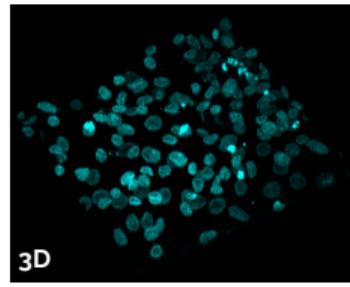
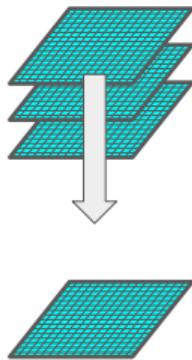
From [21], Subject C3L-02465



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.



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

Machinery

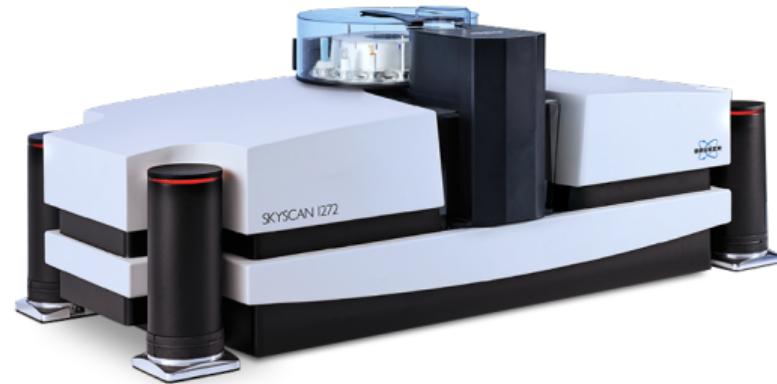
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flic.kr/p/fpTrGu @@

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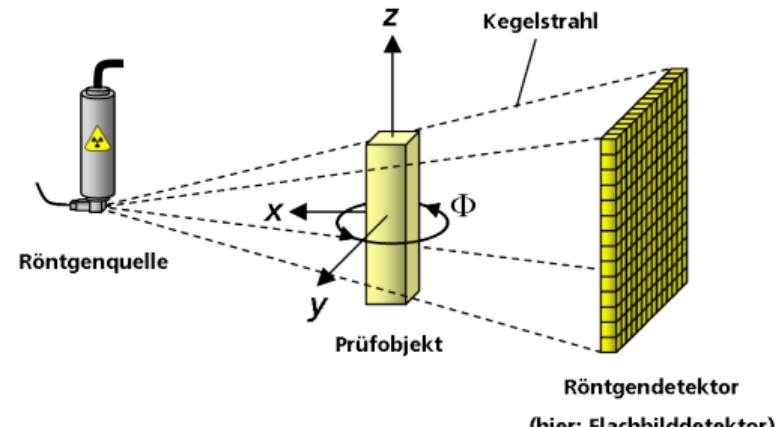


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What is happening?

- No matter what kind of machine, the basic principle is always
- an x-ray source
 - a sample
 - a detector



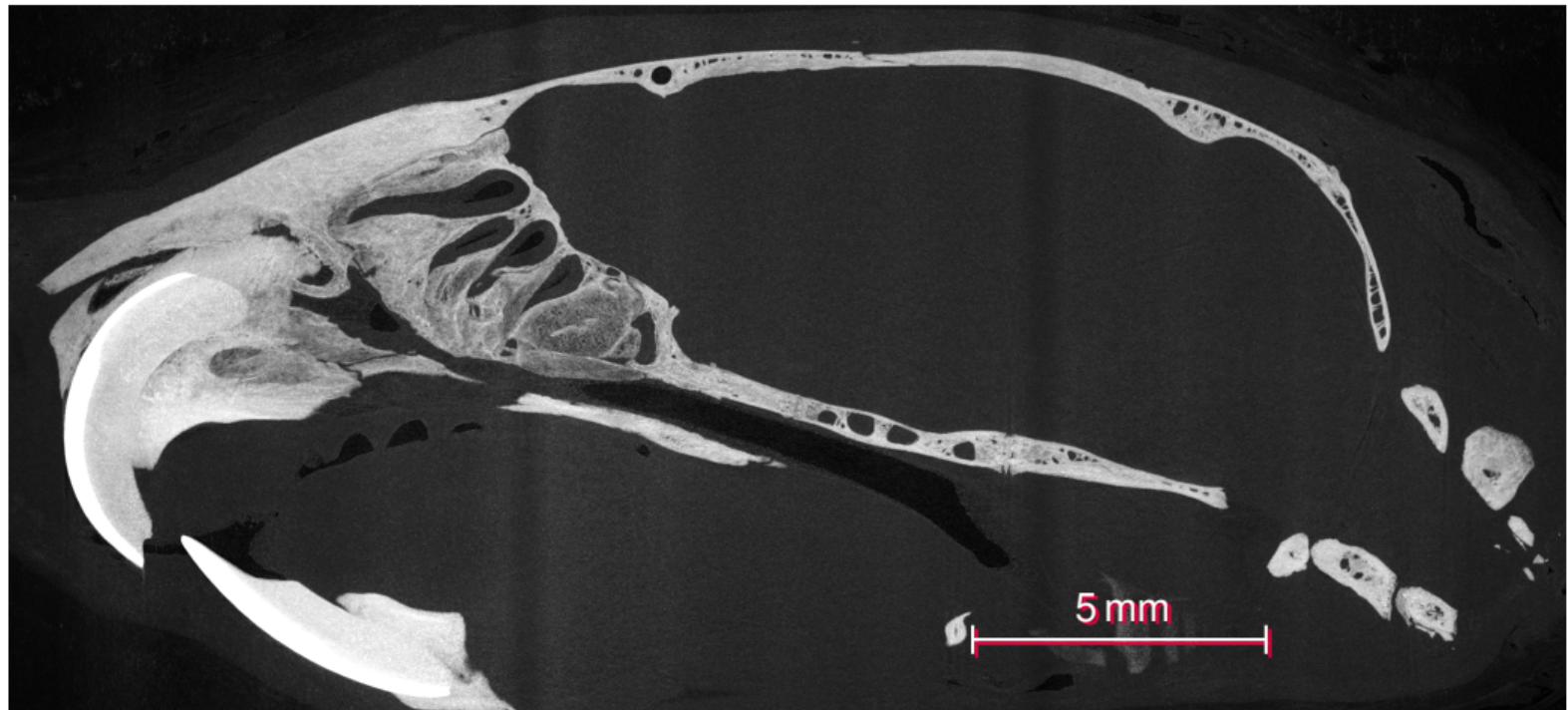
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Machinery

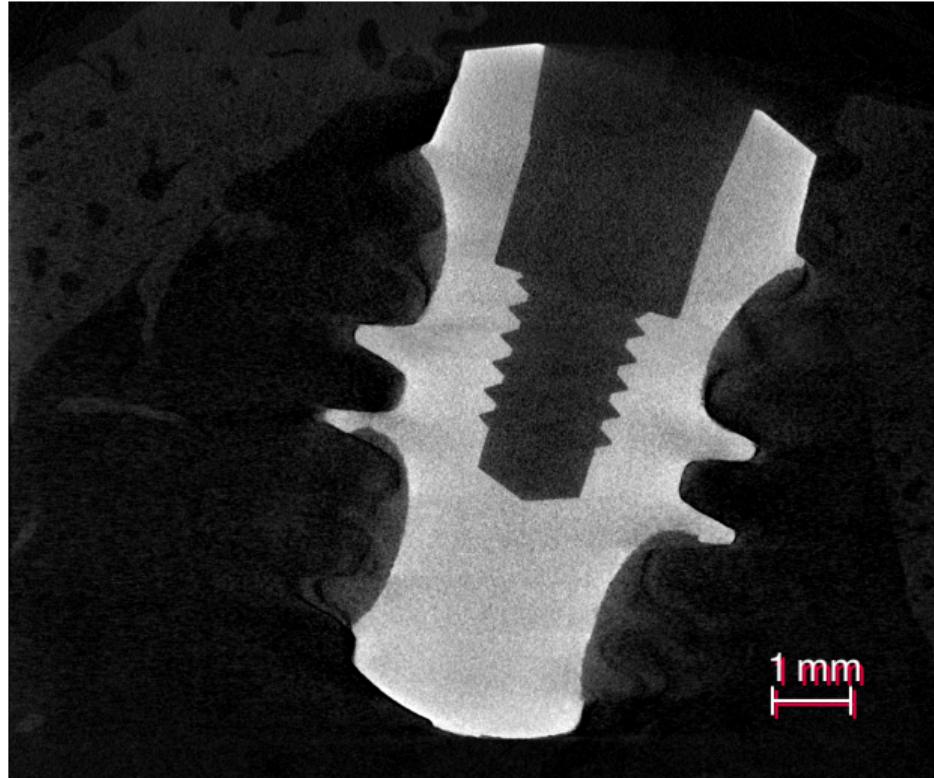
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Examples



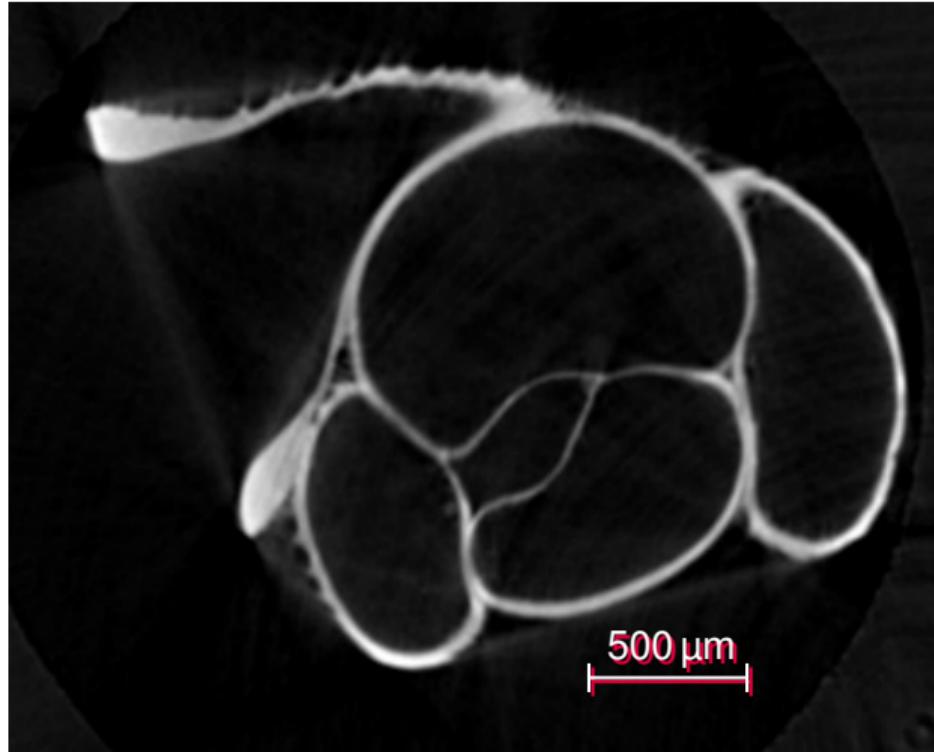
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Examples



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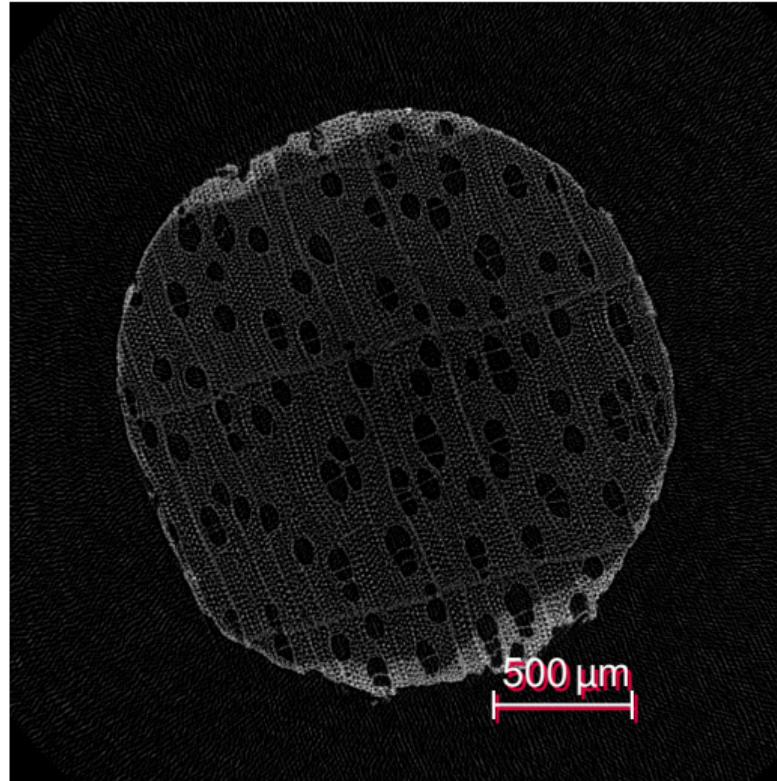
Examples



From [8], *Diancta phoenix*

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Examples



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Examples



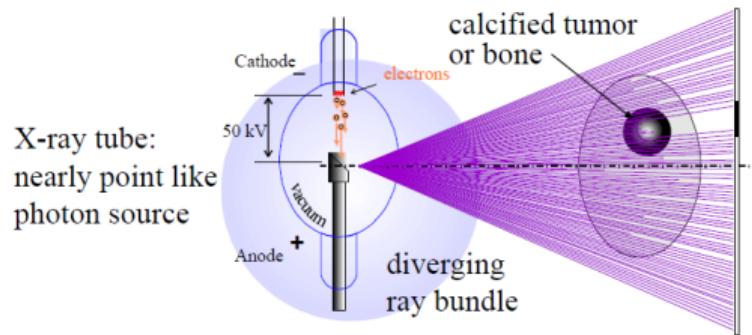
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Preparation

- Study design
- Sample preparation

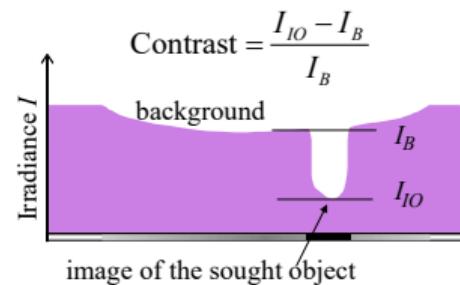
Projections

X-ray generation and contrast



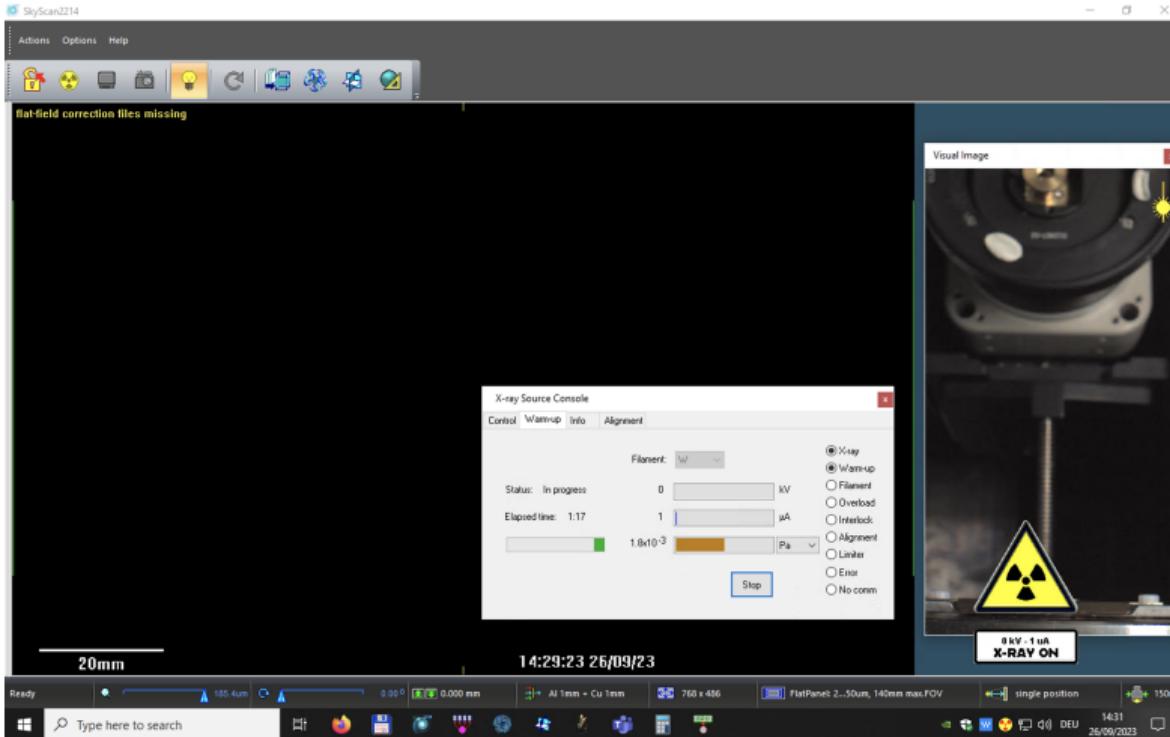
Contrast is given by
absorption of intensity I

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



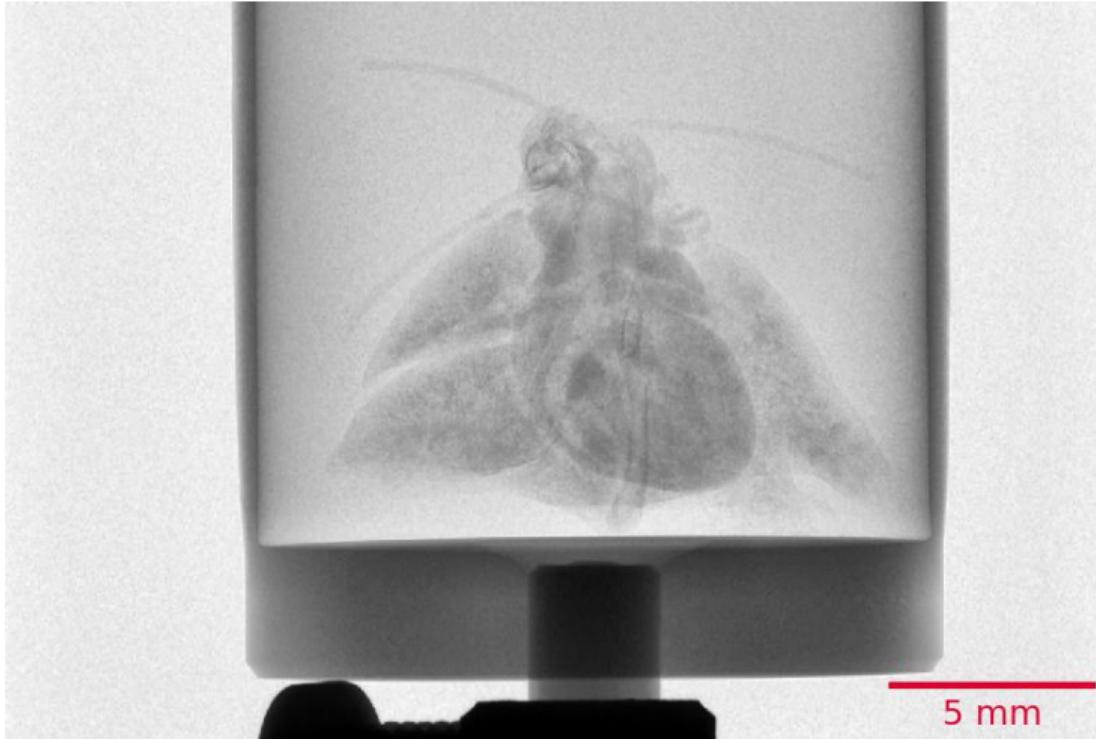
Contrast, Magnification and Resolution—Laws of Physics for Microscopists (1, 2022) by Martin Frenz, Slide 21

u^b Projection acquisition



u^b

Projections

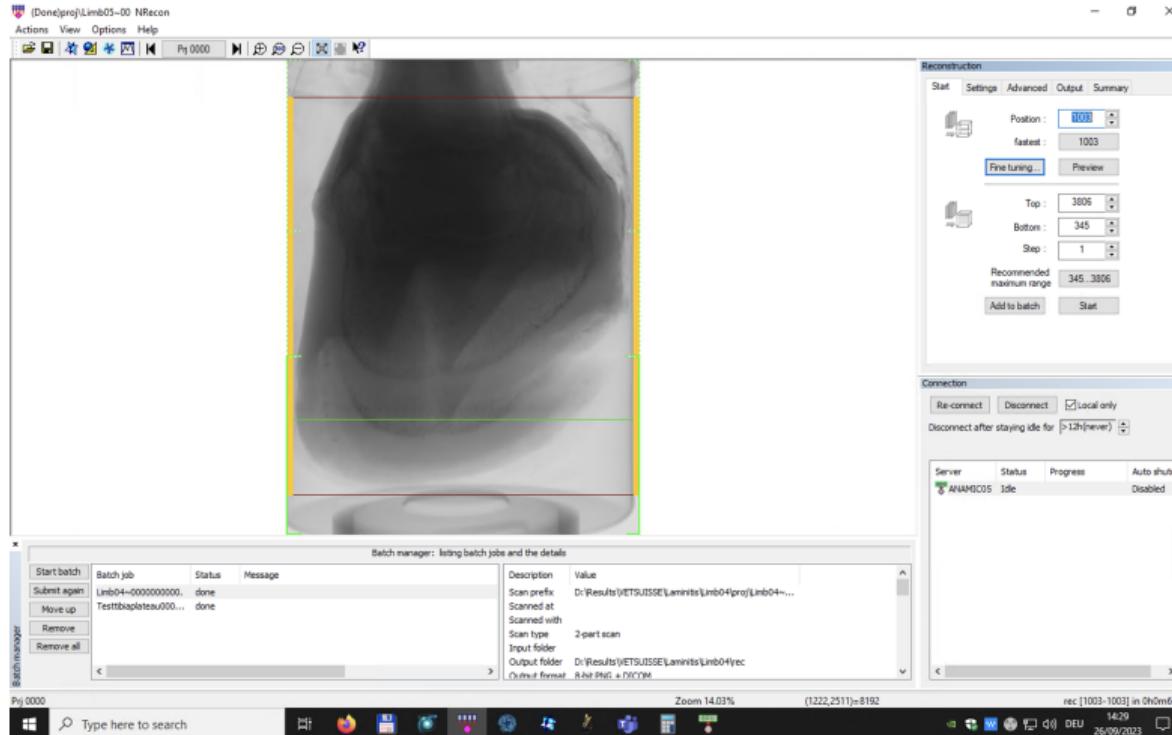


Projections

- 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

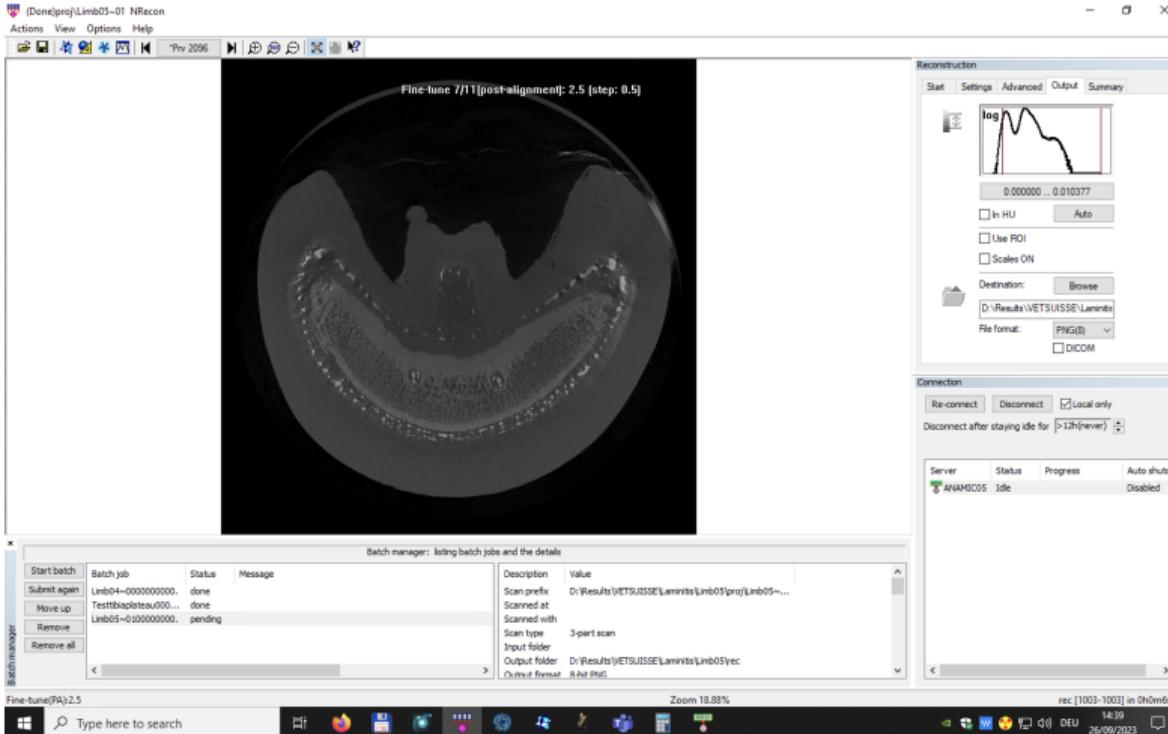
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Reconstructions



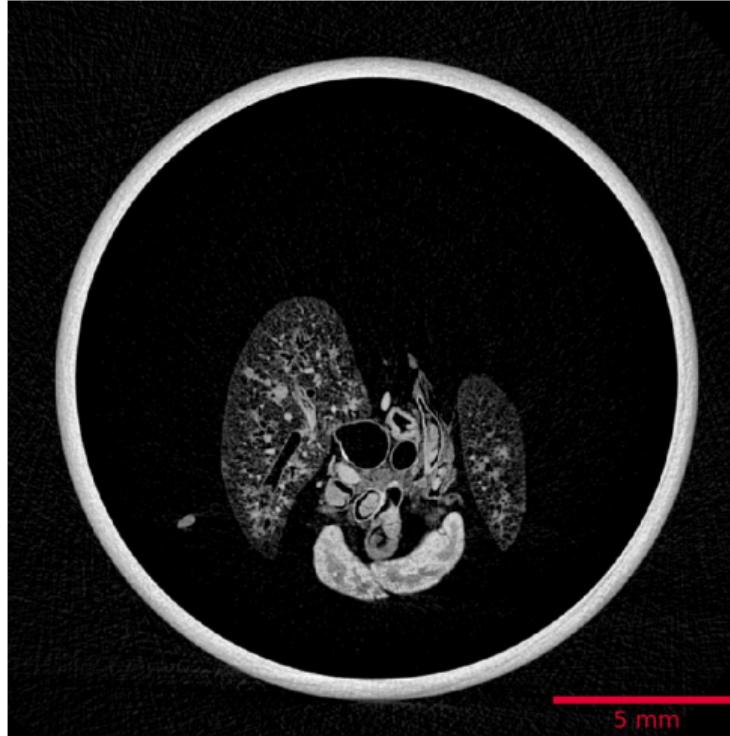
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Reconstructions



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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



Visualization

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

u^b

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!

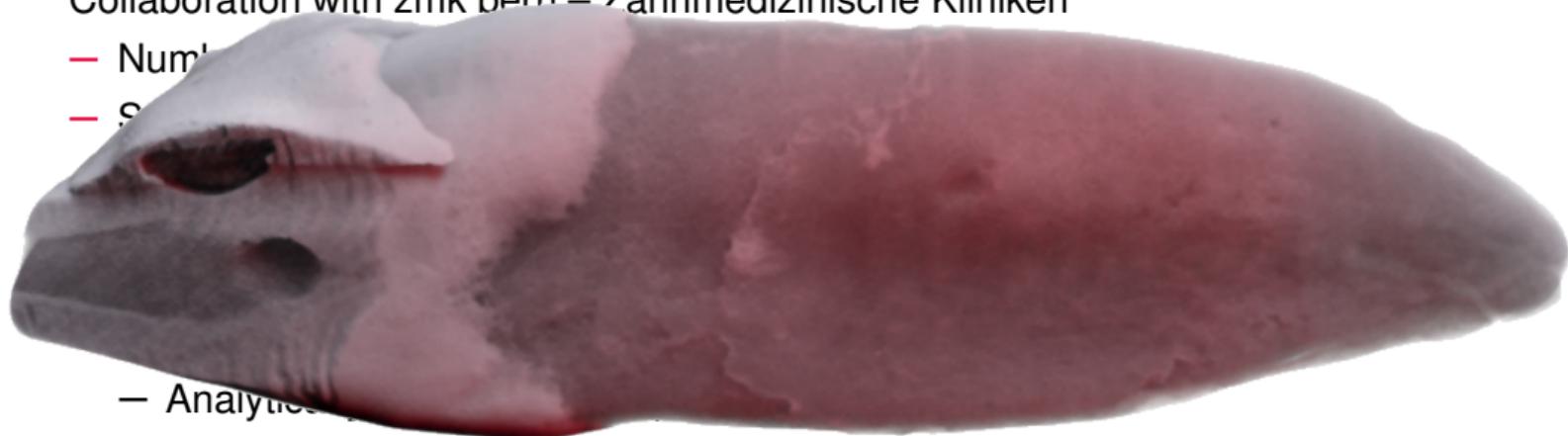
Quantitative data

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

Internal morphology of human teeth

Collaboration with zmk bern – Zahnmedizinische Kliniken

- Number of teeth
- Structure



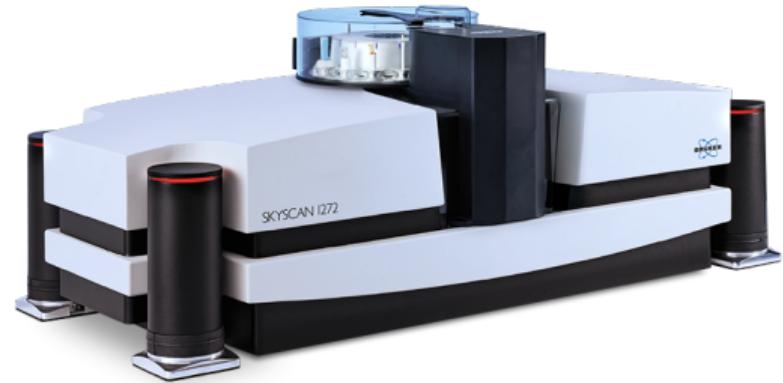
How?

- 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
```

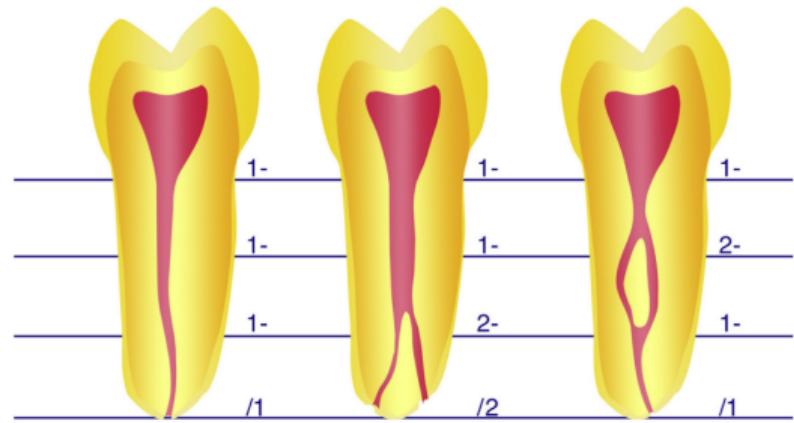
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Sample changer on the SkyScan 1272
In total:

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

How?

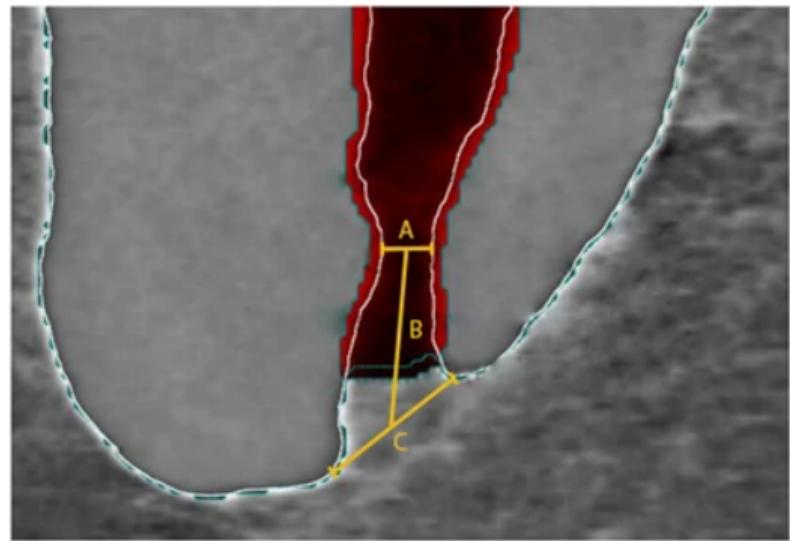
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From [25], Fig. 2

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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 interface. At the top, it displays 'master' branch, '1 branch', '1 tag', 'Go to file', 'Add file', and a 'Code' button. Below this is a list of files with their last commit details:

| 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.ipynb | 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 |

Below the file list is the 'README.md' file content:

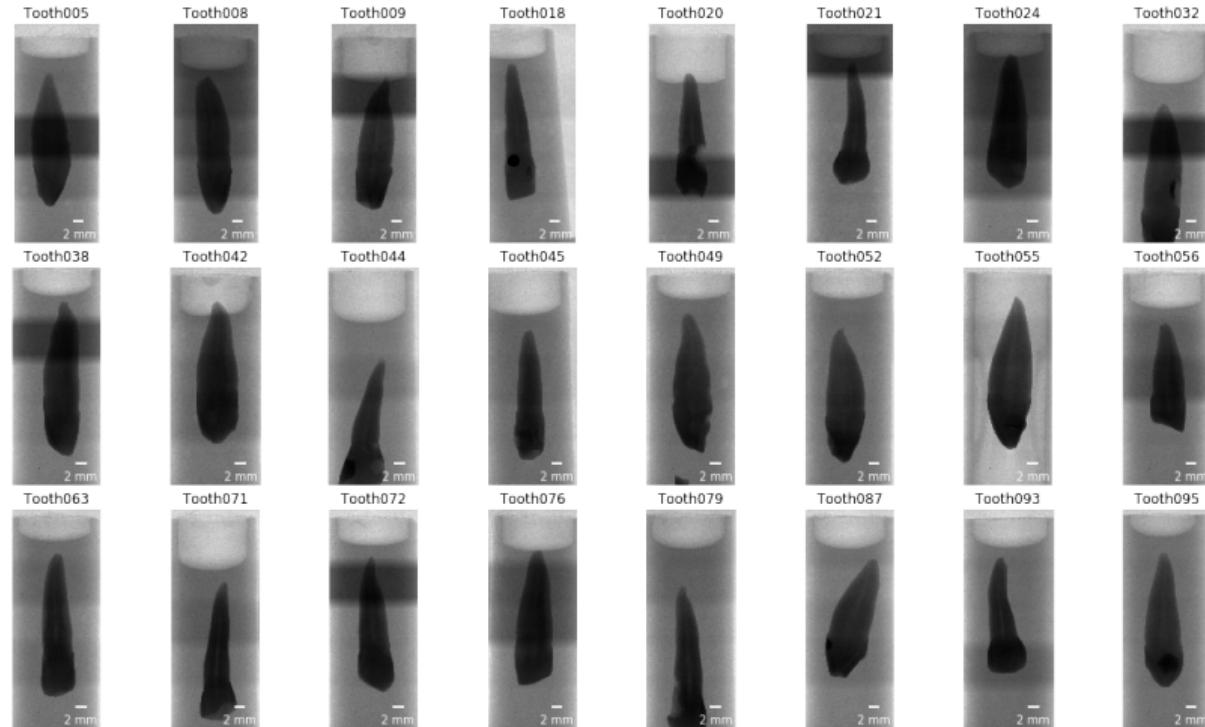
A big tooth cohort

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

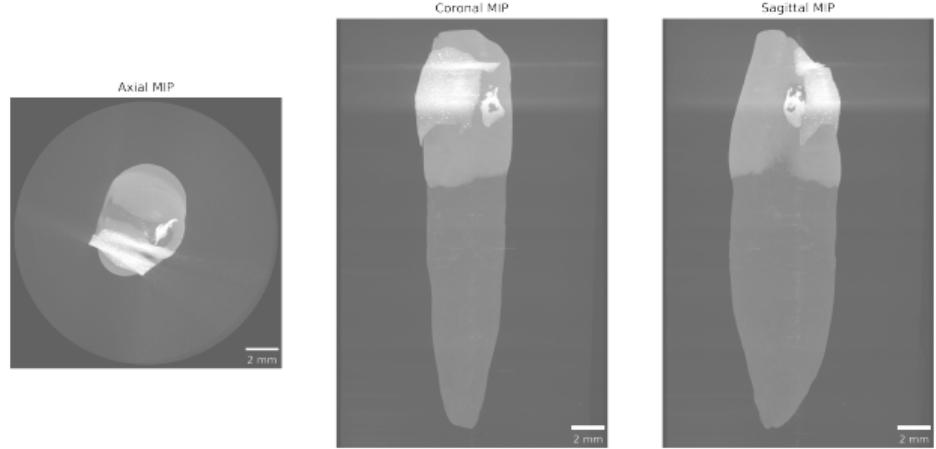
μ CT imaging



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Dataset cropping

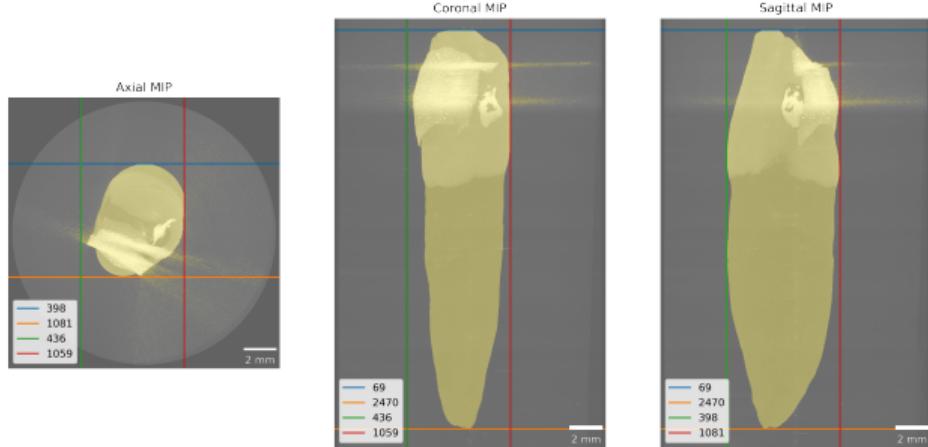
- Full datasets: 326 GB
- Cropped datasets: 115 GB



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Dataset cropping

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



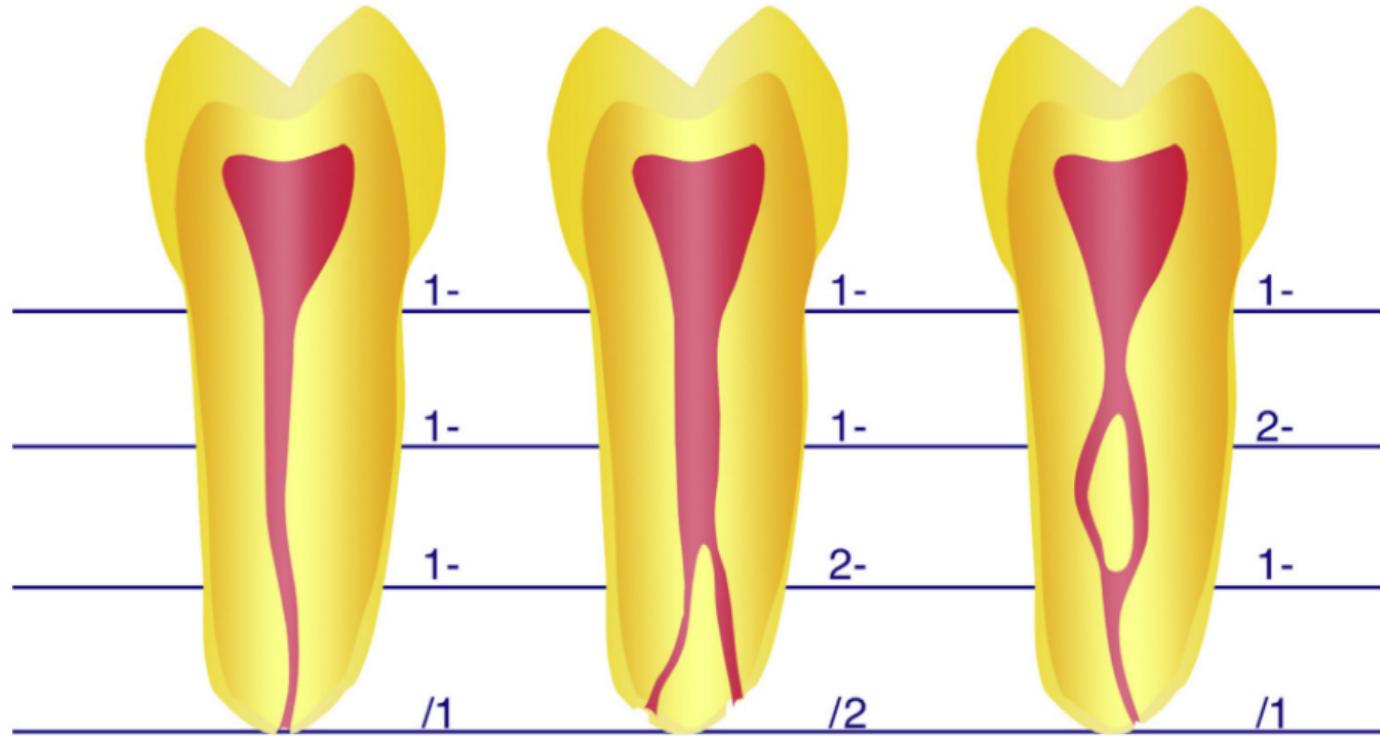
u^b

Tooth morphology



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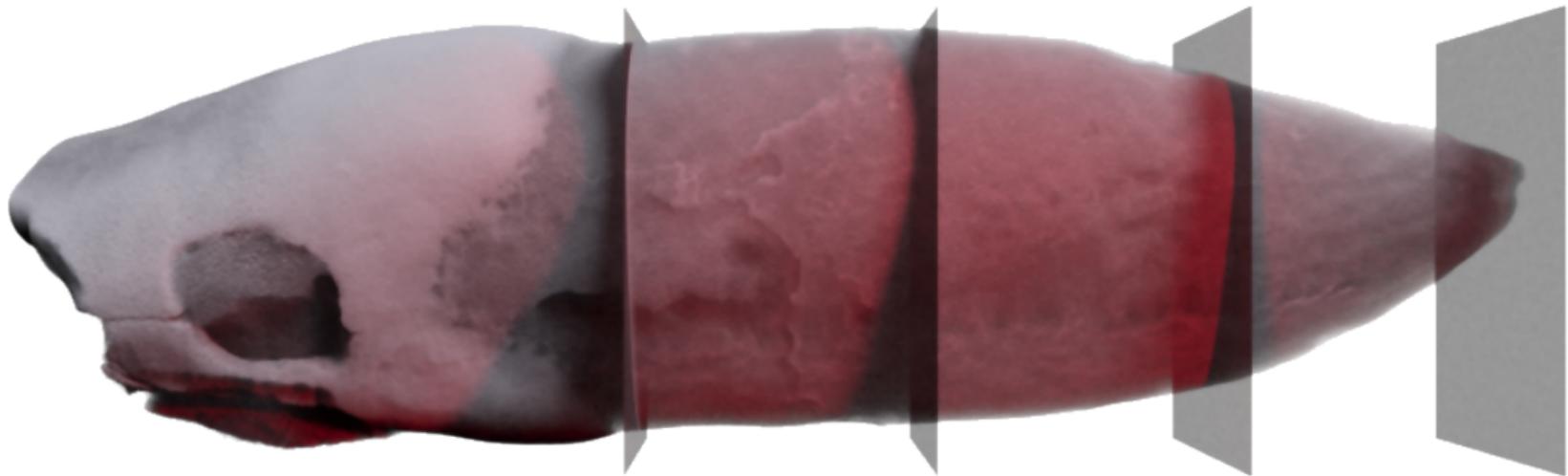
Tooth morphology



From [25], Fig. 2

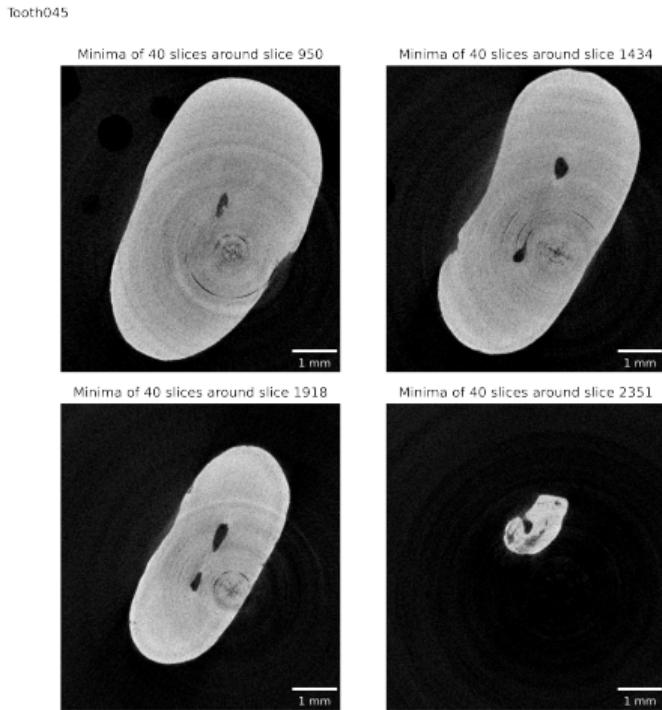
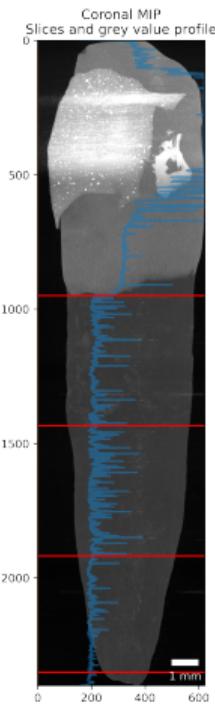
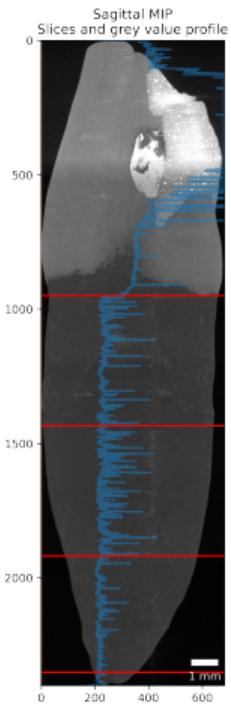
u^b

Tooth morphology



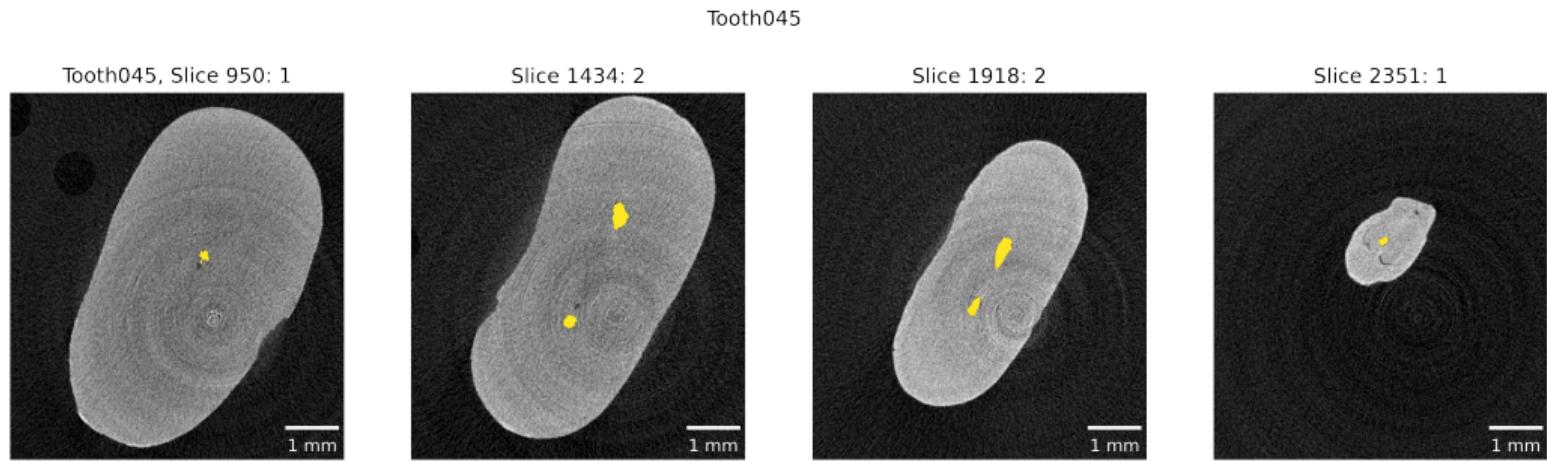
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Detection of enamel-dentin border



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Detection of enamel-dentin border

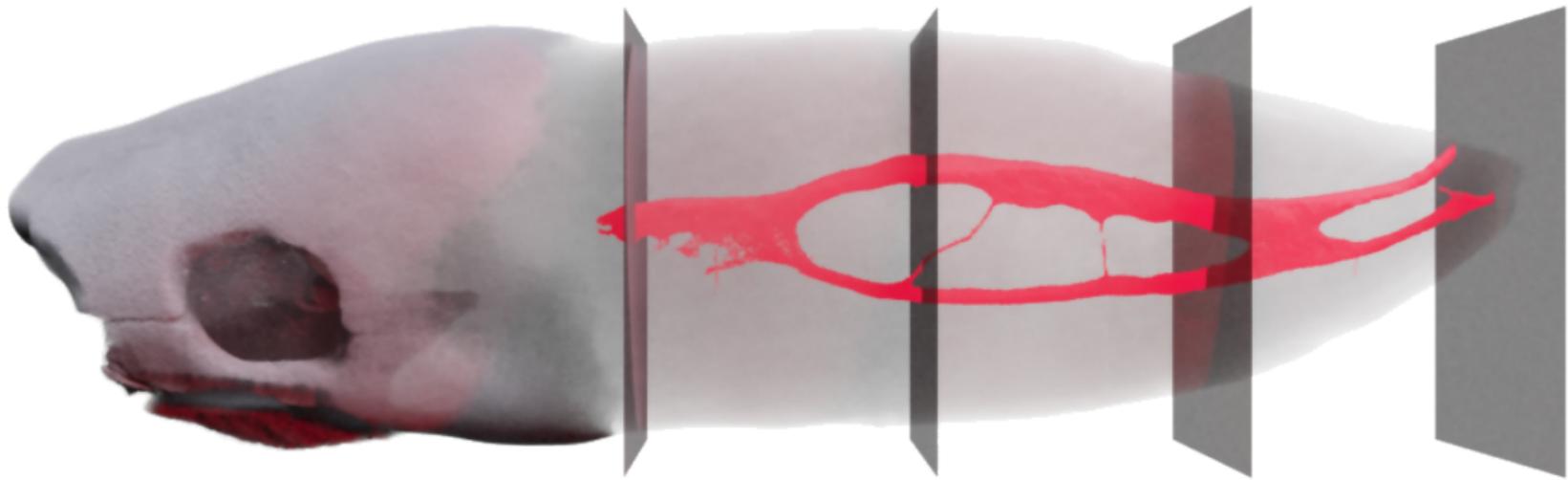


Classification of root canal configurations

| 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 |
| | | 1-2-1/1 | 1 |
| | Lingual | 1-1-1/1 | 2 |
| | | 1-1-1/2 | 1 |

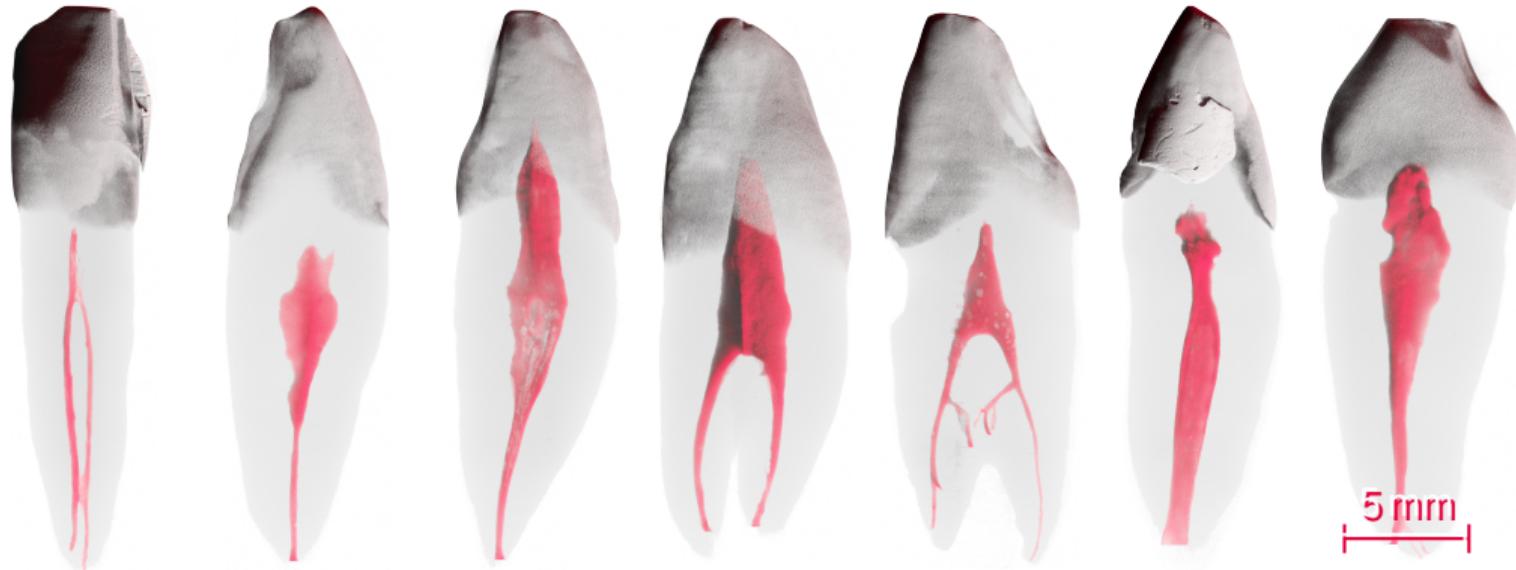
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Extraction of root canal space



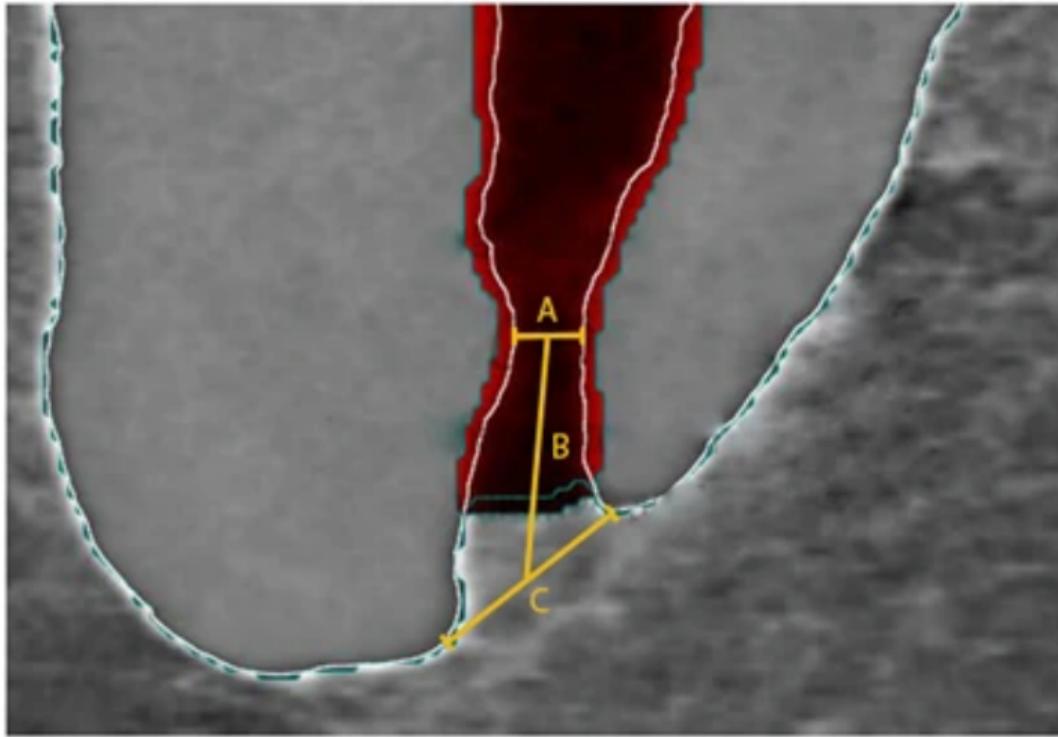
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Results of root canal space extraction



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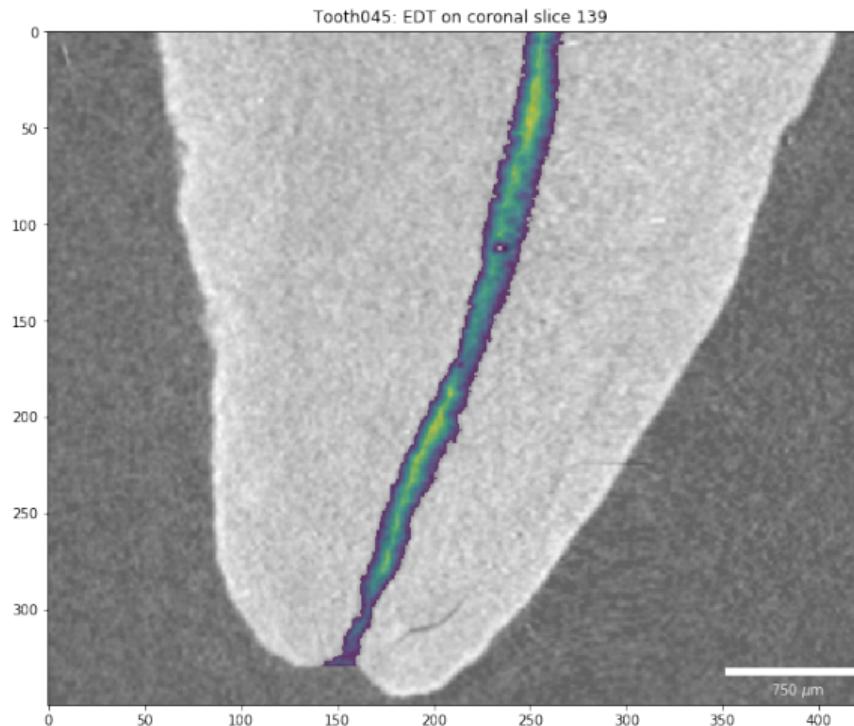
Physiological foramen geometry



From [27], Fig. 1

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Physiological foramen geometry

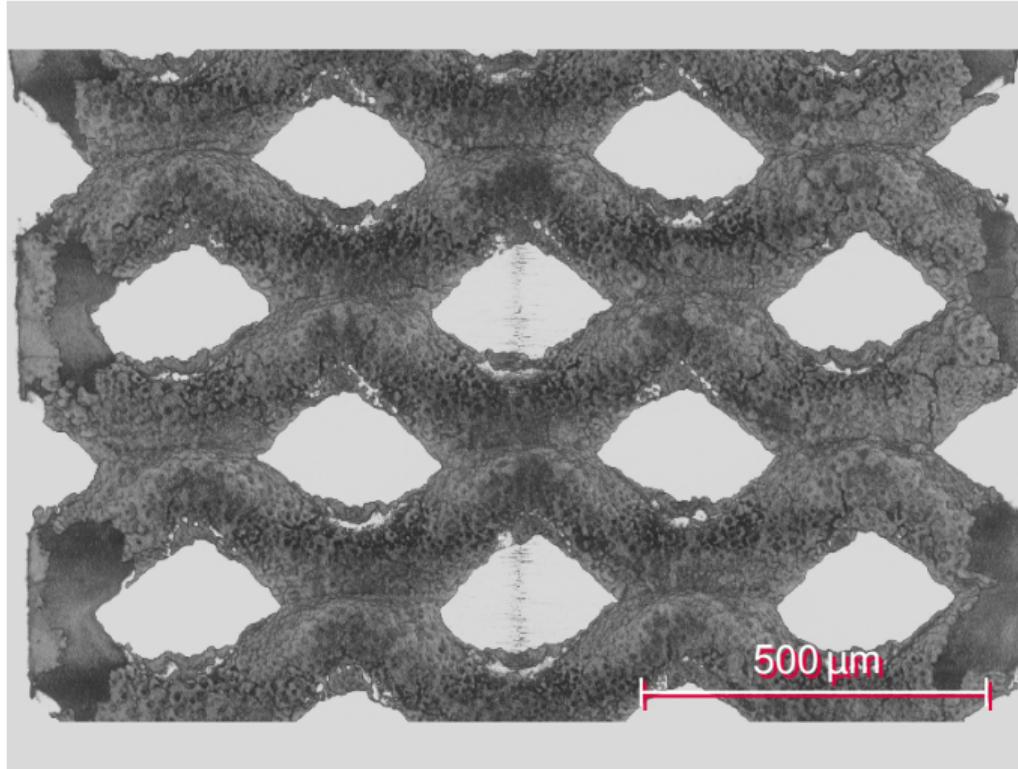


Conclusion ZMK

- 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



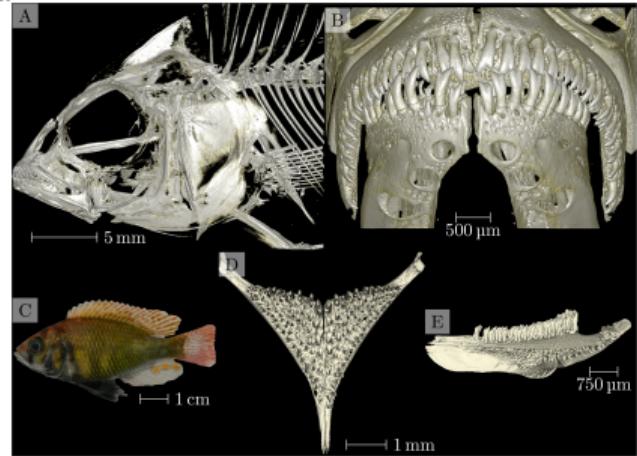
Etienne Berner NanoElectroCatalysis Group

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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

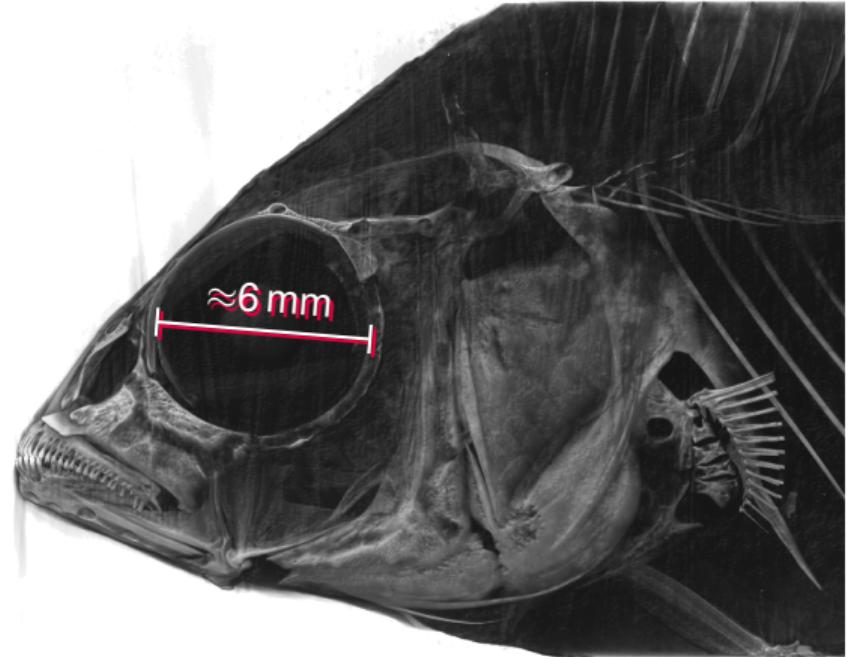


DOI:gsst8t, Fig. 1

^a11.

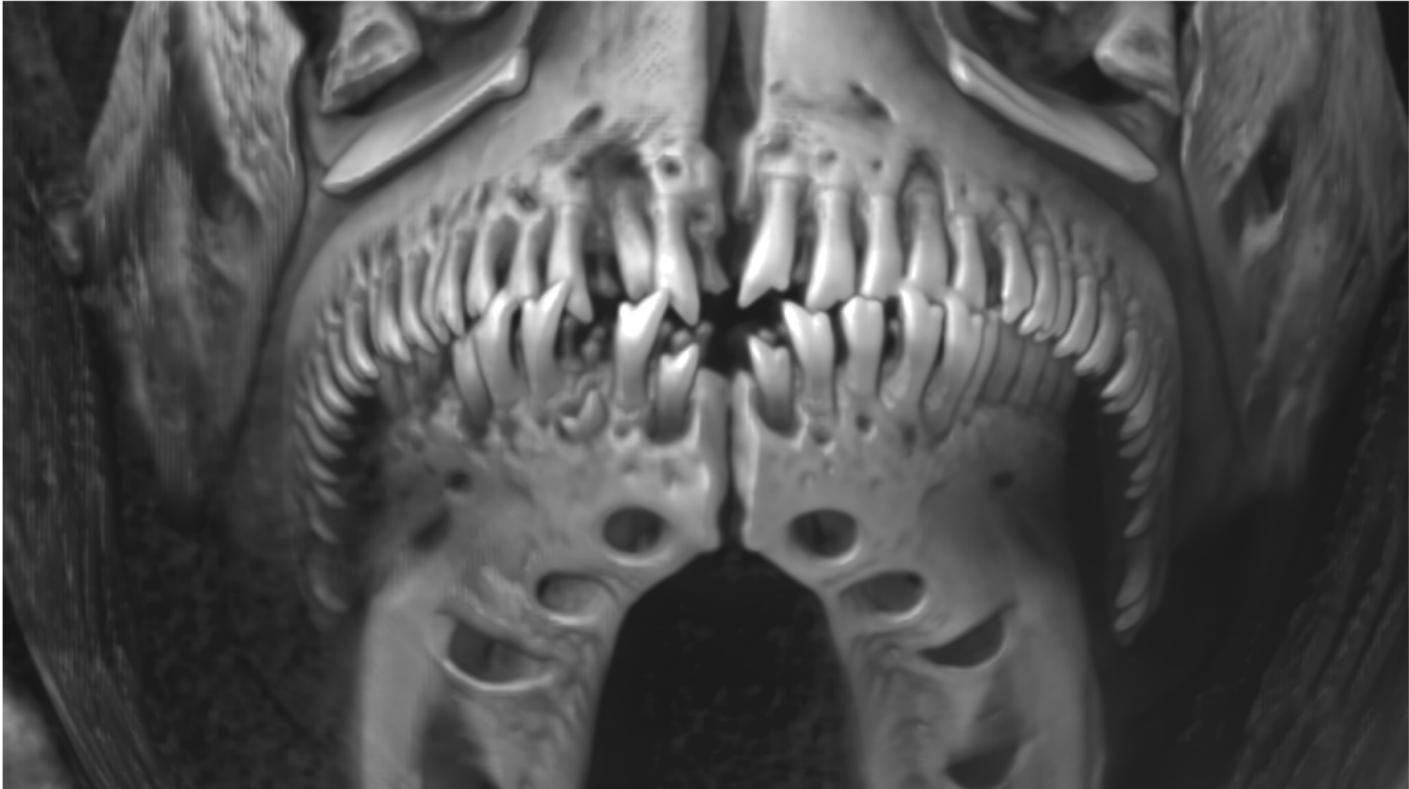
u^b

Visualization of cichlid head



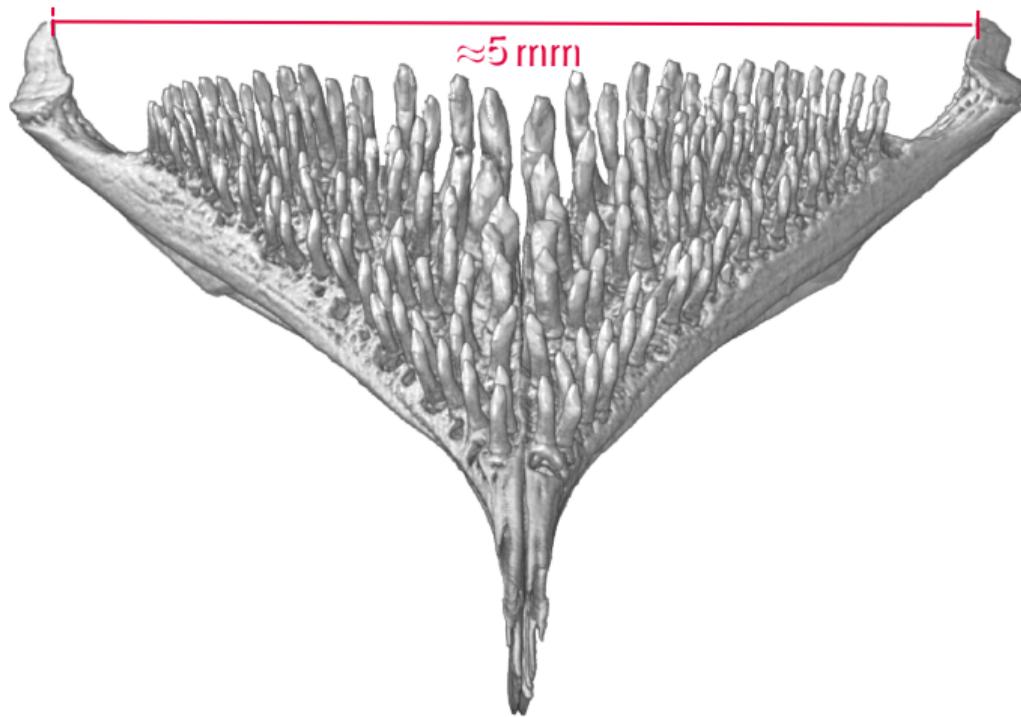
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Visualization of cichlid head



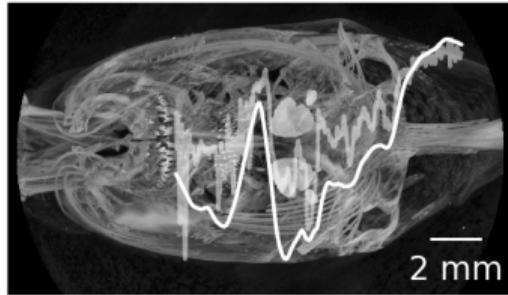
u^b

Visualization of segmented pharyngeal jaw



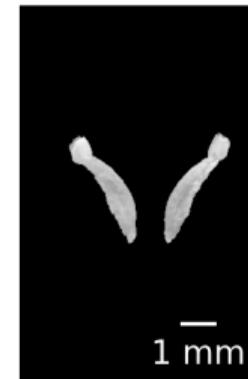
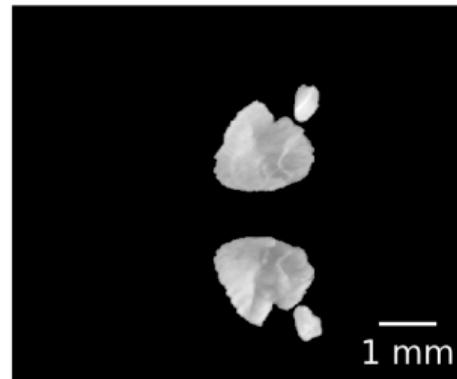
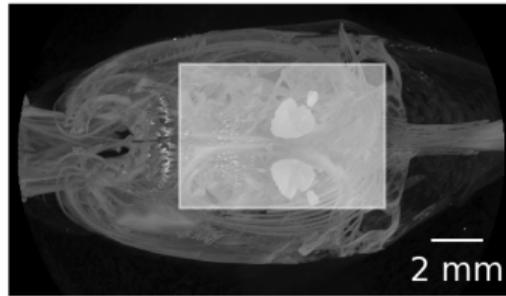
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Data wrangling by example: Cichlids



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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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