

A Factorization Formula for Class Number Two

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Let R be an atomic integral domain. R is a half-factorial domain (HFD) if whenever $x_1 \cdots x_n = y_1 \cdots y_m$ for $x_1, \dots, x_n, y_1, \dots, y_m$ irreducibles of R , then $n = m$. A well known result of L. Carlitz (1960, *Proc. Amer. Math. Soc.* **11**, 391–392) states that the ring of integers in a finite extension of the rationals is a HFD if and only if the class number of R is less than or equal to 2. If R is such a ring of integers with class number 2, then we use some simple Krull monoids to develop a formula for counting the number of different factorizations of any integer x into products of irreducible elements of R . © 1999 Academic Press

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Let R be an atomic integral domain (i.e., every nonzero nonunit of R can be written as a product of irreducible elements) and $\mathcal{I}(R)$ its set of irreducible elements. The study of conditions which force R to be factorial has been a central focus of commutative algebra for many years. Much recent literature has been devoted to the study of atomic integral domains where the unique factorization property fails (see [1, 3] for a summary). R is called a *half-factorial domain* if whenever $x_1, \dots, x_n, y_1, \dots, y_m$ are irreducibles of R with $x_1 \cdots x_n = y_1 \cdots y_m$ then $n = m$. This definition can

be extended in the obvious manner for atomic monoids, which we will denote by HFM. Carlitz [2] characterized rings of algebraic integers which satisfy the HFD property in terms of the class number. We restate his result below using our terminology.

THEOREM 1(Carlitz [2]). *Let R be the ring of integers in a finite extension of the rationals. R is a HFD if and only if R has class number less than or equal to two.*

In this note, we find a formula to compute the total number of factorizations of an integer x in a ring of algebraic integers with class number two. Our main tool will be the connection of the algebra in such a ring of integers to the monoids

$$\mathbb{X}_n = \{(x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) \mid x_i \in \mathbb{N}_0, x_1 + \dots + x_n = 2x_{n+1}\},$$

where $n \geq 2$ is a positive integer and \mathbb{N}_0 represents the nonnegative integers.

Because of Carlitz's result, factorization problems in class number two have drawn some attention in the literature (see [5, 9] for instance). Most of these recent works deal with asymptotic studies of factorization properties or obtaining estimates on the total number of integers having at most k different factorizations. Our work does not touch on these subjects, but answers a question concerning a Krull monoid with infinitely many primes in one divisor class by studying a series of Krull monoids whose nontrivial divisor classes contain finitely many elements. If we wish to count the total number of factorizations of an integer α in R , then our formula does assume knowledge of the prime ideal factorization of the principal ideal αR .

We open with some notation and a brief review of Krull monoids. If x is a nonzero nonunit of R , then set

$$\eta(x) = \# \text{ of nonassociated irreducible factorizations of } x \in R.$$

This function has been studied in great detail by Halter-Koch in [6], where he shows (using the notation $\mathbf{f}(x)$) for each positive integer n that

$$\eta(x^n) = An^d + O(n^{d-1})$$

for some $A \in \mathbb{Q}_{>0}$ and $d \in \mathbb{N}_0$.

If \mathcal{S} is a commutative, cancellative monoid, then denote the quotient group of \mathcal{S} by $\mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$. Let \leq be the divisibility relation (or quasi-ordering) on \mathcal{S} induced by the following: $x \leq y$ in $\mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$ if and only if $xz = y$ for some $z \in \mathcal{S}$. Let \mathcal{F} be a nonempty family of homomorphisms $f \neq 0$ of $\mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$ into \mathbb{Z} such that for each $x \in \mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$ the set $\mathcal{F}^* = \{f \in \mathcal{F} \mid f(x) \neq 0\}$ is finite. An element of \mathcal{F}^* is called a *state* on \mathcal{S} . If the monoid \mathcal{S} is defined by \mathcal{F} (i.e., $\mathcal{S} = \{x \in \mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S}) \mid f(x) \geq 0 \ \forall f \in \mathcal{F}\}$) then \mathcal{S} is a *Krull*

Monoid. A state on \mathcal{S} is *essential* if for any $x, y \in \mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$, there exists $z \in \mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})$ such that $x \leq z$, $y \leq z$ and $f(z) = \max\{f(x), f(y)\}$. Let \mathcal{E} denote the set of essential states f which are *normalized* (i.e., $f(\mathcal{Q}(\mathcal{S})) = \mathbb{Z}$). Consider the map $\varphi: \mathcal{S} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}_+^{(\mathcal{S})}$ defined by $\varphi(x)_{(f)} = f(x)$. The essential states of a Krull monoid yield a *divisor theory* for \mathcal{S} . The factor monoid

$$\mathbb{Z}_+^{(\mathcal{S})}/\varphi(\mathcal{S}) \cong \mathbb{Z}^{(\mathcal{E})}/\varphi(\mathcal{E})$$

is a group known as the *divisor class group* of \mathcal{S} and denoted $\text{Cl}(\mathcal{S})$. The unit basis vectors e_i in $\mathbb{Z}_+^{(\mathcal{S})}$ are the *prime divisors* of \mathcal{S} . The interested reader may consult [3] for further information on Krull monoids.

The monoids \mathbb{X}_n are examples of the monoids

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{M}(a_1, \dots, a_n; b) \\ = \{(x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) \mid x_i \in \mathbb{N}_0, a_1x_1 + \dots + a_nx_n = bx_{n+1}\}, \end{aligned}$$

where a_1, \dots, a_n, b are positive integers, studied by the first author, Krause and Oeljeklaus in [4]. For our purposes we need the following facts.

LEMMA 2. *Let $n > 1$ be a positive integer.*

- (1) *Each \mathbb{X}_n is a half-factorial Krull monoid with divisor class group \mathbb{Z}_2 .*
- (2) *The essential states of \mathbb{X}_n are the projections $\pi_i((x_1, \dots, x_{n+1})) = x_i$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$.*
- (3) *The nontrivial divisor class of \mathbb{X}_n contains exactly n prime divisors (namely e_1, \dots, e_n).*
- (4) *\mathbb{X}_n contains no prime elements.*

Proof. Proofs of these facts can be found in [4, Sect. 2]. That each \mathbb{X}_n is an HFM follows from [7, Proposition 2]. ■

It is of interest to note that the monoid \mathbb{X}_n cannot appear as the multiplicative monoid of a Krull domain [4, Proposition 2.2]. The irreducible elements of \mathbb{X}_n can be retrieved from the divisor class group by considering the sum of two (not necessary distinct) prime divisors e_i with $1 \leq i \leq n$. To demonstrate, the irreducible element of \mathbb{X}_3 are

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{i}_1 &= (2, 0, 0, 1), & \mathbf{i}_4 &= (1, 1, 0, 1) \\ \mathbf{i}_2 &= (0, 2, 0, 1), & \mathbf{i}_5 &= (1, 0, 1, 1) \\ \mathbf{i}_3 &= (0, 0, 2, 1), & \mathbf{i}_6 &= (0, 1, 1, 1). \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

When referring to the function $\eta(x)$ for a particular \mathbb{X}_n , we will use the notation $\eta_{\mathbb{X}_n}(x)$. Since our argument will be recursive, we begin with \mathbb{X}_2 .

PROPOSITION 3. *If $x = (x_1, x_2, x_3) \in \mathbb{X}_2$, then*

$$\eta_{\mathbb{X}_2}(x) = \lfloor \min\{x_1, x_2\}/2 \rfloor + 1.$$

Proof. First note that the irreducibles in \mathbb{X}_2 are

$$\mathbf{i}_1 = (2, 0, 1), \quad \mathbf{i}_2 = (0, 2, 1), \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{i}_3 = (1, 1, 1).$$

Assume without loss that $\min\{x_1, x_2\} = x_1$. If $a_1\mathbf{i}_1 + a_2\mathbf{i}_2 + a_3\mathbf{i}_3$ is a factorization of x into irreducibles, then

$$\underbrace{\{2, \dots, 2\}}_{a_1 \text{ times}} \quad \underbrace{\{1, \dots, 1\}}_{a_3 \text{ times}}$$

forms a partition of x_1 consisting of 1's and 2's. Conversely, if

$$\underbrace{\{2, \dots, 2\}}_{\alpha \text{ times}} \quad \underbrace{\{1, \dots, 1\}}_{\beta \text{ times}}$$

is such a partition of x_1 , then x can be written as $\alpha\mathbf{i}_1 + \beta\mathbf{i}_3 + \gamma\mathbf{i}_2$ where $\gamma \geq 0$ (since $x_1 = \min\{x_1, x_2\}$). Hence $\eta_{\mathbb{X}_2}(x) = \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor + 1$ and in general

$$\eta_{\mathbb{X}_2}(x) = \left\lfloor \frac{\min\{x_1, x_2\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1. \quad \blacksquare$$

We next derive $\eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x)$. Notice that for any $n \geq 2$, if $x = (x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) \in \mathbb{X}_n$, then x can be mapped via a monoid automorphism to an element $x' = (x'_1, \dots, x'_{n+1})$ with $x'_1 \leq x'_2 \leq \dots \leq x'_n$. Our formulas for $n \geq 3$ will assume that the first n coordinates of an element x are monotonically increasing.

PROPOSITION 4. *If $x = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) \in \mathbb{X}_3$, with $x_1 \leq x_2 \leq x_3$, then*

$$\eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x) = \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \sum_{k=0}^{x_1-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{\min\{x_2-k, x_3-x_1+2j+k\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right),$$

or, without the minimum function,

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x) = & \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_3-x_1+2j+k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \right) \\ & + \sum_{j=0}^{(1/2)(x_1-x_2+x_3-2)} \left(\sum_{k=(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)+1}^{x_1-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_2-k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \right). \end{aligned}$$

Proof. If $x = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) \in \mathbb{X}_3$, then the first entry x_1 is determined by the coefficients a_1, a_4, a_5 of $\mathbf{i}_1, \mathbf{i}_4$, and \mathbf{i}_5 in an irreducible factorization of x of the form $a_1\mathbf{i}_1 + \cdots + a_6\mathbf{i}_6$ (the irreducibles of \mathbb{X}_3 are listed in (1)). The coefficient a_1 may range from 0 to $\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor$. Choose an allowable value for a_1 , and then subtract these \mathbf{i}_1 's from x to obtain

$$\begin{aligned} x' &= (x'_1, x'_2, x'_3, x'_4) = x - a_1\mathbf{i}_1 \\ &= (x_1 - 2a_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 - a_1). \end{aligned}$$

Next, consider the coefficient a_4 , which may now range from 0 to $x'_1 = x_1 - 2a_1$. We choose an allowable value for a_4 , obtaining

$$\begin{aligned} x'' &= (x''_1, x''_2, x''_3, x''_4) = x' - a_4\mathbf{i}_4 \\ &= (x_1 - 2a_1 - a_4, x_2 - a_4, x_3, x_4 - a_1 - a_4). \end{aligned}$$

Now the only irreducible that will affect the first entry is \mathbf{i}_5 , and we are forced to take $a_5 = x''_1 - x_1 - 2a_1 - a_4$, leaving us with

$$\begin{aligned} x''' &= (x'''_1, x'''_2, x'''_3, x'''_4) = x'' - a_5\mathbf{i}_5 \\ &= (x_1 - 2a_1 - a_4 - a_5, x_2 - a_4, x_3 - a_5, x_4 - a_1 - a_4 - a_5) \\ &= (0, x_2 - a_4, x_3 - (x_1 - 2a_1 - 4a), x_4 - a_1 - a_4 - a_5). \end{aligned}$$

Since $x'''_1 = 0$, we may ignore the first entry (i.e., factoring x''' in \mathbb{X}_3 is analogous to factoring its counterpart $y = (x'''_2, x'''_3, x'''_4) = (x_2 - a_4, x_3 - x_1 + 2a_1 + a_4, x_4 - a_1 - a_4 - a_5)$ in \mathbb{X}_2) and we have

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x''') &= \eta_{\mathbb{X}_2}(y) = \left\lfloor \frac{\min\{y_1, y_2\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \\ &= \left\lfloor \frac{\min\{x_2 - a_4, x_3 - x_1 + 2a_1 + a_4\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1. \end{aligned}$$

For convenience, we will now substitute j for a_1 and k for a_4 , and obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(x) &= \sum_{a_1=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \sum_{a_4=0}^{x_1-2a_1} \eta(x''') \\ &= \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \sum_{k=0}^{x_1-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{\min\{x_1 - k, x_3 - x_1 + 2j + k\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right). \end{aligned}$$

We can eliminate the minimum function by evaluating when $x_3 - x_1 + 2j + k \leq x_2 - k$, and vice versa:

$$x_3 - x_1 + 2j + k \leq x_2 - k$$

$$\Leftrightarrow$$

$$2j + 2k \leq x_1 + x_2 - x_3$$

$$\Leftrightarrow$$

$$k \leq \frac{1}{2}(x_1 + x_2 - x_3 - 2j).$$

So we can split the inner summation into two summations, one in which $0 \leq k \leq \frac{1}{2}(x_1 + x_2 - x_3 - 2j)$, and the other in which k takes on the remaining values, $\frac{1}{2}(x_1 + x_2 - x_3 - 2j) + 1 < k \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor$. Since there are not always necessarily “remaining values”, we must also add on another summation, to account for the case when $\frac{1}{2}(x_1 + x_2 - x_3 - 2j) + 1 \notin x_1 - 2j$. This is equivalent to $j > \frac{1}{2}(x_1 - x_2 + x_3 - 2)$. So we have

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x) = & \sum_{j=0}^{(1/2)(x_1-x_2+x_3-2)} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_3-x_1+2j+k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \right) \\ & + \sum_{k=(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)+1}^{x_2-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_2-k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \\ & + \sum_{j=(1/2)(x_1-x_2+x_3)}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_3-x_1+2j+k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right), \end{aligned}$$

which can be further modified to yield

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}(x) = & \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \left(\sum_{k=0}^{(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_3-x_1+2j+k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \right) \\ & + \sum_{j=0}^{(1/2)(x_1-x_2+x_3-2)} \left(\sum_{k=(1/2)(x_1+x_2-x_3-2j)+1}^{x_1-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{x_2-k}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) \right) \quad \blacksquare \end{aligned}$$

Now we find a recursive form for $\eta_{\mathbb{X}_m}(x)$. Let $x = (x_1, \dots, x_m, x_{m+1}) \in \mathbb{X}_m$. We first list all the irreducibles in \mathbb{X}_m , with nonzero first entry:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{i} &= (2, 0, \dots, 0, 1) \\
\mathbf{j}_1 &= (1, 1, 0, \dots, 0, 1) \\
\mathbf{j}_2 &= (1, 0, 1, 0, \dots, 0, 1) \\
&\vdots \\
\mathbf{j}_k &= (1, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_k, 1, 0, \dots, 0, 1) \\
&\vdots \\
\mathbf{j}_{m-1} &= (1, \underbrace{0, \dots, 0}_{m-1}, 1, 1).
\end{aligned}$$

Since $\mathbf{i}, \mathbf{j}_1, \dots, \mathbf{j}_{m-1}$ are the irreducibles that affect x_1 , we will be concerned with their coefficients, a, b_1, \dots, b_{m-1} (respectively) in an irreducible factorization of x . The coefficient a may take on the values $0 \leq a \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor$. We choose an allowable value for a , and let

$$x' = x - a\mathbf{i} = (x_1 - 2a, x_2, x_2, \dots, x_m, x_{m+1} - a).$$

Now b_1 has a range of $0 \leq b_1 \leq x'_1 = x_1 - 2a$. We choose an allowable value for b_1 , and let

$$x'' = x' - b_1\mathbf{j}_1 = (x_1 - 2a - b_1, x_2 - b_1, x_3, \dots, x_m, x_{m+1} - a - b_1).$$

We continue in this fashion, choosing allowable coefficients of relevant irreducibles, to obtain for each $1 \leq k \leq m-2$,

$$\begin{aligned}
x^{(k+1)} &= x^{(k)} - b_k\mathbf{j}_k \\
&= (x_1 - 2a - b_1 - \dots - b_k, x_2 - b_1, \dots, x_{k+1} - b_k, x_{k+2}, \dots, x_m, \\
&\quad x_{m+1} - a - b_1 - \dots - b_k) \\
&= \left(x_1 - 2a - \sum_{l=1}^k b_l, x_2 - b_1, x_3 - b_2, \dots, x_{k+1} - b_k, x_{k+2}, \dots, x_m, \right. \\
&\quad \left. x_{m+1} - a - \sum_{l=1}^k b_l \right).
\end{aligned}$$

Letting $x_i^{(k)}$ represent the i th coordinate of $x^{(k)}$, we are now forced to set $b_{m-1} = x_1^{(m-1)}$, and so we have

$$\begin{aligned} x^{(m)} &= \left(x_1^{(m-1)} - b_{m-1}, x_2 - b_1, \dots, x_m - b_{m-1}, x_{m+1} - a - \sum_{l=1}^{m-1} b_l \right) \\ &= \left(0, x_2 - b_1, \dots, x_m - b_{m-1}, x_{m+1} - a - \sum_{l=1}^{m-1} b_l \right) \\ &= (0, x_2^{(m)}, \dots, x_{m+1}^{(m)}). \end{aligned}$$

Letting $y = (x_2^{(m)}, \dots, x_{m+1}^{(m)}) \in \mathbb{X}_{m-1}$, we obtain the following.

PROPOSITION 5. *Let $m \geq 4$ be a positive integer, $x = (x_1, \dots, x_{m+1}) \in \mathbb{X}_m$ with $x_1 \leq \dots \leq x_m$ and $a, b_1, \dots, b_{m-1}, y$ be defined as above. Then*

$$\eta_{\mathbb{X}_m}(x) = \sum_{a=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \sum_{b_1=0}^{x_1-2a} \sum_{b_2=0}^{x_1-2a-b_1} \cdots \sum_{b_{m-2}=0}^{x_1-2a-\sum_{k=1}^{m-3} b_k} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_{m-1}}(y).$$

For example, when $m = 4$ we obtain $\eta_{\mathbb{X}_4}(x) =$

$$\sum_{a=0}^{\lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor} \sum_{b_1=0}^{x_1-2a} \sum_{b_2=0}^{x_1-2a-b_1} \eta_{\mathbb{X}_3}((x_2 - b_1, x_3 - b_2, x_4 - b_3, x_5 - a - b_1 - b_2 - b_3)).$$

Hence, given a Krull monoid M with divisor class \mathbb{Z}_2 whose nontrivial divisor class contains finitely many primes, we have produced a formula for counting the number of different factorizations of any nonzero nonunit $x \in M$. To see this, write

$$x = p_1^{n_1} \cdots p_k^{n_k} q_1^{m_1} \cdots q_t^{m_t},$$

where the p_i 's are distinct prime divisors from the trivial divisor class and the q_j 's distinct prime divisors from the nontrivial divisor class. Any irreducible factorization of x will contain the product $p_1^{n_1} \cdots p_k^{n_k}$. Hence $\eta(x)$ depends on $\eta(x')$ where $x' = q_1^{m_1} \cdots q_t^{m_t}$. Now, x' is divisible by t distinct nontrivial prime divisors, and if we assume without loss that $m_1 \leq \dots \leq m_t$, then

$$\eta(x) = \eta(x') = \eta_{\mathbb{X}_t} \left(\left(m_1, \dots, m_t, \frac{m_1 + \dots + m_t}{2} \right) \right).$$

Notice that the same reasoning works if M has infinitely many primes in the nontrivial class. Thus our formula works on *any* Krull monoid with divisor class group \mathbb{Z}_2 .

EXAMPLE 6. If $R = \mathbb{R}[\sqrt{-5}]$, then R has class number two. If p is prime in \mathbb{Z} , then p ramifies in R if $p = 2$ or 5 , splits in R if $p \equiv 1, 3, 7$ or $9 \pmod{20}$, and is inert in R if $p \not\equiv 1, 3, 7$ or $9 \pmod{20}$ (with the exception of 2 and 5 as noted above) [8]. We compute $\eta(70398)$ in R . In \mathbb{Z} , $70398 = 2 \cdot 3^2 \cdot 3911$ where 2 ramifies, 3 splits and 3911 is inert. Now, $R - \{0\}$ is a multiplicative Krull monoid with divisor class group \mathbb{Z}_2 . Hence, there is a prime divisor p_1 in the trivial divisor class and distinct nonzero prime divisors q_1, q_2 and q_3 so that

$$70398 = p_1 q_1^2 (q_2 q_3)^2 = p_1 q_1^2 q_2^2 q_3^2.$$

Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(70398) &= \eta(18) = \eta(q_1^2 q_2^2 q_3^2) = \eta_{\times_3}((2, 2, 2, 3)) \\ &= \sum_{j=0}^1 \sum_{k=0}^{2-2j} \left(\left\lfloor \frac{\min\{2-j, 2j+k\}}{2} \right\rfloor + 1 \right) = 5. \end{aligned}$$

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