

Onyx: A Programmable Accelerator for Sparse Tensor Algebra

Kalhan Koul¹, Maxwell Strange¹, Jackson Melchert¹, Alex Carsello¹, Yuchen Mei¹, Olivia Hsu¹, Taeyoung Kong¹, Po-Han Chen¹, Huifeng Ke¹, Keyi Zhang¹, Qiaoyi Liu¹, Gedeon Nyengele¹, Akhilesh Balasingam¹, Jayashree Adivarahan¹, Ritvik Sharma¹, Zhouhua Xie¹, Christopher Torng², Joel Emer³, Fredrik Kjolstad¹, Mark Horowitz¹, Priyanka Raina¹

¹Stanford University, CA, USA; ²University of Southern California, CA, USA; ³MIT, MA, USA

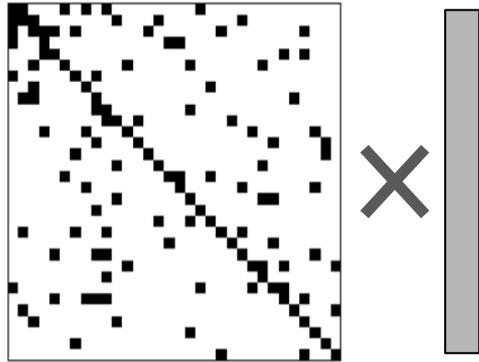
Sparse Applications

- Applications ranging from scientific computing to machine learning can have **extremely** sparse inputs

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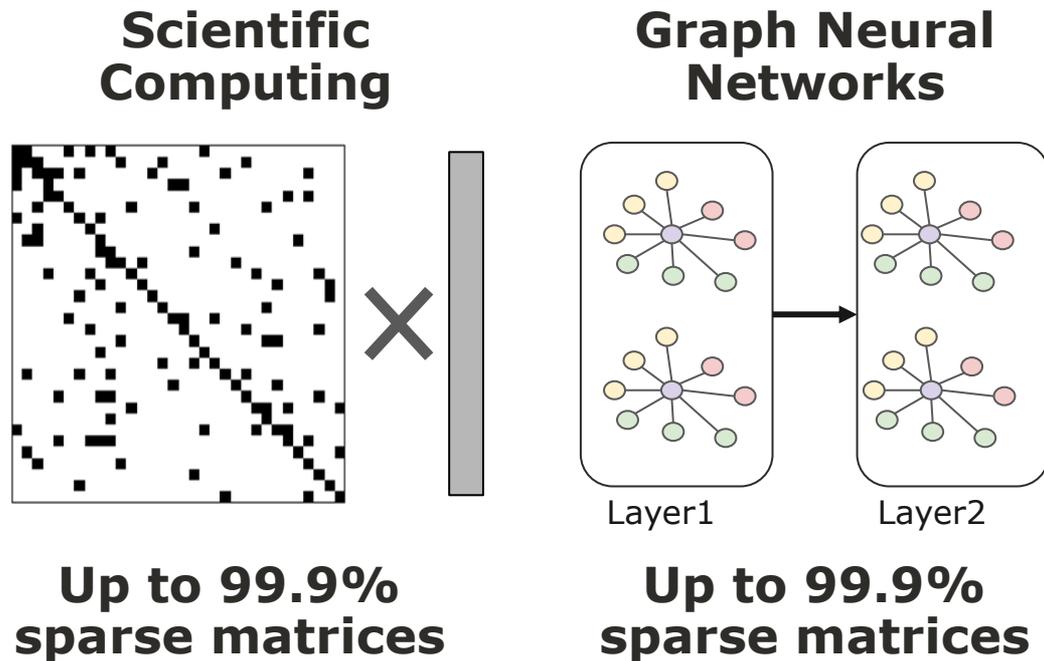
Scientific Computing



**Up to 99.9%
sparse matrices**

Sparse Applications

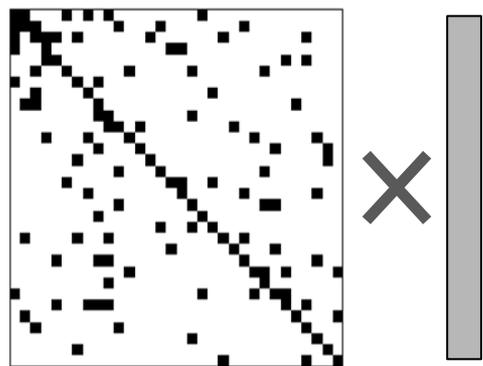
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Sparse Applications

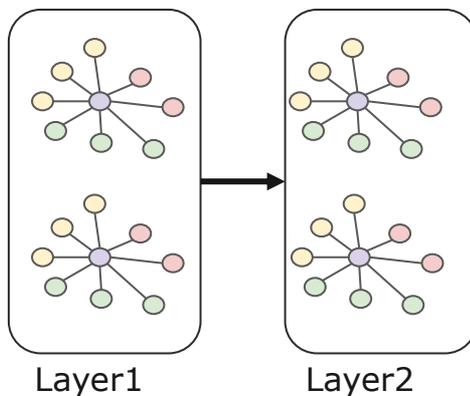
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Scientific Computing



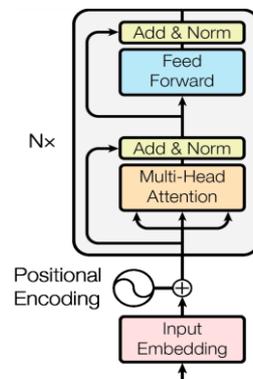
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Graph Neural Networks



**Up to 99.9%
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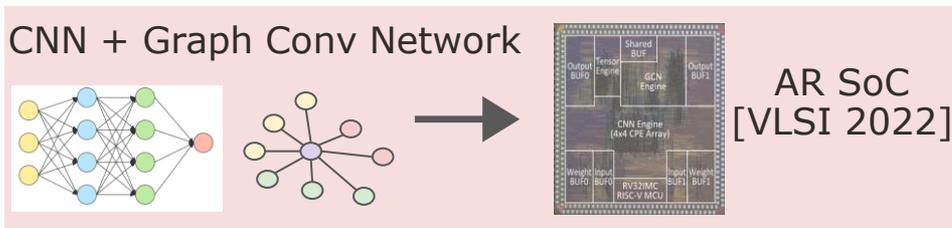
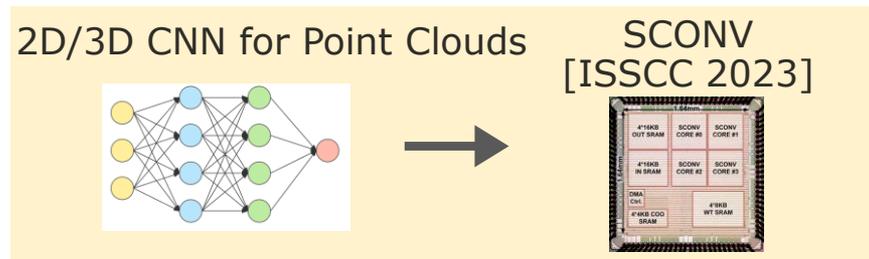
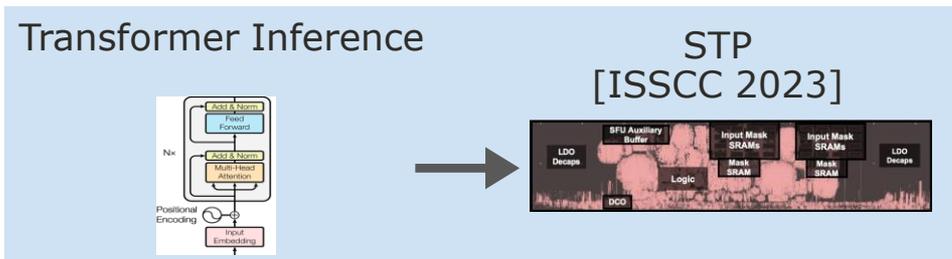
Sparse Transformers



**Up to 93%
sparse matrices**

End-to-End Sparse Accelerators

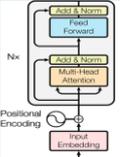
- Hardware accelerators for end-to-end applications exploiting sparsity are fixed function and become obsolete as applications evolve



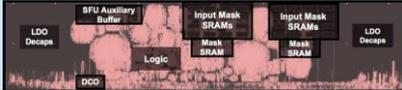
End-to-End Sparse Accelerators

- Hardware accelerators for end-to-end applications exploiting sparsity are fixed function and become obsolete as applications evolve

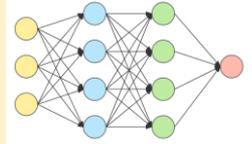
Transformer Inference



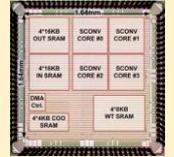
STP
[ISSCC 2023]



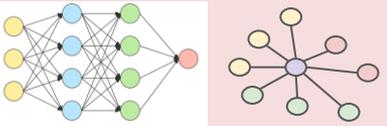
2D/3D CNN for Point Clouds



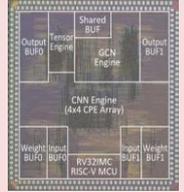
SCONV
[ISSCC 2023]



CNN + Graph Conv Network



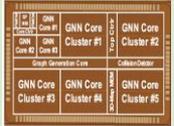
AR SoC
[VLSI 2022]



3D Navigation



GPPU
[VLSI 2023]

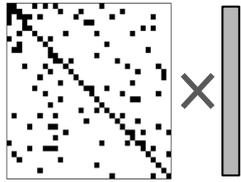


- ✓ Energy and area efficient
- ✗ Accelerate a fixed type of application
- ✗ Do not adapt to evolving application domains

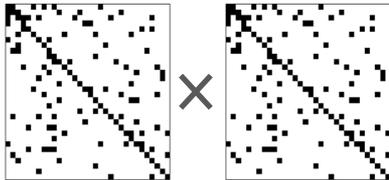
Kernel-Level Sparse Accelerators

- Sparse kernel accelerators focus only on sparse matrix-matrix or matrix-vector multiplication

Supported



matrix times vector

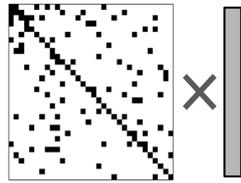


matrix times matrix

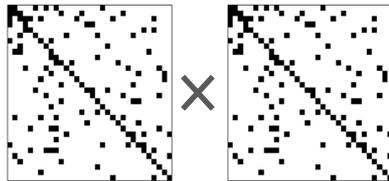
Kernel-Level Sparse Accelerators

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- These accelerators leave out support for high-dimensional tensors, multi-input complex expressions and fusion

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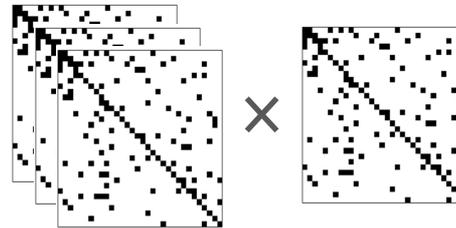


matrix times vector

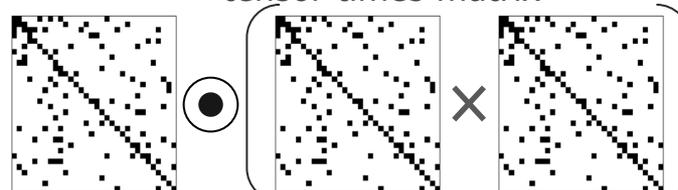


matrix times matrix

Unsupported



tensor times matrix

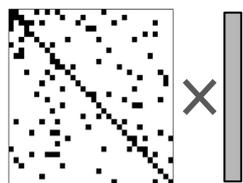


sampled matrix times matrix

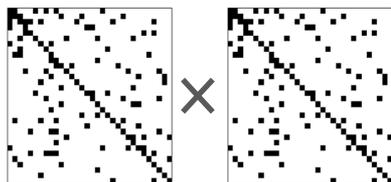
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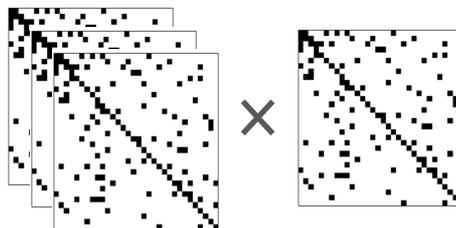


matrix times vector

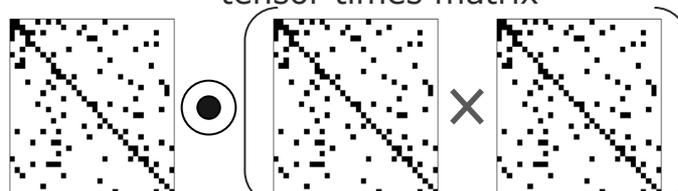


matrix times matrix

Unsupported



tensor times matrix

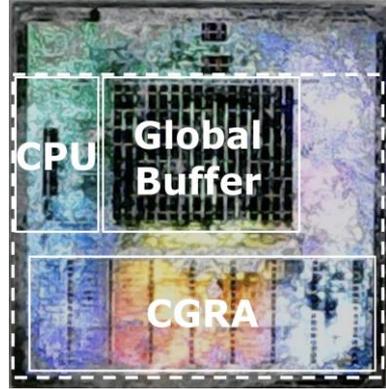


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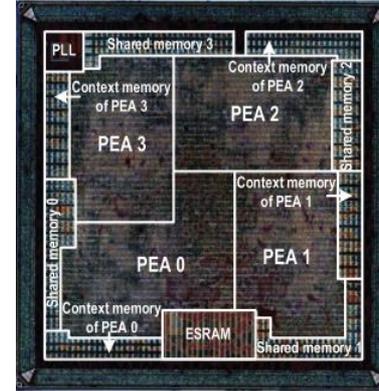
Require a highly programmable accelerator!

Programmable Accelerators

- But most programmable accelerators **only** focus on dense applications



Amber CGRA
[VLSI 2022]

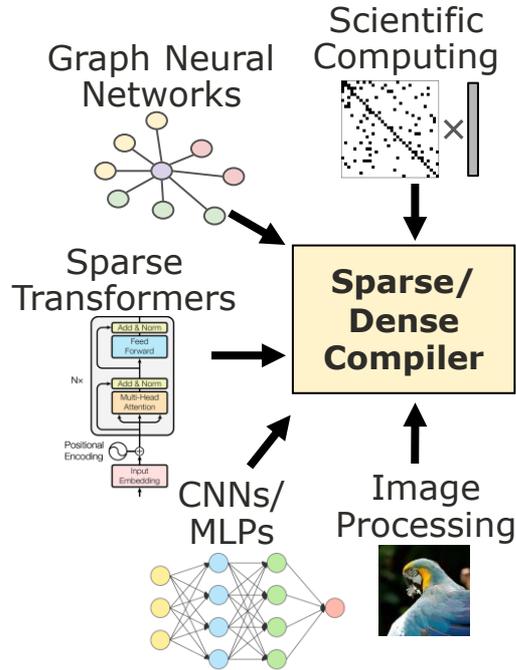


MIMO CGRA
[JSSC 2020]

- ✓ Energy and area efficiency approaching ASICs
- ✓ Accelerate a domain of applications
- ✓ Adaptable to evolving dense application domains

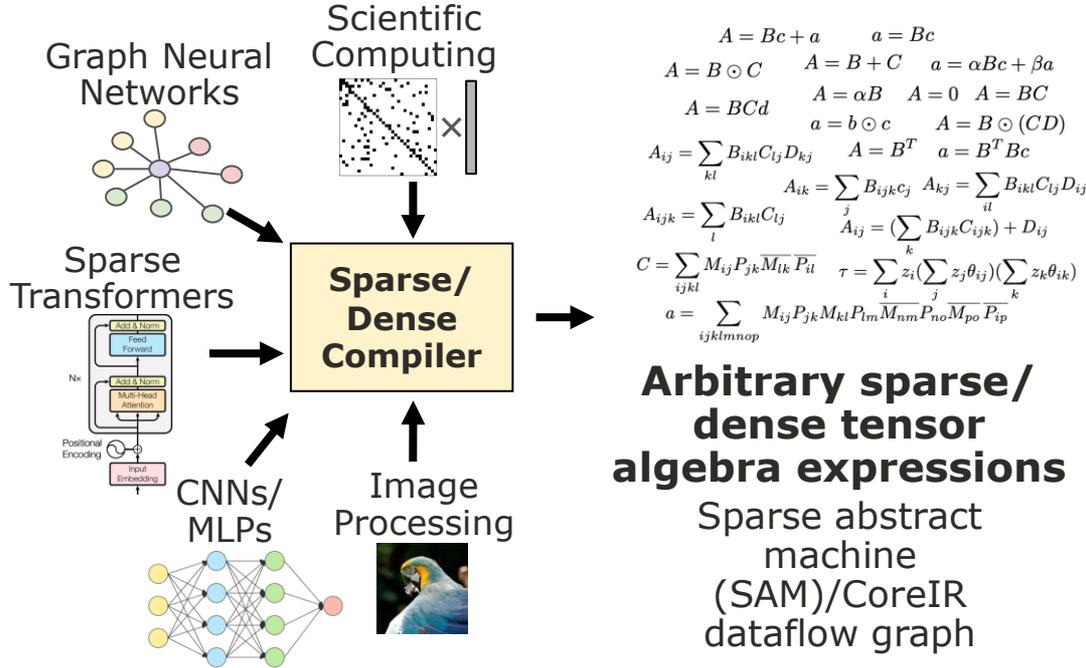
Onyx

- Programmable accelerator for any tensor algebra expression



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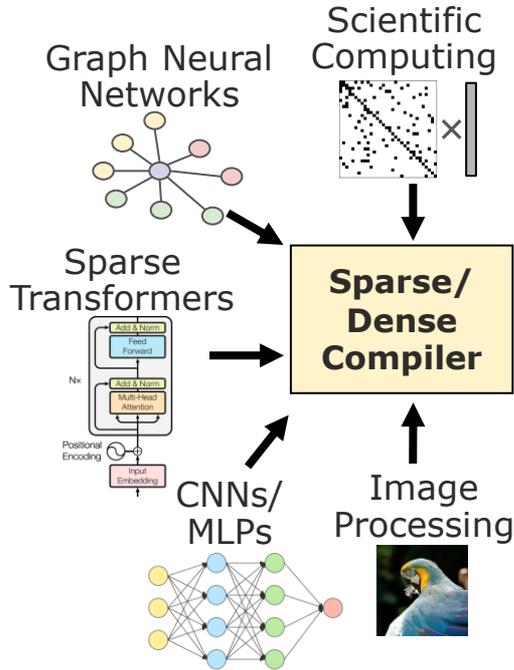


$$\begin{aligned}
 &A = Bc + a \quad a = Bc \\
 &A = B \odot C \quad A = B + C \quad a = \alpha Bc + \beta a \\
 &A = BCd \quad A = \alpha B \quad A = 0 \quad A = BC \\
 &\quad \quad \quad a = b \odot c \quad A = B \odot (CD) \\
 &A_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} C_{lj} D_{kj} \quad A = B^T \quad a = B^T Bc \\
 &A_{ijk} = \sum_l B_{ikl} C_{lj} \quad A_{ik} = \sum_j B_{ijk} c_j \quad A_{kj} = \sum_{il} B_{ikl} C_{lj} D_{ij} \\
 &A_{ijk} = \sum_l B_{ikl} C_{lj} \quad A_{ij} = (\sum_k B_{ijk} C_{ijk}) + D_{ij} \\
 &C = \sum_{ijkl} M_{ij} P_{jk} \overline{M}_{lk} \overline{P}_{il} \quad \tau = \sum_i z_i (\sum_j z_j \theta_{ij}) (\sum_k z_k \theta_{ik}) \\
 &a = \sum_{ijklmnop} M_{ij} P_{jk} M_{kl} P_{lm} \overline{M}_{nm} P_{no} \overline{M}_{po} \overline{P}_{ip}
 \end{aligned}$$

**Arbitrary sparse/
dense tensor
algebra expressions**
Sparse abstract
machine
(SAM)/CoreIR
dataflow graph

Onyx

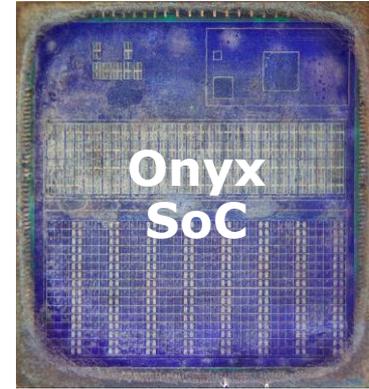
- Programmable accelerator for any tensor algebra expression



$$\begin{aligned}
 A &= Bc + a & a &= Bc \\
 A &= B \odot C & A &= B + C & a &= \alpha Bc + \beta a \\
 A &= Bcd & A &= \alpha B & A &= 0 & A &= BC \\
 a &= b \odot c & A &= B \odot (CD) \\
 A_{ij} &= \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} C_{lj} D_{kj} & A &= B^T & a &= B^T Bc \\
 A_{ijk} &= \sum_l B_{ikl} C_{lj} & A_{ik} &= \sum_j B_{ijk} c_j & A_{kj} &= \sum_{il} B_{ikl} C_{lj} D_{ij} \\
 C &= \sum_{ijkl} M_{ij} P_{jk} \bar{M}_{ik} \bar{P}_{il} & \tau &= \sum_i z_i \left(\sum_j z_j \theta_{ij} \right) \left(\sum_k z_k \theta_{ik} \right) \\
 a &= \sum_{ijklmnop} M_{ij} P_{jk} M_{kl} P_{lm} \bar{M}_{nm} P_{no} \bar{M}_{po} \bar{P}_{ip}
 \end{aligned}$$

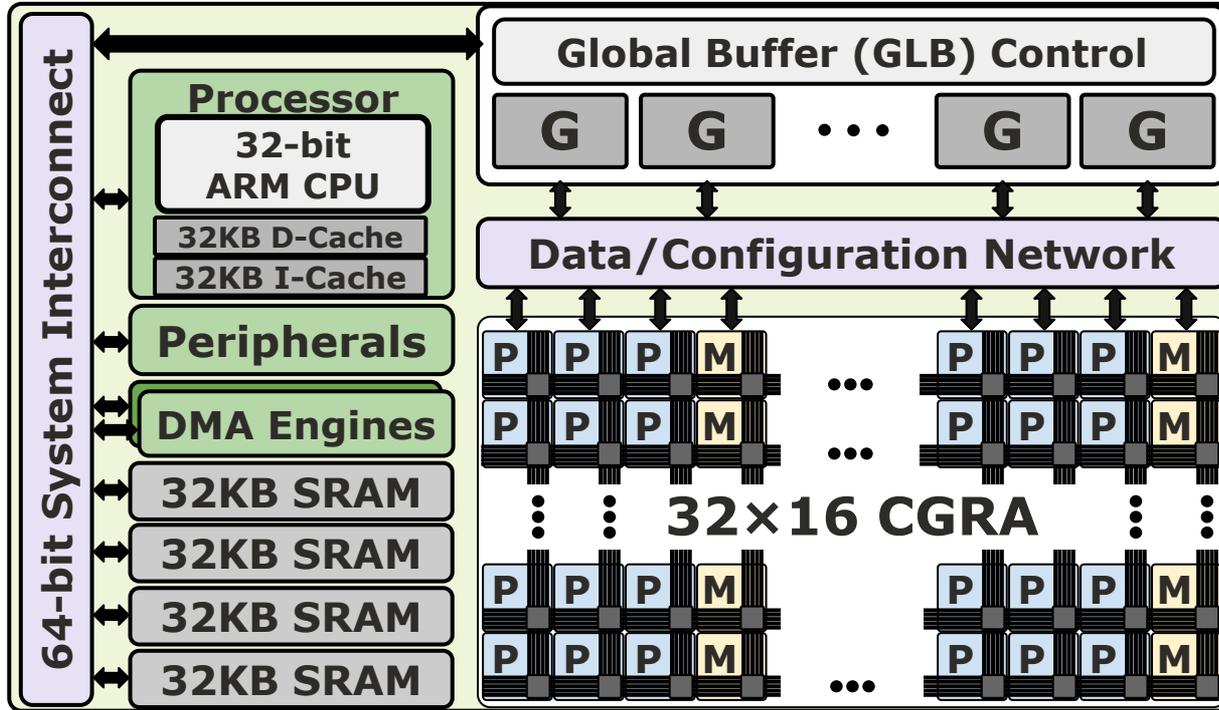
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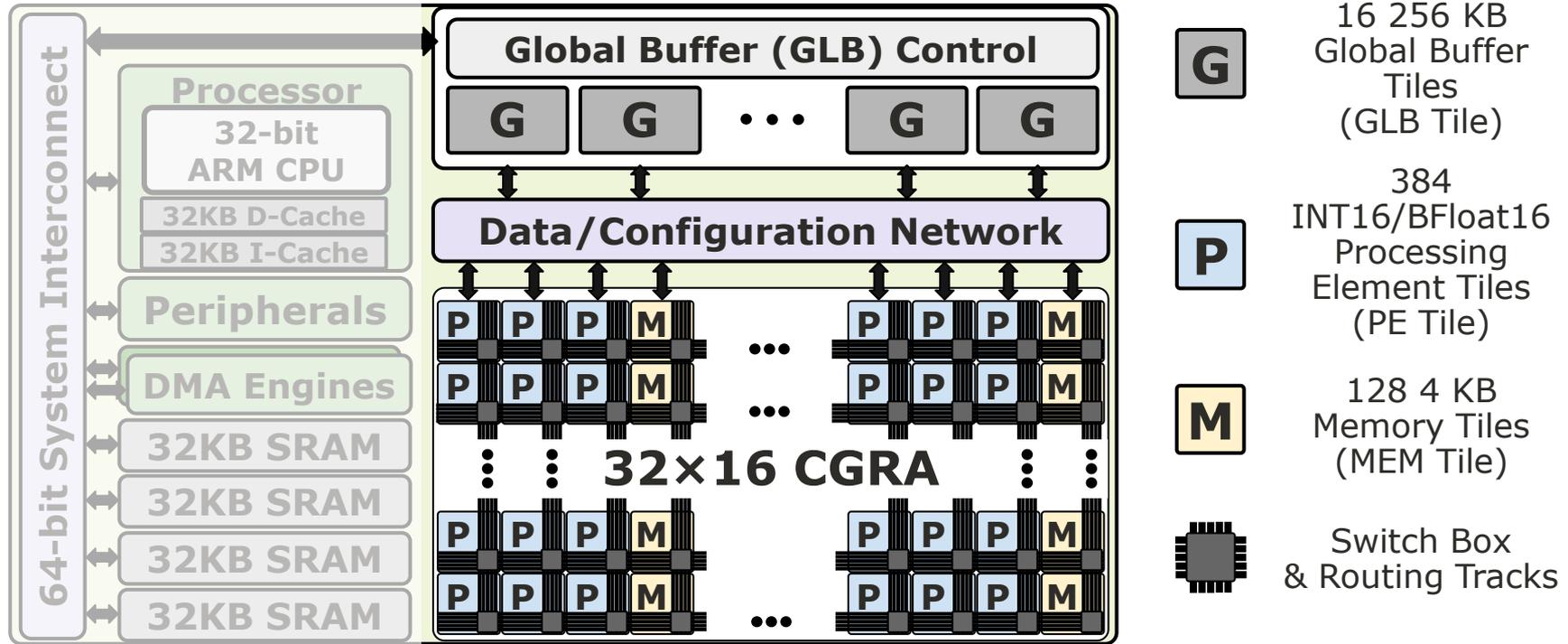


- ✓ Energy and area efficient
- ✓ Accelerates an application domain
- ✓ Configurable for sparse + dense
- ✓ Adaptable to fast evolving domains

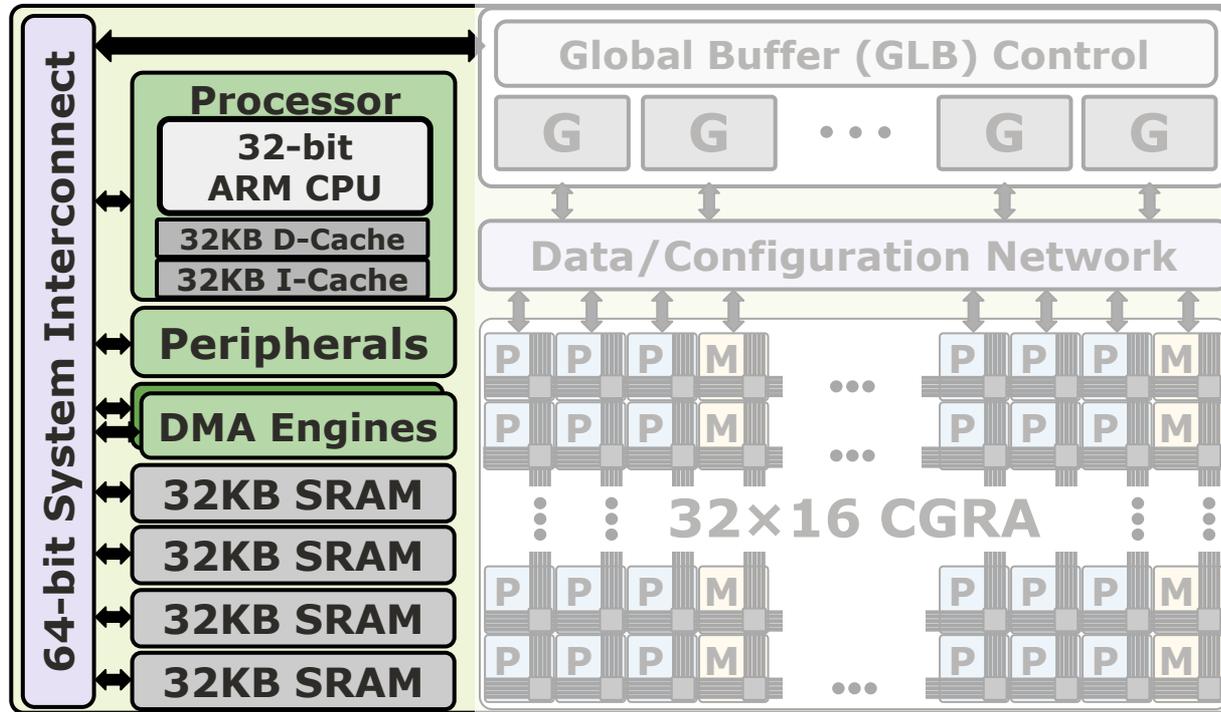
Onyx Architecture



Onyx Architecture



Onyx Architecture

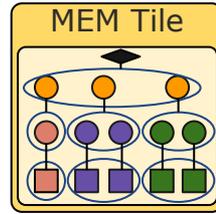
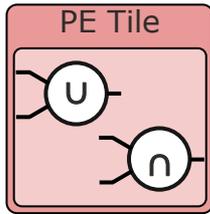


Contributions

Contributions

Sparse Acceleration Hardware

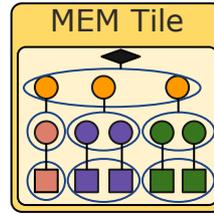
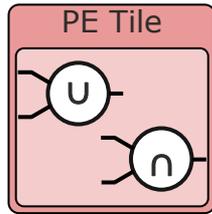
Composable primitives for
accelerating arbitrary sparse
tensor algebra kernels



Contributions

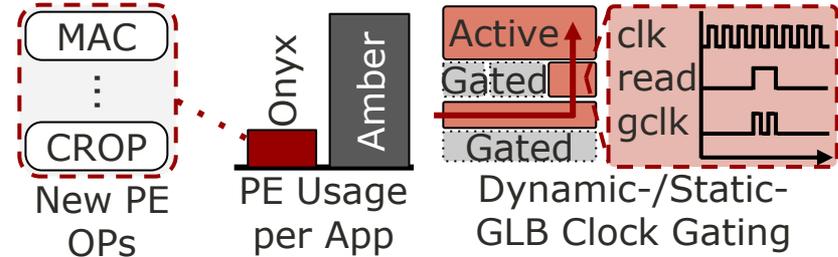
Sparse Acceleration Hardware

Composable primitives for accelerating arbitrary sparse tensor algebra kernels



Dense Acceleration Improvements

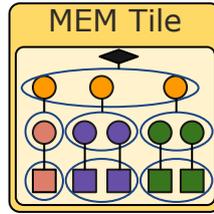
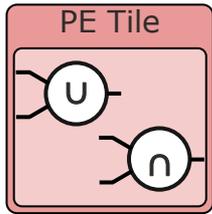
Compute and memory controller optimizations for dense applications



Contributions

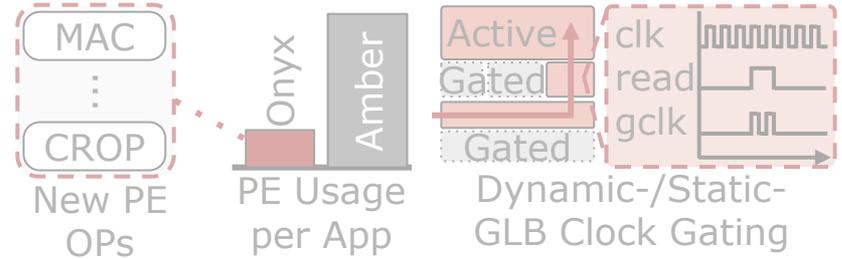
Sparse Acceleration Hardware

Composable primitives for accelerating arbitrary sparse tensor algebra kernels



Dense Acceleration Improvements

Compute and memory controller optimizations for dense applications



Sparse Tensor Abstraction

- Sparse tensors can be represented as fibertree [1] structures

Tensor

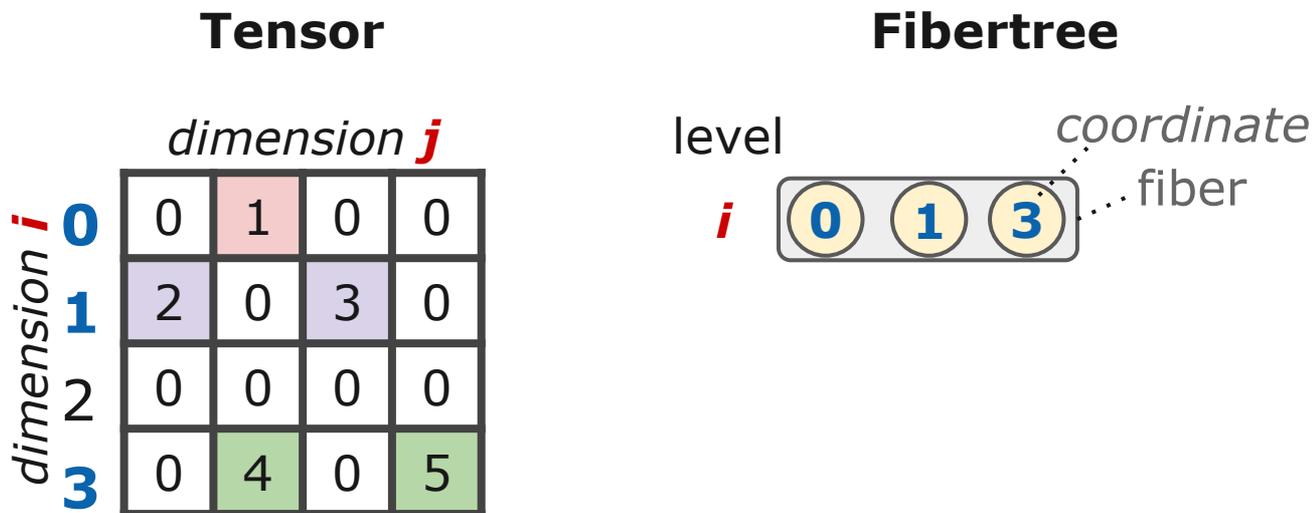
dimension j

<i>dimension i</i>	0	1	0	0
	2	0	3	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	4	0	5

[1] V. Sze et al., M&C'2020.

Sparse Tensor Abstraction

- Sparse tensors can be represented as fibertree [1] structures



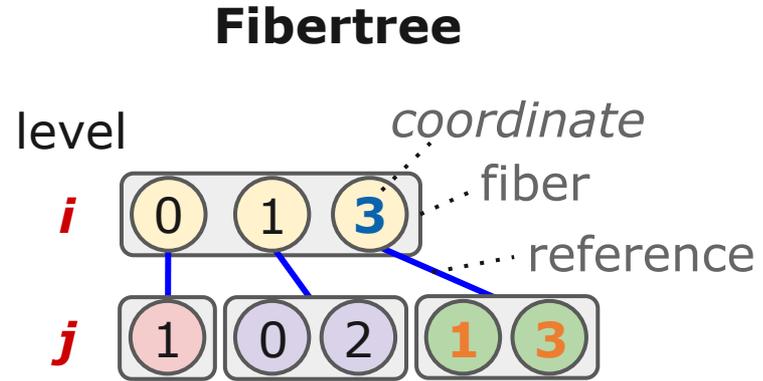
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Tensor
dimension j

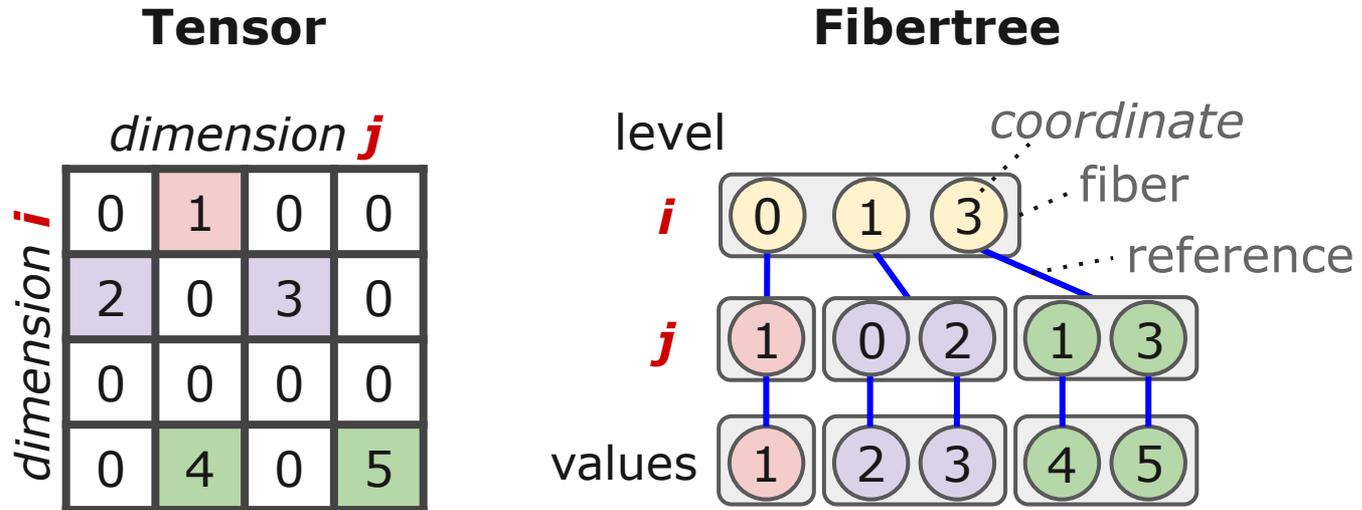
	0	1	2	3
<i>dimension i</i> 0	0	1	0	0
1	2	0	3	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	4	0	5



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Sparse Tensor Abstraction

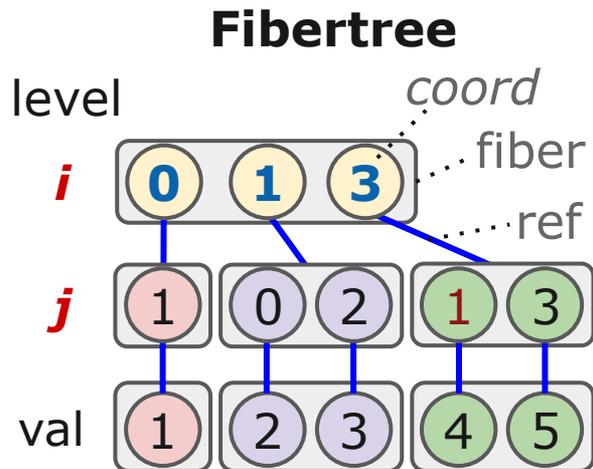
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[1] V. Sze et al., M&C'2020.

Stream and Storage Format

- Fibertree in stream format

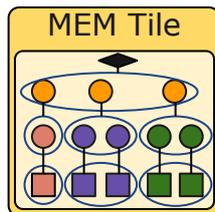


coordinates: coord

references: ref

segments: seg

values: val

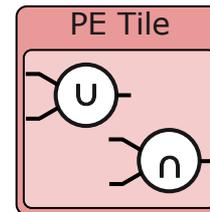


Stream Format

i coord D S₀ 3 1 0



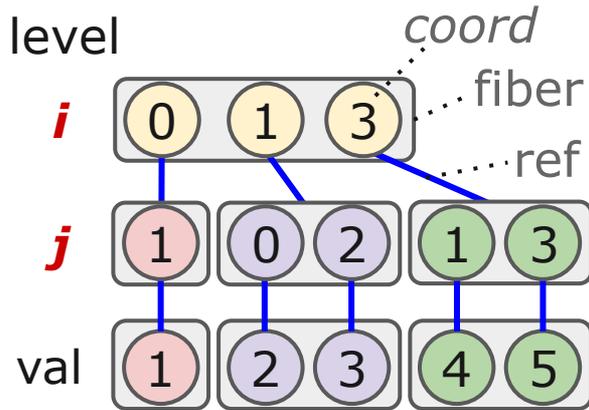
S:stop
D:done



Stream and Storage Format

- Fibertree in stream format

Fibertree



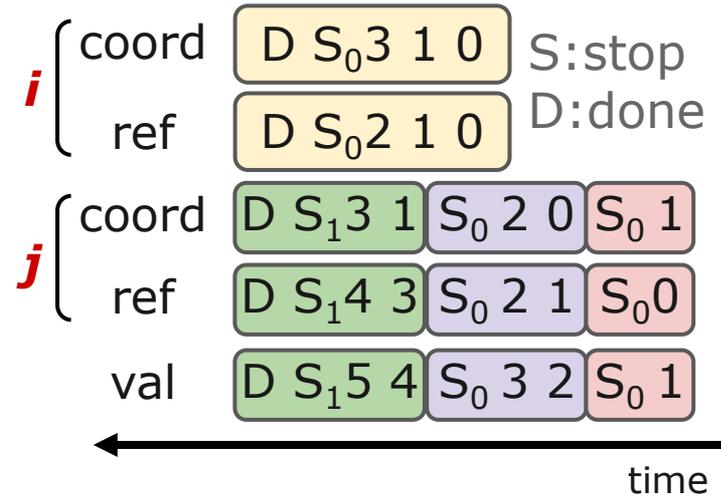
coordinates: coord

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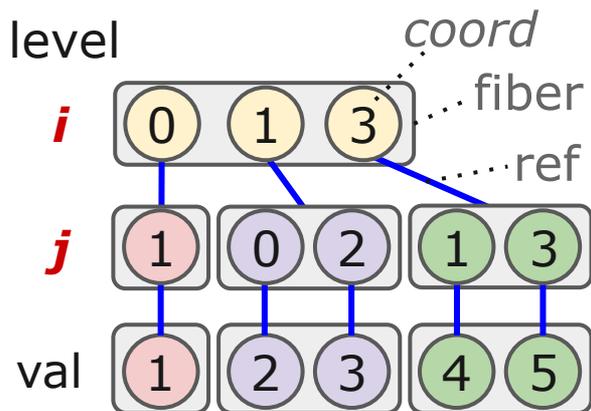
Stream Format



Stream and Storage Format

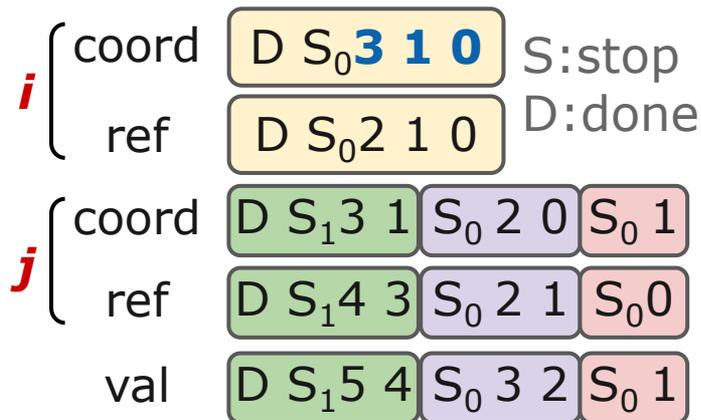
- Fibertree in storage format

Fibertree



coordinates: coord
 references: ref
 segments: seg

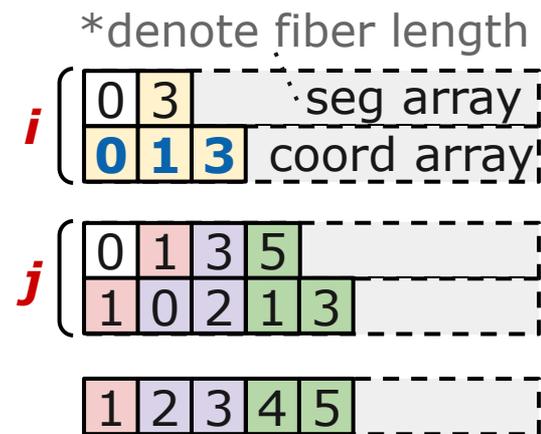
Stream Format



← time

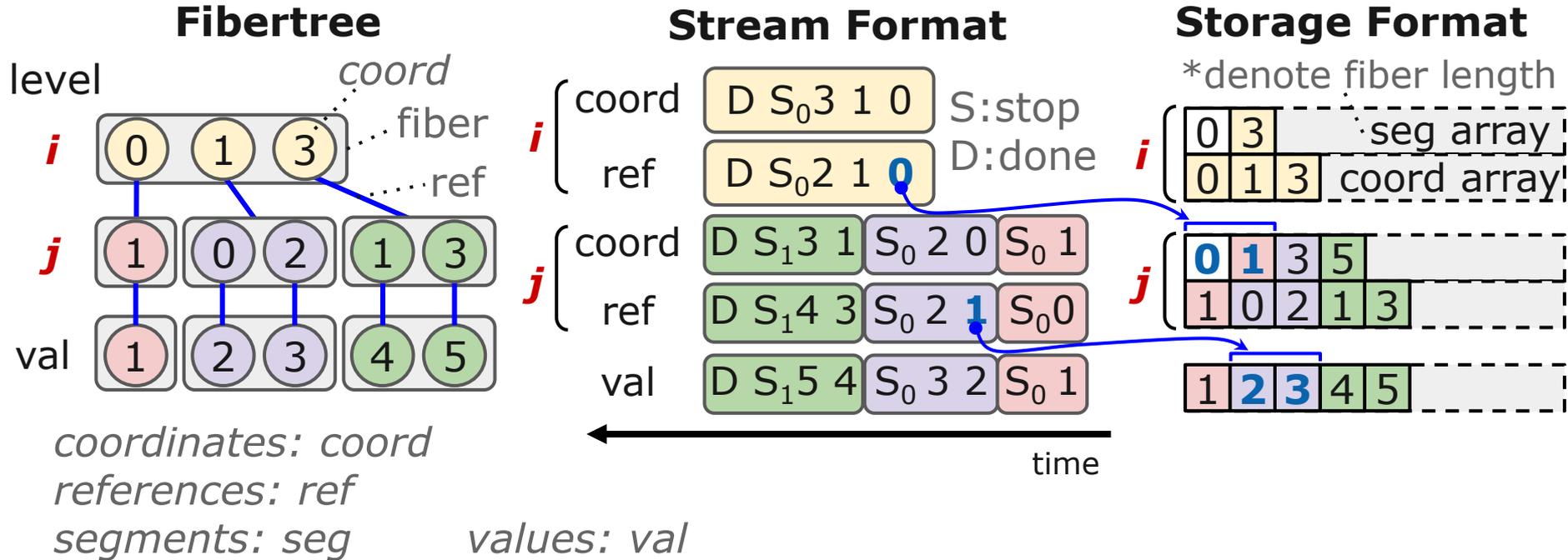
values: val

Storage Format



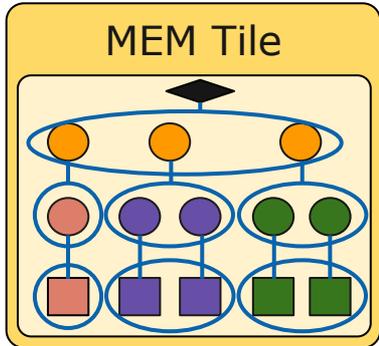
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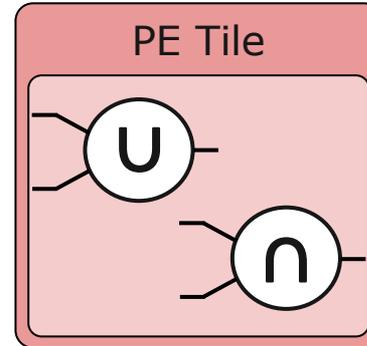


Sparse Acceleration Hardware

- MEMs: sparse memory controller logic to convert between the stream and storage representation of fibertrees
- PEs: contains logic to eliminate all ineffectual compute and support tensor algebra



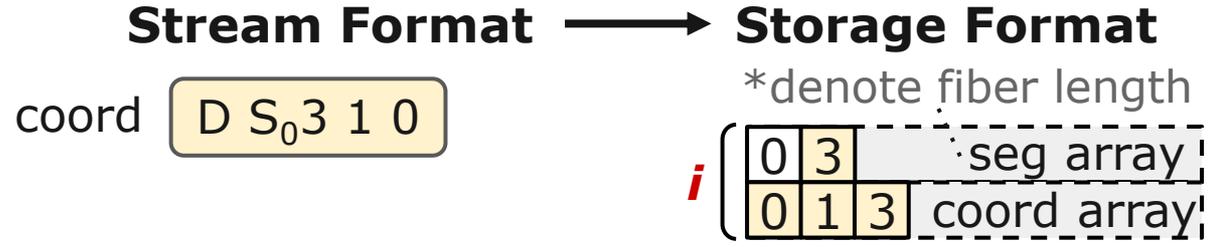
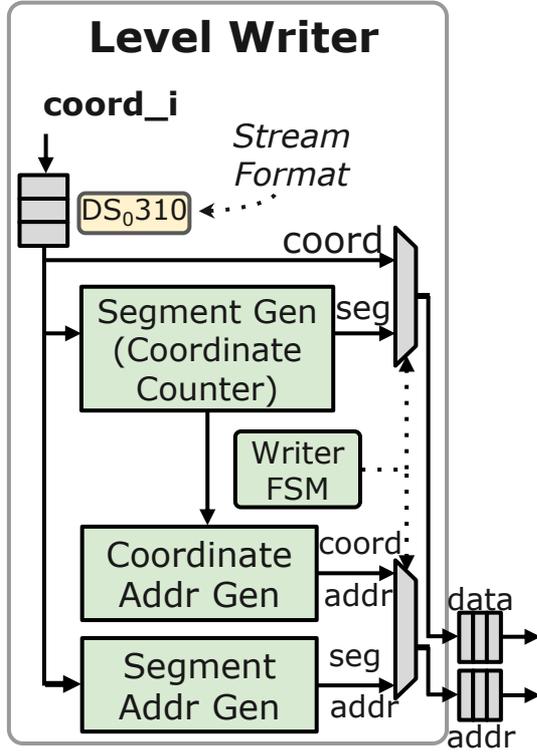
Level Writer
Level Scanner
Level Buffer



Intersector
Unioner
Coordinate Dropper
Reducer
Repeater

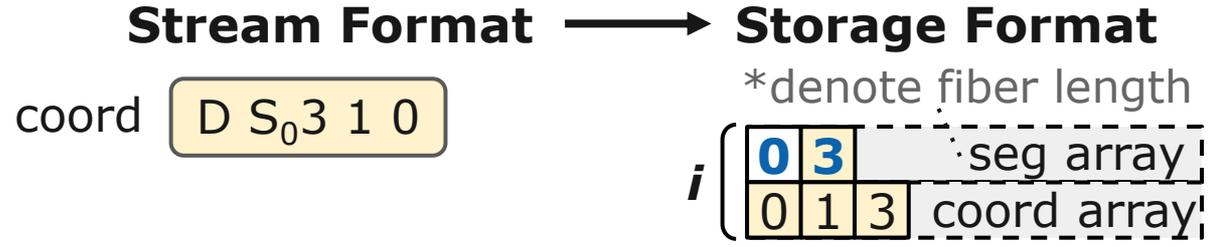
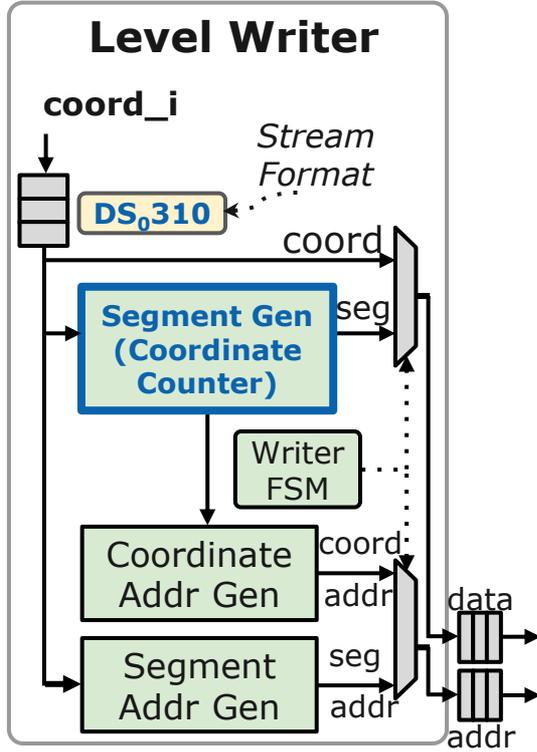
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Writer

- The level writer converts a stream to the storage format



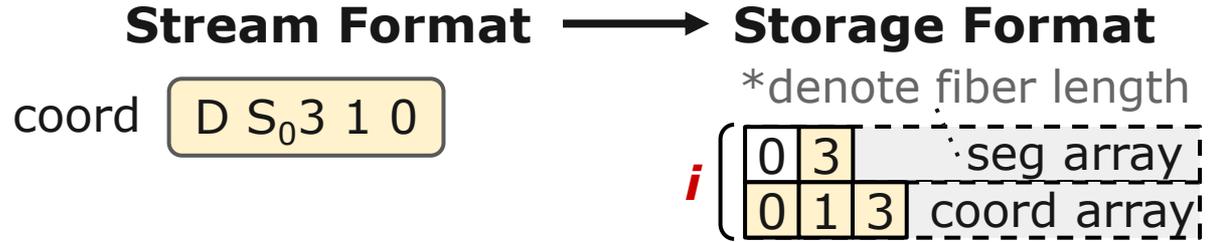
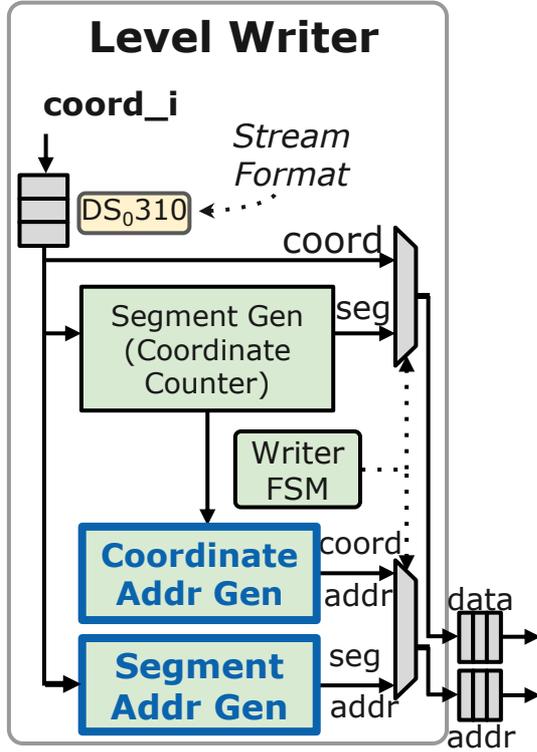
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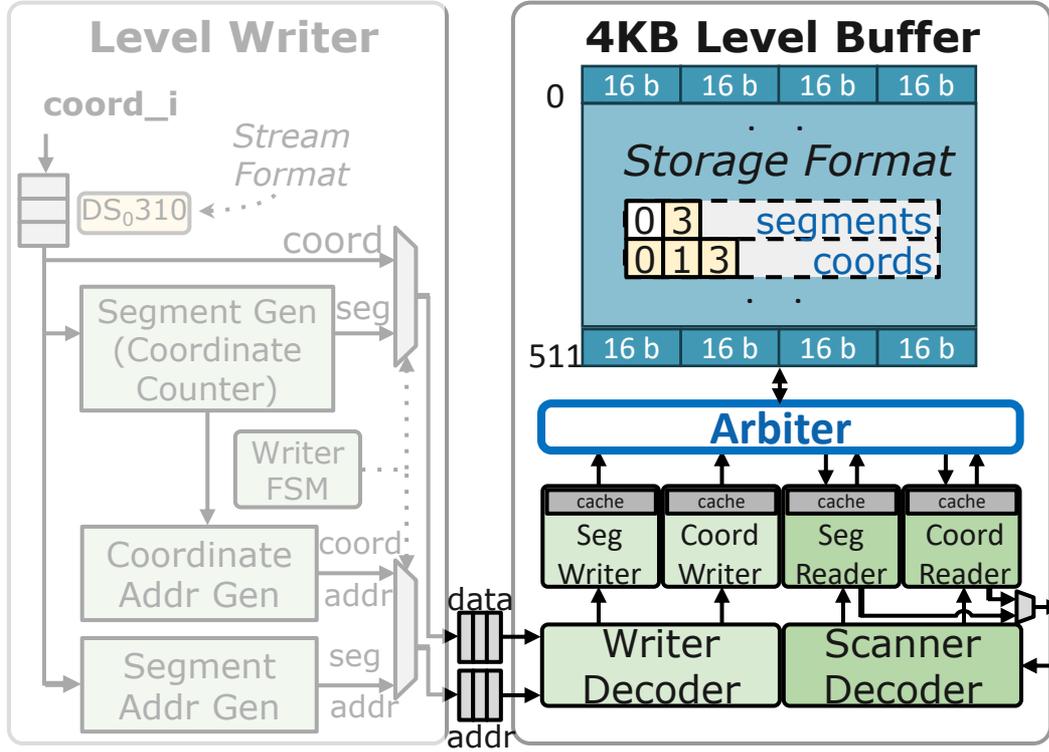
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Writer

- The level writer converts a stream to the storage format



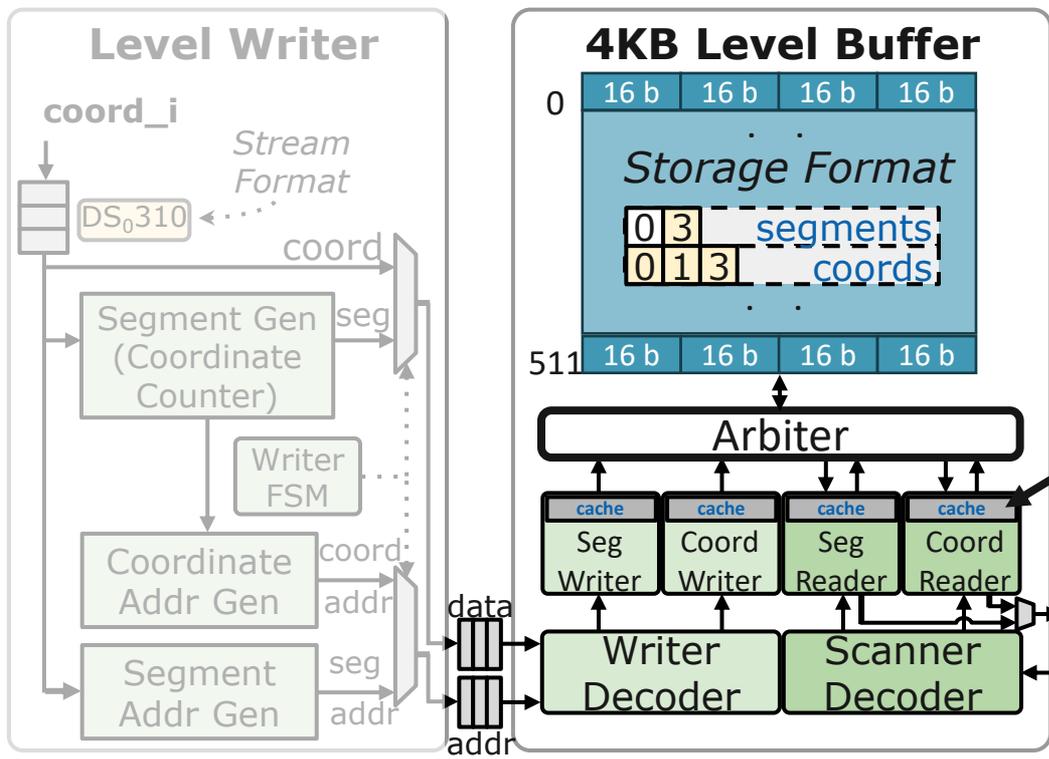
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Buffer

- The level buffer arbitrates writes/reads with support for caching



Primitives in MEM Tile – Level Buffer

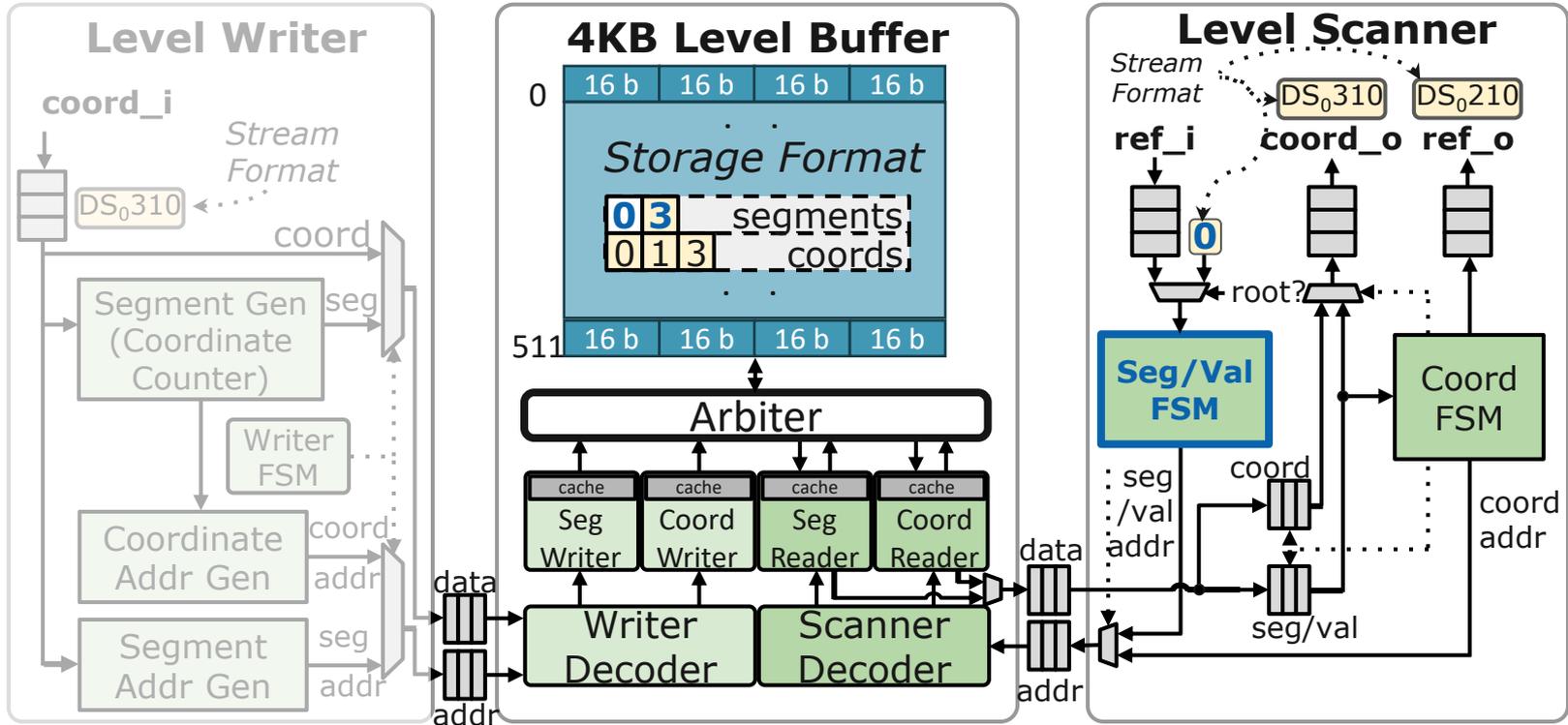
- The level buffer arbitrates writes/reads with support for caching



Avoid redundant reads of the same 4-element word

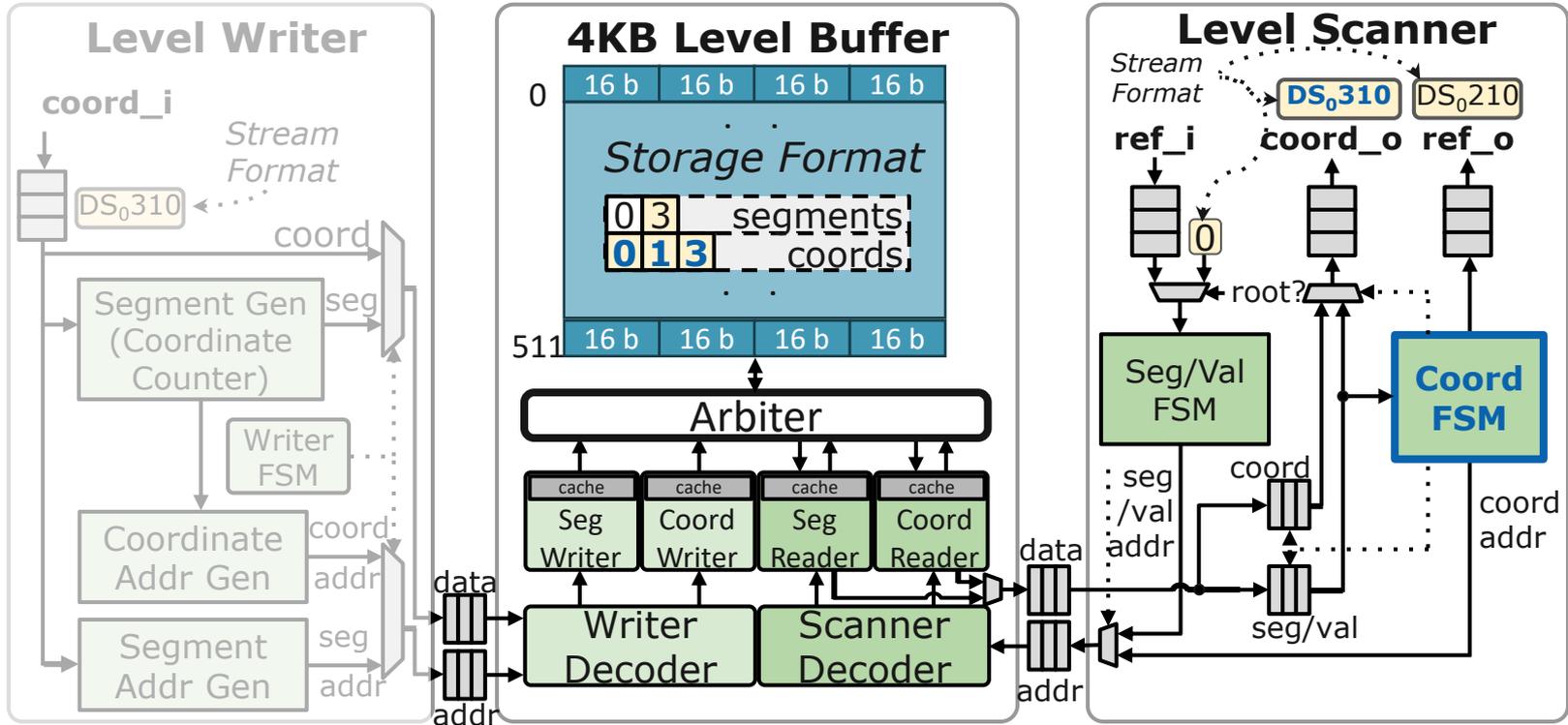
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Scanner

- The level scanner produces the next level fiber for a reference



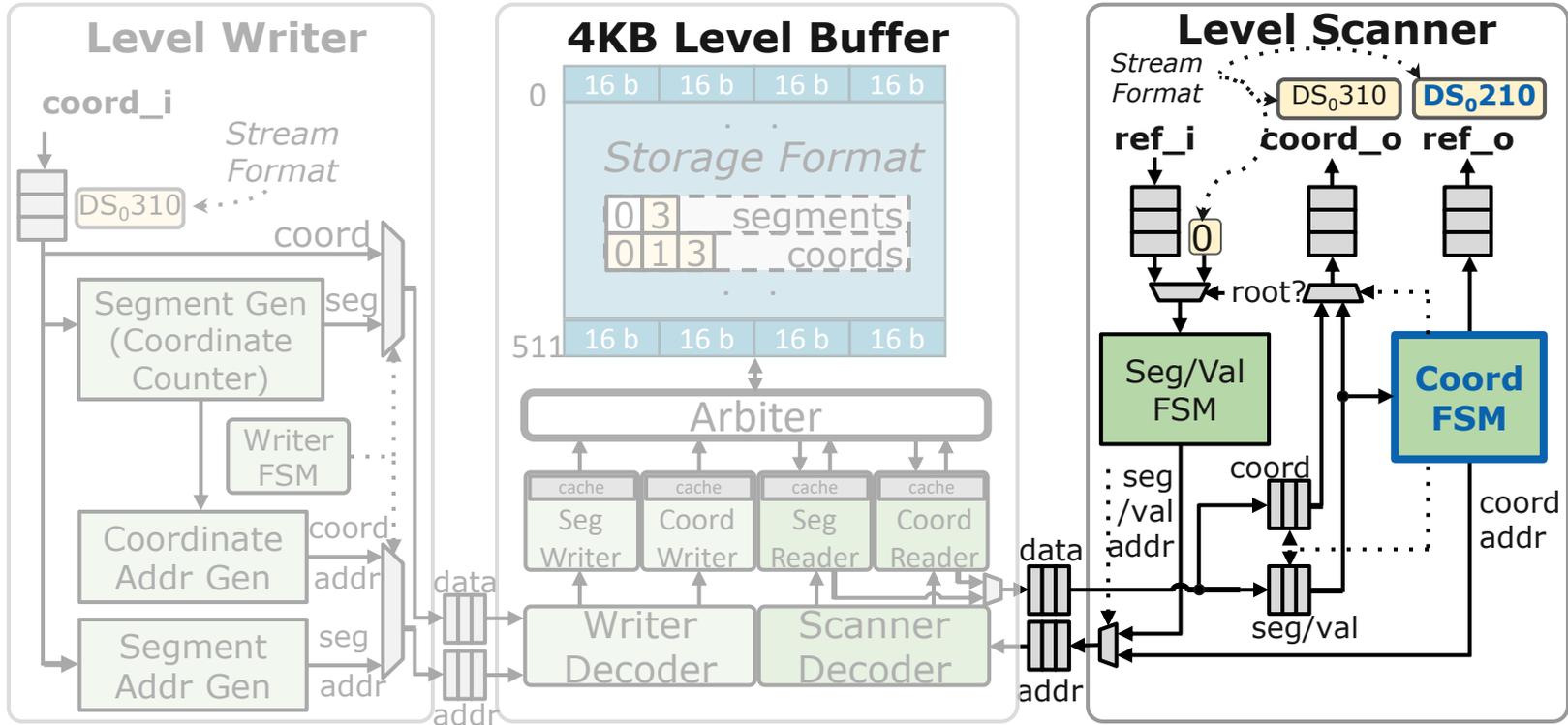
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Scanner

- The level scanner produces the next level fiber for a reference



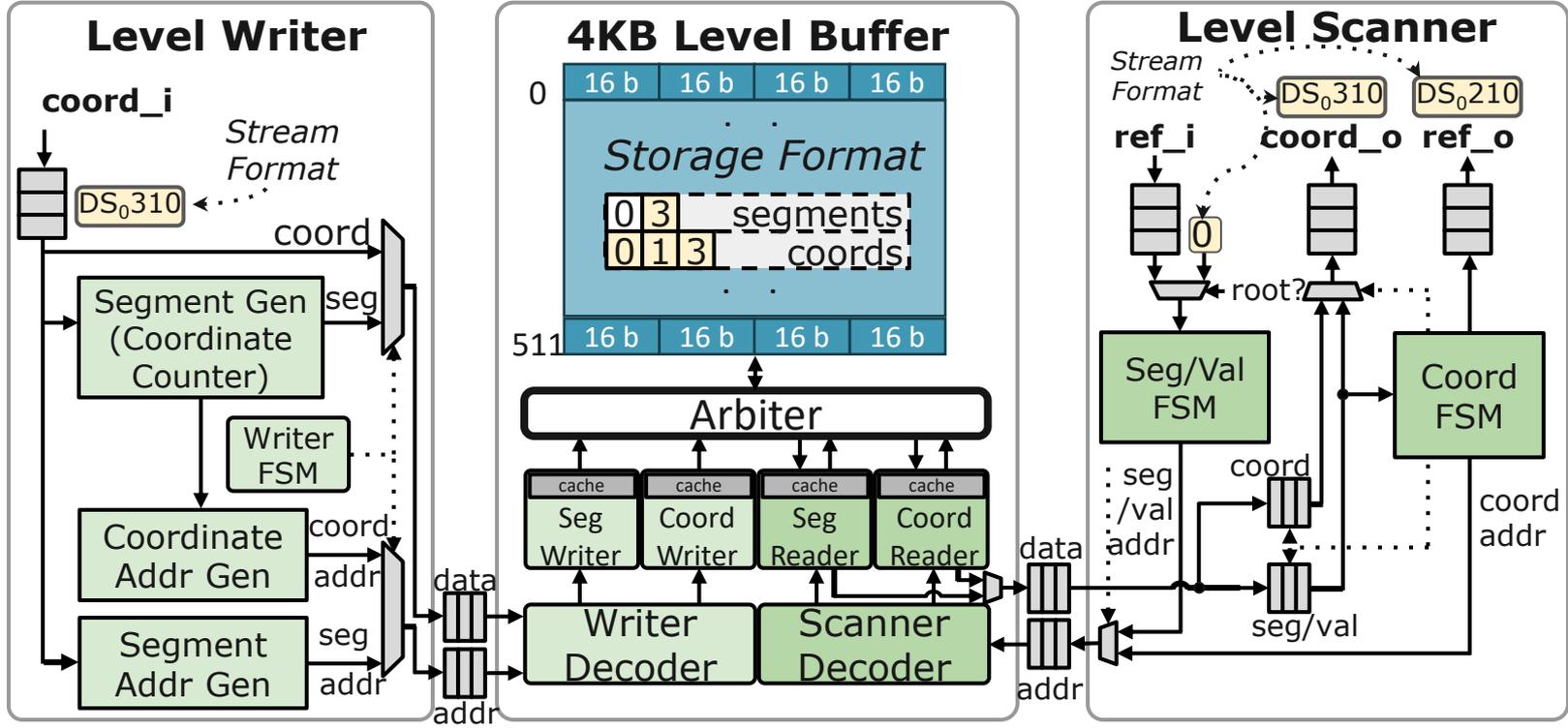
Primitives in MEM Tile - Level Scanner

- The level scanner produces the next level fiber for a reference



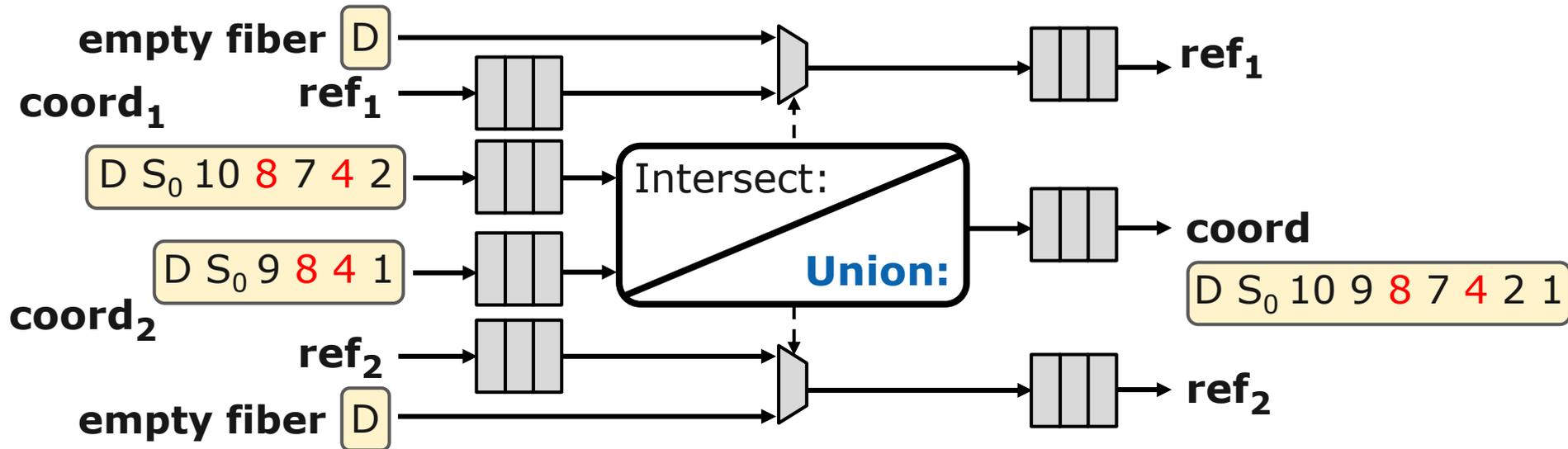
Primitives in MEM Tile

- Store and process any-dimensional tensors



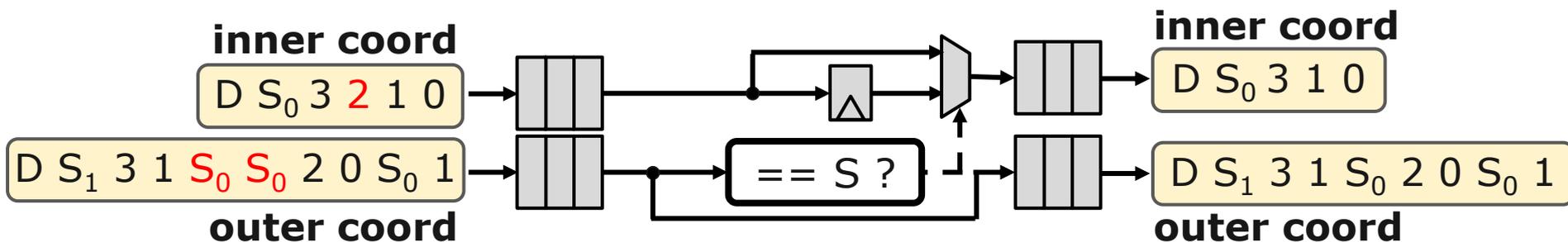
Primitives in PE Tile - Intersector / Unioner

- The unioner collects all incoming coordinates



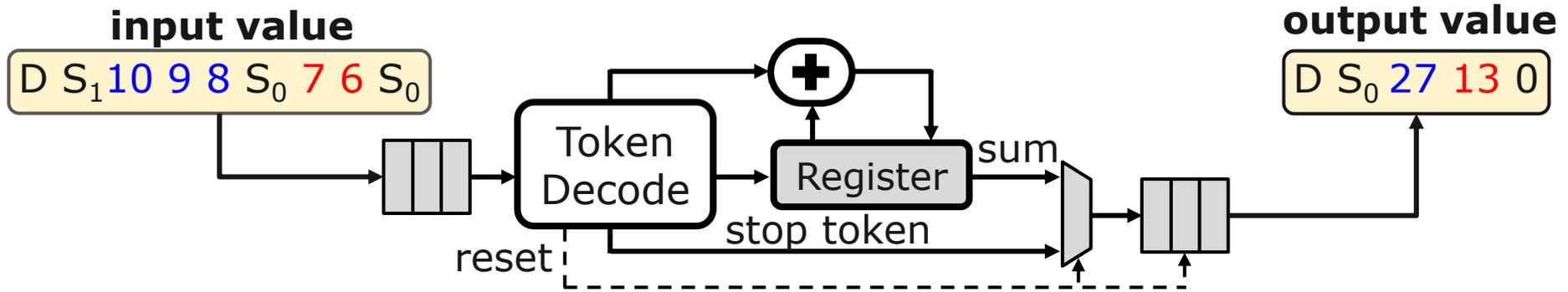
Primitives in PE Tile - Coordinate Dropper

- The coordinate dropper removes empty fibers after an intersect



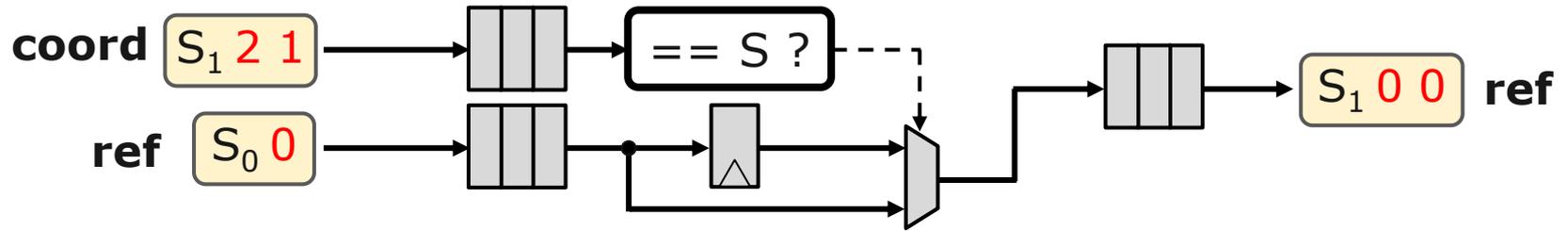
Primitives in PE Tile - Reducer

- The reducer accumulates over a fiber



Primitives in PE Tile - Repeater

- The repeater broadcasts a stream over another

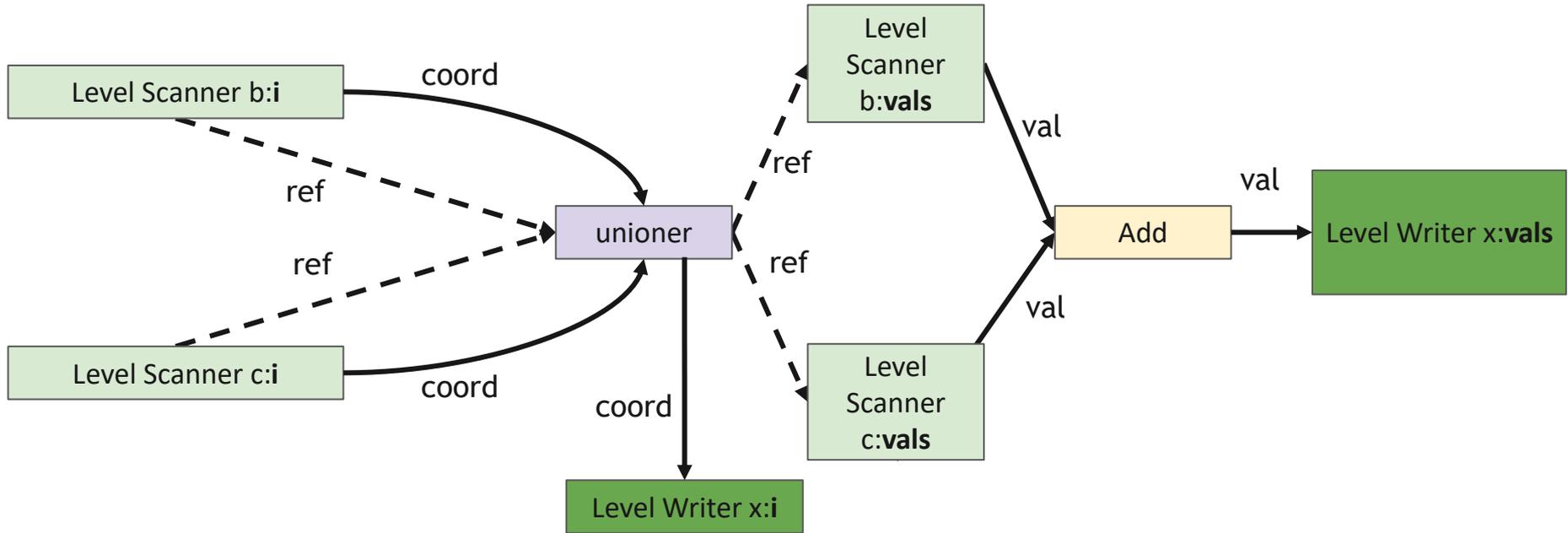


Ex: Scalar Broadcasted over a Vector



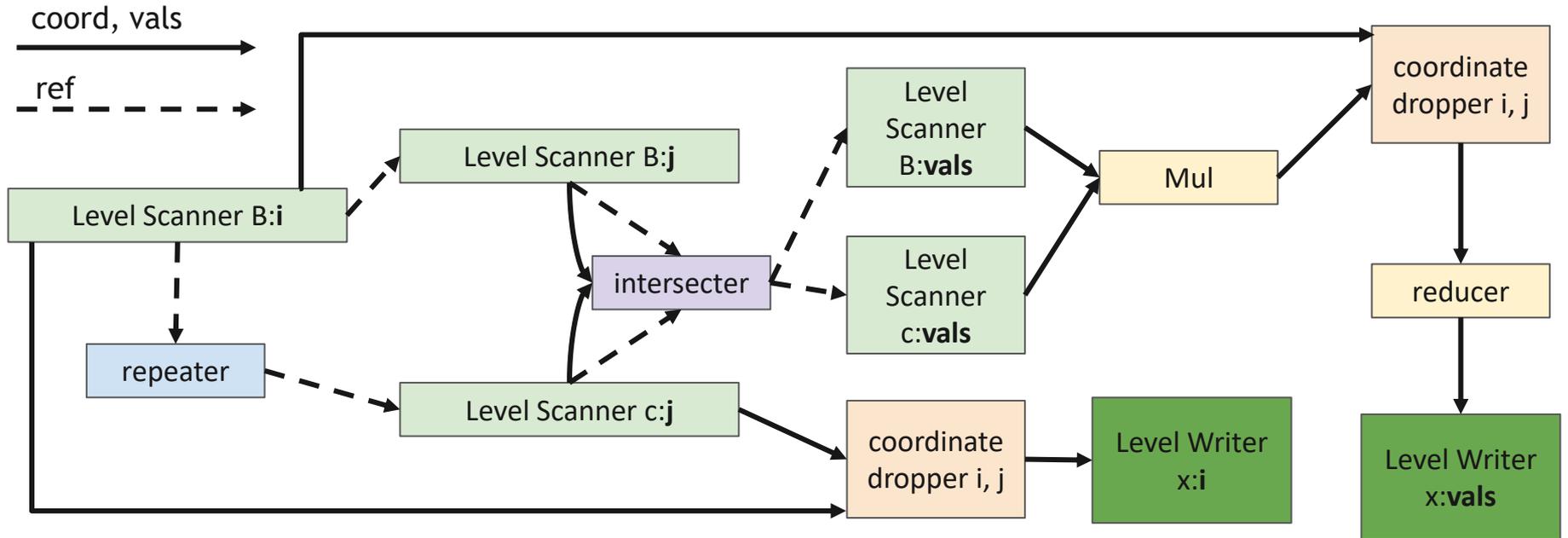
Composable Primitives

- With these primitives we support all of sparse tensor algebra
Vector-Vector Element Add ($X_i = b_i + c_i$)



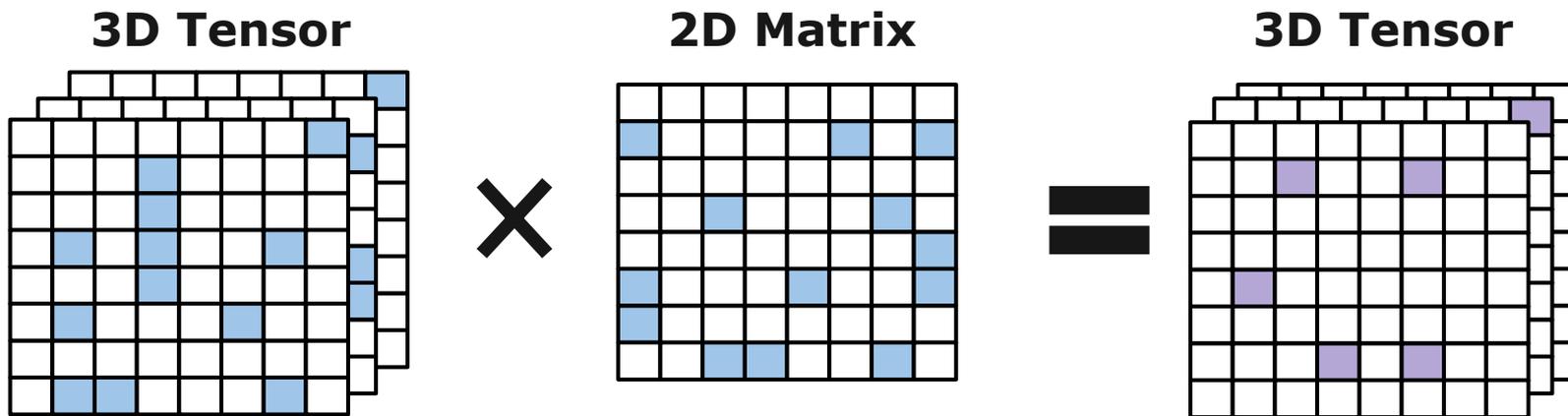
Composable Primitives

- With these primitives we support all of sparse tensor algebra
Ex: Matrix-Vector Multiplication ($X_i = \sum_j B_{ij} c_j$)



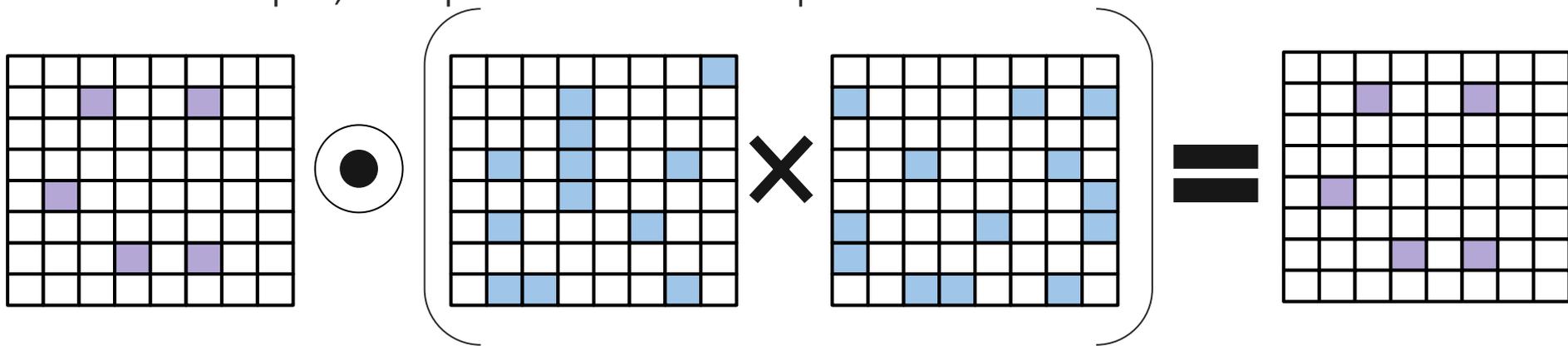
Composable Primitives

- Utilizing these composable primitives, we support **high-dimensional tensors** and multiple inputs with fusion
- For example, tensor times matrix:



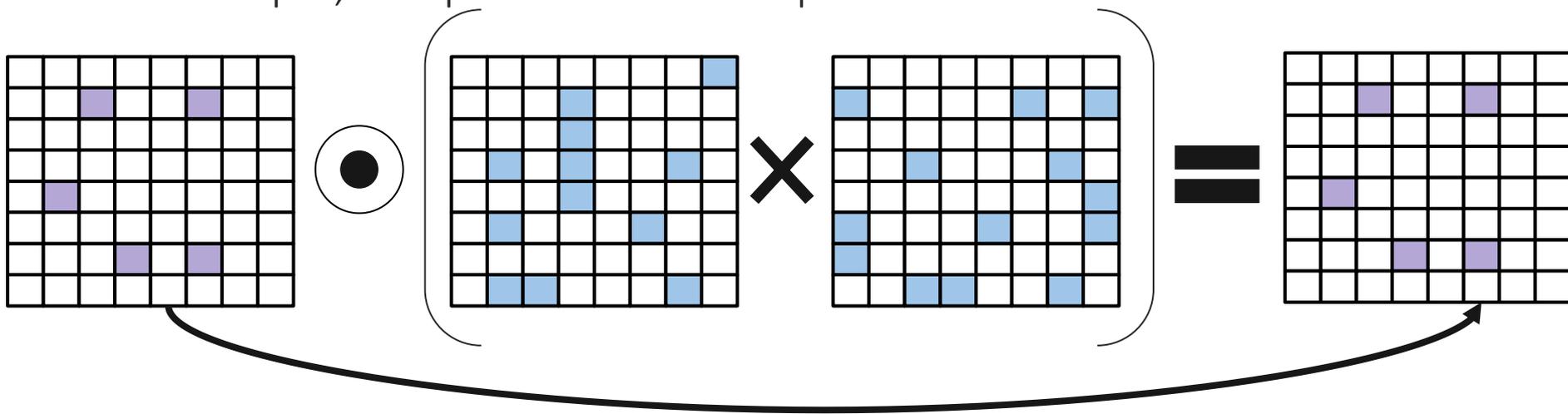
Composable Primitives

- Utilizing these composable primitives, we support high-dimensional tensors and **multiple inputs with fusion**
- For example, sampled matrix multiplication:



Composable Primitives

- Utilizing these composable primitives, we support high-dimensional tensors and **multiple inputs with fusion**
- For example, sampled matrix multiplication:

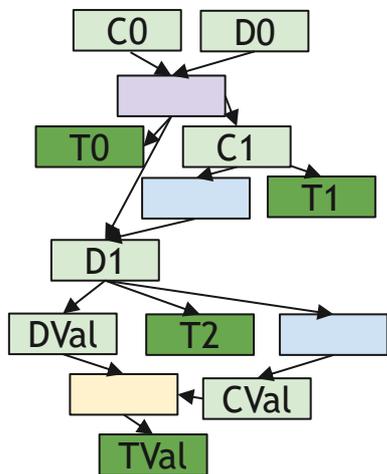


Only calculate necessary indices!

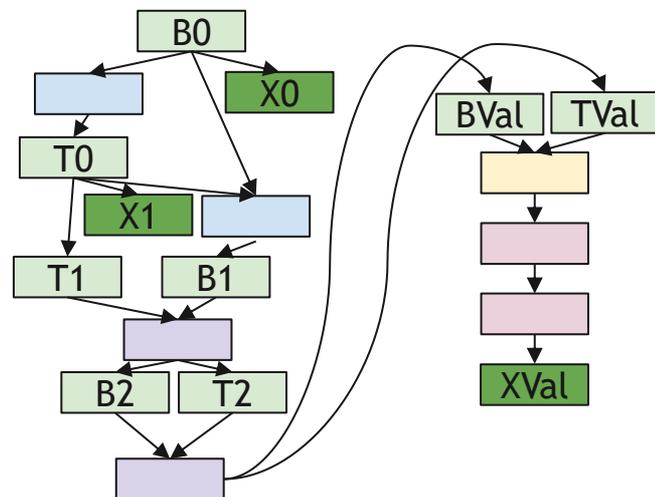
Without Fusion

- For example, for a higher-dimensional, multi-input expression like **Matricized Tensor Times Khatri-Rao Product (MTTKRP: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} C_{jk} D_{jl}$)**
- An accelerator with 2-input support splits MTTKRP into Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk} D_{jl}$ and Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} T_{jkl}$

Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk} D_{jl}$

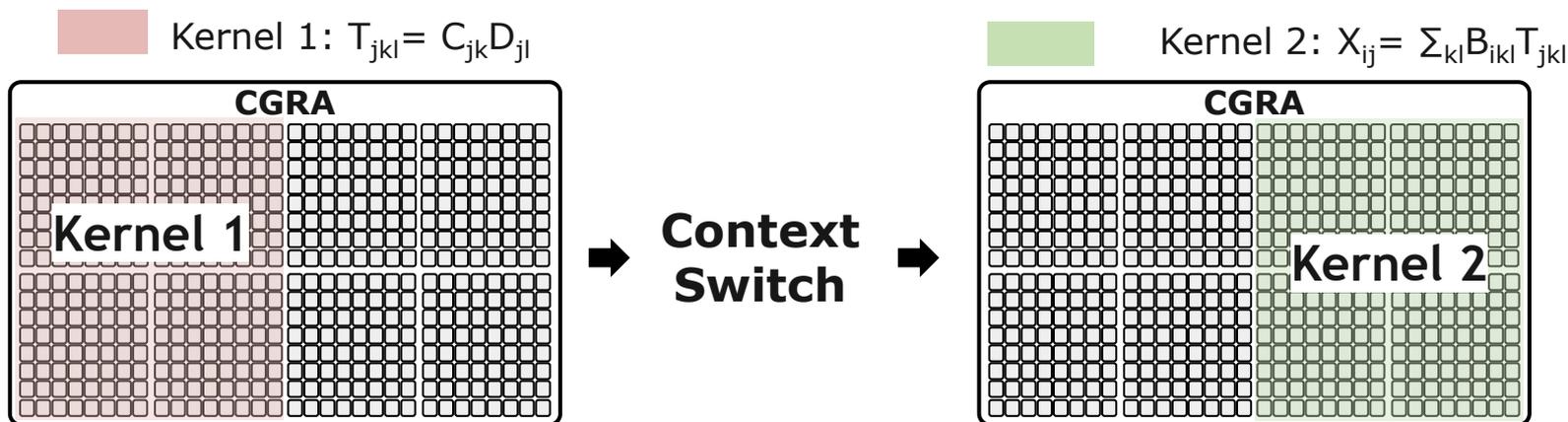


Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} T_{jkl}$



Without Fusion

- For example, for a higher-dimensional, multi-input expression like **Matricized Tensor Times Khatri-Rao Product (MTTKRP: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} C_{jk} D_{jl}$)**
- An accelerator with 2-input support splits MTTKRP into Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk} D_{jl}$ and Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl} T_{jkl}$



Time →

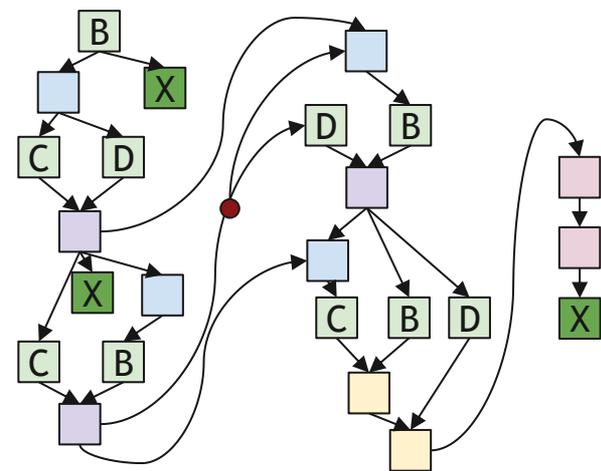
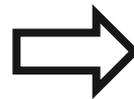
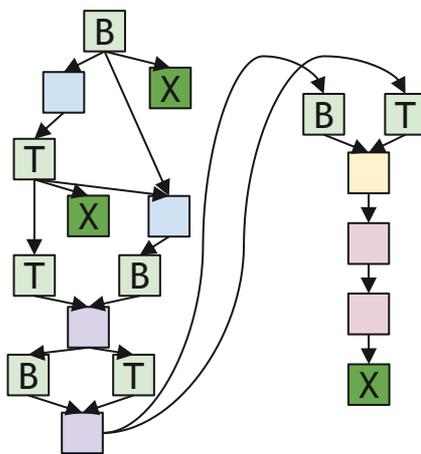
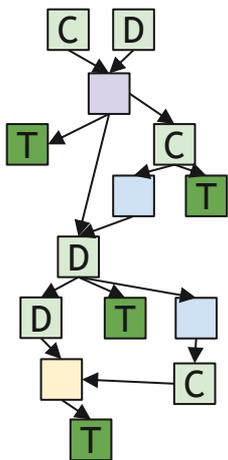
Fusion Results

- With Onyx we use a single fused kernel on the array

Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk}D_{jl}$

Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}T_{jkl}$

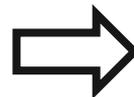
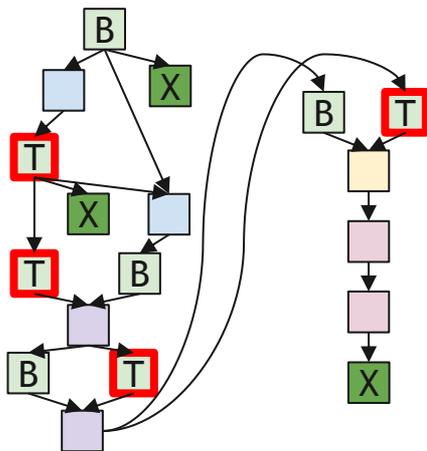
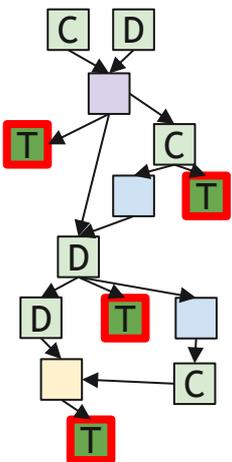
Fused Kernel: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}C_{jk}D_{jl}$



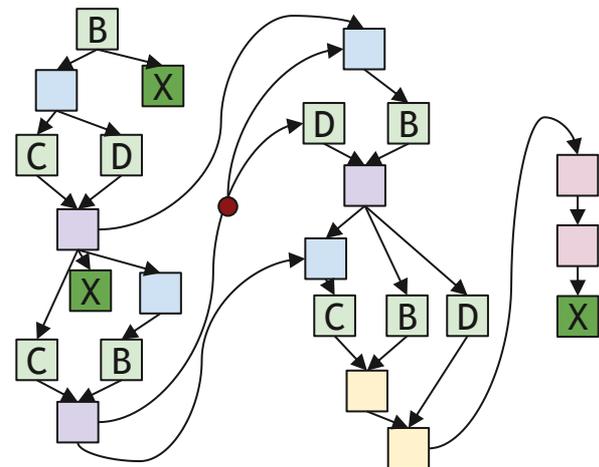
Fusion Results

- With Onyx we use a single fused kernel on the array
- Eliminate intermediate storage of T

Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk}D_{jl}$ Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}T_{jkl}$



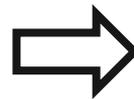
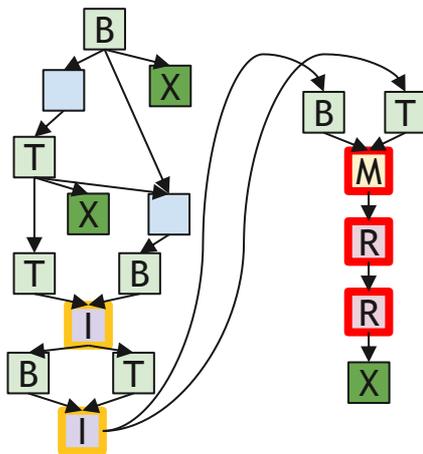
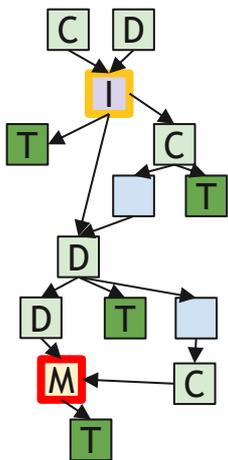
Fused Kernel: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}C_{jk}D_{jl}$



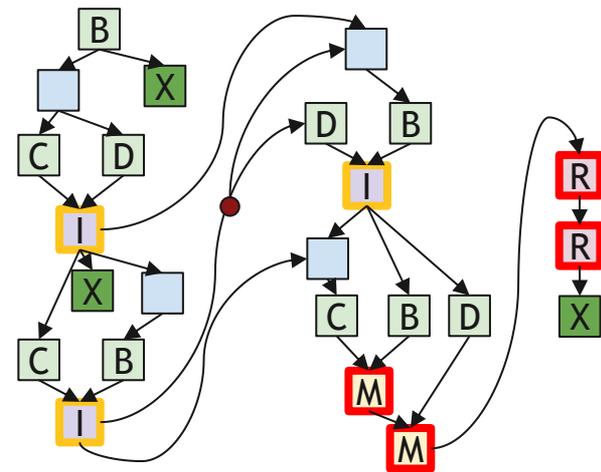
Fusion Results

- With Onyx we use a single fused kernel on the array
- Perform all intersections before compute

Kernel 1: $T_{jkl} = C_{jk}D_{jl}$ Kernel 2: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}T_{jkl}$

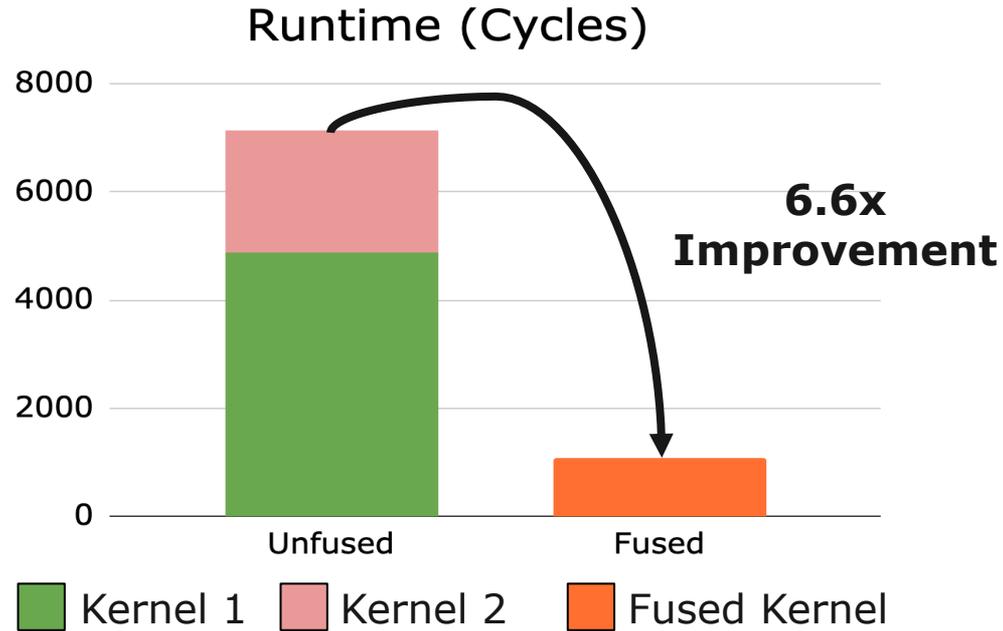


Fused Kernel: $X_{ij} = \sum_{kl} B_{ikl}C_{jk}D_{jl}$



MTTKRP Fusion Results

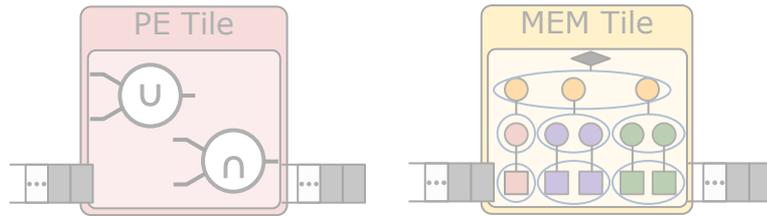
- Onyx supports a single fused kernel on the array
- Avoids intermediate storage and eliminates unnecessary compute



Contributions

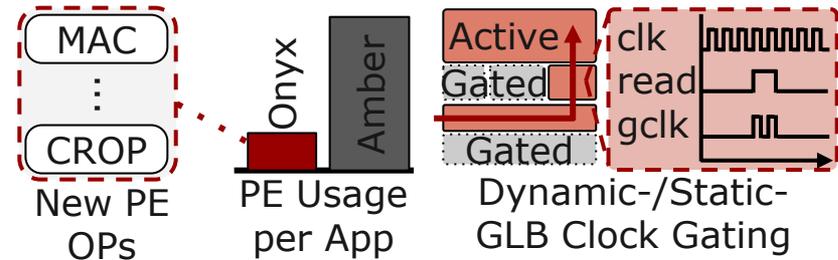
Sparse Acceleration Hardware

Composable primitives accelerating arbitrary sparse tensor algebra kernels



Dense Acceleration Improvements

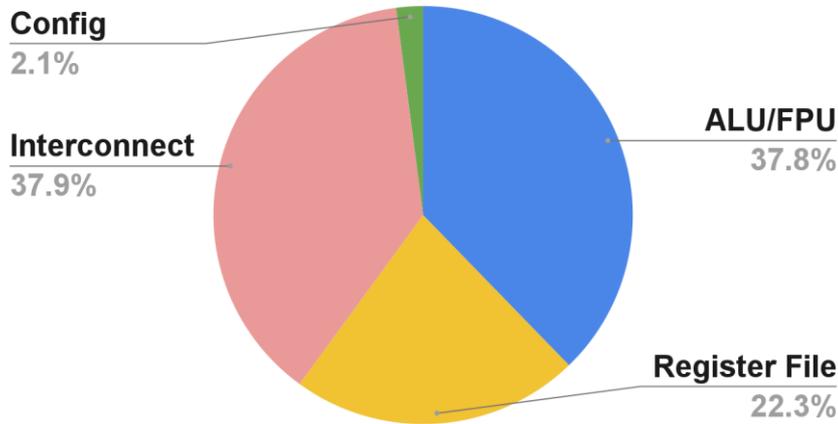
Compute and memory controller optimizations for dense applications



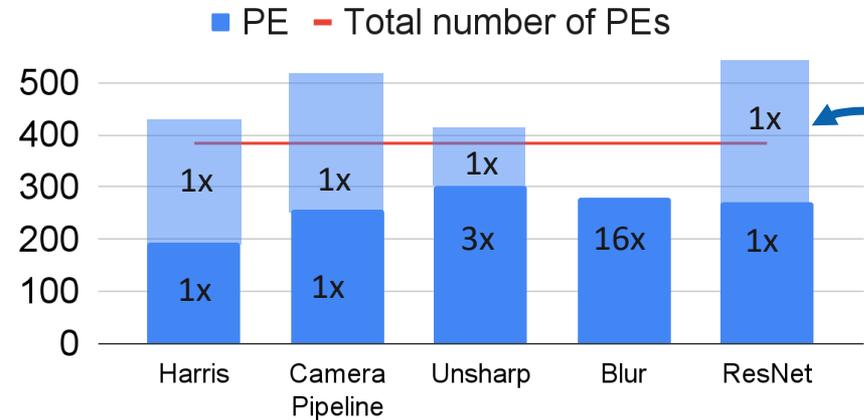
Challenge 1: Compute Density

- Compute only 37.8% of PE area
- Since each app requires several simple PEs, it is difficult to further unroll applications - low CGRA PE utilization

Amber [2] PE Tile Area Breakdown



PE usage on Amber [2]

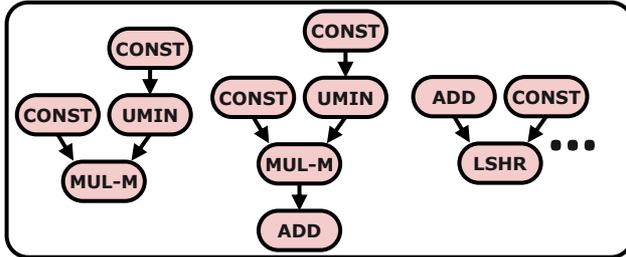


[2] K. Feng et al., JSSC'2023.

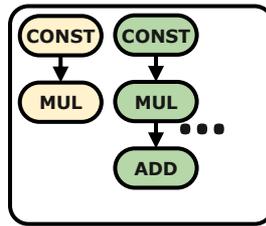
Optimized Compute

- Utilized the Automated PE Exploration tool (APEX [3])
- Step 1: Mine frequent subgraphs from each application

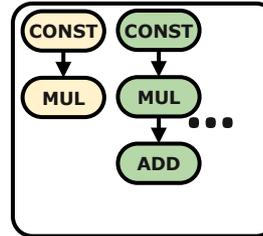
Camera Pipeline



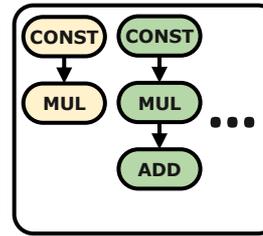
Unsharp



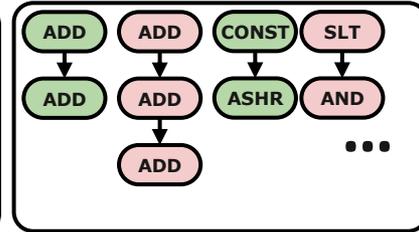
Gaussian



ML



Harris

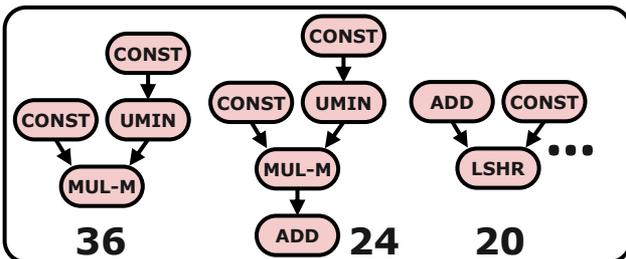


[3] J. Melchert et al., ASPLOS'2023.

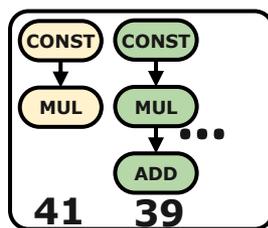
Optimized Compute

- Step 1: Mine frequent subgraphs from each application
- Step 2: Order subgraphs by # non-overlapping occurrences using maximal independent set analysis

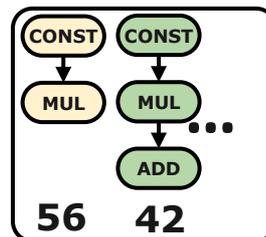
Camera Pipeline



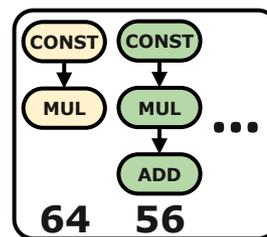
Unsharp



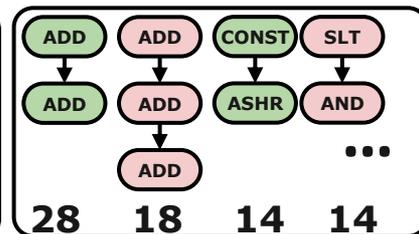
Gaussian



ML



Harris



← High Occurrences Low Occurrences

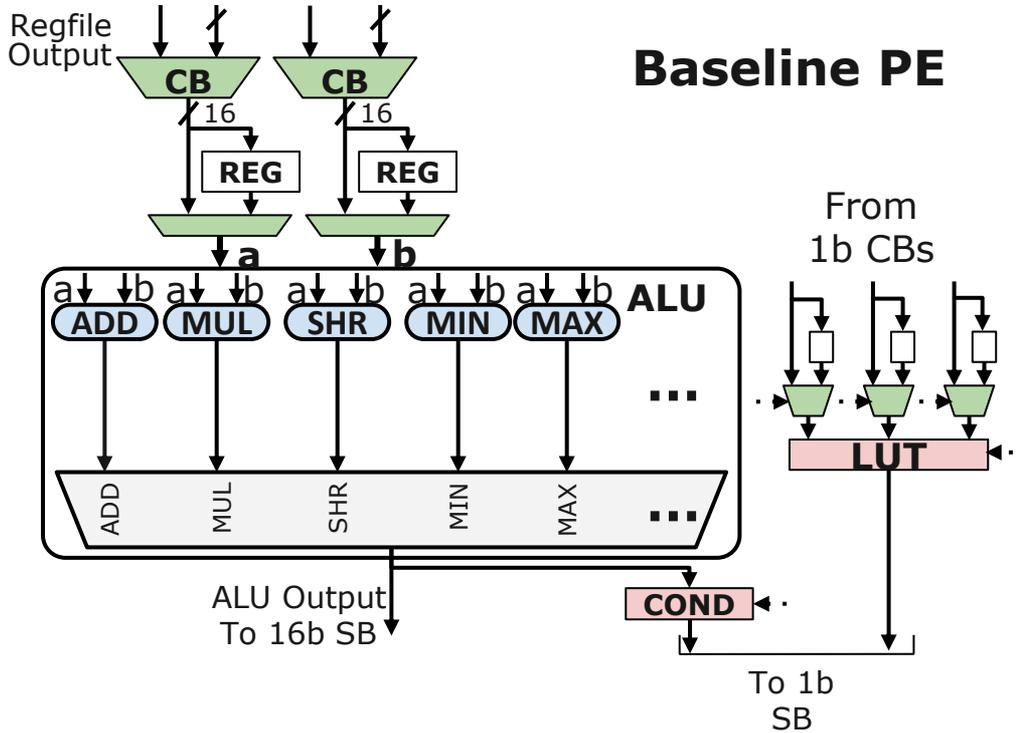
Operations in Baseline PE

Frequent subgraphs merged in Onyx PE

Frequent subgraphs not merged due to large area overhead

Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



Baseline PE

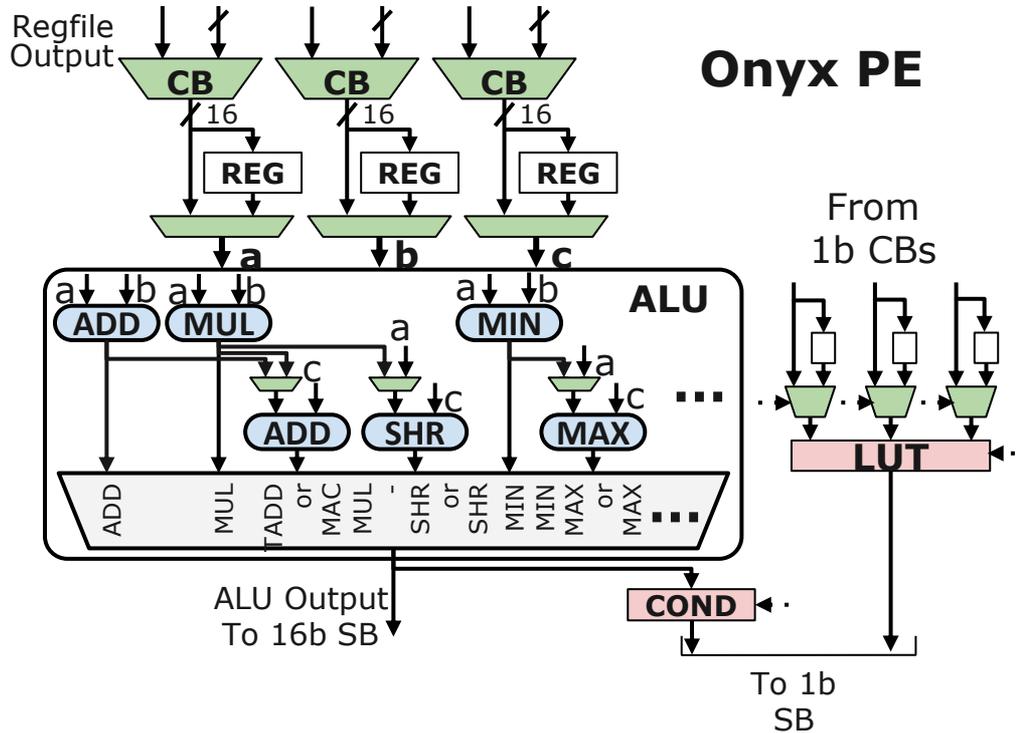
PE Instruction Set:

INT16/BIT: ADC SBC ABS MUX MULT0
 MULT1 MULT2 SHR SHL OR AND NOT XOR
 MIN MAX EQ CMP

BFloat16: ADD SUB CMP MUL GETMAN*
 ADDIEXP* SUBEXP* EXP2F* F2INT*
 GETFR* INT2F* (*Used in complex ops)

Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



PE Instruction Set:

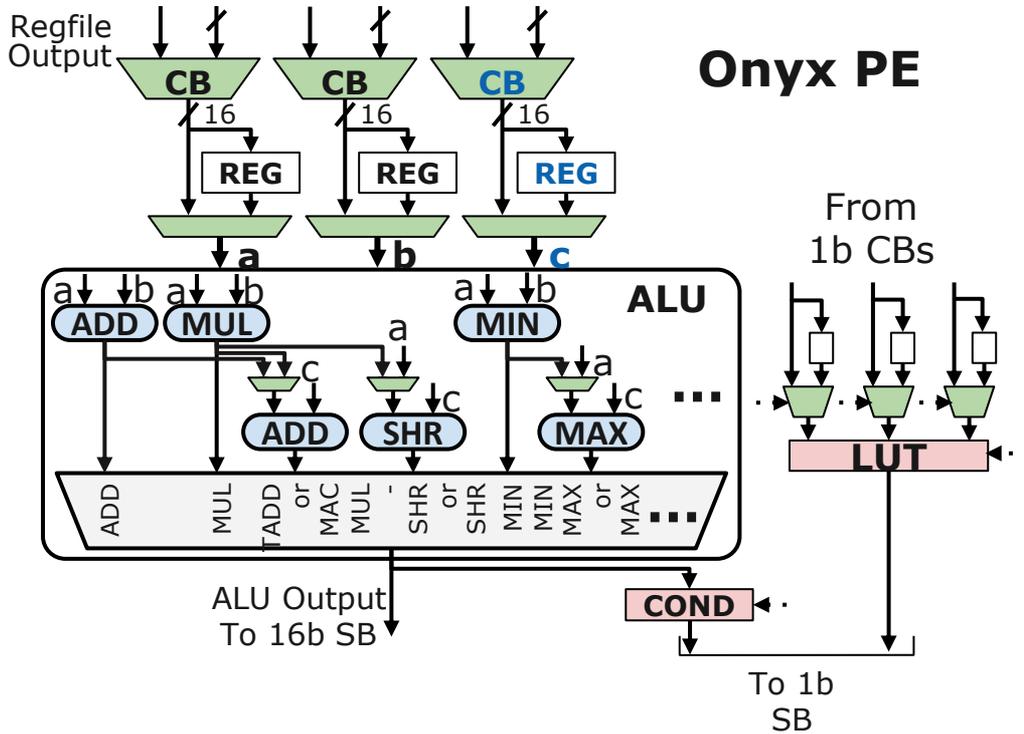
INT16/BIT: ADC SBC ABS MUX MULT0
MULT1 MULT2 SHR SHL OR AND NOT XOR
MIN MAX EQ CMP

MAC variants (MULADD MULSUB) TADD
variants (ADDADD ADDSUB SUBADD
SUBSUB) MINMAX MULSHR

BFloat16: ADD SUB CMP MUL GETMAN*
ADDIEXP* SUBEXP* EXP2F* F2INT*
GETFR* INT2F* (*Used in complex ops)

Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



PE Instruction Set:

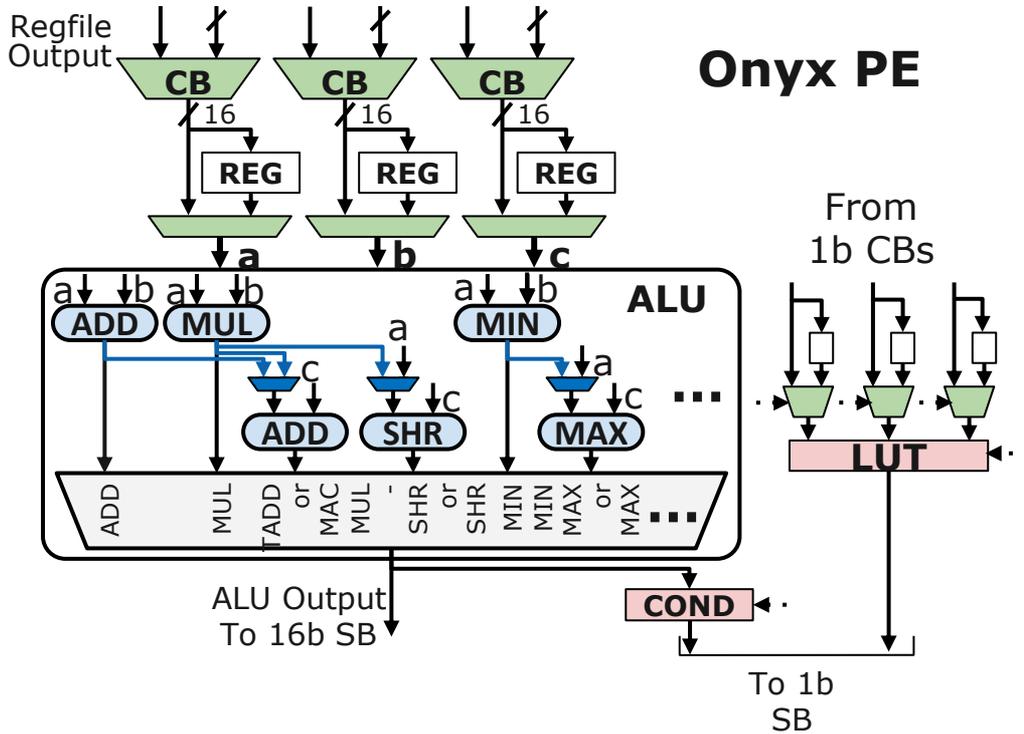
INT16/BIT: ADC SBC ABS MUX MULT0
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Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



PE Instruction Set:

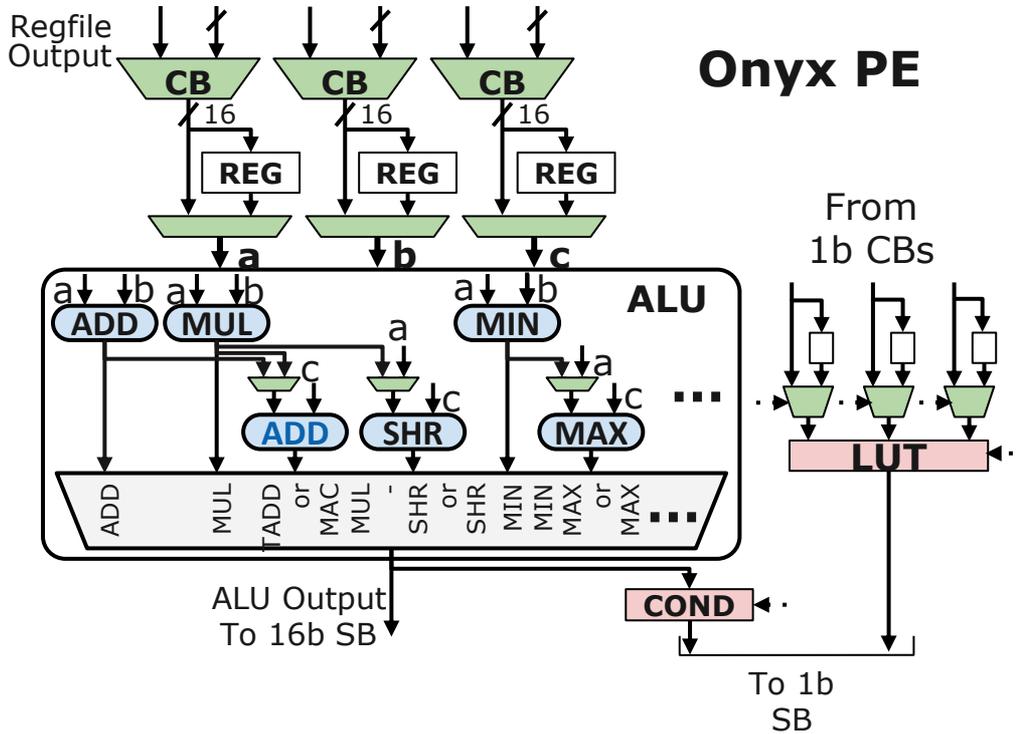
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 GETFR* INT2F* (*Used in complex ops)

Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



Onyx PE

PE Instruction Set:

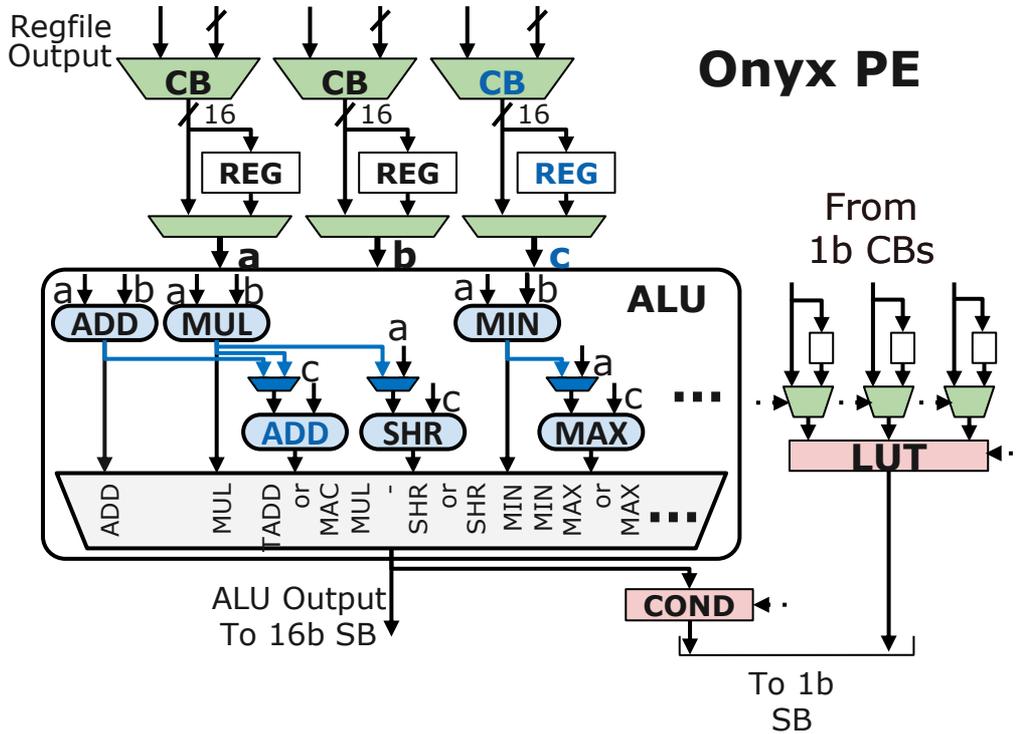
INT16/BIT: ADC SBC ABS MUX MULT0
 MULT1 MULT2 SHR SHL OR AND NOT XOR
 MIN MAX EQ CMP

MAC variants (MULADD MULSUB) TADD
 variants (ADDADD ADDSUB SUBADD
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BFloat16: ADD SUB CMP MUL GETMAN*
 ADDIEXP* SUBEXP* EXP2F* F2INT*
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Optimized Compute

- Step 3: Merge subgraphs into PE



PE Instruction Set:

INT16/BIT: ADC SBC ABS MUX MULT0
 MULT1 MULT2 SHR SHL OR AND NOT XOR
 MIN MAX EQ CMP

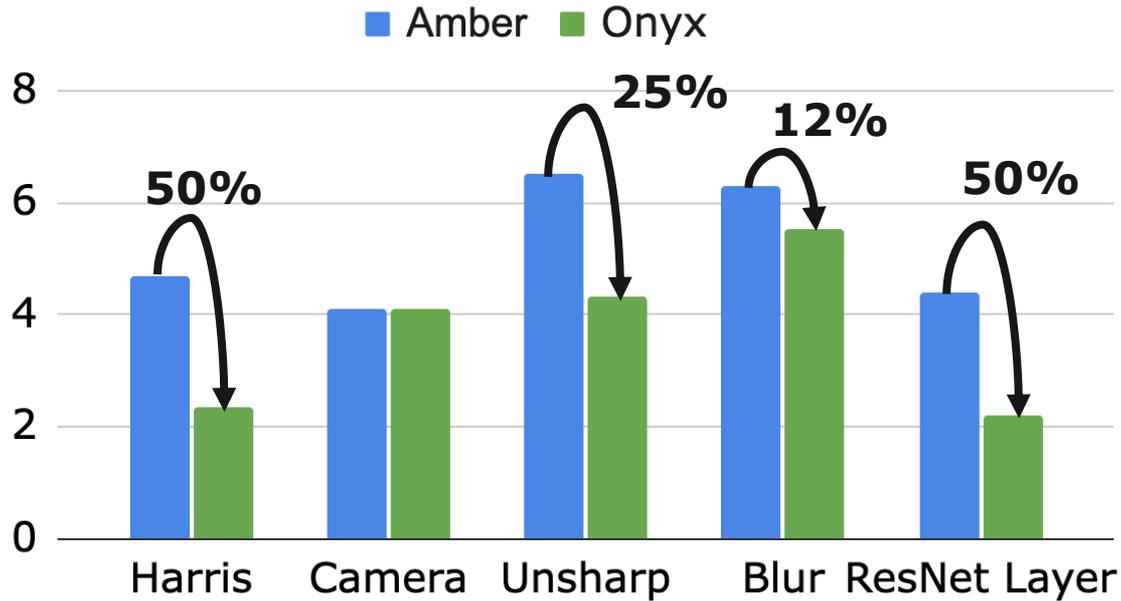
**MAC variants (MULADD MULSUB) TADD
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 ADDIEXP* SUBEXP* EXP2F* F2INT*
 GETFR* INT2F* (*Used in complex ops)

Optimized Compute Results

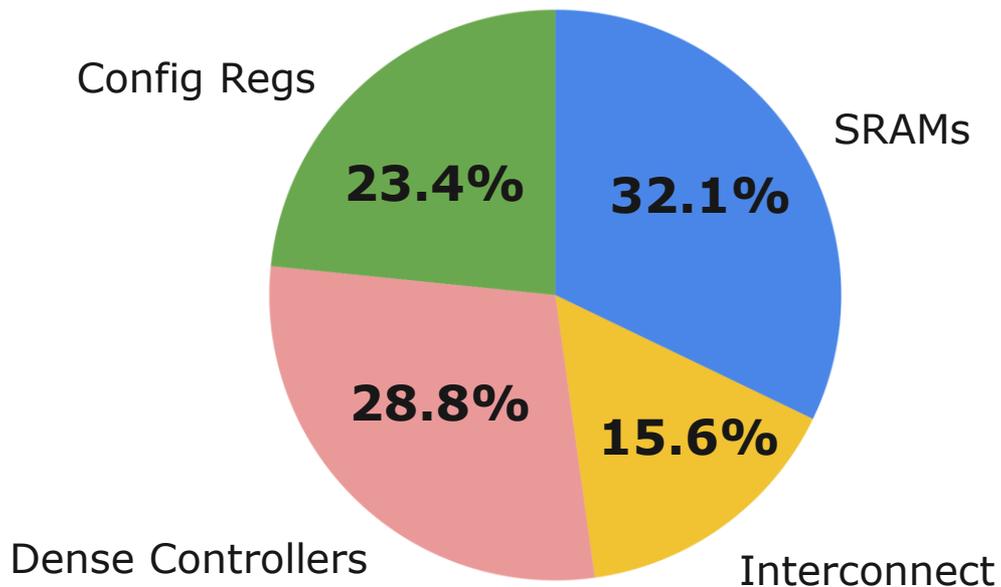
- Increased compute allows for further parallelization, reducing runtime

Iso-Frequency Runtime (ms/frame)

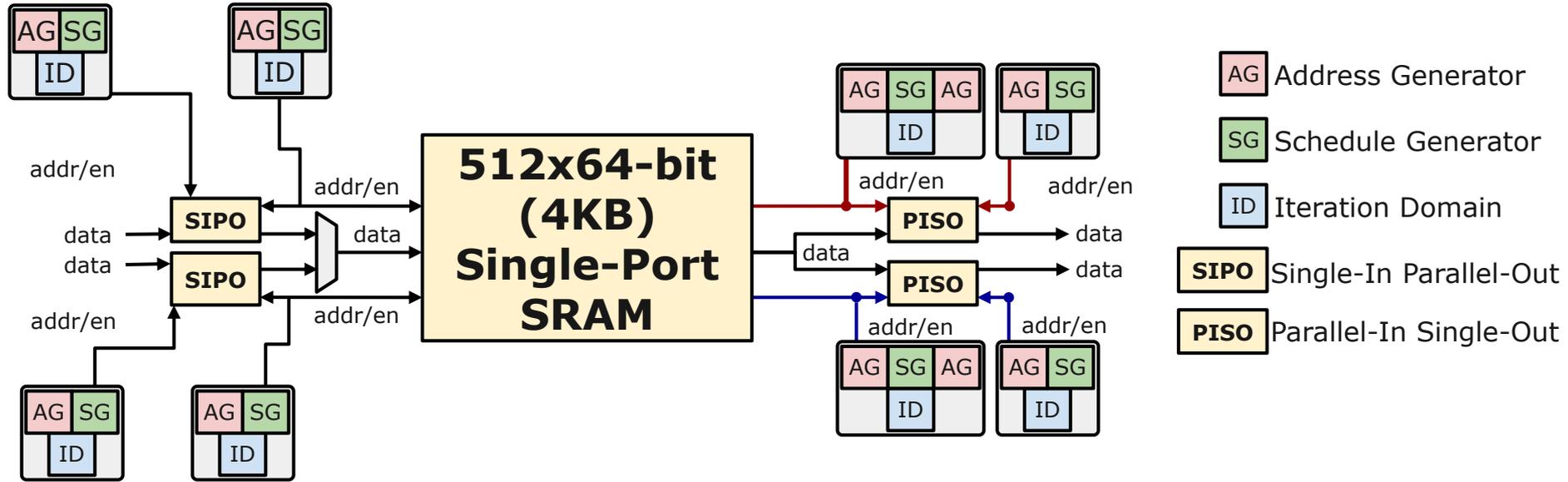


Challenge 2: Area Breakdown of MEM

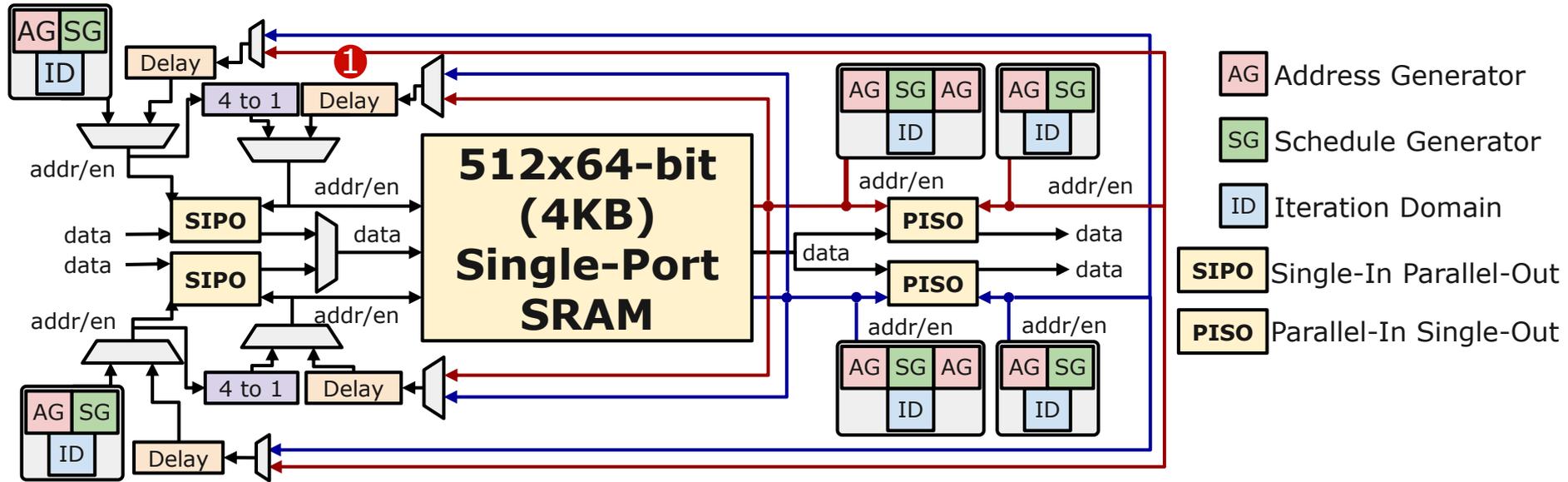
- SRAMs only 32.1% of MEM Tile



Dense Memory Controller

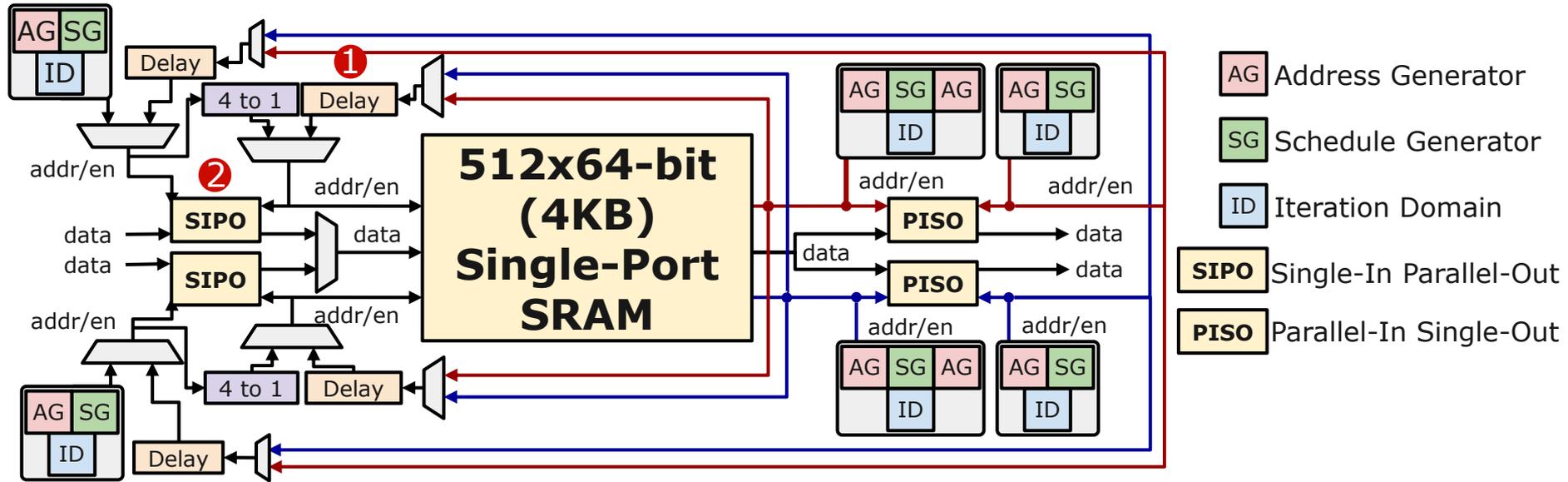


Optimized Dense Memory Controller



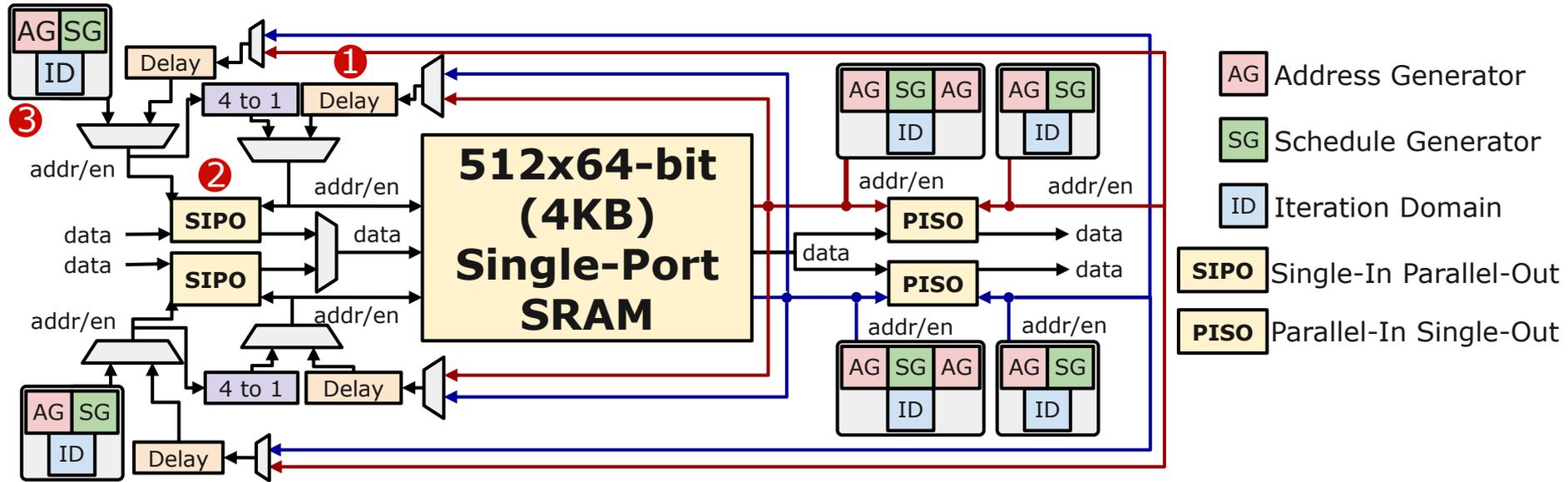
1 Simplified write controllers by replacing address generators (AGs) with delay blocks for read-modify-write operations

Optimized Dense Memory Controller



- ① Simplified write controllers by replacing address generators (AGs) with delay blocks for read-modify-write operations
- ② Halved SIPO FIFO depth

Optimized Dense Memory Controller



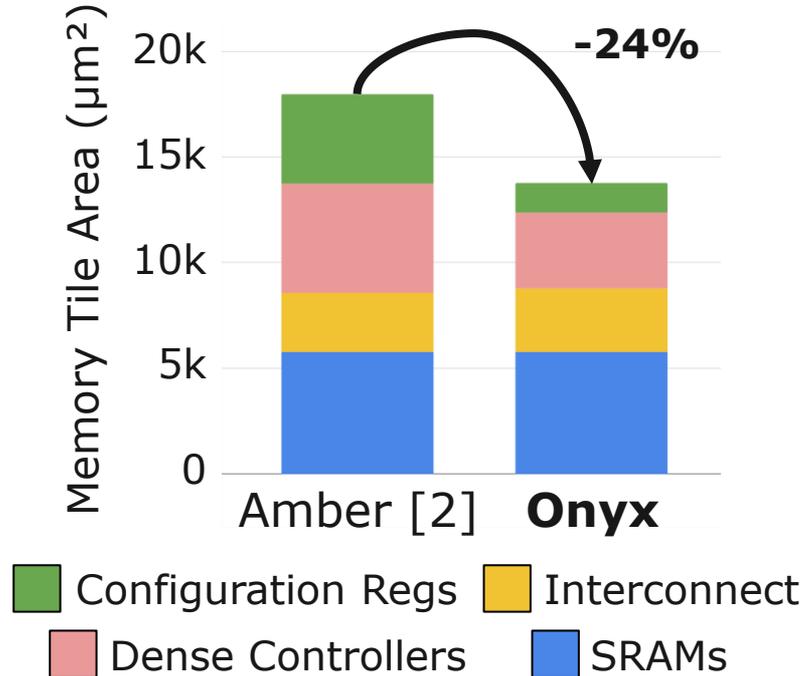
① Simplified write controllers by replacing address generators (AGs) with delay blocks for read-modify-write operations

② Halved SIPO FIFO depth

③ Reduced counter and configuration register bit widths in iteration domains (IDs)

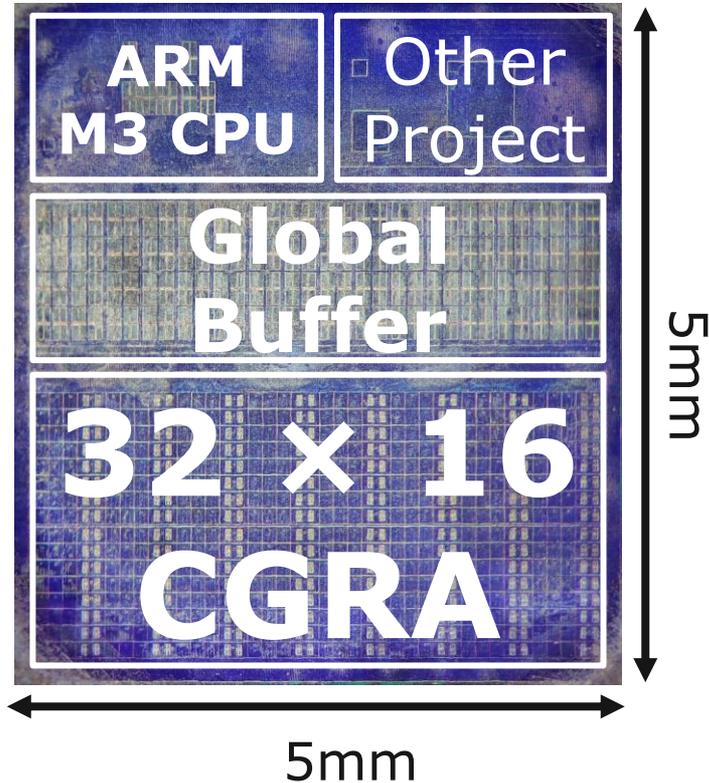
Dense Memory Controller Results

- Memory controller and configuration reduced by 24%



[2] K. Feng et al., JSSC'2023.

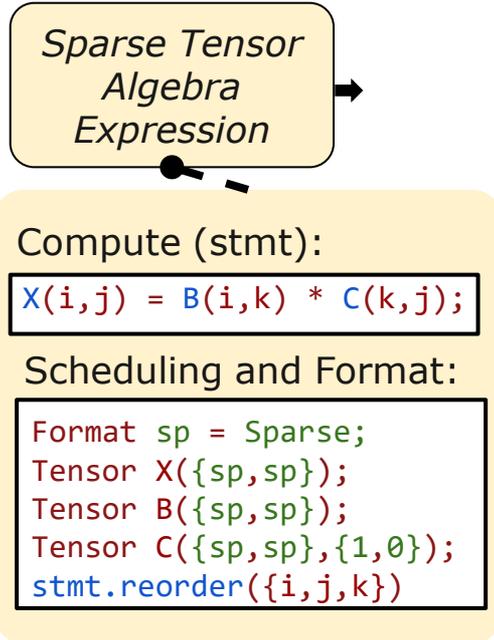
Chip Specifications and Die Photo



	Onyx
Architecture	SoC with CGRA
Node	GF 12 nm
Area (mm ²)	23
Precision	BF16, INT16
SRAM (MiB)	4.5
Voltage (V)	0.78
Freq (MHz)	970
Peak GOPS	571
GOPS/W	756

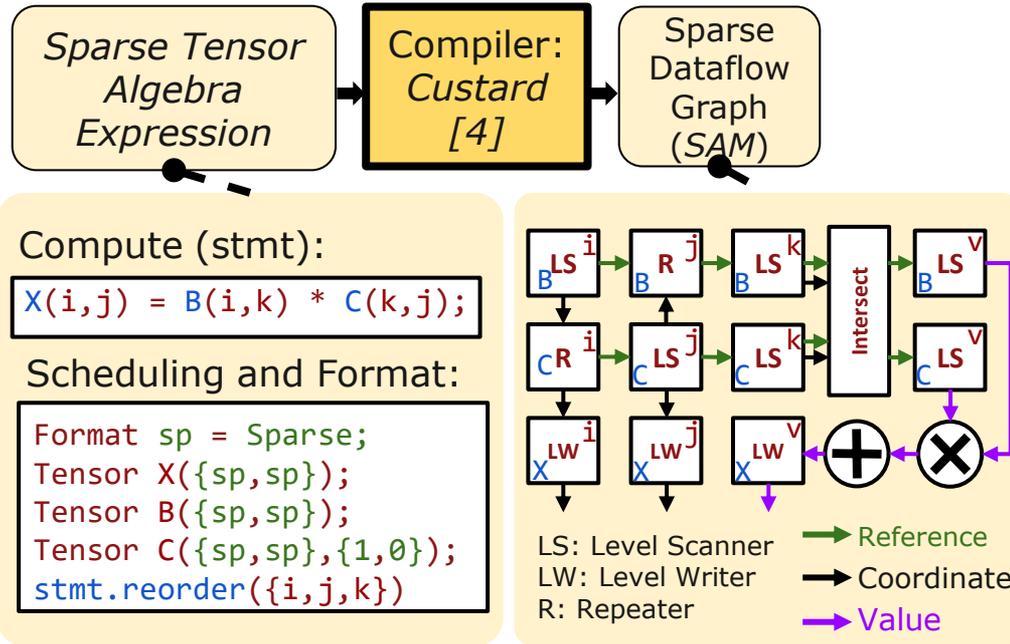
Application Compiler

- Designed end-end compiler to map Sparse Tensor Algebra Expressions onto CGRA



Application Compiler

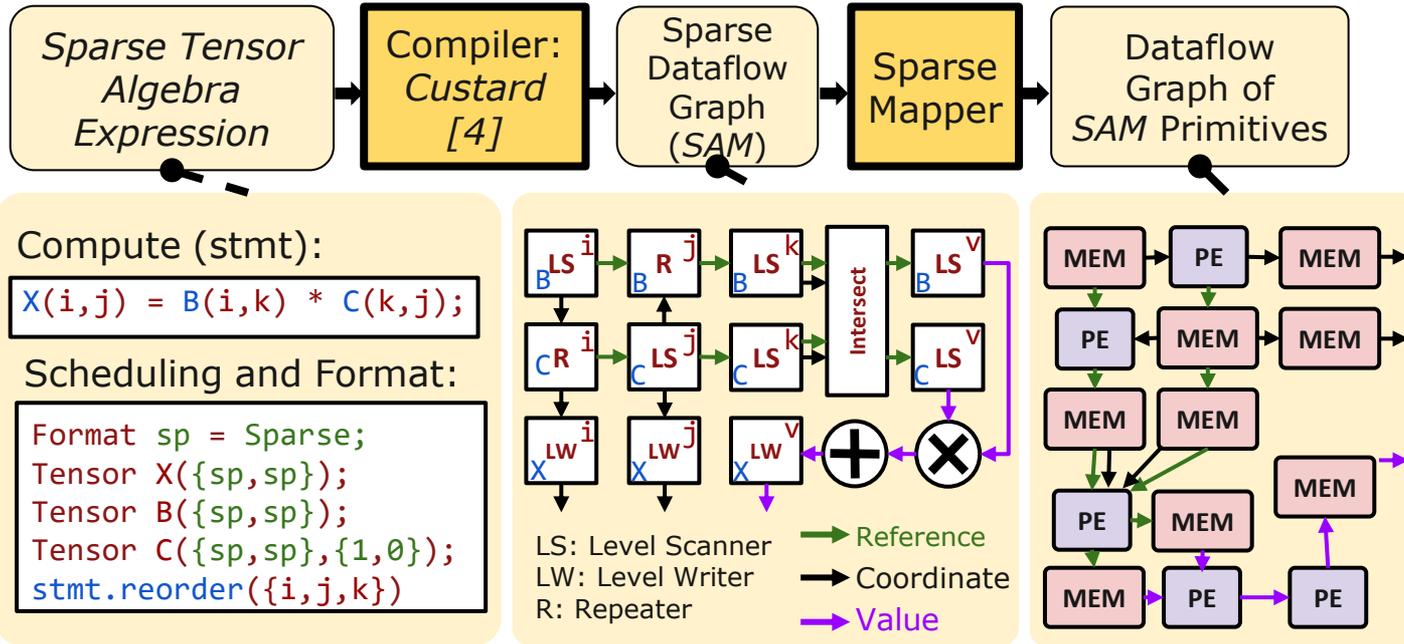
- Designed end-end compiler to map Sparse Tensor Algebra Expressions onto CGRA



[4] O. Hsu et al., ASPLOS'2023.

Application Compiler

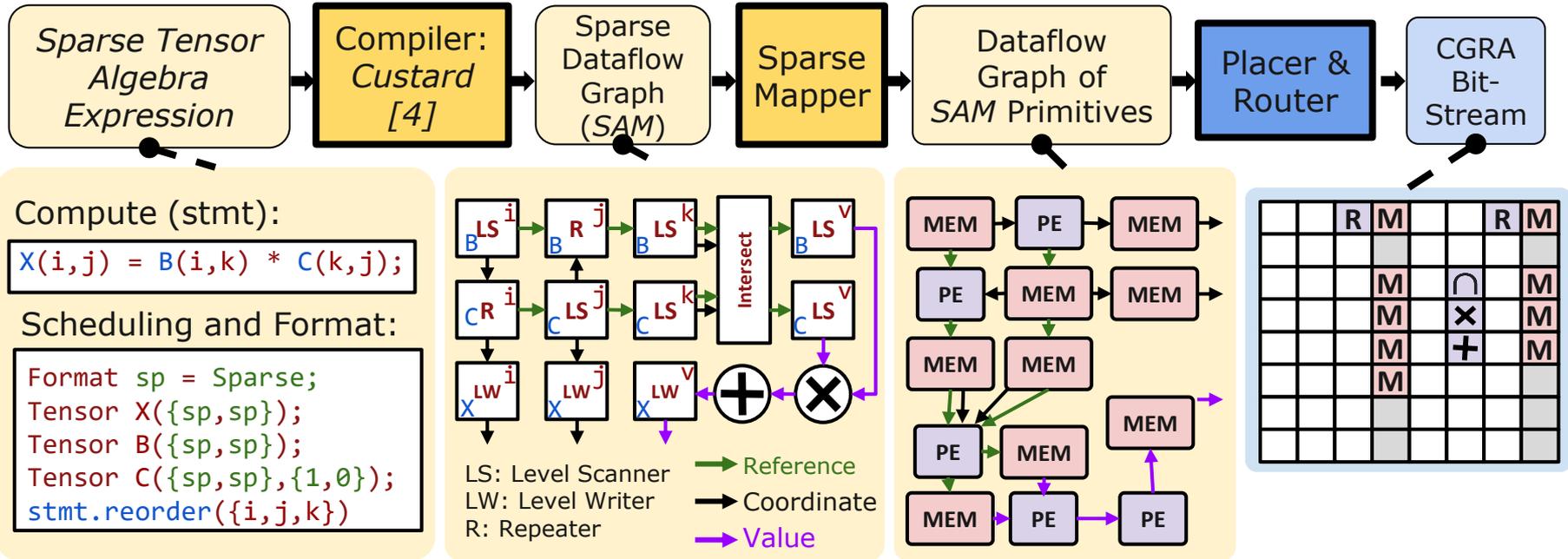
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[4] O. Hsu et al., ASPLOS'2023.

Application Compiler

- Designed end-end compiler to map Sparse Tensor Algebra Expressions onto CGRA



[4] O. Hsu et al., ASPLOS'2023.

Benchmark Application Suite

Dense applications written in Halide compared against CPU, GPU, FPGA, and CGRA:

- Image processing
 - Blur: image blur
 - Unsharp: enhances local contrast by smoothing an image
 - Camera pipeline: processes raw data from an image sensor into a color image
- Computer vision
 - Harris: detects corners
- Machine learning
 - ResNet-18: image classification

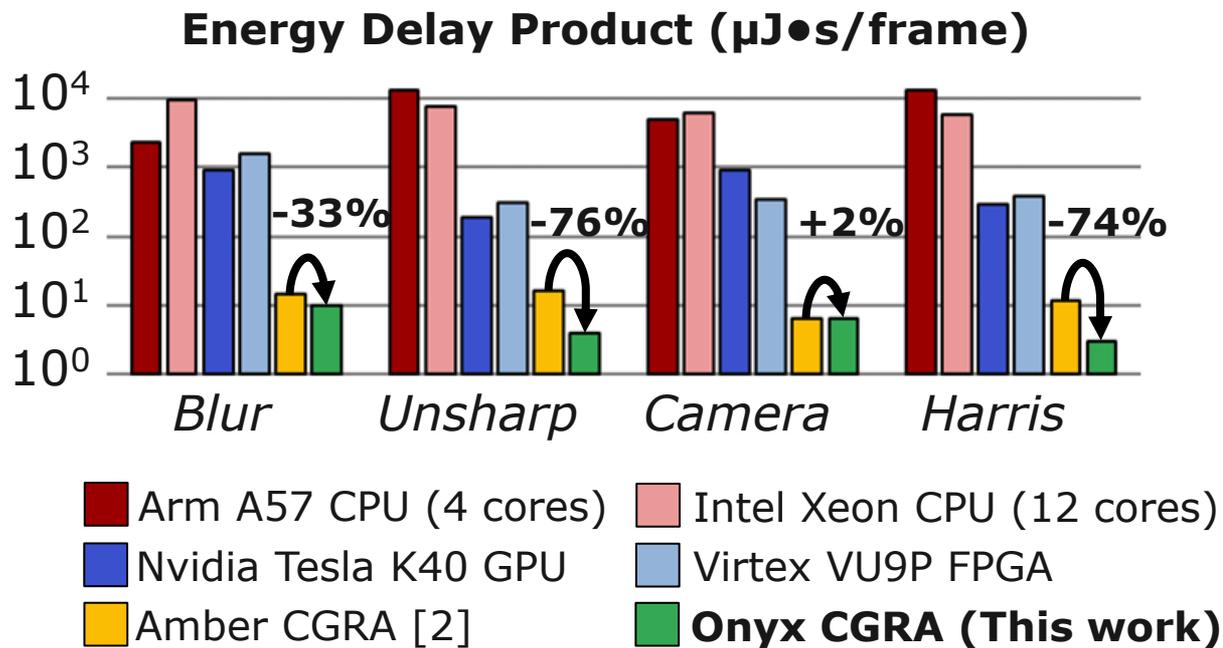
Benchmark Application Suite

Sparse tensor algebra expressions compiled using Custard compared against CPU:

- 2D Dataset: Randomly selected SuiteSparse Matrices from linear programming, computational fluid dynamics, chemical process simulation, undirected weighted random graphs, etc.
- Matrix Dimensions: 821x1876 - 2021x2021
- 3D Dataset: Uniform random generated sparse (67%) tensors
- Tensors Dimensions: 8x37x10 - 28x35x54

Dense Image Processing Results

- Up to 76% better EDP versus the state-of-the-art CGRA

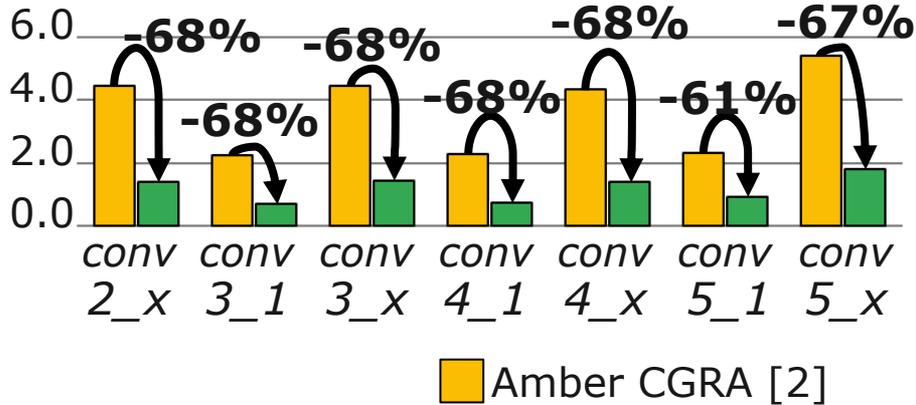


[2] K. Feng et al., JSSC'2023.

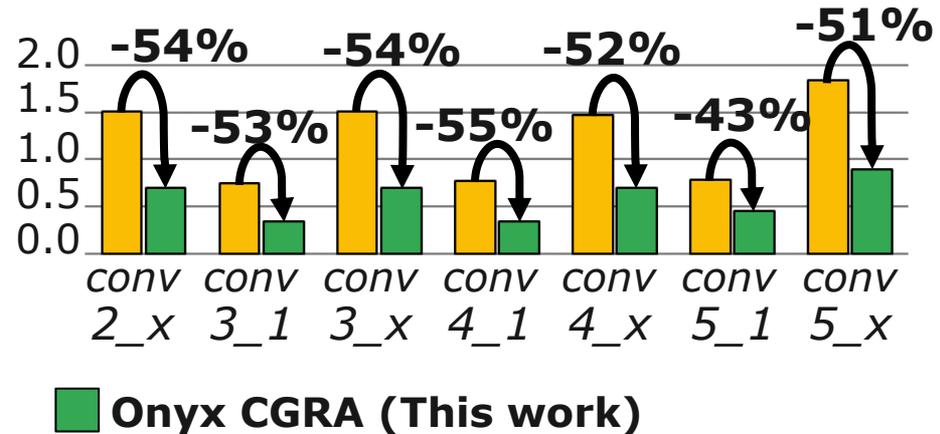
Dense Image ResNet Results

- Up to 55% better energy versus the state-of-the-art CGRA

ResNet-18 Layers Runtime (ms)



ResNet-18 Layers Energy (mJ)

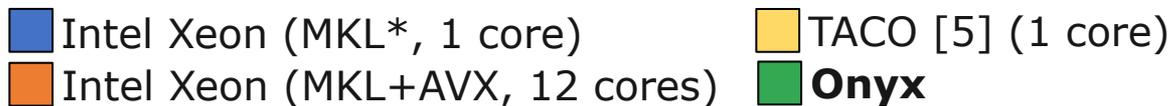
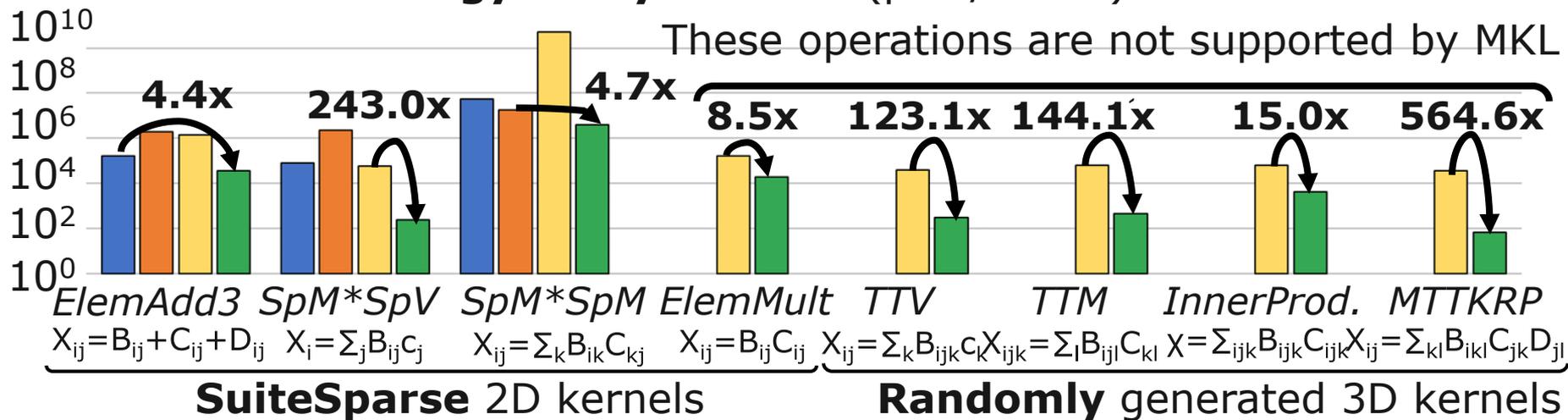


[2] K. Feng et al., JSSC'2023.

Sparse Tensor Algebra Results

- Up to 564.6x better EDP versus a CPU

Energy Delay Product (pJ•s/frame)



[5] F. Kjolstad et al., OOPSLA'2017.

Summary of Key Contributions

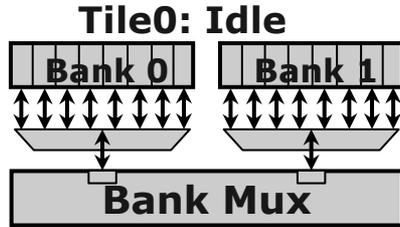
- Onyx is an SoC designed for flexible and efficient acceleration of sparse and dense data applications
 - **Sparse:** composable primitives for arbitrary sparse tensor algebra supporting multi-dimensional, multi-input expressions with fusion
 - **Dense:** compute density increased, and memory controllers optimized
- Automatic end-to-end compiler maps applications onto Onyx
- Onyx achieves up to 565x EDP improvement over CPUs with sparse libraries and 85% lower EDP versus the state-of-the-art CGRA on dense applications
- Demonstrates an approach for accelerating fast evolving application domains

Funding Acknowledgement: DARPA DSSoC, AHA Center, Stanford SystemX Alliance, SRC PRISM Center, NSF Award 2238006, Intel HIP and Samsung.

Backup Slides

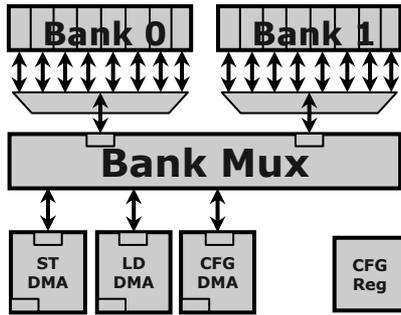
GLB Architecture

- Each GLB tile is composed of two banks



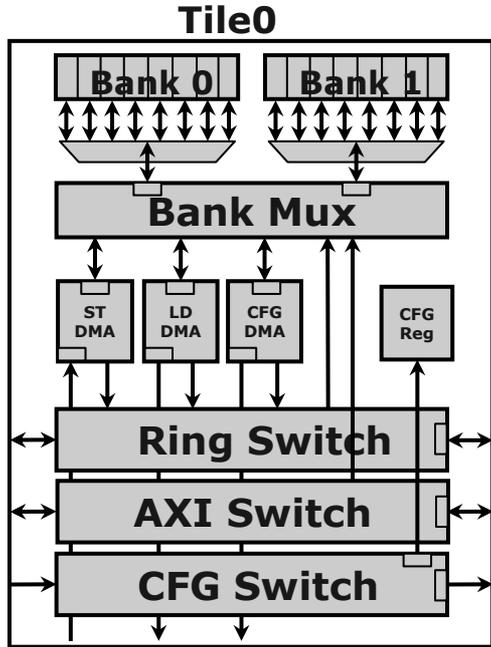
GLB Architecture

- Has Store, Load, Configuration DMAs and Configuration registers



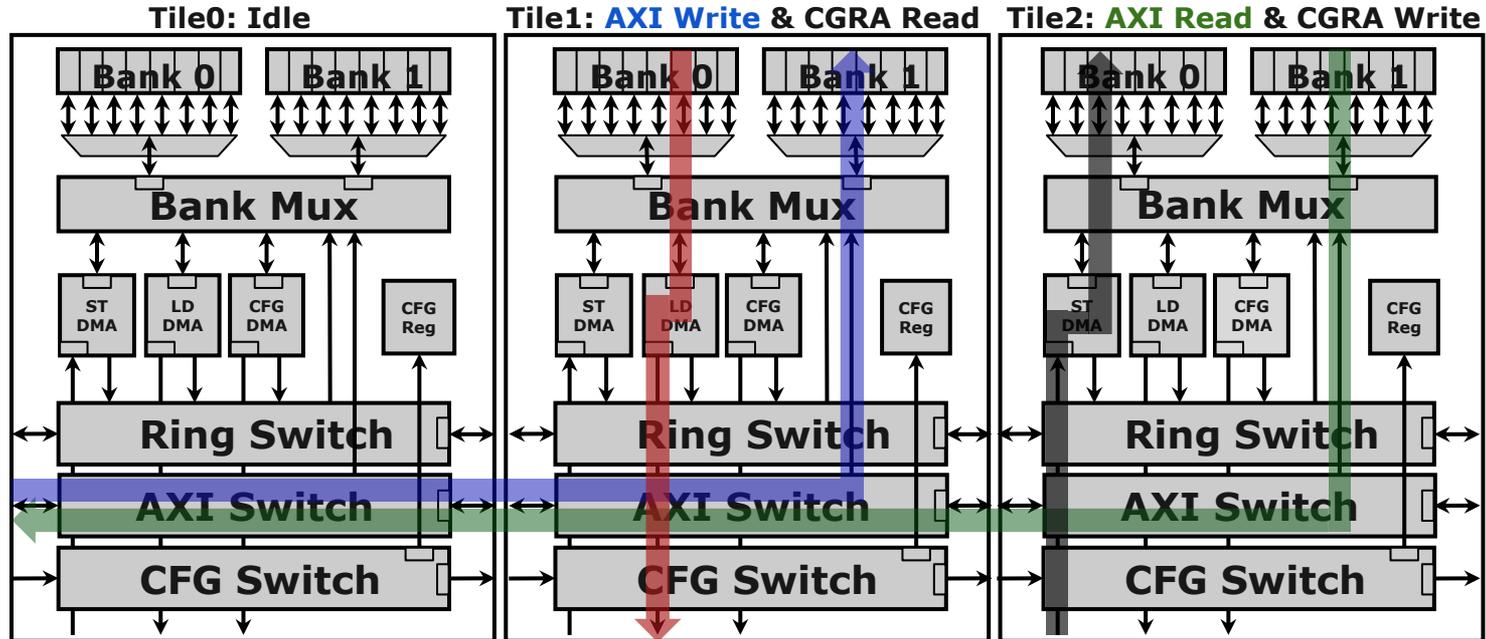
GLB Architecture

- Switches for CGRA and AXI communication and configuration



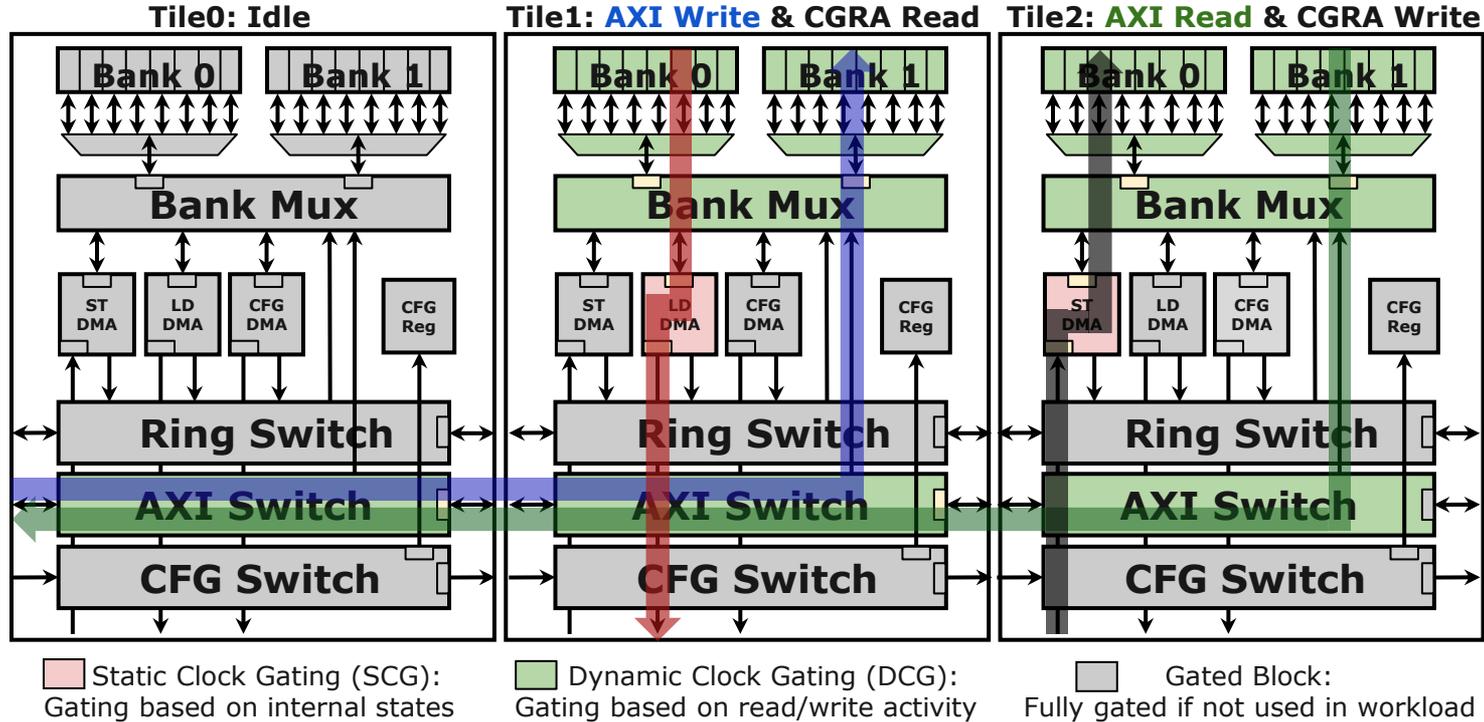
GLB Dynamic-/Static- Clock Gating

- Double buffering workload: what blocks are active?



GLB Dynamic-/Static- Clock Gating

- Only parts of the blocks are active during read/write transactions



GLB Results

- 24% power saved on example double buffering workload

