

Solved: The enigma of labradorite feldspar with incommensurately modulated structure

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ABSTRACT



Intermediate plagioclase feldspars are the most abundant minerals in the Earth's crust. Their incommensurately modulated structure has puzzled geologists and crystallographers for decades since the phenomenon in a labradorite was reported in 1940. Solving the structure is a necessary step toward mapping the complex subsolidus phase relations of plagioclase solid solution. The structure of a homogeneous labradorite (An₅₁) single crystal from a metamorphic rock is solved and refined from single-crystal X-ray diffraction. The result structure can be simplified as alternating $I\bar{1}$ -like lamellae domains related by inversion twins. The inversion boundary shows an anorthite-like structure with $I\bar{1}$ symmetry and is richer in Ca than the neighboring domains with opposite polarity. No albite-like subunits appear in the *e*-plagioclase structure. The modulated structure displays a unique Al–Si ordering pattern. A density modulation with a variation of 17 mol% in composition is also observed and can be properly described only by applying second-order harmonic waves for the atomic modulation functions. The modulated structure reveals details that cannot be observed from refinement with only main reflections and may be used to assess the ordering state and cooling rate of its host rock. The homogeneity of the crystal indicates the closure of the solvus for Bøggild intergrowth at low temperature. The highly ordered modulation supports the thermodynamic stability of *e*-plagioclase. Both Al–Si ordering and Ca–Na ordering are the driving force for formation of the incommensurately modulated structure.

Keywords: Intermediate plagioclase, incommensurate, modulated structure, density modulation, single-crystal XRD, *e*-plagioclase, labradorite, aperiodic crystal, Invited Centennial article

INTRODUCTION

Plagioclase feldspars, which form a coupled solid solution between albite (Ab; NaAlSi₃O₈) and anorthite (An; CaAl₂Si₂O₈), are the most abundant group of minerals in the Earth's crust, and they can be found in most igneous and metamorphic rocks. However, the complicated crystal structure and subsolidus phase relation has been puzzling mineralogists for decades. The most enigmatic feature of plagioclase is the incommensurately modulated structure (*e*-plagioclase) that appears in low plagioclase with composition between ~An₂₅ and ~An₇₅ (Bown and Gay 1959; Ribbe 1983; Smith and Brown 1988). The crystal structure of *e*-plagioclase has been an enigma since its first discovery in 1940 (Chao and Taylor 1940). Several different models for *e*-plagioclase have been raised over the decades, yet none of them solved the structure satisfactorily. All previous models are based on alternating anorthite domains with antiphase relation to one another, while some display density modulation by inserting albite-like $C\bar{1}$ domains in between $I\bar{1}$ domains (Cinnamon and Bailey 1971; Grove 1977; Horst et al. 1981; Kumao et al. 1981; McConnell and Fleet 1963; Megaw 1960a, 1960b, 1960c; Nakajima et al. 1977; Smith and Ribbe 1969; Steurer and Jagodzinski 1988; Toman and Frueh 1976a, 1976b; Wenk and Nakajima 1980) (Fig. 1).

Most single-crystal X-ray analyses of *e*-plagioclase have

been done on labradorite (Boysen and Kek 2015; Horst et al. 1981; Toman and Frueh 1976a, 1976b; Yamamoto et al. 1984), with An composition about 50, which is about the middle of entire compositional range of *e*-plagioclase. As the An composition increases, so do the intensities of satellite reflections and the modulation period (Smith and Brown 1988). Labradorite is an ideal specimen as the satellites are separate enough to be easily discerned and strong enough for quality refinement. However, igneous plagioclase of this composition often exhibit iridescent color from the Bøggild intergrowth. All the labradorite samples studied previously actually consist of two phases with different compositions and modulation periods (Boysen and Kek 2015; Horst et al. 1981; Yamamoto et al. 1984), which was considered a serious problem (Ribbe 1983), because the reflections from the two components overlap and therefore a

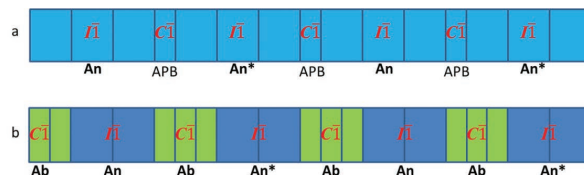


FIGURE 1. Previously proposed models for *e*-plagioclase. (a) $I\bar{1}$ domains separated by antiphase boundaries. (b) $I\bar{1}$ domains with antiphase relation separated by albite-like $C\bar{1}$ domains, the different colors indicate compositional variation.

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structure refined to such a diffraction pattern is obviously a composite of two structures of different compositions and can have no real physical meaning. Two totally different structure models for the labradorite were proposed with R values of $\sim 10\%$ for e -reflections based on the exact same set of diffraction data (Horst et al. 1981; Yamamoto et al. 1984). Boysen and Kek (2015) attempted to solve the problem by introducing another set of satellites from exsolution lamellae, yet they still could not discern the detailed differences between two phases. Their structural refinement was not complete and contained unrealistic occupancies. It is obvious that both good crystal samples (single crystal without exsolution lamellae) and data quality are prerequisites for obtaining an unambiguous structure model with much lower R values for the satellite reflections. A comparison of previous structure refinements and this work is summarized in Table 1.

All the labradorite samples used for X-ray studies display iridescent color and are of igneous origin. Grove et al. (1983) observed homogenous e -labradorite in a metamorphic rock. The composition lies in the compositional range of the Bøggild immiscible gap, and it was interpreted by Grove et al. (1983) as metastable. However, both early transmission electron microscopy (TEM) observations and our own TEM results do not show any evidence of exsolution in this crystal (Fig. 2). With no two-phase intergrowth, a low potassium content, and a lack of defects introduced by phase transformations during cooling, metamorphic plagioclase is an ideal sample for single-crystal X-ray analysis of the modulated structure. Therefore, the data collected on a metamorphic labradorite without exsolution lamellae should provide reliable data toward

solving the mysterious structure of the intermediate plagioclase with incommensurately modulated structure, or e -plagioclase.

SAMPLE AND EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

The sample analyzed in this paper is a labradorite from 987-L (An_{49} - An_{51}) mentioned by Grove et al. (1983). The host rock is a metamorphosed carbonate rock near Augusta, Maine (Ferry 1980). Crystals are smaller than 0.5 mm in size and contain both albite twins and pericline twins. The temperature and pressure of metamorphism was calculated as ~ 530 °C and ~ 3.6 kbars (Ferry 1980), respectively. The crystal is slightly Ca rich (An_{50} - An_{52}) with trace amount of K, which is hardly detectable by energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS).

Ion-milled samples were used in TEM study. A 3 mm copper ring was mounted onto a 30 μ m thick optical thin section by epoxy, with the area of interest in the center, and then cut off from the thin section and soaked in acetone to eliminate the mounting adhesive on the sample. The sample was ion milled with a Fischione 1050 at 5.2 kV for about 8 h at 10° angle, and then milled at 1.3 kV for another half hour to get rid of the amorphous matter on the sample. The sample was coated with a thin layer of carbon before examined with TEM. TEM images and selected-area electron diffraction pattern (SAED) were taken on a Philips CM200UT. Composition of the plagioclase was examined by attached X-ray energy-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS). The EDS result is calibrated using mineral standards of anorthite, labradorite, and orthoclase, composition of which were analyzed by electron microprobe.

The crystal for X-ray diffraction was picked from the thin section and mounted on a glass fiber with epoxy glue. The X-ray diffraction data was collected on a Bruker Quazar APEXII single-crystal diffractometer with $MoK\alpha$ λ 0.71 Å source at room temperature. 4 ω runs and 1 ϕ run were programmed with a scan width of 0.5° and a 60 s exposure time. The instrument was running at power of 50 kV and 0.6 mA. The detector was at a distance of 5 cm from the crystal. Unit-cell parameter was calculated and refined by APEXII software, as well as peak integration. Absorption correction was done analytically with JANA2006 software (Petříček et al. 2014). The structure was solved with the charge flipping algorithm (Oszlanyi and Suto 2004, 2005) using SUPERFLIP (Palatinus and Chapuis 2007). The refinement of the average structure and modulated structure was done with JANA2006 (Petříček et al. 2014) as well. The 3D crystal structure was visualized by VESTA (Momma and Izumi 2011).

TABLE 1. Comparison of structure refinement results

Composition	Publication	Number of reflections	R	Parameters
An_{73}	Kitamura and Morimoto (1975, 1977)	1072 ($210a+432e+430f$) ^a	0.24	132
An_{55}	Toman and Frueh (1976a, 1976b)	1530 ($720a+492e+318f$)	(0.071/0.215/0.27) ^b	307
An_{52}	Horst et al. (1981)	4910 ($1640a+3270e$)	0.08 (0.066/0.182)	255
An_{52}	Yamamoto et al. (1984)	4910 ($1640a+3270e$)	0.08 (0.066/0.105)	429
An_{38} ^c	Steurer and Jagodzinski (1988)	3519 ($1176a+2343e$)	0.106 (0.044/0.33)	216
An_{52}	Boysen and Kek (2015)	13518 ($4354a+4535e+3069f$) ^d	0.031 (0.023/0.037/0.13)	578
An_{51}	This work	5124 ($1842a+2616e+666f$)	0.024 (0.021/0.025/0.06)	642

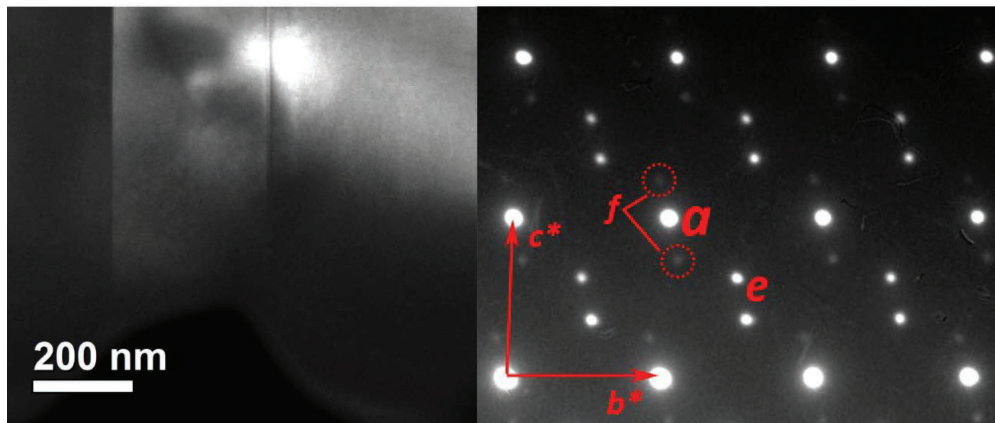
^a Letters a , e , and f refer to main reflections, first-order satellites, and second-order satellites respectively.

^b Values in parentheses refer to R for a , e , and f reflections, respectively.

^c The composition was previously reported An_{62} (Wenk et al. 1980) and corrected to An_{38} (Smith and Wenk 1983).

^d There are also 1560 third-order satellites observed, with an R of 0.29.

FIGURE 2. Dark-field TEM image along a -axis showing albite twin boundary (left). A selected-area electron diffraction pattern showing main a -reflections and satellite reflections (e - and f -reflections). No exsolution lamellae were observed in this crystal.



STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION

Average structure

The average structure refined from only main *a*-reflections is provided in supplementary data¹. The average structure is not different from any plagioclase structure with $C\bar{1}$ symmetry, except the T₁o site is more concentrated in Al than crystals in volcanic rock (Fitz Gerald et al. 1986). The refined composition is An₅₂, which matches the EDS results. M2 site is more concentrated in Ca, and M1 more Na. The <T-O> bond distances are 1.6907, 1.6508, 1.6474, and 1.6562 Å for T₁o, T₁m, T₂o, and T₂m, respectively. The Al occupancies are estimated from the <T-O> bond distances.

Modulated structure

Incommensurately modulated structures are quite common in nature and have been an important subject of crystallography for a long time. Crystallographers observed anomalies in the crystal

morphology of modulated structures (Dam et al. 1985; Donnay 1935) even before non-indexable satellite reflections were discovered in X-ray diffraction work (Janner and Janssen 2015). Since the satellite reflections from incommensurate modulated structures cannot be indexed with integers in the traditional way, an extra base has to be introduced for the satellites. As periodicity is lost in real space, the modulation is independent from the subcell edges. Characterization of incommensurately modulated structures in (3+1)D space is a fully developed theory (van Smaalen 2007; Wagner and Schoenleber 2009), and powerful and user-friendly software is available (Petříček et al. 2014). In a (3+1)D structure, each atom is not simply described by a set of fractional coordinates (x, y, z) and a constant occupancy, but a set of periodic modulation functions instead. Actually, each parameter in a 3D structure corresponds to a one-dimensional function, the atomic modulation function (AMF), in (3+1)D structure. In this paper, every modulation function is described as a sum of simple harmonic functions of first and second order, with period of unity and half of the modulation period, respectively.

The modulated structure was refined in the conventional $c \sim 14$ Å unit cell, since *b* reflections (i.e., $h+k+l = 2n$ in the plagioclase) are replaced by satellite *e*-reflections, a special centering condition is applied, namely $(\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{2} 0)$, $(0 \ 0 \ \frac{1}{2} \ \frac{1}{2})$, $(\frac{1}{2} \ \frac{1}{2} \ 0 \ \frac{1}{2})$. The notation for the (3+1)D space group is $X\bar{1}(\alpha\beta\gamma)0$, corresponding to 2.1.1.1 in the tabulated superspace groups by Stokes et al. (2011). *X* indicates the unconventional centering condition [*C*' in Table 3.9 of van Smaalen (2007)] mentioned above and $\bar{1}$ is simply the triclinic point group extended to the (3+1)D hyperspace. $(\alpha\beta\gamma)$ means the *g*-vector has component (i.e., $\delta h, \delta k, \delta l$ in Table 2) along all three axes in reciprocal space, since there is no symmetrical constraint in a triclinic structure. More basic information about the structure refinement can be found in Table 2. Atomic occupancies and positions are listed in Table 3. Complete crystallographic information file (cif file) of the refinement can be found in Supplementary Data¹. A movie (Supplementary Movie 1) is also provided illustrating how the structure is modulated as function of phase parameter *t* (the movie displays the stationary modulation wave running through the crystal structure). Though lowercase “*t*” is conventionally used for Al contents of T sites in feldspars, in this paper it stands for

¹Deposit item AM-17-15807, Supplemental Material. Deposit items are free to all readers and found on the MSA web site, via the specific issue's Table of Contents (go to http://www.minsocam.org/msa/ammin/toc/2017/Jan2017_data/Jan2017_data.html).

TABLE 2. Crystallographic information of the labradorite (An51) sample

Refined composition:	
Ca _{0.518} Na _{0.482} Si _{2.482} Al _{1.518} O ₈	$\theta_{\min} = 1.94$
$X\bar{1}(\alpha\beta\gamma)0^a$	$\theta_{\max} = 30.54$
$a = 8.1668(1)$ Å	$\theta_{\text{full}} = 30.54$
$b = 12.8509(1)$ Å	$F(000) = 1073$
$c = 14.2086(2)$ Å	Total reflections: 10168
$\alpha = 93.5802(6)^\circ$	Observed reflections: 5124
$\beta = 116.2300(9)^\circ$	Main reflections (<i>a</i>): 1842
$\gamma = 89.8396(13)^\circ$	First-order satellite (<i>e</i>): 2616
$\delta h = 0.06707(9)$	Second-order satellite (<i>f</i>): 666
$\delta k = 0.05463(9)$	Refined on F^2
$\delta l = -0.23038(8)$	$R_{\text{obs}} [I > 3\sigma(I)] = 0.0235$ (2.10%/2.50%/6.14%) ^b
Modulation period: 30.15 Å	$wR_{\text{obs}} [I > 3\sigma(I)] = 0.0696$ (7.50%/5.23%/12.46%) ^b
Cell volume: 1334.53(3) Å ³	$R_{\text{all}} = 0.0478$ (2.29%/4.48%/23.12%) ^b
$Z = 8$	$wR_{\text{all}} = 0.0718$ (7.52%/5.48%/17.54%) ^b
$T = 293$ K	Goodness of fit(all) = 1.28
$0.058 \times 0.059 \times 0.153$ mm	Goodness of fit(obs) = 1.8
Colorless	642 parameters refined

^a Centering condition *X*: $(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, 0)$, $(\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2}, 0, \frac{1}{2})$, $(0, 0, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2})$, corresponding to *C*' in Table 3.9 of van Smaalen (2007).

^b Values in parentheses refer to *a*, *e*, and *f* reflections, respectively.

TABLE 3. Atomic positions and occupancies in the modulated structure

Label	Atom	Average Occ	Max Occ	Min Occ	x	y	z	U_{eq}
M1	Ca	0.158(10)	0.272	0.055	0.2684(2)	-0.0116(4)	0.0793(4)	0.0302(7)
	Na	0.482(14)	0.654	0.301				
M2	Ca	0.361(10)	0.637	0.133	0.2705(2)	0.0274(2)	0.04914(16)	0.0259(6)
	Si	0.4314	0.884	0.107	0.49386(3)	0.335594(18)	-0.107002(18)	0.01024(8)
T ₁ o	Al	0.5686	0.893	0.116				
	Si	0.6888	0.954	0.250	0.50319(3)	0.317713(17)	0.116019(17)	0.00993(8)
T ₁ m	Al	0.3112	0.750	0.046				
	Si	0.7057	0.926	0.270	0.68554(3)	0.109339(17)	0.158333(18)	0.00990(8)
T ₂ o	Al	0.2943	0.630	0.074				
	Si	0.6585	0.921	0.203	0.18169(3)	0.379491(17)	0.178603(17)	0.00979(8)
T ₂ m	Al	0.3415	0.797	0.079				
	Si							
O _{A1}	O	1			0.49795(8)	0.37147(5)	0.01117(5)	0.0183(2)
O _{A2}	O	1			0.58108(8)	-0.00691(4)	0.13907(5)	0.0135(2)
O _{B0}	O	1			0.81162(8)	0.10554(5)	0.09434(5)	0.0181(2)
O _{Bm}	O	1			0.31664(8)	0.35355(5)	0.12254(6)	0.0242(3)
O _{C0}	O	1			0.48585(8)	0.20771(5)	-0.13984(5)	0.0177(2)
O _{Cm}	O	1			0.51473(8)	0.18895(5)	0.10770(5)	0.0179(2)
O _{D0}	O	1			0.30164(8)	0.39259(5)	0.30849(5)	0.0173(2)
O _{Dm}	O	1			0.68998(8)	0.36705(5)	0.21565(5)	0.0211(2)

Note: All the fractional coordinates are based on $c \sim 14$ Å unit cell, even though the number of independent atoms is the same as in albite cell ($c \sim 7$ Å).

the phase parameter of the modulation.

The split nature of M site is unquestionable in plagioclase, yet no conventional nomenclature of the splitting sites has been developed (Smith and Brown 1988). Most previous papers named the site with negative y coordinates the first site (M1, not necessarily the primary one), and the one with positive y coordinate the second (Fitz Gerald et al. 1986; Steurer and Jagodzinski 1988; Wenk et al. 1980; Yamamoto et al. 1984), with the exception of Boysen and Kek (2015). We follow the majority's notation in this paper and name the two M sites with $-y$ and $+y$ M1 and M2, respectively.

The importance of M site model seems to have escaped the attention of previous attempts on solving the modulated structure of intermediate plagioclase, even though detailed M-sites structure has been studied extensively in the averaged structure. Yamamoto et al. (1984) refined the structure by assigning Na and Ca to both M sites, yet a few constraints were applied to force every single parameter to fall within a reasonable range. However, the refined result on M site was not described in the paper, only the summed Ca occupational modulation wave was provided. In Boysen and Kek's (2015) paper, a model with only Na and Ca assigned to each M site, respectively, was used, which resulted in unrealistic occupancies (>1) and a composition obviously differ from the average structure and the real composition. The positions of atoms did not match the electron density peaks very well either. The Na and Ca atoms were claimed to be exchangeable "without loss of fit quality," which is questionable and inconsistent with previous work (Fitz Gerald et al. 1986). This model is too simple to represent the real modulated structure despite the reported low R values.

Ordering of Ca and Na is a significant factor in the ordering-induced transformation from high intermediate plagioclase (CI) to e -plagioclase. A model with three atoms in two M sites is used in this refinement. Only Ca was put into M2 site, but M1 contains both Ca and Na. The total occupancy of three atoms was fixed to 1. This model results in a bulk composition very close to the average structure and the analyzed result, and all occupancies modulate within the reasonable range. This model is also consistent with Fitz Gerald et al.'s (1986) conclusion that Ca is dominant in M2 site. The occupancy modulation of individual M site is plotted in Figure 3. Although the distribution of Ca between the split sites may not be exactly accurate and probably depends on the model applied, since both positional

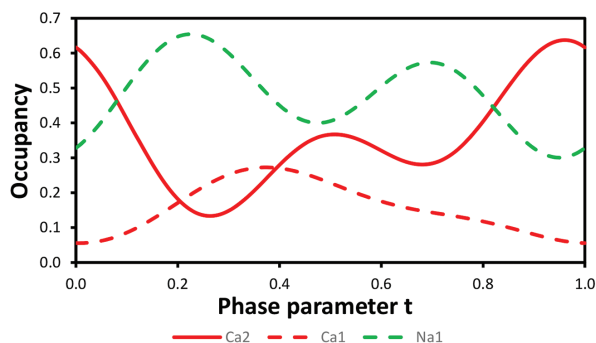


FIGURE 3. Ca/Na occupancy modulation function of M site.

and occupational disordering are involved, the Na occupancy that directly relates total electron density should be reliable.

Since the structure factors of Al and Si are too close to be accurately refined from the data, the Al occupancy in tetrahedral sites was first fixed according to the bond distance from the average structure. Displacive modulation described by harmonic modulation functions up to second order was applied to all atoms. The M-site occupancy modulation was refined to second order. All atoms were refined with harmonic ADPs with up to second-order modulation. Finally, the occupancy modulation of T sites were manually entered based on the modulation of T-O bond distances (the $\langle T-O \rangle$ bond distance modulation is plotted in Fig. 4), following the equation (Kroll and Ribbe 1983):

$$\text{Occ(Al)} = 0.25(1 + n_{\text{Al}}) + (\langle T-O \rangle - \langle \langle T-O \rangle \rangle)/k.$$

The value of k is estimated to be $0.135 \text{ \AA}$ from the results of Angel et al. (1990). The resulting occupancies of all sites lie in the reasonable range (between 0 and 1). The T-site occupancy modulation does not affect the refinement result and is simply a direct reflection of the change in bond distance, thus freeing us from having to calculate every single T-O bond distance in the output structure. The calculated Al occupancies are considered reasonable and consistent with Ca occupancy.

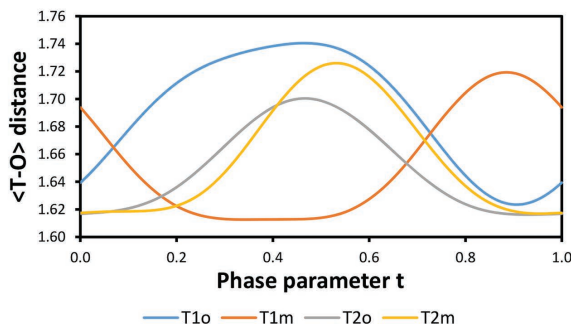


FIGURE 4. T-O bond distance modulation of four T sites, the bond distance is averaged from four T-O bonds within each tetrahedron.

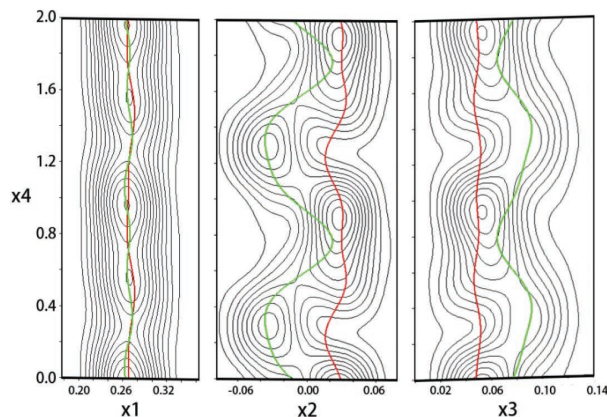


FIGURE 5. The displacement modulation along a , b , and c axis and electron density contour variation, the red line represents M2(Ca) and green line represents M1(Na+Ca), x_i ($i = 1, 2, 3, 4$) are unit-cell edges in $(3+1)D$ space.

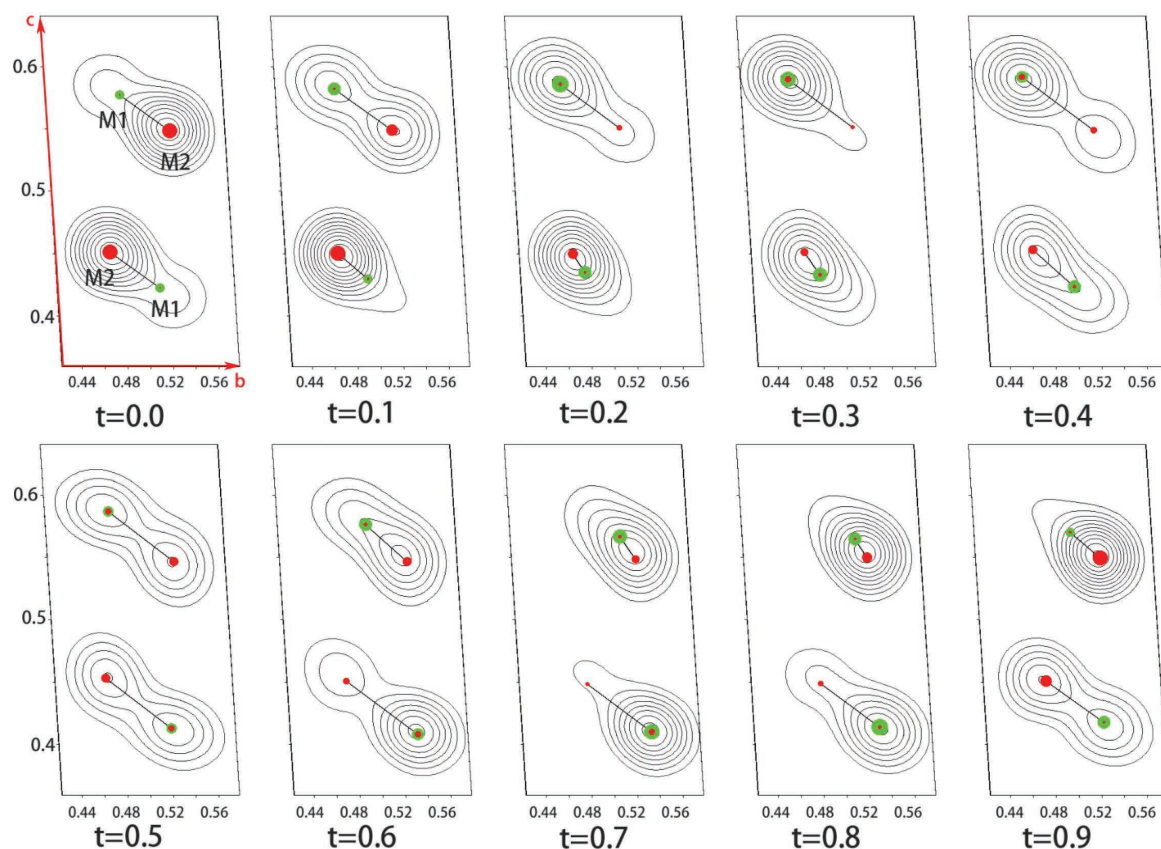


FIGURE 6. Electron density map around two adjacent M sites projected along *a*-axis. The two sites have different *x* coordinates. (Supplementary Movie 2¹ showing the continuous changing in electron density map is provided.)

It is true that atomic displacement parameters (ADPs or temperature parameters) modulation increases the number of refined parameters dramatically (24 for each atom in this case), and requires extra caution on the results of refinement as addressed by Wagner and Schoenleber (2009). However, the coordination environment for the M site is extremely complicated in plagioclase, and the temperature parameter may change a lot while the positions of atoms change. And the results were carefully checked to make sure all the atoms are vibrating within a reasonable ellipsoid. The *R* factor for satellite reflections dropped obviously (*R* value dropped from 5.04 to 2.50% for *e*-reflections, and 11.49 to 6.14% for *f*-reflections) by introducing ADP modulation. The result is consistent with the importance of applying ADP modulation addressed by Li et al. (2011).

The displacement modulation of the M site happens almost entirely in the *b*-*c* plane, as the amplitude of displacement along *a*-axis is very minor (Fig. 5). Therefore, electron density modulation around two M sites (4 sites if we consider the splitting of each M site) is projected along *a*-axis in Figure 6. The two sites have different *x* coordinates but are put together to show the inversion relations. In the ordinary $\bar{1}T$ or $C\bar{1}$ structure for high-temperature plagioclase where no modulation is involved, these two M sites are related by inversion center and should have exactly identical electron density map. However, in the modulated structure, the two M sites display polarity, as observed directly in STEM image

by Xu (2015). At $t = 0$ and $t = 0.5$, the two M sites are related by an inversion center. If we look at the M sites on a larger scale, the two M sites together at $t = t_0$ are exactly inverted from the two M sites at $t = 1 - t_0$.

The displacement modulation for the splitting M site is even more interesting. The M2 site (Ca) is nearly stationary, with M1 site (Na+Ca) moving back and forth (Figs. 5 and 6). The electron density map matches two sites model very well, showing two peaks all the time, except when the M1 site is moving too close to M2 and two peaks merge into one. Fitz Gerald et al., when solving plagioclase structures with only *a*-reflections, mentioned that a more accurate description of the M site “may require a continuum of scattering matter, or at least a series of closely spaced cation sites” (Fitz Gerald et al. 1986); Boysen and Kek (2015) also found that adding a M3 site to the average structure considerably reduced the *R* value. These could be result of the continuous movement of the M1 site in the modulated structure. However, the modulated structure shows no evidence of the necessity to introduce more than two splitting sites. And this behavior of M-site displacement is model independent (as long as two split sites are applied). It is suggested that the occupancy of Ca in the M1 site is related to the crystal composition and structure state. Plagioclase of the same composition with $C\bar{1}$ symmetry (like those in volcanic rocks) will have large Ca occupancy, similar to the crystal studied by Fitz Gerald et al.

(1986). The transformation from $C\bar{1}$ to the modulated structure involves Ca-Na ordering besides Al-Si ordering.

3D structure

The incommensurately modulated structure and its (3+1)D interpretation is quite elusive to those who are not familiar with this concept. One can be easily overwhelmed by massive literature discussing the mathematical representation of the modulated structure. 775 superspace groups are found in (3+1)-dimension (Stokes et al. 2011), which is more than triple the number of the three-dimensional space groups. Fortunately, plagioclase is among the structures with the lowest symmetry, therefore most of atoms are described independently. One can construct an aperiodic structure in real space given enough information without fully understanding the symmetry in (3+1)D superspace.

Just like we cannot construct a 3D crystal structure given only the fractional coordinates of atoms without unit-cell parameters, plotting the modulation waves on the fourth dimension will not tell what the real structure look like without combining them with a q -vector. The q -vector provides the information of the relation between the fourth axis and the other three. If we chose $t = t_0$ as origin, an original 3D unit cell is constructed from all the parameters at $t = t_0$ (just take one frame at $t = t_0$ from Supplementary¹ Movie 1). The next unit cell along a -axis will have the structure constructed from $t = t_0 + \delta h$, and the phase “jump” along b - and c -axis would be δk and δl , respectively. The structure is aperiodic in the sense that δh , δk and δl are not rational numbers, therefore no multiple of them is an integer.

A section of the aperiodic structure extending three subcells along b -axis and seven subcells along c -axis is presented in Figure 7. All the oxygen atoms were omitted to show the Al-Si ordering more clearly. The modulation wavefronts are marked with red planes in the figure. The M sites near the red planes are approximately related by inversion symmetry. Yet clearly no part of the 3D structure shows I -centering or translation along any direction.

If the composition of each subcell is calculated in the superstructure, a chemical variation can be observed. The subcells close to the red planes in Figure 7 are more Ca-rich than those in the middle of two red planes. To demonstrate this trend more clearly, four anorthite cell structures corresponding to $t = 0$, $t = 0.25$, $t = 0.5$, and $t = 0.75$ are shown in Figure 8. Since no three-dimensional translation symmetry is allowed in an incommensurately modulated structure, the I -centering unit cell is calculated from a primitive cell that represents part of the modulated structure. Therefore, the unit cell shown in the Figure 8 is only an approximation as a whole that is convenient for comparison with a familiar anorthite cell. The chemical composition of the four cells are $An_{59.7}$, $An_{43.1}$, $An_{61.5}$, and $An_{43.1}$, respectively, based on Ca occupancy. The cell with inversion center is about 17 mol% higher in composition than the cells with polarity. This should indicate a density modulation with a variation of 17 mol% in composition. Note that the two cells of $t = 0.25$ and $t = 0.75$ are exactly the same structure that are related by inversion twin. (The structure parameters of the cells in Fig. 8 is provided in Supplementary Data¹.) The two centrosymmetric cells, on the other hand, differ a little in composition, and roughly have an antiphase relation of $\frac{1}{2}c$. This might be a

reason for previously proposed “APB” models.

The Al-Si ordering shows obvious anorthite-like pattern in the Ca-rich part, which is alternating Al and Si. Yet in the Na-rich part of the structure, all T_{10} are dominated by Al, while the structure is still I -centered. In other words, the Na-rich part shows no resemblance to an albite cell other than the fact that T_{10} is always rich in Al. This is consistent with NMR study of e -plagioclase (Kirkpatrick et al. 1987). If we take a close-up view of the highlighted subcell (Fig. 9), most T_{10} sites are dominated by Al, except the lower right quarter, as a compromise for the Al avoidance rule. Interestingly, if we sum up the Al occupancy of any two adjacent T sites, none of them exceed one (the connected T_{10} and T_{1m} are very close to 1 in the right half of the fourth cell), which means in the two neighboring T sites may not be occupied by Al at the same time in this structure. Average T_{10} occupancy is about 0.59 with average bond distance of 1.6916 Å.

The M-site ordering is much more complicated, since two sites are involved. The distance between two splitting sites and the cation occupancy of each site both contribute to the M-site

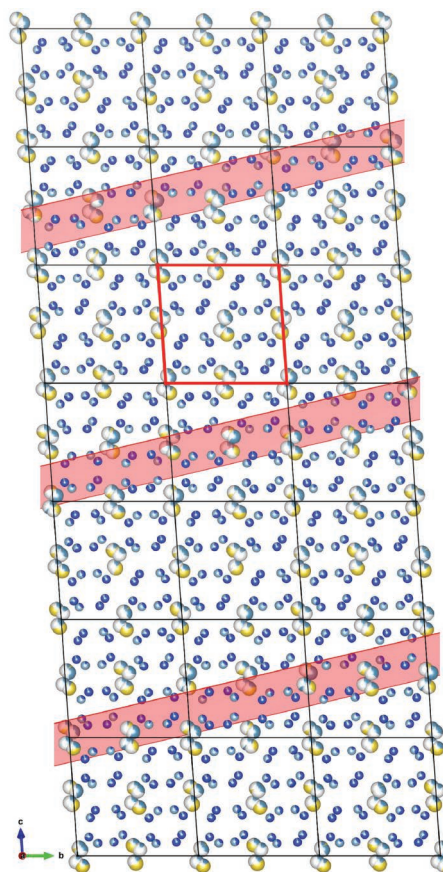


FIGURE 7. A section of the modulated structure consists of 3×7 anorthite cells along b - and c -axis. The modulation wavefronts are marked with red planes in the figure, which are also the sections of the hyperplanes in (3+1)D structure that pass through inversion centers. Oxygen atoms are omitted. Ca/Na atoms are shown as big spheres, with blue for Ca and yellow for Na occupancies. Al/Si atoms are shown as small ones, Si occupancies are shown with dark blue color. A close-up of the red subcell is shown in Figure 9.

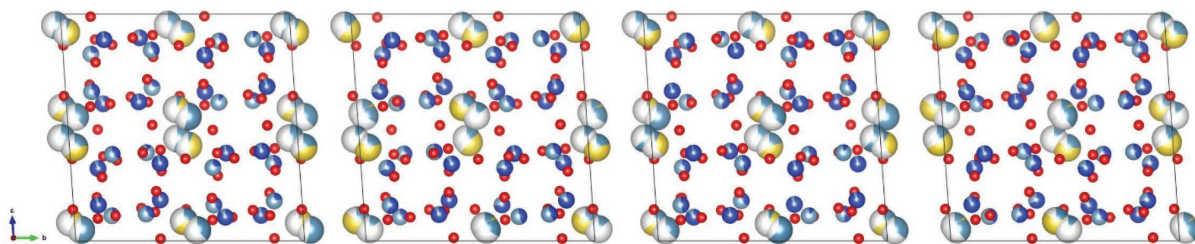


FIGURE 8. Ideal anorthite cells looking down $[100]$ at $t = 0$, $t = 0.25$, $t = 0.5$, and $t = 0.75$. These cells are produced as approximation of the subcells in real structure. The first and third model with $\bar{1}$ symmetry represent the structure near the red planes in Figure 7, while the second and fourth model with 1 symmetry represent the structure in the middle of two red planes. Oxygen atoms are shown as small red spheres.

configuration, not to mention the modulated temperature parameter. There is no simplified way to describe the behavior of M site. Yet it is still reasonable to assume that the M site configuration is affected by the surrounding T site arrangement. If we look down b -axis of the surrounding tetrahedra of the M site, we may find that the M site lies almost exactly on the plane defined by four surrounding T2 sites (Fig. 10), which is also on the (100) plane, where the major components of M site displacement modulation resides. And the splitting distance of M site obviously correlates with the shape of the quadrilateral of T2 (Fig. 11), as the diagonal T2 distance is shorter while two M site merge together (Fig. 12). The modulation of the angle $T_{1o}-O_A1-T_{1m}$ is shown in Figure 13, representing the distortion of the framework around M site. The two curves show maximum difference at around $t = 0.25$ and $t = 0.75$, and naturally, are equal at $t = 0$ and $t = 0.5$. Al-Si ordering results in the framework distortion and M site shifting, as well as Ca-Na ordering. Yet still there is no easy way to define any accurate formula to calculate the relationship between the two. Framework distortion modulation induced by Ca-Na ordering may be similar to those in incommensurately modulated nepheline (Angel et al. 2008; Friese et al. 2011), melilite (Bagautdinov et al. 2002; Bindi et al. 2001; Wei et al. 2012), and perovskite (Rusakov et al. 2011). The observed combination of tetrahedra tilts is very different from M-site induced tilts reported for monoclinic feldspars (Angel et al. 2012; Megaw 1974), because the tetrahedral tilt in the modulated structure does not change the volume of the structure. Although the angle modulation shown in Figure 13 is similar to type 1 tilt (Angel et al. 2012), the two angles are tilting toward opposite directions at any given point, with one inward and the other outward, introducing the polarity that cannot exist in a centrosymmetric structure.

DISCUSSION

Before the refinement of modulated structure was possible, all e -plagioclase structures were refined with only a -reflections as an “average” structure. However, not much reliable information can be acquired from the average structure, even T-O bond distance should be treated with caution. Toman and Frueh (1973), who observed substantial improvement of agreement with a noncentrosymmetric average structure, did not even use split M sites in their refinement. And with the charge-flipping algorithm (Oszlanyi and Suto 2004, 2005), an approach from average structure to the modulated structure is not necessary. Since the inaccuracy of structure solved without e - and f -reflections is not

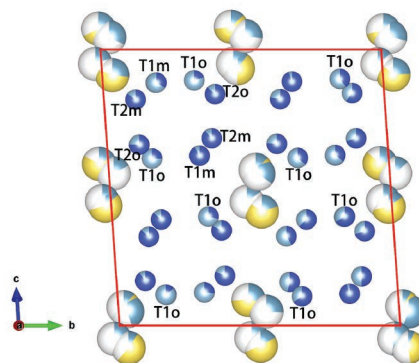


FIGURE 9. A close-up view of the red subcell illustrated in Figure 7.

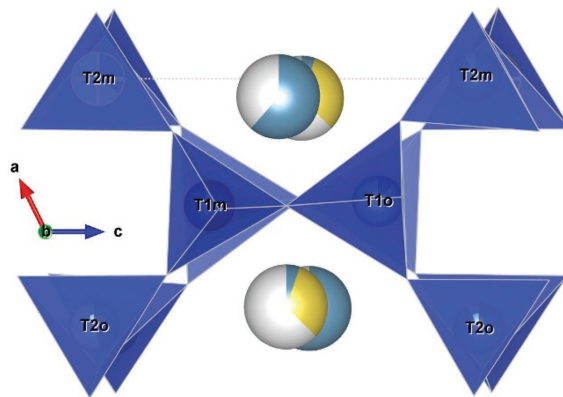


FIGURE 10. Tetrahedra surrounding M sites looking down $[010]$ (at $t = 0$).

the focus of this paper, the average structure of this crystal will not be discussed in detail, because it gives partial truth with a distorted picture about the intermediate plagioclase.

It seems the sample used in this study is not the only e -labradorite that draws attention of mineralogists because of its homogeneity. Slimming (1976) accurately measured the position of e -reflections of two metamorphic e -labradorite from Broken Hill, Australia, with compositions of An_{52} and An_{54} . Both samples lie in the composition range of Bøggild intergrowth, yet no evidence of exsolution was mentioned. Even though TEM images were not provided in her paper, based on the accuracy of the measurement, the samples should be homogenous with no exsolution. Carpenter (1994) addressed this phenomenon as the “perplexing” role played by potassium component in plagioclase.

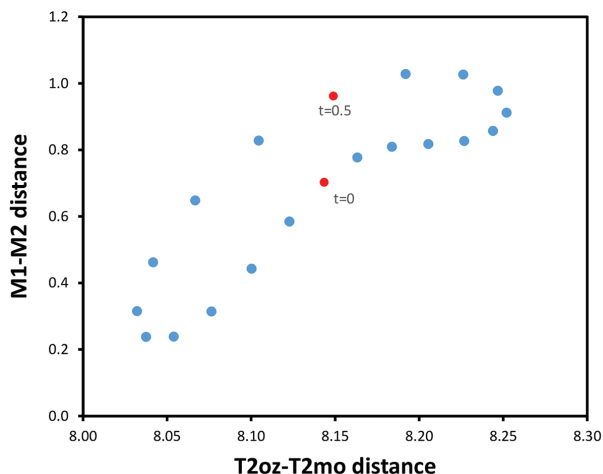


FIGURE 11. Distances between M1 and M2 (splitting distance) are plotted against the corresponding T2o-T2m distances (longer diagonal of the quadrilateral). Obvious correlation between the two distances can be seen. The points labeled in red are values from the centrosymmetric cell.

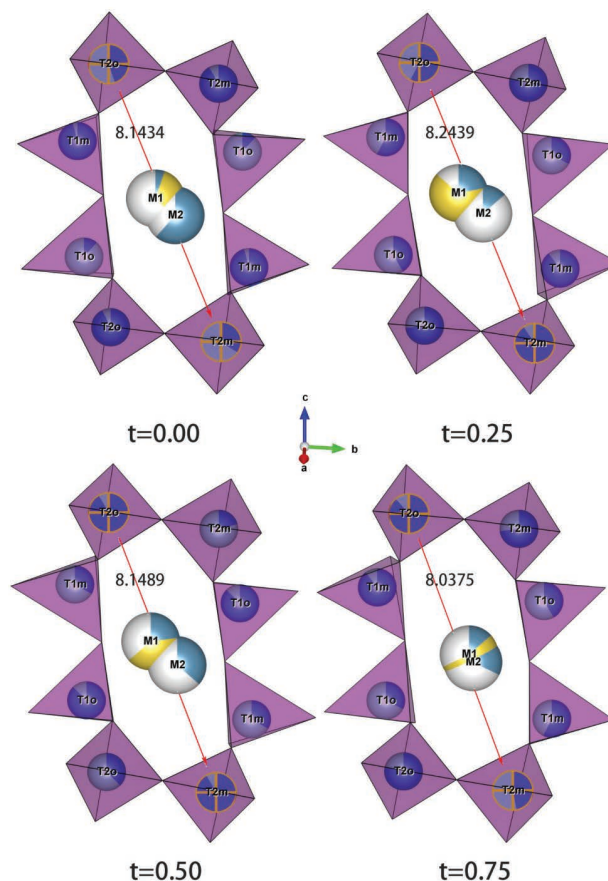


FIGURE 12. M-site configuration with surrounding tetrahedra at $t = 0$, $t = 0.25$, $t = 0.5$, and $t = 0.75$, looking down a^* perpendicular to (100) plane. Distance between diagonal T2 sites are labeled. Only the top part of Figure 10 is shown to avoid overlap of atoms. (Supplementary Movie 3¹ showing both M sites displacement and the distortion/tilt of surrounding tetrahedra is provided.)

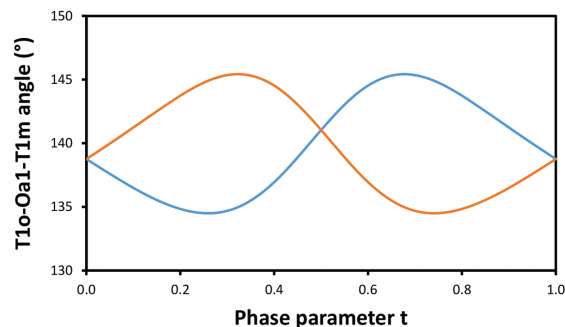


FIGURE 13. The modulation of T_{1o}-O_{a1}-T_{1m} angle. There are two T_{1o} and two T_{1m} sites. Figure 10 and Figure 12, related by inversion center at $t = 0$ and $t = 0.5$, which are where two curves intersect. The unique tetrahedra tilt in *e*-plagioclase may be called *e*-tilt (the fifth type).

Nonetheless, Wenk (1979) also observed a peak around An₅₀ in the histogram of plagioclase composition frequency, which should be zero if the solvus for Bøggild intergrowth is of normal shape. It is obvious that the labradorite studied previously is biased. Crystals with iridescent color visible to naked eye are always of igneous origin. More importantly, igneous crystals are usually large therefore much easier to handle than metamorphic ones. As labradorite that crystallized from magma has to cool down from its melting temperature and hits the solvus at Bøggild intergrowth from above, information below certain temperatures may only be revealed by metamorphic plagioclase grew directly below the solvus at low temperature. The highly ordered modulation of the sample in this study (homogeneous crystal with sharp and strong satellite reflections that fits the refinement amazingly well) should be strong evidence of the thermodynamic stability of *e*-labradorite at low temperatures. This conclusion directly leads to the loop-shaped solvus at Bøggild intergrowth, which closes at low temperatures as proposed by McConnell (2008). More samples with metamorphic origin should be studied in the future to reveal more details of the subsolidus phase relations around this composition.

Almost all previous models for *e*-plagioclase are based on periodic *I*-centered domains with antiphase relations to each other (Cinnamon and Bailey 1971; Grove 1977; Horst et al. 1981; Kumao et al. 1981; McConnell and Fleet 1963; Megaw 1960a, 1960b, 1960c; Nakajima et al. 1977; Smith and Ribbe 1969; Steurer and Jagodzinski 1988; Toman and Frueh 1976a, 1976b; Wenk and Nakajima 1980). All those models were successful in explaining the absence of *b*-reflections and the presence of *e*-reflections. However, instead of a continuous sinusoidal modulation wave, an APB based model requires a crenel modulation function with abrupt changes between constant fragments, which requires additional theory to explain the absence of higher order satellites. The electron density map (Fig. 5) does not show any abrupt change in either positions or occupancies. The refinement was also attempted by applying crenel functions yet failed to improve the result in any criteria, which was also reported by Steurer and Jagodzinski (1988). The assumption of $\bar{I}$ domains separated by $C\bar{I}$ boundaries is based on a skeptical foundation, since there has not been any direct evidence of the existence of

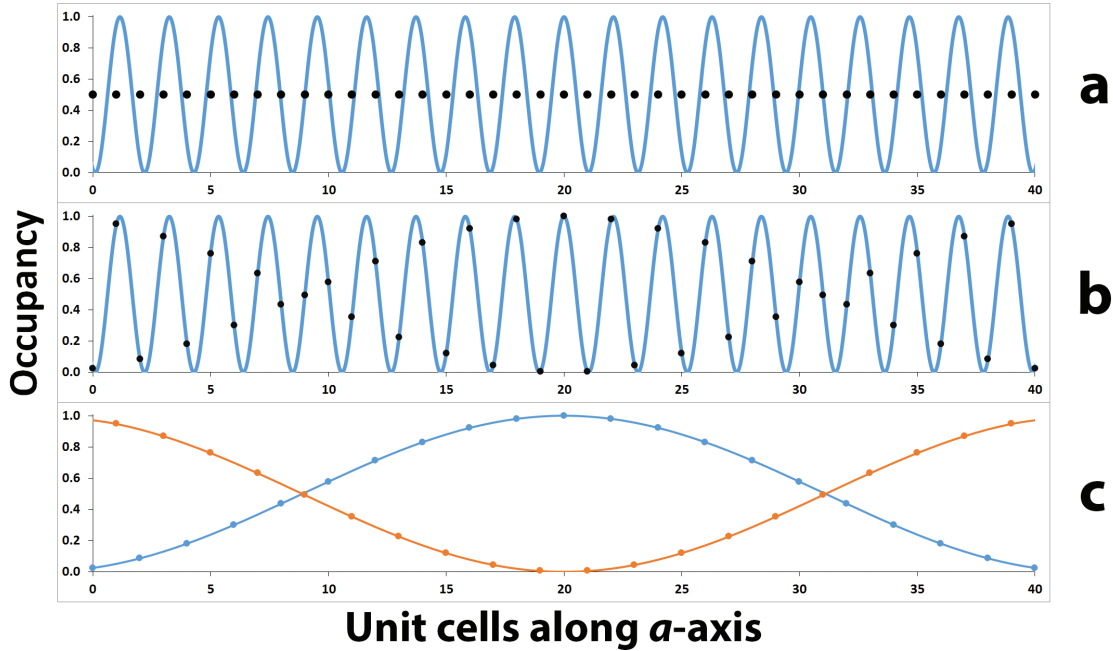


FIGURE 14. One-dimensional incommensurately modulated crystal as an analog to *e*-plagioclase. (a) Normal 1D crystal and a simple harmonic modulation wave with a period close to twice of the crystal cell. (b) Modulated structure by superposing the crystal and the modulation wave. (c) Same modulated structure with a different but more intuitive description, where atoms alternate between two modulation waves with longer period that are related by a phase difference of π .

such domains in the structure. Neither M-site density maps nor T-site ordering patterns can be explained by mixing $I1$ and $C1$ structure domains (Smith and Brown 1988).

The 1D modulated structure shown in Figure 14, where each unit cell consists only one atom and the modulation function has a period slightly longer than twice the subcell length, is a good analog to help us understand the *e*-plagioclase structure. The modulation function describes the occupancy variation of each atom in the structure. We can clearly see that the structure appears to be described by two identical functions with a phase difference of π . Technically, there are two modulation functions describing the structure now. If the atoms described by two functions are considered different, we get a doubled subcell with two atoms in each. Now the differences between two adjacent unit cells are very minor, therefore we can identify each individual subcell. Correspondingly, in reciprocal space, the subcell is represented by the reflection in the middle of two satellites that does not really exist. However, the case is not simpler by this change of subcell, because the two atoms in the subcell are not always ordered alternatively in the super cell. The two atoms are shifted every time two modulation functions intercept, creating a phase shift every half the period of the new modulation wave.

The case is similar in *e*-plagioclase, where the *e*-reflections are satellites of the absent *b*-reflection, so *I*-centered like subcells are identifiable in STEM image as observed by Xu (2015). However, the part where the inversion centers are observed corresponds to the intersection of two modulation waves. If we have to define a “domain” in regards to previous models, it should be the lamellae domains with polarity between two adjacent intersections. The intersection would then act as an inversion twin boundary between two $I1$ -like domains. This model is mentioned as a possibility by

Toman and Frueh (1976a, 1976b), who explained the apparent discrepancy between centrosymmetric average structure and chiral domains, but did not treat this case with much interest as a major feature in their refinement.

It is also worth mentioning that the so-called inversion twin boundary in *e*-plagioclase is artificial, in the sense that the choice of unit cell is arbitrary. Therefore, the results regarding symmetry and inversion twin boundary are mathematical and independent from the choice of structure model. If we plot the M-site occupancy along *a*-axis (Fig. 15), a pattern similar to the 1D analogy can be clearly observed, except the two atoms are related by inversion instead of translation.

Another fact we can get from the 1D analogy is that using only

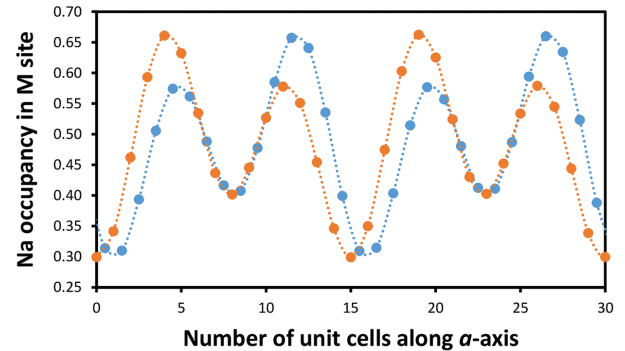


FIGURE 15. Na occupancy along *a*-axis is described by two modulation functions that are similar as in Figure 16, except the alternating atoms are related by hypothetical inversion centers, instead of simple translation. Alternating atoms are marked with different color to show the trend.

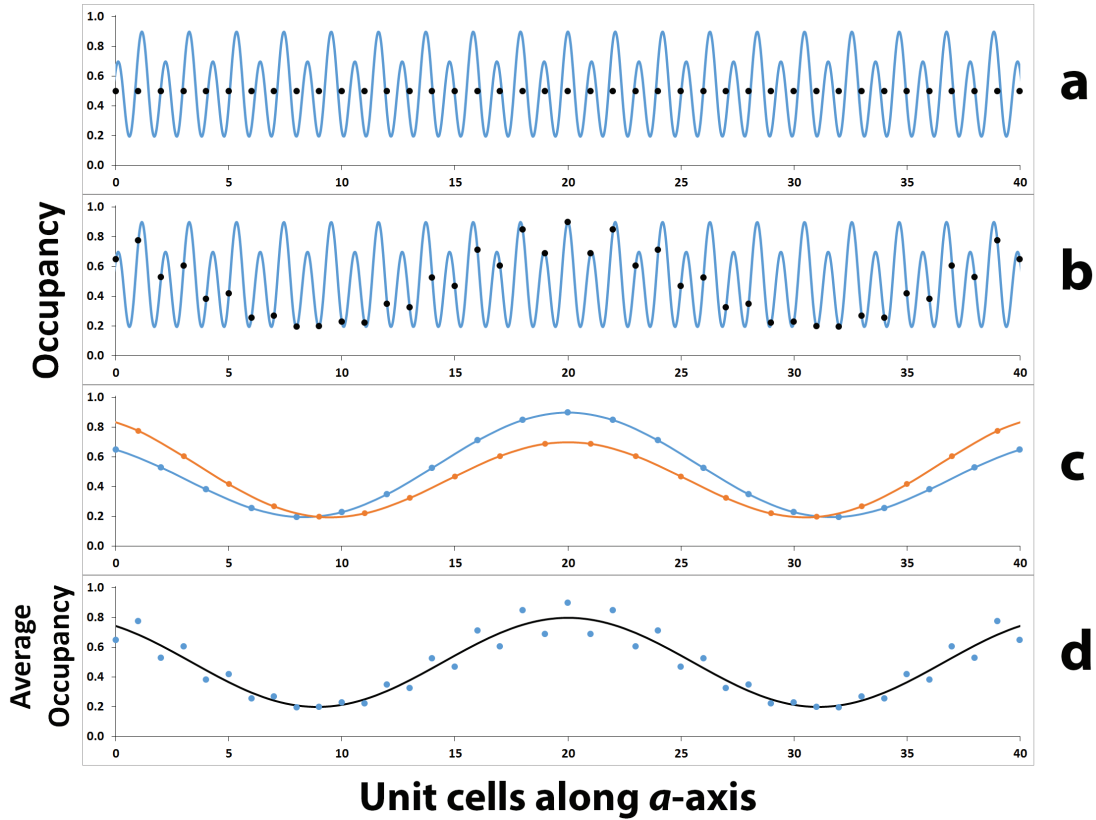


FIGURE 16. By adding harmonic modulation function of second order to the 1D crystal in Figure 14, the density modulation of the structure is introduced.

harmonic modulation function of first order will not produce any density modulation. Since the two modulation waves are identical with phase difference of π , the average of harmonic modulation functions of first order would result in constant value. Only by introducing harmonic modulation functions up to second order, as shown in Figure 16, will the structure display density modulation. This is the reason why all previous refinement without f -reflections did not provide any information about density modulation. Second-order modulation will not cancel out because π is exactly its period. This also means it would be wrong to interpret the modulation function of any individual site as density modulation, and the first-order fluctuation of occupancy in M sites represents nothing other than ordering within the unit cell.

The 3D structure is a little more complicated as more symmetry relations are involved. There are eight symmetrically equivalent M sites within each anorthite cell. If the M-site occupancy is refined with only harmonic modulation function of first order by neglecting f -reflections, the average occupancy within one subcell will be constant. But if the occupancy is refined to second order with f -reflections, the average occupancy will fluctuate around the averaged value (Fig. 17). The two Na occupancy peaks have exactly the same value, since two Na-rich domains are related by an inversion center. The troughs of Na occupancy modulation are slightly different since they correspond to two kinds of inversion boundaries described in the 3D structure.

This might be why two completely different models raised

by Horst et al. (1981) and Yamamoto et al. (1984) could fit the exact same set of data. Critical information is lost by neglecting f -reflections. It is disappointing that Boysen and Kek (2015) failed to address these reflections, and kept using the modulation function of each individual atom to represent the whole structure, even though third-order satellites were detected in their data.

The T-O bond distance modulation is a little different from the M-site occupancy. If we average all T-O bond distances in one anorthite cell (Fig. 18), the two peaks that correspond to two inversion boundaries, respectively, show obvious differences, though the two troughs of the bond distance are still the same. This might be caused by the fact that in the ideal sanidine structure, M sites are on the mirror planes and thus more symmetrical than T sites. This may also indicate the T-O bond distance is not totally reliable in predicting the Al occupancy, as local charge should be balanced in the structure with density modulation.

The average T-O bond distances for T_{1o} , T_{1m} , T_{2o} , and T_{2m} are 1.6916, 1.6570, 1.6497, and 1.6522 Å, respectively. The average bond distance from modulated structure is always slightly bigger than the bond distance from “average structure” refined without satellite reflections. This is because the Fourier map of a -reflections tends to average the modulating atom positions, and the distance of “average positions” refined without satellite reflections is always smaller than the real distances in the modulated structure. The difference may not be significant, but the plotting of T-O bond distance against An composition of plagioclase (Ribbe

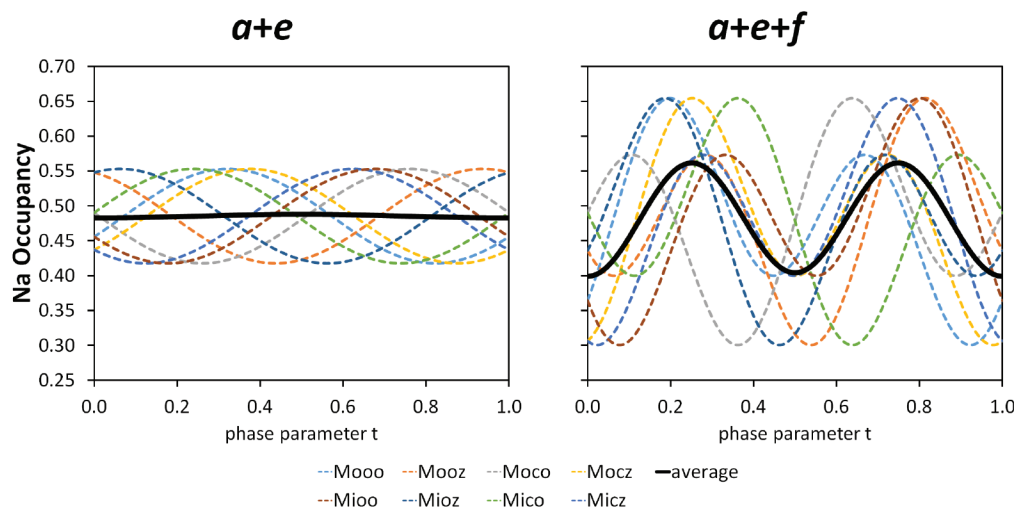


FIGURE 17. Occupancy modulation of eight symmetrically equivalent Na within one anorthite cell and their average. (a) Only harmonic modulation function of first order refined from a - and e -reflections, the average of eight sites is constant. (b) Up to second-order modulation is refined with a -, e -, and f -reflections, the average of eight sites shows a density modulation with a variation of 17 mol% in composition change.

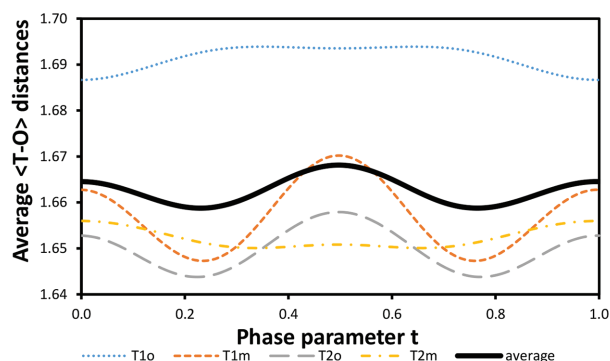


FIGURE 18. Average bond distances of eight symmetrically equivalent T sites and total average (32 sites) within one anorthite cell. Two peaks of bond distance correspond to two Ca-rich inversion boundaries.

1983; Smith and Brown 1988) should be reexamined.

The average Al occupancy of T_{1o} calculated from bond distance is 0.59, which is slightly larger than the occupancy of 0.5 in anorthite structure. Yet it is still dramatically smaller than the mechanical mixture of albite and anorthite structure. It is proposed that reported large enthalpy difference between modulated and disordered An-rich plagioclase (Carpenter et al. 1985) may be related to both Si-Al ordering, Na-Ca ordering, and density modulation. On the other hand, the observed small enthalpy difference between modulated and disordered Na-rich plagioclase (Carpenter et al. 1985) may be a result of Si-Al ordering without density modulation. It is still unknown how the Al/Si ordering in the e -plagioclase helps to lower the Gibbs free energy and make the structure more stable. Computational simulation work might be able to explain the mechanism of the T-site ordering in e -plagioclase in the future.

The f -reflections are critical in revealing the information regarding density modulation, since only satellite reflections

of second order contributes to the chemical variation along the modulation. No f -reflections were reported for plagioclase with composition lower than ~An50, which means that density modulation may not occur in sodic plagioclase. The sample studied in this paper is close to the compositional boundary of observable f -reflections, however, still considerable amount of f -reflections are observed, and the amplitude of density modulation is rather dramatic. Unobserved f -reflections in Na rich plagioclase may be of very weak intensities, which could possibly be resolved by using strong X-ray beam and detector with high dynamic range. Nonetheless, this raises the question of the relation between sodic and calcic e -plagioclase feldspars, or so called e_1 and e_2 plagioclase (Carpenter 1994; McConnell 2008; Ribbe 1983; Smith 1984). Careful refinement on sodic e -plagioclase and labradorite feldspars with different cooling histories are required to reveal the relations between $C\bar{1}$, e_1 and e_2 plagioclase feldspars.

IMPLICATIONS

The growth of the plagioclase studied in this paper occurred below the temperature of the phase transition between $C\bar{1}/\bar{1}$ and e -plagioclase, yet the crystal is homogeneous with no exsolution lamellae. This is an evidence of the loop shape of the solvus at Bøggild miscibility gap, as proposed by McConnell (1974, 2008). The metamorphic nature of the sample should support that e -plagioclase is a thermodynamically stable phase of intermediate plagioclase.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was supported by NSF (EAR-0810150) and the NASA Astrobiology Institute (N07-5489). The authors thank John Ferry for providing us the sample, and Franklin Hobbs for reading the manuscript and providing many helpful suggestions. The authors thank Ross Angel for insightful discussions.

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MANUSCRIPT RECEIVED APRIL 12, 2016

MANUSCRIPT ACCEPTED JUNE 21, 2016

MANUSCRIPT HANDLED BY G. DIEGO GATTA

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