

Antipodal convex hypersurfaces

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ABSTRACT

Motivated by a conjecture of Steinhaus, we consider the mapping F , associating to each point x of a convex hypersurface the set of all points at maximal intrinsic distance from x . We first provide two large classes of hypersurfaces with the mapping F single-valued and involutive. Afterwards we show that a convex body is smooth and has constant width if its double has the above properties of F , and we prove a partial converse to this result. Additional conditions are given, to characterize the (doubly covered) balls.

1. INTRODUCTION

A *convex hypersurface* is the boundary of a *convex body* (i.e., compact convex set with interior points) in the Euclidean space \mathbb{R}^{d+1} , or a doubly covered convex body in \mathbb{R}^d ; in the last case we call it *degenerate*. The *intrinsic metric* ρ of a convex hypersurface S is defined, for any two points x, y in S , as the length $\rho(x, y)$ of a *segment* (i.e., shortest path on the hypersurface) from x to y . For any point $x \in S$ let ρ_x denote the *distance function from x* , given by $\rho_x(y) = \rho(x, y)$ for all $y \in S$,

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and let F_x be the set of all *farthest points from* x (i.e., global maxima of ρ_x). For simplicity, we shall not distinguish between the set $F_x = \{y\}$ and the point y , and we shall write $F_x = y$, when the case occurs.

Our paper concerns the following question of H. Steinhaus (see Section A35, (ii) in [3]): *is the sphere characterized by the property that the mapping F , associating to any point x on the convex surface S the set F_x of farthest points from x , is single-valued, 1–1 and symmetrical?*

It is well known that our mapping F is upper semicontinuous. We call F *injective* if $F_x \cap F_y = \emptyset$ for any pair of distinct points $x, y \in S$, and we call F *surjective* if for every point $y \in S$ there is some point $x \in S$ with $y \in F_x$. When we say that F is bijective, we implicitly state that F is single-valued.

While the employment of the mapping F led to a beautiful topological characterization of the spheres [4], the above – most natural – attempt to use F for a metrical characterization of the spheres was not successful.

A class \mathcal{R} of centrally-symmetric surfaces of revolution was provided by the third author in [10], to negatively answer Steinhaus' question. He also asked for alternative descriptions of the set \mathcal{H} , of all convex (hyper)surfaces for which F is a single-valued involution ($F \circ F = \text{id}_S$). We shall call the elements of \mathcal{H} , referring to the sphere, *antipodal convex (hyper)surfaces*.

Put $\mathcal{I} = \{S \text{ convex} : \text{rad}(S) = \text{diam}(S)\}$, where $\text{rad}(S)$ is the *intrinsic radius* of S , $\text{rad}(S) = \min_{x \in S} \rho(x, F_x)$.

All surfaces in the class \mathcal{I} are antipodal, because $\mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{I} \subset \mathcal{H}$ [13]. We show, with our Theorem 2, that the inclusion $\mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{I}$ is strict. Other examples are provided in [6], by showing that all right circular cylinders of small height also belong to $\mathcal{I} \setminus \mathcal{R}$.

The second author [8] proved that no tetrahedron is antipodal, leaving open the existence problem for antipodal polyhedral convex surfaces.

Yet all these considerations were done for surfaces in \mathbb{R}^3 . The aim of this work is to study antipodal convex hypersurfaces in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} , for any integer $d \geq 2$.

In the first part of the paper, Theorem 1 generalizes the set \mathcal{R} to higher dimensions (see Section 3 for the precise definition), while Theorem 2 provides a new class of examples, by considering the union of two caps of d -dimensional semispheres of (not necessarily) different radii. We prove that all these hypersurfaces belong to $\mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$.

In the last part we restrict our study to the set \mathcal{D} of all degenerate convex hypersurfaces. We show in Theorem 3 that every hypersurface in $\mathcal{H} \cap \mathcal{D}$ is the double of a smooth convex body of constant width. Theorem 4 provides a partial converse to Theorem 3; roughly speaking, it states that every double of a C^2 -differentiable convex body of constant width has a neighbourhood of its ridge, the restriction of F to which has the properties of Steinhaus.

Theorems 5–7 partly confirm Steinhaus' guess, by proving that it is possible to characterize *the balls* (eventhough not the spheres) by the use of the mapping F . More precisely, a degenerate convex hypersurface D is a doubly covered ball if D is centrally symmetric and the corresponding mapping F is an involutive bijection (Theorem 5), respectively if D is two-dimensional and F is an isometry

(Theorem 6), and the only degenerate convex hypersurfaces in \mathcal{I} are the doubly covered balls (Theorem 7).

We refer to the survey article [11] for general properties of, and references on, farthest point sets on convex surfaces.

The *diameter* of a convex hypersurface S is $\text{diam} S = \sup_{x \in S} \rho_x(F_x)$.

The *width* $w(u)$ of the convex body $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ (or of its boundary) in the direction $u \in S^{d-1}$ is the distance between the two supporting hyperplanes of K orthogonal to u . (Here, S^{d-1} denotes the unit sphere in \mathbb{R}^d .) K is said to be of *constant width* if $w(u) = w$ for all $u \in S^{d-1}$. See [2] for a survey on this topic.

According to [9], a convex body K is called *smooth* if all its boundary points are regular. The double D of K is called *smooth* if K is smooth, and of *differentiable class C^r* if $\text{bd} K$, the boundary of K , is so.

For $a, b, c \in \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$, the notations abc , $[ab]$, $[abc]$ and $\|a - b\|$ stand for the 2-plane spanned by the points a, b , and c , the line-segment determined by a and b , the Euclidean triangle determined by a, b and c , and the length of $[ab]$, respectively. We denote by (e_1, \dots, e_{d+1}) the canonical basis of \mathbb{R}^{d+1} , and the j th component of $\omega \in \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$ by ω^j .

The length of the curve Γ is denoted by $l(\Gamma)$.

2 HYPERSURFACES OF REVOLUTION

The goal of this section is to give some more notations and an auxiliary result for later use.

We describe any hypersurface of revolution S as

$$S = \{(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^d \times \mathbb{R} : (\|x\|, y) \in \Gamma\},$$

where Γ is a curve in $\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0} \times \mathbb{R}$ running from $(0, a)$ to $(0, b)$, where $a < b$ and all intermediate points of Γ lie in $\mathbb{R}_{> 0} \times \mathbb{R}$. Then the *south* and *north pole* of S are $\sigma = (0, a) \in \mathbb{R}^d \times \mathbb{R}$ and $\nu = (0, b) \in \mathbb{R}^d \times \mathbb{R}$, respectively.

Each point $p \neq \sigma, \nu$ in the hypersurface of revolution S lies on a unique *meridian* M_p , defined as the component of $S \cap p\sigma\nu \setminus \{\sigma, \nu\}$ containing p . Denote by M_p^- the *opposite meridian* to M_p (or to p) in the plane $p\sigma\nu$, the image of M_p under the antipodal map in the first d coordinates.

Consider now a continuous map $\phi : [0, a] \subset \mathbb{R} \rightarrow [0, +\infty[$ such that $\phi(s) > 0$ for all $s \in [0, a[$ and $\phi(a) = 0$, and denote by S_ϕ the hypersurface of revolution generated as above by the curve Γ consisting of the union of the graphs of ϕ and $-\phi$. Alternatively, the symmetrical graph G_ϕ of ϕ , $G_\phi \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{(s, 0, \dots, 0, \pm\phi(s)) : s \in [0, a]\}$, is included in the (x_1, x_{d+1}) -plane $P = \{q : x_2(q) = \dots = x_d(q) = 0\} \subset \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$. Denote by Λ the unit $(d-2)$ -sphere of the (x_2, \dots, x_d) -space P^\perp . When (λ, α) varies in $\Lambda \times [-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$, G_ϕ generates the hypersurface S_ϕ given by

$$X(s, \lambda, \alpha) = s \sin \alpha e_1 + s \cos \alpha \lambda \pm \phi(s) e_{d+1}.$$

The points $\sigma = (0, \dots, 0, -\phi(0))$ and $\nu = (0, \dots, 0, \phi(0))$ are respectively the south and the north pole of S_ϕ .

We shall repeatedly make use of the following simple result.

Lemma 1. *The diameter $\text{diam}(S)$ of any hypersurface of revolution S is equal to the length of any meridian of S . If the distance between two points p, q on the hypersurface of revolution S is equal to $\text{diam}(S)$ then $F_p = q$ and p, q lie on opposite meridians. In particular, if S is centrally symmetric then the points are symmetric to each other.*

Proof. The diameter of a hypersurface of revolution S is at least equal to the length of one of its meridians, because any meridian is a segment between the poles of S .

Let p, q be two points in S such that $\rho(p, q) = \text{diam}(S)$, M_p the meridian through p , and $z \in M_p^-$ determined by $\rho(q, v) = \rho(z, v)$. We have

$$\begin{aligned} \text{diam}(S) &= \rho(p, q) \\ (1) \quad &\leq \min\{\rho(p, v) + \rho(v, q), \rho(p, \sigma) + \rho(\sigma, q)\} \\ &= \min\{\rho(p, v) + \rho(v, z), \rho(p, \sigma) + \rho(\sigma, z)\} \\ (2) \quad &\leq \frac{1}{2}(l(M_p) + l(M_p^-)) = l(M_p) \leq \text{diam}(S), \end{aligned}$$

which implies that $\text{diam}(S) = \rho(p, q) = l(M_p) = l(M)$ for any meridian M .

The equality case in (2) implies

$$\rho(p, v) + \rho(v, z) = \rho(p, \sigma) + \rho(\sigma, z) = \text{diam}(S).$$

By the equality case in (1), the two components of $(M_p \cup M_q) \setminus \{p, q\}$ are segments.

Let q' be the point symmetric to q with respect to $\nu\sigma p$. Then the two components of $(M_p \cup M_{q'}) \setminus \{p, q'\}$ are segments too. Since segments do not bifurcate, $M_q = M_p^-$ and $q = z$. \square

3. A CLASS OF ANTIPODAL HYPERSURFACES

In this section we provide a class \mathcal{R} of antipodal hypersurfaces, by generalizing in arbitrary dimension the last theorem in [10].

Let $\phi: [0, a] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be a concave nonincreasing function such that

$$0 = \phi(a) < \phi(0) < a.$$

We assume that the function $\psi: [0, a] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, given by $\psi(s) = s^2 + \phi^2(s)$, is strictly increasing.

Let \mathcal{R} be the set of all hypersurfaces S_ϕ obtained from the above functions ϕ by rotating in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} their symmetrical graphs $G_\phi \subset x_1 O x_{d+1}$ about the axis $\mathbb{R}e_{d+1}$; i.e., for ϕ as above, $s \in [0, a]$, $\lambda \in \Lambda$, and $\alpha \in [-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$, S_ϕ is given by

$$X(s, \lambda, \alpha) = s \sin \alpha e_1 + s \cos \alpha \lambda \pm \phi(s) e_{d+1}.$$

For the proof of Theorem 1 we need to define, for each concave function ϕ as above, a new function $\eta: [-a, a] \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ by $\eta(\pm s) = \phi(s)$. Let $S_\phi^- \subset \mathbb{R}^{d+1}$ be the

hypersurface defined by the rotation of the graph of η about the axis $\mathbb{R}e_1$; that is, for $t \in [-a, a]$, $\mu \in \Lambda$ and $\beta \in [-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$, S_ϕ^- is given by

$$Y(t, \mu, \beta) = t e_1 + \phi(|t|) \cos \beta \mu + \phi(|t|) \sin \beta e_{d+1}.$$

Lemma 2. *The hypersurfaces S_ϕ and S_ϕ^- are convex, S_ϕ^- is included in $\text{conv} S_\phi$ and $S_\phi^- \cap S_\phi = S_\phi \cap P$.*

Proof. Let C_ϕ denote the set of all $(x, y) \in \mathbb{R}^d \times \mathbb{R}$ such that $|y| - \phi(\|x\|) \leq 0$, that is, the basin $f \leq 0$ of the function $f : (x, y) \mapsto |y| - \phi(\|x\|)$. Clearly $S_\phi = \text{bd} C_\phi$.

The function $y \mapsto |y|$ is convex, and therefore the function $(x, y) \mapsto |y|$ is convex. The function $x \mapsto \|x\|$ is convex and the function $-\phi$ is nondecreasing and convex, hence the composition $x \mapsto -\phi(\|x\|)$ is convex, and thus the function $(x, y) \mapsto -\phi(\|x\|)$ is convex. As the sum of two convex functions is convex, the function f is convex, and because the subgraph of any convex function is a convex set, it follows that the set C_ϕ is convex, and therefore $S_\phi = \text{bd} C_\phi$ is a convex hypersurface. The proof that S_ϕ^- is a convex hypersurface is analogous.

The hypersurface S_ϕ^- is the set of all $(u, v, y) \in \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^{d-1} \times \mathbb{R}$ such that $u = \pm \phi^{-1}(\|(v, y)\|)$, or equivalently $\phi(|u|)^2 = \|v\|^2 + y^2$. Because the function ψ is strictly increasing, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \phi(\|(u, v)\|)^2 + u^2 + \|v\|^2 &= \phi(\|(u, v)\|)^2 + \|(u, v)\|^2 \\ &\geq \phi(|u|)^2 + u^2 = \|v\|^2 + y^2 + u^2, \end{aligned}$$

with equality if and only if $v = 0$. This is equivalent to $\phi(\|(u, v)\|)^2 \geq y^2$ with equality if and only if $v = 0$, that is, $(u, v, y) \in C_\phi$ and $(u, v, y) \in S_\phi$ if and only if $v = 0$ if and only if $(u, v, y) \in S_\phi \cap P$. \square

The next well-known lemma can be found, for example, in [1], p. 80. Let K be a convex body in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} and x a point in $\mathbb{R}^{d+1} \setminus \text{int} K$. The *metric projection* of x onto K is the unique point in K closest to x .

Lemma 3. *Let K be a convex body in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} and Γ a curve in $\mathbb{R}^{d+1} \setminus \text{int} K$. Then the length of Γ is at least as long as its metric projection onto K .*

The following result extends to arbitrary dimension Theorem 2 in [10]; the proof we present here is not verbatim the same as the proof given in [10], although it contains the same steps.

Theorem 1. $\mathcal{R} \subset \mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$.

Proof. Consider a hypersurface S_ϕ in \mathcal{R} and a point $p \in S_\phi$.

We first prove that if p lies on the equator, that is, $p^{d+1} = 0$, then $\rho(p, -p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi)$.

Because of the rotational symmetry, we may assume that $p \in P$, that is, $p^j = 0$ for all $2 \leq j \leq d$. In combination with $p^{d+1} = 0$ this means that p is a pole of S_ϕ^- , and therefore $\rho_{S_\phi^-}(p, -p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi^-) = l(M_p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi)$ according to Lemma 1. On the other hand, if Γ is any segment in S_ϕ from p to $-p$ and Γ^- its metric projection onto $\text{conv} S_\phi^-$, which lands in S_ϕ^- , then

$$\text{diam}(S_\phi) \geq \rho(p, -p) = l(\Gamma) \geq l(\Gamma^-) \geq \rho_{S_\phi^-}(p, -p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi),$$

where the second inequality follows from Lemma 3. Therefore $\rho(p, -p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi)$.

We now drop the assumption that $p^{d+1} = 0$. Let Γ be a segment from p to $-p$. Then Γ intersects the equator in at least one point q . We obtain from the symmetry of S_ϕ that $\rho(q, -p) = \rho(-q, p)$, and consequently

$$\begin{aligned} \text{diam}(S) &\geq \rho(p, -p) = l(\Gamma) = \rho(p, q) + \rho(q, -p) \\ &= \rho(q, p) + \rho(p, -q) \geq \rho(q, -q) = \text{diam}(S_\phi). \end{aligned}$$

It follows that $\rho(p, -p) = \text{diam}(S_\phi)$, and therefore Lemma 1 yields that $-p$ is the unique point $p' \in S_\phi$ such that $\rho(p, p') = \text{diam}(S_\phi)$. \square

4 ANOTHER CLASS OF ANTIPODAL HYPERSURFACES

In this section we provide another class \mathcal{J} of convex hypersurfaces verifying the Steinhaus' conditions mentioned in Introduction. We consider the union of two caps of d -dimensional semispheres of (possibly not) different radii, and prove that it belongs to $\mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$. Our argument also holds for the limit case where one of the caps is a disk.

In order to prove the main result of this section, we shall use the following fact of elementary analysis.

Lemma 4. *Let Y be a connected topological space, I and interval in \mathbb{R} , and for each $y \in Y$, let $f_y : I \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be such that:*

- (i) *For each $y \in Y$ the function f_y is not constant, and either increasing or decreasing on I ,*
- (ii) *For each $x \in I$ the function $y \mapsto f_y(x)$ is continuous.*

Then either for each $y \in Y$ the function f_y is increasing, or for each $y \in Y$ the function f_y is decreasing.

Proof. Let Y^+ and Y^- denote the set of all $y \in Y$ such that f_y is increasing and f_y is decreasing, respectively. It follows from (i) that $Y^+ \cap Y^- = \emptyset$ and $Y = Y^+ \cup Y^-$. Let $y \in Y^+$. Because f_y is not constant, there exist $a, b \in I$ such that $a < b$ and $f_y(a) < f_y(b)$. It follows from (ii) that there exists a neighbourhood Z of y in Y such that for every $z \in Z$ we have $f_z(a) < f_z(b)$, which implies that $f_z \in Y^+$. This

proves that Y^+ is an open subset of Y . Similarly we obtain that Y^- is an open subset of Y , and because Y is the disjoint union of Y^+ and Y^- and Y is connected, it follows that $Y = Y^+$ or $Y = Y^-$. \square

Let L_{d,R_1,R_2} be the union of two d -dimensional spherical caps of respective radii $R_1 \geq 1$ and $R_2 \geq 1$, whose common boundary is a unit $(d-1)$ -dimensional sphere; i.e., L_{d,R_1,R_2} is the boundary of the intersection of two balls of respective radii R_1 and R_2 , with centers at distance $\sqrt{R_1^2 - 1} + \sqrt{R_2^2 - 1}$. Denote by \mathcal{J} the set of all hypersurfaces L_{d,R_1,R_2} .

Theorem 2. $\mathcal{J} \subset \mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$.

Proof. The following argument will be an exercise in trigonometrical geometry.

Denote by V the space spanned by e_{d+1} , by H the hyperplane orthogonal to V and by Λ the unit $(d-1)$ -sphere in H .

For $i = 1, 2$, let B_i be a ball of radius R_i in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} whose center ω_i belongs to V , and let S_i be the boundary of B_i . Assume that $1 \leq R_1 \leq R_2$ and $S_1 \cap S_2 = \Lambda$. Assume, moreover, that $\omega_1^{d+1} < 0$ and $\omega_2^{d+1} > 0$, and put $C_i = \{u \in S_i : (-1)^i u^{d+1} < 0\}$. Then the boundary L_{d,R_1,R_2} of $B_1 \cap B_2$ is the disjoint union $C_1 \cup \Lambda \cup C_2$. Let $\Theta_i = \angle \omega_i \lambda$, where $\lambda \in \Lambda$. It follows from elementary calculus that

$$(3) \quad \begin{aligned} \Theta_i &= \sin^{-1} \frac{1}{R_i} \\ \omega_i &= (0, \dots, 0, (-1)^i h_i) \\ h_i &= \sqrt{R_i^2 - 1} = \cot \Theta_i. \end{aligned}$$

A parametrization of $C_i^* \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} C_i \setminus V$ is given by

$$(4) \quad \begin{aligned} \phi_i : \Lambda \times]0, \Theta_i[&\rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{d+1} \\ (\lambda, \theta) &\mapsto \omega_i + R_i(\sin \theta \lambda - (-1)^i \cos \theta e_{d+1}). \end{aligned}$$

We call respectively λ and θ the *longitude* and the *colatitude* of $\phi_i(\lambda, \theta)$.

It is quite obvious that a meridian of L_{d,R_1,R_2} has the length equal to

$$\text{diam}(L_{d,R_1,R_2}) = R_1 \Theta_1 + R_2 \Theta_2.$$

A *meridian path* of L_{d,R_1,R_2} is by definition a path in the union of two opposite meridians of L_{d,R_1,R_2} .

If $p = \phi_i(\lambda, \theta)$ belongs to $L_{d,R_1,R_2} \setminus V$ then there exists a unique meridian M_p through p . Denote by $a(p)$ the point of $M_p^- \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} M_{\phi_i(-\lambda, \theta)}$ such that $(M_p \cup M_p^-) \setminus \{p, a(p)\}$ consists of two equally long components. We claim that $a(p)$ is the only farthest point from p . To see this, it suffices to prove that the length of any path from p to $a(p)$ is never less than $\text{diam}(L_{d,R_1,R_2})$ and to apply Lemma 1. By continuity, it is sufficient to investigate the following two cases.

Case 1. $p \in C_2^* \cup a(C_2^*)$. We can assume, without loss of generality, that $p \in C_2^*$ (otherwise, exchange p and $a(p)$). Note that p and $a(p)$ have opposite longitudes, and the colatitudes θ_1 of $a(p)$ and θ_2 of p satisfy

$$(5) \quad \theta_1 R_1 = \theta_2 R_2 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \Delta.$$

It follows that $a(C_2^*)$ is the set of those points in C_1^* having the colatitude in $]0, \frac{R_2}{R_1} \Theta_1[$.

Notice that any segment Σ from p to $q = a(p)$ intersects $\Lambda \subset \text{cl}C_2 \cap \text{cl}C_1$ at a single point, say λ . Indeed, if $r, r' \in \Lambda$ then the segment between r and r' of the circle on C_2 with center at ω_2 is shorter than the segment between r and r' of the circle on C_1 with center at ω_1 , which in turn is shorter than the segment between r and r' of the great circle on Λ . Therefore, if we start at $p \in C_2$ and want to reach $q \in C_1$ along a segment on L_{d, R_1, R_2} then, after reaching a point on Λ via a circle segment on C_2 with center at ω_2 , we must immediately leave Λ into C_1 and go to q along a circle segment in C_1 with center at ω_1 .

We can assume without loss of generality that

$$\begin{aligned} p &= \phi_2(e_1, \theta_2), \\ q &= \phi_1(-e_1, \theta_1), \\ \lambda &= (\cos \alpha, \sin \alpha, 0, \dots, 0). \end{aligned}$$

Σ is the union of two arcs of great circles so, by the cosine rule for spherical triangles, its length is the minimum of

$$\begin{aligned} f_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(\alpha) &= R_1 \cos^{-1}(\cos \Theta_1 \cos \theta_1 + \sin \Theta_1 \cos \alpha \sin \theta_1) \\ &\quad + R_2 \cos^{-1}(\cos \Theta_2 \cos \theta_2 - \sin \Theta_2 \cos \alpha \sin \theta_2). \end{aligned}$$

We use (3) to compute the first derivative of $f_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}$ with respect to α ,

$$\begin{aligned} f'_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(\alpha) &= \sin \alpha \left(\frac{\sin \theta_1}{(1 - (\cos \Theta_1 \cos \theta_1 + \sin \Theta_1 \cos \alpha \sin \theta_1)^2)^{1/2}} \right. \\ &\quad \left. - \frac{\sin \theta_2}{(1 - (\cos \Theta_2 \cos \theta_2 - \sin \Theta_2 \cos \alpha \sin \theta_2)^2)^{1/2}} \right) \\ &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sin \alpha g_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(\cos \alpha). \end{aligned}$$

Notice that $g_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(X)$ vanishes if and only if

$$\begin{aligned} h_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(X) &\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \frac{1 - (\cos \Theta_1 \cos \theta_1 + X \sin \Theta_1 \sin \theta_1)^2}{\sin^2 \theta_1} \\ &\quad - \frac{1 - (\cos \Theta_2 \cos \theta_2 - X \sin \Theta_2 \sin \theta_2)^2}{\sin^2 \theta_2} \\ &= \sin^2 \Theta_1 \cot^2 \theta_1 - \sin^2 \Theta_2 \cot^2 \theta_2 \\ &\quad - (\sin(2\Theta_1) \cot \theta_1 + \sin(2\Theta_2) \cot \theta_2) X \\ &\quad + (\sin^2 \Theta_2 - \sin^2 \Theta_1) X^2 \end{aligned}$$

does so, hence $f_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}$ has at most two extrema on $]0, \pi[$. Therefore, if we prove that 0 and π are both minima for $f_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}$ then it follows that Σ is a meridian path. To do this, we shall apply Lemma 4 and show the property for suitable parameters.

We claim that $h_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(\pm 1) \neq 0$, except for $R_1 = R_2 = 1$. For $s = \pm 1$,

$$\begin{aligned} h_{R_1, R_2, \Delta}(s) &= \sin^2 \Theta_1 (\cot^2 \theta_1 - 1) - \sin^2 \Theta_2 (\cot^2 \theta_2 - 1) \\ &\quad - s (\sin(2\Theta_1) \cot \theta_1 + \sin(2\Theta_2) \cot \theta_2) \\ &= -(\cot \theta_2 \sin \Theta_2 + s \cos \Theta_2)^2 + (\cot \theta_1 \sin \Theta_1 - s \cos \Theta_1)^2. \end{aligned}$$

Since $0 < \theta_i \leq \Theta_i$, $\cot \theta_i \geq \cot \Theta_i$ ($i = 1, 2$). It follows that both parenthesis above are positive and, by (5), $h(s) = 0$ if and only if

$$k(\Delta) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \cot \frac{\Delta}{R_2} \sin \Theta_2 + s \cos \Theta_2 - \cot \frac{\Delta}{R_1} \sin \Theta_1 + s \cos \Theta_1 = 0.$$

Note that, by (3),

$$k'(\Delta) = \frac{1}{R_1^2 \sin^2 \frac{\Delta}{R_1}} - \frac{1}{R_2^2 \sin^2 \frac{\Delta}{R_2}}.$$

Therefore, since the function $y \mapsto y \sin \frac{1}{y}$ is increasing on $]0, \frac{2}{\pi}[$, $k'(\Delta)$ is nonnegative and it vanishes if and only if $R_1 = R_2$. Hence

$$\lim_{\Delta \rightarrow 0} k(\Delta) \leq k(\Delta) \leq k(R_2 \Theta_2).$$

By the use of the formula $\cot X = \frac{1}{X} + O(X)$, valid for small numbers X , we can compute the above limit

$$\begin{aligned} k(\Delta) &= \left(\frac{R_2}{\Delta} + O(\Delta) \right) \frac{1}{R_2} - \left(\frac{R_1}{\Delta} + O(\Delta) \right) \frac{1}{R_1} + s(\cos \Theta_1 + \cos \Theta_2) \\ &\xrightarrow{\Delta \rightarrow 0} s \left(\sqrt{1 - R_1^{-2}} + \sqrt{1 - R_2^{-2}} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Now, if $s = 1$ then $k(\Delta)$ is nonnegative, and it vanishes if and only if $R_2 = R_1 = 1$. If $s = -1$, use (5) to get

$$k(R_2 \Theta_2) = -2 \cos \Theta_1 \leq 0,$$

so $k(\Delta)$ is nonpositive and our claim is proved.

Choose an integer m large enough to ensure that $(R_1, R_2, R_1 \Theta_1 + R_2 \Theta_2)$ and $y_0 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\sqrt{2}, \sqrt{2}, \frac{\pi}{6\sqrt{2}})$ belong to Y_m , where

$$Y_m = \left\{ (\rho_1, \rho_2, \delta): \rho_1 \in \left[1 + \frac{1}{m}, m \right], \rho_2 \in [\rho_1, m], \delta \in \left[\frac{1}{m}, \rho_2 \sin^{-1} \frac{1}{\rho_2} \right] \right\}.$$

We want to apply Lemma 4 for $[a, b] = [0, \pi]$ and $Y = Y_m$. Suppose the assumption of Lemma 4 is not verified; then, for each positive integer n , there

exist $x_n \in]0, 1/n[$ and a triple $y_n = (\rho_1, \rho_2, \delta) \in Y_m$ such that $f'_{y_n}(x_n) = 0$ (resp. $f'_{y_n}(\pi - x_n) = 0$). Then, by the compactness of Y_m , we can extract a subsequence of $\{y_n\}_n$ converging to $y \in Y_m$. It follows that the function h_y associated to f_y as above verifies $h_y(1) = 0$ (resp. $h_y(-1) = 0$), in contradiction to the above claim.

Therefore, we can apply Lemma 4 to deduce that 0 and π are both minima of f_y for all y in Y_m if and only if they are minima of f_{y_0} . Finally, use (5) to establish this last statement by a direct computation:

$$f''_{y_0}(\pi) = f''_{y_0}(0) = g_{y_0}(0) > 0.$$

Case 2. $p \in C_1^* \setminus \text{cl } a(C_2)$. We can assume, without loss of generality, that $p = \phi(e_1, \theta)$ and $a(p) = \phi(-e_1, \theta')$, where θ and θ' are real positive numbers such that

$$R_1(\theta + \theta') = R_1\Theta_1 + R_2\Theta_2.$$

It follows that θ and θ' are not less than $\frac{R_2}{R_1}\Theta_2$. Assume that $\theta \leq \theta'$ (otherwise, exchange them).

A segment between p and $p' = a(p)$ consists either of a meridian path included in C_1 , in which case $\rho(p, p') = \text{diam}(L_{d, R_1 R_2})$, or of three arcs of circles: the first one in C_1 from p to some point $u \in \Lambda$, the second one in C_2 from u to some point $u' \in \Lambda$, and the third one in C_1 from u' to p' .

Let $p'' = \phi(-e_1, \theta)$ be the point symmetrical to p with respect to e_1^\perp .

We claim that the shortest path from p to p'' , among all paths intersecting C_2 , is the meridian path. This claim would end the proof, since it directly implies that the meridian paths are segments between p and p' .

To prove the claim, suppose on the contrary that a shortest path Σ joining p to p'' and intersecting C_2 is shorter than $2(R_2\Theta_2 + R_1(\Theta_1 - \theta))$.

Notice that Σ is symmetrical with respect to e_1^\perp . Indeed, denote by Σ' the path symmetrical to Σ with respect to e_1^\perp , and assume $\Sigma \neq \Sigma'$ (as point sets). Take the first point along Σ , say q , in $\Sigma' \cap e_1^\perp$. Then the arcs of Σ and Σ' from p to q have the same length, and they are segments of our hypersurface $L_{d, R_1 R_2}$. If Σ and Σ' would not have opposite directions at q then the first variation formula (see Theorem 3.5 in [7]) would show the existence (around q) of a path shorter than Σ , which is impossible by our choice. So Σ and Σ' have opposite directions at q , and therefore they coincide as point sets.

We may assume that Σ consists of an arc of circle in C_1 from p to $u = \cos \alpha e_1 + \sin \alpha e_2$ ($\alpha \in]0, \frac{\pi}{2}[$), an arc of circle in C_2 from u to $u' = -\cos \alpha e_1 + \sin \alpha e_2$, and an arc of circle in C_1 from u' to p'' . Then the length of Σ is given by

$$\begin{aligned} L(\alpha) = & R_2 \cos^{-1} \left(1 - \frac{2 \cos^2 \alpha}{R_2^2} \right) \\ & + 2 R_1 \cos^{-1} \frac{\sin \theta \cos \alpha + \cos \theta \sqrt{R_1^2 - 1}}{R_1}. \end{aligned}$$

By a straightforward computation, the first derivative of L is

$$L'(\alpha) = 2 \sin \alpha \left(\frac{\sin \theta}{\sqrt{1 - (\sin \theta \cos \alpha + \cos \theta \sqrt{R_1^2 - 1})^2 / R_1^2}} - \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \cos^2 \alpha / R_2^2}} \right)$$

and it vanishes on $]0, \frac{\pi}{2}[$ if and only if $\cos \alpha$ is a solution of the equation

$$(6) \quad (R_2^2 - R_1^2)X^2 + 2 \cot \theta \sqrt{R_1^2 - 1} R_2^2 X - \cot^2 \theta R_2^2 = 0.$$

Since the product of the solutions of (6) is negative, there exists at most one local extremum for L in $]0, \frac{\pi}{2}[$, say at α_0 . Furthermore,

$$L'\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) = \frac{\sin \theta}{\sqrt{1 - \cos^2 \theta (R_1^2 - 1) / R_1^2}} - 1 < 0,$$

whence α_0 is a point of maximum, and the global minimum of L on $[0, \frac{\pi}{2}]$ is either at 0 or at $\frac{\pi}{2}$. Now we compute

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{1}{2R_1} \left(L(0) - L\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) \right) \\ &= -\cos^{-1} \frac{\cos \theta \sqrt{R_1^2 - 1}}{R_1} \\ & \quad + \cos^{-1} \frac{\sin \theta + \cos \theta \sqrt{R_1^2 - 1}}{R_1} + \frac{R_2}{2R_1} \cos^{-1} \left(1 - \frac{2}{R_2^2} \right) \\ &= -\cos^{-1}(\cos \theta \cos \Theta_1) \\ & \quad + \cos^{-1}(\sin \theta \sin \Theta_1 + \cos \theta \cos \Theta_1) \\ & \quad + \frac{\sin \Theta_1}{2 \sin \Theta_2} \cos^{-1}(1 - 2 \sin^2 \Theta_2) \\ &= -\cos^{-1}(\cos \theta \cos \Theta_1) + \Theta_1 - \theta + \frac{\sin \Theta_1}{\sin \Theta_2} \Theta_2 \\ &\leq -\Theta_1 + \Theta_1 - \theta + \frac{R_2}{R_1} \Theta_2 \leq 0. \end{aligned}$$

So, the global minimum of L is at 0, and the shortest path Σ is a meridian path. This completes the proof of Theorem 2. \square

5 DEGENERATE ANTIPODAL HYPERSURFACES

The usual definition of a convex hypersurface covers, beside the boundaries of convex bodies, the degenerate case too. Formally, a d -dimensional *degenerate convex hypersurface* D is the union of two isometric copies K and K' of a convex body (also denoted by) $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ ($d \geq 2$), glued together along their boundary by

identifying the points $x \in \text{bd}K$ and $x' = \iota(x) \in \text{bd}K'$, where $\iota : K \rightarrow K'$ is the isometry between K and K' . Call K and K' the *faces* of D , and D the *double* of K ; the *ridge* of D is $\text{rd}D = K \cap K'$. Thus, D is (seen as) limit in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} of d -dimensional convex hypersurfaces containing $\text{rd}D$.

Let \mathcal{D} denote the space of all degenerate convex hypersurfaces of some fixed dimension.

For any point x in the double D_T of an arbitrary simplex T of dimension at least 4, the set F_x is included in the vertex set of T [5]. Since F is upper semi-continuous and its image is closed, there exists a neighbourhood of D_T in \mathcal{D} , all of which hypersurfaces have F properly multivalued. Moreover, the same happens for F on *most* (in the sense of Baire categories) hypersurfaces in \mathcal{D} [12], so $\mathcal{H} \cap \mathcal{D}$ is a small subset of \mathcal{D} . We refine this by Theorem 3.

The next auxiliary result, a complete proof of which can be found in [12], follows from the first variation formula.

A point $y \in S$ is called *critical* with respect to ρ_x (or to x), if for any direction τ of S at y for there exists a segment from y to x whose direction at y makes an angle $\alpha \leq \pi/2$ with τ .

Lemma 5. *If $y \in S$ is a local maximum for ρ_x then it is critical with respect to ρ_x .*

We say that a convex body K has the *property of double normals* if any line normal to K at some boundary point of K is also normal to K at the other intersection point with the boundary of K .

The following result can be found, for example, in [2].

Lemma 6. *A convex body K has constant width if and only if it has the property of double normals.*

The next result provides a link between the intrinsic geometry of convex hypersurfaces and the (extrinsic) geometry of convex bodies. Compared to Theorems 1 and 2, it also shows that the degeneracy is a quite strong restriction.

Theorem 3. *If the double of the convex body $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ has the corresponding mapping F an involutive bijection then K is smooth and has constant width.*

Proof. Denote by D the double of K and consider a point z in $S_K = \text{bd}K \subset D$. Then clearly $v = F_z \in S_K$ and there are precisely two segments from v to z , one on each face of D . By Lemma 5, v is a critical point for ρ_z , hence the line zv is normal to S_K at v . Since $z = F_v$, z is a critical point for ρ_v and the line vz is normal to S_K at z , so S_K and consequently K has the property of double normals. Then K has constant width, by Lemma 6.

Assume there exists a supporting cone T_x of S_K , at some point $x \in S_K$, which is not a hyperplane, hence the normal cone N_x of S_K at x is not reduced to a vector. Then there exist two distinct 0-extreme unit vectors v', v'' in N_x , and two sequences

of smooth points x'_n, x''_n convergent to x such that the unit normal vectors $n_{x'_n}, n_{x''_n}$ converge to v', v'' respectively (see Theorem 2.2.7 in [9]).

Put $y'_n = F_{x'_n}, y''_n = F_{x''_n}$ and $y' = \lim y'_n, y'' = \lim y''_n$. The Hausdorff dimension of the set of all singular points of S_K is at most $\dim S_K - 1$ (see [9]), so we may take x'_n, x''_n such that y'_n, y''_n are smooth, too. We get $y' \neq y''$, because the lines $x'_n y'_n$ and $x''_n y''_n$ are normal to S_K at x'_n, y'_n , and respectively x''_n, y''_n , and the limit directions v' and v'' are distinct. On the other hand, $y', y'' \in F_x$ because $y'_n = F_{x'_n}, y''_n = F_{x''_n}$, a contradiction to the bijectivity of F which proves the smoothness of D . \square

6. DOUBLES OF CONSTANT WIDTH CONVEX BODIES

Degenerate antipodal convex hypersurfaces are smooth and have constant width, as shown by Theorem 3. In this section we prove a partial converse of this fact.

Theorem 4. *Let K be a C^2 -differentiable convex body of constant width w , and D the double of K . Then there exists a neighbourhood N of the ridge of D such that for all $x \in N$, $\max \rho_x = w$. Consequently, the restriction of F to N is single-valued and involutive.*

Proof. To begin with, notice that the restriction of F to $S = \text{rd}D$ is single-valued and involutive. Indeed, since K is of constant width, its boundary has the property of double normals (Lemma 6), and for any double normal the distance between the points of contact with $\text{bd}K = S$ equals w .

Let $x, x' \in S$ be two mutually antipodal points in D , and Σ one of the two segments between them. We denote by x_t (resp. x'_t) the point of Σ (resp. of $\iota(\Sigma)$) such that $\rho(x, x_t) = t$ (resp. $\rho(x', x'_t) = t$). We claim that there exists a positive number ε such that for all $t \in [0, \varepsilon]$, $F_{x_t} = x'_t$; moreover, there are precisely two segments between x_t and x'_t , the union of which is $\Sigma \cup \iota(\Sigma)$. In particular, $\max \rho_{x_t} = \rho(x_t, x'_t) = w$.

Assume on the contrary that for $t \rightarrow 0$ there exists a segment from x_t to x'_t whose length is strictly less than w . Such a segment consists of a segment Γ_t from x_t to some point $y_t \in S$ and a segment Γ'_t from y_t to x'_t . Since Σ and $\iota(\Sigma)$ are the only segments between x and x' , y_t goes to x (or to x') if t goes to 0.

Let H be the hyperplane normal to Σ through x' , and π the orthogonal projection onto H . As a convex hypersurface, S is locally the graph of some function defined on some neighbourhood of $x' \in H$, namely there exists an open set U containing x such that

$$S \cap U = \left\{ z + (w - \psi(z)) \frac{\overrightarrow{x'x}}{w} : z \in \pi(U) \right\}$$

Since S is C^2 -differentiable, there exists a positive number A such that

$$(7) \quad 0 \leq \psi(z) \leq A \|x'z\|^2.$$

With $z_t = \pi(y_t)$, the distance between x_t and x'_t is expressed by

$$g(z_t, t) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sqrt{\|x'_t z_t\|^2 + (t - \psi(z_t))^2} + \sqrt{\|x'_t z_t\|^2 + (w - \psi(z_t) - t)^2}.$$

Using the simple fact that $\sqrt{U} + \sqrt{V} \leq w$ if and only if $w^2 \geq U + V$ and $(U + V - w^2)^2 \geq 4UV$, we obtain by a straightforward computation that $g(z_t, t) \leq w$ if and only if

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &\leq -\|x'_t z_t\|^2 + t(w - t) + \psi(z_t)(w - \psi(z_t)), \\ 0 &\leq -\|x'_t z_t\|^2 w^2 + 4t\psi(z_t)(w - \psi(z_t))(w - t) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} h(z_t, t). \end{aligned}$$

From (7) we get, for $t < \frac{1}{4A}$,

$$\begin{aligned} h(z_t, t) &\leq -\|x'_t z_t\|^2 w^2 + 4w^2 t A \|x'_t z_t\|^2 \\ &= \|x'_t z_t\|^2 w^2 (4tA - 1) < 0. \end{aligned}$$

It follows that $g(z_t, t) > w$ for t small enough, which is in contradiction with Lemma 1, and proves the claim.

Put

$$\varepsilon(z) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \max \left\{ \varepsilon > 0: \rho \left(z + \varepsilon \frac{\overrightarrow{zz'}}{w}, F_{z + \varepsilon \frac{\overrightarrow{zz'}}{w}} \right) = w \right\}.$$

Suppose that there exists a sequence z_n tending to z_0 such that $\varepsilon(z_n)$ is tending to zero. The above argument shows that $h(z_n, \varepsilon(z_n)) < 0$ for n large enough, which is impossible. Hence $\min_{z \in S} \varepsilon(z) > 0$ and the proof is complete. \square

Remark. In the proof of Theorem 4 we have used the \mathcal{C}^2 -differentiability only to obtain (7). Since this inequality also holds under the weaker hypothesis that the boundary of K has finite *upper curvatures* at every point (see [1] p.14 for the definition), the statement of Theorem 4 can be accordingly strengthened.

7. THREE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF BALLS

In this section we partly confirm Steinhaus' guess, by proving with our Theorems 5–7 that it is possible to characterize *the balls* (eventhough not the spheres) by the use of the mapping F .

Theorem 1 provides many hypersurfaces in $\mathcal{H} \setminus \mathcal{D}$ with central symmetry, and thus with the mapping F an isometry. Nevertheless, since any centrally symmetric body of constant width is a ball (see, for example, [2]), we directly obtain from Theorem 3 the following result.

Theorem 5. *If the double of the centrally symmetric convex body $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$ has the corresponding mapping F an involutive bijection then K is a ball.*

Theorem 6. *If the double of the convex body $K \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ has the corresponding mapping F an isometry then K is a ball.*

Proof. This follows simply from Theorem 5 and Theorem 4 in [13], stating that the convex surface S is a centrally symmetric surface in \mathcal{H} if and only if the associated mapping F is an isometry. \square

Let S_K denote the *sphere inscribed to K* ; i.e., the sphere of maximal radius included in K . We shall repeatedly and implicitly use the following simple fact (see, for example, [14]).

Lemma 7. *Any closed half sphere of S_K contains a point in the set $S_K \cap K$.*

While Theorems 1 and 2 provide many hypersurfaces in $\mathcal{I} \setminus \mathcal{D}$, the next result shows that there are very few degenerate hypersurfaces in \mathcal{I} .

Theorem 7. *If the double D of the convex body K satisfies $\text{rad}(D) = \text{diam}(D)$ then K is a ball.*

Proof. Suppose $D \in \mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{D}$ is the double of the convex body $K \subset \mathbb{R}^d$. Then it is easily seen that K has constant width $w = \rho(x, F_x)$, $x \in D$, and also has the property of double normals.

Let o and r denote the centre and the radius of the sphere S_K inscribed to K , respectively. We claim that $F_o = \iota(o)$. If so, then $\rho(o, F_o) = 2r$, hence $w = 2r$ and K is a ball.

To prove the claim, assume there exists a point $\iota(y) \in (F_o \setminus \{\iota(o)\}) \cap \iota(K)$. Denote by S_- and S_+ the closed semispheres of S_K determined by the hyperplane orthogonal at o to the line yo , such that $y \in S_-$. Clearly, $y \in S_- \setminus S_+$.

The point o belongs to $F_{\iota(y)}$, because $\rho(o, F_o) = \rho(\iota(y), F_{\iota(y)})$. By Lemma 5, there is some segment Γ from $\iota(y)$ to o which intersects S_+ , say at a . Put $\{b\} = \Gamma \cap \text{rd}D$, hence $\Gamma = [\iota(y)b] \cup [bo]$ and $a \in [bo]$.

Since S_K is inscribed to K , there exists a point $c \in S_- \cap K$. Let H be the hyperplane orthogonal to the line yo through c , and d the point in $H \cap S_- \cap yao$ determined by $[ya] \cap [od] \neq \emptyset$.

Put $\{e\} = [od] \cap [ay]$ and apply twice the triangle inequality, for $[aeo]$ and $[dey]$. We get $\|a - o\| + \|y - d\| \leq \|e - o\| + \|a - e\| + \|y - e\| + \|d - e\| = \|d - o\| + \|y - a\|$. Since $\|a - o\| = \|d - o\| = r$, it follows that $\|y - d\| \leq \|y - a\|$.

We have $\|\iota(y) - c\| = \|y - c\|$ and therefore, by the previous inequality,

$$\begin{aligned} l(\Gamma) &= \|\iota(y) - b\| + \|b - o\| = \|y - b\| + \|b - o\| \\ &\geq \|y - a\| + \|a - o\| \geq \|y - d\| + \|d - o\| \\ &= \|y - c\| + \|c - o\| = \|\iota(y) - c\| + \|c - o\|. \end{aligned}$$

The length-minimality of Γ implies that the inequalities above actually are all equalities, hence $\|y - d\| = \|y - a\|$, $\{a, d, c\} \subset S_- \cap S_+$, and any shortest path from $\iota(y)$ to o intersects S_K at a point in $S_K \cap K$.

Let E be the hyperellipsoid of revolution with the foci at o and y , and with the sum of the focal radii equal to $\rho(o, y)$. It follows that E is included in K , because all segments from $\iota(y)$ to o have the same length. Since E is tangent to K at c , its normal line n at c is also normal to K . Of course, n bisects the angle $\angle yco$. But S_K and K are tangent at c , so n is also normal to S_K at c , and thus $n = oc$, impossible.

This completely proves the claim and the theorem. \square

8. OPEN QUESTIONS

We conclude with three questions related to our work.

1. The inclusion $\mathcal{I} \subset \mathcal{H}$ holds for convex surfaces in \mathbb{R}^3 (see [13]); is it true in arbitrary dimension? An affirmative answer would simplify Theorems 1 and 2, and would give a further motivation for Theorem 7.
2. Theorems 1 and 2, and the fact that all right circular cylinders of small height belong to $\mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$ [6], suggest the following problem.
Find all convex (hyper)surfaces of revolution in $\mathcal{I} \cap \mathcal{H}$. Or, at least those whose generating function ϕ (see Section 2) has piecewise constant curvature.
3. Find all smooth hypersurfaces of constant width which belong to $\mathcal{H} \cap \mathcal{D}$ (see Theorems 3, 4 and 7).

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