

SMOOTH CURVES COVERING TWO CURVES  
OF POSITIVE GENUS

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**Abstract:** Fix integers  $z \geq 2$ ,  $q_i \geq 0$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ ,  $a_i \geq 2$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ ,  $g_j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z - 1$ . Set  $k_z := a_z$  and define by decreasing induction the integers  $k_j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z - 1$  by the formula  $k_j := a_j k_{j+1}$ . Fix smooth and connected projective curves  $Y_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ , such that  $p_a(Y_i) = q_i$  and there is  $M_j \in \text{Pic}^{a_j}(Y_j)$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z$ , spanned by its global sections. Set  $x_j := h^0(Y_j, M_j)$  and  $g := g_z$ . Assume  $1 + a_1 a_2 + a_1 q_1 + a_2 q_2 - a_1 - a_2 + 1 - \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor \leq g_1 \leq 1 + a_1 a_2 + a_1 q_1 + a_2 q_2 - a_1 - a_2$  and  $1 + a_j a_{j+1} + a_j g_j + a_{j+1} q_{j+1} - a_j - a_{j+1} + 1 - \lfloor x_j/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_{j+1}/2 \rfloor \leq g_1 \leq 1 + a_j a_{j+1} + a_j g_j + a_{j+1} q_{j+1} - a_j - a_{j+1}$  for  $1 \leq j \leq z - 1$ . Here we prove the existence of a smooth and connected genus  $g_z$  projective curve  $X$  and degree  $k_i$  morphisms  $f_i : X \rightarrow Y_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ , such that  $p_a(X) = g$ ,  $p_a(Y_i) = q_i$ , and all morphisms  $(f_j, f_z) : X \rightarrow Y_j \times Y_z$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z - 1$ , are birational onto its image.

**AMS Subject Classification:** 14H30

**Key Words:** multiple coverings of curves

1. The Statement

Here we study the existence of smooth and connected projective curves  $X$  equipped with several morphisms  $f_i : X \rightarrow Y_i$  with  $Y_i$  a prescribed curve of genus  $> 0$ . Here we prove the following result.

**Theorem 1.** Fix integers  $z \geq 2$ ,  $q_i \geq 0$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ ,  $a_i \geq 2$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ ,  $g_j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z - 1$ . Set  $k_z := a_z$  and define by decreasing induction the

integers  $k_j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z-1$  by the formula  $k_j := a_j k_{j+1}$ . Fix smooth and connected projective curves  $Y_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ , such that  $p_a(Y_i) = q_i$  and there is  $M_j \in \text{Pic}^{a_j}(Y_j)$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z$ , spanned by its global sections. Set  $x_j := h^0(Y_j, M_j)$  and  $g := g_z$ . Assume  $1 + a_1 a_2 + a_1 q_1 + a_2 q_2 - a_1 - a_2 + 1 - \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor \leq g_1 \leq 1 + a_1 a_2 + a_1 q_1 + a_2 q_2 - a_1 - a_2$  and  $1 + a_j a_{j+1} + a_j q_j + a_{j+1} q_{j+1} - a_j - a_{j+1} + 1 - \lfloor x_j/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_{j+1}/2 \rfloor \leq g_1 \leq 1 + a_j a_{j+1} + a_j q_j + a_{j+1} q_{j+1} - a_j - a_{j+1}$  for  $1 \leq j \leq z-1$ . Then there exist a smooth and connected genus  $g$  projective curve  $X$  and degree  $k_i$  morphisms  $f_i : X \rightarrow Y_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq z$ , such that  $p_a(X) = g$ ,  $p_a(Y_i) = q_i$ , and all morphisms  $(f_j, f_z) : X \rightarrow Y_j \times Y_z$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z-1$ , are birational onto its image.

**Remark 1.** Take the set-up of the statement of Theorem 1. Notice that we may always take  $a_i = q_i + x_i - 1$  and  $h^1(Y_i, M_i) = 0$  for all  $i$ .

We work over an algebraically closed field  $\mathbb{K}$  with  $\text{char}(\mathbb{K}) = 0$ .

## 2. The Proof

We will first prove the case  $z = 2$  of Theorem 1. The general case will easily follow by induction on  $z$ . To prove the case  $z = 2$  we will use the following set-up.

**Remark 2.** Set  $S := Y_1 \times Y_2$ . Hence  $S$  is a smooth and connected projective surface. Let  $\pi_i : S \rightarrow Y_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , denote the projection. By Künneth formula we have  $h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S) = q_1 + q_2$ . For all  $M_i \in \text{Pic}(Y_i)$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , set  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2) := \pi_1^*(M_1) \otimes \pi_2^*(M_2) \in \text{Pic}(S)$ . In this way we obtain an inclusion of abelian groups  $\mathfrak{s} : \text{Pic}(Y_1) \oplus \text{Pic}(Y_2) \rightarrow \text{Pic}(S)$ .  $Y_1$  and  $Y_2$  are called Picard-independent if the inclusion  $\mathfrak{s}$  is surjective (see [4]). This is often (but not always) the case. The pair of integers  $(\text{deg}(M_1), \text{deg}(M_2))$  is called the bidegree of the line bundle  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)$ . Fixing any  $P_i \in Y_i$  and using the integers  $D \cdot \pi_i^{-1}(P_i)$  we see that every Weil divisor of  $S$  has a bidegree, even if  $Y_1$  and  $Y_2$  are not Picard-independent. We have  $(\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2) \cdot \mathcal{O}_S(N_1, N_2)) = a_1 b_2 + a_2 b_1$  if  $\text{deg}(M_i) = a_i$  and  $\text{deg}(N_i) = b_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ . We have  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = h^0(Y_1, M_1) \cdot h^0(Y_2, M_2)$ ,  $h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = h^0(Y_1, M_1) \cdot h^1(Y_2, M_2) + h^1(Y_1, M_1) \cdot h^0(Y_2, M_2)$  and  $h^2(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(Y_1, M_1) \cdot h^1(Y_2, M_2)$  (Künneth formula). We have  $\omega_S \cong \mathcal{O}_S(\omega_{Y_1}, \omega_{Y_2})$ . Hence  $\omega_C \cong \mathcal{O}_S(\omega_{Y_1} \otimes M_1, \omega_{Y_2} \otimes M_2)$  for any effective divisor  $C \in |\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)|$  (adjunction formula). Thus  $p_a(C) = 1 + a_1 a_2 + a_1 q_1 + a_2 q_2 - a_1 - a_2$  if  $\geq (M_i) = a_i$ . For any  $P \in S$  let  $2P$  denote the first infinitesimal neighborhood of  $P$  in  $S$ , i.e. the closed zero-dimensional subscheme of  $S$  with  $(\mathcal{I}_P)^2$  as its ideal

sheaf. Hence  $(2P)_{red} = \{P\}$  and  $\text{length}(2P) = 3$ . Similarly, for any scheme  $A$  and any  $P \in A_{reg}$ , let  $\{2P, A\}$  denote the first infinitesimal neighborhood of  $P$  in  $A$ , i.e. the closed zero-dimensional subscheme of  $A$  with  $(\mathcal{I}_{P,A})^2$  as its ideal sheaf. Notice that  $\{2P, A\}_{red} = \{P\}$  and  $\text{length}(\{2P, A\}) = \dim_P(A) + 1$ .

**Remark 3.** Fix integers  $a_i \geq 2$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ , such that there are  $M_i \in \text{Pic}^{a_i}(Y_i)$ , which are spanned by their global sections. Hence the linear system  $\Gamma := |\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)|$  has no base points. Hence a general  $T \in \Gamma$  is smooth (Bertini's Theorem). There is  $T' \in \Gamma$  formed by the union of  $a_2$  fibers of  $\pi_1$  and  $a_1$  fibers of  $\pi_2$ . Thus  $T'$  is reduced and connected. Hence  $T$  is connected. Thus  $T$  is irreducible. Since each  $M_i$  is spanned, every irreducible component of  $T'$  moves and hence it is a nef divisor. Hence  $T$  is a nef divisor. Notice that  $h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = x_1 h^1(Y_2, M_2) + x_2 h^1(Y_1, M_1)$ . Set  $x_i := h^0(Y_i, M - i)$ . Thus  $\dim(\Gamma) = x_1 x_2 - 1$ . Fix an integer  $b \geq 0$  and a general  $B \subset S$  such that  $\sharp(B) = b$ . Set  $Z := \bigcup_{P \in B} 2P$ . Let  $C$  be a general member of the linear system  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$ .

**Claim A.** Assume  $b \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Then  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)) = x_1 h^1(Y_2, M_2) + x_2 h^1(Y_1, M_1)$ .

*Proof of Claim A.* For any zero-dimensional subscheme  $W \subset S$  the exact sequence

$$0 \rightarrow \mathcal{I}_W(M_1, M_2) \rightarrow \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2) \rightarrow \mathcal{O}_W(M_1, M_2) \rightarrow 0 \tag{1}$$

gives

$$h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_W(M_1, M_2)) \geq h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = x_1 h^1(Y_2, M_2) + x_2 h^1(Y_1, M_1).$$

Hence to prove Claim A it is sufficient to check the inequality

$$h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)) \leq h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)).$$

Fix  $\lfloor x_i/2 \rfloor$  general points  $Q_{j,i}$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq \lfloor x_i/2 \rfloor$ , of  $Y_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ . Set  $Q[h, k] := (Q_{h,1}, Q_{k,2}) \in S$ . Let  $\tilde{Q}[h, k]$  denote the closed zero-dimensional subscheme of  $S$  which is the product of the scheme  $\{2Q_{h,1}, Y_1\} \subset Y_1$  and the scheme  $\{2Q_{k,2}, Y_2\} \subset A_2$ . Set  $Z_i := \bigcup_{j=1}^{\lfloor x_i/2 \rfloor} \{2Q_{j,i}, A_i\}$ . Set  $\tilde{Q} := Z_1 \times Z_2 = \bigcup_{h,k} Q[h, k] \subset S$ . Since  $\text{char}(\mathbb{K}) = 0$  and the points  $Q_{j,i}$  are general in  $Y_i$ , we have  $h^1(Y_i, \mathcal{I}_{Z_i} \otimes M_i) = h^1(Y_i, M_i)$  (see [6]). Hence  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{Q}}(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2))$ . Notice that  $\sharp(\bigcup_{h,k} Q[h, k]) = \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Take any  $A \subseteq \bigcup_{h,k} Q[h, k]$  with  $\sharp(A) = a$  and set  $\tilde{A} := \bigcup_{P \in A} 2P$ . Since  $\tilde{Q}$  is zero-dimensional and  $\tilde{A} \subseteq \tilde{Q}$ , we have  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{Z}}(M_1, M_2)) \leq h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{Q}}(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2))$ . Hence Claim A is true for  $\tilde{Z}$ . By semicontinuity we get Claim A for the general  $Z$ .  $\square$

**Claim B.** Assume  $b \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Then every singularity of  $C$  is an ordinary node.

*Proof of Claim B.* Take  $Q_{j,i} \in Y_i$ ,  $i = 1, 2$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq \lfloor x_i/2 \rfloor$ , and  $Q[h, k] := (Q_{h,1}, Q_{k,2}) \in S$  as in the proof of Claim A. Fix any  $A \subset \bigcup_{h,k} Q[h, k]$  such that  $\sharp(A) = b$  and set  $\tilde{A} := \bigcup_{P \in A} 2P$ . We saw in the proof of Claim A that  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{A}}(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2))$ , i.e.  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{A}}(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2))$  (the minimal possible value). Take any reduced divisor  $E_i \in |\mathcal{O}_{Y_i}(M_i(-\sum_j Q_{j,i}))|$  such that the support of each  $E_i$  does not contain any of the points  $Q_{j,i}$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq \lfloor x_i/2 \rfloor$ . Set  $E := \pi_1(D_1 \cup \bigcup_j Q_{j,1}) \cup \pi_2(D_2 \cup \bigcup_j Q_{j,2})$ . Hence  $E \in |\mathcal{I}_{\tilde{A}}(M_1, M_2)|$  and  $E$  has only ordinary nodes. Since  $h^1(S, \mathcal{I}_{\tilde{A}}(M_1, M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2))$ , we may apply semicontinuity and get that  $C$  has only ordinary nodes, i.e. Claim B is true.  $\square$

**Claim C.** Assume  $0 \leq b \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Then  $C = C'$ .

*Proof of Claim C.* Assume  $C \neq C'$  and call  $E$  the closure of  $C \setminus C'$  in  $S$ . Since we assumed  $b \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ ,  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(E)) \geq 2$  and  $h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(C')) \geq 2$  then there is the following elementary proof. By assumption for a general  $P \in S$  there is  $E_1 \in |E|$  and  $C'' \in |\mathcal{I}_Z(C')|$  such that  $P \in E_1$  and  $P \in C''$ . Furthermore, the set of all such curves  $E_1$  (resp.  $C''$ ) has codimension one in  $|E|$  (resp.  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(C')|$ ). Hence  $h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_{Z \cup 2P}(C)) \geq h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(C)) - 2$ . Since  $b' := b + 1 \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$  and  $B \cup \{P\}$  is general in  $S$ , the contradiction comes from Claim A. Making a weaker assumption on  $b$  we may give the following proof which heavily use our characteristic zero assumption. Since  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)$  is spanned and  $E \neq \emptyset$ , we have  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)(-E)) < h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2))$ . Since  $h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)(-E)) = h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2))$ , the scheme  $Z$  does not impose  $3b$  independent conditions to  $H^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)(-C))$ . By a lemma of Terracini (see [2]) this implies that the base locus of the linear system  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$  contains a curve with multiplicity two, contradicting the fact that  $C$  is nodal and hence it has no multiple component.  $\square$

**Claim D.** Assume  $b + 1 \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Fix  $O \in Y_1$  and let  $\bar{Z}$  be the residual scheme of  $Z$  with respect to the Cartier divisor  $\pi_1^{-1}(O)$ . Then  $h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_{\bar{Z}}(M_1(-O), M_2)) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1(-O), M_2))$ .

*Proof of Claim D.* Copy the proof of Claim A. We only observe that  $\bar{Z} = Z$  if  $O \notin \pi_1(B)$ , while  $\bar{Z} \subset Z$  and  $\text{length}(\bar{Z}) = 3b - 2$  if  $O \in \pi_1(B)$ .  $\square$

**Claim E.** Fix  $O \in Y_2$  and let  $\tilde{Z}$  be the residual scheme of  $Z$  with respect to the Cartier divisor  $\pi_2^{-1}(O)$ . Then  $h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_{\tilde{Z}}(M_1, M_2(-O))) = h^1(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2(-O)))$ .

*Proof of Claim E.* Exchange  $Y_1$  and  $Y_2$  in the proof of Claim D.  $\square$

**Claim F.** Assume  $b + 1 \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Then  $B$  is the set-theoretic base point of  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$ .

*Proof of Claim F.* By Claims D (resp. E) for any  $O \in Y_1$  (resp.  $O \in Y_2$ ) the restriction map  $H^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)) \rightarrow H^0(\pi_1^{-1}(O), \mathcal{I}_{Z \cap \pi_1^{-1}(O)}(M_2))$  (resp.  $H^0(S, \mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)) \rightarrow H^0(\pi_2^{-1}(O), \mathcal{I}_{Z \cap \pi_2^{-1}(O)}(M_1))$ ) is surjective. Hence the set-theoretic base locus of  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$  is contained in the set  $\pi_1^{-1}(\pi_1(B)) \cap \pi_2^{-1}(\pi_2(B))$ . Since  $\pi_1|_B$  and  $\pi_2|_B$  are injective, we have  $\pi_1^{-1}(\pi_1(B)) \cap \pi_2^{-1}(\pi_2(B)) = B$ , proving Claim F.  $\square$

**Claim G.** Assume  $b + 1 \leq \lfloor x_1/2 \rfloor \cdot \lfloor x_2/2 \rfloor$ . Then  $C$  is integral, nodal and  $\text{Sing}(C) = B$ .

*Proof of Claim G.* By Claim F and Bertini's Theorem  $C$  is smooth outside  $B$ . By Claim C the curve  $C$  is nodal. Now we take again the set-up of Claim B. Now we will prove that  $C$  is irreducible. Call  $C'$  the union of all irreducible components of  $C$  containing at least one point of  $B$ . Notice that  $B \subset C'$  because  $B \subset C$ . Since the symmetric product of  $b$  copies of  $S$  is irreducible and we may vary  $B$  in an open subset of it, a monodromy argument gives that one of the following three cases must occur:

(a)  $C'$  is irreducible.

(b)  $C'$  has exactly  $b$  irreducible components, each of them containing exactly one point of  $B$ . Furthermore, all irreducible components, say  $C_1, \dots, C_b$ , of  $C'$  are numerically equivalent and  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_i)) = h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_j))$  for all  $i, j$ .

(c)  $C'$  has two irreducible components, say  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ , and  $B \subseteq (C_1)_{reg} \cap (C_2)_{reg}$ . Furthermore,  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are numerically equivalent and  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_1)) = h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_2))$ .

If  $b = 0$ , then we are in case (a) and  $C = C'$  is smooth by Bertini's Theorem. If  $b = 1$ , then cases (a) and (b) are the same. First assume that we are in case (b) or in case (c) and fix any irreducible component  $D$  of  $C'$ . Let  $(d_1, d_2)$  be the bidegree of  $D$ . Hence in case (b)  $C'$  has bidegree  $(bd_1, bd_2)$ , while in case (c)  $C'$  has bidegree  $(2d_1, 2d_2)$ . Since  $C'$  is reduced and  $Z \subset C'$ , in case (c) we get  $d_1 > 0$  and  $d_2 > 0$ . Every effective divisor of bidegree  $(x, 0)$  (resp.  $(0, x)$ ) is of the form  $\pi_1^{-1}(\tilde{D})$  (resp.  $\pi_2^{-1}(\tilde{D})$ ) for some effective degree  $x$  divisor  $\tilde{D}$  of  $Y_1$  (resp.  $Y_2$ ). Since in case (b)  $D$  has at least one singular point, but it is reduced, while  $Y_1$  and  $Y_2$  are smooth, in case (b) we have  $d_1 > 0$  and  $d_2 > 0$ . Thus case (b) cannot occur if  $b > \min\{a_1, a_2\}$ . Every effective divisor of  $S$  with bidegree  $(1, 1)$  and at least one singular point is reducible. Hence we see that in case (b) either  $d_1 \geq 2$  or  $d_2 \geq 2$ . Thus case (b) cannot occur if  $b > \max\{a_1/2, a_2/2\}$ . Now we fix  $B$  and hence  $Z$ , but we move  $C$  (and hence  $C'$ ) in an open subset of  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$ . We assume  $b \geq 2$  and that we are in case (b). Since  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)|$  is a projective space,  $C$  varies in a rational family. Since  $B$  is fixed, each  $C_i$  varies in a rational family. Furthermore,

$h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_{2P_i}(C_i)) > 0$ , where  $P_i := B \cap C_i$ . Hence the contradiction comes as in the proof of Claim C by the quoted lemma of Terracini (see [2]), unless  $h^0(S, \mathcal{I}_{2P_i}(C_i)) = h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_i)) + 3 \geq 4$  for all  $i$ , i.e.  $h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)) = \sum_{i=1}^b h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_i))$  and that each  $\mathcal{O}_S(C_i)$  is spanned. By [3], Corollary 5.2, we also have that all pairs of linear systems  $(\mathcal{O}_S(C_i), H^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_i)))$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq b$ , are obtained from the pair  $(\mathbf{P}^1, H^0(\mathbf{P}^1, \mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(z)))$ ,  $z := h^0(S, \mathcal{O}_S(C_1))$ , taking the composition of it with a rational map  $\psi$  from  $S$  into  $\mathbf{P}^1$  (the same map for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, b\}$ ). Since all  $C_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq b$ , are numerically equivalent and spanned, the existence of  $\psi$  implies that they are rationally (and hence linearly) equivalent. Hence  $\mathcal{O}_S(C_i) \cong \mathcal{O}_S(C_1)$  for all  $i$ . By Claim C we also get  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2) \cong \mathcal{O}_S(bC_1)$  and hence  $a_j \equiv 0 \pmod{b}$  for  $j = 1, 2$ , and each  $C_i$  has bidegree  $(a_1/b, a_2/b)$ . Since  $\mathcal{O}_S(C_1)$  is spanned,  $\psi$  is a morphism. There is no morphism  $\tau : S \rightarrow \mathbf{P}^1$  such that  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2) \cong \tau^*(\mathcal{O}_{\mathbf{P}^1}(t))$  for some  $t \in \mathbb{Z}$ , because  $\mathcal{O}_S(M_1, M_2)$  is ample. Hence case (b) cannot occur. Now assume that we are in case (c). We saw that  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  must be smooth and  $C_1 \cap C_2 = B$  (scheme-theoretically). Hence  $C_1 \cdot C_2 = b$ . Since  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  are numerically equivalent, we get  $(C_1 + C_2) \cdot (C_1 + C_2) = 4b$ . i.e.  $a_1 a_2 = 2b$ . Since  $x_i \leq a_i$ , we get  $2b \geq x_1 x_2$ , contradiction.  $\square$

**Remark 4.** Claim D of Remark 3 does not hold if  $x_2 = x_2 = 2$  and  $b = 1$ . Indeed, take a general  $(P_1, P_2) \in S$ . Hence  $|M_i(-P_i)| = \{D_i\}$  and hence  $|\mathcal{I}_Z(M_1, M_2)| = \{\pi_1^{-1}(D_1 + P_1) \cup \pi_2^{-1}(D_2 + P_2)\}$  is formed by a reducible divisor.

**Example 1.** Here we assume  $q_1 \geq 2$ ,  $q_2 \geq 2$ ,  $k_1 = k_2 = 2$  and that  $Y_1$  and  $Y_2$  hyperelliptic. In the construction of Remark 3 we have to take as  $M_i$  the  $g^1_2$  on  $Y_i$ . We saw in Remark 3 that we have to take  $C$  smooth. Hence  $g = 1 + k_1 k_2 + k_1 q_1 + k_2 q_2 - k_1 - k_2 = 2q_1 + 2q_2 + 1$  and that, conversely, such a quintuple  $(X, Y_1, Y_2, f_1, f_2)$  with  $X$  of genus  $2q_2 + 2q_1 + 1$  exists for all hyperelliptic curves  $Y_1, Y_2$ . Notice that  $M_1|X$  and  $M_2|X$  are  $g^1_4$ 's on  $X$  and that  $h^0(X, (M_1 \otimes M_2)|X) = 3$ . By Castelnuovo-Severi inequality (see [5] or [1], p. 21) we see that these two  $g^1_4$ 's are the same, i.e. that the two involutions of  $X$  associated to the double coverings  $f_1$  and  $f_2$  commute. Hence  $X$  is of this type (for some  $q_1$  and  $q_2$ ) if and only if it is a Galois covering of  $\mathbf{P}^1$  with  $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$  as its Galois group.

*Proof of Theorem 1.* First assume  $z = 2$ . Hence  $a_1 = k_1$  and  $a_2 = k_2$ . Apply Remark 3. Now assume  $z \geq 3$ . Call  $X'$  a solution for the curves  $Y_1, \dots, Y_{z-1}$  and apply the case  $z = 2$  of the proof to the curves  $X'$  and  $Y_z$ . Use that (calling  $u_j : X' \rightarrow Y_j$ ,  $1 \leq j \leq z - 1$ , the given map) we have  $h^0(X', u_j^*(M_j)) \geq h^0(Y_j, M_j) = x_j$ .  $\square$

### Acknowledgements

The author was partially supported by MIUR and GNSAGA of INdAM (Italy).

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