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# A physically-motivated quantisation of the electromagnetic field on curved spacetimes

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**Abstract:** Recently, Bennett *et al.* [Eur. J. Phys. **37**:014001, 2016] presented a physically-motivated and explicitly gauge-independent scheme for the quantisation of the electromagnetic field in flat Minkowski space. In this paper we generalise this field quantisation scheme to curved spacetimes. Working within the standard assumptions of quantum field theory and only postulating the physicality of the photon, we derive the Hamiltonian,  $\hat{H}$ , and the electric and magnetic field observables,  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$ , without having to invoke a specific gauge. As an example, we quantise the electromagnetic field in the spacetime of an accelerated Minkowski observer, Rindler space, and demonstrate consistency with other field quantisation schemes by reproducing the Unruh effect.

**Keywords:** Quantum Electrodynamics, Relativistic Quantum Information

## 1. Introduction

For many theorists the question “what is a photon?” remains highly non-trivial [1]. It is in principle possible to uniquely define single photons in free space [2]; however, the various roles that photons play in light-matter interactions [3], the presence of boundary conditions in experimental scenarios [4,5] and our ability to arbitrarily shape single photons [6] all lead to a multitude of possible additional definitions. Yet this does not stop us from utilising single photons for tasks in quantum information processing, especially for quantum cryptography, quantum computing, and quantum metrology [7]. In recent decades, it has become possible to produce single photons on demand [8], to transmit them over 100 kilometres through Earth’s atmosphere [9] and to detect them with very high efficiencies [10]. Moreover, single photons have been an essential ingredient in experiments probing the foundations of quantum physics, such as entanglement and locality [11,12].

Recently, relativistic quantum information has received a lot of attention in the literature. Pioneering experiments verify the possibility of quantum communication channels between Earth’s surface and space [13] and have transmitted photons between the Earth and low-orbit satellites [14], while quantum information protocols are beginning to extend their scope towards the relativistic arena [15–21]. The effects of gravity on satellite-based quantum communication schemes, entanglement experiments and quantum teleportation have already been shown to produce potentially observable effects [22–25]. Non-inertial motion strongly affects quantum information protocols and quantum optics set-ups [26–30], with the mere propagation and detection of photons in such frames being highly non-trivial [31–34].

Motivated by these recent developments, this paper generalises a physically-motivated quantisation scheme of the electromagnetic field in flat Minkowski space [35] to curved spacetimes. Our approach aims to obtain the basic tools for analysing and designing relativistic quantum information experiments in a more direct way than alternative derivations, and without having to

34 invoke a specific gauge. Working within the standard assumptions of quantum field theory and  
 35 only postulating the physicality of the photon, we derive the Hamiltonian,  $\hat{H}$ , and the observables,  
 36  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$ , of the electromagnetic field. Retaining gauge-independence is important when modelling  
 37 the interaction of the electromagnetic field with another quantum system, like an atom. In this case,  
 38 different choices of gauge correspond to different subsystem decompositions, thereby affecting our  
 39 notion of what is ‘atom’ and what is ‘field’ [36,37]. Composite quantum systems can be decomposed  
 40 into subsystems in many different ways. Choosing an unphysical decomposition can result in the  
 41 prediction of spurious effects when analysing the dynamics of one subsystem while tracing out the  
 42 degrees of freedom of the other [38]. Hence it is important to first formulate quantum electrodynamics  
 43 in an entirely arbitrary gauge, as this allows us to subsequently fix the gauge when needed.

44 The direct canonical quantisation of the electromagnetic field in terms of the (real) gauge  
 45 independent electric and magnetic fields,  $\mathbf{E}$  and  $\mathbf{B}$ , is not possible, since these do not offer a complete  
 46 set of canonical variables [39–43]. As an alternative, Bennett *et al.* [35] suggested to use the physicality  
 47 of the photon as the starting point when quantising the electromagnetic field. Assuming that the  
 48 electromagnetic field is made up of photons and identifying their relevant degrees of freedom, like  
 49 frequencies and polarisations, results in a harmonic oscillator Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  for the electromagnetic  
 50 field. Using this Hamiltonian and demanding consistency of the dynamics of expectation values with  
 51 classical electrodynamics, especially with Maxwell’s equations, is sufficient to then obtain expressions  
 52 for  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$  without having to invoke vector potentials and without having to choose a specific gauge.  
 53 Generalising Ref. [35] from flat Minkowski space to curved space times, we obtain field observables  
 54 which could be used, for example, to model photonics experiments in curved spacetimes in a similar  
 55 fashion to how quantum optics typically models experiments in Minkowski space [5,36,44].

Additional problems with our understanding of photons (indeed all particles) arise when we  
 consider quantum fields in gravitationally bound systems [7]. General relativity can be viewed as  
 describing gravitation as the consequence of interactions between matter and the curvature of a  
 Lorentzian (mixed signature) spacetime with metric  $g_{\mu\nu}$  [45,46]. Locally, however, any spacetime  
 appears flat, by which we mean

$$g_{\mu\nu}(p) \cong \eta_{\mu\nu} \equiv \text{diag}(+1, -1, -1, -1), \quad (1)$$

56 the familiar special relativistic invariant line-element of Minkowski space. For Earth’s surface where  
 57 gravity is (nearly) uniform this limit can be taken everywhere, and spacetime curvature can be  
 58 neglected. Spacetimes in relativity have no preferred coordinate frame, so physical laws must satisfy the  
 59 principle of covariance and be coordinate independent and invariant under coordinate transformations  
 60 [47]. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that, while the form of the Hamiltonian may change under  
 61 general coordinate transformations, physically measurable predictions do not [48].

62 Studying the behaviour of quantum fields in this setting is typically dealt with by using quantum  
 63 field theory in curved spacetime. This is a first approximation to a theory of quantum gravity which  
 64 considers covariant quantum fields propagating on a fixed curved background, whose geometry is  
 65 not influenced by the field [49,50]. Intuitively this is what is meant by a static spacetime, where the  
 66 time derivative of the metric is zero. This approximation holds on typical astrophysical length and  
 67 energy scales and is thus well-suited for dealing with most physical situations [51]. How to generalise  
 68 field quantisation to curved spaces is very well established, and the theory has produced several major  
 69 discoveries, like the prediction that the particle states seen by a given observer depend on the geometry  
 70 of their spacetime [52–54]. For example, the vacuum state of one observer does not necessarily coincide  
 71 with the vacuum state of an observer in an alternative reference frame. This surprising result even  
 72 arises in flat Minkowski space, where the Fulling-Davies-Unruh effect predicts that an observer with  
 73 constant acceleration sees the Minkowski vacuum as a thermal state with temperature proportional to  
 74 their acceleration [55–59].

75 To make quantum field theory in curved spacetimes more accessible to quantum opticians, and to  
 76 obtain more insight into the aforementioned effects and their experimental ramifications, this paper

77 considers static, 4-dimensional Lorentzian spacetimes. Our starting point for the derivation of the  
 78 field observables  $\hat{H}$ ,  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$  is the assumption that the detectors belonging to a moving observer  
 79 see photons. These are the energy quanta of the electromagnetic field in curved space times. To  
 80 demonstrate the consistency of our approach with other field quantisation schemes, we consider the  
 81 explicit case of an accelerated Minkowski observer, who is said to reside in a Rindler spacetime [60–64],  
 82 and reproduce Unruh’s predictions [55–59].

83 This paper is divided into five sections. In Sec. 2, we provide a summary of the gauge-independent  
 84 quantisation scheme by Bennett *et al.* [35] which applies in the case of flat spacetime. In Sec. 3, we  
 85 discuss what modifications must be made to classical electrodynamics when moving to the more  
 86 general setting of a stationary curved spacetime. We then show that similar modifications allow for  
 87 the gauge-independent quantisation scheme of Sec. 2 to be applied in this more general setting. In  
 88 Sec. 4, we apply our results to the specific case of a uniformly accelerating reference frame and have a  
 89 closer look at the Unruh effect. Finally, we draw our conclusions in Sec. 5. For simplicity, we work in  
 90 natural units  $\hbar = c = 1$  throughout.

## 91 2. Gauge-independent quantisation of the electromagnetic field

92 In this section we review the gauge dependence inherent in the electromagnetic field and contrast  
 93 standard, more mathematically-motivated quantisation procedures with the gauge-independent  
 94 method of Bennett *et al.* [35].

### 95 2.1. Classical electrodynamics

Under coordinate transformations, the electric and magnetic fields transform as the components  
 of an antisymmetric 2-form, the field strength tensor

$$F_{\mu\nu} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & E^1 & E^2 & E^3 \\ -E^1 & 0 & -B^3 & B^2 \\ -E^2 & B^3 & 0 & -B^1 \\ -E^3 & -B^2 & B^1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (2)$$

The field strength is defined in terms of the 4-vector potential by

$$F_{\mu\nu} = \partial_\mu A_\nu - \partial_\nu A_\mu. \quad (3)$$

We can obtain the equations of motion by applying the Euler-Lagrange equations to the Lagrangian  
 density

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{4}F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu} = \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{E}^2 - \mathbf{B}^2), \quad (4)$$

which gives the Maxwell equation

$$\partial_\mu F^{\mu\nu} = 0. \quad (5)$$

The field strength tensor also satisfies the Bianchi identity,

$$\partial_{[\sigma}F_{\mu\nu]} \equiv \frac{1}{3}(\partial_\sigma F_{\mu\nu} + \partial_\mu F_{\nu\sigma} + \partial_\nu F_{\sigma\mu}) = 0, \quad (6)$$

and together, Equations (5) and (6) can be used to obtain the standard Maxwell equations expressed in  
 terms of the magnetic and electric field strengths,  $\mathbf{E}$  and  $\mathbf{B}$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{div}(\mathbf{E}) &= 0, & \operatorname{curl}(\mathbf{B}) &= \dot{\mathbf{E}}, \\ \operatorname{div}(\mathbf{B}) &= 0, & \operatorname{curl}(\mathbf{E}) &= -\dot{\mathbf{B}}. \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

96 The solutions to these equations are transverse plane waves with orthogonal electric and magnetic  
 97 field components with two distinct, physical polarisations propagating through Minkowski space,  $\mathbb{M}$ ,  
 98 at a speed  $c = 1$ .

### 99 2.2. Gauge dependence in electromagnetic field quantisation

100 The most commonly used methods for quantising fields are the traditional canonical and modern  
 101 path-integral approaches. When applied to electromagnetism, these have to be modified due to the  
 102 gauge-freedom of the theory. For example, in the canonical approach, standard commutation relations  
 103 cannot be satisfied. One can get around this by either breaking Lorentz invariance in intermediate  
 104 steps of calculations, or by considering excess degrees of freedom with negative norms that do not  
 105 contribute physically [37]. Standard path integral quantisation fails for electromagnetism because  
 106 the resultant propagator is divergent. The Fadeev-Popov procedure rectifies this by implementing a  
 107 gauge-fixing condition [65]. This method also gives additional terms from non-physical contributions  
 108 in the form of Fadeev-Popov ghosts. Such terms can be ignored for free fields in Minkowski space as  
 109 they only appear in loop diagrams, but in curved spacetimes this is not the case [51]. While physical  
 110 quantities remain gauge-invariant under both approaches to quantisation, non-directly observable  
 111 quantities can become gauge-dependent.

112 This can result in conceptual problems when modelling composite quantum systems, like the  
 113 ones that are of interest to those working in relativistic quantum information, quantum optics and  
 114 condensed matter. Suppose  $H$  denotes the total Hamiltonian of a composite quantum system. Then  
 115 one can show that any Hamiltonian  $H'$  of the form

$$H' = U^\dagger H U, \quad (8)$$

116 where  $U$  denotes a unitary operator, has the same energy eigenvalues as  $H$ . Both Hamiltonians  $H$  and  
 117  $H'$  are unitarily equivalent and can be used interchangeably. However, the dynamics of subsystem  
 118 observables  $O$  can depend on the concrete choice of  $U$ , since  $O' = U^\dagger O U$  and  $O$  are in general not the  
 119 same. For example, atom-field interactions depend on the gauge-dependent vector potential  $\mathbf{A}$  for most  
 120 subsystem decompositions [36,37]. Hence it is important here to formulate quantum electrodynamics  
 121 in an entirely arbitrary gauge and to maintain ambiguity as long as possible, thereby retaining the  
 122 ability to later choose a gauge which does not result in the prediction of spurious effects [38].

### 123 2.3. Physically-motivated gauge-independent method

124 In contrast to this, the electromagnetic field quantisation scheme presented in [35] relies upon two  
 125 primary experimentally derived assumptions. Firstly, the electric and the magnetic field expectation  
 126 values follow Maxwell's equations, and, secondly, the field is composed of photons of energy  $\hbar\omega_{\mathbf{k}}$ , or  
 127  $\omega_{\mathbf{k}}$  in natural units. Whereas in standard canonical quantisation the electromagnetic field's photon  
 128 construction is a derived result, for the method of [35] it is an initial premise. This is physically  
 129 acceptable, since photons are experimentally detectable entities [7,10]. The motivation for the scheme  
 130 [35] comes from the observation that one observes discrete clicks when measuring a very weak  
 131 electromagnetic field. An experimental definition of photons is that these are electromagnetic field  
 132 excitations with the property that their integer numbers can be individually detected, given a perfect  
 133 detector [10].

Hence the Fock space for this gauge-independent approach is spanned by states of the form

$$\bigotimes_{\lambda=1,2} \bigotimes_{k^1=-\infty}^{\infty} \bigotimes_{k^2=-\infty}^{\infty} \bigotimes_{k^3=-\infty}^{\infty} |n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}\rangle, \quad (9)$$

where  $n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  is the number of excitations of a mode with wave-vector  $\mathbf{k}$  and physical, transverse polarisation state  $\lambda$ . Since it is an experimental observation that photons of frequency  $\omega_{\mathbf{k}} = |\mathbf{k}|$  have energy  $\omega_{\mathbf{k}}$  in natural units, the Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  for such a Fock space must satisfy

$$\hat{H} |n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}\rangle = (\omega_{\mathbf{k}} n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda} + H_0) |n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}\rangle, \quad (10)$$

where  $H_0$  is the vacuum or zero-point energy and  $n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  is an integer [35]. An infinite set of evenly spaced energy levels, as is present here, has been proven to be unique to the simple harmonic oscillator [66]. Hence this Hamiltonian must take the form [5]

$$\hat{H} = \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \left( \omega_{\mathbf{k}} \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^\dagger \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda} + H_0 \right), \quad (11)$$

134 where the  $\hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}, \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^\dagger$  are a set of independent ladder operators for each  $(\mathbf{k}, \lambda)$  mode, obeying the canonical  
135 commutation relations

$$[\hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}, \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}] = 0, \quad [\hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^\dagger, \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}^\dagger] = 0, \quad [\hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}, \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}^\dagger] = \delta_{\lambda\lambda'} \delta^3(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{k}'). \quad (12)$$

Since the classical energy density is quadratic in the electric and magnetic fields, while the above Hamiltonian is quadratic in the ladder operators, the field operators must be linear superpositions of creation and annihilation operators [35]. By further demanding that the fields' expectation values satisfy Maxwell's equations, consistency with the Heisenberg equation of motion,

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \hat{\mathcal{O}} = -i[\hat{\mathcal{O}}, \hat{H}], \quad (13)$$

136 allows the coefficients of these superpositions to be deduced, and the (Heisenberg) field operators can  
137 be shown to be of the form [35]

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{\mathbf{E}}(\mathbf{x}, t) &= i \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \sqrt{\frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{16\pi^3}} [e^{i(\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{x} - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}t)} \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda} + \text{H.c.}] \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda, \\ \hat{\mathbf{B}}(\mathbf{x}, t) &= -i \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \sqrt{\frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{16\pi^3}} [e^{i(\mathbf{k}\cdot\mathbf{x} - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}t)} \hat{a}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda} + \text{H.c.}] (\hat{\mathbf{k}} \times \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda), \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

where  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda$  is a unit polarisation vector orthogonal to the direction of propagation, with  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \cdot \hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 = \hat{\mathbf{e}}_1 \cdot \mathbf{k} = \hat{\mathbf{e}}_2 \cdot \mathbf{k} = 0$ . This is also consistent with the Hamiltonian being a direct operator-valued promotion of its classical form

$$\hat{H}(t) = \frac{1}{2} \int d^3x \left[ \hat{\mathbf{E}}^2(\mathbf{x}, t) + \hat{\mathbf{B}}^2(\mathbf{x}, t) \right]. \quad (15)$$

138 Comparing Equations (11) and (15) allows us to determine the zero point energy  $H_0$  in Minkowski  
139 space, which coincides with the energy expectation value of the vacuum state  $|0\rangle$  of the electromagnetic  
140 field. In quantum optics, Equations (11) and (14) often serve as the starting point for further  
141 investigations [5,36,44].

142 Note that a quantisation scheme in a similar spirit to [35] can be found in [67], which also uses the  
143 Maxwell and Heisenberg equations to directly quantise the physical field operators.

### 144 3. Gauge-independent quantisation of the electromagnetic field in curved spacetimes

145 Many aspects of the quantisation method of Bennett *et al.* [35] are explicitly non-covariant and  
146 hence unsuitable for general curved spacetimes with metric  $g_{\mu\nu}$ . Here we lift the scheme onto static  
147 spacetimes, maintaining the original global structure and approach.

### 148 3.1. Classical electrodynamics in curved space

To begin, consider electromagnetism on stationary spacetimes in general relativity, which are differentiable manifolds with a metric structure  $g_{\mu\nu}$ . By stationary we mean  $\partial_0 g_{\mu\nu} = 0$ . For any theory, the standard approach is to follow the minimal-coupling procedure [46,51],

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{\mu\nu} &\rightarrow g_{\mu\nu}, \\ \partial_\mu &\rightarrow \nabla_\mu, \\ \int d^4x &\rightarrow \int d^4x \sqrt{|g|}, \end{aligned} \quad (16)$$

where  $g = \det(g_{\mu\nu})$  and  $\nabla_\mu$  is the covariant derivative associated with the metric (Levi-Civita) connection. Since electric and magnetic fields can be expressed in a covariant form through the field strength tensor, it is simple to generalise to curved space by just applying this procedure. Firstly, the derivatives of the four-vector potential generalise to

$$\begin{aligned} \nabla_\nu A_\mu &= \partial_\nu A_\mu - \Gamma_{\mu\nu}^\rho A_\rho, \\ \nabla_\nu A^\mu &= \partial_\nu A^\mu + \Gamma_{\rho\nu}^\mu A^\rho, \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

where  $\Gamma_{\nu\rho}^\mu$  are the standard symmetric Christoffel symbols. The field strength tensor and the Bianchi identity remain unchanged by these derivatives, as their explicit antisymmetry cancels all the Christoffel symbols. Thus Equations (3) and (6) still hold in curved spacetimes. The only modification we need to make is to the (free-space) inhomogeneous Maxwell equation. Applying the minimal-coupling procedure to Equation (5) gives

$$\nabla_\mu F^{\mu\nu} = 0, \quad (18)$$

which on stationary spacetimes can be written as [61]

$$\nabla_\mu F^{\mu\nu} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{|g|}} \partial_\mu \left( \sqrt{|g|} F^{\mu\nu} \right) = 0, \quad (19)$$

149 as may be obtained from a Lagrangian density  $\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{4} \sqrt{|g|} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu}$ . To obtain the modified Maxwell  
 150 equations for the electric and magnetic field strengths, one may now simply extract the relevant terms  
 151 from the covariant form given above, working in a particular coordinate system [60]. For the resulting  
 152 wave equations, as with any wave equation on a curved spacetime, obtaining a general solution is a  
 153 highly non-trivial task [47]. However, on simple spacetimes such as we will consider later, it is possible  
 154 to obtain analytic solutions.

### 155 3.2. Particles in curved spacetimes

To quantise the electromagnetic field in the manner of [35] our starting point must be to write down an appropriate Fock space for experimentally observable photon states. On curved spacetimes this is complicated by the lack of a consistent frame-independent basis for such a space. To see why, consider that to introduce particle states in quantum field theory, we must first write the solutions to a momentum-space wave equation as a superposition of orthonormal field modes, which are split into positive and negative frequency modes ( $f_i, f_i^*$ ). In order for us to do this, the spacetime must have a timelike symmetry. Symmetries of spacetimes are generated by Killing vectors,  $V$ , which satisfy

$$\nabla_\mu V_\nu + \nabla_\nu V_\mu = 0. \quad (20)$$

156 If  $V_\mu$  is, in addition, timelike at asymptotic infinity then it defines a timelike Killing vector  $K_\mu$ . The  
 157 presence of such a vector defines a stationary spacetime, in which there always exists a coordinate



158 frame such that  $\partial_t g_{\mu\nu} = 0$ , where  $x^0 = t$  in this coordinate set is the Killing time. If, in addition,  $K^\mu$  is  
 159 always orthogonal to a family of spacelike hypersurfaces then the spacetime is said to be static, and in  
 160 addition we have  $g_{ti} = 0$ . Conceptually, the spacetime background is fixed but fields can propagate  
 161 and interact. Particle states can only be canonically introduced with a frequency splitting. Hence, to  
 162 define particles in a curved spacetime there must be a timelike Killing vector [53].

Canonical field quantisation morphs the field into an operator acting on a Fock space of particle states, promoting the coefficients of the positive frequency modes to annihilation operators and those of negative frequency modes to creation operators [33,50]. General field states are therefore critically dependent on the frequency splitting of the modes, which itself depends on the background geometry of the spacetime [52]. In general, we define positive and negative frequency modes  $f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  of frequency  $\omega_{\mathbf{k}}$  with respect to the timelike Killing vector  $K^\mu$ , by using the definition

$$\mathcal{L}_K f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} = \begin{cases} -i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} & +\text{ve frequency} \\ i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} & -\text{ve frequency} \end{cases}, \quad (21)$$

where  $\mathcal{L}_K$  is the coordinate-invariant Lie derivative along  $K^\mu$ , which, in this case, is given by  $K^\mu \partial_\mu$ . However, a particle detector reacts to states of positive frequency with respect to its own proper time  $\tau$ , not the Killing time [55]. For a timelike observer with worldline  $x^\mu$  on a (not necessarily stationary) spacetime, the proper time is defined by the metric  $g_{\mu\nu}$  infinitesimally as

$$d\tau = \sqrt{g_{\mu\nu} dx^\mu dx^\nu}. \quad (22)$$

A given detector with proper time  $\tau$  has positive frequency modes  $g_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  satisfying

$$\frac{dx^\mu}{d\tau} \nabla_\mu g_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} = -i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} g_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}, \quad (23)$$

163 and they will, in general, only cover part of the spacetime. To consistently approach quantisation we  
 164 need these detector modes to relate to the set  $f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  defined with respect to the timelike Killing vector.  
 165 Fortunately, the set of modes  $f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  forms a natural basis for the detector's Fock space if the proper time  $\tau$   
 166 is proportional to the Killing time  $t$ . This occurs if the future-directed timelike Killing vector is tangent  
 167 to the detector's trajectory [46,55].

Even with a timelike Killing vector and its associated symmetry, solving a given wave equation and hence obtaining mode solutions can still be highly non-trivial [47]. Considering a static spacetime greatly simplifies this as the d'Alembertian operator,  $\square = \nabla_\mu \nabla^\mu$ , that appears in the general wave equation can be separated into pure spatial and temporal derivatives, allowing us to easily write separable mode solutions [46,52]

$$f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}(x) = e^{-i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} t} \Sigma_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}(\mathbf{x}). \quad (24)$$

168 These modes are then positive-frequency in the above sense, and conjugate modes  $f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^*$  are negative  
 169 frequency. The set  $(f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}, f_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^*)$  then forms a complete basis of solutions for the wave equation and  
 170 provides a suitable basis for particle detectors.

171 However, when two distinct inertial particle detectors follow different geodesic paths in the  
 172 spacetime, each will have its own unique proper time, determined by its motion and the local geometry.  
 173 But this proper time is what we have used in Equation (23) to define the basis modes associated with a  
 174 given particle Fock space associated with a particle detector. Thus the detectors will define the particle  
 175 states they observe in different manners, and will not agree on a natural set of basis modes [52,53,68].  
 176 This has no counterpart in inertial Minkowski space, where there is a global Poincaré symmetry, but  
 177 will be unavoidable in our scheme.

### 178 3.3. Covariant and gauge-independent electromagnetic field quantisation scheme

179 Accommodating for the above considerations allows the physically motivated scheme [35] to be  
180 covariantly generalised to static curved spacetimes.

#### 181 3.3.1. Hilbert space

182 Since for static spacetimes there exists a global timelike Killing vector we can define positive and  
183 negative frequency modes and thus introduce a well-defined particle Fock space. Again we assume  
184 the existence of photons on the considered spacetime. As travelling waves on the spacetime, these  
185 photons are again characterised by their physical, transverse polarisation  $\lambda$  and wave-vector  $\mathbf{k}$  [69].  
186 Taking these as labels for general states yields again the states in Equation (9) as the basis states of the  
187 quantised field. Physical energy eigenstates have integer values of  $n_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  and are associated with energy  
188  $\omega_{\mathbf{k}}$ . Thus the field Hamiltonian must again satisfy Equation (10), allowing it to be written in terms  
189 of independent ladder operators [66]. In the following, we denote these by  $b_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  and assume that they  
190 satisfy the equal time canonical commutation relations

$$[\hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}, \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}] = 0, \quad [\hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^\dagger, \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}^\dagger] = 0, \quad [\hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}, \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}'\lambda'}^\dagger] = \delta_{\lambda\lambda'} \delta^3(\mathbf{k} - \mathbf{k}'). \quad (25)$$

191 Importantly, the  $b_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  generate a distinct Fock space from that of the ladder operators utilised in the  
192 Minkowskian case.

#### 193 3.3.2. Hamiltonian

To write down the full field or classical Hamiltonian requires some care, as a Hamiltonian is a component of the energy-momentum tensor

$$T_{\mu\nu} = -\frac{2}{\sqrt{|g|}} \frac{\delta S_{\text{matter}}}{\delta g^{\mu\nu}}, \quad (26)$$

where  $S_{\text{matter}}$  is the action determining the matter content on the spacetime. As a component of a tensor the Hamiltonian itself is not invariant under general coordinate transformations. On stationary spacetimes a conserved energy equal to the Hamiltonian can be introduced through the timelike Killing current

$$J^\mu = K_\nu T^{\mu\nu}, \quad (27)$$

which satisfies the continuity equation  $\nabla_\mu J^\mu = 0$ . Stokes's theorem can then be used to integrate over a spacelike hypersurface  $\Sigma$  in three dimensions, giving

$$H = \int_\Sigma d^3x \sqrt{|\gamma|} n_\mu J^\mu, \quad (28)$$

where  $\gamma = \det(\gamma_{ij})$  with  $\gamma_{ij}$  being the induced metric on  $\Sigma$  and  $n^\mu$  being the timelike unit normal vector to  $\Sigma$ . On stationary spacetimes the result of this integral is the same for all hypersurfaces  $\Sigma$  [46,70]. For the electromagnetic field, the variation in Equation (26) yields

$$T_{\mu\nu} = F_{\mu\rho} F^\rho{}_\nu + \frac{1}{4} g_{\mu\nu} F_{\rho\sigma} F^{\rho\sigma}, \quad (29)$$

194 from which we can obtain a covariant form of the classical electromagnetic Hamiltonian.

Note that, since in Equation (28)  $\Sigma$  is a spacelike hypersurface,  $n^\mu$  must be timelike. Thus there exists a frame in which  $n_\mu J^\mu = n_0 J^0$ , and as this is a scalar this is valid in any frame. We also have that  $J^\mu = T_0^\mu$ , so we seek  $T_0^0$ . On a static spacetime  $T_0^0 = g^{00} T_{00}$ , so

$$T_0^0 = \frac{1}{2} (\mathbf{E}^2 + \mathbf{B}^2), \quad (30)$$



where in the intermediate step we have used the Minkowski field strength tensor, as the quantities are scalars. Hence we obtain the electromagnetic field Hamiltonian

$$H = \int_{\Sigma} d^3x \frac{1}{2} (\mathbf{E}^2 + \mathbf{B}^2) \sqrt{|\gamma|} n_0 K^0. \quad (31)$$

195 This result is consistent with the literature [45], and reduces to the familiar expression in Equation (15)  
196 in Minkowski space.

For the covariant analogue of the quantum field Hamiltonian, we note that the field Hamiltonian used in the Minkowskian gauge-independent scheme, given in Equation (11), has a similar functional form to the Hamiltonian for a quantised scalar field; they are identical up to labelling and choice of integration measure. It has been established by Friis *et al.* [16] that the propagation of transverse electromagnetic field modes can be well approximated by such an uncharged field, and this technique has been used to determine the effects of spacetime curvature on satellite-based quantum communications and to make metrology predictions [23,26]. In the following, we use this approximation to justify the form of the electromagnetic field Hamiltonian from that of a real scalar field with the equation of motion  $(\square + m^2)\phi = 0$ . The Hamiltonian density on a static manifold with Killing time  $t$  is

$$\mathcal{H} = \frac{\sqrt{|g|}}{2} \left( \partial^t \phi \partial_t \phi - \partial^i \phi \partial_i \phi + \frac{1}{2} m^2 \phi^2 + \frac{1}{2} \zeta R \phi \right). \quad (32)$$

197 The final term pertains to the coupling between the spacetime background and the field. Given we just  
198 seek to study photons propagating on some curved background and are ignoring their back-reaction  
199 on the geometry, we can choose  $\zeta = 0$ . This is known as the minimal coupling approximation.

Since on static spacetimes the d'Alembertian permits separable solutions, we can write  $\phi = \psi_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}(\mathbf{x}) e^{\pm i E_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} t}$  [46,52]. Here  $\psi_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}, E_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  are the eigenstates of the Klein-Gordon operator  $(\square + m^2)$ . Upon quantisation, the field operator for a real scalar field can now be written as a linear superposition of these modes with ladder operators  $b_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}, b_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^\dagger$  defining the Fock space. However, we must also account for the non-uniqueness of particle states in curved spacetimes. One set of Fock space operators is often not able to cover an entire spacetime, so we will include a sum over distinct sets of operators,  $b_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^{(i)}, b_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^{(i)\dagger}$ . Following Fulling [52] we introduce a measure  $\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}})$  such that if the eigenstates form a complete basis for the Hilbert space of states, allowing a general function to be written as  $F(\mathbf{x}) = \int d\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}}) (f(\omega_{\mathbf{k}}) \psi_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}(\mathbf{x}))$ , the inner product on the Hilbert space becomes

$$\langle F_1, F_2 \rangle = \int d^3x \sqrt{|g|} g^{tt} F_1^* F_2 = \int d\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}}) f_1^* f_2. \quad (33)$$

With this measure, the Hamiltonian field operator for a minimally-coupled scalar field on any static spacetime can be written as [52]

$$\hat{H} = \int d\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}}) \sum_i E_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^{(i)} \left[ \hat{b}_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^{(i)\dagger} \hat{b}_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}^{(i)} + \frac{1}{2} \delta(0) \right]. \quad (34)$$

Thus using the approximation of Friis *et al.* [16], we obtain the same functional form for the free electromagnetic quantised Hamiltonian on any static spacetime. To incorporate the direction of propagation we can instead label modes in the above expressions by their wave-vector satisfying  $|\mathbf{k}| = \omega_{\mathbf{k}}$ . Then the integration measure  $\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}})$  can be taken as  $d\mu(\omega_{\mathbf{k}}) = d^3k$ . This applies since

$$F(\mathbf{x}) = \int d^3k (f(\mathbf{k}) \psi_{\mathbf{k}}(\mathbf{x})) \quad (35)$$

200 and the inner product of two such functions is

$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle F_{\mathbf{k}}, F_{\mathbf{k}'} \rangle &= \int d^3k \int d^3k' \int d^3x \sqrt{|g|} g^{tt} f_{\mathbf{k}}^* f_{\mathbf{k}'} \psi_{\mathbf{k}}^* \psi_{\mathbf{k}'} \\
 &= \int d^3k \int d^3k' f_{\mathbf{k}}^* f_{\mathbf{k}'} \langle \psi_{\mathbf{k}}^*, \psi_{\mathbf{k}'} \rangle \\
 &= \int d^3k f_{\mathbf{k}}^* f_{\mathbf{k}}.
 \end{aligned} \tag{36}$$

To obtain the third line we have used that  $\psi_{\mathbf{k}}$  and  $\psi_{\mathbf{k}'}$  are eigenstates of a self-adjoint operator [52]. Physical photon modes will also be indexed by their transverse polarisation, so we also introduce an additional mode label for the polarisation  $\lambda$ . Thus in all, for a minimally-coupled electromagnetic field on a static Lorentzian manifold the quantised field Hamiltonian for the Fock space defined in Equation (9) can be taken as

$$\hat{H} = \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \left( \sum_i \omega_{\mathbf{k}}^{(i)} \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)\dagger} \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)} + H_0 \right). \tag{37}$$

201 Other than the sum over distinct sectors, this result is no different from its Minkowskian counterpart;  
 202 this has only been possible with careful considerations of the static curved background.

### 203 3.3.3. Electromagnetic field observables

204 Since the classical Hamiltonian remains quadratic in the electric and magnetic fields, and the  
 205 quantised field Hamiltonian is still quadratic in the ladder operators, we can again make the ansatz  
 206 that the electromagnetic field operators are linear superpositions of creation and annihilation operators,  
 207 with the coefficients being negative and positive frequency modes respectively with respect to the  
 208 future-directed timelike Killing vector  $K^\mu$ . We can therefore make an ansatz akin to that of the  
 209 Minkowskian scheme of Sec. 2.3. The only modification we propose is the addition of a sum over  
 210 spacetime sectors as introduced in the previous section. Including such flexibility will be essential in  
 211 Sec. 4 when we quantise the electromagnetic field in an accelerated frame.

212 Thus the ansatz for the field operators becomes

$$\begin{aligned}
 \hat{\mathbf{E}} &= \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \left( \sum_i p_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)} \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)} + \text{H.c.} \right) \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda, \\
 \hat{\mathbf{B}} &= \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int d^3k \left( \sum_i q_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)} \hat{b}_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}^{(i)} + \text{H.c.} \right) (\hat{\mathbf{k}} \times \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda),
 \end{aligned} \tag{38}$$

where  $p_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  and  $q_{\mathbf{k}\lambda}$  are unknown positive-frequency mode functions of all the spacetime coordinates, and  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda$  is a unit polarisation vector orthogonal to the direction of the wave's propagation at a point  $x$  in the spacetime. To determine the unknown mode functions, we demand that the expectation values of the operators satisfy the form of Maxwell's equations explicit in  $\mathbf{E}$  and  $\mathbf{B}$  that derives from

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{|g|}} \partial_\mu \left( \sqrt{|g|} F^{\mu\nu} \right) = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \partial_{[\sigma} F_{\mu\nu]} = 0. \tag{39}$$

213 In general this could be highly non-trivial and is indeed the greatest obstacle to a simple implementation  
 214 of the scheme. Solving wave equations on curved spacetimes is a difficult task [47], so we would like  
 215 to again follow the Minkowskian scheme and simplify the task by using a Heisenberg equation of  
 216 motion.

To get around the manifest non-covariance of Equation (13), we note that since  $\hat{H}$  generates a unitary group that implements time-translation symmetry on the Fock space, the equation is a geometric expression of the fact that time evolution of operators is generated by the system's

Hamiltonian [52]. Considering the effect of an infinitesimal Poincaré transformation on an observable  $\hat{\mathcal{O}}$  thus gives

$$\partial_\mu \hat{\mathcal{O}} = -i[\hat{\mathcal{O}}, \hat{P}_\mu], \quad (40)$$

from which Equation (13) can be obtained as the 0th component [49,71,72]. Generalising this expression to curved spacetimes is then a simple matter of applying the minimal-coupling principle, giving

$$\nabla_\mu \hat{\mathcal{O}} = -i[\hat{\mathcal{O}}, \hat{P}_\mu]. \quad (41)$$

However, it is common to only consider evolution due to the Hamiltonian, in which case the Heisenberg equation is made covariant by using a proper time derivative to give [73–75]

$$\frac{d\hat{\mathcal{O}}}{d\tau} = -i[\hat{\mathcal{O}}, \hat{H}]. \quad (42)$$

Both approaches are used in the literature as covariant generalisations of the Heisenberg equation, yet they do not immediately appear to give the same results. To connect the two, we multiply Equation (41) by a tangent vector,

$$U^\mu \nabla_\mu \hat{\mathcal{O}} = -i[\hat{\mathcal{O}} U^\mu \hat{P}_\mu - U^\mu \hat{P}_\mu \hat{\mathcal{O}}], \quad (43)$$

217 where we have assumed that it commutes with all the operators. Along a curve  $x^\alpha$  the directional  
 218 derivative of any given tensor  $\mathcal{T}$  is  $\frac{d\mathcal{T}}{d\lambda} = \frac{dx^\alpha}{d\lambda} \nabla_\alpha \mathcal{T} = U^\alpha \nabla_\alpha \mathcal{T}$ , where  $\lambda$  is any affine parameter. The  
 219 case  $\lambda = \tau$  promotes  $U^\mu$  to the four velocity. For a particle on a stationary spacetime, in its rest frame  
 220  $U_\mu P^\mu = H$ , and as this is a scalar this holds in any frame. Thus one obtains Equation (42), which is the  
 221 proper time covariant Heisenberg equation of motion.

Our generalised quantisation scheme will apply this covariant Heisenberg equation to the expectation value  $\langle \hat{\mathcal{O}} \rangle$  of a general state in the photon Fock space  $|\psi\rangle$ ,

$$\nabla_0 \langle \hat{\mathcal{O}} \rangle = -i \langle [\hat{\mathcal{O}}, \hat{H}] \rangle. \quad (44)$$

This gives the temporal evolution in the wave equations resulting from Equation (39), where  $\hat{H}$  is taken as the field Hamiltonian of Equation (37). If the form of Maxwell's equations on the spacetime can be obtained and solved for the expectation values of the field operators using this procedure, the constant terms are determined by demanding that

$$\hat{H} \equiv \frac{1}{2} \int_\Sigma d^3x (\hat{\mathbf{E}}^2 + \hat{\mathbf{B}}^2) \sqrt{\gamma} n_0 K^0 \quad (45)$$

222 on the spacelike hypersurface  $\Sigma$ . As the integration over this hypersurface is independent of the choice  
 223 of surface and is constant, this holds for all time. In this manner, the unknown modes in Equation (38)  
 224 can be determined and the electromagnetic field on a static, 4-dimensional Lorentzian manifold can be  
 225 quantised.

### 226 3.3.4. Summary of scheme

227 Let us reflect on our construction. We have taken the Minkowskian gauge-independent  
 228 electromagnetic field quantisation scheme in Sec. 2.3 and lifted it onto a static Lorentzian manifold  
 229 with metric  $g_{\mu\nu}$ . Assuming the existence of detectable photons, the presence of a global timelike Killing  
 230 vector allowed the definition of positive and negative frequency modes and thus the introduction of a  
 231 well-defined particle Fock space, with general photon states labelled by their physical polarisation  
 232  $\lambda$  and wave-vector  $\mathbf{k}$ . We introduced a ladder-operator structure for the Fock space, and using the  
 233 approximation of Friis *et al.* [16] argued that this Fock space is associated with the field Hamiltonian of  
 234 Equation (37) for minimal coupling to the background geometry.

235 The fact that both the field Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  and the classical Hamiltonian  $H$  of Equation (31)  
 236 were quadratic in the ladder operators or field strengths respectively allowed the proposal of a  
 237 linear ansatz for the electric and magnetic field operators in terms of unknown wave modes. The  
 238 scheme is then restricted to the specific manifold in question by demanding that the expectation  
 239 values of these operators satisfy the modified Maxwell equations deriving from Equation (39), which  
 240 introduces an explicit metric dependence to the scheme. To facilitate solving the potentially non-trivial  
 241 Maxwell equations we use a form of the covariant Heisenberg equation, which we expect from work in  
 242 Minkowski space to then uniquely determine the functional form of the modes in the operator ansatz.  
 243 To determine all constants in these modes we demand that if we promote the classical Hamiltonian to  
 244 an operator, upon substitution of the field operators the field Hamiltonian is regained.

245 By building off an already explicitly gauge-independent scheme, our method has the advantage  
 246 of offering a gauge-independent and covariant route to the derivation of the Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  and the  
 247 electric and magnetic field observables,  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$ , on curved spacetimes. However, so far the only  
 248 justification we have that this field quantisation scheme will give a physical result is based on its  
 249 progenitor in Minkowski space. To test the consistency of our approach with other field quantisation  
 250 schemes, we now consider a specific non-Minkowskian spacetime as an example and show that  
 251 standard physical results are reproduced.

#### 252 4. Electromagnetic field quantisation in an accelerated frame

253 In this section we apply the general formalism developed above to a specific example:  
 254 1-dimensional acceleration in Minkowski space. This situation is interesting as the non-inertial nature  
 255 of this motion leads to observers having different notions of particle states, and is thus often considered  
 256 first in developments of quantum field theory in curved spacetime. It is also the situation most easily  
 257 accessible to experimental tests. We must note that Soldati and Specchia [34] have emphasised photon  
 258 propagation in accelerated frames remains conceptually non-trivial due to the separation of physical  
 259 and non-physical polarisation modes arising from standard quantisation techniques. Here we avoid  
 260 these issues by only considering motion in the direction of acceleration (1D propagation) [33,34], and  
 261 also by avoiding the use of canonical quantisation and immediately considering the physical degrees  
 262 of freedom.

##### 263 4.1. Rindler space

An observer in Minkowski space  $\mathbb{M}$  accelerating along a one-dimensional line with proper  
 acceleration  $\alpha$  appears to an inertial observer to travel along a hyperbolic worldline

$$x^\mu = \left( \frac{1}{\alpha} \sinh(\alpha\tau), \frac{1}{\alpha} \cosh(\alpha\tau), 0, 0 \right), \quad x^\mu x_\mu = -\frac{1}{\alpha^2}, \quad (46)$$

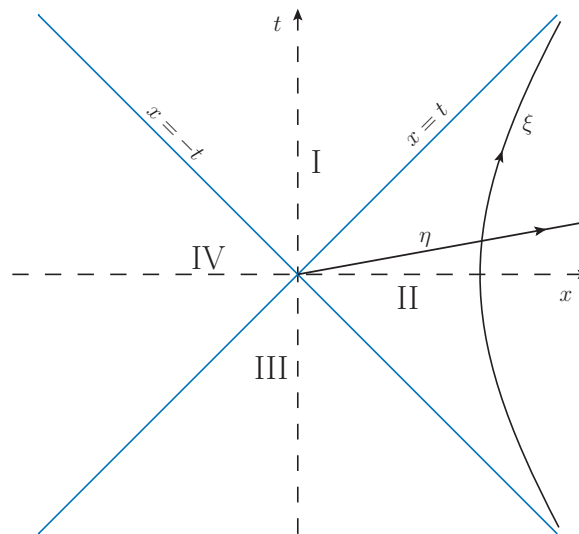
264 where  $\tau$  is the accelerating observer's proper time. As the proper acceleration  $\alpha \rightarrow \infty$ , the hyperbolic  
 265 worldline of Equation (46) becomes asymptotic to the null lines of  $\mathbb{M}$ ,  $x = t$  for  $t > 0$  and  $x = -t$  for  
 266  $t < 0$ . The interior region in which the hyperbola resides is defined by  $|t| < x$  and is called the Right  
 267 Rindler wedge (RR); if  $|t| < -x$  we have the Left Rindler wedge (LR). The union of both wedges yields  
 268 the Rindler space  $\mathcal{R}$ , which is a static globally hyperbolic spacetime [58].

More concretely, we can obtain Rindler space by the coordinate transformation

$$t = \pm \rho \sinh(\alpha\zeta), \quad x = \pm \rho \cosh(\alpha\zeta), \quad y = y, \quad z = z, \quad (47)$$

where we call the coordinates  $(\zeta, \rho, y, z)$  polar Rindler coordinates, with positive signs labelling points  
 in RR and negative signs labelling those in LR [76]. In this coordinate system, the metric associated  
 with the frame of accelerating observer  $O'$  is [34,56,62]

$$ds^2 = \alpha^2 \rho^2 d\zeta^2 - d\rho^2 - dy^2 - dz^2. \quad (48)$$



**Figure 1.** Depiction of a 2-dimensional Minkowski space  $\mathbb{M}$ . Regions I and III are the future and past light cones of the observer O at the origin, while regions II and IV are the Right Rindler wedge (RR) and Left Rindler wedge (LR) respectively. The worldline of a uniformly accelerated observer with acceleration  $\alpha$  is the displayed line of constant conformal Rindler coordinate  $\zeta$ .

269 The right Rindler wedge is covered by the set of all uniformly accelerated motions such that  $\alpha^{-1} \in \mathbb{R}^+$ ,  
 270 and the boundaries of Rindler space are Cauchy horizons for the motion of  $O'$  [61,63].

Many studies of this spacetime choose to introduce conformal Rindler coordinates  $(\zeta, \eta, y, z)$  [58,76], defined by the coordinate transformation

$$t = \pm a^{-1} e^{a\zeta} \sinh(a\eta), \quad x = \pm a^{-1} e^{a\zeta} \cosh(a\eta), \quad y = y, \quad z = z, \quad (49)$$

where  $a \in \mathbb{R}$  is a positive constant such that  $ae^{-a\zeta} = \alpha$ , so the proper time  $\tau$  of  $O'$  relates to  $\eta$  as  $\tau = e^{a\zeta}\eta$ . The two coordinate systems for  $\mathcal{R}$  hence relate as

$$\rho = a^{-1} e^{a\zeta} \quad \text{and} \quad \alpha\zeta = a\eta. \quad (50)$$

Lines of constant Rindler coordinates are shown in Fig. 1. Rindler space can thus also be associated with the metric line element

$$ds^2 = e^{2a\zeta} (d\eta^2 - d\zeta^2) - dy^2 - dz^2. \quad (51)$$

271 These coordinates are useful because worldlines with  $\zeta = 0$  have constant acceleration  $a = \alpha$  [58].

272 From the discussion of Killing vectors in Sec. 3.3, it is immediate that since the metric components  
 273 are independent of  $\zeta$  or  $\eta$  in the respective coordinate systems,  $\partial_\eta \equiv \frac{\alpha}{a} \partial_\zeta$  is a Killing field for  $\mathcal{R}$ , and  
 274 moreover the field is timelike. However in LR the field is orientated in the past time direction, so the  
 275 future-directed timelike Killing vector in this wedge is  $\partial_{(-\eta)} = -\partial_\eta \equiv -\frac{\alpha}{a} \partial_\zeta$ . To deal with this when  
 276 considering wave propagation, one must introduce two disjoint sets of positive-frequency modes  $f_k^{(i)}$ ,  
 277  $i = L, R$ . These satisfy

$$\partial_\eta f_k^{(R)} = -i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} f_k^{(R)} \quad \text{and} \quad -\partial_\eta f_k^{(L)} = -i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} f_k^{(L)}, \quad (52)$$

278 so each set is positive-frequency with respect to its appropriate future-directed timelike Killing vector.  
 279 These sets and their conjugates form a complete basis for solutions of the wave equation on  $\mathcal{R}$  [46,51].

As a region of Minkowski space Rindler space is a flat spacetime with no matter content [64]. Despite this, because of the spacetime's non-inertial nature covariant considerations must be applied

when working in  $\mathcal{R}$ . For example the naïve divergence  $\partial_\mu A^\mu \neq \partial^\mu A_\mu$  as required by Lorentz invariance, and we have non-zero Christoffel symbols

$$\Gamma_{\zeta\zeta}^{\zeta} = \Gamma_{\eta\eta}^{\zeta} = \Gamma_{\eta\zeta}^{\eta} = \Gamma_{\zeta\eta}^{\eta} = a. \quad (53)$$

280 With the Christoffel symbols covariant derivatives  $\nabla_\mu$  can be taken, and the timelike Killing vector  
281 fields  $\partial_\eta$  and  $\partial_{(-\eta)}$  can be shown to formally satisfy Equation (20).

#### 282 4.2. Electromagnetism in Rindler space

To apply our covariant gauge-independent quantisation scheme to accelerating frames, we need to consider classical electromagnetism in Rindler space. Our starting point, the field strength tensor, takes the standard form

$$F_{\mu\nu}^{\mathcal{R}} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 & E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 & E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 \\ -E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 & B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 \\ -E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 & B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 \\ -E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 & B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (54)$$

The explicit relations between the Rindler fields and those in Minkowski space are given in Appendix A. These relations are taken to define the fields in the accelerated frame. For the Maxwell equation we need the contravariant field strength tensor  $F^{\mu\nu} = g^{\mu\sigma} g^{\nu\rho} F_{\sigma\rho}$ . Because of the metric contractions this is explicitly coordinate dependent. In conformal coordinates we have

$$F_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu\nu} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 e^{-4a\zeta} & -E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 e^{-2a\zeta} & -E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 e^{-2a\zeta} \\ E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 e^{-4a\zeta} & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 e^{-2a\zeta} & B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 e^{-2a\zeta} \\ E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 e^{-2a\zeta} & B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 e^{-2a\zeta} & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 \\ E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 e^{-2a\zeta} & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 e^{-2a\zeta} & B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (55)$$

283 The polar coordinate form of this equation can be found in Appendix A.

The Maxwell equations that incorporate the spacetime's non-trivial geometry now follow from Equation (39). In Rindler space and conformal coordinates,  $g = -e^{4a\zeta}$ . Thus we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} e^{-2a\zeta} \partial_\zeta E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 - 2a E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 e^{-2a\zeta} + \partial_y E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 + \partial_z E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= 0, \\ e^{-2a\zeta} \partial_\eta E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= \partial_y B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 - \partial_z B_{\mathcal{R}}^2, \\ \partial_\eta E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= e^{2a\zeta} \partial_z B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 - \partial_\zeta B_{\mathcal{R}}^3, \\ \partial_\eta E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \partial_\zeta B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 - e^{2a\zeta} \partial_y B_{\mathcal{R}}^1. \end{aligned} \quad (56)$$

284 The set of equations deriving from the Bianchi identity are exactly the same as in flat space; these are  
285 listed in Appendix A, along with the full Maxwell equations in polar coordinates.

#### 286 4.3. Field quantisation in Rindler space

287 Knowing how classical electric and magnetic amplitudes evolve in Rindler space, we are now in a  
288 position to derive the Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  and the electric and magnetic field observables,  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$  and  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$ , of the  
289 quantised electromagnetic field in Rindler space  $\mathcal{R}$ . For simplicity, we are only interested in photons  
290 which propagate along one spatial dimension. Suppose they travel along the  $\zeta$  axis in conformal or  
291 along the  $\rho$  axis in polar coordinates, which from Equation (50) are proportional and thus equivalent.  
292 Thus photon modes will have a wave-number  $k$  and a polarisation  $\lambda = 1, 2$  as their labels. Working in  
293 only one dimension, we have avoided the necessity to introduce more complicated polarisations [34].

Unfortunately, the general states in Equation (9) are complicated in  $\mathcal{R}$  by the existence of different future-directed timelike Killing vectors in the two Rindler wedges, with  $\partial_\eta$  in RR and  $-\partial_\eta$  in LR. Hence there need to be two sets of positive-frequency modes for solutions of the wave equation on the



spacetime. There will thus be two distinct Fock spaces representing the particle content in LR and RR. A general particle number state for light propagating in one dimension in  $\mathcal{R}$  will hence be

$$\bigotimes_{\lambda=1,2} \bigotimes_{k=-\infty}^{\infty} |n_{k\lambda}^L, n_{k\lambda}^R\rangle, \quad (57)$$

with  $n_{k\lambda}^L$  being the number of photons in LR and  $n_{k\lambda}^R$  being the number of photons in RR. Thus the physical energy eigenstates are in general degenerate and the Hamiltonian must satisfy

$$\hat{H} |n_{k\lambda}^L, n_{k\lambda}^R\rangle = [\omega_{\mathbf{k}}(n_{k\lambda}^L + n_{k\lambda}^R) + H_0] |n_{k\lambda}^L, n_{k\lambda}^R\rangle, \quad (58)$$

with integer values for both  $n_{k\lambda}^L$  and  $n_{k\lambda}^R$ . This suggests that the field Hamiltonian  $\hat{H}$  of Equation (37) has to be expressed in terms of independent ladder operators for both wedges. Hence it can be written as

$$\hat{H} = \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk [\omega_{\mathbf{k}} (\hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{R\dagger} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R - \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{L\dagger} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L) + H_0], \quad (59)$$

where the  $E_{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}$  factor of Equation (34) and Equation (52) give the relative sign between the left and right sectors. As we are considering photons propagating along  $\zeta$  or  $\rho$ , and photons are electromagnetic waves, the electric and magnetic fields must be in the transverse spatial dimensions  $y, z$  that are unaffected by the acceleration and thus identical to their Minkowski counterparts. As described in Sec. 2.3, the polarisation basis states correspond to choices of these fields. Here we choose

$$\mathbf{E}, \mathbf{B} = \begin{cases} (0, E, 0), & (0, 0, B) & \lambda = 1 \\ (0, 0, E), & (0, -B, 0) & \lambda = 2, \end{cases} \quad (60)$$

where  $E$  and  $B$  are scalar functions of  $(\zeta, \rho)$  or  $(\eta, \xi)$ . With this choice of fields, the Rindler Maxwell equations of Equation (56) reduce to

$$\partial_{\eta} E = -\partial_{\xi} B, \quad \partial_{\xi} E = -\partial_{\eta} B, \quad (61)$$

for conformal Rindler coordinates, and from Equation (A7) to

$$\frac{1}{\rho^2 \alpha^2} \partial_{\xi} E = -\left(\partial_{\rho} B + \frac{1}{\rho} B\right), \quad \partial_{\rho} E = -\partial_{\xi} B, \quad (62)$$

294 for polar coordinates. Both sets of equations hold in both LR and RR. The conformal expressions are  
 295 now identical to the 1D Minkowski propagation considered in [35]. It should be emphasised that the  
 296 apparent simplicity is a result of demanding 1-dimensional propagation along the accelerated spatial  
 297 axis and choosing convenient polarisations.

The non-inertial nature of Rindler space still requires care; recall from Equation (31) that to determine the classical electromagnetic Hamiltonian we require a timelike Killing vector field. We must also choose a spacelike hypersurface  $\Sigma$  with normal vector  $n^{\mu}$  and induced metric  $\gamma_{ij}$  to integrate over. In conformal Rindler coordinates, we know that the timelike Killing vector field is  $K = \partial_{\eta}$ , so  $K^{\mu} = \delta_{\eta}^{\mu}$ . Choosing  $\Sigma$  as being the hypersurface defined by  $\eta = 0$  allows us to continue using the spatial coordinates  $x^i = (\zeta, y, z)$ . Hence, the full conformal Rindler metric of Equation (51) implies  $\gamma = \det(\gamma_{ij}) = e^{-2a\zeta}$ . Finally, since  $\Sigma$  is spacelike,  $n^{\mu}$  is normalised to +1, so

$$1 = g_{\mu\nu} n^{\mu} n^{\nu} = e^{2a\zeta} (n^0)^2, \quad (63)$$

giving  $n^0 = e^{-a\zeta}$  [46]. Hence the Hamiltonian in Rindler space is

$$\begin{aligned} H &= \frac{1}{2} \int d\zeta \left( \mathbf{E}^2 + \mathbf{B}^2 \right) e^{a\zeta} e^{-a\zeta} \delta_\eta^\eta \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \int d\zeta \left( \mathbf{E}^2 + \mathbf{B}^2 \right), \end{aligned} \quad (64)$$

so the initial apparent simplicity holds.

Following our general prescription, we again make the ansatz that the field operators are linear superpositions of the relevant ladder operators. As we are considering 1-dimensional propagation with the electric and magnetic field vectors  $\mathbf{E}$  and  $\mathbf{B}$  as specified in Equation (60), we need only apply the ansatz to the scalar components  $E$  and  $B$  for quantisation, giving

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{E} &= \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \left( p_{k\lambda}^L \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + p_{k\lambda}^R \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + \text{H.c.} \right), \\ \hat{B} &= \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \left( q_{k\lambda}^L \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + q_{k\lambda}^R \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + \text{H.c.} \right), \end{aligned} \quad (65)$$

where  $p_{k\lambda}^i$  and  $q_{k\lambda}^i$  are unknown functions of  $(\eta, \zeta)$ , and  $i = L, R$  for LR and RR respectively. Since the left and the right wedges of  $\mathcal{R}$  are causally disjoint, we can demand that modes in different wedges are orthogonal with respect to the inner product in Equation (36) [46]. Explicitly this yields

$$\begin{aligned} \langle p_{k\lambda}^L, p_{k'\lambda'}^R \rangle &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk p_{k\lambda}^{*L} p_{k'\lambda'}^R = 0, \\ \langle p_{k\lambda}^{*L}, p_{k'\lambda'}^R \rangle &= \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk p_{k\lambda}^L p_{k'\lambda'}^R = 0 \end{aligned}$$

with similar expressions for  $q_{k\lambda}^i$ . To determine all the modes, we follow the recipe of Sec. 3.3 and demand that the expectation values of these field operators satisfy Equations (61) and (62).

From now on we will work in the conformal Rindler coordinates  $(\eta, \zeta)$  due to the wonderful simplicity of their Maxwell equations [77]. To determine temporal evolution we use the Heisenberg equation, which, as the time coordinate is  $\eta$  in this system and our observables  $\hat{O}$  are scalars, is

$$\partial_\eta \hat{O} = -i[\hat{O}, \hat{H}]. \quad (66)$$

Following our prescription, we compare expectation values of the ladder operators for spatial derivatives and time evolution from Heisenberg's equation by using our form of Maxwell's equations. In this case, using Equations (61) this procedure gives the relations

$$\partial_\zeta q_{k\lambda}^i = i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} p_{k\lambda}^i, \quad (67a)$$

$$\partial_\zeta p_{k\lambda}^i = i\omega_{\mathbf{k}} q_{k\lambda}^i. \quad (67b)$$

Solving for  $p_{k\lambda}^i$  we of course just obtain the wave equation,  $(\partial_\zeta^2 + k^2) p_{k\lambda}^i = 0$ , when we consider free, on-shell photons with  $k^2 = \omega_{\mathbf{k}}^2$ . This equation admits separable solutions  $p_{k\lambda}^i = \chi_{k\lambda}^i(\eta) P_{k\lambda}^i(\zeta)$ , so as there are no temporal derivatives we lose all temporal information. Writing down the spatial solution is trivial:

$$P_{k\lambda}^i = J_\lambda^i e^{ik\zeta} + K_\lambda^i e^{-ik\zeta}, \quad (68)$$

where  $J_\lambda^i, K_\lambda^i \in \mathbb{C}$ . To determine the temporal dependence of  $\chi_{k\lambda}^i(\eta)$  we use that positive-frequency Rindler modes must satisfy Equation (52). The two modes  $p_{k\lambda}^L$  and  $p_{k\lambda}^R$  must both be positive-frequency

with respect to the future-direction of  $\partial_\eta$  as they are coefficients of annihilation operators [50]. Thus the difference between them will be in their time dependence. This gives that we must have

$$\chi_{k\lambda}^L = e^{i\omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta}, \quad \chi_{k\lambda}^R = e^{-i\omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta}. \quad (69)$$

This difference is a direct result of the two Rindler wedges having different future-directed timelike Killing vectors. Thus in all, we have

$$\begin{aligned} p_{k\lambda}^R(\eta, \xi) &= U_\lambda^R e^{i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} + V_\lambda^R e^{-i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\xi)}, \\ p_{k\lambda}^L(\eta, \xi) &= U_\lambda^L e^{i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} + V_\lambda^L e^{-i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)}. \end{aligned} \quad (70)$$

We can then easily obtain the  $q_{k\lambda}^i$  solutions from Equation (67a) as

$$\begin{aligned} q_{k\lambda}^R(\eta, \xi) &= \frac{k}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \left[ U_\lambda^R e^{i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} - V_\lambda^R e^{-i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \right], \\ q_{k\lambda}^L(\eta, \xi) &= \frac{k}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \left[ U_\lambda^L e^{i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} - V_\lambda^L e^{-i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \right]. \end{aligned} \quad (71)$$

301 We now seek to determine the unknown coefficients in these expressions. Similarly to Sec. 2.3, first  
302 note that wave modes propagating in the positive  $\xi$  direction in  $\mathcal{R}$  should be functions of  $(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)$   
303 in RR where  $\partial_\eta$  is the future-directed timelike Killing vector, and functions of  $(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)$  in LR where  
304 it is  $-\partial_\eta$ . Similarly, modes propagating in the negative  $\xi$  direction should be functions of  $(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)$   
305 in RR and functions of  $(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)$  in LR. These conditions imply  $V^R = V^L = 0$ .

We then determine the remaining constants by demanding that the classical and the quantised field Hamiltonians are equivalent, as in Equation (45). Since  $\hat{H}$  is quadratic in the electric and magnetic field operators, we obtain cross terms between LR and RR modes during the calculation. Integrating over such terms gives the inner products in Equation (66), but as modes in the different wedges are orthogonal these terms are identically 0, so there are no physical cross terms. Then after some algebra and relying on the integral definition of the delta function, we arrive at

$$\hat{H} = 2\pi \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \left[ |U_\lambda^R|^2 \left( 2\hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{\dagger R} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + \delta(0) \right) + |U_\lambda^L|^2 \left( 2\hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{\dagger L} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + \delta(0) \right) \right], \quad (72)$$

where we have used the commutation relations in Equation (25). As in Sec. 2.3, to finally determine the constant terms and zero-point energy we compare with Equation (59) which yields

$$|U_\lambda^R|^2 = \frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{4\pi}, \quad |U_\lambda^L|^2 = \frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{4\pi}, \quad H_0 = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \omega_{\mathbf{k}} \delta(0). \quad (73)$$

306 To obtain our final expressions for the electric and magnetic field operators we arbitrarily choose the  
307 phases of both  $U_\lambda^R$  and  $U_\lambda^L$  to give consistency with standard Minkowskian results, and multiply the  
308 electric field operator by polarisation unit vector  $\hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda$  and the magnetic field operator by  $\hat{\mathbf{k}} \times \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda$ . Thus in  
309 all, we obtain the final results

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{\mathbf{E}} &= i \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \sqrt{\frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{4\pi}} \left[ e^{i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + e^{i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + \text{H.c.} \right] \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda, \\ \hat{\mathbf{B}} &= -i \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \sqrt{\frac{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{4\pi}} \left[ e^{i(k\xi - \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + e^{i(k\xi + \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta)} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + \text{H.c.} \right] (\hat{\mathbf{k}} \times \hat{\mathbf{e}}_\lambda), \\ \hat{H} &= \sum_{\lambda=1,2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dk \omega_{\mathbf{k}} \left[ \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{\dagger R} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R + \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^{\dagger L} \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L + \delta(0) \right]. \end{aligned} \quad (74)$$

310 These three operators are very similar to the electric and magnetic field operators,  $\hat{\mathbf{E}}$ ,  $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$  and  $\hat{H}$  in  
 311 Equations (11) and (14) in Minkowski space. When moving in only one dimension, the orientation of  
 312 the electric and magnetic field amplitudes is still pairwise orthogonal and orthogonal to the direction  
 313 of propagation. However, the electromagnetic field has become degenerate and additional degrees of  
 314 freedom which correspond to different Rindler wedges have to be taken into account in addition to the  
 315 wave numbers  $k$  and the polarisations  $\lambda$  of the photons. Finally, instead of depending on  $kx$ , the electric  
 316 and magnetic field observables now depend on  $k\zeta \pm \omega_{\mathbf{k}}\eta$ , i.e. they depend not only on the position but  
 317 also on the amount of time the observer has been accelerating in space and on their acceleration. Most  
 318 importantly, Equation (74) can now be used as the starting point for further investigations into the  
 319 quantum optics of an accelerating observer [5,36,44] and is expected to find immediate applications in  
 320 relativistic quantum information [13–21,69].

#### 321 4.4. The Unruh effect

As an example and to obtain a consistency check, we now verify that our results give the well-established Unruh effect [55,56,58,59]. This effect predicts that an observer with uniform acceleration  $\alpha$  in Minkowski space measures the Minkowski vacuum as being a pure thermal state with temperature

$$T_{\text{Unruh}} = \frac{\alpha}{2\pi}. \quad (75)$$

Deriving this result relies on being able to switch between modes in Minkowski and modes in Rindler space, which requires a Bogolubov transformation. This transformation allows us to switch between the modes of different coordinate frames and generally transforms a vacuum state to a thermal state [57,78]. For a field expansion in two complete sets of basis modes,  $\phi = \sum_i \hat{a}_i f_i + \hat{a}_i^\dagger f_i^* = \sum_j \hat{b}_j g_j + \hat{b}_j^\dagger g_j^*$ , this relates the modes as

$$\begin{aligned} g_i &= \sum_j \alpha_{ij} f_j + \beta_{ij} f_j^*, \\ f_i &= \sum_j \alpha_{ji}^* g_j - \beta_{ji} g_j^*, \end{aligned} \quad (76)$$

where  $\alpha_{ij}$  and  $\beta_{ij}$  are the Bogolubov coefficients [58]. Knowing these coefficients also allows the associated particle Fock spaces to be related,

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{a}_i &= \sum_j \alpha_{ji} \hat{b}_j + \beta_{ji}^* \hat{b}_j^\dagger, \\ \hat{b}_i &= \sum_j \alpha_{ij}^* \hat{a}_j - \beta_{ij} \hat{a}_j^\dagger. \end{aligned} \quad (77)$$

322 For transforming between the Rindler and Minkowski Fock spaces, the coefficients can be calculated  
 323 using coordinate relations in a method first introduced by Unruh [55].

Here our field modes are the expansions of the electric field operators in  $\mathcal{R}$  and  $\mathbb{M}$  with the Minkowski results taking the same functional form. Following the standard approach [46,51], our expressions for the field operators yield

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha_{LL} = \alpha_{RR} &= \frac{1}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{2 \sinh(\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{a})}} e^{\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}} \\ \beta_{LR} = \beta_{RL} &= \frac{1}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{2 \sinh(\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{a})}} e^{-\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}}. \end{aligned} \quad (78)$$

These immediately give the following relationship between the ladder operators:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{b}_{k\lambda}^R &= \frac{1}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{2 \sinh(\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{a})}} \left( e^{\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}} \hat{c}_{k\lambda}^R + e^{-\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}} \hat{c}_{-k\lambda}^{L\dagger} \right), \\ \hat{b}_{k\lambda}^L &= \frac{1}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{2 \sinh(\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{a})}} \left( e^{\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}} \hat{c}_{k\lambda}^L + e^{-\frac{\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{2a}} \hat{c}_{-k\lambda}^{R\dagger} \right).\end{aligned}\tag{79}$$

The  $\hat{c}_{k\lambda}^i$  operators are associated with modes that can be purely expressed in terms of positive frequency Minkowski modes (from the form of the field operators in Cartesian coordinates). They must thus share the Minkowski vacuum, so  $\hat{c}_k^R |0_{\mathbb{M}}\rangle = \hat{c}_k^L |0_{\mathbb{M}}\rangle = 0$ . Because we possess the Bogolubov transformation between Minkowski and Rindler space, we can now evaluate particle states seen by an observer in  $\mathcal{R}$ , given by  $\hat{b}_k^i$ , in terms of a Minkowski Fock space given by  $c_k^i$ . In particular, evaluating the RR number operator on the Minkowski vacuum gives

$$\langle 0_{\mathbb{M}} | \hat{b}_k^{R\dagger} \hat{b}_k^R | 0_{\mathbb{M}} \rangle = \frac{1}{\omega_{\mathbf{k}}^2} \frac{\delta(0)}{\exp(\frac{2\pi\omega_{\mathbf{k}}}{a}) - 1}.\tag{80}$$

324 This energy expectation value is the same as the energy expectation value of a thermal Planckian state  
325 with temperature  $\frac{a}{2\pi}$ . For the case  $a = \alpha$  this is the prediction that exactly constitutes the Unruh effect,  
326 and thus verifies that the results of our quantisation scheme match known theoretical predictions.  
327 Having  $a \neq \alpha$  just corresponds to a red-shift [46]. The external factor  $1/\omega_{\mathbf{k}}^2$  is different to that for a  
328 standard scalar field; this is just a remnant of the different normalisation of our electric field operator  
329 and does not affect the physical prediction, with such factors indeed sometimes appearing in the  
330 literature [47].

## 331 5. Conclusions

332 This paper generalises the physically-motivated quantisation scheme of the electromagnetic field  
333 in Minkowski space [35] to static spacetimes of otherwise arbitrary geometry. As shown in Sec. 3, such  
334 a generalisation requires only minimal modification of the original quantisation scheme in flat space.  
335 In order to assess the validity of the presented generalised approach, we apply our findings in Sec. 4 to  
336 the well understood case of Rindler space: the relevant geometry for a uniformly accelerating observer.  
337 Since this reproduces the anticipated Unruh effect, it supports the hypothesis that our approach is a  
338 consistent approach to the quantisation of the electromagnetic field on curved spacetimes.

339 The main strength of our quantisation scheme is its gauge-independence, i.e. its non-reliance  
340 on the gauge-dependent potentials of more traditional approaches. Instead it relies only on the  
341 experimentally verified existence of electromagnetic field quanta. As such, our scheme provides a  
342 more intuitive approach to field quantisation, while still relying on well established concepts and  
343 constructions in quantum field theory in curved space. Given this and the applicability of our results  
344 to accelerating frames in an otherwise flat spacetime, it seems likely that our approach can also be  
345 used to model more complex but experimentally-accessible situations with applications, for example,  
346 in relativistic quantum information.

347 The specific case of Rindler space, as considered in this paper, led to equations with  
348 straightforward analytic solutions. This will likely not be true in more general settings, where the  
349 necessary wave equations will be non-trivial and will possibly require approximation or numerical  
350 solution. This fact is partially mitigated by our use of the Heisenberg equation, thereby reducing  
351 the necessary calculation to an ordinary differential equation and commutation relation, rather  
352 than a partial differential equation. Furthermore, recall that the scheme laid out in this paper is a  
353 generalisation of that in flat space to the case of static curved spacetimes. This simplified the definition  
354 and construction of the quantisation scheme, due to our reliance on spacelike hypersurfaces. When  
355 applied to the more general case of stationary spacetimes, the correct prescription of the scheme

356 becomes less clear and will require further theoretical development.

357

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### 367 Appendix A. Further results of Electromagnetism in Rindler space

To define the electric and magnetic fields in Rindler space we apply coordinate transformations to the Minkowski field strength tensor,

$$F_{\mu\nu}^{\mathcal{R}} = \frac{\partial x_{\mathcal{M}}^{\alpha}}{\partial x_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu}} \frac{\partial x_{\mathcal{M}}^{\beta}}{\partial x_{\mathcal{R}}^{\nu}} F_{\alpha\beta}, \quad (\text{A1})$$

where  $x_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu}$  are the coordinates in Rindler space and  $x_{\mathcal{M}}^{\mu}$  are the coordinates used by an inertial observer. The Rindler electric and magnetic fields are defined as the elements of  $F_{\mu\nu}^{\mathcal{R}}$ . In polar and conformal coordinates this transformation is given by Equations (47) and (49) respectively, which readily give the Jacobian of the transformation as

$$J_{\mu}^{\alpha} \equiv \frac{\partial x_{\mathcal{M}}^{\alpha}}{\partial x_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu}} = \begin{pmatrix} \pm\alpha\rho \cosh(\alpha\zeta) & \pm \sinh(\alpha\zeta) & 0 & 0 \\ \pm\alpha\rho \sinh(\alpha\zeta) & \pm \cosh(\alpha\zeta) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (\text{A2})$$

in polar Rinder coordinates and

$$J_{\mu}^{\alpha} \equiv \frac{\partial x_{\mathcal{M}}^{\alpha}}{\partial x_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu}} = \begin{pmatrix} \pm e^{a\zeta} \cosh(a\eta) & \pm e^{a\zeta} \sinh(a\eta) & 0 & 0 \\ \pm e^{a\zeta} \sinh(a\eta) & \pm e^{a\zeta} \cosh(a\eta) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (\text{A3})$$

in conformal Rindler coordinates, where upper signs refer to RR and lower signs to LR. Transforming the Minkowski field strength tensor in Equation (A1), we obtain  $F_{\mu\nu}^{\mathcal{R}}$  in Equation (54), where the Rindler space elements are defined in either wedge by the transformations

$$\begin{aligned} E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= E_{\mathcal{M}}^1 \alpha \rho, \\ E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \left( E_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \alpha \rho \cosh(\alpha\zeta) - B_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \sinh(\alpha\zeta) \right), \\ E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \left( E_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \alpha \rho \cosh(\alpha\zeta) + B_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \sinh(\alpha\zeta) \right), \\ B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= B_{\mathcal{M}}^1, \\ B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \left( B_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \cosh(\alpha\zeta) + E_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \alpha \rho \sinh(\alpha\zeta) \right), \\ B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \left( B_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \cosh(\alpha\zeta) - E_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \alpha \rho \sinh(\alpha\zeta) \right), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A4})$$



in polar Rindler coordinates and

$$\begin{aligned}
 E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= E_{\mathcal{M}}^1 e^{2a\zeta}, \\
 E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \left( E_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \cosh(a\eta) - B_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \sinh(a\eta) \right) e^{a\zeta}, \\
 E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \left( E_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \cosh(a\eta) + B_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \sinh(a\eta) \right) e^{a\zeta}, \\
 B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= B_{\mathcal{M}}^1, \\
 B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \left( B_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \cosh(a\eta) + E_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \sinh(a\eta) \right) e^{a\zeta}, \\
 B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \left( B_{\mathcal{M}}^3 \cosh(a\eta) - E_{\mathcal{M}}^2 \sinh(a\eta) \right) e^{a\zeta},
 \end{aligned} \tag{A5}$$

in conformal Rindler coordinates. While the conformal coordinate form of the field strength tensor is listed in Equation (55), that for polar coordinates, which equals

$$F_{\mathcal{R}}^{\mu\nu} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & \frac{-E_{\mathcal{R}}^1}{\rho^2\alpha^2} & \frac{-E_{\mathcal{R}}^2}{\rho^2\alpha^2} & \frac{-E_{\mathcal{R}}^3}{\rho^2\alpha^2} \\ \frac{E_{\mathcal{R}}^1}{\rho^2\alpha^2} & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 & B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 \\ \frac{E_{\mathcal{R}}^2}{\rho^2\alpha^2} & B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 & 0 & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 \\ \frac{E_{\mathcal{R}}^3}{\rho^2\alpha^2} & -B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 & B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \tag{A6}$$

was omitted. Then, since in polar coordinates,  $g = -\rho^2\alpha^2$ , Equation (5) gives that the modified Maxwell equations in these coordinates are

$$\begin{aligned}
 \partial_{\rho} E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 - \frac{1}{\rho} E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 + \partial_y E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 + \partial_z E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= 0, \\
 \frac{1}{\rho^2\alpha^2} \partial_{\zeta} E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= \partial_y B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 - \partial_z B_{\mathcal{R}}^2, \\
 \frac{1}{\rho^2\alpha^2} \partial_{\zeta} E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \partial_z B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 - \partial_{\rho} B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 - \frac{1}{\rho} B_{\mathcal{R}}^3, \\
 \frac{1}{\rho^2\alpha^2} \partial_{\zeta} E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \partial_{\rho} B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 + \frac{1}{\rho} B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 - \partial_y B_{\mathcal{R}}^1,
 \end{aligned} \tag{A7}$$

while the Bianchi identity leads to

$$\begin{aligned}
 \partial_i B_{\mathcal{R}}^i &= 0, \\
 \partial_{\zeta} B_{\mathcal{R}}^1 &= \partial_z E_{\mathcal{R}}^2 - \partial_y E_{\mathcal{R}}^3, \\
 \partial_{\zeta} B_{\mathcal{R}}^2 &= \partial_{\rho} E_{\mathcal{R}}^3 - \partial_z E_{\mathcal{R}}^1, \\
 \partial_{\zeta} B_{\mathcal{R}}^3 &= \partial_y E_{\mathcal{R}}^1 - \partial_{\rho} E_{\mathcal{R}}^2,
 \end{aligned} \tag{A8}$$

368 as in flat space. These equations also hold for conformal coordinates; one just replaces  $\zeta$  with  $\eta$  and  $\rho$   
 369 with  $\tilde{\zeta}$ .

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