

LECTURE 24 (APRIL 24)

Outline of the proof of Deligne's theorem. After these preliminaries about absolute Hodge classes, we can now start talking about Deligne's theorem.

Theorem 24.1 (Deligne). *All Hodge classes on abelian varieties are absolute.*

A key object in the proof are so-called "abelian varieties of CM-type", which are abelian varieties whose (rational) endomorphism algebra contains a CM-field. Let's first recall the necessary definitions.

Definition 24.2. A *CM field* is a number field E , such that for every embedding $s: E \hookrightarrow \mathbb{C}$, complex conjugation induces an automorphism of E that is independent of the embedding. In other words, E admits an involution $\iota \in \text{Aut}(E/\mathbb{Q})$, such that for any embedding $s: E \hookrightarrow \mathbb{C}$, one has $\bar{s} = s \circ \iota$. Here \bar{s} denotes the composition of the embedding s with complex conjugation on \mathbb{C} .

The fixed field of the involution is a totally real field F ; concretely, this means that $F = \mathbb{Q}(\alpha)$, where α and all of its conjugates are real numbers. The field E is then of the form $F[x]/(x^2 - f)$, for some element $f \in F$ that is mapped to a negative number under all embeddings of F into \mathbb{R} . The simplest example of a CM-field is $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{-d})$ for a square-free positive integer d ; the involution ι is just complex conjugation.

Definition 24.3. An abelian variety A is said to be *of CM-type* if a CM-field E is contained in $\text{End}(A) \otimes \mathbb{Q}$, and if $H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$ is one-dimensional as an E -vector space. In that case, we clearly have $2 \dim A = \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H^1(A, \mathbb{Q}) = [E : \mathbb{Q}]$.

Example 24.4. It is easy to describe elliptic curves of CM-type. Write the elliptic curve as $\mathbb{C}/(\mathbb{Z} + \mathbb{Z}\tau)$, where τ is a complex number with $\text{Im } \tau > 0$. Any rational endomorphism can be lifted to an endomorphism of \mathbb{C} , and is therefore of the form $z \mapsto \lambda z$ for some $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$. The lifting needs to preserve $\mathbb{Q} + \mathbb{Q}\tau$, and so we get $\lambda = a\tau + b$ and $\lambda\tau = c\tau + d$ for rational numbers $a, b, c, d \in \mathbb{Q}$. This gives

$$a\tau^2 + (b - c)\tau + d = 0,$$

and because τ has positive imaginary part, we get (for $a \neq 0$) that

$$\tau = \frac{c - b + \sqrt{(b - c)^2 + 4ad}}{2a}.$$

As long as $(b - c)^2 + 4ad < 0$, this is an imaginary quadratic extension of \mathbb{Q} , and therefore a CM-field. Observe that there are countably many possible values for τ , which are dense in the upper half-plane; so there are only countably many elliptic curves of CM-type, but they are dense in the space of all elliptic curves.

After this preliminary discussion of abelian varieties of CM-type, we return to Deligne's theorem. Let A be an abelian variety, and let $\alpha \in H^{2p}(A, \mathbb{Q})$ be a Hodge class. The proof consists of the following three steps.

1. The first step is to reduce the problem to abelian varieties of CM-type. This is done by constructing an algebraic family of abelian varieties that links a given A and a Hodge class in $H^{2p}(A, \mathbb{Q})$ to an abelian variety of CM-type and a Hodge class on it, and then applying Principle B.
2. The second step is to show that every Hodge class on an abelian variety of CM-type can be expressed as a sum of pullbacks of so-called split Weil classes. The latter are Hodge classes on certain special abelian varieties, constructed by linear algebra from the CM-field E and its embeddings into \mathbb{C} . This part of the proof is a simplification of Deligne's argument, due to Yves André.

3. The last step is to show that all split Weil classes are absolute. For a fixed CM-type, all abelian varieties of split Weil type are naturally parametrized by a certain hermitian symmetric domain; by Principle B, this allows to reduce the problem to split Weil classes on abelian varieties of a very specific form, for which the proof of the result is straightforward.

The original proof by Deligne uses Baily-Borel theory to show that certain families of abelian varieties are algebraic. In the presentation below, I am going to replace this by the following two results: the existence of a quasi-projective moduli space for polarized abelian varieties with level structure and the theorem of Cattani-Deligne-Kaplan concerning the algebraicity of Hodge loci.

Abelian varieties of CM-type. To motivate what follows, let's briefly look at a criterion for a simple abelian variety A to be of CM-type that involves the Mumford-Tate group $\text{MT}(A)$. This is a certain algebraic group that serves as a sort of "symmetry group" of the Hodge structure on $H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$.

Recall that a complex abelian variety A is uniquely determined by the Hodge structure on $H^1(A, \mathbb{Z})$, which is

$$H^1(A, \mathbb{Z}) \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{C} \cong H^1(A, \mathbb{C}) = H^{1,0}(A) \oplus H^{0,1}(A).$$

Indeed, writing $A = V/\Lambda$, we have natural isomorphisms

$$\begin{aligned} V &\cong H^0(A, \mathcal{T}_A) \cong H^0(A, \Omega_A^1)^* \cong H^{1,0}(A)^*, \\ \Lambda &\cong H_1(A, \mathbb{Z}) \cong H^1(A, \mathbb{Z})^*. \end{aligned}$$

Moreover, A is an abelian variety iff A is projective iff the Hodge structure on $H^1(A, \mathbb{Z})$ is polarized. From the rational Hodge structure $H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$, we can only recover the lattice Λ up to finite index; therefore the Hodge structure on $H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$ determines the abelian variety A only up to isogeny.

Now let's define the Mumford-Tate group. Suppose that V is a rational Hodge structure of weight n , with Hodge decomposition

$$V_{\mathbb{C}} = V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} = \bigoplus_{p+q=n} V^{p,q}.$$

We can encode the decomposition into a morphism of real Lie groups

$$h: U(1) \rightarrow \text{GL}(V_{\mathbb{R}})$$

from the circle group, by letting a complex number z with $|z| = 1$ act on the subspace $V^{p,q}$ as multiplication by $z^{p-q} = z^p |z|^q$. Due to Hodge symmetry, each $h(z)$ is actually a real endomorphism, because

$$\overline{h(z)v} = \overline{z^{p-q}v} = \bar{z}^{p-q}\bar{v} = z^{q-p}\bar{v} = h(z)\bar{v}$$

for $v \in V^{p,q}$. The Hodge decomposition is then exactly the decomposition into common eigenspaces for the commuting endomorphisms $h(z)$ with $z \in U(1)$; these eigenspaces correspond to characters of $U(1)$, which are of the form $z \mapsto z^k$ for $k \in \mathbb{Z}$.

We define the *Mumford-Tate group* $\text{MT}(V)$ as the smallest \mathbb{Q} -algebraic subgroup of $\text{GL}(V)$ whose set of real points contains the image of h . In other words, we view $\text{GL}(V)$ as an affine variety over $\text{Spec } \mathbb{Q}$, defined by the determinant function on $\text{End}(V)$, and $\text{MT}(V)$ is the Zariski closure of $\text{im } h$.

Lemma 24.5. *The Mumford-Tate group $\text{MT}(V)$ is exactly the subgroup of $\text{GL}(V)$ that fixes every Hodge class in every tensor product*

$$T^{k,\ell}(V) = V^{\otimes k} \otimes (V^*)^{\otimes \ell}.$$

Proof. One implication is easy. There are countably many Hodge classes in all the tensor products, and their joint stabilizer is defined by countably many algebraic equations with coefficients in \mathbb{Q} ; therefore it is a \mathbb{Q} -algebraic subgroup M of $\mathrm{GL}(V)$. If we have a Hodge class of type (p, p) in some $T^{k, \ell}(V)$, then $h(z)$ acts on it as multiplication by $z^{p-p} = 1$, and so the image of h is contained in M . Because $\mathrm{MT}(V)$ is the Zariski closure of the image, we get $\mathrm{MT}(V) \subseteq M$. The other implication needs a bit of theory of algebraic groups, so I won't present it here. \square

The Mumford-Tate group of an abelian variety A is $\mathrm{MT}(A) = \mathrm{MT}(H^1(A, \mathbb{Q}))$. By the lemma, it is exactly the subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(H^1(A, \mathbb{Q}))$ that fixes every Hodge class in every tensor product

$$T^{k, \ell}(A) = H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})^{\otimes k} \otimes H_1(A, \mathbb{Q})^{\otimes \ell}.$$

We have the following nice criterion for simple abelian varieties to be of CM-type.

Proposition 24.6. *A simple abelian variety is of CM-type if and only if its Mumford-Tate group $\mathrm{MT}(A)$ is an abelian group.*

Proof. Let's look at the proof of the interesting direction, namely that $\mathrm{MT}(A)$ abelian implies that A is of CM-type. Let $H = H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$. The abelian variety A is simple, which implies that $E = \mathrm{End}(A) \otimes \mathbb{Q}$ is a division algebra. (This is just Schur's lemma: because A does not have nontrivial abelian subvarieties, any endomorphism must be surjective with finite kernel, hence an isogeny.) It is also the space of Hodge classes in $\mathrm{End}_{\mathbb{Q}}(H)$, and therefore consists exactly of those endomorphisms that commute with $\mathrm{MT}(A)$. Because the Mumford-Tate group is abelian, its action splits $H^1(A, \mathbb{C})$ into a direct sum of character spaces

$$H \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} = \bigoplus_{\chi} H_{\chi},$$

where $m \cdot h = \chi(m)h$ for $h \in H_{\chi}$ and $m \in \mathrm{MT}(A)$. Now any endomorphism of H_{χ} obviously commutes with $\mathrm{MT}(A)$, and is therefore contained in $E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C}$. By counting dimensions, we find that

$$\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} E \geq \sum_{\chi} (\dim_{\mathbb{C}} H_{\chi})^2 \geq \sum_{\chi} \dim_{\mathbb{C}} H_{\chi} = \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H.$$

On the other hand, we have $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} E \leq \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H$; indeed, since E is a division algebra, the map $E \rightarrow H$, $e \mapsto e \cdot h$, is injective for every nonzero $h \in H$. Therefore $[E : \mathbb{Q}] = \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} H = 2 \dim A$; moreover, each character space H_{χ} is one-dimensional, and this implies that E is commutative, hence a field. To construct the involution $\iota : E \rightarrow E$ that makes E into a CM-field, choose a polarization $\psi : H \times H \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}$, and define ι by the condition that, for every $h, h' \in H$,

$$\psi(e \cdot h, h') = \psi(h, \iota(e) \cdot h').$$

The fact that $i\psi$ is positive definite on the subspace $H^{1,0}(A)$ can then be used to show that ι is nontrivial, and that $\bar{s} = s \circ \iota$ for any embedding of E into the complex numbers. (We'll prove this below.) \square

Hodge structures of CM-type. When A is an abelian variety of CM-type, $H^1(A, \mathbb{Q})$ is an example of a Hodge structure of CM-type. We now undertake a more careful study of this class of Hodge structures. Let V be a rational Hodge structure of weight n , with Hodge decomposition

$$V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} = \bigoplus_{p+q=n} V^{p,q}.$$

Because the weight n is fixed, there is a one-to-one correspondence between such decompositions and group homomorphisms $h: U(1) \rightarrow \mathrm{GL}(V_{\mathbb{R}})$, with $h(z)$ acting as multiplication by $z^{p-q} = z^{2p-n}$ on the subspace $V^{p,q}$.

Definition 24.7. We say that V is a *Hodge structure of CM-type* if the following two equivalent conditions are satisfied:

- (a) The group of real points of $\mathrm{MT}(V)$ is a compact torus.
- (b) $\mathrm{MT}(V)$ is abelian and V is polarizable.

We mostly use (b) in what follows; the equivalence between (a) and (b) needs a bit of structure theory for algebraic groups, and so we'll skip it.

It is not hard to see that any Hodge structure of CM-type is a direct sum of irreducible Hodge structures of CM-type. Indeed, since V is polarizable, it admits a finite decomposition $V = V_1 \oplus \cdots \oplus V_r$, with each V_i irreducible. As subgroups of $\mathrm{GL}(V) = \mathrm{GL}(V_1) \times \cdots \times \mathrm{GL}(V_r)$, we then have $\mathrm{MT}(V) \subseteq \mathrm{MT}(V_1) \times \cdots \times \mathrm{MT}(V_r)$, and since the projection to each factor is surjective, it follows that $\mathrm{MT}(V_i)$ is abelian. But this means that each V_i is again of CM-type. It is therefore sufficient to concentrate on irreducible Hodge structures of CM-type. For those, there is a nice structure theorem that we shall now explain.

Let V be an irreducible Hodge structure of weight n that is of CM-type, and as above, denote by $M = \mathrm{MT}(V)$ its Mumford-Tate group. Because V is irreducible, its algebra of endomorphisms

$$E = \mathrm{End}_{\mathbb{Q}\text{-HS}}(V)$$

must be a division algebra. In fact, since the endomorphisms of V as a Hodge structure are exactly the Hodge classes in $\mathrm{End}_{\mathbb{Q}}(V)$, we see that E consists of all rational endomorphisms of V that commute with $\mathrm{MT}(V)$. If $T_E = E^{\times}$ denotes the algebraic torus in $\mathrm{GL}(V)$ determined by E , then we get $\mathrm{MT}(V) \subseteq T_E$ because $\mathrm{MT}(V)$ is commutative by assumption.

Since $\mathrm{MT}(V)$ is commutative, it acts on $V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C}$ by characters, and so we get a decomposition

$$V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} = \bigoplus_{\chi} V_{\chi},$$

where $m \in \mathrm{MT}(V)$ acts on $v \in V_{\chi}$ by the rule $m \cdot v = \chi(m)v$. Any endomorphism of V_{χ} therefore commutes with $\mathrm{MT}(V)$, and so $E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C}$ contains the spaces $\mathrm{End}_{\mathbb{C}}(V_{\chi})$. As before, this leads to the inequality

$$\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} E \geq \sum_{\chi} (\dim_{\mathbb{C}} V_{\chi})^2 \geq \sum_{\chi} \dim_{\mathbb{C}} V_{\chi} = \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} V.$$

On the other hand, we have $\dim_{\mathbb{Q}} V \leq \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} E$ because every nonzero element in E is invertible. It follows that each V_{χ} is one-dimensional, that E is commutative, and therefore that E is a field of degree $[E : \mathbb{Q}] = \dim_{\mathbb{Q}} V$. In particular, V is one-dimensional as an E -vector space.

The decomposition into character spaces can be made more canonical in the following way. Let $S = \mathrm{Hom}(E, \mathbb{C})$ denote the set of all complex embeddings of E ; its cardinality is $[E : \mathbb{Q}]$. Then

$$E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \xrightarrow{\sim} \bigoplus_{s \in S} \mathbb{C}, \quad e \otimes z \mapsto \sum_{s \in S} s(e)z,$$

is an isomorphism of E -vector spaces; E acts on each summand on the right through the corresponding embedding s . This decomposition induces an isomorphism

$$V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \xrightarrow{\sim} \bigoplus_{s \in S} V_s,$$

where $V_s = V \otimes_{E,s} \mathbb{C}$ is a one-dimensional complex vector space on which E acts via s . The induced homomorphism $U(1) \rightarrow \text{MT}(V) \rightarrow E^\times \rightarrow \text{End}_{\mathbb{C}}(V_s)$ is a character of $U(1)$, hence of the form $z \mapsto z^k$ for some integer k . Solving $k = p - q$ and $n = p + q$, we find that $k = 2p - n$, which means that V_s is of type $(p, n - p)$ in the Hodge decomposition of V . Now define a function $\varphi: S \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ by setting $\varphi(s) = p$; then any choice of isomorphism $V \simeq E$ puts a Hodge structure of weight n on E , whose Hodge decomposition is given by

$$E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq \bigoplus_{s \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), n - \varphi(s)}.$$

From the fact that $\overline{e \otimes z} = e \otimes \bar{z}$, we deduce that

$$\overline{\sum_{s \in S} z_s} = \sum_{s \in S} \bar{z}_{\bar{s}}.$$

Since complex conjugation has to interchange $\mathbb{C}^{p,q}$ and $\mathbb{C}^{q,p}$, this implies that $\varphi(\bar{s}) = n - \varphi(s)$, and hence that $\varphi(s) + \varphi(\bar{s}) = n$ for every $s \in S$.

Definition 24.8. Let E be a number field, and $S = \text{Hom}(E, \mathbb{C})$ the set of its complex embeddings. Any function $\varphi: S \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ with the property that $\varphi(s) + \varphi(\bar{s}) = n$ defines a *Hodge structure* E_φ of weight n on the \mathbb{Q} -vector space E , whose Hodge decomposition is given by

$$E_\varphi \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq \bigoplus_{s \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), \varphi(\bar{s})}.$$

By construction, the action of E on itself respects this decomposition.

In summary, we have $V \simeq E_\varphi$, which is an isomorphism both of E -modules and of Hodge structures of weight n . Next, we would like to prove that in all interesting cases, E must be a CM-field. Recall from Definition 24.2 that a field E is called a *CM-field* if there exists a nontrivial involution $\iota: E \rightarrow E$, such that complex conjugation induces ι under any embedding of E into the complex numbers. In other words, we must have $s(\iota e) = \bar{s}(e)$ for any $s \in S$ and any $e \in E$. We usually write \bar{e} in place of ιe , and refer to it as complex conjugation on E . The fixed field of E is then a totally real subfield F , and E is a purely imaginary quadratic extension of F .

To prove that E is either a CM-field or \mathbb{Q} , we choose a polarization ψ on E_φ . We then define the so-called *Rosati involution* $\iota: E \rightarrow E$ by the condition that

$$\psi(e \cdot x, y) = \psi(x, \iota e \cdot y)$$

for every $x, y, e \in E$. Denoting the image of $1 \in E$ by $\sum_{s \in S} 1_s$, we have

$$\sum_{s \in S} \psi(1_s, 1_{\bar{s}}) s(e \cdot x) \bar{s}(y) = \sum_{s \in S} \psi(1_s, 1_{\bar{s}}) s(x) \bar{s}(\iota e \cdot y),$$

which implies that $s(e) = \bar{s}(\iota e)$. Now there are two cases: Either ι is nontrivial, in which case E is a CM-field and the Rosati involution is complex conjugation. Or ι is trivial, which means that $\bar{s} = s$ for every complex embedding. In the second case, we see that $\varphi(s) = n/2$ for every s , and so the Hodge structure must be $\mathbb{Q}(-n/2)$, being irreducible and of type $(n/2, n/2)$. This implies that $E = \mathbb{Q}$.

From now on, we exclude the trivial case $V = \mathbb{Q}(-n/2)$ and assume that E is a CM-field.

Definition 24.9. A *CM-type* of E is a mapping $\varphi: S \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ with the property that $\varphi(s) + \varphi(\bar{s}) = 1$ for every $s \in S$.

When φ is a CM-type, E_φ is a polarizable rational Hodge structure of weight 1. As such, it is the rational Hodge structure of an abelian variety with complex multiplication by E . This variety is unique up to isogeny. In general, we have the following structure theorem.

Proposition 24.10. *Any Hodge structure V of CM-type and of even weight $2k$ with $V^{p,q} = 0$ for $p < 0$ or $q < 0$ occurs as a direct factor of $H^{2k}(A, \mathbb{Q})$, where A is a finite product of simple abelian varieties of CM-type.*

Proof. In our classification of irreducible Hodge structures of CM-type above, there were two cases: $\mathbb{Q}(-n/2)$, and Hodge structures of the form E_φ , where E is a CM-field and $\varphi: S \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ is a function satisfying $\varphi(s) + \varphi(\bar{s}) = n$. Clearly φ can be written as a linear combination (with integer coefficients) of CM-types for E . Because of the relations

$$E_{\varphi+\psi} \simeq E_\varphi \otimes_E E_\psi \quad \text{and} \quad E_{-\varphi} \simeq E_\varphi^\vee,$$

every irreducible Hodge structure of CM-type can thus be obtained from Hodge structures corresponding to CM-types by tensor products, duals, and Tate twists.

As we have seen, every Hodge structure of CM-type is a direct sum of irreducible Hodge structures of CM-type. The assertion follows from this by simple linear algebra. \square

To conclude our discussion of Hodge structures of CM-type, we will consider the case when the CM-field E is a Galois extension of \mathbb{Q} . In that case, the Galois group $G = \text{Gal}(E/\mathbb{Q})$ acts on the set of complex embeddings of E by the rule

$$(g \cdot s)(e) = s(g^{-1}e).$$

This action is simply transitive. Recall that we have an isomorphism

$$E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E \xrightarrow{\sim} \bigoplus_{g \in G} E, \quad x \otimes e \mapsto g(e)x.$$

For any E -vector space V , this isomorphism induces a decomposition

$$V \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E \xrightarrow{\sim} \bigoplus_{g \in G} V, \quad v \otimes e \mapsto g(e)v.$$

When V is an irreducible Hodge structure of CM-type, a natural question is whether this decomposition is compatible with the Hodge decomposition. The following lemma shows that the answer to this question is yes.

Lemma 24.11. *Let E be a CM-field that is a Galois extension of \mathbb{Q} , with Galois group $G = \text{Gal}(E/\mathbb{Q})$. Then for any $\varphi: S \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ with $\varphi(s) + \varphi(\bar{s}) = n$, we have*

$$E_\varphi \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E \simeq \bigoplus_{g \in G} E_{g\varphi}.$$

Proof. We chase the Hodge decompositions through the various isomorphisms that are involved in the statement. To begin with, we have

$$(E_\varphi \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E) \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq (E_\varphi \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C}) \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E \simeq \bigoplus_{s \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), n-\varphi(s)} \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E \simeq \bigoplus_{s, t \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), n-\varphi(s)},$$

and the isomorphism takes $(v \otimes e) \otimes z$ to the element

$$\sum_{s, t \in S} t(e) \cdot z \cdot s(v).$$

On the other hand,

$$(E_\varphi \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} E) \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq \bigoplus_{g \in G} E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq \bigoplus_{g \in G} \bigoplus_{s \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), n-\varphi(s)},$$

and under this isomorphism, $(v \otimes e) \otimes z$ is sent to the element

$$\sum_{g \in G} \sum_{s \in S} s(ge) \cdot s(v) \cdot z.$$

If we fix $g \in G$ and compare the two expressions, we see that $t = sg$, and hence

$$E \otimes_{\mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{C} \simeq \bigoplus_{t \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(s), n - \varphi(s)} \simeq \bigoplus_{t \in S} \mathbb{C}^{\varphi(tg^{-1}), n - \varphi(tg^{-1})}.$$

But since $(g\varphi)(t) = \varphi(tg^{-1})$, this is exactly the Hodge decomposition of $E_{g\varphi}$. \square