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On digits of Mersenne numbers

Bryce Kerr, László Mérai and Igor E. Shparlinski

Abstract. Motivated by recently developed interest to the distribution of q-ary digits of Mersenne numbers $M_p = 2^p - 1$, where p is prime, we estimate rational exponential sums with M_p, $p \leqslant X$, modulo a large power of a fixed odd prime q. In turn this immediately implies the normality of strings of q-ary digits amongst about $(\log X)^{3/2+o(1)}$ rightmost digits of M_p, $p \leqslant X$. Previous results imply this only for about $(\log X)^{1+o(1)}$ rightmost digits.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Recently, Cai, Faust, Hildebrand, Li and Zhang [5] have considered various questions on the patterns in leading q-ary digits of *Mersenne numbers* $M_p = 2^p - 1$, where p is prime, see also [4, 10] for some other related questions. In particular, one can find in [5] some numerical results which suggest the leftmost q-ary digits of Mersenne numbers obey the so-called *Benford law*. It has also been mentioned in [5], see Remark 4.4 and Section 7, that the bounds of exponential sums with fractions M_p/m for a large integer m such as in [1, 2] can be used to extract some nontrivial information about the distribution of the rightmost digits of M_p. This conclusion in [5] is based on bounds of exponential sums with an arbitrary modulus m. However, for the case q-ary digits only moduli of the form $m = q^\gamma$ with an integer γ are of interest. Here we show that indeed for such moduli, using some ideas of Korobov [12], one can obtain much stronger results. To emphasise the ideas, we consider the case when q is prime, although there is no doubt that the method extends to any q without too much loss in its power.

For example, our bounds of exponential sums immediately imply the following equidistribution results for q-ary digits of M_p. For any fixed real $\varepsilon > 0$ and for any positive integers $s \leqslant r \leqslant (\log X)^{3/2-\varepsilon}$, on rightmost q-ary positions $r, \ldots, r-s+1$ of M_p, $p \leqslant X$, any block of q-ary digits of length s appears asymptotically the same number of times, that is, $(q^{-s} + o(1))\pi(X)$, where, as usual, $\pi(X)$ denotes the number of primes $p \leqslant X$, see Theorem 1.3.

The generic results of [1, 2] imply this only for positions which are much closer to the right end, namely, only for $r \leqslant c \log X$ for some absolute constant $c > 0$.

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Let m be an arbitrary natural number, and let a and g be integers that are coprime to m. In this paper, we study exponential sums of the form

$$S_m(a;X) = \sum_{n \leqslant X} \Lambda(n)\, \mathbf{e}_m(ag^n), \tag{1.1}$$

where $\mathbf{e}_m$ is the additive character modulo m defined by

$$\mathbf{e}_m(t) = \exp(2\pi i t/m) \quad (t \in \mathbb{R}),$$

and Λ is the *von Mangoldt function*:

$$\Lambda(n) = \begin{cases} \log p & \text{if } n \text{ is a power of the prime } p, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The sums (1.1) are introduced in Banks et al. [1], where it is shown that

$$\max_{(a,m)=1} |S_m(a;X)| \leqslant \left(X\tau^{-11/32} m^{5/16} + X^{5/6}\tau^{5/48} m^{7/24}\right) X^{o(1)},$$

as $X \to \infty$, where $\tau = \operatorname{ord}_m g$ denotes the multiplicative order of g modulo m, that is, the smallest natural number k such that $g^k \equiv 1 \bmod m$.

Using an idea of Garaev [9] to handle double sums over certain hyperbolic regions, the stronger bound

$$\max_{(a,m)=1} |S_m(a;X)| \leqslant \left(X\tau^{-11/32} m^{5/16} + X^{4/5}\tau^{1/8} m^{7/20}\right) X^{o(1)}$$

is established in Banks et al. [2]. Note that, for either of the above bounds to be nontrivial, one must have $\tau \geqslant m^{10/11} X^{o(1)}$ (to control the first term), hence also

$$m \leqslant X^{22/51+o(1)}$$

(to control the second term), as $X \to \infty$. For shorter sums, new ideas are needed.

In the present paper, we study the exponential sums $S_m(a;X)$ in the special case that $m = q^\gamma$ for some fixed prime q. Our aim is to establish nontrivial bounds for short sums in which X is smaller than the modulus m. Our approach relies on an idea of Korobov [12], coupled with the use of Vinogradov's mean value theorem in the explicit form given by Ford [8].

1.2. Statement of results

Since our main motivation comes from applications to Mersenne numbers, we always assume that $q \geqslant 3$, which simplifies the formulas in Section 2.3 (and can easily be avoided at the cost of some small typographical changes).

Theorem 1.1. *Fix a prime $q \geqslant 3$ and an integer $g \geqslant 2$ not divisible by q. Let γ be a positive integer and let $A > 0$ be an arbitrary constant. Suppose that X satisfies*

$$2 \leqslant X \leqslant q^{A\gamma}. \tag{1.2}$$

Then, for all integers a with $\gcd(a, q) = 1$, we have

$$\left|S_{q^\gamma}(a; X)\right| \leqslant c(g, q, A)\left(X^{1-\delta(A)\rho^2}\log X + Xq^{-\delta(A)\gamma}\right),$$

where $\delta(A) > 0$ is a constant depending only on A,

$$\rho = \frac{\log X}{\log q^\gamma}, \tag{1.3}$$

and $c(g, q, A)$ depends only on g, q and A.

We remark that Theorem 1.1 is nontrivial in the range

$$q^{A\gamma} \geqslant X \geqslant q^{\gamma^{2/3+\varepsilon}},$$

for an arbitrary small $\varepsilon > 0$, provided that X is large enough, and with $g = 2$ yields (via partial summation) a nontrivial bound on exponential sums with Mersenne numbers $M_p = 2^p - 1$, p prime.

Corollary 1.2. *For a prime $q \geqslant 3$ and a real X satisfying (1.2), we have*

$$\max_{(a,q)=1}\left|\sum_{\substack{p\leqslant X\\ p \text{ prime}}}\mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(aM_p)\right| \leqslant c(q, A)\left(X^{1-\delta_0(A)\rho^2} + Xq^{-\delta_0(A)\gamma}\right),$$

where $\delta_0(A) > 0$ is a constant depending only on A, ρ is as in (1.3) and $c(q, A)$ depends only on q and A.

We are now able to address the question of distribution of rightmost digits of Mersenne numbers. Given a string σ of s digits to base q,

$$\sigma = (a_{s-1}, \dots, a_0) \in \{0, \dots, q-1\}^s, \tag{1.4}$$

we denote by $A_r(X, \sigma)$ the number of primes $p \leqslant X$ such that M_p written in base q has σ as the string on s consecutive digits on positions $r, \dots, r-s+1$, counting from the right to the left, where the numbering starts with zero.

We recall that by the prime number theorem (in a very crude form) we have $\pi(X) = (1 + o(1))X/\log X$ as $X \to \infty$.

Theorem 1.3. *For a fixed prime $q \geqslant 3$, a real $\varepsilon > 0$ and a string σ of length s of the form (1.4), uniformly over $\varepsilon \log X \leqslant r \leqslant (\log X)^{3/2-\varepsilon}$ and strings σ of length s of the form (1.4) we have*

$$A_r(X, \sigma) = (q^{-s} + o(1))\,\pi(X)$$

as $X \to \infty$.

We remark that the lower bound on r can be relaxed, but a condition of this kind is necessary. For example, if 2 is not a primitive root modulo q, the distribution of digits on the rightmost positions cannot be uniform.

2. Preliminaries

2.1. Notation

Throughout the paper, $\mathbb{N}$ is the set of positive integers. The letters k, m and n (with or without subscripts) are always used to denote positive integers; the letter q (with or without subscripts) is always used to denote a prime.

Given a prime q, let ν_q denote the *standard q-adic valuation*. In particular, for every $n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\}$ one has $\nu_q(n) = k$, where k is the largest nonnegative integer for which $q^k \mid n$.

Given a sequence of complex weights

$$\boldsymbol{\gamma} = (\gamma_h)_{h \in \mathcal{H}}$$

supported on a finite set $\mathcal{H}$ and $\vartheta \geqslant 1$, we define norms of $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$ in the usual way:

$$\|\boldsymbol{\gamma}\|_\infty = \max_{h \in \mathcal{H}} |\gamma_h| \quad \text{and} \quad \|\boldsymbol{\gamma}\|_\vartheta = \Big(\sum_{h \in \mathcal{H}} |\gamma_h|^\vartheta \Big)^{1/\vartheta}.$$

For given functions F and G, the notations $F \ll G$, $G \gg F$ and $F = O(G)$ are all equivalent to the statement that the inequality $|F| \leqslant c|G|$ holds with some constant $c > 0$. Throughout the paper, any implied constants in symbols O, $\ll$ and $\gg$ may depend on the parameters q and A, and are *absolute* unless specified otherwise.

We write $F \asymp G$ to indicate that $F \ll G$ and $G \ll F$ both hold.

Finally, we use $\#\mathcal{S}$ to denote the cardinality of a finite set $\mathcal{S}$.

2.2. Sums over primes

It is convenient to use a form of *Vaughan's identity* given by the equation (6) in Chapter 24 of [6].

Lemma 2.1. *For any complex-valued function $f(n)$ with $|f(n)| \leqslant 1$ and any real numbers $1 < U, V \leqslant X$ with $UV \leqslant X$, we have*

$$\sum_{n \leqslant X} \Lambda(n) f(n) \ll U + \Sigma_1 \log X + \Sigma_2^{1/2} X^{1/2} (\log X)^3,$$

where

$$\Sigma_1 = \sum_{t \leqslant UV} \max_{w \leqslant X/t} \Big| \sum_{w \leqslant m \leqslant X/t} f(mt) \Big|,$$

$$\Sigma_2 = \max_{U \leqslant w \leqslant X/V} \max_{V \leqslant j \leqslant X/w} \sum_{V < m \leqslant X/w} \Bigg| \sum_{\substack{w < n \leqslant 2w \\ n \leqslant X/m \\ n \leqslant X/j}} f(jn) \overline{f}(mn) \Bigg|.$$

2.3. Multiplicative order of integers

Fix a prime $q \geqslant 3$ and an integer $g \neq \pm 1$ with $\gcd(g, q) = 1$. For every $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let $\tau_n = \operatorname{ord}_{q^n} g$ denote the order of g modulo q^n. We write

$$g^{\tau_n} = 1 + h_n q^{n + \mathfrak{g}_n} \quad (n \in \mathbb{N}), \tag{2.1}$$

with some uniquely determined integers h_n and $\mathfrak{g}_n \geqslant 0$ such that $\gcd(h_n, q) = 1$. We also put

$$\tau = \tau_1 \quad \text{and} \quad G = \mathfrak{g}_1 + 1 = v_q(g^\tau - 1). \tag{2.2}$$

A simple argument shows

$$\mathfrak{g}_n = \begin{cases} G - n & \text{if } n \leqslant G, \\ 0 & \text{if } n \geqslant G, \end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad \tau_n = \begin{cases} \tau & \text{if } n \leqslant G, \\ q^{n-G}\tau & \text{if } n \geqslant G. \end{cases} \tag{2.3}$$

The following two statements are easy consequences of (2.3).

Lemma 2.2. *For $r \geqslant s \geqslant G$, we have*

$$g^{n_1\tau_s} \equiv g^{n_2\tau_s} \bmod q^r \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad q^{r-s} \mid (n_1 - n_2).$$

Lemma 2.3. *For $m \in \mathbb{N}$ and nonnegative integers x and y with $x \neq y$, either $q \nmid g^{mx} - g^{my}$, or*

$$v_q(g^{mx} - g^{my}) = v_q(x - y) + v_q(m) + G.$$

Proof. Put $\tau_0 = 1$. For any integer $n \geqslant 0$, we have that $q^n \mid g^{mx} - g^{my}$ if and only if $mx \equiv my \bmod \tau_n$. Consequently,

$$v_q(g^{mx} - g^{my}) = \max\{n \geqslant 0 : \ \tau_n \mid m(x - y)\},$$

and the result follows from (2.3) as $\gcd(\tau, q) = 1$. ∎

2.4. Explicit form of the Vinogradov mean value theorem

Let $N_{r,k}(P)$ be the number of integral solutions to the system of equations

$$n_1^j + \cdots + n_r^j = m_1^j + \cdots + m_r^j \quad (1 \leqslant j \leqslant k, \ 1 \leqslant n_\ell, m_\ell \leqslant P).$$

Our application of Lemma 2.5 below requires a precise form of the Vinogradov mean value theorem. For this purpose, we use a fully explicit version due to Ford (Theorem 3 in [8]), which is presented here in a weakened and simplified form.

Lemma 2.4. *For any integer $k \geqslant 129$, there is an integer $r \in [2k^2, 4k^2]$ such that for $P > 0$,*

$$N_{r,k}(P) \leqslant k^{3k^3} P^{2r - k(k+1)/2 + k^2/1000}.$$

We note that the condition $r \geqslant 2k^2$ is not explicit in Theorem 3 of [8], but we can always impose this in view of the well-known (and essentially trivial) monotonicity property

$$N_{r+1,k}(P)\, P^{-2(r+1)} \leqslant N_{r,k}(P)\, P^{-2r}.$$

We also observe that the recent striking advances in the Vinogradov mean value theorem due to Bourgain, Demeter and Guth [3] and Wooley [14] are not suitable for our purposes here, as they contain implicit constants that depend on r and k, whereas in our approach r and k grow together with P. On the other hand, a result of Steiner [13] may perhaps be used to improve numerical constants in our estimates in some ranges of parameters.

2.5. Double exponential sums with polynomials

Our main tool to bound the exponential sum $S_m(a, X)$ is the following variation of a result of Korobov (Lemma 3 in [12]); examining the proof of that lemma, one can easily see that one can add complex weights $\alpha(x)$ and $\beta(y)$ without any changes in the proof.

It is convenient to denote

$$\mathbf{e}(t) = \exp(2\pi i t) \quad (t \in \mathbb{R}).$$

Lemma 2.5. *Let $\xi_j \in \mathbb{R}$, for $j = 1, \ldots, k$, and suppose that each ξ_j has a rational approximation such that*

$$\left|\xi_j - \frac{b_j}{q_j}\right| \leqslant \frac{1}{q_j^2} \quad \text{with } b_j \in \mathbb{Z},\ q_j \in \mathbb{N}, \text{ and } (b_j, q_j) = 1.$$

Then, for any natural number r and sequences of complex numbers $\alpha(x), \beta(y)$ satisfying

$$|\alpha(x)|, |\beta(y)| \leqslant 1,$$

the sum

$$S = \sum_{x,y=1}^{P} \alpha(x)\beta(y)\,\mathbf{e}(\xi_1 xy + \cdots + \xi_k x^k y^k)$$

admits the upper bound

$$|S|^{2r^2} \leqslant \left(64r^2 \log(3Q)\right)^{k/2} P^{4r^2-2r} N_{r,k}(P) \prod_{j=1}^{k} \min\left\{P^j, P^j q_j^{-1/2} + q_j^{1/2}\right\},$$

where

$$Q = \max_{1 \leqslant j \leqslant k} \{q_j\}.$$

The following result follows from the standard completing technique, see Section 12.2 of [11].

Lemma 2.6. *For an arbitrary function $f : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$, an interval $\mathcal{I}$ of length N, and integers U and V satisfying*

$$UV \leqslant N/2,$$

there exists some $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ such that

$$\sum_{x \in \mathcal{I}} \mathbf{e}(f(x)) \ll \frac{\log N}{UV} \sum_{x \in \mathcal{J}} \sum_{u \leqslant U} \left| \sum_{v \leqslant V} \mathbf{e}(f(x + uv) + \alpha v) \right|,$$

where $\mathcal{J}$ is some interval of length $2N$.

Proof. It is enough to write

$$\sum_{x \in \mathcal{I}} \mathbf{e}(f(x)) = \sum_{\substack{x \in \mathcal{J} \\ x + uv \in \mathcal{I}}} \mathbf{e}(f(x + uv))$$

and the use of the completing technique from Section 12.2 of [11] to encode the condition $x + uv \in \mathcal{I}$ into linear exponential sums, and the use of the bound (8.6) in [11]. ∎

2.6. Bilinear forms with exponential functions

Fix a prime q and an integer $g \neq \pm 1$ with $\gcd(q, g) = 1$. We denote by τ_n the order of g modulo q^n, and recall how G is defined in (2.2).

The following result is the main ingredient for Theorem 1.1. It uses some ideas of Korobov [12], Theorem 4.

Proposition 2.7. *Let $\gamma \in \mathbb{N}$ with $\gamma > 16G$. Given integers $K, L \geqslant 0$ and $M, N \geqslant 1$ with*

$$M \leqslant q^{2\gamma/65},$$

two sequences of complex weights

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_m)_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \quad \text{and} \quad \boldsymbol{\beta} = (\beta_n)_{n=L+1}^{L+N}$$

and an integer z not divisible by q, for the sum

$$S = \sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \sum_{n=L+1}^{L+N} \alpha_m \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn}),$$

we have

$$S \ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \left(M^{1/2-10^{-10}\rho^2} N \log M + M^{1/2} N^{1/2}\right) + \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \, N \, q^{8G},$$

where

$$\rho = \frac{\log M}{\log q^\gamma}.$$

Proof. To simplify the notation, we write

$$\mathcal{M} = \{K + 1, \ldots, K + M\} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{N} = \{L + 1, \ldots, L + N\}.$$

First note we may assume

$$M \geqslant (\log q^\gamma)^{32}, \tag{2.4}$$

as otherwise

$$M^{\rho^2} \ll 1,$$

and hence for the first term in the bound for S,

$$\|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \, M^{1/2-10^{-10}\rho^2} N \log M \gg \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \, M^{1/2} N \log M,$$

which is worse than trivial. If

$$M \leqslant q^{8G},$$

then we have

$$S \leqslant \sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \sum_{n=L+1}^{L+N} |\alpha_m| \, |\beta_n| \leqslant \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \, N q^{8G}.$$

Hence we may assume

$$M \geqslant q^{8G}.$$

By the Cauchy–Schwarz inequality,

$$|S|^2 \leqslant \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2^2 \sum_{m \in \mathcal{M}} \left| \sum_{n \in \mathcal{N}} \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn}) \right|^2 \leqslant \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2^2 \sum_{n_1, n_2 \in \mathcal{N}} |\beta_{n_1}||\beta_{n_2}||S(n_1, n_2)| \tag{2.5}$$
$$\leqslant \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2^2 \, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 \sum_{n_1, n_2 \in \mathcal{N}} |S(n_1, n_2)|,$$

where

$$S(n_1, n_2) = \sum_{m \in \mathcal{M}} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z(g^{n_1 m} - g^{n_2 m})).$$

Recall we are assuming

$$\rho \leqslant \frac{2}{65}. \tag{2.6}$$

Define s by

$$s = \left\lfloor \frac{\rho\gamma}{8} \right\rfloor = \left\lfloor \frac{1}{8} \frac{\log M}{\log q} \right\rfloor \geqslant G, \tag{2.7}$$

so that from (2.3), we have

$$\tau_s \leqslant q^s \leqslant M^{1/8}, \tag{2.8}$$

and

$$q^s > \frac{M^{1/8}}{q} \gg M^{1/8}, \tag{2.9}$$

with implied constant depending on q. To establish the desired result, we bound $S(n_1, n_2)$ in different ways as the pair (n_1, n_2) varies over $\mathcal{N} \times \mathcal{N}$.

We denote

$$\mathcal{A}_1 = \{(n_1, n_2) \in \mathcal{N} \times \mathcal{N} : v_q(n_1) > s \text{ or } v_q(n_2) > s\},$$
$$\mathcal{A}_2 = \{(n_1, n_2) \in \mathcal{N} \times \mathcal{N} : g^{n_1 \tau_s} \equiv g^{n_2 \tau_s} \bmod q^{2s}\},$$
$$\mathcal{A}_3 = (\mathcal{N} \times \mathcal{N}) \setminus (\mathcal{A}_1 \cup \mathcal{A}_2).$$

Clearly,

$$\#\mathcal{A}_1 \leqslant 2N^2/q^s,$$

and Lemma 2.2 implies that

$$\#\mathcal{A}_2 \leqslant N^2/q^s + N.$$

Thus using the trivial bound $|S(n_1, n_2)| \leqslant M$ along with (2.9), we get that

$$\sum_{j=1,2} \sum_{(n_1, n_2) \in \mathcal{A}_j} |S(n_1, n_2)| \ll \left(\frac{MN^2}{q^s} + MN \right) \ll (N^2 M^{7/8} + MN). \tag{2.10}$$

For the final set $\mathcal{A}_3$, we need a nontrivial bound on $S(n_1, n_2)$. Let $(n_1, n_2) \in \mathcal{A}_3$ be fixed. Since $|S(n_1, n_2)| = |S(n_2, n_1)|$, without loss of generality we can assume

$$v_q(n_1) = a, \quad v_q(n_2) = b, \quad a \leqslant b \leqslant s. \tag{2.11}$$

With a and b fixed for the moment, it is convenient to define

$$k = \left\lfloor \frac{\gamma}{s+a} \right\rfloor \quad \text{and} \quad P = q^{s+a}. \tag{2.12}$$

Using the definition of s along with (2.6) and (2.8), we see that

$$k \geqslant 129 \quad \text{and} \quad P \leqslant q^{2s} \leqslant M^{1/4}. \tag{2.13}$$

Now put $\lambda = g^{n_1}$ and $\mu = g^{n_2}$, so that

$$S(n_1, n_2) = \sum_{m \in \mathcal{M}} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z(\lambda^m - \mu^m)).$$

Using (2.1), (2.7) and (2.11), it is easy to see that the relations

$$\lambda^{\tau_s} = 1 + uq^{s+a} \quad \text{and} \quad \mu^{\tau_s} = 1 + vq^{s+b} \tag{2.14}$$

hold with some integers u, v coprime to q. Partitioning the summation over m into distinct residue classes modulo τ_s leads to the estimate

$$S(n_1, n_2) = S_0(n_1, n_2) + O(\tau_s) = S_0(n_1, n_2) + O(M^{1/8}) \tag{2.15}$$

by (2.8), where

$$S_0(n_1, n_2) = \sum_{x=1}^{\tau_s} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z(\lambda^{x+\tau_s y} - \mu^{x+\tau_s y})),$$

and

$$\mathcal{Y} = (K/\tau_s, (K+M)/\tau_s] \cap \mathbb{Z}.$$

By (2.14) we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\lambda^{x+\tau_s y} - \mu^{x+\tau_s y} &= \lambda^x (1 + uq^{s+a})^y - \mu^x (1 + vq^{s+b})^y \\
&= \lambda^x \sum_{i=0}^{y} \binom{y}{i} u^i q^{(s+a)i} - \mu^x \sum_{i=0}^{y} \binom{y}{i} v^i q^{(s+b)i} \\
&\equiv \lambda^x - \mu^x + \sum_{i=1}^{k} q^{(s+a)i} (\lambda^x u^i - \mu^x v^i q^{\Delta i}) \binom{y}{i} \mod q^\gamma,
\end{aligned}$$

where we have put $\Delta = b - a$ (note that (2.12) is used in the last step); therefore,

$$|S_0(n_1, n_2)| \leqslant \sum_{x=1}^{\tau_s} \Bigg| \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Y}} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma} \Bigg(\sum_{i=1}^{k} q^{(s+a)i} (\lambda^x u^i - \mu^x v^i q^{\Delta i}) \binom{y}{i} \Bigg) \Bigg|.$$

We apply Lemma 2.6 with the function

$$f(y) = \sum_{i=1}^{k} q^{(s+a)i} (\lambda^x u^i - \mu^x v^i q^{\Delta i}) \binom{y}{i}$$

and parameters

$$U = V = P, \quad \mathcal{J} = \mathcal{Y},$$

and note that, by (2.8) and (2.13),

$$P^2 \leqslant M^{1/2} \leqslant M^{7/8} \leqslant \frac{M}{\tau_s} \leqslant \#\mathcal{Y} + 1.$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} S_0(n_1, n_2) &\ll \frac{\log M}{P^2} \sum_{x=1}^{\tau_s} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Z}} \sum_{z_1=1}^{P} \Big| \sum_{z_2=1}^{P} \mathbf{e}(\alpha_x z_2)\, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(f(y + z_1 z_2)) \Big| \\ &\ll \frac{\log M}{P^2} \sum_{x=1}^{\tau_s} \sum_{y \in \mathcal{Z}} \Big| \sum_{z_1=1}^{P} \sum_{z_2=1}^{P} \mathbf{e}(\alpha_x z_2)\, \beta_{x,y}(z_1)\, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(f(y + z_1 z_2)) \Big|, \end{aligned} \tag{2.16}$$

where $\mathcal{Z}$ is an interval of length $O(M/\tau_s)$ and α_x may depend on the variable x and $\beta_{x,y}$ may depend on the variables x and y and satisfies

$$|\beta_{x,y}(z_1)| = 1.$$

With the intention of applying Lemmas 2.4 and 2.5 to the right side of (2.16), we fix y for the moment and write

$$k! f(y + Z) = \sum_{j=0}^{k} a_j Z^j \quad (a_j \in \mathbb{Z}),$$

and for each $i = 1, \ldots, k$,

$$k! q^{(s+a)i} (\lambda^x u^i - \mu^x v^i q^{\Delta i}) \binom{y + Z}{i} = \sum_{j=1}^{i} a_{i,j} Z^j \tag{2.17}$$

with some $a_{i,j} \in \mathbb{Z}$. Clearly,

$$a_j = \sum_{i=j}^{k} a_{i,j},$$

and thus

$$v_q(a_j) \geqslant \min\{v_q(a_{i,j}) : i = j, \ldots, k\}. \tag{2.18}$$

Moreover, equality holds in (2.18) whenever

$$v_q(a_{j,j}) < v_q(a_{i,j}) \quad (i > j). \tag{2.19}$$

Denote

$$\bar{\nu} = \min\left\{\nu_q(\lambda^x u^j - \mu^x v^j q^{\Delta j}) : \ j = 1, \dots, k\right\},$$

and let $\bar{j}$ be an index for which

$$\nu_q(\lambda^x u^{\bar{j}} - \mu^x v^{\bar{j}} q^{\Delta \bar{j}}) = \bar{\nu}. \tag{2.20}$$

From (2.17) it is clear that

$$a_{\bar{j},\bar{j}} = \frac{k!}{\bar{j}!} q^{(s+a)\bar{j}} (\lambda^x u^{\bar{j}} - \mu^x v^{\bar{j}} q^{\Delta \bar{j}}),$$

and therefore

$$\nu_q(a_{\bar{j},\bar{j}}) = \nu_q(k!) - \nu_q(\bar{j}!) + (s+a)\bar{j} + \bar{\nu}. \tag{2.21}$$

On the other hand, (2.17) implies

$$\nu_q(a_{i,\bar{j}}) \geqslant \nu_q(k!) - \nu_q(i!) + (s+a)i + \bar{\nu} \quad (i > \bar{j}). \tag{2.22}$$

Before we proceed, we note that the estimate $\bar{j} < i \leqslant k < q^{s+a}$ holds since by (2.4), (2.7) and (2.12) we have

$$k \leqslant \frac{\gamma}{s} \leqslant \frac{2\gamma}{s+1} < \frac{16}{\rho} = \frac{16 \log q^{\gamma}}{\log M} \leqslant M^{1/32} < q^s \leqslant q^{s+a}. \tag{2.23}$$

This implies the inequality

$$(s+a)(i-\bar{j}) > \nu_q(i(i-1)\cdots(\bar{j}+1)) = \nu_q(i!) - \nu_q(\bar{j}!),$$

which together with (2.21) and (2.22) verifies the condition (2.19) for any $\bar{j}$ satisfying (2.20). Hence, (2.18) holds with equality, and thus we have

$$\nu_q(a_{\bar{j}}) = \nu_q(k!) - \nu_q(\bar{j}!) + (s+a)\bar{j} + \bar{\nu} \tag{2.24}$$

for any $\bar{j}$ satisfying (2.20).

If $\Delta > 0$, then clearly

$$\nu_q(\lambda^x u^j - \mu^x v^j q^{\Delta j}) = 0 \quad (j \geqslant 1).$$

For $\Delta = 0$ (that is, $a = b$), we claim that for any two consecutive indices j and $j+1$,

$$\nu_q(\lambda^x u^j - \mu^x v^j) = \bar{\nu} \quad \text{or} \quad \nu_q(\lambda^x u^{j+1} - \mu^x v^{j+1}) = \bar{\nu}. \tag{2.25}$$

To prove the claim, suppose on the contrary that

$$\lambda^x u^j \equiv \mu^x v^j \mod q^{\bar{\nu}+1} \quad \text{and} \quad \lambda^x u^{j+1} \equiv \mu^x v^{j+1} \mod q^{\bar{\nu}+1}$$

for some j. Then, dividing the second congruence by the first one, we get $u \equiv v \mod q^{\bar{\nu}+1}$ and thus

$$\lambda^x u^j \equiv \mu^x v^j \mod q^{\bar{\nu}+1} \quad \text{for all } j,$$

which contradicts the definition of $\bar{\nu}$.

Now let

$$\mathcal{J} = \{(k+1)/2 \leqslant j \leqslant k : \ v_q(\lambda^x u^j - \mu^x v^j q^\Delta) = \bar{v}\}.$$

In view of (2.25), this implies that $\#\mathcal{J} \geqslant \lfloor k/4 \rfloor$. Since $\lambda^x - \mu^x = g^{n_1 x} - g^{n_2 x}$ and $n_1 \neq n_2$ (in fact, $v_q(n_1 - n_2) < s$ by Lemma 2.2 since $(n_1, n_2) \notin \mathcal{A}_2$), by Lemma 2.3 and inequalities (2.7) and (2.8) we have

$$v_q(\lambda^x - \mu^x) = 0 \quad \text{or} \quad v_q(\lambda^x - \mu^x) = v_q(n_1 - n_2) + v_q(x) + G \leqslant 3s;$$

this implies that $\bar{v} \leqslant 3s$. Thus, for every $j \in \mathcal{J}$ we have by (2.24),

$$(s+a)j \leqslant v_q(a_j) \leqslant v_q(k!) + (s+a)j + 3s,$$

and so (recalling that $P = q^{s+a}$) we can write

$$\frac{a_j}{k! q^\gamma} = \frac{b_j}{q_j} \tag{2.26}$$

with

$$\gcd(b_j, q_j) = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad P^{-j} q^{\gamma - 3s} \leqslant q_j \leqslant k! P^{-j} q^\gamma. \tag{2.27}$$

We also define q_j by (2.26) for $j \notin \mathcal{J}$.

We are now in a position to apply Lemmas 2.4 and 2.5 in order to bound the double sum over z_1 and z_2 in (2.16). Writing

$$\begin{aligned} T &= \sum_{z_1, z_2 = 1}^{P} \beta_{x,y}(z_1)\, \alpha_x(z_2)\, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(f(y + z_1 z_2)) \\ &= \sum_{z_1, z_2 = 1}^{P} \beta_{x,y}(z_1)\, \alpha_x(z_2)\, \mathbf{e}\Big(\sum_{j=1}^{k} \frac{b_j}{q_j} (z_1 z_2)^j \Big), \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 2.5 shows that for any natural number r, the bound

$$|T|^{2r^2} \leqslant \big(64 r^2 \log(3Q)\big)^{k/2} P^{4r^2 - 2r} N_{r,k}(P) \prod_{j=1}^{k} \min\{P^j, P^j q_j^{-1/2} + q_j^{1/2}\}$$

holds with $Q = \max_{1 \leqslant j \leqslant k} q_j$. Note that (2.23) and (2.27) imply that

$$\log(3Q) \leqslant \log(3k! q^\gamma) \leqslant \gamma \log(kq) \leqslant \gamma k \log q$$

since for $129 \leqslant k \leqslant \gamma$ we have $3k! \leqslant k^k \leqslant k^\gamma$. Moreover, since $k \geqslant 129$ (see (2.13)), Lemma 2.4 shows that we can choose the integer $r \in [2k^2, 4k^2]$ so that

$$N_{r,k}(P) \leqslant k^{3k^3} P^{2r - k(k+1)/2 + k^2/1000}.$$

Hence we find that

$$|T|^{2r^2} \leqslant \big(1024 \gamma k^5 \log q\big)^{k/2} k^{3k^3 + 3k} P^{4r^2 - k(k+1)/2 + k^2/1000} R, \tag{2.28}$$

where

$$R = \prod_{j=1}^{k} \min\left\{P^j, P^j q_j^{-1/2} + q_j^{1/2}\right\} = P^{k(k+1)/2} \prod_{j=1}^{k} \min\left\{1, q_j^{-1/2} + P^{-j} q_j^{1/2}\right\}.$$

For any $j \in \mathcal{J}$ we have $j \geqslant (k+1)/2$. Recalling (2.12), we have

$$P^{-j} \leqslant P^j q^{-\gamma};$$

thus, using (2.27) we see that

$$q_j^{-1/2} + P^{-j} q_j^{1/2} \leqslant P^{j/2} q^{-\gamma/2+3s/2} + (k!)^{1/2} P^{j/2} q^{-\gamma/2} \leqslant k^k P^{j/2} q^{-\gamma/2+3s/2}.$$

For $j \notin \mathcal{J}$, we use the trivial bound

$$\min\left\{1, q_j^{-1/2} + P^{-j} q_j^{1/2}\right\} \leqslant 1.$$

Therefore, recalling that $\#\mathcal{J} \geqslant \lfloor k/4 \rfloor$, and using the bounds

$$0.24k < \lfloor k/4 \rfloor \leqslant k/4 \quad \text{and} \quad \sum_{j=k-\lfloor k/4 \rfloor+1}^{k} j/2 < 0.11k^2,$$

which hold for $k \geqslant 129$, we see that

$$\begin{aligned} R &\leqslant P^{k(k+1)/2} \prod_{j \in \mathcal{J}} \left(k^k P^{j/2} q^{-\gamma/2+3s/2}\right) \leqslant k^{k^2} P^{k(k+1)/2} \prod_{j=k-\lfloor k/4 \rfloor+1}^{k} \left(P^{j/2} q^{-\gamma/2+3s/2}\right) \\ &\leqslant k^{k^2} P^{k(k+1)/2+0.11k^2} q^{-0.12\gamma k+3sk/8}. \end{aligned}$$

Combining this bound with (2.28), we deduce that

$$|T| \leqslant (ABC)^{1/2r^2} P^2, \tag{2.29}$$

where

$$A = 2^{5k} k^{3k^3+k^2+11k/2}, \quad B = (\gamma \log q)^{k/2} \quad \text{and} \quad C = P^{0.111k^2} q^{-0.12\gamma k+3sk/8}.$$

Since $r \geqslant 2k^2$, it is clear that

$$A^{1/2r^2} \ll 1. \tag{2.30}$$

Next, since $k \asymp \gamma/s \asymp \rho^{-1}$, we have

$$\gamma \log q = \rho^{-1} \log M \ll k \log M,$$

hence

$$B^{1/2r^2} \ll (k \log M)^{1/8k^4} \ll \log M. \tag{2.31}$$

Recalling (2.7) and (2.12), we have

$$\frac{\gamma}{s+a} - 1 < k \leqslant \frac{\gamma}{s+a} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{\gamma}{s} \geqslant \frac{8}{\rho},$$

and using (2.7), we get that

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\log C}{\log q} &= 0.111(s+a)k^2 - 0.12\gamma k + 3sk/8 \leqslant -\frac{0.009\gamma^2}{s+a} + 0.12\gamma + \frac{3s\gamma}{8(s+a)} \\ &\leqslant -\frac{0.009\gamma^2}{s} + 0.12\gamma + \frac{3\gamma}{8} \leqslant -\frac{0.036\gamma}{\rho} + 0.495\gamma \leqslant -\frac{0.02\gamma}{\rho},\end{aligned}$$

where we have used the inequality $\rho \leqslant 2/65$ in the last step; thus,

$$C \leqslant M^{-0.02/\rho^2}. \tag{2.32}$$

Since

$$r \leqslant 4k^2,$$

we have

$$\frac{0.02}{2r^2\rho^2} \geqslant \frac{1}{1600\rho^2 k^4}, \tag{2.33}$$

and from (2.7) and (2.12),

$$k \leqslant \frac{\gamma}{s+a} \leqslant \frac{\gamma}{\rho\gamma/8 - 1}. \tag{2.34}$$

Since

$$\rho\gamma = \frac{\log M}{\log q},$$

and we allow the implied constant in the statement of Proposition 2.7 to depend on q, we may assume that $M \geqslant q^{16}$ and thus

$$\rho\gamma \geqslant 16,$$

which combined with (2.34) implies

$$k \leqslant \frac{16}{\rho},$$

and hence by (2.33),

$$\frac{0.02}{2r^2\rho^2} \geqslant \frac{1}{1600k^4\rho^2} \geqslant \frac{1}{25 \cdot 2^{22}}\rho^2 \geqslant 10^{-9}\rho^2.$$

Substituted in (2.32), this gives

$$C^{1/2r^2} \leqslant M^{-10^{-9}\rho^2}.$$

Combining the above with (2.29), (2.30) and (2.31) we get

$$T \ll P^2 M^{-10^{-9}\rho^2} \log M.$$

Inserting the previous bound into (2.16) and using (2.13), we have

$$S_0(n_1, n_2) \ll \tau_s \#\mathcal{Y}\, M^{-10^{-9}\rho^2} (\log M)^2 \ll M^{1-10^{-9}\rho^2} (\log M)^2,$$

since

$$\tau_s \#\mathcal{Y} \ll M.$$

Combining with (2.15) implies that

$$S(n_1, n_2) \ll M^{1-10^{-9}\rho^2} (\log M)^2. \tag{2.35}$$

Now (2.5), (2.10) and (2.35) together yield the bound

$$S \ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty N M^{1/2-10^{-10}\rho^2} \log M + \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \left(M^{7/16} N + M^{1/2} N^{1/2}\right),$$

and since $M^{7/16} N$ never dominates the term $N M^{1/2-10^{-10}\rho^2} \log M$, we obtain the desired result. ∎

We can remove the condition $M \leqslant q^{2\gamma/65}$ in Proposition 2.7 by partitioning the summation over M into short intervals. This is necessary for applications to Theorem 1.3, where we need to consider both long and short ranges of the parameter M.

Corollary 2.8. *Let $\gamma \in \mathbb{N}$ with $\gamma > 16G$ and let $A > 0$ be arbitrary. Given integers $K, L \geqslant 0$ and $M, N \geqslant 1$ with*

$$M \leqslant q^{A\gamma}, \tag{2.36}$$

two sequences of complex weights

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_m)_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \quad \text{and} \quad \boldsymbol{\beta} = (\beta_n)_{n=L+1}^{L+N}$$

and an integer z not divisible by q, for the sum

$$S = \sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \sum_{n=L+1}^{L+N} \alpha_m \beta_n \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn}),$$

we have

$$S \ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \left(M^{1/2-c\rho^2} N \log M + M^{1/2} N^{1/2}\right) + \left(1 + \frac{M}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right) \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty N q^{8G},$$

where

$$\rho = \frac{\log M}{\log q^\gamma}$$

and $c > 0$ is a constant depending on A.

Proof. By Proposition 2.7, we may assume $M \geqslant q^{2\gamma/65}$, and by modifying the coefficients $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ (appending them with at most $\lfloor q^{2\gamma/65} \rfloor$ zeros), we may assume

$$M = J M_0, \quad \text{with} \quad M_0 = \lfloor q^{2\gamma/65} \rfloor \tag{2.37}$$

for some integer $J \geqslant 1$. Subdividing S into J sums,

$$S_j = \sum_{m=K+1+M_0 j}^{K+M_0(j+1)} \sum_{n=L+1}^{L+N} \alpha_m \beta_n \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn}),$$

by the the Cauchy–Schwarz inequality and Proposition 2.7 (applied for each $0 \leqslant j \leqslant J-1$), and denoting

$$\rho_0 = \frac{\log M_0}{\log q^\gamma}, \tag{2.38}$$

we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
|S|^2 &\leqslant J \sum_{j=0}^{J-1} |S_j|^2 \\
&\ll J \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 \sum_{j=0}^{J-1} \sum_{m=K+1+M_0 j}^{K+M_0(j+1)} |\alpha_m|^2 \big(M_0^{1-2\cdot 10^{-10}\rho_0^2} N^2 \log^2 M + q^{2\gamma/65} N\big) \\
&\quad + J^2 \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty^2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 N^2 q^{16G} \\
&\ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2^2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 \big(J q^{2\gamma(1-2\cdot 10^{-10}\rho_0^2)/65} N^2 \log^2 M + J q^{2\gamma/65} N\big) \\
&\quad + J^2 \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty^2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 N^2 q^{16G} \\
&\ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2^2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 \big(M q^{-2\cdot 10^{-10}\gamma\rho_0^2/65} N^2 \log^2 M + MN\big) + \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty^2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty^2 N^2 \frac{q^{16G} M^2}{q^{4\gamma/65}}.
\end{aligned}$$

By (2.36), (2.37) and (2.38), we have

$$q^{10^{10}\gamma\rho_0^2} \geqslant M^{c\rho^2},$$

for some constant c depending on A. Hence

$$|S| \ll \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_2 \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \big(M^{1/2-c\rho^2} N \log^2 M + M^{1/2} N^{1/2}\big) + \|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty N \frac{q^{8G} M}{q^{2\gamma/65}},$$

which completes the proof. ∎

We now estimate double sums with variables limits of summation for one variable.

Lemma 2.9. *Let $\gamma \in \mathbb{N}$ with $\gamma > 16G$ and let $A > 0$ be arbitrary. Given integers $M, N \geqslant 1$ and $L \geqslant 0$ with*

$$M \leqslant q^{A\gamma},$$

two sequences

$$(K_m)_{m=1}^M \quad \text{and} \quad (N_m)_{m=1}^M$$

of nonnegative integers such that $K_m < N_m \leqslant N$ for each m, two sequences of complex weights

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha} = (\alpha_m)_{m=1}^M \quad \text{and} \quad \boldsymbol{\beta} = (\beta_n)_{n=1}^N$$

with

$$\|\boldsymbol{\alpha}\|_\infty, \|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \ll 1$$

and an integer z not divisible by q, for the sum

$$\widetilde{S} = \sum_{m=L+1}^{L+M} \sum_{K_m \leqslant n \leqslant N_m} \alpha_m \beta_n \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn})$$

we have

$$\widetilde{S} \ll \left(NM^{1-c\rho^2} + N^{1/2}M\right) \log M \log N + \left(1 + \frac{M}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right) Nq^{8G} \log N,$$

where

$$\rho = \frac{\log M}{\log q^\gamma}$$

and $c > 0$ is a constant depending on A.

Proof. Using the standard completing technique, see, for example, Section 12.2 in [11] and the bound (8.6) in [11], it follows that

$$\widetilde{S} = \sum_{-N/2 < r \leqslant N/2} \frac{1}{|r|+1} \sum_{m=L+1}^{L+M} \sum_{n=1}^{N} \widetilde{\alpha}_{m,r} \widetilde{\beta}_{n,r} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z g^{mn}),$$

where

$$\widetilde{\alpha}_{m,r} = \alpha_m \eta_{m,r} \quad \text{and} \quad \widetilde{\beta}_{n,r} = \beta_n \mathbf{e}_N(rn),$$

for some complex number $\eta_{m,r} \ll 1$. Applying Corollary 2.8 and noting that

$$\sum_{-N/2 < r \leqslant N/2} \frac{1}{|r|+1} \ll \log N,$$

we derive

$$\widetilde{S} \ll \left(NM^{1-c\rho^2} + N^{1/2}M\right) \log M \log N + \left(1 + \frac{M}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right) Nq^{8G} \log N,$$

which completes the proof. ∎

2.7. Bounds on double exponential sums over hyperbolic domains

One of our main technical tool is the following result, which gives a bound on double exponential sums over certain "hyperbolic" regions of summation.

We recall the definition of G, given in (2.2).

Lemma 2.10. *Let $\gamma \in \mathbb{N}$ with $\gamma > 16G$ and $A > 0$. Given real numbers $X, Y, Z \geqslant 1$ with*

$$Z < Y \leqslant q^{A\gamma},$$

and a sequence $\boldsymbol{\beta} = (\beta_n)_{n \leqslant X/Z}$ *of complex numbers with*

$$\|\boldsymbol{\beta}\|_\infty \leqslant 1,$$

any sequences

$$(K_m)_{m=1}^M \quad \text{and} \quad (N_m)_{m=1}^M$$

of nonnegative integers such that $K_m < N_m \leqslant X/m$ *for each* m*, and any integer* z *coprime to* q*, we have*

$$\sum_{Z<m\leqslant Y} \left| \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn}) \right| \ll \left(XZ^{-c\zeta^2} + (YX)^{1/2}\right)(\log X)^2 + \left(\frac{1}{Z} + \frac{1}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right) X q^{8G} \log X,$$

where

$$\zeta = \frac{\log Z}{\log q^\gamma} \tag{2.39}$$

and $c > 0$ *is a constant depending only* A*.*

Proof. Clearly there are complex numbers α_m such that $|\alpha_m| = 1$ for $Z < m \leqslant Y$ and $\alpha_m = 0$ otherwise, such that

$$\sum_{Z<m\leqslant Y} \left| \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn}) \right| = \sum_{Z<m\leqslant Y} \alpha_m \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn}).$$

Furthermore,

$$\sum_{Z<m\leqslant Y} \alpha_m \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn}) = \sum_{\log Z - 1 \leqslant j \leqslant \log Y} \sum_{e^j < m \leqslant e^{j+1}} \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \alpha_m \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn})$$

and we have set $\alpha_m = 0$ if $m \leqslant Z$ or $m \geqslant Y$. We observe that for each j within the summation range, we have

$$\frac{\log(e^{j+1} - e^j)}{\log q^\gamma} \geqslant \frac{\log(Z-1)}{\log q^\gamma} \geqslant \frac{\zeta}{2},$$

where ζ is given by (2.39). Hence

$$\sum_{e^j < m \leqslant e^{j+1}} \sum_{K_m\leqslant n\leqslant N_m} \alpha_m \beta_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^{mn}) \ll \left(\frac{X}{e^j} e^{j(1-c\zeta^2/4)} + e^j \left(\frac{X}{e^j}\right)^{1/2}\right)(\log X)^2 + \left(1 + \frac{2^j}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right) \frac{X}{2^j} q^{8G} \log N$$

by Lemma 2.9, and the result follows after renaming c, summing the above over j satisfying $\log Z - 1 \leqslant j \leqslant \log Y$, and using the estimates

$$\sum_{\log Z \leqslant j \leqslant \log Y} e^{-\alpha j} \ll Z^{-\alpha} \quad \text{and} \quad \sum_{\log Z \leqslant j \leqslant \log Y} e^{j\alpha} \ll Y^\alpha.$$

provided $\alpha > 0$ is bounded away from 0. ∎

2.8. Bounds on single exponential sums

We observe that combining Proposition 2.7 with Lemma 2.6 allows us to estimate sums over an interval which has previously been considered by Korobov [12], Theorem 4. We present a proof for completeness.

Lemma 2.11. *With notation as in (2.2) and Proposition 2.7, suppose M satisfies*

$$M \leqslant q^{2\gamma/65}.$$

Then we have

$$\sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^m) \ll M^{1-10^{-11}\rho^2}(\log M)^2 + M^{10^{-10}\rho^2} q^{8G} (\log M)^2,$$

where

$$\rho = \frac{\log M}{\log q^\gamma}.$$

Proof. Let

$$S = \sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^m),$$

and apply Lemma 2.6 with

$$U = M^{1-10^{-10}\rho^2} \quad \text{and} \quad V = 0.5\, M^{10^{-10}\rho^2}$$

to get

$$S \ll \frac{\log N}{M} \sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \sum_{u \leqslant U} \Big| \sum_{v \leqslant V} \mathbf{e}(\alpha v)\, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^m g^{uv}) \Big|.$$

Taking a maximum over m in the above, we get

$$S \ll \log M \sum_{u \leqslant U} \sum_{v \leqslant V} \alpha(u)\beta(v)\, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(z_0 g^{uv}),$$

for some $\gcd(z_0, p) = 1$ and complex numbers α, β satisfying

$$|\alpha(u)|, |\beta(v)| \leqslant 1.$$

With

$$\rho_0 = \frac{\log U}{\log q^\gamma},$$

we have

$$\rho_0 = \rho(1 - 10^{-10}\rho^2),$$

hence by Proposition 2.7,

$$\begin{aligned} S &\ll (\log M)^2 \left(V(U^{1-10^{-10}\rho_0^2} + q^{8G}) + UV^{1/2} \right) \\ &\ll (\log M)^2 M \left(M^{-10^{-10}\rho^2(1-10^{-10}\rho^2)^2} + M^{-\frac{1}{2}10^{-10}\rho^2} \right) + M^{10^{-10}\rho^2} q^{8G} (\log M)^2. \end{aligned}$$

Note the assumption

$$M \leqslant q^{2\gamma/65}$$

implies that

$$\rho \leqslant \frac{2}{65},$$

and hence

$$(1 - 10^{-10}\rho^2)^2 \geqslant \left(1 - 10^{-10}\left(\frac{2}{65}\right)^2\right)^2 \geqslant \frac{1}{10},$$

which completes the proof. ∎

Partitioning the summation into small intervals as in the proof of Corollary 2.8 allows us again to remove the restriction $M \leqslant q^{2\gamma/65}$ in Lemma 2.11.

Corollary 2.12. *With notation as in* (2.2) *and Proposition* 2.7*, suppose* M *satisfies*

$$M \leqslant q^{A\gamma}.$$

Then we have

$$\sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^m) \ll M^{1-c\rho^2} \log M + M^{1-c} q^{8G},$$

where

$$\rho = \frac{\log M}{\log q^\gamma}$$

and $c > 0$ *is a constant depending only* A*.*

Proof. Arguing as in the proof of Corollary 2.8, we may partition the summation over m into intervals of length at most $q^{2\gamma/65}$ and apply Lemma 2.11 to each of these intervals. This produces a bound of the form

$$\sum_{m=K+1}^{K+M} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(zg^m) \ll M^{1-c\rho^2} (\log M)^2 + M^{1-c} q^{8G} \log M, \tag{2.40}$$

for a constant c depending on A. Unless we have $M^{c\rho^2} \geqslant (\log M)^2$ the estimate (2.40) is trivial. Under this condition we have

$$M^{-c\rho^2} (\log M)^2 \leqslant \sqrt{M^{-c\rho^2} (\log M)^2},$$

which allows us to replace $(\log M)^2$ with $\log M$ after changing the constant $c > 0$. Reducing c if necessary, we can also discard $\log M$ in the second term. ∎

3. Proofs of main results

3.1. Proof of Theorem 1.1

We apply Lemma 2.1 with

$$U = X^{1/4} \quad \text{and} \quad V = X^{1/4} \tag{3.1}$$

to get

$$S_{q^\gamma}(a; X) \ll X^{1/4} + \Sigma_1(\log X) + \Sigma_2^{1/2} X^{1/2} (\log X)^3, \tag{3.2}$$

where

$$\Sigma_1 = \sum_{t \leqslant UV} \max_{w \leqslant X/t} \Big| \sum_{w \leqslant m \leqslant X/t} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(a g^{tm}) \Big|,$$

and

$$\Sigma_2 = \max_{U \leqslant w \leqslant X/V} \max_{V \leqslant j \leqslant X/w} \sum_{V < m \leqslant X/w} \Big| \sum_{\substack{w < n \leqslant 2w \\ n \leqslant X/m \\ n \leqslant X/j}} \alpha_n \, \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(a g^{mn}) \Big|,$$

for some $|\alpha_n| \leqslant 1$. Considering Σ_1, for each fixed $t \leqslant UV = X^{1/2}$, define

$$G_t = \nu_q(g^{t \operatorname{ord}_q(g^t)} - 1)$$

and

$$\rho_t = \frac{\log(X/t)}{\log q^\gamma}.$$

By (3.1) and $t \leqslant UV = X^{1/2}$ we have

$$\rho_t \geqslant \frac{\rho}{2}. \tag{3.3}$$

We claim that the following inequality holds:

$$\max_{w \leqslant X/t} \Big| \sum_{w \leqslant m \leqslant X/t} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(a g^{tm}) \Big| \ll \Big(\frac{X}{t}\Big)^{1 - c\rho_t^2} \log X + \Big(\frac{X}{t}\Big)^{1-c} q^{8G_t}. \tag{3.4}$$

Indeed, if $\gamma > 16G_t$, this follows from Corollary 2.12.

If $\gamma \leqslant 16G_t$, then

$$\Big(\frac{X}{t}\Big)^{1-c} q^{8G_t} \geqslant \Big(\frac{X}{t}\Big)^{1-c} q^{\gamma/2} \geqslant \Big(\frac{X}{t}\Big),$$

so (3.4) is trivially true as well since

$$\max_{w \leqslant X/t} \Big| \sum_{w \leqslant m \leqslant X/t} \mathbf{e}_{q^\gamma}(a g^{tm}) \Big| \ll \frac{X}{t}, \tag{3.5}$$

which proves (3.4).

Summing (3.4) over $t \leqslant UV$ and using (3.4), (3.3) and (3.5) gives

$$\Sigma_1 \ll \sum_{t \leqslant X^{1/2}} \left(\frac{X}{t}\right)^{1-c\rho_t^2} \log X + \widetilde{\Sigma}_1, \tag{3.6}$$

where

$$\widetilde{\Sigma}_1 = \sum_{t \leqslant X^{1/2}} \min\left\{\frac{X}{t}, \left(\frac{X}{t}\right)^{1-c} q^{8G_t}\right\}.$$

For $t \leqslant X^{1/2}$ we have $(X/t)^{1-c\rho_t^2/4} \leqslant X^{1-c\rho^2/8} t^{-1}$, thus

$$\sum_{t \leqslant X^{1/2}} \left(\frac{X}{t}\right)^{1-c\rho_t^2} \leqslant \sum_{t \leqslant X^{1/2}} \left(\frac{X}{t}\right)^{1-c\rho^2/4} \ll X^{1-c\rho^2/8} \log X.$$

This, together with (3.6), implies

$$\Sigma_1 \ll X^{1-c\rho^2/8} \log X + \widetilde{\Sigma}_1. \tag{3.7}$$

Considering $\widetilde{\Sigma}_1$, we partition summation over t into dyadic intervals to obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\widetilde{\Sigma}_1 &\ll \sum_{k \leqslant \frac{\log X}{2\log 2}} \sum_{2^k \leqslant t < 2^{k+1}} \min\left\{\frac{X}{t}, \left(\frac{X}{t}\right)^{1-c} q^{8G_t}\right\} \\ &\ll \sum_{k \leqslant \frac{\log X}{2\log 2}} \sum_{2^k \leqslant t < 2^{k+1}} \min\left\{\frac{X}{2^k}, \left(\frac{X}{2^k}\right)^{1-c} q^{8G_t}\right\}.\end{aligned}$$

Let k_0 be an index with $k_0 \leqslant (\log X)/(2\log 2)$ such that the maximum of the inner sums over t is attained, and write

$$Z = \frac{X}{2^{k_0}}.$$

Then

$$X^{1/2} \leqslant Z \leqslant X,$$

and

$$\widetilde{\Sigma}_1 \ll (\log X) \sum_{X/Z \leqslant t \leqslant 2X/Z} \min\left\{Z, Z^{1-c} q^{8G_t}\right\}.$$

Recalling the definition of G, given by (2.2), we see that

$$\operatorname{ord}_q(g^t) = \frac{\tau}{\gcd(\tau, t)},$$

and by Lemma 2.3, used with $m = 1$, $x = \tau t/\gcd(\tau, t)$ and $y = 0$,

$$G_t = v_q\left(g^{\tau t/\gcd(\tau,t)} - 1\right) = G + v_q(t).$$

As g and q are fixed, $G = O(1)$, and hence

$$\widetilde{\Sigma}_1 \ll \log X \sum_{X/Z \leqslant t \leqslant 2X/Z} \min\left\{Z, Z^{1-c} q^{8v_q(t)}\right\}.$$

For $O(XZ^{-1-c/9})$ values of $t \leqslant 2X/Z$ with $q^{\nu_q(t)} > Z^{c/9}$, we use

$$\min\left\{Z, Z^{1-c}q^{8\nu_q(t)}\right\} \leqslant Z.$$

Their total contribution is $O(XZ^{-c/9})$. For the remaining values of t, we use

$$\min\left\{Z, Z^{1-c}q^{8\nu_q(t)}\right\} \leqslant Z^{1-c+8c/9} = Z^{1-c/9},$$

which gives the same total contribution $O(XZ^{-c/9})$. Hence, recalling $Z \geqslant X^{1/2}$, we obtain

$$\widetilde{\Sigma}_1 \ll XZ^{-c/9}\log X \leqslant X^{1-c/18}\log X.$$

Using the above in (3.7) gives

$$\Sigma_1 \ll X^{1-c\rho^2/8}\log X + X^{1-c/18}\log X \ll X^{1-\delta(A)\rho^2}(\log X)^2, \tag{3.8}$$

for some constant $\delta(A) > 0$ that depends only on A.

To estimate Σ_2, we apply Lemma 2.10 to get

$$\Sigma_2 \ll \left(X^{1-\delta(A)\rho^2} + X^{7/8} + \frac{X}{q^{2\gamma/65}}\right)(\log X)^2,$$

for a suitably reduced $\delta(A)$ if necessary. By the above bounds (3.2) and (3.8),

$$S_{q^\gamma}(a; X) \ll X^{1-\delta(A)\rho^2}(\log X)^3 + \frac{X}{q^{2\gamma/65}}(\log X)^4.$$

Now, using the same argument as in the proof of Corollary 2.12, and reducing $\delta(A)$ if necessary, we see that we can replace $(\log X)^3$ with $\log X$ (or any other power of $\log X$) in the first term, and also discard completely $(\log X)^4$ in the second term.

3.2. Proof of Theorem 1.3

We observe that the property of having σ on positions $r, \dots, r-s+1$ of M_p is equivalent to the property of the fractional part of M_p/q^{r+1} falling in a prescribed half-open interval of length $1/q^s$, namely, to

$$\left\{\frac{M_p}{q^{r+1}}\right\} \in \left[\frac{\bar{\sigma}}{q^s}, \frac{\bar{\sigma}+1}{q^s}\right), \tag{3.9}$$

(we recall that the numbering starts from zero), where

$$\bar{\sigma} = \sum_{i=0}^{s-1} a_i q^i,$$

is the integer which q-ary digits are given by σ. We now combine the bound of Corollary 1.2 with the *Erdős–Turán inequality* (see Theorem 1.21 in [7]), which gives a bound of the discrepancy via exponential sums, and conclude that for any integer parameter $H \geqslant 1$,

$$A_r(X, \sigma) - q^{-s}\pi(X) \ll \pi(X)H^{-1} + \sum_{h=1}^{H}\frac{1}{h}\left|\sum_{\substack{p \leqslant X \\ p \text{ prime}}} \mathbf{e}_{q^{r+1}}(hM_p)\right|.$$

We now set

$$H = \lfloor X^{\varepsilon/2} \rfloor.$$

Below we use very crude bounds, many of them can be done in a more refined way; however, this does not improve the final result.

Namely, for any positive integer $h \leqslant H$, writing

$$q^{\gamma} = \frac{q^{r+1}}{\gcd(h, q^{r+1})},$$

since $r \geqslant \varepsilon \log X$, we see that

$$q^{\gamma} \geqslant q^{r+1}/H \geqslant e^{r}/H \geqslant X^{\varepsilon/2}. \tag{3.10}$$

We now use Corollary 1.2 with $A = 2/\varepsilon$ and note by (3.10) that the condition (1.2) is satisfied. This implies that (3.9) happens for

$$A_r(X, \sigma) = q^{-s}\pi(X) + O\big(X^{1-\varepsilon/2} + X^{1-c\varrho^2} \log X + Xq^{-c\gamma} \log X\big) \tag{3.11}$$

primes $p \leqslant X$, where

$$\varrho = \frac{\log X}{\log q^{r+1}} \leqslant \frac{\log X}{\log q^{\gamma}},$$

and $c > 0$ is some constant that depends on ε and q.

Using that $r \leqslant (\log X)^{3/2-\varepsilon}$, we obtain $\varrho \geqslant (\log X)^{-1/2+\varepsilon/2}$. Thus,

$$X^{1-c\varrho^2} \log X \leqslant X \exp\left(-c(\log X)^{\varepsilon}\right) \log X.$$

We also have by (3.10),

$$Xq^{-c\gamma} \leqslant X^{1-c\varepsilon/2},$$

and then (3.11) implies

$$A_r(X, \sigma) = q^{-s}\pi(X) + O\left(X \exp\left(-0.5c(\log X)^{\varepsilon}\right)\right),$$

which concludes the proof.

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Bryce Kerr
Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, Vivatsgasse 7, 53111 Bonn, Germany;
bryce.kerr89@gmail.com

László Mérai
Johann Radon Institute for Computational and Applied Mathematics, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Altenberger Straße 69, 4040 Linz, Austria;
laszlo.merai@oeaw.ac.at

Igor E. Shparlinski
Department of Pure Mathematics, University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia;
igor.shparlinski@unsw.edu.au