



ON THE DIOPHANTINE EQUATION

$$x^4 - q^4 = py^3$$

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Abstract

In this paper we study the Diophantine equation $x^4 - q^4 = py^3$, with the following conditions: p and q are prime distincts natural numbers, x is not divisible with p , $p \equiv 11 \pmod{12}$, $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, \bar{p} is a generator of the group (\mathbf{Z}_q^*, \cdot) , 2 is a cubic residue mod q .

1 Introduction

In some previous papers, [3], [4], [5], we have solved Diophantine equations of the form

$$x^4 - y^4 = pz^2,$$

where p is a prime natural number taken from the set $\{3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 19, 29, 37\}$. Here we try to solve an analogous Diophantine equation, replacing the exponent 2 of z by 3 and considering y given, namely y being a prime number, q . It is clear that it has been necessary to impose some additional conditions for p and q . In the proofs of the statements, one can see why those conditions are necessary.

But first we recall some results.

Proposition 1.1. ([7]). *If p is a prime natural number, $p \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$ and ϵ is a primitive root of unity of order p , then p is irreducible in the ring $Z[\epsilon]$.*

Proposition 1.2. ([7]). *If p is a prime natural number and $p \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, then its decomposition in irreducible factors in the ring $Z[\epsilon]$ is $p = \pi_1 \pi_2$,*

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where π_1 is not associated to π_2 .

Proposition 1.3. ([7]). Let $\pi \in Z[\epsilon]$ be an irreducible element in $Z[\epsilon]$ with $N(\pi) \neq 3$ and $\alpha \in Z[\epsilon]$, α be not divisible with π . Then there exists a unique $m \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, such that $\alpha^{\frac{N(\pi)-1}{3}} \equiv \epsilon^m \pmod{\pi}$.

Definition 1.4. ([7]). Let $\pi \in Z[\epsilon]$ be an irreducible element in $Z[\epsilon]$ with $N(\pi) \neq 3$ and $\alpha \in Z[\epsilon]$. We define the **residual cubic symbol** $\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3$ in the following manner:

- i) $\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3 = 0$ if π/α ;
- ii) $\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3 = \epsilon^m$, if α is not divisible with π where $m \in \{0, 1, 2\}$ and $\alpha^{\frac{N(\pi)-1}{3}} \equiv \epsilon^m \pmod{\pi}$.

Proposition 1.5. ([7]). Let $\pi \in Z[\epsilon]$ be an irreducible element in $Z[\epsilon]$ with $N(\pi) \neq 3$ and $\alpha, \beta \in Z[\epsilon]$. Then:

- i) $\alpha \equiv \beta \pmod{\pi}$ implies $\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\beta}{\pi}\right)_3$;
- ii) $\left(\frac{\alpha\beta}{\pi}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3 \left(\frac{\beta}{\pi}\right)_3$;
- iii) $\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3 = 1$ if and only if α is not divisible with π and the congruence $x^3 \equiv \alpha \pmod{\pi}$ has at least one solution $x \in Z[\epsilon]$.

Proposition 1.6. ([7]). Let $\pi \in Z[\epsilon]$ be an irreducible element in $Z[\epsilon]$ with $N(\pi) \neq 3$. Then, for any $\alpha \in Z[\epsilon]$, we have:

$$\overline{\left(\frac{\alpha}{\pi}\right)_3} = \left(\frac{\alpha^2}{\pi}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\bar{\alpha}}{\pi}\right)_3.$$

Theorem 1.7. ([7]). Let π_1 and π_2 be two irreducible primary elements in $Z[\epsilon]$ such that $N(\pi_1) \neq 3 \neq N(\pi_2)$ and $N(\pi_1) \neq N(\pi_2)$. Then:

$$\left(\frac{\pi_1}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\pi_2}{\pi_1}\right)_3.$$

Theorem 1.8. ([2]). Let ξ be a primitive root of l -order, of unity, where l is a prime natural number. Then a prime ideal P in the ring $Z[\xi]$ is in one of the cases:

- (i) if $\left\{\frac{\mu}{P}\right\} = 0$ then P is in the ring of integers A in the Kummer field $Q(M; \xi)$ (where $M = \sqrt[l]{\mu}$, $\mu \in \mathbf{Z}$) equal with the l -power of a prime ideal, or
- (ii) if $\left\{\frac{\mu}{P}\right\} = 1$ then P decomposes in l different prime ideals in the ring A ,

or

(iii) if $\left\{\frac{\mu}{\bar{p}}\right\}$ is equal with a root of order l of unity, different from 1, then P is a prime ideal in the ring A .

Proposition 1.9. ([6]). Let A be the ring of integers of the Kummer field $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt[l]{p}; \xi)$ where p is a prime natural number and ξ is a primitive root of order l of unity. Let G be the Galois group of the Kummer field $\mathbf{Q}(\sqrt[l]{p}; \xi)$ over \mathbf{Q} . Then for any $\sigma \in G$ and for any $P \in \text{Spec}(A)$ we have $\sigma(P) \in \text{Spec}(A)$.

Proposition 1.10. ([1]). Let p be an odd prime natural number and ξ be a primitive root of order p of the unity. Then $1 - \xi^k = u_k(1 - \xi)$, $k \notin p\mathbf{Z}$ and $u_k \in U(Z[\xi])$.

Proposition 1.11. ([7]). Let p be an odd prime natural number. Then:

- i) 2 is a cubic residue mod 3 (in the case $p = 3$);
- ii) if $p \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$, then 2 is a cubic residue mod p ;
- iii) if $p \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, then 2 is a cubic residue mod p if and only if there exist $c, d \in \mathbf{Z}$ such that $p = c^2 + 27d^2$.

Proposition 1.12. ([6]). Let ϵ be a primitive root of 3-order of unity. Then the extension of fields $\mathbf{Q} \subset \mathbf{Q}(\epsilon, \sqrt[3]{p})$ is a Galois extension and the Galois group $G \cong (S_3, \circ)$. $G = \left\{1_{\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon, \sqrt[3]{p})}, v_1, v_1^2, v_2, v_1 \circ v_2, v_1^2 \circ v_2\right\}$, where $v_1(\epsilon) = \epsilon$, $v_1(\sqrt[3]{p}) = \epsilon\sqrt[3]{p}$, $v_2(\epsilon) = \epsilon^2$, $v_2(\sqrt[3]{p}) = \sqrt[3]{p}$.

2 Results

First, we state and prove two propositions that are necessary for solving the equation

$$x^4 - q^4 = py^3 \quad (1)$$

in the conditions (2):

- (i) p and q are different prime natural numbers;
- (ii) x is not divisible with p ;
- (iii) \bar{p} is a generator of the group (Z_q^*, \cdot) ;
- (iv) $p \equiv 11 \pmod{12}$, $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$;
- (v) 2 is a cubic residue mod q .

Lema 2.1. Let p and q be prime integers satisfying the conditions (2) and

take ϵ as a primitive root of order 3 of the unity. If $\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon; \sqrt[3]{p})$ is the Kummer field with the ring of integers A , y_1 and y_2 are integer numbers such that $\gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1$, p does not divide y_2 , then, taking $m, n \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, $m \neq n$,

$$(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) A \text{ and } (y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) A$$

are comaximal ideals of A .

Proof. Let J be the ideal of A generated by $y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1$ and $y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1$. It is sufficient to prove that $J = A$. We may suppose $m < n$. Using Proposition 1.10., we obtain:

$$(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) - (y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) = \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1 (\epsilon^{n-m} - 1) = \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1 u_{n-m} (\epsilon - 1),$$

where u_{n-m} and ϵ^m are units in $\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]$ and in A , since $U(\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]) \subset U(A)$.

Therefore $\sqrt[3]{p} y_1 (\epsilon - 1) \in J$. But $\sqrt[3]{p^2} \in A$, hence it results that

$$p y_1 (\epsilon - 1) \in J. \quad (3)$$

$$(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in J \text{ and } \epsilon^{n-m} \in A \text{ implies } (y_2 \epsilon^{n-m} - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in J.$$

But $(y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in J$, therefore $y_2 (\epsilon^{n-m} - 1) \in J$ and, by using the Proposition 1.10., we get

$$y_2 (\epsilon - 1) \in J. \quad (4)$$

Since $(y_1, y_2) = 1$ and y_2 is not divisible with p , we get $(p y_1, y_2) = 1$, therefore there exist $k_1, k_2 \in \mathbf{Z}$ such that $p y_1 k_1 + y_2 k_2 = 1$. Multiplying the last equality with $\epsilon - 1$ and using the relations (3) and (4), we obtain that $\epsilon - 1 \in J$.

But $3 = (\epsilon - 1)^2 (-\epsilon^2)$ and $-\epsilon^2 \in U(\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]) \subset U(A)$, therefore

$$3 \in J. \quad (5)$$

$(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) (y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in J$. Let $k \in \{0, 1, 2\} - \{m, n\}$. Knowing that $(y_2 - \epsilon^k \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in A$ and that J is an ideal in A , we get:

$$(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) (y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) (y_2 - \epsilon^k \sqrt[3]{p} y_1) \in J.$$

This relation is equivalent with

$$y_2^3 - p y_1^3 \in J. \quad (6)$$

But $y_2^3 - py_1^3 \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, therefore $(3, y_2^3 - py_1^3) = 1$. We obtain that there exists $h_1, h_2 \in \mathbf{Z}$ such that $3h_1 + (y_2^3 - py_1^3)h_2 = 1$. Using the relations (5) and (6) we get that $J = A$.

In the same way we may prove the next lemma.

Lema 2.2. *Let us consider p and q as in the above conditions (2) and take ϵ as a primitive root of order 3 of the unity. If $\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon; \sqrt[3]{2p})$ is the Kummer field with the ring of integers A , y_1 and y_2 are integers numbers, $\gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1$, p does not divide y_2 , then, taking, $m, n \in \{0, 1, 2\}$, $m \neq n$,*

$$\left(y_2 - \epsilon^m \sqrt[3]{2py_1}\right) A \text{ and } \left(y_2 - \epsilon^n \sqrt[3]{2py_1}\right) A$$

are comaximal ideals of A .

Now we try to solve the equation $x^4 - q^4 = py^3$.

Theorem 2.3. *The equation $x^4 - q^4 = py^3$ does not have nontrivial integer solutions in the conditions (2).*

Proof. We suppose that the equation (1) has nontrivial integer solutions $(x, y) \in \mathbf{Z}^2$ satisfying the conditions (2). We consider two cases, whether x is odd or even.

Case I: x is an odd number

Knowing that q is a prime natural number, $q \geq 3$, we get $x^2, q^2 \equiv 1 \pmod{4}$ and therefore $x^2 - q^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{4}$, $x^2 + q^2 \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$.

We denote $d = \gcd(x^2 - q^2, x^2 + q^2)$. Then $d/2x^2$ and $d/2q^2$. But $\gcd(x, y) = 1$ implies x is not divisible with q . Therefore $d = 2$. We get either that

$$x^2 - q^2 = 4py_1^3, \quad x^2 + q^2 = 2y_2^3,$$

where $y_1, y_2 \in \mathbf{Z}$, $2y_1y_2 = y$, y_2 is an odd number, $\gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1$, or that

$$x^2 - q^2 = 4y_1^3, \quad x^2 + q^2 = 2py_2^3,$$

where $y_1, y_2 \in \mathbf{Z}$, $2y_1y_2 = y$, y_2 is an odd number, $\gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1$.

In the last case, we obtain that $p \mid (x^2 + q^2)$, in contradiction with the fact that $p \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$. It remains to study the case

$$x^2 - q^2 = 4py_1^3, \quad x^2 + q^2 = 2y_2^3.$$

By subtracting the two equations, we obtain $q^2 = y_2^3 - 2py_1^3$. Let A be the ring of integers of the Kummer field $\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon; \sqrt[3]{2p})$, where ϵ is a primitive root of order 3 of unity. In A , the last equality becomes:

$$q^2 = \left(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{2p}\right) \left(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{2p}\right) \left(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{2p}\right). \quad (7)$$

But $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ implies (by using Proposition 1.2.) $q = \pi_1 \pi_2$, where π_1, π_2 are prime elements in the ring $\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]$, π_1 is not associate in divisibility with π_2 .

We get: $q^2 = N(q) = N(\pi_1)N(\pi_2)$, $\pi_1, \pi_2 \notin U(\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon])$, therefore $N(\pi_1) = N(\pi_2) = q$. As p is a prime natural number, $p \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$ implies (from Proposition 1.1.) that p remains prime in the ring $\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]$ and $N(p) = p^2 \neq 3$. We obtain $N(p) \neq N(\pi_i)$, $i = 1, 2$. Using Theorem 1.7., we have that

$$\left(\frac{p}{\pi_i}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\pi_i}{p}\right)_3, \quad i = 1, 2. \quad (8)$$

But 2 is a cubic residue mod q and this implies that there exists $x \in \mathbf{Z}$ such that $x^3 \equiv 2 \pmod{q}$, therefore there exists $x \in \mathbf{Z}$ such that $x^3 \equiv 2 \pmod{\pi_i}$, for any $i = 1, 2$. Hence $\left(\frac{2}{\pi_i}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{\pi_i}{2}\right)_3 = 1$, for any $i = 1, 2$. Using Proposition 1.5., we obtain: $\left(\frac{2p}{\pi_i}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{2}{\pi_i}\right)_3 \left(\frac{p}{\pi_i}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{p}{\pi_i}\right)_3$.

From the proof of the Theorem 1.7. and from the fact that p, q are prime natural numbers, $p \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$, $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$, we have that $\left(\frac{p}{q}\right)_3 = 1$. This is equivalent to

$$\left(\frac{\pi_1}{p}\right)_3 \left(\frac{\pi_2}{p}\right)_3 = 1. \quad (9)$$

From the relations (4) and (5), we have that $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = 1$ or $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \epsilon$, $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = \epsilon^2$ or $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \epsilon^2$, $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = \epsilon$.

If $\left(\frac{p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = 1$, then $p^{\frac{N(\pi_i)-1}{3}} \equiv 1 \pmod{\pi_i}$, $i = 1, 2$.

Since $N(\pi_i) = q$, $i = 1, 2$ and π_1, π_2 are irreducible elements in the rings $\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]$, π_1 is not associate in divisibility with π_2 , we get that $p^{\frac{q-1}{3}} \equiv 1 \pmod{q}$, in contradiction with the fact that \bar{p} is a generator of the group (\mathbf{Z}_q^*, \cdot) .

Therefore $\left(\frac{2p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{p}{\pi_1}\right)_3 = \epsilon^i$ and $\left(\frac{2p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = \left(\frac{p}{\pi_2}\right)_3 = \epsilon^j$, with $i, j \in \{1, 2\}$, $i \neq j$.

According to Theorem 1.8., we get that $\pi_1 A$ and $\pi_2 A$ are prime ideals in the ring A .

Passing to ideals in the relation (7), we obtain:

$$(\pi_1 A)^2 (\pi_2 A)^2 = \left(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{2p}\right) A \left(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{2p}\right) A \left(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{2p}\right) A. \quad (10)$$

According to Lema 2.2., the ideals $(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{2p}) A$, $(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{2p}) A$, $(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{2p}) A$ are comaximal in pair, therefore the equality (10) is impossible. We get that the equation (1) does not have nontrivial integer solutions, in the case when x is an odd number.

Case II: x is an even number.

In this case, $x^2 - q^2$ and $x^2 + q^2$ are odd numbers.

We prove that $\gcd(x^2 - q^2, x^2 + q^2) = 1$. Suppose that there exists an odd prime natural number d such that $d \mid (x^2 - q^2)$ and $d \mid (x^2 + q^2)$. Hence $d \mid x$ and $d \mid q$. Using the hypothesis we obtain that $d \mid y$, in contradiction with the fact $(x, y) = 1$. Therefore $\gcd(x^2 - q^2, x^2 + q^2) = 1$. Then (1) becomes either the system:

$$x^2 - q^2 = py_1^3, x^2 + q^2 = y_2^3, \text{ with } y_1, y_2 \in \mathbf{Z}, y_1 y_2 = y, \gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1$$

or the system:

$$x^2 - q^2 = y_1^3, x^2 + q^2 = py_2^3, \text{ with } y_1, y_2 \in \mathbf{Z}, y_1 y_2 = y, \gcd(y_1, y_2) = 1.$$

In the last case, we obtain that $p \mid (x^2 + q^2)$, in contradiction with the fact that $p \equiv 3 \pmod{4}$. It remains to study the case

$$x^2 - q^2 = py_1^3, x^2 + q^2 = y_2^3.$$

Subtracting the two equations, we get $2q^2 = y_2^3 - py_1^3$.

Let A be the ring of integers of the Kummer field $\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon; \sqrt[3]{p})$, where ϵ is a primitive root of order 3 of the unity. In A , the last equality becomes:

$$(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p})(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p})(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) = 2q^2. \quad (11)$$

Similarly with the case when x is an odd number, we obtain $qA = \pi_1 A \cdot \pi_2 A$, where π_1, π_2 are irreducible elements in the rings $\mathbf{Z}[\epsilon]$, π_1 is not associate in divisibility with π_2 .

Since $p \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$ and using Proposition 1.5. and Proposition 1.11., we get that $\left(\frac{2}{p}\right)_3 = 1$.

Using Theorem 1.8., we get that, in the ring A , $2A = P_1 P_2 P_3$, where P_k , $k = 1, 2, 3$ are prime ideals in the ring A .

Considering the corresponding ideals in the relation (11), we obtain:

$$(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A (y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}) A (y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = P_1 P_2 P_3 (\pi_1 A)^2 (\pi_2 A)^2. \quad (12)$$

According to Proposition 1.12., $\mathbf{Q} \subset \mathbf{Q}(\epsilon, \sqrt[3]{p})$ and the Galois group $G \cong (S_3, \circ)$. Hence $G = \{1_{\mathbf{Q}(\epsilon, \sqrt[3]{p})}, v_1, v_1^2, v_2, v_1 \circ v_2, v_1^2 \circ v_2\}$, where $v_1(\epsilon) = \epsilon$,

$$v_1(\sqrt[3]{p}) = \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}, v_1^2(\epsilon) = \epsilon, v_1^2(\sqrt[3]{p}) = \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}.$$

Case (i): if there exists $k \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ such that $(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = P_k \in \text{Spec}(A)$, we use Proposition 1.9., and we obtain that

$$v_2((y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A) = (y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}) A \in \text{Spec}(A)$$

and

$$v_2^2((y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A) = (y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) A \in \text{Spec}(A),$$

therefore the equality (12) is impossible.

Case (ii): if there exist k and h in $\{1, 2, 3\}$, $k \neq h$ such that $(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = P_k P_h$, where $P_k, P_h \in \text{Spec}(A)$, we use Proposition 1.9. obtaining that

$$(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}) A = v_2((y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A) = (\pi_1 A) P_3 \text{ and}$$

$$(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = v_2^2((y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A) = (\pi_1 A) (\pi_2 A)$$

or similar equalities. This fact implies that the ideals $(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A$, $(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}) A$, $(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) A$ are comaximal to each other.

Case (iii): if $(y_2 - y_1 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = (\pi_1 A)^2$, then $(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon \sqrt[3]{p}) A = (\pi_2 A)^2$,

$$(y_2 - y_1 \epsilon^2 \sqrt[3]{p}) A = P^2, P \in \text{Spec}(A), \text{ in contradiction with (12).}$$

From the cases (i), (ii), (iii), it results that the equality (12) is impossible. We get that the equation (1) does not have nontrivial integer solutions satisfying the conditions (2).

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