Contents

I Introduction **1**

1 The low density limit 2
1.1 The Liouville equation . . . 3
1.2 Mean field versus collisional dynamics . . . 4
1.3 The Boltzmann-Grad limit . . . 6

2 The Boltzmann equation 7
2.1 Transport and collisions . . . 7
2.2 Boltzmann's H-theorem and irreversibility . . . 8
2.3 The Cauchy problem . . . 10
2.3.1 Short-time existence of continuous solutions. . . . 10
2.3.2 Fluctuations around some global equilibrium. . . . 11
2.3.3 Renormalized solutions. . . . 12

3 Main results 14
3.1 Lanford and King's theorems . . . 14
3.2 Background and references . . . 15
3.3 New contributions . . . 17

II The case of hard spheres **19**

4 Microscopic dynamics and BBGKY hierarchy 20
4.1 The N-particle flow . . . 20
4.2 The Liouville equation and the BBGKY hierarchy . . . 22
4.3 Weak formulation of Liouville's equation . . . 23
4.4 The Boltzmann hierarchy and the Boltzmann equation . . . 27

5 Uniform a priori estimates for the BBGKY and Boltzmann hierarchies 30
5.1 Functional spaces and statement of the results . . . 30
5.2 Main steps of the proofs . . . 33
5.3 Continuity estimates . . . 34
5.4 Some remarks on the strategy of proof . . . 38

6 Statement of the convergence result 39
6.1 Quasi-independence . . . 39
6.1.1 Admissible Boltzmann data. . . . 39
6.1.2 Conditioning. . . . 40
6.1.3 Characterization of admissible Boltzmann initial data. . . . 41

6.2 Main result:
Convergence of the BBGKY hierarchy to the Boltzmann hierarchy . . 46
6.2.1 Statement of the result. 46
6.2.2 About the proof of Theorem 8: outline of Chapter 7 and Part IV. 47

7 Strategy of the proof of convergence 49
7.1 Reduction to a finite number of collision times 50
7.2 Energy truncation 51
7.3 Time separation 53
7.4 Reformulation in terms of pseudo-trajectories 54

III The case of short-range potentials **57**

8 Two-particle interactions 58
8.1 Reduced motion 58
8.2 Scattering map 61
8.3 Scattering cross-section and the Boltzmann collision operator 64
8.3.1 Scattering cross-section. 64
8.3.2 Boltzmann collision operator. 67

9 Truncated marginals and the BBGKY hierarchy 68
9.1 Truncated marginals 69
9.2 Weak formulation of Liouville's equation 70
9.3 Clusters 74
9.4 Collision operators 76
9.5 Mild solutions 78
9.6 The limiting Boltzmann hierarchy 79

10 Cluster estimates and uniform a priori estimates 81
10.1 Cluster estimates 81
10.2 Functional spaces 84
10.3 Continuity estimates 86
10.4 Uniform bounds for the BBGKY and Boltzmann hierarchies 90

11 Convergence result and strategy of proof 91
11.1 Admissible initial data 91
11.2 Convergence to the Boltzmann hierarchy 93
11.3 Reductions of the BBGKY hierarchy, and pseudo-trajectories 94

IV Termwise convergence **98**

12 Elimination of recollisions 99
12.1 Stability of good configurations by adjunction of collisional particles . 99
12.2 Geometric lemmas 102

12.2.1 Bad trajectories associated to free transport. 102
12.2.2 Modification of bad trajectories by hard sphere reflection. . . . 103
12.2.3 Modification of bad trajectories by the scattering associated to Φ 103
12.3 Proof of the geometric proposition 104
12.3.1 The pre-collisional case. 104
12.3.2 The post-collisional case with hard sphere reflection. 105
12.3.3 The post-collisional case with smooth scattering. 106

13 Truncated collision integrals 109
13.1 Initialization 109
13.2 Approximation of the Boltzmann functional 110
13.3 Approximation of the BBGKY functional 113

14 Proof of convergence 117
14.1 Proximity of Boltzmann and BBGKY trajectories 117
14.2 Proof of convergence for the hard-sphere dynamics: proof of Theorem 8 121
14.2.1 Error coming from the initial data. 122
14.2.2 Error coming from the prefactors in the collision operators. . . 124
14.2.3 Error coming from the divergence of trajectories. 124
14.2.4 Optimization for tensorized Lipschitz initial data. 125
14.3 Convergence in the case of a smooth interaction potential: proof of Theorem 11 126

15 Concluding remarks 128
15.1 On the time interval of validity of Theorems 8 and 9 128
15.2 More general potentials 128
15.3 Other boundary conditions 129

Bibliography 130

Index 137