



# From the Ideal Theorem to the class number

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*Abstract.* In this article, we provide an explicit upper bound for  $h_K \mathcal{R}_K d_K^{-1/2}$  which depends on an effective constant in the error term of the Ideal Theorem.

## 1 Introduction

Let  $K$  be a number field of degree  $n \geq 3$ , signature  $(r_1, r_2)$ , discriminant  $(-1)^{r_2} d_K$ , class number  $h_K$ , regulator  $\mathcal{R}_K$ , and let  $w_K$  be the number of roots of unity in  $K$ . Let  $\kappa_K$  be the residue at  $s = 1$  of the Dedekind zeta-function  $\zeta_K(s)$  attached to  $K$ . Estimating  $h_K$  is a long-standing problem in algebraic number theory. One of the classic way is the use of the so-called *analytic class number formula* stating that

$$(1.1) \quad h_K \mathcal{R}_K = \frac{w_K}{2^n} \left( \frac{2}{\pi} \right)^{r_2} d_K^{1/2} \kappa_K,$$

and to use Hecke's integral representation and the functional equation of the Dedekind zeta-function to majorize  $\kappa_K$ . This is done in [7, 8] with additional properties of log-convexity of some functions related to  $\zeta_K$  which enables Louboutin to reach the following bound:

$$(1.2) \quad h_K \mathcal{R}_K \leq \frac{w_K}{2} \left( \frac{2}{\pi} \right)^{r_2} \left( \frac{e \log d_K}{4n - 4} \right)^{n-1} d_K^{1/2}.$$

Let  $r_K(m)$  be the  $m$ th coefficient of  $\zeta_K$ , i.e., the number of nonzero integral ideals of  $\mathcal{O}_K$  of norm  $m$ , and denote  $\Delta_K(x)$  to be the error term in the Ideal Theorem, i.e.,

$$(1.3) \quad \Delta_K(x) = \sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) - \kappa_K x.$$

The aim of this work is to prove the following result.

**Theorem 1.1** *Let  $K$  be an algebraic number field of degree  $n \geq 3$ , and set  $\gamma_3 = 214$  and  $\gamma_n = 10$  if  $n \geq 4$ . Assume that there exist  $\alpha \in (0, \frac{2}{n})$  and a constant*

$$C_K \geq \exp \left( \max \left( \gamma_n, \alpha n + \frac{1}{4\alpha^2} \right) \right)$$

Received by the editors March 16, 2023; revised April 26, 2023; accepted May 23, 2023.

Published online on Cambridge Core May 26, 2023.

AMS subject classification: 11R29, 11R42.

Keywords: Class number, Dedekind zeta-function, Ideal Theorem.



such that, for  $x \geq 1$ ,

$$(1.4) \quad |\Delta_K(x)| \leq C_K x^{1-\alpha},$$

where  $\Delta_K(x)$  is given in (1.3). Then

$$h_K \mathcal{R}_K < \frac{3w_K}{2} \left(\frac{2}{\pi}\right)^{r_2} \left( \frac{\left(\frac{1}{2\alpha} \log C_K\right)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{\left(\frac{1}{2\alpha} \log C_K\right)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right) d_K^{1/2}.$$

## 2 Tools

The first lemma is a Titchmarsh-like generalization of [12, Theorem 12.5] to number fields established by Ayoub [1]. The result is stated for the quadratic case, but as it can be seen in the proof and as the author points it out, it is still true for the general case (see also [5, Lemma 13.3]).

**Lemma 2.1** *Let  $n \geq 3$  and  $\mu_K$  be the infimum of the real numbers  $\sigma$  for which the integral*

$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(\sigma + it)|^2}{|\sigma + it|^2} dt$$

converges. Then  $\mu_K \leq 1 - \frac{2}{n}$  and, for all  $\mu_K < \sigma < 1$ , we have

$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(\sigma + it)|^2}{|\sigma + it|^2} dt = \int_0^{\infty} \Delta_K(x)^2 x^{-1-2\sigma} dx.$$

**Proof** Assume  $\frac{1}{n} \leq \sigma \leq 1 - \frac{1}{n}$ . By [3, Theorem 4], we have, for all  $\varepsilon > 0$ ,

$$\int_1^T |\zeta_K(\sigma + it)|^2 dt \ll T^{n(1-\sigma)+\varepsilon}.$$

The exponent of  $T$  is less than 2 for  $\sigma > 1 - \frac{2-\varepsilon}{n}$  and note that  $1 - \frac{2}{n} \geq \frac{1}{n}$  since  $n \geq 3$ . This implies that

$$\int_{T/2}^T \frac{|\zeta_K(\sigma + it)|^2}{|\sigma + it|^2} dt \ll T^{-\eta}$$

for some  $\eta = \eta(\varepsilon) > 0$ . Now replacing  $T$  by  $2^{-j}T$  and summing over  $j \geq 1$  yields  $\mu_K \leq 1 - \frac{2}{n}$ . For the second part of the lemma, we start by using Perron's formula [11, (2.3) p. 217] yielding

$$\sum'_{n \leq x} r_K(n) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{2-i\infty}^{2+i\infty} \frac{\zeta_K(s)}{s} x^s ds,$$

where  $\sum'$  means that if  $x$  is a positive integer, then  $\frac{1}{2}r_K(x)$  comes instead of  $r_K(x)$ . Moving the line of integration to some  $1 - (600)^{-2/3} n^{-7/3} \leq c < 1$  sufficiently close to 1, we get

$$\sum'_{n \leq x} r_K(n) = \kappa_K x + \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{c-i\infty}^{c+i\infty} \frac{\zeta_K(s)}{s} x^s ds,$$

so that

$$(2.1) \quad \Delta_K(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \int_{c-iT}^{c+iT} \frac{\zeta_K(s)}{s} x^s ds.$$

Using [9] (see also [2, Theorem 7.18]), there exists an absolute constant  $c_0 > 0$  such that, for  $1 - (600)^{-2/3} n^{-7/3} \leq c < \sigma < 1$  and  $t \geq e$ ,

$$\left| \frac{\zeta_K(\sigma + it)}{\sigma + it} \right| \leq e^{c_0 n^8 d_K^2} t^{600 n^{7/2} (1-\sigma)^{3/2} - 1} (\log t)^{2/3} \leq e^{c_0 n^8 d_K^2} t^{-1} (\log t)^{2/3},$$

so that  $\zeta_K(s)s^{-1} \rightarrow 0$  uniformly in the strip  $1 - (600)^{-2/3} n^{-7/3} \leq c < \sigma < 1$  as  $|t| \rightarrow \infty$ . Hence, on integrating over the rectangle  $d \pm iT$ ,  $c \pm iT$ , with  $\gamma_K < d < c < 1$ , we infer that (2.1) holds for any  $\gamma_K < c < 1$ . Replacing in (2.1)  $x$  by  $1/x$ , taking  $\gamma_K < c < 1$ , and using Parseval's formula [5, Identity (A5)] yields

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(c + it)|^2}{|c + it|^2} dt &= \int_0^{\infty} \Delta_K(1/x)^2 x^{2c-1} dx \\ &= \int_0^{\infty} \Delta_K(u)^2 u^{-2c-1} du \end{aligned}$$

as required. ■

**Corollary 2.2** *Assume hypothesis (1.4), and let  $0 < \delta < \alpha < \frac{2}{n}$ . Then*

$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(1 - \delta + it)|}{|1 - \delta + it|^2} dt \leq \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \delta}} \left( \frac{\kappa_K}{\sqrt{\delta}} + \frac{C_K}{\sqrt{\alpha - \delta}} \right).$$

**Proof** Using Lemma 2.1, (1.4) and the trivial bound  $|\Delta_K(x)| \leq \kappa_K x$  when  $x \in [0, 1]$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(1 - \delta + it)|^2}{|1 - \delta + it|^2} dt &\leq \kappa_K^2 \int_0^1 x^{2\delta-1} dx + C_K^2 \int_1^{\infty} x^{2(\delta-\alpha)-1} dx \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{\kappa_K^2}{\delta} + \frac{C_K^2}{\alpha - \delta} \right), \end{aligned}$$

and using the Cauchy–Schwarz inequality, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(1 - \delta + it)|}{|1 - \delta + it|^2} dt &\leq \frac{1}{2\pi} \left( \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(1 - \delta + it)|^2}{|1 - \delta + it|^2} dt \right)^{1/2} \left( \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dt}{|1 - \delta + it|^2} \right)^{1/2} \\ &\leq \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \delta}} \left( \frac{\kappa_K^2}{\delta} + \frac{C_K^2}{\alpha - \delta} \right)^{1/2} \leq \frac{1}{2\sqrt{1 - \delta}} \left( \frac{\kappa_K}{\sqrt{\delta}} + \frac{C_K}{\sqrt{\alpha - \delta}} \right) \end{aligned}$$

as asserted. ■

**Lemma 2.3** *Uniformly for all  $x \geq 1$  and all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , we have*

$$\sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} \leq \frac{x \log x}{(n - 1)!} (\log x + n - 1)^{n-2}.$$

**Proof** Let  $\tau_n$  be the  $n$ th Piltz–Dirichlet divisor function. We have  $r_K(m) \leq \tau_n(m)$  and from the bound [2, Exercise 78]

$$\sum_{m \leq t} \tau_n(m) \leq t \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \binom{n-1}{j} \frac{(\log t)^j}{j!} \quad (t \geq 1),$$

so that

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} &= \int_1^x \frac{1}{t} \left( \sum_{m \leq t} r_K(m) \right) dt \\ &\leq \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \binom{n-1}{j} \frac{1}{j!} \int_1^x (\log t)^j dt \\ &= x \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \binom{n-1}{j} (-1)^j \left\{ \sum_{k=0}^j \frac{(-\log x)^k}{k!} - \frac{1}{x} \right\} \\ &= -x \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} \binom{n-1}{j} (-1)^j \sum_{k=j+1}^{\infty} \frac{(-\log x)^k}{k!} \\ &= -x \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{(-\log x)^k}{k!} \sum_{j=0}^{\min(n-1, k-1)} (-1)^j \binom{n-1}{j} \\ &= -x \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (-1)^{k+\min(n-1, k-1)} \frac{(\log x)^k}{k!} \binom{n-2}{\min(n-1, k-1)} \\ &= x \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} \frac{(\log x)^k}{k!} \binom{n-2}{k-1} \\ &\leq \frac{x \log x}{(n-1)!} (\log x + n - 1)^{n-2}, \end{aligned}$$

where we used [4, Identity (1.5)] in the 6th line, and the fact that, for  $0 \leq k \leq n - 3$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{(k+1)!} &= \frac{1}{(n-1)!} \prod_{i=2}^{n-k-1} (i+k) \\ &\leq \frac{1}{(n-1)!} \left( \frac{1}{n-k-2} \sum_{i=2}^{n-k-1} (i+k) \right)^{n-k-2} \\ &\leq \frac{(n-1)^{n-k-2}}{(n-1)!} \end{aligned}$$

by the GM–AM inequality stating that  $(a_1 \dots a_N)^{1/N} \leq N^{-1} (a_1 + \dots + a_N)$ , where  $a_k > 0$ , and this bound also holds when  $k = n - 2$ . ■

**Lemma 2.4** If  $n \geq 3$ ,  $0 < \alpha < \frac{2}{n}$  and  $\log C_K \geq \gamma_n$ , then

$$\frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \geq \frac{e^{\alpha(n-1)+1} \sqrt{\log C_K}}{\sqrt{\alpha(1-\alpha)}}.$$

**Proof** Squaring the inequality of the lemma, it is equivalent to show

$$(\log C_K)^{2n-5} \geq ((n-2)!)^2 \times \frac{\alpha^{2n-5} e^{2\alpha(n-1)+2}}{1-\alpha}.$$

The function  $\alpha \in (0, \frac{2}{n}) \mapsto \frac{\alpha^{2n-5} e^{2\alpha(n-1)+2}}{1-\alpha}$  is nondecreasing, so that

$$\frac{\alpha^{2n-5} e^{2\alpha(n-1)+2}}{1-\alpha} \leq \frac{2^{2n-5} e^{6-4/n} n^{6-2n}}{n-2}$$

and, therefore, it suffices to show

$$\log C_K \geq 2 \left( \frac{e^{6-4/n} n^{6-2n}}{n-2} \right)^{\frac{1}{2n-5}} ((n-2)!)^{\frac{2}{2n-5}}.$$

Using Stirling’s bound, the inequality of the lemma is guaranteed as soon as

$$\log C_K \geq 2(2\pi)^{\frac{1}{2n-5}} e^{-\frac{12n^3-84n^2+143n-48}{6n(n-2)(2n-5)}} \left( \frac{(n-2)^{2n-4}}{n^{2n-6}} \right)^{\frac{1}{2n-5}},$$

and since the right-hand side is a nonincreasing function in  $n \geq 3$ , it then suffices that  $\log C_K \geq s_n$ , where  $s_3 := 4\pi e^{17/6} \approx 213,7$  and  $s_n = 2^{4/3} \pi^{1/3} e^{13/36} \approx 5,3$  whenever  $n \geq 4$ . ■

### 3 Proof of the main result

By (1.1), it is sufficient to show that

$$(3.1) \quad \kappa_K < 3 \left( \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{2(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right).$$

Assume  $n \geq 3$ , and let  $0 < \delta < \alpha < \frac{2}{n}$  and  $x \geq 1$  satisfying

$$(3.2) \quad \delta(1-\delta) \geq x^{-2\delta}$$

and

$$(3.3) \quad x \geq e^{1+\frac{1}{4\alpha^3}}.$$

By another Perron’s formula (see, for instance, [11, (2.9) p. 220]), we have

$$\sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{2-i\infty}^{2+i\infty} \frac{\zeta_K(s)}{s^2} x^s ds.$$

Shifting the contour integration to the line  $\sigma = 1 - \delta$  and picking up the residue of the integrand at the unique simple pole  $s = 1$ , we obtain by Cauchy’s theorem

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} &= \kappa_K x + \frac{1}{2\pi i} \int_{1-\delta-i\infty}^{1-\delta+i\infty} \frac{\zeta_K(s)}{s^2} x^s ds \\ &:= \kappa_K x + I_\delta(x), \end{aligned}$$

and using Corollary 2.2, we get

$$|I_\delta(x)| \leq \frac{x^{1-\delta}}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{|\zeta_K(1-\delta+it)|}{|1-\delta+it|^2} dt$$

$$\leq \frac{x^{1-\delta}}{2\sqrt{1-\delta}} \left( \frac{\kappa_K}{\sqrt{\delta}} + \frac{C_K}{\sqrt{\alpha-\delta}} \right).$$

Therefore, using (3.2), we derive

$$\sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} \geq \kappa_K x \left( 1 - \frac{x^{-\delta}}{2\sqrt{\delta(1-\delta)}} \right) - \frac{x^{1-\delta}}{2} \frac{C_K}{\sqrt{(1-\delta)(\alpha-\delta)}}$$

$$\geq \frac{\kappa_K x}{2} - \frac{x^{1-\delta}}{2} \frac{C_K}{\sqrt{(1-\delta)(\alpha-\delta)}},$$

and Lemma 2.3 yields

$$\kappa_K \leq \frac{2}{x} \sum_{m \leq x} r_K(m) \log \frac{x}{m} + \frac{x^{-\delta} C_K}{\sqrt{(1-\delta)(\alpha-\delta)}}$$

$$\leq \frac{2 \log x}{(n-1)!} (\log x + n - 1)^{n-2} + \frac{x^{-\delta} C_K}{\sqrt{(1-\delta)(\alpha-\delta)}},$$

whenever  $x$  and  $\delta$  satisfy (3.2). Now choose

$$(3.4) \quad \delta = \alpha - \frac{1}{\log x}.$$

Note that (3.2) is satisfied if  $(\alpha \log x - 1)(1 + (1 - \alpha) \log x) \geq e^2 (\log x)^2 x^{-2\alpha}$ . But using (3.3), we get

$$(\alpha \log x - 1)(1 + (1 - \alpha) \log x) \geq \frac{1}{16\alpha^2} \geq e^2 (\log x)^2 x^{-2\alpha}.$$

Therefore, with the choice (3.4), we derive

$$\kappa_K \leq \frac{2 \log x}{(n-1)!} (\log x + n - 1)^{n-2} + \frac{e C_K x^{-\alpha} \log x}{\sqrt{(1-\alpha) \log x + 1}}$$

$$< \frac{2 \log x}{(n-1)!} (\log x + n - 1)^{n-2} + \frac{e C_K x^{-\alpha}}{\sqrt{1-\alpha}} \sqrt{\log x}$$

provided that (3.3) is fulfilled. We next choose

$$x = C_K^{1/\alpha} e^{1-n}.$$

This yields

$$\kappa_K < 2 \left( \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right) + \frac{e^{\alpha(n-1)+1} \sqrt{\log C_K + \alpha(1-n)}}{\sqrt{\alpha(1-\alpha)}}$$

$$< 2 \left( \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right) + \frac{e^{\alpha(n-1)+1} \sqrt{\log C_K}}{\sqrt{\alpha(1-\alpha)}}.$$

Now, since  $\log C_K \geq \gamma_n \geq 10 > 10 - \frac{10}{n} \geq 5\alpha(n-1)$ , we derive using Lemma 2.4

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{4(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} &= \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \left( \frac{\alpha^{-1} \log C_K}{n-1} - 4 \right) \\ &> \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \\ &\geq \frac{e^{\alpha(n-1)+1} \sqrt{\log C_K}}{\sqrt{\alpha(1-\alpha)}} \end{aligned}$$

and, therefore,

$$\kappa_K < 3 \left( \frac{(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{2(\alpha^{-1} \log C_K)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right)$$

which is (3.1). Now substituting this bound into (1.1) yields the desired result. □

### 4 Example

Improving a result in Sunley’s thesis [10], Lee [13] proved that, for all  $x > 0$ ,

$$|\Delta_K(x)| \leq \Theta_K d_K^{\frac{1}{n+1}} (\log d_K)^{n-1} x^{1-\frac{2}{n+1}}$$

with  $\Theta_K := 0,17 \left(\frac{6n-2}{n-1}\right) 2,26^n e^{4n+26/n} n^{n+1/2} \left(44,39 \times 0,082^n n! + \frac{13}{n-1}\right)$ . Hence, one can take  $\alpha = \frac{2}{n+1}$  and

$$C_K := \Theta_K d_K^{\frac{1}{n+1}} (\log d_K)^{n-1}.$$

The hypothesis  $\log C_K \geq \max\left(\gamma_n, \alpha n + \frac{1}{4\alpha^2}\right)$  is easily fulfilled, and noticing that, for any  $n \geq 3$ ,

$$\frac{1}{2} n^2 \log n < \frac{n+1}{4} \log \Theta_K < 3n^2 \log n,$$

we infer that Theorem 1.1 yields the following result.

**Corollary 4.1** *Let  $K$  be an algebraic number field of degree  $n \geq 3$ . Then*

$$h_K \mathcal{R}_K < \frac{3w_K}{2} \left(\frac{2}{\pi}\right)^{r_2} \left( \frac{\left(\frac{1}{4} \log d_K + L_K\right)^{n-1}}{(n-1)!} - \frac{\left(\frac{1}{4} \log d_K + \ell_K\right)^{n-2}}{(n-2)!} \right) d_K^{1/2},$$

where  $\left. \begin{matrix} L_K \\ \ell_K \end{matrix} \right\} := \frac{1}{4}(n^2 - 1) \log \log d_K + \begin{cases} 3n^2 \log n \\ \frac{1}{2} n^2 \log n. \end{cases}$

Note that Stirling's bound yields

$$h_K \mathcal{R}_K < \frac{3w_K}{2\sqrt{2\pi}} \left(\frac{2}{\pi}\right)^{r_2} \left\{ \frac{1}{\sqrt{n-1}} \left( \frac{e \log d_K}{4n-4} + \frac{eL_K}{n-1} \right)^{n-1} - \frac{e^{-\frac{1}{12(n-2)}}}{\sqrt{n-2}} \left( \frac{e \log d_K}{4n-8} + \frac{e\ell_K}{n-2} \right)^{n-2} \right\} d_K^{1/2}$$

which may be more easily compared to (1.2). It finally should be pointed out that Lee slightly improved in [6] the value of  $C_K$ , showing that

$$C_K := \frac{0.54(3n-1)\rho_K(n)}{(n-1)^2(\log m_K)^{n-1}} \times n^{3/2} \times n!$$

with  $m_K = (n^2\pi/4)^n (n!)^{-2}$  and, if  $n > 13$ ,

$$\rho_K(n) := (n+1)^{n-\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2n}} \left( \frac{5}{8} + \frac{\pi}{2} + \frac{1}{n} + \frac{3}{8n^2} \right)^{1/2} e^{4.13n + \frac{0.02}{n}}.$$

Note that the author also gives the value of  $\rho_K(n)$  in the range  $2 \leq n \leq 13$ . Although an improvement over the previous value of  $C_K$ , this result is somewhat irrelevant to ours, while the calculations of  $L_K$  and  $\ell_K$  are more tedious.

**Acknowledgment** The author deeply acknowledges the anonymous referee for some corrections and remarks that have significantly enhanced the paper. The author also warmly thanks Stephan R. Garcia and Ethan S. Lee for sending him Sunley's thesis [10] and Lee's preprint [13].

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