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*Preface*

The main substance of a large part of this book stems from lectures that I gave, and in some cases have continued to give, at Birkbeck College, University of London, over a period of several years. I have endeavored to keep the material up to date, but many generations of Birkbeck students will be familiar with the kind of thing that this book contains. The debt that I owe to these students is immense. Birkbeck students have always been ever-ready to comment upon and correct one's views, and I have derived a vast amount of profit from their interjections. It is more than appropriate that I should record my gratitude here.

I am also extremely grateful to the editor of the series, Professor D. J. O'Connor, for his encouragement in the writing of this book. He has read the complete typescript, and my thanks are due for his comments. I need hardly say that the responsibility for whatever faults the book contains is entirely mine, as is equally the responsibility for the views put forward.

My colleague, Dr. S. C. Brown, has also read the complete typescript and has made a number of very helpful comments. I am extremely grateful to him. I also owe