

Foreword

The advanced course on *The geometry of the word problem for finitely presented groups* was held July 5–15, 2005, at the Centre de Recerca Matemàtica in Bellaterra (Barcelona). It was aimed at young researchers and recent graduates interested in geometric approaches to group theory, in particular, to the word problem. Three eight-hour lecture series were delivered and are the origin of these notes. There were also problem sessions and eight contributed talks.

The course was the closing activity of a research program on *The geometry of the word problem*, held during the academic year 2004–05 and coordinated by José Burillo and Enric Ventura from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, and Noel Brady, from Oklahoma University. Thirty-five scientists participated in these events, in visits to the CRM of between one week and the whole year. Two weekly seminars and countless informal meetings contributed to a dynamic atmosphere of research.

The authors of these notes would like to express their gratitude to the marvelous staff at the CRM, director Manuel Castellet and all the secretaries, for providing great facilities and a very pleasant working environment. Also, the authors thank José Burillo and Enric Ventura for organising the research year, for ensuring its smooth running, and for the invitations to give lecture series. Finally, thanks are due to all those who attended the courses for their interest, their questions, and their enthusiasm.



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