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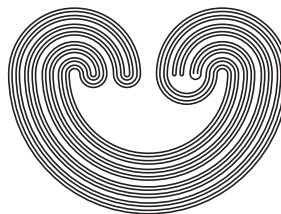
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## CACTUS GROUPS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF GEOMETRIC GROUP THEORY

by

ANTHONY GENEVOIS

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**Mail:** Topology Proceedings

Department of Mathematics & Statistics

Auburn University, Alabama 36849, USA

**E-mail:** [topolog@auburn.edu](mailto:topolog@auburn.edu)

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## CACTUS GROUPS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF GEOMETRIC GROUP THEORY

ANTHONY GENEVOIS

**ABSTRACT.** Cactus groups and their pure subgroups appear in various fields of mathematics and are currently attracting attention from diverse mathematical communities. They share similarities with both right-angled Coxeter groups and braid groups. In this article, our goal is to highlight the tools offered by geometric group theory for the group theoretical study of these groups. Among the new contributions made possible thanks to this geometric perspective, we describe an explicit and efficient solution to the conjugacy problem, and we prove that cactus groups are virtually cocompact special and acylindrically hyperbolic. This has various algebraic consequences. From a purely geometrical point of view, we also prove that cactus groups are pairwise non-quasi-isometric.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cactus groups  $J_n$  first appeared in [11] and [9], under the names “quasi-braid groups” and “mock reflection groups,” respectively. The group  $J_n$  is the fundamental group of the quotient orbifold of  $\overline{M}_0^{n+1}(\mathbb{R})$ , the Deligne–Knudson–Mumford moduli space of stable real curves of genus 0 with  $n + 1$  marked points, by the action of the symmetric group  $S_n$  that permutes the first  $n$  of those points. The picture of stable real curves in this space, which looks like a cactus, gave the name “cactus groups” [25].

Given an integer  $n \geq 2$ , the *cactus group*  $J_n$  can be defined by the generators  $s_{p,q}$ , with  $1 \leq p < q \leq n$ , submitted to the following relations:

- $s_{p,q}^2 = 1$  for every  $1 \leq p < q \leq n$ ;

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*Key words and phrases.* acylindrical hyperbolicity, cactus groups, CAT(0) cube complexes, conjugacy problem, median graphs.

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