William Kingdon Clifford Encyclopedia Article

William Kingdon Clifford

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William Kingdon Clifford

1845-1879

English mathematician best known for his work in the areas of non-Euclidean geometry and topology (the study of surfaces). Clifford was influenced by Georg Riemann and Nikolai Lobachevsky, publishing research in 1870 on properties of matter, energy, and space that were fundamental to Albert Einstein's development of general relativity theory. He also made significant contributions to William Rowan Hamilton's quaternion theory, using them to describe types of motion in what are now known as "Clifford-Klein spaces." Clifford died at the age of 35, apparently from stress induced by severe overwork.