Re: Why "harmonic"

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From: The World Wide Wade (*waderameyxiii_at_comcast.remove13.net*)
Date: 08/07/04

Date: Fri, 06 Aug 2004 18:36:20 −0700

In article <cf0vqf$f1g$1@nntp.itservices.ubc.ca>,
israel@math.ubc.ca (Robert Israel) wrote:

> *In article <cf0kpkadf1@nntp.itservices.ubc.ca>,*
> *Robert Israel <israel@math.ubc.ca> wrote:*
> *>In article <cf0i6jipn1@panix2.panix.com>,*
> *>Lee Rudolph <lrudolph@panix.com> wrote:*
> *>*
> *>>The World Wide Wade <waderameyxiii@comcast.remove13.net> writes:*
> *>*
> *>>>Laplace's equation. They were given the name "spherical harmonics" by*
> *>>>William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) and Peter Tait in 1879.*
> *>*
> *>>The Oxford English Dictionary gives the year of Thomson and Tait's*
> *>>coinage of "sphereical harmonics" as 1867.*
> *>*
> *>That should be "spherical", of course*
> *>*
> *>The term "harmonic analysis" is also attributed to Thomson and Tait.*
> *>T & T first came out in 1867 and went through a number of different*
> *>editions, which may explain the discrepancy. Apparently there was*
> *>a book by Ferres entitled "Spherical Harmonics" published in 1877,*
> *>so the 1879 date would be too late.*
> *>*
> *I didn't find T & T in our library, but I did find "Life and Scientific*
> *Work of Peter Guthrie Tait" by C.G. Knott, which makes it clear that*
> *the appendix on "Spherical Harmonic Analysis" was indeed in the*
> *first edition. He also quotes from a letter Maxwell wrote to Tait*
> *in December 1867: "I believe you call Laplace's Coeffts Spherical*
> *Harmonics."*

Thanks Robert. In our book we write "The term 'spherical harmonic' was apparently first used in this context by William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) and Peter Tait (see [12], Appendix B)." The reference [12] is

William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) and Peter Guthrie Tait, Treatise on