

The Quantum Underground: Early quantum theory textbooks

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Quantum theory had its beginnings in 1900, when Max Planck derived his famous formula for the energy density of black-body radiation. But the early quantum theory textbooks we remember today---for example, those of Arnold Sommerfeld (1919), Fritz Reiche (1921), and a shorter Report by James Jeans (1914), did not appear until some years later, and all were written by physicists who were themselves active participants in early quantum theory. Surprisingly, not all early texts fit this pattern. Reiche himself had written a review article on quantum theory for general readers in *Die Naturwissenschaften* in 1913, long before his research had shifted to quantum topics. And a year later, textbooks by Hermann Sieveking and Sigfried Valentiner treated quantum theory for students and non-specialists, although neither was active in quantum theoretical research. A third and better known author, Owen Richardson, also treated quantum theory in a 1914 book on electromagnetism. I will describe these early and little-known treatments of quantum theory, all of which were written by physicists whose primary research and professional interests lay elsewhere.