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A systematic account of fundamentals, including the basic theory of heights, Roth and Siegel's theorems, the Néron–Tate quadratic form, the Mordell–Weil theorem, Weil and Néron functions, and the canonical form on a curve as it related to the Jacobian via the theta function.

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Serge Lang (Ed.)

Number Theory III

Diophantine Geometry



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Preface

In 1988 Shafarevich asked me to write a volume for the Encyclopaedia of Mathematical Sciences on Diophantine Geometry. I said yes, and here is the volume.

By definition, diophantine problems concern the solutions of equations in integers, or rational numbers, or various generalizations, such as finitely generated rings over \mathbf{Z} or finitely generated fields over \mathbf{Q} . The word Geometry is tacked on to suggest geometric methods. This means that the present volume is not elementary. For a survey of some basic problems with a much more elementary approach, see [La 90c].

The field of diophantine geometry is now moving quite rapidly. Outstanding conjectures ranging from decades back are being proved. I have tried to give the book some sort of coherence and permanence by emphasizing structural conjectures as much as results, so that one has a clear picture of the field. On the whole, I omit proofs, according to the boundary conditions of the encyclopedia. On some occasions I do give some ideas for the proofs when these are especially important. In any case, a lengthy bibliography refers to papers and books where proofs may be found. I have also followed Shafarevich's suggestion to give examples, and I have especially chosen these examples which show how some classical problems do or do not get solved by contemporary insights. Fermat's last theorem occupies an intermediate position. Although it is not proved, it is not an isolated problem any more. It fits in two main approaches to certain diophantine questions, which will be found in Chapter II from the point of view of diophantine inequalities, and Chapter V from the point of view of modular curves and the Taniyama–Shimura conjecture. Some people might even see a race between the two approaches: which one will prove Fermat first? It

is actually conceivable that diophantine inequalities might prove the Taniyama–Shimura conjecture, which would give a high to everybody. There are also two approaches to Mordell’s conjecture that a curve of genus ≥ 2 over the rationals (or over a number field) has only a finite number of rational points: via l -adic representations in Chapter IV, and via diophantine approximations in Chapter IX. But in this case, Mordell’s conjecture is now Faltings’ theorem.

Parts of the subject are more accessible than others because they require less knowledge for their understanding. To increase accessibility of some parts, I have reproduced some definitions from basic algebraic geometry. This is especially true of the first chapter, dealing with qualitative questions. If substantially more knowledge was required for some results, then I did not try to reproduce such definitions, but I just used whatever language was necessary. Obviously decisions as to where to stop in the backward tree of definitions depend on personal judgments, influenced by several people who have commented on the manuscript before publication.

The question also arose where to stop in the direction of diophantine approximations. I decided not to include results of the last few years centering around the explicit Hilbert Nullstellensatz, notably by Brownawell, and related bounds for the degrees of polynomials vanishing on certain subsets of group varieties, as developed by those who needed such estimates in the theory of transcendental numbers. My not including these results does not imply that I regard them as less important than some results I have included. It simply means that at the moment, I feel they would fit more appropriately in a volume devoted to diophantine approximations or computational algebraic geometry.

I have included several connections of diophantine geometry with other parts of mathematics, such as PDE and Laplacians, complex analysis, and differential geometry. A grand unification is going on, with multiple connections between these fields.

New Haven
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Serge Lang

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S.L.

Contents

Preface	vii
Notation	xiii
 CHAPTER I	
Some Qualitative Diophantine Statements	1
§1. Basic Geometric Notions	2
§2. The Canonical Class and the Genus	9
§3. The Special Set	15
§4. Abelian Varieties	25
§5. Algebraic Equivalence and the Néron–Severi Group	30
§6. Subvarieties of Abelian and Semiabelian Varieties	35
§7. Hilbert Irreducibility	40
 CHAPTER II	
Heights and Rational Points	43
§1. The Height for Rational Numbers and Rational Functions	43
§2. The Height in Finite Extensions	51
§3. The Height on Varieties and Divisor Classes	58
§4. Bound for the Height of Algebraic Points	61
 CHAPTER III	
Abelian Varieties	68
§0. Basic Facts About Algebraic Families and Néron Models	68
§1. The Height as a Quadratic Function	71
§2. Algebraic Families of Heights	76
§3. Torsion Points and the l -Adic Representations	82
§4. Principal Homogeneous Spaces and Infinite Descents	85

§5. The Birch–Swinnerton-Dyer Conjecture	91
§6. The Case of Elliptic Curves Over \mathbf{Q}	96

CHAPTER IV

Faltings' Finiteness Theorems on Abelian Varieties and Curves	101
§1. Torelli's Theorem	102
§2. The Shafarevich Conjecture	103
§3. The l -Adic Representations and Semisimplicity	107
§4. The Finiteness of Certain l -Adic Representations. Finiteness I Implies Finiteness II	112
§5. The Faltings Height and Isogenies: Finiteness I	115
§6. The Masser–Wustholz Approach to Finiteness I	121

CHAPTER V

Modular Curves Over \mathbf{Q}	123
§1. Basic Definitions	124
§2. Mazur's Theorems	127
§3. Modular Elliptic Curves and Fermat's Last Theorem	130
§4. Application to Pythagorean Triples	135
§5. Modular Elliptic Curves of Rank 1	137

CHAPTER VI

The Geometric Case of Mordell's Conjecture	143
§0. Basic Geometric Facts	143
§1. The Function Field Case and Its Canonical Sheaf	145
§2. Grauert's Construction and Vojta's Inequality	147
§3. Parshin's Method with $(\omega_{X/Y}^2)$	149
§4. Manin's Method with Connections	153
§5. Characteristic p and Voloch's Theorem	161

CHAPTER VII

Arakelov Theory	163
§1. Admissible Metrics Over \mathbf{C}	164
§2. Arakelov Intersections	166
§3. Higher Dimensional Arakelov Theory	171

CHAPTER VIII

Diophantine Problems and Complex Geometry	176
§1. Definitions of Hyperbolicity	177
§2. Chern Form and Curvature	184
§3. Parshin's Hyperbolic Method	187
§4. Hyperbolic Imbeddings and Noguchi's Theorems	189
§5. Nevanlinna Theory	192

CHAPTER IX

Weil Functions, Integral Points and Diophantine Approximations	205
§1. Weil Functions and Heights	207
§2. The Theorems of Roth and Schmidt	213
§3. Integral Points	216
§4. Vojta's Conjectures	222
§5. Connection with Hyperbolicity	225
§6. From Thue–Siegel to Vojta and Faltings	228
§7. Diophantine Approximation on Toruses	233

CHAPTER X

Existence of (Many) Rational Points	244
§1. Forms in Many Variables	245
§2. The Brauer Group of a Variety and Manin's Obstruction	250
§3. Local Specialization Principle	258
§4. Anti-Canonical Varieties and Rational Points	259
Bibliography	263
Index	283

Notation

Some symbols will be used throughout systematically, and have a more or less universal meaning. I list a few of these.

F^a denotes the algebraic closure of a field F . I am trying to replace the older notation \bar{F} , since the bar is used for reduction mod a prime, for complex conjugates, and whatnot. Also the notation F^a is in line with F^s or F^{nr} for the separable closure, or the unramified closure, etc.

$\#$ denotes number of elements, so $\#(S)$ denotes the number of elements of a set S .

\ll is used synonymously with the big Oh notation. If f, g are two real functions with g positive, then $f \ll g$ means that $f(x) = O(g(x))$. Then $f \gg g$ means $f \ll g$ and $g \ll f$.

$A[\varphi]$ means the kernel of a homomorphism φ when A is an abelian group.

$A[m]$ is the kernel of multiplication by an integer m .

Line sheaf is what is sometimes called an invertible sheaf. The French have been using the expression “faisceau en droites” for quite some time, and there is no reason to lag behind in English.

Vector sheaf will, I hope, replace locally free sheaf of finite rank, both because it is shorter, and because the terminology becomes functorial with respect to the ideas. Also I object to using the same expression vector bundle for the bundle *and* for its sheaf of sections. I am fighting an uphill battle on this, but again the French have been using faisceau vectoriel, so why not use the expression in English, functorially with respect to linguistics?