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SOLVABILITY OF A FIRST ORDER SYSTEM IN THREE-DIMENSIONAL NON-SMOOTH DOMAINS

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this article we first deal with the validity of the inequality

$$||v||_{0} \leq C(||\operatorname{div} v||_{0} + ||\operatorname{rot} v||_{0}),$$

where v is a vector function defined on a bounded and generally non-smooth domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$, and the vanishing normal component n. v on the boundary $\partial \Omega$ is assumed. Following some preliminary lemmas in the next section, we show that (1.1) holds if and only if Ω is simply connected (Section 3). The inequality (1.1) was established earlier for a smooth domain which is homeomorphic to a ball even for the $\|\cdot\|_1$ -norm on the left-hand side (see [3]). Other proofs are given in [8, 18–21]; they are mainly based on contradiction arguments. Estimates analogous to (1.1) for plane non-smooth domains are treated in [10] and in [11], where also mixed boundary conditions are prescribed. We also recall [15] that in the case of vanishing tangential components of v on $\partial \Omega$, the inequality (1.1) is valid iff $\partial \Omega$ is connected (in \mathbb{R}^2 and \mathbb{R}^3).

In Section 4 we apply (1.1) to the problem of solvability of the first order system of four partial differential equations

(1.2)
$$\operatorname{div} u = f \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega,$$
$$\operatorname{rot} u = g \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega,$$
$$n \cdot u = 0 \quad \text{on} \quad \partial\Omega,$$

which play an important role in fluid flow and magnetostatic problems [4, 5, 16-22].

2. SOME FUNCTION SPACES

Throughout the paper, $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ will always be a bounded domain with a Lipschitz boundary $\partial \Omega$ (see [14], p. 17) and with the outward unit normal n. Notations $H^k(\Omega)$, $k = 0, 1, \ldots$, are used for the (real valued) Sobolev spaces. The usual norm in $H^k(\Omega)$

and also in $(H^k(\Omega))^3$ will be denoted by $\|\cdot\|_k$. The scalar product on $(L^2(\Omega))^m, m = 1,3$, will be written as $(\cdot, \cdot)_0$ and we set

$$L_0^2(\Omega) = \{ \chi \in L^2(\Omega) \mid (\chi, 1)_0 = 0 \}.$$

Further, $H^{1/2}(\partial\Omega)$ is the space of traces of functions from $H^1(\Omega)$, and $\mathcal{D}(\Omega)$ is the space of infinitely differentiable functions with a compact support in Ω .

We note (see [9], p. 16) that the functional $v \mapsto n$. $v|_{\partial\Omega}$ defined on $(C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega}))^3$ can be extended by continuity to a linear continuous mapping from the space

$$H(\operatorname{div};\Omega) = \{ v \in (L^2(\Omega))^3 | \exists F \in L^2(\Omega) : (v, \operatorname{grad} z)_0 + (F, z)_0 = 0 \ \forall z \in \mathcal{D}(\Omega) \}$$

into $H^{-1/2}(\partial\Omega)$, the latter being the dual space to $H^{1/2}(\partial\Omega)$. The function F is called the divergence of v (in the sense of distributions) and the Green formula can be rewritten as

$$(2.1) \quad (\operatorname{div} v, z)_0 + (v, \operatorname{grad} z)_0 = \langle n \cdot v, z \rangle_{\partial \Omega} \ \forall v \in H(\operatorname{div}; \Omega), \ \forall z \in H^1(\Omega).$$

Here $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{\partial\Omega}$ denotes the duality pairing between $H^{-1/2}(\partial\Omega)$ and $H^{1/2}(\partial\Omega)$.

Let $\partial\Omega_1, \ldots, \partial\Omega_r$ be the components of $\partial\Omega$. For $v \in H(\text{div}; \Omega)$ we define the functional $n \cdot v \in H^{-1/2}(\partial\Omega_i)$, $i \in \{1, \ldots, r\}$, by

$$(2.2) \langle n. v, z \rangle_{\partial \Omega_z} = (\operatorname{div} v, z)_0 + (v, \operatorname{grad} z)_0, \quad z \in Z_z,$$

where

$$Z_i = \{z \in H^1(\Omega) | z = 0 \text{ on } \partial\Omega_j \ \forall j \in \{1, ..., r\} - \{i\}\}$$

and $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{\partial \Omega_i}$ is the duality pairing between $H^{-1/2}(\partial \Omega_i)$ and $H^{1/2}(\partial \Omega_i)$.

Let us further introduce the space

$$H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega) = \{ v \in (L^2(\Omega))^3 \mid \exists G \in (L^2(\Omega))^3 : (v, \operatorname{rot} z)_0 = (G, z)_0 \ \forall z \in (\mathcal{D}(\Omega))^3 \}$$

endowed with the norm

$$\|\cdot\|_{H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega)} = (\|\cdot\|_0^2 + \|\operatorname{rot}\cdot\|_0^2)^{1/2}.$$

The function G introduced above is called the rotation of v (in the sense of distributions) and the following Green formula holds:

$$(2.3) \qquad (\operatorname{rot} v, z)_0 - (v, \operatorname{rot} z)_0 = \langle n \times v, z \rangle_{\partial \Omega} \quad \forall v \in H(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega) \quad \forall z \in (H^1(\Omega))^3.$$

Here the vector product $n \times v$ is from $(H^{-1/2}(\partial\Omega))^3$ (see [9], p. 21) and $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle_{\partial\Omega}$ denotes the duality pairing between $(H^{-1/2}(\partial\Omega))^3$ and $(H^{1/2}(\partial\Omega))^3$.

Now, we define several subspaces of $H(\text{div}; \Omega)$ and $H(\text{rot}; \Omega)$:

$$H_0(\operatorname{div};\Omega) = \{ v \in H(\operatorname{div};\Omega) \mid n \cdot v = 0 \text{ on } \partial\Omega \},$$

$$H(\operatorname{div}^0;\Omega) = \{ v \in H(\operatorname{div};\Omega) \mid \operatorname{div} v = 0 \text{ in } \Omega \},$$

$$H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega) = H_0(\operatorname{div}; \Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega)$$
,

$$H_0(\operatorname{rot};\Omega) = \{v \in H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega) \mid n \times v = 0 \text{ on } \partial\Omega\},$$

$$\begin{split} &H(\operatorname{rot}^0;\Omega) = \left\{v \in H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega) \mid \operatorname{rot} v = 0 \text{ in } \Omega\right\}, \\ &H_0(\operatorname{rot}^0;\Omega) = H_0(\operatorname{rot};\Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}^0;\Omega), \\ &\mathcal{H}_{\mathscr{Q}} = H_0(\operatorname{div}^0;\Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}^0;\Omega), \\ &\mathcal{H}_{\mathscr{A}} = H(\operatorname{div}^0;\Omega) \cap H_0(\operatorname{rot}^0;\Omega), \\ &V = H_0(\operatorname{div};\Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega), \\ &D = \left\{v \in H(\operatorname{div}^0;\Omega) \mid \langle n,v,1 \rangle_{EO} = 0, \ i = 1,...,r\right\}. \end{split}$$

From (2.1) we can easily derive

(2.4)
$$\operatorname{grad} z \in H(\operatorname{rot}^0; \Omega) \text{ for } z \in H^1(\Omega).$$

Henceforth, we shall present some other properties of the above spaces.

Lemma 2.1. The following inclusions hold:

(2.5)
$$\operatorname{rot} v \in D \quad \text{for} \quad v \in H(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega)$$
,

and

(2.6)
$$\operatorname{rot} v \in H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega) \quad \text{for} \quad v \in H_0(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega).$$

Proof. Let $v \in H(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ and $z \in \mathcal{D}(\Omega)$ be given. Then by (2.3) we obtain

(2.7)
$$(\operatorname{rot} v, \operatorname{grad} z)_0 = (v, \operatorname{rot} \operatorname{grad} z)_0 + \langle n \times v, \operatorname{grad} z \rangle_{\partial\Omega} = 0.$$

Hence, (2.1) yields

(2.8)
$$\operatorname{rot} v \in H(\operatorname{div}^{0}; \Omega).$$

Let us choose $i \in \{1, ..., r\}$ arbitrarily and let $\eta \in C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega})$ be such that $\eta = 1$ in a neighbourhood of $\partial \Omega_i$ and $\eta = 0$ in some neigbourhoods of the other components $\partial \Omega_j$, $j \neq i$, that is $\eta \in Z_i$. Thus (2.2), (2.8) and (2.3) imply

$$\langle n \cdot \operatorname{rot} v, 1 \rangle_{\partial \Omega_{\lambda}} = (\operatorname{rot} v, \operatorname{grad} \eta)_{0} = \langle n \times \operatorname{grad} \eta, v \rangle_{\partial \Omega} = 0$$
.

Consequently, (2.5) is valid. The relation (2.7) holds for any $v \in H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ and $z \in C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega})$ as well. Therefore, rot $v \in H_0(\text{div}^0; \Omega)$.

Lemma 2.2. The identity

$$(\operatorname{rot} \varphi, \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_0 = (\varphi, \operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_0$$

holds for all $\varphi \in H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ such that $\text{rot } \varphi \in H(\text{rot}; \Omega)$.

Proof. Let $\varphi \in H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ with rot $\varphi \in H(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ be given. As $(C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega}))^3$ is dense in $H(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ (see [6, 9]), there exists a sequence $\psi_j \in (C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega}))^3$ such that

(2.9)
$$\|\operatorname{rot} \varphi - \psi_j\|_{H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega)} \to 0 \quad \text{as} \quad j \to \infty.$$

Applying the Green formula (2.3), we get

$$(\operatorname{rot} \varphi, \psi_i)_0 - (\varphi, \operatorname{rot} \psi_i)_0 = \langle n \times \varphi, \psi_i \rangle_{\partial\Omega} = 0$$
,

since $\varphi \in H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$. From (2.9) we conclude that

$$(\operatorname{rot} \varphi, \psi_j)_0 \to (\operatorname{rot} \varphi, \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_0$$

and

$$(\varphi, \operatorname{rot} \psi_j)_0 \to (\varphi, \operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_0$$

for $j \to \infty$, which yields the result as required. \square

3. STUDY OF THE INEQUALITY (1.1)

First, let us recall the definition of a simply connected domain (see e.g. [2, 7, 12, 14]).

Definition 3.1. A domain Ω in \mathbb{R}^d is said to be simply connected if it has the following property: Given any simple closed curve γ : x = h(t), $t \in [a, b]$, with range in Ω , there is a continuous function x = F(s, t) defined for $s \in [0, 1]$, $t \in [a, b]$ such that:

- (i) $F(0, t) = h(t), t \in [a, b];$
- (ii) F(1, t) = P, $t \in [a, b]$, where P is some point in Ω ;
- (iii) F(s, t) lies in Ω for all $s \in [0, 1]$, $t \in [a, b]$.
- (iv) F(s, a) = F(s, b) for all $s \in [0, 1]$.

Defining (closed) curves γ_s by x = F(s, t), $t \in [a, b]$, we say that the family $\{\gamma_s\}$ represents a continuous deformation of γ into a point P.

Domains which are not simply connected are called multiply connected.

The main task of this section will be to prove the following theorem.

Theorem 3.2. Let $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ be a bounded domain with a Lipschitz boundary. Then

(3.1)
$$||v||_0 \le C(||\operatorname{div} v||_0 + ||\operatorname{rot} v||_0) \quad \forall v \in V = H_0(\operatorname{div}; \Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega)$$

if and only if Ω is simply connected.

The proof is based on an auxiliary lemma:

Lemma 3.3. Let Ω be a simply connected domain with a Lipschitz boundary and let $\psi \in H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega)$. Then there exists exactly one stream function $\varphi \in D \cap H_0(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega)$ such that

$$\psi = \operatorname{rot} \varphi$$
.

Moreover,

$$\|\varphi\|_0 \leq C \|\operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_0,$$

where C > 0 does not depend on φ (and ψ).

Proof. For the existence of precisely one divergence-free stream function $\varphi \in D \cap H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ corresponding to $\psi \in H_0(\text{div}^0; \Omega)$ see e.g. [1, 24]. We only prove the inequality (3.2).

From the unicity of φ and (2.6), the linear operator

(3.3)
$$\operatorname{rot}: D \cap H_0(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega) \to H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega)$$

is bijective. The space $H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega)$ equipped with the $\|\cdot\|_0$ -norm is a Banach space. One can easily find that the space $D \cap H_0(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega)$ with the norm $\|\cdot\|_{H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega)}$ is a Banach space as well. As the operator (3.3) is continuous, i.e.

$$\|\operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_{0} \leq C' \|\varphi\|_{H(\operatorname{rot};\Omega)},$$

by the closed graph theorem the inverse (closed) operator is continuous as well. Thus (3.2) holds. \Box

Proof of Theorem 3.2. \Rightarrow : It is known (see e.g. [1], p. 153) that $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ is simply connected if and only if the components of $\mathbb{R}^3 - \overline{\Omega}$ are simply connected. Suppose that Ω is multiply connected. Then there exists a component ω of $\mathbb{R}^3 - \overline{\Omega}$ which is also multiply connected, and we show that (3.1) does not hold.

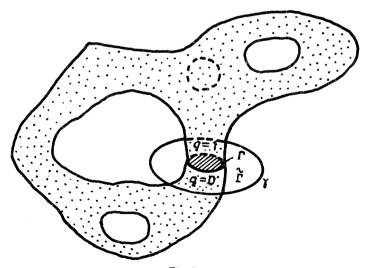
In accordance with Definition 3.1 there exists a simple closed curve $\gamma \subset \omega$ which cannot be continuously deformed into a point without leaving the domain ω . Clearly, γ can be chosen in such a way that it is smooth enough. Let $\tilde{\Gamma}$ be a sufficiently smooth orientable surface bounded by γ (see Fig. 1) and let

$$\Gamma = \tilde{\Gamma} \cap \Omega .$$

By a regularization technique (see e.g. [13], p. 58), it is easy to construct a function $q \in C^{\infty}(\Omega - \Gamma)$ with bounded derivatives such that q = 1 in an exterior neighbourhood of Γ (with respect to a given orientation of $\widetilde{\Gamma}$), and q = 0 in an interior neighbourhood of Γ . Setting

$$w = \left\langle \begin{array}{ll} \operatorname{grad} q & \operatorname{in} & \Omega - \Gamma \\ 0 & \operatorname{on} & \Gamma \end{array} \right.,$$

we see that $w \in (C^{\infty}(\bar{\Omega}))^3$ and that w is not a potential field globally on Ω .



Consider the Neumann problem: Find $p \in H^1(\Omega)$ such that

(3.4)
$$\Delta p = \operatorname{div} w \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega,$$

$$\partial_{n} p = n \cdot w \quad \text{on} \quad \partial \Omega,$$

 $(\partial_n$ being the normal derivative), which is solvable because by (2.1)

$$(\operatorname{div} w, 1)_0 = \langle n \cdot w, 1 \rangle_{\partial \Omega}$$
.

Now, let us define

$$(3.5) v = \operatorname{grad} p - w.$$

Making use of (2.4) and (3.4), we arrive at

$$(v, \operatorname{grad} z)_0 = (\operatorname{grad} p - w, \operatorname{grad} z)_0 = \langle \partial_n p - n \cdot w, z \rangle_{\partial\Omega} = 0 \quad \forall z \in H^1(\Omega),$$

that is $v \in H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega)$.

Furthermore, $v \in H(\text{rot}^0; \Omega)$ which follows from (3.5), (2.4) and the fact that $w \in (C^{\infty}(\overline{\Omega}))^3$ vanishes in some neighbourhood of Γ . Consequently, v satisfies (1.2) with zero right-hand sides. On the other hand $v \neq 0$, since it is not a potential field by (3.5). So the inequality (3.1) is not valid for multiply connected domains.

 \Leftarrow : Let Ω be simply connected and let $v \in V$ be given. Consider the problem

(3.6)
$$\Delta z = \operatorname{div} v \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega,$$

$$\partial_v z = 0 \quad \text{on} \quad \partial \Omega,$$

which has exactly one weak solution z in $L_0^2(\Omega) \cap H^1(\Omega)$, because div $v \in L_0^2(\Omega)$ by (2.1), and it holds that

(3.7)
$$||z||_1 \le C_1 ||\operatorname{div} v||_0.$$

The relations (2.1), (2.4) and (3.6) give grad $z \in H_0(\text{div}; \Omega) \cap H(\text{rot}^0; \Omega)$, i.e. again by (3.6)

(3.8)
$$\psi = v - \operatorname{grad} z \in H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega).$$

In accordance with Lemma 3.3 there exists exactly one stream function $\varphi \in D \cap H_0(\text{rot}; \Omega)$ such that

$$\psi = \operatorname{rot} \varphi.$$

Applying now Lemma 2.2 and (3.2), we come to

(3.10)
$$\|\operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_{0}^{2} = (\operatorname{rot} \varphi, \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_{0} = (\varphi, \operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi)_{0} \leq$$
$$\leq \|\varphi\|_{0} \|\operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_{0} \leq C_{2} \|\operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_{0} \|\operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi\|_{0}.$$

So by (3.8), (3.9), (3.10), (3.7) and (2.4) we obtain

$$||v||_0 \le ||\operatorname{grad} z||_0 + ||\operatorname{rot} \varphi||_0 \le ||z||_1 + C_2 ||\operatorname{rot} \operatorname{rot} \varphi||_0 \le$$

$$\le C_1 ||\operatorname{div} v||_0 + C_2 ||\operatorname{rot} \psi||_0 \le C(||\operatorname{div} v||_0 + ||\operatorname{rot} v||_0). \square$$

Remark 3.4. The spaces $\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{Q}}$ and $\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{R}}$ are finite-dimensional (cf. [18, 19, 22, 23]). From Theorem 3.2 we see that $\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{Q}}$ is trivial iff Ω is simply connected; (note that $\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{R}}$ is trivial iff $\partial\Omega$ is connected [15]). The proof of the inequality (3.1) can be modified for $v \in V \cap (\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{Q}})^{\perp}$ without any assumptions on the connectivity of Ω (the symbol \perp denotes the orthocomplement in $(L^2(\Omega))^3$). This was proved e.g. in [21] for smooth domains.

4. APPLICATION TO A VARIATIONAL PROBLEM

In this section we shall deal with a variational formulation of the problem (1.2). For $f \in L^2(\Omega)$ and $g \in (L^2(\Omega))^3$ we define the linear form

$$(4.1) b(v) = (f, \operatorname{div} v)_0 + (g, \operatorname{rot} v)_0, \quad v \in V,$$

and the bilinear form

(4.2)
$$a(w, v) = (\text{div } w, \text{div } v)_0 + (\text{rot } w, \text{rot } v)_0, \quad w, v \in V.$$

Assume that a sufficiently smooth u satisfies (1.2) in the classical sense. Then we immediately see that $u \in V$ and

$$(\text{div } u, \text{ div } v)_0 = (f, \text{ div } v)_0,$$

 $(\text{rot } u, \text{ rot } v)_0 = (g, \text{ rot } v)_0$

for all $v \in V$. Consequently,

$$(4.3) a(u, v) = b(v) \quad \forall v \in V,$$

and moreover, by (2.1) and (2.5) we have

$$(4.4) f \in L_0^2(\Omega), \quad g \in D.$$

Conversely, let (4.4) hold and let (4.3) be satisfied for a sufficiently smooth $u \in V$. Assuming that Ω is simply connected, we show that u fulfils (1.2).

So let $\chi \in L_0^2(\Omega)$ be arbitrary and let $z \in L_0^2(\Omega) \cap H^1(\Omega)$ be the weak solution of the problem

(4.5)
$$\Delta z = \chi \quad \text{in} \quad \Omega,$$

$$\partial_{n} z = 0 \quad \text{on} \quad \partial \Omega.$$

Then $v = \operatorname{grad} z \in H_0(\operatorname{div}; \Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}^0; \Omega) \subset V$ and from (4.5), (4.2),(4.3) and (4.1) we get

$$(\operatorname{div} u, \chi)_0 = (\operatorname{div} u, \operatorname{div} v)_0 = a(u, v) = b(v) = (f, \operatorname{div} v)_0 = (f, \chi)_0.$$

Hence, div u = f in $L_0^2(\Omega)$.

Furthermore, let $\psi \in D$ be arbitrary. Then by [9], p. 28, there exists a divergence-free stream function $v' \in H(\text{div}^0; \Omega) \cap (H^1(\Omega))^3$ (not uniquely determined) such

that $\psi = \operatorname{rot} v'$. As $\langle n \cdot v', 1 \rangle_{\partial \Omega} = 0$ due to (2.1), the following problem is solvable:

$$\Delta \eta = 0$$
 in Ω ,
 $\partial_n \eta = n \cdot v'$ on $\partial \Omega$.

Then clearly the function v = v'-grad η is from $H_0(\operatorname{div}^0; \Omega) \cap H(\operatorname{rot}; \Omega) \subset V$ and v is also a divergence-free stream function to ψ , that is

$$\psi = \operatorname{rot} v$$

(cf. [1, 15, 24]). Using (4.2), (4.3) and (4.1), we arrive at

$$(\operatorname{rot} u, \psi)_0 = (\operatorname{rot} u, \operatorname{rot} v)_0 = a(u, v) = b(v) = (g, \operatorname{rot} v)_0 = (g, \psi)_0$$

i.e. rot u = g in D.

Thus we have justified the following definition.

Definition 4.1. Let Ω be simply connected. The problem of finding $u \in V$ which satisfies (4.3) is called the variational formulation of the problem (1.2).

Theorem 4.2. Let Ω be simply connected. Then the variational formulation of the problem (1.2) has precisely one solution.

Proof. By Theorem 3.2 the bilinear form (4.2) is a scalar product on V. It is easy to show that V is a Hilbert space and that the linear form (4.1) is continuous on V. Now the assertion follows from the Riesz theorem. \square

Remark 4.3. When Ω is multiply connected the bilinear form (4.2) is a scalar product on $V \cap (\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{D}})^{\perp}$ (cf. Remark 3.4), i.e. the solution of (1.2) exists and is unique apart from a function of $\mathcal{H}_{\mathcal{G}}$.

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Souhrn

ŘEŠITELNOST JISTÉHO SYSTÉMU PRVNÍHO ŘÁDU NA TROJROZMĚRNÝCH NEHLADKÝCH OBLASTECH

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Je studován systém parciálních diferenciálních rovnic prvního řádu, který je definován pomocí operátorů divergence a rotace na ohraničené oblasti $\Omega \subset \mathbb{R}^3$ s nehladkou hranicí. Na hranici $\partial \Omega$ je předepsána nulová normálová složka řešení. Je podána variační formulace a vyšetřována její řešitelnost.

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