### Three-dimensional X-ray Vision by Sparse Tomography

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### This my industrial-academic background



- 2009: Professor, University of Helsinki, Finland
- 2006: Professor, Tampere University of Technology, Finland



2005: R&D scientist at Palodex Group



2004: R&D scientist at GE Healthcare



2002: Postdoc at Gunma University, Japan



2000: R&D scientist at Instrumentarium Imaging



1999: PhD, Helsinki University of Technology, Finland

### Outline

#### Traditional X-ray tomography

**Tomographic imaging with sparse data** Discrete model tor tomography Ill-posedness of the inverse problem Regularization using frame-based sparsity

Hospital case study: diagnosing osteoarthritis

Limited angle tomography

Industrial case study: low-dose 3D dental X-ray imaging

Industrial case study: welding inspection

Conclusion

X-ray intensity attenuates inside matter, here shown with a homogeneous block

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfXo2S1xXCQ

### Here is a more complicated example: a 2D slice through a human head



Andrew Ciscel, Wikimedia commons Now the attenuation process is more complicated because there are different tissues

https://youtu.be/lvUAOeS1sv8

After calibration we are observing how much attenuating matter the X-ray encounters in total

https://youtu.be/RFArLtWEfsQ

This sweeping movement is the data collection mode of first-generation CT scanners

https://youtu.be/JHUz5oyeZb0

#### Modern CT scanners look like this



#### Modern scanners rotate at high speed

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CT-Rotation.ogv

# This is the inverse problem of tomography: we only know the data

https://youtu.be/pr8bXB0oAqI

This is an illustration of the standard reconstruction by filtered back-projection

https://youtu.be/tRD58IO1FKw

# Godfrey Hounsfield and Allan McLeod Cormack developed X-ray tomography





Hounsfield (top) and Cormack received Nobel prizes in 1979.



## Reconstruction of a function from its line integrals was first invented by Johann Radon in 1917



$$f(P) = -rac{1}{\pi} \int_0^\infty rac{d\overline{F_p}(q)}{q}$$

### Diagnosing stroke with X-ray tomography

#### Ischemic stroke



CT image from Jansen 2008

#### Hemorrhagic stroke



CT image from Nakano et al. 2001

# Tomography: case closed?

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# We collected X-ray projection data of a walnut from 1200 directions



Laboratory and data collection by Keijo Hämäläinen and Aki Kallonen, University of Helsinki. The data is openly available at http://fips.fi/dataset.php, thanks to Esa Niemi and Antti Kujanpää

# Reconstructions of a 2D slice through the walnut using filtered back-projection (FBP)



FBP with comprehensive data (1200 projections)



FBP with sparse data (20 projections)

# Sparse-data reconstruction of the walnut using non-negative total variation regularization



Filtered back-projection



Constrained TV regularization  $\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}^{n}_{+}}{\arg\min} \left\{ \|Af - m\|_{2}^{2} + \alpha \|\nabla f\|_{1} \right\}$ 

### **TV** tomography: $\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}^n}{\arg\min} \{ \|Af - m\|_2^2 + \alpha \|\nabla f\|_1 \}$

**1992** Rudin, Osher & Fatemi: denoise images by taking A = I

1998 Delaney & Bresler

2001 Persson, Bone & Elmqvist

2003 Kolehmainen, S, Järvenpää, Kaipio, Koistinen, Lassas, Pirttilä

& Somersalo (first TV work with measured X-ray data)

- 2006 Kolehmainen, Vanne, S, Järvenpää, Kaipio, Lassas & Kalke
- 2006 Sidky, Kao & Pan
- 2008 Liao & Sapiro

2008 Sidky & Pan

2008 Herman & Davidi

2009 Tang, Nett & Chen

- 2009 Duan, Zhang, Xing, Chen & Cheng
- 2010 Bian, Han, Sidky, Cao, Lu, Zhou & Pan
- 2011 Jensen, Jørgensen, Hansen & Jensen
- 2011 Tian, Jia, Yuan, Pan & Jiang
- 2012-present: dozens of articles indicated by Google Scholar











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A projection image is produced by parallel X-rays and several detector pixels (here three pixels)



For tomographic imaging it is essential to record projection images from different directions



6 7 11

## The length of X-rays traveling inside each pixel is important, thus here the square roots



The direct problem of tomography is to find the projection images from known tissue



6 7 11

The inverse problem of tomography is to reconstruct the interior from X-ray data



6 7 11

# The limited-angle problem is harder than the full-angle problem



9 unknowns, 6 equations 9 unknowns, 11 equations

?

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## In limited-angle imaging, different objects may produce the same data



Mathematically this means that the matrix *A* has nontrivial kernel.

5	6	2
1	5	2
4	0	-1

9	1	3
1	0	7
3	0	0

### We write the reconstruction problem in matrix form



Measurement model:  $m = Af + \varepsilon$
This is the matrix equation related to the above measurement



tg.



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### Let us construct a more complicated example



# Discretize the unknown by dividing it into pixels





#### Target (unknown)



 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown



 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown







 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown







 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown

## What can we expect to see from sparse data?



#### **THEOREM 4.2.** A finite set of radiographs tells nothing at all.

For some reason this theorem provokes merriment. It is so plainly one of those mathematical ideals untainted by any possibility of practical application.

[Cormack 1963], [Smith, Solmon & Wagner 1977, Theorem 4.2]

# Naive reconstruction using the minimum norm solution from the normal equation $(A^T A)f^{\dagger} = A^T m$



Original phantom, values between zero (black) and 0.44



Reconstruction: minimum pixel value  $-1.5\cdot10^{14}$ , maximum value  $1.3\cdot10^{14}$ 

# Naive reconstruction using the minimum norm solution with non-negativity constraint



Original phantom, values between zero (black) and 0.44



Reconstruction: minimum value 0, maximum value 2.3

# Illustration of the ill-posedness of sparse tomography







#### Difference 0.00992







# Illustration of the ill-posedness of sparse tomography







#### Difference 0.00983







## Singular value decomposition $A = U^T D V$



 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown

Singular values of *A* (diagonal of *D*)

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# Daubechies, Defrise and de Mol introduced a revolutionary inversion method in 2004

Consider the sparsity-promoting variational regularization

$$\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}^n}{\arg\min} \left\{ \|Af - m\|_2^2 + \mu \|Wf\|_1 \right\},\$$

where W is an orthonormal wavelet transform. The minimizer can be computed using the iteration

$$f_{j+1} = W^{-1}S_{\mu}W\left(f_j + A^T(m - Af_j)\right),$$

where the soft-thresholding operation

$$S_{\mu}(x) = \begin{cases} x + \frac{\mu}{2} & \text{if } x \le -\frac{\mu}{2}, \\ 0 & \text{if } |x| < \frac{\mu}{2}, \\ x - \frac{\mu}{2} & \text{if } x \ge \frac{\mu}{2}, \end{cases}$$

is applied to each wavelet coefficient separately.

# We modify the method so that non-negativity constraint has rigorous mathematical foundation

The minimizer

$$\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}^n_+}{\operatorname{argmin}} \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \|Af - m\|_2^2 + \mu \|Wf\|_1 \right\}$$

can be computed using this iteration:

$$y^{(i+1)} = \mathbb{P}_{C}\left(f^{(i)} - \tau \nabla g(f^{(i)}) - \lambda W^{T} v^{(i)}\right)$$
$$v^{(i+1)} = \left(I - S_{\mu}\right) \left(Wy^{(i+1)} + v^{(i)}\right)$$
$$f^{(i+1)} = \mathbb{P}_{C}\left(f^{(i)} - \tau \nabla g(f^{(i)}) - \lambda W^{T} v^{(i+1)}\right)$$

where  $\tau > 0$ ,  $\lambda > 0$  and  $g(f) = \frac{1}{2} ||Af - m||_2^2$ . Here  $\mathbb{P}_C$  denotes projection to the non-negative "quadrant."

[Loris & Verhoeven 2011], [Chen, Huang & Zhang 2016]

## Illustration of the Haar wavelet transform



# Sparse-data reconstruction of the walnut using Haar wavelet sparsity



Filtered back-projection



Constrained Besov regularization  $\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}_{+}^{n}}{\arg\min} \left\{ \|Af - m\|_{2}^{2} + \alpha \|f\|_{B_{11}^{1}} \right\}$ 

# How to choose the thresholding parameter $\mu$ ? Here it is too small.





How to choose the thresholding parameter  $\mu$ ? Here it is too large.



# Automatic parameter choice using controlled wavelet-domain sparsity (CWDS)

Assume given the *a priori* sparsity level  $0 \le C_{pr} \le 1$ . Denote by  $C_i$  the sparsity of the *j*th iterate  $f_i \in \mathbb{R}^n$ :

 $\mathcal{C}_j = (\text{number of nonzero elements in } Wf_j \in \mathbb{R}^n)/n.$ 

The CWDS iteration is based on proportional-integral-derivative (PID) controllers:

$$\mu^{(i+1)} = \mu^{(i)} + \beta (\mathcal{C}^{(i)} - \mathcal{C}_{pr}).$$

[Purisha, Rimpeläinen, Bubba & S 2018]

### CWDS choice of the thresholding parameter $\mu$





### CWDS choice of the thresholding parameter $\mu$





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Limited angle tomography

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Industrial case study: welding inspection

Conclusion

## This is a joint work with

Tatiana Bubba, University of Helsinki, Finland

Sakari Karhula, Oulu University Hospital, Finland

Juuso Ketola, Oulu University Hospital, Finland

Maximilian März, TU Berlin

Miika T. Nieminen, University of Oulu, Finland

Zenith Purisha, University of Helsinki, Finland

Juho Rimpeläinen, University of Helsinki, Finland

Simo Saarakkala, Oulu University Hospital, Finland

### Normal Knee



## Osteoarthritis



Image by Bruce Blaus, CC BY-SA 4.0 https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=44968165

# We consider small specimens of human bone imaged using microtomography





Slice of 3D reconstruction by FDK based on **596 angles** 

Three-dimensional structure

# We pick out a smaller region of interest for osteoarthritis analysis



Slice of 3D reconstruction by FDK based on **596 angles** 

Slice of 3D region of interest after binary thresholding

We use two numerical quality measures applied to segmented three-dimensional bone structure

Trabecular thickness

Trabecular separation



[Bouxsein, Boyd, Christiansen, Guldberg, Jepsen, & Müller 2010]

# The goal is to reduce measurement time by recording fewer radiographs



3D FDK reconstruction based on 40 angles

3D shearlet-sparsity reconstruction based on 40 angles

# Bone quality parameters from ground truth



[Purisha, Karhula, Rimpeläinen, Nieminen, Saarakkala & S, submitted]
### **Results from FDK reconstructions**



[Purisha, Karhula, Rimpeläinen, Nieminen, Saarakkala & S, submitted]

### Results from 3D shearlet-sparsity reconstructions





[Purisha, Karhula, Rimpeläinen, Nieminen, Saarakkala & S, submitted]

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## SVD reveals the ill-posedness of the limited-angle problem, see Davison 1983 and Louis 1986



 $735 \times 1024$  system matrix *A*, only nonzero elements shown

Singular values of *A* (diagonal of *D*)

### Limited data gives only part of the wavefront set



Stable part of wavefront setUnstable part of wavefront setSee [Greenleaf & Uhlmann 1989], [Quinto 1993], and [Frikel & Quinto 2013]

### Constrained total variation (TV) regularization $\underset{f \in \mathbb{R}^{n}_{+}}{\operatorname{arg\,min}} \left\{ \|Af - m\|_{2}^{2} + \alpha \|\nabla f\|_{1} \right\}$



Stable part of wavefront set



TV regularized reconstruction

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Application: dental implant planning, where a missing tooth is replaced with an implant



### This is the classical imaging procedure of the panoramic X-ray device

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFTXegPxC4U

## The resulting image shows a sharp layer positioned inside the dental arc



# Nowadays, a digital panoramic imaging device is standard equipment at dental clinics





A panoramic dental image offers a general overview showing all teeth and other structures simultaneously.

Panoramic images are not suitable for dental implant planning because of unavoidable geometric distortion. We reprogram the panoramic X-ray device so that it collects projection data by scanning

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=motthjiP8ZQ

### We reprogram the panoramic X-ray device so that it collects projection data by scanning

Number of projection images: 11

Angle of view: 40 degrees

Image size: 1000  $\times 1000$  pixels

The unknown vector f has **7 000 000** elements.





# Standard Cone Beam CT reconstruction delivers 100 times more radiation than VT imaging



Kolehmainen, Vanne, S, Järvenpää, Kaipio, Lassas & Kalke Kolehmainen, Lassas & S Cederlund, Kalke & Welander Hyvönen, Kalke, Lassas, Setälä & S U.S. patent 7269241, thousands of VT units in use



### The VT device was developed in 2001-2012 by

Nuutti Hyvönen Seppo Järvenpää Jari Kaipio Martti Kalke Petri Koistinen Ville Kolehmainen Matti Lassas Jan Moberg Kati Niinimäki Juha Pirttilä Maaria Rantala Fero Saksman Henri Setälä Erkki Somersalo Antti Vanne Simopekka Vänskä Richard I Webber









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#### This part is a joint work with

Alexander Meaney, University of Helsinki, Finland

Esa Niemi, Eniram Ltd., Finland

Aaro Salosensaari, University of Helsinki, Finland

Industrial partners:

Kemppi Ltd. (welding tool manufacturer)

Ajat Ltd. (X-ray detector manufacturer)

### Two steel pipes partly welded together



### This is the limited-angle measurement geometry for a narrow CaTd direct conversion detector

#### Reconstruction algorithm: variant of TVR-DART

With a regularization parameter  $\alpha > 0$ , we minimize

$$\underset{x \in \mathbb{R}^{N}}{\arg\min} \{ \|AS(x) - m\|_{2}^{2} + \alpha TV_{\beta}(x) \},\$$

where  $S : \mathbb{R}^N \to \mathbb{R}^N$  is a soft segmentation function given by

$$S(x) = \sum_{g=2}^{G} (\rho_g - \rho_{g-1}) u(x - \tau_g, k_g),$$

with  $u(x, k_g) = (1 + e^{-2k_g x})^{-1}$ , and  $k_g = K/(\rho_g - \rho_{g-1})$ . Here G = 2 is the number of materials and 3 < K < 6 is called a transition constant. The parameters  $\rho_g$  are the pre-known attenuation values of the materials and  $\tau_g$  are the threshold levels between the different attenuations with  $\tau_1 = 0$ . Above  $TV_\beta$  is

$$TV_{\beta} = \sum_{i,j} \sqrt{(x_{i+1} - x_i)^2 + (x_{i+n} - x_i)^2 + \beta}, \quad \beta > 0.$$

#### Reconstruction algorithm: variant of TVR-DART

We mostly follow [Zhuge, Palenstijn & Batenburg 2016] in the implementation of TVR-DART.

However, we make one bigger modification. In this application it makes a huge difference to restrict the degrees of freedom in the domain occupied by the pipe walls.
### Traditional reconstruction by tomosynthesis

Simulated phantom:





Tomosynthesis:

## TVR-DART with domain restriction



Simulated phantom:

TVR-DART:



#### Tomosynthesis





### **TVR-DART**



















## Reconstructions from measured data



[Niemi, Salosensaari, Meaney & S, submitted manuscript]

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## Tomography appears in adaptive optics

- Modern telescope imaging suffers from turbulence in the atmosphere
  - $\Rightarrow$  blurring of images
- Adaptive optics corrects the perturbed incoming light in real-time
- Major challenge in wide-field AO: atmospheric tomography



European Extremely Large Telescope (2024)

Helin, Kindermann, Lehtonen & Ramlau 2018 Yudytskiy, Helin & Ramlau 2014

# Cosmic muon imaging revealed a secret chamber inside the Pyramid of Cheops





Electron transmission cryotomography reveals the swimming engine of *Treponema primitia* bacteria



[Murphy, Leadbetter & Jensen 2016]

# University of Helsinki microtomography lab



### Links to open computational resources

Open CT datasets:

• Finnish Inverse Problems Society (FIPS) dataset page

Matrix-based parallel-beam reconstruction algorithms: FIPS Computational Blog

- Truncated SVD
- Total Variation regularization

Matrix-free large-scale reconstruction algorithms:

- Matlab page of Mueller-S 2012 book
- <u>ASTRA toolbox</u>
- TVReg: Software for 3D Total Variation Regularization

# Thank you for your attention!



# All Matlab codes freely available at this site!

### Part I: Linear Inverse Problems

1 Introduction

2 Naïve reconstructions and inverse crimes

- 3 Ill-Posedness in Inverse Problems
- 4 Truncated singular value decomposition
- 5 Tikhonov regularization
- 6 Total variation regularization
- 7 Besov space regularization using wavelets
- 8 Discretization-invariance

9 Practical X-ray tomography with limited data 10 Projects

### Part II: Nonlinear Inverse Problems

- 11 Nonlinear inversion
- 12 Electrical impedance tomography
- 13 Simulation of noisy EIT data
- 14 Complex geometrical optics solutions
- 15 A regularized D-bar method for direct EIT
- 16 Other direct solution methods for EIT
- 17 Projects

Another great resource is Per Christian Hansen's 3D tomography toolbox TVreg



**TVreg**: Software for 3D Total Variation Regularization (for Matlab Version 7.5 or later), developed by Tobias Lindstrøm Jensen, Jakob Heide Jørgensen, Per Christian Hansen, and Søren Holdt Jensen.

Website: http://www2.imm.dtu.dk/ pcha/TVReg/

# These books are recommended for learning the mathematics of practical X-ray tomography

1983 Deans: The Radon Transform and Some of Its Applications
1986 Natterer: The mathematics of computerized tomography
1988 Kak & Slaney: Principles of computerized tomographic imaging
1996 Engl, Hanke & Neubauer: Regularization of inverse problems
1998 Hansen: Rank-deficient and discrete ill-posed problems
2001 Natterer & Wübbeling: Mathematical Methods in Image
Reconstruction

**2008 Buzug:** Computed Tomography: From Photon Statistics to Modern Cone-Beam CT

2008 Epstein: Introduction to the mathematics of medical imaging

2010 Hansen: Discrete inverse problems

**2012 Mueller & S**: Linear and Nonlinear Inverse Problems with Practical Applications

2014 Kuchment: The Radon Transform and Medical Imaging