

The discrete Pompeiu problem on the plane

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Joint work with M. Laczkovich and Cs. Vincze

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Dimitrie Pompeiu (1873-1954) was a Romanian mathematician. As one of the students of Henri Poincaré he obtained a Ph.D. degree in mathematics in 1905 at the Université de Paris (Sorbonne).



His contributions were mainly connected to the fields of mathematical analysis, especially the theory of complex functions. In one of his article¹ he posed a question of integral geometry.

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His contributions were mainly connected to the fields of mathematical analysis, especially the theory of complex functions. In one of his article¹ he posed a question of integral geometry. It is widely known as the **Pompeiu problem**.

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The classical Pompeiu problem

Question

Let f be a continuous function defined on the plane, and let K be a closed set of positive Lebesgue measure. Suppose that

$$\int_{\sigma(K)} f(x, y) d\lambda_x d\lambda_y = 0 \quad (1)$$

for every rigid motion σ of the plane, where λ denotes the Lebesgue measure. Is it true that $f \equiv 0$?

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for every rigid motion σ of the plane, where λ denotes the Lebesgue measure. Is it true that $f \equiv 0$?

We say that the set K has the **Pompeiu's property** if the answer of this question is affirmative (YES).

The continuous case

1. $K = \text{square}$:

- ▶ Pompeiu showed that the square has the Pompeiu property.

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2. $K = \text{disk}$:

- ▶ Chakalov³ showed infinitely many linearly independent solutions of the form $\sin(ax + by)$ for appropriately chosen constants a, b .
- ▶ Williams⁴ proved that if K is simply-connected and has a sufficiently smooth boundary ∂K then there is a function $f \neq 0$.


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Another type of problem - The discrete case

⁵R. Katz, M. Krebs, A. Shaheen, Zero sums on unit square vertex sets and plane colorings, *Amer. Math. Monthly* **121** (2014), no. 7, 610–618.

⁶C. de Groote, M. Duerinckx, Functions with constant mean on similar countable subsets of \mathbb{R}^2 , *Amer. Math. Monthly* **119** (2012), 603–605. 

Another type of problem - The discrete case

- ▶ 70th Putman Mathematical Competition problem (2009):
Let f be a real-valued function on the plane such that for every square $ABCD$ in the plane,
 $f(A) + f(B) + f(C) + f(D) = 0$. Does it follow that $f(P) = 0$ for all points P in the plane?

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- ▶ Groote, Duerinckx⁶ investigated the following version: Given a nonempty finite set $H \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ and a function $f : \mathbb{R}^2 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^d$ such that the **arithmetic mean** of f at the elements of any **similar** copy of H is constant. Does it follow that f is constant on \mathbb{R}^2 ?

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More abstractly

Let X be a nonempty set and \mathcal{G} be the family of bijections mapping X to itself.

Definition

The finite set $H = \{d_1, \dots, d_n\} \subset X$ has the *discrete Pompeiu property* w.r.t. \mathcal{G} if for every function $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ the equation

$$\sum_{i=1}^n f(\sigma(d_i)) = 0 \tag{2}$$

holds for all $\sigma \in \mathcal{G}$ implies that $f \equiv 0$.

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In the definition we replace the Lebesgue measure by the counting measure.

Weighted version

Definition

The finite set $H = \{d_1, \dots, d_n\} \subset X$ has the *weighted discrete Pompeiu property* w.r.t. \mathcal{G} if the following condition is satisfied: whenever a_1, \dots, a_n are complex numbers with $\sum_{i=1}^n a_i \neq 0$ and $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$, the equation

$$\sum_{i=1}^n a_i f(\sigma(d_i)) = 0 \tag{3}$$

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holds for all $\sigma \in \mathcal{G}$, then $f \equiv 0$.

We focus on the similarity group (\mathcal{S}), the translation group (\mathcal{T}) and the isometry group (\mathcal{I}) of \mathbb{C} .

Similarity case

Theorem

Every finite set H has the weighted discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{S} .

⁷G. Kiss and A. Varga, Existence of nontrivial solutions of linear functional equation, *Aequationes Math.* (2014), **88**, no. 1, 151-162.

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Theorem

Every finite set H has the weighted discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{S} .

Let $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n \in \mathbb{C}$ be the points of H . Then the equation (3) can be written in the form

$$a_1 f(x + d_1 y) + a_2 f(x + d_2 y) + \dots + a_n f(x + d_n y) = 0 \quad (4)$$

for every $x, y \in \mathbb{C}$, $y \neq 0$ with constant $a_1, \dots, a_n \in \mathbb{C}$ with $\sum_{i=1}^n a_i \neq 0$.

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for every $x, y \in \mathbb{C}$, $y \neq 0$ with constant $a_1, \dots, a_n \in \mathbb{C}$ with $\sum_{i=1}^n a_i \neq 0$.

Theorem (K.- Varga⁷, '14)

Assume that (4) holds for every $x, y \in \mathbb{C}$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} & \exists f \not\equiv 0 \text{ solution of (4)} \iff \\ & \iff \exists \text{ automorphism } \phi \text{ of } \mathbb{C} \text{ which is a solution of (4)} \iff \\ & \iff \phi \text{ satisfies } \sum_i a_i = 0 \text{ and } \sum_i a_i \phi(b_i) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

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- ▶ $A, B \in I$ implies that $A \cup B \in I$
- ▶ $A \in I$ and $B \subseteq A$, then $B \in I$
- ▶ $\mathbb{C} \notin I$
- ▶ $A \in I$, then $A + c = \{x + c : x \in A\} \in I$ for every $c \in \mathbb{C}$.

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I can be the finite subsets of \mathbb{C} , all sets of measure 0 or all first category sets of \mathbb{C} .

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Theorem

Let I be a proper and translation invariant ideal. Assume that (4) holds for every $x \in \mathbb{C}$, $y \in \mathbb{C} \setminus A$, where $A \in I$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} & \exists f \neq 0 \text{ solution of (4)} \iff \\ & \iff \exists \text{ automorphism } \phi \text{ of } \mathbb{C} \text{ which is a solution of (4)} \iff \\ & \iff \phi \text{ satisfies } \sum_i a_i = 0 \text{ and } \sum_i a_i \phi(b_i) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Translations

Theorem

Let G be a torsion free Abelian group. No finite set $H \subset G, |H| \geq 2$ has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. G .

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Let G be a torsion free Abelian group. No finite set $H \subset G, |H| \geq 2$ has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. G .

Let G_H be the subgroup of G generated by H . Then G_H is a finitely generated torsion free Abelian group, and thus

$$G_H \cong \mathbb{Z}^n \text{ for some finite } n.$$

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For every finite set $H \subset \mathbb{Z}^n$ there is a nonzero function $f: \mathbb{Z}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$ such that $\sum_{i=1}^n f(\sigma(d_i)) = 0$ for any translate σ of \mathbb{Z}^n .

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Easily, we can find such a function on every coset of G/G_H .

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Isometries

Proposition

Let E be a finite set in \mathbb{R}^n . If there exists an isometry σ such that $|E \cap \sigma(E)| = |E| - 1$, then E has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. isometries.

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Corollary

For the vertex set of any k - dimensional simplex in \mathbb{R}^n ($n \geq 2$) has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .

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Proposition

Every 2- and 3-element set has the discrete weighted Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .

Main results⁹

Theorem

*Let D be the vertex set of **any** parallelogram. Then D has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .*

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<https://arxiv.org/pdf/1612.00284v1.pdf>

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*Let D be the vertex set of **any** parallelogram. Then D has the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .*

Theorem

*Let $D \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ be the set of four points with rational coordinates. Then D has the discrete **weighted** Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .*

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*Let D be an n -tuple of collinear points in the plane with pairwise commensurable distances. Then D has the discrete **weighted** Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} .*

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Open Questions

A general open question is the following:

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Are there any finite set in the plane which has not the discrete Pompeiu property w.r.t. \mathcal{I} ?

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Question

Do the following sets have the discrete Pompeiu property

- 1. Symmetric trapezoid,*
- 2. 4 points in a line,*
- 3. Pentagon, regular n -gon?*

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1. $\mathbb{C}^G = \{f : G \rightarrow \mathbb{C}\}$ the linear space of all complex valued functions defined on G equipped with the product topology.
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3. *Variety* V on G :
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 - 3.3 linearsubspace of \mathbb{C}^G .
4. *Spectral analysis holds in G* : every $V \neq \{0\}$ on G contains an exponential function.

The *torsion free rank* $r_0(G)$ of G is the cardinality of a maximal independent system of elements of infinite order.

¹⁰M. Laczkovich and G. Székelyhidi, Harmonic analysis on discrete Abelian groups, *Proc. Am. Math. Soc.* **133** (2004), no. 6, 1581-1586.

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Theorem (Laczkovich, Székelyhidi¹⁰)

Spectral analysis holds on every Abelian group G iff

$$r_0(G) < \mathfrak{c}.$$

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Theorem (Laczkovich, Székelyhidi¹⁰)

Spectral analysis holds on every Abelian group G iff

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Every function f satisfying

$$\sum_{i=1}^n a_i f(x + d_i y) = 0,$$

where $x, y \in \mathbb{C}$, $|y| = 1$, $\sum_{i=1}^n a_i \neq 0$ and $H = \{d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n\}$, constructs a variety V on the additive group of \mathbb{C} .

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Method of the proof

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Let G be a finitely generated additive subgroup of \mathbb{C} . The statement can be written in the following form:

$$f(x) + f(x + s_1 y) + f(x + s_2 y) + f(x + (s_1 + s_2)y) = 0 \quad (5)$$

holds for every $x, y \in G$ and $|y| = 1$.

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holds for every $x, y \in G$ and $|y| = 1$. Assume that $f(0) \neq 0$.

There exists an exponential function $g \not\equiv 0$ in V which satisfies

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Thus, we get

$$(1 + g(s_1 y))(1 + g(s_2 y)) = 0. \quad (7)$$

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$$f(x) + f(x + s_1 y) + f(x + s_2 y) + f(x + (s_1 + s_2)y) = 0 \quad (5)$$

holds for every $x, y \in G$ and $|y| = 1$. Assume that $f(0) \neq 0$.

There exists an exponential function $g \not\equiv 0$ in V which satisfies

$$g(x + y) = g(x)g(y). \quad (6)$$

Thus, we get

$$(1 + g(s_1 y))(1 + g(s_2 y)) = 0. \quad (7)$$

i.e $g(s_1 y) = -1$ or $g(s_2 y) = -1$ ($\forall y \in G, |y| = 1$).

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Let A and B be such that $\mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\} = \mathbb{C}^* = A \cup^* B$ and $A = -B$.

We define $h: \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \{-1, 1\}$ as follows:

$$h(x) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } g(x) \in A \\ -1, & \text{if } g(x) \in B. \end{cases}$$

Euclidean Ramsey theory

Color the points of the plane \mathbb{R}^2 with 2 colors.

¹¹L. E. Shader, All right triangles are Ramsey in E^2 !, *Journ. Comb. Theory (A)* **20** (1976), 385-389.

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For every 2-coloring of the plane and every parallelogram H , there is a congruent copy $\sigma(H)$ such that at least three of its vertices has the same color.

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For any given parallelogram H , there is a finite witness¹² set R . Thus, if the generator set of G contains R , we get a contradiction. □


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Easy application on the coloring of the plane

Question (Hadwiger-Nelson's problem¹³)

What is the chromatic number χ of the plane?

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$$4 \leq \chi(\mathbb{R}^2) \leq 7.$$

We denote the set of forbidden distances by \mathcal{FD} . Previously,
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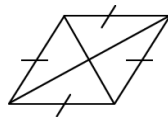
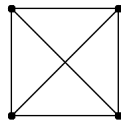
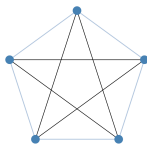
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Proposition

Let $\mathcal{FD}_1 = \{1, \frac{\sqrt{5}+1}{2}\}$, $\mathcal{FD}_2 = \{1, \sqrt{2}\}$ and $\mathcal{FD}_3 = \{1, \sqrt{3}\}$.
Then $\chi_{\mathcal{FD}_i}(\mathbb{R}^2) > 4$ ($i = 1, 2, 3$).



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Commensurable points in a line

After rescaling the line we can assume that the points are integers:

$$z_0 = 0 < z_1 < \dots < z_k = n \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

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Proof. Let M be a sufficiently large positive integer,
 $I = \{1, \dots, n^2 + 1\}$ and consider the following *system of triangles*:
the triangle $\Delta_{i,j}$ $((i,j) \in I \times I)$ is defined such that

1. the sides of $\Delta_{i,j}$ are of positive integer length(s) $M, a_{i,j}, b_{i,j}$.
2. for any fixed i the number of $a_{i,1}, \dots, a_{i,n^2+1}$ are different.
3. $a_{i,j} + b_{i,j} = M + i$ for every $(i,j) \in I \times I$.
4. the triangles are lying on the segment $[0, M]$ in the complex plane and the third vertex is contained in the upper half-plane.

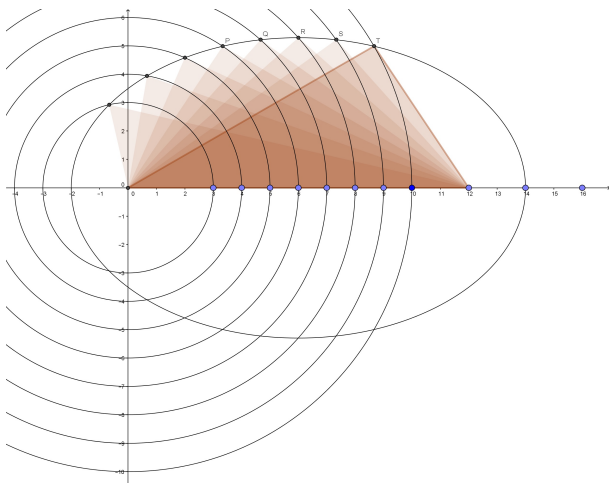


Figure: System of triangles; $M=12$, $i=4$

Remark

The length of the major axis is $M + i$ for any fixed $i = 1 \dots n^2 + 1$.

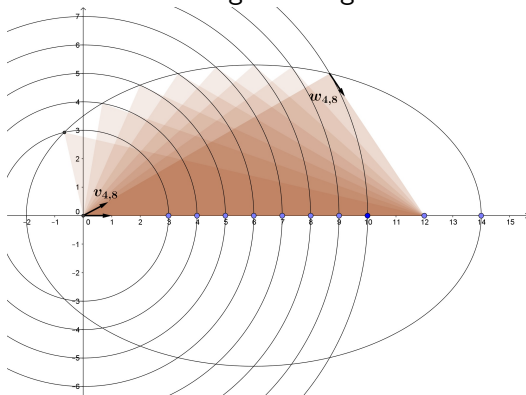
Let us denote the unit vectors parallel to the sides $a_{i,j}$ and $b_{i,j}$ in \mathbb{C} by $v_{i,j}$ and $w_{i,j}$, respectively: $a_{i,j} \cdot v_{i,j} + b_{i,j} \cdot w_{i,j} = M \cdot 1$.

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$$1, v_{i,j}, w_{i,j}, y.$$

G_Δ is a group such that all of the elements are linear combinations with integer coefficients of the generating vectors.



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$$\sum_{i=0}^k a_i f(\sigma(z_i)) = 0 \quad (\sigma \in \text{Iso}(G_\Delta)) \quad (8)$$

on G_Δ contains a non-zero exponential element $g : G_\Delta \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$, i.e.

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Similarly, the same is true for $g(v_{i,j})$ and $g(w_{i,j})$.

Lemma

The root $g(1)$ must be a root of unity.

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$$P(x) = a_0 \cdot 1 + a_1 \cdot x^{z_1} + \dots + a_k \cdot x^{z_k},$$

$g(1) = \lambda_1$ and suppose that (λ_2, λ_3) is the pair of the roots along the (non-horizontal) directions chosen above.

This means that

$$g(v_{i,j_1}) = g(v_{i,j_2}) = g(v_{i',j'_1}) = g(v_{i',j'_2}) = \lambda_2,$$

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Since g is exponential and $a_{i,j}v_{i,j} + b_{i,j}w_{i,j} = M$ we have

$$\lambda_1^M = \lambda_2^{a_{i,j_1}} \lambda_3^{b_{i,j_1}} = \lambda_2^{a_{i,j_2}} \lambda_3^{b_{i,j_2}},$$

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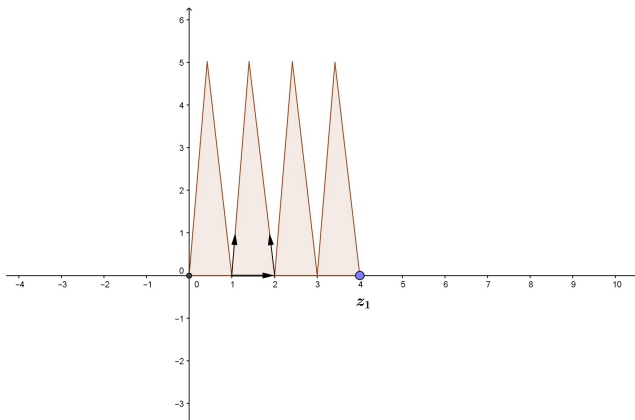
Corollary

The polynomial $P(x) = a_0 \cdot 1 + a_1 \cdot x^{z_1} + \dots + a_k \cdot x^{z_k}$ has a root of unity.

There is an $N \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ such that $(\lambda_k)^N = 1$ for each root λ_k of $P(x)$ which is a root of unity.

End of the proof

Consider the original sample $z_0 = 0, z_1, \dots, z_k = n$. Choose M such that $N|M$, i.e. $\lambda_k^M = 1$.



Draw an isosceles triangles T_i with side lengths $M, M, 1$ indicated by the vectors $v_1, v_2, \underline{1}$.

Extending G_Δ , similarly as above we get that $g(v_i)$ is a root of the polynomial

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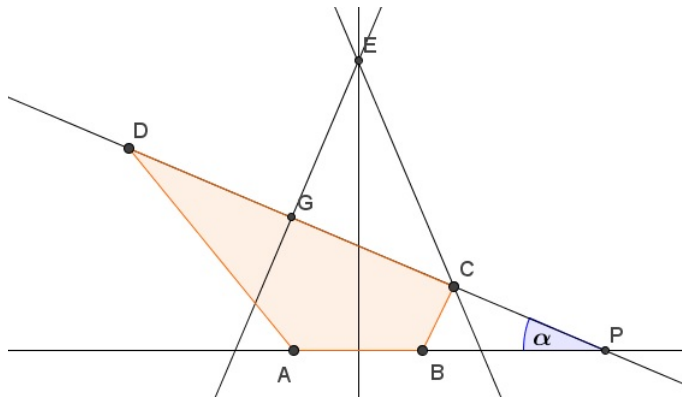
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This implies that $1 = g(0) = g(z_0) = \dots = g(z_k)$ which contradicts to $\sum_{i=0}^k a_i g(z_i) = 0$, where $\sum_{i=0}^k a_i \neq 0$.

A one-parameter family of quadrangles with the discrete Pompeiu property

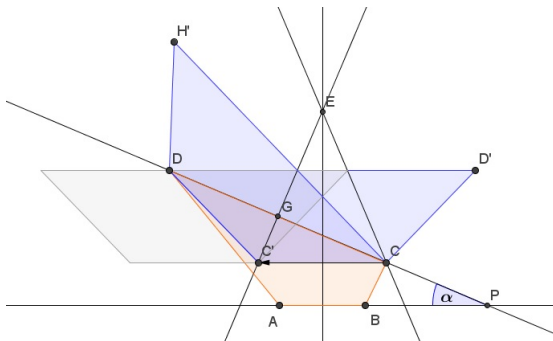
Let $ABC\triangle$ be a non-isosceles triangle and C and B be on the same side of the perpendicular bisector of AB . Let $0 < \alpha < 45^\circ$ be a given angle and choose a point P on the line AB as in the figure below.



Lemma

For any given angle $0 < \alpha < 45^\circ$ the set $H = \{A, B, C, D\}$ has the Pompeiu property.

Proof. For any point X let X' be the image of X under the reflection on the perpendicular bisector of AB . Then $A' = B$, $B' = A$ and the points C, C', D and D' form a symmetric trapezium such that $D'C = CC' = C'D$.



Taking the difference of equations

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It follows that

$$f(C) - f(C') + f(D) - f(D') = 0. \quad (11)$$

Since equation (11) holds on any congruent copy of the trapezium $CC'DD'$ we have

$$f(C)-f(C')+f(D)-f(D') = 0 \text{ and } f(C)-f(C')+f(D)-f(H') = 0. \quad (12)$$

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This implies that $f(D') = f(H')$.

Group acting on \mathbb{R}^2	Set	P	WP
Translations	finite sets with at least 2 elements	No	No
Rigid motions	sets with at most 3 elements	Yes	?
	parallelograms	Yes	?
	finite sets of collinear points with commensurable distances	Yes	Yes
Isometries	non-collinear sets with at most 3 elements	Yes	Yes
	rational 4-point sets	Yes	Yes
	Pompeiu quadrangles	Yes	?
Direct similarities	all finite sets	Yes	Yes

Thank you for your kind attention.