On the computational complexity of the three-body initial value problem

Nikolay Vasiliev and Dmitry Pavlov

Abstract. A classical example of a chaotic dynamic system is considered as a computational problem, stated in terms of computable real numbers. A hypothetical Turing machine, using an infinite tape containing initial values as an input, and a number t as a time interval, can calculate the state of the system at time t as computable real numbers. Known algorithms of numerical integration require at least O(t) time to complete, even disregarding the precision loss. This work deals with the question: can there exist such a machine that solves the initial value problem for three-body system in polynomial in $\log(t)$ time? Basing on the works of Sitnikov and Alexeyev, we can deduce that a particular case of the three-body problem is so combinatorially rich that no Turing machine can find the solution in a polynomial time.

Nikolay Vasiliev Laboratory of Representation Theory and Dynamical Systems St. Petersburg Department of V.A. Steklov Institute of Mathematics of the RAS St. Petersburg, Russia e-mail: vasiliev@pdmi.ras.ru

Dmitry Pavlov Laboratory of Ephemeris Astronomy Institute of Applied Astronomy RAS St. Petersburg, Russia e-mail: dpavlov@ipa.nw.ru