ON THE STRATIFICATION
OF NONCOMMUTATIVE PRIME SPECTRA

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Abstract. We study rational actions of an algebraic torus $G$ by automorphisms on an associative algebra $R$. The $G$-action on $R$ induces a stratification of the prime spectrum $\text{Spec } R$ which was introduced by Goodearl and Letzter. For a noetherian algebra $R$, Goodearl and Letzter showed that the strata of $\text{Spec } R$ are isomorphic to the spectra of certain commutative Laurent polynomial algebras. The purpose of this note is to give a new proof of this result which works for arbitrary algebras $R$.

Introduction

Let $G$ be an affine algebraic group and let $R$ be an associative algebra on which $G$ acts rationally by algebra automorphisms. The induced $G$-action on the set $\text{Spec } R$ of all prime ideals of $R$ leads to a stratification of $\text{Spec } R$ which was pioneered by Goodearl and Letzter [3]. For the special case of an algebraic torus $G$ and a noetherian algebra $R$, Goodearl and Letzter have given a description of the strata of $\text{Spec } R$ in terms of the spectra of certain (commutative) Laurent polynomial algebras. Later, a different description of the strata was given in [4], for any algebra $R$ and any connected affine algebraic group $G$. The purpose of this short note is to consolidate the description of [4], for the case of an algebraic torus $G$, with the earlier one due to Goodearl and Letzter, still working with a general algebra $R$.

Throughout, $k$ will be an algebraically closed base field of arbitrary characteristic. The largest $G$-stable ideal of the algebra $R$ that is contained in a given ideal $I$ of $R$, called the $G$-core of $I$, will be denoted by $I:G$; so $I:G = \bigcap_{g \in G} g.I$. It is easy to see [3 Proposition 8(b)] that, for any rational action of an affine algebraic group $G$ on $R$, the collection of all $G$-cores of prime ideals of $R$ coincides with the set of all $G$-prime ideals of $R$; the latter set will be denoted by $G-\text{Spec } R$. If the algebraic group $G$ is connected, then $G-\text{Spec } R$ is simply the set of all $G$-stable prime ideals of $R$ [3 Proposition 19(a)]. The Goodearl-Letzter stratification of $\text{Spec } R$ is the partition

$$\text{Spec } R = \bigcup_{I \in G-\text{Spec } R} \text{Spec}_I R \quad \text{with} \quad \text{Spec}_I R = \{ P \in \text{Spec } R \mid P:G = I \} .$$
For an algebraic torus $G$, we will give a description of each stratum $\text{Spec}_I R$ in terms of the spectrum of a suitable affine commutative algebra $Z_I$. The construction of the algebra $Z_I$ and the precise statement of the main result will be given in Section 1, while the proof will occupy Section 2.

1. The Stratification Theorem

Let $G$ be a connected affine algebraic group over $\mathbb{k}$ and let $R$ be an associative $\mathbb{k}$-algebra with a rational $G$-action by $\mathbb{k}$-algebra automorphisms. For a given $I \in G\text{-Spec} R$, let $\mathcal{C}(R/I)$ denote the extended centroid of the algebra $R/I$; this is a $\mathbb{k}$-field, called the heart of $I$, on which $G$ acts via its action on $R/I$ [5 2.3]. We put $Z_I = \{c \in \mathcal{C}(R/I) \mid \text{the orbit } G.c \text{ spans a finite-dimensional } \mathbb{k}\text{-subspace of } \mathcal{C}(R/I)\}$. Clearly, $Z_I$ is a $G$-stable $\mathbb{k}$-subalgebra of $\mathcal{C}(R/I)$ and $Z_I$ contains the subfield of $G$-invariants, $\mathcal{C}(R/I)^G$. Moreover, the $G$-action on $Z_I$ is rational by [5 Lemma 18(b)].

We now focus on the case of an algebraic torus $G$. As usual, $X(G)$ will denote the lattice of rational characters of $G$. The following theorem, under the additional assumption that the algebra $R$ is noetherian, is originally due to Goodearl and Letzter [3]; see also [2], [4] and [1 II.2.13].

**Stratification Theorem.** Let $G$ be an algebraic torus over $\mathbb{k}$ that acts rationally by algebra automorphisms on the $\mathbb{k}$-algebra $R$, and let $I \in G\text{-Spec} R$. Then:

1. There is an isomorphism

\[ Z_I \cong \mathcal{C}(R/I)^G \Gamma_I, \]

the group algebra over the field $\mathcal{C}(R/I)^G$ of the sublattice

\[ \Gamma_I = X(G/\text{Ker}_G(Z_I)) \subseteq X(G). \]

2. There is a $G$-equivariant order isomorphism

\[ \gamma : \text{Spec}_I R \sim \rightarrow \text{Spec}(Z_I). \]

2. Proof of the Stratification Theorem

2.1. Reductions and preliminaries. We begin with some remarks that hold for an arbitrary connected affine algebraic group $G$ over $\mathbb{k}$. In order to describe the $G$-stratum $\text{Spec}_I R$ for a given $I \in G\text{-Spec} R$, we may replace $R$ by $R/I$ and thus assume that $I = 0$. In particular, $R$ is a prime ring. We will write $\mathcal{C} = \mathcal{C}(R)$ and $Z = Z_0$ for brevity; so $\mathcal{C}$ is a commutative $\mathbb{k}$-field on which $G$ acts by automorphisms and $Z = \{c \in \mathcal{C} \mid \text{the orbit } G.c \text{ spans a finite-dimensional } \mathbb{k}\text{-subspace of } \mathcal{C}\}$.

Our goal is to give a description of $Z$ and to establish a suitable order isomorphism

\[ \gamma : \text{Spec}_0 R = \{P \in \text{Spec} R \mid P.G = 0\} \sim \rightarrow \text{Spec}(Z). \]

We will need to consider various $G$-actions; they will usually be indicated by a simple dot as in the foregoing. When more precision is necessary, the $G$-action on $\mathcal{C}$ will be denoted by $\rho$. The group $G$ also acts on $\mathbb{k}[G]$, the algebra of regular functions

\[ \mathbb{k}[G] \cong \mathcal{C}(R)^G. \]
of $G$, via the right and left regular representations $\rho_r, \rho_l : G \to \text{Aut}_{k\text{-alg}}(k[G])$; they are defined by $(\rho_r(x)f)(y) = f(yx)$ and $(\rho_l(x)f)(y) = f(x^{-1}y)$ for $x, y \in G$ and $f \in k[G]$. 

2.2. The algebra $Z$. Consider the Hopf $C$-algebra 

$$S = C \otimes_k k[G];$$

this is an algebra of $C$-valued functions on $G$ via $(\sum_i c_i \otimes f_i)(g) = \sum_i c_i f_i(g)$. The group $G$ acts on the ring $S$ via $\rho \otimes \rho_r$. If $g \in G$ and $s = \sum_i c_i \otimes f_i \in S$, then $g.s \in S$ is the function $G \to C$ that is given by 

$$(g.s)(x) = \sum_i (g.c_i) f_i(xg) = g. \sum_i c_i f_i(xg) \quad (x \in G).$$

Let $S^G$ denote the subring of $G$-invariants in $S$. Thus, $s \in S^G$ if and only if $g^{-1}.s(1) = s(g)$ for all $g \in G$.

We claim that 

(1) 
$$S^G \subseteq Z \otimes_k k[G].$$

To see this, let $s = \sum_i^r c_i \otimes f_i \in S^G$ with $\{f_i\}_i^r \subseteq k[G]$ chosen $k$-linearly independent. For a given $g \in G$, choose $\{x_j\}_i^r \subseteq G$ such that the matrix $A_g = (f_i(x_j))_{i,j}$ is invertible and put $B = (f_i(x_j))_{i,j}$. Then the equations $\sum_i c_i f_i(x) = \sum_i (g.c_i) f_i(xg)$ for all $x \in G$, with $x = x_j$ for $j = 1, \ldots, r$, can be written as the matrix equation $(c_1, \ldots, c_r)B = (g.c_1, \ldots, g.c_r)A_g$ or else $(g.c_1, \ldots, g.c_r) = (c_1, \ldots, c_r)BA_g^{-1}$. This shows that $G.c_i \subseteq \sum_{i=1}^r k[c_i]$ and hence $c_i \in Z$, proving (1).

Next, we show that there is an isomorphism 

(2) 
$$\varepsilon : S^G \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} Z$$

such that 

(3) 
$$\varepsilon \circ (1_Z \otimes \rho_l(g)) = \rho(g) \circ \varepsilon$$

holds for all $g \in G$. Indeed, by [5 Lemma 18(b)], the $G$-action on $Z$ is rational: it arises from a map of $k$-algebras $\Delta_Z : Z \to Z \otimes_k k[G]$, $c \mapsto \sum c_0 \otimes c_1$, via $g.c = \sum c_0 c_1(g)$. By [5 equations (17) and (18)], the $k[G]$-linear extension of $\Delta_Z$, which will also be denoted by $\Delta_Z$, is an isomorphism of $k[G]$-algebras, 

$$\Delta_Z : Z \otimes_k k[G] \stackrel{\sim}{\longrightarrow} Z \otimes_k k[G],$$

that satisfies the “intertwining formula” $\Delta_Z \circ (\rho \otimes \rho_l)(g) = (1_Z \otimes \rho_l)(g) \circ \Delta_Z$ for each $g \in G$. It follows that $\Delta_Z$ yields an isomorphism of $S^G = (Z \otimes_k k[G])^G$ with the subalgebra of $(1_Z \otimes \rho_l)(G)$-invariants in $Z \otimes_k k[G]$. Since the latter algebra is clearly $Z$, the isomorphism (2) follows. It is easy to see that the isomorphism (2) is just the restriction to $S^G$ of the Hopf counit $S \to C$, $s \mapsto s(1)$. In particular, for $s \in S^G$, we have $(\varepsilon \circ (1_Z \otimes \rho_l(g)))(s) = s(g^{-1}) = g.p(1) = (\rho(g) \circ \varepsilon)(s)$, proving (3).

2.3. The case of an algebraic torus. Now let $G \cong (k^\times)^d$ be an algebraic torus over $k$ and let $\Lambda = X(G) \cong \mathbb{Z}^d$ be its lattice of rational characters. Then $k[G] = k\Lambda$, the group algebra of $\Lambda$ over $k$. As it is customary to use additive notation for the lattice $\Lambda$, we will write the standard $k$-basis of $k[G]$ as $\{x^\lambda : \lambda \in \Lambda\}$; so $x^\lambda x^{\lambda'} = x^{\lambda + \lambda'}$ and $x^\lambda(g) = (\lambda, g) \in k^\times$ for $g \in G$. Then $\rho_r(g)x^\lambda = (\lambda, g)x^\lambda$ and 

$$S = \bigoplus_{\lambda \in \Lambda} C \otimes_k kx^\lambda \cong C\Lambda,$$
the group algebra of $\Lambda$ over the field $\mathcal{C}$. Consider an element $s = \sum_{\lambda} s_{\lambda} \otimes x^{\lambda} \in S$ with $s_{\lambda} \in \mathcal{C}$. Then $g.s = \sum_{\lambda} g.s_{\lambda} \otimes (\lambda, g)x^{\lambda}$ for $g \in G$. Hence, $s \in S^{G}$ if and only if $g.s_{\lambda} = (-\lambda, g)s_{\lambda}$ for all $g, \lambda$. Putting $C_{\lambda} = \{ c \in \mathcal{C} \mid g.c = (\lambda, g)c \text{ for all } g \in G \}$ and noting that each nonzero $C_{\lambda}$ is 1-dimensional over the fixed field $C^{G}$, we have

$$S^{G} = \bigoplus_{\lambda \in \Lambda} C_{-\lambda} \otimes_k kx^{\lambda} \cong C^{G} \Gamma,$$

the group algebra of the sublattice $\Gamma = \{ \lambda \in \Lambda \mid C_{\lambda} \neq 0 \}$ over $C^{G}$. We remark that $\Gamma = X(G/N)$ is the character lattice of the torus $G/N$, where $N$ is the kernel of the action of $G$ on $Z$; so $Z = \bigoplus_{\lambda \in \Gamma} C_{\lambda}$. The isomorphisms (4) and (2) prove part (a) of the theorem. Note also that $S$ is free over $S^{G}$.

We claim that each $G$-stable ideal $a$ of $S$ is generated by its intersection with $S^{G}$:

$$a = (a \cap S^{G})S.$$

For the nontrivial inclusion $\subseteq$, let $s = \sum_{\lambda} s_{\lambda} \otimes x^{\lambda} \in a$ be given with $s_{\lambda} \in \mathcal{C}$. In order to show that $s \in (a \cap S^{G})S$, we argue by induction on the size of $\text{Supp}(s) = \{ \lambda \in \Lambda \mid s_{\lambda} \neq 0 \}$, the length of $s$. Our claim being clear for $s = 0$, assume that $s \neq 0$. Suppose there exists an element $0 \neq t \in a$ with $\text{Supp}(t) \subseteq \not\exists \text{Supp}(s)$. Multiplying $t$ and $s$ with suitable units of the form $c \otimes x^{a}$, we may assume that $0 \in \text{Supp}(t)$ and $t_{0} = s_{0} = 1$. Since $t$ and $s - t$ are shorter than $s$, they both belong to $(a \cap S^{G})S$ by induction, and hence $s \in (a \cap S^{G})S$ as well. Therefore, we may assume that if $t \in a$ and $\text{Supp}(t) \subseteq \not\exists \text{Supp}(s)$, then $t = 0$. Continuing to assume that $s_{0} = 1$, this applies in particular to $t = s - g.s = \sum_{0 \not= \lambda}(s_{\lambda} - (\lambda, g)g.s_{\lambda}) \otimes x^{\lambda}$ for each $g \in G$. Therefore, $s \in S^{G}$ and (5) is proved.

Now let $b$ be an ideal of $S^{G}$ and let $a$ denote sum of all ideals of $S$ that contract to $b$. Since $S$ is free over $S^{G}$, we have $a \cap S^{G} = b$. Moreover, $a$ is clearly $G$-stable and so (5) gives that $a = bS$. Thus, $bS$ is the unique largest ideal of $S$ that contracts to $b$.

2.4. The prime correspondence. We start with some reminders from [6]. For now, let $G$ again be an arbitrary connected affine algebraic group over $k$ and let $k(G) = \text{Fract} k[G]$ be the field of rational functions of $G$. The $G$-action on $S$ via $\rho \otimes \rho_{e}$ extends uniquely to an action of $G$ on the following localization of $S$:

$$T = \mathcal{C} \otimes_k k(G).$$

Let $\text{Spec}^{G}(T)$ denote the collection of all $G$-stable prime ideals of $T$. Then [6, Theorem 9] establishes an order isomorphism

$$c: \text{Spec}_{0} R \sim \rightarrow \text{Spec}^{G}(T)$$

with the following $G$-equivariance property, for $P \in \text{Spec}_{0} R$ and $g \in G$:

$$c(g.P) = (1_{C} \otimes \rho_{e}(g))(c(P)).$$

Since $T$ is the localization $S$ at the nonzero elements of $k[G]$, contraction and extension yields a $G$-equivariant order isomorphism

$$\text{Spec} T \sim \rightarrow \{ p \in \text{Spec} S \mid p \cap k[G] = 0 \}.$$
Note that $k[G]$ is a $G$-simple ring, because $G$ acts transitively on itself by right multiplication. Therefore, each $p \in \text{Spec}^G(S)$ satisfies $p \cap k[G] = 0$, and hence the above bijection restricts to a bijection

$$\text{Spec}^G(T) \rightarrow \text{Spec}^G(S),$$

given by contraction and extension.

We now return to the case of an algebraic torus $G$. Then the map $p \mapsto p \cap S^G$ injects $\text{Spec}^G(S)$ into $\text{Spec}(S^G)$ by (5). Moreover, for any $q \in \text{Spec}(S^G)$, we know that $p = qS$ is the unique largest ideal of $S$ that contracts to $q$, which implies that $p \in \text{Spec}^G(S)$. Thus we obtain a bijection

$$\text{Spec}^G(S) \rightarrow \text{Spec}(S^G)$$

that is again given by contraction and extension. From (6) - (9) in conjunction with the isomorphism (2) we obtain the desired order isomorphism $\gamma : \text{Spec}_0 R \rightarrow \text{Spec}(Z)$. The fact that $\gamma$ is $G$-equivariant is immediate from the $G$-equivariance property (7) of the bijection (6) and the intertwining formula (3). This completes the proof of the Stratification Theorem.

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**References**


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