ABSTRACT:

In March 1912 Poincaré submitted his paper ‘Sur un Théorème de Géométrie’ to the *Rendiconti*. But the work, which connected to his long-standing interest in the periodic solutions of the three-body problem, was unfinished. For the previous two years he had been trying to find a general proof of the theorem but without success; he had managed to prove only special cases. The paper was published in May and several mathematicians took up the challenge. In October the young GD Birkhoff ‘astonished the mathematical world’ by providing a proof. Ever since then the theorem has attracted the attention of mathematicians—Birkhoff himself maintained an interest in it throughout his career—and papers relating to it continue to be published to this day.