

A generating set for the palindromic Torelli group

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A *palindrome* in a free group F_n is a word on some fixed free basis of F_n that reads the same backwards as forwards. The *palindromic automorphism group* ΠA_n of the free group F_n consists of automorphisms that take each member of some fixed free basis of F_n to a palindrome; the group ΠA_n has close connections with hyperelliptic mapping class groups, braid groups, congruence subgroups of $\mathrm{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$, and symmetric automorphisms of free groups. We obtain a generating set for the subgroup of ΠA_n consisting of those elements that act trivially on the abelianisation of F_n , the *palindromic Torelli group* \mathcal{PT}_n . The group \mathcal{PT}_n is a free group analogue of the hyperelliptic Torelli subgroup of the mapping class group of an oriented surface. We obtain our generating set by constructing a simplicial complex on which \mathcal{PT}_n acts in a nice manner, adapting a proof of Day and Putman. The generating set leads to a finite presentation of the principal level 2 congruence subgroup of $\mathrm{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$.

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1 Introduction

Let F_n be the free group of rank n on some fixed free basis X . The palindromic automorphism group of F_n , denoted ΠA_n , consists of automorphisms of F_n that take each member of X to some palindrome, that is, a word on X that reads the same backwards as forwards. Collins [8] introduced the group ΠA_n and proved that it is finitely presented, giving an explicit presentation. Glover and Jensen [15] obtained further results about ΠA_n , utilising a contractible subspace of the outer space of F_n on which ΠA_n acts cocompactly, with finite stabilisers. For instance, they calculate that the virtual cohomological dimension of ΠA_n is $n - 1$. The group ΠA_n is a free group analogue of the hyperelliptic mapping class group of an oriented surface; we develop this analogy later in this introduction.

In this paper, we are primarily concerned with the intersection of ΠA_n with the Torelli subgroup of F_n , that is, the subgroup of automorphisms of ΠA_n that act trivially on the abelianisation of F_n . We denote this intersection by \mathcal{PT}_n , and refer to it as the *palindromic Torelli group* of F_n . Little appears to be known about the group \mathcal{PT}_n : Collins [8] first observed that it is non-trivial, and Jensen, McCammond and Meier

[17, Corollary 6.3] showed that \mathcal{PT}_n is not of finite homological type for $n \geq 3$. In Section 2, we introduce non-trivial members of \mathcal{PT}_n ($n \geq 3$) known as *doubled commutator transvections* and *separating π -twists*. The main theorem of this paper establishes that these generate \mathcal{PT}_n .

Theorem A *The group \mathcal{PT}_n ($n \geq 3$) is generated by doubled commutator transvections and separating π -twists.*

In order to prove Theorem A, we establish finite generating sets for the subgroups of ΠA_n consisting of automorphisms that fix each member of some specified subset of the free basis X . These generating sets, which are given precisely in the statement of Proposition 2.2, are obtained by utilising Stallings’ graph folding algorithm.

Let $\Gamma_n[2]$ denote the *principal level 2 congruence subgroup* of $GL(n, \mathbb{Z})$, that is, the kernel of the surjection $GL(n, \mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow GL(n, \mathbb{Z}/2)$ that reduces matrix entries mod 2. In Section 2, we discuss a short exact sequence with kernel the palindromic Torelli group and quotient $\Gamma_n[2]$. For $1 \leq i \neq j \leq n$, let $S_{ij} \in \Gamma_n[2]$ be the matrix that has 1s on the diagonal and 2 in the (i, j) position, with 0s elsewhere, and let $O_i \in \Gamma_n[2]$ differ from the identity only in having -1 in the (i, i) position. The following corollary of Theorem A provides a finite presentation of $\Gamma_n[2]$ for $n \geq 4$.

Corollary 1.1 *The principal level 2 congruence group $\Gamma_n[2]$ ($n \geq 4$) is generated by*

$$\{S_{ij}, O_i \mid 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n\},$$

subject to the defining relators

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| (1) $O_i^2,$ | (6) $[S_{ki}, S_{kj}],$ |
| (2) $[O_i, O_j],$ | (7) $[S_{ij}, S_{kl}],$ |
| (3) $(O_i S_{ij})^2,$ | (8) $[S_{ji}, S_{ki}],$ |
| (4) $(O_j S_{ij})^2,$ | (9) $[S_{kj}, S_{ji}] S_{ki}^{-2},$ |
| (5) $[O_i, S_{jk}],$ | (10) $(S_{ij} S_{ik}^{-1} S_{ki} S_{ji} S_{jk} S_{kj}^{-1})^2,$ |

where $1 \leq i, j, k, l \leq n$ are pairwise different.

We note that in the proof of Theorem A it becomes apparent that not every relator of type 10 is needed. In fact, for each choice of three indices i, j and k , we need only select one such word (and disregard the others, for which the indices have been permuted).

We also derive the following similar presentation for $\Gamma_n[2]$ when $n = 2$ or 3 ; however, these are acquired independently of Theorem A. Indeed, the presentation of $\Gamma_3[2]$ is

used to obtain a generating set for \mathcal{PT}_3 , which forms the base case of an inductive proof of [Theorem A](#).

Proposition 1.2 *The principal level 2 congruence group $\Gamma_n[2]$ ($n=2, 3$) is generated by*

$$\{S_{ij}, O_i \mid 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n\},$$

subject to the defining relators in the statement of [Corollary 1.1](#) of types

- (1)–(4) for $n = 2$,
- (1)–(6), (8)–(10) for $n = 3$.

A key tool in the proof of [Proposition 1.2](#) is an “even” version of the division algorithm for the integers. This is the observation that under certain circumstances, the quotient $q \in \mathbb{Z}$ given when dividing $a \in \mathbb{Z}$ by $b \in \mathbb{Z}$ may be chosen to be even, if we sacrifice control of the sign of the remainder $r \in \mathbb{Z}$. More details of this procedure are given in the proofs of [Lemma 2.4](#) and [Theorem 5.1](#).

A similar presentation for $\Gamma_n[2]$ was recently found independently by Kobayashi [\[18\]](#), and was also known to Margalit and Putman. As Margalit and Putman pointed out, this is a natural presentation for $\Gamma_n[2]$, as relators of types (6)–(9) bear a strong resemblance to the Steinberg relations that hold between the transvections generating $SL(n, \mathbb{Z})$; see Milnor [\[22, Section 5\]](#).

A comparison with mapping class groups While ΠA_n is defined entirely algebraically, it may be viewed as a free group analogue of a subgroup of the mapping class group of an oriented surface. Let S_g and S_g^1 denote the compact, connected, oriented surfaces of genus g with 0 and 1 boundary components, respectively. We shall use S to denote such a surface, with or without boundary. Recall that the *mapping class group* of the surface S , denoted $\text{Mod}(S)$, consists of isotopy classes of orientation-preserving self-homeomorphisms of S , where isotopies are required to fix any boundary component pointwise at all times. For a self-homeomorphism f of S , we denote its isotopy class by $[f]$.

A *hyperelliptic involution* of the surface S is an order-2 homeomorphism of the surface that acts as $-I$ on $H_1(S, \mathbb{Z})$; see Brendle and Margalit [\[4, Sections 2 & 4\]](#). Let s denote the homeomorphism of S_g^1 seen in [Figure 1](#). By capping the boundary with a disk, the map s induces a homeomorphism of S_g , which we also denote s , by an abuse of notation. The map s is an example of a hyperelliptic involution of S_g^1 (and S_g). We note that the mapping class of any hyperelliptic involution in $\text{Mod}(S_g)$ ($g \geq 1$) is conjugate to $[s]$; see Farb and Margalit [\[12, Proposition 7.15\]](#).

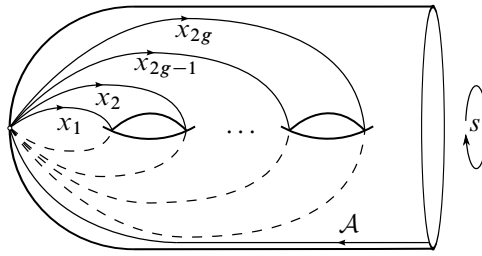


Figure 1: The involution s rotates the surface by π radians. Under the Nielsen embedding, we may view the braid group $B_{2g} \leq \text{SMod}(S_g^1)$ as a subgroup of $\Pi A_{2g} \leq \text{Aut}(F_{2g})$.

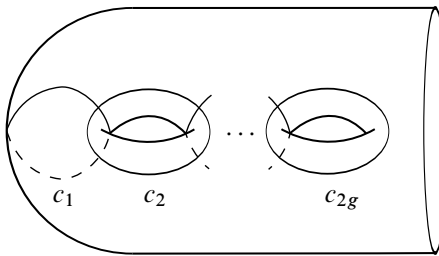


Figure 2: The standard symmetric chain in S_g^1 . The Dehn twists about c_1, \dots, c_{2g} generate $\text{SMod}(S_g^1) \cong B_{2g+1}$.

The *hyperelliptic mapping class group of the surface S_g* , denoted $\text{SMod}(S_g)$, is the centraliser of $[s]$ in $\text{Mod}(S_g)$. Although $[s] \notin \text{Mod}(S_g^1)$, as s does not fix the boundary of S_g^1 , we define the *hyperelliptic mapping class group of S_g^1* , denoted $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$, to be the group of isotopy classes of the centraliser of s in $\text{Homeo}^+(S_g^1)$ [12, Chapter 9].

An obvious analogue of a hyperelliptic involution in $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ is an order-2 member of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ that acts as $-I$ on $H_1(F_n, \mathbb{Z}) = \mathbb{Z}^n$. An example of such an involution in $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ is the automorphism ι that inverts each member of the free basis X . An analogy between s and ι is strengthened by two observations. Firstly, Glover and Jensen [15, Proposition 2.4] showed that any hyperelliptic involution in $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ is conjugate to ι . Secondly, the action of s on $\pi_1(S_g^1) = F_{2g}$, with free basis as seen in Figure 1, is to invert each member of the free basis, as ι does. It is easily verified that ΠA_n is the centraliser of ι in $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ [15, Section 2], so we may think of ΠA_n as being a free group analogue of the hyperelliptic mapping class groups $\text{SMod}(S_g)$ and $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$.

The comparison between ΠA_n and $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$ is made more precise using the classical Nielsen embedding $\text{Mod}(S_g^1) \hookrightarrow \text{Aut}(F_{2g})$. Take the $2g$ oriented loops seen in Figure 1 as a free basis for $\pi_1(S_g^1)$. Observe that s acts on these loops by switching

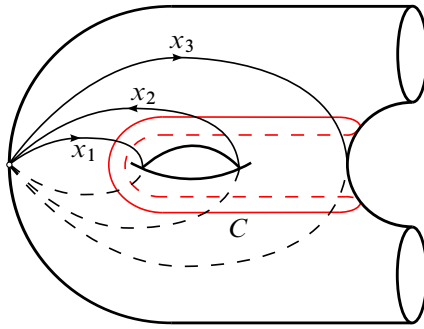


Figure 3: The Dehn twist about the symmetric, separating curve C maps to a separating π -twist in \mathcal{PT}_{2g} under the Nielsen embedding. Note that we only depict a genus-one subsurface of S_g^1 , and that x_2 has a different orientation than in Figure 1.

their orientations. In order to use Nielsen’s embedding into $\text{Aut}(F_{2g})$, we must take these loops to be based on the boundary; we surger using the arc \mathcal{A} to achieve this. The group $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$ is isomorphic to the braid group B_{2g+1} by the Birman–Hilden theorem [3], and is generated by Dehn twists about the curves in the standard, symmetric chain on S_g^1 , seen in Figure 2. The Dehn twists about the $2g - 1$ curves c_2, \dots, c_{2g} generate the braid group B_{2g} . Taking the loops seen in Figure 1 as our free basis X , a straightforward calculation shows that the images of these $2g - 1$ twists in $\text{Aut}(F_{2g})$ lie in ΠA_{2g} . Specifically, the twist about c_{i+1} is taken to the automorphism Q_i of the form

$$x_i \mapsto x_{i+1}, \quad x_{i+1} \mapsto x_{i+1}x_i^{-1}x_{i+1}, \quad x_j \mapsto x_j$$

for $1 \leq i < 2g$ and $j \neq i, i + 1$. This shows that ΠA_n contains the braid group B_n as a subgroup, when n is even. This embedding of B_n is a restriction of one studied by Perron and Vannier [24] and Crisp and Paris [9]. When n is odd, we also have $B_n \hookrightarrow \Pi A_n$, since discarding Q_1 gives a generating set for B_{2g-1} inside $\Pi A_{2g-1} \leq \text{Aut}(F_{2g})$.

Palindromic and hyperelliptic Torelli groups The main focus of our study in this paper is the palindromic Torelli group \mathcal{PT}_n . This group arises as a natural analogue of a subgroup of $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$. The *Torelli subgroup* of $\text{Mod}(S_g^1)$, denoted \mathcal{I}_g^1 , consists of mapping classes that act trivially on $H_1(S_g^1, \mathbb{Z})$. There is non-trivial intersection between \mathcal{I}_g^1 and $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$; we define $\mathcal{ST}_g^1 := \text{SMod}(S_g^1) \cap \mathcal{I}_g^1$ to be the *hyperelliptic Torelli group*. Brendle, Margalit and Putman [5] recently proved a conjecture of Hain [16], also stated by Morifuji [23], showing that \mathcal{ST}_g^1 is generated by Dehn twists about separating simple closed curves of genus one and two that are fixed by s .

Our generating set for \mathcal{PT}_n compares favourably with Brendle, Margalit and Putman's for \mathcal{ST}_g^1 , in the following way. We shall see in [Section 2](#) that any Dehn twist about a symmetric separating curve of genus one that lies in the pre-image of the Nielsen embedding discussed above, maps to a separating π -twist in \mathcal{PT}_{2g} . In fact, up to conjugation by ΠA_{2g} , this is the definition of a separating π -twist. The Dehn twist about the curve C shown in [Figure 3](#) is an example of such a mapping class. Note that the Dehn twist about C is one of the generators of Brendle, Margalit and Putman. We shall see in [Proposition 3.7](#) that doubled commutator transvections do not suffice to generate \mathcal{PT}_n , so we observe that our generating set involves Brendle, Margalit and Putman's generators in a significant way. Thus, the similarity between \mathcal{ST}_g^1 and \mathcal{PT}_n is not just a superficial comparison of definitions: the Nielsen embedding gives rise to a deeper connection between these two groups.

One way in which the analogy between \mathcal{PT}_n and \mathcal{ST}_g^1 breaks down, however, is their behaviour when ΠA_n and $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$ are abelianised, to $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^3$ and \mathbb{Z} , respectively. An immediate corollary of [Theorem A](#) is that \mathcal{PT}_n vanishes in the abelianisation of ΠA_n . In contrast, the image of \mathcal{ST}_g^1 in the abelianisation of $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$ is $4\mathbb{Z}$, which may be shown by calculating the images of Brendle, Margalit and Putman's generators in the abelianisation of $\text{SMod}(S_g^1)$.

Palindromes in right-angled Artin groups In forthcoming work with Anne Thomas [\[14\]](#), we extend Collins' definition of palindromic automorphisms to the right-angled Artin group setting. We obtain generating sets for the analogously defined palindromic automorphism group and palindromic Torelli group of an arbitrary right-angled Artin group.

Approach of the paper To prove [Theorem A](#), we employ a standard, geometric technique: we find a sufficiently connected complex on which \mathcal{PT}_n acts with sufficiently connected quotient, and use a theorem of Armstrong [\[1\]](#) to conclude that \mathcal{PT}_n is generated by the action's vertex stabilisers. This approach is modelled on a proof of Day and Putman [\[11\]](#), which recovers Magnus' finite generating set for the Torelli subgroup of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$.

Conventions We apply functions from right to left. For $g, h \in G$ a group, we let $[g, h] = ghg^{-1}h^{-1}$. In a graph, we denote an edge between vertices x and y by $x - y$. In a group G , we will also conflate a relation $P = Q$ with the relator PQ^{-1} when this is unambiguous.

Outline of the paper In [Section 2](#), the definitions of the palindromic automorphism group and palindromic Torelli group of a free group are given, along with some

elementary properties of these groups. In Section 3, we introduce the complex of partial π -bases of F_n , and use it to obtain a generating set for \mathcal{PT}_n . In Section 4, we prove key results about the connectivity of the complexes involved in the proof of Theorem A. In Section 5, we obtain a finite presentation for $\Gamma_3[2]$ used in the base case of our inductive proof of Theorem A.

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2 The palindromic automorphism group

Let F_n be the free group of rank n , on some fixed free basis $X := \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$. For a word $w = l_1 \cdots l_k$ on $X^{\pm 1}$, let w^{rev} denote the *reverse* of w ; that is, we have $w^{\text{rev}} = l_k \cdots l_1$. Such a word w is said to be a *palindrome* on X if $w^{\text{rev}} = w$. For example, x_1 , x_2^2 and $x_2x_1^{-1}x_2$ are all palindromes on X .

An automorphism $\alpha \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$ is said to be *palindromic* (with respect to the fixed free basis X) if for each $x_i \in X$ the word $\alpha(x_i)$ may be written as a palindrome on X . Such automorphisms form a subgroup of $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ which we call the *palindromic automorphism group of F_n* and denote by ΠA_n . That ΠA_n is a group is easily shown by verifying that ΠA_n is the centraliser in $\text{Aut}(F_n)$ of the automorphism ι which inverts each member of X . The following proposition gives us information about the form of the palindromes $\alpha(x_i)$.

Proposition 2.1 *Let $\alpha \in \Pi A_n$ and $x_i \in X$. Then $\alpha(x_i) = w^{\text{rev}}\sigma(x_i)^{\epsilon_i}w$, where w is a word on $X^{\pm 1}$, σ is a permutation of X and $\epsilon_i \in \{\pm 1\}$.*

Proof For a palindrome $p = w^{\text{rev}}x_i^{\epsilon_i}w \in F_n$ of odd length ($w \in F_n$, $x_i \in X$, $\epsilon_i \in \{\pm 1\}$), let $c(p) = x_i$. The following argument is implicit in the work of Collins [8].

Let $\alpha \in \Pi A_n$. Since $\alpha(X)$ is a free basis, its image under the natural surjection $F_n \rightarrow (\mathbb{Z}/2)^n$ must suffice to generate $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^n$. If some $\alpha(x_i)$ is of even length, it will have zero image, and so the image of $\alpha(X)$ could not generate $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^n$. If

$c(\alpha(x_i)) = c(\alpha(x_j))$ for some $i \neq j$, then $\alpha(x_i)$ and $\alpha(x_j)$ will have the same image in $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^n$, and so again $\alpha(X)$ could not generate $\alpha(\mathbb{Z}/2)^n$. \square

Finite generation of ΠA_n Collins first studied the group ΠA_n , giving a finite presentation for it. For $i \neq j$, let $P_{ij} \in \Pi A_n$ map x_i to $x_j x_i x_j$ and fix x_k with $k \neq i$. For each $1 \leq j \leq n$, let $\iota_j \in \Pi A_n$ map x_j to x_j^{-1} and fix x_k with $k \neq j$. We refer to P_{ij} as an *elementary palindromic automorphism* and to ι_j as an *inversion*. We let $\Omega^{\pm 1}(X)$ denote the group generated by the inversions and the permutations of X . The group generated by all elementary palindromic automorphisms and inversions is called the *pure palindromic automorphism group* of F_n , and is denoted $\text{P}\Pi A_n$.

Collins showed that $\Pi A_n \cong \text{E}\Pi A_n \rtimes \Omega^{\pm 1}(X)$ for $n \geq 2$, where $\text{E}\Pi A_n = \langle P_{ij} \rangle$. The group $\Omega^{\pm 1}(X)$ acts on $\text{E}\Pi A_n$ in the natural way, and a defining set of relations for $\text{E}\Pi A_n$ is given by

- (1) $[P_{ik}, P_{jk}] = 1$,
- (2) $[P_{ij}, P_{kl}] = 1$,
- (3) $P_{ij} P_{jk} P_{ik} = P_{ik}^{-1} P_{jk} P_{ij}$,

where i, j, k, l are pairwise different and the obviously undefined relators are omitted in the $n = 2$ and $n = 3$ cases.

We remark that, as noted by Collins [8], this presentation of $\text{E}\Pi A_n$ is very similar to one given for the *pure symmetric automorphism group of F_n* , $\text{P}\Sigma A_n$, which consists of automorphisms taking each $x \in X$ to a conjugate of itself. This similarity is not entirely surprising, as we may think of a palindrome yxy as a conjugate yxy^{-1} , working “mod 2” ($x, y \in X$). The embedding $B_n \hookrightarrow \Pi A_n$ discussed in Section 1 bears a striking resemblance to Artin’s faithful representation of B_n into ΣA_n , the full symmetric automorphism group, whose members take each $x \in X$ to *some* conjugate [2, Corollary 1.8.3]; this similarity arises via the branched double cover map $S_g^1 \rightarrow D_{2g+1}$ [12, Figure 9.13].

Using graph folding techniques of Stallings, we obtain a new proof of finite generation of ΠA_n , as well as finding generating sets for certain fixed-point subgroups of ΠA_n . We first introduce the notation and terminology of Wade [26] regarding graph folding.

Let R_n denote the wedge of n copies of S^1 at a point o . We canonically identify $\pi_1(R_n, o)$ with F_n by selecting an orientation of each S^1 , and labelling the i^{th} copy of S^1 by $x_i \in X$. We shall let \bar{x}_i denote the edge obtained by reversing the orientation of x_i .

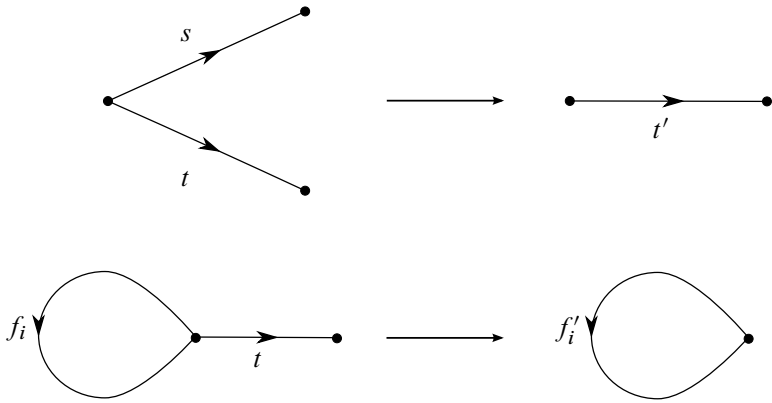


Figure 4: The two types of folding that may occur for our graph morphism ϕ . Wade [26] refers to the top fold as a type 1 fold, and to the bottom as a type 2 fold. The edges are labelled suggestively: we will demand that $s, t \in T$ and $f_i \notin T$.

Now, let Y be a finite graph of rank n with basepoint b . We will view our graphs as combinatorial objects, rather than topological ones. In particular, morphisms between graphs must take edges to edges, rather than edge-paths. A free basis for the (free) fundamental group $\pi_1(Y, b)$ is obtained in the usual way, by selecting a maximal tree T in Y , then choosing an orientation of the edges f_1, \dots, f_n in Y but not T . To be consistent with Wade, we canonically orient an edge e of T by declaring its initial vertex $i(e)$ to be the one closer to the basepoint b under the edge-path metric on T .

Suppose $\theta: Y \rightarrow R_n$ is a morphism of graphs that induces an isomorphism of fundamental groups. The morphism θ , together with the choice of basepoint b , maximal tree T and an ordering L of the (oriented) edges of $Y \setminus T$ form a *branding* of the graph Y . A graph Y together with a 4-tuple $\mathcal{G} = (b, T, L, \theta)$ form a *branded graph* with *branding* \mathcal{G} .

Each branded graph Y with branding $\mathcal{G} = (b, T, L, \theta)$ yields an automorphism $B_{\mathcal{G}} \in \text{Aut}(F_n)$, as follows. For each x_i in the free basis X of F_n , we have

$$B_{\mathcal{G}}(x_i) = \theta_*(y_i),$$

where $\{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$ is the free basis of $\pi_1(Y, b)$ arising from the choices of b , T and L in the branding \mathcal{G} , and $\theta_*: \pi_1(Y, b) \rightarrow \pi_1(R_n, o)$ is the map induced by θ .

If the morphism θ maps a pair of edges e_1 and e_2 with $i(e_1) = i(e_2)$ to the same edge l of R_n , then θ factors through the quotient graph Y' of Y obtained by *folding* e_1 and e_2 together: that is, the graph obtained by identifying e_1 with e_2 , and also

their terminal vertices, $t(e_1)$ and $t(e_2)$, with each other. In particular, if $q: Y \rightarrow Y'$ is the quotient map obtained by the folding, then there is a unique graph morphism $\theta': Y' \rightarrow R_n$ such that $\theta = \theta' \circ q$. While Stallings considered more general foldings, since we require θ to induce an isomorphism of fundamental groups, only two types of folding may arise for us, which are shown in [Figure 4](#).

If we insist that the edges s and t seen in [Figure 4](#) lie in T , and that the edge f_i does not, carrying out either type of fold induces a branding \mathcal{G}' of the folded graph Y' (it is non-trivial to verify that the image of T in Y' is a maximal tree; we leave this to Wade). It may also be the case that we wish to carry out a fold of type 1 or type 2, but that s or t does not lie in T . Before folding, we must change the maximal tree so that the relevant edges lie in the new tree. This defines a new branding \mathcal{G}'' of Y . In either case, it may be shown via a careful consideration of $\pi_1(Y, b)$ (see [\[26, Propositions 3.2 and 3.3\]](#)) that $B_{\mathcal{G}} = B_{\mathcal{G}'} \cdot W'$ and $B_{\mathcal{G}} = B_{\mathcal{G}''} \cdot W''$, where W' and W'' are specified Whitehead automorphisms of F_n . These are automorphisms which fix some $x \in X$ and send each $x_i \in X \setminus \{x\}$ to one of $x_i, x_i x^{\epsilon_i}, x^{\epsilon_i} x_i$ or $x^{\epsilon_i} x_i x^{-\epsilon_i}$ for some $\epsilon_i \in \{\pm 1\}$.

Stallings' folding algorithm allows us to repeatedly fold the graph Y and its quotients, beginning with the morphism $\theta: Y \rightarrow R_n$, then continuing to fold via $\theta': Y' \rightarrow R_n$, and so on. This procedure eventually terminates when we exhaust the edges we are able to fold; in this case, Stallings showed that the quotient graph is R_n , and so the morphism $\psi: R_n \rightarrow R_n$ obtained by repeatedly folding via θ simply permutes and perhaps inverts the n loops in R_n . This folding procedure allows us to write the automorphism $B_{\mathcal{G}}$ we began with as a product of Whitehead automorphisms and permutations and inversions of X .

With the details of folding established, we now put the algorithm to use to find generators for ΠA_n .

Proposition 2.2 *Fix $0 \leq k \leq n$, and let $\Pi A_n(k)$ consist of automorphisms which fix x_1, \dots, x_k . (Our convention is that $\Pi A_n(0) = \Pi A_n$). A finite generating set for $\Pi A_n(k)$ is*

$$[\Omega^{\pm 1}(X) \cap \Pi A_n(k)] \cup \{P_{ij} \mid i > k\}.$$

Proof The idea behind this proof was inspired by a proof of Wade [\[26, Theorem 4.1\]](#).

We begin by introducing some terminology. Let $\phi: S \rightarrow T$ be an isomorphism of finite trees. For a vertex or edge r of S , denote by r' the image of r under ϕ . Choose a distinguished vertex v of S , of valence 1. An *arch of S at v* (see [Figure 5](#)) is the graph formed by gluing S to T along v and v' , then, for each vertex $r \in S$, adding some number of edges (possibly zero) between r and r' (we allow $r = v$). We refer

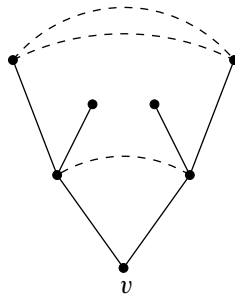


Figure 5: An example of an arch, with base point v . The dashed edges indicate the bridges that have been added to the trees that were glued together at the base point.

to these new edges as *bridges*. The image of v in the arch forms a natural base point, and any edge with v as one of its endpoints is called a *stem*. By a *wedge of arches* we mean a collection of arches glued together at their base points. Note that each of the trees S_i and T_i of each arch sit inside Y as subgraphs, and Y is the union of these subgraphs, together with any bridges inside each arch.

Let $\theta: Y \rightarrow R_n$ be a graph morphism, with Y a wedge of arches. We call θ *symmetric* if for each edge s_i in each tree S_i in each arch of Y we have $\theta(s'_i) = \theta(\bar{s}_i)$. We shall define two new types of folding that we may carry out to any symmetric morphism $\theta: Y \rightarrow R_n$, with the resulting morphism $\theta': Y' \rightarrow R_n$ on the folded graph Y' also being symmetric.

Let $\alpha \in \Pi A_n(k)$. We may realise α as a morphism of graphs $\theta: Z \rightarrow R_n$, where Z is the result of subdividing each S^1 of R_n into the appropriate number of edges, and “spelling out” the word $\alpha(x_i)$ on the i^{th} copy of S^1 . Precisely, the j^{th} edge of the oriented, subdivided S^1 corresponding to $\alpha(x_i)$ is mapped to the loop in R_n corresponding to the j^{th} letter of $\alpha(x_i)$, correctly oriented. Note that Z is a wedge of arches, and θ is symmetric by construction. We thus have $\alpha = B_{\mathcal{G}}$, where \mathcal{G} is the branding of Z arising from the maximal tree that excludes the (appropriately ordered) middle subdivided edge of each copy of S^1 . We now use graph folding to write α as a product of permutations, inversions and elementary palindromic automorphisms.

Let $\theta: Y \rightarrow R_n$ be symmetric, for some wedge of arches Y , built out of trees S_i, T_i ($1 \leq i \leq k$). Since θ is symmetric, foldings of Y come together in natural pairs. Consider folds of type 1. For instance, if we are able to fold together two edges $h_i \in S_i$ and $h_j \in S_j$ since $\theta(h_i) = \theta(h_j)$ (allowing $i = j$), then we will also be able to fold together h'_i and h'_j , as they will also both have the same image under θ , namely $\theta(\bar{h}_i) = \theta(\bar{h}_j)$. We call this pair of folds a *type A 2-fold*.

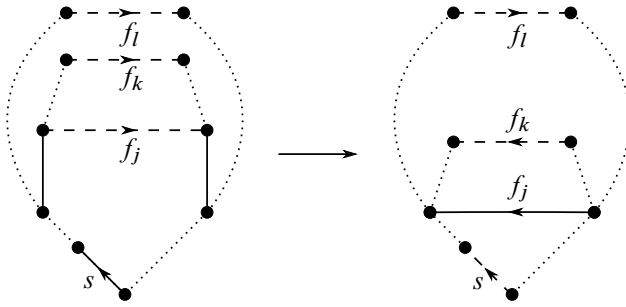


Figure 6: The two adjacent solid edges are folded onto f_j . The dashed edges represent edges excluded from the graph's chosen maximal tree. In order to record what effect this type B 2-fold has on the branded graph's associated automorphism, we must swap f_j into the maximal tree, in place of the stem s .

We may also have a sequence of edges (h_{j-1}, h_j, h_{j+1}) mapped under θ to the sequence (\bar{x}, x, \bar{x}) where x is an oriented edge of R_n , $h_{j-1} \in S_i$, $h_{j+1} = h'_{j-1}$ and h_j is a bridge. We fold h_{j-1} and h_{j+1} onto h_j , and call this pair of folds a *type B 2-fold*. Such a fold is seen in Figure 6.

Doing either of these 2-folds to Y yields another, different wedge of arches, Y' , say. A type B 2-fold simply removes an edge of valence one from S_i (and its corresponding edge in T_i) by folding it onto a bridge, producing new trees S'_i and T'_i which we use to construct Y' as a wedge of arches. A type A 2-fold similarly alters the trees S_i , S_j , T_i and T_j , producing new trees S'_i and T'_i in a description of Y' as a wedge of arches. The morphism $\theta': Y' \rightarrow R_n$ induced by the folding of Y is again symmetric: any edges s_i and s'_i that were not folded still satisfy $\theta'(s'_i) = \theta'(\bar{s}_i)$ by construction of θ' , but so do the images of any folded edges, given how we decompose Y' as a wedge of arches using the new trees S'_i and T'_i .

In order to see what effect these 2-folds have on $\alpha \in \Pi A_n$, we must keep track of a preferred maximal tree T we define on each wedge of arches Y . The edges of Y not in T are the bridges coming from each arch. In order to carry out a type B 2-fold we must swap the bridge f_j (seen in Figure 6) into the maximal tree. Let $p_{i(f_j)}$ denote the unique reduced path in T joining the base point to the initial vertex of f_j . Apart from one degenerate case, which we deal with separately, we may always swap f_j into the maximal tree T by excluding the stem appearing in $p_{i(f_j)}$. Using calculations of Wade [26, Propositions 3.2 and 3.3], it is straightforward to verify that the effect of swapping maximal trees in this way, doing a type B 2-fold, then swapping back to the maximal tree where all bridges are excluded is to carry out an elementary palindromic automorphism $P^{\epsilon_k}_{ij}$ to some members of X . Precisely, let $\theta: Y_1 \rightarrow R_n$ be a symmetric morphism of graphs, where Y_1 has branding \mathcal{G}_1 and let \mathcal{G}_2 be the induced branding of

the graph Y_2 obtained by carrying out the above series of tree swaps and folds. Then

$$\phi_{\mathcal{G}_1} = \phi_{\mathcal{G}_2} \cdot P,$$

where $\phi_{\mathcal{G}_i}$ is the automorphism of F_n associated to \mathcal{G}_i ($i = 1, 2$) and P is a product of elementary palindromic automorphisms.

The only degenerate case of the above is when one (and hence both) of the edges we want to fold onto a bridge is a stem. In this case, we do one of two things. If the bridge is a loop at the base point v , we carry out two type 2 folds. Otherwise, we change maximal trees as before then fold one of the stems onto the bridge with a type 1 fold. This causes the other stem to become a loop, around which we fold the bridge using a type 2 fold. As before, the automorphism of F_n associated to these sequences of steps is a product of elementary palindromic automorphisms.

Carrying out a sequence of 2–folds of types A and B eventually produces a map $R_n \rightarrow R_n$, and so we complete the folding algorithm by applying the appropriate automorphism from $\Omega^{\pm 1}(X)$. Since $\alpha \in \Pi A_n(k)$, the graph Z we constructed has a single loop at the base point for each x_i ($1 \leq i \leq k$), as $\alpha(x_i) = x_i$, so the first k ordered loops of R_n were not subdivided to form Z . Thus, while folding such a graph Y , we only need Collins’ generators that fix the first k members of the free basis X . The proposition is thus proved. \square

Corollary 2.3 *The group $\text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$ of pure palindromic automorphisms that fix x_1, \dots, x_k ($0 \leq k \leq n$) is generated by the set $\{P_{ij}, \iota_i \mid i > k\}$.*

The principal level 2 congruence subgroup of $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$ Recall that $\Gamma_n[2]$ denotes the *principal level 2 congruence subgroup* of $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$, that is, the kernel of the map $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z}) \rightarrow \text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z}/2)$ given by reducing matrix entries mod 2. Let S_{ij} be the matrix with 1s on the diagonal, 2 in the (i, j) position and 0s elsewhere, and let O_i be the matrix which differs from the identity matrix only in having a -1 in the (i, i) position. The following lemma verifies a well-known generating set for $\Gamma_n[2]$ (see, for example, McCarthy and Pinkall [21, Corollary 2.3]). We include a proof here to introduce the idea of an “even division algorithm”, which we utilise in the proof of [Theorem 5.1](#).

Lemma 2.4 *The set $\{O_i, S_{ij} \mid 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n\}$ generates $\Gamma_n[2]$.*

Proof Observe that we may think of the matrices S_{ij} as corresponding to carrying out “even” row operations, that is, adding an even multiple of one matrix row to another. Let u be the first column of some matrix in $\Gamma_n[2]$, and denote by $u^{(i)}$ the i^{th} row of u . Let v_1 be the standard column vector with a 1 in the first entry and 0s elsewhere.

Claim The column u can be reduced to $\pm v_1$ using even row operations.

We use induction on $|u^{(1)}|$. For $|u^{(1)}| = 1$, the claim is obvious. Now suppose $|u^{(1)}| > 1$. As in the proof of Proposition 2.1, we deduce that there must be some $u^{(j)}$ which is not a multiple of $u^{(1)}$. By the division algorithm, there exist $q, r \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $u^{(j)} = q|u^{(1)}| + r$, with $0 \leq r < |u^{(1)}|$. If q is not even, we instead write $u^{(j)} = (q + 1)|u^{(1)}| + (r - |u^{(1)}|)$. Note that if q is odd, then $r \neq 0$, since $u^{(1)}$ is odd and $u^{(j)}$ is even, and so $-|u^{(1)}| < r - |u^{(1)}|$. Depending on the parity of q , we do the appropriate number of even row operations to replace $u^{(j)}$ with r or $r - |u^{(1)}|$. In both cases, we have replaced $u^{(j)}$ with an integer of absolute value smaller than $|u^{(1)}|$. It is clear that now we may reduce the absolute value of $u^{(1)}$ by either adding or subtracting twice the (new) j^{th} row from the first row, and so by induction we have proved the claim.

We now induct on n to prove the lemma. It is clear that $\Gamma_1[2] = \langle O_1 \rangle$. Using the above claim, we may assume that we have reduced $M \in \Gamma_n[2]$ to the form

$$\left[\begin{array}{c|c} \pm 1 & * \\ \hline 0 & N \end{array} \right],$$

where $N \in \Gamma_{n-1}[2]$. Our aim is to further reduce M to the identity matrix using the set of matrices in the statement of the lemma. By induction, we may assume that N can be reduced to the identity matrix using the appropriate members of $\{S_{ij}, O_i \mid i, j > 1\}$. Then we simply use even row operations to fix the top row, and finish by applying O_1 if necessary. □

By Lemma 2.4, the restriction of the canonical map $\text{Aut}(F_n) \rightarrow \text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$ gives the short exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{PT}_n \longrightarrow \text{PIA}_n \longrightarrow \Gamma_n[2] \longrightarrow 1,$$

since P_{ij} maps to S_{ji} and t_i maps to O_i .

The rest of the paper is concerned with finding a generating set for the palindromic Torelli group \mathcal{PT}_n . In order to describe our generating set, we introduce some terminology.

Let Y be the image of the free basis X under some automorphism $\alpha \in \text{PIA}_n$. The set Y is also a free basis for F_n , whose members are palindromes on X ; thus, we refer to Y as a π -basis. An automorphism $\phi \in \mathcal{PT}_n$ is a *doubled commutator transvection* if, for some y_1, y_2, y_3 in some π -basis Y , ϕ maps y_1 to $[y_2, y_3]^{\text{rev}} y_1 [y_2, y_3]$, and fixes the other members of Y . Observe that $\phi \in \mathcal{PT}_n$ is a doubled commutator transvection if and only if ϕ is conjugate in PIA_n to the commutator $\chi_1 := [P_{12}, P_{13}]$.

An automorphism $\phi \in \mathcal{PT}_n$ is a *separating π -twist* if, for some y_1, y_2, y_3 in some π -basis Y , ϕ is given by

$$\phi(y_i) = \begin{cases} d^{\text{rev}} y_1 d & \text{if } i = 1, \\ d^{-1} y_2 (d^{\text{rev}})^{-1} & \text{if } i = 2, \\ d^{\text{rev}} y_3 d & \text{if } i = 3, \\ y_i & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$$

where $d = y_1^{-1} y_2^{-1} y_3^{-1} y_1 y_2 y_3 \in F_n$. It is a straightforward, if lengthy, calculation to verify that $\phi \in \mathcal{PT}_n$ is a separating π -twist if and only if ϕ is conjugate in ΠA_n to the automorphism

$$\chi_2 := (P_{23} P_{13}^{-1} P_{31} P_{32} P_{12} P_{21}^{-1})^2 \in \mathcal{PT}_n.$$

The definition of a separating π -twist may seem unwieldy; however, it belies a hidden geometry. The automorphism χ_2 is the image in \mathcal{PT}_n under the Nielsen embedding of the Dehn twist about the curve C seen in [Figure 3](#). We call such automorphisms separating π -twists to reflect this geometric interpretation.

[Theorem A](#) states that doubled commutator transvections and separating π -twists suffice to generate \mathcal{PT}_n . To prove this, we construct a new complex on which \mathcal{PT}_n acts in a suitable way. We then apply a theorem of Armstrong [\[1\]](#) to conclude that \mathcal{PT}_n is generated by the action's vertex stabilisers. In the following section, we define the complex and use it to prove [Theorem A](#).

3 The complex of partial π -bases

Day and Putman [\[11\]](#) use the *complex of partial bases* of F_n , denoted \mathcal{B}_n , to derive a generating set for IA_n . We build a complex modelled after \mathcal{B}_n , and follow their approach to find a generating set for \mathcal{PT}_n .

Fix $X := \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ as a free basis of F_n . A π -basis, as discussed above, is a set of palindromes on X which also forms a free basis of F_n . A *partial π -basis* is a set of palindromes on X which may be extended to a π -basis. The *complex of partial π -bases* of F_n , denoted \mathfrak{B}_n^π , is defined to be the simplicial complex whose $(k - 1)$ -simplices correspond to partial π -bases $\{w_1, \dots, w_k\}$. We postpone until [Section 4](#) the proof of the following theorem on the connectedness of \mathfrak{B}_n^π .

Theorem 3.1 *For $n \geq 3$, the complex \mathfrak{B}_n^π is simply connected.*

Our complex \mathfrak{B}_n^π is not a subcomplex of \mathcal{B}_n , as the vertices of \mathcal{B}_n are taken to be conjugacy classes, rather than genuine members of F_n . We remove this technicality, as

it can be shown that two odd-length palindromes are conjugate if and only if they are equal. Given this, it is clear, however, that \mathfrak{B}_n^π is isomorphic to a subcomplex of \mathcal{B}_n .

There is an obvious simplicial action of ΠA_n on \mathfrak{B}_n^π . This action is, by definition, transitive on the set of k -simplices, for each $0 \leq k < n$. Further, $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ acts without rotations, that is, if $\phi \in \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ stabilises a simplex s of \mathfrak{B}_n^π , then it fixes s pointwise. Following work of Charney [7] on related complexes, we obtain that the quotient of \mathfrak{B}_n^π by $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ is highly connected.

Theorem 3.2 *For $n \geq 3$, the quotient $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ is $(n - 3)$ -connected.*

The proof of this theorem is discussed in Section 4.

Theorems 3.1 and 3.2 allow us to apply the following theorem of Armstrong [1] to the action of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ on \mathfrak{B}_n^π , for $n \geq 4$. The statement of the theorem is as given by Day and Putman [11].

Theorem 3.3 *Let G act simplicially on a simply connected simplicial complex X , without rotations. Then G is generated by the vertex stabilisers of the action if and only if X/G is simply connected.*

We analyse the vertex stabilisers of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ using an inductive argument. It is known that $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_1 = 1$ and $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_2 = 1$; the latter equality follows from the fact that $\text{IA}_2 = \text{Inn}(F_2)$ and $\text{Inn}(F_n) \cap \Pi A_n = 1$ for $n \geq 1$. We treat the $n = 3$ case differently, as the quotient $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_3$ is not simply connected, and so does not allow us to apply Armstrong’s theorem directly. This treatment is postponed until Section 5.

A Birman exact sequence We require a version of the free group analogue of the Birman exact sequence, as developed by Day and Putman [10]. Recall that $\text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$ consists of the pure palindromic automorphisms fixing x_1, \dots, x_k .

Proposition 3.4 *For $0 \leq k \leq n$, there exists the split short exact sequence*

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{J}_n(k) \longrightarrow \text{P}\Pi A_n(k) \longrightarrow \text{P}\Pi A_{n-k} \longrightarrow 1,$$

where $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ is the normal closure in $\text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$ of the set $\{P_{ij} \mid i > k, j \leq k\}$.

Proof A map $\theta_*: \text{P}\Pi A_n(k) \rightarrow \text{P}\Pi A_{n-k}$ is induced by the map $\theta: F_n \rightarrow F_{n-k}$ that trivialises each x_1, \dots, x_k . Let $\{y_{k+1}, \dots, y_n\}$ be a free basis for F_{n-k} , where $\theta(x_i) = y_i$ for $k + 1 \leq i \leq n$. Denote by Q_{ij} and η_i the elementary palindromic automorphism sending y_i to $y_j y_i y_j$ and the inversion sending y_i to y_i^{-1} , respectively ($k + 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n$).

By Corollary 2.3, we know that $\text{PIA}_n(k)$ is generated by the set

$$S := \{P_{ij}, \iota_i \mid i > k, 1 \leq j \leq n\}.$$

If $j \leq k$, then $\theta_*(P_{ij})$ is trivial. If $i, j \geq k + 1$, then $\theta_*(P_{ij}) = Q_{ij}$ and $\theta_*(\iota_i) = \eta_i$, so we have that θ_* is surjective, by examining Collins’ generators for PIA_{n-k} . Indeed, the map θ_* has a section, taking Q_{ij} to P_{ij} and η_i to ι_i , which we know is well-defined by Collins’ finite presentation for PIA_{n-k} . Thus, we obtain a split short exact sequence via the epimorphism θ_* .

All that is left to establish is the kernel of θ_* . Notice that we have a presentation for PIA_{n-k} in terms of the generating set $\theta_*(S)$: explicitly, we add the relations $\theta_*(P_{ij}) = 1$ for $j \leq k$ to Collins’ relations on the set $\{Q_{ij}, \eta_i\}$. It is a standard fact (see, for example, Magnus, Karrass and Solitar [20, proof of Theorem 2.1]) that the kernel of θ_* is the normal closure in $\text{PIA}_n(k)$ of the obvious lifts of the defining relators on $\theta_*(S)$. The only defining relators with non-trivial lifts in $\text{PIA}_n(k)$ are the relators $\theta_*(P_{ij})$ with $j \leq k$, thus the kernel is $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ as in the statement of the proposition. \square

Our “Birman kernel” $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ is rather worse behaved than the analogous Birman kernel of Day and Putman. Their kernel, denoted $\mathcal{K}_{n,k,l}$, is finitely generated, whereas it may be shown by adapting the proof of their Theorem E that $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ is not. This difference is due in part to the fact that their version of $\text{PIA}_n(k)$ need only fix each of x_1, \dots, x_k up to conjugacy. The lack of finite generation of $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ is, however, not an obstacle to the goal of the current paper; we only require that $\mathcal{J}_n(k)$ is normally generated by a finite set.

Our Birman exact sequence projects into $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$ in an obvious way, made precise in the following lemma. Let v_i denote the image of $x_i \in F_n$ under the abelianisation map. We denote by $\Gamma_n[2](k)$ the members of $\Gamma_n[2]$ which fix $v_1, \dots, v_k \in \mathbb{Z}^n$, and by $\mathcal{H}_n(k)$ the group $\text{Hom}(\mathbb{Z}^{n-k}, (2\mathbb{Z})^k)$.

Lemma 3.5 Fix $0 \leq k \leq n$. Then there exists the commutative diagram

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 1 & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{J}_n(k) & \longrightarrow & \text{PIA}_n(k) & \longrightarrow & \text{PIA}_{n-k} & \longrightarrow & 1 \\
 & & \downarrow & & \downarrow & & \swarrow s & & \downarrow \\
 1 & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{H}_n(k) & \longrightarrow & \Gamma_n[2](k) & \longrightarrow & \Gamma_{n-k}[2] & \longrightarrow & 1 \\
 & & & & & & \swarrow t & &
 \end{array}$$

of split short exact sequences, where s and t are the obvious splitting homomorphisms.

Proof The top row is given by Proposition 3.4. A generating set for $\Gamma_n[2](k)$ follows from the proof of Lemma 2.4; it is precisely the image in $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$ of $\{P_{ij}, u_i \mid i > k\}$, the generating set of $\text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$ given by Corollary 2.3. The bottom row then follows by an argument similar to the proof of Proposition 3.4, noting that the kernel is generated by the images of P_{ij} ($i > k, j \leq k$). It is straightforward to verify that this kernel is $\text{Hom}(\mathbb{Z}^{n-k}, (2\mathbb{Z})^k)$. Intuitively, $\alpha \in \text{Hom}(\mathbb{Z}^{n-k}, (2\mathbb{Z})^k)$ encodes how many (even) multiples of v_j ($1 \leq i \leq k$) are added to each v_i ($k < j \leq n$).

The only vertical map left to consider is the right-most one. Its existence and surjectivity follow from Lemma 2.4. It is clear that all the arrows commute, and that the splitting homomorphisms s and t are compatible with the commutative diagram, so the proof is complete. \square

A generating set for $\mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ By mapping $\text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$ into $\Gamma_n[2](k)$ then conjugating the normal subgroup $\mathcal{H}_n(k)$, we obtain a homomorphism $\alpha_k: \text{P}\Pi A_n(k) \rightarrow \text{Aut}(\mathcal{H}_n(k))$. Setting $k = 1$, we obtain the following lemma.

Lemma 3.6 *The group $\mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ is normally generated in $\mathcal{J}_n(1)$ by the set*

$$\{[P_{ij}, P_{i1}], [P_{ij}, P_{j1}]P_{i1}^2 \mid 1 < i \neq j \leq n\}.$$

Proof By Lemma 3.5, there is a short exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n \longrightarrow \mathcal{J}_n(1) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}_n(1) \longrightarrow 1.$$

The set $Y := \{\phi P_{j1} \phi^{-1} \mid \phi \in \text{P}\Pi A_n(1), 1 < j \leq n\}$ generates $\mathcal{J}_n(1)$ by Proposition 3.4. Let a_j denote the image of P_{j1} in $\text{GL}(n, \mathbb{Z})$. A direct calculation verifies that the set $\{a_j\}$ is a free abelian basis for $\mathcal{H}_n(1)$.

For $\phi \in \text{P}\Pi A_n(1)$, let $\bar{\phi}$ denote the image of ϕ in $\Gamma_n[2](1)$, and let \bar{Y} denote the image of Y . The set of relations

$$\{[a_i, a_j] = 1, \bar{\phi} a_i \bar{\phi}^{-1} = \alpha_1(\phi)(a_i) \mid 1 < i \neq j \leq n, \phi \in \text{P}\Pi A_n(1)\},$$

together with the generating set \bar{Y} , forms a presentation for $\mathcal{H}_n(k)$. It is clear that the image of any member of Y in $\mathcal{H}_n(1)$ is a word on the free abelian basis $\{a_i\}$, and that this word is determined by the homomorphism α_1 .

The group $\mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ is normally generated in $\mathcal{J}_n(1)$ by the obvious lifts of the (infinitely many) relators in the given presentation for $\mathcal{H}_n(1)$. The relators of the form $[a_i, a_j]$ have trivial lift, and so are not required in the generating set. Let C be the finite generating set for $\text{P}\Pi A_n(1)$ given by Corollary 2.3. It can be shown that the obvious lift of the finite set of relators

$$D := \{\bar{c} a_j \bar{c}^{-1} \alpha_1(c)(a_j)^{-1} \mid c \in C^{\pm 1}, 1 < j \leq n\}$$

suffices to normally generate $\mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{PT}_n$. This may be seen using a simple induction argument on the length of a given expression of $\phi \in \text{P}\Pi A_n(1)$ on $C^{\pm 1}$.

All that remains is to verify that the obvious lift of D is the set given in the statement of the lemma; this is a straightforward calculation. □

We now prove [Theorem A](#) using the action of \mathcal{PT}_n on \mathfrak{B}_n^π .

Proof of Theorem A Recall that the set of doubled commutator transvections in \mathcal{PT}_n is precisely the conjugacy class of $[P_{12}, P_{13}]$ in ΠA_n , and that the set of separating π -twists in \mathcal{PT}_n is precisely the conjugacy class of

$$(P_{23}P_{13}^{-1}P_{31}P_{32}P_{12}P_{21}^{-1})^2$$

in ΠA_n .

The group \mathcal{PT}_n acts on \mathfrak{B}_n^π simplicially and without rotations. Combining [Theorems 3.1, 3.2](#) and [3.3](#), we conclude that, for $n \geq 4$, \mathcal{PT}_n is generated by the vertex stabilisers of the action on \mathfrak{B}_n^π .

Let $\mathcal{PT}_n(1)$ denote the stabiliser of the vertex x_1 . Since ΠA_n acts transitively on the vertices of \mathfrak{B}_n^π , the stabiliser in \mathcal{PT}_n of any vertex is conjugate in ΠA_n to $\mathcal{PT}_n(1)$. [Lemma 3.5](#) gives us the split short exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{PT}_n \longrightarrow \mathcal{PT}_n(1) \longrightarrow \mathcal{PT}_{n-1} \longrightarrow 1.$$

We induct on n . By the above split short exact sequence, to generate $\mathcal{PT}_n(1)$ it suffices to combine a generating set of $\mathcal{J}_n(1) \cap \mathcal{PT}_n(1)$ with a lift of one of \mathcal{PT}_{n-1} .

We begin with the base case, $n = 3$. In [Section 5](#), we verify that the presentation of $\Gamma_3[2]$ given in [Corollary 1.1](#) is correct when $n = 3$. Given the short exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{PT}_3 \longrightarrow \text{P}\Pi A_3 \longrightarrow \Gamma_3[2] \longrightarrow 1,$$

we may take the obvious lifts of the relators in this presentation as a normal generating set for \mathcal{PT}_3 in $\text{P}\Pi A_3$. Relators 1–7 are trivial when lifted. Relator 8 lifts to $[P_{ij}, P_{ik}]$ and relator 9 lifts to $[P_{jk}, P_{ij}]P_{ik}^{-2}$, which equals $P_{ik}[P_{ij}, P_{ik}]P_{ik}^{-1}$. Thus the lifts of relators 8 and 9 are conjugate to $[P_{12}, P_{13}]$ in ΠA_3 . Finally, relator 10 lifts to

$$(P_{23}P_{13}^{-1}P_{31}P_{32}P_{12}P_{21}^{-1})^2,$$

so the base case $n = 3$ is true, as each relator lifts to either a doubled commutator transvection, a separating π -twist or the identity automorphism.

Now suppose $n > 3$. By induction, the group \mathcal{PT}_{n-1} is generated by the purported generating set. We lift this generating set to $\mathcal{PT}_n(1)$ in the obvious way.

By Lemma 3.6, we need only add in $\mathcal{J}_n(1)$ -conjugates of the words $[P_{ij}, P_{i1}]$ and $[P_{ij}, P_{j1}]P_{i1}^2$, for $1 < i \neq j \leq n$. The former are clearly conjugate in ΠA_n to the doubled commutator transvection $[P_{12}, P_{13}]$. For the latter, observe that

$$[P_{ij}, P_{j1}]P_{i1}^2 = [P_{ij}, P_{i1}^{-1}],$$

which again is conjugate in ΠA_n to $[P_{12}, P_{13}]$, so we are done. □

Theorem A allows us to conclude that \mathcal{PT}_n is normally generated in ΠA_n by the automorphisms $\chi_1 = [P_{12}, P_{13}]$ and

$$\chi_2 = (P_{23}P_{13}^{-1}P_{31}P_{32}P_{12}P_{21}^{-1})^2.$$

Let $\Omega_n \leq \Pi A_n$ denote the symmetric group on X . The presentation for $\Gamma_n[2] \cong \text{P}\Pi A_n/\mathcal{PT}_n$ given in Corollary 1.1 follows from Theorem A by adding the Ω_n -orbits of χ_1 and χ_2 to Collins' presentation for $\text{P}\Pi A_n$ as relators, then applying the obvious Tietze transformations.

We now demonstrate that the presence of separating π -twists in our generating set for \mathcal{PT}_n is necessary.

Proposition 3.7 *For $n \geq 3$, the group generated by doubled commutator transvections is a proper subgroup of \mathcal{PT}_n .*

Proof Let \mathcal{D} denote the subgroup of \mathcal{PT}_n generated by doubled commutator transvections. In other words, \mathcal{D} is the normal closure of $\chi_1 = [P_{12}, P_{13}]$ in ΠA_n . Then the Ω_n -orbit of χ_1 is a normal generating set for \mathcal{D} in $\text{P}\Pi A_n$. Adding the members of this orbit to the presentation of $\text{P}\Pi A_n$ as relators yields a finite presentation \mathcal{Q} of $\text{P}\Pi A_n/\mathcal{D}$, which may be altered using Tietze transformations so that it looks like the presentation in Corollary 1.1, with relator 10 (and relator 7, if $n = 3$) removed (where we interpret S_{ij} and O_i as formal symbols, rather than matrices). We shall show that the relations of \mathcal{Q} are not a complete set of relations on the generating set $\{S_{ij}, O_i\}$ for $\Gamma_n[2] \cong \text{P}\Pi A_n/\mathcal{PT}_n$, and so conclude that $\mathcal{D} \neq \mathcal{PT}_n$.

It is easily shown that for

$$\xi := (S_{32}S_{31}^{-1}S_{13}S_{23}S_{21}S_{12}^{-1})^2,$$

the image of χ_2 in $\Gamma_n[2]$, is trivial, but we shall show that ξ is non-trivial in the group presented by \mathcal{Q} . Observe that by trivialising all the generators of $\Gamma_n[2]$ except for S_{12} and S_{21} , we surject $\Gamma_n[2]$ onto the free Coxeter group generated by the images of S_{12} and S_{21} , say A and B , respectively. This is easily verified by examining the relators of \mathcal{Q} . The image of ξ under this map is $ABAB \neq 1$, and so ξ is non-trivial in the group presented by \mathcal{Q} . Therefore \mathcal{D} is a proper subgroup of \mathcal{PT}_n . □

Note that in the proof of [Proposition 3.7](#) we also showed that relators 1–9 of [Corollary 1.1](#) are not a sufficient set of relators that hold between the O_i and S_{jk} , as relator 10 is not a consequence of the others. This allows us to conclude that the quotient space $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ is not simply connected.

Corollary 3.8 *The complex $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ is not simply connected.*

Proof By [Theorem 3.3](#), the complex $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ is simply connected if and only if $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ is generated by the vertex stabilisers of the action of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ on \mathfrak{B}_3^π . As in the proof of [Theorem A](#), the group generated by the vertex stabilisers of this action may be normally generated in ΠA_3 by the group $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3(1)$. The same calculations as in the proof of [Theorem A](#) show that $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3(1)$ is the normal closure of the doubled commutator transvection $[P_{12}, P_{13}]$. However, [Proposition 3.7](#) showed that this normal closure is a proper subgroup of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$, so the quotient $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_3$ is not simply connected. \square

4 The connectivity of \mathfrak{B}_n^π and its quotient

In this section, we determine the levels of connectivity of \mathfrak{B}_n^π and $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi/\mathcal{P}\mathcal{L}_n$. The former is found to be simply connected, following the same approach as Day and Putman [\[11\]](#), while the latter is shown to be closely related to a complex already studied by Charney [\[7\]](#), which is $(n - 3)$ -connected.

The connectivity of \mathfrak{B}_n^π First, we recall the definition of the Cayley graph of a group. Let G be a group with finite generating set S . The *Cayley graph of G with respect to S* , denoted $\text{Cay}(G, S)$, is the graph with vertex set G and edge set $\{(g, gs) \mid g \in G, s \in S^{\pm 1}\}$, where an ordered pair (x, y) indicates that vertices x and y are joined by an edge. If $s \in S$ has order 2, we identify each pair of edges (g, gs) and (g, gs^{-1}) for each $g \in G$, to ensure that the Cayley graph is simplicial. Similarly, we also insist that the identity element of G is excluded from S .

We establish [Theorem 3.1](#) by constructing a map Ψ from the Cayley graph of ΠA_n to \mathfrak{B}_n^π and demonstrating that the induced map of fundamental groups is both surjective and trivial. We require the Cayley graph of ΠA_n with respect to a particular generating set, which we now describe. Assume that $n \geq 3$. For $1 \leq i \neq j < n$, let t_{ij} permute x_i and x_j , fixing x_k with $k \neq i, j$. Using the symmetric group action on X , we deduce from [Proposition 2.2](#) that we may generate ΠA_n using the set

$$Z := \{t_{ij}, \iota_2, \iota_3, P_{21}, P_{23}, P_{31}, P_{34} \mid 1 \leq i \neq j \leq n\}.$$

We may use the symmetric group action on X to streamline the presentation of ΠA_n given in [Section 2](#), to obtain the following list of defining relators for ΠA_n on the generating set Z :

- (1) $t_{ij} = t_{ji}$,
- (2) $t_{ij}^2 = 1$,
- (3) $ut_{ij}u^{-1} = t_{u(i)u(j)}$,
- (4) $\iota_2^2 = 1$,
- (5) $(\iota_2\iota_3)^2 = 1$,
- (6) $[\iota_2, P_{31}] = 1$,
- (7) $(\iota_2 P_{21})^2 = 1$,
- (8) $(\iota_3 P_{23})^2 = 1$,
- (9) $P_{23}P_{31}P_{21} = P_{21}^{-1}P_{31}P_{23}$,
- (10) $[P_{21}, P_{31}] = 1$,
- (11) $[P_{21}, P_{34}] = 1$,
- (12) $\iota_3 = t_{23}\iota_2 t_{23}$,
- (13) $P_{31} = t_{23}P_{21}t_{23}$,
- (14) $P_{23} = t_{13}P_{21}t_{13}$,
- (15) $P_{34} = t_{14}t_{23}P_{21}t_{23}t_{14}$,
- (16) $P_{21} = wP_{21}w^{-1}$ for $w \in \mathcal{W}$,
- (17) $\iota_2 = v\iota_2v^{-1}$ for $v \in \mathcal{V}$,

where $1 \leq i \neq j \leq n$, $u \in \{t_{ij}\}$, and \mathcal{W} and \mathcal{V} are the sets of words on $\{t_{ij}\}$ that fix both x_1 and x_2 , and only x_2 , respectively. The relations of type 16 and 17 arise due to the streamlining of the presentation of $\Pi A_n = E\Pi A_n \rtimes \Omega^{\pm 1}(X)$ given in Section 2. Note that relations 1–3 are a complete set of relations for the symmetric group, when generated by the transpositions $\{t_{ij}\}$ [25].

We now consider the Cayley graph $\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z)$. Observe that for each $z \in Z$ either $z(x_1) = x_1$ or $\{x_1, z(x_1)\}$ forms a partial π -basis for F_n . This allows us to construct a map of complexes from the star of the vertex 1 in $\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z)$ to \mathfrak{B}_n^π , by mapping an edge $z \in Z^{\pm 1}$ to the edge $v_1 - z(v_1)$ (which may be degenerate). Using the actions of ΠA_n on $\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z)$ and \mathfrak{B}_n^π , we can extend this map to a map of complexes $\Psi: \text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z) \rightarrow \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi$. Explicitly, Ψ takes a vertex $z_1 \cdots z_r$ of $\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z)$ ($z_i \in Z^{\pm 1}$) to the vertex $z_1 \cdots z_r(x_1)$.

Proof of Theorem 3.1 This proof is modelled on Day and Putman’s proof of [11, Theorem A]. Let

$$\Psi_*: \pi_1(\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z), 1) \rightarrow \pi_1(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi, x_1)$$

be the map of fundamental groups induced by Ψ . Explicitly, the image of a loop $z_1 \cdots z_k$ ($z_i \in Z^{\pm 1}$) in $\pi_1(\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z), 1)$ under Ψ_* is

$$x_1 - z_1(x_1) - z_1z_2(x_1) - \cdots z_1z_2 \cdots - z_k(x_1) = x_1.$$

We first show that Ψ_* is the trivial map, then show that it is also surjective.

Recall that the Cayley graph C of a group G with presentation $\langle X \mid R \rangle$ forms the 1-skeleton of its *Cayley complex*, which we obtain by attaching disks along the loops in C corresponding to all conjugates in G of the words in R . It is well-known that the Cayley complex of a group G is simply connected [19, Proposition 4.2]. We now

verify that the loops in $\pi_1(\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z), 1)$ corresponding to the relators in the above streamlined presentation for ΠA_n have trivial image under Ψ_* . This allows us to extend Ψ to a map from the (simply connected) Cayley complex of ΠA_n (rel Z), and so conclude that Ψ_* is trivial.

Note that in the following we confuse a relator with the loop in $\pi_1(\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z), 1)$ to which it corresponds. Many of the relators 1–17 map to x_1 in \mathfrak{B}_n^π , as they are words on members of Z that fix x_1 . The only ones we need to check are 1–3 and 14–17. Relators 1–3 map into the contractible simplex spanned by x_1, \dots, x_n , so are trivial. Relators 14 and 15 are mapped into the simplices $x_1 - x_3$ and $x_1 - x_4$, respectively. We rewrite relators 16 and 17 as $P_{21}w = wP_{21}$ and $t_2v = vt_2$. It is clear, then, that relators of type 16 map into the contractible subcomplex of \mathfrak{B}_n^π spanned by x_1, \dots, x_n and $x_1x_2x_1$, and relators of type 17 map into the contractible subcomplex spanned by $x_1, x_2^{\pm 1}, \dots, x_n$. All relators have now been dealt with, so we conclude that Ψ_* is the trivial map.

We argue as in Day and Putman’s proof [11] for the surjectivity of Ψ_* . We represent a loop $\omega \in \pi_1(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi, x_1)$ as

$$x_1 = w_0 - w_1 - \dots - w_k = x_1,$$

for some $k \geq 0$. We will demonstrate that for any such path (not necessarily with $w_k = x_1$), there exist $\phi_1, \dots, \phi_k \in \Pi A_n(1)$ such that

$$w_i = \phi_1 t_{12} \phi_2 t_{12} \dots \phi_i t_{12}(x_1)$$

for $0 \leq i \leq k$. We use induction. In the case $k = 0$, there is nothing to prove. Now suppose $k > 0$. Consider the subpath

$$w_0 - w_1 - \dots - w_{k-1}.$$

By induction, to prove the claim all we need find is $\phi_k \in \Pi A_n(1)$ such that

$$w_k = \phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_k t_{12}(x_1).$$

We know that $w_{k-1} = \phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_{k-1} t_{12}(x_1)$ and w_k form a partial π -basis, therefore so do x_1 and $(\phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_{k-1} t_{12})^{-1}(w_k)$. By construction, the action of ΠA_n is transitive on the set of two-element partial π -bases, so there exists $\phi_k \in \Pi A_n(1)$ mapping x_2 to $(\phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_{k-1} t_{12})^{-1}(w_k)$. Therefore

$$w_k = \phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_k t_{12}(x_1),$$

as required.

Now we define

$$\phi_{k+1} = (\phi_1 t_{12} \dots \phi_k t_{12})^{-1},$$

so that

$$R := \phi_1 t_{12} \cdots \phi_k t_{12} \phi_{k+1} = 1$$

is a relation in ΠA_n . Observe that since $w_k = x_1$, we have $\phi_{k+1} \in \Pi A_n(1)$. Also, the generating set Z contains a subset that generates $\Pi A_n(1)$, by Proposition 2.2. We are thus able to write

$$\phi_i = z_1^i \cdots z_{p_i}^i,$$

for some $z_j^i \in Z^{\pm 1}$ ($1 \leq i \leq k + 1$, $1 \leq j \leq p_i$), each of which fixes x_1 . We see that $R \in \pi_1(\text{Cay}(\Pi A_n, Z), 1)$ maps to $\omega \in \pi_1(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi, x_1)$. Removing repeated vertices, R maps to

$$x_1 - \phi_1 t_{12}(x_1) - \cdots - \phi_1 t_{12} \cdots \phi_k t_{12}(x_1) = x_1,$$

which equals ω by construction. Hence Ψ_* is surjective as well as trivial, and hence $\pi_1(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi, x_1) = 1$. □

The connectivity of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{PT}_n$ A complex analogous to \mathfrak{B}_n^π may be defined when working over \mathbb{Z}^n rather than F_n . We write $\mathcal{B}_n(\mathbb{Z})$ for the *complex of partial bases of \mathbb{Z}^n* , whose $(k - 1)$ -simplices correspond to subsets $\{u_1, \dots, u_k\}$ of free abelian bases of \mathbb{Z}^n . Writing members of \mathbb{Z}^n multiplicatively, there is an analogous notion of an odd palindrome on some fixed free abelian basis V , and so also of a partial π -basis. The *complex of partial π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n* is defined in the obvious way, and denoted $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$. Just as ΠA_n acts transitively on the set of π -bases of F_n , so does $\Gamma_n[2]$ act transitively on the set of π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n , as we now verify.

Lemma 4.1 *The group $\Gamma_n[2]$ acts transitively on the set of π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n .*

Proof By definition, any π -basis is of the form $\{M v_1, \dots, M v_n\}$, for $M \in \Gamma_n[2]$ and $\{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$ the standard basis of \mathbb{Z}^n , where v_i has 1 in the i^{th} position and 0s elsewhere. Thus, we have a well-defined action of $\Gamma_n[2]$ on the set of π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n by left-multiplication of basis elements, which is transitive, as every π -basis lies in the same orbit as $\{v_1, \dots, v_n\}$. □

We first show that $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{PT}_n \cong \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$, then show that $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is $(n - 3)$ -connected using a related complex studied by Charney. To prove the former, the following lemma is required.

Lemma 4.2 *Fix $\{u_1, \dots, u_n\}$ as a π -basis for \mathbb{Z}^n , and let $\rho: F_n \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}^n$ be the abelianisation map. Let $\tilde{U} = \{\tilde{u}_1, \dots, \tilde{u}_k\}$ be a partial π -basis of F_n such that $\rho(\tilde{u}_i) = u_i$ for each $1 \leq i \leq k$. Then we can extend \tilde{U} to a π -basis of F_n , $\{\tilde{u}_1, \dots, \tilde{u}_n\}$, such that $\rho(\tilde{u}_i) = u_i$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$.*

Proof Extend $\{\tilde{u}_1, \dots, \tilde{u}_k\}$ to a full π -basis of F_n , $\{\tilde{u}_1, \dots, \tilde{u}_k, \tilde{u}'_{k+1}, \dots, \tilde{u}'_n\}$, and define $u'_j = \rho(\tilde{u}'_j)$ for $k + 1 \leq j \leq n$. Then $\{u_1, \dots, u_k, u'_{k+1}, \dots, u'_n\}$ is a π -basis for \mathbb{Z}^n . By Lemma 4.1, the group $\Gamma_n[2]$ acts transitively on the set of π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n , so there exists $\phi \in \Gamma_n[2](k)$ such that $\phi(u'_j) = u_j$ for $k + 1 \leq j \leq n$. By Lemma 3.5, ϕ lifts to some $\tilde{\phi} \in \text{P}\Pi A_n(k)$, and the π -basis $\{\tilde{u}_1, \dots, \tilde{u}_k, \tilde{\phi}(\tilde{u}'_{k+1}), \dots, \tilde{\phi}(\tilde{u}'_n)\}$ projects onto $\{u_1, \dots, u_n\}$ as desired. \square

Now we establish an isomorphism of simplicial complexes $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n \cong \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$.

Theorem 4.3 *The spaces $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ and $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ are isomorphic as simplicial complexes.*

Proof Let $\rho: F_n \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}^n$ be the abelianisation map, and define a map of simplicial complexes $\Phi: \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi \rightarrow \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ on simplices by $\{w_1, \dots, w_k\} \mapsto \{\rho(w_1), \dots, \rho(w_k)\}$ for $1 \leq k \leq n$. The map Φ is surjective: by Lemma 4.2, each π -basis of \mathbb{Z}^n is the image of some π -basis of F_n , and π -bases of \mathbb{Z}^n correspond to maximal simplices of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$.

It is clear that the map Φ is invariant under the action of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ on \mathfrak{B}_n^π , and so Φ factors through $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$. To establish the theorem, all we need do is show that the induced map from $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n \rightarrow \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is injective. In other words, we must show that if two simplices s, s' of \mathfrak{B}_n^π have the same image under Φ , then s and s' differ by the action of some member of $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$.

Suppose that $s = \{w_1, \dots, w_k\}$ and $s' = \{w'_1, \dots, w'_k\}$ have the same image under Φ . We may assume that $\rho(w_i) = \rho(w'_i)$ for $1 \leq i \leq k$. Let $\Phi(s) = \{\bar{w}_1, \dots, \bar{w}_k\}$, and extend this partial π -basis of \mathbb{Z}^n to a full π -basis $W = \{\bar{w}_1, \dots, \bar{w}_n\}$. By Lemma 4.2, we may extend $\{w_1, \dots, w_k\}$ to $\{w_1, \dots, w_n\}$ and $\{w'_1, \dots, w'_k\}$ to $\{w'_1, \dots, w'_n\}$ such that both of these full π -bases map onto W . Define $\theta \in \Pi A_n$ by $\theta(w_i) = w'_i$ for $1 \leq i \leq n$. By construction, $\theta(s) = s'$ and $\theta \in \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$, so the theorem is proved. \square

This more explicit description of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi / \mathcal{P}\mathcal{I}_n$ as $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ enables us to investigate the quotient's connectivity.

Proof of Theorem 3.2 By a *unimodular sequence* in \mathbb{Z}^n , we mean an (ordered) sequence $(u_1, \dots, u_k) \subset (\mathbb{Z}^n)^k$ whose entries form a basis of a direct summand of \mathbb{Z}^n . Observe that this is just an ordered version of the notion of a partial basis of \mathbb{Z}^n . The set of all such sequences of length at least one form a poset under subsequence inclusion. Charney considers (among others) the subposet of sequences (u_1, \dots, u_k) such that each u_i is congruent to a standard basis vector v_j under mod 2 reduction of the entries

of u_i . We denote by \mathcal{X}_n the poset complex given by the subposet of such sequences. Theorem 2.5 of Charney [7] says that \mathcal{X}_n is $(n - 3)$ -connected.

Let $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*$ denote the barycentric subdivision of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$. Label each vertex of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*$ by the partial π -basis associated to the simplex of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ to which the vertex corresponds. Define a simplicial map $h: \mathcal{X}_n \rightarrow \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*$ by $(u_1, \dots, u_k) \mapsto \{u_1, \dots, u_k\}$. We may think of h as “forgetting the order” of each unimodular sequence. Comparing the definitions of \mathcal{X}_n and $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$, it is not immediately clear that h is well-defined, as there might be some vertex (u_1, \dots, u_k) of \mathcal{X}_n such that $\{u_1, \dots, u_k\}$ extends to a full basis of \mathbb{Z}^n , but not a full π -basis. However, viewing the full basis of \mathbb{Z}^n as a matrix in $\Gamma_n[2]$, a straightforward column operations argument shows that this cannot be the case, so h is well-defined.

We see that h induces a map $\pi_i(\mathcal{X}_n) \rightarrow \pi_i(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*)$ for $i \geq 0$, and show that the induced map is surjective. Set a consistent lexicographical order on the vertices of $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*$, and view $\omega \in \pi_i(\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})^*)$ as a simplicial i -sphere. The chosen lexicographical ordering allows us to lift ω to $\pi_i(\mathcal{X}_n)$, so the induced maps are surjective. The statement of the theorem follows immediately, since $\pi_i(\mathcal{X}_n) = 1$ for $0 \leq i \leq n - 3$. \square

5 A presentation for $\Gamma_3[2]$

In order to apply Armstrong’s theorem [1], it must be the case that $\mathfrak{B}_n^\pi/\mathcal{PT}_n \cong \mathfrak{B}_n^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is simply connected. However, as we have seen from Corollary 3.8, the space $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ has non-trivial fundamental group. The case $n = 3$ forms the base case of our inductive proof of Theorem A, so we require an alternative approach to find a generating set for \mathcal{PT}_3 . Our approach is to find a specific finite presentation of $\Gamma_3[2]$, and use the short exact sequence

$$1 \longrightarrow \mathcal{PT}_3 \longrightarrow \text{P}\Pi A_3 \longrightarrow \Gamma_3[2] \longrightarrow 1$$

to lift the relators in the presentation of $\Gamma_3[2]$ to a normal generating set for \mathcal{PT}_3 .

The augmented partial π -basis complex for \mathbb{Z}^3 By adding simplices to the complex $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$, we obtain a simply connected complex that $\Gamma_3[2]$ acts on. This action allows us to present $\Gamma_3[2]$.

Recall that $\mathcal{B}_n(\mathbb{Z})$ is the partial basis complex of \mathbb{Z}^n . We represent its vertices by column vectors $u = (u^{(1)}, \dots, u^{(n)})^T$. For use in the proof of Theorem 5.1, we follow Day and Putman [11] and define the rank of u to be $|u^{(n)}|$, and denote it by $R(u)$. Let \mathcal{Y} denote the full subcomplex of $\mathcal{B}_3(\mathbb{Z})$ spanned by $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ and vertices u for which $u^{(1)}$ and $u^{(2)}$ are odd and $u^{(3)}$ is even. We call \mathcal{Y} the augmented partial π -basis complex for \mathbb{Z}^3 . We now demonstrate that \mathcal{Y} is simply connected.

Theorem 5.1 *The complex \mathcal{Y} is simply connected.*

Proof By Theorem 2.5 of Charney [7], we know that $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is 0-connected, and hence so is \mathcal{Y} . To show that \mathcal{Y} is simply connected, we adapt the proof of Theorem B of Day and Putman [11].

Let u be a vertex of a simplicial complex C . The *link of u in C* , denoted $\text{lk}_C(u)$, is the full subcomplex of C spanned by vertices joined by an edge to u . Let $v_3 \in \mathbb{Z}^3$ be the standard basis vector with third entry 1 and 0s elsewhere. Observe that for any vertex $u \in \mathcal{Y}$ we have $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(u) \cong \text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$. This is because the group generated by $\Gamma_3[2]$ and the matrix

$$E = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

acts simplicially on \mathcal{Y} and transitively on the 0-skeleton of \mathcal{Y} . This action is transitive on vertices because $\Gamma_3[2]$ acts transitively on the vertices of $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$, and any vertex of $\mathcal{Y} \setminus \mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ may be taken to a vertex of $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ by acting on it with E .

We begin by establishing that $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$ is connected (and hence, by the above, so is the link of any vertex of \mathcal{Y}). By considering what the columns of $M \in \text{GL}(3, \mathbb{Z})$ whose final column is v_3 must look like, we see that a necessary and sufficient condition for $(u^{(1)}, u^{(2)}, u^{(3)})^T$ to be a member of $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$ is that $(u^{(1)}, u^{(2)})^T$ is a vertex of $\mathcal{B}_2(\mathbb{Z})$. The link $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$ may thus be described as follows: it has one vertex for each pair (a, b) , where a is a vertex of $\mathcal{B}_2(\mathbb{Z})$ and $b \in 2\mathbb{Z}$, with vertices (a, b) and (c, d) joined by an edge if and only if a and c are joined by an edge in $\mathcal{B}_2(\mathbb{Z})$. Hence $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$ is connected, though note that its fundamental group is an infinite-rank free group.

Now, let $\omega \in \pi_1(\mathcal{Y}, v_3)$. We represent ω by the sequence of vertices

$$w_0 - w_1 - \cdots - w_r,$$

where w_i ($1 \leq i \leq r$) are vertices of \mathcal{Y} , and $w_0 = w_r = v_3$. Our goal is to systematically homotope this loop so that the rank of each vertex in the sequence is 0. Such a loop may be contracted to the vertex v_3 , and so is trivial in $\pi_1(\mathcal{Y})$.

Consider a vertex w_i for some $1 < i < r$, with $R(w_i) \neq 0$. Since $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(w_i)$ is connected, there is some path

$$w_{i-1} - q_1 - q_2 - \cdots - q_s - w_{i+1}$$

in $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(w_i)$, as seen in Figure 7. Fix attention on some q_j ($1 \leq j \leq s$). By the division algorithm, there exist $a_j, b_j \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that $R(q_j) = a_j \cdot R(w_i) + b_j$, with $0 \leq b_j < R(w_i)$. As in the proof of Lemma 2.4, we wish to ensure that a_j is even, if possible. In all but

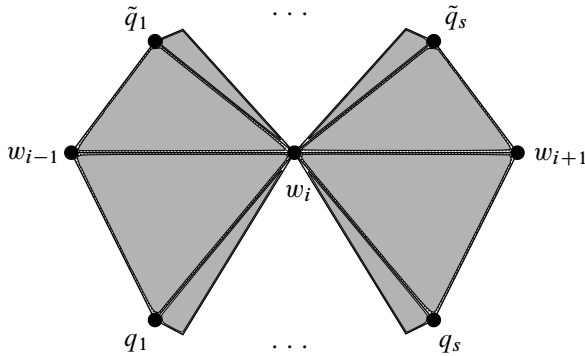


Figure 7: We find two homotopic paths that bound a disk inside $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(w_i)$, where the “upper” path seen here is constructed so that $R(\tilde{q}_j) < R(q_j)$ for $1 \leq j \leq s$.

one case, we will be able to rewrite the division algorithm as $R(q_j) = A_j \cdot R(w_i) + B_j$, for some $A_j, B_j \in \mathbb{Z}$ such that A_j is even and $0 \leq |B_j| < R(w_i)$. We do a case-by-case parity analysis. Note that since q_j and w_i are joined by an edge, $R(q_j)$ and $R(w_i)$ cannot both be odd, otherwise q_j and w_i would both map to the same member of $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^3$ when we reduce their entries mod 2. This would prohibit $\{q_j, w_i\}$ from extending to a basis J of \mathbb{Z}^3 , otherwise the image of J in $(\mathbb{Z}/2)^3$ would generate despite only having two members. If $R(q_j)$ and $R(w_i)$ have different parities and a_j is odd, we may take $A_j = a_j + 1$ and $B_j = b_j - R(w_i)$. In that case, $|B_j| < R(w_i)$, since b_j must be odd and hence non-zero. If both $R(q_j)$ and $R(w_i)$ are even, we may still do this, unless $b_j = 0$.

We now associate to each q_j a new vertex, \tilde{q}_j , defined by

$$\tilde{q}_j = \begin{cases} q_j - a_j \cdot w_i & \text{if } a_j \text{ even,} \\ q_j - A_j \cdot w_i & \text{if } a_j \text{ odd, } b_j \neq 0, \\ q_j - a_j \cdot w_i & \text{if } a_j \text{ odd, } b_j = 0. \end{cases}$$

Note that $R(\tilde{q}_j) = 0$ when $b_j = 0$, and under the conditions given, \tilde{q}_j is always well-defined as a vertex of \mathcal{Y} . The path

$$w_{i-1} - q_1 - \cdots - q_s - w_{i+1}$$

is homotopic inside $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(w_i)$ to the path

$$w_{i-1} - \tilde{q}_1 - \cdots - \tilde{q}_s - w_{i+1},$$

as seen in Figure 7. By construction, $R(\tilde{q}_j) < R(w_i)$. Iterating this procedure continually homotopes ω until it is inside the contractible (full) subcomplex spanned by v_3 and $\text{lk}_{\mathcal{Y}}(v_3)$, and hence is trivial. Therefore $\pi_1(\mathcal{Y}) = 1$. □

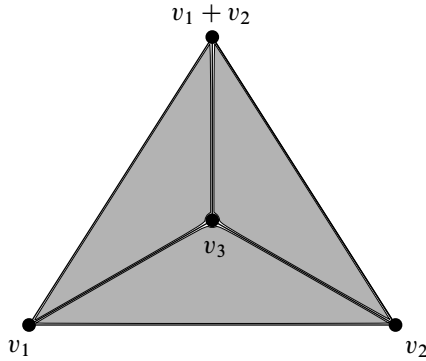


Figure 8: The quotient complex of \mathcal{Y} under the action of $\Gamma_3[2]$. We have labelled its vertices using representatives from the vertex set of \mathcal{Y} .

The complex $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is not simply connected It may be tempting to try to use the method in the above proof to show that $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ is simply connected; however, we know by Corollary 3.8 that $\mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$ has non-trivial fundamental group. The obstruction to the above proof going through occurs when defining \tilde{q}_j in the case that a_j is odd and $b_j = 0$, as $\tilde{q}_j \notin \mathfrak{B}_3^\pi(\mathbb{Z})$. When a_j is odd and $b_j = 0$, there is no even multiple of w_i that can be added to q_j to decrease its rank, so this method of homotoping loops to a point will not work.

Presenting $\Gamma_3[2]$ Let $\Gamma_3[2](w_1, \dots, w_k)$ denote the stabiliser of the ordered tuple (w_1, \dots, w_k) of vertices of \mathcal{Y} . Having demonstrated that \mathcal{Y} is simply connected, we now turn our attention to the obvious action of $\Gamma_3[2]$ on \mathcal{Y} . This action is simplicial, does not invert edges, and the quotient complex under the action is contractible, as seen in Figure 8. The quotient lifts to a subcomplex W of \mathcal{Y} via the vertex labels seen in Figure 8. This subcomplex is what Brown [6] refers to as a *fundamental domain* for the action, and so a theorem of Brown [6, Theorem 3] allows us to conclude that $\Gamma_3[2]$ is the free product of the stabilisers of the vertices of W modulo *edge relations*, which identify the copies of the edge stabiliser $\Gamma_3[2](a, b)$ inside the vertex stabilisers $\Gamma_3[2](a)$ and $\Gamma_3[2](b)$, where $a, b \in \{v_1, v_2, v_3, v_1 + v_2\}$ are distinct.

We obtain a finite presentation for $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ using the semi-direct production decomposition of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ given by Lemma 3.5 (noting that $\Gamma_2[2] \cong \text{PIA}_2$). The group $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ is generated by the set $\{O_2, O_3, S_{23}, S_{32}, S_{12}, S_{13}\}$, with a complete list of relators given by all relators of the form 1–9 (excluding 7, as it is not defined when $n = 3$) seen in Corollary 1.1. By permuting the indices accordingly, we also obtain finite presentations for the stabiliser groups $\Gamma_3[2](v_2)$ and $\Gamma_3[2](v_3)$. Identifying the edge stabiliser subgroups of these three groups appropriately, we obtain the presentation seen in Corollary 1.1 without relators 7 and 10; we denote this presentation by \mathcal{P} .

We now see that the effect of identifying the edge stabiliser subgroups of $\Gamma_n[2](v_1 + v_2)$ with the corresponding copies inside the other three vertex stabiliser groups is to include one additional relator: relator 10. Since $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$ and $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ are conjugate inside $GL(3, \mathbb{Z})$, we take a formal presentation for $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$ by adding a ‘‘hat’’ to each of the symbols in the presentation of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$.

The members of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$ are not, however, strings of formal symbols, but are members of $\Gamma_3[2]$. To express them as such, we observe that

$$\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2) = E_{21} \cdot \Gamma_3[2](v_1) \cdot E_{21}^{-1},$$

where E_{21} is the elementary matrix with 1 in the (2, 1) position. In Table 1 we see the conjugates of the generators of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ by E_{21} . These give expressions for the formal symbols generating $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$. For example,

$$\widehat{S}_{12} = E_{21} S_{12} E_{21}^{-1} = O_1 O_2 S_{21} S_{12}^{-1}.$$

Generator M of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$	The conjugate $\widehat{M} = E_{21} \cdot M \cdot E_{21}^{-1}$
O_2	$S_{21} O_2$
O_3	O_3
S_{12}	$O_1 O_2 S_{21} S_{12}^{-1}$
S_{13}	$S_{13} S_{23}$
S_{23}	S_{23}
S_{32}	$S_{32} S_{31}^{-1}$

Table 1: The conjugates of the generating set of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$ by E_{21}

Let f_i be the edge joining $v_1 + v_2$ to v_i ($1 \leq i \leq 3$), and let J_i be the stabiliser of f_i . We consider these each in turn. Observe that

$$J_2 = E_{21} \cdot \Gamma_3[2](v_1, v_2) \cdot E_{21}^{-1},$$

so J_2 is generated by $\{O_3, S_{13} S_{23}, S_{23}\}$. We have expressed those three generators in terms of the generators of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1)$. To obtain the relations corresponding to this edge stabiliser, we must express them using the generators of $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$, and set them to be equal accordingly. Consulting Table 1, we get the edge relations

$$\widehat{O}_3 = O_3, \quad \widehat{S}_{13} = S_{13} S_{23} \quad \text{and} \quad \widehat{S}_{23} = S_{23}.$$

Note that these relations simply reiterate the expressions we had already determined for \widehat{O}_3 , \widehat{S}_{13} and \widehat{S}_{23} . Similarly, as we obtain J_3 by conjugating $\Gamma_3[2](v_1, v_3)$ by E_{21} , the edge relations arising from the edge f_3 are

$$\widehat{O}_2 = S_{21} O_2, \quad \widehat{S}_{12} = O_1 O_2 S_{21} S_{12}^{-1} \quad \text{and} \quad \widehat{S}_{32} = S_{32} S_{31}^{-1}.$$

Finally, to obtain J_1 , we conjugate $\Gamma_3[2](v_1, v_2)$ by the elementary matrix E_{12} . We obtain that J_1 is generated by $\{O_3, S_{13}, S_{13}S_{23}\}$, which gives edge relations $\hat{O}_3 = O_3$, $S_{13} = \hat{S}_{13}\hat{S}_{23}^{-1}$ and $\hat{S}_{13} = S_{13}S_{23}$. Note that these relations all arise as consequences of the edge relations coming from the edges f_2 and f_3 , so are not required.

We now use these edge relations to replace the formal relators defining $\Gamma_3[2](v_1 + v_2)$ with words on the generating set $\{S_{ij}, O_k\}$. Using Tietze transformations and Brown's Theorem 3 [6], we may then conclude that a complete presentation for $\Gamma_3[2]$ is obtained by adding these relators to the presentation \mathcal{P} . For example, the relator \hat{O}_2^2 becomes $(S_{21}O_2)^2$. All but one of these additional relators are consequences of ones already in \mathcal{P} . The one relator that is not is $[\hat{S}_{13}, \hat{S}_{32}]\hat{S}_{12}^{-2}$, which becomes

$$[S_{13}S_{23}, S_{32}S_{31}^{-1}](O_1O_2S_{21}S_{12}^{-1})^{-2}.$$

Using the other relations in $\Gamma_3[2]$, this word may be rewritten in the form of relator 10 in Corollary 1.1; we have thus verified that the presentation given in Corollary 1.1 is correct when $n = 3$. This proves Proposition 1.2.

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