J. DIFFERENTIAL GEOMETRY
35 (1992) 659-673

A LIPSCHITZ DECOMPOSITION OF MINIMAL SURFACES

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1. Introduction

Let Γ be a simple closed rectifiable curve in Euclidean space $\mathbf{R}^n$. We say that Γ is an M *chord-arc curve* if $l(z, w) \le M|z-w|$ for all $z, w \in \Gamma$, where $l(z, w)$ denotes the length of the shorter subarc of Γ joining z to w. Let $\psi(e^{it})$, $0 \le t \le 2\pi$, parametrize such a curve Γ with $|\psi'(e^{it})| \equiv l(\Gamma)/2\pi$, where $l(\Gamma)$ denotes the length of Γ. Then for $0 \le t-s \le \pi$, we have

$$c_1 \le \frac{|\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is})|}{|e^{it} - e^{is}|} \le c_2 \tag{1.1}$$

with $c_2/c_1 \le \frac{\pi}{2}M$. In other words, Γ is a bi-Lipschitz image of the unit circle. Conversely, if (1.1) holds for some parametrization of Γ, then

$$l(\psi(e^{it}), \psi(e^{is})) \le \left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right)^2 M|\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is})| \tag{1.2}$$

and thus Γ is a $(\frac{\pi}{2})^2 M$ chord-arc curve.

By a *minimal surface with boundary* Γ we mean the image $F(\mathbb{D})$ of the open unit disk $\mathbb{D} = \{z \in \mathbb{C}: |z| < 1\}$ under a continuous map

$$F = (F_1, \cdots, F_n): \overline{\mathbb{D}} \to \mathbb{R}^n$$

from the closed disk to $\mathbb{R}^n$ such that

(1.3) $F|_{\partial\mathbb{D}}$ is a homeomorphism of ∂D onto Γ,

(1.4) $F|_{\mathbb{D}}$ is C^2,

(1.5) $f_j \equiv \dfrac{\partial F_j}{\partial x} - i\dfrac{\partial F_j}{\partial y}$, $\quad 1 \le j \le n$, $z = x + iy$, is analytic in $\mathbb{D}$,

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Received October 30, 1990 and, in revised form, February 20, 1991. The authors' research was supported in part by National Science Foundation grants DMS 8801776, DMS 8602500, and DMS 9002852, respectively.

and

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} f_j^2(z) \equiv 0 \quad \text{in } \mathbb{D}. \tag{1.6}$$

Condition (1.5) says that each component F_j of F is a harmonic function in $\mathbb{D}$, and (1.6) says that the map F is angle preserving except at the (isolated) common zeros of $\{f_j\}$. By a famous theorem of Douglas [1] every simple closed curve Γ bounds at least one such minimal surface. We refer to Osserman's beautiful book [4] for further background on minimal surfaces.

By a *partition* of a domain $\Omega \subset \mathbb{D}$, we mean a family $\{D_j\}$ of simply connected subdomains of Ω such that

$$D_j \cap D_k = \varnothing, \qquad \text{if } j \neq k, \tag{1.7}$$

and

$$\Omega = \bigcup_j (\Omega \cap \overline{D}_j). \tag{1.8}$$

We will call such a partition *locally finite* if each compact subset of $\mathbb{D}$ meets at most a finite number of D_j. In this paper, we prove the following:

Theorem. *There is a universal constant M such that if Γ is a rectifiable simple closed curve in $\mathbb{R}^n$ and $F(\mathbb{D})$ is a minimal surface with boundary Γ, then there is a locally finite partition $\{D_j\}$ of $\mathbb{D}$ such that*

(1.9) *F is a homeomorphism of $\overline{D}_j$ onto $\overline{F(D_j)}$,*

(1.10) *$F(\partial(D_j))$ is an M chord-arc curve,*

and

$$\sum lF(\partial(D_j)) \leq Ml(\Gamma), \tag{1.11}$$

where $l(E)$ denotes the linear measure (or arc length) of the set E.

The only hard part of the theorem is inequality (1.11). Otherwise we could simply take each D_j to be a small square. When $n = 2$, $F_1 + iF_2$ is a conformal map to a plane domain with rectifiable boundary, and then the theorem is a recent result of Jones [3]. Our proof is a refinement of the argument from [3], where the estimate $(1 - |z|^2)|f'|/|f| \leq 6$ is used in an essential way. When $n > 2$, the gradient $f = (f_1, \cdots, f_n)$ can have zeros in $\mathbb{D}$, and the example $f(z) = (1, -i, Nz, -iNz)$ shows that the above estimate can fail even if f does not have zeros. In the proof we will obtain curves that are actually better than M chord-arc. They can be taken to be arbitrarily close to planar M-Lipschitz curves, as defined in [3]. This improvement will be described in §5. We write

$$|f| = \left(\sum_{j=1}^{n} |f_j|^2\right)^{1/2}$$

and

$$f' = (f_1', \cdots, f_n').$$

Throughout the paper c, c_1, C, etc. stand for universal undetermined constants.

2. Preliminaries

The proof of (1.11) rests ultimately on the next lemma, an F. and M. Riesz theorem for minimal surfaces. The *Hardy space* H^1 is the set of g, analytic on $\mathbb{D}$, with

$$\|g\|_{H^1} = \sup_{0<r<1} \int_0^{2\pi} |g(re^{i\theta})|\, d\theta < \infty.$$

Lemma 2.1. *If $F(\mathbb{D})$ is a minimal surface with rectifiable boundary Γ, then $f_j = \partial F_j/\partial x - i\partial F_j/\partial y \in H^1$, $1 \le j \le n$, and*

$$\sup_{0<r<1} \int_0^{2\pi} |f(re^{i\theta})|\, d\theta = \sqrt{2}\, l(\Gamma). \tag{2.1}$$

Proof. By (1.5) each F_j is the Poisson integral of its boundary values, and since Γ is rectifiable, each $F_j(e^{i\theta})$ is of bounded variation. Hence there are finite signed measures μ_j on $\partial\mathbb{D}$ so that $d\mu_j = (\partial F_j(e^{i\theta})/\partial\theta)\, d\theta$ and the vector measure $\mu = (\mu_1, \cdots, \mu_n)$ satisfies

$$\|\mu\| = \sup\left\{\sum_{j=1}^{n} \int h_j\, d\mu_j : h_j \text{ is continuous and } \sum h_j^2 \le 1\right\} = l(\Gamma).$$

Then $\partial F_j(z)/\partial\theta$, where $z = re^{i\theta}$, is the Poisson integral of μ_j, so that

$$\sup_{0<r<1} \int_0^{2\pi} \left\{\sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(\frac{\partial F_j(z)}{\partial\theta}\right)^2\right\}^{1/2} d\theta = l(\Gamma).$$

But by (1.5) and (1.6),

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(\frac{\partial F_j(z)}{\partial\theta}\right)^2 = \sum_{j=1}^{n} r^2 \left(\frac{\partial F_j}{\partial x}\right)^2 = r^2 \frac{|f|^2}{2},$$

and so (2.1) holds. q.e.d.

As an aside, we note this consequence of the lemma: If $F(\mathbb{D})$ is a minimal surface with rectifiable boundary Γ, and if G_j is analytic with $G_j' = f_j$ and $G_j(0) = F_j(0)$, then $F_j = \operatorname{Re} G_j$ and by the lemma G_j is continuous on $\overline{\mathbb{D}}$ and has bounded variation on $\partial\mathbb{D}$. Hence $G = (G_1, \cdots, G_n)$ is an analytic map of $\mathbb{D}$ into $\mathbb{C}^n$, G is a homeomorphism of $\partial\mathbb{D}$ onto the rectifiable curve $G(\partial\mathbb{D})$, and

$$l(G(\partial\mathbb{D})) = \sqrt{2}l(\Gamma). \tag{2.2}$$

Therefore $F(\mathbb{D})$ is the projection onto $\mathbb{R}^n$ of the analytic variety $G(\mathbb{D})$ in $\mathbb{C}^n = \mathbb{R}^{2n}$ for which (2.2) holds.

A measure σ on $\overline{\mathbb{D}}$ is a *Carleson measure* if there is a constant B such that for all θ_0 and all s, $0 < s \leq 1$,

$$\sigma(\{re^{i\theta} : 1 - s \leq r \leq 1,\ \theta_0 \leq \theta \leq \theta_0 + s\}) \leq Bs. \tag{2.3}$$

The Carleson norm $\|\sigma\|$ of σ is the least such B. By Carleson's theorem (see p. 62 of [2]), there is a constant A (independent of σ) so that (2.3) implies

$$\int_{\overline{\mathbb{D}}} |g|\, d\sigma \leq A\|\sigma\|\, \|g\|_{H^1}$$

for all $g \in H^1$.

Our strategy will be to partition $\mathbb{D}$ into regions D_j so small that f is almost constant on D_j, yet so large that arc length on $\bigcup \partial D_j$ is a Carleson measure. Constructions of this type are well known; they stem from Carleson's proof of the corona theorem and are based on the following decomposition of $\mathbb{D}$.

For $m \geq 1$ and $1 \leq j \leq 2^{m+1}$, form the *dyadic squares*

$$Q_{m,j} = \{re^{i\theta} : (j-1)2^{-m}\pi \leq \theta < j2^{-m}\pi;\ 1 - \pi 2^{-m} \leq r < 1\}$$

(when $m = 1$, we require $r \geq 0$), and their *top halves*

$$T(Q_{m,j}) = Q_{m,j} \setminus \bigcup_k Q_{m+1,k}.$$

Fix an integer $N \geq 1$ and refine the dyadic grid by defining *small squares*

$$\begin{aligned} S = S&_{m,j,p,q} \\ &= \{re^{i\theta} : 2^{-m}\pi[(j-1) + (q-1)2^{-N}] \leq \theta < 2^{-m}\pi[(j-1) + q2^{-N}]; \\ &\qquad 1 - 2^{-m}\pi[\tfrac{1}{2} + p2^{-N}] \leq r < 1 - 2^{-m}\pi[\tfrac{1}{2} + (p-1)2^{-N}]\}, \end{aligned}$$

where m, j, p, and q are integers with $m \geq 1$, $1 \leq j \leq 2^{m+1}$, $1 \leq q \leq 2^N$, and $1 \leq p \leq 2^{N-1}$. In other words, each $T(Q_{m,j})$ is to be divided into $4^N/2$ small squares S with edge length $l(\partial S)$ approximately $4\pi 2^{-m-N}$. When E is any subset of $\mathbb{D}$, let $E^* = \{e^{i\theta}: re^{i\theta} \in E$ for some $r \geq 0\}$ denote its projection on $\partial\mathbb{D}$. For S a small square define $Q(S) = \{re^{i\theta}: e^{i\theta} \in S^*,\ 1 - \pi 2^{-m-N} \leq r < 1\}$ as the dyadic square having $Q(S)^* = S^*$, and define $B(S) = \{re^{i\theta}: e^{i\theta} \in S^*;\ \inf_{z\in S}|z| \leq r < 1 - \pi 2^{-m-N}\}$ as the *tower* which includes S but not $Q(S)$. Note that the aspect ratio $l(\partial B(S))/l(S^*)$ is essentially constant, once N is fixed. A region of the form

$$\mathscr{D} = Q \setminus \bigcup_{S\in\mathscr{S}(Q)} \overline{B(S)} \cup \overline{Q(S)}, \tag{2.5}$$

where $\mathscr{S}(Q)$ is some subcollection of small squares, has boundary an M_0 chord-arc curve, where M_0 depends on N but not on the subcollection $\mathscr{S}(Q)$. This is because each maximal $B(S) \cup Q(S)$ not in $\mathscr{D}$ is either adjacent to a larger tower not in $\mathscr{D}$ or at a distance at least $l(S^*)$ from any larger tower not in $\mathscr{D}$. Moreover, such regions $\mathscr{D}$ satisfy

$$l(\partial D \cap Q') \leq Kl(\partial Q')$$

for every dyadic square Q', where K is a constant depending only on N. Thus, by Carleson's theorem,

$$\int_{\partial\mathscr{D}} |g|\, ds \leq AK \int_{\partial\mathbb{D}} |g|\, d\theta \tag{2.6}$$

for all $g \in H^1$, where ds is arc length measure.

3. Chord-arc curves

In this section we give three ways to obtain chord-arc curves in $\mathbb{R}^n$.

Lemma 3.1. *Suppose that* γ *is an* M *chord-arc curve in* $\mathbb{D}$, *and that there is a* $z_0 \in \mathbb{D}$ *with* $|f(z) - f(z_0)| < \delta|f(z_0)|$ *for all* $z \in \gamma$, *where* $\delta < 1/(\sqrt{2}M)$. *Then* $F(\gamma)$ *is an* M_1 *chord-arc curve, where* $M_1 = (\pi/2)^3((1+\sqrt{2}\delta M)/(1-\sqrt{2}\delta M))M$.

Proof. Suppose $\psi(e^{it})$ is a parametrization of γ with $|\psi'(e^{it})| = l(\gamma)/(2\pi)$ for all t. Fix s and t. By a rotation we may suppose $\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is}) \in \mathbb{R}$. By (1.5), (1.6), and the definition of M chord-arc curve,

$$\begin{aligned}
&|F(\psi(e^{it})) - F(\psi(e^{is})) - \mathrm{Re}(f(z_0))(\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is}))| \\
&= \left| \int_s^t \mathrm{Re}[(f(\psi(e^{iu})) - f(z_0))\psi'(e^{iu}) ie^{iu}]\, du \right| \\
&\leq \delta |f(z_0)| l(\psi(e^{it}), \psi(e^{is})) \\
&\leq \delta\sqrt{2} |\,\mathrm{Re}\, f(z_0)| M |\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is})|.
\end{aligned}$$

We conclude

$$|\,\mathrm{Re}\, f(z_0)|(1-\sqrt{2}\delta M) \leq \frac{|F(\psi(e^{it})) - F(\psi(e^{is}))|}{|\psi(e^{it}) - \psi(e^{is})|} \leq |\,\mathrm{Re}\, f(z_0)|(1+\sqrt{2}\delta M).$$

By (1.1) and (1.2), $F(\gamma)$ is an M_1 chord-arc curve with

$$M_1 \leq \left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right)^2 \frac{1+\sqrt{2}\delta M}{1-\sqrt{2}\delta M} M. \qquad \text{q.e.d.}$$

Near a zero of f, we cannot have an inequality like that required in Lemma 3.1. If $f(0) = 0$, write

$$f(z) = az^m + O(z^{m+1}), \tag{3.1}$$

where $a \in \mathbb{C}^n$, $a \neq 0$. Let $D_r = \{z \colon |z| < r\}$ and $D_{j,r} = \{se^{i\theta} \in D_r \colon (j-1)\pi/(m+1) \leq \theta < j\pi/(m+1)\}$, for $j = 1, \cdots, 2(m+1)$.

Lemma 3.2. *Suppose f has the form* (3.1). *If r is sufficiently small, then $F(\partial D_{j,r})$ is an M chord-arc curve with M independent of a and m and*

$$\sum_{j=1}^{2(m+1)} l(F(\partial D_{j,r})) \leq 2l(F(\partial D_r)).$$

Proof. Let $\psi(z) = z^{1/(m+1)}$ and consider $G \equiv F \circ \psi$ on the boundary of the half disk $D^+ = \{z \colon |z| < r^{m+1}, \mathrm{Im}\, z > 0\}$. Then $g \equiv (f \circ \psi)\psi' = a/(m+1) + O(z^{1/(m+1)})$. So if r is sufficiently small, then

$$\left| g(z) - \frac{a}{m+1} \right| < \delta \left| \frac{a}{m+1} \right|.$$

Since the boundary of a half disk is an M_1 chord-arc curve by Lemma 3.1, $F(\partial D_{1,r})$ is a $4M_1$ chord-arc curve if δ is sufficiently small. By rotating ψ, the same is true for $F(\partial D_{j,r})$, $2 \leq j \leq 2(m = 1)$. Moreover

$$l(F(\partial D_{j,r})) = \int_{\partial D^+} |g|\, ds \leq 2 \int_{\partial D^+ \cap \{\mathrm{Im}\, z > 0\}} |g|\, ds = 2l(F(\partial D_{j,r} \cap \partial D_r)).$$

Summing over j completes the proof. q.e.d.

The third method of constructing M chord-arc curves follows the argument given in [3, §2].

Lemma 3.3. *Given $\eta > 0$ there is a constant M depending only on η, so that if $\eta \le |f| \le 1$ on a simply connected domain $\mathscr{D} \subset \mathbb{D}$, then there is a partition $\{\mathscr{D}_j\}$ of $\mathscr{D}$ such that*

$$\text{(3.2)} \qquad \textit{each } F(\partial\mathscr{D}_j) \textit{ is an } M \textit{ chord-arc curve}$$

and

$$\text{(3.3)} \qquad \sum l(F(\partial\mathscr{D}_j)) \le Ml(F(\partial D)).$$

Moreover, if each component of $\partial\mathscr{D} \cap \mathbb{D}$ is smooth, then the partition $\{\mathscr{D}_j\}$ can be taken to be locally finite.

Proof. Let $G = F \circ \psi$ and $g = (f \circ \psi)\psi'$, where ψ is a conformal map of $\mathbb{D}$ onto $\mathscr{D}$. By Green's theorem,

$$\int_{\mathbb{D}} \Delta(|g|) \log \frac{1}{|z|} \frac{dx\,dy}{2\pi} = \int_{\partial\mathbb{D}} |g(e^{i\theta})| \frac{d\theta}{2\pi} - |g(0)|,$$

and by the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality,

$$\Delta(|g|) = \frac{2|g'|^2}{|g|} - \frac{|\langle g', g\rangle|^2}{|g|^3} \ge \frac{|g'|^2}{|g|}.$$

Hence we obtain the inequalities

$$\int_{\mathbb{D}} \frac{|g'|^2}{|g|} \log \frac{1}{|z|} \frac{dx\,dy}{2\pi} \le \int_{\partial\mathbb{D}} |g(e^{i\theta}| \frac{d\theta}{2\pi} - |g(0)| \le 2 \int_{\mathbb{D}} \frac{|g'|^2}{|g|} \log \frac{1}{|z|} \frac{dx\,dy}{2\pi}.$$

We also need the estimate

$$\frac{|g'|}{|g|} \le \frac{|(f \circ \psi)'|}{|f \circ \psi|} + \frac{|\psi''|}{|\psi'|} \le \frac{K}{1 - |z|^2},$$

where K is a constant depending only on η; it follows because $\log \psi'$ is in the Bloch space with Bloch norm independent of ψ and because $\eta \le |f \circ \psi| \le 1$.

We now repeat the stopping time argument of §2 of [3], slightly modified to ensure that our partition of $\mathbb{D}$ is locally finite. For a dyadic square Q, we define a subregion $\mathscr{D}_Q$ as follows: If there is a $z \in T(Q)$ with $|g(z) - g(z_Q)| \ge \frac{\delta}{2}|g(z_Q)|$, where z_Q is the center of $T(Q)$, stop and let $\mathscr{D}_Q = T(Q)$. In this case we say $\mathscr{D}_Q$ is of type 0. Otherwise, let $\{Q_j\}$ be those dyadic squares inside Q, which satisfy

$$\sup_{z \in T(Q_j)} |g(z) - g(z_Q)| \ge \delta |g(z_Q)|$$

and define $\mathscr{D}_Q = Q \setminus \bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} \overline{Q}_j$. We say such a $\mathscr{D}_Q$ is of type 1 if $l(\partial\mathbb{D} \cap \partial\mathscr{D}_Q) \geq \frac{1}{2} l(\partial\mathbb{D} \cap \partial Q)$, and we say $\mathscr{D}_Q$ is of type 2 otherwise. The reason for using $\frac{\delta}{2}$ is that if $\zeta \in \partial\mathbb{D}$ and $\psi(\zeta) \in \mathbb{D}$, then g is continuous and nonzero at ζ, so the stopping time argument near ζ will eventually yield a dyadic square Q on which $|g(z) - g(z_Q)| < \delta|g(z_Q)|$, i.e., $\mathscr{D}_Q = Q$.

Since each component of g may have a zero in $\mathbb{D}$, we avoid the use of $g^{1/2}$ used to prove (2.8) of [3] by the following slight modification of the argument therein: As in [3], there is a δ' depending on δ and K such that for type 2 regions

$$\delta'|g(z_Q)|^2 \leq \int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_Q} |g - g(z_Q)|^2 \, d\omega = \int_{\mathscr{D}_Q} |g'|^2 \mathscr{G}_{z_Q}(z) \, dx \, dy,$$

where $\mathscr{G}_{z_Q}$ is Green's function in $\mathscr{D}_Q$ with pole at z_Q, and $d\omega = \frac{\partial \mathscr{G}}{\partial \eta} \frac{|dz|}{2\pi}$ is harmonic measure on $\partial\mathscr{D}_Q$ for the point z_Q. As in [3], the latter quantity is at most

$$\frac{C}{l(Q^*)} \int_{\mathscr{D}_Q} |g'(z)|^2 \log \frac{1}{|z|} \, dx \, dy \leq C_1 \frac{|g(z_Q)|}{l(\partial\mathscr{D}_Q)} \int_{\mathscr{D}_Q} \frac{|g'|^2}{|g|} \log \frac{1}{|z|} \, dx \, dy.$$

Hence

$$\int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_Q} |g| \, |dz| \leq (1+\delta) \frac{|g(z_Q)|^2 l(\partial\mathscr{D}_Q)}{|g(z_Q)|} \leq K_1 \int_{\mathscr{D}_Q} |g'|^2 |g| \log \frac{1}{|z|} \, dx \, dy,$$

where K_1 is a constant depending on δ'.

The stopping time argument (so modified) in §2 of [3] can now be repeated to yield a partition $\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j$ of $\mathbb{D}$ such that each $\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j$ is an M_1 chord-arc curve, $|g(z) - a_j| < \delta|a_j|$ on $\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j$ for some $a_j \in C^n$, and, by letting $\mathscr{D}_j = \psi(\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j)$,

$$\sum_j l(F(\partial\mathscr{D}_j)) = \sum_j l(G(\partial\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j)) \leq M_1 l(G(\partial\mathbb{D})) = M1l(F(\partial\mathscr{D})).$$

By Lemma 3.1, each $F(\mathscr{D}_j) = G(\widetilde{\mathscr{D}}_j)$ is an M chord-arc curve.

4. When f is small

In this section, we remove the hypothesis that $|f| \geq \eta > 0$ in Lemma 3.3.

Lemma 4.1. *There is a constant M so that if $|f| \leq 1$ on a simply connected domain $\mathscr{D} \subset \mathbb{D}$, then there is a partition $\{\mathscr{D}_j\}$ of $\mathscr{D}$ such that*

(4.1) $$\textit{each } F(\partial\mathscr{D}_j) \textit{ is an } M \textit{ chord-arc curve}$$

and

(4.2) $$\sum l(F(\partial\mathscr{D}_j)) \leq M l(\partial\mathscr{D}).$$

Moreover, if each component of $\partial\mathscr{D} \cap \mathbb{D}$ *is smooth, then the partition* $\{\mathscr{D}_j\}$ *can be taken to be locally finite.*

Notice that (4.2) is a weaker conclusion than (3.3).

Proof. Our strategy will be to divide $\mathscr{D}$ into good regions and bad regions. Lemma 3.3 will apply to the good regions, and f will be small on the bad regions. The process will be restarted on each bad region $\mathscr{B}$ with f replaced by $f/\sup_{\mathscr{B}}|f|$. Let φ be a conformal map of $\mathbb{D}$ onto $\mathscr{D}$. We will subdivide certain dyadic squares Q into two cases:

Fix $\alpha > 0$, $\varepsilon > 0$, and an integer N, where α, ε and N' are to be chosen later, with $\varepsilon < \alpha/2$.

Case 1: $\sup_{T(Q)}|f\circ\varphi| \leq \alpha/2$. Define descendent squares Q_j to be the maximal dyadic squares contained in Q, for which

$$\sup_{T(Q_j)}|f\circ\varphi| \geq \alpha,$$

and let $\mathscr{B} = \mathscr{B}(Q) = Q\setminus \cup \overline{Q}_j$ be called a *bad region of the first kind.* Note that $|f\circ\varphi| \leq \alpha$ for all $z \in \mathscr{B}$.

Case 2: $|f\circ\varphi| > \alpha/2$. Let $\mathscr{S}(Q)$ be the set of small squares $S \subset Q$ such that

$$\inf_S |f\circ\varphi| \leq \varepsilon$$

and such that its projection S^* and its tower $B(S)$ are maximal. The descendent squares $\{Q_j\}$ are defined to be $\{Q(S) : S \in \mathscr{S}(Q)\}$. Each component $\mathscr{G}_j$ of $Q\setminus\bigcup\{\overline{B(S)} \cup \overline{Q(S)} : S \in \mathscr{S}(Q)\}$ is declared a *good region of the first kind.* Inside the towers $B(S)$, $S \in \mathscr{S}(Q)$, we must define other good and bad regions. By a *very small square* we mean a square of the form given in (2.4) with N replaced by $N + N'$. So if S' is a very small square contained in a small square S, then $l(\partial S')$ is approximately $2^{-N'} l(\partial S)$. There are $4^{N'}$ such very small squares S' in each small square S. Let $\mathscr{S}'(S)$ be the set of very small squares $S' \subset B(S)$ that either contain a zero of $f\circ\varphi$ or touch a very small square containing a zero of $f\circ\varphi$. In other words, $\mathscr{S}'(S) = \{S' : S' \subset B(S)$ and $\overline{S'} \cap \overline{S''} \neq \emptyset$ for some S'' containing a zero of $f\circ\varphi$, where S' and S'' are very small squares$\}$. Each $S' \in \mathscr{S}'(S)$ will be declared a *bad region of* *the second kind*, and each $S' \notin \mathscr{S}'(S)$ with $S' \subset B(S)$ will be declared a *good region of the second kind.* If N' is sufficiently large, by Schwarz's lemma $|f \circ \varphi| < \alpha$ on each $S' \in \mathscr{S}'(S)$, since S' is near a zero of $f \circ \varphi$. Thus $|f \circ \varphi| \le \alpha$ on all bad regions.

In order to apply Lemma 3.3 to each good region, we need to see that $|f \circ \varphi|$ is not too small there. On each good region of the first kind $|f \circ \varphi| \ge \varepsilon$ by construction. To obtain a similar estimate for good regions of the second kind, we first estimate the number of zeros of $f \circ \varphi$ near a tower $B(S)$, $S \in \mathscr{S}(Q)$. Suppose $\inf_{z \in S} |z| > \inf_{z \in Q} |z|$. Then $|f \circ \varphi| \ge \varepsilon$ on the top edge, $\{\zeta \in \overline{S}: |\zeta| = \inf_{z \in S} |z|\}$ of $B(S)$, and hence there is a unit vector $u = (u_1, \cdots, u_n)$ so that the function $g = f \circ \varphi \cdot u$ satisfies $|g(\zeta)| \ge \varepsilon$ for some ζ on the top edge of $B(S)$. Let $\widetilde{B}(S) = \bigcup \{\widetilde{S}: \widetilde{S}$ is a small square with $\operatorname{dist}(\widetilde{S}, B(S)) < l(\partial S)/8\}$ and let $Z(S) = \{z_v \in \widetilde{B}(S): g(z_v) = 0\}$. By p. 288 of [2] again,

$$\sum_{z_v \in Z(S)} \operatorname{Im} z_v \le C_3 2^N l(\partial S) \log 1/\varepsilon. \tag{4.3}$$

Since $\operatorname{Im} z_v \ge l(\partial S)/16$, we see that there are at most $K(\varepsilon, N) = 1 + C_4 2^N \log 1/\varepsilon$ points in $Z(S)$, counting multiplicity. Since $|g| \ge \varepsilon$ at some point on the top edge of $B(S)$, Harnack's inequality shows that if z belongs to a good region $S' \subset B(S)$, then

$$|g(z)| \ge k(N) \delta^{K(\varepsilon, N)} \equiv \eta > 0, \tag{4.4}$$

where $k(N)$ is a constant depending only on N, and $\delta = 2^{-N} 2^{-N'}$ is a lower bound for the pseudohyperbolic size of a "very small" square. If $\inf_{z \in S} |z| = \inf_{z \in Q} |z|$, inequality (4.4) persists since $l(\partial S)$ and $l(\partial Q)$ are comparable and $\sup_{T(Q)} |g| \ge \alpha/2 > \varepsilon$ for an appropriate unit vector u. Thus we conclude that $\eta \le |f \circ \varphi| \le 1$ on good regions of either kind. This argument also shows that there are at most $C_5 K(\varepsilon, N)$ bad regions of the second kind in each $B(S)$.

We note that the bad regions can be slightly increased and the neighboring good regions decreased, so that no zero of $f \circ \varphi$ occurs on the boundary of a bad region, and we still have $|f \circ \varphi| < \alpha$ on each bad region.

We apply the processes described in Cases 1 and 2 as follows. Beginning with each $Q_{1,k}$, as defined in §2, apply the appropriate Case 1 or Case 2 obtaining (in particular) descendent squares Q_j. To each descendent square, apply the appropriate case, obtaining the next *generation* of descendents. Continue this process indefinitely.

We need the following proposition.

Proposition 4.2. *Given* $\alpha > 0$, *we can choose an integer* N *and an* $\varepsilon_0 > 0$, *so that for each Case* 2 *dyadic square* Q, *if* $\varepsilon \le \varepsilon_0$ *then*

$$\sum\{l(\partial Q_j) : Q_j \text{ is a descendent of } Q\} \le l(\partial Q)/100. \tag{4.5}$$

Proof. Since Q is a Case 2 square there is a unit vector $u = (u_1, \cdots, u_n)$ so that the function $g = f \circ \varphi \cdot u$ satisfies $\sup_{T(Q)} |g| > \alpha/2$. By Schwarz's lemma, we can choose N sufficiently large, depending on ε_0, so that if $\inf_S |g| \le \varepsilon$ then $\sup_S |g| \le 2\varepsilon_0$. Thus Theorem 3.2 on p. 334 of [2] shows we can choose an ε_0, depending on α, so that if $\varepsilon \le \varepsilon_0$

$$\sum \left\{ l(S^*) : S \subset Q \text{ and } \inf_S |g| \le \varepsilon \right\} \le l(Q^*)/100,$$

which gives (4.5). q.e.d.

Since each descendent of a Case 1 square is a Case 2 square, this proposition yields that for any dyadic square Q', we have

$$\sum_{\mathscr{G}_i \text{ good}} l(\partial \mathscr{G}_i \cap Q') \le K l(\partial Q'), \tag{4.6}$$

where K is a constant depending on N and N'. The proposition also implies that for N' sufficiently large,

$$\sum_{\mathscr{B}_i \text{ bad}} l(\partial \mathscr{B}_i \cap Q') \le C_6 l(\partial Q'), \tag{4.7}$$

where C_6 is a universal constant. To see this, note that if $\mathscr{B}$ is a bad region of the first kind, coming from a dyadic square Q, then $l(\partial \mathscr{B}) \le 2l(\partial Q)$. Furthermore, if S is a small square in $\mathscr{S}(Q)$, then our bound on the number of zeros near $B(S)$ gives

$$\begin{aligned} &\sum\{\partial \mathscr{B} : \mathscr{B} \text{ is a bad region of the second kind } \subset B(S)\} \\ &\quad \le C 2^N (\log 1/\varepsilon) 2^{-N'} l(\partial S) \le l(\partial S) \end{aligned}$$

for N' sufficiently large.

By Carleson's theorem, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{\mathscr{G}_i \text{ good}} \int_{\partial \varphi(\mathscr{G}_i)} |f|\, ds &= \sum_{\mathscr{G}_i \text{ good}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{G}_i} |f \circ \varphi|\, |\varphi'|\, ds \\ &\le CK \int_{\partial \mathbb{D}} |f \circ \varphi|\, |\varphi'|\, ds = CK \int_{\partial \mathscr{D}} |f|\, ds \end{aligned} \tag{4.8}$$

and

$$\sum_{\mathscr{B}_i \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{B}_i} |\varphi'|\, ds \le C C_6 \int_{\partial \mathbb{D}} |\varphi'|\, ds = C_7 l(\partial \mathscr{D}). \tag{4.9}$$

We continue our subdivisions now at a second *level.* For each bad region $\mathscr{B}_i$, let ψ_i be a conformal map of $\mathbb{D}$ onto $\mathscr{B}_i$ and let $g = (f \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i)/\sup_{\mathscr{B}} |f \circ \varphi|$. If there is only one zero ζ of $f \circ \varphi$ in $\mathscr{B}_i$, we choose ψ_i so that $\psi_i(0) = \zeta$. In this case, we choose r so small that Lemma 3.2 applies to $(f \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i)(\varphi \circ \psi_i)'$ and $F \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i$. Since

$$\int_{|z|=r} |f \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i||\varphi' \circ \psi_i||\psi_i'|\, ds \le \int_{\partial \mathscr{B}} |f \circ \varphi|\, \varphi'|\, ds,$$

the small sectors from Lemma 3.2 will at most double the total length estimates. For notational convenience, we will call these sectors good regions. The initial regions $G_{1,j}$ are replaced in this case by $G_{1,j}\backslash\{z\colon |z| \le r\}$, $j = 1, \cdots, 4$.

Replacing φ with $\varphi \circ \psi_i$ and $f \circ \varphi$ with g, we apply the process described above to obtain a second level of good regions $\mathscr{G}_{i,j}^{(2)}$ and bad regions $\mathscr{B}_{i,j}^{(2)}$. Then by (4.6) and (4.9), we get

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \sum_{\mathscr{G}_{i,j}^{(2)} \text{ good}} \int_{\partial(\varphi \circ \psi(\mathscr{G}_{i,j}^{(2)}))} |f|\, ds \\
&= \sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \sum_{\mathscr{G}_{i,j}^{(2)} \text{ good}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{G}_{i,j}^{(2)}} |f \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i|\, |(\varphi \circ \psi_i)'|\, ds \\
&\le CK \sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathbb{D}} |f \circ \varphi \circ \psi_i|\, |(\varphi \circ \psi_i)'\, ds \\
&= CK \sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{B}_i^{(1)}} |f \circ \varphi|\, |\varphi'|\, ds \le CKC_7 \alpha l(\partial \mathscr{D}).
\end{aligned}$$

Furthermore, a use of (4.7) and (4.9) yields

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \sum_{\mathscr{B}_{i,j}^{(2)} \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{B}_{i,j}^{(2)}} |\varphi' \circ \psi_i|\, \psi_i'|\, ds \le C_7 \sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathbb{D}} |\varphi' \circ \psi_i|\, |\psi_i'|\, ds \\
&= C_7 \sum_{\mathscr{B}_i^{(1)} \text{ bad}} \int_{\partial \mathscr{B}_i^{(1)}} |\varphi'|\, ds \le C_7^2 l(\partial \mathscr{D}).
\end{aligned}$$

For each bad region at the second level, we repeat this process obtaining third level good and bad regions. Continue this subdivision indefinitely. We obtain a partition of $\mathscr{D}$ into regions $\tau_k(\mathscr{G}_k)$, where each $\mathscr{G}_k$ is a good region at some level, and τ_k is a conformal map of $\mathbb{D}$ into $\mathscr{D}$. Indeed, $|f| \le \alpha^m$ on $\tau_k(\mathscr{B})$, where $\mathscr{B}$ is a bad region at level m, so each point of $\mathscr{D}\backslash\{z\colon f(z) = 0\}$ is in at most finitely many bad regions. Each zero of

f is eventually in a region $\tau_k(\mathscr{B})$ where Lemma 3.2 is applied to $f \circ \tau_k$ on $\mathscr{B}$. Choose α so that $C_7\alpha < 1$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_k \int_{\partial\tau_k(\mathscr{G}_k)} |f|\,ds &\le CK[1 + C_7\alpha + (C_7\alpha)^2 + \cdots]l(\partial\mathscr{D}) \\ &= \frac{CK}{1 - C_7\alpha} l(\partial\mathscr{D}). \end{aligned} \tag{4.10}$$

In order to make our partition locally finite, we reduce the size of each good region $\mathscr{G}_k$ slightly, so that each component of $\tau_k(\mathscr{G}_k) \cap \mathbb{D}$ is smooth. Indeed, we can find almost square regions $\mathscr{D}_j' \subset \mathscr{G}_k$ so that

(i) for each j, there is an $a_j \in \mathbb{C}^m$ with $|f \circ \tau_k - a_j| < \delta |a_j|$ on $\mathscr{D}_j'$,
(ii) $\sum l(\partial\mathscr{D}_j') \le 5l(\partial\mathscr{G}_k)$,
(iii) each $\partial\mathscr{D}_j'$ is a 5 chord-arc curve, and
(iv) $\mathscr{G}_k' = \mathscr{G}_k \setminus \bigcup \overline{\mathscr{D}_j'}$ has each component of $\{\zeta \in \partial\mathscr{G}_k' : \tau_k(\zeta) \in \mathbb{D}\}$ a smooth curve.

Moreover, since each component of $\{\zeta \in \partial\mathscr{G}_k : \tau_k(\zeta) \in \mathbb{D}\}$ consists of radial line segments and arcs of circles centered at the origin, the components $\mathscr{D}_j'$ can be chosen so small and so close to squares that

$$\int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_j'} |\tau_k'(z)|\,|dz| \le 5 \int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_j' \cap \partial\mathscr{G}_k} |\tau_k'(z)|\,|dz|.$$

The $\{\mathscr{D}_j'\}$ look like a one-cell thick skin around (most of) $\partial\mathscr{G}_k$, with variable sized cells. Thus

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_j \int_{\partial\tau_k(\mathscr{D}_j')} |f|\,ds &\le (1+\delta) \sum_j |a_j| \int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_j'} |\tau_k'|\,ds \\ &\le \frac{5(1+\delta)}{1-\delta} \sum_j \int_{\partial\mathscr{D}_j' \cap \partial\mathscr{G}_k} |f \circ \tau_k|\,|\tau_k'|\,ds \\ &\le 6 \int_{\partial\tau_k(\mathscr{G}_k)} |f|\,ds. \end{aligned} \tag{4.11}$$

We now apply Lemma 3.3 to each $\mathscr{G}_k'$. By (4.10) and (4.11) we have the desired partition of $\mathscr{D}$.

To see that the partition is locally finite when each component of $\partial\mathscr{D} \cap \mathbb{D}$ is smooth, first note that at each level the good regions have $\{\tau_k(\mathscr{G}_k)\}$ locally finite. This is because if $\zeta \in \partial\mathbb{D}$ and $\tau_k(\zeta) \in \mathbb{D}$, then $f \circ \tau_k$ is continuous at ζ, so our stopping time argument either ends with a bad region of the first kind containing a neighborhood of ζ in $\mathbb{E}$, i.e., when $|f(\tau_k(\zeta))| \le \alpha/2$, or with a Case 2 good region of the first kind containing a neighborhood of ζ in $\mathbb{D}$, i.e., when $|f(\tau_k(\zeta))| > \alpha/2$. Each partition within a good region is locally finite by Lemma 3.3. Since $|f| \le \alpha^m$ at the mth level, each point $\zeta \in \mathbb{D}\backslash\{z\colon f(z) = 0\}$ is in at most finitely many $\tau(\mathscr{B})$, $\mathscr{B}$ a bad region, and each zero of f is eventually the only zero in $\tau(\mathscr{B})$, for some conformal map τ and bad region $\mathscr{B}$. For each zero ζ of f, then, the process terminates near ζ with the good regions generated by the application of Lemma 3.2. We conclude that our partition is locally finite.

5. When f is large

To remove the boundedness restriction on f, we apply the following decomposition. Choose $r_0 < 1$ so that if C_θ is the (open) convex hull of $e^{i\theta}$ and $\{z\colon |z| < r_0\}$, then $T(Q) \subset C_\theta$ whenever Q is a dyadic square with $e^{i\theta} \in Q^*$ (in fact, $r_0 = \sqrt{4/5}$ will work). Let

$$f^*(\theta) = \sup\{|f(z)|\colon z \in C_\theta\}.$$

Using the Hardy-Littlewood maximal theorem and Lemma 2.1, we obtain $\int_0^{2\pi} |f^*(\theta)|\,d\theta \le C\|f\|_{H^1} = C\sqrt{2}l(\Gamma)$. Now suppose that Q is a dyadic square with $2^{m-1} \le \sup_{T(Q)} |f| < 2^m$, where m is an integer. Define descendent squares $Q_k \subset Q$ to be the maximal dyadic squares contained in Q for which $\sup_{T(Q_k)} |f| \ge 2^m$. Let $\mathscr{D}^m = Q\backslash \bigcup \overline{Q_k}$. Note that for $e^{i\theta} \in Q^*$, $|f^*(\theta)| > 2^{m-1}$, $l(\partial\mathscr{D}^m) \le 6l(Q^*)$, and $|f/2^m| < 1$ on $\mathscr{D}^m$. Begin with each $Q_{1,j}$ forming the associated regions $\mathscr{D}^m$. For each descendent Q_k, repeat the process by forming regions $\mathscr{D}^{m+1}$. Continuing the process indefinitely, we obtain a decomposition of $\mathbb{D}$ into regions of the form $\mathscr{D}^m = Q\backslash \bigcup \overline{Q_k}$, where $\sup_{\mathscr{D}} |f/2^m| < 1$. We may reduce the regions $\mathscr{D}$ at each stage slightly, as we did in the proof of (4.11), so that $\partial\mathscr{D}^m \cap \mathbb{D}$ is smooth. By Lemma 4.1 applied to $F/2^m$, we can partition each $\mathscr{D}^m$ into regions $\mathscr{D}_i^m$ with

$$\sum_i l(F(\partial\mathscr{D}_i^m)) \le M_1 2^m l(\partial\mathscr{D}^m).$$

Regions $\mathscr{D}^{m'}$ formed from Q_k, where $\mathscr{D}^m = Q\backslash\overline{Q_k}$, have $m' > m$. Thus

$$\sum_{m,i} l(F(\partial\mathscr{D}_i^m)) \le M_2 \sum 2^m |\{\theta\colon f^*(\theta) > 2^{m-1}\}| \le M_2 C\|f\|_{H^1} = Ml(\Gamma)$$

and the theorem is proved in full generality.

Finally, we note that the regions $\{F(\mathscr{D}_i^m)\}$ of the above partition are better than M chord-arc. By the proofs of Lemmas 3.2 and 3.3, each such $\mathscr{D}$ is the image under some conformal map τ of a region Ω, bounded by an M chord-arc curve, with

$$|(f \circ \tau)\tau' - a| < \delta|a|, \qquad z \in \Omega, \tag{5.1}$$

for some $a \in \mathbb{C}^n$. The Ω's coming from Lemma 3.2 are half disks and the Ω's coming from §2 of [3] are called M-Lipschitz curves. Namely, each such Ω after a translation, notation, and dilation can be parametrized by $(r(\theta)\cos\theta, r(\theta)\sin\theta)$, $0 \le \theta \le 2\pi$, where $1/(1+M) \le r \le 1$ and $|r(\theta_1)-r(\theta_2)| \le M|\theta_1-\theta_1|$ for all θ_1 and θ_2. We define an *M-δ Lipschitz curve* in $\mathbb{R}^n$ to be a curve parametrized after a translation, rotation, and dilation by

$$(\gamma(e^{i\theta}) = (r(\theta)\cos\theta, r(\theta)\sin\theta, x_3(e^{i\theta}), \cdots, x_n(e^{i\theta})), \qquad 0 \le \theta \le 2\pi,$$

where $1/(1+M) \le r(\theta) \le 1$, $|r(\theta_1) - r(\theta_2)| \le M|\theta_1 - \theta_2|$ and $|x_j(e^{i\theta_1}) - x_j(e^{i\theta_2})| \le \delta|\theta_1 - \theta_2|$ for all $\delta_0 > 0$, we can arrange that $\delta \le \delta_0$ in (5.1). Thus by Lemma 3.1, given any $\delta > 0$, we can find an $M_1 < \infty$ so that $\mathbb{D}$ can be partitioned into regions D_j so that $\partial F(D_j)$ is an M_1-δ Lipschitz curve and (1.11) holds. These M_1-δ Lipschitz regions are images of M-Lipschitz regions Ω_j with the property that any two points in Ω_j can be connected by a path γ consisting of a radial line segment, followed by a circular line segment, followed by another radial segment, where the radial segments are no longer than their distance apart. By the proof of Lemma 3.1, $F \circ \tau_j$ must be one-to-one on $\overline{\Omega_j}$. These regions $F(D_j)$ thus look like small perturbations of planar M-Lipschitz curves that have been translated, rotated, and dilated in $\mathbb{R}^n$. This concludes the proof of the theorem.

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