

# PROJECTION AND RAMIFICATION

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ABSTRACT. When a projective variety is linearly projected to a projective space of the same dimension, a ramification divisor forms. We study basic properties of this projection-ramification assignment, and uncover enumerative phenomena extending the classical appearance of Catalan numbers in the geometry of rational normal curves.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

{sec:intro}

Let  $f: X \rightarrow Y$  be a map between smooth algebraic varieties. A fundamental object associated to  $f$  is the set  $R(f) \subset X$  consisting of critical points of  $f$ , namely the points  $x \in X$  at which  $df: T_x X \rightarrow T_{f(x)} Y$  has less than maximal rank. To what extent can  $f$  be recovered from  $R(f)$ ? For example, does every non-trivial perturbation of  $f$  induce a non-trivial perturbation of  $R(f)$ ? If this is the case, then how many other  $g: X \rightarrow Y$  have  $R(g) = R(f)$ ? The goal of this paper is to explore these questions when  $X$  is a smooth projective variety and  $Y$  is a projective space of the same dimension as  $X$ .

More precisely, let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a smooth projective variety of dimension  $r$ , not contained in a hyperplane. A general  $(n - r - 1)$ -dimensional linear subspace  $L \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  defines a finite surjective map  $X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^r$ . The set of critical points of this map is the ramification divisor  $R(L) \subset X$ . By the Riemann–Hurwitz formula,  $R(L)$  lies in the linear series  $|K_X + (r + 1)H|$ , where  $K_X$  is the canonical class, and  $H$  is the hyperplane class on  $X$ . The association  $L \rightsquigarrow R(L)$  gives a rational map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(n - r - 1, n + 1) \dashrightarrow |K_X + (r + 1)H|.$$

We can rephrase in terms of  $\rho$  the questions raised in the introduction: Is  $\rho$  generically finite? What is the degree of  $\rho$ ? Our main goal is to answer these questions.

A simple argument shows that  $\rho_X$  is itself a linear projection of  $\mathbf{Gr}(n - r, n + 1)$  in its Plücker embedding. When  $X$  is a smooth curve over a field of characteristic 0, the map  $\rho_X$  is regular everywhere on  $\mathbf{Gr}(n - r, n + 1)$ . When  $X$  is a rational normal curve, the map  $\rho_X$  is also finite. In this case, the ramification divisor of a map  $\mathbf{P}^1 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$  of degree  $n$  represented by the rational function  $f/g$  is cut out by the Jacobian expression, namely the degree  $(2n - 2)$  polynomial  $f'g - g'f$ . Since  $\rho_X$  is regular, its degree is the degree of the Grassmannian, which in this case is the Catalan number  $\frac{(2n-2)!}{n!(n-1)!}$ . When  $X$  has dimension 2 or more,  $\rho_X$  may not be regular on the entire Grassmannian, which makes it difficult to understand. Nevertheless, it appears that the geometry of  $\rho_X$  is related to some fascinating areas of classical projective geometry, and the enumerative questions surrounding  $\rho_X$  hint at a rich underlying structure.

{q:maxvar}

**1.1. Maximal variation.** Our focus is the following question.

**Question 1.1.** Is  $\rho_X$  generically finite onto its image? In other words, does the image of  $\rho_X$  have maximal possible dimension?

To our knowledge, this question first appeared explicitly in the work of Flenner and Manaresi [FM98], with the authors' original motivation being to understand Stückrad-Vogel cycles. Our first result answers this question affirmatively for a large class of varieties. We say that  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is *incompressible* if for every  $(n - r - 1)$ -dimensional linear subspace  $L \subset \mathbf{P}^n$ , the projection map  $p_L: X \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}^r$  is dominant. Recall that the dual variety  $X^* \subset \mathbf{P}^{n*}$  is the closure of the locus of hyperplanes in  $\mathbf{P}^n$  whose intersection with the smooth part of  $X$  is singular.

{thm:main}

**Theorem A.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate, normal, projective variety over a field of characteristic zero. Suppose at least one of the following holds:*

- (1)  *$X$  is incompressible,*
- (2) *the dual variety  $X^* \subset \mathbf{P}^{n*}$  is a hypersurface.*

{item:incomp}

{item:dual}

*Then  $\rho_X$  is generically finite onto its image.*

We do not assume that  $X$  is smooth in the statement of Theorem A. This requires defining  $\rho_X$  more carefully. To state the conclusion informally, if we move a generic  $L \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  of complementary dimension, then the ramification locus  $R_L \subset X$  also moves.

The hypotheses in Theorem A are sufficient, but not necessary. Indeed, consider  $X = \mathbf{P}^{r-1} \times \mathbf{P}^1 \subset \mathbf{P}^{2r-1}$ , embedded by the Segre embedding, for  $r \geq 3$ . Then  $X$  is neither incompressible nor is  $X^*$  a hypersurface, and yet  $\rho_X$  is dominant (see Theorem E).

To our knowledge, the known results about maximal variation operate under condition (1) in Theorem A. For example, in [FM98], the authors deduce maximal variation under the condition that for every  $(n - r - 1)$ -dimensional linear subspace  $L \subset \mathbf{P}^n$ , the join  $J(L, X)$  equals  $\mathbf{P}^n$ , or under the condition that  $X$  is smooth and the twisted normal bundle  $N_{X/\mathbf{P}^n}(-1)$  is ample. Either condition implies that  $X$  is incompressible, and hence falls under condition (1). If  $X$  is a curve or a smooth complete intersection, then  $X$  is incompressible, and covered by condition (1).

Theorem A substantially increases the class of varieties where we now know maximal variation. For example, it is easy to see that if  $X$  is a smooth surface over a field of characteristic 0, then  $X^*$  is a hypersurface. Therefore, maximal variation holds for all surfaces, although incompressibility may not (The cubic surface scroll  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^4$  is the smallest counter example, as the projection from the directrix line of  $X$  is not dominant). As another source of new examples, take a sufficiently high degree Veronese re-embedding  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^N$  of any smooth  $X$ . Then  $X^*$  is divisorial, and hence  $X$  is covered under Theorem A. But  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^N$  will be compressible.

Given that maximal variation holds in such a large class of varieties, it is natural to wonder if it always holds. This is not the case.

{Thm:Counterexam}

**Theorem B.** *There exist smooth, non-degenerate, rational normal scrolls  $X^r \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  of every dimension  $r \geq 4$  and degree  $d \geq r + 1$  such that the projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  is not generically finite onto its image.*

Theorem B provides the first known examples of varieties with non-maximal variation of ramification divisors. We describe the rational normal scrolls in Theorem B in ??; they include some of general moduli.

We now turn our attention to cases where the projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  may be dominant. The next result classifies  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  for which the source and the target of  $\rho_X$  are of the same dimension.

**Theorem C.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a smooth, non-degenerate projective variety of dimension  $r$  over a field of characteristic zero. We have the inequality*

$$\dim \mathbf{Gr}(n-r, n+1) \leq \dim |K_X + (r+1)H|,$$

where equality holds if and only if  $X$  is a variety of minimal degree, that is  $\deg X = n-r+1$ .

Recall the list of smooth varieties of minimal degree: rational normal curves, quadric hypersurfaces, the Veronese surface in  $\mathbf{P}^5$ , and rational normal scrolls. By Theorem A,  $\rho_X$  is dominant for the first three, so we are led to investigate the scrolls. It came to us as a surprise that  $\rho_X$  is *not* dominant for all scrolls (see Theorem B). Nevertheless, it is dominant for most scrolls, which we now make precise.

Recall that if  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a smooth rational normal scroll, then  $X$  is isomorphic to the projectivization of an ample vector bundle  $E$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , and the embedding is given by the complete linear series  $|\mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}E}(1)|$ .

**Theorem D.** *Let  $X = \mathbf{P}E \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a rational normal scroll, where  $E$  is a ample vector bundle of rank  $r$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , general in its moduli. If  $\deg E = a \cdot (r-1) + b \cdot (2r-1) + 1$  for non-negative integers  $a, b$ , then the projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  is dominant for  $X$ . In particular, the conclusion holds if  $E$  is general of degree at least  $(r-1)(2r-1) + 1$ .*

Thus, at least among the general scrolls, the projection-ramification map is dominant except possibly in small degrees. We prove Theorem D by degeneration, using the theory of limit linear series of higher rank developed by Teixidor i Bigas [TiB91] and Osserman [Oss14]. In the course of proving the theorem, we also demonstrate dominance in the case of  $E = \mathcal{O}(1)^r$  and  $E = \mathcal{O}(2)^r$ .

**1.2. Enumerative problems.** Theorem C and Theorem D motivate a gamut of enumerative questions.

**Question 1.2.** When  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a variety of minimal degree, what is the degree of  $\rho_X$ ?

The following result summarizes our knowledge of the answers to Question 1.2.

**Theorem E.**

- (1) If  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a rational normal curve, then  $\rho_X$  is regular and  $\deg \rho_X = \frac{(2n-2)!}{n!(n-1)!}$ .
- (2) If  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a quadric hypersurface, then  $\rho_X$  is an isomorphism.
- (3) If  $X = \mathbf{P}^{r-1} \times \mathbf{P}^1 \hookrightarrow \mathbf{P}^{2r-1}$  is the Segre embedding, then  $\rho_X$  is birational.
- (4) If  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^5$  is the Veronese surface, then  $\deg \rho_X = 3$ .

- (5) If  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^5$  is a general quartic surface scroll, then  $\deg \rho_X = 2$ .
- (6) If  $X = \mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(k+1)) \subset \mathbf{P}^{k+3}$  is the surface scroll with most imbalanced splitting type, then  $\rho_X$  is birational.
- (7) If  $X = \mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(k+1)) \subset \mathbf{P}^{k+5}$  is the threefold scroll with most imbalanced splitting type, then  $\rho_X$  is birational.

For  $X$  of dimension 1, namely a rational normal curve, the projection-ramification map

$$\rho_X : \mathbf{Gr}(2, n+1) \longrightarrow \mathbf{P}^{2n-2}$$

is regular, and defined by the Plücker line bundle on the Grassmannian. Therefore, its degree is the top self-intersection of the Plücker line bundle, which in this case is the Catalan number  $\frac{(2n-2)!}{n!(n-1)!}$ .

For  $X$  of codimension 1, namely a quadric hypersurface, the projection-ramification map

$$\rho_X : \mathbf{Gr}(n, n+1) = \mathbf{P}^n \longrightarrow \mathbf{P}^{n*}$$

is again regular, and is in fact the duality isomorphism induced by the (non-degenerate) quadric  $X$ .

The case of the Veronese surface and of the quartic surface scroll in Theorem E are particularly delightful; these are treated in § 6. They involve intricate classical projective geometry that intertwines cubic plane curves, Steinerians and Cayleyans, conjugate triangles, and polarity.

The cases of the most unbalanced surface and threefold scrolls follow from direct calculation. Note, however, that for the most unbalanced scroll in dimension 4 and higher, the projection-ramification map is not dominant. For scrolls,  $\rho_X$  is not regular. Furthermore, the complexity of the base locus of  $\rho_X$  effectively blocks any straightforward application of the excess intersection formula.

A smooth rational normal scroll  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  of degree  $d$  and dimension  $r$  is isomorphic to the projectivization of an ample vector bundle  $E$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , which in turn is isomorphic to a direct sum  $\mathcal{O}(a_1) \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathcal{O}(a_r)$  for positive integers  $a_1, \dots, a_r$  satisfying  $d = a_1 + \cdots + a_r$ . Let  $\Sigma_{r,d}$  be the set of  $r$ -term partitions of  $d$ . We get a function  $\rho : \Sigma_{r,d} \longrightarrow \mathbf{Z}_{\geq 0}$  defined by

$$\rho(a_1, \dots, a_r) = \deg \rho_X,$$

for  $X = \mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}(a_1) \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathcal{O}(a_r))$ . The set  $\Sigma_{r,d}$  has a partial ordering  $\prec$  given by dominance. If  $(a_1, \dots, a_r) \prec (b_1, \dots, b_r)$ , then the scroll  $\mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}(b_1) \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathcal{O}(b_r))$  isotrivially specializes to the scroll  $\mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}(a_1) \oplus \cdots \oplus \mathcal{O}(a_r))$ . By the lower semi-continuity of degrees of rational maps, we get

$$\rho(a_1, \dots, a_r) \leq \rho(b_1, \dots, b_r).$$

Theorem D implies that, at least if  $d$  is sufficiently large compared to  $r$ , then  $\rho$  is not identically zero. Theorem E determines the value of  $\rho$  for the partitions  $(n)$ ,  $(1, \dots, 1)$ ,  $(1, k+1)$ ,  $(1, 1, k+1)$ , and  $(2, 2)$ . The following table lists some more values of  $\rho$  computed using randomized calculations over finite fields using the computer algebra systems **Macaulay2** and **MAGMA**. We plan to return to a more complete enumerative investigation of  $\rho$  in a future paper.

$a_1 \backslash a_2$	1	2	3	4
1	1			
2	1	2		
3	1	6	22	
4	1	17	92	422

TABLE 1. Degree of  $\rho_X$  for  $X = \mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}(a_1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(a_2))$ 

{tab:computation}

**1.3. Further remarks and questions.** One of the central enumerative problems concerning branch divisors, originating in the work of Hurwitz, is to compute the number of branched covers of the projective line with specified branch set in  $\mathbf{P}^1$ . This number is called the Hurwitz number. As is well known, the Hurwitz numbers are difficult to compute, but they exhibit remarkable structure. There is a related question of computing the number of rational functions on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  with a prescribed ramification set. This question is much more elementary, and yields the Catalan numbers, as we have seen.

In higher dimensions, however, the analogue of the Hurwitz problem is expected to be much less interesting, thanks to Chisini’s conjecture (now Kulikov’s theorem [Kul99]). Kulikov’s theorem asserts that a branched cover  $S \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^2$  with generic branching is uniquely determined by its branch divisor  $B \subset \mathbf{P}^2$ , with finitely many well-understood exceptions. In contrast, the enumerative problem regarding ramification divisors persists in all dimensions, thanks to Theorem C, and poses a significant challenge. In some sense, the “branch” and “ramification” enumerative stories trade places, at least in terms of difficulty, but perhaps also in terms of structure.

The projection-ramification map generalizes the Wronski map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(2, n+1) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^{2n-2}.$$

The geometry surrounding the Wronski map has received a lot of attention, thanks to the B. and M. Shapiro conjecture. This conjecture states that the pre-image of any point in  $\mathbf{P}^{2n-2}$  defined by a set of  $(2n-2)$  real points on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  consists entirely of real points in  $\mathbf{Gr}(2, n+1)$  [Sot00] (the conjecture has been proved by Eremenko and Gabrielov [EG02]). Theorem C potentially sets the stage for a higher-dimensional generalization of the body of work around the Shapiro conjecture. In particular, it would be interesting to find a uniform topological picture explaining the enumerative numbers  $\deg \rho_X$  similar to the “nets” introduced by Eremenko and Gabrielov, which explained the appearance of Catalan numbers.

The study of  $\rho_X$  in positive characteristic is likely to bring new surprises and require different techniques. We do not know if Theorem A or Theorem C holds in positive characteristic; our proof certainly does not. The answers to the enumerative questions Question 1.2 do depend on the characteristic, even in the simplest case of rational normal curves, due to the presence of inseparable covers [Oss06].

**1.4. Notation and conventions.** We work over an algebraically closed field  $k$  of characteristic 0 (We use Bertini's theorem and generic smoothness. We also appeal to the Kodaira Vanishing theorem.) By a *proper variety*, we mean a proper, integral, finite-type  $k$ -scheme. For any scheme  $X$ , we let  $X^{\text{sm}}$  denote its smooth locus. If  $F$  is a coherent sheaf, we let  $P(F)$  denote its sheaf of principal parts. We will let  $e: H^0(X, F) \rightarrow P(F)$  denote the natural evaluation morphism – we suppress the dependence on  $F$ . If  $s$  is a global section of a locally free sheaf, we let  $v(s)$  denote the vanishing scheme of  $s$ . If  $L$  is a line bundle, we let  $|L|$  denote the projective space  $\mathbf{P}(H^0(L))$ . If  $L$  is a line bundle on a smooth variety  $Y$ , and  $s \in H^0(Y, L)$  is a section, then the *singular scheme*  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$  of  $s$  is the vanishing scheme of  $e(s) \in H^0(Y, P(L))$ ; if  $K$ , the kernel sheaf of  $e: H^0(Y, L) \otimes \mathcal{O}_Y \rightarrow P(L)$ , is locally free, then  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$  is the largest closed subscheme  $T \subset Y$  such that  $s: \mathcal{O}_T \rightarrow H^0(Y, L) \otimes \mathcal{O}_T$  factors through  $K|_T$ .

## 2. THE PROJECTION-RAMIFICATION MAP

{sec:prmap}

In this section, we define a projection-ramification map for a pair  $(X, L)$  consisting of a proper, normal, variety  $X$  and a sufficiently positive line bundle  $L$  on  $X$ . For  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$ , taking  $L = \mathcal{O}(1)$  recovers the projection-ramification map introduced in § 1. Working with abstract pairs, however, offers more flexibility that is helpful in inductive proofs.

Let  $X$  be a proper variety of dimension  $r$  over an algebraically closed field  $k$  of characteristic zero. A *linear series* on  $X$  is a pair  $(L, W)$  consisting of a line bundle  $L$  on  $X$  and a subspace  $W \subset H^0(X, L)$ . The *complete linear series* associated to  $L$  is  $(L, W)$  with  $W = H^0(X, L)$ . A *projection* is a linear series  $(L, V)$  with  $\dim V = r + 1$ . A *projection of*  $(L, W)$  is a projection  $(L, V)$  with  $V \subset W$ . As a convention, we use  $V$  for projections and  $W$  for more general linear series.

{definition:prop}

**Definition 2.1.** We say that a projection  $(L, V)$  is *properly ramified* if the evaluation homomorphism

$$e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \rightarrow P(L)$$

is an isomorphism over a general point in  $X$ . If  $(L, V)$  is properly ramified, its *ramification divisor*

$$R(L, V) \subset X$$

is the closure of the scheme defined by the determinant of  $e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X^{\text{sm}}} \rightarrow P(L)|_{X^{\text{sm}}}$ .

In most cases,  $L$  is clear from context, so we drop it from the notation and denote the ramification divisor simply by  $R(V)$ .

{rem:Jacobian}

*Remark 2.2.* Suppose for simplicity that  $V$  is a base-point free linear series that yields a surjective map  $\phi: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^V$ . Then the ramification divisor may be defined as the degeneracy locus of the map

$$d\phi: T_X \rightarrow \phi^* T_{\mathbf{P}^V}$$

on tangent spaces. The degeneracy locus is the zero locus of  $\det \phi$ , which in local coordinates, is given by the determinant of the Jacobian matrix  $\left( \frac{\partial \phi_i}{\partial x_j} \right)$ . Therefore, the ramification

divisor  $R(L, V)$  is also often called the *Jacobian* of the linear series  $(L, V)$  (see, for example, [Dol12, 1.1.7]).

A projection  $(L, V)$  gives the evaluation map

$$e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow L.$$

The evaluation map yields a map  $p_{V,L}: X \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}V$ , regular on the non-empty open set of  $X$  where  $e$  is surjective. The following is an easy observation, whose proof we skip.

{prop:proj}

**Proposition 2.3.** *The projection  $(L, V)$  is properly ramified if and only if the map on tangent spaces induced by  $p_{V,L}$  is generically an isomorphism. In characteristic zero, this is equivalent to the condition that  $p_{V,L}$  is dominant.*

For a fixed  $(L, W)$ , the set of all projections of  $(L, W)$  are parametrized by the Grassmannian  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, W)$ . The property of being properly ramified is a Zariski open condition on the Grassmannian.

We now define a map that assigns to a projection its ramification divisor. To do so, we interpret the ramification divisor as an element of a linear series.

Assume, furthermore, that  $X$  is normal. Let  $K_X$  be the canonical sheaf of  $X$ . Denoting by  $i: X^{\text{sm}} \rightarrow X$  the inclusion,  $K_X$  is given by the push-forward

$$K_X = i_* K_{X^{\text{sm}}}.$$

Note that, since  $X$  is normal, the complement of  $X^{\text{sm}} \subset X$  has codimension at least 2. The sheaf  $K_X$  is coherent, reflexive, and satisfies Serre's S2 condition.

Let  $L$  be a line bundle on  $X$ . The sheaf  $P(L)$  is locally free of rank  $(r+1)$  on  $X^{\text{sm}}$ , and we have a canonical isomorphism

$$\bigwedge^{r+1} P(L)|_{X^{\text{sm}}} \cong K_{X^{\text{sm}}} \otimes L^{r+1}.$$

Given a subspace  $V \subset H^0(X, L)$ , we apply  $\bigwedge^{r+1}$  to the evaluation map

$$e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X^{\text{sm}}} \longrightarrow P(L)|_{X^{\text{sm}}},$$

to get

$$\det e: \det V \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X^{\text{sm}}} \longrightarrow K_{X^{\text{sm}}} \otimes L^{r+1}.$$

By applying  $i_*$  and taking global sections, we get

{eqn:ramsection}

$$r_V: \det V \longrightarrow H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1}). \quad (2.1)$$

If  $(L, V)$  is properly ramified, then this map is non-zero, and hence gives a point of the projective space  $\mathbf{P}H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1})^*$ . Doing the same construction universally over the Grassmannian  $\mathbf{Gr} = \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, W)$  yields a map

{eqn:rammap}

$$r: \det \mathcal{V} \longrightarrow H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1}) \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}}, \quad (2.2)$$



where  $\mathcal{V} \subset W \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}}$  is the universal sub-bundle of rank  $(r+1)$ . Let  $U \subset \mathbf{Gr}$  be the open subset of properly ramified projections. Then the map in (2.2) is non-zero at every point of  $U$ , and defines a map  $U \rightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1})^*$  given by the surjection

$$H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1})^* \otimes \mathcal{O}_U \rightarrow \det \mathcal{V}|_U^*. \quad (2.3)$$

Note that  $U$  is non-empty if and only if  $W$  separates tangent vectors at a general point of  $X$ .

**Definition 2.4.** Let  $(L, W)$  be a linear series that separates tangent vectors at a general point of  $X$ . The *projection-ramification* map for  $(L, W)$  is the rational map

$$\rho_{(X,L,W)}: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, W) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1})^*$$

defined on the non-empty open subset of properly ramified maps by (2.3).

If any of  $X$ ,  $L$ , or  $W$  are clear from context, we drop them from the notation. In particular, for a non-degenerate  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$ , we denote by  $\rho_X$  the map  $\rho_{X,L,W}$  with  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$  and  $W$  the image in  $H^0(X, L)$  of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^n, \mathcal{O}(1))$ .

Note that the map (2.3) factors as

$$\det \mathcal{V} \xrightarrow{a} \bigwedge^{r+1} W \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}} \xrightarrow{b} H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1}) \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}},$$

where  $a$  is  $\wedge^{r+1}$  applied to the universal inclusion  $\mathcal{V} \subset W \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}}$ , and  $b$  is induced by  $\wedge^{r+1}$  applied to the evaluation map  $e: W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \rightarrow P(L)$ . The map  $a$  defines the Plücker embedding

$$i: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, W) \rightarrow \mathbf{P} \left( \bigwedge^{r+1} W^* \right),$$

and the map  $b$  defines a linear projection

$$p: \mathbf{P} \left( \bigwedge^{r+1} W^* \right) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1}).$$

Thus,  $\rho_{X,L,W}$  factors as the Plücker embedding followed by a linear projection.

### 3. MAXIMAL VARIATION FOR INCOMPRESSIBLE AND NON-DEFECTIVE $X$

The goal of this section is to prove Theorem A. We begin by proving part (1), which is substantially easier.

**Proposition 3.1** (Theorem A (1)). *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate, normal, incompressible projective variety over a field of characteristic zero. Then  $\rho_X$  is a finite map.*

*Proof.* Set  $L = \mathcal{O}(1)$  and let  $W \subset H^0(X, L)$  be the image of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^n, \mathcal{O}(1))$ . Let  $V \subset W$  be an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace. Since  $X$  is incompressible, the projection map  $p_{V,L}: X \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}V$  induced by  $(L, V)$  is dominant. By Proposition 2.3, this implies that  $(L, V)$  is properly ramified. Since  $V$  was arbitrary, the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, W) \rightarrow |K_X + (r+1)H|$$

is regular. Since the Picard rank of a Grassmannian is 1, a regular map from a Grassmannian is either constant or finite. It is easy to check that  $\rho$  is not constant; so it must be finite.  $\square$

For the proof of part (2) of Theorem A, we proceed inductively by showing that a general  $(n - r - 1)$ -dimensional linear subspace which is incident to  $X$  is an isolated point in its fiber under  $\rho$ . Again, it is more convenient to work with the more abstract set-up of a linear series, allowing for series that are not very ample.

Let  $X$  be a proper variety of dimension  $r$ , and let  $(L, W)$  be a linear series on  $X$ . For an ideal sheaf  $I \subset \mathcal{O}_X$  we denote by  $W \otimes I$  the subspace of  $W$  consisting of the sections that vanish modulo  $I$ . More precisely, if  $K$  is the kernel of the evaluation map

$$W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow L \otimes \mathcal{O}_X / I,$$

then  $W \otimes I = H^0(X, K)$ . In particular, for  $W = H^0(X, L)$ , we have  $W \otimes I = H^0(X, L \otimes I)$ . For  $s \in W \otimes I$ , the vanishing locus  $v(s)$  refers to the vanishing locus of  $s$  as a section of  $L$ . We set  $|W| = \mathbf{P}W^*$ , the space of one-dimensional subspaces of  $W$ , and likewise  $|W \otimes I| = \mathbf{P}(W \otimes I)^*$ . For a complete linear series, we write  $|L|$  for  $|W|$ . Note that  $v(s) = v(\lambda s)$  for a non-zero scalar  $\lambda$ , so it causes no ambiguity to talk about  $v(s)$  for  $s \in |W|$ .

non-defectivity}

**3.1. Non-defective linear series.** We study a positivity property of linear series that generalizes the property of having a divisorial dual.

lynon-defective}

**Definition 3.2.** We say that a linear series  $(L, W)$  is *non-defective* if, for a general point  $x \in X$  either  $W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2 = 0$ , or there exists  $s \in W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2$  such that  $v(s)$  has an isolated singularity at  $x$ .

Note that for  $s \in |W|$ , the condition that  $v(s)$  have an isolated singularity at  $x$  is a Zariski open condition on  $|W|$ . Therefore, if there exists an  $s \in |W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2|$  such that  $v(s)$  has an isolated singularity at  $x$ , then a general  $s \in |W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2|$  has the same property.

*Remark 3.3.* Let  $x$  be a point of  $X$ . Suppose there exists  $s \in |W|$  with an isolated singularity at  $x$ . It may be tempting to conclude from this that  $(L, W)$  is non-defective. This is not necessarily true! For example, take  $X = \mathbf{F}_3$ . Denote by  $E$  the section of self-intersection  $-3$  and  $F$  the fiber of the projection  $\mathbf{F}_3 \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$ . Let  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(E + 2F)$  and  $W = H^0(X, L)$ . For  $x \in E$ , the general member of  $|W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2|$  has an isolated singularity at  $x$ , but the same is not true for a general  $x \in X$ .

*Remark 3.4.* Suppose  $(L, W)$  is non-defective. Let  $x \in X$  be general, and let  $s \in |W|$  be such that  $v(s)$  has an isolated singularity at  $x$ . For all such  $s$ , it may be the case  $v(s)$  has singularities away from  $x$ , even along a positive dimensional locus. For example, let  $\pi: X \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^2$  be the blow-up at a point, and  $E$  the exceptional divisor. The complete linear series associated to  $L = \pi^*\mathcal{O}(2) \otimes \mathcal{O}(2E)$  is non-defective, but for every global section of  $L$ , the singular locus of  $v(s)$  contains  $E$ .

We now define the conormal variety of a linear series, which plays an important role in our analysis of non-defectivity. Let  $K$  be the kernel of the evaluation map

$$e: W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow P(L).$$

Let  $U \subset X$  be an open subset such that  $K|_U$  is locally free and the dual of the inclusion

$$W^* \otimes \mathcal{O}_U \longrightarrow K|_U^*$$

is a surjection. This surjection defines a closed embedding  $\mathbf{P}(K|_U) \subset U \times |W|$ . The conormal variety of  $(L, W)$ , denoted by  $P_{L,W}$ , is the closure of  $\mathbf{P}(K|_U)$  in  $X \times |W|$ .

{prop:dimension}

**Proposition 3.5.** *Suppose  $(L, W)$  is non-defective. If  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ , then  $P_{L,W}$  is irreducible of dimension  $\dim W - 2$ . If  $\dim W \leq r + 1$ , then  $P_{L,W}$  is empty.*

*Proof.* Set  $n = \dim |W| = \dim W - 1$ . Let  $k$  be the (generic) rank of  $K$ , namely the rank of the locally free sheaf  $K|_U$ . Then  $k \geq n - r$ . The statement of the proposition is equivalent to showing that if  $k > 0$ , then  $k = n - r$ .

For brevity, set  $P = P_{L,W}$ . Consider the projection  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$ , obtained by restricting the second projection  $X \times |W| \longrightarrow |W|$ . For  $s \in |W|$ , we view  $\sigma^{-1}(s)$  as a subscheme of  $X$ . We then have

$$\sigma^{-1}(s) \cap U = \text{Sing}(v(s)) \cap U.$$

Suppose  $r > 0$ . Then  $P$  is non-empty and irreducible, since it is the closure of a non-empty and irreducible variety. Since  $(L, W)$  is non-defective, a general point  $(x, s) \in P$  is such that  $x$  is an isolated point of  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$ . Therefore,  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  is generically finite onto its image. We conclude that  $\dim P \leq \dim |W|$ , and hence  $k \leq n - r + 1$ .

To show that  $k = n - r$ , it suffices to show that  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  is not surjective. We do so using Bertini's theorem. Let  $B \subset X$  denote the union of the base locus of  $|W|$  and the singular locus of  $X$ . Then  $B$  is a proper closed subset of  $X$ . Let  $P^B \subset P$  be the pre-image of  $B$  under the projection  $\pi: P \longrightarrow X$ . By the definition of  $P$ , the map  $\pi: P \longrightarrow X$  is surjective, and hence  $P^B$  is a proper closed subset of  $P$ . Since  $P$  is irreducible, we have  $\dim P^B < \dim P \leq \dim |W|$ , so the projection  $P^B \longrightarrow |W|$  cannot be dominant. Let  $s \in |W|$  be general, in particular, not in the image of  $P^B \longrightarrow |W|$ . By Bertini's theorem  $v(s)$  is non-singular away from  $B$ . Thus, for any  $x \in X$ , the point  $(x, s) \in X \times |W|$  does not lie in  $P$ . For  $x \in B$ , this is because  $s$  is not in the image of  $P^B$ , and for  $x \notin B$ , this is because  $v(s)$  is non-singular at  $x$ . We conclude that  $s$  does not lie in the image of  $P \longrightarrow |W|$ . Hence  $P \longrightarrow |W|$  is not surjective.  $\square$

{prop:dimensionC}

**Proposition 3.6.** *Let  $(L, W)$  be a linear series with  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ , and let  $P = P_L$  be its conormal variety. The projection  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  is generically finite onto its image if and only if  $(L, W)$  is non-defective.*

*Proof.* Since  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ , the conormal variety  $P = P_{L,W}$  is non-empty. Let  $(x, s) \in P$  be a general point. We may assume that  $x \in U$ . Then  $x$  is a singular point of  $v(s)$ , and it is an isolated singularity of  $v(s)$  if and only if  $(x, s)$  is an isolated point in the fiber of  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  over  $s$ . The conclusion follows.  $\square$

The following observation relates non-defectivity with the non-degeneracy of the dual.

**Proposition 3.7.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate projective variety. Let  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$  and  $W \subset H^0(X, L)$  the image of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^n, \mathcal{O}(1))$ . Then  $(L, W)$  is non-defective if and only if the dual variety  $X^* \subset \mathbf{P}^{n*}$  is a hypersurface.*

*Proof.* Since  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is not contained in a hyperplane, we have  $\dim W = n + 1 \geq r + 1$ . Since  $(L, W)$  is very ample, it separates tangent vectors on  $X$ , so the evaluation map

$$e: W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow P(L)$$

is surjective. It follows that the rank of the kernel is  $n - r$ , and hence

$$\dim P_{L,W} = (n - r - 1) + r = n - 1.$$

By definition, the dual variety  $X^* \subset \mathbf{P}^{n*} = |W|$  is the image of the conormal variety under the projection  $P_{L,W} \longrightarrow |W|$ . By Proposition 3.6,  $(L, W)$  is non-defective if and only if  $\dim X^* = n - 1$ .  $\square$

**Proposition 3.8.** *Let  $(L, W)$  be a non-defective linear series on  $X$  with  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ . Let  $x \in X$  be a general point. Then there exists  $s \in |W|$  such that  $v(s)$  has an ordinary double point singularity at  $x$ .*

*Proof.* By Proposition 3.6, the projection  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  is generically finite onto its image. Let  $(x, s) \in P$  be a general point. Since our ground field is of characteristic zero, we may assume that  $P$  is smooth at  $(x, s)$ , that  $x \in U \cap X^{\text{sm}}$ , and  $\sigma: P \longrightarrow |W|$  is a local immersion at  $(x, s)$ . This implies that  $x \in \text{Sing}(v(s))$  is isolated, and also that  $x$  is a reduced point of the scheme  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$ . These two properties show that  $v(s)$  possesses an ordinary double point at  $x$ . To see this, choose local coordinates  $(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  so that the complete local ring  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$  is isomorphic to  $k[[x_1, \dots, x_n]]$ . After choosing a local trivialization for  $L$  around  $x$ , the section  $s$  corresponds to a power series  $s(x_1, \dots, x_r)$  contained in  $\mathfrak{m}_x^2 \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$ . The germ of  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$  at  $x$  is cut out by the power series  $\frac{\partial s}{\partial x_1}, \dots, \frac{\partial s}{\partial x_r}$ . Since the germ of  $\text{Sing}(v(s))$  at  $x$  is the reduced point  $x$ , we get that  $\frac{\partial s}{\partial x_1}, \dots, \frac{\partial s}{\partial x_r}$  are linearly independent as elements of  $\mathfrak{m}_x / \mathfrak{m}_x^2$ . From this, it is easy to check that the tangent cone of  $s(x_1, \dots, x_r)$  at  $x$  is a non-degenerate quadric cone.  $\square$

**Proposition 3.9.** *If  $(L, W)$  is a non-defective linear series with  $\dim W \geq r + 1$ , then  $W$  separates tangent vectors at a general point  $x \in X$ . That is, the evaluation map*

$$e_x: W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow L / \mathfrak{m}_x^2 L$$

*is surjective for general  $x \in X$ .*

*Proof.* By the definition of  $P(L)$ , we have a natural isomorphism

$$P(L)|_x = L / \mathfrak{m}_x^2 L,$$

so it suffices to show that the evaluation map

$$e: W \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow P(L)$$

is surjective at  $x$ . Let  $k$  be the generic rank of  $K$ , the kernel of  $e$ . From the proof of Proposition 3.5, we get

$$k = \dim W - r - 1.$$

Since  $(r + 1)$  is the generic rank of  $P(L)$ , we conclude that  $e$  is generically surjective.  $\square$

{cor:properlyram}

**Corollary 3.10.** *Suppose  $(L, W)$  is a non-defective linear series on  $X$  with  $\dim W \geq r + 1$ . Then there exists a properly ramified projection  $(L, V)$  of  $(L, W)$ .*

*Proof.* This follows immediately from Proposition 3.9.  $\square$

As a consequence of Corollary 3.10, the projection-ramification rational map  $\rho_{X,L,W}$  is defined for a non-defective linear series  $(L, W)$  with  $\dim W \geq r + 1$ .

Let  $\pi: \tilde{X} \rightarrow X$  be the blow-up at a point  $x \in X$ , and  $E \subset \tilde{X}$  the exceptional divisor. A linear series  $(L, W)$  on  $X$  gives a linear series  $(\tilde{L}, \tilde{W})$  as follows. Take  $\tilde{L} = \pi^*L \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\tilde{X}}(-E)$ . Note that  $H^0(X, L) = H^0(\tilde{X}, \pi^*L)$ , so we may think of  $W$  as a subspace of  $H^0(\tilde{X}, \pi^*L)$ . Take  $\tilde{W} = W \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\tilde{X}}(-E)$  with its natural inclusion  $\tilde{W} \subset H^0(\tilde{X}, \tilde{L})$ .

{prop:blowuppoint}

**Proposition 3.11.** *In the setup above, if  $(L, W)$  is non-defective,  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ , and  $x \in X$  is general, then  $(\tilde{L}, \tilde{W})$  is also non-defective.*

*Proof.* Let  $y$  be a general point of  $\tilde{X}$ . We have the equality

$$\tilde{W} \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2 = W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x \cdot \mathfrak{m}_y^2.$$

By Proposition 3.9, for a general  $y \in X$ , we have

$$\dim(W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2) = \dim W - (r + 1).$$

Since  $x \in X$  is general, we get

$$\dim(W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x \cdot \mathfrak{m}_y^2) = \dim W - (r + 2).$$

If  $\dim W = r + 2$ , then we get  $\tilde{W} \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2 = 0$ , so we are done. Assume that  $\dim W \geq r + 3$ . Then  $\dim(W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2) \geq 2$ . Since  $(L, W)$  is non-defective, a general  $s \in W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2$  is such that  $v(s)$  has an isolated singularity at  $y$ . Moreover, since  $\dim(W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2) \geq 2$ , for every  $x \in X$ , there exists  $s \in W$  such that  $v(s)$  passes through  $x$ . Hence, as  $x \in X$  is general, there exists  $s \in W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2$  such that  $v(s)$  has an isolated singularity at  $y$  and passes through  $x$ . That is, there exists  $s \in \tilde{W} \otimes \mathfrak{m}_y^2$  that has an isolated singularity at  $y$ . We conclude that  $(\tilde{L}, \tilde{W})$  is non-defective.  $\square$

**3.2. Maximal variation for non-defective pairs.** In this section, we prove part (2) of Theorem A. In fact, we prove a more general result (Theorem 3.12).

As before,  $X$  is a proper, normal variety of dimension  $r$  over an algebraically closed field of characteristic zero.

{thm:mainMain}

**Theorem 3.12.** *Let  $(L, W)$  be a non-defective linear series on  $X$  with  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ . Then the projection-ramification map  $\rho_{X,L,W}$  is generically finite onto its image.*

For the proof, we need two lemmas, which are essentially local computations. Throughout,  $X$ ,  $L$ , and  $W$  are as in the statement of Theorem 3.12.

**Lemma 3.13.** *Let  $x \in X$  be a general point and  $V \subset W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x$  a general  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace. Then  $V$  is properly ramified, and the ramification divisor  $R(V)$  has an ordinary double point singularity at  $x$ .*

*Proof.* Using Proposition 3.8 and Proposition 3.9, we get a basis  $(s_1, \dots, s_n, t)$  of  $V$  satisfying the following two conditions:

- (1)  $s_1, \dots, s_n$  generate  $L \otimes (\mathfrak{m}_x/\mathfrak{m}_x^2)$ , and
- (2)  $v(t)$  has an ordinary double point singularity at  $x$ .

Let  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$  denote the completion of the local ring at  $x \in X$  along its maximal ideal. Upon trivializing  $L$ , we may regard  $s_i$  and  $t$  as elements of  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$ , and can also assume  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x} = k[[s_1, \dots, s_n]]$ . In the bases  $(s_1, \dots, s_n, t)$  for  $V$  and  $(1, s_1, \dots, s_n)$  for  $P(L)$ , the evaluation map

$$e: V \otimes \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x} \longrightarrow P(L) \otimes \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$$

has the matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} s_1 & s_2 & \dots & t \\ 1 & 0 & \dots & \partial_1 t \\ 0 & 1 & \dots & \partial_2 t \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & \partial_n t \end{pmatrix}, \quad (3.1)$$

where  $\partial_i$  denotes  $\frac{\partial}{\partial s_i}$ . The determinant of the matrix (3.1)

$$t - \sum_i s_i \partial_i t$$

is an analytic local equation for the ramification divisor  $R(V)$  near  $x$ . Evidently,  $R(V)$  shares the same tangent cone as  $v(t)$  at  $x$ . The proposition follows.  $\square$

**Lemma 3.14.** *Let  $x \in X$  be a general point and  $V \subset W$  an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace with a basis  $(u, a_1, \dots, a_{r-1}, b)$  where*

- (1)  $u$  does not vanish at  $x$ ,
- (2)  $a_1, \dots, a_{r-1}$  vanish at  $x$ , and reduce to linearly independent elements of  $L \otimes (\mathfrak{m}_x/\mathfrak{m}_x^2)$ ,  
and
- (3)  $v(b)$  has an ordinary double point at  $x$ .

*Then  $R(V)$  contains  $x$  and is smooth at  $x$ .*

*Proof.* That  $R(V)$  contains  $x$  is clear since  $V \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2 \neq 0$ .

For smoothness, we again work in the completion  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$ . After trivializing  $L$ , we assume  $u, a_1, \dots, b$  are elements of  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$ . We choose an element  $z \in \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$  such that  $(a_1, \dots, a_{r-1}, z)$

forms a system of coordinates, that is  $\widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x} \cong k[[a_1, \dots, a_{r-1}, z]]$ . With respect to the given basis of  $V$  and the basis  $1, a_1, \dots, a_{r-1}, z$  for  $P(L)$ , the evaluation map

$$e: V \otimes \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x} \longrightarrow P(L) \otimes \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$$

has the matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} u & a_1 & a_2 & \dots & b \\ \partial_1 u & 1 & 0 & \dots & \partial_1 b \\ \partial_2 u & 0 & 1 & \dots & \partial_2 b \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \partial_z u & 0 & 0 & \dots & \partial_z b \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.2) \quad \{\text{matrix2}\}$$

The determinant of the matrix (3.2) is the analytic local equation for  $R(V)$ . It is given by

$$\bar{u} \cdot \partial_z b \pm \partial_z u \cdot \bar{b},$$

where, for  $r \in \widehat{\mathcal{O}}_{X,x}$  we set

$$\bar{r} = r - a_1 \partial_1 r - a_2 \partial_2 r - \dots - z \partial_z r.$$

Since  $b \in \mathfrak{m}_x^2$ , we get that  $\bar{b} \in \mathfrak{m}_x^2$ , and so  $\partial_z b \in \mathfrak{m}_x$ . Furthermore, since the tangent cone of  $b$  is a non-degenerate quadric, we also get that  $\partial_z b \notin \mathfrak{m}_x^2$ . Since  $\bar{u}$  is a unit, we see that the tangent cone of  $R(V)$  at  $x$  is the hyperplane cut out by  $\partial_z b \in \mathfrak{m}_x / \mathfrak{m}_x^2$ . So  $R(V)$  is smooth at  $x$ .  $\square$

We now have all the tools for the proof of Theorem 3.12.

*Proof of Theorem 3.12.* We induct on  $\dim W$ . The base case  $\dim W = r + 1$  is clear.

We now do the induction step. Suppose  $\dim W \geq r + 2$ . Choose a general point  $x \in X$  such that the induced linear series  $(\widetilde{L}, \widetilde{W})$  on  $\widetilde{X} = \text{Bl}_x X$  is non-defective as in Proposition 3.11. Choose a general  $(r + 1)$ -dimensional subspace  $V \subset W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x = \widetilde{W}$  that satisfies the hypotheses of Lemma 3.13. By the induction hypothesis,  $V$  considered as a projection of  $(\widetilde{L}, \widetilde{W})$  is an isolated point in the projection-ramification map for  $\widetilde{X}$ . We now show that it is also an isolated point in the projection-ramification map for  $X$ .

Let  $(C, 0)$  be a pointed smooth curve and  $V \subset W \otimes \mathcal{O}_C$  a sub-bundle of rank  $(r + 1)$  such that

- (1)  $V_0 = V$ , and
- (2)  $V_c \neq W_0$  for  $c \in C \setminus \{0\}$ .

We must show that  $R(V_c) \neq R(V)$  for a general  $c \in C$ .

Suppose  $V_c \subset W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x = \widetilde{W}$  for all  $c \in C$ . Denote by  $\widetilde{R}(V_c)$  the ramification divisor of  $V_c$  considered as a projection of  $\widetilde{X}$ . Since  $V = V_0$  is an isolated point in the projection-ramification map for  $\widetilde{X}$ , we know that  $\widetilde{R}(V_c) \neq \widetilde{R}(V_0)$  for a general  $c \in C$ . Clearly,  $R(V_c)$  and  $\widetilde{R}(V_c)$  agree away from the exceptional divisor, and hence we conclude that  $R(V_c) \neq R(V_0)$  for a general  $c \in C$ .

On the other hand, suppose  $V_c \not\subset W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x = \widetilde{W}$  for a general  $c \in C$ . Consider the evaluation maps

$$e_c: V_c \longrightarrow L/\mathfrak{m}_x^2 L$$

between an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional source and  $(r+1)$ -dimensional target. Since  $V = V_0$  satisfies the hypotheses of Lemma 3.13,  $\text{rk } e_0 = r$ . Therefore, by semi-continuity,  $\text{rk } e_c \geq r$  for all  $c \in C$ . If  $\text{rk } e_c = (r+1)$  for a general  $c \in C$ , then  $x \notin R(V_c)$ , and hence  $R(V_c) \neq R(V)$ . Otherwise, by shrinking  $C$  if necessary, assume  $\text{rk } e_c = r$  for all  $c \in C$ . In other words,  $\dim(V_c \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2) = 1$  for all  $c \in C$ . Let  $b_c \in V_c \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x^2$  be a non-zero element. Since  $v(b_0)$  has an ordinary double-point singularity at  $x$ , so does  $v(b_c)$ . Also, since  $\text{rk}(e_c) = r$  and  $V_c \not\subset W \otimes \mathfrak{m}_x$  for a general  $c$ , there exists  $u_c \in V_c$  not vanishing at  $x$ , and a set of  $(r-1)$  other elements that vanish at  $x$  but reduce to linearly independent elements modulo  $\mathfrak{m}_x^2$ . That is,  $V_c$  satisfies the hypotheses of Lemma 3.14 for a general  $c \in C$ . But Lemma 3.14 implies that  $R(V_c)$  is smooth at  $x$ . Since  $R(V_0)$  is singular at  $x$ , we conclude that  $R(V_0) \neq R(V_c)$ . The induction step is now complete.  $\square$

We immediately get part (2) of Theorem A.

**Corollary 3.15.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate projective variety such that the dual variety  $X^* \subset \mathbf{P}^{n*}$  is a hypersurface. Then  $\rho_X$  is generically finite onto its image.*

*Proof.* By Proposition 3.7 the linear series on  $X$  that gives the embedding  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is non-defective. Now apply Theorem 3.12.  $\square$

**Corollary 3.16.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate smooth curve or a surface. Then  $\rho_X$  is generically finite onto its image.*

*Proof.* Curves and surfaces have divisorial duals, so Corollary 3.15 applies.  $\square$

#### 4. PROJECTION-RAMIFICATION FOR VARIETIES OF MINIMAL DEGREE

In this section, we prove Theorem C, which relates varieties of minimal degree and the projection-ramification map. We then prove Theorem B by constructing examples of rational scrolls where maximal variation fails. Finally, we obtain an alternate and more explicit description of the projection-ramification map for scrolls, which we use repeatedly.

The following is an easy application of the Kodaira vanishing theorem.

**Proposition 4.1.** *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a non-degenerate, smooth, projective, variety of dimension  $r \geq 1$  over a field of characteristic zero. For all  $m \geq r$ , we have the inequality*

$$\binom{m}{r}(n-r) + \binom{m-1}{r} \leq h^0(X, K_X + mH). \quad (4.1)$$

*If equality holds for any  $m \geq r$ , then  $X$  is a variety of minimal degree, that is  $\deg X = n - r + 1$ . Conversely, for a variety of minimal degree, equality holds for all  $m \geq r$ .*



*Proof.* Without loss of generality,  $X$  is embedded by the complete linear series. Indeed, passing to the complete linear series only increases the left side of the desired inequality, and does not change the right side.

We first prove the inequality (4.1), using a double induction—first on  $r$ , and then on  $m$ . For the base case  $r = 1$ , Riemann–Roch gives

$$\{eqn:r1\} \quad h^0(X, K_X + mH) = g_X - 1 + mn, \quad (4.2)$$

from which (4.1) follows for all  $m$ .

Assume that (4.1) holds for varieties of dimension  $(r - 1)$  and all  $m \geq r - 1$ . Let  $D \subset X$  be a general member of the linear series  $|H|$ . By Bertini's theorem,  $D$  is a smooth variety. The adjunction formula  $K_D = (K_X + H)|_D$  yields the exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow \mathcal{O}_X(K_X + (m - 1)H) \longrightarrow \mathcal{O}_X(K_X + mH) \longrightarrow \mathcal{O}_D(K_D + (m - 1)H) \longrightarrow 0. \quad (4.3) \quad \{eqn:mainexact\}$$

Note that, by the Kodaira vanishing theorem, we have  $h^1(K_X + nH) = 0$  for all  $n > 1$ ; we use this repeatedly, without further comment. For  $m = r$ , the long exact sequence in cohomology associated to (4.3) gives

$$h^0(K_D + (r - 1)H) \leq h^0(K_X + rH).$$

By applying the induction hypothesis to  $D$ , we have

$$n - r \leq h^0(K_D + (r - 1)H) \quad (4.4)$$

Therefore, we conclude that

$$(n - r) \leq h^0(K_D + rH). \quad (4.5)$$

Let  $m > r$ , and assume that (4.1) holds for  $X$  for  $m - 1$ . The long exact sequence in cohomology associated to (4.3) gives

$$h^0(K_X + (m - 1)H) + h^0(K_D + (m - 1)H) = h^0(K_X + mH). \quad (4.6) \quad \{eqn:add\}$$

By applying the induction hypothesis to  $m - 1$ , we get

$$\begin{aligned} h^0(K_X + (m - 1)H) + h^0(K_D + (m - 1)H) \\ \geq \binom{m - 1}{r}(n - r) + \binom{m - 2}{r} + \binom{m - 1}{r - 1}(n - r) + \binom{m - 2}{r - 1} \\ = \binom{m}{r}(n - r) + \binom{m - 1}{r}. \end{aligned}$$

Together with (4.6), we conclude

$$\binom{m}{r}(n - r) + \binom{m - 1}{r} \leq h^0(K_X + mH), \quad (4.7)$$

which is (4.1) for  $m$ . The proof of the inequality is thus complete.

We now examine when equality holds in (4.1). For  $r = 1$ , the equation (4.2) shows that equality holds for some  $m$  if and only if  $g_X = 0$ , that is  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a rational normal curve, and in this case, equality holds for all  $m$ . Furthermore, we observe in the inductive proof that if equality holds for an  $X$  of dimension  $r > 1$  and some  $m$ , then it must hold

for the hyperplane slice  $D$  and  $(m-1)$ . Again, by an induction on  $r$ , we conclude that  $\deg X = n - r + 1$ , that is,  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  is a variety of minimal degree.

Finally, for  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  of minimal degree, induction on  $r$  shows that equality holds in (4.1) for all  $m$ .  $\square$

As a consequence, we immediately deduce Theorem C.

**Theorem 4.2** (Theorem C). *Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a smooth, non-degenerate projective variety of dimension  $r \geq 1$  over a field of characteristic zero. We have the inequality*

$$\dim \mathbf{Gr}(n-r, n+1) \leq \dim |K_X + (r+1)H|,$$

where equality holds if and only if  $X$  is a variety of minimal degree, that is  $\deg X = n - r + 1$ .

*Proof.* Apply Proposition 4.1 with  $m = r + 1$ .  $\square$

**4.1. Projection-ramification for scrolls.** Theorem C motivates a deeper investigation of the projection-ramification map for varieties of minimal degree. Indeed, for  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  of minimal degree, the projection-ramification map is potentially generically finite. Recall that a large class of varieties of minimal degree are the rational normal scrolls, namely  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  for an ample vector bundle  $E$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  embedded by the complete linear series  $\mathcal{O}_X(1)$ . If  $\dim X \geq 3$ , then  $X$  is neither incompressible nor does it have a divisorial dual variety. Therefore, for such  $X$ , Theorem A leaves the question of maximal variation unanswered.

We now examine the projection-ramification map for projectivizations of vector bundles on smooth curves in more detail. Let  $C$  be a smooth curve and  $E$  an ample vector bundle on  $C$  of rank  $r$ . Set  $X = \mathbf{P}E$ , the space of one-dimensional quotients of  $E$ , and  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ . Denote by  $\pi: X \rightarrow C$  the natural map.

Let  $(L, V)$  be a projection of  $X$ . Recall from (2.1) that such a projection gives a map

$$r_V: \det V \rightarrow H^0(X, K_X \otimes L^{r+1}),$$

whose zero locus is the ramification divisor  $R(V) \subset X$ . Note that we have an isomorphism  $K_X \cong \pi^*(\det E \otimes K_C) \otimes L^{-r}$ , and hence, we may view  $r_V$  as a map

$$r_V: \det V \rightarrow H^0(C, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_C).$$

We now describe another construction of a section of  $E \otimes \det E \otimes K_C$  from  $V$ , which we call the *differential construction*. The subspace  $V \subset H^0(X, L) = H^0(C, E)$  gives the evaluation map

$$e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C \rightarrow E.$$

If  $V$  is generic, then  $e$  is a surjection, and its kernel is canonically isomorphic to  $\det E^* \otimes \det V$ . Consider the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & \det E^* \otimes \det V & \longrightarrow & V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C & \xrightarrow{e} & E \longrightarrow 0 \\ & & \downarrow d_V & & \downarrow e & & \parallel \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & K_C \otimes E & \longrightarrow & P(E) & \longrightarrow & E \longrightarrow 0, \end{array} \quad (4.8)$$

al\_construction}

where the bottom row is the standard sequence associated to  $P(E)$ , both maps labeled  $e$  are evaluation maps, and the map  $d_V$  is the map induced by them. The map  $d_V$  gives a map

$$d_V: \det V \longrightarrow H^0(C, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_C).$$

{prop:rdv}

**Proposition 4.3.** *In the setup above, the two maps  $d_V$  and  $r_V$  are equal.*

*Proof.* Recall that  $r_V$  is induced by the determinant of the evaluation map

$$V \otimes \mathcal{O}_X \longrightarrow P(L).$$

Denote by  $P_\pi(L)$  the bundle of principal parts of  $L$  along the fibers of  $\pi$ . More explicitly,

$$P_\pi(L) = \pi_{1*}(\pi_2^* L \otimes (\mathcal{O}_{X \times_\pi X} / I_\Delta^2)),$$

where  $\Delta \subset X \times_\pi X$  is the diagonal and  $\pi_i$  for  $i = 1, 2$  are the two projections  $X \times_\pi X \longrightarrow X$ . It is easy to check that the evaluation map  $\pi^* E \longrightarrow L$  induces an isomorphism  $\pi^* E \longrightarrow P_\pi(L)$ . Furthermore, we have the sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow \pi^* K_C \otimes L \longrightarrow P(L) \longrightarrow P_\pi(L) \longrightarrow 0.$$

By combining this with the identification  $\pi^* E = P_\pi(L)$ , and the top row of (4.8), we get the diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \longrightarrow & \pi^*(\det E^* \otimes \det V) & \longrightarrow & V \otimes \mathcal{O}_X & \longrightarrow & \pi^* E \longrightarrow 0 \\ & & \downarrow p & & \downarrow e & & \parallel \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & \pi^* K_C \otimes L & \longrightarrow & P(L) & \longrightarrow & P_\pi(L) \longrightarrow 0. \end{array} \quad (4.9) \quad \{\text{eqn:pxpl}\}$$

From the diagram, we see that  $\det e = p$ , interpreted as elements of the appropriate Hom spaces. By definition, after taking global sections,  $\det e$  gives the section  $r_V$ . Note that, applying  $\pi_*$  to the bottom row of (4.9) yields the bottom row of (4.8). Hence, after applying  $\pi_*$ , twisting by  $\det E$  and taking global sections,  $p$  gives the section  $d_V$ . We conclude that  $r_V = d_V$ .  $\square$

Let  $R = R(V) \subset X$  be the ramification divisor of the projection given by  $V$ . Note that  $R$  is a divisor of class  $\pi^*(\det E \otimes K_C) \otimes \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ . Therefore,  $R \subset X$  is a sub-scroll, or equivalently, the fibers of  $R \longrightarrow C$  are hyperplanes in the corresponding fiber of  $X \longrightarrow C$ . We can obtain an explicit description of these hyperplanes in two ways, one using the original definition, and one using the differential construction. Fix a point  $c \in C$ , and a uniformizer  $t$  of  $C$  at  $c$ . Let  $X_c \subset X$  and  $R_c \subset R$  be the fibers of  $X \longrightarrow C$  and  $R \longrightarrow C$  over  $c$ , respectively.

By definition  $R \subset X$  is the set of points  $x \in X$  for which there exists  $s \in V$  such that  $v(s)$  is singular at  $x$ . Since  $s$  is a section of  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ , the hypersurface  $v(s)$  is singular at  $x$  if and only if it contains the entire fiber of  $\pi: X \longrightarrow C$  through  $x$ . Suppose  $\pi(x) = c$ . Then, in an open set of  $X$  containing  $X_c$ , we have  $s = ts_1$  for a section  $s_1$  of  $\mathcal{O}_X(1)$ . Observe that, we have  $\text{Sing}(v(s)) \cap F = v(s_1) \cap F$ , and therefore,  $R_c \subset X_c$  is the hyperplane cut out by  $s_1$ .

To obtain the same description using the differential construction, consider the top row of (4.8). Let  $v$  be a local section of  $V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C$  around  $c$  that generates the kernel of  $e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C \rightarrow E$  at  $c$ . The fiber of the evaluation map  $V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C \rightarrow P(L)$  over  $c$  sends  $v \in V$  to the image of  $e(v)$  in  $L/\mathfrak{m}_c^2 L$ . Since  $v$  generates the kernel of  $e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_C \rightarrow L$  at  $c$ , we know that image of  $e(v)$  in  $L/\mathfrak{m}_c L$  is zero. Writing  $e(v) = ts_1$  for a section  $s_1$  of  $E$  around  $c$ , we see that  $d_V(v) = s_1 \otimes t \in E \otimes \mathfrak{m}_c/\mathfrak{m}_c^2$ . Thus, the fiber of the sub-scroll defined by  $d_V$  over  $c$  is the hyperplane in  $X_c$  cut out by  $s_1$ .

Finally, we write an equation of  $R(V) \subset X$  over an open subset of  $C$  containing  $c$  explicitly in coordinates. Choose a trivialization  $X_1, \dots, X_r$  for  $E$  over an open set  $U \subset C$  containing  $c$ . Then  $X_U \cong \mathbf{P}^{r-1} \times U = \text{Proj } \mathcal{O}_U[X_1, \dots, X_r]$ . We have a trivialization of  $K_C$  over  $U$  given by  $dt$ . We then get a trivialization of  $P(E)|_U$  by  $X_1, \dots, X_r, dt \otimes X_1, \dots, dt \otimes X_r$ . Choose a basis  $v_0, \dots, v_r$  of  $V$ , and suppose the map  $e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_U \rightarrow E_U$  is given by

$$e(v_i) = \sum m_{i,j} X_j,$$

for  $m_{i,j} \in \mathcal{O}_U$ , where  $0 \leq i \leq r$  and  $1 \leq j \leq r$ . Then the map  $\det E^* \otimes \det V \rightarrow V \otimes \mathcal{O}_U$  defining the kernel of  $e$  is given by the  $r \times r$  minors of the matrix  $(m_{i,j})$ . Denote the  $\ell$ -th minor by  $M_\ell$ ; that is  $M_\ell = (-1)^\ell \det(m_{i,j} \mid i \neq \ell)$ . Then the map  $d_V$  sends the generator to the element of  $E \otimes K_C$  given by

$$\sum_{i,j} M_i \cdot \frac{\partial m_{i,j}}{\partial t} \cdot (dt \otimes X_j).$$

Note that the expression above is the determinant of the  $(r+1) \times (r+1)$  matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} m_{0,1} & m_{0,2} & \dots & m_{0,r} & \sum_{i=1}^r \frac{\partial m_{0,i}}{\partial t} \cdot dt \otimes X_i \\ m_{1,1} & m_{1,2} & \dots & m_{1,r} & \sum_{i=1}^r \frac{\partial m_{1,i}}{\partial t} \cdot dt \otimes X_i \\ \vdots & \ddots & \dots & \vdots & \vdots \\ m_{r,1} & m_{r,2} & \dots & m_{r,r} & \sum_{i=1}^r \frac{\partial m_{r,i}}{\partial t} \cdot dt \otimes X_i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (4.10)$$

This gives an equation for  $R_U \subset X_U = \text{Proj } \mathcal{O}_U[X_1, \dots, X_r]$ .

**4.2. Failure of maximal variation.** In this section, we show that there exists ample vector bundles  $E$  of rank  $r \geq 4$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  such that the projection-ramification map for  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  is not generically finite. In other words, a generic projection of  $X$  can be deformed in a one-parameter family so that the ramification divisor remains unchanged.

Recall that the projection-ramification map for  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  and the complete linear series of  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$  is a map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X, L)) \dashrightarrow |K_X \otimes L^{r+1}|,$$

or equivalently a map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})^*.$$

By construction,  $\rho$  is equivariant with respect to the action of  $\text{Aut}(X)$ , and in particular, by the subgroup  $\text{Aut}(X/\mathbf{P}^1)$ .

We engineer the failure of maximal variation using the following observation.

ivialStabilizer}

**Proposition 4.4.** *A generic point of  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E))$  has a trivial stabilizer under the action of  $\text{Aut}(\mathbf{P}E/\mathbf{P}^1)$ .*

*Proof.* Fix  $(r+1)$  distinct points  $p_0, \dots, p_r \in \mathbf{P}^1$ . Let  $V \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)$  be a generic  $(r+1)$  dimensional subspace. Let  $e: V \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1} \rightarrow E$  be the evaluation map. The points  $p_0, \dots, p_r$  give vectors  $v_0, \dots, v_r \in V$ , unique up to scaling, defined by the property that  $e(v_i) = 0$  in the fiber  $E|_{p_i}$ . Choose a generic point  $t \in \mathbf{P}^1$ . We get  $(r+1)$  points  $x_0, \dots, x_r \in \mathbf{P}E^*|_t \cong \mathbf{P}^{r-1}$  given by  $e(v_0), \dots, e(v_r)$  evaluated at  $t$ . For generic  $V$  and  $t$ , it is easy to check that these points are in linear general position. Any element of  $\text{Aut}(\mathbf{P}E/\mathbf{P}^1)$  that fixes  $V$  must fix  $x_0, \dots, x_r$ . But then it must act as the identity on the projective space  $\mathbf{P}E^*|_t$ , and hence on the dual projective space  $\mathbf{P}E|_t$ . Since  $t \in \mathbf{P}^1$  is general, it follows that it must be the identity.  $\square$

{prop:specialE}

**Proposition 4.5.** *There exist ample vector bundles  $E$  of every rank  $\geq 4$  such that a general point of  $\mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})$  has a positive-dimensional stabilizer under  $\text{Aut}(\mathbf{P}E/\mathbf{P}^1)$ . In particular, we may take  $E = \mathcal{O}(1)^{r-1} \oplus \mathcal{O}(k+1)$  where  $k \geq 1$  and  $r \geq 4$ .*

*Proof.* It suffices to exhibit an  $E$  such that a generic element of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})$  has a positive dimensional stabilizer under the action of  $\text{Aut}(E/\mathbf{P}^1)$ . Take

$$E = \mathcal{O}(a)^{r-1} \oplus \mathcal{O}(b),$$

where  $0 < a < b$  are to be determined. Elements of  $\text{Aut}(E/\mathbf{P}^1)$  can be represented by block lower triangular square matrices

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} A & \\ U & B \end{pmatrix},$$

where  $A \in \text{GL}_a(k)$ ,  $B \in k^\times$ , and  $U = (u_i)$  is an  $(r-1)$  length row with entries in  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(b-a))$ . Set  $d = (r-1)a + b$  so that  $\det E = \mathcal{O}(d)$ . Suppose  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $r$ , are such that

$$(r-1)(b-a+1) \geq b+d-1 = (r-1)a+2b-1. \quad (4.11) \quad \{\text{eqn:requirement}$$

Take a general element of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})$ ; say it is given by the column vector

$$v = (p_1, \dots, p_{r-1}, q)^T,$$

where the  $p_i$  (resp  $q$ ) are homogeneous polynomials in  $X, Y$  of degree  $a+d-2$  (resp  $b+d-2$ ). We take  $A = \text{id}_{r-1}$  and  $B = \lambda$  for some  $\lambda \in k^\times$ , and show that there exists a  $U = (u_i)$  such that  $Mv = v$ . Indeed, we have  $Mv = (p_1, \dots, p_r, q')$ , where

$$q' = \lambda q + \sum u_i p_i.$$

Let  $W \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(a+d-1))$  be the vector space spanned by  $p_1, \dots, p_{r-1}$ . Consider the multiplication map

$$H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(b-a)) \otimes W \rightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(b+d-2)).$$

Thanks to (4.11), the dimension of the source is at least as much as the dimension of the target. It is easy to check that the map is in fact surjective for generic  $p_1, \dots, p_{r-1}$ . In particular, there exist  $u_i \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(b-a))$  for  $i = 1, \dots, r-1$ , such that

$$q(1-\lambda) = \sum u_i p_i.$$

With this choice of  $U = (u_i)$ , we get  $M$  such that  $Mv = v$ .

Finally, note that the requirement (4.11) is satisfied for  $a = 1$  and  $b = k+1$  if  $k \geq 1$  and  $r \geq 4$ .  $\square$

**Corollary 4.6** (Theorem B). *Let  $r \geq 3$  and  $d \geq r+1$ . There exist ample vector bundles  $E$  of rank  $r$  and degree  $d$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  such that for  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  and the complete linear series  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ , the projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  is not generically finite onto its image.*

*Proof.* Take  $E$  such that the action of  $\text{Aut}(X/\mathbf{P}^1)$  on a generic point of  $|K_X \otimes L^{r+1}|$  has a positive-dimensional stabilizer (see Proposition 4.5). Since  $\rho_X: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X, L)) \dashrightarrow |K_X \otimes L^{r+1}|$  is equivariant with respect to the action of  $\text{Aut}(X/\mathbf{P}^1)$ , and a generic point of the source does not have a positive-dimensional stabilizer (see Proposition 4.4), it follows that  $\rho_X$  cannot be dominant. Since the dimension of the source and target of  $\rho_X$  are the same,  $\rho_X$  is not generically finite.  $\square$

*Remark 4.7.* In all the examples of scrolls where we know that maximal variation fails, the failure can be explained by the presence of generic stabilizers. We do not know, however, if this is the only reason for the failure of maximal variation.

*Remark 4.8.* If  $k = 1$  and  $r \geq 4$ , then  $X$  is the most balanced scroll of its degree and rank, and hence, generic in moduli. Therefore, the non-dominance of projection-ramification is not directly connected to the eccentricity of the splitting type of a scroll.

**4.3. Eccentric threefold scrolls.** Theorem B leaves open the case of threefold scrolls (surface scrolls are covered by Corollary 3.16). We settle this case in this section by showing that the projection-ramification map for threefold scrolls is always generically finite, and thus the statement of Theorem B is sharp in  $r$ .

Let  $E = \mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(k+1)$ , for  $k \geq 0$ . Set  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  and  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ .

**Proposition 4.9.** *The map  $\rho_X: \mathbf{Gr}(4, H^0(X, L)) \dashrightarrow |K_X + 4L|$  is birational.*

*Proof.* The proof is by direct calculation. Consider the standard open subset  $\mathbf{A}^1 = \text{Spec } k[t] \subset \mathbf{P}^1$ . Choose trivializations of the four summands of  $E$  over  $\mathbf{A}^1$  given by sections  $X_1, X_2, X_3$ .

Let  $W \subset H^0(X, L)$  be a general 4-dimensional subspace. Then the projection map  $W \rightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(1))$  will be an isomorphism. Therefore, we can choose a basis of  $W$  of the form

$$X_1 + aX_3, X_2 + bX_3, tX_1 + cX_3, tX_2 + dX_3,$$

where  $a, b, c, d \in k[t]$  have degree at most  $k + 1$ . Using (4.10), we get that the ramification divisor of this  $W$  is

$$\begin{aligned} \rho(W) &= (d - bt)X_1 + (at - c)X_2 + ((a't - c')(bt - d) + (at - c)(d' - b't))X_3 \\ &= \alpha X_1 + \beta X_2 + \gamma X_3, \text{ say.} \end{aligned} \quad (4.12)$$

In this calculation,  $p'$  denotes the derivative  $\frac{dp}{dt}$ . Note that we have

$$\gamma = \alpha' \beta - \beta' \alpha + \alpha a + \beta b.$$

The degrees of  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma$  are (at most)  $k + 2, k + 2$ , and  $2k + 2$ , respectively.

Consider the affine space  $\mathbf{A}^{4k+8}$  whose coordinates correspond to the coefficients of  $a, b, c, d$ , and likewise, the affine space  $\mathbf{A}^{4k+9}$  whose coordinates correspond to the coefficients of  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma$ . The expression in (4.12) defines a map

$$\begin{aligned} \rho^* : \mathbf{A}^{4k+8} &\longrightarrow \mathbf{A}^{4k+9} \\ (a, b, c, d) &\mapsto (\alpha, \beta, \gamma). \end{aligned}$$

Note that the choice of basis of  $W$  gives a birational isomorphism  $\mathbf{Gr}(4, H^0(X, L)) \cong \mathbf{A}^{4k+8}$ . Via this isomorphism, the projection-ramification map  $\rho$  is simply the composite of  $\rho^*$  and the projection  $\mathbf{A}^{4k+9} \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}^{4k+8} = \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes \mathcal{O}(-2))^*$ .

Let  $(a, b, c, d) \in \mathbf{A}^{4k+8}$  be a generic point. We show that the map induced by  $\rho$  on tangent spaces is injective at this point. For  $\epsilon^2 = 0$ , we have

$$\rho^* : (a + \hat{a}\epsilon, b + \hat{b}\epsilon, c + \hat{c}\epsilon + d + \hat{d}\epsilon) \mapsto (\alpha + \hat{\alpha}\epsilon, \beta + \hat{\beta}\epsilon, \gamma + \hat{\gamma}\epsilon),$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{\alpha} &= \hat{d} - \hat{b}t, \\ \hat{\beta} &= \hat{a}t - \hat{c}, \text{ and} \\ \hat{\gamma} &= (bt - d)(\hat{a}'t - \hat{c}') + (at - c)(\hat{d}' - \hat{b}'t) + (\hat{a}t - \hat{c})(d' - b't) + (\hat{b}t - \hat{d})(a't - c). \end{aligned}$$

Suppose  $\hat{\alpha} = \hat{\beta} = \hat{\gamma} = 0$ . Then  $(bt - d)(\hat{a}t - \hat{c}) + (at - c)(\hat{d}' - \hat{b}'t) = 0$ . However, for generic  $a, b, c, d$ , the polynomials  $(bt - d)$  and  $(at - c)$  have degree  $(k + 2)$  and are relatively prime. So they have no non-trivial syzygy with coefficients of degree at most  $k + 1$ . As a result, we get  $\hat{a}t - \hat{c} = 0$  and  $\hat{d}' - \hat{b}'t = 0$ . Along with  $at - c = 0$  and  $d - bt = 0$ , we get  $a = b = c = d = 0$ . Thus,  $d\rho^*$  is injective. To show that  $d\rho$  is injective, it suffices to show that the image of  $d\rho^*$  intersects the line joining  $(0, 0, 0)$  and  $(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)$  transversely. For this, it suffices to show that the three equations  $\hat{\alpha} = \alpha, \hat{\beta} = \beta, \hat{\gamma} = \gamma$  give no solutions in  $(a, b, c, d)$ . Indeed, these three equations imply  $(bt - d)(\hat{a}'t - \hat{c}') + (at - c)(\hat{d}' - \hat{b}'t) = 0$ , and by the same reason as before, give  $\hat{a}'t - \hat{c}' = \hat{d}' - \hat{b}'t = 0$ . But it is easy to see that the last two equations combined with  $\hat{a}t - \hat{c} = at - c$  and  $\hat{b}t - \hat{d} = bt - d$  have no solutions.

Since the map induced by  $\rho$  is injective tangent spaces,  $\rho$  is generically finite, and hence dominant. To show that  $\rho$  is birational, it suffices to show that the generic fiber of  $\rho$  is connected. For this, it suffices to show that the generic fiber of  $\rho^*$  is connected. However,

observe that the fiber of  $\rho^*$  over  $(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)$  is given by the equations

$$\alpha = d - bt, \beta = at - c, \gamma = \alpha'\beta - \beta'\alpha + \alpha a + \beta b,$$

which are affine linear equations in  $a, b, c, d$ . Hence, the fibers of  $\rho^*$  are affine spaces, which are connected. The proof is now complete.  $\square$

**Corollary 4.10.** *The projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  is dominant for every smooth three dimensional rational normal scroll  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$ .*

*Proof.* Every such  $X$  isotrivially specializes to  $\mathbf{P}(\mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(k+1))$ . The statement now follows from the upper semi-continuity of fiber dimension.  $\square$

## 5. MAXIMAL VARIATION FOR GENERIC SCROLLS

In this section, we establish that the projection-ramification map is generically finite (equivalently, dominant) for most scrolls, notwithstanding the examples provided by Theorem B. We begin by treating the cases of some particular scrolls by hand. We then bootstrap these to more general results using degeneration arguments.

**5.1. Maximal variation for some particular cases.** Given an ample vector bundle  $E$  on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , we say that *maximal variation holds for  $E$*  if the projection-ramification map is generically finite (equivalently, dominant) for  $X = \mathbf{P}E$  embedded by the complete linear series associated to  $L = \mathcal{O}_X(1)$ .

**Proposition 5.1.** *Maximal variation holds for  $E = \mathcal{O}(1)^r$ . In fact, the degree of the projection-ramification map in this case is 1.*

*Proof.* We know that the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(1)^r)) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(r-1)^r)^*$$

is  $\text{Aut } \mathbf{P}E$  equivariant. In this case, it is easy to check that the action of  $\text{Aut}(\mathbf{P}E/\mathbf{P}^1) = \text{PGL}_r$  has a unique open orbit and trivial generic stabilizers on both the source and the target of  $\rho$ . Hence,  $\rho$  must be birational.  $\square$

**Proposition 5.2.** *Maximal variation holds for  $E = \mathcal{O}(2)^r$ .*

Compared to Proposition 5.1, our proof of Proposition 5.2 is significantly more involved, and does not yield the degree.

*Proof.* We exhibit a point  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E))$  at which  $\rho$  is defined, and at which the induced map  $d\rho$  on the tangent space is non-singular. It follows that  $\rho$  is a local isomorphism at this point, and hence dominant overall.

Our proof is by direct calculation. We calculate on  $\mathbf{A}^1 = \text{Spec } k[x] \subset \mathbf{P}^1$  and identify  $\mathcal{O}(n)$  with  $\mathcal{O}(n \cdot \infty)$ . Then the global sections of  $\mathcal{O}(n)$  are identified with polynomials in  $x$  of degree at most  $n$ . Denote the generator of the  $i$ th summand of  $E(-2)$  by  $X_i$ . Consider the point of  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E))$  represented by the vector space  $V \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)$  spanned by the  $(r+1)$  sections  $v_1, \dots, v_{r+1}$  defined as follows. Set  $v_i = (x - a_i)^2 X_i$  for



$0 \leq i \leq r-1$ , and  $v_r = \sum p_i X_i$ , where  $a_i \in k$ , and  $p_j \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2))$  are generic. By (4.10), the ramification divisor associated to  $V$  is cut out by the determinant of the matrix

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} (x-a_1)^2 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 2(x-a_1)X_1 \\ 0 & (x-a_2)^2 & \cdots & 0 & 2(x-a_2)X_2 \\ 0 & 0 & \ddots & 0 & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & (x-a_r)^2 & 2(x-a_r)X_r \\ p_1 & p_2 & \cdots & p_r & \sum p'_i X_i \end{pmatrix}.$$

We leave it to the reader to check that  $R = \det M$  is not identically zero.

To do the tangent space computation, we choose elements  $w_i \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)$ , and change  $v_i$  to  $v_i + \epsilon w_i$ , where  $\epsilon^2 = 0$ . Let  $R_\epsilon$  be the equation of the discriminant of the projection given by  $V_\epsilon \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E) \otimes k[\epsilon]/\epsilon^2$ , where  $V_\epsilon$  is spanned by  $v_1 + \epsilon w_1, \dots, v_{r+1} + \epsilon w_{r+1}$ . Concretely,  $R_\epsilon$  is the determinant of a matrix  $M_\epsilon$  given by (4.10), which reduces to  $M$  modulo  $\epsilon$ . Note that  $R_\epsilon$  is an element of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2)) \otimes k[\epsilon]/\epsilon^2$ , and we have

$$R_\epsilon = R + \epsilon S(w_1, \dots, w_{r+1}),$$

for some  $S(w_1, \dots, w_{r+1}) \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2))$ . Furthermore, the map

$$S: H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)^{r+1} \longrightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2)) \quad (5.1) \quad \{\text{eqn:mainmap}\}$$

is a linear map. To show that  $d\rho$  is non-singular at  $V$ , it suffices to show that  $S$  is surjective. For  $1 \leq i \leq r$  and  $1 \leq j \leq r+1$ , let  $E_{i,j} \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)^{r+1}$  be the element corresponding to  $(w_1, \dots, w_{r+1})$  where  $w_j = X_i$  and  $w_\ell = 0$  for all  $\ell \neq j$ . For  $i \neq j$  and  $1 \leq j \leq r$  and  $q \in H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2))$ , by direct calculation we get

$$S(qE_{i,j}) = \frac{(x-a_1)^2 \cdots (x-a_r)^2 p_j}{(x-a_i)^2 (x-a_j)^2} \cdot [q, (x-a_i)^2] \cdot X_i,$$

where the notation  $[a, b]$  means  $a'b - ab'$ . Similarly, we get

$$S(qE_{i,r+1}) = -\frac{(x-a_1)^2 \cdots (x-a_r)^2}{(x-a_i)^2} \cdot [q, (x-a_i)^2] \cdot X_i,$$

and

$$S(qE_{i,i}) = \det M_i, \quad (5.2) \quad \{\text{eqn:diag}\}$$

where  $M_i$  is obtained from  $M$  by changing the  $(i, i)$ -th entry from  $(x-a_i)^2$  to  $q$  and the  $(i, r+1)$ -th entry from  $2(x-a_i)X_i$  to  $q'X_i$ .

Fix an  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq r$ , and consider the subspace  $W_i \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)^{r+1}$  spanned by  $qE_{i,j}$  for  $j \neq i$ . By our calculations above,  $S$  maps  $W_i$  to the subspace of  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2))$  spanned by  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r)) \otimes X_i$ . We begin by identifying  $S(W_i)$ .

For  $1 \leq j \leq r$  and  $j \neq i$ , set

$$Q_{i,j} = \frac{(x-a_1)^2 \cdots (x-a_r)^2 p_j}{(x-a_i)^2 (x-a_j)^2},$$

and

$$Q_{i,r+1} = -\frac{(x-a_1)^2 \cdots (x-a_r)^2}{(x-a_i)^2}.$$

We claim that, there is no non-trivial linear relation among the  $r$  polynomials  $Q_{i,j}$  for  $j \in \{1, \dots, r+1\} \setminus \{i\}$ . Indeed, suppose we had a linear relation

$$\sum l_j Q_{i,j} = 0,$$

then dividing throughout by  $\frac{(x-a_1)^2 \dots (x-a_r)^2}{(x-a_i)^2}$  gives the relation

$$\sum_{j=1}^r l_j \frac{p_j}{(x-a_j)^2} + l_{r+1} = 0.$$

If  $l_j \neq 0$  for some  $j$  with  $1 \leq j \leq r$ , then we have a pole on the left side at  $x = a_j$ , but not on the right side (note that  $(x-a_j)$  does not divide  $p_j$  by the genericity of  $p_j$ ). Therefore, we must have  $l_j = 0$  for all  $j$ , and hence also  $l_{r+1} = 0$ . Consider the map

$$\{eqn:big\} \quad H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(1)) \otimes \langle Q_{i,j} \mid j \in \{1, \dots, r+1\} \setminus \{i\} \rangle \longrightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r-1)). \quad (5.3)$$

We just saw that this map is injective. But both sides have the same dimension, and hence the map must be surjective. Finally, it is easy to see that the image of the map

$$\{eqn:q\} \quad H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2)) \longrightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2)), \quad q \mapsto [q, (x-a_i)^2] \quad (5.4)$$

is  $(x-a_i) \cdot H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(1))$ . By (5.3) and (5.4), we conclude that the image of the map

$$S: W_i = \langle qE_{i,j} \mid j \in \{1, \dots, r+1\} \setminus \{i\} \rangle \longrightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r-1)) \otimes X_i$$

is  $(x-a_i)H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r-2)) \otimes X_i$ . In other words, the cokernel of the map is  $X_i \otimes k$  where the map

$$H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r)) \otimes X_i \longrightarrow k \otimes X_i$$

is given by evaluation at  $a_i$ . Putting together the maps for various  $i$ , we see that the cokernel of the map

$$S: \bigoplus_i W_i \longrightarrow H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2)) = H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r)) \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle$$

is  $k \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle$ , where the map

$$\{eqn:partialsur\} \quad H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \mathcal{O}(2r-2)) = H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r)) \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle \longrightarrow k \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle \quad (5.5)$$

on  $H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2r)) \otimes X_i$  is given by evaluation at  $a_i$ .

To show that  $S$  is surjective, it is now enough to show that the map

$$\{eqn:remainsur\} \quad H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}(2)) \otimes \langle E_{i,i} \mid i \in \{1, \dots, r+1\} \rangle \longrightarrow k \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle \quad (5.6)$$

obtained by composing (5.1) and (5.5) is surjective. Recall from (5.2) that we have  $S(qE_{i,i}) = \det M_i$ , where  $M_i$  is obtained from  $M$  by changing the  $(i, i)$ -th entry to  $q$  and the  $(i, r+1)$ -th entry to  $q'X_i$ . Taking  $q = (x-a_i)$  gives

$$S(qE_{i,i}) = \det M_i = \pm \prod_{j \neq i} (a_i - a_j)^2 p_i(a_i) X_i,$$

which is a non-zero multiple of  $X_i$ . That is, the images of  $(x-a_i)E_{i,i}$  under  $S$  span  $k \otimes \langle X_1, \dots, X_r \rangle$ , and hence the map in (5.6) is surjective. The proof is now complete.  $\square$

Our next goal is to bootstrap from Proposition 5.1 and Proposition 5.2 to deduce maximal variation for generic scrolls of sufficiently high degree. We do this by a degeneration argument. We degenerate a vector bundle  $E$  to a vector bundle  $E_0$  on the nodal rational curve  $P_0 = \mathbf{P}^1 \cup \mathbf{P}^1$ , and show that the projection-ramification map for  $E_0$  is dominant. For this to work, we have to define the projection-ramification map for nodal curves. It turns out that with the most naïve definition of linear series on scrolls on nodal curves, we do not get a dominant projection-ramification map. We have to work with the limit linear series of higher rank as developed in [TiB91] and [Oss14].

{sec:lls}

**5.2. Limit linear series.** We need limit linear series for the simplest singular curve, namely a (projective, connected) nodal curve  $C$  which is the nodal union of two smooth (projective, connected) curves  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ , but we need them for vector bundles of rank higher than 1. Let  $B$  be the spectrum of a DVR with special point 0, general point  $\eta$ . Let  $\pi: X \rightarrow B$  be a smoothing of  $C$  with non-singular total space  $X$ . That is,  $\pi$  is a flat, proper, family of connected curves, smooth over  $\eta$ , and isomorphic to  $C$  over 0. Such a family is a particularly simple example of an almost local smoothing family [Oss14, § 2.1–2.2]. Let  $g_i$  be the genus of  $C_i$  for  $i = 1, 2$ , and  $g = g_1 + g_2$  the genus of  $X_\eta$ .

Let  $E$  be a vector bundle of rank  $r$  on  $C$ . The *multi-degree* of  $E$  is the pair of integers  $(\deg E|_{C_1}, \deg E|_{C_2})$ . The *degree* or *total degree* of  $E$  is the sum  $\deg E = \deg E|_{C_1} + \deg E|_{C_2}$ .

Once and for all, fix a vector bundle  $\mathcal{E}$  of rank  $r$  on  $X$ , and set  $E = \mathcal{E}|_C$ . Let  $E$  have degree  $d$  and multi-degree  $(w_1, w_2)$ . Fix a positive integer  $k$ . Our next task is to recall the definition of the space of limit linear series of dimension  $k$ . It will be a  $B$ -scheme whose fiber over  $\eta$  is the Grassmannian  $\mathbf{Gr}(k, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$ . The key idea is to not only consider the sections of  $\mathcal{E}$ , but also of its various twists, namely the vector bundles obtained by tensoring with the powers of  $\mathcal{O}_X(C_i)$ .

Fix maps  $\theta_1: \mathcal{O}_X \rightarrow \mathcal{O}_X(C_1)$  and  $\theta_2: \mathcal{O}_X \rightarrow \mathcal{O}_X(C_2)$ . The choice of these maps is auxiliary, and each one is unique up to multiplication by an element of  $\mathcal{O}_B^*$ . For  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$ , set

$$\mathcal{E}_n = \begin{cases} \mathcal{E} \otimes \mathcal{O}_X(C_1)^{\otimes n} & \text{if } n \geq 0, \\ \mathcal{E} \otimes \mathcal{O}_X(C_2)^{\otimes (-n)} & \text{if } n < 0. \end{cases}$$

The maps  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$  induces maps

$$\theta_n: \mathcal{E}_m \rightarrow \mathcal{E}_{m+n}$$

given by

$$\theta_n = \begin{cases} \theta_1^n & \text{if } n \geq 0, \\ \theta_2^{-n} & \text{if } n < 0. \end{cases}$$

Note that the multi-degree of  $\mathcal{E}_n$  is  $(w_1 - nr, w_2 + nr)$ . In particular, for sufficiently negative  $n$ , say for  $n \leq n_1$ , we have  $H^0(C_2, \mathcal{E}_n|_{C_2}) = 0$ , and similarly, for sufficiently positive  $n$ , say  $n \geq n_2$ , we have  $H^0(C_1, \mathcal{E}_n|_{C_1}) = 0$ . Assume, without loss of generality, that  $n_2 \geq n_1$ . Set

$$d_1 = w_1 - n_1 r, \text{ and } d_2 = w_2 + n_2 r, \text{ and } b = n_2 - n_1.$$

Observe that

$$d_1 + d_2 - rb = d.$$

We say that  $\mathcal{E}$  has multi-degree  $w$  if for every  $s \in S$  mapping to  $0 \in B$ , the degree of  $\mathcal{E}|_s$  on  $C_v$  is  $w_v$  for  $v = 1, 2$ . Note that, if  $\mathcal{E}$  has multi-degree  $(w_1, w_2)$ , then  $\mathcal{E}_n$  has multi-degree  $(w_1 - rn, w_2 + rn)$ .

{def:lls}

**Definition 5.3** (Limit linear series). Let  $S$  be a  $B$ -scheme. A  $k$ -dimensional limit linear series on  $\mathcal{E}_S$  consists of sub-bundles  $V_n \rightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_n)_S$  of rank  $k$  for every  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$  satisfying the following compatibility condition. For every  $m, n \in \mathbf{Z}$ , the map

s:compatibility}

$$\pi_*\theta_n: \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_m)_S \rightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{m+n})_S \text{ maps } V_m \rightarrow V_{m+n}. \quad (5.7)$$

Definition 5.3 is a special case of [Oss14, Definition 3.3.2]. From now on, we will talk about the image of an element in  $V_m$  in  $V_{m+n}$ ; this should be understood as the image under the map  $\pi_*\theta_n$ .

*Remark 5.4.* The notion of a sub-bundle of a push-forward is a bit subtle; it is treated in depth in [Oss14, Definition B.2.1]. We recall the main points. For a flat proper morphism  $X \rightarrow S$  and a vector bundle  $\mathcal{E}$  on  $S$ , a *sub-bundle* of  $\pi_*\mathcal{E}$  is a vector bundle  $V$  on  $S$  along with a map  $i: V \rightarrow \pi_*\mathcal{E}$  such that for every  $T \rightarrow S$ , the pull-back  $i_T: V_T \rightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_T)$  is injective. Note that this is a local condition on  $S$ . For Noetherian schemes such as ours, it is enough to check this condition for the  $T \rightarrow S$  that are inclusions of closed points. Alternatively, if  $F_0 \rightarrow F_1 \rightarrow \dots$  is a complex of vector bundles on  $S$  quasi-isomorphic to  $R\pi_*\mathcal{E}$ , then a sub-bundle of  $\pi_*\mathcal{E}$  is a vector bundle  $V$  along with a map  $i: V \rightarrow \pi_*\mathcal{E}$  such that the composite  $V \rightarrow F_0$  is an injection of vector bundles (that is, the dual map is surjective).

*Remark 5.5.* Definition 5.3 defines limit linear series on a particular vector bundle  $\mathcal{E}$ . We can also vary the choice of the vector bundle, as is done in [Oss14]; in that case, one imposes an additional vanishing condition on the vector bundles to ensure boundedness of the moduli space of limit linear series.

{def:simple\_lls}

**Definition 5.6.** Let  $S = \text{Spec } K$ , where  $K$  is a field, and let  $V = (V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  be a limit linear series on  $S$ . We say  $V$  is *simple* if there exist integers  $w_1, \dots, w_k$ , not necessarily distinct, and elements  $v_i \in V_{w_i}$  such that for every  $w \in \mathbf{Z}$ , the images of  $v_1, \dots, v_k$  in  $V_w$  form a basis of  $V_w$ .

Note that if  $S \rightarrow B$  maps to the generic point  $\eta$ , then the data of a limit linear series  $V = (V_n)$  is equivalent to the data of an individual  $V_n$  for any  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$ , and in particular, for  $n = 0$ . As a result, the functor that associates to  $S \rightarrow \eta$  the set of  $k$ -dimensional limit linear series of  $\mathcal{E}_S$  is represented by the Grassmannian  $\mathbf{Gr}(k, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$ . The main theorem of [Oss14] is the following representability theorem.

{thm:lls}

**Theorem 5.7** ([Oss14, Theorem 3.4.7]). *The functor that associates to a  $B$ -scheme  $S \rightarrow B$  the set of limit linear series on  $\mathcal{E}_S$  is representable by a projective  $B$ -scheme  $\mathcal{G}(k, \mathcal{E})$  isomorphic to the Grassmannian  $\mathbf{Gr}(k, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$  over  $\eta$ . The locus of simple linear*

series  $\mathcal{G}^{\text{simple}}(k, \mathcal{E}) \subset \mathcal{G}(k, \mathcal{E})$  is an open subscheme, and the map  $\mathcal{G}^{\text{simple}}(k, \mathcal{E}) \rightarrow B$  has universal relative dimension at least  $k(d - k - r(g - 1))$ .

The last statement implies that if  $v \in \mathcal{G}^{\text{simple}}$  is such that  $\mathcal{G}^{\text{simple}}$  has relative dimension at most  $k(d - k - r(g - 1))$  at  $v$ , then it has relative dimension exactly  $k(d - k - r(g - 1))$  at  $v$  and, furthermore, it is an open map near  $v$ . In particular,  $v$  is in the closure of  $\mathbf{Gr}(k, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$ .

*Remark 5.8.* Osserman proves a stronger theorem, namely a relative version of the statement above, over the stack of vector bundles on  $X$ . But the statement above is enough for our purposes.

Although the definition of a limit linear series demands that we specify infinitely many vector bundles  $V_n$ , one for each  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$ , this is neither practical nor necessary. In the best case, only specifying the extremal ones, namely  $V_{n_1}$  and  $V_{n_2}$ , suffices, provided that they satisfy some compatibility conditions. The original definition of limit linear series due to Eisenbud–Harris [?] in the rank 1 case and Teixidor i Bigas [TiB91] in the general case, took this minimalist approach.

Let  $E_n$  be the restriction of  $\mathcal{E}_n$  to the central fiber  $C = X_0$ , and set  $p = C_1 \cap C_2$ .

{def:eht}

**Definition 5.9.** A  $k$ -dimensional EHT limit linear series on  $E$  consists of  $k$ -dimensional subspaces  $W_i \subset H^0(C_i, E_{n_i}|_{C_i})$  for  $i = 1, 2$  that satisfy the following two conditions.

{ieq:eht}

- (1) If  $a_1^i \leq \dots \leq a_k^i$  is the vanishing sequence for  $(\mathcal{E}_{n_i}|_{C_i}, W_i)$  at  $p$  for  $i = 1, 2$ , then for every  $v = 1, \dots, k$  we have

$$a_v^1 + a_{k+1-v}^2 \geq b.$$

{gluing:eht}

- (2) There exist bases  $s_1^i, \dots, s_k^i$  for  $W_i$  for  $i = 1, 2$ , such that  $s_v^i$  has order of vanishing  $a_v^i$  at  $p$ , and if we have  $a_v^1 + a_{k+1-v}^2 = b$  for some  $v$ , then

$$\tilde{\phi}(s_v^1) = s_{k+1-v}^2,$$

where  $\tilde{\phi}: E_{n_1}(-a_v^1 \cdot p)|_p \rightarrow E_{n_2}(-a_{k+1-v}^2 \cdot p)|_p$  is the isomorphism obtained by taking the appropriate twist of the identity map.

We say that  $(W_1, W_2)$  is a *refined EHT limit linear series* if all equality holds in (1) for all  $v = 1, \dots, k$ .

This definition is adapted from [Oss14, Definition 4.1.2]. Note that, due to the vanishing condition on the twists of  $E$ , the restriction map

$$H^0(C, E_{n_i}) \rightarrow H^0(C_i, E_{n_i}|_{C_i})$$

is an isomorphism. Via this isomorphism, we sometimes treat  $W_i$  as a subspace of  $H^0(C_i, \mathcal{E}_{n_i}|_{C_i})$ .

Although the notions of a limit linear series and an EHT limit linear series differ in general, they essentially agree when we restrict to the simple limit linear series and the refined EHT limit linear series. More precisely, we have the following statement.

{prop:11seht}

**Proposition 5.10.** *Let  $S$  be a  $B$ -scheme, and  $V = (V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  a limit linear series on  $\mathcal{E}_S$ . For every  $s \in S$  over  $0 \in B$ , taking  $W_i = V_{n_i}|_s$  for  $i = 1, 2$  gives an EHT limit linear series. Conversely, assume that  $S$  is reduced, and let  $\mathcal{W}_i \subset \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_i})_S$  be sub-bundles whose restrictions to every  $s \in S$  over  $\eta \in B$  agree under the isomorphism  $(\mathcal{E}_{n_1})_\eta \cong (\mathcal{E}_{n_2})_\eta$ , and to every  $s \in S$  over  $0 \in B$  define a refined EHT limit linear series. Then there exists a unique limit linear series  $V = (V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  on  $\mathcal{E}_S$  such that  $\mathcal{W}_i = V_{n_i}$ . Furthermore, for every  $s \in S$  over  $0$ , the series  $V|_s$  is simple.*

*Proof.* Proving that  $(W_1, W_2)$  is an EHT limit linear series is straightforward, and left to the reader. It is a special case of [Oss14, Theorem 4.3.4] and the equivalence of type I and type II series in the two component case ([Oss14, Remark 3.4.15]).

The converse also follows from the proof of [Oss14, Theorem 4.3.4], but it is not explicitly stated there. So we offer a proof.

First, suppose that  $S$  lies over  $\eta \in B$ . Then  $V_n \subset \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_n)_S$  is determined uniquely as the image of  $V_{n_i} = \mathcal{W}_{n_i} \subset \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_i})_S$  for either  $i = 1$  or  $i = 2$ .

Next, suppose that  $S = \text{Spec } K$ , and it lies over  $0 \in B$ . Denoting  $(\mathcal{E}_n)_S$  by  $E_n$ , we must construct  $V_n \subset H^0(C, E_n)$ . By composing  $\theta_{n_i-n}: E_n \rightarrow E_{n_i}$  and the restriction  $E_{n_i} \rightarrow E_{n_i}|_{C_i}$ , we get a map

$$\iota: H^0(C, E_n) \rightarrow H^0(C_1, E_{n_1}|_{C_1}) \oplus H^0(C_2, E_{n_2}|_{C_2}).$$

The vanishing condition on the twists of  $E$  mean that  $\iota$  is injective. The compatibility condition in Definition 5.3 implies that we must choose  $V_n$  so that  $\iota(V_n) \subset W_1 \oplus W_2$ . We claim that  $\dim \iota^{-1}(W_1 \oplus W_2) = k$ , so that there is a unique choice of  $V_n$ , namely  $V_n = \iota^{-1}(W_1 \oplus W_2)$ .

Suppose  $s \in \iota^{-1}(W_1 \oplus W_2)$ . Then  $\iota(s)$  is a linear combination of  $(s_1^1, 0), \dots, (s_k^1, 0)$ , and  $(0, s_1^2), \dots, (0, s_k^2)$ . Write  $\iota(s) = (s_1, s_2)$ . Since  $s_i$  is obtained by applying  $\theta_{n-n_i}$ , and  $\theta$  on  $C_i$  at  $p$  corresponds to multiplication by the uniformizer, we see that

$$\text{ord}_p(s_1) \geq n - n_1, \text{ and likewise, } \text{ord}_p(s_2) \geq n_2 - n. \quad (5.8)$$

Let  $v_1 \in \{1, \dots, k\}$  be the smallest such that  $a_v^1 \geq n - n_1$ , and  $v_1 + c$  the smallest such that  $a_{v_1+c}^1 > n - n_1$ . Since  $(W_1, W_2)$  is refined, and  $n_2 - n_1 = b$ , we see that  $v_2 = k + 1 - v_1$  is the largest such that  $a_{v_2}^2 \leq n_2 - n$ , and  $v_2 - c$  the smallest such that  $a_{v_2+c}^2 < n_2 - n$ . The vanishing conditions (5.8) imply that  $\iota(s)$  must be a linear combination of  $(s_{v_1}^1, 0), \dots, (s_k^1, 0)$  and  $(0, s_{v_2-c}^2), \dots, (0, s_k^2)$ . Suppose

$$\iota(s) = \sum_{\ell=i}^k \alpha_\ell \cdot (s_\ell^1, 0) + \sum_{\ell=j}^k \beta_\ell \cdot (0, s_\ell^2),$$

where  $\alpha_\ell$  and  $\beta_\ell$  are elements of the field  $K$ . Since  $s$  is a section on the entire nodal curve  $C$ , its two restrictions to  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are equal at  $p$ . In terms of the two components of  $\iota(s)$ , and in light of the gluing condition (2) in Definition 5.9, this equality is equivalent to

$\alpha_\ell = \beta_{k+1-\ell}$ . That is,  $\iota(s)$  is a linear combination of the  $k$  elements

$$(s_{v_1}^1, s_{v_2}^2), \dots, (s_{v_1+c-1}^1, s_{v_2-c+1}^2), (s_{v_1+c}^1, 0), \dots, (s_k^1, 0), (0, s_{v_2+1}^2), \dots, (s_k^2, 0).$$

Conversely, it is easy to see that any such linear combination lies in  $W_1 \oplus W_2$ . Hence the claim that  $\dim \iota^{-1}(W_1 \oplus W_2) = k$ .

Set  $V_n = \iota^{-1}(W_1 \oplus W_2)$ . To see that  $V$  is simple, we must exhibit appropriate  $w_i$  and  $v_i \in V_{w_i}$  for  $i = 1, \dots, k$ . Take  $w_i = n - n_1 - a_i^1$ , and let  $v_i \in V_{w_i} \subset H^0(C, E_{w_i})$  be such that  $\iota(v_i) = (s_i^1, s_{k+1-i}^2)$ . Then the images of  $v_1, \dots, v_k$  form a basis of  $V_n$  for all  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$ .

For more general  $S$ , consider the map

$$\bar{\iota}: \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_n)_S \longrightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_1})_S / \mathcal{W}_1 \oplus \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_2})_S / \mathcal{W}_2,$$

obtained by composing  $\iota = \pi_*(\theta_{n_1-n} \oplus \theta_{n_2-n})$  and the projections  $\pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_i})_S \longrightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_{n_i})_S / \mathcal{W}_i$ . We proved that, for every  $\text{Spec } K \longrightarrow S$ , the kernel of  $\bar{\iota} \otimes_{\mathcal{O}_S} K$  is  $k$ -dimensional. Since  $S$  is reduced, it is easy to prove that  $V_n = \ker \iota$  is a sub-bundle of  $\pi_*(\mathcal{E}_n)$ . It is also easy to check that  $V = (V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  a limit linear series, the only one that satisfies  $V_{n_i} = \mathcal{W}_i$ . The proof is now complete.  $\square$

Proposition 5.10 allows us to combine the economy of specifying an EHT limit linear series with the convenient functorial definition of a limit linear series. We use this in the definition of the projection-ramification map in terms of limit linear series.

{sec:prnodal}

**5.3. Projection-ramification with non-generic vanishing sequence.** We consider the projection-ramification map for linear series with a non-generic vanishing sequence. The analysis of such series plays a key role in defining the projection-ramification map for limit linear series.

Let  $C$  be a smooth curve and  $p \in C$  a point. Let  $E$  be a vector bundle on  $C$  of rank  $r$ . The projective spaces associated to the vector spaces  $E(np)|_p$ , for  $n \in \mathbf{Z}$ , are canonically isomorphic to each other, so we identify them. The vanishing sequences considered are at the point  $p$ . Choose a uniformizer  $t$  of  $C$  at  $p$ .

Suppose  $V \subset H^0(C, E)$  is an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace with the vanishing sequence

$$(\underbrace{a, \dots, a}_i, \underbrace{a+1, \dots, a+1}_{r+1-i}), \quad (5.9) \quad \{\text{eqn:specialvs}\}$$

for some  $i$  with  $1 \leq i \leq r$ , and  $a \geq 0$ . Let  $v_1, \dots, v_{r+1}$  be a basis of  $V$  adapted to the vanishing sequence, namely a basis  $v_1, \dots, v_{r+1}$  such that in the stalk  $E_p$ , we can write

$$v_1 = t^a \tilde{v}_1, \dots, v_i = t^a \tilde{v}_i, \quad v_{i+1} = t^{a+1} \tilde{v}_{i+1}, \dots, v_{r+1} = t^{a+1} \tilde{v}_{r+1}, \quad (5.10) \quad \{\text{eqn:basis}\}$$

for some  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_{r+1} \in E_p$  such that the images of  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_i$  in the fiber  $E|_p$  are linearly independent, and the same holds for the images of  $\tilde{v}_{i+1}, \dots, \tilde{v}_{r+1}$ . Here we are slightly abusing the notation by denoting  $v_i$  and its image in  $E_p$  under the natural evaluation map by the same letter. Let  $V^0 \subset E|_p$  be spanned by the images of  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_i$ , and  $V^1 \subset E|_p$  by the images of  $\tilde{v}_{i+1}, \dots, \tilde{v}_{r+1}$ . It is easy to check that a different choice of basis adapted to the vanishing sequence gives the same  $V^0$  and  $V^1$ . By construction,  $\dim V_0 = i$  and

$\dim V^1 = r + 1 - i$ , and therefore,  $\dim(V^0 \cap V^1) \geq 1$ . We say that  $V$  has *transverse vanishing* at  $p$  if

$$\dim(V^0 \cap V^1) = 1. \quad (5.11) \quad \{\text{eq:genericity}\}$$

Note that if  $V$  is base-point free at  $p$ , then  $\dim V^0 = r$  and  $\dim V^1 = 1$ , so  $V$  automatically has transverse vanishing.

$\{\text{prop:agreement}\}$

**Proposition 5.11.** *Suppose  $V \subset H^0(C, E)$  is an  $(r + 1)$ -dimensional subspace with vanishing sequence (5.9) and transverse vanishing at  $p$ . Then the ramification section  $r_V$  of  $V$  vanishes to order  $(r + 1)a + (r - i)$  at  $p$ . Furthermore, writing  $r_V = t^{(r+1)a+r-i} \cdot \tilde{r}$ , the one-dimensional subspace of  $E|_p$  spanned by  $\tilde{r}|_p$  is  $V^0 \cap V^1$ .*

*Proof.* Thanks to transverse vanishing, there exists a basis  $\{\bar{s}_1, \dots, \bar{s}_r\}$  of  $E|_p$  such that

$$V^0 = \langle \bar{s}_1, \dots, \bar{s}_i \rangle \text{ and } V^1 = \langle \bar{s}_{i+1}, \dots, \bar{s}_r, \bar{s}_1 \rangle.$$

Let  $v_1, \dots, v_{r+1}$  be a basis of  $V$  adapted to the vanishing sequence such that if  $\tilde{v}_i$  are defined as in (5.10) then the images of  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_r$  in  $E|_p$  are  $\bar{s}_1, \dots, \bar{s}_r$ , respectively, and the image of  $\tilde{v}_{r+1}$  is  $\bar{s}_1$ . In particular, the  $r$  elements  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_r \in E_p$  give a trivialization of  $E$  around  $p$ . Write

$$\tilde{v}_{r+1} = b_1 \tilde{v}_1 + \dots + b_r \tilde{v}_r$$

in  $E_p$ , where  $b_1, \dots, b_r \in \mathcal{O}_{C,p}$ . Since the image of  $\tilde{v}_{r+1}$  in  $E|_p$  is  $\bar{s}_1$ , we get that  $b_1 \equiv 1 \pmod{\mathfrak{m}_p}$ , and  $b_2, \dots, b_r \in \mathfrak{m}_p$ . Using the basis  $v_1, \dots, v_{r+1}$  of  $V$  and the local trivialization  $\tilde{v}_1, \dots, \tilde{v}_r$  of  $E$ , we can write  $r_V$  as the determinant (see (4.10)) as follows

$$\begin{aligned} r_V &= \det \begin{pmatrix} t^a & & & & at^{a-1}\tilde{v}_1 \\ & \ddots & & & \vdots \\ & & t^a & & at^{a-1}\tilde{v}_i \\ & & & t^{a+1} & (a+1)t^a\tilde{v}_{i+1} \\ & & & & \ddots \\ & & & & t^{a+1} & (a+1)t^a\tilde{v}_r \\ b_1 t^{a+1} & b_2 t^{a+1} & \dots & b_{r-1} t^{a+1} & b_r t^{a+1} & (a+1)t^a\tilde{v}_1 + t^{a+1}(\dots) \end{pmatrix} \\ &= t^{(r+1)a+r-i}\tilde{v}_1 + t^{(r+1)a+r-i+1}(\dots). \end{aligned}$$

Thus the order of vanishing of  $r_V$  is as claimed. Furthermore,  $\tilde{r}$  is given by

$$\tilde{r} = \tilde{v}_1 + t(\dots).$$

Since the image of  $\tilde{v}_1$ , namely  $\bar{s}_1$ , spans  $V^0 \cap V^1$ , the proof is complete.  $\square$

We are primarily interested in generic  $(r + 1)$ -dimensional subspaces  $V \subset H^0(C, E)$ . A generic such  $V$  has the vanishing sequence

$$(0, \dots, 0, 1).$$

For limit linear series, it is important to also study the  $V$  with complementary vanishing sequence, namely

$$(0, 1, \dots, 1),$$



which we now do. For simplicity, we restrict to  $C = \mathbf{P}^1$ .

Let  $E$  be an ample vector bundle on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  of rank  $r$ . Fix a point  $p \in \mathbf{P}^1$ ; all the vanishing sequences are at  $p$ . Consider the locally closed subset  $U \subset \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E))$  parametrizing  $V \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)$  with vanishing sequence

$$(0, \underbrace{1, \dots, 1}_r).$$

Given such a  $V$ , let  $\tilde{r}_V \in \mathbf{P}H^0(E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1} \otimes \mathcal{O}(-(r-1)p))^*$  be the reduced ramification section, namely the section obtained by dividing the usual ramification section  $r_V$  by the  $(r-1)$ -th power of a uniformizer at  $t$  (see Proposition 5.11). The assignment  $V \mapsto \tilde{r}_V$  gives a variant of the projection-ramification map, which we call the *reduced projection-ramification map*

$$\tilde{\rho}: U \longrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1} \otimes \mathcal{O}(-(r-1)p))^*. \quad (5.12) \quad \{\text{eqn:rrd}\}$$

Note that, just as in the case of the usual projection-ramification map, the source and the target of the reduced projection-ramification map are of the same dimension.

Having defined the reduced projection-ramification map, we now relate it back to the usual projection-ramification map, but on a different vector bundle. Given a one-dimensional subspace  $\ell \subset E|_p$ , define  $E'_\ell$  by the exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow E'_\ell \longrightarrow E \longrightarrow E|_p/\ell \longrightarrow 0.$$

There exists a Zariski open subset of the projective space of lines in  $E|_p$  such that for all  $\ell$  in this set, the isomorphism class of  $E'_\ell$  remains constant. Denote this isomorphism class by  $E'_{\text{gen}}$ .

$\{\text{prop:domred}\}$

**Proposition 5.12.** *If the usual projection-ramification map*

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E'_{\text{gen}})) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E'_{\text{gen}} \otimes \det E'_{\text{gen}} \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})^*$$

*is dominant, then so is the reduced projection-ramification map*

$$\tilde{\rho}: U \longrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1} \otimes \mathcal{O}(-(r-1)p))^*.$$

*Proof.* Let  $D \in \mathbf{P}H^0(E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1} \otimes \mathcal{O}(-(r-1)p))^*$  be a generic section. Let  $\ell \subset E|_p$  be the one-dimensional subspace defined by  $D|_p$ , and set  $E' = E'_\ell$ . Since  $D$  is generic, we may assume  $E' \cong E'_{\text{gen}}$ . The inclusion of sheaves  $E' \longrightarrow E$  induces an inclusion of sheaves

$$E' \otimes \det E' \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1} \longrightarrow E \otimes \det E \otimes \mathcal{O}(-(r-1)p) \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1},$$

and by construction,  $D$  is the image of a section  $D' \in \mathbf{P}H^0(E' \otimes \det E' \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})^*$ . Since  $\rho$  is dominant for  $E'$ , there exists a sequence of subspaces  $V'_n \in \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E'))$  such that the limit of  $\rho(V'_n)$  is  $D'$ . Let  $V_n \subset \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E))$  be the image of  $V'_n$ . Then the limit of  $\tilde{\rho}(V_n)$  is  $D$ . Since  $D$  was generic, we get that  $\tilde{\rho}$  is dominant.  $\square$

$\{\text{prop:domredexam}\}$

**Corollary 5.13.** *The reduced projection-ramification map is dominant for the bundles  $E = \mathcal{O}(1) \oplus \mathcal{O}(2)^{r-1}$  and  $E = \mathcal{O}(2) \oplus \mathcal{O}(3)^{r-1}$ .*

*Proof.* Follows from Proposition 5.12 and that the projection-ramification map is dominant for  $E' = \mathcal{O}(1)^r$  and  $E' = \mathcal{O}(2)^r$ .  $\square$

**5.4. Projection-ramification for limit linear series.** Recall the setup from § 5.2:  $C = C_1 \cup C_2$  is a nodal union of two smooth projective curves of genus  $g_1$  and  $g_2$ , and  $\pi: X \rightarrow B$  be a smoothing of  $C$ . Let  $\mathcal{E}$  be a vector bundle of rank  $r$  on  $X$  whose restriction  $E$  to  $C$  has multi-degree  $(w_1, w_2)$ . The integers  $n_2 \geq n_1$  are such that we have vanishing  $H^0(C_2, E_n|_{C_2}) = 0$  for all  $n \leq n_1$  and  $H^0(C_1, E_n|_{C_1}) = 0$  for  $n \geq n_2$ . For convenience, we decrease  $n_1$  and increase  $n_2$  so that the vanishing on  $C_2$  holds for all  $n \leq n_1 - (w_1 - 2g_1)$  and on  $C_1$  for all  $n \geq n_2 + (w_2 - 2g_2)$ . Define

$$d_1 = w_1 - n_1 r, \quad d_2 = w_2 + n_2 r, \quad \text{and } b = n_2 - n_1,$$

as before.

Set  $\mathcal{E}' = \mathcal{E} \otimes \det \mathcal{E} \otimes \omega_{X/B}$ . Then  $\mathcal{E}'$  is a vector bundle of rank  $r$  on  $X$  whose restriction  $E'$  to  $C$  has multi-degree  $(w'_1, w'_2)$  where

$$w'_1 = w_1 + r(w_1 - 2g_1 + 1) \text{ and } w'_2 = w_2 + r(w_2 - 2g_2 + 1).$$

We set

$$n'_1 = n_1(1 + r) \text{ and } n'_2 = n_2(1 + r),$$

and observe that we have vanishings  $H^0(C_2, E'_n|_{C_2}) = 0$  for  $n \leq n'_1$  and  $H^0(C_1, E'_n|_{C_1}) = 0$  for  $n \geq n'_2$ . We also set

$$b' = n'_2 - n'_1 = b(1 + r).$$

Our next goal is to define a rational map

$$\rho: \mathcal{G}(r+1, \mathcal{E}) \dashrightarrow \mathcal{G}(1, \mathcal{E}') \quad (5.13)$$

that extends the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta)) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{Gr}(1, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}'_\eta))$$

on  $X_\eta$ . For technical reasons, we define the map in (5.13) only on the reduced scheme underlying  $\mathcal{G}(r+1, \mathcal{E})$ .

Before defining the map, we identify three conditions on limit linear series on the central fiber that are required for the map to be defined. To do this, consider a limit linear series  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  on  $C$ , and let  $(W_1, W_2)$  be the associated EHT limit linear series namely  $W_1 = V_{n_1}$  and  $W_2 = V_{n_2}$  (see Proposition 5.10). The first condition we want to impose is that  $(W_1, W_2)$  be a refined EHT limit linear series; this is an open condition (see [Oss14, Proposition 4.1.5]). The second condition we want to impose is that the vanishing sequence of  $W_1 \subset H^0(C_1, E_{n_1}|_{C_1})$  at  $p$  is of the form

$$(a, \dots, a, \underbrace{a+1, \dots, a+1}_{r+1-i}) \quad (5.14)$$

as in (5.9); imposing a particular vanishing sequence is again an open condition (see [Oss14, Proposition 4.2.5]). Since  $(W_1, W_2)$  is refined, it follows that the vanishing sequence of  $W_2 \subset H^0(C_2, E_{n_2}|_{C_2})$  at  $p$  is

$$(\underbrace{b-a-1, \dots, b-a-1}_{r+1-i}, \underbrace{b-a, \dots, b-a}_i).$$

Recall from § 5.3 that  $W_1$  yields two vector spaces  $V^0$  and  $V^1$  in the fiber  $E_{n_1}|_p$ , which we may identify canonically (up to scaling) with the fiber  $E|_p$ . Likewise,  $W_2$  yields two analogous vector spaces, call them  $\Lambda^0$  and  $\Lambda^1$ , in  $E|_p$ . The gluing condition in the definition of EHT limit linear series (Definition 5.9) and the definition of these vector spaces immediately shows that

$$V^0 = \Lambda^1 \text{ and } V^1 = \Lambda^0. \quad (5.15) \quad \{\text{eqn:vlambdaswit}\}$$

The third condition we want to impose is that these two vector spaces be transverse, namely  $\dim(V^0 \cap V^1) = 1$ .

Let  $\mathcal{U} \subset \mathcal{G}(r+1, \mathcal{E})$  be the complement of the union of the following closed sets:

- (1) the closure of the subset of  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$  corresponding to  $V \subset H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta)$  for which the evaluation map  $V \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X_\eta} \rightarrow \mathcal{E}_\eta$  has generic rank less than  $r$ .
- (2) the set of limit linear series  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  on  $C$  such that the associated EHT limit linear series  $(W_1, W_2)$  is not refined, or does not have the vanishing sequence as in (5.14), or does not satisfy the transversality condition  $\dim(V^0 \cap V^1) = 1$ .

Give  $\mathcal{U}$  the reduced scheme structure.

Let  $S$  be a reduced  $B$ -scheme with a map to  $\mathcal{U}$  given by the limit linear series  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$ . On  $X_S$ , we have a diagram analogous to (4.8), namely

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \det \mathcal{E}_n^* \otimes \det V_n & \xrightarrow{j} & V_n \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X_S} & \xrightarrow{e} & \mathcal{E}_n & & \\ & & \downarrow d & & \downarrow e & & \parallel \\ 0 & \longrightarrow & \Omega_{X_S/S} \otimes \mathcal{E}_n & \longrightarrow & P(\mathcal{E}_n) & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{E}_n \longrightarrow 0. \end{array} \quad (5.16) \quad \{\text{eq:llspr}\}$$

Here  $P(\mathcal{E}_n)$  is the sheaf of principal parts of  $\mathcal{E}_n$  relative to  $X_S \rightarrow S$ , and the bottom row is the natural exact sequence coming from its definition. The top row is a complex, but it may not be exact. The maps labeled  $e$  are the evaluation maps. The map  $j$  is defined by the maximal minors of  $e: V_n \otimes \mathcal{O}_{X_S} \rightarrow \mathcal{E}_n$ . The map  $d$  is the unique map induced by the other maps in the diagram. By composing  $d$  through the inclusion  $\Omega_{X_S/S} \rightarrow \omega_{X_S/S}$ , and doing some rearrangement, we obtain a map

$$r_n: \det V_n \rightarrow \pi_*(\mathcal{E}_n \otimes \det \mathcal{E}_n \otimes \omega_{X_S/S}^*) = \pi_*(\mathcal{E}'_{(r+1)n}). \quad (5.17) \quad \{\text{eqn:Rn}\}$$

Consider the two extremal sections, namely those corresponding to  $n = n_1$  and  $n = n_2$ . {\lem:rameht}

**Lemma 5.14.** *Over every  $s \in S$  over  $0 \in \Delta$ , the restrictions  $r_{n_1}|_s$  and  $r_{n_2}|_s$  define a one-dimensional refined EHT limit linear series for  $E'$ .*

*Proof.* Without further comment, we identify  $r_{n_i}|_s \in H^0(C, E'_{(r+1)n_i})$  with its image in  $H^0(C_i, E'_{(r+1)n_i}|_{C_i})$ . We have

$$E'_{(r+1)n_2}|_{C_i} = E_{n_2} \otimes \det E_{n_2} \otimes \omega_C|_{C_1} = E_{n_2} \otimes \det E_{n_2} \otimes \Omega_C|_{C_1} \otimes \mathcal{O}_{C_1}(p),$$

and by construction  $r_{n_1}|_s$  is the image of the ramification section of  $V_{n_1} \subset H^0(C_1, E_{n_1}|_{C_1})$  under the inclusion map

$$E_{n_1} \otimes \det E_{n_1} \otimes \Omega_C|_{C_1} \rightarrow E_{n_1} \otimes \det E_{n_1} \otimes \omega_C|_{C_1} = E'_{(r+1)n_1}|_{C_1}.$$

By Proposition 5.11, the ramification section of  $V_{n_1}$  has order of vanishing  $(r+1)a + (r-i)$  at  $p$ , and hence  $r_{n_1}|_s$  on  $C_1$  has order of vanishing  $(r+1)a + (r-i+1)$  at  $p$ . Likewise,  $r_{n_2}|_s$  on  $C_2$  has order of vanishing  $(r+1)(b-a-1) + i$  at  $p$ . Since

$$(r+1)a + (r-i+1) + (r+1)(b-a-1) + i = (r+1)b = b',$$

we see that  $r_{n_1}|_s$  and  $r_{n_2}|_s$  have complementary orders of vanishing, leading to an equality in condition (1) of Definition 5.9.

We must next ensure that condition (2) of Definition 5.9 holds, that is, the images of  $r_{n_i}|_s$  in the appropriate twists of  $E_{n_i}|_p$  are equal, at least up to scaling. By Proposition 5.11, the image of  $r_{n_1}|_s$  in the appropriate twist of  $E_{n_1}|_p$  spans the line  $(V^0 \cap V^1)$ , and the image of  $r_{n_2}|_s$  spans the line  $\Lambda^0 \cap \Lambda^1$ . But by (5.15), we have  $V^1 = \Lambda^0$  and  $V^0 = \Lambda^1$ , so the two lines are equal.  $\square$

Thanks to Lemma 5.14, we apply Proposition 5.10, and conclude that there exists a unique (1-dimensional) limit linear series  $(R_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  of  $\mathcal{E}'$  on  $X_S$  for which  $R_{n'_1} = \det V_{n_1}$  and  $R_{n'_2} = \det V_{n_2}$ , at least if  $S$  is reduced. The transformation

$$(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z}) \mapsto (R_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$$

defines a morphism

$$\rho: \mathcal{U} \longrightarrow \mathcal{G}(1, \mathcal{E}'), \quad (5.18)$$

as desired in (5.13). Note that  $\mathcal{U}$  has the reduced scheme structure.

The fruit of our labor is the following corollary.

**Corollary 5.15.** *Suppose  $v \in \mathcal{U}_0$  is such that  $\dim_v \mathcal{U}_0 = (r+1)(d-rg-1)$  and  $v$  is isolated in the fiber of  $\rho$ , then the projection-ramification map  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta)) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{PH}^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta \otimes \det E_\eta \otimes K_{X_\eta})$  is generically finite.*

*Proof.* If  $\dim_v \mathcal{U}_0 = (r+1)(d-rg-1)$ , then  $v$  is in the closure of  $\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(X_\eta, \mathcal{E}_\eta))$  by Theorem 5.7. The statement now follows from the upper semi-continuity of fiber dimension.  $\square$

**5.5. Maximal variation for generic scrolls of high degree.** We now have all the tools to prove Theorem D

**Theorem 5.16** (Theorem D). *Let  $E$  be a generic vector bundle on  $\mathbf{P}^1$  of rank  $r$  and degree  $d = a(r-1) + b(2r-1) + 1$ , where  $a, b$  are positive integers. Then the projection-ramification map is generically finite, and hence dominant, for  $E$ . In particular, the projection-ramification map is dominant for generic  $E$  of degree  $\geq (r-1)(2r-1) + 1$ .*

*Proof.* We say that generic dominance holds for rank  $r$  and degree  $d$  if the projection-ramification map is dominant (equivalently, generically finite) for the generic vector bundle of rank  $r$  and degree  $d$ . The rank will be fixed throughout, so let us drop it from the discussion. Let us prove that if generic dominance holds for degrees  $d_1$  and  $d_2$ , then it also holds for degree  $d = d_1 + d_2 - 1$ . With the base cases  $d_1 = r$  (Proposition 5.1) and  $d_2 = 2r$  (Proposition 5.2), this proves the theorem.

Take  $C_1 = C_2 = \mathbf{P}^1$ , and let  $C = C_1 \cup C_2$  be their nodal union at one point, which we take to be the point labeled 0 on both  $\mathbf{P}^1$ s. Let  $X \rightarrow B$  be a smoothing of  $C$ . Note that any vector bundle on  $C$  is the restriction of a vector bundle on  $X$ . Therefore, by Corollary 5.15, it suffices to construct a vector bundle  $E$  of degree  $d$  on  $C$  and a limit linear series  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  on  $E$  such that the following conditions hold for the point  $v$  of  $\mathcal{G}(r+1, E')$  represented by  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$ :

- (1)  $\dim_v \mathcal{G}(r+1, E) = (r+1)(d-1)$ ,
- (2)  $\rho$  is defined at  $v$ , and
- (3)  $v$  is an isolated point in the fiber of  $\rho$ .

We construct  $E$  as follows. Let  $E_1$  be a generic vector bundle of degree  $d_1$  on  $C_1$ , and  $E'_2$  a generic vector bundle of degree  $d_2 - 1$  on  $C_2$ . Choose a generic isomorphism  $E_1|_0 \cong E'_2|_0$ , and construct the vector bundle  $E$  on  $C$  by gluing  $E_1$  and  $E'_2$  along this isomorphism. Choose  $n_1 = a$  and  $n_2 = b + a$  for sufficiently negative  $a$  and sufficiently positive  $b$ . The isomorphism  $E_1|_0 \cong E'_2|_0$  yields isomorphisms, canonical up to scaling, of  $E_1(m)|_0$  and  $E'_2(n)|_0$  for any  $m, n \in \mathbf{Z}$ .

Having constructed  $E$ , we must now construct  $(V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$ . By Proposition 5.10, it is enough to construct  $V_{n_1} \subset H^0(C_1, E_1 \otimes \mathcal{O}(a))$  and  $V_{n_2} \subset H^0(C_2, E'_2(b-a))$ , provided they define a refined EHT limit linear series. Let  $V \subset H^0(C_1, E_1)$  be a generic  $(r+1)$ -dimensional vector space. Then it will have the vanishing sequence  $(0, \dots, 0, 1)$ . Hence, we have  $V^0 = E|_0$  and  $V^1 \subset E|_0$  is 1-dimensional (see § 5.3 for the definition of these two subspaces). Furthermore, the genericity of  $V$  implies that  $V^1$  is a general 1-dimensional subspace. Let  $\Lambda \subset H^0(C_2, E'_2(1))$  be the image of a general  $(r+1)$  dimensional subspace of  $H^0(C_2, E_2)$ , where  $E_2$  is the vector bundle of degree  $d_2$  defined by the sequence

$$0 \rightarrow E_2 \rightarrow E'_2(1) \rightarrow E'_2(1)|_0/V^1 \rightarrow 0.$$

Then  $\Lambda \subset H^0(C_2, E'_2(1))$  has the vanishing sequence  $(0, 1, \dots, 1)$ , with  $\Lambda^0 = V^1$  and  $\Lambda^1 = V^0$ . Let  $V_{n_1} \subset H^0(C_1, E_1 \otimes \mathcal{O}(a))$  be the image of  $V$  and  $V_{n_2} \subset H^0(C_2, E_2 \otimes \mathcal{O}(b-a))$  the image of  $\Lambda$ . Then  $V_{n_1}$  has the vanishing sequence  $(a, \dots, a, a+1)$ , and  $\Lambda$  the complementary vanishing sequence  $(b-a-1, b-a, \dots, b-a)$ . By the construction of  $\Lambda$ , there exist bases of  $V_{n_1}$  and  $V_{n_2}$  that satisfy the gluing condition at 0. In conclusion,  $V_{n_1}$  and  $V_{n_2}$  form a refined EHT limit linear series, and hence define a limit linear series  $v = (V_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$ .

It is easy to check that  $\dim_v \mathbf{G}(r+1, E) = (r+1)(d-1)$ . Indeed, for every limit linear series  $w = (W_n \mid n \in \mathbf{Z})$  in an open subset around  $v$ , the EHT limit linear series associated to  $w$  determines  $w$  and has the same vanishing sequence as  $v$ . In particular,  $W_{n_1} \subset H^0(C_1, E_1(a))$  is the image of an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace  $W \subset H^0(C_1, E_1)$  with vanishing sequence  $(0, \dots, 1)$ , and  $W_{n_2} \subset H^0(C_2, E_2(b-a))$  is the image of an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace  $M \subset H^0(C_2, E_2(1))$  with vanishing sequence  $(0, 1, \dots, 1)$ . Furthermore, the gluing condition implies that  $M$  is in fact the image of an  $(r+1)$ -dimensional subspace of the kernel of the map

$$E'_2(1) \rightarrow E'_2(1)/W^1.$$

By the genericity of  $V$ , the isomorphism type of the kernel of this map is constant around  $v$ ; that is, the kernel is isomorphic to  $E_2$ . So, a dimension count for  $\mathcal{G}(r+1, E)$  around  $v$  gives

$$\begin{aligned} \dim_v \mathcal{G}(r+1, E) &= \dim \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(C_1, E_1)) + \dim \mathbf{Gr}(r+1, H^0(C_2, E_2)) \\ &= (r+1)(d_1 - 1) + (r+1)(d_2 - 1) \\ &= (r+1)(d_1 + d_2 - 2) \\ &= (r+1)(d - 1). \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we must check that  $v$  is an isolated point in the fiber of

$$\rho: \mathcal{G}(r+1, E) \dashrightarrow \mathcal{G}(1, E \otimes \det E \otimes \omega_C).$$

For any  $w \in \mathcal{G}(r+1, E)$  in an open set around  $v$ , either  $V \neq W$  or  $\Lambda \neq M$ , where  $V, \Lambda, W, M$  are as above. By construction,  $V \subset H^0(r+1, H^0(C_1, E_1))$  and  $\Lambda \subset H^0(r+1, H^0(C_2, E'_2))$  are isolated in their respective projection-ramification maps. Therefore, either  $\rho_{C_1}(V) \neq \rho_{C_1}(W)$  or  $\rho_{C_2}(\Lambda) \neq \rho_{C_2}(M)$ . In either case, we obtain that  $\rho(v) \neq \rho(w)$ , and hence conclude that  $v$  is an isolated point in the fiber of  $\rho$ .  $\square$

**5.6. Recasting the projection-ramification map for scrolls.** Let  $E$  be a rank  $r$  ample vector bundle on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , and set  $X = \mathbf{P}E$ . Then a general  $r+1$ -dimensional subspace

$$W \subset H^0(X, \mathcal{O}(1)) = H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, E)$$

yields a short exact sequence

$$0 \longrightarrow (\det E)^{-1} \longrightarrow W \otimes \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1} \longrightarrow E \longrightarrow 0$$

which corresponds to an element  $w$  (up to scalar) of the extension space  $\mathrm{Ext}^1(E, (\det E)^{-1})$ . The assignment  $W \mapsto [w] \in \mathbf{P}(\mathrm{Ext}^1(E, (\det E)^{-1}))$  is easily seen to be a birational map between  $\mathbf{G} := \mathbf{Gr}(n+1, H^0(E))$  and  $\mathbf{P}(\mathrm{Ext}^1(E, (\det E)^{-1}))$ .

The ramification linear series  $|R|$  is the projectivization of the vector space  $V = H^0(E \otimes \det E \otimes K_{\mathbf{P}^1})$ . By Serre duality,  $V$  is dual to  $\mathrm{Ext}^1(E, (\det E)^{-1})$ . Therefore, the projection-ramification map  $\rho_X$  may be recast as a map

$$\delta_X : \mathbf{P}(V^*) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}(V)$$

## 6. THE PROJECTION-RAMIFICATION ENUMERATIVE PROBLEM

In this section, we calculate the degree of the projection-ramification map for as many varieties of minimal degree as we can, leading to a proof of Theorem E. After treating the relatively easy cases by hand, we relate the projection-ramification map for the veronese surface and the quartic normal scroll with classical geometry of cubic plane curves.

{sub:a\_rnc}

**6.1. Rational normal curves.** Let  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  be a rational normal curve. Plainly,  $X$  is incompressible, and hence the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(2, n+1) \longrightarrow \mathbf{P}^{2n-2}$$

is a regular map. Therefore, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \deg \rho &= c_1(\rho^* \mathcal{O}(1))^{2n-2} \\ &= c_1(\mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{Gr}(r+1, n+1)}(1))^{2n-2} \\ &= \frac{(2n-2)!}{n!(n-1)!}. \end{aligned}$$

**6.2. Quadric hypersurfaces.** A smooth quadric hypersurface  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^n$  defined by a homogeneous quadric equation  $F(X_0, \dots, X_n) = 0$ . An easy calculation shows that the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{P}^n \longrightarrow (\mathbf{P}^n)^*$$

is given in coordinates by

$$p = [p_0 : \dots : p_n] \mapsto \left[ \frac{\partial F}{\partial X_0}(p) : \dots : \frac{\partial F}{\partial X_n}(p) \right].$$

In other words, it is the *polarity isomorphism* induced by  $F$ , namely the isomorphism between a projective space and its dual given by the non-degenerate bilinear form associated to  $F$ . In particular, we get  $\deg \rho = 1$ .

**6.3. The Veronese surface.** Let  $\mathbf{P}^2 \cong X \subset \mathbf{P}^5$  be the Veronese surface, the image of  $\mathbf{P}^2$  under the complete linear series  $\mathcal{O}(2)$ . In this case, the projection-ramification map

$$\rho: \mathbf{Gr}(3, H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(2))) \cong \mathbf{Gr}(3, 6) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(3))^* \cong \mathbf{P}^9$$

can be described as follows. Let  $N \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(2))$  be a net of conics. Then  $\rho(N)$  corresponds to the cubic curve traced out by the nodes of the singular members of  $N$ , called the *Jacobian* of  $N$ .

**Proposition 6.1.** *Let  $R \subset \mathbf{P}^2$  be a general cubic. The fiber of  $\rho$  over  $R$  is in natural bijection with the set of non-trivial 2-torsion line bundles on  $R$ . In particular, we have  $\deg \rho = 3$ .*

The rest of ?? is devoted to the proof of this assertion.

For the proof, we recall some classical projective geometry of cubics and nets of conics from [Dol12, § 3]. To distinguish the various copies of  $\mathbf{P}^2$  that naturally arise in this story, write  $\mathbf{P}^2 = \mathbf{P}V$  for a 3 dimensional vector space  $V$ . Let  $N \subset H^0(\mathbf{P}V, \mathcal{O}(2)) = \text{Sym}^2 V$  be a general net of conics on  $\mathbf{P}V$ . Given a point  $x \in \mathbf{P}N^*$ , we denote the associated conic by  $Q_x$ .

Associated to the net  $N$  are three important cubic plane curves, namely the Jacobian curve, the discriminant curve, and the Hermite curve. We have already seen the Jacobian curve  $R \subset \mathbf{P}V$ . The *discriminant curve*  $D \subset \mathbf{P}N^*$  is the locus of  $x \in \mathbf{P}N^*$  such that  $Q_x$

{sub:a\_quadric\_s}

{sec:veronese}

{prop:veronese}

is singular. Since a pencil of conics contains three singular members, we see that  $D$  is a cubic curve. Note that if  $Q_d$  is singular, then it is the union of two distinct lines in  $\mathbf{PV}$ . A component line of  $Q_x$  is called a *Reye line*. The *Hermite curve*  $E \subset \mathbf{PV}^*$  is the locus of Reye lines. We leave it to the reader to check that it is a cubic curve.

The three cubic curves introduced above are inter-related. First, we have an isomorphism  $\tau: D \rightarrow R$  defined by

$$\{\text{eqn:DR}\} \quad \tau: d \mapsto \text{The singular point of } Q_d. \quad (6.1)$$

Second, we have a degree 2 map  $E \rightarrow D$  defined by

$$\ell \mapsto \text{The } d \in D \text{ such that } Q_d \text{ contains } \ell.$$

Evidently, the fiber of this map over a given  $x \in D$  corresponds to the two components of  $Q_d$ . The (étale) degree 2 map  $E \rightarrow D \cong R$  gives a non-trivial two-torsion element  $\eta \in \text{Pic}(R)[2]$ . The element  $\eta$  is characterized by the property that it is the unique non-trivial two-torsion element whose pull-back to  $E$  is trivial.

Denote by  $H$  the hyperplane divisor class on  $R \subset \mathbf{P}^2$ .

$\{\text{lem:reya}\}$

**Lemma 6.2.** *For every  $a \in R$ , the line joining  $a$  and  $a + \eta$  is a Reye line. Furthermore, this Reye line is a component of  $Q_d$  where  $d = \tau^{-1}(H - 2a - \eta)$ . Finally, the conjugate Reye line, namely the other component of  $Q_d$ , passes through the points  $b$  and  $b + \eta$  where  $b \in R$  differs from  $a$  by a non-trivial two-torsion element other than  $\eta$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\ell$  be a general Reye line, and let  $d \in D$  be such that  $\ell$  is a component of  $Q_d$ . Let  $x = \tau(d) \in R$  be the singular point of  $Q_d$ . Note  $\ell \cap R$  consists of three points, one of which is  $x$ . It suffices to show that the other two, say  $y$  and  $z$ , differ by  $\eta$ .

The point  $y$  defines a line in  $\mathbf{PV}^*$ . This line intersects  $E \subset \mathbf{PV}^*$  in three points, one of which is  $\ell$ , and the other two are the two components of  $Q_{\tau^{-1}(y)}$ , namely the two pre-images of  $y \in R$  under the double covering  $E \rightarrow R$ . Call these two points  $y_1$  and  $y_2$ . Define  $z_1$  and  $z_2$  analogously. By construction, the triplets  $y_1, y_2, \ell$  and  $z_1, z_2, \ell$  are collinear triplets on  $E \subset \mathbf{PV}^*$ , and therefore we have the linear equivalence

$$y_1 + y_2 \sim z_1 + z_2$$

on  $E$ . By pushing this forward to  $R$ , we get

$$2y \sim 2z.$$

Therefore,  $y - z$  is a (non-trivial) two torsion element in  $\text{Pic}(R)$ . However, the pull-back of  $y - z$  is trivial on  $E$ , and hence  $y - z = \eta$ .

Finally, let  $m$  be the Reye line conjugate to  $\ell$ . Then it passes contains  $x$ , and two other points of  $R$ , say  $y'$  and  $z'$ . By what we just proved,  $y' - z' = \eta$ . But we also have  $y' + z' \sim y + z$ . Hence  $y - y'$  is a two-torsion element, non-trivial, and distinct from  $\eta$ . The proof is now complete.  $\square$

We now have all the tools to prove Proposition 6.1.



*Proof of Proposition 6.1.* Let  $U \subset \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(3))^*$  be the locus of smooth cubic curves,  $J \rightarrow U$  be the universal Picard scheme,  $J[2] \subset J$  the closed subscheme of two-torsion classes, and  $J[2]^* \subset J[2]$  the open and closed subscheme of non-trivial two-torsion classes. The projection-ramification map for the Veronese surface factors as

$$\begin{aligned} \rho: \mathbf{Gr}(3, H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(2))) &\dashrightarrow J[2]^* \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(3))^* \\ N &\mapsto (R, \eta) \mapsto R. \end{aligned}$$

We construct  $J[2]^* \rightarrow \mathbf{Gr}(3, H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(2)))$  inverse to the first map. Given  $(R, \eta) \in J[2]^*$ , we need to construct a net  $N$  of conics with Jacobian  $R$ . We use Lemma 6.2, which tells us the singular elements of this net in terms of  $R$  and  $\eta$ . Let  $\{\eta, \eta', \eta''\}$  be the three non-trivial 2 torsion line bundles on  $R$ . Define the map  $R \rightarrow \mathbf{P}H^0(\mathbf{P}^2, \mathcal{O}(2))^*$  by

$$R \ni a \mapsto (\langle a, a + \eta \rangle) \cdot (\langle a + \eta', a + \eta'' \rangle),$$

where  $\langle p, q \rangle$  denotes the line joining  $p$  and  $q$ . We leave it to the reader to check that the image of  $R$  is a plane cubic curve. The span of the image of  $R$  is the desired net  $N$ .  $\square$

{sec:quartic\_scroll}

**6.4. Quartic surface scroll.** Our next objective is to prove that  $\deg \rho_X = 2$  for a generic quartic surface scroll  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^5$ . We begin by recasting  $\rho_X$  in terms of nets of conics on  $\mathbf{P}^2$ , and bring in the projective geometry introduced in § 6.3.

The generic quartic surface scroll  $X \subset \mathbf{P}^5$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbf{P}^1 \times \mathbf{P}^1$ , embedded by the complete linear system associated to  $\mathcal{O}(1, 2)$ . Say  $\mathbf{P}^1 \times \mathbf{P}^1 = \mathbf{P}U \times \mathbf{P}V$ , where  $U$  and  $V$  are two-dimensional vector spaces. Then the projection-ramification map is a  $\mathrm{PGL}(U) \times \mathrm{PGL}(V)$ -equivariant map

$$\mathbf{Gr}(3, U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^2 V) \dashrightarrow \mathbf{P}(U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^4 V)^*.$$

We take the quotient of both sides by the  $\mathrm{PGL}(U) \times \mathrm{PGL}(V)$ -action. We begin by identifying the two quotients.

Let  $S$  be a 3-dimensional quadratic space, that is, a vector space with a non-degenerate quadratic form  $q$ . Then we have  $\mathrm{Aut}(S) = \mathrm{O}(q) \cong \mathrm{O}(3)$ . The projective space  $\mathbf{P}S$  is isomorphic to  $\mathbf{P}^2$ , and it comes with a distinguished smooth conic  $Q \subset \mathbf{P}S$ . The automorphism group of the pair  $(\mathbf{P}S, Q)$  is  $\mathrm{Aut}(Q) \cong \mathrm{PGL}_2$ .

{lem:quotgrass}

**Lemma 6.3.** *The quotient  $\mathbf{Gr}(3, U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^2 V) / \mathrm{PGL}(U) \times \mathrm{PGL}(V)$  is birational to the quotient  $\mathrm{Hilb}^3(\mathbf{P}S) / \mathrm{Aut} S$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $W$  be a 3-dimensional vector space. We have a birational isomorphism

$$\begin{aligned} &\mathbf{Gr}(3, U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^2 V) / \mathrm{PGL}(U) \times \mathrm{PGL}(V) \\ &\sim (W^* \otimes U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^2 V) / \mathrm{GL}(W) \times \mathrm{GL}(U) \times \mathrm{GL}(V). \end{aligned}$$

Interpret the space  $(W^* \otimes U \otimes \mathrm{Sym}^2 V) / \mathrm{GL}(W) \times \mathrm{GL}(U)$  as the space of  $2 \times 3$  matrices with entries in  $\mathrm{Sym}^2 V$ , modulo row and column transformations. Set  $S = \mathrm{Sym}^2 V$ ; it has a canonical (up to scaling) quadratic form given by the conic  $Q \cong \mathbf{P}V \subset \mathbf{P}S$  embedded by

$\mathcal{O}(2)$ . We can then interpret  $(W^* \otimes U \otimes \text{Sym}^2 V)/\text{GL}(W) \times \text{GL}(U)$  as the space of  $2 \times 3$  matrices with entries in  $S$ . We have a birational isomorphism

$$(W^* \otimes U \otimes \text{Sym}^2 V)/\text{GL}(W) \times \text{GL}(U) \sim \text{Hilb}^3(\mathbf{P}S)$$

$$2 \times 3 \text{ matrix } M \mapsto \text{Vanishing locus of } 2 \times 2 \text{ minors of } M.$$

By taking the further quotient by  $\text{GL}(V)$ , we finish the proof.  $\square$

{lem:quotram}

**Lemma 6.4.** *The quotient  $\mathbf{P}(U \otimes \text{Sym}^4 V)^*/\text{PGL}(U) \times \text{PGL}(V)$  is birational to the quotient  $\mathbf{Gr}(2, (\text{Sym}^2 S)/q)/\text{Aut} S$ .*

*Proof.* We have the birational isomorphism

$$(U \otimes \text{Sym}^4 V)/\text{GL}(U) \sim \mathbf{Gr}(2, \text{Sym}^4 V).$$

Note that  $q \in \text{Sym}^2 S$  spans the kernel of the natural surjection  $\text{Sym}^2 S \rightarrow \text{Sym}^4 V$ . The assertion follows.  $\square$

Via the birational isomorphisms in Lemma 6.3 and Lemma 6.4, the projection-ramification map  $\mu$  transforms into an  $\text{Aut}(S)$ -equivariant map

$$\mu: \text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{P}S \dashrightarrow \mathbf{Gr}(2, \text{Sym}^2 S/q).$$

We now describe this map  $\mu$ . To ease notation, we denote a linear form and its vanishing locus by the same letter. Let  $\xi \in \text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{P}S$  be a general point corresponding to the three vertices of the triangle formed by three lines  $L_i$  for  $i = 1, 2, 3$ . Two lines  $L_i$  and  $L_j$  define a pencil of quadratic forms on  $Q$ . Let  $R_{ij}$  be the line whose intersection with  $Q$  is the ramification divisor of the pencil  $\langle L_i, L_j \rangle$ . It is easy to check that the quadrics  $L_1 R_{23}$ ,  $L_2 R_{13}$ , and  $L_3 R_{12}$  span a 3-dimensional subspace of  $\text{Sym}^2 S$  that contains the quadric  $q$ .

{lem:mu}

**Lemma 6.5.** *In the setup above, the image of  $\xi$  under  $\mu$  is the image of  $\langle L_1 R_{23}, L_2 R_{13}, L_3 R_{12} \rangle$  in  $\text{Sym}^2 S/q$ .*

*Proof.* The ideal of the point  $\xi \in \text{Hilb}^3(S)$  is cut out by  $2 \times 3$  matrix of linear forms

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} L_1 & 0 & L_3 \\ 0 & L_2 & L_3 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Let  $U_0, U_1$  be a basis of  $U$ . Under the isomorphism in Lemma 6.3, this  $2 \times 3$  matrix corresponds to the point of  $\mathbf{Gr}(3, U \otimes \text{Sym}^2 V)$  given by the subspace of  $U \otimes \text{Sym}^3 V$  spanned by  $U_0 M_{0,i} + U_1 M_{1,i}$  for  $i = 1, 2, 3$ . From (4.10), the ramification divisor of this subspace is given by

$$\begin{aligned} R &= \det \begin{pmatrix} L_1 & 0 & U_0 L'_1 \\ 0 & L_2 & U_1 L'_2 \\ L_3 & L_3 & (U_0 + U_1) L'_3 \end{pmatrix} \\ &= U_0 L_2 (L'_3 L_1 - L_1 L'_3) + U_1 L_1 (L'_3 L_2 - L_2 L'_3) \\ &= U_0 L_2 R_{13} + U_1 L_1 R_{23}. \end{aligned}$$

In this calculation,  $L'_i$  denotes the derivative  $\frac{d}{dt}$  of  $L_i$  considered as an element of  $k[t]$  by pullback under some parametrization  $\text{Spec } k[t] \rightarrow Q$  and trivialization of  $\mathcal{O}(2)|_{\text{Spec } k[t]}$ . Although the derivative depends on the choices, the forms  $L_i L'_j - L_j L'_i$  do not, and they cut out precisely the ramification divisor of the pencil  $\langle L_i, L_j \rangle$ . Under the isomorphism in (6.4), the divisor  $R$  corresponds to the 2 dimensional subspace of  $\text{Sym}^2 S/q$  spanned by  $L_2 R_{13}$  and  $L_1 R_{23}$  (The roles of  $L_1, L_2, L_3$  can be changed by linear transformations of  $M$ , so we get that  $L_3 R_{12}$  also lies in this span). The proof is thus complete.  $\square$

Recall that the conic  $Q \subset \mathbf{PS}$  gives an isomorphism  $\mathbf{PS} \cong \mathbf{PS}^*$ , called *polarity* with respect to  $Q$ . On the vector spaces, it is the isomorphism induced by the bilinear form associated to  $q$ . Geometrically, it is characterized by the rule that the polar of a point  $p \in Q$  is the tangent line to  $Q$  at  $p$ . More generally, given a point  $p \in \mathbf{PS}$ , the pencil of lines through  $p$  contains two lines tangent to  $Q$ ; the polar of  $p$  is the line joining the two points of tangency. We denote the polar of a point  $p$  (resp. a line  $L$ ) by  $p^\perp$  (resp.  $L^\perp$ ).

Set  $M_i = R_{jk}$ , and let  $N$  be the net spanned by  $L_i M_i$  for  $i = 1, 2, 3$ . By the definition of  $R_{jk}$ , we see that  $M_i$  is the polar line of the point  $L_k \cap L_j$ . In other words, the triangles  $(L_1, L_2, L_3)$  and  $(M_1, M_2, M_3)$  are polar conjugates—lines in one are polars to the vertices of the other.

Recall that  $\xi \in \text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{PS}$  is the point defined by the three vertices of the triangle formed by  $(L_1, L_2, L_3)$ . Let  $\xi' \in \text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{PS}$  be the point defined by the three vertices of the triangle formed by  $(M_1, M_2, M_3)$ .

**Proposition 6.6.** *In the setup above,  $\xi$  and  $\xi'$  are the only points of  $\text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{PS}$  that map to  $N \in \mathbf{Gr}(2, \text{Sym}^2 S/q)$ . In particular, the degree of  $\mu: \text{Hilb}^3 \mathbf{PS} \dashrightarrow \mathbf{Gr}(2, \text{Sym}^2 S/q)$  is 2.*

*Proof.* By Lemma 6.5, we see immediately that  $\mu(\xi') = \mu(\xi) = N$ . To show that no other triangles map to  $N$ , consider pairs of triplets  $\Delta = (\Delta_1, \Delta_2, \Delta_3)$  and  $\nabla = (\nabla_1, \nabla_2, \nabla_3)$  of lines in  $\mathbf{PS}$  such that

- (1)  $\Delta$  and  $\nabla$  are polar conjugates with respect to  $Q$ , and
- (2)  $\Delta_i \nabla_i$  is an element of  $N$  for  $i = 1, 2, 3$ .

It suffices to show that the only ones satisfying the two conditions are  $(L_1, L_2, L_3)$  and  $(M_1, M_2, M_3)$ , up to permutation.

To show this, we need some observations.

First, suppose  $A_1 B_1$  and  $A_2 B_2$  are elements of the net  $N$ , where  $A_i$  and  $B_j$  are lines in  $\mathbf{PS}$ . Then, by definition,  $A_i$  and  $B_j$  are Reye lines of the net  $N$ . Let  $p = A_1 \cap A_2$  and  $q = B_1 \cap B_2$ . We claim that the third Reye line through  $p$ , in addition to  $A_1$  and  $A_2$ , is the line  $\langle p, q \rangle$ . Indeed, in the pencil of conics spanned by  $A_1 B_1$  and  $A_2 B_2$ , the third singular conic is  $\langle p, q \rangle \langle p', q' \rangle$ , where  $p' = A_1 \cap B_2$  and  $q' = A_2 \cap B_1$ .

Second, let  $R \subset \mathbf{PS}$  be the Jacobian cubic and  $E \subset \mathbf{PS}^*$  be the Hermite cubic of  $N$ . Let  $E^\perp \subset \mathbf{PS}$  be the image of  $E$  under the polarity isomorphism induced by  $Q$ . Explicitly, the points of  $E^\perp$  are the polars of the Reye lines. We claim that the six points of intersection of  $R$  and  $Q$  also lie on  $E^\perp$ . Indeed, to show that  $x \in R \cap Q$  also lies on  $E^\perp$ , it suffices

to show that the line  $T_x Q$  is a Reye line. Since  $x \in R$ , there exists an element of  $N$  of the form  $AB$  where  $A$  and  $B$  are lines intersecting at  $x$ . Note that in the pencil of conics spanned by  $AB$  and  $Q$ , there is a singular conic containing  $T_p Q$ . Therefore,  $T_p Q$  is a Reye line.

Third, since  $R \cap E^\perp$  contain 6 points on the conic  $Q$ , the residual 3 points are collinear. Let them correspond to  $x_1, x_2, x_3 \in E$ . Denoting by  $H$  the hyperplane class of  $E \subset \mathbf{P}S^*$ , we have the equation in  $\text{Pic } E$

$$x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = H.$$

Suppose we have two triangles  $\Delta$  and  $\nabla$  satisfying the two conditions above. Consider the point  $p_3 = \Delta_3 \cap \nabla_3$ . By the second condition, it lies on  $R$ . By the polar conjugacy of  $\Delta$  and  $\nabla$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} p_3^\perp &= \langle \Delta_3^\perp, \nabla_3^\perp \rangle \\ &= \langle \nabla_1 \cap \nabla_2, \Delta_1 \cap \Delta_2 \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

By the first claim, we see that  $p_3^\perp$  is a Reye line. Hence  $p_3$  lies on  $E^\perp$ , and hence on  $R \cap E^\perp$ . Similarly,  $p_1 = \Delta_1 \cap \nabla_1$  and  $p_2 = \Delta_2 \cap \nabla_2$  also lie on  $E^\perp$ . Since  $N$  is general, we may assume that the  $p_i$  do not lie on  $Q$ . Hence,  $p_1, p_2, p_3$  are the points corresponding to the three collinear points in  $R \cap E^\perp$ . (The fact that  $p_1, p_2, p_3$  are collinear is not surprising—it is because any two polar conjugate triangles are in linear perspective [Dol12, Theorem 2.1.9]). By reordering if necessary, assume that we have  $p_i^\perp = x_i$  as elements of  $E$ .

Now, observe that the three Reye lines through the vertex  $\Delta_1 \cap \Delta_2$  are  $\Delta_1$ ,  $\Delta_2$ , and  $p_3^\perp$ , and likewise for the other two vertices. The concurrence of the three lines, along with the equality  $p_3^\perp = x_1$ , yields the system of equations on  $\text{Pic } E$

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_1 + \Delta_2 + x_3 &= H, \\ \Delta_2 + \Delta_3 + x_1 &= H, \\ \Delta_3 + \Delta_1 + x_2 &= H. \end{aligned}$$

Of course, the same three equations hold if we replace  $\Delta$  by  $\nabla$ .

Note that the points  $x_1, x_2, x_3 \in E$  are determined by  $N$ . Using  $x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = H$ , a simple calculation gives  $2\Delta_1 = 2x_1$ . This equation has 4 solutions for  $\Delta_1$ , namely  $x_1 + \epsilon$  for  $\epsilon \in \text{Pic } E[2]$ . Also,  $\Delta_1$  determines  $\Delta_2$  and  $\Delta_3$  by the equations above, which in turn determine the  $\nabla_i$  using polarity or the property that  $\nabla_i$  and  $\Delta_i$  form a fiber of the map  $E \rightarrow R$ . Thus, it suffices to show that only two of the four solutions for  $\Delta_1$  can be valid.

Suppose  $\Delta_1 = x_1$ . Then we get  $\Delta_2 = x_2$ , and  $\Delta_3 = x_3$ . However, the lines represented by the  $x_i$  are concurrent, whereas the lines  $\Delta_i$  are not. Therefore, we get that  $\Delta_1 \neq x_1$ . The same argument shows that  $\nabla_1 \neq x_1$ . Let the involution of  $E$  induced by  $E \rightarrow R$  be given by the addition of  $\epsilon_0 \in \text{Pic } E[2]^*$ . Since  $\Delta_1$  and  $\nabla_1$  form a fiber of  $E \rightarrow R$ , we have  $\nabla_1 = \Delta_1 + \epsilon_0$ . So,  $\nabla_1 \neq x_1$  translates into  $\Delta_1 \neq x_1 + \epsilon_0$ . In summary, the only two possible solutions for  $\Delta_1$  are  $x_1 + \epsilon$  for  $\epsilon \in \text{Pic } E[2] \setminus \{0, \epsilon_0\}$ . The proof is now complete.  $\square$

## 7. FURTHER QUESTIONS

- (1) How many of our theorems are valid in characteristic  $p > 0$ ?
- (2) When  $\dim \mathbf{Gr} < \dim |R|$  and  $\rho_X$  is generically finite onto its image, then is  $\rho_X$  birational onto its image?
- (3) Is  $\mathbf{Gr}(2, 4)$  the only incompressible Grassmannian?
- (4) Is it possible to classify the scrolls for which  $\deg \rho_X = 1$ ?
- (5) Is there an analogous characterization of varieties of minimal degree using “higher codimension” ramification loci?

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