MINIMAL VOLUME OF SLABS IN THE COMPLEX CUBE

HERMANN KÖNIG AND ALEXANDER KOLDOBSKY

(Communicated by Thomas Schlumprecht)

ABSTRACT. We study the volume of sections and slabs in the n -dimensional cube for complex scalars. In particular, we investigate the directions of minimal volume for a small width of the slab.

1. INTRODUCTION AND RESULTS

Let $\|\cdot\|_\infty$ and $|\cdot|$ denote the supremum and the euclidean norm on $\mathbb{K}^n$ where $\mathbb{K} \in \{\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{C}\}$. For volume considerations, $\mathbb{C}^n$ is identified with $\mathbb{R}^{2n}$ and the $(2n)$ -dimensional volume is used. Let

$$B_\infty := \{x \in \mathbb{K}^n \mid \|x\|_\infty \leq \alpha\}$$

be the n -dimensional cube of volume 1, i.e. $\alpha = 1/2$ if $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$ and $\alpha = 1/\sqrt{\pi}$ if $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$. Given some direction $a \in \mathbb{K}^n$ of length $|a| = 1$ and $t \in \mathbb{K}$, we introduce the *section* of the cube

$$S(a, t) := \{x \in \mathbb{K}^n \mid \|x\|_\infty \leq \alpha, \langle x, a \rangle = \alpha t\}$$

and for $t > 0$ the *slab* in the cube

$$S\ell(a, t) := \{x \in \mathbb{K}^n \mid \|x\|_\infty \leq \alpha, |\langle x, a \rangle| \leq \alpha t\}.$$

Let

$$A(a, t) := \text{vol}_{n-1}(S(a, t)) \quad , \quad t \in \mathbb{K},$$

$$V(a, t) := \text{vol}_n(S\ell(a, t)) \quad , \quad t > 0,$$

denote the volumes of the section and the slab of B_∞ . In the complex case, one has to use vol_{2n-2} and vol_{2n} for A and V . For $a = (a_k)_{k=1}^n$, let a^* denote the decreasing rearrangement of the sequence $(|a_k|)_{k=1}^n$, i.e. $|a_1| \geq \dots \geq |a_n| \geq 0$. Since the volume is invariant under coordinate permutations and sign changes, which in the complex case means invariant under permutations and rotations of coordinate disks, we have

$$A(a, t) = A(a^*, |t|) \quad , \quad V(a, t) = V(a^*, t).$$

We will therefore assume in the following that $a = (a_k)_{k=1}^n$, $a_1 \geq \dots \geq a_n \geq 0$ and $t \geq 0$.

Received by the editors August 26, 2010 and, in revised form, January 21, 2011.

2010 *Mathematics Subject Classification*. Primary 46B20, 52A20, 52A40; Secondary 46B04, 52A21.

The first author was partially supported by the American Institute of Mathematics.

The second author was partially supported by NSF grant DMS-1001234 and the American Institute of Mathematics.

Let $f_1 = (1, 0, \dots, 0)$, $f_2 := (1, 1, 0, \dots, 0)/\sqrt{2}$. For central sections $1 = A(f_1, 0) \leq A(a, 0) \leq A(f_2, 0) = 2^{m/2}$, and where $m = 1$ for $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$, $m = 2$ for $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$. The lower bound is due to Hadwiger [Ha], Vaaler [V] and Hensley [He]; the upper bound for $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$ is a well-known result of K. Ball [B]. The complex case is due to Oleskiewicz-Pelczyński [OP].

For small $t > 0$ it would seem natural that the volume of slabs mimics this behaviour in the sense that for $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$

$$t = V(f_1, t) \leq V(a, t) \leq V(f_2, t) = \sqrt{2}t - t^2/2.$$

In fact, it was proved by Barthe-Koldobsky [BK] that the lower bound is true provided that $t \leq 3/4$ holds. For $t > 2(\sqrt{2} - 1)$, however, $V(f_1, t) \leq V(a, t)$ is false for $a = f_2$, and for t larger but close to this number $2(\sqrt{2} - 1)$, f_2 probably is the direction of minimal slab volume (this is true at least for $n = 2$ and 3). The lower bound

$$t^2 = V(f_1, t) \leq V(a, t)$$

remains true in the complex case for small t . This generalization of the result of [BK] to the complex case is the main result of this paper. Formula (2.3) states that

$$V(f_2, t) = 2t^2 - ((1 + t^2)t\sqrt{2 - t^2} + (2t^2 - 1)\arcsin(t\sqrt{2 - t^2}))/\pi,$$

and for $t \geq t_1 \approx 0.867115$, $V(f_2, t) < V(f_1, t)$, and for $t \geq t_1$ but near t_1 , t_2 is probably the direction of minimal volume (true for $n = 2$). Our main result states that f_1 is the direction of minimal volume for slabs of width $t \leq 4/5$, leaving a gap for width $4/5 < t < t_1$ similar to the real case where the gap is $3/4 < t < 2(\sqrt{2} - 1)$.

Theorem 1. *Let $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$, $a \in \mathbb{C}^n$ with $|a| = 1$ and $0 \leq t \leq 4/5$. Then*

$$(1.1) \quad t^2 = V(f_1, t) \leq V(a, t).$$

Note that

$$V(a, t) = 2 \int_0^t A(a, s) s \, ds, \quad 1 = \text{vol}_{2n}(B_\infty) = 2 \int_0^\infty A(a, s) s \, ds.$$

As in [BK] the main technical tool is an integral inequality of independent interest, to be applied to $f = 2A(a, \cdot)$:

Proposition 2. *Let $f : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ be in $L_1(\mathbb{R}_+, s \, ds)$, non-increasing and log-concave. Let $t > 0$. Assume that*

$$(1.2) \quad \int_0^t f(s) s \, ds \leq \left(\frac{4}{5}\right)^2 \int_0^\infty f(s) s \, ds.$$

Then

$$(1.3) \quad 2 \left(\int_0^\infty f(s) s^3 \, ds \right) \left(\int_0^t f(s) s \, ds \right) \geq t^2 \left(\int_0^\infty f(s) s \, ds \right)^2.$$

Concerning the direction of the maximal volume of slabs, in the case of *complex* scalars, different from the case of the maximal volume of sections [OP], $V(a, t) \leq V(f_2, t)$ is false in general for *any* width $t > 0$: for large $n \in \mathbb{N}$, we show $V(f_n, t) > V(f_2, t)$, where $f_n := (1, \dots, 1)/\sqrt{n} \in S^{n-1}$.

Proposition 3. *Let $0 < t < 4/9$ and $n \geq 20$. Then for $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$ and any $n \geq 1/t$,*

$$V(f_n, t) > V(f_2, t).$$

Contrary to this, in the case of *real* scalars $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$, $V(f_n, t) < V(f_2, t)$ holds provided that $t < t_0$, where t_0 is approximately $1/14$.

2. VOLUME FORMULAS

We mention and recall some volume formulas for sections and slabs of the cube which yield some statements and formulas before the formulation of Theorem 1.

Proposition 4. *Let $a \in \mathbb{R}_+^n$, $|a| = 1$, $t \geq 0$. Then*

$$(2.1) \quad A(a, t) = \begin{cases} \frac{2}{\pi} \int_0^\infty \prod_{k=1}^n \frac{\sin(a_k s)}{a_k s} \cos(ts) ds & \mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R} \\ \frac{1}{2} \int_0^\infty \prod_{k=1}^n j_1(a_k s) J_0(ts) s ds & \mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C} \end{cases}$$

and

$$(2.2) \quad V(a, t) = \begin{cases} t \frac{2}{\pi} \int_0^\infty \prod_{k=1}^n \frac{\sin(a_k s)}{a_k s} \frac{\sin(ts)}{ts} ds & \mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R} \\ t^2 \frac{1}{2} \int_0^\infty \prod_{k=1}^n j_1(a_k s) j_1(ts) s ds & \mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C} \end{cases},$$

where J_0, J_1 are the first Bessel functions and $j_1(x) = 2 J_1(x)/x$.

Let us note that (2.1), $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}$ is a well-known result of Polya [P]. For $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$ and $t = 0$, it is found in [OP]. Formulas (2.2) follow from (2.1) by integrating over t , using $J_0(s)s = (J_1(s)s)'$ in the complex case. The standard way to prove (2.1) is to write (with α as in the introduction)

$$A(a, t) = \int_{\langle z, a \rangle = \alpha t} \chi(\|z\|_\infty) dz,$$

where χ is the indicator function of $[0, \alpha]$, and to take the Fourier transform in the t -variable, $\hat{A}(a, \cdot)$, which by coordinate independence is a constant times a product of scaled (by a_k) Fourier transforms of the ball $B = \{z \in \mathbb{K} \mid |z| \leq \alpha\}$. For $\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}$ this is where J_1 appears. Taking the inverse transform then gives (2.1).

In particular, for $a = f_1$ and $a = f_2$, (2.2) yields

$$(2.3) \quad \begin{aligned} V(f_1, t) &= t \quad (\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}), \quad V(f_1, t) = t^2 \quad (\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}), \\ V(f_2, t) &= \sqrt{2}t - t^2/2 \quad (\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{R}), \\ V(f_2, t) &= 2t^2 - ((1+t^2)t\sqrt{2-t^2} + (2t^2-1)\arcsin(t\sqrt{2-t^2}))/\pi \quad (\mathbb{K} = \mathbb{C}) \end{aligned}$$

so that $V(f_1, t_1) = V(f_2, t_1)$ for $t_1 = 2(\sqrt{2}-1)$ in the real case and $t_1 \simeq 0.867115$ in the complex case, as mentioned in the introduction. For $0 < t < t_1$, $V(f_1, t) < V(f_2, t)$.

Using these formulas, we now give the

Proof of Proposition 3. (a) For $f_n = (1, \dots, 1)/\sqrt{n}$, (2.2) implies for complex scalars and $t > 0$:

$$V(f_n, t) = \frac{t^2}{2} \int_0^\infty (j_1(s/\sqrt{n}))^n j_1(ts) s \, ds.$$

Since $\lim_{u \rightarrow 0} j_1(u) e^{u^2/8} = 1$, $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} j_1(s/\sqrt{n})^n = e^{-s^2/8}$ for any $s \in \mathbb{R}$, and we find using the dominated convergence theorem that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} V(f_n, t) &= \frac{t^2}{2} \int_0^\infty e^{-s^2/8} j_1(ts) s \, ds \\ (2.4) \qquad &= t \int_0^\infty e^{-s^2/8} J_1(ts) \, ds = 1 - e^{-2t^2}. \end{aligned}$$

(b) For the properties of Bessel functions, cf. Watson [W].

We will use the following estimates for the modified Bessel functions $j_1(t) = 2J_1(t)/t$:

$$(2.5) \qquad |j_1(t)| \leq \min(1, 1.66/t^{3/2}), \quad 0 < t,$$

$$(2.6) \qquad |j_1(t)| \geq \exp(-t^2/8 - t^4/316), \quad 0 \leq t \leq 2.$$

As for (2.5), $\sqrt{t}|J_1(t)|$ has a decreasing sequence of maxima, tending to $\sqrt{2/\pi}$ by the asymptotic formula for $J_1(t)$, with the first maximum near $t_0 \approx 2.17$ bounded by 0.83. To prove (2.6), consider $f(t) := j_1(t) \exp(t^2/8 + t^4/316)$. Then

$$g(t) := f'(t) \exp(-t^2/8 - t^4/316) = J_1(t)(1/2 + 2/79 t^2) - 2J_2(t)/t.$$

In $[0, 2]$, g is positive for $t < t_1 \approx 1.67$ and negative for $t > t_1$, as can be checked by using the alternating power series expansion of J_1 and J_2 to approximate g by polynomials. Thus f is first increasing and then decreasing. Since $f(0) = 1$ and $f(2) > 0$, (2.6) holds for $t \in [0, 2]$.

(c) By (2.2) and (2.4), we have for any $t > 0$

$$(2.7) \qquad V(f_n, t) = (1 - e^{-2t^2}) - t^2/2 \int_0^\infty (e^{-s^2/8} - j_1(s/\sqrt{n})^n) j_1(ts) s \, ds.$$

Using (2.6) and $|j_1(u)| \leq 1$, we find

$$\begin{aligned} I_1 &:= t^2/2 \int_0^{2\sqrt{n}} |e^{-s^2/8} - j_1(s/\sqrt{n})^n| j_1(ts) s \, ds \\ &\leq t^2/2 \int_0^{2\sqrt{n}} e^{-s^2/8} (1 - e^{-s^4/(316n)}) s \, ds \\ &\leq t^2/2 \int_0^\infty e^{-s^2/8} s^5/(316n) \, ds = 64/79 t^2/n. \end{aligned}$$

For $s > 2\sqrt{n}$, we estimate both terms in the integrand in (2.7) separately:

$$I_2 := t^2/2 \int_{2\sqrt{n}}^\infty e^{-s^2/8} |j_1(ts)| s \, ds \leq t^2/2 \int_{2\sqrt{n}}^\infty s e^{-s^2/8} \, ds = 2/e^{n/2} t^2$$

and, using (2.5),

$$\begin{aligned} I_3 &:= t^2/2 \int_{2\sqrt{n}}^{\infty} |j_1(s/\sqrt{n})|^n |j_1(ts)| s ds = t^2 n/2 \int_2^{\infty} |j_1(u)|^n |j_1(\sqrt{n} t u)| u du \\ &\leq t^2 n/2 \int_2^{\infty} (1.66/u^{3/2})^n u du = 4n/(3n-4) (0.83/\sqrt{2})^n t^2 \leq 2/e^{n/2} t^2, \quad n \geq 4. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore $I := I_1 + I_2 + I_3 \leq (64/79 + 4n/e^{n/2}) t^2/n \leq 0.815t^2/n$, provided that $n \geq 20$. Using formula (2.3) for $V(f_2, t)$, elementary estimates give that $V(f_2, t) \leq 2t^2 - t^3$ for any $t \in [0, 1]$. Therefore $V(f_2, t) < V(f_n, t)$ will follow from $0.815 + 2nt^2 < nt$. It is elementary to check that this holds for $1/n < t < 4/9$ and $n \geq 20$. $\square$

3. SLABS OF MINIMAL VOLUME

We now prove Theorem 1 by first using Proposition 2 and then giving the (independent) proof of Proposition 2.

Proof of Theorem 1 from Proposition 2. Let $a \in S^{n-1}(\mathbb{C})$ and $0 \leq t \leq 4/5$. For the volume of the slab and the unit cube we have in the complex case by polar integration

$$V(a, t) = 2 \int_0^t A(a, s) s ds, \quad 1 = 2 \int_0^{\infty} A(a, s) s ds.$$

Assume that the direction a satisfies $V(a, t) \leq V(f_1, t) = t^2$. We claim that in this case $V(a, t) = V(f_1, t)$; i.e. f_1 is a minimal volume direction for the complex slab. The assumption in Proposition 2 is satisfied for $f = 2A(a, \cdot)$ since

$$V(a, t) = \int_0^t f(s) s ds \leq t^2 \leq \left(\frac{4}{5}\right)^2 = \left(\frac{4}{5}\right)^2 \int_0^{\infty} f(s) s ds.$$

Further, for the circle $B = \{z \in \mathbb{C} \mid |z| \leq \alpha = 1/\sqrt{\pi}\}$ of area 1,

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^{\infty} f(s) s^3 ds &= 2 \int_0^{\infty} A(a, s) s^3 ds \\ &= 2\pi^2 \int_0^{\infty} A(a, u/\alpha) u^3 du \\ &= \pi \int_B A(a, |v|/\alpha) |v|^2 dv \\ &= \pi \int_B \left(\int_{\langle z, a \rangle = |v|} dz \right) |v|^2 dv \\ &= \pi \int_{B_{\infty}} |\langle w, a \rangle|^2 dw = \frac{1}{2}, \end{aligned}$$

where the last equality follows from

$$\int_{B^2} w_i \bar{w}_j dw_i dw_j = 0, \quad \int_B |w_i|^2 dw_i = \frac{1}{2\pi}.$$

We thus conclude by Proposition 2

$$2 \left(\int_0^\infty f(s) s^3 ds \right) \left(\int_0^t f(s) s ds \right) \geq t^2 \left(\int_0^\infty f(s) s ds \right)^2;$$

i.e. $2 \cdot \frac{1}{2} \cdot V(a, t) \geq t^2 \cdot 1^2$, $V(a, t) \geq t^2 = V(f_1, t)$. $\square$

Proof of Proposition 2. Let $t > 0$ and $0 < v < V$. Consider

$$F_{t,v,V} := \left\{ f : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+ \mid f \text{ non-increasing, log-concave, } \int_0^\infty f(s) s ds = V, \int_0^t f(s) s ds = v \right\}.$$

We want to prove that under the assumption (1.2) on f ,

$$(3.1) \quad \inf \left\{ \int_0^\infty f(s) s^3 ds \mid f \in F_{t,v,V} \right\} \geq \frac{t^2 V^2}{2v}.$$

Using the monotonicity and log-concavity of f , one proves similarly as in [BK] that

$$(3.2) \quad \inf \left\{ \int_0^\infty f(s) s^3 ds \mid f \in F_{t,v,V} \right\} \\ = \inf \left\{ \int_0^d e^{-ps} s^3 ds \mid p \geq 0, d \geq t \geq 0, \int_0^d e^{-ps} s ds = V, \int_0^t e^{-ps} s ds = v \right\}.$$

Thus we only have to consider functions $f(s) = \chi_{[0,d]}(s) e^{-ps}$. The constraints in (3.2) mean that

$$V = \int_0^d e^{-ps} s ds = \frac{1}{p^2} \int_0^x e^{-u} u du, \quad v = \int_0^t e^{-ps} s ds = \frac{1}{p^2} \int_0^y e^{-u} u du,$$

with $x := pd \geq y := pt$. Moreover,

$$\int_0^d e^{-ps} s^3 ds = \frac{1}{p^4} \int_0^x e^{-u} u^3 du.$$

Assumption (1.2) for these functions is thus equivalent to

$$(3.3) \quad \int_0^y e^{-u} u du \leq \left(\frac{4}{5} \right)^2 \int_0^x e^{-u} u du, \quad 0 \leq y \leq x.$$

Therefore, using (3.2), inequality (1.3) of Proposition 2 will follow provided we can show that for any $0 \leq y \leq x$ satisfying (3.3) we have

$$(3.4) \quad \frac{2 \int_0^x e^{-u} u^3 du}{\left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right)^2} \geq \frac{y^2}{\left(\int_0^y e^{-u} u du \right)^2}.$$

The function $g, g(y) := y^2 / \left(\int_0^y e^{-u} u du \right)$ is increasing since

$$2 \int_0^y e^{y-u} u du \geq 2 \int_0^y u du = y^2,$$

i.e.

$$2y \int_0^y e^{-u} u du \geq e^{-y} y^3.$$

Define $\varphi : \mathbb{R}_+ \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ by the requirement

$$(3.5) \quad \int_0^{\varphi(x)} e^{-u} u du = \left(\frac{4}{5} \right)^2 \int_0^x e^{-u} u du.$$

Hence by assumption $y \leq \varphi(x) \leq x$, and (3.4) will follow from the stronger claim

$$\frac{2 \int_0^x e^{-u} u^3 du}{\left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right)^2} \geq \frac{\varphi(x)^2}{\left(\int_0^{\varphi(x)} e^{-u} u du \right)^2} = \left(\frac{5}{4} \right)^2 \frac{\varphi(x)^2}{\left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right)^2},$$

i.e.

$$(3.6) \quad \varphi(x)^2 \leq \frac{32}{25} \left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u^3 du \Big/ \int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right) =: \psi(x).$$

Let $x \in [0, 4]$. Since $\varphi(0) = 0$, $\lim_{x \searrow 0} \psi(x) = 0$, to prove (3.6) in this range of x it suffices to show that $(\varphi(x)^2)' \leq \psi'(x)$. We have by (3.5)

$$(\varphi(x)^2)' = 2\varphi(x)\varphi'(x) = \frac{32}{25} e^{\varphi(x)} x e^{-x}$$

and

$$\psi'(x) = \frac{32/25}{\left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right)^2} \left[\left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right) x^3 e^{-x} - x e^{-x} \left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u^3 du \right) \right].$$

Hence $(\varphi(x)^2)' \leq \psi'(x)$ holds provided that

$$e^{\varphi(x)} \left(\int_0^x e^{-u} u du \right)^2 \leq \int_0^x (x^2 u - u^3) e^{-u} du$$

or equivalently

$$(3.7) \quad \begin{aligned} e^{\varphi(x)} &\leq f(x)/g(x), \quad f(x) := x^2(e^x + 2) - 6(e^x - (1+x)), \\ g(x) &= (e^x - (1+x))(1 - (1+x)e^{-x}). \end{aligned}$$

We claim that $\varphi(x) \leq \frac{4}{5}x - \frac{4}{75}x^2 =: \gamma(x)$ holds. This will follow from

$$(3.8) \quad \int_0^{\gamma(x)} e^{-u} u du \geq \left(\frac{4}{5}\right)^2 \int_0^x e^{-u} u du$$

by definition of φ . (3.8) will follow from the stronger inequality for the derivatives

$$\gamma'(x)e^{-\gamma(x)}\gamma(x) \geq \left(\frac{4}{5}\right)^2 e^{-x}x,$$

i.e.

$$(1 - \frac{2}{15}x)(1 - \frac{1}{15}x)e^{x/5+4x^2/75} \geq 1$$

or

$$(3.9) \quad \frac{x}{5} + \frac{4}{75}x^2 + \ln(1 - \frac{2}{15}x) + \ln(1 - \frac{1}{15}x) \geq 0.$$

For $x \leq 4$, $\frac{2}{15}x \leq \frac{3}{5}$ and for $y \leq \frac{3}{5}$, $\ln(1-y) \geq -y - y^2$, which implies

$$\ln(1 - \frac{2}{15}x) + \ln(1 - \frac{1}{15}x) \geq -\frac{x}{5} - \frac{x^2}{45}.$$

Hence (3.9) and (3.8) hold for $x \leq 4$. We conclude that

$$(3.10) \quad e^{\varphi(x)} \leq e^{4/5x-4x^2/75} \leq 1 + \frac{4}{5}x + \frac{4}{15}x^2 + \frac{16}{375}x^3 + \frac{8}{5625}x^4,$$

the last inequality coming from the series development of the middle term. As for f and g in (3.7), one calculates the Taylor expansions

$$\begin{aligned} f(x) &= \frac{x^4}{4} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{4(n+1)(n+6)}{(n+4)!} x^n \\ g(x) &= \frac{x^4}{4} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n \cdot 4 \cdot \frac{(n+4)^2 - 3(n+4) + 1 + (-1)^n}{(n+4)!} x^n. \end{aligned}$$

The Taylor polynomial for $f(x)/g(x)$ of order 3 yields a lower bound

$$(3.11) \quad 1 + \frac{4}{5}x + \frac{13}{45}x^2 + \frac{11}{189}x^3 \leq f(x)/g(x).$$

Inequality (3.7) now follows from (3.10), (3.11) and

$$\frac{4}{15}x^2 + \frac{16}{375}x^3 + \frac{8}{5625}x^4 \leq \frac{13}{45}x^2 + \frac{11}{189}x^3,$$

which is true since $1 + \frac{367}{525}x - \frac{8}{125}x^2 \geq 0$ for $0 \leq x \leq 4$ holds.

For $x \geq 4$, inequality (3.9) is verified more easily: φ and ψ are increasing functions with

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \psi(x) = \frac{192}{25} = 7.68, \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \varphi(x)^2 \simeq 4.74.$$

For $x \geq 4$

$$\psi(x) \geq \psi(4) \simeq 4.79 \geq \varphi(\infty)^2 \geq \varphi(x)^2.$$

□

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MATHEMATISCHES SEMINAR, UNIVERSITÄT ZU KIEL, 24098 KIEL, GERMANY
E-mail address: `hkoenig@math.uni-kiel.de`

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65211
E-mail address: `koldobsk@math.missouri.edu`