

# ON A RATIONALITY PROBLEM FOR FIELDS OF CROSS-RATIOS

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ABSTRACT. Let  $k$  be a field,  $n \geq 5$  be an integer,  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  be independent variables and  $L_n = k(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ . The symmetric group  $\Sigma_n$  acts on  $L_n$  by permuting the variables, and the projective linear group  $\mathrm{PGL}_2$  acts by applying (the same) fractional linear transformation to each variable. The fixed field  $K_n = L_n^{\mathrm{PGL}_2}$  is called “the field of cross-ratios”. Let  $S \subset \Sigma_n$  be a subgroup. The Noether Problem asks whether the field extension  $L_n^S/k$  is rational, and the Noether Problem for cross-ratios asks whether  $K_n^S/k$  is rational. In an effort to relate these two problems, H. Tsunogai posed the following question: Is  $L_n^S$  rational over  $K_n^S$ ? He answered this question in several situations, in particular, in the case where  $S = \Sigma_n$ . In this paper we extend his results by recasting the problem in terms of Galois cohomology. Our main theorem asserts that the following conditions on a subgroup  $S \subset \Sigma_n$  are equivalent: (a)  $L_n^S$  is rational over  $K_n^S$ , (b)  $L_n^S$  is unirational over  $K_n^S$ , (c)  $S$  has an orbit of odd order in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Let  $k$  be a base field,  $n \geq 5$  be an integer,  $x_1, \dots, x_n$  be independent variables, and

$$L_n = k(x_1, \dots, x_n).$$

The group  $\mathrm{PGL}_2$  acts on  $L_n$  via

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \cdot x_i \rightarrow \frac{ax_i + b}{cx_i + d}$$

for  $i = 1, \dots, n$ . The field of invariants  $K_n = L_n^{\mathrm{PGL}_2}$  is generated over  $k$  by the  $n-3$  cross-ratios

$$[x_1, x_2, x_3, x_i] = \frac{(x_i - x_1)(x_3 - x_2)}{(x_i - x_2)(x_3 - x_1)}, \quad i = 4, \dots, n.$$

For this reason we will refer to  $K_n$  as the field of cross-ratios. The natural action of the symmetric group  $\Sigma_n$  on  $L_n$  induced by permuting the variables descends to a faithful action on  $K_n$ . Suppose  $S$  is a subgroup of  $\Sigma_n$ .

The Noether problem asks whether the fixed field  $L_n^S$  is rational (respectively, stably rational or retract rational) over  $k$ . The Noether Problem for cross-ratios is whether or not  $K_n^S$  is rational (respectively, stably rational or retract rational) over  $k$ . In an effort to relate these two problems, H. Tsunogai [Tsu17] posed the following question:

**Question 1.** Is  $L_n^S$  rational over  $K_n^S$ ?

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He answered this question in several situations (see [Tsu17, Theorems 1, 2, 3]) in particular, in the case, where  $S = \Sigma_n$ . Our main theorem generalizes his results as follows.

**Theorem 2.** *Let  $S$  be a subgroup of the symmetric group  $\Sigma_n$ , where  $n \geq 5$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:*

- (a)  $L_n^S$  is rational over  $K_n^S$ ,
- (a)  $L_n^S$  is unirational over  $K_n^S$ ,
- (c)  $S$  has an orbit of odd order in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .

The remainder of this note will be devoted to proving Theorem 2.

## 2. RECASTING THE PROBLEM IN THE LANGUAGE OF GALOIS COHOMOLOGY

Let  $G$  be the subgroup of  $(\mathrm{GL}_2)^n = \mathrm{GL}_2 \times \dots \times \mathrm{GL}_2$  consisting of  $n$ -tuples  $(g_1, \dots, g_n)$  such that  $\bar{g}_1 = \dots = \bar{g}_n$ . Here  $\bar{g}$  denotes the image of  $g \in \mathrm{GL}_2$  in  $\mathrm{PGL}_2$ . In other words,  $(g_1, \dots, g_n) \in (\mathrm{GL}_2)^n$  lies in  $G$  if and only if  $g_1, \dots, g_n$  are scalar multiples of each other. The symmetric group  $\Sigma_n$  acts naturally on  $(\mathrm{GL}_2)^n$  by permuting the entries;  $G$  is invariant under this action. For any subgroup  $S \subset \Sigma_n$ , we will denote the semidirect product  $G \rtimes S$  by  $G_S$ . This gives rise to the natural split exact sequence

$$(1) \quad 1 \longrightarrow G \xrightarrow{i} G_S \xrightarrow{\phi} S \longrightarrow 1$$

We will also be interested in another exact sequence,

$$(2) \quad 1 \longrightarrow (\mathbb{G}_m^n) \rtimes S \xrightarrow{\alpha} G_S \xrightarrow{\beta} \mathrm{PGL}_2 \longrightarrow 1,$$

where map  $G \rightarrow \mathrm{PGL}_2$  sends  $(g_1, \dots, g_n) \in G$  to  $\bar{g}_1 = \dots = \bar{g}_n$ .

Consider the natural linear action of  $G_S$  on the  $2n$ -dimensional affine space  $V = (\mathbb{A}^2)^n$  defined as follows:  $(g_1, \dots, g_n) \in G$  acts on  $(\mathbb{A}^2)^n$  by

$$(g_1, \dots, g_n) : (v_1, \dots, v_n) \mapsto (g_1 v_1, \dots, g_n v_n)$$

and  $\sigma \in S \subset \Sigma_n$  by

$$\sigma : (v_1, \dots, v_n) \mapsto (v_{\sigma(1)}, \dots, v_{\sigma(n)}).$$

One readily checks that this action is generically free. (Recall that our standing assumption is that  $n \geq 5$ .) That is,  $V$  has a dense  $G$ -invariant Zariski open subset  $V_0$ , such that the stabilizer of  $v$  in  $G_S$  is trivial for every  $v \in V_0$ . After passing to a smaller  $G_S$ -invariant open subset, we may assume that  $V_0$  is the total space of a  $G_S$ -torsor  $T_S: V_0 \rightarrow Z_S$  for some  $k$ -variety  $Z_S$ ; see [BF03, Theorem 4.7]. We thus obtain the following diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & V_0 & \\ & \downarrow & \searrow \\ (\mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S)\text{-torsor} & & \\ & Y_S & T_S, \text{ a } G_S\text{-torsor} \\ & \downarrow & \\ t_S, \text{ a } \mathrm{PGL}_2\text{-torsor} & & \\ \eta \longrightarrow & Z_S & \end{array}$$

where  $Y_S = V_0/(\mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S)$ . The function fields  $k(Z_S)$  and  $k(Y_S)$  are naturally isomorphic to  $L_n^S$  and  $K_n^S$ , respectively. When we pass to the generic point  $\eta$  of  $Z_S$ ,  $T_S$  gives rise to a  $G_S$ -torsor

$(V_0)_\eta \rightarrow \text{Spec}(K_n^S)$  and  $t_S$  to a  $\text{PGL}_2$ -torsor  $(Y_S)_\eta \rightarrow \text{Spec}(K_n^S)$ , respectively. By abuse of notation we will continue to denote these torsors by  $T_S$  and  $t_S$ .

Now let  $K$  is an arbitrary field. Recall that  $G_S$ -torsors over  $\text{Spec}(K)$  are classified by the Galois cohomology set  $H^1(K, G_S)$ , and  $\text{PGL}_2$ -torsors are classified by  $H^1(K, \text{PGL}_2)$ ; see [Se97, §I.5.2]. We will denote the classes of  $T_S$  and  $t_S$  by  $[T_S] \in H^1(K_n^S, G_S)$  and  $[t_S] \in H^1(K_n^S, \text{PGL}_2)$ , respectively. The exact sequences (1) and (2) of algebraic groups give rise to exact sequences of Galois cohomology sets

$$(3) \quad H^1(K, G) \xrightarrow{i_1} H^1(K, G_S) \xrightarrow{\phi_1} H^1(K, S)$$

and

$$(4) \quad H^1(K, \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S) \xrightarrow{\alpha_1} H^1(K, G_S) \xrightarrow{\beta_1} H^1(K, \text{PGL}_2)$$

for any field  $K$ . If  $K = K_n^S$ , then by our construction  $[t_S] = \beta_1([T_S])$ . The following proposition recasts Question 1 in the language of Galois cohomology.

**Proposition 3.** *The following conditions on a subgroup  $S \subset \Sigma_n$  are equivalent:*

- (a)  $L_n^S$  is rational over  $K_n^S$ ,
- (b)  $L_n^S$  is unirational over  $K_n^S$ ,
- (c)  $[t_S]$  is the trivial class in  $H^1(K_n^S, \text{PGL}_2)$ ,
- (d)  $\beta_1: H^1(K, G_S) \rightarrow H^1(K, \text{PGL}_2)$  is the trivial for every field  $K$  containing  $k$ ,
- (e)  $\alpha_1: H^1(K, \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S) \rightarrow H^1(K, G_S)$  is surjective for every field  $K$  containing  $k$ ,
- (f)  $\phi_1: H^1(K, G_S) \rightarrow H^1(K, S)$  is bijective for every field  $K$  containing  $k$ ,
- (g)  $H^1(K, {}_\tau G) = 1$  for every  $\tau \in H^1(K, S)$ .

In part (g),  ${}_\tau G$  denotes the twist of  $G$  by  $\tau$  via the natural permutation action of  $S$  on  $G$ . For generalities on the twisting operation, see [Se97, Section I.5.3] or [B10, Section II.5]. Note in particular that  ${}_\tau G$  is an algebraic group over  $K$ ; it does not descend to  $k$  in general.

**Remark 4.** The Galois cohomology set  $H^1(K, \text{PGL}_2)$  is in a natural (i.e., functorial in  $K$ ) bijective correspondence with the set of isomorphism classes of quaternion algebras over  $K$ ; see [Se03, §I.2 and I.3]. Thus condition (c) amounts to saying that a certain quaternion algebra over  $K_n^S$  is split.

We defer the proof of Proposition 3 to Section 4.

### 3. GENERALITIES ON GALOIS COHOMOLOGY

Suppose  $i: A \rightarrow B$  is a morphism of algebraic groups over  $k$ , and  $K$  is a field containing  $k$ . Following the notational conventions of the previous section, we will denote the induced map  $H^d(K, A) \rightarrow H^d(K, B)$  of cohomology sets by  $i_d$ . Here  $d = 0$  or  $1$ .

The following lemma will be used in the proof of Proposition 3.

**Lemma 5.** *Consider the exact sequence*

$$(5) \quad 1 \longrightarrow A \xrightarrow{i} B \xrightarrow{\pi} C \longrightarrow 1$$

$\longleftarrow \underbrace{\hspace{2em}}_s \longrightarrow$

of smooth algebraic groups over a field  $k$ . Then

- (a) The map  $\pi_1: H^1(K, B) \rightarrow H^1(K, C)$  is surjective for every field  $K/k$ .
- (b)  $\pi_1$  is injective if and only if  $H^1(K, s_1(\gamma)A) = 1$  for every  $\gamma \in H^1(K, C)$ .

*Proof.* (a) is clear, since  $s_1: H^1(K, C) \rightarrow H^1(K, B)$  is a section for  $\pi_1$ . To prove (b), twist the exact sequence (5) by  $\tau = s_1(\gamma)$  to obtain a new exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow {}_\tau A \longrightarrow {}_\tau B \xrightarrow{\tau\pi} {}_\tau C \longrightarrow 1$$

$\xleftarrow{\tau s}$

of algebraic groups over  $K$  and consider the associated long exact sequence

$$(6) \quad H^0(K, {}_\tau B) \xrightarrow{\tau\pi_0} H^0(K, {}_\tau C) \xrightarrow{\delta} H^1(K, {}_\tau A) \xrightarrow{\tau i_1} H^1(K, {}_\tau B) \xrightarrow{\tau\pi_1} H^1(K, {}_\tau C)$$

$\xleftarrow{\tau s_0} \qquad \xleftarrow{\tau s_1}$

in cohomology. Note that  ${}_\tau C$  is naturally isomorphic to  ${}_\gamma C$ . By [Se97, Corollary I.5.5.2], the fiber of  $\gamma$  under  $\pi_1$  is in bijective correspondence with the set of  $H^0(K, {}_\tau C)$ -orbits in  $H^1(K, {}_\tau A)$ . We are interested in the case, where  $\pi_1$  is injective, i.e., this fiber is trivial for every  $\gamma \in H^1(K, C)$ .

Since  ${}_\tau s_0$  is a section for  ${}_\tau\pi_0$ , we see that  ${}_\tau\pi_0$  is surjective. Thus the connecting map  $\delta$  in the long exact sequence (6) sends every element of  $H^0(K, {}_\tau C)$  to the trivial element of  $H^1(K, {}_\tau A)$ . Consequently,  $H^0(K, {}_\tau C)$  acts trivially on  $H^1(K, {}_\tau A)$ . We conclude that the fiber of  $\gamma$  under  $\pi_1$  is in bijective correspondence with  $H^1(K, {}_\tau A)$ . In particular,  $\pi_1$  is injective if and only if  $H^1(K, {}_\tau A) = 1$  for every  $\gamma$ , as claimed.  $\square$

**Corollary 6.** *Consider the split exact sequence*

$$(7) \quad 1 \longrightarrow \mathbb{G}_m^n \xrightarrow{i} \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S \xrightarrow{\pi} S \longrightarrow 1,$$

$\xleftarrow{s}$

where  $S$  is a subgroup of  $\Sigma_n$ , and  $\mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S$  is the semidirect product with respect to the natural (permutation) action of  $S$  on  $\mathbb{G}_m^n$ . Then  $\pi$  and  $s$  induce mutually inverse bijections  $\pi_1: H^1(K, \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S) \rightarrow H^1(K, S)$  and  $s_1: H^1(K, S) \rightarrow H^1(K, \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S)$  for every field  $K$  containing  $k$ .

*Proof.* By Lemma 5 it suffices to show that

$$(8) \quad H^1(K, {}_\gamma(\mathbb{G}_m^n)) = 1 \text{ for every } \gamma \in H^1(K, S).$$

Here  $S$  acts on  $\mathbb{G}_m^n$  by permuting the  $n$  copies of  $\mathbb{G}_m$ . Thus the twisted group  ${}_\gamma(\mathbb{G}_m^n)$  is a quasi-trivial torus, and (8) follows from the Feddeev-Shapiro Lemma [Se97, Section I.2.5].  $\square$

#### 4. PROOF OF PROPOSITION 3

The implication (a)  $\implies$  (b) is obvious.

(b)  $\implies$  (c): If  $L_n^S$  is unirational over  $K_n^S$ , then  $t_S$  has a rational section, and (c) follows.

(c)  $\implies$  (a): If  $[t_S] = 1$  is the trivial class in  $H^1(K_n^S, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$ , then  $Y_S$  is birationally isomorphic to  $Z_S \times \mathrm{PGL}_2$  over  $Z_S$ . Since the group variety of  $\mathrm{PGL}_2$  is rational over  $k$ , this tells us that  $Y_S$  is rational over  $Z_S$ . Equivalently,  $k(Y_S) = L_n^S$  is rational over  $k(Z_S) = K_n^S$ .

(c)  $\implies$  (d): By [Se03, Example I.5.4],  $[T_S]$  is a versal  $G_S$ -torsor. This implies that if  $[t_S] = \beta_1([T_S])$  is trivial in  $H^1(K_n^S, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$ , then the image of every element of  $H^1(K, G_S)$  under  $\beta_1$  is trivial in  $H^1(K, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$  for every infinite field  $K$  containing  $k$ , as desired. It remains to consider the case, where  $K$  is a finite field. By Wedderburn’s “little theorem” every quaternion algebra over a finite field  $K$  is split. In view of Remark 4, this translates to  $H^2(K, \mathrm{PGL}_2) = \{1\}$ . We conclude that the map  $H^1(K, G_S) \rightarrow H^1(K, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$  is trivial for every field  $K$  containing  $k$ .

(d)  $\implies$  (c) is obvious.

(d)  $\iff$  (e): Follows from the fact that the sequence (4) is exact.

(e)  $\iff$  (f): Consider the group homomorphisms  $S \xrightarrow{s} \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S \xrightarrow{\alpha} G_S \xrightarrow{\phi} S$ , whose composition is the identity map  $S \rightarrow S$ . Note that here  $\phi$ ,  $\alpha$  and  $s$  are the same as in (1), (2), and (7), respectively. Let us examine the induced sequence

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 H^1(K, S) & \xrightarrow[\cong]{s_1} & H^1(K, \mathbb{G}_m^n \rtimes S) & \xrightarrow{\alpha_1} & H^1(K, G_S) & \xrightarrow{\phi_1} & H^1(K, S) \\
 & & \searrow & \text{id} & \nearrow & & \\
 & & & & & & 
 \end{array}$$

in cohomology. By Corollary 6,  $s_1$  is an isomorphism. Thus  $\alpha_1$  is surjective if and only if  $\phi_1$  is bijective, as claimed.

(f)  $\iff$  (g): Immediate from Lemma 5, applied to the exact sequence (1). □

### 5. REDUCTION TO THE CASE, WHERE $S$ IS A 2-GROUP

**Lemma 7.** *Let  $P$  be a subgroup of  $S$ . Assume that the index  $d = [S : P]$  is odd. Then  $[t_S]$  is trivial in  $H^1(K_n^S, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$  if and only if  $[t_P]$  is trivial in  $H^1(K_n^P, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$ .*

*Proof.* The diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 & V_0 & \\
 T_P \swarrow & & \searrow T_S \\
 Y_P & \xrightarrow{\deg d} & Y_S \\
 \downarrow t_P & & \downarrow t_S \\
 Z_P & \xrightarrow{\deg d} & Z_S
 \end{array}$$

shows that  $[t_P]$  is the image of  $[t_S]$  under the restriction map

$$r : H^1(K_n^S, \mathrm{PGL}_2) \rightarrow H^1(K_n^P, \mathrm{PGL}_2).$$

By Proposition 3 it suffices to show that  $r$  has trivial kernel. By Remark 4 elements of the Galois cohomology set  $H^1(K, \mathrm{PGL}_2)$  can be identified with quaternion algebras over  $K$  (up to  $K$ -isomorphism). The map  $r$  sends a quaternion algebra  $A$  over  $K_n^S$  to the quaternion algebra  $A \otimes_{K_n^S} K_n^P$  over  $K_n^P$ . Since  $K_n^P/K_n^S$  is a field extension of odd degree,  $A \otimes_{K_n^S} K_n^P$  is split if and only if  $A$  is split. Thus  $r$  has trivial kernel, as claimed. □

Combining Lemma 7 with the equivalence of (a), (b), (c) in Proposition 3, we see that for the purpose of proving Theorem 2,  $S$  may be replaced its 2-Sylow subgroup  $P$ . Note that  $S$  has an orbit of odd order in  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  if and only if  $P$  has an orbit of odd order in  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  if and only if  $P$  has a fixed point. By the equivalence of parts (a), (b) and (g) in Proposition 3, in order to complete the proof of Theorem 2, it suffices to establish the following.

**Proposition 8.** *Let  $S$  be a 2-subgroup of  $\Sigma_n$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent.*

- (i)  $H^1(K, {}_\tau G) = 1$  for every  $\tau \in H^1(K, S)$ .
- (ii)  $S$  has a fixed point in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .

## 6. CONCLUSION OF THE PROOF OF THEOREM 2

In this section we will complete the proof of Theorem 2 by establishing Proposition 8.

Denote the orbits of  $S$  in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  by  $\mathcal{O}_1, \dots, \mathcal{O}_t$  where  $\mathcal{O}_i \simeq S/S_i$  as a  $G$ -set. Here  $S_i$  is the stabilizer of a point in  $\mathcal{O}_i$ . The groups  $S_1, \dots, S_t$  are uniquely determined by the embedding  $S \hookrightarrow \Sigma_n$  up to conjugacy and reordering. Note that  $S_1, \dots, S_t$  may not be distinct.

Recall that elements of  $\tau \in H^1(K, S)$  are in a natural bijective correspondence with  $S$ -Galois algebras  $L/K$ . Here by an  $S$ -Galois algebra  $L/K$  we mean an étale algebra (i.e., a direct sum of finite separable field extensions of  $K$ ) equipped with a faithful action of  $S$  such that  $\dim_K(L) = |S|$  and  $L^S = K$ ; see [Se03, Example 2.2]. To an  $S$ -Galois algebra  $L/K$  one can naturally associate the étale  $K$ -algebra

$$E = L^{S_1} \times \dots \times L^{S_t}$$

of degree  $n$ .

Now observe that the group  $G$  (defined at the beginning of Section 2) admits the following alternative description. Consider the natural surjective map  $f: \mathrm{GL}_2 \times \mathbb{G}^m \rightarrow G$  given by

$$(g, t_1, \dots, t_n) \rightarrow (gt_1, gt_2, \dots, gt_n).$$

The kernel of  $f$  is  $\Delta = \{(tI_2, t, \dots, t) \mid t \in \mathbb{G}_m\} \simeq \mathbb{G}_m$ . Thus  $f$  induces an isomorphism  $G \simeq (\mathrm{GL}_2 \times \mathbb{G}_m^n)/\Delta$  of algebraic groups. Moreover, this isomorphism is  $S$ -equivariant with respect to the natural actions of  $S$  on  $G$  (described at the beginning of section 2) and  $(\mathrm{GL}_2 \times \mathbb{G}_m^n)/\Delta$  (via permuting the  $n$  components of  $\mathbb{G}_m$ ). The twisted forms  ${}_\tau G$  of  $G$  and the Galois cohomology sets  $H^1(K, {}_\tau G)$  are explicitly described in [FR18]. In particular, if  $\tau \in H^1(K, S)$  corresponds to the  $n$ -dimensional étale  $K$ -algebra  $E$  as above, then  ${}_\tau G \simeq (\mathrm{GL}_2 \times R_{E/K}(\mathbb{G}_m))/\Delta_K$ , where  $R_{E/K}$  denotes Weil restriction and  $\Delta_K \simeq {}_\tau \Delta$  is  $\mathbb{G}_m$  (over  $K$ ), diagonally embedded into  $\mathrm{GL}_2 \times R_{E/K}(\mathbb{G}_m)$ ; see [FR18, Section 4]. Moreover,

$$H^1(K, {}_\tau G) \simeq \{\text{isom. classes of quaternion } K\text{-algebras } A \text{ such that } A \text{ is split by } E \otimes_k K\};$$

see [FR18, Lemma 5.1]. Note that  $A$  is split by  $E \otimes_k K$  if and only if  $A$  is split by  $L^{S_i} \otimes_k K$  for every  $i = 1, \dots, t$ . This explicit description of  $H^1(K, {}_\tau G)$  reduces Proposition 8 to the following equivalent form.

**Proposition 9.** *Let  $S \subset \Sigma_n$  be a 2-group. Then the following conditions on  $S$  are equivalent.*

- (a) *There exists a field extension  $K/k$ , a quaternion division algebra  $A/K$  and  $S$ -Galois algebra  $L/K$  such that  $A$  splits over  $L^{S_i}$  for every  $i = 1, \dots, t$ .*
- (b)  *$S$  does not have a fixed point in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ .*

To prove (a)  $\implies$  (b), assume that  $S$  has a fixed point. That is, one of the orbits of  $S$  in  $\{1, \dots, n\}$ , say  $\mathcal{O}_1$ , consists of a single point. Equivalently,  $S_1 = S$ . Clearly a quaternion division algebra over  $K$ , cannot split over  $L^{S_1} = L^S = K$ .

To prove (b)  $\implies$  (a), assume  $S$  does not have a fixed point in  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$ , i.e.,  $|\mathcal{O}|_i = |S/S_i| \geq 2$  for every  $i = 1, \dots, t$ . Since  $S$  is a 2-group, each  $S_i$  is contained in a maximal proper subgroup of  $S$ . That is, for each  $i = 1, \dots, t$ , there exists a subgroup

$$S_i \subseteq H_i \subsetneq S \text{ such that } [S : H_i] = 2.$$

Note that  $H_i$ , being a subgroup of index 2, is normal in  $S$ .

Now let  $M/F$  be an  $S$ -Galois field extension. For example, we can let  $S$  act on  $M = k(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  by permuting the variables and set  $F = M^S$ . Since  $H_i$  is normal in  $S$ ,  $M^{H_i}/F$  is a Galois extension of degree 2 for each  $i = 1, \dots, t$ . By a theorem of M. Van den Bergh and A. Schofield [VdB-S94, Theorem 3.8], there exists a field extension  $K/F$  and a quaternion division algebra  $A/K$  such that  $A$  contains  $M^{H_i} \otimes_F K$  as a maximal subfield for each  $i = 1, \dots, t$ . Now consider the  $S$ -Galois algebra  $L = M \otimes_F K$  over  $K$ . For each  $i = 1, \dots, t$ ,  $L^{S_i}$  contains  $L^{H_i} = M^{H_i} \otimes_F K$ . Hence, each  $L^{S_i}$  splits  $A$ , as desired.

This completes the proof of Proposition 9 and thus of Proposition 8 and Theorem 2.  $\square$

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