

Problem 19: A function  $f$  is defined on the complex numbers by  $f(z) = (a + bi)z$ , where  $a$  and  $b$  are positive numbers. This function has the property that the image of each point in the complex plane is equidistant from that point and the origin. Given that  $|a + bi| = 8$ , find the value of  $b^2$ . (Source: AIME)

We are given that  $|f(z) - z| = |f(z)|$  for all complex numbers  $z$ . Let's plug in 1 for  $z$ .

$$\begin{aligned} |f(1) - 1| &= |f(1)| \\ |a + bi - 1| &= |a + bi| \\ (a - 1)^2 + b^2 &= a^2 + b^2 \\ a^2 - 2a + 1 + b^2 &= a^2 + b^2 \\ -2a + 1 &= 0 \\ -2a &= -1 \\ a &= \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

We are also given that  $|a + bi| = 8$ . Knowing  $a$ , we can solve for  $b$ .

$$\begin{aligned} |a + bi| &= 8 \\ a^2 + b^2 &= 64 \\ \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + b^2 &= 64 \\ \frac{1}{4} + b^2 &= \frac{256}{4} \\ b^2 &= \boxed{\frac{255}{4}} \end{aligned}$$