



# UE Metabolomics



## Lecture: GC-MS in Metabolomics

Lena Fragner

*Molecular Systems Biology,  
University of Vienna*





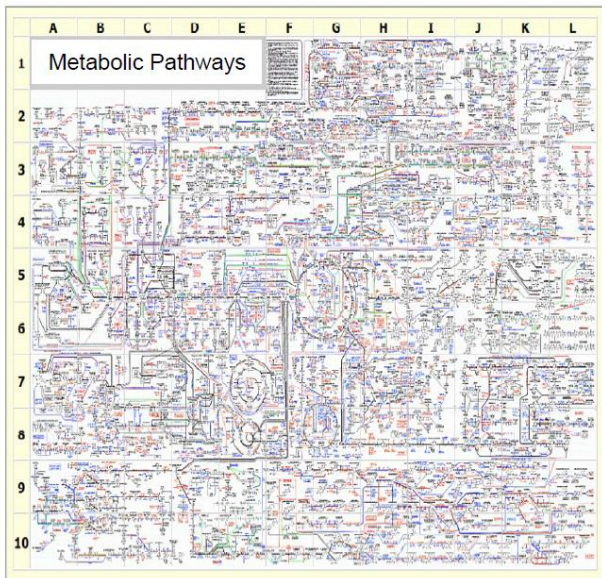
# metabolomics





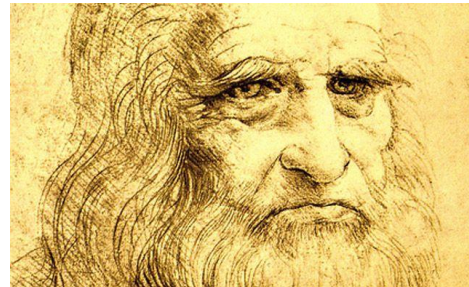
# highly complex biological systems

**physico-chemical  
diversity of metabolites**



> 200.000 - 1 million  
putative structures  
occurring in  
plant kingdom

**variable biological  
matrix**



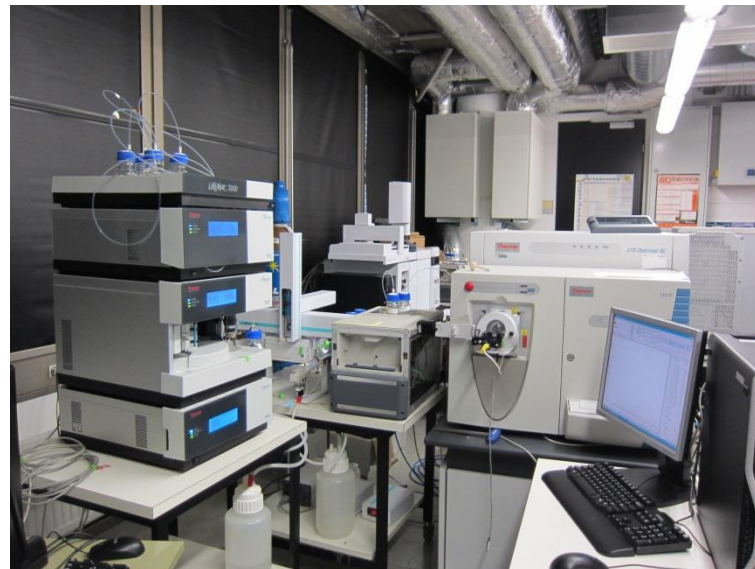
**high dynamic  
range of analytes**



GC-MS



LC-MS



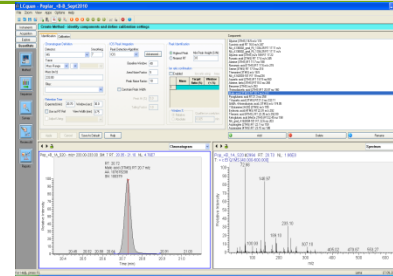
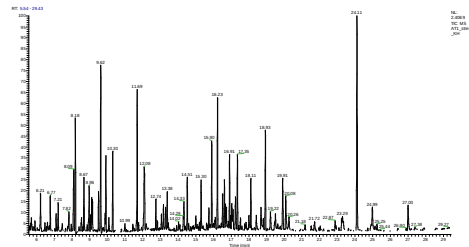
IC-(MS)



# sample pathway

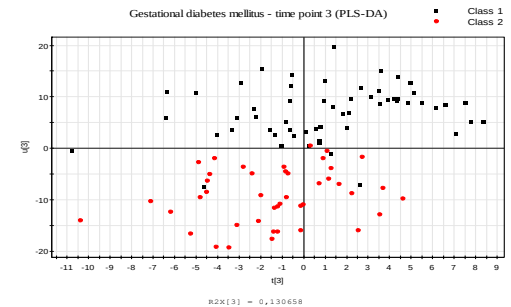
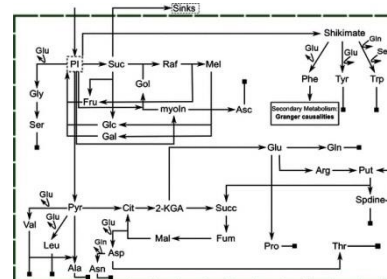
from biological material to interpretable data

# sample pathway



sample preparation & extraction

Experimental design



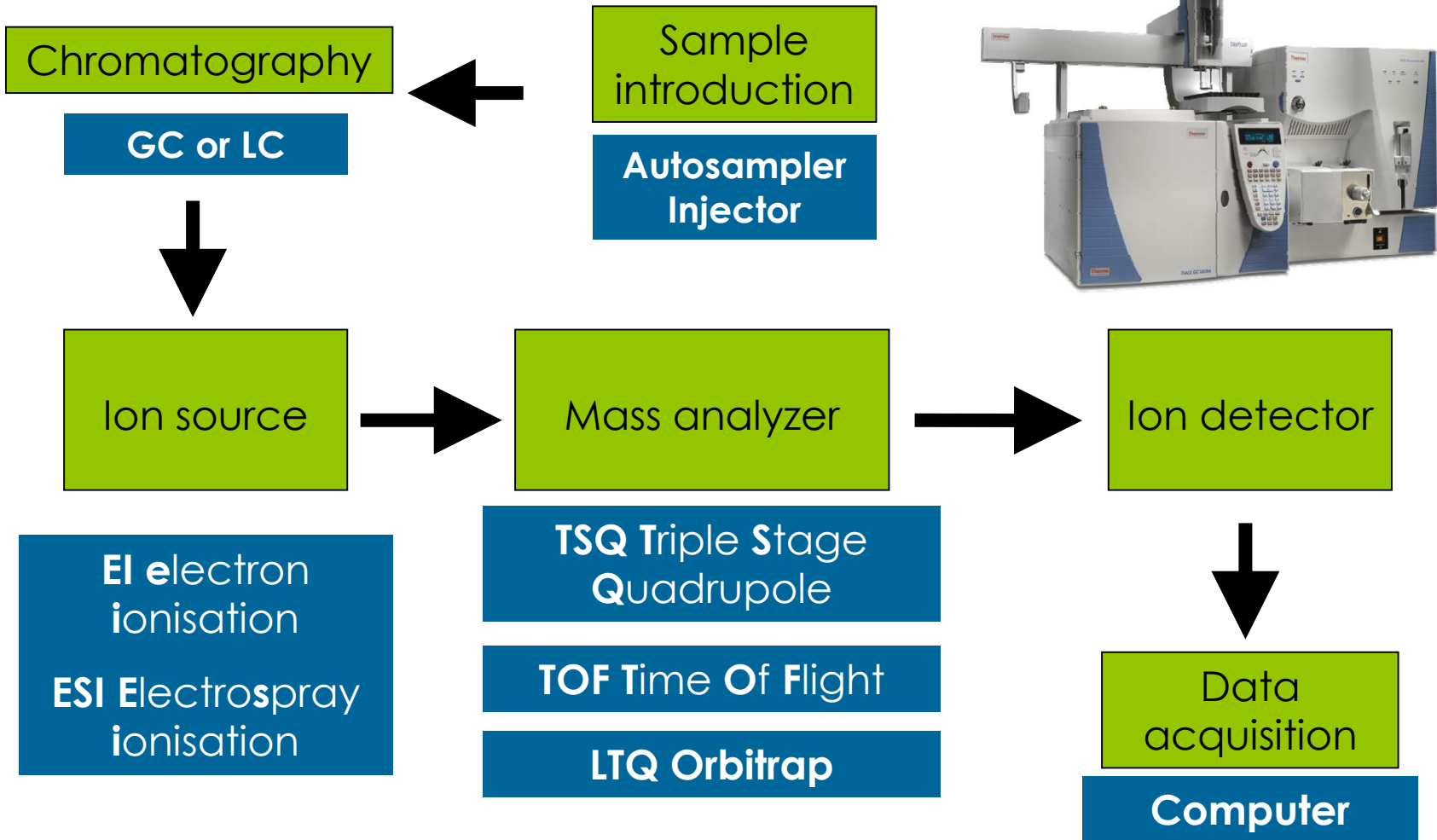
MS analysis

derivatisation

data processing & interpretation



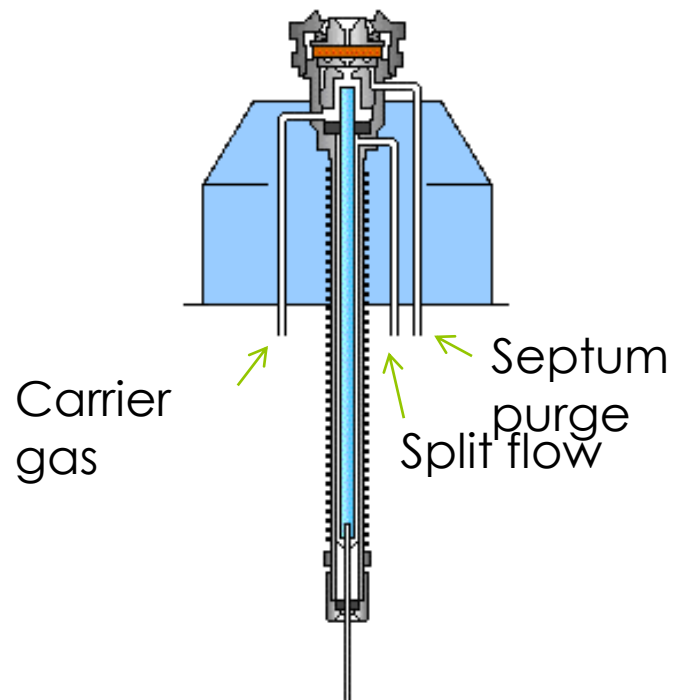
# Components of a mass spectrometer





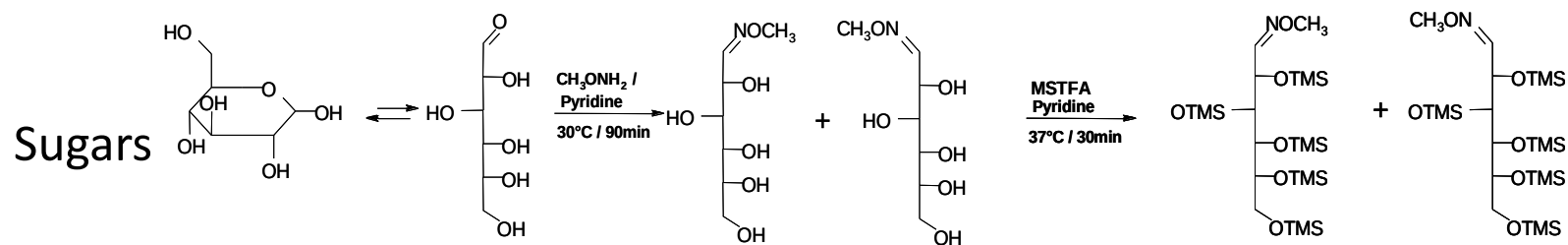
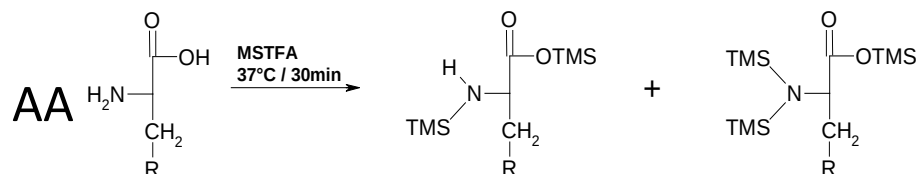


# Injector



- Liquid sample introduction
- Vaporisation in liner
- S/SL
- PTV

# Chemical derivatisation



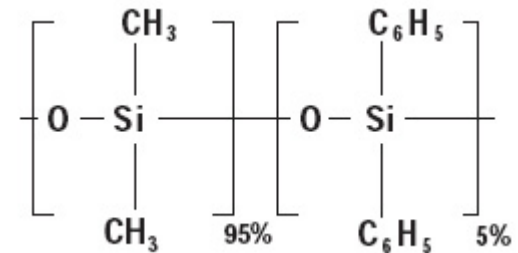
# Chromatography

- **LC** → **H**igh-**P**erformance **L**iquid **C**hromatography (HPLC)  
mobile phase: liquid (solvents), stationary phase: hydrophobic (RP) or hydrophilic (NP) columns
- **GC** → **G**as **C**hromatography (Helium mobile phase, hydrophobic-coated capillary column)
- **CE** → **C**apillary **e**lectrophoresis (ions migrate in an electrical field)
- **IC** → **I**on **C**hromatography  
(ions are separated according to the affinity to the ion exchanger)



# Chromatography - GC

- Optional uncoated precolumn
- Analytical column  
HP-5ms (siloxanes substituted with 5% phenyl and 95% methyl groups)
  - Separation according to boiling point (adsorption and desorption)
  - And interaction with active groups of column
    - Apolar substances: Van-der-Waals-forces
    - Polar: hydrogen bonds
- Transferline  
→ connection to MS



# Chromatography - LC

## HPLC

### Normal phase column

---

- stationary phase: high polar rigid silica, or silica-based compositions
- mobile phases: relatively nonpolar solvent, hexane, methylene chloride, or mixtures of these
- more polar solvent has higher eluent strength
- the least polar component is eluted first

## HPLC

### Reverse phase column

---

- stationary phases: nonpolar hydrocarbons, waxy liquids, or bonded hydrocarbons (such as C18, C8, etc.)
- mobile phase: polar solvents or mixtures such as methanol-water or acetonitrile-water
- the most polar component is eluted first
- less polar solvent has higher eluent strength
- less sensitive to polar impurities

▽ Avoid to measure a sample that pH value is greater than 7.5 in a reversed –phase column, because of hydrolysis of the siloxane.

# Ion Source

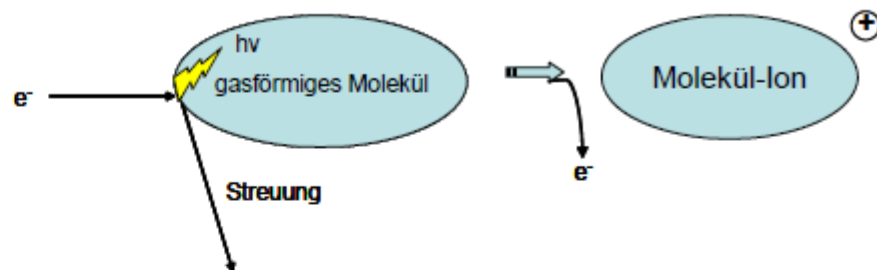
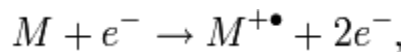
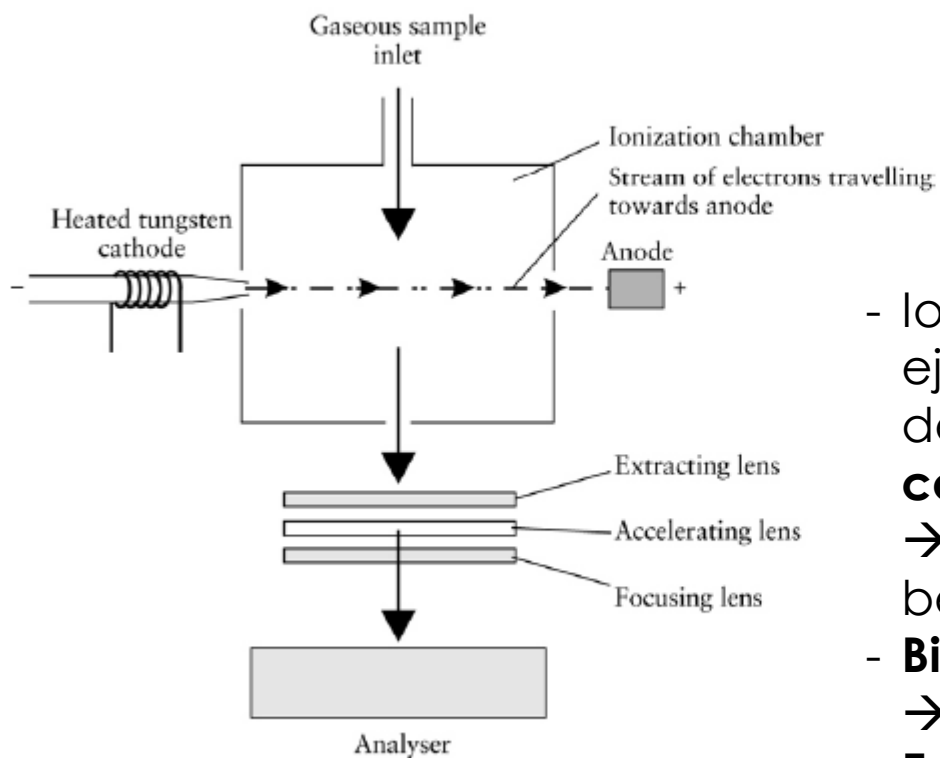
Ionisation



# Ionisation

- Ionisation essential („hard“ and „soft“)
- EI = electron ionisation (electron impact)
- CI = chemical ionization
- API (atmospheric pressure ionization): ESI, APCI
- MALDI = Matrix-assisted Laser Desorption Ionisation

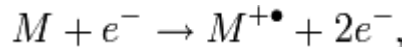
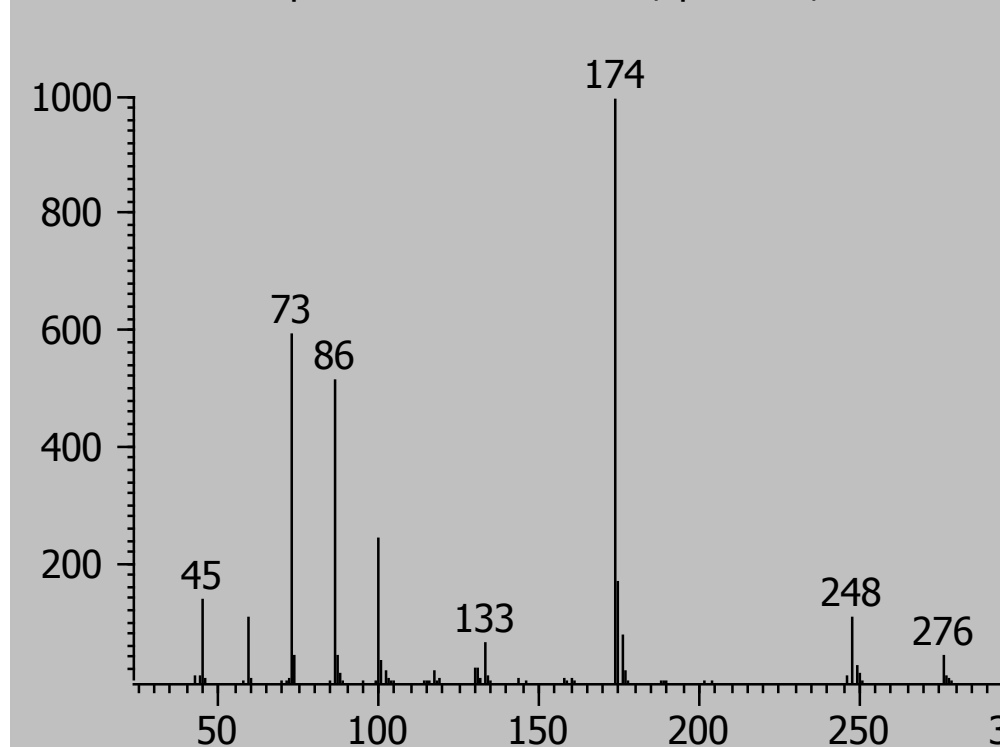
# EI - Electron Impact



- Ionisation is caused by electron ejection from analyte or by analyte decomposition, **not by direct collision**  
→ energy transfer from electron beam to analyte
- **Binding energy** of organic molecules  
→ 2-8eV/mol
- **Excitation energy of 70eV** gets converted into Oscillation energy  
→ leading to fragmentation

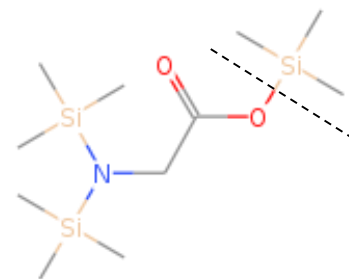
# El spectrum

Peak True - sample "Ara\_50\_1D\_SL:1", peak 84, at 12.556:

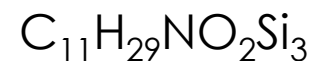


Single charged fragment ions

Glycine (3TMS)

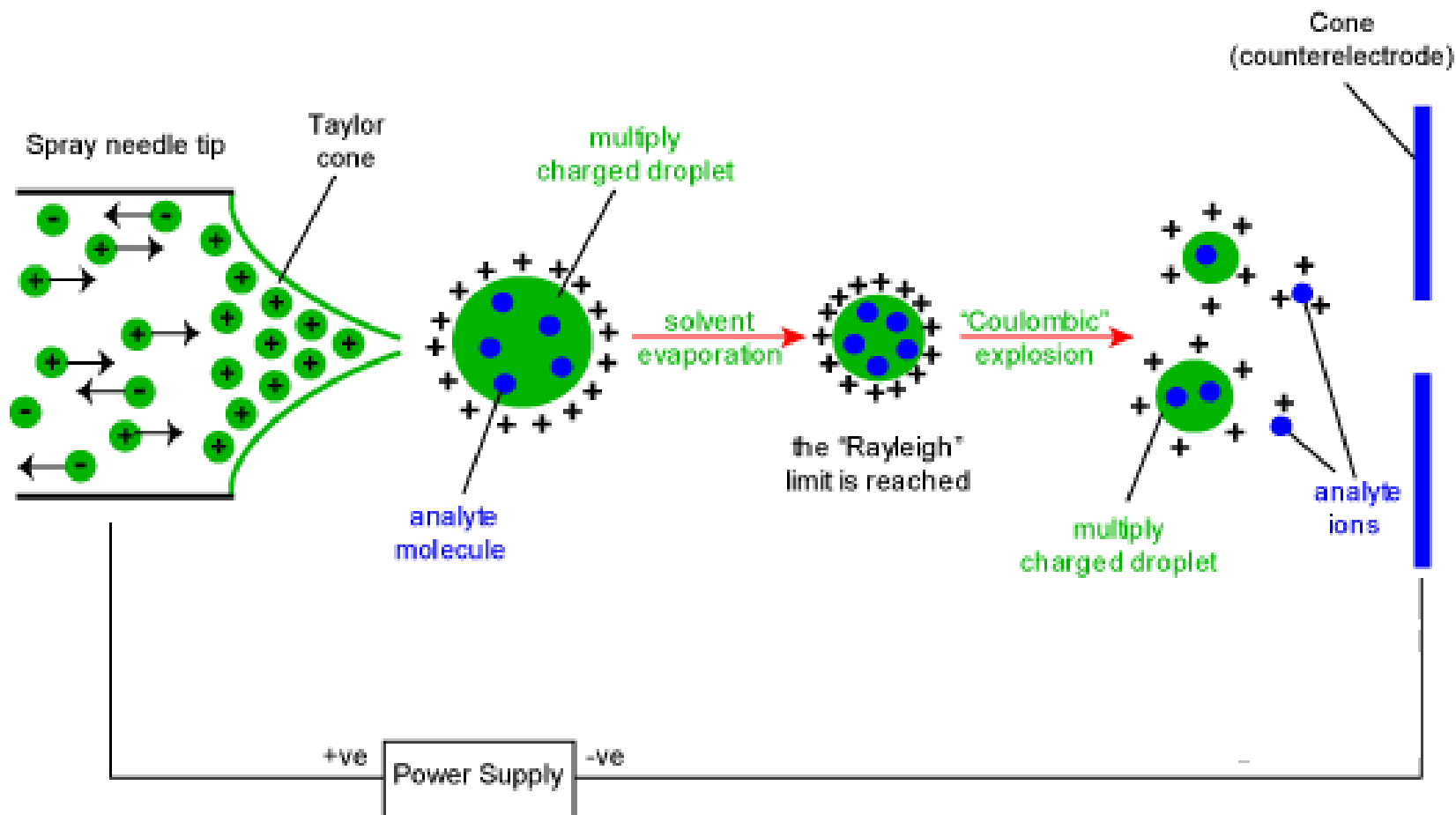


Sum formular:



$M^{+\bullet}$  291.15061

# ESI – Electrospray Ionisation



<http://www.bris.ac.uk/nerclsmf/techniques/hplcms.html>

# ESI – spectrum



Exact mass of molecular ion -->  
mass accuracy <5ppm  
→ sum formular calculation

Still structure = ??????

→ MS<sup>n</sup> fragmentation pattern  
→ Comparison with standards

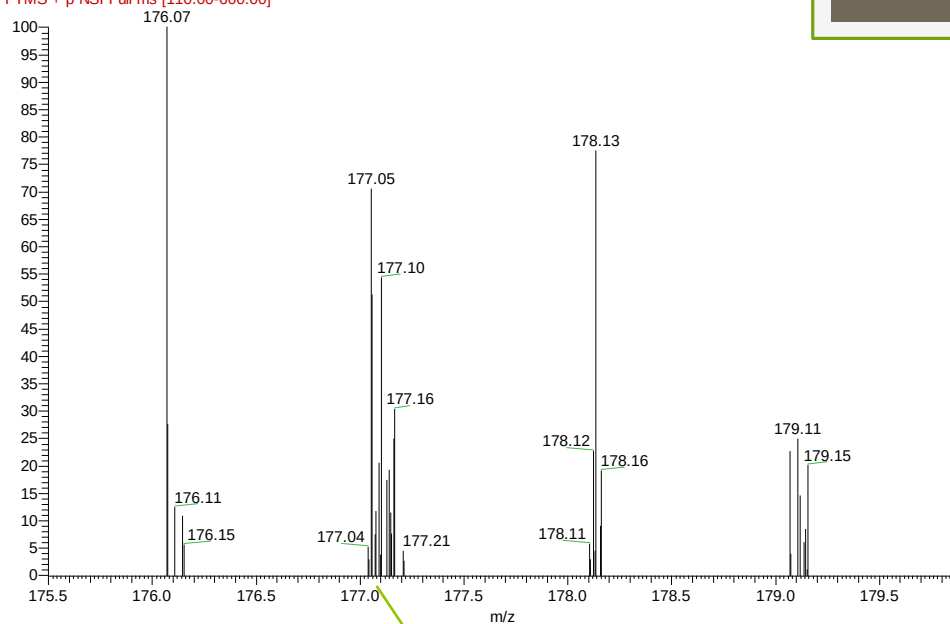
Monoisotopic mass C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>12</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O: 176.094955 Da

Monoisotopic mass H: 1.007276 Da

[M+H]<sup>+</sup> 177.102231 Da



4\_2 #817 RT: 7.52 AV: 1 NL: 1.35E5  
F: FTMS + p NSI Full ms [110.00-600.00]

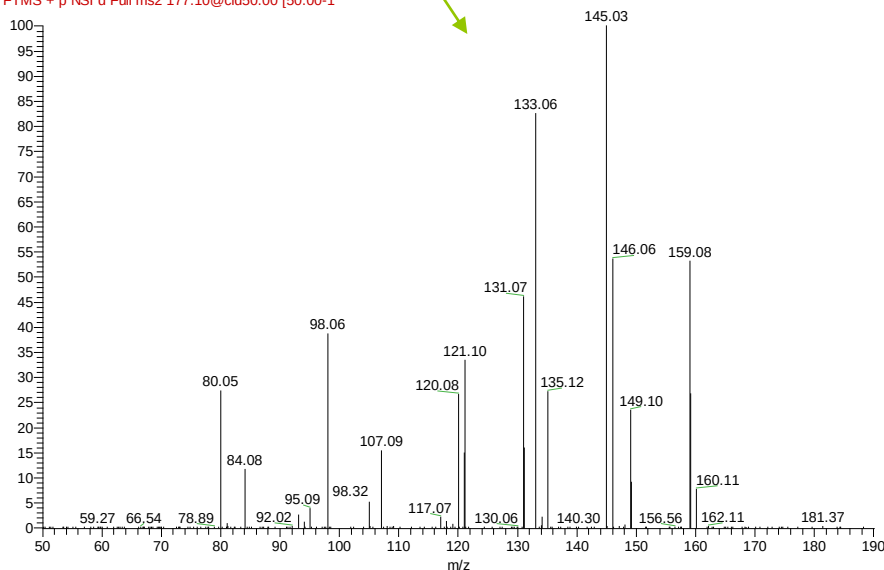


Full Scan MS1

Precursor:  
[M+H]<sup>+</sup> 177.102231

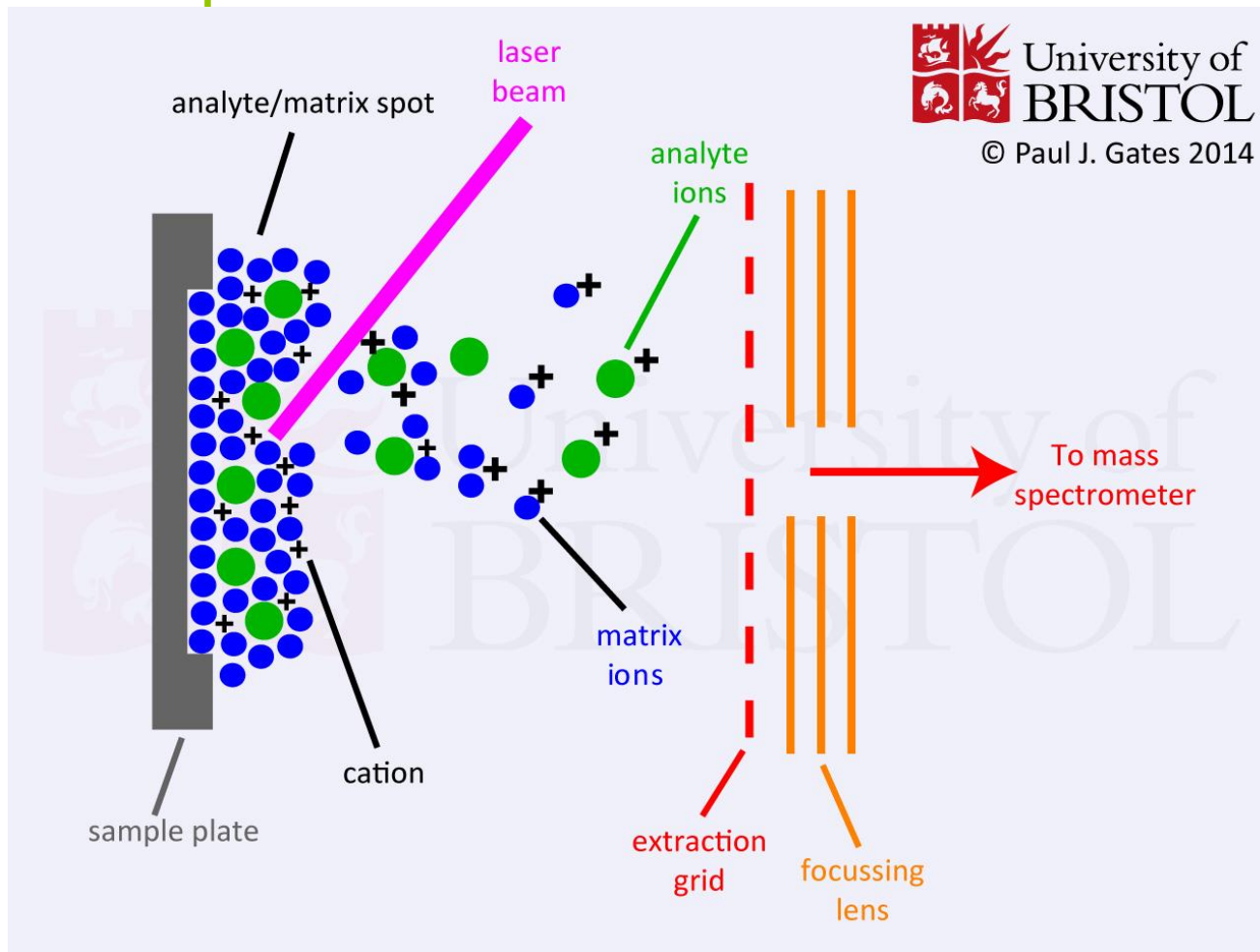
Multiple charges possible

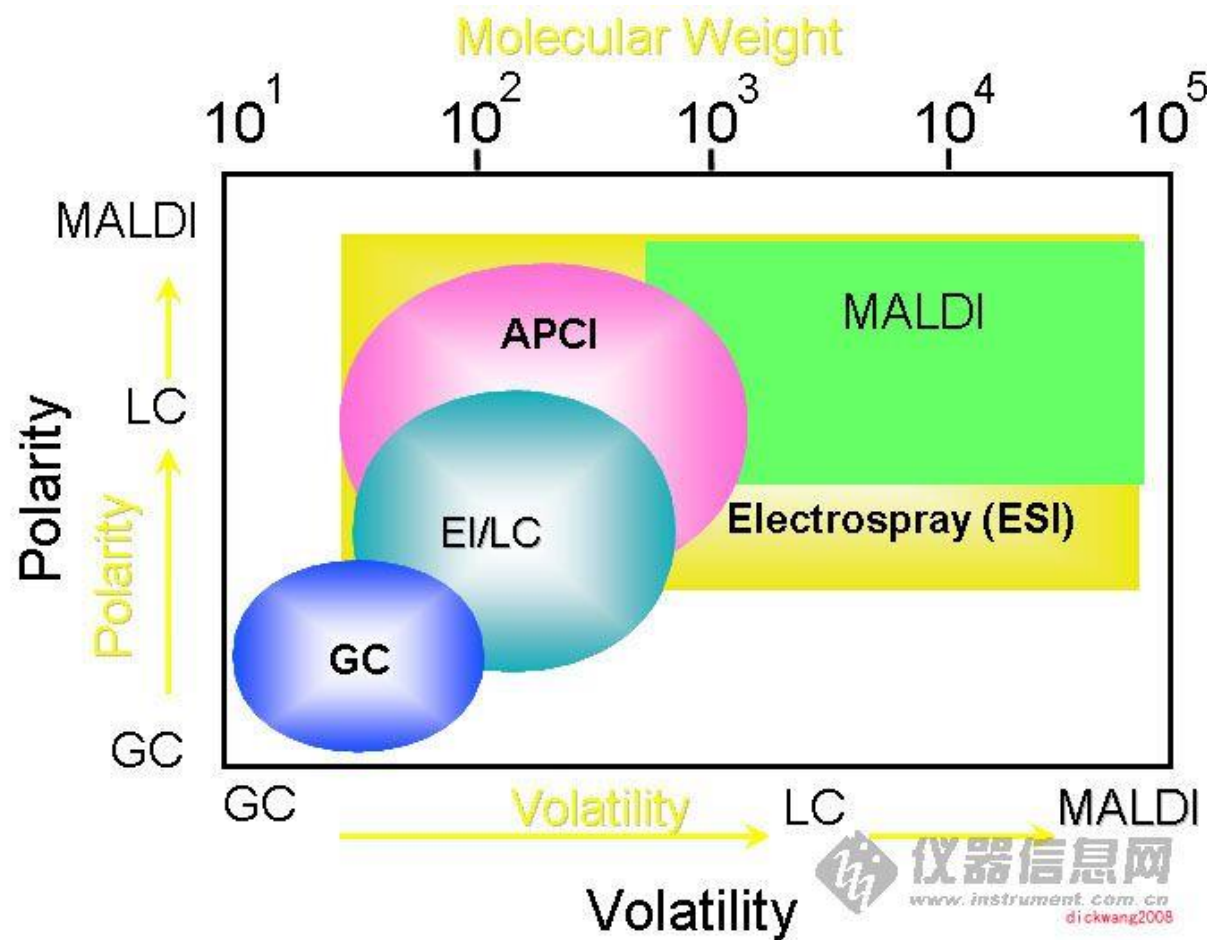
4\_2 #419-997 RT: 4.57-8.15 AV: 9 NL: 4.37E3  
F: FTMS + p NSI d Full ms2 177.10@cid50.00 [50.00-1]



Full Scan MS2

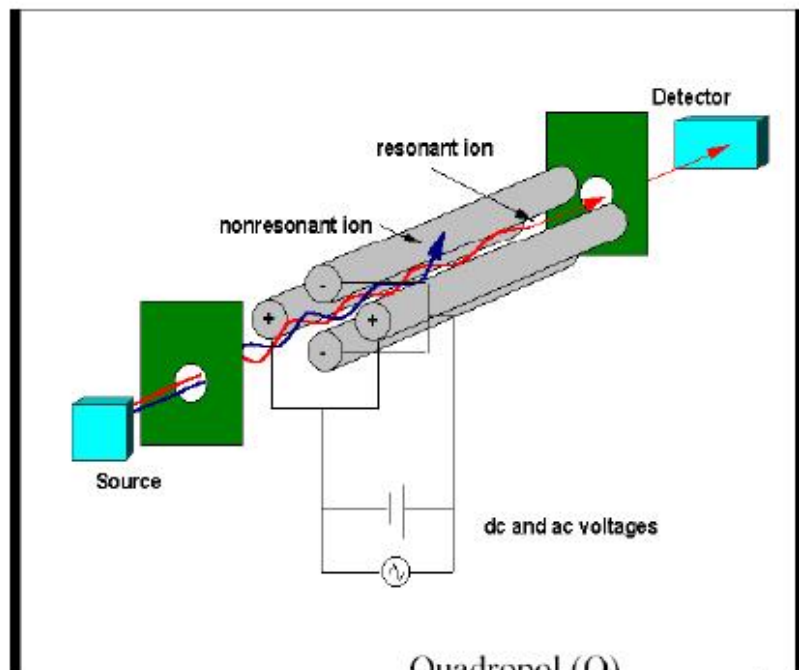
# MALDI – Matrix-assisted Laser Desorption Ionisation





# Mass analyzer

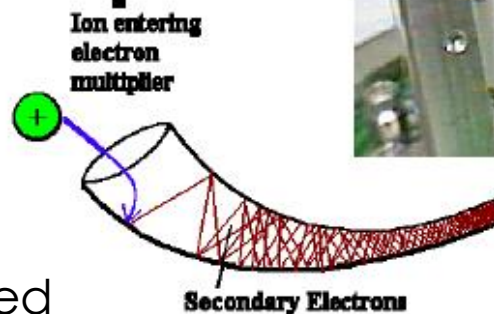
# Quadrupole



$$m/z = 5.7U/\omega^2 r^2$$

$\omega$ : Frequenzanteil,  $r$ :  $\frac{1}{2}$  Stababstand

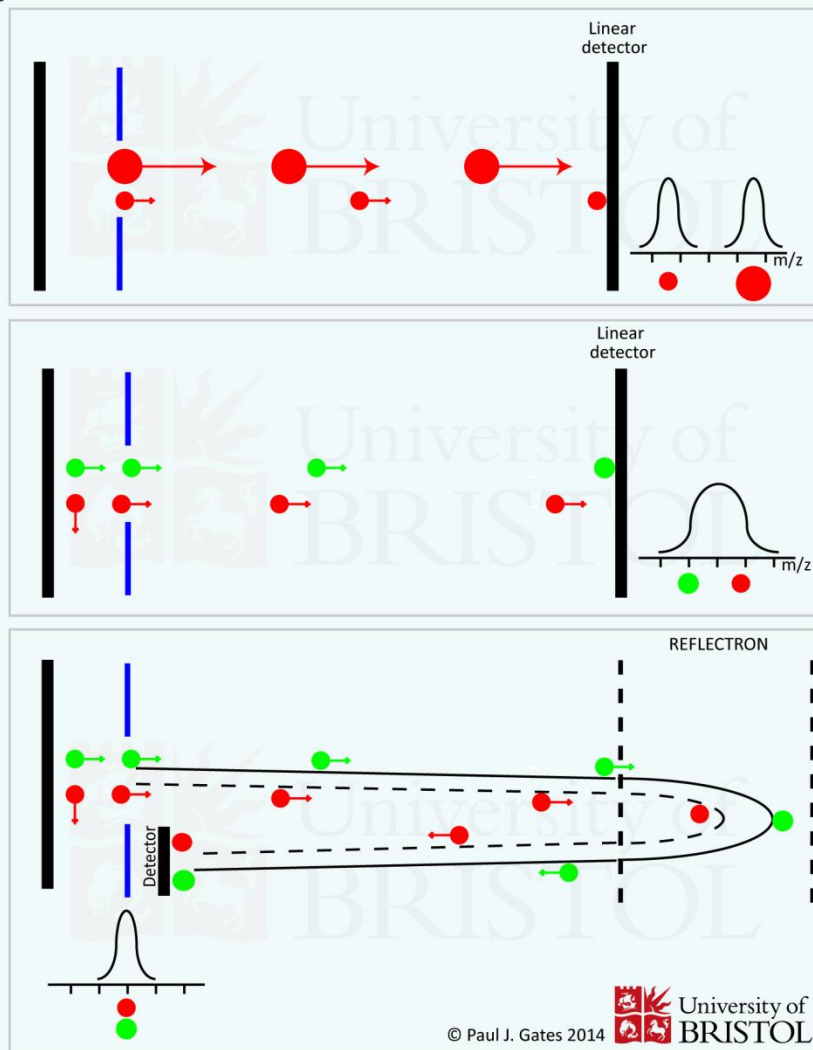
$U$ : Beschleunigungsspannung (10-20 V)



oscillating electric fields are used  
to select or scan specific ions

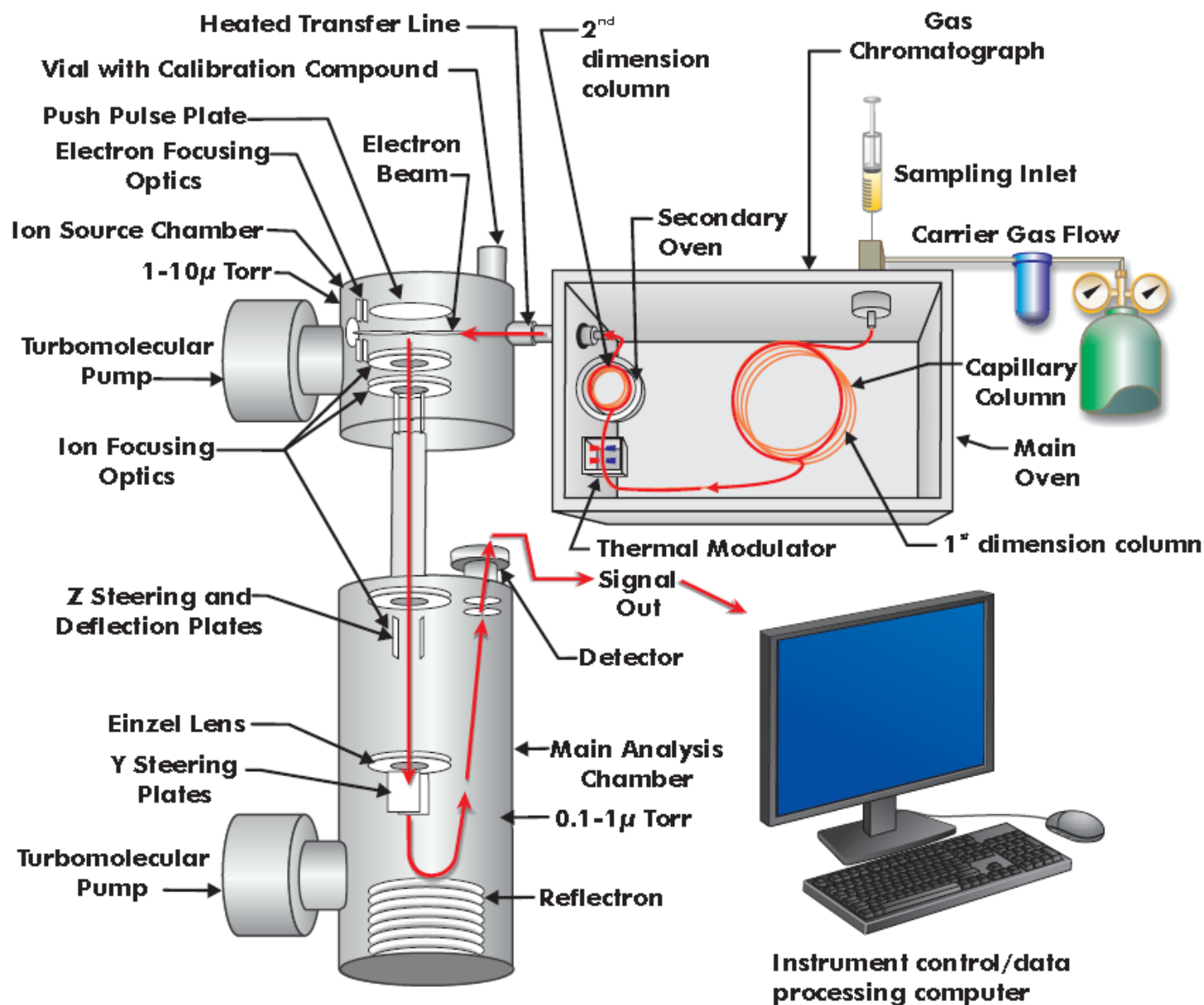
# TOF – Time-of-flight

Figure 2.



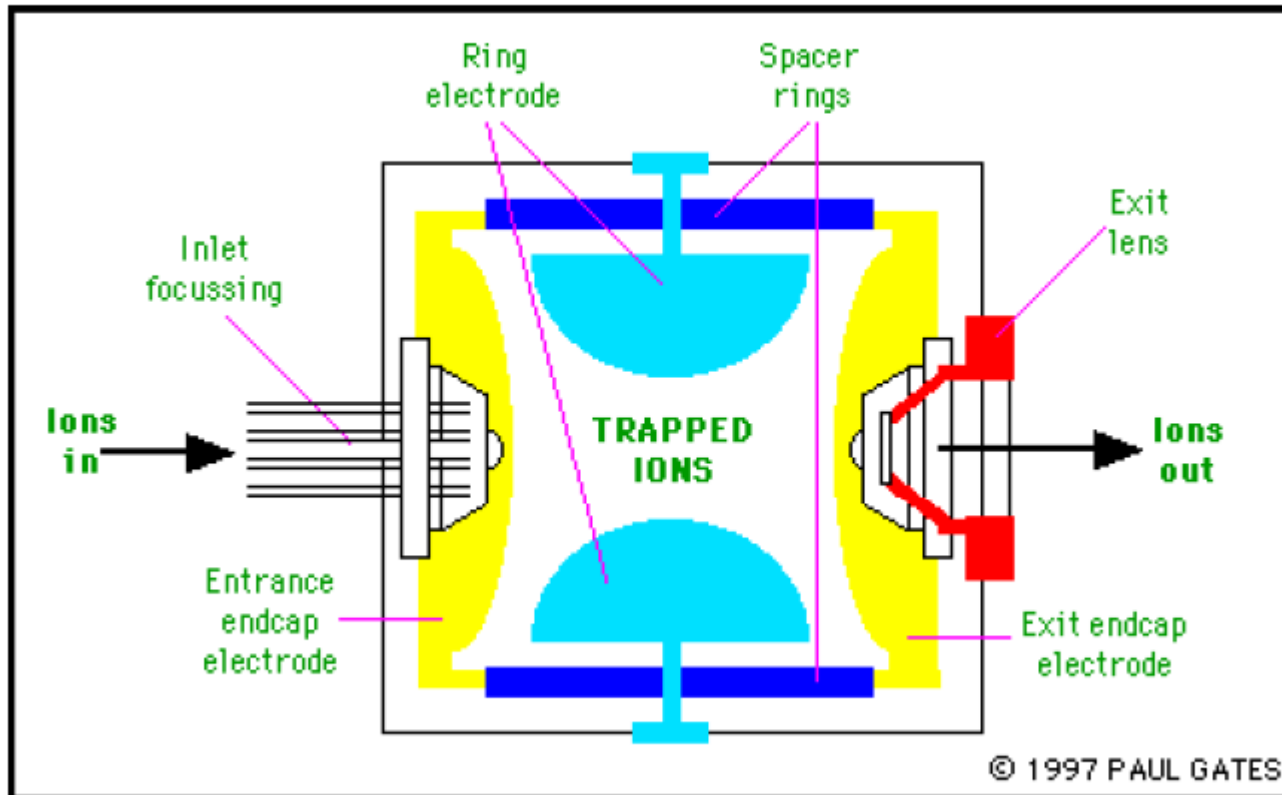


# Diagram of GCxGC-TOFMS Instrument



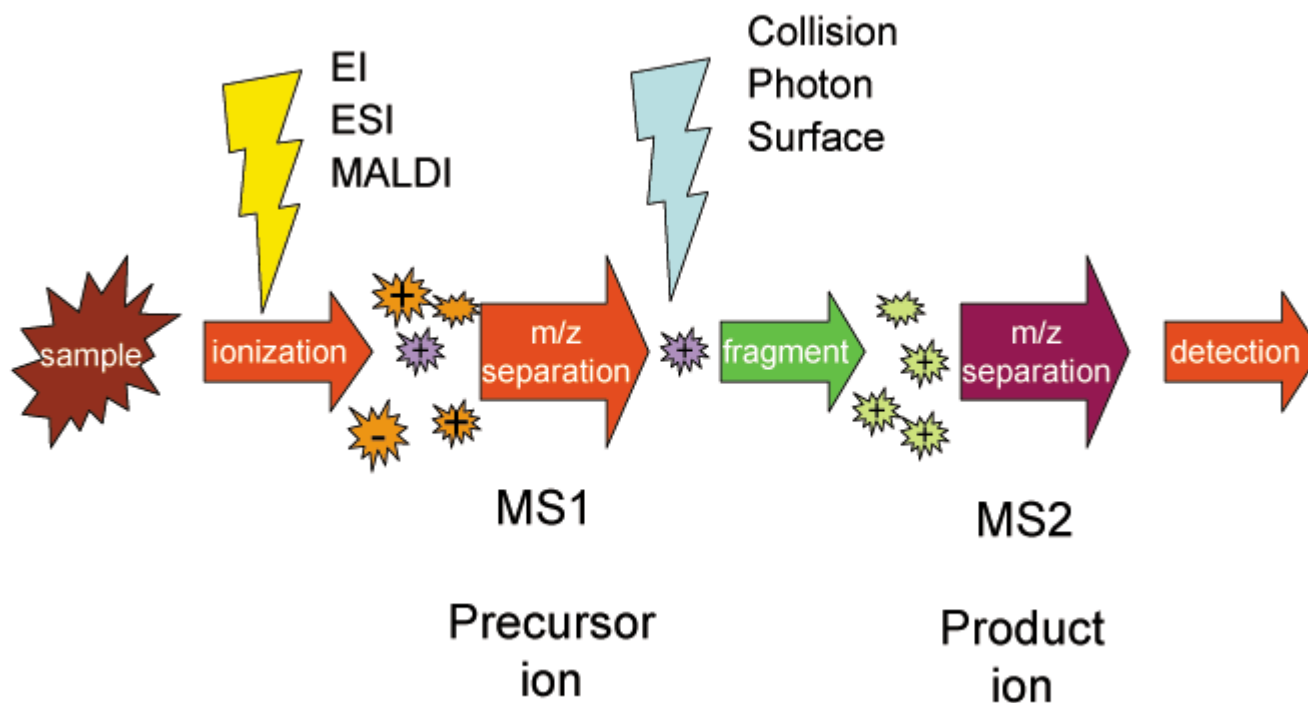
# Ion Trap

e.g. Quadrupole Ion Trap (Paul trap)



Trapping of ions by  
static direct current and (DC)  
radio frequency oscillating electric fields (AC)

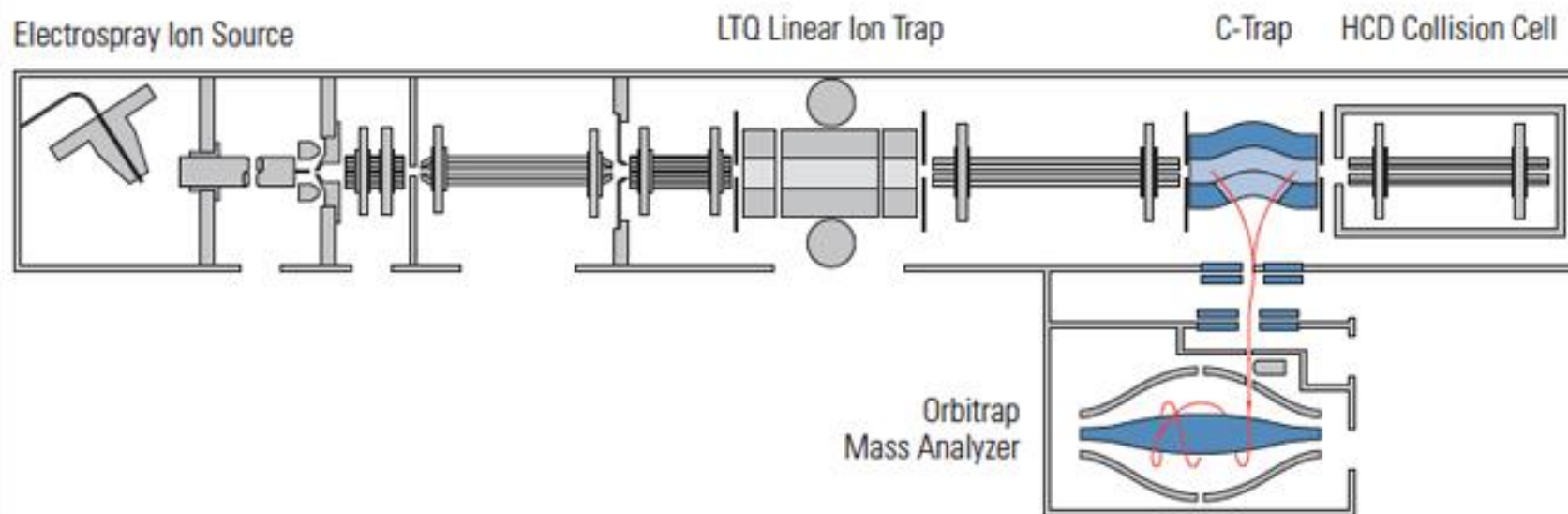
# Tandem mass spectrometry (MS/MS)



By K. Murray (Kkmurray) - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1943319>

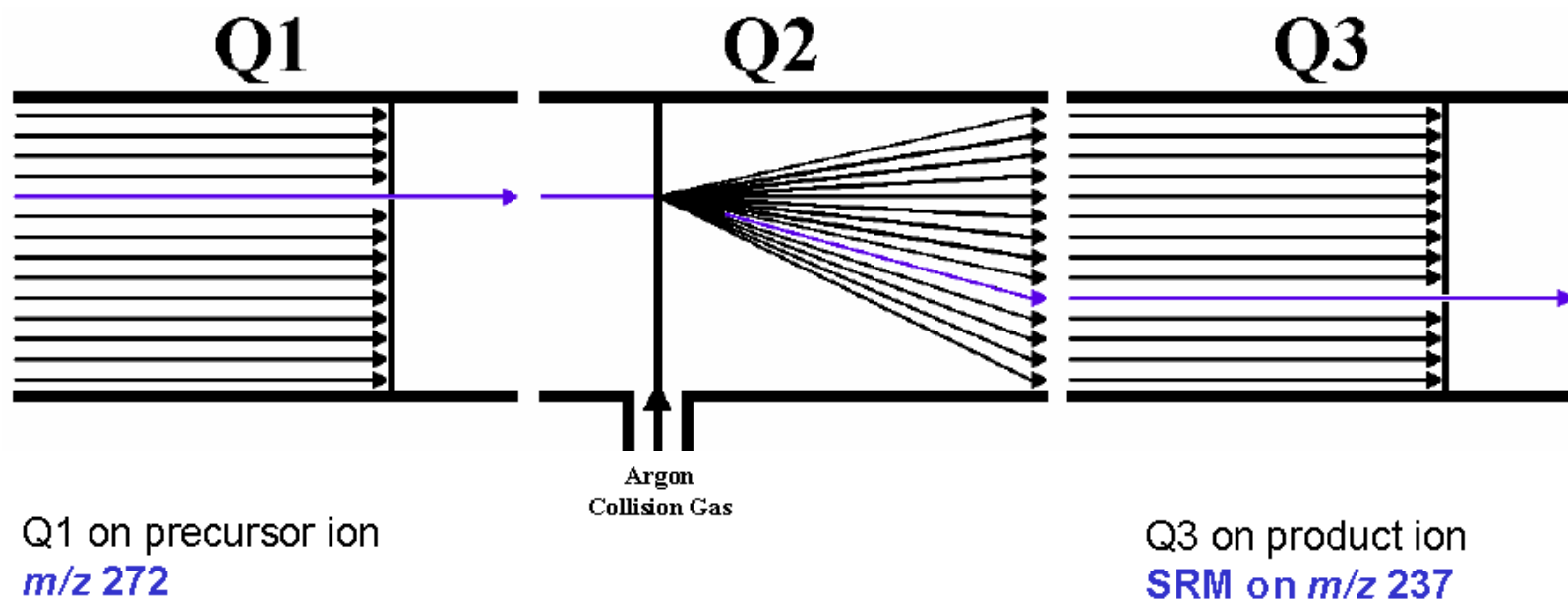
# Tandem mass spectrometry

## LTQ Orbitrap



<http://planetorbitrap.com/ltq-orbitrap-xl#.VrYYEfnhDq4>

**“Monitor a Transition”**  
**from *Precursor in Q1* to *Product Ion in Q3***



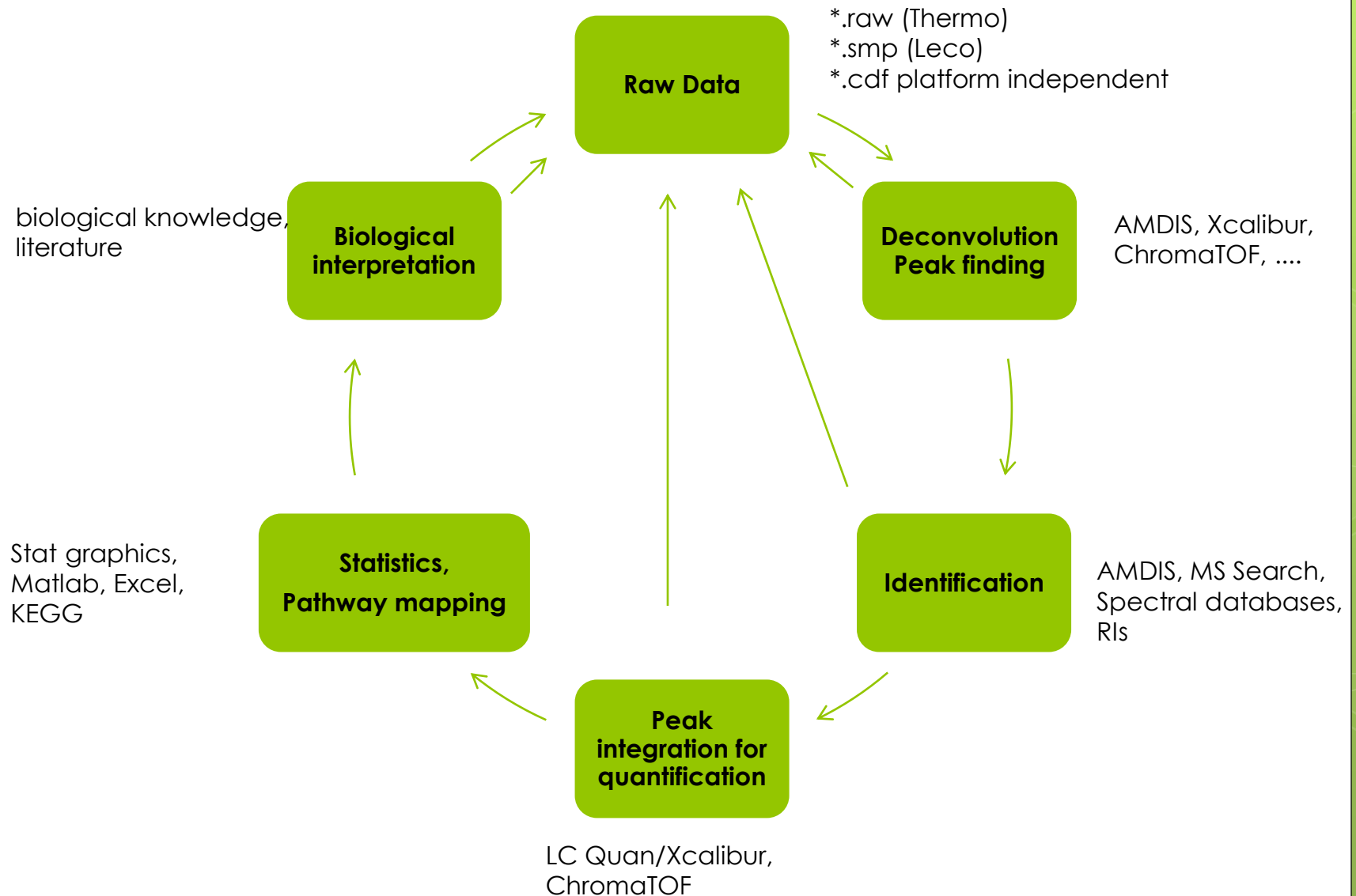
**Q1**  
mass filter

**Q2**  
collision cell  
2nd fragmentation

**Q3**  
scanning of selected  
product ion

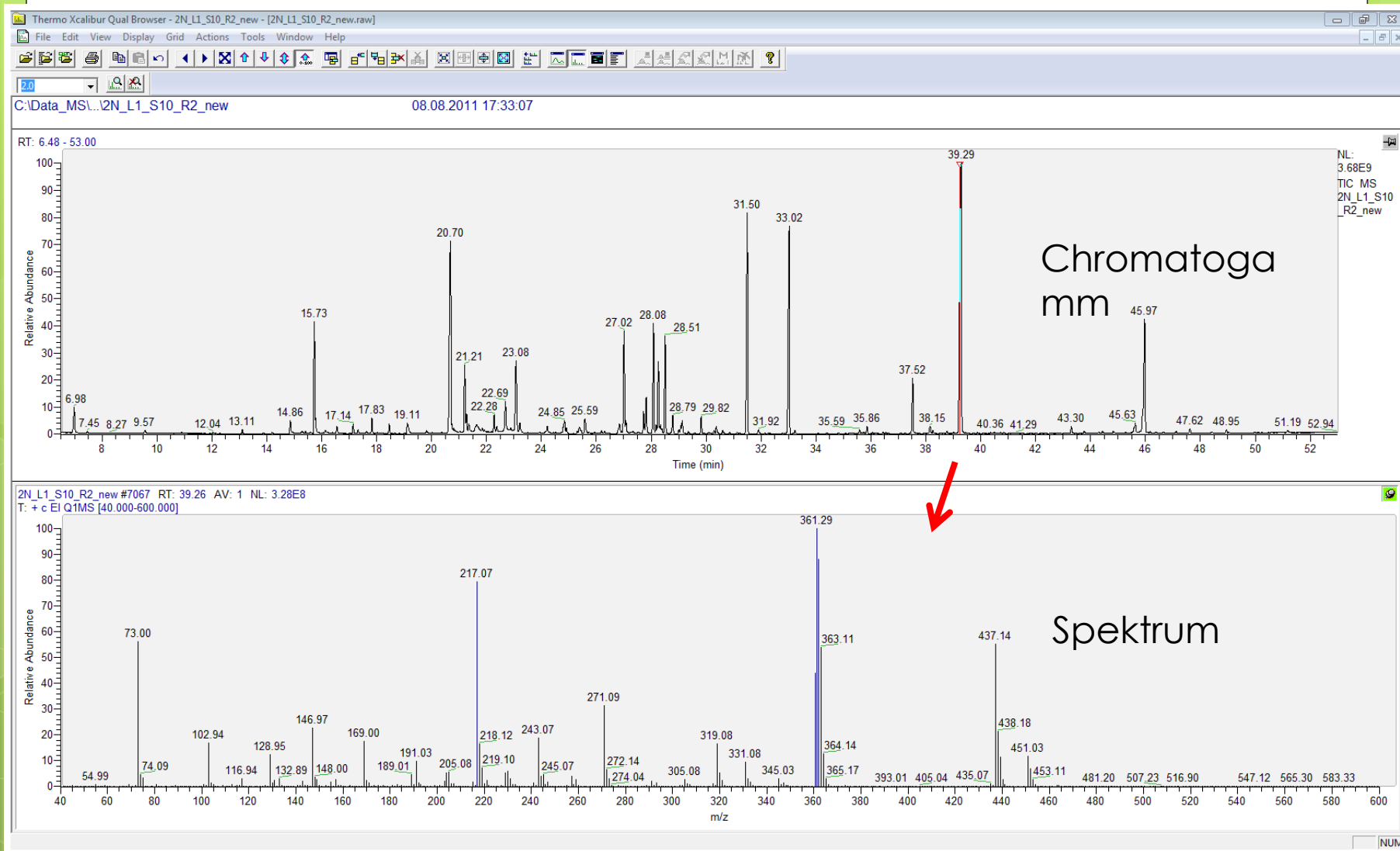
# data processing

workflow

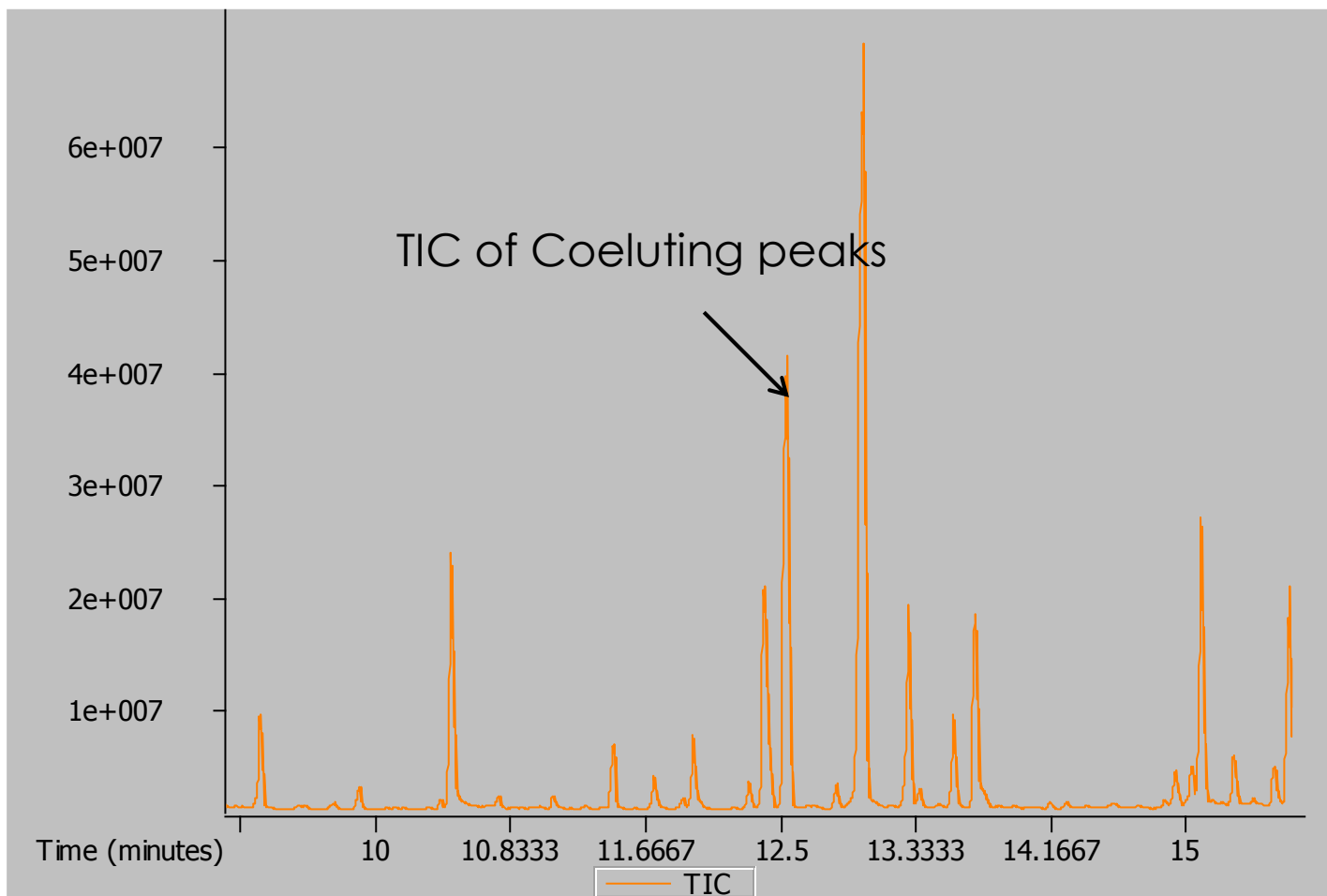




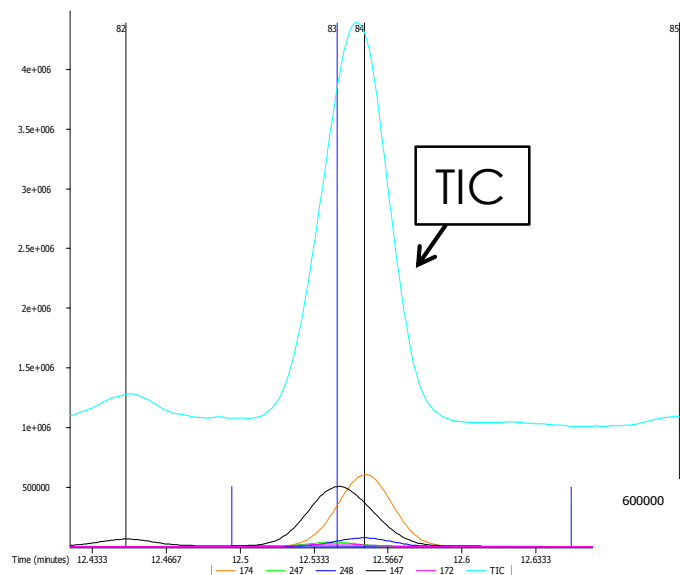
# Spektrum and Chromatogramm



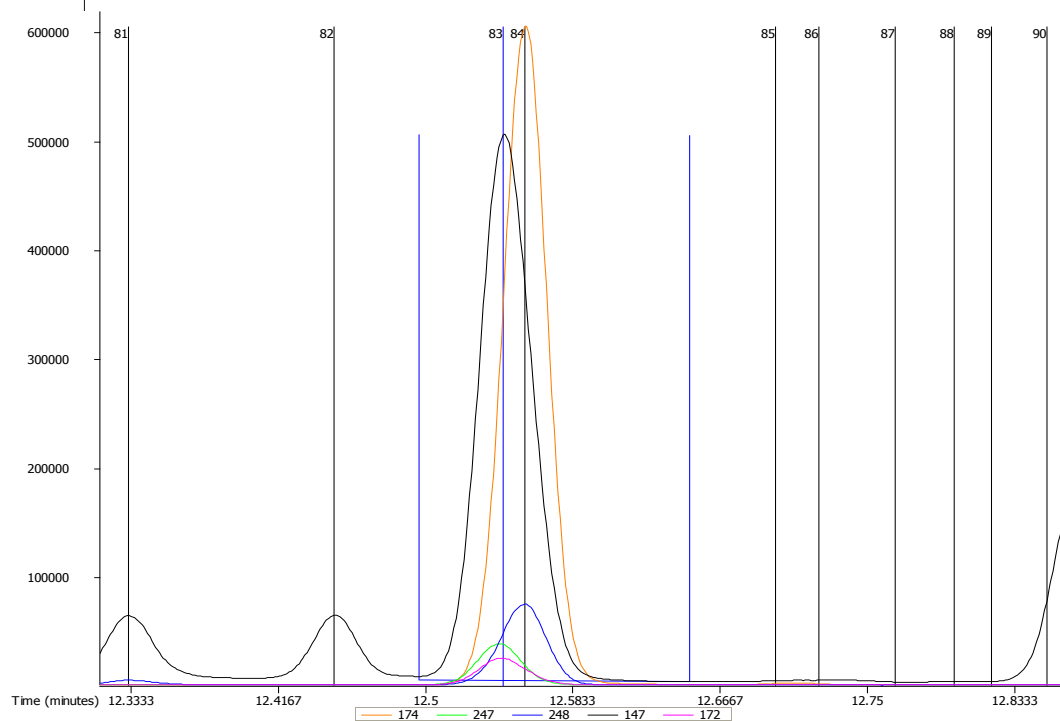
# chromatographic and mass spectral separation



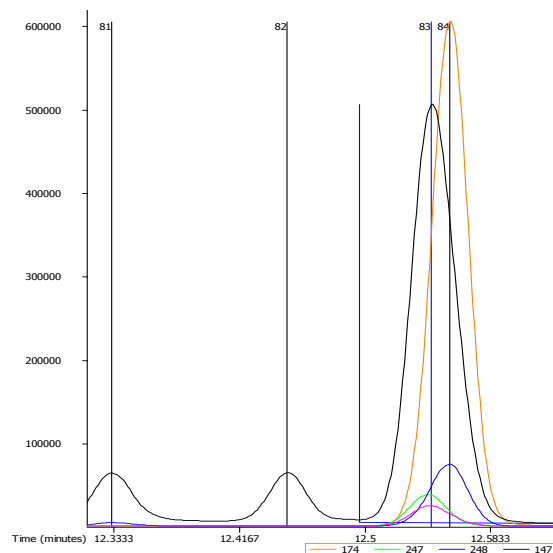
# deconvolution



EIC m/z 174, 247, 248, 147, 172

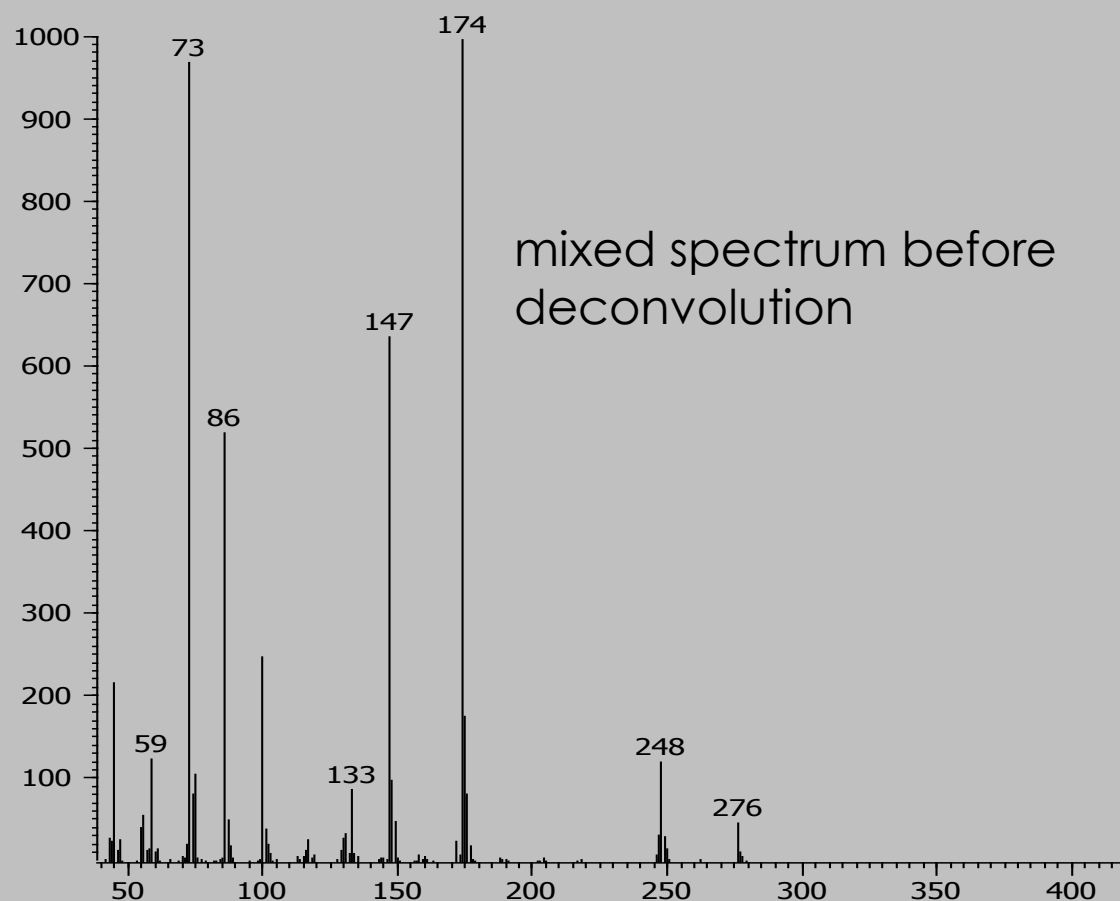


# deconvolution



m/z 174, 247, 248, 147, 172

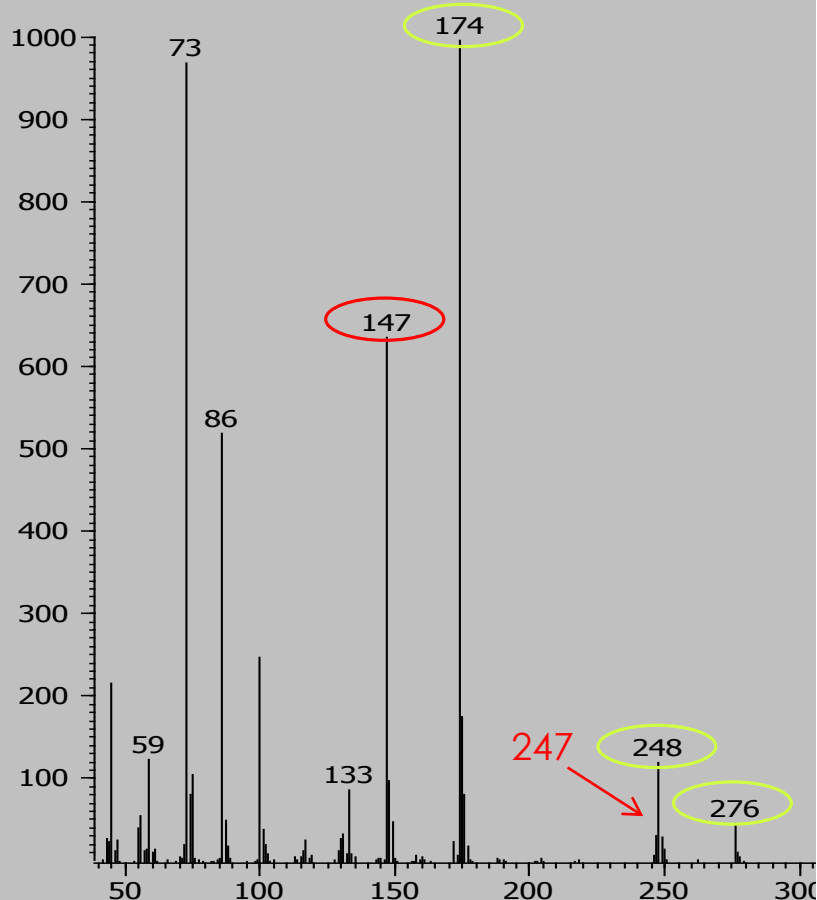
Caliper - sample "Ara\_50\_1D\_SL:1", 12.5545 minutes to 12.5545 minutes - 12.6655



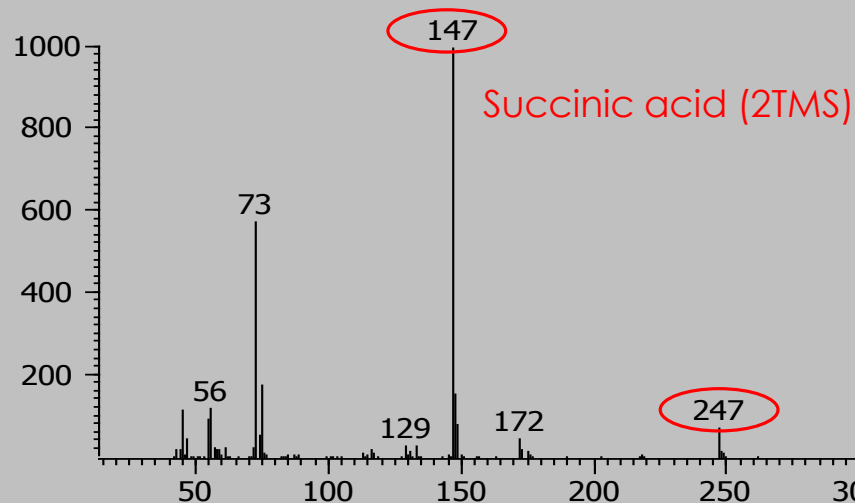
mixed spectrum before  
deconvolution

## mixed spectrum before deconvolution

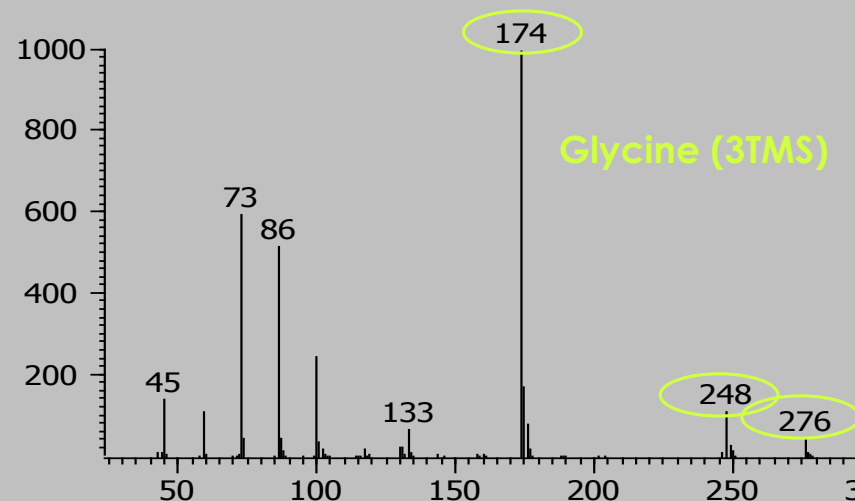
Caliper - sample "Ara\_50\_1D\_SL:1", 12.5545 minutes to 12.5



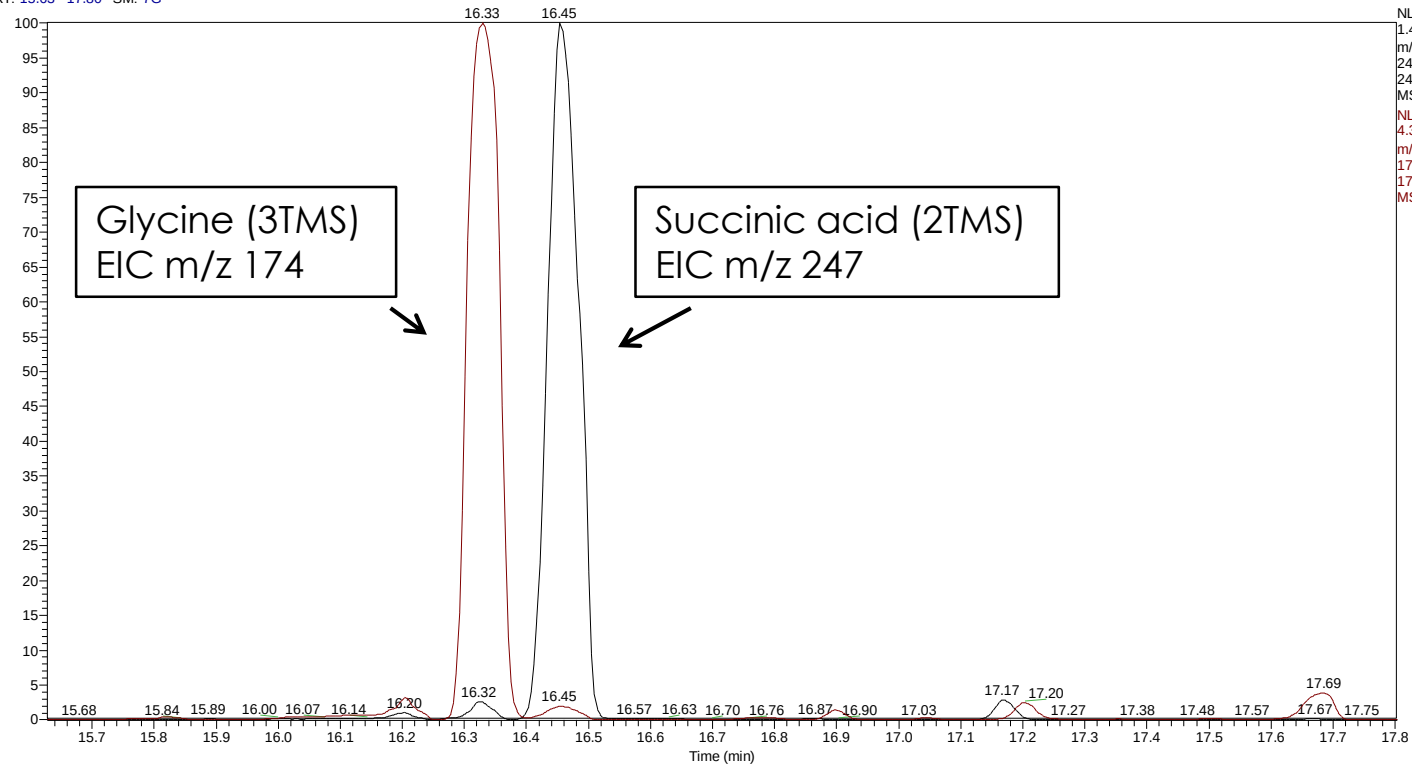
Peak True - sample "Ara\_50\_1D\_SL:1", peak 83, at 12.5438



Peak True - sample "Ara\_50\_1D\_SL:1", peak 84, at 12.556

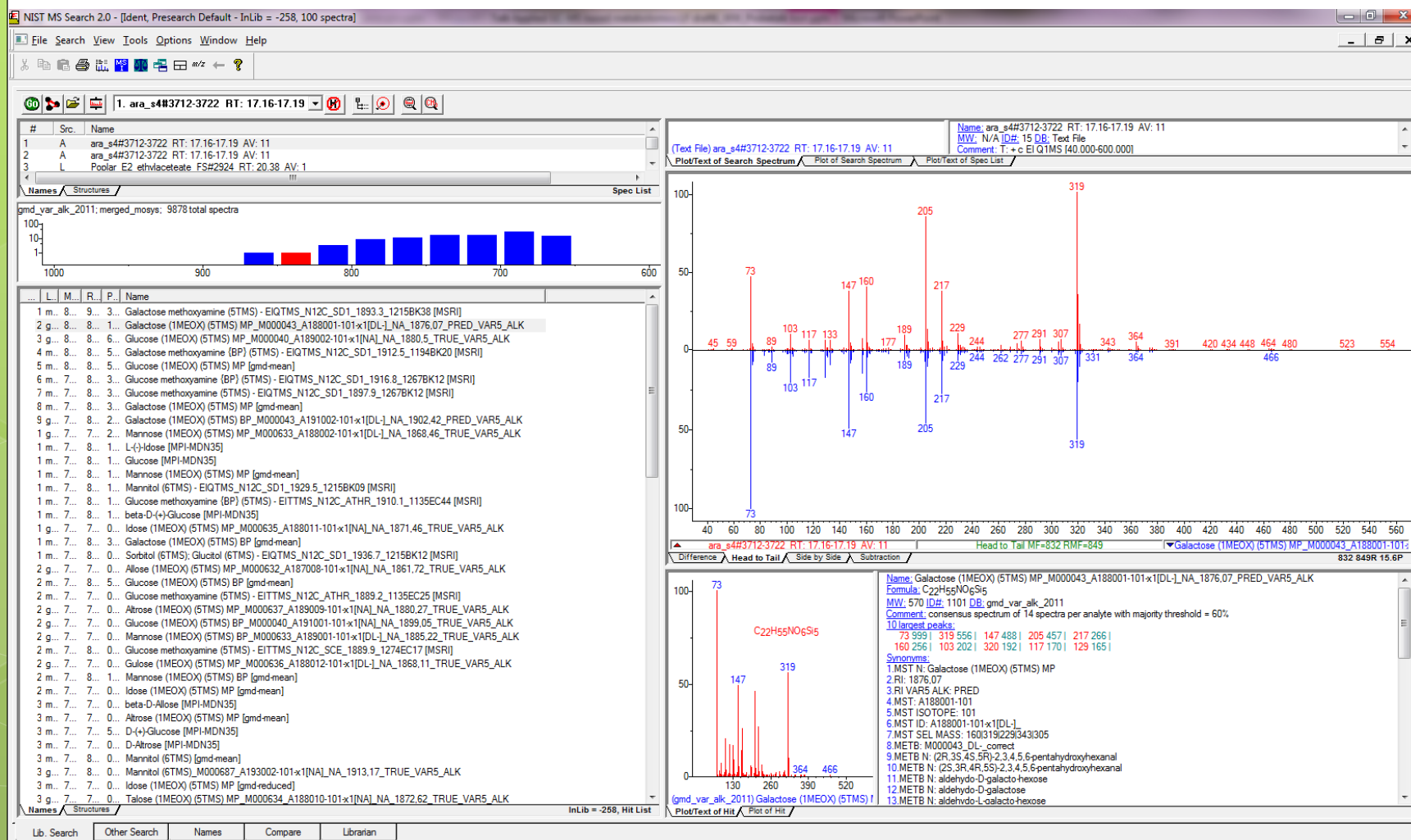


RT: 15.63 - 17.80 SM: 7G



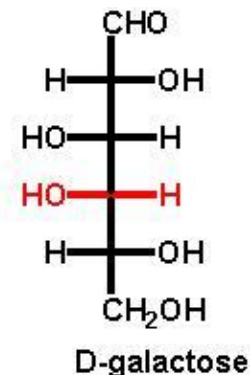
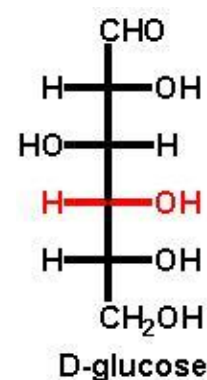
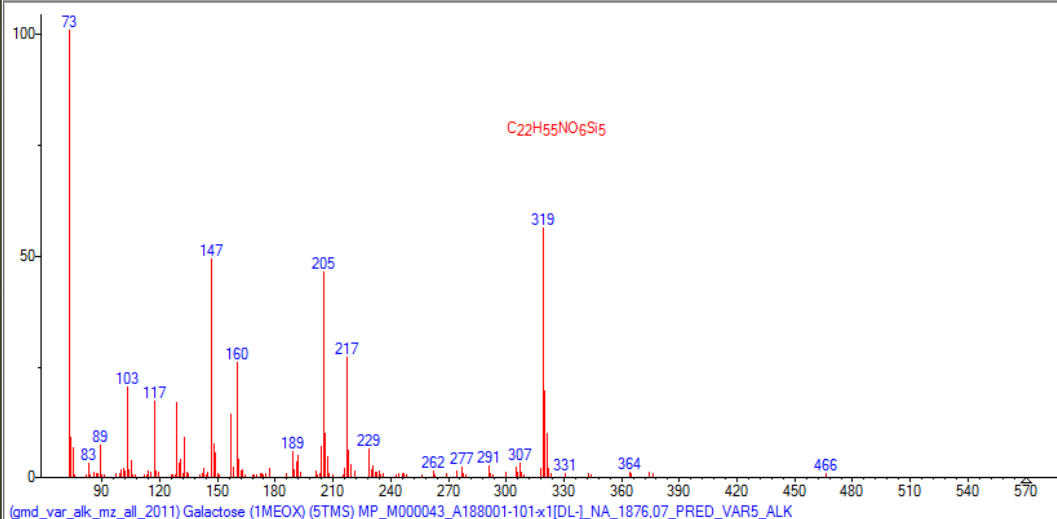
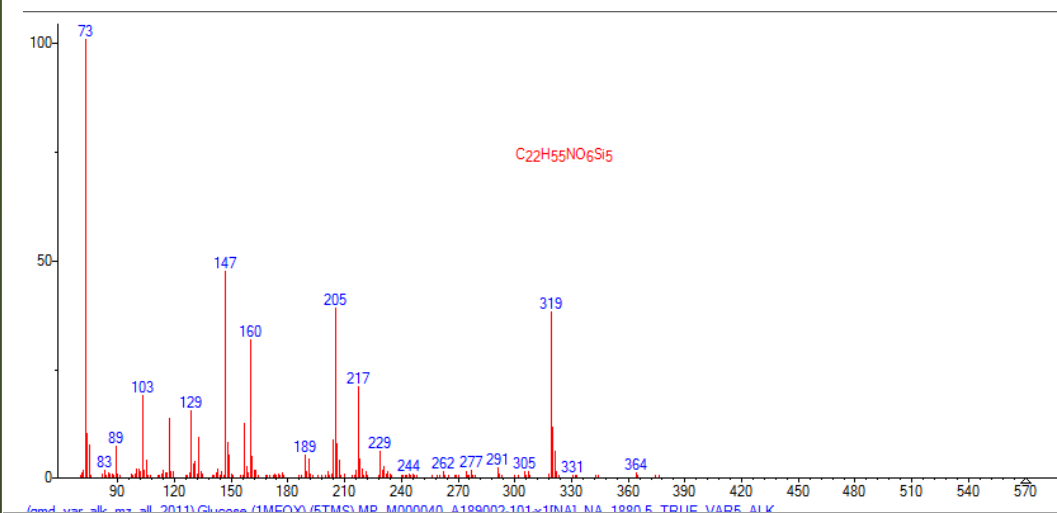
baseline separation  
using a longer  
temperature gradient

# identification – spectral match

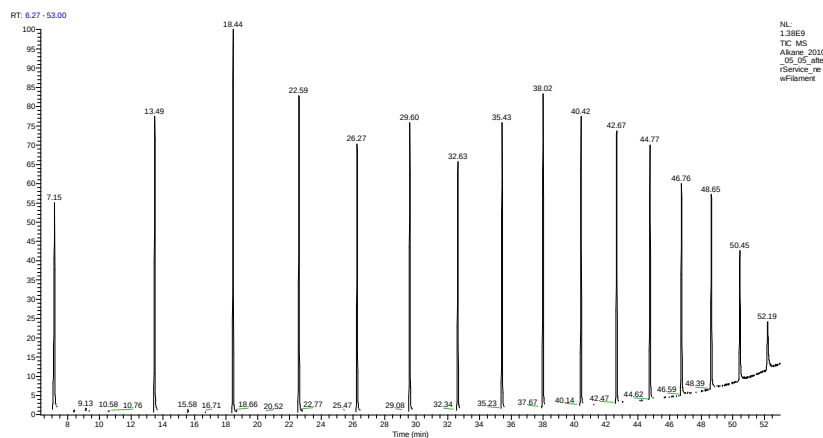




# identification – spectral match

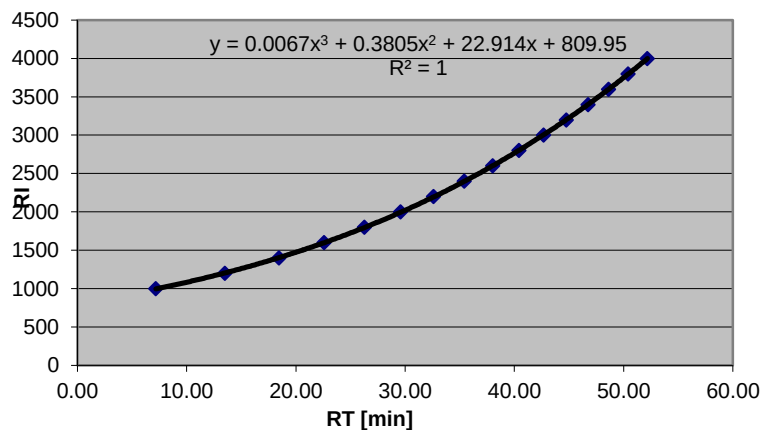


# identification – retention index



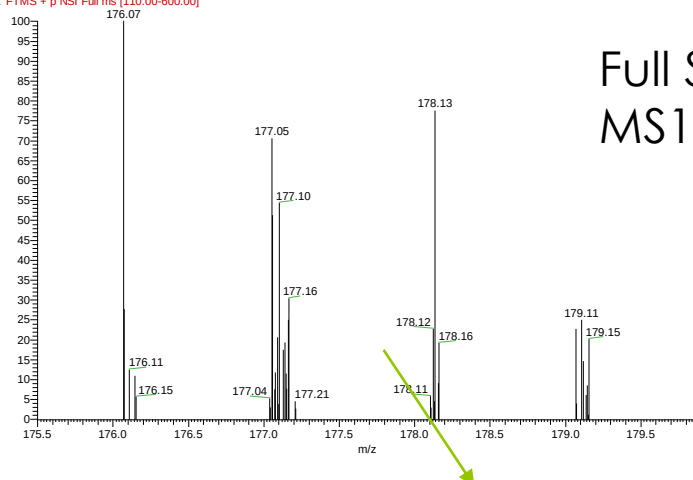
|                                                | RT    | RI   |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|------|
| Decane (C <sub>10</sub> H <sub>22</sub> )      | 7.31  | 1000 |
| Dodecane (C <sub>12</sub> H <sub>26</sub> )    | 12.96 | 1200 |
| Tetradecane (C <sub>14</sub> H <sub>30</sub> ) | 17.74 | 1400 |
| ...                                            | ...   | ...  |

Calculation RI Polynomial regression 3rd order



# „identification“ – exact mass

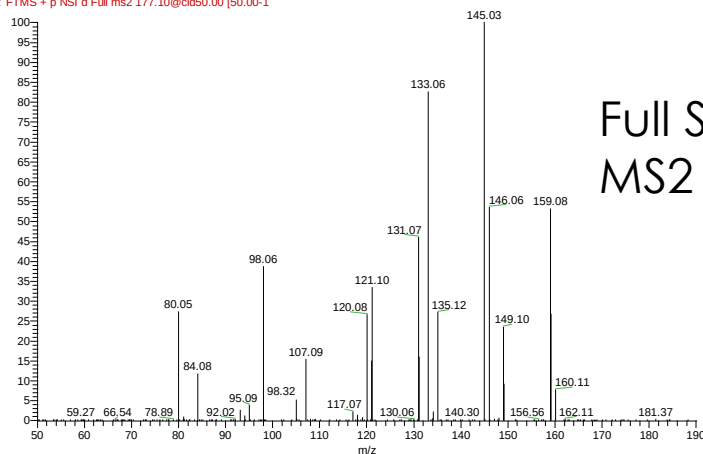
4.2 #817 RT: 7.52 AV: 1 NL: 1.35E5  
F: FTMS + p NSI Full ms [110.00-600.00]



Sum formula annotation by exact mass

Precursor:  
[M+H]<sup>+</sup> 177.102231

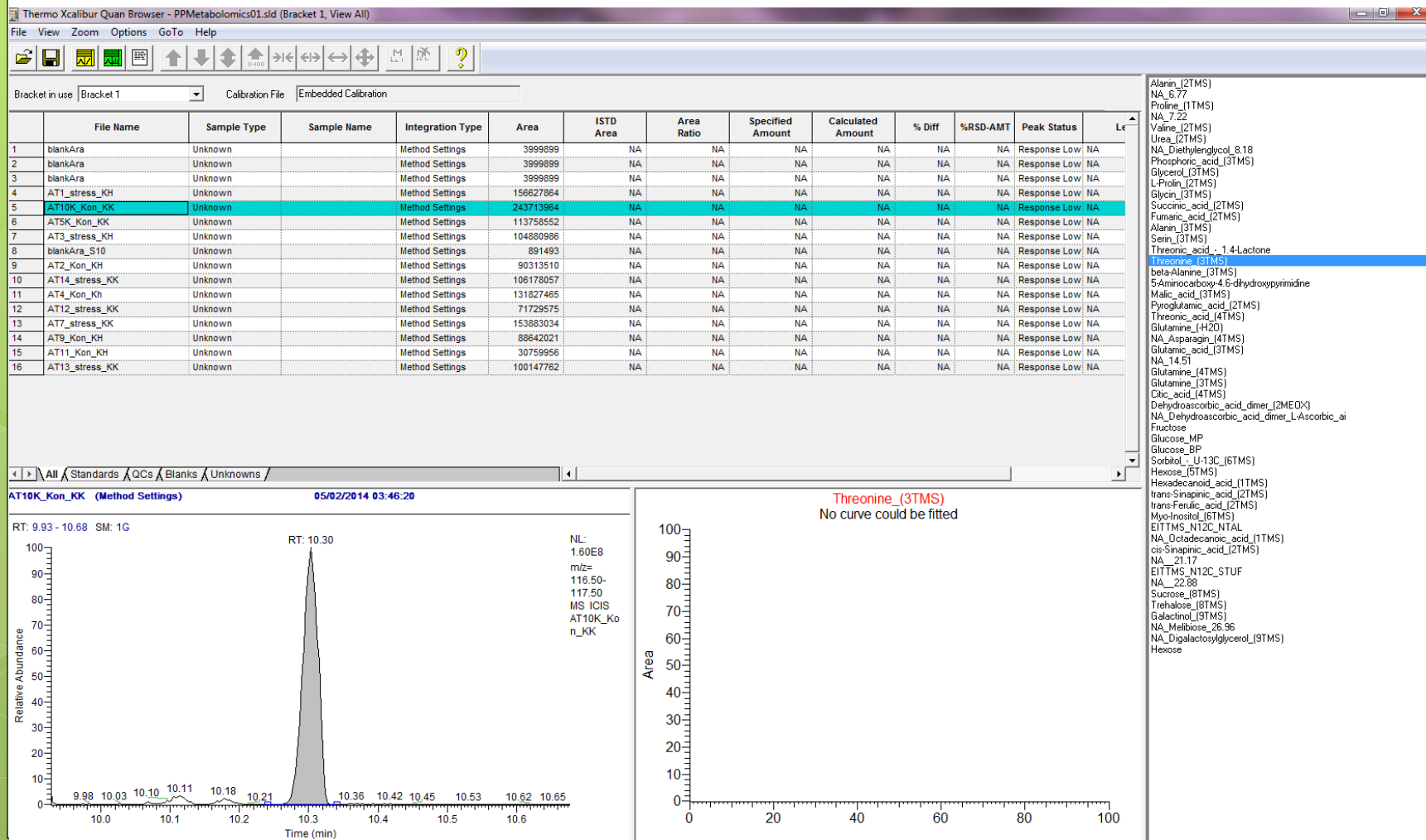
4.2 #419-997 RT: 4.57-8.15 AV: 9 NL: 4.37E3  
F: FTMS + p NSI d Full ms2 177.10@cid50.00 [50.00-1



Multiple charges possible

Structure information by comparing MS<sub>n</sub> spectra to libraries

## alignment &amp; peak integration



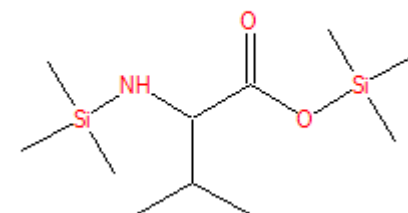
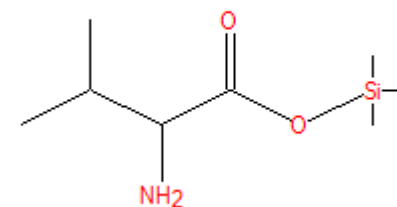
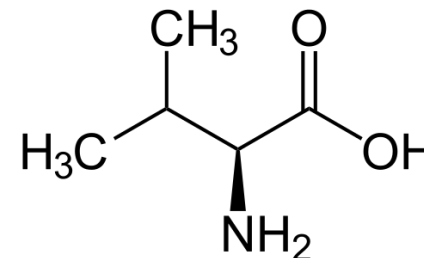
# raw data matrix

The image shows a large, dense raw data matrix. It consists of many rows and columns, with each cell containing a numerical value. The values are arranged in a grid pattern, and the matrix is very large, spanning most of the width and height of the slide. The values appear to be floating-point numbers, ranging from approximately 0.000000 to 0.000001, with many zeros and some small non-zero values. The matrix is organized into several distinct sections, with some rows and columns highlighted in a light green color. The overall appearance is that of a large, complex dataset, likely representing a high-dimensional feature space or a large-scale experimental result.

|       | S1         | S2         | S3        |
|-------|------------|------------|-----------|
| M1_D1 | 680518     | 22042      | 5913      |
| M1_D2 | 2218715500 | 1177147637 | 114881670 |
| M2    | 12090493   | 1674566    | 2551986   |
| M3    | 38668521   | 16650636   | 4641401   |
| ....  | ...        | ....       | ....      |

# curated data matrix

|                 | S1         | S2         | S3         |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Valine (1+2TMS) | 56856630   | 3066789    | 2316542    |
| Malic acid      | 1010149883 | 232986113  | 999818170  |
| Glucose (MP)    | 3230720402 | 2316640517 | 1818410005 |
| ....            | ....       | ...        | ...        |



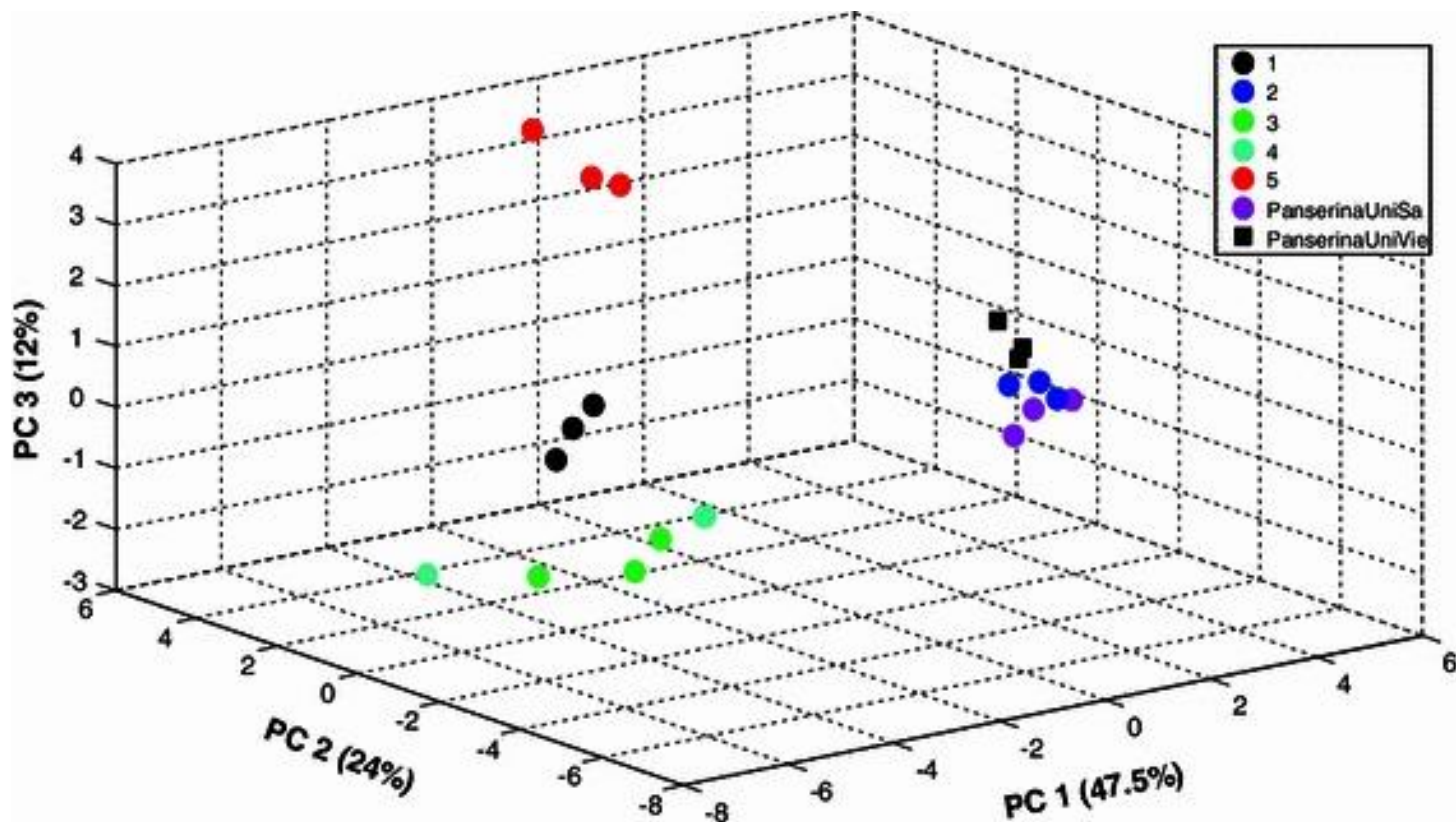
summed derivatives

normalised to sample amount (weight, volume, protein content)

checked for 0-values, contaminants, ....

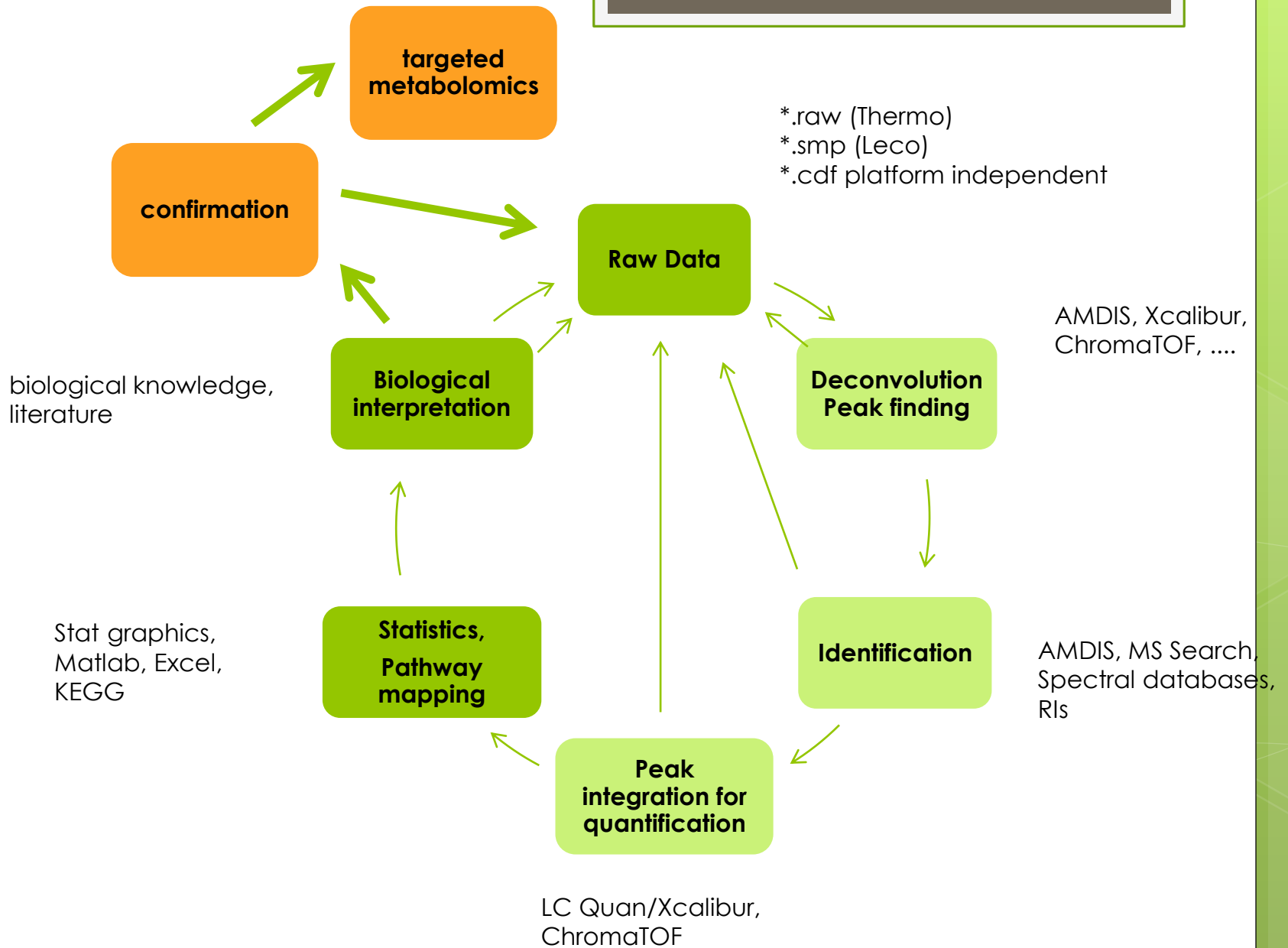
Absolute quantification using calibration curves of standard mix

# statistics - PCA



Mari et al. (2013),  
Metabolomics 9(3): 564–574

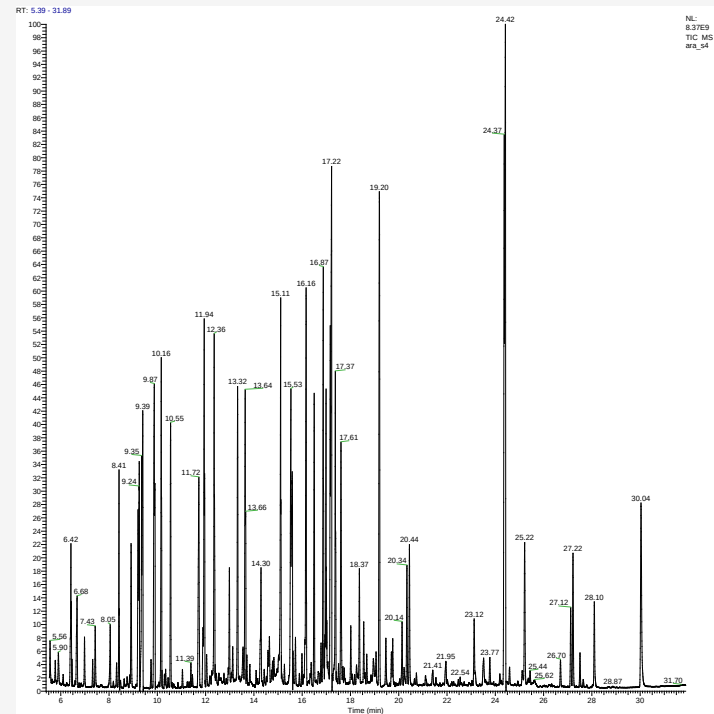
# data processing







# Questions?



**Mosys**

Department  
Molecular Systems Biology



universität  
wien

University of Vienna | Faculty of Life Sciences | Althanstrasse 14 | 1090 Vienna | Austria

# Nachtrag

# ESI – spectrum



Exact mass of molecular ion -->  
mass accuracy <5ppm  
→ sum formular calculation

Still structure = ??????

→ MS<sup>n</sup> fragmentation pattern  
→ Comparison with standards

Monoisotopic mass C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>12</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O: 176.094955 Da

Monoisotopic mass H: 1.007276 Da

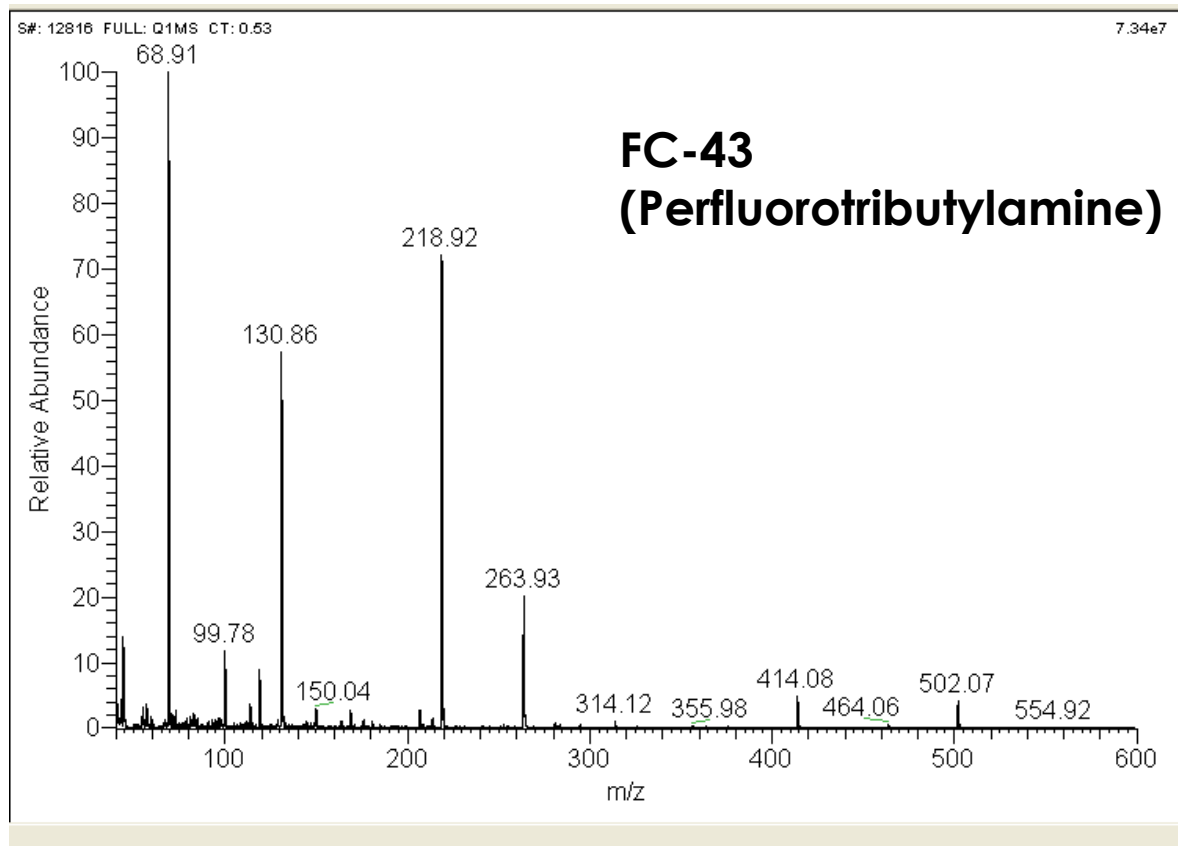
$$[M+H]^+ = 177.102231 \text{ Da}$$

**Mass error calculation [ppm]:**

(theoretical mass-experimental m/z)/

Theoretical mass \* 10<sup>6</sup>

# calibration gas





# Thank you!

