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I. Introduction. Given the real or complex square matrices A, D, E, B and the matrix C of conforming dimensions, we consider the linear matrix equation

$$(1) \quad AXE + DXB = C$$

in the unknown matrix¹ \mathbf{X} , and its various generalizations. If E and D are identity matrices, then (1) is called the Sylvester equation, as its first appearance is usually associated with the work of J. J. Sylvester [240]; if in addition $B = A^*$, where A^* is the conjugate transpose of A , then the equation is called the Lyapunov equation in honor of A. M. Lyapunov and his early contributions to the stability problem of motion; see [14] and the entire issue of the same journal. We shall mainly consider the generic case, thus assuming that all the matrices involved are nonzero.

Under certain conditions on the coefficient matrices, (1) has a unique solution with available elegant and explicit closed forms. These are usually inappropriate as computational devices, either because they involve estimations of integrals, or because their computation can be polluted with numerical instabilities of various sorts. Nevertheless, closed forms and other properties of the solution matrix have strongly influenced the computational strategies that have led to most algorithms used today for numerically solving (1), in the case of small or large dimensions of the coefficient matrices. Due to the availability of robust and reliable core algorithms, (1) now arises in an increasingly larger number of scientific computations, from statistics to dynamical systems analysis, with a major role in control applications and also as a workhorse of more computationally intensive methods. In section 3 we will briefly review this broad range of numerical and application problems.

Our aim is to provide an overview of the major algorithmic developments that have taken place in the past few decades in the numerical solution of (1) and of related problems, both in the small and large scale cases. A distinctive feature in the large scale setting is that although the coefficient matrices may be sparse, the solution matrix is usually dense and thus impossible to store in memory. Therefore, ad hoc strategies need to be devised to approximate the exact solution in an affordable manner.

Functions related to the solution matrix \mathbf{X} , such as the spectrum, the trace, and the determinant, also have important roles in stability analysis and other applications. Although we shall not discuss in detail the computational aspects associated

¹Here and in what follows we shall use boldface letters to denote the unknown solution matrices.

with these functions, we shall occasionally point to relevant results and appropriate references.

Linear matrix equations have received considerable attention since the early 1900s and were the topic of many elegant and thorough studies in the 1950s and 1960s, which used deep tools of matrix theory and functional analysis. The field continues to prosper with the analysis of new challenging extensions of the main equation (1), very often stimulated by application problems. Our contribution is intended to focus on the computational methods for solving these equations. For this reason, in our presentation we will mostly sacrifice the theoretical results, for which we refer the interested reader to, e.g., [90], [165], [131], [40].

The literature on the Lyapunov equation is particularly rich, due to the prominent role of this matrix equation in control theory. In particular, many authors have focused on numerical strategies specifically associated to this equation. As a consequence, the Sylvester and Lyapunov equations have somehow evolved differently. For these reasons, and to account for the literature in a homogeneous way, we shall first discuss numerical strategies for the Sylvester equation, and then treat in detail the Lyapunov problem. For A and B of size up to a few thousand, the Schur decomposition based algorithm by Bartels and Stewart [15] has since its appearance become the main numerical solution tool. In the large scale case, various directions have been taken and a selection of effective algorithms is available, from projection methods to sparse format iterations. Despite a lot of intense work in the past 15–20 years, the community has not entirely agreed upon the best approaches for all settings, hence the need for an overview that aims to analyze where the field stands at this point.

For A and B of the order of 10^4 or larger, the solution \mathbf{X} cannot be stored explicitly; current memory-effective strategies rely on factored low-rank or sparse approximations. The possibility of computing a memory conserving good approximate solution in the large scale case depends highly on the data. In particular, for C full rank, accurate low-rank approximations may be hard, if not impossible, to find. For instance, the equation $A\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}A^* = I$ with A nonsingular and symmetric admits the unique solution $\mathbf{X} = \frac{1}{2}A^{-1}$, which is obviously full rank, with not necessarily quickly decreasing eigenvalues, so that a good low-rank approximation cannot be determined.

The distinction between small, moderate, and large size is clearly architecture-dependent. In what follows we shall refer to “small” and “medium” problem sizes when the coefficient matrices have dimensions of a few thousand at most; on high performance computers these dimensions can be considerably larger. Small and medium size linear equations can be solved with decomposition-based methods on laptops with moderate computational effort. The target for current large scale research is matrices of dimensions $\mathcal{O}(10^6)$ or larger, with a variety of sparsity patterns.

Throughout the article we shall assume either that E, D are the identity or that at least one of them is nonsingular. Singular E, D have great relevance in control applications associated with differential-algebraic equations and descriptor systems but require a specialized treatment, which can be found, for instance, in [164].

Equation (1) is a particular case of the linear matrix equation

$$(2) \quad A_1\mathbf{X}B_1 + A_2\mathbf{X}B_2 + \cdots + A_k\mathbf{X}B_k = C,$$

with A_i, B_i , $i = 1, \dots, k$, square matrices and C of dimension $n \times m$. While up to 15–20 years ago this multiterm equation could be rightly considered to be of mainly theoretical interest, the recent developments associated with problems stemming from applications with parameters or a dominant stochastic component have brought multiterm linear matrix equations forward to play a fundamental role; see sections 3 and

part, namely, the field of values $W(A) = \{z \in \mathbb{C} : z = x^*Ax, x \in \mathbb{C}^n, \|x\| = 1\}$ is contained in the open left half complex plane. The notation $A \succ 0$ ($A \succeq 0$) states that A is a Hermitian and positive definite (semidefinite) matrix.

The vector e_i denotes the i th column of the identity matrix, whose dimension will be clear from the context; I_n denotes the identity matrix of size n , and the subscript will be omitted when clear from the context. Throughout, given $x \in \mathbb{C}^n$, $\|x\|$ denotes the 2-norm of x , $\|A\|$ or $\|A\|_2$ denotes the matrix norm induced by the vector 2-norm, while $\|A\|_F$ denotes the Frobenius norm of $A = (a_{i,j})_{i=1,\dots,n,j=1,\dots,m}$, that is, $\|A\|_F^2 = \sum_{i,j} |a_{i,j}|^2$. For the matrix 2-norm the condition number of a square nonsingular matrix is defined as $\kappa(A) = \|A\| \|A^{-1}\|$, and analogously for the Frobenius norm. The notation $[A; B]$ will be often used to express the matrix obtained by stacking the matrix B below the matrix A , both having conforming dimensions.

For given matrices $A \in \mathbb{C}^{n_A \times m_A}$, $A = (a_{ij})_{i=1,\dots,n_A,j=1,\dots,m_A}$, and $B \in \mathbb{C}^{n_B \times m_B}$, the Kronecker product is defined as

$$(3) \quad A \otimes B = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11}B & a_{12}B & \cdots & a_{1m_A}B \\ a_{21}B & a_{22}B & \cdots & a_{2m_A}B \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ a_{n_A1}B & a_{n_A2}B & \cdots & a_{n_Am_A}B \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{C}^{n_A n_B \times m_A m_B};$$

the vec operator stacks the columns of a matrix $X = [x_1, \dots, x_m] \in \mathbb{C}^{n \times m}$ one after another as

$$\text{vec}(X) = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \vdots \\ x_m \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{C}^{nm \times 1}.$$

We summarize some well-known properties of the Kronecker product in the following lemma; see, e.g., [131].

LEMMA 1. *Some properties:*

- (i) $\text{vec}(AXB) = (B^\top \otimes A)\text{vec}(X)$;²
- (ii) If $A \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ and $B \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times m}$, and $\lambda_A \in \text{spec}(A)$, $\lambda_B \in \text{spec}(B)$, then $\lambda_A \lambda_B \in \text{spec}(A \otimes B)$ (and every eigenvalue of $A \otimes B$ is the product of eigenvalues of A and B);
- (iii) With the notation of (ii), $\lambda_A + \lambda_B \in \text{spec}(I_m \otimes A + B \otimes I_n)$ (and every eigenvalue of $I_m \otimes A + B \otimes I_n$ is the sum of eigenvalues of A and B).

3. Applications. Matrix equations are ubiquitous in signal processing, control, and systems theory; see, e.g., [4], [247], [90], [64], [32], [218], [60] and references therein. Most time-dependent models accounting for the prediction, simulation, and control of real world phenomena may be represented as linear or nonlinear dynamical systems. Therefore, the relevance of matrix equations within engineering applications largely explains the great effort put forth by the scientific community into their numerical solution.

Linear matrix equations have an important role in the stability analysis of linear dynamical systems and also take part in the theoretical developments of nonlinear

²Note the transposition without conjugation for B . For real matrices we shall not make this distinction in what follows.

systems. Consider the continuous-time linear system³

$$(4) \quad \dot{x} = Ax + B_1u, \quad y = B_2^*x,$$

where x is the model state, u is the input, y is the output, and the matrices A , B_1 , and B_2 are time-invariant. Assuming A is stable, that is, its eigenvalues have negative real part, then the solutions \mathbf{P} and \mathbf{Q} to the Lyapunov equations

$$A\mathbf{P} + \mathbf{P}A^* + B_1B_1^* = 0, \quad A^*\mathbf{Q} + \mathbf{Q}A + B_2B_2^* = 0$$

are called the controllability and observability Gramians, respectively, and they are used, for instance, to measure the energy transfers in the system (4); see [4, sec. 4.3.1]. Under certain additional hypotheses it may be shown that the symmetric matrices \mathbf{P} and \mathbf{Q} are positive definite. These latter two matrices are key when one is interested in reducing the original system into one of much smaller dimension, while essentially preserving the main dynamical system properties. Indeed, *balanced reduction*, which was originally used to improve the sensitivity to round-off propagation in filter design [188], determines an appropriate representation basis for the system such that the Gramians are equal and diagonal [4], so that the reduction of that basis will maintain this property of the Gramians. The diagonal Gramians then contain information on the output error induced by the reduced model.

Alternatively, if B_1 and B_2 have the same number of columns, one can solve the Sylvester equation

$$A\mathbf{W} + \mathbf{W}A + B_1B_2^* = 0,$$

thus obtaining the *cross-Gramian* \mathbf{W} [86], which contains information on controllability and observability of the system. For B_1, B_2 with a single column, or for A symmetric and B_1, B_2 such that $B_2^*(zI - A)^{-1}B_1$ is symmetric, it is possible to show that $\mathbf{W}^2 = \mathbf{P}\mathbf{Q}$, so that the eigenvalues of \mathbf{W} coincide with the square root of the eigenvalues of $\mathbf{P}\mathbf{Q}$ [87], [234]. In general, the latter are called the Hankel singular values of the system, and they satisfy important invariance properties; see [4] for a detailed discussion of these quantities and their role in model order reduction. A different Sylvester equation was used in [91] to derive a numerical algorithm that couples the two Gramians \mathbf{P} and \mathbf{Q} . Similar results can be stated for the case of the discrete-time time-invariant linear systems

$$(5) \quad \begin{aligned} x(k+1) &= Ax(k) + B_1u(k), \\ y(k) &= B_2^*x(k), \end{aligned}$$

which are associated, for instance, with the discrete-time Lyapunov equation

$$A\mathbf{X}A^* - \mathbf{X} + B_1B_1^* = 0.$$

As a particular case of the linear equation in (1), the generalized Lyapunov equation

$$(6) \quad A\mathbf{X}E^* + E\mathbf{X}A^* = C$$

has a special interest in control; see also recent applications in Hopf bifurcation iden-

³In the control literature, B_1, B_2 are usually denoted by B and C^* , respectively; we opted for a slightly different notation because here B and C have a different meaning.

with $\varepsilon > 0$ and, for the sake of simplicity, $\Omega = (0, 1) \times (0, 1)$ with zero Dirichlet boundary conditions. Using standard centered finite difference discretization for each term and setting $\mathbf{U}_{ij} := u(x_i, y_j)$, where (x_i, y_j) are interior grid nodes, $i, j = 1, \dots, n$, we obtain

$$(9) \quad T\mathbf{U} + \mathbf{U}T + \Phi_1 B \mathbf{U} \Psi_1^* + \Psi_2 \mathbf{U} (\Phi_2 B)^* = F, \quad F = (f(x_i, y_j));$$

here

$$T = -\frac{\varepsilon}{h^2} \text{tridiag}(1, -2, 1), \quad B = \frac{1}{2h} \text{tridiag}(-1, 0, 1),$$

and

$$\Phi_k = \text{diag}(\phi_k(x_1), \dots, \phi_k(x_n)), \quad \Psi_k = \text{diag}(\psi_k(y_1), \dots, \psi_k(y_n)), \quad k = 1, 2,$$

where h is the mesh size. Equation (9) is a four-term linear matrix equation in \mathbf{U} and was used in the early literature on difference equations; we refer the reader to, e.g., [41] for similar derivations. Common strategies then transform the problem above into the following standard real nonsymmetric linear system by means of the Kronecker product:

$$\left(I \otimes T + T \otimes I + \Psi_1 \otimes (\Phi_1 B) + (\Phi_2 B) \otimes \Psi_2 \right) \mathbf{u} = \tilde{f}, \quad \mathbf{u} := \text{vec}(U), \tilde{f} = \text{vec}(F),$$

for whose solution a vast literature is available. We are unaware of any recent strategies that exploit the matrix equation formulation of the problem for its numerical solution, although the matrix structure may suggest particular preconditioning strategies.

In the context of dynamical system analysis, multiterm matrix equations of the type (2) arise in the numerical treatment of bilinear systems in the form (see, e.g., [118], [217])

$$(10) \quad \dot{x}(t) = (A + u(t)N)x(t) + Bu(t), \quad x(0) = x_0, \quad y(t) = Cx(t),$$

which occur when the model accounts for a stochastic component by means of the term involving N . Other generalizations of Gramians can thus be considered, which can be written as the solution \mathbf{X} to the multiterm linear matrix equation

$$A\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}A^* + N\mathbf{X}N^* + BB^* = 0,$$

together with its counterpart with respect to C^*C ; note that extra terms of the form $N_i\mathbf{X}N_i^*$ can be included in the sum; see [23] and references therein. The solution \mathbf{X} carries information on the reachability and observability properties of the state vectors [107]. The one above is an example of linear jump systems (see [183]), in which the linear coefficient matrices depend on a Markovian random process, giving rise to systems of matrix equations with an extra term, accounting for the probabilistic nature of the problem.

Another typical emerging setting where the multiterm matrix equation in (2) arises is the analysis of uncertainty quantification in data modeling. For instance, the stochastic steady state diffusion equation with homogeneous Dirichlet boundary conditions is given by

$$(11) \quad \begin{cases} -\nabla \cdot (c\nabla p) = f & \text{in } D \times \Omega, \\ p = 0 & \text{on } \partial D \times \Omega, \end{cases}$$

where D is a sufficiently regular spatial domain and Ω is a probability sample space. Both the forcing term f and the diffusion coefficient c have a stochastic component. By properly discretizing the *weak* formulation of (11), and under certain assumptions on the stochastic discretized space, one obtains the algebraic linear system (see, e.g., [85] and references therein)

$$(12) \quad \mathcal{A}\mathbf{p} = f, \quad \mathcal{A} = G_0 \otimes K_0 + \sum_{r=1}^m \sqrt{\lambda_r} G_r \otimes K_r.$$

By passing to the matrix formulation and introducing the matrix \mathbf{X} of coefficients in \mathbf{p} , (12) can be rewritten as

$$(13) \quad K_0 \mathbf{X} G_0^* + \sum_{r=1}^m \sqrt{\lambda_r} K_r \mathbf{X} G_r^* = F,$$

where F contains the components of f and each column of F corresponds to a different basis element in the probability space. In many simulations, while the underlying mathematical formulation is still (11), the quantity of interest is $c\nabla p$, rather than p . Using, for instance, the derivation in [89], a direct approximation to $c\nabla p$ is obtained by introducing the variable (flux) $\vec{u} = c\nabla p$, which gives

$$(14) \quad \begin{cases} c^{-1}\vec{u} - \nabla p = 0 & \text{in } D \times \Omega, \\ -\nabla \cdot \vec{u} = f & \text{in } D \times \Omega, \end{cases} \quad p = 0 \quad \text{on } \partial D \times \Omega.$$

By means of a discretization with proper (tensor products of) finite element spaces of the weak formulation of (14) (see, e.g., [89], [85], [203]), one obtains the following saddle point algebraic linear system:

$$(15) \quad \begin{bmatrix} A & B^* \\ B & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{u} \\ \mathbf{p} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ f \end{bmatrix}, \quad A = G_0 \otimes K_0 + \sum_{r=1}^m \sqrt{\lambda_r} G_r \otimes K_r, \quad B = G_0 \otimes B_0.$$

The solution vectors \mathbf{u} and \mathbf{p} contain the two-dimensional coefficients of the (discrete) expansions of \vec{u} and p column by column. Once again, a closer look at the two equations above reveals that the matrix formulation could replace the Kronecker products. Indeed, if \mathbf{U} is the matrix such that $\mathbf{u} = \text{vec}(\mathbf{U})$, whose coefficients are $(u_{j\ell})$, and similarly for \mathbf{P} , then the linear system above reads

$$(16) \quad K_0 \mathbf{U} G_0^* + \sum_{r=1}^m \sqrt{\lambda_r} K_r \mathbf{U} G_r^* + B_0^* \mathbf{P} G_0 = 0,$$

$$(17) \quad B_0 \mathbf{U} G_0^* = F,$$

with obvious meaning for F . This system is a natural generalization of the case in (13) and may be thought of as a saddle point *generalized matrix* system. Such systems of linear matrix equations will be discussed in section 7.2.

4. Continuous-Time Sylvester Equation. The continuous-time Sylvester equation is possibly the most broadly employed linear matrix equation and is given as

$$(18) \quad \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C},$$

with $A \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$, $B \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times m}$, and $C \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times m}$. In general, the dimensions of A and B may be orders of magnitude different, and this fact is key in selecting the most appropriate numerical solution strategy.

A general result on the consistency of the Sylvester equation was given by Roth in 1952 in [211] and reads: *equation (18) admits a solution if and only if the matrices*

$$(19) \quad \begin{bmatrix} A & -C \\ 0 & -B \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \begin{bmatrix} A & 0 \\ 0 & -B \end{bmatrix}$$

are similar; the similarity transformation matrix is given by

$$\begin{bmatrix} I & \mathbf{X} \\ 0 & I \end{bmatrix},$$

where \mathbf{X} is the solution to (18).

Using the Kronecker product, the matrix equation in (18) can be rewritten as the standard (vector) linear system

$$(20) \quad \mathcal{A}\mathbf{x} = c, \quad \text{with} \quad \begin{aligned} \mathcal{A} &= I_m \otimes A + B^* \otimes I_n, \\ \mathbf{x} &= \text{vec}(\mathbf{X}), \quad c = \text{vec}(C), \end{aligned}$$

from which we can deduce that the system admits a solution for any c , and this is unique if and only if the matrix \mathcal{A} is nonsingular. Taking into account Lemma 1(iii), this is equivalent to requiring that $\text{spec}(A) \cap \text{spec}(-B) = \emptyset$ (see, e.g., [131, Thm. 4.4.6]). In what follows we shall thus always assume that this latter condition is satisfied, so that the solution to (18) exists and is unique; standard matrix analysis books describe the case when this spectral condition is not satisfied (see, e.g., [131], [168]). The homogeneous case, namely, when $C = 0$, can be handled correspondingly: the matrix equation has only the trivial solution $\mathbf{X} = 0$ if and only if $\text{spec}(A) \cap \text{spec}(-B) = \emptyset$ [97, sec. 17.8].

The solution \mathbf{X} of (18) may be written in closed form in a number of different ways. These forms were derived in different references throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with contributions by E. Heinz, A. Jameson, M. G. Krein, E. C. Ma, M. Rosenblum, and W. E. Roth, among others. A beautiful account of these early contributions can be found in the survey by P. Lancaster [165], to which we also refer the reader for the bibliographic references. Here we report the main closed forms:

(a) *Integral of resolvents.* The following representation, due to Krein, exploits spectral theory arguments:

$$(21) \quad \mathbf{X} = -\frac{1}{4\pi^2} \int_{\Gamma_1} \int_{\Gamma_2} \frac{(\lambda I_n - A)^{-1} C (\mu I_m - B)^{-1}}{\lambda + \mu} d\mu d\lambda,$$

where Γ_1, Γ_2 are contours containing and sufficiently close to the spectra of A and B , respectively.

(b) *Integral of exponentials.* This representation, due to Heinz, is tightly connected to the previous one:

$$(22) \quad \mathbf{X} = -\int_0^\infty e^{At} C e^{Bt} dt,$$

where e^{Ht} is the matrix exponential of Ht . Here the spectra of A and B are assumed to be separated by a vertical line.

(c) *Finite power sum.* Let $C = C_A C_B^*$. Let a_m of degree m be the minimal polynomial of A with respect to C_A , namely, the smallest degree monic polynomial such that $a_m(A)C_A = 0$. Analogously, let b_k of degree k be the

minimal polynomial of B with respect to C_B . Then

$$(23) \quad \begin{aligned} \mathbf{X} &= \sum_{i=0}^{m-1} \sum_{j=0}^{k-1} \gamma_{ij} A^i C B^j \\ &= [C_A, AC_A, \dots, A^{m-1}C_A](\gamma \otimes I) \begin{bmatrix} C_B^* \\ C_B^* B \\ \vdots \\ C_B^* B^{k-1} \end{bmatrix}, \end{aligned}$$

where γ is the solution of the Sylvester equation with coefficient matrices given by the companion matrices of a_m and b_k and right-hand side given by the matrix $[1; 0; \dots; 0][1, 0, \dots, 0]$ [69]; a block version of this result using minimal *matrix* polynomials can also be derived [225].

- (d) *Similarity transformations.* Strictly related to (c), in addition this form assumes that A and B can be diagonalized, $U^{-1}AU = \text{diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n)$ and $V^{-1}BV = \text{diag}(\mu_1, \dots, \mu_m)$. Let $\tilde{C} = U^{-1}CV$. Then

$$\mathbf{X} = U\tilde{X}V^{-1}, \quad \text{with} \quad \tilde{x}_{ij} = \frac{\tilde{c}_{ij}}{\lambda_i + \mu_j}.$$

Other representations can be found in [165] and, for more general equations of the same type, in [262]. We also mention that the columns of $[\mathbf{X}; I]$ span an invariant subspace for the left matrix in (19), that is,

$$(24) \quad \begin{bmatrix} A & -C \\ 0 & -B \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X} \\ I \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X} \\ I \end{bmatrix} S,$$

where it holds that $S = -B$. Equation (24) has been used both to derive matrix properties of the solution \mathbf{X} and also to construct solution devices.

In [69] the closed form in (c) is used to derive results on the solution rank; results on the nonsingularity of the solution based on the same conditions are also given in [119]. For more general equations, corresponding nonsingularity conditions can be found, e.g., in [261]. In [69], the controllability (resp., observability) of the pair (A, C_A) (resp., (B^*, C_B)) plays a crucial role.⁴

Early computational methods relied on one of the analytic expressions above; see the account of early computational methods in [90]. Although these closed forms are no longer used to solve the Sylvester equation numerically, they have motivated several successful methods and they represent an important starting point for theoretical investigations of numerical approaches.

4.1. Stability and Sensitivity Issues of the Sylvester Equation. In this section we provide a brief account of the sensitivity issues encountered when solving the Sylvester equation. The topic is broad, and it also involves the solution of related matrix equations; we refer to the thorough treatment in [157] for a full account of the perturbation theory of this and other important equations in control.

The sensitivity to perturbations of the solution \mathbf{X} to (18) is inversely proportional to the separation between A and $-B$, where the separation function of two matrices A_1 and A_2 is defined as

$$\text{sep}_p(A_1, A_2) = \min_{\|P\|_p=1} \|A_1P - PA_2\|_p,$$

⁴A pair (M, C) is controllable if the matrix $[C, MC, \dots, M^{n-1}C]$ has full row rank n , equal to the row dimension of M ; (M, C^*) is observable if (M^*, C) is controllable.

with $p = 2, F$; see, e.g., [238]. This can be seen by recalling that the columns of $[\mathbf{X}; I]$ are a basis for an invariant subspace for the first block matrix in (24). We refer the reader to, e.g., [98, sec. 7.6.3], where the role of $\|\mathbf{X}\|_F$ in the conditioning of the associated eigenvalues is emphasized. More specifically, it holds that

$$(25) \quad \|\mathbf{X}\|_F \leq \frac{\|C\|_F}{\text{sep}_F(A, -B)}.$$

For nonnormal matrices, the bound above suggests that a good spectral distance between A and $-B$ might not be sufficient to limit the size of $\|\mathbf{X}\|_F$, since $\text{sep}_F(A, -B)$ can be much smaller than the distance between the spectra of A and $-B$. The function sep plays the role of a condition number for the Sylvester operator

$$(26) \quad S : \mathbb{R}^{n \times m} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n \times m}, \quad S(X) = AX + XB;$$

numerical estimates for the sep function can be obtained by carefully adapting classical strategies [49]. The occurrence of the sep function in the bound (25) suggests that for small scale equations, algorithms that rely on orthogonal reduction should be preferred for numerical stability. Methods that rely on more general transformations $\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = U\mathbf{X}V^{-1}$ may transfer the ill-conditioning of the transformation matrices U and V onto large errors in the obtained solution; moreover (see, e.g., [238, Exercise V.2.1]),

$$\frac{\text{sep}(A, B)}{\kappa(U)\kappa(V)} \leq \text{sep}(UAU^{-1}, VB^{-1}V) \leq \kappa(U)\kappa(V)\text{sep}(A, B).$$

A major difference between matrix equations and standard linear systems lies in their stability properties. In particular, a small Sylvester equation residual does not necessarily imply a small backward error [124, sec. 15.2]. Define the backward error for an approximation \mathbf{X} as

$$\eta(\mathbf{X}) := \min\{\varepsilon : (A + \Delta A)\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}(B + \Delta B) = C + \Delta C, \\ \|\Delta A\|_F \leq \varepsilon\|A\|_F, \|\Delta B\|_F \leq \varepsilon\|B\|_F, \|\Delta C\|_F \leq \varepsilon\|C\|_F\},$$

and the residual as $R = C - (A\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}B)$. Then [123]

$$(27) \quad \eta(\mathbf{X}) \leq \mu \frac{\|R\|_F}{(\|A\|_F + \|B\|_F)\|\mathbf{X}\|_F + \|C\|_F},$$

where μ is an amplification factor depending on the data norms and on the singular values of \mathbf{X} . For instance, for $n = m$ this factor has the expression

$$\mu = \frac{(\|A\|_F + \|B\|_F)\|\mathbf{X}\|_F + \|C\|_F}{((\|A\|_F^2 + \|B\|_F^2)\sigma_{\min}(\mathbf{X})^2 + \|C\|_F^2)^{\frac{1}{2}}},$$

making the dependence on the norm and ill-conditioning of \mathbf{X} more apparent. A more complex situation occurs for $n \neq m$; we refer the reader to [124, sec. 15.2] for more details, and to [157] for a more thorough perturbation analysis. We also mention that in [243] bounds for the norm of the solution \mathbf{X} and of its perturbation are obtained that emphasize the influence of the possibly low-rank right-hand side on the sensitivity of the solution itself. The distribution of the singular values of \mathbf{X} plays a crucial role in the stability analysis of dynamical systems and also in the quality of low-rank approximations. In section 4.4 we recall some available estimates for the singular values that also motivate the development of low-rank approximation methods.

4.2. Sylvester Equation. Small Scale Computation. A robust and efficient method for numerically solving Sylvester equations of small and moderate size was introduced in 1972 by Bartels and Stewart [15], and with some modifications is still the state of the art; in section 8 we give an account of current software, much of which relies on this method. The idea is to compute the Schur decomposition of the two coefficient matrices and then transform the given equation into an equivalent one that uses the quasi-lower/upper triangular structure of the Schur matrices. This last equation can then be explicitly solved element by element. To introduce the algorithm, let us first consider the general case of complex A and B . Then the following steps are performed (see, e.g., [98]):

Algorithm 2.

1. Compute the Schur forms $A^* = URU^*$, $B = VSV^*$ with R, S upper triangular.
2. Solve $R^*\mathbf{Y} + \mathbf{Y}S = U^*CV$ for \mathbf{Y} .
3. Compute $\mathbf{X} = U\mathbf{Y}V^*$.

The Schur forms in the first step are obtained by the QR iteration [98], while the third step is a simple product. It remains to explain how to solve the new structured Sylvester equation in the second step. Since R^* is lower triangular and S is upper triangular, the (1,1) element of \mathbf{Y} can be readily obtained. From there the next elements of the first row in \mathbf{Y} can also be obtained sequentially. Similar reasoning can be used for the subsequent rows.

In the case of real A and B , the *real* Schur form may be exploited, where R and S are now quasi-triangular, that is, the diagonals have 2×2 and 1×1 blocks corresponding to complex and real eigenvalues, respectively. The solution process can then use the equivalence between a 2×2 Sylvester equation and the associated Kronecker form in (20); see, e.g., [223, sec. 2.3.1]. The same sequential process as in the complex case can be employed to compute the elements of \mathbf{Y} , as long as the diagonal blocks can be made conforming; for nonconforming dimensions, a sequence of small shifted linear systems needs to be solved; the details can be found in [15], [98, sec. 7.6.3], [223, sec. 2.3.1]. The method outlined above is at the core of most linear matrix equation solvers in software packages such as LAPACK⁵ and SLICOT [246], [232], [27]. The leading computational cost is given by the Schur forms in the first step, which for real matrices are nowadays performed in real arithmetic. Explicitly computing the Schur form costs at least $10n^3$ floating point operations for a matrix of size n [98]; to limit costs, the Bartels–Stewart algorithm is commonly employed only if either A or B is already in Schur or upper Hessenberg form; see, e.g., [232]. For general matrices A and B , the method proposed by Golub, Nash, and Van Loan in 1979 [99] can be considerably faster, especially if either m or n is significantly smaller than the other. This latter method replaces the Schur decomposition of the larger matrix, say, B , with the Hessenberg decomposition of the same matrix whose computational cost is $5/3m^3$, which should be compared with $10m^3$ for the Schur form [99]. We refer the reader to [223, sec. 2.3.1] for a more detailed comparison of the computational costs. In [236], a variant of the Bartels–Stewart algorithm is proposed: the forward-backward substitution in step 2 is performed by a columnwise block scheme, which seems to be better suited for modern computer architectures than the original complex version. In [143], [144], the authors propose an even more effective implementation based on splitting the matrices, already in block triangular

⁵<http://www.netlib.org/lapack/>.

form, and then recursively solving for each block. For instance, if A is much larger than B ($n \geq 2m$), then the original equation can be written as

$$\begin{bmatrix} A_{11} & A_{12} \\ & A_{22} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} X_1 \\ X_2 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} X_1 \\ X_2 \end{bmatrix} B = \begin{bmatrix} C_1 \\ C_2 \end{bmatrix},$$

with obvious meaning for the blocks. The second block equation gives the smaller size Sylvester equation $A_{22}X_2 + X_2B = C_2$, which can again be split by using the block triangular form of A_{22} , and the solution is obtained in a recursive manner. Once X_2 is fully recovered, X_1 can be computed by recursively solving with the updated right-hand side in the first block equation above. Different size cases and different triangular structures can be handled and are described in [143]. These advanced strategies have been included in the software package RECSY⁶ and in LAPACK; see section 8.

Iterative solution strategies for small size matrices have also been proposed: given an initial guess \mathbf{X}_0 , they determine a sequence of matrices $\mathbf{X}_1, \dots, \mathbf{X}_k, \dots$ that converge to \mathbf{X} . These are related to a basic Newton iteration for approximating the matrix sign function. In section 5.2.3 we will give more details in relation to the Lyapunov equation, although the procedure can be used for stable Sylvester equations as well [36]. These approaches are easier to parallelize than QR-based methods. For instance, it is shown in [36] that they provide high efficiency and scalability on clusters of processors.

To conclude, a special mention should be made of the Sylvester equation with $B = -A$, yielding the so-called *displacement equation*

$$(28) \quad \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X} - \mathbf{X}\mathbf{A} = C,$$

which measures how far A and \mathbf{X} are from commuting; see, e.g., [96] for typical applications in the context of structured matrices such as Cauchy-like and Toeplitz matrices.

4.3. Sylvester Equation. Large A and Small B . When either n or m is large, Schur factorization may require a prohibitive amount of space, due to the dense nature of the corresponding large matrix. Selecting the most appropriate solver still depends on whether the smaller matrix has very small dimension. Different approaches can then be used when decomposing the small matrix is feasible.⁷ To fix ideas, and without loss of generality, we shall assume that B is small (size less than 1000) and A is large (size much bigger than 1000), so that $m \ll n$.

In this section we thus consider that the equation can be visualized as

$$(29) \quad \begin{bmatrix} A \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X} \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X} \end{bmatrix} [B] = \begin{bmatrix} C \end{bmatrix},$$

so that the large dimension of A makes the methods discussed in section 4.2 unfeasible. This situation arises, for instance, in the solution of eigenvalue problems [258, sec. 2.4, sec. 6.6] and in (separable) boundary value problems [254], [256], [41]. We immediately notice that for very small m , the transformation with the Kronecker product (20) might be appealing, since the dimension of the linear system might be just a few (m)

⁶<http://www8.cs.umu.se/~isak/recsy/>.

⁷Feasibility is machine architecture dependent; nonetheless, a matrix of dimension much less than 1000 should be considered small.

times that of A . However, projection methods acting on the original matrix equation turn out to be extremely effective in this case, possibly explaining the sparsity of attempts to pursue the Kronecker formulation. We next describe some of the standard approaches currently employed in the literature and in applications.

Assume that B can be spectrally decomposed cheaply and stably. Then by writing $B = WSW^{-1}$ with $S = \text{diag}(s_1, \dots, s_m)$, we obtain

$$(30) \quad A\widehat{\mathbf{X}} + \widehat{\mathbf{X}}S = \widehat{C}, \quad \widehat{\mathbf{X}} = \mathbf{X}W, \quad \widehat{C} = CW.$$

For B Hermitian, $W^{-1} = W^*$. Each column of $\widehat{\mathbf{X}}$ can be obtained by solving a shifted linear system $(A + s_i I)(\widehat{\mathbf{X}})_i = (\widehat{C})_i$, where $(\widehat{\mathbf{X}})_i$ denotes the i th column of $\widehat{\mathbf{X}}$. The main steps can be summarized in the following algorithm:

Algorithm 3.

1. Compute the decomposition $B = WSW^{-1}$.
2. Set $\widehat{C} = CW$.
3. For $i = 1, \dots, m$ solve $(A + s_i I)(\widehat{\mathbf{X}})_i = (\widehat{C})_i$.
4. Compute $\mathbf{X} = \widehat{\mathbf{X}}W^{-1}$.

The shifted systems in step 3 can be solved simultaneously by using standard solvers for algebraic linear systems, either direct or iterative; see, e.g., [214], [230] and their references. We also note that step 3 is “embarrassingly parallel” when different systems can be distributed on a multiprocessor machine.

If the eigendecomposition of B is not appealing, then one can resort to a (complex) Schur decomposition $B = QR_BQ^*$, giving $A\mathbf{X}Q + \mathbf{X}QR_B = CQ$. Since R_B is upper triangular, these systems can still be solved using the shifted form, but this time in sequence: letting r_{ij} be the (i, j) entry of R_B and $\widehat{C} = CQ$, we have

$$(31) \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, m, \quad (A + r_{ii}I)(\widehat{\mathbf{X}})_i = (\widehat{C})_i - \sum_{k=1}^{i-1} r_{ki}(\widehat{\mathbf{X}})_k, \quad \widehat{\mathbf{X}} = \mathbf{X}Q.$$

Such an approach has been used in different contexts; see, e.g., [110], [234], [26], where the Sylvester equation considered is occasionally called a *sparse-dense* equation.

For moderate n , the use of direct methods in (30) and (31) may entail the use of complex arithmetic if the shifts s_i (eigenvalues) are complex, significantly increasing the computational cost; the alternative of solving two real systems also leads to higher computational costs. In addition, when the use of sparse direct methods appears to be competitive, it should be noted that only the sparsity analysis step can be done once, whereas the actual decomposition needs to be performed again for each distinct shift.

Major computational savings may be obtained if C is low rank, namely, $C = C_0R$, with $C_0 \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times \bar{m}}$ and $\bar{m} < m$. Indeed, the m shifted systems can be solved more efficiently by working only with the common matrix C_0 . For the rest of this section we assume that C is full rank and postpone the treatment of the low-rank case to later, when we discuss the occurrence of large B . Indeed, the rank of C is key in developing general projection methods, as is explained next.

Projection Methods. Let \mathcal{V} be a subspace⁸ of \mathbb{C}^n of dimension k , and let the columns of $V_k \in \mathbb{C}^{n \times k}$ span \mathcal{V} . An approximate solution \mathbf{X}_k with $\text{range}(\mathbf{X}_k) \subset \mathcal{V}$ is

⁸We use complex arithmetic for \mathcal{V} to allow for complex spaces also for real data, which may occur when using rational Krylov subspaces with complex shifts. A careful implementation can construct a real space if conjugate shifts are used. For the sake of generality we stick to complex arithmetic for \mathcal{V} .

sought such that

$$R_k := A\mathbf{X}_k + \mathbf{X}_k B - C \approx 0.$$

Several options arise, depending on the choice of \mathcal{V} and the strategy to determine \mathbf{X}_k within the space \mathcal{V} . For a given \mathcal{V} , thus let $\mathbf{X}_k = V_k \mathbf{Y}_k \approx \mathbf{X}$ for some $\mathbf{Y}_k \in \mathbb{C}^{k \times m}$ to be determined. Recalling the operator \mathcal{S} defined in (26), we observe that \mathcal{S} generalizes to the “block” B the concept of shifted matrices, namely,

$$x \mapsto (A + \beta I)x = Ax + x\beta.$$

Therefore, it is very natural to extend the algorithmic strategies of linear systems to the case of \mathcal{S} . Extensions of the linear system solvers CG (FOM) and MINRES (GMRES) can be thought of for A Hermitian (non-Hermitian), although the actual implementation differs. All these solvers are derived by imposing some orthogonality condition on the system residual. If we require that the columns of the matrix R_k be orthogonal to the approximation space \mathcal{V} in the Euclidean inner product, then we are imposing the following Galerkin condition (see also (40)):

$$V_k^* R_k = 0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad (I \otimes V_k)^* \text{vec}(R_k) = 0.$$

For simplicity, let us assume that $V_k^* V_k = I$. Then

$$(32) \quad 0 = V_k^* R_k = V_k^* A V_k \mathbf{Y}_k + \mathbf{Y}_k B - V_k^* C.$$

The condition thus gives a new Sylvester equation of reduced size. Under the hypothesis that $\text{spec}(V_k^* A V_k) \cap \text{spec}(-B) = \emptyset$, (32) can be solved efficiently by one of the methods discussed in section 4.2. The procedure above holds for any space \mathcal{V} and associated full-rank matrix V_k . Therefore, the effectiveness of the approximation process depends on the actual selection of \mathcal{V} . A well-exercised choice is given by the block Krylov subspace

$$(33) \quad K_k^\square(A, C) = \text{range}([C, AC, \dots, A^{k-1}C]).$$

The following result proved in [209, Lem. 2.1], [225] generalizes the well-known shift invariance property of vector Krylov subspaces to the case of blocks, where the $m \times m$ matrix B plays the role of the shift; the operator \mathcal{S} is as defined in (26).

PROPOSITION 2. *Define $\mathcal{S}^j(C) = \mathcal{S}(\mathcal{S}^{j-1}(C))$, $j > 0$, and $\mathcal{S}^0(C) = C$. Then*

$$K_k^\square(A, C) = K_k^\square(\mathcal{S}, C) := \text{range}([C, \mathcal{S}(C), \dots, \mathcal{S}^{k-1}(C)]).$$

For the space in (33), the procedure outlined above is the complete analogue of that giving rise to the full orthogonalization method (FOM) for $m = 1$ or for $B = 0$. However, due to possible loss of rank in the basis, it was suggested in [209] to generate the subspace with A rather than with \mathcal{S} . As an example, Algorithm 4 describes an implementation of the projection method with the generation of the block Krylov subspace and the determination of the approximation by imposing the Galerkin orthogonality condition.

Algorithm 4. Given A, B, C :

1. Orthogonalize the columns of C to find $v_1 = V_1$.
2. $k = 1, 2, \dots$
3. Compute \mathbf{Y}_k , solution to $(V_k^* A V_k) \mathbf{Y} + \mathbf{Y} B - V_k^* C = 0$.

Preconditioned global Krylov subspaces have also been proposed as approximation spaces [46], which, however, simply amount to a convenient implementation of a subspace method for the Kronecker formulation of the problem; see also section 4.4.1.

An alternative choice of approximation space \mathcal{V} has recently shown great potential compared with the block Krylov subspace and is given by the *extended* Krylov subspace, defined as

$$(38) \quad \mathbf{EK}_k(A, C) := K_k^\square(A, C) + K_k^\square(A^{-1}, A^{-1}C).$$

Since the spaces are nested, namely, $\mathbf{EK}_k(A, C) \subseteq \mathbf{EK}_{k+1}(A, C)$, the space can be generated iteratively, allowing one to improve the approximate solution as the recurrence proceeds. For A large and sparse, experiments in [227] show that the good performance of the derived method seems to fully compensate for the high costs of solving linear systems with A at each iteration.

4.4. Sylvester Equation. Large A and Large B . In the most general case, both A and B have large dimensions. This setting arises in many situations, such as in the discretization of separable PDEs [80] or in the computation of the *cross*-Gramian in control [4]. A particularly important observation is that the dimensions of A and B determine that of \mathbf{X} , and that although A and B may be sparse, \mathbf{X} is dense, in general. In this context, the distribution of the singular values of \mathbf{X} plays a key role in the development and convergence analysis of iterative solution methods. Indeed, a Sylvester equation having solution with exponentially decaying singular values can be well approximated by a low-rank matrix. The possibility of writing $C = C_1 C_2^*$ with C_1, C_2 with low column rank is crucial to obtaining good low-rank approximations to \mathbf{X} , thus avoiding the storage of the whole matrix, which is in general prohibitive. We recall here the result described by Sabino in [215, Thm. 2.1.1], while Sabino’s Ph.D. thesis contains further discussion related to this bound. Here K and K' are the complete elliptic integrals of the first kind⁹ [1]. Additional considerations and results are postponed to the Lyapunov equation case considered in section 5.

THEOREM 4. *Let A and B be stable and real symmetric, with spectra contained in $[a, b]$ and $[c, d]$, respectively. Define $\eta = 2(b - a)(d - c)/((a + c)(b + d))$. Assume C is of rank p . Then the singular values $\sigma_1 \geq \dots \geq \sigma_{\min\{m, n\}}$ of the solution \mathbf{X} to (18) satisfy*

$$\frac{\sigma_{pr+1}}{\sigma_1} \leq \left(\frac{1 - \sqrt{k'_r}}{1 + \sqrt{k'_r}} \right)^2, \quad 1 \leq pr < n,$$

where $k'_r = 1/(1 + \eta + \sqrt{\eta(\eta + 2)})$ is the complementary elliptic modulus corresponding to the nome q^r , $q := \exp(-\pi K'/K)$.

A more accessible and practical estimate for $B = A (= A^*)$ and small condition number $\kappa(A) = \|A\| \|A^{-1}\|$ may be obtained as [215]

$$(39) \quad \frac{\sigma_{pr+1}}{\sigma_1} \lesssim 4 \exp(-\pi^2 r / \log(4\kappa(A))).$$

A rule of thumb suggested in [215, Rule of Thumb 2.1.4] is that if $\kappa(A)$ is on the order of 10^q , then the ratios of σ_j/σ_1 decrease by a factor of 10 for every increase in j by $p(q + 1)/2$.

⁹They are defined as $K = K(k) = \int_0^1 [(1 - t^2)(1 - kt^2)]^{-1/2} dt$ and $K' = K(1 - k)$, with k being the modulus, $k = \sqrt{1 - (k')^2}$, while the complementary elliptic modulus k' is given.

premultiply and postmultiply \mathbf{X} by P^{-1} and P^{-*} , that is,

$$(P^{-1}AP)P^{-1}\mathbf{X}P^{-*} + P^{-1}\mathbf{X}P^{-*}(P^*BP^{-*}) = P^{-1}CP^{-*}.$$

Unfortunately, this transformation yields coefficient matrices that are similar to the original ones, thus the eigenvalues are unchanged. This simple example shows that different acceleration strategies need to be developed for the Sylvester equation; research has thus focused on constructing information-rich approximation spaces by using spectral transformations, rather than preconditioning as is done in eigenvalue computations.

4.4.1. Projection Methods. When both n and m are large, the dense solution matrix \mathbf{X} of (18) cannot be stored, therefore the determination of a memory saving approximation becomes mandatory. Whenever $C = C_1C_2^*$ has low rank, the results discussed in section 4.4 suggest that a low-rank approximate solution can be determined, so that projection strategies are very appealing. Indeed, these methods compute low-rank approximations $\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = V_k\mathbf{Y}W_j^* \approx \mathbf{X}$, with V_k and W_j that have far fewer columns than n and m , respectively, and are generalizations of the procedure seen in section 4.3.

Let \mathcal{V} and \mathcal{W} be two subspaces of \mathbb{C}^n , in principle not necessarily of the same dimension, and let the k (j) columns of V_k (of W_j) be orthonormal bases for \mathcal{V} (for \mathcal{W}), with $k \ll n$, $j \ll m$, such that \mathcal{V} is not orthogonal to $\text{range}(C_1)$ and \mathcal{W} is not orthogonal to $\text{range}(C_2)$. We look for an approximation $\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = V_k\mathbf{Y}W_j^* \approx \mathbf{X}$, and we let $R := C_1C_2^* - A\tilde{\mathbf{X}} - \tilde{\mathbf{X}}B$ be the associated residual. Then we have $\tilde{\mathbf{x}} = \text{vec}(\tilde{\mathbf{X}}) = (W_j \otimes V_k)\text{vec}(\mathbf{Y})$, where $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$ is an approximate solution of (20). Imposing a Galerkin (orthogonality) condition to the vector residual $c - \mathcal{A}\tilde{\mathbf{x}}$ in (20) with respect to the space spanned by $W_j \otimes V_k$ corresponds to writing

$$(40) \quad (W_j \otimes V_k)^*(c - \mathcal{A}\tilde{\mathbf{x}}) = 0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad V_k^*RW_j = 0.$$

Other conditions could be considered, such as the minimization of the residual in some norm, or the orthogonality of the residual with respect to some other space; see, e.g., [132], [130], [179].

If the columns of V_k and W_j span the spaces $K_k^\square(A, C_1)$ and $K_j^\square(B^*, C_2)$, respectively, as in (33), then the obtained approximate solution $\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = V_k\mathbf{Y}W_j^*$ may also be written as

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = [C_1, AC_1, \dots, A^{k-1}C_1]G[C_2, B^*C_2, \dots, (B^*)^{j-1}C_2]^*$$

for some matrix G , showing that projection methods yield a *polynomial* approximation to \mathbf{X} , which may be viewed as particular truncations of the finite sum closed form of the solution in (23); see [225] for more details on this formulation.

Substituting the residual matrix in the equation $V_k^*RW_j = 0$ gives the following small size Sylvester equation:

$$(41) \quad V_k^*AV_k\mathbf{Y} + \mathbf{Y}W_j^*BW_j = V_k^*C_1(W_j^*C_2)^*.$$

If $V_k^*AV_k$ and $-W_j^*BW_j$ have disjoint spectra, then this equation admits a unique solution for any right-hand side. By assuming that the fields of values of A and $-B$ are disjoint, one can ensure that $V_k^*AV_k$ and $-W_j^*BW_j$ have disjoint spectra. Though restrictive, such an assumption is welcome also for stability purposes, to monitor

(b) Rational (block) Krylov subspace:

$$\mathcal{V} = \text{range}([(A + \sigma_1 I)^{-1} C_1, (A + \sigma_2 I)^{-1} (A + \sigma_1 I)^{-1} C_1, \dots])$$

for a specifically chosen sequence $\{\sigma_j\}$, $j = 1, 2, \dots$, that ensures nonsingularity of the shifted matrix.

(c) Global Krylov subspace:

$$\mathcal{V} = \left\{ \sum_{i \geq 0} A^i C_1 \gamma_i, \gamma_i \in \mathbb{R} \right\} = \text{span}\{C_1, AC_1, A^2 C_1, \dots\},$$

where the linear combination is performed blockwise.

In all instances the least number of powers is computed so as to reach the dimension k . The subspaces listed above are somewhat related. For instance, the standard Krylov subspace can be formally obtained from the rational Krylov subspace for $\sigma_j = \infty$ for all j . Moreover, the rational block Krylov subspace also includes the special choice of fixed poles at zero and infinity, which corresponds to the *extended* Krylov subspace in (38), namely, $K_j^\square(A, C_1) + K_k^\square(A^{-1}, A^{-1}C_1)$, where j and k can in principle be different [75]. In addition, one can impose that C_1 belongs to the rational Krylov subspace with the choice $\sigma_1 = \infty$. The global Krylov subspace in (c) is a subspace of the block Krylov subspace; it was first proposed to solve linear systems with multiple right-hand sides [141], and was then adapted to the Sylvester equation in [138]. Global spaces may be viewed as simplified versions of block Krylov spaces, where the polynomial coefficients are chosen to be multiples of the identity matrix, therefore lowering the number of degrees of freedom.

The criterion for stopping the iterative procedure in Algorithm 5, and thus the approximation space expansion, is usually based on the Frobenius or 2-norm of the residual matrix $R = A\tilde{X} + \tilde{X}B - C_1 C_2^*$. In general, R is dense and should not be computed explicitly if it has large dimensions. Its norm can be computed more cheaply if the generated spaces satisfy certain relations. Hence, assume that $\hat{v}_k, \hat{w}_j, \underline{H}_k$, and \underline{K}_j exist such that $AV_k = [V_k, \hat{v}_k] \underline{H}_k$ and $B^* W_j = [W_j, \hat{w}_j] \underline{K}_j$, where $[V_k, \hat{v}_k]$ and $[W_j, \hat{w}_j]$ have orthonormal columns. If C_1 and C_2 satisfy $C_1 = [V_k, \hat{v}_k] C_1^{(k)}$, $C_2 = [W_j, \hat{w}_j] C_2^{(j)}$ for some $C_1^{(k)}, C_2^{(j)}$, then

$$\begin{aligned} \|R\|_F &= \|AV_k \mathbf{Y} W_j^* + V_k \mathbf{Y} W_j^* B - \hat{V}_k C_1^{(k)} (\hat{W}_j C_2^{(j)})^*\|_F \\ &= \|[V_k, \hat{v}_k] (\underline{H}_k \mathbf{Y} [I, 0] + [I; 0] \mathbf{Y} \underline{K}_j^* - C_1^{(k)} (C_2^{(j)})^*) [W_j, \hat{w}_j]^*\|_F \\ (42) \quad &= \|\underline{H}_k \mathbf{Y} [I, 0] + [I; 0] \mathbf{Y} \underline{K}_j^* - C_1^{(k)} (C_2^{(j)})^*\|_F. \end{aligned}$$

The last expression involves a small matrix if k and j are small, and thus its norm can be cheaply evaluated. The spaces (a) to (c) above do satisfy the required conditions, and thus the residual norm can be monitored as the iteration proceeds.

All spaces listed above are nested, so that an approximate solution can be derived while each of them is expanded.

The implementation can allow for different space dimensions for A and B , especially if the two coefficient matrices have rather different spectral properties. The idea of generating different approximation spaces—of the same dimension—for A and B by means of standard Krylov subspaces was first developed in [132], where, however, the right-hand side C of the original problem was approximated by a rank-one

a special class of matrices which appear to occur after the use of several discretization methods, when partial differential equations or integral equations are treated numerically [101]. The \mathcal{H} -matrix format consists of partitioning a given matrix recursively into submatrices admitting low-rank approximations. The definition of this format requires the introduction of further arithmetic operations/approximations, in order to be able to determine, e.g., an \mathcal{H} -matrix after the approximate inversion of an \mathcal{H} -matrix, in order to make the class closed with respect to some important matrix operations; see section 5.2.3 for further details.

A different though related approach consists in adapting small scale iterations to the large setting, again under the condition that C is low rank. This can be performed, for instance, within the sign function iteration, by using rank truncation of the iterates and sparse format for the approximate solution. More details on the sign function iteration will be given in section 5.2.3. Here we mention that such an approach is investigated in [17] (see also [19]), where the sparse format chosen for the data and for the approximate solution is the hierarchical \mathcal{H} -matrix format also used in [102], [104]. With this approach, sparse approximate solutions to a Sylvester equation of size up to $n = 262144$ associated with a control problem for the two-dimensional heat equation are reported in [17]. The accuracy and effectiveness of the method depend on some thresholds used for maintaining sparsity and low rank during the iteration, and are thus problem dependent.

5. Continuous-Time Lyapunov Equation. For $B = A^*$, from the Sylvester equation we obtain the Lyapunov equation

$$(44) \quad \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{X}\mathbf{A}^* + \mathbf{C} = 0,$$

with C symmetric, and its generalized counterpart $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{E}^* + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{A}^* + \mathbf{C} = 0$, with E nonsingular. Clearly, this latter equation can be transformed into the form (44) by left and right multiplication by E^{-1} and E^{-*} , respectively. If E is symmetric and positive definite, a Cholesky decomposition could be performed and its inverse factors applied to the equation on the left and right sides, to maintain the problem structure. These are called the *continuous-time* Lyapunov equations, to be distinguished from the discrete-time equations which will be discussed in section 6. They arise in the analysis of continuous-time and discrete-time linear dynamical systems, respectively. A very detailed analysis of the Lyapunov equation, with computational developments up to 1995 and many relevant connections in the control application area, can be found in [90].

In the context of inertia theory, (44) with $C \succeq 0$ relates the location of the eigenvalues of A and \mathbf{X} with respect to the imaginary axis. Since C is symmetric, the solution \mathbf{X} is also symmetric. According to the Sylvester equation theory, the solution to (44) exists and is unique if and only if $\lambda_i + \bar{\lambda}_j \neq 0$ for all eigenvalues λ_i, λ_j of A [131]. If all eigenvalues of A have negative real part, namely, A is stable, then this condition is satisfied, so that a unique solution is ensured. We remark that the stability of A is an important property in the control setting, therefore it is not regarded as a restriction for solving the Lyapunov equation, although not strictly required. We shall see, however, that some of the large scale methods require additional restrictions on A , namely, its negative definiteness, to ensure the existence of an approximate solution. For A nonsymmetric, this extra condition may limit the applicability of the method, since in general a stable matrix A is not necessarily negative definite.

It can be verified that if A is stable and $C \succ 0$ ($C \succeq 0$), then $\mathbf{X} \succ 0$ ($\mathbf{X} \succeq 0$); in this case the problem is called the *stable* Lyapunov equation. If $C \succeq 0$ and (A, C^*) is observable,

(see, e.g., [210])

$$(45) \quad \begin{bmatrix} 0 & \mathbf{X} \\ 0 & I \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \left(I + \text{sign} \left(\begin{bmatrix} A^* & C \\ 0 & -A \end{bmatrix} \right) \right) =: \frac{1}{2} (I + \text{sign}(Z_0)).$$

With this property, the following matrix iteration corresponds to applying the Newton method to the nonlinear equation $(\text{sign}Z_0)^2 = I$:

$$(46) \quad Z_{k+1} = \frac{1}{2}(Z_k + Z_k^{-1}), \quad k = 0, 1, \dots$$

This yields

$$\text{sign } Z_0 = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} Z_k = \begin{bmatrix} -I & 2\mathbf{X} \\ 0 & I \end{bmatrix}.$$

Although the iteration is globally and (asymptotically) quadratically convergent, the basic iteration above may have slow initial convergence, so it is often accelerated using a parameterized procedure, that is, $Z_{k+1} = \frac{1}{2}(c_k Z_k + (c_k Z_k)^{-1})$, $k = 0, 1, \dots$, for an appropriate selection of the parameter $c_k > 0$. A popular choice is $c_k = |\det(Z_k)|^{-\frac{1}{n}}$ [50]; see, e.g., [7], [42, sec. 3.5.2] for a review of other choices and for additional historical and computational considerations on the matrix sign function.

5.2. Lyapunov Equation. Large Scale Computation. Recalling the discussion for the Sylvester equation in section 4.4, the solution of the Lyapunov equation for A of large dimensions focuses on the determination of memory saving and computationally appealing approximations. For the stable problem, this is achieved in most cases by looking for a *low-rank* approximation $\tilde{\mathbf{X}} = \mathbf{Z}\mathbf{Z}^*$, so that only the tall matrix \mathbf{Z} is actually computed and stored. This can be possible if, for instance, the right-hand side has low rank, since in that case we also have $\mathbf{X} \succeq 0$. Nonetheless, strategies to approximate the general right-hand side by low-rank matrices have also been explored in the literature; see, e.g., [132].

To help fully grasp the relevance of the topic, we notice that a number of recent Ph.D. theses have been devoted to the theory and computational aspects of the large scale Lyapunov matrix equation, and their results have significantly advanced knowledge on the problem; among them, we note [197], [189], [185], [129], [272], [173], [215]. The list could be expanded if one were to also include closely related theses on model order reduction of linear dynamical systems.

We conclude this section by noting that a systematic numerical comparison of all iterative methods described in the following subsections on a variety of very large problems (of size $n \gg 10^4$) is still lacking, although in our presentation some guidelines are given about the settings in which each of the methods discussed is preferred.

5.2.1. Projection Methods. As in the case of the Sylvester equation, the derivation of a projection method can be determined by imposing, e.g., the Galerkin condition on the residual with respect to some approximation space. In particular, from (41) with $k = j$, $V_k = W_j$, and $C_2 = C_1$, we obtain the projected small size Lyapunov equation

$$(47) \quad V_k^* A V_k \mathbf{Y}_k + \mathbf{Y}_k V_k^* A^* V_k + V_k^* C_1 (V_k^* C_1)^* = 0,$$

whose solution matrix \mathbf{Y}_k gives $\mathbf{X}_k = V_k \mathbf{Y}_k V_k^* \approx \mathbf{X}$. Since \mathbf{Y}_k is positive semi-definite and numerically singular, it is possible to perform a truncated decomposition of \mathbf{Y}_k as $\mathbf{Y}_k = LL^*$, so that only the slim factor $Z_k = V_k L$ of the solution $\mathbf{X}_k = Z_k Z_k^*$

needs to be stored. To ensure that (47) admits a unique solution, the matrix $V_k^*AV_k$ is assumed to be stable. Such a sufficient condition is met by requiring that A be negative definite, which is the usual hypothesis when using projection methods. This condition represents a limitation of projection methods, since the original problem admits a unique solution even in case of a stable¹³ but not necessarily negative definite A . On the other hand, these are sufficient conditions: projection methods can work in practice without this assumption, although they may break down or show some erratic convergence behavior; see [179] for an analysis.

An apparently different (functional) approach, based on the approximation to the matrix exponential and on (21), leads to exactly the same approximation procedure as Galerkin. Indeed, the action of the matrix exponential on C_1 , $\exp(tA)C_1$, can be approximated in the space \mathcal{V} as $V_k \exp(tH_k)(V_k^*C_1)$, where $H_k = V_k^*AV_k$, so that the analytic expression in (21) for the solution can be approximated explicitly; this is the way the Galerkin approximate solution was originally obtained in [213] for a rank-one matrix C_1 .

PROPOSITION 8 (see [213]). *Let \mathcal{V} be a subspace of \mathbb{R}^n , and let V have orthonormal columns and be such that $\mathcal{V} = \text{range}(V)$. Let H be the projection and restriction of A onto \mathcal{V} , and $y(t) = \exp(tH)(V^*C_1)$. Then the matrix VYV^* with*

$$Y = \int_0^\infty y(t)y(t)^* dt$$

is the Galerkin approximate solution to the Lyapunov equation in \mathcal{V} .

The procedure above is very general, and the success of the approach, in terms of computational cost, depends on the choice of the approximation space \mathcal{V} . All choices discussed in section 4.3 have been explored. For instance, the block Krylov subspace $K_k^\square(A, C_1)$ was exploited in [137] and was referred to as the Arnoldi method, after the procedure used to build the block Krylov subspace. The following computationally convenient relation for the residual $R_k = AX_k + X_kA^* + C_1C_1^*$ can be deduced from (42) [137, Thm. 2.1]:

$$\|R_k\|_F = \sqrt{2} \|(v_{k+1}^*Av_k)E_k^*Y_k\|_F, \quad E_k^* = [0_m, \dots, 0_m, I_m],$$

where v_{k+1} contains the next block of basis vectors.

Finally, the solution X_k is the exact solution to the nearby problem [137]

$$(A - \Delta)X + X(A - \Delta)^* + C_1C_1^* = 0,$$

with $\Delta = V_{k+1}(V_{k+1}^*AV_k)V_k^*$, $\|\Delta\|_F = \|V_{k+1}^*AV_k\|_F$.

The asymptotic convergence of the Arnoldi method was recently analyzed in [228]. Here we give an example of such analysis, which applies to A symmetric and positive definite and C_1 of rank one and unit norm; the derived bound was shown in [228] to provide an accurate worst-case convergence rate of the method.

THEOREM 9. *Let A be symmetric and positive definite, and let λ_{\min} be the smallest eigenvalue of A . Let $\hat{\lambda}_{\min}$, $\hat{\lambda}_{\max}$ be the extreme eigenvalues of $A + \lambda_{\min}I$ and $\hat{\kappa} = \hat{\lambda}_{\max}/\hat{\lambda}_{\min}$. Let X_k be the Galerkin approximate solution to X in a Krylov*

¹³As said before, even stability of A is not strictly necessary for the solvability of the Lyapunov equation, only that $I \otimes A + A \otimes I$ is nonsingular.

matrix functions as coefficient matrices, and is then solved by means of the global Krylov subspace method. This may be viewed as a preconditioning strategy.

5.2.3. Spectral, Sparse Format, and Other Methods. As for the Sylvester equation, the Kronecker formulation can be used to restate the matrix equation as the very large linear system

$$(55) \quad \mathcal{A}\mathbf{x} := (I_n \otimes A + A^* \otimes I_n)\mathbf{x} = c, \quad \mathbf{x} = \text{vec}(\mathbf{X}), \quad c = \text{vec}(C),$$

of size n^2 , where n is the size of A ; see, e.g., [126] for an early attempt to solve the system by exploiting the structure of \mathcal{A} . For A symmetric and positive definite, the convergence rate of CG applied to the Kronecker formulation is influenced by the condition number $\kappa(\mathcal{A}) = \kappa(A)$, whereas the convergence rate of the Galerkin procedure directly applied to the original Lyapunov equation is influenced by $\kappa(A + \lambda_{\min}I)$ (see Theorem 9), which can be significantly smaller than $\kappa(A)$. This analysis justifies the better performance of projection methods applied to the matrix equation. A second possibly stronger argument is given by memory requirements: the Kronecker formulation requires n^2 -length vectors. Nonetheless, it was recently shown in [185] that when solving (55) floating point operations can be carried out so as to lower memory storage from $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$ to $\mathcal{O}(n)$. Moreover, a standard Krylov subspace method for (55) can take full advantage of the structure, since matrix-vector multiplications can be rewritten as matrix-matrix operations.

A possible way to overcome slow convergence is to choose an effective preconditioning strategy that can improve the spectral properties of the coefficient matrix \mathcal{A} . Hochbruck and Starke used a Krylov subspace solver for the system (55), and they investigated SSOR and ADI iteration (with a fixed number of iterations) as operator-based preconditioners; see also [185] for some implementation aspects of preconditioning strategies. More recently, a flexible GMRES approach was proposed in [44], which allowed for a variable ADI preconditioning step. Very preliminary numerical results report promising performance of the Kronecker formulation, while taking into account the matrix structure. These approaches may have broader applications for more general matrix equations; see the discussion in section 7.2.

A rather different approach consists of using an appropriately modified version of the sign function iteration depicted in (45). As memory requirements are excessive in its original form for large scale problems, two major amendments have been explored (see, e.g., [16]): (i) a sparsified version of A , so as to substantially reduce the computation and storage of Z_k^{-1} ; (ii) for $C = C_1 C_1^*$, a factored version of the approximation $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}$, so that only a tall factor need be iterated. The latter problem was addressed in [33], where the following coupled iteration was proposed:

$$A_0 = A, \quad B_0 = C_1, \quad A_{k+1} = \frac{1}{2}(A_k + A_k^{-1}), \quad B_{k+1} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}[B_k, A_k^{-1}B_k], \quad k = 0, 1, \dots,$$

giving $\mathbf{Y} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} B_k$, with $\mathbf{Y}\mathbf{Y}^* = \mathbf{X}$. Note that the number of columns of B_k is doubled at each iteration, therefore a rank reduction is suggested in [33]. A recent extensive investigation of the performance of this type of approach can be found in [224]; the discussion in [224] in fact addresses the generalized Sylvester equation.

Item (i), namely, reducing the cost of dealing with the explicit inverse of large matrices, may be addressed by exploiting data sparse matrix representations and approximate arithmetic. In [18], but also in previous related works for the algebraic

tion by repeatedly integrating the dynamical system associated with the Lyapunov equation as the basis for an orthogonal power iteration.

A somewhat related approach was proposed in [231], which exploits the popular *proper orthogonal decomposition* (POD) approach employed in reduced order modeling of large scale dynamical systems [32]. The idea is to collect a sample of m approximate solutions to a sequence of associated linear time-dependent differential equations with different starting data and, for a chosen k , form a rank- k approximate Lyapunov solution. The approach relies on the integral representation of the Lyapunov solution and, according to the author, it is particularly appropriate for infinite-dimensional problems.

Finally, a novel and very different approach was recently proposed by Vandereycken and Vandewalle in [250] for A symmetric and positive definite: the method finds a low-rank approximation to \mathbf{X} by minimizing the function

$$f : \mathcal{M}_k \rightarrow \mathbb{R}, \quad X \mapsto \text{trace}(XAX) - \text{trace}(XC)$$

on the manifold \mathcal{M}_k of symmetric and positive semidefinite matrices of rank k in $\mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$, namely,

$$\min_{X \in \mathcal{M}_k} f(X).$$

When \mathbf{X}_* is the true solution to the Lyapunov equation, it was proved in [250] that $\|\text{vec}(X - \mathbf{X}_*)\|_{\mathcal{A}}^2 = 2f(X) + 2\text{trace}(\mathbf{X}_*A\mathbf{X}_*)$ for all $X \in \mathcal{M}_k$, with \mathcal{A} as in (55), so that the minimization of f corresponds to the minimization of the error in the energy norm, which is defined as $\|x\|_{\mathcal{A}}^2 = x^*Ax$. By using the smoothness of \mathcal{M}_k the problem is solved within a Riemann optimization framework, which allows one to embed the rank constraint in the space and solve an unconstrained minimization problem by means of a Riemann trust-region method, a second-order model based on the Hessian [2]. At convergence of the minimization process, if the current solution rank is not sufficiently accurate, the process is restarted basically from scratch. As a result, the method may be appealing when the optimal rank is approximately known a priori; otherwise, the approach may not be competitive with respect to other strategies discussed so far.

6. The Stein and Discrete Lyapunov Equations. The Stein and the discrete Sylvester equations are the discrete-time counterpart of the (continuous-time) equations discussed in the previous sections, and they naturally stem from a discrete-time system; see (5) and, e.g., [4, sec. 4.3]. Other relevant applications include, for instance, statistics [152], [151], probability [10], and spectral analysis [133]. These equations are also a computational tool in the design of control systems [156], and in the coprime matrix fraction description of linear systems [269].

The Stein equation may be written as

$$(57) \quad \mathbf{X} + A\mathbf{X}B = C,$$

where it is assumed that the eigenvalues of A and B are contained in the open unit disk. The discrete-time Lyapunov equation is obtained by choosing $B = -A^*$, in which case, if C is symmetric and if a solution \mathbf{X} exists, then \mathbf{X} has to be symmetric. In the context of inertia theory, for $C \succeq 0$ the discrete-time Lyapunov equation allows one to analyze the proximity of $\text{spec}(A)$ to the unit circle and the proximity of $\text{spec}(\mathbf{X})$ to the imaginary axis; see, [168, sec. 13.2] and also, e.g., [260], [172] for more specialized results.

Under the condition that $\lambda_i(A)\lambda_j(B) \neq -1$ for all i, j , the solution \mathbf{X} exists and is unique for any C (see, e.g., [167]), and this is highlighted by the Kronecker form of

gence can be achieved with the *squared* Smith method, which becomes of interest in the large scale case precisely for C of small rank [198]. The iteration is generically given as

$$\mathbf{X} = A^{2^{k+1}} \mathbf{X} (A^{2^{k+1}})^* + \sum_{i=0}^{2^{k+1}-1} A^i C (A^i)^*, \quad \mathbf{X} = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{i=0}^{2^{k+1}-1} A^i C (A^i)^*.$$

The resulting recursion is given by $H_{k+1} = H_k + A_k H_k A_k^*$, $H_0 = C$, where $A_{k+1} = A_k^2$, so that $C_k \rightarrow \mathbf{X}$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$. By exploiting the low rank of $C = C_0 C_0^*$, $H_{k+1} = C_{k+1} C_{k+1}^*$ with $C_{k+1} = [C_k, A_k C_k]$. Therefore, the number of columns of C_{k+1} doubles at each iteration, and C_{k+1} is contained in a block Krylov subspace generated by A and C_0 . Recent advances to make this recurrence more effective in terms of both computational costs and memory requirements include compressions, truncations, and restarts, with a tricky use of the underlying Krylov subspace [175], [216], [25]. In these references, estimates for the residual and error norms are also derived. Finally, we point out an ADI acceleration strategy in [216] (for $B = -A^*$) and in [25], which significantly improves the convergence speed. In fact, a major breakthrough for the Smith method consisted in combining its recurrence with the ADI idea, as developed in [198].

All these approaches rely on the fact that often the solution \mathbf{X} has (numerical) rank much lower than n ; indeed, in [25] it is shown for the Stein equation that if the eigenvalues of A and B lie inside the open unit disk and C has rank p ,

$$\frac{\sigma_{kp+1}(\mathbf{X})}{\sigma_1(\mathbf{X})} \leq \|A^k\| \|B^k\|,$$

indicating that the solution rank might indeed be small if the powers of A and B decrease rapidly in norm. In [216] the following estimate was derived for $B = -A^*$ and $\|A\| < 1$:

$$\frac{\sigma_{kp+1}(\mathbf{X})}{\sigma_1(\mathbf{X})} \leq \frac{\|A\|^{2k}}{1 - \|A\|^2}.$$

In general, a computational comparison of various variants of the approaches based on the Smith iteration is still lacking, though highly desirable.

A related matrix equation is the \top -Stein equation, given by $\mathbf{X} = A\mathbf{X}^\top B + C$, whose solvability conditions have been recently analyzed in [177]. More generally, a broader class of matrix equations can be written as $\mathbf{X} = Af(\mathbf{X})B + C$, where $f(X) = X^\top$, $f(X) = \bar{X}$, or $f(X) = X^*$, whose analysis and numerical solution can be recast in terms of the Stein matrix equation [271]. This and more general forms of linear equations are discussed in the next section.

7. Generalized Linear Equations.

7.1. The Generalized Sylvester and Lyapunov Equations. The term *generalized* refers to a very wide class of equations, which includes systems of matrix equations, bilinear equations, and problems where the coefficient matrices are rectangular. We start with the most common form of the generalized Sylvester equation, namely,

$$(58) \quad A\mathbf{X}D + E\mathbf{X}B = C,$$

which differs from (18) in the occurrence of coefficient matrices on both sides of the unknown solution \mathbf{X} .

If D and E are both nonsingular, left multiplication by E^{-1} and right multiplication by D^{-1} lead to a standard Sylvester equation, with the same solution matrix \mathbf{X} . If either E or D is ill-conditioned, such a transformation may lead to severe instabilities. This problem is common to other *generalized* equations we will encounter later in this section, and it justifies the development of solution methods that stick to the original form (58). The case of singular D and E , especially for $D = E^*$ and $B = A^*$, has an important role in the solution of differential-algebraic equations and descriptor systems [164]. The solution of (58) for E and D singular requires knowledge of the spectral projectors onto the right and left deflating subspaces of the *stable* pencils $\lambda E - A$ and $\lambda D - B$, associated with the finite eigenvalues, along with the right and left deflating subspaces associated with the eigenvalue at infinity. In such a setting, the right-hand side matrix is also projected onto the corresponding deflating subspaces and the equation is called the *projected* Sylvester equation. The numerical treatment of this matrix equation necessitates ad hoc procedures that appropriately and stably take into account the Weierstrass canonical form of the pencils $\lambda E - A$, $\lambda D - B$, from which the spectral projectors can be derived; we refer the reader to, e.g., [239], [178] and their references for further details on projected Sylvester equations.

The following result ensures the existence of a unique solution \mathbf{X} to (58).

THEOREM 12 (see [58]). *The matrix equation $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{D} + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C}$ has a unique solution if and only if*

- (i) *the pairs (A, E) and $(D, -B)$ are regular pencils;*
- (ii) *the spectra of (A, E) and $(B, -D)$ are disjoint.*¹⁵

Under the hypotheses of Theorem 12, uniqueness is thus still ensured if one of the matrices A, B, D , or E is singular, as long as the corresponding pencil is nonsingular.

A natural extension of the Bartels–Stewart method can be implemented for numerically solving (58) when dimensions are small, and this was discussed in [93], [94], [196], where the starting point is a QZ decomposition of the pencils (A, E) and (B, D) followed by the solution of a sequence of small (1-by-1 or 2-by-2) generalized Sylvester equations, which is performed using their Kronecker form. For C positive semidefinite and (A, E) stable, in [196] a generalization of the Hammarling method is also proposed. The algorithm developed in [93], [94] is also able to treat the case in which some specifically selected coefficient matrices are singular.

The large scale setting does not significantly differ from previous cases, as long as E, D are not too ill-conditioned. The problem can be recast as a standard Sylvester equation in $E^{-1}A$ and BD^{-1} . In the case of rational Krylov subspace and ADI methods, shifted systems can be solved with the coefficient matrix $(E^{-1}A + sI) = E^{-1}(A + sE)$, and analogously for systems with BD^{-1} . In the case of ill-conditioned E, D , one could consider using a specifically selected $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$ (or $\alpha \in \mathbb{C}$) such that the two matrices $E + \alpha A$ and $D - \alpha B$ are better conditioned and the solution uniqueness is ensured, and rewrite (58) as the equivalent generalized Sylvester matrix equation $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}(\mathbf{D} - \alpha\mathbf{B}) + (\mathbf{E} + \alpha\mathbf{A})\mathbf{X}\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C}$.

We mention the specific application of global Krylov subspace methods (see section 4.4), which are obtained by using the mapping $\mathcal{M}(X) = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{D} + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{B}$; therefore, they can be applied in general to the equation $\sum_{i=1}^q A_i X B_i = C$, as is done in [46]. Note that this kind of approach can only be applied to medium size problems, as the matrix formulation involves dense matrices. We recall once again that there is a tight

¹⁵Here the notion of disjoint spectra [58, formula (7)] should be understood in light of the definition of “spectral set” in generalized eigenvalue problems, as defined, for instance, in [238, Def. VI.1.1.1].

relation between global methods and the Kronecker form, which provides a good basis for the theoretical understanding of global methods.

A unique solution to the generalized Lyapunov equation

$$(59) \quad \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{E}^* + \mathbf{E}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{A}^* = \mathbf{C}$$

is ensured if and only if Theorem 12 applies, that is, all eigenvalues of the pencil (A, E) are finite and they do not have pairwise zero sum. As a consequence, a unique solution is only obtained if one of the matrices A, E is nonsingular. In this case one can recast (6) as a standard Lyapunov equation.

To avoid stability problems caused by a possibly ill-conditioned E or A , it is usually preferred to work with E and A implicitly. This is realized by performing a simultaneous Schur decomposition of E and A , $E = \mathbf{Q}\mathbf{S}\mathbf{Z}^*$ and $A = \mathbf{Q}\mathbf{T}\mathbf{Z}^*$, with S and T (complex) upper triangular [186]. Plugging in this transformation, (59) becomes $\mathbf{Q}\mathbf{T}\mathbf{Z}^*\mathbf{X}\mathbf{Z}\mathbf{S}^*\mathbf{Q}^* + \mathbf{Q}\mathbf{S}\mathbf{Z}^*\mathbf{X}\mathbf{Z}^*\mathbf{T}^*\mathbf{Q}^* = \mathbf{C}$, that is,

$$\mathbf{T}\widehat{\mathbf{X}}\mathbf{S}^* + \mathbf{S}\widehat{\mathbf{X}}\mathbf{T}^* = \mathbf{Q}^*\mathbf{C}\mathbf{Q}, \quad \widehat{\mathbf{X}} = \mathbf{Z}^*\mathbf{X}\mathbf{Z}.$$

The elements of $\widehat{\mathbf{X}}$ can then be obtained by exploiting the structure of T and S [116].

A different approach adapts the matrix sign function iteration in (46) to this more general context, and it is shown in [33] that it is applicable under the hypothesis that the Lyapunov equation is stable. In the case of C in factorized form in (59), a recurrence is proposed in [33] to generate an approximation to the Cholesky-type factor of the resulting semidefinite solution \mathbf{X} . Comparisons in terms of memory requirements and floating point operations with respect to the generalized Hammarling method (see [196]) are also reported in [33]. We also refer the reader to [196] for some estimates of the separation¹⁶ and the condition number of the operator associated with (59), which is important to assessing the accuracy of the computed solution.

7.2. Bilinear, Constrained, and Other Linear Equations. Other generalizations of the Sylvester equation have attracted the attention of many researchers. In some cases the standard procedure for their solution consists in solving a (sequence of) related standard Sylvester equation(s), so that the computational core is the numerical solution of the latter by means of some of the procedures discussed in previous sections. We thus list here some of the possible generalizations more often encountered and employed in real applications. We start by considering the case when the two coefficient matrices can be rectangular. This gives the equation

$$(60) \quad \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X} + \mathbf{Y}\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C},$$

where \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{Y} are both unknown, and A, B , and C are all rectangular matrices of conforming dimensions. Equations of this type arise in control theory, for instance, in output regulation with internal stability, where the matrices are in fact polynomial matrices (see, e.g., [263] and references therein). The following theorem is a first result on the existence and uniqueness of the pair \mathbf{X}, \mathbf{Y} and is reported as originally stated in [211]; see also more recent advanced developments in [83].

THEOREM 13 (see [211]). *The necessary and sufficient condition that the equation $\mathbf{A}\mathbf{X} - \mathbf{Y}\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{C}$, where A, B , and C are $m \times r$, $s \times n$, and $m \times n$ matrices, respectively,*

¹⁶Defined as $\text{sep}_p(A, E) = \min_{\|\mathbf{X}\|_p=1} \|\mathbf{A}^*\mathbf{X}\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{E}^*\mathbf{X}\mathbf{A}\|_p$, with $p = 2, F$.

to a robust Kronecker-form based iteration reviewed in [62, secs. 3.1–4], Damm in [62] proposed a regular splitting for the numerical solution of (65), yielding the iterative scheme

$$A\mathbf{X}_{k+1} + \mathbf{X}_{k+1}A^* = -N\mathbf{X}_kN^* - C_1C_1^*, \quad \mathbf{X}_0 = 0,$$

which entails the solution of a sequence of standard Lyapunov equations. Convergence to \mathbf{X} is obtained if the spectrum of A is sufficiently far away from the imaginary axis. In [62, sec. 4] the generalized case of the Lyapunov operator is also treated. In the recent article [23] a thorough discussion and contextualization of the algebraic problem in stochastic model order reduction can be found. In [21], various methods for the Lyapunov equation, such as ADI and projection techniques, are adapted to the setting of (65), including sparse format approaches for the Kronecker formulation; reported experimental results on large problems seem to favor this sparse format approach, with the caveat that the sparsity and accuracy parameters must be tuned, as described in section 5.2.3.

An approach that may be appropriate for large scale problems is implicitly suggested in [8]. In the context of model order reduction, the following approximation space is introduced:

$$(66) \quad \text{range}(V) = \text{span} \left\{ \bigcup_{k=1}^r \text{range}\{V^{(k)}\} \right\},$$

with $\text{range}(V^{(1)}) := K_q(A^{-1}, A^{-1}C_1)$ and

$$\text{range}(V^{(k)}) := K_q(A^{-1}, A^{-1}NV^{(k-1)}), \quad k = 2, \dots, r.$$

Using a Galerkin approximation onto $\text{range}(V)$, (65) can be reduced and solved with a direct procedure; a possible implementation of this idea was recently proposed in [21]. Another approach for solving multilinear systems in Kronecker form was analyzed in [163], in which a tensor-based form for the approximate solution is considered. Such a strategy is well suited to the approximation of *parameterized* linear systems, which arise, for instance, in certain discretization strategies for the numerical solution of stochastic partial differential equations [6]. Data sparse methods associated with the Kronecker formulation may provide a possibly successful avenue for attacking the general linear multiterm matrix equation (2); to the best of our knowledge, no attempts have been made in this direction so far for really large problems.

7.3. Sylvester-like and Lyapunov-like Equations. Sylvester- and Lyapunov-like linear matrix equations of the form [47], [39]

$$(67) \quad B\mathbf{X} + f(\mathbf{X})A = C, \quad A^*\mathbf{X} + f(\mathbf{X})A = C, \quad B, A, \mathbf{X} \in \mathbb{C}^{m \times n},$$

with $f(X) = \bar{X}$, $f(X) = X^\top$, and $f(X) = X^*$, or their “discrete-time” variants (see section 6) are less common, but see, for instance, [161] for an occurrence in structured eigenvalue computation. The homogeneous case ($C = 0$) has been recently analyzed in [72], where a complete description of the solution in terms of the Kronecker canonical form of $A + \lambda f(B)$ is derived whenever information on this latter pencil is available. These equations have attracted increasing interest in the past few years, with recent contributions on the necessary and sufficient conditions for their solvability, for any right-hand side matrix C [134]; a different proof of this result that also induces a numerical method is proposed in [253]. As an example of this type of result, in [51,

A number of benchmark problems have been made available for testing purposes. In addition to those available in the NICONET website, a variety of datasets is available in the Oberwolfach collection²² accompanied by a well-documented description of the originating application problems; see also the description in [160].

Refined implementations of structured linear equation methods have been proposed for high performance computations. In particular, the efficient solution of triangular and quasi-triangular Sylvester equations has been discussed in [206], [202]. A high performance library for triangular Sylvester-type matrix equations (continuous- and discrete-time) is also available at <http://www8.cs.umu.se/~isak/recsy/>, while a parallel SCALAPACK-style version of this software, called SCASY, is available at <http://www8.cs.umu.se/~granat/scasy.html>. Some of the SLICOT routines are overloaded in these libraries; see [143], [144], [100] for more information on their implementation on parallel architectures.

In [129] an early parallel algorithm was developed to solve medium size ($0 < n \leq 1000$) Lyapunov problems with a banded and negative definite matrix A ; experiments with a shared memory multiprocessor machine (Alliant FX-8) can also be found. The approach is similar in spirit to classical iterative linear system methods such as Jacobi and Gauss–Seidel. More recently, specialized parallel algorithms for Lyapunov, Stein, and other generalized matrix equations for different modern architectures have been presented by a number of authors; see, e.g., [205] for the Cray T3E, [34], [35] employing a cluster of PCs, and [24] for hybrid CPU-GPU platforms. The use of approaches based either on the square Smith iteration or on iterative techniques for the matrix sign function, as opposed to the Schur decomposition, is key to obtaining good parallel performance.

Systems of matrix equations were implemented in a parallel environment in [45] and references therein. A parallel algorithm for the small scale solution to the multi-input Sylvester-observer equation (see section 7.2) was proposed in [43] and tested on two shared-memory vector machines.

9. Concluding Remarks and Future Outlook. The solution of linear matrix equations has always attracted the attention of the engineering and scientific communities. The reliability of efficient core numerical linear algebra methods has made the solution of these matrix equations increasingly popular in application problem modeling. A good understanding of the theoretical tools and of the variety of numerical methods available for Sylvester-type equations provides a solid ground for attacking more general—nonlinear, multiterm, or multifunctional—matrix equations. In particular, the efficient solution of multiterm matrix equations such as those in (2) represents the next frontier for numerical linear algebra, as it is currently one of the major bottlenecks in the numerical treatment of PDEs involving stochastic terms; see section 3. Advances in this direction will be tightly related to those being made in the solution of linear systems with tensor product structure, which in the simplest case can be written as

$$(70) \quad \mathcal{A}\mathbf{x} = b \quad \text{with} \quad \mathcal{A} = \sum_{j=1}^k I_{n_1} \otimes \cdots \otimes I_{n_{j-1}} \otimes A_j \otimes I_{n_{j+1}} \cdots \otimes I_{n_k}.$$

This problem is a further level of generalization of the standard Sylvester equation, where the solution is a k -way tensor whose size explodes with k even for modest values

²²Available at <http://portal.uni-freiburg.de/imteksimulation/downloads/benchmark>.

of n_j [154]. The complex Kronecker structure arising in (70) makes the problem very hard to even analyze, and its size calls for truncation or reduction procedures that rely on approximation theory and hierarchical data structures; see, e.g., [106], [191], [192]. Scientific computing applications dealing with many variables can exploit these data tools to considerably lower the computational complexity of their model; see, e.g., [149] for a recent survey. Among the very recent projection methods used for the solution of (70), we find Krylov subspace based procedures that considerably generalize methods used for the two-dimensional case; see, e.g., [162], [9]. We envisage that a lot of scientific research will be devoted to multiterm and multidimensional problems in forthcoming years.

We have mainly limited our presentation to linear problems. Nonlinear matrix equations have a crucial and ever increasing role in many applications: for instance, the popular algebraic Riccati equation (see [167]) has a leading role in control applications and is an important tool in eigenvalue problems; we refer the reader to [42] for a very recent presentation of the rich literature on computational methods. Other fully nonlinear equations include, e.g. matrix eigenvalue problems [82], [184] and equations of the type $\mathbf{X} + A^\top F(\mathbf{X})A = Q$, where F is a properly defined nonlinear function of \mathbf{X} (see, e.g., [207] and references therein), together with matrix equations involving powers of \mathbf{X} .

Linear matrix equations with special properties arise when dealing with *periodic* dynamical systems. These problems give rise to periodic counterparts of the equations we have analyzed, such as Lyapunov and Sylvester equations. Corresponding Schur forms can be used for their solution, and necessary and sufficient conditions for a periodic discrete-time system to be equivalent to a time-invariant system are known; thorough treatments with developments on both the theoretical and algorithmic fronts, mainly on small size problems, have been carried out by Byers, Van Dooren, Sreedhar, Varga, and their collaborators.

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