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that we considered in Sections 2 and 3 above. Similarly, if G is $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ acting on Q as the antipodal map, then the corresponding extension to $P_{\mathbb{C}}^2$ is given by complex conjugation.

3. $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ and the 4-sphere S^4

The previous discussion, restricted to n = 2 and compared to the cohomogeneity 1 isometric action of SO(3, **R**) on S^4 constructed in [HL], motivates an equivariant version of the Arnold-Kuiper-Massey theorem [Ar1, Ar2, Ku, Ma1], saying that $P_{\rm C}^2$ modulo conjugation is the 4-sphere. In this section we give a new proof of this theorem. We construct an explicit algebraic map $\Phi: P_{\rm C}^2 \to S^4$, which is equivariant with respect to the cohomogeneity 1 isometric actions of SO(3, **R**) on $P_{\rm C}^2$ and S^4 and induces a diffeomorphism $P_{\rm C}^2/conjugation \cong S^4$.

We start by recalling the SO(3, \mathbf{R})-action on S^4 , as explained by Hsiang and Lawson in [HL; Example 1.4].

Let S be the vector space of real 3×3 , traceless and symmetric matrices. As a real vector space S is \mathbb{R}^5 , and it can be equipped with a metric given by the inner product $(A, B) \mapsto \text{trace}(AB)$. Let $S^{(4)}$ be the space of matrices in S with norm 1. One has an obvious diffeomorphism $S^4 \cong S^{(4)}$, which becomes isometric if we endow S^4 with its usual round metric and $S^{(4)}$ with the metric given by the inner product in S. We shall identify these two spaces in the sequel, denoting both of them by S^4 indistinctly. The group SO(3, \mathbb{R}) acts on S by $A \mapsto O^t AO$, where O^t is the transposed matrix (which is equal, in our case, to O^{-1}). This induces an isometric action Γ of SO(3, \mathbb{R}) on S^4 . This action on S^4 has two disjoint copies of $P_{\mathbb{R}}^2$ as special fibres (see the remark at the end of this section). The space of orbits is the interval [0, 1], with the endpoints giving the special orbits. Each principal orbit (i.e. the orbits of highest dimension) is a flag manifold

$$F^{\mathfrak{s}}(2,1) \cong \operatorname{SO}(3,\mathbf{R}) / (\mathbf{Z}/2\mathbf{Z} \times \mathbf{Z}/2\mathbf{Z}) \cong L(4,1) / (\mathbf{Z}/2\mathbf{Z}),$$

of pairs (P, l) with P a plane in \mathbb{R}^3 and l line in P, where L(4, 1) is the lens space $S^3 / (\mathbb{Z}/4\mathbb{Z}) \cong SO(3, \mathbb{R}) / (\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z})$.

Let us give a similar description of $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$. Let

$$\mathfrak{H}(3,\mathbf{C}) = \{ H \in M(3,\mathbf{C}) \mid H = H^* \}$$

be the space of complex 3×3 Hermitian matrices, where $H^* = \overline{H}^t$ is the adjoint matrix of H, obtained by first conjugating each entry of H and then

transposing the matrix. We equip $\mathfrak{H}(3, \mathbb{C})$ with the Hermitian inner product

(3.1)
$$\langle H_1, H_2 \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \operatorname{trace} (H_1 H_2).$$

As a vector space, with this inner product, $\mathfrak{H}(3, \mathbb{C})$ is the ordinary Euclidean space \mathbb{E}^9 . Consider the subset P(2) of $\mathfrak{H}(3, \mathbb{C})$ defined by

(3.2)
$$P(2) = \left\{ H \in \mathfrak{H}(3, \mathbb{C}) \mid H^2 = H \text{ and } \operatorname{trace}(H) = 1 \right\}.$$

LEMMA 3.3. The set P(2) is a manifold, diffeomorphic to $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$. Moreover, if we endow P(2) with the metric defined by (3.1), then P(2) is isometric to $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ equipped with the Fubini-Study metric (of constant holomorphic sectional curvature 4).

We remark that it is possible to describe $P_{\mathbf{C}}^n$ in a similar way, but we restrict our attention to n = 2 because this is all we need.

Proof. We claim that if H is in P(2), then it is an orthogonal projection over a complex line. In fact, if H is in P(2), then it is diagonalizable by a unitary matrix and its eigenvalues are 0 or 1, because $H^2 = H$. Since the trace is one, two eigenvalues must be 0 and the other is 1. Hence H is a surjection of \mathbb{C}^3 over a complex line, and this map has to be an orthogonal projection because H is Hermitian. Conversely, it is clear that each line $L \in \mathbb{C}^3$ determines a unique orthogonal projection of \mathbb{C}^3 , and this is given by a matrix in P(2). The diffeomorphism in Lemma 3.3 is achieved by the map that carries H into the corresponding line in \mathbb{C}^3 . To prove that this map gives a metric equivalence, we notice that the unitary group U(3) acts on $\mathfrak{H}(3, \mathbb{C})$ by $H \mapsto U^*HU$, and P(2) is an orbit of this action, with isotropy $(U(2) \times U(1))$. Thus,

$$P(2) \cong U(3)/(U(2) \times U(1)) \cong P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$$

and the metric on P(2) is obviously U(3)-invariant. Hence the induced metric on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ is also U(3)-invariant, and this characterizes the Fubini-Study metric, up to scaling. \Box

We recall now that the quotient of $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ by the complex conjugation j is a smooth manifold, which is not an obvious fact since j has fixed points. This is carefully explained in [Mar], so we only sketch a few ideas here. Away from the fixed point set $\Pi \cong P_{\mathbf{R}}^2$, the involution j is free, so the quotient is a smooth manifold. The problem is on Π . A tubular neighbourhood of

 Π in $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ can be regarded as an open disk normal bundle, and conjugation carries each normal fibre into itself. Since the quotient of each normal 2-disk by the involution is again a 2-disk, it follows that the quotient $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j$ is a topological manifold. Making this argument more carefully one gets that $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j$ is in fact a *PL*-manifold, as noticed in [Ku], and therefore it is smooth, since every piecewise linear 4-manifold is smooth. In [Mar] Marin defines the smooth structure on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j$ directly, without using *PL*-structures. An important point is that the smooth structure on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j$ is such that the obvious projection $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2 \to P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j$ is differentiable.

Let us denote by Γ the aforementioned isometric action of SO(3, **R**) on S^4 , and by $\tilde{\Gamma}$ the standard action of SO(3, **R**) on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$, which is by isometries with respect to the Fubini-Study metric. This action is defined either by considering SO(3, **R**) as a subgroup of $O(3, \mathbf{C})$, acting on the space of lines in \mathbf{C}^3 , or via the action of SO(3, **R**) on the space of matrices $P(2) \subset H(3, \mathbf{C})$ given by

$$(O,A)\mapsto O^tAO$$
.

By Lemma 3.3, both metrics on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ are equivalent; also for every $O \in \mathrm{SO}(3, \mathbf{R}), H \in P(2)$ and $v \in \mathbf{C}^3$ such that H(v) = v, one has $O^t HO(O^{-1}(v)) = O^{-1}(v)$, because $O^{-1} = O^t$. Hence both actions on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2 \cong P(2)$ are equivalent. Similarly, given the $\mathrm{SO}(3, \mathbf{R})$ -actions $\widetilde{\Gamma}$ on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ and Γ on S^4 , we say that these actions are equivariant if there exists a map $\Phi: P_{\mathbf{C}}^2 \to S^4$ which makes the following diagram commutative:

$$\begin{array}{cccc} \mathrm{SO}(3,\mathbf{R}) \times P_{\mathbf{C}}^{2} & \stackrel{\widetilde{\Gamma}}{\longrightarrow} & P_{\mathbf{C}}^{2} \\ & & & & \\ Id \times \Phi & & & & \Phi \\ & & & & & & \\ \mathrm{SO}(3,\mathbf{R}) \times S^{4} & \stackrel{\Gamma}{\longrightarrow} & S^{4} \,. \end{array}$$

In this case we say that Φ conjugates the actions Γ and $\widetilde{\Gamma}$. The map Φ carries orbits into orbits, i.e. the decompositions of $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ and S^4 into orbits are (smoothly) equivalent.

Let us now state the equivariant Arnold-Kuiper-Massey theorem:

THEOREM 3.4. There is a real algebraic equivariant map $\Phi: P_{\mathbf{C}}^2 \to S^4$, which is invariant by the complex conjugation j and induces a diffeomorphism $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2/j \cong S^4$, providing a conjugation between the isometric $\mathrm{SO}(3, \mathbf{R})$ -actions $\widetilde{\Gamma}$ on $P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ and Γ on S^4 .

We notice that Theorem 3.4, together with [HL], imply that the image of $P_{\mathbf{R}}^2 \subset P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$ under the above map is the image of $P_{\mathbf{R}}^2$ by the classical Veronese embedding $(P_{\mathbf{C}}^2, P_{\mathbf{R}}^2) \hookrightarrow (P_{\mathbf{C}}^5, S^4)$.

The proof of Theorem 3.4 follows from several lemmas below.

LEMMA 3.5. Let A be a real (3×3) -matrix. Then A is the real part of a matrix H in P(2) if and only if

i) A is symmetric with trace 1;

ii) A has 0 as an eigenvalue and the other two eigenvalues λ_i and λ_j are roots of an equation of the form:

$$\lambda^2 - \lambda + k = 0 \,,$$

for some constant $k \in \mathbf{R}$ with $0 \le k \le \frac{1}{4}$.

If A and H are as above, and if $O \in SO(3, \mathbb{R})$ is such that O^tAO is a diagonal matrix, then the imaginary part B of H, taken into its canonical form O^tBO , has only two possible non-zero entries, which are $\pm \sqrt{k}$. In particular, if k = 0, then H = A.

Proof. Let us consider a matrix $H \in P(2)$ and decompose it into its real and imaginary parts: H = A + iB. Then one has $\overline{H}^t = A^t - iB^t$. Also $H = \overline{H}^t$ because H is Hermitian. Hence $A = A^t$ and $B = -B^t$, i.e. A is symmetric and B is anti-symmetric. Thus the trace of A is 1, proving statement (i). One also has

$$H^2 = A^2 - B^2 + i(AB + BA),$$

and $H^2 = H$ because H is in P(2). Therefore $A = A^2 - B^2$ and B = AB + BA.

Now, A is symmetric, and so is A^2 ; these two matrices obviously commute, so they can be diagonalized simultaneously by a matrix $O \in SO(3, \mathbb{R})$. Since $B^2 = A^2 - A$, one knows that $O^t B^2 O$ is also diagonal:

$$O^t B^2 O = egin{pmatrix} \mu_1 & 0 & 0 \ 0 & \mu_2 & 0 \ 0 & 0 & \mu_3 \end{pmatrix} \,,$$

with $\mu_i = \lambda_i^2 - \lambda_i$, for each i = 1, 2, 3, where the λ_i are the eigenvalues of A. But B is antisymmetric and commutes with B^2 , which is symmetric. Hence the same matrix O takes B to its canonical form:

$$O^{t}BO = egin{pmatrix} 0 & a & c \ -a & 0 & b \ -c & -b & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

for some $a, b, c \in \mathbf{C}$. This implies that

$$O^{t}B^{2}O = (O^{t}BO)(O^{t}BO) = \begin{pmatrix} -a^{2} - c^{2} & -bc & ab \\ -bc & -a^{2} - b^{2} & -ac \\ ab & -ac & -b^{2} - c^{2} \end{pmatrix},$$

which we know is a diagonal matrix. Therefore two of the numbers a, b, c must be zero. Assume for instance that a and b are 0, then both eigenvalues λ_1 and λ_3 are roots of the polynomial

$$\lambda^2 - \lambda + c^2 = 0.$$

This implies that

$$\lambda_1 + \lambda_3 = 1$$
 and $\lambda_1 \cdot \lambda_3 = c^2 \ge 0$.

Hence $\lambda_2 = 0$ (because the trace of A is 1), so 0 is an eigenvalue of A. The other eigenvalues λ_1 and λ_3 must both be ≥ 0 and ≤ 1 , because their product is non-negative and their sum is 1. Moreover the roots must be real, therefore $k = c^2 \leq \frac{1}{4}$, proving statement (ii).

Also, in this case the eigenvalues of A determine the imaginary part B of H up to sign:

$$B = \pm O \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & c \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -c & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} O^{t},$$

with $c^2 = \lambda_1 - \lambda_3^2 = \lambda_3 - \lambda_3^2$, proving in this case the last statement of Lemma 3.5. The other cases, when either a = c = 0 or b = c = 0, are similar to the previous one. This proves that if $A = \Re(H)$ for some matrix $H \in P(2)$, then A is as stated in Lemma 3.5. Conversely, given A satisfying these conditions, the above arguments tell us how to construct B so that these matrices are the real and imaginary parts of some H in P(2).

Now, given $H \in P(2)$, its real part is $\Re(H) = \frac{1}{2}(H + \overline{H})$. Define

$$\psi\colon P(2)\to M(3,\mathbf{R})\,,$$

the space $M(3, \mathbf{R})$ being the space of real (3×3) -matrices, by the formula

(3.6)
$$\psi(H) = \frac{1}{3}I_3 - \Re(H) \in M(3, \mathbf{R}),$$

where I_3 is the (3×3) -identity matrix. In other words, $\psi(H)$ is the real part of the matrix $(\frac{1}{3}I_3 - H)$. Since $H \in P(2)$, it follows that $\psi(H)$ is actually contained in S.

It is clear that the above action of SO(3, **R**) on P(2) given by conjugation is equivalent, via the above diffeomorphism $P(2) \cong P_{\mathbf{C}}^2$, with the standard action

studied in §2 and §3 above. It is also clear that, for every $O \in SO(3, \mathbb{R})$, one has

$$\psi(O^{t}HO) = \frac{1}{3}I - \frac{1}{2}\left(O^{t}(H + \overline{H})O\right) = O^{t}\left(\frac{1}{3}I - \frac{1}{2}(H + \overline{H})\right)O = O^{t}\psi(H)O.$$

Hence we have

LEMMA 3.7. The map ψ is equivariant. That is, for every $O \in SO(3, \mathbb{R})$ and $H \in P(2)$, one has $\psi(O^tHO) = O^t\psi(H)O$.

LEMMA 3.8. Given $S \in S - \{0\}$, there exists a unique positive $t \in \mathbf{R}$, such that the matrix $(\frac{1}{3}I - tS)$ is the real part of some matrix $H \in P(2)$.

Proof. By Lemma 3.7, we may assume that S is diagonal. Hence the matrix $\hat{S}_t = (\frac{1}{3}I - tS)$ is also diagonal, say

$$\widehat{S}_t = egin{pmatrix} \lambda_1(t) & 0 & 0 \ 0 & \lambda_2(t) & 0 \ 0 & 0 & \lambda_3(t) \end{pmatrix}$$

with $\lambda_i(t) = \frac{1}{3} - t\mu_i$, where the μ_i are the eigenvalues of *S*. We notice that for all $t \in \mathbf{R}$, one has

trace
$$S_t = 1 - t$$
 (trace S) = 1,

because S has trace 0. Hence all these matrices satisfy condition (i) of Lemma 3.5.

Let us look for the possible values of t that give solutions of Lemma 3.5. That is, we want t > 0 for which one eigenvalue $\lambda_i(t)$ is 0 and the others are such that their sum is 1 and their product is ≥ 0 and $\leq \frac{1}{4}$.

Let us number the eigenvalues of S so that $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2 \leq \mu_3$. Since their sum is 0 and S is not the zero matrix, one must have $\mu_1 < 0$ and $\mu_3 > 0$. If we want t as above, one $\lambda_i(t)$ must vanish. Let us look for solutions with $\lambda_1(t) = 0$. This means that $t = \frac{1}{3\mu_1} < 0$, and we want t > 0. Hence, there are no solutions with $\lambda_1(t) = 0$.

Now let us look for solutions with $\lambda_2(t) = 0$. This implies that $t = \frac{1}{3\mu_2}$; for this to be possible we must have $\mu_2 \neq 0$. If $\mu_2 < 0$, then t < 0 and we want t to be positive. Thus, we only care about $\mu_2 > 0$. We have

$$\lambda_1(t) = \frac{1}{3}(1 - \frac{\mu_1}{\mu_2})$$
 and $\lambda_3(t) = \frac{1}{3}(1 - \frac{\mu_3}{\mu_2})$.

We have $\mu_1 < 0 < \mu_2$, so $\lambda_1(t) > 0$. If $\mu_2 < \mu_3$, then $\lambda_3(t) < 0$, thus the product $\lambda_1(t)\lambda_3(t)$ is < 0, so there are no such solutions to Lemma 3.8. The

other possibility is $\mu_2 = \mu_3$; this also implies $\lambda_3(t) = 0$. In this case one has $\lambda_1(t) = 1$ and $\lambda_2(t) = \lambda_3(t) = 0$, and $t = \frac{1}{3\mu_2}$ is positive. Hence we have a solution, and this is unique because $\mu_2 = \mu_3$. If $\mu_2 = 0$, then $\lambda_2(t)$ cannot be 0 and we cannot find solutions like this.

Summarizing, so far we have seen that: i) there are no solutions as in Lemma 3.8 for which $\lambda_1(t) = 0$; ii) if $\mu_2 \leq 0$, there are no solutions as in Lemma 3.8 for which $\lambda_2(t) = 0$; and iii) if $\mu_2 = \mu_3$, then there is a unique solution as in Lemma 3.8, for which $\lambda_2(t) = \lambda_3(t) = 0$ and $\lambda_1(t) = 1$.

Finally, let us look for solutions with $\lambda_3(t) = 0$, i.e. with $t = \frac{1}{3\mu_3}$. We know, by hypothesis, that $\mu_2 \leq \mu_3$ and $\mu_3 > 0$. If $\mu_2 = \mu_3$, then we are in the previous case and there is a unique positive t giving a solution as in Lemma 3.8. Let us assume now that $\mu_2 < \mu_3$. Then we have

$$\lambda_1(t) = \frac{1}{3}(1 - \frac{\mu_1}{\mu_3})$$
 and $\lambda_2(t) = \frac{1}{3}(1 - \frac{\mu_2}{\mu_3})$

which are both ≥ 0 . Since their sum is 1, it follows that each $\lambda_i(t)$ is also ≤ 1 .

The product of $\lambda_1(t)$ and $\lambda_2(t)$ satisfies

$$0 \le \lambda_1(t) \cdot \lambda_2(t) = \frac{1}{9} \left(1 - \frac{\mu_1 + \mu_2}{\mu_3} + \frac{\mu_1 \mu_2}{\mu_3^2}\right) = \frac{1}{9} \left(2 + \frac{\mu_1 \mu_2}{\mu_3^2}\right)$$
$$= \frac{1}{9} \left(2 + \frac{\mu_1 \mu_2}{(\mu_1 + \mu_2)^2}\right) \le \frac{1}{4},$$

since $\mu_1 + \mu_2 + \mu_3 = 0$ and $\frac{\mu_1 \mu_2}{(\mu_1 + \mu_2)^2} \leq \frac{1}{4}$ because $\frac{1}{4}(a+b)^2 \geq ab$ for any real numbers *a* and *b* (with equality if and only if a = b). Hence $t = \frac{1}{3\mu_3}$ is the unique solution satisfying the conditions of Lemma 3.8. \Box

We now "normalize" the map ψ so that its image is contained in $S^4 \subset S$. For this we define a function

$$\alpha(H) = [\operatorname{trace}(\psi(H)^2)]^{-\frac{1}{2}},$$

i.e. $\alpha(H)$ is the inverse of the norm of $\psi(H)$ in S, and we set

$$\Phi(H) = \alpha(H) \,\psi(H) \,.$$

One has

trace[
$$\psi(H)^2$$
] = trace[$(\frac{1}{3}I_3 - \frac{1}{2}(H + \overline{H}))^2$]
= trace[$\frac{1}{9}I_3 - \frac{1}{3}(H + \overline{H}) + \frac{1}{4}(H^2 + \overline{H}^2 + H\overline{H} + \overline{H}H)$]
= $\frac{1}{6} + \frac{1}{4}$ trace($H\overline{H} + \overline{H}H$),

which is always positive since the matrix $(H\overline{H} + \overline{H}H)$ is positive semi-definite, so its trace is ≥ 0 . Hence the maps α and Φ are well defined. It is clear that the image of Φ is contained in $S^4 \subset S$, because the linearity of the trace implies that

$$[\text{trace}(\Phi(H))]^2 = \alpha^2(H) [\text{trace } \psi(H)]^2 = 1.$$

It is also clear that Φ is SO(3, **R**)-equivariant, since the trace is invariant under conjugation and ψ is equivariant by Lemma 3.7. These considerations imply both Lemma 3.8 and the following

LEMMA 3.9. The map Φ is an equivariant surjection from P(2) over $S^4 \subset S$, and it is two-to-one, except over the image of the real matrices in P(2) where it is one-to-one.

This gives the map in Theorem 3.4 that determines an equivariant diffeomorphism between S^4 and P_C^2 modulo the involution given by conjugation. To complete the proof of Theorem 3.4 we need to show that Φ is invariant under the involution of P(2) that corresponds to complex conjugation in P_C^2 . For this we notice that if L_H is the complex line in \mathbb{C}^3 which is the image of $H \in P(2)$, and if $0 \neq (z_1, z_2, z_3) \in L_H$, we can associate to H the point in P_C^2 with projective coordinates $[z_1, z_2, z_3]$. To the matrix \overline{H} there corresponds the line with projective coordinates $[\overline{z}_1, \overline{z}_2, \overline{z}_3]$. Therefore we have

LEMMA 3.10. The involution j* of P(2) defined by $j*(H) = \overline{H}$ coincides with the involution j of $P_{\mathbb{C}}^2$ given by complex conjugation, $[z_1, z_2, z_3] \stackrel{j}{\mapsto} [\overline{z}_1, \overline{z}_2, \overline{z}_3].$

Then Φ is invariant under this involution, since $\Re(H) = \Re(\overline{H})$, proving Theorem 3.4.

4. Some applications and remarks

It is interesting to describe explicitly the orbits of the Γ action of SO(3, **R**) on S⁴, regarded²) as the set of matrices with norm 1 in S. In fact, the orbits of this action are conjugacy classes (or *congruency classes*) of traceless symmetric matrices whose square has trace 1. This is the connection between our construction and the spherical Tits buildings. Every $S \in S$ can

²) This orbit description of S^4 is also given in [Ma2].