1. Record Nr. UNINA990008543170403321

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Titolo China's elite politics : political transitions and power balancing / Bo

Zhiyue

Pubbl/distr/stampa Singapore : World Scientific, 2007

ISBN 9789812700414

Descrizione fisica XVI, 449 p. : ill. ; 23 cm

Collana Series on contemporary China; 8

Disciplina 320.951

Locazione FSPBC

Collocazione Collez. 2091 (8)

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Record Nr. UNISALENTO991003969259707536 Autore Marot, Clément <1496-1544> Titolo L'enfer, texte de 1549 / Clément Marot Cambridge: Schoenhof's, c1960 Pubbl/distr/stampa Descrizione fisica 180 p.: ill.; 18 cm Altri autori (Persone) Françon, Marcel Disciplina 841.3 Lingua di pubblicazione Francese **Formato** Materiale a stampa Livello bibliografico Monografia Note generali Avec introduction et notes [par] Marcel Francon 3. Record Nr. UNINA9910299967603321 Autore Brezinski Claude Titolo André-Louis Cholesky: Mathematician, Topographer and Army Officer // by Claude Brezinski, Dominique Tournès Pubbl/distr/stampa Cham:,: Springer International Publishing:,: Imprint: Birkhäuser,, 2014 **ISBN** 3-319-08135-7 Edizione [1st ed. 2014.] Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (340 p.) Disciplina 510.9 Soggetti Mathematics History Applied mathematics

Applied mathematics
Engineering mathematics

Computer science - Mathematics History of Mathematical Sciences Applications of Mathematics

Computational Mathematics and Numerical Analysis

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Note generali
Nota di bibliografia

Description based upon print version of record.

Nota di bibliografia

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Sommario/riassunto

Preface -- Biography of Cholesky -- Cholesky's family -- On topography -- The method of Cholesky for linear systems -- Other works of Cholesky -- Léon Eyrolles and his superior school -- An unpublished book by Cholesky -- Ernest Benoît -- Documents -- Acknowledgments -- Bibliography -- Index.

Outside the professional circles of topography and applied mathematics, the life and work of André-Louis Cholesky (1875–1918) are still relatively unknown to the scientific community. This new book appreciably widens the exposure of his remarkable personal achievements in topography and mathematics to a much larger international audience. Cholesky is also interesting to historians because he is a perfect representative of the "scientists engineers" that, since the early 19th century, had issued from the French scientific high schools. Because they had received a high level of mathematical education, they were able to innovate in their practice of engineering. In the case of Cholesky, this resulted in original contributions in artillery, topography, numerical analysis and graphical calculation. In addition, the book places his education and works within the history of several European countries through the 17th to 19th centuries. The book begins with Cholesky's biography, followed by his family's history and an introduction to topography. It continues with a historical analysis of an unpublished paper (translated into English) in which Cholesky explained his method for linear systems. Cholesky's other works are then described, such as his participation in teaching at a superior "school by correspondence" founded by Léon Eyrolles. His important unpublished book in French on graphical calculation, which is reproduced in its entirety, is analyzed in detail and compared to similar contemporary publications. The biography of Ernest Benoit, who wrote the first paper on Cholesky's method, is provided. Various documents, highlighting the life and the personality of Cholesky, round out his story and end the book.