

**ELECTRONS AND PHONONS IN LAYERED CRYSTAL
STRUCTURES**

PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY OF MATERIALS
WITH LAYERED STRUCTURES

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ELECTRONS AND PHONONS IN LAYERED CRYSTAL STRUCTURES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

ix

PART I: ELECTRONS

CHAPTER A

M. SCHLÜTER / Symmetry Considerations	1
1. Group Theoretical Basis	1
1.1. Symmetry of the Schrödinger Equation	1
1.2. Group Representations	2
1.3. Crystal Point and Space Groups	6
1.3.1. Symmorphic Space Groups	8
1.3.2. The Symmorphic Crystal Space Group D_{3d}^3	9
1.3.3. Non-Symmorphic Space Groups	17
1.3.4. The Non-Symmorphic Space Group D_{6h}^4	19
1.4. Double Groups and Time Reversal Symmetry	30
2. Symmetrized Basis Functions	38
2.1. Use of a Symmetrized Basis	38
2.2. Symmetry of Plane Waves	39
2.3. Group Projection Operators	41
2.4. Example for Symmetrized Plane Waves: Non-Symmorphic Space Group D_{6h}^4	43
3. Symmetry Classification of Layer Compounds	50
3.1. Structural Aspects	50
3.2. Group Analysis of Some Layer Compounds	53
3.3. Description of Eight Space Groups of Layer Compounds	55
References	57

CHAPTER B

C. Y. FONG / Methods Used for Calculating Band Structures of Layered Materials	59
1. The Tight-Binding Method (LCAO)	59
1.1. Original Formulation of the Tight-Binding Method	60
1.2. The Bromley-Murray Scheme	62
1.3. The Slater-Koster Interpolation Scheme	67

2. The Augmented-Plane-Wave Method (APW)	69
2.1. Basic Concepts of the Augmented-Plane-Wave Method	70
2.2. Construction of the Crystal Potential	71
2.3. Calculation of the Energy Eigenvalues	75
2.4. Comments on Computational Details	77
3. The Empirical Pseudopotential Method (EPM)	79
3.1. General Considerations of the Pseudopotential Method	80
3.2. The Local Empirical Pseudopotential Method	83
3.3. The Non-Local Empirical Pseudopotential Method	89
3.4. Comments on Fitting Procedures	91
4. The Green's Function Method (KKR)	93
4.1. Variational Procedure for Simple Structures	94
4.2. Generalization to Complex Crystals	98
4.3. Calculation of Structure Factors	99
5. The Method of Linear Combination of Muffin-Tin Orbitals (LCMTO)	102
5.1. Mathematical Formulation of Muffin-Tin Orbitals	104
5.2. Variational Scheme Using a Linear Combination of Muffin-Tin Orbitals	107
5.3. Comments on Practical Calculations	109
6. The Layer Transfer-Matrix Method (LTM)	110
6.1. Derivation of an Eigenvalue Equation	111
6.2. Calculation of the Transfer Matrix Q	114
6.3. Formulation of the Structure Factors	119
6.4. Mathematical Details	124
7. The Orthogonalized Plane Wave Method (OPW)	129
7.1. General Formulation of the OPW Method	130
7.2. Self-Consistent OPW Calculations	133
7.3. Combined OPW-Tight Binding Calculations	137
8. Conclusions	140
References	143

CHAPTER C

C. Y. FONG and M. SCHLÜTER / Electronic Structure of Some Layer Compounds	145
1. Transition Metal Layer Compounds	145
1.1. Compounds with Octahedral Arrangement of the Cations	145
1.1.1. The Group IVB Transition Metal Chalcogenides	152
1.1.2. The Group VB Transition Metal Dichalcogenide TaS ₂	171
1.2. Compounds with Trigonal Prismatic Arrangement of the Cations	177
1.2.1. The Group VB Transition Metal Dichalcogenides	181
1.2.2. The Group VIB Transition Metal Dichalcogenides	193

2. Non-Transition Metal Layer Compounds	202
2.1. Compounds with Octahedral Arrangement of the Cations	203
2.1.1. The Tin Dichalcogenides SnS_2 and SnSe_2	204
2.1.2. The Five-Layer Compound Bi_2Te_3	220
2.1.3. Lead Iodide PbI_2	229
2.1.4. Bismuth Iodide BiI_3	245
2.2. Compounds with Trigonal Prismatic Arrangement of the Cations	256
2.2.1. The Gallium Chalcogenides	256
2.3. Hexagonal Network Structures	296
2.3.1. Graphite	296
2.3.2. Boron Nitride	305
References	311
Acknowledgment	315
List of Symbols – CHAPTER A	316
List of Symbols – CHAPTER B	317
List of Symbols – CHAPTER C	318

PART II: PHONONS

T. J. WIETING and J. L. VERBLE / Infrared and Raman Investigations of Long-Wavelength Phonons in Layered Materials	321
1. Introduction	321
2. Structures and Symmetry	322
2.1. Families of Layered Materials	322
2.1.1. GaSe	322
2.1.2. MoS_2	323
2.1.3. CdI_2	324
2.1.4. Graphite	325
2.1.5. As_2S_3	325
2.1.6. Sb_2S_3	326
2.1.7. Bi_2Te_3	326
2.2. Group Theory and the Correlation Method	326
2.3. Correlation Diagrams	338
2.3.1. β -GaS	338
2.3.2. ϵ -GaSe	338
2.3.3. γ -GaSe	340
2.3.4. 3R- and 3T- MoS_2	341
2.3.5. 2H- CdI_2	342
2.3.6. 4H- CdI_2	342
2.3.7. Graphite	344
2.3.8. As_2S_3	344
2.3.9. Sb_2S_3	346
2.3.10. Bi_2Te_3	348

3. Infrared Absorption and Raman Scattering	349
3.1. Selection Rules for Infrared Absorption	349
3.2. Analysis of Infrared Spectra	351
3.3. Effective Charge	354
3.4. Experimental Configurations in Raman Scattering	356
3.5. Raman Selection Rules and Scattered Light Intensity	357
4. Normal Vibrations in Layered Materials	358
4.1. General Properties	359
4.2. Linear-Chain Model	363
5. Experimental Investigations	368
5.1. GaSe Family	368
5.2. MoS ₂ Family	380
5.3. CdI ₂ Family	386
5.4. Graphite	393
5.5. As ₂ S ₃ , Sb ₂ S ₃ , and Bi ₂ Te ₃ Families	394
5.6. Chemical Bonding	397
Appendix	400
Acknowledgments	400
List of Symbols	402
References	403
N. WAKABAYASHI and R. M. NICKLOW / Neutron Scattering and Lattice Dynamics of Materials with Layered Structures	409
1. Lattice Dynamics and Inelastic Neutron Scattering	409
1.1. Lattice Dynamics in the Harmonic Approximation	409
1.2. Model of Lattice Dynamics	412
1.3. Inelastic Scattering of Neutrons	416
2. Atomic Vibrations in Layered Compounds	419
3. Neutron Scattering Experiments on Layered Compounds	423
3.1. Introduction	423
3.2. Graphite	424
3.3. Transition Metal Dichalcogenides (TX ₂)	438
3.3.1. MoS ₂ (2H)	439
3.3.2. NbSe ₂	447
3.3.3. TiSe ₂	449
3.4. GaSe	451
3.5. PbI ₂	457
3.6. Iodine	458
Appendix	460
Acknowledgment	461
List of Symbols	461
References	462
SUBJECT INDEX	465
INDEX OF LAYERED MATERIALS	473

FOREWORD

This volume is devoted to the electron and phonon energy states of inorganic layered crystals. The distinctive feature of these low-dimensional materials is their easy mechanical cleavage along planes parallel to the layers. This feature implies that the chemical binding within each layer is much stronger than the binding between layers and that some, but not necessarily all, physical properties of layered crystals have two-dimensional character. In Wyckoff's *Crystal Structures*, SiC and related compounds are regarded as layered structures, because their atomic layers are alternately stacked according to the requirements of cubic and hexagonal close-packing. However, the uniform (tetrahedral) coordination of the atoms in these compounds excludes the kind of structural anisotropy that is fundamental to the materials discussed in this volume. An individual layer of a layered crystal may be composed of either a single sheet of atoms, as in graphite, or a set of up to five atomic sheets, as in Bi_2Te_3 . A layer may also have more complicated arrangements of the atoms, as we find for example in Sb_2S_3 . But the unique feature common to all these materials is the structural anisotropy, which directly affects their electronic and vibrational properties.

The nature of the weak interlayer coupling is not very well understood, despite the frequent attribution of the coupling in the literature to van der Waals forces. Two main facts, however, have emerged from all studies. The first is the extraordinary variation in the interlayer coupling strength from material to material. By comparison with the forces acting within the layers, the interlayer forces are smaller by factors ranging between twenty and a thousand. These ratios have been determined from phonon studies, and their values are a convenient measure of the structural anisotropy of a particular material. The second fact is the nearly three-dimensional character of certain electronic energy states in materials that otherwise show large structural anisotropy. This combination of two- and three-dimensional effects in the same material is an intriguing aspect of the physical properties of layered solids. Since most studies have focussed on the stronger intralayer forces, few quantitative models of the interlayer interaction have thus far been proposed, and much important work remains to be done in this area.

In organizing this review the editors have chosen to restrict the number of contributions, so that a broader and more synthetic treatment of electron and phonon energy states could be achieved. The first three articles in this volume, contributed by Schlüter and Fong, review the calculations of energy bands in layered materials and the supporting optical data. After discussing the group theoretical tools, the authors consider the various theoretical methods used to calculate the band structures of layered crystals. They then discuss specific materials and their bonding models and

compare theoretical results with relevant experiments. The two articles on phonons, which make up the second part of the volume, divide along the lines of the experimental techniques employed in studying lattice vibrations. Long-wavelength phonons are treated in the article by Wieting and Verble on infrared absorption and Raman scattering, and phonon dispersion is taken up in the article by Wakabayashi and Nicklow on inelastic neutron scattering. Each article in turn attempts to evaluate all the published work on electron or phonon energy states in inorganic layered crystals.

In a rapidly growing field of research, the most recent results are inevitably omitted from consideration. Since completing the manuscript, a number of papers have appeared that supplement the discussion in this review or provide examples of new families of layered crystals, or in some cases describe novel physical effects. Perhaps the most interesting recent development is the discovery of electron charge density waves in the tantalum dichalcogenides and the periodic structural distortions that are associated with the formation of these waves. Many investigators have already entered into this new area. An assessment of this and other work, however, must remain for future reviews of electrons and phonons in layered crystals.

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