PREFACE

This third in a continuing series of international conferences on the application of geometrical and topological techniques to physics attracted participants from fifteen nations in Europe, Asia, North and South America. There were forty two speakers, many of whom elected to present not a single talk, but an entire series of lectures on their work, thereby providing nonspecialists with an opportunity to assimilate ideas and techniques of related fields that might bear fruit in their own areas of research. These series of lectures, together with the contributed papers, painted a broad picture of a beautiful and intensely active area of modern mathematical physics and facilitated a lively interaction between scientists who, at more focused, less eclectic gatherings would never encounter each other. These exchanges were all the more pleasant and rewarding by virtue of the beautiful surroundings of the Black Sea coast of Northeastern Bulgaria in which they took place. As it is every year, a day was set aside for an excursion on which the participants could take in some of this lovely terrain and the rich history of the area.

It is our pleasant duty to thank the participants for their contributions to the conference and to this volume as well as to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the California State University at Chico and the European Mathematical Society for the financial support without which the conference would not have been possible. The editors are confident that a tradition has been firmly established and that the fourth conference, scheduled for June 6–15, 2002, will be even more rewarding.

The Editors