

# RIESZ MEANS OF CERTAIN ARITHMETIC FUNCTIONS

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ABSTRACT. We give examples of completely multiplicative arithmetic functions that assume only the values  $\pm 1$  and that have bounded first Cesàro means. The method of proof also yields some interesting identities involving special values of Dirichlet  $L$ -functions. In particular, we present some new class number formulas for quadratic fields.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An arithmetic function  $a : \mathbb{Z}^+ \rightarrow \{-1, 1\}$  that is completely multiplicative is tantamount to the assignment of  $\pm 1$  to each prime. The value at any integer is then determined by its unique factorization into primes. For example, if we assign  $-1$  to each prime we get the Liouville function

$$\lambda(n) = (-1)^{\Omega(n)},$$

where  $\Omega(n)$  is the number of prime factors of  $n$ , counted with multiplicity.

A conjecture of Erdős (Problem #9 of [5]) proven a few years ago by Tao [13] implies that for *any* such arithmetic function  $a(n)$  the partial sums

$$(1) \quad s(n) = \sum_{1 \leq k \leq n} a(k)$$

are unbounded. A potential strengthening of this result would be the statement that the (first) Cesàro mean

$$(2) \quad c(n) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{1 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{1 \leq k \leq m} a(k)$$

is also unbounded. This is true for the Liouville function. We will show in this paper that there exist infinitely many completely multiplicative  $\pm 1$  arithmetic functions for which the Cesàro mean is bounded, hence that such a strengthening does not hold in general.

It is easy to describe these functions explicitly. Let  $q > 2$  be a prime and  $\left(\frac{\cdot}{q}\right)$ , the Legendre symbol. Define  $a_q(q) = -1$  while for  $p \neq q$  set  $a_q(p) = \left(\frac{p}{q}\right)$  and extend  $a_q(n)$  to be completely multiplicative. Clearly  $a_q(n) \in \{\pm 1\}$  for all  $n$ . We see directly that  $s(n)$  as defined in (1) is unbounded, since for any positive integer  $m$

$$s(1 + q^2 + q^4 + \cdots + q^{2m}) = m.$$

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*Date:* November 21, 2019.

*1991 Mathematics Subject Classification.* 11N60, 11M06.

*Key words and phrases.* Dirichlet  $L$ -functions, arithmetic functions, class number formulas,  $q$ -additive. Supported by NSF grant DMS 1701638 and the Simons Foundation.

**Theorem 1.** *For any prime  $q > 2$  there exists a constant  $A_q > 0$  such that*

$$\left| \frac{1}{n} \sum_{1 \leq m \leq n} \sum_{1 \leq k \leq m} a_q(k) \right| \leq A_q$$

for all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ .

Suppose now that  $q$  is any positive integer with  $q > 1$  and that  $\psi(n)$  is a periodic arithmetic function with period  $q$ . Say that  $\psi$  is *admissible* for  $q$  if either  $\psi = \chi$  where  $\chi$  is a primitive Dirichlet character mod  $q$  or  $\psi = \tilde{\chi}$ , where  $\tilde{\chi}$  is defined by setting  $\tilde{\chi}(n) = 1$  for  $q \nmid n$  while otherwise  $\tilde{\chi}(n) = 1 - q$ . The method of proof of Theorem 1 yields some remarkable identities for special values of the  $L$ -function

$$L(s, \psi) = \sum_{n \geq 1} \psi(n) n^{-s}$$

when  $\psi$  is admissible for  $q$ . This series is absolutely convergent for  $\operatorname{Re}(s) > 1$  and has an analytic continuation in  $s$  to an entire function of order one (see below in §3). Note that

$$(3) \quad L(s, \tilde{\chi}) = (1 - q^{1-s}) \zeta(s).$$

Let  $(x)_k = x(x+1) \cdots (x+k-1)$  be the Pochhammer symbol and  $H_k = \frac{1}{1} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \cdots + \frac{1}{k}$  be the  $k^{\text{th}}$  harmonic number.

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $\psi$  be admissible for  $q > 1$ . For any  $k \in \mathbb{Z}^+$  and  $\alpha = \frac{\pi i}{\log q}$  we have*

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \\ n \text{ odd}}} \frac{k! L(n\alpha, \psi)}{(n\alpha)_{k+1}} &= -\log q \sum_{0 \leq j \leq k-1} (-1)^j \binom{k}{j} \frac{L(-j, \psi)}{q^{j+1}} \quad \text{and} \\ \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\} \\ n \text{ even}}} \frac{k! L(n\alpha, \psi)}{(n\alpha)_{k+1}} &= -L'(0, \psi) - \left(\frac{1}{2} \log q - H_k\right) L(0, \psi) - \log q \sum_{1 \leq j \leq k-1} (-1)^{j+1} \binom{k}{j} \frac{L(-j, \psi)}{q^j - 1}, \end{aligned}$$

where the infinite sums are absolutely convergent.

These identities yield some new class number formulas for quadratic fields. Suppose that  $D \neq 1$  is a fundamental discriminant and

$$\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{D}).$$

Let  $\sigma : \mathbb{K} \rightarrow \mathbb{K}$  generate the Galois group of  $\mathbb{K}/\mathbb{Q}$  and for  $\beta \in \mathbb{K}$  let  $N(\beta) = \beta\beta^\sigma$ . Let  $\text{Cl}_D^+$  be the group of (narrow) fractional ideal classes in  $\mathbb{K}$ . Thus two ideals  $\mathfrak{a}$  and  $\mathfrak{b}$  are in the same class if there is  $\beta \in \mathbb{K}$  with  $N(\beta) > 0$  so that  $\mathfrak{a} = (\beta)\mathfrak{b}$ . Let

$$h(D) = \#\text{Cl}_D^+$$

be the class number and  $w = w_D$  be the number of roots of unity in  $\mathbb{K}$ . Thus  $w = 2$  unless  $D = -3, -4$  when  $w = 6, 4$ , respectively. If  $D > 1$  let  $\epsilon_D$  be the smallest unit of norm 1 in the ring of integers of  $\mathbb{K}$  with  $\epsilon_D > 1$ . Finally, let  $\chi_D(\cdot)$  be the Kronecker symbol, which is a primitive Dirichlet character mod  $|D|$ .

The next corollary follows from Theorem 2 with  $k = 1$  together with standard class number formulas (see e.g. [4]).

**Corollary 1.** For a fundamental discriminant  $D \neq 1$  let  $\alpha = \frac{\pi i}{\log |D|}$ . Then

$$w_D^{-1} h(D) \log |D| = - \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \\ n \text{ odd}}} \frac{L(n\alpha, \chi_D)}{(n\alpha)(n\alpha + 1)} \quad \text{when } D < 0 \text{ and}$$

$$\frac{1}{2} h(D) \log \epsilon_D = - \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\} \\ n \text{ even}}} \frac{L(n\alpha, \chi_D)}{(n\alpha)(n\alpha + 1)} \quad \text{when } D > 0.$$

The following consequence of Theorem 2 and (13) below is of interest in connection with the Chowla-Selberg formula.

**Corollary 2.** For  $D < 0$

$$\sum_{1 \leq n \leq |D|} \chi_D(n) \log \Gamma\left(\frac{n}{|D|}\right) = - \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\} \\ n \text{ even}}} \frac{L(n\alpha, \chi_D)}{(n\alpha)(n\alpha + 1)} + \left(\frac{1}{2} \log |D| + 1\right) L(0, \chi_D).$$

## 2. EXACT FORMULAS FOR RIESZ MEANS

Theorems 1 and 2 follow from formulas for certain Riesz means. For any sequence  $a(n)$  and any non-negative integer  $k$  define the  $k^{\text{th}}$  Riesz (**arithmetic**) mean of  $a(n)$  by

$$s_k(x) = \sum_{n \leq x} \left(1 - \frac{n}{x}\right)^k a(n)$$

(see [7, §5.16]). When  $k = 1$  this is essentially the first Cesàro mean (2) in that

$$(4) \quad c(n) = \frac{n+1}{n} s_1(n+1).$$

We give an explicit formula for  $s_k(n)$  when  $a(n) = a_{\psi}^{\pm}(n)$  is defined through the formula

$$(5) \quad a_{\psi}^{\pm}(n) = \sum_{q^m | n} (\pm 1)^m \psi\left(\frac{n}{q^m}\right),$$

where  $\psi$  is admissible for  $q$  and a choice of  $\pm$  is made.

**Proposition 1.** Let  $\psi$  be admissible for  $q > 1$ . For a positive integer  $k$  and  $x \geq 1$  we have

$$(6) \quad \sum_{n \leq x} \left(1 - \frac{n}{x}\right)^k a_{\psi}^{-}(n) = \frac{k!}{\log q} \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \\ n \text{ odd}}} \frac{L(n\alpha, \psi)}{(n\alpha)_{k+1}} x^{n\alpha} + \sum_{0 \leq j \leq k-1} (-1)^j \binom{k}{j} \frac{L(-j, \psi)}{q^{j+1}} x^{-j} + O(x^{\frac{3}{4}-k}) \quad \text{and}$$

$$(7) \quad \sum_{n \leq x} \left(1 - \frac{n}{x}\right)^k a_{\psi}^{+}(n) = \frac{1}{\log q} (\log x + \frac{1}{2} \log q - H_k) L(0, \psi) + \frac{1}{\log q} L'(0, \psi)$$

$$+ \frac{k!}{\log q} \sum_{\substack{n \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0\} \\ n \text{ even}}} \frac{L(n\alpha, \psi)}{(n\alpha)_{k+1}} x^{n\alpha} + \sum_{1 \leq j \leq k-1} (-1)^{j+1} \binom{k}{j} \frac{L(-j, \psi)}{q^{j-1}} x^{-j} + O(x^{\frac{3}{4}-k}),$$

where the infinite series are absolutely convergent and  $\alpha = \frac{\pi i}{\log q}$ . When  $x$  is an integer these hold as identities without an error term. The  $\log x$  term occurs in (7) if and only if either  $\psi = \tilde{\chi}$  or  $\psi = \chi$  and  $\chi(-1) = -1$ .

Theorem 1 is an immediate consequence of (6) in Proposition 1 when we take  $q > 2$  prime,  $\psi(\cdot) = \left(\frac{\cdot}{q}\right)$  and  $k = 1$ , since then  $a_{\psi}^{-}(n) = a_q(n)$ . We remark that another infinite set of examples is provided by  $a_{\psi}^{+}(n)$  for this  $\psi$ , provided we assume that  $p \equiv 1 \pmod{4}$ . This follows by the second formula of Proposition 1. The multiplicative  $\pm 1$  functions  $a_{\psi}^{\pm}(n)$  were studied in [1], where their partial sums to  $n$  were expressed in terms of the digits in the base  $q$  expansion of  $n$ .

The exactness of the formulas of Proposition 1 when  $x$  is an integer is not important for the proof of Theorem 1, but is crucial for that of Theorem 2 and its corollaries. In fact Theorem 2 follows from Proposition 1 right away by taking  $x = 1$ .

Exact formulas of this type for arithmetic functions are unusual, but examples are well-known when  $k = 1$ . Note that by (4)

$$(8) \quad S(m) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{n \leq m} \left(1 - \frac{n}{m}\right) a_{\psi}^{+}(n) = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{1 \leq n \leq m-1} s(n) \quad \text{where } s(n) = \sum_{\ell \leq n} a_{\psi}^{+}(\ell).$$

When  $\psi = \tilde{\chi}$  we have that  $s(n)$  gives the sum of the digits in the base  $q$  expansion of  $n$ . Actually, (7) with  $k = 1$  and  $\psi = \tilde{\chi}$  is equivalent to the well-known exact formula found by Trollope [14] and by Delange [3] for  $S(m)$ . In general, the partial sum  $s(n)$  of  $a_{\psi}^{\pm}(n)$  is an example of a  $q$ -additive function and, as in (8), a formula for the first Riesz mean of  $a_{\psi}^{\pm}(n)$  amounts to a formula for the partial sums of  $s(n)$ . Exact formulas for the partial sums of many  $q$ -additive functions are known (see e.g. [9], [8]) but apparently consequences such as the corollaries to Theorem 2 have not been noticed. Also, formulas like those of Proposition 1 when  $k > 1$  seem to be new.

We use the Mellin transform and standard analytic number theory for the proof of Proposition 1. This method was applied in [6] to several examples, including the Delange-Trollope formula, and does a good job of explaining the mechanism behind the exact formulas for the first Riesz means. The method is a bit more involved when  $k > 1$ .

### 3. DIRICHLET $L$ -FUNCTIONS

Throughout this section assume that  $q > 1$  is fixed and that  $\psi$  is admissible for  $q$ . Note that for any such  $\psi$

$$(9) \quad \sum_{1 \leq n \leq q} \psi(n) = 0.$$

We require some basic properties of the associated  $L$ -function

$$(10) \quad L(s, \psi) = \sum_{n \geq 1} \psi(n) n^{-s}.$$

This series converges absolutely and uniformly on compact subsets of  $\{s \in \mathbb{C}; \operatorname{Re}(s) > 1\}$ . The  $L$ -function has there the Euler product expansion

$$L(s, \psi) = \begin{cases} \prod_p (1 - \chi(p) p^{-s})^{-1}, & \psi = \chi \\ (1 - q^{1-s}) \prod_p (1 - p^{-s})^{-1}, & \psi = \tilde{\chi}. \end{cases}$$

A classical result is that  $L(s, \psi)$  has an analytic continuation to an entire function in  $s$  of order one. In case  $\psi = \chi$  set

$$\xi(s, \psi) = \left(\frac{\pi}{q}\right)^{-\frac{s+a_\chi}{2}} \Gamma\left(\frac{s+a_\chi}{2}\right) L(s, \chi),$$

where  $a_\chi \in \{0, 1\}$  is such that  $\chi(-1) = (-1)^{a_\chi}$ . If  $\psi = \tilde{\chi}$  set

$$\xi(s, \psi) = (1 - q^s) \pi^{-\frac{s}{2}} \Gamma\left(\frac{s}{2}\right) L(s, \tilde{\chi}).$$

Then we have the functional equation

$$(11) \quad \xi(1 - s, \psi) = \varepsilon_\psi \xi(s, \psi)$$

where  $\varepsilon_\chi$  is a certain root of unity with  $\varepsilon_{\tilde{\chi}} = 1$ . For proofs see [2]. We have the following immediate consequence of the functional equation (11) together with the well-known fact [2] that  $L(1 + it, \psi) \neq 0$  for all  $t \in \mathbb{R}$ .

**Lemma 1.** *For non-zero  $t \in \mathbb{R}$  we have that  $L(it, \psi) \neq 0$ . For  $j = 0, 1, 2, \dots$  we have that  $L(-j, \psi) = 0$  when  $\psi = \chi$  if and only if  $a_\chi + j$  is even, while  $L(-j, \tilde{\chi}) = 0$  if and only if  $j = -2, -4, \dots$*

The functional equation and the Phragmén-Lindelöf theorem imply the following explicit estimate [12].

**Lemma 2.** *For  $0 < \epsilon \leq \frac{1}{2}$  we have*

$$|L(\sigma + it, \psi)| \ll \begin{cases} (|t| + 1)^{\frac{1}{2} - \sigma}, & \sigma < -\frac{1}{2} \\ \zeta(1 + \epsilon) (|t| + 1)^{\frac{1 - \sigma + \epsilon}{2}}, & -\epsilon \leq \sigma \leq 1 + \epsilon \end{cases}$$

where the implied constant depends only on  $q$ .

A useful tool to study these  $L$ -functions at non-positive integers is the Hurwitz zeta function, which is defined for  $x > 0$  and  $\operatorname{Re}(s) > 1$  by

$$\zeta(s, x) = \sum_{n \geq 0} (n + x)^{-s}.$$

See e.g. [10, §1.4] for the properties we quote below. For fixed  $x > 0$  it has an analytic continuation in  $s$  to an entire function except for a simple pole at  $s = 1$ . For  $j \in \mathbb{Z}^+$  we have

$$\zeta(1 - j, x) = -\frac{1}{j} B_j(x),$$

where  $B_j(x)$  is the Bernoulli polynomial. Also

$$\partial_s \zeta(x, 0) = \log((2\pi)^{-\frac{1}{2}} \Gamma(x)).$$

Clearly

$$L(s, \psi) = q^{-s} \sum_{1 \leq r \leq q} \psi(r) \zeta(s, \frac{r}{q})$$

so that we get the following lemma.

**Lemma 3.** For integral  $j \geq 1$  we have

$$(12) \quad L(1-j, \psi) = -\frac{q^{j-1}}{j} \sum_{1 \leq n \leq q} \psi(n) B_j\left(\frac{n}{q}\right),$$

where  $B_j(x)$  is the Bernoulli polynomial. Also we have

$$(13) \quad L'(0, \psi) = -L(0, \psi) \log q + \sum_{1 \leq n \leq q} \psi(n) \log \Gamma\left(\frac{n}{q}\right).$$

Note that we are using (9) to derive (13).

For convenience we record some properties of the Bernoulli polynomial  $B_k(x)$  that we will need. A good reference is [10, §1.5.1]. For integral  $k \geq 0$  the following hold:

$$(14) \quad B'_{k+1}(x) = (k+1)B_k(x)$$

$$(15) \quad B_k(x) - B_k(x-1) = k(x-1)^{k-1}$$

$$(16) \quad \sum_{0 \leq j \leq k} \binom{k}{j} B_j(x) y^{k-j} = B_k(x+y).$$

#### 4. PROOF OF PROPOSITION 1

We will give details for (6) and simply indicate the small changes needed to prove (7). Using (5) it is easy to check that for  $L(s, \psi)$  from (10)

$$(17) \quad \sum_{n \geq 1} a_{\psi}^{-}(n) n^{-s} = (1 + q^{-s})^{-1} L(s, \psi).$$

We use the following summation formula. For  $x \geq 1$  and  $c > 1$  we have the absolutely convergent integral representation [11, p.142]

$$\frac{1}{k!} \sum_{n \leq x} \left(1 - \frac{n}{x}\right)^k a_q^{-}(n) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{L(s, \psi) x^s}{(1 + q^{-s})(s)_{k+1}} ds,$$

where we have applied (17).

Next, the idea is to apply the standard method of shifting the contour to the left, in our case to the line  $\operatorname{Re}(s) = \frac{3}{4} - k$ . Note that it is valid to do this in view of Lemma 2 and the term  $(s)_{k+1}$  in the denominator of the integrand. In the process we will pass over simple poles at zeros of  $1 + q^{-s}$ , namely  $s = \frac{\pi i n}{\log q}$  for odd  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ . These are actual poles by Lemma 1. The residues at the poles are easily computed. This yields the asymptotic formula of (6), upon estimating

$$(18) \quad \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\frac{3}{4}-k-i\infty}^{\frac{3}{4}-k+i\infty} \frac{L(s, \psi)(qx)^s}{(1 + q^s)(s)_{k+1}} ds$$

by Lemma 2. The absolute convergence of the series is also guaranteed by Lemma 2.

The statement that the formula holds without the error term when  $x$  is an integer comes from the following lemma, after using

$$\frac{q^s}{1 + q^s} = \sum_{m \geq 1} (-1)^{m+1} q^{ms}$$

in (18) and integrating term by term, this being easily justified.

**Lemma 4.** *For integers  $q, k, r$  with  $q > 1$  and  $k, r \geq 1$  and for  $\chi$  as above*

$$\frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{\frac{3}{4}-k-i\infty}^{\frac{3}{4}-k+i\infty} \frac{L(s, \psi)(qr)^s}{(s)_{k+1}} ds = 0.$$

*Proof.* As before, for  $c > 1$  we have the absolutely convergent integral representation

$$\frac{1}{k!} \sum_{n \leq qr} \left(1 - \frac{n}{qr}\right)^k \psi(n) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{L(s, \psi)(qr)^s}{(s)_{k+1}} ds.$$

Shifting the contour to the line  $\operatorname{Re}(s) = \frac{3}{4} - k$ , a calculation of residues shows that the proof will be finished once we establish the following lemma.  $\square$

**Lemma 5.** *Assumptions as above.*

$$(19) \quad \sum_{1 \leq n \leq qr} \psi(n) \left(1 - \frac{n}{qr}\right)^k = \sum_{1 \leq j \leq k} (qr)^{1-j} (-1)^{j+1} \binom{k}{j-1} L(1-j, \psi).$$

*Proof.* Apply the binomial expansion and formula (12) to compute the coefficient of  $\psi(n)$  for  $1 \leq n \leq q$  on either side of (19), also using the  $q$ -periodicity of  $\psi$ . By (9) and (12) we reduce the proof to the polynomial identity in  $x$ :

$$(20) \quad \sum_{0 \leq \ell \leq r-1} (x - r + \ell)^k = - \sum_{1 \leq j \leq k} (-r)^{k-j+1} \binom{k}{j-1} \frac{1}{j} B_j(x) + C_{k,r},$$

where  $C_{k,r}$  is a constant. Then (19) follows by taking  $x = \frac{n}{q}$ .

To establish (20), we need only show that the derivatives of both sides with respect to  $x$  coincide. Thus we must show that

$$(21) \quad k \sum_{0 \leq \ell \leq r-1} (x - r + \ell)^{k-1} = - \sum_{0 \leq j \leq k-1} (-r)^{k-j} \binom{k}{j} B_j(x),$$

where we have applied (14) and then shifted indices in  $j$ . Now apply the identity (16) to the right hand side of (21) to reduce the needed identity to

$$(22) \quad k \sum_{0 \leq \ell \leq r-1} (x - r + \ell)^{k-1} = B_k(x) - B_k(x - r).$$

Then (22) follows by applying the identity (15)  $r$  times to the right hand side of (22). This finishes the proof of (19).

Although we do not need it, the constant  $C_{k,r}$  can be evaluated as  $C_{k,r} = -\frac{(-r)^{k+1}}{k+1}$ .  $\square$

This completes the proof of (6) in Proposition 1. The proof of (7) is similar except that we must account for a double pole at  $s = 0$  since

$$\sum_{n \geq 1} a_{\psi}^{+}(n) n^{-s} = (1 - q^{-s})^{-1} L(s, \psi).$$

The final statement of Proposition 1 follows by Lemma 1.  $\square$

*Remark:* It can be shown that the union of all  $\psi$  that are admissible for some divisor  $q' > 1$  of a fixed  $q > 1$  forms a  $\mathbb{C}$ -basis for the space of all  $q$ -periodic arithmetic functions  $\psi(n)$  that satisfy

$$\sum_{1 \leq n \leq q} \psi(n) = 0.$$

It is therefore possible to extend much of our analysis to such arithmetic functions.

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