



The Scientific Legacy of Poincare (History of Mathematics)

Eric Charpentier, Etienne Ghys, Annick Lesne

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Henri Poincare (1854-1912) was one of the greatest scientists of his time, perhaps the last one to have mastered and expanded almost all areas in mathematics and theoretical physics. He created new mathematical branches, such as algebraic topology, dynamical systems, and automorphic functions, and he opened the way to complex analysis with several variables and to the modern approach to asymptotic expansions. He revolutionized celestial mechanics, discovering deterministic chaos. In physics, he is one of the fathers of special relativity, and his work in the philosophy of sciences is illuminating. For this book, about twenty world experts were asked to present one part of Poincare's extraordinary work. Each chapter treats one theme, presenting Poincare's approach, and achievements, along with examples of recent applications and some current prospects. Their contributions emphasize the power and modernity of the work of Poincare, an inexhaustible source of inspiration for researchers, as illustrated by the Fields Medal awarded in 2006 to Grigori Perelman for his proof of the Poincare conjecture stated a century before. This book can be read by anyone with a master's (even a bachelor's) degree in mathematics, or physics, or more generally by anyone who likes mathematical and physical ideas. Rather than presenting detailed proofs, the main ideas are explained, and a bibliography is provided for those who wish to understand the technical details.

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