

# Pretzel Monoids

**Daniel Heath**

They/Them

[dpheath.github.io](https://dpheath.github.io)

**University of Manchester**

Joint work with Mark Kambites and Nóra Szakács.

Durham NBSAN XXXIX, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025



The University of Manchester

# Left Adequate Monoids

## Definition

A monoid  $M$  is *left adequate* if:

- ① Idempotents of  $M$  commute;
- ② For all  $a \in M$ , there exists a unique idempotent  $a^+ \in E(M)$  such that

$$\forall x, y \in M \quad xa = ya \iff xa^+ = ya^+.$$

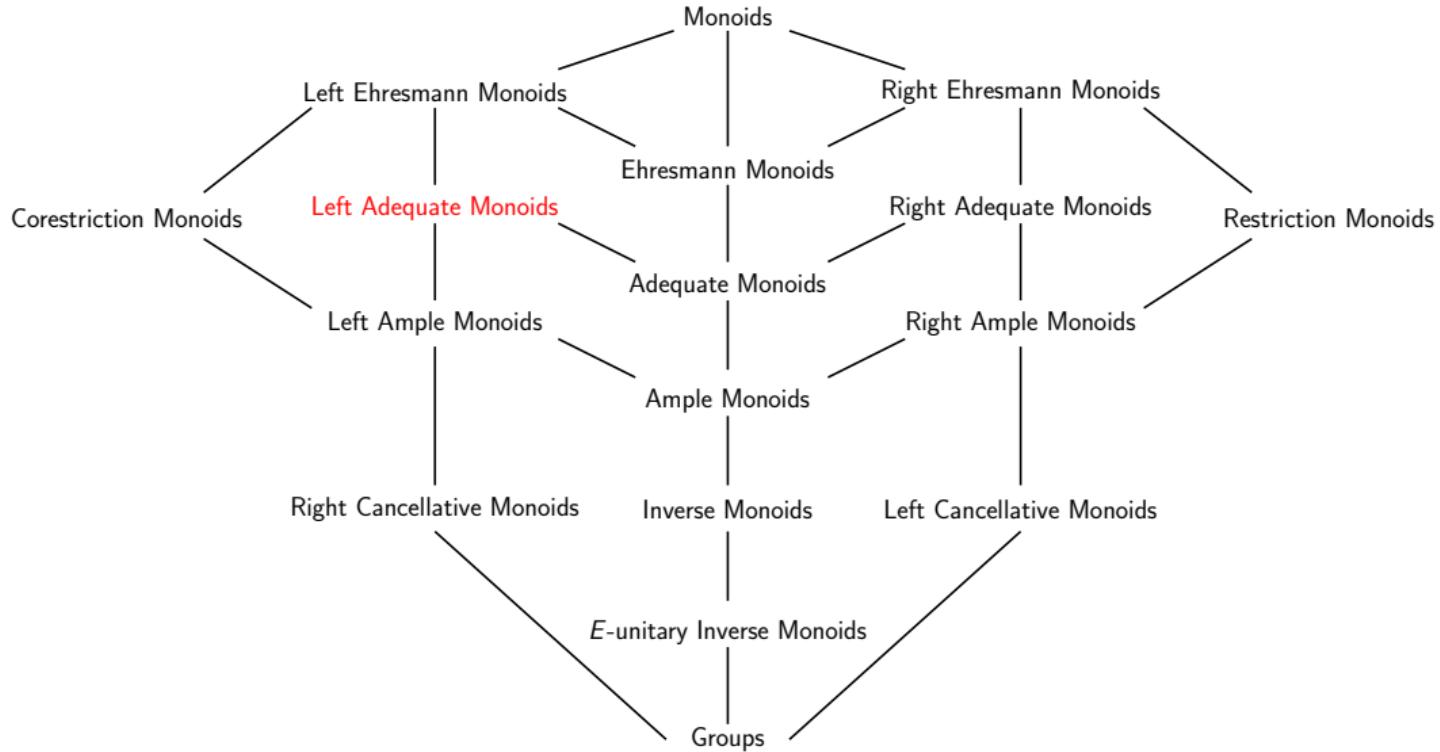
## Definition

Equivalently, a monoid equipped with a unary operation  $+$  is called *left adequate* if it satisfies the defining identities:

$$a^+a = a, \quad (a^+b^+)^+ = a^+b^+, \quad a^+b^+ = b^+a^+, \quad (ab)^+ = (ab^+)^+,$$

$$a^2 = a \rightarrow a = a^+ \quad \text{and} \quad ac = bc \rightarrow ac^+ = bc^+.$$

## A Big Diagram



# A Potted History

- Kilp 1973, *Commutative monoids all of whose principal ideals are projective*.
- Fountain 1976, *Right PP monoids with central idempotents*.

**Remark.** A monoid  $M$  is *right PP* (modernly known as *right abundant*) if and only if every  $\mathcal{L}^*$ -class contains an idempotent. Very reminiscent of regular and inverse semigroups!

- Fountain 1977, *A class of right PP monoids*.
- Fountain 1979, *Adequate semigroups*.

## Definition

A right adequate semigroup is called *right ample* if  $eM \cap aM = eaM$  for all  $e \in E(M)$ ,  $a \in M$ .

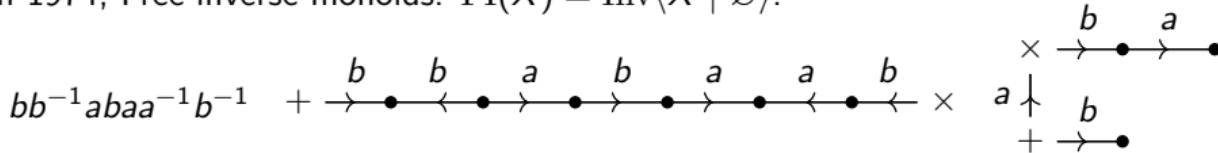
## Theorem (Fountain 1977)

Let  $M$  be a right ample monoid. Then  $S$  is the image of some “proper” right ample monoid under some morphism  $\theta$  where  $a\theta = b\theta \implies a\mathcal{L}^*b$ .

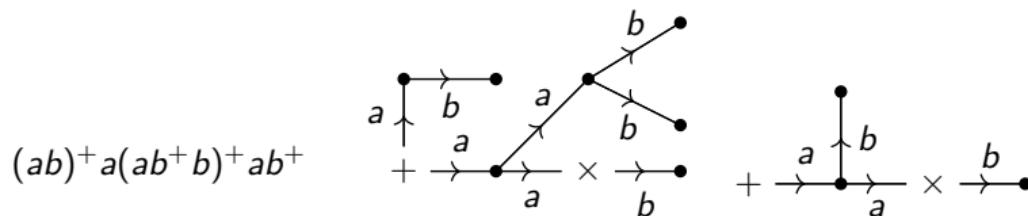
- See also Hollings 2009, *From right PP monoids to restriction semigroups: a survey*.

# A Potted History 2

- Munn 1974, Free inverse monoids.  $\text{FI}(X) = \text{Inv}\langle X \mid \emptyset \rangle$ .



- Fountain 1991, Free right type A semigroups.
- Fountain, Gomes, Gould 2009, The free ample monoid.  $\text{FLAm}(X) = \text{LAm}\langle X \mid \emptyset \rangle$ .



- Kambites 2009-11, Free adequate semigroups  $\text{FLAd}(X) = \text{LAd}\langle X \mid \emptyset \rangle$ .

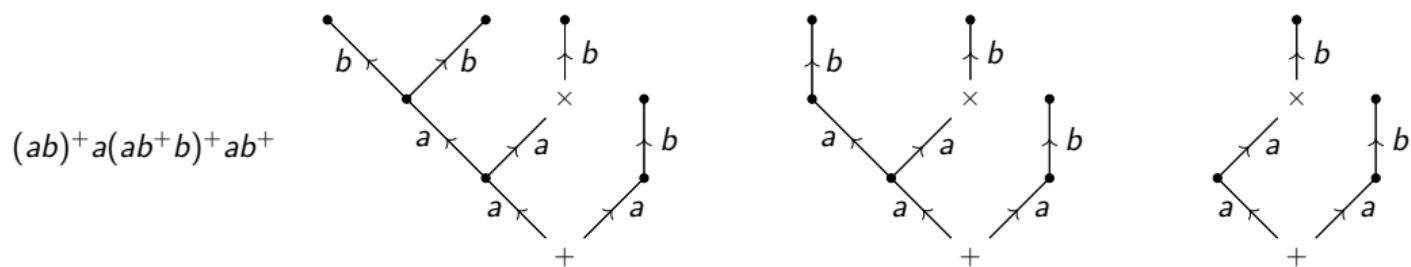
## Free Left Adequate Monoids

For trees in  $\text{FLAd}(X)$ , first draw the tree as in  $\text{FLAm}(X)$ ...

## Definition

The *retraction* of a tree is the smallest image under an idempotent endomorphism which fixes  $+$  and  $\times$ .

**Fact:** The retraction of a tree is unique up to isomorphism.



# The Goal

**Question:** What results in inverse or cancellative semigroups can we generalise to (left) adequate or ample monoids?

- McAlister's covering theorem and the  $P$ -theorem (Fountain 1970s).
- Munn trees and free inverse monoids (Fountain, Gomes, Gould, Kambites, 2000s).
- Stephen's procedure...? (Likely very hard!)
- *Expansions!*

# Semigroup Expansions

## Definition (Birget, Rhodes 1984)

Let  $\mathcal{C} \subseteq \mathcal{D} \subseteq \mathbf{Sgp}$ . An *expansion of  $\mathcal{C}$  to  $\mathcal{D}$*  is a functor  $F : \mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}$  such that there is a natural transformation  $\eta : F \Rightarrow \iota_{\mathcal{C} \rightarrow \mathcal{D}}$  whose components  $\eta_S$  are all surjective.

i.e. for all  $S \in \mathcal{C}$ , there is a semigroup  $F(S) \in \mathcal{D}$  and a surjective morphism  $\eta_S : F(S) \rightarrow S$  such that whenever  $\tau : S \rightarrow T$  is a morphism, there is a morphism  $F(\tau) : F(S) \rightarrow F(T)$  making the following diagram commute:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} F(S) & \xrightarrow{F(\tau)} & F(T) \\ \eta_S \downarrow & & \downarrow \eta_T \\ S & \xrightarrow{\tau} & T \end{array}$$

## Theorem (Birget, Rhodes 1984 / Szendrei 1989)

*There is an expansion  $\text{Sz} : \mathbf{Gp} \rightarrow \mathbf{FInv}$  given by  $\text{Sz}(G) = \{(H, g) : H \subseteq G \text{ finite and } 1, g \in H\}$ .*

## Theorem (Szendrei 1989)

*$\text{Sz}$  is left adjoint to the maximal group image functor  $\sigma^\natural : \mathbf{FInv} \rightarrow \mathbf{Gp}$ .*

# Expansions of other Categories

Recall that  $\text{FI}(X)$  was constructed by 'tracing' the Cayley graph of  $\text{FG}(X)$ ... what about other Cayley graphs?

## Theorem (Margolis, Meakin 1989)

Let  $X$  be a set and let  $G$  be an  $X$ -generated group. There is an expansion  $\mathcal{M} : \mathbf{XGp} \rightarrow \mathbf{XEInv}$  given by  $\mathcal{M}(G) = \{(\Gamma, g) : \Gamma \text{ is a finite connected subgraph of } \text{Cay}(G), 1, g \in V(\Gamma)\}$ .  $\mathcal{M}$  is left adjoint to the maximal group image functor  $\sigma^\natural : \mathbf{XEInv} \rightarrow \mathbf{XGp}$ .

## Theorem (Gould 1996, + Gomes 2000)

Let  $X$  be a set and let  $M$  be an  $X$ -generated monoid. Define

$$\mathcal{G}(M) = \{(\Gamma, m) : \Gamma \text{ is a finite connected subgraph of } \text{Cay}(M), 1, m \in V(\Gamma)\}.$$

Then  $\mathcal{G}$  forms expansions  $\mathbf{XRC} \rightarrow \mathbf{XPLAm}$  and  $\mathbf{XU} \rightarrow \mathbf{XPWLAm}$ . Moreover,  $\mathcal{G}$  is left adjoint to taking the maximal right cancellative image and maximal unipotent image respectively.

## Question

Can we find an expansion  $\mathbf{XRC} \rightarrow \mathbf{XLAd}$ ? Preferably with some graphical interpretation?

# Pretzels!

Fix a set  $X$  and an  $X$ -generated right cancellative monoid  $C$ .

## Definition

An *idempath* in an  $X$ -labelled digraph  $\Gamma$  is a path labelled by a word  $x_1x_2 \cdots x_n$  which is equal to the identity in  $C$ . We take the empty path with label  $\epsilon$  to have  $\epsilon =_C 1$ .

An *idempath identification* in  $\Gamma$  is the process of ‘cycling up’ an idempath.

## Lemma (H., Kambites, Szakács 2024)

Given a tree  $T \in \text{FLAd}(X)$ , there exists a unique graph obtainable by sequentially performing all non-trivial idempath identifications (in any order) to  $T$ .

## Definition

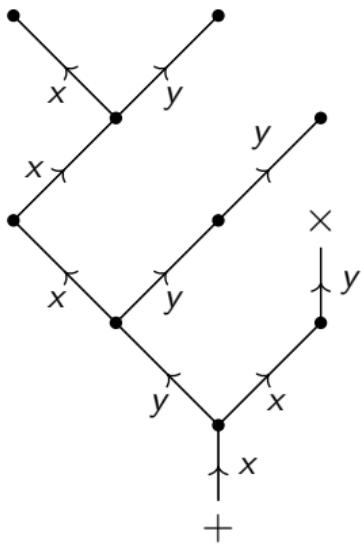
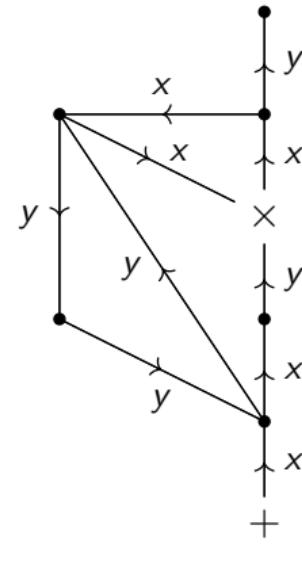
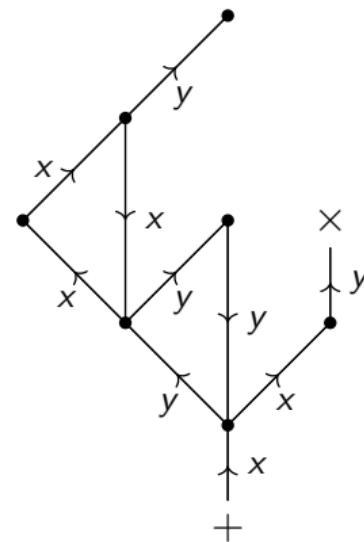
Given any tree  $T \in \text{FLAd}(X)$ , perform the following:

- ① Idempath identify as far as possible...
- ② ...then retract anything in the result which can retract (take minimal image under idempotent graph endomorphisms).

We call the (uniquely obtained) result the *pretzel* of  $T$ , denoted  $\widetilde{T}$ .

## Example

Take  $X = \{x, y\}$  and  $C = C_3 \times C_3 = \text{Mon}\langle x, y \rangle$ .

 $T$  $\tilde{T}$

# $(2, 1, 0)$ -algebras

Define a multiplication  $\overline{\widetilde{S}} \cdot \overline{\widetilde{T}}$  on pretzels as follows:

- ① Glue  $\overline{\widetilde{T}}$  to  $\overline{\widetilde{S}}$ , start-to-end.
- ② Pretzel-ify the result (note that new idempaths could have been created!).

Define a unary operation  $+$  on pretzels as follows:

- ① Relabel the end vertex of  $\overline{\widetilde{T}}$  to be the start vertex.
- ② Pretzel-ify the result (note that new retractions might be possible!).

## Theorem (H., Kambites, Szakács 2024)

*The set of all pretzels  $\mathcal{PT}(C; X)$  forms an  $X$ -generated left adequate monoid.*

## Theorem (H., Kambites, Szakács 2024)

$\mathcal{PT}(C; X) \cong \mathbf{LAd}\langle X \mid w^2 = w \text{ for } w \in X^* \text{ s.t. } w =_C 1 \rangle.$

# Margolis-Meakin Expansions vs. Pretzels

## Properties of $\mathcal{M}(G)$

- ①  $\mathcal{M}(\text{FG}(X)) \cong \text{FI}(X)$ .
- ②  $\mathcal{M}(G)$  is finite  $\iff G$  is finite.
- ③ Elements are subgraphs of  $\text{Cay}(G)$ .
- ④  $\mathcal{M}(G) \cong \mathbf{Inv}\langle X \mid w^2 = w \text{ for } w \in X^* \text{ s.t. } w =_G 1 \rangle$ .
- ⑤  $\mathcal{M}$  defines an expansion  $\mathbf{XGp} \rightarrow \mathbf{XEInv}$ .

## Properties of $\mathcal{PT}(C)$

- ①  $\mathcal{PT}(X^*) \cong \text{FLAd}(X)$ .
- ②  $\mathcal{PT}(C)$  is finite  $\iff C$  is finite  $\implies C$  is a group.
- ③ Elements are trees of strongly connected subgraphs of  $\text{Cay}(C)$ .
- ④  $\mathcal{PT}(C; X) \cong \mathbf{LAd}\langle X \mid w^2 = w \text{ for } w \in X^* \text{ s.t. } w =_C 1 \rangle$ .

## Theorem (H., Kambites, Szakács 2024)

$\mathcal{PT}$  defines an expansion  $\mathbf{XRC} \rightarrow \mathbf{XLAd}$ .

# Open Questions and What's Next

- What about right adequate and two-sided adequate pretzel monoids?
- Can we find geometric interpretations of other analogues of Margolis-Meakin expansions in the left adequate setting, perhaps one such that  $M(C)$  has maximal right cancellative image  $C$ ?

## Proposition

The maximal right cancellative image of  $\mathcal{PT}(C)$  is  $\mathbf{RC}\langle X \mid w = 1 \text{ for } w \in X^* \text{ s.t. } w =_C 1 \rangle$ .  
In particular, it is two-sided cancellative.

## Proposition

$\mathcal{PT}$  is not left adjoint to the maximal right cancellative image functor.

- Can we apply similar pretzel-style techniques in  $F$ -inverse land? In particular for the free  $F$ -inverse monoid...?
- What about other interesting presentations of (left) adequate monoids?

Thank you!