

# $q$ -Whittaker functions, finite fields, and Jordan forms

Slides available at [snkarp.github.io](https://snkarp.github.io)

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# Schur functions

- A *partition*  $\lambda$  is a weakly-decreasing sequence of nonnegative integers.

• e.g.  $\lambda = (4, 4, 1) =$

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

$T =$

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 4 | 8 | 8 |
| 5 |   |   |   |

- A *semistandard tableau*  $T$  is a filling of  $\lambda$  with positive integers which is weakly increasing across rows and strictly increasing down columns.

## Definition (Schur function)

$$s_{\lambda}(x_1, x_2, \dots) := \sum_T \mathbf{x}^T,$$

where the sum is over all semistandard tableaux  $T$  of shape  $\lambda$ .

- $s_{\lambda}(\mathbf{x})$  is symmetric in the variables  $x_j$ .

# Schur functions

- e.g.  $s_{(2,1)}(x_1, x_2, x_3) =$

$$x_1^2 x_2 + x_1^2 x_3 + x_1 x_2^2 + x_1 x_2 x_3 + x_1 x_2 x_3 + x_1 x_3^2 + x_2^2 x_3 + x_2 x_3^2$$

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 3 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 2 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
| 3 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 3 |
| 2 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 3 |
| 3 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 |   |

- Schur functions appear in many contexts; for example, they:
  - form an *orthonormal basis* for the algebra of symmetric functions in  $\mathbf{x}$ ;
  - are characters of the *irreducible polynomial representations* of  $GL_n(\mathbb{C})$ ;
  - give the values of the *irreducible characters* of the symmetric group  $S_n$ , when expanded in terms of power sum symmetric functions;
  - are representatives for *Schubert classes* in the cohomology ring of the Grassmannian  $Gr_{k,n}(\mathbb{C})$ ;
  - define the *Schur processes* of Okounkov and Reshetikhin (2003).

# Cauchy identity

## Theorem (Cauchy)

$$\prod_{i,j \geq 1} \frac{1}{1 - x_i y_j} = \sum_{\lambda} s_{\lambda}(\mathbf{x}) s_{\lambda}(\mathbf{y})$$

- The identity is equivalent to the orthonormality of the Schur functions. It also gives the partition function for the Schur processes.
- The left-hand side counts *nonnegative-integer matrices*, and the right-hand side counts *pairs of semistandard tableaux of the same shape*.
- e.g. Taking the coefficient of  $x_1 x_2 y_1 y_2$  on each side gives

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} 1 & + & 1 & = & 1 & + & 1 \\ 12 & & 21 & & \left( \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 1 \\ \hline 2 \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline 1 \\ \hline 2 \\ \hline \end{array} \right) & & \left( \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 1 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline 1 & 2 \\ \hline \end{array} \right) \end{array}$$

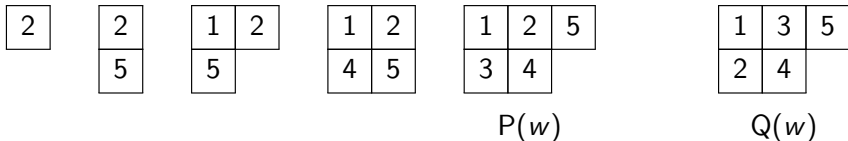
# Burge correspondence (1974)

- The *Burge correspondence* (also known as *column Robinson–Schensted–Knuth*) is a bijection

$$M \mapsto (P(M), Q(M))$$

between nonnegative-integer matrices and pairs of semistandard tableaux of the same shape. It proves the Cauchy identity for Schur functions.

- $P(M)$  is obtained via *column insertion* and  $Q(M)$  via *recording*.
- e.g.  $w = 25143$



# Nilpotent matrices

- An  $n \times n$  matrix  $N$  over  $\mathbb{k}$  is *nilpotent* if some power of  $N$  is zero. Such an  $N$  can be conjugated over  $\mathbb{k}$  into *Jordan form*. Let  $JF^\top(N)$  be the *transpose* of the partition given by the sizes of the Jordan blocks.

e.g.  $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \mapsto \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \square \\ \hline \square \\ \hline \square \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \mapsto \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline \square & \square \\ \hline \square & \square \\ \hline \square & \square \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \mapsto \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline \square & \square & \square \\ \hline \square & \square & \square \\ \hline \square & \square & \square \\ \hline \end{array}$

- Algebraically,  $JF^\top(N)$  is the partition  $\lambda$  given by

$$\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \cdots + \lambda_i = \dim(\ker(N^i)) \quad \text{for all } i.$$

## Theorem (Gansner (1981))

Let  $N$  be a generic  $n \times n$  strictly upper-triangular matrix, where  $N_{i,j} = 0$  for all inversions  $(i,j)$  of  $w^{-1}$ . Then  $P(w)$  and  $Q(w)$  can be read off from the Jordan forms of the leading submatrices of  $N$  and  $w^{-1}Nw$ .

# Burge correspondence via Jordan forms

• e.g.  $w = 25143$

$$N = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & a & b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & c & d & e \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad (a, b, c, d, e \in \mathbb{k} \text{ generic})$$

$P(w)$ :

$$1 \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 2 \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 3 \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & a \\ 0 & 0 & c \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 4 \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & a & b \\ 0 & 0 & c & d \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 5 \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 \\ 0 & 0 & a & b & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & c & d & e \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$



$Q(w)$ :

$$2 \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 5 \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 \\ 0 & e \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 1 \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & 1 \\ 0 & e & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 4 \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & 1 & 4 \\ 0 & e & 0 & d \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & b \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad 3 \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & 1 & 4 & 3 \\ 0 & e & 0 & d & c \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$



# Flag variety

- A *complete flag*  $F$  in  $\mathbb{k}^n$  is a sequence of nested subspaces

$$0 = F_0 \subseteq F_1 \subseteq \cdots \subseteq F_{n-1} \subseteq F_n = \mathbb{k}^n, \quad \dim(F_i) = i \text{ for all } i.$$

- An  $n \times n$  (nilpotent) matrix  $N$  is *strictly compatible* with  $F$  if

$$N(F_i) \subseteq F_{i-1} \quad \text{for all } i.$$

- The matrix  $N$  in Gansner's theorem is precisely one which is strictly compatible with two complete flags  $F$  and  $F'$  defined by

$$F_i := \langle e_1, e_2, \dots, e_i \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad F'_j := \langle e_{w(1)}, e_{w(2)}, \dots, e_{w(j)} \rangle.$$

The two sequences of matrices in the theorem are  $(N|_{F_i})_{i=1}^n$  and  $(N|_{F'_j})_{j=1}^n$ .

- More generally, we can take any pair of flags  $(F, F')$  with *relative position*  $w$ , denoted  $F \xrightarrow{w} F'$ . The relative position records  $\dim(F_i \cap F'_j)$  for all  $i$  and  $j$ , or alternatively, the *Schubert cell* of  $F'$  relative to  $F$ .



# Burge correspondence via flags

Theorem (Steinberg (1976, 1988), Spaltenstein (1982), Rosso (2012))

Fix *partial* flags  $F$  and  $F'$  with  $F \xrightarrow{M} F'$ . Let  $N$  be a generic nilpotent matrix strictly compatible with both  $F$  and  $F'$ . Then

$$P(M) = JF^\top(N; F) \quad \text{and} \quad Q(M) = JF^\top(N; F').$$

- If  $F \xrightarrow{w} F'$ , then  $F' \xrightarrow{w^{-1}} F$ . This implies the symmetry

$$P(w^{-1}) = Q(w).$$

- What happens when  $\mathbb{k}$  is a *finite* field, and we consider *all* choices of  $N$  (not necessarily generic)?

# $q$ -Whittaker functions

- Define  $[n]_q := 1 + q + q^2 + \dots + q^{n-1}$  and  $[n]_q! := [n]_q [n-1]_q \dots [1]_q$ .

## Definition ( $q$ -Whittaker function)

$$W_\lambda(x_1, x_2, \dots; q) := \sum_T \text{wt}_q(T) \mathbf{x}^T,$$

where the sum is over all semistandard tableaux  $T$  of shape  $\lambda$ .

- $W_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q)$  is symmetric in the variables  $x_i$ , and specializes to  $s_\lambda(\mathbf{x})$  when  $q = 0$ . We obtain the  $\mathfrak{gl}_n$ -Whittaker functions as a certain  $q \rightarrow 1$  limit.

- e.g.  $T = \begin{array}{|c|c|c|} \hline 1 & 2 & 4 \\ \hline 3 & 5 & 7 \\ \hline 6 & & \\ \hline \end{array}$        $\text{wt}_q(T) = [1]_q [2]_q [1]_q [2]_q [2]_q [1]_q [2]_q = (1+q)^4$

- We have the following specializations:

$$W_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q) = P_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q, 0) = q^{\deg(\tilde{H}_\lambda)} \omega(\tilde{H}_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; 1/q, 0)), \quad W_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; 1) = e_{\lambda^\top}(\mathbf{x}).$$

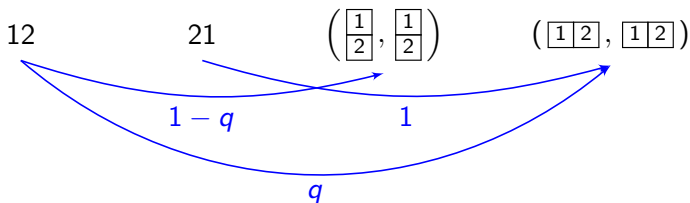
# $q$ -Cauchy identity

## Theorem (Macdonald (1995))

$$\prod_{i,j \geq 1} \prod_{d \geq 0} \frac{1}{1 - x_i y_j q^d} = \sum_{\lambda} \frac{(1-q)^{-\lambda_1}}{\prod_{i \geq 1} [\lambda_i - \lambda_{i+1}]_q!} W_{\lambda}(\mathbf{x}; q) W_{\lambda}(\mathbf{y}; q)$$

- This gives the partition function for the  $q$ -Whittaker processes, a special case of the *Macdonald processes* of Borodin and Corwin (2014).
- e.g. Taking the coefficient of  $x_1 x_2 y_1 y_2$  on each side gives

$$(1-q)^{-2} + (1-q)^{-2} = (1-q)^{-1} + (1-q)^{-2}(1+q)$$





## $q$ -Burge correspondence

- Let  $1/q$  be a prime power, and fix partial flags  $F \xrightarrow{M} F'$  over  $\mathbb{F}_{1/q}$ . For semistandard tableaux  $T$  and  $T'$  of the same shape, define

$$p_M(T, T') := \mathbb{P}(\text{JF}^\top(N; F) = T \text{ and } \text{JF}^\top(N; F') = T'), \quad (*)$$

where  $N$  is a uniformly random nilpotent matrix strictly compatible with both  $F$  and  $F'$ . (This does not depend on the choice of  $(F, F')$ .)

### Theorem (Karp, Thomas (2022))

- (i) *The maps  $p_M(\cdot, \cdot)$  define a probabilistic bijection proving the Cauchy identity for  $q$ -Whittaker functions, called the  $q$ -Burge correspondence.*
- (ii) *The bijection converges to the classical Burge correspondence as  $q \rightarrow 0$ .*

- The inverse probabilities are also given by  $(*)$ , but where  $N$  is fixed and  $(F, F')$  is uniformly random.
- Two other probabilistic bijections were given by Matveev and Petrov (2017), using  $q$ -analogues of row and column insertion.

## Theorem (Borho, MacPherson (1983); Karp, Thomas (2022))

Fix a nilpotent matrix  $N$  over  $\mathbb{F}_{1/q}$  with Jordan type  $\lambda$ . The coefficient of  $x_1^{\alpha_1} \cdots x_k^{\alpha_k}$  in  $W_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q)$  equals  $q^{\sum_i \binom{\lambda_i}{2} - \binom{\alpha_i}{2}}$  times the number of partial flags  $F$  over  $\mathbb{F}_{1/q}$  strictly compatible with  $N$  satisfying

$$\dim(F_i) = \alpha_1 + \cdots + \alpha_i \quad \text{for all } i.$$

- e.g.  $\lambda = \begin{array}{|c|c|} \hline \square & \square \\ \hline \end{array}$ ,  $N = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ . Then the coefficient of  $x_1 x_2$  in  $W_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q)$  is

$$q^1 \cdot \#(\text{complete flags in } \mathbb{F}_{1/q}^2) = q(1 + 1/q) = q + 1.$$

- This is similar to a formula for the *modified Hall–Littlewood functions*  $\tilde{H}_\lambda(\mathbf{x}; q, 0)$  in terms of *weakly compatible flags* over  $\mathbb{F}_q$ .
- A key step to proving both theorems is enumerating an arbitrary double coset of  $P_\alpha \backslash \mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{F}_{1/q}) / P_\beta$ , where  $P_\alpha$  and  $P_\beta$  are standard parabolic subgroups of  $\mathrm{GL}_n(\mathbb{F}_{1/q})$ .

# Combinatorics of the $q$ -Burge correspondence

## Problem

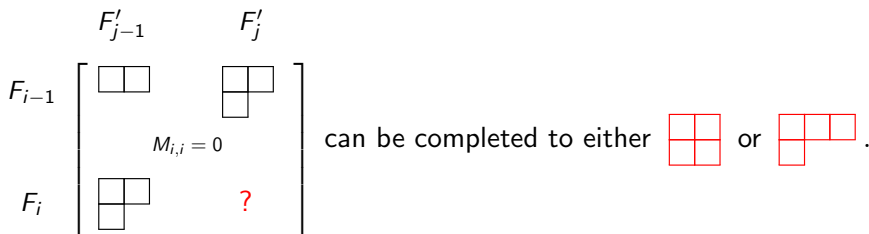
Is  $p_M(T, T')$  a rational function of  $q$ ? (If so, it is a polynomial.)

- We have an explicit formula when  $M$  is a diagonal matrix (i.e.  $F = F'$ ).

## Problem

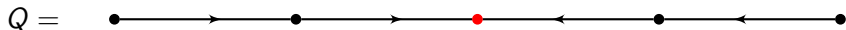
Is there a recursive combinatorial rule for calculating  $p_M(T, T')$ ?

- Unlike insertion-based deformations of RSK, the  $q$ -Burge correspondence does not admit Fomin-style local growth rules. For example, the diagram

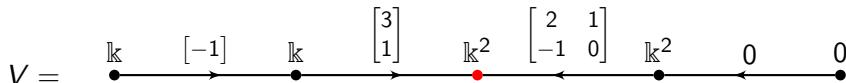


# Quiver representations and the preprojective algebra

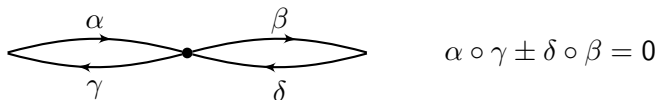
- Consider a path quiver with a unique sink:



- A representation  $V$  of  $Q$  is an assignment of a vector space to each vertex and a linear map to each arrow, e.g.,



- We will only consider  $V$  where every linear map is injective. Isomorphism classes of such  $V$  are indexed by nonnegative-integer matrices  $M$ .
- We now decorate  $V$  with a linear map for the reverse of each arrow, such that a relation holds for every vertex:

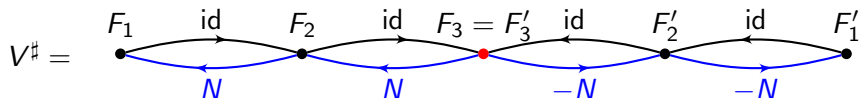


This defines a module  $V^\#$  over the *preprojective algebra* of  $Q$ .



# Socle filtration

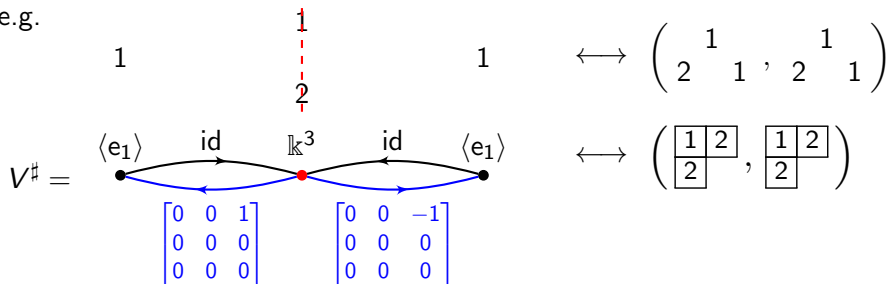
- Up to isomorphism,  $V^\#$  is given (non-uniquely) by a triple  $(F, F', N)$ :



- The *socle filtration* of  $V^\#$  corresponds precisely to the pair of tableaux

$$(T, T') = (JF^\top(N; F), JF'^\top(N; F')).$$

- e.g.



# Counting isomorphism classes

- The  $q$ -Burge correspondence implies enumerative results about such modules  $V^\sharp$ . For example:

## Theorem (Karp, Thomas (2022))

Let  $(T, T')$  be a pair of semistandard tableaux of shape  $\lambda$ , and let  $\mathbf{d}$  be a dimension vector of  $Q$ . Then

$$\sum_{[V^\sharp]} \frac{1}{|\text{Aut}(V^\sharp)|} = \frac{q^{c(\mathbf{d})} (1-q)^{-\lambda_1}}{\prod_{i \geq 1} [\lambda_i - \lambda_{i+1}]_q!} \text{wt}_q(T) \text{wt}_q(T'),$$

where the sum is over all isomorphism classes  $[V^\sharp]$  of modules  $V^\sharp$  over  $\mathbb{F}_{1/q}$  with dimension vector  $\mathbf{d}$  and socle filtration corresponding to  $(T, T')$ .

# Thank you!