

Zeitschrift: Helvetica Physica Acta
Band: 56 (1983)
Heft: 1-3

Artikel: Scanning tunneling microscopy
Autor: Binnig, G. / Rohrer, H.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-115392>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Scanning Tunneling Microscopy

G. Binnig and H. Rohrer
IBM Zurich Research Laboratory, 8803 Rüschlikon, Switzerland

Scanning Tunneling Microscopy is a very young method for studying surfaces of conductors in real space, including adsorbates. A review article recently appeared in this journal [1], so here we only give a short account of the main steps in the development of the technique, and briefly mention the most recent results.

In a first step towards the Scanning Tunneling Microscope (STM), the feasibility of performing vacuum tunneling was demonstrated [2] by measuring the exponential dependence of the tunnel current on gap width. This required control of the gap width within a fraction of an angström. In a next step, scanning at constant tunnel current provided the first real-space pictures of mono-steps on metal surfaces [3]. These experiments were all performed in moderate vacuum. For reaching the optimum resolution, and for operation under well-defined conditions, a new STM working in ultra-high vacuum was built up. In this configuration, surface mono-steps on Au(110) [3,4] and Si(111) [5], the 2×1 reconstruction on Au(110) [4], the 7×7 reconstruction on Si [6], the island growths of Au on Si(111) [5], the island growth of Si monoxide on Si(111) [7] and resonance tunneling [1] were observed. A computer-processed topographic picture of the most spectacular of all our measurements, the 7×7 reconstruction, is given in Fig. 1. We believe that the 12 maxima observed per unit cell are formed by 12 adatoms. Here, the signal-to-noise ratio for observing a single atom is remarkable.

New developments in the technique address, what we should like to call, differential surfaces. The tunnel current is a measure of the overlap of tip and sample wave functions. The main contribution comes from the electron densities roughly in the middle of the gap, with electron energies lying between the Fermi levels of the two electrodes. Thus, measuring with different gap widths, i.e. different tunnel currents, at constant tunnel voltage gives essentially a 3-D picture of the electron densities of those electrons selected by the energy window, which is in turn determined by the applied voltage. That

means, e.g., that a dangling bond with well-defined energy on a Si surface is "ignored" by the tip for a certain applied voltage, and becomes "visible" for a higher voltage. In this way, a set of "different surfaces" related to different voltages contributes to a better understanding of the surface structure.

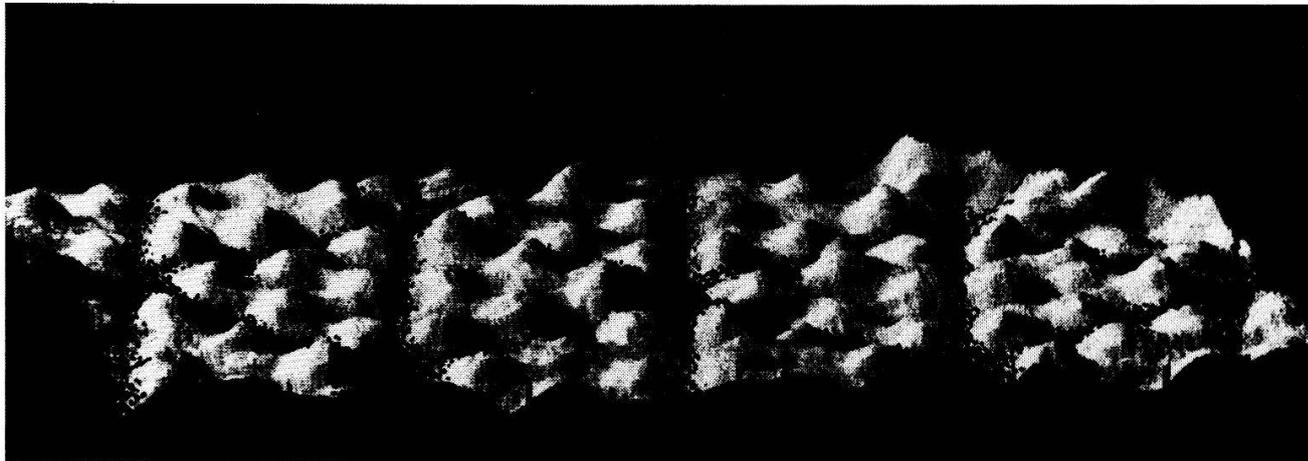


Figure 1

Image-processed measurement of the 7×7 reconstruction in Si(111). The edges of the unit cells are visualized by dotted stripes. Image processing: Hartwig Thomas.

Now, in our latest version, the completely new STM has been combined with Auger and low-energy electron diffraction (Leed) surface tools. Just for testing this combination, we have investigated a Au(100) surface. After having detected a 1×5 reconstruction in the Leed pattern, this structure was resolved by the STM in the first run. This speaks for the simplicity of the instrument.

REFERENCES

- [1] G. BINNIG and H. ROHRER, *Helv. Phys. Acta* (1983) in press.
- [2] G. BINNIG, H. ROHRER, Ch. GERBER and E. WEIBEL, *Physica 109 and 110B* (1982) 2075; *Appl. Phys. Lett.* 40 (1982) 178.
- [3] G. BINNIG, H. ROHRER, Ch. GERBER and E. WEIBEL, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 49 (1982) 57. New results on Au(110) will appear shortly.
- [4] G. BINNIG, H. ROHRER, Ch. GERBER and E. WEIBEL, submitted for publication.
- [5] G. BINNIG and H. ROHRER, *Surface Sci.* (1983) in press.
- [6] G. BINNIG, H. ROHRER, Ch. GERBER and E. WEIBEL, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* 50 (1983) 120.
- [7] G. BINNIG and H. ROHRER, not yet published.