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Let *G* be a connected linear algebraic group over a field *k*. We say that *G* is toric-friendly if for any field extension K/k and any maximal *K*-torus *T* in *G* the group G(K) acts transitively on (G/T)(K). Our main result is a classification of semisimple (and under certain assumptions on *k*, of connected) toric-friendly groups.

#### Introduction

Let k be a field and X be a homogeneous space of a connected linear algebraic group G defined over k. The first question one usually asks about X is whether or not it has a k-point. If the answer is "yes", then one often wants to know whether or not the set X(k) of k-points of X forms a single orbit under the group G(k).

In this paper we shall focus on the case where the geometric stabilizers for the *G*-action on *X* are maximal tori of  $G_{\overline{k}} := G \times_k \overline{k}$  (here  $\overline{k}$  stands for a fixed algebraic closure of *k*). Such homogeneous spaces arise, in particular, in the study of the adjoint action of a connected reductive group *G* on its Lie algebra or of the conjugation action of *G* on itself; see [Colliot-Thélène et al. 2011]. It is shown in Corollary 4.6 of the same reference (see also [Kottwitz 1982, Lemma 2.1]) that every homogeneous space *X* of this type has a *k*-point, assuming that *G* is split and char(*k*) = 0. Therefore it is natural to ask if this point is unique up to translations by *G*(*k*).

**Definition 0.1.** Let k be a field. We say that a connected linear k-group G is *toric-friendly* if for every field extension K/k the following condition is satisfied:

(\*) For every maximal *K*-torus *T* of  $G_K := G \times_k K$ , the group G(K) has only one orbit in  $(G_K/T)(K)$ ; equivalently, the natural map  $\pi : G(K) \to (G_K/T)(K)$  is surjective.

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Examining the cohomology exact sequence associated to the *K*-subgroup *T* of  $G_K$  [Serre 1994, I.5.4, Proposition 36], we see that *G* is toric-friendly if and only if ker[ $H^1(K, T) \rightarrow H^1(K, G)$ ] = 1 for every field extension K/k and every maximal *K*-torus *T* of  $G_K$ .

Observe that G is toric-friendly if and only if condition (\*) of Definition 0.1 is satisfied for all *finitely generated* extensions K/k.

We are interested in classifying toric-friendly groups. In Section 1 we partially reduce this problem to the case where the group is semisimple. The rest of this paper will be devoted to proving the following classification theorem for semisimple toric-friendly groups.

**Main Theorem 0.2.** Let k be a field. A connected semisimple k-group G is toricfriendly if and only if G is isomorphic to a direct product  $\prod_i R_{F_i/k}G'_i$ , where each  $F_i$  is a finite separable extension of k and each  $G'_i$  is an inner form of PGL<sub>n<sub>i</sub>,  $F_i$ </sub> for some integer  $n_i$ .

*Notation.* Unless otherwise specified, k will denote an arbitrary field. For any field K we denote by  $K_s$  a separable closure of K.

By a k-group we mean an affine algebraic group scheme over k, not necessarily smooth or connected. However, when talking of a *reductive* or *semisimple* k-group, we implicitly assume smoothness and connectedness.

Let S be a k-group. We denote by  $H^i(k, S)$  the *i*-th flat cohomology set for i = 0, 1 [Waterhouse 1979, 17.6]. If S is abelian, we denote by  $H^i(k, S)$  the *i*-th flat cohomology group for  $i \ge 0$  [Berhuy et al. 2007, Appendix B]. There are exact sequences for flat cohomology similar to those for Galois cohomology, [Waterhouse 1979, 18.1; Berhuy et al. 2007, Appendix B]. When S is smooth, the flat cohomology  $H^i(k, S)$  can be identified with Galois cohomology.

#### 1. First reductions

**Lemma 1.1.** Let  $1 \to U \to G \xrightarrow{\varphi} G' \to 1$  be an exact sequence of smooth connected k-groups, where U is unipotent. We assume that U is k-split, that is, has a composition series over k whose successive quotients are isomorphic to  $\mathbb{G}_{a,k}$ . Then G is toric-friendly if and only if G' is toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Choose a field extension K/k and a maximal K-torus  $T \subset G_K$ . Set  $T' = \varphi(T) \subset G'_K$ , then T' is a maximal torus of  $G'_K$ . The map  $\varphi^T : T \to T'$  is an isomorphism, because  $T \cap U_K = 1$  (as  $U_K$  is unipotent). Conversely, let us start from a maximal torus T' of  $G'_K$ . The preimage

$$H = \varphi^{-1}(T') \subset G_K$$

of T' is smooth and connected, so any maximal torus T of H maps isomorphically onto T' and therefore it is maximal in  $G_K$ .

Now we have a commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{c|c} H^1(K,T) & \longrightarrow & H^1(K,G) \\ \varphi_*^T & & & & & & \\ \varphi_*^T & & & & & & \\ H^1(K,T') & \longrightarrow & H^1(K,G') \end{array}$$

Since  $\varphi^T : T \to T'$  is an isomorphism of tori, the left vertical arrow  $\varphi^T_*$  is an isomorphism of abelian groups. On the other hand, by [Sansuc 1981, Lemma 1.13], the right vertical arrow  $\varphi_*$  is a bijective map. We see that the top horizontal arrow in the diagram is injective if and only if the bottom horizontal arrow is injective, which proves the lemma.

Let *k* be a perfect field and *G* be a connected *k*-group. Recall that over a perfect field the unipotent radical of *G* makes sense; that is, the "geometric" unipotent radical over an algebraic closure is defined over *k*, by Galois descent. We denote the unipotent radical of *G* by  $R_u(G)$ .

**Corollary 1.2.** Let k be a perfect field, G be a connected k-group, and  $R_u(G)$  be its unipotent radical. Then G is toric-friendly if and only if the associated reductive k-group  $G/R_u(G)$  is toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Since *k* is perfect, the smooth connected unipotent *k*-group  $R_u(G)$  is *k*-split [Borel 1991, Theorem 15.4], and the corollary follows from Lemma 1.1.

Let *k* be a field. We recall that a *k*-group *G* is called *special* if  $H^1(K, G) = 1$  for every field extension K/k. This notion was introduced by J.-P. Serre [1958]. Semisimple special groups over an algebraically closed field were classified by A. Grothendieck [1958]; we shall use his classification later on.

Recall that a *k*-torus *T* is called quasitrivial, if its character group X(T) is a permutation Galois module. Split tori and, more general, quasitrivial tori are special.

**Proposition 1.3.** Let  $1 \to C \to G \xrightarrow{\varphi} G' \to 1$  be an exact sequence of k-groups, where G and G' are reductive, and  $C \subset G$  is central, hence of multiplicative type (not necessarily connected or smooth).

- (a) If G is toric-friendly, so is G'.
- (b) If C is a special k-torus, then G is toric-friendly if and only if G' is toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Let K/k be a field extension. The map  $T \mapsto T' := \varphi(T)$  is a bijection between the set of maximal *K*-tori  $T \subset G_K$  and the set of maximal *K*-tori  $T' \subset G'_K$ 

(the inverse map is  $T' \mapsto T := \varphi^{-1}(T')$ ). For such T and  $T' = \varphi(T)$  we have commutative diagrams

$$\begin{array}{cccc} G_K & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & G'_K & & G(K) & \xrightarrow{\varphi} & G'(K) \\ \pi & & & & & & \\ \pi & & & & & & \\ G_K/T & \xrightarrow{\varphi_*} & G'_K/T' & & & & \\ & & & & & & \\ G_K/T)(K) & \xrightarrow{\varphi_*} & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ & & & & \\ \end{array}$$

where  $\varphi_*: G_K/T \xrightarrow{\sim} G'_K/T'$  is an isomorphism of *K*-varieties, and the induced map on *K*-points  $\varphi_*: (G_K/T)(K) \to (G'_K/T')(K)$  is a bijection. Now, if *G* is toric-friendly, then the map  $\pi: G(K) \to (G_K/T)(K)$  is surjective, and we see from the right-hand diagram that then the map  $\pi': G'(K) \to (G'_K/T')(K)$  is surjective as well. This shows that *G'* is toric-friendly, thus proving (a).

To prove (b), assume that G' is toric-friendly and C is a special k-torus. Then the map  $\pi': G'(K) \to (G'_K/T')(K)$  is surjective (because G' is toric-friendly) and the map  $\varphi: G(K) \to G'(K)$  is surjective (because C is special). We see from the right-hand diagram that the map  $\pi: G(K) \to (G_K/T)(K)$  is surjective as well. Hence G is toric-friendly.

We record the following immediate corollary of Proposition 1.3(b).

**Corollary 1.4.** Let G be a reductive k-group. Suppose that the radical R(G) is a special k-torus (in particular, this condition is satisfied if R(G) is a quasitrivial k-torus). Then G is toric-friendly if and only if the semisimple group G/R(G) is toric-friendly.

The next result follows from Corollaries 1.2 and 1.4. It partially reduces the problem of classifying toric-friendly groups G to the case where G is semisimple.

**Corollary 1.5.** Let k be a perfect field. Let G be a connected k-group containing a split maximal torus. Then G is toric-friendly if and only if the semisimple group G/R(G) is toric-friendly.

The following two lemmas will be used to reduce the problem of classifying *adjoint* semisimple toric-friendly groups G to the case where G is an absolutely simple adjoint k-group.

**Lemma 1.6.** A direct product  $G = G' \times_k G''$  of connected k-groups is toric-friendly if and only if both G' and G'' are toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Let K/k be a field extension. Let  $T' \subset G'_K$  and  $T'' \subset G''_K$  be maximal K-tori, then  $T := T' \times_K T'' \subset G_K$  is a maximal K-torus, and every maximal K-torus

in  $G_K$  is of this form. The commutative diagram

shows that every *K*-point of  $G_K/T$  lifts to *G* if and only if every *K*-point of  $G'_K/T'$  lifts to *G'* and every *K*-point of  $G''_K/T''$  lifts to *G''*.

**Lemma 1.7.** Let l/k be a finite separable field extension, G' a connected *l*-group, and  $G = R_{l/k}G'$ . Then G is toric-friendly if and only if G' is toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Let K/k be a field extension. Then  $l \otimes_k K = L_1 \times \cdots \times L_r$ , where  $L_i$  are finite separable extensions of K. It follows that  $G_K = \prod_i R_{L_i/K} G'_{L_i}$ . Let  $T \subset G_K$  be a maximal K-torus, then  $T = \prod_i R_{L_i/K} T'_i$ , where  $T'_i$  is a maximal  $L_i$ -torus of  $G'_{L_i}$  for each i. We have

$$G(K) = G_K(K) = \left(\prod_i R_{L_i/K} G'_{L_i}\right)(K) = \prod_i G'_{L_i}(L_i) = \prod_i G'(L_i)$$

and similarly  $(G_K/T)(K) = \prod_i (G'_{L_i}/T'_i)(L_i)$ , yielding a commutative diagram

If G' is toric-friendly, then the right vertical arrow in the diagram is surjective, hence the left vertical arrow is surjective and G is toric-friendly.

Conversely, assume that *G* is toric-friendly. Let L/l be a field extension and  $T' \subset G'_L$  a maximal *L*-torus. Set K := L and T := T' in the diagram above. Then we can identify *L* with one of  $L_i$  in the decomposition  $l \otimes_k K = L_1 \times \cdots \times L_r$ , say with  $L_1$ . In this way we identify  $G'_L$  with  $G'_{L_1}$  and  $G'_L/T'$  with  $G'_{L_1}/T'_1$ . Since *G* is toric-friendly, the left vertical arrow in the diagram is surjective, hence the right vertical arrow is also surjective. This means that the map  $G'(L_i) \to (G'_{L_i}/T'_i)(L_i)$  is surjective for each *i* and in particular, for i = 1. Consequently, the map  $G'(L) \to (G'_L/T')(L)$  is surjective, and G' is toric-friendly, as desired.  $\Box$ 

#### 2. The elementary obstruction

**2.1.** Let *K* be a field and *X* be a smooth geometrically integral *K*-variety. Write  $\mathfrak{g} = \operatorname{Gal}(K_s/K)$ , where  $K_s$  is a fixed separable closure of *K*. Recall from [Colliot-Thélène and Sansuc 1987, Definition 2.2.1] that the *elementary obstruction*  $\operatorname{ob}(X)$ 

is the class in  $\operatorname{Ext}^{1}_{\mathfrak{a}}(K_{s}(X)^{*}/K_{s}^{*}, K_{s}^{*})$  of the extension

$$1 \to K_s^* \to K_s(X)^* \to K_s(X)^* / K_s^* \to 1.$$

In particular, ob(X) = 0 if and only if this extension of g-modules splits. If X has a K-point, then ob(X) = 0 [Colliot-Thélène and Sansuc 1987, Proposition 2.2.2(a)]. Conversely, if Y is a T-torsor over K for some K-torus T, and ob(Y) = 0, then Y has a K-point, by Lemma 2.1(iv) of [Borovoi et al. 2008]. However, if X is an H-torsor over K for some simply connected semisimple K-group H, then ob(X) = 0 even when X has no K-points; see Lemma 2.2(viii) of that same reference. (The standing assumption in [Borovoi et al. 2008] is that char(K) = 0; however, the proofs of Lemmas 2.1(iv) and 2.2(viii) go through in arbitrary characteristic.)

The following key lemma was suggested to us by J.-L. Colliot-Thélène.

**Lemma 2.2.** Let K be a field, T be a K-torus, H be a simply connected semisimple K-group, X be a H-torsor over K and Y be a T-torsor over K. If Y has an F-point over the function field F = K(X) of X, then Y has a K-point.

*Proof.* Since *H* is simply connected, ob(X) = 0; see Section 2.1 above. Suppose *Y* has an *F*-point. This means that there exist a *K*-rational map  $X \dashrightarrow Y$ . By [Wittenberg 2008, Lemma 3.1.2], if we have a *K*-rational map  $X \dashrightarrow Y$  between smooth geometrically integral *K*-varieties, then ob(X) = 0 implies ob(Y) = 0. Since *T* is a *K*-torus, if ob(Y) = 0, then  $Y(K) \neq \emptyset$ ; see Section 2.1 above. Thus in our situation *Y* has a *K*-point, as claimed.

Lemma 2.3. Let k be a field. Assume we have a commutative diagram of k-groups



where G is a smooth connected k-group, the vertical map  $T \rightarrow G$  is the inclusion of a maximal k-torus T into G, and H is semisimple and simply connected. If there exists a field extension K/k such that the map

$$H^1(K, S) \to H^1(K, T)$$

is nontrivial, then G is not toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Choose K and  $s \in H^1(K, S)$  such that the image  $t \in H^1(K, T)$  of s in  $H^1(K, T)$  is nontrivial. Let  $h \in H^1(K, H)$  be the image of  $s \in H^1(K, S)$  in  $H^1(K, H)$ , and let  $g \in H^1(K, G)$  be the image of t (and of h) in  $H^1(K, G)$ , as

shown in the commutative diagram below:

$$\begin{array}{cccc} H^1(K,S) \longrightarrow H^1(K,T) & s \longrightarrow t \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ & & & & & & & \\ H^1(K,H) \longrightarrow H^1(K,G) & & & & h \longrightarrow g \end{array}$$

Let *X* be an *H*-torsor over *K* representing *h* and let F = K(X) be the function field of *X*. We denote by  $h_F$  the image of *h* in  $H^1(F, H)$ , and similarly we define  $s_F$ ,  $t_F$ , and  $g_F$ . Clearly *X* has an *F*-point, hence  $h_F = 1$  in  $H^1(F, H)$  and therefore  $g_F = 1$  in  $H^1(F, G)$ . On the other hand, by Lemma 2.2,  $t_F \neq 1$ . We conclude that the kernel of the natural map  $H^1(F, T) \rightarrow H^1(F, G)$  contains  $t_F \neq 1$  and hence, is nontrivial. This implies that *G* is not toric-friendly.

**2.4.** Let G be a reductive k-group. Let  $G^{ss}$  be the derived group of G (it is semisimple), and let  $G^{sc}$  be the universal cover of  $G^{ss}$  (it is semisimple and simply connected). Consider the composed homomorphism  $f: G^{sc} \twoheadrightarrow G^{ss} \hookrightarrow G$ .

Let K/k be a field extension. There is a canonical bijective correspondence  $T \leftrightarrow T^{sc}$  between the set of maximal *K*-tori  $T \subset G_K$  and the set of maximal *K*-tori  $T^{sc} \subset G^{sc}$ . Starting from a maximal *K*-torus  $T \subset G_K$ , we define a maximal *K*-torus  $T^{sc} := f^{-1}(T) \subset G_K^{sc}$ . Conversely, starting from a maximal *K*-torus  $T^{sc} \subset G_K^{sc}$ , we define a maximal *K*-torus  $T := f(T^{sc}) \cdot R(G)_K \subset G_K$ , where R(G) is the radical of G.

**Proposition 2.5.** Let G be a reductive k-group. Let  $G^{sc}$  and  $f: G^{sc} \to G$  be as in Section 2.4 above. Let K/k be a field extension,  $T \subset G_K$  be a maximal K-torus of  $G_K$ , and set  $T^{sc} = f^{-1}(T) \subset G_K^{sc}$  as above. If the natural map  $H^1(K, T^{sc}) \to H^1(K, T)$  is nontrivial, then G is not toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Immediate from Lemma 2.3.

**Proposition 2.6.** Let G be a semisimple k-group,  $f : G^{sc} \to G$  be the universal covering and  $C := \ker(f)$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:

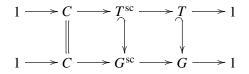
- (a) G is toric-friendly.
- (b) The map  $H^1(K, T^{sc}) \to H^1(K, T)$  is trivial (identically zero) for every field extension K/k and every maximal K-torus  $T^{sc}$  of  $G^{sc}$ . Here  $T := f(T^{sc})$ .
- (c) The map  $H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, T^{sc})$  is surjective for every field extension K/k and every maximal K-torus  $T^{sc}$  of  $G^{sc}$ .
- (d) The connecting homomorphism  $\partial_T : H^1(K, T) \to H^2(K, C)$  is injective for every field extension K/k and every maximal K-torus T of G.
- (e) The natural map  $H^1(K, T) \rightarrow H^1(K, G)$  is injective for every field extension K/k and every maximal K-torus T of G.

*Proof.* (a)  $\Rightarrow$  (b) by Proposition 2.5. Examining the cohomology sequence

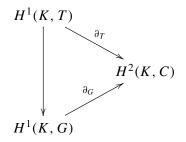
$$H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, T^{\mathrm{sc}}) \to H^1(K, T) \to H^2(K, C)$$

associated to the exact sequence  $1 \to C \to T^{sc} \to T \to 1$  of *k*-groups, we see that (b), (c) and (d) are equivalent.

(d)  $\Rightarrow$  (e): The diagram



of K-groups induces compatible connecting morphisms



Suppose  $\alpha, \beta \in H^1(K, T)$  map to the same element in  $H^1(K, G)$ . Then the diagram above shows that  $\partial_T(\alpha) = \partial_T(\beta)$  in  $H^2(K, C)$ . Part (d) now tells us that  $\alpha = \beta$ .

(e)  $\Rightarrow$  (a) is obvious, since (a) is equivalent to the assertion that  $H^1(K, T) \rightarrow H^1(K, G)$  has trivial kernel for every K and T; see Definition 0.1.

**Corollary 2.7.** With the assumptions and notation of *Proposition 2.6*, if *G* is toricfriendly and quasisplit, then

- (a) the map  $H^1(K, G^{sc}) \to H^1(K, G)$  is trivial for every K/k,
- (b) the map  $H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, G^{sc})$  is surjective for every K/k,
- (c) the connecting map  $\partial_G : H^1(K, G) \to H^2(K, C)$  has trivial kernel for every K/k.

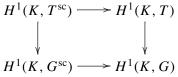
Proof. Examining the cohomology sequence

$$H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, G^{\mathrm{sc}}) \to H^1(K, G) \to H^2(K, C)$$

associated to the exact sequence  $1 \rightarrow C \rightarrow G^{sc} \rightarrow G \rightarrow 1$ , we see that (a), (b) and (c) are equivalent.

To prove (a), recall that since  $G_K$  is quasisplit, by a theorem of Steinberg [1965, Theorem 1.8] every  $x^{sc} \in H^1(K, G^{sc})$  lies in the image of the map  $H^1(K, T^{sc}) \rightarrow$ 

 $H^1(K, G^{sc})$  for some maximal *K*-torus  $T^{sc}$  of  $G_K^{sc}$ . Since *G* is toric-friendly, by Proposition 2.6 the map  $H^1(K, T^{sc}) \to H^1(K, T)$  is trivial. The commutative diagram



now shows that the image of  $x^{sc}$  in  $H^1(K, G)$  is 1. Thus the map  $H^1(K, G^{sc}) \rightarrow H^1(K, G)$  is trivial.

**Theorem 2.8.** Let G be a split semisimple k-group and  $f: G^{sc} \to G$  be its universal covering map. If G is toric-friendly, then  $G^{sc}$  is special.

*Proof.* Let  $T^{sc}$  be a split maximal torus of  $G^{sc}$ . Recall that  $T^{sc}$  is special (as is any split torus). Set  $C = \ker f$ , then  $C \subset T^{sc}$ . For any field extension K/k, the map  $H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, G^{sc})$  factors through  $H^1(K, T^{sc}) = 1$  and hence is trivial. By Corollary 2.7(b) this map is also surjective. This shows that  $H^1(K, G^{sc}) = 1$  for every K/k, that is,  $G^{sc}$  is special.

**Remark 2.9.** Our proof of Theorem 2.8 goes through for any (not necessarily split) semisimple *k*-group *G*, as long as  $G^{sc}$  contains a special maximal *k*-torus  $T^{sc}$ . In particular, Theorem 2.8 remains valid for any quasisplit semisimple *k*-group *G*, in view of Lemma 2.10 below. This lemma is a special case of [Colliot-Thélène et al. 2004, Lemma 5.6]; however, for the sake of completeness we supply a short self-contained proof.

**Lemma 2.10.** Let G be a semisimple, simply connected, quasisplit k-group over a field k. Let  $B \subset G$  be a Borel subgroup defined over k, and let  $T \subset B \subset G$  be a maximal k-torus of G contained in B. Then T is a quasitrivial k-torus.

*Proof.* We write  $\overline{k}$  for a fixed algebraic closure of k. Let  $\mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$  denote the group of cocharacters of T. Let  $R^{\vee} = R^{\vee}(G_{\overline{k}}, T_{\overline{k}}) \subset \mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$  denote the coroot system of  $G_{\overline{k}}$  with respect to  $T_{\overline{k}}$ , and let  $\Pi^{\vee} \subset R^{\vee}$  denote the basis of  $R^{\vee}$  corresponding to B. The Galois group  $\operatorname{Gal}(k_s/k)$  acts on  $\mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$ . Since T, G, and B are defined over k, the subsets  $R^{\vee}$  and  $\Pi^{\vee}$  of  $\mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$  are invariant under this action. Since G is simply connected,  $\Pi^{\vee}$  is a  $\mathbb{Z}$ -basis of  $\mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$ . Thus  $\operatorname{Gal}(k_s/k)$  permutes the  $\mathbb{Z}$ -basis  $\Pi^{\vee}$  of  $\mathbb{X}^{\vee}(T)$ ; in other words, T is a quasitrivial torus.  $\square$ 

**Remark 2.11.** A similar assertion for *adjoint* quasisplit groups was proved by G. Prasad [1989, Proof of Lemma 2.0].

#### 3. Examples in type A

Let *k* be a field and *A* a central simple *k*-algebra of dimension  $n^2$ . We write  $GL_{1,A}$  for the *k*-group with  $GL_{1,A}(R) = (A \otimes_k R)^*$  for any unital commutative *k*-algebra

*R* (here ()\* denotes the group of invertible elements). The *k*-group  $GL_{1,A}$  is an inner form of  $GL_{n,k}$ .

Let *K* be a field. Recall that an *n*-dimensional commutative étale *K*-algebra is a finite product  $E = \prod_i L_i$ , where each  $L_i$  is a finite separable field extension of *K* and  $\sum_i [L_i : K] = n$ . For such  $E = \prod_i L_i$  we define a *K*-torus  $R_{E/K} \mathbb{G}_{m,E} :=$  $\prod_i R_{L_i/K} \mathbb{G}_{m,L_i}$ , then  $(R_{E/K} \mathbb{G}_{m,E})(K) = E^*$ . Clearly the *K*-torus  $R_{E/K} \mathbb{G}_{m,E}$  is quasitrivial.

**Proposition 3.1.** Let k be a field, and let A/k be a central simple k-algebra of dimension  $n^2$ .

- (a) The k-group  $G = GL_{1,A}$  is toric-friendly.
- (b) The k-group  $PGL_{1,A} := GL_{1,A}/\mathbb{G}_{m,k}$  is toric-friendly.
- (c) In particular,  $GL_{n,k}$  and  $PGL_{n,k}$  are toric-friendly.

*Proof.* (a) Let K/k be a field extension and let

$$T \subset G_K = \mathrm{GL}_{1,A\otimes_k K}$$

be a maximal *K*-torus. Let *E* be the centralizer of *T* in  $A \otimes_k K$ . An easy calculation over a separable closure  $K_s$  of *K* shows that *E* is an *n*-dimensional commutative étale *K*-subalgebra of  $A \otimes_k K$  and that  $T = R_{E/K} \mathbb{G}_{m,E}$ . It follows that *T* is quasitrivial, hence special. Since all maximal *K*-tori  $T \subset G_K$  are special, *G* is toric-friendly.

(b) follows from (a) and Corollary 1.4. To deduce (c) from (a) and (b), set  $A = M_n(k)$  (the matrix algebra).

We now come to the main result of this section, which asserts that a toric-friendly semisimple groups of type *A* is necessarily an adjoint group.

**Proposition 3.2.** Let k be a field. Consider a k-group  $G = (SL_{n_1} \times \cdots \times SL_{n_r})/C$ , where  $C \subset \mu := \mu_{n_1} \times \cdots \times \mu_{n_r}$  is a central subgroup of  $G^{sc} = SL_{n_1} \times \cdots \times SL_{n_r}$ , not necessarily smooth. If  $C \neq \mu$ , then G is not toric-friendly.

Before proceeding with the proof, we fix some notation. Let L/K be a finite separable field extension of degree *n*. Set

$$R_{L/K}^1(\mathbb{G}_m) := \ker[N_{L/K} : R_{L/K}\mathbb{G}_{m,L} \to \mathbb{G}_{m,K}],$$

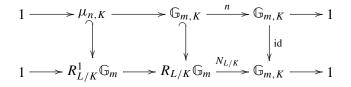
where  $N_{L/K}$  is the norm map. Clearly  $R^1_{L/K}(\mathbb{G}_m)$  can be embedded into  $SL_{n,K}$  as a maximal *K*-torus. The embedding  $K \hookrightarrow L$  induces an embedding  $\mu_{n,K} \hookrightarrow R^1_{L/K}\mathbb{G}_m$ , where n = [L:K].

The following two lemmas are undoubtedly known. We include short proofs below because we have not been able to find appropriate references.

**Lemma 3.3.** There is a commutative diagram

where the horizontal arrows are canonical isomorphisms, the right vertical arrow is induced by the embedding  $\mu_n \hookrightarrow R^1_{L/K} \mathbb{G}_m$ , and the left vertical arrow is the natural projection.

*Proof.* Apply the flat cohomology functor to the commutative diagram of commutative *K*-groups



and use Hilbert's Theorem 90.

**Lemma 3.4.** Suppose  $r \mid n$ . Then there is a commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccc} K^*/K^{*n} & \stackrel{\cong}{\longrightarrow} H^1(K, \mu_n) \\ & & & & \downarrow^{(n/r)_*} \\ K^*/K^{*r} & \stackrel{\cong}{\longrightarrow} H^1(K, \mu_r) \, , \end{array}$$

where the horizontal arrows are canonical isomorphisms, the right vertical arrow is induced by the homomorphism  $\mu_n \xrightarrow{n/r} \mu_r$  given by  $x \mapsto x^{n/r}$ , and the left vertical arrow is the natural projection.

*Proof.* Similar to that of Lemma 3.3, using the commutative diagram

**Example 3.5.** The group  $G = SL_{n,k}$   $(n \ge 2)$  is not toric-friendly.

*Proof.* Since  $SL_n$  is special, it suffices to construct an extension K/k and a maximal *K*-torus  $T := R^1_{L/K}(\mathbb{G}_m)$  such that  $H^1(K, T) \neq 1$ . In view of Lemma 3.3 it suffices to show that  $N_{L/K}(L^*) \neq K^*$  for some field extension K/k and some finite

separable field extension L/K of degree *n*. This is well known; see for example the proof of [Rowen 1980, Proposition 3.1.46]. We include a short proof below as a way of motivating a related but more complicated argument at the end of the proof of Proposition 3.2.

Let  $L := k(x_1, ..., x_n)$ , where  $x_1, ..., x_n$  are independent variables, and  $K := L^{\Gamma}$ , where  $\Gamma$  is the cyclic group of order *n* that acts on *L* by cyclically permuting  $x_1, ..., x_n$ . For  $0 \neq a \in k[x_1, ..., x_n]$ , let deg $(a) \in \mathbb{N}$  denote the degree of *a* as a polynomial in  $x_1, ..., x_n$ . If  $a \in k(x_1, ..., x_n)$  is of the form a = b/c with nonzero  $b, c \in k[x_1, ..., x_n]$ , then we define deg $(a) = \deg(b) - \deg(c)$ . This yields the usual degree homomorphism deg :  $L^* \to \mathbb{Z}$ . Since  $N_{L/K}(a) = \prod_{\gamma \in \Gamma} \gamma(a)$ , we see that deg $(N_{L/K}(a)) = n \deg(a)$  is divisible by *n*, for every  $a \in L^*$ . On the other hand,  $s_1 = x_1 + \cdots + x_n \in K$  has degree 1. This shows that  $N_{L/K}(L^*) \neq K^*$ , as claimed.

**3.6.** *Proof of Proposition 3.2.* Let K/k be a field extension. For each i = 1, ..., r, let  $L_i$  be a separable field extension of degree  $n_i$  over K, and let  $T = T_1 \times \cdots \times T_r$  be a maximal K-torus of  $G^{sc}$ , where  $T_i := R^1_{L_i/K}(\mathbb{G}_m)$ . By Proposition 2.6 it suffices to show that the composition

$$H^{1}(K,C) \to H^{1}(K,\mu) \to H^{1}(K,T)$$
<sup>(2)</sup>

is not surjective for some choice of extensions K/k and  $L_i/K_i$ . Since  $C \not\subseteq \mu$ , there exist a prime p and a nontrivial character  $\chi : \mu \to \mu_p$  such that  $\chi(C) = 1$ . By Proposition 1.3(a) we may assume that  $C = \ker(\chi)$ . For notational simplicity, let us suppose that  $n_1, \ldots, n_s$  are divisible by p and  $n_{s+1}, \ldots, n_r$  are not, for some  $0 \le s \le r$ . Then it is easy to see that  $\chi$  is of the form

$$\chi(c_1,\ldots,c_r)=c_1^{d_1n_1/p}\cdots c_s^{d_sn_s/p}$$

for some integers  $d_1, \ldots, d_s$ . Since  $\chi$  is nontrivial on  $\mu$ , we have  $s \ge 1$  and  $d_i$  is not divisible by p for some  $i = 1, \ldots, s$ , say for i = 1. That is, we may assume that  $d_1$  is not divisible by p.

Lemma 3.3 gives a concrete description of the second map in (2). To determine the image of the map  $H^1(K, C) \rightarrow H^1(K, \mu)$ , we examine the cohomology exact sequence

induced by the exact sequence  $1 \to C \to \mu \xrightarrow{\chi} \mu_p \to 1$ . The image of  $H^1(K, C)$ in  $H^1(K, \mu)$  is the kernel of  $\chi_*$ . By Lemma 3.4,  $\chi_*$  maps the class of  $(a_1, \ldots, a_r)$  in  $H^1(K, \mu) = \prod_{i=1}^r K^*/K^{*n_i}$  to the class of  $a_1^{d_1} \cdots a_s^{d_s}$  in  $H^1(K, \mu_p) = K/K^{*p}$ . In other words, the image of  $H^1(K, C)$  in  $H^1(K, \mu)$  is the subgroup of classes of *r*-tuples  $(a_1, \ldots, a_r)$  in  $H^1(K, \mu) = \prod_{i=1}^r K^*/K^{*n_i}$  such that  $a_1^{d_1} \ldots a_s^{d_s} \in K^{*p}$ . Hence, the image of  $H^1(K, C)$  in  $H^1(K, T) = \prod_{i=1}^r K^*/N_{L_i/K}(L_i^*)$  consists of classes of *r*-tuples  $(a_1, \ldots, a_r)$  such that  $a_1^{d_1} \ldots a_s^{d_s} \in K^{*p}$ .

It remains to construct a field extension K/k, separable field extensions  $L_i/K$  of degree  $n_i$  for i = 1, ..., r, and an element  $\alpha \in H^1(K, T) = \prod_{i=1}^r K^*/N_{L_i/K}(L_i^*)$ , which cannot be represented by  $(a_1, ..., a_r) \in (K^*)^r$  such that  $a_1^{d_1} \cdots a_s^{d_s} \in K^{*p}$ . This will show that the map  $H^1(K, C) \to H^1(K, T)$  is not surjective, as claimed.

Set  $L := k(x_1, ..., x_n)$ , where  $n = n_1 + \cdots + n_r$  and  $x_1, ..., x_n$  are independent variables. The symmetric group  $S_n$  acts on L by permuting these variables; we embed  $S_{n_1} \times \cdots \times S_{n_r}$  into  $S_n$  in the natural way, by letting  $S_{n_1}$  permute the first  $n_1$  variables,  $S_{n_2}$  permute the next  $n_2$  variables, etc. Set  $K := L^{S_{n_1} \times \cdots \times S_{n_r}}$ ,  $s_1 := x_1 + \cdots + x_n \in K$  and

$$L_1 := K(x_1), \ L_2 := K(x_{n_1+1}), \ \dots \ L_r := K(x_{n_1+\dots+n_{r-1}+1}).$$

Clearly  $[L_i:K] = n_i$ . We claim the class of  $(s_1, 1, ..., 1)$  in  $\prod_{i=1}^r K^* / N_{L_i/K}(L_i^*)$  cannot be represented by any  $(a_1, ..., a_r) \in (K^*)^r$  with  $a_1^{d_1} \cdots a_s^{d_s} \in K^{*p}$ .

Let deg :  $L^* \to \mathbb{Z}$  be the degree map, as in Example 3.5. Arguing as we did there, we see that deg $(N_{L_i/K}(a))$  is divisible by  $n_i$  for every i = 1, ..., r and every  $a \in L_i^*$ . In particular,  $(a_1, ..., a_r) \mapsto \text{deg}(a_i) + n_i \mathbb{Z}$  is a well-defined function  $\prod_{i=1}^r K^*/N_{L_i/K}(L_i^*) \to \mathbb{Z}/n_i \mathbb{Z}$ , and consequently,

$$f(a_1,\ldots,a_n) := d_1 \deg(a_1) + \cdots + d_s \deg(a_s) + p\mathbb{Z}$$

is a well-defined function  $H^1(K, T) \to \mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ . We have

$$f(a_1,\ldots,a_n) = \deg(a_1^{d_1}\cdots a_s^{d_s}).$$

If  $a_1^{d_1} \cdots a_s^{d_s} \in K^{*p}$ , then  $f(a_1, \ldots, a_r) = 0$  in  $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ . On the other hand, since  $\deg(1) = 0$ ,  $\deg(s_1) = 1$  and  $d_1$  is not divisible by p, we conclude that  $f(s_1, 1, \ldots, 1)$  is nonzero in  $\mathbb{Z}/p\mathbb{Z}$ . This proves the claim and the proposition.

#### 4. Groups of type $C_n$ and outer forms of $A_n$

**Proposition 4.1.** *No absolutely simple* k*-group of type*  $C_n$   $(n \ge 2)$  *is toric-friendly.* 

*Proof.* Clearly we may assume that k is algebraically closed. We may also assume that G is adjoint, see Proposition 1.3(a). We see that  $G = PSp_{2n}$  and  $G^{sc} = Sp_{2n}$ . By Example 3.5, SL<sub>2</sub> is not toric-friendly. This means that there exist a field extension K/k, a maximal K-torus  $S \subset SL_{2,K}$ , and a cohomology class  $a_S \in H^1(K, S)$  such

that  $a_S \neq 1$ . We consider the standard embedding

$$(\operatorname{SL}_2)^n = (\operatorname{Sp}_2)^n \hookrightarrow \operatorname{Sp}_{2n}, \quad n \ge 2.$$

Set  $T^{sc} = S^n \subset (Sp_2)^n \subset Sp_{2n} = G^{sc}$ . Let  $\iota : S \hookrightarrow T^{sc} = S^n$  be the embedding as the first factor. Set  $a^{sc} = \iota_*(a_S) \in H^1(K, T^{sc})$ . Let *T* be the image of  $T^{sc}$  in  $G = PSp_{2n}$ , and let *a* be the image of  $a^{sc}$  in  $H^1(K, T)$ .

Now observe that the homomorphism

$$\chi: T^{\mathrm{sc}} = S^n \to S, \quad (x_1, \dots, x_n) \mapsto x_1 x_2^{-1},$$

factors through *T* (recall that  $n \ge 2$ ). Since  $\chi \circ \iota = id_S$ , we see that  $a \ne 1$ . On the other hand, the image of  $a^{sc}$  in  $H^1(K, G^{sc})$  is 1 (because  $G^{sc} = \text{Sp}_{2n}$  is special), hence  $a \in \ker[H^1(K, T) \to H^1(K, G)]$ , and we see that  $G = \text{PSp}_{2n}$  is not toric-friendly.

**Proposition 4.2.** No absolutely simple k-group of outer type  $A_n$   $(n \ge 2)$  is toricfriendly.

**Lemma 4.3.** Let k be a field, K/k a separable quadratic extension, and D/K a central division algebra of dimension  $r^2$  over K with an involution  $\sigma$  of the second kind (i.e.,  $\sigma$  acts nontrivially on K and trivially on k). Then there exists a finite separable field extension F/k such that  $K_F := K \otimes_k F$  is a field and  $D \otimes_K K_F$  is split, that is,  $K_F$ -isomorphic to the matrix algebra  $M_r(K_F)$ .

*Proof of the lemma.* Since there are no nontrivial central division algebras over finite fields, we may assume that k and K are infinite. Let

$$H = \{x \in D \mid x^{\sigma} = x\}$$

denote the k-space of Hermitian elements of D. Consider the embedding  $D \hookrightarrow M_r(K_s)$  induced by an isomorphism  $D \otimes_K K_s \cong M_r(K_s)$ , where  $K_s$  is a separable closure of K. An element x of D is called semisimple regular if its image in  $D \otimes_K K_s \cong M_r(K_s)$  is a semisimple matrix with r distinct eigenvalues. A standard argument using an isomorphism  $D \otimes_k K_s \cong M_r(K_s) \times M_r(K_s)$  shows that there is a dense open subvariety  $H_{\text{reg}}$  in the space H, consisting of semisimple regular elements. Clearly  $H_{\text{reg}}$  is defined over k and contains k-points.

Let  $x \in H_{reg}(k) \subset D$  be a semisimple regular Hermitian element. Let *L* be the centralizer of *x* in *D*. Since *x* is Hermitian ( $\sigma$ -invariant), the *k*-algebra *L* is  $\sigma$ -invariant. Since *x* is semisimple and regular, the algebra *L* is a commutative étale *K*-subalgebra of *D* of dimension *r* over *K*, as is easily seen by passing to  $K_s$ . Clearly *L* is a field, [L:K] = r, and *L* is separable over *k*. Since  $L \subset D$  and [L:K] = r, the field *L* is a splitting field for *D*; see, for example, [Pierce 1982, Corollary 13.3]. Since  $L \supset K$ , we see that  $\sigma$  acts nontrivially on L. Let  $F = L^{\langle \sigma \rangle}$  denote the subfield of L consisting of elements fixed by  $\sigma$ . Then [L:F] = 2 and [F:k] = r. Clearly F is separable over k. Since  $F \cap K = k$  and FK = L, we conclude that  $L = K \otimes_k F := K_F$ . This completes the proof of the lemma.

**4.4.** *Proof of Proposition 4.2.* By Proposition 1.3(a) we may assume that *G* is adjoint. By Lemma 4.3 there is a finite separable field extension F/k such that  $G_F \cong \text{PSU}(L^{n+1}, h)$ , where L/F is a separable quadratic extension and *h* is a Hermitian form on  $L^{n+1}$ . It suffices to prove that  $G_F = \text{PSU}(L^{n+1}, h)$  is not toric-friendly.

Set  $S = R_{L/F}^1 \mathbb{G}_m$ . We set  $G_F^{sc} = SU(L^{n+1}, h)$ . We may assume that h is a diagonal form [Knus 1991, Proposition 6.2.4(1); Scharlau 1985, Theorem 7.6.3]. Consider the diagonal torus  $S^{n+1} \subset U(L^{n+1}, h)$  and set  $T^{sc} = S^{n+1} \cap SU(L^{n+1}, h)$ .

We claim that there exists a field extension K/F such that  $H^1(K, S) \neq 1$ . Indeed, take K = F((t)), the field of formal Laurent series over F. Then by [Serre 1968, Proposition V.2.3(c)],  $H^1(K, S) \cong H^1(F, S) \times \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \neq 1$ .

Now let  $a_S \in H^1(K, S)$ ,  $a_S \neq 1$ , and consider the embedding

$$\iota: S \hookrightarrow T^{\mathrm{sc}} \subset S^{n+1}, \quad x \mapsto (x, x^{-1}, 1, \dots, 1).$$

Set  $a^{sc} = \iota_*(a_S) \in H^1(K, T^{sc})$ . Let *T* be the image of  $T^{sc}$  in  $G_F = \text{PSU}(L^{n+1}, h)$ and *a* be the image of  $a^{sc}$  in  $H^1(K, T)$ .

Note that the homomorphism

$$\chi: T^{\mathrm{sc}} \to S, \quad (x_1, \ldots, x_n, x_{n+1}) \mapsto x_1 x_3^{-1},$$

factors through *T* (recall that  $n \ge 2$ ). Since  $\chi \circ \iota = id_S$ , we see that  $a \ne 1$ . Now by Proposition 2.5,  $G_F$  and hence *G* are not toric-friendly.

#### 5. Classification of semisimple toric-friendly groups

**Lemma 5.1.** Let k be an algebraically closed field. If a semisimple k-group G is toric-friendly, then it is adjoint of type A, that is,  $G \cong \prod_i \text{PGL}_{n_i}$  for some integers  $n_i \ge 2$ .

*Proof.* First assume that *G* is simple. By Theorem 2.8 the simply connected cover  $G^{sc}$  of *G* is special. By a theorem of Grothendieck [1958, Theorem 3],  $G^{sc}$  is special if and only if *G* is of type  $A_n$ ,  $n \ge 1$  or  $C_n$ ,  $n \ge 2$ . Proposition 4.1 rules out the second possibility. Thus *G* is of type *A*.

Now let *G* be semisimple. By Proposition 1.3(a),  $G^{ad}$  is toric-friendly. Write  $G^{ad} = \prod_i G_i$ , where each  $G_i$  is an adjoint simple group, then by Lemma 1.6 each  $G_i$  is toric-friendly. As we have seen, this implies that each  $G_i$  is of type *A*, that is, isomorphic to PGL<sub>*n<sub>i</sub>*</sub> for some  $n_i$ . By Proposition 3.2, *G* is adjoint, that is,  $G = G^{ad} = \prod_i PGL_{n_i}$ .

**5.2.** *Proof of the Main Theorem 0.2.* If *G* is toric-friendly, then clearly  $G_{\overline{k}}$  is toric-friendly, where  $\overline{k}$  is an algebraic closure of *k*. By Lemma 5.1, *G* is adjoint of type *A*. Write  $G = \prod_i R_{F_i/k}G'_i$ , where each  $F_i/k$  is a finite separable extension and  $G'_i$  is a form of PGL<sub>*n*<sub>i</sub>,  $F_i$ . By Lemmas 1.6 and 1.7, each  $G'_i$  is toric-friendly, and by Proposition 4.2,  $G'_i$  is an *inner* form of PGL<sub>*n*<sub>i</sub>,  $F_i$ .</sub></sub>

Conversely, by Proposition 3.1 an inner form  $G'_i$  of PGL<sub>*n<sub>i</sub>,F<sub>i</sub>* is toric-friendly. By Lemmas 1.6 and 1.7, the product  $G = \prod_i R_{F_i/k}G'_i$  is toric-friendly.</sub>

**Corollary 5.3.** Let G be a nontrivial semisimple k-group. Then there exist a field extension K/k and a maximal K-torus  $T \subset G$  that is not special. Equivalently, there exist a field extension K/k and a maximal K-torus T of G such that  $H^1(K, T) \neq 1$ .

*Proof.* Assume the contrary, that is, that for any field extension K/k, any maximal K-torus  $T \subset G_K$  is special. We may and shall assume that G is split. Recall that for a (quasi)split group, by [Steinberg 1965, Theorem 11.1], every element of  $H^1(K, G)$  lies in the image of the map  $H^1(K, T) \rightarrow H^1(K, G)$  for some maximal K-torus T of G. Thus, under our assumption we have  $H^1(K, G) = 1$  for every field extension K/k, that is, G is special. By [Grothendieck 1958, Theorem 3], this is only possible if G is simply connected and has components only of types A and C. On the other hand, G is clearly toric-friendly (see Definition 0.1), and by the Main Theorem 0.2 no nontrivial simply connected semisimple group can be toric-friendly, a contradiction.

The next result follows immediately from the Main Theorem 0.2 and Corollary 1.4.

**Corollary 5.4.** *Let G be a split reductive k*-*group. The group G is toric-friendly if and only if it satisfies these two conditions:* 

- (a) the center Z(G) of G is a k-torus, and
- (b) the adjoint group  $G^{ad} := G/Z(G)$  is a direct product of simple adjoint groups of type A.

Note that in condition (a) we allow the trivial *k*-torus {1}.

By Corollary 1.4 if G is a reductive k-group such that G/R(G) is toric-friendly and R(G) is special, then G is toric-friendly. The example below shows that when G/R(G) is toric-friendly but R(G) is not special, G need not be toric-friendly.

**Example 5.5.** Let  $k = \mathbb{R}$ ,  $G = U_2$ , the unitary group in two complex variables. Then Z(G) is the group of scalar matrices in G, it is connected, hence R(G) = Z(G) and  $G/R(G) = G^{ad} = PSU_2$ . Since  $PSU_2$  is an inner form of  $PGL_{2,\mathbb{R}}$ , by the Main Theorem 0.2 it is toric-friendly. However, the group  $G = U_2$  is not toric-friendly. This does not contradict Corollary 1.4, because R(G) = Z(G) is not special:  $H^1(\mathbb{R}, Z(G)) = \mathbb{R}^* / N_{\mathbb{C}/\mathbb{R}}(\mathbb{C}^*) \cong \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ .

To show that  $G = U_2$  is not toric-friendy, set  $S = R^1_{\mathbb{C}/\mathbb{R}} \mathbb{G}_m$ . Let *T* be the diagonal maximal  $\mathbb{R}$ -torus of  $U_2$ . Set  $G^{sc} = SU_2$ ,  $T^{sc} = T \cap SU_2$ , then  $T^{sc} \cong S$ .

Let  $a^{sc} \in H^1(\mathbb{R}, T^{sc})$  be the cohomology class of the cocycle given by the element  $-1 \in T^{sc}(\mathbb{R})$  of order 2. Let  $a \in H^1(\mathbb{R}, T)$  be the image of  $a^{sc}$  in  $H^1(\mathbb{R}, T)$ . Clearly  $a \neq 1$ . By Proposition 2.5, *G* is not toric-friendly.

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