

In memoriam

WILHELM ACKERMANN
1896-1962

HANS HERMES

Wilhelm Ackermann was born on March 29, 1896, in Schönebeck (Kreis Altena) in Westphalia, at that time belonging to Prussia. His studies at the University of Göttingen, which were interrupted during the First World War, were devoted to mathematics, physics, and philosophy. He obtained his Ph.D. in 1924 as a student of David Hilbert. Then a scholarship enabled him to spend time in Cambridge (England). From 1927 until 1961 he taught in secondary schools, first in Burgsteinfurt (Westphalia), then as an *Oberstudienrat* in Lüdenscheid (Westphalia). In 1953 he became a corresponding member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences, and in the same year the School of Mathematics and Sciences (Mathematisch Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät) of Münster University made him an honorary professor. While continuing his teaching position in Lüdenscheid, he gave regular lectures at the University on questions of mathematical logic and the foundations of mathematics. He lectured until three days before his death on December 24, 1962.

Although Ackermann did not choose a university career, he was continually engaged in research and published many contributions to the foundations of mathematics. He became especially well known as the main author of the textbook: Hilbert-Ackermann *Grundzüge der theoretischen Logik* [4]. Between 1928 and 1959 this book has had four editions and has been translated into several languages. Being a student of Hilbert, Ackermann began with investigations on the consistency of mathematics. The mathematical systems which he investigated were at first of a rather limited kind. But later he also studied more comprehensive systems of set theory and logic without types. His last papers contain sketches of systems which seem to be consistent, but the consistency of which has not been proven yet. Besides this main branch of investigations, Ackermann has, in several publications, been concerned with the decision problem of predicate logic. In 1954 a comprehensive presentation was published in book form under the title *Solvable Cases of the Decision Problem* [19]. Finally, there are some shorter investigations concerning recursive functions and the strengthening of strict implication.

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