

Explicit modularity of K3 surfaces with CM of large degree

Edgar Costa (MIT)

July 8, 2025, ICERM

Slides available at edgarcosta.org.

Joint work with Andreas-Stephan Elsenhans, Jörg Jahnel, John Voight

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$
Endomorphisms	$\text{End}(E_{\overline{\mathbb{Q}}})_{\mathbb{Q}} = \mathbb{Q}$ or CM field	$\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}} = \text{RM}$ or CM field

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$
Endomorphisms	$\text{End}(E_{\overline{\mathbb{Q}}})_{\mathbb{Q}} = \mathbb{Q}$ or CM field	$\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}} = \text{RM}$ or CM field
Modularity status	proved (Wiles et al.)	open except $\dim T(X)$ is small or CM

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$
Endomorphisms	$\text{End}(E_{\overline{\mathbb{Q}}})_{\mathbb{Q}} = \mathbb{Q}$ or CM field	$\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}} = \text{RM}$ or CM field
Modularity status	proved (Wiles et al.)	open except $\dim T(X)$ is small or CM

In general, if $\dim \text{End}_{\text{Hdg}} M = \dim M$, then for some algebraic Hecke quasi-character ψ_M

$$L(M, s) = L(s, \psi_M).$$

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$
Endomorphisms	$\text{End}(E_{\mathbb{Q}^{\text{al}}})_{\mathbb{Q}} = \mathbb{Q}$ or CM field	$\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}} = \text{RM}$ or CM field
Modularity status	proved (Wiles et al.)	open except $\dim T(X)$ is small or CM

In general, if $\dim \text{End}_{\text{Hdg}} M = \dim M$, then for some algebraic Hecke quasi-character ψ_M

$$L(M, s) = L(s, \psi_M).$$

Question

Can we make modularity *explicit* for K3s with complex multiplication?

From Elliptic Curves to K3 Surfaces: an Analogy

Feature	Elliptic curve $E/\mathbb{Q}$	K3 surface $X/\mathbb{Q}$
Dimension	1	2
Motive of interest	$H^1(E)$	$T(X) \subsetneq H^2(X) \sim_{\mathbb{Q}} \text{NS}(X) \oplus T(X) \simeq \mathbb{Z}^{22}$
Weight	1	2
Dimension	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X) \in [2, 21]$
L -function degree	2	$\dim T(X) = 22 - \dim \text{NS}(X)$
Endomorphisms	$\text{End}(E_{\overline{\mathbb{Q}}})_{\mathbb{Q}} = \mathbb{Q}$ or CM field	$\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}} = \text{RM}$ or CM field
Modularity status	proved (Wiles et al.)	open except $\dim T(X)$ is small or CM

In general, if $\dim \text{End}_{\text{Hdg}} M = \dim M$, then for some algebraic Hecke quasi-character ψ_M

$$L(M, s) = L(s, \psi_M).$$

Question

Can we make modularity *explicit* for K3s with complex multiplication?

Today: three examples with $\dim T(X) = 6$ and $\text{End}_{\text{Hdg}}(T(X))_{\mathbb{Q}}$ is a sextic CM field.

The Protagonists: Three degree 2 K3 surfaces with suspicious endomorphisms

- Three double covers of $\mathbb{P}^2$

$$X_1: w^2 = x y z (x^3 - 3xy^2 + y^3 - 3x^2z - 3xyz + 9y^2z + 6yz^2 + z^3)$$

$$X_2: w^2 = x y z (7x^3 - 7x^2y + y^3 + 49x^2z - 21xyz - 7y^2z + 98xz^2 + 49z^3)$$

$$X_3: w^2 = x y z \left(\begin{aligned} &49x^3 - 304x^2y + 361xy^2 + 361y^3 + 570x^2z - 2793xyz \\ &+ 2888y^2z + 2033xz^2 - 5415yz^2 + 2299z^3 \end{aligned} \right)$$

The Protagonists: Three degree 2 K3 surfaces with suspicious endomorphisms

- Three double covers of $\mathbb{P}^2$

$$X_1: w^2 = x y z (x^3 - 3xy^2 + y^3 - 3x^2z - 3xyz + 9y^2z + 6yz^2 + z^3)$$

$$X_2: w^2 = x y z (7x^3 - 7x^2y + y^3 + 49x^2z - 21xyz - 7y^2z + 98xz^2 + 49z^3)$$

$$X_3: w^2 = x y z \left(\begin{aligned} &49x^3 - 304x^2y + 361xy^2 + 361y^3 + 570x^2z - 2793xyz \\ &+ 2888y^2z + 2033xz^2 - 5415yz^2 + 2299z^3 \end{aligned} \right)$$

- The right hand side factors as the product of six general lines in $\mathbb{P}^2$.
- Blowing up the 15 double points yields a smooth K3 with

$$\mathrm{rk} \, \mathrm{NS} X_i = 1 + 15, \quad \dim T(X_i) = 22 - 16 = 6.$$

The Protagonists: Three degree 2 K3 surfaces with suspicious endomorphisms

- Three double covers of $\mathbb{P}^2$

$$X_1: w^2 = x y z (x^3 - 3xy^2 + y^3 - 3x^2z - 3xyz + 9y^2z + 6yz^2 + z^3)$$

$$X_2: w^2 = x y z (7x^3 - 7x^2y + y^3 + 49x^2z - 21xyz - 7y^2z + 98xz^2 + 49z^3)$$

$$X_3: w^2 = x y z \left(\begin{aligned} &49x^3 - 304x^2y + 361xy^2 + 361y^3 + 570x^2z - 2793xyz \\ &+ 2888y^2z + 2033xz^2 - 5415yz^2 + 2299z^3 \end{aligned} \right)$$

- The right hand side factors as the product of six general lines in $\mathbb{P}^2$.
- Blowing up the 15 double points yields a smooth K3 with

$$\mathrm{rk} \, \mathrm{NS} X_i = 1 + 15, \quad \dim T(X_i) = 22 - 16 = 6.$$

- Period matrix of $X_i \rightsquigarrow$ strong evidence of CM by a cyclic sextic field K_i .

$$\mathbb{Q}(\zeta_9 + \zeta_9^{-1}, \sqrt{-1}) \simeq 6.0.419904.1 \quad \mathbb{Q}(\zeta_7 + \zeta_7^{-1}, \sqrt{-1}) \simeq 6.0.153664.1 \quad 6.0.59105344.1$$

- The lines are defined over the unique (real) cubic subfield.

The Accomplices: Four Hyperelliptic Curves with CM 🙄

Question

Can we construct a CM abelian threefold attached to these fields? 🕵️

The Accomplices: Four Hyperelliptic Curves with CM 🐼

Question

Can we construct a CM abelian threefold attached to these fields? 🕵️

Yes, we can!

Theorem (Weng + C-Mascot-Sijssling-Voight)

We have $\text{End}(\text{Jac}(C_i))_{\mathbb{Q}} \simeq K_i$, where

i	$\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{-1}) \subset K_i$	Defining equation for C_i
1	$\mathbb{Q}(\zeta_9 + \zeta_9^{-1}, \sqrt{-1}) \simeq 6.0.419904.1$	$y^2 = x^7 + 6x^5 + 9x^3 + x$
2	$\mathbb{Q}(\zeta_7 + \zeta_7^{-1}, \sqrt{-1}) \simeq 6.0.153664.1$	$y^2 = x^7 + 7x^5 + 14x^3 + 7x$
3	6.0.8340544.1	$y^2 = x^7 + 1786x^5 + 44441x^3 + 278179x$
4	6.0.59105344.1	$y^2 = x^7 + 961x^5 - 3694084x^3 + 1832265664x$

Main Theorem: Matching Modularity

Theorem (C–Elsenhans–Jahnel–Voight)

For $i = 1, 2, 3$, let $X = X_i$ and let K be the predicted sextic CM field. and $F \subseteq K$ the unique cubic subfield.

🔍 If $T_{\mathbb{Q}}(X)$ has CM by K , for an explicit character ψ_X with ∞ -type $\{(0, 2), (1, 1), (1, 1)\}$ and for all primes ℓ we have

$$\rho_{T(X), \ell} \simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \psi_X \quad L(T(X), s) = L(s, \psi_X).$$

Main Theorem: Matching Modularity

Theorem (C–Elsenhans–Jahnel–Voight)

For $i = 1, 2, 3$, let $X = X_i$ and let K be the predicted sextic CM field. and $F \subseteq K$ the unique cubic subfield.

🔍 If $T_{\mathbb{Q}}(X)$ has CM by K , for an explicit character ψ_X with ∞ -type $\{(0, 2), (1, 1), (1, 1)\}$ and for all primes ℓ we have

$$\rho_{T(X), \ell} \simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \psi_X \quad L(T(X), s) = L(s, \psi_X).$$

👁️ Let $A = \text{Jac}(C_i)$. For an explicit character ψ_A of ∞ -type $\{(0, 1), (0, 1), (0, 1)\}$ and for all primes ℓ we have

$$\rho_{H^1(A), \ell} \simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \psi_A \quad L(H^1(A), s) = L(s, \psi_A).$$

Main Theorem: Matching Modularity

Theorem (C–Elsenhans–Jahnel–Voight)

For $i = 1, 2, 3$, let $X = X_i$ and let K be the predicted sextic CM field. and $F \subseteq K$ the unique cubic subfield.

 If $T_{\mathbb{Q}}(X)$ has CM by K , for an explicit character ψ_X with ∞ -type $\{(0, 2), (1, 1), (1, 1)\}$ and for all primes ℓ we have

$$\rho_{T(X), \ell} \simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \psi_X \quad L(T(X), s) = L(s, \psi_X).$$

 Let $A = \text{Jac}(C_i)$. For an explicit character ψ_A of ∞ -type $\{(0, 1), (0, 1), (0, 1)\}$ and for all primes ℓ we have

$$\rho_{H^1(A), \ell} \simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \psi_A \quad L(H^1(A), s) = L(s, \psi_A).$$

 We have

$$\begin{aligned} \rho_{H^2(A), \ell} &\simeq \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_F}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} \mathbb{Q}_{\ell}(1) \oplus \text{Ind}_{\text{Gal}_K}^{\text{Gal}_{\mathbb{Q}}} (\psi_X \oplus \psi') \\ L(H^2(A), s) &= \zeta_F(s+1) L(s, \psi_X) L(s, \psi'), \end{aligned}$$

where ψ' is of ∞ -type $\{(0, 2), (0, 2), (1, 1)\}$.

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
 2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?
-
1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$
 2. We must consider $\mathfrak{N}$ up to $\mathfrak{p}_2^7 \cdot 7 \cdot 11 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$, where $\mathfrak{p}_p$ is the unique prime dividing p .

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?
3. **Enumerate** all the characters ψ with the required ∞ -type and bounded conductor.

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$
2. We must consider $\mathfrak{N}$ up to $\mathfrak{p}_2^7 \cdot 7 \cdot 11 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$, where $\mathfrak{p}_p$ is the unique prime dividing p .

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?
3. **Enumerate** all the characters ψ with the required ∞ -type and bounded conductor.

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$
2. We must consider $\mathfrak{N}$ up to $\mathfrak{p}_2^7 \cdot 7 \cdot 11 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$, where $\mathfrak{p}_p$ is the unique prime dividing p .
3. Must consider groups as large as

$$(\mathbb{Z}/4\mathbb{Z})^5 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/8\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/24\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/48\mathbb{Z} \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/240\mathbb{Z})^3 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/5040\mathbb{Z}$$

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story 🕵️

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?
3. **Enumerate** all the characters ψ with the required ∞ -type and bounded conductor.
4. **Match Euler factors**: compute characteristic polynomials of Frobenius on $T(X_i)$ for split primes $p < 250$; unique match singles out ψ_{X_i} (and similarly ψ_{A_i}).

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$
2. We must consider $\mathfrak{N}$ up to $\mathfrak{p}_2^7 \cdot 7 \cdot 11 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$, where $\mathfrak{p}_p$ is the unique prime dividing p .
3. Must consider groups as large as

$$(\mathbb{Z}/4\mathbb{Z})^5 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/8\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/24\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/48\mathbb{Z} \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/240\mathbb{Z})^3 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/5040\mathbb{Z}$$

4. We have $\mathfrak{N} = \mathfrak{p}_2^2 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$ and it is the unique character with that conductor such that $L_p(\psi_{X_i}, T) = 1 + 14T - 5pT^2 - 28p^2T^3 - 5p^3T^4 + 14p^4T^5 + p^6T^6$ for $p = 37$.

How We Pin Down ψ_X : A Four Step Detective Story 🕵️

1. **Bad primes** of X_i : when do the 6 lines are no longer in general position?
2. **Conductor bound**: what are the maximum exponents such that $\mathbb{Q}(\psi) \subseteq K_i$?
3. **Enumerate** all the characters ψ with the required ∞ -type and bounded conductor.
4. **Match Euler factors**: compute characteristic polynomials of Frobenius on $T(X_i)$ for split primes $p < 250$; unique match singles out ψ_{X_i} (and similarly ψ_{A_i}).

1. For X_3 , the bad primes are $\{2, 7, 11, 19\}$
2. We must consider $\mathfrak{N}$ up to $\mathfrak{p}_2^7 \cdot 7 \cdot 11 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$, where $\mathfrak{p}_p$ is the unique prime dividing p .
3. Must consider groups as large as

$$(\mathbb{Z}/4\mathbb{Z})^5 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/8\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/24\mathbb{Z})^2 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/48\mathbb{Z} \oplus (\mathbb{Z}/240\mathbb{Z})^3 \oplus \mathbb{Z}/5040\mathbb{Z}$$

4. We have $\mathfrak{N} = \mathfrak{p}_2^2 \cdot \mathfrak{p}_{19}$ and it is the unique character with that conductor such that $L_p(\psi_{X_i}, T) = 1 + 14T - 5pT^2 - 28p^2T^3 - 5p^3T^4 + 14p^4T^5 + p^6T^6$ for $p = 37$.
5. This example took about 180h (all the others took less than a minute).

What We Gain and What's Next

- **Matching:** three explicit K3 with putative CM to explicit algebraic Hecke quasi-characters.

What We Gain and What's Next

- **Matching:** three explicit K3 with putative CM to explicit algebraic Hecke quasi-characters.
- **Symmetric square relation:** $\psi_X \mid \text{Sym}^2 \psi_A \rightsquigarrow$ strongly suggests that X and A are related via the Kuga–Satake construction (up to isogeny and powers), i.e.,

$$T(X) \subset H^1(A) \otimes H^1(A)$$

What We Gain and What's Next

- **Matching:** three explicit K3 with putative CM to explicit algebraic Hecke quasi-characters.
- **Symmetric square relation:** $\psi_X \mid \text{Sym}^2 \psi_A \rightsquigarrow$ strongly suggests that X and A are related via the Kuga–Satake construction (up to isogeny and powers), i.e.,

$$T(X) \subset H^1(A) \otimes H^1(A)$$

- A fourth Hyperelliptic curve with CM lacks a K3 example, but the characters still exist! CM field has class group $C_2 \times C_2$. Does this obstruct definition over $\mathbb{Q}$?

What We Gain and What's Next

- **Matching:** three explicit K3 with putative CM to explicit algebraic Hecke quasi-characters.
- **Symmetric square relation:** $\psi_X \mid \text{Sym}^2 \psi_A \rightsquigarrow$ strongly suggests that X and A are related via the Kuga–Satake construction (up to isogeny and powers), i.e.,

$$T(X) \subset H^1(A) \otimes H^1(A)$$

- A fourth Hyperelliptic curve with CM lacks a K3 example, but the characters still exist! CM field has class group $C_2 \times C_2$. Does this obstruct definition over $\mathbb{Q}$?

Questions?