# Permutations with few inversions 

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#### Abstract

A curious generating function $S_{0}(x)$ for permutations of $[n]$ with exactly $n$ inversions is presented. Moreover, $(x C(x))^{i} S_{0}(x)$ is shown to be the generating function for permutations of $[n]$ with exactly $n-i$ inversions, where $C(x)$ is the generating function for the Catalan numbers.


Mathematics Subject Classifications: 05A05, 05A15, 05A19

## 1 Introduction

The famous triangle of Mahonian numbers starts as follows:

| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | $\ldots$ |
| ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: | :--- |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 20 | 22 | 20 | 15 | 9 | 4 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 5 | 14 | 29 | 49 | 71 | 90 | 101 | 101 | 90 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 6 | 20 | 49 | 98 | 169 | 259 | 359 | 455 | 531 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 7 | 27 | 76 | 174 | 343 | 602 | 961 | 1415 | 1940 | $\ldots$ |
| 1 | 8 | 35 | 111 | 285 | 628 | 1230 | 2191 | 3606 | 5545 | $\ldots$ |

Its $n$-th row records the distribution of inversions on permutations of $[n]=\{1,2, \ldots, n\}$. The corresponding generating function is [6]

$$
\begin{equation*}
(1+x)\left(1+x+x^{2}\right) \cdots\left(1+x+\cdots+x^{n-1}\right)=\prod_{j=1}^{n} \frac{1-x^{j}}{1-x} \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

[^0]We shall derive generating functions for the subdiagonals on or below the main diagonal of the table above. The first three of those are

$$
\begin{aligned}
& S_{0}(x)=1+x^{3}+5 x^{4}+22 x^{5}+90 x^{6}+359 x^{7}+1415 x^{8}+\cdots \\
& S_{1}(x)=x+x^{2}+2 x^{3}+6 x^{4}+20 x^{5}+71 x^{6}+259 x^{7}+961 x^{8}+\cdots \\
& S_{2}(x)=x^{2}+2 x^{3}+5 x^{4}+15 x^{5}+49 x^{6}+169 x^{7}+602 x^{8}+\cdots
\end{aligned}
$$

In general, if $i$ is a non-negative integer, then $S_{i}(x)$ is the generating function for permutations of $[n]$ with exactly $n-i$ inversions. In other words, if we let $I_{n}(k)$ denote the number of permutations of $[n]$ with $k$ inversions, then

$$
S_{i}(x)=\sum_{n \geqslant 0} I_{n}(n-i) x^{n} .
$$

It should be noted that there is a known closed expression for $I_{n}(k)$ when $k \leqslant n$, namely the Knuth-Netto formula $[4,7]$ :

$$
I_{n}(k)=\binom{n+k-1}{k}+\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}(-1)^{j}\binom{n+k-u_{j}-j-1}{k-u_{j}-j}+\sum_{j=1}^{\infty}(-1)^{j}\binom{n+k-u_{j}-1}{k-u_{j}}
$$

where $u_{j}=j(3 j-1) / 2$ is the $j$-th pentagonal number. This formula can be proved using (1) and Euler's pentagonal number theorem [1]. For instance, $u_{1}=1, u_{2}=5$, and the coefficient of $x^{6}$ in $S_{0}(x)$ is

$$
I_{6}(6)=\binom{11}{6}-\binom{10-u_{1}}{5-u_{1}}-\binom{11-u_{1}}{6-u_{1}}+\binom{11-u_{2}}{6-u_{2}}=90
$$

Let $C(x)=(1-\sqrt{1-4 x}) /(2 x)$ be the generating function for the Catalan numbers, $C_{n}=\binom{2 n}{n} /(n+1)$. We show (Theorem 3) that, for any non-negative integer $i$,

$$
S_{i}(x)=(x C(x))^{i} S_{0}(x)
$$

thus reducing the problem of determining $S_{i}(x)$ to that of determining $S_{0}(x)$.
Denote by $\sigma(n)$ the sum of divisors of $n$, and denote by $p(n)$ the number of integer partitions of $n$. We show (Theorem 4) that

$$
S_{0}(x)=R(x C(x)),
$$

where the power series $R(x)$ can be expressed in any of the following three equivalent ways

$$
\begin{aligned}
R(x) & =\frac{1-x}{1-2 x} \prod_{k \geqslant 1}\left(1-x^{k}\right) \\
\log R(x) & =\sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-\sigma(n)-1\right) \frac{x^{n}}{n} \\
1 / R(x) & =1-\sum_{n \geqslant 1}(p(1)+p(2)+\cdots+p(n-1)-p(n)) x^{n} .
\end{aligned}
$$

See Equation (3), Proposition 12 and Proposition 13.

## 2 Factoring permutations with few inversions

Let $\mathcal{S}_{n}$ denote the set of permutations of $[n]$. The inversion table of $\pi=a_{1} a_{2} \cdots a_{n}$ in $\mathcal{S}_{n}$ is defined as $b_{1} b_{2} \cdots b_{n}$ where $b_{i}$ is the number of elements to the left of and larger than $a_{i}$; in other words, $b_{i}$ is the cardinality of the set $\left\{j \in[i-1]: a_{j}>a_{i}\right\}$. For instance, the inversion table of 3152746 is 0102021 . The number of inversions in $\pi$, denoted $\operatorname{inv}(\pi)$, is simply the sum of the entries in the inversion table for $\pi$. We will work with an invertible transformation of the inversion table that we call the cumulative inversion table. It is obtained by taking partial sums of the inversion table: $b_{1}, b_{1}+b_{2}, b_{1}+b_{2}+b_{3}$, etc. The cumulative inversion table of 3152746 is 0113356 .

A subdiagonal sequence is a sequence of non-negative integers whose $k$-th entry is smaller than $k$. It is easy to see that the inversion table of a permutation is a subdiagonal sequence and that any such sequence is an inversion table, so the two concepts can be used interchangeably.

Lemma 1. There are exactly $C_{n}=\binom{2 n}{n} /(n+1)$ weakly increasing subdiagonal sequences of length $n$.

Proof. Let a weakly increasing subdiagonal sequences $b_{1} b_{2} \cdots b_{n}$ be given, and form the sequence $a_{1} a_{2} \cdots a_{n}$ by setting $a_{i}=b_{i}+1$. Then $a_{i} \leqslant i$ and $1 \leqslant a_{1} \leqslant a_{2} \leqslant \cdots \leqslant a_{n}$. By Exercise 6.19(s) in [9] there are exactly $C_{n}$ such sequences.

Let $\mathcal{S}_{n}^{k}=\left\{\pi \in \mathcal{S}_{n}: \operatorname{inv}(\pi)=k\right\}$ be the set of permutations of $[n]$ with $k$ inversions, and let $\mathcal{C}_{n}$ be the subset of $\mathcal{S}_{n}^{n-1}$ consisting of those permutations whose every prefix of length $k \geqslant 1$ has fewer than $k$ inversions. For $n=0,1,2,3,4$ those are $\emptyset,\{1\},\{21\}$, $\{231,312\}$, and $\{1432,2341,2413,3142,4123\}$.

Lemma 2. For $n \geqslant 1$ we have $\left|\mathcal{C}_{n}\right|=C_{n-1}$.
Proof. Clearly, the cumulative inversion table $\gamma=c_{1} c_{2} \cdots c_{n}$ of any permutation $\pi \in \mathcal{S}_{n}$ is weakly increasing. Also, the last letter, $c_{n}$, of $\gamma$ is the number of inversions in $\pi$. In particular, if $\pi \in \mathcal{C}_{n}$ then $c_{n}=n-1$ and $\pi$ is uniquely determined by $\gamma=c_{1} c_{2} \cdots c_{n-1}$. Now, any $k$-prefix of $\gamma$ is the cumulative inversion table of a permutation with fewer than $k$ inversions. Moreover, since the only condition on $\pi$ is that each $k$-prefix has fewer than $k$ inversions, any weakly increasing subdiagonal sequence of length $n-1$ is the cumulative inversion table of such a permutation. As pointed out in Lemma 1, such sequences are counted by the Catalan numbers.

Recall that $S_{i}(x)$ is the generating function for permutations of length $n$ with $n-i$ inversions:

$$
S_{i}(x)=\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left|\mathcal{S}_{n}^{n-i}\right| x^{n}
$$

Also, let $C(x)=(1-\sqrt{1-4 x}) /(2 x)$ be the generating function for the Catalan numbers, $C_{n}=\binom{2 n}{n} /(n+1)$.

Theorem 3. For $i \geqslant 0$ we have

$$
\mathcal{S}_{n}^{n-i-1} \simeq \bigcup_{k=0}^{n} \mathcal{S}_{k}^{k-i} \times \mathcal{C}_{n-k}
$$

and thus the generating functions $S_{i+1}(x)$ and $S_{i}(x)$ satisfy the identity

$$
S_{i+1}(x)=x C(x) S_{i}(x),
$$

Equivalently,

$$
S_{i}(x)=(x C(x))^{i} S_{0}(x)
$$

Proof. Let $\pi=a_{1} a_{2} \cdots a_{n} \in \mathcal{S}_{n}^{n-i-1}$. We shall "factor" $\pi$ into two parts $\sigma$ and $\tau$ such that, for some $k$ in $\{0,1, \ldots, n\}, \sigma$ belongs to $\mathcal{S}_{k}^{k-i}$ and $\tau$ belongs to $\mathcal{C}_{n-k}$. For any permutation $\rho$, let $\Delta(\rho)=\operatorname{inv}(\rho)-|\rho|$. Consider what happens if we apply $\Delta$ to successive prefixes of $\pi$. In other words, consider the sequence

$$
\begin{equation*}
\Delta(\epsilon), \Delta\left(a_{1}\right), \Delta\left(a_{1} a_{2}\right), \ldots, \Delta\left(a_{1} a_{2} \cdots a_{n}\right) \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $\epsilon$ denotes the empty prefix. Clearly, this sequence can decrease by at most one at a time. Moreover, $\Delta(\epsilon)=0$ and $\Delta\left(a_{1} a_{2} \cdots a_{n}\right)=\Delta(\pi)=-i-1$, and thus the value $-i$ occurs at least once. Note that the assumption $i \geqslant 0$ is crucial for this argument to work. Let $\sigma=a_{1} \cdots a_{k}$ be the longest prefix of $\pi$ such that $\Delta(\sigma)=-i$. Additionally, let $\tau=a_{k+1} \cdots a_{n}$ be such that $\pi=\sigma \tau$. For instance, if $\pi=4213675 \in \mathcal{S}_{7}^{6}$, then $i=0$, the sequence (2) is $(0,-1,-1,0,0,-1,-2,-1)$, and $\pi$ factors into $\sigma=4213$ and $\tau=675$.

By definition, $\operatorname{inv}(\sigma)=k-i$. We shall prove that $\sigma$ is a permutation of $[k]$, and thus $\tau$ is a permutation of $\{k+1, k+2, \ldots, n\}$. Let

$$
d=\#\left\{(i, j): a_{i}>a_{j}, i \leqslant k, j>k\right\} .
$$

That is, $d$ is the number of inversions in $\pi$ with one leg in $\sigma(i \leqslant k)$ and the other leg in $\tau(j>k)$. Then $\operatorname{inv}(\pi)=\operatorname{inv}(\sigma)+\operatorname{inv}(\tau)+d$. We want to prove that $d=0$. Suppose to the contrary that $d \geqslant 1$ and let $\tau^{\prime}$ be the shortest prefix of $\tau$ such that $\pi^{\prime}=\sigma \tau^{\prime}$ has an inversion with one leg in $\sigma$ and the other in $\tau^{\prime}$. Now, in any such inversion the "leg" in $\tau^{\prime}$ must in fact be the last element of $\tau^{\prime}$ due to the minimality of $\tau^{\prime}$. Thus there is an element of $\sigma$ larger than the last element of $\tau^{\prime}$, but smaller than all the other elements of $\tau^{\prime}$, and hence the last element of $\tau^{\prime}$ is its smallest. In particular, $\operatorname{inv}\left(\tau^{\prime}\right) \geqslant\left|\tau^{\prime}\right|-1$. Now, consider $\operatorname{inv}\left(\pi^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{inv}\left(\sigma \tau^{\prime}\right)$. By definition, $\operatorname{inv}(\sigma)=|\sigma|-i$. We have just seen that $\operatorname{inv}\left(\tau^{\prime}\right) \geqslant\left|\tau^{\prime}\right|-1$ and, by assumption, there is also at least one inversion with one leg in $\sigma$ and the other in $\tau^{\prime}$. Thus,

$$
\operatorname{inv}\left(\pi^{\prime}\right) \geqslant(|\sigma|-i)+\left(\left|\tau^{\prime}\right|-1\right)+1=\left|\pi^{\prime}\right|-i
$$

and $\Delta\left(\pi^{\prime}\right) \geqslant-i$. Now, by the same intermediate value type argument as above, there is some prefix $\sigma^{\prime}$ of $\pi$ containing $\pi^{\prime}$ that satisfies $\Delta\left(\sigma^{\prime}\right)=-i$, contradicting the maximality
of $\sigma$. Thus there are no inversions with one leg in $\sigma$ and the other in $\tau$, and consequently $\sigma$ is a permutation of $[k]$ and $\tau$ a permutation of $\{k+1, \ldots, n\}$.

Having proved that $\sigma \in \mathcal{S}_{k}^{k-i}$ it immediately follows that $\operatorname{inv}(\tau)=n-i-1-(k-i)=$ $n-k-1$. It remains to prove that $\tau$ has no nonempty prefix with as many inversions as letters. Suppose that $\Delta\left(\tau^{\prime}\right)>0$ for some nonempty prefix $\tau^{\prime}$ of $\tau$. Then some nonempty prefix $\tau^{\prime \prime}$ of $\tau$ would satisfy $\Delta\left(\tau^{\prime \prime}\right)=0$ by a similar argument as above, but then the prefix $\sigma \tau^{\prime \prime}$ of $\pi$ would satisfy $\Delta\left(\sigma \tau^{\prime \prime}\right)=-i$, contradicting the maximality of $\sigma$.

While the above theorem represents some progress in understanding permutations with few inversions one crucial piece of the puzzle is missing. Theorem 3 relates all the $S_{i}(x)$ 's to $S_{0}(x)$, but we need a formula for $S_{0}(x)$, which is what we shall offer in the next section.

## 3 A formula for $S_{0}(x)$

Let us write $\lambda \vdash n$ to indicate that $\lambda$ is an integer partition of $n$, and $\mu \vDash n$ to indicate that $\mu$ is an integer composition of $n$. Further, let

$$
\operatorname{Par}(x)=\prod_{k \geqslant 1} \frac{1}{1-x^{k}} \quad \text { and } \quad \operatorname{Comp}(x)=\frac{1-x}{1-2 x}
$$

be the generating functions for integer partitions and compositions. With $\operatorname{Par}_{+}(x)=$ $\operatorname{Par}(x)-1$ denoting the generating function for nonempty integer partitions we have

$$
\operatorname{Par}(x)^{-1}=\frac{1}{1+\operatorname{Par}_{+}(x)}=\sum_{k \geqslant 0}(-1)^{k}\left(\operatorname{Par}_{+}(x)\right)^{k}
$$

Thus $\operatorname{Par}(x)^{-1}$ counts signed tuples of nonempty integer partitions, where the sign of such a tuple $\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}\right)$ is $(-1)^{k}$. Define

$$
\begin{align*}
R(x) & =\operatorname{Comp}(x) \operatorname{Par}(x)^{-1}  \tag{3}\\
& =1+x^{3}+2 x^{4}+5 x^{5}+9 x^{6}+19 x^{7}+37 x^{8}+\cdots
\end{align*}
$$

Then $R(x)$ counts elements of the set

$$
\mathcal{R}_{n}=\left\{\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right): \lambda^{i} \vdash n_{i}, \mu \vDash m, n_{1}+n_{2}+\cdots+n_{k}+m=n\right\},
$$

where the sign of the tuple $\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)$ is $(-1)^{k}$. Writing $\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right) \vdash n$ when $\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)$ is in $\mathcal{R}_{n}$ we then have, by definition,

$$
R(x)=\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left(\sum_{\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right) \vdash n}(-1)^{k}\right) x^{n} .
$$

For illustration we list the elements of $\mathcal{R}_{3}$ below. Negative elements are found in the left column and positive elements in the right column:

| $(1 ; 11)$ | $(\emptyset ; 111)$ |
| ---: | :---: |
| $(1 ; 2)$ | $(\emptyset ; 12)$ |
| $(1,1,1 ; \epsilon)$ | $(\emptyset ; 21)$ |
| $(11 ; 1)$ | $(\emptyset ; 3)$ |
| $(111 ; \epsilon)$ | $(1,1 ; 1)$ |
| $(21 ; \epsilon)$ | $(1,11 ; \epsilon)$ |
| $(2 ; 1)$ | $(1,2 ; \epsilon)$ |
| $(3 ; \epsilon)$ | $(11,1 ; \epsilon)$ |
|  | $(2,1 ; \epsilon)$ |

Here, $\epsilon$ denotes the (empty) integer composition of 0 and $\emptyset$ denotes an empty tuple (of integer partitions). The sequence $1,0,0,1,2,5,9,19,37,74, \ldots$ of coefficients of $R(x)$ is recorded in entry A178841 of the OEIS [8]. There it is said to count the number of pure inverting compositions of $n$; see Propositions 2 and 3 in [5].

We are now in position to state our main result regarding $S_{0}(x)$.
Theorem 4. We have $S_{0}(x)=R(x C(x))$, or, equivalently, $S_{0}(x(1-x))=R(x)$, which, by Theorem 3, implies that $S_{i}(x)=(x C(x))^{i} R(x C(x))$.

Before proving this we need to better understand what combinatorial structures $R(x)$ enumerates, so we shall define a sign-reversing involution $\phi$ on $\mathcal{R}$ that singles out a positive subset $\operatorname{Fix}(\phi)$ of $\mathcal{R}$ for which

$$
R(x)=\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left|\operatorname{Fix}(\phi) \cap \mathcal{R}_{n}\right| x^{n} .
$$

First, however, we define the auxiliary function

$$
\text { split : }\{\mu: \mu \vDash n\} \rightarrow \bigcup_{i=0}^{n}\{\lambda: \lambda \vdash i\} \times\{\mu: \mu \vDash n-i\}
$$

by $\operatorname{split}(\mu)=\left(\lambda, \mu^{\prime}\right)$ where $\mu=\lambda \mu^{\prime}$ and $\lambda$ is the longest prefix of $\mu$ that is weakly decreasing, and thus defines a partition. For instance, split(311212) $=(311,212)$, split(21) $=$ $(21, \epsilon), \operatorname{split}(12)=(1,2)$ and $\operatorname{split}(\epsilon)=(\epsilon, \epsilon)$. Let $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ be the length of the longest strictly increasing prefix (also called leftmost increasing run) of $\mu$. For instance, $\operatorname{lir}(121)=2$, $\operatorname{lir}(213)=\operatorname{lir}(1122)=1$ and $\operatorname{lir}(\epsilon)=0$.

Lemma 5. Let $\lambda$ be a nonempty partition and $\mu$ a composition such that $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even. Then $\operatorname{lir}(\lambda \mu)$ is odd. Moreover, if $a$ is the last element of $\lambda$, then

$$
\operatorname{split}(\lambda \mu)= \begin{cases}(\lambda, \epsilon) & \text { if } \mu=\epsilon \text { is empty } \\ (\lambda, \mu) & \text { if }\left(b, \mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{split}(\mu) \text { and } a<b ; \\ \left(\lambda b, \mu^{\prime}\right) & \text { if }\left(b, \mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{split}(\mu) \text { and } a \geqslant b .\end{cases}
$$

Note that if $\mu$ is nonempty and $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even, then the first element of $\mu$ must be smaller than the second, and hence the longest weakly decreasing prefix of $\mu$ is a singleton (the first letter of $\mu$ ). Thus the lemma above covers all cases. We now define the promised involution $\phi$ on $\mathcal{R}_{n}$.

Definition 6. Let $\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right) \vdash n$. If $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even then

$$
\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)= \begin{cases}(\emptyset ; \mu) & \text { if } k=0 \\ \left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1} ; \lambda^{k} \mu\right) & \text { if } k>0\end{cases}
$$

If $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is odd and $\left(\rho x, \mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{split}(\mu)$ then

$$
\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)= \begin{cases}\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}, \rho x ; \mu^{\prime}\right) & \text { if } \operatorname{lir}\left(\mu^{\prime}\right) \text { is even; } \\ \left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}, \rho ; x \mu^{\prime}\right) & \text { if } \operatorname{lir}\left(\mu^{\prime}\right) \text { is odd. }\end{cases}
$$

The idea behind the map is that we can create an involution by moving a partition $\lambda$ back and forth between being considered as part of the list of partitions or as a prefix of our composition $\mu$. The parity of $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ allows us to know if we, so to speak, have already prepended a $\lambda$ or not; indeed $\operatorname{lir}(\lambda \mu)$ is odd if $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even.

Let us look at a few cases illustrating Definition 6. A simple case is that of a fixed point: $\operatorname{lir}(3644)=2$ is even and

$$
\phi(\emptyset ; 3644)=(\emptyset ; 3644) .
$$

Consider $\left(\lambda^{1} ; \mu\right)=(6211 ; \epsilon) \vdash 10$. Then $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)=0$ is even, $k=1$ and

$$
\phi(6211 ; \epsilon)=(\emptyset ; 6211)
$$

Another example of when $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even is

$$
\phi(11,62 ; 243352)=(11 ; 62243352) .
$$

Finally, three cases when $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is odd are

$$
\begin{aligned}
\phi(11,62 ; 643452) & =(11,62,643 ; 452) ; \\
\phi(11,62 ; 643425) & =(11,62,64 ; 3425) ; \\
\phi(\emptyset ; 643425) & =(64 ; 3425) .
\end{aligned}
$$

Lemma 7. The map $\phi$ is a sign-reversing involution on $\mathcal{R}_{n}$ whose fixed points are of the form $(\emptyset ; \mu)$ with $\mu \vDash n$ and $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ even.

Proof. Let $w=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right) \vdash n$ be given. It is clear that $\phi(w) \vdash n$ and that the first case of the definition, namely $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even and $k=0$, covers all fixed points. Further, the second case shortens the list of partitions by one while the third and fourth cases
lengthen the same list by one. In all three cases the sign of $w$ is thus reversed. It remains to show that $\phi(\phi(w))=w$ and we consider each of the last three cases of the definition of $\phi$ separately.

If $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even and $k>0$, then $\phi(w)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1} ; \lambda^{k} \mu\right)$. To show that $\phi(\phi(w))=w$ we consider the three cases of Lemma 5. If $\mu$ is empty then $\operatorname{split}\left(\lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{k}, \epsilon\right), \operatorname{lir}(\epsilon)=0$ is even and

$$
\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1} ; \lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1}, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)=w .
$$

If $\mu$ is nonempty then let $\left(b, \mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{split}(\mu)$. Also, let $a$ be the last element of $\lambda^{k}$. If $a<b$ then $\operatorname{split}\left(\lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{k}, \mu\right), \operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even (by assumption) and

$$
\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1} ; \lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1}, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)=w .
$$

If $a \geqslant b$ then $\operatorname{split}\left(\lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{k} b, \mu^{\prime}\right), \operatorname{lir}\left(\mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{lir}(\mu)-1$ is odd and

$$
\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1} ; \lambda^{k} \mu\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k-1}, \lambda^{k} ; b \mu^{\prime}\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \mu\right)=w
$$

If $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is odd then let $\left(\rho x, \mu^{\prime}\right)=\operatorname{split}(\mu)$. If, in addition, $\operatorname{lir}\left(\mu^{\prime}\right)$ is even, then

$$
\phi(\phi(w))=\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}, \rho x ; \mu^{\prime}\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \rho x \mu^{\prime}\right)=w .
$$

If $\operatorname{lir}\left(\mu^{\prime}\right)$ is odd, then $\phi(w)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}, \rho ; x \mu^{\prime}\right)$ and, since $\operatorname{lir}\left(x \mu^{\prime}\right)$ is even,

$$
\phi(\phi(w))=\phi\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k}, \rho ; x \mu^{\prime}\right)=\left(\lambda^{1}, \ldots, \lambda^{k} ; \rho x \mu^{\prime}\right)=w
$$

which concludes the last case and thus also the proof.
Next we aim at proving Theorem 4. That is, we wish to prove that

$$
\begin{equation*}
S_{0}(x(1-x))=R(x) \tag{4}
\end{equation*}
$$

The proof is somewhat involved and we have divided it into three lemmas that we now outline:

- Lemma 7 above gives a convenient combinatorial interpretation of the right-hand side of (4). In Lemma 8 we provide a (signed) combinatorial interpretation of lefthand side of (4): We define a family of sets $\left\{T_{n}\right\}_{n \geqslant 0}$ such that the coefficient of $x^{n}$ in $S_{0}(x(1-x))$ is

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{(S, \beta) \in T_{n}}(-1)^{|S|} . \tag{5}
\end{equation*}
$$

- The next step would ideally be to define a sign-reversing involution on $T_{n}$ whose fixed-points are all positive and thus arrive at a result akin to Lemma 7. What we have found is a sign-reversing involution that does not quite fulfill this ideal, in that some fixed-points are negative: Lemma 10 shows that the sum (5) can be rewritten as

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n}(-1)^{|\lambda|}, \tag{6}
\end{equation*}
$$

where the meaning of $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$ is given in Definition 9 below. This sum is preferable to (5) for two reasons. First, it has fewer terms. Second, the combinatorial structures being summed over are closer in spirit to the fixed points of $\phi$ (Lemma 7) than the members of $T_{n}$ are.

- Finally, by means of a natural equivalence relation, Lemma 11 shows that the value of the sum (6) equals the number of fixed points of $\phi$ on $\mathcal{R}_{n}$ as desired.

Having presented an outline of the proof of (4) we now dive into the details. Let $T_{n, k}$ be the set of pairs $(S, \beta)$, where $S \subseteq[n-k],|S|=k$, and

$$
\beta=\left(\beta_{1}, \beta_{2}, \ldots, \beta_{n-k}\right)
$$

is a subdiagonal sequence with sum $\beta_{1}+\beta_{2}+\cdots+\beta_{n-k}=n-k$. Also, let

$$
T_{n}=\bigcup_{k=0}^{n} T_{n, k}
$$

For instance, $T_{0}=\{(\emptyset, \epsilon)\}, T_{1}$ and $T_{2}$ are empty, $T_{3}=\{(\emptyset, 012)\}$, and $T_{4}$ consists of the following 8 elements:

$$
\begin{gathered}
(\emptyset, 0121),(\emptyset, 0112),(\emptyset, 0103),(\emptyset, 0022),(\emptyset, 0013), \\
(\{1\}, 012),(\{2\}, 012),(\{3\}, 012) .
\end{gathered}
$$

Lemma 8. We have

$$
S_{0}(x(1-x))=\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left(\sum_{(S, \beta) \in T_{n}}(-1)^{|S|}\right) x^{n} .
$$

Proof. Let $(S, \beta) \in T_{n, k}$. View $\beta$ as an inversion table and let $\pi$ be the corresponding permutation on $[n-k]$. Note that $\pi$ has exactly $n-k$ inversions and thus the cardinality of $T_{n, k}$ is $\left.\left|\mathcal{S}_{n-k}^{n-k}\right| \begin{array}{c}n-k \\ k\end{array}\right)$. The result now follows from a direct calculation:

$$
\begin{aligned}
S_{0}(x(1-x)) & =\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left|\mathcal{S}_{n}^{n}\right| x^{n}(1-x)^{n} \\
& =\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left|\mathcal{S}_{n}^{n}\right| x^{n} \sum_{k=0}^{n}\binom{n}{k}(-1)^{k} x^{k} \\
& =\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left(\sum_{k=0}^{n}\left|\mathcal{S}_{n-k}^{n-k}\right|\binom{n-k}{k}(-1)^{k}\right) x^{n} \\
& =\sum_{n \geqslant 0} \sum_{k=0}^{n}\left(\sum_{(S, \beta) \in T_{n, k}}(-1)^{|S|}\right) x^{n} \\
& =\sum_{n \geqslant 0}\left(\sum_{(S, \beta) \in T_{n}}(-1)^{|S|}\right) x^{n} .
\end{aligned}
$$

We shall show that the set $T_{n}$ in the inner summation in Lemma 8 can be replaced with a smaller set, but first we give a few definitions.

For a composition $\mu=\left(\mu_{1}, \ldots, \mu_{k}\right)$ define $\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$ as 0 if $k \leqslant 1$ and

$$
\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)=\max \left\{\mu_{j}-j+1: 2 \leqslant j \leqslant k\right\}
$$

otherwise. If we plot $\mu_{j}$ against $j$ this is the largest distance it goes over the line $y=x-1$, excluding $\mu_{1}$ for technical reasons. For instance, if $\mu=3241261$ then $\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)=\mu_{3}-3+$ $1=2$ as depicted below:


Up until this point we have listed the parts of a partition $\lambda$ in weakly decreasing order. In what follows, it will be convenient to instead list them in weakly increasing order. For instance, we may write $\lambda=\left(\lambda_{1}, \lambda_{2}, \lambda_{3}\right)=(1,3,4) \vdash 8$.

Definition 9. Let $\lambda$ be an integer partition and $\mu$ an integer composition. Let their total sum be $n$ and let $d=\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$. We shall write

$$
(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n
$$

if the following three conditions hold:

- $\lambda$ has distinct parts (and is hence strictly increasing);
- $\lambda \neq \epsilon \Longrightarrow \lambda_{|\lambda|}<d$,
- $\mu \neq \epsilon \Longrightarrow \mu_{1} \leqslant d$.

For instance, $(\lambda, \mu)$ with $\mu=3241261$ as in the example above does not satisfy Definition 9 regardless of what the partition $\lambda$ is; the reason being that $3=\mu_{1}>\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)=2$. Let us consider the sets of pairs $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$ for small $n$. For $n=0$ there is a single pair, $(\epsilon, \epsilon)$; for $n=1,2$ there are none; for $n=3$ there is a single pair, $(\epsilon, 12)$; for $n=4$ there are two, $(\epsilon, 121)$ and $(\epsilon, 13)$; and for $n=5$ there are seven:

$$
(\epsilon, 113),(\epsilon, 1211),(\epsilon, 122),(\epsilon, 131),(\epsilon, 14),(\epsilon, 23),(1,13) .
$$

As a larger example we offer $(134,161121) \Vdash 20$.
Lemma 10. We have

$$
\sum_{(S, \beta) \in T_{n}}(-1)^{|S|}=\sum_{(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n}(-1)^{|\lambda|}
$$

Proof. We shall give a sign-reversing involution on $T_{n}$ whose fixed points can be bijectively mapped to pairs $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$.

Let $(S, \beta) \in T_{n, n-r}$ with $\beta=\left(\beta_{1}, \beta_{2}, \ldots, \beta_{r}\right)$. We will say that $\beta_{i}$ is marked if $i \in S$. An index $i$ such that $\beta_{i}=0$ and $\beta_{i+1}>0$ will be called a 0 -ascent. If $\beta_{i}=i-1$, then we call $i$ a diagonal index and $\beta_{i}$ a diagonal entry. We shall now define an endofunction

$$
\psi: T_{n} \rightarrow T_{n}
$$

which we will later prove is a sign-reversing involution. Consider the entries $\beta_{i}$ in descending order by index and define $\psi(S, \beta)$ according to which of the following four mutually exclusive cases is encountered first:

1. If $\beta_{i}$ is marked and there is no 0 -ascent $j>i$, then we replace $\beta_{i}$ with an unmarked bigram $x y$ whose first letter is zero, $x=0$, and whose last letter is $y=\beta_{i}+1$. In particular, $S$ is mapped to $S \backslash\{i\}$.
2. If $\beta_{i}$ is marked, $i$ is not a diagonal index and there is a 0 -ascent $j>i$, then we replace $\beta_{i}$ with an unmarked $\beta_{i}+1$ and append an unmarked zero to the end of $\beta$. Again, $S$ is mapped to $S \backslash\{i\}$.
3. If $\beta_{i}$ and $\beta_{i+1}$ are both unmarked, $i$ is a 0 -ascent and there is no diagonal index $j>i+1$, then we replace the bigram $\beta_{i} \beta_{i+1}$ by a single marked $\beta_{i+1}-1$. Here, $S$ is mapped to $S \cup\{i\}$.
4. If $\beta_{i} \neq 0$ is unmarked, $\beta_{r}=0$ and there is some 0 -ascent $j>i$, then we replace $\beta_{i}$ by a marked $\beta_{i}-1$ and remove $\beta_{r}$. Here, $S$ is mapped to $S \cup\{i\}$.

If none of these cases are encountered we let $\psi(S, \beta)=(S, \beta)$ be a fixed point. It is easy to see that each case preserves subdiagonality. Cases 1 and 2 remove a mark, increase the sum by one and add an element; consequently the image $\psi(S, \beta)$ is in $T_{n, n-r-1}$. Cases 3 and 4 add a mark, decrease the sum by one and remove an element, so in these two cases $\psi(S, \beta)$ is in $T_{n, n-r+1}$. Thus $\psi$ is well-defined and sign-reversing. Let us consider some examples:

- Case 1 at $i=3: \psi(\{1,3\}, 0103)=(\{1\}, 01013)$
- Case 2 at $i=3: \psi(\{2,3\}, 0010150)=(\{2\}, 00201500)$
- Case 3 at $i=4: \psi(\{1\}, 002040)=(\{1,4\}, 00230)$
- Case 4 at $i=2: \psi(\{3\}, 0120250000)=(\{2,3\}, 002025000)$
- A fixed point: $\psi(\{1,3\}, 0020152000)=(\{1,3\}, 0020152000)$.

Next we shall prove that $\psi$ is an involution; that is, $\psi(\psi(S, \beta))=(S, \beta)$. If $(S, \beta)$ is a fixed point, then the claim is trivially true, so we can assume that we encounter one of the four cases above. Suppose $\psi(S, \beta)=(T, \gamma)$ after falling into one of the cases at $\beta_{i}$. We want to show that $\psi(T, \gamma)=(S, \beta)$. The map $\psi$ leaves the suffix $\beta_{i+2} \beta_{i+3} \cdots \beta_{r}$ of $\beta$ unchanged, aside from possibly appending an unmarked trailing zero; hence this suffix, with possibly an appended zero, will also be present in $\gamma$. If no zero was appended then clearly none of the cases apply to $(T, \gamma)$ at $j>i$, or else that case would have applied to $(S, \beta)$ as well. Suppose a zero was appended. Since this trailing zero is unmarked ( $T, \gamma$ ) cannot fall into case 1 or 2 for any $j>i$. Adding a zero at the end cannot introduce a 0 -ascent, so $(T, \gamma)$ cannot fall into case 3 for $j>i$. Case 4 is also easy to exclude, so we conclude that $(T, \gamma)$ cannot fall into any of the four cases at an index $j>i$.

Going through each of the cases at index $i$, we see that if $\beta_{i}$ falls into case 1 , then $\gamma_{i}$ must fall into case 3 , which undoes what case 1 just did. Similarly, case 2 is cancelled by case 4,3 by 1 , and 4 by 2 ; thus, $\psi$ is an involution.

We now consider the fixed points of $\psi$. We wish to show that any nonempty fixed point $(S, \beta)$ of $\psi$, when considered as a marked sequence, can be written

$$
\sigma \tau \zeta
$$

where each letter of $\sigma$ is either a marked diagonal entry or an unmarked zero, ending in an unmarked zero; $\tau$ consists of unmarked positive entries at least one of which is a diagonal entry; and $\zeta$ is a (possibly empty) sequence of zeros. One instance of a fixed point is $(\emptyset, 0121)$ in which $\sigma=0, \tau=121$ and $\zeta=\epsilon$. Another instance is $(\{1,3\}, 0020152000)$ in which $\sigma=0020, \tau=152$ and $\zeta=000$.

Since $\beta$ is subdiagonal it starts with a zero. Moreover, its sum $r$ is positive, and hence it must contain a 0 -ascent. Let $\sigma$ be the prefix of $\beta$ consisting of every letter of $\beta$ up to and including the rightmost 0 -ascent. Define $\tau$ as the subsequent contiguous run of positive entries in $\beta$ and let the remaining suffix be $\zeta$. In particular, $\tau$ is nonempty. Also, $\zeta$ must consist entirely of zeros; otherwise, it would contain a 0 -ascent, contradicting that $\zeta$ is right of the rightmost 0 -ascent in $\beta$. Now, if $\beta_{i}$ is marked and there is no 0 -ascent $j>i$, then case 1 would apply at $\beta_{i}$. Thus every entry of $\sigma_{|\sigma|} \tau \zeta$ must be unmarked. There also has to be a diagonal entry in $\tau$, otherwise the bigram $\sigma_{|\sigma|} \tau_{1}$ would make us fall into case 3. Thus, there is an $\ell>1$ such that $\tau_{\ell}=\ell-1+|\sigma|$. If $\sigma_{i}$ is marked, then $i$ is a diagonal index, else we would fall into case 2 at $\sigma_{i}$ because it is to the left of a 0 -ascent. To show that $\sigma$ is of the desired form we shall consider two cases.

Suppose $\zeta$ is empty. Every element to the right of $\tau_{\ell}$ is $\geqslant 1$, and $\tau_{1}>0$, so

$$
\tau_{1}+\tau_{\ell}+\cdots+\tau_{r-|\sigma|} \geqslant 1+(\ell-1+|\sigma|)+(r-|\sigma|-\ell) \geqslant r
$$

The sum of entries in $\beta$ is $r$ (by definition of $T_{n, n-r}$ ) and consequently the sum above is exactly $r$. Thus, every entry of $\sigma$ is zero. Aside from the first one, none of those zeros can be marked, or else we would have a contradiction with the earlier result that any marked element of $\sigma$ is a diagonal entry. Thus $\sigma$ is of the desired form.

Suppose $\zeta$ is nonempty. There cannot be any positive unmarked $\sigma_{i}$ since then we would fall into case 4 at $\sigma_{i}$. Thus, $\sigma$ is of the desired form by the same argument as above.

Let us now define a function $\theta$ mapping fixed points of $\psi$ to pairs $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$. Given a fixed point $(S, \beta)$ factored as $\sigma \tau \zeta$ we let $\theta(S, \beta)=(\lambda, \mu)$, where $\lambda$ consists of the marked indices of $\sigma$ written in increasing order and $\mu=\tau$. In other words, the entries of $\lambda$ are the elements of $S$, the reason being that $\tau$ and $\zeta$ contain only unmarked elements. For example $\theta(\emptyset, 0121)=(\epsilon, 121)$ and $\theta(\{1,3\}, 0020152000)=(13,152)$. It is clear that $\lambda$ has distinct parts and that $\mu$ defines a composition. Furthermore, the sum of values in $\lambda$ and $\mu$ is the sum of elements in $\beta$ plus the number of marked elements, which is $r+n-r=n$. Note that the sign simply is $(-1)^{|\lambda|}$.

We wish to show that $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$. Our diagonal index $\ell$ gives us

$$
\begin{aligned}
\operatorname{dmax}(\mu) & \geqslant \mu_{\ell}-\ell+1 \\
& =\tau_{\ell}-\ell+1 \\
& =(\ell-1+|\sigma|)-\ell+1=|\sigma| .
\end{aligned}
$$

Suppose $\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)=\mu_{j}-j+1$. Then

$$
\begin{aligned}
\operatorname{dmax}(\mu) & =\beta_{j+|\sigma|}-j+1 \\
& \leqslant j+|\sigma|-1-j+1=|\sigma| .
\end{aligned}
$$

in which the inequality is a consequence of subdiagonality. Thus $\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)=|\sigma|$. If $\lambda$ is nonempty, then $\lambda_{1}$ corresponds to a marked diagonal index, which must then be in $\sigma$. Thus $\lambda<|\sigma|=\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$ since $\sigma$ ends on a zero. If $\mu$ is nonempty, then $\mu_{1}=\tau_{1} \leqslant|\sigma|$ by subdiagonality, and hence $\mu_{1} \leqslant \operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$. Thus $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$.

To complete our proof we have to show that $\theta$ is bijective, which we do by constructing its inverse. Assume that $(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n$ and $k=\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$. Let $\sigma=\sigma_{1} \sigma_{2} \cdots \sigma_{k}$, where $\sigma_{i}=i-1$ is a marked diagonal entry if $i=\lambda_{j}$ for some $j \in[|\lambda|]$, and $\sigma_{i}=0$ is an unmarked zero otherwise. Also, let $\tau=\mu$ and let $\zeta$ be a segment consisting of $n-|\sigma|-|\tau|$ unmarked zeros. By the same argument as above we have $|\lambda|$ marked elements, and the sum of all elements in $\lambda$ and $\mu$ is $n-|\lambda|$, so $r=|\lambda|$. Since $\lambda \neq \epsilon \Rightarrow \lambda_{1}<\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$ we have $\sigma_{|\sigma|}=0$. Thus the image is in $T_{n, n-r}$ and $\theta$ maps $\sigma \tau \zeta$ back to $(\lambda, \mu)$, completing our proof.

Lemma 11. We have

$$
\sum_{(\lambda, \mu) \Vdash n}(-1)^{|\lambda|}=\mid\{\mu \vDash n: \operatorname{lir}(\mu) \text { even }\} \mid .
$$

Proof. Let $\sim$ be the equivalence relation generated by postulating that

$$
(\lambda a, \mu) \sim(\lambda, a \mu)
$$

whenever both $(\lambda a, \mu) \Vdash n$ and $(\lambda, a \mu) \Vdash n$ hold. For example, when $n=5$ the equivalence classes are all singletons except the class $\{(\epsilon, 113),(1,13)\}$. For $n=6$ there are three nonsingleton classes, namely

$$
\{(\epsilon, 1131),(1,131)\},\{(\epsilon, 114),(1,14)\} \text { and }\{(\epsilon, 123),(1,23)\} .
$$

We wish to show that the inner sum in the expression for $R(x)$ above when restricted to a single equivalence class is 0 or 1 . In other words, if $C$ is an equivalence class, then

$$
\sum_{(\lambda, \mu) \in C}(-1)^{|\lambda|} \in\{0,1\} .
$$

Assume $(\lambda a, \mu) \Vdash n$. Then $a<\operatorname{dmax}(\mu)$, but $\operatorname{dmax}(a \mu) \geqslant \operatorname{dmax}(\mu)-1$, so $a \leqslant \operatorname{dmax}(a \mu)$. Furthermore, if $\lambda$ is nonempty, then $\lambda_{|\lambda|}<a$ because $\lambda a$ is strictly increasing. Thus $\lambda_{|\lambda|}<a \leqslant \operatorname{dmax}(a \mu)$, and so $(\lambda, a \mu) \Vdash n$. By induction on the number of elements moved we see that $(\lambda, \mu)$ is in the same equivalence class as $(\epsilon, \lambda \mu)$. Clearly we cannot have two pairs of the form $(\epsilon, \mu)$ in the same equivalence class, so we make them our representatives.

Let $(\epsilon, \mu)$ be such a representative. We will call $k$ valid if

$$
\left(\mu_{1} \cdots \mu_{k}, \mu_{k+1} \cdots \mu_{|\mu|}\right) \Vdash n .
$$

Let $\lambda=\mu_{1} \cdots \mu_{k}$ and $\nu=\mu_{k+1} \cdots \mu_{|\mu|}$. By the argument above, if some $k$ is valid, then all smaller $k$ are valid too. We want to find the largest valid $k$. The sign of $\left(\mu_{1} \cdots \mu_{k}, \mu_{k+1} \cdots \mu_{|\mu|}\right)$ is $(-1)^{k}$, so if the largest valid value is $\ell$, then the sum of the equivalence class of $(\epsilon, \mu)$ is $(-1)^{0}+(-1)^{1}+\cdots+(-1)^{\ell}$, which is zero if $\ell$ is odd and 1 if $\ell$ is even.

Let $s=\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$. We wish to show that $\ell$ and $s$ have the same parity. Clearly, $\ell \leqslant s$ since otherwise $\lambda=\mu_{1} \cdots \mu_{\ell}$ would not be strictly increasing. If $\ell=s$ we have nothing left to prove, so we can assume that $\ell<s$. Then $\nu$ is nonempty and $\nu_{1} \leqslant \operatorname{dmax}(\nu)$, so $|\nu| \geqslant 2$ and $\ell \leqslant s-2$. Let $k=s-2$. Then $\lambda=\mu_{1} \cdots \mu_{k}$ is strictly increasing and $\nu_{1}<\nu_{2}$. Thus $\operatorname{dmax}(\nu) \geqslant \nu_{2}-1 \geqslant \nu_{1}$. If $\lambda$ is nonempty, then $\lambda_{k}<\nu_{1} \leqslant \operatorname{dmax}(\nu)$. Thus $k=s-2$ is valid, so $\ell=s-2$, which has the same parity as $s$. The representatives $(\epsilon, \mu)$ whose equivalence classes have sum one are hence exactly those where $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ is even.

Theorem 4 follows directly from Lemmas 7, 8, 10 and 11.

## 4 Structure of $\boldsymbol{R}(\boldsymbol{x})$

By Lemma 7 the elements of $\operatorname{Fix}(\phi) \cap \mathcal{R}_{n}$ are of the form $(\emptyset ; \mu)$ with $\mu \vDash n$ and $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ even. With this in mind let

$$
\operatorname{Fix}_{n}(\phi)=\{\mu \vDash n: \operatorname{lir}(\mu) \text { even }\} .
$$

Let $\mathcal{M}_{n}$ be the set of compositions of $n$ that start with an ascent and are weakly decreasing after the initial ascent and let $M(x)$ be the corresponding generating function. That is, $\left(\mu_{1}, \ldots, \mu_{k}\right) \in \mathcal{M}_{n}$ if and only if $k \geqslant 2, \mu_{1}<\mu_{2} \geqslant \mu_{3} \geqslant \ldots \geqslant \mu_{k}$ and $\mu_{1}+\cdots+\mu_{k}=n$. For instance, $\mathcal{M}_{n}=\emptyset$ for $n \leqslant 2, \mathcal{M}_{3}=\{12\}, \mathcal{M}_{4}=\{121,13\}, \mathcal{M}_{5}=\{1211,122,131,14,23\}$ and the first few terms of the power series $M(x)$ are

$$
M(x)=x^{3}+2 x^{4}+5 x^{5}+8 x^{6}+15 x^{7}+23 x^{8}+37 x^{9}+\cdots
$$

Let $\mu^{1}, \mu^{2}, \ldots, \mu^{k}$ be compositions with $\mu^{i} \in \mathcal{M}_{n_{i}}$. Their concatenation

$$
\mu=\mu^{1} \mu^{2} \cdots \mu^{k}
$$

is a composition of $n=n_{1}+\cdots+n_{k}$ with $\operatorname{lir}(\mu)$ even, and so $\mu \in \operatorname{Fix}_{n}(\phi)$.
Conversely, given a composition $\mu \in \operatorname{Fix}_{n}(\phi)$, let $\mu^{1}$ be the longest suffix of $\mu$ that belongs to $\mathcal{M}_{n_{1}}$, where $n_{1}$ is the length of $\mu^{1}$. Writing $\mu=\nu \mu^{1}$ we can recursively do the same with $\nu$, stopping if $\nu$ is empty. This works because $\mu$ starts with an ascent, so if $\nu$ is nonempty then $\nu$ starts with an ascent as well. This way we arrive at a factorisation $\mu=\mu^{k} \cdots \mu^{2} \mu^{1}$ with $\mu^{i} \in \mathcal{M}_{n_{i}}$ and $n=n_{1}+\cdots+n_{k}$. For instance, the factors of $123511211 \in \operatorname{Fix}_{17}(\phi)$ are 12,351 and 1211.

In terms of generating functions the factorisation we have established translates to the functional equation $R(x)=(1-M(x))^{-1}$. Now, by (3),

$$
M(x)=1+\left(\frac{x}{1-x}-1\right) \operatorname{Par}(x)
$$

Thus, aside from the constant term, the coefficient of $x^{n}$ in $M(x)$ equals

$$
\begin{equation*}
p(0)+p(1)+\cdots+p(n-1)-p(n) \tag{7}
\end{equation*}
$$

and coincides with sequence A058884 in the OEIS [8]. Moreover, (7) is the number of compositions with exactly one inversion according to Theorem 4.1 of [3]. To summarise we have established the following proposition.

Proposition 12. With $p(n)$ denoting the number of partitions of $n$,

$$
R(x)=\left(1-\sum_{n \geqslant 1}(p(1)+p(2)+\cdots+p(n-1)-p(n)) x^{n}\right)^{-1}
$$

An alternative formula can be obtained from considering the logarithmic derivative of $R(x)$ :

Proposition 13. With $\sigma(n)$ denoting the sum of the divisors of $n$,

$$
R(x)=\exp \left(\sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-\sigma(n)-1\right) \frac{x^{n}}{n}\right) .
$$

Proof. Taking the logarithmic derivative of (3) we get

$$
\begin{aligned}
x(\log R(x))^{\prime} & =\frac{x \operatorname{Comp}^{\prime}(x)}{\operatorname{Comp}(x)}-\frac{x \operatorname{Par}^{\prime}(x)}{\operatorname{Par}(x)} \\
& =\frac{x}{(1-x)(1-2 x)}-\sum_{k \geqslant 1} \frac{k x^{k}}{1-x^{k}}
\end{aligned}
$$

An expression of the form $F(x)=\sum_{k \geqslant 1} a_{k} x^{k} /\left(1-x^{k}\right)$ is called a Lambert series, and it is well known, and easy to see, that

$$
F(x)=\sum_{n \geqslant 1} b_{n} x^{n}, \text { where } b_{n}=\sum_{k \mid n} a_{k} .
$$

In our case $a_{k}=k$ and hence $b_{n}=\sigma(n)$. Consequently,

$$
\begin{equation*}
x(\log R(x))^{\prime}=\sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-1-\sigma(n)\right) x^{n} \tag{8}
\end{equation*}
$$

and it follows that

$$
\begin{aligned}
\log R(x) & =\int_{0}^{x} \sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-1-\sigma(n)\right) t^{n-1} d t \\
& =\sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-1-\sigma(n)\right) \frac{x^{n}}{n},
\end{aligned}
$$

which proves the claim.
Corollary 14. The cardinalities $r_{n}=\left|\mathcal{R}_{n}\right|$ can be computed recursively by $r_{0}=1$ and, for $n \geqslant 1$,

$$
r_{n}=\frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} r_{n-k}\left(2^{k}-\sigma(k)-1\right) .
$$

Moreover, we have the closed formula

$$
r_{n}=\frac{1}{n!} \sum_{\pi \in \operatorname{Sym}(n)} \prod_{\ell \in C(\pi)}\left(2^{\ell}-\sigma(\ell)-1\right),
$$

where $\operatorname{Sym}(n)$ is the symmetric group of degree $n$ and $C(\pi)$ is a multiset that encodes the cycle type of $\pi$, that is, there is an $\ell \in C(\pi)$ for each $\ell$-cycle of $\pi$.
Proof. Since $(\log R(x))^{\prime}=R^{\prime}(x) / R(x)$ it follows from (8) that

$$
x R^{\prime}(x)=R(x) \sum_{n \geqslant 1}\left(2^{n}-1-\sigma(n)\right) x^{n}
$$

and on identifying coefficients we get the claimed recursion. For the closed formula we refer to Equation (8) in [2] and the paragraph preceding that formula.

It easy to see that the coefficient of $x^{n}$ in $x M^{\prime}(x) /(1-M(x))$ is $2^{n}-\sigma(n)-1$. Thus, if we consider the factorisation $\mu=\mu^{1} \mu^{2} \cdots \mu^{k}$ of elements in $\mathcal{R}$, as above, together with a distinguished site of $\mu^{1}$, then such structures should be counted by $2^{n}-\sigma(n)-1$. Finding a bijective proof of this remains an open problem.

## 5 Superdiagonals

Having derived formulas for the main diagonal and the subdiagonals of the Mahonian triangle one naturally wonders if similar formulas exist for the superdiagonals. In other words, does Theorem 3 generalize to negative $i$ ? If so then, in particular, $S_{-1}(x) x-$ $S_{0}(x) C(x)^{-1}$ would be the zero power series. This is, however, not the case and experimentally we have found that this difference is the rational power series $(-1+2 x) /(1-x)$. More generally, it appears that the coefficients of $S_{-i}(x) x^{i}-S_{0}(x) C(x)^{-i}$ are linearly recurrent with minimal polynomial $(1-x)^{i}$, and we make the following conjecture, which has been verified for $1 \leqslant i \leqslant 50$ and power series truncated to their initial 150 terms.

Conjecture 15. For any $i \geqslant 1$, there is a polynomial $P_{i}(x) \in \mathbb{Z}[x]$ of degree $3 i-2$ such that

$$
S_{-i}(x) x^{i}=S_{0}(x) C(x)^{-i}+\frac{P_{i}(x)}{(1-x)^{i}} .
$$

In particular, the first four polynomials $P_{1}(x), P_{2}(x), P_{3}(x)$ and $P_{4}(x)$ are

$$
\begin{aligned}
& -1+2 x \\
& -1+4 x-4 x^{2}+x^{3}+x^{4} ; \\
& -1+6 x-12 x^{2}+10 x^{3}-2 x^{4}-x^{5}+2 x^{6}-x^{7} ; \\
& -1+8 x-24 x^{2}+35 x^{3}-25 x^{4}+6 x^{5}+4 x^{6}-3 x^{7}+3 x^{8}-3 x^{9}+x^{10} .
\end{aligned}
$$

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