

Towards a cohomological understanding of the tropical Riemann-Roch theorem

Oliver Lorscheid

**Part 1: Tropical Riemann-Roch,
aka Baker-Norine theory**

Divisors on graphs

Let G be a graph with vertex set V . A **divisor** on G is an element of the abelian group

$$\text{Div } G = \mathbb{Z}^V,$$

which we typically write as a formal linear combination $D = \sum D_v v$ of vertices $v \in V$ where $D_v = D(v)$.

A **principal divisor** in G is a divisor in the image of the group homomorphism

$$\text{div} : \mathbb{Z}^V \longrightarrow \mathbb{Z}^V,$$

that sends an element $f \in \mathbb{Z}^V$ to the divisor $\text{div}(f) = \sum df_v v$ with

$$df_v = \sum_{\text{edges } v-w} (f(w) - f(v)).$$

The rank

A divisor $D = \sum D_v v$ on G is **effective** if $D_v \geq 0$ for all $v \in V$.

We define $r_G(D) = 0$ if $D + \text{div}(f)$ is **not** effective for any $f \in \mathbb{Z}^V$.

We define recursively

$$r_G(D) = 1 + \min \{ r_G(D - v) \mid v \in V \}$$

if $D + \text{div}(f)$ is effective for some $f \in \mathbb{Z}^V$.

The number $r_G(D)$ is called the **rank** of D .

Tropical Riemann-Roch

The **degree** of a divisor $D = \sum D_v v$ on G is $\deg(D) = \sum D_v$.

The **genus** of G is its first Betti number

$$g = h_1(G, \mathbb{Z}) = \#\{\text{edges}\} - \#V + 1.$$

The **canonical divisor** of G is the divisor $K = \sum K_v v$ on G with

$$K_v = \#\{\text{edges } v - w\} - 2.$$

Theorem (Baker-Norine 06)

Let D be a divisor on G . Then

$$r_G(D) - r_G(K - D) = \deg(D) + 1 - g.$$

Remark: Gathmann-Kerber and Mikhalkin-Zharkov have deduced from this theorem a version for metric graphs.

The specialization lemma

Let k be a field with discrete absolute value $v : k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$, valuation ring $R \subsetneq k$ and residue field k_0 .

Let X be a smooth projective curve over k and \mathcal{X} a *strictly semistable R -model* of X , i.e. an R -scheme whose generic fibre \mathcal{X}_k is isomorphic to X and whose special fibre \mathcal{X}_0 consists of transversally intersecting smooth curves over k_0 .

Let G be the *dual graph* of \mathcal{X}_0 whose vertices correspond to the irreducible components of \mathcal{X}_0 and whose edges correspond to the nodes of \mathcal{X}_0 .

Taking the Zariski closure in \mathcal{X} of a divisor D of X induces a group homomorphism $\text{trop} : \text{Div } X \rightarrow \text{Div } G$.

Theorem (Baker 07)

Let D be a divisor of rank $r_X(D)$ on X . Then $r_X(D) \leq r_G(\text{trop}(D))$.

Remark: This theory has applications in Brill-Noether theory.

**Part 2: Towards a cohomological
interpretation of the tropical
Riemann-Roch theorem**

Endowing G with a scheme structure

We recall the context:

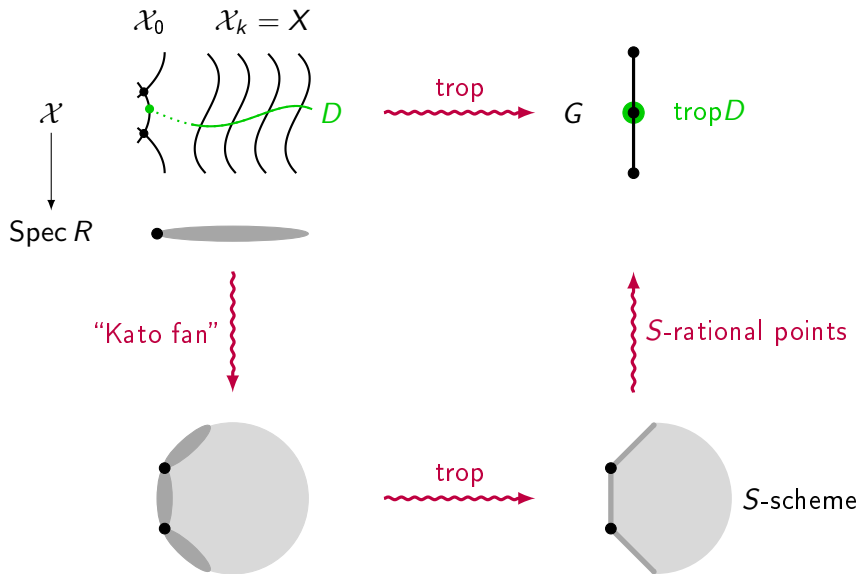
- ▶ a field k with discrete valuation $v : k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$;
- ▶ its valuation ring R and residue field k_0 ;
- ▶ a smooth projective curve X over k ;
- ▶ a strictly semistable R -model \mathcal{X} of X ;
- ▶ the dual graph G of \mathcal{X}_0 .

We denote by $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}$ the **tropical semifield** (using the Berkovich convention), which is $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ together with the usual multiplication and the addition

$$a + b = \max\{a, b\}.$$

The subsemiring $S = [0, 1]$ of $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}$ is the **semiring of tropical integers**.

A picture



Remarks

- ▶ In joint work with Martin Ulirsch (in progress), we can make sense of the “Kato fan” and its tropicalization within the theory of *ordered blue schemes*.
- ▶ Sets of cocycles for tropical schemes (i.e. schemes over $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}$) form naturally tropical linear spaces, aka *valuated matroids*. For S -schemes, we need a notion of *matroid bundles*.

Part 3: The tropical hyperfield

An intuitive definition

The **tropical hyperfield** is $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ together with the usual multiplication and the *hyperaddition*

$$a \boxplus b = \begin{cases} \{\max\{a, b\}\} & \text{if } a \neq b; \\ [0, a] & \text{if } a = b. \end{cases}$$

Note that

- ▶ $0 \boxplus a = a \boxplus 0 = \{a\}$ for all a (neutral element);
- ▶ $0 \in a \boxplus b$ if and only if $b = a$ (additive inverses);
- ▶ $c \in a \boxplus b$ if and only if the maximum occurs twice among a, b, c (tropical equality).

Part 4: Ordered blueprints

The definition

An **ordered blueprint** is a triple $B = (B^\bullet, B^+, \leq)$ where

- ▶ B^+ is a semiring (commutative with 0 and 1);
- ▶ $B^\bullet \subset B^+$ is a multiplicative subset that generates B^+ as a semiring and contains 0 and 1;
- ▶ \leq is a partial order on B^+ that is *additive* and *multiplicative*, i.e. $x \leq y$ implies $x + z \leq y + z$ and $xz \leq yz$.

We call B^+ the **ambient semiring** and B^\bullet the **underlying monoid** of B . We write $a \in B$ for $a \in B^\bullet$.

Given a subset S of $B^+ \times B^+$, we denote by $\langle S \rangle$ the smallest additive and multiplicative partial order on B^+ .

A **morphism** of ordered blueprints is a multiplicative map $f : B_1 \rightarrow B_2$ that extends (necessarily uniquely) to an order-preserving semiring homomorphism $f^+ : B_1^+ \rightarrow B_2^+$.

This defines the category OBlpr of ordered blueprints. It is closed, complete and cocomplete and contains free objects.

Examples

- ▶ $\mathbb{F}_1 = (\{0, 1\}, \mathbb{N}, =)$ (initial object)
- ▶ $\mathbb{B} = (\{0, 1\}, (\{0, 1\}, \max, \cdot), =)$ (Boolean semifield)
- ▶ $\mathbb{K} = (\{0, 1\}, \mathbb{N}, \langle 0 \leq 1 + 1, 1 \leq 1 + 1 \rangle)$ (Krasner hyperfield)
- ▶ $\mathbb{T} = (\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}, \mathbb{N}[\mathbb{R}_{>0}], \langle c \leq a + b \mid c \in a \boxplus b \rangle)$ (tropical hyperfield)

Fact

For $a_1, \dots, a_n, b \in \mathbb{T}$, we have $b \leq \sum a_i$ if and only if the maximum occurs twice among a_1, \dots, a_n, b .

- ▶ A field k defines the ordered blueprint $\mathbf{k} = (k, \mathbb{N}[k^\times], \langle c \leq a + b \mid c = a + b \text{ in } k \rangle)$.

Part 5: Scheme theory for ordered blueprints

Localizations

Let B be an ordered blueprint. The **unit group** of B is the group B^\times of multiplicatively invertible elements of B .

Fact

*Let $S \subset B$ be a multiplicative subset. Then there exists a universal morphism $\iota_S : B \rightarrow S^{-1}B$ among all morphisms $f : B \rightarrow C$ such that $f(S) \subset C^\times$, which we call the **localization of B at S** .*

For $h \in B$, we define $B[h^{-1}] = S^{-1}B$ where $S = \{h^i\}_{i \in \mathbb{N}}$. We call $\iota_h = \iota_S : B \rightarrow B[h^{-1}]$ the **localization of B at h** .

Ordered blue schemes

Let $\text{Aff} = \text{OBlpr}^{\text{op}}$. We denote the anti-equivalence of OBlpr with its opposite category by

$$\text{Spec} : \text{OBlpr} \longrightarrow \text{Aff}.$$

Given a morphism $f : B \rightarrow C$ of ordered blueprints, we write $f^* : \text{Spec } C \rightarrow \text{Spec } B$ for the opposite morphism in Aff .

A **principal open immersion** is a morphism in Aff of the form $\iota_h^* : \text{Spec } B[h^{-1}] \rightarrow \text{Spec } B$.

Let \mathcal{T} be the Grothendieck pretopology on Aff that is generated by families of principal open immersions $\{ \text{Spec } B[h_i^{-1}] \rightarrow \text{Spec } B \}_{i \in I}$ that are contained in the canonical topology of Aff .

An **ordered blue scheme** is the colimit of a “monodromy-free” diagram of principal open immersions in the category of sheaves $\text{Sh}(\text{Aff}, \mathcal{T})$ on the site $(\text{Aff}, \mathcal{T})$.

Geometric points

Taking geometric points of the slice category over an ordered blue scheme X in $\text{Sh}(\text{Aff}, \mathcal{T})$ allows us to identify X with a topological space \underline{X} together with a structure sheaf \mathcal{O}_X in OBlpr .

In the case of an **affine ordered blue scheme** $X = \text{Spec } B$, where we identify Aff with its essential image under the Yoneda embedding $\text{Aff} \rightarrow \text{Sh}(\text{Aff}, \mathcal{T})$, the points of the underlying topological space of $\text{Spec } B$ correspond to the *prime ideals* of $\text{Spec } B$, which are subsets \mathfrak{p} of B such that

- ▶ $0 \in \mathfrak{p}$,
- ▶ $\mathfrak{p} \cdot B = \mathfrak{p}$, and
- ▶ $S = B - \mathfrak{p}$ is a multiplicative subset.

Part 6: Tropicalization as a base change

Nonarchimedean absolute values as morphisms

Let k be a field. Recall the definitions of the associated ordered blueprint

$$\mathbf{k} = \left(k, \mathbb{N}[k^\times], \langle c \leq a + b \mid c = a + b \text{ in } k \rangle \right)$$

and the tropical hyperfield

$$\mathbb{T} = \left(\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}, \mathbb{N}[\mathbb{R}_{>0}], \langle c \leq a + b \mid c \in a \boxplus b \rangle \right).$$

Fact

A map $v : k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ is a nonarchimedean absolute value if and only if it is a morphism $\mathbf{v} : \mathbf{k} \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$ of ordered blueprints.

Blue models

Let $X = \text{Spec } R$ be an affine k -scheme with a *choice of coordinates*, by which we mean a closed immersion $\iota : X \rightarrow \text{Spec } k[A]$ into a toric variety where A is a suitable monoid (commutative, fine and saturated). Let $\pi : k[A] \rightarrow R$ the surjection of coordinate rings.

We associate with ι the ordered blue scheme $\mathbb{X} = \text{Spec } B$ where

$$B = \left(\{ ca \mid c \in k, a \in A \}, \mathbb{N}[k^\times \times A], \leq \right)$$

whose partial order \leq is generated by the relations $db \leq \sum c_i a_i$ for which $\pi(db) = \pi(\sum c_i a_i)$ in R .

The morphism $\mathbf{k} \rightarrow B$ that sends c to $c \cdot 1$ endows \mathbb{X} with the structure of an ordered blue \mathbf{k} -scheme. We call \mathbb{X} a **blue model** of X .

Tropicalization as a base change

The **scheme theoretic tropicalization** of X (with respect to ι) is the \mathbb{T} -scheme

$$\mathbb{X}^{\text{trop}} = \mathbb{X} \times_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T} = \text{Spec}(B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T})$$

where $B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T}$ is the colimit of $B \longleftarrow \mathbf{k} \xrightarrow{\mathbf{v}} \mathbb{T}$.

The **set theoretic tropicalization** of X (with respect to ι) is

$$X^{\text{trop}} = \left\{ f : A \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0} \mid \underbrace{\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{for all } \sum c_i a_i \in \ker \pi \text{ with } c_i \in k, a_i \in A, \\ \{v(c_i)f(a_i)\} \text{ assumes the maximum twice} \end{array} \right\}}_{\text{i.e. } 0 \leq \sum v(c_i)f(a_i) \text{ in } \mathbb{T}} \right\}$$

Theorem (L'19)

The composition with the natural map $A \rightarrow B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T}$, sending a to $(1 \cdot a) \otimes 1$, defines a bijection

$$\mathbb{X}^{\text{trop}}(\mathbb{T}) = \text{Hom}_{\mathbb{T}}(B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T}, \mathbb{T}) \longrightarrow X^{\text{trop}}.$$

Recovering the Giansiracusa tropicalization

In their seminal paper on tropical scheme theory, Jeff and Noah Giansiracusa introduce an $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}$ -scheme that represents X^{trop} in terms of the so-called **bend relation** on $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}[A]$.

Theorem (L'19)

$(\mathbb{X}^{\text{trop}} \times_{\mathbb{F}_1} \mathbb{B})^+ = \text{Spec}(B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T} \otimes_{\mathbb{F}_1} \mathbb{B})^+$ is naturally isomorphic to the Giansiracusa tropicalization of X .

In particular, we recover the Giansiracusa bend relation on $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}[A]$ as the congruence kernel of the projection

$$\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}^{\max}[A] \longrightarrow (B \otimes_{\mathbf{k}} \mathbb{T} \otimes_{\mathbb{F}_1} \mathbb{B})^+$$

induced by $\pi : k[A] \rightarrow R$.

Part 7: Matroid bundles
(joint work with Matthew Baker)

Idylls

The **regular partial field** is the ordered blueprint

$$\mathbb{F}_1^\pm = \left(\{0, 1, \epsilon\}, \mathbb{N}[1, \epsilon], \langle 0 \leq 1 + \epsilon \rangle \right)$$

where $\epsilon^2 = 1$. Thus ϵ plays the role of an additive inverse of 1.

An **\mathbb{F}_1^\pm -algebra** is an ordered blueprint B together with a morphism $\mathbb{F}_1^\pm \rightarrow B$. By abuse of notation, we denote the image of ϵ in B also by ϵ .

An **idyll** is an \mathbb{F}_1^\pm -algebra $\mathbb{F}_1^\pm \rightarrow F$ such that

- ▶ $F^\bullet = \{0\} \cup F^\times$;
- ▶ $F^+ = \mathbb{N}[F^\times]$;
- ▶ for all relations of the form $0 \leq \sum c_i a_i$, we have either $\sum c_i \geq 3$ or $\sum c_i a_i = a + \epsilon a$ for some $a \in B$.

Remark: We interpret $\sum c_i a_i$ as zero if $0 \leq \sum c_i a_i$.

Examples

The regular partial field \mathbb{F}_1^\pm is tautologically an idyll.

The Krasner hyperfield $\mathbb{K} = (\{0, 1\}, \mathbb{N}, \langle 0 \leq 1 + 1, 1 \leq 1 + 1 \rangle)$ is an idyll with respect to the morphism $\mathbb{F}_1^\pm \rightarrow \mathbb{K}$ that sends ϵ to 1.

The tropical hyperfield \mathbb{T} is an idyll with respect to the morphism $\mathbb{F}_1^\pm \rightarrow \mathbb{T}$ that maps ϵ to 1.

The ordered blueprint \mathbf{k} associated with a field k is an idyll with respect to the morphism $\mathbb{F}_1^\pm \rightarrow \mathbf{k}$ that maps ϵ to -1 .

Baker-Bowler theory

Fix $E = \{1, \dots, n\}$ and $0 \leq r \leq n$. Let $\binom{E}{r} = \{r\text{-subsets of } E\}$.

Let F be an idyll. A **Grassmann-Plücker function in F** is a nontrivial function

$$\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \longrightarrow F$$

that satisfies the *Plücker relations*, i.e.

$$0 \leq \sum_{k=0}^{k=r} \epsilon^k \Delta(J - \{j_k\}) \Delta(J' \cup \{j_k\})$$

for all $(r+1)$ -subsets $J = \{j_0, \dots, j_r\}$ and $(r-1)$ -subsets J' of E where $j_0 < \dots < j_r$ and $\Delta(J' \cup \{j_k\}) = 0$ if $j_k \in J'$.

An **F -matroid** is an F^\times -class $M = [\Delta]$ of a Grassmann-Plücker function $\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \rightarrow F$.

Theorem (Baker-Bowler 19)

Duality and cryptomorphisms (cycles, dual pairs) for F -matroids.

Examples

A **matroid** is a \mathbb{K} -matroid.

A **valuated matroid**, or **tropical linear space**, is a \mathbb{T} -matroid where \mathbb{T} is the tropical hyperfield.

Let k be a field and \mathbf{k} the associated idyll. Then a \mathbf{k} -matroid is a k -rational point of the Grassmannian $\text{Gr}(r, E)$.

Matroids as rational points of a Grassmannian

Heuristic: An F -matroid should be an F -rational point of a Grassmannian “ $\text{Gr}(r, E)$ ”. A *matroid bundle* on an ordered blue \mathbb{F}_1^\pm -scheme X should be a morphism “ $X \rightarrow \text{Gr}(r, E)$ ”.

Certainly “ $\text{Gr}(r, E)$ ” cannot be a usual scheme. But we can turn this into a concise statement! Namely...

Let $B = (B^\bullet, B^+, \leq)$ be the \mathbb{F}_1^\pm -algebra with

- ▶ $B^+ = \mathbb{N}[1, \epsilon][T_I \mid I \in \binom{E}{r}]$ where $\epsilon^2 = 1$;
- ▶ $B^\bullet = \{c \cdot \prod T_I^{e_i} \mid c \in \{0, 1, \epsilon\}, e_i \in \mathbb{N}\}$;
- ▶ \leq is generated by $0 \leq 1 + \epsilon$ and the Plücker relations.

The **matroid space** is defined as $\text{Mat}(r, E) = \text{Proj } B$ where Proj is defined analogously to usual algebraic geometry.

Theorem (Baker-L'18)

Let F be an idyll. Then $\text{Mat}(r, E)(F)$ stays in a natural bijection with the set of all F -matroids $M = [\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \rightarrow F]$.

Digression: applications to matroid theory

Let F be an idyll. There is a unique morphism $t_F : F \rightarrow \mathbb{K}$. We say that a matroid M is **representable over F** if there is a Grassmann-Plücker function $\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \rightarrow F$ such that $M = [t_F \circ \Delta]$.

The morphism $\text{Spec } \mathbb{K} \rightarrow \text{Mat}(r, E)$ associated with a matroid M has a unique image point x_M . The **universal idyll** of M is the “residue field” k_M of $\text{Mat}(r, E)$ at x_M .

Theorem (Baker-L'18)

Let F be an idyll and M a matroid. Then M is representable over F if and only if there is a morphism $k_M \rightarrow F$.

Remark: There is a derived object F_M , the **foundation** of M , that is better suited for applications than k_M . Representability is for many idylls F equivalent to the existence of a morphism $F_M \rightarrow F$. This leads to new proofs of various classical theorems on matroids.

Matroid bundles

Let X be an ordered blue \mathbb{F}_1^\pm -scheme. A **line bundle** on X is a sheaf \mathcal{L} that is locally isomorphic to the structure sheaf \mathcal{O}_X .

A **Grassmann-Plücker function** on X is a line bundle \mathcal{L} together with a function

$$\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \longrightarrow \Gamma(X, \mathcal{L})$$

such that $\{\Delta(I) \mid I \in \binom{E}{r}\}$ generates \mathcal{L} and that satisfies the Plücker relations.

A **matroid bundle** on X is an isomorphism class $\mathcal{M} = [\Delta]$ of Grassmann-Plücker functions.

The moduli interpretation of matroid bundles

The matroid space comes with the usual Plücker embedding

$$\iota : \text{Mat}(r, E) \longrightarrow \mathbb{P}_{\mathbb{F}_1^\pm}^N = \text{“ Proj } \mathbb{F}_1^\pm[T_I | I \in \binom{E}{r}] \text{”}$$

where $N = \binom{E}{r} - 1$. Let $\mathcal{O}(1)$ be the first twisted sheaf on \mathbb{P}^N . Then $T_I \in \Gamma(\mathbb{P}_{\mathbb{F}_1^\pm}^N, \mathcal{O}(1))$.

Theorem (Baker-L'18)

Let X be an ordered blue \mathbb{F}_1^\pm -scheme. Sending a morphism $\varphi : X \rightarrow \text{Mat}(r, E)$ to the function $\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \rightarrow \Gamma(X, (\iota \circ \varphi)^*(\mathcal{O}(1)))$ with $\Delta(I) = (\iota \circ \varphi)^\#(T_I)$ defines a bijection

$$\text{Hom}_{\mathbb{F}_1^\pm}(X, \text{Mat}(r, E)) \longrightarrow \{\text{matroid bundles on } X\}.$$

In other words, $\text{Mat}(r, E)$ is the fine moduli space of matroid bundles on X .

Matroids over the tropical integers

The **hyperring of tropical integers** is the ordered blueprint

$$\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}} = \left([0, 1], \mathbb{N}[(0, 1]], \langle c \leq a + b \mid c \leq a + b \text{ in } \mathbb{T} \rangle \right),$$

which is an \mathbb{F}_1^{\pm} -algebra with respect to the morphism $\mathbb{F}_1^{\pm} \rightarrow \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$ that sends ϵ to 1.

Since $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}^{\times} = \{1\}$ and all line bundles on $\text{Spec } \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$ are trivial, a matroid bundle on $\text{Spec } \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$ is the same as a function

$$\Delta : \binom{E}{r} \longrightarrow \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$$

such that $\Delta(I) = 1$ for some $I \in \binom{E}{r}$ and that satisfies the Plücker relations.

Part 8: Back to the tropical Riemann-Roch theorem

The next accomplished steps

Recall the context from the beginning: a field k with discrete valuation $v : k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$ and valuation ring R ; a smooth projective k -curve X with strictly semistable R -model \mathcal{X} .

The Kato fan of \mathcal{X} provides the “coordinates” for a blue model \mathbb{X} of \mathcal{X} . Its tropicalization is $\mathbb{X}^{\text{trop}} = \mathbb{X} \times_{\mathbf{R}} \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$ where \mathbf{R} is the ordered blueprint associated with R .

Fact

The (geometric realization of the) dual graph G of \mathcal{X}_0 stays in natural bijection with $\mathbb{X}^{\text{trop}}(\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}})$.

Future steps

- ▶ Do cocycle sets for line bundles on \mathbb{X}^{trop} carry the expected matroid structure? Note that this requires a cryptomorphic description of $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{T}}$ -matroids in terms of cycles (i.e. defining equations).
- ▶ Is the rank of the cohomology group equal to the Baker-Norine rank? Or does it give a sharper bound in the specialization lemma? (This could be very useful for Brill-Noether theory)
- ▶ Can we find a cohomological proof for the tropical Riemann-Roch theorem?
- ▶ What about Riemann-Roch for other ordered blueprints, e.g. \mathbb{F}_1^{\pm} ?