On the inversion formulas of Pestov and Uhlmann for the geodesic ray transform

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Abstract. We generalize the inversion formulas obtained by Pestov–Uhlmann for the geodesic ray transform of functions and vector fields on 2-dimensional manifolds with boundary of constant curvature. Our formulas hold for simple 2-dimensional manifolds whose curvatures are close to a constant.

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1 Introduction

Let $(M, g)$ be a smooth compact Riemannian manifold with boundary $\partial M$. In this paper, we study the geodesic ray transform. This is defined as follows: Let $f \in L^2(M)$ be a symmetric tensor field of rank $m$ written in local coordinates as,

$$f = f_{i_1\ldots i_m} dx^{i_1} \cdots dx^{i_m}.$$

Here and below when repeating indices are encountered, Einstein summation convention is assumed. Let $\gamma : [0, l(\gamma)] \to M$ be a geodesic connecting boundary points, where $l(\gamma)$ is the length of the geodesic. The geodesic ray transform $I_m$ of $f$ along $\gamma$ is defined as,

$$I_m f(\gamma) = \int_0^{l(\gamma)} f_{i_1\ldots i_m}(\gamma(t)) \dot{\gamma}^{i_1}(t) \cdots \dot{\gamma}^{i_m}(t) dt.$$

We will be interested only in the cases $m = 0$ (functions) and $m = 1$ (1-forms) here and denote their geodesic ray transforms by $I_0$ and $I_1$ respectively.

The geodesic ray transform is not injective in general. One needs additional restrictions on the metric and one such restriction is to assume that the Riemannian manifold $(M, g)$ is simple [4] defined as follows:

Definition 1.1. A compact Riemannian manifold with boundary is simple if

(a) The boundary $\partial M$ is strictly convex: $\langle \nabla_{\xi} v, \xi \rangle < 0$ for $\xi \in T_x(\partial M)$ where $v$ is the unit inward normal to the boundary.

(b) The map $\exp_x : \exp^{-1}_x M \to M$ is a diffeomorphism for each $x \in M$. 
It is known that on a simple Riemannian manifold, $I_0 f$ uniquely determines $f$ and $I_1 f$ uniquely determines the solenoidal component of $f$. See [4] and the references therein for these results. It is then natural to ask whether there exist explicit inversion formulas recovering a function or the solenoidal component of a vector field from their geodesic ray transforms. Several such inversion formulas are known in special cases [2].

In [3], Pestov and Uhlmann found Fredholm type inversion formulas for the geodesic ray transform on functions and vector fields on simple 2-dimensional manifolds. These formulas become exact inversion formulas for 2-dimensional manifolds of constant curvature. Moreover these inversion formulas hold even when conjugate points are present along geodesics.

The Fredholm-type inversion formulas of Pestov–Uhlmann are given by the following theorem:

**Theorem 1.2** ([3, Theorem 5.4]). Let $(M, g)$ be a 2-dimensional Riemannian manifold. Then

$$f + W_g^2 f = \frac{1}{4\pi} \delta_{\perp} I^*_1 (\alpha^* H(I_0 f) |_{\partial_+ SM}), \quad f \in L^2(M).$$  \hfill (1.1)

$$h + (W_g^*)^2 h = \frac{1}{4\pi} I^*_0 (\alpha^* H(I_1 H_{\perp} h) |_{\partial_+ SM}), \quad h \in H^1_0(M).$$  \hfill (1.2)

Here $W_g$ is the operator ($W_g^*$ is its $L^2$ adjoint) on $L^2(M)$ defined by

$$W_g f(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{S_x} H_{\perp} \left( \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} f(y_x, \xi(t)) dt \right) dS_x(\xi),$$

where

$$H_{\perp} u(x, \xi) = \xi^i \left( \frac{\partial u}{\partial x^i} - \Gamma^k_{ij} \xi^j \partial_k u \right),$$

where the derivative $\partial_k$ on the unit sphere bundle is defined by

$$\partial_k u = \frac{\partial}{\partial \xi^k} u(x, |\xi|) |_{|\xi|=1}.$$  \hfill (1.3)

\(\Gamma^k_{ij}\) are the Christoffel symbols for the Levi–Civita connection on $M$ and $\xi_{\perp}$ is the $90^\circ$ anticlockwise rotation of the unit vector $\xi$.

As shown in [3], for manifolds of constant curvature, $W_g = W_g^* = 0$ and hence these Fredholm-type formulas becomes exact inversion formulas. The right hand side of (1.1) and (1.2) can be determined from boundary measurements. We refer the reader to Pestov–Uhlmann’s paper [3] for the details.
In this paper, we prove the following result generalizing the above inversion formulas. Since simple Riemannian manifolds are diffeomorphic to balls in $\mathbb{R}^n$ [4], from now on, we will fix $M$ to be a closed ball in $\mathbb{R}^n$ with Euclidean coordinates.

**Theorem 1.3.** Let $g_0$ be a simple metric on $M$ of constant curvature. There exists a positive $\varepsilon$ with $\varepsilon \ll 1$ such that for all Riemannian metrics $g$ on $M$ with $\|g - g_0\|_{C^3} < \varepsilon$, the operators $I + W_g^2$ and $I + (W_g^*)^2$ are invertible on $L^2(M)$ and the inverses are given by Neumann series expansions.

An immediate consequence of Theorem 1.3 is the following corollary.

**Corollary 1.4.** Let $g_0$ be a simple Riemannian metric on $M$ of constant curvature and let $g$ be as in Theorem 1.3. Then

$$f = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n W_g^{2n} \left( \frac{1}{4\pi} \delta_1 I_1^* (\alpha^* H(I_0 f)^{-1}|_{\partial_+ SM}) \right), \quad f \in L^2(M).$$

$$h = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (-1)^n (W_g^*)^{2n} \left( \frac{1}{4\pi} I_0^* (\alpha^* H(I_1 H_0 h)^{+}|_{\partial_+ SM}) \right), \quad h \in H^1_0(M).$$

As shown in [3], $W_g$ ($W_g^*$ is its $L^2$ adjoint) is an integral operator on $L^2(M)$ with kernel,

$$W_g(x, y) = -Q(x, \exp_x^{-1}(y)) \frac{|\det(\exp_x^{-1})'(x, y)| \sqrt{\det(g(x))}}{\sqrt{\det(g(y))}}. \quad (1.4)$$

For the sake of completeness, and since we will use this kernel in the proof of Theorem 1.3, we sketch the proof of (1.4) given in [3].

We have

$$2\pi W_g f(x) = \int_{S_x M} \mathcal{H}_\perp \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} f(y(x, \xi, t)) dt dS_x$$

$$= \int_{S_x M} \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} \frac{\partial f}{\partial x^j} (y(x, \xi, t)) \mathcal{H}_\perp y^j(x, \xi, t) dt dS_x.$$

Let $x(s), -\varepsilon < s < \varepsilon$ be a curve starting at $x$ in the direction $\xi_\perp$. Now parallel translate the vector $\xi$ along this curve, call it $\tilde{\xi}(s)$ and consider the variation by geodesics, $\gamma(x(s), \tilde{\xi}(s), t)$. The vector field

$$X(x, \xi, t) := \frac{d}{ds}\bigg|_{s=0} \gamma(x(s), \xi(s), t), \quad (1.5)$$
is a Jacobi vector field along $\gamma$ with the following initial conditions,
\[ X(x, \xi, 0) = \xi_\perp, \quad D_t X(x, \xi, 0) = 0, \]
where $D_t$ is the covariant derivative along $\gamma$. Differentiating the right-hand side of (1.5), we obtain,
\[ X(x, \xi, t) = \mathcal{H}_\perp \gamma(x, \xi, t), \]
using the fact that $\xi(s)$ is the parallel translate of $\xi$ along $x(s)$.

We now define another Jacobi field along $\gamma(x, \xi(s), t)$ by considering the variation by geodesics, $\gamma(x, \xi(s), t)$, where $\xi(s)$ is a smooth curve in $S_x M$ with initial tangent vector $\xi_\perp$. The Jacobi vector field
\[ Y(x, \xi, t) := d \left|_{s=0} \right. \gamma(x, \xi(s), t) \]
has initial conditions,
\[ Y(x, \xi, 0) = 0, \quad D_t Y(x, \xi, 0) = \xi_\perp. \]

We denote $Y$ by,
\[ \partial_{\theta} \gamma(x, \xi, t) := Y(x, \xi, t) = \xi_\perp^i \partial_i \gamma(x, \xi, t), \]
where the operator $\partial_i$ is defined in (1.3). Since $X$ and $Y$ are Jacobi fields normal to $\gamma$ and since $\dim(M) = 2$, these two fields must be proportional to the parallel translate of the vector $\xi_\perp$ along the geodesic $\gamma$. Let this parallel translate be denoted $\hat{\gamma}_\perp$. Then there exists two smooth functions $a(x, \xi, t)$ and $b(x, \xi, t)$ such that
\[ X = a \hat{\gamma}_\perp, \quad Y = b \hat{\gamma}_\perp. \]

Denoting by prime $(t)$, the derivatives with respect to $t$, the functions $a$ and $b$ satisfy the scalar Jacobi equations,
\[ a''(x, \xi, t) + K(x, \xi, t)a(x, \xi, t) = b''(x, \xi, t) + K(x, \xi, t)b(x, \xi, t) = 0. \quad (1.7) \]

Here $K$ is the Gaussian curvature and
\[ a(x, \xi, 0) = 1, \quad a'(x, \xi, 0) = 0, \quad b(x, \xi, 0) = 0, \quad b'(x, \xi, 0) = 1. \]

We now write,
\[ W_g f(x) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{S_x M} \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} \langle \nabla f, \mathcal{H}_\perp \gamma \rangle dt dS_x \]
\[ = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{S_x M} \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} \frac{a}{b} \langle \nabla f, Y \rangle dt dS_x \]
\[ = -\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{\tau(x, \xi)} \int_{S_x M} \partial_{\theta} \left( \frac{a}{b} \right) (f \circ \gamma) dS_x dt. \]
Let
\[ q(x, \xi, t) = \partial_\theta \left( \frac{a}{b} \right). \]

This function is initially not defined when \( t = 0 \), but by the initial conditions of Lemma 2.1, there exists a function \( Q(x, t\xi) \in C^\infty(TM) \) such that
\[ q(x, \xi, t) = tQ(x, t\xi). \]

Now by a change of variables involving the inverse of the exponential map, we have the expression for \( W_g \) in (1.4).

2 The proof

We prove the following lemma. Here, as before, the derivatives indicated by prime (') are with respect to time.

**Lemma 2.1.** Let \( \varphi = b\partial_\theta a - a\partial_\theta b \) and \( \gamma \) be the geodesic starting at a point \( x \) with unit tangent vector \( \xi \). Then \( \varphi \) satisfies the following ordinary differential equation,
\[ \varphi'''(x, \xi, t) + 4K(x, \xi, t)\varphi'(x, \xi, t) + 2K'(x, \xi, t)\varphi(x, \xi, t) = -2\partial_\theta (K(x, \xi, t)), \]
with initial conditions,
\[ \varphi(x, \xi, 0) = \varphi'(x, \xi, 0) = \varphi''(x, \xi, 0) = 0. \]

**Proof.** First of all we have
\[ ab' - a'b' \equiv 1. \] (2.1)

For, let \( \phi = ab' - ba' \). Then \( \phi' = ab'' - a''b \). From equation (1.7) we get that \( \phi' = 0 \) and so \( \phi \) is a constant. Since \( \phi(0) = 1 \), we have the claim. With this we now show that \( \varphi = b\partial_\theta a - a\partial_\theta b \) satisfies the ODE above.
\[ \varphi' = b'\partial_\theta a + b\partial_\theta a' - a'\partial_\theta b - a\partial_\theta b'. \]

From (2.1) we get
\[ b'\partial_\theta a + a\partial b' - b\partial_\theta a' - a'\partial_\theta b = 0. \]

This gives
\[ \varphi' = 2(b'\partial_\theta a - a'\partial_\theta b) = 2(b\partial_\theta a' - a\partial_\theta b'). \]

Differentiating again, we get
\[ \varphi'' = 2(b''\partial_\theta a + b'\partial_\theta a' - a''\partial_\theta b - a'\partial_\theta b'). \]
Using equation (1.7), this becomes
\[ \varphi'' = 2(-K\varphi + b'\partial_\theta a' - a'\partial_\theta b'). \]
Differentiating yet again, and as in the steps above, we finally get,
\[ \varphi'''' + 4K\varphi' + 2K\varphi = -2\partial_\theta K. \] (2.2)

It now follows from these equations that
\[ \varphi(x, \xi, 0) = \varphi'(x, \xi, 0) = \varphi''(x, \xi, 0) = 0. \]

**Proof.** We now prove Theorem 1.3. We rewrite (2.2) as a first order differential equation:
\[
\begin{pmatrix}
\varphi'_1 \\
\varphi'_2 \\
\varphi'_3
\end{pmatrix} =
\begin{pmatrix}
0 & 1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 1 \\
-2K' & -4K & 0
\end{pmatrix}
\begin{pmatrix}
\varphi_1 \\
\varphi_2 \\
\varphi_3
\end{pmatrix} +
\begin{pmatrix}
0 \\
0 \\
-2\partial_\theta K
\end{pmatrix},
\] (2.3)

where
\[ \varphi_1 = \varphi, \quad \varphi_2 = \varphi' \quad \text{and} \quad \varphi_3 = \varphi''. \]

For simplicity, let us write (2.3) as a system of the form
\[ \varphi(x, \xi, t) = A(x, \xi, t)\varphi(x, \xi, t) + B(x, \xi, t), \] (2.4)

where \( \varphi \) is the column vector on the l.h.s. of (2.3), \( A \) and \( B \) are the \( 3 \times 3 \) matrix and the column vector on the r.h.s. of (2.3) respectively. From [1], since \( \varphi(0) = 0 \), we have a solution to this differential equation to be
\[ \varphi(x, \xi, t) = \Phi(x, \xi, t) \int_0^t \Phi^{-1}(x, \xi, s)B(x, \xi, s) \, ds, \]

where \( \Phi \) is the fundamental matrix of the homogeneous system,
\[ \varphi'(x, \xi, t) = A(x, \xi, t)\varphi(x, \xi, t). \]

Since \( \|g - g_0\|_{C^3} < \varepsilon \) with \( \varepsilon \ll 1 \) and \( M \) is compact, there exists a \( C_1 = C_1(g_0) > 0 \) such that \( \|\Phi\|_{C^0} < C_1, \|\Phi^{-1}\|_{C^0} < C_1 \) and
\[ |\partial_\theta K| \leq C_1 \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}. \]

Combining these inequalities we get
\[ |\varphi''(x, \xi, t)| \leq |\varphi(x, \xi, t)| \leq C_2 t \|\nabla K\|_{C^0} \]
for some \( C_2 = C_2(g_0) > 0. \)
Since
\[
\varphi(x, \xi, t) = \int_0^t \int_0^s \varphi''(x, \xi, u) \, du \, ds,
\]
for \(0 \leq s \leq t\), we have
\[
|\varphi(x, \xi, t)| \leq C_2 t^3 \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}.
\]
Since \(g\) is simple for all \(g\) such that \(\|g - g_0\|_{C^3} < \varepsilon\), we have \(b \neq 0\) for \(t \neq 0\), since \(b(0) = 0\). Now we write \(b(x, y, t) = t\tilde{b}(x, y, t)\) with \(\tilde{b} \neq 0\). Therefore there exists \(C_3 = C_3(g_0) > 0\) and
\[
|q(x, \xi, t)| = \left| \frac{\partial a}{\partial b} \right| \leq C_3 t \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}.
\]
Since \(tQ(x, t\xi) = q(x, \xi, t)\), we have
\[
|Q(x, t\xi)| \leq C_3 \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}.
\]
The remaining terms in
\[
W_g(x, y) = -Q(x, \exp^{-1}(y)) \frac{|\det(\exp^{-1}(y))'(x, y)| \sqrt{\det(g(x))}}{\sqrt{\det(g(y))}}
\]
are bounded by a constant that depends on \(g_0\) and so we have a \(C_4 = C_4(g_0) > 0\) such that
\[
\|W_g\|_{C^0} \leq C_4 \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}.
\]
Finally, there exists a \(C > 0\) uniformly constant in a \(C^3\) neighborhood of \(g_0\) such that
\[
\|W_g\|_{L^2(M) \to L^2(M)} \leq C \|\nabla K\|_{C^0}.
\]
So now choosing \(\varepsilon\) to be small enough, we can make \(\|\nabla K\|_{C^0} < 1/C\). Hence for all \(g\) with \(\|g - g_0\|_{C^3} < \varepsilon\), we have \(\|W_g\|_{L^2 \to L^2} < 1\). Therefore the operator \(I + W_g^2\) is invertible and the inverse is given by a Neumann series expansion. A similar argument works for the operator \(I + (W_g^*)^2\). This completes the proof of Theorem 1.3. \(\square\)

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Bibliography


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