

# Calculating more terms in Cloitre's sequence

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## Abstract

We provide more terms of a sequence given by Cloitre. Previously the first 29 terms were known; we use a faster method of computing the sequence due to Jan Büthe to calculate the first 315 terms.

## 1 Introduction

Let  $a = (a_n)_{n \geq 1}$  be the integer sequence inductively defined by

$$\begin{aligned} a_1 &:= 1 \\ a_n &:= |a_{n-1} - \gcd(a_{n-1}, n-1)| \end{aligned}$$

and let  $b = (b_k)_{k \geq 1}$  the sequence of indices  $n$  for which  $a_n$  is zero. Cloitre defines the sequence  $b$  in [Clo, page 3] (see also A186253 in the OEIS) and conjectures that all terms of  $b_k$  are prime and  $b_k \sim c2^k$  when  $k \rightarrow \infty$ , for some constant  $c = 1.186\dots$ . In the OEIS-entry we can read  $c = 1.1861\dots$ . In an [Clo, APPENDIX 1], Cloitre supports this conjecture by giving the first 29 terms of the sequence  $b$ :

2, 5, 11, 23, 47, 79, 157, 313, 619, 1237, 2473, 4909, 9817, 19603, 39199, 78193, 156019, 311347, 622669, 1244149, 2487739, 4975111, 9950221, 19900399, 39800797, 79601461, 159202369, 318404629, 636788881.

The value  $a_{n-1} - \gcd(a_{n-1}, n-1)$  becomes negative only if  $a_{n-1} = 0$ . We have  $a_{b_k} = 0$  by definition and obtain  $a_{b_k+1} = b_k$ .

A straightforward method of calculating the sequence  $b$  consist of calculating the sequence  $a$  inductively and giving out the next term of  $b$  every time  $a_n$  is zero. This can for example be done in *pari* using the following line:

```
a=1; for(n=2, 10^20, a=abs(a-gcd(a, n-1)); if(a==0, print1(n, ", ")))
```

(see also the *pari* code giving in [Clo] and A186253.)

When we let this run on a desktop PC for several weeks, we get a few more terms of  $b$ : 1273577761, 2547155419, 5094310069, 10188620041, 20377200079, 40754397121, 81508794229, 163017588457, 326034863503, 652069726981, 1304139453961, 2608278775139.

## 2 Jumping ahead

In this section we present a faster method of computing  $b$ . The idea and the code presented is by Jan Büthe.

We look at the sequence  $a$ . When  $a_n$  is zero, that is if  $n = b_k$  for some  $k$ , for the term  $n + 1 = b_k + 1$  we get  $a_{n+1} = b_k$ . If  $a_n$  is not zero and if  $\gcd(a_{n+1}, n + 1) = 1$ , we get  $a_{n+1} = a_n - 1$ . The sequence  $a$  only makes bigger jumps if  $\gcd(a_{n+1}, n + 1) > 1$ . The first of such jumps happens for the smallest  $m_1$  such that  $d_1 := \gcd(b_k - (m_1 - 1), b_k + m_1) > 1$ . In fact we define inductively  $m_r$  to be the smallest positive integer such that

$$d_r := \gcd\left(b_k - \sum_{\ell=0}^r (m_\ell - 1) - \sum_{\ell=1}^{r-1} d_\ell, b_k + \sum_{\ell=1}^r m_\ell\right) > 1$$

To actually determine  $d_1$  and  $m_1$  we solve the following congruences:

$$\begin{aligned} b_k - (m_1 - 1) &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_1} \\ b_k + m_1 &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_1} \end{aligned}$$

Here the following fact comes in useful.

**Fact 1.** *For integer  $A$ ,  $B$  and odd  $d$  we have*

$$d \mid A \text{ and } d \mid B \Leftrightarrow d \mid A + B \text{ and } d \mid A - B$$

By applying this fact we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned} 2b_k + 1 &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_1} \\ 2m_1 - 1 &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_1} \end{aligned}$$

We want to find the smallest positive  $m_1$  that solves these congruences for some positive  $d_1$ . This can effectively be done by considering the prime factors of  $2b_k + 1$ . Similarly in order to find inductively defined  $m_r$  and  $d_r$  we consider the system

$$\begin{aligned} 2b_k + 1 - \sum_{\ell=1}^{r-1} (d_\ell - 1) &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_r} \\ \sum_{\ell=1}^r 2(m_\ell - 1) + \sum_{\ell=1}^{r-1} d_\ell &\equiv 0 \pmod{d_r} \end{aligned}$$

Putting it all together gives the following *pari* code:

```
next_a(last_a) = {
    local(A=last_a,B=last_a,C=2*last_a+1);
    while(A>0,
        D=divisors(C);
        k1=10*D[2];
        for(j=2,matsize(D)[2],d=D[j];k=((A+1-B+d)/2)%d;
            if(k==0,k=d); if(k<=k1,k1=k;d1=d));
        if(k1-1+d1==A,B=B+1);
        A = max(A-(k1-1)-d1,0);
        B = B + k1;
        C = C - (d1 - 1);
    );
    return(B);
}

a=2
while(true,print1(a," ",");a=next_a(a))
```

With this program we are able to calculate the first 300 terms of the sequence, given in a table in the appendix.

## 2.1 Another sequence

From the program it becomes clear, that we can define another sequence  $(\alpha_n)_{n \geq 1}$ , where  $\alpha_n$  is the result of `next_a(n)`. In other words:  $\alpha_n$  is the smallest index  $i > n$  such that for the inductively defined sequence

$$\begin{aligned} a_n &:= 0 \\ a_i &:= a_{i-1} - \gcd(a_{i-1}, i-1) \quad \text{for } i > n \end{aligned}$$

we have  $a_i = 0$ . Let's write  $\alpha$  as a function

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha : \mathbb{N} &\rightarrow \mathbb{N} \\ n &\mapsto \alpha(n) := \alpha_n \end{aligned}$$

Here are some observations for the function  $\alpha$ .

- a) We have  $b_n = \alpha^{n-1}(2)$ , where  $\alpha^{n-1}$  is  $\alpha$  iterated  $n-1$  times.
- b)  $\alpha(13) = 21$
- c)  $\alpha(i)$  is prime for all  $0 < i \leq 10^9$  if  $i \neq 13$ .
- d)  $\alpha(i) = 2i + 1$  if and only if  $2i + 1$  is prime.
- e)  $\alpha(i) = 2i - 1$  if and only if  $2i - 1$  is a prime of the form  $6z + 1$ .
- f)  $\alpha(i) = 2i - 3$  if and only if  $2i - 3$  is a prime of the form  $30z + 1$ .
- g)  $z := \alpha(i) = 2i - 5$  if and only if  $z$  is prime and one of the following three is the case.
  - I)  $z = 0 \pmod{3}$  and  $z = 13$
  - II)  $z = 1 \pmod{3}$  and  $z \neq 0 \pmod{7}$  and  $z \neq 0 \pmod{11}$  and  $z \neq 0 \pmod{13}$  and either
    - i)  $z \neq 4 \pmod{5}$  and  $z = 1 \pmod{7}$  or
    - ii)  $z = 4 \pmod{5}$  and  $z \neq 9 \pmod{11}$  and  $z \neq 11 \pmod{13}$ .
  - III)  $z = 2 \pmod{3}$  and  $z \in \{8, 71, 92\} \pmod{105}$ .

## 3 Asymptotics

As noticed by Cloitre, it seems like  $b_n \sim c2^n$  for  $c = 1.186\dots$ . We attach a table of the values  $c_n := \frac{b_n}{2^n}$ . We plot the sequence absolute values of differences of  $c$ , i.e.  $(|c_{n+1} - c_n|)_{n \geq 1}$ . From this plot is looks plausible that at least the first 35 digits of  $c_{300}$  are correct:

$$c = 1.18610755201970969274641959912948880\dots$$

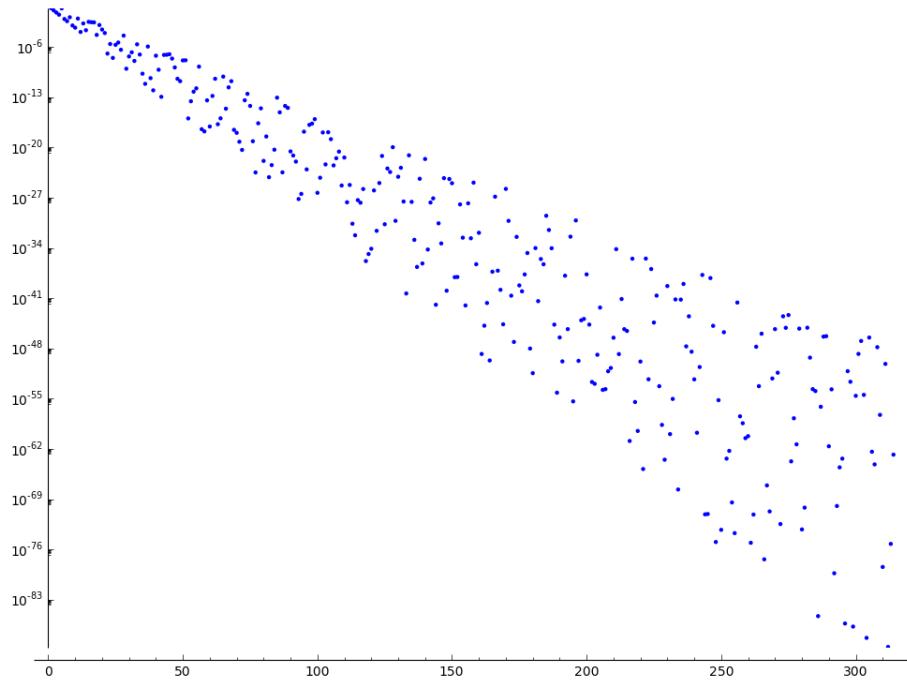


Figure 1: Logarithmic plot of  $(|c_{n+1} - c_n|)_{n \geq 1}$  for  $n < 315$ .

## 4 Appendix

A table of the first 300 values of the sequence  $b$ .

$n$	$b_n$
1	2
2	5
3	11
4	23
5	47
6	79
7	157
8	313
9	619
10	1237
11	2473
12	4909
13	9817
14	19603
15	39199
16	78193
17	156019
18	311347
19	622669
20	1244149
21	2487739
22	4975111
23	9950221
24	19900399
25	39800797
26	79601461
27	159202369
28	318404629
29	636788881
30	1273577761
31	2547155419
32	5094310069
33	10188620041
34	20377200079
35	40754397121
36	81508794229
37	163017588457
38	326034863503
39	652069726981
40	1304139453961
41	2608278775139

$n$	$b_n$
42	5216557547329
43	10433115094657
44	20866228823311
45	41732454755713
46	83464902745219
47	166929802112809
48	333859603830469
49	667719207640333
50	1335438415261387
51	2670876800596783
52	5341753538059891
53	10683507076119781
54	21367014152239069
55	42734028304456861
56	85468056608789419
57	170936112956422291
58	341872225912844581
59	683744451825689161
60	1367488903651336099
61	2734977807302672179
62	5469955614604651421
63	10939911228867814129
64	21879822457735627939
65	43759644915471251671
66	87519289825471433329
67	175038579650942495623
68	350077159301184925933
69	700154318592312818233
70	1400308637184625633099
71	2800617274369251263599
72	5601234548738502526903
73	11202469097477005053763
74	22404938194953306492529
75	44809876389895526368621
76	89619752779790591190337
77	179239505559581182369501
78	358479011119162364739001
79	716958022238324715398701
80	1433916044476646061607879
81	2867832088953292123215433
82	5735664177906584244794839
83	11471328355813168489589671
84	22942656711626336979178663
85	45885313423252673958167347
86	91770626846498644550911261
87	183541253692997168082731737
88	36708250738594336165462423
89	734165014771984909918324339
90	1468330029543965802199019407
91	2936660059087931604391093729
92	5873320118175863208778430461
93	11746640236351726417555791877
94	23493280472703452835111583741
95	46986560945406905670223167347
96	93973121890813811214704529553
97	187946243781627622429407659893
98	375892487563255240394362905949
99	751784975126510467419366561643
100	1503569950253020823974756626427
101	3014239900506041647949513240631
102	601427981012083295899023398461
103	1202859602024166579403443973367
104	2405711920404833158806008744053
105	4811423840809666263858033334291
106	962284768161933325161166337485681
107	192456953632386665032228132136167
108	38491390726477330064353569391327
109	769827814529546660126991628419769
110	1539655629059093320253983191729133
111	3079311258118186640506936021800541
112	615862251623637328101387204240301
113	12317245032472746562027743464400949
114	24634490064945493124055486928796959
115	4926898012989098628110973857593677
116	98537960259781972496221947676827301
117	19707592051956394492443895320229633
118	394151841039127889984887785259447507
119	78830368207825577996977557051895013
120	1576607364156511559939551141037790007
121	3153214728313023119879102282075579809
122	6306429456626046239758204509009857359
123	12612858913252092479516409018019454749
124	25225717826504184959032815675304441663
125	50451435653008369918037625328347919813
126	100902871306016739836075250656678663449
127	201805742612033479672148495650051520389
128	403611485224066959344295693300427135063
129	807222970448133918681164641485718226971
130	161444594089626783736232928970615449851
131	3228891881792535674724656302968912476923
132	6457783763585071349449232530051367454757
133	12915567527170142698898465056894676674687
134	25831135054340285397796930113789353349373
135	51662270108680570795559092648964890764943
136	103324540217361141591118185274937075902777
137	206649080434722283182236370549873916636879
138	413298160869444566364472741099747833194221
139	826596321738889132728945179098738031574433

$n$	$b_n$
140	1653192643477778265457890358197476062179889
141	3306385286955556530915092188941585586136419
142	661277057391113061830184377883170833420293
143	1322554114782226123660368753373494242944751
144	26451082295644452247320737488693714733719843
145	52902164591288904494641474977387429467439631
146	105804329182577808989282949954750676440829051
147	21160865836515561797856899909501276468133839
148	423217316730311235957131610262875945813279907
149	84643463346062247191426320525751891626480523
150	1692869226692124494382852586213247775885348913
151	3385738533842489887657051425372313993469761381
152	6771477067684979775314102850744627986890683163
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154	27085908270739919101256411400290734123962938413
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164	27735970069237677159685652336258677591455963272631
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168	443775521107802834554984996861252472934553043584927
169	8875510422156056910996999372250495868994693217131
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171	355020416886422126476343987992408546250028694290288747
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174	2840163335089938141151903926969373942960135931581573
175	5680326670179876282303807878533857986131145592325389
176	113606533403597525646076157570677159722564478499637619
177	227213068071950512921523151413541945111315724194969
178	45442613361439010258430463028207863882295687973841727
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181	3635409068915120820674437042261669050361207454396113801
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183	14541636275660483282697748169046675018951530701409081869
184	290832755132096565395496338093349967298437421522015171
185	5816654510264193313079092676186699908255688445599989813
186	11633309020528386261581985690260565417262590301863599776453
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198	476500337480842716207439812001805477909568155738244817036261
199	95300674961685342414879624003610955819136304707961495391653
200	19060013499233708648297592480072911638272588458529407007529
201	38120026998467417296595184960144382320928664835356055118583
202	762400539969348345931903699202888764641857328294868304030009
203	15248010799386969186380739840577529823714656897736331682923
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208	48793634558038294139641836748984880937088480731950291479491
209	9758726911607658827923374979697618741576968174639343961587663
210	195174538232153176555673469959395237483153936349275530031214669
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212	780698152986127062342693877983750500455100912017621363963610833
213	156139630585722541268538775967516100091020182403307221983085753
214	31227926117144508249370775519350220182019987108865892901095259
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222	799434908598994111838918532953682410833012350339600717659185022237
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233	1637242692810545994104610515548914152986224993564133701390683812243789
234	327448538562109198820922103109782305972431269005928494601616081212307
235	65489707712421839764184420621956566119448625380119856989203232162423353
236	13097941542484367952836884124391313223889653970280221997166015858487397
237	26195830849687359056737682487826264477576831535557383623761422136906367

b  
n  
238 5239317661699374718113475364975652528955153663070250585777070745250516679  
239 1047835323398749436226950729951305057910307299505978663947757831020260369  
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243 16765365174379990796312167922088092656491679239946796590931221421343879  
244 3353073034875998195926423358441761852639260574311951735054882216003883371  
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246 134122921395039973783049693433767047410557042297247806940219528886401551609  
247 628645842790079855674099386867534094819666048417592945679659106255260488409  
248 5364916855801597113481987737350681196933932096191952915194990918888780931821  
249 10729833711603194269639754740136379278664192389198503899818037777561863641  
250 214596674232063884539279509494027257855732838476783700768545467230980261093  
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252 85838669629825553815171803079761091034229331537379514365390370977677983921701  
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254 3433546787713022152628472151904364136917254150958058534372388293612190884029  
255 6867093575426044305256944303808872827383450830191611708744776587243236106359  
256 1373417815082668861015388606171745564769691660388322341748953174478954684722010521  
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315	1.1861075520197096927464195991294888057695370256660087650074177921167382326953697338936154799499

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