On isospin breaking in $\tau$ decays for $(g-2)_\mu$ from Lattice QCD

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Hadronic spectral functions of $\tau$ decays have been used in the past to provide an alternative determination of the LO Hadronic Vacuum Polarization relevant for the $(g-2)$ of the muon. Following recent developments and results in Lattice QCD+QED calculations, we explore the possibility of studying the isospin breaking corrections of $\tau$ spectral functions for this prediction. We present preliminary results at physical pion mass based on Domain Wall Fermion ensembles generated by the RBC/UKQCD collaboration.

The 36th Annual International Symposium on Lattice Field Theory - LATTICE2018
22-28 July, 2018
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA.

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1. Introduction

The discrepancy between the theoretical determination of the muon anomalous magnetic moment \(a_\mu\) and the experimental measurement performed at the Brookhaven National Lab. is a very interesting place to look for new physics beyond the Standard Model. While new experimental results are expected from the Fermilab and J-PARC Laboratories, theoretical calculations are trying to consolidate or improve their error estimates. A crucial piece is the hadronic vacuum polarization (HVP) where data-driven approaches based on dispersive analysis are presently overpowering pure first-principles non-perturbative calculations from the lattice.

Data-driven approaches are essentially based on results from dedicated measurements of cross sections of \(e^+e^-\to\text{hadrons}\), whose accuracy must meet certain criteria to guarantee the desired final precision in the HVP. The fact that we are analyzing the anomalous moment of the muon has a direct impact on the kernel appearing in the dispersive integral, weighting each energy region differently: as a consequence approximately 70% of the total HVP contribution to \(a_\mu\) comes from the \(\pi^+\pi^-\) channel alone.

2. \(\tau\) input for \((g - 2)_\mu\)

At a time when experimental decay rates of the \(\tau\) lepton were more precise than electron-production experiments, the authors of Ref. [1] proposed to use the vector spectral functions measured in hadronic \(\tau\) decays to compute the HVP with the standard dispersive methods. In the following we will mostly focus our attention on the \(\pi\pi\) channel, given its importance and dominance in the total signal and error of \(a_\mu\).

The decays of the \(\tau\) leptons are mediated by weak interactions and as consequence the observed \(\pi^-\pi^0\) state is charged and purely isospin 1. Instead the hadronic vacuum polarization originates from the electromagnetic current, thus producing intermediate \(\pi^+\pi^-\) states which are neutral and predominantly isospin 1, with a small isospin-0 component as well. Therefore to relate the spectral functions obtained from \(\tau\) decays, which we denote by \(v_{-}\), to the calculation of the HVP, the proper isospin correction factor \(R_{IB}\) is required. The neutral spectral function \(v_0\) can be obtained according to

\[
R_{IB}(s) = \frac{FSR(s) \beta_0^2(s) |f_0(s)|^2}{G_{EM}(s) \beta^2(s) |f_-(s)|^2}
\]

(2.1)

can be split in different parts\(^2\):

- long-distance radiative corrections, where a soft photon is emitted from the \(\tau^-\) or \(\pi^-\), or exchanged between the two; these contributions are contained in the function \(G_{EM}\), computed in Refs. [2, 3] in the framework of Chiral Perturbation Theory and in Refs. [4, 5] with Vector Meson Dominance models;

\(^1\)Higher multiplicities can be taken into account in principle, but lead to larger experimental systematics.

\(^2\)In our list we omit short-distance electro-weak and radiative corrections, accounted for by a multiplicative factor \(S_{EW}\), since it is often used in the definition of \(v_--\) from the decay-rate measurement and not in \(R_{IB}\).
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- final state radiation (FSR) of the $\pi^+\pi^-$ state, computed assuming point-like pions as well;
- a factor that accounts for the difference in phase spaces (called $\beta$) between the $\pi^0\pi^-$ and the $\pi^-\pi^+$ states, due to $m_{\pi^0} \neq m_{\pi^+}$;
- finally the $\rho - \omega$ mixing phenomenon and differences in the masses and widths of the $\rho^0$ and $\rho^-$ determine the strength of the isospin breaking in the two-pion charged and neutral form factors, $f_-(s)$ and $f_0(s)$ respectively.

With this definition of the factor $R_{IB}$ it is then possible to compute the correction $\Delta a_\mu$ to be added to the anomalous magnetic moment computed from the $\tau$ spectral functions, namely

$$\Delta a_\mu = \int_{4m_\pi^2}^m ds K(s) [v_0(s) - v_-(s)] = \int_{4m_\pi^2}^m ds K(s) [R_{IB}(s) - 1] v_-(s), \quad (2.2)$$

where $K(s)$ represents the muon kernel. Historically, three groups$^3$ have computed the isospin rotation of $\tau$ spectral functions always obtaining a value for $a_\mu$ incompatible with the corresponding determination from $e^+e^-$ data. More specifically $a_\mu[\tau]$ is bigger than $a_\mu[ee]$ by approximately 22-25 units of $10^{-10}$, while the theoretical estimates $\Delta a_\mu$ were around -12, thus resulting in a systematic error for the combined estimate much larger than the simpler and cleaner $e^+e^-$ determination. For this reason and also due to dramatic improvements in the experimental measurements of $\pi^+\pi^-$ spectral functions, in particular in the BaBar and KLOE experiments, this alternative theoretical determination of $a_\mu$ was abandoned, until Jegerlehner and Szafron proposed a solution [9] to the puzzle, by adding the effect of $\rho - \gamma$ mixing to the calculation of $R_{IB}$.

In our work we present an alternative approach to the calculation of the correction $\Delta a_\mu$ based on Lattice QCD. It is worth noting that the overall size of the correction, which is about 2-3 %, combined with the precision for $a_\mu$, $O(1\%)$, results in a required uncertainty for $\Delta a_\mu$ of approximately 10-20 %, a goal that with current advances in Lattice QCD+QED calculations seems achievable.

3. Lattice calculation

The progress in the last years to include QED effects in Lattice QCD calculations was significant. Based on this advances, we develop the formalism necessary to compute $R_{IB}$ on the lattice and we report some preliminary results in the next Section before concluding. By realizing that the electro-magnetic current is formed by an isospin 0 and 1 parts (we consider only to the light flavors)

$$j_\mu^0 = ie (Q_u \bar{u} \gamma_\mu u + Q_d \bar{d} \gamma_\mu d) = \frac{Q_u + Q_d}{2} (\bar{u} \gamma_\mu u + \bar{d} \gamma_\mu d) + ie \frac{Q_u - Q_d}{2} (\bar{u} \gamma_\mu u - \bar{d} \gamma_\mu d), \quad (3.1)$$

we decompose the standard vector-vector two-point function in three terms

$$G^\gamma(t) = \frac{1}{3} \sum_{k,\tilde{k}} \langle j_\mu^0(x_j) j_\mu^0(0) \rangle = G^\gamma_{00}(t) + 2G^\gamma_{01}(t) + G^\gamma_{11}(t), \quad G^\gamma_{ij}(t) \equiv \frac{1}{3} \sum_{k,\tilde{k}} \langle j_\mu^i(x_j) j_\mu^j(0) \rangle. \quad (3.2)$$

$^3$For convenience we will label the separate groups as Cirigliano et al. [2, 3], Davier et al. [6, 7, 8] and Jegerlehner et al. [9, 10]. Note that the authors of Refs. [2, 3] did not include the FSR.
In eq. (3.2) the term \( G_{01}^T \) vanishes in the isospin limit and is different from zero due to QED and \( O(m_u - m_d) \) effects. Instead both \( G_{00}^T \) and \( G_{11}^T \) survive in the isospin limit: the former contains also disconnected contributions, while the latter dominates the signal. Then, to map our calculation to the \( \tau^- \) spectral functions, we compute the expectation value of two charged isospin 1 currents

\[
j^{(1,-)}_\mu(x) = i e \frac{Q_u - Q_d}{\sqrt{2}} \langle \bar{u}(x) \gamma_\mu d \rangle, \quad G_{11}^W \equiv \frac{1}{3} \sum_{k,x} \langle j^{(1,-)}_k(x) j^{(1,+)}(0) \rangle. \tag{3.3} \]

To compute the HVP contribution to \( a_\mu \) we use the Time-Moment representation\(^4\), \( a_\mu \equiv 4 \alpha^2 \sum \omega_i G^0(t) \), and following the decomposition in eq. (3.2) we obtain correspondingly three contributions to \( a_\mu \). At this point it is straightforward to define the correction \( \Delta a_\mu \) in our lattice calculation

\[
\Delta a_\mu \equiv 4 \alpha^2 \sum \omega_i [G^0(t) - G^W(t)] \quad \rightarrow \quad \Delta a_\mu [\pi \pi] = 4 \alpha^2 \sum \omega_i \left[ 2 G_{01}^T(t) + G_{11}^T(t) - G_{11}^W(t) \right],
\]

where in the second equation we have neglected the \( G_{00}^T \) term that contributes only to channels with an odd number of pions. Also in this case, in the isospin limit \( \Delta a_\mu \) goes to zero; therefore to compute this quantity we perform a diagrammatic expansion where we insert a single photon in all possible ways, together with all possible insertions of the scalar operator. In Fig. (1) we draw the leading contributions and we postpone the discussion on the details of the QED formalism on the lattice to the next section. For the reader’s convenience we report below, as an example, the first diagram\(^4\) in Fig. (1) which we call \( V \)

\[
V = \frac{1}{3} \sum_{k,x} \left[ \bar{u}(x) \gamma_\mu D^{-1}(x,z) \gamma_\nu D^{-1}(z,0) \gamma_\mu D^{-1}(0,y) \gamma_\nu D^{-1}(y,x) \Delta^\mu\nu(z,y) \right], \tag{3.5} \]

with \( D^{-1} \) being a (light) quark propagator and \( \Delta^\mu\nu(z,y) \) the photon propagator\(^5\).

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\(^4\)We keep minus signs from Dirac traces, photon coupling, etc. all explicit.

\(^5\)In this work we have used the Feynman gauge.
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Studying separately the pure $I = 1$ correction $\delta G$ has the advantage that many terms simplify and it can be directly mapped to the mass and width differences of the neutral and charged $\rho$ mesons in the phenomenological models of the form factors. For this quantity we obtain

$$
\delta G \equiv G_{11}^\gamma - G_{11}^W = -\frac{(Q_u - Q_d)}{4}[V - F].
$$

(3.6)

Instead, in the contribution originating from the isospin 0 to 1 transition, which from the phenomenological point of view is very interesting due to the $\rho - \omega$ mixing, cancellations are less relevant, resulting in a dependence on many diagrams:

$$
2G_{01}^\gamma = -\frac{(Q_u^2 - Q_d^2)}{2}(4\pi\alpha)Z_V\left[V + 2S - F + \cdots\right] - \frac{Q_u^2 - Q_d^2}{2}(m_u - m_d)[2M - 2O + \cdots].
$$

(3.7)

We note that as expected these isospin breaking functions are proportional to $(Q_u - Q_d)$ and $(m_u - m_d)$.

Our final discussion point before turning to the numerical results, is on the connection between the previous theoretical determinations of $\Delta a_\mu$ and ours. The integral of $\Delta a_\mu$ can be compared without problems, in the continuum and infinite volume limit. However given the large amount of cancellations in the integrands in eq. (2.2) and in eq. (3.4), it may be worth exploring the possibility of doing a more detailed comparison between the two determinations. To achieve this, first we realize that the lattice calculation is performed in Euclidean time and can not be analytically continued to Minkowski space. Therefore it is natural to apply a simple Laplace transform and convert the standard determinations of $R_{IB}(s)$ to Euclidean time

$$
\Delta a_\mu[\pi\pi, \tau] = 4\alpha^2\sum_t w_t \times \left\{\frac{1}{12\pi^2} \int d\omega \omega^2 e^{-\omega t} \left[R_{IB}(\omega^2) - 1\right] v_-(\omega^2)\right\}.
$$

(3.8)

4. Preliminary results

In our work we consider the results published by the RBC/UKQCD collaboration on the calculation of $a_\mu$, including the leading QED and strong-isospin diagrams [12]. We perform a simple re-analysis of these results to compute the quantities of interest for this work.

Firstly, when including QED in lattice calculations a precise prescription to remove the zero-modes is required and in our work we adopt the QED$_L$ formalism. Moreover we consider a diagrammatic expansion at $O(\alpha_{em})$ and $O(m_u - m_d)$ which completely defines our scheme: hence in the renormalization procedure, a new set of (hadronic) quantities must be computed (at $O(\alpha_{em})$ and $O(m_u - m_d)$) to tune the bare parameters of our calculation to follow a line of constant physics. In Ref. [12] the mass of the Omega baryon $\Omega^-$ has been used to re-compute the lattice spacing, while the mass difference $m_{\Xi^-} - m_{\Xi^+}$ and the charged pion mass were used to define $m_u$ and $m_d$ separately.$^7$ Similarly $Z_V$ has been recomputed to include $O(\alpha_{em})$ effects [12].

$^6$The factor $Z_V^2$ associated to the external photons is included in our definition of the weights $w_t$.

$^7$In Ref. [12] also the strange quark mass has been properly retuned, but this does not affect our work since we consider only up-down valence contributions to $a_\mu$. 

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Figure 2: Left: pure $I=1$ part of $\Delta a_{\mu}$ ($\delta G$ only) as a function of the summation window in lattice units. The fit to the lowest state with constrained energy provides a substantial reduction in the statistical noise. We estimate the systematic error by varying the energy between the two-pion and pion-photon states. Right: contribution of diagram $F$ to the pure $I=1$ part of $\Delta a_{\mu}$ (i.e. contribution of diagram $F$ to $\delta G$). The red crosses correspond to the data set published in Ref. [12] and used in the rest of this work. The blue data points correspond to a new ongoing re-analysis of the data produced to study the HLbL contribution to $a_{\mu}$ [13], which provides a significant statistical improvement for this observable.

In Fig. (3) we show our preliminary results obtained at fixed lattice spacing ($a^{-1} \approx 1.73$ GeV) and fixed volume ($L \approx 5.4$ fm). The calculation is performed at physical pion masses and we refer the reader to Ref. [12] for more details on the numerical strategies used to compute every diagram. To improve the statistical error of our estimates we rely on a constrained fit with functional form $(c_0 + c_1 t)e^{-E t}$, also discussed in Ref. [12], where the energy is fixed to be either $E_{\pi\pi}$ or $E_{\pi\gamma}$, which are very similar due to the specific choice of $L$. The systematic error arising from the difference of the two fits is still much smaller than the statistical one, and the fact that the energy is constrained reduces the noise in the long tails. We demonstrate this effect in the left panel of Fig. (2) where we show the partial sum $\sum w_i \delta G(t)$ as a function of the summation window. In order to improve this calculation we are also working on a new and better determination of these diagrams where such fits can be pushed to much later (Euclidean) times, thus significantly reducing the systematics. In the right panel of Fig. (2) we present the comparison between the current and the new determination of diagram $F$, obtained from a re-analysis of the point-source propagators generated to study the Hadronic Light-by-Light contribution to $a_{\mu}$ [13].

In the present exploratory study our goal is to understand the size of the various terms to better plan these future calculations, where we will significantly reduce the dependence of our results on these assumptions. As we can see from the comparison of the two panels of Fig. (3), the pure $I=1$ contribution $\delta G$, where we include all diagrams (see eq. (3.6)) and only QED matters at this order, has little impact compared to the isospin 0-1 channel, which in turn is completely dominated by strong-isospin breaking. This expectation matches ChPT predictions for the $\rho - \omega$ mixing parameter, where $O(m_u - m_d)$ terms are expected to be a factor 4 larger than QED. However, we must note that the current determination of the connected SIB term, namely diagram $M$ in our notation, is unable to resolve it from zero throughout the entire time extent. For this reason, with the current data we can not provide a reliable estimate of $\Delta a_{\mu}$. Nevertheless, in the near future we expect to be able to significantly improve our estimates of all the diagrams presented in this study, together with the sub-leading ones. Due to the presence of QED interactions and SIB we expect
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Figure 3: Left: contribution to $\Delta a_\mu$ proportional to $G_{\mu\nu}$ where both QED and strong-isospin are present. Unfortunately the present quality of the connected strong-isospin term ($M$) is sufficient to bound the value of $\Delta a_\mu$ but is practically compatible with zero for all Euclidean times. For this reason we will invest additional resources to improve this specific part and we do not proceed much further now. Note also that sub-leading diagrams suppressed by at least one power of $1/N_c$ or $1/N_f$ are neglected. Right: pure $I = 1$ term of $\Delta a_\mu$. In this case all diagrams are included and only QED contributes, simplifying the calculation. A relatively good signal is already achieved with current statistics, highlighting the high degree of cancellations present when computing the integral. For this reason we stress again the importance of a more detailed comparison of the integrands between the lattice and previous phenomenological determinations.

in general large finite volume effects. Part of our efforts are in fact devoted to a careful study of these systematic uncertainties by repeating our calculation on several lattices, differing only by the volume, together with the insights provided by ChPT.

5. Conclusions

In this work we have presented some preliminary results for the isospin-breaking corrections necessary to compute $a_\mu$ from $\tau$ decays. Lattice QCD+QED calculations are finally mature enough to attack this class of problems and we have showed how a simple re-analysis of already published results can give further insights into this quantity. At first we have developed the formalism necessary to define the quantity of interest ($\Delta a_\mu$) on the lattice and with the current available data we have attempted a first calculation. We have demonstrated that only two QED diagrams are needed to compute the the pure $I = 1$ component of the isospin-breaking rotation and we have provided some initial numerical evidence. Systematic errors such as finite volume and discretization effects have not been estimated and we refer the reader to future publications, where we plan to study both. We have also demonstrated our current progress in the calculation by showing a new determination of diagram $F$, which is substantially more precise, allowing us to reduce some systematics introduced by our fitting procedure. Finally we stress once more the importance of the comparison of the integrands, beyond the final results for $\Delta a_\mu$, due to the high level of cancellations taking place. We are working together with the other groups that computed this quantity in the past towards a careful comparison between our Lattice QCD+QED results and the previous theoretical/phenomenological determinations. With more and exciting experimental results ahead of us an alternative, competitive and solid estimate of $a_\mu$ from $\tau$ decays may again be possible.
Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our RBC/UKQCD collaborators for helpful discussions and support. M.B. is particularly indebted to F. Jegerlehner for sharing private results, to K. Maltam for helpful insights on τ phenomenology and to M. Davier for stimulating discussions. This work is supported in part by US DOE Contract DESC0012704(BNL). T.I. is supported by JSPS KAKENHI grant numbers JP17H02906. C.L. is also supported by a DOE Office of Science Early Career Award.

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