



Algebraic Geometry

Small codimension smooth subvarieties in even-dimensional homogeneous spaces with Picard group \mathbb{Z}

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Abstract

We investigate a method proposed by E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes to study the Picard group of a smooth low-codimensional subvariety X in a variety Y when Y is homogeneous. We prove that this method is strongly related to the signature σ_Y of the Poincaré pairing on the middle cohomology of Y . We give under some topological assumptions a bound on the rank of Picard group $\text{Pic}(X)$ in terms of σ_Y and remove these assumptions for Grassmannians to recover the main result of E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes. **To cite this article:** *N. Perrin, C. R. Acad. Sci. Paris, Ser. I 345 (2007).*

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Résumé

Sous-variétés lisses de petite codimension dans les variétés homogènes de groupe de Picard \mathbb{Z} . E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes ont proposé une méthode pour étudier le groupe de Picard $\text{Pic}(X)$ d'une sous-variété lisse X d'une variété Y . Dans le cas où Y est homogène, nous montrons que cette méthode est intimement liée à la signature σ_Y de l'accouplement de Poincaré sur la cohomologie de dimension moitié de Y . Nous donnons, sous certaines hypothèses topologiques, une borne sur le rang de $\text{Pic}(X)$ en fonction de σ_Y . Dans le cas des grassmanniennes, ces conditions topologiques sont satisfaites et nous obtenons une généralisation des résultats de E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes. **Pour citer cet article :** *N. Perrin, C. R. Acad. Sci. Paris, Ser. I 345 (2007).*

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Version française abrégée

Soit Y une variété projective lisse de dimension paire et dont le groupe de Picard est \mathbb{Z} engendré par une classe hyperplane H . Dans leur article [1], E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes présentent une esquisse de programme afin de déterminer si un diviseur D d'une sous-variété lisse X de Y est équivalent à un multiple de H . De tels types de résultats (ainsi que des résultats plus forts) ont été démontrés par W. Barth et M.E. Larsen [2] pour l'espace projectif.

Ce programme nécessite des informations topologiques souvent difficiles à prouver et que nous n'aborderons pas ici. Nous discuterons cependant la validité du reste de la méthode dans le cas où Y est une variété homogène. Nous montrerons que cette méthode est intimement reliée à la signature σ_Y de la forme quadratique induite par la dualité de Poincaré sur la cohomologie de dimension moitié de Y . En particulier, on ne pourra espérer que les résultats proposés

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par E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes soient encore valables en dehors d'un très petit nombre de cas. Nous expliquons cependant qu'on peut obtenir une borne sur le rang du groupe de Picard de X grâce à cette méthode.

Fixons quelques notations : nous noterons N la dimension de Y et pour suivre les notations de E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes [1], nous définirons l'entier n par $N = 2(n - 1)$. Rappelons la définition suivante utilisée par O. Debarre [5] :

Définition 0.1. Une sous-variété X de Y est dite *encombrante* (nous dirons *bulky* en anglais), si pour toute sous-variété Z de Y telle que $\dim(Z) \geq \text{codim}(X)$, alors on a $[X] \cdot [Z] \neq 0$.

Nous montrons le résultat suivant :

Théorème 0.2. Soit Y une variété homogène de dimension $2(n - 1)$ et de groupe de Picard \mathbb{Z} . Soit X une sous-variété lisse et encombrante de Y de dimension n' avec $n' \geq n$.

Supposons que X est simplement connexe et que, pour toute sous-variété de Schubert Y' de Y de dimension n , l'intersection de X avec un translaté général de Y' est irréductible, alors le groupe de Picard de X est libre de rang au plus $\frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{C}) - \sigma_Y) + 1$.

Les principales difficultés pour appliquer ce résultat sont les hypothèses topologiques sur X . Dans le cas de l'espace projectif, ces hypothèses sont toujours satisfaites en vertu du théorème de Bertini ainsi que du fameux théorème de connexité de Fulton–Hansen (voir [6]). Plus généralement, O. Debarre dans [5] a montré des résultats analogues dans le cas des grassmanniennes. On peut donc se passer de nos hypothèses topologiques dans ce cas. Supposons que Y est la grassmannienne $\mathbb{G}(p, m)$ et soit $R = \max(p, m - p)$, $r = \min(p, m - p)$, $\delta = R - 1$ pour $r \geq 3$ et $\delta = 1$ pour $r \leq 2$. On obtient le :

Corollaire 0.3. Toute sous-variété lisse et encombrante de Y de dimension n' avec $n' \geq n - 1 + \delta$ a un groupe de Picard libre de rang au plus $\frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{C}) - \sigma_Y) + 1$.

Enfin, lorsque $r \leq 2$, nous retrouvons le résultat principal de E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes [1] :

Corollaire 0.4. Si Y est de dimension $2(n - 1)$ et est isomorphe à un espace projectif ou à une grassmannienne de droites, alors toute sous-variété lisse et encombrante de dimension au moins n de Y a un groupe de Picard isomorphe à \mathbb{Z} .

Remarquons que des résultats plus forts sont montrés par A.J. Sommese [10] mais qu'ils ne s'appliquent pas pour des codimensions aussi grandes que les nôtres.

En ce qui concerne la généralité de la méthode telle que proposée par E. Arrondo et J. Caravantes, les résultats présentés dans cette note montrent que l'on ne peut espérer qu'elle fonctionne. En effet, la méthode repose sur le fait qu'une certaine forme quadratique q sur la cohomologie de dimension moitié de Y (cf. formule (1) de la version anglaise) se décompose en somme à coefficients positifs de certains carrés. Or nous montrons (Proposition 2.3) qu'en général des coefficients négatifs peuvent apparaître. La positivité des coefficients n'est vraie que lorsque la dualité de Poincaré est définie positive et la méthode ne fonctionnera donc que dans ces cas.

Les seules¹ variétés homogènes de dimension paire et groupe de Picard \mathbb{Z} satisfaisant cette condition sont les espaces projectifs, les grassmanniennes de droites, les quadriques de dimension multiple de 4 et le plan de Cayley $\mathbb{O}\mathbb{P}^2$. Il est assez frappant de constater que les espaces projectifs, les grassmanniennes de droites et le plan de Cayley sont des exemples d'espaces projectifs sur des algèbres de composition (sur \mathbb{C} , \mathbb{H} et \mathbb{O} , cf. [4]). Ceci nous conduit à formuler la :

Question 0.5. Est-il vrai que, pour toute sous-variété encombrante lisse X de dimension au moins 9 du plan de Cayley $\mathbb{O}\mathbb{P}^2$, le groupe de Picard de X est \mathbb{Z}^2 ?

¹ Voir par exemple [9].

² Remarquons qu'il suffit d'obtenir une forme du théorème de Bertini et une forme du théorème de connexité de Fulton–Hansen [6] dans cette situation pour obtenir une réponse positive à cette question.

1. Introduction

E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes present in [1] a sketch of program to decide if a divisor D in a smooth subvariety X of a smooth even-dimensional variety Y is equivalent to a multiple of an hyperplane section of X . To apply this method, they need additional topological information on X that we will not discuss here. We will however discuss the general validity of the rest of the method in the case of homogeneous varieties Y with Picard group \mathbb{Z} and prove that it is closely related to the signature σ_Y of the Poincaré pairing on the middle cohomology of Y . Let us fix the following notation: $N = \dim(Y)$ the dimension of Y is even and to keep coherent notation with [1] we set $N = 2(n - 1)$. Recall the definition (see [5]):

Definition 1.1. A subvariety X of Y is said to be *bulky* if for any subvariety $Z \subset Y$ such that $\dim(Z) \geq \text{codim}(X)$ we have $[X] \cdot [Z] \neq 0$.

We will prove the following:

Theorem 1.2. *Let X be a bulky smooth subvariety in Y of dimension n' with $n' \geq n$. Assume that X is simply connected and that, for any n -dimensional Schubert subvariety Y' of Y , the intersection of X with a general translate of Y' is irreducible, then $\text{Pic}(X)$ is free of rank at most $\frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{C}) - \sigma_Y) + 1$.*

One major difficulty to use this result is to prove the two topological assumptions on X , namely that X is simply connected and that its intersection with the general translate of a Schubert subvariety of dimension n is irreducible. However, in the case where Y is the Grassmannian variety $\mathbb{G}(p, m)$, O. Debarre [5] proved such results. In that case, set $R = \max(p, m - p)$, $r = \min(p, m - p)$, $\delta = R - 1$ for $r \geq 3$ and $\delta = 1$ for $r \leq 2$. We deduce the following:

Corollary 1.3. *Assume X is a smooth bulky subvariety of dimension $n' \geq n - 1 + \delta$ of Y . Then $\text{Pic}(X)$ is free of rank at most $\frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{C}) - \sigma_Y) + 1$.*

Finally we recover the main result in [1]:

Corollary 1.4. *Assume that $r \leq 2$, or equivalently that Y is a projective space or a Grassmannian of lines, then any smooth bulky subvariety X of Y of dimension $n' \geq n$ satisfies $\text{Pic}(X) = \mathbb{Z}$.*

Remark that stronger results were proved by A.J. Sommese [10] but in smaller codimension. In this Note we prove that the method of E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes to show that the Picard group of X is \mathbb{Z} works only if the Poincaré duality is positive definite on the middle cohomology. The only³ even-dimensional homogeneous varieties with Picard group \mathbb{Z} and positive definite Poincaré pairing on the middle cohomology are the projective spaces, the Grassmannians of lines, the quadrics of dimension multiple of 4 and the Cayley plane $\mathbb{O}\mathbb{P}^2$. It is striking that these are examples of projective spaces over composition algebras (over \mathbb{C} , \mathbb{H} and \mathbb{O} , cf. [4]). With this in mind we ask the following:

Question 1.1. Is it true that, for any smooth bulky subvariety X of dimension at least 9 of the Cayley plane $\mathbb{O}\mathbb{P}^2$, we have $\text{Pic}(X) = \mathbb{Z}$?

2. Proof of the theorem

To prove the theorem we will in some sense restrict ourselves to the n -dimensional case. Let X' be a variety satisfying the hypothesis of Theorem 1.2. Let D' be a divisor of X' , we may assume D' to be smooth.⁴ We will denote by X a general hyperplane section of X' of dimension n and by D the divisor in X corresponding to D' . Remark that X and D are also smooth and that X is bulky.

³ See [9].

⁴ This will be harmless upon replacing D' by $D' + mH_{X'}$ with m big.

It is a classical result that a basis of $H^*(Y, \mathbb{Z})$ is given by the classes $\sigma(w)$ of Schubert subvarieties where w is in a coset W_Y of the Weyl group W (see for example [3]). We will denote by $(\sigma(t))_{t \in T}$ and $(\sigma(u))_{u \in U}$ the classes of Schubert subvarieties of dimensions n and $n - 1$. They form a basis of the effective monoids in $H^{n-2}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$ and $H^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$. We use the notation: $\sigma(w) \cdot \sigma(w') = \sum_{w''} c_{w,w''}^{w'} \sigma(w'')$ and write

$$[X] = \sum_{t \in T} a_t \sigma(t) \quad \text{and} \quad [D] = \sum_{u \in U} \alpha_u \sigma(u)$$

with a_t and α_u non negative for all $t \in T$ and $u \in U$ (because X is bulky, all the a_t are positive).

Poincaré duality acts as a permutation between Schubert classes and induces an involution $w \mapsto w^*$ on W_Y . In particular, it stabilises U and we may consider the partition $U_{\text{id}} \sqcup U_{\text{hyp}} = U$ where U_{id} is the set of fixed points of U under the Poincaré involution. This induces a decomposition of the Abelian group $H^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$ into $H_{\text{id}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z}) \oplus H_{\text{hyp}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$. Poincaré duality acts as the identity on $H_{\text{id}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$ and is hyperbolic on $H_{\text{hyp}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$. In particular if σ_Y is its signature on $H^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Z})$, we have the equalities $\dim(H_{\text{id}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Q})) = \sigma_Y$ and $\dim(H_{\text{hyp}}^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Q})) = h^{n-1}(Y, \mathbb{Q}) - \sigma_Y$.

We first compare D and H_X with respect to numerical equivalence. Consider the classes of curves $C(u) = \sigma(u) \cdot [X]$ and $C(t) = [D] \cdot \sigma(t)$. We define some non negative integers by: $x_u := H_X \cdot C(u)$, $y_u := D \cdot C(u)$, $z_t := H_X \cdot C(t)$ and $\lambda_t := [D] \cdot C(t)$. We have the equalities:

$$x_u = \sum_{t \in T} c_{t,H}^{u*} a_t, \quad y_u = \alpha_{u^*} \quad \text{and} \quad z_t = \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} \alpha_u.$$

Define a matrix M with two rows and columns indexed by $U \cup T$ by

$$M = (m_{i,j})_{i \in \{1,2\}, j \in U \cup T} = \begin{pmatrix} (x_u)_{u \in U} & (z_t)_{t \in T} \\ (y_u)_{u \in U} & (\lambda_t)_{t \in T} \end{pmatrix}.$$

The same proof as in [1] and Lefschetz’s hyperplane Theorem lead to the following:⁵

Proposition 2.1. *The divisor D is numerically equivalent to a multiple of H_X iff M has rank one.*

Corollary 2.2. *The divisor D' is numerically equivalent to a multiple of $H_{X'}$ iff M has rank one.*

As in [1], the sequence $0 \rightarrow N_{D/X} \rightarrow N_{D/Y} \rightarrow (N_{X/Y})|_D \rightarrow 0$ is exact because X and D are smooth. Taking the top Chern classes gives the equality $P := D \cdot_Y D - (D \cdot_X D) \cdot_X X|_X = 0$. In terms of the variables $(a_t)_{t \in T}$, $(\alpha_u)_{u \in U}$ and $(\lambda_t)_{t \in T}$, we get:

$$P = \sum_{u \in U} \alpha_u \alpha_{u^*} - \sum_{t \in T} a_t \lambda_t.$$

The next step is the elimination of the variables $(\lambda_t)_{t \in T}$. We consider for this, following [1], the surfaces $(S_t)_{t \in T}$ where S_t is the intersection of X with a general subvariety of class $\sigma(t)$. We set:

$$\text{Hodge}_t := \begin{vmatrix} H_{S_t}^2 & H_{S_t} D_{S_t} \\ H_{S_t} D_{S_t} & D_{S_t}^2 \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} x_u & z_t \\ \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} y_u & \lambda_t \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} x_u & \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} y_u \\ \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} y_u & \lambda_t \end{vmatrix} = \sum_{u \in U} c_{t,H}^{u*} \begin{vmatrix} m_{1,u} & m_{1,t} \\ m_{2,u} & m_{2,t} \end{vmatrix}.$$

Observe that Hodge_t is a non negative linear combination of minors of the matrix M . By hypothesis on X' , the surface S_t is irreducible hence Hodge_t is non positive. Set $d_t := H_{S_t}^2 > 0$ and define the following quadratic form q in the variables $(\alpha_u)_{u \in U}$ (observe that q is non positive)

$$q := P + \sum_{t \in T} \frac{a_t}{d_t} \text{Hodge}_t. \tag{1}$$

⁵ We can apply a numerical version of the Lefschetz Theorem because X' and all its linear sections are simply connected thanks to the homotopic Lefschetz’s Hyperplane Theorem, see [7, Theorem 3.1.21].

In [1], E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes decompose q , in the special case of Grassmannians of lines, as a sum of squares to prove its non negativity. We do this in full generality and show that some negative part may appear. We know that all the variables $(x_u)_{u \in U}$ do not vanish because X is bulky. Hence we may define two quadratic forms q' and q'' in the variables $(\alpha_u)_{u \in U}$ by:

$$q' = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{t \in T} \sum_{(u, u') \in U^2} \frac{a_t c_{t,H}^u c_{t,H}^{u'}}{d_t x_u x_{u'}} \begin{vmatrix} m_{1,u} & m_{1,u'} \\ m_{2,u} & m_{2,u'} \end{vmatrix}^2 \quad \text{and} \quad q'' = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{u \in U} \frac{1}{x_u x_{u^*}} \begin{vmatrix} m_{1,u} & m_{1,u^*} \\ m_{2,u} & m_{2,u^*} \end{vmatrix}^2.$$

Proposition 2.3. *The formula $q = q' - q''$ holds.*

Proof. For any couple (u, u') of elements in U , set $A_{u,u'} = -\sum_{t \in T} \frac{a_t}{d_t} c_{t,H}^{u^*} c_{t,H}^{u'^*}$.

The coefficient of $\alpha_u \alpha_{u'}$ in q is equal to $A_{u,u'} + A_{u',u} = 2A_{u,u'}$ if $u' \neq u^*$ and $u' \neq u$, it is equal to $2 + 2A_{u,u'}$ if $u' = u^* \neq u$, to $A_{u,u'}$ if $u^* \neq u' = u$ and to $1 + A_{u,u'}$ if $u' = u^* = u$. The coefficient of $\alpha_u \alpha_{u'}$ in q' is equal to $2A_{u,u'}$ if $u' \neq u$ and, if $u' = u$, to

$$\sum_{t \in T} \sum_{u'' \in U, u'' \neq u} \frac{a_t}{d_t} c_{t,H}^{u^*} c_{t,H}^{u''} \frac{x_{u''}}{x_{u^*}} = \sum_{t \in T} \frac{a_t}{d_t x_{u^*}} c_{t,H}^{u^*} (d_t - c_{t,H}^{u^*} x_{u^*}) = \frac{x_u}{x_{u^*}} - \sum_{t \in T} \frac{a_t}{d_t} c_{t,H}^{u^* 2} = \frac{x_u}{x_{u^*}} + A_{u,u'}.$$

The non vanishing coefficients of $\alpha_u \alpha_{u'}$ in q'' are equal to -2 if $u' = u^* \neq u$ and to $\frac{x_u}{x_{u^*}}$ if $u' = u \neq u^*$. But this is exactly the difference $q' - q$. \square

Corollary 2.4. *If for all $u \in U$, we have $\begin{vmatrix} m_{1,u} & m_{1,u^*} \\ m_{2,u} & m_{2,u^*} \end{vmatrix} = 0$, then D' is a multiple of $H_{X'}$ in $\text{Pic}(X')$.*

Proof. Indeed, in that case q'' vanishes so q must vanish (and also q'). Because X is bulky, all a_t are different from 0 and this implies that all 2×2 minors of M vanish and M has rank one. Apply Corollary 2.2 to conclude that D' is numerically equivalent to a multiple of H . Because X' is simply connected, this implies the result on the Picard group of X' . \square

We finish the proof of Theorem 1.2. Because X' is simply connected, we know that the Picard group is free of finite type. Let us now prove that its rank is at most $\frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y) - \sigma_Y) + 1$. Indeed, let $(D_i)_{0 \leq i \leq k}$ divisors on X' independent in $\text{Pic}(X')$, with $D_0 = H$. The conditions in Corollary 2.4 are $x_u \alpha_u - x_{u^*} \alpha_{u^*} = 0$ for $u \in U$ and in fact there are only $\frac{1}{2} h_{\text{hyp}}^{n-1}(Y) = \frac{1}{2}(h^{n-1}(Y) - \sigma_Y)$ such conditions because this condition is trivial if $u = u^*$ and is the same for u and u^* . Now if k is bigger than the preceding number of conditions, then there exists an element D' in the linear span of the family $(D_i)_{1 \leq i \leq k}$ satisfying these conditions. But then D' has to be a multiple of $H = D_0$, a contradiction.

3. Applications

Denote by $Y = \mathbb{G}(p, m)$ the Grassmannian variety of p -dimensional vector subspaces in a m -dimensional vector space. We complete the proof of Corollaries 1.3 and 1.4⁶ thanks to the following (see [5]):⁷

Proposition 3.1.

- (i) *Let X be a bulky irreducible subvariety in $\mathbb{G}(p, m)$ of dimension n' such that $2n' \geq N + r$ (or equivalently $n' \geq n - 1 + \frac{r}{2}$) then X is simply connected.*
- (ii) *Let X be a bulky irreducible variety of dimension $n' \geq n - 1 + \delta$ in Y , then the intersection of X with a general translate of a Schubert variety of dimension n is irreducible.*

⁶ The signature σ_Y is easy to compute in the last case, see [9].

⁷ The first part of this result generalises the celebrated Fulton–Hansen Theorem [6] while the second generalises the Bertini Theorem for Grassmannians.

We may not hope that the method proposed by E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes will lead to a better bound on the rank of the Picard group because the decomposition into sums of squares shows that some negative terms appear. More precisely we have the following:

Proposition 3.2. *If Y is cominuscule, for any square of minor appearing q'' the coefficient in q' of this square is smaller than its coefficient in q'' .*

Proof. If t is such that $c_{t,H}^u c_{t,H}^{u^*} \neq 0$ then the quiver of t (see [8] for more on these quivers) differs from those of u and u^* by one vertex and has to be the union of these quivers. In particular t is unique. Furthermore we get $d_t \geq x_u + x_{u^*} \geq 2a_t$ thus $\frac{a_t}{d_t} \leq \frac{1}{2} < 1$. \square

For example, consider the case $Y = Q_{2(n-1)}$ of a smooth quadric. Then our result together with Fulton–Hansen connectivity Theorem and Bertini Theorem leads to the following:

Proposition 3.3. *If X is a smooth subvariety of dimension $n' \geq n$ in a smooth quadric $Q_{2(n-1)}$ of dimension $2(n-1)$, then $\text{Pic}(X) = \mathbb{Z}$ if n is odd and $\text{Pic}(X) = \mathbb{Z}$ or \mathbb{Z}^2 if n is even.*

This has already been observed by E. Arrondo and J. Caravantes, and in the last case, they give in [1] an example of smooth subvariety X of dimension n in $Q_{2(n-1)}$ with Picard group \mathbb{Z}^2 .

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