
A very short history of the figure of the Earth, from a mathematical perspective

Etienne Ghys*¹

¹Ghys (CNRS ENS Lyon) – Centre national de la recherche scientifique - CNRS (France) – UMPA, 46 Allée d'Italie, 69364 Lyon, France

Abstract

Determining the precise shape of the Earth has been a fundamental question for centuries. Of course, this can be approached by many different techniques. In this non technical talk, I would like to describe the work of famous mathematicians, including Newton, Lagrange, Laplace, Legendre and Poisson. However, my main emphasis will be on the fundamental contribution of Poincaré, leading to bifurcation theory. I will also describe the present situation, from the mathematical point of view.

*Speaker