
Preface to Second Edition

Given the fact that the first edition of this book is almost sold out, the editor has asked for a second edition. I readily accepted this opportunity, because – as many users and I myself had found out in the meantime – there were quite a lot of typing and other errors in the first edition which had to be eliminated. But more important, I saw the chance to extend the book by a new chapter on light–matter interaction, which complements the canon of the book with respect to both the physics of this interaction and the theoretical methods used for its description. Moreover, during the four years since the first edition the whole field has developed as can be seen in the list of references which now contains about 30 new titles.

Part of the contents of this book has been presented during a guest lecture at the National Mechnikov University in Odessa in the spring term of 2007. I would like to acknowledge the hospitality of the Department of Theoretical Physics and its head, Prof. V.M. Adamyan, and the contacts with the students who attended this one as their first lecture in English. Finally, I appreciate the support by and easy cooperation with the publisher.

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