The hypersimplex and the m = 2 amplituhedron

Lauren K. Williams, Harvard

Slides at http://people.math.harvard.edu/~williams/TropAmpKITP.pdf

Based on:

- "The positive tropical Grassmannian, the hypersimplex, and the m = 2 amplituhedron," with Tomasz Lukowski and Matteo Parisi, arXiv:2002.06164
- "The positive Dressian equals the positive tropical Grassmannian," with David Speyer, arXiv:2003.10231

I. Amplituhedron '13 Arkani-Hamed–Trnka $\mathcal{N} = 4$ SYM II. Hypersimplex and moment map '87 Gelfand-Goresky-MacPherson-Serganova matroids, torus orbits on $Gr_{k,n}$



III. Positive tropical Grassmannian '05 Speyer–W. associahedron, cluster algebras connected to amplitudes, "pos. configuration space"

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Overview of the talk

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- (Positroid) triangulations of the amplituhedron

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- How we discovered this: the (positive) tropical Grassmannian
- Summary

The **Grassmannian** $Gr_{k,n} = Gr_{k,n}(\mathbb{R}) := \{V \mid V \subset \mathbb{R}^n, \dim V = k\}$ Represent an element of $Gr_{k,n}(\mathbb{R})$ by a full-rank $k \times n$ matrix A.

 $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 & -2 \\ 0 & 1 & 3 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$

Can think of $Gr_{k,n}(\mathbb{R})$ as $Mat_{k,n}/\sim$.

Given $I \in {\binom{\lfloor n \rfloor}{k}}$, the **Plücker coordinate** $p_I(A)$ is the minor of the $k \times k$ submatrix of A in column set I.

The **TNN (totally nonnegative) Grassmannian** $(Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}$ is the subset of $Gr_{k,n}(\mathbb{R})$ where $p_I(A) \geq 0$.

Def due to Postnikov from early 2000's. Earlier Lusztig defined $(G/P)_{\geq 0}$. Not obvious that Lusztig's definition – in the case of $Gr_{k,n}$ – agrees with Postnikov's – but this is true (Rietsch 2007).

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One can partition $(Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}$ into pieces based on which Plücker coordinates are positive and which are 0.

Let $\mathcal{M} \subseteq {\binom{[n]}{k}}$. Let $S_{\mathcal{M}}^{tnn} := \{A \in (Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0} \mid p_I(A) > 0 \text{ iff } I \in \mathcal{M}\}.$

- Decorated permutations π on [n] with k antiexcedances.
- other combinatorial objects such as on-shell (plabic) diagrams.

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- The amplituhedron $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,m}$ was introduced by Arkani-Hamed and Trnka in 2013.
- $A_{n,k,m}$ is the image of the TNN Grassmannian under a simple map.

The amplituhedron $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,m}$

Fix n, k, m with $k + m \leq n$.

Let Z be a $n \times (k + m)$ matrix with maximal minors positive. Let \widetilde{Z} be map $(Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0} \to Gr_{k,k+m}$ sending a $k \times n$ matrix A to AZ. Set $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,m}(Z) := \widetilde{Z}((Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}) \subset Gr_{k,k+m}$.

- $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,m}$ has full dimension km inside $Gr_{k,k+m}$.
- When m = 4, its "volume" computes scattering amplitudes in N = 4 super Yang Mills theory.

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The amplituhedron $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,n'}$

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- The m = 4 amplituhedron $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,4}$:
 - encodes the geometry of (tree-level) scattering amplitudes in planar $\mathcal{N}=4$ SYM.
- The m = 2 amplituhedron $A_{n,k,2}$ (subject of today's talk):
 - considered a toy-model for m = 4 case.
 - governs geometry of scattering amplitudes in $\mathcal{N} = 4$ SYM at subleading order in perturbation theory for the 'MHV' sector of the theory (cf def of loop amplituhedron).
 - is relevant to the 'next to MHV' sector, enhancing connection with geometries of loop amplitudes (Kojima–Langer).

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Fix n, k, m with $k + m \le n$, let $Z \in \operatorname{Mat}_{n,k+m}^+$ (max minors > 0). Let \widetilde{Z} be map $(Gr_{k,n})_{\ge 0} \to Gr_{k,k+m}$ sending a $k \times n$ matrix A to AZ. Set $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,m}(Z) := \widetilde{Z}((Gr_{k,n})_{\ge 0}) \subset Gr_{k,k+m}$.

- The m = 4 amplituhedron $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,4}$:
 - encodes the geometry of (tree-level) scattering amplitudes in planar $\mathcal{N}=4$ SYM.
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Lauren K. Williams (Harvard)

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M(a, b, c) is a famous number in combinatorics, which counts:

- the number of *plane partitions* contained in $a \times b \times c$ box.
- collections of c noncrossing lattice paths inside $a \times b$ rectangle
- rhombic tilings, perfect matchings, Kekule structures, ...



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- The hypersimplex $\Delta_{k,n}$ is the convex hull $Conv\{e_{I} : |I| = k\}$.
- Equiv: it's the intersection of unit cube with hyperplane $\sum_i x_i = k$.
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The images $\mu(Gr_{k,n}) = \mu((Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0})$ are exactly $\Delta_{k,n}$. Images of positroid cells S_{π} called **positroid polytopes** $\Gamma_{\pi} \subset \Delta_{k,n}$.

Define a (positroid) **triangulation** of $\Delta_{k,n}$ to be a collection $\{S_{\pi^{(1)}}, \ldots, S_{\pi^{(\ell)}}\}$ of (n-1)-dim'l cells of $(Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}$ where μ is injective, such that their images $\{\Gamma_{\pi^{(1)}}, \ldots, \Gamma_{\pi^{(\ell)}}\}$ are disjoint and cover $\Delta_{k,n}$.

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Claim is weird because:

- dim $\Delta_{k+1,n} = n-1$ while dim $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,2} = 2k$.
- $\Delta_{k+1,n}$ is a polytope but $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,2}$ is not.
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- A collection of 2k-dim'l positroid cells of (Gr_{k,n})≥0 where Z is injective, such that images are disjoint and cover A_{n,k,2}.
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Nevertheless, compare # of cells comprising the triangulations \ldots

Karp–W.–Zhang conj: there are $\binom{n-2}{k}$ cells in any triangulation of $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,2}$.

Theorem (Speyer–W. 2020)

Every (regular) positroidal triangulation of $\Delta_{k+1,n}$ uses precisely $\binom{n-2}{k}$ cells.

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T-duality map on positroid cells

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Moreover, dim $(S_{\hat{\pi}}) = \dim(S_{\pi}) + 2k - (n - 1)$. So it maps cells of dim n - 1 to cells of dimension 2k.

Conjecture (Lukowski–Parisi–W.)

A collection $\{S_{\pi}\}$ of cells of $Gr_{k+1,n}^+$ gives a triangulation of $\Delta_{k+1,n}$ if and only if the collection $\{S_{\hat{\pi}}\}$ of cells of $Gr_{k,n}^+$ gives a triangulation of $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,2}$.

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- Say that S_{π} is a generalized triangle for $\Delta_{k+1,n}$ if dim $S_{\pi} = n-1$ and the moment map is injective on it.
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Remark: many of the known triangulations of the amplituhedron are "bad" in the sense that boundaries of images of cells overlap badly.

Definition (Lukowski–Parisi–W.)

Say that a triangulation is **good** if whenever $Z_{\pi^{(l)}} \cap Z_{\pi^{(l)}}$ has codimension 1, it equals Z_{π} , the image of a cell S_{π} in the closure of both $S_{\pi^{(l)}}$ and $S_{\pi^{(l)}}$.

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Trop⁺ $Gr_{k,n}$ and physics

Before defining Trop⁺ $Gr_{k,n}$, we note its recent appearances in physics, in the context of singularities of loop amplitudes in $\mathcal{N} = 4$ SYM and computing scattering amplitudes in (generalized) biadjoint scalar theories:

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Speyer–W, 2005: introduced and gave several descriptions of Trop⁺ $Gr_{k,n}$:

- image under valuation map of $Gr_{k,n}^+$ over Puisseux series;
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Simpler way to describe it (subset of $\mathbb{R}^{\binom{[n]}{k}}$ with fan structure):

A vector $P = \{P_I\}_I \in \mathbb{R}^{\binom{[n]}{k}}$ is a **positive tropical Plücker vector** if for any $1 < a < b < c < d \le n$ and $S \in \binom{[n]}{k-2}$ disjoint from $\{a, b, c, d\}$,

- P_{Sac} + P_{Sbd} = P_{Sab} + P_{Scd} ≤ P_{Sad} + P_{Sbc}
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Let $P = \{P_I\}_I \in \mathbb{R}^{\binom{|P_I|}{k}}$. The following are equivalent.

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Connecting $\operatorname{Trop}^+ Gr_{k,n}$ to triangulations

To construct regular subdivision of $\Delta_{k,n}$, choose some $P := \{P_I\}_I \in \mathbb{R}^{\binom{[n]}{k}}$, thought of as *height function* on the vertices e_I of $\Delta_{k,n}$. Projecting "lower faces" of Conv $\{(e_I, P_I)\}$ to $\Delta_{k,n}$ gives regular subdivision \mathcal{D}_P .

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CorollaryRegular (positroid) triangulations of $\Delta_{k,n} \leftrightarrow$ the maximal cones of Trop+ $Gr_{k,n}$. $\Box \mapsto \langle \Box \rangle \land \exists \Rightarrow \exists \Rightarrow \neg \land \neg$ Lauren K. Williams (Harvard) $\Delta_{k+1,n}$ and $A_{n,k,2}$ 202026/29

- We define a triangulation of $A_{n,k,2}$ to be **regular** if it comes from Trop⁺ $Gr_{k+1,n}$ i.e. it is the T-duality image of a regular positroid triangulation of $\Delta_{k+1,n}$.
- The regular triangulations of $\mathcal{A}_{n,k,2}$ behave well at the boundary, i.e. they are good.

Momentum amplituhedron

 We introduce a momentum amplituhedron M_{n,k,m}^a which should give analogous story to what I've explained today, but for any even m.

(see appendix of slides for definition)

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- In Speyer–W 2005 we found connection of Trop⁺ $Gr_{k,n}$ and cluster algebras. Direct connection of cluster algebras to $A_{n,k,2}$??

Thank you for listening!

I. Amplituhedron '13







III. Positive tropical Grassmannian '05



- "The positive tropical Grassmannian, the hypersimplex, and the m = 2 amplituhedron," with Lukowski and Parisi, arXiv:2002.06164
- "The positive Dressian equals the positive tropical Grassmannian," with Speyer, arXiv:2003.10231.
- "The tropical totally positive Grassmannian," with Speyer, arXiv:math/0312297, J. Algebraic Combinatorics, Sept 2005.

Given a $k \times n$ matrix $C = (c_1, \ldots, c_n)$ (representing a point of $(Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}$) written as a list of its columns, we associate a decorated permutation π as follows.

- Given $i, j \in [n]$, let r[i, j] denote the rank of $\langle c_i, c_{i+1}, \ldots, c_j \rangle$, where we list the columns in cyclic order, going from c_n to c_1 if i > j.
- We set $\pi(i) := j$ to be the label of the first column j such that $c_i \in \text{span}\{c_{i+1}, c_{i+2}, \dots, c_j\}.$
- If c_i is the all-zero vector, we call *i* a loop or black fixed point, and if c_i is not in the span of the other column vectors, we call *i* a coloop or white fixed point.

We define S_{π}^{tnn} to be the set of all elements $C \in (Gr_{k,n})_{\geq 0}$ which give rise to this π .

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- compute the vanishing set over *positive Puisseux series* V(I) ⊂ (C⁺)ⁿ and apply a *valuation map* (and take closure);
- take the intersection of all positive tropical hypersurfaces Trop⁺(f) for f ∈ l.
- So we can define Trop⁺ Gr_{k,n} = ∩ Trop⁺(f), where f ranges over all elements in the Plücker ideal I.

- compute the vanishing set over *positive Puisseux series* V(1) ⊂ (C⁺)ⁿ and apply a *valuation map* (and take closure);
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Given ideal $I \subset C[x_1, \ldots, x_n]$, there are two equivalent ways of defining the positive tropical variety Trop⁺ V(I):

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Let $\mathcal{C} = \bigcup_{n=1}^{\infty} \mathbb{C}((t^{1/n})).$

If $f \in C^*$, with lowest term at^{ν} , define val(f) := u. Valuation map val : $(C^*)^n \to \mathbb{Q}^n$, $(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \mapsto (val(x_1), \ldots, val(x_n))$. Let $C^+ := \{x(t) \in C \mid \text{ coeff. of the lowest term of } x(t) \text{ is positive real}\}$. If $I \subset C[x_1, \ldots, x_n]$ an ideal, then Trop $V(I) := \overline{val(V(I) \cap (C^*)^n)}$. Positive part of Trop V(I) is Trop⁺ $V(I) := val(V(I) \cap (C^+)^n)$.

Let *I* be the Plücker ideal. Define Trop *Gr_{k,n}* := Trop *V(I)* (Speyer–Sturmfels '04), and Trop⁺ *Gr_{k,n}* := Trop⁺ *V(I*) (Speyer–W. '05).

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The momentum amplituhedron

Let
$$\tilde{\Lambda} \in \operatorname{Mat}_{k+m,n}^{>0}, \Lambda \in \operatorname{Mat}_{n-k,n}^{>0,\tau}$$
. The matrices $(\tilde{\Lambda}, \Lambda)$ induce map
 $\Phi_{\tilde{\Lambda},\Lambda} : \operatorname{Gr}_{k+\frac{m}{2},n}^+ \to \operatorname{Gr}_{k+\frac{m}{2},k+m} \times \operatorname{Gr}_{n-k-\frac{m}{2},n-k}$

defined by

$$\Phi_{\tilde{\Lambda},\Lambda}(\langle v_1,...,v_{k+\frac{m}{2}}\rangle) := \left(\langle \tilde{\Lambda}(v_1),...,\tilde{\Lambda}(v_{k+\frac{m}{2}})\rangle,\langle \Lambda(v_1^{\perp}),...,\Lambda(v_{n-k-\frac{m}{2}}^{\perp})\rangle\right)$$

where $\langle v_1, ..., v_{k+\frac{m}{2}} \rangle \in Gr_{k+\frac{m}{2},n}^+$ is written as the span of basis vectors and $\langle v_1^{\perp}, ..., v_{n-k-\frac{m}{2}}^{\perp} \rangle := \langle v_1, ..., v_{k+\frac{m}{2}} \rangle^{\perp} \in Gr_{n-k-\frac{m}{2},n}^{+,\tau}$ (also written as span).

Definition

The momentum amplituhedron $\mathcal{M}_{n,k,m}(\Lambda, \tilde{\Lambda})$ is defined as the image $\Phi_{\tilde{\Lambda},\Lambda}(Gr_{k+\frac{m}{2},n}^+)$ inside $Gr_{k+\frac{m}{2},k+m} \times Gr_{n-k-\frac{m}{2},n-k}$.