

## 3.1. Crystal lattices

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### 3.1.1. Bases and lattices

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#### 3.1.1.1. Description and transformation of bases

In three dimensions, a coordinate system is defined by an origin and a basis consisting of three non-coplanar vectors. The lengths  $a, b, c$  of the basis vectors  $\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{c}$  and the intervector angles  $\alpha = \angle(\mathbf{b}, \mathbf{c}), \beta = \angle(\mathbf{c}, \mathbf{a}), \gamma = \angle(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$  are called the *metric parameters*. In  $n$  dimensions, the lengths are designated  $a_i$  and the angles  $\alpha_{ik}$ , where  $1 \leq i < k \leq n$ .

Another description of the basis consists of the scalar products of all pairs of basis vectors. The set of these scalar products obeys the rules of covariant tensors of the second rank (see Section 1.5.2). The scalar products may be written in the form of a  $(3 \times 3)$  matrix

$$(\mathbf{a}_i \cdot \mathbf{a}_k) = (g_{ik}) = \mathbf{G}, \quad i, k = 1, 2, 3,$$

which is called the *matrix of the metric coefficients* or the *metric tensor*.

The change from one basis to another is described by a transformation matrix  $\mathbf{P}$ . The transformation of the old basis  $(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{c})$  to the new basis  $(\mathbf{a}', \mathbf{b}', \mathbf{c}')$  is given by

$$(\mathbf{a}', \mathbf{b}', \mathbf{c}') = (\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{c}) \cdot \mathbf{P}. \quad (3.1.1.1)$$

The relation

$$\mathbf{G}' = \mathbf{P}^T \cdot \mathbf{G} \cdot \mathbf{P} \quad (3.1.1.2)$$

holds for the metric tensors  $\mathbf{G}$  and  $\mathbf{G}'$ .

#### 3.1.1.2. Lattices

A three-dimensional lattice can be visualized best as an infinite periodic array of points, which are the termini of the vectors

$$\mathbf{l}_{uvw} = u\mathbf{a} + v\mathbf{b} + w\mathbf{c}, \quad u, v, w \text{ all integers.}$$

The parallelepiped determined by the basis vectors  $\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}, \mathbf{c}$  is called a (primitive) *unit cell* of the lattice (cf. Section 1.3.2.3),  $\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}$  and  $\mathbf{c}$  are a primitive *basis of the lattice*. The number of possible lattice bases is infinite.

For the investigation of the properties of lattices, appropriate bases are required. In order to select suitable bases (see below), transformations may be necessary (Chapter 1.5). Of the several properties of lattices, only symmetry and some topological aspects are considered in this section. Some further properties of lattices are given in Section 3.1.4.

#### 3.1.1.3. Topological properties of lattices

The treatment of the topological properties is restricted here to the consideration of the neighbourhood of a lattice point. For this purpose, the *domain of influence* (*Wirkungsbereich*, Dirichlet domain, Voronoi domain, Wigner–Seitz cell) (Delaunay, 1933) is introduced. The domain of a particular lattice point consists of all points in space that are closer to this lattice point than to any other lattice point or at most equidistant to it. To construct the

domain, the selected lattice point is connected to all other lattice points. The set of planes perpendicular to these connecting lines and passing through their midpoints contains the boundary planes of the domain of influence, which is thus a convex polyhedron. (Niggli and Delaunay used the term ‘domain of influence’ for the interior of the convex polyhedron only.) Without the use of metrical properties, Minkowski (1897) proved that the maximal number of boundary planes resulting from this construction is equal to  $2(2^n - 1)$ , where  $n$  is the dimension of the space. The minimal number of boundary planes is  $2n$ . Each face of the polyhedron represents a lattice vector. Thus, the topological, metrical and symmetry properties of infinite lattices can be discussed with the aid of a single finite polyhedron, namely the domain of influence (cf. Burzlaff & Zimmermann, 1977).

#### 3.1.1.4. Special bases for lattices

Different procedures are in use to select special bases of lattices. The reduction procedures employ metrical properties to develop a sequence of basis transformations which lead to a *reduced basis* and *reduced cell* (see Section 3.1.4).

Another possibility is to make use of the symmetry properties of lattices. This procedure, with the additional aid of standardization rules, leads to the *conventional crystallographic basis* and *cell*. In addition to translational symmetry, a lattice possesses point-group symmetry. No crystal can have higher point-group symmetry than the point group of its lattice, which is called its *holohedry*. (Detailed treatment of the symmetry properties of lattices and their classification is given in Chapter 1.3. Following the terminology introduced there, the lattice point groups are the geometric classes to which the Bravais groups of the lattices belong.) The seven holohedries in three dimensions and the four in two dimensions form the basis for the classification of lattices (Table 3.1.1.1). It may be shown by an algebraic approach (Burckhardt, 1966) or a topological one (Delaunay, 1933) that the arrangement of the symmetry elements with respect to the lattice vectors is not arbitrary but well determined. Taking as basis vectors lattice vectors along important symmetry directions and choosing the origin in a lattice point simplifies the description of the lattice symmetry operations (cf. Section 3.3.1). Note that such a basis is not necessarily a (primitive) basis of the lattice (see below). The choice of a basis controlled by symmetry is not always unique; in the monoclinic system, for example, one vector can be taken parallel to the symmetry direction but the other two vectors, perpendicular to it, are not uniquely determined by symmetry.

The choice of conventions for standardizing the setting of a lattice depends on the purpose for which it is used. The several sets of conventions rest on two conflicting principles: symmetry considerations and metric considerations. The following rules (i) to (vii) defining a *conventional basis* are taken from Donnay (1943; Donnay & Ondik, 1973); they deal with the conventions based on symmetry:

- (i) Each basis vector is a lattice vector from the origin to the nearest node on the related row. The basis must define a right-handed coordinate system.