

# Assignment on Ant Colony Optimisation

## solve the traveling salesman problem using an AntSystem

Find the shortest tour around the following list of cities (data from the files `vertices.txt` and `edges.txt` from Dijkstra exercise):

AW Aberystwyth  
BG Brighton  
BK Birkenhead  
BR Bristol  
CH Cheltenham  
CL Carlisle  
CM Cambridge  
CN Carmarthen  
CO Coventry  
DO Dover  
ED Edinburgh  
EX Exeter  
FO Folkestone  
FW Fort-William  
GW Glasgow

In the Ant System,  $m$  ants travel from a random starting point from city to city until all  $n$  cities have been visited. Hereby, paths are chosen randomly with a probability which is a function of the amount of pheromones already deposited and of the distance to the next city. The probability for an ant  $k$  at city  $i$  to go to city  $j$ , is given by

$$p_{ij}^k(t) = \frac{Q_{ij}}{\sum_{l \in J_i^k} Q_{il}} \quad \text{with } j \in J_i^k,$$

which is the feasible neighborhood for ant  $k$  in city  $i$  and  $Q_{ij}$  a combined metric of the quality of the route. In the Ant System, the quality of a route  $ij$  is a function of the pheromones already deposited by other ants given by  $\tau_{ij}$ , and a heuristic  $\eta_{ij} = \frac{1}{d_{ij}}$ , with  $d_{ij}$  the distance between city  $i$  and city  $j$ . Thus,  $Q_{ij}$  is defined as  $Q_{ij} = [\tau_{ij}]^\alpha [\eta_{ij}]^\beta$  with  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  allowing us to fine tune the impact of pheromones and heuristic information on the metric.

After completion of a tour, i.e. arriving at the starting city, ants assess the tour, and deposit an amount of pheromones that is inverse proportional to the tour length on  $k$  every link  $ij$  they visited, i.e.  $\Delta\tau_{ij} = \frac{1}{C^k}$  with  $C^k$  the total length of the tour of ant  $k$ .