Improper Ferroelectricity: A Theoretical and Experimental Study. Unclassified

Theoretical and experimental investigations proposed for this period have been completed. First-principle theoretical lattice-dynamics calculations on the high and low-temperature commensurate phases of RbZnCl₂, K₂ZnCl₂, and BaMnF₄ have indicated the origin of the incommensurate behavior in the intermediate phase. Molecular dynamics (M-D) calculations were developed that demonstrate how the orientational disorder develops in the molecular anion sublattice and how it relates to the incommensurate and commensurate phase transitions. These M-D calculations have also demonstrated the importance of including ionic polarization in these calculations. A general theory, based on "latent symmetry", of incommensurate behavior in these, and probably many similar materials, has been developed and submitted for publication. Raman spectra have been obtained for various phases of these materials. An analytical method was developed for deconvoluting these severely overlapped spectra so that a one-to-one comparison with (continued on next page)
the theoretically-predicted lines could be made. Methods for measuring transition temperatures more precisely, ± 0.5 K, using birefringence and capacitance measurements under varying temperature and uniaxial stress, were developed. Measurements of the Raman spectra of CsZnI₄, which behaves differently from the other materials studied so far, were completed; a complete comparison with theory awaits the completion of M-D calculations for this material.
Improper Ferroelectricity:
A Theoretical and Experimental Study

Final Report #2

J.R. Hardy and F.G. Ullman

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Department of Physics and Astronomy and Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68588-0111

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1. **Introduction**

The program over the past four years was effectively a continuation of our earlier Army-Sponsored work on "Improper Ferroelectrics". However, the emphasis on incommensurate behavior, which was the principal concern of the latter part of that program, developed into the major theme of the program of the past four years.

During this period the experimental and theoretical programs were closely coupled as our theoretical understanding evolved to reveal the true complexity of the behavior of ionic molecular crystals.

When the present work was initiated, we had proposed to extend the first-principles theoretical methods that had been applied successfully to RbCaF$_3$ (L.L. Beyer and J.H. Hardy, Phys. Rev. B 24, 2577 (1981)) to isomorphs of potassium selenate such as the chlorozincates of rubidium and potassium (Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ and K$_2$ZnCl$_4$). To obtain experimental confirmation of the validity of these results, we also proposed to improve our analytical methods for deconvoluting the severely overlapped lines in the Raman spectra of these materials. An important corollary of these spectral studies is the ability to identify, within about one degree Kelvin, the actual phase transition temperatures in the laser-light-scattering volume. To this end, we proposed to develop the well-known measurement methods of birefringence and capacitance vs. temperature for use also under varying uniaxial stress.

Not only have we been successful in meeting these objectives, we have been able to go well beyond these original expectations, especially in the outcome of the theoretical work. Major elements of this were Dr. Edwardson's development of computer molecular dynamics simulation techniques to run on our VAX 725 system, and Dr. Katkanant's development of the analytical methods for deconvoluting complex Raman spectra. The specific details of these and
other developments are best summarized by the Abstracts of the various publications which we have incorporated in the body of this report with appropriate introductory and/or linking material.

The most outstanding development is that we believe we have uncovered the basic cause of incommensurate behavior both in the $\text{K}_2\text{SeO}_4$ isomorphs that we have studied, and in many, if not all, other insulating materials. This cause is physically quite simple; it stems from the fact that the molecular ions, (e.g., SeO$_4^{2-}$ and ZnCl$_4^{2-}$) that constitute one (or more) components of these compounds, have their own natural shape and size. As a consequence, they tend not to fit well into the periodic lattice structure which is constrained on them by the other component ions (most commonly alkali or alkaline earth metals). A two-stage compromise results: first they form on very open basic lattices (e.g., simple hexagonal) which are notorious for their lack of stability—this tendency is also favored in these lattices by permitting large interstices between the molecular ions into which the small metal cations pack easily. Secondly, the molecular ions as a result of this packing, can undergo quite large rotations. This motion has two components: a collective rotation, i.e., a combined libration-translation which drives the formation of an incommensurate phase; and a local uncorrelated rotational disorder. In some systems, the disorder dominates and no structural change occurs; in others, the collective response dominates and disorder is absent. The $\text{K}_2\text{SeO}_4$ isomorphs, such as $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$, to which much of our effort has been devoted, show both types of behavior simultaneously, which is the main reason that they have proved so perplexing.

The incommensurate behavior arises from the imperfect helical symmetry operations present in the high temperature, most symmetric phase. Given a sufficiently strong collective rotational "drive", the associated helical arrays of molecules, effectively "uncouple" their helical backbone structure
from the constraint of exact repetition after either 2, 4, or 6 lattice translations, and adjust their pitch to relax their own internal strains due to their imperfectness. The result is a non-exactly repeating helix which appears as an incommensurate phase. This mechanism is discussed in detail in an article just submitted to Physical Review whose Abstract is included in the following Abstract summary.

2. Theoretical studies

The overall substance of these has been summarized in the Introduction: the specific work is now annotated sequentially below.

The first report of the theoretical work appeared as a Physical Review Letter on the behavior of $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$. Here the "bare bones" of the principles and simulations are described, along with the enunciation of the principle of "latent symmetry"
A PRIORI THEORY OF INCOMMENSURATE BEHAVIOR
IN \text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4

V. Katkanant*, P.J. Edwardson,** and J.R. Hardy\textsuperscript{\textdagger}
Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111

and

L.L. Boyer
U.S. Naval Research Laboratory
Washington D.C. 20375

ABSTRACT

We have performed a study of the potential energy, normal modes, static
relaxation, and molecular dynamics of \text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4 using ab initio Gordon-Kim
interionic potentials for intermolecular and interionic potentials. We find
that the Pnam - Pna\textsubscript{2}1 transition in this, and almost certainly many isomor-
phous systems is entropy driven and shows no soft mode behavior. This is
shown to arise from the presence in this system of a large equipotential
volume of phase space between the Pnam and the tripled Pna\textsubscript{2}1 low temperature
structure. This region arises from a major lattice instability involving
large rotations and displacements and having approximately six-fold screw
symmetry along the a axis. This concealed imperfect symmetry which we call
latent symmetry is the basic cause of the existence of a near-tripled incom-
mensurate phase over a range of 113 K (302 K - 189 K) between the Pnam and
Pna\textsubscript{2}1 phases. In this region the helicity is incommensurate with the lat-
tice, being largely determined by the relief of intrahelical stresses. In
addition, we have demonstrated by molecular dynamics that the \text{ZnCl}_4^{2-} tetra-
hedra are orientationally disordered, but, despite this, the helical insta-
bility remains. These findings are also related to anomalies in the observed
Raman spectra and to X-ray data which confirm the presence of dynamically
correlated disorder.

* Now at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno,
California 93740

** Now at Naval Research Lab, Washington D.C., 20375

\textsuperscript{\textdagger} To whom all correspondence should be addressed
While our use of computer molecular dynamics was a major component of both these papers, it was not itself the central theme; little more than the results were presented. However, the simulations have come to play a key role and their findings have been presented in full detail in a report of one study on Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ in the "normal", Pnam, phase just above $T_1$, the incommensurate transition temperature.

This report brings out, in particular, the interplay between disorder and cooperative behavior. However, it also revealed that there was some "missing factor" in the description of the ZnCl$_4^{2-}$ units: principally their lack of rigidity. This factor, we have identified as ionic polarization.
In view of the important role of the Cl\textsuperscript{-} ion's polarization, and, to a lesser extent, that of the Rb\textsuperscript{+} ion, we extended our studies to include that effect with the results described in the following abstract.

To be submitted to Physical Review B

Simulation of the Polarizable-ion Dynamics of Rb\textsubscript{2}ZnCl\textsubscript{4}

P.J. Edwardson and J.R. Hardy
Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111

The role of ionic polarizability in the near stability of the average structure of normal Rb\textsubscript{2}ZnCl\textsubscript{4} is explored through constant-pressure simulation. Fifty-six ions under periodic-boundary constraints are allowed to polarize in nonlinear response to electrostatic and short-range forces. The parameter-free short-range forces are obtained from the electron-gas model. In contrast with methods based on the shell model, the present method conserves energy, includes nonlinear effects, and avoids the polarization catastrophe. These results support the hypothesis [Edwardson et al, Phys. Rev. E, 1-Jun-1987] that polarizability, rather than charge transfer, is a crucial factor in the properties of the ZnCl\textsubscript{2}\textsuperscript{2-} ion and the structure of Rb\textsubscript{2}ZnCl\textsubscript{4}.
we are currently extending these studies to other isomorphous systems.

Finally, in order to test the generality of our ideas, we studied BaMnF₄, a totally different structure, and found the same general principles to hold.

Submitted to Solid State Communications

Ab Initio Explanation of the Incommensurate Phase Transition in BaMnF₄

P.J. Edwardson, V. Katkanant, and J.R. Hardy

Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111

and

L.L. Boyer

U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

Washington D.C. 20375

ABSTRACT

Results of an a priori theoretical study of the origins of the incommensurate stability in BaMnF₄ are presented. The most unstable vibrational mode lies at \( q_1 = (0.32, 0.5, 0.5) \) (in fractions of the reciprocal lattice vectors for the orthorhombic lattice), while the observed value is \( (0.392, 0.5, 0.5) \). These findings are interpreted in terms of our previously introduced concept of an imperfect, or "latent" symmetry which is extended into a general explanation of incommensurate behavior. A further possible consequence of this is that some strongly incommensurate systems could, in a specific and restricted sense, be novel states of matter.
3. Experimental Studies

In the experimental program, the emphasis has been on extending our previous light-scattering studies of K$_2$SeO$_4$ to its isomorphs, such as Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ and K$_2$ZnCl$_4$. As mentioned in the Introduction, analytical methods had to be developed to deconvolute the severely overlapped spectra of these materials. New (for us) methods of determining the phase transition temperature in the light-scattering volume more precisely, using measurements of birefringence and dielectric constant, had also to be developed. The light-scattering studies were described in the Technical Report issued in July, 1966. Abstracts of the papers and the title page and foreword from the Technical Report are reproduced below with additional comments as needed.

The article below is a part of the Proceedings of the Fifth European Meeting on Ferroelectricity held in Benalmadena (Malaga), Spain in September, 1963. It described our first Raman-scattering measurements on Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ and also an application of a different analytical technique to a previously published uniaxial stress study of the soft "amplitude" mode in K$_2$/SeO$_4$.

F. G. ULLMAN
Department of Electrical Engineering and Department of Physics and Astronomy
J. R. HARDY, V. KATKANANT, and D. BILLESBACH
Department of Physics and Astronomy

Abstract Raman spectra of Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ for several temperatures from 18 K to 340 K are compared with those of K$_2$SeO$_4$. The results support a model proposed previously for the origin of the anomalous internal mode spectra in K$_2$SeO$_4$. Previous work on the uniaxial stress dependence of the peak frequency of the amplitude mode below the incommensurate transition temperature (≈130 K) is analyzed using a sixth degree Landau free energy expansion. The results show little deviation from previous conclusions based on mean-field analysis.
Since birefringence measurements are non-contacting and non-destructive, and proportional to the square of the order parameter, they are a powerful tool for measuring phase transition temperatures. In this work, it was possible to study the uniaxial stress dependence of the incommensurate transition temperature with good precision in this way.
These two papers are part of the Proceeding of the Sixth International Meeting on Ferroelectricity held in Kobe, Japan in the summer of 1985.

**Analysis of the Raman Spectrum of the Higher Frequency Modes of Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$**

V. Katkanant, F. G. Ullman* and J. R. Hardy

Beihlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111

*Beihlen Laboratory of Physics and Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111

The stretching-region (250-330 cm$^{-1}$) internal modes of Rb$_2$ZnCl$_4$ were studied by Raman-scattering from 190 to 330 K. Four lines peaking at about 275, 285, 295 and 304 cm$^{-1}$ are clearly resolved below the normal-to-incommensurate phase transition (307 K in these measurements); above 307 K, the four merge into three and the 285 cm$^{-1}$ peak is no longer detectable. The derivatives of these spectra were fitted to the derivative of an overlapped, spectrometer-corrected, four-Lorentzian lineshape. The resulting temperature dependence of the integrated intensity of the 285 cm$^{-1}$ peak decreases by at most a factor of 3 up to 305 K whereas the square of the order parameter in this range decreases by a factor of about 50. Thus, its disappearance above 307 K is as yet unexplained.

**Effect of Uniaxial Stress on the 130 K and 93 K Phase Transitions in K$_2$SeO$_4$**

D. P. Billesbach, F. G. Ullman* and J. R. Hardy

Beihlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0111, U.S.A.

*Beihlen Laboratory of Physics and Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0511, U.S.A.

The uniaxial stress dependencies of the 130 K($T_a$) and 93 K($T_c$) transitions in K$_2$SeO$_4$ were determined from measurements of birefringence anomalies at $T_a$, and capacitance anomalies at $T_c$. At $T_a$, for crystal axes defined as $c < a < b$, we obtain $-1.0 \pm 0.2$ K kbar for stress along "c", $3.1 \pm 0.2$ K kbar for stress along "a", and $7.0 \pm 0.2$ K kbar for stress along "b". Summing these three values gives the hydrostatic pressure dependence of $-6.2$ kbar, close to the reported experimental values of about $-6.5$ K kbar. Capacitance vs temperature data, for stress along "c" only, in the vicinity of 93 K were fitted to a Curie-Weiss law to determine the transition temperatures. A value of about $-25$ K kbar for the c-axis stress dependence of $T_c$ was found.
SOME ASPECTS OF RAMAN SCATTERING FROM $A_2BX_4$ COMPOUNDS*

F.G. Ullman
Departments of Electrical Engineering and Physics

V. Katkanant, P.J. Edwardson, and J.R. Hardy
Department of Physics

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588

1. INTRODUCTION.

Since the development of ion lasers made Raman spectroscopy a routine analytical tool, it has been used extensively in studies of structural phase transitions in solids. Even though it is restricted in most cases to zero wavevector excitations, the effects of non-zero wavevector instabilities can also be evident in the spectra. It has thus also proved useful for the study of the incommensurate phase transitions that were the subject of this workshop. To illustrate how Raman scattering studies have contributed to a better understanding of incommensurate phases in ferroelectric insulators, we have selected for this article two quite different studies in which Raman scattering has provided new information about the incommensurate ferroelectrics, $K_2SeO_4$ and $Rb_2ZnCl_4$.

First, we describe measurements of the temperature dependence of the amplitude mode of $K_2SeO_4$ in its lock-in phase over a range from about eighty degrees to just below its incommensurate transition, $T_i$, which occurs at about 130K. It will be shown that these data can be analysed by purely classical considerations with no need to invoke theories of critical behavior or to rely on partial fits to Curie-Weiss laws.
Second, we describe measurements of the internal mode spectra of $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$ which cannot be described by conventional factor group analysis. The results support a model proposed earlier (1) to explain similar but less obvious effects in the spectra of $\text{K}_2\text{SeO}_4$. The model attributes the lack of agreement with conventional analysis to orientational disorder of weakly-coupled selenate ions. An explanation for the cause of the disorder has been developed from an analysis of the dynamics of $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$ and $\text{K}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$(2).

The next two Abstracts are based on material described in much greater detail in the Technical Report, whose Abstract follows those two. The first, on $\text{K}_2\text{SeC}_4$, is under final review by Physical Review B. The final draft of the second, on $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$ and $\text{K}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$, is in preparation for submission to Physical Review B.
NEW MEASUREMENTS OF THE RAMAN SPECTRUM OF POTASSIUM SELENATE

V. Katkanant and J.R. Hardy
Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0511

and

Frank G. Ullman
Department of Electrical Engineering and
Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0511

ABSTRACT

The Raman spectrum of K$_2$SeO$_4$ has been re-measured at 140K and 110K with neon line calibration and numerical fitting of peak frequencies to obtain ±0.1 cm$^{-1}$ precision. Although the results at 140K confirm the measurements of the internal mode peak frequencies reported by Unruh which appear to agree with the factor group predictions for the perfect crystal, arguments are presented to show that the orientationally-disordered selenate model still holds. Additional measurements in the incommensurate phase at 110K revealed linesplitting similar to those reported for infrared spectra; a comparison with those results is given.
RAMAN-SCATTERING STUDIES OF Rb₂ZnCl₄ and K₂ZnCl₄

V. Katkanant, J. R. Hardy, and R. D. Kirby
Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0111

and

Frank G. Ullman
Department of Electrical Engineering and Behlen Laboratory of Physics, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0511

ABSTRACT

The Raman spectrum of Rb₂ZnCl₄ has been measured at 20 K, 100 K, 200 K, room temperature, and 315 K, covering all four known solid phases of this crystal. The spectra for the four highest temperatures were deconvoluted by fitting to a multi-Lorentzian function convolved with a slit transmission function. The peak frequency, full half-maximum width (FWHM), and integrated intensity for each of the deconvoluted peaks is tabulated and compared with those Raman lines calculated from the lattice dynamics for the presumed perfect crystal structures in the normal high-temperature phase, Pnam, and the higher-temperature phase of the two commensurate ferroelectric phases, Pnma and Pn2₁. The four highest frequency lines that fall in the 270-310 cm⁻¹ range have been studied at several temperatures in the 190-330 K range where they behave anomalously, compared to a similar group in K₂SeO₄. This behavior is accounted for by the chlorozincate ion disorder and an accidental phonon degeneracy uncovered by the lattice-dynamical calculations that can, along with the disorder, permit harmonic mode-coupling. The internal modes do not change drastically with temperature; i.e., the tripling of the lattice period in the commensurate phase does not add a corresponding number of lines to the internal mode spectrum other than a few splittings, indicating the disordered chlorozincate ion
sublattice to be weakly coupled. Greater, but far from complete, splitting is found for the lattice modes. A similar study of commensurate, ferroelectric $K_2ZnCl_4$ shows the same general behavior.
ANALYSES OF THE RAMAN SPECTRA OF THE INCOMMENSURATE FERROELECTRICS Rb₂ZnCl₄ AND K₂SeO₄

INTERIM TECHNICAL REPORT

BY

V. KATKANANT, Post-doctoral Research Associate,

F.G. ULLMAŃ, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Physics and co-principal investigator,

P.J. EDWARDSON, Post-doctoral Research Associate,

AND

J.R. HARDY, Professor of Physics and co-principal investigator

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

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FOREWORD

Previously, a study (1) of the Raman spectrum of the incommensurate ferroelectric, potassium selenate ($K_2SeO_4$) was reported from this Laboratory. A qualitative model was proposed in that work to explain the universal observation, that in its paraelectric phase, there is a higher multiplicity of lines in the internal mode spectra (selenium-oxygen vibrations within the selenate tetrahedra) than predicted. The predictions came from conventional symmetry analysis of the x-ray-determined (for the selenate) $\alpha$-potassium sulfate structure (Pnam). The main features of that qualitative model suggested the true structure to be slightly deviated from the inversion symmetry of the Pnam space group as a result of small rotations (both static and dynamic) of the selenate tetrahedra out of their centrosymmetric positions. Further, it was necessary to postulate that these rotations did not possess translational symmetry but were disordered in the lattice, and that the selenate-selenate coupling was weak, in order to explain the numbers of lines observed in each Raman-scattering configuration.

More recently (i.e., since June, 1983), in addition to refining some of our measurements of the selenate spectra, we have made a detailed study and analysis of the Raman spectra of an isomorph of $K_2SeO_4$, rubidium tetrachlorozincate ($Rb_2ZnCl_4$), also known (like $K_2SeO_4$), to exhibit incommensurate behavior (2,3). This experimental study paralleled (and reinforced) an intensive theoretical study of the lattice dynamics of $Rb_2ZnCl_4$, to be described elsewhere, but from which calculated Raman peak frequencies were taken and are cited in
this report. (A brief preliminary report of some major results of the theoretical work has been submitted for publication (4)).

In the following sections, we describe our experimental results on $\text{Rb}_2\text{ZnCl}_4$, our analytical procedures, and the results of our analysis, and we compare these results with our earlier studies on $\text{K}_2\text{SeO}_4$ and with the predictions of the model offered previously and described briefly above.

We also present in a second chapter some new measurements of the potassium selenate internal mode spectra, made with more precise frequency calibration, for comparison with work reported by other laboratories.

Portions of this report are being prepared for the appropriate journals. However, this material is presented also as a technical report since many of the details will be omitted in journal publications because of space limitations.

The authors are especially indebted to their colleague, Professor R. D. Kirby, for many helpful suggestions on instrumentation, and on the analysis and interpretation of the data.
In the Spring of 1984, the co-principal investigators began organizing, as guest Editors (and at their instigation), a special issue of FERROELECTRICS, dedicated to the scientific contributions of the late Issai "Lef" Lefkowitz. The contents are restricted to those areas in which Lef played an active role and contain papers by authors from many countries.

The issue appeared in April 1987, just a month after the historic American Physical Society meeting at which the "marathon" session on high-temperature superconductors was held. It is appropriate to recall, as does one section of this issue of FERROELECTRICS, that Lef was a prime mover in the encouragement of research on insulators (e.g., CuCl) as potential high-temperature superconductors. The Guest Editors' introduction to that volume of FERROELECTRICS is reproduced below.
GUEST EDITORS’ PREFACE

We first came to know “Lef” Lefkowitz through his supportive role as a Program Manager in the U.S. Army Research Office and later, through working with him for a few years in our roles as Program co-Chairs for IMF-5. We kept in contact mainly by phone—more frequently throughout his last illness.

It was impossible to know Lef at all well without realizing that he had not been able to reach his personal goals in pure research; in one author’s recollections (later in this issue), it is noted that Lef “never quite landed the big one”, and maybe this is true. However, an examination of his publication list reveals a considerable body of work, much of it at the frontiers of the areas that attracted his interest.

In an introductory section that follows, we have collected recollections from friends, co-workers, and supervisors who were close to Lef at various major stages of his professional career. As one reads through these, it becomes more and more clear that Lef’s true role was as a “catalyst”—not in the usual casual overworked sense of the word, but rather in its most frequent chemical sense—the component without which the reaction effectively does not take place. This was Lef’s most abiding contribution; without his participation, so many valuable scientific contributions might not have been made.

In this sense, this volume is a tribute to Lef’s ability to see the future impact of new ideas, to his ever-present enthusiasm, and to his ability to push forward those areas he recognized as being potentially important whether or not they were popular or acclaimed at the time.

We recall the old saying that the good that men do dies with them. Lef’s life (as we knew it) refutes this cynical appraisal. The good he did lives on in the minds and work of those who were supported, stimulated, cheered, and inspired by him, particularly during his last years which a lesser man could have made into a tragedy. Lef made them an inspiration and ultimately his own kind of triumph—as another contributor puts it so well, “Even when Lef lost, he won.”

Lef is no longer with us but his influence lives on and grows, as ever more of the seeds he planted, mature, come to fruition, and in turn, generate their own progeny.

Finally, this volume is dedicated to those who were closest to him: his wife and sons. We are especially grateful to Libby for her support and encouragement. And to Neil and Philip, may this volume add another dimension to their memories of their father.

F. G. Ullman and J. R. Hardy
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

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