I. INTRODUCTION

The leading contribution of positronium, the e⁺e⁻ bound state, to the anomalous magnetic moment of the electron (aₑ) has been computed in Ref. [1]. The result of this calculation,

\[ aₑ = \frac{\alpha^5}{4\pi} \zeta(3) \left( 8 \ln 2 - \frac{11}{2} \right) = 0.89 \times 10^{-13}, \]  

where \( \zeta(3) = 1.202 \ldots \) and \( \alpha \) is the fine-structure constant, is of the same order of \( \alpha \) as the perturbative QED five-loop contribution \( aₑ^{(5)} = 9.16 (58) (\alpha/\pi)^5 \) [3]. This bound-state contribution is also comparable with the electroweak one, \( aₑ^{\text{EW}} = 0.2973 (52) \times 10^{-13} \) [4, 5], and with the present experimental uncertainty of \( aₑ = 2.8 \times 10^{-13} \) [6]. It seems reasonable to expect a reduction of this experimental error to a part in \( 10^{-15} \) (or better) in ongoing efforts to improve the measurement of the electron (and positron) anomalous magnetic moment [7]. Work is also in progress to reduce the error induced by the uncertainty of \( \alpha \) in the theoretical prediction for \( aₑ \) [8].

A test of the electron \( g-2 \) at the level of \( 10^{-13} \) (or below) is therefore a goal that may be achieved not too far in the future with ongoing experimental work. This will bring \( aₑ \) to a pivotal role in probing new physics [9]. It will also provide the opportunity to test whether the long-standing 3–4σ discrepancy \( \Delta a_μ \) in the muon \( g-2 \) manifests itself in the electron one [9, 10]. In fact, as shown in Ref. [9], in a large class of new-physics models, new contributions to lepton magnetic moments scale with the square of the lepton masses, so that the anomaly in \( \Delta a_μ \) suggests a new-physics effect in \( aₑ \) of \( (0.7 \pm 0.2) \times 10^{-13} \), a value comparable with \( aₑ^{\text{vp}} \). A check of Eq. (1) is therefore clearly warranted. This is presented in Sec. II where we confirm the result of Eq. (1) and correct a few errors in its derivation in Ref. [1].

Recently, the authors of Ref. [2] pointed out the presence of the continuum nonperturbative contribution

\[ aₑ^{(\text{vp})\text{cont, np}} = -\frac{1}{8\pi} \frac{\alpha^5}{\pi} \zeta(3) \left( 8 \ln 2 - \frac{11}{2} \right) \]  

arising from the region right above the \( s = 4m^2 \) threshold, which corresponds to \( e⁺e⁻ \) scattering states with the exchange of Coulomb photons. Comparing Eqs. (1) and (2) they showed that this additional \( O(\alpha^5) \) nonperturbative contribution cancels one-half of that of the positronium poles. The question is therefore how to deal with the remaining half: should one add it to the perturbative five-loop QED result of Ref. [3]? Reference [2] argued that this remaining \( aₑ^{\text{vp}}/2 \) term is already contained in the perturbative \( O(\alpha^5) \) contribution to \( aₑ \) computed in Ref. [3] and, therefore, it should not be added to it. On the other hand, one of the authors of the five-loop calculation in [3] has recently claimed that positronium contributes to \( aₑ \) only through diagrams of \( O(\alpha^7) \) or higher [11]. Also, on more general grounds [12], Ref. [13] argued that \( aₑ^{\text{vp}} \) simply does not exist.

In order to clarify this point, in Sec. II we first use the closed form for the QED vacuum polarization function near the \( s = 4m^2 \) threshold of Refs. [12, 13] to verify that the total (positronium poles plus continuum) nonperturbative contribution to \( aₑ \) arising from the threshold region is equal to \( aₑ^{\text{vp}}/2 \). Then, using the analytic QED vacuum polarization at four-loop recently computed in Ref. [15], we show explicitly that the perturbative five-loop calculation of \( aₑ \) of Ref. [2] does indeed contain the remaining term \( aₑ^{\text{vp}}/2 \), in agreement with the arguments of Ref. [2]. Conclusions are drawn in Sec. IV.
II. POSITRONION POLES

Let us consider QED with only electrons and photons. The vacuum polarization tensor is given by

\[ i\Pi^{\mu\nu}(q) = i\Pi(q^2) (g^{\mu\nu}q^2 - q^{\mu}q^{\nu}) \]

\[ = \int d^4x \bar{\psi}(x) \gamma^{\mu}\psi(x) \langle 0 \mid \{ j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) \} \mid 0 \rangle, \tag{3} \]

where \( j^{\mu}(x) = -e\bar{\psi}(x)\gamma^{\mu}\psi(x) \) is the electromagnetic current. In perturbative calculations, \( \Pi(q^2) \) is analytic in the complex \( q^2 \)-plane except for cuts along the positive real axis beginning at \( q^2 = (2m)^2 \), where \( m \) is the electron mass and \( l = 0, 1, 2, \ldots \). The \( q^2 = 0 \) branch-point \( (l = 0) \) is the threshold value for production of three (or a higher odd number of) real photons, while \( l = 1 \) corresponds to the threshold for the creation of a real \( e^+e^- \) pair by a virtual photon.

An electron-positron bound state will appear as an additional pole singularity in \( \Pi(q^2) \) below the \( q^2 = (2m)^2 \) branch-point. In fact, there is an infinite number of such poles, each corresponding to an energy state of positronium. In any of its \( n \) discrete states \( (n = 1, 2, 3, \ldots) \) is the principal quantum number), positronium may be regarded as an (unstable) particle with mass \( M_n = 2m - \varepsilon_n \), where \( \varepsilon_n > 0 \) is the binding energy. To leading order in \( \alpha, \varepsilon_n = m\alpha^2/4\pi^2 \). To compute the leading-order contribution of positronium to \( a_e \) we can use the approximation \( M_n \approx 2m \). Positronium will be treated as a two-particle nonrelativistic bound state.

To determine the contribution of positronium to \( \Pi^{\mu\nu}(q) \) in the neighborhood of its poles, we write explicitly the time-ordered product appearing in Eq. (3)

\[ \langle 0 \mid \{ j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) \} \mid 0 \rangle = \theta(x^0) \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle + \theta(-x^0) \langle 0 | j^{\nu}(0) j^{\mu}(x) | 0 \rangle \]

and compute \( \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle \) by inserting between the two currents the completeness relation

\[ \langle \sigma \mid n, p \rangle = \int \frac{d^3p}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{1}{2E_{n,p}} | n, p, \sigma \rangle | n, p, \sigma \rangle \]

\[ = \int \frac{d^3k}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{\tilde{\phi}_{n,p}(k) | k_+, k_-, \sigma \rangle | k_+, k_-, \sigma \rangle}. \tag{5} \]

In Eq. (6), \( p \) and \( E_{n,p} = \sqrt{p^2 + M_n^2} \) are the three-momentum and energy of positronium, and \( \sigma \) indicates its four spin states: three spin-1 states (triplet) and one spin-0 state (singlet). In Eq. (4), positronium states have been expressed as a linear superposition of free \( e^+ \) and \( e^- \) states with three-momenta \( k_+ \) and \( k_- \) respectively, and energies \( E_{\pm} = \sqrt{k^2_{\pm} + m^2} \), with \( p = k_+ + k_- \) and \( k = (k_+ - k_-)/2 \). This superposition is weighted by the momentum-space Coulomb wavefunction \( \tilde{\phi}_{n,p}(k) \), which gives the amplitude for finding a particular value of \( k \) for a positronium state \( n \) with total momentum \( p \). In the nonrelativistic bound-state approximation employed in this paper, \( |k| \sim O(\alpha m) \ll m \). 

Our result for the positronium contribution to \( \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle \) is

\[ \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle = -16\pi \pi^2 \int \frac{d^3p}{M_n} \frac{e^{-ipx}}{2E_{n,p}} (M_n^2 g^{\mu\nu} - p^{\mu}p^{\nu}) \]

\[ = \sum_{n} |\phi_{n,0}(0)|^2 \int \frac{d^3p}{M_n} \frac{e^{-ipx}}{2E_{n,p}} (M_n^2 g^{\mu\nu} - p^{\mu}p^{\nu}), \tag{7} \]

where \( p^{\mu} = (E_{n,p}, p) \) and \( \phi_{n,0}(0) \) is the position-space wavefunction at the origin in the rest frame of positronium. Our result in Eq. (7) differs from that in Eq. (6) of Ref. [1]. Ours has an additional factor

\[ \xi_{n,p} = -\frac{M_n}{E_{n,p}}. \tag{8} \]

After the sign difference, this factor \( \xi_{n,p} \) renders our expression in Eq. (7) Lorentz invariant (we note that, in the \( |k| \ll m \) limit, the ratio \( \phi_{n,0}(0)/\sqrt{M_n} \) is a Lorentz scalar under boosts with momentum \( p \)). On the contrary, the result for the positronium contribution to \( \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle \) of Ref. [1] is not Lorentz invariant.

Contrary to Ref. [1], Eq. (7) has been obtained summing over all spin states of positronium. However, the spin-0 state (singlet) does not contribute because, in the nonrelativistic bound-state approximation employed, the expression for \( \langle 0 | j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) | 0 \rangle \) has no angular dependence. The \( e^+e^- \) bound state is therefore in an s-wave with zero orbital angular momentum, and angular momentum conservation requires that the total spin of the bound state is equal to 1 (triplet).

The leading contribution of positronium to \( \Pi(q^2) \) can be immediately obtained from Eqs. (5) and (7) using the integral representation \( \theta(t) = -\int (d\omega/2\pi i)e^{i\omega t}/(\omega - i\epsilon) \) for the step function \( (\epsilon > 0) \). The result is

\[ \Pi_\nu(q^2) = -16\pi \alpha \sum_{n} \frac{|\phi_{n,0}(0)|^2}{M_n} \frac{1}{q^2 - M_n^2 + i\epsilon}. \tag{9} \]

Once again, our Eq. (9) differs from Eq. (8) in Ref. [1] by a factor \( \xi_{n,q} \), which renders our result for \( \Pi_\nu(q^2) \) Lorentz invariant, while that in [1] is not. Also, the nonrelativistic limit \( E_{n,q} \rightarrow M_n \) taken in [1] to compute the contribution of \( \Pi_\nu(q^2) \) to \( a_e \) (which should not be confused with the nonrelativistic bound-state approximation \( |k| \ll m \) is not tenable. The sign of the residues of the poles in our Eq. (9)

\[ Z_n = -16\pi \alpha \frac{|\phi_{n,0}(0)|^2}{M_n} < 0, \tag{10} \]

is in agreement with the sign of the spectral density of the Källén-Lehmann representation for \( \langle 0 | T\{ j^{\mu}(x) j^{\nu}(0) \} | 0 \rangle \). The leading contribution of positronium to the imaginary part of \( \Pi(q^2) \) is given by

\[ \text{Im} \Pi_\nu(q^2) = -\pi \sum_{n} Z_n \delta(q^2 - M_n^2). \tag{11} \]
This result differs from that reported in Ref. [14], ours being twice theirs, while it agrees with that of Ref. [20] obtained via the nonrelativistic Coulomb Green’s function [22] (see also Eq. (22) below).

The contribution to $a_e$ of the diagram in Fig. 1 containing the vacuum polarization insertion in the internal photon line of the one-loop electron vertex diagram, can be computed using a (subtracted) dispersion relation for the vacuum polarization. The result can be cast in the form [19, 24, 25]

$$a_e(vp) = \frac{\alpha}{\pi^2} \int_0^\infty ds \frac{d}{s} \text{Im} \Pi(s + i\epsilon) K(s), \quad (12)$$

where

$$K(s) = \int_0^1 dx \frac{x^2(1-x)}{x^2 + (1-x)(s/m^2)} \quad (13)$$

is a positive function. The $i\epsilon$ prescription indicates that, in correspondence of a cut, the function $\text{Im} \Pi(s)$ must be evaluated right above it, at $s + i\epsilon$. Equation (12) differs from Eq. (13) of Ref. [1] by an overall minus sign. This sign can be checked, for example, inserting in Eq. (12) the imaginary part of the second-order (one-loop) contribution to $\Pi(q^2)$

$$\text{Im} \Pi^{(2)}(s + i\epsilon) = \theta(s - 4m^2) \frac{\alpha}{3} \sqrt{1 - \frac{4m^2}{s}} \left(1 + \frac{2m^2}{s}\right). \quad (14)$$

One obtains $a_e^{(2)}(vp) = (119/36 - \pi^2/3) (\alpha/\pi)^2$, the well-known positive result for the two-loop QED contribution to $a_e$ originated by the one-loop $e^+e^-$ contribution to the photon self-energy (see e.g. [24, 26]). Similarly, including hadronic effects, the leading-order hadronic contribution to $a_e$ can be obtained via the dispersive integral in Eq. (12) with $\text{Im} \Pi_h(s) = s\sigma_h(s)/4\pi\alpha$, where $\sigma_h(s)$ is the total cross section for $e^+e^-$ annihilation into any hadronic state (with vacuum polarization and initial-state QED corrections subtracted off), leading to $a_e^{\text{HL-O}} = 18.66 (11) \times 10^{-13}$ [25, 27], once again a positive contribution.

The leading contribution of positronium to $a_e$, depicted in Fig. 2 can be immediately derived inserting Eq. (11) into the integral in Eq. (12). Using the explicit expression for the position-space wavefunction $\phi_{n,0}(0)$ at the origin in the rest frame of positronium [16]

$$|\phi_{n,0}(0)|^2 = \frac{m^3}{8\pi n^3}, \quad (15)$$

the approximation $M_n \approx 2m$ (thus neglecting terms of $O(m^2\alpha^2)$), and $K(4m^2) = 8\ln 2 - 11/2$, we obtain Eq. (1). We note that the Riemann zeta function $\zeta(3) = \sum_{n=1}^\infty 1/n^3$ is due to the sum over the residues of the poles. Equation (1) can equivalently be computed by direct integration of the Feynman diagram in Fig. 1 with the subtracted vacuum polarization function

$$\Pi_v(q^2) - \Pi_v(0) = \sum_n \frac{Z_n}{M_n^2} \frac{q^2}{q^2 - M_n^2 + i\epsilon} \quad (16)$$

without employing its dispersion representation.

Our result for $a_e^p$ agrees with that of Ref. [1]. In fact, the sign error in the calculation of $\langle 0|j^\mu(x)j^\nu(0)|0 \rangle$ in [1] is compensated by the incorrect sign in Eq. (13) of that reference. Also, as we discussed earlier, the erroneous additional factor $E_{n,q}/M_n$ present in Eq. (8) of Ref. [1] was set to one taking the incorrect limit $E_{n,q} \to M_n$. In spite of these shortcomings, Ref. [1] provides the correct contribution of positronium to the $g-2$ of the electron and was the first, to our knowledge, to compute it.

### III. THRESHOLD CONTRIBUTION

In this section we study the nonperturbative contribution to $a_e(vp)$ arising from the region near the electron-positron threshold, both below and above $q^2 = 4m^2$, and discuss its relation with perturbative QED results.

Let us start considering the vacuum polarization function close to $q^2 \approx 4m^2$ given by [12, 13, 20]

$$\Pi_{\text{th}}(q^2) = \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(2)}(q^2) + \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(4)}(q^2) + A(\beta), \quad (17)$$
\[ \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(2)}(q^2) = \alpha \left( \frac{8}{9\pi} + \frac{i}{2\beta} \right), \]
\[ \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(3)}(q^2) = \alpha^2 \left[ \frac{1}{4\pi^2} \left( 3 - \frac{21}{2} \zeta(3) \right) + \frac{11}{32} \right], \]
\[ A(\beta) = -\frac{\alpha^2}{2} \left[ \gamma + \psi \left( 1 - \frac{i\alpha}{2\beta} \right) \right]. \]

\[ \gamma = 0.577 \ldots \text{ is Euler's constant, } \psi(z) = d\ln \Gamma(z)/dz \text{ is the digamma function, and } \beta = \sqrt{1 - 4m^2/q^2} \text{ (for } q^2 > 4m^2, \beta \text{ corresponds to the velocity of the electron and the positron in their c.m. frame). The functions } \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(2)}(q^2) \text{ and } \Pi_{\text{th}}^{(3)}(q^2) \text{ are the leading terms of the one- and two-loop functions } \Pi^{(1)}(q^2) \text{ and } \Pi^{(2)}(q^2), \text{ respectively, in the nonrelativistic limit } \beta \to 0. \text{ For example, Eq. (14) shows that the leading term of } \text{Im } \Pi^{(2)}(q^2) \text{ in the limit } \beta \to 0 \text{ is } \alpha \beta^2/2, \text{ in agreement with Eq. (18). The function } A(\beta), \text{ obtained via the nonrelativistic Coulomb Green's function, resums the nonrelativistic vacuum polarization diagrams with the exchange of two or more photons between the electron-positron pair, therefore corresponding to the sum of the leading contributions for } \beta \to 0 \text{ of all vacuum polarization diagrams with three or more loops. For } |\beta| \ll \alpha, A(\beta) \text{ is of } \mathcal{O}(\alpha^2), \text{ whereas for } |\beta| \gg \alpha \text{ it contains terms of } \mathcal{O}(\alpha^3) \text{ and higher, as it can be immediately seen expanding it for } |\beta| > \alpha/2, \text{ one obtains } A(\beta) = \frac{\alpha^2}{2} \sum_{k=1}^\infty \zeta(k+1) \left( \frac{i\alpha}{2\beta} \right)^k. \]

Remarkably, the function } A(\beta) \text{ catches the threshold effects both above and below } q^2 = 4m^2. \text{ In fact, as the digamma function } \psi(z) \text{ has simple poles at } z = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \ldots, A(\beta) \text{ has poles at } \beta = i\alpha/2n \text{ which, to leading order in } \alpha, \text{ correspond to } q^2 = M_n^2, \text{ the energy states of positronium. Developing the Laurent expansion of Eq. (20) about the positronium poles and selecting the imaginary part of } \Pi_{\text{th}}(q^2) \text{ for all values of } q^2, \text{ one obtains } \text{Im } \Pi_{\text{th}}(q^2) = 16\pi^2 \alpha \sum_n \frac{|\phi_n(0)|^2}{M_n} \delta(q^2 - M_n^2) + \theta(\beta) \frac{\pi\alpha^2/2}{1 - e^{-\pi\alpha/\beta}}. \]

The first line of Eq. (22) agrees with the contribution of the positronium poles to Im } \Pi(q^2) \text{ in Eq. (11). The second line, which provides the continuum contribution, is the Sommerfeld factor.}

With } \Pi_{\text{th}}(q^2) \text{ at our disposal, we will now follow an argument similar to one in Ref. [2] to verify that the total (positronium poles plus continuum) nonperturbative contribution to the electron } g-2 \text{ arising from the threshold region is equal to } a_e^\text{th}/2. \text{ Starting from } a_e(\text{vp}) \text{ in Eq. (12), this contribution is given by } a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) = \frac{\alpha}{\pi^2} \int_{M_1^2}^{k_0^2} \frac{ds}{4m^2} \text{ Re } A(\beta) - \frac{i\pi\alpha^3}{24\beta} K(4m^2), \text{ where } M_1 = 2m - E_1 \text{ is the energy of the positronium ground state and } k_0^2 > 4m^2 \text{ corresponds to } \beta_0 = \beta(k_0^2) \text{ with } \pi\alpha \ll \beta_0 \ll 1. \text{ With these integration limits, } a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) \text{ catches the contribution of the entire threshold region. The expression in braces in Eq. (23) is } \Pi_{\text{th}}(q^2) \text{ subtracted of the } \mathcal{O}(\alpha), \mathcal{O}(\alpha^2) \text{ and } \mathcal{O}(\alpha^3) \text{ terms of its perturbative expansion (see Eqs. (17) and (21)); this subtracted quantity selects the nonperturbative contribution of the threshold region, which arises at } \mathcal{O}(\alpha^4). \text{ Equation (23) can be split into its poles and continuum parts, and, using Eq. (22), can be written in the form (note that } \beta \text{ is imaginary at the poles)} \]

\[ a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) = \frac{\alpha}{\pi^2} K(4m^2) \left\{ \int_{M_1^2}^{k_0^2} \frac{ds}{4m^2} \text{ Re } A(\beta) + \int_0^{\beta_0} 2\beta d\beta \left[ \frac{\pi\alpha^2/2}{1 - e^{-\pi\alpha/\beta}} - \frac{\alpha \beta}{2} - \frac{\pi\alpha^2}{4} - \frac{\pi^2\alpha^3}{24\beta} \right] \right\}. \]

The function } A(\beta) \text{ has branch points at } q^2 = 0 \text{ and } 4m^2 \text{ and, as discussed above, simple poles at } q^2 = M_n^2. \text{ Employing a dispersion relation for the real part of } A(\beta), \text{ Eq. (24) can be expressed in terms of Re } A(\beta) \text{ at } |q^2| \to \infty, \text{ i.e. } \beta \to 1. \text{ To leading order in } \alpha \text{ we obtain } \]

\[ a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) = -\frac{\alpha}{\pi} K(4m^2) \text{ Re } A(1). \]

This very simple formula can be immediately evaluated using Eq. (21) at leading order. The result is

\[ a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) = \frac{\alpha^5}{8\pi} \zeta(3) K(4m^2) = \frac{a_e^\text{ch}}{2}. \]

This consistency check agrees with Eqs. (21) and (25) of Ref. [2], and confirms that the total contribution of the threshold region to } a_e(\text{vp}) \text{ is equal to the sum of the poles' contribution in Eq. (1) and the continuum one in Eq. (2).}

We will now show that the above derived threshold contribution } a_e^\text{th}(\text{vp}) \text{ is already included in the usual perturbative QED calculations of Refs. [3, 15]. To this end, we use the explicit expressions for } \Pi^{(4)}(q^2) \text{, the QED vacuum polarization function at four loops recently computed in Ref. [15]. The authors provide expansions for the low-energy, high-energy and threshold regions. In particular, in the threshold region } \Pi^{(4)}(q^2) \text{ can be written as}

\[ \Pi^{(4)}(q^2) = \sum_{k=-2}^{\infty} \Pi^{(k)}(q^2) \beta^k. \]

The five-loop QED contribution to } a_e \text{ arising from the insertion of the eight-order (four-loop) vacuum polarization in the photon line of the second-order vertex diagram}
has been computed via the formula [29, 30]
\[ a_e^{(10)}(vp) = -\frac{\alpha}{\pi} \int_0^1 dx (1-x) \Pi^{(8)} \left( -\frac{m^2 x^2}{1-x} \right). \] (28)

If we select the first term in the expansion of \( \Pi^{(8)}(q^2) \) in powers of \( \beta \) given by Eq. (27), and replace in it \( 1/\beta^2 = x^2/[x^2 + 4(1-x)] \), we obtain
\[ a_e^{(10)}(vp) = -\frac{\alpha}{\pi} \int_0^1 (1-x) \left[ \frac{x^2 \Pi^{(8)}_2}{x^2 + 4(1-x)} \right] dx + \cdots \] (29)

(we note that the expansion in Eq. (27) is not well defined in the integration region of Eq. (29), where \( \beta \geq 1 \), and it is only employed to isolate the term of \( O(1/\beta^2) \)). The coefficient \( \Pi^{(8)}_2 \) is constant and given by the explicit calculation of Ref. [15],
\[ \Pi^{(8)}_2 = -n_e \frac{\alpha^4}{8} \zeta(3), \] (30)

where the label \( n_e \) (to be set to one) indicates that this term arises from four-loop diagrams with only one closed electron loop. Inserting (30) into (29) we obtain
\[ a_e^{(10)}(vp) = n_e \frac{\alpha^5}{8\pi} \zeta(3) K(4m^2) + \cdots = \frac{a_e^P}{2} + \cdots, \] (31)

which shows that the contribution \( a_e^P/2 \) is naturally included in the perturbative five-loop calculation. Equation (31) also shows that this contribution arises from the five-loop set \( I(i) \) of Ref. [30] which contains eighth-order vacuum polarization diagrams with only one closed electron loop. This is at variance with the claim of Ref. [11] that the leading-order contribution of positronium to \( a_e(vp) \) occurs through diagrams of \( O(\alpha^7) \) obtained from the five-loop set \( I(j) \) by adding the exchange of at least one additional photon in each of the two light-by-light scattering loops.

Finally, from Eq. (27) we note that \( \Pi^{(8)}_n(q^2) \), the leading term of the four-loop function \( \Pi^{(8)}(q^2) \) in the limit \( \beta \rightarrow 0 \), is equal to \( \Pi^{(6)}_n(q^2) \). From Eq. (30) we see that this explicit result is in agreement with the \( O(\alpha^5) \) term of the expansion of \( A(\beta) \) in Eq. (21). To leading order in \( \alpha \) we can therefore express Eq. (25) in the form
\[ a_e^{(nu)}(vp) = \frac{\alpha}{\pi} K(4m^2) \Pi^{(6)}_{\nu n}(|q^2| \rightarrow \infty). \] (32)

This result shows that the contribution of the threshold region can be mapped into one at \( |q^2| \rightarrow \infty \) where, far from the positronium bound states, perturbation theory converges well. This observation, presented in Ref. [2] (where it was introduced via the nonrelativistic Coulomb Green’s function in the space-like limit \( q^2 \rightarrow -\infty \)) led the authors to argue that the term \( a_e^P/2 \) can be obtained through conventional perturbation theory, where loop diagrams are calculated performing a Wick rotation with subsequent integration over space-like momenta. Our Eq. (31) shows this point explicitly.

**IV. CONCLUSIONS**

In this paper we re-examined the contribution \( a_e^P \) of positronium to the electron \( g-2 \) computed in Ref. [1]. We confirmed the result of this reference and corrected a few errors in its derivation.

As shown recently in Ref. [2], the integral representation for \( a_e(vp) \) also receives a continuum nonperturbative contribution from the integration region right above the electron-positron threshold. This additional nonperturbative contribution was shown in [2] to cancel one-half of it.

In order to verify this partial cancellation, we introduced the closed-form QED vacuum polarization function near threshold of Refs. [12, 14] and calculated the contribution to \( a_e(vp) \) arising from its integration in the region below and above threshold. Our result confirms that the total contribution to \( a_e(vp) \) of the region near threshold is equal to \( a_e^P/2 \).

We therefore addressed the question whether this remaining term \( a_e^P/2 \) should be added to the perturbative five-loop QED result of Ref. [3]. The authors of Ref. [2] argued that this term is already included in the perturbative \( O(\alpha^5) \) contribution to \( a_e(vp) \) computed in Ref. [3] and, therefore, should not be added to it. On the other hand, one of the authors of Ref. [3] recently claimed that positronium contributes to \( a_e(vp) \) only through a class of diagrams of \( O(\alpha^7) \) [11]. Using the analytic four-loop vacuum polarization function of Ref. [15], we showed explicitly that the perturbative five-loop calculation of \( a_e(vp) \) of Ref. [3] indeed includes the remaining term \( a_e^P/2 \). We also showed that this contribution arises from the class \( I(i) \) of five-loop diagrams containing only one closed electron loop, thus refuting the claim of Ref. [11].

In conclusion, we showed by explicit calculation that there is no additional contribution of QED bound states to \( a_e \) beyond perturbation theory.

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