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# EXPERIMENTAL AND NUMERICAL STUDIES OF SEPARATRIX SPLITTING AND MAGNETIC FOOTPRINTS IN DIII-D

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## ABSTRACT

A numerical field line integration code is used to study the structure of divertor footprints produced by small non-axisymmetric magnetic perturbations in the DIII-D tokamak. The modeling results are compared to experimental data which show a splitting of the divertor target plate heat flux into several distinct peaks when an  $n = 3$  magnetic perturbation from the DIII-D I-coil is applied. The splitting consistently appears when the  $n = 3$  perturbation is applied and disappears when the perturbation is removed. The magnitude of the splitting implied by the modeling is a factor of 2-3 smaller than the splitting seen in the experimental data. These results suggest that the plasma response to the applied  $n = 3$  edge resonant magnetic perturbation amplifies the vacuum magnetic footprint structure on the divertor target plates. These results may have significant implications for the ITER divertor design.

## I. INTRODUCTION

When subjected to small non-axisymmetric magnetic perturbations, the separatrix of a poloidally diverted tokamak is transformed from an axisymmetric 2D geometry into a set of intersecting invariant manifolds that define a somewhat more complex 3D topology [1]. We refer to this process as separatrix splitting and the patterns formed by the intersection of the invariant manifolds with solid surfaces as magnetic footprints. This process is unavoidable when non-axisymmetric magnetic perturbations, such as those from external correction/control coils, field-errors or internal magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) modes, are present in the system. These magnetic structures can have significant implications for the deposition of heat and particle fluxes on divertor structures and first wall components and thus are of considerable interest for plasma-surface interaction research in toroidal fusion devices.

The mathematical theory of the structures formed due to separatrix or invariant manifold splitting in simple Hamiltonian systems, generically referred to as homoclinic tangles, has been extensively studied and is well understood [2-4]. The application of invariant manifold theory to magnetic field lines in realistic poloidally diverted tokamaks is most directly approached by numerical field line integration and mapping codes such as TRIP3D [5] and TRIP3D\_MAP [6] where the unperturbed axisymmetric field is derived from experimentally constrained equilibria. These equilibria are calculated with the EFIT Grad-Shafranov code [7], that includes the effects of the plasma pressure and current density. In addition, mapping codes used to study simplified wire models of poloidally diverted tokamaks [8] are valuable for comparing the properties of field line trajectories to a broader class of dynamics generic to conservative vector field systems, i.e., Hamiltonian systems. Finally, as suggested by the present data, the response of the plasma to changes in the magnetic topology can be significant and may act to either amplify or reduce the effect of the splitting.

In this paper we present measurements of heat flux and particle recycling patterns in the DIII-D lower divertor that are qualitatively consistent with the expected helical structure of magnetic footprints defined by homoclinic tangles produced during  $n = 3$  I-coil experiments in DIII-D [9]. DIII-D data is presented in Sec. 2 and numerical modeling results from the TRIP3D field line integration code in Sec. 3. The experimental measurements and the numerical modeling are compared in Sec. 4.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS

The separatrix splitting and magnetic footprint studies discussed in this paper are done with lower divertor target plate imaging diagnostics located at two toroidal angles using a dominantly lower null diverted plasma as shown in Fig. 1(a). The principle diagnostics are an infrared television (IRTV) [10] centered at a toroidal angle  $\phi = 60$  deg, as shown in Fig. 1(a), and a downward tilted, tangentially aligned visible camera viewing  $D_\alpha$  recycling light between  $\phi = 120$  deg and  $\phi = 225$  deg [11]. The IRTV is used to measure radial heat flux profiles across the lower divertor as a function of time. A typical heat flux profile during an edge localized mode (ELM) H-mode with no externally imposed resonant magnetic perturbations, other than intrinsic field-errors, is shown along the lower divertor tiles in Fig. 1(a). The  $D_\alpha$  camera provides 3D ( $R$ ,  $z$ ,  $\phi$ ) images of the lower divertor recycling with a 33 ms integration time. Figure 1(b) shows the poloidal structure of the split separatrix at  $\phi = 60$  deg calculated with TRIP3D\_MAP during an  $n = 3$  I-coil pulse. This calculation is done using the methods described in Refs. 1 and 6 and with an I-coil perturbation field that is approximately the same size as the field-error perturbations at the unperturbed separatrix.

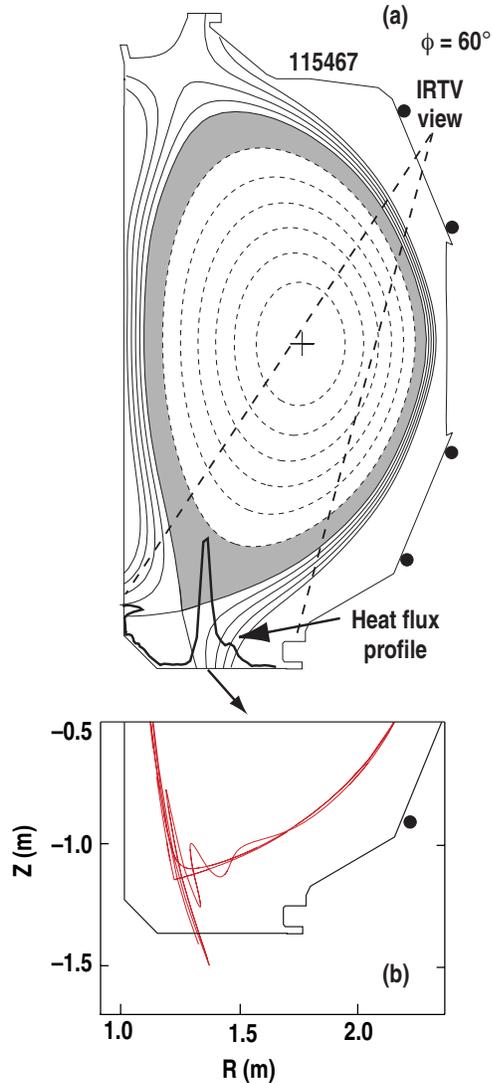


Fig. 1. (a) DIII-D axisymmetric equilibrium during discharge 115467 showing the IRTV camera view at  $\phi = 60$  deg and a typical heat flux profile before the I-coil (black dots) is pulsed, (b) typical non-axisymmetric separatrix structure during the I-coil pulse.

The key plasma parameters for this discharge are: elongation ( $\kappa$ ) of 1.8, upper and lower triangularities of 0.35 and 0.73 respectively, toroidal magnetic field  $B_T = 1.6$  T, plasma current  $I_p = 1.1$  MA and neutral beam heating power of 5.1 MW. The electron pedestal density normalized to the Greenwald density ( $n_{e,ped}/n_G$ ) is 0.55 with a line averaged density ( $n_e$ ) of  $7.2 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^{-3}$ . An L-H transition occurred at  $t = 1600$  ms and established regular Type-I ELMs within the first 300-400 ms of the L-H transition. The safety factor at the 95% flux surface ( $q_{95}$ ) 3.7. In this discharge an  $n = 3$  I-coil pulse was used to suppress ELMs [9] and the DIII-D C-coil was not used. Divertor Langmuir probe measurements indicate that the inner divertor leg is detached and the outer leg is close to detachment [12]. The properties of the discharges during the ELM suppressed phases

along with various diagnostic responses to the I-coil pulse are discussed extensively in Refs. 9, 13 and 14.

Data collected with the IRTV shows a distinct change in the divertor heat flux at the beginning of the I-coil current pulse followed by the formation of two distinct peaks that are slowly modulated during the remainder of the pulse. This temporal evolution of the divertor heat flux across the outer strike point region is represented using contour lines in Fig. 2(a). Here, red indicates a heat flux of approximately  $20 \text{ W/cm}^2$  and each additional contour line represents a change of  $5 \text{ W/cm}^2$ . A 4.4 kA,  $n = 3$ , I-coil current pulse is initiated at 3.0 s and terminates at 4.4 s. The heat flux profile evolves from a single peaked structure at  $t = 2.9 \text{ s}$ , as shown by the green “I-coil off” profile in Fig. 2(b), to a double peaked profile at  $t = 3.3 \text{ s}$  with the “I-coil on” as shown by the red dashed profile in Fig. 2(b). The maximum peak-to-peak separation of the double peak formation is 55 mm.

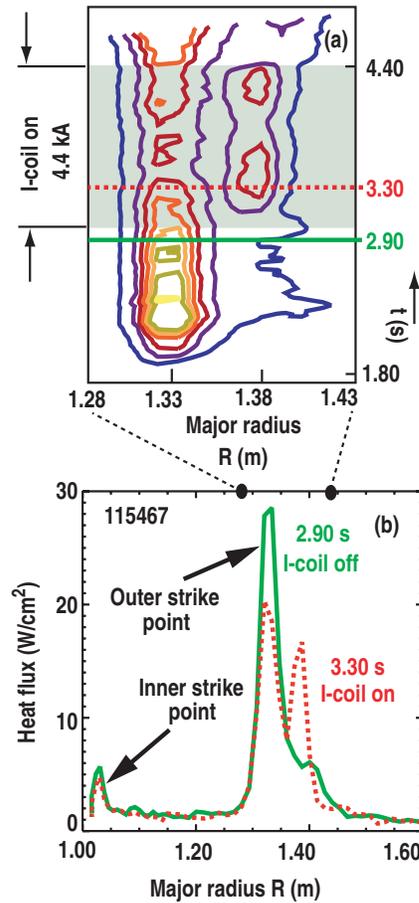


Fig. 2. (a) Contour plot showing the radial distribution of the lower divertor heat flux near the outer strike point ( $R = 1.31 \text{ m}$ ) as a function of time in discharge 115467. The I-coil is pulsed to 4.4 kA between 3.0 s and 4.4 s, (b) radial heat flux profiles just before (2.9 s) and during (3.3 s) the I-coil pulse.

A splitting of the  $D_{\alpha}$  recycling emission near the outer strike point is also seen when the I-coil is pulsed in this discharge. Figure 3 shows the  $D_{\alpha}$  TV view 60 ms after the initiation of the I-coil pulse. The radial resolution of the camera at the toroidal tangency point with the outer strike point ( $\phi = 195$  deg) is 5 mm in this view. The peak-to-peak splitting of the recycling in this image is estimated to be between 20 and 30 mm at  $\phi = 195$  deg. In addition the full width of each peak is estimated to be between 10 and 20 mm.

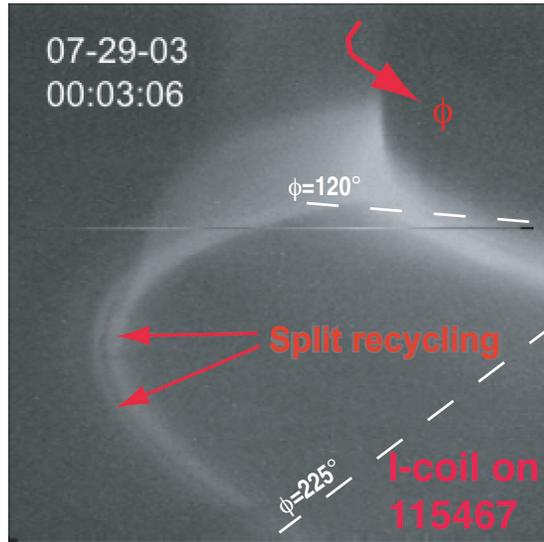


Fig. 3. Lower divertor  $D_{\alpha}$  recycling emission splits along the outer strike point during the I-coil pulse in discharge 115467.

### III NUMERICAL MODELING

Numerical modeling of the magnetic footprint near the outer strike point before the I-coil pulse in discharge 115467 shows a small  $n = 1$  split peak pattern at  $\phi = 195$  deg with a peak-to-peak separation of approximately 5 mm as seen in Fig. 4. This splitting is due to measured non-axisymmetric intrinsic field-error components generated by the vertical field coils (DIII-D f-coils), the toroidal field coil bus bars and the toroidal field coil center post legs. The TRIP3D code uses engineering quality models of the known field-errors and perturbation coils (i.e., the C- and I-coils) in DIII-D to calculate magnetic field vectors needed for field line integration studies [5]. The data shown in Figs. 4 and 5 are accumulated by following  $\sim 1.4 \times 10^4$  field lines started at 180 uniformly distributed poloidal points on 10 unperturbed normalized flux surfaces between  $\psi_N = 0.98$  and 0.998 and 8 uniformly distributed toroidal angles. Each field line is integrated along the toroidal field direction for 200 toroidal transits or until it strikes the lower divertor target plate where its position is recorded with a dot and its flux surface of origin is designated by the color of the dot used with red to blue corresponding to 0.98 to 0.998 respectively.

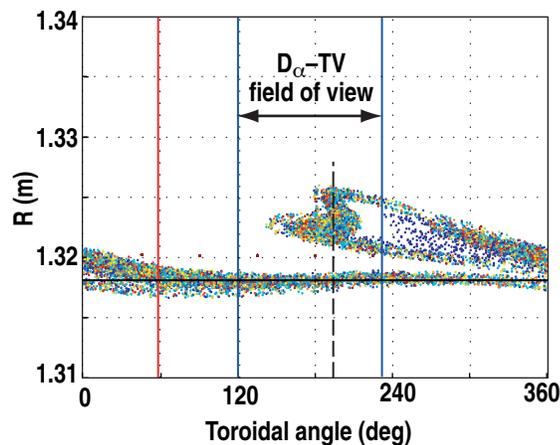


Fig. 4. Magnetic footprint calculated with TRIP3D showing field line strike point locations in  $(R, \phi)$  due to DIII-D field-errors only (before the I-coil is pulsed) in discharge 115467.

With the I-coil on in discharge 115467 the magnetic footprint calculated with TRIP3D forms a clear  $n = 3$  structure. The width of the structure at  $\phi = 195$  deg remains approximately constant as seen in Fig. 5 compared to the field-error width. At the location of the IRTV ( $\phi = 60$  deg indicated by the red line in Figs. 4 and 5) three new radial stripes with peak-to-peak separations of 2 mm, 5 mm and 9 mm appear. The tips of these stripes have a much lower field line density than their base and are dominated by field lines from flux surfaces close to the unperturbed separatrix.

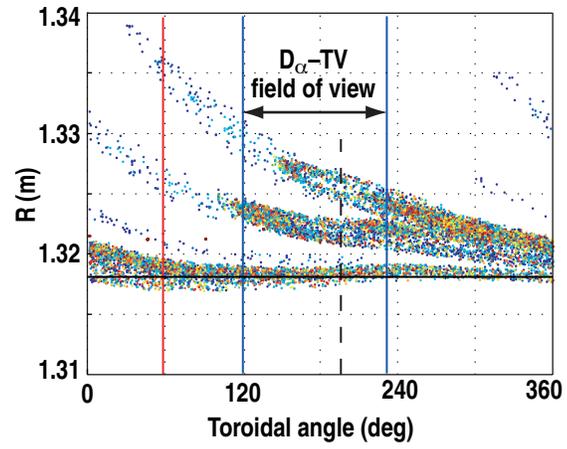


Fig. 5. The same as Fig. 4 during the 4.4 kA  $n = 3$  I-coil pulse in discharge 115467.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A comparison of the experimental data, during the I-coil pulse as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, with the numerical calculations of the magnetic footprint near outer strike point (Fig. 5) indicates that a non-axisymmetric splitting of the separatrix is qualitatively consistent with the experimental data. Since the structure appears in both the heat flux profile at  $\phi = 60$  deg and in the  $D_\alpha$  images at  $\phi = 195$  deg when the I-coil pulse is initiated and disappears when the I-coil pulse terminates it is clearly correlated with the applied  $n = 3$  magnetic perturbation. Similar features have been seen during locked modes, ELMs and disruptions in DIII-D [1,15].

Quantitative estimates of the peak-to-peak splitting in the heat flux profile determined from IRTV indicate two peaks separated by 55 mm while the numerical modeling results indicate a total of four discrete radial stripes separated by 2, 5 and 9 mm from inner to outer respectively, approximately 20 mm in total. Since the spatial resolution of the IRTV is of order 15 mm the fine structure predicted by the modeling may not be visible in the measured data. The data and the modeling taken together suggest that the applied perturbation may be amplified by as much a factor of 2-3 by plasma effects. Interestingly, at the  $D_\alpha$  imaging location the numerical modeling results indicate a peak-to-peak splitting of about 8-15 mm during the I-coil pulse and the experimental data shows a 20-30 mm split which would also be consistent with an amplification factor of 2-3. Additionally, the decrease seen in the experimental peak-to-peak separation from  $\phi = 60$  deg to  $\phi = 195$  deg is qualitatively consistent with the numerical results shown in Fig. 5.

These results demonstrate that heat and particle deposition patterns seen on the target plates of a poloidally diverted plasma are qualitatively consistent with the magnetic footprints produced by a splitting of the separatrix when small non-axisymmetric magnetic perturbations are present. In addition, the experimental data presented here indicate that the plasma response may amplify the magnitude of the splitting by as much as a factor of 3 and that small non-axisymmetric perturbations, when combined with the potential for plasma amplification, may have significant implications for divertor designs in burning plasma devices such as ITER.

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