## Two-Character Sets Arising from Gluings of Orbits

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# Two-Character Sets Arising from Gluings of Orbits 

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#### Abstract

In this paper we construct two infinite families of transitive two-character sets and hence two infinite families of symmetric strongly regular graphs. We also construct infinite families of quasi-quadrics.


Keywords Symmetric graphs • Strongly regular graphs • Two-character sets • Quasi-quadrics

Mathematics Subject Classification (2000) 51E14 • 51E20

## 1 Introduction

A symmetric graph is a (loopless, undirected) graph whose automorphism group acts transitively on ordered edges. The study of symmetric graphs goes back to work of Tutte [12], with the first significant result after that being the classification of those symmetric graphs of prime order by Chao [5].

A strongly regular $\operatorname{graph} \operatorname{srg}(v, k, \lambda, \mu)$ is a regular graph such that there are constants $\lambda$ and $\mu$ with the property that every pair of adjacent vertices has $\lambda$ common neighbours and every pair of non-adjacent vertices has $\mu$ common neighbours. Strongly regular graphs were introduced by Bose [2].

[^0]A way of constructing symmetric strongly regular graphs arises from the geometry of certain subsets of finite projective spaces known as transitive two-character subsets.

A two-character set in the projective space $\operatorname{PG}(d, q)$ is a set $\mathcal{S}$ of $n$ points with the property that the intersection number with any hyperplane only takes two values, $n-w_{1}$ and $n-w_{2}$. Then the positive constants $w_{1}$ and $w_{2}$ are called the weights of the two-character set. Embed now $\operatorname{PG}(d, q)$ as a hyperplane $\Pi$ in $\operatorname{PG}(d+1, q)$. The linear representation graph $\Gamma_{d}^{*}(\mathcal{S})$ is the graph having as vertices the points of $\mathrm{PG}(d+1, q) \backslash \Pi$ and where two vertices are adjacent whenever the line defined by them meets $\mathcal{S}$. It follows that $\Gamma_{d}^{*}(\mathcal{S})$ has $v=q^{d+1}$ vertices and valency $k=(q-1) n$. Delsarte [10] proved that this graph is strongly regular if $\mathcal{S}$ is a two-character set. If the two-character set $\mathcal{S}$ is also transitive, i.e., it has a transitive automorphism group, then the strongly regular graph $\Gamma_{d}^{*}(\mathcal{S})$ is also symmetric.

The other parameters of the graph $\Gamma_{d}^{*}(\mathcal{S})$ are $\lambda=k^{2}+3 k-q\left(w_{1}+w_{2}\right)-k q\left(w_{1}+\right.$ $\left.w_{2}\right)+q^{2} w_{1} w_{2}$ and $\mu=k^{2}+k-k q\left(w_{1}+w_{2}\right)+q^{2} w_{1} w_{2}$ by Corollary 3.7 of [4]. It is interesting to note that regarding the coordinates of the elements of $\mathcal{S}$ as columns of the generator matrix of a code $\mathcal{L}$ of length $n$ and dimension $d+1$, then the two-character set property of $\mathcal{S}$ translates into the fact that the code $\mathcal{L}$ has two (non-zero) weights $\left(w_{1}\right.$ and $\left.w_{2}\right)$ [4]. Such a code is said to be a projective two-weight code. The weights of the code are exactly the weights of the two-character set.

Numerous authors-too many to be mentioned here-studied two-character sets, sometimes using algebra, sometimes using geometry. In this paper we construct two infinite families of transitive two-character sets and hence two infinite families of symmetric strongly regular graphs. In Corollary 1 we construct symmetric strongly regular graphs
$\operatorname{srg}\left(q^{4},\left(q^{4}-q^{3}-q^{2}+q\right) / 2,\left(q^{4}-2 q^{3}-q^{2}+6 q\right) / 4,\left(q^{4}-2 q^{3}-q^{2}+2 q\right) / 4\right)$, for any prime power $q>3$, while in Corollary 2 we construct symmetric strongly regular graphs $\operatorname{srg}\left(q^{8}, q^{7}-q^{5}-q^{3}+q, q^{6}-q^{4}+3 q^{3}+q^{2}+3 q, q^{6}-2 q^{4}-q^{3}+q^{2}+q\right)$, for any odd prime power $q$.

We also give a construction of quasi-quadrics of projective spaces i.e., two-character sets having the same intersection numbers with respect to hyperplanes as a non-degenerate quadric and hence a construction of other strongly regular graphs.

Finally, we present a computational result on two-character sets arising from a particular 2-modular representation of the group $G_{2}(3)$.

## 2 Elementary Properties of the Twisted Cubic

A twisted cubic $\mathcal{C}$ of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q), q=p^{h}, p$ prime, where $X_{1}, \ldots, X_{4}$ are projective homogeneous coordinates, in its canonical form is the set

$$
\left\{P(t)=\left(t^{3}, t^{2}, t, 1\right): t \in \mathrm{GF}(q)\right\} \cup\{(1,0,0,0)\}
$$

comprising $q+1$ points no four of which are coplanar and hence no three of which are collinear. At each point $P(t)$ of $\mathcal{C}$ there exists an osculating plane with equation $X_{1}-3 t X_{2}+3 t^{2} X_{3}-t^{3} X_{4}=0$, that meets $\mathcal{C}$ only at $P(t)$. The set of $q+1$ osculating planes form the osculating developable $\Gamma$ to $\mathcal{C}$. A chord of $\mathcal{C}$ is a line $\ell$ of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$
joining either a pair of real points $P(t)$ and $P\left(t^{\prime}\right)$ of $\mathcal{C}$, possibly coincident, or a pair of complex conjugate points $P(t)$ and $P\left(t^{\prime}\right)$ (here $t$ and $t^{\prime}$ are conjugate over a quadratic extension of $\mathrm{GF}(q))$. We say that $\ell$ is a real chord, a tangent or a imaginary chord, respectively. When $p \neq 3$, dual to the chords of $\mathcal{C}$ are the axes of $\Gamma$. From [11, Lemma 21.1.9] the tangents to $\mathcal{C}$ form a $(q+1)$-span of $\mathrm{PG}(3, q)$.

Lemma 1 ([11, Lemma 21.1.3]) Let $G_{q}$ denote the stabilizer of $\mathcal{C}$ in $\operatorname{PGL}(4, q)$.

1. When $q \geq 5, G_{q} \simeq \operatorname{PGL}(2, q)$;
2. $G_{4} \simeq \operatorname{Sym}(5)$;
3. $G_{3} \simeq \operatorname{Sym}(4) \cdot 2^{3}$;
4. $G_{2} \simeq \operatorname{Sym}(3) \cdot 2^{3}$.

For our purpose we need to know the action of $G_{q}$ on planes and points of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$.

Lemma 2 ([11, Corollary 4, p. 234]) Under the action of $G_{q}$ there are five orbits on planes of $\mathrm{PG}(3, q)$ :

1. $\mathcal{N}_{1}=\Gamma$ of size $q+1$;
2. $\mathcal{N}_{2}=\{$ planes meeting $\mathcal{C}$ at exactly two points $\}$ of size $q(q+1)$;
3. $\mathcal{N}_{3}=\{$ planes meeting $\mathcal{C}$ at exactly three points $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 6$;
4. $\mathcal{N}_{4}=\{$ planes not in $\Gamma$ meeting $\mathcal{C}$ at exactly one point $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 2$;
5. $\mathcal{N}_{5}=\{$ planes disjoint from $\mathcal{C}\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 3$.

Lemma 3 ([11, Corollary 5 p. 235]) Under the action of $G_{q}$ there are five orbits on points of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$.

Assume $q \not \equiv 0(\bmod 3)$.

1. $\mathcal{M}_{1}=\mathcal{C}$ of size $q+1$;
2. $\mathcal{M}_{2}=\{$ points off $\mathcal{C}$ on a tangent $\}$ of size $q(q+1)$;
3. $\mathcal{M}_{3}=\{$ points on three osculating planes $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 6$;
4. $\mathcal{M}_{4}=\{$ points off $\mathcal{C}$ on exactly one osculating plane $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 2$;
5. $\mathcal{M}_{5}=\{$ points on no osculating plane $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 3$.

Assume $q \equiv 0(\bmod 3)$.

1. $\mathcal{M}_{1}=\mathcal{C}$ of size $q+1$;
2. $\mathcal{M}_{2}=\{$ points on all osculating planes $\}$ of size $q+1$;
3. $\mathcal{M}_{3}=\{$ points off $\mathcal{C}$ on a tangent and one osculating plane $\}$ of size $\left(q^{2}-1\right)$;
4. $\mathcal{M}_{4}=\{$ points off $\mathcal{C}$ on a real chord $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 2$;
5. $\mathcal{M}_{5}=\{$ points on an imaginary chord $\}$ of size $q\left(q^{2}-1\right) / 2$.

Remark 1 From [11, Corollary p. 242], for $q \equiv 1(\bmod 3), \mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}=\{$ points on a real chord $\}$ and $\mathcal{M}_{4}=\{$ points on an imaginary chord\}. For $q \equiv-1(\bmod 3)$, $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}=\{$ points on an imaginary chord $\}$ and $\mathcal{M}_{4}=\{$ points on a real chord $\}$.

### 2.1 The First Infinite Family

In this section we will show that the orbit $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ for all $q$ turns out to be a two-character set.

Theorem 1 For $q \geq 3$, the $G_{q}$-orbit $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ is a two-character set with $w_{1}=\left(q^{3}-q^{2}\right) / 2$ and $w_{2}=\left(q^{3}-q^{2}-2 q\right) / 2$.

Proof Firstly assume that $q \not \equiv 0(\bmod 3)$. Let $\Pi$ be a plane of $\mathrm{PG}(3, q)$. If $\Pi \in \mathcal{N}_{1}$ and $q \equiv 1(\bmod 3)$ then $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ at $q(q-1) / 2$ points. Indeed, in this case, $\Pi$ does not contain imaginary chords and from Remark $1 \mathcal{M}_{4}$ is the set of points on imaginary chords. The claim follows from the fact that $q(q-1) / 2$ is the number of imaginary chords [11, Lemma 21.1.4]. If $q \equiv-1(\bmod 3)$ then $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ again at $q(q-1) / 2$ points. Indeed, in this case from Remark $1 \mathcal{M}_{4}$ is the set of points on real chords (there are exactly $q$ chords of $\mathcal{C}$ passing through $\Pi \cap \mathcal{C}$ ). Assume that $\Pi \in \mathcal{N}_{2}$ and let $\Pi \cap \mathcal{C}=\{P, Q\}$. Then $\Pi$ contains either the tangent $t_{P}$ to $\mathcal{C}$ at $P$ or the tangent $t_{Q}$ to $\mathcal{C}$ at $Q$. It cannot contain both because the tangents to $\mathcal{C}$ are mutually disjoint (they form a $(q+1)$-span). It follows that $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{2}$ at $q+(q-1)$ points. Assume that $q \equiv 1(\bmod 3)$. Then $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}$ consists of points on real chords. There are $q(q+1) / 2$ real chords of which $q-1$ on $P$ and $q-1$ on $Q$ distinct from $P Q$. It follows that $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}$ at the $q-1$ points of $P Q$ and at $\left(q^{2}-3 q+2\right) / 2$ points on the remaining chords. Hence $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ at $q^{2}+q+1-2-(2 q-1)-(q-1)-\left(\left(q^{2}-3 q+2\right) / 2\right)=q(q-1) / 2$ points. Assume that $\Pi \in \mathcal{N}_{3}$. Let $\Pi \cap \mathcal{C}=\{P, Q, R\}$. Then $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{C}$ at three points, $\mathcal{M}_{2}$ at $q-2$ points, $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}$ at $3(q-1)$ points on $P Q, P R$ and $Q R$ and at further $\left(q^{2}-5 q+6\right) / 2$ points. It follows that $\pi$ meets $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ at $q(q-1) / 2$ points. Assume that $\Pi \in \mathcal{N}_{4}$. Then $\Pi$ meets $\mathcal{C}$ at only one point, $\mathcal{M}_{2}$ at $q$ points, $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}$ at $q(q+1) / 2-q=q(q-1) / 2$ points and hence $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ at $q(q+1) / 2$ points. Assume that $\Pi \in \mathcal{N}_{5}$. Then $\Pi$ is skew to $\mathcal{C}$, meets $\mathcal{M}_{2}$ at $q+1$ points, $\mathcal{M}_{3} \cup \mathcal{M}_{5}$ at $q(q+1) / 2$ points and hence $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ at $q(q-1) / 2$ points. When $q \equiv-1(\bmod 3)$, the orbits $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ is exactly the set of points on real chords and hence the result follows from the previous case. Assume now that $q \equiv 0(\bmod 3)$. In this case $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ consists of points off $\mathcal{C}$ on real chords and the result follows from the proof above. The proof is now complete.

Corollary $1 \Gamma_{3}^{*}\left(\mathcal{M}_{4}\right)$ is a symmetric strongly regular graph $\operatorname{srg}\left(q^{4},\left(q^{4}-q^{3}-q^{2}+q\right)\right.$ $\left./ 2,\left(q^{4}-2 q^{3}-q^{2}+6 q\right) / 2,\left(q^{4}-2 q^{3}-q^{2}+2 q\right) / 2\right)$.

Remark 2 When $q=3$, the group $G_{3}$ has four point-orbits of size $4,8,12,16$. The 12 -orbit is a transitive two-character set with $w_{1}=3$ and $w_{2}=6$, the 16 -orbit is a transitive two-character set with $w_{1}=4$ and $w_{2}=7$. Their union is a two-character set with $w_{1}=7$ and $w_{2}=10$. When $q=4$, we have that $\mathcal{M}_{4}$ has size 30 and it is a transitive two-character set with $w_{1}=6$ and $w_{2}=10$.

## 3 On the Set of Tangent Lines to $Q^{-}(3, q), q$ odd

Let $Q^{-}(3, q)$ be an elliptic quadric of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q), q$ odd, i.e., a set of $q^{2}+1$ points of $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$ no three of them collinear. On each point $P$ of $Q^{-}(3, q)$ there are $q+1$
tangent lines lying on a plane called tangent plane to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ at $P$. Hence there are $\left(q^{2}+1\right)(q+1)$ tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$. Embed $\mathrm{PG}(3, q)$ in $\mathrm{PG}\left(3, q^{2}\right)$ as a Baer subgeometry. Denote by $T$ the set of points of $\mathrm{PG}\left(3, q^{2}\right)$, that are not in $\mathrm{PG}(3, q)$, on tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ (extended over GF $\left(q^{2}\right)$ ). Clearly, $|T|=(q+1)\left(q^{2}+1\right)\left(q^{2}-q\right)$.

### 3.1 The Second Infinite Family

Theorem 2 The set $T$ is a transitive two-character set with $w_{1}=q^{5}-q^{3}$ and $w_{2}=q^{5}-q^{3}-q^{2}$.

Proof The stabilizer of $Q^{-}(3, q)$ in $\mathrm{PGL}_{4}(q)$ is the group $\mathrm{PGL}_{2}\left(q^{2}\right)$. In order to show that $\mathrm{PGL}_{2}\left(q^{2}\right)$ is transitive on $T$ it is sufficient to show that the stabilizer $H$ in $\mathrm{PGL}_{2}\left(q^{2}\right)$ of an extended tangent line $\ell$ to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ is transitive on the set of points of $\ell$ not in $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$ for $\mathrm{PGL}_{2}\left(q^{2}\right)$ acts transitively on the set of tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$. The group $H$ has order $q^{2}(q-1)$ and acts on $\ell$ with a kernel of order $q$ as $\operatorname{AGL}(1, q)$; hence $H$ acts transitively on the set of points of $\ell$ not in $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$.

A plane $\Pi$ of $\operatorname{PG}\left(3, q^{2}\right)$ either meets $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$ at a plane or at a line.
Assume that $\Pi \cap \operatorname{PG}(3, q)$ is a plane $\pi$. If $\pi$ is a tangent plane to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ at a point $P$ of $Q^{-}(3, q)$ then $\Pi$ meets $T$ at $(q+1)\left(q^{2}-q\right)$ points.

If $\pi$ is a secant plane to $Q^{-}(3, q)$, i.e., $\pi \cap Q^{-}(3, q)$ ia a conic $C$, then $\Pi$ contains the tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ at the points of $C$ and again $\Pi$ meets $T$ at $(q+1)\left(q^{2}-q\right)$ points.

Assume that $\Pi$ meets $\operatorname{PG}(3, q)$ at a line $\ell$.
If $\ell$ is tangent to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ at $P$ then $\Pi$ meets $T$ at $q^{3}+q^{2}-q$ points: $q^{2}-q$ points of the $\mathrm{GF}\left(q^{2}\right)$-extension of $\ell$ and for any other point of $Q^{-}(3, q)$ there are $q$ $\mathrm{GF}\left(q^{2}\right)$-extended tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ meeting $\Pi$ at a point.

Assume that $\ell$ is external to $Q^{-}(3, q)$. On $\ell$ there are exactly two tangent planes to $Q^{-}(3, q)$. This means that $\Pi$ meets $T$ at $\left(q^{2}-1\right) q=(q+1)\left(q^{2}-q\right)$ points.

Finally, assume that $\ell$ is secant to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ at $P_{1}$ and $P_{2}$. Then, $\Pi$ meets $T$ at $(q+1)\left(q^{2}-q\right)$ points. The proof is now complete.

Corollary $2 \Gamma_{3}^{*}(T)$ is a symmetric strongly regular graph $\operatorname{srg}\left(q^{8}, q^{7}-q^{5}-q^{3}\right.$ $\left.+q, q^{6}-q^{4}+3 q^{3}+q^{2}+3 q, q^{6}-2 q^{4}-q^{3}+q^{2}+q\right)$.

Remark 3 When $q$ is even, the tangent lines to $Q^{-}(3, q)$ form a non-singular linear complex, and the analogue of our theorem has been proved in [8].

## 4 A Construction of Quasi-Quadrics

In a projective space $\operatorname{PG}(k, q)$ a quasi-quadric is a set of points that has the same intersection numbers with respect to hyperplanes as a non-degenerate quadric in that space [9]. Clearly, non-degenerate quadrics themselves are examples of quasi-quadrics. When $k$ is odd, quasi-quadrics have two sizes of intersections with hyperplanes and so are two-character sets (and therefore give rise to strongly regular graphs). In this section we give a construction of quasi-quadrics, arising from a non-degenerate polarity $\Pi$ of $\mathrm{PG}(k, q), k$ odd.

Let $s=q$ or $s=q^{2}, q=p^{h}, p$ prime, according as $\Pi$ is symplectic, orthogonal or unitary.

Let $k=2 r-1$. Let $X_{0}, \ldots, X_{2 r-1}$, be homogeneous projective coordinates for $\mathrm{PG}(k, s), k=2 r-1, r>2$. Let $S_{1}$ and $S_{2}$ be the subspaces with equations:

$$
\begin{aligned}
& S_{1}: X_{0}=X_{1}=X_{2}=\cdots=X_{r-1}=0 \\
& S_{2}: X_{r}=X_{r+1}=\cdots=X_{k+1}=0
\end{aligned}
$$

Assume that $S_{1}$ and $S_{2}$ are totally singular with respect to $\Pi$. Let $P:=\left(0,0, \ldots, 0, a_{r}\right.$, $\left.a_{r+1}, \ldots, a_{k+1}\right)$ be a point of $S_{1}$, and let $P^{\perp}$ be the polar hyperplane of $P$ with respect to the polarity $\Pi$. The intersection of $P^{\perp}$ and $S_{2}$ is a projective $(r-2)$-subspace, say $S_{P}$, and we say that $S_{P}$ corresponds to $P$. Straightforward computations show that $S_{P}$ has the following equations:

$$
\left\{\begin{array}{l}
a_{r}^{\alpha} X_{0}+a_{r+1}^{\alpha} X_{1}+\cdots+a_{k+1}^{\alpha} X_{r-1}=0 \\
X_{r}=X_{r+1}=\cdots=X_{k+1}=0
\end{array} .\right.
$$

where $\alpha=1$ if $\Pi$ is symplectic or orthogonal, and $\alpha=q$ in the unitary case. Note that the subspace $\left\langle P, S_{P}\right\rangle$ is totally singular with respect to $\Pi$.

Take another point $P^{\prime}$ of $S_{1}, P^{\prime} \neq P$, and suppose that its corresponding subspace $S_{P^{\prime}}$ coincides with $S_{P}$. Then, the line $P P^{\prime}$ and $S_{P}$ would be orthogonal to each other and hence would generate a totally singular $r$-dimensional projective subspace, a contradiction.

Thus, allowing $P$ to vary over the points of $S_{1}$, the construction described above produces a family, say $\mathcal{P}_{1}$, of $\theta_{r-1}(s)$ distinct totally singular ( $r-1$ )-dimensional subspaces (here $\theta_{t}(s)$ denotes the number of points of a projective space $\operatorname{PG}(t, s)$ ). Further any two members of $\mathcal{P}_{1}$ meet in exactly a totally singular $(r-2)$-dimensional subspace. In a similar way, as $Q$ varies over the points of $S_{2}$, one obtains another collection, say $\mathcal{P}_{2}$, of $\theta_{r-1}(s)$ distinct totally singular $(r-1)$-dimensional subspaces. This way, we get a set $\mathcal{R}$ containing at least $2 \theta_{r-1}(s)+2$ totally singular $(r-1)$ dimensional subspaces, including $S_{1}$ and $S_{2}$, but at most two of these subspaces are mutually disjoint.

Theorem 3 The set $\mathcal{R}$ is a hyperbolic quadric if $\Pi$ is orthogonal and a quasi-quadric in the symplectic and unitary cases having the same intersection numbers of a hyperbolic quadric of $\mathrm{PG}(2 r-1, s)$.

Proof Easy computations show that $|\mathcal{R}|=\left(s^{r-1}+1\right)\left(s^{r}-1\right) /(s-1)$.
Let $H$ be a hyperplane of $\operatorname{PG}(k, s)$. We distinguish two cases.
$S_{1} \subset H$ or $S_{2} \subset H$ Assume $S_{1} \subset H$. The case $S_{2} \subset H$ is similar. In this case the intersection between $H$ and $S_{2}$ is an ( $r-2$ )-dimensional subspace $S_{p}$ for some $P \in S_{1}$. Of course, $H$ meets any other member of $\mathcal{P}_{1}$ in an $(r-2)$-dimensional subspace. It follows that $H$ meets $\mathcal{R}$ in $h_{1}$ points where $h_{1}=\theta_{r-1}(s)+\theta_{r-2}(s)+\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-\right.$ $\theta_{r-2}(s-1)+\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-1\right)\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-\theta_{r-3}(s)-1\right)=\theta_{r-1}(s)+s^{r-2}\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-1\right)$.
$S_{1}, S_{2} \not \subset H$ Let $X_{1}$ be the $(r-2)$-dimensional subspace $S_{1} \cap H$ and $X_{2}$ the ( $r-2$ )-dimensional subspace $S_{2} \cap H$. We have to consider two subcases.

1. $X_{2}=S_{1} P$ for some $P \in X_{1}$. In this case, $H$ contains $\left\langle P, X_{2}\right\rangle$, meets $\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-1\right)$ members of $\mathcal{P}_{1}$ in an $(r-2)$-dimensional subspace meeting both $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$, and the remaining members of $\mathcal{P}_{1}$ in $\theta_{r-1}(s)-\theta_{r-3}(s)$ points. It follows that $H$ meets $\mathcal{R}$ in $h_{1}$ points where $h_{1}=2 \theta_{r-2}(s)+\theta_{r-1}(s)-\theta_{r-2}(s)-1+\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-1\right)\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-\right.$ $\left.\theta_{r-3}(s)-1\right)+\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-\theta_{r-2}(s)\right)\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-\theta_{r-3}(s)\right)=\theta_{r-1}(s)+s^{r-2}\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-\right.$ 1).
2. $X_{2}$ does not correspond to any point of $X_{1}$. It follows that $H$ meets $\mathcal{R}$ in $h_{2}$ points where $h_{2}=2 \theta_{r-2}(s)+\theta_{r-2}(s)\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-\theta_{r-3}(s)-1\right)+\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-\theta_{r-2}(s)-\right.$ 1) $\left(\theta_{r-2}(s)-\theta_{r-3}(s)\right)=\theta_{r-2}(s)+s^{r-2}\left(\theta_{r-1}(s)-1\right)$.

Remark 4 When $q$ is even and $\Pi$ is symplectic $\mathcal{R}$ is actually a quadric: an orthogonal polarity is also symplectic.

Remark 5 It should be noted that when $r=3$, the chordal variety $M_{3}^{4}$ of the Veronese surface $\mathcal{V}$ of $\operatorname{PG}(5, q)$ is a quasi-quadric of hyperbolic type. In [7] the geometry of conics of $\operatorname{PG}(2, q)$ was used to determine the two intersection numbers. By means of [1], it can be proved that the point set of $M_{3}^{4}$ can be partitioned into $q^{2}+1$ Veronese surfaces ( $\mathcal{V}$ included). It turns out that the $q^{2}+q+1$ conic planes of $\mathcal{V}$ all meet the remaining Veronese surfaces on $M_{3}^{4}$ at a point. Hence, $\mathcal{V}$ and each one of the Veronese surfaces on $M_{3}^{4}$ play the role of $S_{1}$ or $S_{2}$ in our Theorem 3 .

Remark 6 It should be mentioned that when $\Pi$ is unitary the set $\mathcal{R}$ can be obtained as the intersection of two Hermitian varieties in $\operatorname{PG}\left(2 r-1, q^{2}\right)$, [6]

Remark 7 Of course, the strongly regular graphs arising from our quasi-quadrics and quasi-Hermitian varieties have the same parameters of those arising from the usual quadrics and Hermitian varieties, but in general we have no information about their automorphism groups: some MAGMA computations [3] for small values of $k$ and $q$ show that the automorphism groups of our graphs are smaller than those arising from quadrics or Hermitian varieties. In particular, in the symplectic case when $k=5$ and $q=3,5,7,9,11$ we found that the group of the related strongly regular graphs is $G L_{3}(q) \cdot 2$. In the unitary case, always when $k=5$ and $q^{2}=9,16,25,49$, we found that the group of the related strongly regular graph is $\left(S U_{3}(q) \times S U_{3}(q)\right) \cdot C_{q+1} \cdot 2$.

## 5 A sporadic two-character set

The group $G_{2}(3)$ has a 2-modular representation of $14^{\circ}$ [13]. As a subgroup of $\mathrm{PGL}_{14}(2)$, it has five orbits on points of $\mathrm{PG}(13,2)$ of sizes $378,378,3888,4368$ and 7371 . The union of the two 378 -orbits and the 3888 -orbit is a two-character set with $w_{1}=2368$ and $w_{2}=2304$. (This computation was performed in Magma [3].) This gives rise to a strongly regular $(16384,4644,1276,1332)$ graph.

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