Joseph-Diaz Gergonne Biography

Joseph-Diaz Gergonne

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Biography

Joseph-Diaz (sometimes rendered as Diez) Gergonne introduced the word polar into mathematics along with the principal of duality in projective **geometry**. Gergonne also solved the problem of **Apollonius of Perga**. In 1810 Gergonne started editing and producing the first purely mathematical journal, *Annales de Mathematiques Pures et Appliquees*, which is sometimes also known as *Annales de Gergonne*.

Born in Nancy, France, Gergonne became an artillery officer and a professor of mathematics. He quickly provided an elegant solution to the problem of Apollonius, which deals with finding a **circle** that touches three given circles. In 1810, while a professor of mathematics at Nimes University, Gergonne launched his *Annales*. It was initially intended as an educational journal, but rapidly it became a home for unusual mathematics with many of the papers being written by Gergonne himself, sometimes anonymously. The journal ceased production in 1832 when Gergonne became Rector of the Academie at the University of Montpellier. He discovered the principle of duality in about 1825, which provoked ill feeling between him and Jean Victor Poncelet, who claimed priority in the discovery. Gergonne died at Montpellier in 1859; he was 88.