THE PIVOTAL TESSELLATION

LUIS M CRUZ-ORIVE

Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computation, Faculty of Sciences, University of Cantabria, Avda. Los Castros s/n, E-39005 Santander, Spain
e-mail: luis.cruz@unican.es
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to explore elementary properties of a special planar tessellation stemming from the application of recent stereological results (Cruz-Orive, 2005; 2008; Gual-Arnau and Cruz-Orive, 2009).

Consider the equatorial disk \( B_{2,t} = B_3 \cap L^3_{2[0]} \), where \( B_3 \subset \mathbb{R}^3 \) represents a ball of radius \( R \) centred at the origin \( O \) and \( L^3_{2[0]} \) denotes an isotropic plane through \( O \) with normal direction \( t \in S^2 \).

Within the disk \( B_{2,t} \), generate \( N \) independent and identically distributed uniform random points \( \{ z_1, z_2, \ldots, z_N \} \), (Fig. 1a). For each \( i = 1, 2, \ldots, N \), draw a straight line \( L_1(z_i) \) through the point \( z_i \) and normal to the axis \( O_{z_i} \). Thus \( L_1(z_i) \) is effectively a “point sampled” straight line which will be called a \( p \)-line. The union of all \( p \)-lines constitutes a tessellation in the reference disk, (Fig. 1b) which will be called a pivotal tessellation, inasmuch as the containing plane \( L^3_{2[0]} \) can only rotate around a fixed 'pivot' \( O \). The practical interest of this construction lies in the following fact. Consider a nonvoid compact subset \( Y \subset B_3 \) of volume \( V_3(Y) \) with piecewise smooth boundary \( \partial Y \) of area \( V_2(\partial Y) \). Then,

\[
\begin{align*}
\hat{V}_2(\partial Y) & = 2aN^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^{N} v_0 \{ (\partial Y \cap B_{2,t}) \cap L_1(z_i) \} , \\
\hat{V}_3(Y) & = aN^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^{N} v_1 \{ (Y \cap B_{2,t}) \cap L_1(z_i) \} ,
\end{align*}
\]

are unbiased estimators of \( V_2(\partial Y) \) and \( V_3(Y) \), respectively, where \( a := \pi R^2 \), and \( v_0, v_1 \) denote number of intersections and chord length, respectively (Cruz-Orive, 2005; 2008).

Here we are interested in some properties of the pivotal tessellation constituted by the \( p \)-lines associated with a planar Poisson point process.

PRELIMINARIES

Given a point \( z \in \mathbb{R}^2 \) of polar coordinates \( (\rho, \omega) \), \( \rho \in (0, \infty), \omega \in (0,2\pi) \), we define a \( p \)-line \( L_1(z) \) as a straight line with normal coordinates \( (\rho, \omega) \), namely,

\[
L_1(z) := L_1(\rho, \omega) = \{ x = (x_1, x_2) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : x_1 \cos \omega + x_2 \sin \omega = \rho \} .
\]

(2)

Consider either a stationary planar point process

\[
\Phi = \bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} z_i ,
\]

with realizations in \( \mathbb{R}^2 \), or a stationary random lattice

\[
\Lambda_z = \Lambda_0 + z = \bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} z_i ,
\]

(4)

where \( \Lambda_0 \subset \mathbb{R}^2 \) is a fixed regular lattice of points and \( z \) is a uniform random point in a fundamental tile of \( \Lambda_0 \), (Fig. 3a). In either case, the pivotal tessellation associated with either \( \Phi \) or \( \Lambda_z \) is

\[
\Psi = \bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} L_1(z_i) ,
\]

(5)
namely the corresponding process of $p$-lines, (Figs. 1b, 3b).

In this paper $\mathbb{P}(dx)$ represents the probability element of a random variable $X$, namely $\mathbb{P}(dx) := \mathbb{P}(x < X \leq x + dx)$. If $X$ admits a probability density function $f(x)$, then $\mathbb{P}(dx) = f(x)dx$. This notation extends to higher dimensions in a natural manner.

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When the associated process $\Phi$ is a stationary and isotropic planar Poisson point process (Stoyan et al., 1995), then the corresponding pivotal tessellation $\Psi$ will be called the pivotal Poisson tessellation. Let $\tau$ denote the fixed intensity of $\Phi$, namely,

$$\tau = \frac{\mathbb{E}\{v_0(\Phi \cap B)\}}{v_2(B)}, \quad 0 < v_2(B) < \infty,$$

where $B$ denotes any subset from the Borel $\sigma$-algebra in $\mathbb{R}^2$, and $v_q$ denotes the $q$-dimensional Hausdorff measure in $\mathbb{R}^2$, (thus $v_2$ represents area, $v_1$ curve length, and $v_0$ the counting measure).

Next we obtain some properties of the tessellation $\Psi$. To do this we consider the random intersection

$$\Psi \cap B_R = \bigcup_{i=1}^{N} L_1(z_i) \cap B_R,$$

(Fig. 1b), where $B_R \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ is a closed disk of radius $R$ centred at the origin $O$, whereas $\{z_1, z_2, \ldots, z_N\}$ represent $N$ independent and identically distributed (i.i.d.) uniform random (UR) points in $B_R$, and

$$N \sim \text{Poisson}(\pi R^2 \tau),$$

so that $N$ is a Poisson random variable with mean and variance equal to $\pi R^2 \tau$.

For a $p$-line $L_1(z) := L_1(\rho, \omega)$ such that the point $z$ of polar coordinates $(\rho, \omega)$ is UR in $B_R$, it is easy to show that $\rho$ and $\omega$ are independent random variables with

$$\mathbb{P}(d\rho) = 2R^{-2}\rho d\rho, \quad 0 < \rho < R,$$

$$\mathbb{P}(d\omega) = (2\pi)^{-1}d\omega, \quad 0 < \omega < 2\pi.$$  \hspace{1cm} (9)

**Lemma 1.** Let $z \in B_R$ denote a UR point in $B_R$. Then the mean chord length determined in $B_R$ by the corresponding $p$-line is,

$$\mathbb{E}\{v_1(L_1(z) \cap B_R)\} = \frac{4}{3}R.$$  \hspace{1cm} (10)

**Proof.** Straightforward bearing in mind that $v_1(L_1(\rho, \omega) \cap B_R) = 2\sqrt{R^2 - \rho^2}$ and using Eq. 9. $\square$

**Proposition 1.** The mean total length per unit disk area of the straight line segments determined in $B_R$ by the $p$-lines of $\Psi$ is

$$\lambda_1^2(R) := (\pi R^2)^{-1}\mathbb{E}\{v_1(\Psi \cap B_R)\} = \frac{4}{3}R.$$  \hspace{1cm} (11)

**Proof.** Conditional on the number $N$ of $p$-lines from $\Psi$ hitting $B_R$, by Eq. 10 we have,

$$\mathbb{E}\{v_1(\Psi \cap B_R)|N\} = \frac{4}{3}RN.$$  \hspace{1cm} (12)

Using the premise (Eq. 8) and dividing by $\pi R^2$, the result follows. $\square$
**Consequence.** From Eq. 11 we see that \( \lambda_1^3(R) = O(R) \), which implies that the pivotal Poisson tessellation \( \Psi \) associated with \( \Phi \) is not stationary.

**Remark 1.** The mean area of the equatorial disk \( B_{2,1} \) considered in the Introduction (see Fig. 2) per unit volume of the corresponding ball \( B_3 \), is \( \lambda_2^3(R) = \pi R^2 / (4\pi R^3 / 3) = 3/(4R) \). On the other hand, the mean total chord length of the bounded pivotal Poisson tessellation in \( B_{2,1} \), per unit area of \( B_2 \), is given by Eq. 11. Therefore, the mean total chord length of such planar tessellation per unit volume of the reference ball \( B_3 \), is

\[
\lambda_1^3(R) = \lambda_2^3(R) \cdot \lambda_3^3(R) = \tau, \tag{13}
\]

namely a constant. This result is consistent with the fact that \( p \)-lines are effectively motion invariant in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \).

**Lemma 2.** Let \( z_1, z_2 \) denote two i.i.d. UR points in \( B_R \). Then,

\[
\mathbb{P}\{ L_1(z_1) \cap L_2(z_2) \subset B_R \} = \frac{3}{8}, \quad \forall R \in (0, \infty), \tag{14}
\]

that is, the probability that the corresponding two \( p \)-lines intersect inside \( B_R \) is a known constant equal to \( 3/8 \) for any \( R > 0 \).

\[\text{Fig. 2. The probability that a } p\text{-line } L_1(z_2) \text{ associated with a UR point } z_2 \in B_R \text{ hits a given } p\text{-chord } L_1(z_1) \cap B_R \text{ (thick straight line segment in the figure) is equal to the probability that } z_2 \text{ falls in the support set (shaded region) of the given } p\text{-chord with respect to } O.\]

**Proof.** Fix one of the two points, e.g., \( z_1 = (\rho, \omega) \), \( \rho \in (0, R) \), \( \omega \in (0, 2\pi) \), and denote by \( p(\rho, \omega; R) \) the required probability conditional on \( (\rho, \omega) \). By the definition of support set (Cruz-Orive, 2005; Gual-Arnau and Cruz-Orive, 2009), it follows that \( p(\rho, \omega; R) \) is the probability that \( z_2 \) falls in the support set \( H_{L_1(z_1) \cap B_R} \) of the chord \( L_1(z_1) \cap B_R \) with respect to the disk centre \( O \) (see Fig. 2). Bearing in mind that \( \mathbb{P}(d\omega) = (\pi R^2)^{-1} d\omega \), we have

\[
p(\rho, \omega; R) := \mathbb{P}\{ L_1(z_1) \cap L_2(z_2) \subset B_R | \rho, \omega \} = \int_{H_{L_1(z_1) \cap B_R}} \mathbb{P}(d\omega) = \frac{1}{2} - \frac{2}{\pi} \cdot g_{\text{disk}} \left( \sqrt{1 - \rho^2 / R^2} \right), \tag{15}
\]

where

\[
g_{\text{disk}}(x) = \frac{1}{2} \left( \cos^{-1} x - x \sqrt{1 - x^2} \right), \quad (0 \leq x \leq 1), \tag{16}
\]

is the geometric covariogram of a disk of unit diameter. It is readily verified that,

\[
\mathbb{P}\{ L_1(z_1) \cap L_2(z_2) \subset B_R \} = \int_0^R p(\rho, \omega; R) \mathbb{P}(d\rho) = \frac{3}{8}, \tag{17}
\]

where \( \mathbb{P}(d\rho) \) is given by the first Eq. 9. \( \square \)

**Proposition 2.** Let \( \lambda_0^{(0)}(R) \), \( \lambda_0^{(1)}(R) \), and \( \lambda_0^{(2)}(R) \) denote the mean total numbers per unit disk area of the vertices, edges and connected regions constituting the bounded tessellation \( \Psi \cap B_R \), respectively. Then,

\[
\begin{align*}
\lambda_0^{(0)}(R) &= \frac{3}{16} \pi^2 R^2 + 2\tau, \\
\lambda_0^{(1)}(R) &= \frac{3}{8} \pi^2 R^2 + 3\tau, \\
\lambda_0^{(2)}(R) &= \frac{3}{16} \pi^2 R^2 + \tau + \frac{1}{\pi R^2},
\end{align*}
\tag{18}
\]

where the terms following the first one in the right hand side of the preceding identities represent the contributions of the disk boundary \( \partial B_R \).

**Proof.** We use the method of Santaló (1940; 1976 p. 51). Conditional on the number \( N \) of \( p \)-lines from \( \Psi \) hitting \( B_R \), let \( V_{B'}(N), V_{\partial B'}(N) \) denote the mean number of vertices interior to \( B_R \) and in \( \partial B_R \), respectively, and set \( V_{B'}(N) + V_{\partial B'}(N) = V(N) \). Then using Lemma 2,

\[
\mathbb{E}\{ V(N) | N \} = \left( \frac{N}{2} \right) \frac{3}{8} + 2N. \tag{19}
\]

Likewise, let \( E_{B'}(N), E_{\partial B'}(N) \) denote the mean number of edges interior to \( B_R \) and in \( \partial B_R \), respectively, and set \( E_{B'}(N) + E_{\partial B'}(N) = E(N) \). At each interior vertex there meet 4 edges, but they are counted twice because each edge has two vertices as endpoints. On the other hand, at each boundary vertex...
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there meet 3 edges, but they are also counted twice for the same reason. Therefore,

\[ \mathbb{E}\{E(N)\mid N\} = 2 \binom{N}{2} \frac{3}{8} + 3N. \]

(20)

Finally, let \( F(N) \) denote the total number of connected regions or “faces”. By Euler’s formula we have \( V(N) + F(N) - E(N) = 1 \), and therefore,

\[ \mathbb{E}\{F(N)\mid N\} = \binom{N}{2} \frac{3}{8} + N + 1. \]

(21)

Taking expectations on both sides of each of the identities (Eqs. 19–21) with respect to \( N \), bearing Eq. 8 in mind, and dividing by \( \pi R^2 \) in each case, the corresponding identities (Eq. 18) are obtained.

**Definition.** The mean number of vertices (or of sides), the mean boundary length, and the mean area of a connected region from the bounded tessellation \( \Psi \cap B_R \), are defined respectively as follows,

\[ \mathbb{E}\{N(R)\} = \frac{2\lambda^{(1)}_0(R)}{\lambda^{(2)}_0(R)}, \]

\[ \mathbb{E}\{B(R)\} = \frac{2\lambda^{(2)}_0(R) + 2/R}{\lambda^{(2)}_0(R)}, \]

(22)

\[ \mathbb{E}\{A(R)\} = \frac{1}{\lambda^{(2)}_0(R)}. \]

**Proposition 3.** The characteristics given in the preceding definition satisfy the following asymptotic relations,

\[ \mathbb{E}\{N(R)\} = 4 + O(R^{-2}), \]

\[ \mathbb{E}\{B(R)\} = O(R^{-1}), \]

(23)

\[ \mathbb{E}\{A(R)\} = O(R^{-2}). \]

**Proof.** Substitute the results Eq. 11 and Eq. 18 into Eq. 22.

\[ \square \]

**CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS**

Concerning the planar pivotal Poisson tessellation \( \Psi \), the main conclusion is that it is not stationary, as illustrated by the results (Eqs.11, 18, and 23). The asymptotic mean number of vertices of a polygon is 4, as in the ordinary Poisson tessellation of straight lines (Stoyan et al., 1995), but the remaining properties change with the distance from the origin. The non stationarity is intuitively plausible on seeing Fig. 1b. A priori one might think that, because \( p \)-lines on an isotropic plane \( L^2_{[0]} \) are effectively motion invariant in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \), and because the associated point process is stationary Poisson, then \( \Psi \) would also be stationary in \( \mathbb{R}^2 \), but this is not the case. As confirmed by Eq. 13, the length density of the \( p \)-lines of the planar pivotal Poisson tessellation must be constant in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \) because they are motion invariant in \( \mathbb{R}^3 \). Note that the plane \( L^2_{[0]} \) is less and less “dense” away from the origin; this effect must be compensated by a higher and higher line length density in that plane away from the origin, and this is indeed what happens.
For estimation purposes via Eq. 1 it is simpler and more efficient to start with a stationary random lattice of points (Fig. 3a), instead of a Poisson point process. The corresponding pivotal lattice tessellation (Fig. 3b) will enjoy similar properties. An exact study of the latter might be prohibitive, however, because the number of lattice points inside a disk is a complicated oscillating function of the disk diameter.

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