Constantin Caratheodory Encyclopedia Article

Constantin Caratheodory

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Constantin Caratheodory

1873-1950

Caratheodory was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1873, where he received the major portion of his academic training. He received his doctorate in mathematics from the University of Gottingen in 1904 under the guidance of Hermann Minkowski, a famous Russian-born German mathematician. After lecturing in several German locales, Caratheodory was sought out by the Greek government to take up a chair at the University of Smyrna. He did so and was present when the Turks attacked Smyrna in 1922. Through his efforts, he was able to save the university library, which he moved to Athens. Caratheodory made significant contributions to the mathematics community by his work in the calculus of variations, and the theory of functions of a real variable. He also made worthy contributions in related fields such as in the special theory of relativity, thermodynamics, and geometrical optics. Caratheodory died in Munich, Germany, in 1950.