Analytic Variations on Redundancy Rates of Renewal Processes

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Abstract— **Csiszár and Shields have recently proved that the minimax redundancy for a class of (stationary) renewal processes is $\Theta(\sqrt{n})$ where n is the block length. This interesting result provides a first non-trivial bound on redundancy for a non-parametric family of processes. The present paper gives a precise estimate of the redundancy rate for such (nonstationary) renewal sources, namely,**

$$\frac{2}{\log 2}\sqrt{\left(\frac{\pi^2}{6}-1\right)n}+O(\log n).$$

This asymptotic expansion is derived by complex–analytic methods that include generating function representations, Mellin transforms, singularity analysis and saddle point estimates. This work places itself within the framework of analytic information theory.

Keywords— **Redundancy, universal coding, renewal processes, partitions of integers, tree function, Mellin transform, saddle point method, analytic information theory.**

I. Introduction

RECENT YEARS have seen a resurgence of interest in redundancy rates of lossless coding; see [4], [15], [17], [19], [20], [21], [22], [26], [27], [29]. The redundancy-rate problem of universal fixed–to–variable length coding for a class of sources consists in determining by how much the actual code length exceeds the optimal (ideal) code length. In a minimax scenario one finds the best code for the worst source. While Shields [20] proved that there is no function $o(n)$ which is a rate bound on the redundancy for the class of *all ergodic* processes, it has been known for some time (cf. [17], [27]) that, for certain parametric families of sources (e.g., memoryless and Markov sources), the redundancy can be as small as $\Theta(\log n)$ where n is the block length. There was no interesting bound for a class of sources that lies between $\Theta(\log n)$ and general $o(n)$ until recently, when Csiszár and Shields [4] designed a renewal class of sources that yields a $\Theta(\sqrt{n})$ bound. Still one would like to know more about this bound. What is for instance the constant in front of $\sqrt{n}$, if there is one? (See [15] for an example where fluctuations are involved in the redundancy rate.) Is the next term of the redundancy $100\sqrt{n/\log n}$ or $2\log n$? And so forth. In this paper, we address these questions by providing an asymptotic expansion of the redundancy for renewal sources up to the $O(\log n)$ term.

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Regarding coding theory, we shall follow the notation and the presentation from [4]. A code $C_n : \mathcal{A}^n \to \{0,1\}^*$ is defined as an injective mapping from the set $\mathcal{A}^n$ of all sequences of length n over the finite alphabet $\mathcal{A}$ to the set $\{0,1\}^*$ of all binary sequences. We consider here only uniquely decodable (lossless) coding. A message of arbitrary length n with letters indexed from 1 to n is denoted by x_1^n, so that $x_1^n \in \mathcal{A}^n$. We write X_1^n to denote the random variable representing a message of length n. Given a probabilistic source model, we let $P(x_1^n)$ be the probability of the message x_1^n; given a code C_n, we let $L(C_n, x_1^n)$ be the code length for x_1^n. Information-theoretic quantities are expressed in binary logarithms written $\lg := \log_2$. We also write $\log := \ln$.

From Shannon's works we know that the entropy $H_n(P) = -\sum_{x_1^n} P(x_1^n)\lg P(x_1^n)$ is an absolute lower bound on the expected code length, and $-\lg P(x_1^n)$ can be viewed as the "ideal" code length. The next natural question is to ask by how much the length $L(C_n, x_1^n)$ of the code C_n differs from the ideal code length, either for individual sequences or on average. Thus, the *pointwise redundancy* $R_n(C_n, P; x_1^n)$ and the *average redundancy* $\overline{R}_n(C_n, P)$ are defined as

$$\begin{aligned} R_n(C_n,P;x_1^n) &= L(C_n,x_1^n)+\lg P(x_1^n) \\ \overline{R}_n(C_n,P) &= \mathbf{E}_P[R_n(C_n,P;X_1^n)] \\ &= \mathbf{E}[L(C_n,X_1^n)]-H_n(P) \end{aligned}$$

where the underlying probability measure P represents a particular source model and $\mathbf{E}$ denotes the expectation. Another natural measure of code performance is the *maximal* redundancy defined as

$$R_n^*(C_n,P)=\max_{x_1^n}\{R_n(C_n,P;x_1^n)\}.$$

Observe that while the pointwise redundancy can be negative, maximal and average redundancies cannot, by Kraft's inequality and Shannon's source coding theorem, respectively.

In practice, the source probabilities are unknown, hence the desire to design codes for a whole class of source models $\mathcal{S}$. When the source is known, the redundancy can be as low as 1 bit, as demonstrated for example by Shannon codes. Therefore, for unknown probabilities, the redundancy rate can be also viewed as the penalty paid for estimating the underlying probability measure. The *weak* *redundancy-rate problem* for the class $\mathcal{S}$ of sources can be roughly viewed as finding a bound on the redundancy rate for a sequence of codes C_n over all $P \in \mathcal{S}$ (cf. [4]). The (asymptotic) *strong redundancy-rate problem* consists in determining for a class $\mathcal{S}$ of source models the rate of growth either of the average minimax redundancy or the maximal minimax redundancy, respectively,

$$\begin{aligned}\overline{R}_n(\mathcal{S}) &= \min_{C_n} \max_{P\in\mathcal{S}} \{\overline{R}_n(C_n, P)\},\\ R_n^*(\mathcal{S}) &= \min_{C_n} \max_{P\in\mathcal{S}} \{R_n^*(C_n, P)\}\end{aligned}$$

as $n \to \infty$. In this paper, we deal with the stronger version, namely with the maximal minimax redundancy R_n^* for arbitrary renewal sources.

The redundancy rate problem is typical of a situation where second-order asymptotics play a crucial rôle since the leading term of $L(C_n, X_1^n)$ is known to be nH, where H is the entropy rate. This problem is an ideal candidate for "analytic information theory" that applies complex-analytic tools to information theory. As argued by Andrew Odlyzko [16]: "*Analytic methods are extremely powerful and when they apply, they often yield estimates of unparalleled precision.*" We shall see this principle at work for the redundancy problem. (Other examples are provided by [12], [13], [15], [22], [24], [26].) In fact, in his *1997 Shannon Lecture* [30], Jacob Ziv presented compelling arguments for "backing off" to a certain degree from the (first-order) asymptotic analysis of information systems in order to predict the behaviour of real systems where we always face *finite* (and often small) lengths (of sequences, files, codes, etc.) One way of overcoming these difficulties is to increase the accuracy of asymptotic analysis and replace first-order analyses (e.g., a leading term of the average code length) by more complete asymptotic expansions, thereby extending their range of applicability to smaller values while providing more accurate analyses (like constructive error bounds, large deviations, local or central limit laws).

A substantial literature is available on the redundancy problem. Some known results are listed below.

• If $\mathcal{M}$ s a class of i.i.d. (i.e., independently, identically distributed) processes or the class of Markov chains, or more generally the process belongs to a finitely parameterizable class of dimension K, then Rissanen [17] (cf. also [26]) established

$$\overline{R}_n(\mathcal{M}) \sim R_n^*(\mathcal{M}) \sim \frac{K}{2}\lg n.$$

It was also found in [26], [27] that the next term of $\overline{R}_n(\mathcal{M})$ and of $R_n^*(\mathcal{M})$ is $O(1)$. In fact, Szpankowski [22] (cf. also [26]) has established a full asymptotic expansion for $R_n^*(\mathcal{M})$ for memoryless sources over an m-ary alphabet, namely

$$R_n^*(\mathcal{M}) = \frac{m-1}{2}\lg\left(\frac{n}{2}\right) + \lg\left(\frac{\sqrt{\pi}}{\Gamma(m/2)}\right) + \cdots,$$

where $\Gamma(x)$ is the Euler gamma function. In passing we observe that when the alphabet size m is large, the second order terms may contribute significantly to R_n^*. More importantly, the above formula is true only when m is fixed, while in some applications m may depend on n (e.g., image size is comparable to image alphabet). Then, one needs a *uniform* asymptotic expansion of R_n^*, and clearly second order terms will *contribute* to the final outcome.

• Csiszár and Shields [4] have studied order r stationary Markov renewal sequences in which a 1 is inserted every $T_0, T_1, \ldots$ of 0's, where $\{T_i\}$ is either an i.i.d. or Markov renewal or r-order Markov renewal process. We denote such sources as $\mathcal{R}_r$. The authors of [4] proved that $\overline{R}_n(\mathcal{R}_r) = R_n^*(\mathcal{R}_r) = \Theta(n^{(r+1)/(r+2)})$ for $r = 1, 2, \ldots$ which specializes to $\Theta(\sqrt{n})$ when $r = 0$.

• Shields [20] proved that there is no function $\rho(n) = o(n)$ which is a weak-rate bound for the class of all ergodic processes.

• Louchard and Szpankowski [15], Savari [19], Wyner [29], and Jacquet and Szpankowski [14] proved that the Lempel-Ziv codes in the class of i.i.d. and Markov processes have either rate $\Theta(n/\log n)$ (for LZ'78) or $\Theta(n \log\log n/\log n)$ (for LZ'77 code). Interestingly, in [15] it was shown that for LZ'78 the bound $\Theta(n/\log n)$ cannot be improved to an asymptotic equivalence since a fluctuating function is involved. More precisely, for a binary alphabet with 0's generated with probability p and 1's with probability $q = 1-p$, the authors of [15] showed that

$$\overline{R}_n(LZ) = H(\chi + \delta(n))\frac{n}{\log n} + O\left(\frac{n\log\log n}{\log^2 n}\right),$$

where $H = -p\lg p - (1-p)\lg(1-p)$ is the entropy rate and χ is an explicitly determined constant. What is more surprising is the occurrence of the function $\delta(x)$ that fluctuates with mean zero and a tiny amplitude for $\log p/\log q$ rational (the amplitude of $\delta(x)$ is smaller than 10^{-6} for the unbiased case, where $p = q = 0.5$), but satisfies $\lim_{x\to\infty}\delta(x) = 0$ otherwise.

In this paper, we revisit Csiszár and Shields renewal process and present a precise analysis of the maximal minimax redundancy rate for the class of basic renewal source $\mathcal{R}_0$ corresponding to $r = 0$. However, instead of analyzing stationary renewal sequence we consider a nonstationary renewal sequence that starts with a 1 (see Section II for details). Our main result is as follows.

Theorem 1: Consider the class $\mathcal{R}_0$ of nonstationary renewal sources. Let $c = \frac{\pi^2}{6} - 1 \approx 0.645$. Then the minimax redundancy $R_n^*(\mathcal{R}_0)$ satisfies

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{2}{\log 2}\sqrt{cn} &- \frac{5}{8}\lg n + \frac{1}{2}\log\log n \qquad (1)\\ &\le R_n^*(\mathcal{R}_0) \le \frac{2}{\log 2}\sqrt{cn} - \frac{1}{8}\lg n + \frac{1}{2}\log\log n\end{aligned}$$

for large n.

We believe that a more refined analysis of Lemma 1 below could allow us to conclude that the upper bound of

(1) is the correct asymptotic expression for R_n^* up to $O(1)$ term. Actually, some recent results of [6] may lead to a precise calculation of the $O(1)$ term, too. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see if the constant of the leading term of the maximal minimax redundancy $R_n^*(\mathcal{R}_0)$ is the same as for the average minimax redundancy $\overline{R}_n(\mathcal{R}_0)$. The answer to the latter question would shed some light on a wider problem, namely, whether $\overline{R}_n \sim R_n^*$ for a class of stationary and ergodic processes. Some preliminary results in this direction can be found in [6].

This paper is organized as follows. In Section II, the problem is reduced to estimating a certain combinatorial sum that is of independent interest (cf. (7)). Next, we present the main ingredients of the proof in Section III. The heart of the analysis is Lemma 2 that is established in Section IV. The proof is analytic and uses such diverse tools as the Mellin transform, singularity analysis, and the saddle point method. We believe that the analytic approach discussed in this section is of general interest and hope it may find further applications in information theory. For this reason as well as for convenience of exposition, we adopt a tabular presentation of the two main tools used here: the Mellin transform (Fig. 1) and the saddle point method (Fig. 2).

II. Reduction to a Combinatorial Sum

We start with a precise definition of the class $\mathcal{R}_0$ of nonstationary renewal process and its associated sources. Let $T_1, T_2 \ldots$ be a sequence of i.i.d. positive–valued random variables with common distribution $Q(j) = \Pr\{T_1 = j\}$. Throughout we assume that $\mathbf{E}[T_1] < \infty$. The process $T_1, T_1 + T_2, \ldots$ is called the (nonstationary) renewal process. With such a renewal process there is associated a *binary renewal sequence* that is a $0,1$-sequence in which the 1's occur exactly at the renewal epochs T_1, $T_1 + T_2$, etc. Accordingly , we start the renewal sequence with a 1 put at the zeroth position. In passing we observe that since P and Q determine one another, we freely identify the underlying probability measure P defined on $\{0,1\}^\infty$ with the distribution Q that it induces.

We should mention that Csiszár and Shields considered a *stationary* renewal sequence so that starts with some initial 0's of length T_0 satisfying $\Pr\{T_0 = i\} = \mathbf{E}[T_1]^{-1} \sum_{j \ge i} Q(j)$.

We now briefly discuss the mathematical aspect of the redundancy problem. Our goal is to derive asymptotics of

$$R_n^*(\mathcal{S}) = \min_{C_n} \sup_{Q \in \mathcal{S}} \max_{x_1^n} [L(C_n, x_1^n) + \lg P(x_1^n)]$$

where the supremum is taken over all corresponding distributions Q or P. Shtarkov's maximum-likelihood technique [21] implies

$$\lg\left(\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)\right) \le R_n^*(\mathcal{S}) \le \lg\left(\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)\right) + 1. \qquad (2)$$

Indeed, for the lower bound Shtarkov [21] observed that

$$q(x_1^n) := \frac{\sup_Q P(x_1^n)}{\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)}$$

is a probability distribution, and by Kraft's inequality there exists $\widetilde{x}_1^n$ such that

$$L(C_n, \widetilde{x}_1^n) \ge -\lg q(\widetilde{x}_1^n).$$

This implies the lower bound as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} R_n^*(\mathcal{S}) &\ge \min_{C_n} \sup_Q [\lg(1/q(\widetilde{x}_1^n)) + \lg P(\widetilde{x}_1^n)] \\ &\ge \lg\left(\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)\right) \\ &+ \min_{C_n} \sup_Q \left[\lg P(\widetilde{x}_1^n) - \lg \sup_Q P(\widetilde{x}_1^n)\right] \\ &= \lg\left(\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)\right). \end{aligned}$$

For the upper bound, Shtarkov proposed to take the Shannon code $\widetilde{C}_n$ for the distribution $q(x_1^n)$ of length

$$L(\widetilde{C}_n, x_1^n)) = \lceil -\lg q(x_1^n) \rceil,$$

which gives the desired upper bound by the following simple implications:

$$\begin{aligned} R_n^*(\mathcal{S}) &\le \sup_Q \max_{x_1^n} [\lceil -\lg 1/q(x_1^n) \rceil + \lg P(x_1^n)] \\ &\le \lg\left(\sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n)\right) + 1. \end{aligned}$$

This completes the derivation of (2).

We shall derive asymptotics of $R_n^*(\mathcal{S})$ up to $O(\log n)$ term. We first define

$$r_n^* = \sum_{x_1^n} \sup_Q P(x_1^n). \qquad (3)$$

By Shtarkov's inequality (2) we know that $\lg r_n^*$ is within $O(1)$ from the maximal redundancy $R_n^*(\mathcal{R}_0)$.

In order to estimate r_n^* we need to compute $P(x_1^n)$ and analyze $\sup_Q P(x_1^n)$ that we discuss next. Observe that the nonstationary renewal sequence $x_0^n = 1x_1^n$ can be represented as

$$x_0^n = 10^{\alpha_1} 1 \cdots 10^{\alpha_l} 1 \underbrace{0 \cdots 0}_{k^*}$$

where $0 \le \alpha_i \le n$ for $i = 1, \ldots, l \le n$. Let k_m be the number of i such that $\alpha_i = m$, where $m = 0, 1, \ldots, n-1$. Then

$$P(x_1^n) = Q^{k_0}(1) Q^{k_1}(2) \cdots Q^{k_{n-1}}(n) \Pr\{T_1 > k^*\} \qquad (4)$$

subject to $Q(1) + Q(2) + \cdots + Q(n) \le 1$ and

$$k_0 + 2k_1 + \cdots + nk_{n-1} + k^* = n. \qquad (5)$$

To simplify somewhat the next presentation we set $q_i = Q(i+1)$, that is, q_i describes the distribution of the number of zeros between two renewals. (By definition, we set $q_{-1} = Q(0) = 0$.)

As a check, we verify that $P(x_0^n)$ is a probability distribution, that is, $\sum_{x_0^n} P(x_0^n) = 1$ for all $n \geq 0$, where by definition $P(x_0^0 = 1) = 1$. We prove it using generating functions (cf. also Section IV and [9], [23]). In particular, we shall show that for $|z| \leq 1$ we have

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} z^n \sum_{x_0^n} P(x_0^n) = \frac{1}{1-z}. \tag{6}$$

Indeed, let $k = k_0 + \cdots k_{n-1}$ where $k_0, \ldots, k_{n-1}$ satisfy (5). Introducing two new variables u and v, recalling that $q_i = \Pr\{T_1 = i+1\} = Q(i+1)$, and defining $F(v) = \sum_{i \geq 0} q_i v^i$, we have with $n^* = n - k^*$ (the first three lines of the below summation is over tuples $(k_0, \ldots, k_{n-1})$ satisfying (5) and $k = k_0 + \cdots k_{n-1}$, but for simplicity we are not showing it below explicitly)

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{n\geq 0}\sum_{k\geq 0}\sum_{k^*\geq 0} \binom{k}{k_0, k_1, \ldots} q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots (1 - q_0 - \cdots - q_{k^*-1}) z^n u^k v^{k^*} \\
&= \sum_{n^*\geq 0}\sum_{k\geq 0} \binom{k}{k_0, k_1, \ldots} q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots z^{n^*} u^k \frac{1 - zvF(zv)}{1-zv} \\
&= \frac{1 - zvF(zv)}{1-zv} \sum_{k\geq 0} u^k \sum_{n^*\geq 0} \binom{k}{k_0, k_1, \ldots} (q_0 z)^{k_0} \left(q_1 z^2\right)^{k_1} \cdots \\
&= \frac{1 - zvF(zv)}{1-zv} \sum_{k\geq 0} (zuF(z))^k \\
&= \frac{1 - zvF(zv)}{1-zv} \frac{1}{1 - uzF(z)}.
\end{aligned}$$

Substituting in the last line $u = 1$ and $v = 1$ proves (6).

It turns out that the problem of estimating r_n^* can be reduced to the evaluation of a purely combinatorial sum r_m defined below that we study throughout the rest of the paper (by convention here $0^0 = 1$):

$$\begin{cases}
r_m = \displaystyle\sum_{k=0}^{m} r_{m,k} \\
r_{m,k} = \displaystyle\sum_{\mathcal{P}(m,k)} \binom{k}{k_0 \cdots k_{m-1}} \left(\frac{k_0}{k}\right)^{k_0} \cdots \left(\frac{k_{m-1}}{k}\right)^{k_{m-1}}
\end{cases} \tag{7}$$

where $\mathcal{P}(m,k)$ denotes the set of partitions of m into k summands, that is, the collection of tuples of nonnegative integers $(k_0, k_1, \ldots, k_{m-1})$ satisfying

$$m = k_0 + 2k_1 + \cdots + mk_{m-1}, \tag{8}$$
$$k = k_0 + k_1 + \cdots + k_{m-1}. \tag{9}$$

It can also be observed that the quantity r_m has an intrinsic meaning by its own. Let $\mathcal{W}_m$ denote the set of all m^m sequences of length m over the alphabet $\{0, \ldots, m-1\}$. For a sequence w, take k_j to be the number of letters j in w. Then each sequence w carries a "maximum likelihood probability" $\pi_{ML}(w)$ (given by (14) below): this is the probability that w gets assigned in the Bernoulli model that makes it most likely. The quantity r_m is also

$$r_m = \sum_{w \in \mathcal{W}_m} \pi_{ML}(w).$$

Returning to our problem, we present below lower and upper bounds for r_n^* in terms of r_n.

Lemma 1: For all $n \geq 0$

$$r_{n+1} - 1 \leq r_n^* \leq \sum_{m=0}^{n} r_m, \tag{10}$$

where r_n is defined in (7)–(9).

Proof. Let, as before, $q_i = Q(i+1) = \Pr\{T = i+1\}$. By (4) we have

$$P(x_1^n) = q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots q_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}} (1 - q_0 - q_1 - \cdots - q_{k^*-1}) \tag{11}$$

subject to $q_0 + \cdots + q_{n-1} \leq 1$, $k^* \geq 0$, and

$$k_0 + 2k_1 + \cdots + nk_{n-1} \leq n. \tag{12}$$

Observe that in (12) above we have $\leq n$ instead of $= n$ (cf. (8) where m is replaced by n). We denote such a set of partitions (i.e., satisfying (12) and (9) in which m is replaced by n) as $\mathcal{P}(\leq n, k)$.

Upper Bound. We now proceed as follows

$$\begin{aligned}
\sup_q \quad & q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots q_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}} (1 - q_0 - q_1 - \cdots - q_{k^*-1}) \\
\leq \; & \sup_q q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots q_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}} \qquad (13) \\
= \; & \left(\frac{k_0}{k}\right)^{k_0} \cdots \left(\frac{k_{n-1}}{k}\right)^{k_{n-1}} \qquad (14)
\end{aligned}$$

provided $\mathcal{P}(\leq n, k)$ holds. The second line of the above is a consequence of $(1 - q_0 - q_1 - \cdots - q_{k^*-1}) \leq 1$. The last line of the above follows from solving a simple optimization problem with the constraints $q_0 + q_1 + \cdots + q_{n-1} \leq 1$. By the Kuhn–Tucker condition or otherwise, it is seen that

$$\frac{q_i}{q_j} = \frac{k_i}{k_j} \quad \text{for } 0 \leq i, j \leq n-1$$

maximizes the product $q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots q_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}}$ provided n and k satisfy $\mathcal{P}(\leq n, k)$. Thus, (14) is established. Since $\mathcal{P}(\leq n, k) = \bigcup_{i=0}^{n} \mathcal{P}(n-i, k)$, we finally get the upper bound for r_n^*.

Lower Bound. The lower bound is more intricate. We first observe that the last term of the probability $P(x_1^n)$ can be estimated as

$$(1 - q_0 - \cdots - q_{k^*-1}) = \Pr\{T > k^*\} \geq \Pr\{T = k^*+1\} = q_{k^*}.$$

In other words, we add an additional 1 at the end of the sequence (making it of length $n+1$), but then the last k^*

zeros fall into the same distribution as the previous ones, and can be handled by the same optimization technique as in the upper bound case. A simple calculation reveals that

$$\sup_q \quad q_0^{k_0} q_1^{k_1} \cdots q_{k^*}^{k^*+1} \cdots q_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}}$$
$$= \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \cdots \left(\frac{k_{k^*}+1}{k+1}\right)^{k^*+1} \cdots\cdots \left(\frac{k_{n-1}}{k+1}\right)^{k_{n-1}}$$

subject to $k^* \geq 0$ with n and k satisfying $\mathcal{P}(n+1, k+1)$. We have the following chain of inequalities where below $\mathcal{P}(n,k)_j$ is the set of n-tuples $(k_0, k_1, \ldots, k_{n-1}) \in \mathcal{P}(n,k)$ satisfying $k_j > 0$ and we write $j = k^*$ for simplicity:

$$\begin{aligned}
r_n^* &\geq \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{j\geq 0} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n-j,k)} \binom{k}{k_0, \ldots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \cdots \left(\frac{k_j+1}{k+1}\right)^{k_j+1} \cdots \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{j\geq 0} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n-j,k)} \frac{k_j+1}{k+1} \binom{k+1}{k_0, k_1, \cdots, k_j+1, \cdots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \\
&\quad \cdots \left(\frac{k_1}{k+1}\right)^{k_1} \cdots \left(\frac{k_j+1}{k+1}\right)^{k_j+1} \cdots \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{j\geq 0} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n+1,k+1)_j} \frac{k_j}{k+1} \binom{k+1}{k_0, k_1, \cdots, k_j, \cdots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \\
&\quad \cdots \left(\frac{k_1}{k+1}\right)^{k_1} \cdots \left(\frac{k_j}{k+1}\right)^{k_j} \cdots \\
&\overset{(A)}{=} \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{j\geq 0} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n+1,k+1)} \frac{k_j}{k+1} \binom{k+1}{k_0, \cdots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \left(\frac{k_1}{k+1}\right)^{k_1} \cdots \\
&\overset{(B)}{=} \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n+1,k+1)} \sum_{j\geq 0} \frac{k_j}{k+1} \binom{k+1}{k_0, \cdots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \left(\frac{k_1}{k+1}\right)^{k_1} \cdots \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n+1,k+1)} \binom{k+1}{k_0, \cdots} \left(\frac{k_0}{k+1}\right)^{k_0} \left(\frac{k_1}{k+1}\right)^{k_1} \cdots \\
&= r_{n+1} - 1.
\end{aligned}$$

Note that in step (A) above we can "add" those terms with $k_j = 0$ because of the factor $k_j/(k+1)$, while in (B) we use the fact that $\sum_j k_j = k+1$. This proves the lower bound and Lemma 1. ∎

III. A Streamlined Analysis

Our goal is to estimate asymptotically r_n through asymptotics of $r_{n,k}$. A difficulty of finding such asymptotics stems from the factor $k!/k^k$ present in the definition (7) of $r_{n,k}$. We circumvent this problem by analyzing a related pair of sequences, namely s_n and $s_{n,k}$ that are defined as

$$\left\{ \begin{aligned} s_n &= \sum_{k=0}^{n} s_{n,k} \\ s_{n,k} &= e^{-k} \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n,k)} \frac{k_0^{k_0}}{k_0!} \cdots \frac{k_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}}}{k_{n-1}!}. \end{aligned} \right. \tag{15}$$

The translation from s_n to r_n is most conveniently expressed in probabilistic terms. Introduce the random variable K_n whose probability distribution is $s_{n,k}/s_n$, that is,

$$\varpi_n: \qquad \Pr\{K_n = k\} = \frac{s_{n,k}}{s_n}, \tag{16}$$

where ϖ_n denotes the distribution. Then Stirling's formula yields

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{r_n}{s_n} &= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \frac{r_{n,k}}{s_{n,k}} \frac{s_{n,k}}{s_n} = \mathbf{E}[(K_n)! K_n^{-K_n} e^{K_n}] \\ &= \mathbf{E}[\sqrt{2\pi K_n}] + O(\mathbf{E}[K_n^{-\frac{1}{2}}]). \end{aligned} \tag{17}$$

Thus, the problem of finding r_n reduces to asymptotic evaluations of s_n, $\mathbf{E}[\sqrt{K_n}]$ and $\mathbf{E}[K_n^{-\frac{1}{2}}]$. The heart of the matter is the following lemma which provides the necessary estimates.

Lemma 2: Let $\mu_n = \mathbf{E}[K_n]$ and $\sigma_n^2 = \mathbf{Var}(K_n)$, where K_n has the distribution ϖ_n defined above in (16). The following holds

$$s_n \sim \exp\left(2\sqrt{cn} - \frac{7}{8}\log n + d + o(1)\right) \tag{18}$$
$$\mu_n = \frac{1}{4}\sqrt{\frac{n}{c}} \log\frac{n}{c} + o(\sqrt{n}) \tag{19}$$
$$\sigma_n^2 = O(n \log n) = o(\mu_n^2), \tag{20}$$

where $c = \pi^2/6 - 1$, $d = -\log 2 - \frac{3}{8}\log c - \frac{3}{4}\log \pi$.

The somewhat delicate proof of Lemma 2 constitutes the core of the paper and it is deferred till the next section. Once the estimates of Lemma 2 are granted, the moments of order $\pm\frac{1}{2}$ of K_n follow by a standard argument based on concentration of the distribution ϖ_n.

Lemma 3: For large n

$$\mathbf{E}[\sqrt{K_n}] = \mu_n^{1/2}(1 + o(1)) \tag{21}$$
$$\mathbf{E}[K_n^{-\frac{1}{2}}] = o(1). \tag{22}$$

where $\mu_n = \mathbf{E}[K_n]$.

Proof: We only prove (21) since (22) is obtained in a similar manner. The upper bound $\mathbf{E}[\sqrt{K_n}] \leq \sqrt{\mathbf{E}[K_n]}$ follows from concavity of the function $\sqrt{x}$. The lower bound follows from concentration of the distribution. Chebyshev's inequality and (20) of Lemma 2 entail, for any arbitrarily small $\varepsilon > 0$,

$$\Pr\{|K_n - \mu_n| > \varepsilon\mu_n\} \leq \frac{\mathbf{Var}[K_n]}{\varepsilon^2\mu_n^2} = \frac{\delta(n)}{\varepsilon^2}$$

where $\delta(n) \to 0$ as $n \to \infty$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{E}[\sqrt{K_n}] &\geq \sum_{k\geq(1-\varepsilon)\mu_n} \sqrt{k}\Pr\{K_n \geq k\} \\ &\geq (1-\varepsilon)^{\frac{1}{2}} \mu_n^{1/2} \Pr\{K_n \geq (1-\varepsilon)\mu_n\} \\ &\geq (1-\varepsilon)^{\frac{1}{2}} \left(1 - \frac{\delta(n)}{\varepsilon^2}\right) \mu_n^{1/2}. \end{aligned}$$

Hence for any $\eta > 0$ one has $\mathbf{E}[\sqrt{K_n}] > \mu_n^{1/2}(1-\eta)$ provided n is large enough. This completes the proof. ∎

In summary, r_n and s_n are related by

$$\begin{aligned} r_n &= s_n \mathbf{E}[\sqrt{2\pi K_n}](1 + o(1)) \\ &= s_n\sqrt{2\pi\mu_n}(1 + o(1)), \end{aligned}$$

by virtue of (17) and Lemma 3. This leads to

$$R_n := \lg r_n = \lg s_n + \frac{1}{2}\lg \mu_n + \lg\sqrt{2\pi} + o(1). \qquad (23)$$

At this point it suffices to apply the estimates provided by Lemma 2 and Lemma 1 to prove the main result. A little calculation needed to prove the upper bound is provided at the end of Section IV (since it is the easiest to do through the generating function machinery introduced in the section below).

IV. Complex Asymptotic Analysis

This section provides precise asymptotic estimates for the quantity s_n and for moments of the distribution ϖ_n as expressed in (19) and (20) of Lemma 2. It turns out that the quantities $s_{n,k}$ and s_n have generating functions $S(z,u)$ and $S(z,1)$, respectively, that are infinite products involving the tree function of combinatorial analysis. The corresponding coefficient asymptotics are dictated by the behaviour at the singularity of greatest weight [7] — in the case at hand, the positive real singularity $z = 1$— so that we start by investigating asymptotics of $S(z,1)$ as $z \to 1$. This itself requires a dedicated analysis by mean of the Mellin transform. Once the dominant singular behaviour of $S(z,1)$ near $z = 1$ has been found, it remains to extract information on the coefficients s_n. This task involves an appeal to the saddle point method (summarized by Lemma 4) and necessitates some technical concentration condition (Lemma 5). (The whole analysis draws its inspiration from a method of Meinardus in the asymptotic theory of integer partitions; see especially Chapter 6 of [1].) Proceeding in this way the estimate (18) of s_n in Lemma 2 is established. Finally, the method adapts gracefully to moment estimates, yielding the other two estimates (19), (20) of Lemma 2.

Generating Functions. The expression of $s_{n,k}$ in (15) involves quantities of the form $k^k/k!$. We start by introducing the well-known "tree function" $T(z)$ defined as the solution of

$$T(z) = ze^{T(z)}$$

that is analytic at 0. The function $T(z)$ satisfies, by the Lagrange inversion theorem,

$$T(z) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{k^{k-1}}{k!} z^k \qquad (24)$$

for $|z| < e^{-1}$. The tree function owes its name to its rôle in tree enumerations and we refer to the survey paper [3] for algebraic and analytic properties of this important special function of combinatorics.

Next define the function $\beta(z)$ as

$$\beta(z) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{k^k}{k!} e^{-k} z^k.$$

One has (e.g., by Lagrange inversion again or otherwise)

$$\beta(z) = \frac{1}{1 - T(ze^{-1})}.$$

The quantities s_n and $s_{n,k}$ of (15) have generating functions,

$$S_n(u) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} s_{n,k} u^k, \qquad S(z,u) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} S_n(u) z^n.$$

Then, since equation (25) involves convolutions of sequences of the form $k^k/k!$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} S(z,u) &= \sum_{\mathcal{P}(n,k)} z^{1k_0 + 2k_1 + \cdots} \left(\frac{u}{e}\right)^{k_0 + \cdots + k_{n-1}} \frac{k_0^{k_0}}{k_0!} \cdots \frac{k_{n-1}^{k_{n-1}}}{k_{n-1}!} \\ &= \prod_{i=1}^{\infty} \beta(z^i u), \end{aligned} \qquad (25)$$

We also need access to the first moment $\mu_n = \mathbf{E}[K_n]$ and the second factorial moment $\mathbf{E}[K_n(K_n - 1)]$. They are obtained as

$$\begin{aligned} s_n &= [z^n] S(z,1), \\ \mu_n &= \frac{[z^n] S'_u(z,1)}{[z^n] S(z,1)}, \\ \mathbf{E}[K_n(K_n-1)] &= \frac{[z^n] S''_{uu}(z,1)}{[z^n] S(z,1)} \end{aligned}$$

where $[z^n]F(z)$ denotes the coefficient at z^n of $F(z)$, $S'_u(z,1)$ and $S''_{uu}(z,1)$ represent the first and the second derivative of $S(z,u)$ at $u = 1$.

Mellin Asymptotics. We deal here with s_n that is accessible through its generating function,

$$S(z,1) = \prod_{i=1}^{\infty} \beta(z^i). \qquad (29)$$

The behaviour of the generating function $S(z,1)$ as $z \to 1$ is an essential ingredient of the analysis.

First, the singularity of the tree function $T(z)$ at $z = e^{-1}$ is of the square-root type; see [3]. (This results from the failure of the implicit function theorem at $(z,T) = (e^{-1}, 1)$ where the relation becomes locally quadratic in T.) Hence, near $z = 1$, $\beta(z)$ admits the singular expansion (cf. [3]):

$$\beta(z) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2(1-z)}} + \frac{1}{3} - \frac{\sqrt{2}}{24}\sqrt{(1-z)} + O(1-z).$$

We now turn to the infinite product asymptotics as $z \to 1^-$, with z real. Let $L(z) = \log S(z,1)$ and $z = e^{-t}$, so that

$$L(e^{-t}) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \log \beta(e^{-kt}). \qquad (30)$$

Mellin transform techniques provide an expansion of $L(e^{-t})$ around $t = 0$ (or equivalently $z = 1$) since the sum (30)

(M1) DIRECT AND INVERSE MELLIN TRANSFORMS. Let c belong to the *fundamental strip* defined below.

$$f^*(s) := \mathcal{M}(f(x); s) = \int_0^\infty f(x)x^{s-1}dx \qquad \Longleftrightarrow \qquad f(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi i}\int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} f^*(s)x^{-s}ds. \tag{26}$$

(M2) FUNDAMENTAL STRIP. The Mellin transform of $f(x)$ exists in the *fundamental strip* $\Re(s) \in (-\alpha, -\beta)$, where

$$f(x) = O(x^\alpha) \qquad (x \to 0), \qquad\qquad f(x) = O(x^\beta) \qquad (x \to \infty)$$

for $\beta < \alpha$.

(M3) HARMONIC SUM PROPERTY. By linearity and the scale rule $\mathcal{M}(f(ax); s) = a^{-s}\mathcal{M}(f(x); s)$,

$$f(x) = \sum_{k\geq 0} \lambda_k g(\mu_k x) \qquad \Longleftrightarrow \qquad f^*(s) = g^*(s)\sum_{k\geq 0}\lambda_k \mu_k^{-s}. \tag{27}$$

(M4) MAPPING PROPERTIES (Asymptotic expansion of $f(x)$ and singularities of $f^*(s)$).

$$f(x) = \sum_{(\xi,k)\in A} c_{\xi,k}x^\xi(\log x)^k + O(x^M) \qquad \Longleftrightarrow \qquad f^*(s) \asymp \sum_{(\xi,k)\in A} c_{\xi,k}\frac{(-1)^k k!}{(s+\xi)^{k+1}}. \tag{28}$$

— (i) *Direct Mapping.* Assume that $f(x)$ admits as $x \to 0^+$ the asymptotic expansion (28) for some $-M < -\alpha$ and $k > 0$. Then for $\Re(s) \in (-M, -\beta)$, the transform $f^*(s)$ satisfies the singular expansion (28)

— (ii) *Converse Mapping.* Assume that $f^*(s) = O(|s|^{-r})$ with $r > 1$, as $|s| \to \infty$ and that $f^*(s)$ admits the singular expansion (28) for $\Re(s) \in (-M, -\beta)$. Then $f(x)$ satisfies the asymptotic expansion (28) at $x = 0^+$.

Fig. 1. Main properties of the Mellin transform.

falls under the *harmonic sum* paradigm of [8]. The Mellin approach is by now a standard technique in the analysis of algorithms. For the reader's convenience, we recall its main properties in Fig. 1, following [8], to which we refer globally for detailed validity conditions.

First, the Mellin transform $L^*(s) = \mathcal{M}(L(e^{-t}); s)$ of $L(e^{-t})$ is computed by the harmonic sum property (M3). For $\Re(s) \in (1, \infty)$, the transform evaluates to

$$L^*(s) = \zeta(s)\Lambda(s)$$

where $\zeta(s) = \sum_{n\geq 1} n^{-s}$ is the Riemann zeta function, and

$$\Lambda(s) = \int_0^\infty \log\beta(e^{-t})t^{s-1}dt.$$

The subsequent treatment is typical of the Mellin analysis of harmonic sums: the singularity structure of $\Lambda(s)$ is deduced from the asymptotic properties of $\beta(z)$. This gives in turn the singularity structure of $L^*(s)$ that is then converted back into an asymptotic expansion of $L(e^{-t})$. In effect, by the direct mapping property (M4), the expansion of $\beta(z)$ at $z = 1$ implies

$$\log\beta(e^{-t}) = -\frac{1}{2}\log t - \frac{1}{2}\log 2 + O(\sqrt{t}),$$

so that, collecting local expansions,

$$\Lambda(s) \asymp \Big(\Lambda(1)\Big)_{s=1} + \left(\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{s^2} - \frac{1}{2}\frac{\log 2}{s}\right)_{s=0}.$$

On the other hand, classical expansions give (cf. [25])

$$\zeta(s) \asymp \left(\frac{1}{s-1} + \gamma\right)_{s=1} + \left(-\frac{1}{2} - s\log\sqrt{2\pi}\right)_{s=0}.$$

Term-wise multiplication then provides the singular expansion of $L^*(s)$:

$$L^*(s) \asymp \left(\frac{\Lambda(1)}{s-1}\right)_{s=1} + \left(-\frac{1}{4s^2} - \frac{\log\pi}{4s}\right)_{s=0}.$$

An application of the converse mapping property (M4) allows us to come back to the original function,

$$L(e^{-t}) = \frac{\Lambda(1)}{t} + \frac{1}{4}\log t - \frac{1}{4}\log\pi + O(\sqrt{t}), \tag{31}$$

which translates, using $1 - t + O(t^2) = e^{-t} = z$, in

$$L(z) = \frac{\Lambda(1)}{1-z} + \frac{1}{4}\log(1-z) - \frac{1}{4}\log\pi - \frac{1}{2}\Lambda(1) + O(\sqrt{1-z}). \tag{32}$$

This computation is finally completed by the evaluation of $c := \Lambda(1)$:

$$\begin{aligned} c = \Lambda(1) &= -\int_0^1 \log(1 - T(x/e))\frac{dx}{x} \\ &= -\int_0^1 \log(1-t)\frac{(1-t)}{t}dt \qquad (x = te^{1-t}) \\ &= \frac{\pi^2}{6} - 1. \end{aligned}$$

In summary, we just proved that, as $z \to 1^-$,

$$S(z,1) = e^{L(z)} = a(1-z)^{\frac{1}{4}} \exp\left(\frac{c}{1-z}\right)(1+o(1)), \quad (33)$$

where $a = \exp(-\frac{1}{4}\log\pi - \frac{1}{2}c)$.

So far, the main estimate (33) has been established as z tends to 1 from the left, by real values. In fact, the formula (31) on which (33) rests holds for *complex* t only constrained in such a way that $-\frac{\pi}{2} + \epsilon \le \arg(t) \le \frac{\pi}{2} - \epsilon$, for any $\epsilon > 0$. The reason is that the converse mapping property (M4:*ii*) and in particular (31) rely on residues of the inverse Mellin integral that still converges when t is restricted to such a wedge (cf. [8]). Thus, the expansion (33) actually holds true as $z \to 1$ in a sector, say,

$$|\arg(1-z)| < \frac{\pi}{4}.$$

Saddle Point Analysis. It remains to collect the information gathered on $S(z,1)$ and recover $s_n = [z^n]S(z,1)$ asymptotically. The inversion is provided by the Cauchy coefficient formula, that is,

$$s_n = \frac{1}{2\pi i}\oint \frac{S(z,1)}{z^{n+1}}dz$$

where the integration path is any simple loop around 0 inside the unit disk. The saddle point method [5], [11] summarized in Fig. 2 is now employed.

First, we provide a formula[1] for a standard set of functions that exhibit the same growth pattern as $S(z,1)$ near $z=1$.

Lemma 4: For positive $A > 0$, and reals B and C, define $f(z) = f_{A,B,C}(z)$ as

$$f(z) = \exp\left(\frac{A}{1-z} + B\log\frac{1}{1-z} + C\log\left(\frac{1}{z}\log\frac{1}{1-z}\right)\right). \quad (34)$$

Then, the nth Taylor coefficient of $f_{A,B,C}(z)$ satisfies asymptotically, for large n,

$$\begin{aligned}[z^n]f_{A,B,C}(z) \;=\; & \exp\Bigg[2\sqrt{An} + \frac{1}{2}\left(B - \frac{3}{2}\right)\log n \quad (35)\\ & + C\log\log\sqrt{\frac{n}{A}}\\ & - \frac{1}{2}\log\left(4\pi e^{-A}/\sqrt{A}\right)\Bigg](1+o(1)).\end{aligned}$$

Proof: Problems of this kind have been considered by Wright [28] and others who, in particular, justify in detail that the saddle point method works in similar contexts. Therefore, we only outline the proof here. The starting point (see Fig. 2) is Cauchy's formula

$$[z^n]f(z) = \frac{1}{2\pi i}\oint e^{h(z)}dz$$

where

$$h(z) = \log f_{A,B,C}(z) - (n+1)\log z.$$

In accordance with (S1) of Fig. 2, one chooses a saddle point contour that is a circle of radius r defined by $h'(r) = 0$. Asymptotically, one finds

$$r = 1 - \sqrt{\frac{A}{n}} + \frac{B-A}{2n} + o(n^{-1}),$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}h(r) \;=\; & 2A\sqrt{\frac{n}{A}} + B\log\left(\sqrt{\frac{n}{A}}\right) + C\log\log\left(\sqrt{\frac{n}{A}}\right)\\ & + \frac{1}{2}A + o(1).\end{aligned}$$

The "range" $\phi = \phi(n)$ of the saddle point, where most of the contribution of the contour integral is concentrated asymptotically, is dictated by the order of growth of derivatives; see (S2). Here, $h''(r) \approx n^{3/2}$, while $h'''(r) \approx n^2$, so that

$$\phi(n) = n^{-3/4}.$$

In accordance with requirement (S3), tails are negligible since the function $\exp((1-z)^{-1})$ decays very fast when going away from the real axis. In the central region, the local approximation (S4) applies, as seen by expansions near $z=1$. Thus requirements (S1), (S2), (S3), and (S4) are satisfied, implying, by (S5),

$$[z^n]f(z) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi|h''(r)|}}e^{h(r)}(1+o(1)).$$

Some simple algebra, using

$$h''(r) = 2n\sqrt{n/A}\,(1+o(1)),$$

yields the stated estimate (35). ∎

Now, the function $S(z,1)$ is only known to behave like $f(z)$ of Lemma 4 in the vicinity of 1. In order to adapt the proof of Lemma 4 and legitimate the use of the resulting formula, we need to prove that $S(z,1)$ decays fast away from the real axis.

Lemma 5 (Concentration property) Consider the ratio

$$q(z) = \prod_{j=1}^{\infty}\left|\frac{\beta(z^j)}{\beta(|z|^j)}\right|.$$

Then, there exists a constant $c_0 > 0$ such that

$$q(re^{i\theta}) = O\left(e^{-c_0(1-r)^{-1}}\right),$$

uniformly, for $\frac{1}{2} \le r < 1$ and $|\arg(re^{i\theta} - 1)| > \frac{\pi}{4}$.

Proof: In this proof the c_j denote positive constants whose precise value is immaterial.

First, by the triangular inequality, a function like $\beta(z)$ that has nonnegative Taylor coefficients attains its maximum modulus on the positive real axis. More precisely, one has

$$\sup_\theta |\beta(re^{i\theta})| = \beta(r).$$

[1]The computations here and in the rest of the section have been further checked with the help of the symbolic system Maple. Note that this requires multi-scale asymptotic manipulations for which the package based on the works of Salvy and Shackell [18] proved to be of special importance.

Input: A function $g(z)$ analytic in $|z| < R$ $(0 < R < +\infty)$ with nonnegative Taylor coefficients and "fast growth" as $z \to R^-$. Let $h(z) := \log g(z) - (n+1)\log z$.
Output: The asymptotic formula (41) for $g_n := [z^n]g(z)$ derived from the Cauchy coefficient integral

$$g_n = \frac{1}{2i\pi}\int_\gamma g(z)\,\frac{dz}{z^{n+1}} = \frac{1}{2i\pi}\int_\gamma e^{h(z)}\,dz \tag{36}$$

where γ is a loop around $z = 0$.
(S1). Saddle point contour. *Require that $g'(z)/g(z) \to +\infty$ as $z \to R^-$.* Let $r = r(n)$ be the unique positive root of the saddle point equation

$$h'(r) = 0 \qquad \text{or} \qquad \frac{rg'(r)}{g(r)} = n+1, \tag{37}$$

so that $r \to R$ as $n \to \infty$. The integral (36) is evaluated on $\gamma = \{z \mid |z| = r\}$.
(S2). Basic split. *Require that $h'''(r)^{1/3}h''(r)^{-1/2} \to 0$.* Define $\phi = \phi(n)$ called the "range" of the saddle point by

$$\phi = \left|h'''(r)^{-1/6}h''(r)^{-1/4}\right|, \tag{38}$$

so that, as $\phi \to 0$, $h''(r)\phi^2 \to \infty$, and $h'''(r)\phi^3 \to 0$. Split $\gamma = \gamma_0 \cup \gamma_1$, where $\gamma_0 = \{z \in \gamma \mid |\arg(z)| \le \phi\}$, $\gamma_1 = \{z \in \gamma \mid |\arg(z)| \ge \phi\}$.
(S3) Elimination of tails. *Require that $|g(re^{i\theta})| \le |g(re^{i\phi})|$ on γ_1.* Then, the tail integral satisfies the trivial bound,

$$\left|\int_{\gamma_1} e^{h(z)}\,dz\right| = O\left(|e^{-h(re^{i\phi})}|\right). \tag{39}$$

(S4) Local approximation. *Require that $h(re^{i\theta}) - h(r) - \frac{1}{2}r^2\theta^2h''(r) = O(|h'''(r)\phi^3|)$ on γ_0.* Then, the central integral is asymptotic to a complete Gaussian integral, and

$$\frac{1}{2i\pi}\int_{\gamma_0} e^{h(z)}\,dz = \frac{g(r)r^{-n}}{\sqrt{2\pi h''(r)}}\left(1 + O(|h'''(r)\phi^3|)\right). \tag{40}$$

(S5) Collection. Requirements $(S1), (S2), (S3), (S4)$, imply the estimate:

$$[z^n]g(z) = \frac{g(r)r^{-n}}{\sqrt{2\pi h''(r)}}\left(1 + O(|h'''(r)\phi^3|)\right) \sim \frac{g(r)r^{-n}}{\sqrt{2\pi h''(r)}}. \tag{41}$$

Fig. 2. The Saddle Point Algorithm.

Furthermore, by the converse triangular inequality, the maximum is uniquely attained on $|z| = r$ as soon as the function is aperiodic, which means the following: There is no $\widehat{\beta}(z)$ analytic at 0 such that $\beta(z) = z^a\widehat{\beta}(z^b)$ for integers a, b and $b \ge 2$. This condition is obviously satisfied here since $\beta(z) = 1 + e^{-1}z + 2(e^{-1}z)^2 + \cdots$.

Fix some small angle parameter ϕ_0, for instance, $\phi_0 = \frac{1}{10}$, and define

$$\sigma(r) = \sup_{|\theta|\ge\phi_0}\left|\frac{\beta(re^{i\theta})}{\beta(r)}\right|. \tag{42}$$

Then $\sigma(r)$ is continuous on the open interval $(0,1)$ where it satisfies $\sigma(r) < 1$ while it tends to zero when r tends to 1. As a consequence, for each $\delta > 0$, there exists an $A_\delta < 1$ such that

$$\sigma(r) < A_\delta \qquad \text{for all } r \text{ satisfying } \delta \le r < 1. \tag{43}$$

Consider the case where $z = re^{i\theta}$ with $r \to 1$. Set $r = e^{-\tau}$. The powers z^j form a discrete set of points on a logarithmic spiral that winds about 0. The number of such powers that have modulus larger than δ is

$$\frac{\log\delta^{-1}}{\tau} + O(1).$$

If $z = re^{i\theta}$ and $|\theta| \ge \phi_0$, then a fraction of these points, namely,

$$c_1\frac{\log\delta^{-1}}{\tau} + O(1)$$

will lie outside of the region $|\arg(z^j)| < \phi_0$. Thus, by the bound (43), we find

$$q(re^{i\theta}) = O(e^{-c_2/\tau}) = O(e^{-c_3/(1-r)}). \tag{44}$$

This argument adapts when z is close to the real axis as follows. It is assumed that $|\arg(z-1)| > \pi/4$. Thus,

$\arg(z) = \theta > \tau$. Then, the winding number around 0 of the polygonal line with vertices the z^j and $|z^j| > \delta$ is

$$\left\lceil \left(\frac{\log \delta^{-1}}{\tau} + O(1) \right) \frac{\theta}{2\pi} \right\rceil > \frac{\log \delta^{-1}}{2\pi} + O(1).$$

In other words, fixing δ small enough ensures that at least one full winding takes place. In this case a number at least c_4/τ of the z^j satisfying $|z^j| > \delta$ are such that $|\beta(z^j)/\beta(r^j)| < A_\delta$. Then, an estimate of type (44) holds,

$$|q(re^{i\theta})| = O(e^{-c_5/\tau}) = O(e^{-c_6/(1-r)}), \qquad (45)$$

albeit with different constants. The statement follows upon taking $c_0 = \min(c_3, c_6)$. ∎

We are now eventually ready to return to the estimate of s_n in Lemma 2. In the region $|\arg(z-1)| < \frac{\pi}{4}$, the Mellin asymptotic estimates (31) and (33) apply. This shows that in this region,

$$S(z,1) = e^{o(1)} f_{A,B,C}(z) \qquad (z \to 1),$$

where the function f is that of Lemma 4 and the constants A, B, C have the values assigned by (33):

$$A = c = \frac{\pi^2}{6} - 1, \quad B = -\frac{1}{4}, \quad C = 0.$$

In the complementary region, $|\arg(z-1)| > \frac{\pi}{4}$, the function $S(z,1)$ is exponentially smaller than $(S(|z|,1)$ by Lemma 5. From these two facts, the saddle point estimates of Lemma 4 are seen to apply, by a trivial modification of the proof of that lemma. This concludes the proof of Equation (18) in Lemma 2.

Moments. It remains to complete the evaluation of μ_n and σ_n^2, following the same principles as before. Start with $\mu_n = \mathbf{E}[K_n]$, with the goal of establishing the evaluation (19) of Lemma 2. It is necessary to estimate $[z^n]S'_u(z,1)$, with

$$S'_u(z,1) = S(z,1) \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} z^k \frac{\beta'(z^k)}{\beta(z^k)}. \qquad (46)$$

Let

$$D_1(z) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \alpha(z^k), \qquad \text{where} \qquad \alpha(z) = z\frac{\beta'(z)}{\beta(z)}.$$

Via the substitution $z = e^{-t}$, the function $D_1(e^{-t})$ falls under the harmonic sum property (M3) of Fig 1, so that its Mellin transform is

$$\mathcal{M}(D_1(e^{-t}); s) = \zeta(s)\mathcal{M}(\alpha(e^{-t}); s).$$

The asymptotic expansion

$$\alpha(e^{-t}) = \frac{1}{2t} - \frac{\sqrt{2}}{6}\frac{1}{\sqrt{t}} - \frac{1}{18} + O(\sqrt{t}),$$

gives the singular expansion of the corresponding Mellin transform, by (M4:*i*). This in turn yields the singular expansion of $\mathcal{M}(D_1(e^{-t}); s)$. Then, the converse mapping property (M4:*ii*) gives back $D(e^{-t})$ at $t \sim 0$, hence,

$$\begin{aligned} D_1(z) &= \frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{1-z}\log\frac{1}{1-z} + \frac{1}{2}\frac{\gamma}{1-z} \\ &\quad - \frac{1}{6}\frac{\sqrt{2}\zeta(\frac{1}{2})}{\sqrt{1-z}} - \frac{1}{4}\log\frac{1}{1-z} + O(1), \end{aligned}$$

where $\gamma = 0.577\ldots$ is the Euler constant. The combination of this last estimate and the main asymptotic form of $S(z,1)$ in (33) yields

$$S'_u(z,1) \underset{z\to 1}{\sim} \frac{1}{2} a \exp\left(\frac{c}{1-z} + \frac{3}{4}\log\frac{1}{1-z} + \log\log\frac{1}{1-z} \right), \qquad (47)$$

where a is the same constant as in (33). Like for $S(z,1)$, the derivative $S'_u(z,1)$ is amenable to Lemma 4, and this proves the asymptotic form of μ_n, as stated in (19) of Lemma 2.

Finally, we need to justify (20) that represents a bound on the variance of K_n. The computations follow the same steps as above, so we only sketch them briefly. One needs to estimate a second derivative,

$$\frac{S''_{uu}(z,1)}{S(z,1)} = D_2(z) + D_1^2(z)$$

where

$$D_2(z) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} z^{2k}\frac{\beta''(z^k)}{\beta(z^k)} - \left(\frac{z^k\beta'(z^k)}{\beta(z^k)}\right)^2.$$

The sum above is again a harmonic sum that is amenable to Mellin analysis, with the result that

$$D_2(z) = \frac{\zeta(2)}{2}\frac{1}{(1-z)^2} + O((1-z)^{-3/2}).$$

Then we appeal again to Lemma 4 to achieve the transfer to coefficients. Somewhat tedious calculations (that were assisted by the computer algebra system MAPLE) show that the leading term in $n\log^2 n$ of the second moment cancels with the square of the mean μ_n. Hence, the variance cannot be larger than $O(n\log n)$. This establishes the second moment estimate (20) of Lemma 2.

To complete the proof we must show how to obtain the asymptotics for the upper bound on r_n^*, that is, $r_n^U = \sum_{i=0}^n r_i$. We follow the footsteps of the analysis for r_n, that is, we define s_n^U, and observe that its generating function is

$$S^U(z,u) = \frac{S(z,u)}{1-z}.$$

In particular, (33) implies

$$S^U(z,1) = e^{L(z)} = a(1-z)^{-\frac{3}{4}} \exp\left(\frac{c}{1-z}\right)(1+o(1)).$$

Thus

$$\log s_n^U = 2\sqrt{cn} - \frac{3}{8}\log n + O(1).$$

To establish $\log \mu_n^U$ (where μ_n^U is the corresponding quantity to μ_n defined in Lemma 2) we just repeat the calculations leading to (47) which yield

$$\log \mu_n^U = \frac{1}{2}\log n + \log\log n + O(1).$$

This establishes the desired upper bound and proves the main result.

V. Numerical Estimates

Numerical verifications support extremely well the claims made in the introduction about the accuracy of asymptotic expansions based on analytic methods, even when the values of n are far from the asymptotic regime. Our main result states that the function

$$\varphi(n) = \frac{2}{\log 2}\sqrt{\left(\frac{\pi^2}{6}-1\right)n} - \frac{5}{8}\log_2 n + \frac{1}{2}\log_2\log n + K,$$

where

$$K = \frac{1}{8}\lg\left(\frac{\pi^2/6-1}{2^{12}\pi^2}\right) \approx -1.99197,$$

is such that $r_n = \varphi(n) + o(1)$. In fact observation of the values of the difference $\Delta(n) = r_n - \varphi(n)$, for which a sample is given by the following table

n:	3	5	10	20	50	100
$\Delta(n)$:	0.223	0.026	0.128	0.055	0.002	-0.010

shows that *the quantity* $\varphi(n)$ *estimates* r_n *very well for all values of* $n \geq 3$.

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