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1 Testing the accuracy of single-grain OSL dating on Eemian quartz 2 samples

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9

10 **Abstract:** Single-grain OSL dating of quartz is a popular approach to OSL dating, even when
11 incomplete bleaching is not likely to be significant. However, little testing of the accuracy of single-
12 grain dating has been published; particularly for samples older than 50 ka. In this study, we
13 investigate the accuracy of single-grain quartz OSL dating, when a significant number of individual
14 grains are no longer able to accurately measure the burial dose because of saturation effects. We
15 compare standard multi-grain OSL results with those obtained from single-grain OSL measurements
16 for five OIS substage 5e (Eemian) samples (~128 ka). We show that for these samples, standard
17 multi-grain quartz dose estimation results in dose estimates in good agreement with the predicted
18 doses (four of the five samples recover age control), but that standard frequentist single-grain dating
19 procedures significantly underestimate the age controls, i.e. the measured to predicted dose range
20 between 0.42 ± 0.03 and 0.84 ± 0.06 , where the underestimation increases with increasing relative
21 number of grains in saturation. Attempting to remove the inevitable bias in the dose estimation
22 resulting from a significant number of saturated grains (by using the D_c criterion) reduced the
23 underestimation, i.e. the measured to predicted dose range between 0.63 ± 0.05 and 0.94 ± 0.08 , but only
24 the sample with the smallest absorbed dose is consistent with the age control. Using Bayesian analysis
25 (“BayLum”) the ratio of measured to predicted dose range between 0.75 ± 0.07 and 1.14 ± 0.08 , but only
26 two of the five samples agree with the independent age control. Our results have implications for the
27 evaluation of single-grain OSL dating of quartz in the 100-200 Gy natural dose range.

1 **Keywords:** Luminescence, quartz, OSL, single-grain, accuracy, multi-grain, independent age-control,
2 dose models

3

4 **1 Introduction**

5 Quartz single-grain (SG) OSL dating is often considered to be a superior alternative to multi-grain
6 (MG) dating and is routinely used for dating OSL samples (e.g., Jacobs et al., 2008; Armitage et al.,
7 2011; Arnold et al., 2013; Jacobs and Roberts, 2015; Demuro et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022; Demuro et
8 al., 2023). Single-grain measurements allow an evaluation of each individual grain and enable the
9 removal of those which are deemed undesirable - either because they show aberrant OSL
10 characteristics (e.g., Jacobs et al., 2013; Demuro et al., 2023), or because they can be identified as
11 sources of contamination from e.g., post-depositional mixing (e.g., Roberts et al., 1999; Fu et al.,
12 2019). In standard multi-grain OSL dating, all grains emitting OSL contribute to the OSL signal. If a
13 sample suffers from a significant degree of incomplete bleaching, the signal averaging in the multi-
14 grain approach will lead to overestimation of the true burial age and hence it is argued that the single-
15 grain approach should be applied to obtain an accurate burial estimate (e.g., Duller, 1994; Olley et al.,
16 1998) through statistical modelling to determine the grain population most likely to have been well-
17 bleached at burial, e.g., the Minimum Age Model (MAM, Galbraith et al., 1999), the Internal/External
18 Uncertainty consistency criterion (IEU, Thomsen et al., 2007) or a Bayesian mixture model
19 (Christophe et al., 2018). But do single-grain measurements also give the most accurate burial dose
20 when incomplete bleaching is not likely to be significant? It seems intuitive that analysis of a subset
21 of grains formed exclusively by grains displaying “good” OSL characteristics should, as a minimum,
22 perform on par with the full set (as used in multi-grain measurements). However, evidence in the
23 literature suggests that this may not always be the case - at least not with commonly used single-grain
24 analysis procedures. Guérin et al., (2015) presented 19 samples with independent age control ranging
25 between 2 and 46 ka and showed that the average ratio of the single-grain Central Age Model (CAM,
26 Galbraith et al., 1999) age to the reference age was 0.90 ± 0.02 , indicating an average underestimation
27 of ~10% by this standard frequentist approach. The word "frequentist" refers to frequentist statistics,
28 in which probability is interpreted as the long run frequency of outcomes. By standard frequentist

1 approach, we refer here to using “*Analyst*” (Duller, 2015) to derive a set of paired D_e values and
2 associated uncertainties which are then input into a dose estimation model such as CAM. Guérin et al.
3 (2015) observed that the accuracy decreased with increasing age when standard frequentist analysis
4 was applied, but when using a Bayesian approach (“BayLum”, Combès et al., 2015; Combès and
5 Philippe, 2017), the age control could be recovered. When using BayLum, the usual steps from dose
6 response curve (DRC) analysis to age determination are combined into a single hierarchical model in
7 which all parameters are sampled using Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) to produce posterior
8 credible interval ranges (Combès et al., 2015; Combès and Philippe, 2017).

9 However, single-grain quartz analysis have also been found to be in agreement with independent age
10 control (< 50 ka) using the standard frequentist approach (e.g., Jacobs et al., 2015; Jankowski et al.,
11 2020; Colarossi et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2022), but only little (if any) testing of the accuracy of single-
12 grain quartz OSL dating has been done for samples older than 50 ka, where a significant number of
13 individual grains may not be able to accurately record the burial dose because of saturation effects.
14 The purpose of this study is to investigate the accuracy of single-grain quartz OSL Single-Aliquot
15 Regenerative (SAR, Murray and Wintle, 2000) dating for five OIS substage 5e samples with known
16 absorbed doses in the 100-200 Gy range. Our primary questions are (i) how do the CAM and the
17 Average Dose Model (ADM, Guérin et al., 2017) perform on these samples? (ii) Do commonly used
18 rejection criteria improve equivalent dose estimation? (iii) Does application of BayLum (Christophe
19 et al., 2023) result in more accurate quartz single grain age estimates than standard frequentist
20 approaches?

21 **2 Independent age control, samples and previous luminescence ages**

22 For the purpose of testing single-grain OSL dating of quartz in the 100-200 Gy dose range, we chose
23 five OIS substage 5e samples from two different sites (see below). Both sites have been determined to
24 be early Eemian deposits by pollen analysis (Funder et al., 2002; Murray et al., 2007). The exact age
25 of each stratigraphical position is not independently dated, but broadly said to have been deposited
26 within a short period of time in the beginning of the Eemian. In our study, we adopt an early Eemian

1 age of 128 ka for all samples presented here and assign an uncertainty of 2 ka since the samples were
2 likely deposited over a few thousand years.

3 Three samples (981007, 981009, 981013) are from Gammelmark, Denmark, which contains a
4 sequence of marine sediments in upwards succession of a marine transgression layer. The samples
5 were originally collected as part of an OSL dating application to test the accuracy of multi-grain OSL
6 dating using sand-sized quartz grains (Murray and Funder, 2003). These authors defined an age for the
7 whole marine section of between 133 and 125 ka (see section SI.1 for further information). Using
8 quartz, these authors determined an average age of 119 ± 2 ka ($n=20$) using the median as the dose
9 estimator. Buylaert et al. (2011) revised these quartz ages (using early background subtraction, EBG,
10 Ballarini et al., 2007, and an improved cosmic dose rate estimate) and derived an average age of
11 120 ± 7 ka ($n=20$). These authors also presented fading corrected K-feldspar IRSL (IR_{50}) ages from
12 which they obtained an average age of 128 ± 3 ka ($n=19$). However, if the 8 most lower samples
13 extracted from meltwater sand (where incomplete bleaching of the K-feldspar IR_{50} signal may be an
14 issue) were rejected, an average age of 119 ± 6 ka ($n=11$) was derived. Buylaert et al. (2012) used the
15 pIRIR(50,290) protocol (Thiel et al., 2011) on four of the same K-rich extracts and obtained an
16 average age of 112 ± 4 ka ($n=4$). Table SI.1 provides an overview of the results of these previous
17 luminescence ages for the specific samples directly relevant to this study.

18 The two remaining samples (H22547 and H22553) come from a section located on the Sula River,
19 Russia (see Murray et al., 2007). They were sampled from a unit of marine sand characterized by
20 fauna tied to the presence of warm coastal waters at the time of sediment deposition. By correlation
21 with Western European pollen records (Funder et al., 2002), Murray et al. (2007) suggest a burial age
22 of around 130 ka for the sediment column, while also stating that the entire sequence was deposited
23 within a span of 5,000 years. Murray et al. (2007) determined an average SAR quartz multi-grain age
24 of 108 ± 2 ka ($n=16$) indicating an underestimate of ~15% of the expected age. However, using the
25 SARA protocol (Mejdahl and Bøtter-Jensen, 1994), they obtained an average quartz age of 124 ± 8 ka
26 ($n=16$) consistent with the age control. Buylaert et al. (2008) measured K-rich feldspar for the same
27 suite of samples using the fading corrected IR_{50} signal and obtained an average age of 107 ± 2 ka

1 (n=16) and Buylaert et al. (2012) measured K-rich feldspar from three of the samples using the
2 pIRIR(50,290) signal and obtained an average age of 121 ± 7 ka (n=3). (see section SI.1 and Table
3 SI.1 for further information).

4 These previously published pIRIR(50,290) ages are consistent with, or slightly younger than, the
5 corresponding quartz ages. This is convincing evidence that the quartz at both these sites was
6 bleached sufficiently at or before deposition to allow accurate dating (Murray et al., 2012, Möller and
7 Murray, 2015).

8 **3 Experimental details**

9 **3.1 Instrumentation**

10 All quartz OSL measurements were made using Risø TL/OSL DA-20 readers (Bøtter-Jensen et al.,
11 2010) equipped with Risø Single Grain Laser attachments (Bøtter-Jensen et al., 2003). For multi-grain
12 measurements ($\varnothing=8$ mm), we stimulated quartz with blue LEDs (470 nm, ~ 80 mW/cm²) and
13 measured the resulting OSL signals through 7.5 mm Hoya U-340 detection filters. We loaded the
14 samples onto stainless steel discs that were prepared with silicone oil in a circular area ($\varnothing = 8$ mm).
15 For single-grain measurements, we stimulated individual quartz grains using a 10 mW Nd:YVO4
16 solid-state diode laser emitting at 532 nm. Individual grains were loaded onto special aluminium discs
17 containing grain holes in a 10x10 array. We used two different hole-size discs, depending on the size
18 fraction being measured. For a size fraction of 90-150 μm (samples 981007, -09 and -13), we used
19 $\varnothing=200$ μm discs and for a size fraction of 180-250 μm , we used $\varnothing=300$ μm (samples H22547 and
20 H22553). For beta irradiation we used calibrated ⁹⁰Sr/⁹⁰Y sources mounted on the readers (Bøtter-
21 Jensen et al., 2010; Hansen et al., 2015; Autzen et al., 2022). The beta sources were calibrated in the
22 same geometry as used for the measurements. The beta sources used in these experiments all have
23 good spatial uniformity (i.e., <5% standard deviation across the sample area) and thus correcting for
24 beta source non-homogeneity (e.g., using the approach developed by Lapp et al., 2012) would not
25 result in significant changes to dose or scatter.

1 3.2 Dose rates and predicted doses

2 We adopt the radionuclide concentrations presented in Murray and Funder (2003) and Murray et al.
3 (2007), which were all measured using high-resolution gamma spectrometry (Murray et al., 1987). We
4 recalculated dose rates (see Table SI.2) using the conversion factors of Cresswell et al. (2018) and
5 derived cosmic ray contributions from Prescott and Hutton (1994). Additionally, we assume an
6 uncertainty of 2% for beta calibration and an internal quartz dose rate of 0.010 ± 0.005 Gy/ka
7 (consistent with Vanderberghe et al., 2008). We use the saturated water content for dose rate
8 calculations as in the original publications (see section SI.2 for further details). Our newly derived
9 dose rates for Gammelmark are larger than those originally published (by about 8%). This difference
10 arises mainly from the conversion factors used. We expect the conversion factors of Cresswell et al.
11 (2018) to generally result in larger dose rates, especially due to changes in ^{40}K factors. It may then
12 seem curious that our estimated Sula dose rates are smaller compared to those originally published
13 (about 6 and 14%). However, the decrease in dose rates for Sula is because we now use 0.01 Gy/ka as
14 the internal dose rate coming from U and Th, whereas in Murray et al. (2007), a value of 0.06 Gy/ka
15 (based on Mejdahl 1987) was assumed. Because of the low radionuclide concentrations for these Sula
16 samples, the net effect is a decrease in total dose rate, despite the use of the conversion factors by
17 Cresswell et al. (2018).

18 For an OSL age to match the independent age control, its equivalent dose should be equal to the age
19 control multiplied by the environmental dose rate. This results in predicted doses of 186 ± 8 Gy
20 (981007), 188 ± 9 Gy (981009), 217 ± 10 Gy (981013), 132 ± 7 Gy (H22547) and 95 ± 6 Gy (H22553)
21 (see Table SI.1). The uncertainties on the predicted doses have been derived from error propagation of
22 the uncertainty assigned to the age control (± 2 ka) and the total uncertainty on the environmental dose
23 rate.

24 3.3 Measurement protocols and dose determination

25 For both multi-grain (MG) and single-grain (SG) measurements, we employed a Single-Aliquot
26 Regenerative (SAR) protocol (Murray and Wintle, 2000) including at least one recycling, one IR
27 depletion (for SG) and one recuperation measurement. We used a preheat of 260°C for 10 s, a cutheat

1 of 160°C and a test dose of 50 Gy. We stimulated MG aliquots for 40 s at 125 °C using the blue LEDs,
2 and in signal analysis, we used the first 0.2 s of the measurement as the signal summation interval and
3 the following 0.4 s as the background summation interval, i.e., early background subtraction, to
4 maximise the fast-component contribution to the signal (Cunningham & Wallinga, 2010). However,
5 we also used late background subtraction (LBG) with a background summation of the last 5 s. The
6 average natural dose ratio of LBG to EBG is 0.94 ± 0.03 ($n=5$ samples) where all individual sample
7 ratios are consistent with unity (see section SI.7.2).

8 With single grains, we stimulated each grain for 1 s at 125 °C using the green laser. We used the first
9 0.05 s as the signal summation interval and the last 0.15 s as the background summation interval, i.e.
10 late background subtraction (LBG). Applying EBG subtraction to SG data will result in the removal
11 of a significant number of grains which is in fact fast-component dominated but appear to have
12 significant medium/slow component because of the differences in effective stimulation power in the
13 single grain measurement system (Thomsen et al., 2015). Thus, we do not consider it practical to
14 apply EBG subtraction to our SG data.

15 Individual dose estimates were derived using “Analyst v4.56” (Duller, 2015). To fit single-grain dose
16 response curves (DRCs), we used a single saturating exponential function forced through the origin
17 (i.e., $L_x/T_x = A \times (1 - \exp(D/D_c))$), where A is the laboratory saturation level and D_c is a measure of
18 the curvature of the dose response curve. To fit multi-grain DRCs, we used the sum of two saturating
19 exponential functions forced through the origin to obtain a good fit to all regeneration points (see Fig.
20 1D and Table SI.5). However, we have also used a single saturating exponential to fit the MG DRCs,
21 but often it was necessary to omit low dose regeneration point to obtain a reasonable fit to the DRCs
22 in the region of interest. The average ratio of the dose estimated using the single saturating
23 exponential fit to the double saturating exponential was 0.96 ± 0.03 ($n=5$ samples), where all individual
24 sample ratios also are consistent with unity (see section SI.7.3). We chose these fitting functions for
25 the following reasons: for SG, a single saturating exponential function adequately captures the
26 observed signal saturation without overfitting the data. For MG, the sum of two saturating
27 exponentials appears better suited to account for late-saturating grains.

1 For BayLum analysis, we specified a saturating exponential function forced through the origin for
2 both single-grain and multi-grain data. This means that we do not use the same fit to model multi-
3 grain DRCs in BayLum as in the frequentist approach. This was a choice of necessity, as it is currently
4 not possible to run BayLum using a double saturating exponential to fit the data. However, we note
5 that when running BayLum using a saturation exponential and linear fit, results are indistinguishable
6 from those obtained using a saturating exponential alone (BayLum EXP-to-BayLum EXP+LIN:
7 1.00 ± 0.02 , $n=5$). For most computations associated with BayLum, we made use of “Sophia” – a High-
8 Performance-Computing-Cluster at DTU (Technical University of Denmark, 2019).

9 We define saturated aliquots as those whose natural sensitivity corrected OSL signal ($L_n/T_n \pm \sigma_n$)
10 cannot be interpolated onto the corresponding DRC, where σ_n is the uncertainty assigned to L_n/T_n
11 based on counting statistics, curve fitting errors and an instrument reproducibility of 0.5% and 2.5%
12 per OSL measurement for multi-grain and single-grain measurements respectively (Thomsen et al.,
13 2005).

14 **3.4 Rejection criteria and dose models**

15 For the multi-grain measurements, in the frequentist approach, we include all aliquots, which had a
16 natural test dose response with an uncertainty known to better than 20% (“ $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ ”) and gave
17 bounded dose estimates (i.e., aliquots that were not in saturation). However, we also investigated the
18 effect of rejecting all aliquots which didn’t have a recycling or IR depletion ratio within $\pm 10\%$ of
19 unity and a recuperation value larger than 5% of the natural. Applying this additional rejection criteria
20 has no effect on the average dose or the observed scatter (see section SI.7.1), i.e., the average dose
21 ratio is 1.001 ± 0.005 ($n=5$ samples) and the individual dose ratios are all consistent with unity. This is
22 commonly observed (e.g., Murray et al., 2021 and references therein). In the Bayesian approach, we
23 use all measured aliquots, including those in saturation.

24 For the single-grain measurements, we tested the application of three rejection criteria procedures: (i)
25 include all grains for which the uncertainty on the natural test dose signal is less than 20 %
26 (“ $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ ”), (ii) include all grains where $s_{Tn} < 20\%$, the recycling ratio is within 2σ of unity, the IR
27 depletion ratio is within 2σ of unity and the recuperation is less than 5% of the natural signal. Below

1 we refer to this set of criteria as the “standard” or “Std.” rejection criteria, as these are commonly used
2 in single-grain dating applications (e.g., Jacobs et al., 2008; Armitage et al., 2011; Demuro et al.,
3 2019; Liu et al., 2022), (iii) include all grains which satisfy “ $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ ” in combination with the D_c
4 criterion (in previous publications referred to as the D_0 criterion, Thomsen et al., 2016). To determine
5 an appropriate D_c threshold value, we plotted the apparent dose (calculated using either the CAM or
6 the ADM) against increasing minimum accepted D_c . We then chose the D_c threshold to be the dose
7 where the apparent central dose intersects the 1:1 line (e.g., Singh et al., 2017). This process is
8 illustrated in the inset in Fig. 1H and 1I. Guo et al. (2017) suggested a revised version of the original
9 D_c criterion in which the D_c threshold is increased until there are no grains in saturation. Although,
10 this approach is likely to fall short if there are any grains for which the measured L_n/T_n values are
11 significantly above the laboratory dose response curve (i.e. “Class 3” grains according to Yoshida et
12 al., 2000). Nevertheless, we also tested this approach. We obtain a CAM dose ratio of 0.98 ± 0.02 ($n=5$
13 samples) but exclude 180 additional grains in the Guo et al. (2017). As a result, the relative CAM dose
14 error goes from between 5.4 and 5.9% (for the five samples) using our chosen D_c criterion, to ranging
15 between 6.5 and 8.4%. In the frequentist single-grain approach, we exclude all grains not giving
16 bounded dose estimates, but both include and exclude them in the Bayesian approach.

17 For multi-grain dose distributions, we compared the arithmetic central dose with the median dose and
18 the central dose determined by BayLum. For single-grain data, we compared the following dose
19 models: (i) CAM, (ii) ADM with intrinsic over-dispersions σ_m of 45% (Gammelmark) and 30%
20 (Sula) Based on Guérin et al. (2017), these σ_m values have been determined from the relative over-
21 dispersions determined in the dose recovery experiments using the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion (see Table SI.4),
22 and (iii) BayLum (assuming a log-normal dose distribution).

23 **4 Luminescence characteristics**

24 **4.1 OSL stimulation curves and dose response curves**

25 **Fig. 1**

26 Based on multi-grain measurements, our samples appear to be fast-component dominated (see Fig. 1),
27 since the OSL stimulation curves of representative multi-grain Gammelmark and Sula samples are

1 very similar to those of Risø Calibration quartz; the latter of which is known to be fast-component
2 dominated with no significant contribution from slower components (Jain et al., 2003; Hansen et al.,
3 2015). Single-grain OSL stimulation curves are significantly more variable (see Fig. 1B and 1C), but
4 according to Thomsen et al. (2015) this is to be expected because the effective stimulation power is
5 likely to vary from grain to grain and thus some fast-component dominated grains are likely to show
6 stimulation curves which are slower than expected. For all Sula multi-grain aliquots, the average
7 recycling ratio is 1.03 ± 0.02 , the IR depletion ratio is 0.952 ± 0.011 and the average recuperation is
8 $-0.03 \pm 0.14\%$ of the natural ($n = 64$). For Gammelmark, the corresponding numbers are 1.004 ± 0.005 ,
9 0.973 ± 0.005 and $0.14 \pm 0.02\%$ of the natural signal ($n = 94$). The median D_c values for the double
10 saturating exponential fits of the DRCs are 25 Gy and 185 Gy ($n = 154$). Typical multi-grain dose
11 response curves are shown in Fig. 1D. Fig. 1E and 1F shows representative single-grain OSL dose
12 response curves for Gammelmark (981009) and Sula (H22553) respectively, highlighting the usual
13 considerable between-grain variability for single-grain measurements (e.g., Duller, 2008). Fig. 1H and
14 1I shows the D_c distribution at the single-grain level for 981009 (predicted dose of 188 Gy) and
15 H22553 (predicted dose of 95 Gy) respectively. We observe a wide dispersion of values, with a great
16 many below 100 Gy. The application of the D_c criterion is shown in the inset, where increasing the D_c
17 threshold for accepting grains into analysis creates an initial increase in the derived dose, after which
18 the curve plateaus. Based on the above, we consider both Gammelmark and Sula quartz suitable for
19 OSL dating.

20 4.2 Recovery of laboratory given doses

21 Fig. 2

22 Laboratory dose recovery experiments (both multi-grain and single-grain) were undertaken by
23 bleaching aliquots, either using the blue LEDs twice for 100 s (with an intervening pause of 10 ks) or
24 in a daylight simulator for >2 h before a known laboratory dose was given and measured. No
25 consistent difference could be seen between the different modes of bleaching and thus dose recovery
26 results have been combined (see Fig. SI.3.1 for further details). Thermal transfer was assessed by
27 measuring the residual dose in a subset of aliquots after blue LED bleaching. Residual doses of

1 0.49±0.09 Gy (n=12, H22553) and 0.65±0.07 Gy (n=12, 981013) was measured and thus thermal
2 transfer is considered small for our samples. The ability of SAR to recover doses administered in the
3 laboratory does not necessarily convey its ability to recover natural doses, but it is the most complete
4 test of protocol performance (Murray et al., 2021). By convention, we deem dose recovery results
5 within 10% of unity as acceptable (Wintle and Murray, 2006).

6 The results of the multi-grain quartz OSL dose recovery experiments are shown in Fig. 2. Our multi-
7 grain SAR protocol recovered doses given to the Gammelmark samples over the full range of tested
8 doses (25-300 Gy), with an overall average dose recovery ratio of 1.00±0.02 (n=9). For the Sula
9 samples, the corresponding average ratio for given doses ranging between 25 and 388 Gy, is
10 1.23±0.04 (n=9); possibly indicating that there is uncorrected sensitivity change in the first
11 measurement cycle. In the first publication on multi-grain quartz OSL for these samples (Murray et
12 al., 2007), it was observed that SAR, on average, underestimated the age control by ~15% (n=16), but
13 that the SARA (single aliquot regeneration added dose) protocol (Mejdahl and Bøtter-Jensen, 1994)
14 on average recovered the age control (ratio of 0.95±0.06 to age control). We have applied the SARA
15 protocol to two samples from Gammelmark and one from Sula and find that all slopes are consistent
16 with unity (average of 1.00±0.02, n=3, see Fig. SI.3.2) and thus the unacceptable SAR dose recovery
17 ratios for the Sula samples are not caused by first cycle sensitivity changes. It is interesting to note
18 that the dose recovery ratios for H22553 are only acceptable for the very high given doses > 300 Gy.

19 In the single grain dose recovery experiments, the given dose range between 25 and 250 Gy (981009
20 and H22553). The results are shown in Fig. 2A (981009), Fig. 2B (H22553) and in Table SI.4.

21 Applying the standard rejection criteria does not have a significant effect on the estimated dose or the
22 dose over-dispersion (OD) for any of the samples, regardless of the dose estimation model used.

23 Using CAM, the average dose ratio of "Std." to "s_{Tn}<20%" is 0.985±0.014 (n=9) and for BayLum, the
24 "Std." to "s_{Tn}<20%" ratio is 0.99±0.02 (n=9). In terms of OD, the same rejection criteria comparison
25 yields a ratio of 1.00±0.03 (n=9). Thus, the only effect of applying the "Std." rejection criteria is to
26 reduce the grain population by about 30%. It is worth noting that, when applying the D_c criterion, the
27 dose estimate increases smoothly as a function of given dose, i.e., the ratio of CAM_{Dc} to CAM_{sTn<20%}

1 increases from 1.07 ± 0.06 at 25 Gy to 1.66 ± 0.18 (at 250 Gy). Thus, application of the D_c criterion
2 increases the recovered dose, but simultaneously decreases the observed OD (see Table SI2). The ratio
3 of OD_{D_c} to $OD_{s_{Tn} < 20\%}$ decreases continuously from 1.00 ± 0.14 (at 50 Gy) to 0.49 ± 0.16 % (at 250 Gy).
4 This ratio is poorly known at 25 Gy (i.e., 0.76 ± 0.26) because relatively few grains were measured at
5 this dose. Application of the D_c criterion also reduces the number of saturated grains to $< 6\%$.
6 Interestingly, the dose estimated by BayLum is relatively insensitive to the application of the D_c
7 criterion (ratio of 0.974 ± 0.013 , $n=9$ samples). A similar effect in dose recovery experiments was
8 previously observed by Heydari and Guérin (2018). As expected, the OD increases as a function of
9 given dose (Thomsen et al., 2012) from 19.8 ± 1.0 % (at 25 Gy) to $51 \pm 5\%$ (at 250 Gy). Applying the
10 D_c criterion gives OD_{D_c} values for all given doses of ~ 25 %. Thus, applying the D_c criterion reduces
11 the apparent intrinsic over-dispersion and makes it independent of dose.

12 Fig. 2A summarises the dose recovery results for 981009 (Gammelmark). A residual dose of 1.2 ± 0.4
13 Gy ($n = 21$, calculated using the un-logged version of CAM, Arnold et al., 2009) was measured, but
14 not subtracted from the dose measured in the dose recovery experiments. The CAM dose recovery
15 ratio decreases with given dose. At a given dose of 70 Gy, the ratio is 1.08 ± 0.02 ($n=278$) and it
16 decreases to 0.68 ± 0.04 ($n = 106$) at 250 Gy. The CAM dose recovery is only acceptable for given
17 doses ranging between 70 and 128 Gy. When the D_c criterion is applied, the same decreasing trend in
18 the absolute dose recovery ratio is observed, but now acceptable dose recoveries (dose recovery ratio
19 within 10% of unity) are in the range between 100 and 250 Gy. Hence, in a laboratory prepared
20 sample, we are able to recover high given doses, even when the majority of grains do not give
21 bounded dose estimates (65% at 250 Gy). However, the application of the D_c criterion in these
22 samples, particularly at high doses, is very expensive in terms of grain-loss (and therefore also
23 precision). For BayLum, the Bayesian approach allows inclusion of saturated grains. If we include all
24 grains with $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ in BayLum, we successfully recover the given dose in the interval 128-250 Gy
25 (average dose recovery ratio of 1.087 ± 0.013 , $n=3$). To test the influence of including saturated grains,
26 we also ran BayLum without including these saturated grains (“BayLum_{no sat}”). We observe acceptable
27 dose recovery ratios in the interval 100-250 Gy (average dose recovery ratio of 0.99 ± 0.03 , $n=4$). Thus,

1 in these dose recovery experiments, it appears that BayLum successfully recover the given dose in the
2 128-250 dose range regardless of whether saturated grains are included or not. This is surprising but
3 probably testifies to the power of the Bayesian approach to dose estimation.

4 Fig. 2B summarises the dose recovery results for H22553 (Sula). A residual dose of 1.2 ± 0.3 Gy ($n =$
5 33, calculated using the un-logged version of CAM, Arnold et al., 2009) was measured, but not
6 subtracted from the dose measured in the dose recovery experiments. In general, we observe the same
7 pattern as for the Gammelmark sample. We have unacceptable dose recovery ratios at low doses (25
8 and 50 Gy) but acceptable dose recoveries for the two other investigated doses for this sample (i.e., 85
9 and 110 Gy).

10 **5 Natural equivalent doses**

11 **5.1 Multi-grain equivalent doses**

12 Table 1 summarizes our multi-grain quartz results. The equivalent doses have been normalized to the
13 predicted dose. Multi-grain dose distributions have relative standard deviations ranging between 20
14 and 38 % (Fig. SI.5) and appear positively skewed.

15 **Table 1**

16 This is often interpreted as a sign of significant incomplete bleaching (e.g., Mellett et al., 2012;
17 Alexanderson and Bernhardson, 2016; Perilla-Castillo et al., 2023). However, these data were
18 obtained using multi-grain aliquots, each containing thousands of grains. It is therefore to be expected
19 that averaging effects would prevent the use of the shape of the dose distribution to detect incomplete
20 bleaching. Also, significant incomplete bleaching of these samples can confidently be ruled out
21 because of the relatively good agreement between K-rich feldspar IRSL ages and quartz ages (Murray
22 and Funder, 2003; Murray et al., 2007; Buylaert et al., 2008, 2011, 2012) despite the vastly different
23 bleaching rates of the two dosimeters (e.g., Murray et al., 2012). However, it is interesting to note that
24 for three of the five samples (981009, 981013, H22553), the natural sensitivity corrected L_n/T_n values
25 appear to be normally distributed (data not shown). This implies that for these samples, it is the
26 interpolation onto the curving part of the laboratory constructed DRCs which is causing the observed
27 skewness. In this case, it can be argued that the median dose is more accurate than the average dose

1 (Murray and Funder, 2003; Murray et al., 2021). However, for these samples there is no significant
2 difference between the average and median natural doses. These are also indistinguishable from the
3 BayLum results (Table 1).

4 In the SARA protocol, aliquots containing their natural doses are given increasing additional beta
5 doses to determine the relationship between the measured dose and the added dose. The purpose of
6 the SARA is to derive an equivalent dose while accounting for natural-cycle sensitivity changes which
7 may occur in quartz when first preheated and measured. In Fig. SI.3.2, we show the SARA results for
8 three samples (981007, 981013 and H22553). The average ratio between our resulting SARA D_e
9 values and the expected doses is 1.03 ± 0.05 ($n=3$).

10 **Fig. 3**

11 Thus, using multi-grain aliquots we can recover the expected dose of the independent age control
12 using both SAR and SARA. So at least in the case of Sula, it appears that inferences made about the
13 performance of SAR using multi-grain dose recovery experiments are of limited value.

14 **Table 2**

15 **5.2 Single-grain equivalent doses**

16 We measured the natural OSL signals from a total of 34,700 individual grains from the five samples
17 investigated here. Of these grains, 5.3% gave an acceptable test dose response (i.e., $s_{Tn} < 20\%$).
18 However, only about 60% of these grains gave bounded dose estimates, i.e., ~40% of the light-giving
19 grains appeared to be in saturation. Table 2 show these characteristics for the individual samples. All
20 five samples have equivalent dose distributions characterized by positive skewness and over-
21 dispersions of more than 40% (see Fig. SI.6 and Table 2). All dose distributions contain a wide range
22 of dose estimates. For instance, in sample H22547, estimates range from 1 ± 8 Gy to 457 ± 169 Gy,
23 while sample 981007 estimates range from 1 ± 2 Gy to 457 ± 141 Gy. We observe the presence of few
24 grains with doses consistent with zero (average: $3.7 \pm 0.2\%$ of grains per sample, $n = 5$). These grains
25 are unlikely to arise from post-depositional mixing at these depths (>3 m) and all grain holes in the
26 single-grain discs were screened for contamination (i.e., stuck grains) prior to use. Laboratory

1 contamination can never be completely ruled out, but we do not consider it to be a likely explanation.
2 We here note that reporting on apparent zero-dose grains in old samples is not unusual (e.g., Arnold
3 and Roberts, 2011; Singh et al., 2017) and in the absence of convincing external reasons (e.g., post-
4 depositional mixing) for rejecting these grains, we must accept that these outliers are simply an
5 indication of the scatter in these measurements.

6 When rejecting grains due only to the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion, we see from Table 2 that for the
7 Gammelmark samples (9810xx), about 45% of grains do not give bounded dose estimates, i.e., they
8 are lost from frequentist analysis due to saturation. This is of great concern, because it must mean that
9 the grains for which a bounded dose estimate could be derived are likely to underestimate the true
10 burial age (e.g., Thomsen et al., 2016). Additionally, for the Gammelmark samples, we also observe
11 large over-dispersion values, with an average value of $62.7 \pm 0.7\%$ ($n = 3$). In the literature, it has been
12 suggested that single-grain over-dispersion values larger than 20% could suggest significant
13 incomplete bleaching (e.g., Olley et al., 2004; Arnold et al., 2009). However, this can confidently be
14 ruled out here, because of the previously published good agreement with feldspar ages (Buylaert et
15 al., 2008, 2011, 2012). In addition, the intrinsic overdispersion (derived from dose recovery
16 experiments) are significantly larger than this threshold value; they range between $46 \pm 4\%$ and $51 \pm$
17 5% for given doses of 180 Gy and 250 Gy (Table SI.4). The Sula samples have fewer grains in
18 saturation ($\sim 35\%$) and smaller over-dispersion values (i.e., $58 \pm 3\%$ and $42 \pm 4\%$ for H22547 and
19 H22553 respectively). The difference in over-dispersion between the two Sula samples could imply
20 that a significant portion of the over-dispersion is in fact due to the curvature of the region of DRC-
21 interpolation and not incomplete bleaching, since the sample with the lower over-dispersion is also the
22 sample with a lower predicted dose (95 ± 6 Gy vs 132 ± 7 Gy).

23 Applying the “Std.” rejection criteria (recycling ratio, OSL IR depletion ratio and recuperation) does
24 not make a significant difference in terms of central dose, overdispersion or proportion of grains in
25 saturation from accepting all grains giving a detectable natural test dose signal (here defined as
26 $s_{Tn} < 20\%$). While examples exist of “Std.” rejection criteria having an effect (e.g., Jakobs et al., 2006),
27 observations like ours have been reported numerous times in the literature (e.g., Thomsen et al., 2012;

1 Geach et al., 2015; Guérin et al., 2015a; Kristensen et al., 2015; Thomsen et al., 2016; Guérin et al.,
2 2017; Singh et al., 2017; Murray et al., 2021; Marquet et al., 2023). Only with the D_c criterion are we
3 able to reduce the relative number of grains in saturation, i.e., the average saturation of 40 ± 2 % is
4 reduced to 9 ± 2 %. The over-dispersion is also reduced, from an average relative OD of 58 ± 4 % to
5 41 ± 3 %.

6 In the following, we focus only on results from application of the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion, unless otherwise
7 specified. Generally, CAM doses are significantly smaller than ADM doses for these five samples
8 (average CAM-to-ADM ratio is 0.914 ± 0.014 , $n=5$). However, both CAM and ADM are consistently
9 and significantly smaller than the BayLum doses (average ADM-to-BayLum ratio is 0.63 ± 0.04 , $n=5$).
10 For BayLum, it makes a significant difference if grains which give no bounded estimates in
11 frequentist analysis are included or not. The average ratio between BayLum and BayLum only giving
12 bounded dose estimates (BayLum_{no sat}) is 1.29 ± 0.05 ($n=5$). This contrasts with what we observed in
13 the dose recovery tests, where the BayLum results were largely unaffected by the inclusion or
14 omission of the saturated grains. Applying the D_c criterion decreases the difference between ADM and
15 BayLum by $\sim 20\%$ (average ADM _{D_c} -to-BayLum _{D_c} ratio is 0.79 ± 0.03 , $n=5$), partly because ADM
16 estimates increase (by 28 ± 7 %, $n=5$) and partly because BayLum estimates decrease (by 6.0 ± 1.1 %, $n=5$).
17

18 **5.3 Comparisons with predicted doses from the independent age control**

19 **Fig. 4**

20 Fig. 3 shows the multi-grain results obtained using the arithmetic average of the multi-grain dose
21 results. We observe that four of five multi-grain results are consistent with unity within 2σ (MG doses
22 to Predicted doses range between 0.84 ± 0.05 and 1.15 ± 0.10). Only the highest dose sample (981013)
23 underestimates the age control (measured MG dose to predicted dose of 0.84 ± 0.05). For the
24 Gammelmark samples, the average ratio between multi-grain SAR equivalent doses presented here
25 and multi-grain SAR equivalent doses published by Murray and Funder (2003) is 1.05 ± 0.03 ($n = 3$)
26 consistent within 2σ . However, for the Sula samples, our doses are consistently larger than those of
27 Murray et al. (2007). The average ratio between SAR equivalent doses presented here and those

1 published by Murray et al. (2007) is 1.38 ± 0.16 ($n = 2$). It may be that corrections to the dose absorbed
2 by calibration quartz would increase past equivalent doses by up to 8% (Autzen et al., 2022), but this
3 increase is incidentally almost accounted for using updated conversion factors (Cresswell et al., 2018)
4 and the assumed internal dose rate in quartz (based on Vanderberghe et al., 2008).

5 With respect to the single-grain measurements, Fig. 3B clearly shows that both CAM and AMD dose
6 models severely underestimate the age control for four of the five samples with $\sim 45\%$ and $\sim 40\%$,
7 respectively. Only for the sample with the lowest dose (H22553 with a predicted dose of 95 ± 5 Gy)
8 can we recover the predicted dose within 3σ (CAM and ADM ratios of 0.84 ± 0.06 and 0.87 ± 0.06 ,
9 respectively). When we apply the D_c criterion (Fig. 3B) the average ADM_{D_c} -to-predicted dose ratio
10 improves to 0.75 ± 0.06 (for H22553 it is 0.94 ± 0.07). However, except for H22553, this ratio is still
11 unacceptably small. BayLum-to-predicted dose ratios range from 0.75 ± 0.07 to 1.14 ± 0.08 , with only
12 the Sula samples consistent with unity, but only when saturated grains are included. Without these
13 grains, the average ratio is 0.74 ± 0.07 . If we used BayLum on the D_c filtered data sets, the ratios are on
14 average decreased by $6.0 \pm 1.1\%$ in contrast to the dose recovery experiments where application of the
15 D_c criterion did not result in a significant difference.

16 In Fig. 4 we plot the ratios of measured equivalent doses and predicted doses as a function of the
17 relative number of the light giving grains appearing to be in saturation (i.e., n_{sat}). For all dose models
18 there appears to be a correlation between the proportion of saturated grains and how well the
19 predicted dose can be recovered.

20 BayLum is most successful in recovering the predicted dose for the two Sula samples (H22547 and
21 H22553), which also have the smallest proportion of saturated grains. For the three Gammelmark
22 samples (981007, -09 and -13), not even BayLum is able to recover the predicted dose, and there is a
23 clear correlation between the recovery ratio and the relative number of saturated grains.

24 However, why is it that we recover the age control using multi-grain aliquots and performs so poorly
25 using single grain measurements? If we sum our single grain data (before analysing the data), do we
26 then obtain the same results as we do using true multi-grain measurements? To investigate this, we

1 have made “synthetic” multi-grain aliquots from our single-grain data (using the “*Sum all grains*”
2 function in Analyst) and processed those as the true multi-grain data (see Table SI.7.4). Only for
3 sample H22553 (the sample with the lowest dose) are the synthetic aliquot doses indistinguishable
4 from the true multi-grain measurements. For the remaining samples, the synthetic aliquots
5 underestimate the true multi-grain doses by $21\pm 3\%$.

6 **6 Discussion**

7 Had we a-priori chosen to use quartz single-grain OSL dating using the standard procedures outlined
8 herein, we would have severely underestimated the burial ages. For example, the mean $ADM_{\text{Std.}}$ -to-
9 predicted dose ratio is 0.57 ± 0.09 ($n=5$). If we had been concerned with the level of saturation, and
10 therefore applied the D_c criterion in order to remove grains not able to record the absorbed dose (but
11 giving bounded dose estimates nonetheless), the number of saturated grains would be reduced to
12 between 3 and 12 % of grains, but we would still significantly underestimate the ages using either
13 CAM or ADM (ADM_{D_c} -to-predicted dose ratio: 0.75 ± 0.06 , $n=5$). Had we instead chosen to date these
14 samples using both conventional single-grain and multi-grain procedures, we would have been left
15 with contrasting results, i.e., the average $CAM_{\text{Std.}}$ -to-multi-grain ratio is 0.57 ± 0.06 ($n=5$). Given no
16 external source of support, such as independent age control, we might favour single-grain results
17 since: “... *the OSL characteristics of each grain have been individually evaluated against objective*
18 *quality assurance criteria, and only grains considered reliable contribute to the final burial dose*
19 *estimate*” (Arnold et al., 2013). This would clearly not be a suitable choice for these samples. Had we
20 a-priori chosen the standard multi-grain approach, we would have obtained accurate ages, unaware
21 that our dose estimates derive from averaging effects of a large fraction of grains whose signals do not
22 interpolate onto their individual dose response curves. To explain why our more conventional single-
23 grain procedures underestimate the age control so dramatically, one could argue that we should not at
24 all be surprised given that 30-45% of the light giving grains are in apparent dose saturation for these
25 samples. If saturated grains more likely belong to a higher-than-median dose sub-population, having
26 to take these grains out of analysis would bias our estimates toward lower doses (Murray and Funder,
27 2003). But of course, we still significantly underestimate the age control when applying the D_c .

1 criterion, which aims at eliminating saturation effects. Even if we are able to account for why single-
2 grain procedures perform so poorly for these samples, we are still left with the question of why our
3 multi-grain procedure performs so well.

4 From basic principles, one would expect that the sum of the OSL signals from individual grains would
5 equal that of multi-grain, if we assume that there is no significant effect of using different stimulation
6 wavelengths and different stimulation powers. It has previously been shown that there is no
7 significant difference in DRC shape between using blue (MG dose estimation) and green (SG dose
8 estimation) light stimulation, but that the high power green laser stimulation used in the single grain
9 system gives a significant reduction in the average D_c value of $23\pm 3\%$ (Thomsen et al., 2015). Thus,
10 one should not expect the sum of the single grain OSL data to be equal to that of multi-grain data
11 because of this difference. In addition, Thomsen et al. (2015) also showed that the large variability
12 observed in the shape of quartz single grain stimulation curves is largely caused by varying effective
13 stimulation power, so summing individual single grain data to produce synthetic small multi-grain
14 aliquots should not necessarily be expected to be equivalent to true multi-grain measurements. Hence
15 it is not surprising that the synthetic multi-grain aliquots are significantly different from the true
16 multi-grain data (except for sample H22553).

17 If we apply BayLum to our single-grain data, then we are able to recover the expect dose on average.
18 Using either only the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion (average BayLum-to-age control dose ratio of 0.95 ± 0.08 ,
19 $n=5$) or the commonly used rejection criteria (“Std.”) (average BayLum-to-age control dose ratio of
20 0.96 ± 0.08 , $n=5$), we recover the age control within 1σ - but only when saturated grains are also
21 included in the BayLum model. If left out of the analysis, BayLum underestimates doses in a similar
22 fashion to the D_c criterion with ADM. However, it should be noted that for samples with more than
23 40% of the grains in saturation, BayLum is also having trouble recovering the expected dose, i.e., the
24 ratio is 0.82 ± 0.06 ($n=3$ samples). Given that the most accurate doses are obtained using standard
25 multi-grain analysis or single-grain measurements analysed with BayLum (including saturated
26 grains), is it then the case that saturated grains provide information necessary for accurate burial dose
27 estimation at high doses (where incomplete bleaching can confidently be ruled out)? One contrary

1 argument is that we should expect larger net dose estimates when saturated grains are included in the
2 analysis; for samples outside the dating range, this will create estimates closer to the true age by
3 chance. Of course, it is then curious that our estimates, on average, match the predicted doses and do
4 so over a range of 100 Gy. In contrast, in 4 out of 5 samples, conventional single-grain procedures
5 significantly underestimate in this dose range (the exception is sample H22553, with a predicted dose
6 of 95 ± 6 Gy).

7 **7 Conclusions**

8 In this study we investigate the accuracy of quartz OSL multi-grain and single-grain techniques on
9 five previously published samples of known age (128 ± 2 ka) – three from Gammelmark, Denmark,
10 and two from Sula, Russia. For the single-grain analysis, we compare three sets of acceptance criteria:
11 (i) all grains with a relative uncertainty on the natural test dose response ($s_{Tn} < 20\%$) is included, (ii)
12 only grains with $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ and a set of “standard” acceptance criteria are included, i.e., both the
13 recycling ratio and the IR depletion ratio are within 2σ of unity, and the recuperation (measured after
14 the largest regeneration dose) is less than 5% of the natural signal, (iii) grains with $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ and with
15 a D_c value larger than a certain threshold value are included. We compare equivalent doses to the
16 predicted doses from the independent age control using three different dose models: ADM, CAM and
17 BayLum. For our samples, we find that standard multi-grain measurements on average recover the
18 age control, but that standard single-grain analysis using CAM severely underestimates the age
19 control of all samples, i.e., the CAM-to-Predicted dose ratios range between 0.43 ± 0.03 and 0.84 ± 0.07
20 ($n=5$). Reducing the number of grains likely to be affected by saturation effects through the
21 application of the D_c criterion improves the accuracy, but the estimated doses still significantly
22 underestimate the age control (ratios range between 0.63 ± 0.05 and 0.94 ± 0.08), except for the sample
23 with the smallest absorbed dose (H22553) which is consistent with the age control. Using BayLum,
24 the dose estimate is consistent with age control for only two of the five samples.

25 On the other hand, four of five MG measurements come within 2σ of predicted values. We conclude
26 that for these samples, multi-grain OSL dating of quartz is the simplest and most accurate

1 chronometer. Our results may have considerable implications for the reliability of published single-
2 grain OSL dating of quartz in the 100-200 Gy natural dose range.

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5

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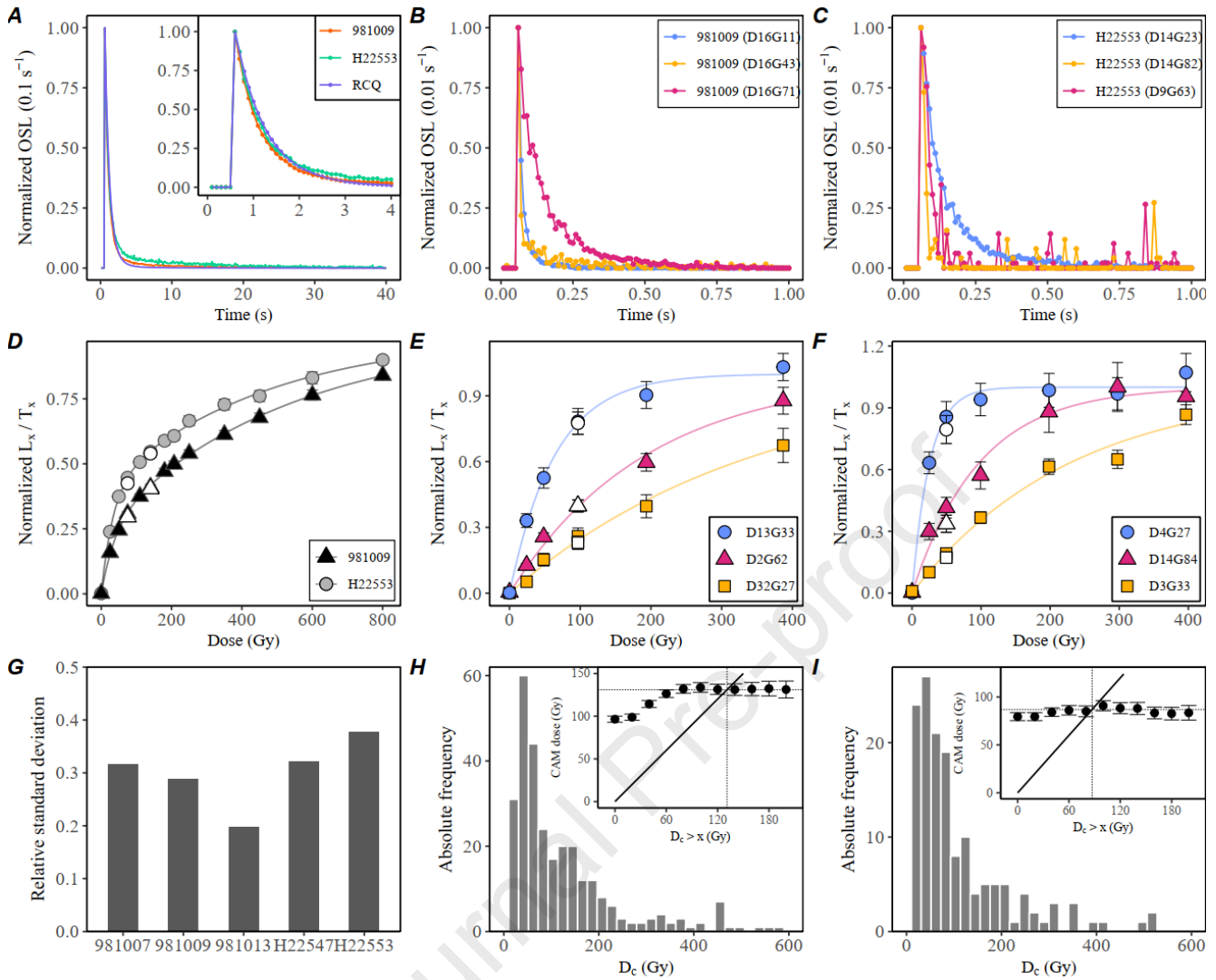


Fig.1. Luminescence characteristics for Gammelmark and Sula samples. Left-hand graphs (A, D, G) show multi-grain (MG) characteristics. Middle and right-hand graphs (B, C, E, F, H, I), show single-grain (SG) characteristics. (A) Representative normalized MG stimulation curves for 981009, H22553 and Risø Calibration Quartz (RCQ). (B) SG stimulation curves for three individual grains from sample 981009. (C) SG stimulation curves for three individual grains from sample H22553. (D) Representative MG dose response curves (DRCs) from Sula (sample H22553) and Gammelmark (sample 981009). Open symbols indicate recycling ratios (E) DRCs of three individual Gammelmark grains (sample 981009). Open symbols indicate recycling ratios (F) DRCs of three individual Sula grains (sample H22553). Open symbols indicate recycling ratios. (G) MG relative standard deviation of natural dose estimates for each sample. (H) SG D_c -distribution from 981009 ($n=339$). The inset shows the effect of omitting single-grain dose estimates based on their D_c values for CAM doses. (I) SG D_c -distribution from H22553 ($n = 104$). The inset shows the effect of omitting single-grain dose estimates based on their D_c values for CAM doses.

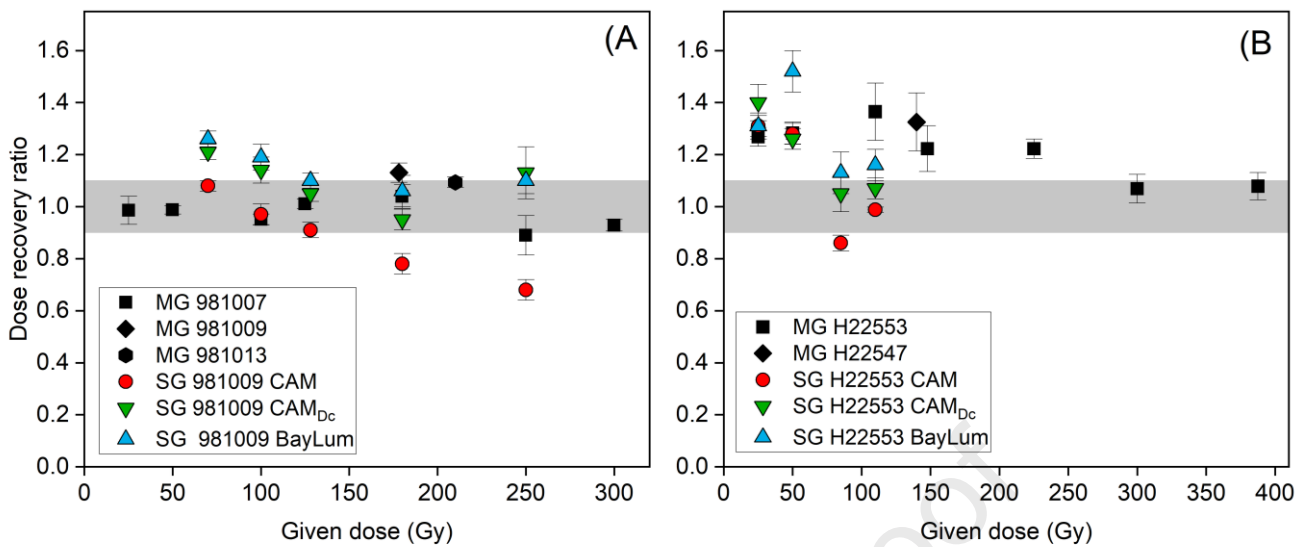


Fig.2. Quartz SAR dose recovery ratios (measured dose divided by given dose) as a function of given dose for A) Gammelmark (981007, 981009 and 981013) and B) Sula (H22547 and H22553). “MG” is multi-grain and “SG” is single grain. Prior to giving any dose, the aliquots were bleached using either blue LED stimulation (MG and SG) or the SOL2 simulator (MG only). No detectable difference is observed between the two bleaching modes and the results are combined (see Fig.SI.3.1 for further information). For “CAM” (red circles) the measured dose has been calculated using the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion. For “CAM_{Dc}” (green downward facing triangles) the measured dose has been calculated the using the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion in combination with the D_c criterion. For “BayLum” (blue upward facing triangles) the measured dose has been calculated using the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion including saturated grains. All SG data is tabulated in Tabel SI.4.

Table 1. Summary of predicted doses and multi-grain quartz natural doses normalized to the age control. “Predicted D_e ” is the dose expected from the age control (128 ± 2 ka) and the total dose rate (see Table SI.2). “ n ” is the number of aliquots used in equivalent dose estimation and “ n_{sat} ” is the number of aliquots which did not give a bounded dose estimate. We show dose estimates for the arithmetic average (“Av.”), Median and BayLum. Uncertainties are given at 68% confidence. The brackets for the BayLum results indicate the 68% CI. Individual uncertainties are the propagated uncertainties from the measured and predicted doses.

Sample	Predicted D_e (Gy)	n	n_{sat} (%)	Av. D_e	Median D_e	BayLum D_e
981007	186 ± 8	32	11%	0.92 ± 0.07	0.91 ± 0.08	0.99 [0.94,1.04]
981009	188 ± 9	33	8%	0.98 ± 0.07	0.98 ± 0.08	1.00 [0.89,1.05]
981013	217 ± 10	29	9%	0.84 ± 0.05	0.84 ± 0.05	0.91 [0.86,0.95]
H22547	132 ± 7	26	10%	1.15 ± 0.10	1.07 ± 0.09	1.21 [1.08,1.30]
H22553	95 ± 6	34	3%	1.12 ± 0.10	1.12 ± 0.12	1.21 [1.14,1.27]

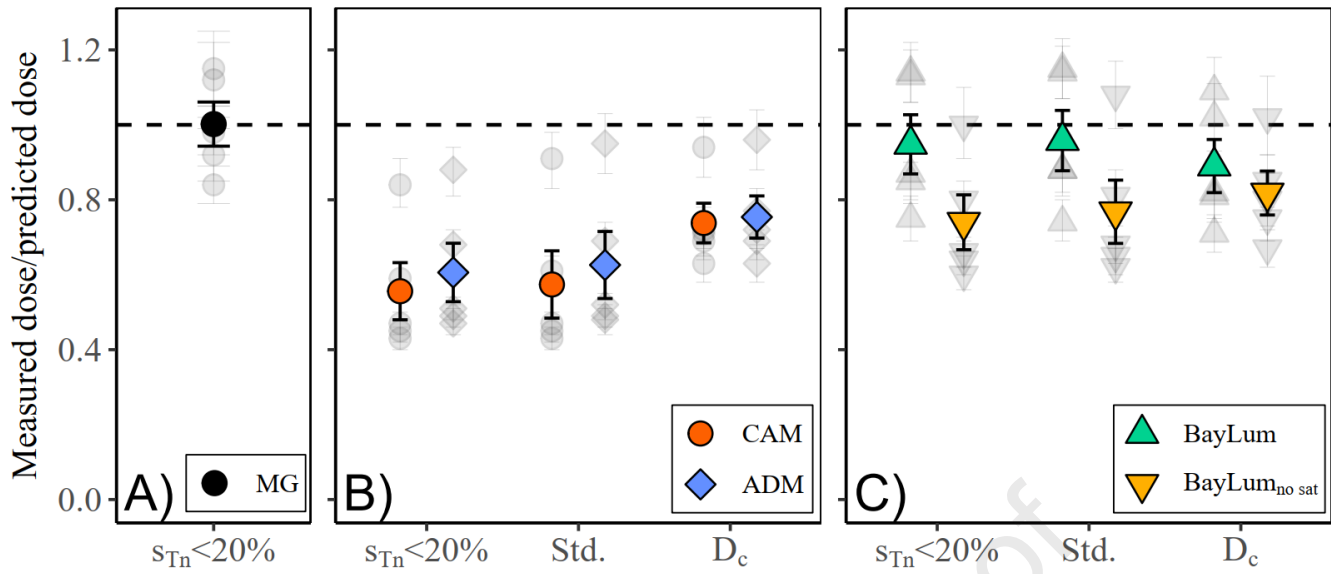


Fig. 3. Ratios of measured equivalent doses to predicted equivalent doses as a function of rejection criteria and dose model. A) Multi-grain quartz OSL results using the arithmetic average. B) Single-grain quartz OSL results using the Central Age Model (CAM) and Average Dose Model (ADM). For ADM, we use an intrinsic OD of 45% for the Gammelmark samples and 30% for the Sula samples (see main text). C) Single-grain quartz OSL results using BayLum - both with the inclusion of grains that do not give bounded dose estimates in frequentist analysis (upward facing triangles) and without these (downward facing triangles). Individual sample ratios are shown as light grey symbols.

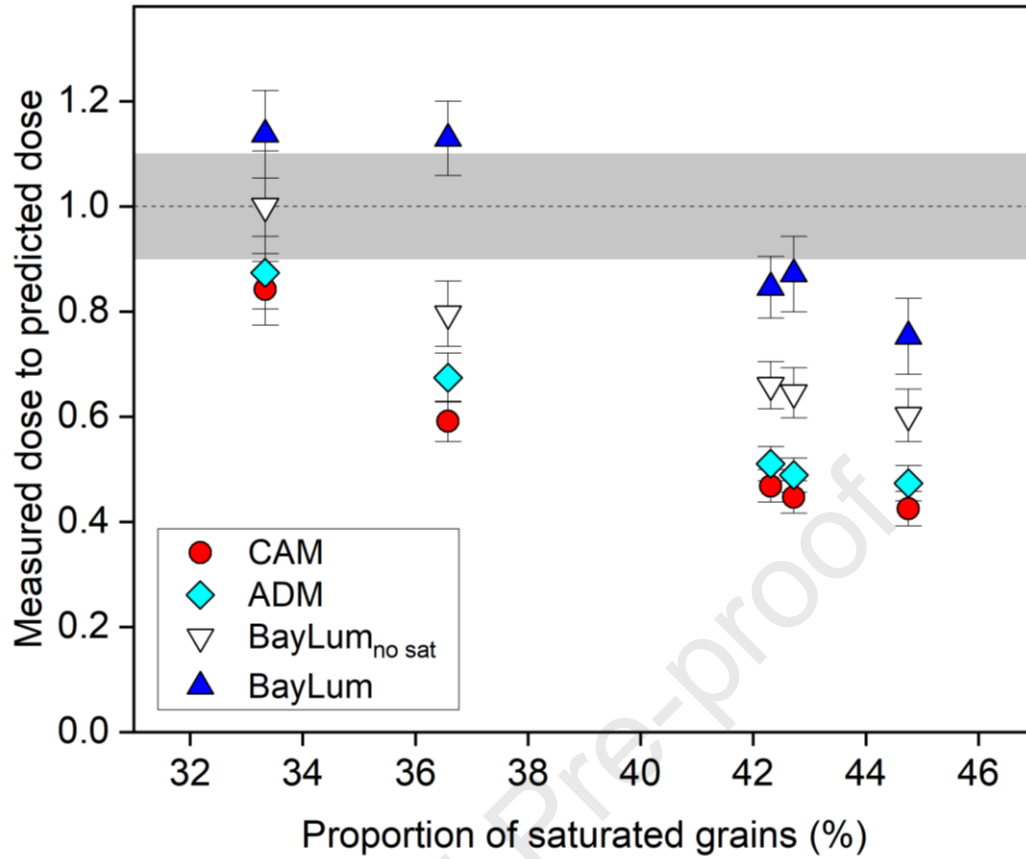


Fig. 4. Ratios of measured to predicted single grain dose as function of the relative number of grains in saturation (%). The data shown are all obtained using the $s_{Tn} < 20\%$ criterion. The horizontal dashed line indicates unity and the grey band indicates $\pm 10\%$ of unity.

Table 2. Overview of single-grain results for CAM, ADM and BayLum dose models using different rejection criteria: i) the uncertainty on the natural test dose is less than 20% (“ $s_{Tn}<20\%$ ”), ii) $s_{Tn}<20\%$ in combination with the recycling and the IR depletion ratio within 2σ of unity and the recuperation is less than 5% of the natural signal, iii) $s_{Tn}<20\%$ in combination with the D_c criterion (see text for details). “ N ” denotes the total number of grains measured while “ n ” represents the number of grains giving bounded dose estimates. “ n_{sat} ” denotes the number of light-giving grains which did not give bounded dose estimates because of saturation effects. “BayLum_{no sat}” is the BayLum dose estimated obtained by only including grain giving bounded dose estimates in the analysis, whereas “BayLum” is the BayLum dose estimate obtained by including grains deemed to be in saturation in the standard frequentist analysis. Results are given at 68% confidence for each of our chosen rejection criteria schemes. Also shown are relative over-dispersion values (OD). For ADM, we use an intrinsic OD of 45% for the Gammelmark samples (9810xx) and 30% for the Sula samples (H225xx).

Sample	N	Rejection criteria	n	n/N (%)	n_{sat} (%)	OD (%)	CAM (Gy)	ADM (Gy)	BayLum _{no sat} (Gy)	BayLum (Gy)
H22547	8,900	$s_{Tn}<20\%$	293	3%	37%	58 ± 3	78 ± 3	89 ± 4	105 [99, 109]	149 [146, 154]
		Std.	254	3%	38%	59 ± 4	80 ± 4	91 ± 4	107 [100, 112]	150 [147, 154]
		D_c	158	2%	12%	52 ± 4	93 ± 5	102 ± 5	112 [104, 119]	135 [125, 143]
H22553	6,500	$s_{Tn}<20\%$	104	2%	33%	42 ± 4	80 ± 4	83 ± 4	95 [87, 101]	108 [105, 112]
		Std.	75	1%	39%	41 ± 5	86 ± 5	90 ± 5	102 [97, 109]	109 [107, 113]
		D_c	63	1%	10%	32 ± 4	89 ± 5	91 ± 5	97 [90, 107]	103 [99, 111]
981007	7,000	$s_{Tn}<20\%$	158	2%	45%	64 ± 4	79 ± 5	88 ± 5	112 [104, 118]	140 [128, 147]
		Std.	133	2%	48%	64 ± 5	80 ± 5	89 ± 5	116 [109, 123]	138 [128, 144]
		D_c	64	1%	10%	40 ± 5	117 ± 7	117 ± 7	125 [118, 132]	132 [124, 140]
981009	7,600	$s_{Tn}<20\%$	300	4%	42%	62 ± 3	88 ± 4	96 ± 4	124 [118, 129]	159 [151, 165]
		Std.	252	3%	46%	63 ± 4	88 ± 4	97 ± 4	128 [121, 134]	166 [157, 173]
		D_c	95	1%	8%	46 ± 4	129 ± 7	129 ± 7	141 [132, 150]	154 [142, 163]
981013	4,700	$s_{Tn}<20\%$	240	5%	43%	62 ± 4	97 ± 5	106 ± 5	140 [133, 148]	189 [176, 198]
		Std.	229	5%	43%	60 ± 4	98 ± 5	106 ± 5	141 [133, 149]	191 [178, 201]
		D_c	61	1%	3%	37 ± 5	157 ± 9	157 ± 9	174 [158, 183]	176 [162, 187]

Declaration of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

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