

# On the Atomicity of Monoid Algebras of Finite Characteristic

(joint work with Jim Coykendall)

Felix Gotti

UC Berkeley

AMS Special Session:  
Factorization and Arithmetic Properties  
of Integral Domains and Monoids

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## Definition (monoid)

**Just for today**, a semigroup  $(M, *)$  with identity  $e$  is called a *monoid* provided that it is

- 1 commutative;
- 2 cancellative;
- 3 torsion-free (i.e.,  $x^n = y^n$  implies  $x = y$  for all  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $x, y \in M$ .)

For a monoid  $M$ , we let  $M^\times$  denote the set of invertible elements (or units) of  $M$ .

**Notation:** From now on, monoids here will be additively written unless otherwise specified.

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# Atomic Monoids

Let  $M$  be a monoid.

- An element  $a \in M \setminus M^\times$  is an *atom* if  $x + y = a$  implies that either  $x \in M^\times$  or  $y \in M^\times$ .
- We let  $\mathcal{A}(M)$  denote the set of atoms of  $M$ .
- The monoid  $M$  is called *atomic* if every element in  $M \setminus M^\times$  can be expressed as a sum of atoms.

Proposition (Easy to verify)

*Let  $M$  and  $N$  be monoids. If  $M$  and  $N$  are atomic, then  $M \times N$  is atomic.*

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# ACCP Monoids

Let  $M$  be a monoid.

- A subset  $I$  of  $M$  is an *ideal* of  $M$  if  $I + M \subseteq I$ .
- The ideal  $I$  is *principal* if  $I = x + M$  for some  $x \in M$ .
- The monoid  $M$  is an *ACCP monoid* if every ascending chain of principal ideals of  $M$  eventually stabilizes.

**Proposition** (Easy to prove)

Let  $M$  and  $N$  be monoids.

- If  $M$  and  $N$  satisfy the ACCP, then  $M \times N$  satisfies the ACCP.
- If  $M$  is an ACCP monoid, then  $M$  is atomic.

**Example.** Let  $p_n$  denote the  $n^{\text{th}}$  odd prime. The Gram's monoid,

$$G = \left\langle \frac{1}{2^n \cdot p_n} \mid n \in \mathbb{N} \right\rangle$$

is atomic but does not satisfy the ACCP as the ascending chain of principal ideals  $\{1/2^n + G\}$  does not stabilize.

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# Rank of a Monoid

## Definition (Grothendieck group and rank)

Let  $M$  be a monoid.

- The *Grothendieck group*  $\text{gp}(M)$  of  $M$  is the abelian group satisfying that any abelian group containing a homomorphic image of  $M$  will also contain a homomorphic image of  $\text{gp}(M)$ .
- The *rank* of  $M$  is the rank of the group  $\text{gp}(M)$ , that is, the dimension of the  $\mathbb{Q}$ -vector space  $\mathbb{Q} \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \text{gp}(M)$ .

**Example.** For a submonoid  $M$  of  $(\mathbb{Q}_{\geq 0}, +)$  we have that  $\text{gp}(M) \cong \{r - s \mid r, s \in M\}$  and so  $M$  has rank 1.

**Example.** If  $\alpha$  and  $\beta \in \mathbb{R}_{>0} \setminus \mathbb{Q}$  are linearly independent over  $\mathbb{Q}$  and  $M_1$  and  $M_2$  are submonoids of  $(\mathbb{Q}_{\geq 0}, +)$ , then

$$\text{gp}(\alpha M_1 + \beta M_2) \cong \alpha \text{gp}(M_1) \oplus \beta \text{gp}(M_2),$$

and so  $\alpha M_1 \oplus \beta M_2$  has rank 2.

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# Puiseux Monoids

## Definition (Puiseux monoid)

A *Puiseux monoid* is an additive submonoid of  $(\mathbb{Q}_{\geq 0}, +)$ .

### Elementary Facts:

- A Puiseux monoid  $M$  is isomorphic to a submonoid of  $(\mathbb{N}_0, +)$  iff  $M$  is finitely generated.
- If a submonoid of  $(\mathbb{Q}, +)$  is not a group, then it is isomorphic to a Puiseux monoid.
- The only homomorphisms of Puiseux monoids are given by rational multiplication.
- A monoid has rank 1 if and only if it is isomorphic to a Puiseux monoid.
- If 0 is not a limit point of a Puiseux monoid, then the monoid is atomic.
- Not every Puiseux monoid is atomic:  $\langle 1/2^n \mid n \in \mathbb{N} \rangle$  has no atoms.

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# Why Should We Care About Puiseux Monoids?

**Remark.** Puiseux monoids allow us to construct useful examples of monoid algebras. Such algebras have been used to:

- 1 disprove Cohn's conjecture that any atomic domain must satisfy the ACCP (A. Grams);
- 2 construct the first example of two-dimensional non-Noetherian UFD (R. Gilmer);
- 3 find an ACCP domain with a localization which is not an ACCP domain (D. Anderson, D. Anderson, and M. Zafrullah);
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# Monoid Domains/Algebras

## Definition (monoid algebra/ring)

Let  $M$  be a monoid and let  $R$  be an integral domain. The ring  $R[M]$  consisting of all the polynomial expressions on  $X$  with exponents in  $M$  and coefficients in  $R$  is called the *monoid domain* of  $M$  over  $R$ . When  $R$  is a field,  $R[M]$  is called a *monoid algebra*.

**Remark.** Note that  $R[\mathbb{N}_0]$  is the standard ring of polynomials over  $R$ , i.e.,  $R[\mathbb{N}_0] = R[X]$ .

**Observations.** For an integral domain  $R$  and a monoid  $M$ , the following statements are easy to verify:

- $R[M]$  is an integral domain;
- The set of units of  $R[M]$  is  $R^\times$ ;
- If  $M$  is totally ordered, then  $\deg(fg) = \deg f + \deg g$  for any  $f, g \in R[M] \setminus \{0\}$ .

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# Atomicity: A Question by Gilmer

## Question (Gilmer, 1984)

*For any pair  $(M, R)$  consisting of an atomic monoid  $M$  and an atomic integral domain  $R$ , is the monoid domain  $R[M]$  atomic?*

## Theorem (Roitman)

*There exists an atomic domain  $R$  such that  $R[X]$  is not atomic.*

## Observations:

- The monoid-domain pairs found by Roitman are of the form  $(\mathbb{N}_0, R)$ . Observe that  $\mathbb{N}_0$  is the “nicest” example of nontrivial atomic monoid.
- The “nicest” examples of atomic integral domains are fields.

**Question (G’)**. Can we find a pair  $(M, F)$ , where  $M$  is an atomic monoid and  $F$  is a field such that  $F[M]$  is not atomic?

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## Question (Gilmer, 1984)

*For any pair  $(M, R)$  consisting of an atomic monoid  $M$  and an atomic integral domain  $R$ , is the monoid domain  $R[M]$  atomic?*

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*There exists an atomic domain  $R$  such that  $R[X]$  is not atomic.*

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## Theorem (Coykendall-G: 2018)

*For each field  $F$  of finite characteristic, there exists an atomic monoid  $M$  such that  $F[M]$  is not atomic.*

Sketch of Proof:

- 1 Let  $\{p_n\}$  be the strictly increasing sequence of primes. Set  $p := \text{char}(F)$ , and consider the Puiseux monoid

$$M_p := \left\langle \frac{1}{p^n p_n} \mid p_n \neq p \right\rangle.$$

Note that  $M_2$  is the Gram's monoid.

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## Question

*Is  $G'$  true when restricted to monoids of rank 1, i.e., Puiseux monoids?*

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## Theorem (Coykendall-G: 2018)

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# Is $G'$ True When Restricted to Rank-1 Monoids? (continuation)

## Theorem (Coykendall-G: 2018)

*There exists an atomic Puiseux monoid  $M$  such that the monoid algebra  $\mathbb{Z}_2[M]$  is not atomic.*

### Sketch of Proof:

- 1 Let  $\{\ell_n\}$  be a strictly increasing sequence of positive integers satisfying that  $3^{\ell_n - \ell_{n-1}} > 2^{n+1}$ .
- 2 Consider the Puiseux monoid

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# Related Open Questions

## Question

*For each prime  $p$ , can we find a pair  $(M, F)$ , where  $M$  is a rank-1 atomic monoid and  $F$  is a field of characteristic  $p$  such that  $F[M]$  is not atomic?*

## Question

*Can we find a pair  $(M, F)$ , where  $M$  is an atomic monoid and  $F$  is a field of characteristic 0 such that  $F[M]$  is not atomic?*

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**THANK YOU!**