

The Maxwellians

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the subject of the book is a biography of the theoretical physicist arnold sommerfeld 1868 1951 although sommerfeld is famous as a quantum theorist for the elaboration of the semi classical atomic theory bohr sommerfeld model sommerfeld s fine structure constant his role in the history of modern physics is not confined to atoms and quanta sommerfeld left his mark in the history of mathematics fluid mechanics a number of physical subdisciplines and in particular as founder of a most productive school peter debye wolfgang pauli werner heisenberg linus pauling and hans bethe were his pupils to name only the nobel laureates among them this biography is to a large extent based on primary source material correspondence diaries unpublished manuscripts it should be of particular interest to students who are keen to know more about the historical roots of modern science sommerfeld lived through turbulent times of german history wilhelmian empire weimar republic nazi period his life therefore illustrates how science and scientists perform in changing social environments from this perspective the biography should also attract readers with a general interest in the history of science and technology

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