

THE TRANSLATION PLANES OF ORDER 49 AND THEIR AUTOMORPHISM GROUPS

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ABSTRACT. Using isomorphism invariants we enumerate the translation planes of order 49 and determine their automorphism groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

We describe the enumeration of the translation planes of order 49 and the computation of their automorphism groups. We follow the same pattern of classification used by the second author in [10] to handle the translation planes of order 27, but we use slightly more refined methods.

The classification of the translation planes of order 49 was also obtained previously by R. Mathon and G. Royle [15]. However, these authors use quite different methods. In particular our solution to the isomorphism problem, a significant component of any enumeration of projective planes of a fixed order, is entirely different. We systematically use isomorphism invariants to solve this problem. This permits a different search strategy than that used in [15], resulting in a significant reduction in the computational effort. As a consequence, the complete enumeration of isomorphism classes of the spread sets corresponding to the translation planes of order 49, can be repeated by anyone with standard computing resources.

The isomorphism invariants we use originate from an invariant of general (finite) projective planes which was proposed by J. H. Conway and investigated by C. Charnes in [3]; see [4]. To distinguish the isomorphism classes of translation planes, we use the *fingerprint*, the *Leitzahl* and *Kennzahl*, which are defined in [4] and [10], respectively. These invariants can be computed for the translation planes of order 49 without much overhead. Furthermore, our invariants can be used to determine the automorphism groups of the planes. Therefore, they are of independent interest, and we give in §3 a self-contained description of the invariants and of our algorithm for generating the spread sets.

We provide in §7 a detailed description of the automorphism groups of the translation planes of order 49. For each plane we give the following information: the order of the automorphism group; the order of the center; the order of the Fitting factor group; orders of the factors of the derived series; orders of the factors of the composition series; orders of the factors of the lower central series. Structural information of this kind is useful in the study of the geometrical properties of the planes and should suffice to identify each group. The orders of the groups were computed in two independent ways. First by U. Dempwolff, who determined the

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elements of $GL_4(7)$ which leave invariant each spread set. The group orders were computed from these generators with a program written by U. Dempwolff. Independently, GAP [16] routines were used to obtain the aforementioned data from the generating matrices.

In [6] we announced the classification of the translation planes of order 49 whose automorphism groups contain involutory homologies. These planes were used as a check on the correctness of the complete enumeration – each involutory homology plane had to occur in the final list of planes. Finally, the number of isomorphism classes of translation planes of order 49 we obtain, 973 up to polarity, agrees with the enumeration in [15].

In §5 we identify the involutory homology planes and some other planes which have appeared in the literature.

2. DEFINITIONS AND NOTATION

We recall briefly the results and notation used in the enumeration of translation planes; details can be found in [10] and [13].

Let $W = V \oplus V$, $V = GF(p^n)$, be a $2n$ -dimensional vector space over $GF(p)$. A collection $\mathcal{S} = \{V_\infty, V_0, \dots, V_m\}$ of mutually disjoint n -dimensional subspaces of W is called a *partial spread*. If $m = p^n - 1$, then \mathcal{S} is a *spread* and describes a translation plane of order p^n . By choosing a basis in W we can write $V_\infty = \{(0, v) | v \in V\}$, $V_0 = \{(v, 0) | v \in V\}$ and $V_i = \{(v, vt_i) | v \in V\}$, where $t_i \in G = GL_n(p)$ and $t_1 = 1$. We call $S = \{t_0, t_1, \dots, t_m\}$ a *spread set* with respect to the coordinate triple $(\infty, 0, 1)$.

A basic property of spread sets is: $(*) \det(t_i - t_j) \neq 0$ for $0 \leq i < j \leq m$. Conversely, each set $S \subseteq G \cup \{0\}$ satisfying $(*)$ defines a spread set. This description determines a spread set only up to conjugacy; see [10]. Replacing (V_∞, V_0, V_1) by some other triple (V_i, V_j, V_k) defines a spread set S' ; this is a *coordinatization* of S with respect to (i, j, k) .

The possible coordinatizations are obtained from each other by the successive application of the following operations:

- $O_1(x): S \rightarrow xSx^{-1}$ ($x \in G$),
- $O_2(i): S \rightarrow t_i^{-1}S$ ($1 \leq i \leq m$),
- $O_3: S \rightarrow S^{-1}$,
- $O_4: S \rightarrow 1 - S$.

Definition 2.1. Two (partial) spread sets S_1, S_2 are said to be *equivalent* if and only if S_1 can be obtained from S_2 by a successive application of operations $O_1(x), \dots, O_4$.

The problem of enumerating the isomorphism classes of translation planes of order p^n reduces to the problem of determining a set of representatives of the equivalence classes induced by the above relation.

These equivalence operations can also be used to determine the automorphisms of the translation planes. For suppose that $t \in GL_{2n}(p)$ is an automorphism of \mathcal{S} and that t maps (V_∞, V_0, V_1) to (V_i, V_j, V_k) . To determine t amounts to finding a sequence of equivalence operations which take a spread set S (with respect to $(\infty, 0, 1)$) onto a spread set S' (with respect to (i, j, k)). To ease the computations, we also use the more crude *weak equivalence*, which is defined as:

Definition 2.2. S is *weakly equivalent* to S' if and only if S or S^T is equivalent to S' .

3. INVARIANTS

We describe some invariants of (weak) equivalence. They are a decisive tool for the practical computation of the equivalence classes of spread sets. Let $\{x_0 = 0, x_1, \dots, x_m\}$ be a spread set.

Fingerprint [4], [10]. For $x \in GF(p)^{n \times n}$ set $[x] = (\frac{\det x}{p},$ the Legendre symbol, if $\det x \neq 0$ and $[x] = 0$ otherwise. Define an $(m+2) \times (m+2)$ -matrix $Q = (q_{ij})$ by

$$q_{ij} = \left| \sum_{k=0}^m [x_i - x_k][x_j - x_k] + 1 \right|, \quad 0 \leq i, j \leq m;$$

$$q_{i\infty} = q_{\infty i} = \left| \sum_{k=0}^m [x_i - x_k] \right|, \quad 0 \leq i \leq m, \quad q_{\infty\infty} = m+1.$$

Then the multiset of entries of $Q = Q(S)$ is an invariant of equivalence.

Fingerprints were used in [4] to determine the *canonical* forms of the ovoids which correspond (by the Klein correspondence) to translation planes of order p^2 ; see also [7]. The automorphism groups of translation planes can be determined in this way; see [4] and [5].

Leitzahl [6]. For $x \in GF(p)^{n \times n}$ define $\ll x \gg = 1$ if $\det x = 1$ and $\ll x \gg = 0$ otherwise. Set

$$\ell(S) = \sum_{0 \leq i < j \leq m} \sum_{\substack{k \neq i, j \\ k=0}} \ll (x_i - x_k)(x_k - x_j)^{-1} \gg.$$

Then $\ell(S)$ is invariant with respect to all equivalence operations except possibly O_3 . Thus, if S_1 and S_2 are two coordinatizations of a spread set with respect to (a, b_1, c_1) and (a, b_2, c_2) , respectively, then $\ell(S_1) = \ell(S_2)$.

Kennzahl [10]. For $x \in GF(p)^{n \times n}$ define $((x)) = 1$ if $\det x = 0$ and $((x)) = 0$ otherwise. Set

$$k(S) = \sum_{1 \leq i < j \leq m} ((x_i + x_j)).$$

Then $k(S)$ is invariant with respect to all equivalence operations except possibly O_4 . Thus, if S_1 and S_2 are two coordinatizations of a spread set with respect to (a_1, b_1, c_1) and (a_2, b_2, c_2) , respectively, then $k(S_1) = k(S_2)$ if $\{a_1, b_1\} = \{a_2, b_2\}$.

Finally, we denote by $c(S)$ the multiset of numbers $|S \cap C|$, where C ranges over the conjugacy classes of G . Clearly, $c(S)$ is a conjugacy invariant.

Next, we give an algorithm which uses the above mentioned invariants to test the equivalence of two spread sets S, S' .

Algorithm

Step 1: If $Q(S) \neq Q(S')$, then stop. Otherwise:

Step 2: For $a \in \{\infty, 0, \dots, m\}$ compute one coordinatization S_a with respect to $(a, *, *)$ (for an arbitrary admissible $*$). If always $\ell(S_a) \neq \ell(S')$, then stop. Otherwise:

Step 3: For $b \in \{\infty, 0, \dots, m\} \setminus \{a\}$ compute one coordinatization S_{ab} with respect to $(a, b, *)$. If always $k(S_{ab}) \neq k(S')$, then repeat Step 2 with $a := a + 1$ if possible. If not, then stop. Otherwise:

Step 4: For $c \in \{\infty, 0, \dots, m\} \setminus \{a, b\}$ compute a coordinatization S_{abc} of S with respect to (a, b, c) . If always $c(S_{abc}) \neq c(S')$, then repeat Step 3 with $b := b + 1$ (or $b := b + 2$ if $a := b + 1$) if possible. If not, then stop. Otherwise:

Step 5: Attempt to find a $x \in G$ such that $xS_{abc}x^{-1} = S'$.

Stop.

For more details regarding this algorithm see [10]. Precisely the same procedure (excluding Step 1), is used to determine the generators for the automorphism group of \mathcal{S} (belonging to S). Again the details can be found in [10].

4. THE SEARCH AND RESULTS

The search for the representatives of the equivalence classes of spread sets of translation planes of order 49 routinely follows the search for the spread sets of the translation planes of order 27, described in [10]. In the order 49 case, we have used a similar classification of starter sets $S = \{t_0, t_1 = 1, \dots, t_m\}$, where $6 \leq m \leq 12$. We choose t_2, \dots, t_6 which fixes a particular subspace of V , say $t_i = \begin{pmatrix} ** \\ 0 * \end{pmatrix}$.

If k is the maximum number of scalar matrices in a coordinatization of S , we have to distinguish the six cases: $k = 1, \dots, 6$. In contrast to the search used by R. Mathon and G. Royle [15], we did not require a result like their Lemma 3.1. Instead we determined all completions in every case to gain extra control. (Distinguishing the isomorphism classes of completions is inexpensive with our methods.) Our final enumeration matches completely the enumeration described in [15].

There are precisely 973 representatives of spread sets up to weak equivalence. There are 374 spread sets which have the property that S is inequivalent to S^T (i.e., represent pairs of mutually polar planes). Thus, there are 1347 representatives of spread sets up to equivalence. For each representative spread set we have computed a set of matrix generators – elements of $GL_4(7)$, which leave the spread set invariant. From these generators we computed the data contained in §7.

4.1. Control. In such a large enumeration problem, it is important to first establish a control set. Therefore, we have independently determined the spread sets of the translation planes of order 49 which admit involutory homologies. There are precisely 154 such spread sets up to weak equivalence; see [6]. Heuristic reasons explained in [10] and [13] show that the identification of the 154 spread sets among the complete list of spread sets will provide a reasonable test of the correctness of the enumeration.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF SOME KNOWN PLANES

In this section we identify some planes of order 49 which have previously appeared in the literature with those occurring in our list. (For the notation see §7.)

As in [10], we have checked our list of spread sets for possible *symplectic spreads*. It turns out that only the Desarguesian spread 9cu has this property.

Planes with involutory homologies [6]:

0aa	0ab	0ac	0ad	0ae	0af	0ah	0ai	0ak	0am
0ao	0aq	0as	0av	0aw	0ax	0ay	0bb	0be	0bk
0bl	0br	0bs*	0bx	0cc	0cg	0ch	0ck	0cl	0cm
0cs	0cz	0df	0dk	1ab	1ac	1af	1am*	1an	1aq
1bd	1be	1bq	1br	1ck*	1cm	1cs*	1ct	1dl	1dm
2bt	2bu	2cv	2dc	2dd*	3af*	3an	3ao	3ap	3aq
3as	3db	3dp	4ad	4an	4bi	4bm	4cj*	4db	4ds
5af	5an	5aw	5bq	5br	5bs	5bt	5cs*	5cu	6am
6au	6cb	6ce*	6cs	6dj*	6dl	6dm	7ab	7am*	7ao
7be	7bi	7bs	7bz	7cs	7cy	7dd	7df	7dp	7dq*
7ds*	8ag*	8al	8as	8at	8bl	8ce	8ch	8co	8cw
8cx	8de	8dh	8dl	8dq	9aa	9aj	9ak	9at	9aw
9az	9bg	9bh	9bi	9bj	9bk	9bl	9bm	9bp	9bq*
9br	9bt	9bv	9bw	9by	9bz	9ca	9cc	9cd	9ce
9cg	9ch	9cj	9ck	9cl	9cm	9cn	9co	9cp	9cq
9cr	9cs	9ct	9cu						

Heimbeck planes with quaternion group of homologies [11]:

Name	Name in [11]	Order	Orbits on l_∞
9cq	I	13824	2 48
0df	II	6912	2 48
9ct	III	11520	10 40
3an	IV	9216	2 48
0af	V	2304	2 16 32
0ac	VI	3072	2 16 32
4ad	VII	768	2 16 16 16
0ad	VIII	2304	2 16 32
1be	IX	1536	2 16 32
9cp	X	576	1 1 48

Heimbeck plane with a shear [12]: 8dl, 2016, 1 7 42.

Non-Desarguesian planes with nonsolvable group:

Name	Name in the literature	Order	Orbits on l_∞
0ab	Hall	32256	8 42
0au	Mason	4320	20 30
0ba	S_5 -Type [7]	1440	10 40
9bn	Mason	4320	20 30
9cs	S_5 -Type [7] (also Korchmaros)	2880	20 30
9ct	Mason-Ostrom	11520	10 40

Non-Desarguesian flag transitive planes [2]:

Name	Name in [2]	Order	Orbits on l_∞
0an*	$[L_1] \cup [L'_1], [L_1] \cup [L''_1]$	600	50
1dr	$[L_3] \cup [L'_3]$	600	50

Planes as projections of 8-dimensional ovoids: Certain translation planes of order 49 arise (by the Klein correspondence) from 6-dimensional ovoids which are ‘sections’ of ovoids in $\Omega^+(8, 7)$. There are two ovoids in $\Omega^+(8, 7)$ which are invariant under the Weyl groups $W(D_7)$ [17], and $W(E_7)$ [8]. These give 16 isomorphism classes of translation planes which are indexed by the orbits of $W(D_7)$ and $W(E_7)$ acting on the isotropic vectors of $\Omega^+(8, 7)$; see [8] and [3]. We identify these planes below. An entry in the ‘ovoid’ column indicates that the plane corresponds to a section of the listed 8-dimensional ovoid.

Name	Ovoid	Orbits on l_∞	Name	Ovoid	Orbits on l_∞
0ad	$D_7 E_7$	2 16 32	0ca	D_7	6 8 12 24
0ae	$D_7 E_7$	6 8 36	1aq	$D_7 D_7 D_7$	4 6 16 24
0ag	$D_7 D_7 E_7$	2 8 12 12 16	6cs	$D_7 D_7$	2 8 12 12 16
0ak	D_7	2 12 36	9bn	$D_7 D_7 E_7$	20 30
0au	$E_7 E_7$	20 30	9cn	$D_7 E_7$	8 18 24
0ba	$D_7 D_7 E_7$	10 40	9cq	$D_7 E_7$	2 48
0be	$D_7 D_7 E_7$	3 3 8 36	9cs	$D_7 E_7$	20 30
0bl	D_7	6 12 32	9ct	$D_7 E_7$	10 40

6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE AUTOMORPHISM GROUPS

To describe the structure of the automorphism groups of the 1347 translation planes of order 49, it suffices to consider only the 973 representatives up to polarity. Since a dual spread has the same abstract group in its contragradient representation, the two groups have the same orders.

For each representative spread set we calculate the following: the order of the automorphism group; the order of the center; the order of the Fitting factor group; orders of the factors of the derived series; orders of the factors of a composition series; orders of the factors of the lower central series. We also indicate which spreads are self-polar (S isomorphic to S^T). This data was obtained with GAP [16] with the help of the generators obtained by U. Dempwolff. The GAP routines were prepared mechanically using AWK [1] from the generators to prevent errors from creeping in.

6.1. Non-Abelian composition factors. Tables I – X, given in §7, show that the automorphism groups of the non-Desarguesian planes of order 49 have only the following non-Abelian composition factors: $PSL_2(5)$, $PSL_2(7)$ and $PSL_2(9)$. Here, $PSL_2(7)$ gives the Hall plane, see [9], while $PSL_2(9)$ is of a Mason type, see [7]. Planes with $PSL_2(5)$ relate to the ones we considered in [7]. By the automorphism group, we mean the subgroup of $GL_4(7)$ generated by the spread stabilizer and the kernel homologies.

TABLE I. (continued).

0ca	576	6	24	2	[2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3]	[24, 24]	[24, 2, 2, 2]
0cb	12	12	1	1	[2, 3, 2]	[]	[12]
0cc	72	12	3	2	[2, 3, 2, 2, 3]	[24, 3]	[24]
0cd	48	6	4	1	[2, 2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0ce*	24	6	2	1	[3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0cf	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0cg	48	12	2	1	[2, 2, 2, 3, 2]	[24, 2]	[24, 2]
0ch	48	12	2	1	[2, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[24, 2]	[24, 2]
0ci	48	6	4	1	[2, 2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0cj	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0ck	576	6	24	6	[2, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[24, 3, 4, 2]	[24]
0cl	96	12	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[24, 4]	[24, 2, 2]
0cm	192	12	8	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2]	[24, 8]	[24, 4, 2]
0cn	72	6	6	2	[3, 2, 2, 2, 3]	[12, 6]	[12, 2]
0co	24	6	2	1	[2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0cp	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0cq	24	6	2	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0cr*	24	6	2	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0cs	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0ct	216	6	18	4	[3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3]	[12, 18]	[12, 2]
0cu	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0cv	24	6	2	1	[3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0cw	48	6	4	1	[2, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0cx*	12	12	1	1	[2, 3, 2]	[]	[12]
0cy	336	6	28	2	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 7]	[12, 28]	[12, 2, 2]
0cz	384	6	8	1	[2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[48, 8]	[48, 2, 2, 2]
0da	24	6	2	1	[2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0db	48	6	4	1	[2, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0dc	24	6	2	1	[2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0dd	24	24	1	1	[3, 2, 2, 2]	[]	[24]
0de	12	12	1	1	[2, 3, 2]	[]	[12]
0df	6912	6	576	36	[2, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 9, 16, 4]	[12]
0dg	144	6	12	2	[3, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 12]	[12, 2, 2]
0dh	12	12	1	1	[3, 2, 2]	[]	[12]
0di	72	6	6	2	[2, 3, 2, 2, 3]	[12, 6]	[12, 2]
0dj	24	24	1	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[]	[24]
0dk	192	12	8	1	[2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[24, 8]	[24, 4, 2]
0dl	144	6	24	6	[2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2]	[6, 3, 4, 2]	[6]
0dm	24	24	1	1	[2, 2, 3, 2]	[]	[24]
0dn	24	6	2	1	[2, 2, 3, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0do	24	6	2	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0dp	24	6	2	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]
0dq	12	12	1	1	[3, 2, 2]	[]	[12]
0dr	12	12	1	1	[2, 3, 2]	[]	[12]
0dt	576	6	24	2	[2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2]	[24, 24]	[24, 2, 2, 2]
0du*	48	6	4	1	[2, 3, 2, 2, 2]	[12, 4]	[12, 2, 2]
0dv	24	6	2	1	[2, 3, 2, 2]	[12, 2]	[12, 2]

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