

# GRÖBNER BASES FOR PERMUTATIONS AND ORIENTED TREES

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*This paper is dedicated to professor Imre Kátai  
on the occasion of his 65th birthday*

**Abstract.** Let  $\mathbb{F}$  be a field. We describe Gröbner bases for the ideals of polynomials vanishing on the sets  $X_n$  and  $Y_m$ . Here  $X_n = X(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$  is the set of all permutations of some  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n \in \mathbb{F}$ .  $Y_m$  is the set of characteristic vectors of the oriented trees on an  $m$ -element vertex set.

## 1. Introduction

Let  $\mathbb{F}$  be a field and  $n \geq 1$  an integer. For a subset  $X$  of the affine space  $\mathbb{F}^n$  one may consider the ideal  $I(X)$  of polynomial functions  $f \in S = \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  vanishing on  $X$ . Many interesting (combinatorial) properties of  $X$  can be formulated in terms of the polynomial functions  $X \rightarrow \mathbb{F}$ . This approach leads to the study of  $I(X)$ , and in particular to the study of Gröbner bases, standard monomials and the Hilbert function of  $S/I(X)$  (see Subsection 1.1 for definitions). In [11], [133] we described Gröbner bases and related data for the complete uniform families, i.e., when  $X$  consists of all 0,1-vectors in  $\mathbb{F}^n$  which, for a fixed  $k$ , have precisely  $k$  ones as coordinate values. Applications are given in [3], [11], [13] and [14].

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In this note we consider another two types of interesting finite subsets of  $\mathbb{F}^n$ . Let  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$  be  $n$  different elements of  $\mathbb{F}$  and put

$$X_n := X_n(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n) := \{(\alpha_{\pi(1)}, \dots, \alpha_{\pi(n)}) : \pi \in S_n\}.$$

$X_n$  is the set of all permutations of the  $\alpha_i$ , viewed as a subset of  $\mathbb{F}^n$ .

For general terminology on directed graphs (path, circuit, cycle, etc.) we refer to Lovász [17]. An *oriented tree* with vertex set  $V$  is a weakly connected directed graph  $T$  on  $V$  with  $|V| - 1$  edges such that there is a  $v \in V$ , the root of  $T$ , which is reachable by a directed path from every  $w \in V$ . An *oriented forest* is a digraph whose weak components are oriented trees.

Let  $m$  be a positive integer and  $\mathcal{T}_m$  be the set of all oriented trees with vertex set  $[m] := \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$ . It is known that  $|\mathcal{T}_m| = m^{m-1}$ , see for example Section 2.3.4.4 in [15], or § 4 in [17]. We represent the trees  $T \in \mathcal{T}_m$  by their characteristic vectors  $v(T) \in F^n$ , where  $n = m(m-1)$ . The coordinate functions  $x_{(i,j)}$  in  $F^n$  are indexed with directed edges  $(i, j)$ ,  $i \neq j \in [m]$ . The  $(i, j)$ -component  $v(T)_{(i,j)}$  is 1 if  $(i, j)$  is an edge of  $T$  and  $v(T)_{(i,j)} = 0$  otherwise. We put

$$Y_m := \{v(T) : T \in \mathcal{T}_m\} \subseteq \mathbb{F}^n.$$

In Theorems 2.2 and 3.2 we describe Gröbner bases for the ideals  $I(X_n)$  and  $I(Y_m)$  above. Before formulating the precise statements, we overview the facts from the theory of Gröbner bases we need later on.

Suppose that we have a set of variables  $x_\ell$  indexed by elements  $\ell$  of a set  $J$ . In the sequel  $J$  will be either  $[n]$ , or the set of edges of the complete digraph  $KD_m$  on  $[m]$ . For a subset  $H \subseteq J$  we denote by  $x_H$  the monomial  $\prod_{\ell \in H} x_\ell$ , in particular,  $x_\emptyset = 1$ .

### 1.1. Gröbner bases and standard monomials

A total ordering  $\prec$  on the monomials  $x_1^{i_1} x_2^{i_2} \dots x_n^{i_n}$  from variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  is a *term order*, if 1 is the minimal element of  $\prec$ , and  $uw \prec vw$  holds for any monomials  $u, v, w$  with  $u \prec v$ . There are many term orders, important examples being the lexicographic order  $\prec_l$  and the deglex order  $\prec_{dl}$ . We have

$$x_1^{i_1} x_2^{i_2} \dots x_n^{i_n} \prec_l x_1^{j_1} x_2^{j_2} \dots x_n^{j_n}$$

iff  $i_k < j_k$  holds for the smallest index  $k$  such that  $i_k \neq j_k$ . As for deglex, we have  $u \prec_{dl} v$  iff either  $\deg u < \deg v$ , or  $\deg u = \deg v$ , and  $u \prec_l v$ .

The *leading monomial*  $\text{lm}(f)$  of a nonzero polynomial  $f$  from the ring  $S = \mathbb{F}[x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n]$  is the largest (with respect to  $\prec$ ) monomial which occurs with nonzero coefficient in the standard form of  $f$ .

Let  $I$  be an ideal of  $S$ . A finite subset  $G \subseteq I$  is a *Gröbner basis* of  $I$  if for every  $f \in I$  there exists a  $g \in G$  such that  $\text{lm}(g)$  divides  $\text{lm}(f)$ . A term order is well-founded, implying that  $G$  generates  $I$ , i.e.  $G$  is a basis of  $I$ . A fundamental fact is (cf. [10, Chapter 1, Corollary 3.12] or [1, Corollary 1.6.5, Theorem 1.9.1]) that every nonzero ideal  $I$  of  $S$  has a Gröbner basis with respect to any term order  $\prec$ .

A monomial  $w \in S$  is a *standard monomial* for  $I$  if it is not a leading monomial of any  $f \in I$ . Let  $\text{sm}(\prec, I, \mathbb{F})$  stand for the set of all standard monomials of  $I$  with respect to the term-order  $\prec$  over  $\mathbb{F}$ . It is known (see [10, Chapter 1, Section 4]) that for a nonzero ideal  $I$  the set  $\text{sm}(\prec, I, \mathbb{F})$  is a basis of the  $\mathbb{F}$ -vector space  $S/I$ . More precisely every  $g \in S$  can be written uniquely as  $g = h + f$  where  $f \in I$  and  $h$  is a unique  $\mathbb{F}$ -linear combination of monomials from  $\text{sm}(\prec, I, \mathbb{F})$ .

Now if  $X \subseteq \mathbb{F}^n$  is a finite set, then an easy interpolation argument gives that every function from  $X$  to  $\mathbb{F}$  is a polynomial function. The latter two facts imply that

$$(1) \quad |\text{Sm}(\prec, I(X), \mathbb{F})| = |X|.$$

A Gröbner basis  $\{f_1, \dots, f_m\}$  of  $I$  is *reduced* if the coefficient of  $\text{lm}(f_i)$  is 1, and no nonzero monomial in  $f_i$  is divisible by any  $\text{lm}(f_j)$ ,  $j \neq i$ . By a theorem of Buchberger ([1, Theorem 1.8.7]) a nonzero ideal has a unique reduced Gröbner basis.

The *initial ideal*  $\text{in}(I)$  of  $I$  is the ideal in  $S$  generated by the monomials  $\{\text{lm}(f) : f \in I\}$ .

Next we introduce reduction, a notion closely related to Gröbner bases. Let  $\mathcal{G}$  be a set of polynomials in  $\mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  and let  $f \in \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  be a fixed polynomial. Let  $\prec$  be an arbitrary term-order. We can reduce  $f$  by the set  $\mathcal{G}$  with respect to  $\prec$ . This gives a new polynomial  $h \in \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ .

Here *reduction* means that we possibly repeatedly replace monomials in  $f$  by smaller ones (with respect to  $\prec$ ) as follows: if  $w$  is a monomial occurring in  $f$  and  $\text{lm}(g)$  divides  $w$  for some  $g \in \mathcal{G}$  (i.e.  $w = \text{lm}(g)u$  for some monomial  $u$ ), then we replace  $w$  in  $f$  with  $u(\text{lm}(g) - g)$ . Clearly the monomials in  $u(\text{lm}(g) - g)$  are  $\prec$ -smaller than  $w$ . If  $\mathcal{G}$  is a Gröbner basis then any  $f \in S$  can be reduced into a (unique)  $\mathbb{F}$ -linear combination of standard monomials.

Let  $I$  be an ideal of  $S = \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ . The *Hilbert function* of the algebra  $S/I$  is the sequence  $h_{S/I}(0), h_{S/I}(1), \dots$ . Here  $h_{S/I}(m)$  is the dimension over  $\mathbb{F}$

of the factor space  $\mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]_{\leq m} / (I \cap \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]_{\leq m})$  (see [5, Section 9.3]). It is easy to see that  $h_{S/I}(m)$  is the number of standard monomials of degree at most  $m$ , where the ordering  $\prec$  is deglex.

In the case when  $I = I(X)$  for some  $X \subseteq F^n$ , the number  $h_X(m) := h_{S/I}(m)$  is the dimension of the space of functions from  $X$  to  $\mathbb{F}$  which are polynomials of degree at most  $m$ .

## 2. Permutations

We recall the definition of the complete symmetric polynomials. Let  $i$  be a nonnegative integer and write

$$h_i(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{a_1 + \dots + a_n = i} x_1^{a_1} x_2^{a_2} \dots x_n^{a_n}.$$

Thus,  $h_i \in \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  is the sum of all monomials of total degree  $i$ . For  $0 \leq i \leq n$  we write  $\sigma_i$  for the  $i$ -th elementary symmetric polynomial:

$$\sigma_i(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{S \subset [n], |S|=i} x_S.$$

$\sigma_i \in \mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  is the sum of all square free monomials of degree  $i$  in the variables  $x_1, \dots, x_n$ .

Let  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$  be  $n$  different elements of  $\mathbb{F}$ , and  $X_n = X_n(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n) \subseteq \mathbb{F}^n$  be the set of permutations of  $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ .

For  $1 \leq k \leq n$  we introduce the polynomials  $f_k \in S$  as follows:

$$f_k = \sum_{i=0}^k (-1)^i h_{k-i}(x_k, x_{k+1}, \dots, x_n) \sigma_i(\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n).$$

We remark, that  $f_k \in \mathbb{F}[x_k, x_{k+1}, \dots, x_n]$ . Moreover,  $\deg f_k = k$  and the leading monomial of  $f_k$  is  $x_k^k$  with respect to any term order  $\prec$  for which  $x_1 \succ x_2 \succ \dots \succ x_n$ .

**Proposition 2.1.** *Let  $v \in X_n$ . Then  $f_k(v) = 0$  for  $1 \leq k \leq n$ .*

**Proof.** The statement is immediate from the following known (see, e.g. [9, p. 314]) identities. Let  $1 \leq k \leq n$ . Then

$$(2) \quad \sum_{i=0}^k (-1)^i h_{k-i}(x_k, \dots, x_n) \sigma_i(x_1, \dots, x_n) = 0.$$

For the convenience of the reader we sketch a proof of (2). For a fixed  $k$  one verifies first that

$$(3) \quad \sigma_i(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{S \subseteq [k-1]} x_S \sigma_{i-|S|}(x_k, \dots, x_n),$$

where we understand  $\sigma_j = 0$  for  $j < 0$ .

We need also the fundamental relation connecting complete symmetric polynomials to the elementary ones, see [20, Theorem 4.3.7] or [18, p.14]. If  $t, m$  are positive integers then, with the convention  $\sigma_i = 0$  for  $i > m$ , we have

$$(4) \quad \sum_{i=0}^t (-1)^i h_{t-i}(w_1, \dots, w_m) \sigma_i(w_1, \dots, w_m) = 0.$$

Now using (3), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} & \sum_{i=0}^k (-1)^i h_{k-i}(x_k, \dots, x_n) \sigma_i(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \\ &= \sum_{S \subseteq [k-1]} x_S \sum_{j=|S|}^k (-1)^j h_{k-j}(x_k, \dots, x_n) \sigma_{j-|S|}(x_k, \dots, x_n). \end{aligned}$$

To establish (2), it suffices to verify that the coefficient of  $x_S$  is 0 for every  $S \subseteq [k-1]$ . For this we can apply (4) with  $t = k - |S| > 1$ , and  $m = n - k + 1$ .

We can state now the main result of this section. A related weaker statement is given in [9, Proposition 5, Chapter 7].

**Theorem 2.2.** *Let  $\mathbb{F}$  be a field and let  $\prec$  be an arbitrary term order on the monomials of  $\mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$  such that  $x_n \prec \dots \prec x_1$ . Then the reduced Gröbner basis of  $I(X_n)$  is*

$$\{f_i : 1 \leq i \leq n\}.$$

Moreover the set of standard monomials is

$$(5) \quad \text{Sm}(\prec, I(X_n), \mathbb{F}) = \{x_1^{\alpha_1} \dots x_n^{\alpha_n} : 0 \leq \alpha_i \leq i-1, \text{ for } 1 \leq i \leq n\}.$$

**Proof.** Let  $\mathcal{M}$  denote the set of monomials on the right hand side of (5). The leading monomial of  $f_k$  is  $x_k^k$ , hence if a monomial  $w$  is not in  $\mathcal{M}$  then  $w$  is clearly a leading term for  $I(X_n)$ . We infer that the standard monomials are a subset of  $\mathcal{M}$ . The reverse inclusion follows at once from  $|\mathcal{M}| = n! = |X_n|$  and (1). Now (5) implies that the monomials  $x_k^k$ , ( $1 \leq k \leq n$ ) generate the initial ideal for  $I(X_n)$ , therefore  $\{f_1, \dots, f_n\}$  is a Gröbner basis for  $I(X_n)$ .

Reducedness is immediate: on one hand, there are no divisibilities among the  $x_k^k$ . On the other hand, except for the leading term, all monomials in  $f_k$  are standard monomials.

In [2] E. Artin proved that  $\mathcal{M}$  is a basis of the quotient ring

$$\mathbb{F}[x_1, \dots, x_n]/(\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_n).$$

Our result can be considered as a refinement of Artin's theorem. We call the elements of  $\mathcal{M}$  *Artin monomials*.

There is a useful and simple bijection between permutations and Artin monomials, more precisely their exponent vectors. This is the Hall map [16, Section 5.1.1]. To a permutation  $\pi$  of  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  the Hall map associates the sequence of integers  $b_n, b_{n-1}, \dots, b_1$ , where  $b_j$  is the number elements  $k \in [n]$  such that  $k > j$  and  $k$  appears in  $\pi$  to the left of  $j$ . Clearly we have  $b_i \leq n - i$  for  $i = 1, \dots, n$ , hence  $x_1^{b_n} x_2^{b_{n-1}} \dots x_n^{b_1} \in \mathcal{M}$ . It is not hard to show that this map is invertible. Monomials of degree  $k$  correspond under the Hall map to permutations with exactly  $k$  inversions. These latter objects have been studied intensively. Writing simply  $h(m)$  for the Hilbert function  $h_{S/I(X_n)}(m)$ , we have

$$h(m) - h(m-1) = I_m(n), \quad m = 1, 2, \dots, \binom{n}{2},$$

where  $I_m(n)$  is the number of permutations of  $n$  symbols with  $m$  inversions. In [16, Section 5.1.1.] there are some explicit formulae for  $I_m(n)$ ,  $m \leq n$ . Asymptotic estimates are given in [7] and [19].

The Fundamental Theorem on Symmetric Polynomials asserts that every symmetric polynomial  $f \in \mathbb{F}[y_1, \dots, y_n]$  admits a unique expression of the form

$$f = \sum_{p \geq 0} a_p \sigma_1^{p_1} \sigma_2^{p_2} \dots \sigma_n^{p_n},$$

where  $p = (p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n)$ ,  $a_p \in \mathbb{F}$ , and the  $\sigma_i$  are the elementary symmetric polynomials in the  $y_i$ . In [12] Garsia obtained a beautiful generalization. Here we present a simple proof. Let  $\mathcal{N}$  be the set of Artin monomials in the  $y_i$  (we substitute  $y_i$  in the place of  $x_i$  for every  $w \in \mathcal{M}$ ).

**Corollary 2.3.** *Every polynomial  $f \in \mathbb{F}[y_1, \dots, y_n]$  has a unique expansion of the form*

$$f(y_1, \dots, y_n) = \sum_{w \in \mathcal{N}} \sum_{p \geq 0} a_{w,p} w \sigma_1^{p_1} \sigma_2^{p_2} \cdots \sigma_n^{p_n},$$

where  $a_{w,p} \in \mathbb{F}$ .

**Proof.** Let  $\{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$  be variables, and consider the set of permutations  $X_n = X_n(y_1, \dots, y_n)$  in  $\mathbb{K}^n$ , where  $\mathbb{K}$  is the function field  $\mathbb{F}(y_1, \dots, y_n)$ . The polynomial  $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  can be considered as an element of  $\mathbb{K}[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ . We apply the preceding Theorem with  $\mathbb{K}$  in the place of  $\mathbb{F}$  and  $\alpha_i = y_i$ . The reduction of  $f(x_1, \dots, x_n)$  with respect to  $f_1, \dots, f_n$  shows the existence of a unique expansion of the form

$$(6) \quad f(x_1, \dots, x_n) = \sum_{w \in \mathcal{M}} w g_w,$$

where  $g_w \in \mathbb{F}[y_1, \dots, y_n]$  are symmetric polynomials in the  $y_i$ . This holds because the leading coefficient of an  $f_i$  is 1, and the non leading terms of  $f_i$  are of the form  $w g_w$  as above. The two sides of (6) are equal as functions on  $X_n$ . Now the substitutions  $x_i = y_i$  and the Fundamental Theorem on Symmetric Polynomials gives the claim.

**Remark.** The Corollary, together with the proof we presented here, offers an algorithmic version of the fact that  $\mathbb{F}[y_1, \dots, y_n]$  is a free module of rank  $n!$  over the ring of symmetric polynomials. The reduction procedure gives an expression of  $f$  in terms of the Artin basis.

### 3. Oriented trees

Let  $m$  be a positive integer. Recall that  $Y_m$  is the set of characteristic vectors of the oriented trees on  $[m]$ . We have  $Y_m \subset \mathbb{F}^n$ , where  $n = m(m-1)$ . The coordinate functions on  $\mathbb{F}^n$  are indexed with the edges of the complete directed graph  $KD_m$  with vertex set  $[m]$ . We consider the ideal  $I(Y_m)$  in the polynomial ring  $S = \mathbb{F}[x_{(i,j)} : 1 \leq i, j \leq m, i \neq j]$ . We work with the lexicographic order, where the ordering of the variables is as follows:

$$(7) \quad x_{(2,1)} \succ x_{(3,1)} \succ \dots \succ x_{(m,1)} \succ x_{(1,2)} \succ \dots \succ x_{(1,m)} \succ x_{(3,2)} \succ \dots,$$

i.e. the edges entering 1 are the largest, then follow the edges leaving 1, and we proceed similarly for 2, 3,  $\dots$ ,  $m$ .

In this section  $i, j, k$  denote three different integers from  $[m]$ . We introduce four sets of polynomials.

$$\mathcal{A} = \{x_{(i,j)}^2 - x_{(i,j)} : j > 1\},$$

$$\mathcal{B} = \{x_{(i,j)}x_{(i,k)} : j, k > 1\},$$

$$\mathcal{C} = \{x_C : C \text{ is a directed cycle in } KD_m, \text{ which avoids vertex } 1\}.$$

We define the polynomials  $g_i \in S$ ,  $i > 1$  as follows

$$(8) \quad g_i := \left( -1 + \sum_{j \neq i} x_{(i,j)} \right) \left( -1 + \sum_P x_P \right) - \sum_C x_C,$$

where  $P$  ranges over the directed paths in  $KD_m$  from 1 to  $i$  and  $C$  runs through the subgraphs  $KD_m$  which consist of a directed path  $Q$  from 1 to  $i$  and an edge  $(i, j)$ , where  $j$  is a node on  $Q$ . Please note that the leading term of  $g_i$  is  $x_{(i,1)}$ . Also, simplification of (8) shows that the non leading terms of  $g_i$  are of the shape  $\alpha_F x_F$ , where  $\alpha_F \in \mathbb{F}$  and  $F$  is an oriented forest on  $[m]$ , without edges entering 1. We put

$$\mathcal{D} = \{g_i : i > 1\},$$

and set

$$\mathcal{G} := \mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B} \cup \mathcal{C} \cup \mathcal{D}.$$

**Proposition 3.1.** *We have  $\mathcal{G} \subseteq I(Y_m)$ .*

**Proof.** The polynomials from  $\mathcal{A}$  vanish on all 0,1-vectors. We have  $f(v(T)) = 0$  for  $f \in \mathcal{B}$  and  $T \in \mathcal{T}_m$  because the out-degree of a vertex in  $T$  is at most 1. The polynomials from  $\mathcal{C}$  vanish on  $v(T)$  because  $T$  does not contain directed cycles.

Finally  $g_i(v(T)) = 0$  for  $i > 1$  because either the out-degree of vertex  $i$  in  $T$  is 1, or else  $i$  is the root of  $T$ , and hence  $T$  contains a directed path from 1 to  $i$ .

Let  $\mathcal{F}_m$  be the set of all oriented forests  $F$  on  $[m]$  which do not contain edges entering vertex 1. We note that  $|\mathcal{T}_m| = |\mathcal{F}_m|$ . Indeed, from a tree  $T \in \mathcal{T}_m$  we obtain a forest  $F \in \mathcal{F}_m$  by just deleting the edges entering vertex 1. This map is invertible: from  $F$  we recover  $T$  by adding edges  $(i, 1)$ , where  $i$  is the root of a component  $C$  of  $F$  for which  $1 \notin C$ .

**Theorem 3.2.** *Let  $\mathbb{F}$  be a field and let  $\prec$  be the lex order on the monomials of  $S$ , as specified in (7). Then  $\mathcal{G}$  is the reduced Gröbner basis of  $I(Y_m)$ . Moreover the set of standard monomials is*

$$(9) \quad \text{Sm}(\prec, I(Y_m), \mathbb{F}) = \{x_F : F \in \mathcal{F}_m\}.$$



**Proof.** We prove first (9). In view of  $|\mathcal{T}_m| = |\mathcal{F}_m|$  and (1) it suffices to show  $\subseteq$ . Let  $w$  be a monomial which is not divisible by the leading monomial of any  $f \in \mathcal{G}$ . The leading term of  $g_i$  is  $x_{(i,1)}$ , hence  $w$  does not contain any of these variables. The polynomials in  $\mathcal{A}$  ensure now that  $w$  is not divisible by the square of any variable, hence  $w = x_G$  for some subgraph  $G$  of  $KD_m$ . The monomials in  $\mathcal{B}$  do not divide  $w$ , hence the out-degree of any vertex of  $G$  is at most 1. Likewise, the monomials in  $\mathcal{C}$  ascertain that  $G$  does not contain directed cycles. It is a simple and well known (see, e.g. Exercise 2.3.4.2.7 in [15]) fact that such a  $G$  must be an oriented forest. As  $G$  has no edges entering 1, we conclude that  $G \in \mathcal{F}_m$ .

The argument above gives also that the leading terms of  $\mathcal{G}$  generate the initial ideal of  $I(Y_m)$ , hence  $\mathcal{G}$  is a Gröbner basis of  $I(Y_m)$ .

Concerning reducedness, the set of the leading monomials of  $\mathcal{G}$  is

$$\{x_{(i,j)}^2 : j > 1\} \cup \mathcal{B} \cup \mathcal{C} \cup \{x_{(i,1)} : i > 1\},$$

and there are no nontrivial divisibilities among these monomials. The other (non leading) terms of an  $f \in \mathcal{G}$  are all standard monomials.

In this case we have a nice formula for the number of standard monomials of degree  $i$ . We shall use a result of Clarke [8]: for  $1 \leq k \leq m-1$  let  $L(m, k)$  denote the number of undirected spanning trees on the vertex set  $[m]$  where the degree of 1 is  $k$ . Clarke proved that

$$L(m, k) = \binom{m-2}{k-1} (m-1)^{m-k-1}.$$

We observe that for  $m \geq 2$ ,  $L(m, k)$  is the number of oriented forests on  $\{2, \dots, m\}$  with  $m-1-k$  edges. Indeed from such an oriented forest we obtain a spanning tree on  $[m]$  by joining the roots of the trees to 1 and then forgetting the orientation of edges. This map is clearly invertible.

**Proposition 3.3.** *We have*

$$|\{F \in \mathcal{F}_m : F \text{ has exactly } i \text{ edges}\}| = \binom{m-1}{i} (m-1)^i$$

for  $0 \leq i \leq m-1$ .

**Proof.** The formula is obviously correct for  $m = 1, 2$  and in general for  $i = 0$ . The case  $i = m-1$  is also easy. Then  $F$  spans an oriented tree on  $\{2, \dots, m\}$  and has an edge leaving 1. The number of such graphs is  $(m-1)^{(m-2)}(m-1) = (m-1)^{(m-1)}$ .

Assume now that  $1 < i < m - 1$ . Let  $F \in \mathcal{F}_m$  and  $|F| = i$ . Then  $F$  has 0 or 1 edges starting at 1. The subgraph of  $F$  spanned by  $\{2, \dots, m\}$  is an oriented tree on  $m - 1$  points with  $i$  edges in the former case and with  $i - 1$  edges in the latter case.

The number of possibilities therefore is

$$\begin{aligned} & L(m, m - 1 - i) + L(m, m - i)(m - 1) = \\ &= \binom{m - 2}{m - 2 - i} (m - 1)^i + \binom{m - 2}{m - i - 1} (m - 1)^{i-1} (m - 1) = \\ &= \left( \binom{m - 2}{i} + \binom{m - 2}{i - 1} \right) (m - 1)^i = \binom{m - 1}{i} (m - 1)^i. \end{aligned}$$

The proof is complete.

#### 4. A concluding remark

It would be interesting to give Gröbner bases for  $I(Y_m)$  with respect to some degree compatible order  $\prec$ , such as deglex. This would likely be helpful to determine the Hilbert function of  $S/I(Y_m)$ .

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