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Planar thermal Hall effect of topological bosons in the Kitaev magnet α -RuCl₃

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1 In the field of quantum spin liquids [1–3], the honeycomb magnet α -RuCl₃ has
 2 attracted considerable interest because it is proximate to the Kitaev Hamiltonian
 3 \mathcal{H}_K [4–12]. In 2006, Kitaev [13] published the exact solution for the ground state
 4 of \mathcal{H}_K , and found that the excitations are Majoranas and vortices. The thermal
 5 Hall conductivity κ_{xy} of Majorana fermions is predicted to be half-quantized [13].
 6 This effect has been reported in α -RuCl₃ [17, 18], but this observation has proven
 7 difficult to reproduce [19, 20] and remains highly controversial. We report
 8 detailed measurements of the Onsager-like planar thermal Hall conductivity κ_{xy}
 9 in α -RuCl₃, a spin-liquid candidate of topical interest. With the thermal current
 10 \mathbf{J}_Q and magnetic field $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$ (zigzag axis), the observed κ_{xy}/T varies strongly
 11 with temperature T (1-10 K). Using a novel fitting procedure, we show that
 12 this temperature dependence matches the distinct form expected for topological
 13 bosonic modes in a Chern insulator-like model. Our analysis yields band energies
 14 that are in agreement with earlier experiments and that the excitations evolve
 15 into increasingly magnon-like modes at high B with a Chern number ~ 1 . The
 16 bosonic character is incompatible with half-quantization of κ_{xy}/T .

17 The thermal Hall effect provides a powerful probe of spin excitations, for e.g. in the
 18 pyrochlores Lu₂V₂O₇ [14] and Tb₂Ti₂O₇ [15] and the kagome magnet Cu(1-3, bdc) [16]. In
 19 2018, evidence for a half-quantized κ_{xy} in α -RuCl₃ in the narrow interval $3.7 < T < 5$ K was
 20 reported in Ref. [17]. Half-quantization of κ_{xy}/T was also observed [18] with $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$ but in a
 21 narrow field interval distinct from that in Ref. [17]. Subsequently, the authors of Ref. [19]
 22 reported that the planar κ_{xy} was strongly T dependent showing no trace of half-quantized
 23 behavior. In this report, large oscillations of κ_{xx} were observed with maximal amplitude
 24 within the window $7 < H < 11.5$ T. A third group recently reported a κ_{xy} signal consistent
 25 with half-quantization in the planar geometry [20], but the large uncertainties in their data
 26 call into question their claim of robustness. The conflicting results reflect the weak signal
 27 and large hysteretic and magnetocaloric effects below 4 K.

28 Adopting measures (Supplemental Information) [21] to mitigate these distortions, we
 29 have obtained κ_{xy} over a broad interval of T (0.5 to 10 K). Our results point to a view
 30 of κ_{xy} categorically distinct from the half-quantized picture. We show that κ_{xy} originates
 31 from bosonic edge-mode excitations that become topological magnons at large B . Whereas

32 fermionic edge modes have been investigated intensively in quantum Hall systems, our ex-
 33 periment is the first quantitative demonstration of neutral bosonic edge modes in a magnetic
 34 insulator.

35 In the experiment, both the thermal current \mathbf{J}_Q and \mathbf{B} are applied $\parallel \hat{\mathbf{x}} \parallel \mathbf{a}$. During
 36 each run lasting 8-10 h, B is incremented in steps $\delta B_{\text{step}} = 0.2$ T from -13 to +13 T (and
 37 back to -13 T) while T is regulated within ± 1 mK of its set-point. We adopt a step-
 38 probe protocol [21] in which measurements of the sensors T_A , T_B and T_C are delayed by
 39 150 s after each step-change. The protocol rigorously excludes contamination by the large
 40 transients caused by magnetocaloric and eddy-current heating effects. Hysteretic artefacts
 41 are eliminated by combining field sweep-up and -down curves. The 3 readings determine
 42 the values of λ_{yx} and λ_{xx} at each B .

43 Figure 1 (a) shows the explicitly B -antisymmetric thermal Hall signal ΔT_H^{asym} (propor-
 44 tional to the thermal Hall resistivity λ_{yx}) measured at 7.5 K in an in-plane $\mathbf{B} \parallel \hat{\mathbf{x}}$ (inset).
 45 At each B , the thermal Hall signal is obtained by combining the two readings $T_B - T_C$ and
 46 $T_A - T_C$, and field-antisymmetrizing [21]. In Panel (b), the color map provides an overview
 47 of how λ_{yx} varies over the B - T plane. The large- λ_{yx} region above 4 K (red area) tapers to a
 48 thin neck at 7.5 T as T decreases to 1 K. Below 2.5 K, λ_{yx} becomes slightly negative in the
 49 small region shown in blue. The evolution of the field profiles of λ_{yx} is shown in Fig. 1c. At
 50 9.22 K, the profile features a broad peak that narrows dramatically as $T \rightarrow 3.65$ K. At high
 51 B (> 10 T), λ_{yx} is strongly suppressed to values below our resolution for $T < 4$ K.

52 From the matrix inversion $\kappa_{ij} = [\lambda^{-1}]_{ij}$, we derive the curves of κ_{xy}/T vs. B which
 53 display a peak in the field profile (Fig. 1d). In the regime $B > 10$ T and $T < 4$ K, the
 54 matrix inversion leads to large uncertainties (caused by multiplying a near-zero λ_{yx} by a
 55 factor of $\sim 10^3$ [21]). Over the interval $0.5 < T < 10$ K, κ_{xy}/T does not show evidence of
 56 half-quantization (dashed line). Instead, the dominant feature is the strong T dependence
 57 of κ_{xy}/T .

58 Figure 2 shows how κ_{xy}/T varies with T with B fixed at between 5 and 10 T. At each
 59 value of B , κ_{xy}/T falls monotonically towards zero as T decreases below 10 K. We have
 60 found that the steep T dependence is in quantitative agreement with edge modes populated
 61 by bosons (solid curves).

62 First, a planar thermal Hall effect that is odd in \mathbf{B} is quite unexpected. In topological
 63 materials, however, the emergence of a Berry curvature $\mathbf{\Omega}$ that reverses sign with \mathbf{B} can

64 lead to a planar (electrical) Hall response, as seen in ZrTe_5 [22]. For this purpose, we would
 65 need $\mathbf{\Omega} \parallel \hat{\mathbf{c}}^*$ (normal to the honeycomb layer) as well as to reverse sign with $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$.

66 Recent calculations have shown that $\mathbf{\Omega}$ indeed emerges in $\alpha\text{-RuCl}_3$ with high-intensity
 67 spots near each of the K points in the Brillouin zone (BZ) [23–25] (Fig. 3a, inset). At large
 68 B , the excitations, called topological magnons, occupy bands in which the Chern number
 69 \mathcal{C}_n alternates in sign [23–25]. Crucially, when $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$, $\mathbf{\Omega}$ reverses sign with \mathbf{B} [25, 30, 31].

70 In a 2D magnet with finite $\mathbf{\Omega}$, the thermal Hall conductivity is given by [26, 27]

$$\frac{\kappa_{xy}}{T} = \frac{1}{\hbar V} \sum_{n,\mathbf{k}} \Omega_{n,z}(\mathbf{k}) \int_{\varepsilon_{n,\mathbf{k}}}^{\infty} d\varepsilon \frac{(\varepsilon - \mu)^2}{T^2} \left(-\frac{d\rho}{d\varepsilon} \right), \quad (1)$$

71 where the sum is over bands with dispersion $\varepsilon_{\mathbf{k}}$ and Berry curvature $\mathbf{\Omega}_n$, ρ is the distribution
 72 function of the relevant excitation, V is the sample volume, μ the chemical potential and
 73 $\hbar = h/2\pi$ with h the Planck constant.

74 Semiclassically, we may regard a wave-packet subject to $\mathbf{\Omega}$ and the force $-\nabla U$ exerted
 75 by the wall potential U [27] (Fig. 3a, inset). The anomalous velocity $\mathbf{v}_A = -\nabla U \times \mathbf{\Omega}$ drives
 76 a circulating thermal current around the edges. A thermal gradient $-\nabla T \parallel \hat{\mathbf{x}}$ unbalances
 77 the excitation density between the warm and cool edges ($\parallel \hat{\mathbf{y}}$), which leads to a net thermal
 78 current $\mathbf{J}_Q \parallel \hat{\mathbf{y}}$ (Fig. 3c). Crucially, the reversal of $\mathbf{\Omega}$ induced by reversing \mathbf{B} leads to an
 79 Onsager planar thermal Hall current.

80 If the excitations are fermions, Eq. 1 yields the (T -independent) Kane-Fisher result [28,
 81 29]

$$\frac{\kappa_{xy}}{T} = \frac{\pi^2}{3} \frac{k_B^2}{h} \nu, \quad (\nu \in \mathbb{Z}). \quad (2)$$

82 where k_B is Boltzmann's constant.

83 By contrast, for bosons, Eq. 1 yields a very strong T dependence. In units of the universal
 84 thermal conductance k_B^2/h (and setting $\mu = 0$), Eq. 1 simplifies to

$$\frac{\mathcal{K}_H}{T} \equiv \frac{\kappa_{xy}/T}{k_B^2/h} = \sum_n \mathcal{C}_n c_2^{(n)}(\omega_n, T) \quad (3)$$

85 The function $c_2^{(n)}(\omega_n, T)$ is defined as [26, 27]

$$c_2^{(n)}(\omega_n, T) = \int_{u_{0n}}^{\infty} du u^2 (-d\rho/du), \quad (u_{0n} = \beta\omega_n(\mathbf{k})), \quad (4)$$

86 where $\rho = 1/(e^u - 1)$ and $\beta = 1/(k_B T)$. The lowest band is nearly flat [25]. Adopting the
 87 flat-band approximation, we used the winding-number equation $2\pi\mathcal{C}_n = \int_{\text{BZ}} d^2k \Omega_{n,z}(\mathbf{k})$ to
 88 relate $\Omega_{n,z}$ to \mathcal{C}_n .

89 At low T , we retain the 2 lowest bands in Eq. 3 (Fig. 3a and Ref. [21]). Assuming that
 90 their Chern numbers alternate in sign ($\mathcal{C}_1 = -\mathcal{C}_2$), we have

$$\frac{\mathcal{K}_H}{T} = \mathcal{C}_1 \left[c_2^{(1)}(\omega_1, T) - c_2^{(2)}(\omega_2, T) \right]. \quad (5)$$

91 The overall scale of \mathcal{K}_H/T is fixed by \mathcal{C}_1 .

92 We find that Eq. 5 provides close fits to the observed κ_{xy}/T over a broad range of B
 93 (the fits were carried out on $\kappa_{xy}^{2D} = \kappa_{xy}d$ with $d = 5.72 \text{ \AA}$). In Fig. 2, the fits are shown
 94 as the solid curves. We have found that slight deviations from the fits (grey circles) reveal
 95 important information on the excitations.

96 For $B < 6.8 \text{ T}$, κ_{xy}/T displays a weak, negative deviation (dip) below 3 K (in the blue
 97 region in Fig. 1b). The expanded view in Fig. 3b shows the dips in 4 traces of κ_{xy}/T
 98 vs. T . The negative dips imply that, once we enter the ordered phase (below 7 T), the
 99 spin excitation branches deviate from Eq. 3. The weak negative dip feature also appears
 100 in calculations of κ_{xy} (see Figs. 3 and 6 in Ref. [30]). Weak, positive deviations are also
 101 observed below $\sim 11 \text{ T}$. These deviations may represent the growth of excitations in the QSL
 102 state as $T \rightarrow 0$. Within the uncertainties, they scale with the amplitude of the oscillations
 103 in κ_{xx} [21].

104 Away from these deviations, the fits shown in Fig. 2 describe quite accurately the strong
 105 T dependence of κ_{xy}/T over a broad range of B . At each B , the fit yields the 2 energies ω_1
 106 and ω_2 (in Eq. 4) as well as the dimensionless quantity \mathcal{C}_{obs} discussed next.

107 Dividing Eq. 5 across by the T -dependent factor $[c_2^{(1)}(\omega_1, T) - c_2^{(2)}(\omega_2, T)]$, we define

$$\mathcal{C}_{\text{obs}} \equiv (\mathcal{K}_H/T)/[c_2^{(1)}(\omega_1, T) - c_2^{(2)}(\omega_2, T)], \quad (6)$$

108 which can be compared with \mathcal{C}_1 . \mathcal{C}_{obs} is plotted vs. B in Fig. 3c.

109 We find that \mathcal{C}_{obs} starts off small (~ 0.3 at 5 T) but increases to attain a plateau above 9
 110 T. Within the experimental uncertainty, the nearest integer at the plateau is $\mathcal{C}_{\text{obs}} \simeq 1$. The
 111 strong T dependence of κ_{xy}/T largely arises from the bosonic distribution in the integrand
 112 of $c_2^{(n)}$ (Eq. 4). Remarkably, once this is factored out, the overall amplitude in the polarized
 113 state at high fields is fixed by the integer $\mathcal{C}_{\text{obs}} \simeq 1$.

114 We show next that the energy ω_1 derived from the fits of κ_{xy}/T to Eq. 1 closely agrees
 115 with the energy of the dominant sharp mode seen in electron spin resonance (ESR) [32, 33],
 116 microwave absorption [8, 34] and neutron-scattering experiments [36]. The energy of the

117 second band is found to be $\omega_2 \sim 50 \pm 10$ K with a large uncertainty [21]. In the field
 118 interval above B_c (from 7.3 to 14 T), α -RuCl₃ displays a rich magnetic resonance spectrum
 119 with 4 sharp modes (C , D , E and F) [32] superposed on a broad continuum suggestive of
 120 excitations [8, 34]. The broad continuum was observed also in microwave absorption and
 121 inelastic neutron scattering experiments [36]. At $B= 7.3$, the two lowest modes C and F
 122 are degenerate at 0.27 THz (1.1 meV). As B is raised to 16 T, both increase steeply to
 123 1.1 THz (for C) and 0.9 THz (F). These modes are also seen in exact diagonalization of
 124 a 24-spin model [35]. Close to B_c , ω_1 inferred from κ_{xy}/T agrees remarkably well with the
 125 degenerate values of C and F . At large B , ω_1 is lower than C (C arises from vertical $\Delta\mathbf{q} = 0$
 126 transitions [33] at the zone center Γ). This suggests that, as C rises steeply with B , κ_{xy}
 127 is weighted towards lower-lying excitations from elsewhere in the BZ. The curve of $\omega_1(B)$
 128 agrees with the energy scale inferred in Ref. [11] from $\kappa_{xx}(T)$.

129 As discussed in Refs. [32, 33, 35], the sharp ESR mode C is increasingly dominant at
 130 large B but the broad background excitation continuum persists. From this viewpoint, the
 131 observed saturation of \mathcal{C}_{obs} to 1 above 9 T in Fig. 3d is physically appealing. As the dominant
 132 excitations become increasingly magnon-like, the topological Hall current, expressed as \mathcal{C}_{obs} ,
 133 approaches 1. For $B < 7$ T (zig-zag state) the vanishing of κ_{xy} (aside from the negative dip
 134 near 6.3 T) suggests that Ω is very small. Our results also conclusively rule out a phonon
 135 mechanism for the planar κ_{xy} [21].

136 The physical picture that emerges is that the planar κ_{xy} derives from spin excitations
 137 that live at the relatively high energy scale $\omega_1 \sim 1$ meV (11.6 K) and form a bosonic Chern
 138 insulator- like state at high B (though with μ fixed at 0 instead of inside the gap between
 139 bands). A large Berry curvature drives these excitations as an edge-mode thermal current,
 140 which results in an Onsager-type thermal Hall current whose magnitude corresponds to a
 141 Chern number of 1 at fields above 9 T and leads to a distinct T dependence for κ_{xy}/T . At
 142 all B , the bosonic character leads to strong suppression of κ_{xy} to near zero below 3 K. The
 143 strong T dependence of κ_{xy}/T precludes a fermionic description and raises serious questions
 144 about the validity of the reports of quantization. A detailed discussion of why claims of
 145 robustness are problematic is given in Ref. [21]. Finally, we note that ω_1 is not a bulk “spin
 146 gap”. The sharp modes coexist with a broad continuum corresponding to spin excitations
 147 that extend well below ω_1 . We emphasize that the magnons are only well-defined above
 148 ~ 10 T [36]. As we lower B into the spin-liquid state, the excitations are increasingly less

149 magnon-like, as seen in the deviations from the fit to Eq. 3 as well as the steep decrease of
150 C_{obs} (Fig. 3c). The deviations provide clues to the excitations in the spin-liquid state. In
151 the low- T limit, the edge-mode engendered κ_{xy} vanishes altogether while novel bulk features
152 emerge to define the oscillations observed in κ_{xx} [19, 37].

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250 **Methods:**

251 The mounting procedure used for the sample follows the procedure described in detail in
 252 Ref. [19]. A photo of the crystal and thermometer setup used in this report is shown in
 253 Extended Data Fig. 1. The thermometers (RX102A) are connected to the crystal using
 254 Stycast epoxy via 5 mil Au wires (which themselves are attached to the thermometers using
 255 Ag epoxy). The ceramic heater ($R = 1 \text{ k}\Omega$) is attached directly to the crystal using Ag paint.
 256 The crystal is also attached to a brass plate using Ag paint. To avoid damage caused by the
 257 large magnetic torque above 3 Tesla, the other end of the crystal is mechanically supported
 258 using a piece of delrin (a low thermal conductivity polymer) attached using Stycast epoxy.
 259 Once mounted, the brass plate is placed onto a Janis ^3He insert. Special care must be taken
 260 to not over-strain the crystal at any point as even small amounts of mechanical stress may
 261 induce unwanted stacking faults in the crystal. To minimize electrical noise, all thermometers
 262 (sample and stage) are measured using Lakeshore LS372 temperature controllers. The LS372
 263 uses an AC lock-in based method that is optimized for temperature measurements that offers
 264 significantly better resolution than DC-based Lakeshore models like the LS340 as well as
 265 conventional lock-in amplifiers.

The thermal transport tensor is calculated using a standard steady-state technique. A
 thermal current of known density \mathbf{J}^Q is applied using the $1 \text{ k}\Omega$ heater. We define $\hat{\mathbf{x}} \parallel \mathbf{J}^Q$
 and $\hat{\mathbf{z}} \parallel c^*$ so $\hat{\mathbf{y}}$ is the transverse/Hall direction. The thermal resistivity matrix is analogous
 to the electrical equivalent and relates the applied current \mathbf{J}^Q to the resulting temperature
 gradient ∇T :

$$-\partial_i T = \lambda_{ij} J_j^Q$$

266 In the experiment we measure the longitudinal and transverse temperature differences ($\Delta_x T$
 267 and $\Delta_y T$). From these values, \mathbf{J}^Q , and the appropriate sample dimensions we are able to
 268 calculate all components of λ_{ij} and then invert the resulting matrix to obtain the thermal
 269 conductivity matrix $\kappa_{ij} = (\lambda^{-1})_{ij}$. We stress that it is only the field-antisymmetric com-
 270 ponent of Δ_y that is used in the above calculation and it is this value (now referred to as
 271 ΔT^{asym}) that is the most essential quantity that is measured in these experiments. Crucial
 272 steps were taken to remove all extrinsic contributions to the measured ΔT^{asym} . Our ap-
 273 proach is to step-increase the magnetic field by 0.2 T (steps spaced by 180 s). Once a new
 274 field value is reached, we wait for the thermometers to relax to their equilibrium tempera-
 275 tures. Extended Data Fig. 2 shows an example of this during data collection. The transient

276 temperature shifts that ultimately relax are caused by eddy currents in the measurement ap-
277 paratus and the unusually large magnetocaloric effects in RuCl_3 . When analyzing the data,
278 we choose an averaging window (light blue strip) that contains only data acquired after
279 equilibrium is attained. More information about the technical details of our measurements
280 can be found in the supplementary material [21].

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289 **Author contributions:**

290 P.C. performed the measurements and analyzed the data with N.P.O. P.C., T.G., and N.P.O.
291 conceptualized the experiment, which employs a methodology developed by them and M.H.
292 The crystal was grown and characterized at Oak Ridge National Laboratory by P.L.-K.,
293 A.B., D.G.M., and S.E.N. N.Q. performed precision measurements of the experimentally
294 relevant sample dimensions. The manuscript was written by P.C. and N.P.O. with input
295 from all authors.

296 **Additional Information:**

297 Supplementary information is available in the online version of the paper.

298 **Competing interests:**

299 The authors declare no competing financial interests.

300 **Data and materials availability:**

301 All data will be made available and archived in Dataverse.

302 **Supplementary Materials:**

303 Supplementary Text

304 Figs. S1 to S12

305 References 1–9

306

307 **Figure Captions:**

308 **Fig. 1. Planar thermal Hall response of α -RuCl₃ in the interval $0.5 < T < 10.5$**
 309 **K and field range $0 < B < 13$ T with $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$.** Panel (a) shows the B -antisymmetric
 310 thermal Hall signal $\Delta T_{\text{H}}^{\text{asym}}$ taken in sweep-up (red) and -down (blue) directions at 7.5 K
 311 ($\Delta T_{\text{H}}^{\text{asym}}$ is proportional to λ_{yx}). The inset shows the placements of thermometers measuring
 312 T_{A} , T_{B} and T_{C} . Panel (b): The color map constructed from ~ 50 traces of the thermal Hall
 313 resistivity λ_{yx} vs. B in the B - T plane (scale bar on right). The large- λ_{yx} region (in red)
 314 tapers down to a neck around 7.3 T, as $T \rightarrow 0.4$ K. Below 2.5 K, $\lambda_{yx} < 0$ in a sliver at 6.3 T
 315 (blue region). Panel (c) shows curves of λ_{yx} vs. B at fixed T . The peak in the field profiles
 316 narrows as $T \rightarrow 3.35$ K. Below 4 K, λ_{yx} is strongly suppressed to zero above 9.5 T. Panel (d)
 317 plots κ_{xy}/T vs. B (at fixed T) inferred from λ_{ij} . The non-intersecting curves imply that, at
 318 any fixed B , κ_{xy}/T is monotonic in T . Below 4.7 K the matrix inversion greatly amplifies
 319 the uncertainties in λ_{xy} for $B > 9$ T. The horizontal dashed line is the half-quantized value.

320 **Fig. 2. Curves of κ_{xy}/T vs. T at B fixed at the ten values indicated.** In each
 321 panel, the solid curves are fits to Eqs. 3 and 4. At each B , the fit yields the energies ω_1 and
 322 ω_2 and \mathcal{C}_{obs} . The grey circles represent weak deviations from the fits below 4 K. Just below
 323 the boundary of the zigzag phase ($B < 7$ T), excitations in the zigzag state lead to negative
 324 deviations (see also Fig. 3b). In the QSL state ($7 < B < 11$ T), positive deviations onset
 325 below 3 K and grow in amplitude as $T \rightarrow 0$. These seem to be related to the excitations
 326 that lead to oscillations in κ_{xx} (see Supplement).

327 **Fig. 3. Bosonic edge-mode and the planar κ_{xy} .** Panel(a) shows a sketch of the two
 328 lowest magnon modes (blue curves) with $\omega_1 = 11.6$ K and $\omega_2 \simeq 50$ K. With $\mathcal{C} = 1$ in the
 329 lowest band, an edge mode traverses the gap (dashed curve). The inset displays the high-
 330 intensity spots of the Berry curvature $\mathbf{\Omega}$ calculated [25] for the lowest band with $\mathbf{B} \parallel \mathbf{a}$. $\mathbf{\Omega}$
 331 changes sign with \mathbf{B} . Panel (b): Curves of κ_{xy}/T vs. T with B fixed at 6.0, 6.2, 6.4 and 6.6
 332 T (just inside the zigzag phase). Below 3 K, κ_{xy} displays a weak negative contribution. For
 333 clarity, we have shifted successive curves vertically by 0.1 mW/Km. Panel (c): The quantity
 334 \mathcal{C}_{obs} defined in Eq. 6 derived from the fit at each B . As B increases, \mathcal{C}_{obs} saturates to a value
 335 ~ 1.1 above 9 T, consistent with the Chern integer 1. In the inset, the profile of $U(\mathbf{r}) + \omega_1$ is
 336 sketched as the red curve. A gradient $-\nabla T \parallel \hat{\mathbf{x}}$ unbalances the excitation densities between
 337 the warm and cool edges to produce $\mathbf{J}_{\text{Q}} \parallel \hat{\mathbf{y}}$ (distribution ρ shaded in blue). Panel (d) shows

338 the B dependence of the energy level ω_1 derived from the fit of κ_{xy}/T vs. T to Eq. 5 at each
339 B . At the minimum (at 6.8 T), ω_1 agrees with the energy of the narrow mode seen in ESR
340 (~ 1 meV). At large B , ω_1 is slightly lower than the ESR mode, and in better agreement
341 with the energy extracted from κ_{xx} in Ref. [11].

342 **Extended Data Figure Captions:**

343 **Extended Data Fig. 1.** Image of crystal studied in this report. The three thermometers
344 used for temperature measurements are labeled (T_A , T_B , T_C) according to their locations.

345 **Extended Data Fig. 2.** Example of raw temperature data for a particular field-step se-
346 quence. The inset depicts the same data over a narrower time window so that the timescales
347 for the relaxation process can be seen.

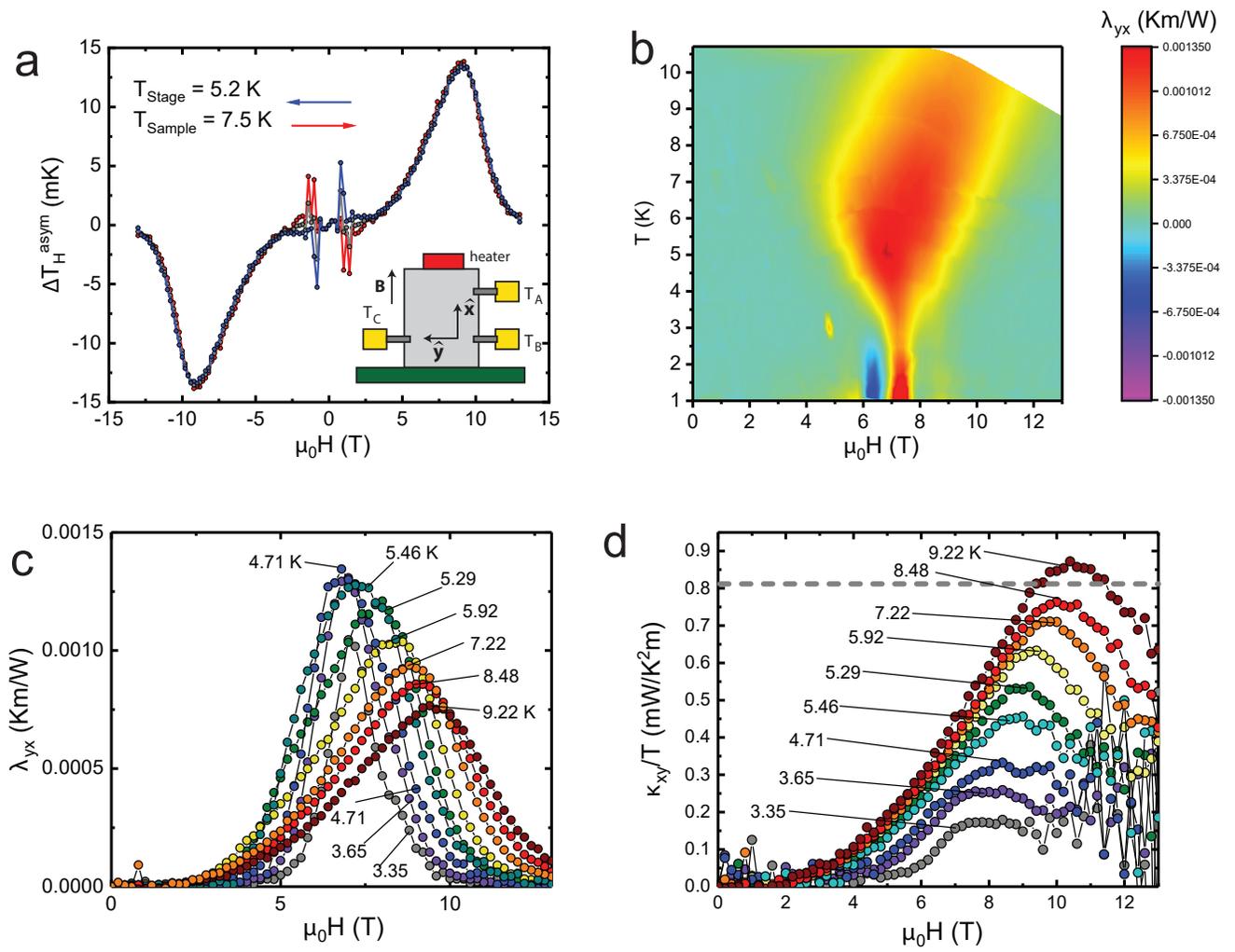


FIG. 1.

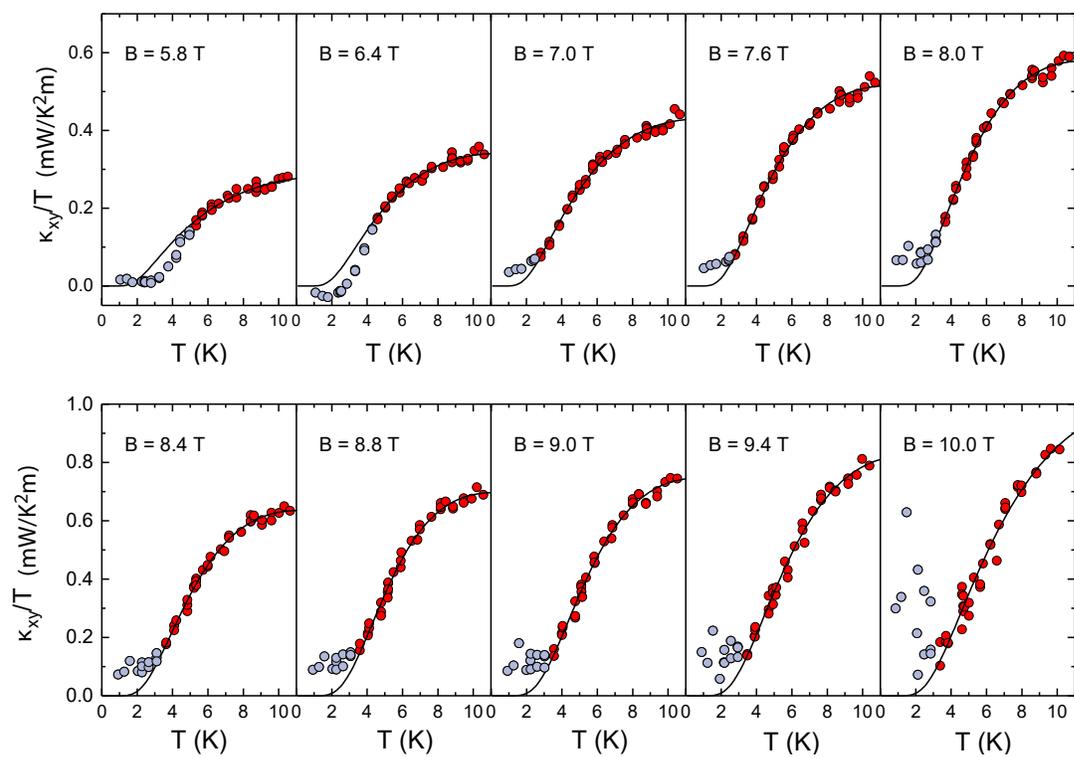


FIG. 2.

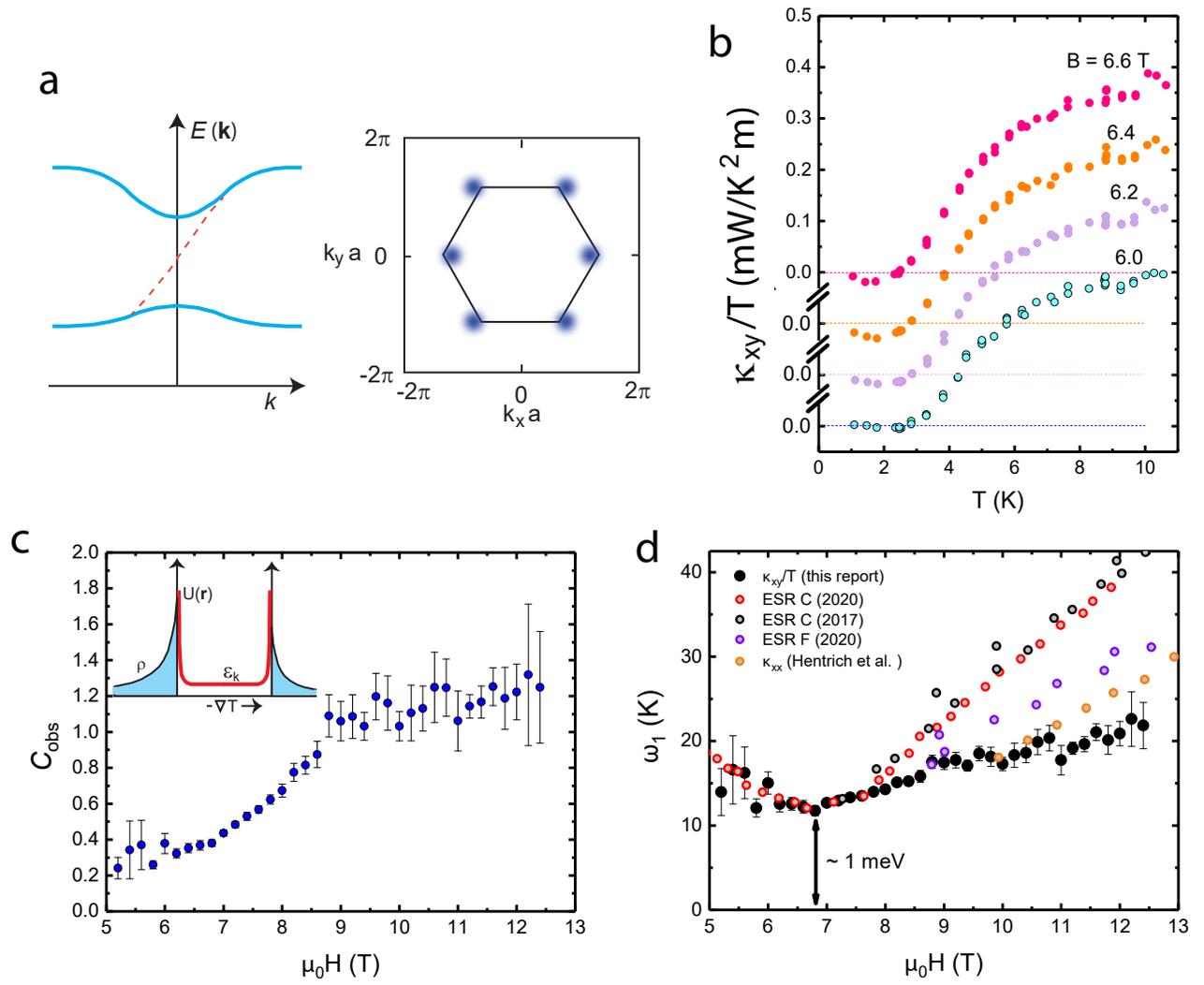


FIG. 3.

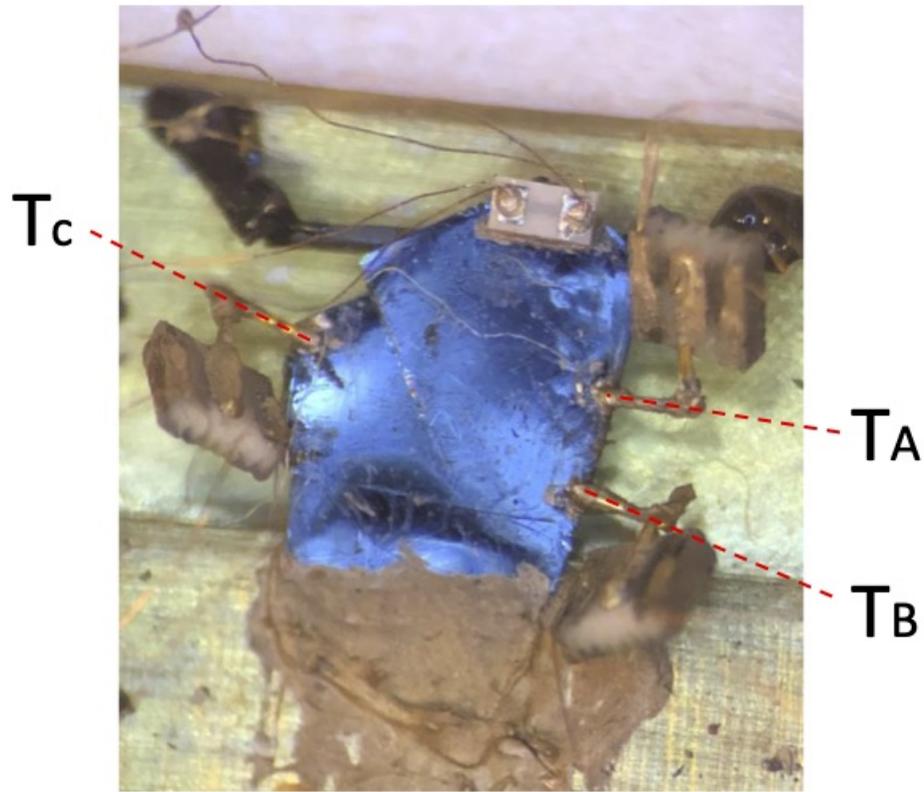


FIG. 1. Extended Data

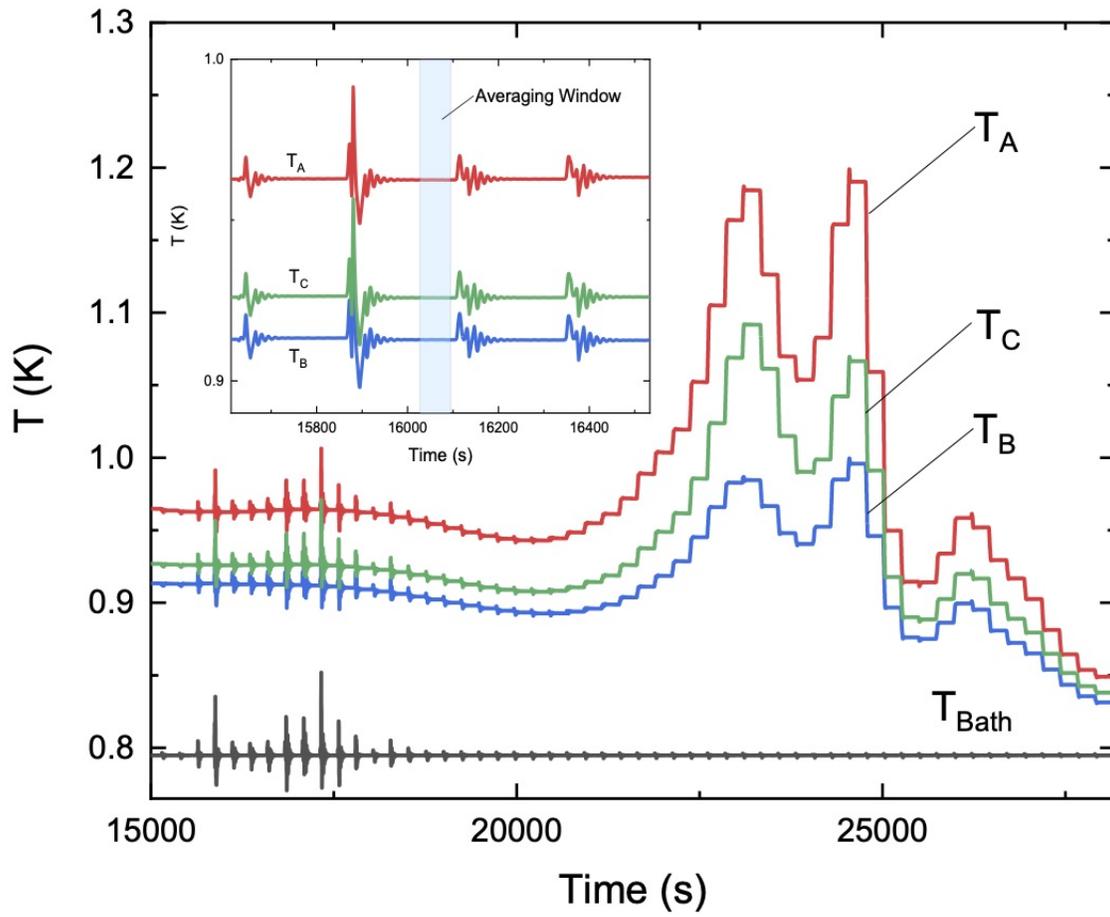


FIG. 2. Extended Data

Supplementary Files

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- [22KxyRuCl3Supplv1.pdf](#)