

Geometric Optimization Exercises

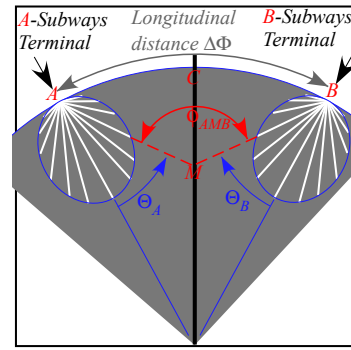


Fig. 1 Local friction-free subways on Sophomore Physics-Earth (SPE). Fig. 2 Global friction-free subways on SPE.

1. a. Friction-free local subway path ACB in Fig. 1 is laser-beam straight and normal to line thru Earth center only at turning point C . How long does it take for subway car starting with $v(0)=0$ at point A to arrive at point B ?
- b. Assume constant gravity $g=9.8m/s^2$ for friction-free local subway path AMB in Fig. 1 where turning vertex M is negotiated ideally with no loss of energy (or life!). Derive depth D_V of point M and angle ϕ_{AMB} that gives the quickest trip from A to B ($AC=1km=CB$) thru M and derive the AMB time of travel $\tau_{AMB} = \text{_____ min.}$
- c. Cycloid (Lect. 11 p.33-42) gives absolute minimum τ_{AB} . Derive its (x,y) formula and plot using attached cycloid graph paper. Over it plot the optimal V-shaped path AMB of 1b to help compare the two.
- d. Use Lagrange equation of circle angle ϕ to find cycloid travel time $\tau_{AB} = \text{_____ min}$ and compare it to τ_{AMB} .

2. Assume Isotropic Harmonic Oscillator IHO gravity in Fig. 2 with acceleration $g=9.8m/s^2$ at surface dropping to $g=0$ at Earth-center C_{\oplus} (bottom-center of Fig.2). The objective (as in Ex. 1) is to find path AMB and angle ϕ_{AMB} having least time of travel τ_{AMB} between Terminal points A and B separated by great circle longitude angle $\Delta\Phi_{AB}$.

Before solving main objective consider some alternative routes whose travel times should be easy to derive.

- a. Direct straight line route from A to B : $\tau_{A \text{ direct to } B} = \text{_____ min.}$ Relate to SPE half-orbit period $\tau_{\circ}/2$
- b. Straight line segment routes A to C then C to B : $\tau_{A \text{ to } C \text{ to } B} = \text{_____ min.}$ “ “
- c. Direct A to Earth-center C_{\oplus} then C_{\oplus} back up to B : $\tau_{A \text{ to } C_{\oplus} \text{ to } B} = \text{_____ min.}$ “ “

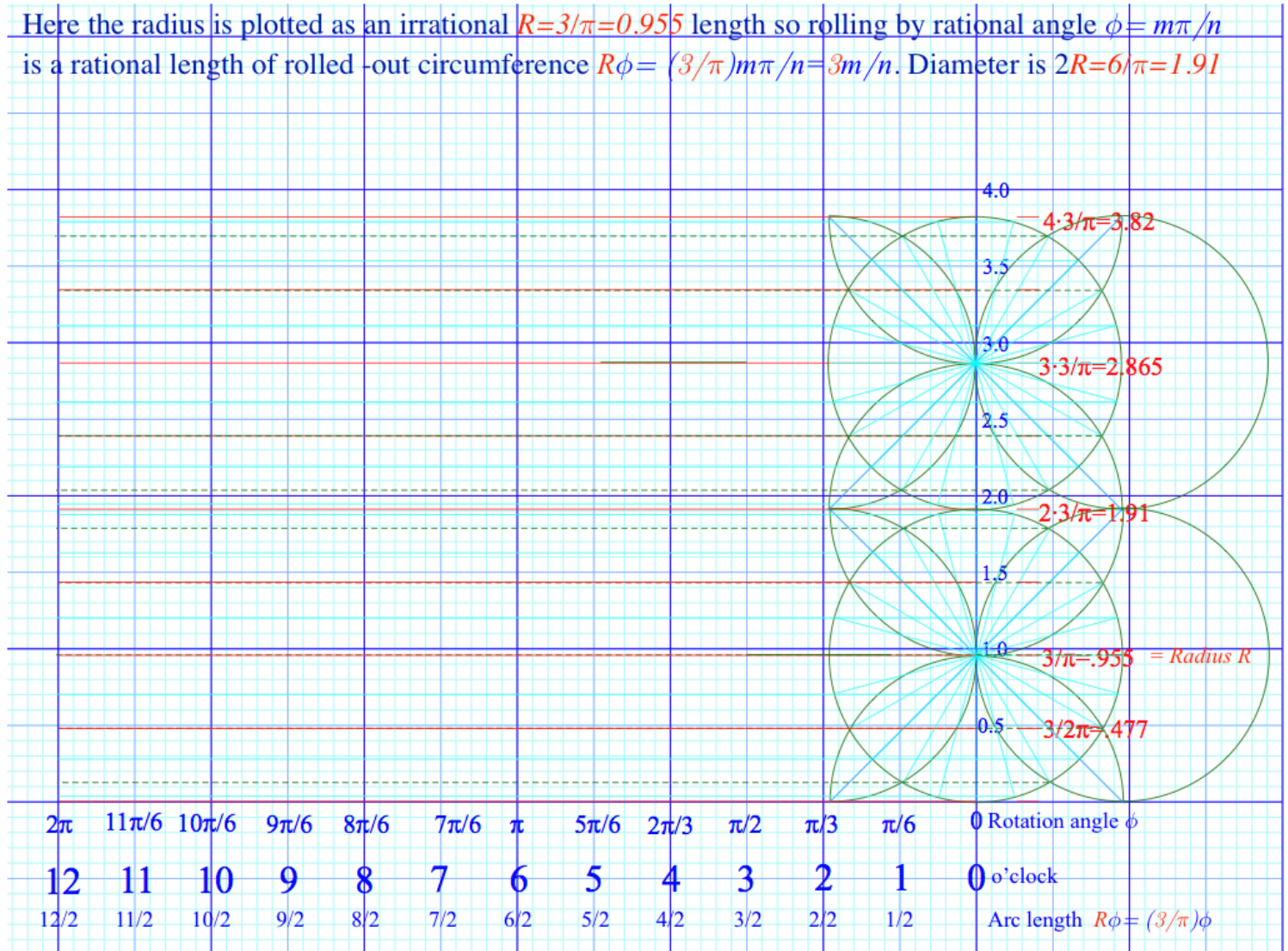
3. To solve main objective of Ex.2, imagine subway cars from terminal A or B leave their terminal at time $t_0=0$ and fall along straight tunnels (white lines) to positions at later time t_I indicated by points on blue oval in Fig. 2. Ovals A and B expand equally until a touch-time t_T when they are tangent to each other and to vertical line CM .

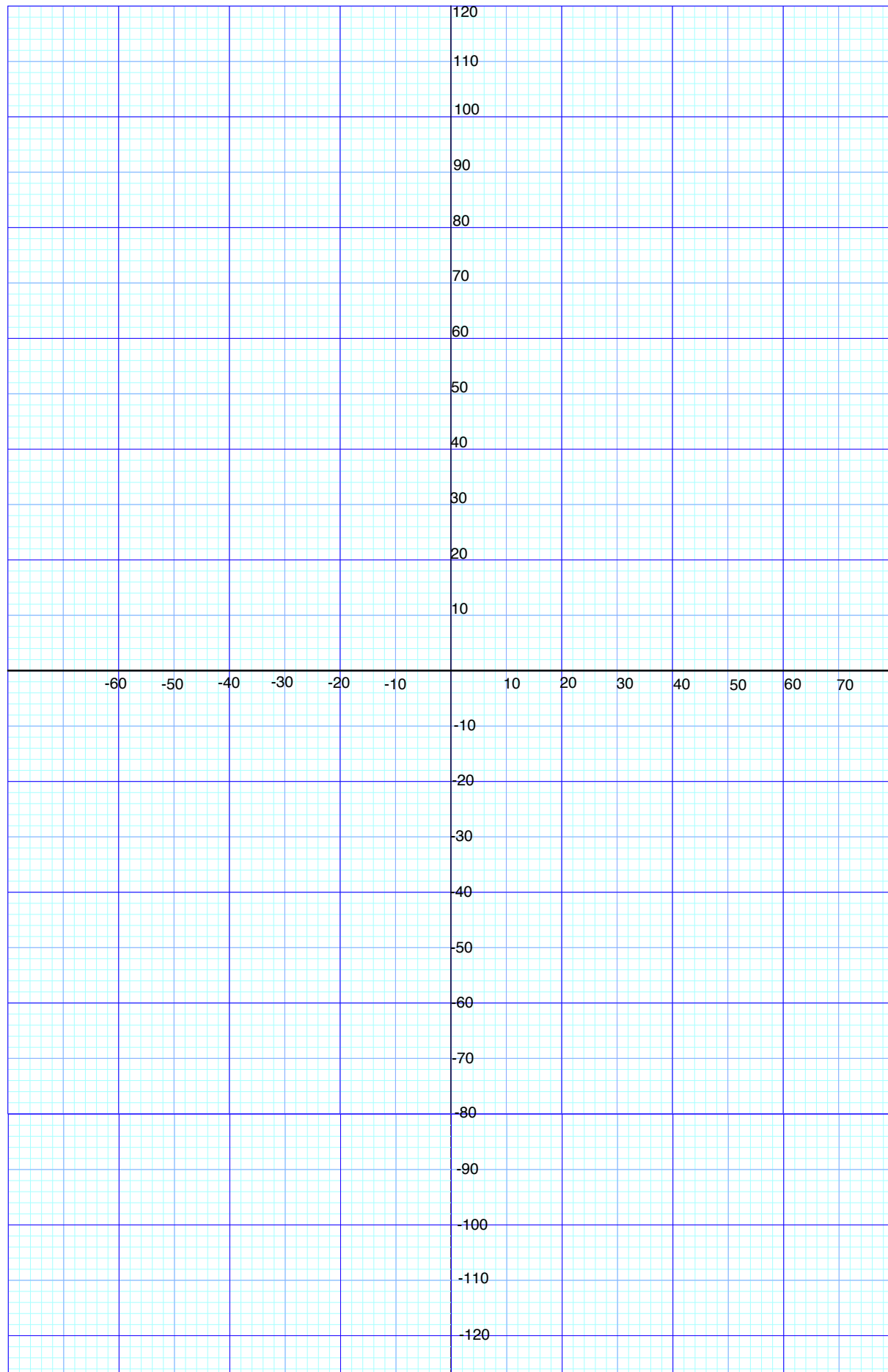
- a. That touch-time t_T is related to total minimum travel time τ_{AMB} . How? (Recall τ_{AMB} for Ex. 1.)
- b. Derive polar $r(\Theta, t)$ equation for “ovals” relative to Terminal origin. What Thales geometric form is it?
- c. Relate optimizing angle ϕ_{AMB} to angle $\Delta\Phi_{AB}$ of longitudinal A to B separation. Plot geometry for $\Delta\Phi = \frac{\pi}{2}$. It helps to define a slope angle α between optimal subway path and terminal vertical radial line.
- d. A terminal-launched SPE circular orbit serves as a clock hand that quantifies growing “oval” size. Include this in your geometric plot to quantify optimal travel time τ_{AMB} and plot car positions vs. t . Show car positions at fractions $\frac{1}{12}, \frac{2}{12}, \frac{3}{12}, \dots$ of half-orbit period $\tau_{\circ}/2$ to help relate to travel time τ_{AMB} .
- e. Verify geometry c and d in extreme cases of distance that is small ($\Delta\Phi \ll \frac{\pi}{2}$ like Ex.1) or large ($\Delta\Phi = \pi$).

For Exercises 1c and 1d:

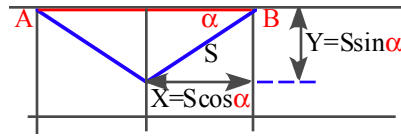
Huygen's cycloidal-pendulum construction graph (See Lect. 11p.33-42).

Motion may be calculated using Lagrange's 1D equation using single angle variable ϕ and angular velocity $\dot{\phi}$. In *mks* units the circumference $2\pi R$ of the circle (and width *ACB* of cycloid) should be $2km$ as shown in Fig. 1.





Exercise Set 6 Solutions 1a. Car falls “down” A to C in 21 min. and back “up” to B in 21 min. Total time: 42 min.
 Exercise 1b The simplest local (constant gravity) travel time is greatly reduced by a “V” shaped path between A and B that drops by angle α below the line connecting A to B. For nearby points, the connecting line is very close to the horizon. Not so for more global excursions.



Local uniform g approximation

For local V-path let A and B be $L=2X$ apart and connected by an isosceles “V” of slant length S . Uniform gravity potential $V=mgy$ is zero at the surface as is assumed the initial velocity $v(t=0)$ and $KE(t=0)$. Then total energy E will be conserved at zero value.

$$0 = E = KE + PE = \frac{1}{2} mv^2 + mgy = \frac{1}{2} m \left(\frac{ds}{dt} \right)^2 - mgs \sin \alpha \quad \text{where: } y = -s \sin \alpha \quad \text{and: } v = \frac{ds}{dt} = \sqrt{2gs \sin \alpha}$$

The travel time is then a simple integral. Consider just the first (or last) half travel time.

$$T = \int_0^T dt = \int_0^S \frac{ds}{v} = \int_0^S \frac{ds}{\sqrt{2gs \sin \alpha}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2g \sin \alpha}} \int_0^S s^{-1/2} ds = \frac{S^{1/2}}{\frac{1}{2} \sqrt{2g \sin \alpha}} = \sqrt{\frac{2S}{g \sin \alpha}} \quad \text{where: } X = S \cos \alpha$$

$$\text{time: } T_{AtoX} = \sqrt{\frac{2X}{g \sin \alpha \cos \alpha}} \quad \text{frequency: } \nu_{AtoBtoA} = \frac{1}{4T_{AtoX}} = \frac{1}{4} \sqrt{\frac{g \sin \alpha \cos \alpha}{2X}} = \frac{1}{8} \sqrt{\frac{g}{X}} \sqrt{\sin 2\alpha}$$

Finding α -min-max for either ν or T involves zeroing its α -derivative.

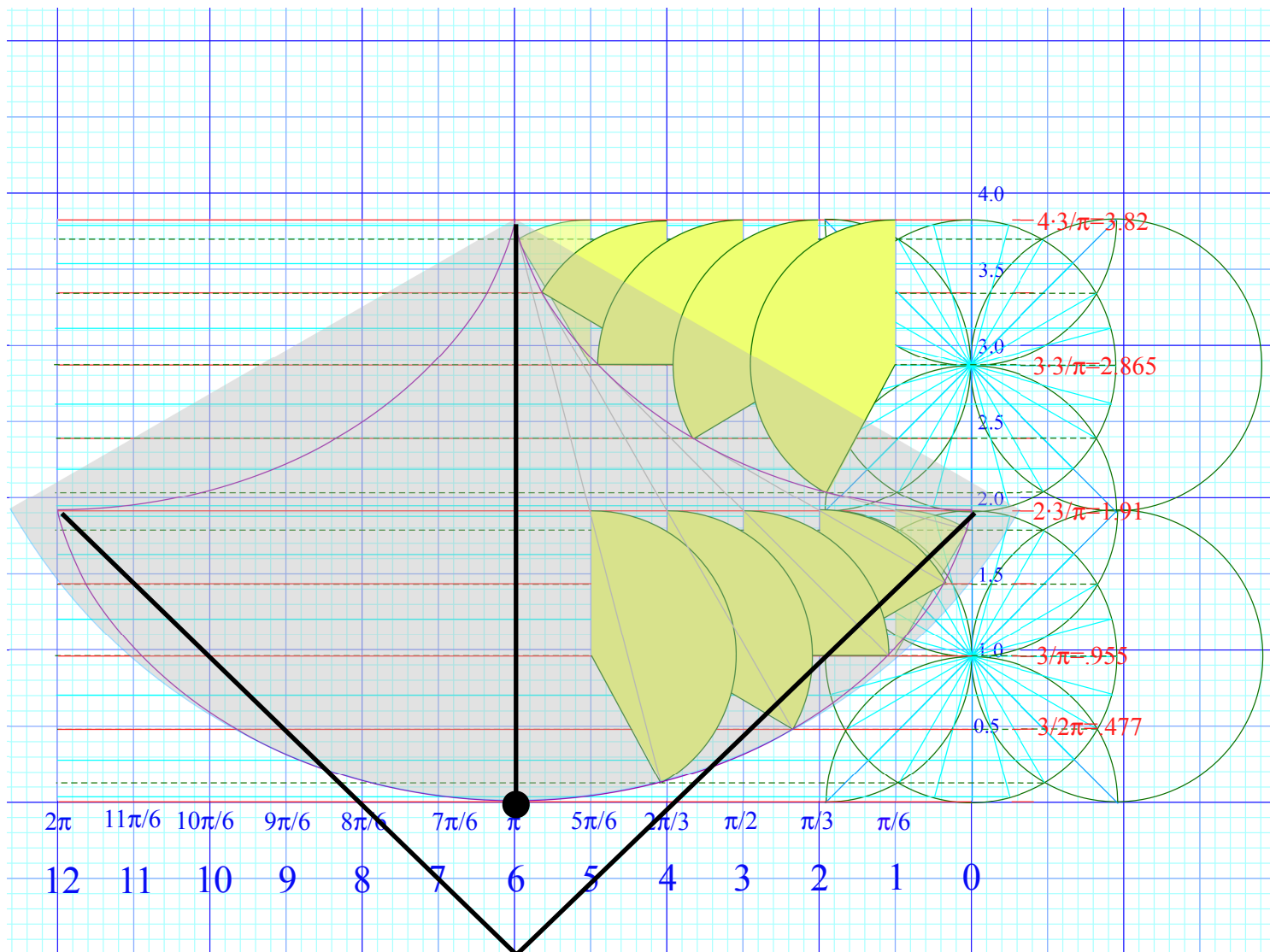
$$\frac{d\nu}{d\alpha} = 0 = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{g}{X}} \frac{d}{d\alpha} \sqrt{\sin 2\alpha} = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{g}{X}} \frac{\cos 2\alpha}{\sqrt{\sin 2\alpha}} \Rightarrow \cos 2\alpha = 0 \Rightarrow \alpha = \pm \frac{\pi}{4}$$

So angle $\alpha=45^\circ$ minimizes the half-travel time as well as twice that, the whole A-to-X-to-B time.

$$T_{AtoXtoB}(\text{1way}) = 2 \sqrt{\frac{2X}{g(1/\sqrt{2})^2}} = 4 \sqrt{\frac{X}{g}} = 2\sqrt{2} \sqrt{\frac{L}{g}} = 2\sqrt{2} \sqrt{\frac{2 \cdot 10^3 m}{9.8 m/s^2}} = 40.4 \text{ sec for: } L = AtoB \text{ distance} = 2X = 2km$$

An A-to-B distance of $L=2km$ on Earth is thus traversed in a little over 40 seconds. A longitude $\Delta\phi=1^\circ$ gives $L=111km$ and $T=301 \text{ seconds}$ or nearly 5 min. (Both beat the 42-minute half-circum-period by a lot!.)

$-\pi R$ 0 $+\pi R$

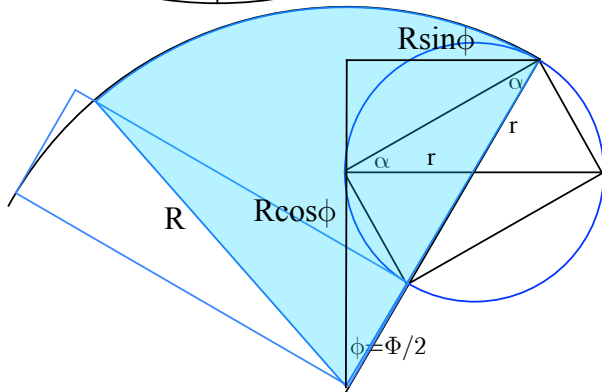
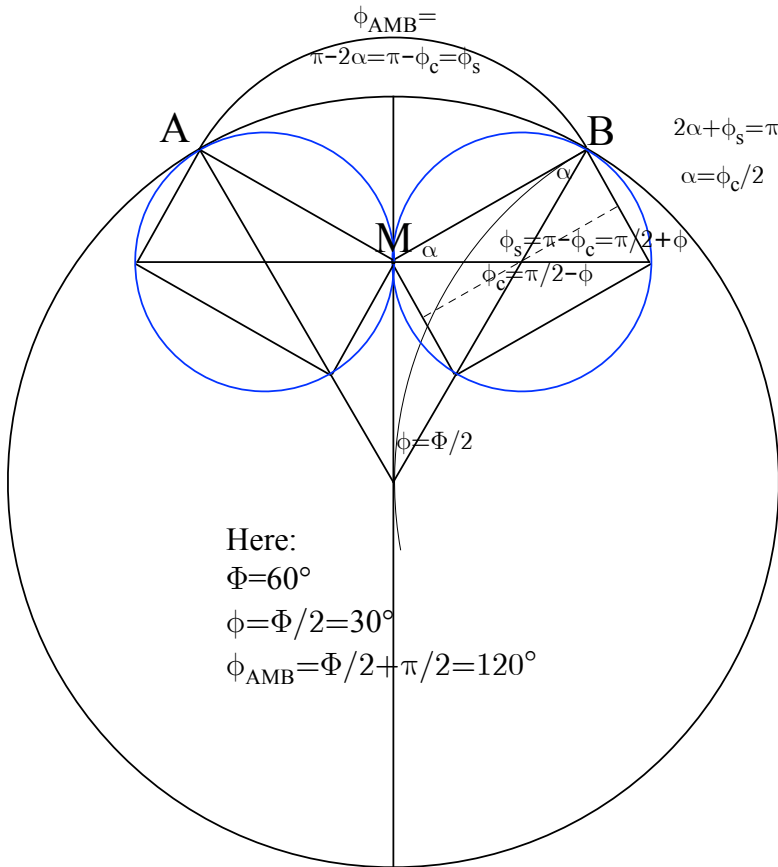


Pendulum of length $4R$ has frequency: $v = \frac{\omega}{2\pi} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \sqrt{\frac{g}{4R}}$ where: $\pi R = 1\text{km} = 10^3\text{m}$

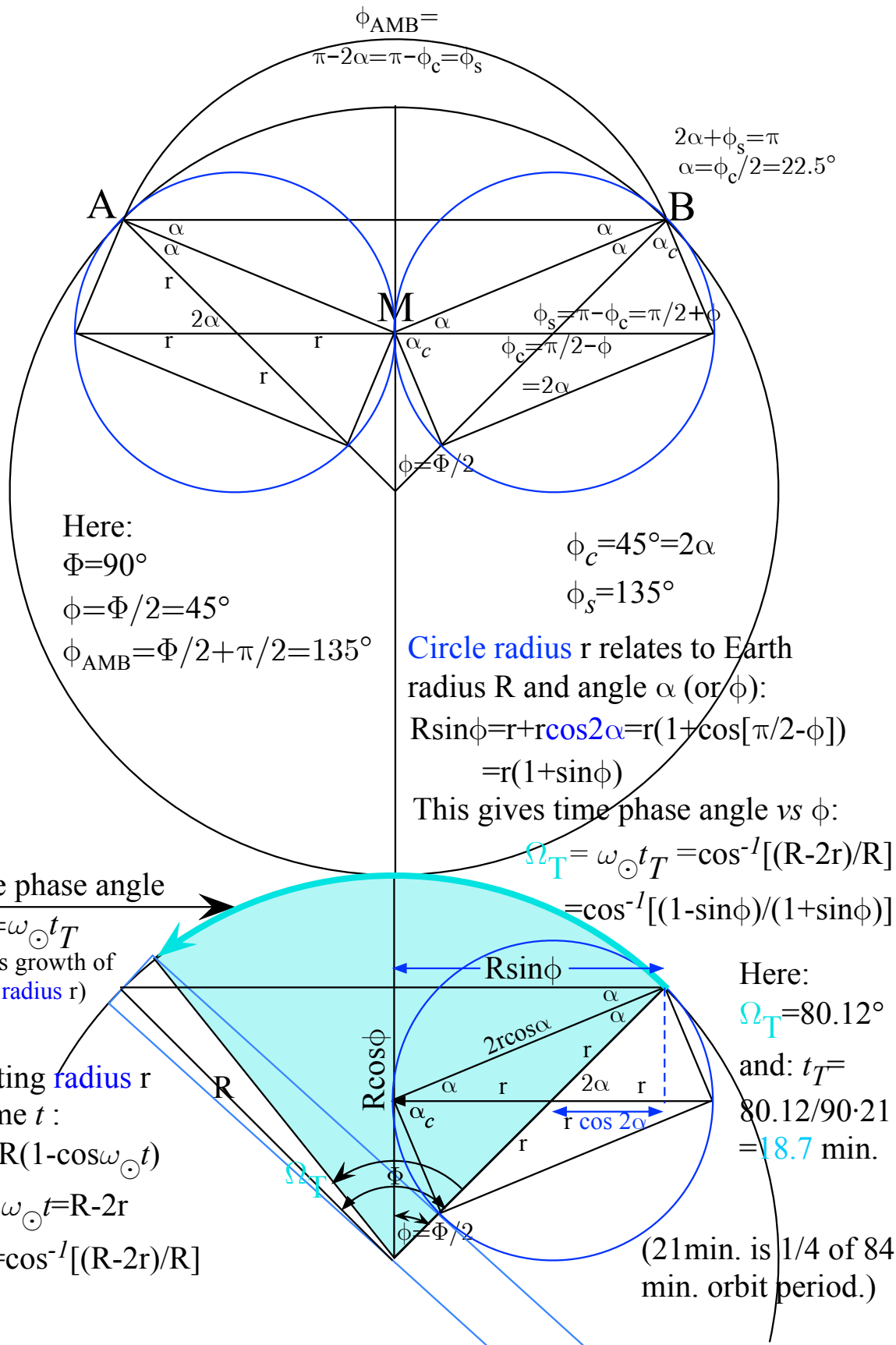
Pendulum of length $4R$ has period: $\tau = \frac{2\pi}{\omega} = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{4R}{g}}$

Half-period: $\frac{\tau}{2} = \pi \sqrt{\frac{4R}{g}} = \pi \sqrt{\frac{4 \cdot 10^3\text{m}}{9.8\text{m} \cdot \text{s}^{-2}}} = \sqrt{\frac{4\pi \cdot 10^3\text{m}}{9.8\text{m} \cdot \text{s}^{-2}}} = 35.81\text{seconds}$

This a little quicker than the 40.4 seconds travel time on the 45° V-path.



The following is a general solution with the $\phi = \Phi / 2 = 45^\circ$ case with numerical timing estimates.



The following is a general solution with the $\phi = \Phi/2 = 30^\circ$ case given numerically.

