Sinai billiard maps with Ruelle resonances

Damien Thomine

Université Paris-Saclay, CNRS, Laboratoire de Mathématiques d’Orsay 91405
Orsay, France

E-mail: damien.thomine@universite-paris-saclay.fr

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Abstract
We construct families of two-dimensional Sinai billiards whose transfer operators have Ruelle resonances arbitrarily close to 1. Our method involves taking a large enough cover of an initial billiard table, and relating the transfer operator of the covering table to twisted transfer operators of the initial table. We also study the distribution of these resonances which are close to 1.

Keywords: billiard, transfer operator, Ruelle, resonance

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Dispersing billiards are one of the classical models of chaotic dynamics, dating back to Sinai [15]. Over the years, many of their statistical properties have been proved, starting with their ergodicity [15], and up to the central limit theorem, the exponential decay of correlations [5, 18] and large deviations for the collision map [14, 11].

In the last few years, the approach via the study of the spectral properties of the transfer operator bore fruits, with Demers and Zhang constructing Banach spaces $B$ on which the transfer operator acts quasi-compactly [7, 8]. This implies the previous results, and led to a finer understanding of the statistical properties of the billiard flow using Dolgopyat-type arguments [2].

Since the transfer operator acting on a suitable Banach space is quasi-compact, one can define Ruelle resonances, that is, eigenvalues of the transfer operator. There is at least one such eigenvalue (1, corresponding to constant functions). A question, asked by Baladi, was whether one could find billiard tables with non-trivial Ruelle resonances.

There are relatively few examples for which we are able to describe explicitly the spectrum of the transfer operator; one such instance is given by the work of Bandtlow, Just and Slipantschuk on Blaschke products [4, 16]. A generic Anosov diffeomorphism of the 2-torus also admits non-trivial Ruelle resonances [1].

We prove that, for a suitable choice of billiard tables, the transfer operator admits non-trivial Ruelle resonances. In a nutshell, we fix an initial billiard table, and relate the transfer operator on Abelian covers of the billiard table to twisted transfer operators for this initial table. Then the eigenvalues of a twisted transfer operator appear as Ruelle resonances of the
transfer operator on a corresponding cover. A perturbative argument finally shows that, if the degree of the cover is large enough, then there exist such resonances close to 1 (theorem 1.1), corresponding to the main eigenvalues of the twisted transfer operators for small values of the twist. While no explicit bound on the degree is given ensuring the existence of such resonances, our argument can in principle be made constructive if an explicit control on the spectral gap of the transfer operator were to be proved.

While we found it independently, our method is very close to the one used by Jakobson, Naud and Soares [10] to prove the existence of Ruelle resonances for geodesic flows on convex-cocompact surfaces of constant negative curvature. The main difference is that, for the geodesic flow in constant curvature, an approach via dynamical zeta functions is available, which simplifies many arguments (in particular those relying on the time-reversal symmetry). This approach is not available in the context of billiards, so we provide more elementary, and more robust, arguments.

As in [10], we also show that those resonances which are close to 1 are real, and study their distribution for families of large covers (propositions 1.3 and 1.4).

While we expect this method to work as well with the billiard flow, some groundwork is necessary to be able to deal with the Banach spaces constructed in [2]. As a consequence, we only discuss the collision map.

The necessary background and our results are exposed in section 1. We prove the existence of resonances in section 2, and study their distribution in section 3.

1. Context and results

1.1. Sinai billiards and Ruelle spectrum

A planar Sinai billiard with finite horizon is given by a finite number of non-overlapping closed convex regions \((\Gamma_k)_{1 \leq k \leq d}\) of the torus \(T^2\), whose boundaries \((\gamma_k)_{1 \leq k \leq d}\) are \(C^3\) with non-vanishing curvature, and such that any line in the torus meets the interior of one of the \(\Gamma_k\)'s (the so-called finite horizon condition).

The billiard table is \(Q = T^2 \setminus \bigcup_{k=1}^{d} \Gamma_k\). We consider the dynamics of a point particle moving at unit speed in \(Q\), with specular reflection at the obstacles. The state space for this flow is three-dimensional, and there is a natural Poincaré section: the set \(M := \bigcup_{k=1}^{d} \gamma_k \times [-\pi/2, \pi/2]\) of outward-facing unit vectors at the boundaries of the obstacles. The finite horizon condition implies that the return time to this Poincaré section is bounded (figure 1). Let \(T : M \to M\) be the first return map to \(M\), which is also called the collision map.

The map \(T\) is hyperbolic with codimension 1 singularities (which correspond to grazing trajectories on the billiard table), and a finite number of domains of continuity. It preserves a symplectic form on \(M\), and thus the associated Liouville measure \(\mu = \frac{\cos(\theta)}{\sum_{k=1}^{d} |\gamma_k|} \ dV \ d\theta\) on \(M\).

The collision map \(T\) is one of the most prominent examples of chaotic maps; for instance, it exhibits exponential decay of correlations against Hölder observables. More precisely, for any \(\eta > 0\), there exist constants \(C > 0\) and \(\lambda > 1\) such that

\[
\left| \int_M \varphi \cdot \psi \circ T^n \ d\mu - \int_M \varphi \ d\mu \int_M \psi \ d\mu \right| \leq C \lambda^{-n} \|\varphi\|_\eta \|\psi\|_\eta, \tag{1.1}
\]

where \(\|\cdot\|_\eta\) is the \(\eta\)-Hölder norm. Equation (1.1) can be seen as a consequence of spectral properties of the composition operator \(h \mapsto h \circ T\), or its dual, the transfer operator \(P\). The transfer operator \(P\) acts on \(L^1(M, \mu)\) by:

\[
P(h) = h \circ T^{-1} \quad \forall \ h \in L^1(M, \mu).
\]
The operator $P$ also acts on various function or distribution spaces; of interest to us will be the Banach spaces of anisotropic distributions $\mathcal{B}$ constructed by Demers and Zhang [7, 8].

The anisotropic distributions on $M$ constructed by Demers and Zhang are regular in the unstable direction, and dual of regular in the stable direction. By [7, lemma 2.1],
\[ C^{1/3}(M) \rightarrow \mathcal{B} \rightarrow C^{1/3}(T^{-n}\mathcal{W}^s)^*, \]
where $C^\gamma$ is the space of $\gamma$-Hölder functions, $\mathcal{W}^s$ is a space of stable curves, and the inclusions are continuous and injective. In addition, the injection $C^1(M) \subset \mathcal{B}$ has a dense image.

The operator $P$ acts continuously on $\mathcal{B}$. By [7, proposition 2.3], its action is quasi-compact: 1 belongs to the spectrum of $P$ (since $1 \in \mathcal{B}$ and $P(1) = 1$), and the essential spectral radius $\rho_{\text{ess}}(P \leftrightarrow \mathcal{B})$ of $P$ acting on $\mathcal{B}$ is strictly smaller than 1. More precisely, there exists a constant $\rho_0 > 0$, depending only on the minimal travel time between obstacles and the minimal curvature of the obstacles, such that $\rho_{\text{ess}}(P \leftrightarrow \mathcal{B}) \leq \rho_0 < 1$. The spectrum of $P$ in $\overline{B}(0, \rho_0)^c$ is discrete, contained in $\overline{B}(0, 1)$, and consists in (at most) countably many eigenvalues of finite multiplicity. Such eigenvalues are Ruelle resonances of the transfer operator.

In addition, when acting on $\mathcal{B}$, the operator $P$ has a spectral gap: its resonance 1 is simple and is the only resonance of modulus 1. Hence, $P$ is the sum of the rank 1 projection $h \mapsto \int_M h \, d\mu \cdot 1$ and of an operator of spectral radius strictly smaller than 1. The exponential decay of correlations (1.1) follows (figure 2).
If the obstacles are close or the minimal curvature of the obstacles is small, then the estimate on the essential spectral radius becomes worse, which makes it harder to find resonances. The strategy we adopt lets us work with those constants being fixed, avoiding this difficulty.

1.2. Coverings of billiard tables

A Sinai billiard table admits a \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \)-covering, that is, a \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \)-periodic billiard table \( \tilde{Q} \subset \mathbb{R}^2 \) such that the natural projection of \( \tilde{Q} \) on \( \mathbb{T}^2 \) is \( Q \). In what follows, we denote with a tilde all objects related to this \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \)-cover.

By choosing an origin and making \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \) act on \( \tilde{Q} \), the obstacles of \( \tilde{Q} \) can be indexed by \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \): we get \( \mathbb{R}^2 \setminus \tilde{Q} = \bigcup_{k=1}^{d} \bigcup_{p \in \mathbb{Z}^2} \tilde{\Gamma}_{k,p} \), where \( \Gamma_{k,p} = \Gamma_{k,0} + p \), whence \( \tilde{M} = \bigcup_{p \in \mathbb{Z}^2} M \times \mathbb{Z}^2 \).

The Liouville measure \( \mu \) also lifts to a \( \tilde{T} \)-invariant measure \( \tilde{\mu} \), such that any restriction of \( \tilde{\mu} \) to a fundamental domain equals \( \mu \).

The collision map \( \tilde{T} \) for \( \tilde{Q} \) is a \( \mathbb{Z}^2 \)-extension of the collision map for \( Q \). Given \( (x, p) \in \tilde{M} = M \times \mathbb{Z}^2 \), we have \( \tilde{T}(x, p) = (T(x), q) \), and \( q - p \) depend only on \( x \). Writing \( q - p = F(x) \), we get a function \( F : M \to \mathbb{Z}^2 \) such that:

\[
\tilde{T}(x, p) = (T(x), p + F(x)).
\]

The value \( F(x) \) stays the same as long as \( (x, 0) \) and \( \tilde{T}(x, 0) \) belong to the same two obstacles. As a consequence, \( F \) is constant on the domains of continuity of \( T \). By the finite horizon condition, \( T \) admits finitely many domains of continuity, so that \( F \) is bounded.

The billiard map is time-reversible. The involution \( \iota(\ell, \theta) := (\ell, -\theta) \) on \( M \) has the following properties:

\[
\iota \circ T = T^{-1} \circ \iota, \\
F \circ \iota = -F \circ T^{-1},
\]

and \( \iota \) preserves \( \mu \). It follows that \( \int_M F \, d\mu = 0 \).

The same construction can be used on any covering of \( Q \) (figure 3). In particular, given any rank 2 lattice \( \Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2 \), we get a billiard table \( Q_\Lambda \), to which we associate a probability-preserving
dynamical system \((M_\Lambda, \mu_\Lambda, T_\Lambda)\). Writing \(G := \mathbb{Z}^2 / \Lambda\), we have:

\[
M_\Lambda = M \times G,
\]

\[
\mu_\Lambda = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{g \in G} \mu \times \delta_g,
\]

\[
T_\Lambda(x, g) = (T(x), g + F(x)\Lambda).
\]

We denote by \(P_\Lambda\) the transfer operator associated with \((M_\Lambda, \mu_\Lambda, T_\Lambda)\), and \(B_\Lambda\) the Banach space as constructed in [7] for the system \((M_\Lambda, \mu_\Lambda, T_\Lambda)\). By construction, for any \(h \in B_\Lambda\),

\[
\|h\|_{B_\Lambda} = \max_{g \in G} \|h1_{M \times \{g\}}\|_B.
\]

1.3 Results

We shall prove that, when \(\Lambda\) is large enough, the Sinai billiard on the table \(Q_\Lambda\) has non-trivial Ruelle resonances (figure 4). More precisely,

**Theorem 1.1.** There exists \(\delta > 0\) such that \(\text{Sp}(P_\Lambda \ominus B_\Lambda) \subset B(0, 1 - \delta) \cup [1 - \delta, 1]\) for all lattices \(\Lambda\).

In addition, there exist positive constants \(c < C\) such that:

\[
c|G| < \left|\{\text{Ruelle resonances in } [1 - \delta, 1] \text{ with multiplicities}\}\right| < C|G|.
\]

In particular, whenever \(\Lambda\) is sparse enough, \(P_\Lambda\) admits non-trivial Ruelle resonances.

Now, let us focus on the distribution of these resonances. Let \(\rho_0\) be the upper bound on \(\rho_{\text{ess}}(P \ominus B)\) given by [7, proposition 2.3]. For \(\Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2\) a rank 2 lattice, define the spectral measure of \(P_\Lambda\) as:

\[
\nu_\Lambda := \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{\delta_\lambda, \lambda \text{ resonance of } P_\Lambda} \delta_\lambda,
\]

where the sum is taken with multiplicity. Then \(\rho_{\text{ess}}(P_\Lambda \ominus B_\Lambda) \leq \rho_0\), so that \(\nu_\Lambda\) is a Radon measure on \(B(0, \rho_0)^c\). Our next proposition, which is a variant of [10, theorem 1.3], states that,
for any sequence \((\Lambda_N)\) of lattices, the sequence \((\nu_{\Lambda_N})\) of spectral measures admits a converging subsequence.

**Proposition 1.2.** For any sequence of rank 2 lattices \(\Lambda_N \subset \mathbb{Z}^2\), there exists a subsequence \((\Lambda_{N_k})_{k \geq 0}\) and a Radon measure \(\nu\) such that \(\nu_{\Lambda_{N_k}} \to \nu\) for the vague topology, i.e.

\[
\lim_{k \to +\infty} \int_{B(0,\rho_0)} f \, d\nu_{\Lambda_{N_k}} = \int_{B(0,\rho_0)} f \, d\nu
\]

for all \(f \in C_c(B(0,\rho_0))\).

For specific choices of a sequence of lattices \((\Lambda_N)\), we can express explicitly the limit of \((\nu_{\Lambda_N})\) near 1, similarly to what was done in [10, section 3.2]. Let \(\Lambda^{(1)}_N := N\mathbb{Z} \times \mathbb{Z}\) and \(\Lambda^{(2)}_N := (N\mathbb{Z})^2\). We write \(\nu^{(1)}_{\Lambda_N} := \nu_{\Lambda^{(1)}_N}\) and likewise \(\nu^{(2)}_{\Lambda_N} := \nu_{\Lambda^{(2)}_N}\). For the sequence of lattices \((\Lambda^{(1)}_N)\), we get the following statement:

**Proposition 1.3.** Let \(\delta\) be defined as in theorem 1.1. There exist \(\delta_0 \in (0, \delta]\) and a finite measure \(\nu^{(1)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}\) on \([1-\delta_0,1]\) such that:

\[
\lim_{N \to +\infty} \nu^{(1)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor} = \nu^{(1)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}^*\]

where the convergence is in \(C([1-\delta_0,1],\mathbb{C})^*\). Moreover, \(\nu^{(1)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}\) is absolutely continuous with respect to the Lebesgue measure, and its density admits a version which is continuous on \([1-\delta_0,1]\) and satisfies

\[
\lim_{x \to 1-} \sqrt{1-x} \frac{d\nu^{(1)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}}{dx} = \frac{1}{\pi \sqrt{2 \Sigma_{11}}} > 0. \tag{1.2}
\]

In equation (1.2), the constant \(\Sigma_{11}\) is the upper-left coefficient of the covariance matrix \(\Sigma\) associated with the diffusion of the billiard on the table \(\tilde{Q}\) (see equation (2.2)). Replacing \(\Lambda^{(1)}_N\) by \(\mathbb{Z} \times N\mathbb{Z}\) only changes the constant in equation (1.2), where \(\Sigma_{11}\) becomes \(\Sigma_{22}\).

We get an analogous statement for the sequence \((\Lambda^{(2)}_N)\):

**Proposition 1.4.** Let \(\delta\) be defined as in theorem 1.1. There exist \(\delta_0 \in (0, \delta]\) and a finite measure \(\nu^{(2)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}\) on \([1-\delta_0,1]\) such that:

\[
\lim_{N \to +\infty} \nu^{(2)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor} = \nu^{(2)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}^*\]

where the convergence is in \(C([1-\delta_0,1],\mathbb{C})^*\). Moreover, \(\nu^{(2)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}\) is absolutely continuous with respect to the Lebesgue measure, and its density admits a version which is continuous on \([1-\delta_0,1]\) and satisfies

\[
\lim_{x \to 1-} \frac{d\nu^{(2)}_{\lfloor 1-\delta_0,1\rfloor}}{dx} = \frac{1}{2\pi \sqrt{\det(\Sigma)}} > 0. \tag{1.3}
\]
2. Existence of resonances

In this section, we prove a weaker version of theorem 1.1:

**Proposition 2.1.** Let \((M, \mu, T)\) be a finite horizon Sinai billiard. Let \(U\) be a neighbourhood of 1 in \(C\). There exists a constant \(c(U) > 0\) such that, for any rank 2 lattice \(\Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2\), the spectrum of \(P_\Lambda\) acting on \(B_\Lambda\) admits at least \(c(U)|G|\) Ruelle resonances (with multiplicities) in \(U\).

In particular, if \(\Lambda\) is sparse enough, then \(P_\Lambda\) admits non-trivial Ruelle resonances in \(U\).

Theorem 1.1 shall follow from proposition 2.1 and some additional results on the localization of Ruelle resonances proved in section 3.

### 2.1. Spectral decomposition of \(B_\Lambda\)

The map \(M_\Lambda \to M\) is a Galois covering, the deck transformations being translations \(\tau_g : M_\Lambda \to M_\Lambda\) given by \(\tau_g(x, g') = (x, g' + g)\), for all \(g \in G\). All these translations are measure-preserving and commute with \(T_\Lambda\):

\[
\tau_g \circ T_\Lambda(x, g') = (T(x), g' + F(x) + g[\Lambda]) = T_\Lambda \circ \tau_g(x, g').
\]

As a consequence, \(G\) acts on \(B_\Lambda\) by pre-composition:

\[
(\tau_g h_\Lambda)(\varphi) := h_\Lambda(\varphi \circ \tau_g)
\]

for all \(h_\Lambda \in B_\Lambda\) and \(\varphi \in C^1(M_\Lambda, \mathbb{C})\), and this action commutes with \(P_\Lambda\).

Let \(g \in G\). Since \(\tau_g\) and \(P_\Lambda\) commute, the eigenspaces of \(\tau_g\) are \(P_\Lambda\)-invariant. As this holds for all \(g \in \tau_g\), the intersections of the eigenspaces for \((\tau_g)_{g \in G}\) are \(P_\Lambda\)-invariant. But these eigenspaces are given by the characters of \(G\):

\[
B_{\Lambda, \chi} := \{h \otimes \chi : h \in B_\Lambda, \quad \chi \in \hat{G}\},
\]

where \((h \otimes \chi)(\varphi) = \sum_{g \in G} \chi(g)h(\varphi(\cdot, g))\) for all \(\varphi_\Lambda \in C^1(M_\Lambda, \mathbb{C})\). Note that we can define maps \(\Pi_{\Lambda, \chi} : B_\Lambda \to B\) by:

\[
\Pi_{\Lambda, \chi}(h_\Lambda)(\varphi) := |G|^{-1}h_\Lambda(\varphi \otimes \chi) \quad \forall \varphi \in C^1(M, \mathbb{C}),
\]

and the space \(B_{\Lambda, \chi}\) can be written as:

\[
B_{\Lambda, \chi} = \bigcap_{\chi \in \hat{G}} \text{Ker}(\Pi_{\Lambda, \chi}).
\]

In particular, the spaces \(B_{\Lambda, \chi}\) are closed, and there is a \(P_\Lambda\)-invariant splitting:

\[
B_\Lambda = \bigoplus_{\chi \in \hat{G}} B_{\Lambda, \chi}.
\]
2.2. Spectrum of $P_\Lambda$

Each subspace $B_{\Lambda, \chi}$ is isomorphic to $B$, for instance via $\Pi_{\Lambda, \chi}$ and its right inverse $h \mapsto h \otimes \chi$. The action of $P_\Lambda$ on $B_{\Lambda, \chi}$ is thus conjugated with the action of some operator $P_{\Lambda, \chi}$ on $B$, which can be made explicit. For all $h \in B$ and $\varphi \in C^1(M, \mathbb{C})$,

$$P_{\Lambda, \chi}(h)(\varphi) = [\Pi_{\Lambda, \chi} P_\Lambda (h \otimes \chi)](\varphi)$$

$$= \frac{1}{|G|} [P_\Lambda (h \otimes \chi)](\varphi \otimes \nabla)$$

$$= \frac{1}{|G|} (h \otimes \chi)(\varphi \otimes \nabla \circ T_\Lambda)$$

$$= \frac{1}{|G|} (h \otimes \chi)((\nabla (F) \cdot \varphi \circ T) \otimes \nabla)$$

$$= h(\chi(-F) \cdot \varphi \circ T)$$

$$= [P(\chi(-F)h)](\varphi).$$

Hence, $P_{\Lambda, \chi}(h) = P(\chi(-F)h)$. More intuitively, for $h \in C^0(M, \mathbb{C})$, we have $P_{\Lambda, \chi}(h \otimes \chi) = (h \otimes \chi) \circ T_\Lambda^{-1}$, with:

$$T_\Lambda^{-1}(x, p) = (T^{-1}(x), p - F \circ T^{-1}(x)),$$

from which the same result follows. As a consequence,

$$\text{Sp}(P_\Lambda \curvearrowright B_{\Lambda}) = \bigcup_{\chi \in \hat{G}} \text{Sp}(P_{\Lambda, \chi} \curvearrowright B),$$

(2.1)

where the union is taken with multiplicities.

Note that the estimate given in [7, proposition 2.3] on the essential spectral radius of $P$ also holds for $P_\Lambda$, for all $\Lambda$. There are two ways to prove this theorem:

- That bound only depends on the minimal curvature of the obstacles, the minimal free path length of the bouncing particle, and on the choice of $\epsilon_0$. These quantities are the same for the billiard table $M$ and for all its covers $M_\Lambda$.
- The estimates on the essential spectral radius of [7, proposition 2.3] generalize to the weighted operators $P_{\Lambda, \chi}$, with no dependence on the character $\chi$. Equation (2.1) yields the claim.

2.3. Perturbations of transfer operators

The function $F : M \to \mathbb{Z}^2$ satisfies the assumptions of [8, lemma 5.4]. Hence, the family of twisted transfer operators:

$$P_w(h) := P(e^{i(w \cdot F)}h),$$

acting on $B$, depends analytically on $w \in 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2$.

As 1 is an isolated eigenvalue of $P$ with eigenfunction 1, there exists a neighbourhood $U$ of 0 in $2\pi \mathbb{T}^2$ and analytic functions $w \mapsto \lambda_w \in \mathbb{C}$, and $w \mapsto g_w \in B$ defined on $U$ such that $g_w(1) = 1$ and $P_w(g_w) = \lambda_w g_w$. 

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By a classical computation, appearing for instance in the Nagaev–Guivarc’h proof of the central limit theorem for Markov chains \[9, 12, 13\],

\[
\lambda_w = 1 - \frac{\Sigma(w, w)}{2} + O(|w|^3)
\] (2.2)

near 0, where \( \Sigma \) is a bilinear form. As \( \Sigma \) is the matrix of covariance for the central limit theorem for \((\sum_{k=0}^{n-1} F \circ T^k)\) and such a central limit theorem for a finite horizon Sinai billiard has a non-degenerate limit law, \( F \) is not a coboundary and \( \Sigma \) is positive definite. In particular, up to taking a smaller neighborhood \( U \), we shall assume that \(|\lambda_w| < 1\) for \( w \neq 0 \).

### 2.4. Ruelle resonances for Sinai billiards

We now prove proposition 2.1.

**Proposition 2.1.** Let \( U \) be a neighborhood of 1 in \( \mathbb{C} \). Let \( V \) be a neighborhood of 0 in \( 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 \) on which the main eigenvalue \( \lambda_w \) of \( P_w \) is well-defined and belongs to \( U \). Let \( W \) be a neighborhood of 0 such that \( W - W \subset V \). Let \( \Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2 \) be a lattice. Note that \( \hat{G} = (\hat{\mathbb{Z}}^2 / \hat{\Lambda}) \subset \hat{\mathbb{Z}}^2 = 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 \). Then:

\[
|G| \text{Vol}(W) = \int_{2\pi \mathbb{T}^2} \sum_{\chi \in \hat{G}} 1_{\chi + W} \ d\text{Vol} \leq 4\pi^2 \max_{\chi \in \hat{G}} \sum_{\chi \in \hat{G}} 1_{\chi + W}. \quad (2.3)
\]

In addition, for all \( \chi' \in 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 \),

\[
\sum_{\chi \in \hat{G}} 1_{\chi + W}(\chi') = |\hat{G} \cap (\chi' - W)|.
\]

Assume that \( \hat{G} \cap (\chi' - W) \) is non-empty, and let \( \chi_0 \) be one of its elements. The function \( \chi \mapsto |\hat{G} \cap (\chi - W)| \) is \( \hat{G} \)-invariant, so \( |\hat{G} \cap (\chi' - W)| = |\hat{G} \cap (\chi' - \chi_0 - W)| \). But \( \chi_0 \in \chi' - W \), so \( \chi' - \chi_0 \in W \) and \( \chi' - \chi_0 - W \subset W - W \subset V \). Hence, \( |\hat{G} \cap (\chi' - W)| \leq |\hat{G} \cap V| \). This inequality is also true if \( \hat{G} \cap (\chi' - W) \) is empty, so equation (2.3) implies:

\[
|G| \text{Vol}(W) \leq 4\pi^2 |\hat{G} \cap V|. \quad (2.4)
\]

Finally, given any \( \chi = e^{i(w, \cdot)} \in \hat{G} \cap V \), the operator \( P_w = P_{\chi, \chi} \) admits \( \lambda_w \) as a Ruelle resonance. By construction, \( \lambda_w \in U \), and \( \lambda_w \) is also a resonance of \( P_\Lambda \) by equation (2.1). Hence, \( P_\Lambda \) admits at least \( |\hat{G} \cap V| \geq \frac{\text{Vol}(W)}{4\pi^2} |G| \) Ruelle resonances in \( U \) (with multiplicities), including the trivial eigenvalue 1. If \( |G| > \frac{4\pi^2}{\text{Vol}(W)} \), then there is at least one non-trivial Ruelle resonance.

### 3. Distribution of resonances

We now focus on the properties of the non-trivial resonances constructed in section 2. We shall finish the proof of theorem 1.1 in subsections 3.1 and 3.2, where we describe more precisely the main eigenvalue \( \lambda_w \) of the twisted transfer operator \( P_w \). We shall prove propositions 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 in subsection 3.3.
3.1. Aperiodicity of the Sinai billiard

As a step-stone to theorem 1.1, we shall prove that Sinai billiards are aperiodic. While this is already known [17], the following argument is reasonably short. We write characters in exponential form: $\chi = e^{i\langle u, \cdot \rangle}$. Let $H := \{ (\rho, w) \in \mathbb{S}_1 \times 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 \mid \rho \in \text{Sp}(P_w \cap B) \}$. We claim:

**Lemma 3.1.** The set $H$ is a subgroup of $\mathbb{S}_1 \times 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2$.

**Proof.** Note that, by considering $H \cap (\mathbb{S}_1 \times \{0\})$, this lemma implies that the peripheral spectrum of $P$ is a subgroup of $\mathbb{S}_1$, which is well-known [7, lemma 5.2]. The proof of lemma 3.1 mimics the proof of the later fact.

Up to straightforward modifications, the proof of [7, lemma 5.1] can be generalized to prove that, for any $(\rho, w) \in H$, the corresponding Jordan block is trivial and any associated eigendistribution belongs to $L^\infty(M, \mu) \cdot d\mu$. In addition, whenever $k$ is an eigendistribution associated with $(\rho, w) \in H$,

$$P_w(k \cdot d\mu) = e^{i\langle (w,F) \circ T^{-1} k \circ T^{-1} d\mu = \rho k \cdot d\mu,}$$

and thus

$$\rho k = e^{i\langle (w,F) \circ T^{-1} k \circ T^{-1} \rangle.}$$

(3.1)

Taking absolute values in equation (3.1), we get $|k| \circ T^{-1} = |k|$; as the Sinai billiard is ergodic, $|k|$ is constant, and $k$ does not vanish.

Taking the complex conjugate in equation (3.1), we get $\overline{\rho k} = e^{i\langle (w,F) \circ T^{-1} \rangle} \overline{\rho} \circ T^{-1}$, so $\overline{\rho} \cdot d\mu$ is an eigendistribution for $P_{-w}$ for the eigenvalue $\overline{\rho}$. In addition, $\overline{\rho} \cdot d\mu \in H$. Hence, $(\overline{\rho}, -w) \in H$.

Let $k_1 \cdot d\mu$, $k_2 \cdot d\mu$ be two eigendistributions corresponding to $(\rho_1, w_1)$, $(\rho_2, w_2) \in H$ respectively. Then, again using equation (3.1),

$$e^{i\langle (w_1 + w_2,F) \circ T^{-1} \rangle \rho_1 \rho_2 k_1 \circ T^{-1} \cdot e^{i\langle (w_2,F) \circ T^{-1} \rangle k_2 \circ T^{-1}} = \rho_1 \rho_2 k_1 k_2.$$

As neither $k_1$ nor $k_2$ vanish, their product $k_1 k_2$ does not vanish either, so $k_1 k_2$ is an eigendistribution for the eigenvalue $\rho_1 \rho_2$ of $P_{w_1 + w_2}$. In addition, by the argument of [6, lemma 5.5], $k_1 k_2 \cdot d\mu \in H$. Hence, $(\rho_1 \rho_2, w_1 + w_2) \in H$.

All the arguments above are standard (they only use properties of the action of $P_w$ on $B$), and apply to a much wider class of dynamical systems. For Sinai billiards, lemma 3.1 can be strengthened:

**Lemma 3.2.** For a finite horizon Sinai billiard, $H = \{(1,0)\}$.

**Proof.** By the discussion in subsection 2.1, there exists a neighborhood $V$ of $0$ in $2\pi \mathbb{T}^2$ and a neighborhood $U$ of $1$ in $\mathbb{C}$ such that, for all $w \in V$, we have $\text{Sp}(P_w \cap B) \cap U \{ \lambda_w \}$. Since $\lambda_w = 1 - \frac{2\pi w}{2 \pi} + O(|w|^3)$, if $w \in V \setminus \{0\}$, then $P_w$ has no eigenvalue of modulus $1$ in $U$. Hence, $(1,0)$ is isolated in $H$. The group $H$ is discrete, and thus finite.

Assume that $H$ is not trivial, and let $(\rho, w) \in H \setminus \{(1,0)\}$. Since $H$ is finite, $(\rho, w)$ has finite order. Hence, there exists a rank 2 lattice $\Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2$ such that $w \in \mathcal{G}$. Then $\rho \in \text{Sp}(P_{\Lambda} \cap B)$ for $\chi = e^{-i\langle \omega, \cdot \rangle} \in \mathcal{G}$, so $\rho \in \text{Sp}(P_{\Lambda} \cap B)$. Then the transfer operator $P_{\Lambda}$ for the Sinai billiard $Q_{\Lambda}$ has non-trivial peripheral spectrum. If $\rho = 1$, then $1 \in \text{Sp}(P_{\Lambda} \cap B)_{\Lambda}$ has multiplicity at least 2, which contradicts the ergodicity of Sinai billiards. If $\rho \neq 1$, then $\rho$ is a non-trivial root of the unit, which contradicts the fact that Sinai billiards are mixing.
The Ruelle spectrum of \( w \mapsto P_w \) depends continuously on \( w \). By lemma 3.2, there exists \( \delta > 0 \) and a neighborhood \( V \) of \( 0 \) in \( 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 \) such that \( P_w \) has a resonance of modulus larger than \( 1 - \delta \) if and only if \( w \in V \), and under this condition the resonance is \( \lambda_w \).

By equation (2.1), the spectrum of \( P_\lambda \) acting on \( B_\lambda \) is the union of the spectra of the operators \( P_w \) for \( w \in \tilde{G} \). Hence, for this value of \( \delta > 0 \) and all rank 2 lattices \( \Lambda \subset \mathbb{Z}^2 \):

\[
\text{Sp}(P_\lambda \cap B_\lambda) \subset \mathbb{B}(0, 1 - \delta) \cup \{ \lambda_w : w \in V \}. \tag{3.2}
\]

A further consequence is that \( P_\lambda \) admits at most \( |G| \) resonances (with multiplicities) in \( \mathbb{B}(0, 1 - \delta) \). Finally, with proposition 2.1, this implies that the number of Ruelle resonances in the annulus \( \{ 1 - \delta < |z| \leq 1 \} \) is at least \( c|G| \) and at most \( |G| \) for some positive constant \( c \in (0, 1] \).

3.2. Realness of the resonances

Let \( \delta > 0 \) be small enough that equation (3.2) holds. Let \( V := \{ w \in 2\pi \mathbb{T}^2 : |\lambda_w| > 1 - \delta \} \). Up to taking a smaller value of \( \delta \), we may assume that \( \lambda \) is continuous on \( V \). Let \( w \in V \), and \( h_w \in B \) an eigendistribution for \( P_w \). Since the operator \( P \) is real,

\[
P_{-w}(h_w) = P(e^{-i(w,F)} h_w) = P(e^{i(w,F)} h_w) = \overline{\lambda_w} h_w,
\]

so \( \overline{\lambda_w} \in \text{Sp}(P_{-w} \cap B) \). But \( |\lambda_w| > 1 - \delta \) and the only eigenvalue of \( P_{-w} \) of modulus larger than \( 1 - \delta \) is \( \lambda_{-w} \). Hence, \( \lambda_{-w} = \overline{\lambda_w} \) for all \( w \in V \).

We recall that the billiard map is time-reversible. The involution \( \iota(\ell, \theta) = (\ell, -\theta) \) satisfies:

\[
\iota \circ T = T^{-1} \circ \iota,
\]

\[
F \circ \iota = -F \circ T^{-1}.
\]

Let \( B^* \) be the dual of \( B \). Informally, the space \( B^* \) contains distributions which are regular in the direction of the stable cones of \( T \), and irregular in the unstable cones. Then \( \text{Sp}(P_w \cap B^*) = \text{Sp}(P_w \cap B) \). In addition, for all \( \varphi, \psi \in C^1(M, \mathbb{C}) \):

\[
\int_M P_w(\varphi) \cdot \psi \ d\mu = \int_M \varphi \cdot P_w(\psi) \ d\mu = \int_M e^{i(w,F)} \varphi \circ T \cdot \psi \ d\mu. \tag{3.3}
\]

Let \( \tilde{B} \) be the image of \( B \) under precomposition by the involution \( \iota \). Again, informally, \( \tilde{B} \) contains distributions which are regular in the direction of the stable cones of \( T \), and irregular in the unstable cones. Let us define \( \tilde{P}_w(\varphi) := (P_w(\varphi \circ \iota)) \circ \iota \), and extend this operator by continuity to \( \tilde{B} \). Then \( \text{Sp}(\tilde{P}_w \cap \tilde{B}) = \text{Sp}(P_w \cap B) \). In addition, for all \( \varphi, \psi \in C^1(M, \mathbb{C}) \):

\[
\int_M \tilde{P}_w(\varphi) \cdot \psi \ d\mu = \int_M P_w(\varphi \circ \iota) \cdot \psi \circ \iota \ d\mu = \int_M e^{i(\varphi,F)} \varphi \circ \iota \cdot \psi \circ \iota \circ T \ d\mu
\]

\[
= \int_M e^{i(\varphi,F \circ T^{-1} \circ \iota)} \varphi \circ \iota \cdot \psi \circ T^{-1} \circ \iota \ d\mu
\]

\[
= \int_M e^{-i(\psi,F \circ T^{-1})} \varphi \cdot \psi \circ T^{-1} \ d\mu
\]

\[
= \int_M e^{-i(\psi,F)} \varphi \cdot T \cdot \psi \ d\mu. \tag{3.4}
\]
To sum up:
\[
\text{Sp}(P^\ast_w \cap B^\ast) = \text{Sp}(P_{-w} \cap B),
\]
\[
\text{Sp}(\tilde{P}_w \cap \tilde{B}) = \text{Sp}(P_w \cap B),
\]
and the operators \(P^\ast_w\) and \(\tilde{P}_w\) coincide on \(C^1\) functions by equations (3.3) and (3.4).

We would like to show that the spectra of \(P^\ast_w\) and \(\tilde{P}_w\) coincide, at least outside of \(\bar{B}(0, \rho_0)\). Unfortunately, a result such as [3, lemma A.1] is not directly applicable, because we do not know whether \(C^1(M, \mathbb{C})\) is dense in \(B^\ast\). We use instead an ad hoc argument, and show the weaker result \(\lambda_w = \lambda_{-w}\).

The space \(\tilde{B}\) is defined as the completion of \(C^1(M, \mathbb{C})\) for the norm \(\| \cdot \|_{\tilde{B}}\). Hence, \(C^1(M, \mathbb{C})\) is dense for the strong topology on \(\tilde{B}\). In addition, by [7, lemma 3.9], \(C^1(M, \mathbb{C})\) maps continuously into \(B^\ast\), and this map is injective (since there is an injective embedding \(C^1 \hookrightarrow B^\ast\)).

Let \(\Pi_{-w}\) be the (rank 1) spectral projection of \(P_{-w}\) onto the eigenspace corresponding to the eigenvalue \(\lambda_w\), and \(Q_{-w} := P_{-w} - \lambda_w \Pi_{-w}\). The spectral radius of \(Q_{-w}\) is no larger than \(1 - \delta\), so let \(\delta' < \delta\) with \(|\lambda_w| > 1 - \delta'\). Then, for all \(\varphi, \psi \in C^1(M, \mathbb{C})\),
\[
\int_M \varphi \cdot P^\ast_{-w}(\psi) \, d\mu = \lambda^c_{-w} \Pi_{-w}(\psi)(\varphi) + O\left((1 - \delta')^n \|\varphi\|_{C^1} \|\psi\|_{C^1}\right).
\]

By density, there exists a \(C^1\) function \(\psi\) such that \(\Pi_{-w}(\psi) \neq 0\) in \(B\). Following the construction in [8, lemma 3.8], and noticing that the test function can be chosen smooth (for instance by mollification), we get a function \(\varphi \in C^1\) such that \(\Pi_{-w}(\psi)(\varphi) \neq 0\).

In addition, for the functions \(\varphi\) and \(\psi\) constructed above,
\[
\int_M \varphi \cdot P^\ast_{-w}(\psi) \, d\mu = \int_M (P^\ast_{-w})^n(\varphi) \cdot \psi \, d\mu
\]
\[
= \int_M \tilde{P}_w^n(\varphi) \cdot \psi \, d\mu
\]
\[
= \lambda^c_{-w} \Pi_{-w}(\psi)(\varphi) + O\left((1 - \delta')^n \|\varphi\|_{C^1} \|\psi\|_{C^1}\right),
\]
where \(\tilde{\Pi}_{-w}\) is the eigenprojection of \(\tilde{P}_w\) corresponding to the eigenvalue \(\lambda_{-w}\). Hence, \(\Pi_{-w}(\psi)(\varphi) = \tilde{\Pi}_{-w}(\varphi)(\psi) \neq 0\) and \(\lambda_{-w} = \lambda_w\).

The function \(w \mapsto \lambda_w\) is even on a neighborhood of zero, and since \(\lambda_w = \lambda_{-w} = \lambda_w\), it is also real-valued. As a consequence, for the same value \(\delta > 0\), for all \(\lambda\):
\[
\text{Sp}(P_{\lambda} \cap B_{\lambda}) \subset \bar{B}(0, 1 - \delta) \cup [1 - \delta, 1].
\]

This finishes the proof of theorem 1.1.

**Remark 3.3 (Real eigendistributions).** The eigenvalues \(\lambda_w \in \{1 - \delta, 1\}\) are real, and the corresponding eigenspaces are 2-dimensional. These eigenspaces are spanned by pairs of eigendistributions \(\{h^R_{\lambda,w}, h^I_{\lambda,w}\}\), which are real (in that \(h^R_{\lambda,w}(\varphi)\) and \(h^I_{\lambda,w}(\varphi)\) are both real for any real test function \(\varphi\)) and can be chosen as:
\[
h^R_{\lambda,w} := \Re(h_w \otimes \chi)
\]
\[
h^I_{\lambda,w} := \Im(h_w \otimes \chi),
\]
where \(\chi = e^{i(w, \cdot)}\) and \(h_w\) is an eigendistribution for \(P_w\).
3.3. Distribution of the resonances

Now, we shall discuss the convergence of the spectral densities and prove propositions 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.

**Proof of proposition 1.2.** Let $\rho_0$ be the upper bound on $\rho_{\text{ess}}(P \circ B)$ given by [7, proposition 2.3]. Since $w \mapsto (P_w)_{w \in 2\pi T^2}$ is a continuous family of transfer operators with $\rho_{\text{ess}}(P_w \circ B) \leq \rho_0$, by continuity of the spectrum, for any compact $K \subset \overline{B}(0, \rho_0)^c$, the function $w \mapsto \nu(w)(K)$ is bounded, where:

$$\nu_w = \sum_{\lambda \text{ resonance of } P_w, |\lambda| > 1 - \rho_0} \delta_{\lambda},$$

and where the resonances are counted with multiplicity.

The spectral decomposition yields, for any rank 2 lattice $\Lambda$,

$$\nu_{\Lambda} = \frac{1}{|G|} \sum_{w \in \hat{G}} \nu_w,$$

whence $\Lambda \mapsto \nu(\Lambda)(K)$ is also bounded uniformly in $\Lambda$. Compactness of subprobability measures on $K$ yields the existence of limit distributions of $(\nu_{\Lambda})_{\Lambda \geq 1}$ on any compact $K$, and a diagonal argument yields proposition 1.2. □

Propositions 1.3 and 1.4 follow from the discussion after [10, theorem 3.1], with some care to make the constants explicit.

**Proof of proposition 1.3.** Recall that $\Lambda_{N}^{(1)} = N\varepsilon \otimes \mathbb{Z}$. By the aforementioned discussion, there exists $\delta_0 > 0$ such that, for all $f \in \mathcal{C}(\mathbb{R}, \mathbb{C})$ supported on $[1 - \delta_0, 1]$,

$$\lim_{N \to +\infty} \int_{1 - \delta_0}^{1} f \, d\nu^{(1)}_{N} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(\lambda_{e_1}) \, d\lambda,$$

with $e_1 = (1, 0)$. The constant $2\pi$ comes from the different parametrization we use for $t$. Without loss of generality, $\delta_0$ can be chosen smaller than $\delta$. By the Morse lemma, there exists a $\mathcal{C}^1$ diffeomorphism of the real line $\Psi$ such that $\Psi'(0) = 1$ and:

$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(\lambda_{e_1}) \, d\lambda = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma_{11} t^2}{2}\right) |\Psi'(t)| \, d\lambda.$$

It follows that the limit distribution of $(\nu_{N}^{(1)})_{N \geq 1}$ is absolutely continuous with respect to the Lebesgue measure, and its density admits a continuous version on $[\delta_0, 1]$. Let $\varepsilon > 0$. If $f$ is supported on a small enough neighborhood of 1,

$$\left|\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(\lambda_{e_1}) \, d\lambda - \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma_{11} t^2}{2}\right) \, d\lambda\right| \leq \varepsilon \|f\|_{\infty},$$

and:

$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma_{11} t^2}{2}\right) \, d\lambda = \frac{1}{\pi} \int_{0}^{+\infty} f \left(1 - \frac{\Sigma_{11} u^2}{2}\right) \, du = \int_{0}^{+\infty} f(1 - u) \frac{1}{\pi \sqrt{2\Sigma_{11} u}} \, du,$$

finishing the proof of proposition 1.3. □

Proposition 1.4 follows from the same kind of computations.
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