

**Zeitschrift:** L'Enseignement Mathématique  
**Herausgeber:** Commission Internationale de l'Enseignement Mathématique  
**Band:** 43 (1997)  
**Heft:** 1-2: L'ENSEIGNEMENT MATHÉMATIQUE

**Artikel:** POLYGON SPACES AND GRASSMANNIANS  
**Autor:** Hausmann, Jean-Claude / Knutson, Allen  
**Kapitel:** 3. Quaternions, Grassmannians and structures on the full polygon spaces  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-63276>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 12.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

Finally,  ${}^3\mathcal{P}^2 \simeq \mathbf{CP}^1/\{z \sim \bar{z}\}$  is homeomorphic, via the length-side map  $\ell$ , to the solid triangle

$${}^3\mathcal{P}^2 = {}^3\mathcal{P}^3 \xrightarrow[\simeq]{\ell} \{(x_1, x_2, x_3) \in \mathbf{R}^3 \mid x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = 2 \text{ and } 0 \leq x_i \leq 1\}$$

with boundary  ${}^3\mathcal{P}^1$ .

### 3. QUATERNIONS, GRASSMANNIANS AND STRUCTURES ON THE FULL POLYGON SPACES

(3.1) Let  $\mathbf{H} = \mathbf{C} \oplus \mathbf{C}j$  be the skew-field of quaternions; the space  $I\mathbf{H}$  of pure imaginary quaternions is equipped with the orthonormal basis  $i, j$  and  $k = ij$ , giving rise to an isometry with  $\mathbf{R}^3$  which turns the pure imaginary part of the quaternionic multiplication  $pq$  into the usual cross product  $p \times q$ . The space  ${}^m\mathcal{F}^3$  is thus identified with  ${}^m\mathcal{F}(I\mathbf{H})$  which gives rise to the canonical identifications on the the various moduli spaces (see (2.2)).

Recall that the correspondence

$$\eta : u + vj \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} u & v \\ -\bar{v} & \bar{u} \end{pmatrix}$$

gives an injective  $\mathbf{R}$ -algebra homomorphism  $\eta : \mathbf{H} \longrightarrow \mathcal{M}_{(2 \times 2)}(\mathbf{C})$ . This enables a matrix  $P \in U_2$  to act on the right or on the left on  $\mathbf{H}$ . It also identifies the group  $S^3$  of unit quaternions with  $SU_2$ .

(3.2) The Hopf map  $\phi : \mathbf{H} \longrightarrow I\mathbf{H}$  defined by

$$\phi(q) := \bar{q}iq$$

sends the 3-sphere of radius  $\sqrt{r}$  in  $\mathbf{H}$  onto the 2-sphere of radius  $r$  in  $I\mathbf{H}$ . (The formulae given in the original paper by Hopf [Ho, § 5] actually correspond to the map  $q \mapsto \bar{q}kq$ .) The equality  $\phi(q) = \phi(q')$  occurs if and only if  $q' = e^{i\theta}q$ . The map  $\phi$  satisfies the equivariance relation  $\phi(q \cdot P) = P^{-1} \cdot \phi(q) \cdot P$ . Writing  $q = u + vj$  with  $u, v \in \mathbf{C}$ , one has

$$\phi(u + vj) = (\bar{u} - j\bar{v})i(u + vj) = i(\bar{u} + j\bar{v})(u + vj) = i[(|u|^2 - |v|^2) + 2\bar{u}vj].$$

(3.3) Observe that if  $q = s + tj$  with  $s, t \in \mathbf{R}$ , then  $\phi(q) = iq^2$ . This plane  $\mathbf{R} \oplus \mathbf{R}j$  of its images is the fixed point set of the involution  $a + bj \mapsto \bar{a} + \bar{b}j$  that will be used later. Its image under  $\phi$  is  $\mathbf{R}i \oplus \mathbf{R}k$ .

(3.4) REMARK.  $I\mathbf{H}$ , with the Lie bracket  $[p, q] = pq - qp = 2\text{Im}(pq)$ , is the Lie algebra for the group  $U_1(\mathbf{H}) \simeq SU_2 \simeq S^3$ . The pairing

$(q, q') \mapsto -\operatorname{Re}(qq') = \langle q, q' \rangle$  identifies  $I\mathbf{H}$  with its dual. If  $\mathbf{H} \simeq \mathbf{C} \oplus \mathbf{C}$  is endowed with the standard Kähler form, then the map  $\frac{1}{2}\phi$  is the moment map for the Hamiltonian action of  $U_1(\mathbf{H})$  on  $\mathbf{H}$  (the factor  $\frac{1}{2}$  can be checked by restricting the action to the  $S^1$ -action on  $\mathbf{C}$ ).

(3.5) Let  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  be the space of  $(m \times 2)$ -matrices

$$(a, b) := \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & b_1 \\ \vdots & \vdots \\ a_m & b_m \end{pmatrix} \in \mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C})$$

such that  $|a| = |b| = 1$  and  $\langle a, b \rangle = 0$ .  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  is the Stiefel manifold of orthonormal 2-frames in  $\mathbf{C}^m$ . The group  $U_m$  acts transitively on the left on  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  producing the diffeomorphism  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) = U_m/U_{m-2}$ . One has the conjugation on  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  given by  $(a, b) \mapsto (\bar{a}, \bar{b})$  with fixed-point space the Stiefel manifold  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) = O_m/O_{m-2}$  of orthonormal 2-frames in  $\mathbf{R}^m$ . Finally, the embedding  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \subset \mathbf{H}^m$  given by  $(a, b) \mapsto (\dots, a_r + b_r j, \dots)$  intertwines the conjugation on  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  with the involution of (2.5) on  $\mathbf{H}^m$ . One thus gets an embedding  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \subset (\mathbf{R} \oplus \mathbf{R}j)^m$ .

Using the Hopf map  $\phi$  of (3.2), one defines the smooth map  $\Phi : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\mathcal{F}(I\mathbf{H}) \simeq {}^m\mathcal{F}^3$  by the formula

$$\Phi(a, b) := (\phi(a_1 + b_1 j), \phi(a_2 + b_2 j), \dots, \phi(a_m + b_m j)).$$

The fact that  $\sum \phi(a_r + b_r j) = 0$  is equivalent to  $\langle a, b \rangle = 0$  and  $|a| = |b|$ . As  $|a| = |b| = 1$ , the image of  $\Phi$  is exactly  $S({}^m\mathcal{F}^3)$ . By composing with the projection  ${}^m\mathcal{F}^3 - \{0\} \longrightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$ , one gets a surjective smooth map  $\Phi : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$ . One checks that  $\Phi(a, b) = \Phi(a', b')$  if and only if  $(a, b)$  and  $(a', b')$  are in the same orbit under the action of the maximal torus  $U_1^m$  of diagonal matrices in  $U_m$ . This action is free when none of the  $(a_i, b_i)$ 's vanishes, namely if and only if  $\Phi(a, b)$  is a proper polygon. As  $\Phi(\bar{a}, \bar{b}) = \Phi(a, b)^\vee$ , the restriction of  $\Phi$  to the fixed points gives a smooth map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}(\mathbf{R}i \oplus \mathbf{R}k) \simeq {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$  with analogous properties. We have thus proved

**THEOREM 3.6.** *a) The smooth map  $\Phi : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$  induces a homeomorphism  $\widehat{\Phi} : U_1^m \setminus \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \xrightarrow{\cong} {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$  such that  $\widehat{\Phi}(\bar{a}, \bar{b}) = \Phi(a, b)^\vee$ . The restriction of  $\Phi$  above the space of proper polygons is a smooth principal  $U_1^m$ -bundle.*

*b) The smooth map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$  induces a homeomorphism  $\widehat{\Phi}_{\mathbf{R}} : O_1^m \setminus \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \xrightarrow{\cong} {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$ . The restriction of  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$  above the space of proper planar polygons is a principal  $O_1^m$ -covering.*

COROLLARY 3.7.  ${}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3 \simeq U_1^m \setminus U_m / U_{m-2}$  and  ${}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2 \simeq O_1^m \setminus O_m / O_{m-2}$ .

(3.8) Let  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  be the Grassmann manifold of 2-planes in  $\mathbf{C}^m$ . The map  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \rightarrow \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  which associates to  $(a, b)$  the plane generated by  $a$  and  $b$  is the projection  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \rightarrow \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) / U_2$  (a principal  $U_2$  bundle), for the natural right action of  $U_2$  on  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \subset \mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C})$ . This projection is  $U_m$ -equivariant, equivalent to the projection  $U_m / U_{m-2} \rightarrow U_m / U_2 \times U_{m-2}$ .

The map  $\Phi : \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$  satisfies

$$\Phi((a, b)P) = P^{-1} \Phi(a, b)P \quad \text{for } (a, b) \in \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m), P \in U_2.$$

The conjugation by  $P$  being an element of  $SO(I\mathbf{H})$ , one thus gets a map (still called  $\Phi$ ) from  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  onto  ${}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}_+^3$ . The space  ${}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}_+^3$  has a smooth structure on the open-dense subset of non-lined polygons (which is where the  $SO_3$ -action was free) and, above this open-dense subset, the new map  $\Phi$  is smooth. The map  $\Phi$  intertwines the involutions and so restricts to a map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$ , where  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{R}^m)$  is the Grassmannian of 2-planes in  $\mathbf{R}^m$ . In this case, an intermediate object is the Grassmannian  $\tilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) = SO_m / SO_2 \times SO_{m-2}$  of oriented 2-planes in  $\mathbf{R}^m$  with the smooth map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} \tilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}_+^2 \simeq \mathbf{C}P^{m-2}$ . The action of  $U_1^m$  on  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  descends to an action on  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  which is no longer effective: its kernel is the diagonal subgroup  $\Delta$  of  $U_1^m$ , the center of  $U_m$ , isomorphic to  $U_1$ . The same holds true in the real case, replacing  $U_1$  by  $O_1$  (the diagonal subgroup of  $O_1^m$  is also denoted by  $\Delta$ ).

Using Theorem 3.6, the reader will easily prove the following

THEOREM 3.9. a) The map  $\Phi : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$  induces a homeomorphism  $\widehat{\Phi} : U_1^m \setminus \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \xrightarrow{\simeq} {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$  such that  $\widehat{\Phi}(\bar{a}, \bar{b}) = \Phi(a, b)$ . The restriction of  $\widehat{\Phi}$  above the space of proper non-lined polygons is a smooth principal  $(U_1^m / \Delta)$ -bundle.

b) The smooth map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : \tilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}_+^2$  induces a homeomorphism  $\widehat{\Phi}_{\mathbf{R}} : O_1^m \setminus \tilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \xrightarrow{\simeq} {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}_+^2$ . It is a smooth branched covering and, restricted above the space of proper polygons, a principal  $(O_1^m / \Delta)$ -covering.

c) The map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \rightarrow {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$  induces a homeomorphism  $\widehat{\Phi}_{\mathbf{R}} : O_1^m \setminus \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{R}^m) \xrightarrow{\simeq} {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$ . The restriction of  $\widehat{\Phi}$  above the space of proper non-lined polygons is a principal  $(O_1^m / \Delta)$ -covering.

COROLLARY 3.10. *One has homeomorphisms between the polygon spaces and the double cosets*

- a)  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^3 \simeq U_1^m \setminus U_m / (U_2 \times U_{m-2})$
- b)  ${}^m\mathcal{P}_+^2 \simeq S(O_1^m) \setminus SO_m / (SO_2 \times SO_{m-2})$ .
- c)  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^2 \simeq O_1^m \setminus O_m / (O_2 \times O_{m-2})$ .

(3.11) *Example.* As in (2.7) the example of planar triangles ( $m = 3$  and  $k = 2$ ) is interesting. The Stiefel manifold  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^3)$  is diffeomorphic to the unit tangent bundle to  $S^2$ , in turn diffeomorphic to  $SO_3$ . The oriented Grassmannian  $\widetilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^3)$  can be identified with  $S^2$  by associating to an oriented plane its unit normal vector. The smooth map

$$\Phi_{\mathbf{R}} : S^2 \simeq \widetilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{R}^3) \longrightarrow {}^3\mathcal{P}_+^2 \simeq S^2$$

is of degree 4, branched over the 3 points. This map can be visualized as follows: tessellate  $\mathbf{R}^2$  with equilateral triangles. Divide  $\mathbf{R}^2$  by the subgroup of isometries which preserve the tessellation and the orientation (it thus preserves a checkerboard coloring of the triangle tessellation). This quotient is a well known orbifold structure on  $S^2$  with three branched points. The projection  $\mathbf{R}^2 \longrightarrow S^2$  factors through an octahedron with a chess-board coloring of its faces. The residual map from this octahedron to  $S^2$  is our map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$ .

Take the pullback by  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$  of the Hopf bundle  $S^3 \longrightarrow S^2$ . One gets a map of degree 4 from some lens space  $L$  onto  $S^3$ , with branched locus the link formed by three  $SO_2$ -orbits. The lens space will be doubly covered by  $SO_3$ . We thus get the map

$$\widetilde{\Phi} : SO_3 \simeq \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{R}^3) \longrightarrow {}^3\widetilde{\mathcal{P}}^2 \simeq S^3$$

of degree 8. Finally, one has  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{R}^3) \simeq \mathbf{RP}^2$  and  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$  is the quotient of  $\mathbf{RP}^2$  by the action of  $O_1^3$  on each homogeneous coordinate. This quotient is a 2-simplex and one sees again that  ${}^3\mathcal{P}^2$  is a solid triangle.

(3.12) *Orbifold structures.* The maps  $\widehat{\Phi}_{\mathbf{R}}$  and  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$  provide, for the spaces  ${}^2\widetilde{\mathcal{P}}^2 \simeq S^{2m-3}$  and  ${}^m\mathcal{P}_+^2 \simeq \mathbf{CP}^{m-2}$ , a smooth orbifold structure. Each point has a neighbourhood homeomorphic to an open set of the quotient of  $(\mathbf{R}^2)^s$  by a subgroup of  $O_1^s$ , where  $O_1$  acts on each  $\mathbf{R}^2$  via the antipodal map. Observe that the map  $\Phi_{\mathbf{R}}$  is a “small cover” in the sense of [DJ]. The branched loci are  $E_{m-1}{}^m\widetilde{\mathcal{P}}^2$  and  $E_{m-1}{}^m\mathcal{P}_+^2$  respectively. As for  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^2$  we have to add the branched locus  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^1$ . The generic points of  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^1$  have a neighbourhood modelled on the quotient of  $\mathbf{C}^{m-2}$  by complex conjugation.

Analogously, the map  $\Phi: \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\mathcal{P}^3$  gives rise, for the space  ${}^m\widetilde{\mathcal{P}}^3$ , to a smooth *complex orbifold structure*. By that we mean a space locally modelled on the quotient of  $\mathbf{C}^s$  by a subgroup of  $U_1^s$ . We define the space  $\mathcal{C}^\infty({}^m\mathcal{P}^3)$  of *smooth* maps from  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^3$  to the reals as the subspace of  $\mathcal{C}^\infty(\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m))$  which is invariant by the action of  $U_1^m$ .

(3.13) *Riemannian and Poisson structures.* Let  $\mathcal{H}(m)$  be the space of Hermitian  $(m \times m)$ -matrices, identified with  $\mathbf{u}_m^*$  via the pairing

$$\mathcal{H}(m) \times \mathbf{u}_m \longrightarrow \mathbf{R} \quad (H, X) \mapsto \frac{i}{2} \operatorname{tr}(HX).$$

This identification turns the co-adjoint action of  $U_m$  into the conjugation action on  $\mathcal{H}(m)$ . Consider the map  $\widetilde{\Psi} : \mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C}) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}(m)$  given by  $\widetilde{\Psi}(a, b) := (a, b) \cdot (a, b)^*$ . One has  $\widetilde{\Psi}(Q \cdot (a, b) \cdot P) = Q \cdot \widetilde{\Psi}((a, b) \cdot Q^*)$  for  $P \in U_2$  and  $Q \in U_m$  and thus  $\mathcal{C} := \widetilde{\Psi}(\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m))$  is the  $U_m$ -orbit through  $\operatorname{diag}(1, 1, 0, \dots, 0)$ . This proves that  $\widetilde{\Psi}$  descends to a diffeomorphism  $\Psi : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathcal{C}$ .

The complex vector space  $\mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C})$  is endowed with its classical Hermitian structure  $\langle A, B \rangle := \operatorname{tr}(AB^*)$ , with associated symplectic form  $\omega(\cdot, \cdot) = -\operatorname{Im} \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle$ . The map  $\widetilde{\Psi}$  above and the map  $\widetilde{\Phi} : \mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C}) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}_0(2)$  given by

$$\widetilde{\Phi}(a, b) := (a, b)^* \cdot (a, b) - \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

are moment maps for the Hamiltonian actions of  $U_m$  and  $U_2$  respectively. One has  $\mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) = \widetilde{\Phi}^{-1}(0)$  and thus  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  occurs as symplectic reduction of the Hermitian vector space  $\mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C})$  and thereby inherits a  $U_m$ -invariant Kähler structure, using, for instance [Ki], § 1.7. (Strictly speaking, one deals in [Ki] with compact Kähler manifolds; to fulfill this condition, one can first divide  $\mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C}) - \{0\}$  by the diagonal action of  $\mathbf{C}^*$  to put oneself into a complex projective space.) The residual map  $\Psi : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \xrightarrow{\simeq} \mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{H}(m)$  is a moment map for the action of  $U_m$  on  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$ .

Being thus a Kähler manifold,  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  is a Riemannian Poisson manifold. This structure descends to the complex orbifold  ${}^m\mathcal{P}^3$ : the algebra  $\mathcal{C}^\infty({}^m\mathcal{P}^3)$  admits a unique Lie bracket so that the projection  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow {}^m\mathcal{P}^3$  is a Poisson map.

(3.14) It is possible to endow with a Poisson structure the space  ${}^m\mathcal{PP}_+^3$  of configurations of *all*  $m$ -gons in  $\mathbf{R}^3$ , without fixing the perimeter to 2. It suffices in the above construction, to replace the  $U_2$ -reduction  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) = \widetilde{\Phi}^{-1}(0)/U_2$  by the  $SU_2$ -reduction  $\widetilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) := \widetilde{\Phi}^{-1}(0)/SU_2$ . The latter is a non-compact space, the total space of the determinant bundle over  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  with the zero

section collapsed. The trace function on  $\mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C})$  descends to  $\tilde{\mathbf{G}}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  and to the Casimir function “perimeter” on  ${}^m\mathcal{PP}_+^3$ .

#### 4. POLYGONS WITH GIVEN SIDES – KÄHLER STRUCTURES

We now use the map  $\ell : {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k, {}^m\mathcal{P}_+^k, {}^m\mathcal{P}^k \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^m$  defined in (2.4). Recall that  $\ell(\rho)$ , for  $\rho \in {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k$ , is the length of the successive sides of a representative of  $r$  with total perimeter 2.

For  $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_m) \in \mathbf{R}_{\geq 0}^m$  with  $\sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_i = 2$ , we define

$${}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k(\alpha) := \tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k(\alpha) := \{\rho \in {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k \mid \ell(\rho) = \alpha\} \subset {}^m\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k.$$

The space  $\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k(\alpha)$  is invariant under the action of  $O_k$ . We define the moduli spaces

$$\mathcal{P}_+^k(\alpha) := SO_k \backslash \tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k(\alpha) = \ell^{-1}(\alpha) \subset {}^m\mathcal{P}_+^k$$

and

$$\mathcal{P}^k(\alpha) := O_k \backslash \tilde{\mathcal{P}}^k(\alpha) = \ell^{-1}(\alpha) \subset {}^m\mathcal{P}^k.$$

The space  $\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^1(\alpha)$  consists of a finite number of points and is generically empty. We call  $\alpha$  *generic* if  $\tilde{\mathcal{P}}^1(\alpha) = \emptyset$ .

**THEOREM 4.1.** *The map  $\mu := \ell \circ \widehat{\Phi} : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow \mathbf{R}^m$  is a moment map for the action of  $U_1^m$  on  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$ .*

*Proof.* As seen in (3.13), the moment map  $\Psi : \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}(m)$  for the  $U_m$ -action on  $\mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  is induced from  $\tilde{\Psi} : \mathcal{M}_{m \times 2}(\mathbf{C}) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}(m)$  given by  $\tilde{\Psi}(a, b) := (a, b) \cdot (a, b)^*$ . A moment map  $\mu$  for the action of  $U_1^m$  is obtained by composing  $\Psi$  with the projection  $\mathcal{H}(m) \longrightarrow \mathbf{R}^m$  associating to a matrix its diagonal entries. So, if  $\Pi \in \mathbf{G}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$  is generated by  $a$  and  $b$  with  $(a, b) \in \mathbf{V}_2(\mathbf{C}^m)$ , one has

$$\mu(\Pi) = (|a_1|^2 + |b_1|^2, \dots, |a_m|^2 + |b_m|^2) = \ell \circ \widehat{\Phi}(a, b).$$

□

A now classic theorem of Atiyah and Guillemin-Sternberg [Au, §III.4.2] asserts that the image of a moment map for a torus action is a convex polytope (the *moment polytope*). The restriction of the moment map to the fixed point set of an anti-symplectic involution has the same image [Du]. In our case, one gets these facts directly :