

## Current and vortex statistics in microwave billiards

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Using the one-to-one correspondence between the Poynting vector in a microwave billiard and the probability current density in the corresponding quantum system, probability densities and currents were studied in a microwave billiard with a ferrite insert as well as in an open billiard. Distribution functions were obtained for probability densities, currents, and vorticities. In addition, the vortex pair correlation function could be extracted. For all studied quantities a complete agreement with the predictions from the approach using a random superposition of plane waves was obtained.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

A particularly successful approach to describe the statistical properties of the eigenfunctions of chaotic billiards, dating back to Berry [1], assumes that at any point not too close to the boundary the wave function can be described by a random superposition of plane waves,

$$\psi(r) = \sum_n a_n e^{ik_n r}, \quad (1)$$

where the modulus  $k = |k_n|$  of the incoming waves is fixed, but directions  $k_n/k$  and amplitudes  $a_n$  are considered as random. In billiards with time-reversal symmetry there is, in addition, the restriction that the wave function has to be real. This ansatz cannot be strictly true. It completely ignores the boundary conditions at the billiard walls, but this is of no importance as long as the wavelength is small compared to the billiard size.

As a consequence, one expects a Gaussian distribution for the wave function amplitudes  $\psi$ , or, equivalently, a Porter-Thomas distribution for their squares  $|\psi|^2$ . For the spatial autocorrelation function  $c(r) = \langle \psi^*(\bar{r}+r)\psi(\bar{r}) \rangle_{\bar{r}}$  a Bessel function is found. These predictions were first verified by McDonald and Kaufman in their disseminating papers on stadium wave functions [2,3]. It is impossible to mention all works that have been published hitherto on this subject. As another consequence of ansatz (1) the gradient of the wave function is Gaussian distributed too, and uncorrelated to the wave function. This has been used to calculate the distribution of eigenvalue velocities and the velocity autocorrelation function for the case of a local parameter variation [4].

The approach is not restricted to quantum-mechanical systems, or systems where there is a one-to-one correspondence to quantum mechanics such as quasi-two-dimensional microwave billiards. Porter-Thomas distributions are found as well in the squared amplitudes of vibrating plates [5]. In an experiment on a three-dimensional Sinai microwave billiard, having no quantum mechanical equivalent, the electromagnetic field distributions as well as their spatial correla-

tions could be explained assuming a random superposition of plane electromagnetic fields [6,7]. In a very recent experiment on light propagation through distorted waveguides, finally, the observed transversal field patterns could be described again by ansatz (1) [8]. All these examples show that the approach using a random superposition of plane waves is not of a quantum-mechanical origin, but holds for all types of waves.

If the billiard is opened, or if time-reversal symmetry is broken, the wave function acquires an imaginary part,

$$\psi = \psi_R + i\psi_I,$$

with the consequence that in dependence of the relative fractions of real and imaginary parts the distribution of  $|\psi|^2$  changes from Porter-Thomas behavior to single exponential behavior. An explicit formula describing the distribution in the transition regime has been given by different authors [9–12]. The same function has been derived by Šeba *et al.* for the distribution of scattering matrix elements in a partially opened microwave billiard [13]. Wu *et al.* studied amplitude distributions and spatial autocorrelation functions in a microwave billiard with one ferrite-coated wall to break time-reversal symmetry, and found quantitative agreement with the results expected from the approach using a random superposition of plane waves [14]. In a recent paper by Ishio *et al.*, deviations of this formula due to scars and in regular systems are also studied [15].

More recently the interest focused on the current statistics in open systems. Saichev *et al.* calculated the distribution of currents [12]. The properties of current vortices have been studied by Berry and Dennis, who gave analytic expressions for different types of vortex spatial autocorrelation functions [16]. Independently, such autocorrelation functions as well as the distribution of nearest distances between nodal points have been studied in Ref. [17].

Experimental results on current statistics and the distribution of nodal points have not been available as yet. The method of choice to study such questions are microwave techniques. In a previous work of our group we could demonstrate that currents can be easily obtained in an open microwave billiard [18]. In the present paper we show results on current distributions in two types of billiards, verifying a

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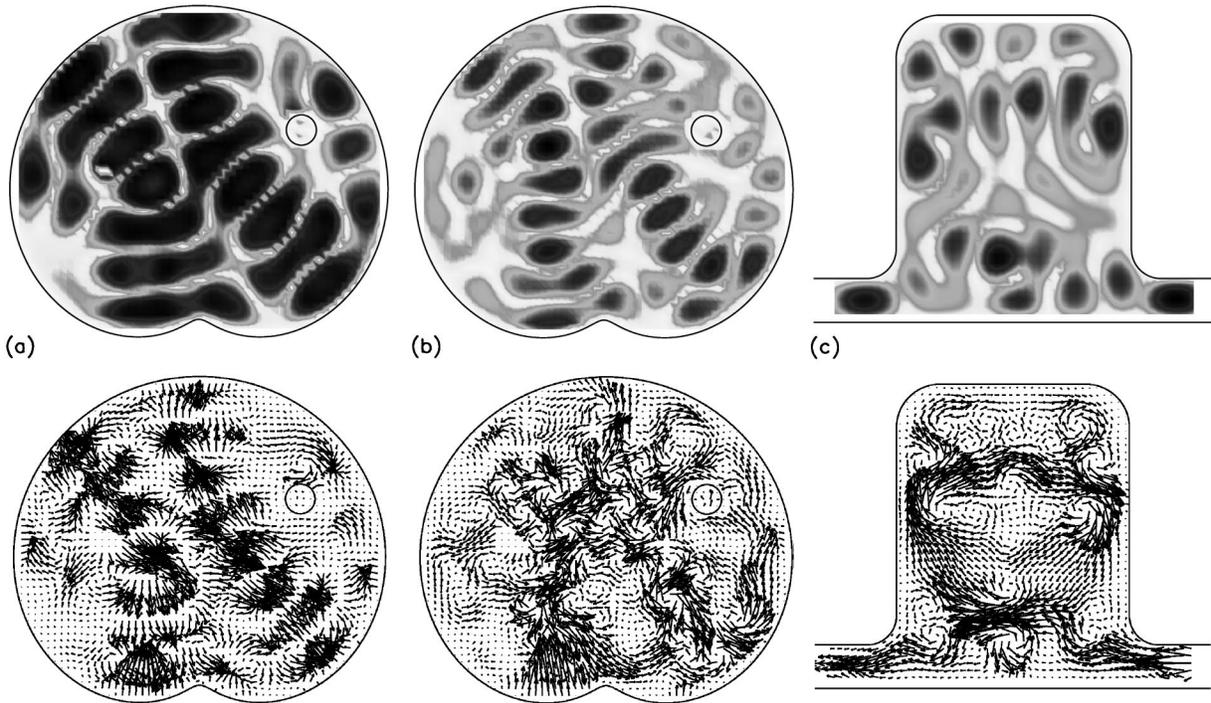


FIG. 1. Map of  $|\psi|^2$  (top) and of the current (bottom) in the ferrite billiard at 5.19 GHz (a) and 6.41 GHz (b), and for the open billiard at 5.77 GHz (c). The intensity has been converted into a gray scale with the intensity increasing from white to black. The lengths of the arrows in the current map correspond to the magnitude of the Poynting vector. For the field distribution in panel (a) there is a strong flow into the probing antenna at points of high intensity. In the two other examples the flow into the probing antenna is negligible.

number of predictions given in the above mentioned papers also in experiment.

## II. EXPERIMENT

The basic principles of the experiment are described in detail in Ref. [19]. Therefore, we concentrate on the aspects being of relevance to the present study. Two different billiards have been used, both resonators have a size of about 25 cm and a height of 8 mm. One of them is an open system of a rectangular shape with rounded corners and two openings on opposite sides containing entrance and exit antennas [see Fig. 1(c)]. A third movable antenna was used to map the field distribution in the resonator on a square grid of period 5 mm. The same system was used previously for a quantum dot analog study [20]. The two fixed antennas have a metallic core of diameter 1 mm, and a teflon coating for stronger coupling; the movable antenna was a thin wire of diameter 0.2 mm. The lengths of all antennas were about 6 mm. The quantity directly accessible in the experiment is the scattering matrix [21]. From a reflection measurement as a function of the antenna position a mapping of the modulus of the wave function can be obtained; to get the sign as well, the transmission between two antennas is needed. By the presence of the antennas the resonances are somewhat broadened and shifted, but in chaotic systems this does not change the universal distributions. (For details see Ref. [19].)

The second system studied is a Robnik, or limaçon billiard [22,23]. It can be obtained by a complex mapping of the unit circle in the complex plain by means of the function  $w$

$=z+\lambda z^2$ . The deformation parameter used in the experiment was  $\lambda=0.4$ . For this parameter the billiard is believed to be completely chaotic. (There are recent theoretical results indicating that this cannot be taken for sure [24]. But if there are still stable islands in the phase space, their corresponding volume will be very small.) A ferrite ring is introduced to break time-reversal symmetry [shape and position are included in Figs. 1(a) and 1(b)]. Ferrites have been used already repeatedly for this purpose [14,25–27]. A detailed description of the function principle of the ferrites will be given in a forthcoming publication [28]. During reflection at the ferrite the microwaves experience a phase shift with the consequence that there will be currents through the billiard though it is completely closed. These currents are a complete analogue to the persistent currents observed in mesoscopic structures [29], for a recent review see Ref. [30]. They will be the subject of a separate publication [31]. In addition there will be currents due to the fact that the ferrite introduces considerable absorption into the system. In the present context it is not of relevance whether the currents are due to a break of time-reversal symmetry or due to absorption.

It was demonstrated in Ref. [18] that in quasi-two-dimensional billiards the Poynting vector  $\vec{S}=(c/4\pi)\vec{E}\times\vec{H}$  can be written as

$$\vec{S}=\frac{c}{8\pi k}\text{Im}[E^*(r)\vec{\nabla}E(r)],$$

showing that there is a one-to-one correspondence with the current density,

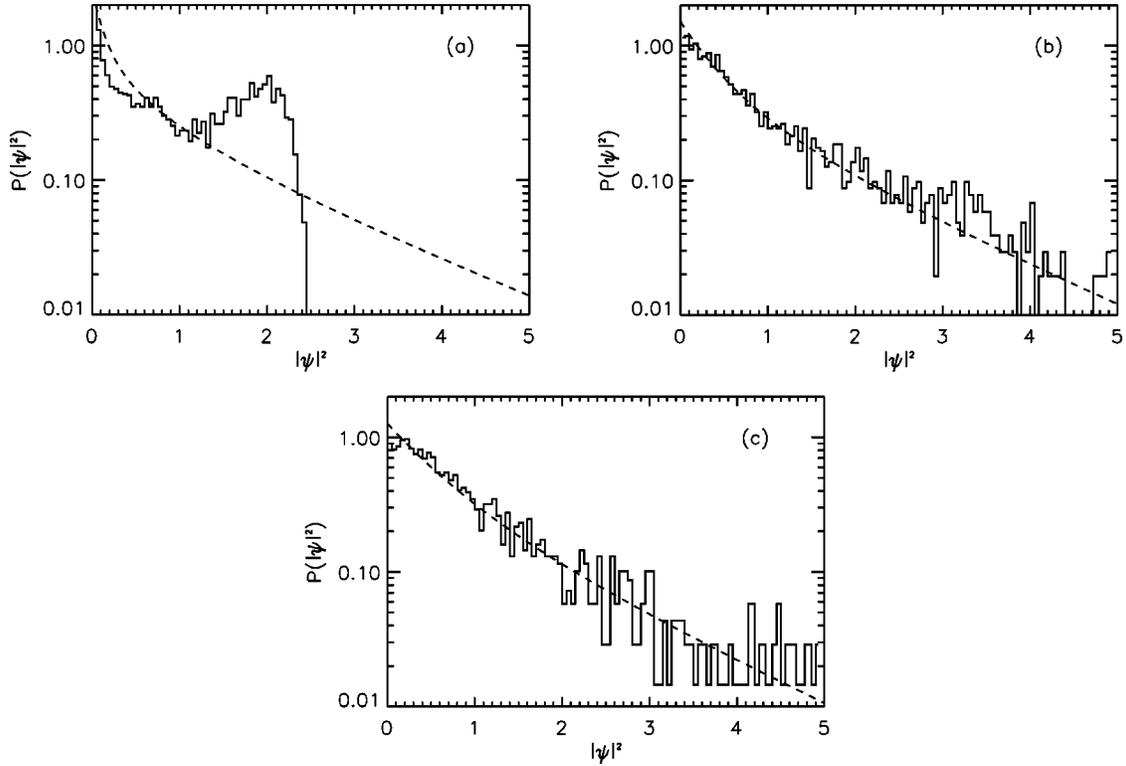


FIG. 2. Distributions of  $\rho=|\psi|^2$  for the ferrite billiard at 5.19 GHz (a), 6.41 GHz (b), and for the open billiard at 5.77 GHz (c), corresponding to Fig. 1. The dashed lines have been calculated from Eq. (2).

$$\vec{j} = \frac{\hbar}{m} \text{Im}[\psi^*(r) \vec{\nabla} \psi(r)],$$

in the corresponding quantum-mechanical system. A measurement of the electric field in the resonator including the phase thus immediately yields the Poynting vector and by means of the mentioned analogy the current density.

There is one problem with the experimental determination of field and current distributions. The probe antenna moving through the billiard unavoidably gives rise to a leakage current spoiling the statistical properties of the current distribution [18]. The influence of the probe antenna is small as long as there is a strong flow through the system. In this case the unavoidable leakage current into the probe antenna is negligible. There are situations, however, where there is no or only little flow, e.g., for the open dot, if the total transmission is close to zero, or for the ferrite billiard, if there are strong standing waves present, as in Fig. 1(a). In such cases the leakage current is no longer negligible, and may even become dominating. There is only one way to avoid this problem: the frequencies have to be chosen such that the overall amplitudes are moderate. As an example, Fig. 1(a) shows a mapping of  $|\psi|^2$  and of the current distribution in the ferrite billiard at a frequency where there is a strong flow into the measuring antenna at points of high intensity. In Fig. 1(b), on the other hand, the frequency has been chosen such that there is no noticeable current into the probe antenna.

### III. INTENSITY DISTRIBUTIONS

In a chaotic billiard, real and imaginary parts of the wave function are uncorrelated within the approach using a ran-

dom super position of plane waves,  $\langle \psi_R \psi_I \rangle = 0$ , where the average is taken over the billiard area. In a microwave measurement, there may be an additional rotation of the phase, caused by antennas, cables etc., i.e., the wave function registered by the apparatus is

$$\tilde{\psi} = \tilde{\psi}_R + i \tilde{\psi}_I = e^{i\alpha} (\psi_R + i \psi_I).$$

This has the consequence that real and imaginary parts become correlated,  $\langle \tilde{\psi}_R \tilde{\psi}_I \rangle \neq 0$ . To begin with we have to remove this phase rotation. The procedure is described, e.g., in Refs. [12,15].

The distribution of intensities  $\rho=|\psi|^2$  can be calculated with the help of the Berry ansatz described above. If there is a complex mixing of independent Gaussian fields  $\psi_R$  and  $\psi_I$ , we have in the transition regime [12,15]

$$P(\rho) = \mu \exp(-\mu^2 \rho) I_0(\mu \sqrt{\mu^2 - 1} \rho), \quad (2)$$

where

$$\mu = \frac{1}{2} \left( \epsilon + \frac{1}{\epsilon} \right) \quad \text{and} \quad \epsilon = \sqrt{\frac{\langle \psi_I^2 \rangle}{\langle \psi_R^2 \rangle}}.$$

In the limit  $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ , Eq. (2) describes the Porter-Thomas distribution found for systems where the wave function is real. For  $\epsilon \rightarrow 1$ , a single exponential behavior is observed, which holds for systems where real and imaginary parts are of the same strength.

Figures 2(a) and 2(b) show the corresponding intensity

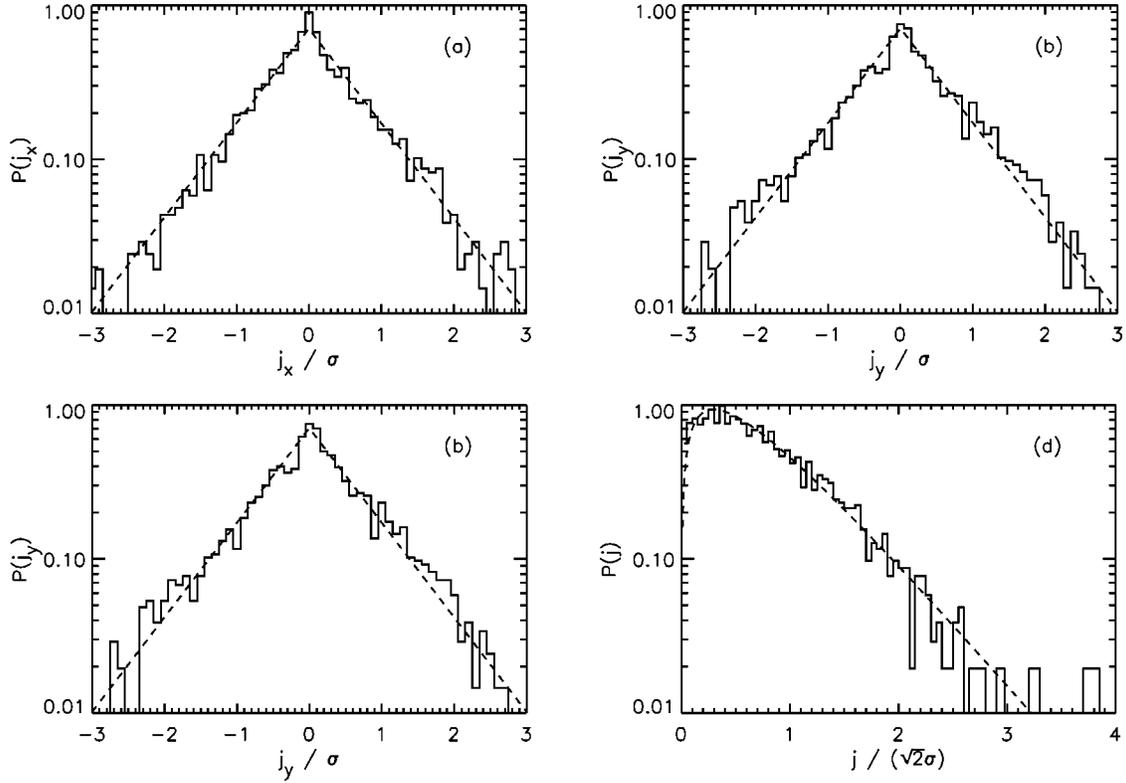


FIG. 3. Distributions of  $j_x$  (a),  $j_y$  (b), and  $j$ , the latter one both on a linear (c) and a logarithmic scale (d), for the ferrite billiard at 6.41 GHz, corresponding to Fig. 1(b). The dashed lines are the theoretical expectations from Eqs. (3) and (4), respectively, where  $\sigma = \sqrt{\langle j_{x,y}^2 \rangle}$ ; see Eq. (5).

distributions for the ferrite billiard. The dashed lines are calculated from Eq. (2). The parameter  $\epsilon$  has not been fitted but has been taken directly from the experiment by averaging  $\psi_R^2$  and  $\psi_I^2$  over all pixels at a given frequency.

One observes a quantitative agreement with theory for the case that the leakage current is negligible [Fig. 2(b)]. For the scarred wave function of Fig. 2(a), on the other hand, the experimentally found distribution of  $|\psi|^2$  is completely at odds with theory. Such discrepancies are not new. Already in the disseminating paper by McDonald and Kaufman [3] Gaussian distributions for  $\psi$  were observed for chaotic wave functions exclusively. It is obvious that the approach using a random superposition of plane waves cannot work for bouncing ball and scarred wave functions such as the one shown in Fig. 1(a). It is an easy matter to show that sharp drops in the  $|\psi|^2$  distribution as the one in Fig. 2(a) are generic, e.g., for all wave functions of the rectangle [15].

Figure 2(c) shows a corresponding example for the open billiard at a frequency where there is no leakage current. Again one finds a complete correspondence with theory.

#### IV. CURRENT DISTRIBUTIONS

For the currents shown in the bottom panel of Fig. 1 the distribution function of

$$\vec{j} = \text{Im}[\psi^* \vec{\nabla} \psi] = \psi_R \vec{\nabla} \psi_I - \psi_I \vec{\nabla} \psi_R$$

has to be calculated. A similar problem occurred in our work on global and local level dynamics where the distribution function of  $\psi \vec{\nabla} \psi$  was needed [4]. With the approach using a random superposition of plane waves the calculation of the averages is straightforward and yields [12]

$$P(j_{x,y}) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\langle j_{x,y}^2 \rangle}} \exp\left(-\sqrt{\frac{2}{\langle j_{x,y}^2 \rangle}} |j_{x,y}|\right) \quad (3)$$

for the distribution of the current components  $j_x$  and  $j_y$ , and

$$P(j) = \frac{4j}{\langle j^2 \rangle} K_0\left(\frac{2j}{\sqrt{\langle j^2 \rangle}}\right) \quad (4)$$

for the distribution of the mod( $j$ ) =  $\sqrt{j_x^2 + j_y^2}$ , where the parameter

$$\langle j_{x,y}^2 \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \langle j^2 \rangle = k^2 \langle \psi_R^2 \rangle \langle \psi_I^2 \rangle \quad (5)$$

can again be taken directly from the experiment.

Figures 3 and 4 show the distributions for  $j_x$ ,  $j_y$ , and  $j$  for the same patterns depicted in Figs. 1(b) and 1(c), respectively. Once again, theory is in complete accordance with the experiment if there are no leakage currents, but is not able to describe the experiment otherwise. For comparison, Fig. 5 shows the current distribution for the scarred wave function

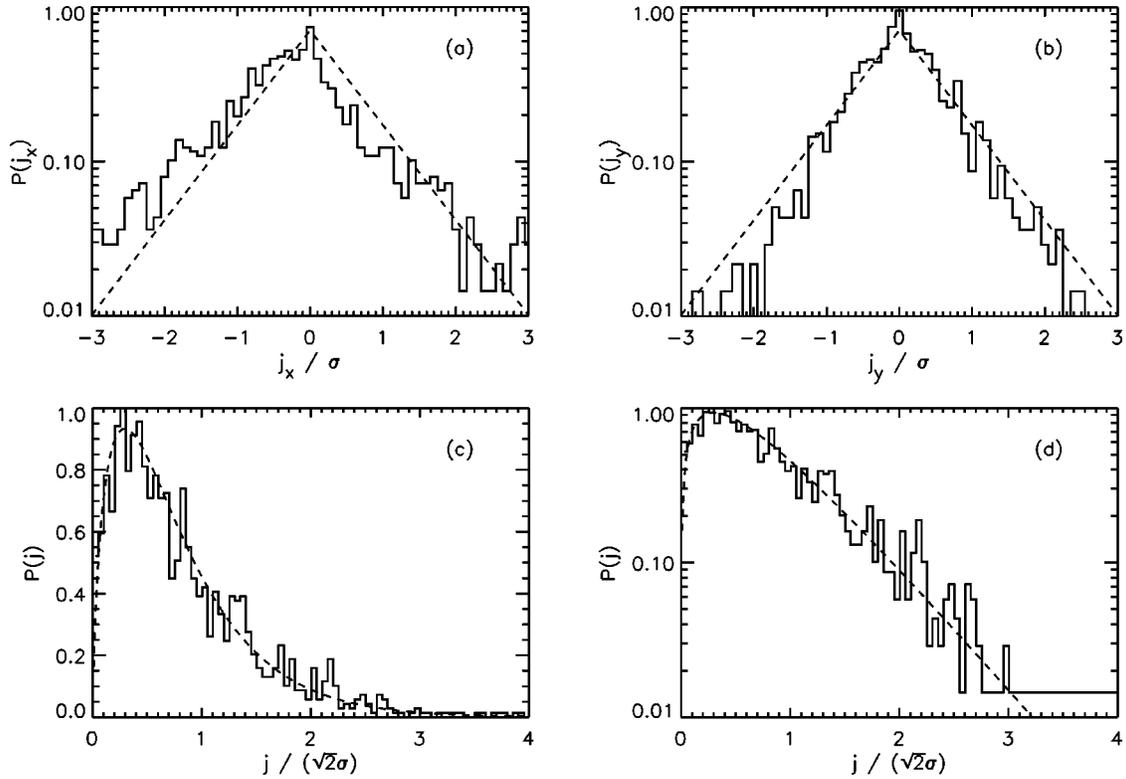


FIG. 4. Same as Fig. 3, but for the open billiard at 5.77 GHz, corresponding to Fig. 1(c).

in Fig. 1(a). Not unexpectedly there are again significant deviations from the universal behavior. The excess at large current values in particular is a consequence of the strong leakage currents observed at positions of high  $|\psi|^2$  values [see Fig. 1(a)].

In particular, we observe identical distributions for  $j_x$  and  $j_y$  in the ferrite billiard. This is no longer the case for the open billiard, where the maximum of the  $j_x$  distribution is shifted significantly to negative values caused by the transport from the right to the left through the billiard.

## V. THE VORTEX SPATIAL AUTOCORRELATION FUNCTION

A very useful quantity to characterize the vortex structure of a vector field is the vorticity. Up to a factor of 1/2 it is

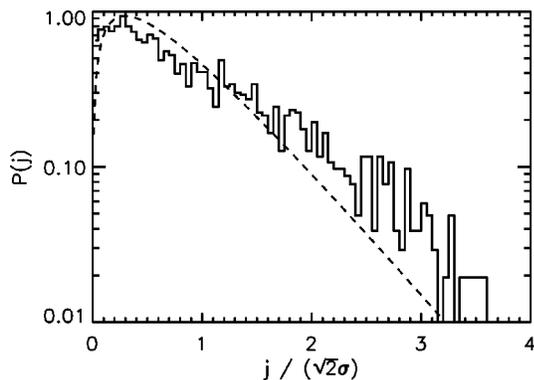


FIG. 5. Distribution of  $j$  on a logarithmic scale as in Fig. 3(d), but for the scarred wave function at 5.19 GHz, shown in Fig. 1(a).

identical to the rotation of the current density,

$$\omega = \frac{\partial \psi_R}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \psi_I}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial \psi_I}{\partial x} \frac{\partial \psi_R}{\partial y} = \frac{1}{2} (\vec{\nabla} \times \vec{j})_z.$$

The calculation of the corresponding distribution function  $P(\omega)$  follows exactly the same lines as for the current distribution and yields

$$P(\omega) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\langle \omega^2 \rangle}} \exp\left(-\sqrt{\frac{2}{\langle \omega^2 \rangle}} |\omega|\right), \quad (6)$$

where

$$\langle \omega^2 \rangle = \frac{1}{2} k^4 \langle \psi_R^2 \rangle \langle \psi_I^2 \rangle \quad (7)$$

can be taken directly from the experiment.

Figure 6 shows the vorticity distribution for the example shown in Fig. 1(b) for the ferrite billiard. The dashed line has been calculated from Eq. (6). Again the parameter  $\lambda$  was not fitted but taken from the experiment.

For the wave function to be zero both real and imaginary parts have to be vanished. As a consequence there are no longer nodal lines, but only nodal points. Each nodal point corresponds to a vortex in the corresponding flow pattern. Since the distance between neighboring node lines is of the order of half of a wavelength both for real and imaginary parts, the mean spacing between neighboring nodal points is of this order of magnitude as well.

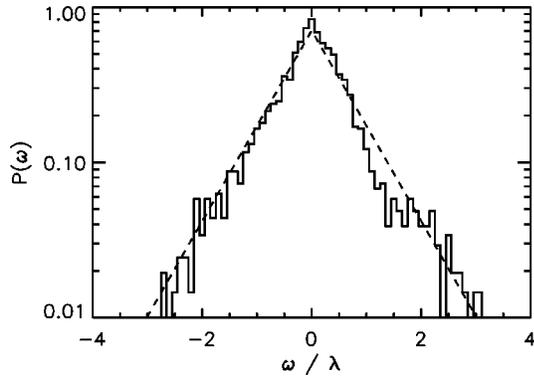


FIG. 6. Distribution of the vorticity for the ferrite billiard at 6.41 GHz corresponding to Fig. 1(b). The dashed line corresponds to Eq. (6), where  $\lambda = \sqrt{\langle \omega^2 \rangle}$ ; see Eq. (7).

Using the approach using a random superposition of plane waves, Berry and Dennis [16] calculated two types of vortex spatial autocorrelation functions, one of them called pair correlation function is defined by

$$g(r) = g_0 \langle \delta(\psi_R(\vec{r}+r)) \delta(\psi_I(\vec{r}+r)) \delta(\psi_R(\vec{r})) \delta(\psi_I(\vec{r})) \times |\omega(\vec{r}+r)| |\omega(\vec{r})| \rangle_{\vec{r}}. \quad (8)$$

The normalization  $g_0$  is determined such that  $g(r) \rightarrow 1$  for  $r \rightarrow \infty$ . The other correlation function discussed by the authors, the charge autocorrelation function  $g_Q(r)$ , differs from expression (8) only by the fact that the sign of the vorticity is taken into account,

$$g_Q(r) = g_0 \langle \delta(\psi_R(\vec{r}+r)) \delta(\psi_I(\vec{r}+r)) \delta(\psi_R(\vec{r})) \delta(\psi_I(\vec{r})) \times \omega(\vec{r}+r) \omega(\vec{r}) \rangle_{\vec{r}}.$$

Since for  $g_Q(r)$ , pairs of vortices with different senses of rotation enter with a negative sign, we have  $g_Q(r) \rightarrow 0$  for  $r \rightarrow \infty$ . For the explicit expressions of  $g(r)$  and  $g_Q(r)$ , which are quite complicated, the reader is referred to the original work. From the spatial autocorrelation function the distribution of nearest distances between vortices can be calculated, which has been studied by Saichev *et al.* [17].

The experimental study of the vortices is more difficult than that of the different types of distribution functions discussed above, since it involves the determination of the zeros of real and imaginary parts of the wave function. Because of the applied grid period of 5 mm, the precision in determining distances is only moderate, and more problematically, it is impossible to resolve vortices lying very close together,

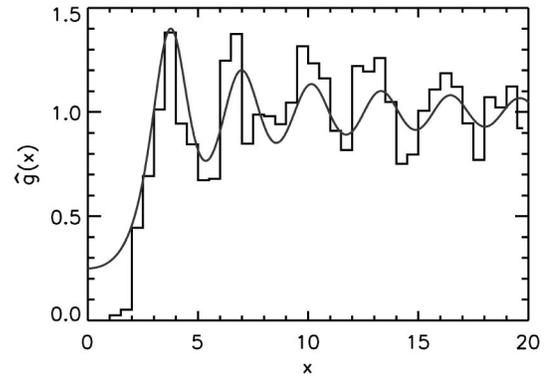


FIG. 7. Vortex pair correlation function  $\hat{g}(x)$  for the ferrite billiard, see Eq. (8), where  $x = kr$  and  $\hat{g}(x) = g(r)$ . The solid line has been calculated from an integral expression given by Berry and Dennis [16].

which is very often the case for vortices with different sign. In this situation a reliable determination of the distance distribution is not possible. The determination of the charge correlation function  $g_Q$ , too, did not work because of the cancellation of positive and negative terms, leading to an intolerable increase of the noise level. But the pair correlation function  $g$  could be determined. Since the wave number  $k$  enters the pair correlation function as a scaling factor only, we may write  $g(r) = \hat{g}(x)$ , where  $x = kr$ . This allows us to improve the statistics by superimposing the results from different frequencies. Figure 7 shows the resulting pair correlation function  $\hat{g}(x)$  obtained from current patterns at 43 different frequencies in the range from 4 to 8 GHz, by extracting the found vortices by hand. The frequency regimes showing a flow into the probe antenna were carefully avoided. Though the statistics is only moderate, the oscillations predicted by theory are clearly observable. The hole observed in the experimental histogram at small distances reflects the above mentioned difficulty to resolve closely neighboring vortices.

We can thus conclude that the experimentally obtained distributions of wave function amplitudes, currents, and vortices are in quantitative agreement with the predictions of the approach using a random superposition of plane waves, if the wave function is chaotic.

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