



**HAL**  
open science

# On pseudo-inverses of matrices and their characteristic polynomials in supertropical algebra

Adi Niv

► **To cite this version:**

Adi Niv. On pseudo-inverses of matrices and their characteristic polynomials in supertropical algebra. *Linear Algebra and its Applications*, 2015, 471, pp.264-290. 10.1016/j.laa.2014.12.038 . hal-01253421

**HAL Id: hal-01253421**

**<https://inria.hal.science/hal-01253421>**

Submitted on 10 Jan 2016

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# ON PSEUDO-INVERSES OF MATRICES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTIC POLYNOMIALS IN SUPERTROPICAL ALGEBRA

ADI NIV<sup>†</sup>

ABSTRACT. The only invertible matrices in tropical algebra are diagonal matrices, permutation matrices and their products. However, the pseudo-inverse  $A^\nabla$ , defined as  $\frac{1}{\det(A)} \text{adj}(A)$ , with  $\det(A)$  being the tropical permanent (also called the tropical determinant) of a matrix  $A$ , inherits some classical algebraic properties and has some surprising new ones. Defining  $B$  and  $B'$  to be tropically similar if  $B' = A^\nabla B A$ , we examine the characteristic (max-)polynomials of tropically similar matrices as well as those of pseudo-inverses. Other miscellaneous results include a new proof of the identity for  $\det(AB)$  and a connection to stabilization of the powers of definite matrices.

*Keywords:* Tropical and supertropical linear algebra; characteristic polynomial; eigenvalues; Kleene star; permanent; definite matrices; pseudo-inverse.

*AMSC:* 15A09 (Primary), 15A15, 15A18, 15A80, 15B33

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The **tropical max-plus semifield** is an ordered group  $\mathcal{G}$  (usually the set of real numbers  $\mathbb{R}$  or the set of rational numbers  $\mathbb{Q}$ ), together with  $-\infty$ , denoted as  $\mathbb{T} = \mathcal{G} \cup \{-\infty\}$ , equipped with the operations  $a \oplus b = \max\{a, b\}$  and  $a \odot b = a + b$ , denoted as  $a + b$  and  $ab$  respectively (see [1] and [14]). The unit element  $1_{\mathbb{T}}$  is actually the element  $0 \in \mathbb{Q}$ . This arithmetic enables one to simplify non-linear questions by asking them in a (pseudo)-linear setting (see [12]), which can be applied to discrete mathematics, optimization, algebraic geometry and more, as has been well reviewed in [8], [9], [11], [13], [21] and [24]. In this max-plus language, we may also use notions of linear algebra to interpret combinatorial problems, such as eigenvectors being used to solve the Longest-Distance problem (see [4]).

The intention of this paper is to use an analogous concept of the inverse matrix by passing to a wider structure called the **supertropical semiring**, equipped with the ghost ideal  $G = \mathcal{G}^\nu$ , as established and studied by Izhakian and Rowen in [16] and [17]. The use of the term “pseudo” in this paper is the same as “quasi” throughout the work of Izhakian and Rowen.

---

<sup>†</sup> Department of Mathematics, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan 52900, Israel.  
Email: [adi.niv@live.biu.ac.il](mailto:adi.niv@live.biu.ac.il).

This paper is part of the author’s PhD thesis, which was written at Bar-Ilan University under the supervision of Prof. L. H. Rowen.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Sergei Sergeev from the University of Birmingham and an anonymous referee for their invaluable comments which were very helpful when preparing this paper.

This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant no. 1207/12).

We denote the “standard” supertropical semiring as

$$R = T \bigcup G \bigcup \{-\infty\},$$

where  $T = \mathcal{G}$ , which contains the so called tangible elements of the structure and where  $\forall a \in T$  we have  $a^\nu \in G$  are the ghost elements of the structure, as defined in [16]. So  $G$  inherits the order of  $\mathcal{G}$ . This enables us to distinguish between a maximal element  $a$  that is attained only once in a sum, i.e.  $a \in T$  which is invertible, and a maximum that is being attained at least twice, i.e.  $a + a = a^\nu \in G$ , which is not invertible. Note that  $\nu$  projects the standard supertropical semiring onto  $G$ , which can be identified with the usual tropical structure.

In this new supertropical sense, we use the following order relation to describe two elements that are equal up to some ghost supplement:

**Definition 1.1.** Let  $a, b$  be any two elements in  $R$ . We say that  $a$  **ghost surpasses**  $b$ , denoted  $a \models_{gs} b$ , if  $a = b + ghost$ , i.e.  $a = b$  or  $a \in G$  with  $a^\nu \geq b^\nu$ . We say  $a$  is  $\nu$ -equivalent to  $b$ , denoted by  $a \cong_\nu b$ , if  $a^\nu = b^\nu$ . That is, when we use  $\nu$  to project from  $R$  to  $G$ , identified with the tropical structure,  $\nu$ -equivalence becomes equality.

For matrices  $A = (a_{ij}), B = (b_{ij}) \in M_{n \times m}(R)$  (and in particular for vectors)  $A \models_{gs} B$  means  $a_{ij} \models_{gs} b_{ij} \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, n$  and  $j = 1, \dots, m$ .

For polynomials

$$f(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i x^i, \quad g(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i x^i \in R[x],$$

we say that  $f(x) \models_{gs} g(x)$ , also denoted as  $f \models_{gs} g$ , when  $a_i \models_{gs} b_i \quad \forall i$ .

**Important properties of  $\models_{gs}$ :**

1.  $\models_{gs}$  is a partial order relation.  
See [19, Lemma 1.5].
2. If  $a \models_{gs} b$  then  $ac \models_{gs} bc$ .

Considering this relation, we use the classical notion  $\frac{1}{\det(A)} adj(A)$  (where  $\det(A)$  is the permanent and then  $adj(A)$  is defined as usual) to formulate results in the supertropical setting, which are inaccessible in the usual tropical setting. This notion was introduced and studied in tropical algebra by Yoeli [31] and Cuninghame-Green [7], and was further investigated by Gaubert [10], Reutenauer and Straubing [27] and Sergeev [28]. We obtain tropical theorems by considering the tangible elements. By Izhakian’s results in [15], this notion satisfies that  $\frac{1}{\det(A)} adj(A) \cdot A$  is equal to the  $Id$  matrix on the diagonal, and  $\models_{gs}$  the  $Id$  matrix off the diagonal.

In section 3 we discuss type of matrices with 0 on the diagonal and 0 determinant, defined as **definite matrices**. In section 3.1, we establish that for the set

$$\mathcal{N} = \{A^\nabla : A \in M_n(R)\},$$

the operation  $\nabla$  is of order 2 (see Theorem 3.5), and in section 3.2 we will show that for a definite matrix  $A$  of order  $n$

$$A^\nabla \cong_\nu A^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_\nu A^* \cong_\nu A^k, \quad \forall k \geq n - 1$$

(see Theorem 3.6 and Proposition 3.7). These results are extended to the supertropical setting from the results obtained over the tropical structure in [31] and [28], regarding these closure operations.

In section 4, we use the factorizability of matrices in  $\mathcal{N}$  to give an alternative proof, analogous to the proof in classical linear algebra, of the property

$$\det(AB) \models_{gs} \det(A)\det(B)$$

stated in Theorem 2.10.

In sections 5 we prove that

$$f_{A^\nabla BA} \models_{gs} f_B, \text{ (see Theorem 5.4).}$$

In section 6, our considerations lead us to Conjecture 6.2:

$$|A|f_{A^\nabla}(x) \models_{gs} x^n f_A(x^{-1}),$$

where  $f_M(x) = \det(M + xI)$  denotes the characteristic polynomial of a square matrix  $M$ . We prove 6.2 for the determinant and trace coefficients and for every  $2 \times 2$  or  $3 \times 3$  and triangular matrix.

A consequence would be

$$f_{A^{\nabla\nabla}} = f_A, \text{ whenever } f_{A^{\nabla\nabla}} \text{ is tangible.}$$

These properties provide a foundation for further research in representation theory and eigenspace decomposition.

## 2. PRELIMINARIES

### 2.1. Matrices.

The work in [18], [19] and [20] shows that even though the semiring of matrices over the supertropical semiring lacks negation, it satisfies many of the classical matrix theory properties when using the ghost ideal  $G$ . Following [4] and [18] for the tropical and supertropical notations, we give some basic definitions for this theory. One may also find in [4] further combinatorial motivations for the objects discussed.

**Definition 2.1.** A **permutation track**, of the permutation  $\pi \in S_n$ , is the sequence

$$a_{1,\pi(1)}a_{2,\pi(2)} \cdots a_{n,\pi(n)}$$

of  $n$  entries of the matrix  $A = (a_{i,j}) \in M_n(R)$ .

**Definition 2.2.** We define the **tropical determinant** of a matrix  $A = (a_{i,j})$  to be

$$\det(A) = \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} a_{1,\sigma(1)} \cdots a_{n,\sigma(n)}.$$

In the special case where  $a_{i,j} \in R$ ,  $\forall i, j$ , we refer to any permutation track yielding the highest value in this sum as a **dominant permutation track**.

The tropical determinant is actually the same as *max permanent* of [4]- [7], and the above definition is a reformulation of the optimal assignment problem.

**Definition 2.3.** We define a matrix  $A \in M_n(\mathbb{T})$  or  $A \in M_n(R)$  to be **tropically singular** if there exist at least two different dominant permutation tracks. Otherwise the matrix is **tropically non-singular**.

Consequently a matrix  $A \in M_n(R)$  is supertropically singular if  $\det(A) \in G \cup \{-\infty\}$  and supertropically non-singular if  $\det(A) \in T$ . A matrix  $A$  is **strictly singular** if  $\det(A) = -\infty$ .

Notice that over the tropical semifield we cannot determine if the matrix is tropically non-singular from the value of its determinant, which is always invertible over  $\mathbb{T} \setminus \{-\infty\}$ . Over the supertropical semiring however, a supertropically non-singular matrix has an invertible determinant, while a supertropically singular matrix has a non-invertible determinant.

As the definitions of singularity are identical over the tropical and supertropical structures, we will only indicate "non-singular" or "singular" and "over  $\mathbb{T}$ " or "over  $R$ " (which will effect the value and invertibility of the determinant).

**Definition 2.4.** Let  $\mathbb{T}^n$  be the free module (see [19]) of rank  $n$  over the tropical semifield, and  $R^n$  be the free module of rank  $n$  over the supertropical semiring. We define the **standard base** of  $\mathbb{T}^n$ , and therefore of  $R^n$ , to be  $e_1, \dots, e_n$ , where

$$e_i = \begin{cases} 1_{\mathbb{T}} = 1_R, & \text{in the } i^{\text{th}} \text{ coordinate} \\ 0_{\mathbb{T}} = 0_R, & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}.$$

**Definition 2.5.** The tropical **identity matrix** in the tropical matrix semiring is the  $n \times n$  matrix with the standard base for its columns. We denote this matrix as

$$I_{\mathbb{T}} = I_R = I.$$

**Definition 2.6.** A matrix  $A \in M_n(R)$  is **invertible** if there exists a matrix  $B \in M_n(R)$  such that

$$AB = BA = I.$$

**Definition 2.7.** A square matrix  $P_{\pi} = (a_{i,j})$  is defined to be a **permutation matrix** if there exists  $\pi \in S_n$  such that  $a_{i,j} = \begin{cases} 0_R, & j \neq \pi(i) \\ 1_R, & j = \pi(i) \end{cases}$ .

*Remark 2.8.* A tropical matrix  $A$  is invertible if and only if it is a product of a permutation matrix  $P_{\pi}$  and a diagonal matrix  $D$  with an invertible determinant. These type of products are defined as **generalized permutation matrices**.

**Definition 2.9.** Following the notation in [26], we define three types of tropical elementary matrices, corresponding to the three elementary matrix operations, obtained by applying one such operation to the identity matrix.

A **transposition matrix** is obtained from the identity matrix by switching two rows (resp. columns). Multiplying a matrix  $A$  to the right of such a matrix (resp. to the left) will switch the corresponding rows (resp. columns) in  $A$ .

A **diagonal multiplier** is obtained from the identity matrix where one row (resp. column) has been multiplied by an invertible scalar. Multiplying a matrix  $A$  to the right of such a matrix (resp. to the left) will multiply the corresponding row (resp. columns) in  $A$  by the same scalar.

A **Gaussian matrix** is defined to differ from the identity matrix by having a non-zero entry  $r$ , in a non-diagonal position  $(i, j)$ . Multiplying a matrix  $A$  to the right of such a matrix (resp. to the left) will add row  $j$  (resp. column), multiplied by  $r$ , to row (resp. column)  $i$ .

By Remark 2.8, a product of transposition matrices, which is a permutation matrix, is invertible. A product of diagonal multipliers, which is a diagonal matrix, is invertible. Thus a product of transposition matrices and diagonal multipliers, which is a generalized permutation matrix, is invertible. Gaussian matrices however, are not invertible, and therefore a product including a Gaussian matrix is not invertible.

**Theorem 2.10. (*The rule of determinants*)** For  $n \times n$  matrices  $A, B$  over the supertropical semiring  $R$ , we have

$$\det(AB) \models_{gs} \det(A)\det(B).$$

**Proof.** See Theorem 3.5 in [18, §3].

This theorem also follows from [10, Proposition 2.1.7]. Although S. Gaubert’s proof is done in the symmetrized tropical semiring, it carries over to the supertropical case.

In this context, we note that the two transfer principles in [2, Theorem 3.3 and Theorem 3.4 ] allow one to obtain such results automatically in a wider class of semirings, including the supertropical semiring.

The fact that the determinant of a non-singular matrix  $A$  over  $R$  is tangible means that the matrix has one dominant permutation track. By using a permutation matrix we can relocate the corresponding permutation to the diagonal, and by using a diagonal matrix we can change the diagonal entries to  $1_R$ , obtaining a non-singular matrix whose dominant Id-permutation track equals  $1_R$ . That is,  $A = P\bar{A}$  where  $P$  is an invertible matrix (See Remark 2.8) such that  $\det(P) = \det(A)$  and  $\bar{A}$  is a definite matrix.

**Definition 2.11.**  $\bar{A}$  is called the **definite form of  $A$** ,  $P$  the **conductor of  $A$**  and we say that  $P$  *conducts* the dominant permutation track in  $A$ .

The process of bringing a non-singular matrix  $A$  to its definite form, can be obtained by using transposition matrices and diagonal multipliers either on the columns or on the rows of  $A$ . Respectively, we denote these conducting matrices as the **right conductor** and the **left conductor** of  $A$ , which are invertible. The **right** (resp. **left**) **definite form** corresponds to the right (resp. left) conductor.

Definite matrices are not the same as normal matrices, defined in [3] and [4] to have non-positive off diagonal entries. Over  $\mathbb{T}$  the definite form is obtained for not strictly singular matrices, by conducting one of the dominant permutation tracks.

Looking at elementary matrices as the “atoms” of matrices, we present the following definitions:

**Definition 2.12.** We define a matrix to be **elementarily factorizable** if it can be factored into a product of tropical elementary matrices.

By Remark 2.8, an invertible matrix is always elementarily factorizable, while a non-invertible matrix is elementarily factorizable if and only if its definite form is factorizable.

*Remark.* Writing a permutation  $\pi$  as a product of disjoint cycles  $\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_t$ , the permutation track  $a_{1,\pi(1)} \cdots a_{n,\pi(n)}$  can be decomposed into the **cycle tracks**  $C_1, \dots, C_t$ , where  $C_i$  is the cycle track corresponds to the cycle  $\sigma_i$ .

We introduce a standard combinatorial property of definite matrices. Since this property will be in use in Section 5, we provide some details regarding the technique of its use.

**Lemma 2.13.** *For a definite matrix  $A = (a_{i,j}) \in M_n(R)$ , any sequence*

$$(2.1) \quad a_{i_1, i_2} a_{i_2, i_3} \cdots a_{i_k, i_1}, \text{ where } i_j \in \{1, \dots, n\} \text{ (not necessarily distinct)}$$

*either describes a permutation track, or is dominated by a subsequence which describes a permutation track.*

*Proof.* As proved in [4, Theorem 4.4], due to the determinant obtained by the 0-entries on the diagonal of a definite matrix, for every cycle track  $C$  we have that

$$C = C \cdot C_{Id} \leq P_{Id},$$

where  $P_{Id}$  is the Id-permutation track and  $C_{Id}$  is the Id-cycle track extending  $C$  to a permutation track.

We use a standard fact from graph theory, that if a path  $(i_1, i_2, i_3, \dots, i_k, i_1)$  has repeating nodes, then it can be recursively separated into (not necessarily disjoint) cycles, starting and ending at the points of repetition. Thus, (2.1) can be decomposed as the product of (not necessarily disjoint) cycle tracks satisfying

$$\prod_{j=1}^l C_j \leq C_i = C_i \cdot C_{Id} \quad \forall i,$$

where  $C_j$  are cycle tracks and  $C_i \cdot C_{Id}$  is the extension of  $C_i$  to a permutation track. □

**Notation.** For an element  $a \in R$ , we denote as  $a^\nu$  the element  $b \in G$  s.t.  $a \cong_\nu b$ , and as  $\hat{a}$  the element  $b \in T$  s.t.  $a \cong_\nu b$ .

For a matrix (and in particular for a vector)  $A = (a_{i,j})$  we write

$$A^\nu = (a_{i,j}^\nu) \text{ and } \widehat{A} = (\widehat{a_{i,j}}).$$

For a polynomial  $f(x) = \sum a_i x^i$  we write

$$f^\nu(x) = \sum a_i^\nu x^i \text{ and } \widehat{f(x)} = \sum \widehat{a_i} x^i.$$

**Definition 2.14.** A **pseudo-zero** matrix  $Z_G$  is a matrix equal to  $0_R$  on the diagonal, and whose off-diagonal entries are ghosts or  $0_R$ .

A **pseudo-identity** matrix  $I_G$  is a nonsingular, multiplicatively idempotent matrix equal to  $I + Z_G$ , where  $Z_G$  is a pseudo-zero matrix. Thus, for every matrix  $A$  and a pseudo-identity  $I_G$  we have  $I_G A \models_{gs} A$ .

A **ghost pseudo-identity** matrix is a singular, multiplicatively idempotent matrix equal to  $I^\nu + Z_G$ .

**Definition 2.15.** The  $r, c$ -**minor**  $A_{r,c}$  of a matrix  $A = (a_{i,j})$  is obtained by deleting row  $r$  and column  $c$  of  $A$ . The **adjoint matrix**  $adj(A)$  of  $A$  is defined as the matrix  $(a'_{i,j})$ , where  $a'_{i,j} = det(A_{j,i})$ .

The matrix  $A^\nabla$  denotes  $\frac{1}{det(A)} adj(A)$ , when  $det(A)$  is invertible, and  $\left(\frac{1}{det(A)}\right)^\nu adj(A)$ , when  $det(A)$  is not invertible. Thus over  $R$ ,  $A^\nabla$  is defined differently for singular and

non-singular matrices. Over  $\mathbb{T}$ , however,  $A^\nabla$  is defined the same for every not strictly singular matrix.

**Remark.** Notice that  $\det(A_{j,i})$  may be obtained as the sum of all permutation tracks in  $A$  passing through  $a_{j,i}$ , with  $a_{j,i}$  removed:

$$\det(A_{j,i}) = \sum_{\substack{\pi \in S_n : \\ \pi(j) = i}} a_{1,\pi(1)} \cdots a_{j-1,\pi(j-1)} a_{j+1,\pi(j+1)} \cdots a_{n,\pi(n)}.$$

When writing such a permutation as the product of disjoint cycles,  $\det(A_{j,i})$  can be presented as:

$$(2.2) \quad \det(A_{j,i}) = \sum_{\substack{\pi \in S_n : \\ \pi(j) = i}} (a_{i,\pi(i)} \cdots a_{\pi^{-1}(j),j}) C_\pi,$$

where  $(a_{i,\pi(i)} \cdots a_{\pi^{-1}(j),j})$  is the cycle track missing  $a_{j,i}$ , and  $C_\pi$  is the product of the cycle tracks of  $\pi$  that do not include  $i$  and  $j$ .

**Fact.** The products  $AA^\nabla$  and  $A^\nabla A$  are pseudo-identities when  $\det(A)$  is invertible, and ghost pseudo-identities otherwise.

These identities can be deduced from [10, Proposition 2.1.2], by replacing Gaubert's  $\ominus a$  with  $a$ . Then  $a^\nu \models 0_R$  corresponds to  $a^\bullet \nabla 0_R$ . See [19, Theorem 2.8] for the proof in the supertropical setting.

**Definition 2.16.** We say that  $A^\nabla$  is the **pseudo-inverse** of  $A$  over  $R$ , denoting

$$I_A = AA^\nabla \text{ and } I'_A = A^\nabla A.$$

**Theorem 2.17.**

- (i)  $\det(A \cdot \text{adj}(A)) = \det(A)^n$  .
- (ii)  $\det(\text{adj}(A)) = \det(A)^{n-1}$  .

**Proof.** [18, Theorem 4.9].

*Remark 2.18.* For a definite matrix  $A$ , we have  $A^\nabla = \frac{1}{\det(A)} \text{adj}(A) = \text{adj}(A)$ , which is also definite.

*Proof.* The diagonal entries in  $\text{adj}(A)$  are sums of cycle tracks of  $A$ , and thus the Id summand  $1_R$  dominates every diagonal entry. Also, by Theorem 2.17(ii), we have

$$1_R = \det(A^\nabla),$$

as required for definite matrices. □

**Proposition 2.19.**  $\text{adj}(AB) \models_{gs} \text{adj}(B)\text{adj}(A)$ .

**Proof.** [18, Proposition 4.8].

Recall the classical Bruhat (LDU) decomposition, whose tropical analog in [22] is called the LDM decomposition.

**Lemma 2.20.**

*a.* If  $A$  is a not strictly singular triangular matrix over  $\mathbb{T}$  (respectively non-singular over  $R$ ), then  $A$  is elementarily factorizable.



b. If  $A$  is a not strictly singular matrix over  $\mathbb{T}$  (respectively non-singular over  $R$ ), then  $A^\nabla$  (respectively  $A^{\nabla\nabla}$ ) is elementarily factorizable.

*Proof.* See the LDM decomposition in [22], or an alternative proof in [26, Lemma 6.5 and Corollary 6.6].  $\square$

One can find a cruder factorization in [3], where sufficient conditions are established for  $\text{trop}(AB) = \text{trop}(A)\text{trop}(B)$ , when looking at the tropical structure as the image of a valuation over the field of Puiseux series, using the classical  $LDU$  decomposition over this field. In section 3 we will show the connection of definite matrices and factorization to the well known tropical closure operation  $*$ , studied in [28] and [29].

## 2.2. Polynomials.

As one can see in [16], the polynomials over the tropical structure are rather straightforward to view geometrically. We notice that the graph of a monomial  $a_i x^i \in \mathbb{T}[x]$  is a line, where the power  $i$  indicates the slope. Since  $\mathbb{T}$  is ordered we may present its elements on an axis, directed rightward, where if  $a < b$  then  $a$  appears left to  $b$  on the  $\mathbb{T}$ -axis, for every pair of distinct elements  $a, b \in T$ . It is now easy to understand that a tropical polynomial

$$\sum_{i=0}^n a_i x^i \in R[x]$$

takes the value of the dominant monomial among  $a_i x^i$  along the  $\mathbb{T}$ -axis. That having been said, it is possible that some monomials in the polynomial would not dominate for any  $x \in \mathbb{T}$ .

**Definition 2.21.** Let

$$f(x) = \sum_{i=0}^n a_i x^i \in R[x]$$

be a supertropical polynomial. We call monomials in  $f(x)$  that dominate for some  $x \in R$  **essential**, and monomials in  $f(x)$  that do not dominate for any  $x \in R$  **inessential**. We write

$$f^{es}(x) = \sum_{i \in I} a_i x^i \in R[x],$$

where  $a_i x^i$  is an essential monomial  $\forall i \in I$ , called **the essential polynomial** of  $f$ .

**Definition 2.22.** We say that  $b$  is a  $k$ -**root** of  $a$ , for some  $k \in \mathbb{N}$ , denoted as  $b = \sqrt[k]{a}$ , if  $b^k = a$ .

*Remark 2.23.* If  $a, b \in T$  and  $a^k = b^k$  then  $a^k + b^k = (a+b)^k \in G$ , and therefore  $a+b \in G$  and  $a = b$ . That is, the  $k$ -root of a tangible element is unique.

**Definition 2.24.** We call an element  $r \in R$  a **root** of a polynomial  $f(x)$  if

$$f(r) \models_{gs} 0_R.$$

We distinguish between two kinds of roots of supertropical polynomials.

**Definition 2.25.** We refer to roots of a polynomial being obtained as an intersection of two leading tangible monomials as **corner roots**, and to roots that are being obtained from one leading ghost monomial as **non-corner roots**.

*Remark 2.26.* Suppose  $f(x) = \sum a_i x^i \in R[x]$ . We specialize to elements  $r \in R$ , starting with  $r$  small and then increasing.

1. The constant term  $a_0$  and the leading monomial  $a_n x^n$  dominate first and last, respectively, due to their slopes. Furthermore, they are the only ones that are **necessarily** essential in every polynomial.
2. The intersection of an essential monomial  $a_i x^i$  and the next essential monomial  $a_j x^j$  where  $j > i$ , is the  $i^{\text{th}}$  root of  $f$  (counting multiplicities), denoted as  $\alpha_i = \sqrt[k]{\frac{a_i}{a_j}}$ , and is of multiplicity  $k = j - i$ .

*Proof:* The monomial  $a_i x^i$  dominates all monomials between  $a_i x^i$  and  $a_j x^j$ . Therefore, when  $r \in (\alpha_{i-1}, \alpha_i]$ ,

$$f(r) = a_j r^j + a_i r^i = a_j \left( r^j + \frac{a_i}{a_j} r^i \right) \in G \Rightarrow \left( r^j + \frac{a_i}{a_j} r^i \right) = r^i \left( r^{j-i} + \frac{a_i}{a_j} \right) \in G$$

which means  $(r + \alpha_i)^k \in G$ , and therefore  $\alpha_i$  is a root of  $f$  with multiplicity  $k$ .

### 2.3. Supertropical characteristic polynomials and eigenvalues.

We follow the description in [19, §5].

**Definition 2.27.**  $\forall v \in T^n$  and  $A \in M_n(R)$  such that  $\exists \alpha \in T \cup \{0_R\}$  where  $Av \models_{gs} \alpha v$ , we say that  $v$  is a **supertropical eigenvector** of  $A$  with a **supertropical eigenvalue**  $\alpha$ .

The **characteristic polynomial** of  $A$  (also called the maxpolynomial) is defined to be  $f_A(x) = \det(xI + A)$ . The tangible value of the roots of the characteristic polynomial  $f_A$  are the eigenvalues of  $A$ , as shown in [18, Theorem 7.10]. The coefficient of  $x^k$  in this polynomial is a sum of the tropical determinants of all  $n - k \times n - k$  minors, obtained by deleting  $k$  chosen rows of the matrix, and their corresponding columns. These minors are defined as **principal sub-matrices**.

The combinatorial motivation for the tropical characteristic polynomial is the Best Principal Submatrix problem, and has been studied by Butkovic in [5] and [6].

**Theorem 2.28.** (*Supertropical Hamilton-Cayley*) Any matrix  $A$  satisfies its characteristic polynomial, in the sense that  $f_A(A)$  is ghost.

*Proof.* See [30] or [18, Theorem 5.2] for a supertropical statement and proof. □

**Proposition 2.29.** If  $\alpha \in T \cup 0_R$  is a supertropical eigenvalue of a matrix  $A \in M_n(T)$ , then  $\alpha^i$  is a supertropical eigenvalue of  $A^i$ .

*Proof.* See [25, Proposition 3.2]. □

However, we notice that  $\{\alpha^i : \alpha \text{ is an eigenvalue of a matrix } A\}$  need not be the only supertropical eigenvalues of the matrix  $A^i$ , as shown in the next example.

*Example 2.30.* Consider the  $2 \times 2$  matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Then  $f_A(x) = x^2 + 2x + 2 \Rightarrow f_A(x) \in G$  when  $x = 0, 2$ .

However,

$$A^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Thus  $f_{A^2}(x) = x^2 + 4x + 5 \Rightarrow f_{A^2}(x) \in G$  when  $x \leq 1$  or  $x = 4$ .

**Theorem 2.31.** *Let  $A$  be in  $M_n(R)$ . If*

$$f_A(x) = \sum_{i=0}^n \alpha_i x^i \quad \text{and} \quad f_{A^m}(x) = \sum_{i=0}^n \beta_i x^i$$

are the characteristic polynomials of  $A$  and its  $m^{\text{th}}$  power, respectively, then

$$f_{A^m}(x^m) \models_{gs} f_A(x)^m.$$

*Proof.* See [25, Theorem 3.6]. □

**Corollary 2.32.**

- a. *If  $f_{A^m} \in T[x]$  then equality holds in Theorem 2.31.*
- b. *Every corner root of  $f_{A^m}$  is an  $m^{\text{th}}$  power of a corner root of  $f_A$ .*

*Proof.* See [25, Corollary 3.7 and Corollary 3.10]. □

### 3. THE $\nabla$ OF A DEFINITE MATRIX

As shown in [26] and [28], reductions to definite matrices can simplify verifications of some complicated properties of matrices. On top of that, matrices of this form enjoy some interesting properties of their own.

*Remark 3.1.* Since ghost equivalent implies equality in the tropical setting, we will formulate our results in terms of ghost equivalence (i.e. over  $R$ ), with the understanding that the corresponding tropical equalities (i.e. over  $\mathbb{T}$ ) follow automatically.

#### 3.1. Stabilization under the $\nabla$ operation.

The goal in this section is to show that  $\nabla$  is a closure operation.

**Lemma 3.2.**

- (i)  $P^\nabla = P^{-1}$  whenever  $P$  is an invertible matrix.
- (ii)  $\det(PA) = \det(P)\det(A) = \det(AP)$ , for  $P$  an invertible matrix.
- (iii)  $(PA)^\nabla = A^\nabla P^\nabla$  where  $\det(A)$  is invertible and  $P$  is an invertible matrix.
- (iv) Let  $\bar{A}$  be the left definite form of the matrix  $A$ , i.e.  $A = P\bar{A}$  for some invertible matrix  $P$ . Then  $A^\nabla = \bar{A}^\nabla P^{-1}$ .

*Proof.* For (i), (iii) and (iv) see [26, Lemma 5.7].

(ii) We recall that for any permutation  $\sigma$  we have a corresponding permutation  $\rho$  such that  $\sigma(i) = \rho(j)$ ,  $\sigma(j) = \rho(i)$  and  $\sigma(k) = \rho(k) \forall k \neq i, j$ .

As a result, if  $P = E_{i,j}$  is a transposition matrix and  $A = (a_{i,j})$ , then

$$\det(E_{i,j}A) = \sum_{\sigma} a_{i,\sigma(j)} a_{j,\sigma(i)} \prod_{k \neq j,i} a_{k,\sigma(k)} = \sum_{\rho} a_{i,\rho(i)} a_{j,\rho(j)} \prod_{k \neq j,i} a_{k,\rho(k)} = \det(A) = \det(E_{i,j})\det(A).$$

If  $P = E_{\alpha \cdot j}$  is a diagonal multiplier and  $A = (a_{i,j})$ , then

$$\det(E_{\alpha \cdot j}A) = \sum_{\sigma} \alpha \cdot a_{j,\sigma(j)} \prod_{k \neq j} a_{k,\sigma(k)} = \alpha \sum_{\sigma} a_{j,\sigma(j)} \prod_{k \neq j} a_{k,\sigma(k)} = \alpha \det(A) = \det(E_{\alpha \cdot j}) \det(A).$$

Inductively the claim holds for every invertible matrix  $P$ . □

**Claim 3.3.** *If  $A$  is a definite matrix, then  $A^{\nabla}A \cong_{\nu} A^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} AA^{\nabla}$ .*

*Proof.* See [27] for general semirings, or [26, Claim 6.1] for the special case of the supertropical semiring. □

**Corollary 3.4.** *Let  $A$  be a matrix with left definite form  $\bar{A}$  and right definite form  $\tilde{A}$ , i.e.  $A = P\bar{A} = \tilde{A}Q$  for invertible matrices  $P$  and  $Q$ . Then*

- a.  $\bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} I'_A$ ,  $\tilde{A}^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \tilde{A}^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} I_A$ .
- b.  $A^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_{\nu} PA^{\nabla}P$ .

*Proof.*

- a. According to [19, Corollary 4.4] we know that  $A^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} A^{\nabla}A^{\nabla\nabla}A^{\nabla}$ . By applying Claim 3.3 to  $\bar{A}^{\nabla}$  we can conclude

$$\bar{A}^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla}(\bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla}\bar{A}^{\nabla}) \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla}\bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla}.$$

According to Claim 3.3

$$\bar{A}^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla}\bar{A} = \bar{A}^{\nabla}P^{-1}P\bar{A} = A^{\nabla}A = I'_A, \text{ and } \tilde{A}^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} \tilde{A}\tilde{A}^{\nabla} = \tilde{A}QQ^{-1}\tilde{A}^{\nabla} = AA^{\nabla} = I_A$$

- b. By Lemma 3.2 we have

$$A^{\nabla\nabla} = (P\bar{A})^{\nabla\nabla} = P\bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_{\nu} P\bar{A}^{\nabla} = PA^{\nabla}P.$$

□

**Theorem 3.5.** *We denote the application  $k$  times of  $\nabla$  to  $A$  as  $A^{\nabla(k)}$ . Then*

$$A^{\nabla(k)} \cong_{\nu} A^{\nabla(k+2)} \quad \forall k \geq 1.$$

*That is, applying  $\nabla$  to  $A^{\nabla}$  is an operator of order 2, which means that the  $\nabla$  operation on the set  $\{A^{\nabla} : A \in M_n(R)\}$  acts like the inverse operation.*

*Proof.* In the same way as in Corollary 3.4 (b) we see that

$$(A^{\nabla})^{\nabla\nabla} = (\bar{A}^{\nabla}P^{-1})^{\nabla\nabla} = (P\bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla})^{\nabla} \cong_{\nu} (P\bar{A}^{\nabla})^{\nabla} = \bar{A}^{\nabla\nabla}P^{-1} \cong_{\nu} \bar{A}^{\nabla}P^{-1} = A^{\nabla}.$$

The general case then follows inductively. □

In summary,  $\nabla\nabla$  is a sort of closure operation, which yields elementarily factorizable matrices.

*Example 3.6.*

- (i) For every non-singular  $2 \times 2$  matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$$

we have that

$$A^{\nabla} = \det(A)^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} d & b \\ c & a \end{pmatrix}$$

and

$$A^{\nabla\nabla} = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} = A,$$

imply that the formula in Theorem 3.5 holds in the  $2 \times 2$  case for all  $k \geq 0$ . We conclude that  $A$  is elementarily factorizable.

(ii) Let

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & - \\ - & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & - & 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

(where  $-$  denotes  $-\infty$ ).

Thus

$$A^\nabla = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$A^{\nabla\nabla} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1^\nu \\ 0^\nu & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0^\nu & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \text{ which is different than } A^\nabla,$$

$$A^{\nabla(3)} = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} = A^\nabla \text{ and therefore equal } A^{\nabla(2k-1)} \forall k \in \mathbb{N},$$

and

$$A^{\nabla(4)} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 & -1^\nu \\ 0^\nu & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0^\nu & 0 \end{pmatrix} = A^{\nabla\nabla} \text{ and therefore equal } A^{\nabla(2k)} \forall k \in \mathbb{N}.$$

### 3.2. The closure operation $*$ and power stabilization.

Noticing that  $A^\nabla$  arises from supertropical algebraic considerations (as its product with  $A$  gives a pseudo-identity), we would like to make a connection to the familiar tropical concept of the Kleene star, denoted as  $A^*$ , which has been widely studied since the 60's. In the next theorem and proposition we give results relevant to [31] and [28], obtained over the tropical setting, with the understanding that tropical equality implies supertropical ghost-equivalent. Since the definition for  $A^*$  requires that  $\det(A)$  is bounded by  $1_R$ , we consider here the special case of definite matrices. According to Lemma 2.20(a), we can conclude from the LDM factorization of  $A^*$  in [23] that  $A^*$  is elementarily factorizable.

**Theorem 3.7.** (See [31, Theorem 2]) *If  $A$  is an  $n \times n$  definite matrix and  $k$  is a natural number, then  $A^k \cong_\nu A^{k+1}$ ,  $\forall k \geq n - 1$ .*

**Proposition 3.8.**  $A^\nabla \cong_\nu A^* \cong_\nu A^{n-1}$  when  $A$  is definite.

*Proof.* For  $A^\nabla \cong_\nu A^*$  see [31, Theorem 4]. As described in [28], the equivalence to  $A^{n-1}$  is immediate from the definition of  $A^*$  for a definite matrix  $A$ :

$$(3.1) \quad A^* = \sum_{i \in \mathbb{N} \cup 0} A^i.$$

Indeed, according to [31, Theorem 2] we have that

$$\widehat{A} \leq \widehat{A}^2 \leq \dots \leq \widehat{A}^{n-1} \cong_\nu A^n \cong_\nu \dots$$

(due to the diagonal, each position can only increase comparing to the corresponding position in the previous power and the value of each entry will stabilize at power  $n - 1$  at most).  $\square$

Combining Corollary 3.4, Theorem 3.6 and Proposition 3.7 we get

$$A^* \cong_\nu A^{n-1} \cong_\nu A^\nabla \cong_\nu A^{\nabla\nabla} \cong_\nu I_A,$$

for a definite matrix  $A$  of order  $n$ .

#### 4. AN ALTERNATIVE PROOF OF THEOREM 2.10: $\det(AB) \models_{gs} \det(A)\det(B)$

The proof of Theorem 2.10 is given by means of a multilinear function. In the classical case there exists an alternative, somewhat easier proof, using the factorization of non-singular matrices into the product of elementary matrices. Due to Lemma 2.20 we can now give a tropical analog of this proof.

If  $A$  or  $B$  are strictly singular (without lost of generality  $B$ ), then according to [18, Theorem 6.5] the columns of  $B$ , denoted as  $C_1, \dots, C_n$ , are tropically dependent:

$$\sum \alpha_i C_i \in G \cup 0_R, \quad \alpha_i \in T \forall i.$$

Denoting the rows of  $A$  as  $R_1, \dots, R_n$  and the columns of  $AB$  as  $c_1, \dots, c_n$  we get

$$\sum \alpha_i c_i = \begin{pmatrix} \sum \alpha_i R_1 C_i \\ \vdots \\ \sum \alpha_i R_n C_i \end{pmatrix} \in G_{0_R}.$$

Therefore  $\det(AB) \in G \cup 0_R$  as required.

In order to obtain the  $\nabla$  operation for (not-strictly) singular matrices we work over the tropical semifield and will prove that  $\det(AB)$  equals  $\det(A)\det(B)$  plus a term that is attained twice.

Using Theorem 2.17 we have that  $\det(A^\nabla) = \det(A)^{-1}$ , and it suffices to prove the theorem for  $A^\nabla, B^\nabla$ . By Lemma 3.2(ii), if  $A$  or  $B$  are transposition matrices and diagonal multipliers then the theorem holds with equality. Due to Lemma 2.20(b) we only have to show the impact of Gaussian matrices.

Let  $E = E_{row\ i+\alpha \cdot row\ j}$  be a Gaussian matrix adding row  $j$ , multiplied by  $\alpha$ , to row  $i$ . We denote the rows of  $A$  as  $R_1, \dots, R_n$ . Then the rows of  $EA$  are the same as  $A$ 's, except for the  $i^{th}$  row which is  $R_i + \alpha R_j$ , therefore

$$(4.1) \quad \det(EA) = \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} a_{1,\sigma(1)} \cdots a_{i,\sigma(i)} \cdots a_{n,\sigma(n)} + \sum_{\sigma \in S_n} a_{1,\sigma(1)} \cdots \alpha a_{j,\sigma(i)} \cdots a_{n,\sigma(n)},$$

where the sum on the left is  $\det(A)$ . In order to analyze the sum on the right, we note that

$$(4.2) \quad \forall i, j \exists! \sigma, \rho \in S_n : \sigma(i) = \rho(j), \sigma(j) = \rho(i), \text{ and } \sigma(k) = \rho(k) \forall k \neq i, j,$$

and let  $E$  fix  $i$  and  $j$ . Thus

$$(4.3) \quad \det(EA) = \det(A) +$$

$$\sum_{\sigma, \rho \in S_n} (a_{1, \sigma(1)} \cdots \alpha a_{j, \sigma(i)} \cdots a_{j, \sigma(j)} \cdots a_{n, \sigma(n)} + a_{1, \sigma(1)} \cdots a_{j, \rho(j)} \cdots \alpha a_{j, \rho(i)} \cdots a_{n, \sigma(n)}),$$

for  $\sigma, \rho$  as in (4.2). Therefore the sum is attained twice, as required. If  $E$  is multiplied on the right, then the proof is analogous using column operation instead of row operations.

As a result we have

$$\begin{aligned} |AB| &= |(AB)^\nabla|^{-1} \models_{gs} |B^\nabla A^\nabla|^{-1} = |P_1^{-1} \bar{B}^\nabla \bar{A}^\nabla P_2^{-1}|^{-1} = |P_1| |\bar{B}^\nabla \bar{A}^\nabla|^{-1} |P_2| \models_{gs} \\ &|P_1| |\bar{B}^\nabla|^{-1} |\bar{A}^\nabla|^{-1} |P_2| = |P_1^{-1} \bar{B}^\nabla|^{-1} |\bar{A}^\nabla P_2^{-1}|^{-1} = |B^\nabla|^{-1} |A^\nabla|^{-1} = |A| |B|, \end{aligned}$$

where  $P_1, P_2$  are the right conductor of  $B$  and left conductor of  $A$  respectively, and as shown in Lemma 2.20,  $\bar{A}$  and  $\bar{B}$  are products of Gaussian matrices, for which the theorem holds according to (4.3).

## 5. TROPICALLY CONJUGATE AND SIMILAR MATRICES

Although our factorization results for  $A^\nabla$  follow from those for  $A^*$ , the  $\nabla$  operation has additional applications in representation theory.

**Definition 5.1.** A matrix  $B$  is **tropically conjugate** to  $B'$  if there exists a non-singular matrix  $A$  such that

$$(5.1) \quad A^\nabla B A \models_{gs} B'.$$

If equality holds in (5.1) then we say that  $B$  is **tropically similar** to  $B'$ .

*Remark 5.2.* If  $B$  is tropically similar to  $B'$ , then

- a.  $\det(B') \models_{gs} \det(B)$ , with equality when  $B'$  is non-singular.
- b.  $\text{tr}(B') \models_{gs} \text{tr}(B)$ .

These relations can be seen by direct computation, but are also a consequence of Theorem 5.4 below.

Following the next motivating example, we have an analog to the theorem on similar matrices in classical algebra.

*Example 5.3.*

1. Let

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad B' = \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 1^\nu \\ 5 & 3 \end{pmatrix}.$$

We have  $A^\nabla B A = B'$ , and therefore  $f_{B'}(x) = x^2 + 3^\nu x + 6^\nu \models_{gs} f_B(x) = x^2 + 1^\nu x + 5$ . As a result all supertropical eigenvalues of  $B$  are supertropical eigenvalues of  $A^\nabla B A$ .

2. By taking  $B = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$ ,  $B' = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 3 \\ 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$ ,  $A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1^\nu \\ -\infty & 0 \end{pmatrix}$  we get

$$A^\nabla B A = \begin{pmatrix} 2^\nu & 3^\nu \\ 1 & 2^\nu \end{pmatrix} \models_{gs} B'.$$

However,  $|B| = 2$  and  $|B'| = 4$  do not ghost-surpass each other, which shows that there need not be a ghost surpassing relation between the characteristic polynomials of tropically conjugate matrices.

**Theorem 5.4.** *If  $B$  is tropically similar to  $B'$ , then  $f_{B'} \models_{gs} f_B$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $B' = A^\nabla BA$ , where  $A$  is a non-singular matrix.

Let  $\bar{A}$  be the right definite form of  $A$  and  $E$  be its right conductor which means

$$A = \bar{A}E \text{ and } A^\nabla = E^{-1}\bar{A}^\nabla.$$

Using Lemma 3.2, we notice that  $A^\nabla BA$  and  $\bar{A}^\nabla B\bar{A}$  share the same characteristic polynomial, since

$$\begin{aligned} \det(xI + A^\nabla BA) &= \det(xI + E^{-1}\bar{A}^\nabla B\bar{A}E) = \\ \det(E)^{-1}\det(xI + \bar{A}^\nabla B\bar{A})\det(E) &= \det(xI + \bar{A}^\nabla B\bar{A}). \end{aligned}$$

Therefore it is sufficient to prove this theorem for the definite form of  $A$ , which according to Proposition 3.8 coincides with its Kleene star and  $n - 1$  power.

We consider  $A$  to be a definite matrix. We denote the characteristic polynomials of  $B'$  and  $B$  as

$$f_{B'}(x) = x^n + \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} \beta'_k x^{n-k}, \quad f_B(x) = x^n + \sum_{k=0}^{n-1} \beta_k x^{n-k}$$

respectively, and the entries of the matrices as

$$A = (a_{i,j}), \quad A^\nabla = A^* = A^{n-1} = A^n = (a'_{i,j}) \quad \text{and} \quad B = (b_{i,j}).$$

We show that  $\beta'_k \models_{gs} \beta_k \forall k$ . That is, every summand in  $\beta'_k$  either has an identical summand in  $\beta_k$  or appear twice, creating a ghost summand.

The entry of  $A^\nabla BA$  appears in the  $(i, \sigma(i))$  position is  $\sum_{t,s=1}^n a'_{i,t} b_{t,s} a_{s,\sigma(i)}$ .

The summands in  $\beta'_k$  (the sum of determinants of  $k \times k$  principal sub-matrices) are

$$(5.2) \quad \prod_{j=1}^k a'_{i_j, t_j} b_{t_j, s_j} a_{s_j, \sigma(i_j)},$$

where  $\sigma \in S_k$ , and  $t_j, s_j \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ .

We can factor each permutation into disjoint cycles  $(i_j \ \sigma(i_j) \ \sigma^2(i_j) \ \dots \ \sigma^{-1}(i_j))$ , and we denote  $i_j$  as  $j$ . We abbreviate  $\sigma(j), \sigma^2(j), \dots, \sigma^{-1}(j)$  to  $\sigma, \sigma^2, \dots, \sigma^{-1}$ .

Therefore, each permutation track can be factored into cycle tracks:

$$(5.3) \quad \prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a'_{j, t_j} b_{t_j, s_j} a_{s_j, \sigma}) (a'_{\sigma, t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma, s_\sigma} a_{s_\sigma, \sigma^2}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1}, t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}}, s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}}, j}),$$

obtaining a product of brackets, where the left indices are distinct, describing a permutation. Changing the location of the brackets does not change the value of this term. We use this relocation of brackets to show that identical terms are being obtained on different permutation tracks.

The term  $a'_{j, t_j}$  is a sum arising from the Kleene star:

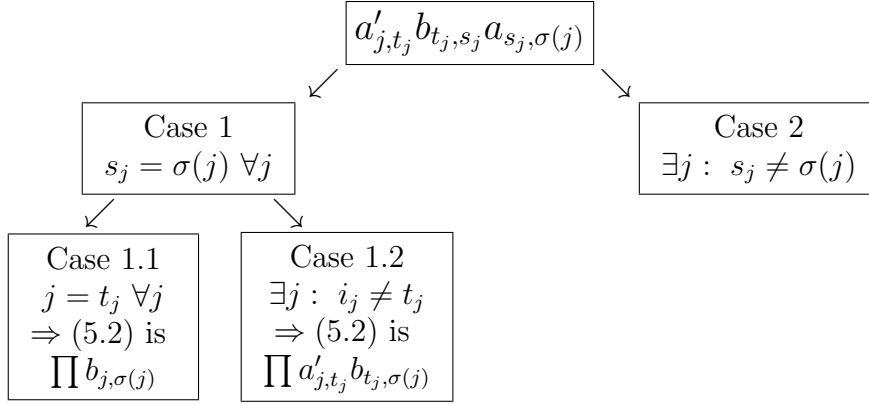
$$a'_{j, t_j} = \sum_{r_1, \dots, r_{n-2}=1}^n (a_{j, r_1} a_{r_1, r_2} \cdots a_{r_{n-2}, t_j}).$$



Thus, we write (5.3) as

$$\prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a_{j,r_{j,1}} a_{r_{j,1},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma}) (a_{\sigma,r_{\sigma,1}} a_{r_{\sigma,1},r_{\sigma,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma,n-2},t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,s_\sigma} a_{s_\sigma,\sigma^2}) \cdots \\ (a_{\sigma^{-1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j}).$$

Next, we divide our proof into disjoint cases as follows:



In **case 1**,  $s_j = \sigma(j) \forall j$ . Thus  $a_{s_j,\sigma(j)}$  is diagonal and therefore equals 0 for every  $j$ . Next, if we have the special **sub-case 1.1**,  $j = t_j \forall j$ , then  $a'_{j,t_j}$  are also diagonal entries, equal to 0. Therefore (5.2) is  $\prod b_{j,\sigma(j)}$ , which is a summand in  $f_B$ .

At this point we have established  $\beta'_k = \beta_k + g_k$ , where  $g_k \in R \forall k$ . It remains to prove that  $g_k \in G \forall k$ , that is every other summand is attained at least twice, creating a ghost summand.

In **sub-case 1.2**, stating that  $\exists j : i_j \neq t_j$ , some  $a'_{j,t_j}$  is not diagonal. Thus (5.3) is

$$\prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a_{j,r_{j,1}} a_{r_{j,1},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma} a_{\sigma,r_{\sigma,1}}) (a_{\sigma,r_{\sigma,1}} a_{r_{\sigma,1},r_{\sigma,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma,n-2},t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,\sigma^2}) \cdots \\ (a_{\sigma^{-1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j}).$$

We analyze the second index of each element:  $r_{j,1}$ ,  $j = 1, \dots, k$ .

If all these indices are distinct, then  $r_{\sigma^l,1} \mapsto r_{\sigma^{l+1},1}$  describes a permutation. Its track is obtained by moving the brackets one position **forward**:

$$\prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} a_{j,r_{j,1}} (a_{r_{j,1},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma} a_{\sigma,r_{\sigma,1}}) (a_{r_{\sigma,1},r_{\sigma,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma,n-2},t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,\sigma^2} \cdots \\ a_{\sigma^{-1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}}) (a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j} = \\ \prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a_{r_{j,1},r_{j,1}} a_{r_{j,1},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma} a_{\sigma,r_{\sigma,1}}) (a_{r_{\sigma,1},r_{\sigma,1}} a_{r_{\sigma,1},r_{\sigma,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma,n-2},t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,\sigma^2} a_{\sigma^2,r_{\sigma^2,1}}) \\ \cdots (a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j} a_{j,r_{j,1}}).$$

If  $r_{j,1} = r_{i,1}$  for some  $j \neq i$ , then:

If it occurs *in the same cycle*, we obtain a new permutation by factoring this cycle into two sub-cycles, using the points of repetition (we do not change any of the other cycles):

$$\begin{aligned} & [(a_{j,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a_{\sigma^l,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{\sigma^l,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^l,n-2},t_{\sigma^l}} b_{t_{\sigma^l},\sigma^{l+1}}) \cdots \\ & \quad (a_{\sigma^{-1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] = \\ & [(a_{j,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{\sigma^l,2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^l,n-2},t_{\sigma^l}} b_{t_{\sigma^l},\sigma^{l+1}}) \cdots (a_{\sigma^{-1},r_{\sigma^{-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},1},r_{\sigma^{-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] \\ & [(a_{\sigma^l,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a_{\sigma^{l-1},r_{\sigma^{l-1},1}} a_{r_{\sigma^{l-1},1},r_{\sigma^{l-1},2}} \cdots a_{r_{\sigma^{l-1},n-2},t_{\sigma^{l-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{l-1}},\sigma^l})] \end{aligned}$$

(the squared brackets indicate cycles).

If an index  $r_{j,1}$  repeats *in two different cycles*, we obtain a new permutation by joining these cycles into a single cycle, using the points of repetition (we do not change any of the other cycles):

$$\begin{aligned} & [(a_{j,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] \cdot \\ & [(a_{i,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{i,2}} \cdots a_{r_{i,n-2},t_i} b_{t_i,\sigma(i)}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1}(i),t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},i})] = \\ & [(a_{j,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{i,2}} \cdots a_{r_{i,n-2},t_i} b_{t_i,\sigma(i)}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1}(i),t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},i}) \\ & \quad (a_{i,\underline{r_{j,1}}} a_{\underline{r_{j,1}},r_{j,2}} \cdots a_{r_{j,n-2},t_j} b_{t_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] \end{aligned}$$

(the squared brackets indicate cycles).

In **case 2**,  $\exists j : s_j \neq \sigma(j)$ , and thus some  $a_{s_j,\sigma(j)}$  is not diagonal.

We obtain the second permutation track using the algorithm of case 1.2, analyzing the indices  $s_j$ ,  $j = 1, \dots, k$ .

If all these indices are distinct, then  $s_{\sigma^l} \mapsto s_{\sigma^{l+1}}$  describes a permutation. Even if this permutation coincides with  $\sigma$ , you still obtain a different summand of (5.2). Its track is obtained by moving the brackets one position **backwards**:

$$\begin{aligned} & \prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j}) (a_{s_j,\sigma} a'_{\sigma,t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,s_\sigma}) \cdots (a_{s_{\sigma^{-2}},\sigma^{-1}} a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}}) (a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j} = \\ & \prod_{\substack{\text{cycles} \\ \text{of } \sigma}} (a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j} a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j}) (a_{s_j,\sigma} a'_{\sigma,t_\sigma} b_{t_\sigma,s_\sigma}) \cdots (a_{s_{\sigma^{-2}},\sigma^{-1}} a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}}). \end{aligned}$$

(This case is dual to the previous argument in the sense that 1.2 *starts* where the entries of  $A$  are diagonal, and is *being repeated* by a permutation track with no such restriction.)

In all remaining summands  $s_j = s_i$ , for some  $j \neq i$ . Then like in case 1.2, we factor and disjoint cycles, using the points of repetition, without changing the non-relevant cycles:

$$\begin{aligned} & [(a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^l,t_{\sigma^l}} b_{t_{\sigma^l},s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma^{l+1}}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] = \\ & [(a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma^{l+1}}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] \cdot \\ & [(a'_{\sigma^l,t_{\sigma^l}} b_{t_{\sigma^l},s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{l-1},t_{\sigma^{l-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{l-1}},s_{\sigma^{l-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{l-1}},\sigma^l})], \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} & [(a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j})] \cdot \\ & [(a'_{i,t_i} b_{t_i,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma(i)}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1}(i),t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},s_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},i})] = \\ & [(a'_{j,t_j} b_{t_j,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma(i)}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1}(i),t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},s_{\sigma^{-1}(i)}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}(i)},i}) \cdot \\ & (a'_{i,t_i} b_{t_i,s_j} a_{s_j,\sigma}) \cdots (a'_{\sigma^{-1},t_{\sigma^{-1}}} b_{t_{\sigma^{-1}},s_{\sigma^{-1}}} a_{s_{\sigma^{-1}},j})]. \end{aligned}$$

The assertion then follows. □

**Corollary 5.5.** *If  $B$  is tropically similar to  $B'$ , then*

1. *Every supertropical eigenvalue of  $B$  is a supertropical eigenvalue of  $B'$ .*
2. *If  $f_{B'} \in T[x]$  then  $f_{B'} = f_B$ .*
3.  *$B$  satisfies  $f_{B'}$  in the sense that  $f_{B'}(B)$  is ghost..*

*Proof.*

1.  $B$  is tropically similar to  $B'$ . If  $\lambda$  is an eigenvalue of  $B$ , then  $f_{B'}(\lambda) \models_{gs} f_B(\lambda) \in G$ .
2. Follows immediately from the theorem.
3. By Theorem 2.28 we get  $f_{B'}(B) \models_{gs} f_B(B) \in G$ . □

## 6. THE CHARACTERISTIC POLYNOMIAL OF THE PSEUDO-INVERSE.

Current research regarding the eigenspaces of a supertropical matrix shows that these spaces may behave in an undesirable fashion, as shown in [19, Example 5.7]. The following chapter provides properties regarding the characteristic polynomial, eigenvalues, determinant and trace of  $A^\nabla$ , which may provide techniques for solving the dependency problem of supertropical eigenspaces.

We observe the following motivating example.

*Example 6.1.* Let  $A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & - \\ 3 & 4 & - \\ - & - & 1 \end{pmatrix}$  (where  $-$  denotes  $-\infty$ ). Then

$$f_A(x) = x^3 + 4x^2 + 5^\nu x + 6$$

and

$$A^\nabla = 6^{-1} \begin{pmatrix} 5 & 1 & - \\ 4 & 2 & - \\ - & - & 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & -5 & - \\ -2 & -4 & - \\ - & - & -1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

As a result we get  $f_{A^\nabla}(x) = x^3 + (-1)^\nu x^2 + (-2)x - 6$ . Multiplying by  $\det(A)$  we get

$$6x^3 + 5^\nu x^2 + 4x + 0,$$

which has the same coefficients of  $f_A$  but in opposite order. Consequently, the inverse of every supertropical eigenvalue of  $A$  is a supertropical eigenvalue of  $A^\nabla$ , obtained in the opposite order.

In the following conjecture we formulate how the  $k^{\text{th}}$  coefficient of the characteristic polynomial of  $A^\nabla$  is related to the  $(n - k)^{\text{th}}$  coefficient of the characteristic polynomial of  $A$ .

**Conjecture 6.2.** *If  $A = (a_{i,j}) \in M_n(R)$  is a non-singular matrix, then*

$$\det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(x) \models_{gs} x^n f_A(x^{-1}).$$

An equivalent formulation is

$$\det(A)b_k \models_{gs} a_{n-k} \quad \forall k = 0, \dots, n.$$

We resolve this conjecture for some special cases described in Proposition 6.3 and Example 6.4.

**Proposition 6.3.** *Let  $A \in M_n(R)$ . We denote the characteristic polynomials of the matrix  $A = (a_{i,j})$  and  $A^\nabla = \left(\frac{a'_{i,j}}{\det(A)}\right)$  as  $f_A(x) = \sum_{k=0}^n a_k x^k$  and  $f_{A^\nabla}(x) = \sum_{k=0}^n b_k x^k$  respectively, noting that  $x^n f_A(x^{-1}) = \sum_{k=0}^n a_{n-k} x^k$ . Then,*

$$\det(A)b_k \models_{gs} a_{n-k}, \quad \text{where } k \in \{0, n-2, n-1, n\}.$$

*Proof.* (i) Since  $\det(A) = \det(A^\nabla)^{-1}$ , we have

$$\det(A)b_0 = \det(A)\det(A^\nabla) = 0 = a_n$$

and

$$\det(A)b_n = \det(A) = a_0.$$

(ii) We have  $\det(A)b_{n-1} = a_1$  since

$$\det(A)\text{tr}(A^\nabla) = \det(A)b_{n-1} = \det(A) \sum \frac{a'_{i,i}}{\det(A)} = \sum a'_{i,i},$$

which is indeed the sum of determinants of all  $(n - 1) \times (n - 1)$  principal sub-matrices in  $A$ .

(iii) We have  $\det(A)b_{n-2} \models_{gs} a_2$ , where  $b_{n-2}$  is the sum of determinants of  $2 \times 2$  principal sub matrices in  $A^\nabla$ , and

$$(6.1) \quad \det(A)b_{n-2} = \det(A) \sum_{1 \leq i_1 < i_2 \leq n} \sum_{\sigma \in S_2} \frac{a'_{i_1, \sigma(i_1)}}{\det(A)} \frac{a'_{i_2, \sigma(i_2)}}{\det(A)}.$$

For a product of entries of  $A = (a_{i,j})$ , we abuse the graph theory notations of  $d_{\text{out}}(r)$  and  $d_{\text{in}}(r)$  to denote the number of appearances of  $r$  as a left index and as a right index, respectively. We use [18, Proposition 3.17], stating that a product of  $kn$  entries of  $A$

$$(6.2) \quad \prod_{j=1}^{kn} a_{s_j, t_j}, \quad \text{where } d_{\text{out}}(s_j) = d_{\text{in}}(t_j) = k, \quad \forall s_j, t_j = 1, \dots, n,$$

is a product of  $k$  permutation tracks of  $A$ .

The numerator in 6.1

$$(6.3) \quad \prod_{j=1}^2 a'_{i_j, \sigma(i_j)}$$

is the product of two entries of the adjoint of  $A$ , located in positions  $(i_1, \sigma(i_1))$  and  $(i_2, \sigma(i_2))$ . That is, 6.3 is on the permutation track  $i_1 \mapsto \sigma(i_1)$ ,  $i_2 \mapsto \sigma(i_2)$  of the  $2 \times 2$  principle sub-matrix of  $i_1$  and  $i_2$  in  $adj(A)$ . Thus,  $\prod_{j=1}^2 a'_{i_j, \sigma(i_j)} a_{\sigma(i_j), i_j}$  is the product of two permutation tracks of  $A$ :

$$(6.4) \quad [a_{1, \pi_1(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi_1(n)}][a_{1, \pi_2(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi_2(n)}] = \prod_{j=1}^2 \prod_{r=1}^n a_{r, \pi_j(r)},$$

where  $a_{\sigma(i_j), i_j}$  appears in the track of  $\pi_j \in S_n$ , and

$$d_{out}(r) = d_{in}(\pi_j(r)) = 2, \quad \forall r = 1, \dots, n, \quad j = 1, 2.$$

Product 6.4 includes

$$(6.5) \quad \prod_{j=1}^2 a_{\sigma(i_j), i_j},$$

which is a permutation track in a  $2 \times 2$  principle sub-matrix of  $A$ , and

$$d_{out}(\sigma(i_j)) = d_{in}(i_j) = 1, \quad \forall j = 1, 2.$$

Analyzing 6.3, we would like to find that when multiplied by  $\frac{det(A)}{det(A)^2}$ , it either describes a summand in  $a_2$ , dominated by one, or appears in another permutation track in a  $2 \times 2$  principle sub-matrix of  $adj(A)$ . We show that by applying a switch (a change of permutation on the same set of indices) on  $\sigma$ . That is, we multiply 6.3 by  $a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}$ , instead of  $a_{\sigma(i_1), i_1} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_2}$ , as we did in 6.4:

$$(6.6) \quad a'_{i_1, \sigma(i_1)} a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a'_{i_2, \sigma(i_2)} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}.$$

Since the index counting in 6.6 do not change (from 6.4), it also describes the product of two permutation tracks of  $A$ :

$$(6.7) \quad [a_{1, \pi'_1(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi'_1(n)}][a_{1, \pi'_2(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi'_2(n)}] = \prod_{j=1}^2 \prod_{r=1}^n a_{r, \pi'_j(r)},$$

where  $d_{out}(r) = d_{in}(\pi'_j(r)) = 2$  and  $\pi'_j \in S_n$ ,  $\forall r = 1, \dots, n$ ,  $j = 1, 2$ .

We look for the location of  $a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}$  and  $a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2}$  in 6.7.

The summands obtaining  $a_2$ :

If both appear in the same permutation track, without loss of generality  $\pi'_1$ , then the track of  $\pi'_2$ , which is equal to, or dominated by  $det(A)$ , appears in 6.3. That is, we can consider  $\pi'_2$  to be the permutation attaining  $det(A)$ , otherwise, it is dominated by the summand having the track attaining  $det(A)$  instead of  $\pi'_2$ .

Next, since  $a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}$  is a track of a permutation of  $S_2$  in  $A$ , included in the track of  $\pi'_1$ , we have that  $\frac{a_{1, \pi'_1(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi'_1(n)}}{a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}}$  is a track of a permutation of  $S_{n-2}$  in  $A$ :

$$\frac{det(A)}{det(A)^2} \frac{det(A) a_{1, \pi'_1(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi'_1(n)}}{a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}} = \frac{a_{1, \pi'_1(1)} \cdots a_{n, \pi'_1(n)}}{a_{\sigma(i_1), i_2} a_{\sigma(i_2), i_1}},$$

which is a summand in  $a_2$ .

The summands obtaining a ghost:

If  $a_{\sigma(i_2),i_1}$  and  $a_{\sigma(i_1),i_2}$  appears in different permutation tracks, without loss of generality  $a_{\sigma(i_2),i_1}$  on the track of  $\pi'_1$  and  $a_{\sigma(i_1),i_2}$  on the track of  $\pi'_2$ , then

$$(6.8) \quad \frac{[a_{1,\pi'_1(1)} \cdots a_{n,\pi'_1(n)}][a_{1,\pi'_2(1)} \cdots a_{n,\pi'_2(n)}]}{a_{\sigma(i_2),i_1} a_{\sigma(i_1),i_2}},$$

which is identical to 6.3 (we multiplied by  $a_{\sigma(i_2),i_1} a_{\sigma(i_1),i_2}$  instead of  $a_{\sigma(i_1),i_1} a_{\sigma(i_2),i_2}$  in the numerator, and then canceled it in the dominator), describes the product of two adjoint-entries, located in positions  $(i_1, \sigma(i_2))$  and  $(i_2, \sigma(i_1))$ , and described by the permutations  $\pi'_1$  and  $\pi'_2$  respectively.

As a result, products 6.3 and 6.8 describe two identical summands obtained on the permutation tracks of  $\begin{cases} i_1 \mapsto \sigma(i_1) \\ i_2 \mapsto \sigma(i_2) \end{cases}$  and  $\begin{cases} i_1 \mapsto \sigma(i_2) \\ i_2 \mapsto \sigma(i_1) \end{cases}$  in  $adj(A)$ , respectively. □

*Example 6.4.*

1. If  $A = (a_{i,j})$  is a triangular, non-singular matrix, then  $A^\nabla$  and all principal submatrices of  $A$  and  $A^\nabla$  are triangular. Denoting  $A^\nabla = (b_{i,j})$ , we have  $b_{i,i} = a_{i,i}^{-1}$ . Noting that the determinant of a triangular matrix comes from its diagonal, we get

$$\det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(x) = x^n f_A(x^{-1}).$$

2. By Proposition 6.3, if  $A \in M_i(R)$ , where  $i = 2, 3$ , then

$$\det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(x) \models x^i f_A(x^{-1}) \text{ (with equality when } i = 2),$$

since the coefficient of  $x^{i-1}$  is the trace, the coefficient of  $x^{i-2}$  is  $b_{n-2}$  and the constant is the determinant. The  $4 \times 4$  case has been verified by a computer calculation.

Consequences of Conjecture 6.2 would be:

1. The inverse of every supertropical eigenvalue of  $A$  is a supertropical eigenvalue of  $A^\nabla$ , since if  $\lambda$  is an eigenvalue of  $A$ , then  $\det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(\lambda^{-1}) \models_{gs} (\lambda^{-1})^n f_A(\lambda) \in G$ .

2. If  $f_{A^\nabla} \in T[x]$  then  $\det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(x) = x^n f_A(x^{-1})$  (follows immediately).

3. If  $f_{A^\nabla\nabla} \in T[x]$  then  $f_{A^\nabla\nabla} = f_A$ , since applying (6.2) to  $A$  and  $A^\nabla$ , we have

$$\det(A)^{-1} f_{A^\nabla\nabla}(x) \models_{gs} x^n f_{A^\nabla}(x^{-1}) \text{ and } \det(A)f_{A^\nabla}(x) \models_{gs} x^n f_A(x^{-1}).$$

Combining these two equations we get

$$\det(A)\det(A)^{-1} f_{A^\nabla\nabla}(x) \models_{gs} \det(A)x^n f_{A^\nabla}(x^{-1}) \models_{gs} x^n x^{-n} f_A(x).$$

Then, if  $f_{A^\nabla\nabla} \in T[x]$ , we have that  $f_{A^\nabla\nabla} = f_A$ .

## REFERENCES

- [1] M. AKIAN, R. BAPAT, AND S. GAUBERT, *Max-plus algebra*. Hogben L., Brualdi R., Greenbaum A., Mathias R. (eds.), Handbook of Linear Algebra. Chapman and Hall, London, 2006.
- [2] M. AKIAN, S. GAUBERT AND A. GUTERMAN, *Linear dependence over tropical semirings and beyond*. Tropical and Idempotent Mathematics, volume 495 of Contemporary Mathematics, pp. 1–38, AMS, 2009.

- [3] A. BUCHHOLZ, *Tropicalization of linear isomorphisms on plane elliptic curves*. PhD dissertation, Mathematical Institute Georg-August, University Gottingen, April 2010.
- [4] P. BUTKOVIC, *Max-algebra: the linear algebra of combinatorics?*. Linear Algebra Appl. 367 (2003), 313-335.
- [5] P. BUTKOVIC, *On the coefficients of the max-algebraic characteristic polynomial and equation*. In proceedings of the workshop on Max-algebra, Symposium of the International Federation of Automatic Control, Prague, 2001.
- [6] P. BUTKOVIC AND L. MURFITT, *Calculating essential terms of a characteristic maxpolynomial*. CEJOR 8 (2000) 237-246.
- [7] R.A. CUNNINGHAME-GREEN, *Minimax algebra*. Lecture notes in Economics and Mathematical Systems, no. 166, Springer, 1979.
- [8] M. FIEDLER, J. NEDOMA, J. RAMIK, J. ROHN AND K. ZIMMERMANN, *Linear optimization problems with inexact data*. Springer, New York, 2006.
- [9] S. GAUBERT AND M. PLUS, *Methods and applications of  $(\max, +)$  linear algebra*, in *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*. 1200, Springer Verlag, New York, 1997.
- [10] S. GAUBERT, *Théorie des systèmes linéaires dans les dioïdes*. PhD dissertation, School of Mines. Paris, July 1992.
- [11] J.S. GOLAN, *Semirings and their applications*. Kluwer Acad. Publ., Dordrecht, 1999.
- [12] M. GONDRAN, *Path algebra and algorithms*. In B. Roy, editor, *Combinatorial programming: methods and applications*, Reidel, Dordrecht, pp. 137-148, 1975.
- [13] B. HEIDERGOTT, G.J. OLSDER AND J. VAN DER WOUDE, *Max Plus at Work: Modeling and Analysis of Synchronized Systems: A Course on Max- Plus Algebra and Its Applications*. Princeton Univ. Press, 2006.
- [14] I. ITENBERG, G. MIKHALKIN AND E. SHUSTIN, *Tropical Algebraic Geometry*. Oberwolfach Seminars, Vol. 35, Birkhauser, Basel e.a., 2007.
- [15] Z. IZHAKIAN, *Tropical arithmetic and matrix algebra*. Comm. in Algebra 37(4):1445-1468, 2009.
- [16] Z. IZHAKIAN AND L. ROWEN, *Supertropical algebra*. Adv. Math. 225: 2222-2286, 2010.
- [17] Z. IZHAKIAN, M. KNEBUSCH AND L. ROWEN, *Supertropical linear algebra*. To appear in Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 2013.
- [18] Z. IZHAKIAN AND L. ROWEN, *Supertropical matrix algebra*. Israel Journal of Mathematics 182(1):383-424, 2011.
- [19] Z. IZHAKIAN AND L. ROWEN, *Supertropical matrix algebra II: solving tropical equations*. Israel Journal of Mathematics, 186(1):69-97, 2011.
- [20] Z. IZHAKIAN AND L. ROWEN, *Supertropical matrix algebra III: Powers of matrices and their supertropical eigenvalues*. Journal of Algebra, 341(1):125-149, 2011.
- [21] G. L. LITVINOV AND V. P. MASLOV, *Idempotent mathematics: correspondence principle and applications*. Russian Mathematical Surveys, 51, no. 6 (1996) 1210-1211.
- [22] G. L. LITVINOV, A. YA. RODIONOV, S.N. SERGEEV AND A. V. SOBOLEVSKI, *Universal algorithms for solving the matrix Bellmann equation over semirings*. Preprint. Moscow, 2012. Submitted to Soft Computing.
- [23] G. L. LITVINOV AND S.N. SERGEEV, *Tropical and Idempotent Mathematics*. Contemporary Mathematics, vol 495. AMS, Providence (2009).
- [24] G. MIKHALKIN, *Tropical geometry and its applications*. In Proceedings of the ICM, Madrid, Spain, vol. II, 2006, pp. 827-852. arXiv: math/0601041v2 [math. AG]
- [25] A. NIV, *Characteristic Polynomials of Supertropical Matrices*. Preprint at arXiv:1201.0966v2, 2012. To appear in Communications in Algebra.
- [26] A. NIV, *Factorization of tropical matrices*. J. Algebra Appl., vol 13, 1350066 (2014).

- [27] C. REUTENAUER AND H. STRAUBING, *Inversion of matrices over a commutative semiring*. J. Algebra, 88(2): 350-360, 1984.
- [28] S.N. SERGEEV, *Multiorder, Kleene stars and cyclic projectors in the geometry of max cones*. In G. L. Litvinov and S. N. Sergeev (Eds.), Contemporary mathematics: Vol. 495. Tropical and idempotent mathematics (pp. 317-342). AMS, Providence (2009).
- [29] S.N. SERGEEV, H. SCHNEIDER AND P. BUTKOVIC, *On visualization scaling, subeigenvectors and Kleene stars in max algebra*. Linear Algebra and its Applications, 431(12):2395–2406, 2009.
- [30] H. STRAUBING, *A combinatorial proof of the Cayley-Hamilton Theorem*. Discrete Math. 43 (2-3): 273-279, 1983.
- [31] M. YOELI, *A note on a generalization of boolean matrix theory*. Amer. Math. Monthly 68 (1961), 552-557.