

# Archimedean Local Fields

Dhruv Goel

April 2025

## Abstract

The purpose of this note is to record four proofs of the result that the only archimedean local fields are  $\mathbb{R}$  and  $\mathbb{C}$ , or slightly more generally that the only complete archimedean valued fields are  $\mathbb{R}$  or  $\mathbb{C}$  (Gelfand-Tornheim-Ostrowski).

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Topological Vector Spaces over Valued Fields</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The Main Theorem</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Generalized Absolute Values and Artin Constants</b>	<b>7</b>

# 1 Introduction

In this section we review the definitions of absolute values and prove Ostrowski's Theorem for  $\mathbb{Q}$ . In the next section, we review the basics of normed vector spaces over valued fields. In the last two sections we give a proof of the claimed result.

## Definition 1.1.

- (a) An *absolute value* on a field  $K$  is a function

$$|\cdot| : K \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$$

such that

- (i) for all  $x \in K$ , we have  $|x| = 0$  iff  $x = 0$ ,
- (ii) for all  $x, y \in K$ , we have  $|xy| = |x| \cdot |y|$ , and
- (iii) for all  $x, y \in K$ , we have  $|x + y| \leq |x| + |y|$ .

If the absolute value  $|\cdot|$  on  $K$  further satisfies that

- (iii') for all  $x, y \in K$ , we have  $|x + y| \leq \max\{|x|, |y|\}$ ,

then it is said to be *non-archimedean*; else, it is said to be *archimedean*.

- (b) For a field  $K$ , then *trivial* absolute value is the one given by  $|x| = 1$  for all  $x \in K^\times$ . An absolute value other than this one is said to be *nontrivial*.
- (c) A *valued field* is a pair  $(K, |\cdot|)$ , where  $K$  is a field and  $|\cdot|$  an absolute value on  $K$ ; it is said to be (non)-archimedean (resp. (non)trivial) according to whether  $|\cdot|$  is.

We will henceforth drop the pedanticity and adopt usual conventions of implicit notation. An absolute value on a field gives it the structure of a topological field. Clearly, the restriction of an absolute value to a subfield defines an absolute value on it. If  $(K, |\cdot|)$  is a valued field, then for any root  $\zeta$  of unity in  $K$  we have  $|\zeta| = 1$ , and so  $|-x| = |x|$  for all  $x \in K$ .

## Example 1.2.

- (a) On  $K = \mathbb{C}$  (and hence on any subfield), the function  $|\cdot|_\infty$  given by  $a + ib \mapsto \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}$  for  $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$  defines an archimedean absolute value, called the *standard absolute value*.
- (b) When  $K = \mathbb{Q}$  and  $p$  is a prime, then the function  $|\cdot|_p$  given by  $x \mapsto p^{-v_p(x)}$  when  $x \in \mathbb{Q}^\times$  is an absolute value called the *p-adic absolute value* on  $\mathbb{Q}$ .<sup>1</sup>

**Lemma/Definition 1.3.** Let  $K$  be a field and  $|\cdot|$  and  $|\cdot|'$  two absolute values on  $K$ . The following are equivalent:

- (a) There is a  $c \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that  $|\cdot|' = |\cdot|^c$ .
- (b) The induced topologies on  $K$  coming from  $|\cdot|$  and  $|\cdot|'$  are the same.
- (c) For all  $x \in K$ , we have  $|x| < 1$  iff  $|x|' < 1$ .

When these conditions are satisfied, we say that  $|\cdot|$  and  $|\cdot|'$  are *equivalent*. We say that two valued fields  $(K, |\cdot|_K)$  and  $(L, |\cdot|_L)$  are *isomorphic* if there is a field isomorphism  $\sigma : K \rightarrow L$  such that the absolute value  $\sigma^*|\cdot|_L$  given on  $K$  by  $x \mapsto |\sigma x|_L$  for  $x \in K$  is equivalent to  $|\cdot|_K$ .

*Proof.*

- (a)  $\Rightarrow$  (b) Clear.
- (b)  $\Rightarrow$  (c) If  $(K, |\cdot|)$  is a valued field, then for  $x \in K$  we have  $|x| < 1$  iff  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} x^n = 0$ .
- (c)  $\Rightarrow$  (a) If either of  $|\cdot|$  and  $|\cdot|'$  is trivial, then so is the other and  $c = 1$  works. Else there is an  $z \in K$  such that  $|z| > 1$ , and we need to show that for all  $y \in K^\times$  we have

$$\frac{\log |y|}{\log |z|} = \frac{\log |y|'}{\log |z|'}.$$

---

<sup>1</sup>Here  $v_p(x)$  denotes the highest power of  $p$  dividing  $x$ .

If the left side were less than the right, then there would be  $m, n \in \mathbb{Z}$  with  $n > 0$  such that  $m/n$  squeezes in between them; but then  $x := y^n z^{-m}$  has the property that  $|x| > 1$  but  $|x|' < 1$ . This is sufficient by symmetry. ■

**Lemma 1.4.** A valued field  $(K, |\cdot|)$  is nonarchimedean iff  $|\cdot|$  is bounded on the image of  $\mathbb{Z}$  in  $K$ . In particular, if  $K$  has positive characteristic, then any absolute value on it is non-archimedean.

*Proof.* If  $K$  is nonarchimedean, then in fact  $|n| \leq 1$  for all  $n$  in the image of  $\mathbb{Z}$  in  $K$ . Conversely, suppose that the image of  $\mathbb{Z}$  is bounded in absolute value, say by  $B \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ . We need to show that if  $x, y \in K^\times$  with  $x + y \neq 0$  and  $|x| \leq |y|$ , then  $|x + y| \leq |y|$ . For all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ ,

$$|x + y|^n \leq \sum_{i=0}^n \binom{n}{i} |x|^i |y|^{n-i} \leq B(n+1)|y|^n.$$

Extracting  $n^{\text{th}}$  roots and taking the limit as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  yields the result. ■

**Theorem 1.5** (Ostrowski). Any nontrivial absolute value  $|\cdot|$  on  $\mathbb{Q}$  is equivalent to exactly one  $|\cdot|_p$ , where  $p$  is either a prime or  $\infty$ .

*Proof.* Suppose first that  $|\cdot|$  is non-archimedean, so that by 1.4, we have that  $|n| \leq 1$  for all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ . The ideal  $\{n \in \mathbb{Z} : |n| < 1\} \subset \mathbb{Z}$  is evidently prime, and it is nonzero because  $|\cdot|$  is nontrivial. Therefore, there is a unique prime  $p$  such that for  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$  we have  $|n| < 1$  iff  $p \mid n$ , and this easily implies (using, e.g., 1.3(c)) that  $|\cdot|$  is equivalent to  $|\cdot|_p$ .

It only remains to analyze the archimedean case in which there is  $b \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 2}$  such that  $|b| > 1$ . Let  $b$  be the smallest such integer, and let  $c \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  be such that  $|b| = b^c$ . It suffices to show that for all  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , we have  $|n| = n^c$ . Let  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$  be given.

- (a) We show that  $|n| \leq n^c$ . Write the base- $b$  expansion of  $n$  as  $n = a_0 + a_1 b + \cdots + a_k b^k$  with  $k \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$  and  $a_0, \dots, a_k \in \{0, 1, \dots, b-1\}$  such that  $a_k \neq 0$ . Then  $k \leq \log_b n$ , and so

$$|n| \leq \sum_{i=0}^k |a_i| \cdot |b|^i \leq \sum_{i=0}^k b^{ic} = b^{kc} \sum_{i=0}^k b^{-ic} \leq b^{kc} \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} b^{-ic} = C b^{kc} \leq C n^c,$$

where  $C := (1 - b^{-c})^{-1} \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  is independent of  $n$ . This holds for each  $n$ ; replacing  $n$  by  $n^r$  for  $r \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$  and extracting  $r^{\text{th}}$  roots gives us also that  $|n| \leq C^{1/r} n^c$ . Taking the limit as  $r \rightarrow \infty$  gives the result.

- (b) We show that  $|n| \geq n^c$ . Let  $k := \lfloor \log_b n \rfloor \in \mathbb{Z}$  so that  $b^k \leq n < b^{k+1}$ . Then

$$|n| \geq |b^{k+1}| - |b^{k+1} - n| \geq b^{(k+1)c} - (b^{k+1} - n)^c \geq b^{(k+1)c} - (b^{k+1} - b^k)^c \geq D n^c,$$

where  $D := b^c[1 - (1 - b^{-1})^c] \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  is independent of  $n$ . The same trick as in (a) finishes the proof. ■

## 2 Topological Vector Spaces over Valued Fields

**Definition 2.1.** Let  $K$  be a valued field and  $V$  a vector space over  $K$ . A *norm* on  $V$  is a function

$$\|\cdot\| : V \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$$

such that

- (i) for all  $v \in V$ , we have  $\|v\| = 0$  iff  $v = 0$ ,
- (ii) for all  $x \in K$  and  $v \in V$ , we have  $\|xv\| = |x| \cdot \|v\|$ , and
- (iii) for all  $v, w \in V$ , we have  $\|v + w\| \leq \|v\| + \|w\|$ .

A norm on a vector space  $V$  over a valued field  $K$  gives it the structure of a topological vector space over  $K$ .

**Example 2.2.**

- (a) In the setting of 2.1, if  $V$  has finite dimension  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$  over  $K$  and  $v_1, \dots, v_n \in V$  is a  $K$ -basis of  $V$ , then the function  $\|\cdot\|$  on  $V$  given by  $\|\sum_{i=1}^n x_i v_i\| := \max_{i=1}^n |x_i|$  for  $x_1, \dots, x_n \in K$  is a norm on  $V$  called the *sup-norm*.
- (b) If  $L/K$  is an extension of valued fields (i.e., a field extension in which the absolute value on  $L$  extends that on  $K$ ), then the absolute value on  $L$  gives its underlying vector space over  $K$  a norm.

**Lemma/Definition 2.3.** Let  $K$  be a valued field,  $V$  a vector space over  $K$ , and  $\|\cdot\|$  and  $\|\cdot\|'$  two norms on  $V$ . The following are equivalent:

- (a) There are  $C, D \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that for all  $v \in V$  we have  $C\|v\| \leq \|v\|' \leq D\|v\|$ .
- (b) The induced topologies on  $V$  coming from  $\|\cdot\|$  and  $\|\cdot\|'$  are the same.

*Proof.* The implication (a)  $\Rightarrow$  (b) is clear. For (b)  $\Rightarrow$  (a), note that if the induced topologies are same, then there is an  $r > 0$  such that for all  $v \in V$  we have  $\|v\| \leq r$  implies  $\|v\|' \leq 1$ . Then  $D = r^{-1}$  works, and this suffices by symmetry.  $\blacksquare$

**Theorem 2.4.** Let  $K$  be a *complete* valued field and  $V$  a *finite dimensional* vector space over  $K$ . Then any two norms on  $V$  are equivalent and  $V$  is complete.

*Proof.* Evidently,  $V$  is complete in the sup-norm with respect to any basis (2.2(a)) if  $K$  is, so it suffices to prove the first statement. Let  $n := \dim_K V$ . If  $n = 0$ , there is nothing to show; hence suppose  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , and fix a basis  $v_1, \dots, v_n$  of  $K$ . Let  $\|\cdot\|$  be any given norm on  $V$ . We will show that  $\|\cdot\|$  is equivalent to the sup norm with respect to  $v_1, \dots, v_n$ , by producing  $C$  and  $D$  as in 2.3(a).

Let  $D := \sum_{i=1}^n \|v_i\|$ . Then for any  $v \in V$ , if we write  $v = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i v_i$  with  $x_i \in K$ , then

$$\|v\| \leq \sum_{i=1}^n |x_i| \|v_i\| \leq D \max_{i=1}^n |x_i|.$$

To produce a  $C$ , we proceed by induction on  $n$ . When  $n = 1$ , the constant  $C := \|v_1\|$  works. Suppose  $n \geq 2$ , and for  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , let  $V_i$  denote the  $K$ -span of  $v_1, \dots, v_{i-1}, v_{i+1}, \dots, v_n$ . By induction  $V_i$  is complete with respect to the restriction of  $\|\cdot\|$  to  $V_i$  and hence closed in  $V$ . Therefore,  $S = \bigcup_{i=1}^n (v_i + V_i) \subset V$  is a closed subset not containing 0, so there is a  $C \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that  $w \in S$  implies  $\|w\| \geq C$ . Now given any nonzero  $v \in V$ , write  $v = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i v_i$  and suppose without loss of generality that  $|x_1| = \max_{i=1}^n |x_i|$ . The result follows from  $x_1^{-1}v \in S$ .  $\blacksquare$

### 3 The Main Theorem

In this section, we present the main results.

**Definition 3.1.** A *local field* is a nontrivial valued field that is locally compact.

**Lemma 3.2.** A local field is complete.

*Proof.* It suffices to note that all closed balls are compact (since all closed balls are homeomorphic to one another and  $K$  is locally compact), and hence sequentially compact (since  $K$  is metric). Now a Cauchy sequence must eventually lie in a closed ball. ■

The key result we are interested in is

**Theorem 3.3.** An archimedean local field is isomorphic as a valued field to either  $\mathbb{R}$  or  $\mathbb{C}$  with the standard absolute values.

*Proof.* Let  $K$  be an archimedean local field. Since  $K$  is archimedean, it has characteristic zero (1.4). By Ostrowski's Theorem (1.5), the restriction of the absolute value of  $K$  to its prime subfield  $\mathbb{Q}$  is equivalent to the standard absolute value  $|\cdot|_\infty$ . By 3.2, the completion of  $\mathbb{Q}$  in  $K$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbb{R}$  with its standard absolute value. The absolute value on  $K$  makes it a locally compact topological vector space over  $\mathbb{R}$  (2.2(b)), whence  $[K : \mathbb{R}] < \infty$  ([3, Theorem 1.22]). By the Fundamental Theorem of Algebra, this is possible only if  $K = \mathbb{R}$  or  $K = \mathbb{C}$ . In the former case, there is nothing left to show. In the latter case, the absolute value on  $K$  defines a norm on the underlying  $\mathbb{R}$ -vector space (2.2(b)) of  $K$ , which by 2.4 is equivalent as a norm to the one coming from the standard absolute value on  $\mathbb{C}$ . It follows from 2.3 and 1.3 that it is equivalent as an absolute value to the standard absolute value on  $\mathbb{C}$ . ■

In fact, the “locally compact” condition is stronger than needed, and we have

**Theorem 3.4** (Gelfand-Tornheim-Ostrowski). A complete archimedean valued field is isomorphic as a valued field to either  $\mathbb{R}$  or  $\mathbb{C}$  with the standard absolute values.

Note that 3.2 and 3.4 imply 3.3. We will now give three proofs of 3.4, the first two of which are taken from [2]. The final proof, taken from [1], is almost provided in this section as well, except for one technical detail which we address in the final section.

*Proof 1 of 3.4.* ([2, §1.2.9]) Let  $K$  be such a field; proceeding as in the proof of 3.3, it remains to show that  $K/\mathbb{R}$  is algebraic. For this, for  $z \in \mathbb{C}$ , let  $p_z(t) := t^2 - (z + \bar{z})t + z\bar{z} \in \mathbb{R}[t]$  and for  $\alpha \in K$ , define the function  $f : \mathbb{C} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$  by  $f(z) := |p_z(\alpha)|$  for  $z \in \mathbb{C}$ . Then  $f$  is a continuous proper map and so attains a minimum value say  $m \in \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ . We will show that  $m = 0$ .

Since the level set  $Z := f^{-1}(m)$  is compact, there is a  $z_0 \in Z$  of maximal  $|z_0|_\infty$ . If  $m > 0$ , then pick an  $\varepsilon \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that<sup>2</sup>  $|\varepsilon| < m$  and consider a root  $w$  of  $p_{z_0}(t) + \varepsilon$ ; then  $w \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \mathbb{R}$  and

$$|z_0|_\infty = \sqrt{|w|_\infty^2 - \varepsilon} < |w|_\infty,$$

which implies  $f(w) > m$ . We will show that also  $f(w) \leq m$ , which is the required contradiction.

Indeed, for odd  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , if we factor the polynomial  $q_n(t) := p_{z_0}(t)^n + \varepsilon^n \in \mathbb{R}[t]$  over  $\mathbb{C}$  as  $q_n(t) = \prod_{i=1}^{2n} (t - w_i)$  with  $w_1, \dots, w_{2n} \in \mathbb{C}$ , then after renumbering we may assume that

---

<sup>2</sup>This we may do because  $|\cdot|$  restricted to  $\mathbb{R}$  is equivalent to  $|\cdot|_\infty$ . If it makes one more comfortable, they may take  $\varepsilon \in \mathbb{Q}_{>0}$ .

$w = w_1$ . Since  $q_n(t) \in \mathbb{R}[t]$ , we have that

$$q_n(t)^2 = \prod_{i=1}^{2n} p_{w_i}(t)$$

and hence

$$|q_n(\alpha)|^2 = \prod_{i=1}^{2n} f(w_i) \geq f(w) \cdot m^{2n-1}.$$

But now also

$$|q_n(\alpha)| \leq |f(z_0)|^n + |\varepsilon|^n = m^n + |\varepsilon|^n,$$

and so

$$f(w) \leq \frac{|q_n(\alpha)|^2}{m^{2n-1}} \leq \frac{(m^n + |\varepsilon|^n)^2}{m^{2n-1}} = m \left( 1 + \left( \frac{|\varepsilon|}{m} \right)^n \right)^2.$$

Taking the limit as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  yields the result. ■

*Proof 2 of 3.4.* ([2, §1.3.3]) Let  $K$  be a complete archimedean valued field. As in the proof of 3.3,  $K$  contains  $\mathbb{R}$  in such a way that the restriction of the absolute value on  $K$  to  $\mathbb{R}$  is equivalent to the standard absolute value on  $\mathbb{R}$ . We now have two cases:

- (a) If there is a square root of  $-1$  in  $K$ , then in fact  $K$  contains  $\mathbb{C}$ , and by the same argument as in the proof of 3.3, the restriction of the absolute value on  $K$  to  $\mathbb{C}$  is equivalent to the standard absolute value. But then  $K$  is a complex Banach algebra which is a field, so that by the Gelfand-Mazur Theorem ([3, Theorem 10.14]) we have  $K = \mathbb{C}$ .
- (b) If there does not exist a square root of  $-1$  in  $K$ , then we consider the quadratic field extension  $K[i] := K[t]/(t^2 + 1)$ , which admits the structure of a  $\mathbb{C}$ -algebra. In this case, the norm  $\|\cdot\|$  on  $K[i]$  given by  $\|x + iy\| := |x| + |y|$  may not be an absolute value on  $K[i]$ , but it certainly does make  $K[i]$  a complex Banach algebra, and then the same argument as above works. ■

*Proof 3 of 3.4.* ([1, Chapter 3]) We proceed as in Proof 2, but handle the cases differently.

- (a) We proceed very similarly to Proof 1, but taking  $p_z(t) := t - z$  this time, so  $f(z) = |\alpha - z|$ . Let  $m, Z, z_0$  be as before, and pick  $\varepsilon \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  so that  $|\varepsilon| < m$ . Let  $w := z_0 \pm \varepsilon$ , with the sign chosen so that  $|w|_\infty > |z_0|_\infty$ , which implies  $f(w) > m$ . This time, for odd  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , we set  $q_n(t) := p_{z_0}(t)^n \mp \varepsilon^n$  and proceed similarly to that proof to obtain  $f(w) \leq m(1 + |\varepsilon|^n m^{-n})$ . Taking the limit as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  finishes the proof.
- (b) This time, we show that  $K[i]$  can be made into a local field by introducing an absolute value whose restriction to  $K$  is equivalent to the given absolute value. Since this is somewhat technical and best developed in a slightly different framework, we postpone this to the next section. Given this, we are done since  $K[i]$  is archimedean (by, say, 1.4) and so by (a) we have  $K[i] = \mathbb{C}$ , proving  $K = \mathbb{R}$ . ■

## 4 Generalized Absolute Values and Artin Constants

In this section, we discuss *generalized* absolute values (which [1] calls *valuations*), and see how they give a slightly cleaner approach to dealing with absolute values. In particular, we use this to give a proof of the assertion that if  $K$  is a complete valued field which does not have a square root of  $-1$ , then there is an absolute value on  $K[i]$  whose restriction to  $K$  is equivalent to the given absolute value.

**Definition 4.1.** A *generalized absolute value* on a field  $K$  is a function

$$|\cdot| : K \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$$

that satisfies properties (i) and (ii) of 1.1 and also that

(iii'') there is a  $C \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that for all  $x \in K$ , we have  $|x| \leq 1$  implies  $|1+x| \leq C$ .

The infimum of all possible  $C$  in (iii'') is called the *Artin constant* of  $|\cdot|$ .

Equivalently, the Artin constant of  $|\cdot|$  is the smallest  $C \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that for all  $x, y \in K$  we have  $|x+y| \leq C \max\{|x|, |y|\}$  (c.f. 4.2(a)). It is clear that if  $|\cdot|$  is a generalized absolute value on a field  $K$ , then so is  $|\cdot|^c$  for each  $c \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ , something which is *not* true of absolute values in general.

**Lemma 4.2.** Let  $|\cdot|$  be a generalized absolute value on a field  $K$  with Artin constant  $C$ .

- (a) We have  $C \geq 1$ .
- (b) The function  $|\cdot|$  defines an absolute value iff  $C \leq 2$ .
- (c) Further, in (b), the resulting absolute value is nonarchimedean iff  $C = 1$ .

*Proof.*

- (a) By (i) and (ii), we have  $|0| = 0$  and  $|1| = 1$ . The result follows by taking  $x = 0$  in (iii'').
- (b) Clearly, (iii) implies (iii'') with  $C = 2$ . Conversely, if for all  $x, y \in K$  we have that  $|x+y| \leq 2 \max\{|x|, |y|\}$ , then by induction, for each  $N \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$  of the form  $2^n$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}$  and all  $x_1, \dots, x_N \in K$ , we have

$$|x_1 + \dots + x_N| \leq N \max_{i=1}^N |x_i|.$$

When  $N$  is not a power of 2, let  $n := \lceil \log_2 N \rceil$  so that  $2^{n-1} < N \leq 2^n$ , and fill the empty spots with zeroes (i.e., set  $x_{N+1} = \dots = x_{2^n} = 0$ ) to obtain the weaker

$$|x_1 + \dots + x_N| \leq 2N \max_{i=1}^N |x_i|.$$

In particular, for any  $N \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ , taking  $x_1 = \dots = x_N$  gives us  $|N| \leq 2N$ . Then for any  $x, y \in K$  and  $n \in \mathbb{Z}_{\geq 1}$ ,

$$|x+y|^n \leq 2(n+1) \max_{i=0}^n \left| \binom{n}{i} x^i y^{n-i} \right| \leq 4(n+1) \max_{i=0}^n \binom{n}{i} |x|^i |y|^{n-i} \leq 4(n+1)(|x|+|y|)^n.$$

Extracting  $n^{\text{th}}$  roots and taking the limit as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  yields the result.

- (c) Clear, since (iii') is directly equivalent to (iii'') for  $C = 1$ .

■

*Remark 1.* In fact, one can show along very similar lines to 4.2(b) that the Artin constant  $C$  is actually just  $C = \max\{1, |2|\}$ , so that the function  $|\cdot|$  defines an absolute value iff  $|2| \leq 2$  and a nonarchimedean one iff  $|2| \leq 1$ . See [2].

Now we can finish Proof 3 of 3.4.

**Lemma 4.3.** Let  $K$  be a complete valued field and suppose that there is no square root of  $-1$  in  $K$ .

- (a) There is a  $\Delta \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$  such that for all  $x, y \in K$  we have  $|x^2 + y^2| \geq \Delta \max\{|x|^2, |y|^2\}$ .
- (b) There is an absolute value on  $K[i]$  whose restriction to  $K$  is equivalent to the given absolute value.

*Proof.*

- (a) In fact,  $\Delta := |4|(1 + |4|)^{-1}$  will do. Suppose there is an  $a_0 \in K$  such that  $|a_0^2 + 1| < \Delta$ , and set

$$\varepsilon := \frac{|a_0^2 + 1|}{|4|(1 - |a_0^2 + 1|)},$$

so that  $0 < \varepsilon < 1$ . It is then easy to check that the sequence  $a_n$  in  $K$  defined by

$$a_{n+1} = a_n - \frac{a_n^2 + 1}{2a_n}$$

for  $n \geq 1$  is well-defined, satisfies that for all  $n \geq 0$

$$|a_n^2 + 1| \leq \varepsilon^{2^n - 1} |a_0^2 + 1|,$$

and is a Cauchy sequence. Its limit  $a$  then satisfies  $a^2 + 1 = 0$ , i.e., is a square root of  $-1$ , a contradiction to hypothesis.

- (b) We will show that the function  $|\cdot|$  on  $K[i]$  given by  $x + iy \mapsto |x^2 + y^2|^{1/2}$  for  $x, y \in K$  is a generalized absolute value on  $K$ . It follows that for some  $c \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$ , the generalized absolute value  $x + iy \mapsto |x^2 + y^2|^{c/2}$  has Artin constant  $C \leq 2$ , and so by 4.2(b) defines an absolute value, the restriction of which to  $K$  is evidently equivalent to the given one. Indeed, property (i) follows from the fact that there is no square root of  $-1$  in  $K$  and property (ii) uses the Euler identity

$$(xz - yw)^2 + (yz + xw)^2 = (x^2 + y^2)(z^2 + w^2) \in \mathbb{Z}[x, y, z, w].$$

It remains to show (iii''), so suppose we are given  $x, y \in K$  such that  $|x^2 + y^2| \leq 1$ . If  $\Delta$  is as in (a), then

$$\max\{|x|, |y|\} \leq \Delta^{-1/2}.$$

Then

$$|1 + x + iy|^2 = |(1 + x)^2 + y^2| \leq 1 + |2| \cdot |x| + |x|^2 + |y|^2 \leq 1 + |2|\Delta^{-1/2} + 2\Delta^{-1}$$

and so (iii'') is satisfied for

$$C := (1 + |2|\Delta^{-1/2} + 2\Delta^{-1})^{1/2}.$$

■



## References

- [1] CASSELS, J. W. S. *Local Fields*, vol. 3 of *London Mathematical Society Student Texts*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- [2] CLARK, P. L. Algebraic Number Theory II: Valuations, Local Fields and Adeles. Available at <http://alpha.math.uga.edu/~pete/8410FULL.pdf>.
- [3] RUDIN, W. *Functional Analysis*, second ed. International Series in Pure and Applied Mathematics. McGraw Hill Education, 2006.