

Sulphur-SAD phasing GeniX Cu High Flux

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Application Note n° AN-G2

Abstract

Solving protein crystal structures by single-wavelength anomalous diffraction (SAD) from sulphur atoms has become a widely advocated technique in recent years. Such a SAD phasing analysis was conducted using GeniX beam delivery system operating with Cu K α radiation installed at EPFL - Lausanne.

A STOE image-plate system IPDS2T, equipped with a GeniX CU High Flux was used to collect a highly redundant data set from crystals of porcine pancreatic Elastase. Thus, the quality of the data produced by the combined GeniX-IPDS2T setup is capable of solving a 26 kDa protein structure in a quasi-automatic fashion by sulphur-SAD.



Fig. 1 : The combined GeniX - IPDS2T set-up installed at EPFL in Lausanne.

High-throughput Sulphur-SAD phasing of Elastase with a STOE-IPDS2T diffractometer and a XENOCs GeniX Cu High Flux beam delivery system

Data courtesy of Marc Schiltz, Laboratoire de Cristallographie, EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Introduction

Solving protein crystal structures by single-wavelength anomalous diffraction (SAD) from sulphur atoms has become a widely advocated technique in recent years ¹. This method has several appealing features: (1) Since it uses the anomalous scattering properties from sulphur atoms that are naturally present in protein molecules, the haphazard step of preparing heavy-atom derivatives is removed; (2) Data can be collected away from the absorption edge, using laboratory equipment operating either with Cr K α ² or Cu K α ³ radiation. On the other hand, given that the anomalous scattering strength from sulphur atoms is rather weak at these wavelength ($f''=0.557$ at Cu K α), the data have to be collected with a very high degree of accuracy, completeness and redundancy ⁴. Such measurements are therefore ideal to test the capabilities and performances of a laboratory diffractometer setup.

Experiment

The STOE image-plate system IPDS2T, equipped with a GeniX Cu High Flux microbeam delivery system manufactured by XENOCs (Fig. 1), was used to collect a highly redundant data set from crystals of porcine pancreatic Elastase, a 26 kDa protein of 240 amino acids (1826 non-hydrogen atoms) containing 10 sulphur atoms (8 Cys + 2 Met). The crystals belong to space group P2(1)2(1)2(1) with cell parameters 51.31 58.02 75.41 Å.

The GeniX was operated at 50 kV, 1 mA. The circular image plate (scanned surface: 170 mm radius) was positioned at a distance of 150 mm from the sample with zero 2-theta offset, thus allowing data to be collected at a maximum resolution of 1.89 Å. A highly redundant data set, consisting of two 0–180° omega-scans recorded at two different phi angles (0° and 90°) was collected. The data comprise a total of 360 frames, each corresponding to a 1° omega rotation and an exposure of 300 seconds. Fig. 2 displays an example of a data frame. The frames were indexed and integrated with the MOSFLM ⁵ program. Data reduction (scaling and merging) was carried out with the program SCALA ⁶ from the CCP4 ⁷ package. Details of data reduction statistics are given in Table 1.

• wavelength	1,54 Å / 8 keV (Cu K α)
• spot size at focus	230x230 μm^2 FWHM
• typical flux (in vacuum)	> 200x10 ⁶ phs/s <small>(source run at 50W–50 kV–1 mA)</small>
• divergence	4,8 mrad FWHM
• K α spectral purity	typically > 97%
• K β contamination	typically < 0.3%
• flux stability	RSD < 0.04% over 17 hours

GeniX CU High Flux
beam features

The reduced data were then fed into the autoSHARP[®] software package, using the program defaults for all non-compulsory input parameters. Detection and refinement of sulphur atoms, SAD phasing and phase improvement by density modification, chain tracing, model building and refinement of the structure were carried out in a completely automatic fashion, without further user intervention. The final model consists of 237 residues (out of 240), refined to R=15.5% and R-free=21.2%.

Table 1 : Data reduction statistics

	Overall	Inner Shell	Outer Shell
Low resolution limit /Å	27.09	27.09	1.98
High resolution limit /Å	1.87	5.93	1.87
Rmerge	0.047	0.025	0.141
Rmeas (within I+/I-)	0.050	0.027	0.152
Rmeas (all I+/I-)	0.050	0.029	0.151
Rpim (within I+/I-)	0.018	0.010	0.057
Rpim (all I+/I-)	0.013	0.008	0.041
Fractional partial bias	-0.003	-0.008	0.003
Total numbe. of observations	257953	8637	29515
Total number of unique reflections	18621	687	2246
Mean I/sd(I)	44.2	73.9	18.6
Completeness (%)	97.4	99.1	82.1
Multiplicity	13.9	12.6	13.1
Anomalous completeness (%)	97.1	99.8	81.0
Anomalous multiplicity	7.3	7.5	6.8

As can be seen from Table 1, the data quality is indeed very high. Though the anomalous differences are small, the SHELXD heavy atom detection method, as implemented in autoSHARP, readily located 8 out of the 10 sulphur atoms. The two additional sulphurs were located by the automatic procedure for analysing residual maps. The SAD phases are of very good quality as is evidenced in Fig. 3, where the experimental electron density map computed from SAD phases and after density modification, but prior to any model building, is displayed. The structural model of Elastase, as retrieved from the PDB databank, is superimposed to this map. As can be seen, the agreement is very good.

Conclusion

The quality of the data produced by the combined GeniX-IPDS2T setup installed at EPFL-Lausanne is capable of solving a 26 kDa protein structure in a quasi-automatic fashion by sulphur-SAD.

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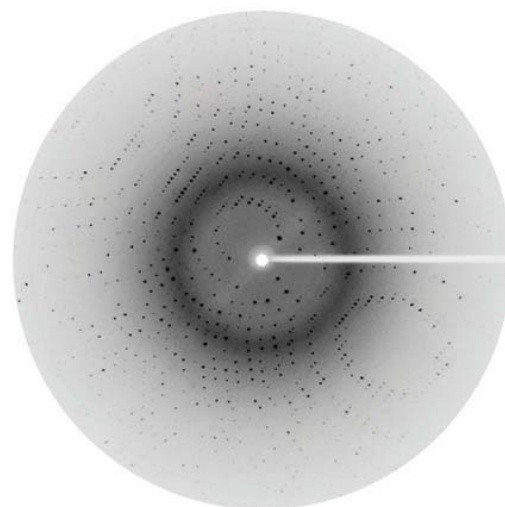


Fig. 2 : Diffraction frame recorded on an elastase crystal. Scan width: 1° (omega), exposure time: 300 sec. Crystal-detector distance: 150 mm. Resolution at edge (170 mm from the centre): 1.89 Å.

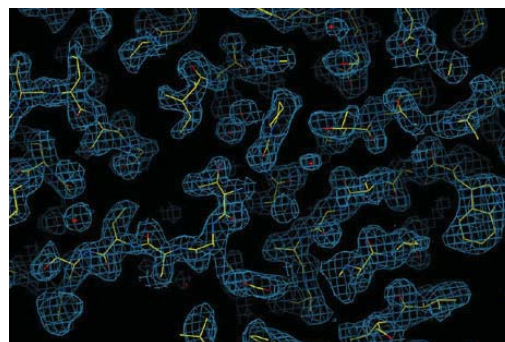


Fig. 3 : Experimental electron density map computed from Sulphur-SAD phases and after density modification, but prior to any model building. The structural model of Elastase, as retrieved from the PDB databank, is superimposed to this map. As can be seen, the agreement is very good.

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