

Publication

Imaging protein three-dimensional nanocrystals with cryo-EM

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

ID 4530972

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Year 2013

Title Imaging protein three-dimensional nanocrystals with cryo-EM

Journal Acta Crystallographica. Section D, Biological Crystallography

Volume 69

Number Pt 5

Pages / Article-Number 852-9

Mesh terms Science & TechnologyLife Sciences & BiomedicinePhysical SciencesBiochemical Research MethodsBiochemistry & Molecular BiologyBiophysicsCrystallographyBiochemistry & Molecular Biology-BiophysicsCrystallography

Flash-cooled three-dimensional crystals of the small protein lysozyme with a thickness of the order of 100 nm were imaged by 300 kV cryo-EM on a Falcon direct electron detector. The images were taken close to focus and to the eye appeared devoid of contrast. Fourier transforms of the images revealed the reciprocal lattice up to 3 angstrom resolution in favourable cases and up to 4 angstrom resolution for about half the crystals. The reciprocal-lattice spots showed structure, indicating that the ordering of the crystals was not uniform. Data processing revealed details at higher than 2 angstrom resolution and indicated the presence of multiple mosaic blocks within the crystal which could be separately processed. The prospects for full three-dimensional structure determination by electron imaging of protein three-dimensional nanocrystals are discussed.

Publisher Munksgaard

ISSN/ISBN 0907-4449

edoc-URL https://edoc.unibas.ch/75914/

Full Text on edoc No;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.1107/S0907444913002734

PubMed ID http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23633595

ISI-Number 000318240200020

Document type (ISI) Journal Article