

Series of Nilpotent Orbits

J. M. Landsberg, Laurent Manivel, and Bruce W. Westbury

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We organize the nilpotent orbits in the exceptional complex Lie algebras into series and show that within each series the dimension of the orbit is a linear function of the natural parameter $a = 1, 2, 4, 8$, respectively for $\mathfrak{f}_4, \mathfrak{e}_6, \mathfrak{e}_7, \mathfrak{e}_8$. We observe similar regularities for the centralizers of nilpotent elements in a series and grade components in the associated grading of the ambient Lie algebra. More strikingly, we observe that for $a \geq 2$ the numbers of \mathbb{F}_q -rational points on the nilpotent orbits of a given series are given by polynomials that have uniform expressions in terms of a . This even remains true for the degrees of the unipotent characters associated to these series through the Springer correspondence. We make similar observations for the series arising from the other rows of Freudenthal's magic chart and make some observations about the general organization of nilpotent orbits, including the description of and dimension formulas for several universal nilpotent orbits (universal in the sense that they occur in almost every simple Lie algebra).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Main Results

In this paper we explore consequences of the Tits-Freudenthal construction and its variant, the triality model, for nilpotent orbits in the exceptional complex simple Lie algebras. Both models produce a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B})$ from a pair of real normed algebras \mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B} . When $\mathbb{B} = \mathbb{O}$, one obtains the exceptional Lie algebras $\mathfrak{f}_4, \mathfrak{e}_6, \mathfrak{e}_7$, and \mathfrak{e}_8 , parametrized by the dimension $a = 1, 2, 4, 8$ of \mathbb{A} . In [Landsberg and Manivel 02a], the first two authors used the triality model to explain rather mysterious formulas obtained by Deligne for the dimensions of certain series of representations of the exceptional Lie algebras. In this paper, we show that the use of the parameter a leads to several interesting observations for nilpotent orbits in the exceptional Lie algebras.

Let us begin with any nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O} in \mathfrak{f}_4 . Thanks to the natural embeddings $\mathfrak{so}_8 \subset \mathfrak{f}_4 \subset \mathfrak{e}_6 \subset \mathfrak{e}_7 \subset \mathfrak{e}_8$, we obtain a series of orbits \mathcal{O}_a in these Lie algebras. Their weighted Dynkin diagrams can be obtained in the following way: each series of orbits is defined by a weight of

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\mathfrak{so}_8 , which, through the triality model, defines a weight, thus a weighted Dynkin diagram, for each exceptional Lie algebra. This is how we proved and generalized the dimension formulas of Deligne for series of representations whose highest weights came from \mathfrak{so}_8 in [Landsberg and Manivel 02a]. We prove, or check from the tables compiled in [Carter 93], that

- the dimension of \mathcal{O}_a is a linear function of a ;
- the stabilizers of points in \mathcal{O}_a have unipotent radicals of dimension again linear in a , while their reductive parts organize into simple series;
- the closure of \mathcal{O}_a can be desingularized by a homogeneous vector bundle, whose dimensions of the base and of the fiber are both linear in a ;
- the number of \mathbb{F}_q -rational points on \mathcal{O}_a , for large q , is given by a polynomial in q with a uniform expression in a ; and
- the unipotent characters of the finite groups of exceptional Lie type, associated to the orbits \mathcal{O}_a through the Springer correspondence, have degrees given by polynomials that, when suitably expressed as rational functions, have uniform expressions in a .

This last fact, which is true only for $a \geq 2$, is the most mysterious observation of this paper, and we would like very much to have a theoretical explanation.

We observe similar phenomena for the other lines of Freudenthal’s square: i.e., for the series of Lie algebras $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B})$ when \mathbb{B} is \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{C} , or \mathbb{H} and also for the classical Lie algebras. In fact, a few orbits are universal (or almost universal), in the sense that they appear in every (or almost every) simple Lie algebra. We discuss certain properties of these orbits in connection with the work of Vogel and Deligne around the “universal Lie algebra” and, also, with the more geometric investigations of [Landsberg and Manivel 01].

1.2 The Freudenthal-Tits Construction

We recall Tits’ construction of the exceptional Lie algebras in terms of real normed algebras [Tits 66].

Let \mathbb{A} be a real normed algebra, so that $\mathbb{A} = \mathbb{R}, \mathbb{C}, \mathbb{H}$, or \mathbb{O} , the Cayley algebra, and let $a := \dim \mathbb{A} = 1, 2, 4$, or 8 . The conjugation (i.e., the orthogonal symmetry with respect to the unit element) will be denoted by $u \mapsto u^*$. The subspace of \mathbb{A} defined by the equation $u^* = -u$ is the orthogonal $Im \mathbb{A}$ of the unit element. Let $\mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})$ denote the Jordan algebra of Hermitian matrices of order three

with coefficients in \mathbb{A} . The subspace of traceless matrices is denoted $\mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})_0$.

Now, let \mathbb{A} and \mathbb{B} be two real normed algebras, and let

$$\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B}) = Der \mathbb{A} \times Der \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{B}) \oplus (Im \mathbb{A} \otimes \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{B})_0).$$

There is a natural structure of \mathbb{Z}_2 -graded Lie algebra on $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B})$.

A useful variant of this construction is the triality model, first discovered by Allison [Allison 78] and recently rediscovered by several authors (see e.g., [Landsberg and Manivel 02a]). Define the *triality algebra*

$$\begin{aligned} \mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A}) &= \{\theta = (\theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3) \in \mathfrak{so}(\mathbb{A})^3 : \\ &\theta_3(xy) = \theta_1(x)y + x\theta_2(y) \text{ for all } x, y \in \mathbb{A}\}. \end{aligned}$$

We have $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{R}) = 0$, $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{C}) = \mathbb{R}^2$, $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{H}) = \mathfrak{so}_3 \times \mathfrak{so}_3 \times \mathfrak{so}_3$, and $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{so}_8$.

For \mathbb{A} and \mathbb{B} two real normed algebras, let

$$\tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B}) = \mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A}) \times \mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{B}) \oplus (\mathbb{A}_1 \otimes \mathbb{B}_1) \oplus (\mathbb{A}_2 \otimes \mathbb{B}_2) \oplus (\mathbb{A}_3 \otimes \mathbb{B}_3).$$

Then, there is a natural structure of $(\mathbb{Z}_2 \times \mathbb{Z}_2)$ -graded semi-simple Lie algebra on $\tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B})$.

In what follows we will work over the complex numbers and complexify the whole construction without changing notations. We just have a new conjugation map $x \rightarrow \bar{x}$ in \mathbb{O} (which now denotes the complexified Cayley algebra) such that $\overline{\bar{x}y} = \bar{x} \times \bar{y}$.

The result of both constructions is Freudenthal’s magic square:

	\mathbb{R}	\mathbb{C}	\mathbb{H}	\mathbb{O}
\mathbb{R}	\mathfrak{sl}_2	\mathfrak{sl}_3	\mathfrak{sp}_6	\mathfrak{f}_4
\mathbb{C}	\mathfrak{sl}_3	$\mathfrak{sl}_3 \times \mathfrak{sl}_3$	\mathfrak{sl}_6	\mathfrak{e}_6
\mathbb{H}	\mathfrak{sp}_6	\mathfrak{sl}_6	\mathfrak{so}_{12}	\mathfrak{e}_7
\mathbb{O}	\mathfrak{f}_4	\mathfrak{e}_6	\mathfrak{e}_7	\mathfrak{e}_8

1.3 The Exceptional Series

Letting $\mathbb{B} = \mathbb{O}$ in the magic square, we obtain exceptional Lie algebras of types $\mathfrak{f}_4, \mathfrak{e}_6, \mathfrak{e}_7$, and \mathfrak{e}_8 .

An important fact for what follows is the observation ([Landsberg and Manivel 02a], page 68) that there is a preferred cone \mathcal{C} in the weight lattice of $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{so}_8$ defined by the condition that a weight in \mathcal{C} is dominant and integral when considered as a weight of each of the four Lie algebras $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O}) \supset \mathfrak{so}_8$. This cone is generated by the four following weights of \mathfrak{so}_8 :

$$\begin{aligned} \omega(\mathfrak{g}) &= \omega_2, & \omega(\mathfrak{g}_2) &= \omega_1 + \omega_3 + \omega_4, \\ \omega(\mathfrak{g}_3) &= 2\omega_1 + 2\omega_3, & \text{and } \omega(\mathfrak{g}_Q) &= 2\omega_1. \end{aligned}$$

	\mathfrak{f}_4	\mathfrak{e}_6	\mathfrak{e}_7	\mathfrak{e}_8
$\omega(\mathfrak{g})$				
$\omega(\mathfrak{g}_2)$				
$\omega(\mathfrak{g}_3)$				
$\omega(\mathfrak{g}_Q)$				

TABLE 1.

(The representations we denote by \mathfrak{g} , \mathfrak{g}_2 , \mathfrak{g}_3 , and \mathfrak{g}_Q are denoted X_1, X_2, X_3 , and Y_2^* in [Deligne 96; Landsberg and Manivel 02a].)

Table 1 contains the expressions of these four weights in terms of the fundamental weights of each exceptional Lie algebra.

2. NILPOTENT ORBITS IN THE EXCEPTIONAL SERIES

2.1 Series of Nilpotent Orbits

Since $\text{Der } \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{f}_4$ is a subalgebra of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ for all \mathbb{A} , every nilpotent orbit in \mathfrak{f}_4 defines a nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O}_a in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ of the corresponding adjoint Lie group. More generally, any element of \mathfrak{f}_4 defines a series of orbits in the Lie algebras $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$.

Proposition 2.1. *For any element of \mathfrak{f}_4 , the dimension of its orbit \mathcal{O}_a in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ is a linear function of a .*

Proof: Let X belong to \mathfrak{f}_4 , and let's denote its centralizer by $c(X) \subset \mathfrak{f}_4$. The centralizer $c(X)_a$ of X in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ is $\text{Der } \mathbb{A} \times c(X) \oplus \text{Im } \mathbb{A} \otimes k(X)$, where $k(X) \subset \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{O})_0$ denotes the subspace annihilated by X . The codimension of this centralizer is obviously a linear function of a . Since it is equal to the dimension of the orbit \mathcal{O}_a of X in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$, our claim is proved. \square

Now we suppose that $X \in \mathfrak{f}_4$ is nilpotent, and we complete it into a \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple (X, Y, H) of \mathfrak{f}_4 . The reductive part of $c(X)_a$ is the centralizer $\mathfrak{h}(a) := c(X, Y, H)_a$ of the full \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple ([Carter 1993], Proposition 5.5.9). Moreover, the decomposition of the adjoint action of H into eigenspaces is

$$\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O}) = \bigoplus_{i \in \mathbb{Z}} \mathfrak{g}(a, i),$$

with $[\mathfrak{g}(a, i), \mathfrak{g}(a, j)] \subset \mathfrak{g}(a, i+j)$. In particular, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0)$ is a subalgebra, and each $\mathfrak{g}(a, i)$ is a $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0)$ -module. Note that $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0)$ contains $\mathfrak{h}(a)$.

Proposition 2.2. *For every nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O}_1 in \mathfrak{f}_4 , let \mathcal{O}_a again denote the corresponding series of nilpotent orbits in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$. The dimension of the nilpotent radical $\mathfrak{r}(a)$ of the stabilizer of an element of \mathcal{O}_a is a linear function of a . For any $i \neq 0$, the dimension of the i th part $\mathfrak{g}(a, i)$ of the induced gradation of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ is a linear function of a .*

Proof: Let $X \in \mathcal{O}_1 \subset \mathfrak{f}_4$ be nilpotent, and let (X, Y, H) be a \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple of \mathfrak{f}_4 . If $k(X, Y, H) = k(X) \cap k(Y) \cap k(H)$, the centralizer of the \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple is

$$c(X, Y, H)_a = \text{Der } \mathbb{A} \times c(X, Y, H)_1 \oplus \text{Im } \mathbb{A} \otimes k(X, Y, H),$$

whose codimension in $c(X)_a$ is a linear function of a . Since this is the reductive part $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ of this centralizer, its codimension is equal to the dimension of the nilpotent radical $\mathfrak{r}(a)$ of $c(X)_a$, and our first claim is proved.

For the second claim, we just note that, for $i \neq 0$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, i) = \mathfrak{g}(0, i) \oplus \text{Im } \mathbb{A} \otimes \mathfrak{k}(i)$, where $\mathfrak{k}(i) \subset \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{O})_0$ is the i th eigenspace of the H -action. (We thank E. Vinberg for these observations.) \square

Remark 2.3. Since $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ centralizes the \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple, $\mathfrak{h}(a) \times \mathfrak{sl}_2$ is naturally a subalgebra of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$, which can be decomposed into

$$\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O}) = \bigoplus_{k \geq 0} \mathfrak{g}^*(a, k) \otimes [k],$$

where $[k]$ denotes the irreducible \mathfrak{sl}_2 -module of dimension $k+1$ and $\mathfrak{g}^*(a, k)$ is a $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ -module. In particular, $\mathfrak{g}^*(a, 0) = \mathfrak{h}(a)$. By elementary properties of the

representation theory of \mathfrak{sl}_2 , the dimension of $\mathfrak{g}^*(a, k)$ is $\dim \mathfrak{g}(a, k) - \dim \mathfrak{g}(a, k+2)$ and is, again, a linear function of a for $k \neq 0$.

Recall that the nilpotent orbits can be classified by combinatorial data as follows: if X belongs to some nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O} , we include it into a \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple (X, Y, H) . The semi-simple element H can be supposed to belong to a given Cartan subalgebra \mathfrak{t} , and a set of simple roots Δ can be chosen such that $\alpha(H)$ is a nonnegative integer for all $\alpha \in \Delta$. The collection of these integers, or the corresponding weighted Dynkin diagram, uniquely defines the nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O} .

To understand the weighted Dynkin diagrams of a series \mathcal{O}_a of nilpotent orbits in the exceptional Lie algebras, it is convenient to use the triality model $\tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ rather than the more classical Tits-Freudenthal construction. Beginning with $\mathbb{A} = \mathbb{R}$, we have

$$\mathfrak{f}_4 = \tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{so}_8 \oplus \mathbb{O}_1 \oplus \mathbb{O}_2 \oplus \mathbb{O}_3.$$

A Cartan subalgebra \mathfrak{t} of \mathfrak{f}_4 can be chosen inside \mathfrak{so}_8 . We use the notations of [Bourbaki 1968] for the root system of \mathfrak{so}_8 and choose the same simple roots. The roots of \mathfrak{f}_4 are then given by those of \mathfrak{so}_8 , plus the weights of the three inequivalent eight-dimensional representations \mathbb{O}_1 , \mathbb{O}_2 , and \mathbb{O}_3 . We get a set of positive roots by choosing a linear form on \mathfrak{t}^* of the form $\ell = \ell_1\alpha_1^* + \ell_2\alpha_2^* + \ell_3\alpha_3^* + \ell_4\alpha_4^*$, with $\ell_1 > \ell_2 > \ell_3 > \ell_4 > 0$. The three representations \mathbb{O}_1 , \mathbb{O}_2 , and \mathbb{O}_3 have highest weights ω_1 , ω_3 , and ω_4 respectively, and their minimal weights on which ℓ is positive are $\phi_1 = \omega_3 - \omega_4$, $\phi_2 = \omega_1 - \omega_4$, and $\phi_3 = \omega_1 - \omega_3$ respectively. The simple roots of \mathfrak{f}_4 must be either simple roots of \mathfrak{so}_8 or among these three minimal weights. Since $\phi_3 = \phi_1 + \phi_2$, $\alpha_3 = \alpha_4 + 2\phi_1$, and $\alpha_1 = \alpha_3 + 2\phi_4$, the simple roots of \mathfrak{f}_4 must be $\alpha_2, \alpha_4, \phi_1$, and ϕ_2 . Note that our four preferred weights $\omega(\mathfrak{g})$, $\omega(\mathfrak{g}_2)$, $\omega(\mathfrak{g}_3)$, and $\omega(\mathfrak{g}_Q)$ of \mathfrak{so}_8 provide us with the dual basis.

Now, let \mathbb{A} be any real normed algebra (complexified). A Cartan subalgebra of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ is given by the sum of the Cartan subalgebra \mathfrak{t} of $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{so}_8$ and a Cartan subalgebra of $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$. The root system of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ is the union of the roots systems of \mathfrak{so}_8 and $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$, plus the weights of the form $\mu + \nu$, for μ a weight of some \mathbb{O}_i and ν a weight of \mathbb{A}_i . The positive roots can be chosen to be the positive roots of \mathfrak{so}_8 and $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$, plus the weights $\mu + \nu$ for which $\ell(\mu) > 0$. The simple roots of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ are then either simple roots of \mathfrak{so}_8 , of $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$ (we denote them by α'_j), or some of the $\phi_i - \omega'_i$, where ω'_i is the highest weight of \mathbb{A}_i (and $-\omega'_i$ its lowest weight, since \mathbb{A}_i is self-dual). Since $S^2\mathbb{A}_i$ contains the trivial representation, $2\omega'_i$ must

belong to the root lattice of $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$, as well as $\omega'_1 + \omega'_2 + \omega'_3$, because there is an equivariant map $\mathbb{A}_1 \otimes \mathbb{A}_2 \rightarrow \mathbb{A}_3$. We easily deduce that, exactly as in the case of \mathfrak{f}_4 , $\phi_3 - \omega'_3$, α_1 , and α_3 cannot be simple roots. The simple roots of $\tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ are, therefore, given by α_2, α_4 , the α'_j 's, $\phi_1 - \omega'_1$, and $\phi_2 - \omega'_2$.

For a \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple (X, Y, H) in $\mathfrak{f}_4 = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{O})$ defining a nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O}_a in $\tilde{\mathfrak{g}}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$, the labels of the corresponding Dynkin diagram will be $\alpha_2(H)$, $\alpha_4(H)$, $\alpha'_j(H) = 0$, $\phi_1(H)$, and $\phi_2(H)$: i.e., exactly the same labels as those of \mathcal{O}_1 , plus some zeros on the simple roots coming from $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$. We conclude:

Proposition 2.4. *Let the nilpotent orbit \mathcal{O}_1 in \mathfrak{f}_4 define a series \mathcal{O}_a of nilpotent orbits in the exceptional Lie algebras. Suppose that the weighted Dynkin diagram of \mathcal{O}_1 defines the weight $p\omega(\mathfrak{g}) + q\omega(\mathfrak{g}_2) + r\omega(\mathfrak{g}_3) + s\omega(\mathfrak{g}_Q)$. Then this remains true for the weighted Dynkin diagrams of each of the nilpotent orbits \mathcal{O}_a .*

We encode the corresponding series by the symbol $\mathfrak{g}^p \mathfrak{g}_2^q \mathfrak{g}_3^r \mathfrak{g}_Q^s$. With this convention, the Hasse diagram of nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{f}_4 (see e.g., [Carter 19], page 440), is given by Figure 1.

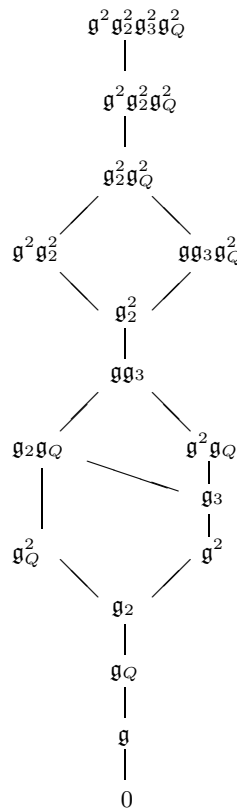


FIGURE 1. Hasse diagram of nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{f}_4 .

Example 2.5. The series of nilpotent orbits $\mathfrak{g}\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$ will be given by the following four weighted Dynkin diagrams:

$$\begin{array}{c} 1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 2 \\ \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \\ | \\ 1 \end{array}, \quad \begin{array}{c} 2 \quad 1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 2 \\ \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \\ | \\ 1 \end{array}, \quad \begin{array}{c} 1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 0 \quad 2 \quad 0 \\ \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \\ | \\ 0 \end{array}, \quad \begin{array}{c} 2 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \\ \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \text{---} \circ \\ | \\ 0 \end{array}.$$

2.2 Series of Stabilizers

For each series \mathcal{O}_a , we proved in Proposition 2.2 that the codimension of the centralizer, and the dimension of the nilpotent radical $\mathfrak{t}(a)$, are linear functions of a . In this section we provide explicit data for each series of orbits. We also give the reductive parts $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ of these centralizers and observe that they organize into series of Lie algebras. Most of these are either given by the other series $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{B})$ of Freudenthal's square, the derivation algebras $\text{Der}\mathbb{A}$, the triality algebras $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A}) = \text{Der}\mathbb{A} \oplus 2\text{Im}\mathbb{A}$, or the intermediate series $\mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A}) = \text{Der}\mathbb{A} \oplus \text{Im}\mathbb{A}$ of Barton and Sudbery ([Barton and Sudbery 2002], page 13).

Another series that appears is the *inf-Severi series* $\mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$. It has two preferred representations $V(a)$ and $W(a)$, respectively of dimensions $2a$ and $a + 2$. Geometrically, let $X(a)$ be one of the four Severi varieties, which is homogeneous under the action of the adjoint group of $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{C})$ [Landsberg and Manivel 2002d]. Then, $\mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$ is the reductive part of the Lie algebra of the stabilizer of a point in $X(a)$, $V(a)$ is the isotropy representation, and $W(a)$ is the complement of the Cartan square of $V(a)^*$ in $S^2V(a)^*$ (except when $a = 1$, in which case it is equal to this Cartan square).

These series of Lie algebras are given by:

	\mathbb{A}	\mathbb{R}	\mathbb{C}	\mathbb{H}	\mathbb{O}
$\text{Der}\mathbb{A}$		0	0	\mathfrak{sl}_2	\mathfrak{g}_2
$\mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$		0	\mathbb{C}	$2\mathfrak{sl}_2$	\mathfrak{spin}_7
$\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$		0	$2\mathbb{C}$	$3\mathfrak{sl}_2$	\mathfrak{spin}_8
$\mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$	\mathfrak{sl}_2	$\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{gl}_2$	$\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{gl}_2$	$\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{sl}_4$	\mathfrak{spin}_{10}

Most of the data below have been gathered from the tables in [Carter 1993]. We refer to each series of orbits by its label $\mathfrak{g}^p\mathfrak{g}_2^q\mathfrak{g}_3^r\mathfrak{g}_Q^s$. Then, we provide the series of labels used in the tables of [Carter 93]; in general, we provide four of them, encoding the four orbits in \mathfrak{f}_4 , \mathfrak{e}_6 , \mathfrak{e}_7 , \mathfrak{e}_8 , sometimes five, when the series comes from $\mathfrak{so}_8 \subset \mathfrak{f}_4$, in which case we also provide the partition of 8 encoding the corresponding orbit (actually sometimes a trialitarian triple of orbits) in \mathfrak{so}_8 , which corresponds to $a = 0$.

Remark 2.6. If an \mathfrak{so}_8 orbit is symmetric about its folding, it also occurs in \mathfrak{g}_2 , and its dimension is given by the same formula with $a = -2/3$. This occurs for the orbits labeled \mathfrak{g} , \mathfrak{g}_2 , \mathfrak{g}^2 , and $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_2^2$. Similarly, the formulas for \mathfrak{g}

extend to both \mathfrak{sl}_2 and \mathfrak{sl}_3 with $a = -4/3$ and $a = -1$, respectively, and \mathfrak{g}^2 extends also to \mathfrak{sl}_3 . That these Lie algebras should be incorporated in the exceptional series was already observed in [Deligne 96].

- \mathfrak{g} : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 6a + 10$
 $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 6a + 9$
 $[(2^21^4), A_1, A_1, A_1, A_1] \quad \mathfrak{h}(a) = 3\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sp}_6, \mathfrak{sl}_6,$
 $\mathfrak{so}_{12}, \mathfrak{e}_7$

This is the minimal nilpotent orbit, the cone over the adjoint variety. Here $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{H})$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{H}) \times \mathbb{C}$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = \mathfrak{z}_2(\mathbb{A})$, the Zorn representation (see for example [Landsberg and Manivel 02d]), and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = \mathbb{C}$.

- \mathfrak{g}_Q : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 10a + 12$
 $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 9a + 6$
 $[(2222), \tilde{A}_1, 2A_1, 2A_1, 2A_1] \quad \mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{so}_5, \mathfrak{sl}_4, \mathfrak{co}_7,$
 $\mathfrak{so}_9 \times \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{so}_{13}$

We denoted by $\mathfrak{co}_n = \mathfrak{so}_n \times \mathbb{C}$ the conformal Lie algebra. Here $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{co}_3, \mathfrak{co}_7, \mathfrak{co}_8, \mathfrak{co}_{10} \times \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{co}_{14}$ respectively, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1)$ is a spin representation of dimension $8a$, and, for $a > 0$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2)$ is the standard vector representation of dimension $a + 6$.

- \mathfrak{g}_2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 12a + 16$
 $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 9a + 9$
 $[(3221), A_1 + \tilde{A}_1, 3A_1, 3A_1, 3A_1] \quad \mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{sl}_3,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{sp}_6, \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{f}_4$

This is the series of orbits discussed by Panyushev in [Panyushev 02]. Here $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{R})$ and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{C}) \times \mathfrak{gl}_2$. If U denotes the natural two-dimensional representation of this \mathfrak{gl}_2 , we have $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A}) \otimes U$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3) = U$.

- \mathfrak{g}^2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 12a + 18$
 $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 6a + 8$
 $[(3311), A_2, A_2, A_2, A_2] \quad \mathfrak{h}(a) = 2\mathbb{C}, \mathfrak{sl}_3, 2\mathfrak{sl}_3,$
 $\mathfrak{fsl}_6, \mathfrak{e}_6$

This is the $a = 2$ line of the Freudenthal square, that is $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{C})$. Moreover, since this is the orbit \mathfrak{g}^2 , the induced grading is the same as in the case of the minimal nilpotent orbit, with indices doubled: $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{H}) \times \mathbb{C}$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = 0$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = \mathfrak{z}_2(\mathbb{A})$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3) = 0$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 4) = \mathbb{C}$.

- \mathfrak{g}_3 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 16a + 18$
 $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 9a + 6$
 $[A_2 + \tilde{A}_1, A_2 + 2A_1, A_2 + 2A_1, A_2 + 2A_1] \quad \mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{gl}_2, 3\mathfrak{sl}_2,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_7$

Here $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{l}(a)$. Moreover, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{gl}_3 \times \mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$, where $\mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$ is the inf-Severi series discussed above. Let U denote the natural representation of \mathfrak{gl}_3 . Then $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = U \otimes V(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = U^* \otimes W(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3) = V(a)$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 4) = U$.

- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 16a + 20$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 5a + 5$
 $[(44), B_2, A_3, A_3, A_3]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 2\mathbb{C}, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{co}_5,$
 $\mathfrak{so}_7 \times \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{so}_{11}$

Here $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = 2\mathfrak{gl}_2, \mathfrak{co}_5, \mathfrak{gl}_4 \times \mathbb{C}^2, \mathfrak{gl}_2 \times \mathfrak{co}_8, \mathfrak{co}_{12} \times \mathbb{C}$, respectively. Moreover, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1)$ and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3)$ have dimension $4a$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2)$ and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 4)$ have dimension $a + 4$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 5)$ is one-dimensional. For $a = 1$ we get representations of dimensions 4 and 5, in accordance with the exceptional isomorphism $\mathfrak{so}_5 \simeq \mathfrak{sp}_4$.

- \mathfrak{g}_Q^2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 18a + 12$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 8a$
 $[\tilde{A}_2, 2A_2, 2A_2, 2A_2]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{g}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{g}_2,$
 $2\mathfrak{g}_2$

For this case $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \text{Der} \mathbb{A} \times \text{Der} \mathbb{O}$, a product of derivation algebras. The grading is the doubling of the grading for \mathfrak{g}_Q .

- $\mathfrak{g}_2 \mathfrak{g}_Q$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 18a + 18$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 8a + 5$
 $[\tilde{A}_2 + A_1, 2A_2 + A_1,$
 $2A_2 + A_1, 2A_2 + A_1]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{g}_2$

In this case $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \text{Der} \mathbb{A}$. Moreover, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathbb{C}^2 \times \mathfrak{k}(a)$, with the notations of the series \mathfrak{g}_3 , and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = U \otimes W(a) \oplus V(a)$ has dimension $4a + 4$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = U \otimes V(a) \oplus \mathbb{C}$ has dimension $4a + 1$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3) = U \oplus V(a)$ has dimension $2a + 2$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 4) = W(a)$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 5) = U$, the natural representation of \mathfrak{sl}_2 .

- $\mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_3$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 18a + 20$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 7a + 4$
 $[C_3(a_1), A_3 + A_1,$
 $A_3 + \tilde{A}_1, A_3 + A_1]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{gl}_2, 3\mathfrak{sl}_2,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_7$

This case is similar to the previous one, since $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$ and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathbb{C} \times \mathfrak{k}(\mathbb{A})$. But the induced grading is different: $\mathfrak{g}(a, 1) = U \oplus U \otimes V(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 2) = V(a) \oplus W(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 3) = U \otimes W(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 4) = V(a)$, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 5) = U$, and $\mathfrak{g}(a, 6) = \mathbb{C}$.

- \mathfrak{g}_2^2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 18a + 22$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 6a + 6$
 $[(53), F_4(a_3), D_4(a_1),$
 $D_4(a_1), D_4(a_1)]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, 2\mathbb{C}, 3\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{so}_8$

Note that $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{A})$, the triality algebra. The induced grading is the same as for the series \mathfrak{g}_2 only with indices doubled.

- $\mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 18a + 24$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 4$
 $[(71), B_3, D_4, D_4, D_4]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_3,$
 $\mathfrak{sp}_6, \mathfrak{f}_4$

This is the line $a = 1$ of the Freudenthal square, that is $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{R})$.

- $\mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 22a + 20$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 4a + 3$
 $[C_3, A_5, \tilde{A}_5, A_5]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{g}_2$

Here $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \text{Der} \mathbb{A}$. Moreover, $\mathfrak{g}(a, 0) = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathbb{C}^3 \times \text{Der} \mathbb{A}$, and the induced grading has ten nonzero terms in positive degrees.

- $\mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 22a + 22$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 4a + 4$
 $[F_4(a_2), E_6(a_3),$
 $E_6(a_3), E_6(a_3)]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 22a + 24$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 3$
 $[F_4(a_1), D_5, D_5, D_5]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, \mathbb{C}, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{so}_7$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 24a + 24$
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 2a + 2$
 $[F_4, E_6, E_6, E_6]$ $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2$

We see that $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \text{Der} \mathbb{A}$ for the two series $\mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$ and $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$, and that $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ is given by the intermediate series $\mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$ in the case of $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$.

2.3 Desingularizations of Orbit Closures

Given a \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triple (X, H, Y) in a simple complex Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} , a resolution of singularities for the orbit closure \overline{GX} of the adjoint group G can be obtained as follows (see [Panyushev 1992]): let $\mathfrak{m} = \bigoplus_{i \geq 2} \mathfrak{g}(i)$, let $\mathfrak{p} = \bigoplus_{i \geq 0} \mathfrak{g}(i)$, and let $P \subset G$ be the parabolic subgroup with Lie algebra \mathfrak{p} . Then, \mathfrak{m} is a P -module, and the ‘‘collapsing’’

$$\begin{array}{ccc} G \times_P \mathfrak{m} & \longrightarrow & \overline{GX} \subset \mathfrak{g} \\ \downarrow & & \\ G/P & & \end{array}$$

is a resolution of singularities. Here, as usual, $G \times_P \mathfrak{m}$ denotes the homogeneous vector bundle over the projective variety G/P , whose fiber at the base point P/P is the P -module \mathfrak{m} . This manifold can also be defined as the

$$Z_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) = q^{11a+8} \frac{(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^{a/2+2} - 1)}$$

FIGURE 2.

quotient of the product $G \times \mathfrak{m}$ by the equivalence relation $(g, m) \simeq (gp^{-1}, p.m)$, where $p \in P$, so that the product map $(g, m) \mapsto g.m \in \mathfrak{g}$ descends to $G \times_P \mathfrak{m}$.

Now, if (X, H, Y) defines a series \mathcal{O}_a of nilpotent orbits in $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$, we observed that each eigenspace $\mathfrak{g}(a, i)$ of $ad(H)$ for the eigenvalue $i \neq 0$, so a fortiori $\mathfrak{m}(a) = \bigoplus_{i \geq 2} \mathfrak{g}(a, i)$, has a dimension which is linear in a . This implies that the closure of \mathcal{O}_a is birational to a homogeneous vector bundle whose fiber and base are both of dimension linear in a .

Note that in most cases the orbit \mathcal{O}_a is even, meaning that the associated weighted Dynkin diagram has only even weights. Such an orbit is a Richardson orbit, and the desingularization above of its closure is simply given by the cotangent bundle T^*G/P .

For another nice situation, consider an orbit \overline{GX} corresponding to an \mathfrak{sl}_2 triple (X, H, Y) such that $H = H_\beta$ for some simple root β . Suppose that H defines a 5-step grading of \mathfrak{g} , which means that the coefficient of the highest root $\tilde{\alpha}$ over β equals two. Let P_β denote the standard maximal parabolic subgroup of G defined by β . Consider $\tilde{\alpha}$ as a weight of P_β and denote by $E_\beta(\tilde{\alpha})$ the associated irreducible vector bundle on G/P_β . Then, the desingularisation of \overline{GX} is

$$\begin{array}{ccc} E_\beta(\tilde{\alpha}) & \longrightarrow & \overline{GX} \subset \mathfrak{g} \\ \downarrow & & \\ G/P_\beta & & \end{array} .$$

Recall from [Tits 1954] that the adjoint variety $X_{ad} \subset \mathbb{P}\mathfrak{g}$ is uniruled by the shadows of G/P_β , a family of homogeneous varieties parametrized by G/P_β . These shadows are determined pictorially by deleting β from the Dynkin diagram of \mathfrak{g} with the adjoint marking (when the adjoint representation is fundamental, this just means that we mark the node of the corresponding fundamental weight). Then, the projectivization of \overline{GX} is the union of the linear spans of the shadows, and the vector bundle $E_\beta(\tilde{\alpha})$ is the family of the associated vector subspaces of \mathfrak{g} . (Special cases of this were observed in [Landsberg and Manivel 2002b].) This phenomenon occurs uniformly for the series \mathfrak{g}_Q .

2.4 Rational Points

A nilpotent orbit $\mathcal{O} \simeq G/K \subset \mathfrak{g}$ is defined over \mathbb{F}_q for q large enough, and the number of its \mathbb{F}_q -points is a polynomial function of q [Brion and Peyre 02, Theorem 1.a].

We can deduce this polynomial function from the data gathered in [Carter 93]. Indeed, if K is connected, this number is equal to $|G(\mathbb{F}_q)|/|K(\mathbb{F}_q)|$ (see [Brion and Peyre 02, Theorem 1.c]) and can be deduced from the formulas in [Carter 93, pages 75–76] and the data for K gathered above. When the group K is not connected, which may happen in some cases, the formulas below hold for the quotients $|G(\mathbb{F}_q)|/|K(\mathbb{F}_q)|$.

For each of our series \mathcal{O}_a of nilpotent orbits, we express the resulting polynomial as a rational function involving only terms of the form $q^\ell - 1$, where ℓ is some linear function of a , from a very limited list.

We begin with the biggest series of orbits, whose label is $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$. The number of \mathbb{F}_q -points on these orbits is shown in Figure 2. For the other series, the corresponding functions are simple quotients $Z_{\mathcal{O}}(q) = Z_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q)/Y_{\mathcal{O}}(q)$, with denominators given by the following table:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{\mathfrak{g}}(q) &= q^{11a+8}(q^a - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1) \\ &\quad (q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) &= q^{21a/2+6}(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1) \\ &\quad (q^{a+4} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_2}(q) &= q^{19a/2+6}(q^2 - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}^2}(q) &= q^{8a+4}(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{a+1} - 1) \\ &\quad (q^{3a/2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_3}(q) &= q^{15a/2+4}(q^2 - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) &= q^{11a/2+2}(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) &= q^{6a+4}(q^2 - 1)(q^6 - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_2 \mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) &= q^{6a+4}(q^2 - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_3}(q) &= q^{11a/2+2}(q^2 - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_2^2}(q) &= q^{5a+2}(q^{a/2} - 1)^2, \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2}(q) &= q^{7a/2}(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_3 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) &= q^{2a+2}(q^2 - 1), \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) &= q^{2a+2}, \\ Y_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_2^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) &= q^{3a/2}(q^{a/2} - 1). \end{aligned}$$

In particular, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points on the series of minimal nilpotent orbits is

$$Z_{\mathfrak{g}}(q) = \frac{(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)}.$$

2.5 Unipotent Characters

The Springer correspondence uses local systems on nilpotent orbits to define representations of Weyl groups, which themselves are in natural correspondence with unipotent characters of finite groups of the corresponding Lie type. In this section we show that the unipotent characters corresponding to our series of nilpotent orbits in the exceptional Lie algebras are accordingly organized into series. This can be seen on the polynomials giving the degrees of these characters, once we write these polynomials as rational functions. More precisely, we are able to write these functions as products of factors of type $q^e - 1$, or inverses of such factors, with e a linear function of a . This striking fact only holds for $a = 2, 4$, or 8 . A theoretical explanation would be most welcome. Also, it would be interesting to understand what really happens when $a = 1$, that is, when \mathfrak{e}_6 is folded into \mathfrak{f}_4 .

Note that the fundamental groups of the nilpotent orbits in our series are well-behaved: they are constant in each series, either trivial or equal to \mathbb{Z}_2 , in which case we get two series of unipotent characters. Actually, there is one exception to this: in the series labeled \mathfrak{g}_Q^2 , the nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{e}_6 and \mathfrak{e}_7 are simply connected, but that of \mathfrak{e}_8 has fundamental group \mathbb{Z}_2 .

The following data are again transcriptions of the formulas gathered in [Carter 93, pages 480–488] for the degrees of unipotent characters. Note that, in this reference, these degrees are given as products of cyclotomic polynomials, a form in which the regularities that we observed are far from visible. Some work is needed to put these formulas into the form that follows. Note that only a small family of linear functions is involved in these formulas. Note also that many simplifications may occur in each degree, but in different ways.

We let N denote the number of positive roots.

- \mathfrak{g} : The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$q^{N-3a-5} \frac{(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)}{(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)}.$$

- \mathfrak{g}_Q : The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$q^{N-5a-6} \frac{(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)(q^{a+4} - 1)}.$$

- \mathfrak{g}_2 : The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$\frac{1}{2}q^{N-6a-9} \frac{(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a+1} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)^2(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)^2(q^{3a/2+3} - 1)}.$$

- \mathfrak{g}^2 : The degrees of the two associated unipotent characters are

$$\frac{1}{2}q^{N-6a-9} \frac{(q^{a+2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a+1} - 1)(q^{a+4} - 1)(q^{3a/2+3} - 1)} \quad \text{and}$$

$$\frac{1}{2}q^{N-6a-9} \frac{(q - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+3} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)^2(q^{a+1} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_Q$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$q^{N-8a-10} \frac{(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+4} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)}.$$

- \mathfrak{g}_2^2 : The degrees of the two associated unipotent characters are $q^{N-9a-11}$ times

$$\frac{(q^{a/2+1} - 1)^3(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{6(q - 1)^2(q^2 - q + 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)^2(q^{a/2+2} - 1)^3(q^{a+2} - 1)^2(q^{3a/2+3} - 1)} \quad \text{and}$$

$$\frac{(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{3(q^2 - 1)^2(q^{a/2} - 1)^2(q^{a+2} - 1)^2(q^{3a/2+6} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_2^2$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$q^{N-9a-12} \frac{(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^6 - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+4} - 1)(q^{a+4} - 1)}.$$

- \mathfrak{g}_Q^2 : Here there is a problem: there are two associated characters for E_8 , but only one for E_6 and E_7 . Nevertheless, let

$$\phi_a(q) = q^{N-9a-6} \frac{(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)^2(q^6 - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+4} - 1)}.$$

The degrees of the unipotent characters attached to this series for E_6 and E_7 are $\phi_2(q)$ and $\phi_4(q)$, while the two characters for E_8 have their degrees given by

$$\phi_{8,\epsilon}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{q^9 - \epsilon}{q^3 - \epsilon} \frac{q - \epsilon}{q^7 - \epsilon} \phi_8(q), \quad \text{where } \epsilon = \pm 1.$$

- \mathfrak{g}_3 : The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$q^{N-8a-9} \frac{(q^{a/2+4} - 1)(q^{2a-2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^6 - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+2} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}_2\mathfrak{g}_Q$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$\frac{1}{3} q^{N-9a-11} \frac{(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)^2(q^{a/2+2} - 1)^3(q^{a+2} - 1)^2}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}\mathfrak{g}_3$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is

$$\frac{1}{2} q^{N-9a-11} \frac{(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^3 - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+4} - 1)(q^{3a/2+3} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is $\frac{1}{2} q^{N-11a-11}$ times

$$\frac{(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+3} - 1)(q^{a/2+5} - 1)(q^{a+4} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}_2^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: The degree of the associated character is $\frac{1}{2} q^{N-11a-11}$ times

$$\frac{(q^{a/2+3} - 1)(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^2 - 1)^2(q^3 + 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)^3(q^{a/2+5} - 1)(q^{a+6} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_2^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is $q^{N-11a-12}$ times

$$\frac{(q^{a/2+4} - 1)(q^{2a-2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^6 - 1)^2(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+8} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_2^2\mathfrak{g}_3^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: The degree of the associated unipotent character is $q^{N-12a-12}$ times

$$\frac{(q^a - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^2 - 1)(q^6 - 1)(q^8 - 1)(q^{12} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+4} - 1)(q^{a/2+8} - 1)}.$$

$$\psi_{\mathfrak{gg}_Q}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^2 - 1)(q^{5a/4-2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^{a/4-1} - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a/2+4} - 1)}.$$

FIGURE 3.

2.6 Series of Type E_6

We now examine how the five remaining nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{e}_6 propagate to orbits in \mathfrak{e}_7 and \mathfrak{e}_8 . They are associated to \mathfrak{sl}_2 -triples (X, H, Y) for which the semi-simple element H can be chosen to belong to $\mathfrak{t}(\mathbb{O}) = \mathfrak{so}_8$ and, hence, can again be encoded by a label $\mathfrak{g}^p \mathfrak{g}_2^q \mathfrak{g}_3^r \mathfrak{g}_Q^s$.

The degrees of the associated unipotent characters do not behave as well as in the series coming from \mathfrak{f}_4 . A first difficulty is that, in each case, there are two associated characters in type E_7 and E_8 , but only one in type E_6 . We already encountered a similar phenomenon for the series $\mathfrak{g}_Q^2 = [A_2, 2A_2, 2A_2, 2A_2]$, where the degrees of the two unipotent characters were closely related. This is again true for the series of type E_6 , and an a priori explanation would be welcome.

For each series of orbits, we provide the label used in [Carter 93], the dimension of the orbits \mathcal{O}_a and of the unipotent radical $\mathfrak{r}(a)$ of the generic centralizers, which again are both linear functions in a , and the reductive parts $\mathfrak{h}(a)$ of these centralizers.

- \mathfrak{gg}_Q : $A_2 + A_1$, $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 15a + 16$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 9a + 5$, $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{gl}_3, \mathfrak{gl}_4, \mathfrak{sl}_6$.

The degree of the associated unipotent character in type E_6 is

$$\deg \phi_{64,13} = q^{13} \frac{(q^6 - 1)(q^8 - 1)(q^{12} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^3 - 1)(q^3 - 1)}.$$

In type E_7 the degrees of the two unipotent characters are

$$\deg \phi_{120,25} = \frac{1}{2} q^{25} \frac{(q^8 - 1)(q^{10} - 1)(q^{12} - 1)(q^{18} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^6 - 1)} \times \frac{(q^3 + 1)(q^7 + 1)}{(q^4 + 1)(q^6 + 1)} \text{ and}$$

$$\deg \phi_{105,26} = \frac{1}{2} q^{25} \frac{(q^8 - 1)(q^{10} - 1)(q^{12} - 1)(q^{18} - 1)}{(q - 1)(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^6 - 1)} \times \frac{(q^3 - 1)(q^7 - 1)}{(q^4 - 1)(q^6 - 1)}.$$

In type E_8 the degrees of the two unipotent characters are

$$\deg \phi_{210,52} = \frac{1}{2} q^{52} \frac{(q^{14} - 1)(q^{18} - 1)(q^{20} - 1)(q^{30} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^5 - 1)(q^6 - 1)} \times \frac{(q^4 + 1)(q^{12} + 1)}{(q^7 + 1)(q^9 + 1)} \text{ and}$$

$$\deg \phi_{160,55} = \frac{1}{2} q^{52} \frac{(q^{14} - 1)(q^{18} - 1)(q^{20} - 1)(q^{30} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^5 - 1)(q^6 - 1)} \times \frac{(q^4 - 1)(q^{12} - 1)}{(q^7 - 1)(q^9 - 1)}.$$

In Figure 3, let us introduce the following rational function, which is close to those we already met, except for the appearance of an $a/4$ in the exponents of q . Then we can write the degrees in the figure as

$$q^{N-15a/2-8} \psi_{\mathfrak{gg}_Q}(q) \frac{(q^{a/4+2} - 1)(q^{5a/4+2} - 1)}{(q^{3a/4+1} - 1)(q^{3a/4+3} - 1)} \text{ and}$$

$$q^{N-15a/2-8} \psi_{\mathfrak{gg}_Q}(q) \frac{(q^{a/4+2} + 1)(q^{5a/4+2} + 1)}{(q^{3a/4+1} + 1)(q^{3a/4+3} + 1)}.$$

These formulas have several intriguing features. They are obviously closely related one to the other. For $a = 1$, the noninteger exponents cancel out. Moreover, the second part of this expression gives 1 for $a = 1$, hence the same rational expression with coefficient one half, in fact, there is only one character in this case, whose degree is given by the sum of these two equal contributions. What kind of group theoretic explanation could this phenomenon have?

In this series, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points is given by

$$q^{3a+4} \frac{(q^{5a/4-2} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^{a/4} - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+2} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: A_4 , $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 20a + 20$, $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 5a + 4$, $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{gl}_2, \mathfrak{gl}_3, \mathfrak{sl}_5$.

Here we have one unipotent character $\phi_{81,6}$ in type E_6 , two in type E_7 , $\phi_{420,13}$ and $\phi_{336,14}$, and again two in type E_8 , $\phi_{2268,30}$ and $\phi_{1296,33}$. Their degrees are given by the following expressions, with the same phenomenon for $a = 1$ as in the previous case:

$$q^{N-10a-10}\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) \frac{(q^2-1)(q^{a+2}-1)}{(q^{a/2+1}-1)(q^{a/2+3}-1)} \quad \text{and} \quad q^{N-10a-10}\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) \frac{(q^2+1)(q^{a+2}+1)}{(q^{a/2+1}+1)(q^{a/2+3}+1)}, \quad \text{where}$$

$$\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^{3a/4-1}-1)(q^{3a/4}-1)(q^{a+4}-1)(q^{2a-2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q^4-1)(q^6-1)(q^{a/4}-1)(q^{a/4+1}-1)(q^{a/2}-1)(q^{a/2+1}-1)^2}.$$

In this series, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points is given by

$$q^{15a/2+6} \frac{(q^2-1)(q^{5a/4-2}-1)(q^{3a/2}-1)(q^{3a/2+2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{2a+4}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q^3-1)(q^{a/4}-1)(q^{a/2}-1)(q^{a/2+1}-1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{gg}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q$: $A_4 + A_1$, $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 21a + 20$, $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 6a + 3$, $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathbb{C} \mathbb{C}^2, \mathfrak{gl}_3$.

Here we have one unipotent character $\phi_{60,5}$ in type E_6 , two in type E_7 , $\phi_{512,11}$ and $\phi_{512,12}$, and again two in type E_8 , $\phi_{4096,26}$ and $\phi_{4096,27}$. Their degrees are given by

$$q^{N-21a/2-10}\psi_{\mathfrak{gg}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q)$$

(except for $a = 1$ where the degree of the unique character is twice this quantity), with

$$\psi_{\mathfrak{gg}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^2-1)(q^{5a/4-2}-1)(q^{3a/2}-1)(q^{3a/2+2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{2a+4}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q-1)(q^3-1)^2(q^{a/4}-1)(q^{a/2+1}-1)(q^{a/2+3}-1)(q^{a/2+5}-1)(q^{3a/2+3}-1)}.$$

In this series, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points is given by

$$q^{15a/2+6} \frac{(q^2-1)(q^{5a/4-2}-1)(q^{3a/2}-1)(q^{3a/2+2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{2a+4}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q-1)(q^3-1)(q^{a/4}-1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q$: $D_5(a_1)$, $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 21a + 22$, $\dim \mathfrak{t}(a) = 5a + 3$, $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathbb{C}, \mathfrak{gl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_4$.

Here we have one unipotent character $\phi_{64,4}$ in type E_6 , two in type E_7 , $\phi_{420,10}$ and $\phi_{336,11}$, and again two in type E_8 , $\phi_{2800,25}$ and $\phi_{2100,28}$. Their degrees are given by

$$q^{N-21a/2-11}\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) \quad \text{and} \quad q^{N-21a/2-11}\psi'_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q),$$

(except for $a = 1$ where the degree of the unique character is the sum of these two—equal in this case—quantities), with

$$\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^{a/4+4}-1)(q^{3a/4}-1)(q^{5a/4-2}-1)(q^{3a/2+2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{2a+4}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q^3-1)^2(q^{a/4}-1)(q^{a/4+1}-1)(q^{a/2}-1)(q^{a/2+4}-1)(q^{a/2+8}-1)(q^{3a/4+3}-1)} \quad \text{and}$$

$$\psi'_{\mathfrak{g}^2\mathfrak{g}_3\mathfrak{g}_Q}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^{3a/4-1}-1)(q^{5a/4-1}-1)(q^{3a/2}-1)(q^{3a/2+2}-1)(q^{2a+2}-1)(q^{2a+4}-1)(q^{5a/2+4}-1)(q^{3a+6}-1)}{(q^3-1)(q^5-1)(q^{a/4}-1)(q^{a/2}-1)(q^{a/2+2}-1)^2(q^{3a/4}-1)(q^{3a/2+6}-1)}.$$

In this series, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points is given by

$$q^{8a+7} \frac{(q^2 - 1)(q^{5a/4-2} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^{a/4} - 1)(q^{a/2} - 1)}.$$

- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $E_6(a_1)$, $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 24a + 22$, $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 2$, $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_3$.

Here again we have one unipotent character $\phi_{6,1}$ in type E_6 , two in type E_7 , $\phi_{120,4}$ and $\phi_{105,5}$, and again two in type E_8 , $\phi_{2800,13}$ and $\phi_{2100,16}$. Their degrees are given by

$$q^{N-12a-11} \psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) \quad \text{and} \quad q^{N-21a/2-11} \psi'_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q)$$

(except for $a = 1$ where the degree of the unique character is the sum of these two—equal in this case—quantities), with

$$\psi_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^{a/2+2} - 1)(q^{3a/4} - 1)(q^{3a/4} - 1)(q^{2a-2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)^2 (q^4 - 1)(q^{12} - 1)(q^{a/4} - 1)(q^{a/4+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+1} - 1)(q^{a/2+5} - 1)} \quad \text{and}$$

$$\psi'_{\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_3^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2}(q) = \frac{1}{2} \frac{(q^{a/2+5} - 1)(q^{5a/4-2} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^4 - 1)(q^6 - 1)^2 (q^{a/4} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{a+10} - 1)}.$$

In this series, the number of \mathbb{F}_q -points is given by

$$q^{21a/2+7} \frac{(q^2 - 1)(q^{5a/4-2} - 1)(q^{3a/2} - 1)(q^{3a/2+2} - 1)(q^{2a+2} - 1)(q^{2a+4} - 1)(q^{5a/2+4} - 1)(q^{3a+6} - 1)}{(q^3 - 1)(q^{a/4} - 1)}.$$

This accounts for all nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{e}_6 , about one half of those in \mathfrak{e}_7 , and a little less than one third of those in \mathfrak{e}_8 .

3. SERIES FOR THE OTHER ROWS OF FREUDENTHAL SQUARE

The exceptional series of Lie algebras is the fourth line $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{O})$ in the magic square of Freudenthal, and we just saw how this allows us to organize their nilpotent orbits into series.

In this section we briefly discuss the other three lines of Freudenthal square and their nilpotent orbits.

3.1 The Subexceptional Series $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{H})$

Here the Lie algebras \mathfrak{g} , and the number of positive roots N , parametrized by a are:

a	1	2	4	8
\mathfrak{g}	\mathfrak{sp}_6	\mathfrak{sl}_6	\mathfrak{so}_{12}	\mathfrak{e}_7
N	9	15	30	63

The nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{so}_{12} are parametrized by pairs of partitions (α, β) such that $2|\alpha| + |\beta| = 12$ and β has distinct parts. The nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{sl}_6 are parametrized by partitions of six. The nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{sp}_6 are

parametrized by pairs of partitions (α, β) with $|\alpha| + |\beta| = 3$, where β has distinct parts (see [Carter 93]).

Given a nilpotent orbit (α, β) of \mathfrak{sp}_6 , the elementary divisors are given by repeating each part of α twice and doubling each part of β . By ordering these elementary divisors, we get a partition λ with $|\lambda| = 6$, which corresponds to a nilpotent orbit of \mathfrak{sl}_6 . Given a nilpotent orbit λ of \mathfrak{sl}_6 , we can take the pair of partitions (λ, \emptyset) , which corresponds to a nilpotent orbit of \mathfrak{so}_{12} . These constructions give the first three terms of each series below.

For the subexceptional series we have three preferred representations, \mathfrak{g} and $\mathfrak{g}_Q = V_2$, $\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{A}P^2} = V$, in the notations of [Landsberg and Manivel 02a]. The highest weights of these representations are shown in Table 2.

We obtain the following series:

- \mathfrak{g} : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 4a + 2$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 4a + 1$,
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{so}_5, \mathfrak{sl}_4(\mathfrak{so}_6),$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_8, \mathfrak{so}_{12}$,
 $[(11, 1), (21^4),$
 $(21^4, -), A_1]$
- \mathfrak{g}_Q : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 6a + 4$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 5a + 2$,
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{gl}_2, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_5,$
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_9 = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_{a+1}$,
 $[(21, -), (2211),$
 $(2211, -), 2A_1]$

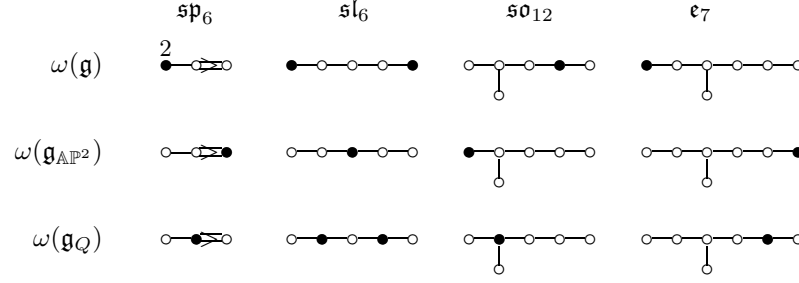


TABLE 2.

- $\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{P}^2}$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 6a + 6$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 3$,
 $[(2, 1), (222), (222, -), 3A_1]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_3, \mathfrak{sp}_6$,
 $\mathfrak{f}_4 = \mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{R})$,
- \mathfrak{g}_Q^2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 10a + 4$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 4a$,
 $[(3, -), (33), (33, -), 2A_2]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_2, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2$,
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{g}_2 = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathcal{D}er\mathbb{A}$,
- $\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{P}^2}^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 10a + 4$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 1$,
 $[(1, 2), (411), (411, -), A_3]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{gl}_2, 3\mathfrak{sl}_2$,
 $\mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{so}_7 = \mathfrak{sl}_2 \times \mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$,
- $\mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{P}^2} \mathfrak{g}$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 10a + 6$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a + 2$,
 $[(-, 21), (42), (42, -), (A_3 + A_1)']]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, \mathbb{C}, 2\mathfrak{sl}_2$,
 $\mathfrak{so}_7 = \mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$,
- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_{\mathbb{A}\mathbb{P}^2}^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 12a + 6$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 2a + 1$,
 $[(-, 3), (6), (6, -), A_5]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2 = \mathcal{D}er\mathbb{A}$.

This leaves three nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{sl}_6 not in one of these series. These correspond to the partitions (51), (321), and (3111) and propagate as follows:

- $\mathfrak{g}^2 \mathfrak{g}_Q^2$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 12a + 4$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a$,
 $[(51), (51, -), A_4]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_3$,
- \mathfrak{gg}_Q : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 9a + 4$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 5a + 1$,
 $[(321), (321, -), A_2 + A_1]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_4$,
- \mathfrak{g}^2 : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 8a + 2$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 5a + 1$,
 $[(3111), (3111, -), A_2]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = \mathfrak{sl}_3, \mathfrak{so}_6, \mathfrak{sl}_6$.

3.2 The Severi Series $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{C})$

Here the Lie algebras \mathfrak{g} , and the number of positive roots N , parametrized by a are:

a	1	2	4	8
\mathfrak{g}	\mathfrak{sl}_3	$2\mathfrak{sl}_3$	\mathfrak{sl}_6	\mathfrak{e}_6
N	3	6	15	36

The nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{sl}_3 correspond to partitions of three, and the nilpotent orbits of \mathfrak{sl}_6 correspond to partitions of six. Given a partition of three, we construct a partition of six by repeating each part twice. There are two dual preferred representations V and V^* , of dimension $3a + 3$, where V can be identified with the Jordan algebra $\mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})$. We obtain two series (we left a “?” for the non-simple case, which has no standard label):

- V : $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 4a$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 3a$,
 $[(21), (?), (2211), 2A_2]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2 = \mathcal{D}er\mathbb{A}$,
- $\mathfrak{g}_Q = VV^*$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 6a$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = 2a$,
 $[(3), (?), (33), 2A_1]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, \mathbb{C}, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{so}_7 = \mathfrak{l}(\mathbb{A})$.

3.3 The Sub-Severi Series $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{R})$

This is the series $\mathfrak{g}(\mathbb{A}, \mathbb{R}) = \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{sl}_3, \mathfrak{sp}_6, \mathfrak{f}_4$, with its preferred representation $W = \mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})_0$ of dimension $3a + 2$: the space of traceless matrices in $\mathcal{J}_3(\mathbb{A})$. This leads to the following series of orbits:

- $\mathfrak{g}_Q = W$: $\dim \mathcal{O}_a = 4a - 2$,
 $\dim \mathfrak{r}(a) = a$,
 $[(2), (3), (3, -), \tilde{A}_2]$
 $\mathfrak{h}(a) = 0, 0, \mathfrak{sl}_2, \mathfrak{g}_2 = \mathcal{D}er\mathbb{A}$.

4. BEYOND THE EXCEPTIONAL LIE ALGEBRAS

4.1 General Dimension Formulas

There are four nonzero nilpotent orbits occurring in all simple Lie algebras of rank greater than two (and also \mathfrak{g}_2):

1. the *regular nilpotent orbit*, which is the open orbit in the nilpotent cone;
2. the *subregular nilpotent orbit*, which is the open orbit in the boundary of the regular orbit;
3. the *minimal nilpotent orbit*, which we call $\mathcal{O}_{ad} \subset \mathfrak{g}$ (we often work with its projectivization $X_{ad} \subset \mathbb{P}\mathfrak{g}$), and in this paper is denoted simply \mathfrak{g} , as the marked Dynkin diagram corresponds to the adjoint representation;
4. the orbit whose projectivization we called $\sigma_{(1)}(X_{ad})$ in [Landsberg and Manivel 01].

Panyushev, in [Panyushev 02], calls this last orbit \mathbb{O} , but because of our usage of \mathbb{O} to denote the octonions, we will denote it by $\mathcal{O}_{\sigma_{(1)}(X_{ad})}$ or \mathfrak{g}_2 , since its marked Dynkin diagram gives the weight of \mathfrak{g}_2 . Note that Panyushev only observes this orbit when the adjoint representation is fundamental, where it corresponds to the diagram marked with a 1 over nodes adjacent to the node of the adjoint representation and with zeroes elsewhere. Geometrically, $\mathcal{O}_{\sigma_{(1)}(X_{ad})}$ may be described as either the union of tangent lines to the contact distribution on X_{ad} or as the closure of the set of points in $\mathbb{P}\mathfrak{g}$ lying on a two-parameter family of secant lines (see [Landsberg and Manivel 01]).

The dimension of the regular nilpotent orbit has a simple expression, either the number of roots or the dimension of \mathfrak{g} minus the rank of \mathfrak{g} , and the subregular orbit, being of codimension two in the closure of the regular orbit, inherits a dimension formula.

Nevertheless, when we study orbits in series, we see that, from the series perspective, the properties of being regular and subregular are not good ones. What happens instead is that the regular and subregular orbits of the fixed algebra in a series gives rise to a series of orbits which, in general, are not regular or subregular. This is not surprising as the dimension of the regular and subregular orbits grow like the square of the parameter parametrizing the algebras (as do the dimensions of the algebras themselves), while we insist that the nilpotent orbits in series have linear dimension formulas.

The starting point of Vogel’s conjectured *universal Lie algebra* was an attempt to construct a category with analogs of the Casimir, the bracket, the Killing form, and the Jacobi identity, which dominates the category of modules of any simple Lie algebra. It leads to a parametrization of the simple Lie algebras by a projective plane, whose barycentric coordinate is the eigenvalue of the Casimir operator on the adjoint representation, and

the scaling is by the length of the longest root. (See [Vogel 99; Deligne 96] for these parameters, and [Landsberg and Manivel 02a; Landsberg and Manivel 02d] for the relation with the triality model.)

Remarkably, the minimal nilpotent orbit has a nice dimension formula in the spirit of Vogel’s work. This was first observed by W. Wang ([Wang 99], independently of this interpretation).

Proposition 4.1. *Let \mathfrak{g} be a complex simple Lie algebra. After an invariant quadratic form has been chosen, let \sqrt{a} denote the length of the longest root, and let C denote the Casimir eigenvalue for \mathfrak{g} . Then,*

$$\dim \mathcal{O}_{ad} = \frac{2C}{a} - 2.$$

Wang’s formula is actually $\dim \mathcal{O}_{ad} = 2\check{h} - 2$, where \check{h} denotes the dual Coxeter number. But, once we have fixed an invariant scalar product on the root lattice, we can write

$$\frac{C}{a} = \frac{\langle \tilde{\alpha} + 2\rho, \tilde{\alpha} \rangle}{\langle \tilde{\alpha}, \tilde{\alpha} \rangle} = 1 + 2 \frac{\langle \rho, \tilde{\alpha} \rangle}{\langle \tilde{\alpha}, \tilde{\alpha} \rangle} = \check{h},$$

the last equality being a definition. Here $\tilde{\alpha}$ denotes the highest root and 2ρ the sum of all positive roots. Note that this is just a linear formula, while Vogel’s dimension formulas for the modules are much more complicated.

In [Landsberg and Manivel 01] we discuss two other series of nilpotent orbits that are not completely general. We revert to the notation of [Landsberg and Manivel 01], discussing the projectivizations of the orbit closures in $\mathbb{P}\mathfrak{g}$. In particular, the dimension of the corresponding orbit closure is one more than that of its projectivization.

1. $\mathcal{O}_{\sigma_{(3)}(X_{ad})}$: this orbit occurs in the exceptional series (with label \mathfrak{g}^2) and the \mathfrak{sl} series. Geometrically, it is the union of tangent lines to X_{ad} that are tangent to the quartic cone inside each hyperplane in the contact distribution. In terms of weighted Dynkin diagrams, one marks the adjoint nodes with a 2 and puts zeros elsewhere.
2. $\mathcal{O}_{\sigma_Q(X_{ad})}$: here Q denotes an unextendable quadric on X_{ad} . This series occurs in the exceptional series (with label \mathfrak{g}_Q), and there are two different series of such orbits in the \mathfrak{so} -series (even three for \mathfrak{so}_8 , but they are all isomorphic). In each series the dimension of Q is a linear function of the parameter parametrizing the series. Geometrically, these orbits are obtained by taking a uniruling of X_{ad} by

unextendable quadrics and taking the union of their projective spans. In terms of weighted Dynkin diagrams, one marks with a 1 the node such that, when erased, the connected component of the node marked for the adjoint representation is a marked Dynkin diagram corresponding to a quadric hypersurface (see [Landsberg and Manivel 01]).

The dimensions of these orbits for the exceptional series were computed in [Landsberg and Manivel 01]. For the classical series they can be extracted from [Carter 93], and we get the following:

Corollary 4.2.

$$\begin{aligned} \dim \mathcal{O}_{\sigma_{(1)}(X_{ad})} &= \frac{4C}{a} - 5, \\ \dim \mathcal{O}_{\sigma_{(3)}(X_{ad})} &= \frac{4C}{a} - 9, \text{ and} \\ \dim \mathcal{O}_{\sigma_Q(X_{ad})} &= \frac{4C}{a} - \dim Q - 5 \end{aligned}$$

Note that in the classical series, if one extends a partition by zero, one obtains a series of nilpotent orbits in our sense, in that the dimensions of the orbits are given as linear functions of the parameters. More precisely, we have the next proposition:

Proposition 4.3. *Fix f , and respectively let $\mathfrak{g}_f = \mathfrak{sl}_f, \mathfrak{so}_f, \mathfrak{sp}_{2f}$ and $\mathfrak{g}(t) = \mathfrak{g}_{f+t}$. Let \mathcal{O} be a nilpotent orbit in \mathfrak{g}_f . Let r_i denote the number of elementary divisors with exponent i in the partition defining \mathcal{O} (following [Carter 93]). Let $\mathcal{O}_t \subset \mathfrak{g}_t$ be the corresponding orbit with $r_1(t) = t + r_1$ and all the other r_i s the same. Then, $\dim \mathcal{O}_t$ is a linear function of t . More precisely, we have*

$$\dim \mathcal{O}_t = \begin{cases} 2t(f - (r_1 + \cdots + r_n)) + \dim \mathcal{O} & \text{sl-case} \\ t(f - (r_1 + \cdots + r_n) - \frac{3}{4}) + \dim \mathcal{O} & \text{so-case} \\ 2t(f - (r_1 + \cdots + r_n) + \frac{3}{4}) + \dim \mathcal{O} & \text{sp-case} \end{cases}$$

As with the exceptional series, these orbits also share a common geometry. Their desingularizations by vector bundles $E \rightarrow G/P$ are such that the spaces G/P have uniform geometric interpretations, which are obvious in the classical cases, and can be understood uniformly in terms of their shadows on the adjoint varieties $X_{ad} \subset \mathbb{P}\mathfrak{g}$. The P -modules defining E also have uniform interpretations in terms of Tits geometries.

4.2 The Generalized Magic Square

This is the following 3×3 square, with parameters $n \geq 4$ and $a, b = 1, 2, 4$:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & a = 1 & a = 2 & a = 4 \\ b = 1 & \mathfrak{so}_n & \mathfrak{sl}_n & \mathfrak{sp}_{2n} \\ b = 2 & \mathfrak{sl}_n & 2\mathfrak{sl}_n & \mathfrak{sl}_{2n} \\ b = 4 & \mathfrak{sp}_{2n} & \mathfrak{sl}_{2n} & \mathfrak{so}_{4n} \end{array} .$$

Recall from [Carter 1993] or [Collingwood and McGovern 93, Section 5.1], that nilpotent orbits in \mathfrak{sl}_n , respectively $\mathfrak{sp}_{2n}, \mathfrak{so}_{2n+1}, \mathfrak{so}_{2n}$, are in one-to-one correspondence with partitions (d_1, \dots, d_n) of n , respectively partitions of $2n$ in which odd parts occur with even multiplicity, partitions of $2n + 1$ in which even parts occur with even multiplicity, and partitions of $2n$ in which even parts occur with even multiplicity (with a slight modification for partitions with only even parts). We let r_i be the number of times i occurs in the partition.

Proposition 4.4. *For every nilpotent orbit $\mathcal{O}_{1,1}$ in \mathfrak{so}_n , there is a nilpotent orbit $\mathcal{O}_{a,b}$ for each element of the generalized magic square, whose dimension is a bilinear function of a and b . More precisely, let (r_1, \dots, r_n) be as above for the partition parametrizing the orbit $\mathcal{O}_{1,1} \subset \mathfrak{so}_n$. Then,*

$$\begin{aligned} \dim \mathcal{O}_{a,b} &= \frac{ab}{2}(n^2 - \sum_i (\sum_{j \geq i} r_j)^2 \\ &\quad - n + \sum_i \text{odd} r_i) + (a + b - 2)(n - \sum_i \text{odd} r_i). \end{aligned}$$

More generally, one can take a nilpotent orbit for any algebra in the square and extend it across and below to get a bilinear function in a, b .

Proof: Given a partition of n admissible for \mathfrak{so}_n , just use it as a partition for \mathfrak{sl}_n to get a nilpotent orbit. Given a partition of \mathfrak{sl}_n , double it to get an admissible partition for \mathfrak{sp}_{2n} . Given a partition for \mathfrak{sl}_n , use it twice to get a partition for $2\mathfrak{sl}_n$. Given two partitions of length n (parametrizing a nilpotent orbit in $2\mathfrak{sl}_n$), put them together to get a partition for \mathfrak{sl}_{2n} . Given a partition admissible for \mathfrak{sp}_{2n} , just use it to get a partition for \mathfrak{sl}_{2n} . Given a partition of \mathfrak{sl}_{2n} , double it to get an admissible partition for \mathfrak{so}_{4n} . These are the partitions we use to define $\mathcal{O}_{a,b}$ from $\mathcal{O}_{1,1}$. Note that the process is symmetric in how one moves across the chart.

Now, the proof just consists of checking that, for each value of a, b , the dimension given by the above formula is consistent with those given in [Collingwood and McGovern 93] for the classical Lie algebras. \square

Note that this works also for the $n = 3$ chart including the exceptional groups, and also note that one can begin anywhere in the chart to get orbits to the right and below. Finally, specializing to each row, one gets *linear* functions of a for the dimensions.

Example 4.5. The regular nilpotent orbit in \mathfrak{so}_n induces a series with

$$\dim \mathcal{O}_{a,b} = \frac{ab}{2}(n^2 - n - 1 + \epsilon) + (a + b + 2)(n - \epsilon),$$

where $\epsilon = 1$ if n is odd and 0 if n is even.

Example 4.6. (A Magical Orbit.) Consider the partition $(3, 1, \dots, 1)$ and the resulting three parameter family of orbits $\mathcal{O}_{a,b,n}$. We get the following dimension formula, which has the very nice property of being linear in each of the parameters:

$$\dim \mathcal{O}_{a,b,n} = 2(ab(n - 2) + a + b - 2).$$

Note that this orbit is *universal* in that it occurs in all simple Lie algebras: in the exceptional and sub-exceptional cases this is the series labeled \mathfrak{g}_Q^2 , in the Severi case the series labeled $\mathfrak{g}_Q = VV^*$, and in the sub-Severi case the series labeled $\mathfrak{g}_Q = W$.

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Joseph M. Landsberg, School of Mathematics, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332-0160
(jml@math.gatech.edu)

Laurent Manivel, Institut Fourier, UMR 5582 du CNRS Université Grenoble I, BP 74, 38402
Saint Martin d'Hères cedex France (Laurent.Manivel@ujf-grenoble.fr)

Bruce W. Westbury, Mathematics Institute, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK (bww@maths.warwick.ac.uk)

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