

## ON BLOCK IRREDUCIBLE FORMS OVER EUCLIDEAN DOMAINS

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ABSTRACT. In this paper a general canonical form for elements in a ring Euclidean with respect to a real valuation is established. It is also shown that this form is unique and minimal thus gives the arithmetical weight of an element with respect to a radix.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION.

In this paper we shall establish a general canonical form for elements in a ring Euclidean with respect to a real valuation. We show this form is unique and minimal and thus gives us the arithmetical weight of an element with respect to a radix  $r$ .

Throughout  $R$  will denote a commutative ring Euclidean for a real valuation  $v$  satisfying:

(i)  $v(R)$  is well-ordered by the usual ordering of the real numbers.

(ii) for  $a, b \neq 0$  in  $R$ , there exists  $q, r$  in  $R$  such that  $a = bq + r$  and  $v(r) < v(b)$ .

For completeness we recall that an element  $r$  of  $R$  is called a radix (or a base) for  $R$  if every element  $a$  of  $R$  can be represented as a finite sum of the form

$$a = \sum a_i r^i \quad \text{where } v(a_i) < v(r) \quad (1.1)$$

and we call such a representation a weak radix- $r$  form (or representation) for  $a$ . For convenience we often write  $a = (a_{n-1}, \dots, a_0)$  or  $a_{n-1}, \dots, a_1 a_0$  in lieu of (1.1). The form (1.1) is said to be a minimal weak radix form for  $a$  if the number of indices  $i$  with  $a_i \neq 0$  is minimal. The weight of  $a$  relative to the radix- $r$  form is the number of nonzero  $a_i$ 's in a minimal weak radix- $r$  form. Some canonical minimal forms were given by Reitwiesner [1] for integers with radix  $r = 2$ , Clark and Liang [2], Boyarinov [3], Kabatyanskii [4] for integers with general radix  $r$  and Clark and Liang [5] for Gaussian integers with radix  $r = \pm 1 \pm i$ .

We shall establish here a more general canonical minimal form for radix  $r$  of  $R$  which we call a block irreducible form.

LEMMA 1. Let  $r$  be an element of  $R$  such that  $v(r) \geq 3$ . Then  $(a_m, \dots, a_1, a_0) = (b_m, \dots, b_1, b_0)$  if and only if there exists  $c_0, \dots, c_j, \dots$  in  $R$  such that

$$\begin{aligned} b_0 &= a_0 = c_0 r \\ b_j &= a_j + c_{j-1} - c_j r, \quad \text{for } 0 < j < m \\ b_m &= a_m - c_{m-1} \end{aligned}$$

and

$$v(c_i) < 3 \quad \text{for all } i$$

$$v(c_0) < 2$$

PROOF. Assume  $(a_m, \dots, a_1, a_0) = (b_m, \dots, b_1, b_0)$ . This implies  $a_0 \equiv b_0 \pmod r$  hence  $b_0 = a_0 - c_0 r$ . Now,  $c_0 r = a_0 - b_0$  implies  $v(c_0) < \frac{v(r) + v(r)}{v(r)} = 2$ . Therefore,  $(a_m, \dots, a_1, a_0) = (a_m, \dots, a_1 + c_0, b_0) = (b_m, \dots, b_1, b_0)$  which implies  $(b_m, \dots, b_1) = (a_m, \dots, a_1 + c_0)$ . We thus have  $b_1 \equiv a_1 + c_0 \pmod r$ . Again, let  $b_1 = a_1 + c_0 - c_1 r$  or  $c_1 r = a_1 - b_1 + c_0$ . Hence,

$$v(c_1) < \frac{v(r) + v(r) + 2}{v(r)} < 2 + \frac{2}{v(r)} < 3$$

since  $v(r) \geq 3$ . Now,  $(a_m, \dots, a_2, a_1 + c_0) = (a_m, \dots, a_2 + c_1, b_1) = (b_m, \dots, b_2, b_1)$ . Therefore,  $(a_m, \dots, a_2 + c_1) = (b_m, \dots, b_2)$ . As before  $a_2 + c_1 - c_2 r = b_2$  or  $c_2 r = a_2 - b_2 + c_1$ . We have  $v(c_2) < \frac{2v(r) + 3}{v(r)} < 3$ . Proceeding in this way we get

$$a_j + c_{j-1} - c_j r = b_j, \quad v(c_j) < 3 \quad \text{for all } j.$$

If  $a_j = b_j = 0$ , we have  $c_{j-1} = 0$  since  $c_{j-1} r = c_j r$  implies  $v(c_{j-1}) > v(r) \geq 3$ , a contradiction.

For the converse, we must assume  $v(a_i)$  and  $v(b_i)$  are both less than  $v(r)$ .

DEFINITION 0. We call the  $a_i$  in (1.1) and in Lemma 1 digits, and the  $c_i$  in Lemma 1 carries. Note that if  $v(r) \geq 3$  then all carries  $c_j$  satisfy  $v(c_j) < 3$  thus all carries are digits. However if  $v(r) < 3$  then a carry may not be a digit. To avoid this complication we make the following

ASSUMPTION. Henceforth all carries are assumed to be digits.

DEFINITION 1. The form  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is reducible if there exists a form  $(b_m, \dots, b_0)$  such that

$$(1) \quad b_i = 0 \quad \text{for some } i \in \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$$

and

$$(2) \quad (b_m, \dots, b_0) = (a_n, \dots, a_0)$$

Otherwise the form  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is called irreducible.

LEMMA 2. The form  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible if and only if

$$(1) \quad a_i \neq 0 \quad \text{for all } i = 0, \dots, n$$

and

$$(2) \quad \text{there exists no } k \leq n \text{ such that } (a_k, \dots, a_1, a_0) = (b_{k+1}, 0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0)$$

where  $(b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0)$  is irreducible.

PROOF. Let  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  be irreducible then clearly (1) holds. If (2) fails then

$$(a_k, \dots, a_0) = (b_{k+1}, 0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0) \quad \text{for some } k \leq n.$$

If  $k = n$  we get a contradiction so we may assume  $k + 1 \leq n$ . We can write

$$a_n r^n + \dots + a_{k+1} r^{k+1} + b_{k+1} r^{k+1} = c_m r^m + \dots + c_{k+1} r^{k+1}.$$

Therefore,  $(a_n, \dots, a_{k+1}, a_k, \dots, a_0) + (a_n r^n + \dots + a_{k+1} r^{k+1}) + (a_k, \dots, a_0)$

$$= a_n r^n + \dots + a_{k+1} r^{k+1} + (b_{k+1}, 0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0) = a_n r^n + \dots + a_{k+1} r^{k+1} + b_{k+1} r^{k+1}$$

$$+ (0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0) = c_m r^m + \dots + c_{k+1} r^{k+1} + (0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0)$$

$$= (c_m, \dots, c_{k+1}, 0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_0), \text{ a contradiction. Conversely, let } a = (a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0)$$

satisfy (1) and (2) and being reducible. Then

$$(a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0) = (b_m, \dots, b_j, \dots, b_0)$$

where  $b_j = 0$  for some  $j$ ,  $0 \leq j \leq n$  and  $j$  being smallest possible. Now

$$\begin{aligned}
 b_0 &= a_0 - c_0 r \\
 b_1 &= a_1 + c_0 - c_1 r \\
 &\vdots \\
 0 &= b_j = a_j + c_{j-1} - c_j r \\
 c_j &= 0 + c_j - 0 \cdot r
 \end{aligned}$$

We have  $(a_j, a_{j-1}, \dots, a_0) = (c_j, 0, b_{j-1}, \dots, b_0)$ . By the choice of  $j$ ,  $b_{j-1}, \dots, b_0$  must be irreducible otherwise we would have  $(c_j, 0, b_{j-1}, \dots, b_0) =$

$(b'_m, \dots, b'_{j-1}, \dots, b'_s = 0, \dots, b_0)$  and we could use this to find a smaller "j".

If  $(a_j, a_{j-1}, \dots, a_0) = (b_m, \dots, b_s, 0, b_{s-2}, \dots, b_0)$ , then we can write

$$\begin{aligned}
 (a_n, \dots, a_0) &= (b'_t, \dots, b'_s, 0, b_{s-2}, \dots, b_0). \text{ By "addition", } (a_n, \dots, a_{j+1}, 0, 0, \dots, 0) \\
 + (0, \dots, 0, a_j, a_{j-1}, \dots, a_0) &= (a_n, \dots, a_{j+1}, 0, \dots, 0) + (\dots, b_s, 0, b_{s-2}, \dots, b_0) = \\
 (b'_t, \dots, b'_s, 0, b_{s-2}, \dots, b_0).
 \end{aligned}$$

DEFINITION 2. The form  $(a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0)$  is called block irreducible if whenever  $a_j \neq 0$  for all  $j$ ,  $t < j < s$  but  $a_s = a_t = 0$ , we must have  $(a_{s-1}, \dots, a_{t+1})$  irreducible. In other words  $(a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0)$  is composed of irreducible sequences (or blocks) separated by sequences (or blocks) of zeros.

LEMMA 3. If  $a = qr + c$  where  $v(c) < v(r)$  and  $v(a) \geq v(r) \geq 2$ , then  $v(q) < \frac{2}{v(r)} v(a)$ .

The following corollary is an immediate consequence of lemma 3.

COROLLARY. If  $v(r) \geq 2$ , then the sequence

$$\begin{aligned}
 a &= q_1 r + a_0, \\
 q_1 &= q_2 r + a_1, \\
 &\dots \\
 q_i &= q_i r + a_i, \quad \text{where } v(a_i) < v(r),
 \end{aligned}$$

contains an element  $q_k$  such that  $v(q_k) < v(r)$ .

REMARK. The sequence given above need not be bounded since e.g. in the ring of integers for base  $r = 3$ , we have  $(-1, 2) = (-1, 2, 2) = (-1, 2, 2, 2) = \dots = -1$  since  $2 = (1, -1)$ ,  $(2, 2) = (1, 0, -1)$ ,  $(2, 2, 2) = (1, 0, 0, -1)$ , etc.

DEFINITION. Let  $a = (a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0) = a_n r^n + \dots + a_1 r + a_0$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} a &= q_0 r + a_0, & q_0 &= a_n r^{n-1} + \dots + a_1 \\ q_0 &= q_1 r + a_1, & q_1 &= a_n r^{n-2} + \dots + a_2 \\ &\vdots & & \\ q_i &= q_{i+1} r + a_i, & q_{i+1} &= a_n r^{n-(i+2)} + \dots + a_{i+2} \\ &\vdots & & \\ q_n &= 0 \cdot r + a_n \end{aligned}$$

Suppose  $a_0 \neq 0$ . We shall say that  $a_i = 0$  is the soonest possible zero after  $a_0$  if  $a_0 \neq 0$ ,  $a_1 \neq 0, \dots, a_{i-1} \neq 0$ ,  $a_i = 0$  and for no smaller  $i$  is it possible to find a representation for  $a$  with  $a_j = 0$ ,  $j < i$ .

REMARK.  $a = (a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible if and only if  $a_0 \neq 0$  and  $a_{n+1} = 0$  is the soonest possible zero after  $a_0$ .

REMARK. If  $a = \dots, a_{s+2}, 0, a_s, \dots, a_t, 0, a_{t-1}, \dots$ , then the sequence corresponds to the following

$$\begin{aligned} a &= q_0 r + a_0 \\ &\vdots \\ q_{t-2} &= q_{t-1} r + a_{t-2} \\ q_{t-1} &= q_t r + 0 \\ q_t &= q_{t+1} r + a_t \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} q_{s-1} &= q_s r + a_s \\ q_s &= q_{s+1} r + 0 \\ &\vdots \end{aligned}$$

Clearly,  $(a_s, \dots, a_t)$  is irreducible if and only if  $a_{s+1}$  is the soonest possible zero after  $a_t$  and  $a_t \neq 0$ . We shall show in theorem 3 that this process must stop (at or before  $n+2$  where  $v(q_n) < v(r)$ ).

LEMMA 4. If  $a = (a_n, \dots, a_k, 0, 0, \dots, 0) = (b_m, \dots, b_k, \dots, b_0)$  then  $b_i = 0$  for  $i = 0, 1, \dots, k-1$ .

PROOF. Since  $b_0 \equiv 0 \pmod r$  and  $v(b_0) < r$ , this implies  $b_0 = 0$ . Thus  $\frac{a}{r} = (a_n, \dots, a_k, 0, \dots, 0) = (b_m, \dots, b_k, \dots, b_1)$  and  $b_1 = 0$ . By induction,  $b_0 = b_1 = \dots = b_k = 0$ .

THEOREM 1. (Uniqueness of Block Irreducible Form) Let  $v(r) \geq 3$  and  $a = (a_n, \dots, a_1, a_0)$  be a block irreducible form with non zero blocks.

$$\begin{aligned} &(a_{k_2}, \dots, a_{k_1}) \\ &(a_{k_4}, \dots, a_{k_3}) \\ &\vdots \\ &\text{etc.} \end{aligned}$$

Then these blocks are unique in the sense that if  $(a_\ell, \dots, a_k)$  and  $(b_m, \dots, b_t)$  are the  $i$ -th irreducible blocks in two different block irreducible representations, then  $k = t$ ,  $\ell = m$  and

$$\sum_{j=k}^m a_j r^j = \sum_{j=k}^m b_j r^j$$

PROOF. Let  $a = (\dots, 0, a_\ell, \dots, a_k, 0, \dots, 0)$  and  $a = (\dots, 0, b_m, \dots, b_t, 0, \dots, 0)$  where  $(a_\ell, \dots, a_k)$  and  $(b_m, \dots, b_t)$  are both irreducible. By lemma 4,  $a_k \neq 0$  iff  $b_t \neq 0$ , hence  $t = k$  and if  $\ell < m$ , then  $(b_m, \dots, b_k) = (\dots, 0, a_\ell, \dots, a_k)$  not irreducible. Therefore,  $\ell = m$ . We may assume  $k = 0$ . Then we have

$$\sum_{j=0}^m b_j r^j \equiv \sum_{j=0}^m a_j r^j \pmod{r^{m+2}}$$

or

$$\sum_{j=0}^m (b_j - a_j) r^j \equiv 0 \pmod{r^{m+2}}$$

Therefore, either

$$\sum_{j=0}^m (b_j - a_j) r^j = 0$$

in which case we have

$$\sum_{j=0}^m b_j r^j = \sum_{j=0}^m a_j r^j$$

or

$$2 \left( \sum_{j=0}^m (b_j - a_j) r^j \right) \geq v(r)^{m+2}$$

which implies

$$2[v(r)^{m+1} + \dots + v(r)] > v(r)^{m+2}$$

or



$$2v(r) \left( \frac{v(r)^{m+1} - 1}{v(r) - 1} \right) > v(r)^{m+2}$$

or

$$v(r)^{m+1} - 1 = \frac{2(v(r)^{m+1} - 1)}{2} \geq 2 \left( \frac{v(r)^{m+1} - 1}{v(r) - 1} \right) > v(r)^{m+1}$$

a contradiction. Therefore,

$$\sum_{j=k}^m a_j r^j = \sum_{j=k}^m b_j r^j.$$

By induction one may show that the next irreducible block is also unique and all blocks are unique.

**THEOREM 2.** (Minimality of Block Irreducible Form) If  $a = (a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is a block irreducible form, then it is minimal. Furthermore for each  $i$ , if  $a = (b_m, \dots, b_i, \dots, b_0)$  then  $(b_i, \dots, b_0)$  has weight at least the weight of  $(a_i, \dots, a_0)$ .

**PROOF.** It suffices to show that for each  $i$ ,  $(b_i, \dots, b_0)$  has no more zero terms than  $(a_i, \dots, a_0)$ . By lemma 4, we may assume  $a_0 \neq 0$ ,  $b_0 \neq 0$ . Thus we have  $a = (\dots, 0, a_k, \dots, a_0)$  where  $(a_k, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible. If  $b = (\dots, b_k, \dots, b_0)$  then  $b_j \neq 0$  for  $j = 0, \dots, k$ , for suppose not, let  $b_j = 0$ , some  $j \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$ . By lemma 1

$$\begin{aligned} b_0 &= a_0 - c_0 r \\ b_s &= a_s + c_{s-1} - c_s r, & 0 < s \leq j-1 \\ 0 &= a_j + c_{j-1} - c_j r \\ c_j &= 0 + c_j - 0 \cdot r \\ (a_j, \dots, a_0) &= (c_j, 0, b_{j-1}, \dots, b_0) \end{aligned}$$

which cannot happen since  $(a_k, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible. Now, suppose we have a 1 - 1 mapping of zeros of  $(b_p, \dots, b_0)$  into zeros of  $(a_p, \dots, a_0)$  for some  $p$  where  $p$  is beyond the first irreducible block of  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$ . If  $b_p = 0$  and  $a_p = 0$ , we map  $b_p$  to  $a_p$ . However, if  $a_p \neq 0$  and  $b_p = 0$ , we then have the following situation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &(a_p, \dots, a_\ell) \text{ is irreducible} \\
 &0 = a_p + c_{p-1} - c_p r \\
 &b_{p-1} = a_{p-1} + c_{p-2} - c_{p-1} r \\
 &\vdots \\
 &b_j = a_j + c_{j-1} - c_j r \\
 &\vdots \\
 &b_\ell = a_\ell + c_{\ell-1} - c_\ell r \\
 &b_{\ell-1} = 0 + c_{\ell-2} - c_{\ell-1} r
 \end{aligned}$$

Suppose  $b_j = 0$  for some  $j \in \{p-1, \dots, \ell\}$ , we have  $a_j - c_j r = -c_{j-1}$ . Hence  $(c_p, 0, b'_{p-1}, \dots, b'_\ell) = (a_p, \dots, a_\ell)$ . Since we can begin the carrying at  $a_j$  [with  $a_j - c_j r$ ] and this will allow us to get 0 at the  $p$ -th digit, we obtain a contradiction to the fact that  $(a_p, \dots, a_\ell)$  is irreducible. Hence  $b_{p-1} \neq 0$ ,  $b_{p-2} \neq 0, \dots, b_\ell \neq 0$ . Now if  $b_{\ell-1} = 0$  we have  $c_{\ell-2} = c_{\ell-1} r$  which implies  $c_{\ell-2} = c_{\ell-1} = 0$  and so we have  $(0, b_{p-1}, \dots, b_\ell) = (a_p, \dots, a_\ell)$  since we do not need the carry from  $(\ell-1)$ st digit (it is zero). Therefore  $b_p = 0$  can be mapped to  $a_{\ell-1} = 0$ .

**THEOREM 3.** (Existence of Block Irreducible Form) Every element  $a$  in  $R$  has a block irreducible form with respect to a radix  $r$  if  $v(r) \geq 2$ .

PROOF. Let  $a = (a_\ell, \dots, a_0)$  be any weak radix- $r$  form for  $a$ . Assume that  $a_j \neq 0$  but  $a_t = 0$ ,  $t < j$ , also  $(a_k, \dots, a_j)$  irreducible but  $(a_{k+1}, a_k, \dots, a_j)$  reducible. Then  $(a_{k+1}, a_k, \dots, a_j) = (a'_{k+2}, 0, a'_k, \dots, a'_j)$  where  $(a'_k, \dots, a'_j)$  is irreducible. Now, we can rewrite  $a$  as  $a = (a''_{n+1}, \dots, a''_{k+2}, 0, a'_k, \dots, a'_j, 0, \dots, 0)$ . Applying the above to  $(a''_{n+1}, \dots, a''_{k+2})$  and induction yield for  $n$  as large as desired,  $a = (a_m, \dots, a_n, \dots, a_0)$  where  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is block irreducible. Now we want to show the process will stop. Note that  $a = (a_m, \dots, a_n, \dots, a_0)$  leads to the sequence of

$$\begin{aligned}
 a &= q_0 r + a_0 \\
 q_0 &= q_1 r + a_1 \\
 &\vdots \\
 q_n &= q_{n+1} r + a_n
 \end{aligned}$$

and at some point  $v(q_n) < v(r)$  which implies that  $v(q_j) < v(r)$  for all  $j \geq n$  since  $q_{n+1} r = q_n - a_n$  so  $v(q_{n+1}) < \frac{2v(r)}{v(r)} = 2 \leq v(r)$  and by induction. Now pick any  $n$  such that  $v(q_n) < v(r)$  and  $a = (\dots, a_n, \dots, a_0)$  where  $(a_n, \dots, a_0)$  is block irreducible. Suppose  $a_n \neq 0$ . We then have  $q_n = r q_{n+1} + a_n$ ,  $q_{n+1} = r \cdot 0 + q_{n+1}$  and  $0 = r \cdot 0 + 0$ . So  $a = (0, q_{n+1}, a_n, \dots, a_\ell, 0, \dots)$  where  $a_n \neq 0$ ,  $a_\ell \neq 0$  and  $(a_n, \dots, a_\ell)$  is irreducible. If  $(q_{n+1}, a_n, \dots, a_\ell)$  is irreducible, we are done. If not  $(0, q_{n+1}, a_n, \dots, a_\ell) = (a'_{n+2}, 0, a'_n, \dots, a'_\ell)$  and  $(a'_n, \dots, a'_\ell)$  is irreducible so  $a = (a'_{n+2}, 0, a'_n, \dots, a'_\ell, 0, \dots, a_1, a_0)$  is block irreducible. Now if  $a_n = 0$  we claim  $a_j = 0$  for  $j \geq n$ . Otherwise for smallest  $n < j$  such that  $a_j \neq 0$  we have

$$\begin{aligned}
q_n &= q_{n+1}r + 0 \\
&\vdots \\
q_{j-1} &= q_j r + 0 \\
q_j &= q_{j+1}r + a_j
\end{aligned}$$

but  $q_{j-1} = q_j r$  implies  $q_j = 0$  and  $a_j = -q_{j+1}r$  implies  $a_j = 0$ , a contradiction.

In what follows we shall give an algorithm for finding the block irreducible form for  $v(r) \geq 3$ . Actually these are just some ideas on how to possibly simplify the search for block irreducible forms.

LEMMA 5. Let  $A_k$  be the set of all representatives of the form  $(a_k, a_{k-1}, \dots, a_0)$  where all proper subsequences are irreducible but the sequence itself is reducible. Let  $A = A_1 \cup A_2 \dots \cup A_k \dots$ . If  $(a_{k-1}, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible then  $(a_k, a_{k-1}, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible iff  $(a_k, a_{k-1}, \dots, a_{k-j}) \notin A_j$  for all  $j \in \{1, 2, \dots, k\}$ ,  $a_k \neq 0$ .

PROOF. Since  $(a_{k-1}, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible so are all proper subsequences. Thus, if  $(a_k, \dots, a_0)$  were reducible then there is a smallest  $j$  such that  $(a_k, \dots, a_{k-j})$  is reducible. No proper subsequences will be reducible since it would contradict to the choice of  $j$ .

ALGORITHM. (For finding block irreducible form) We may assume  $a_0 \neq 0$ ,  $a_1 \neq 0$ . By definition  $(a_1, a_0) \notin A_1$  iff  $(a_1, a_1)$  is irreducible. If  $(a_1, a_0) \notin A$ , consider  $(a_2, a_1, a_0)$ . WOLOG, assume  $a_i \neq 0$ ,  $i = 0, 1, 2$ . It is irreducible iff  $(a_2, a_1) \notin A$ , and  $(a_2, a_1, a_0) \in A_2$ . In general if we have chosen  $(a_{k-1}, \dots, a_1)$  irreducible then  $(a_k, \dots, a_1)$  is also irreducible iff  $(a_k, a_{k-1}) \notin A_1$ ,  $(a_k, a_{k-1}, a_{k-2}) \notin A_2, \dots, (a_k, \dots, a_0) \notin A_k$ . Thus if we find

$(a_k, \dots, a_j) \in A_t$ , then we replace  $(a_k, \dots, a_0)$  by  $(b_{k+1}, 0, b_{k-1}, \dots, b_j, a_{j-1}, \dots, a_0)$  and we know  $(b_{k-1}, \dots, b_j, a_{j-1}, \dots, a_0)$  is irreducible. Reduce the rest of  $a$  by carrying  $b_{k+1}$  to the left as necessary and then begin the same process with the new  $(k+1)$ st term if it is non zero (or the next non zero term).

LEMMA 6. If the form  $(a_{k+1}, \dots, a_0) \in A_{k+1}$ , then there exist carries  $c_j$ ,  $j = 0, 1, \dots, k+1$  such that

$$(1) \quad a_{k+1} = c_{k+1}r - c_k$$

$$(2) \quad v(a_0 - c_0r) < v(r)$$

and  $(3) \quad \text{for } j \in \{1, \dots, k\}$

$$v(a_j - c_jr) \geq v(r)$$

but  $v(a_j - c_jr + c_{j-1}) < v(r)$

PROOF. Let  $(a_{k+1}, \dots, a_0) \in A_{k+1}$  then  $(a_{k+1}, \dots, a_0) = (b_{k+2}, 0, b_k, \dots, b_0)$  with  $b_j = a_j + c_{j-1} - c_jr$ ,  $j = k+1, \dots, 1$  and  $b_0 = a_0 - c_0r$ . Now  $0 < v(b_j) < v(r)$  for  $j \leq k$  otherwise  $b_j = 0$  would imply  $(a_j, \dots, 0)$  being reducible, a contradiction. Also,  $v(a_j - c_jr) \geq v(r)$  for  $1 \leq j \leq k$ . Since if  $v(a_j - c_j) < v(r)$  then  $(a_{k+1}, a_k, \dots, a_j)$  would be reducible, again a contradiction since no proper subsequence of  $(a_{k+1}, a_k, \dots, a_0)$  is reducible.

EXAMPLE. Let  $R$  be the ring of Gaussian integers and  $r = 100$ . The element  $a = [-(1+i), 4 + 71i, 50 + 50i] \in A_2$  because  $a = (0, -95 - 28i, -50 - 50i)$  and  $(4 + 71i, 50 + 50i)$  is irreducible since  $4 + 71i + u_1 + u_2i \neq 100(v_1 + v_2i)$  for any  $u_i, v_i \in \{0, \pm 1\}$ .

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