

## DEGREE EVEN COVERINGS OF ELLIPTIC CURVES BY GENUS 2 CURVES

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ABSTRACT. In this survey we study the genus 2 curves with  $(n, n)$ -split Jacobian for even  $n$ .

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Let  $C$  be a genus 2 curve defined over an algebraically closed field  $k$ , of characteristic zero. Let  $\psi : C \rightarrow E$  be a degree  $n$  maximal covering (i.e. does not factor through an isogeny) to an elliptic curve  $E$  defined over  $k$ . We say that  $C$  has a *degree  $n$  elliptic subcover*. Degree  $n$  elliptic subcovers occur in pairs. Let  $(E, E')$  be such a pair. It is well known that there is an isogeny of degree  $n^2$  between the Jacobian  $J_C$  of  $C$  and the product  $E \times E'$ . The locus of such  $C$ , denoted by  $\mathcal{L}_n$ , is a 2-dimensional algebraic subvariety of the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_2$  of genus two curves and has been the focus of many papers in the last decade; see [5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1, 2].

The space  $\mathcal{L}_2$  was studied in Shaska/Völklein [9]. The space  $\mathcal{L}_3$  was studied in [5] where an algebraic description was given as sublocus of  $\mathcal{M}_2$ . Lately the space  $\mathcal{L}_5$  has been studied in detail in [10]. The case of even degree has been less studied even though there have been some attempts lately to compute some of the cases for  $n = 4$ ; see [4]. In this survey we study the genus 2 curves with  $(n, n)$ -split Jacobian for small  $n$ . While such curves have been studied by many authors, our approach is simply computational.

### 2. CURVES OF GENUS 2 WITH SPLIT JACOBIANS

Most of the results of this section can be found in [11]. Let  $C$  and  $E$  be curves of genus 2 and 1, respectively. Both are smooth, projective curves defined over  $k$ ,  $\text{char}(k) = 0$ . Let  $\psi : C \rightarrow E$  be a covering of degree  $n$ . From the Riemann-Hurwitz formula,  $\sum_{P \in C} (e_\psi(P) - 1) = 2$  where  $e_\psi(P)$  is the ramification index of points  $P \in C$ , under  $\psi$ . Thus, we have two points of ramification index 2 or one point of ramification index 3. The two points of ramification index 2 can be in the same fiber or in different fibers. Therefore, we have the following cases of the covering  $\psi$ :

**Case I:** There are  $P_1, P_2 \in C$ , such that  $e_\psi(P_1) = e_\psi(P_2) = 2, \psi(P_1) \neq \psi(P_2)$ , and  $\forall P \in C \setminus \{P_1, P_2\}, e_\psi(P) = 1$ .

**Case II:** There are  $P_1, P_2 \in C$ , such that  $e_\psi(P_1) = e_\psi(P_2) = 2, \psi(P_1) = \psi(P_2)$ , and  $\forall P \in C \setminus \{P_1, P_2\}, e_\psi(P) = 1$ .

**Case III:** There is  $P_1 \in C$  such that  $e_\psi(P_1) = 3$ , and  $\forall P \in C \setminus \{P_1\}, e_\psi(P) = 1$ .

In case I (resp. II, III) the cover  $\psi$  has 2 (resp. 1) branch points in  $E$ .

Denote the hyperelliptic involution of  $C$  by  $w$ . We choose  $\mathcal{O}$  in  $E$  such that  $w$  restricted to  $E$  is the hyperelliptic involution on  $E$ . We denote the restriction of  $w$  on  $E$  by  $v, v(P) = -P$ . Thus,  $\psi \circ w = v \circ \psi$ .  $E[2]$  denotes the group of 2-torsion points of the elliptic curve  $E$ , which are the points fixed by  $v$ . The proof of the following two lemmas is straightforward and will be omitted.

**Lemma 1.** *a) If  $Q \in E$ , then  $\forall P \in \psi^{-1}(Q), w(P) \in \psi^{-1}(-Q)$ .*

*b) For all  $P \in C, e_\psi(P) = e_\psi(w(P))$ .*

Let  $W$  be the set of points in  $C$  fixed by  $w$ . Every curve of genus 2 is given, up to isomorphism, by a binary sextic, so there are 6 points fixed by the hyperelliptic involution  $w$ , namely the Weierstrass points of  $C$ . The following lemma determines the distribution of the Weierstrass points in fibers of 2-torsion points.

**Lemma 2.** *The following hold:*

- (1)  $\psi(W) \subset E[2]$
- (2) *If  $n$  is an odd number then*
  - i)  $\psi(W) = E[2]$*
  - ii) If  $Q \in E[2]$  then  $\#(\psi^{-1}(Q) \cap W) = 1 \pmod{2}$*
- (3) *If  $n$  is an even number then for all  $Q \in E[2], \#(\psi^{-1}(Q) \cap W) = 0 \pmod{2}$*

Let  $\pi_C : C \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  and  $\pi_E : E \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  be the natural degree 2 projections. The hyperelliptic involution permutes the points in the fibers of  $\pi_C$  and  $\pi_E$ . The ramified points of  $\pi_C, \pi_E$  are respectively points in  $W$  and  $E[2]$  and their ramification index is 2. There is  $\phi : \mathbb{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  such that the diagram commutes.

$$(1) \quad \begin{array}{ccc} C & \xrightarrow{\pi_C} & \mathbb{P}^1 \\ \psi \downarrow & & \downarrow \phi \\ E & \xrightarrow{\pi_E} & \mathbb{P}^1 \end{array}$$

Next, we will determine the ramification of induced coverings  $\phi : \mathbb{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$ . First we fix some notation. For a given branch point we will denote the ramification of points in its fiber as follows. Any point  $P$  of ramification index  $m$  is denoted by  $(m)$ . If there are  $k$  such points then we write  $(m)^k$ . We omit writing symbols for unramified points, in other words  $(1)^k$  will not be written. Ramification data between two branch points will be separated by commas. We denote by  $\pi_E(E[2]) = \{q_1, \dots, q_4\}$  and  $\pi_C(W) = \{w_1, \dots, w_6\}$ .

2.0.1. *The Case When  $n$  is Even.* Let us assume now that  $deg(\psi) = n$  is an even number. The following theorem classifies the induced coverings in this case.

**Theorem 1.** *If  $n$  is an even number then the generic case for  $\psi : C \rightarrow E$  induce the following three cases for  $\phi : \mathbb{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$ :*

$$\mathbf{I:} \left( (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2) \right)$$

- II:**  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2) \right)$
- III:**  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-6}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2) \right)$

Each of the above cases has the following degenerations (two of the branch points collapse to one)

- I:** (1)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (2)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n-6}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (3)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}} \right)$   
 (4)  $\left( (3)(2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$
- II:** (1)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (2)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (3)  $\left( (4)(2)^{\frac{n-8}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (4)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n-6}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (5)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (6)  $\left( (3)(2)^{\frac{n-6}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (7)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (3)(2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$
- III:** (1)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (2)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n-6}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n-4}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$   
 (3)  $\left( (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (4)(2)^{\frac{n-10}{2}} \right)$   
 (4)  $\left( (3)(2)^{\frac{n-8}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}} \right)$

*Proof.* We skip the details of the proof. □

**Remark 1.** *The case  $n = 8$  is the first true generic case when all the subcases occur.*

**2.1. Maximal coverings  $\psi : C \rightarrow E$ .** Let  $\psi_1 : C \rightarrow E_1$  be a covering of degree  $n$  from a curve of genus 2 to an elliptic curve. The covering  $\psi_1 : C \rightarrow E_1$  is called a **maximal covering** if it does not factor through a nontrivial isogeny. A map of algebraic curves  $f : X \rightarrow Y$  induces maps between their Jacobians  $f^* : J_Y \rightarrow J_X$  and  $f_* : J_X \rightarrow J_Y$ . When  $f$  is maximal then  $f^*$  is injective and  $\ker(f_*)$  is connected, see [8] for details.

Let  $\psi_1 : C \rightarrow E_1$  be a covering as above which is maximal. Then  $\psi^*_1 : E_1 \rightarrow J_C$  is injective and the kernel of  $\psi_{1,*} : J_C \rightarrow E_1$  is an elliptic curve which we denote by  $E_2$ ; see [2]. For a fixed Weierstrass point  $P \in C$ , we can embed  $C$  to its Jacobian via

$$(2) \quad \begin{aligned} i_P : C &\rightarrow J_C \\ x &\rightarrow [(x) - (P)] \end{aligned}$$

Let  $g : E_2 \rightarrow J_C$  be the natural embedding of  $E_2$  in  $J_C$ , then there exists  $g_* : J_C \rightarrow E_2$ . Define  $\psi_2 = g_* \circ i_P : C \rightarrow E_2$ . So we have the following exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow E_2 \xrightarrow{g} J_C \xrightarrow{\psi_{1,*}} E_1 \rightarrow 0$$

The dual sequence is also exact

$$0 \rightarrow E_1 \xrightarrow{\psi_1^*} J_C \xrightarrow{g^*} E_2 \rightarrow 0$$

If  $\text{deg}(\psi_1)$  is an odd number then the maximal covering  $\psi_2 : C \rightarrow E_2$  is unique up to isomorphism of elliptic curves. If the cover  $\psi_1 : C \rightarrow E_1$  is given, and therefore  $\phi_1$ , we want to determine  $\psi_2 : C \rightarrow E_2$  and  $\phi_2$ . The study of the relation between the ramification structures of  $\phi_1$  and  $\phi_2$  provides information in this direction. The following lemma (see [2, pg. 160]) answers this question for the set of Weierstrass points  $W = \{P_1, \dots, P_6\}$  of  $C$  when the degree of the cover is odd.

**Lemma 3.** *Let  $\psi_1 : C \rightarrow E_1$ , be maximal of degree  $n$ . Then, the map  $\psi_2 : C \rightarrow E_2$  is a maximal covering of degree  $n$ . Moreover,*

- i) *if  $n$  is odd and  $\mathcal{O}_i \in E_i[2]$ ,  $i = 1, 2$  are the places such that  $\#(\psi_i^{-1}(\mathcal{O}_i) \cap W) = 3$ , then  $\psi_1^{-1}(\mathcal{O}_1) \cap W$  and  $\psi_2^{-1}(\mathcal{O}_2) \cap W$  form a disjoint union of  $W$ .*
- ii) *if  $n$  is even and  $Q \in E[2]$ , then  $\#(\psi^{-1}(Q)) \cap W = 0$  or  $2$ .*

The above lemma says that if  $\psi$  is maximal of even degree then the corresponding induced covering can have only type **I** ramification, see Theorem 1.

**Example 1.** Let  $\psi : C \rightarrow E$  be a degree  $n = 8$  maximal covering of the elliptic curve  $E$  by a genus 2 curve  $C$ . Then, we have Type I covering as in previous theorem. Hence, the ramification is

$$((2)^3, (2)^3, (2)^3, (2)^4, (2))$$

This case is the first case which has all its subcases with ramifications as follows:

- i)**  $((2)^4, (2)^3, (2)^3, (2)^4)$
- ii)**  $((2)^3, (2)^3, (4)(2), (2)^4)$
- iii)**  $((2)^3, (2)^3, (2)^3, (4)(2)^2)$
- iv)**  $((3)(2)^2, (2)^3, (2)^3, (2)^4)$

The locus of genus 2 curves in the generic case is a 2-dimensional subvariety of the moduli space  $\mathcal{M}_2$ . It would be interesting to explicitly compute such subvariety since it is the first case which could give some clues to what happens in the general case for even degree.

### 3. THE LOCUS OF GENUS TWO CURVES WITH $(n, n)$ SPLIT JACOBIANS

In this section we will discuss the Hurwitz spaces of coverings with ramification as in the previous section and the Humbert spaces of discriminant  $n^2$ .

**3.1. Hurwitz spaces of covers**  $\phi : \mathbb{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$ . Two covers  $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  and  $f' : X' \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  are called **weakly equivalent** if there is a homeomorphism  $h : X \rightarrow X'$  and an analytic automorphism  $g$  of  $\mathbb{P}^1$  (i.e., a Moebius transformation) such that  $g \circ f = f' \circ h$ . The covers  $f$  and  $f'$  are called **equivalent** if the above holds with  $g = 1$ .

Consider a cover  $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  of degree  $n$ , with branch points  $p_1, \dots, p_r \in \mathbb{P}^1$ . Pick  $p \in \mathbb{P}^1 \setminus \{p_1, \dots, p_r\}$ , and choose loops  $\gamma_i$  around  $p_i$  such that  $\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_r$  is a

standard generating system of the fundamental group  $\Gamma := \pi_1(\mathbb{P}^1 \setminus \{p_1, \dots, p_r\}, p)$ , in particular, we have  $\gamma_1 \cdots \gamma_r = 1$ . Such a system  $\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_r$  is called a homotopy basis of  $\mathbb{P}^1 \setminus \{p_1, \dots, p_r\}$ . The group  $\Gamma$  acts on the fiber  $f^{-1}(p)$  by path lifting, inducing a transitive subgroup  $G$  of the symmetric group  $S_n$  (determined by  $f$  up to conjugacy in  $S_n$ ). It is called the **monodromy group** of  $f$ . The images of  $\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_r$  in  $S_n$  form a tuple of permutations  $\sigma = (\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_r)$  called a tuple of **branch cycles** of  $f$ .

We say a cover  $f : X \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  of degree  $n$  is of type  $\sigma$  if it has  $\sigma$  as tuple of branch cycles relative to some homotopy basis of  $\mathbb{P}^1$  minus the branch points of  $f$ . Let  $\mathcal{H}_\sigma$  be the set of weak equivalence classes of covers of type  $\sigma$ . The **Hurwitz space**  $\mathcal{H}_\sigma$  carries a natural structure of an quasiprojective variety.

We have  $\mathcal{H}_\sigma = \mathcal{H}_\tau$  if and only if the tuples  $\sigma, \tau$  are in the same **braid orbit**  $\mathcal{O}_\tau = \mathcal{O}_\sigma$ . In the case of the covers  $\phi : \mathbb{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}^1$  from above, the corresponding braid orbit consists of all tuples in  $S_n$  whose cycle type matches the ramification structure of  $\phi$ .

This and the genus of  $\mathcal{H}_\sigma$  in the degenerate cases (see the following table) has been computed in GAP by the BRAID PACKAGE written by K. Magaard.

deg	Case	cycle type of $\sigma$	$\#(\mathcal{O}_\sigma)$	$G$	dim $\mathcal{H}_\sigma$	genus of $\mathcal{H}_\sigma$
8		$(2^3, 2^3, 2^3, 2^4, 2)$	224	$S_8$	2	–
	1	$(2^4, 2^3, 2^3, 2^4)$	4	16	1	0
	2	$(2^3, 2^3, (4)(2), 2^4)$	48	$S_8$	1	4
	3	$(2^3, 2^3, 2^3, (4)(2)^2)$	96	$S_8$	1	16
	4	$((3)2^2, 2^3, 2^3, 2^4)$	36	$S_8$	1	4

TABLE 1. The length of braid orbits, the order of the group, and the genus of 1-dimensional subspaces for even degree maximal coverings.

As the reader can imagine even such computations are not easy for higher  $n$ . It is unclear what are the monodromy groups that appear in all the subcases and the formulas for the lengths of the braid orbits.

**3.2. Humbert surfaces.** Let  $\mathcal{A}_2$  denote the moduli space of principally polarized abelian surfaces. It is well known that  $\mathcal{A}_2$  is the quotient of the Siegel upper half space  $\mathfrak{H}_2$  of symmetric complex  $2 \times 2$  matrices with positive definite imaginary part by the action of the symplectic group  $Sp_4(\mathbb{Z})$ .

Let  $\Delta$  be a fixed positive integer and  $N_\Delta$  be the set of matrices  $\tau = \begin{pmatrix} z_1 & z_2 \\ z_2 & z_3 \end{pmatrix} \in \mathfrak{H}_2$  such that there exist nonzero integers  $a, b, c, d, e$  with the following properties:

$$(3) \quad \begin{aligned} az_1 + bz_2 + cz_3 + d(z_2^2 - z_1z_3) + e &= 0 \\ \Delta &= b^2 - 4ac - 4de \end{aligned}$$

The *Humbert surface*  $\mathcal{H}_\Delta$  of discriminant  $\Delta$  is called the image of  $N_\Delta$  under the canonical map

$$\mathfrak{H}_2 \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_2 := Sp_4(\mathbb{Z}) \backslash \mathfrak{H}_2.$$

It is known that  $\mathcal{H}_\Delta \neq \emptyset$  if and only if  $\Delta > 0$  and  $\Delta \equiv 0$  or  $1 \pmod 4$ . Humbert (1900) studied the zero loci in Eq. (3) and discovered certain relations between points in these spaces and certain plane configurations of six lines.

For a genus 2 curve  $C$  defined over  $\mathbb{C}$ ,  $[C]$  belongs to  $\mathcal{L}_n$  if and only if the isomorphism class  $[J_C] \in \mathcal{A}_2$  of its (principally polarized) Jacobian  $J_C$  belongs to the Humbert surface  $\mathcal{H}_{n^2}$ , viewed as a subset of the moduli space  $\mathcal{A}_2$  of principally polarized abelian surfaces. There is a one to one correspondence between the points in  $\mathcal{L}_n$  and points in  $\mathcal{H}_{n^2}$ . Thus, we have the map:

$$(4) \quad \begin{aligned} \mathcal{H}_\sigma &\longrightarrow \mathcal{L}_n \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}_{n^2} \\ ([f], (p_1, \dots, p_r)) &\longrightarrow [\mathcal{X}] \longrightarrow [J_{\mathcal{X}}] \end{aligned}$$

In particular, every point in  $\mathcal{H}_{n^2}$  can be represented by an element of  $\mathfrak{H}_2$  of the form

$$\tau = \begin{pmatrix} z_1 & \frac{1}{n} \\ \frac{1}{n} & z_2 \end{pmatrix}, \quad z_1, z_2 \in \mathfrak{H}.$$

There have been many attempts to explicitly describe these Humbert surfaces. For some small discriminant this has been done by several authors; see [9], [5]. Geometric characterizations of such spaces for  $\Delta = 4, 8, 9$ , and  $12$  were given by Humbert (1900) in [3] and for  $\Delta = 13, 16, 17, 20, 21$  by Birkenhake/Wilhelm (2003).

#### 4. COMPUTING THE LOCUS $\mathcal{L}_n$ IN $\mathcal{M}_2$

We take the most general case for maximal coverings of even degree, namely  $n$ , Type I. The ramification structure of  $\phi : \mathbb{P}_x^1 \rightarrow \mathbb{P}_z^1$  is

$$\left( (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n-2}{2}}, (2)^{\frac{n}{2}}, (2) \right)$$

We denote the branch points respectively  $q_1, \dots, q_5$ . Let  $q_1 = 0, q_2 = 1, q_3 = \infty$ . The red places in  $\mathbb{P}_x^1$  denote the unramified places and the black places all have ramification index 2. We pick the coordinate  $x$  such that it is  $x = 0, x = 1, x = \infty$  in the unramified places of  $\mathbb{P}_z^1$  and respectively in the fibers of  $0, 1, \infty$  as in the picture.

There are exactly  $d = \frac{n-2}{2}$  places of index 2 in  $\phi^{-1}(0)$ . Let  $P(x)$  denote the polynomial whose roots are exactly these places. Similarly denote by  $R(x), Q(x)$  such polynomials for fibers of 1 and  $\infty$ . The other unramified places in the fibers of  $0, 1, \infty$  we denote by  $w_4, w_5, w_6$  respectively.

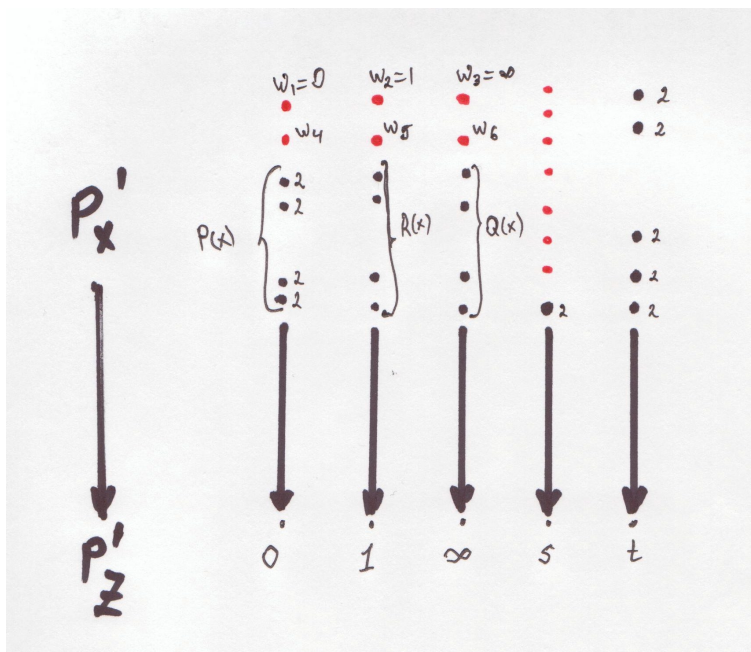
Then, we have

$$z = \lambda \cdot x \cdot \frac{x - w_4}{x - w_6} \cdot \frac{P^2(x)}{Q^2(x)}$$

for some  $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}, \lambda \neq 0$ . Furthermore,

$$z - 1 = \lambda \cdot (x - 1) \cdot \frac{x - w_5}{x - w_6} \cdot \frac{R^2(x)}{Q^2(x)}$$

where  $P(x), Q(x), R(x)$  are monic polynomials of degree  $d = \frac{n-2}{2}$  with no multiple roots and no common roots.



Substituting for  $z$  we get a degree  $n$  equation

$$\lambda x(x - w_4)P^2(x) - (x - w_6)Q^2(x) - \lambda \cdot (x - 1)(x - w_5)R^2(x) = 0$$

By equating coefficients of this polynomial with zero we get a nonlinear system of  $n + 1$  equations. In the same way we get the corresponding equations from the fibers of the other two branch points  $s$  and  $t$ . Solving such system would determine also  $w_4, w_5, w_6$ . The equation of the genus 2 curve  $C$  is given by

$$y^2 = x(x - 1)(x - w_4)(x - w_5)(x - w_6)$$

**4.1. Degree 4 covers.** In this section we focus on the case  $\deg(\phi) = 4$  (not necessarily maximal). The goal is to determine all ramifications  $\sigma$  and explicitly compute  $\mathcal{L}_4(\sigma)$ . There is one generic case and one degenerate case in which the ramification of  $\deg(\phi) = 4$  applies, as given by the above possible ramification structures.

- i)  $(2, 2, 2, 2^2, 2)$  (generic)
- ii)  $(2, 2, 2, 4)$  (degenerate)

**4.2. Degenerate Case.** In this case one of the Weierstrass points has ramification index 3, so the cover is totally ramified at this point.

Let the branch points be  $0, 1, \lambda$ , and  $\infty$ , where  $\infty$  corresponds to the element of index 4. Then, above the fibers of  $0, 1, \lambda$  lie two Weierstrass points. The two Weierstrass points above  $0$  can be written as the roots of a quadratic polynomial  $x^2 + ax + b$ ; above  $1$ , they are the roots of  $x^2 + px + q$ ; and above  $\lambda$ , they are the roots of  $x^2 + sx + t$ . This gives us an equation for the genus 2 curve  $C$ :

$$C : y^2 = (x^2 + ax + b)(x^2 + px + q)(x^2 + sx + t).$$

The four branch points of the cover  $\phi$  are the 2-torsion points  $E[2]$  of the elliptic curve  $E$ , allowing us to write the elliptic subcover as

$$E : y^2 = x(x - 1)(x - \lambda).$$

We have the following theorem:

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $C$  be a genus 2 curve with a degree 4 degenerate elliptic subcover. Then  $C$  is isomorphic to the curve given by*

$$(5) \quad \begin{aligned} C : y^2 &= \left( \frac{1-b}{3} + \frac{2}{3}(1-b)x + x^2 \right) \left( \frac{1}{12}(b-4)b + \frac{1}{3}(b-4)x + x^2 \right) \\ &\quad \left( b - \frac{2}{3}(b+2)x + x^2 \right) \\ E : v^2 &= u(u-1) \left( u - \frac{b^3(4-b)}{16(b-1)} \right) \end{aligned}$$

where the corresponding discriminants of the right sides must be non-zero. Hence,

$$(6) \quad \Delta_C := b(b-4)(b-2)(b-1)(2+b) \neq 0$$

$$(7) \quad \Delta_E := \frac{(b-4)^2(b-2)^6 b^6(b+2)^2}{65536(b-1)^4} \neq 0.$$

and its invariants satisfy

$$(8) \quad \begin{aligned} &1541086152812576000 J_2^2 J_4^2 - 22835312232360960000 J_2 J_4 J_6 + 5009676947631 J_2^6 \\ &- 8782271900467200000 J_6^2 + 1176812184652746480 J_2^4 J_4 + 12448207102988800000 J_4^3 \\ &- 3715799948429529600 J_2^3 J_6 = 0 \\ &186626560000 J_2^2 J_4^4 + 138962144767343358744576000000 J_{10}^2 + \frac{282429536481}{10^4} J_2^{10} \\ &+ 619923800736 J_2^6 J_4^2 - 25600000000 J_4^5 - \frac{28249152375924}{100} J_2^8 J_4 \\ &+ 266576269949878792320 J_2^5 J_{10} - 510202022400 J_2^4 J_4^3 \\ &+ 693067624145203200000 J_2 J_4^2 J_{10} + 1763516708182388736000 J_2^3 J_4 J_{10} = 0. \end{aligned}$$

*Proof.* See [4]. □

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