

Integer distance sets

Rachel Greenfeld

Northwestern University

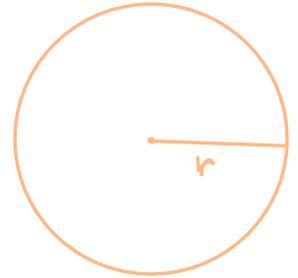
Joint work with

Marina Iliopoulou and Sarah Peluse

Oxford Discrete Maths and Probability Seminar

February 2025

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$$\forall \lambda' \neq \lambda \in \Lambda: \hat{\int}_{D_r} (x' - \lambda) = \int_D e^{2\pi i x \cdot (x' - \lambda)} dx = 0$$

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radial

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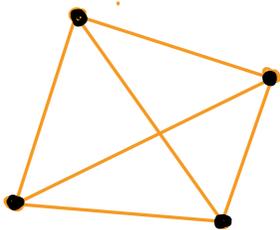
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Bessel function



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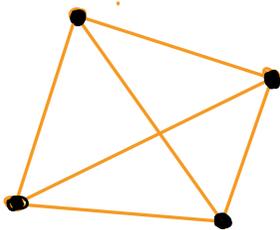
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Determinant method (Bombieri-Pila)

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- Encode Λ as lattice points on an analytic manifold.
- Analyse transcendentalty of the manifold
- Apply the determinant method.

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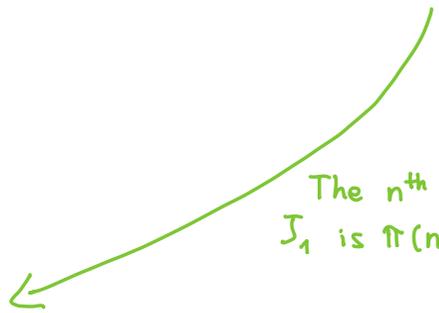
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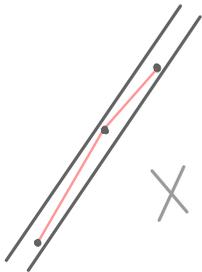
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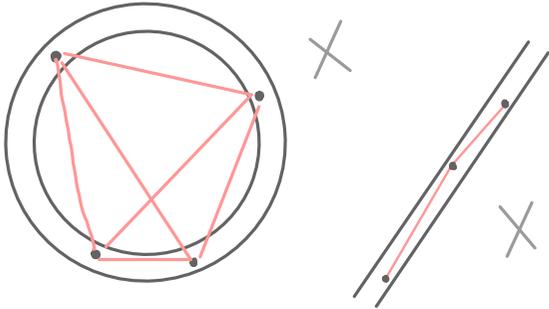
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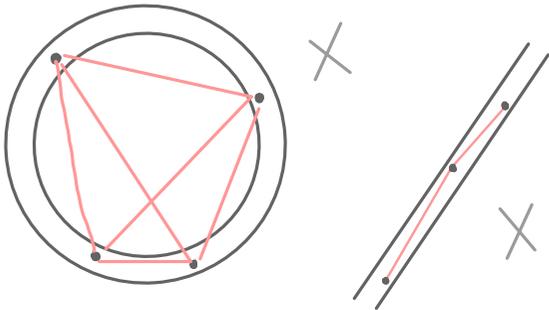
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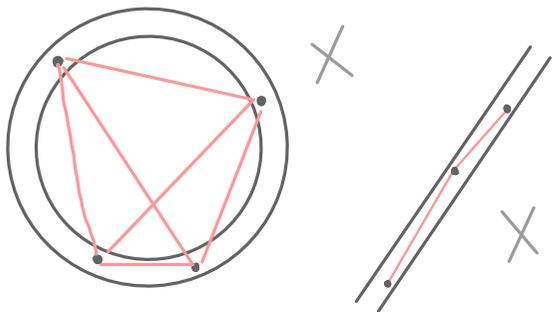
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This links to another famous problem:

The size and structure of integer distance sets.

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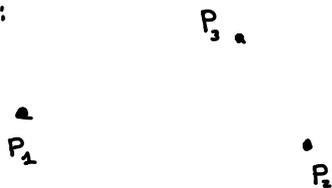
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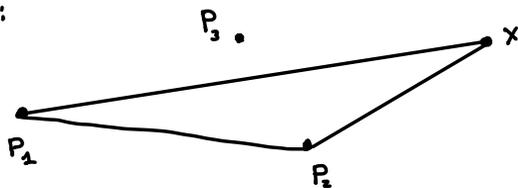
Proof (of Erdős):



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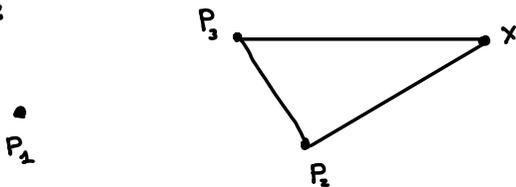
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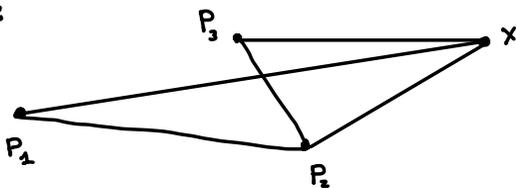
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$\|P_1 - P_2\| + 1$
hyperbolas

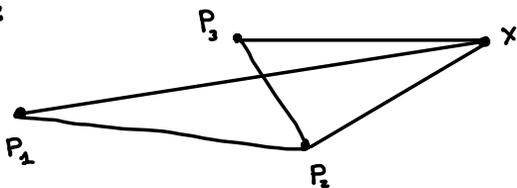
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$$|H_1 \cap H_2| \leq 4(\|P_1 - P_2\| + 1)(\|P_2 - P_3\| + 1) < \infty.$$

Bézout's theorem \rightarrow



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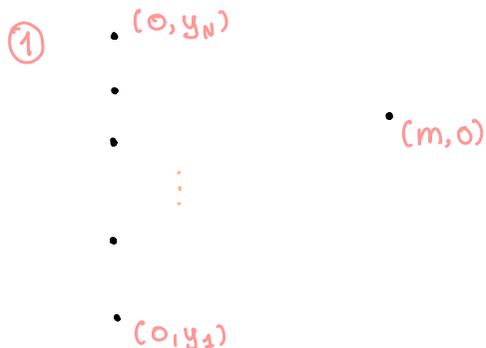
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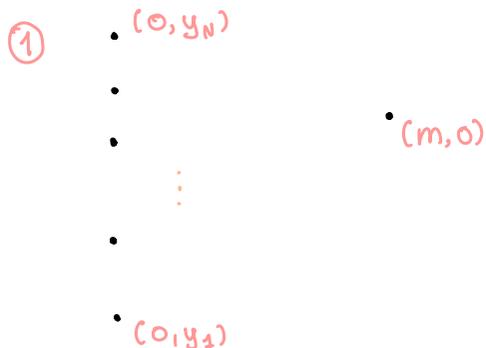
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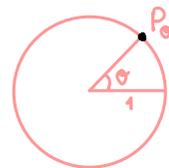


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② concyclic:

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$$P_\theta = (\cos \theta, \sin \theta)$$



$\{P_\theta\}$ is dense in the unit circle;

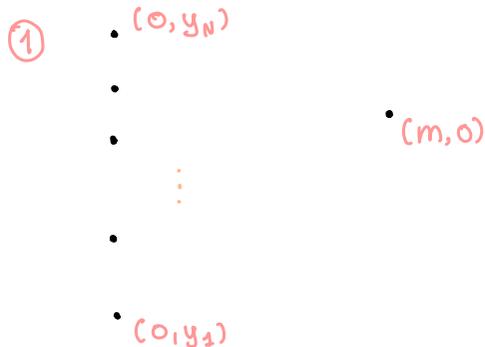
$$\|P_\theta - P_{\theta'}\| = 2 \left| \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \cos \frac{\theta'}{2} - \sin \frac{\theta'}{2} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \right| \in \mathbb{Q}$$

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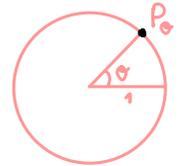


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S is concentrated on one line/circle.

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Question (Erdős): How large can an integer distance set S be if it has no 3 points on a line and no 4 points on a circle?

Conditional on Bombieri: - Lang's conjecture, under these assumptions, $|S|$ is bounded by a constant. [Ascher - Braune - Turchet, 2020]

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Conjecture:

$$|S| \leq C$$

$$|\Lambda| \leq 3$$

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Integer
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orthogonal
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$$|S| = O((\log N)^c)$$

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Theorem (Gilliopoulou-Peluse, 2024):

Let $S \subset [N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set. Then there exists a line or circle $C \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$ such that: $|S \setminus C| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

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In particular, we obtain:

Corollary: Let $S \subseteq [N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set with **no 3 of its points on a line** and **no 4 points on a circle**. Then $|S| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

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Corollary: Let S be a **noncollinear** integer distance set. If $|S| = N$

then:

$$\text{diam } S \geq N^{c(\log \log N)}.$$

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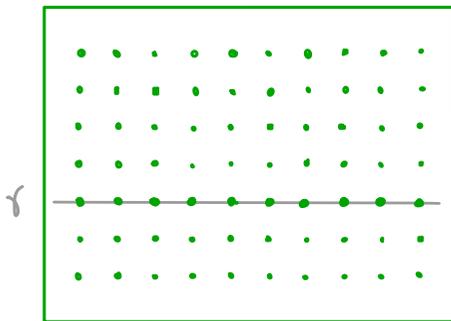
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A well-developed theory - originally due to Bombieri - Pila (1989) - provides sharp bounds on the number of lattice points on any irreducible curve V of degree d defined over \mathbb{Q} .

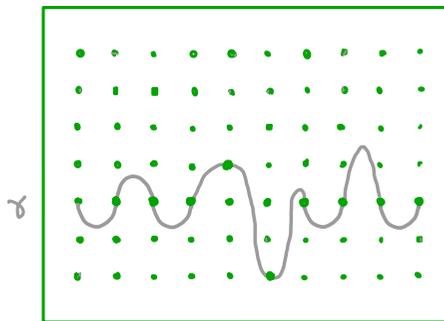
The height of $\frac{m}{n} \in \mathbb{Q}$ with $(m,n)=1$ is $\max\{|m|, |n|\}$.

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Rational points of height $\leq H$



σ has too low degree \rightarrow



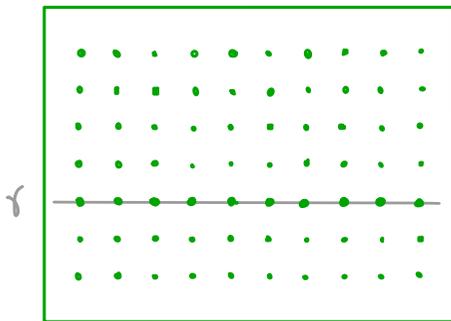
many points

$\leftarrow \sigma$ has too high degree

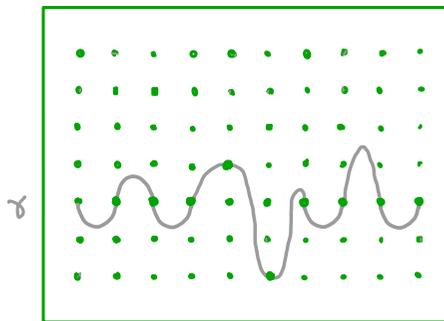
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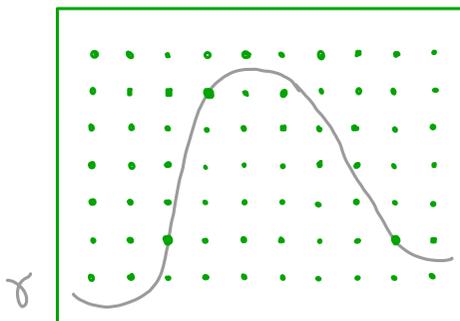


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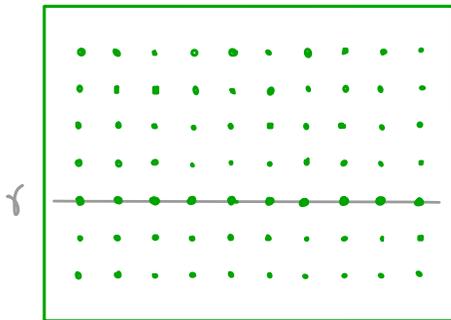
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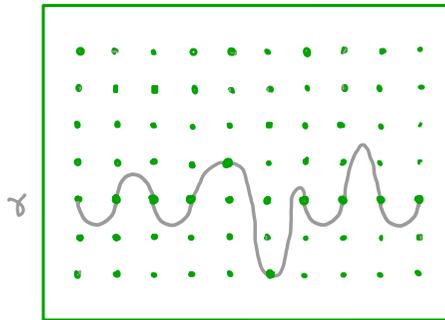
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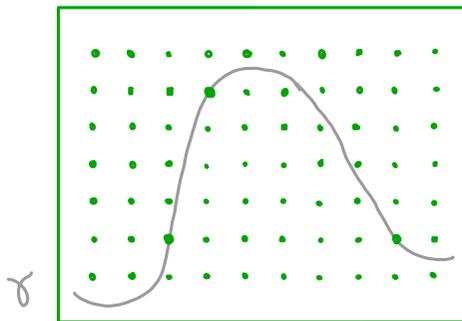
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Optimal degree:
 $(\log H)^c$



intermediate degree
 \rightarrow a small number of points

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By translation and rotation, we can assume without loss of generality that:

$$0 \in S \subseteq \left\{ (x, \sqrt{m}y) \mid x, y \in \frac{1}{M}\mathbb{Z} \right\}$$

for squarefree $m = m(S)$, and integer $M = O(N)$. [Kemnitz, 88]

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We define the affine variety:

$$X_k := \left\{ (x, y, d_1, \dots, d_k) \mid (x - a_j)^2 + (y - b_j)^2 m = d_j^2; j = 1, \dots, k \right\} \subseteq \mathbb{C}^{k+2}.$$

Fix $P_1, \dots, P_k \in S$

$$P_1 = (a_1, b_1\sqrt{m})$$
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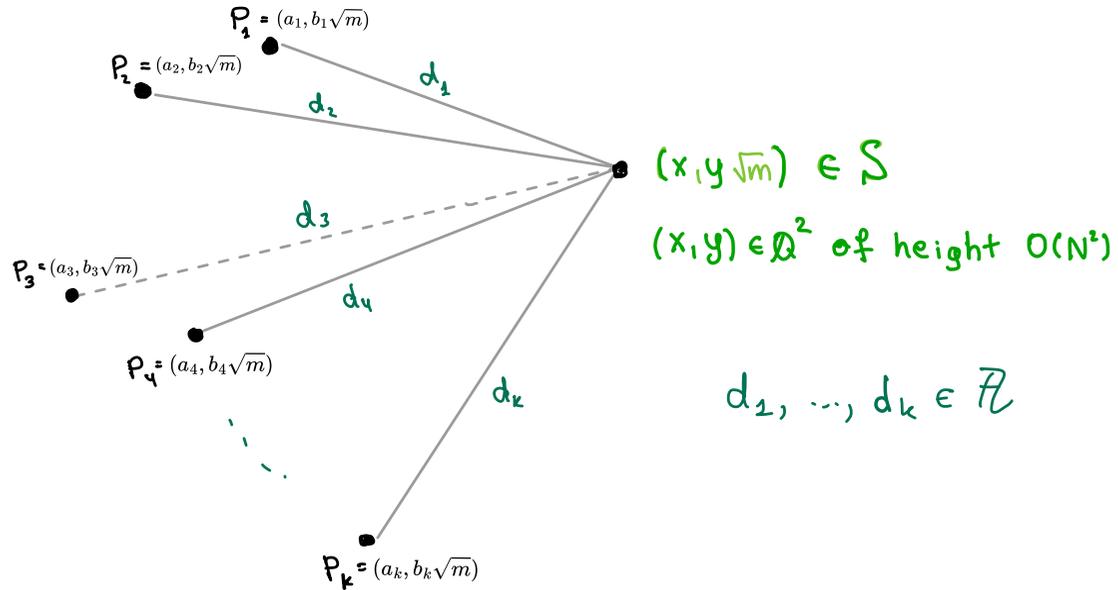
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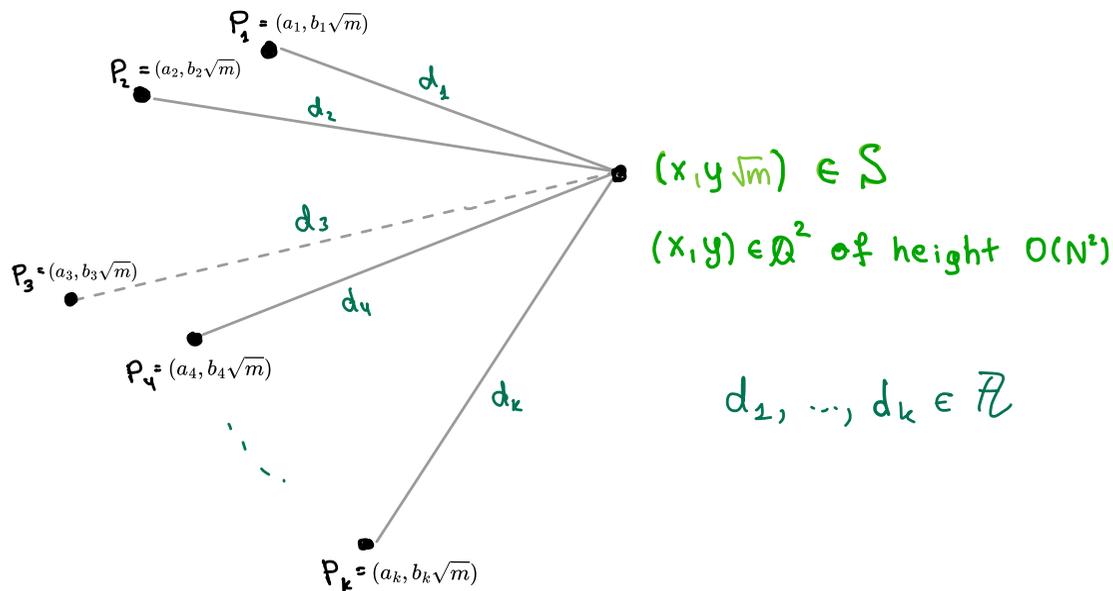
- $(x, y\sqrt{m}) \in S$

$(x, y) \in \mathbb{Q}^2$ of height $O(N^2)$

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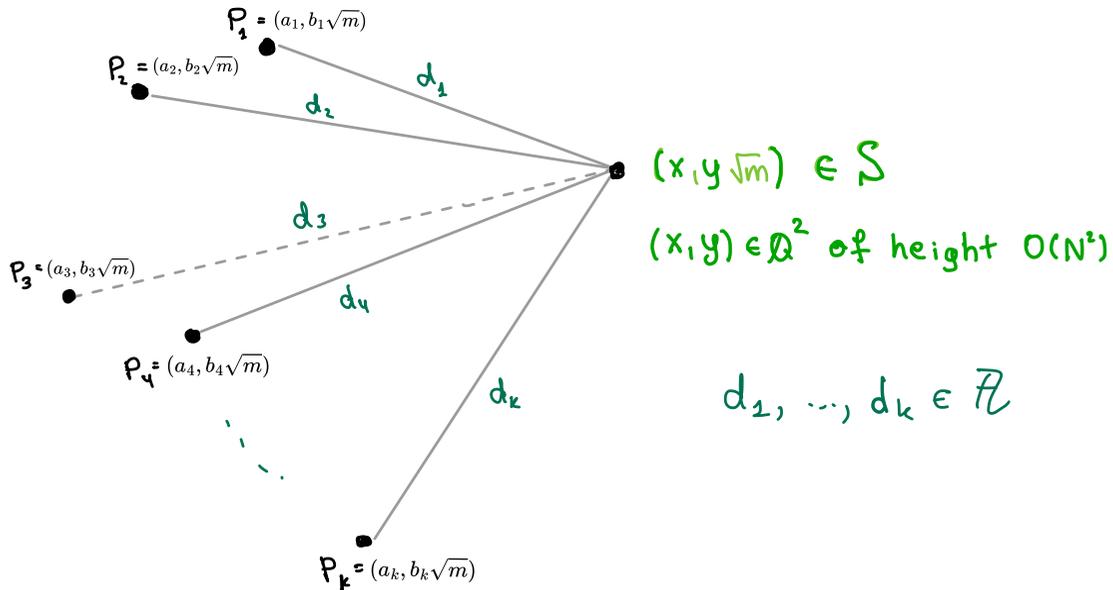


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Points of $S \xrightarrow{\pi^{-1}} \tilde{S}$: rational points of height $O(N^2)$ on $\bar{X}_k \subseteq \mathbb{P}^{k+2}$.
injective

$\overline{X}_k \subseteq \mathbb{P}^{k+2}$ is an irreducible surface of degree 2^k defined over \mathbb{Q} .

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↖ $\dim \bar{X}_k = 2$



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↘
[Castryk, Cluckers, Dittmann, Nguyen, 2020]

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might be too low ☹️

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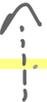
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$$|S \cap \delta_j| \leq |\tilde{S}_j| = ?$$

If $(P_i^1)_{i=1}^k$ are in "general position", \overline{C}_k is an irreducible curve of degree $\approx 2^k$ defined over \mathbb{Q} .

δ_j is line/circle and $|S \setminus \delta_j| > ck^2$

δ_j isn't line/circle and $|S \cap \delta_j| > \log N^c k^2$


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Use Bombieri-Pila's-type result



$$|\tilde{S}_j| = \textcircled{?}$$

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$$|\tilde{S}_j| = O(e^{o(k)} N^{o(a^{-k})})$$

If $(P_i)_{i=1}^k$ are in "general position", \overline{C}_k is an irreducible curve of degree $\approx a^k$ defined over \mathbb{Q} .

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as long as :

σ_j isn't line / circle and $|S \cap \sigma_j| > \log N^c k^2$

or

σ_j is line / circle and $|S \setminus \sigma_j| > ck^2$

as $k^2 \asymp (\log \log N)^2$, we have:

If γ_j is not a line/circle, then $|\gamma_j \cap S| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

Otherwise, either $|S \setminus \gamma_j| = O((\log \log N)^2)$ or $|\gamma_j \cap S| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

As there are $O((\log N)^{o(1)})$ curves, this concludes the proof.



Theorem (G-Iliopoulou-Peluse, 2024):

Let $S \subset [-N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set. Then there exists a line or circle $C \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$ such that: $|S \setminus C| = O((\log N)^{O(1)})$.

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Let $S \subset [-N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set. Then there exists a line or circle $C \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$ such that: $|S \setminus C| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

In fact, we have that either $|S| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$, or there is a line/circle C s.t. $|S \setminus C| = O((\log \log N)^2)$.

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Let $S \subset [N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set. Then there exists a line or circle $C \subseteq \mathbb{R}^2$ such that: $|S \cap C| = O((\log N)^{o(1)})$.

Corollary: Let $S \subset [N, N]^2$ be an integer distance set with no 3 of its points on a line and no 4 points on a circle. Then

$$|S| = O((\log N)^{o(1)}).$$

Corollary: Let S be a noncollinear integer distance set. If $|S| = N$

then:

$$\text{diam } S \geq N^{c(\log \log N)}.$$

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What is the size & structure of higher-dimensional integer distance sets?

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Can our method be adapted to other long-standing problems?

Thank You!

