



Rationality and the Jordan–Gatti–Viniberghi Decomposition

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Abstract. We verify our earlier conjecture and use it to prove that the semisimple parts of the rational Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions of a rational vector all lie in a single rational orbit.

1 Introduction

Let k be a field of characteristic 0, and write \bar{k} for its algebraic closure. Let G be a reductive algebraic group (not necessarily connected), acting on a vector space V , with G , V , and the action all defined over k . Given a point $v \in V$, write G_v for the stabilizer of v ; it is an algebraic subgroup of G .

In [6], Kac and Vinberg made the following definitions:

Definition 1.1

- (i) A vector $s \in V$ is *semisimple* if the orbit $G \cdot s$ is Zariski closed.
- (ii) A vector $n \in V$ is *nilpotent* with respect to G if the Zariski closure $\overline{G \cdot n}$ contains the vector 0.
- (iii) A *Jordan decomposition* of a vector $\gamma \in V$ is a decomposition $\gamma = s + n$, with
 - (a) s semisimple,
 - (b) n nilpotent with respect to G_s ,
 - (c) $G_\gamma \subseteq G_s$.

This Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition matches the standard Jordan decomposition when V is the Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} of G . In that case, every $\gamma \in \mathfrak{g}$ has a unique Jordan decomposition $\gamma = s + n$, and if γ lies in $\mathfrak{g}(k)$ then so do s and n . For general V , however, as noted in [7], an element $\gamma \in V$ may have multiple Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions. For all of them, the element s lies in a single G -orbit, namely the unique closed G -orbit in $\overline{G \cdot \gamma}$.

In [7], Kac showed that every vector $\gamma \in V$ has a Jordan–Gatti–Viniberghi decomposition (as he called it), as a simple application of the Luna slice theorem. A rational version of the Luna slice theorem has been proven by Bremigan [5], and it implies (Lemma 4.3) that every k -point $\gamma \in V(k)$ has a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition, that is a Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition $\gamma = s + n$ with s (and hence n) in $V(k)$. This fact has not previously appeared in the literature.

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In this paper we show that given $\gamma \in V(k)$, the semisimple parts s of all k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions $\gamma = s + n$ of γ all lie in a single $G(k)$ -orbit. In other words, even though k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions are not unique, the $G(k)$ -orbit of the semisimple parts is. This uniqueness is important in producing the fine geometric expansion in relative trace formulas (see the discussion in [9]).

We use two tools to prove this. One is the rational version of the Hilbert–Mumford Theorem, as proven by Kempf [8] and Rousseau. The Hilbert–Mumford Theorem allows us to restate the problem in terms of limits of the form $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$, for k -cocharacters λ in G .

The other is a recent rationality result of Bate–Martin–Röhrle–Tange [2] on such limits.

In fact we prove the somewhat more general result, Theorem 3.4, that given $\gamma \in V(k)$, the limit points $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$ that are semisimple, ranging over all cocharacters λ defined over k , all lie in a single $G(k)$ -orbit. This solves the conjecture in [10].

2 Preliminaries

We begin with some notation. Let k be a field (of any characteristic), and write \bar{k} for its algebraic closure. Let G be a reductive algebraic group (not necessarily connected) defined over k . Write $X^*(G)$ for the group of characters $\chi: G \rightarrow \text{GL}(1)$, and $X_*(G)$ for the set of cocharacters $\lambda: \text{GL}(1) \rightarrow G$. Similarly write $X^*(G)_k$ (resp. $X_*(G)_k$) for those characters (resp. cocharacters) defined over k . Define the map $\langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle: X_*(G) \times X^*(G) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ by requiring the identity $\chi(\lambda(t)) = t^{\langle \lambda, \chi \rangle}$. The group G acts naturally on $X_*(G)$:

$$(g \cdot \lambda)(t) = g\lambda(t)g^{-1}, \quad \text{for } g \in G, \lambda \in X_*(G), t \in \text{GL}(1).$$

Given $\lambda \in X_*(G)_k$ and $g \in G(k)$, the cocharacter $g \cdot \lambda$ is also in $X_*(G)_k$.

Suppose that V is an affine G -variety. Given $\lambda \in X_*(G)$ and $\nu \in V$, we say that the *limit*

$$(2.1) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \nu$$

exists and equals x if there is a morphism of varieties $\ell: \mathbb{A}^1 \rightarrow V$ with $\ell(t) = \lambda(t) \cdot \nu$ for $t \neq 0$, and $\ell(0) = x$. Notice that if ℓ exists then it is unique; also if V and λ are defined over k , with $\nu \in V(k)$, then ℓ must also be defined over k , and so x must lie in $V(k)$. Given $\nu \in V(k)$, write $\Lambda(\nu, k)$ for the set of $\lambda \in X_*(G)_k$ such that the limit (2.1) exists.

The group G acts on itself via the action $y \mapsto xyx^{-1}$. Given $\lambda \in X_*(G)$, let $P(\lambda)$ be the subvariety

$$P(\lambda) = \{g \in G \mid \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t)g\lambda(t)^{-1} \text{ exists}\}.$$

It is an algebraic group, defined over k if λ is. These groups $P(\lambda)$ were defined in [11] and are called the Richardson parabolic subgroups in [2]. The map

$$h_\lambda: P(\lambda) \rightarrow G, \quad h_\lambda(g) = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t)g\lambda(t)^{-1}$$

is a homomorphism of algebraic groups, defined over k if λ is. The image and kernel are given by

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Im } h_\lambda &= G^\lambda = \{g \in G \mid \lambda(t)g\lambda(t)^{-1} = g, \text{ for all } t\} \\ \text{ker } h_\lambda &= \{g \in G \mid \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t)g\lambda(t)^{-1} = 1\} = R_u(P(\lambda)) \end{aligned}$$

(see [11] for details).

Now suppose that V is a G -module defined over k . Given any $\lambda \in X_*(G)$, we can then define the G^λ -modules

$$\begin{aligned} V_{\lambda,n} &= \{v \in V \mid \lambda(t) \cdot v = t^n v \text{ for all } t\}, \quad n \in \mathbb{Z} \\ V_{\lambda,+} &= \sum_{n>0} V_{\lambda,n}, \quad V_{\lambda,0+} = \sum_{n \geq 0} V_{\lambda,n} = V_{\lambda,0} \oplus V_{\lambda,+}. \end{aligned}$$

Notice that $V_{\lambda,0+}$ consists of those vectors $v \in V$ such that the limit (2.1) exists, and is invariant under $P(\lambda)$; in fact for $g \in P(\lambda)$, and $v \in V_{\lambda,0+}$,

$$(2.2) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot (g \cdot v) = h_\lambda(g) \cdot \left(\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot v \right).$$

Further, for $v \in V_{\lambda,0+} = V_{\lambda,0} \oplus V_{\lambda,+}$, the limit (2.1) is just the projection of v to $V_{\lambda,0}$.

Suppose next that A is a k -defined torus in G . For each $\chi \in X^*(A)_k$ define V^χ by

$$V^\chi = \{v \in V \mid a \cdot v = \chi(a)v, \text{ for all } a \in A\}.$$

Then only finitely many V^χ are nonzero and V is their direct sum. Given a vector $v \in V$, write v_χ for the component of v in the space V^χ , $\chi \in X^*(A)_k$, and set

$$\text{supp } v = \text{supp}_A v = \{\chi \in X^*(A)_k \mid v_\chi \neq 0\},$$

so that

$$v = \sum_{\chi \in \text{supp } v} v_\chi.$$

For any $\lambda \in X_*(A)_k \subset X_*(G)_k$, each vector space $V_{\lambda,n}$, $n \in \mathbb{Z}$, is also a direct sum of weight spaces:

$$V_{\lambda,n} = \sum_{\substack{\chi \in X^*(A)_k \\ \langle \lambda, \chi \rangle = n}} V^\chi.$$

We record the following obvious statement for later use.

Lemma 2.1 *Suppose that λ is in $X_*(A)_k$. For a vector $v \in V$, the limit (2.1) exists if and only if for every $\chi \in \text{supp } v$ we have $\langle \lambda, \chi \rangle \geq 0$; in this case the limit equals*

$$\sum_{\substack{\chi \in X^*(A)_k \\ \langle \lambda, \chi \rangle = 0}} v_\chi.$$

3 Limits

In this section we assume that k is perfect. We summarize some results that we will later use. First is the rational version of the Hilbert–Mumford Theorem, [8, Corollary 4.3].

Lemma 3.1 *If $\gamma \in V(k)$, then there exists $\lambda \in X_*(G)_k$ so that the limit*

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$$

exists and is semisimple.

Remark Note that this limit point must necessarily lie in $V(k)$.

The following two results are also essential to our proof. The first is a restatement of [2, Lemma 2.15].

Lemma 3.2 *Suppose that $A \subset G$ is a k -defined torus and λ, λ_0 are in $X_*(A)_k$. Suppose that vectors $\gamma, v_0, v' \in V$ are related by*

$$\begin{aligned} v_0 &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_0(t) \cdot \gamma, \\ v' &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot v_0. \end{aligned}$$

Then there exists $\mu \in X_(A)_k$ such that*

$$\begin{aligned} V_{\mu,0} &= V_{\lambda_0,0} \cap V_{\lambda,0} \\ V_{\mu,+} &\supseteq V_{\lambda_0,+}, \quad V_{\mu,0+} \subseteq V_{\lambda_0,0+}, \\ v' &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \gamma. \end{aligned}$$

Remark The cocharacter μ can be of the form $n\lambda_0 + \lambda$ for any sufficiently large $n \in \mathbb{N}$.

The second result is [2, Cor. 3.7].

Lemma 3.3 *Let $v \in V(k)$ be semisimple. For every $\lambda \in X_*(G)_k$, if the limit $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot v$ exists, then it lies in $G(k) \cdot v$.*

Remark In fact, [2, Cor. 3.7] shows that the limit must lie in $R_u(P(\lambda))(k) \cdot v$.

Our main result in this section is the following.

Theorem 3.4 *Let G be a reductive group and V a G -module. Suppose that k is perfect and let $\gamma \in V(k)$. Then for every $\lambda, \mu \in X_*(G)_k$ such that both vectors $v = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$ and $v' = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \gamma$ exist and are semisimple, v' lies in $G(k) \cdot v$.*

Remarks (a) This solves Conjecture 1.5 of [10].

(b) As is well-known (see for example [2, Remark 2.8] or [8, Lemma 1.1]), we can embed any affine G -variety over k inside a k -defined rational G -module, and hence Theorem 3.4 is also valid for affine G -varieties.

Definition 3.5 Let $\Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$ be the set of cocharacters that minimize $\dim V_{\lambda,0}$, among $\lambda \in X_*(G)_k$ such that $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$ exists and is semisimple.

Remark By the Kempf–Rousseau–Hilbert–Mumford theorem 3.1, and because $\dim V_{\lambda,0}$ is always a nonnegative integer, the set $\Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$ is non-empty.

Lemma 3.6 Given $\lambda \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$ and $p \in P(\lambda)(k)$, we have that $\lambda \in \Lambda(p \cdot \gamma, k)_{\min}$. Further, the limit points

$$v = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma \quad \text{and} \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot (p \cdot \gamma)$$

lie in the same $G(k)$ -orbit.

Proof Let $\lambda \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$. By (2.2), $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot (p \cdot \gamma) = h_\lambda(p) \cdot v$, so the limit exists and lies in the $G(k)$ -orbit of v ; consequently its G -orbit is closed.

On the other hand, given any $\mu \in \Lambda(p \cdot \gamma, k)$, we have that $p^{-1} \cdot \mu \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)$ and $\dim V_{\mu,0} = \dim V_{p^{-1} \cdot \mu,0}$; since $\lambda \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$, this dimension is at least $\dim V_{\lambda,0}$; hence λ lies in $\Lambda(p \cdot \gamma, k)_{\min}$. ■

Lemma 3.7 Given $\lambda_0 \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$, write $v_0 = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_0(t) \cdot \gamma$. Suppose that $A \subset G$ is a k -defined torus with $\lambda_0 \in X_*(A)_k$. Suppose that for $\lambda \in X_*(A)_k$, the limit $v = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma$ exists and has a closed G -orbit. Then v lies in $G(k) \cdot v_0$.

Proof By Lemma 2.1 the existence of the limit v implies that for every $\chi \in \text{supp}(\gamma)$ we have $\langle \lambda, \chi \rangle \geq 0$, and the vector v is the sum

$$\sum_{\substack{\chi \in \text{supp} \gamma \\ \langle \lambda, \chi \rangle = 0}} \gamma_\chi,$$

the projection of γ to $V_{\lambda,0}$; in particular $\text{supp } v \subseteq \text{supp } \gamma$ and $\gamma - v \in V_{\lambda,+}$. Similarly $\text{supp}(v_0)$ is contained in $\text{supp}(\gamma)$, and so by Lemma 2.1 we may conclude that the limit $v' = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot v_0$ exists. Since $G \cdot v_0$ is closed, v' lies in $G \cdot v_0$, so that $G \cdot v'$ is also closed.

We then obtain, from Lemma 3.2, a $\mu \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)$ with $v' = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \gamma$, having a closed G -orbit, and

$$(3.1) \quad V_{\mu,0} = V_{\lambda_0,0} \cap V_{\lambda,0}$$

$$(3.2) \quad V_{\mu,+} \supseteq V_{\lambda_0,+}, \quad V_{\mu,0+} \subseteq V_{\lambda_0,0+}.$$

Since λ_0 lies in $\Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$, we may conclude that $V_{\mu,0} = V_{\lambda_0,0}$, and hence by (3.1), (3.2), also that $V_{\mu,0+} = V_{\lambda_0,0+}$. The limit point v' is the projection of γ to $V_{\mu,0} = V_{\lambda_0,0}$, hence $v' = v_0$.

Since $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \gamma$ exists, γ and hence ν lie in $V_{\mu,0+}$. Now, the projection of $\gamma - \nu$ to

$$V_{\lambda,0} = \sum_{\substack{\chi \in X^*(A)_k \\ \langle \lambda, \chi \rangle = 0}} V^\chi$$

is zero. By (3.1), $V_{\mu,0} \subseteq V_{\lambda,0}$, so the projection of $\gamma - \nu \in V_{\mu,0+}$ to $V_{\mu,0}$ is also zero, and hence

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \nu = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \mu(t) \cdot \gamma = \nu' = \nu_0.$$

By 3.3, we can finally conclude that ν lies in $G(k) \cdot \nu_0$. ■

Proof of Theorem 3.4 First, note that a cocharacter in G is necessarily a cocharacter in the connected component G^0 of the identity in G , and that it is sufficient to prove Theorem 3.4 for G^0 . Without loss of generality, we therefore assume that G is connected.

Pick $\lambda_0 \in \Lambda(\gamma, k)_{\min}$, set $\nu_0 = \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_0(t) \cdot \gamma$. Since being in the same $G(k)$ -orbit is an equivalence relation, it is clearly sufficient to prove the theorem for $\mu = \lambda_0$, $\nu' = \nu_0$.

The image of λ_0 lies in a maximal torus, and by [4, 1.4] must in fact lie in a maximal k -split torus A . Fix a minimal k -defined parabolic subgroup P of G , with $C_G(A) \subseteq P \subseteq P(\lambda_0)$. The choice of P corresponds to a choice of basis ${}_k\Delta$ of simple roots of G with respect to A .

The image of λ also lies in some maximal k -split torus, so since all maximal k -split tori are conjugate over $G(k)$ [3, Thm. 20.9(ii)], there exists $g \in G(k)$ so that the image of $g \cdot \lambda$ lies in A . Multiplying g on the left by an element of $N_G(A)(k)$ if necessary, we can arrange that $\langle g \cdot \lambda, \alpha \rangle \geq 0$ for every $\alpha \in {}_k\Delta$, that is, $P \subseteq P(g \cdot \lambda)$. Let us write λ_A for $g \cdot \lambda \in X_*(A)$.

We now apply the Bruhat decomposition: write

$$g = p w u, \quad p \in P(k) \subseteq P(\lambda_A)(k), \quad w \in N_G(A), \quad u \in R_u(P)(k).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} (3.3) \quad \nu &= \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma = g^{-1} \cdot \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_A(t) g \cdot \gamma \\ &= g^{-1} \cdot [\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_A(t) p \lambda_A(t)^{-1}] \cdot \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_A(t) w u \cdot \gamma \\ &= g^{-1} h_{\lambda_A}(p) \cdot \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_A(t) w u \cdot \gamma \\ &= g^{-1} h_{\lambda_A}(p) w \cdot \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} (w^{-1} \cdot \lambda_A)(t) \cdot (u \cdot \gamma), \end{aligned}$$

with $g h_{\lambda_A}(p) w \in G(k)$. Note that the existence of the first limit in (3.3) implies the existence of the others.

Now, $u \in R_u(P)(k) \subseteq P(k) \subseteq P(\lambda_0)(k)$, so by Lemma 3.6, $\lambda_0 \in \Lambda(u \cdot \gamma, k)_{\min}$. Notice also that λ_0 and $w^{-1} \cdot \lambda_A$ both lie in $X_*(A)_k$. By Lemmas 3.7 and 3.6,

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} (w^{-1} \cdot \lambda_A) \cdot (u \cdot \gamma) \in G(k) \cdot \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda_0(t) \cdot (u \cdot \gamma) = G(k) \cdot \nu_0$$

so ν is also in $G(k) \cdot \nu_0$. ■

4 Application to Jordan Decompositions

In this section, we require k to have characteristic 0.

- Definition 4.1** (i) A *Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition* of a vector $\gamma \in V$ is as in Definition 1.1(iii).
 (ii) Given $\gamma \in V(k)$, a *k-Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition* of γ is a Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition $\gamma = s + n$ with s (and hence n) in $V(k)$.

Kac [7] used the Luna Slice theorem to prove that every vector has a Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition. We now show that every vector in $V(k)$ has a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition.

Bremigan proved a rational version of the Luna Slice Theorem in [5]. The following is an immediate consequence of it.

Lemma 4.2 Given $v \in V(k)$ semisimple, let F be the subvariety of points $\gamma \in V$ with $G \cdot v \subseteq \overline{G \cdot \gamma}$. Then there is a G -invariant retraction $\psi: F \rightarrow G \cdot v$ that is defined over k such that $\psi(\gamma) \in \overline{G_{\psi(\gamma)} \cdot \gamma}$ for every $\gamma \in F$.

Proof A G -invariant retraction $\psi: F \rightarrow G \cdot v$, defined over k , is given in [5, Cor. 3.4]. A point $\gamma \in F$ is written as $\gamma = g \cdot x$ with $g \in G$ and $v \in \overline{G_v \cdot x}$ (and x in the selected Luna slice), and $\psi(\gamma)$ is then set to be $g \cdot v$. But then

$$\psi(\gamma) = g \cdot v \in \overline{G_{g \cdot v} \cdot (g \cdot x)} = \overline{G_{\psi(\gamma)} \cdot \gamma},$$

as required. ■

Remark For fields of positive characteristic, the Luna Slice Theorem does not hold without additional assumptions. See [1] for further details.

Corollary 4.3 Every $\gamma \in V(k)$ has a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition.

Proof Let $\gamma \in V(k)$. By Lemma 3.1, there exists a semisimple $v \in \overline{G \cdot \gamma} \cap V(k)$. Lemma 4.2 provides a G -invariant map ψ , defined over k , from F to $G \cdot v$. Setting $s = \psi(\gamma)$, we immediately see that $s \in V(k)$, that s is semisimple, that $G_\gamma \subseteq G_s$, and that the unique closed G_s -orbit in $\overline{G_s \cdot \gamma}$ is s . Subtracting s , the unique closed G_s -orbit in $\overline{G_s \cdot (\gamma - s)}$ is 0. Therefore $\gamma = s + (\gamma - s)$ is a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition. ■

We can use the Hilbert–Mumford theorem to provide an alternate description of a Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition.

Proposition 4.4 A decomposition $\gamma = s + n$, with s semisimple, and $G_\gamma \subseteq G_s$, is a Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition if and only if there exists $\lambda \in X_*(G_s)$ so that

$$(4.1) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot \gamma = s.$$

If $\gamma \in V(k)$, then $\gamma = s + n$ is a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition if and only if λ can be taken to be in $X_*(G_s)_k$.

Proof The first part of the proposition is just the second part over \bar{k} , so we need only consider the second part.

Given a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition $\gamma = s + n$, we know that $0 \in \overline{G_s \cdot n}$. The Hilbert–Mumford Theorem (Lemma 3.1) provides a $\lambda \in X_*(G_s)_k$ such that

$$(4.2) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} \lambda(t) \cdot n = 0.$$

However, since the image of λ is in G_s , we can add s and obtain (4.1).

In the other direction, given $\lambda \in X_*(G_s)_k$, subtracting s from (4.1) gives (4.2), implying that n is nilpotent with respect to G_s . Since γ and λ are defined over k , so are s and n , hence $\gamma = s + n$ is a k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decomposition. ■

From Proposition 4.4 and Theorem 3.4, we immediately obtain the following.

Corollary 4.5 *For any two k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions $\gamma = s + n$, $\gamma = s' + n'$ of $\gamma \in V(k)$, we have $s' \in G(k) \cdot s$.*

This means that although a vector $\gamma \in V(k)$ may have multiple k -Jordan–Kac–Vinberg decompositions, all such decompositions lie in a single $G(k)$ -orbit.

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