

Syzygies of monomial curves  
and a linear diophantine problem  
of Frobenius

by

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## Introduction

Consider  $n_1, \dots, n_d \in \mathbf{N}$  without common factor, then for any  $n \in \mathbf{N}$  large enough  $n \in \Gamma = \langle n_1, \dots, n_d \rangle$  the semigroup generated by  $n_1, \dots, n_d$ . The Frobenius's change money problem consists to find the biggest  $g \in \mathbf{N} - \Gamma$  in function of  $n_1, \dots, n_d$ . This problem has been studied from the combinatorial point of view and only are known the solutions for  $d = 2$  (Sylvester) and  $d = 3$  (Rödseth). In fact using the terms of index of regularity one can remark that  $g$  is the index of regularity of the Hilbert function of the ring  $k[t^{n_1}, \dots, t^{n_d}]$  and can be interpreted by using syzygies, see [Mo], in fact the reader can see all the results in this like one generalisation paper of the Frobenius's problem: namely describe using combinatorics the syzygies of a monomial curve. Here we give positive solutions for affine and projective monomial curves in  $k^3$  and  $\mathbb{P}^3$  respectively and an easy criterium for a projective monomial curve in  $\mathbb{P}^3$  to be arithmetically Cohen-Macaulay in terms of its semigroup.

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§ 0.

0.1 - Consider a monomial curve  $A = k[t_1^{a_1}, \dots, t_d^{a_d}]$  given parametrically by  $X_1 = t_1^{a_1}, \dots, X_d = t_d^{a_d}$ , this is a graded ring and the Hilbert function  $H(n) = \dim_k A_n$  takes values 0 or 1. Further if  $a_1, \dots, a_d$  are relatively prime, then  $H(n) = 1$  for all  $n$  large. The smallest number  $g$  such that  $H(n) = 1$  for all  $n > g$  is called the index of regularity of the Hilbert function. Then it is clear that  $g$  is the biggest integer  $g \notin \Gamma$  where  $\Gamma$  is the semigroup generated by  $a_1, \dots, a_d$ . Sometimes it is called the Frobenius number.

0.2 - Now consider  $A$  as a quotient of the weighted polynomial ring  $R = k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  where  $\text{weight}(X_i) = a_i$  then as an  $R$ -module  $A$  has a syzygies (i.e. free resolution)

$$0 \rightarrow \bigoplus_i R[-n_{d-1,i}] \rightarrow \bigoplus_i R[-n_{d-2,i}] \rightarrow \dots \rightarrow R \rightarrow A \rightarrow 0$$

and we have the relation

$$g = \max_i \left\{ n_{d-1,i} - \sum_{i=1}^d a_i \right\}.$$

For more about index of regularity see also [Mo].

§ 1. Some generalities about equations and relations of curves

1.1. - Let  $C$  a curve given parametrically in

$$k[X_1, \dots, X_d] \text{ by } X_1 = t^m, X_2 = \varphi_2(t), \dots, X_d = \varphi_d(t) .$$

Call  $P$  the ideal of this curve in  $k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  . Consider  $\alpha \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $(\alpha, m) = 1$  . And the curve  $\tilde{C}$  given parametrically in  $k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  by  $X_1 = t^m, X_2 = \varphi_2(t^\alpha), \dots, X_d = \varphi_d(t^\alpha)$  , call  $\tilde{P}$  the ideal of this curve in  $k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  . Also for one element  $f \in k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  we put  $\tilde{f}$  the element  $\tilde{f} := f(X_1^\alpha, X_2, \dots, X_d)$  .

1.1.1 - Remark. We can also replace the ring of polynomials by the ring of convergent power series or the ring of formal power series.

1.2 - Lemma.  $f \in P \iff \tilde{f} \in \tilde{P}$  . In particular if  $f_1, \dots, f_s$  is a minimal system of generators of  $P$  , then  $\tilde{f}_1, \dots, \tilde{f}_s$  is a minimal system of generators of  $\tilde{P}$  . As a consequence  $P$  is a complete intersection if and only if  $\tilde{P}$  is.

1.2.1 - Remark. The proof of all the facts in this section comes from the following trivial claim, where  $R$  is the ring of polynomials.

Any  $f \in R$  can be written as

$$f = \tilde{f}_0 + X_1 \tilde{f}_1 + \dots + X_1^{\alpha-1} \tilde{f}_{\alpha-1}$$

where  $f_i \in R$ .

1.2.2 Proof of 1.2. - By definition  $P$  (resp.  $\tilde{P}$ ) is the Kernel of the morphism  $R \longrightarrow k[t]$  sending  $X_1$  to  $t^m$  and  $X_i$  to  $\varphi_2(t)$  (resp.  $X_i$  to  $\varphi_1(t^\alpha)$ ) and this proves the first assertion in 1.2.

In order to prove the second assertion, we take  $f \in \tilde{P}$  and we write it like in 1.2.1

$$f = \tilde{f}_0 + X_1 \tilde{f}_1 + \dots + X_1^{\alpha-1} \tilde{f}_{\alpha-1}$$

then we claim that  $\tilde{f}_i$  are such that  $f_i \in P$ , we replace the parametrisation of  $\tilde{C}$  in  $f$ , but then the powers of  $t$  in  $\tilde{f}_0(X_1(t), \dots, X_d(t))$  are in  $\alpha \mathbb{Z}$ , those of  $X_1^i \tilde{f}_i$  in  $mi + \alpha \mathbb{Z}$   $1 \leq i \leq \alpha-1$ , this implies that  $\tilde{f}_i \in \tilde{P}$  for any  $i$ , in particular after the first assertion in 1.2  $f_i \in P$ , and this is enough to prove the second assertion in 1.2.

1.3 Proposition. - We consider a syzygies of the ideal  $P \subset k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$  then a syzygies of  $\tilde{P}$  is obtained by changing  $X_1$  by  $X_1^\alpha$  in any matrix syzygies of  $P$ . In particular if the resolution for  $P$  is minimal so it is for  $\tilde{P}$  and the Betti numbers of  $P$  and  $\tilde{P}$  are the same. If  $P$  is the ideal of a monomial curve then the shifts in the graded syzygies of  $\tilde{P}$  are obtained from those of  $P$ .

Proof. - 1.2 says us that if  $P$  is generated by  $f_1, \dots, f_s$  then  $\tilde{P}$  is generated by  $\tilde{f}_1, \dots, \tilde{f}_s$ , that means that the proposition is true at the first step of syzygies. Now suppose that there is a relation

$$\sum_{i=1}^s g_i \tilde{f}_i = 0 \quad \text{with } g_i \in R$$

then we can use 2.1.1 to write

$$g_i = \tilde{g}_{0,i} + X_1 \tilde{g}_{1,i} + \dots + X_1^{\alpha-1} \tilde{g}_{\alpha-1,i}$$

this implies that

$$\sum_{i=1}^s \tilde{g}_{0,i} \tilde{f}_i + X_1 \sum_{i=1}^s \tilde{g}_{1,i} \tilde{f}_i + \dots + X_1^{\alpha-1} \sum_{i=1}^s \tilde{g}_{\alpha-1,i} \tilde{f}_i = 0$$

in  $R = k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$

but monomials in each sum are different from other sums because the powers of  $X_1$  are not in the same set. In particular we conclude that

$$\sum_{i=1}^s \tilde{g}_{j,i} \tilde{f}_i = 0 \quad \forall j \quad \text{in } R$$

but this implies  $\sum_{i=1}^s g_{ji} f_i = 0$  in  $R$ , that means that the relations in the  $\{\tilde{f}_1, \dots, \tilde{f}_s\}$  are generated by the relations in  $\{f_1, \dots, f_s\}$  just by changing  $X_1$  by  $X_1^\alpha$ .

Now if  $K_n$  is the  $n$ -syzygies of  $P$  (resp.  $\tilde{K}_n$  the  $n$ -syzygies of  $\tilde{P}$  and if we suppose that  $\tilde{K}_n$  is generated by a set of generators of  $K_n$  just by changing  $X_1$  by  $X_1^\alpha$ , then the same method apply to

show that  $\tilde{K}_{n+1}$  is generated by  $K_{n+1}$  just by changing  $X_1$  by  $X_1^\alpha$ . This gives the proof of the Proposition.

1.4 Definition. - Let  $C = \{C_q, \partial_q\}$  and  $C' = \{C'_q, \partial'_q\}$  be two cochain complex over  $R$ . The tensor product  $(C \otimes C')$  is the cochain complex defined by

$$(C \otimes C')^n = \bigoplus_{i+j=n} (C^i \otimes C'^j)$$

with the differential  $\epsilon^n$

$$\epsilon^n : C^i \otimes C'^j \longrightarrow (C \otimes C')^{n-1}$$

$$(a \otimes b) \longmapsto \partial_i a \otimes b + (-1)^i a \otimes \partial'_j b .$$

The following lemma is well known, also it will be useful in the next section.

1.5 Lemma. - Consider a prime ideal  $P$  in a regular ring  $R$  (here  $R = k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$ ) and suppose that we add a new variable  $W$  and a new equation  $W - \varphi(X_1, \dots, X_d)$ . Call  $P_1$  the ideal in  $R_1 = k[X_1, \dots, X_d, W]$  generated by a basis of  $P$  and  $W - \varphi(X_1, \dots, X_d)$ . Let  $S^\circ$  be the syzygies of  $P$  over  $k[X_1, \dots, X_d]$ , we also call  $S^\circ$  the syzygies of  $P$  over  $k[X_1, \dots, X_d, W]$ . Then the syzygies  $S_1^\circ$  of  $P_1$  is  $S_1^\circ := S^\circ \otimes (0 \longrightarrow R_1 \xrightarrow{G} R_1 \longrightarrow 0)$  where  $G = W - \varphi(X_1, \dots, X_d)$ .



1.6 Example. - Consider the monomial curve given parametrically in the fourth dimensional space by  $X = t^4$ ,  $Y = t^6$ ,  $Z = t^7$ ,  $U = t^9$ . Call  $P$  the prime ideal defining this curve in  $k[X,Y,Z,U]$ . It is well known that  $P$  is generated by the following elements:

$$\begin{aligned} a &= X^3 - Y^2 \\ b &= XU - YZ \\ c &= X^2Y - Z^2 \\ d &= X^2Z - YU \\ e &= XY^2 - ZU \\ f &= Y^3 - U^2 \end{aligned}$$

Let  $\varphi(X,Y,Z,U) = YZ = t^{13}$ , then after 1.3 and 1.5 we can say that the prime ideal  $\tilde{P}$  of the curve given parametrically by  $X = t^{4\alpha}$ ,  $Y = t^{6\alpha}$ ,  $Z = t^{7\alpha}$ ,  $U = t^{9\alpha}$ ,  $W = t^{13}$  is generated by

$$\tilde{P} = (a, b, c, d, e, f, g = W^\alpha - XY)$$

for any  $\alpha$  natural number prime with 13.

This is a powerful method to find syzygies without complicated calculations.

1.7 Example 2. - Consider a monomial curve  $C$  in  $k^3$ , given parametrically by  $X = t^a$ ,  $Y = t^b$ ,  $Z = t^c$ ,  $a, b, c$  being three natural numbers. In order to study equations of this curve we can assume that  $a, b, c$  are relatively prime. Secondly by

using 1.3 we can assume that  $a, b, c$  are coprime two by two. Incidentally we see that if one of the three numbers say  $c$  belongs to the semigroup generated by  $a, b$ , then  $c = ma + nb$ , with  $m, n \in \mathbb{N}$ , and we can write  $Z = X^m Y^n$ . 1.5 says us that  $C$  is a complete intersection (in fact a plane curve).

§ 2. Monomial curves in  $k^3$

2.0 - Let  $a, b, c \in \mathbb{N}$  such that  $(a, b, c) = 1$  and that  $k[t^a, t^b, t^c]$  be a curve  $C$  of embedding dimension 3. Let  $R = k[X, Y, Z]$  with grading given by weight  $(X) = a$ , weight  $(Y) = b$ , weight  $(Z) = c$ . After J. Herzog ([He], [K]) we know that if  $k[t^a, t^b, t^c]$  is not a complete intersection, his syzygies are like follows

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & R^2 & \xrightarrow{M} & R^3 & \longrightarrow & R \longrightarrow k[t^a, t^b, t^c] \longrightarrow 0 \\ & & & & & & X \longmapsto t^a \\ & & & & & & Y \longmapsto t^b \\ & & & & & & Z \longmapsto t^c \end{array}$$

Now we improve this result giving explicitly the matrix  $M$ . The equations of the curve  $C$  in  $k^3$  being the  $2 \times 2$  minors of the matrix  $M$ . The problem to find  $M$  is in fact equivalent to the solution of the Frobenius's change money problem in dimension 3 (cf. [Rö]):

Problem. - Find the biggest  $g \in \mathbb{N}$  who can't be written

$$g = \alpha a + \beta b + \gamma c, \text{ with } \alpha, \beta, \gamma \in \mathbb{N}.$$

2.1 - In order to relate both problems we introduce the Apéry sequences. Let  $\Gamma$  be the semigroup generated by  $a, b, c$  and

$s \in \Gamma$  , then the Apéry sequence  $\Gamma(s)$  is by the definition

$$\Gamma(s) = \{l \in \Gamma / l - s \notin \Gamma\} .$$

2.1.1 - Remark. - Let  $(a,b) = d$  and  $\Gamma' = \langle a/d, b/d \rangle$  the semigroup generated by  $a/d$  and  $b/d$  . Suppose that

$$\Gamma'(a/d) = \{y b/d + zc / (y,z) \in \mathcal{D}\}$$

then

$$\Gamma(a) = \{y b + izc / (y,z) \in \mathcal{D}, 1 \leq i \leq d\} .$$

2.1.2 - It follows from remark 2.1.1 that in order to describe the Apéry sequence  $\Gamma(a)$  we can consider only the case where  $(a,b) = 1$  .

Let  $s_0$  be the unique integer such that

$$s_0 b \equiv c \pmod{a} \quad \text{and} \quad 0 < s_0 < a$$

put  $s_{-1} := a$  and consider the Jung-Hirzebruch continuous fraction

$$s_{-1} := a = q_1 s_0 - s_1 \qquad q_i \geq 2, s_i \geq 0$$

$$s_0 = q_2 s_1 - s_2$$

...

$$s_{m-1} = q_{m+1} s_m$$

and the sequences  $P_i, R_i$  defined by

$$P_{-1} = 0, P_0 = 1, P_{i+1} = P_i Q_i - P_{i-1} Q_{i-1}$$

$$R_i = \frac{s_i b - P_i c}{a}, R_{-1} = b, R_0 = \frac{s_0 b - c}{a}.$$

Then  $\{s_i\}$  and  $\{R_i\}$  are strictly decreasing sequences,  $P_i$  is a strictly increasing sequence of integers;  $R_{m+1}$  is a negative integer, and for any  $i$  we have  $s_i P_{i+1} - s_{i+1} P_i = a$ .

2.2 - Definition. - Let  $v$  the unique integer number s.t.

$$R_{v+1} \leq 0 < R_v.$$

This is equivalent to saying that  $\frac{s_{v+1}}{P_{v+1}} \leq \frac{c}{b} < \frac{s_v}{P_v}$ . Now we can state the nice theorem of Rödseth.

2.3 - Theorem ([Rö]). - With the above notations, any element  $\theta \in \Gamma(a)$  can be written  $\theta = yb + zc$ , we suppose that  $z$  is the minimal with this property and when this is the case the pair  $(y, z)$  is unique. Now let

$$A = \{(y, z) / 0 \leq y < s_v - s_{v+1}, 0 \leq z < P_{v+1}\}$$

$$B = \{(y, z) / s_v - s_{v+1} \leq y < s_v, 0 \leq z < P_{v+1} - P_v\}$$

then  $\Gamma(a) = \{yb + zc / (y, z) \in A \cup B\}$ .

And now we can describe the syzygies of a monomial curve  $C$  given by  $X = t^a, Y = t^b, Z = t^c$ .

2.4 - Theorem. - Let  $a, b, c$  three natural numbers if  $a, b$  are not coprime by using 1.3 we can suppose  $(a, b) = 1$  ; then with the above notations the matrix syzygies for the curve  $C$  in  $k^3$  is:

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} X^{R_{\nu}} & Y^{s_{\nu}-s_{\nu+1}} \\ Y^{s_{\nu+1}} & Z^{P_{\nu}} \\ Z^{P_{\nu+1}-P_{\nu}} & X^{-R_{\nu+1}} \end{pmatrix} .$$

Moreover the curve  $C$  is a complete intersection if one of  $R_{\nu+1}, P_{\nu}$  or  $s_{\nu+1}$  is null.

Proof. - By definition of the sequences  $s_i, P_i, R_i$  we have the relations

$$(1) \quad P_{\nu+1}c = bs_{\nu+1} + (-R_{\nu+1})a$$

$$(2) \quad s_{\nu}b = R_{\nu}a + P_{\nu}c$$

$$(3) \quad (R_{\nu}-R_{\nu+1})a = (s_{\nu}-s_{\nu+1})b + (P_{\nu+1}-P_{\nu})c$$

the third relation is a consequence of the first two. Also we use the relation

$$(4) \quad s_{\nu}P_{\nu+1} - s_{\nu+1}P_{\nu} = a .$$

Now by [He] p.10 it is enough to prove the following claims:

Claim I. -  $P_{\nu+1}c$  is the least multiple of  $c$  in  $\langle a, b \rangle$  .

Claim II. - i)  $s_{\nu}b$  is the least multiple of  $b$  in  $\langle a, c \rangle$

or ii)  $(R_{\nu} - R_{\nu+1})a$  is the least multiple of  $a$  in  $\langle b, c \rangle$ .

Proof of Claim I. - Suppose that there exists  $\gamma$ ,  $0 < \gamma < P_{\nu+1}$  such that  $\gamma c \in \langle a, b \rangle$ , then  $(0, \gamma) \in A \cup B$  by 2.3 and  $\gamma c \in \Gamma(a)$ , i.e.  $\gamma c = \lambda b$  this contradicts the minimality condition on the coefficient given to define  $A$  and  $B$  (see 2.3).

Proof of Claim II. - Suppose that there exists  $\gamma$ ,  $0 < \gamma < s_{\nu}$  such that  $\gamma b \in \langle a, c \rangle$ ,  $\gamma$  minimal with this property by 2.3  $(\gamma, 0) \in A \cup B$ , and  $\gamma b = \lambda c$ , using the Claim I  $\lambda \geq P_{\nu+1}$  and we can write  $\gamma b = (\lambda - P_{\nu+1})c + b s_{\nu+1} + (-R_{\nu+1})a$ . But  $\gamma b \in \Gamma(a)$  then  $-R_{\nu+1} = 0$ . If  $R_{\nu+1} \neq 0$  we get a contradiction and we have proved the part i) of the Claim II. If  $R_{\nu+1} = 0$ , because  $\gamma$  is minimal we must have  $s_{\nu+1} = 0$  and  $P_{\nu+1} = 0$  or  $\gamma = s_{\nu+1}$  and  $\lambda = P_{\nu+1}$  the first relation is impossible by definition of  $s_i, P_i$ . From the relation  $P_{\nu+1}c = s_{\nu+1}b$  we get that  $s_{\nu+1} = \delta \frac{c}{\alpha}$ ,  $P_{\nu+1} = \delta \frac{b}{\alpha}$ , where  $\alpha = (b, c)$  and  $\delta = (s_{\nu+1}, P_{\nu+1})$  and by (4) that  $(s_{\nu} - s_{\nu+1})\delta(b/\alpha) + (P_{\nu+1} - P_{\nu})\delta(c/\alpha) = a$  in particular  $\delta$  divides  $a$ . Now using (3) we obtain

$$\delta R_{\nu} = \alpha, \text{ i.e. } \delta \text{ divides } \alpha = (b, c)$$

this implies  $\delta = 1$  by hypothesis. Now it is clear that if  $\gamma a \in \langle b, c \rangle$  then  $\alpha$  divides  $\gamma$ ; this implies that  $R_{\nu}a$  is

the least multiple of  $a$  in  $\langle b, c \rangle$  and finish the proof of 2.4. Note that  $R_\nu = R_\nu - R_{\nu+1}$  because in this case  $R_{\nu+1} = 0$ .

The last affirmation in 2.4 is clear from the description of the matrix syzygies.

2.5 - Remark. - The results in this section are used in [Mo-1] to construct a large series of examples where the symbolic Rees ring  $\bigoplus P^{(n)}$  is noetherian.



§ 3. Syzygies of projective monomial curves in  $\mathbb{P}^3$

3.0 - We consider the projective curve given by the parametrisation  $X = u^a$ ,  $Y = u^b t^{a-b}$ ,  $Z = u^c t^{a-c}$ ,  $W = t^a$  when  $a, b, c$  are natural numbers  $a > b > c > 0$ . Related with this projective curve we have two associated affine curves putting respectively  $u = 1$  or  $t = 1$

$$\begin{aligned} C : X &= u^a, Y = u^b, Z = u^c \\ D : Y &= t^{a-b}, Z = t^{a-c}, W = t^a. \end{aligned}$$

Many people have studied the question of finding the syzygies of a projective monomial curve, specially Bresinsky and Renschuch, now using the results on section two it is possible to give equations and syzygies in function of the invariants introduced there. This algorithm is of special interest in cases where computer fails because of high number of computations. Using the algorithm in section 2 and then Bresinsky-Renschuch [B-R] and Bresinsky [B]; computation of syzygies needs only fourth operations on integer numbers.

3.1 Proposition. - Consider the morphism  $\phi : k[X, Y, Z, W] \rightarrow k[u, t]$  given by  $X = u^a$ ,  $Y = u^b t^{a-b}$ ,  $Z = u^c t^{a-c}$ ,  $W = t^a$  where  $a > b > c$  and we assume  $(a, b) = 1$ . The notations are those introduced in section 2 and we put  $R_j^! = s_j - P_j - R_j$  for any  $j$ . Then the ideal  $\text{Ker}\phi$  is generated by the polynomials

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} Z^{P_{v+1}} - Y^{S_{v+1}} X^{-R_{v+1}} W^{-R'_{v+1}} \\ X^{R_v - R_{v+1}} W^{R'_v - R'_{v+1}} - Y^{S_v - S_{v+1}} Z^{P_{v+1} - P_v} \\ X^{R_v} Z^{P_v} - Y^{S_v} W^{-R'_v} \end{array} \right.$$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} Y^{2S_v - S_{v+1}} Z^{P_{v+1} - 2P_v} - X^{2R_v - R_{v+1}} W^{2R'_v - R'_{v+1}} \\ Y^{(q_{v+1} - 1)S_v - S_{v+1}} Z^{P_{v+1} - (q_{v+1} - 1)P_v} - X^{(q_{v+1} - 1)R_v - R_{v+1}} \\ W^{(q_{v+1} - 1)R'_v - R'_{v+1}} \\ \dots \\ W^{-R'_{v-1}} Y^{S_{v-1}} - X^{R_{v-1}} Z^{P_{v-1}} \end{array} \right.$$

We repeat this last group by changing  $v$  by  $v-1$  and so on. The process stops when we find  $R'_i \geq 0$ , then the last equation will be

$$Y^{S_i} - X^{R_i} Z^{P_i} W^{R'_i}$$

instead of  $W^{-R'_i} Y^{S_i} - X^{R_i} Z^{P_i}$ .

3.1.1 - The proof is a direct consequence of our algorithm described in section 2 and Bresinsky-Renschuch [B-R]. The syzygies follows from these equations by using Bresinsky [B].

3.2 - In the case where  $(a,b) \neq 1$  we can give the following receipt to find the equations:



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