NUMBER OF CYCLIC SQUARE-TILED TORI

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Abstract. We study cyclic square-tiled tori in $\mathcal{H}(0)$, answering a question by M. Bolognesi (by personal communication to A. Zorich). We give the exact number of cyclic tori tiled by $n \in \mathbb{N}$ squares. We also give the asymptotic proportion of cyclic square-tiled tori over all square-tiled tori.

1. Introduction

In this note we count cyclic square-tiled surfaces in the stratum $\mathcal{H}(0)$, the well-known moduli space of translation surfaces of genus one (flat tori) with a marked point. This work arises to answer a question posed by M. Bolognesi (by personal communication to A. Zorich) regarding cyclic covers of the torus, after his joint work [BG] on configuration spaces of points on the line and in higher-dimensional projective spaces and, in particular, on cyclic covers of the line.

This work is in some sense a toy analogue of the work by P. Hubert and S. Lelièvre [HL] on square-tiled surfaces in $\mathcal{H}(2)$, the stratum of translation surfaces of genus two with a conical singularity of angle $6\pi$, which is the best understood stratum in higher genus. The work of McMullen [Mc] extends results of [HL] for surfaces in $\mathcal{H}(2)$ in full generality. However, since genus one case is notoriously simpler, we need to treat only a small part of the problems studied in [HL]. In particular, there are no difficulties in the study of Teichmüller discs: there is only one, which can be identified to $\text{SL}(2, \mathbb{R})/\text{SL}(2, \mathbb{Z})$.

For general references on translation surfaces we refer the reader to the survey of A. Zorich [Zo0]. A translation surface is a surface which can be obtained by edge-to-edge gluing of polygons in the plane using translations only. An $n$-square-tiled surface is a translation surface obtained by edge-to-edge gluing of $n \in \mathbb{N}$ unit squares, that is, a translation cover of degree $n$ over the standard torus marked at the origin. We say that a square-tiled surface is cyclic if the deck transformation group of the translation cover is cyclic.

Theorem 1. For $n \in \mathbb{N}$, the number of cyclic $n$-square-tiled surfaces in $\mathcal{H}(0)$ is

$$\psi(n) = n \cdot \prod_{p \mid n} \left(1 + \frac{1}{p}\right),$$

where the product is over the distinct prime numbers dividing $n$.

The arithmetic function $\psi$ in the main theorem is the so called Dedekind psi function. The number $\sigma(n)$, of $n$-square-tiled surfaces in $\mathcal{H}(0)$ is given by $\sum_{d \mid n} d$ (see, e.g., [Zo, §5]), where the sum is over all divisors of $n$ (not only prime divisors). The arithmetic function $\sigma$ is the well-known sum-of-divisors sigma function.

1.
Theorem 2. The number \( \psi(n) \), of cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(0) \), has the following extremal asymptotic behavior with respect to \( \sigma(n) \), the total number of \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(0) \):

\[
\liminf_{n \to \infty} \frac{\psi(n)}{\sigma(n)} = \frac{1}{\zeta(2)} \quad \text{and} \quad \limsup_{n \to \infty} \frac{\psi(n)}{\sigma(n)} = 1.
\]

Also, the number of cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(0) \) is asymptotically \( 1/\zeta(4) \) times the mean order of the total number of \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(0) \), that is,

\[
\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{n} \psi(k)}{\sum_{k=1}^{n} \sigma(k)} = \frac{1}{\zeta(4)}.
\]

There is a remarkable coincidence in relation to deviations from the mean order here and in [HL, Prop. 1.5]: the number of \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(2) \) for prime \( n \) is asymptotically \( 1/\zeta(4) \) times the mean order of the number of \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(2) \).

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2. NUMBER OF CYCLIC SQUARE-TILED TORI

Each \( n \)-square-tiled torus is uniquely determined by a sublattice of \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \) of index \( n \) and cyclic square-tiled tori correspond to primitive sublattices, that is, such that the quotient group is cyclic. But the number of primitive sublattices of fixed index \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) in any 2-dimensional lattice is given by \( n \cdot \prod_{p|n} (1 + \frac{1}{p}) \) (see [Sc, § VI.3.3]) and so is the number of cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled surfaces in \( \mathcal{H}(0) \). For the sake of completeness, we give a elementary proof of this.

Let \( \Lambda \) be a (rank 2) sublattice of \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \) and \( \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{Z}^2 \) be generators of \( \Lambda \). Note that \( n := |\det(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v})| = [\mathbb{Z}^2 : \Lambda] \), which clearly does not depend on the choice of generators. We introduce \( \tau := \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \) which is also independent of the choice of \( \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \). Indeed, we have the following.

Lemma 2.1. Let \( \Lambda_i = \langle \mathbf{u}_i, \mathbf{v}_i \rangle_{\mathbb{Z}} \) be rank 2 sublattices of \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \), \( i = 1, 2 \), such that \( \Lambda_1 \subset \Lambda_2 \). Then \( \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}_2, \mathbf{v}_2)|\text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}_1, \mathbf{v}_1) \).

Proof. Since \( \Lambda_1 \subset \Lambda_2 \), there exists \( p, q, r, s \in \mathbb{Z} \) such that \( u_{1j} = pu_{2j} + qv_{2j} \) and \( v_{1j} = ru_{2j} + sv_{2j} \). Since \( \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}_2, \mathbf{v}_2)|\text{gcd}(u_{2j}, v_{2j}) \), \( \text{gcd}(u_{2j}, v_{2j})|pu_{2j} + qv_{2j} = u_{1j} \) and \( \text{gcd}(u_{2j}, v_{2j})|ru_{2j} + sv_{2j} = v_{1j} \), \( j = 1, 2 \). Thus, \( \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}_2, \mathbf{v}_2)|\text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}_1, \mathbf{v}_1) \).

Then \( \tau = \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \) depends only on \( \Lambda \) and we write \( \tau = \tau(\Lambda) \).

Remark 2.2. If \( \Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2 \) is a sublattice of index \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) and \( \tau = \tau(\Lambda) \), then \( \tau^2 \) divides \( n \). In fact, if \( \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \) are generators of \( \Lambda \), then \( \mathbf{u}_r = \frac{1}{\tau}\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}_r = \frac{1}{\tau}\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{Z}^2 \). In particular, \( n/\tau^2 = |\det(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v})|/\tau^2 = |\det(\mathbf{u}_r, \mathbf{v}_r)| \in \mathbb{Z} \) and \( \tau^2|n \).

Proposition 2.3. A rank 2 sublattice \( \Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2 \) is primitive if and only if \( \tau(\Lambda) = 1 \).

Proof. Let \( \tau = \tau(\Lambda) \) and \( \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \) be generators of \( \Lambda \). Then \( \tau = \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \) and we can write \( \mathbf{u} = r_u\mathbf{u}_0, \mathbf{v} = r_v\mathbf{v}_0 \), where \( r_u = \text{gcd}(\mathbf{u})/\tau \) and \( r_v = \text{gcd}(\mathbf{v})/\tau \). In particular, \( \text{gcd}(r_u, r_v) = 1 \) and \( \mathbf{u}_0, \mathbf{v}_0 \) are generators of \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \). But then, \( \mathbb{Z}^2/\Lambda \) is isomorphic to \( \mathbb{Z}/r_u\mathbb{Z} \oplus \mathbb{Z}/r_v\mathbb{Z} \) which is cyclic if and only if \( \tau = \text{gcd}(r_u, r_v) = 1 \). \( \square \)
In particular, for certain values of \( n \), there is only cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled tori.

**Corollary 2.4.** If \( n \in \mathbb{N} \) is square-free, then every \( n \)-square-tiled tori is cyclic.

**Proof.** If \( \Lambda \) is the lattice associated to an \( n \)-square-tiled torus and \( r = r(\Lambda) \), by Remark 2.2, \( r^2 \) divides \( n \). Since \( n \) is square-free, then \( r = 1 \) and, by Proposition 2.3, \( \Lambda \) is primitive, that is, the square-tiled torus is cyclic. \( \square \)

For the counting, we will choose a particular basis of the lattice given by the following classical result (see, e.g., [Se, § VII.5.2]).

**Lemma 2.5.** Let \( \Lambda \) be a rank 2 sublattice of \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \) of index \( n \in \mathbb{N} \). Then, there exists \( w, h, t \in \mathbb{N} \), \( 0 \leq t < w \) such that \( u = (w, 0) \) and \( v = (t, h) \) are generators of \( \Lambda \). In particular \( n = wh \). Moreover, these numbers are uniquely determined by \( \Lambda \).

**Remark 2.6.** These numbers \( w, h, t \) correspond to natural parameters of the horizontal cylinder decomposition of the square-tiled torus. The cylinder is isometric to \( \mathbb{R}/w\mathbb{Z} \times [0, h] \). The additional twist parameter \( t \) measures the distance along the horizontal direction of the cylinder between some reference points on the bottom and top of the cylinder (see Figure 1).

![Figures](image1.png)

(a) Fundamental domain and horizontal cylinder. (b) A square-tiled torus glued from a square-tiled cylinder with the twist \( t \).

**Figure 1.** Parameters \( w, h \) and \( t \).

Thus, as mentioned in the introduction, the number \( \sigma(n) \) of \( n \)-square-tiled tori is \( \sum_{wh=n} w \), that is, the sum-of-divisors sigma function. Similarly, with the aid of Proposition 2.3, we obtain that the number \( \psi(n) \) of cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled tori is given by

\[
\sum_{\text{gcd}(w,h)=1} \left\{ t \in \{0, \ldots, w-1\} | \text{gcd}(w, h, t) = 1 \right\}.
\]

In the following we use some basics of number theory. An arithmetic function \( \Phi : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{R} \) is said to be multiplicative if whenever \( n_1, n_2 \in \mathbb{N} \) are coprimes, then \( \Phi(n_1 n_2) = \Phi(n_1) \Phi(n_2) \). In particular, we will use the Euler’s totient function (see [HW, § 5.5])

\[
\varphi(n) = \# \left\{ k \in \{0, \ldots, n-1\} | \gcd(n, k) = 1 \right\},
\]

which is multiplicative and satisfies the Euler’s product formula

\[
\varphi(n) = n \prod_{p | n} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p} \right),
\]

where the product is over the prime divisors of \( n \in \mathbb{N} \).

**Lemma 2.7.** The number \( \psi(n) \) of cyclic \( n \)-square-tiled tori is equal to

\[
\sum_{\text{gcd}(w,h)=1} \frac{w}{\text{gcd}(w,h)} \cdot \varphi(\text{gcd}(w,h)).
\]
Proof. We first note that \( \gcd(w, h, t) = \gcd(\gcd(w, h), t) \). Then, one step in Euclid’s algorithm gives \( \gcd(w, h, t) = \gcd(\gcd(w, h), t') \), for \( t' = t \mod \gcd(w, h) \). Furthermore, there are exactly \( w/\gcd(w, h) \) such \( t' \) for each \( t' \in \{0, \ldots, \gcd(w, h) - 1\} \). Thus,

\[
\psi(n) = \sum_{w,h=n}^{w} \frac{w}{\gcd(w, h)} \{t' \in \{0, \ldots, \gcd(w, h) - 1\} | \gcd(w, h, t') = 1\}.
\]

\[\square\]

Lemma 2.8. The function \( n \mapsto \psi(n) \) is the multiplicative arithmetic function such that, for any prime number \( p \) and positive integer \( \alpha \),

\[
\psi(p^\alpha) = p^\alpha \cdot \left(1 + \frac{1}{p}\right).
\]

Proof. Let \( n_1, n_2 \in \mathbb{N} \) be coprimes and \( n = n_1n_2 \). Using the formula of the previous lemma we will show that \( \psi(n) = \psi(n_1)\psi(n_2) \). Let \( w, h \) be such that \( wh = n \). Then, as \( n_1 \) and \( n_2 \) are coprimes, we can decompose \( w = w_1w_2 \) and \( h = h_1h_2 \) where \( w_i, h_i \) divides only \( n_i \), \( i = 1, 2 \). This decomposition is unique and \( w_ih_i = n_i \), \( i = 1, 2 \). Furthermore, since \( \gcd(n_1, n_2) = 1 \), \( \gcd(w_i, w_j) = \gcd(w_i, h_j) = \gcd(h_i, h_j) = 1 \), for \( i \neq j \), and

\[
\gcd(w, h) = \gcd(w_1w_2, h_1h_2) = \gcd(w_1, h_1h_2) \gcd(w_2, h_1h_2) = \gcd(w_1, h_1) \gcd(w_2, h_2)
\]

But then,

\[
\psi(n) = \sum_{w,h=n}^{w} \frac{w}{\gcd(w, h)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w, h))
\]

\[
= \sum_{w_1h_1=n_1}^{w_1} \frac{w_1}{\gcd(w_1, h_1)} \sum_{w_2h_2=n_2}^{w_2} \frac{w_2}{\gcd(w_2, h_2)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w_1, h_1) \gcd(w_2, h_2))
\]

\[
= \sum_{w_1h_1=n_1}^{w_1} \frac{w_1}{\gcd(w_1, h_1)} \left( \frac{w_2}{\gcd(w_2, h_2)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w_1, h_1)) \right) \left( \frac{w_2}{\gcd(w_2, h_2)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w_2, h_2)) \right)
\]

\[
= \left( \sum_{w_1h_1=n_1}^{w_1} \frac{w_1}{\gcd(w_1, h_1)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w_1, h_1)) \right) \left( \sum_{w_2h_2=n_2}^{w_2} \frac{w_2}{\gcd(w_2, h_2)} \cdot \varphi(\gcd(w_2, h_2)) \right)
\]

where we have used the fact that the Euler \( \varphi \) function is multiplicative and that \( \gcd(w_1, h_1) \) and \( \gcd(w_2, h_2) \) are coprimes since the first divides \( n_1 \) and the second, \( n_2 \), which are coprimes.

Let \( p \) be a prime number and \( \alpha \) a positive integer. Since \( p \) is the only prime factor of \( p^\alpha \), using the Euler’s product formula, we have

\[
\psi(p^\alpha) = \sum_{w,h=p^\alpha}^{w} \frac{w}{\gcd(w, h)} \varphi(\gcd(w, h)) = 1 + \sum_{k=1}^{[\alpha/2]} \frac{p^k}{p^k} \varphi(p^k) + \frac{p^k}{p^k} \varphi(p^{\alpha-k}) + p^\alpha
\]

\[
= 1 + \sum_{k=1}^{\alpha-1} p^k \left(1 - \frac{1}{p} \right) + p^\alpha = 1 + (p-1) \sum_{k=1}^{\alpha-1} p^{k-1} + p^\alpha = 1 + (p-1) \sum_{k=1}^{\alpha-2} p^k + p^\alpha = 1 + (p-1) \frac{p^{\alpha-1} - 1}{p - 1} + p^\alpha = p^{\alpha-1} + p^\alpha = p^{\alpha-1} (1 + p) = p^\alpha \cdot \left(1 + \frac{1}{p}\right).
\]

\[\square\]
Multiplicative arithmetic functions are completely defined from its values in prime powers, so we can finish the proof of Theorem 1.

Let \( n \) be a positive integer, and \( n = \prod_{i=1}^{\omega(n)} p_i^{\alpha_i} \) its prime decomposition. Then
\[
\psi(n) = \psi \left( \prod_{i=1}^{\omega(n)} p_i^{\alpha_i} \right) = \prod_{i=1}^{\omega(n)} \psi(p_i^{\alpha_i}) = \prod_{i=1}^{\omega(n)} \left( 1 + \frac{1}{p_i} \right) = n \cdot \prod_{i=1}^{\omega(n)} \left( 1 + \frac{1}{p_i} \right).
\]

3. Asymptotics

Let \( n \) be a positive integer and \( n = \prod_i q_i^{\alpha_i} \) its prime decomposition. It is known that \( \sigma(n) = \prod_i \frac{q_i^{\alpha_i+1} - 1}{q_i - 1} \) (see [HW, § 16.7]). Then
\[
\rho(n) := \frac{\psi(n)}{\sigma(n)} = \prod_i \frac{q_i^{\alpha_i+1} + q_i^{\alpha_i-1} - 1}{q_i^{\alpha_i+1} - 1} = \prod_i \left( 1 - \frac{1}{q_i^2} \right) \cdot \left( 1 - \frac{1}{q_i^{\alpha_i+1}} \right)^{-1}.
\]

Since \( q_i^{\alpha_i+1} \geq q_i^2 \), \( \rho(n) \leq 1 \), with equality if and only if \( \alpha_i = 1 \) for all \( i \), that is, when \( n \) is square-free. In particular, \( \lim sup \rho(n) = 1 \).

Let \( \{p_j\}_{j=1}^{\infty} \) be the set of prime numbers. Then,
\[
\prod_i \left( 1 - \frac{1}{q_i^2} \right) \geq \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p_j^2} \right) = \frac{1}{\zeta(2)} \quad \text{and} \quad \prod_i \left( 1 - \frac{1}{q_i^{\alpha_i+1}} \right) \leq 1.
\]

It follows that \( \rho(n) \geq 1/\zeta(2) \). Let \( n_k = (p_1 \cdots p_k)^k \) be the \( k \)th power of the product of first \( k \) prime numbers. Then, we have that
\[
\lim_{k \to \infty} \rho(n_k) = \lim_{k \to \infty} \prod_{j=1}^{k} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p_j^2} \right) \cdot \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p_j^{k+1}} \right)^{-1}
\]
\[
\leq \lim_{k \to \infty} \prod_{j=1}^{k} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p_j^2} \right) \cdot \left( 1 - \frac{1}{2^{k+1}} \right)^{-1}
\]
\[
= \frac{1}{\zeta(2)} \cdot \lim_{k \to \infty} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{2^{k+1}} \right)^{-k} = \frac{1}{\zeta(2)},
\]

and \( \lim inf \rho(n) = 1/\zeta(2) \).

The average order of sum-of-divisors sigma function is \( n\zeta(2) \) (see [HW, § 18.3]).

For the mean order of \( \psi \), let \( q \) be the indicator function of square-free integers and denote
\[
\psi'(n) = n \sum_{d \mid n} \frac{q(d)}{d}.
\]

We claim that \( \psi' = \psi \). In fact, is easy to see that \( q \) is multiplicative and a computation analogue to the proof of Lemma 2.8 shows that \( \psi' \) is multiplicative. But multiplicative functions are completely defined from its values in prime powers and
\[
\psi'(p^\alpha) = p^\alpha \sum_{\beta=1}^{\alpha} \frac{q(p^\beta)}{p^{\beta}} = p^\alpha \left( 1 + p^{-1} \right) = \psi(p^\alpha),
\]
proving the claim. We also use the fact (see [HW, § 17.8]) that
\[
\sum_{d=1}^{\infty} \frac{q(d)}{d^2} = \frac{\zeta(2)}{\zeta(4)}.
\]
Then,

\[
\sum_{k=1}^{n} \psi(k) = \sum_{k=1}^{n} \psi'(k) = \sum_{k=1}^{n} k \sum_{d|k} \frac{q(d)}{d} = \sum_{d' \leq n} d' q(d) = \sum_{d=1}^{n} q(d) \sum_{d'=1}^{\lfloor \frac{n}{d} \rfloor} d' \\
= \frac{1}{2} \sum_{d=1}^{n} q(d) \left( \frac{n}{d} \right)^2 + \frac{n}{d} = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{d=1}^{n} q(d) \left( \frac{n^2}{d^2} + O \left( \frac{n}{d} \right) \right) \\
= n^2 \sum_{d=1}^{n} \frac{q(d)}{d^2} + O \left( n \sum_{d=1}^{n} \frac{1}{d} \right) = n^2 \sum_{d=1}^{\infty} \frac{q(d)}{d^2} + O \left( n^2 \sum_{d=n+1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{d^2} \right) + O \left( n \ln n \right) \\
= \frac{n^2}{2} \zeta(2) + O \left( n \ln n \right) = \frac{n^2}{2} \zeta(2) + O \left( n \ln n \right)
\]

and the average order of \( \psi(n) \) is \( n \zeta(2)/\zeta(4) \).

The result about the mean order of Dedekind psi function is an avatar of the result in [HW, § 18.5] about mean order of Euler’s totient function, which has a similar expression: \( n \cdot \prod_{p|n} \left( 1 - \frac{1}{p} \right) \).

This same proof for the average order of Dedekind psi function was previously exhibited in [Pe].

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