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LEMMA 4.8. *Suppose that  $C \otimes K$  is étale over  $K$  and let  $(M, F)$  and  $(M', F')$  be cubic  $C$ -forms. Assume that the determining mappings  $q_F, q_{F'}$  are nonzero. Then every  $R$ -linear isomorphism  $f: (M, F) \rightarrow (M', F')$  is either  $C$ -linear or  $C$ -sesquilinear.*

*Proof.* The map  $f$  will induce an isomorphism of determining quadratic mappings of type  $C$ . We conclude by Proposition 2.3.  $\square$

## 5. STRUCTURE OF THE CUBIC $C$ -FORMS

We shall describe below the  $C$ -module structure of  $S_C^3(M^*)$  and the corresponding  $C$ -isomorphism classes.

THEOREM 5.1. *Let  $M$  be a rank-one projective  $C$ -module. For each  $\phi \in \text{Hom}_C(M_C^{\otimes 3}, C^*)$  we define a cubic form by  $F_\phi(\mathbf{x}) = \phi(\mathbf{x} \otimes \mathbf{x} \otimes \mathbf{x})(1)$ . Then*

- (i) *The correspondence  $\phi \mapsto F_\phi$  is an isomorphism of  $C$ -modules  $\text{Hom}_C(M_C^{\otimes 3}, C^*) \rightarrow S_C^3(M^*)$ .*
- (ii) *The determining mapping  $q_{F_\phi}$  is primitive if and only if  $\phi$  is an isomorphism.*
- (iii) *Two cubic  $C$ -forms  $F$  and  $F_1$  on  $M$  are equivalent over  $C$  if and only if there exists  $c \in C^\times$  such that  $F_1 = c^3 F$ .*

*Proof.* (i) This is a restatement of Proposition 3.7. The map  $\phi \mapsto F_\phi$  is a  $C$ -isomorphism by definition of the structure of  $C$ -module on  $S_C^3(M^*)$  in Section 3.

(ii) It is enough to prove our assertion locally, so we assume that  $M$  is free over  $C$ . Write  $M = C\mathbf{m}$  for some  $\mathbf{m} \in M$ . Let  $\lambda = \phi(\mathbf{m} \otimes \mathbf{m} \otimes \mathbf{m})$ . Then we have  $\phi(x\mathbf{m} \otimes y\mathbf{m} \otimes z\mathbf{m}) = \lambda(xyz)$ . Let  $\beta(y\mathbf{m}, z\mathbf{m}) = \lambda(yz)$  and observe that  $\lambda$  is a basis of  $C^*$  over  $C$  if and only if the symmetric bilinear form  $\beta$  is unimodular. We have

$$\begin{aligned} q_{F_\phi}(x\mathbf{m}) &= n(x)q_{F_\phi}(\mathbf{m}) \\ &= n(x) \wedge^2 \beta. \end{aligned}$$

It follows from this equality that  $q_{F_\phi}$  is primitive if and only if  $\beta$  is unimodular, that is, if and only if  $\phi$  is an isomorphism.

(iii) Let  $F$  and  $F_1$  be cubic  $C$ -forms on  $M$ . Suppose that they are  $C$ -isomorphic. Then there exists  $c \in C^\times$  such that  $F_1 = F \circ l_c$ . Let  $T$  be the symmetric trilinear form associated to  $F$ . Since  $T(cx, cy, cz) = T(c^3x, y, z)$ , we get  $F_1 = c^3F$ . Conversely, if  $F_1 = c^3F$  we may reverse these steps to conclude that  $F_1 = F \circ l_c$   $\square$

We shall henceforth denote by  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  the set of  $C$ -isomorphism classes of cubic  $C$ -forms on  $M$  with primitive determining mapping. Recall that when  $M$  is an invertible  $C$ -module, there is a *unique* primitive quadratic mapping  $(M, q, N)$  of type  $C$  on  $M$  ([11]). If  $F \in \text{Cubic}_C(M)$ , then necessarily

$$(M, q_F, \mathcal{D}(M)) = (M, q, N) \text{ in } H(C), \quad \text{and} \quad C = C^+(M, q_F, \mathcal{D}(M)),$$

by Corollary 4.7 (ii); in particular, all members of  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  have isomorphic determining mappings.

**THEOREM 5.2.** *Let  $M$  be a projective  $C$ -module of rank one.*

- (i) *The set  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  is nonempty if and only if  $3[M] = [C^*]$  in  $\text{Pic}(C)$ .*
- (ii) *If  $3[M] = [C^*]$  in  $\text{Pic}(C)$ , then the group  $C^\times / C^{\times 3}$  acts simply transitively on the set  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$ .*

*Proof.* (i) By Part (ii) of Theorem 5.1, the module  $M$  admits a cubic  $C$ -form with primitive determining mapping if and only if there is an isomorphism  $M_C^3 \rightarrow C^*$ .

(ii) Since  $M_C^{\otimes 3}$  and  $C^*$  are invertible  $C$ -modules,  $\text{Isom}_C(M_C^{\otimes 3}, C^*)$  is either empty or it is a torsor for  $C^\times$  (i.e., a simply transitive  $C^\times$ -set). It is nonempty if and only if  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  is nonempty, by Part (i). Suppose this is so, and choose an isomorphism  $\phi: M_C^3 \rightarrow C^*$ . Each cubic  $C$ -form on  $M$  with primitive determining mapping is uniquely of the shape  $F_{c\phi}$  with  $c \in C^\times$  by Parts (i) and (ii) of Theorem 5.1. By Part (iii) of Theorem 5.1, the form  $F_{c\phi}$  will be isomorphic with  $F_\phi$  if and only if  $c \in (C^\times)^3$ .  $\square$

We discuss next the relation between  $R$ -isomorphism and  $C$ -homomorphism of cubic forms.

Let  $\text{Cubic}_R(M)$  be the set of  $R$ -isomorphism classes of binary Gaussian cubic forms on  $M$  with primitive determining mapping of type  $C$ . Set

$$\mathcal{S}_R(C) = \coprod_{[M]} \text{Cubic}_R(M) \quad \text{and} \quad \mathcal{S}(C) = \coprod_{[M]} \text{Cubic}_C(M),$$

where  $[M]$  runs over the elements of  $\text{Pic}(C)$  satisfying  $3[M] = [C^*]$  and  $\coprod$  means disjoint union.

The set  $\mathcal{S}(C)$  carries a natural involution given by

$$[M, F] \mapsto \overline{[M, F]} := [\overline{M}, F],$$

where  $\overline{M}$  is defined as follows:  $\overline{M} = M$  as  $R$ -modules with  $C$  acting by  $c \cdot \mathbf{x} = \overline{c}\mathbf{x}$ , where  $c \mapsto \overline{c}$  is the canonical involution of  $C$ . This is well-defined because  $q_F$  depends only on the  $R$ -module structure of  $M$ , and it will be of type  $C$  for  $M$  if and only if it is so for  $\overline{M}$  since  $n(c) = n(\overline{c})$ . Note that  $[M, F] = \overline{[M, F]}$  if and only if  $(M, F)$  possesses a  $C$ -sesquilinear automorphism.

PROPOSITION 5.3. *With the previous notation we have*

- (i)  $\mathcal{S}_R(C) = \mathcal{S}(C) / \sim$ , where  $\sim$  identifies  $[M, F]$  with  $\overline{[M, F]}$ .
- (ii) If  $[M] = [\overline{M}]$  and  $3[M] = [C^*]$ , then  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  has an element  $[M, F_0]$  fixed under the involution.
- (iii) If  $[M] \neq [\overline{M}]$  and  $3[M] = [C^*]$  in  $\text{Pic}(C)$ , then  $\text{Cubic}_C(M) = \text{Cubic}_R(M)$ . In particular,  $\text{Cubic}_R(M)$  is a simply transitive  $(C^\times / C^{\times 3})$ -set.

*Proof.* (i) Let  $\psi: (M, F) \rightarrow (M', F')$  be an  $R$ -isomorphism. Then  $\psi$  is an isomorphism of quadratic mappings  $(M, q_F, \mathcal{D}(M)) \rightarrow (M', q_{F'}, \mathcal{D}(M'))$ . By Proposition 2.3, the map  $\psi$  is either  $C$ -linear or  $C$ -sesquilinear. Hence either  $[M, F] = [M', F']$  or  $[M, F] = \overline{[M', F']}$ .

(ii) We start out with an element  $[M, F] \in \mathcal{S}(C)$ , which exists by hypothesis on  $M$  and by Theorem 5.2(i), and we choose a  $C$ -sesquilinear automorphism  $\sigma: M \rightarrow M$ . We know by Theorem 5.2 that all the  $C$ -forms on  $M$  are of the form  $wF$  with  $w \in C^\times$ . In particular  $F \circ \sigma = wF$  for some  $w \in C^\times$ . An easy computation using (21) shows  $(wF) \circ \sigma = \overline{w}(F \circ \sigma)$ , so  $F \circ \sigma^2 = \overline{w}wF$ . Since  $\sigma^2$  is  $C$ -linear, it follows from Theorem 5.2 that  $\overline{w}w \in C^{\times 3}$ . Using the fact that the cohomology of  $\mathbf{Z}/2\mathbf{Z}$  with coefficients in a group of odd exponent (in this case  $C^\times / C^{\times 3}$  with  $\mathbf{Z}/2\mathbf{Z}$  acting via the canonical involution of  $C$ ) is trivial, we conclude that  $w = \overline{u}^{-1}uv^3$  for some  $u, v \in C^\times$ . Let  $F_0 = uF$ . By direct computation we have  $F_0 \circ \sigma = v^3 F_0$ ; thus  $\overline{[M, F]} = [M, F \circ \sigma] = [M, F]$  as claimed.

(iii) If  $[M] \neq [\overline{M}]$ , by Part (i), no two distinct elements of  $\text{Cubic}_C(M)$  can be identified in  $\text{Cubic}_R(M)$ , that is, the canonical projection

$$\text{Cubic}_C(M) \rightarrow \text{Cubic}_R(M)$$

is a bijection. The second assertion follows from Theorem 5.2.  $\square$



COROLLARY 5.4. *Let  $[M] \in \text{Pic}(C)$  be as in Part (ii) of Theorem 5.3. Let  $[M, F_0] \in \text{Cubic}_C(M)$  be a the fixed point of the involution. Then the map  $(C^\times / C^{\times 3}) \rightarrow \text{Cubic}_C(M)$  given by  $u \mapsto [M, uF_0]$  is an isomorphism of  $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ -sets. In particular, this correspondence induces a bijection  $\text{Cubic}_R(M) \simeq (C^\times / C^{\times 3}) / \sim$ , where  $\sim$  identifies  $c$  with  $\bar{c}$ .*

*Proof.* By Theorem 5.2, it is enough to show that the map  $u \mapsto [M, uF_0]$  commutes with the action of  $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$  via the involutions. Let  $\sigma: (\bar{M}, F_0) \rightarrow (M, F_0)$  be a  $C$ -isomorphism and let  $u \in C^\times$ . Since  $(uF_0) \circ \sigma = \bar{u}(F_0 \circ \sigma)$ , we have  $[M, uF_0] = [\bar{M}, uF_0] \stackrel{\sigma}{=} [M, (uF_0) \circ \sigma] = [M, \bar{u}(F_0 \circ \sigma)] = [M, \bar{u}F_0]$ .  $\square$

The above proposition applies in particular to the case of fields. We can summarize our results in this case as follows:

PROPOSITION 5.5. *Let  $K$  be a field of characteristic not 2 or 3. Let  $\mathcal{S}_K$  be the set of  $K$ -isomorphism classes of all binary cubic forms over  $K$  with nonzero discriminant. Then there is a natural partition*

$$(25) \quad \mathcal{S}_K = \coprod_C \text{Cubic}_K(C),$$

where  $C$  ranges over the quadratic étale  $K$ -algebras and each  $\text{Cubic}_K(C)$  is in one-to-one correspondence with the quotient of  $C^\times / (C^\times)^3$  by the involution  $c \mapsto \bar{c}$ .

*Proof.* If  $K$  is a field then  $\text{Pic}(C) = 0$  for all quadratic  $K$ -algebras  $C$ . Each cubic form with nonzero discriminant will be a  $C$ -form for a unique quadratic étale algebra, namely the even Clifford algebra of its determining form, by Proposition 2.8 and Theorem 4.5. We finish by applying Proposition 5.3.  $\square$

As an illustration of these ideas, we prove a result known to L.E. Dickson [5, page 23]:

PROPOSITION 5.6. *Let  $K = \mathbb{F}_q$  be a finite field with  $q$  elements, not of characteristic 2 or 3. Then the number of  $\text{GL}_2(\mathbb{F}_q)$ -equivalence classes of binary cubic forms over  $\mathbb{F}_q$  with nonzero discriminant is 3 if  $q \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$ , and is 9 if  $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ .*

*Proof.* The étale quadratic algebras over  $\mathbf{F}_q$  are

1.  $C = \mathbf{F}_q \times \mathbf{F}_q$ ;

2.  $C = \mathbf{F}_{q^2}$ .

If  $q \equiv 2 \pmod{3}$ , then  $C^\times / (C^\times)^3$  is trivial in the first case and is  $\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z}$  in the second case since  $q^2 \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ . In the second case the involution  $c \rightarrow \bar{c}$  fixes the identity element of  $C^\times / (C^\times)^3$  and interchanges the other two elements, giving 2 orbits on this. This gives  $1 + 2$  orbits in total, so by Proposition 5.5, we have 3 isomorphism classes of binary cubic forms. If  $q \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ , then  $C^\times / (C^\times)^3$  is  $\mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z} \times \mathbf{Z}/3\mathbf{Z}$  in the first case and is  $\mathbf{Z}/3$  in the second case. In the second case, the Galois involution acts trivially, since  $\mathbf{F}_q^\times / (\mathbf{F}_q^\times)^3 = C^\times / (C^\times)^3$ . This gives 3 orbits. In the first case, the involution flips the two factors, and there are clearly 6 orbits. This gives a total of 9 orbits, and hence 9 cubic forms.  $\square$

REMARK 5.7. When  $R = K$  is a field of characteristic not 2 or 3, one can give an alternate description of  $\mathcal{S}_R$ . Since  $\mathbf{GL}_2$  acts threefold transitively on  $\mathbf{P}^1$ , any binary cubic form with nonzero discriminant is equivalent over the separable closure of  $K$  with  $\Phi = xy(x - y)$ . Therefore, by the usual descent yoga, there is a canonical bijection

$$(26) \quad \mathcal{S}_K \simeq H^1(K, \text{Aut}(\Phi)),$$

where  $\text{Aut}(\Phi)$  is the  $K$ -group scheme of automorphisms of  $\Phi$ . The structure of  $\text{Aut}(\Phi)$  is easily worked out:

$$\text{Aut}(\Phi) = \mu_3 \times S_3,$$

where  $S_3$  is the symmetric group on 3 letters as a trivial Galois module; it corresponds to the stabilizer in  $\mathbf{PGL}_2$  of the set of zeros of  $\Phi$  in  $\mathbf{P}^1$ .

The signature  $S_3 \rightarrow \mu_2$  induces a homomorphism  $\delta: \text{Aut}(\Phi) \rightarrow \mu_2$ , which in turn induces a map in Galois cohomology

$$(27) \quad \delta_*: H^1(K, \text{Aut}(\Phi)) \rightarrow H^1(K, \mu_2) = K^\times / K^{\times 2}.$$

Using (4) and the identification (26), we can show that

$$\delta_*(F) = -3D_F \in K^\times / K^{\times 2}.$$

Thus we can interpret the partition (25) as the partition on  $H^1(K, \text{Aut}(\Phi))$  given by the fibers of  $\delta_*$ , the set  $\text{Cubic}_K(C)$  corresponding to the fiber  $\delta_*^{-1}(-3D)$ , where  $D$  is the discriminant of  $C$ .

When  $R$  is a PID we can give a more precise version of Theorem 5.2. In this case,  $C$  is a free  $R$ -module, and since  $R1$  is a direct factor,  $C = R \oplus R\omega = R[\omega]$  is a monogenic  $R$ -algebra. Therefore  $C^*$  is free of rank one over  $C$  (see Section 7), so the condition  $3[M] = [C^*]$  of Theorem 5.2 reads simply  $3[M] = 0$ . Furthermore, since  $\text{Pic}(R) = 0$ , the exact sequence (13) induces an isomorphism

$$(28) \quad G(C)[3] \simeq H(C)[3] = \text{Pic}(C)[3]$$

(note that  $R^\times/n(C^\times)$  is an elementary abelian 2-group).

The isomorphism (28) suggests that when  $R$  is a PID, it should be possible to use quadratic forms instead of quadratic mappings and develop a theory for binary cubic forms that is completely parallel to Eisenstein's theory over  $\mathbf{Z}$ . As we mentioned above, any projective  $R$ -module is free, so that a quadratic form  $(M, q)$  is the same thing as a quadratic form classically understood: a homogeneous polynomial of degree two. If  $q$  is of type  $C$  then  $M = R^2$  becomes an invertible  $C$ -module. This  $C$ -module is said to be *associated to*  $q$ .

We begin by proving an easy technical lemma.

**LEMMA 5.8.** *Suppose that  $R$  is a UFD and let  $C = R[t]/(t^2 + bt + c)$ . Let  $D = b^2 - 4c$  and let  $\omega$  be the class of  $t$  in  $C$ . Set  $\delta = b + 2\omega$  (note that  $\delta^2 = D$ ) and let  $\xi = x + y\delta$  with  $x, y \in R$ . If  $n(\xi) \equiv 0 \pmod{4R}$ , then  $\xi \equiv 0 \pmod{2C}$ .*

*Proof.* It is enough to prove  $x \equiv by \pmod{2R}$ . Let  $p \in R$  be an irreducible element. For  $z \in R - \{0\}$  we denote by  $\text{ord}_p(z)$  the largest power of  $p$  occurring in the factorization of  $z$ . Set  $m = \text{ord}_p(x - by)$ . If  $m < \text{ord}_p(2)$  then, since  $\text{ord}_p$  is a valuation,  $\text{ord}_p(x + by) = \text{ord}_p(x - by + 2by) = m$ . Hence  $\text{ord}_p(x^2 - b^2y^2) = 2m < \text{ord}_p(4)$ , which contradicts our assumption (since  $b^2 \equiv D \pmod{4R}$ ). Therefore  $\text{ord}_p(x - by) \geq \text{ord}_p(2)$  for all irreducible  $p$ , which proves the lemma.  $\square$

Now we can prove:

**PROPOSITION 5.9.** *Let  $R$  be a PID and let  $F$  be a cubic form on  $M = R^2$  given in the natural basis by (1), with coefficients  $a_i \in R$ . Suppose that its Eisenstein determining form  $q_F(\mathbf{x}) = ax_1^2 + bx_1x_2 + cx_2^2$ , as in (2), is primitive of discriminant  $D \neq 0$  and let  $C := C^+(q_F) = R[t]/(t^2 + bt + ac)$ . Then  $3[M, q_F] = 0$  in  $G(C)$ .*

*Proof.* By the syzygy (7) we have

$$4q_F(\mathbf{x})q_F(\mathbf{y})q_F(\mathbf{z}) = X^2 - DY^2,$$

where  $X$  and  $Y$  are symmetric  $R$ -trilinear forms in  $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z}$ . Applying the lemma to the rings  $R' := R[x_1, x_2, y_1, y_2, z_1, z_2]$  and  $C' := C \otimes_R R'$  with  $\xi = X + \delta Y$  (with  $\delta$  as in the lemma; the lemma applies since  $R$ , hence  $R'$ , is a UFD), we have

$$(29) \quad q_F(\mathbf{x})q_F(\mathbf{y})q_F(\mathbf{z}) = n(T),$$

where  $T = \xi/2 \in C'$ , by the lemma. Note that  $T$  is symmetric trilinear in  $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z}$ ; hence the identity (29) shows that the triplication of  $q_F$  is the trivial form, as desired.  $\square$

The results below were essentially known in the case  $R = \mathbf{Z}$  to Eisenstein [6] and [7], Arndt [1], Pepin [13], Cayley [3] and Hermite [8].

**THEOREM 5.10.** *Let  $R$  be a PID. Let  $q = ax_1^2 + bx_1x_2 + cx_2^2$  be a primitive binary quadratic form over  $R$  of discriminant  $D = b^2 - 4ac \neq 0$ . Let  $C = C^+(q)$  be the even Clifford algebra of  $q$  and let  $M := R^2$  be endowed with the natural  $C$ -module structure. Let  $\tau \in C$  be such that  $\tau + \bar{\tau} = 0$  and  $\tau^2 = D$ . With this notation we have*

- (i) *There exists a Gaussian binary cubic form  $F$  such that  $q_F = q$  (where  $q_F$  is given by (2)) if and only if  $3[M, q] = 0$  in the group  $G(C)$  of  $C$ -isomorphism classes of quadratic forms of type  $C$ .*
- (ii) *If  $F$  and  $F'$  are Gaussian binary cubic forms with  $q_F = q_{F'} = q$ , then there exists a unit  $c = a + b\tau \in C^\times$  with  $n(c) = 1$  such that  $F' = cF = aF + bG_F$ , where  $G_F$  is the cubic covariant defined in (5).*
- (iii) *Let two cubic forms  $F$  and  $F'$  with  $q_F = q_{F'} = q$  be given. The following conditions are equivalent:*
  - (a) *There exists  $d \in C^\times$  with  $n(d) = 1$  such that  $F' = d^3F$ .*
  - (b) *There exists  $d \in C^\times$  such that  $F' = d^3F$ .*
  - (c)  *$F$  and  $F'$  are  $\mathbf{SL}_2(R)$ -equivalent.*

*Proof.* (i) By Proposition 5.9 the condition  $3[M, q] = 0$  is necessary. We shall see that it is sufficient. Suppose  $3[M, q] = 0$  in  $G(C)$ ; in particular

$$3[M] = 0 \in \text{Pic}(C),$$

thus by virtue of Theorem 5.2, Part (i), there exists a Gaussian cubic form  $F$  such that  $[M, q_F, R] = [M, q, R]$  in  $H(C)$ . By Proposition 5.9, the class  $[M, q_F]$  is in  $G(C)[3]$ ; hence, by the isomorphism (28), we conclude  $[M, q_F] = [M, q]$  in  $G(C)$ .

(ii) Suppose that  $q_F = q_{F'} = q$ .  $C \otimes K$  is an étale  $K$ -algebra since  $D \neq 0$ . Hence by Corollary 4.7 both  $F$  and  $F'$  are  $C$ -forms and by Theorem 5.2, Part (ii), there exists  $c \in C^\times$  such that  $F' = cF = (\rho(c)/3)F$  (in the notation of (23)). Writing  $c = a + b\tau$  we get  $F' = aF + (b/3)(\rho(\tau)F)$ . By (24) we have  $\rho(\tau)F = 3G_F$  (changing the sign of  $\tau$  if needed) and direct computation shows  $q_{F'} = n(c)q_F$ . Thus  $n(c) = 1$  as required. Note that in general, the coefficients  $a, b$  will have a 2 in the denominator since  $\tau = b + 2\omega$  for a generator  $\omega$  of the algebra  $C$  (see Lemma 5.8).

(iii)  $a) \Rightarrow b)$  is trivial.

$b) \Rightarrow c)$ . If  $F' = d^3F$  with  $d \in C^\times$  then, by Part (ii) of Theorem 5.2,  $F$  and  $F'$  are  $C$ -equivalent, the isomorphism being  $\mathbf{x} \rightarrow d\mathbf{x}$ . We have  $n(d)^3 = 1$  by the proof of Part (ii) of this theorem, so replacing  $d$  by  $n(d)d$  we can assume  $n(d) = 1$ ; that is,  $F$  and  $F'$  are  $\mathbf{SL}_2(R)$ -equivalent, and this also establishes the implication  $b) \Rightarrow a)$ .

$c) \Rightarrow a)$ . If  $F'(\mathbf{x}) = F(d\mathbf{x})$ , where  $d \in \mathbf{SL}_2(R)$ , then  $d$  is in the orthogonal group of  $q = q_F = q_{F'}$ . Since  $\det(d) = 1$ , it is in the special orthogonal group of this form, hence given by multiplication by an element  $d \in C_1^\times$  by Corollary 2.4. But  $F(d\mathbf{x}) = (d^3F)(\mathbf{x})$ .  $\square$

**COROLLARY 5.11.** *Now let  $R = \mathbf{Z}$ , and let  $D$  be a nonzero integer congruent to 0 or 1 modulo 4. Let  $F$  be an integral Gaussian binary cubic form with primitive determining form of discriminant  $D$ .*

- (i) *Suppose  $D < -3$ . If  $F'$  is another Gaussian binary cubic form with  $q_{F'} = q_F$  then  $F'$  is  $\mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbf{Z})$ -equivalent to  $F$ .*
- (ii) *Suppose  $D > 0$  or  $D = -3$ . Then there are exactly three  $\mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbf{Z})$ -equivalence classes of Gaussian binary cubic forms  $F'$  such that  $q_{F'} = q_F$ .*

*Proof.* We have that  $C^+(q_F) = C_D$ , the unique quadratic  $\mathbf{Z}$ -algebra of discriminant  $D$ . Note that  $(C_D)_1^\times / (C_D)_1^{\times 3}$  is trivial when  $D < -3$  and is cyclic of order 3 when  $D = -3$  or  $D > 0$ . The corollary follows immediately from this and Parts (ii) and (iii) of Theorem 5.10.  $\square$

**COROLLARY 5.12.** *Let  $D$  be a nonzero integer congruent to 0 or 1 modulo 4. Let  $h_3(D)$  be the number of  $\mathbf{SL}_2(\mathbf{Z})$ -equivalence classes of binary Gaussian cubic forms with primitive determining form of discriminant  $D$ . Then  $h_3(D) = |\text{Pic}(C_D)[3]|$  if  $D < -3$  and  $h_3(D) = 3|\text{Pic}(C_D)[3]|$  if  $D = -3$  or  $D > 0$ .*

*Proof.* Follows immediately from Corollary 5.11, equation (28) and Part (i) of Theorem 5.10.  $\square$

## 6. COHOMOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Let  $\mathbf{G}_m$  be the multiplicative group regarded as an affine group scheme over  $X := \operatorname{Spec} C$  and let  $\mu_3 \subset \mathbf{G}_m$  be the kernel of multiplication by 3. All the cohomology groups below are with respect to the flat topology on  $X$ .

**THEOREM 6.1.** *Suppose  $[C^*]$  is divisible by 3 in  $\operatorname{Pic}(C)$ . Then the group  $H_{\text{fl}}^1(X, \mu_3)$  acts simply transitively on the set  $\mathcal{S}(C)$  of  $C$ -equivalence classes of cubic  $C$ -forms with primitive determining mapping.*

*Proof.* Recall that the group  $H_{\text{fl}}^1(X, \mu_3)$  can be interpreted concretely as the set of isomorphism classes of pairs  $(L, \psi)$ , where  $L$  is an invertible  $C$ -module and where  $\psi: L_C^{\otimes 3} \rightarrow C$  is an isomorphism (see Milne [14, Chap. III, §4]). Let  $[L, \psi]$  be an element of  $H_{\text{fl}}^1(X, \mu_3)$  and let  $(M, F)$  be a cubic  $C$ -form. By Theorem 5.1, Part (i), we can assume  $F = F_\phi$ , where  $\phi: M^{\otimes 3} \rightarrow C^*$  is an isomorphism. We define an action of  $H_{\text{fl}}^1(X, \mu_3)$  on  $\mathcal{S}(C)$  by

$$(30) \quad [L, \psi] \cdot [M, F_\phi] = [L \otimes M, F_{\psi \otimes \phi}],$$

noting that

$$(L \otimes M)_C^{\otimes 3} = L_C^{\otimes 3} \otimes M_C^{\otimes 3} \xrightarrow{\psi \otimes \phi} C \otimes C^* = C^*$$

is an isomorphism. Let us show first that this action is simple. Suppose  $[L \otimes M, F_{\psi \otimes \phi}] = [M, F_\phi]$ . Then,  $L \cong C$ . Choosing an isomorphism  $L \rightarrow C$ , we have  $\psi(x \otimes y \otimes z) = uxyz$ , where  $u \in C^\times$ . Hence  $[M, F_\phi] = [M, F_{u\phi}]$ , and by Part (iii) of Theorem 5.1 we conclude that  $u = c^3$  for some  $c \in C^\times$ . But then  $c: C \rightarrow C$  provides an isomorphism of  $(C, \psi)$  with  $(C, 1)$ , thus  $[L, \psi] = [C, 1]$ .

We show now that the action is transitive. Let  $[M_i, F_{\phi_i}]$  ( $i = 1, 2$ ) be elements of  $\mathcal{S}(C)$ . Let  $M_2^\bullet = \operatorname{Hom}_C(M_2, C)$  and let  $\phi_2^\bullet: (C^*)^\bullet \rightarrow (M_2^{\otimes 3})^\bullet$  be the dual of  $\phi_2$ . Let  $L = M_1 \otimes M_2^\bullet$  and let  $\psi = \phi_1 \otimes \phi_2^{\bullet -1}$ . One verifies immediately that  $[L, \psi] \cdot [M_2, F_{\phi_2}] = [M_1, F_{\phi_1}]$ , which proves that the action is transitive.  $\square$