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TRACES OF PLURIHARMONIC FUNCTIONS

Paolo de Bartolomeis and Giuseppe Tomassini

Introduction

Let M be a real oriented hypersurface in a complex manifold X , which divides X into two open sets X^+ and X^- .

In this paper we characterize in terms of tangential linear differential operators on M the distributions T on M which are “jumps” or traces (in the sense of currents) of pluriharmonic functions in X^+ and X^- .

The starting point of our investigation is the non-tangential characterizing equation $\bar{\partial}_b \partial T = 0$, which can be deduced from the theory of boundary values of holomorphic forms. If M is not Levi-flat, we construct a second order tangential local linear differential operator ω_M such that if T is the trace on M of a pluriharmonic function h , then $\omega_M(T) = \partial h$. This enables us to prove that the tangential equation $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(T) = 0$ characterizes locally the traces on M of pluriharmonic functions on X^+ or X^- (local Cauchy–Dirichlet problem). From this local result we deduce directly the global solvability of the Cauchy–Dirichlet problem in the case M is either compact or its Levi form has everywhere at least one positive eigenvalue.

Finally, using standard cohomological arguments the global Riemann–Hilbert problem (“jumps” of pluriharmonic functions on $X \setminus M$) is solved if $H^2(X, \mathbb{C}) = 0$ or $H^1(M, \mathbb{R}) = 0$. Particular cases of our problem have been investigated in [1], [3] (cf. also [2], [4]).

The present paper contains an improved version of the results announced in [5].

1. Preliminaries and notations

In the present paper X will be a complex manifold of dimension $n \geq 2$, and $M \subset X$ a real oriented connected C^∞ hypersurface.

We assume M is defined by $\rho = 0$ where $\rho: X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is a C^∞ function such that $d\rho \neq 0$ on M .

We say that such a ρ is a *defining function* for M ; M divides X into two open sets X^+ and X^- , defined respectively by $\rho > 0$ and $\rho < 0$; if U is an open subset of X , we will set $U^\pm = U \cap X^\pm$; we can also assume that there exists an $\epsilon_0 > 0$ such that if $|\epsilon| < \epsilon_0$ and M_ϵ is the level hypersurface defined by $\rho = \epsilon$, there exists a diffeomorphism $\pi_\epsilon: M_\epsilon \rightarrow M$.

We will use the standard notations for currents and distributions spaces (cf. e.g. [9]); in particular we fix the orientation on M in such a way that $d[X^+] = [M]$.

Furthermore we list the following definitions:

- i) Let $L: \mathcal{G}^{(r)}(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{G}^{(r)}(M)$ be the restriction operator; we set: $\mathcal{G}^{(p,q)}(M) = L(\mathcal{G}^{(p,q)}(X))$.
- ii) Let $K \in \mathcal{D}'^{(r)}(M)$: $K \wedge [M]$ will be the $(r+1)$ -current on X defined by: $\langle K \wedge [M], \varphi \rangle = \langle K, L(\varphi) \rangle$, $\varphi \in \mathcal{D}^{(2n-r-1)}(X)$.
- iii) We say that $K \in \mathcal{D}'^{(r)}(M)$ is a $(r, 0)$ -current (resp. $(0, r)$ -current) if $(K \wedge [M])^{p,q} = 0$ for $p \leq r$ (resp. $(K \wedge [M])^{q,p} = 0$ for $p \leq r$); we denote by $\mathcal{D}'^{(r,0)}(M)$ (resp. $\mathcal{D}'^{(0,r)}(M)$) the space of $(r, 0)$ -currents (resp. $(0, r)$ -currents).
- iv) If $K \in \mathcal{D}'^{(r,0)}(M)$, then $K \wedge [M]^{1,0}$ is the $(r+1, 0)$ -current defined by: $\langle K \wedge [M]^{1,0}, \varphi \rangle = \langle K, L(\varphi) \rangle$, $\varphi \in \mathcal{D}^{(n-r-1,n)}(X)$ and $K \wedge [M]^{0,1}$ is the $(r, 1)$ -current defined by: $\langle K \wedge [M]^{0,1}, \varphi \rangle = \langle K, L(\varphi) \rangle$, $\varphi \in \mathcal{D}^{(n-r, n-1)}(X)$.
- v) Let $\alpha \in \mathcal{G}^{(2)}(X^+)$; we say that α *admits trace* $K \in \mathcal{D}'^{(r)}(M)$ on M in the sense of currents if for every $\varphi \in \mathcal{D}^{(2n-r-1)}(M)$ we have:

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0^+} \int_{M_\epsilon} \alpha \wedge \pi_\epsilon^*(\varphi) &= \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0^+} \int_M \pi_{\epsilon*}(\alpha) \wedge \varphi = \\ &= \lim_{\epsilon \rightarrow 0^+} \langle \pi_{\epsilon*}(\alpha), \varphi \rangle = \langle K, \varphi \rangle \end{aligned}$$

(cf. [8]); we set $K = \gamma_+(\alpha)$; in the same manner we define $\gamma_-(\alpha)$ if $\alpha \in \mathcal{G}^{(r)}(X^-)$.

Let $a \in \mathcal{G}^{(r)}(X \setminus M)$ such that $\gamma_+(\alpha)$ and $\gamma_-(\alpha)$ exist: we refer to $\gamma_+(\alpha) - \gamma_-(\alpha)$ as the *jump* of α on M .

We denote by $\mathcal{G}_*^{(r,s)}(X^\pm)$ the space of forms $\alpha \in \mathcal{G}^{(r,s)}(X^\pm)$ such that $\gamma_\pm(\alpha)$ and $\gamma_\pm(d\alpha)$ exist.

Observe that if $\alpha \in \mathcal{G}_*^{(r,0)}(X^+)$, in particular we have

$$\partial(\gamma_+(\alpha) \wedge [M]^{1,0}) = (-1)^{r+1} \gamma_+(\partial\alpha) \wedge [M]^{1,0}.$$

2. Tangential operators on M

2a) The smooth case

A local linear operator $\Phi: \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{E}^{(r,s)}(M)$ is said to be *tangential on M* if from $L(f) = 0$ it follows $\Phi(f) = 0$; a tangential operator induces a new operator: $\mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{E}^{(r,s)}(M)$ which will be denoted again by Φ .

Let now (\cdot, \cdot) be a Hermitian structure on X ; without loss of generality we can assume $(\partial\rho, \partial\rho) \equiv \frac{1}{2}$ on M . Define:

$$\mathcal{N}^{(p,q)}(M) = \{\alpha \in \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \mid \alpha = \varphi \wedge L(\partial\rho)\} \quad p \geq 1$$

$$\mathfrak{E}^{(p,q)}(M) = \{\alpha \in \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \mid (\alpha, \beta) = 0 \quad \forall \beta \in \mathcal{N}^{(p,q)}(M)\}$$

$$\bar{\mathcal{N}}^{(p,q)}(M) = \{\alpha \in \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \mid \alpha = \varphi \wedge L(\bar{\partial}\rho)\} \quad q \geq 1$$

$$\bar{\mathfrak{E}}^{(p,q)}(M) = \{\alpha \in \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \mid (\alpha, \beta) = 0 \quad \forall \beta \in \bar{\mathcal{N}}^{(p,q)}(M)\}$$

We have the decompositions:

$$\mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) = \mathcal{N}^{(p,q)}(M) \oplus \mathfrak{E}^{(p,q)}(M)$$

$$\mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) = \bar{\mathcal{N}}^{(p,q)}(M) \oplus \bar{\mathfrak{E}}^{(p,q)}(M)$$

and we denote by:

$$\tau: \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \rightarrow \mathfrak{E}^{(p,q)}(M)$$

$$\bar{\tau}: \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \rightarrow \bar{\mathfrak{E}}^{(p,q)}(M)$$

the natural projections; observe that $\tau(\alpha) = \tau(\beta)$ is equivalent to $\alpha \wedge [M]^{1,0} = \beta \wedge [M]^{1,0}$; we set $\partial_b = \tau \circ L \circ \partial$ and $\bar{\partial}_b = \bar{\tau} \circ L \circ \bar{\partial}$; by definition ∂_b and $\bar{\partial}_b$ are tangential operators on M (cf. [6]).

The induced operators

$$\partial_b: \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \rightarrow \mathfrak{E}^{(p+1,q)}(M)$$

$$\bar{\partial}_b: \mathcal{E}^{(p,q)}(M) \rightarrow \bar{\mathfrak{E}}^{(p,q+1)}(M)$$

are described by the formulas

$$\partial_b \alpha = \tau \circ L \circ \partial(\alpha \wedge [M]^{1,0})$$

$$\bar{\partial}_b \alpha = \bar{\tau} \circ L \circ \bar{\partial}(\alpha \wedge [M]^{0,1}).$$

Thus

$$\begin{aligned}\partial(\alpha \wedge [M]^{1,0}) &= \partial_b \alpha \wedge [M]^{1,0} \\ \bar{\partial}(\alpha \wedge [M]^{0,1}) &= \bar{\partial}_b \alpha \wedge [M]^{0,1}.\end{aligned}$$

We consider in particular the following cases: $f \in \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(X)$ and $\beta \in \mathcal{E}^{(1,0)}(X)$.

a) if $f \in \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(X)$ set:

$$N(f) = L[(\partial f, \partial \rho)] \quad \bar{N}(f) = L[(\bar{\partial} f, \bar{\partial} \rho)];$$

so we obtain on M :

$$\begin{aligned}L(\partial f) &= \partial_b f + 2N(f)L(\partial \rho) \\ L(\bar{\partial} f) &= \bar{\partial}_b f + 2\bar{N}(f)L(\bar{\partial} \rho);\end{aligned}$$

furthermore it is easy to check that:

- i) at every point of M , $N(f)$ represents the complex normal derivative of f and $N(f) + \bar{N}(f)$ is the real normal derivative of f .
- ii) $f \mapsto N(f) - \bar{N}(f)$ is a tangential operator on M ; thus we have also e.g.:

$$L(\partial f) = \partial_b f + [N(f) - \bar{N}(f)]L(\partial \rho) + [N(f) + \bar{N}(f)]L(\partial \rho)$$

b) if $\beta \in \mathcal{E}^{(1,0)}(X)$ define $N_1(\beta)$ and $\bar{N}_1(\beta)$ by the relations:

$$\begin{aligned}L(\partial \beta) &= \partial_b \beta + 2N_1(\beta) \wedge L(\partial \rho) \\ L(\partial \bar{\beta} + \bar{\partial} \beta) - \bar{\tau}(\partial \bar{\beta} + \bar{\partial} \beta) &= \bar{N}_1(\beta) \wedge L(\partial \rho)\end{aligned}$$

we observe that $\beta \mapsto N_1(\beta) - \bar{N}_1(\beta)$ is a tangential operator, and so we obtain on M the decomposition:

$$L(\partial \beta) = \partial_b \beta + [N_1(\beta) - \bar{N}_1(\beta)] \wedge L(\partial \rho) + [N_1(\beta) + \bar{N}_1(\beta)] \wedge L(\partial \rho)$$

which again enables us to isolate the genuine non-tangential component of $L(\partial \beta)$, namely $(N_1(\beta) + \bar{N}_1(\beta)) \wedge L(\partial \rho)$.

Let $U \subset X$ be an open set and let $\mathcal{P}(U)$ be the space of real

pluriharmonic functions on U (i.e. $f \in \mathcal{P}(U)$ iff f is real valued and $\partial\bar{\partial}f = 0$).

We have the following:

PROPOSITION 2.1: *Assume $L(\partial\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\rho \wedge \partial\bar{\partial}\rho) \neq 0$; then there exists a local linear differential operator $R: \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(M)$ such that if $h \in \mathcal{P}(X)$ then $R(L(h)) = L(N(h) + \bar{N}(h))$.*

PROOF: Let $h \in \mathcal{P}(X)$: define $\delta_b = \partial_b + \bar{\partial}_b$, $^*\delta_b = \bar{\tau}\partial_b + \tau\bar{\partial}_b$, $\delta_b^\natural = i(\bar{\partial}_b - \partial_b)$; then omitting L to simplify our notations:

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \tau\bar{\tau}(\bar{\partial}\partial h) = \tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial h) = \tau(\bar{\partial}_b[\partial_b h + 2N(h)\partial\rho]) = \\ &= \tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial_b h + 2\bar{\partial}_b N(h) \wedge \partial\rho + 2N(h)\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho) = \tau(\partial_b\partial_b h) + 2N(h)\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho) \end{aligned}$$

and also

$$0 = \bar{\tau}\tau(\partial\bar{\partial}h) = \tau(\partial_b\bar{\partial}_b h) + 2N(h)\bar{\tau}(\partial_b\bar{\partial}\rho) = \bar{\tau}(\partial_b\bar{\partial}_b h) - 2N(h)\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)$$

thus we obtain the relation:

$$(\neq \neq) \quad ^*\delta_b\delta_b^\natural h = 2i[N(h) + \bar{N}(h)]\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho);$$

taking the Hermitian product, we have:

$$(^*\delta_b\delta_b^\natural h, i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)) = 2[N(h) + \bar{N}(h)](\|i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)\|^2).$$

Since $i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)$, which is a real operator, represents the restriction to M of the Levi form of ρ , in our assumption $\|i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)\|^2 > 0$ everywhere and so the R we are looking for is given by:

$$R(f) = \frac{1}{2}[(^*\delta_b\delta_b^\natural f, i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho))\|i\tau(\bar{\partial}_b\partial\rho)\|^{-2}].$$

We observe that in [10] a similar formula is proved in a more laborious way.

For example in the case $X = B^2$, the unit ball in C^2 , and $M = bB^2$, we obtain the formula:

$$\begin{aligned} R(f) &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \left[\frac{\partial f}{\partial z_1} z_1 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z_2} z_2 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial \bar{z}_1} \bar{z}_1 + \frac{\partial f}{\partial \bar{z}_2} \bar{z}_2 \right. \\ &\quad \left. + 2 \left(\frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial z_1 \partial \bar{z}_2} z_1 \bar{z}_2 + \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial \bar{z}_1 \partial z_2} z_1 \bar{z}_2 - \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial z_1 \partial \bar{z}_1} z_2 \bar{z}_2 - \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial z_2 \partial \bar{z}_2} z_1 \bar{z}_1 \right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

(cf. also [1]).

Proposition 2.1 shows that if h is a pluriharmonic function on X and M is not Levi-flat anywhere, then the real normal derivative of h on M can be expressed by means of a real tangential operator R .

Thus we have on M :

$$(*) \quad L(\partial h) = \partial_b h + [N(h) - \bar{N}(h)]L(\partial\rho) + R(h)L(\partial\rho)$$

let $\omega_M: \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{E}^{(1,0)}(M)$ be defined by the right member of (*) we have the following:

REMARKS 2.2: a) if $f \in \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(M)$, then $\partial_b \omega_M(f) = 0$.

(b) if f is the restriction of a pluriharmonic function F then $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(f) = 0$.

PROOF: a) Let $\tilde{f} \in \mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(X^+)$ be an extension of f ; by Stokes' theorem, $L(\partial\rho) \wedge [M]^{1,0} = 0$, so $\omega_M(f) \wedge [M]^{1,0} = \partial_b f \wedge [M]^{1,0} = \partial(\tilde{f}[M]^{1,0})$ and therefore $\partial\omega_M(f) \wedge [M]^{1,0} = 0$, so $\partial_b \omega_M(f) = 0$.

b) By (*), $\omega_M(f) = L(\partial F)$ so $\omega_M(f) \wedge [M]^{0,1} = \partial F \wedge [M]^{0,1}$. Since F is pluriharmonic, $\bar{\partial}(\omega_M(f) \wedge [M]^{0,1}) = 0$ and therefore $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(f) = 0$.

2b) *Extension to the general case.*

Consider the dual decompositions:

$$\mathcal{D}^{(p,q)}(M) = \mathcal{N}'^{(p,q)}(M) \oplus \mathfrak{F}'^{(p,q)}(M)$$

$$\mathcal{D}'^{(p,q)}(M) = \bar{\mathcal{N}}'^{(p,q)}(M) \oplus \bar{\mathfrak{F}}'^{(p,q)}(M)$$

where the projections τ and $\bar{\tau}$ are defined in an obvious way, so the operators ∂_b and $\bar{\partial}_b$ extend naturally to currents on M . Furthermore it turns out that N_1 and \bar{N}_1 are defined as $N_1, \bar{N}_1: \mathcal{E}_*^{1,0}(X^\pm) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}'^{(1,0)}(M)$ and they induce a continuous operator $N_1 - \bar{N}_1: \mathcal{D}'^{(1,0)}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}'^{(1,0)}(M)$; so if e.g. $\beta \in \mathcal{E}_*^{(1,0)}(X^+)$ we have:

$$\gamma_+(\partial\beta) = \partial_b \beta + (N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\gamma_+(\beta)) \wedge L(\partial\rho) + (N_1 + \bar{N}_1)(\beta) \wedge L(\partial\rho).$$

Of course $\partial\beta = 0$ implies $N_1(\beta) = 0$; we note also that if β is holomorphic or $\beta = \partial f$ for a real valued f , then $\bar{N}_1(\beta) = 0$; in particular if $\gamma_+(\beta) = \gamma_+(f)\partial\rho$ for a real valued function f , then:

$$(\circ) \quad (N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\beta) = (N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial f\rho - \rho\partial f) = (N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial f\rho) = 0.$$

Finally we have that ω_M can be extended as an operator $\omega_M: \mathcal{D}'^{(0,0)}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{D}'^{(1,0)}(M)$ and remarks 2.2 a), b) hold.

3. Traces of pluriharmonic functions

We are able now to give the following local solution to the trace problem (Cauchy–Dirichlet problem) for the $\bar{\partial}\partial$ operator.

THEOREM 3.1: *Let $p \in M$ and U be a neighbourhood of p ; assume $L(\partial\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\partial\rho) \neq 0$ on $M \cap U$ and let T be a real distribution defined on $U \cap M$; then the following statements are equivalent:*

- i) $\bar{\partial}_b\omega_M(T) = 0$ on $U \cap M$
- ii) *there exists a neighbourhood V of p and there exists $F \in \mathcal{P}(V \setminus M)$ such that $\gamma_+(F) - \gamma_-(F) = T$ in $U \cap V \cap M$; more precisely if the Levi form of ρ has a positive (resp. negative) eigenvalue at p we can choose $F|_{V^-} = 0$ (resp. $F|_{V^+} = 0$) and so T is actually the trace of a pluriharmonic function.*

PROOF: We have already observed that ii) implies i); conversely assume $\bar{\partial}_b\omega_M(T) = 0$ on $U \cap M$; let $W \subset U$ be a Stein neighbourhood of p : by assumption we have: $\bar{\partial}[\omega_M(T) \wedge [M \cap W]^{0,1}] = 0$ in W and so there exists $\tilde{K} \in \mathcal{D}'^{(1,0)}(W)$ such that $\bar{\partial}\tilde{K} = \omega_M(T) \wedge [M \cap W]^{0,1}$.

$\tilde{K}|_{W^+}$ and $\tilde{K}|_{W^-}$ are holomorphic $(1, 0)$ -forms in W^+ and W^- respectively, $\tilde{K}|_{W^\pm} \in \mathcal{E}_*^{(1,0)}(W^\pm)$ and $\gamma_+(\tilde{K}|_{W^+}) - \gamma_-(\tilde{K}|_{W^-}) = \omega_M(T)$ on $M \cap W$ (cf. [8] th.II 1.3). Now assume the Levi form of ρ has e.g. a positive eigenvalue at p ; then $\tilde{K}|_{W^-}$ extends across M as a holomorphic $(1, 0)$ -form β to a Stein neighbourhood V of p : if $K_+ = \tilde{K}|_{V^+}$ of course we have: $\gamma_+(K_+ - \beta) = \omega_M(T)$ on $M \cap W$.

Furthermore we have:

$$(**) \quad \gamma_+[\partial(K_+ - \beta)] = 0$$

in fact $\bar{N}_1(K_+ - \beta) = 0$ and so:

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma_+[\partial(K_+ - \beta)] &= \partial_b[\gamma_+(K_+ - \beta)] + 2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\gamma_+(K_+ - \beta)) \\ &= \partial_b\omega_M(T) + 2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\omega_M(T)) = 2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial_b T) \end{aligned}$$

Let now $(f_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ be a sequence of elements of $\mathcal{E}^{(0,0)}(V)$ such that $L(f_n) \rightarrow T$ in $\mathcal{D}'^{(0,0)}(M \cap V)$; from (°) it follows

$$2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial_b T) = \lim_n 2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial_b f_n) = \lim_n 2(N_1 - \bar{N}_1)(\partial f_n) = 0$$

which proves (**).

Now in V we have:

$$\bar{\partial}[\partial(K_+ - \beta) \wedge [V^+]] = \gamma_+(\partial K_+ - \beta) \wedge [V \cap M]^{0,1} = 0$$

and thus $\partial(K_+ - \beta) \wedge [V^+]$ is holomorphic in V and so $\partial(K_+ - \beta) \equiv 0$ on V^+ .

It follows that on V : $\partial[(K_+ - \beta) \wedge [V^+] - T \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0}] = 0$ and so it is possible to find $\tilde{G} \in \mathcal{D}'^{(0,0)}(V)$ such that:

$$\partial \tilde{G} = (K_+ - \beta) \wedge [V^+] - T \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0}.$$

Then if we set $G = \tilde{G}|_{V \setminus M}$ we obtain $\bar{\partial} \partial G = 0$.

Thus we have the following:

- a) G is a pluriharmonic function in $V \setminus M$
- b) Since G can be extended as a distribution across M and satisfies $\bar{\partial} \partial G = 0$, then (cf. again [8] corollaire I, 2.6.) $\gamma_+(G)$ and $\gamma_-(G)$ exist.
- c) On V^+ one has $\partial G = K_+ - \beta$.

We have also that $\gamma_+(G) + T$ is ∂_b -closed: in fact:

$$\begin{aligned} \partial[(\gamma_+(G) + T) \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0}] &= \omega_M(T) \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0} + \\ &- \gamma_+(\partial G) \wedge [M]^{1,0} = \omega_M(T) \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0} - \gamma_+(K_+ - \beta) \wedge [M \cap V]^{1,0}. \end{aligned}$$

Thus there exists an antiholomorphic function H on V^+ such that $\gamma_+(H) = \gamma_+(G) + T$.

It follows that $F = H - G$ is a pluriharmonic function on V^+ such that $\gamma_+(F) = T$ and since T is real we actually have $\gamma_+(\operatorname{Re} F) = T$ and the proof of Theorem 3.1. is complete.

From Theorem 3.1. we can deduce first the following global solutions of the Cauchy-Dirichlet problem:

PROPOSITION 3.2: *Suppose the Levi form of ρ has least one positive eigenvalue at every point $p \in M$. Then there exists a neighbourhood U of M such that the equation $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(T) = 0$ characterizes those distributions on M which are traces of pluriharmonic functions in U^+ .*

PROOF: Theorem 3.1. assures that there exists a covering $\mathcal{U} = (U_n)_{n \in \mathbb{N}}$ of M by open set of X such that for every $n \in \mathbb{N}$ there exists $f_n \in \mathcal{P}(U_n^+)$ for which $\gamma_+(f_n) = T$ on $M \cap U_n$; furthermore, if

$U_n \cap U_m \cap M \neq \emptyset$, one has $\gamma_+(f_m) = \gamma_+(f_n)$ on $U_m \cap U_n \cap M$ and thus, since the trace on M characterizes a pluriharmonic function, we have $f_m = f_n$ on $U_n^+ \cap U_m^+$ etc ...

PROPOSITION 3.3: *Suppose X is a Stein manifold, X^+ is relatively compact and $L(\partial\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\partial\rho) \neq 0$. If T is a real distribution on M , then the following statements are equivalent:*

- i) $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(T) = 0$
- ii) *there exists $F \in \mathcal{P}(X^+)$ such that $\gamma_+(F) = T$*

PROOF: i) follows immediately from ii); assume now i) holds: in order to prove ii), we argue in the same way as in Theorem 3.1, setting $W = X$ and using Hartog's theorem to extend $\bar{K}|_{X^-}$ to the whole X .

Using standard cohomological arguments we can investigate the global Riemann–Hilbert problem.

Let \mathcal{S} be the sheaf of germs of real distributions T on M such that $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(T) = 0$ and let $\hat{\mathcal{S}}$ be its trivial extension to X . Let \mathcal{A} be the sheaf of germs of distributions T on M such that $\bar{\partial}_b T = 0$. Furthermore, let \mathcal{P}_X be the sheaf of germs of real pluriharmonic functions on X and $*\mathcal{P}_M$ the sheaf on X associated to the canonical presheaf:

$$*\mathcal{P}(U) = \begin{cases} \mathcal{P}(U) & \text{if } U \cap M = \emptyset \\ \{f \in \mathcal{P}(U) \mid \gamma_+(f), \gamma_-(f) \text{ exist on } M\} & \text{if } U \cap M \neq \emptyset. \end{cases}$$

Assume $L(\partial\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\partial\rho) \neq 0$ on M .

Let $\text{Re}: \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}$ be the sheaf homomorphism defined by $T \mapsto$ real part of T , and let α be the sheaf homomorphism defined by: $\alpha: *\mathcal{P}_M \rightarrow \hat{\mathcal{S}}$

$$\alpha_x(f) = \begin{cases} [\gamma_+(f) - \gamma_-(f)]_x & \text{if } x \in M \\ 0 & \text{if } x \notin M \end{cases}.$$

COROLLARY 3.4: *The sequences*

$$(1) \quad 0 \rightarrow \mathcal{P}_X \rightarrow *\mathcal{P}_M \xrightarrow{\alpha} \hat{\mathcal{S}} \rightarrow 0$$

$$(2) \quad 0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \xrightarrow{i} \mathcal{A} \xrightarrow{\text{Re}} \mathcal{S} \rightarrow 0$$

are exact.

PROOF: We need the following

LEMMA 3.5: *Suppose M is not Levi-flat at p and let U be a neighbourhood of p ; let $f_{\pm} \in \mathcal{P}(U^{\pm})$ admitting traces $\gamma_+(f_+)$ and $\gamma_-(f_-)$ on $U \cap M$. If furthermore $\gamma_+(f_+) = \gamma_-(f_-)$, then there exists $f \in \mathcal{P}(U)$ such that $f|_{U^{\pm}} = f_{\pm}$.*

PROOF OF LEMMA 3.5: Since the problem is local, we can assume U is a domain of \mathbb{C}^n : then $\frac{\partial f_{\pm}}{\partial z_j}$, $1 \leq j \leq n$, are holomorphic in U^{\pm} , $\gamma_+(\frac{\partial f_+}{\partial z_j})$ and $\gamma_-(\frac{\partial f_-}{\partial z_j})$ exist and Proposition 2.1. assures that $\gamma_+(\frac{\partial f_+}{\partial z_j}) = \gamma_-(\frac{\partial f_-}{\partial z_j})$, $1 \leq j \leq n$; hence, we are essentially reduced to the case f_{\pm} holomorphic which follows from [8], Corollaire II 1.2.

PROOF OF THE COROLLARY 3.4: (1) In virtue of Theorem 3.1. α is surjective and the previous lemma concludes the proof of the exactness of (1).

(2) As a consequence of Lemma 3.5, we deduce easily that $\ker \operatorname{Re} = \operatorname{Im}(i)$ and so we have to check that if $p \in M$ and $T \in \mathcal{S}_p$ then there exists $\tilde{T} \in \mathcal{A}_p$ such that $\operatorname{Re} \tilde{T} = T$.

Now in virtue of Theorem 3.1, there exist a neighbourhood U of p in X and $F \in \mathcal{P}(U \setminus M)$ such that: $T = \gamma_+(F) - \gamma_-(F)$; from [8] we deduce that there exists $G \in \mathcal{O}(U \setminus M)$ such that $\operatorname{Re} G = F$ and $\gamma_+(G)$, $\gamma_-(G)$ exist; (more in detail the argument runs as follows: holomorphic and pluriharmonic functions with traces in the sense of currents are characterized by finite order of growth with respect to ρ ([8] Corollaire I 2.6.) so F has finite order of growth with respect to ρ and so does G , which can be expressed locally as $G = F + iH$, where H satisfies $dH = d^c F$ etc . . .); it follows that $\operatorname{Re}: \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{S}$ is surjective and (2) is exact: so the proof of Corollary 3.4 is complete.

THEOREM 3.6: *(Global solution of the Riemann–Hilbert problem for $\bar{\partial}\partial$) Suppose X is a Stein manifold and $L(\partial\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\rho \wedge \bar{\partial}\bar{\partial}\rho) \neq 0$; assume furthermore $H^2(X, \mathbb{C}) = 0$ or $H^1(M, \mathbb{R}) = 0$; then if T is a real distribution on M , the following statements are equivalent:*

- i) $\bar{\partial}_b \omega_M(T) = 0$
- ii) *there exists $F \in \mathcal{P}(X \setminus M)$ such that $\gamma_+(F) - \gamma_-(F) = T$.*

PROOF: We observe that for a Stein manifold X we have the isomorphism $H^r(X, \mathcal{P}_X) \approx H^{r+1}(X, \mathbb{C})$ for $r \geq 1$; moreover we have: $H^0(X, \hat{\mathcal{P}}) \approx H^0(M, \mathcal{S})$.

If $H^2(X, \mathbb{C}) = 0$ we obtain the exact sequence:

$$0 \rightarrow H^0(X, \mathcal{P}_X) \rightarrow H^0(X, *_\mathcal{P}_M) \rightarrow H^0(M, \mathcal{S}) \rightarrow 0$$

If $H^1(M, \mathbb{R}) = 0$ we obtain the exact sequence:

$$0 \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \rightarrow H^0(M, \mathcal{A}) \rightarrow H^0(M, \mathcal{S}) \rightarrow 0$$

This concludes the proof.

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