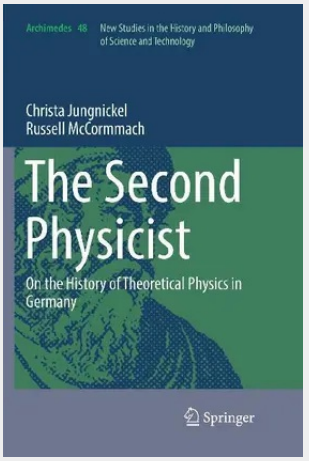
Jungnickel / McCormmach

The Second Physicist

On the History of Theoretical Physics in Germany



This book explores the rise of theoretical physics in 19th century Germany. The authors show how the junior second physicist in German universities over time became the theoretical physicist, of equal standing to the experimental physicist. Gustav Kirchhoff, Hermann von Helmholtz, and Max Planck are among the great German theoretical physicists whose work and career are examined in this book.

Physics was then the only natural science in which *theoretical* work developed into a major teaching and research specialty in its own right. Readers will discover how German physicists arrived at a well-defined field of theoretical physics with well understood and generally accepted goals and needs. The authors explain the nature of the *work* of theoretical physics with many examples, taking care always to locate the research within the workplace.

The book is a revised and shortened version of *Intellectual Mastery of Nature: Theoretical Physics from Ohm to Einstein* , a two-volume work by the same authors. This new edition represents a reformulation of the larger work. It retains what is most important in the original work, while including new material, sharpening discussions, and making the research more accessible to readers. It presents a thorough examination of a seminal era in physics.

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235,39 €
219,99 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9783319841908
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-3-319-84190-8
Verlag: Springer
Erscheinungstermin: 01.08.2018
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Softcover Nachdruck of the original 1. Auflage 2017
Serie: Archimedes
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 739 g
Seiten: 460
Format (B x H): 155 x 235 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)