18.783 Elliptic Curves
Lecture 7

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Lecture 6 recap

Definition

If α is an isogeny, the dual isogeny $\hat{\alpha}$ is the unique isogeny for which $\hat{\alpha} \circ \alpha = \deg \alpha$.
The trace of $\alpha \in \mathrm{End}(E)$ is $\mathrm{tr}\,\alpha := \alpha + \hat{\alpha} = 1 + \deg \alpha - \deg(1 - \alpha) \in \mathbb{Z}$.

Lemma

Let α and β be endomorphisms of an elliptic curve E/k and let m be the maximum of $\deg \alpha$ and $\deg \beta$. Let $n \geq 2\sqrt{m} + 1$ be an integer prime to the characteristic of k, and also relatively prime to the integers $\deg \alpha$ and $\deg \beta$. If $\alpha_n = \beta_n$ then $\alpha = \beta$.

Theorem

Let $\alpha \in \mathrm{End}(E)$ and let $n \geq 1$ be coprime to the characteristic. Then

$$\mathrm{tr}\,\alpha \equiv \mathrm{tr}\,\alpha_n \bmod n \qquad \textit{and} \qquad \deg \alpha \equiv \det \alpha_n \bmod n.$$

Hasse's theorem

Lemma

$\alpha, \beta \colon E_1 \to E_2$ *isogenies with* α *inseparable,* $\alpha + \beta$ *is inseparable if and only if* β *is.*

Theorem (Hasse, 1933)

Let $E/\mathbb{F}_q$ be an elliptic curve over a finite field. Then $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1 - \operatorname{tr} \pi_E$, where the trace of the Frobenius endomorphism π_E satisfies $|\operatorname{tr} \pi_E| \le 2\sqrt{q}$.
Proof: To the board!

Definition

The Hasse interval $\mathcal{H}(q)$ is $[q + 1 - 2\sqrt{q},\ q + 1 + 2\sqrt{q}] = [(\sqrt{q} - 1)^2, (\sqrt{q} + 1)^2]$

The Legendre symbol

Definition

For odd primes p the Legendre symbol is defined by

$$\left(\frac{a}{p}\right) = \left\{ \begin{array}{ccl} 1 & & \text{if } y^2 = a \text{ has two solutions mod } p \\ 0 & & \text{if } y^2 = a \text{ has one solution mod } p \\ -1 & & \text{if } y^2 = a \text{ has no solutions mod } p \end{array} \right\} = \#\{\alpha \in \mathbb{F}_p : \alpha^2 = a\} - 1.$$

We also define $\left(\frac{a}{\mathbb{F}_q}\right)$ for $a \in \mathbb{F}_q$ with q odd; just replace $\mathbb{F}_p$ with $\mathbb{F}_q$.

For $E\colon y^2 = x^3 + Ax + B$ over $\mathbb{F}_q$ we have

$$\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = 1 + \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_q} \left(1 + \left(\frac{x^3 + Ax + B}{\mathbb{F}_q} \right) \right) = q + 1 + \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_q} \left(\frac{x^3 + Ax + B}{\mathbb{F}_q} \right).$$

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Naive point counting

Let $E\colon y^2 = x^3 + Ax + B$ be an elliptic curve over $\mathbb{F}_q$. Computing $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ via

$$\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = 1 + \#\left\{(x,y) \in \mathbb{F}_q^2 : y^2 = x^3 + Ax + B\right\}$$

takes $O(q^2 \mathsf{M}(\log q))$ time, which in terms of $n = \log q$ is $O(\exp(2n)\mathsf{M}(n))$. But

$$\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1 + \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_q} \left(\frac{x^3 + Ax + B}{\mathbb{F}_q}\right)$$

can be computed in $O(\exp(n)\mathsf{M}(n))$ time by precomputing a table of squares in $\mathbb{F}_q$.

But $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ lies in the Hasse interval $\mathcal{H}(q)$ of width $4\sqrt{q}$. Surely we can do better!

Computing the order of a point

The order $|P|$ of any $P \in E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ divides $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) \in \mathcal{H}(q) = [(\sqrt{q}-1)^2, \ (\sqrt{q}+1)^2]$.
If we put $M_0 = \lceil (\sqrt{q}-1)^2 \rceil$, we can find a multiple M of $|P|$ in $\mathcal{H}(q)$ by computing

$$M_0 P, \ (M_0+1)P, \ (M_0+2)P, \ \ldots, \ MP = 0.$$

We have $M \leq M_0 + 4\sqrt{q}$, so this takes $O(\sqrt{q}\mathsf{M}(\log q)) = O(\exp(n/2)\mathsf{M}(n))$ time.

Algorithm (Fast order computation)

Given $P \in E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ and $M \in \mathcal{H}(q)$ such that $MP = 0$, compute $|P|$ as follows:
   1. Compute $M = p_1^{e_1} \cdots p_r^{e_r}$ and set $m := M$.
   2. For each prime p_i, while $p_i | m$ and $(m/p_i)P = 0$, replace m by m/p_i.
   3. Output $|P| = m$.

This algorithm takes much less than $O(\exp(n/2)\mathsf{M}(n))$ time.
(in fact $O(\exp(n/5)n^{16/5})$ deterministically and $\exp(n^{1/2+o(1)})$ probabilistically).

The exponent of a group

Definition

The exponent of a finite group G is $\lambda(G) := \operatorname{lcm}\{|g| : g \in G\}$.

Lemma

Let G be a finite abelian group. Then $\exists g \in G$ such that $|g| = \lambda(G)$.

Proof: Put $G \simeq \mathbb{Z}/n_1\mathbb{Z} \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathbb{Z}/n_r\mathbb{Z}$ with $n_i | n_{i+1}$ and take any generator of $\mathbb{Z}/n_r\mathbb{Z}$.

Theorem

Let G be a finite abelian group. If g and h are uniformly distributed elements of G then

$$\Pr\bigl[\operatorname{lcm}(|g|, |h|) = \lambda(G)\bigr] > \frac{6}{\pi^2}.$$

Proof: $\Pr\bigl[\operatorname{lcm}(|g|, |h|) = \lambda(G)\bigr] \geq \prod_{p | \lambda(G)}(1 - p^{-2}) > \prod_p (1 - p^{-2}) = \zeta(2)^{-1} = 6/\pi^2$.

Counting points on quadratic twists

Let $E \colon y^2 = x^3 + Ax + B$ be an elliptic curve over $\mathbb{F}_q$ and pick $s \in \mathbb{F}_q$ so $\left(\frac{s}{\mathbb{F}_q}\right) = -1$.

Then $\widetilde{E} \colon sy^2 = x^3 + Ax + B$ is a (non-isomorphic) quadratic twist of E, and we have

$$\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1 + \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_q} \left(\frac{x^3 + Ax + B}{\mathbb{F}_q}\right)$$

$$\#\tilde{E}(\mathbb{F}_q) = q + 1 - \sum_{x \in \mathbb{F}_q} \left(\frac{x^3 + Ax + B}{\mathbb{F}_q}\right)$$

$$\#E(\mathbb{F}_q) + \#\widetilde{E}(\mathbb{F}_q) = 2q + 2.$$

To compute $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ it suffices to compute either $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ or $\#\widetilde{E}(\mathbb{F}_q)$.

We can put $\widetilde{E}$ in Weierstrass form as $\widetilde{E} \colon y^2 = x^3 + s^2 Ax + s^3 B$.

Mestre's theorem/algorithm

Theorem (Mestre)

Let $p > 229$ be prime, $E/\mathbb{F}_p$ an elliptic curve with quadratic twist $\widetilde{E}/\mathbb{F}_p$.
At least one of $\lambda(E(\mathbb{F}_p))$ and $\lambda(\widetilde{E}(\mathbb{F}_p))$ has a unique multiple in $\mathcal{H}(p)$.

Algorithm (Mestre)

Given $E/\mathbb{F}_p$ with $p > 229$, compute $\#E(\mathbb{F}_p)$ as follows:
1. Compute $\widetilde{E}$, and set $E_0 := E$, $E_1 := \widetilde{E}$, $N_0 := 1$, $N_1 := 1$, $i := 0$.
2. While neither N_0, N_1 has a unique multiple U_0, U_1 in $\mathcal{H}(p)$:
   a. Pick a random $P \in E_i(\mathbb{F}_p)$ and compute $M \in \mathcal{H}(p)$ such that $MP = 0$.
   b. Use M to compute $|P|$, then replace N_i with $\operatorname{lcm}(N_i, |P|)$ and replace i by $1 - i$.
3. Output $\#E(\mathbb{F}_p) = U_0$ or $\#E(\mathbb{F}_p) = 2p + 2 - U_1$ (whichever is defined).

We expect $O(1)$ iterations in Step 2, expected running time is $O(\exp(n/2)\mathsf{M}(n))$.

Baby-steps giant-steps

Algorithm (Shanks)

Given $P \in E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ compute $M \in \mathcal{H}(q)$ such that $MP = 0$ as follows:

1. Pick $r, s \in \mathbb{Z}_{>0}$ such that $rs \geq 4\sqrt{q}$ and put $a := \lceil (\sqrt{q} - 1)^2 \rceil = \min(\mathcal{H}(q) \cap \mathbb{Z})$.
2. Compute baby steps $S_{\text{baby}} := \{0, \ P, \ 2P, \ \ldots, \ (r-1)P\}$.
3. Compute giant steps $S_{\text{giant}} := \{aP, \ (a+r)P, \ (a+2r)P, \ \ldots, \ (a+(s-1)r)P\}$.
4. For each $P_{\text{giant}} = (a+ir)P$ check if $P_{\text{giant}} + P_{\text{baby}} = 0$ for some $P_{\text{baby}} = jP$. If so, output $M = a + ir + j$.

Every $M \in \mathcal{H}(q)$ can be written as $M = a + ir + j$ with $0 \leq i < s$ and $0 \leq j < r$, and

$$MP = (a + ri)P + jP = P_{\text{giant}} + P_{\text{baby}} = 0,$$

for some $P_{\text{giant}} \in S_{\text{giant}}$ and $P_{\text{baby}} \in S_{\text{baby}}$. Complexity is $O(\exp(n/4)\mathsf{M}(n))$.

Batching inversions

In order to efficiently match giant steps with baby steps we use affine coordinates.
Addition in $E(\mathbb{F}_q)$ uses $3\mathbf{M} + \mathbf{I}$ or $4\mathbf{M} + \mathbf{I}$ operations in $\mathbb{F}_q$, or $O(\mathsf{M}(n)\log n)$ time.

Algorithm

Given $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_m \in \mathbb{F}_q$ compute $\alpha_1^{-1}, \cdots \alpha_m^{-1}$ as follows:
  1. Set $\beta_0 := 1$ and compute $\beta_i := \beta_{i-1}\alpha_i$ for i from 1 to m.
  2. Compute $\gamma_m := \beta_m^{-1}$.
  3. For i from m down to 1 compute $\alpha_i^{-1} := \beta_{i-1}\gamma_i$ and $\gamma_{i-1} := \gamma_i\alpha_i$.

This takes less than $3m\mathbf{M} + \mathbf{I}$ operations in $\mathbb{F}_q$, or $O(m\mathsf{M}(n) + \mathsf{M}(n)\log n)$ time.
For $m \geq \log n$ this is $O(\mathsf{M}(n))$ per inversion, on average, rather than $O(\mathsf{M}(n)\log n)$.

For large m the cost of each baby/giant step is effectively $6\mathbf{M}$ operations in $\mathbb{F}_q$.

Point counting summary

The table below summarizes the complexity of various algorithms to compute $\#E(\mathbb{F}_q)$. Complexity bounds are bit-complexities in terms of $n = \log q$.

algorithm	time complexity	space complexity
Totally naive	$O(\exp(2n)\mathsf{M}(n))$	$O(n)$
Legendre symbols on the fly	$O(\exp(n)\mathsf{M}(n)\log n)$	$O(n)$
Legendre symbols precomputed	$O(\exp(n)\mathsf{M}(n))$	$O(\exp(n)n)$
Mestre with linear search	$O(\exp(n/2)\mathsf{M}(n))$	$O(n)$
Mestre with baby-steps giant-steps	$O(\exp(n/4)\mathsf{M}(n))$	$O(\exp(n/4)n)$
Schoof's algorithm	$O(\mathrm{poly}(n))$	$O(\mathrm{poly}(n))$

For Mestre's algorithm these are expected running times, the rest are deterministic.
Probabilistic optimizations to Schoof's algorithm (SEA) are used in practice for large q.

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