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A rank 3 geometry for the O'Nan group connected with the Livingstone graph

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Abstract

We construct a rank 3 geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ over the diagram $\frac{c}{1-10} \frac{8 \cdot 5 \cdot 8}{10-10}$ whose automorphism group is the O'Nan sporadic simple group. The maximal parabolic subgroups are the Janko group J_1 , $2 \times S_5$ and the Mathieu group M_{11} . Our construction is based on a convenient amalgam of known geometries of rank 2 for J_1 and M_{11} extracted from the subgroup lattice of O'N.

Keywords: Diagram geometry, coset geometry, sporadic simple groups, O'Nan group,

Livingstone graph

MSC 2000: 51E24, 20D08

1. Introduction

We provide a construction of a rank 3 coset geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ for O'Nan's sporadic simple group O'N over the type set $I=\{0,1,2\}$. The geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ belongs to the diagram

The construction is based on a convenient amalgam of known rank 2 coset geometries for the sporadic groups J_1 and M_{11} , and on a theorem due to Aschbacher [1]. We prove that $\Gamma(O'N)$ is flag-transitive, residually connected, residually weakly primitive, locally 2-transitive and that it satisfies the intersection property in rank 2. Finally we prove that the automorphism group of











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the geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ is O'N, using a study of the truncation of $\Gamma(O'N)$ on its elements of type in $\{0,1\}$.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we give the basic definitions needed to understand this paper. Then we state a theorem due to Aschbacher used later to prove that the geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ is flag-transitive. In section 3, we introduce a characterization of the Janko group J_1 due to Perkel [13] using the Livingstone graph. Then we construct the geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ in section 4. In the next three sections, we study properties of $\Gamma(O'N)$ and finally, in section 8, we prove that its automorphism group $\operatorname{Aut}(\Gamma(O'N))$ is O'N.

2. A theorem of Aschbacher

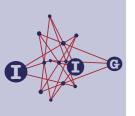
Following [4, Chapter 3, §3], a geometry is a 4-tuple (X,*,t,I) with X a set of elements, * a binary, reflexive and symmetric relation on X called incidence, I a set of types, and $t:X\to I$ a surjective map, called the type function, which assigns a type to each element of X. Moreover the incidence relation satisfies the following condition: given $x,y\in X$ such that x*y and t(x)=t(y), it follows that x=y. Finally, every maximal set of pairwise incident elements contains one element of each type.

In [15, 16], Tits introduces and develops the concept of a coset geometry. Given a group G and a family $\mathcal{F}=\{G_i\mid i\in I\}$ of subgroups of G, where I is a finite set, define $\Gamma(G,\mathcal{F})$ to be the pregeometry over I as follows. For $i\in I$ the set of elements of type i is the set of right cosets of G_i in G. Two elements G_ig and G_jh are incident, and we write G_ig*G_jh for that, if and only if $G_ig\cap G_jh\neq\emptyset$. Clearly, G acts as a group of automorphisms of $\Gamma(G,\mathcal{F})$ under right multiplication.

Following Tits, Aschbacher [1] studied the interaction between incidence geometries and groups. He studies a useful criterion so as to determine whether a coset geometry with a string diagram is flag-transitive. In order to state and to apply easily this criterion, we introduce some notation used in [1]. Let G and $\mathcal{F} = \{G_i \mid i \in I\}$ be as above. For $J \subseteq I$, let $G_J = \cap_{j \in J} G_j$. We set $S_J = \{G_j \mid j \in J\}$, $\mathcal{F}_J = \{G_{J \cup \{i\}} \mid i \in I - J\}$ and $\Gamma(J) = \Gamma(G_J, \mathcal{F}_J)$. Obviously, S_J is a flag of type J in $\Gamma(G, \mathcal{F})$. A diagram on I in the sense of [1] is a tuple $\mathcal{D} = \{\mathcal{D}_J \mid J \subseteq I, |J| = 2\}$ such that \mathcal{D}_J is a nonempty family of geometries on J. The graph of \mathcal{D} is the undirected graph with vertex set I and I adjacent to I if I is a forder 2 and some member of I is not a generalized digon. The diagram I is a string if we can order I is the diagram on I with I is a string if we can order I is a string if we can order I is a string of the graph are I is a string if we can order I is a string if we can order I is a string of the graph are I is a string if we can order I is a string if we can order I is a string of the graph are I is a string if we can order I is a string if I









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Now comes the result of Aschbacher.

Lemma 2.1 ([1, Main theorem]). Let G be a group and let $\mathcal{F} = \{G_i \mid i \in I\}$ be a family of subgroups of G. Assume

- (a) for each subset J of I of corank at least 2, $G_J = \langle G_{J \cup \{i\}} \mid i \in I J \rangle$, and
- (b) the connected components of the graph of $\mathcal{D}(G,\mathcal{F})$ are strings.

Then

- (1) G is flag-transitive on $\Gamma(G, \mathcal{F})$.
- (2) $\Gamma(G, \mathcal{F})$ is residually connected.
- (3) For each $J \subseteq I$, the map

$$(G_{J\cup\{i\}})z\mapsto G_iz,\quad i\in I-J, z\in G_J$$

is an isomorphism of $\Gamma(J)$ and the residue of S_J .

3. The Livingstone graph

The Livingstone graph was first described in [11] as an 11-regular graph of 266 vertices on which J_1 acts flag-transitively. This graph motivated further work consisting of constructions and characterizations as in [3, 13, 17]. We provide the characterization of the Livingstone graph given in [13].

3.1. Perkel's characterization

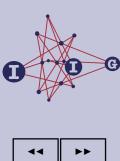
Let \mathcal{L} be a connected, finite, regular undirected graph of girth 5 on a set Ω of vertices, with automorphism group $G \cong \operatorname{Aut}(\mathcal{L})$, satisfying the following four properties:

- 1. the valency of \mathcal{L} is 11;
- 2. for any $x \in \Omega$, the point stabilizer in G is isomorphic to the simple group $L_2(11)$;
- 3. for some path (x, y, z) of length 2, $x, y, z \in \Omega$ $(x \neq z)$, G_{xyz} fixes a pentagon (a circuit of length 5) containing (x, y, z);
- 4. the vertices and edges fixed by an involution of G_{xyz} constitute a connected subgraph of \mathcal{L} .

Then \mathcal{L} is a distance regular graph of 266 vertices with $G \cong J_1$.









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3.2. The Livingstone graph as a coset geometry

In [3, Chapter 11, §7], Brouwer, et al. provide a construction of the Livingstone graph as a coset geometry for J_1 as follows. Let $F \cong J_1$. This group possesses exactly one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to $L_2(11)$, and one conjugacy class of involutions. The centralizer of an involution is isomorphic to $2 \times A_5$. Now choose a subgroup L < F isomorphic to $L_2(11)$ and an involution $i \in F$ such that $L_2(11) \cap C_F(i) = A_5$ (there are 11 such involutions) and set $C := C_F(i)$. Define the coset geometry $\Gamma(J_1) = \Gamma(F, \{L, C\})$ with Borel subgroup isomorphic to A_5 . Then the underlying incidence geometry \mathcal{L} is precisely the Livingstone graph. It is a regular distance transitive graph of degree 11 with $V(\mathcal{L}) = 266$ and $E(\mathcal{L}) = 1463$. The distance distribution diagram of the graph \mathcal{L} is provided in Figure 1.

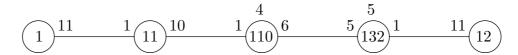


Figure 1: The distance distribution diagram of \mathcal{L}

The coset geometry $\Gamma(J_1)$ is flag-transitive, firm, residually connected, residually weakly primitive, locally 2-transitive and satisfies the intersection property. We provide the Buekenhout diagram of the dual geometry of $\Gamma(J_1)$ in Figure 2 (see Gottschalk and Leemans [6] or Leemans [10, Geometry 2.7]).

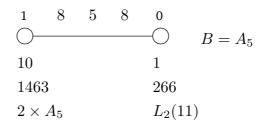


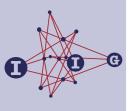
Figure 2: The dual diagram of $\Gamma(J_1)$.

4. Construction of a rank 3 coset geometry for O'N

The maximal subgroups of O'N are known (see [14, 18, 19]). This group has, among others, one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to J_1 and two conjugacy classes of subgroups isomorphic to M_{11} that are fused under the action of $\operatorname{Aut} O'N = O'N$: 2. The residually weakly primitive and locally 2-transitive









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coset geometries for M_{11} are known (see Leemans [10] and Dehon *et al.* [5]). Exactly one of those geometries has a Borel subgroup isomorphic to A_5 . We call it $\Gamma(M_{11})$. Its underlying incidence structure is a complete graph on 12 vertices and it belongs to the Buekenhout diagram of Figure 3.

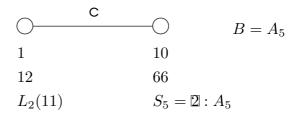


Figure 3: The diagram of $\Gamma(M_{11})$.

Since $\Gamma(M_{11})$ has a maximal parabolic subgroup isomorphic to $L_2(11)$, we see that $\Gamma(J_1)$ and $\Gamma(M_{11})$ might be residues of a residually weakly primitive and locally 2-transitive rank 3 geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ for O'N.

Theorem 4.1. The O'Nan group contains a boolean lattice Ψ of subgroups as in Figure 4, in which all inclusions are maximal except the inclusion of $2 \times S_5$ in O'N. There are exactly two such lattices in O'N up to conjugacy. These two classes of boolean lattices are fused in $\operatorname{Aut}(O'N)$.

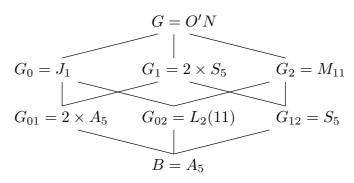
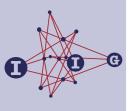


Figure 4: The Boolean lattice Ψ of $\Gamma(O'N)$.

Proof. Let Λ denote the subgroup lattice of O'N available in [9]. There exists a unique class of conjugate subgroups isomorphic to J_1 in O'N=G. This is class number 6 in Λ . Let $J_1\cong G_0< G$. There is exactly one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to $L_2(11)$ in O'N. This is class number 119 in Λ . Moreover, J_1 possesses exactly one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to $L_2(11)$ and exactly one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to $2\times A_5$ (class number 277 in Λ). Let $G_{02}< G_0$ and $G_{01}< G_0$ be isomorphic respectively









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to $L_2(11)$ and $2 \times A_5$. J_1 has two conjugacy classes of subgroups isomorphic to A_5 . Only one of them has subgroups that are contained simultaneously in a subgroup isomorphic to $L_2(11)$ and in a subgroup isomorphic to $2 \times A_5$. It corresponds to class number 370 in Λ . Let $A_5 \cong B = G_{01} \cap G_{02}$.

There are two conjugacy classes of subgroups isomorphic to M_{11} in O'N: they are classes number 23 and 24 in Λ . These classes are fused in $\operatorname{Aut}(O'N)=O'N:2$. In M_{11} , there is exactly one conjugacy class of subgroups isomorphic to $L_2(11)$. Choose $M_{11}\cong G_2< G$ in any of the two conjugacy classes (without loss of generality, say class 23), such that $G_{02}< G_2$. Now let $S_5\cong G_{12}< G_2$ be such that $B< G_{12}$. Hence, G_{12} is a subgroup of class 278 in Λ . Indeed, there are two classes of subgroups isomorphic to $2\times S_5$ in O'N, but only class number 278 is in class 23 of subgroups isomorphic to M_{11} .

The subgroups G_{01} and G_{12} share a unique common minimal overgroup G_1 . This subgroup is isomorphic to $2 \times S_5$ and belongs to class number 212 in Λ . Moreover, G_{12} has exactly two other minimal overgroups. They are isomorphic to M_{11} and thus they are themselves maximal subgroups of G. Since they do not contain G_{01} , we see that the subgroups G_{01} and G_{12} generate G_1 or G itself. We claim that they generate G_1 . By way of contradiction, suppose they generate G. Since $G_{01} \cap G_{12} = B \cong A_5$, there would exist a thin rank 2 geometry for O'N with a Borel $B \cong A_5$. Consequently, $B \trianglelefteq G$, i.e. O'N would have a normal subgroup isomorphic to A_5 , a contradiction.

In conclusion, the choice of a conjugacy class of subgroups M_{11} determines uniquely the boolean lattice Ψ of Figure 4.

Theorem 4.2. The boolean lattice Ψ of Figure 4 determines a coset geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ over the Buekenhout diagram of Figure 5: $\Gamma(O'N)$ is flag-transitive, firm, residually connected, residually weakly primitive, locally 2-transitive and satisfies the intersection property in rank 2 residues as defined in Leemans [10] and Pasini [12].

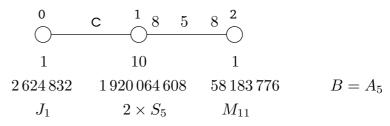


Figure 5: The diagram of $\Gamma(O'N)$

Proof. The boolean lattice Ψ of Figure 4 provides us with G = O'N and a family of subgroups $\mathcal{F} = \{G_0, G_1, G_2\}$. Observe that $G_J = \langle G_{J \cup \{i\}} : i \in I - J \rangle$ for







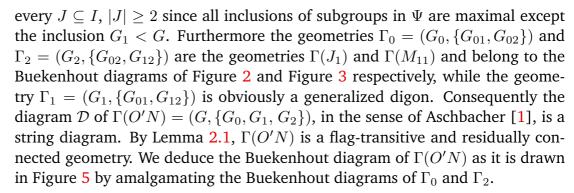


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Moreover $\Gamma(O'N)$ is residually weakly primitive because all inclusions of parabolic subgroups are maximal except the inclusion $G_1 < G$. Clearly, it is firm and it satisfies the intersection property in rank 2. Finally, it is locally 2-transitive as all of its rank 2 residues are.

5. The line graph of the Livingstone graph

Let $\mathcal{G} = (V, E)$ be a graph with vertex set V and edge set E. We define the *line graph* of \mathcal{G} as the graph $L(\mathcal{G}) = (E, X)$ which represents the adjacencies between the edges of \mathcal{G} (see Harary [7, Chapter 8]). In other words, the vertex set of $L(\mathcal{G})$ is the edge set E of \mathcal{G} ; two vertices of $L(\mathcal{G})$ are joined by an edge if and only if the corresponding edges in \mathcal{G} share a common vertex in \mathcal{G} .

We require the next characterization of line graphs in the development of section 7.

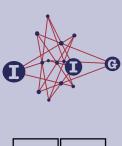
Lemma 5.1 ([7, Theorem 8.4]). A graph is a line graph if and only if its edges can be partitioned into complete subgraphs in such a way that no vertex lies in more than two of the subgraphs.

Given a line graph $L(\mathcal{G})$ and a partition P as in Lemma 5.1, we recover the original graph \mathcal{G} in a natural way: the vertex set of \mathcal{G} is the set P; two vertices of G are now joined by an edge if and only if the corresponding cliques share a vertex in $L(\mathcal{G})$.

Accordingly, the line graph $L(\mathcal{L})$ of the Livingstone graph \mathcal{L} is a graph of 1463 vertices. Each vertex lies in exactly two cliques of 11 points and there are 266 11-cliques in $L(\mathcal{L})$. The associated incidence geometry of rank 2 is a flag-transitive geometry that belongs to the diagram of Figure 6. Let us observe that J_1 acts on the set of 11-cliques and on the set of vertices of $L(\mathcal{L})$ (with incidence provided by symmetrized inclusion) in the same way as it acts on the Livingstone graph.









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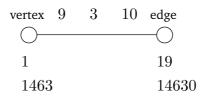


Figure 6: The diagram of $L(\mathcal{L})$.

6. Two graphs on 1463 vertices on which J_1 acts flag-transitively

Using Magma, it can be checked that there are exactly two nonisomorphic flagtransitive coset geometries $\Gamma_1(J_1)$ and $\Gamma_2(J_1)$ for J_1 of rank 2 with parabolic subgroups $G_0 = 2 \times A_5$ and $G_1 = D_{12}$ and with Borel subgroup isomorphic to S_3 . They belong to the Buekenhout diagrams given in Figure 7.

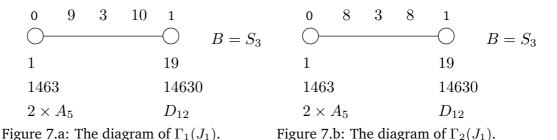


Figure 7: Two nonisomorphic geometries with same parabolic subgroups

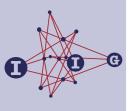
We readily see that $\Gamma_1(J_1)$ is the line graph of the Livingstone graph that we discussed in Section 5. The geometry $\Gamma_2(J_1)$ is a graph of degree 20 with 1463 vertices and 14630 edges.

7. A graph extension involving the line graph of the Livingstone graph

The truncation \mathcal{T} of $\Gamma(O'N)$ on its elements of type in $\{0,1\}$ is a graph whose vertices are the elements of type 0 of $\Gamma(O'N)$ and whose edges are the elements of type 1 of $\Gamma(O'N)$. Every edge is incident to 2 vertices in $\Gamma(O'N)$ and every vertex is incident to 1463 edges as a consequence of Theorem 4.2.











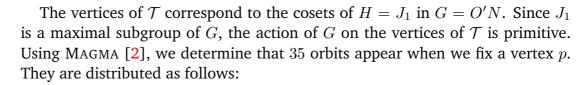
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$$1 + 1463^3 + 5852 + 12540^2 + 21945^2 + 29260^5 + 58520^2 + 87780^{12} + 175560^7$$
.

There are 3 orbits of size 1463, say Ω_1 , Ω_2 and Ω_3 . Given $q_1 \in \Omega_1$, $q_2 \in \Omega_2$ and $q_3 \in \Omega_3$, we obtain that, up to relabelling, $\operatorname{Stab}_G\{p,q_1\} \cong \operatorname{Stab}_G\{p,q_2\} \cong 2 \times S_5$ and $\operatorname{Stab}_G\{p,q_3\} \cong 4 \times A_5$. However, $\operatorname{Stab}_G\{p,q_1\}$ and $\operatorname{Stab}_G\{p,q_2\}$ are not conjugate in G. In order to distinguish two subgroups isomorphic to $2 \times S_5$ that belong to two different conjugacy classes of subgroups in G, we denote a subgroup of the class corresponding to the 1-elements of $\Gamma(O'N)$ by $(2 \times S_5)_A$ (according to the construction of $\Gamma(O'N)$ in section 4, it corresponds to conjugacy class number 212 in Λ) and the other by $(2 \times S_5)_B$ (it corresponds to conjugacy class number 213 in Λ).

Let us denote by $p^{\perp}=(V_p,E_p)$ the induced subgraph on the neighborhood of p in \mathcal{T} . Using MAGMA, we build p^{\perp} in the following way. Start with the set V_p of points of Ω_1 and an empty edge set E_p . For each (unordered) pair of points $\{x,y\}$ of V_p , if $\mathrm{Stab}_G\{x,y\}=(2\times S_5)_A$ then add $\{x,y\}$ to the edge set E_p . We eventually determine that p^{\perp} is 40-regular and that $|E_p|=29260=2\times14630$. The clique number of p^{\perp} is 11 and it occurs that p^{\perp} has exactly 266 such cliques. Let us denote by E_p^1 the set of edges of p^{\perp} occuring in at least one 11-clique. We check that each vertex of p^{\perp} is in exactly 2 cliques of 11 points. Consequently, by Theorem 5.1, the graph (V_p, E_p^1) is isomorphic to $L(\mathcal{L}) = \Gamma_1(J_1)$. Let us now consider the set $E_p^2 = E_p - E_p^1$. The resulting graph (V_p, E_p^2) is isomorphic to $\Gamma_2(J_1)$. The set of edges of p^{\perp} is thus the disjoint union of the edge sets of $\Gamma_1(J_1)$ and $\Gamma_2(J_1)$.

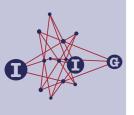
Intuitively, we can think of the induced subgraph on the neighborhood of a point of \mathcal{T} as a superposition of the graphs $\Gamma_1(J_1)$ and $\Gamma_2(J_1)$.

Theorem 7.1. The automorphism group of the graph T is isomorphic to O'N.

Proof. Let T denote the automorphism group $\operatorname{Aut} \mathcal{T}$ of \mathcal{T} . Let p be a vertex of \mathcal{T} , let T_p denote $\operatorname{Stab}_T p$ and let T(p) denote the orbit of p. By the orbit-stabilizer theorem, $|T| = |T_p| \times |T(p)|$. The automorphism group P of p^{\perp} is isomorphic to J_1 and $P \leq T_p$. By contradiction, suppose that the inclusion is strict. Let $S = \operatorname{Stab}_T[p^{\perp} \cup p]$ denote the pointwise stabilizer of $p^{\perp} \cup p$ in T. Since $P \neq T_p$, we have that S is nontrivial. Let $q \in p^{\perp}$. By the developments of sections 6 and 7, we know that $q^{\perp} \cong p^{\perp}$ and $|p^{\perp} \cap q^{\perp}| = 40$. Moreover, those 40 vertices are fixed. Using MAGMA, it is checked easily that if we fix pointwise a vertex of q^{\perp} and its neighborhood in q^{\perp} , then q^{\perp} is fixed pointwise. Therefore, if p and











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 p^{\perp} are pointwise fixed, all vertices at distance 2 from p are fixed as well, and, repeating the same argument, we show that all vertices are fixed. Hence S is trivial, a contradiction.

This means that fixing pointwise a vertex p and its neighborhood p^{\perp} in \mathcal{T} implies that the set of points of \mathcal{T} at distance 2 from p is fixed pointwise. It follows that \mathcal{T} itself is fixed pointwise. Consequently, $P=T_p$ and thus $J_1\cong T_p$. Now we conclude:

$$|T| = |T_p| \times |T(p)|$$

$$= |J_1| \times \frac{|O'N|}{|J_1|}$$

$$= |O'N|.$$

By the developments of section 2, the O'Nan group acts as an automorphism group on \mathcal{T} and thus $G \leq T$. Since |O'N| = |T|, we have $O'N \cong G = T$.

8. Automorphism group of $\Gamma(O'N)$

In order to prove the next theorem, we introduce the following notation. The incidence graph of $\Gamma(O'N)$ is a tripartite graph $\mathcal{X}=(X,*)$ with $X=X_0\sqcup X_1\sqcup X_2$ where X_i is the set of elements of $\Gamma(O'N)$ of type i, and * is the incidence relation inherited from $\Gamma(O'N)$.

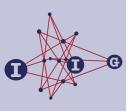
Theorem 8.1. The automorphism group of the geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ is isomorphic to O'N.

Proof. We apply the same strategy as in the proof of Theorem 7.1. First, let us observe that $\Xi := \operatorname{Aut} \mathcal{X} = \operatorname{Aut} \Gamma(O'N)$.

Let us consider a vertex j of X_0 and denote by j^\perp the induced subgraph in $\mathcal X$ on the neighborhood of j. This graph corresponds to the incidence graph of the residue in $\Gamma(O'N)$ of j. It is readily seen that j^\perp is therefore the incidence graph of the Livingstone graph whose automorphism group is $J\cong J_1$. Consequently, $J\leq \Xi_j$. By way of contradiction, assume the inclusion is strict. Let $S=\operatorname{Stab}_\Xi[j^\perp\cup j]$ denote the pointwise stabilizer of $j^\perp\cup j$ in Ξ . Since $J\neq\Xi_j$, we have that S is nontrivial. Observe that the induced subgraph $\mathcal X_{01}$ in $\mathcal X$ on the vertices of X_0 and X_1 is isomorphic to the incidence graph of $\mathcal T$. By Theorem 7.1, if we fix pointwise j and j^\perp in $\mathcal X_{01}$, then all the vertices of $\mathcal X_{01}$ are fixed. It follows that the vertices of X_2 are pointwise fixed. Indeed, the truncation T_{12} of $\Gamma(O'N)$ on its elements of type $\{1,2\}$ is a graph whose vertices correspond to the elements of X_2 and whose edges correspond to the elements of X_1 . Since











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all the edges of this graph are fixed, it follows that all of its vertices are fixed because T_{12} is not a generalized digon.

We conclude by applying the orbit-stabilizer theorem:

$$|\Xi| = |\Xi_j| \times |\Xi(j)|$$

$$= |J_1| \times \frac{|O'N|}{|J_1|}$$

$$= |O'N|$$

and thus $\Xi \cong O'N$.

9. Final remark

Buekenhout¹ observed that the geometry $\Gamma(O'N)$ is a truncation of a rank 5 geometry due to Ivanov and Shpectorov [8]. This observation leads to upcoming work of Buekenhout and the author.

10. Acknowledgement

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¹Private communication.





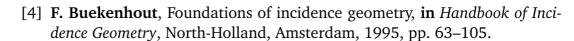
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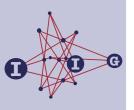
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