10.7.50

EE25BTECH11001 - Aarush Dilawri

October 11, 2025

Question

Question:

Consider the family of circles $x^2 + y^2 = r^2, 2 < r < 5$. If in the first quadrant, the common tangent to a circle of this family and the ellipse $4x^2 + 25y^2 = 100$ meets the coordinate axes at **A** and **B**, then find the equation of the locus of the midpoint of AB.

Solution:

$$\text{The family of circles is } \mathbf{X}^\top \mathbf{X} = r^2, \qquad 2 < r < 5, \tag{1}$$

$$\text{and the ellipse is } \mathbf{X}^\top \mathbf{V} \mathbf{X} = 100, \quad \mathbf{V} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 0 \\ 0 & 25 \end{pmatrix}. \tag{2}$$

Let the common tangent meet the coordinate axes at

$$\mathbf{A} = a\mathbf{e}_1, \qquad \mathbf{B} = b\mathbf{e}_2, \qquad a, b > 0. \tag{3}$$

The equation of the line passing through **A** and **B** can be written as

$$\frac{\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{X}}{a} + \frac{\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{X}}{b} = 1. \tag{4}$$

Solution

This is of the form $\mathbf{n}^\top \mathbf{X} = c$, with

$$\mathbf{n} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{a} \\ \frac{1}{b} \end{pmatrix}, \quad c = 1. \tag{5}$$

Let the midpoint of $\mathbf{A}$ and $\mathbf{B}$ be

$$\mathbf{m} = \frac{\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{B}}{2}. \tag{6}$$

From this,

$$a = 2\,\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}, \quad b = 2\,\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}. \tag{7}$$

Solution

For the line $\mathbf{n}^\top \mathbf{X} = c$ to be tangent to $\mathbf{X}^\top \mathbf{V} \mathbf{X} = 100,$ the condition is $c^2 = 100\, \mathbf{n}^\top \mathbf{V}^{-1} \mathbf{n}.$

$$\text{Here } c = 1, \quad \mathbf{V}^{-1} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{4} & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{25} \end{pmatrix}. \text{ Substituting gives } 1 = 100\left(\frac{1}{4a^2} + \frac{1}{25b^2}\right). \tag{8}$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{25}{a^2} + \frac{4}{b^2} = 1. \tag{9}$$

Solution

Also, for the line $\mathbf{n}^\top \mathbf{X} = c$ to be tangent to the circle $\mathbf{X}^\top \mathbf{X} = r^2$, the distance from the origin must equal r.

$$\frac{|c|}{\|\mathbf{n}\|} = r. \tag{10}$$

$$\text{With } c = 1 \text{ this gives } \|\mathbf{n}\|^2 = \frac{1}{r^2}. \text{ So } \frac{1}{a^2} + \frac{1}{b^2} = \frac{1}{r^2}. \tag{11}$$

We now express the ellipse tangency condition in terms of $\mathbf{m}$.
Substitute $a = 2\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m},\ b = 2\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}$:

$$\frac{25}{4\left(\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2} + \frac{4}{4\left(\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2} = 1. \tag{12}$$

Solution

$$\implies \left(4\left(\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2 - 25\right)\left(\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2 = 4\left(\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2. \tag{13}$$

$$\text{Or equivalently, } 4\left(\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2\left(\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2 - 4\left(\mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2 - 25\left(\mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m}\right)^2 = 0. \tag{14}$$

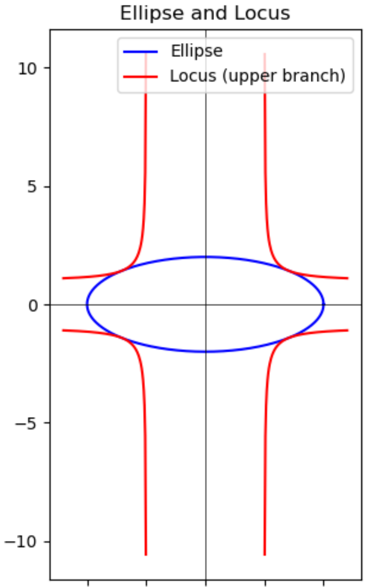
$$\text{Finally, let } \mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{e}_1^\top \mathbf{m} = x, \quad \mathbf{e}_2^\top \mathbf{m} = y. \tag{15}$$

Solution

$$\text{Substituting gives the locus equation } 4x^2y^2 - 4x^2 - 25y^2 = 0. \tag{16}$$

$$\text{Required locus: } 4x^2y^2 - 4x^2 - 25y^2 = 0. \tag{17}$$

Graphical Representation



Codes

https://github.com/AarushDilawri/ee1030-2025/tree/main/ee25btech11001/MATGEO/10.7.50/codes