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problem with attribution

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To: Gerhard.Hiss@math.rwth-aachen.de, broue@math.univ-paris-diderot.fr

Cc: D.F.Holt@warwick.ac.uk, "William M. Kantor" <kantor@uoregon.edu>, Eamonn A O'Brien <e.obrien@auckland.ac.nz>, Sergey Bratus <sergey@cs.dartmouth.edu>

Dear Editors Michel Broué and Gerhard Hiss,

I would like to bring your attention to the paper "Fast recognition of alternating groups of unknown degree" by Sebastian Jambo, Martin Leuner, Alice Niemeyer and Wilhelm Plesken, recently published in Journal of Algebra.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021869313003190>

In that paper, the authors mention in passing our paper [4], see below. The authors claim we do not consider the case of an unknown degree (see their quote below). This is not correct. Not only we consider the case of unknown degree in our Theorem 2, we devote to this case the whole Section 9, titled "What to do If n is not known?"

When I brought this deficiency of attribution to authors' attention, I received a reply from Alice Niemeyer claiming that while our results are correct, they are weaker than that in their paper. Be it as it may, we do not believe this is a good reason to disregard our work. When I subsequently emailed the authors asking for an erratum or some kind of an official "acknowledgement of attribution", they did not respond.

Thus, I would like to ask for your help in this unfortunate matter. Please let me know what can be done by the JOA to mitigate this situation. Best,

-- Igor Pak

P.S. As the paper does not list the editor who accepted the paper, I am CC'ing this email to several editors in the Section on Computational Algebra close to the area, who may have taken part in handling of this article.

Quote from Jambo et al

"We present a constructive recognition algorithm to decide whether a given black-box group is isomorphic to an alternating or a symmetric group without prior knowledge of the degree. This eliminates the major gap in known algorithms, as they require the degree as additional input. [...] the present black-box algorithms [3] and [4] can only test whether a given black-box group is isomorphic to an alternating or a symmetric group of a particular degree, provided as additional input to the algorithm."

Here [4] is

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Sergey Bratus and Igor Pak, "Fast constructive recognition of a black box group isomorphic to S_n using Goldbach conjecture", Journal of Symbolic Computation, vol. 29, 2000, 33-57.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S074771719990295X>