

ON TRANSITIVE OPERATIONS IN ABSTRACT ALGEBRAS

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An n -ary operation f is said to be *transitive* if for each pair $i, j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ there exists a permutation p_1, \dots, p_n of numbers $1, \dots, n$ such that $p_i = j$ and

$$f(x_1, \dots, x_n) = f(x_{p_1}, \dots, x_{p_n}).$$

In other words, f is called transitive if the group of symmetry of f is transitive.

In this paper we give a generalization of some results, proved earlier by E. Marczewski and K. Urbanik; concerning symmetrical and quasi-symmetrical operations. It is also a continuation of investigations of cyclic operations by J. Płonka.

For any abstract algebra \mathfrak{A} we denote by $S(\mathfrak{A})$ the set of all integers $n \geq 2$ for which there exists an n -ary algebraic operation in \mathfrak{A} depending on every variable.

Marczewski proved ([1], Corollary 3) the following theorem:

If there are no algebraic constants in algebra $\mathfrak{A} = (A; f)$, where f is k -ary quasi-symmetrical operation in \mathfrak{A} ($k \geq 2$), then the set $S(\mathfrak{A})$ contains arithmetical progression $k + j(k-1)$, ($j = 0, 1, 2, \dots$).

Urbanik proved ([5], Theorem 1), under the same assumptions, that the set $S(\mathfrak{A})$ contains arithmetical progression $k + 2 + j(k-1)$ ($j = 0, 1, 2, \dots$), and that if, moreover, $S(\mathfrak{A})$ is an arithmetical progression itself, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) = \{2, 3, \dots\}$, $\{3, 4, \dots\}$ or $\{3, 5, \dots\}$ ([5], Theorem 2).

Płonka [3] proved that if f is cyclic, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{1, 3, \dots\}$. We shall prove that if f is a k -ary transitive operation (to be quasi-symmetrical or cyclic are stronger conditions for f than to be transitive), then $S(A; f)$ is the union of an arbitrary set of even integers and of the set of all odd integers. In our construction f will be even symmetrical, thus assuming quasi-symmetry or symmetry does not give a new thesis. If a transitive operation f depends on an even number of variables, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) = \{2, 3, \dots\}$ or $\{3, 4, \dots\}$.

Our conclusions from Lemma 1 can be obtained also from results of Płonka [4].

We assume throughout the paper that no algebra has constant operations. Put $F^0(x) = x$, $F^{k+1}(x) = f(F^k(x), \dots, F^k(x))$ for any operation $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$. $|A|$ will denote the number of elements in A .

LEMMA 1. *Let $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ ($n \geq 3$) be a transitive operation in an algebra \mathfrak{A} . If $h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, F^r(x_k))$ is an algebraic operation depending on all variables x_1, \dots, x_k , then there exists an index $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ such that*

$$h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, f(F^{r-1}(x), \dots, F^{r-1}(x), F^{r-1}(y), F^{r-1}(z), \dots, F^{r-1}(z))),$$

where $F^{r-1}(y)$ stands in the i -th place in f , depends on all $k+2$ variables $x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z$ ($r = 1, 2, \dots$).

Proof. Examine the operation

$$\begin{aligned} g(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z) \\ = h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, f(F^{r-k}(x), F^{r-1}(y), F^{r-1}(z), \dots, F^{r-1}(z))). \end{aligned}$$

Putting $x = y = z$ into g we see that g depends on x_1, \dots, x_{k-1} and on at least one of x, y, z . Put

$$\begin{aligned} g_j(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) \\ = h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, f(F^{r-1}(x), \dots, F^{r-1}(x), F^{r-1}(z), \dots, F^{r-1}(z))), \end{aligned}$$

where $F^{r-1}(x)$ is repeated j times and $F^{r-1}(z)$ is repeated $n-j$ times ($j = 1, \dots, n$).

(a) If g does not depend on x , then $g(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z, z) = g_1(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z)$ also does not depend on x , but g_1 must depend on z . From the transitivity of f we infer that $f(t, \dots, t, s) = f(s, t, \dots, t)$. Thus

$$g_{n-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) = g(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, x, z) = g(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, z, x, x)$$

depends on x and does not depend on z . Therefore there exists an index $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ such that

$$(1) \quad g_{i-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) = g'(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, z)$$

does not depend on x and

$$(2) \quad g_i(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) = g''(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x)$$

does not depend on z . It follows that the operation

$$\begin{aligned} u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z) \\ = h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, f(F^{r-1}(x), \dots, F^{r-1}(x), F^{r-1}(y), F^{r-1}(z), \dots, F^{r-1}(z))), \end{aligned}$$

where $F^{r-1}(y)$ stands in the i -th place in f , depends on $x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z$,

because, putting $y = z$ into u , we get $u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z, z) = g'(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, z)$ by (1), and (putting $y = x$) $u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, x, z) = g''(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x)$ by (2).

By the transitivity of f we have $f(t, s, t, \dots, t) = f(s, t, \dots, t)$ and so we can proceed in the same way if g does not depend on y .

(b) If now g does not depend on z , but depend on x and y , then $g_2(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) = g(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, x, z)$ does not depend on z . On the other hand, putting $z = y$ in g , we infer that the operation $g_1(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y)$ depends on x and, by the transitivity of f , the operation $g_n(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z)$ depends on z . Therefore there exists an $i \in \{2, \dots, n\}$ such that

$$(3) \quad g_{i-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) \text{ does not depend on } z,$$

$$(4) \quad g_i(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z) \text{ depends on } z.$$

Putting $F^{r-1}(y)$ in the i -th place in f , we get an operation

$$\begin{aligned} u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z) \\ = h(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, f(F^{r-1}(x), \dots, F^{r-1}(x), F^{r-1}(y), F^{r-1}(z), \dots, F^{r-1}(z))) \end{aligned}$$

depending on $x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, y, z$, because, by (3),

$$u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z, z) = g_{i-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z)$$

does not depend on z , and, by (4),

$$u(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, x, z) = g_i(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, x, z)$$

depends on z .

Remark. If r can be arbitrarily large, then one can show by induction that there are in \mathfrak{A} operations depending on $k + 2i$ variables ($i = 1, 2, \dots$).

COROLLARY. *If $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$, $n \geq 3$, is a transitive operation in \mathfrak{A} , then $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{3, 5, \dots\}$.*

Proof. $F^{r+1}(x) = F(F^r(x))$ depends on x for every integer r . Lemma 1 with $F^{r+1}(x)$ in the place of h yields the thesis.

LEMMA 2. *Let $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ be a transitive operation in \mathfrak{A} . If f , after identification of all variables to two, depends on one of them only, then there exists an $i \in \{2, \dots, n\}$ such that the operation*

$$g(x, y, z) = f(x, \dots, x, y, z, \dots, z),$$

where y stands in the i -th place, depends on x, y, z .

Moreover, if $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(x)$, then g satisfies

$$(5) \quad g(x, y, y) = g(y, x, y) = g(y, y, x) = G(x) = F(x)$$

and if $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(y)$, then g satisfies

$$(6) \quad g(x, y, y) = g(y, x, y) = g(y, y, x) = G(y) = F(y).$$

Proof. Put $f_j(x, z) = f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$, where $x_1 = x_2 = \dots = x_j = x$, $x_{j+1} = \dots = x_n = z$. By assumption, $f_1(x, z) = f(x, z, \dots, z)$ depends only on x or only on z .

Let $f_1(x, z) = F(x)$ do not depend on z . By the transitivity of f we have $f_n(x, z) = F(z)$. Thus there exists an $i \in \{2, \dots, n\}$ such that

$$f_{i-1}(x, z) = F(x) \quad \text{and} \quad f_i(x, z) = F(z).$$

Put $g(x, y, z) = f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$, where $x_1 = \dots = x_{i-1} = x$, $x_i = y$, $x_{i+1} = \dots = x_n = z$. We have

$$g(x, z, z) = f_{i-1}(x, z) = F(x), \quad g(x, x, z) = f_i(x, z) = F(z)$$

and, by the transitivity of f ,

$$g(x, y, x) = f(x, \dots, x, y, x, \dots, x) = F(y);$$

thus g satisfies (5).

If $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(y)$, we can in the same way obtain an operation satisfying (6). Formulas (5) or (6) give then directly the desired dependence on variables.

LEMMA 3. If $g(x_1, x_2, x_3)$ is an operation satisfying, for any $x, y \in A$, the equalities

$$g(x, x, y) = g(x, y, x) = g(y, x, x) = G(x),$$

then the operation

$$u(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) = g(x_1, g(x_2, x_3, x_1), G^r(x_4))$$

depends on x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 for each $r = 1, 2, \dots$

Proof. Putting $x_2 = x_3 = x$ we get

$$u(x_1, x, x, x_4) = g(x_1, g(x, x, x_1), G^r(x_4)) = g(x_1, G(x), G^r(x_4))$$

and so u depends on x_1 and x_4 . Let now $x_2 = x_1$. Since

$$g(x_1, g(x_1, x_3, x_1), G^r(x_4)) = g(x_1, G(x_1), G^r(x_4)) \neq g(x_1, G(x_3), G^r(x_4)),$$

u depends on x_2 . The same for x_3 .

LEMMA 4. Let $f(x_1, \dots, x_{2n})$, $n \geq 2$, be a transitive operation in \mathfrak{A} . If f , after identification of all variables to two, depends on one of them only, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{3, 4, \dots\}$.

Proof. By assumption, $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(y)$ or $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(x)$. Since in the first case Lemmas 2, 3 and 1 (see also Corollary) yield the thesis, consider the second case: $f(x, y, \dots, y) = F(x)$. By Lemma 2,

there is in A an operation $g(x, y, z)$ satisfying (5). From the transitivity of f we have

$$(7) \quad f(y, \dots, y, x, y, \dots, y) = F(x),$$

where x stands in any place.

Examine operations $f_i(x, z) = f(x, \dots, x, z, \dots, z)$ ($i = 1, \dots, 2n$), where the first i variables in f are equal to x and the remaining ones to z .

There are three possibilities:

(a) $f_{2i+1}(x, z) = F(x)$, $f_{2i}(x, z) = F(z)$ for $i = 0, \dots, n-1$,

(b) there exists a $j \in \{2, \dots, 2n-1\}$ with $f_{j-1}(x, z) = f_j(x, z) = F(x)$,

(c) there exists a $j \in \{3, \dots, 2n\}$ with $f_{j-1}(x, z) = f_j(x, z) = F(z)$.

In the case (a) we have $f_{2n-1}(x, z) = F(x)$. On the other hand, by (7), $f_{2n-1}(x, z) = f(x, \dots, x, z) = F(z)$. Thus case (a) is impossible.

In the case (b) put $h(x, y, z) = f(x, \dots, x, y, z, \dots, z)$, where the first $j-1$ variables in f are equal to x . Operation h satisfies

$$(8) \quad \begin{aligned} h(x, y, y) &= f_{j-1}(x, y) = F(x), & h(x, y, x) &= F(y), \\ h(x, x, z) &= f_j(x, z) = F(x). \end{aligned}$$

In view of (8), $F^r(h(x, y, z))$ and $h(F^r(x), F^r(y), F^r(z))$ depend on x, y, z ($r = 1, 2, \dots$). Examine the following operation u :

$$u(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) = g(x_1, x_2, h(x_1, x_3, F^r(x_4))).$$

If $x_1 = x_2$, then, by (5),

$$(9) \quad u(x_2, x_2, x_3, x_4) = g(x_2, x_2, h(x_2, x_3, F^r(x_4))) = F(h(x_2, x_3, F^r(x_4))).$$

The right-hand side of (9) depends on x_2, x_3, x_4 , and thus u depends on x_3 and x_4 . Inserting $x_2 = h(x_1, x_3, F^r(x_4))$ in u , we infer, by (5) and (9), that u depends on x_2 , because

$$u(x_1, h(x_1, x_3, F^r(x_4)), x_3, x_4) = F(x_1) \neq F(h(x_1, x_3, F^r(x_4))).$$

Now put $x_1 = x_3$ into u . We obtain, by (8), the equality

$$(10) \quad u(x_3, x_2, x_3, x_4) = g(x_3, x_2, h(x_3, x_3, F^r(x_4))) = g(x_3, x_2, F(x_3)).$$

Operation on the right-hand side of (10) does not depend on x_4 . On the other hand, according to (9), $u(x_2, x_2, x_3, x_4)$ depends on x_4 , and so u depends also on x_1 . Lemma 1 applied successively to operations g and u in the place of h gives thesis. This finishes the proof in the case (b).

In the case (c) put $h_1(x, y, z) = f(x, \dots, x, y, z, \dots, z)$, where the first $j-1$ variables of f are equal to x . By assumption of (c) and (7), operation h_1 has the properties $h_1(x, y, y) = f_{j-1}(x, y) = F(y)$, $h_1(x, y, x) = F(y)$, $h_1(x, x, z) = f_j(x, z) = F(z)$. Since the operation $h(x, y, z) = h_1(z, y, x)$ satisfies (8), the case (c) can be reduced to that of (b).

LEMMA 5. Let $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ ($n \geq 3$) be a transitive operation in \mathfrak{A} . If $S(\mathfrak{A}) \neq \{2, 3, \dots\}$, then there exists an integer r such that $f(F^r(x_1), \dots, F^r(x_n))$ depends, after identification of all variables x_1, \dots, x_n to two, on one of them only.

Proof. If for any r from $f(F^r(x_1), \dots, F^r(x_n))$ we could obtain, by the identification of variables, an operation $h(F^r(x), F^r(y))$ depending on two variables, then Lemma 1 would give $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{2, 4, \dots\}$ and so, by Corollary, $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{2, 3, \dots\}$. A contradiction.

THEOREM 1. If in an algebra \mathfrak{A} without constant operations there is a transitive operation depending on an even number of variables, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{3, 4, \dots\}$.

Proof. For binary operations transitivity is equivalent to symmetry. Płonka [2] proved that if in an algebra \mathfrak{A} there is a binary symmetrical operation, then $S(\mathfrak{A}) \supset \{2, 3, \dots\}$. If there is in \mathfrak{A} a transitive operation $f(x_1, \dots, x_{2n})$, $n \geq 2$, then Lemma 4, applied either to f or to $f(F^r(x_1), \dots, F^r(x_{2n}))$ from Lemma 5, gives the thesis.

THEOREM 2. For any set T of even integers there exists an algebra $\mathfrak{A} = (A; f)$ such that the fundamental operation f is ternary symmetrical and $S(\mathfrak{A})$ is equal to the union of T and of the set of all odd integers. Moreover, for each $k = 1, 2, \dots$, there is in \mathfrak{A} a symmetrical operation depending on $2k+1$ variables.

Proof. Take the set $A = \{a, b, a_1, a_2, \dots, c_1, c_2, \dots, 2, 4, \dots\}$, where sets $\{a\}, \{b\}, \{a_1, \dots\}, \{c_1, \dots\}, \{2, \dots\}$ are pairwise disjoint and define on A the operation

$$g(x_1, x_2, x_3) = \begin{cases} b & \text{if } x_i = b \text{ for the odd number of } i\text{'s,} \\ a & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

It is easy to see that g is symmetrical, satisfies (5), and that for each $k = 2, 3, \dots$ the operations

$$g_3(x_1, x_2, x_3) = g(x_3, x_2, x_1),$$

$$g_{2k+1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k+1}) = g(x_{2k+1}, x_{2k}, g_{2k-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k-1}))$$

satisfy the condition

$$g_{2k+1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k+1}) = \begin{cases} b & \text{if } x_i = b \text{ for the odd number of } i\text{'s,} \\ a & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

These g_{2k+1} ($k = 1, 2, \dots$) are symmetrical and, of course, depend on x_1, \dots, x_{2k+1} . Any non-trivial algebraic operation in $(A; g)$ is equal to g_{2k+1} for some k .

Now we shall define the operation f .

If $T = \emptyset$, put $f = g$. If $T = \{t_1, t_2, \dots\}$ (finite or not), put (arguments in f can be placed in any order):

$$\begin{aligned} f(a_1, a_2, a_1) &= 2, & f(a_5, a_4, a_3) &= c_1, & f(a_3, a_6, c_1) &= 4, \\ f(a_9, a_8, a_7) &= c_2, & f(a_{11}, a_{10}, c_2) &= c_3, & f(a_7, a_{12}, c_3) &= 6, & \dots, \\ f(a_{m+3}, a_{m+2}, a_{m+1}) &= c_{n+1}, & f(a_{m+5}, a_{m+4}, c_{n+1}) &= c_{n+2}, & \dots, \\ f(a_{m+2k-1}, a_{m+2k-2}, c_{n+k-2}) &= c_{n+k-1}, \\ f(a_{m+1}, a_{m+2k}, c_{n+k-1}) &= 2k, & \dots, \end{aligned}$$

where $m = m(k) = k(k-1)$, $n = n(k) = \frac{1}{2}(k-2)(k-1)$. In the remaining cases put $f(x_1, x_2, x_3) = g(x_1, x_2, x_3)$.

If $2k \notin T$, we delete the equalities from $f(\dots) = 2(k-1)$ to $f(\dots) = 2k$, but without the first of them.

Now define operations $f_{2k+1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k+1})$, algebraic in $\mathfrak{A} = (A; f)$, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} f_3(x_1, x_2, x_3) &= f(x_3, x_2, x_1), \\ f_{2k+1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k+1}) &= f(x_{2k+1}, x_{2k}, f_{2k-1}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k-1})) \quad (k = 2, 3, \dots). \end{aligned}$$

In other words, for $k = 1, 2, \dots$, we have

$$f_{2k+1} = f(x_{2k+1}, x_{2k}, f(x_{2k-1}, x_{2k-2}, f(\dots, f(x_3, x_2, x_1)) \dots)).$$

Put

$$f_{2k}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k}) = f_{2k+1}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_{2k}, x_1).$$

In this way we obtain for $2k \in T$ operations f_{2k} satisfying

$$(11) \quad f_{2k}(a_{k(k-1)+1}, \dots, a_{k(k+1)}) = 2k.$$

From the symmetry of f , variables x_{2i} and x_{2i+1} ($1 \leq i \leq k-1$) commute in f_{2k} and these cycles generate the whole group of symmetry of f_{2k} .

Finally, observe that

$$(12) \quad f_{2k}(x_1, \dots, x_{2k}) = g_{2k-1}(x_2, \dots, x_{2k}) \quad \text{if } \{x_1, \dots, x_{2k}\} \neq \{a_1, \dots, a_{2k}\}.$$

Operations f_{2k} depend on x_1, \dots, x_{2k} , because, putting in the left-hand side of (11) $x_i = a$ instead of $i \in \{1, \dots, 2k\}$, we obtain on the right-hand side a instead of $2k$. Observe that any superposition of ternary operation f has an odd number of variables. If $h(x_1, \dots, x_{2k})$ is an algebraic operation in $\mathfrak{A} = (A; f)$, then, in any formula determining h , some variables are repeated an even number of times (formally, f is superposed with a trivial operation). If in h there is an even number of repetitions, different from that in f_{2k} , then, by the definition of f , h does not depend on

repeated variables. Thus any algebraic operation depending on $2k$ variables is equal to f_{2k} . Finally, observe that

$$F(f(x_1, x_2, x_3)) = f(F(x_1), F(x_2), F(x_3)) = g(x_1, x_2, x_3).$$

Thus g is an algebraic operation in \mathfrak{A} and operations g_{2k+1} are the wanted symmetrical operations depending on $2k+1$ variables for each $k = 1, 2, \dots$. This completes the proof.

If f is a k -ary, where k is an even, cyclic operation, then f generates a binary symmetrical operation. We shall show that there exists a two-element idempotent algebra with a transitive operation of six variables and without binary non-trivial operations.

Example. Put $\mathfrak{A} = (0, 1; f)$, where

$$f(x_1, \dots, x_6) = x \quad \text{if } |\{i: x_i = x\}| > 3$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} f(x, x, x, y, y, y) &= f(x, x, y, x, y, y) = f(x, y, x, y, y, x) \\ &= f(y, x, y, x, y, x) = f(y, x, x, y, x, y) \\ &= f(x, y, y, x, x, y) = f(x, y, y, y, x, x) \\ &= f(y, y, x, x, x, y) = f(y, x, y, y, x, x) \\ &= f(y, y, x, x, y, x) = x. \end{aligned}$$

Operation f is transitive. The group of symmetry of f is generated by $(1, 2, 3)(4, 5, 6)$ and $(1, 2)(3, 4)5, 6$. Let h be a k -ary operation ($k > 2$). For each subset P of $\{1, \dots, k\}$ we define a binary operation h_P by

$$h_P(x, y) = f(x_1, \dots, x_k),$$

where $x_i = x$ if $i \in P$, and $x_i = y$ if $i \notin P$. Observe that $f_P(x, y) = e_j^2(x, y)$, $j = 1, 2$, where, for any n , trivial operations e_j^n are defined by $e_j^n(x_1, \dots, x_n) = x_j$ ($j = 1, \dots, n$). Let h_j ($j = 1, \dots, n$) be k -ary operations on A and h be an n -ary operation on A . Let $h_{jP}(x, y)$ ($j = 1, \dots, n$) be equal to a trivial operation for each $P \subset \{1, \dots, k\}$ and let also $h_Q(x, y)$ be equal to a trivial operation for any $Q \subset \{1, \dots, n\}$. Examine the superposition

$$u(x_1, \dots, x_k) = h(h_1, \dots, h_n)(x_1, \dots, x_k).$$

Observe that

$$u_P(x, y) = h(h_{1P}, \dots, h_{nP})(x, y) = h_Q(x, y)$$

for some $Q \subset \{1, \dots, n\}$ is a trivial operation. Thus in our algebra $\mathfrak{A} = (A; f)$ each binary operation is trivial and $2 \notin S(\mathfrak{A})$.

Finally, observe that in this example the group of symmetry of f is doubly transitive and f is quasi-symmetrical.

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- [5] K. Urbanik, *Remarks on quasi-symmetrical operations*, Bulletin de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, Série des sciences mathématiques, astronomiques et physiques, 13 (1965), p. 389-392.

Reçu par la Rédaction le 23.10.1970
