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A. Baker's conjecture and Hausdorff dimension

By V. BERESNEVICH (Minsk) and V. BERNIK (Minsk)

Dedicated to the 60th birthday of Professor Kálmán Győry

Abstract. It this paper we discuss an application of the Hausdorff dimension to the set of very well multiplicatively approximable points $(x, \dots, x^n)$. In 1998 D. Kleinbock and G. Margulis proved A. Baker's conjecture stating that this set is of measure zero. We show that for any natural n multiplicatively approximable points $(x, \dots, x^n)$ to order $1+\varepsilon$ form a set of Hausdorff dimension at least $2/(1+\varepsilon)$. It is conjectured that this number is the exact value of the dimension. We also prove this conjecture for $n = 2$.

Introduction

We will use the following notation. The Vinogradov symbol $\ll$ ($\gg$) means '$\leq$ ($\geq$) up to a positive constant multiplier'; $a \asymp b$ is equivalent to $a \ll b \ll a$. The Lebesgue measure of $A \subset \mathbb{R}$ is denoted by $|A|$. We denote by $\mathcal{P}_n$ the set of polynomials $P \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$ with $\deg P \leq n$. Given a polynomial $P(x) = a_n x^n + \dots + a_1 x + a_0 \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$, we define the height of P as $H(P) = \max\{|a_0|, \dots, |a_n|\}$.

Let $\varepsilon > 0$, $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $S_n(\varepsilon)$ denote the set of $x \in \mathbb{R}$ such that the inequality

$$(1) \qquad |P(x)| < H(P)^{-n(1+\varepsilon)}$$

has infinitely many solutions $P \in \mathcal{P}_n$. In 1932 K. Mahler, in his classification of real numbers, conjectured that for any $\varepsilon > 0$ the Lebesgue measure

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of $S_n(\varepsilon)$ is zero. Mahler's problem was settled by V. Sprindzuk [5] in 1964. The concept of Hausdorff dimension (see [4]) makes it possible to differ sets of measure zero. In particular, this was applied to $S_n(\varepsilon)$. In 1970 A. Baker and W. Schmidt [2] established a lower bound for $\dim S_n(\varepsilon)$, the Hausdorff dimension of $S_n(\varepsilon)$. Later it was proved by V. Bernik [3] that this value is also an upper bound for $\dim S_n(\varepsilon)$ resulting in

$$\dim S_n(\varepsilon) = \frac{n+1}{n+1+n\varepsilon}. \tag{2}$$

In 1975 A. Baker raised a problem by replacing the right hand side of (1) with the function $\Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon}$, where $P(x) = a_n x^n + \cdots + a_1 x + a_0 \in \mathcal{P}_n$ and $\Pi_+(P) = \prod_{i=1}^n \max(1, |a_i|)$. Given $\varepsilon > 0$ and $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let $M_n(\varepsilon)$ be the set of $x \in \mathbb{R}$ such that the inequality

$$|P(x)| < \Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon} \tag{3}$$

has infinitely many solutions $P \in \mathcal{P}_n$. A. Baker [1] conjectured that for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ one has $|M_n(\varepsilon)| = 0$ for any $\varepsilon > 0$.

Notice that Baker's conjecture is stronger than that of Mahler. Indeed, since $H(P)^n \geq \Pi_+(P)$, we have $H(P)^{-(1+\varepsilon)n} \leq \Pi_+(P)^{-(1+\varepsilon)}$. Therefore, if (1) is soluble infinitely often, then so is (3). In particular, it means that

$$S_n(\varepsilon) \subset M_n(\varepsilon). \tag{4}$$

Baker's conjecture was proved by D. Kleinbock and G. Margulis [7] in 1998.

As in the case of $S_n(\varepsilon)$, it is also of interest to determine the Hausdorff dimension of $M_n(\varepsilon)$. We will use the following properties [4]:

1) $\dim A \leq \dim B$ for any $A, B \subset \mathbb{R}$ with $A \subset B$;

2) $\dim A = \sup_{i=1,2,\ldots} \dim A_i$, where $A = \bigcup_{i=1}^\infty A_i$ and $A_i \subset \mathbb{R}$.

Conjectures and results

First of all, notice that

$$M_k(\varepsilon) \subset M_n(\varepsilon) \quad \text{for any } k, n \in \mathbb{N} \text{ with } k < n. \tag{5}$$

It follows from (4) and (5) that $S_1(\varepsilon) \subset M_n(\varepsilon)$ for any $n \in \mathbb{N}$. Therefore, we have $\dim M_n(\varepsilon) \geq \dim S_1(\varepsilon)$. Now applying (2) gives

Theorem 1. *For any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and any $\varepsilon > 0$*

$$\dim M_n(\varepsilon) \geq \frac{2}{2+\varepsilon}. \tag{6}$$

Conjecture H1. *For any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\varepsilon > 0$ one has*

$$\dim M_n(\varepsilon) = \frac{2}{2+\varepsilon}.$$

This conjecture is trivial for $n = 1$. Indeed, it is easy to notice that for any $\delta > 0$ we have the inclusion $M_1(\varepsilon) \subset S_1(\varepsilon - \delta)$. Therefore, for any δ with $0 < \delta < \varepsilon$ we have $\dim M_1(\varepsilon) \leq \dim S_1(\varepsilon - \delta)$. By (2), we conclude that $\dim M_1(\varepsilon) \leq 2/(2 + \varepsilon - \delta)$. Since $\delta \in (0, \varepsilon)$ is arbitrary, we have $\dim M_1(\varepsilon) \leq 2/(2 + \varepsilon)$. In this paper we also prove the conjecture for $n = 2$.

Theorem 2. *For any $\varepsilon > 0$ we have*

$$\dim M_2(\varepsilon) = \frac{2}{2+\varepsilon}.$$

Proof of Theorem 2. By (6), it is sufficient to show that $\dim M_2(\varepsilon) \leq 2/(2+\varepsilon)$. Let $\{I_k\}_{k=1}^{\infty}$ be a collection of closed intervals such that $\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\} = \bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} I_k$. The existence of such a collection is easily verified. Then, $M_2(\varepsilon) = \{0\} \cup (\bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} M_2(\varepsilon) \cap I_k)$. Since $\dim\{0\} = 0$, by property 2 of Hausdorff dimension above, we have the inequality $\dim M_2(\varepsilon) \leq \sup_{k=1,2,\dots} \dim(M_2(\varepsilon) \cap I_k)$. Therefore, it is sufficient to show that $\dim(M_2(\varepsilon) \cap I_k) \leq 2/(2 + \varepsilon)$ for any k. Let I be one of the intervals I_k. There is no loss of generality in assuming that $I = [a, b]$ with $0 < a < b < \infty$.

Let $x \in I$ and $P(t) = a_2t^2 + a_1t + a_0 \in \mathcal{P}_2$ be a solution of (3). It follows from (3) that

$$\begin{aligned}|a_0| = |P(x) - a_2x^2 - a_1x| &\leq \Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon} + |a_2|x^2 + |a_1|x \\ &\leq 1 + |a_2|b^2 + |a_1|b \leq (1 + b + b^2)\max\{|a_1|, |a_2|\}.\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, we have

$$\max\{|a_1|, |a_2|\} \leq H(P) \leq (1 + b + b^2)\max\{|a_1|, |a_2|\}. \tag{7}$$

Now define the constant

$$C = \min(a, 1/2)/(1 + b + b^2). \tag{8}$$

Let $M_2^1(\varepsilon, I)$ be the subset of $M_2(\varepsilon) \cap I$ consisting of $x \in I$ such that there are infinitely many $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$ satisfying

$$\begin{cases} |P(x)| < \Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon}, \\ |P'(x)| < CH(P). \end{cases} \tag{9}$$

Let $x \in I$ and $P(t) = a_2t^2 + a_1t + a_0$ be a solution of (9). We have the following two possibilities:

1) $|a_2| \geq |a_1|$;

2) $|a_1| \geq |a_2|$.

Consider the first one. It follows from (7) and (9) that

$$|2x + a_1/a_2| \leq CH(P)/|a_2| \leq C(1 + b + b^2) \leq a.$$

Since $x \geq a$, we have $|a_1/a_2| = |2x - (2x + a_1/a_2)| \geq |2x| - |2x + a_1/a_2| \geq 2a - a = a$. Therefore, we obtain $a \leq |a_1/a_2| \leq 1$.

Consider the other possibility: $|a_1| \geq |a_2|$. It follows from (7) and (9) that

$$|2xa_2/a_1 + 1| \leq CH(P)/|a_1| \leq C(1 + b + b^2) \leq 1/2.$$

Hence, $|2xa_2/a_1| = |1-(2xa_2/a_1+1)| \geq 1-|2xa_2/a_1+1| \geq 1-1/2 = 1/2$. Since $x \leq b$, we have $|a_2/a_1| \geq 1/(4b)$. Therefore, we obtain $1/(4b) \leq |a_2/a_1| \leq 1$.

As a result we conclude that $|a_1| \asymp |a_2|$ for both the possibilities. Moreover, by (7), we have $|a_1| \asymp |a_2| \asymp H(P)$. Therefore, $\Pi_+(P) \asymp H(P)^2$ and the first inequality of (9) implies that

$$|P(x)| \ll H(P)^{-2(1+\varepsilon)}. \tag{10}$$

Now if $x \in M_2^1(\varepsilon, I)$, then inequality (10) holds for infinitely many polynomials $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$ and for any $\delta > 0$ the inequality $|P(x)| < H(P)^{-2(1+\varepsilon-\delta)}$ has infinitely many solutions $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$. It follows that $M_2^1(\varepsilon, I) \subset S_2(\varepsilon - \delta)$ for any δ with $0 < \delta < \varepsilon$. By (2), we obtain

$$\dim M_2^1(\varepsilon, I) \leq \dim S_2(\varepsilon - \delta) = \frac{3}{3 + 2(\varepsilon - \delta)}.$$

Since $\delta \in (0, \varepsilon)$ is arbitrary, we get

$$\dim M_2^1(\varepsilon, I) \leq \frac{3}{3+2\varepsilon} < \frac{2}{2+\varepsilon}. \tag{11}$$

Now we consider the set $M_2^2(\varepsilon, I) = (M_2(\varepsilon) \cap I) \setminus M_2^1(\varepsilon, I)$. It is easy to verify that for any $x \in M_2^2(\varepsilon, I)$ the system

$$\begin{cases} |P(x)| < \Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon}, \\ |P'(x)| \geq CH(P) \end{cases} \tag{12}$$

holds for infinitely many polynomials $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$. Given a polynomial $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$, let $\sigma(P)$ denote the set of $x \in I$ satisfying (12). It is easy to notice that $\sigma(P)$ is a union of at most three intervals, say $\sigma^i(P)$ with $i = 1, 2, 3$. Also if $x \in M_2^2(\varepsilon, I)$ then x belongs to $\sigma^i(P)$ for infinitely many different polynomials $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$.

Fix $P \in \mathcal{P}_2$ and $x, y \in \sigma^i(P)$. By the Mean Value Theorem, we have $P(x) - P(y) = P'(\theta)(x - y)$, where θ is a point between x and y. Since $\sigma^i(P)$ is an interval, $\theta \in \sigma^i(P)$ and, therefore, $|P'(\theta)| \geq CH(P)$. Hence,

$$|x - y| \leq \frac{|P(x)| + |P(y)|}{|P'(\theta)|} \leq \frac{2\Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon}}{CH(P)}.$$

Thus,

$$|\sigma^i(P)| \ll \Pi_+(P)^{-1-\varepsilon} \cdot H(P)^{-1}. \tag{13}$$

Let $2/(2+\varepsilon) < \rho < 1$. We have the following inequality

$$\begin{aligned} &\sum_{P \in \mathcal{P}_2} \sum_{i=1}^{3} |\sigma^i(P)|^\rho \\ &\qquad \ll \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \sum_{l=0}^{\infty} \sum_{2^k \leq |a_1| < 2^{k+1}} \sum_{2^l \leq |a_2| < 2^{l+1}} \sum_{a_0} \sum_{i=1}^{3} |\sigma^i(P)|^\rho, \end{aligned} \tag{14}$$

where $P(x) = a_2 x^2 + a_1 x + a_0$. If $2^k \leq |a_1| < 2^{k+1}$ and $2^l \leq |a_2| < 2^{l+1}$ then, by (13), $|\sigma^i(P)| \ll 2^{-(1+\varepsilon)(k+l) - \max\{k,l\}}$. Moreover, by (7), the number of different a_0 such that $\sigma(P) \neq \emptyset$ is $\ll 2^{\max\{k,l\}}$. Now it follows from (14) that

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{P\in\mathcal{P}_2}\sum_{i=1}^{3}|\sigma^i(P)|^\rho\\
&\quad\ll\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}\sum_{2^k\le|a_1|<2^{k+1}}\sum_{2^l\le|a_2|<2^{l+1}}2^{\max\{k,l\}}\cdot\left(2^{-(1+\varepsilon)(k+l)-\max\{k,l\}}\right)^\rho\\
&\quad\ll\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^k\cdot 2^l\cdot 2^{\max\{k,l\}}\cdot\left(2^{-(1+\varepsilon)(k+l)-\max\{k,l\}}\right)^\rho\\
&\quad=\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^{(1-\rho(1+\varepsilon))(k+l)+(1-\rho)\max\{k,l\}}\\
&\quad\le\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^{(1-\rho(1+\varepsilon))(k+l)+(1-\rho)(k+l)}=\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^{(2-\rho(2+\varepsilon))(k+l)}\\
&\quad=\left(\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}2^{(2-\rho(2+\varepsilon))k}\right)\cdot\left(\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^{(2-\rho(2+\varepsilon))l}\right).
\end{aligned}$$

Since $\rho > 2/(2+\varepsilon)$, we have $2-\rho(2+\varepsilon) < 0$. It is now easy to see that the sum $\sum_{l=0}^{\infty}2^{(2-\rho(2+\varepsilon))l}$ converges. Therefore, we have

$$\sum_{P\in\mathcal{P}_2}\sum_{i=1}^{3}|\sigma^i(P)|^\rho<\infty \tag{15}$$

for any ρ with $2/(2+\varepsilon) < \rho < 1$. By Lemma 4 in [4, pp. 94], the Hausdorff dimension of the set consisting of $x \in I$, which belongs to infinitely many intervals $\sigma^i(P)$, is at most ρ. This set is exactly $M_2^2(\varepsilon, I)$. Since $\rho \in (2/(2+\varepsilon), 1)$ is arbitrary, we have $\dim M_2^2(\varepsilon, I) \le 2/(2+\varepsilon)$. Combining this and (11) completes the proof of Theorem 2. □

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V. BERESNEVICH
INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS
THE BELARUS ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
220072, SURGANOVA 11, MINSK
BELARUS

E-mail: beresnevich@im.bas-net.by

V. BERNIK
INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS
THE BELARUS ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
220072, SURGANOVA 11, MINSK
BELARUS

E-mail: bernik@im.bas-net.by

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