



COMITÉ FRANÇAIS DE MÉCANIQUE  
DES SOLS ET DE GÉOTECHNIQUE



ACADEMIE  
DES SCIENCES  
INSTITUT DE FRANCE



## Charles-Augustin COULOMB - A geotechnical tribute

Paris, september 25 & 26, 2023



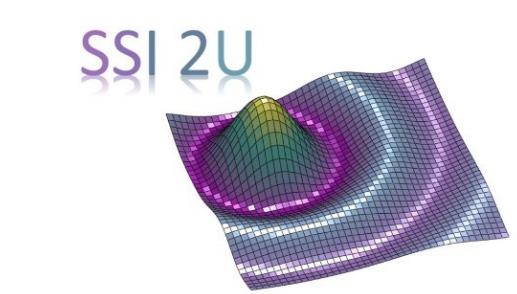
### *Workshop #1: Design methods for retaining walls*

Assessment of active and passive earth pressure:  
what do we owe to Boussinesq and Caquot?

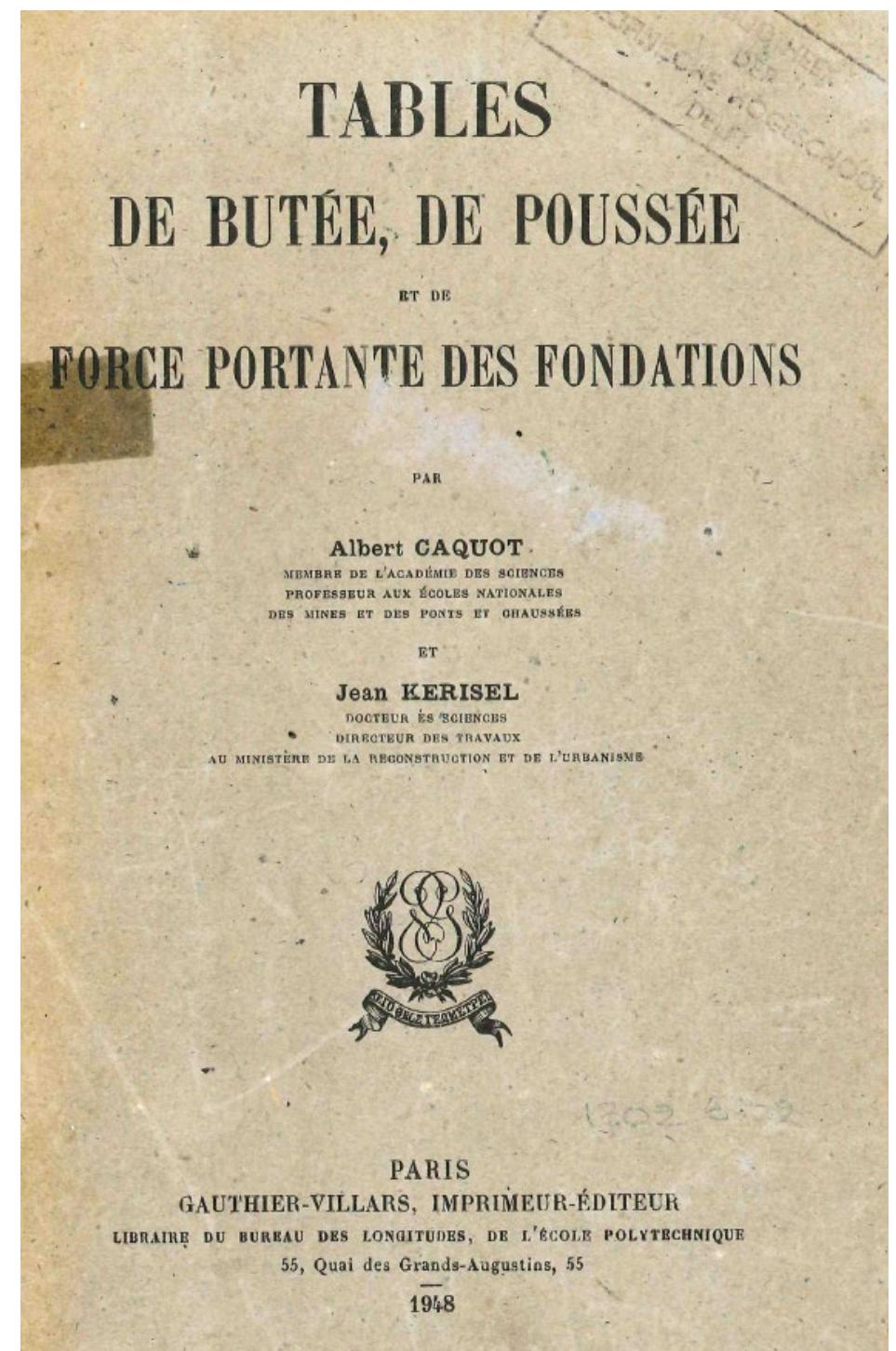
S. Burlon  
Terrasol, Setec



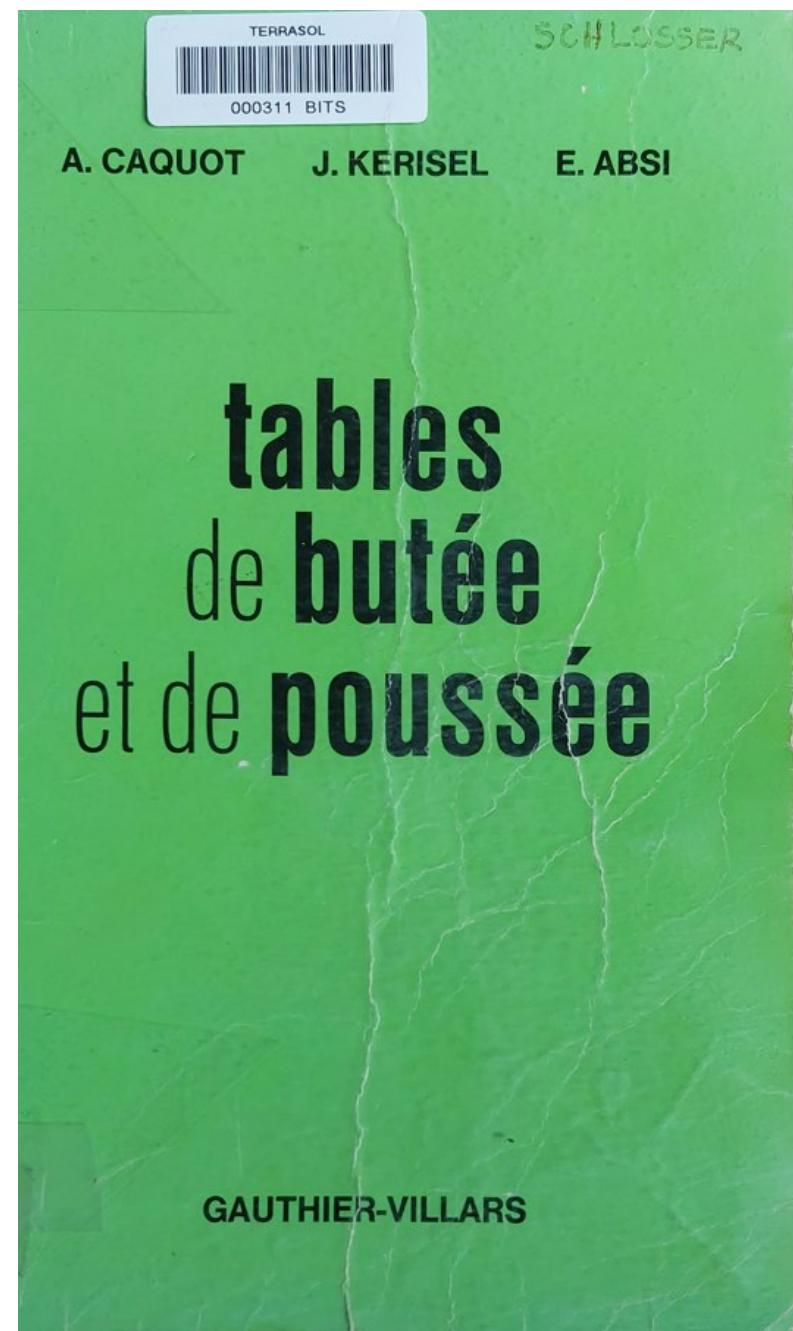
Shaping a World of Trust



# Introduction

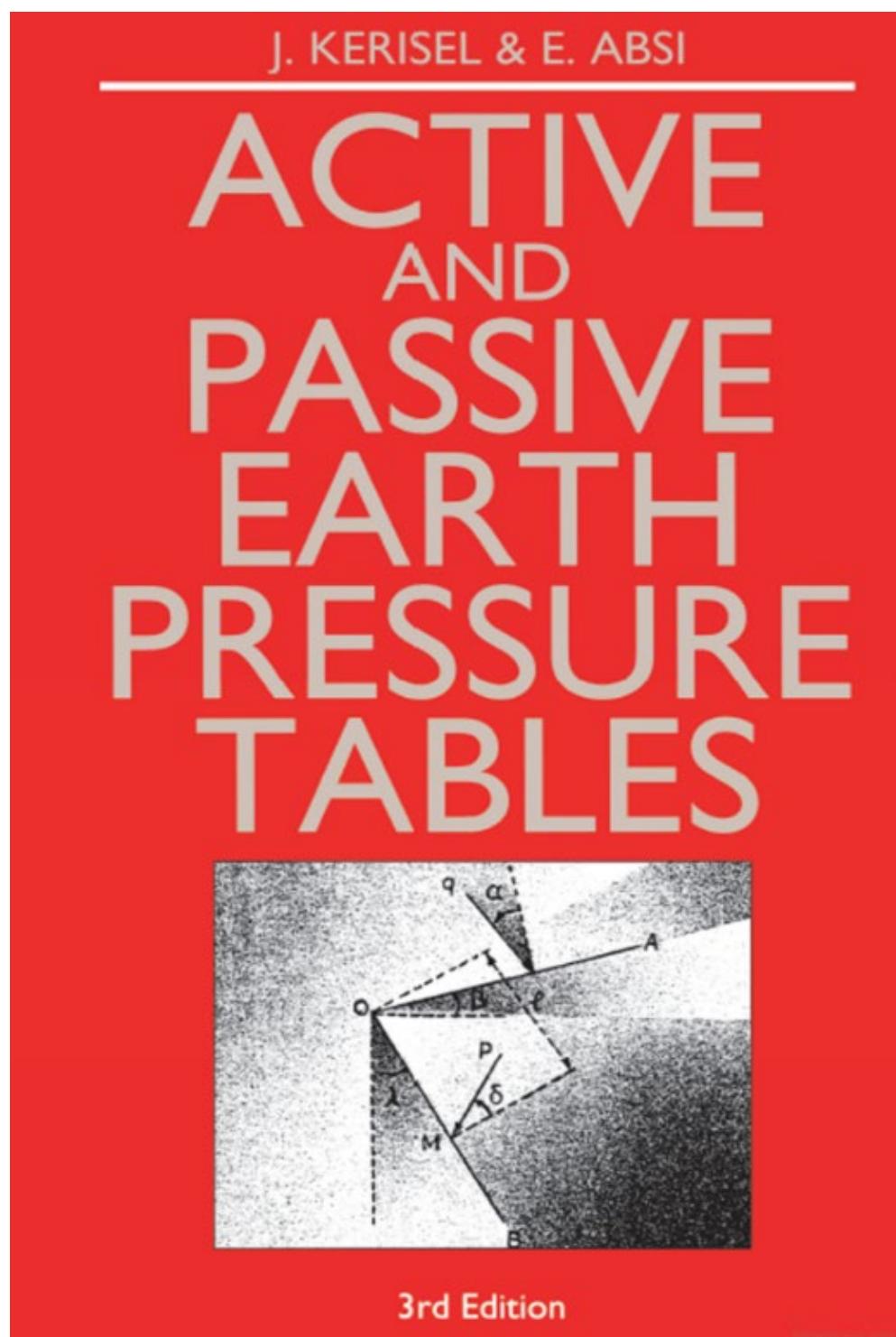


1948  
1<sup>st</sup> edition



1966

1973  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition

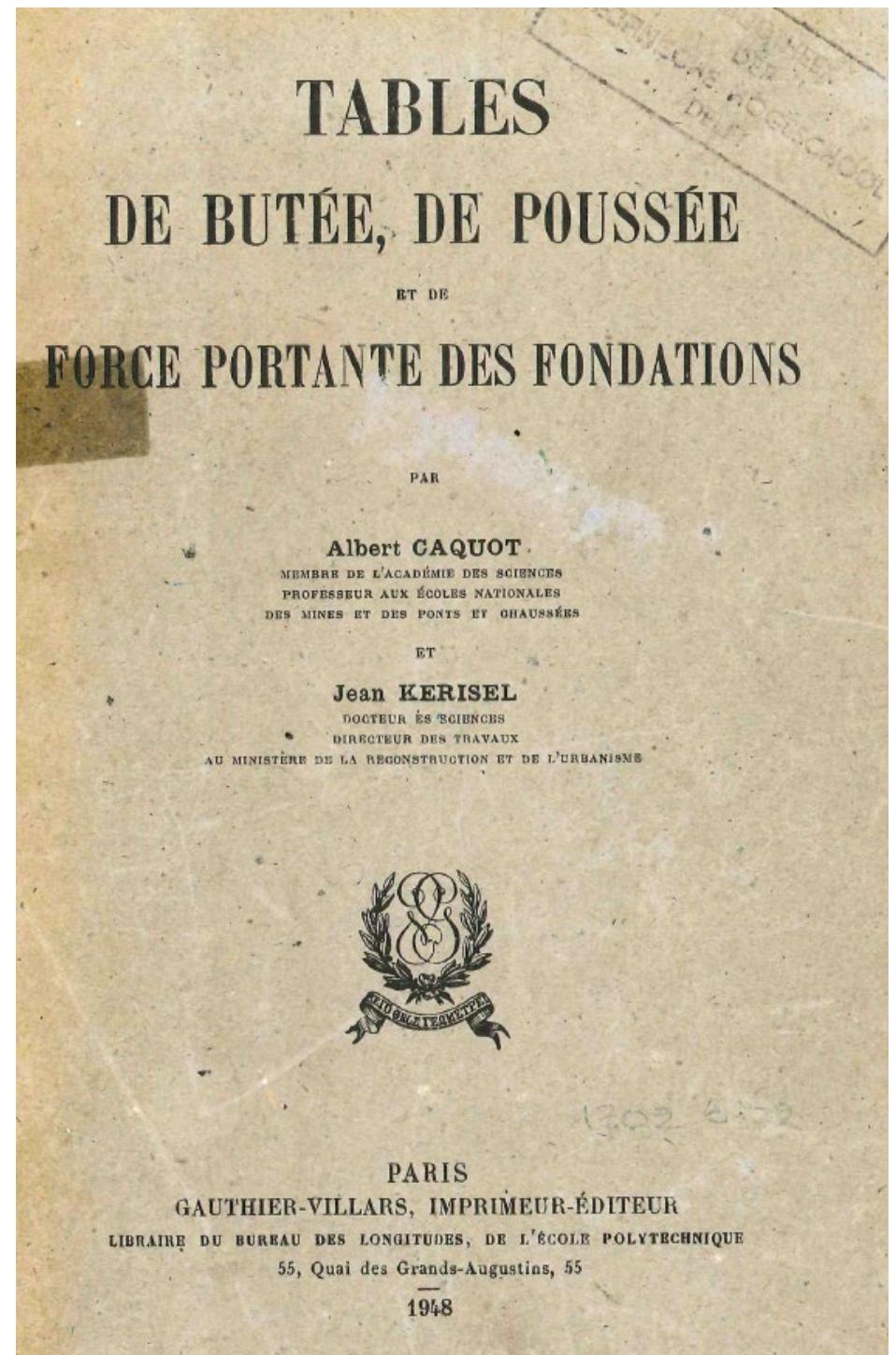


1990  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition

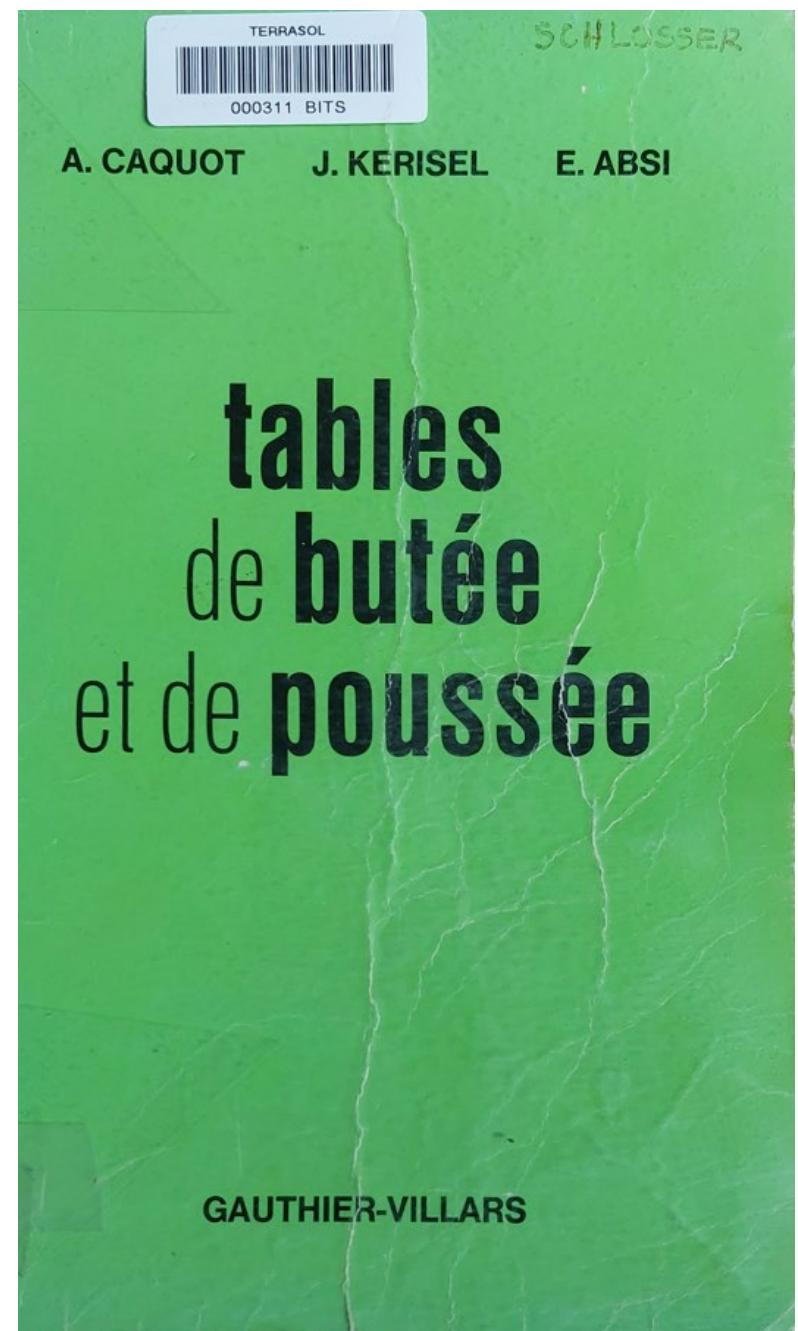
Values used for the design of both:

- gravity walls with limit equilibrium methods
- retaining walls with subgrade reaction methods

# Introduction

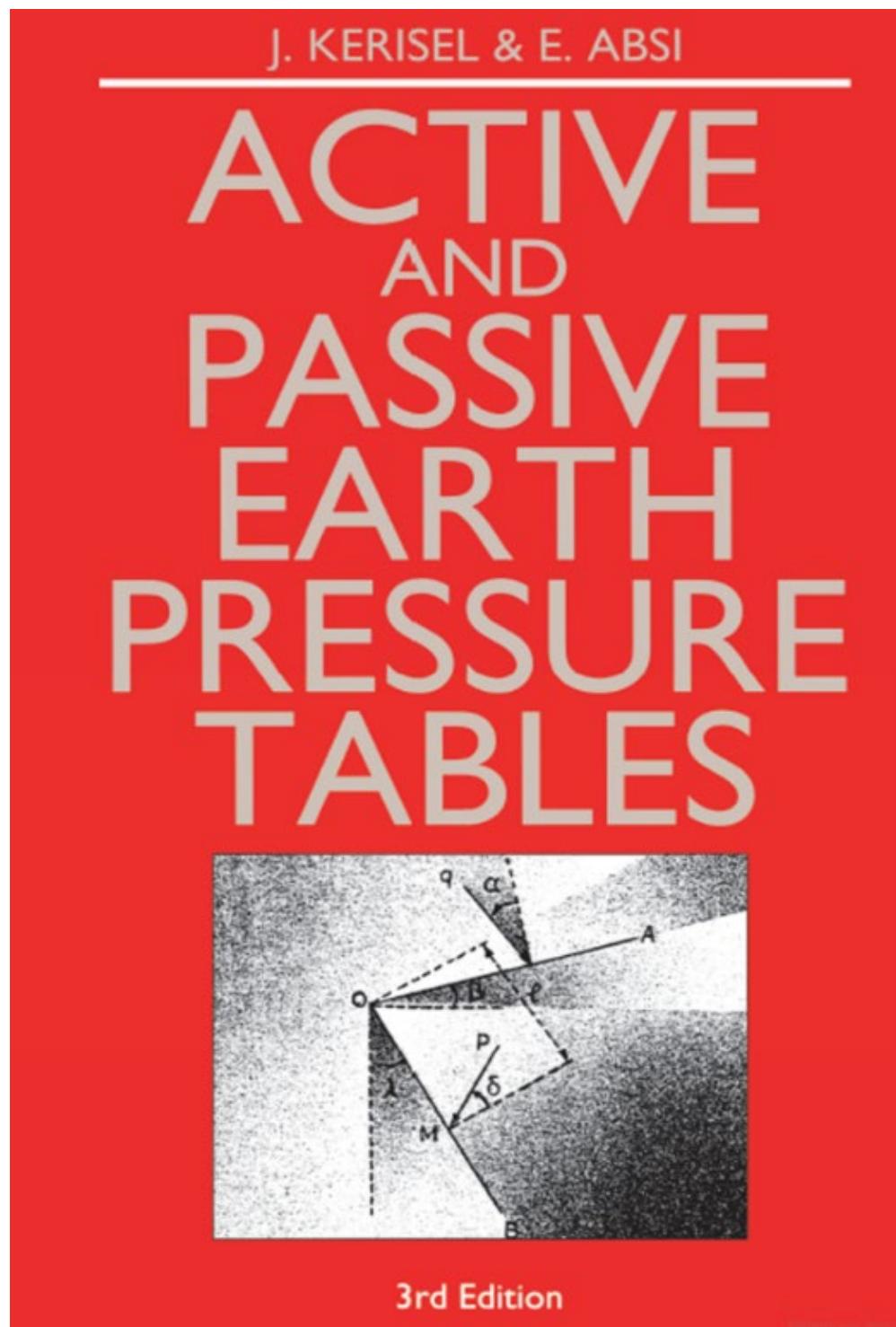


1948  
1<sup>st</sup> edition



1966

1973  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition



1990  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Two main issues:

- what are the main contributions for the elaboration of these tables?
- How have these values been determined?

# Boussinesq (1874)

ANNALES  
DES  
PONTS ET CHAUSSÉES.  
—  
MÉMOIRES ET DOCUMENTS.  
—  
5<sup>e</sup> SÉRIE.  
TOME VIII.  
—  
1874  
2<sup>e</sup> SEMESTRE.  
—  
1874

ESSAI THÉORIQUE  
SUR  
L'ÉQUILIBRE DES MASSIFS PULVÉRULENTS,  
COMPARÉ A CELUI DE MASSIFS SOLIDES,  
ET  
SUR LA POUSSÉE DES TERRES SANS COHÉSION;  
PAR  
M. J. BOUSSINESQ,  
PROFESSEUR A LA FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LILLE.



BRUXELLES,  
P. HAYEZ, IMPRIMEUR DE L'ACADEMIE ROYALE DE BELGIQUE.

—  
1876

1876

## Introduction (1874)

Dans son mémoire, remarquable à plusieurs titres, *On the stability of loose Earth* (\*), le regretté M. Macquorn-Rankine a donné une méthode ingénieuse pour l'étude des distributions planes des pressions à l'intérieur de masses pesantes quelconques en équilibre, et il a essayé, au moyen d'une hypothèse qui ramène analytiquement la question au problème classique du refroidissement d'une barre homogène, de l'employer dans la recherche des pressions produites aux divers points d'un massif sablonneux dont le profil supérieur est courbe.

## Conclusion (1874)

La formule ( $\mu$ ) montre combien est inexacte l'hypothèse de M. Rankine, puisque l'expression qu'elle fournit pour  $X$  dépend, non pas seulement de  $H$ , comme il arriverait si elle pouvait être de la forme  $F(H)$ , mais encore de  $y$  (\*). Peut-être trouvera-t-on un jour quelque ordre de phénomènes auquel l'hypothèse considérée sera plus applicable, et qui réalisera ainsi cette curieuse analogie d'une distribution de pressions avec le mouvement de la chaleur dans une barre.

- Strong criticism of the Rankine theory.
- New equations are proposed but it is not possible to provide closed-form solutions.

# Résal (1903)

## Active earth pressures: first values (horizontal component)

ENCYCLOPÉDIE  
DES  
TRAVAUX PUBLICS

Fondée par M.-G. LECHALAS, Inspecteur général des Ponts et Chaussées

COURS DE L'ÉCOLE DES PONTS & CHAUSSEES

### POUSSÉE DES TERRES

#### STABILITÉ

DES

### MURS DE SOUTÈNEMENT

PAR

JEAN RÉSAL

INGÉNIEUR EN CHEF, PROFESSEUR A L'ÉCOLE DES PONTS ET CHAUSSEES

PARIS

LIBRAIRIE POLYTECHNIQUE, CH. BÉRANGER, ÉDITEUR

Successeur de DAUDRY & C°

15, RUE DES SAINTS-PÈRES, 15

Même Maison à Liège, rue de la Régence, 21

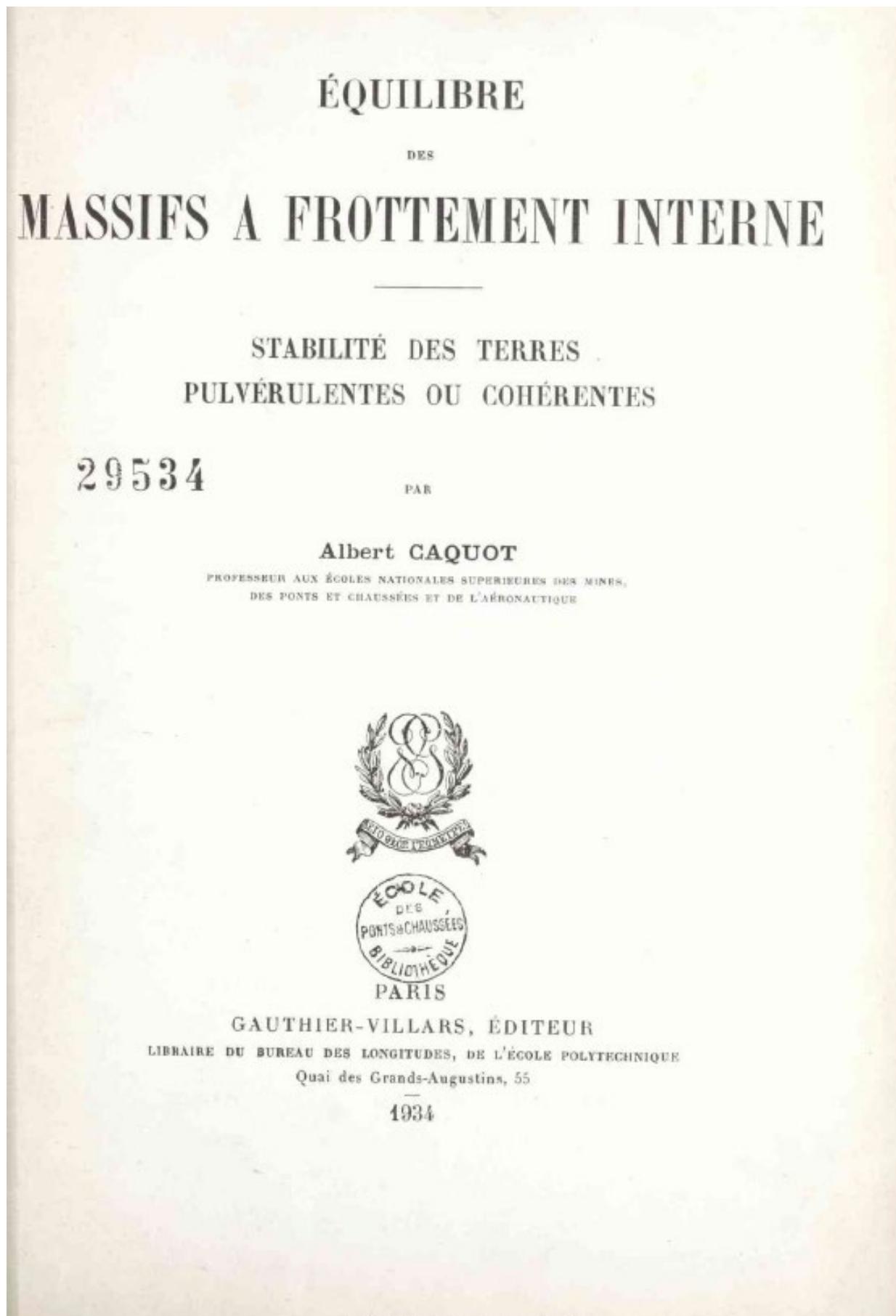
1903

Tous droits réservés

1903

		$i = 5^\circ$						$i = 0^\circ$					
$\gamma =$	$f(\gamma) =$	45°	40°	35°	30°	25°	20°	45°	40°	35°	30°	25°	20°
$\gamma =$	0,17339	0,22005	0,27462	0,33849	0,41378	0,50152	0,17158	0,21744	0,27099	0,33333	0,40587	0,49029	
$\gamma =$	21°27'53"'	23°33'5"	25°37'50"	27°28'50"	29°3'	30°7'5"	22°30'	23°	27°30'	30°	32°30	35°	
$\gamma =$	23°32'5"	26°24'55"	29°22'10"	32°31'10"	35°57'	39°52'55"	22°30'	25°	27°30'	30°	32°30'	35°	
$\alpha =$													
45°	0,202	0,258	0,322	0,397	0,486	0,589	0,172	0,217	0,271	0,333	0,406	0,490	
40°	0,193	0,251	0,314	0,387	0,473	0,573	0,172	0,217	0,271	0,333	0,406	0,490	
35°	0,194	0,246	0,307	0,378	0,463	0,561	0,172	0,217	0,271	0,333	0,406	0,490	
30°	0,190	0,261	0,301	0,371	0,453	0,549	0,172	0,217	0,271	0,333	0,404	0,487	
25°	0,186	0,237	0,294	0,361	0,441	0,533	0,172	0,217	0,269	0,330	0,396	0,479	
20°	0,181	0,230	0,285	0,348	0,426	0,516	0,170	0,215	0,262	0,320	0,385	0,467	
15°	0,173	0,219	0,270	0,331	0,408	0,498	0,163	0,203	0,251	0,307	0,372	0,454	
10°	0,163	0,205	0,253	0,312	0,389	0,479	0,154	0,192	0,237	0,292	0,357	0,440	
5°	0,150	0,189	0,236	0,296	0,369	0,460	0,142	0,179	0,222	0,276	0,344	0,424	
0°	0,137	0,174	0,219	0,277	0,349	0,440	0,130	0,164	0,206	0,259	0,324	0,407	
— 5°	0,124	0,159	0,201	0,258	0,328	0,416	0,118	0,150	0,189	0,241	0,302	0,386	
— 10°	0,110	0,142	0,183	0,237	0,305	0,390	0,103	0,135	0,172	0,222	0,283	0,363	
— 15°	0,095	0,125	0,163	0,216	0,280	0,362	0,091	0,120	0,154	0,202	0,260	0,337	
— 20°	0,080	0,108	0,143	0,193	0,255	0,333	0,076	0,103	0,135	0,181	0,236	0,309	
— 25°	0,063	0,090	0,123	0,170	0,229	0,300	0,060	0,086	0,116	0,159	0,212	0,280	

# Caquot (1934)

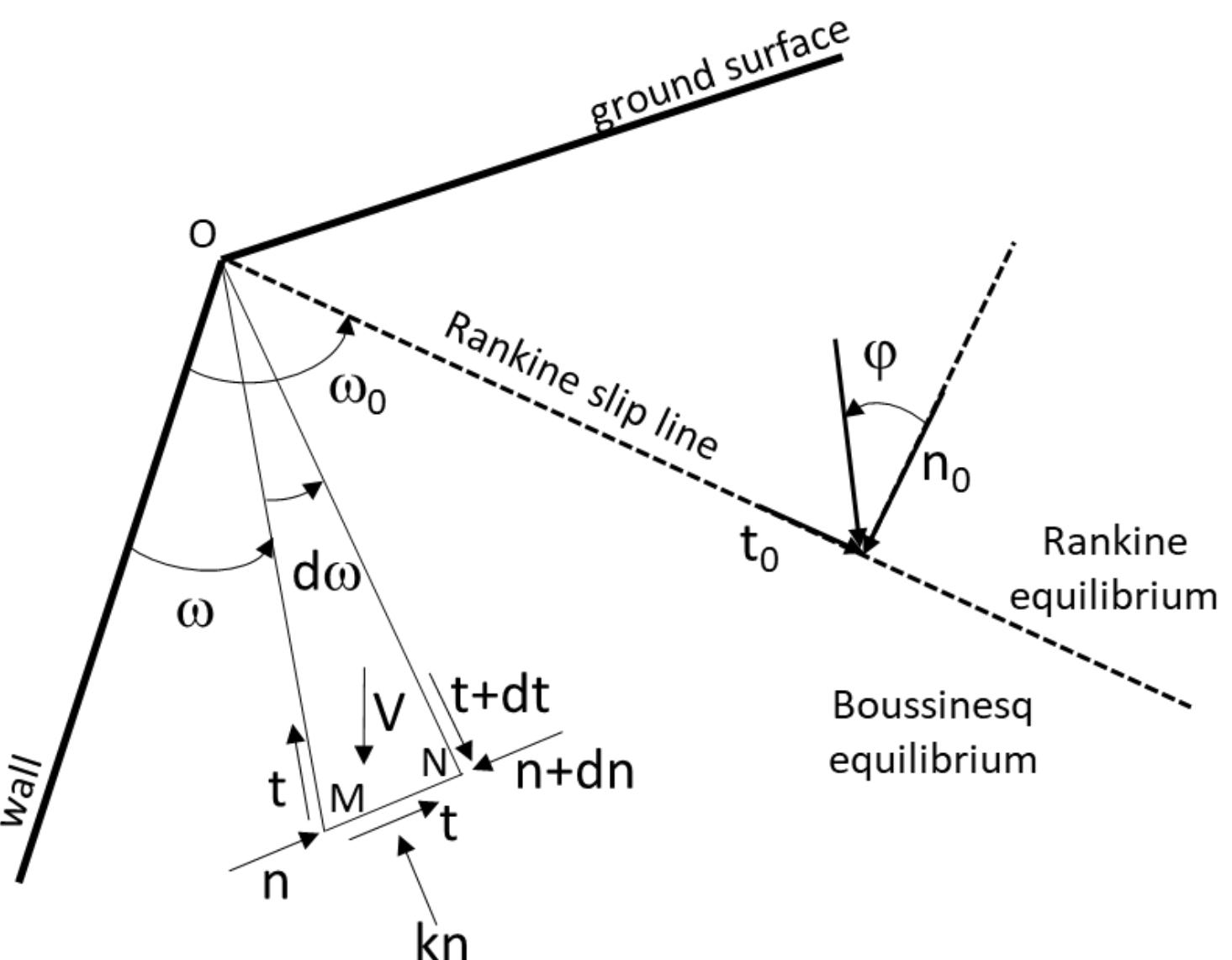


$$\frac{dn}{d\omega} = 3t - \sin\omega \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{dt}{d\omega} = nm - \cos\omega \quad (2)$$

$$m = 2k - 1$$

$$m = 1 + 4\tan^2\varphi \pm \frac{4}{\cos\varphi} \sqrt{\tan^2\varphi - \tan^2\alpha}$$



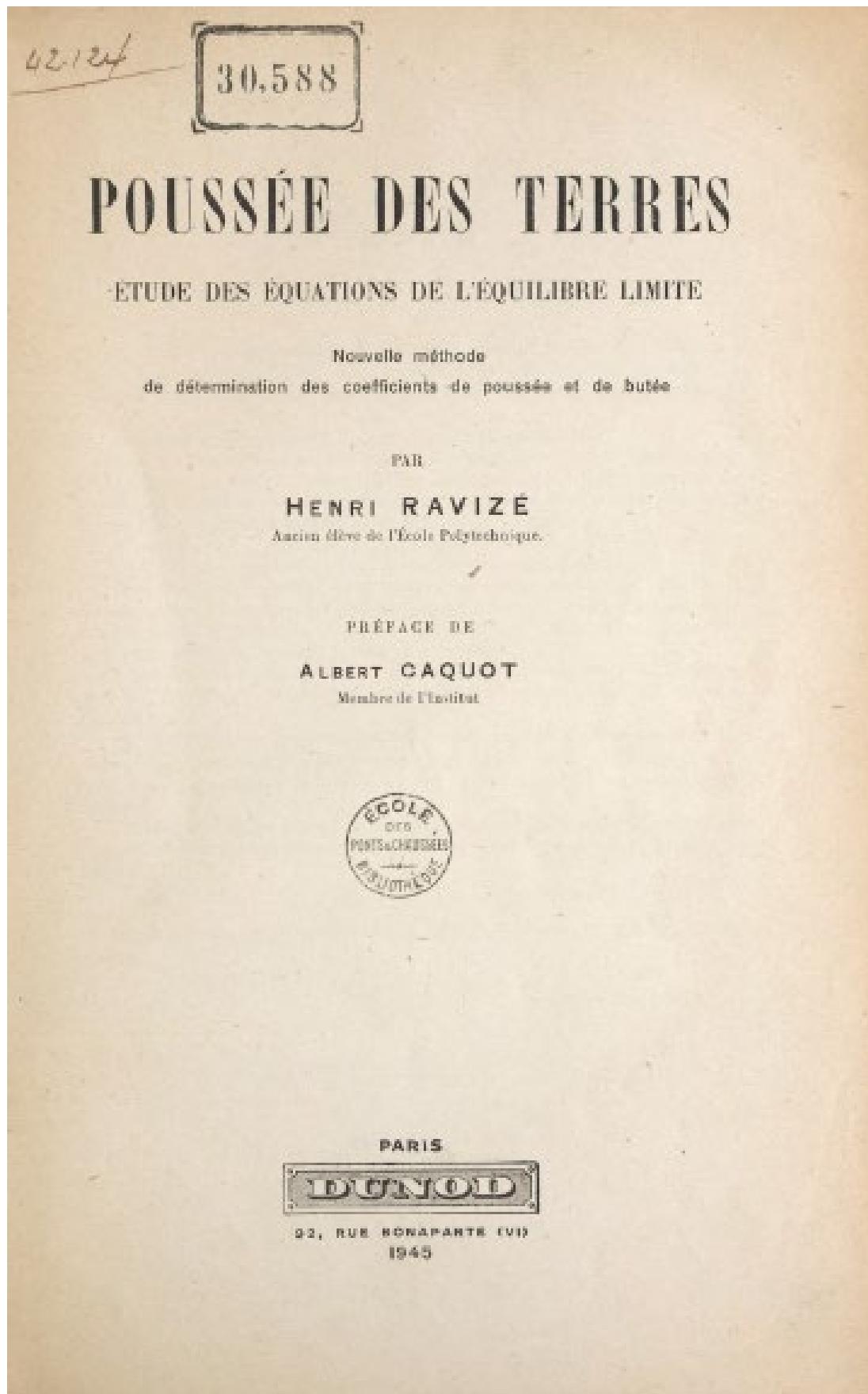
The stress state ensures the equilibrium of the system that is fully plastic.

The parameter  $k$  ensures that the stress state with its inclination  $\alpha$  is on the Mohr circle ('+' for active state and '-' for passive state)

A first method is proposed but the numerical values are still those calculated by Résal in 1903.

1934

# Ravizé (1945)

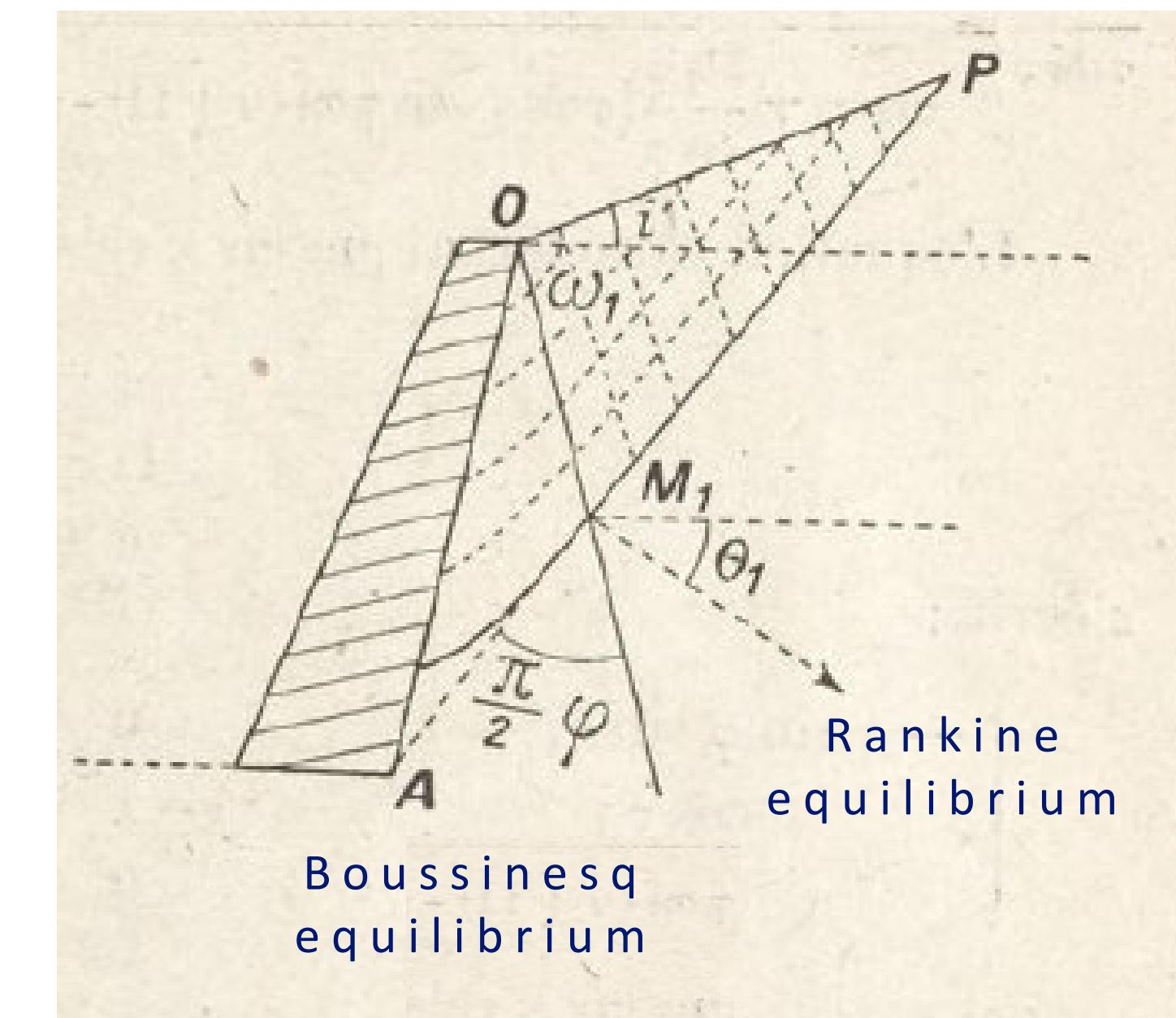


The calculation principles are clearly established with the distinction of two parts: the first one is related to the Rankine equilibrium while the second one is related to the Boussinesq equilibrium.

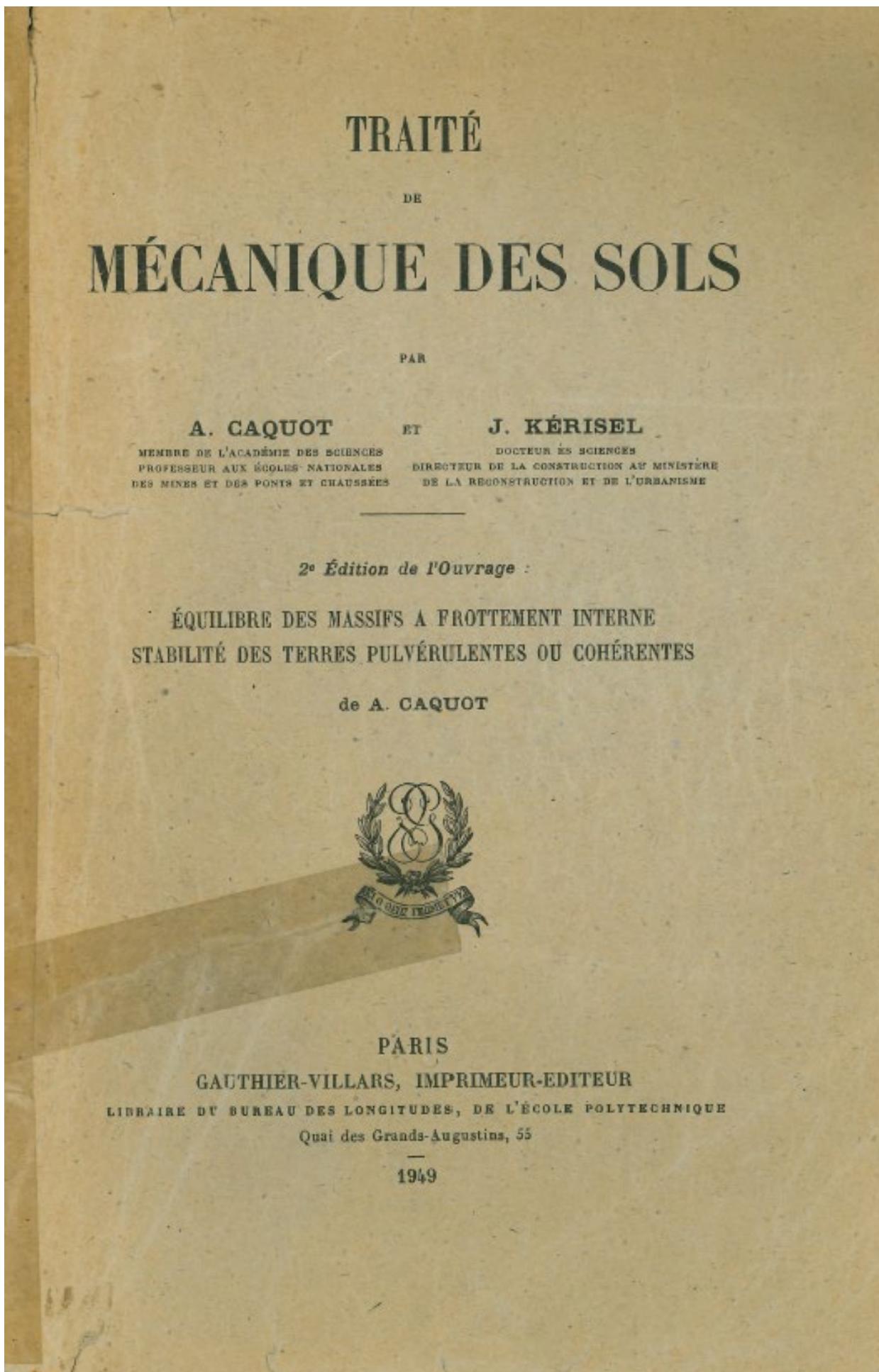
The equations are undetermined: for any stress inclination on the wall, it is possible to find an earth pressure on the wall that ensures the equilibrium with the Rankine state on the line  $OM_1$ .

1945

Some values are proposed.



# Caquot and Kerisel (1948 and 1949)



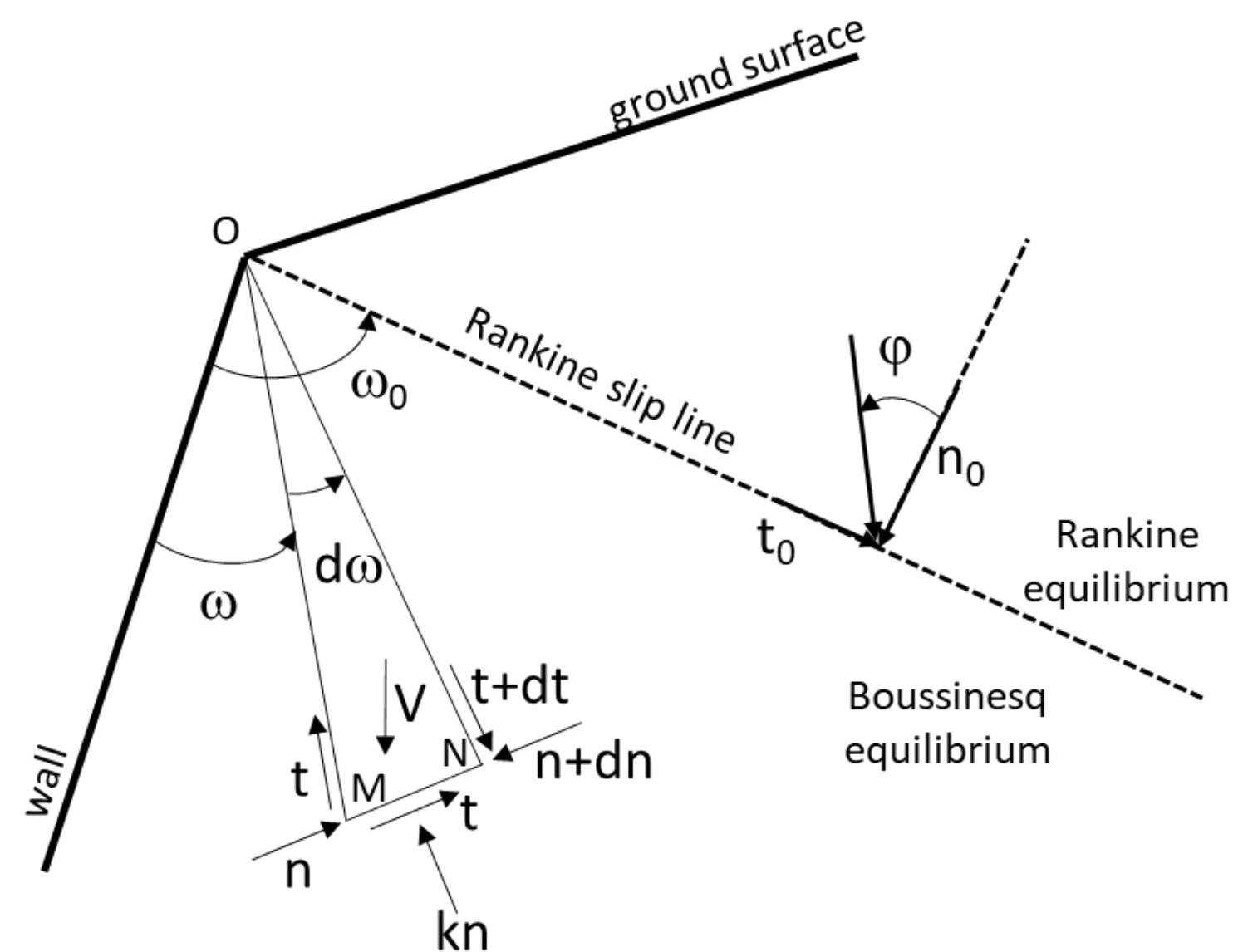
1949

$$\frac{dn}{d\omega} = 3t - \sin\omega \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{dt}{d\omega} = nm - \cos\omega \quad (2)$$

$$m = 2k - 1$$

$$m = 1 + 4\tan^2\varphi \pm \frac{4}{\cos\varphi} \sqrt{\tan^2\varphi - \tan^2\alpha}$$



Active and passive earth pressure coefficients are calculated for various cases using a systematic procedure: the first tables proposed by Caquot and Kerisel are presented.

# Active and passive earth pressures for weighted ground conditions

→ Active earth pressures: the values are the same since 1948.

$$K_{a\gamma} = \rho k_a \quad k_a = \frac{\cos^2(\lambda - \varphi)}{\cos(\lambda + \delta) \left( 1 + \sqrt{\frac{\sin(\varphi + \delta)\sin(\varphi - \beta)}{\cos(\lambda + \delta)\cos(\beta - \lambda)}} \right)^2} \quad \ln(\rho) = - \left( 2 - \frac{\tan^2 \beta + \tan^2 \delta}{2\tan^2 \varphi} \right) \sqrt{\sin \varphi} \ln[(1 - 0,9\zeta^2 - 0,1\zeta^4)(1 - 0,3\zeta^3)]$$

Coulomb-Poncelet coefficient

# Active and passive earth pressures for weighted ground conditions

→ Active earth pressures: the values are the same since 1948.

$$K_{a\gamma} = \rho k_a \quad k_a = \frac{\cos^2(\lambda - \varphi)}{\cos(\lambda + \delta) \left( 1 + \sqrt{\frac{\sin(\varphi + \delta)\sin(\varphi - \beta)}{\cos(\lambda + \delta)\cos(\beta - \lambda)}} \right)^2} \quad \ln(\rho) = - \left( 2 - \frac{\tan^2 \beta + \tan^2 \delta}{2\tan^2 \varphi} \right) \sqrt{\sin \varphi} \ln[(1 - 0,9\zeta^2 - 0,1\zeta^4)(1 - 0,3\zeta^3)]$$

Coulomb-Poncelet coefficient

→ Passive earth pressures: the values have varied.

Example:

$$c=0, \varphi=30^\circ \text{ and } \delta/\varphi = -1$$

Caquot, Kerisel and Absi:

$$K_p = 6,42 \text{ (1948)}, K_p = 6,56 \text{ (1966)}, \\ K_p = 6,50 \text{ (1990)}$$

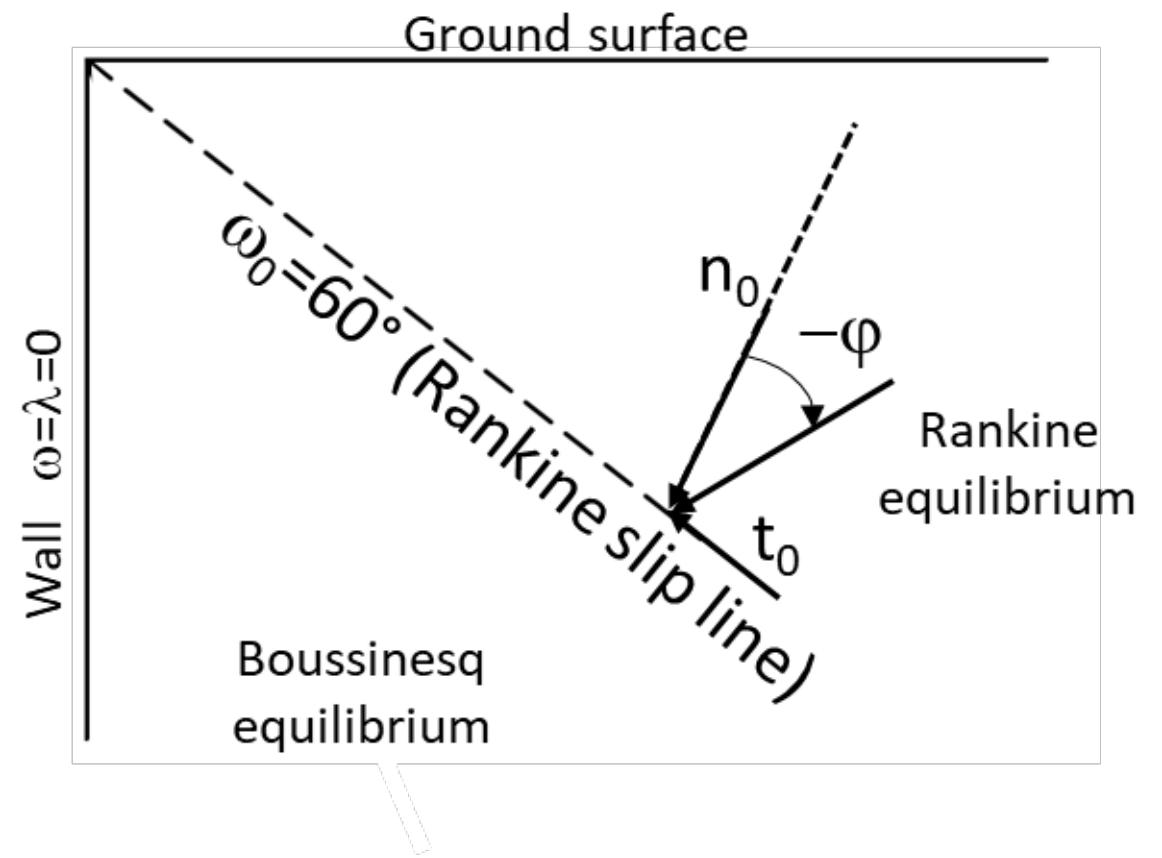
Sokolowski (1965):

$$K_p = 6,55$$

The differences are negligible for the practice but it may be interesting to better understand how these values were determined.

# An example of numerical integration

$\varphi=30^\circ$ ,  $\beta=0$ ,  $\lambda=0$ ,  $\delta/\varphi=-1$  (case 1)



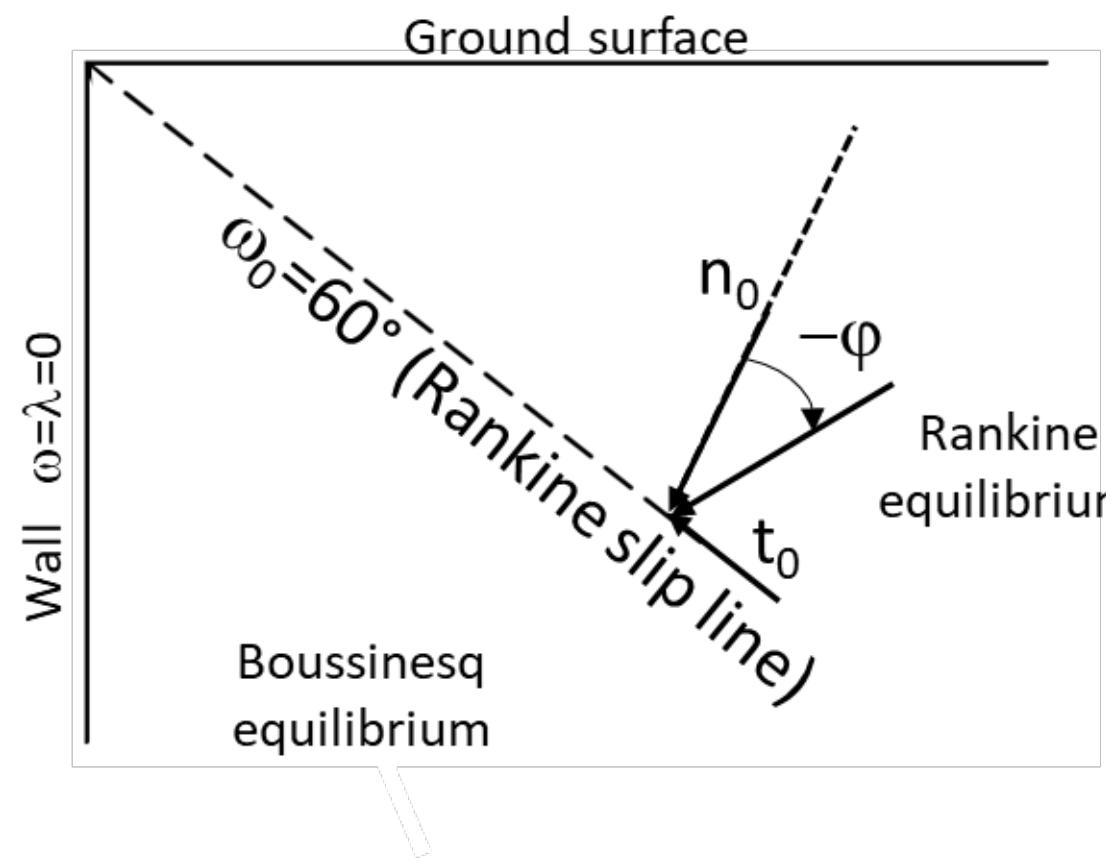
$$\frac{dn}{d\omega} = 3t - \sin\omega \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{dt}{d\omega} = nm - \cos\omega \quad (2)$$

Runge Kutta (RK4) numerical  
integration method

# An example of numerical integration

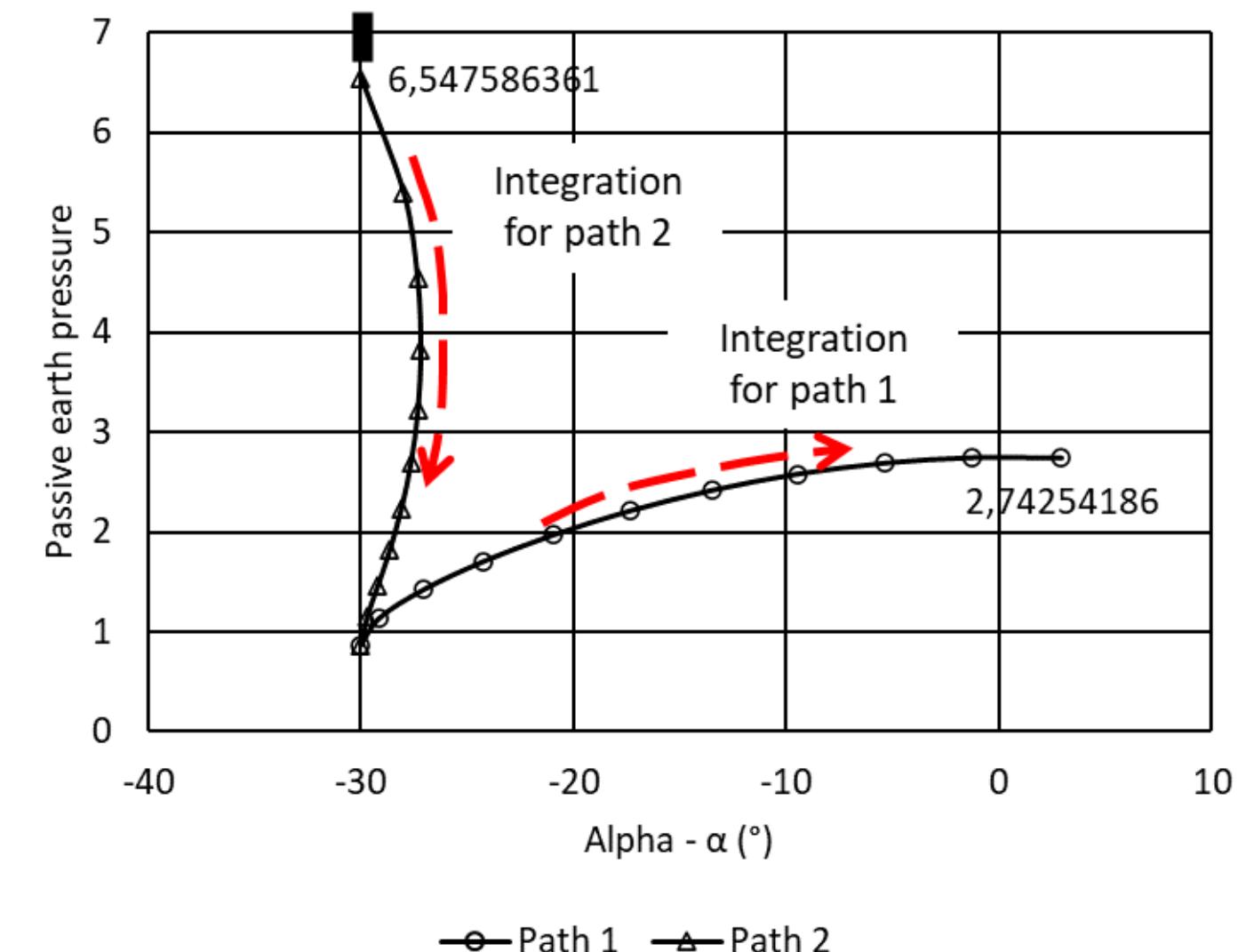
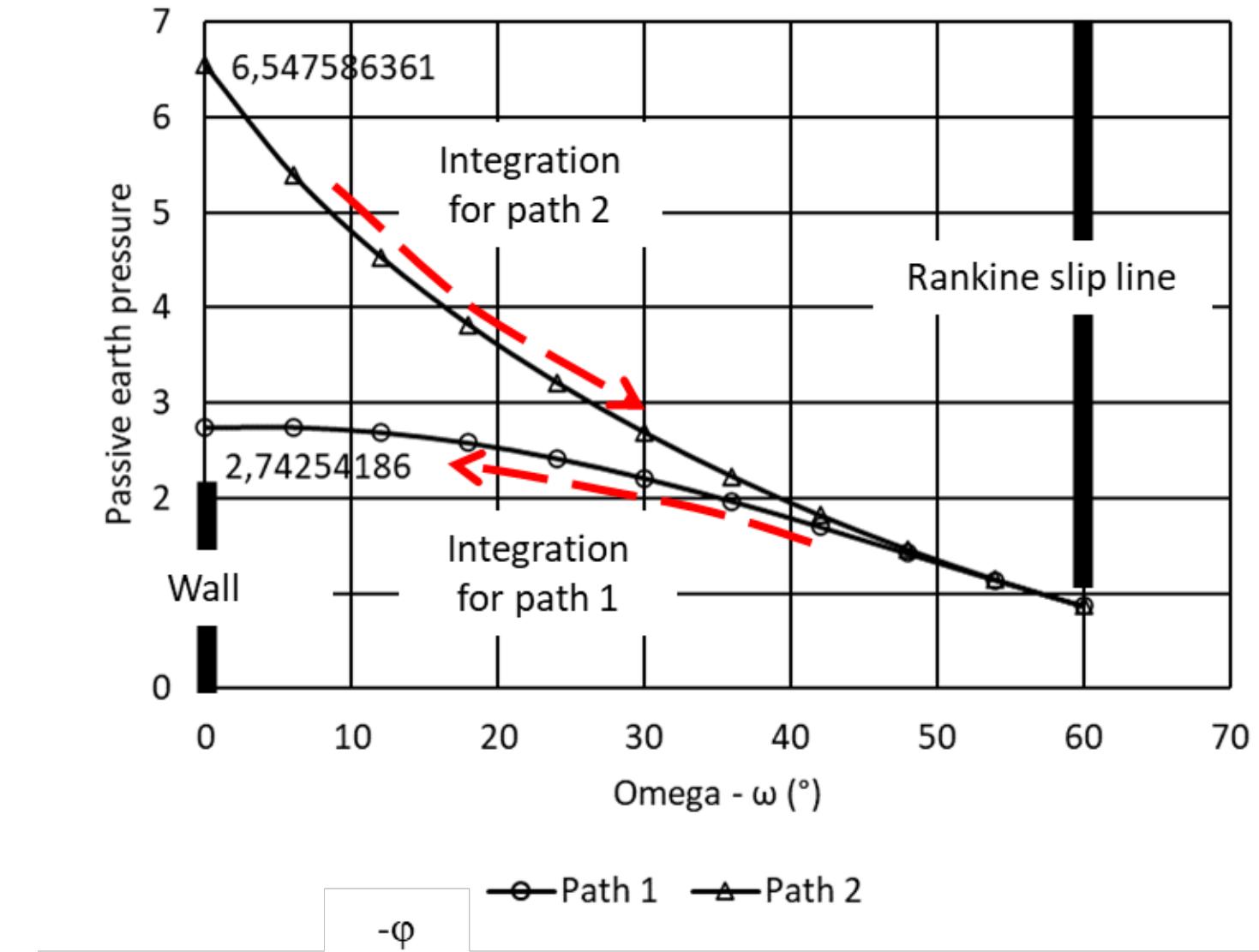
$\varphi=30^\circ, \beta=0, \lambda=0, \delta/\varphi=-1$  (case 1)



$$\frac{dn}{d\omega} = 3t - \sin\omega \quad (1)$$

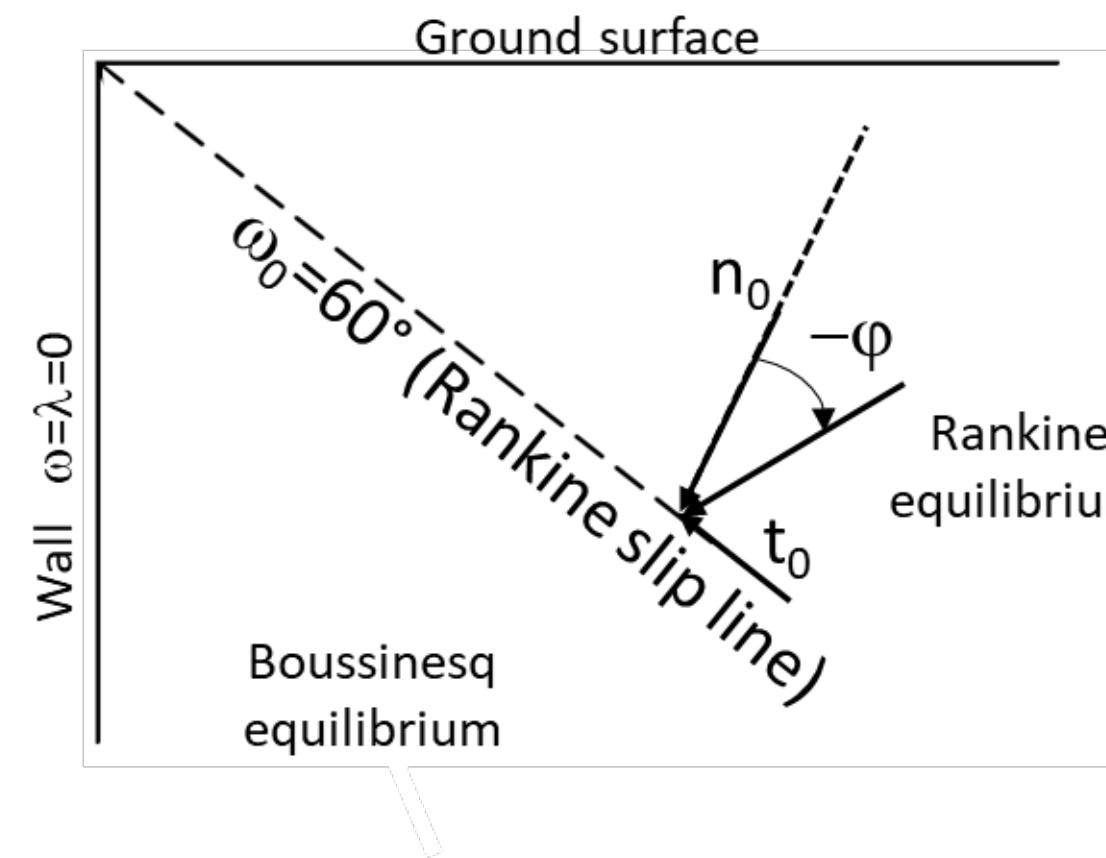
$$\frac{dt}{d\omega} = nm - \cos\omega \quad (2)$$

Runge Kutta (RK4) numerical integration method



# An example of numerical integration

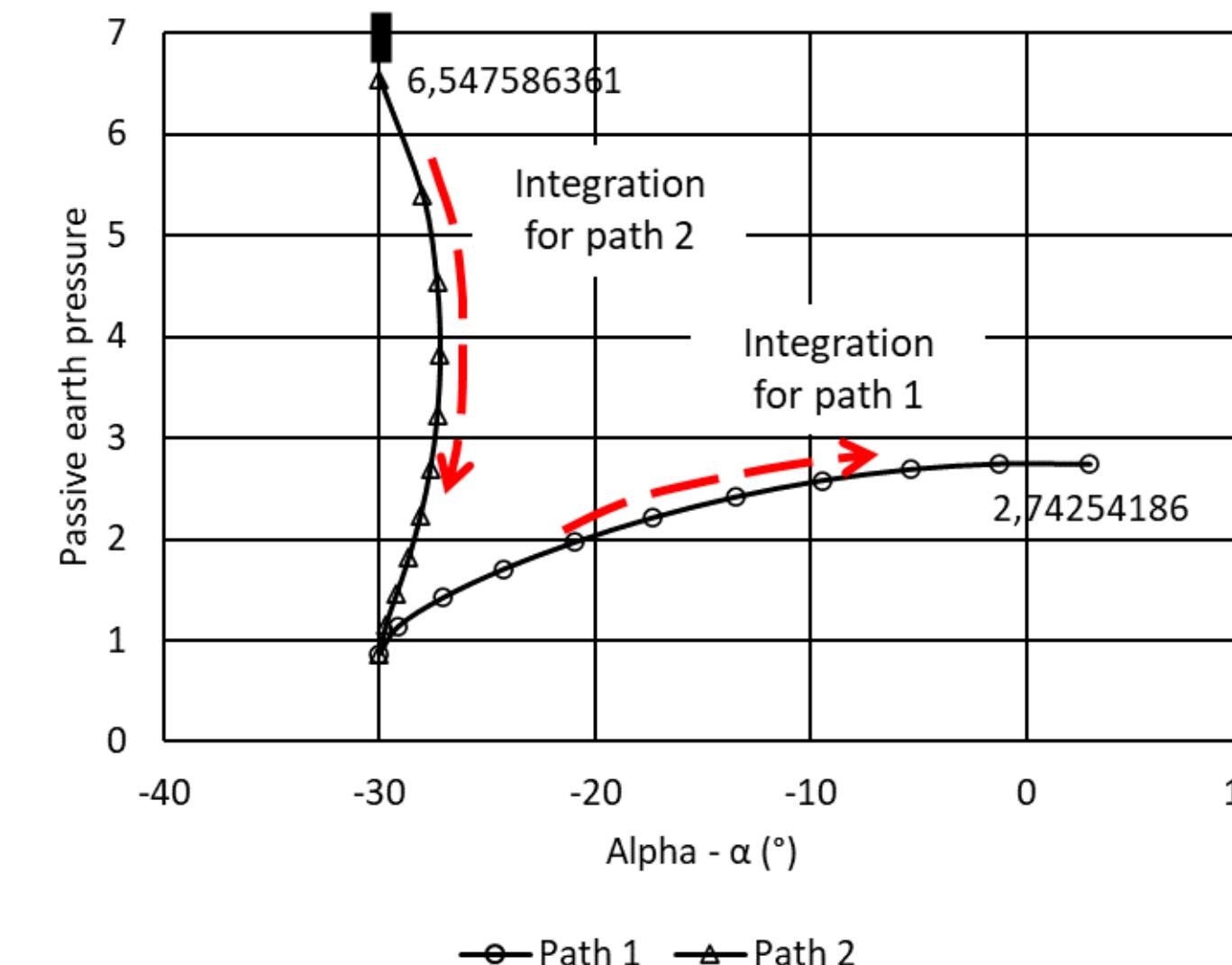
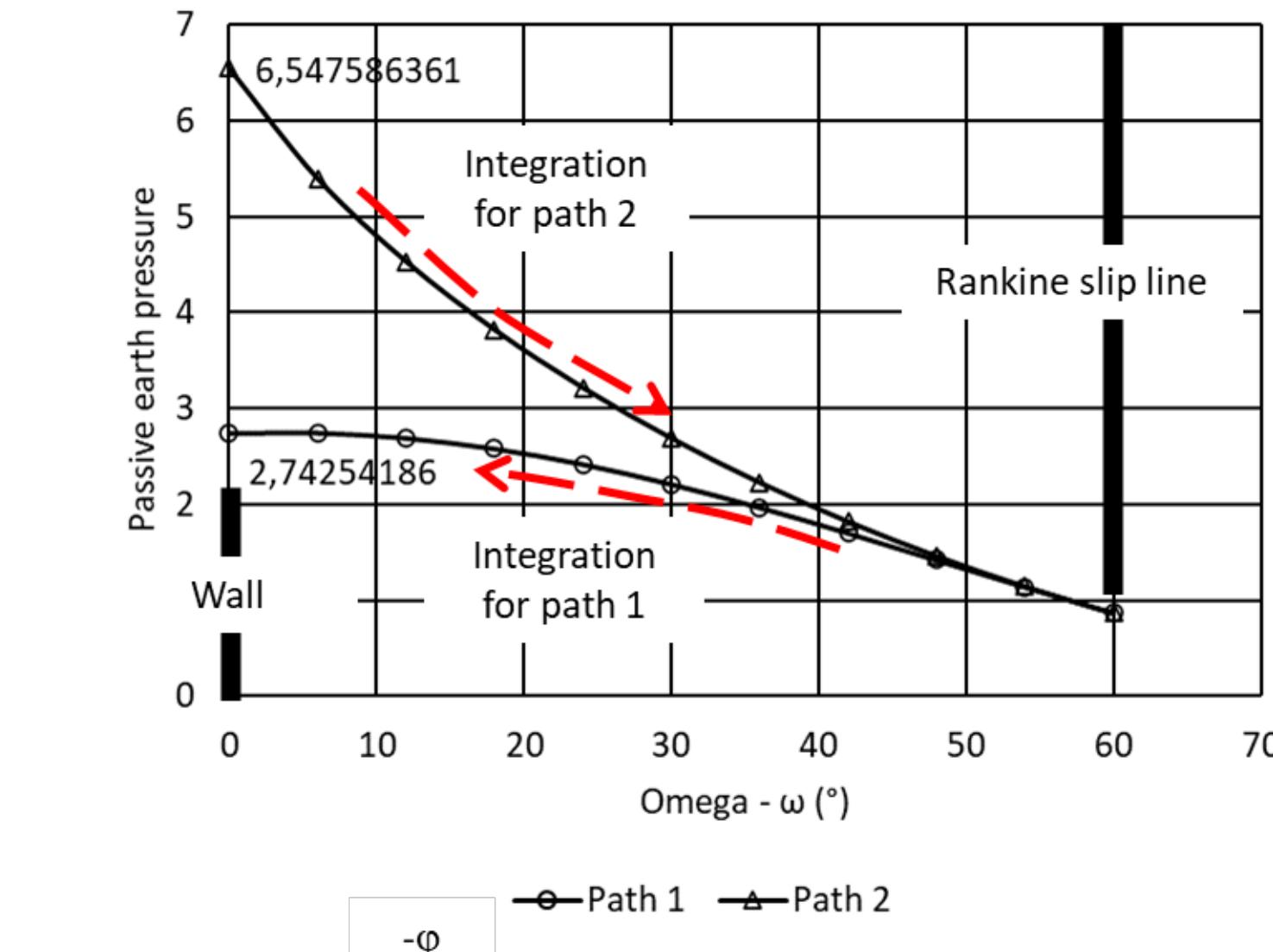
$\varphi=30^\circ, \beta=0, \lambda=0, \delta/\varphi=-1$  (case 1)



$$\frac{dn}{d\omega} = 3t - \sin\omega \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{dt}{d\omega} = nm - \cos\omega \quad (2)$$

Runge Kutta (RK4) numerical integration method



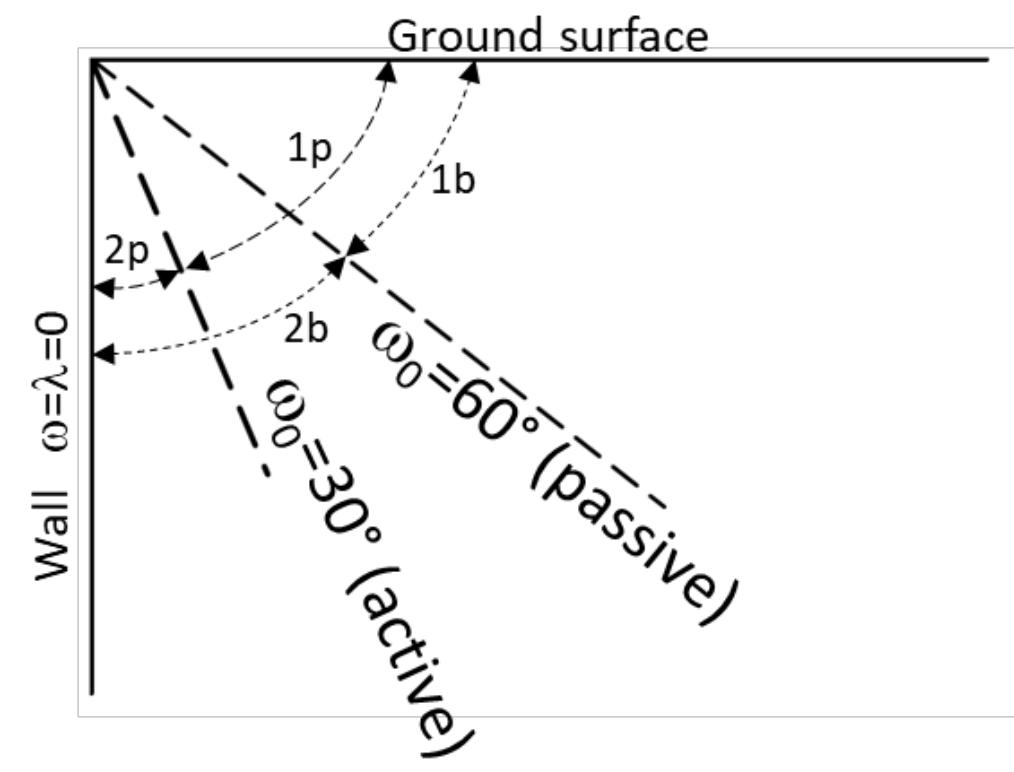
Method presented:  
 $K_p = 6,548$

Caquot, Kerisel, Absi:  
 $K_p = 6,42$  (1948),  $K_p = 6,56$  (1966),  $K_p = 6,50$  (1990)

Sokolowski (1965):  
 $K_p = 6,55$

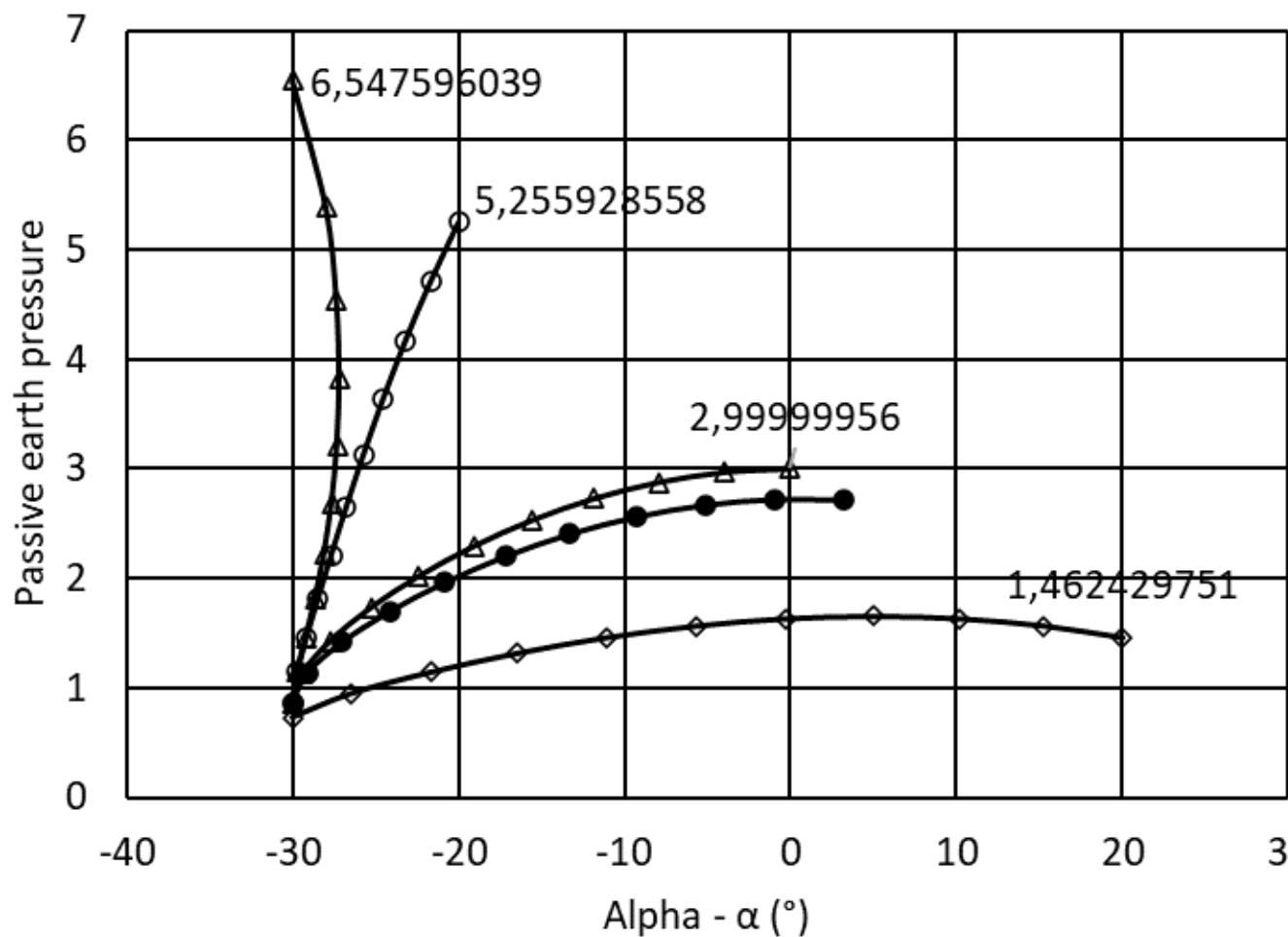
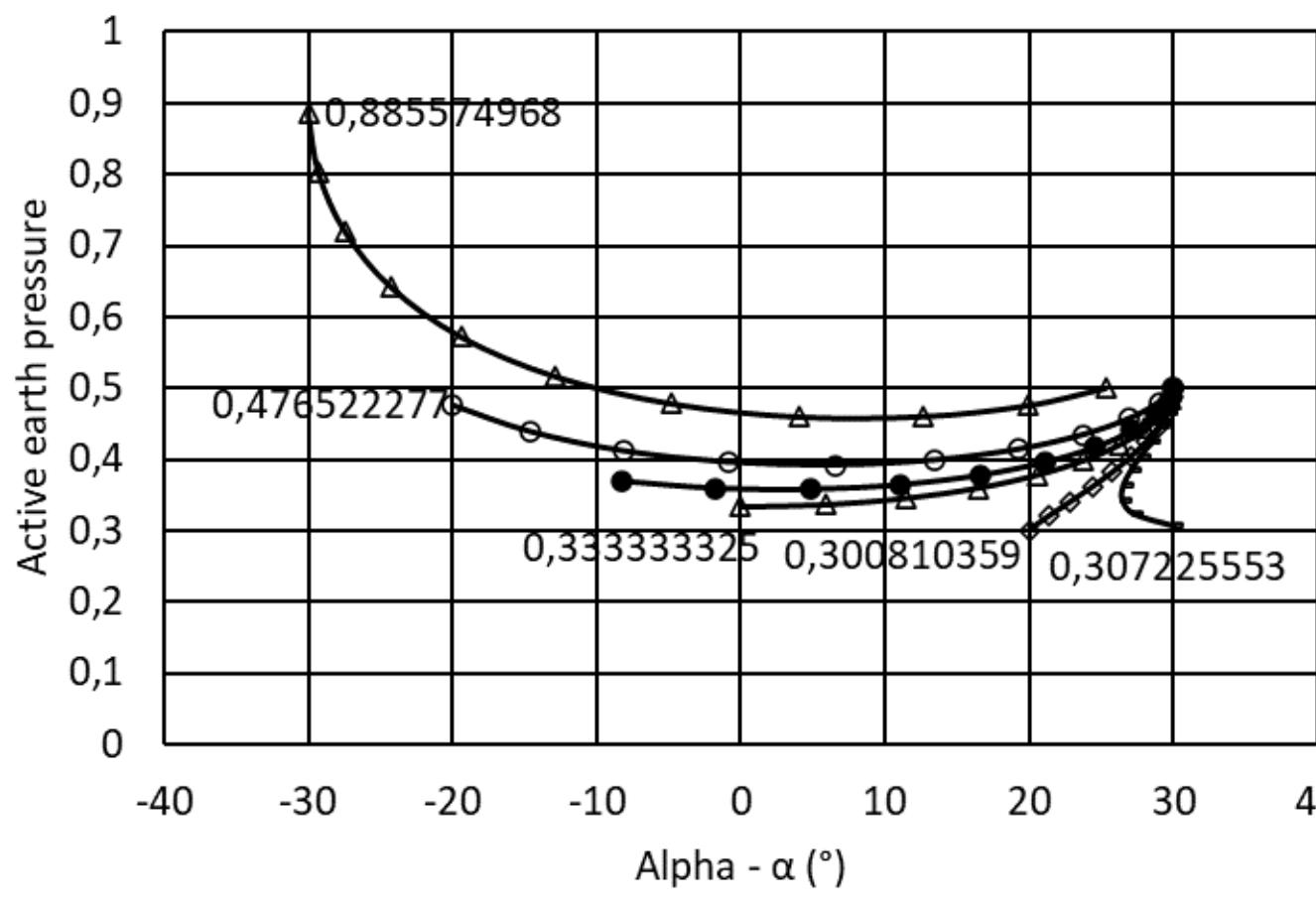
# Other examples

$\phi=30^\circ, \beta=0, \lambda=0$  (case 1)



1p : Rankine equilibrium for active state  
1b : Rankine equilibrium for passive state

2p : Boussinesq equilibrium for active state  
2b : Boussinesq equilibrium for passive state



● Path 1 ▲  $\delta/\phi=-1$  ○  $\delta/\phi=-2/3$  ▲  $\delta/\phi=0$  ◇  $\delta/\phi=2/3$  ■  $\delta/\phi=1$

Active earth pressure –  $\delta/\phi$

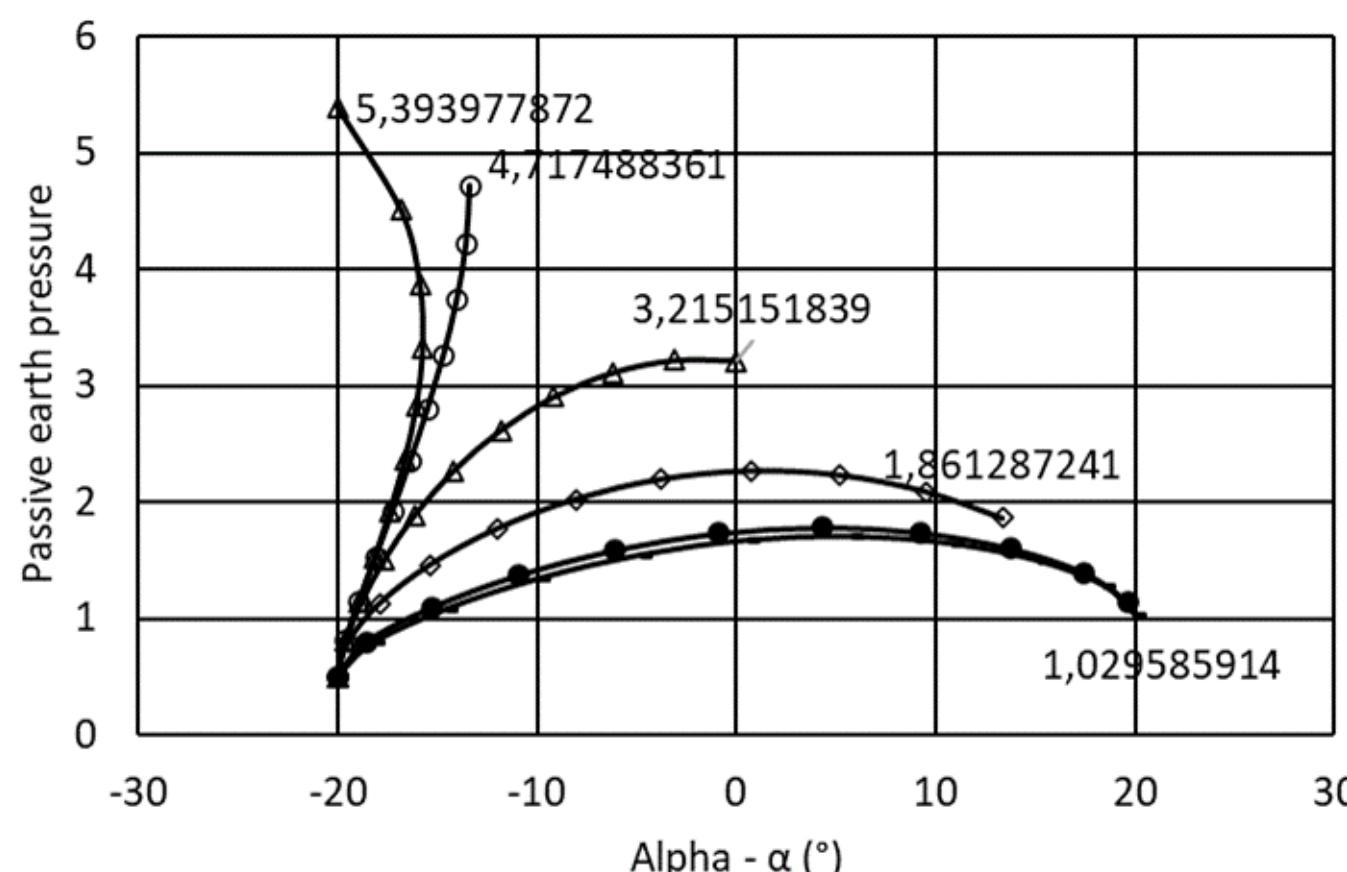
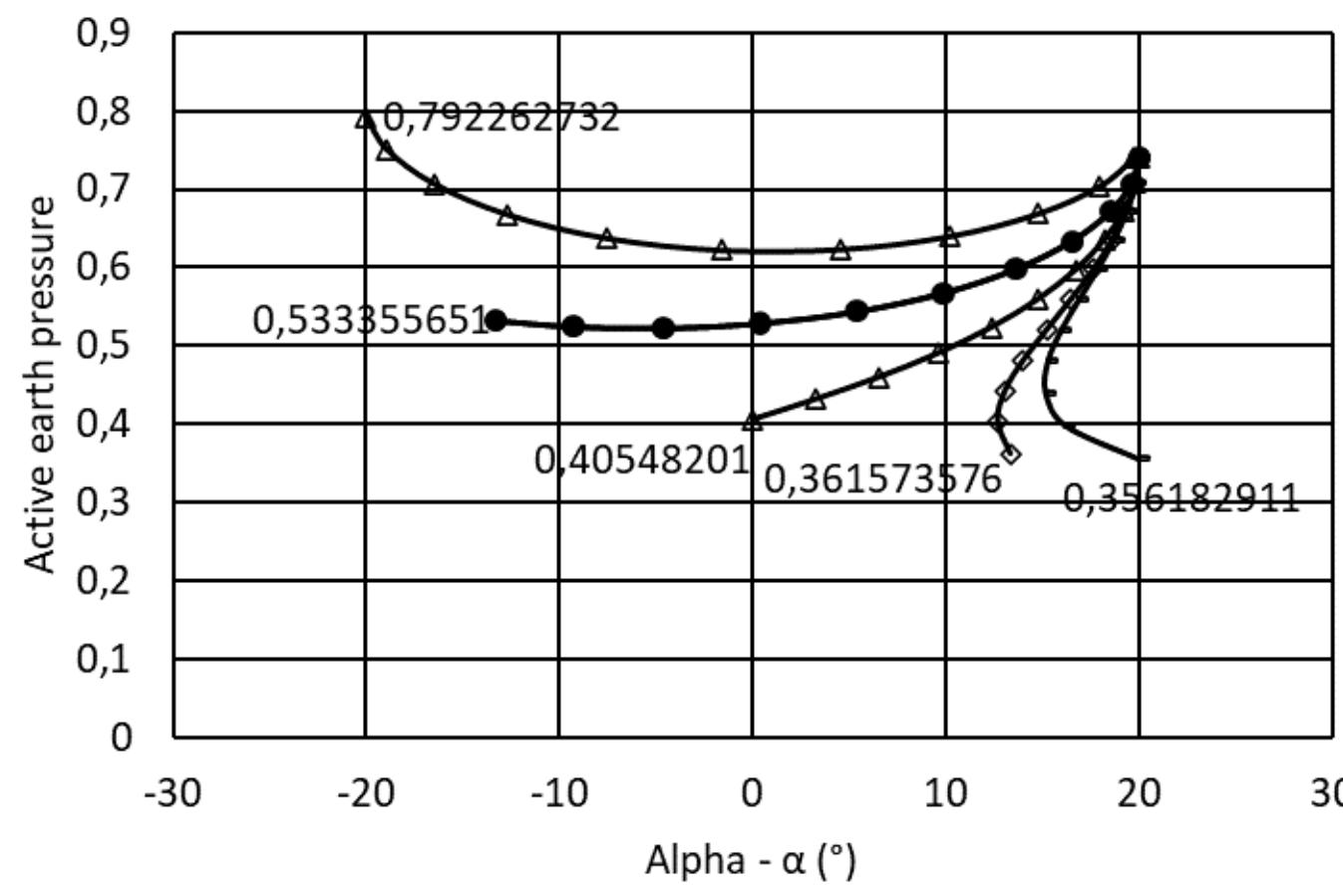
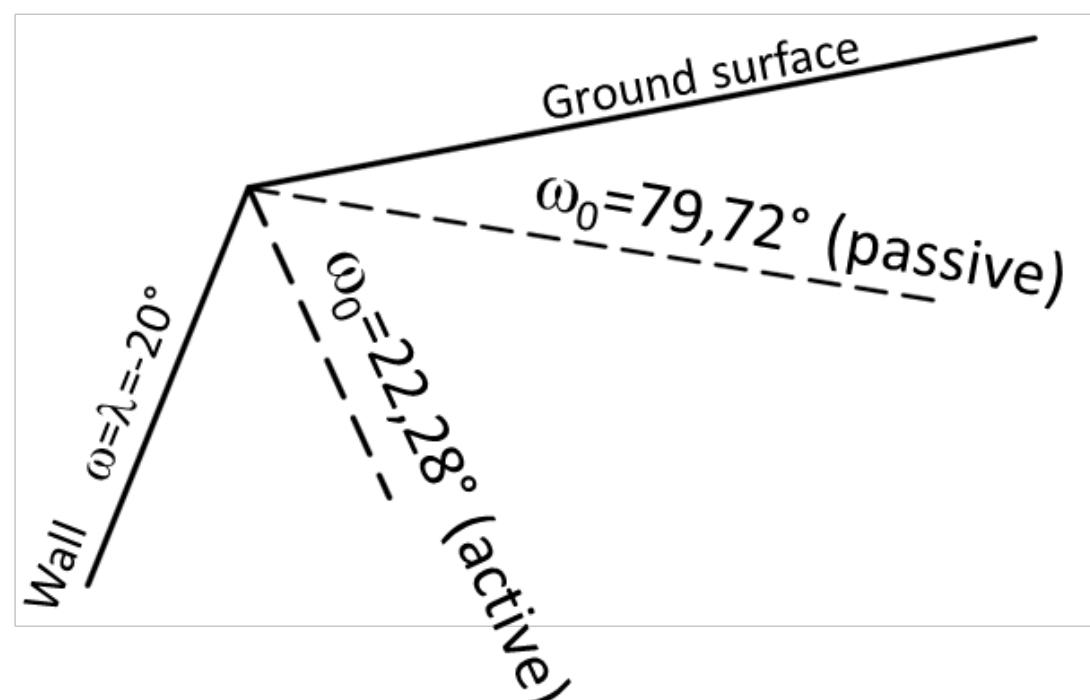
Relative inclination	- 1	- 2 / 3	0	2 / 3	1
Presented method	0,886	0,477	0,333	0,301	0,307
Caquot	0,981	0,476	0,333	0,300	0,308
Kerisel	0,866	0,469	0,333	0,297	0,297
Coulomb					

Passive earth pressure –  $\delta/\phi$

Relative inclination	- 1	- 2 / 3	0	2 / 3	1
Presented method	6,55	5,26	3,0	1,46	---
Caquot	6,50	5,30	3,0	1,46	---
Kerisel					

# Other examples

$\varphi=20^\circ, \beta=12^\circ, \lambda=-20^\circ$  (case 2)



—●— Path 1    —▲—  $\delta/\varphi = -1$     —○—  $\delta/\varphi = -2/3$   
 —△—  $\delta/\varphi = 0$     —◆—  $\delta/\varphi = 2/3$     —×—  $\delta/\varphi = 1$

Active earth pressure –  $\delta/\varphi$

Relative inclination	- 1	- 2 / 3	0	2 / 3	1
Presented method	0,792	0,533	0,405	0,362	0,356
Caquot	0,869	0,533	0,405	0,358	0,355
Kerisel	0,766	0,533	0,403	0,349	0,334
Coulomb					

Passive earth pressure –  $\delta/\varphi$

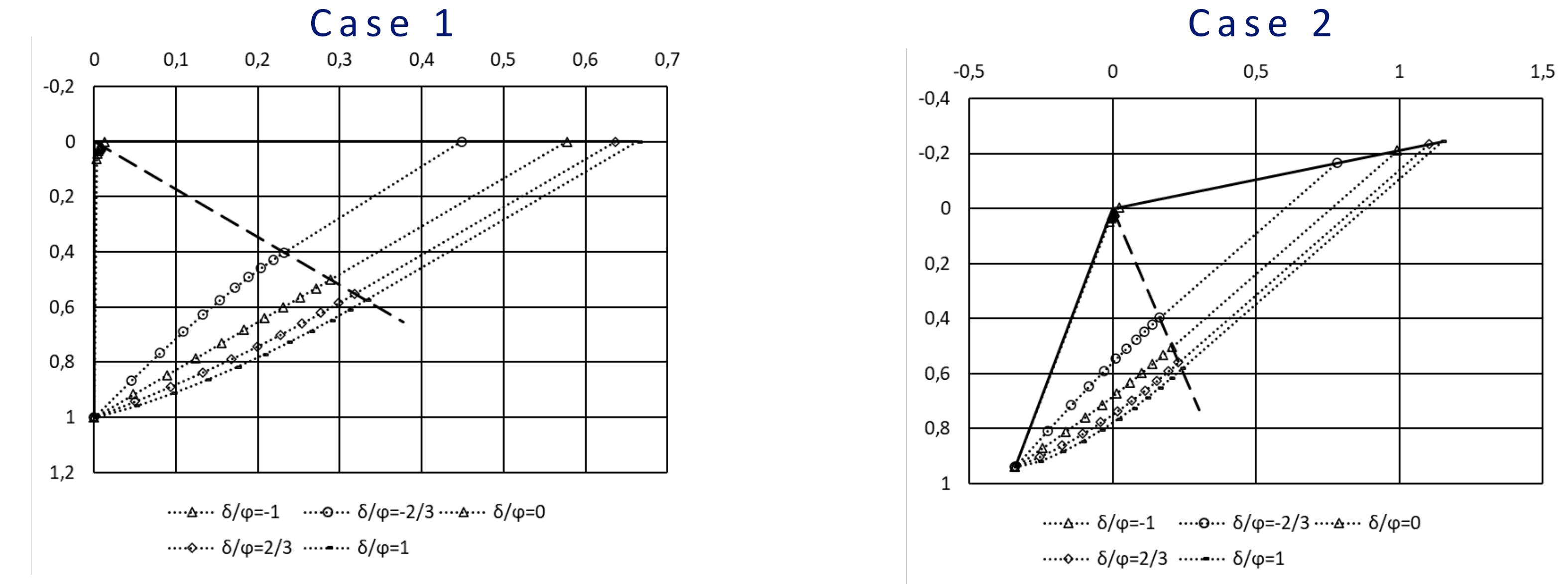
Relative inclination	- 1	- 2 / 3	0	2 / 3	1
Presented method	5,39	4,72	3,22	1,86	1,03
Caquot	5,40	4,70	3,20	1,86	---
Kerisel					

# Failure mechanism – Slip lines

Active earth  
pressures

$$r = e^{-\int \tan \xi(\omega) d\omega} \text{ with:}$$

$$\xi(\omega) = \frac{\pi}{4} + \frac{\varphi}{2} - \frac{(\omega_\alpha - \alpha)}{2} \text{ and } \omega_\alpha = \arcsin\left(\frac{\sin \alpha}{\sin \varphi}\right)$$



# Failure mechanism – Slip lines

Active earth pressures

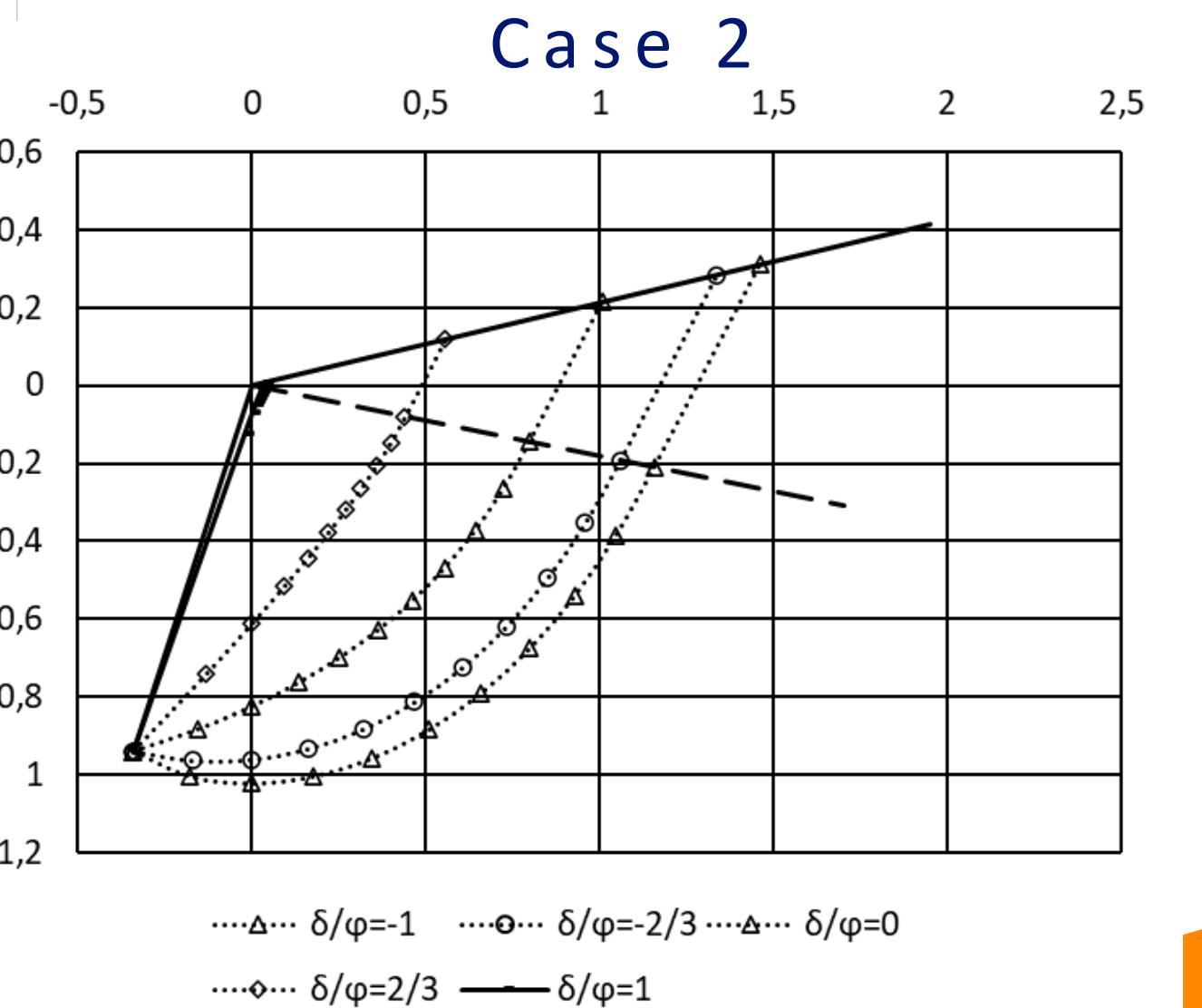
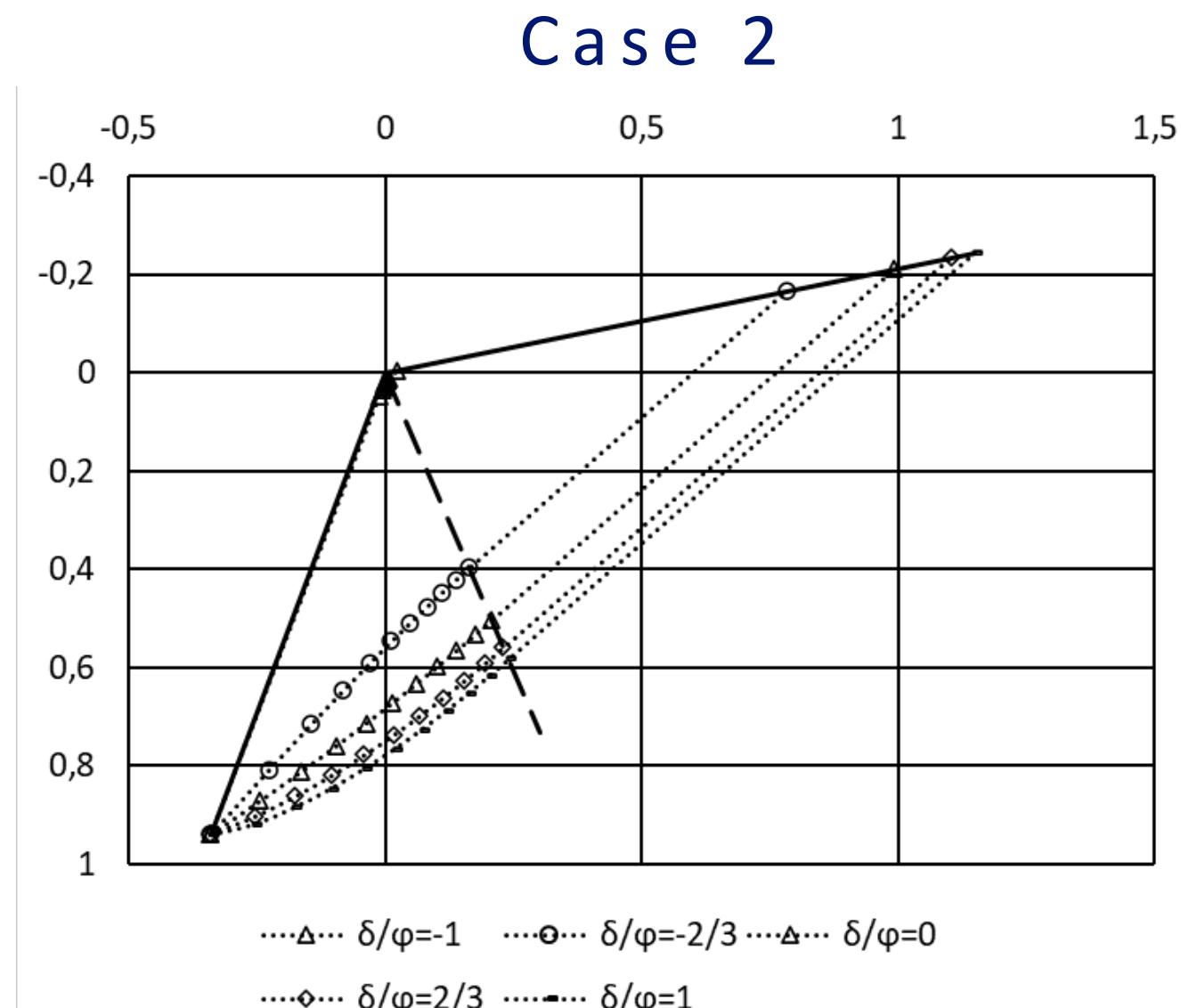
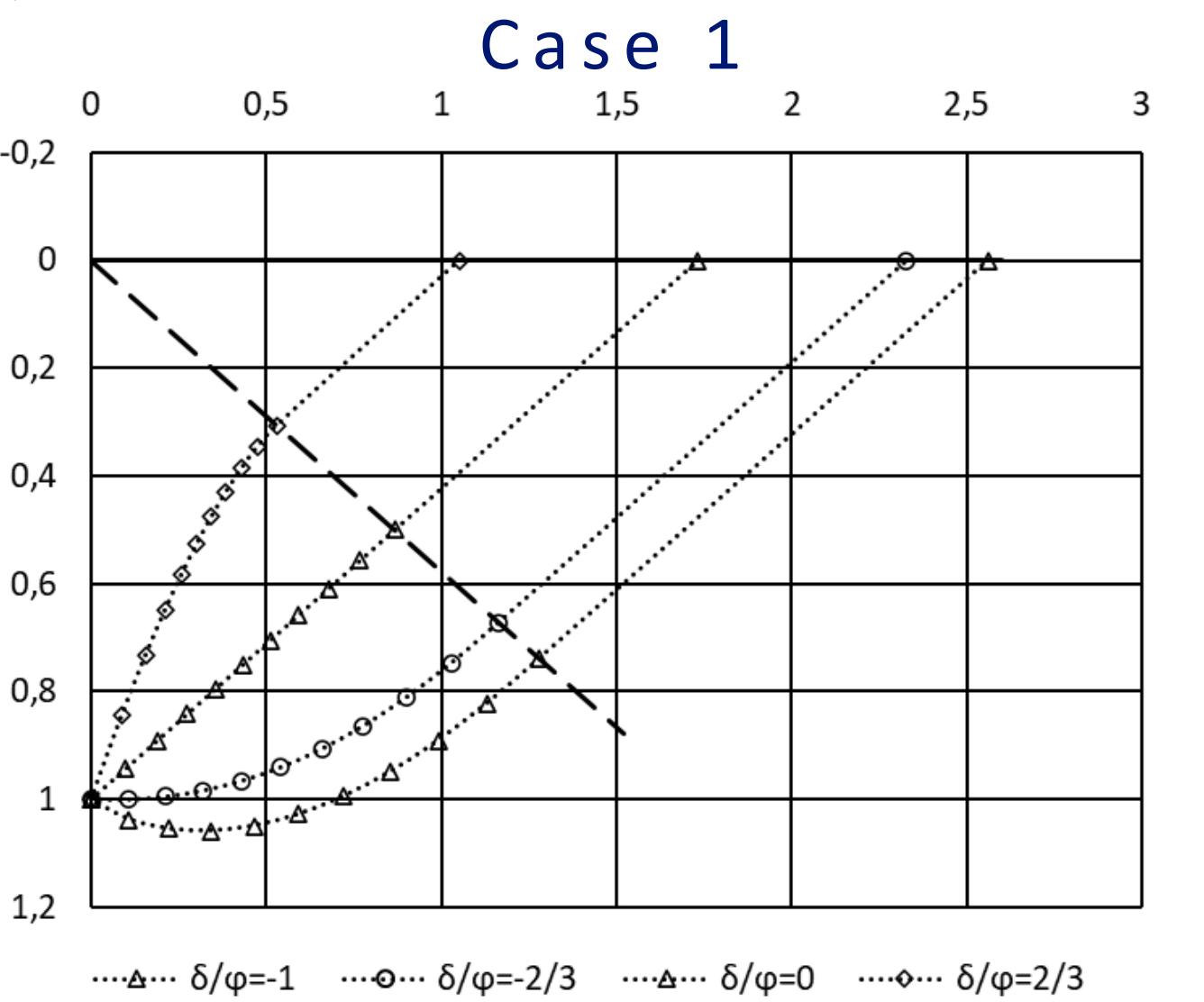
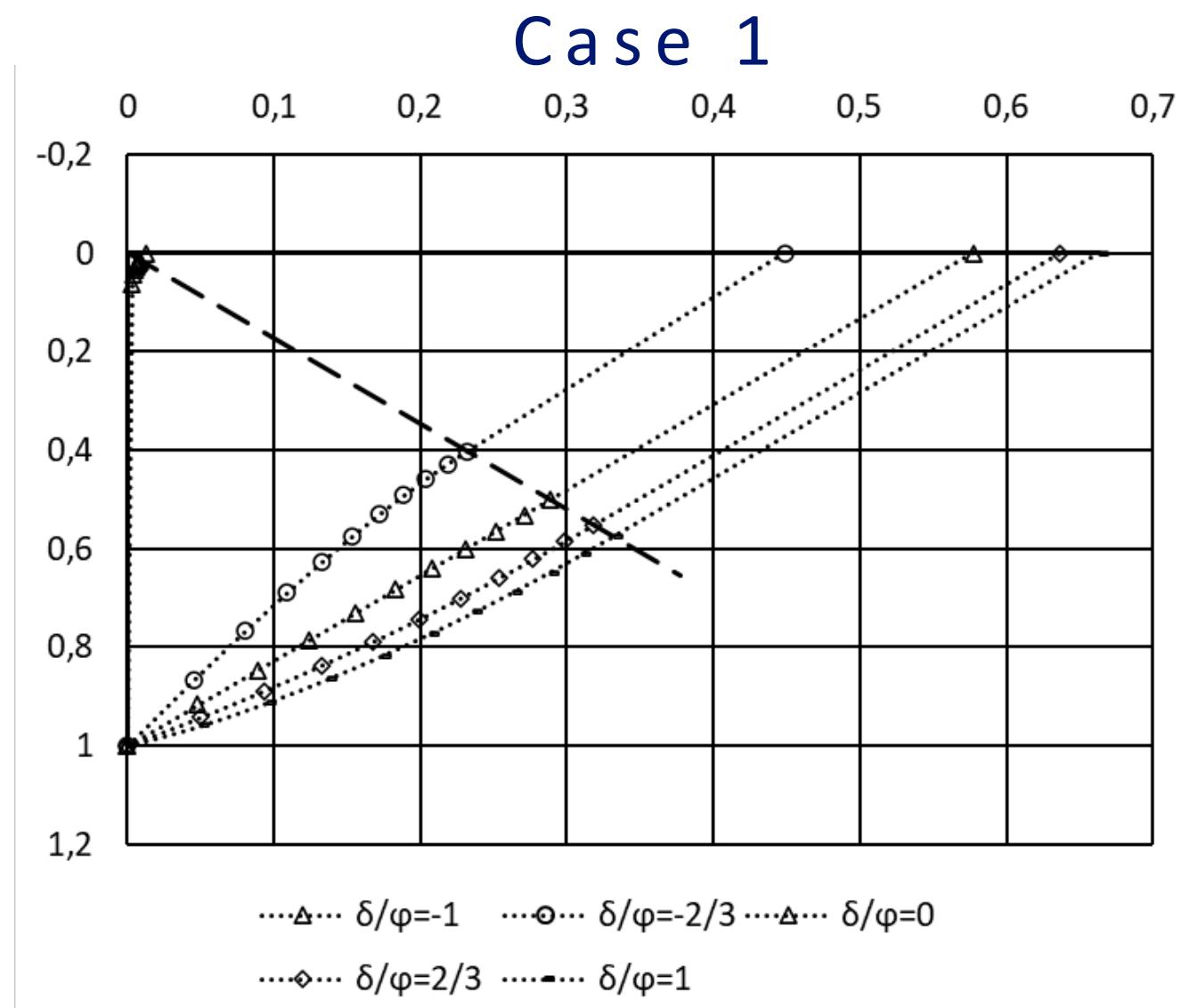
$$r = e^{-\int \tan \xi(\omega) d\omega} \text{ with:}$$

$$\xi(\omega) = \frac{\pi}{4} + \frac{\varphi}{2} - \frac{(\omega_\alpha - \alpha)}{2} \text{ and } \omega_\alpha = \arcsin\left(\frac{\sin \alpha}{\sin \varphi}\right)$$

Passive earth pressures

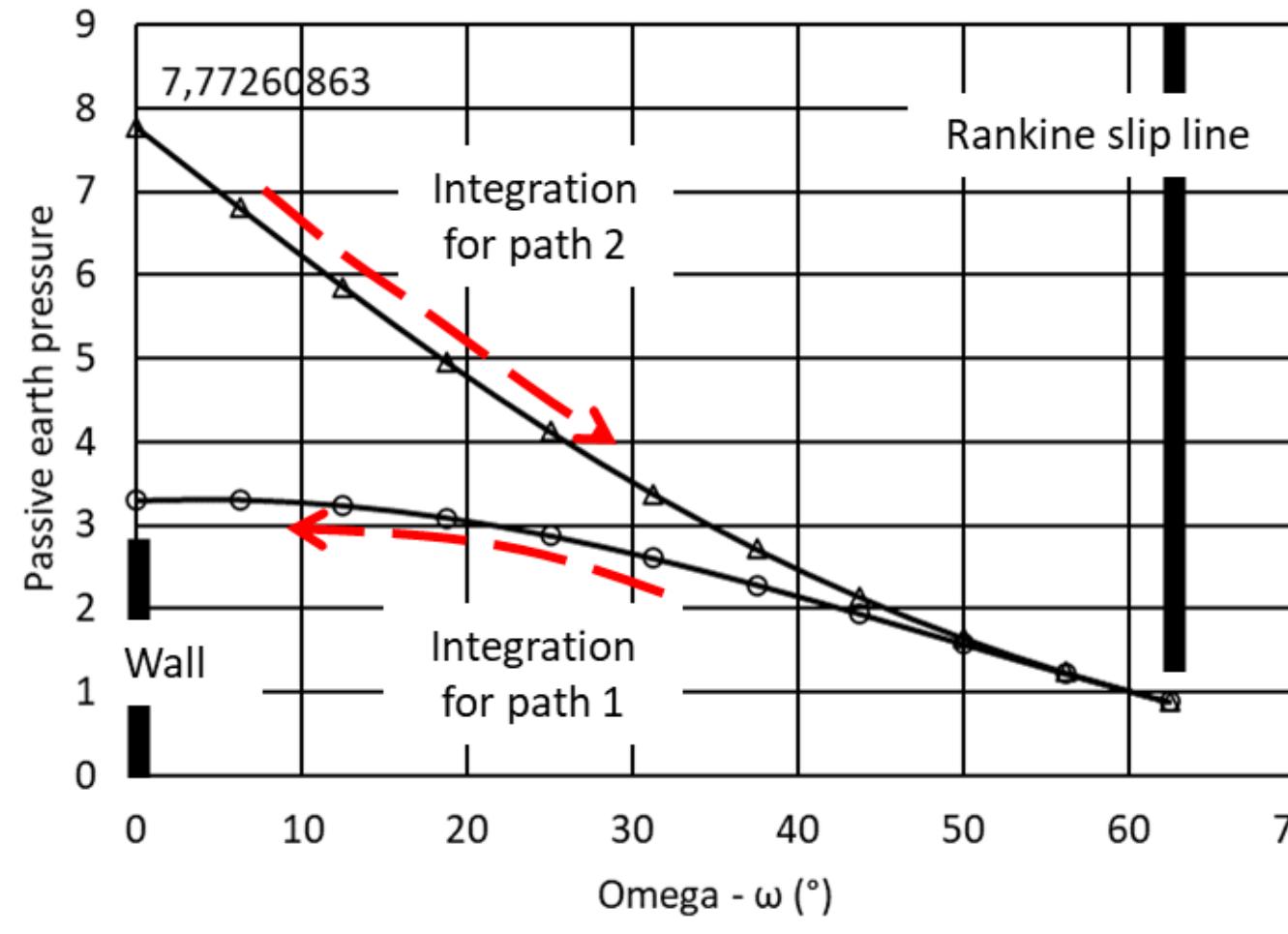
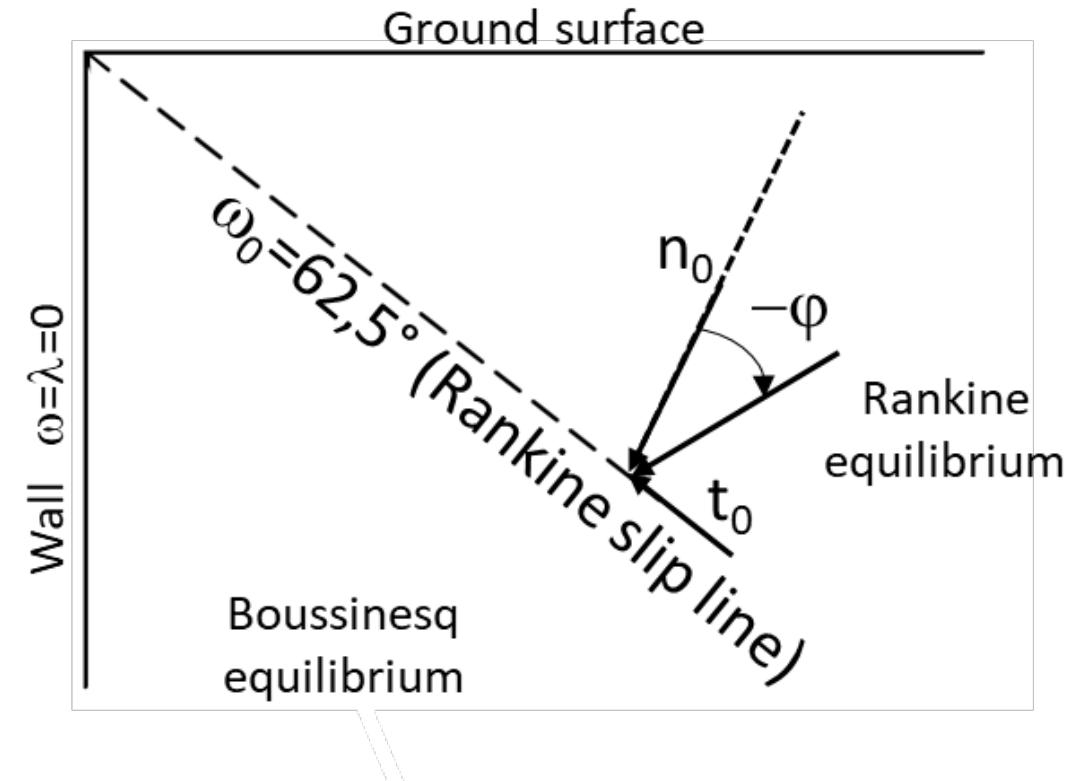
$$r = e^{-\int \tan \xi(\omega) d\omega} \text{ with:}$$

$$\xi(\omega) = \frac{\pi}{4} - \frac{\varphi}{2} + \frac{(\omega_\alpha + \alpha)}{2} \text{ and } \omega_\alpha = \arcsin\left(\frac{\sin \alpha}{\sin \varphi}\right)$$

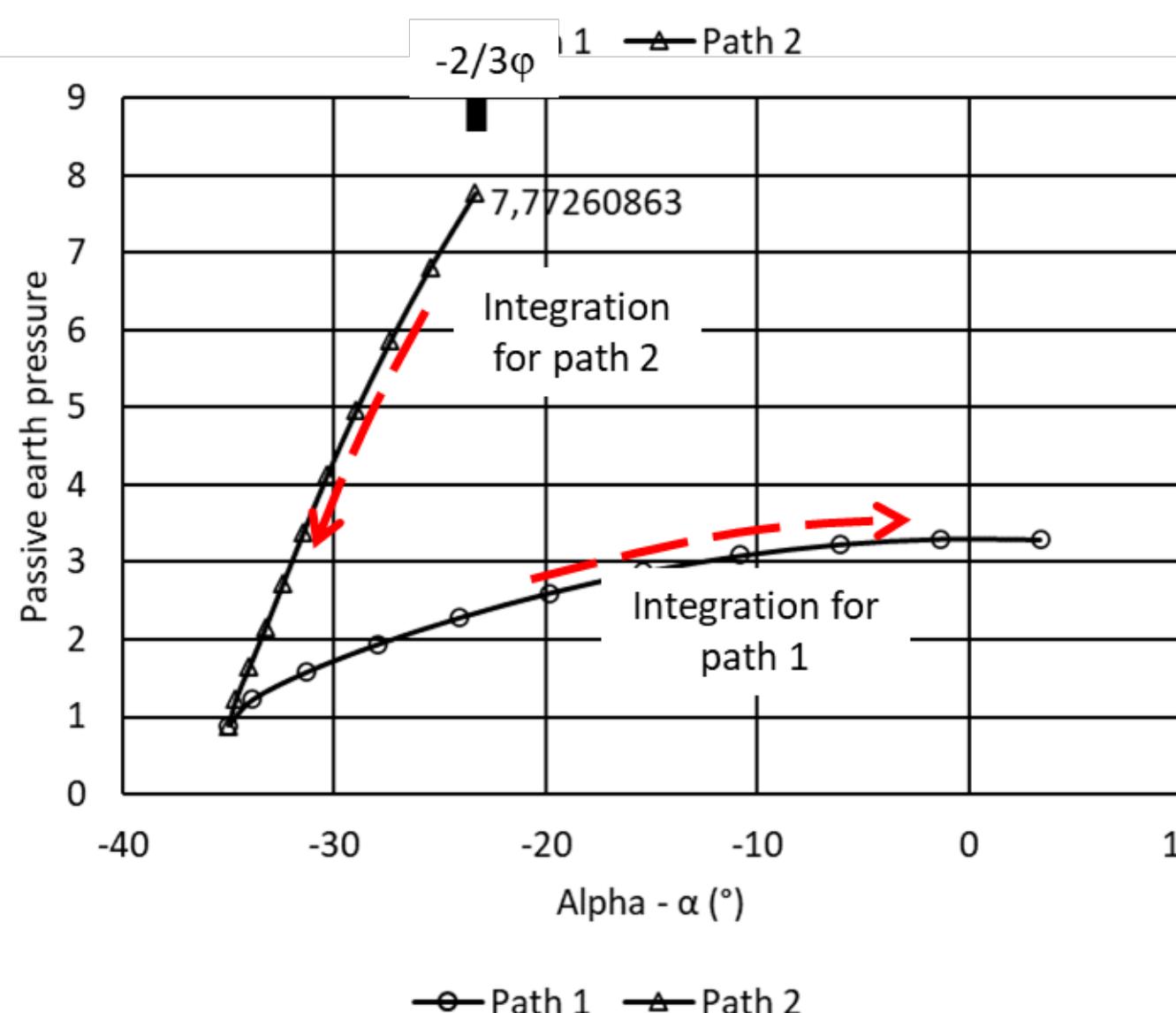


# A last example – Comparison with the kinematical approach of the yield analysis

$$\varphi=35^\circ, \beta=0, \lambda=0, \delta/\varphi=-2/3$$



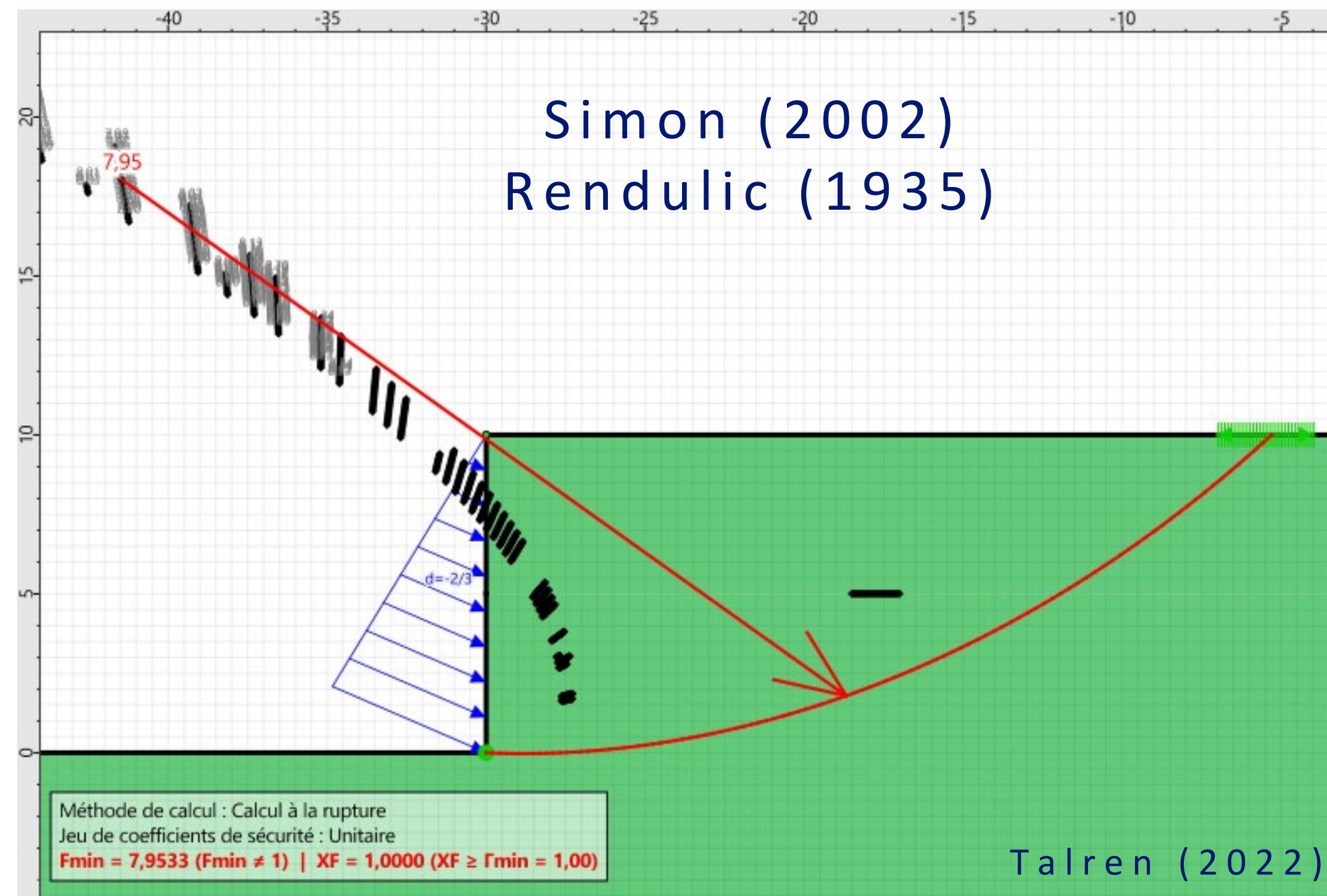
Presented method:  $K_p = 7,77$



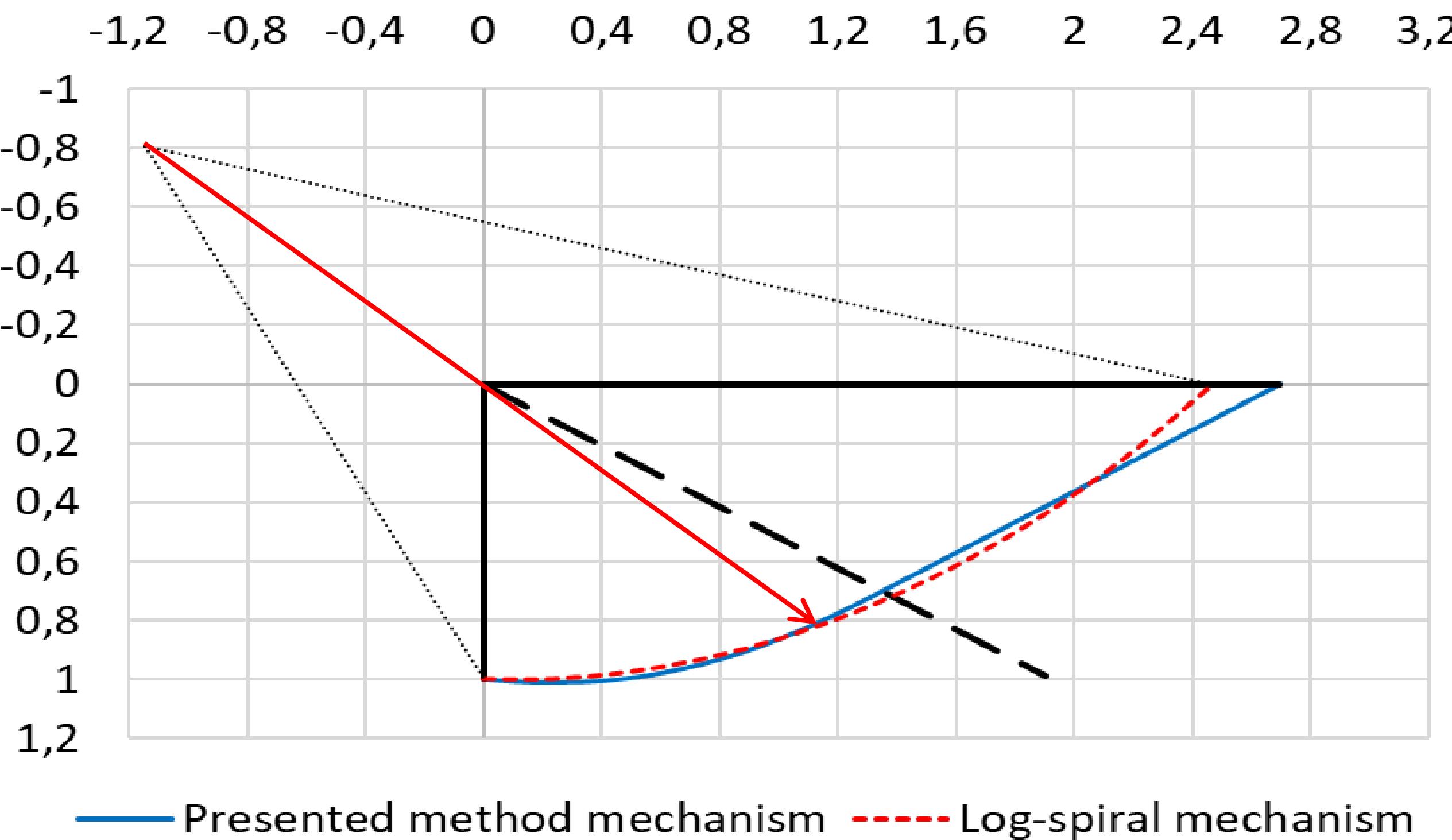
Caquot-Kerisel:  $K_p = 8,0$

The difference is significant even if it remains very low and negligible for the practice.

# A last example – Comparison with the kinematical approach of the yield analysis



A kinematical approach provides:  $K_p=7,95$



The two mechanisms are very similar.

→ The « true » value should be between 7,77 and 7,95.

# Conclusions

Around 175 years after Coulomb, Caquot and Kerisel developed another approach to assess active and passive earth pressures for weighted ground conditions from the contributions of Bousinesq, Résal and Ravizé.

Failure mechanisms can also be obtained and compared to those considered by Coulomb explaining why Coulomb approach is not on the safe side.

Today, Bousinesq, Caquot and Kerisel approaches can be compared to some other solutions obtained by the kinematical approach of the yield analysis.

New values of active and passive earth pressure coefficients might be thus obtained by comparing both Bousinesq, Caquot and Kerisel approaches and the kinematical approach of the yield analysis.



**Thank you for your attention**

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