

# Final Report MAP592: Parking 4-sphere swimmer

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## Abstract

This article is about the parking 4-sphere swimmer (SPR4). This is a low-Reynolds number swimmer composed of four balls of equal radii. The four balls can move along the four axes passing through the four vertices of a tetrahedron and its midpoint. The balls do not rotate around their axes such that the shape of the swimmer is characterized by the length of the four arms, measured from the midpoint to the center of each ball. Yet, the swimmer may rotate freely around its center of mass. The governing dynamical system is presented and its geometric structure is displayed. Then it is shown that, in the first order range of small strokes, optimal periodic strokes for planar displacements with an additional rotation about the axis orthogonal to the plane of movement are ellipses embedded in  $4d$  space, i.e. closed curves of the form  $t \in [0, 2\pi] \mapsto (\cos t)a + (\sin t)b$  for suitable vectors  $a, b \in \mathbb{R}^4$ . A simple analytic expression for the vectors  $a$  and  $b$  is derived. Eventually, a conjecture about the general case is made.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In his novel paper [11], Purcell treats for the first time the issue of swimming on a microscopic level and the principal problems linked to it. He especially illustrates, why any micro-organism trying to swim using a reciprocal movement like the one of a scallop, i.e. swimming by opening and closing a valve, cannot move. This observation, also known as the *scallop theorem*<sup>1</sup> entails the problem of finding the simplest swimming mechanism at microscopic scales; that is, the capacity to advance using a periodic change of shape - a swimming *stroke* - in the absence of external forces. A variety of such mechanisms has already been proposed and analyzed, see e.g. [2], [10], [11].

The principal mathematical challenge of this problem stems from the low value of the Reynolds number  $\text{Re} = \rho u L / \mu$  which gives an estimate of the relative importance of inertial to viscous forces for an object of characteristic length scale  $L$  moving at speed  $u$  through a Newtonian fluid of density  $\rho$  and dynamic viscosity  $\mu$ . In the low Reynolds number regime, i.e.  $\text{Re} \ll 1$ , the inertial forces become irrelevant and consequently, micro-swimmers can only utilize the viscous resistance of the surrounding fluid to move. In mathematical terms, the micro-swimmers are governed by the steady Stokes equations, which are linear and symmetric under time reversal. In the case of the scallop, this means that whatever forward motion is caused by closing its valves, it will exactly be compensated by the movement produced by reopening them, regardless of the speed of these two processes.

Let us formulate the basic problem of swimming: given a periodic record of shape changes of a swimmer, predict the corresponding history of positions and orientations in space. A closely related question is the one of *controllability*; that is, whether it is possible to achieve any prescribed position and orientation in space starting from an arbitrary initial position and orientation using an appropriate sequence of shape deformations. In fact, the peculiarity of swimming at low values of  $\text{Re}$  stems from the fact that reciprocal shape changes cannot contribute to the net displacement as inertial forces are negligible. This especially becomes an issue when we only have few control variables at our disposal. Indeed, the scallop theorem actually shows that swimmers with only one control variable are not controllable.

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<sup>1</sup>For a proof as well as an elementary introduction to the topic we refer to the encyclopedia article [5].

Once the controllability of a swimmer is assured, the natural follow-up question is to ask which swimming strokes achieve a prescribed net displacement with the lowest energy consumption. In other words, mathematically speaking, we face an *optimal control problem*. From the point of view of biology, this is relevant in the light of *natural selection* among micro-organisms, whereas from the engineering standpoint, this is crucial since, as it is pointed out in [4], if a micro-swimmer should have an effect on macroscopic scales, it has to swim faster than bacteria and therefore consumes  $10^4$  more energy than a bacterium. Hence, it is desirable to know the most effective swimming strokes for a micro-swimmer.

In [2], a whole class of controllable micro-swimmer is presented. The said paper also puts forward a numerical method to address the problem of optimal swimming. However, their explicit dynamics as well as the structure of optimal swimming strokes remain largely unknown. In this paper, we will analyze further the swimmer SPR4 from [2] and shed a light on the latter aspects. The analysis will take place very much in the spirit of the treatment of the swimmer SPR3 in [3], which originally had been presented in [2] as well. In fact, the swimmer SPR4 is a natural generalization of the swimmer SPR3, capable of moving in the entire  $3d$  space instead of just a plane. Although the principal techniques used in this paper are in close analogy to the ones in [3], the more complex geometry of both the position and the shape space cause the analysis to be more involved.

Aim of this paper is to *analytically* address the optimal control problem for SPR4 in the range of *small* strokes.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: in section 2, we give both a geometric and a kinematic description of parking 4-sphere swimmer (SPR4). Next, we introduce the control system treated in this paper. In section 3, we study the geometric structure of the control system taking advantage of the symmetries it has to satisfy due to the underlying Stokes equations. In section 4, we unravel the properties of the control system in the range of small strokes. Eventually, section 5 addresses the characterization of energy minimizing strokes for a special class of prescribed net displacements.

## 2. MODELING OF THE SWIMMER AS A CONTROL PROBLEM

We restrict ourselves to considering the swimmer SPR4 proposed in [2]. Let  $(S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4)$  be a regular reference tetrahedron centered at  $c \in \mathbb{R}^3$  such that  $\text{dist}(c, S_i) = 1$  for all  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . Then the swimmer consists of four balls  $(B_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  of  $\mathbb{R}^3$  centered at  $b_i \in \mathbb{R}^3$ , all of radius  $a > 0$ , such that the ball  $B_i$  can move along the ray starting at  $c$  and passing through  $S_i$ , see figure 1.

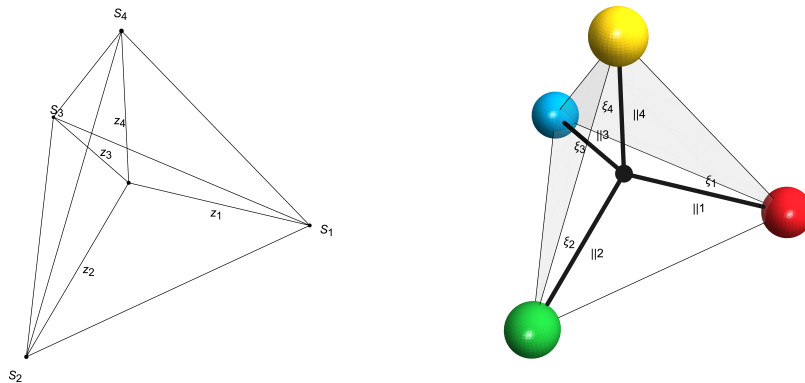


Figure 1: The reference tetrahedron and the parking 4-sphere swimmer (SPR4).

This reflects the situation where the balls are linked together by thin jacks that are able to elongate and retract. However, the viscous resistance of these jacks is neglected and therefore the fluid is assumed to permeate the entire open set  $\mathbb{R}^3 \setminus \bigcup_{i=1}^4 \overline{B}_i$ . The balls do

not rotate around their arms which implies that the shape of the swimmer is completely determined by the four lengths  $\xi_1, \xi_2, \xi_3, \xi_4$  of its arms, measured from  $c$  to the center of each ball  $b_i$ . However, there are no restrictions for the rotation of the swimmer around the center  $c$ , i.e. for fixed arm lengths, the swimmer is considered to be a rigid body in a Stokesian fluid. Hence, the geometrical configuration of the swimmer can be described by two sets of variables:

- (i) The vector of *shape variables*  $\xi := (\xi_1, \xi_2, \xi_3, \xi_4) \in \mathcal{M} := (\sqrt{\frac{3}{2}}a, +\infty)^4 \subseteq \mathbb{R}_+^4$ , from which one obtains the relative distances  $(b_{ij})_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  between the balls, where the lower bound in the open intervals is chosen such that the balls cannot overlap.
- (ii) The vector of *position variables*  $p = (c, R) \in \mathcal{P} := \mathbb{R}^3 \times \text{SO}(3)$ , which encodes the global position and orientation in space of the swimmer.

To be more precise, we consider the reference tetrahedron convexly spanned by the four unit vectors  $z_1 := (2\sqrt{2}/3, 0, -1/3)$ ,  $z_2 := (-\sqrt{2}/3, -\sqrt{2}/3, -1/3)$ ,  $z_3 := (-\sqrt{2}/3, \sqrt{2}/3, -1/3)$  and  $z_4 := (0, 0, 1)$ . Position and orientation in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  are then described by the coordinates of the center  $c \in \mathbb{R}^3$  and the rotation  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  of the swimmer with respect to the reference orientation induced by the reference tetrahedron, i.e. if the arms are aligned with the reference tetrahedron, then this corresponds to the identity matrix  $I \in \text{SO}(3)$ . Thus, we set  $b_i := c + \xi_i R z_i$  for the center of the ball  $B_i$ .

The swimmer is completely described by the parameters  $(\xi, p) \in \mathcal{M} \times \mathcal{P}$ . Indeed, if we denote by  $B_a$  the ball in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  of radius  $a$  centered at the origin, then for any  $r \in \partial B_a$ , the position of the current point on the  $i$ -th sphere of the swimmer in the state  $(\xi, p)$  is given, for any  $(\xi, p, r) \in \mathcal{M} \times \mathcal{P} \times \partial B_a$ , by the function

$$r_i(\xi, p, r) := c + R(\xi_i z_i + r). \quad (2.1)$$

Note that the functions  $(r_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  are analytic in  $\mathcal{M} \times \mathcal{P}$  and thus we can use them to calculate the instantaneous velocity on the  $i$ -th sphere  $B_i$ , which for any  $(\xi, p, r) \in \mathcal{M} \times \mathcal{P} \times \partial B_a$  and every  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$  is given by

$$u_i(\xi, p, r) = \dot{c} + \omega \times (\xi_i z_i + r) + R z_i \dot{\xi}_i, \quad (2.2)$$

where  $\omega$  is the axial vector associated with the skew matrix  $\dot{R}R$ .

In [2] it is shown that the system SPR4, i.e. both the shape  $\xi$  and the position  $p$ , is controllable only using the rate of change  $\dot{\xi}$  of the shape. To do so, we have to understand how  $p$  responds to a variation in  $\xi$ . To that end, the assumptions of *self-propulsion* and *negligible inertia of the swimmer* (which is equivalent to assuming a very low Reynolds number) are made. They imply that the total viscous force and torque exerted by the surrounding fluid on the swimmer must vanish. More precisely, for details see [2], the system can be written as

$$\dot{p} = F(R, \xi) \dot{\xi} := \begin{pmatrix} F_c(R, \xi) \\ F_\theta(R, \xi) \end{pmatrix} \dot{\xi}, \quad (2.3)$$

where  $\dot{c} = F_c(R, \xi) \dot{\xi}$  and  $\dot{R} = F_\theta(R, \xi) \dot{\xi}$ .

In preparation for what follows, let us note that if we denote by  $T_p \mathcal{P}$  the tangent space of the smooth manifold  $\mathcal{P}$  at the point  $p$ , we have  $F(R, \xi) \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbb{R}^4, T_p \mathcal{P})$  for any  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  and  $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^4$ , where  $\mathcal{L}(V, W)$  denotes the linear maps between two vector spaces  $V$  and  $W$ . We quickly recall the fact that at any point  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$ , see e.g. [6] for details, we have

$$T_R \text{SO}(3) = R^* \text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R}) = \{RM \mid M \in \text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R})\}, \quad (2.4)$$

where  $\text{Skew}_n(\mathbb{R})$  denotes the set of skew-symmetric real matrices of size  $n \times n$ . Hence, we have in particular that for any  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  and  $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^4$

$$F_c(R, \xi) \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbb{R}^4, \mathbb{R}^3) \text{ and } F_\theta(R, \xi) \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbb{R}^4, R^* \text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R})) \quad (2.5)$$

and therefore we can express both  $F_c(R, \xi)$  and  $F_\theta(R, \xi)$  as real matrices of size  $3 \times 4$  once we have chosen a basis for the corresponding tangent spaces. Indeed, one verifies quickly that  $\text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R})$  is a three-dimensional vector space over  $\mathbb{R}$ .

In analogy to [3], it is important to note here that the control system  $F$  is independent of  $c$  due to the translational invariance of the Stokes equations. However, the translational invariance is not the only symmetry property that SPR4 satisfies. The goal of the following section is to examine the structure of the control system  $F$  in consequence of the symmetries it must fulfill being driven by the Stokes equations.

### 3. SYMMETRIES

For any initial condition  $p_0 = (c_0, R_0) \in \mathcal{P}$  and any control curve  $\xi : I \subseteq \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathcal{M}$ , with  $I$  a neighborhood of zero, we denote by  $\gamma(c_0, R_0, \xi) : I \rightarrow \mathcal{P}$  the solution associated to the dynamical system

$$\dot{p} = F(R, \xi)\dot{\xi}, \quad p(0) := p_0, \quad (3.1)$$

as well as  $\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, \xi)$  and  $\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, \xi)$  its projections on  $\mathbb{R}^3$  and  $\text{SO}(3)$ , respectively, such that for any  $t \in I$

$$\dot{\gamma}(c_0, R_0, \xi)(t) = F(\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, \xi)(t), \xi(t))\dot{\xi}(t). \quad (3.2)$$

#### 3.1 Rotational invariance

Rotational invariance of the Stokes equations expresses the fact that solution of the dynamical system (3.1) is invariant under rotations, i.e., that for any rotation  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  we have for the spatial part of the solution

$$\gamma_c(c_0, RR_0, \xi)(t) = R\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, \xi)(t) + (I - R)c_0 \quad (3.3)$$

and for the angular part of the solution

$$\gamma_\theta(c_0, RR_0, \xi)(t) = R\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, \xi)(t) \quad (3.4)$$

at any point in time  $t \in I$ . Eventually, we can rigorously state the following symmetry property of the control system (3.1) with respect to rotations:

**Condition 1** (Rotational invariance). *If  $\gamma(c_0, R_0, \xi)$  is a solution of the control system (3.1), then so is  $\gamma(c_0, RR_0, \xi)$  and (3.3) and (3.4) hold.*

*Remark.* To follow the reasoning of [3], the symmetry relations satisfied by SPR4 are stated as hypotheses on the solution  $\gamma$ . In so doing, the results work for any control system of the form (2.3) and satisfying the hypotheses we state, independently of these hypotheses being guaranteed by the invariance of the Stokes equations under a certain group of transformations.

We then have

**Proposition 2.** *Let  $\xi_0 := \xi(0) \in \mathcal{M}$  denote the initial state of the control parameters and by  $T_{\xi_0}\mathcal{M}$  the tangent space of  $\mathcal{M}$  at  $\xi_0$ . If the control system (3.1) is invariant under rotations and for every  $\xi \in \mathcal{M}$  it holds that  $T_{\xi}\mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$ , then*

$$F_c(R, \xi) = RF_c(\xi) \text{ and } F_\theta(R, \xi) = RF_\theta(\xi), \quad (3.5)$$

for every  $(R, \xi) \in \text{SO}(3) \times \mathcal{M}$ , where  $F_c(\xi) := F_c(I, \xi)$  and  $F_\theta(\xi) := F_\theta(I, \xi)$ .

*Proof.* On the one hand, we have by definition of the dynamical system (2.3) that

$$\dot{\gamma}(c_0, R, \xi) = F_c(\gamma_\theta(c_0, R, \xi), \xi)\dot{\xi}. \quad (3.6)$$

On the other hand, using equation (3.3) and once more the definition of the dynamical system (3.1), we obtain

$$\dot{\gamma}(c_0, R, \xi) = R\dot{\gamma}(c_0, I, \xi) = RF_c(\gamma_\theta(c_0, I, \xi), \xi)\dot{\xi}. \quad (3.7)$$

Therefore,  $F_c(\gamma_\theta(c_0, R, \xi), \xi)\dot{\xi} = RF_c(\gamma_\theta(c_0, I, \xi), \xi)\dot{\xi}$  for every  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$ . Since  $T_{\xi_0}\mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$ , evaluation of the preceding expression at  $t = 0$  yields  $F_c(R, \xi_0) = RF_c(I, \xi_0)$ , as desired. The proof for  $F_\theta$  is completely analogous and thus is omitted.  $\square$

### 3.2 Permutation of two arms

In this section, we investigate the effect of a swap of two arms on the generic solution of the dynamical system (3.1). To that end, let  $P_{ij} \in M_{4 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$  denote the permutation matrix that interchanges the  $i$ -th and  $j$ -th index of a vector, which corresponds to the swap of the arms  $\|i$  and  $\|j$ , denoted by  $(\|i \leftrightarrow \|j)$ , if applied to the shape space  $\mathcal{M}$ . In addition, let  $S_{ij}$  denote the reflection of  $\mathbb{R}^3$  sending arm  $\|i$  onto arm  $\|j$  in the reference orientation  $I$ . Geometrical inspection of the reference tetrahedron shows that  $S_{ij}$  is always a reflection at a plane containing the remaining arms  $\|k$  and  $\|l$ .

Before we formulate the symmetry conditions for the interchanging of two arms, we recall some results about how rotations behave under reflections. So far, we have only regarded the orientation of SPR4 as a rotation matrix in  $\text{SO}(3)$ . However, by Euler's rotation theorem to every such rotation matrix  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  there exists a corresponding rotation vector  $\omega \in \mathbb{R}^3$  which is collinear to the unique axis of rotation defined by  $R$ , i.e.  $\omega$  is an eigenvector associated to the eigenvalue 1 of  $R$ . Its length is given by the angle of rotation around this axis. The rotation vector  $\omega$  is then directly related to the rotation matrix  $R$  via the map  $\exp : \mathfrak{so}(3) \rightarrow \text{SO}(3)$ , where  $\mathfrak{so}(3) = T_I \text{SO}(3) = \text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R})$  denotes the Lie algebra over  $\text{SO}(3)$ , which we will illustrate in the following paragraphs.

It is clear that  $\dim \text{Skew}_3(\mathbb{R}) = 3$ . In particular, if  $R_1(\theta)$ ,  $R_2(\theta)$  and  $R_3(\theta)$  denote the simple rotations around the  $\hat{e}_1$ -,  $\hat{e}_2$ - and  $\hat{e}_3$ -axis, where  $\hat{e}_1, \hat{e}_2, \hat{e}_3$  denote the canonical basis vectors of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , then the matrices

$$L_1 = \frac{d}{d\theta} R_1(\theta)|_{\theta=0} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (3.8)$$

$$L_2 = \frac{d}{d\theta} R_2(\theta)|_{\theta=0} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (3.9)$$

$$L_3 = \frac{d}{d\theta} R_3(\theta)|_{\theta=0} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (3.10)$$

form a basis of  $\mathfrak{so}(3)$  consisting of the infinitesimal rotations around the corresponding axes. If we now write  $\mathbf{L} := (L_1, L_2, L_3)^T$  and allow the slight abuse of notation

$$\omega \cdot \mathbf{L} = \omega_1 L_1 + \omega_2 L_2 + \omega_3 L_3, \quad (3.11)$$

we find by direct computation that  $\exp(\omega \cdot \mathbf{L}) = R$ . This relationship allows us to formulate the behavior of the orientation of SPR4 under reflection and thus under permutation of two arms as we shall see later. Indeed, we have

**Lemma 3.** *For any orientation of a rigid body characterized by  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$ , the orientation of its mirror image under a reflection  $S$  is given by*

$$\tilde{R} = SRS. \quad (3.12)$$

*Proof.* Let us first consider the simple case where  $S_i$  is the reflection of the  $\hat{e}_i$ -axis. Let  $\omega$  and  $\tilde{\omega}$  be the rotation vectors corresponding to  $R$  and  $\tilde{R}$ , respectively. They are related by  $\tilde{\omega} = -S_i \omega$ , where the gain of the minus sign stems from the fact that rotation vectors are in fact pseudovectors. In other words, we not only reflect the axis of rotation but we also reverse the sense of rotation around the axis. It follows then from direct computation that

$$\tilde{\omega} \cdot \mathbf{L} = (-S_i \omega) \cdot \mathbf{L} = S_i(\omega \cdot \mathbf{L})S_i \quad (3.13)$$

and thus we have

$$\tilde{R} = \exp(\tilde{\omega} \cdot \mathbf{L}) = \exp(S_i(\omega \cdot \mathbf{L})S_i) = S_i R S_i, \quad (3.14)$$

as  $S_i^{-1} = S_i$ .

If now  $S$  is an arbitrary reflection, we always find a rotation  $Q \in \text{SO}(3)$  such that  $S = QS_iQ^T$  for one of the elementary reflections  $S_i$ . Moreover, for any rotation  $R' \in \text{SO}(3)$  we find another  $R \in \text{SO}(3)$  such that  $R' = QRQ^T$ . In particular, we have

$$\tilde{R}' = Q\tilde{R}Q^T = QS_iRS_iQ^T = SR'S^T, \quad (3.15)$$

as desired.  $\square$

With this lemma at hand, Stokes' equations allow us to state the following

**Condition 4** (Swap ( $\|i \leftrightarrow \|j$ )). Let the initial position be  $p_0 := (c_0, I)$ . If  $\gamma(c_0, I, P_{ij}\xi)$  is a solution of the control system (2.3), then so is  $\gamma(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)$  and the following relations hold

$$\gamma_c(c_0, I, P_{ij}\xi) = S_{ij}\gamma_c(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi) \quad (3.16)$$

and

$$\gamma_\theta(c_0, I, P_{ij}\xi) = S_{ij}\gamma_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)S_{ij}. \quad (3.17)$$

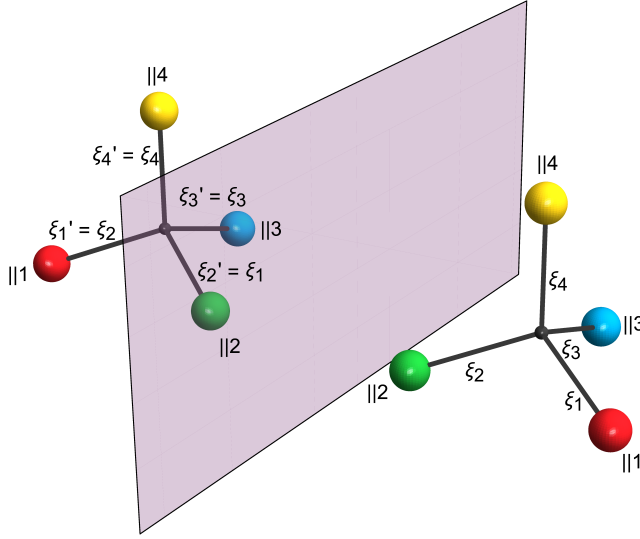


Figure 2: The reflection  $S_{12}$  applied to SPR4 in the reference orientation corresponding to the swap ( $\|1 \leftrightarrow \|2$ )

*Remark.* In physical terms, the previous condition stems from the invariance of Stokes equations with respect to the observation point, see figure 2. In fact, an observer watching the dynamics of  $\gamma(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)$  of SPR4 in a mirror in the reflection plane of  $S_{ij}$  sees the dynamics  $\gamma(c_0, I, P_{ij}\xi)$  of a micro-swimmer obtained from SPR4 by swapping arms  $\|i$  and  $\|j$ .

To avoid chaos in our notation, we treat the spatial and angular parts now separately. For the spatial part, we find

**Proposition 5.** If the control system (2.3) is invariant under the swap ( $\|i \leftrightarrow \|j$ ) and  $T_\xi \mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$  for all  $\xi \in \mathcal{M}$ , then for all  $\xi \in \mathcal{M}$

$$F_c(P_{ij}\xi) = S_{ij}F_c(\xi)P_{ij}. \quad (3.18)$$

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)$  be the spatial part of any solution of the control problem (3.1). The hypothesis of rotational invariance, i.e. (3.3), implies that

$$\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0\gamma_c(c_0, I, P_{ij}\xi) + (I - R_0)c_0. \quad (3.19)$$

From condition 4, we then get

$$\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0S_{ij}\gamma_c(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi) + (I - R_0)c_0. \quad (3.20)$$

As both  $\gamma_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)$  and  $\gamma_c(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)$  are spatial parts of solutions of the control system (3.1), we have on the one hand using Proposition 2

$$\dot{\gamma}_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = \gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)F_c(P_{ij}\xi)P_{ij}\dot{\xi}, \quad (3.21)$$

and on the other hand using (3.20) and once more (3.1) together with Proposition 2

$$\dot{\gamma}_c(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0S_{ij}\dot{\gamma}_c(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi) = R_0S_{ij}\gamma_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)F_c(\xi)\dot{\xi}. \quad (3.22)$$

Equating (3.21) and (3.22) at  $t = 0$  yields  $F_c(P_{ij}\xi_0) = S_{ij}F_c(\xi_0)P_{ij}$ , since by hypothesis  $T_{\xi_0}\mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$ . As  $\xi_0$  was arbitrary, we conclude.  $\square$

For the angular part, we first have to choose a basis and fix some notation. Naturally, we choose the canonical basis  $\mathcal{E} := (e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4)$  for  $\mathbb{R}^4$ . For  $\mathfrak{so}(3)$ , we choose the basis  $\mathcal{L} := (L_1, L_2, L_3)$ , where the matrices  $L_i$  are defined in (3.8) - (3.10). Then we denote the matrix representing an arbitrary linear map  $T : V \rightarrow W$  between two vector spaces  $V$  and  $W$  with respect to two bases  $\mathcal{B}$  and  $\mathcal{B}'$  by  $[T]_{\mathcal{B}'}^{\mathcal{B}}$ . Subsequently, we will especially make use of the adjoint map on  $\mathfrak{so}(3)$  associated to an orthogonal transformation  $Q$  of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . More precisely, if  $Q$  is an orthogonal transformation of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , we define the adjoint map  $\text{ad}_Q : \mathfrak{so}(3) \rightarrow \mathfrak{so}(3)$  by

$$\text{ad}_Q(M) := QMQ^T, \quad (3.23)$$

which is clearly a linear map.

Thus, before we address the invariance property of the angular part of the control system under a swap of arms, let us prove the following

**Lemma 6.** *Let  $S : \mathbb{R}^3 \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$  be an arbitrary reflection at a plane. Then the representation matrix of the adjoint map  $\text{ad}_S$  is given by  $[\text{ad}_S]_{\mathcal{L}} = -S$ .*

*Proof.* We have already seen in the proof of Lemma 3 that for the reflection  $S_i$  of the  $\hat{e}_i$ -axis, we have  $[\text{ad}_{S_i}]_{\mathcal{L}} = -S_i$ . Moreover, by direct calculation, we find for the elementary rotations  $R_i(\theta)$  that  $[\text{ad}_{R_i(\theta)}]_{\mathcal{L}} = R_i(\theta)$ . Now if  $S$  is an arbitrary reflection, we find  $Q \in SO(3)$  such that  $S = QS_iQ^T$  for one of the elementary reflections  $S_i$ . In particular, we find by Euler's rotation theorem three angles  $\alpha, \beta, \gamma \in \mathbb{R}$  such that  $Q = R_3(\gamma)R_2(\beta)R_1(\alpha)$  and therefore

$$\text{ad}_Q = \text{ad}_{R_3(\gamma)} \circ \text{ad}_{R_2(\beta)} \circ \text{ad}_{R_1(\alpha)}, \quad (3.24)$$

which implies that  $[\text{ad}_Q]_{\mathcal{L}} = Q$ . Since we clearly have  $\text{ad}_Q^{-1} = \text{ad}_{Q^{-1}} = \text{ad}_{Q^T}$ , we have  $[\text{ad}_{Q^T}]_{\mathcal{L}} = Q^T$ . Hence, due to  $\text{ad}_S = \text{ad}_Q \circ \text{ad}_{S_i} \circ \text{ad}_{Q^T}$ , we find

$$[\text{ad}_S]_{\mathcal{L}} = -QS_iQ^T = -S, \quad (3.25)$$

as desired.  $\square$

**Proposition 7.** *If the control system (3.1) is invariant under the swap ( $\|i \leftrightarrow \|j$ ) and  $T_\xi\mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$  for all  $\xi \in \mathcal{M}$ , then for all  $\xi \in \mathcal{M}$*

$$[F_\theta(P_{ij}\xi)]_{\mathcal{E}}^{\mathcal{L}} = -S_{ij}[F_\theta(\xi)]_{\mathcal{E}}^{\mathcal{L}}P_{ij}. \quad (3.26)$$

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)$  be the angular part of any solution of the control problem (3.1). By the rotational invariance hypothesis, i.e. (3.4), we have

$$\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0\gamma_\theta(c_0, I, \xi). \quad (3.27)$$

Then Condition 4 implies that

$$\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0S_{ij}\gamma_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)S_{ij}. \quad (3.28)$$

Since both  $\gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)$  and  $\gamma_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi)$  are the angular parts of solutions of the control problem (3.1), we obtain with Proposition 2 on the one hand

$$\dot{\gamma}_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = \gamma_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi)F_\theta(P_{ij}\xi)P_{ij}\dot{\xi} \quad (3.29)$$

and on the other hand using (3.28) and once more Proposition 2

$$\dot{\gamma}_\theta(c_0, R_0, P_{ij}\xi) = R_0 S_{ij} \dot{\gamma}_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi) S_{ij} = R_0 S_{ij} \gamma_\theta(S_{ij}c_0, I, \xi) F_\theta(\xi) \dot{\xi} S_{ij}. \quad (3.30)$$

Imposing equality of (3.29) and (3.30) at  $t = 0$  yields

$$F_\theta(P_{ij}\xi_0) P_{ij} \dot{\xi}(0) = S_{ij} F_\theta(\xi_0) \dot{\xi}(0) S_{ij}. \quad (3.31)$$

By choice of the canonical basis for  $\mathbb{R}^4$  we clearly have  $[P_{ij}]_\mathcal{E}^\mathcal{E} = P_{ij}$ . Therefore, by Lemma 6, we have

$$[F_\theta(P_{ij}\xi_0)]_\mathcal{E}^\mathcal{L} P_{ij} [\dot{\xi}(0)]_\mathcal{E} = [S_{ij} F_\theta(\xi_0) \dot{\xi}(0) S_{ij}]_\mathcal{L} = -S_{ij} [F_\theta(\xi_0)]_\mathcal{E}^\mathcal{L} [\dot{\xi}(0)]_\mathcal{E}. \quad (3.32)$$

Recalling that  $T_{\xi_0} \mathcal{M} \simeq \mathbb{R}^4$  as well as the arbitrariness of  $\xi_0$  finish the proof.  $\square$

In the following sections, we will always understand  $F_\theta(\xi)$  as a matrix of size  $3 \times 4$  and thus, since no confusion may arise, we will abandon the slightly cumbersome notation and identify  $[F_\theta(\xi)]_\mathcal{E}^\mathcal{L}$  with  $F_\theta(\xi)$ .

## 4. THE SMALL STROKE REGIME

Let us return to the control equations for SPR4 given by (3.1). The response of the control system is characterized by the two matrix valued functions  $F_c, F_\theta : \text{SO}(3) \times \mathbb{R}^4 \rightarrow M_{3 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$  which can by Proposition 2 can be factorized as:

$$F_c(R, \zeta) = R F_c(\zeta) \text{ and } F_\theta(R, \xi) = R F_\theta(\zeta), \quad (4.1)$$

with  $F_c(\zeta) := F_c(I, \zeta)$  and  $F_\theta(\zeta) := F_\theta(I, \zeta)$ . Hereinafter, we suppose that  $\zeta := \xi_0 + \xi$  with  $\xi_0 \in \mathcal{M}$  having all its components equal. Furthermore, we set  $F_{c, \xi_0}(\xi) := F_c(\xi_0 + \xi)$  and analogously  $F_{\theta, \xi_0}(\xi) := F_\theta(\xi_0 + \xi)$ . It has been shown in [2] that  $F$  and thus both  $F_{c, \xi_0}$  and  $F_{\theta, \xi_0}$  are analytic functions. Therefore, we can consider their first order expansions in  $\xi$ :

$$F_{c, \xi_0}(\xi) \eta = F_{c, 0} \eta + \mathcal{H}_{c, 0}(\xi \otimes \eta) + \mathcal{O}(|\xi|) \eta \quad (4.2)$$

$$F_{\theta, \xi_0}(\xi) \eta = F_{\theta, 0} \eta + \mathcal{H}_{\theta, 0}(\xi \otimes \eta) + \mathcal{O}(|\xi|) \eta, \quad (4.3)$$

where  $F_{c, 0} := F_c(\xi_0) \in M_{3 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$ ,  $\mathcal{H}_{c, 0} \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbb{R}^4 \otimes \mathbb{R}^4, \mathbb{R}^3)$  represents the first order derivative of  $F_{c, \xi_0}$  at  $\xi = 0$  and for  $F_{\theta, \xi}$  the analogous definitions are made. The purpose of this section is to reveal the structure of the different terms in the expansions (4.2) and (4.3) in light of the symmetry properties fulfilled by  $F_c$  and  $F_\theta$  due to Propositions (5) and (7), i.e.

$$F_c(P_{ij}\xi) = S_{ij} F_c(\xi) P_{ij} \quad \text{and} \quad F_\theta(P_{ij}\xi) = -S_{ij} F_\theta(\xi) P_{ij} \quad \forall \xi \in \mathcal{M}. \quad (4.4)$$

The following slightly generalized statement of Lemma 9 in [3] proves useful in our case as well. However, the proof, being exactly the same, is omitted.

**Lemma 8.** *Let  $G : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow M_{m \times n}(\mathbb{R})$  be an analytic function and  $S \in M_{m \times m}(\mathbb{R})$  and  $P \in M_{n \times n}(\mathbb{R})$  matrices such that  $G(P\xi) = SG(\xi)P$  for every  $\xi \in \mathbb{R}^n$ . For  $\xi_0 \in \mathbb{R}^n$  with all components equal, set  $G_{\xi_0}(\xi) := G(\xi_0 + \xi)$  and write the first order expansion*

$$G_{\xi_0}(\xi) \eta = G_0 \eta + \mathcal{H}_0(\xi \otimes \eta) + \mathcal{O}(|\xi|) \eta. \quad (4.5)$$

Then we have

$$G_0 = S G_0 P, \quad (4.6)$$

and

$$\mathcal{H}_0((P\xi) \otimes \eta) = S \mathcal{H}_0(\xi \otimes (P\eta)) \quad \forall \xi, \eta \in \mathbb{R}^n. \quad (4.7)$$



#### 4.1 The zeroth order terms $F_{c,0}$ and $F_{\theta,0}$

One could directly use Lemma 8 to obtain the terms of order zero up to a scalar by solving a system of two matrix equations as it was done in [3]. Yet, there is a direct geometric argument, which incidentally also works for SPR3 in [3], that reveals their structure. Let us denote by  $A^{(i)}$  the  $i$ -th column of a matrix  $A \in M_{m \times n}(\mathbb{R})$ . Then we note that for the spatial term  $F_{c,0}$  and any  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$  we obtain from Lemma 8 and Proposition 5

$$F_{c,0}^{(i)} = F_{c,0}e_i = S_{ij}F_{c,0}P_{ij}e_i = S_{ij}F_{c,0}e_j = S_{ij}F_{c,0}^{(j)}. \quad (4.8)$$

Similarly, for any  $k \in \mathbb{N}_4$  one has

$$F_{c,0}^{(k)} = S_{ij}F_{c,0}P_{ij}e_k = S_{ij}F_{c,0}e_k = S_{ij}F_{c,0}^{(k)}. \quad (4.9)$$

Recall that  $S_{ij}$  is the reflection that maps the arm  $\|i$  onto arm  $\|j$  and vice-versa in the reference orientation, i.e. where  $\|i$  is collinear to  $z_i$ , the  $i$ -th arm of the reference tetrahedron defined in section 2. In particular, the plane of reflection is defined by the origin and the remaining arms of the reference tetrahedron, i.e. by the vectors  $z_k$  and  $z_l$ . Thus, equation (4.9) implies that  $F_{c,0}^{(k)} \in \text{span}\{z_k, z_l\}$  as  $F_{c,0}^{(k)}$  apparently is an eigenvector associated to the eigenvalue 1 of  $S_{ij}$ . Yet, the same argument shows that  $F_{c,0}^{(k)} \in \text{span}\{z_k, z_i\}$  and  $F_{c,0} \in \text{span}\{z_k, z_j\}$  and the vectors  $z_i, z_j$  and  $z_l$  being linearly independent implies that  $F_{c,0}^{(k)} = a_k z_k$  for some  $a_k \in \mathbb{R}$ . Due to equation (4.8) and the fact that  $S_{ij}$  is orthogonal, we have  $|a_i| = |a_j| = |a_k| = |a_l|$ . Finally, we note that the quantity  $a_k z_k \cdot z_k$  stays constant under change of indices again in consequence of the symmetry conditions from Lemma 8. Hence, we have  $a_1 = a_2 = a_3 = a_4 := \mathbf{a}$  and therefore

$$F_{c,0} = \mathbf{a}(z_1|z_2|z_3|z_4). \quad (4.10)$$

In the following sections, we will exploit the orthonormal basis of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  consisting of the vectors  $\tau_1 := \frac{1}{\sqrt{6}}(-2, 1, 1, 0)^T$ ,  $\tau_2 := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(0, 1, -1, 0)^T$ ,  $\tau_3 := \frac{1}{2\sqrt{3}}(1, 1, 1, -3)^T$  and  $\tau_4 := \frac{1}{2}(1, 1, 1, 1)^T$ , in terms of which  $F_{c,0}$  can be written as  $F_{c,0} = -3\sqrt{3}\mathbf{a}[\tau_1|\tau_2|\tau_3]^T$ .

For the angular term  $F_{\theta,0}$  we find by Lemma 8, Proposition 7 and a similar argument for any  $k \in \mathbb{N}_4$  that

$$F_{\theta,0}^{(k)} = -S_{ij}F_{\theta,0}^{(k)}. \quad (4.11)$$

This means that in this case  $F_{\theta,0}^{(k)}$  is an eigenvector to the eigenvalue  $-1$  and therefore must be orthogonal to the plane of reflection, i.e.  $\text{span}\{z_k, z_l\}$ . The same is true for the reflections  $S_{il}$  and  $S_{jl}$  and hence  $F_{c,0}^{(k)}$  is in particular orthogonal to  $z_i, z_j, z_l$ . This eventually implies that  $F_{\theta,0} = 0$  since the latter three vectors form a basis of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

*Remark.* First, we observe that the upper left corner of  $F_{c,0}$  corresponding to the arms  $\|1, \|2$  and  $\|3$  up to multiplication by a scalar is the same as for SPR3 in [3]. Furthermore, one notes that physically it is clear that  $F_{\theta,0}$  must vanish since by hypothesis  $\xi_0$  has all its components equal and thus the swimmer is in a symmetric shape at  $\xi = 0$ . Therefore, the balls moving along their axes cannot create any torque.

#### 4.2 The first order terms $\mathcal{H}_{c,0}$ and $\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}$

Following the approach in [3], we evaluate the tensors  $\mathcal{H}_{c,0}$  and  $\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}$  on the basis  $(e_i \otimes e_j)_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4}$ . Setting  $A_k := (\mathcal{H}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot \hat{e}_k)_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  and  $B_k := (\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot \hat{e}_k)_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  for  $k \in \mathbb{N}_3$ , we can write the vectors  $\mathcal{H}_{c,0}(\xi \otimes \eta), \mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}(\xi \otimes \eta) \in \mathbb{R}^3$  for any  $\xi, \eta \in \mathbb{R}^3$  as

$$\mathcal{H}_{c,0}(\xi \otimes \eta) = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (A_k \eta \cdot \xi) \hat{e}_k, \quad (4.12)$$

and similarly

$$\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}(\xi \otimes \eta) = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \eta \cdot \xi) L_k. \quad (4.13)$$

We could pursue the approach of [3] and directly calculate the matrices  $A_k$  and  $B_k$ . However, as we shall see later, the dynamics of SPR4, up to higher order terms in the norm

of the control curve  $\xi$ , will only be governed by their skew symmetric parts. Thus, we will evade this strenuous task and we determine the skew symmetric matrices  $M_k := \frac{1}{2}(A_k - A_k^T)$  and  $M_{k+3} := \frac{1}{2}(B_k - B_k^T)$  for  $k \in \mathbb{N}_3$ , up to two scalar parameters, using a geometric argument similar to the one used in the previous section.

To that end, we notice that Lemma 8 together with the fact that  $(P_{ij})^2 = I$  yields for all  $i, j \in \mathbb{N}_4$  and for all  $\xi, \eta \in \mathbb{N}_4$

$$S_{ij}\mathcal{H}_{c,0}(P_{ij}\xi \otimes P_{ij}\eta) = \mathcal{H}_{c,0}(\xi \otimes \eta), \quad (4.14)$$

as well as

$$-S_{ij}\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}(P_{ij}\xi \otimes P_{ij}\eta) = \mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}(\xi \otimes \eta). \quad (4.15)$$

Next, we define  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(\xi \otimes \eta) := \frac{1}{2}[\mathcal{H}_{c,0}(\xi \otimes \eta) - \mathcal{H}_{c,0}(\eta \otimes \xi)]$  and similarly  $\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}$  such that

$$M_k = (\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot \hat{e}_k)_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4} \text{ and } M_{k+3} = (\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot \hat{e}_k)_{i,j \in \mathbb{N}_4}, \quad k \in \mathbb{N}_3. \quad (4.16)$$

In particular, it is clear that  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}$  and  $\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}$  satisfy the same symmetry relations as  $\mathcal{H}_{c,0}$  and  $\mathcal{H}_{\theta,0}$ , respectively, and additionally, we have  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = -\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_j \otimes e_i)$  and  $\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = -\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_j \otimes e_i)$ .

For the spatial part, we deduce from the symmetry properties above that for all  $i, j \in \mathbb{N}_4$

$$\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = S_{ij}\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_j \otimes e_i) = -S_{ij}\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \quad (4.17)$$

and therefore  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j)$  is an eigenvector associated to the eigenvalue  $-1$  of the reflection  $S_{ij}$ . The reflection  $S_{ij}$  taking place at the plane passing through the two remaining arms of the reference tetrahedron  $z_k$  and  $z_l$ , implies that  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = \alpha_{ij}(z_k \times z_l)$  for some scalar  $\alpha_{ij} \in \mathbb{R}$ . Additionally, we have  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = S_{jk}\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_k) = \alpha_{ik}(z_j \times z_l)$  and since  $S_{jk}$  is orthogonal, we have  $|\alpha_{ij}| = |\alpha_{ik}|$  as the vectors  $z_i$  are normalized. Eventually, one quickly verifies that the quantity

$$\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot \text{sgn}(ijkl)(z_k \times z_l), \quad (4.18)$$

where  $\text{sgn}(ijkl)$  denotes the parity of the permutation  $(ijkl)$  of  $\mathbb{N}_4$ , stays constant under any permutation of the indices as well as any symmetry condition. Hence, we may conclude that

$$\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = \alpha \text{sgn}(ijkl)(z_k \times z_l), \quad (4.19)$$

for all  $i \neq j \in \mathbb{N}_4$  and some scalar  $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ . Clearly, the symmetry conditions imply that  $\mathcal{K}_{c,0}(e_i \otimes e_i) = 0$  for all  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . Thus, we have determined the matrices  $M_1, M_2, M_3$  up to one scalar parameter. By explicitly calculating the cross products  $z_i \times z_j$ , we find

$$M_1 = \alpha \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 3 & 3 & 2 \\ -3 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ -3 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ -2 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad M_2 = \sqrt{3}\alpha \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & -2 & -1 \\ 1 & 2 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (4.20)$$

and

$$M_3 = 2\sqrt{2}\alpha \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (4.21)$$

Similarly, for the angular part, we find that

$$\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = -S_{kl}\mathcal{K}_{\theta}(e_i \otimes e_j) \quad (4.22)$$

and therefore  $\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = \delta_{ij}e_i \times e_j$ . By noticing that this time the quantity  $\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) \cdot (z_i \times z_j)$  stays constant, a similar argument to the one above shows that

$$\mathcal{K}_{\theta,0}(e_i \otimes e_j) = \delta(z_i \times z_j), \quad (4.23)$$

for all  $i \neq j \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . Again, we have  $\mathcal{K}_\theta(e_i \otimes e_i) = 0$  for all  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . A calculation similar to the one above now yields

$$M_4 = \delta \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & -2 & 3 \\ 1 & 2 & 0 & -3 \\ 0 & -3 & 3 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad M_5 = \sqrt{3}\delta \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & -1 & 2 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ -2 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (4.24)$$

and

$$M_6 = 2\sqrt{2}\delta \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (4.25)$$

*Remark.* At this point, let us point out the apparent similarity between the matrices  $M_1, M_2$  and  $M_6$  with their corresponding matrices in [3]. In fact, in the upper left corner, i.e. the entries that relate the first three arms to each other, we retrieve the same matrices as in [3] up to rescaling  $\alpha$  and  $\delta$ , which very well reflects the similarity between SPR3 and SPR4. However, the fact that it is the first three arms that corresponds to the three arms in SPR3 merely stems from our choice of the reference orientation.

### 4.3 The linearized control equations

Herein, we denote by  $J$  the closed interval  $[0, 2\pi] \subset \mathbb{R}$  and we define the so-called *strokes space* as  $H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ , i.e. the Sobolev space of  $2\pi$ -periodic vector valued functions of  $L_\#^2(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  having first order weak derivative in  $L_\#^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ . For every  $f \in L_\#^2(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  we denote by  $\langle f \rangle := (2\pi)^{-1} \int_J f(s) ds$  the average of  $f$  on  $J$ .

In the previous section, we have seen that the control system governing the evolution of SPR4 under the action of the control parameters  $\zeta \in \mathcal{M}$  is given by

$$\begin{cases} \dot{c} &= RF_c(\zeta)\dot{\zeta} \\ \dot{R} &= RF_\theta(\zeta)\dot{\zeta}, \end{cases} \quad (4.26)$$

where  $(c, R) \in \mathcal{P} = \mathbb{R}^3 \times \text{SO}(3)$ , the systems  $F_c, F_\theta : \mathcal{M} \rightarrow M_{3 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$  are given by (4.1) and  $\dot{\zeta} \in T_\zeta \mathcal{M}$ . Furthermore, we have seen previously, c.f. (4.4), (4.12) and (4.13), that if we set  $\zeta = \xi_0 + \xi$ , the response of the system around  $\xi = 0$ , up to higher order terms, simplifies to

$$\begin{cases} \dot{c} &= RF_{c,0}\dot{\xi} + R \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (A_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) \hat{e}_k \\ \dot{R} &= R \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) L_k. \end{cases} \quad (4.27)$$

In particular, if we fix  $\xi \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  and define  $\Gamma := \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) : J \rightarrow \mathfrak{so}(3)$ , then the dynamics of  $R$  can be written as an ordinary differential equation on the Lie group  $\text{SO}(3)$ :

$$\begin{cases} \dot{R}(t) = R(t)\Gamma(t) \\ R(0) := R_0. \end{cases} \quad (4.28)$$

To simplify equations (4.27) further, we are interested in the solution of (4.28) in the regime of a small stroke  $\xi \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  or equivalently in the regime of a small vector field  $\Gamma$ . Intuitively, the solution  $R$  of (4.28) should not deviate too much from the initial value  $R_0$  if the vector field  $\Gamma$  driving the differential equation is small. The solution of (4.28) and its relation to a small vector field  $\Gamma$  as well as the notion of smallness for the vector field  $\Gamma$  in the first place, are mathematically formalized by the concept of *chronological calculus*. For details on the topic, we refer to [1] but essentially it works as follows: First, one identifies any smooth manifold  $M$  with the space  $C^\infty(M)$ , on which one defines a certain metric topology, the Whitney topology. Then, the solution of a differential equation  $\dot{q}(t) = q(t)V(t)$  for  $V$  a non-autonomous vector field on  $M$  is given by

$$q(t) = q(0) \exp \int_0^t V(s) ds, \quad (4.29)$$

where  $\overrightarrow{\exp}$  is a special operator called the *right chronological exponential*. It is defined as a limit of an iterated integral, see [1]. For the series expansion

$$S_m(t) := I + \sum_{n=1}^{m-1} \int_{\Delta_n(t)} \cdots \int V(s_n) \circ \cdots \circ V(s_1) ds_n \cdots ds_1, \quad (4.30)$$

with  $\Delta_n(t) = \{(s_1, \dots, s_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n | 0 \leq s_n \leq \cdots \leq s_1 \leq t\}$ , we have

$$q(t) = S_m(t) + \mathcal{O}(t^m), \quad t \downarrow 0. \quad (4.31)$$

In particular, for an equation of the form  $\dot{q}(t) = q(t)\varepsilon V(t)$ , it is shown in [1], that

$$q(t) = S_m^\varepsilon(t) + \mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^m), \quad \varepsilon \downarrow 0, \quad (4.32)$$

where  $S_m^\varepsilon$  denotes the series expansion (4.30) for the vector field  $\varepsilon V$ .

With the estimate (4.32) at hand, let  $\hat{\xi} \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  be a normalized stroke, i.e.  $\|\hat{\xi}\|_{H_\#^1} = 1$ , and  $\varepsilon > 0$ . Set  $\xi := \varepsilon \hat{\xi}$  as well as  $\Gamma_\varepsilon := \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) L_k$  such that  $\Gamma_1 = \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \hat{\xi}) L_k$  and  $\Gamma_\varepsilon = \varepsilon^2 \Gamma_1$ . Writing  $S_m^\varepsilon$  for the expansion (4.30) of the vector field  $\Gamma_\varepsilon$ , we find by (4.32)

$$R(t) = R_0 \left( I + \int_0^t \Gamma_\varepsilon(\tau) d\tau \right) + \mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^4), \quad \varepsilon \downarrow 0. \quad (4.33)$$

Hence, choosing  $R_0 = I$ , we have in particular the following approximations for any  $t \in J$

$$\begin{cases} \dot{c} &= \left( I + \int_0^t \Gamma_\varepsilon(\tau) d\tau \right) \left( F_{c,0} \dot{\xi} + \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (A_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) \hat{e}_k \right) + \mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^4) \\ \dot{R} &= \left( I + \int_0^t \Gamma_\varepsilon(\tau) d\tau \right) \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} (B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi) L_k + \mathcal{O}(\varepsilon^4), \end{cases} \quad (4.34)$$

for  $\varepsilon \downarrow 0$ . By integrating the previous two relations over  $J$ , we find an estimate of the net displacement undergone by the center  $c$  of SPR4 as well as its orientation  $R$  after a small stroke. Moreover, with equations (4.34) we can express the net displacements  $\delta c$  and  $\delta R$  as maps  $H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^4$  given by  $\xi \mapsto 2\pi \langle \dot{c}(\xi) \rangle$  and  $\xi \mapsto 2\pi \langle \dot{R}(\xi) \rangle$ , respectively. Consequently, let us prove that

**Proposition 9.** *For any  $\xi \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ ,  $\xi : J \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^4$ , in a neighborhood of  $0 \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ , the following estimates hold*

$$\begin{aligned} \delta c(\xi) &= 2\pi \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \langle A_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle \hat{e}_k + \mathcal{O}(\|\xi\|_{H_\#^1}^3), \\ \delta R(\xi) &= 2\pi \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \langle B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle L_k + \mathcal{O}(\|\xi\|_{H_\#^1}^4). \end{aligned} \quad (4.35)$$

*Proof.* First, let us note that the term  $\langle F_{c,0} \dot{\xi} \rangle$  vanishes due to the periodicity of the stroke  $\xi$ . Next, we observe that it suffices to prove that the scalar quantities of the form

$$\left\langle \left( \int_0^t B_k \dot{\xi}(\tau) \cdot \hat{\xi}(\tau) d\tau \right) A_l \dot{\xi} \cdot \hat{\xi} \right\rangle, \quad k, l \in \mathbb{N}_3, \quad (4.36)$$

as well as  $\langle \left( \int_0^t B_k \dot{\xi}(\tau) \cdot \hat{\xi}(\tau) d\tau \right) \hat{\xi}_i \rangle$ ,  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$  are bounded, where we again set  $\xi = \varepsilon \hat{\xi}$ . We focus on the terms of the latter form, since the others can be treated in the same manner. We have

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \int_J \left( \int_0^t B_k \dot{\xi}(\tau) \cdot \hat{\xi}(\tau) d\tau \right) \hat{\xi}_i(t) dt \right| &= \left| \int_0^{2\pi} B_k \dot{\xi}(t) \cdot \hat{\xi}(t) \int_t^{2\pi} \hat{\xi}_i(s) ds dt \right| \\ &\leq \|B_k\|_{op} \int_J |\dot{\xi}(t)| \cdot |\hat{\xi}(t) - \hat{\xi}(0)|^2 dt \end{aligned} \quad (4.37)$$

The Sobolev-Morrey embedding  $H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4) \subseteq L_\#^\infty(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  guarantees the existence of a  $c_S > 0$  such that  $\|\xi\|_\infty \leq c_S \|\xi\|_{H_\#^1}$  for every  $\xi \in H_\#^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ . Hence, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \left| \left\langle \left( \int_0^t B_k \dot{\xi}(\tau) \cdot \hat{\xi}(\tau) d\tau \right) \hat{\xi}_i \right\rangle \right| &\leq \|B_k\|_{op} \|\hat{\xi}\|_\infty^2 \|\hat{\xi}\|_{H_\#^1} \\ &\leq c_S \|B_k\|_{op} \|\hat{\xi}\|_{H_\#^1}^3 = c_S \|B_k\|_{op}, \end{aligned} \quad (4.38)$$

which is clearly bounded. This finishes the proof.  $\square$

To end this section, we note that on the one hand, we have  $\langle A_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle = \langle M_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle$  and  $\langle B_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle = \langle M_{k+3} \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle$  for all  $k \in \mathbb{N}_3$ . Indeed, if  $A$  is a symmetric matrix, we have by integration by parts that  $\langle A \xi \cdot \dot{\xi} \rangle = \langle A \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi \rangle = -\langle A \xi \cdot \dot{\xi} \rangle$  and thus only the skew-symmetric parts of the matrices  $A_k$  and  $B_k$  contribute to the net displacement. Furthermore, similarly to [3], we can represent the terms  $M_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi$  in terms of certain operations of the orthonormal basis  $\{\tau_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  of  $\mathbb{R}^4$ . In fact, we find by straightforward calculation using that

$$M_k \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi = -2\sqrt{6} \alpha \det(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_{k+1} | \tau_{k+2}), \quad k \in \mathbb{N}_3 \quad (4.39)$$

$$M_{3+k} \dot{\xi} \cdot \xi = -2\sqrt{6} \delta \det(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_k | \tau_4), \quad k \in \mathbb{N}_3, \quad (4.40)$$

where  $\det(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_j | \tau_k)$  denotes the determinant of the matrix  $(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_j | \tau_k)$  and the index  $k$  is reduced mod 3 to simplify the notation. Ultimately, using that  $\mathbb{R}^3 \times \mathfrak{so}(3) \simeq \mathbb{R}^6$ , we can write the net displacement in position and orientation simultaneously as

$$\frac{\delta p}{2\pi} = -2\sqrt{6} \alpha \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \det(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_{k+1} | \tau_{k+2}) f_k - 2\sqrt{6} \delta \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \det(\xi | \dot{\xi} | \tau_k | \tau_4) f_{k+3}, \quad (4.41)$$

where  $\{f_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}_6}$  denotes the canonical Basis of  $\mathbb{R}^6$  and the index  $k$  is once more reduced mod 3. This representation will prove particularly useful in the following section.

## 5. ENERGY MINIMIZING STROKES

In the spirit of [2] and [3], we follow the notion of swimming efficiency suggested by Lighthill [8] and we adopt the following notion of optimality: energy minimizing strokes are the ones that minimize the kinematic energy dissipated while trying to reach a given net displacement  $\delta p \in \mathbb{R}^3 \times \mathfrak{so}(3) \simeq \mathbb{R}^6$ . Mathematically speaking, the total energy dissipation due to a stroke  $\xi \in H_{\sharp}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  can be evaluated through an adequate quadratic energy functional, c.f. [2],

$$\mathcal{G}_S(\xi) := \int_J \mathbf{g}(\xi(t)) \dot{\xi}(t) \cdot \dot{\xi}(t) dt, \quad (5.1)$$

where the energy density  $\mathbf{g} \in C^1(\mathbb{R}^4)$  is a function with values in the space of symmetric and positive definite matrices  $M_{4 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$ . In other words,  $\mathbf{g}$  defines a continuous Riemannian metric on  $\mathcal{M}$ . In the small stroke regime, we can approximate the energy density by  $\mathbf{g}(\xi) = \mathbf{g}(0) + o(1)$ , where  $\mathbf{g}(0) \in M_{4 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$  is symmetric and positive definite. More precisely,

$$\mathcal{G}(\xi) := \int_J Q_{\mathbf{g}}(\dot{\xi}(t)) dt, \quad (5.2)$$

with  $Q_{\mathbf{g}}(\eta) := \mathbf{g}(0) \eta \cdot \eta$ . For the same symmetry reasons as discussed in section 3, we necessarily have for all  $\eta \in \mathbb{R}^4$

$$Q_{\mathbf{g}}(P_{ij} \eta) = Q_{\mathbf{g}}(\eta), \quad i, j \in \mathbb{N}_4, \quad (5.3)$$

where  $P_{ij}$  denotes the permutation matrix swapping the  $i$ -th and  $j$ -th entries. By direct computation, one finds that the symmetric positive matrix  $G$  representing the quadratic form  $Q_{\mathbf{g}}$  is of the form

$$G = \begin{pmatrix} \kappa & h & h & h \\ h & \kappa & h & h \\ h & h & \kappa & h \\ h & h & h & \kappa \end{pmatrix}, \quad (5.4)$$

for two parameters  $h$  and  $\kappa > \max(h, -3h)$ . In particular, we observe that  $G\tau_k = (\kappa - h)\tau_k$  for  $k \in \mathbb{N}_3$  and  $G\tau_4 = (\kappa + 3h)\tau_4$ . In the following, we denote by  $\mathbf{g}_1 := \mathbf{g}_2 := \mathbf{g}_3 := \kappa - h$  and  $\mathbf{g}_4 := \kappa + 3h$  the eigenvalues of  $G$ . Furthermore, the eigenvalues  $(\mathbf{g}_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  allow us to diagonalize  $G$  as

$$G = U \Lambda_{\mathbf{g}} U^T, \quad U := [\tau_1 | \tau_2 | \tau_3 | \tau_4], \quad \Lambda_{\mathbf{g}} := \text{diag}(\mathbf{g}_i). \quad (5.5)$$

The goal of this section is the minimization of  $\mathcal{G}$  in  $H_{\#}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  subject to a prescribed net displacement  $\delta p \in \mathbb{R}^6$ , i.e. subject to the constraint (c.f. (4.41))

$$\begin{aligned} \delta p = \mathfrak{h}_c \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \left( \int_J \det(\xi(t)) |\dot{\xi}(t)| \tau_{k+1} |\tau_{k+2}| dt \right) f_k \\ + \mathfrak{h}_\theta \sum_{k \in \mathbb{N}_3} \left( \int_J \det(\xi(t)) |\dot{\xi}(t)| \tau_k |\tau_4| dt \right) f_{k+3}, \end{aligned} \quad (5.6)$$

with  $\mathfrak{h}_c = -2\sqrt{6}\alpha$  and  $\mathfrak{h}_\theta = -2\sqrt{6}\delta$ .

### 5.1 Recall of the exterior algebra

Let us recall in this small section the basic definitions around the notion of the *exterior algebra*, where we refer to [9] for details. For our purposes, the abstract definition of  $k$ -vectors as alternating  $k$ -tensors is not very useful. We merely illustrate them in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  since the notion then generalizes easily to higher dimensions. In  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , a bivector is an oriented plane segment; that is, a small piece of surface having a magnitude given by the area of the surface element as well as a direction given by the attitude of the plane the surface element lies in as well as a sense of rotation. Together, they form the vector space  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$ . We can represent a bivector  $\omega \in \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$  as a small parallelogram which suggests that we can think of it as some product of the two vectors along its sides. This is realized by the *exterior product*, also called *wedge product*,  $u \wedge v$  of two vectors  $u$  and  $v$ . The product  $u \wedge v$  then represents the bivector obtained by sweeping  $v$  along  $u$ . This operation yields a direct link between  $\mathbb{R}^3$  and the vector space  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$  of bivectors, a basis of which is given by

$$\{\hat{e}_1 \wedge \hat{e}_2, \hat{e}_1 \wedge \hat{e}_3, \hat{e}_2 \wedge \hat{e}_3\}, \quad (5.7)$$

if  $\{\hat{e}_1, \hat{e}_2, \hat{e}_3\}$  is a basis of  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . In fact, the standard scalar product on  $\mathbb{R}^3$  extends to a scalar product on  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$  by

$$\langle u_1 \wedge u_2, v_1 \wedge v_2 \rangle = \det \begin{pmatrix} u_1 \cdot v_1 & u_1 \cdot v_2 \\ u_2 \cdot v_1 & u_2 \cdot v_2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5.8)$$

In particular,  $\langle u \wedge v, u \wedge v \rangle = |u|^2 |v|^2 \sin^2 \psi$ , where  $\psi$  is the angle between the vectors  $u$  and  $v$ . Eventually, the norm of a bivector  $\omega = \omega_{12} \hat{e}_1 \wedge \hat{e}_2 + \omega_{13} \hat{e}_1 \wedge \hat{e}_3 + \omega_{23} \hat{e}_2 \wedge \hat{e}_3$  is given by

$$|\omega| = \sqrt{\omega_{12}^2 + \omega_{13}^2 + \omega_{23}^2}. \quad (5.9)$$

These definitions then extend naturally to all higher dimensions. In particular, we note that if  $\{e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4\}$  again denotes the canonical basis of  $\mathbb{R}^4$ , a basis of the space  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  is given by

$$\{e_{12}, e_{13}, e_{14}, e_{23}, e_{24}, e_{34}\}, \quad (5.10)$$

where we write  $e_{ij} := e_i \wedge e_j$  to simplify the notation. More generally, the vectors, bivectors etc. of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  all make part of a graded algebra, the *exterior algebra*, defined by

$$\bigwedge \mathbb{R}^4 := \mathbb{R} \oplus \mathbb{R}^4 \oplus \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4 \oplus \bigwedge^3 \mathbb{R}^4 \oplus \bigwedge^4 \mathbb{R}^4, \quad (5.11)$$

whose product is given by the wedge product. As we shall see later, it is due to the fundamental differences between  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$  and  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  that the structure of optimal control curves for SPR3 and SPR4 are substantially different.

### 5.2 G-Orthogonalization

We begin by rewriting the energy functional (5.2) and the constraint (5.6) in terms of the orthonormal basis of eigenvectors  $(\tau_i)_{i \in \mathbb{N}_4}$  of the matrix  $G$ . The change of variables  $\eta(t) := U^T \xi(t) \in H_{\#}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ , allows us to write

$$\mathcal{G}_U(\eta) = \int_J \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}} \dot{\eta}(t) \cdot \dot{\eta}(t) dt, \quad (5.12)$$

with  $\mathcal{G}_U(\eta) := \mathcal{G}(\xi) = \mathcal{G}(U\eta)$ . For the constraint, we note that

$$\det(\xi|\dot{\xi}|\tau_i|\tau_j) = \det U \det(\eta|\dot{\eta}|e_i|e_j) = \det(\dot{\eta}|\eta|e_i|e_j), \quad (5.13)$$

since  $\det U = -1$ . Eventually, we can express the determinants more elegantly in terms of exterior products. In fact, by direct calculation one obtains  $\det(\dot{\eta}|\eta|e_k|e_4) = (\dot{\eta} \wedge \eta, e_{k+1} \wedge e_{k+2})$  and  $\det(\dot{\eta}|\eta|e_{k+1}|e_{k+2}) = (\dot{\eta} \wedge \eta, e_k \wedge e_4)$ , for  $k \in \mathbb{N}_3$  taken mod 3. Then, the isomorphism sending the basis  $\{f_i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}_6}$  of  $\mathbb{R}^6$  onto the ordered basis

$$(e_{14}, e_{24}, e_{34}, e_{23}, e_{31}, e_{12}) \quad (5.14)$$

of  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$ , where we write  $e_{ij} := e_i \wedge e_j$ , allows us to rewrite (5.6) as

$$\Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}}^{-1} \delta p = \int_J \dot{\eta}(t) \wedge \eta(t) dt, \quad (5.15)$$

with  $\Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}} := \text{diag}(\mathfrak{h}_c, \mathfrak{h}_c, \mathfrak{h}_c, \mathfrak{h}_\theta, \mathfrak{h}_\theta, \mathfrak{h}_\theta)$ .

### 5.3 Fourier transformation of the minimization problem

We denote by  $\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  the space of sequences  $\mathbf{u} := (u_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^4$  such that the norm

$$\|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)} := \sqrt{\sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} |u_n|^2} \quad (5.16)$$

is finite. Consequently, we denote by  $\dot{\ell}^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  the Hilbert space of sequences  $\mathbf{u} = (u_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  such that  $(nu_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ . As the elements in  $H_{\sharp}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  are  $2\pi$ -periodic, we can express  $\eta$  in terms of its Fourier series as

$$\eta(t) := \frac{1}{2}a_0 + \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \cos(nt)a_n + \sin(nt)b_n, \quad (5.17)$$

with  $(a_n, b_n) \in \dot{\ell}^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \dot{\ell}^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ . Substitution of the Fourier series of  $\dot{\eta}$  into the energy functional (5.12) yields due to Parseval's equality

$$\mathcal{G}_U(\eta) := \int_J \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}} \dot{\eta}(t) \cdot \dot{\eta}(t) dt = \pi \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} n^2 (\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}} a_n \cdot a_n + \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}} b_n \cdot b_n) \quad (5.18)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2 + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2, \quad (5.19)$$

where we have set

$$\mathbf{u} := (u_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} := \sqrt{2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}}(na_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \text{ and } \mathbf{v} := (v_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}} := \sqrt{2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}}(nb_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}. \quad (5.20)$$

Clearly, we have  $(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ . As a result of the  $L_{\sharp}^2(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$ -orthogonality of the Fourier trigonometric system, we can express the constraint (5.15) in terms of Fourier coefficients as  $2\pi \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{1}{n} (nb_n) \wedge (na_n) = \Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}}^{-1} \delta p$ . Returning to our old notation for a moment, we note that for any  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , we have

$$2\pi n^2 \det(b_n|a_n|e_i|e_j) = \frac{\sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_i \mathfrak{g}_j}}{\sqrt{\det \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}}} \det(v_n|u_n|e_i|e_j), \quad (5.21)$$

and hence by setting  $\tilde{\Lambda}_{\mathfrak{g}} := \text{diag}(\mathfrak{g}_c, \mathfrak{g}_c, \mathfrak{g}_c, \sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta}, \sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta}, \sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta})$ , with  $\mathfrak{g}_1 := \mathfrak{g}_2 := \mathfrak{g}_3 := \mathfrak{g}_c$  and  $\mathfrak{g}_4 := \mathfrak{g}_\theta$ , we eventually find

$$\sqrt{\det \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}} (\Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}} \tilde{\Lambda}_{\mathfrak{g}})^{-1} \delta p = \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{v_n \wedge u_n}{n} \quad (5.22)$$

We thus have proved the following

**Proposition 10.** *The  $H_{\sharp}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  minimization of the functional  $G_U$  given by (5.12) under the constraint (5.15) is equivalent to the minimization of the functional*

$$\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) := \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2 + \frac{1}{2} \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2, \quad (5.23)$$

defined in the product Hilbert space  $\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  and subject to the constraint

$$\sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{1}{n} v_n \wedge u_n = \omega \text{ with } \omega := \sqrt{\det \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}} (\Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}} \tilde{\Lambda}_{\mathfrak{g}})^{-1} \delta p, \quad (5.24)$$

where  $\delta p \in \mathbb{R}^6$  is a prescribed net displacement of position and orientation.

## 5.4 Bivectors in the fourth dimension

In this section we will point out some properties of the space  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  and how it differs from  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^3$ , which then illustrates why the optimal control curves for SPR3 and SPR4 in general do not have the same structure. Nevertheless, we will be able to treat a simplified situation for SPR4 in the same manner as SPR3 in [3].

As a matter of fact, one peculiarity of the bivectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  is that they are isomorphic to the space  $\mathbb{R}^3$  itself. This is realized by the so-called *Hodge dual operator*  $\star$ , c.f. [9] p. 38, which is defined in a way such that for any two vectors  $u, v \in \mathbb{R}^3$  one has

$$u \wedge v = \star(u \times v), \quad (5.25)$$

where  $\times$  denotes the usual cross product. This entails two things: First, every bivector in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  is *simple*; that is, it can be written as the wedge product of two vectors. Second, every bivector in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  defines one unique plane in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . It is due to this underlying geometrical fact that one can always reduce the Fourier coefficients of an optimal control curve to one pair of vectors, by which one attained the same net displacement at the same energy consumption in [3]. Furthermore, this implies that the optimal control curves are situated in a certain plane defined by the vector of the net displacement.

Yet, in  $\mathbb{R}^4$ , the geometry of its bivectors proves to be more involved. As  $\dim \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4 = 6$ , it is clear that the bivectors in  $\mathbb{R}^4$  are not isomorphic to  $\mathbb{R}^4$  itself. In particular, in  $\mathbb{R}^4$  not all bivectors are simple. Indeed, the bivector  $e_1 \wedge e_2 + e_3 \wedge e_4 \in \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  cannot be written as an exterior product of just two vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^4$ . Nevertheless, any bivector in  $\mathbb{R}^4$  can be written as the sum of two orthogonal simple bivectors [9]. Moreover, we have the following criterion to determine whether a bivector is simple:

**Lemma 11.** *A bivector  $\omega \in \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  is simple if and only if  $\omega \wedge \omega = 0$ .*

*Proof.* If  $\omega \in \bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  is a simple bivector, i.e. if there are vectors  $u, v \in \mathbb{R}^4$  such that  $\omega = u \wedge v$ , then it is clear from the anticommutativity and associativity of the wedge product that

$$\omega \wedge \omega = (u \wedge v) \wedge (u \wedge v) = -u \wedge u \wedge v \wedge v = 0. \quad (5.26)$$

The inverse requires a rather lengthy proof by induction, see the lecture notes on projective geometry by Nigel Hitchin, chapter 3, p.48 [7].  $\square$

We note that the condition in Lemma 11 is in particular satisfied if all coefficients corresponding to a certain index are zero, e.g.  $\omega_{i4} = 0$  for  $i \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . This yields four subspaces  $D_{ijk}^*$  of  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  consisting only of simple bivectors. Since net displacement  $\delta p$  is merely scaled and multiplied by diagonal matrices to get the constraint vector in (5.24), its structure is not changed and thus by inspection of the basis of  $\bigwedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$ , we have the following correspondences:

$$\begin{aligned} D_{123}^* &\longleftrightarrow \text{rotations around all three axes } \hat{e}_1, \hat{e}_2, \hat{e}_3 \\ D_{124}^* &\longleftrightarrow \text{translation in the } \hat{e}_1 \hat{e}_2\text{-plane, rotation around the } \hat{e}_3\text{-axis} \\ D_{134}^* &\longleftrightarrow \text{translation in the } \hat{e}_1 \hat{e}_3\text{-plane, rotation around the } \hat{e}_2\text{-axis} \\ D_{234}^* &\longleftrightarrow \text{translation in the } \hat{e}_2 \hat{e}_3\text{-plane, rotation around the } \hat{e}_1\text{-axis} \end{aligned}$$



In particular, the subspaces  $D_{ijk}^*$  are of dimension three and correspond to the subspaces  $D_{ijk} := \text{span}\{e_i, e_j, e_k\} \subset \mathbb{R}^4$ . In fact, we have  $D_{ijk}^* = \bigwedge^2 D_{ijk}$  and furthermore the isomorphism given by the Hodge star operator  $\star$ , i.e.

$$\omega = \omega_{ij}e_{ij} + \omega_{ik}e_{ik} + \omega_{jk}e_{jk} \mapsto \omega_{ij}e_k + \omega_{ik}e_j + \omega_{jk}e_i. \quad (5.27)$$

This especially allows us to relate cross products in the subspace  $D_{ijk}$  to a unique bivector in  $D_{ijk}^*$ . More precisely, we have for  $u, v \in D_{ijk}$  that  $u \wedge v = \star(u \times v)$  just like in (5.25), where the usual cross product is understood in the subspace  $D_{ijk}$ .

### 5.5 The simple case $\omega \in D_{ijk}^*$

With the remarks from the preceding section, we are able to solve the constrained minimization problem of Proposition 10 in a similar manner to [3]. In fact, we retrieve essentially the same result, i.e. that the optimal control curves are ellipses in a certain plane defined by the net displacement. Let us prove

**Proposition 12.** *If  $\omega = D_{ijk}$ , then for any  $(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  such that the constraint (5.24) holds, there exist two vectors  $u, v \in \mathbb{R}^4$  such that for the sequences  $\mathbf{u}_\star := \mathbf{e}_1 u$  and  $\mathbf{v}_\star := \mathbf{e}_1 v \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  one has*

$$\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{u}_\star, \mathbf{v}_\star) = \mathcal{F}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \text{ and } v \wedge u = \omega. \quad (5.28)$$

*Proof.* If  $\omega = 0$ , then the proof is trivial. Thus, let us denote by  $\hat{\omega}$  the unit bivector associated to  $\omega$ . For a couple  $(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \in \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ , we then choose  $u, v \in \mathbb{R}^4$  such that the following relations hold:

$$|u| = \|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}, \quad |v| = \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}, \quad \frac{u \wedge v}{|u \wedge v|} = \hat{\omega}. \quad (5.29)$$

The latter is possible since  $\hat{\omega}$  is a simple bivector by hypothesis. Furthermore, we have  $u \wedge v = \|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)} \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)} (\sin \psi) \hat{\omega}$ , where  $\psi$  is the angle between  $u$  and  $v$ . Therefore, the equality  $u \wedge v = \omega$  can be satisfied by choosing the angle  $\psi \in (0, \pi)$  such that

$$\sin \psi = \frac{|\omega|}{\|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)} \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}} \quad (5.30)$$

This is possible under the condition that the right hand side of the previous equation is not greater than one. In fact, we have using the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality

$$|\omega| \leq \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{1}{n} |v_n \wedge u_n| \leq \sum_{n \in \mathbb{N}} |v_n| |u_n| \leq \|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)} \|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}. \quad (5.31)$$

Finally, from (5.29) we obtain

$$\mathcal{F}(\mathbf{u}_\star, \mathbf{v}_\star) = \frac{1}{2}|u|^2 + \frac{1}{2}|v|^2 = \frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{u}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2 + \frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{v}\|_{\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)}^2, \quad (5.32)$$

which concludes the proof.  $\square$

We immediately have

**Corollary 13.** *The minimization problem for  $\mathcal{F}$  in  $\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$ , under the constraint (5.24), is equivalent to the minimization in  $\mathbb{R}^4 \times \mathbb{R}^4$  of the function*

$$f(u, v) := \frac{1}{2}|u|^2 + \frac{1}{2}|v|^2 \quad (5.33)$$

under the constraint

$$v \wedge u = \omega. \quad (5.34)$$

*Proof.* It suffices to observe that if  $\mathcal{V}_\omega$  denotes the subset of  $\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  satisfying the constraint (5.24) and by  $V_\omega$  the subset of  $(u, v) \in \mathbb{R}^4 \times \mathbb{R}^4$  such that  $u \times v = \omega$ , then Proposition 12 yields

$$\min_{(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \in \mathcal{V}_\omega} \mathcal{F}(\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) = \min_{(u, v) \in V_\omega} \mathcal{F}(\mathbf{e}_1 u, \mathbf{e}_1 v) = \min_{(u, v) \in V_\omega} f(u, v). \quad (5.35)$$

$\square$

Let us now prove the following

**Proposition 14.** *Any couple of vectors  $(u_\star, v_\star) \in \mathbb{R}^4 \times \mathbb{R}^4$  minimizing the function  $f$  given in (5.33) and subject to the constraint (5.34) with  $\omega \in D_{ijk}^*$ , is characterized by the following conditions:*

$$u_\star, v_\star \in D_{ijk}, \quad |u_\star|^2 = |v_\star|^2, \quad u_\star \cdot v_\star = 0. \quad (5.36)$$

Therefore, for any  $\sigma \in D_{ijk}$  such that  $\sigma \cdot \hat{\omega} = 0$  and  $|\sigma|^2 = |\omega|$ , the couple

$$(\sigma, \sigma \times \star \hat{\omega}) \in D_{ijk} \times D_{ijk} \subset \mathbb{R}^4 \times \mathbb{R}^4 \quad (5.37)$$

is a (global) constrained minimizer for  $f$ .

*Remark.* The construction of a couple of vectors satisfying relations (5.36) is straightforward and very similar to the construction of the corresponding pair of vectors for SPR3, c.f. Remark 18 in [3]. It suffices to choose any vector  $\mu \in D_{ijk}$  linearly independent from  $\star \hat{\omega}$  and to set  $\sigma := \mu \times \star \hat{\omega}$ . In fact, setting  $\hat{\mu} := \mu/|\mu|$  yields  $|\mu|^2 = |\omega|/(1 - (\hat{\mu} \cdot \star \hat{\omega})^2)$  and therefore by choosing  $|\mu|^2 = |\omega|/(1 - (\hat{\mu} \cdot \star \hat{\omega})^2)$  we get  $|\sigma|^2 = |\omega|$ .

*Proof.* First, we note that it is clear that  $u_\star, v_\star \in D_{ijk}$  by definition of  $D_{ijk}^*$ . Next, to find the minimizers of the problem (5.33) - (5.34), we note that the constraint  $u \wedge v = \omega$  implies the existence of a  $\psi \in (0, \pi)$  such that  $|u||v| \sin \psi = |\omega|$ . Hence, the constrained minimization for  $f$  is equivalent to the unconstrained minimization of the function  $\hat{f} : \mathbb{R}^4 \times (0, \pi) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  defined by

$$(u, \psi) \mapsto \frac{1}{2}|u|^2 + \frac{1}{2} \frac{|\omega|^2}{|u|^2 \sin^2 \psi}, \quad (5.38)$$

whose stationary satisfy  $\psi_\star = \frac{\pi}{2}$  and  $|u_\star|^2 = |\omega|$ . This shows the necessity of the conditions stated in (5.36). To show sufficiency of the condition, one observes that for any such points one has  $\hat{f}(u_\star, \psi_\star) = |\omega|$ . Indeed, for any  $(u, \psi) \in D_{ijk}, \psi \in (0, \pi)$  we have

$$\hat{f}(u, \psi) \geq \frac{1}{2} \frac{|u|^4 + |\omega|^2}{|u|^2} = |\omega| + \frac{1}{2} \frac{(|\omega| - |u|^2)^2}{|u|^2} \geq |\omega| = \hat{f}(u_\star, \psi_\star). \quad (5.39)$$

This proves the first statement. For the second part, we set  $\hat{\omega} := \omega/|\omega|$  and we consider a vector  $\sigma \in D_{ijk}$  such that

$$\sigma \cdot \star \hat{\omega} = 0 \text{ and } |\sigma|^2 = |\omega|. \quad (5.40)$$

By a trivial computation, one finds that the vectors  $v := \sigma \times \star \hat{\omega}$  and  $u := \sigma$  satisfy the relations  $u \cdot v = 0$ ,  $|u|^2 = |v|^2 = |\omega|$  and  $v \wedge u = \omega$ .  $\square$

Pasting everything worked out above together leads to the final result of this section. We have

**Theorem 15.** *Let  $\delta p \in \mathbb{R}^3 \times \mathfrak{so}(3) \simeq \wedge^2 \mathbb{R}^4$  be a prescribed net displacement. Moreover, assume that  $\delta p \in D_{ijk}^*$  for some combination of indices  $i, j, k \in \mathbb{N}_4$ . Then, any minimizer  $\xi \in H_{\sharp}^1(J, \mathbb{R}^4)$  of the energy functional (5.2) subject to the constraint (5.6) is of the form*

$$\xi(t) := (\cos t)a + (\sin t)b, \quad (5.41)$$

i.e. an ellipse of  $D_{ijk} \subset \mathbb{R}^4$  centered at the origin and contained in the plane spanned by the vectors  $a$  and  $b$ . The vectors  $a, b \in D_{ijk}$  are obtained as follows:

(i) We compute the vector  $\omega$  via the relation

$$\omega := \text{diag} \left( \frac{\sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta}}{\mathfrak{h}_c}, \frac{\sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta}}{\mathfrak{h}_c}, \frac{\sqrt{\mathfrak{g}_c \mathfrak{g}_\theta}}{\mathfrak{h}_c}, \frac{\mathfrak{g}_c}{\mathfrak{g}_\theta}, \frac{\mathfrak{g}_c}{\mathfrak{g}_\theta}, \frac{\mathfrak{g}_c}{\mathfrak{g}_\theta} \right) \delta p \in D_{ijk}. \quad (5.42)$$

Then we consider a vector  $u \in D_{ijk}$  in the plane orthogonal to  $\star \omega$  in  $D_{ijk}$  and such that

$$|u|^2 = |\omega|, \quad (5.43)$$

e.g.  $u := \sqrt{|\omega|} \frac{\mu \times \star \omega}{|\mu \times \star \omega|}$ , with  $\mu \in D_{ijk}$  linearly independent from  $\star \omega$ . Furthermore, we set  $v := u \times \star \omega$ .

(ii) We set  $\hat{\omega} := \omega/|\omega|$  and we calculate the vectors  $a$  and  $b$  via the relations

$$a := \frac{U\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}^{-1/2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}}u, \quad b := \frac{U\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}^{-1/2}}{\sqrt{2\pi}}v. \quad (5.44)$$

We then have  $v \wedge u = \omega$  and the minimum value of  $\mathcal{G}$  is equal to  $|\omega|$ .

In addition, the vectors  $a$  and  $b$  are  $\mathfrak{g}$ -orthogonal, i.e. with respect to the inner product defined for every  $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^4$  by  $(x, y)_{\mathfrak{g}} := 2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}x \cdot y$ , and have the same  $\mathfrak{g}$ -norm  $|a|_{\mathfrak{g}}^2 = |b|_{\mathfrak{g}}^2 = |\omega|$ .

*Remark.* Suppose that  $\delta p \parallel e_{14}$ , i.e. a net displacement along the  $\hat{e}_1$ -axis. Then we have both  $\hat{\omega} \in D_{124}^*$  as well as  $\hat{\omega} \in D_{134}^*$ . In the first case, we have  $\star\hat{\omega} = e_2$  and thus we can choose  $u := \sqrt{|\omega|}e_4$  to satisfy (5.43). Then we have  $v = -\sqrt{|\omega|}e_1$  and hence we get from (5.44) that

$$a := \sqrt{\frac{|\omega|}{2\pi\mathfrak{g}_4}}\tau_4, \quad b := -\sqrt{\frac{|\omega|}{2\pi\mathfrak{g}_1}}\tau_1. \quad (5.45)$$

In the case  $\hat{\omega} \in D_{134}^*$  we have  $\star\hat{\omega} = e_3$  and therefore we find the same vectors  $a$  and  $b$  from the relations (5.43) and (5.44). Indeed, the resulting vectors are independent of the choice of one of the two possible spaces  $D_{ijk}^*$  for any direction  $\hat{\omega} = e_{ij}$ . In other words, an energy minimizing net displacement along the  $\hat{e}_1$ -axis with respect to the standard euclidean space  $(\mathbb{R}^4, (\cdot, \cdot)_2)$  is realized by an elliptic stroke contained in the plane spanned by the vectors  $\tau_1$  and  $\tau_4$ . On the other hand, with respect to the inner-product space  $(\mathbb{R}^4, (\cdot, \cdot)_{\mathfrak{g}})$ , the energy optimizing strokes are circles of radius  $\sqrt{|\omega|}$ . More generally, if  $\hat{\omega} = e_{ij}$ , then the energy optimizing strokes describe ellipses with respect to the standard inner-product or  $(\cdot, \cdot)_2$  circles of radius  $\sqrt{|\omega|}$  with respect to the inner-product  $(\cdot, \cdot)_{\mathfrak{g}}$  in the plane spanned by the vectors  $\tau_i$  and  $\tau_j$ .

*Proof.* From Proposition 14, Corollary 13 and then Proposition 10, we get that any  $\sigma \in D_{ijk}$  satisfying the relations

$$u \cdot \star\hat{\omega}, \quad |u|^2 = |\omega|, \quad \omega := \sqrt{\det \Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}}(\Lambda_{\mathfrak{h}}\tilde{\Lambda}_{\mathfrak{g}})^{-1}\delta p, \quad (5.46)$$

is associated to a (global) constrained minimizer for  $\mathcal{G}_U$ , via the curve  $\eta(t) := (\cos t)\tilde{a} + (\sin t)\tilde{b}$ , where the Fourier coefficients  $\tilde{a}, \tilde{b} \in \mathbb{R}^4$  are related to  $\omega$  (c.f. 5.20) by  $(\sqrt{2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}})\tilde{a} = u$  and  $(\sqrt{2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}})\tilde{b} = (u \times \star\hat{\omega})$ . The minimum value of the energy is then  $\mathcal{G}_U(\eta) = |\omega|$ .

Finally, in the  $\mathfrak{g}$ -orthogonal reference frame, the inner product is defined by  $(x, y)_{\mathfrak{g}} := 2\pi\Lambda_{\mathfrak{g}}x \cdot y$  for  $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^4$ . Let us denote by  $|\cdot|_{\mathfrak{g}}$  the associated norm. Then we have the following relations:

$$|\tilde{a}|_{\mathfrak{g}}^2 = |\tilde{b}|_{\mathfrak{g}}^2 = |\omega| \quad \text{and} \quad (\tilde{a}, \tilde{b})_{\mathfrak{g}} = 0. \quad (5.47)$$

Applying the orthogonal map  $U$  to  $\tilde{a}$  and  $\tilde{b}$  finishes the proof.  $\square$

## 6. CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

To summarize, in sections 3 and 4 we revealed the structure of the dynamical system governing the micro-swimmer SPR4 with the help of the geometrical properties of Stokes' equations in the regime of small strokes. More precisely, we identified the dynamics of SPR4, c.f. equations (4.27), and we described the net displacement after a  $2\pi$ -periodic strokes up to higher order terms in Proposition 9.

Next, we addressed the problem of optimal swimming for SPR4 in the small stroke regime in section 5. The use of the exterior algebra allowed us on the one hand to rewrite the initial optimization problem, see equations (5.2) and (5.6), in terms of exterior products of the Fourier coefficients of the strokes in Proposition 10. On the other hand, in doing so, the considerably more complex geometry of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  in comparison with  $\mathbb{R}^3$  manifested itself in the fact that in  $\mathbb{R}^4$  not all bivectors are simple, i.e. can be written as a single exterior product

of two vectors of  $\mathbb{R}^4$ . In fact, in the general case, every bivector of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  can be written as the sum of two orthogonal simple bivectors.

As a consequence, we failed at reducing the infinite dimensional minimization problem in  $\ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4) \times \ell^2(\mathbb{R}^4)$  of Proposition 10 to a finite dimensional one in full generality. Nevertheless, in the special case of certain subspaces consisting only of simple bivectors, we managed to retrieve a result similar to the one for the swimmer SPR3 stated in Theorem 15. In particular, this simplified case covers all planar net displacement with an additional rotation around the axis orthogonal to the plane of movement.

In the general case, which for example is needed to determine optimal swimming strokes for screw motions, e.g.  $\delta p \parallel e_{12} + e_{34} \simeq L_3 + \hat{e}_3$ , we make the following conjecture: In general, optimal swimming strokes are ellipses contained in one or at most two completely orthogonal planes of  $\mathbb{R}^4$ . Indeed, we have the following two reasons to believe so: First, we expect the proof of Proposition 12 to generalize to the general case where  $\delta p = x_1 \wedge y_1 + x_2 \wedge y_2$  is the sum of two orthogonal simple bivectors by carefully choosing the lengths of the vectors  $x_1, x_2, y_1$  and  $y_2$  as well as the angles between them. However, the latter appears to be non-trivial for the time being. Second, if one considers the Euler-Lagrange equation associated to the initial minimization problem, c.f. [5], one finds that it reads

$$G\ddot{\xi} - \Omega(\mu)\dot{\xi} = 0, \quad (6.1)$$

where  $\mu \in \mathbb{R}^6$  and  $\Omega(\mu) = \sum_{k=1}^3 \mu_k M_k$ , with  $M_k$  from section 3. The matrix  $\Omega(\mu) \in M_{4 \times 4}(\mathbb{R})$  being skew symmetric, exponentiation yields a rotation of  $\mathbb{R}^4$  and therefore the solution to (6.1) must lie in two completely orthogonal planes by the canonical form of rotations in euclidean space.

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