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Jérémie Bettinelli. Scaling Limit of Random Planar Quadrangulations with a Boundary. 2011. hal-00646399v1

HAL Id: hal-00646399

<https://hal.science/hal-00646399v1>

Preprint submitted on 29 Nov 2011 (v1), last revised 13 Sep 2013 (v3)

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Scaling Limit of Random Planar Quadrangulations with a Boundary*

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November 29, 2011

Abstract

We discuss the scaling limit of large planar quadrangulations with a boundary whose length is of order the square root of the number of faces. We consider a sequence (σ_n) of integers such that $\sigma_n/\sqrt{2n}$ tends to some $\sigma \in [0, \infty]$. For every $n \geq 1$, we call q_n a random map uniformly distributed over the set of all rooted planar quadrangulations with a boundary having n faces and $2\sigma_n$ half-edges on the boundary. For $\sigma \in (0, \infty)$, we view q_n as a metric space by endowing its set of vertices with the graph metric, rescaled by $n^{-1/4}$. We show that this metric space converges in distribution, at least along some subsequence, toward a limiting random metric space, in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology. We show that the limiting metric space is almost surely a space of Hausdorff dimension 4 with a boundary of Hausdorff dimension 2 that is homeomorphic to the two-dimensional disc. For $\sigma = 0$, the same convergence holds without extraction and the limit is the so-called Brownian map. For $\sigma = \infty$, the proper scaling becomes $\sigma_n^{-1/2}$ and we obtain a convergence toward Aldous’s CRT.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivations

In the present work, we investigate the scaling limit of random (planar) quadrangulations with a boundary. Recall that a planar map is an embedding of a finite connected graph (possibly with loops and multiple edges) into the two-dimensional sphere, considered up to direct homeomorphisms of the sphere. The faces of the map are the connected components of the complement of edges. A quadrangulation with a boundary is a particular instance of planar map whose faces are all *quadrangles*, that is, faces incident to exactly 4 half-edges, with the exception of one face of arbitrary even degree. The quadrangles will be called *internal faces* and the other face will be referred to as the *external face*. The half-edges incident to the external face will constitute the *boundary* of the map. Beware that we do not require the boundary to be a simple curve. We will implicitly consider our maps to be rooted, which means that one of the half-edges is

*This work is partially supported by ANR-08-BLAN-0190

distinguished. In the case of quadrangulations with a boundary, the root will always lie on the boundary, with the external face to its left.

In recent years, scaling limits of random maps have been the subject of many studies. The most natural setting is the following. We consider maps as metric spaces, endowed with their natural graph metric. We choose uniformly at random a map of “size” n in some class, rescale the metric by the proper factor, and look at the limit in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology [Gro99]. The size considered is usually the number of faces. From this point of view, the most studied class is the class of planar quadrangulations. The pioneering work of Chassaing and Schaeffer [CS04] revealed that the proper rescaling factor in this case is $n^{-1/4}$. The problem was first addressed by Marckert and Mokkadem [MM06], who constructed a candidate limiting space called the *Brownian map*, and showed the convergence toward it in some other sense. Le Gall [LG07] then showed the relative compactness of this sequence of metric spaces and that any of its accumulation point was almost surely of Hausdorff dimension 4. It is only recently that the problem was completed independently by Miermont [Mie11] and Le Gall [LG11], who showed that the scaling limit is indeed the Brownian map. This last step, however, is not mandatory in order to identify the topology of the limit: Le Gall and Paulin [LGP08], and later Miermont [Mie08], showed that any possible limit is homeomorphic to the two-dimensional sphere.

To be a little more accurate, Le Gall considered in [LG07] the classes of $2p$ -angulations, for $p \geq 2$ fixed, and, in [LG11], the same classes to which he added the class of triangulations, so that the result about quadrangulations is in fact a particular case. We also generalized the study of [LG07, Mie08] to the case of bipartite quadrangulations in fixed positive genus $g \geq 1$ in [Bet10a, Bet10b], where we showed the convergence up to extraction of a subsequence and identified the topology of any possible limit as that of the surface of genus g . In the present work, we adopt a similar point of view and consider the class of quadrangulations with a boundary, where the length of the boundary grows as the square root of the number of internal faces. We show the convergence up to extraction, and show that any possible limiting space is almost surely a space of Hausdorff dimension 4 with a boundary of Hausdorff dimension 2 that is homeomorphic to the two-dimensional disc. We also show that, if the length of the boundary is small compared to the square root of the number of internal faces, then the convergence holds (without extraction) and the limit is the Brownian map. When the length of the boundary is large with respect to the square root of the number of internal faces, then the proper scaling becomes the length of the boundary raised to the power $-1/2$, and we obtain a convergence toward the so-called Continuum Random Tree (CRT).

The study of these problems often starts with a bijection between the class considered and a class of simpler objects. In the case of planar quadrangulations, the bijection in question is the so-called Cori–Vauquelin–Schaeffer bijection [CV81, Sch98, CS04] between planar quadrangulations and so-called well-labeled trees. This bijection has then been generalized in several ways. Bouttier, Di Francesco, and Guitter [BDFG04] extended it into a bijection coding all planar maps (and even more). Later, Chapuy, Marcus, and Schaeffer [CMS09] considered bipartite quadrangulations of positive fixed genus. As quadrangulations with a boundary are a particular case of planar maps, we will use in this work a slightly amended instance of the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Gutter bijection. Let us also mention that Bouttier and Gutter studied in [BG09] the distance statistics of quadrangulations with a boundary. In particular, their study showed the existence of the three different regimes we consider in this work.

From now on, when we speak of quadrangulations, we always mean rooted planar quadrangulations with a boundary, and, by convention, we always draw the external face as the infinite component of the plane.

1.2 Main results

1.2.1 Generic case

Let m be a map. We call $V(m)$ its sets of vertices, $E(m)$ its sets of edges, and $\vec{E}(m)$ its set of half-edges. We say that a face f is **incident** to a half-edge ϵ (or that ϵ is incident to f) if ϵ belongs to the boundary of f and is oriented in such a way that f lies to its left. We write ϵ_* the root of m , and, for any half-edge ϵ , we call $\bar{\epsilon}$ its reverse, as well as ϵ^- and ϵ^+ its origin and end. We denote by d_m the graph metric on m defined as follows: for any $a, b \in V(m)$, the distance $d_m(a, b)$ is the number of edges of any shortest path in $E(m)$ linking a to b . Finally, we call $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}$ the set of all quadrangulations with a boundary having n internal faces and 2σ half-edges on the boundary.

The Gromov–Hausdorff distance between two compact metric spaces (\mathcal{X}, δ) and (\mathcal{X}', δ') is defined by

$$d_{GH}((\mathcal{X}, \delta), (\mathcal{X}', \delta')) := \inf \{ \delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\varphi(\mathcal{X}), \varphi'(\mathcal{X}')) \},$$

where the infimum is taken over all isometric embeddings $\varphi : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathcal{X}''$ and $\varphi' : \mathcal{X}' \rightarrow \mathcal{X}''$ of \mathcal{X} and \mathcal{X}' into the same metric space $(\mathcal{X}'', \delta'')$, and $\delta_{\mathcal{H}}$ stands for the usual Hausdorff distance between compact subsets of \mathcal{X}'' . This defines a metric on the set \mathbb{M} of isometry classes of compact metric spaces ([BBI01, Theorem 7.3.30]), making it a Polish space¹.

Our main results for quadrangulations with a boundary are the following.

Theorem 1. *Let $\sigma > 0$, and $(\sigma_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be a sequence of positive integers such that $\sigma_n / \sqrt{2n} \rightarrow \sigma$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Let \mathfrak{q}_n be uniformly distributed over the set \mathcal{Q}_{n,σ_n} of all planar quadrangulations with a boundary having n internal faces and $2\sigma_n$ half-edges on the boundary. Then, from any increasing sequence of integers, we may extract a subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$ such that there exists a random metric space $(\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$ satisfying*

$$\left(V(\mathfrak{q}_{n_k}), \frac{1}{\gamma n_k^{1/4}} d_{\mathfrak{q}_{n_k}} \right) \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} (\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$$

in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology, where

$$\gamma := \left(\frac{8}{9} \right)^{1/4}.$$

Moreover, the Hausdorff dimension of the limit space $(\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$ is almost surely equal to 4, regardless of the choice of the sequence of integers.

Note that, a priori, the metric space $(\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$ depends on the subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$. In view of the recent developments made by Miermont [Mie11] and Le Gall [LG11] in the case without boundary, we conjecture that the extraction in Theorem 1 is not necessary and that d_{∞}^{σ} can be explicitly expressed in a way similar to their expression. We also believe that the space $(\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$ only depends on σ , and arises as some universal scaling limit for more general classes of random maps with a boundary. In particular, our approach should be generalizable to the case of $2p$ -angulations, $p \geq 2$, by using the same kind of arguments as Le Gall in [LG07].

As in the case without boundary, Theorem 1 is nonetheless sufficient to identify the topology of the limit, regardless of the subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$.

Theorem 2. *For $\sigma > 0$, any possible metric space $(\mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}, d_{\infty}^{\sigma})$ from Theorem 1 is a.s. homeomorphic to the 2-dimensional disc \mathbb{D}_2 .*

We may also compute the Hausdorff dimension of the limiting space's boundary: we define $\partial \mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma} \subseteq \mathfrak{q}_{\infty}^{\sigma}$ as the set of points having no neighborhood homeomorphic to a disc.

¹This is a simple consequence of Gromov's compactness theorem [BBI01, Theorem 7.4.15].

Theorem 3. For any $\sigma > 0$, the boundary ∂q_∞^σ is a subset of $(q_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ whose Hausdorff dimension is almost surely equal to 2.

1.2.2 Case $\sigma = 0$

In the case where $\sigma = 0$, we may actually be a little more precise than in the previous theorems. In particular, we have a whole convergence, instead of just a convergence along subsequences. We find that, in the limit, the boundary “vanishes” in the sense that we obtain the same limit as in the case without boundary: the Brownian map [LG11, Mie11].

Theorem 4. Let $(\sigma_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be a sequence of positive integers such that $\sigma_n/\sqrt{2n} \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Let q_n be uniformly distributed over the set $\mathcal{Q}_{n, \sigma_n}$ of all planar quadrangulations with a boundary having n internal faces and $2\sigma_n$ half-edges on the boundary. Then,

$$\left(V(q_n), \frac{1}{\gamma n^{1/4}} d_{q_n} \right) \xrightarrow[n \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} (\mathbf{m}_\infty, D^*)$$

in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology, where (\mathbf{m}_∞, D^*) is the Brownian map.

As a consequence, we retrieve immediately the classical properties of the Brownian map, from where the results of the previous section are inspired. For instance, it is known that the Hausdorff dimension of (\mathbf{m}_∞, D^*) is almost surely equal to 4 ([LG07]), and that the metric space (\mathbf{m}_∞, D^*) is a.s. homeomorphic to the 2-dimensional sphere \mathbb{S}_2 ([LGP08, Mie08]).

1.2.3 Case $\sigma = \infty$

In the case $\sigma = \infty$, the proper scaling factor is no longer $n^{-1/4}$, but the length of the boundary raised to the power $-1/2$. We also have a whole convergence and, in this case, only the boundary remains visible in the limit. We find Aldous’s so-called CRT [Ald91, Ald93] defined as follows. We call \mathfrak{e} the normalized Brownian excursion, and define the pseudo-metric

$$\delta_{\mathfrak{e}}(s, t) := \mathfrak{e}(s) + \mathfrak{e}(t) - 2 \min_{[s \wedge t, s \vee t]} \mathfrak{e}, \quad 0 \leq s, t \leq 1.$$

It defines a metric on the quotient $\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{e}} := [0, 1]_{/\{\delta_{\mathfrak{e}}=0\}}$, which, by a slight abuse of notation, we still write $\delta_{\mathfrak{e}}$. The **Continuum Random Tree** is the random metric space $(\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{e}}, \delta_{\mathfrak{e}})$.

Theorem 5. Let $(\sigma_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be a sequence of positive integers such that $\sigma_n/\sqrt{2n} \rightarrow \infty$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Let q_n be uniformly distributed over the set $\mathcal{Q}_{n, \sigma_n}$ of all planar quadrangulations with a boundary having n internal faces and $2\sigma_n$ half-edges on the boundary. Then,

$$\left(V(q_n), \frac{1}{(2\sigma_n)^{1/2}} d_{q_n} \right) \xrightarrow[n \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} (\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{e}}, \delta_{\mathfrak{e}})$$

in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology.

We observe an interesting phenomenon here. We expect that, if we take a uniform quadrangulation in $\mathcal{Q}_{n, \sigma_n}$ with n large and σ_n large enough but not too large (probably in the scale $n^{1/2+\varepsilon}$ with $\varepsilon > 0$ small) then, in the scale $n^{-1/4}$, it should locally resemble the Brownian map, whereas in the scale $\sigma_n^{-1/2}$, it should look more like the CRT.

1.3 Organization of this paper and general strategy

We begin by exposing in Section 2 the version of the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection that we will need. As we do not use it in its usual setting, we spend some time explaining it. In particular, we introduce a notion of bridge that is not totally standard. We then investigate in Section 3 the scaling limit of the objects appearing in this bijection, and deduce Theorem 1.

Discrete forests play an important part in the coding of quadrangulations with a boundary through the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection, and the analysis of Section 3 leads to the construction of a continuum random forest, which may be seen as a generalization of Aldous’s CRT [Ald91, Ald93]. We carry out the analysis of Le Gall [LG07] to our case in Section 4 and see any limiting space of Theorem 1 as a quotient of this continuum random forest via an equivalence relation defined in terms of Brownian labels on it.

Following Miermont [Mie08], we then prove Theorem 2 in Section 5 thanks to the notion of regularity introduced by Whyburn [Why35a, Why35b]. As we consider in this work surfaces with a boundary, the notion of 1-regularity used by Miermont in [Mie08] is no longer sufficient: we will also need here the notion of 0-regularity, which we will expose in Section 5.1.

Section 6.1 is dedicated to the case $\sigma = 0$ in which we use a totally different approach, consisting in comparing quadrangulations with a “small” boundary with quadrangulations without boundary. In Section 6.2, we treat the case $\sigma = \infty$ by a different method.

We will need to use the so-called Brownian snake to prove some remaining technical results. We prove these in Section 7. In particular, in Section 7.2, we will look at the increase points of the Brownian snake we consider. From our approach, we can retrieve [LGP08, Lemma 3.2].

Finally, Section 8 is dedicated to some developments and open questions.

Our general strategy is in many points similar to [Bet10a, Bet10b]. Although we will try to make this work as self-contained as possible, we will often refer the reader to these papers when the proofs are readily adaptable, and will rather focus on the new ingredients. One of the main difficulties that was not present in [Bet10a, Bet10b] arises from the fact that the Brownian labels on the continuum random forest we construct do not have the same diffusion factor on the floor than in the trees. To be a little more precise, the labels in the trees vary like standard Brownian motion, whereas on the floor they vary as a Brownian motion multiplied by the factor $\sqrt{3}$ (see Proposition 7 for a rigorous statement). This factor comes from the fact that the bridge coding the external face in the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection does not have the same variance as the Motzkin paths appearing everywhere else. Its presence generates new technical issues and forces us to find new proofs for some of Le Gall’s estimates.

A key point of our analysis is that, at the limit, the boundary does not have any pinch points (Lemma 19). As the boundary of the map roughly corresponds to the floor of the forest (Proposition 21), it will be crucial to see that, in the quotient we define, the points of the floor are not identified with one another (Lemma 14). We will see in Theorem 13 that two points are identified if they have the same labels and if the labels of the points “between them” are all greater. From the already known cases, we could think that it all works the same but, a priori, this factor $\sqrt{3}$ could induce some identification of points on the floor of the forest. Fortunately, this does not happen. However, we can see from our proofs in Section 7.2 that this value is critical, in the sense that if it was strictly greater, then some of the points of the floor would be identified, so that the boundary would no longer be a simple curve.

The presence of this factor also suggests that the objects we construct in this work are not directly related to the Brownian map.

Except in Section 7, all the random variables considered in this work are taken on a common probability space $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$.

Acknowledgments The author wishes to heartily thank Grégory Miermont for the precious advice and careful guidance he constantly offered during the realization of this work.

2 The Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection

As is often the case in this kind of problems, we start with a bijection allowing us to work with simpler objects. We use here a particular instance of the so-called Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection [BDFG04], which has already been used in [BG09]. For more convenience, we modify it a little to better fit our purpose. This will allow us to code quadrangulations with a boundary by forests whose vertices carry integer labels.

2.1 Forests

We use for forests the formalism of [Bet10a, Bet10b], which we briefly recall here. We denote by $\mathbb{N} := \{1, 2, \dots\}$ the set of positive integers. For $u = (u_1, \dots, u_n), v = (v_1, \dots, v_p) \in \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \mathbb{N}^n$, we let $\|u\| := n$ be the height of u , and $uv := (u_1, \dots, u_n, v_1, \dots, v_p)$ be the concatenation of u and v . We say that u is an **ancestor** of uv and that uv is a **descendant** of u . In the case where $v \in \mathbb{N}$, we use the terms **parent** and **child** instead.

Definition 1. A *forest* is a finite subset $\mathfrak{f} \subset \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \mathbb{N}^n$ satisfying:

- (i) there is an integer $t(\mathfrak{f}) \geq 1$, called the **number of trees** of \mathfrak{f} , such that $\mathfrak{f} \cap \mathbb{N} = \llbracket 1, t(\mathfrak{f}) + 1 \rrbracket$,
- (ii) if $u \in \mathfrak{f} \setminus \mathbb{N}$, then its parent belongs to \mathfrak{f} ,
- (iii) for every $u \in \mathfrak{f}$, there is an integer $c_u(\mathfrak{f}) \geq 0$ such that $ui \in \mathfrak{f}$ if and only if $1 \leq i \leq c_u(\mathfrak{f})$,
- (iv) $c_{t(\mathfrak{f})+1}(\mathfrak{f}) = 0$.

The set $fl := \mathfrak{f} \cap \mathbb{N}$ is called the **floor** of the forest \mathfrak{f} . When $u \in fl$, we sometime note it (u) to avoid confusion between the integer u and the point $(u) \in \mathfrak{f}$. For $u = (u_1, \dots, u_p) \in \mathfrak{f}$, we call $\mathfrak{a}(u) := u_1 \in fl$ its oldest ancestor. For $1 \leq j \leq t(\mathfrak{f})$, the set $\{u \in \mathfrak{f} : \mathfrak{a}(u) = j\}$ is called **tree** of \mathfrak{f} rooted at (j) . The points $u, v \in \mathfrak{f}$ are called **neighbors**, and we write $u \sim v$, if either u is a parent or child of v , or $u, v \in fl$ and $|u - v| = 1$. On the figures, we always draw edges between neighbors (see Figure 1). We say that an edge drawn between a parent and its child is a **tree edge** whereas an edge drawn between two consecutive tree roots will be called a **floor edge**.

Definition 2. A *well-labeled forest* is a pair (\mathfrak{f}, ι) where \mathfrak{f} is a forest and $\iota : \mathfrak{f} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ is a function satisfying:

- (i) for all $u \in fl$, $\iota(u) = 0$,
- (ii) if $u \sim v$, then $|\iota(u) - \iota(v)| \leq 1$.

Let $\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n := \{(\mathfrak{f}, \iota) : t(\mathfrak{f}) = \sigma, |\mathfrak{f}| = n + \sigma + 1\}$ be the set of well-labeled forests with σ trees and n tree edges. By a simple application (see for example [Bet10a, Lemma 3]) of the so-called cycle lemma [BCP03, Lemma 2], and the fact that to every forest with n tree edges correspond exactly 3^n labeling functions, we obtain that

$$|\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n| = 3^n \frac{\sigma}{2n + \sigma} \binom{2n + \sigma}{n}. \quad (1)$$

For a forest \mathfrak{f} with σ trees and n tree edges, we define its **facial sequence** $\mathfrak{f}(0), \mathfrak{f}(1), \dots, \mathfrak{f}(2n + \sigma)$ as follows (see Figure 1): $\mathfrak{f}(0) := (1)$, and for $0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma - 1$,

- ◇ if $f(i)$ has children that do not appear in the sequence $f(0), f(1), \dots, f(i)$, then $f(i+1)$ is the first of these children, that is, $f(i+1) := f(i)j_0$ where

$$j_0 = \min \{j \geq 1 : f(i)j \notin \{f(0), f(1), \dots, f(i)\}\},$$

- ◇ otherwise, if $f(i) \notin fl$, then $f(i+1)$ is the parent of $f(i)$,
- ◇ if neither of these cases occur, which implies that $f(i) \in fl$, then $f(i+1) := f(i) + 1$.

A well-labeled forest (f, l) is then entirely determined by its so-called **contour pair** $(C_f, L_{f,l})$ consisting in its **contour function** $C_f : [0, 2n + \sigma] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ and its **spatial contour function** $L_{f,l} : [0, 2n + \sigma] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ defined by

$$C_f(i) := \|f(i)\| + t(f) - \mathbf{a}(f(i)) \quad \text{and} \quad L_{f,l}(i) := l(f(i)), \quad 0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma,$$

and linearly interpolated between integer values (see Figure 1).

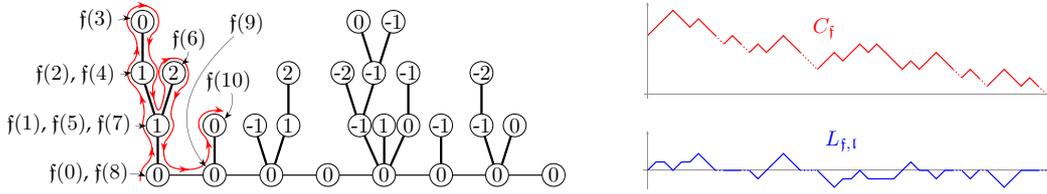


Figure 1: The facial sequence and contour pair of a well-labeled forest from \mathfrak{F}_7^{20} . The paths are dashed on the intervals corresponding to floor edges.

2.2 Bridges

Definition 3. We say that a sequence of integers $(b(0), b(1), \dots, b(\sigma))$ for some $\sigma \geq 1$ is a **bridge** if $b(0) = 0$, $b(\sigma) \leq 0$, and, for all $0 \leq i \leq \sigma - 1$, we have $b(i+1) - b(i) \geq -1$. The integer σ will be called the **length** of the bridge.

The somehow unusual condition $b(\sigma) \leq 0$ will become clear in the following section: it will be used to keep track of the position of the root in the quadrangulation. We call \mathcal{B}_σ the set of all bridges of length σ . In the following, when we consider a bridge $b \in \mathcal{B}_\sigma$, we will always implicitly extend its definition to $[0, \sigma]$ by linear interpolation between integer values.

Lemma 6. The cardinality of the set \mathcal{B}_σ is

$$|\mathcal{B}_\sigma| = \binom{2\sigma}{\sigma}.$$

Proof. With a bridge $(b(i))_{0 \leq i \leq \sigma} \in \mathcal{B}_\sigma$, we associate the following sequence

$$(\tilde{b}_j)_{1 \leq j \leq 2\sigma} := \underbrace{(+1, +1, \dots, +1)}_{b(0) - b(\sigma) \text{ times}}, -1, \underbrace{(+1, +1, \dots, +1)}_{b(1) - b(0) + 1 \text{ times}}, -1, \underbrace{(+1, +1, \dots, +1)}_{b(2) - b(1) + 1 \text{ times}}, \dots, -1, \underbrace{(+1, +1, \dots, +1)}_{b(\sigma) - b(\sigma - 1) + 1 \text{ times}}.$$

The set \mathcal{B}_σ is then in one-to-one correspondence with the set of sequences in $\{-1, +1\}^{2\sigma}$ counting exactly σ times the number -1 . The number of bridges of length σ is then the number of choices we have to place these σ numbers among the 2σ spots. \square

2.3 The bijection

A **pointed quadrangulation** (with a boundary) is a pair (q, v^\bullet) consisting in a quadrangulation (with a boundary) q together with a distinguished vertex $v^\bullet \in V(q)$. We call

$$\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet := \{(q, v^\bullet) : q \in \mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}, v^\bullet \in V(q)\}$$

the set of all pointed quadrangulations with n internal faces and 2σ half-edges on the boundary. The Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection may easily be adapted into a bijection between the sets $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet$ and $\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n \times \mathcal{B}_\sigma$. We briefly describe it here, and refer the reader to [BDFG04] for proofs and further details.

2.3.1 From quadrangulations to forests and bridges

Let us start with the mapping from $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet$ onto $\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n \times \mathcal{B}_\sigma$. Let $(q, v^\bullet) \in \mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet$. We label the vertices of q as follows: for every vertex $v \in V(q)$, we set $\tilde{l}(v) = d_q(v^\bullet, v)$. Because q is bipartite, the labels of both ends of any edge differ by exactly 1. As a result, the internal faces can be of two types: the labels around the face are either $d, d+1, d+2, d+1$, or $d, d+1, d, d+1$ for some d . We add a new edge to every internal face as shown on the left part of Figure 2.

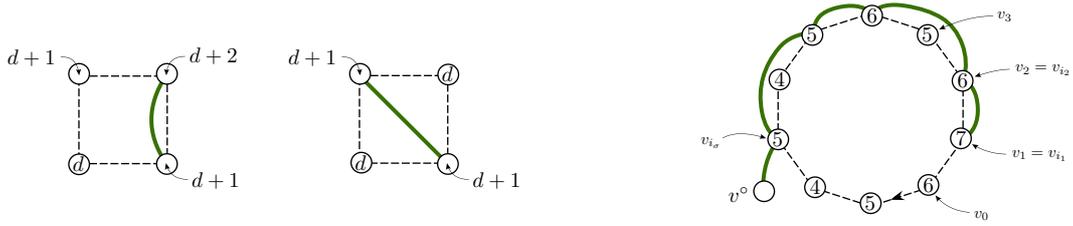


Figure 2: *Left.* Adding the new edge to an internal face. *Right.* Example of the operation on the external face. In this example, $\mathfrak{b} = (0, -1, -1, -2, -2, -1)$.

The operation regarding the external face is a little more intricate. We call $v_0, v_1, \dots, v_{2\sigma-1}$ its vertices read in counterclockwise order, starting at the origin of the root, $v_0 = \mathfrak{e}_*^-$ (and we use the convention $v_{2\sigma} = v_0$). We only consider the vertices v_i such that $\tilde{l}(v_{i+1}) = \tilde{l}(v_i) - 1$. Note that, because $\tilde{l}(v_{i+1}) - \tilde{l}(v_i) \in \{-1, +1\}$, there are exactly σ such vertices. We call them $v_{i_1}, v_{i_2}, \dots, v_{i_\sigma}$, with $0 \leq i_1 < i_2 < \dots < i_\sigma < 2\sigma$. Finally, we add a new vertex v° inside the external face, and draw extra edges linking v_{i_k} to $v_{i_{k+1}}$ for all $1 \leq k \leq \sigma - 1$, and v_{i_σ} to v° . See the right part of Figure 2.

We then only keep the new edges we added and the vertices in $(V(q) \setminus \{v^\bullet\}) \cup \{v^\circ\}$. We obtain a forest \mathfrak{f} whose floor is drawn in the external face: $(k) = v_{i_k}$ for $1 \leq k \leq \sigma$, and $(\sigma + 1) = v^\circ$. To obtain the labels of \mathfrak{f} , we shift the labels tree by tree, in such a way that the floor labels are 0: we define $l(u) := \tilde{l}(u) - \tilde{l}(a(u))$, and $l(v^\circ) = 0$. Finally, the bridge \mathfrak{b} records the labels of the floor before the shifting operation: for $0 \leq k \leq \sigma - 1$, we let $\mathfrak{b}(k) := \tilde{l}(v_{i_{k+1}}) - \tilde{l}(v_{i_k})$, and $\mathfrak{b}(\sigma) = \tilde{l}(v_0) - \tilde{l}(v_{i_1})$ (so that $\mathfrak{b}(\sigma)$ keeps track of the position of the root).

The pointed quadrangulation (q, v^\bullet) corresponds to the pair $((\mathfrak{f}, l), \mathfrak{b})$.

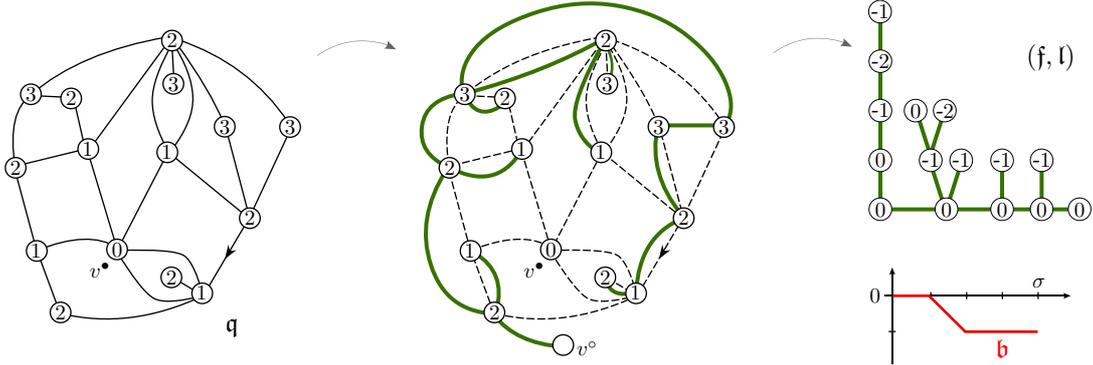


Figure 3: The mapping from $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet$ onto $\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n \times \mathcal{B}_\sigma$. In this picture, $n = 10$ and $\sigma = 4$.

2.3.2 From forests and bridges to quadrangulations

Let us now describe the mapping from $\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n \times \mathcal{B}_\sigma$ onto $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}^\bullet$. Let $(f, l) \in \mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n$ be a well-labeled forest and $b \in \mathcal{B}_\sigma$ be a bridge. As above, we write $f(0), f(1), \dots, f(2n + \sigma)$ the facial sequence of f . The pointed quadrangulation (q, v^\bullet) corresponding to $((f, l), b)$ is then constructed as follows. First, we shift all the labels of f tree by tree according to the bridge b : precisely, we define $\hat{l}(u) := l(u) + b(a(u) - 1)$. Then, we shift all the labels in such a way that the minimal label is equal to 1: let us call $\tilde{l} := \hat{l} - \min \hat{l} + 1$ this shifted labeling function. We add an extra vertex v^\bullet carrying the label $\tilde{l}(v^\bullet) := 0$ inside the only face of f . Finally, following the facial sequence, for every $0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma - 1$, we draw an arc—without intersecting any edge of f or arc already drawn—between $f(i)$ and $f(\text{succ}(i))$, where $\text{succ}(i)$ is the **successor** of i , defined by

$$\text{succ}(i) := \begin{cases} \inf S_\geq & \text{if } S_\geq \neq \emptyset \\ \inf S_\leq & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad \text{with} \quad \begin{aligned} S_\geq &:= \{k \in \llbracket i, 2n + \sigma - 1 \rrbracket : \tilde{l}(f(k)) = \tilde{l}(f(i)) - 1\} \\ S_\leq &:= \{k \in \llbracket 0, i - 1 \rrbracket : \tilde{l}(f(k)) = \tilde{l}(f(i)) - 1\} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

with the conventions $\inf \emptyset = \infty$, and $f(\infty) = v^\bullet$.

Because there may be more than one arc linking $f(i)$ to $f(\text{succ}(i))$, we will speak of the arc linking i to $\text{succ}(i)$ to avoid any confusion, and we will write it

$$i \frown \text{succ}(i) \quad \text{or} \quad \text{succ}(i) \smile i.$$

When we need an orientation, we will write $i \frown \text{succ}(i)$ the arc orientated from i toward $\text{succ}(i)$ and $i \smile \text{succ}(i)$ the arc orientated from $\text{succ}(i)$ toward i . The quadrangulation q is then defined as the map whose set of vertices is $(f \setminus \{(\sigma + 1)\}) \cup \{v^\bullet\}$, whose edges are the arcs we drew, and whose root is either $\text{succ}^{-b(\sigma)}(0) \frown \text{succ}^{-b(\sigma)+1}(0)$ if $b(\sigma) > b(\sigma - 1) - 1$, or $2n + \sigma - 1 \smile \text{succ}(2n + \sigma - 1)$ if $b(\sigma) = b(\sigma - 1) - 1$.

2.3.3 Some remarks

1. Because of the way we drew the arcs of q in Section 2.3.2, it is easy to see that for any vertex $v \in V(q)$, $\tilde{l}(v) = d_q(v^\bullet, v)$, so that both functions \tilde{l} of Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 coincide.
2. Note that the sequence \tilde{b} from the proof of Lemma 6 reads the increments of the labels around the boundary: $\tilde{b}_j = \tilde{l}(v_j) - \tilde{l}(v_{j-1})$ for $1 \leq j \leq 2\sigma$.

3. Using Lemma 6, equation (1), and the fact that every quadrangulation in $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}$ has exactly $n + \sigma + 1$ vertices, we see that

$$|\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}| = \frac{|\mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n| |\mathcal{B}_\sigma|}{n + \sigma + 1} = \frac{3^n (2\sigma)! (2n + \sigma - 1)!}{\sigma! (\sigma - 1)! n! (n + \sigma + 1)!}.$$

Using generating functions techniques, Bouttier and Guitter [BG09, Equation (2.3)] already gave the same expression.

4. If we call (C, L) the contour pair of (f, l) , then we may retrieve the oldest ancestor of $f(i)$ thanks to C by the relation

$$a(f(i)) - 1 = \sigma - \underline{C}(i),$$

where we use the notation

$$\underline{X}_s := \inf_{[0,s]} X$$

for any process $(X_s)_{s \geq 0}$. The function

$$\mathfrak{L} := \left(L(s) + \mathfrak{b}(\sigma - \underline{C}(s)) \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 2n + \sigma}$$

then records the labels of the forest, once shifted tree by tree according to the bridge \mathfrak{b} . As a result, we see that $\mathfrak{L}(i) - \min \mathfrak{L} + 1$ represents the distance in \mathfrak{q} between v^\bullet and the point corresponding to $f(i)$.

5. This gives a natural way to explore the vertices of \mathfrak{q} : we call $\mathfrak{q}(i)$ the vertex corresponding to $f(i)$. In particular, $\{\mathfrak{q}(i), 0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma - 1\} = V(\mathfrak{q}) \setminus \{v^\bullet\}$. We end this section by giving an upper bound for the distance between two vertices $\mathfrak{q}(i)$ and $\mathfrak{q}(j)$, in terms of the function \mathfrak{L} :

$$d_{\mathfrak{q}}(\mathfrak{q}(i), \mathfrak{q}(j)) \leq \mathfrak{L}(i) + \mathfrak{L}(j) - 2 \max \left(\min_{k \in \overrightarrow{[i,j]}} \mathfrak{L}(k), \min_{k \in \overleftarrow{[j,i]}} \mathfrak{L}(k) \right) + 2 \quad (3)$$

where we note, for $i \leq j$, $\overrightarrow{[i,j]} := [i, j] \cap \mathbb{Z} = \{i, i + 1, \dots, j\}$, and

$$\overrightarrow{[i,j]} := \begin{cases} \overrightarrow{[i,j]} & \text{if } i \leq j, \\ \overleftarrow{[i, 2n + \sigma - 1]} \cup \overrightarrow{[0, j]} & \text{if } j < i. \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

We refer the reader to [Mie09, Lemma 4] for a detailed proof of this bound.

3 Proof of Theorem 1

3.1 Convergence of the coding functions

Let $(\sigma_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be a sequence of positive integers such that

$$\sigma_{(n)} := \frac{\sigma_n}{\sqrt{2n}} \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \sigma \in [0, \infty].$$

Until further notice, we suppose that $\sigma \in (0, \infty)$. The remaining cases $\sigma = 0$ and $\sigma = \infty$ will be treated separately in Section 6. Let q_n be uniformly distributed over the set \mathcal{Q}_{n,σ_n} of quadrangulation with n internal faces and $2\sigma_n$ half-edges on the boundary. Conditionally given q_n , we let v_n^\bullet be uniformly distributed over the set $V(q_n)$. Because every quadrangulation in \mathcal{Q}_{n,σ_n} has exactly $n + \sigma_n + 1$ vertices (by Euler characteristic formula), we see that (q_n, v_n^\bullet) is uniformly distributed over $\mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma_n}^\bullet$ and thus correspond through the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection to a pair $((f_n, l_n), \mathfrak{b}_n)$ uniformly distributed over the set $\mathfrak{F}_{\sigma_n}^n \times \mathcal{B}_{\sigma_n}$.

3.1.1 Brownian bridges, first-passage Brownian bridges, and Brownian snake

Let us define the space

$$\mathcal{K} := \bigcup_{x \in \mathbb{R}_+} \mathcal{C}([0, x], \mathbb{R})$$

of continuous real-valued functions on \mathbb{R}_+ killed after some time. For an element $f \in \mathcal{K}$, we call $\zeta(f)$ its lifetime, that is, the only x such that $f \in \mathcal{C}([0, x], \mathbb{R})$. We endow this space with the following metric:

$$d_{\mathcal{K}}(f, g) := |\zeta(f) - \zeta(g)| + \sup_{y \geq 0} |f(y \wedge \zeta(f)) - g(y \wedge \zeta(g))|.$$

We write $B_{[0, \sigma]}^{0 \rightarrow 0}$ a Brownian bridge on $[0, \sigma]$ from 0 to 0, defined as a standard Brownian motion on $[0, \sigma]$ started at 0, conditioned on being at 0 at time σ (see for example [BCP03, Bet10a, Bil68, RY99]). We also call $F_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}$ a first-passage Brownian bridge on $[0, 1]$ from σ to 0, defined as a standard Brownian motion on $[0, 1]$ started at σ , and conditioned on hitting 0 for the first time at time 1. We refer the reader to [Bet10a] for a proper definition of this conditioning, as well as for some convergence results of the discrete analogs.

The so-called Brownian snake's head may then be defined as the process $(F_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}, Z_{[0, 1]})$, where, conditionally given $F_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}$, the process $(Z_{[0, 1]}(s))_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ is a centered Gaussian process with covariance function

$$\text{cov}(Z_{[0, 1]}(s), Z_{[0, 1]}(s')) = \inf_{[s \wedge s', s \vee s']} (F_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0} - \underline{F}_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}). \quad (5)$$

We refer to [Bet10a, DLG02, LG99] for more details.

3.1.2 Convergence of the bridge and the contour pair of the well-labeled forest

We call (C_n, L_n) the contour pair of $(\mathfrak{f}_n, \mathfrak{l}_n)$, and define the scaled versions of C_n , L_n , and \mathfrak{b}_n by

$$C_{(n)} := \left(\frac{C_n((2n + \sigma_n - 1)s)}{\sqrt{2n}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1} \quad L_{(n)} := \left(\frac{L_n((2n + \sigma_n - 1)s)}{\gamma n^{1/4}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$$

$$\mathfrak{b}_{(n)} := \left(\frac{\mathfrak{b}_n(\sqrt{2n}s)}{\gamma n^{1/4}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq \sigma_{(n)}}$$

where the constant γ was defined during the statement of Theorem 1.

Remark. Following [Bet10a, Bet10b], the notation with a parenthesized n will always refer to suitably rescaled objects, as in the definitions above.

The aim of this section is the following proposition.

Proposition 7. *The triple $(C_{(n)}, L_{(n)}, \mathfrak{b}_{(n)})$ converges in distribution in the space $(\mathcal{K}, d_{\mathcal{K}})^3$ toward a triple $(C_{\infty}, L_{\infty}, \mathfrak{b}_{\infty})$ whose law is defined as follows:*

- ◇ the processes (C_{∞}, L_{∞}) and \mathfrak{b}_{∞} are independent,
- ◇ the process (C_{∞}, L_{∞}) has the law of a Brownian snake's head on $[0, 1]$ going from σ to 0:

$$(C_{\infty}, L_{\infty}) \stackrel{(d)}{=} (F_{[0, 1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}, Z_{[0, 1]}),$$

◇ the process \mathfrak{b}_∞ has the law of a Brownian bridge on $[0, \sigma]$ from 0 to 0, scaled by the factor $\sqrt{3}$:

$$\mathfrak{b}_\infty \stackrel{(d)}{=} \sqrt{3} B_{[0, \sigma]}^{0 \rightarrow 0}.$$

Proof. By [Bet10a, Corollary 16], the pair $(C_{(n)}, L_{(n)})$ converges in distribution² toward the pair $(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}, Z_{[0,1]})$, in the space $(\mathcal{K}, d_{\mathcal{K}})^2$. Moreover, (C_n, L_n) and \mathfrak{b}_n are independent, so that it only remains to show that $\mathfrak{b}_{(n)}$ converges in distribution toward $\sqrt{3} B_{[0, \sigma]}^{0 \rightarrow 0}$. To that end, we will use [Bet10a, Lemma 10].

Let $(X_i)_{i \geq 1}$ be a sequence of i.i.d. random variables with distribution given by

$$X_i \sim \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} 2^{-k-1} \delta_{k-1}.$$

We call $\Sigma_0 := 0$ and, for $j \geq 1$, $\Sigma_j := \sum_{i=1}^j X_i$. For $k \geq 0$ fixed, and n such that $\sigma_n \geq k$, we also define a process $(S_n^k(i))_{0 \leq i \leq \sigma_n}$ distributed as $(\Sigma_i)_{0 \leq i \leq \sigma_n}$ conditioned on the event $\{\Sigma_{\sigma_n} = -k\}$. We extend its definition to $[0, \sigma_n]$ by linear interpolation between integer values. Because X_1 is centered, has moments of any order, and has variance 2, we may apply [Bet10a, Lemma 10] and we see that the process

$$\left(\frac{S_n^k(\sqrt{2n}s)}{\sqrt{3}\gamma n^{1/4}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq \sigma_{(n)}} \xrightarrow[n \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} B_{[0, \sigma]}^{0 \rightarrow 0}. \quad (6)$$

Moreover, it is easy to see that the bridge S_n^k is uniform over the set $\{\mathfrak{b} \in \mathcal{B}_{\sigma_n} : \mathfrak{b}(\sigma_n) = -k\}$. Indeed, for any $\mathfrak{b} \in \mathcal{B}_{\sigma_n}$ such that $\mathfrak{b}(\sigma_n) = -k$, we have

$$\mathbb{P}(S_n^k = \mathfrak{b}) = \frac{\mathbb{P}(\forall i \in \llbracket 1, \sigma_n \rrbracket, X_i = \mathfrak{b}(i) - \mathfrak{b}(i-1))}{\mathbb{P}(\Sigma_{\sigma_n} = -k)} = \frac{2^{-2\sigma_n+k}}{\mathbb{P}(\Sigma_{\sigma_n} = -k)},$$

which does not depend on \mathfrak{b} but only on n and k . For such a \mathfrak{b} , we call

$$c_{n,k} := \frac{\mathbb{P}(\mathfrak{b}_n = \mathfrak{b})}{\mathbb{P}(S_n^k = \mathfrak{b})} = \binom{2\sigma_n}{\sigma_n}^{-1} \binom{2\sigma_n - k - 1}{\sigma_n - 1}.$$

(We may use the bijection of Lemma 6 to compute the denominator.) We have that

$$c_{n,k} = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(2\sigma_n - k - 1)!}{(2\sigma_n - 1)!} \frac{\sigma_n!}{(\sigma_n - k)!} \leq \frac{1}{2} \prod_{i=0}^{k-1} \frac{\sigma_n - i}{\sigma_n - i + \sigma_n - 1} \leq 2^{-k},$$

and that $c_{n,k} \rightarrow 2^{-k-1}$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. Now, let $\varphi : \mathcal{K} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a bounded measurable function. Using (6), we obtain by dominated convergence that

$$\mathbb{E}[\varphi(\mathfrak{b}_{(n)})] = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} c_{n,k} \mathbb{E} \left[\varphi \left(\left(\frac{S_n^k(\sqrt{2n}s)}{\gamma n^{1/4}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq \sigma_{(n)}} \right) \right] \xrightarrow[n \rightarrow \infty]{} \mathbb{E}[\varphi(\sqrt{3} B_{[0, \sigma]}^{0 \rightarrow 0})].$$

This completes the proof. \square

²In [Bet10a], the processes considered were the same except that the term $(2n + \sigma_n - 1)$ was replaced with $2n$. The fact that $\sigma_n/2n \rightarrow 0$ and the uniform continuity of the process $(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}, Z_{[0,1]})$ yield the result as stated here.

Recall the notation $\mathfrak{q}_n(i)$ introduced at the end of Section 2 for the vertex corresponding to $\mathfrak{f}_n(i)$ through the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection. Remember that $d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}(v_n^\bullet, \mathfrak{q}_n(i)) = \mathfrak{L}_n(i) - \min \mathfrak{L}_n + 1$, where

$$\mathfrak{L}_n := \left(L_n(s) + \mathfrak{b}_n(\sigma_n - \underline{C}_n(s)) \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 2n + \sigma_n}. \quad (7)$$

The rescaled version of \mathfrak{L}_n is then given by

$$\mathfrak{L}_{(n)} := \left(\frac{\mathfrak{L}_n((2n + \sigma_n - 1)s)}{\gamma n^{1/4}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1} = \left(L_{(n)}(s) + \mathfrak{b}_{(n)}(\sigma_{(n)} - \underline{C}_{(n)}(s)) \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}.$$

Corollary 8. *The process $(C_{(n)}, \mathfrak{L}_{(n)})$ converges in distribution in the space $(\mathcal{K}, d_{\mathcal{K}})^2$ toward the process $(C_\infty, \mathfrak{L}_\infty)$, where*

$$\mathfrak{L}_\infty := \left(L_\infty(s) + \mathfrak{b}_\infty(\sigma - \underline{C}_\infty(s)) \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}. \quad (8)$$

3.2 Proof of Theorem 1

The proof of Theorem 1 is very similar to [Bet10a, Section 6], so that we only sketch it. Our approach is adapted from Le Gall [LG07] for the first assertion, and from Le Gall and Miermont [LGM11] for the Hausdorff dimension. In addition, we use this occasion to introduce some notation that will be useful later.

We define on $\llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$ the pseudo-metric d_n by

$$d_n(i, j) := d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}(\mathfrak{q}_n(i), \mathfrak{q}_n(j)),$$

we extend its definition to non integer values by linear interpolation: for s, t in $[0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1]$,

$$d_n(s, t) := \underline{s} \underline{t} d_n(\lfloor s \rfloor + 1, \lfloor t \rfloor + 1) + \underline{s} \underline{t} d_n(\lfloor s \rfloor + 1, \lfloor t \rfloor) + \overline{s} \underline{t} d_n(\lfloor s \rfloor, \lfloor t \rfloor + 1) + \overline{s} \overline{t} d_n(\lfloor s \rfloor, \lfloor t \rfloor),$$

where $\lfloor s \rfloor := \sup\{k \in \mathbb{Z}, k \leq s\}$, $\underline{s} := s - \lfloor s \rfloor$ and $\overline{s} := \lfloor s \rfloor + 1 - s$, and we define its rescaled version: for $s, t \in [0, 1]$, we let

$$d_{(n)}(s, t) := \frac{1}{\gamma n^{1/4}} d_n((2n + \sigma_n - 1)s, (2n + \sigma_n - 1)t).$$

We also define the equivalence relation \sim_n on $\llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$ by declaring that $i \sim_n j$ when $\mathfrak{q}_n(i) = \mathfrak{q}_n(j)$, which is equivalent to $d_n(i, j) = 0$. The function $d_{(n)}$ may then be seen as a metric on

$$\mathcal{Q}_n := (2n + \sigma_n - 1)^{-1} \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket / \sim_n,$$

and, as v_n^\bullet is the only point of \mathfrak{q}_n that does not lie in $\{\mathfrak{q}_n(i) : 0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma_n - 1\}$, we have

$$d_{GH} \left(\left(\mathcal{Q}_n, d_{(n)} \right), \left(V(\mathfrak{q}_n), \frac{1}{\gamma n^{1/4}} d_{\mathfrak{q}_n} \right) \right) \leq \frac{1}{\gamma n^{1/4}}. \quad (9)$$

The bound (3) gives us a control on the metric $d_{(n)}$, from where we can derive the following lemma (see [Bet10a, Lemma 19]).

Lemma 9. *The sequence of the laws of the processes*

$$(d_{(n)}(s, t))_{0 \leq s, t \leq 1}$$

is tight in the space of probability measure on $\mathcal{C}([0, 1]^2, \mathbb{R})$.

As a result of Lemma 9, from any increasing sequence of integers, we may extract a (deterministic) subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$ such that there exists a random function $d_\infty^\sigma \in \mathcal{C}([0, 1]^2, \mathbb{R})$ satisfying

$$(d_{(n_k)}(s, t))_{0 \leq s, t \leq 1} \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} (d_\infty^\sigma(s, t))_{0 \leq s, t \leq 1}. \quad (10)$$

By Skorokhod's representation theorem, we will assume that this convergence holds almost surely. In the limit, the bound (3) becomes

$$d_\infty^\sigma(s, t) \leq d_\infty^\circ(s, t) := \mathfrak{L}_\infty(s) + \mathfrak{L}_\infty(t) - 2 \max \left(\min_{x \in \overrightarrow{[s, t]}} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(x), \min_{x \in \overleftarrow{[t, s]}} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(x) \right), \quad 0 \leq s, t \leq 1, \quad (11)$$

where

$$\overrightarrow{[s, t]} := \begin{cases} [s, t] & \text{if } s \leq t, \\ [s, 1] \cup [0, t] & \text{if } t < s. \end{cases} \quad (12)$$

Adding to this the fact that the functions $d_{(n)}$ obey the triangle inequality, we see that the function d_∞^σ is a pseudo-metric. We define the equivalence relation associated with it by saying that $s \sim_\infty t$ if $d_\infty^\sigma(s, t) = 0$, and we call $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma := [0, 1] / \sim_\infty$. The convergence claimed in Theorem 1 holds along the same subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$.

To see this, we use the characterization of the Gromov–Hausdorff distance via correspondences. Recall that a correspondence between two metric spaces (\mathcal{X}, δ) and (\mathcal{X}', δ') is a subset $\mathcal{R} \subseteq \mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{X}'$ such that for all $x \in \mathcal{X}$, there is at least one $x' \in \mathcal{X}'$ for which $(x, x') \in \mathcal{R}$ and vice versa. The distortion of the correspondence \mathcal{R} is defined by

$$\text{dis}(\mathcal{R}) := \sup \{ |\delta(x, y) - \delta(x', y')| : (x, x'), (y, y') \in \mathcal{R} \}.$$

Then we have [BBI01, Theorem 7.3.25]

$$d_{GH}(\mathcal{X}, \mathcal{X}') = \frac{1}{2} \inf_{\mathcal{R}} \text{dis}(\mathcal{R}), \quad (13)$$

where the infimum is taken over all correspondences between \mathcal{X} and \mathcal{X}' .

We call \mathbf{p}_n the canonical projection from $\llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$ to $\llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket / \sim_n$. For $t \in [0, 1]$, we define $\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t) := (2n + \sigma_n - 1)^{-1} \mathbf{p}_n(\lfloor (2n + \sigma_n - 1)t \rfloor)$, and we call $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(t)$ the equivalence class of t in $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$. We then define the correspondence \mathcal{R}_n between the spaces $(\mathcal{Q}_n, d_{(n)})$ and $(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ as the set

$$\mathcal{R}_n := \{ (\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t), \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(t)), t \in [0, 1] \}.$$

Its distortion is

$$\text{dis}(\mathcal{R}_n) = \sup_{0 \leq s, t \leq 1} \left| d_{(n)} \left(\frac{\lfloor (2n + \sigma_n - 1)s \rfloor}{2n + \sigma_n - 1}, \frac{\lfloor (2n + \sigma_n - 1)t \rfloor}{2n + \sigma_n - 1} \right) - d_\infty^\sigma(s, t) \right|,$$

and, thanks to (10),

$$d_{GH}((\mathcal{Q}_{n_k}, d_{(n_k)}), (\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)) \leq \frac{1}{2} \text{dis}(\mathcal{R}_{n_k}) \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{} 0.$$

Combining this with (9), we obtain the first assertion of Theorem 1.

The Hausdorff dimension of the limit may be computed by the technique we used in [Bet10a]. Because the proof is very similar, and is not really related to our purpose here, we leave it to the reader. The idea is roughly the following. To prove that the Hausdorff dimension is less than 4,

we use the fact that \mathcal{L}_∞ is almost surely α -Hölder for all $\alpha \in (0, 1/4)$ [c.f. (7)], yielding that the canonical projection from $([0, 1], |\cdot|)$ to $(q_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ is also α -Hölder for the same values of α . To prove that it is greater than 4, we show that the size of the balls of diameter δ is of order δ^4 . To see this, we first bound from below the distances in terms of label variation along the branches of the forest, and then use twice the law of the iterated logarithm: this tells us that, for a fixed $s \in [0, 1]$, the points outside of the set $[s - \delta^4, s + \delta^4]$ code points that are at distance at least δ^2 from $q_\infty^\sigma(s)$ in the forest, so that their distance from $q_\infty^\sigma(s)$ is at least δ in the map. See [Bet10a, Section 6.4] for a complete proof. We will also use a similar approach to show Theorem 3 in Section 5.4.

From now on, we fix a subsequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$ along which (10) holds. We will generally focus on this particular subsequence in the following, and we will often consider convergences when $n \rightarrow \infty$ to hold along this particular subsequence.

4 Maps seen as quotients of real forests

In the discrete setting, the metric space $(V(q_n), d_{q_n})$ may either be seen as a quotient of $\llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$, as in last section, or directly as the space f_n endowed with the proper metric. In the continuous setting, we defined q_∞^σ as a quotient of $[0, 1]$, but it will also be useful to see it as a quotient of a continuous analog to f_n . We obtain a quotient, because some points may be very close in the discrete forest, and become identified in the limit. Finding a criterion telling which points are identified in the limit will be the object of Section 4.3. In a first time, we define the continuous analog to forests.

4.1 Real forests

We define here real forests in a way convenient to our purpose, by adapting the notions used in [Bet10b, Section 3]. We will also need basic facts on real trees (see for example [LG05]). We dispose of a continuous function $h : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$ such that $h(1) = 0$, and we define on $[0, 1]$ the relation \simeq as the coarsest equivalence relation such that $0 \simeq 1$, and $s \simeq t$ if

$$h(s) = h(t) = \inf_{[s \wedge t, s \vee t]} h. \quad (14)$$

We call **real forest** any set $\mathcal{F} := [0, 1]_{/\simeq}$ obtained by such a construction. It is possible to endow it with a natural metric, but we will not use it in this work. We now define the notions we will use throughout this work (see Figure 4). For $s \in [0, 1]$, we write $\mathcal{F}(s)$ its equivalence class in the quotient $\mathcal{F} = [0, 1]_{/\simeq}$. In a way, we see $(\mathcal{F}(s))_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ as the continuous facial sequence of \mathcal{F} . We call **root** of \mathcal{F} the point $\partial := \mathcal{F}(0) = \mathcal{F}(1)$.

Definition 4. *The **floor** of \mathcal{F} is the set $fl := \mathcal{F}(\{s : h(s) = \underline{h}(s)\})$.*

For $a = \mathcal{F}(s) \in \mathcal{F} \setminus fl$, let $l := \inf\{t \leq s : \underline{h}(t) = \underline{h}(s)\}$ and $r := \sup\{t \geq s : \underline{h}(t) = \underline{h}(s)\}$. Note that, once endowed with the natural metric, the set $\tau_a := \mathcal{F}([l, r])$ is a real tree rooted at $\rho_a := \mathcal{F}(l) = \mathcal{F}(r) \in fl$. In the following, we will only use notions defined in terms of sets about real trees.

Definition 5. *We call **tree** of \mathcal{F} a set of the form τ_a for any $a \in \mathcal{F} \setminus fl$.*

If $a \in fl$, we simply set $\rho_a := a$. Let τ be a tree of \mathcal{F} rooted at ρ , and $a, b \in \tau$. We call $[[a, b]]$ the range of the unique injective path linking a to b . In particular, the set $[[\rho, a]]$ represents the

ancestral lineage of a in the tree τ . We say that a is an **ancestor** of b , and we write $a \preceq b$, if $a \in [[\rho, b]]$. We write $a \prec b$ if $a \preceq b$ and $a \neq b$.

Let $a, b \in \mathcal{F}$ be two points. There is a natural way to explore the forest \mathcal{F} from a to b . If $\inf \mathcal{F}^{-1}(a) \leq \sup \mathcal{F}^{-1}(b)$, then let $t := \inf\{r \geq \inf \mathcal{F}^{-1}(a) : b = \mathcal{F}(r)\}$ and $s := \sup\{r \leq t : a = \mathcal{F}(r)\}$. If $\sup \mathcal{F}^{-1}(b) < \inf \mathcal{F}^{-1}(a)$, then let $t := \inf \mathcal{F}^{-1}(b)$ and $s := \sup \mathcal{F}^{-1}(a)$. We define

$$[a, b] := \mathcal{F} \left(\overrightarrow{[s, t]} \right), \quad (15)$$

where $\overrightarrow{[s, t]}$ is defined by (12). We may now extend the definition of $[[a, b]]$ to any two points in \mathcal{F} . First, for $a, b \in fl$, we let $[[a, b]] := [a, b] \cap fl$. Then, for any points $a, b \in \mathcal{F}$ such that $\rho_a \neq \rho_b$, we define

$$[[a, b]] := [[a, \rho_a]] \cup [[\rho_a, \rho_b]] \cup [[\rho_b, b]],$$

so that it is the range of the unique injective path from a to b that stays inside $[a, b]$.

Definition 6. Let $b = \mathcal{F}(t) \in \mathcal{F} \setminus fl$ and $\rho \in [[\rho_b, b]] \setminus \{\rho_b, b\}$. Let $l' := \inf\{s \leq t : \mathcal{F}(s) = \rho\}$ and $r' := \sup\{s \leq t : \mathcal{F}(s) = \rho\}$. Then, provided $l' \neq r'$, we call **tree to the left** of $[[\rho_b, b]]$ rooted at ρ the set $\mathcal{F}([l', r'])$.

We define the **tree to the right** of $[[\rho_b, b]]$ rooted at ρ in a similar way, by replacing " \leq " with " \geq " in the definitions of l' and r' .

Definition 7. We call **subtree** of \mathcal{F} any tree of \mathcal{F} , or any tree to the left or right of $[[\rho_b, b]]$ for some $b \in \mathcal{F} \setminus fl$.

Note that subtrees of \mathcal{F} are real trees, and that trees of \mathcal{F} are also subtrees of \mathcal{F} . The maximal interval $[s, t]$ such that $\tau = \mathcal{F}([s, t])$ is called the **interval coding** the subtree τ .

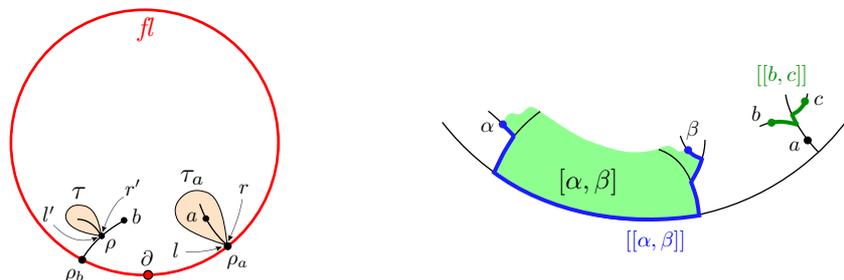


Figure 4: *Left.* On this picture, we can see the root ∂ , the floor fl , an example of tree τ_a (coded by $[l, r]$), and an example of tree τ to the left of $[[\rho_b, b]]$ rooted at ρ (coded by $[l', r']$). *Right.* On this picture, a is an ancestor of b and c , and we can see the sets $[[b, c]]$, $[\alpha, \beta]$, and $[[\alpha, \beta]]$.

We call \mathcal{F}_n the real forest obtained from the function $s \in [0, 1] \mapsto C_n((2n + \sigma_n)s)$, as well as \mathcal{F}_∞ the real forest obtained from the function C_∞ . We also call $\simeq_{(n)}$ and \simeq_∞ the corresponding equivalence relations. We write ∂_∞ the root of \mathcal{F}_∞ , and fl_∞ its floor. It is more natural to use f_n rather than \mathcal{F}_n in the discrete setting. As f_n may be viewed as a subset of \mathcal{F}_n (when identifying $(\sigma_n + 1)$ with (1)), we will use for f_n the formalism we defined above simply by restriction. Note that the notions of floor and trees are consistent with the definitions we gave in Section 2.1 in this case.

Remark that, because the function C_∞ is a first-passage Brownian bridge, there are almost surely no trees rooted at the root ∂_∞ of \mathcal{F}_∞ , and all the points of \mathcal{F}_∞ are of order less than 3,

in the sense that for all $a \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$ and all connected subset $C \subseteq \mathcal{F}_\infty$, the number of connected components of $\mathcal{F}_\infty \cap C \setminus \{a\}$ is less than 3. We will not use this remark in the following, so that we do not go into further details.

4.2 Quotient of real forests

Similarly to the notation $\mathfrak{f}_n(i)$ and $\mathfrak{q}_n(i)$ in the discrete setting, we call $\mathcal{F}_\infty(s)$ (resp. $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(s)$) the equivalence class of $s \in [0, 1]$ in $\mathcal{F}_\infty = [0, 1]_{/\simeq_\infty}$ (resp. in $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma = [0, 1]_{/\sim_\infty}$).

Lemma 10. *The equivalence relation \simeq_∞ is coarser than \sim_∞ .*

Proof. First, notice that, by (11), we have $d_\infty^\sigma(0, 1) \leq d_\infty^\circ(0, 1) = 0$, so that $0 \sim_\infty 1$. The remaining is then identical to the first part of the proof of [Bet10b, Lemma 6]. \square

This allows us to define a pseudo-metric and an equivalence relation on \mathcal{F}_∞ , still noted d_∞^σ and \sim_∞ , by setting $d_\infty^\sigma(\mathcal{F}_\infty(s), \mathcal{F}_\infty(t)) := d_\infty^\sigma(s, t)$ and declaring $\mathcal{F}_\infty(s) \sim_\infty \mathcal{F}_\infty(t)$ if $s \sim_\infty t$. The metric space $(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ is thus isometric to $(\mathcal{F}_\infty/\sim_\infty, d_\infty^\sigma)$. We also define d_∞° on \mathcal{F}_∞ by letting

$$d_\infty^\circ(a, b) := \inf \{d_\infty^\circ(s, t) : a = \mathcal{F}_\infty(s), b = \mathcal{F}_\infty(t)\}.$$

We will see in Lemma 11 that there is a.s. only one point where the function \mathfrak{L}_∞ reaches its minimum. If we call $s^\bullet \in [0, 1]$ this point, then it is not hard (see [Bet10b, Lemma 7]) to see from the fourth remark of Section 2.3.3 that

$$d_\infty^\sigma(s, s^\bullet) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(s) - \mathfrak{L}_\infty(s^\bullet).$$

By the triangle inequality, we obtain that $s \sim_\infty t$ implies $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(s) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(t)$, so that, in particular, $s \simeq_\infty t$ implies $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(s) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(t)$, by Lemma 10. It is then licit to see \mathfrak{L}_∞ as a function on \mathcal{F}_∞ by setting $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(\mathcal{F}_\infty(s)) := \mathfrak{L}_\infty(s)$. This yields a more explicit expression for d_∞° :

$$d_\infty^\circ(a, b) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) + \mathfrak{L}_\infty(b) - 2 \max \left(\min_{x \in [a, b]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(x), \min_{x \in [b, a]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(x) \right), \quad (16)$$

where $[a, b]$ was defined by (15). Similarly, for $a \in \mathfrak{f}_n$, we call $\mathfrak{L}_n(a) := \mathfrak{l}_n(a) + \mathfrak{b}_n(a(a) - 1)$, so that $\mathfrak{L}_n(\mathfrak{f}_n(i)) = \mathfrak{L}_n(i)$ for all $0 \leq i \leq 2n + \sigma_n - 1$.

4.3 Point identifications

4.3.1 Criterion telling which points are identified

Our analysis starts with the following two observations on the process $(C_\infty(s), \mathfrak{L}_\infty(s))_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$.

Lemma 11. *The set of points where \mathfrak{L}_∞ reaches its minimum is a.s. a singleton.*

Let $f : [0, \ell] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a continuous function. We say that $s \in [0, \ell]$ is a **right-increase point** of f if there exists $t \in (s, \ell]$ such that $f(r) \geq f(s)$ for all $s \leq r \leq t$. A **left-increase point** is defined in a symmetric way. We call $\text{IP}(f)$ the set of all (left or right) increase points of f .

Lemma 12. *Almost surely, $\text{IP}(C_\infty)$ and $\text{IP}(\mathfrak{L}_\infty)$ are disjoint sets.*

The proofs of these lemmas make intensive use of the so-called Brownian snake, so that we postpone them to Section 7. We have the following criterion:

Theorem 13. *Almost surely, for every $a, b \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$, $a \sim_\infty b$ is equivalent to $d_\infty^\circ(a, b) = 0$. In other words,*

$$d_\infty^\circ(a, b) = 0 \Leftrightarrow d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) = 0.$$

We call **leaves** the points of \mathcal{F}_∞ whose equivalence class for \simeq_∞ is trivial. It will be important in what follows to observe that, by Lemma 12 and Theorem 13, only leaves of \mathcal{F}_∞ can be identified by \sim_∞ .

The proof of Theorem 13 is based on Lemma 11, Lemma 12, and Lemma 15 below, which we will prove in Section 7. Once we have these lemmas, the arguments of the proof of [Bet10b, Theorem 8] (which uses the ideas of [LG07]) may readily be adapted to our case. For the sake of self-containment, we give here the main ingredients. By the bound (11), we already have one implication:

$$d_\infty^\circ(a, b) = 0 \Rightarrow d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) = 0.$$

The converse is shown in three steps. First, we show that the floor points are not identified (by \sim_∞) with any other points, then that points are not identified with their strict ancestors, and finally the general case. The main point of the two first steps is that, if we take $a \sim_\infty b$, then a and b are not identified with any other points of the privileged paths $[[a, b]]$ and $[[b, a]]$. In the discrete setting, this translates into saying that the geodesics do not intersect these paths, and are thus more easily controlled. As an example, we will treat here the first step mentioned above. As we will see, the adaptation is almost verbatim, and is a little easier. The other steps use the same ideas and are even more straightforwardly adaptable, so that we leave them to the reader. Precisely, we are going to show the following lemma:

Lemma 14. *Almost surely, for every $b \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$ and every $a \in fl_\infty \setminus \{\rho_b\}$, we have $a \not\sim_\infty b$.*

4.3.2 Set overflown by a path and paths passing through subtrees

We give in this section the two notions we will need for discrete paths. In the following, we will never consider paths using the edges of the forest, but always paths using the edges of the map, and we will always use the letter “ \wp ” to denote these paths.

The first notion is the notion of set overflown by a path: roughly speaking, imagine a squirrel jumping from tree to tree in the forest along the edges of a path \wp in the map. Then the set overflown by \wp is the ground covered by the squirrel along its journey. Let us denote by fl_n the floor of f_n . Let $i \in \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$, and let $\text{succ}(i)$ be its successor in (f_n, l_n) , defined by (2). We moreover suppose that $\text{succ}(i) \neq \infty$. We say that the arc $i \frown \text{succ}(i)$ linking $f_n(i)$ to $f_n(\text{succ}(i))$ overflies the set

$$f_n \left(\overrightarrow{\llbracket i, \text{succ}(i) \rrbracket} \right) \cap fl_n,$$

where $\overrightarrow{\llbracket i, \text{succ}(i) \rrbracket}$ was defined by (4). We define the set overflown by a path \wp in q_n that avoids the base point v_n^\bullet as the union of the sets its arcs overfly.

Remark. Note that, by the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter construction, all the labels of the set overflown by a path are larger than or equal to the minimum label on the path.

The second notion is the notion of path passing through a subtree: here again, imagine a squirrel moving along the path \wp . The path \wp passes through a subtree τ if the squirrel visits τ , and moreover enters it when going in one direction (from left to right or from right to left) and exits it while going in the same direction. Let τ be a subtree of f_n and $\wp = (\wp(0), \wp(1), \dots, \wp(r))$ a path in q_n that avoids the base point v_n^\bullet . We say that the path \wp passes through the subtree τ between times i and j , where $0 < i \leq j < r$, if

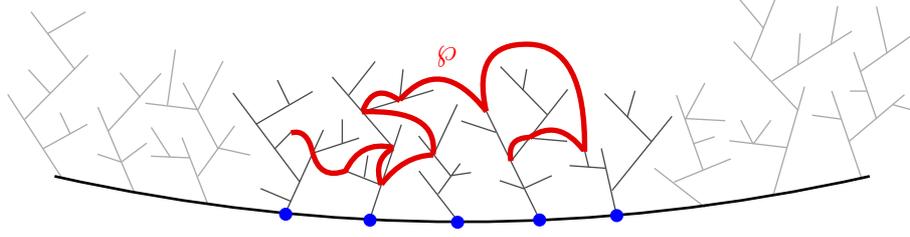


Figure 5: The set overflowed by the path φ is the set of (blue) large dots.

- ◇ $\varphi(i-1) \notin \tau; \varphi([i, j]) \subseteq \tau; \varphi(j+1) \notin \tau,$
- ◇ $\mathfrak{L}_n(\varphi(i)) - \mathfrak{L}_n(\varphi(i-1)) = \mathfrak{L}_n(\varphi(j+1)) - \mathfrak{L}_n(\varphi(j)).$

We say that a vertex $a_n \in \mathfrak{f}_n$ converges toward a point $a \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$ if there exists a sequence of integers $s_n \in \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$ coding a_n (i.e. $a_n = \mathfrak{f}_n(s_n)$) such that $s_n/(2n + \sigma_n - 1)$ admits a limit s coding a , i.e. such that $a = \mathcal{F}_\infty(s)$. Let $\llbracket l_n, r_n \rrbracket$ be the intervals coding subtrees $\tau_n \subseteq \mathfrak{f}_n$. We say that the subtree τ_n converges toward a subtree $\tau \subseteq \mathcal{F}_\infty$ if the sequences $l_n/(2n + \sigma_n - 1)$ and $r_n/(2n + \sigma_n - 1)$ admit limits l and r such that the interval coding τ is $[l, r]$. The key lemma of our approach is the following. It is adapted from Le Gall [LG07, End of Proposition 4.2], and will be proved in Section 7.

Lemma 15. *With full probability, the following occurs. Let $a, b \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$ be such that $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(b)$. We suppose that there exists a subtree τ rooted at ρ such that $\inf_\tau \mathfrak{L}_\infty < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(\rho)$. We further suppose that we can find vertices $a_n, b_n \in \mathfrak{f}_n$ and subtrees τ_n in \mathfrak{f}_n converging respectively toward a, b, τ and satisfying the following property: for infinitely many n 's, there exists a geodesic path φ_n in \mathfrak{q}_n from a_n to b_n that avoids the base point v_n^\bullet and passes through the subtree τ_n .*

Then, $a \not\sim_\infty b$.

4.3.3 Proof of Lemma 14

Proof of Lemma 14. We argue by contradiction and suppose that we can find $b \in \mathcal{F}_\infty$ and $a \in fl_\infty \setminus \{\rho_b\}$ such that $a \sim_\infty b$. It is easy to find $a_n \in fl_n$ and $b_n \in \mathfrak{f}_n$ converging respectively toward a and b . Let φ_n be a geodesic path (in \mathfrak{q}_n , for $d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}$) from a_n to b_n . For n large, φ_n avoids the base-point, because otherwise, a and b would have the minimal label and this would contradict Lemma 11. For such an n , φ_n has to overfly at least $\llbracket \rho_{b_n}, a_n \rrbracket$ or $\llbracket a_n, \rho_{b_n} \rrbracket$. To see this, let $(x, y) \in \llbracket \rho_{b_n}, a_n \rrbracket \times \llbracket a_n, \rho_{b_n} \rrbracket$. When we remove from \mathfrak{f}_n all the edges incident to x and all the edges incident to y , we obtain several connected components, and the points a_n and b_n do not belong to the same of these components. There has to be an arc of φ_n that links a point belonging to the component containing a_n to one of the other components. Such an arc overflies x or y .

Let us suppose that, for infinitely many n 's, φ_n overflies $\llbracket \rho_{b_n}, a_n \rrbracket$. By the remark concerning the labels on the set overflowed by a path in the previous section, a simple argument (see [Bet10b, Lemma 14]) shows that $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(c) \geq \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) = \mathfrak{L}_\infty(b)$ for all $c \in \llbracket \rho_b, a \rrbracket$. The labels on fl_∞ are given by the process \mathfrak{b}_∞ , defined during Proposition 7: for $x \in [0, \sigma]$, we define $T_x := \inf\{r \geq 0 : C_\infty(r) = \sigma - x\}$, so that $fl_\infty = \mathcal{F}_\infty(\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \sigma\})$, and

$$(\mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_x))_{0 \leq x \leq \sigma} = (\mathfrak{b}_\infty(x))_{0 \leq x \leq \sigma}.$$

As \mathfrak{b}_∞ has the law of a certain Brownian bridge (scaled by $\sqrt{3}$), and as local minimums of Brownian motion are distinct, we can find $d \in \llbracket \rho_b, a \rrbracket \setminus \{a, \rho_b\}$ such that $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(c) > \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a)$ for all $c \in \llbracket d, a \rrbracket \setminus \{a\}$.

Because $a \in fl_\infty$, every number coding it is an increase point of C_∞ and thus is not an increase point of \mathfrak{L}_∞ , by Lemma 12. As a result, there exists a tree τ^1 rooted at $\rho^1 \in [[d, a]] \setminus \{a\}$ satisfying $\inf_{\tau^1} \mathfrak{L}_\infty < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(\rho^1)$ (see Figure 6).

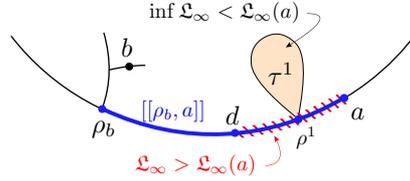


Figure 6: The tree τ^1 .

Similarly, if for infinitely many n 's, \wp_n overflies $[[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$, then we can find a tree τ^2 rooted at $\rho^2 \in [[a, \rho_b]] \setminus \{a, \rho_b\}$ satisfying $\inf_{\tau^2} \mathfrak{L}_\infty < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(\rho^2)$. Three cases may occur:

- (i) for n large enough, \wp_n does not overfly $[[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$ (and therefore overflies $[[\rho_{b_n}, a_n]]$),
- (ii) for n large enough, \wp_n does not overfly $[[\rho_{b_n}, a_n]]$ (and therefore overflies $[[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$),
- (iii) \wp_n overflies $[[\rho_{b_n}, a_n]]$ for infinitely many n 's, and $[[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$ also for infinitely many n 's.

In case (i), the tree τ^1 is well-defined. Let $\tau_n^1 \subseteq f_n^*$ be a tree rooted at $\rho_n^1 \in [[\rho_{b_n}, a_n]]$ converging to τ^1 . We claim that, for n sufficiently large, \wp_n passes through τ_n^1 . First, notice that, for n large enough, $\inf_{\tau_n^1} \mathfrak{L}_n < \inf_{\wp_n} \mathfrak{L}_n$. The idea is that, at some point, \wp_n has to go from a tree located at the right of τ_n^1 to a tree located at its left, and, because it does not overfly $[[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$, it has no other choice than passing through τ_n^1 (see Figure 7).

More precisely, we call $[[s_n^1, t_n^1]]$ the set coding the subtree τ_n^1 , and we let $\omega_n = f_n(p_n) \in [[a_n, \rho_{b_n}]]$ be a point that is not overflowed by \wp_n . Then, we define

$$A_n := f_n \left(\overrightarrow{[[t_n^1 + 1, p_n]]} \right).$$

We call $\wp_n(i-1)$ the last point of \wp_n belonging to A_n . Such a point exists because $a_n \in A_n$ and $b_n \notin A_n$. For n large, because \wp_n does not overfly ω_n , and because $\inf_{\tau_n^1} \mathfrak{L}_n < \inf_{\wp_n} \mathfrak{L}_n$, we see that $\wp_n(i) \in \tau_n^1$. Let $\wp_n(j+1)$ be the first point after $\wp_n(i)$ not belonging to τ_n^1 . It exists because $b_n \notin \tau_n^1$. Using the facts that \wp_n does not overfly ω_n , and that $\wp_n(j+1) \notin A_n$, we see that \wp_n passes through τ_n^1 between times i and j .

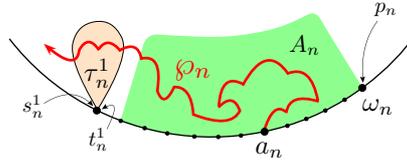


Figure 7: The path \wp_n passing through the tree τ_n^1 .

In case (ii), we apply the same reasoning with τ^2 instead of τ^1 . In case (iii), both trees τ^1 and τ^2 are well-defined and we obtain that \wp_n has to pass through one of their discrete approximations. We then conclude by Lemma 15 that $a \not\sim_\infty b$, which contradicts our hypothesis. \square

5 Regularity of quadrangulations

Recently, the notion of regularity has been used to identify the topology of the scaling limit of random uniform planar quadrangulations in [Mie08], and then positive genus quadrangulations in [Bet10b]. In both these references, it is the notion of 1-regularity that is used, roughly stating that there are no small loops separating the surface in large components. In the case of surfaces with a boundary, a new problem arises, and we also need the notion of 0-regularity for the boundary. In this section, we expose both these notions, which were introduced in a slightly different context (see the discussion in [Mie08, Section 2]) by Whyburn [Why35a, Why35b], and then use them to prove Theorem 2.

5.1 0-regularity and 1-regularity

Recall that we wrote (\mathbb{M}, d_{GH}) the set of isometry classes of compact metric spaces, endowed with the Gromov–Hausdorff metric. A metric space (\mathcal{X}, δ) is called a **path metric space** if any two points $x, y \in \mathcal{X}$ can be joined by a path isometric to the segment $[0, \delta(x, y)]$. We let PM be the set of isometry classes of path metric spaces, which is a closed subset of \mathbb{M} , by [BBI01, Theorem 7.5.1].

Definition 8. *We say that a sequence $(\mathcal{X}_n)_{n \geq 1}$ of compact metric spaces is **1-regular** if for every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $\eta > 0$ such that for n large enough, every loop of diameter less than η in \mathcal{X}_n is homotopic to 0 in its ε -neighborhood.*

The theorem (derived from [Beg44, theorem 7]) that was used in [Mie08, Bet10b] states that the limit of a converging 1-regular sequence of path metric spaces all homeomorphic to the g -torus is either reduced to a singleton (this can only happen when $g = 0$), or homeomorphic to the g -torus as well. In other words, this gives a sufficient condition for the limit to be homeomorphic to the surface we started with. In the case of the 2-dimensional disc \mathbb{D}_2 , this condition is no longer sufficient. For example, take for the space \mathcal{X}_n the union of two unit discs whose centers are at distance $2 - 1/n$. This peanut-shaped space is homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 , and it is easy to see that $(\mathcal{X}_n)_n$ is 1-regular and converges to the wedge sum (or bouquet) of two discs. The following definition discards this kind of degeneracy.

Definition 9. *We say that a sequence $(\mathcal{X}_n)_{n \geq 1}$ of compact metric spaces is **0-regular** if for every $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $\eta > 0$ such that for n large enough, every pair of points in \mathcal{X}_n lying at a distance less than η from each other belong to a connected subset of \mathcal{X}_n of diameter less than ε .*

We will rely on the following theorem, which is a simple consequence of [Why35a, Theorem 6.4].

Proposition 16 (Whyburn). *Let $(\mathcal{X}_n)_{n \geq 1}$ be a sequence of path metric spaces all homeomorphic to the 2-dimensional disc \mathbb{D}_2 , converging for the Gromov–Hausdorff topology toward a metric space \mathcal{X} not reduced to a single point. Suppose that the sequence $(\mathcal{X}_n)_{n \geq 1}$ is 1-regular, and that the sequence $(\partial\mathcal{X}_n)_n$ is 0-regular.*

Then \mathcal{X} is homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 as well.

In [Why35a], Whyburn actually considered convergence in the sense of the Hausdorff topology, and made the extra hypothesis that $\partial\mathcal{X}_n$ converges to a set B . He concluded that \mathcal{X} was homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 and that $\partial\mathcal{X}$ was equal to B . To derive the version that we state here, we proceed as follows. First, by [GPW09, Lemma A.1], we can find a compact metric space \mathcal{Z} , and isometric embeddings $\varphi, \varphi_1, \varphi_2, \dots$ of $\mathcal{X}, \mathcal{X}_1, \mathcal{X}_2, \dots$ into \mathcal{Z} such that $\varphi_n(\mathcal{X}_n)$ converges toward $\varphi(\mathcal{X})$ for the Hausdorff topology in \mathcal{Z} . Then, by [BBI01, Theorem 7.3.8], the family $\{\partial(\varphi_n(\mathcal{X}_n))\}$

is relatively compact for the Hausdorff topology. Let us consider a subsequence along which $\partial(\varphi_n(\mathcal{X}_n))$ converges to a set B . Applying Whyburn's original theorem along this subsequence, we obtain that $\varphi(\mathcal{X})$ is homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 , so that \mathcal{X} is homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 as well. We moreover obtain that $\partial(\varphi(\mathcal{X})) = B$, and, using the same argument, we see that any accumulation point of the sequence $(\partial(\varphi_n(\mathcal{X}_n)))_n$ has to be $\partial(\varphi(\mathcal{X}))$, so that $\partial(\varphi_n(\mathcal{X}_n)) = \varphi_n(\partial\mathcal{X}_n)$ actually converges toward $\partial(\varphi(\mathcal{X})) = \varphi(\partial\mathcal{X})$ for the Hausdorff topology. This last observation will be used in Section 5.4 to identify the boundary of $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$.

5.2 Representation as metric surfaces

As the space $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n), d_{\mathfrak{q}_n})$ is not a surface, we cannot directly apply Proposition 16. In a first time, we will construct a path metric space $(\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_n)$ homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 , and an embedded graph that is a representative of the map \mathfrak{q}_n , such that the restriction of $(\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_n)$ to the embedded graph is isometric to $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n), d_{\mathfrak{q}_n})$. We use the same method as Miermont in [Mie08, Section 3.1] (see also [Bet10b, Section 5.2]), roughly consisting in gluing hollow boxes together according to the structure of \mathfrak{q}_n .

Let us be a little more specific. We call f_* the external face of \mathfrak{q}_n , $F(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ its set of internal faces, and $F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n) := F(\mathfrak{q}_n) \cup \{f_*\}$ the set of all its faces. We also note \mathcal{G} a regular $2\sigma_n$ -gon with unit length edges embedded in \mathbb{R}^2 , and call z_k , $0 \leq k \leq 2\sigma_n$, its vertices (with $z_0 = z_{2\sigma_n}$). With every quadrangle $f \in F(\mathfrak{q}_n)$, we associate a copy of the ‘‘hollow bottomless unit cube,’’ and with f_* , we associate a ‘‘hollow bottomless $2\sigma_n$ -sided prism’’: we define

$$X_f := [0, 1]^3 \setminus ((0, 1)^2 \times [0, 1]), \quad f \in F(\mathfrak{q}_n), \quad \text{and} \quad X_{f_*} := (\mathcal{G} \times [0, 1]) \setminus (\mathring{\mathcal{G}} \times [0, 1]),$$

and we endow these spaces with the intrinsic metric D_f inherited from the Euclidean metric. This means that the distance between two points x and y is the Euclidean length of a minimal path in X_f linking x to y . Note in particular that if x and y are on the boundary, this path is entirely contained in the boundary. This will ensure that, when we will glue these spaces together, we will not alter the graph metric. Note also that, so far, the external face is not really treated differently from the other faces (except for the fact that it has a different number of edges). In the end, we will remove the ‘‘top’’ $\mathring{\mathcal{G}} \times \{1\}$ from X_{f_*} .

Now, we associate with every half-edge $e \in \vec{E}(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ a path along one of the edges of the polygon ∂X_f , where f is the face incident to e . We call $e_1, e_2, \dots, e_{2\sigma_n}$ the half-edges bordering f_* ordered in the clockwise order (recall that, by convention, f_* is the infinite face of \mathfrak{q}_n , so that the order is reversed), and define

$$c_{e_k}(t) := ((1-t)z_{k-1} + tz_k, 0) \in X_{f_*}, \quad t \in [0, 1], \quad 1 \leq k \leq 2\sigma_n.$$

In a similar way, for every internal face $f \in F(\mathfrak{q}_n)$, and every half-edge e incident to it, we define a function $c_e : [0, 1] \rightarrow \partial X_f$ parameterizing an edge of ∂X_f . We do this in such a way that the parameterization of ∂X_f is coherent with the counterclockwise order around f (see [Mie08, Section 3.1] or [Bet10b, Section 5.2]).

We may now glue these spaces together along their boundaries: we define the relation \approx as the coarsest equivalence relation for which $c_e(t) \approx c_{\bar{e}}(1-t)$ for all $e \in \vec{E}(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ and $t \in [0, 1]$, where \bar{e} denotes the reverse of e . The topological quotient $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n := (\bigsqcup_{f \in F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n)} X_f) / \approx$ is then a 2-dimensional CW-complex satisfying the following properties. Its 1-skeleton $\mathcal{E}_n = (\bigsqcup_{f \in F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n)} \partial X_f) / \approx$ is an embedding of \mathfrak{q}_n with faces $X_f \setminus \partial X_f$. The edge $\{e, \bar{e}\} \in E(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ corresponds to the edge of $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$ made of the equivalence class of the points in $c_e([0, 1])$. Its 0-skeleton \mathcal{V}_n is in one-to-one correspondence with $V(\mathfrak{q}_n)$, and its vertices are the equivalence classes of the vertices of the polygons ∂X_f 's.

We endow the space $\bigsqcup_{f \in F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n)} X_f$ with the largest pseudo-metric δ_n compatible with D_f , $f \in F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ and \approx , in the sense that $\delta_n(x, y) \leq D_f(x, y)$ for $x, y \in X_f$ and $\delta_n(x, y) = 0$ whenever $x \approx y$. Its quotient, which we still note δ_n , then defines a pseudo-metric on $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$ (which is actually a true metric, as we will see in Proposition 17). We also define $\delta_{(n)} := \delta_n / (\gamma n^{1/4})$ its rescaled version. Finally, we call $\mathcal{S}_n := (\bigsqcup_{f \in F_*(\mathfrak{q}_n)} Y_f) / \approx \subseteq \hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$, where $Y_{f_*} := X_{f_*} \setminus (\hat{\mathcal{G}} \times \{1\})$ and $Y_f := X_f$ when $f \neq f_*$.

Proposition 17 ([Mie08, Proposition 1]). *The space $(\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n, \delta_n)$ is a path metric space homeomorphic to \mathbb{S}_2 . Moreover, the restriction of $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$ to \mathcal{V}_n is isometric to $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n), d_{\mathfrak{q}_n})$, and any geodesic path in $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$ between points in \mathcal{V}_n is a concatenation of edges of $\hat{\mathcal{S}}_n$.*

We readily obtain the following corollary.

Corollary 18. *The space $(\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_n)$ is a path metric space homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 . Moreover, the restriction of \mathcal{S}_n to \mathcal{V}_n is isometric to $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n), d_{\mathfrak{q}_n})$, and any geodesic path in \mathcal{S}_n between points in \mathcal{V}_n is a concatenation of edges of \mathcal{S}_n . Finally, $d_{GH}((V(\mathfrak{q}_n), d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}), (\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_n)) \leq 3$, so that, by Theorem 1,*

$$(\mathcal{S}_{n_k}, \delta_{(n_k)}) \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{(d)} (\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$$

in the sense of the Gromov–Hausdorff topology.

Note that, although the boundary of \mathfrak{q}_n is not topologically a circle in general, $\partial \mathcal{S}_n$ (which corresponds to $\partial \mathcal{G} \times \{1\}$ in Y_{f_*}) always is. In what follows, we will see $V(\mathfrak{q}_n)$ as a subset of \mathcal{S}_n . In other words, we identify \mathcal{V}_n with $V(\mathfrak{q}_n)$.

5.3 Proof of Theorem 2

We now prove that $(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ is a.s. homeomorphic to \mathbb{D}_2 thanks to Proposition 16 and Corollary 18. As $(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma)$ is a.s. not reduced to a point³, it is enough to show that the sequence $(\partial \mathcal{S}_{n_k})_k$ is 0-regular, and that the sequence $(\mathcal{S}_{n_k})_k$ is 1-regular. The 1-regularity of $(\mathcal{S}_{n_k})_k$ is readily adaptable from [Bet10b, Section 5.3] so that we begin with the 0-regularity of the boundary. We call $\pi_\infty : \mathcal{F}_\infty \rightarrow \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ the canonical projection.

5.3.1 0-regularity of the boundary

Lemma 19. *The sequence $(\partial \mathcal{S}_{n_k})_k$ is 0-regular.*

Proof. The idea is that fl_∞ has no cut points in \mathcal{F}_∞ , and because the points in fl_∞ are not identified with any other points, $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$ does not have any cut points either.

We argue by contradiction and assume that, with positive probability, along some (random) subsequence of the sequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$, there exist $\varepsilon > 0$, $x_n, y_n \in \partial \mathcal{S}_n$ such that $\delta_{(n)}(x_n, y_n) \rightarrow 0$, and x_n and y_n do not belong to the same connected component of $B_{(n)}(x_n, \varepsilon) \cap \partial \mathcal{S}_n$, where $B_{(n)}(x_n, \varepsilon)$ denotes the open ball of radius ε centered at x_n for the metric $\delta_{(n)}$. We reason on this event.

As x_n and y_n do not belong to the same connected component of $B_{(n)}(x_n, \varepsilon) \cap \partial \mathcal{S}_n$, we can find $x'_n, y'_n \in \partial \mathcal{S}_n \setminus B_{(n)}(x_n, \varepsilon)$ such that x'_n belongs to one of the two arcs joining x_n to y_n in $\partial \mathcal{S}_n$, and such that y'_n belongs to the other one. We are going to approach these four points with points of fl_n .

³It is for example a.s. of Hausdorff dimension 4 by Theorem 1.

We note $\partial q_n \subseteq \vec{E}(q_n)$ the set of half-edges incident to the external face of q_n . With every point $x \in \partial \mathcal{S}_n$ naturally corresponds a half-edge $e(x) \in \partial q_n$: if x corresponds to $((1-t)z_{k-1} + tz_k, 1) \in X_{f_*}$ for some $t \in [0, 1)$, then $e(x)$ is the half-edge e_k . We consider the first half-edge $e \in \partial q_n$ after $e(x_n)$ ($e(x_n)$ included) in the clockwise order such that $\mathfrak{L}_n(e^+) = \mathfrak{L}_n(e^-) + 1$, and we call $a_n := e^+$. By definition of the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection, $a_n \in fl_n$. Moreover, a_n is “close” to x_n , in the sense that $\delta_n(a_n, x_n) \leq 1 + \sup_{0 \leq i < 2\sigma_n} |\mathfrak{b}_n(i+1) - \mathfrak{b}_n(i) + 2|$, so that

$$\delta_n(a_n, x_n) \leq \frac{3}{\gamma n^{1/4}} + \sup_x \left| \mathfrak{b}_n \left(x + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2n}} \right) - \mathfrak{b}_n(x) \right| \leq \frac{3}{\gamma n^{1/4}} + \omega_{\mathfrak{b}_n}(\eta),$$

as soon as $n \geq 1/2\eta^2$. Here, $\omega_{\mathfrak{b}_n}$ denotes the modulus of continuity of \mathfrak{b}_n . Hence, we obtain that $\limsup \delta_n(a_n, x_n) \leq \omega_{\mathfrak{b}_\infty}(\eta)$, for all $\eta > 0$, so that $\delta_n(a_n, x_n) \rightarrow 0$.

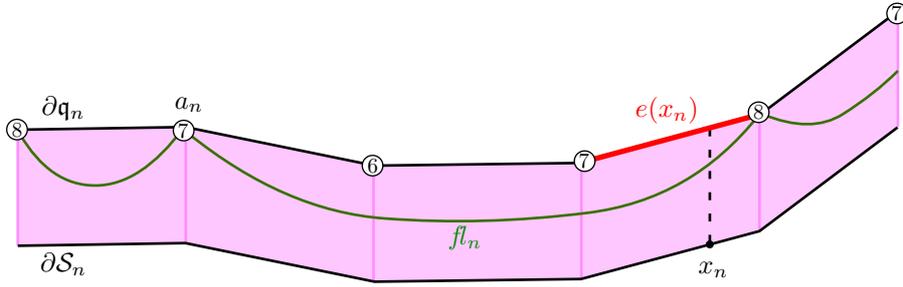


Figure 8: Approaching a point $x_n \in \partial \mathcal{S}_n$ with a point $a_n \in fl_n$.

We define in a similar way points b_n, a'_n , and b'_n in fl_n corresponding to y_n, x'_n , and y'_n . Exchanging x'_n and y'_n if necessary, we may suppose that the points a_n, a'_n, b_n, b'_n are encountered in this order when traveling in the counterclockwise order around ∂q_n . Up to further extraction, we may suppose that $(a_n, a'_n, b_n, b'_n) \rightarrow (a, a', b, b') \in fl_\infty^4$, so that $a' \in [[a, b]]$ and $b' \in [[b, a]]$. Moreover, because $\delta_n(x_n, x'_n) \geq \varepsilon$, we see that $d_\infty^\sigma(a, a') \geq \varepsilon$. Similarly, we obtain that $d_\infty^\sigma(b, a') \geq \varepsilon$, $d_\infty^\sigma(a, b') \geq \varepsilon$, and $d_\infty^\sigma(b, b') \geq \varepsilon$, so that $a \neq b$. Finally, the fact that $\delta_n(x_n, y_n) \rightarrow 0$ implies that $d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) = 0$, so that $a \sim_\infty b$. This contradicts Lemma 14. \square

5.3.2 1-regularity of \mathcal{S}_n

In order to show that the sequence $(\mathcal{S}_{n_k})_k$ is 1-regular, we first only consider simple loops made of edges in \mathcal{S}_n . A simple loop φ splits \mathcal{S}_n into two domains. By the Jordan curve theorem, one of these is homeomorphic to a disc. We call it the **inner domain** of φ . The other domain contains $\partial \mathcal{S}_n$ in its closure, and we call it the **outer domain** of φ .

Lemma 20. *A.s., for all $\varepsilon > 0$, there exists $0 < \eta < \varepsilon$ such that for all k sufficiently large, the inner domain of any simple loop made of edges in \mathcal{S}_{n_k} with diameter less than η has diameter less than ε .*

The proof of this Lemma is readily adaptable from the proof of [Bet10b, Lemma 22], which uses the method employed by Miermont in [Mie08]. The general idea is that a loop separates a whole part of the map from the base point. As a result, the labels in one of the two domains are larger than the labels on the loop. In the forest, this corresponds to having a part with labels larger than the labels on the “border.” In the continuous limit, this creates an increase point for both C_∞ and \mathfrak{L}_∞ . We recall now the main steps.

Proof. We argue by contradiction and suppose that, with positive probability, there exists $\varepsilon > 0$ for which, along some (random) subsequence of the sequence $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$, there exist simple loops \wp_n made of edges in \mathcal{S}_n with diameter tending to 0 (with respect to the rescaled metric $\delta_{(n)}$) and whose inner domains are of diameter larger than ε . We reason on this event. We will show in the proof of Proposition 21 that $\partial\mathcal{S}_{n_k}$ tends, for the Gromov–Hausdorff topology, toward $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$. Because fl_∞ is not reduced to a singleton, we see by Lemma 14 that $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$ is not a singleton either, so that $\text{diam}(\pi_\infty(fl_\infty)) > 0$. To avoid trivialities, we moreover suppose that $\varepsilon < \text{diam}(\pi_\infty(fl_\infty))$. Because $\partial\mathcal{S}_n$ is entirely contained in the outer domain of \wp_n , we obtain that, for n large enough, the outer domain of \wp_n is also of diameter larger than ε .

Let s_n^\bullet be an integer where \mathfrak{L}_n reaches its minimum, and $w_n^\bullet := f_n(s_n^\bullet)$ the corresponding point in the forest. Let us suppose for the moment that $w_n^\bullet \notin \wp_n$. We take x_n as far as possible from \wp_n in the domain that do not contain w_n^\bullet , and we call y_n the first vertex of the path $[[x_n, w_n^\bullet]]$ that belongs to \wp_n . Up to further extraction, we suppose that $s_n^\bullet / (2n + \sigma_n - 1) \rightarrow s^\bullet : = \text{argmin } \mathfrak{L}_\infty, x_n \rightarrow x$, and $y_n \rightarrow y$. Because of the way x_n and y_n were chosen, it is not hard to see that $x \neq y$.

Let us first suppose that $y \neq w^\bullet := \mathcal{F}_\infty(s^\bullet)$. In particular, $w_n^\bullet \notin \wp_n$ for n large, so that x_n and y_n are well-defined. In this case, $y \in [[x, w^\bullet]] \setminus \{x, w^\bullet\}$, so that the points in $\mathcal{F}_\infty^{-1}(y)$ are increase points of C_∞ . By Lemma 12, we can find a subtree τ , not containing y , satisfying $\inf_\tau \mathfrak{L}_\infty < \mathfrak{L}_\infty(y)$ and rooted on $[[x, y]]$. We consider a discrete approximation τ_n of this subtree, rooted on $[[x_n, y_n]]$. When n is sufficiently large, we thus have $\inf_{\tau_n} \mathfrak{L}_n < \inf_{\wp_n} \mathfrak{L}_n$.

As the labels of the forest represent the distances in q_n to the base point (up to some additive constant), we see that all the labels of the points in the same domain as x_n are larger than $\inf_{\wp_n} \mathfrak{L}_n$. As a consequence, τ_n cannot be entirely included in this domain, so that the set $\wp_n \cap \tau_n$ is not empty. We take $z_n \in \wp_n \cap \tau_n$, and, up to further extraction, we suppose that $z_n \rightarrow z$. On the one hand, $\delta_{(n)}(y_n, z_n) \leq \text{diam}(\wp_n)$, so that $y \sim_\infty z$. On the other hand, $z \in \tau$ and $y \notin \tau$, so that $y \neq z$. Because y is not a leaf, this contradicts Theorem 13.

The case $y = w^\bullet$ is treated with a slightly different argument. As the argument is exactly the same as in [Bet10b], we do not treat it here. \square

We now turn to general loops that are not necessarily made of edges. Here again, we use an argument similar to the one used in [Mie08, Bet10b], with some minor changes. We fix $\varepsilon > 0$, and we let η be as in Lemma 20. For k sufficiently large, the conclusion of Lemma 20 holds, together with the inequality $\eta \gamma n_k^{1/4} \geq 12$.

We call **pane** of \mathcal{S}_n the projection in \mathcal{S}_n of a $[z_{j-1}, z_j] \times [0, 1] \subseteq X_{f_*}$ for some $1 \leq j \leq 2\sigma_n$, with the notation of Section 5.2. We also call **semi-edge** the projection in \mathcal{S}_n of either $\{z_j\} \times [0, 1] \subseteq X_{f_*}$ or $[z_{j-1}, z_j] \times \{1\} \subseteq X_{f_*}$ for some $1 \leq j \leq 2\sigma_n$. These correspond to the edges of the prism X_{f_*} that are not already edges in \mathcal{S}_n . Let us consider a loop \mathcal{L} drawn in \mathcal{S}_{n_k} with diameter less than $\eta/2$. Consider the union of the closed internal faces⁴ and panes visited by \mathcal{L} . The boundary of this union consists in simple loops made of edges and semi-edges in \mathcal{S}_{n_k} . It should be clear that one of these loops entirely contains \mathcal{L} in the closure of its inner domain. Let us call this loop λ .

We call $\tilde{\lambda}$ the largest (in the sense of the inclusion of the inner domains) simple loop made of edges contained in the closure of the inner domain of λ (that is, the loop obtained by removing the semi-edges of the form $\{z_j\} \times [0, 1]$ and changing the ones of the form $[z_{j-1}, z_j] \times \{1\}$ by $[z_{j-1}, z_j] \times \{0\}$). Because every internal face and every pane of \mathcal{S}_{n_k} has diameter less than $3/(\gamma n_k^{1/4})$, we see that $\text{diam}(\tilde{\lambda}) \leq \text{diam}(\mathcal{L}) + 6/(\gamma n_k^{1/4}) \leq \eta$. Then, by Lemma 20, the diameter of the inner domain of $\tilde{\lambda}$ is less than ε . As a result, the diameter of the inner domain of λ is less

⁴We call **closed face** the closure of a face.

than 2ε , so that \mathcal{L} is homotopic to 0 in its 2ε -neighborhood.

5.4 Boundary of $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$

We use the observation following Proposition 16 to show that the boundary of $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ is (the image in $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ of) the floor fl_∞ of \mathcal{F}_∞ , and then give a lower bound on its Hausdorff dimension. We postpone the proof of the upper bound to Section 7.4, because we will need the notation of Section 7.

Proposition 21. *The boundary of $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ is given by $\partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma = \pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$.*

Proof. We define a pseudo-metric \tilde{d}_{GH} on the set of triples (\mathcal{X}, δ, A) where (\mathcal{X}, δ) is a compact metric space and $A \subseteq \mathcal{X}$ is a closed subset of \mathcal{X} by

$$\tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathcal{X}, \delta, A), (\mathcal{X}', \delta', A')) := \inf \{ \delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\varphi(\mathcal{X}), \varphi'(\mathcal{X}')) \vee \delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\varphi(A), \varphi'(A')) \},$$

where the infimum is taken over all isometric embeddings $\varphi : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathcal{X}''$ and $\varphi' : \mathcal{X}' \rightarrow \mathcal{X}''$ of \mathcal{X} and \mathcal{X}' into the same metric space $(\mathcal{X}'', \delta'')$. By slightly adapting the proof of [BBI01, Theorem 7.3.30], we can show that $\tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathcal{X}, \delta, A), (\mathcal{X}', \delta', A')) = 0$ if and only if there is an isometry from (\mathcal{X}, δ) onto (\mathcal{X}', δ') whose restriction to A maps A onto A' .

We proceed in three steps. First, note that the observation following Proposition 16 implies that

$$\tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathcal{S}_{n_k}, \delta_{(n_k)}, \partial\mathcal{S}_{n_k}), (\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma, \partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma)) \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{} 0. \quad (17)$$

Secondly, we show that

$$\tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_{(n)}, \partial\mathcal{S}_n), (V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}, \delta_{(n)}, fl_n)) \xrightarrow[n \rightarrow \infty]{} 0. \quad (18)$$

We work here in \mathcal{S}_n and see $V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}$ as one of its subsets. Because of the way \mathcal{S}_n is constructed, we see that $\delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\mathcal{S}_n, V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}) \leq 3/\gamma n^{1/4}$. Using the technique we used in the proof of Lemma 19 to approach the points of $\partial\mathcal{S}_n$ by points lying in fl_n , and the fact that every point in fl_n is at distance at most $1/(\gamma n^{1/4})$ from $\partial\mathcal{S}_n$, we obtain that

$$\delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\partial\mathcal{S}_n, fl_n) \leq \frac{3}{\gamma n^{1/4}} + \omega_{b_{(n)}}(\eta),$$

as soon as $n \geq 1/2\eta^2$. As a result, $\limsup \tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathcal{S}_n, \delta_{(n)}, \partial\mathcal{S}_n), (V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}, \delta_{(n)}, fl_n)) \leq \omega_{b_\infty}(\eta)$ for all $\eta > 0$, and (18) follows by letting $\eta \rightarrow 0$.

Finally, we see that

$$\tilde{d}_{GH}((V(\mathfrak{q}_{n_k}) \setminus \{v_{n_k}^\bullet\}, \delta_{(n_k)}, fl_{n_k}), (\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma, \pi_\infty(fl_\infty))) \xrightarrow[k \rightarrow \infty]{} 0. \quad (19)$$

Recall that $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}, \delta_{(n)})$ is isometric to the space $(\mathcal{Q}_n, d_{(n)})$ defined in Section 3.2. We slightly abuse notation and view the floor fl_n of \mathfrak{f}_n as a subset of \mathcal{Q}_n . We call $r_n := \text{dis}(\mathcal{R}_n)/2$, where \mathcal{R}_n is the correspondence between \mathcal{Q}_n and $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ defined during Section 3.2, and we define the pseudo-metric Δ_n on the disjoint union $\mathcal{Q}_n \sqcup \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ by $\Delta_n(x, y) := d_{(n)}(x, y)$ if $x, y \in \mathcal{Q}_n$, $\Delta_n(x, y) := d_\infty^\sigma(x, y)$ if $x, y \in \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$,

$$\Delta_n(x, y) := \inf \{ d_{(n)}(x, x') + r_n + d_\infty^\sigma(y', y) : (x', y') \in \mathcal{R}_n \}$$

if $x \in \mathcal{Q}_n$ and $y \in \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$, and $\Delta_n(x, y) := \Delta_n(y, x)$ if $x \in \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ and $y \in \mathcal{Q}_n$. It is a simple exercise to verify that Δ_n is indeed a pseudo-metric and that $\delta_{\mathcal{H}}(\mathcal{Q}_n, \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma) \leq r_n$. We showed in Section 3.2 that $r_{n_k} \rightarrow 0$ as $k \rightarrow 0$, so that it is sufficient to prove that $\delta_{\mathcal{H}}(fl_{n_k}, \pi_\infty(fl_\infty)) \rightarrow 0$ as well. Let us argue by contradiction and suppose that this is not the case. There exists $\varepsilon > 0$ such that one of the following occurs:

- (i) for infinitely many n 's, we can find a point t_n in the set $(2n + \sigma_n - 1)^{-1} \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$ such that $\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n) \in fl_n$, and $\Delta_n(\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n), \pi_\infty(fl_\infty)) \geq \varepsilon$,
- (ii) for infinitely many n 's, there is $s_n \in [0, 1]$ such that $\mathcal{F}_\infty(s_n) \in fl_\infty$, and $\Delta_n(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(s_n), fl_n) \geq \varepsilon$.

In the first case, up to extraction, we may suppose that $t_n \rightarrow t$. The fact that $\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n) \in fl_n$ yields that $C_{(n)}(t_n) = \underline{C}_{(n)}(t_n)$, so that $C_\infty(t) = \underline{C}_\infty(t)$ by continuity, and $\mathcal{F}_\infty(t) \in fl_\infty$. We then have

$$\varepsilon \leq \Delta_n(\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n), \pi_\infty(fl_\infty)) \leq \Delta_n(\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n), \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(t)) \leq d_\infty^\sigma(t_n, t) + r_n \rightarrow 0$$

along some subsequence. This is a contradiction. In the second case, we may also suppose that $s_n \rightarrow s$, and we have $\mathcal{F}_\infty(s) \in fl_\infty$. We call $t_n := \inf\{t : C_{(n)}(t) = \underline{C}_{(n)}(s)\}$, so that $\mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n) \in fl_n$. Up to further extraction, we have that $t_n \rightarrow t$, and because $C_\infty(t) = \underline{C}_\infty(s) = C_\infty(s)$, we see that $s \simeq_\infty t$, which yields $d_\infty^\sigma(s, t) = 0$. Finally,

$$\varepsilon \leq \Delta_n(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(s_n), fl_n) \leq \Delta_n(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(s_n), \mathbf{p}_{(n)}(t_n)) \leq d_\infty^\sigma(s_n, t_n) + r_n \rightarrow 0$$

along some subsequence.

Now, (17), (18), and (19) yield that $\tilde{d}_{GH}((\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma, \partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma), (\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma, \pi_\infty(fl_\infty))) = 0$, so that there exists an isometry $\varphi : \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma \rightarrow \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ such that $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty) = \varphi(\partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma) = \partial(\varphi(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma)) = \partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$. \square

We are now able to bound from below the Hausdorff dimension of $\partial\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$. We start with a lemma.

Lemma 22. *For $a, b \in fl_\infty$, we have*

$$d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) \geq \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) - \max\left(\min_{[[a, b]]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty, \min_{[[b, a]]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty\right).$$

Proof. Let $a_n, b_n \in fl_n$ be points converging to a and b , and let \wp_n be a geodesic from a_n to b_n . Reasoning as in the beginning of the proof of Lemma 14, we see that \wp_n either overflies $[[a_n, b_n]]$ for infinitely many n 's, or it overflies $[[b_n, a_n]]$ for infinitely many n 's.

In the first case, let $c \in [[a, b]]$, and let $c_n \in [[a_n, b_n]]$ be a point converging toward c . For the values of n for which \wp_n overflies $[[a_n, b_n]]$, we obtain by the remark of Section 4.3.2, and the triangle inequality, that

$$\mathfrak{L}_n(c_n) \geq \mathfrak{L}_n(a_n) - d_{q_n}(a_n, b_n).$$

Taking the limit after renormalization along these values of n , we obtain that $\mathfrak{L}_\infty(c) \geq \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) - d_\infty^\sigma(a, b)$. Taking the infimum for c over $[[a, b]]$, we find $d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) \geq \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) - \min_{[[a, b]]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty$. In the second case, a similar reasoning yields that $d_\infty^\sigma(a, b) \geq \mathfrak{L}_\infty(a) - \min_{[[b, a]]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty$. \square

Proof of Theorem 3 (lower bound). Recall that, for $x \in [0, \sigma]$, we defined $T_x := \inf\{r \geq 0 : C_\infty(r) = \sigma - x\}$. We also call $fl(x) := \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma(T_x)$, so that $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty) = \{fl(x), 0 \leq x \leq \sigma\}$.

To obtain the lower bound, we proceed as follows. We define the measure Λ_β on $\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ supported by $\pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$ as the image of the Lebesgue measure on $[0, \sigma]$ by the map $y \in [0, \sigma] \mapsto fl(y)$.

Let us fix $x \in [0, \sigma]$. Because the process $y \in [0, \sigma] \mapsto \mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_y) = \mathfrak{b}_\infty(y)$ has the law of a Brownian bridge (up to a factor $\sqrt{3}$), the law of the iterated logarithm ensures us that, a.s., for $\eta > 0$, and δ small enough,

$$\mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_x) - \min_{y \in [x - \delta^{2-\eta}, x]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_y) > \delta \quad \text{and} \quad \mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_x) - \min_{y \in [x, x + \delta^{2-\eta}]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty(T_y) > \delta. \quad (20)$$

For $a \in \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ and $r > 0$, we call $B_\infty(a, r) \subseteq \mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma$ the open ball centered at a with radius r for the metric d_∞^σ . Using Lemma 22, we see that, whenever (20) holds,

$$B_\infty(fl(x), \delta) \cap \pi_\infty(fl_\infty) \subseteq fl((x - \delta^{2-\eta}, x + \delta^{2-\eta})),$$

so that $\Lambda_{fl}(B_\infty(fl(x), \delta)) \leq 2\delta^{2-\eta}$. Finally, we obtain that, a.s., for all $a \in \pi_\infty(fl_\infty)$,

$$\limsup_{\delta \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Lambda_{fl}(B_\infty(a, \delta))}{\delta^{2-\eta}} \leq 2.$$

We then conclude that $\dim_{\mathcal{H}}(\mathfrak{q}_\infty^\sigma, d_\infty^\sigma) \geq 2 - \eta$ for all $\eta > 0$ by standard density theorems for Hausdorff measures ([Fed69, Theorem 2.10.19]). \square

6 Singular cases

6.1 Case $\sigma = 0$

In the case $\sigma = 0$, we could apply a reasoning similar to the one we used in Sections 3 through 5. We would obtain for the law of (C_∞, L_∞) the law of a Brownian snake driven by a normalized Brownian excursion, and we would use a result of Whyburn [Why35a, Corollary 5.21 and Theorem 6.3] treating the case where $\text{diam}(\partial\mathcal{X}_n) \rightarrow 0$. Instead, we use a more direct approach, roughly consisting in saying that a uniform quadrangulation with “small” boundary is close to a uniform quadrangulation without boundary. A non-negligible advantage of this method is that it gives a more precise statement, Theorem 4, and completely identifies the limiting space as the Brownian map.

Let us begin with a lemma giving an upper bound on the Gromov–Hausdorff distance between a quadrangulation with a boundary and the quadrangulation obtained by applying Schaeffer’s bijection to one of the trees of the forest that corresponds through the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection.

Lemma 23. *Let $(\mathfrak{f}, \mathfrak{l}) \in \mathfrak{F}_\sigma^n$ be a well-labeled forest, $\mathfrak{b} \in \mathcal{B}_\sigma$ a bridge, \mathfrak{t} a tree of \mathfrak{f} rooted at ρ , and $\mathfrak{b} \in \{-1, 0\}$. Then $(0, \mathfrak{b}) \in \mathcal{B}_1$, and, up to a trivial transformation, $(\mathfrak{t}, \mathfrak{l}_\mathfrak{t})$ may be seen as an element of $\mathfrak{F}_1^{|\mathfrak{t}|-1}$. We call $\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{f} \in \mathcal{Q}_{n,\sigma}$ (resp. $\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{t} \in \mathcal{Q}_{|\mathfrak{t}|-1,1}$) the quadrangulation corresponding to $((\mathfrak{f}, \mathfrak{l}), \mathfrak{b})$ [resp. to $((\mathfrak{t}, \mathfrak{l}_\mathfrak{t}), (0, \mathfrak{b}))$] through the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection (we omit here the distinguished vertices). Then*

$$d_{GH}((\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{f}, d_{\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{f}}), (\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{t}, d_{\mathfrak{q}_\mathfrak{t}})) \leq 2 \left(\max_{\mathfrak{f} \setminus \mathfrak{t}} \hat{\mathfrak{l}} - \min_{\mathfrak{f} \setminus \mathfrak{t}} \hat{\mathfrak{l}} + 1 \right),$$

where $\mathfrak{t} := \mathfrak{t} \setminus \{\rho\}$, and

$$\hat{\mathfrak{l}}(u) := \mathfrak{l}(u) + \mathfrak{b}(\mathfrak{a}(u) - 1), \quad u \in \mathfrak{f}$$

is the labeling function, shifted tree by tree according to the bridge, as in Section 2.3.2.

Proof. Before we begin, let us introduce some useful notation. For arcs $i_1 \frown i_2, i_2 \frown i_3, \dots, i_{r-1} \frown i_r$, we write

$$i_1 \frown i_2 \frown \dots \frown i_r$$

the path obtained by concatenating them. Let us call v^\bullet the extra vertex we add when performing the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection. We call $v^\circ := (\sigma + 1) \in \mathfrak{f}$ the last vertex of \mathfrak{f} , and we will identify the sets $\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\}$ with $V(q_t)$, as well as $(\mathfrak{f} \setminus \{v^\circ\}) \cup \{v^\bullet\}$ with $V(q_f)$. Then the set

$$\mathcal{R} := \{(a, a) : a \in \mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\}\} \cup \{(a, \rho) : a \in \mathfrak{f} \setminus (\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\circ\})\}$$

is a correspondence between q_f and q_t . Without loss of generality, we may suppose that \mathfrak{t} is the first tree of \mathfrak{f} . This yields in particular that an integer $i \in \llbracket 0, 2|\mathfrak{t}| - 2 \rrbracket$ codes the same vertex in \mathfrak{t} and in \mathfrak{f} , namely $\mathfrak{t}(i) = \mathfrak{f}(i)$. Because we will apply the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection at the same time to both $((\mathfrak{f}, \mathfrak{l}), \mathfrak{b})$ and $((\mathfrak{t}, \mathfrak{l}_t), (0, \mathfrak{b}))$, we will write $\text{succ}_f(i)$ the successor of $i \in \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma - 1 \rrbracket$ in the forest \mathfrak{f} , and $\text{succ}_t(i)$ the successor of $i \in \llbracket 0, 2|\mathfrak{t}| - 2 \rrbracket$ in the tree \mathfrak{t} , in order to avoid confusion. We also set $l_2 := \max_{\mathfrak{f} \setminus \hat{\mathfrak{t}}} \hat{l}$ and $l_1 := \min_{\mathfrak{f} \setminus \hat{\mathfrak{t}}} \hat{l}$ for more clarity. Using the characterization (13) of the Gromov–Hausdorff distance via correspondences, we see that it suffices to show that, for all $(a, a'), (b, b') \in \mathcal{R}$, we have

$$|d_{q_f}(a, b) - d_{q_t}(a', b')| \leq 4(l_2 - l_1 + 1).$$

First case: $a, b \in \mathfrak{f} \setminus (\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\circ\})$. In this case, either $[a, b]$ or $[b, a]$ entirely lies inside $\mathfrak{f} \setminus \hat{\mathfrak{t}}$. As a result, (3) gives

$$|d_{q_f}(a, b) - d_{q_t}(\rho, \rho)| \leq \hat{l}(a) + \hat{l}(b) - 2 \min_{\mathfrak{f} \setminus \hat{\mathfrak{t}}} \hat{l} + 2 \leq 2(l_2 - l_1 + 1).$$

Second case: $a, b \in \mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\}$. We may suppose $a \neq b$. We proceed in two steps. We first claim that

$$d_{q_t}(a, b) \leq d_{q_f}(a, b).$$

To see this, let $\varphi = (\varphi(0), \varphi(1), \dots, \varphi(k))$ be any path (not necessarily geodesic) between a and b in q_f . We will construct a shorter path from a to b in q_t , and our claim will immediately follow. Our construction is based on the simple observation that, if an arc exists in q_f between two points of $\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\}$, then the same arc also exists in q_t . We then only have to replace the portions of φ that “exit” $\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\}$ with shorter paths in q_t . Precisely, we can restrict ourselves to the case where $\varphi(r) \in \mathfrak{f} \setminus (\mathfrak{t} \cup \{v^\bullet\})$ for $0 < r < k$, with $k \geq 2$. We will also need to observe that a path linking two vertices of label l and l' has length at least $|l - l'|$.

Let us call i the integer such that the arc $(\varphi(0), \varphi(1))$ is either $i \frown \text{succ}_f(i)$ or $i \curvearrowright \text{succ}_f(i)$. We will say that $(\varphi(0), \varphi(1))$ is oriented **to the right** in the first case, and **to the left** in the second case. We also define j in a similar way for the arc $(\varphi(k), \varphi(k-1))$. Four possibilities are then to be considered (see Figure 9):

- ◊ Both $(\varphi(0), \varphi(1))$ and $(\varphi(k), \varphi(k-1))$ are oriented to the right. Without loss of generality, we may suppose $i < j$. Properties of the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter bijection then show that $\hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(j)) \geq \hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(i))$, and we have

$$k \geq 1 + |(\hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(j)) - 1) - (\hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(i)) - 1)| + 1 = \hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(j)) - \hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(i)) + 2.$$

The following path in q_t ,

$$j \frown \text{succ}_t(j) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_t^{\hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(j)) - \hat{l}(\mathfrak{f}(i)) + 1}(j) = \text{succ}_t(i) \frown i,$$

links a to b in q_t and has length less than k . The equality in the last line is an easy consequence of the Bouttier–Di Francesco–Guitter construction.

- ◇ Both $(\wp(0), \wp(1))$ and $(\wp(k), \wp(k-1))$ are oriented to the left. Here again, we may suppose $i < j$. In this case, $\hat{l}(f(j)) > \hat{l}(f(i))$, and

$$\text{succ}_f(j) \frown \text{succ}_t(\text{succ}_f(j)) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_t^{\hat{l}(f(j)) - \hat{l}(f(i))}(\text{succ}_f(j)) = \text{succ}_f(i)$$

fulfills our requirements.

- ◇ $(\wp(0), \wp(1))$ is oriented to the right, and $(\wp(k), \wp(k-1))$ is oriented to the left. Necessarily, we have $\text{succ}_f(j) < i$, or $\text{succ}_f(j) = \infty$. If $\hat{l}(f(i)) \geq \hat{l}(f(j))$, then we take

$$i \frown \text{succ}_t(i) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_t^{\hat{l}(f(i)) - \hat{l}(f(j)) + 1}(i) = \text{succ}_f(j),$$

otherwise, we take

$$\text{succ}_f(j) \frown \text{succ}_t(\text{succ}_f(j)) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_t^{\hat{l}(f(j)) - \hat{l}(f(i))}(\text{succ}_f(j)) = \text{succ}_t(i) \frown i,$$

- ◇ $(\wp(0), \wp(1))$ is oriented to the left, and $(\wp(k), \wp(k-1))$ is oriented to the right. By considering the path $\bar{\wp} := (\wp(k), \wp(k-1), \dots, \wp(0))$ instead of \wp , we are back to the previous case.

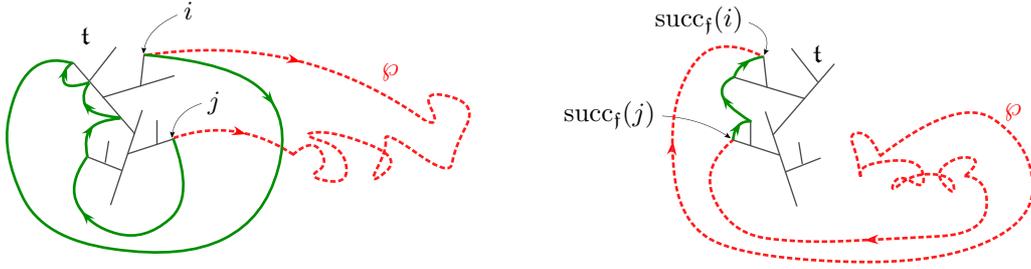


Figure 9: On this picture, t is the only part of \mathfrak{f} represented. The dashed (red) line represents the path \wp (in q_f) and the (green) solid path is the path in q_t . Both first cases are represented.

We now show that

$$d_{q_f}(a, b) \leq d_{q_t}(a, b) + 2(l_2 - l_1 + 1).$$

Let us consider a path \wp of length k in q_t from a to b . We are going to construct a path in q_f from a to b , with length less than $k + 2(l_2 - l_1 + 1)$. The only arcs present is q_t but not in q_f are of the form $i \frown \text{succ}_t(i)$ with $\text{succ}_t(i) < i$ or $\text{succ}_t(i) = \infty$, and $l_1 + 1 \leq \hat{l}(f(i)) \leq l_2 + 1$. For convenience, let us call **pathological** such arcs. For all pathological arcs $i \frown \text{succ}_t(i)$ and $j \frown \text{succ}_t(j)$ with $i < j$, we can construct the path

$$j \frown \text{succ}_f(j) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_f^{\hat{l}(f(j)) - \hat{l}(f(i)) + 1}(j) = \text{succ}_f(i) \frown i \quad (21)$$

linking $f(i)$ to $f(j)$ in q_f , its length being $\hat{l}(f(j)) - \hat{l}(f(i)) + 2$. We can also construct the path

$$j \frown \text{succ}_f(j) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_f^{\hat{l}(f(j)) - l_1 + 1}(j) = \text{succ}_f^{\hat{l}(f(j)) - l_1}(\text{succ}_t(j)) \frown \dots \frown \text{succ}_t(j) \quad (22)$$

linking $f(j)$ to $f(\text{succ}_t(j))$ in q_f , its length being $2(\hat{l}(f(j)) - l_1) + 1 \leq 2(l_2 - l_1 + 1) + 1$. Using these paths, we construct our path in q_f as follows. If φ does not use any pathological arcs, then φ can be seen as a path in q_f . If φ uses exactly one pathological arc, we construct our new path by changing this arc into a path of the form (22). By doing so, we obtain a path from a to b in q_f with length smaller than $k - 1 + 2(l_2 - l_1 + 1) + 1$. Now, if φ uses more than two pathological arcs, let $i \frown \text{succ}_t(i)$ be the first one it uses, and $j \frown \text{succ}_t(j)$ the last one. Let us call i_1 and i_2 the indexes at which φ uses them: $(\varphi(i_1), \varphi(i_1 + 1)) = i \frown \text{succ}_t(i)$ or $i \curvearrowright \text{succ}_t(i)$ and $(\varphi(i_2), \varphi(i_2 + 1)) = j \curvearrowleft \text{succ}_t(j)$ or $j \frown \text{succ}_t(j)$. Changing φ into its reverse $\bar{\varphi}$ if needed, we may suppose that $(\varphi(i_1), \varphi(i_1 + 1)) = i \curvearrowright \text{succ}_t(i)$. If $(\varphi(i_2), \varphi(i_2 + 1)) = j \curvearrowleft \text{succ}_t(j)$, we change the portion $(\varphi(i_1), \varphi(i_1 + 1), \dots, \varphi(i_2 + 1))$ into the path (21), and obtain a new path shorter than φ . Finally, if $(\varphi(i_2), \varphi(i_2 + 1)) = j \frown \text{succ}_t(j)$, we change the portion $(\varphi(i_1), \varphi(i_1 + 1), \dots, \varphi(i_2 + 1))$ into the path (21) concatenated with the path (22), and obtain a new path satisfying our requirements.

Third case: $a \in t \cup \{v^\bullet\}$, $b \in f \setminus (t \cup \{v^\circ\})$. We can write

$$\begin{aligned} |d_{q_f}(a, b) - d_{q_t}(a, \rho)| &\leq |d_{q_f}(a, b) - d_{q_f}(a, \rho)| + |d_{q_f}(a, \rho) - d_{q_t}(a, \rho)| \\ &\leq d_{q_f}(b, \rho) + |d_{q_f}(a, \rho) - d_{q_t}(a, \rho)| \\ &\leq 4(l_2 - l_1 + 1), \end{aligned}$$

by applying the first case to (b, ρ) and the second case to (a, ρ) . This ends the proof. \square

We may now proceed to the proof of Theorem 4. We use the same notation as in Section 3.1, and Corollary 8 remains true, if the process $(C_\infty, \mathfrak{L}_\infty)$ has the law of a Brownian snake driven by a normalized Brownian excursion. As we will not need the explicit law of the process $(C_\infty, \mathfrak{L}_\infty)$ in what follows, we do not prove this, and refer the reader to [Bet10a], in particular to Proposition 15 for similar results. By Skorokhod's representation theorem, we still assume that this convergence holds almost surely.

Proof of Theorem 4. We call t_n the largest tree of f_n (if there are more than one largest tree, we take t_n according to some convention, for example the first one), and we consider a random variable b_n uniformly distributed over $\{-1, 0\}$, independent of q_n . We call \hat{q}_n the quadrangulation corresponding, as in the statement of Lemma 23, to $((t_n, l_n|_{t_n}), (0, b_n))$ through the Bouttier-Di Francesco-Guitter bijection. Then, conditionally given $|t_n| = k + 1$, the quadrangulation \hat{q}_n is uniformly distributed over the set $\mathcal{Q}_{k,1}$.

From now on, we work on the set of full probability where the convergence $C_{(n)} \rightarrow C_\infty$ holds. Let $\varepsilon \in (0, 1/4)$, and $2\eta := \min_{[\varepsilon, 1-\varepsilon]} C_\infty > 0$. As $C_{(n)}$ tends to C_∞ , for n large enough, we have $\min_{[\varepsilon, 1-\varepsilon]} C_{(n)} \geq \eta$ and $\sigma_{(n)} < \eta$. As a result,

$$\begin{aligned} s_n &:= \inf \left\{ r \leq \frac{1}{2} : C_{(n)}(r) = \underline{C}_{(n)} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \right\} \leq \varepsilon, \\ t_n &:= \sup \left\{ r \geq \frac{1}{2} : C_{(n)}(r) = \underline{C}_{(n)} \left(\frac{1}{2} \right) \right\} \geq 1 - \varepsilon, \end{aligned}$$

so that t_n is coded by $[(2n + \sigma_n - 1)s_n, (2n + \sigma_n - 1)t_n]$. Note that, in particular, this implies that $|t_n| \geq n(1 - 2\varepsilon)$. This fact will be used later. By Lemma 23,

$$\begin{aligned} &\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} d_{GH} \left(\left(V(q_n), d_{q_n}/(\gamma n^{1/4}) \right), \left(V(\hat{q}_n), d_{\hat{q}_n}/(\gamma n^{1/4}) \right) \right) \\ &\leq 2 \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \left(\sup_{[1-\varepsilon, \varepsilon]} \mathfrak{L}_{(n)} - \inf_{[1-\varepsilon, \varepsilon]} \mathfrak{L}_{(n)} + \frac{1}{\gamma n^{1/4}} \right) = 2 \left(\sup_{[1-\varepsilon, \varepsilon]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty - \inf_{[1-\varepsilon, \varepsilon]} \mathfrak{L}_\infty \right) \xrightarrow{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} 0. \end{aligned}$$

Let us call $\hat{\delta}_{(n,k)} := d_{\hat{q}_n}/(\gamma k^{1/4})$. We then have to see that $(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)})$ converges toward the Brownian map $(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*)$. Let $f : \mathbb{M} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be uniformly continuous and bounded. By the Portmanteau theorem [Bil68, Theorem 2.1], we only need to show that

$$\mathbb{E} \left[f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)}) \right] \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{E} \left[f(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*) \right].$$

Let $\varepsilon > 0$. If we delete from \hat{q}_n the only edge on the boundary that is not the root, we obtain a quadrangulation without boundary, which, conditionally given $|\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1$, is uniformly distributed over the set of planar quadrangulations with k faces. As this operation does not affect the underlying metric space, by [Mie11, Theorem 1] or [LG11, Theorem 1.1], we obtain that the distribution of $(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)})$ conditioned on $|\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1$ converges toward the distribution of $(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*)$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$. As $(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*)$ is a compact metric space, we can find large n_0 and M such that, for all $k \geq n_0/2$ and n for which $\mathbb{P}(|\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1) > 0$,

$$\mathbb{P} \left(\text{diam} (V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)}) \geq M \mid |\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1 \right) < \frac{\varepsilon}{2 \sup f}, \quad (23)$$

and

$$\left| \mathbb{E} \left[f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)}) \mid |\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1 \right] - \mathbb{E} \left[f(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*) \right] \right| < \varepsilon. \quad (24)$$

We then choose $\eta \in (0, 1/2)$ such that

$$d_{GH}((\mathcal{X}, \delta), (\mathcal{X}', \delta')) \leq \frac{1}{2} M \left(1 - (1 - \eta)^{1/4} \right) \quad \Rightarrow \quad |f((\mathcal{X}, \delta)) - f((\mathcal{X}', \delta'))| < \varepsilon. \quad (25)$$

For $n \geq n_0$, we then have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left| \mathbb{E} \left[f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)}) \right] - \mathbb{E} \left[f(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*) \right] \right| \leq 2 \sup f \mathbb{P}(|\mathfrak{t}_n| \leq n(1 - \eta)) \\ & + \sum_{k=\lceil n(1-\eta) \rceil}^n \mathbb{P}(|\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1) \left| \mathbb{E} \left[f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)}) \mid |\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1 \right] - \mathbb{E} \left[f(\mathfrak{m}_\infty, D^*) \right] \right|. \end{aligned}$$

By the observation we previously made, we see that the first term in the right-hand side tends to 0 as $n \rightarrow \infty$. To conclude, it will be sufficient to show that the term between vertical bars in the sum is smaller than 3ε . Using (23), (24), and the fact that $n(1 - \eta) \geq n_0/2$, we obtain that it is smaller than

$$2\varepsilon + \mathbb{E} \left[\left(f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)}) - f(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)}) \right) \mathbb{1}_{\{\text{diam}(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)}) < M\}} \mid |\mathfrak{t}_n| = k + 1 \right].$$

By taking a trivial correspondence between $(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,n)})$ and $(V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)})$, it is not hard to see that the Gromov–Hausdorff distance between these two spaces is smaller than

$$\frac{1}{2} \text{diam} (V(\hat{q}_n), \hat{\delta}_{(n,k)}) \left(1 - (k/n)^{1/4} \right).$$

We finally obtain the desired bound thanks to (25). \square

6.2 Case $\sigma = \infty$

In this case, the scaling factor changes. We use the same formalism as in the beginning of Section 3.1, except that we now suppose that the sequence $(\sigma_n)_{n \geq 1}$ satisfies $\sigma_n/\sqrt{2n} \rightarrow \infty$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$. By [Bet10a, Lemma 10], the process

$$\left(\frac{\mathfrak{b}_n(\sigma_n s)}{(2\sigma_n)^{1/2}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1} \quad (26)$$

converges in distribution toward a standard Brownian bridge $\mathfrak{B} = B_{[0,1]}^{0 \rightarrow 0}$. By Skorokhod's representation theorem, we will assume that this convergence holds almost surely. We define on $[0, 1]$ the pseudo-metric

$$\delta_{\mathfrak{B}}(s, t) := \mathfrak{B}(s) + \mathfrak{B}(t) - 2 \max \left(\min_{r \in [s, t]} \mathfrak{B}(r), \min_{r \in [t, s]} \mathfrak{B}(r) \right), \quad 0 \leq s, t \leq 1.$$

By Vervaat's transformation [Ver79, Theorem 1], the metric space $(\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{B}} := [0, 1] / \{\delta_{\mathfrak{B}} = 0\}, \delta_{\mathfrak{B}})$ is isometric to the CRT $(\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{e}}, \delta_{\mathfrak{e}})$. We will show the convergence toward this space, by using correspondences.

Proof of Theorem 5. We call $\mathfrak{p}_{\mathfrak{B}} : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{B}}$ the canonical projection, and we define the correspondence \mathfrak{R}_n between $(V(\mathfrak{q}_n) \setminus \{v_n^\bullet\}, (2\sigma_n)^{-1/2} d_{\mathfrak{q}_n})$ and $(\mathcal{T}_{\mathfrak{B}}, \delta_{\mathfrak{B}})$ by

$$\mathfrak{R}_n := \{(\mathfrak{q}_n(i), \mathfrak{p}_{\mathfrak{B}}(s)) : i \in \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket, s \in [0, 1], \sigma_n - \underline{C}_n(i) = \lfloor \sigma_n s \rfloor\}.$$

In terms of forests, this roughly consists in saying that all the vertices of a tree are in correspondence with a small segment corresponding to the edge of the floor following the root of the tree. It is sufficient to show that its distortion tends to 0 as $n \rightarrow \infty$. For any two points a and $b \in \mathfrak{f}_n$, we have the following bounds:

$$\mathfrak{L}_n(a) + \mathfrak{L}_n(b) - 2 \max \left(\min_{[a, b]} \mathfrak{L}_n, \min_{[b, a]} \mathfrak{L}_n \right) \leq d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}(a, b) \leq \mathfrak{L}_n(a) + \mathfrak{L}_n(b) - 2 \max \left(\min_{[a, b]} \mathfrak{L}_n, \min_{[b, a]} \mathfrak{L}_n \right) + 2.$$

The second inequality is merely the bound (3), and the first one is easily obtained by a technique similar to the one we used in the proof of Lemma 22 (see also [Bet10a, Lemma 20]). It is thus easy to see (recall the definition (7) of \mathfrak{L}_n) that, for $i, j \in \llbracket 0, 2n + \sigma_n - 1 \rrbracket$,

$$\left| d_{\mathfrak{q}_n}(\mathfrak{q}_n(i), \mathfrak{q}_n(j)) - \left(\mathfrak{b}_n(u) + \mathfrak{b}_n(v) - 2 \max \left(\min_{[u, v]} \mathfrak{b}_n, \min_{[v, u]} \mathfrak{b}_n \right) \right) \right| \leq 3(\sup \mathfrak{l}_n - \inf \mathfrak{l}_n) + 2,$$

where we wrote $u := \sigma_n - \underline{C}_n(i)$ and $v := \sigma_n - \underline{C}_n(j)$. Using the convergence of the process (26) stated before, we obtain

$$\limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \text{dis}(\mathfrak{R}_n) \leq \limsup_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{3(\sup \mathfrak{l}_n - \inf \mathfrak{l}_n)}{(2\sigma_n)^{1/2}}.$$

It remains to show that latter quantity is equal to 0. This is a consequence of Lemma 24, which follows. \square

We still call (C_n, L_n) the contour pair of $(\mathfrak{f}_n, \mathfrak{l}_n)$, but we now define the scaled versions of C_n and L_n by

$$C_{[n]} := \left(\frac{C_n(k_n s)}{\sigma_n} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1} \quad \text{and} \quad L_{[n]} := \left(\frac{L_n(k_n s)}{\sqrt{\sigma_n}} \right)_{0 \leq s \leq 1},$$

where we wrote $k_n := 2n + \sigma_n$.

Lemma 24. *The pair $(C_{[n]}, L_{[n]})$ converges toward $((1-s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}, (0)_{0 \leq s \leq 1})$ in distribution in the space $(\mathcal{K}, d_{\mathcal{K}})^2$.*

Proof. The first step consists in showing the convergence of the first component

$$C_{[n]} \rightarrow (1-s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}.$$

In a first time, we will consider bridges instead of first-passage bridges.

Step 1. Let $(S_i)_{i \geq 0}$ be a simple random walk started at 0, and, for all $p \in [0, 1]$, let $(S_i^{(p)})_{i \geq 0}$ be a random walk started at 0 with steps having the distribution $p \delta_{2(1-p)} + (1-p) \delta_{-2p}$. It is a simple computation to see that, for any measurable function f and any k ,

$$\mathbb{E} [f((S_i)_{0 \leq i \leq k})] = \mathbb{E} \left[(4p(1-p))^{-k/2} \left(\frac{p}{1-p} \right)^{-(S_k^{(p)} + k(2p-1))/2} f((S_i^{(p)} + i(2p-1))_{0 \leq i \leq k}) \right].$$

(Note that $(S_i^{(p)} + i(2p-1))_{i \geq 0}$ is a random walk whose steps have the distribution $p \delta_1 + (1-p) \delta_{-1}$.) Let us fix $n \in \mathbb{N}$ and $\varepsilon > 0$. Applying the latter equality, we obtain that

$$\mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} \left| S_i + i \frac{\sigma_n}{k_n} \right| > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n} = -\sigma_n \right) = \mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} |S_i^{(p)}| > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0 \right), \quad (27)$$

if we choose $p := 1/2 - \sigma_n/2k_n$. (Beware that p depends on n .)

For $m \in \mathbb{Z}$, it should be clear that, under $\mathbb{P}(\cdot \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2m)$, the path $(S_i^{(p)})_{0 \leq i \leq k_n}$ is uniformly distributed among the paths going from 0 to $2m$ and having steps with value $2(1-p)$ or $-2p$. Then, changing uniformly a $-2p$ -step into a $2(1-p)$ -step, we obtain a path with law $\mathbb{P}(\cdot \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2(m+1))$ that always lie above the previous one. This observation shows the stochastic domination

$$\mathbb{P}(\cdot \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2m) \preceq \mathbb{P}(\cdot \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2(m+1)),$$

from where we obtain that

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(S_{k_n}^{(p)} \geq 0) \mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0 \right) \\ &= \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \mathbb{P}(S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2m) \mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0 \right) \\ &\leq \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \mathbb{P}(S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2m) \mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 2m \right) \\ &\leq \mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} > \varepsilon \sigma_n \right). \end{aligned}$$

The term $\mathbb{P}(S_{k_n}^{(p)} \geq 0)$ is equal to $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(k_n, p) \geq k_n p)$, where $\mathcal{B}(k_n, p) := S_{k_n}^{(p)}/2 + k_n p$ has a binomial distribution with parameters k_n and p . By [Ham95, Theorem 2], this quantity is larger than $1/2$. Adding to this the fact that $(S_i^{(p)})_{i \geq 0}$ is a martingale, we obtain, by applying Doob's inequality, that

$$\mathbb{P} \left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} > \varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0 \right) \leq \frac{2}{\varepsilon^2 \sigma_n^2} \mathbb{E} \left[(S_{k_n}^{(p)})^2 \right] = \frac{8p(1-p)k_n}{\varepsilon^2 \sigma_n^2} \leq \frac{2k_n}{\varepsilon^2 \sigma_n^2}.$$

Using a similar argument to bound $\mathbb{P}(\inf_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} S_i^{(p)} < -\varepsilon \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0)$, we see that the quantity (27) is smaller than $4k_n/\varepsilon^2 \sigma_n^2$.

Finally, the construction of discrete first-passage bridges from discrete bridges provided in

[BCP03, Theorem 1] yields

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}\left(\sup_{0 \leq s \leq 1} |C_{[n]}(s) - (1-s)| > \varepsilon\right) &= \mathbb{P}\left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} \left|C_n(i) - \sigma_n + i \frac{\sigma_n}{k_n}\right| > \varepsilon \sigma_n\right) \\ &\leq \mathbb{P}\left(\sup_{0 \leq i \leq k_n} \left|S_i + i \frac{\sigma_n}{k_n}\right| > \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \sigma_n \mid S_{k_n} = -\sigma_n\right) \\ &\leq \frac{16k_n}{\varepsilon^2 \sigma_n^2} = \frac{16}{\varepsilon^2} \left(\frac{2n}{\sigma_n^2} + \frac{1}{\sigma_n}\right) \xrightarrow{n \rightarrow \infty} 0. \end{aligned}$$

Step 2. Now that we have the convergence of the first component, let us prove the convergence of the pair $(C_{[n]}, L_{[n]})$. As explained in the proof of [Bet10a, Proposition 15], it is sufficient to show that, for every $q \geq 2$, there exists a constant C_q satisfying, for all n and all $0 \leq s \leq t \leq 1/2$ for which $k_n s$ and $k_n t$ are integers,

$$\mathbb{E}\left[|S_{k_n t} - S_{k_n s}|^q \mid S_{k_n} = -\sigma_n\right] \leq C_q \sigma_n^q |t-s|^{q/2}.$$

Using the same method as above (with the same value of p), we see that the left-hand side is equal to

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\left|S_{k_n t}^{(p)} - S_{k_n s}^{(p)} - \sigma_n(t-s)\right|^q \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0\right].$$

We need to bound the quantity

$$\mathbb{E}\left[\left|S_{k_n t}^{(p)} - S_{k_n s}^{(p)}\right|^q \mid S_{k_n}^{(p)} = 0\right] = \mathbb{E}\left[\left|S_{k_n t}^{(p)} - S_{k_n s}^{(p)}\right|^q \frac{Q_{k_n(1-t)}^{S_{k_n t}^{(p)}}(S_{k_n t}^{(p)})}{Q_{k_n}^{S_{k_n}^{(p)}}(0)}\right], \quad (28)$$

where we used the notation $Q_a^{S_a^{(p)}}(b) := \mathbb{P}(S_a^{(p)} = b)$ and the Markov property at time $k_n t$. Using the simple fact⁵ that for a binomial variable $\mathcal{B}(m, p)$ with parameters $m \in \mathbb{N}$ and $p \in [0, 1)$, we have

$$\sup_{r \geq 0} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(m, p) = r) = \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(m, p) = \lfloor (m+1)p \rfloor),$$

we see that the quotient in the right-hand side of (28) is smaller than

$$\frac{\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(k_n(1-t), p) = \lfloor (k_n(1-t) + 1)p \rfloor)}{\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(k_n, p) = k_n p)} \underset{n \rightarrow \infty}{\sim} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-t}} \leq \sqrt{2},$$

so that it is uniformly bounded in n by some finite constant C . Finally, we conclude thanks to Rosenthal's Inequality [Pet95, Theorem 2.9 and 2.10] that there exists a constant (depending on q) C'_q such that (28) is smaller than

$$C \mathbb{E}\left[\left|S_{k_n t}^{(p)} - S_{k_n s}^{(p)}\right|^q\right] \leq C'_q \mathbb{E}\left[\left|S_1^{(p)}\right|^q\right] k_n^{q/2} |t-s|^{q/2} \leq (C_q - 1) \sigma_n^q |t-s|^{q/2},$$

with $C_q := C'_q 2^q \sup_n (k_n / \sigma_n^2)^{q/2} + 1 < \infty$. This completes the proof. \square

⁵Observe that, when $p \in (0, 1)$, $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(m, p) = r) \geq \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{B}(m, p) = r-1)$ if and only if $r \leq (m+1)p$.

7 Proofs using the Brownian snake

In this section, we prove Lemmas 11, 12, 15, and complete the proof of Theorem 3. To this end, we will need some notions about the Brownian snake. We refer the reader to [LG99] for a complete description of this object. Recall that we denoted by \mathcal{K} the space of continuous real-valued functions on \mathbb{R}_+ killed at some time, and that we wrote $\zeta(w)$ the lifetime of an element $w \in \mathcal{K}$. We also use the notation $\widehat{w} := w(\zeta(w))$ for the final value of a path $w \in \mathcal{K}$. From now on, we will work on the space $\Omega' := \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}_+, \mathcal{K})$ of continuous functions from \mathbb{R}_+ into \mathcal{K} , equipped with the topology of uniform convergence on every compact subset of \mathbb{R}_+ . We write $W_s := \omega(s)$ the canonical process on Ω' , and call $\zeta_s := \zeta(W_s)$ its lifetime.

For $w \in \mathcal{K}$, we call \mathbb{P}_w the law of the Brownian snake started from w . This means that, under \mathbb{P}_w , the process $(\zeta_s)_{s \geq 0}$ has the law of a reflected Brownian motion on \mathbb{R}_+ started from $\zeta(w)$, and that the conditional distribution of $(W_s)_{s \geq 0}$ knowing $(\zeta_s)_{s \geq 0}$, denoted by Θ_w^ζ , is characterized by

- ◊ $W_0 = w$, Θ_w^ζ a.s.
- ◊ the process $(W_s)_{s \geq 0}$ is time-inhomogeneous Markov under Θ_w^ζ and, for $0 \leq s \leq s'$,
 - $W_{s'}(t) = W_s(t)$ for all $0 \leq t \leq \zeta_r$, Θ_w^ζ a.s., where $\zeta_r := \inf_{r' \in [s, s']} \zeta_{r'}$,
 - under Θ_w^ζ , the process $(W_{s'}(\zeta_r + t))_{0 \leq t \leq \zeta_{s'} - \zeta_r}$ is independent of W_s and distributed as a real Brownian motion started from $W_s(\zeta_r)$ and stopped at time $\zeta_{s'} - \zeta_r$.

Let us call $I_a := \inf\{s : \zeta_s = a\}$ and define the probability measure on Ω'

$$\mathbb{P}_w^0 := \mathbb{P}_w(\cdot | I_0 = 1).$$

This conditioning may be properly defined by saying that, under \mathbb{P}_w^0 , the law of $(\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ is the law of a first-passage Brownian bridge on $[0, 1]$ from $\zeta(w)$ to 0, the law of $(\zeta_s)_{s \geq 1}$ is the law of a reflected Brownian motion on $[1, +\infty)$ issued from 0, and the conditional distribution of $(W_s)_{s \geq 0}$ knowing $(\zeta_s)_{s \geq 0}$ is Θ_w^ζ .

We call $\mathbf{0}_\sigma \in \mathcal{K}$ the function $s \in [0, \sigma] \mapsto 0$. Under $\mathbb{P}_{\mathbf{0}_\sigma}^0$, the process $((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}, (\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1})$ has the same law as the process $(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}, Z_{[0,1]})$ defined during Section 3.1.1. If we call \mathbb{B} the law on \mathcal{K} of a Brownian bridge on $[0, \sigma]$ from 0 to 0, multiplied by the factor $\sqrt{3}$, we then obtain that, under

$$\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w^0(dw),$$

the process $((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}, (\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1})$ has the same law as $(C_\infty, \mathfrak{L}_\infty)$ (under the common probability measure \mathbb{P}).

We note $n(de)$ the Itô measure of positive Brownian excursions, whose normalization is given by the relation $n(\sup e > \varepsilon) = 1/2\varepsilon$, and we call

$$\mathbb{N}_x := \int_{\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}_+, \mathbb{R}_+)} n(de) \Theta_x^e$$

the excursion measure of the Brownian snake away from the path $\bar{x} : 0 \mapsto x$. Let us call (α_i, β_i) , $i \in I$, the excursion intervals of $s \in [0, I_0] \mapsto \zeta_s - \zeta_{s'}$, that is, the connected components of the open set $[0, I_0] \cap \{s : \zeta_s > \zeta_{s'}\}$. For $i \in I$, we define $W^{(i)} \in \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}_+, \mathcal{K})$ by setting, for $s \geq 0$,

$$W_s^{(i)}(t) = W_{(\alpha_i + s) \wedge \beta_i}(\zeta_{\alpha_i} + t), \quad 0 \leq t \leq \zeta_s^{(i)} := \zeta_{(\alpha_i + s) \wedge \beta_i} - \zeta_{\alpha_i}.$$

One of the main ingredients to our proofs is the following lemma.

Lemma 25 ([LG99, Lemma V.5]). *The point measure*

$$\sum_{i \in I} \delta_{(\zeta_{\alpha_i}, W^{(i)})}(dt d\omega) \quad (29)$$

is under \mathbb{P}_w a Poisson point measure on $\mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}_+, \mathcal{K})$ with intensity

$$\mathcal{N}_w(dt d\omega) := 2 \mathbb{1}_{[0, \zeta(w)]}(t) dt \mathbb{N}_{w(t)}(d\omega).$$

We will also need the explicit “law” of the minimum of the Brownian snake’s head under \mathbb{N}_x .

Lemma 26 ([LGW06, Lemma 2.1]). *For all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}$ with $y < x$,*

$$\mathbb{N}_x \left(\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s < y \right) = \frac{3}{2(x-y)^2}.$$

In this setting, we have two singular conditionings: one being $I_0 = 1$, and the second one being the fact that w is under $\mathbb{B}(dw)$ a bridge, instead of a Brownian motion. The first step in our proofs will generally be to dispose of the first of these conditionings (and sometimes the second as well), making us work under \mathbb{P}_w instead of \mathbb{P}_w^0 . This will usually be done by a simple absolute continuity argument, at least for almost sure properties. Another difficulty will arise from the factor $\sqrt{3}$, and we will sometimes need to take extra care because of it.

7.1 Proof of Lemma 11

Thanks to Lemma 25, we will derive Lemma 11 from the following similar result under \mathbb{N}_x , which is due to Le Gall and Weill [LGW06].

Proposition 27 ([LGW06, Proposition 2.5]). *There exists \mathbb{N}_x a.e. a unique instant where $(\widehat{W}_s)_{s \geq 0}$ reaches its minimum.*

Proof of Lemma 11. It is sufficient to show that, for $a \in [0, \zeta(w)]$, the process $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_a}$ reaches its minimum only once \mathbb{P}_w a.s., for w fixed in some subset of \mathcal{K} of full \mathbb{B} -measure. Indeed, as for all $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$, the distribution of $(W_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1-\varepsilon}$ under \mathbb{P}_w^0 is absolutely continuous with respect to the distribution of $(W_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1-\varepsilon}$ under $\mathbb{P}_w(dw \mid I_0 \geq 1-\varepsilon)$, this entails that, for those w ’s, \mathbb{P}_w^0 a.s., for every rational $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$ and every rational $a \in [0, \zeta(w)]$, on the event $\{I_a \leq 1-\varepsilon\}$, the process $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_a}$ reaches its minimum only once. Discarding a set of zero \mathbb{B} -measure if needed, we may only consider w ’s for which $\min_{x \in [0, \zeta(w)]} w(x) < 0$. Because $\min_{s \in [0, 1]} \widehat{W}_s \leq \min_{x \in [0, \zeta(w)]} w(x) < 0 = \widehat{W}_1$, we see that under \mathbb{P}_w^0 , $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ does not reach its minimum at time 1. As a consequence, if this process were reaching its minimum twice at times $t_1 < t_2$, then we could find $a \in \mathbb{Q} \cap (0, \zeta(w)]$ such that $t_2 \leq I_a$, and then we could find $\varepsilon \in \mathbb{Q} \cap (0, 1)$ satisfying $I_a \leq 1-\varepsilon$. This would be a contradiction. We finally obtain that $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ reaches its minimum only once $\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$ a.s. and the result follows because $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}$ has under $\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$ the same law as \mathcal{L}_∞ under \mathbb{P} .

For the moment, we do not need to make any assumptions on $w \in \mathcal{K}$. We claim that, \mathbb{P}_w a.s., the numbers $\min_{s \in [\alpha_i, \beta_i]} \widehat{W}_s$, $i \in I$, are pairwise distinct, because the “law” of $\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s$ is diffuse under \mathbb{N}_x , by Lemma 26. Let us show this claim. We call $\ell := \sup\{s \geq 0 : \zeta_s > 0\}$. It is a classical result ([RY99, Proposition XII.2.8]) that $n(\ell \geq t) = (2\pi t)^{-1/2}$, so that, for $k \geq 1$,

$$\mathcal{N}_w(A_k) < \infty, \quad \text{where } A_k := \left\{ \ell \in \left[\frac{1}{k}, \frac{1}{k-1} \right) \right\}$$

with the convention $1/0 = \infty$. On $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$, we consider independent random variables N_k , $k \geq 1$, and $(t_{k,i}, W^{k,i})$, $k, i \geq 1$. We suppose that N_k is Poisson with mean $\mathcal{N}_w(A_k)$, and that the law of $(t_{k,i}, W^{k,i})$ is $\mathcal{N}_w(\cdot | A_k)$. Basic facts about Poisson point measures show that the point measure

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \sum_{i=1}^{N_k} \delta_{(t_{k,i}, W^{k,i})}$$

has (under \mathbb{P}) the same law as (29) under \mathbb{P}_w . We then have

$$\mathbb{P}_w \left(\exists i \neq j : \min_{s \in [\alpha_i, \beta_i]} \widehat{W}_s = \min_{s \in [\alpha_j, \beta_j]} \widehat{W}_s \right) \leq \sum_{(k,i) \neq (l,j)} \mathbb{P} \left(\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s^{k,i} = \min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s^{l,j} \right) = 0,$$

because, for $(k, i) \neq (l, j)$, the variables $\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s^{k,i}$ and $\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s^{l,j}$ are independent, and their laws have no atoms.

A consequence of what we just showed is that, under \mathbb{P}_w , the process $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_a}$ does not reach its minimum on two different intervals of the form $[\alpha_i, \beta_i]$, $i \in I$. Now, the probability that it reaches its minimum more than once on some such interval is smaller than

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_w \left(\exists i \in I : \exists \alpha_i \leq s < t \leq \beta_i : \widehat{W}_s = \widehat{W}_t = \min_{s \in [\alpha_i, \beta_i]} \widehat{W}_s \right) \\ = 1 - \exp \left(-2 \int_0^{\zeta(w)} dt \mathbb{N}_{w(t)} \left(\exists s < t : \widehat{W}_s = \widehat{W}_t = \min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s \right) \right) = 0, \end{aligned}$$

by Proposition 27.

We will now see that $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_a}$ does not reach its minimum on $[0, I_a] \setminus \bigcup_{i \in I} [\alpha_i, \beta_i]$, which will complete the proof. It is at this time that we make extra assumptions on w . The so-called snake property shows that

$$\left\{ \widehat{W}_s : s \in [0, I_a] \setminus \bigcup_{i \in I} [\alpha_i, \beta_i] \right\} = \{w(t) : a \leq t \leq \zeta(w)\},$$

so that it will be enough to see that, \mathbb{P}_w a.s., $\min_{0 \leq s \leq I_a} \widehat{W}_s < \min_{[a, \zeta(w)]} w$. Using Lemma 25 then Lemma 26, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}_w \left(\min_{0 \leq s \leq I_a} \widehat{W}_s < \min_{[a, \zeta(w)]} w \right) &= 1 - \exp \left(-2 \int_a^{\zeta(w)} dt \mathbb{N}_{w(t)} \left(\min_{s \geq 0} \widehat{W}_s < \min_{[a, \zeta(w)]} w \right) \right) \\ &= 1 - \exp \left(-3 \int_a^{\zeta(w)} dt \left(w(t) - \min_{[a, \zeta(w)]} w \right)^{-2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

An easy application of Lévy's modulus of continuity (see for example [RY99, Theorem I.2.7]) shows that, $\mathbb{B}(dw)$ a.s., this quantity equals 1. This concludes the proof. \square

7.2 Proof of Lemma 12

For a continuous function $f : [0, \ell] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, we write $\text{IP}_{left}(f)$ (resp. $\text{IP}_{right}(f)$) the set of its left-increase points (resp. right-increase points). Remember that $s \in (0, \ell]$ is a left-increase point of f if there exists $t \in [0, s)$ satisfying $f(r) \geq f(s)$ for all $t \leq r \leq s$, and that a right-increase point is defined in a symmetrical way. We also call $\text{IP}(f) = \text{IP}_{left}(f) \cup \text{IP}_{right}(f)$ the set of all its

increase points. Due to the fact that the points I_a , $a \in [0, \zeta(w)]$ are left-increase points of ζ and do not always lie in $\cup_{i \in I} (\alpha_i, \beta_i]$, we cannot directly apply the same strategy as in the previous section and derive Lemma 12 from a similar statement under \mathbb{N}_x . Instead, we use a technique of covering intervals inspired from [Ber91] and a theorem of Shepp [She72]. In [Ber91], Bertoin is interested with a similar problem: he characterizes the Lévy processes X for which the set $\mathbb{P}_{right}(X) \cap \mathbb{P}_{left}(-X)$ is almost surely empty. Our method gives, in particular, another proof to [LGP08, Lemma 3.2], which states that the set

$$\mathbb{P}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}) \cap \mathbb{P}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell})$$

is \mathbb{N}_x a.e. empty. (Recall that we write $\ell := \sup\{s \geq 0 : \zeta_s > 0\}$.) This comes very roughly from the fact that, if ζ and \widehat{W} do not share any increase points on $[0, I_0]$, in particular, they do not share any increase points on any (α_i, β_i) either, and, by Lemma 25, the process restricted to (α_i, β_i) is then “distributed” under \mathbb{N}_x .

For $y \in \mathbb{R}$, we call $\mathbf{T}_y := \inf\{s \geq 0 : w(s) = y\}$, where w is the canonical process on \mathcal{K} , and, for $y < a$ and $\kappa > 0$, we call $P_{a,\kappa}^{(y,\infty)}$ the law on \mathcal{K} of a standard Brownian motion multiplied by κ , started from a and stopped at time \mathbf{T}_y . We also call, for $x > 0$, $P_{a,\kappa}^x$ the law of a standard Brownian motion multiplied by κ , started from a and stopped at time x . When we omit the value of κ , it will be assumed to be 1.

Although quite long to properly write in full detail, our strategy is pretty simple. One of the main difficulty comes from the two levels of randomness of the Brownian snake. In contrast to the previous proof where we worked under \mathbb{P}_w for a fixed $w \in \mathcal{K}$, we will need here to work under $\mathbb{B}(dw)\mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$ and see w as random. As a consequence, we will need to consider the timescale of ζ and W , as well as the timescale of w . Juggling from one to the other may also cause confusion.

In order to facilitate the reading of our proof, let us outline it now. By absolute continuity arguments, we get rid of the conditionings and work under $P_{0,\sqrt{3}}^x(dw)\mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ instead of $\mathbb{B}(dw)\mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$. We then only consider left-increase points of \widehat{W} that are also increase points of ζ , and treat later right-increase points of \widehat{W} by a nice time-reversal argument. It should not be too hard to convince oneself⁶ that it suffices to look at points $s \in [0, I_0]$ such that $\zeta_s = \zeta_s$. If s is such a point and also, say, a right-increase point of \widehat{W} , we will first see that s is not starting an excursion. This will entail that ζ_s is a left-increase point of w . Beware that, as ζ is non-increasing, the notions of left and right are reversed. By an argument similar as before, we only consider points s satisfying $\zeta_s = \zeta_s = \inf\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}$. See Figure 10.

Now, we will consider the excursions of $w - \underline{w}$ and look at the minimum of \widehat{W} on the intervals corresponding to these excursions. Using [She72], we will see that, as close as we want before ζ_s , we can find an excursion of $w - \underline{w}$ where the minimum of \widehat{W} is smaller than $w(\zeta_s)$, prohibiting ζ_s from being a left-increase point of w .

We start with a lemma stating that the extremities of any excursion interval (α_i, β_i) are not increase points of \widehat{W} restricted to this excursion.

Lemma 28. *Let $w \in \mathcal{K}$. Then, $\mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s., for all $i \in I$,*

$$\alpha_i \notin \mathbb{P}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \quad \text{and} \quad \beta_i \notin \mathbb{P}_{left}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}).$$

⁶To be more accurate, if s does not satisfy this hypothesis, we apply the Markov property at some (rational) time a close enough before s so that $\zeta_s = \inf_{[a,s]} \zeta$. When doing so, we have to work under $P_{0,\sqrt{3}}^x(dw)\mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ and not $P_{0,\sqrt{3}}^x(dw)\mathbb{P}_w(dw)$.

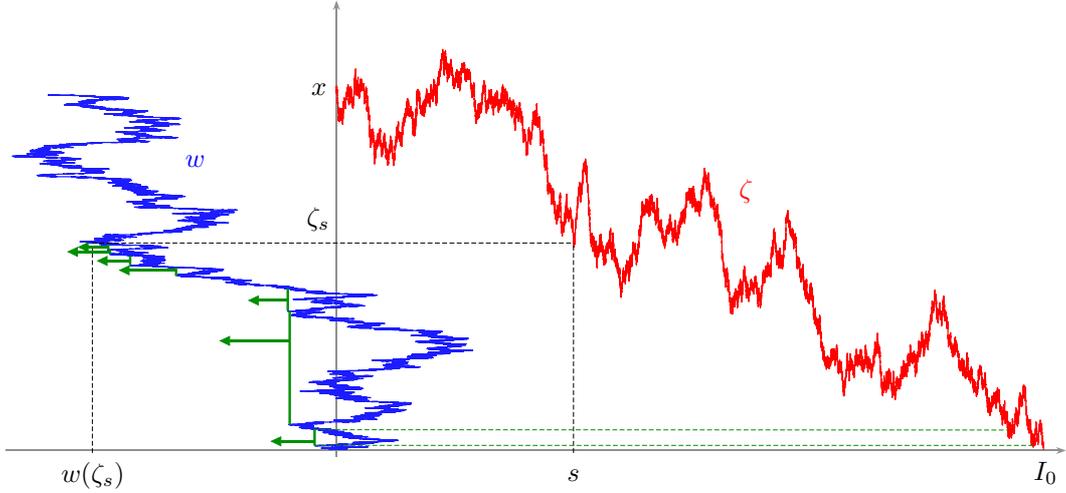


Figure 10: Visual aid for the proof of Lemma 12. On this picture, the timescale of ζ and W is horizontal, whereas the timescale of w is vertical. The point s satisfies $\zeta_s = \zeta_s = \inf\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}$. We represented by (green) solid lines the seven longest excursions of $w - \underline{w}$, and the arrows represent the minimum of \widehat{W} on the corresponding intervals.

Proof. It is enough to show that \mathbb{N}_x a.e. $0 \notin \mathbb{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell})$. Indeed, this entails that

$$\begin{aligned} & \mathbb{P}_w(\exists i \in I : \alpha_i \in \mathbb{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0})) \\ &= 1 - \exp\left(-2 \int_0^{\zeta(w)} dt \mathbb{N}_{w(t)}(0 \in \mathbb{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}))\right) = 0. \end{aligned}$$

Then, by the time-reversal property under \mathbb{N}_x (the process $(\zeta_{\ell-s}, W_{\ell-s})_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}$ has under \mathbb{N}_x the same distribution as $(\zeta_s, W_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}$), we see that \mathbb{N}_x a.e. $\ell \notin \mathbb{IP}_{left}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell})$, and we conclude in the same way.

Let e be an excursion. By definition, under Θ_x^e , the process

$$\left(\widehat{W}(\sup\{s \leq \ell/2 : e_s = y\})\right)_{0 \leq y \leq e_{\ell/2}}$$

has the law $P_x^{e_{\ell/2}}$. Then, because $n(de)$ a.e. $\sup\{s \leq \ell/2 : e_s = 0\} = 0$, we see that $n(de)$ a.e. Θ_x^e a.s. $0 \notin \mathbb{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell})$. \square

The following lemma will only be used for $\kappa = 1$ or $\kappa = \sqrt{3}$ in what follows, but the proof works for any $\kappa \leq \sqrt{3}$, so that we consider all these values.

Lemma 29. Let $\kappa \leq \sqrt{3}$ and $x > 0$. The sets

$$\mathcal{A} := \left\{s \in \mathbb{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) : \zeta_s = \zeta_s = \inf\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}\right\}$$

and

$$\mathcal{B} := \left\{s \in \mathbb{IP}_{left}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) : \zeta_s = \zeta_s = \sup\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}\right\}$$

are $P_{0, \sqrt{3}}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(d\omega)$ a.s. empty.

Proof. Let $y > 0$. We are going to show that the set \mathcal{A} is $P_{0,\sqrt{3}}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. This will entail in particular that the set

$$\left\{s \in \mathbb{P}_{right} \left((\widehat{W}_s)_{I_x \leq s \leq I_0} \right) : \zeta_s = \underline{\zeta}_s = \inf\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\} \right\}$$

is $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw \mid \mathbf{T}_{-y} \geq x) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. By the Markov property, under the latter measure, the distribution of

$$\left((w(s))_{0 \leq s \leq x}, (\zeta_{I_x+s})_{0 \leq s \leq I_0 - I_x}, (W_{I_x+s})_{0 \leq s \leq I_0 - I_x} \right)$$

is precisely $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw \mid \underline{w}_x \geq -y) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$. Letting $y \rightarrow \infty$ yields that \mathcal{A} is $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty.

Step 1. Let us call (u_j, v_j) , $j \in J$, the excursion intervals of $w - \underline{w}$ and

$$w^{(j)} := w((u_j + s) \wedge v_j) - w(u_j) \quad j \in J.$$

We will need to find the distribution under $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ of the point measure

$$\mathcal{P} := \sum_{j \in J} \delta_{(-w(u_j), m^{(j)})} \quad \text{where } m^{(j)} := w(u_j) - \min_{[I_{v_j}, I_{u_j}]} \widehat{W}.$$

To this end, we adapt a computation of Miermont [Mie11, Lemma 31]. By Itô's excursion theory, the point measure

$$\sum_{j \in J} \delta_{(-w(u_j), w^{(j)})}$$

is under $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw)$ a Poisson point measure on $\mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathcal{K}$ with intensity $\kappa^{-1} \mathbb{1}_{[0,y]}(t) dt 2n(de\kappa)$. Using Lemma 25, we may see the $m^{(j)}$, $j \in J$, as independent marks on $w^{(j)}$, $j \in J$, with law $\mathbb{P}_{w^{(j)}}(-\min \widehat{W} \in dz)$. The marking theorem of Poisson point measures [Kin93, Marking Theorem] shows that, under $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$, \mathcal{P} is also a Poisson point measure on $\mathbb{R}_+ \times \mathbb{R}_+$ with intensity

$$\kappa^{-1} \mathbb{1}_{[0,y]}(t) dt \int_{\mathcal{K}} 2n(de) \mathbb{P}_{\kappa e}(-\min \widehat{W} \in dz).$$

To compute explicitly this intensity, we use Lemmas 25 and 26, and then Bismut's description of n [RY99, Theorem XII.4.7]:

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\mathcal{K}} 2n(de) \mathbb{P}_{\kappa e}(-\min \widehat{W} \geq z) &= \int_{\mathcal{K}} 2n(de) \left(1 - \exp\left(-\int_0^\ell \frac{3 ds}{(\kappa e_s + z)^2}\right) \right) \\ &= \int_{\mathcal{K}} 2n(de) \int_0^\ell \frac{3 dt}{(\kappa e_t + z)^2} \exp\left(-\int_t^\ell \frac{3 ds}{(\kappa e_s + z)^2}\right) \\ &= 6 \int_0^\infty \frac{da}{(\kappa a + z)^2} E_a^{(0,\infty)} \left[\exp\left(-\int_0^{\mathbf{T}_0} \frac{3 ds}{(\kappa w(s) + z)^2}\right) \right] \\ &= 6 \int_0^\infty \frac{da}{(\kappa a + z)^2} E_{a+z/\kappa}^{(0,\infty)} \left[\exp\left(-\frac{3}{\kappa^2} \int_0^{\mathbf{T}_{z/\kappa}} \frac{ds}{(w(s))^2}\right) \right]. \end{aligned}$$

Using the absolute continuity relations between Bessel processes with different indexes, which is due to Yor [RY99, Exercice XI.1.22], and the fact that reflected Brownian motion is a 1-dimensional Bessel process, we see that

$$\begin{aligned}
E_{a+z/\kappa}^{(0,\infty)} \left[\exp \left(-\frac{3}{\kappa^2} \int_0^{\mathbf{T}_{z/\kappa}} \frac{ds}{(w(s))^2} \right) \right] &= \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} E_{a+z/\kappa}^{(0,\infty)} \left[\exp \left(-\frac{3}{\kappa^2} \int_0^{\mathbf{T}_{z/\kappa} \wedge t} \frac{ds}{(w(s))^2} \right) \right] \\
&= \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} E_{a+z/\kappa}^{(2+2\nu)} \left[\left(\frac{w(\mathbf{T}_{z/\kappa} \wedge t)}{a+z/\kappa} \right)^{-\nu-1/2} \right] \\
&= \left(\frac{z}{\kappa a + z} \right)^{-\nu-1/2} P_{a+z/\kappa}^{(2+2\nu)} [\mathbf{T}_{z/\kappa} < \infty] \\
&= \left(\frac{z}{\kappa a + z} \right)^{\nu-1/2}.
\end{aligned}$$

where $\nu := \sqrt{24 + \kappa^2} / 2\kappa$ and $P_a^{(2+2\nu)}$ denotes the distribution of a Bessel process of dimension $2 + 2\nu$. In the last line, we used the fact that, for $b > c$, $P_b^{(2+2\nu)} [\mathbf{T}_c < \infty] = (c/b)^{2\nu}$ (see [RY99, Chapter XI]). Putting all this together, we obtain that the intensity of \mathcal{P} is

$$\mathbb{1}_{[0,y]}(t) dt \frac{\lambda}{z^2} dz, \quad \text{where } \lambda := \frac{12\kappa^{-1}}{\sqrt{24 + \kappa^2} + \kappa} \geq 1.$$

Step 2. Let $\sum_{k \in K} \delta_{(t_k, z_k)}$ be a Poisson random measure with intensity $dt \lambda z^{-2} dz$. Then, by the restriction property of Poisson random measures, for all $\varepsilon > 0$, $\sum_{k \in K} \delta_{(t_k, z_k)} \mathbb{1}_{\{z_k \leq \varepsilon\}}$ is a Poisson random measure with intensity $dt \lambda z^{-2} \mathbb{1}_{\{z \leq \varepsilon\}} dz$. By a theorem of Shepp⁷ [She72], we obtain that the random set

$$\bigcup_{k \in K : z_k \leq \varepsilon} (t_k, t_k + z_k)$$

is a.s. equal to \mathbb{R} . As a result, the set

$$\bigcup_{z_k \leq \varepsilon, 0 \leq t_k \leq y} (t_k, t_k + z_k)$$

a.s. contains $[\varepsilon, y]$. Because the point measure $\sum_{k \in K} \delta_{(t_k, z_k)} \mathbb{1}_{\{0 \leq t_k \leq y\}}$ has the same law as \mathcal{P} under $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(d\omega) \mathbb{P}_w(d\omega)$, we find that, $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(d\omega) \mathbb{P}_w(d\omega)$ a.s., for all rational $\varepsilon > 0$, the set $[-y, -\varepsilon]$ is contained in

$$\text{Cov}_\varepsilon := \bigcup_{j \in J : m^{(j)} \leq \varepsilon} (w(u_j) - m^{(j)}, w(u_j)).$$

Now, let us assume that \mathcal{A} is not empty, and let us take $s \in \mathcal{A}$. By Lemma 28, $s \notin \{\alpha_i, i \in I\}$. As a result, there exists $\eta > 0$ such that $\widehat{W}_r \geq \widehat{W}_s$ for all $r \in [s, I_{\zeta_s - \eta}]$. In particular, for all $j \in J$ such that $[u_j, v_j] \subseteq [\zeta_s - \eta, \zeta_s]$, we have $w(u_j) - m^{(j)} \geq \widehat{W}_s = w(\zeta_s)$. As $\zeta_s = \inf\{t : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}$, we can find a rational $\varepsilon > 0$ satisfying $w(\zeta_s) \leq \underline{w}(\zeta_s - \eta) - \varepsilon \leq -\varepsilon$.

Let $j \in J$ be such that $m^{(j)} \leq \varepsilon$. If $u_j \leq \zeta_s - \eta$, then $w(u_j) - m^{(j)} \geq \underline{w}(\zeta_s - \eta) - \varepsilon \geq w(\zeta_s)$. If $u_j \in [\zeta_s - \eta, \zeta_s]$, we already observed that $w(u_j) - m^{(j)} \geq w(\zeta_s)$. Finally, if $u_j \geq \zeta_s$, then

⁷We use here the fact that $\lambda \geq 1$, ensuring that \mathbb{R} is covered with “small” intervals. See in particular the remark on high frequency coverings in [She72, Section 5].

$w(u_j) \leq w(\zeta_s)$. In all cases, $w(\zeta_s) \notin (w(u_j) - m^{(j)}, w(u_j))$. We found a point $w(\zeta_s) \in [-y, -\varepsilon]$ that does not belong to Cov_ε . This can only happen with probability 0.

Similar arguments show that the set \mathcal{B} is $\overline{P}_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty, where we write $\overline{P}_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}$ the pushforward of $P_{0,\kappa}^{(-y,\infty)}$ under $w \mapsto \overline{w} := (w(\zeta(w) - s))_{0 \leq s \leq \zeta(w)}$. This entails that \mathcal{B} is also $\overline{P}_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty, and, by time-reversal, $\overline{w} - w(x)$ has under $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw)$ the same distribution as w , so that the result also holds $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. We leave the details to the reader. \square

We may now proceed to the proof of Lemma 12. We define

$$I_b^{(a)} := \inf\{s \geq a : \zeta_s = b\}.$$

Proof of Lemma 12. As above, we start by working under $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ with $\kappa \leq \sqrt{3}$.

Step 1. The first step consists in treating the left-increase points of ζ . To do so, we will use the Markov property of the Brownian snake and “insert” rational numbers in order to be able to apply the previous lemmas. Let $b \in [0, x]$. Because the process

$$\left((w(b+r) - w(b))_{0 \leq r \leq x-b}, ((W_r(b+t))_{0 \leq t \leq \zeta_r - b})_{0 \leq r \leq I_b} \right)$$

has under $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ the law $P_{0,\kappa}^{x-b}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$, we see by Lemma 29 that the set

$$\mathcal{A}^b := \left\{ s \in \text{IP}_{right} \left((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_b} \right) : \zeta_s = \zeta_s = \inf\{t \geq b : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\} \right\}$$

is $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. Similarly, for $b \in [0, x]$, $c > b$, and a , the Markov property shows that the process

$$\left((W_a(b+r) - W_a(b))_{0 \leq r \leq c-b}, ((W_{I_c^{(a)}+r}(b+t))_{0 \leq t \leq \zeta_{I_c^{(a)}+r} - b})_{0 \leq r \leq I_b^{(a)} - I_c^{(a)}} \right)$$

has under $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw \mid a \leq I_0, \zeta_a < b, c < \zeta_a)$ the law $P_0^{c-b}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$. (Beware that here the factor κ does not appear.) As a result, Lemmas 28 and 29 successively show that, on the event $\{a \leq I_0, \zeta_a < b, c < \zeta_a\}$, the sets

$$\mathcal{C}_a^{b,c} := \left\{ s \in \text{IP}_{right} \left((\widehat{W}_s)_{I_c^{(a)} \leq s \leq I_b^{(a)}} \right) \cap \text{IP}_{right}(\zeta) : \zeta_s = \inf_{[a,s]} \zeta \right\}$$

and

$$\mathcal{A}_a^{b,c} := \left\{ s \in \text{IP}_{right} \left((\widehat{W}_s)_{I_c^{(a)} \leq s \leq I_b^{(a)}} \right) : \zeta_s = \inf_{[a,s]} \zeta = \inf\{t \geq b : W_a(t) = W_a(\zeta_s)\} \right\}$$

are $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. As a result, we obtain that $P_{0,\kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s., for all rational values of a, b , and c , these sets are empty.

Now, if the set $\text{IP}_{left}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}_{right}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0})$ is not empty, let s be a point lying in it. Let us first suppose that $\zeta_s = \zeta_s$. By Lemma 28, we know that $s \notin \{\alpha_i, i \in I\}$. This implies that $\zeta_s \in \text{IP}_{left}(w)$. As local minimums of Brownian motion are distinct, we can find a rational $b \in [0, \zeta_s]$ such that $\zeta_s = \inf\{t \geq b : w(t) = w(\zeta_s)\}$, and $s \in \mathcal{A}_b$. Otherwise, $\zeta_s > \zeta_s$.

As $s \in \text{IP}_{\text{left}}(\zeta)$, we can find a rational $a \in [0, s)$ such that $\zeta_a > \zeta_s$ and $\zeta_s = \inf_{[a, s]} \zeta$. If $s \in \text{IP}_{\text{right}}(\zeta)$, we can find rationals $b \in (\zeta_a, \zeta_s)$ and $c \in (\zeta_s, \zeta_a)$ so that $s \in \mathcal{C}_a^{b, c}$. If $s \notin \text{IP}_{\text{right}}(\zeta)$, then $\zeta_s \in \text{IP}_{\text{left}}(W_a)$. We can then find rationals b and c such that $s \in \mathcal{A}_a^{b, c}$.

Summing up, we obtain that $\text{IP}_{\text{left}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}_{\text{right}}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0})$ is $P_{0, \kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. By a similar argument, we show that the set $\text{IP}_{\text{left}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}_{\text{left}}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0})$ is also $P_{0, \kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty.

Step 2. We now use a time-reversal argument under \mathbb{N}_y to treat the right-increase points of ζ . By translation, the quantity

$$\Delta := \mathbb{N}_y \left(\text{IP}_{\text{left}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}) \neq \emptyset \right)$$

does not depend on y . Using the Poissonian decomposition of the excursions of $\zeta - \zeta$, we see that, $P_{0, \kappa}^x(dw)$ a.s.,

$$0 = \mathbb{P}_w \left(\text{IP}_{\text{left}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \neq \emptyset \right) \geq 1 - e^{-2x\Delta},$$

so that $\Delta = 0$. Note that a priori we only have an inequality, because some left-increase points of $(\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}$ may well lie outside of the set $\cup_{i \in I} [\alpha_i, \beta_i]$. Using time-reversal under \mathbb{N}_y , we find that $\text{IP}_{\text{right}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq \ell})$ is also \mathbb{N}_y a.e. empty. As announced at the beginning of this section, we re-obtained here [LGP08, Lemma 3.2]. It is then easier to deal with right-increase points of $(\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}$, because they all lie in $\cup_{i \in I} [\alpha_i, \beta_i]$: using once again the Poissonian decomposition of the excursions of $\zeta - \zeta$, we find (for any $w \in \mathcal{K}$)

$$\mathbb{P}_w \left(\text{IP}_{\text{right}}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \neq \emptyset \right) = 1 - e^{-2\zeta(w)\Delta} = 0.$$

Putting it all together, we showed that $\text{IP}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0})$ is $P_{0, \kappa}^x(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. empty. Using the fact that the distribution of $(w(s))_{0 \leq s \leq \sigma - \varepsilon}$ under \mathbb{B} is absolutely continuous with respect to the distribution of $(w(s))_{0 \leq s \leq \sigma - \varepsilon}$ under $P_{0, \sqrt{3}}^{\sigma - \varepsilon}(dw)$, we obtain that, $\mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s., for all rational $\varepsilon \in (0, \sigma)$, $\text{IP}((\zeta_s)_{I_{\sigma - \varepsilon} \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{I_{\sigma - \varepsilon} \leq s \leq I_0}) = \emptyset$. Standard properties of Brownian motion show that, \mathbb{P}_w a.s. $0 \notin \text{IP}(\zeta)$ and $\inf_{\varepsilon \in (0, \sigma) \cap \mathbb{Q}} I_{\sigma - \varepsilon} = 0$, so that $\mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$ a.s. $\text{IP}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}) = \emptyset$. Using another absolute continuity argument and the fact that $1 \notin \text{IP}_{\text{left}}(\widehat{W})$ (because $0 \notin \text{IP}(w)$), we conclude that $\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$ a.s. $\text{IP}((\zeta_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}) \cap \text{IP}((\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq 1}) = \emptyset$. This completes the proof. \square

7.3 Proof of Lemma 15

As explained in the proof of [Bet10b, Lemma 11], Lemma 15 is a consequence of the following two lemmas, which we state here directly in terms of the Brownian snake. We will use a strategy similar to that of Section 7.1 and derive these lemmas from similar statements under \mathbb{N}_x , namely [LG07, Lemma 2.4] and [LG10, Lemma 6.1]. We call \mathcal{L} the Lebesgue measure on \mathbb{R} .

Lemma 30. *Let $w \in \mathcal{K}$. \mathbb{P}_w^0 a.s., for every $\eta > 0$, for all $x \in [0, 1]$ and all $l < r$ such that,*

- \diamond either $0 < l < r < x$ and $\zeta_l = \zeta_r = \inf_{[l, x]} \zeta$,
- \diamond or $x < l < r < 1$ and $\zeta_l = \zeta_r = \inf_{[x, r]} \zeta$,

the condition $\inf_{[l,r]} \widehat{W} < \widehat{W}_l - \eta$ implies that

$$\liminf_{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} \varepsilon^{-2} \mathcal{L} \left(\left\{ s \in [l, r] : \widehat{W}_s < \widehat{W}_l - \eta + \varepsilon; \forall y \in [\zeta_l, \zeta_s], \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s : \zeta_t = y\}} > \widehat{W}_l - \eta + \frac{\varepsilon}{8} \right\} \right) > 0.$$

Lemma 31. For every $p \geq 1$ and every $\delta \in (0, 1]$, there exists a constant $c_{p,\delta} < \infty$ such that, for every $\varepsilon > 0$,

$$\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w^0 \left[\left(\int_0^1 \{ \widehat{W}_s \leq \min_{0 \leq r \leq 1} \widehat{W}_r + \varepsilon \} ds \right)^p \right] \leq c_{p,\delta} \varepsilon^{4p-\delta}.$$

Proof of Lemma 30. By an absolute continuity argument, it is sufficient to show the result under \mathbb{P}_w (while replacing 1 with I_0). By [LG07, Lemma 2.4], the result holds under \mathbb{N}_0 (while replacing 1 with ℓ), and we may extend it to the case $l = 0, r = \ell$ as follows. Let us suppose that there exists $\eta > 0$ such that $\inf_{[0,\ell]} \widehat{W} < -\eta$ and $\liminf_{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0} \varepsilon^{-2} \mathcal{L}(A_\varepsilon) = 0$, where

$$A_\varepsilon := \left\{ s \in [0, \ell] : \widehat{W}_s < -\eta + \varepsilon; \forall y \in [0, \zeta_s], \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s : \zeta_t = y\}} > -\eta + \frac{\varepsilon}{8} \right\}.$$

In terms of tree, we are going to look at the ancestral lineage of the point with minimum label. By cutting this line sufficiently close to the root, we will create a subtree that contradicts [LG07, Lemma 2.4]. We call $s^\bullet \in (0, 1)$ the (unique) point where \widehat{W} reaches its minimum. As $z \mapsto \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s^\bullet : \zeta_t = z\}}$ is continuous, we can find $z_0 > 0$ such that

$$\sup_{0 \leq z \leq z_0} \left| \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s^\bullet : \zeta_t = z\}} \right| < \eta.$$

We take $z \in (0, z_0]$ such that $l := \sup\{t \leq s^\bullet : \zeta_t = z\}$ is a local minimum of ζ , $x \in (0, l)$ such that $\zeta_l = \inf_{[x,l]} \zeta$, and finally $r := \inf\{t \geq s^\bullet : \zeta_t = z\}$. Then this pair (l, r) satisfies the hypothesis of the lemma for $\eta' := \eta + \widehat{W}_l > 0$, but not the conclusion, as the set

$$\left\{ s \in [l, r] : \widehat{W}_s < \widehat{W}_l - \eta' + \varepsilon; \forall y \in [\zeta_l, \zeta_s], \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s : \zeta_t = y\}} > \widehat{W}_l - \eta' + \frac{\varepsilon}{8} \right\}$$

is contained inside A_ε as soon as

$$\inf_{0 \leq y \leq z} \widehat{W}_{\sup\{t \leq s^\bullet : \zeta_t = y\}} > -\eta + \frac{\varepsilon}{8},$$

which happens for ε small enough.

We conclude by saying that, under \mathbb{P}_w , if the numbers l, r, x , and η satisfy the hypothesis but not the conclusion, then there exists an $i \in I$ such that, either $(l, r) = (\alpha_i, \beta_i)$, in which case $0, \beta_i - \alpha_i$, and η also satisfy the hypothesis but not the conclusion for the process $(\zeta^{(i)}, W^{(i)})$, or $l - \alpha_i, r - \alpha_i, x - \alpha_i$, and η also satisfy the hypothesis but not the conclusion for the process $(\zeta^{(i)}, W^{(i)})$. The probability of this event is then equal to 0, by Lemma 25. \square

We will need in the proof of Lemma 31 the following fact: for a stopping time T such that $T < 1$ \mathbb{P} a.s., we have, for any bounded measurable function f on \mathcal{K} ,

$$\mathbb{E} \left[f \left(\left(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}(t) \right)_{0 \leq t \leq T} \right) \right] = E_\sigma^1 \left[f \left((w(t))_{0 \leq t \leq T} \right) \frac{p'_{1-T}(w(T))}{p'_1(\sigma)} \mathbb{1}_{\{\underline{w}(T) > 0, T < 1\}} \right] \quad (30)$$

where

$$p'_a(x) := -\frac{x}{\sqrt{2\pi a^3}} \exp\left(-\frac{x^2}{2a}\right)$$

denotes the derivative of the density of a centered Gaussian variable with variance a . This is an easy consequence of [Bet10a, Equation (19)]: we write

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E} \left[f \left(\left(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}(t) \right)_{0 \leq t \leq T} \right) \right] &= \lim_{m \rightarrow 1} \mathbb{E} \left[f \left(\left(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}(t) \right)_{0 \leq t \leq T \wedge m} \right) \right] \\ &= \lim_{m \rightarrow 1} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{j=1}^{\lceil m2^n \rceil} \mathbb{E} \left[f \left(\left(F_{[0,1]}^{\sigma \rightarrow 0}(t) \right)_{0 \leq t \leq j2^{-n}} \right) \mathbb{1}_{\{(j-1)2^{-n} < T \wedge m \leq j2^{-n}\}} \right], \end{aligned}$$

and apply [Bet10a, Equation (19)] inside the sum. We leave the technical details to the reader.

Proof of Lemma 31. We fix $p \geq 1$ and $\delta \in (0, 1]$.

Step 1. As before, the first step is to dispose of the two conditionings. We notice that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^1 \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_1 + \varepsilon\}} ds &= \int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_1 + \varepsilon\}} ds + \int_{I_{\sigma/2}}^1 \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_1 + \varepsilon\}} ds \\ &\leq \int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds + \int_{I_{\sigma/2}}^1 \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \min_{I_{\sigma/2} \leq r \leq 1} \widehat{W}_r + \varepsilon\}} ds. \end{aligned}$$

As both terms in the previous line have the same law under $\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w^0(dw)$, we obtain

$$\int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w^0 \left[\left(\int_0^1 \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_1 + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \leq 2^{p+1} \int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w^0 \left[\left(\int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right].$$

Applying (30), we see that

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}_w^0 \left[\left(\int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] &= \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \frac{p'_{1-I_{\sigma/2}}(\sigma/2)}{p'_1(\sigma)} \mathbb{1}_{\{I_{\sigma/2} < 1\}} \right] \\ &\leq c_\sigma \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right], \end{aligned}$$

where

$$c_\sigma := \sup_{a > 0} \frac{p'_a(\sigma/2)}{p'_1(\sigma)} < \infty.$$

We then dispose of the second conditioning. By using [Bet10a, Equation (18)], it is not hard to see that

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{\mathcal{K}} \mathbb{B}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_{\sigma/2}} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_{\sigma/2}} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \\ \leq \sqrt{2} \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_{0,\kappa}^{\sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_0} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right], \end{aligned}$$

where, from now on $\kappa = \sqrt{3}$. Putting it all together, we see that it will suffice to bound the right-hand side of this inequality.

Step 2. The second difficulty comes from the factor κ . Our strategy is the following. By stretching the time by a factor κ^2 for the process w , we obtain a standard Brownian motion, no longer rescaled. But we have to be careful that, by doing so, we change the intensity of the Poisson point measure (29). Precisely, let $(X_i)_{i \in I}$, be a sequence of i.i.d. random Bernoulli variables with mean $1/\kappa^2$, independent from the process (29). Then, the marking theorem of Poisson point measures entails that the process $\sum_{i \in I} \delta_{(\kappa^2 \zeta_{\alpha_i}, W^{(i)})}$ has, under $\int_{\mathcal{K}} P_{0,\kappa}^{\sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw)$, the same distribution as the process

$$\sum_{i \in I} \delta_{(\zeta_{\alpha_i}, W^{(i)})} \mathbb{1}_{\{X_i=1\}}, \quad \text{under} \quad \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_0^{\kappa^2 \sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dw).$$

As a result, writing $I' := \{i \in I : X_i = 1\}$, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_{0,\kappa}^{\sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_0} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \\ &= \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_{0,\kappa}^{\sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\sum_{i \in I} \int_0^{\beta_i - \alpha_i} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^{(i)} \leq \min\{\min_{j \in I} \widehat{W}^{(j)}, j \in I\} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \\ &= \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_0^{\kappa^2 \sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\sum_{i \in I'} \int_0^{\beta_i - \alpha_i} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^{(i)} \leq \min\{\min_{j \in I'} \widehat{W}^{(j)}, j \in I'\} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \\ &\leq \kappa^2 \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_0^{\kappa^2 \sigma/2}(dw) \mathbb{E}_w \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \widehat{W}_{I_0} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right]. \end{aligned}$$

We used in the first equality the fact that $(\widehat{W}_s)_{0 \leq s \leq I_0}$ reaches its minimum on $\bigcup_{i \in I} [\alpha_i, \beta_i]$, which was proven during the proof of Lemma 11. To obtain the last inequality, we conditioned by the event

$$\{\min\{\min_{j \in I'} \widehat{W}^{(j)}, j \in I'\} = \min\{\min_{j \in I} \widehat{W}^{(j)}, j \in I\}\},$$

which happens with probability $1/\kappa^2$.

Step 3. We will now use Bismut's description of n in order to apply [LG10, Lemma 6.1]. In some sense, the measure we have been considering so far takes into account only half of the excursion measure \mathbb{N}_0 . We remedy to this by defining, for $a > 0$, the following probability measure on $\mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}_+, \mathcal{K})^2$:

$$\mathbb{P}^a(dW^1 dW^2) := \int_{\mathcal{K}} P_0^a(dw) \mathbb{P}_w(dW^1) \mathbb{P}_w(dW^2).$$

Under this measure, we call $I_0^1 := \inf\{s : \zeta(W_s^1) = 0\}$ and $I_0^2 := \inf\{s : \zeta(W_s^2) = 0\}$. It will be enough to see that

$$\sup_{\varepsilon > 0} \frac{\Phi_a(\varepsilon)}{\varepsilon^{4p-\delta}} < \infty, \quad \text{where } \Phi_a(\varepsilon) := \mathbb{E}^a \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0^1} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^1 \leq \min \widehat{W}^1 + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right].$$

Let us call $m := \min \widehat{W}^1 \wedge \min \widehat{W}^2$. Conditioning on the event $\{\min \widehat{W}^1 < \min \widehat{W}^2\}$, and then on $\{I_0^1 < 1, I_0^2 < 1\}$, we obtain, for $a \leq A$,

$$\begin{aligned} \Phi_a(\varepsilon) &\leq 2 \mathbb{E}^a \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0^1} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^1 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds + \int_0^{I_0^2} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^2 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right] \\ &\leq \frac{2}{(\mathbb{P}^a(I_0^1 < 1))^2} \mathbb{E}^a \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0^1} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^1 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds + \int_0^{I_0^2} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^2 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \mathbb{1}_{\{I_0^1 < 1, I_0^2 < 1\}} \right] \\ &\leq C_A \mathbb{E}^a \left[\left(\int_0^{I_0^1} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^1 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds + \int_0^{I_0^2} \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s^2 \leq m+\varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \mathbb{1}_{\{I_0^1 + I_0^2 < 2\}} \right], \end{aligned}$$

where C_A is a finite constant depending only on A . Using Bismut's description of n [RY99, Theorem XII.4.7], then [LG10, Lemma 6.1], we see that

$$\int_0^A da \Phi_a(\varepsilon) \leq C_A \mathbb{N}_0 \left(\int_0^\ell dt \mathbb{1}_{\{\ell < 2\}} \left(\int_0^\ell \mathbb{1}_{\{\widehat{W}_s \leq \min \widehat{W} + \varepsilon\}} ds \right)^p \right) \leq 2C_A c'_{p,\delta} \varepsilon^{4p-\delta},$$

where $c'_{p,\delta} < \infty$ depends only on p and δ . As a result, we obtain that, for Lebesgue almost every $a \in (0, A]$, we have $\sup_{\varepsilon > 0} \varepsilon^{\delta-4p} \Phi_a(\varepsilon) < \infty$. We conclude by noticing that, for all $a, b > 0$, we have $\Phi_{a+b}(\varepsilon) \leq 2^p(\Phi_a(\varepsilon) + \Phi_b(\varepsilon))$. If for some A , we had $\sup_{\varepsilon > 0} \varepsilon^{\delta-4p} \Phi_A(\varepsilon) = \infty$, then, for all $a \in (0, A)$ we would have $\sup_{\varepsilon > 0} \varepsilon^{\delta-4p} \Phi_a(\varepsilon) = \infty$ or $\sup_{\varepsilon > 0} \varepsilon^{\delta-4p} \Phi_{A-a}(\varepsilon) = \infty$ (possibly both), which would contradict our latest observation. \square

7.4 Upper bound for the Hausdorff dimension of ∂q_∞^σ

We may now end the proof of Theorem 3.

Proof of Theorem 3 (upper bound). Under \mathbb{P}_w , we will call $T_x := \inf\{r \geq 0 : \zeta_r = \zeta(w) - x\}$. For $s \in [0, I_0]$, we set $s^+ := \sup\{t : \zeta_t = \zeta_s\}$. Using the same kind of reasoning as in the previous sections, we see that it is enough to show that, for any pseudo-metric d on $[0, I_0]$ such that

$$d(s, t) \leq \widehat{W}_s + \widehat{W}_t - 2 \min_{r \in [s^+, t]} \widehat{W}_r, \quad 0 \leq s \leq t \leq I_0,$$

we have

$$\mathbb{P}_w(\dim_{\mathcal{H}}(\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}, d) \leq 2) = 1, \quad \mathbb{B}(dw) \text{ a.s.}$$

We fix $\eta \in (0, 1)$. We will cover $\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}$ by small open balls. Let us first bound the distance between two points in $\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}$. Using [LG07, Lemma 5.1] and the fact that, $\mathbb{B}(dw)$ a.s., w is $1/(2+\eta)$ -Hölder continuous, it is not hard to see that there exists a (random) constant $c < \infty$ such that, $\mathbb{B}(dw)$ a.s. \mathbb{P}_w a.s.,

$$\left| \widehat{W}_s - \widehat{W}_t \right| \leq c (d_\zeta(s, t))^{\frac{1}{2+\eta}}, \quad \text{for all } s, t \in [0, I_0], \quad (31)$$

where

$$d_\zeta(s, t) := \zeta_s + \zeta_t - 2 \min_{r \in [s \wedge t, s \vee t]} \zeta_r, \quad s, t \in [0, I_0].$$

Let $0 \leq x \leq y \leq \zeta(w)$, and $m(x, y) \in [T_x^+, T_y]$ be such that $\widehat{W}_{m(x, y)} = \min_{s \in [T_x^+, T_y]} \widehat{W}_s$. When (31) holds, we have

$$\begin{aligned} d(T_x, T_y) &\leq \widehat{W}_{T_x} + \widehat{W}_{T_y} - 2\widehat{W}_{m(x, y)} \\ &\leq c \left((d_\zeta(T_x, m(x, y)))^{\frac{1}{2+\eta}} + (d_\zeta(T_y, m(x, y)))^{\frac{1}{2+\eta}} \right) \\ &\leq 2c \left(y - x + 2(\zeta_{m(x, y)} - \zeta_{m(x, y)}) \right)^{\frac{1}{2+\eta}}. \end{aligned} \quad (32)$$

In order to control the term $(\zeta_{m(x, y)} - \zeta_{m(x, y)})$ in the above inequality, we sort out the excursions going “too high.” Namely, we fix $\varepsilon > 0$, and set

$$I^{(\varepsilon)} := \left\{ i \in I : \sup_{s \geq 0} \zeta_s^{(i)} > \varepsilon \right\}.$$

By Lemma 25, the cardinality of $I^{(\varepsilon)}$ is under \mathbb{P}_w a Poisson random variable with mean

$$2 \int_0^{\zeta(w)} dt \mathbb{N}_w(t) \left(\sup_{s \geq 0} \zeta_s > \varepsilon \right) = 2\zeta(w) n \left(\sup_{s \geq 0} e_s > \varepsilon \right) = \frac{\zeta(w)}{\varepsilon}.$$

In particular, $|I^{(\varepsilon)}| < \infty$, \mathbb{P}_w a.s. We call $B(s, r) \subseteq [0, I_0]$ the open ball of radius r centered at s , for the pseudo-metric d , and, for $i \in I$, we call $x_i := \zeta(w) - \zeta_{\alpha_i}$. If $\delta := 2c(3\varepsilon)^{1/(2+\eta)}$, we claim that the set

$$\left\{ B(T_{x_i}, \delta), i \in I^{(\varepsilon)} \right\} \cup \left\{ B(T_{k\varepsilon}, \delta), 0 \leq k \leq \frac{\zeta(w)}{\varepsilon} \right\}$$

is a covering of $\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}$. To see this, let us take a point $y \in [0, \zeta(w)]$, and let us consider $x := \max\{s \in \{0\} \cup \{x_i, i \in I^{(\varepsilon)}\} : s \leq y\}$. Because $T_x^+ \leq m(x, y) \leq T_y$, we see that $\zeta_{m(x, y)} - \zeta_{m(x, y)} \leq \varepsilon$. Then, if $y - x < \varepsilon$, by (32), we have $T_y \in B(T_x, \delta)$. If $y - x \geq \varepsilon$, then $y - \lfloor y/\varepsilon \rfloor \varepsilon < \varepsilon$, and $\lfloor y/\varepsilon \rfloor \varepsilon \geq x$, so that $\zeta_{m(\lfloor y/\varepsilon \rfloor \varepsilon, y)} - \zeta_{m(\lfloor y/\varepsilon \rfloor \varepsilon, y)} \leq \varepsilon$. This yields that $T_y \in B(T_{\lfloor y/\varepsilon \rfloor \varepsilon}, \delta)$, by (32).

The $(2 + \eta)(1 + \eta)$ -value of this covering is less than

$$\left(|I^{(\varepsilon)}| + \frac{\zeta(w)}{\varepsilon} + 1 \right) (2\delta)^{(2+\eta)(1+\eta)} \leq c' \left(|I^{(\varepsilon)}| + \frac{\zeta(w)}{\varepsilon} + 1 \right) \varepsilon^{1+\eta},$$

for some constant c' , independent of ε . By Chebyshev’s inequality, we see that with \mathbb{P}_w -probability at least $1 - \varepsilon/\zeta(w)$, we have $|I^{(\varepsilon)}| \leq 2\zeta(w)/\varepsilon$. We conclude that, $\mathbb{B}(dw)$ a.s., the $(2 + \eta)(1 + \eta)$ -Hausdorff content of $\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}$ is \mathbb{P}_w a.s. equal to 0, so that $\dim_{\mathcal{H}}(\{T_x, 0 \leq x \leq \zeta(w)\}, d) \leq (2 + \eta)(1 + \eta)$. Finally, letting $\eta \rightarrow 0$ yields the result. \square

8 Developments and open questions

8.1 Quadrangulations with a simple boundary

We considered in this work quadrangulations with a boundary that is not necessarily simple. It is natural to ask ourselves what happens if we require the boundary to be simple. This translates into a conditioning of the coding forest from where some technical difficulties arise and our results may not straightforwardly be adapted to this case. We expect, however, to find the same limit, up to some factor modifying the length of the boundary.

Very roughly, the intuition is that the 0-regularity of the boundary implies that a large quadrangulation with a boundary should typically consist in one large quadrangulation with a simple boundary on which small quadrangulations with a boundary are grafted. As a result, if we remove these small components on the boundary, the first quadrangulation should not be too far from a quadrangulation with a simple boundary having roughly the same number of faces but a significantly smaller boundary.

We expect that such results may be rigorously derived from our analysis with a little more work.

8.2 Application to self-avoiding walks

We present here a model of self-avoiding walks on random quadrangulations, which is adapted from [BBG11]. In the latter reference, Borot, Bouttier and Guitter study a model of loops on quadrangulations. We can easily adapt their model to the case of self-avoiding walks, and we see that it is directly related to quadrangulations with a boundary. We call **step tile** a quadrangle in which two opposite half-edges incident to the quadrangle are distinguished, and **half-step tile** a face of degree 2 in which one incident half-edge is distinguished. On the figures, we draw a (red) line linking the two distinguished edges in the step tiles, as well as a line linking the distinguished edge to the center of the face in the half-step tiles (see Figure 11). These lines will constitute the self-avoiding walk of the model.

Let $n \geq 0$ and $\sigma \geq 1$ be two integers. A map whose faces consist in two half-step tiles, $\sigma - 1$ step tiles, and n quadrangles is called an (n, σ) -**configuration** if it satisfies the following:

- ◊ the reverse of every distinguished half-edge is also a distinguished half-edge,
- ◊ there are no cyclic chains of step tiles,
- ◊ the root of the map is the half-edge that is not distinguished in one of the two half-step tiles.

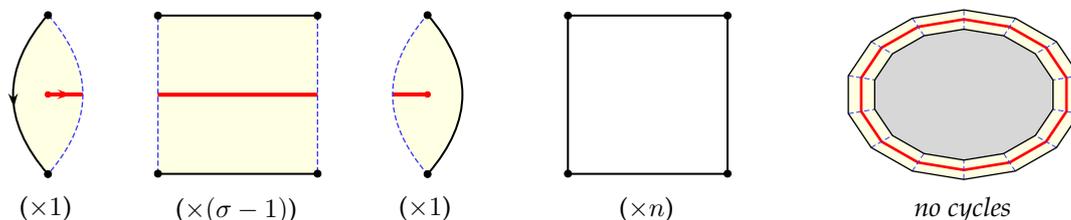


Figure 11: Borot, Bouttier and Guitter's model of self-avoiding walks. The distinguished edges are the thin dashed (blue) lines, whereas the other edges are the thicker black solid lines. The path is drawn in an even thicker solid (red) line. It starts in the root half-step tile and ends in the other half-step tile. We added an arrowhead on it in the root half-step tile to symbolize this fact.

We claim that the (n, σ) -configurations are in one-to-one correspondence with the quadrangulations with a boundary having n internal faces and 2σ half-edges on the boundary. Indeed, let us take an (n, σ) -configuration. It has 2σ distinguished half-edges forming σ different edges. When removing these σ edges, we obtain a map having n quadrangles and one other face of degree $1 + 2(\sigma - 1) + 1 = 2\sigma$, this face being incident to the root. This is thus a quadrangulation of $\mathcal{Q}_{n, \sigma}$. Conversely, let us consider a quadrangulation of $\mathcal{Q}_{n, \sigma}$, and let us call $\epsilon_1 = \epsilon_*, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_{2\sigma}$ the half-edges incident to its external face, read in the clockwise order. We add extra edges

(that do not cross each other) linking $e_{2\sigma-i}^+$ to e_{i+1}^+ for $0 \leq i \leq \sigma - 1$. We thus create two faces of degree 2 (one incident to e_* and one incident to $e_{\sigma+1}$) as well as $\sigma - 1$ faces of degree 4. These faces are half-step tiles and step tiles when we distinguish the half-edges composing the extra edges we added. It is then easy to see that this map is an (n, σ) -configuration (see Figure 12). Moreover, the composition of the two operations we described here (in an order or the other) is clearly the identity, so that our claim follows.

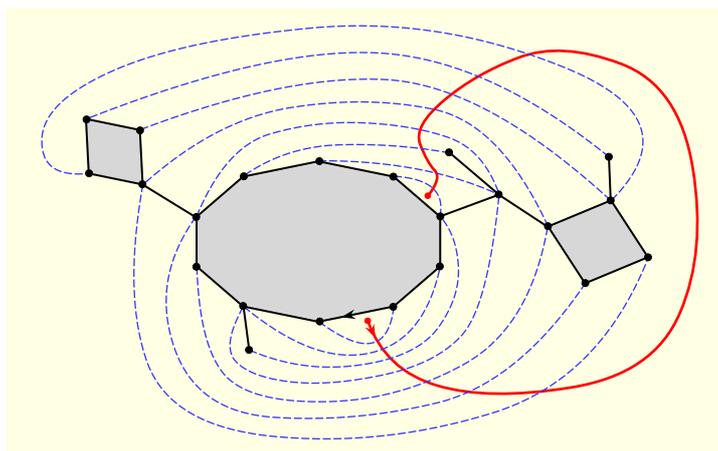


Figure 12: A quadrangulation with a boundary and the corresponding configuration. On this figure, $\sigma = 15$.

We believe that some results may be derived from our work and this bijection. For example, we think possible to show that, when $\sigma_n/\sqrt{2n} \rightarrow \sigma \in (0, \infty)$, a uniform (n, σ_n) -configuration converges (up to extraction) toward a metric space with a marked path in some sense. Moreover, the limiting space should be homeomorphic to the 2-dimensional sphere and have dimension 4 a.s. The marked path should also have dimension 2.

Here again, however, some technical difficulties arise. The main problem is that the gluing operation tremendously modifies the metric. We may easily define this gluing operation in the continuous setting by considering the quotient of q_∞^σ by the coarsest equivalence relation for which $fl(x) \sim fl(\sigma - x)$, $x \in [0, \sigma]$ (with the notation of the end of Section 5), but some care is required when dealing with this quotient. In particular, it is not clear that the points identified in this quotient are solely the one identified by the equivalence relation. Then, it also remains to show that the convergence still holds after the gluing operation.

Understanding the scaling limit of quadrangulations with a simple boundary and this gluing operation could also lead to some interesting results on random self-avoiding walks on random quadrangulations, as quadrangulations with a marked self-avoiding walk are in one-to-one correspondence with quadrangulations with a simple boundary by a bijection similar to the one described above.

We end this section by mentioning that the model we presented corresponds to the particular case Borot, Bouttier and Guitter called *rigid* in [BBG11]. We may also consider the more general case in which the two distinguished half-edges of a step tile are not required to be opposite. In this model, we also expect to find the same limits.

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