

Irrationality of certain numbers that contain values of the di- and trilogarithm

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Abstract

We prove that, for $z \in \{1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5\}$, at least one of the two numbers

$$\sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{z^l}{l^2} + \log(1-z) \log z \quad \text{and} \quad \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{z^l}{l^3} + \frac{1}{2} \log(1-z) \log^2 z$$

is irrational.

The irrationality result that we prove here, involves the values of the functions

$$f_j(z) = \text{Li}_j(z) - \text{Li}_1(z) \cdot \frac{\log^{j-1} z}{(j-1)!}, \quad j = 2, 3, \dots$$

Here, as usual,

$$\text{Li}_j(z) = \sum_{l=1}^{\infty} \frac{z^l}{l^j}, \quad |z| < 1, \quad j = 1, 2, 3, \dots$$

denote the polylogarithmic functions; $\text{Li}_1(z) = -\log(1-z)$.

Theorem 1. *For $z \in \{1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5\}$, at least one of the two numbers $f_2(z)$ and $f_3(z)$ is irrational.*

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Using the classical formulae (see, e.g., [5], eqs. (1.11) and (6.10)) we may also express the functions $f_2(z)$ and $f_3(z)$ as follows:

$$f_2(z) = \frac{\pi^2}{6} - \text{Li}_2(1-z),$$

$$f_3(z) = \zeta(3) + \frac{1}{6} \log^3 z + \frac{\pi^2}{6} \log z - \text{Li}_3(1-z) - \text{Li}_3(1-z^{-1}).$$

Moreover, the values of these functions at the point $z = 1/2$ are computed by means of $\log 2$, $\zeta(2) = \pi^2/6$ and $\zeta(3)$ (see [5], eqs. (1.16) and (6.12)):

$$f_2(1/2) = \frac{1}{2}\zeta(2) + \frac{1}{2} \log^2 2, \quad f_3(1/2) = \frac{7}{8}\zeta(3) - \frac{1}{2}\zeta(2) \log 2 - \frac{1}{3} \log^3 2.$$

Using these formulae we obtain the following corollary of Theorem 1.

Theorem 2. *At least one of the two numbers*

$$\pi^2 + 6 \log^2 2 \quad \text{and} \quad \zeta(3) - \frac{2}{21}(\pi^2 + 4 \log^2 2) \log 2$$

is irrational.

Relative results, ‘at least one of the numbers $3\zeta(3) - c\zeta(2)$, $\zeta(2) - 2c \log 2$ ($c \in \mathbb{Q}$) is irrational’ and ‘at least one of the numbers $\text{Li}_2(1/q)$, $\text{Li}_3(1/q)$ ($q \in \mathbb{Z} \setminus \{0, 2\}$) is irrational’, are proved in [3] and [4], respectively.

Our proof relies on a general hypergeometric construction of two linear forms in the polylogarithms and positive powers of the logarithm, respectively. This idea was recently used in [2] for proving that at least one of the three numbers $f_2(1/2)$, $f_3(1/2)$ and $f_4(1/2)$ is irrational. We are able to improve this earlier result and present the related ones due to the powerful group-structure arithmetic method introduced in [6] and [7] in order to prove new estimates for irrationality measures of $\zeta(2)$ and $\zeta(3)$ (see also [8] and [9]).

1 Hypergeometric series and integral

Let a_0, a_1, \dots, a_s and b_0, b_1, \dots, b_s be collections of positive integers satisfying

$$b_0 = 1 < a_0, a_1, \dots, a_s < b_1, \dots, b_s, \quad \sum_{j=0}^s a_j < \sum_{j=0}^s b_j, \quad (1)$$

$$\min_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{a_j\} + \max_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{a_j\} \leq b_l \quad \text{for all } l = 1, \dots, s,$$

We will also consider the ordered versions $\{a_0^*, a_1^*, \dots, a_s^*\} = \{a_0, a_1, \dots, a_s\}$ and $\{b_0^*, b_1^*, \dots, b_s^*\} = \{b_0, b_1, \dots, b_s\}$ of the collections:

$$a_0^* \leq a_1^* \leq \dots \leq a_s^*, \quad b_0^* = 1, \quad b_1^* \geq b_2^* \geq \dots \geq b_s^*.$$

To this data we assign the rational function

$$\tilde{R}(t) = \tilde{R}(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; t) = \prod_{j=0}^s \frac{\Gamma(t + a_j)}{\Gamma(t + b_j)} = \frac{(t+1)(t+2)\cdots(t+a_0-1)}{\prod_{j=1}^s (t+a_j)\cdots(t+b_j-1)} \quad (2)$$

and its ‘arithmetically normalized’ version

$$R(t) = R(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; t) = \frac{\prod_{j=1}^s \Gamma(b_j - a_j)}{\Gamma(a_0)} \tilde{R}(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; t) = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} \frac{A_{jk}}{(t+k)^j}. \quad (3)$$

Our main objects then are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} I = I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) &= z^{a_0^*} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} R(t) z^t = \sum_{t=1-a_0^*}^{\infty} R(t) z^{t+a_0^*} = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \sum_{t=1-a_0^*}^{\infty} \frac{z^{t+k}}{(t+k)^j} \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \sum_{l=1+k-a_0^*}^{\infty} \frac{z^l}{l^j} = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \left(\text{Li}_j(z) - \sum_{l=1}^{k-a_0^*} \frac{z^l}{l^j} \right) \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^s \text{Li}_j(z) \cdot \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} - \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} \sum_{l=1}^{k-a_0^*} \frac{z^{-(k-a_0^*-l)}}{l^j} \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^s P_j(z^{-1}) \text{Li}_j(z) - P_0(z^{-1}), \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

and (the closed contour \mathcal{L} below surrounds all poles $t = -k$ for $a_1^* \leq k < b_1^*$ of the rational function $R(t)$)

$$\begin{aligned} J = J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) &= \frac{z^{a_0^*}}{2\pi i} \oint_{\mathcal{L}} R(t) z^t dt = z^{a_0^*} \sum_k \text{Res}_{t=-k} (R(t) z^t) \\ &= \sum_k z^{-k+a_0^*} \text{Res}_{t=-k} (R(t) z^{t+k}) = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_k A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \cdot \text{Res}_{t=-k} \frac{z^{t+k}}{(t+k)^j} \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_k A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \cdot \text{Res}_{t=0} \frac{z^t}{t^j} = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_k A_{jk} z^{-k+a_0^*} \cdot \frac{\log^{j-1} z}{(j-1)!} \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^s P_j(z^{-1}) \frac{\log^{j-1} z}{(j-1)!}. \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

All this means that we arrange to construct ‘simultaneous’ approximations to the set of polylogarithms $\text{Li}_1(z), \dots, \text{Li}_s(z)$ and the set of logarithm powers $\log z, \dots, \frac{1}{(s-1)!} \log^{s-1} z$. This is essentially the idea from [2], Theorem 3.

2 Arithmetic ingredients

Lemma 1. *Let*

$$m_1 = \max \left\{ a_0 - 1, \max_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{b_j\} - \min_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{a_j\} - 1 \right\}. \quad (6)$$

Then, for any $j = 1, 2, \dots, s$, we have the inclusions

$$D_{m_1}^{s-j} \cdot A_{jk} \in \mathbb{Z},$$

where A_{jk} are the coefficients in the partial-fraction decomposition (3).

Proof. The rational function in (3) may be written as $R(t) = \prod_{j=0}^s R_j(s)$, where

$$R_0(t) = \frac{(t+1)(t+2)\cdots(t+a_0-1)}{(a_0-1)!}$$

and

$$R_j(t) = \frac{(b_j - a_j - 1)!}{(t + a_j) \cdots (t + b_j - 1)} \quad \text{for } j = 1, \dots, s.$$

The polynomial $R_0(t)$ (of degree $a_0 - 1$) is integer-valued, with the property

$$D_{a_0-1}^l \cdot \frac{1}{l!} \frac{d^l R_0(t)}{dt^l} \Big|_{t=-k} \in \mathbb{Z}, \quad k \in \mathbb{Z}, \quad l = 0, 1, 2, \dots \quad (7)$$

(see [9], Lemma 15). All poles of the rational functions $R_1(t), \dots, R_s(t)$ are of the form $t = -k$ for some integer k in the range $a' \leq k < b'$, where $a' = \min_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{a_j\}$ and $b' = \max_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{b_j\}$. Therefore, for any $j = 1, \dots, s$, we have

$$D_{b'-a'-1}^l \cdot \frac{1}{l!} \frac{d^l}{dt^l} (R_j(t)(t+k)) \Big|_{t=-k} \in \mathbb{Z}, \quad k = a', a'+1, \dots, b'-1, \quad l = 0, 1, 2, \dots \quad (8)$$

(see [9], Lemma 16). Finally, by the Leibniz rule

$$\begin{aligned} A_{s-l,k} &= \frac{1}{l!} \frac{d^l}{dt^l} (R(t)(t+k)^s) \Big|_{t=-k} \\ &= \sum_{\substack{l_0, l_1, \dots, l_s \geq 0 \\ l_0 + l_1 + \dots + l_s = l}} \frac{1}{l_0!} \frac{d^{l_0} R_0(t)}{dt^{l_0}} \Big|_{t=-k} \cdot \frac{1}{l_1!} \frac{d^{l_1}}{dt^{l_1}} (R_1(t)(t+k)) \Big|_{t=-k} \cdots \\ &\quad \times \frac{1}{l_s!} \frac{d^{l_s}}{dt^{l_s}} (R_s(t)(t+k)) \Big|_{t=-k} \end{aligned}$$

for any $k = a', a'+1, \dots, b'-1$ and $l = 0, 1, \dots, s-1$. In view of inclusions (7) and (8), the last formula yields the required result. \square

Lemma 2. Let $m = \max\{m_1, b_2^* - a_0^* - 1\}$ with m_1 defined in (6) and

$$m_0 = b_1^* - a_0^* - 1 = \max_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{b_j\} - \min_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{a_j\} - 1.$$

Then the polynomials

$$P_j(x) = \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} x^{k-a_0^*}, \quad j = 1, \dots, s, \quad P_0(x) = \sum_{j=1}^s \sum_{k=a_j^*}^{b_j^*-1} A_{jk} \sum_{l=1}^{k-a_0^*} \frac{x^{k-a_0^*-l}}{l^j},$$

defined in (4) and (5) as the coefficients of linear forms satisfy

$$\deg P_j(x) \leq m_0, \quad D_{m_0} D_m^{s-1} \cdot P_j(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x], \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, s.$$

Proof. The claim follows immediately for the polynomials $P_1(x), \dots, P_s(x)$ from Lemma 1 since $m \geq m_1$. In the case of $P_0(x)$ we require the inclusions of Lemma 1, also the obvious ones

$$D_{b_1^*-a_0^*-1} \cdots D_{b_j^*-a_0^*-1} \cdot \sum_{l=1}^{k-a_0^*} \frac{x^{k-a_0^*-l}}{l^j} \in \mathbb{Z}[x], \quad k = a_j^*, \dots, b_j^* - 1, \quad j = 1, \dots, s,$$

and the fact that $m \geq b_j^* - a_0^* - 1$ for $j = 2, \dots, s$. \square

Denote by

$$\Pi = \Pi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}) = \frac{\prod_{j=1}^s \Gamma(b_j - a_j)}{\Gamma(a_0)} = \frac{\prod_{j=1}^s (b_j - a_j - 1)!}{(a_0 - 1)!} \quad (9)$$

the arithmetic normalization in (3). By (2)–(5), the quantities

$$\frac{I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)}{\Pi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)}{\Pi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})} \quad (10)$$

do not depend on rearranging the parameters a_0, a_1, \dots, a_s . Let us denote by \mathfrak{S} the permutation group (of order $(s+1)!$) of the parameters a_0, a_1, \dots, a_s . For any $\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}$, introduce the corresponding normalization factor $\Pi^{(\sigma)} = \Pi(\sigma\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$ and the quantities

$$I^{(\sigma)} = I(\sigma\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = \sum_{j=1}^s P_j^{(\sigma)}(z^{-1}) \text{Li}_j(z) - P_0^{(\sigma)}(z^{-1}),$$

$$J^{(\sigma)} = J(\sigma\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = \sum_{j=1}^s P_j^{(\sigma)}(z^{-1}) \frac{\log^{j-1} z}{(j-1)!}.$$

Using Lemma 2, the inequality $m_0 \geq m$, and invariance of (10) and $m_0 = b_1^* - a_0^* - 1$ under the \mathfrak{S} -action we arrive at the following claim.

Lemma 3. *The following inclusions*

$$D_{m_0}^s \cdot \frac{\Pi^{(\sigma)}}{\Pi} \cdot P_j(x) = D_{m_0}^s \cdot P_j^{(\sigma)}(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x], \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, s,$$

are valid for any $\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}$.

Corollary (cf. [9], Lemma 10). *If*

$$\Phi = \Phi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}) = \prod_{\sqrt{m_0} < p \leq m} p^{e_p}, \quad \text{where } e_p = \max_{\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}} \text{ord}_p \frac{\Pi}{\Pi^{(\sigma)}},$$

then

$$D_{m_0} D_m^{s-1} \cdot \Phi^{-1} \cdot P_j(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x], \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, s. \quad (11)$$

Since $\text{ord}_p N! = \lfloor N/p \rfloor$ for primes $p > \sqrt{N}$, we have

$$\text{ord}_p \Pi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}) = \sum_{j=1}^s \left[\frac{b_j - a_j - 1}{p} \right] - \left[\frac{a_0 - 1}{p} \right], \quad p > \sqrt{m_0},$$

hence

$$e_p = \max_{\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}} \varpi_p^{(\sigma)},$$

where

$$\varpi_p^{(\sigma)} = \sum_{j=1}^s \left(\left[\frac{b_j - a_j - 1}{p} \right] - \left[\frac{b_j - \sigma a_j - 1}{p} \right] \right) - \left(\left[\frac{a_0 - 1}{p} \right] - \left[\frac{\sigma a_0 - 1}{p} \right] \right).$$

Now, take the parameters \mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b} as follows:

$$a_j = \alpha_j n + 1, \quad j = 0, 1, \dots, n, \quad \text{and} \quad b_j = \beta_j n + 2, \quad j = 1, \dots, n, \quad (12)$$

where $\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ and β_1, \dots, β_n are positive integers satisfying

$$0 < \alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_s < \beta_1, \dots, \beta_s, \quad \sum_{j=0}^s \alpha_j < \sum_{j=1}^s \beta_j, \quad (13)$$

$$\min_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{\alpha_j\} + \max_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{\alpha_j\} \leq \beta_l \quad \text{for all } l = 1, \dots, s,$$

to ensure conditions (1). As before, we introduce the ordered collections

$$\{\alpha_0^*, \alpha_1^*, \dots, \alpha_s^*\} = \{\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_s\}, \quad \{\beta_1^*, \dots, \beta_s^*\} = \{\beta_1, \dots, \beta_s\},$$

$$\alpha_0^* \leq \alpha_1^* \leq \dots \leq \alpha_s^*, \quad \beta_1^* \geq \dots \geq \beta_s^*.$$

Then $m_0 = \nu_0 n$, $m = \nu n$, where

$$\nu_0 = \beta_1^* - \alpha_0^* = \max_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{\beta_j\} - \min_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{\alpha_j\},$$

$$\nu = \max \left\{ \alpha_0, \max_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{\beta_j\} - \min_{1 \leq j \leq s} \{\alpha_j\}, \max_{2 \leq j \leq s} \{\beta_j\} - \min_{0 \leq j \leq s} \{\alpha_j\} \right\},$$

and

$$\varpi_p^{(\sigma)} = \varphi^{(\sigma)}\left(\frac{n}{p}\right),$$

where

$$\varphi^{(\sigma)}(x) = \sum_{j=1}^s (\lfloor (\beta_j - \alpha_j)x \rfloor - \lfloor (\beta_j - \sigma\alpha_j)x \rfloor) - (\lfloor \alpha_0 x \rfloor - \lfloor \sigma\alpha_0 x \rfloor), \quad \sigma \in \mathfrak{S}. \quad (14)$$

With a help of identity $\lfloor y \rfloor = y - \{y\}$ (where $\{\cdot\}$ denotes the fractional part of a number) we see that functions (14) are 1-periodic. Moreover, since $\lfloor kx \rfloor$ (for a positive integer k) changes its value only at the points $x = l/k$ for $l \in \mathbb{Z}$, we conclude that any of the functions in (14) takes constant values in demi-intervals $[u, v) \subset [0, 1)$, where u, v is any pair of neighbour fractions with denominators $\leq \nu_0$. These properties are inherited by the function

$$\varphi(x) = \max_{\sigma \in \mathfrak{S}} \varphi^{(\sigma)}(x),$$

whence its computation is a pure machinery.

Denoting $\Phi_n = \Phi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$ and using the prime number theorem and the standard arithmetic argument (see, e.g., [9], Lemma 11) we obtain

Lemma 4. *The following limit relations are valid:*

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log \Phi_n}{n} &= \int_0^1 \varphi(x) d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2}, \\ \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log D_{\nu_0 n}}{n} &= \nu_0, \quad \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log D_{\nu n}}{n} = \nu, \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

where $\psi(x)$ is the logarithmic derivative of the gamma function.

In accordance with (11), formulae (15) completely determine the arithmetic behaviour of the constructed approximations (4) and (5).

3 Asymptotics

Consider the integral

$$J = J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = \frac{z^{a_0^*}}{2\pi i} \oint_{\mathcal{L}} R(t) z^t dt, \quad (16)$$

where \mathcal{L} is a closed clockwise contour surrounding all poles $t = -k$ for $a_1^* \leq k < b_1^*$ of the rational function $R(t) = R(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; t)$.

Lemma 5. *Let $0 < z < 1$ and $s \geq 1$. Then the following integral representation is valid:*

$$J = -\frac{z^{\alpha_0^*}}{2\pi i} \int_{M-i\infty}^{M+i\infty} R(t)z^t dt, \quad (17)$$

where M is an arbitrary real constant in the interval $(-\infty, -b_1^*)$.

Proof. Take the contour \mathcal{L} in (16) as the rectangle with vertices $M \pm iT$, $T \pm iT$, where M is an arbitrary fixed number, $M \leq -b_1^*$, and T is sufficiently large. In accordance with (2), (12) we have that $R(t) = o(T^{-s-1})$ on the segments $[M - iT, T - iT]$, $[T - iT, T + iT]$ and $[T + iT, M + iT]$. Therefore, for horizontal sides of the rectangle we obtain

$$\left| \int_{M \pm iT}^{T \pm iT} R(t)z^t dt \right| = \left| \int_M^T R(x \pm iT)z^{x \pm iT} dx \right| \leq \frac{c_1}{T^2} |z|^M (T - M), \quad (18)$$

while on the vertical segment $[T - iT, T + iT]$ we have the trivial bound $|z|^t = |z^{T+iy}| = |z|^T < 1$, hence

$$\left| \int_{T-iT}^{T+iT} R(t)z^t dt \right| \leq \frac{c_2}{T}. \quad (19)$$

Finally, letting T tend to infinity and taking into account estimates (18) and (19) we arrive at the required statement. \square

Lemma 6. *The integral $J = J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)$ admits the following representation:*

$$J = c_3 \int_{\mu-i\infty}^{\mu+i\infty} g(\tau) e^{nf(\tau)} (1 + O(n^{-1})) dt, \quad (20)$$

where the functions

$$\begin{aligned} f(\tau) &= \sum_{j=0}^s ((\tau - \beta_j) \log(\tau - \beta_j) - (\tau - \alpha_j) \log(\tau - \alpha_j)) \\ &\quad - \alpha_0 \log \alpha_0 + \sum_{j=1}^s (\beta_j - \alpha_j) \log(\beta_j - \alpha_j) + (\alpha_0^* - \tau) \log z \end{aligned}$$

and

$$g(\tau) = \exp \left\{ \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j=0}^s (\log(\tau - \alpha_j) - 3 \log(\tau - \beta_j)) \right\}$$

are defined in the cut τ -plane $\mathbb{C} \setminus (-\infty, \beta_1^*]$, μ is an arbitrary number in the interval $(\beta_1^*, +\infty)$, and the constants $c_3 \neq 0$ and in $O(1/n)$ depend only on the parameters $\mathbf{\alpha}, \mathbf{\beta}$.

Proof. Changing the variable t by $-t$ and applying the formula

$$\Gamma(a-t)\Gamma(t-a+1) = \frac{\pi}{\sin(\pi(a-t))},$$

we can write (17) in the form

$$J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = \pm \frac{z^{a_0^*} \prod_{j=1}^s \Gamma(b_j - a_j)}{2\pi i \Gamma(a_0)} \int_{-M-i\infty}^{-M+i\infty} \prod_{j=0}^s \frac{\Gamma(t - b_j + 1)}{\Gamma(t - a_j + 1)} z^{-t} dt$$

for some choice of the sign in ‘ \pm ’. Set $-M = \mu n$, $t = n\tau$, where $\tau = \mu + iy$, $\mu \in (\beta_1^*, \infty)$, $y \in (-\infty, +\infty)$, and $n \in \mathbb{N}$, use (12) and the following asymptotic formula for the Γ -function:

$$\log \Gamma(u) = \left(u - \frac{1}{2}\right) \log u - u + \log \sqrt{2\pi} + r(u), \quad |r(u)| \leq K |\operatorname{Re} u|^{-1}, \quad (21)$$

where K is an absolute constant. Then we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \prod_{j=0}^s \frac{\Gamma(t - b_j + 1)}{\Gamma(t - a_j + 1)} &= \prod_{j=0}^s \frac{\Gamma(n(\tau - \beta_j) - 1)}{\Gamma(n(\tau - \alpha_j))} \\ &= \exp \left\{ \sum_{j=0}^s \left((\alpha_j - \beta_j) n \log n + n(\tau - \beta_j) \log(\tau - \beta_j) - n(\tau - \alpha_j) \log(\tau - \alpha_j) \right. \right. \\ &\quad \left. \left. - \frac{3}{2} \log(\tau - \beta_j) + \frac{1}{2} \log(\tau - \alpha_j) - \frac{1}{2} \log n + O(n^{-1}) \right) \right\}. \end{aligned}$$

Finally, estimating the normalizing factor $\Pi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})$ in (9) by (21) we obtain expression (20) as required. \square

Lemma 7. *Let $0 < z < 1$, $s = 3$, the parameters $\boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\beta}$ be defined in (13), and*

$$h(\tau) = z \prod_{j=0}^s (\tau + \alpha_j) - \prod_{j=0}^s (\tau + \beta_j). \quad (22)$$

Suppose furthermore that

$$h'(0) < 0, \quad h''(0) < 0, \quad h'(-\beta_1^*) < 0, \quad \text{and} \quad h''(-\beta_1^*) > 0.$$

Then the polynomial equation $h(\tau) = 0$ has a unique positive root τ_1 belonging to the interval $(0, z\alpha_0^/(1-z))$ and a unique root τ_0 in the interval $(-\infty, -\beta_1^*)$.*

Proof. A straightforward verification shows that in the case $s = 3$ the second derivative $h''(\tau)$ is a quadratic polynomial with negative coefficients:

$$h''(\tau) = 12(z-1)\tau^2 + 6\tau \sum_{j=0}^3 (z\alpha_j - \beta_j) + 2 \sum_{0 \leq j < k \leq 3} (z\alpha_j \alpha_k - \beta_j \beta_k). \quad (23)$$

In particular, $h''(\tau) < 0$ for all $\tau \geq 0$. This means that the function $h'(\tau)$ is strictly decreasing on $[0, +\infty)$ and, since $h'(0) < 0$, we have $h'(\tau) < 0$ on this interval. Whence $h(\tau)$ is strictly decreasing on $[0, +\infty)$ and, noting that $h(0) > 0$ and $h(+\infty) = -\infty$, we deduce that the equation $h(\tau) = 0$ has a unique positive root τ_1 . If $\tau \geq z\alpha_0^*/(1-z)$, then $z(\tau + \alpha_0^*) \leq \tau$ implies $h(\tau) < 0$ by (13). Therefore, $\tau_1 \in (0, z\alpha_0^*/(1-z))$.

Consider now the interval $(-\infty, -\beta_1^*)$. First, note that the equation $h''(\tau) = 0$ has two negative roots $\tau_* < \tau_{**} < 0$ by (23). Since $h''(-\beta_1^*) > 0$, it follows that $-\beta_1^* \in (\tau_*, \tau_{**})$, therefore $h''(\tau)$ takes negative values on $(-\infty, \tau_*)$ and positive values on $(\tau_*, -\beta_1^*)$. This means that the function $h'(\tau)$ is strictly increasing on $(\tau_*, -\beta_1^*)$. Taking into account that $h'(-\infty) = +\infty$, $h'(-\beta_1^*) < 0$, $h(-\infty) = -\infty$, and $h(-\beta_1^*) > 0$, we conclude that the equation $h(\tau) = 0$ has a unique root τ_0 in $(-\infty, -\beta_1^*)$, and the lemma is proved. \square

Lemma 8. *Assume the conditions of Lemma 7 and, moreover, that $f''(-\tau_0) \neq 0$. Then the following asymptotic formulae are valid:*

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log |J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)|}{n} = f_0(\tau_0), \quad \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log |I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}, z)|}{n} = \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} f_0(\tau) &= f(-\tau) + \tau \cdot f'(-\tau) \\ &= \sum_{j=0}^s (\alpha_j \log(\tau + \alpha_j) - \beta_j \log(\tau + \beta_j)) + \sum_{j=1}^s (\beta_j - \alpha_j) \log(\beta_j - \alpha_j) \\ &\quad - \alpha_0 \log \alpha_0 + \alpha_0^* \log z. \end{aligned}$$

Proof. Note that $f'(-\tau) = 0$ implies $f(-\tau) = f_0(\tau)$.

The proof of the first equality is based on application of the saddle-point method to the integral representation of Lemma 6. Take $\mu = -\tau_0$ in (20), where τ_0 is defined in Lemma 7. Since $\tau_0 \in (-\infty, -\beta_1^*)$ is a zero of the polynomial (22) we see that

$$z \prod_{j=0}^s (-\tau_0 - \alpha_j) = \prod_{j=0}^s (-\tau_0 - \beta_j) > 0,$$

hence $f'(\mu) = f'(-\tau_0) = 0$. Let us show that the function $\operatorname{Re} f(\mu + iv)$ of the real variable $v \in (-\infty, +\infty)$ attains its maximum at the unique point $v = 0$. Indeed, we

have

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{d}{dv} \operatorname{Re} f(\mu + iv) &= -\operatorname{Im} \frac{d}{d\tau} f(\mu + iv) \\
&= \sum_{j=0}^1 (\arg(\mu + iv - \alpha_j^*) - \arg(\mu + iv - \beta_j)) \\
&\quad + \sum_{j=2}^s (\arg(\mu + iv - \alpha_j^*) - \arg(\mu + iv - \beta_j)) \\
&= \Sigma_1 + \Sigma_2, \tag{24}
\end{aligned}$$

where $\beta_0 = 0$. Note that the function defined in (24) is odd with respect to the variable v . We assume that $v > 0$ and consider the parametrization $\tau = \mu + iv = \mu(1 + i \tan \varphi)$ for $\varphi = \arg \tau \in (0, \pi/2)$. Using the inequalities $0 < \alpha_0^* \leq \alpha_1^* < \beta_1 \leq \beta_1^* < \mu$ we see that

$$0 < \arg \tau < \arg(\tau - \alpha_0^*) \leq \arg(\tau - \alpha_1^*) < \arg(\tau - \beta_1) < \frac{\pi}{2},$$

hence

$$0 < \arg(\tau - \alpha_0^*) + \arg(\tau - \alpha_1^*) < \pi, \quad 0 < \arg \tau + \arg(\tau - \beta_1) < \pi.$$

Furthermore, we have

$$\cot \arg(\tau - \alpha_0^*) = \frac{\mu - \alpha_0^*}{\mu \cdot \tan \varphi}, \quad \cot \arg(\tau - \alpha_1^*) = \frac{\mu - \alpha_1^*}{\mu \cdot \tan \varphi};$$

denote

$$\begin{aligned}
C_1 &= \cot(\arg(\tau - \alpha_0^*) + \arg(\tau - \alpha_1^*)) = \frac{\mu^2(1 - \tan^2 \varphi) - \mu(\alpha_0^* + \alpha_1^*) + \alpha_0^* \alpha_1^*}{\mu \cdot \tan \varphi \cdot (2\mu - \alpha_0^* - \alpha_1^*)}, \\
C_2 &= \cot(\arg \tau + \arg(\tau - \beta_1)) = \frac{\mu(1 - \tan^2 \varphi) - \beta_1}{(2\mu - \beta_1) \tan \varphi}.
\end{aligned}$$

Then

$$C_1 - C_2 = \frac{\mu^2(\beta_1 - \alpha_0^* - \alpha_1^*)(1 + \tan^2 \varphi) + \alpha_0^* \alpha_1^*(2\mu - \beta_1)}{\mu(2\mu - \alpha_0^* - \alpha_1^*)(2\mu - \beta_1) \cdot \tan \varphi} > 0$$

by (13). Thus, $C_1 > C_2$ or, equivalently,

$$\arg(\tau - \alpha_0^*) + \arg(\tau - \alpha_1^*) < \arg \tau + \arg(\tau - \beta_1),$$

i.e. $\Sigma_1 < 0$. If $v > 0$, then in accordance with our choice of the parameters $\boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\beta}$ given in (13),

$$0 < \arg(\mu - \alpha_j^* + iv) < \arg(\mu - \beta_j + iv) < \frac{\pi}{2}, \quad j = 2, \dots, s,$$

yielding $\Sigma_2 < 0$. Finally, $\frac{d}{dv} \operatorname{Re} f(\mu + iv) = \Sigma_1 + \Sigma_2 < 0$ for $v > 0$ and $\frac{d}{dv} \operatorname{Re} f(\mu + iv) > 0$ for $v < 0$ (by oddness of the derivative). Therefore, μ is the unique maximum of the function $\operatorname{Re} f(\tau)$ on the vertical line $(\mu - i\infty, \mu + i\infty)$. This implies that the integral J is determined by the contribution of the saddle point μ , namely,

$$J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = c_3 g(\mu) |f''(\mu)|^{-1/2} e^{nf(\mu)} (1 + O(n^{-1})),$$

whence the first equality of Lemma 8 follows.

In order to prove the second asymptotic relation, we write the sum I in the form

$$\begin{aligned} I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) &= z^{\alpha_0^*} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} R(t) z^t \\ &= \frac{\prod_{j=1}^s \Gamma((\beta_j - \alpha_j)n + 1)}{\Gamma(\alpha_0 n + 1)} z^{\alpha_0^* n + 1} \sum_{t=0}^{\infty} \prod_{j=0}^s \frac{\Gamma(t + \alpha_j n + 1)}{\Gamma(t + \beta_j n + 2)} z^t \end{aligned}$$

and use the techniques as in the second proof of Lemma 3 in [1]. We deduce that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log |I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)|}{n} &= \alpha_0^* \log z + \sum_{j=1}^s (\beta_j - \alpha_j) \log(\beta_j - \alpha_j) - \alpha_0 \log \alpha_0 \\ &\quad + \max_{\tau > 0} \left\{ \tau \log z + \sum_{j=0}^s ((\tau + \alpha_j) \log(\tau + \alpha_j) - (\tau + \beta_j) \log(\tau + \beta_j)) \right\} \\ &= \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1) \end{aligned}$$

by Lemma 7, thus completing the proof. \square

4 Proof of the main result

We shall apply the arithmetic and asymptotic results to the linear forms

$$L(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = I(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) - \operatorname{Li}_1(z) J(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z) = \sum_{j=2}^s P_j(z^{-1}) f_j(z) - P_0(z^{-1})$$

in the case $s = 3$. It happens that an optimal choice for the integer parameters $\boldsymbol{\alpha}, \boldsymbol{\beta}$ depends on $z \in \{1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5\}$, but in all examples below the technical conditions of Lemmas 7 and 8 are fulfilled, and we also have $f_0(\tau_0) \neq \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1)$ ensuring

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\log |L(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z)|}{n} = \max\{f_0(\tau_0), \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1)\},$$

where \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} are taken in accordance with (12). By Corollary of Lemma 3 the non-zero linear forms

$$d^{\nu_0 n} D_{\nu_0 n} D_{\nu n}^2 \cdot \Phi(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b})^{-1} \cdot L(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{b}; z), \quad d \text{ is the denominator of } z^{-1},$$

have integer coefficients; therefore, if

$$\nu_0(1 + \log d) + 2\nu - \left(\int_0^1 \varphi(x) d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} \right) + \max\{f_0(\tau_0), \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1)\} < 0,$$

then these forms tend to 0 as $n \rightarrow \infty$, which implies that at least one of the numbers $f_2(z)$ and $f_3(z)$ must be irrational.

If $z = 1/2$ we take

$$(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3; \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3) = (3, 4, 5, 6; 17, 16, 15).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} f_0(\tau_0) &= f_0(-54.774962\dots) = -30.978821\dots, \\ \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1) &= \operatorname{Re} f_0(0.045669\dots) = -31.342224\dots \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\nu_0 + 2\nu - \left(\int_0^1 \varphi(x) d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} \right) = 14 + 2 \cdot 13 - 9.416718\dots = 30.583281\dots,$$

since

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{3}{13}, \frac{1}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{11}, \frac{2}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{9}, \frac{7}{12} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{11}, \frac{9}{14} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{9}, \frac{11}{14} \right) \cup \left[\frac{10}{11}, \frac{11}{12} \right), \\ 1 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{13}, \frac{1}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{13}, \frac{3}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{7}, \frac{5}{12} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{9}, \frac{1}{2} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{13}, \frac{5}{9} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{7}{12}, \frac{7}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{9}{14}, \frac{3}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{10}{13}, \frac{7}{9} \right) \cup \left[\frac{11}{14}, \frac{6}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{8}{9}, \frac{10}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{11}{12}, \frac{13}{14} \right), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

If $z = 2/3$ we take

$$(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3; \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3) = (5, 6, 7, 8; 17, 16, 15).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} f_0(\tau_0) &= f_0(-67.615443\dots) = -32.714219\dots, \\ \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1) &= \operatorname{Re} f_0(0.314519\dots) = -34.100076\dots \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \nu_0(1 + \log 2) + 2\nu - \left(\int_0^1 \varphi(x) d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} \right) \\ = 12 \cdot (1 + \log 2) + 2 \cdot 11 - 9.957743\dots = 32.360022\dots, \end{aligned}$$

since

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{2}{11}, \frac{1}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{7}, \frac{3}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{11}, \frac{2}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{7}, \frac{3}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{8}{11}, \frac{3}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{9}, \frac{4}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{8}{9}, \frac{9}{10} \right), \\ 1 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{11}, \frac{1}{8} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{7}, \frac{2}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{5}, \frac{1}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{11}, \frac{2}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{10}, \frac{4}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{7}, \frac{1}{2} \right) \cup \left[\frac{6}{11}, \frac{4}{7} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{3}{5}, \frac{5}{8} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{11}, \frac{7}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{7}, \frac{8}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{4}, \frac{7}{9} \right) \cup \left[\frac{6}{7}, \frac{8}{9} \right) \cup \left[\frac{9}{10}, \frac{11}{12} \right), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

If $z = 3/4$ we take

$$(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3; \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3) = (7, 8, 9, 10; 20, 19, 18).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} f_0(\tau_0) &= f_0(-96.814387\dots) = -42.031285\dots, \\ \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1) &= \operatorname{Re} f_0(0.679858\dots) = -40.372159\dots \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \nu_0(1 + \log 3) + 2\nu - \left(\int_0^1 \varphi(x) \, d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} \right) \\ = 13 \cdot (1 + \log 3) + 2 \cdot 12 - 11.149689\dots = 40.132270\dots, \end{aligned}$$

since

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{5}, \frac{3}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{2}, \frac{6}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{8}, \frac{7}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{10}, \frac{5}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{4}, \frac{10}{13} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{4}{5}, \frac{9}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{9}{10}, \frac{10}{11} \right), \\ 1 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{12}, \frac{1}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{6}, \frac{1}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{11}, \frac{4}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{8}, \frac{2}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{7}, \frac{5}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{6}{11}, \frac{4}{7} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{7}{12}, \frac{5}{8} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{11}, \frac{7}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{7}, \frac{8}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{10}{13}, \frac{4}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{9}{11}, \frac{11}{13} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{7}{8}, \frac{9}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{10}{11}, \frac{12}{13} \right), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

If $z = 4/5$ we take

$$(\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3; \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3) = (11, 12, 13, 14; 26, 25, 24).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} f_0(\tau_0) &= f_0(-136.248182\dots) = -51.532175\dots, \\ \operatorname{Re} f_0(\tau_1) &= \operatorname{Re} f_0(1.686050\dots) = -52.579778\dots \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} \nu_0(1 + \log 4) + 2\nu - \left(\int_0^1 \varphi(x) \, d\psi(x) - \int_0^{1/\nu} \varphi(x) \frac{dx}{x^2} \right) \\ = 15 \cdot (1 + \log 4) + 2 \cdot 14 - 12.384270\dots = 51.410144\dots, \end{aligned}$$

since

$$\varphi(x) = \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{14}, \frac{1}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{12}, \frac{1}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{7}, \frac{2}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{6}, \frac{2}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{14}, \frac{3}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{4}, \frac{4}{15} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{3}{10}, \frac{4}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{14}, \frac{4}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{7}, \frac{5}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{1}{2}, \frac{7}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{5}, \frac{8}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{7}, \frac{8}{11} \right), \\ 1 & \text{if } x \in \left[\frac{1}{13}, \frac{1}{12} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{13}, \frac{1}{6} \right) \cup \left[\frac{3}{13}, \frac{1}{4} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{15}, \frac{3}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{7}, \frac{3}{10} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{13}, \frac{5}{14} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{4}{11}, \frac{5}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{2}{5}, \frac{3}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{5}{11}, \frac{6}{13} \right) \cup \left[\frac{7}{13}, \frac{6}{11} \right) \cup \left[\frac{4}{7}, \frac{3}{5} \right) \cup \left[\frac{8}{13}, \frac{7}{11} \right) \\ & \quad \cup \left[\frac{9}{14}, \frac{5}{7} \right) \cup \left[\frac{8}{11}, \frac{13}{15} \right) \cup \left[\frac{9}{10}, \frac{14}{15} \right), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The presented computations show the truth of Theorem 1.

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