

18.783 Elliptic Curves

Lecture 12

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The endomorphism ring of an elliptic curve E

Recall that the endomorphism ring $\text{End}(E)$ is the ring of morphisms $E \rightarrow E$ in which addition is defined pointwise and we multiply via composition.

- $\text{End}(E)$ has no zero divisors;
- $\text{deg}: \text{End}(E) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$ defined by $\alpha \mapsto \text{deg } \alpha$ is multiplicative (with $\text{deg } 0 := 0$);
- $\text{deg } n = n^2$ for all $n \in \mathbb{Z} \subseteq \text{End}(E)$;
- $\hat{\alpha} \in \text{End}(E)$ with $\alpha\hat{\alpha} = \hat{\alpha}\alpha = \text{deg } \alpha = \text{deg } \hat{\alpha}$, and $\hat{\hat{\alpha}} = \alpha$;
- $\hat{n} = n$ for all $n \in \mathbb{Z} \subseteq \text{End}(E)$;
- $\widehat{\alpha + \beta} = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta}$ and $\widehat{\alpha\beta} = \hat{\beta}\hat{\alpha}$ for all $\alpha, \beta \in \text{End}(E)$;
- $\text{tr } \alpha := \alpha + \hat{\alpha}$ satisfies $\text{tr } \alpha = \text{tr } \hat{\alpha}$ and $\text{tr}(\alpha + \beta) = \text{tr } \alpha + \text{tr } \beta$;
- $\text{tr } \alpha = \text{deg } \alpha + 1 - \text{deg}(\alpha - 1) \in \mathbb{Z}$ for all $\alpha \in \text{End}(E)$;
- α and $\hat{\alpha}$ are the roots of the characteristic equation $x^2 - (\text{tr } \alpha)x + \text{deg } \alpha \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$.

Tensor products of algebras

Definition

For a commutative ring R an (associative unital) R -algebra A is a ring equipped with a homomorphism $R \rightarrow A$ whose image lies in the center. Every ring is a \mathbb{Z} -algebra.

Definition

The **tensor product** of two R -algebras A and B is the R -algebra $A \otimes_R B$ generated by the formal symbols $\alpha \otimes \beta$ with $\alpha \in A$, $\beta \in B$, subject to the relations

$$(\alpha_1 + \alpha_2) \otimes \beta = \alpha_1 \otimes \beta + \alpha_2 \otimes \beta, \quad \alpha \otimes (\beta_1 + \beta_2) = \alpha \otimes \beta_1 + \alpha \otimes \beta_2$$

$$r\alpha \otimes \beta = \alpha \otimes r\beta = r(\alpha \otimes \beta), \quad (\alpha_1 \otimes \beta_1)(\alpha_2 \otimes \beta_2) = \alpha_1\alpha_2 \otimes \beta_1\beta_2$$

It comes with an R -linear map $\varphi: A \times B \rightarrow A \otimes_R B$ defined by $(\alpha, \beta) \mapsto \alpha \otimes \beta$ with the universal property that every R -bilinear map of R -algebras $\psi: A \times B \rightarrow C$ factors uniquely through $A \otimes_R B$: there is a unique $\psi': A \otimes_R B \rightarrow C$ such that $\psi = \psi' \circ \varphi$.

Base change

Definition

If $R \rightarrow S$ is a homomorphism of commutative rings, then S is an R -algebra.
If A is an R -algebra, the S -algebra $S \rightarrow A \otimes_R S$ is the **base change** of A to S .
(the map $S \rightarrow A \otimes_R S$ is defined by $s \mapsto 1 \otimes s$).

Lemma

*If R is an integral domain with fraction field S then every element of $A \otimes_R S$ can be written as a **pure tensor** $\alpha \otimes s$.*

Example

The ring of integers \mathcal{O}_K of a number field K/\mathbb{Q} is a \mathbb{Z} -algebra of rank $n := [K : \mathbb{Q}]$.
The base change $\mathcal{O}_K \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Q}$ is a \mathbb{Q} -algebra of dimension n isomorphic to K .

The endomorphism algebra of an elliptic curve

Definition

The **endomorphism algebra** of an elliptic curve E is the \mathbb{Q} -algebra

$$\text{End}^0(E) := \text{End}(E) \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Q}.$$

Its elements can all be written in the form $r\alpha$ with $r \in \mathbb{Q}$ and $\alpha \in \text{End}(E)$. We extend the map $\alpha \rightarrow \hat{\alpha}$ to $\text{End}^0(\mathbb{Q})$ by defining $\widehat{r\alpha} = r\hat{\alpha}$. We then have $\hat{\hat{\alpha}} = \alpha$, $\widehat{\alpha\beta} = \hat{\beta}\hat{\alpha}$ and $\widehat{\alpha + \beta} = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta}$ for $\alpha, \beta \in \text{End}^0(E)$, and $\hat{r} = r$ for $r \in \mathbb{Q}$.

Definition

An *anti-homomorphism* $\varphi: R \rightarrow S$ of rings is a homomorphism of additive groups with $\varphi(1_R) = 1_S$ and $\varphi(\alpha\beta) = \varphi(\beta)\varphi(\alpha)$ for all $\alpha, \beta \in R$. An *involution* (or *anti-involution*) is an anti-homomorphism $\varphi: R \rightarrow R$ that is its own inverse: $\varphi \circ \varphi$ is the identity map.

The involution $\alpha \mapsto \hat{\alpha}$ of $\text{End}(E)$ is called the **Rosati involution**.

Norm and trace

Definition

For $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$, we define the (reduced) **norm** $N\alpha := \alpha\hat{\alpha}$ and **trace** $T\alpha := \alpha + \hat{\alpha}$. We have $N\hat{\alpha} = N\alpha$, $T\hat{\alpha} = T\alpha$, $N(\alpha\beta) = N\alpha N\beta$, $T(\alpha + \beta) = T\alpha + T\beta$, $T(r\alpha) = rT\alpha$, and we note that $T\alpha = \alpha + \hat{\alpha} = 1 + \alpha\hat{\alpha} - (1 - \alpha)(1 - \hat{\alpha}) = 1 + N\alpha - N(1 - \alpha) \in \mathbb{Q}$.

Lemma

For all $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$ we have $N\alpha \in \mathbb{Q}_{\geq 0}$ with $N\alpha = 0$ if and only if $\alpha = 0$.

Proof: If $\alpha = r\phi$ then $N\alpha = \alpha\hat{\alpha} = r\phi r\hat{\phi} = r^2 \deg \phi \geq 0$ with equality only if $r\phi = 0$.

Corollary

Every nonzero $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$ has a multiplicative inverse α^{-1} .

Proof: If $\beta = \hat{\alpha}/N\alpha$, then $\alpha\beta = N\alpha/N\alpha = 1$ and $\beta\alpha = N\hat{\alpha}/N\alpha = 1$, so $\beta = \alpha^{-1}$.

Lemma

An element $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$ is fixed by the Rosati involution if and only if $\alpha \in \mathbb{Q}$.

Proof: If $\hat{\alpha} = \alpha$ then $T\alpha = \alpha + \hat{\alpha} = 2\alpha$ and $\alpha = T\alpha/2 \in \mathbb{Q}$.

Lemma

Let $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$. Then α and $\hat{\alpha}$ are roots of the polynomial

$$x^2 - (T\alpha)x + N\alpha \in \mathbb{Q}[x]$$

Proof: $0 = (\alpha - \alpha)(\hat{\alpha} - \hat{\alpha}) = \alpha^2 - \alpha(\alpha + \hat{\alpha}) + \alpha\hat{\alpha} = \alpha^2 - (T\alpha)\alpha + N\alpha$.

Corollary

For any nonzero $\alpha \in \text{End}^0(E)$, if $T\alpha = 0$ then $\alpha^2 = -N\alpha < 0$ and $\alpha \notin \mathbb{Q}$.

Quaternion algebras

Definition

A **quaternion algebra** H over a field k is a k -algebra with a basis $\{1, \alpha, \beta, \alpha\beta\}$ satisfying $\alpha^2, \beta^2 \in k^\times$ and $\alpha\beta = -\beta\alpha$. We distinguish quaternion algebras as **non-split** or **split** depending on whether they are division rings or not.

Example

Non-split: the \mathbb{R} -algebra with basis $\{1, i, j, ij\}$ satisfying $i^2 = j^2 = -1$ and $ij = -ji$.

Split: the ring of 2×2 matrices over k with $\alpha^2 = \beta^2 = 1$, where

$$\alpha := \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \beta := \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \alpha\beta = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \beta\alpha = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Endomorphism algebra classification theorem

Theorem

Let E/k be an elliptic curve. Then $\text{End}^0(E)$ is isomorphic to one of the following:

- the field of rational numbers \mathbb{Q} ;
- an imaginary quadratic field $\mathbb{Q}(\alpha)$ with $\alpha^2 < 0$;
- a quaternion algebra $\mathbb{Q}(\alpha, \beta)$ with $\alpha^2, \beta^2 < 0$.

Corollary

The endomorphism ring $\text{End}(E)$ is a free \mathbb{Z} -module of rank $r := \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{End}^0(E)$.
In other words, it is an *order* in $\text{End}^0(E)$.

Definition

An elliptic curve with $\text{End}(E) \neq \mathbb{Z}$ is said to have *complex multiplication*.