# Multiple Dirac nodal lines in an in-plane anisotropic semimetal TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>

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Nodal-line semimetals (NLSMs) contain Dirac-Weyl-type band-crossing nodes extending into shapes of lines, loops, and chains in the reciprocal space, leading to band topology and transport responses. Robust NLSMs against spin-orbit coupling typically occur in three-dimensional and in-plane isotropic materials which have more symmetry operations to protect the line nodes of band crossing, while the possibilities in exfoliatable materials with in-plane anisotropy are rarely discussed. Here, we demonstrate a robust NLSM phase in an exfoliatable in-plane anisotropic nonmagnetic semimetal TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. Combining angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy measurements and first-principles calculations, we reveal multiple Dirac-type nodal lines with fourfold degeneracy in TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. Our findings suggest rich physics in structurally anisotropic topological materials and call for further functional exploitation based on them.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Symmetry plays an essential role in topological phases of matter because it determines the way in which different wave functions are forced to have the same energy eigenvalue, i.e., degeneracy. When the valence and conduction bands cross and form distinct point-contact nodes instead of opening a gap, the system turns to a topological semimetal [1]. Following the concept of particle physics, such elementary excitations could be described as Dirac [2–8] and Weyl fermions [9–20], as well as triply degenerate [21–24] and double Dirac fermions [25], etc., manifesting phenomena such as ultrahigh mobility [8] and unusual magnetic transport behaviors [26,27]. In addition, the possible nodal structure in topological semimetals could also extend to shapes of lines, loops, and chains in the reciprocal space, leading to the so-called nodal-line semimetals (NLSMs) [2,28–32]. Typically, NLSMs, especially those

robust against spin-orbit coupling (SOC), usually occur in three-dimensional (3D) and in-plane isotropic materials with more symmetry operations (e.g., mirror and nonsymmorphic symmetries) that protect the Dirac band crossing [33–41]. In comparison, the possibility of a robust NLSM phase against SOC in exfoliatable materials with strong in-plane anisotropy has rarely been explored [42–44]. Only very recently, indirect evidence of nonsymmorphic symmetry-protected nodal lines from tunneling spectroscopy was reported based on a two-dimensional (2D) platform, tri-atomic-layer bismuth [45]. Direct evidence of robust NLSMs in 2D exfoliatable materials with in-plane anisotropy is still missing.

Here, we report the realization of robust Dirac nodal lines (DNLs), i.e., nodal lines with fourfold degeneracy, in an exfoliatable, in-plane anisotropic nonmagnetic semimetal TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. Combining angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) and density functional theory (DFT) calculations, we reveal that the interplay between non-symmorphic symmetry and structural anisotropy results in multiple DNLs robust against SOC, as presented by three key features: (1) fourfold degenerate nodes (Dirac cones) at the boundary (Z point) of the bulk Brillouin zone (BZ); (2)

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FIG. 1. (a) Schematic lattice structure of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. The single crystals are cleaved along the *ac* plane (top panel) for angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) measurement. Black solid lines indicate the unit cell, and black dashed box indicates the one-dimensional NiTe<sub>2</sub> chains. (b) Single crystal x-ray diffraction (XRD) pattern with all the peaks indexed. The inset shows the optical image of needlelike single crystals. (c) Field-dependent transverse resistivity ( $\rho_{xx}$ ) and Hall resistivity ( $\rho_{yx}$ ) measured at 1.6 K for magnetic field parallel to the *b* axis and current parallel to the *a* axis.

these Dirac cones extend through the whole 3D BZ along the *T-Z-T* line and form DNLs; (3) multiple nodal loops in the *Z-A-R* plane. The consistency between ARPES measurements and DFT calculations justifies the above claims and provides direct evidence of a NLSM phase robust against SOC in TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. Our results suggest rich physics in structurally anisotropic topological materials and call for further functional exploitation based on them.

## **II. LATTICE STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERIZATION**

Single crystals of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub> adapt an orthorhombic layered structure with the space group *Cmcm* (No. 63) [46–48]. The lattice constants can be inferred from powder x-ray diffraction (XRD) and single-crystal XRD results with a = 3.657 Å, b = 13.125 Å, and c = 15.119 Å (see the Supplemental Material [49] and Refs. [28,50–57] therein for details). As shown in Fig. 1(a), the one-dimensional (1D) NiTe<sub>2</sub> chains extend along the crystallographic *a* axis and form a quasi-2D layer via linking chains of Ta atoms along the *c* axis. For ARPES measurement, cleavage occurs parallel to these *ac* layers ([010]) and normal to the *b* axis. The crystals grow in the shape of needles along the *a* axis [Fig. 1(b) inset]. All the peaks of the single-crystal XRD pattern in Fig. 1(b) can be indexed as (0 *L* 0) reflections, and no trace of an impurity phase can be detected, indicating its high crystalline quality.

Field-dependent resistivity measurement [Fig. 1(c)] was performed with the magnetic field parallel to the *b* axis and current parallel to the *a* axis. The transverse resistivity  $\rho_{xx}$ shows linear behavior at low field region (-4 T < B < 4 T), indicating possible linear dispersions close to the Fermi level. No saturation can be inferred for the field up to 15 T. The Hall resistivity shows a generally positive slope with the field and clearly nonlinear behavior, suggesting multiple Fermi surfaces and hole-type carriers. This behavior agrees with recent work



FIG. 2. (a) The three-dimensional (3D) Brillouin zone (BZ) of bulk TaNiTe<sub>5</sub> and the projected BZ for the angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) measured [010] surface with high-symmetry points specified. (b) Density functional theory (DFT) calculated electronic band structure of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub> along high-symmetry directions with spin-orbit coupling (SOC), where the three bands with Dirac nodal lines and Dirac cones near the Fermi level are highlighted in red, blue, and green, respectively. (c) The line nodes on the *Z*-*A*-*R* plane for different bands, which correspond to red, blue, and green band crosses as shown in (b).

[46], which reports  $TaNiTe_5$  as a material with a nontrivial Berry phase.

#### III. MULTIPLE DNLs IN TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>

To uncover the topological properties of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>, we start from DFT calculations. Figure 2(b) shows the calculated band structures of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub> with SOC on high-symmetry k paths illustrated in Fig. 2(a). Firstly, the band crossings at the Z point with linear dispersion in  $k_x$  (Z-A) and  $k_y$  ( $\Gamma$ -Z) directions, forming the typical fourfold degenerate Dirac cones. This is because nonsymmorphic symmetry  $g'_y = \{M_y | (0, \frac{1}{2}, 0)\}$  and  $S_{2y} = \{C_{2y} | (0, \frac{1}{2}, 0)\}$  fulfills the anticommutation relationship with inversion at Z, leading to an extra twofold degeneracy between two pairs of Kramers doublets. Secondly, along the  $k_z$  direction, the Dirac cones extend from point Z to point T, resulting in robust DNLs against strong SOC. These Dirac cones and DNL features are highlighted in red, blue, and green for the bands near the Fermi level along  $\Gamma$ -Z-T path shown in Fig. 2(b). Thirdly, the width of the red-labeled band along  $k_{\rm r}$ (A-Z) direction is  $\sim 2$  eV,  $\sim 10$  times larger than that along  $k_v$  ( $\Gamma$ -Z) and  $k_z$  (T-Z), reflecting the anisotropic character of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. In Fig. S2 in the Supplemental Material [49], we perform atomic projection of the DFT calculated dispersion and density of states (DOS). It is shown that, close to the Fermi level, Ta atoms have little contribution to the dispersion and DOS, suggesting that transport electrons are mainly originated from the 1D NiTe<sub>2</sub> chains, corroborating its anisotropic nature.

Fourthly, the strongly dispersed bands along the *A*-*Z*-*R* path appear in pairs, forming Type-I Dirac cones on point *Z*, Type-II Dirac cones on point *R*, and cross each other several times forming Type-II Dirac cones in between, which are also highlighted in color in Fig. 2(b). Further DFT calculation confirms that all Dirac cones connect with each other, forming nodal lines and nodal loops on the  $k_y = \frac{\pi}{h}$  (*Z*-*A*-*R*) plane, as



FIG. 3. (a) Schematic three-dimensional (3D) Brillouin zone (BZ) and the location of the Dirac nodal lines (DNLs) along the *T-Z-T* line in the top *Z-A-T* plane. Red open circles between *Z* and *T* indicate the positions where angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) spectra in (d) are taken. (b) Comparison between Fermi surfaces from ARPES (left) and density functional theory (DFT; right) for the single-crystal *ac* plane ( $\Gamma$ -*Z*-*A* plane) of TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>. (c) Comparison between dispersions along  $\Gamma$ -*Z*- $\Gamma$  from ARPES raw spectra (left), two-dimensional (2D) curvature (middle), and DFT projection (right). (d) Photon energy-dependent dispersion along  $\overline{\Gamma}$ - $\overline{T}$ - $\overline{\Gamma}$  for  $k_z$  covering half of the 3D BZ from *Z* to *T*.

shown in Fig. 2(c). We prove that these DNLs are protected by nonsymmorphic symmetry in the presence of strong SOC in TaNiTe<sub>5</sub>, establishing a robust NLSM phase (see the Supplemental Material [49] for details).

Our ARPES measurements provide direct evidence of these multiple DNL features. We first analyze the Dirac cone at the bulk Z point and DNLs along the T-Z-T line, as indicated in Fig. 3(a). The Fermi surface and bands measured by ARPES and projected from DFT calculations are shown in comparison in Figs. 3(b) and 3(c). For ARPES measurement, the photon energy was selected as 50 eV, so it approximately covers the  $\Gamma$ -Z-A plane, see Fig. S3 in the Supplemental Material [49] for systematic photon energydependent data. Satisfactory agreement between experiment and theory is reached considering the detailed fermiology and spectrum. The fourfold Dirac cone crossing at the bulk Z point at -0.64 eV (as discussed in Fig. 2) can be clearly resolved by ARPES, as marked in Fig. 3(c) by green arrows. These measured Dirac cones correspond to the calculated ones shown in green lines in Fig. 2(b). The calculated Dirac cones shown in red lines are above the Fermi level, and those in blue lines are too weak to be resolved [blue arrows in Fig. 3(c)].

Judging from the highlighted dispersion in the curvature plot, this Dirac crossing is gapless at the Z point. Furthermore, in Fig. 3(d), we present the spectra of this Dirac crossing at different  $k_z$  planes measured by varying the incident photon energies. It is noted that this DNL shows clear dispersion along the Z-T line in DFT [Fig. 2(b)], with Dirac crossing energy at ~-0.64 eV at the Z point and ~-1.13 eV at the T point. Interestingly, both gapless Dirac crossings are present for all the ARPES spectra at different  $k_z$  planes, resulting from the projection of this DNL to the measured  $k_x$ - $k_y$  plane, as can be proved by the remarkable agreement between the ARPES spectra and the DFT projection in Fig. 3(c). The manifestation of spectral projection may come from the relatively large  $\Delta k_z$  corresponding with the low photon energies we used. Nevertheless, the photon energy-dependent ARPES measurement corroborates DFT calculations and establishes gapless Dirac cones at bulk Z/T points and thus a gapless DNL along the *T*-*Z*-*T* line in the 3D BZ, as demanded by  $g'_y = \{M_y | (0, \frac{1}{2}, 0)\}$  symmetry (see the Supplemental Material [49] for details).

Considering the nodal loops locating in the T-Z-A plane, we can also find strong evidence of their corresponding Dirac crosses from the satisfactory match between ARPES and DFT. In Fig. 4(a), bottom panel, the nodal loops from three pairs of bands close to the Fermi level are shown in the T-Z-A plane with red, blue, and green colors as in Fig. 2(c). ARPES spectra and DFT dispersion along the  $k_x$  ( $Z \rightarrow A$ ) direction are shown in comparison in Figs. 4(b)-4(d). In the present DFT energy-momentum window [Fig. 4(b)], two Dirac crosses can be identified for the green pair of bands, four Dirac crosses for the blue pair, and three for the red, with all the band pairs containing both Type-I and Type-II Dirac cones. The dashed ellipses in Fig. 4(b) point out regions where the Dirac gaps are too small to be resolved in ARPES spectra. Except that, all the features predicted by DFT can be identified in the ARPES spectra, as emphasized in Figs. 4(c) and 4(d) by arrows colored correspondingly. The existence of multiple Type-I and II Dirac crosses along the  $k_x$  ( $Z \rightarrow A$ ) direction in ARPES spectra provides strong evidence for the nodal loops shown in Fig. 4(a).

Further evidence of these Dirac crosses can also be derived from the ARPES spectra along the  $k_y$  (parallel to  $\Gamma$ -Z- $\Gamma$ ) direction at different values of  $k_x$ . As shown in Fig. 4(e),



FIG. 4. (a) Schematic three-dimensional (3D) Brillouin zone (BZ) and the location of the nodal loops in the *T-Z-A* plane. Red solid circles between Z and A indicate the positions where angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) spectra in (e) are taken. Comparison between spectra along the  $Z \rightarrow A$  direction from (b) density functional theory (DFT) bands, (c) ARPES raw spectra, and (d) two-dimensional (2D) curvature ARPES spectra. (e) Systematic evolution of spectra (2D curvature) along  $k_y$  at different  $k_x$  values. Colored arrows in (c)–(e) indicate the Dirac crosses from the corresponding band pairs shown in the DFT calculation in (b).

ARPES spectra along the  $k_y$  direction at different  $k_x$  positions present evolution of the Dirac crosses corresponding to the nodal loop shape. When the  $k_x$  positions of the spectra, as specified by red circles in Fig. 4(a), bottom panel, coincide with the nodal loops, gapless Dirac crosses can be identified directly in the 2D curvature spectra. These Dirac crosses are also emphasized by arrows whose colors correspond to the band pairs. When the  $k_x$  positions are off the nodal loops, gaps open for the Dirac cone. The correspondence between ARPES and DFT down to a very detailed level establishes solid evidence of multiple Dirac nodal loops in the *T-Z-A* plane.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

Combining ARPES measurements, DFT calculations, and symmetry analysis, we have demonstrated how structural anisotropy can interact with nonsymmorphic symmetry and reshape the band topology in a semimetal. The resulting multiple robust Dirac crosses and DNLs against SOC suggest fertile physics in lower-dimensional topological systems [58–60]. Compared with their in-plane isotropic counterparts, anisotropic topological materials could be better suited for device exploitation due to their reduced dimensionality, especially in devices utilizing coherent spin transport [61,62]. This paper may stimulate further effort in exploring these rich physics and applications in in-plane isotropic topological materials.

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