9. BASIC STRUCTURAL FEATURES

pointed out by Pandey & Krishna (1977) and suitable correction factors have recently been derived by Pandey, Prasad, Lele & Gauthier (1987). A satisfactory solution to the problem of structure determination of one-dimensionally disordered stackings must await proper understanding of all other factors that may influence the true diffraction profiles.

9.2.2. Layer stacking in general polytypic structures (By S. Ďurovič)

9.2.2.1. *The notion of polytypism*

The common property of the structures described in Section 9.2.1 was the stacking ambiguity of adjacent layer-like structural units. This has been explained by the geometrical properties of close packing of equal spheres, and the different modifications thus obtained have been called *polytypes*.

This phenomenon was first recognized by Baumhauer (1912, 1915) as a result of his investigations of many SiC single crystals by optical goniometry. Among these, he discovered three *types* and his observations were formulated in five statements:

(1) all three types originate simultaneously in the same melt and seemingly also under the same, or nearly the same, conditions;

(2) they can be related in a simple way to the same axial ratio (each within an individual primary series);

(3) any two types (I and II, II and III) have certain faces in common but, except the basal face, there is no face occurring simultaneously in all three types;

(4) the crystals belonging to different, but also to all three, types often form intergrowths with parallel axes;

(5) any of the three types exhibits a typical X-ray diffraction pattern and thus also an individual molecular or atomic structure.

Baumhauer recognized the special role of these *types* within modifications of the same substance and called this phenomenon *polytypism* – a special case of polymorphism. The later determination of the crystal structures of Baumhauer's three types indicated that his results can be interpreted by a family of structures consisting of identical layers with hexagonal symmetry and differing only in their stacking mode.

The stipulation that the individual polytypes grow from the same system and under (nearly) the same conditions influenced for years the investigation of polytypes because it logically led to the question of their growth mechanism.

In the following years, many new polytypic substances have been found. Their crystal structures revealed that polytypism is restricted neither to close packings nor to heterodesmic 'layered structures' (*e.g.* CdI_2 or GaSe; *cf.* homodesmic SiC or ZnS; see §§9.2.1.2.2 to 9.2.1.2.4), and that the reasons for a stacking ambiguity lie in the crystal chemistry – in all cases the geometric nearest-neighbour relations between adjacent layers are preserved. The preservation of the bulk chemical composition was not questioned.

Some discomfort has arisen from refinements of the structures of various phyllosilicates. Here especially the micas exhibit a large variety of isomorphous replacements and it turns out that a certain chemical composition stabilizes certain polytypes, excludes others, and that the layers constituting polytypic structures need not be of the same kind. But subsequently the opinion prevailed that the sequence of individual kinds of layers in polytypes of the same family should remain the same and that the relative positions of adjacent layers cannot be completely random (*e.g.* Zvyagin, 1988). The postulates declared mixed-layer and turbostratic structures as non-polytypic. All this led to certain controversies about the notion of polytypism. While

Thompson (1981) regards polytypes as 'arising through different ways of stacking structurally compatible tabular units ... [provided that this] ... should not alter the chemistry of the crystal as a whole', Angel (1986) demands that 'polytypism arises from different modes of stacking of one or more structurally compatible modules', dropping thus any chemical constraints and allowing also for rod- and block-like modules.

The present official definition (Guinier *et al.*, 1984) reads:

''An element or compound is *polytypic* if it occurs in several different structural modifications, each of which may be regarded as built up by stacking layers of (nearly) identical structure and composition, and if the modifications differ only in their stacking sequence. Polytypism is a special case of polymorphism: the two-dimensional translations within the layers are (essentially) preserved whereas the lattice spacings normal to the layers vary between polytypes and are indicative of the stacking period. No such restrictions apply to polymorphism.

Comment: The above definition is designed to be sufficiently general to make polytypism a useful concept. There is increasing evidence that some polytypic structures are characterized either by small deviations from stoichiometry or by small amounts of impurities. (In the case of certain minerals like clays, micas and ferrites, deviations in composition up to 0.25 atoms per formula unit are permitted within the same polytypic series: two layer structures that differ by more than this amount should not be called polytypic.) Likewise, layers in different polytypic structures may exhibit slight structural differences and may not be isomorphic in the strict crystallographic sense.

The *Ad-Hoc* Committee is aware that the definition of polytypism above is probably too wide since it includes, for example, the turbostratic form of graphite as well as mixed-layer phyllosilicates. However, the sequence and stacking of layers in a polytype are always subject to well-defined limitations. On the other hand, a more general definition of polytypism that includes 'rod' and 'block' polytypes may become necessary in the future.''

This definition was elaborated as a compromise between members of the IUCr *Ad-Hoc* Committee on the Nomenclature of Disordered, Modulated and Polytype Structures. It is a slightly modified definition proposed by the IMA/IUCr Joint Committee on Nomenclature (Bailey *et al.*, 1977), which was the target of Angel's (1986) objections.

The official definition has indeed its shortcomings, but not so much in its restrictiveness concerning the chemical composition and structural rigidity of layers, because this can be overcome by a proper degree of abstraction (see below). More critical is the fact that it is not 'geometric' enough. It specifies neither the 'layers' (except for their two-dimensional periodicity), nor the limitations concerning their sequence and stacking mode, and it does not state the conditions under which a polytype belongs to a family.

Very impressive evidence that even polytypes that are in keeping with the first Baumhauer's statement may not have exactly the same composition and the structure of their constituting layers *cannot* be identical has been provided by studies on SiC carried out at the Leningrad Electrotechnical Institute (Sorokin, Tairov, Tsvetkov & Chernov, 1982; Tsvetkov, 1982). They indicate also that each periodic polytype is *sensu stricto* an individual polymorph. Therefore, it appears that the question whether some *real* polytypes belong to the same

family depends mainly on the idealization and/or abstraction level, *relevant to a concrete purpose*.

This very idealization and/or abstraction process caused the term *polytype* to become also an *abstract notion* meaning a *structural type* with relevant geometrical properties,* belonging to an abstract family whose members consist of layers with identical structure and keep identical bulk composition. Such an abstract notion lies at the root of all systemization and classification schemes of polytypes.

A still higher degree of abstraction has been achieved by Dornberger-Schiff (1964, 1966, 1979) who abstracted from chemical composition completely and investigated the manifestation of crystallochemical reasons for polytypism in the *symmetry of layers* and *symmetry relations between layers*. Her theory of OD (order–disorder) structures is thus a theory of symmetry of polytypes, playing here a role similar to that of group theory in traditional crystallography. In the next section, a brief account of basic terms, definitions, and logical constructions of OD theory will be given, together with its contribution to a geometrical definition of polytypism.

9.2.2.2. *Symmetry aspects of polytypism*

9.2.2.2.1. *Close packing of spheres*

Polytypism of structures based on close packing of equal spheres (note this idealization) is explained by the fact that the spheres of any layer can be placed *either* in all the voids $\triangledown$ of the preceding layer, *or* in all the voids $\triangle$ – not in both because of steric hindrance (Section 9.2.1, Fig. 9.2.1.1).

A closer look reveals that the two voids are *geometrically* (but not translationally) *equivalent*. This implies that the two possible pairs of adjacent layers, say *AB* and *AC*, are geometrically equivalent too – this equivalence is brought about *e.g.* by a reflection in any plane perpendicular to the layers and passing through the centres of mutually contacting spheres *A*: such a reflection transforms the layer *A* into itself, and *B* into *C*, and *vice versa*. Another important point is that the symmetry proper of any layer is described by the layer group $P(6/m)mm$,† and that the relative position of any two adjacent layers is such that only some of the 24 symmetry operations of that layer group remain valid for the pair. It is easy to see that 12 out of the total of 24 transformations do not change the *z* coordinate of any starting point, and that these operations constitute a subgroup of the index [2]. These are the so-called τ operations. The remaining 12 operations change any *z* into $-z$, thus turning the layer upside down; they constitute a coset. The latter are called ρ operations. Out of the 12 τ operations, only 6 are valid for the layer pair. One says that only these 6 operations have a *continuation* in the adjacent layer. Let us denote the general multiplicity of the group of τ operations of a single layer by *N*, and that of the subgroup of these operations with a continuation in the adjacent layer by *F*: then the number *Z* of positions of the adjacent layer leading to geometrically equivalent layer pairs is given by $Z = N/F$ (Dornberger-Schiff, 1964, pp. 32 ff.); in our case, $Z = 12/6 = 2$ (Fig. 9.2.2.1). This is the so-called *NFZ relation*, valid with only minor alterations for all categories of OD structures (§9.2.2.2.7). It follows that all conceivable structures based on close packing of equal spheres are built on the same

symmetry principle: they consist of equivalent layers (*i.e.* layers of the same kind) and of equivalent layer pairs, and, in keeping with these stipulations, any layer can be stacked onto its predecessor in two ways. Keeping in mind that the layer pairs that are geometrically equivalent are also energetically equivalent, and neglecting in the first approximation the interactions between a given layer and the next-but-one layer, we infer that all structures built according to these principles are also energetically equivalent and thus equally likely to appear.

It is important to realize that the above symmetry considerations hold not only for close packing of spheres but also for *any conceivable structure* consisting of two-dimensionally periodic layers with symmetry $P(6/m)mm$ and containing pairs of adjacent layers with symmetry $P(3)m1$. Moreover, the OD theory sets a quantitative stipulation for the relation between any two adjacent layers: they have to remain *geometrically equivalent* in any polytype belonging to a family. This is far more exact than the description: 'the stacking of layers is such that it preserves the nearest-neighbour relationships'.

9.2.2.2.2. *Polytype families and OD groupoid families*

All polytypes of a substance built on the same *structural principle* are said to belong to the same *family*. All polytypic structures, even of different substances, built according to the same *symmetry principle* also belong to a family, but different from the previous one since it includes structures of various polytype families, *e.g.* SiC, ZnS, AgI, which differ in their composition, lattice dimensions, *etc*. Such a family has been called an *OD groupoid family*; its members differ only in the relative distribution of *coincidence operations** describing the respective symmetries, irrespective of the crystallochemical content. These coincidence operations can be *total* or *partial* (local) and their set constitutes a groupoid (Dornberger-Schiff, 1964, pp. 16 ff.; Fichtner, 1965, 1977). Any polytype (abstract) belonging to such a family has its own stacking of layers, and its symmetry can be described by the appropriate individual groupoid. Strictly speaking, these groupoids are the members of an OD groupoid family. Let us recall that any space group

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* A coincidence operation is a space transformation (called also *isometric mapping*, *isometry*, or *motion*), which preserves distances between any two points of the given object.
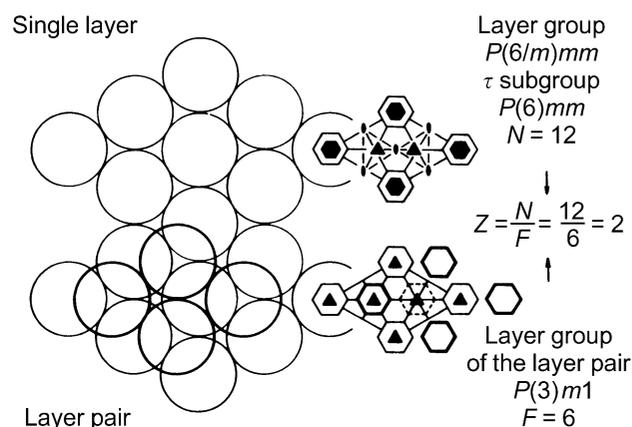

Fig. 9.2.2.1. Symmetry interpretation of close packings of equal spheres. The layer group of a single layer, the subgroup of its τ operations, and the number of asymmetric units *N* per unit mesh of the former, are given at the top right. The τ operations that have a continuation for the pair of adjacent layers, the layer group of the pair, and the value of *F* are indicated at the bottom right.

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* This is an interesting example of how a development in a scientific discipline influences semantics: *e.g.* when speaking of a *6H* polytype of SiC, one has very often in mind a characteristic sequence of Si–C layers rather than deviations from stoichiometry, presence and distribution of foreign atoms, distortion of coordination tetrahedra, *etc*.

† The direction in which there is no periodicity is indicated by parentheses (Dornberger-Schiff, 1959).

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