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COMPLEX ANALYSIS

an introduction to the theory of analytic
functions of one complex variable

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COMPLEX ANALYSIS

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to the memory of

Ernst Lindelöf

PREFACE

This text is a rigorous introduction on an elementary level to the theory of analytic functions of one complex variable. At American universities it is intended to be used by first-year graduate and advanced undergraduate students.

Since the time the first edition was published there has been a marked change in the quality of American students of mathematics. They enter college better prepared, and they are confronted with true mathematical reasoning at an earlier stage. To a lesser degree the same is true abroad.

In preparing the second edition the author has striven to adjust to this greater maturity of the readers. At the same time the essentially elementary character of the exposition has not been sacrificed. Indeed, nothing could be gained by addressing only the ablest students. Therefore, as in the first edition, the presentation is comparatively broad in the beginning, except for condensed reviews of familiar material, and rises only slowly to a higher level of conciseness. The author has tried to emphasize economy of thought in order to make the reader aware of the intrinsic unity which is so characteristic of the subject.

We enumerate the most important changes from the first edition:

1. The exponential and trigonometric functions are now defined by means of power series. In order to do so it was necessary to introduce an early elementary section on complex power series, a procedure that is not without didactic value in itself.

2. The introduction to point set topology has been rewritten. It now includes the fundamental properties of metric spaces and a more detailed discussion of compactness.

3. Normal families are approached in a more direct manner, and the connection with compactness is emphasized.

4. The Riemann mapping theorem has been combined with a section on the Schwarz-Christoffel formula.

5. A short chapter on elliptic functions has been added. It is deliberately very concentrated in an effort to spare the reader from the customary maze of notations that are needed only by specialists.

6. The exercise sections have been enlarged, and some starred exercises with generous hints for their solution have been included. The latter are to be regarded as part of the text, and students should be encouraged to compose complete proofs.

I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my indebtedness to my late teacher Ernst Lindelöf. The whole structure of the book is also deeply influenced by Emil Artin's idea to base elementary homology theory on winding numbers.

I am very grateful to a number of mathematicians who have pointed out errors in the first edition. I can only express a pious hope that no new ones have crept in.

Lars V. Ahlfors

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	vii
CHAPTER 1: COMPLEX NUMBERS	1
1. <i>The Algebra of Complex Numbers</i>	1
1.1. Arithmetic Operations	1
1.2. Square Roots	3
✓ 1.3. Justification	4
✓ 1.4. Conjugation, Absolute Value	6
✓ 1.5. Inequalities	9
2. <i>The Geometric Representation of Complex Numbers</i>	12
✓ 2.1. Geometric Addition and Multiplication	12
2.2. The Binomial Equation	15
2.3. Analytic Geometry	17
✓ 2.4. The Spherical Representation	18
CHAPTER 2: COMPLEX FUNCTIONS	21
1. <i>Introduction to the Concept of Analytic Function</i>	21
✓ 1.1. Limits and Continuity	22
✓ 1.2. Analytic Functions	24
✓ 1.3. Polynomials	28
✓ 1.4. Rational Functions	30
2. <i>Elementary Theory of Power Series</i>	33
✓ 2.1. Sequences	34
✓ 2.2. Series	35
✓ 2.3. Uniform Convergence	36
✓ 2.4. Power Series	38
2.5. Abel's Limit Theorem	42

3. The Exponential and Trigonometric Functions	43
✓3.1. The Exponential	43
✓3.2. The Trigonometric Functions	44
✓3.3. The Periodicity	45
✓3.4. The Logarithm	46

CHAPTER 3: ANALYTIC FUNCTIONS AS MAPPINGS 49

1. Elementary Point Set Topology	50
✓1.1. Sets and Elements	50
✓1.2. Metric Spaces	51
✓1.3. Connectedness	54
✓1.4. Compactness	59
✓1.5. Continuous Functions	64
1.6. Topological Spaces	67
2. Conformality	68
✓2.1. Arcs and Closed Curves	68
✓2.2. Analytic Functions in Regions	69
✓2.3. Conformal Mapping	73
3. Linear Transformations	76
✓3.1. The Linear Group	76
✓3.2. The Cross Ratio	78
✓3.3. Symmetry	80
3.4. Oriented Circles	83
3.5. Families of Circles	84
4. Elementary Conformal Mappings	89
✓4.1. The Use of Level Curves	89
✓4.2. A Survey of Elementary Mappings	93
4.3. Elementary Riemann Surfaces	97

CHAPTER 4: COMPLEX INTEGRATION 101

1. Fundamental Theorems	101
✓1.1. Line Integrals	101
1.2. Rectifiable Arcs	104
✓1.3. Line Integrals as Functions of Arcs	105
✓1.4. Cauchy's Theorem for a Rectangle	109
✓1.5. Cauchy's Theorem in a Circular Disk	112
2. Cauchy's Integral Formula	114
✓2.1. The Index of a Point with Respect to a Closed Curve	114
✓2.2. The Integral Formula	118
✓2.3. Higher Derivatives	120

3. Local Properties of Analytic Functions	124
✓3.1. Removable Singularities. Taylor's Theorem	124
✓3.2. Zeros and Poles	126
✓3.3. The Local Mapping	130
✓3.4. The Maximum Principle	133
4. The General Form of Cauchy's Theorem	137
✓4.1. Chains and Cycles	137
✓4.2. Simple Connectivity	139
✓4.3. Exact Differentials in Simply Connected Regions	141
✓4.4. Multiply Connected Regions	144
5. The Calculus of Residues	147
✓5.1. The Residue Theorem	147
✓5.2. The Argument Principle	151
✓5.3. Evaluation of Definite Integrals	153
6. Harmonic Functions	160
✓6.1. Definition and Basic Properties	160
✓6.2. The Mean-value Property	163
✓6.3. Poisson's Formula	165
✓6.4. Schwarz's Theorem	167
✓6.5. The Reflection Principle	170
 CHAPTER 5: SERIES AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS	 173
1. Power Series Expansions	173
✓1.1. Weierstrass's Theorem	173
✓1.2. The Taylor Series	177
✓1.3. The Laurent Series	182
2. Partial Fractions and Factorization	185
✓2.1. Partial Fractions	185
✓2.2. Infinite Products	189
✓2.3. Canonical Products	192
2.4. The Gamma Function	196
2.5. Stirling's Formula	199
3. Entire Functions	205
✓3.1. Jensen's Formula	205
3.2. Hadamard's Theorem	206
4. Normal Families	210
✓4.1. Equicontinuity	210
✓4.2. Normality and Compactness	211
✓4.3. Arzela's Theorem	214
✓4.4. Families of Analytic Functions	215
4.5. The Classical Definition	217

CHAPTER 6: CONFORMAL MAPPING. DIRICHLET'S PROBLEM	221
1. <i>The Riemann Mapping Theorem</i>	221
✓ 1.1. Statement and Proof	221
✓ 1.2. Boundary Behavior	224
1.3. Use of the Reflection Principle	225
1.4. Analytic Arcs	226
2. <i>Conformal Mapping of Polygons</i>	227
2.1. The Behavior at an Angle	227
2.2. The Schwarz-Christoffel Formula	228
2.3. Mapping on a Rectangle	230
2.4. The Triangle Functions of Schwarz	233
3. <i>A Closer Look at Harmonic Functions</i>	233
✓ 3.1. Functions with the Mean-value Property	234
✓ 3.2. Harnack's Principle	235
4. <i>The Dirichlet Problem</i>	237
✓ 4.1. Subharmonic Functions	237
✓ 4.2. Solution of Dirichlet's Problem	240
5. <i>Canonical Mappings of Multiply Connected Regions</i>	243
5.1. Harmonic Measures	244
5.2. Green's Function	249
5.3. Parallel Slit Regions	251
 CHAPTER 7: ELLIPTIC FUNCTIONS	 255
1. <i>Simply Periodic Functions</i>	255
1.1. Representation by Exponentials	255
1.2. The Fourier Development	256
1.3. Functions of Finite Order	256
2. <i>Doubly Periodic Functions</i>	257
2.1. The Period Module	257
2.2. Unimodular Transformations	258
2.3. The Canonical Basis	260
2.4. General Properties of Elliptic Functions	262
3. <i>The Weierstrass Theory</i>	264
3.1. The Weierstrass \wp -function	264
3.2. The Functions $\zeta(z)$ and $\sigma(z)$	265
3.3. The Differential Equation	267
3.4. The Modular Function $\lambda(\tau)$	269
3.5. The Conformal Mapping by $\lambda(\tau)$	271

CHAPTER 8: GLOBAL ANALYTIC FUNCTIONS 275

1. <i>Analytic Continuation</i>	275
✓ 1.1. General Analytic Functions	275
✓ 1.2. The Riemann Surface of a Function	277
✓ 1.3. Analytic Continuation along Arcs	278
1.4. Homotopic Curves	281
✓ 1.5. The Monodromy Theorem	285
1.6. Branch Points	287
 2. <i>Algebraic Functions</i>	 291
2.1. The Resultant of Two Polynomials	291
2.2. Definition and Properties of Algebraic Functions	292
2.3. Behavior at the Critical Points	294
 3. <i>Picard's Theorem</i>	 297
3.1. Lacunary Values	297
 4. <i>Linear Differential Equations</i>	 299
4.1. Ordinary Points	300
4.2. Regular Singular Points	302
4.3. Solutions at Infinity	304
4.4. The Hypergeometric Differential Equation	305
4.5. Riemann's Point of View	309
 <i>Index</i>	 313

1 COMPLEX NUMBERS

We want to get to Chapter 4 as quickly as possible, but we will spend some time on Chapters 2 and 3. Quickly through Chapter 1. Our purpose is to prove theorems from known facts about real nos. Pictures will be used only as an aid to imagination.

1. THE ALGEBRA OF COMPLEX NUMBERS

It is fundamental that real and complex numbers obey the same basic laws of arithmetic. We begin our study of complex function theory by stressing and implementing this analogy.

Read very carefully

* **1.1. Arithmetic Operations.** From elementary algebra the reader is acquainted with the *imaginary unit* i with the property $i^2 = -1$. If the imaginary unit is combined with two real numbers α, β by the processes of addition and multiplication, we obtain a *complex number* $\alpha + i\beta$. α and β are the *real* and *imaginary part* of the complex number. If $\alpha = 0$, the number is said to be *purely imaginary*; if $\beta = 0$, it is of course *real*. Zero is the only number which is at once real and purely imaginary. Two complex numbers are equal if and only if they have the same real part and the same imaginary part.

Addition and multiplication do not lead out from the system of complex numbers. Assuming that the ordinary rules of arithmetic apply to complex numbers we find indeed

$$(1) \quad (\alpha + i\beta) + (\gamma + i\delta) = (\alpha + \gamma) + i(\beta + \delta)$$

and

$$(2) \quad (\alpha + i\beta)(\gamma + i\delta) = (\alpha\gamma - \beta\delta) + i(\alpha\delta + \beta\gamma).$$

In the second identity we have made use of the relation $i^2 = -1$.

It is less obvious that division is also possible. We wish to

show that $(\alpha + i\beta)/(\gamma + i\delta)$ is a complex number, provided that $\gamma + i\delta \neq 0$. If the quotient is denoted by $x + iy$, we must have

$$\alpha + i\beta = (\gamma + i\delta)(x + iy).$$

By (2) this condition can be written

$$\alpha + i\beta = (\gamma x - \delta y) + i(\delta x + \gamma y),$$

and we obtain the two equations

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha &= \gamma x - \delta y \\ \beta &= \delta x + \gamma y.\end{aligned}$$

This system of simultaneous linear equations has the unique solution

$$\begin{aligned}x &= \frac{\alpha\gamma + \beta\delta}{\gamma^2 + \delta^2} \\ y &= \frac{\beta\gamma - \alpha\delta}{\gamma^2 + \delta^2},\end{aligned}$$

for we know that $\gamma^2 + \delta^2$ is not zero. We have thus the result

$$(3) \quad \frac{\alpha + i\beta}{\gamma + i\delta} = \frac{\alpha\gamma + \beta\delta}{\gamma^2 + \delta^2} + i \frac{\beta\gamma - \alpha\delta}{\gamma^2 + \delta^2}.$$

Once the existence of the quotient has been proved, its value can be found in a simpler way. If numerator and denominator are multiplied with $\gamma - i\delta$, we find at once

$$\frac{\alpha + i\beta}{\gamma + i\delta} = \frac{(\alpha + i\beta)(\gamma - i\delta)}{(\gamma + i\delta)(\gamma - i\delta)} = \frac{(\alpha\gamma + \beta\delta) + i(\beta\gamma - \alpha\delta)}{\gamma^2 + \delta^2}.$$

As a special case the reciprocal of a complex number $\neq 0$ is given by

$$\frac{1}{\alpha + i\beta} = \frac{\alpha - i\beta}{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}.$$

We note that i^n has only four possible values: 1, i , -1 , $-i$. They correspond to values of n which divided by 4 leave the remainders 0, 1, 2, 3.

EXERCISES

1. Find the values of

$$(1 + 2i)^3, \quad \frac{5}{-3 + 4i}, \quad \left(\frac{2 + i}{3 - 2i}\right)^2, \quad (1 + i)^n + (1 - i)^n.$$

2. If $z = x + iy$ (x and y real), find the real and imaginary parts of

$$z^4, \quad \frac{1}{z}, \quad \frac{z-1}{z+1}, \quad \frac{1}{z^2}.$$

3. Show that

$$\left(\frac{-1 \pm i\sqrt{3}}{2} \right)^3 = 1 \quad \text{and} \quad \left(\frac{\pm 1 \pm i\sqrt{3}}{2} \right)^6 = 1$$

for all combinations of signs.

*1.2. **Square Roots.** We shall now show that the square root of a complex number can be found explicitly. If the given number is $\alpha + i\beta$, we are looking for a number $x + iy$ such that

$$(x + iy)^2 = \alpha + i\beta.$$

This is equivalent to the system of equations

$$(4) \quad \begin{aligned} x^2 - y^2 &= \alpha \\ 2xy &= \beta. \end{aligned}$$

From these equations we obtain

$$(x^2 + y^2)^2 = (x^2 - y^2)^2 + 4x^2y^2 = \alpha^2 + \beta^2.$$

Hence we must have

$$x^2 + y^2 = \sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2},$$

where the square root is positive or zero. Together with the first equation (4) we find

$$(5) \quad \begin{aligned} x^2 &= \frac{1}{2}(\alpha + \sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}) \\ y^2 &= \frac{1}{2}(-\alpha + \sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}). \end{aligned}$$

Observe that these quantities are positive or zero regardless of the sign of α .

The equations (5) yield, in general, two opposite values for x and two for y . But these values cannot be combined arbitrarily, for the second equation (4) is not a consequence of (5). We must therefore be careful to select x and y so that their product has the sign of β . This leads to the general solution

$$(6) \quad \sqrt{\alpha + i\beta} = \pm \left(\sqrt{\frac{\alpha + \sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}}{2}} + i \frac{\beta}{|\beta|} \sqrt{\frac{-\alpha + \sqrt{\alpha^2 + \beta^2}}{2}} \right)$$

provided that $\beta \neq 0$. For $\beta = 0$ the values are $\pm \sqrt{\alpha}$ if $\alpha \geq 0$, $\pm i \sqrt{-\alpha}$

Read very carefully.

if $\alpha < 0$. It is understood that all square roots of positive numbers are taken with the positive sign.

We have found that the square root of any complex number exists and has two opposite values. They coincide only if $\alpha + i\beta = 0$. They are real if $\beta = 0, \alpha \geq 0$ and purely imaginary if $\beta = 0, \alpha \leq 0$. In other words, except for zero, only positive numbers have real square roots and only negative numbers have purely imaginary square roots.

Since both square roots are in general complex, it is not possible to distinguish between the positive and negative square root of a complex number. We could of course distinguish between the upper and lower sign in (6), but this distinction is artificial and should be avoided. The correct way is to treat both square roots in a symmetric manner.

EXERCISES

1. Compute

$$\sqrt{i}, \quad \sqrt{-i}, \quad \sqrt{1+i}, \quad \sqrt{\frac{1-i\sqrt{3}}{2}}.$$

2. Find the four values of $\sqrt[4]{-1}$.

3. Compute $\sqrt[4]{i}$ and $\sqrt[4]{-i}$.

4. Solve the quadratic equation

$$z^2 + (\alpha + i\beta)z + \gamma + i\delta = 0.$$

1.3. Justification. So far our approach to complex numbers has been completely uncritical. We have not questioned the existence of a number system in which the equation $x^2 + 1 = 0$ has a solution while all the rules of arithmetic remain in force.

We begin by recalling the characteristic properties of the real-number system which we denote by \mathbf{R} . In the first place, \mathbf{R} is a *field*. This means that addition and multiplication are defined, satisfying the *associative, commutative, and distributive laws*. The numbers 0 and 1 are neutral elements under addition and multiplication, respectively: $\alpha + 0 = \alpha$, $\alpha \cdot 1 = \alpha$ for all α . Moreover, the equation of subtraction $\beta + x = \alpha$ has always a solution, and the equation of division $\beta x = \alpha$ has a solution whenever $\beta \neq 0$.†

One shows by elementary reasoning that the neutral elements and the results of subtraction and division are unique. Also, every field is an *integral domain*: $\alpha\beta = 0$ if and only if $\alpha = 0$ or $\beta = 0$.

† We assume that the reader has a working knowledge of elementary algebra. Although the above characterization of a field is complete, it obviously does not convey much to a student who is not already at least vaguely familiar with the concept.