


# Electromagnetic Form Factors and Structure of the $T_{bb}$ Tetraquark from Lattice QCD

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We present the first lattice QCD determination of the electromagnetic form factors of the exotic tetraquark  $T_{bb}(bb\bar{u}\bar{d})$  with quantum numbers  $I(J^P) = 0(1^+)$ . The extracted form factors encode information about its internal structure, including the charge distribution and the magnetic dipole moments, determined separately for the light and heavy quarks. Our results provide evidence in favor of it being a bound state consisting of a compact heavy diquark  $[bb]$  in a color-antitriplet with spin one and a light antidiquark  $[\bar{u}\bar{d}]$  in a color-triplet with spin zero. The charge radius of  $T_{bb}$  is found to be significantly smaller than the combined charge radii of  $B$  and  $B^*$  mesons. These two comprise the lowest-lying threshold  $BB^*$  in the channel that we are considering, and their electric charge form factors are also determined. The computations were performed on a single ensemble, generated by the Coordinated Lattice Simulations effort, with  $N_f = 2 + 1$  dynamical quarks and a lattice spacing of approximately  $a \approx 0.064$  fm at the pion mass  $m_\pi \approx 290$  MeV.

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**Introduction**—Quantum chromodynamics (QCD), as an integral part of the standard model of particle physics, has achieved enormous success in explaining the existence of hadrons—mesons and baryons that are bound states or resonances. In a simple quark model picture these are built either from a single quark-antiquark pair ( $\bar{q}_1 q_2$ ) or three quarks ( $q_1 q_2 q_3$ ), respectively [1,2]. QCD also allows for the existence of more exotic states [3,4], e.g., tetraquarks ( $\bar{q}_1 \bar{q}_2 q_3 q_4$ ), pentaquarks ( $q_1 \bar{q}_2 q_3 q_4 q_5$ ), hybrid mesons ( $\bar{q}_1 g q_2$ ), or glueballlike mesons, the latter built mainly from gluons; many of these have been discovered experimentally [5–14]. Nevertheless the quest to determine how the exotic states populate the dense spectrum arising from QCD is one of the most active avenues of research in hadronic physics [15–18].

The as yet experimentally undiscovered doubly-bottom tetraquark,  $T_{bb} = bb\bar{u}\bar{d}$ ,  $I(J^P) = 0(1^+)$ , has been particularly scrutinized as one of the most promising candidates for an exotic QCD stable state [19–26]. State-of-the-art lattice studies find its mass to be significantly below the lowest compatible decay threshold,  $BB^*$ , in the  $I = 0$  channel

[20,27–34]. These studies are especially pertinent given the recent discovery of  $T_{cc} = cc\bar{u}\bar{d}$  at LHCb [14] and the favorable prospects of observing  $T_{bc} = bc\bar{u}\bar{d}$  [35,36], expected to lie slightly below the  $DB^*$  threshold [37–39]. Regarding  $T_{bb}$ , its production cross section at the LHC was determined to be a few nb [35]. Detection in exclusive decays seems unlikely [40], while there may be a possibility of observing  $T_{bb}$  in inclusive decays [40].

Information about the structure of composite particles, i.e., their spin, color, and orbital wave functions, are encoded in their form factors. They appear via Lorentz-covariant parametrizations of matrix elements  $\mathcal{M} = \langle h_2(p_2, \lambda_2) | \hat{j}(x=0) | h_1(p_1, \lambda_1) \rangle$ , with  $h_{1(2)}$  being single hadrons possessing momenta and helicities  $p_{1(2)}$  and  $\lambda_{1(2)}$  and the current  $\hat{j}$  representing the probe. Currently, almost all theoretically or experimentally studied form factors of QCD states involve the conventional states, e.g., pions [41–46], nucleons [47–52], kaons [44,46,53], and others (including transition and multiparticle form factors) [54–61].

Tetraquarks admit two color configurations that yield an  $SU(3)$  singlet hadron [15,17,62]. One is the so-called *molecular structure* where the wave function is a product of two quark-antiquark pairs, both in definite color representations:  $(\bar{q}_1 q_3)_1 (\bar{q}_2 q_4)_1$ ,  $(\bar{q}_1 q_4)_1 (\bar{q}_2 q_3)_1$ , and  $(\bar{q}_1 q_3)_8 (\bar{q}_2 q_4)_8$ . The first two feature pairs of color-singlet hadrons interacting via residual color interactions. This structure prevails in nuclei composed of protons and neutrons and plays a prominent role for many tetraquark residing near meson-meson thresholds. The second possibility includes the *diquark-antidiquark structure*:  $[\bar{q}_1 \bar{q}_2]_3 [q_3 q_4]_3$  or  $[\bar{q}_1 \bar{q}_2]_6 [q_3 q_4]_6$ . The former features a diquark in a color-antitriplet and an antidiquark in a color-triplet, while the latter

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is comprised of a color-sextet and a color-antisextet. These color wave functions are not linearly independent and can be related to each other [62,63].

In this work, we probe the structure of the doubly-bottom tetraquark  $T_{bb}$  by determining its electromagnetic form factors in lattice QCD. Its stability against strong decay guarantees that infinite-volume matrix elements  $\langle T_{bb} | \hat{j} | T_{bb} \rangle$  are directly accessible from the lattice and are not significantly polluted by finite-volume effects [64,65]. This feature sets the  $T_{bb}$  apart from all so-far discovered tetraquarks, which decay via strong interaction and therefore do not correspond to QCD asymptotic states. The  $T_{bb}$ , by contrast only decays weakly—like the pion, kaon, and other pseudoscalar hadrons. As such, it provides a unique opportunity to study the structure of a hadron, whose manifestly exotic character arises from its flavor content (two bottom quarks) and its electric charge.

*$h \xrightarrow{\hat{j}_{\text{EM}}} h$  form factor decomposition*—The matrix element linked to the electromagnetic (EM) composition of a hadron  $h$  is defined in the continuum as

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{M}_{\text{EM}}^\mu(p_2, \lambda_2, p_1, \lambda_1) &= \langle h(p_2, \lambda_2) | \hat{j}_{\text{EM,cont}}^\mu | h(p_1, \lambda_1) \rangle, \\ \hat{j}_{\text{EM,cont}}^\mu &= \sum_q e_q \bar{q} \gamma^\mu q, \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where  $e_q$  is the charge of quark  $q$ .

The decomposition of matrix element (1) is uniquely determined by the particle spin and the current  $\hat{j}$  [66]. For the same pseudoscalar in the initial and final states this renders a single form factor [67]

$$\mathcal{M}_{\text{EM}}^\mu = (p_1 + p_2)^\mu F_C(Q^2), \quad (2)$$

while for  $J^P = 1^\pm$  particles this gives [68]

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{M}_{\text{EM}}^\mu &= -(p_1 + p_2)^\mu (\varepsilon_2^* \cdot \varepsilon_1) F_1(Q^2) \\ &\quad - [(\varepsilon_2^* \cdot q) \varepsilon_1^\mu - (\varepsilon_1 \cdot q) \varepsilon_2^{*\mu}] F_2(Q^2) \\ &\quad + \frac{(\varepsilon_2^* \cdot q)(\varepsilon_1 \cdot q)}{2m^2} (p_1 + p_2)^\mu F_3(Q^2), \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

with  $Q^2 \equiv -q^2 = -(p_2 - p_1)^2 > 0$  defined as the momentum transfer and  $\varepsilon_{1(2)}^{(*)}$  as the polarization four vectors.  $F_{C,1,2,3}(Q^2)$  are Lorentz scalars that are functions of  $Q^2$ .  $F_{1,2,3}(Q^2)$  are further related to the charge, magnetic dipole, and electric quadrupole form factors, labeled by  $F_C$ ,  $F_M$ , and  $F_Q$ , respectively, via a linear transformation [68,69]

$$\begin{pmatrix} F_C(Q^2) \\ F_M(Q^2) \\ F_Q(Q^2) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 + \frac{2}{3}\eta & -\frac{2}{3}\eta & \frac{2}{3}\eta(1+\eta) \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & -1 & (1+\eta) \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} F_1(Q^2) \\ F_2(Q^2) \\ F_3(Q^2) \end{pmatrix}, \quad (4)$$

TABLE I. Hadron masses  $m_h$  and charge radii  $\sqrt{\langle r_C^2 \rangle}$ . Columns  $r$  and  $t_+$  show the resonances and multiparticle thresholds, respectively, that appear in the  $z$ -expansions.

$h$	$m_h$ (GeV)	$\sqrt{\langle r_C^2 \rangle}$ (fm)	$r$	$t_+$
$T_{bb}$	10.5765(98)	0.499(31)	$\omega$	$(3m_\pi)^2$
$B$	5.3020(17)	0.692(21)	$\rho$	$(2m_\pi)^2$
$B^*$	5.3387(20)	0.698(23)	$\rho$	$(2m_\pi)^2$
$\pi$	0.28953(97)	0.652(20)	$\rho$	$(2m_\pi)^2$

with  $\eta = (Q^2/4m^2)$ . The normalization of the charge form factor at  $Q^2 = 0$  is fixed to the total charge  $Z$  of the state in units of the elementary charge  $e_0$ , i.e.,  $F_C(Q^2 = 0) = Z$ . The values of the electric quadrupole and the magnetic dipole form factors at  $Q^2 = 0$  yield the values of the total electric quadrupole moment  $\mathcal{Q} = (1/m^2)F_Q(0)$  and the magnetic dipole moment  $\mu = (1/2m)F_M(0)$  [70,71].

*Lattice setup*—We employ a single ensemble of gauge configurations (X253) with a hypervolume  $N_L^3 \times N_T = 40^3 \times 128$  and lattice spacing  $a = 0.06379(37)$  fm [72], generated by the Coordinated Lattice Simulations (CLS) effort [73]. This  $N_f = 2 + 1$  ensemble features  $s$  and degenerate  $u/d$  quarks described by the nonperturbatively  $O(a)$  improved Wilson action, resulting in a pion mass  $m_\pi \approx 290$  MeV, listed in Table I. The bottom quark action is implemented with an anisotropic Clover action [74], tuned to reproduce the physical masses and continuum energy-momentum dispersions of  $B$  and  $B^*$  mesons on the ensemble [5].

The light and heavy EM currents,

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{j}_{u/d}^\mu &= Z_{u/d}^V \left( \frac{2}{3} \bar{u} \gamma^\mu u - \frac{1}{3} \bar{d} \gamma^\mu d \right), \quad \hat{j}_b^\mu = Z_b^V \left( -\frac{1}{3} \bar{b} \gamma^\mu b \right), \\ \hat{j}_{\text{EM}}^\mu &= \hat{j}_{u/d}^\mu + \hat{j}_b^\mu, \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

are nonperturbatively renormalized with factors  $Z_{u/d}^V$  and  $Z_b^V$  determined from  $T_{bb}$  matrix elements to recover the infinite-volume and continuum normalization of the  $T_{bb}$  charge form factor,  $F_C(0) = -1$ . The  $b$ -quark action, its tuning, and current renormalization are described in Supplemental Material [75].

The desired matrix elements (1) for states  $h = T_{bb}, B, B^*, \pi$  (generated by the interpolators  $O_h^{(\dagger)}$  as detailed in [75]) were computed from three-point correlation functions  $\mathcal{C}_3^\mu(\vec{p}_2, \vec{q}, T; t)$ , shown for  $T_{bb}$  in Fig. 1:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{C}_3^\mu(\vec{p}_2, \vec{q}, T; t) &= \langle \Omega | \mathcal{O}_h(\vec{p}_2, T) \hat{j}_{\text{EM}}^\mu(\vec{q}, t) \mathcal{O}_h^\dagger(x=0) | \Omega \rangle \\ &= \sum_{n,m=0}^{\infty} \frac{\mathcal{Z}_n^{f*} \mathcal{Z}_m^i}{(2E_n^f)(2E_m^i)} \mathcal{M}_{nm}^\mu e^{-E_n^f(T-t)} e^{-E_m^i t}. \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Here  $\vec{p}_2$  and  $\vec{q} \equiv \vec{p}_2 - \vec{p}_1$  are momenta at the sink and the current, respectively, and  $T$  denotes the source-sink

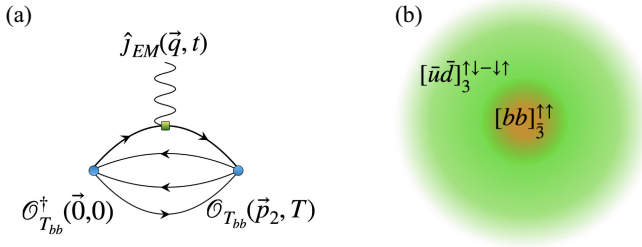


FIG. 1. (a) Example of a connected Wick contraction diagram generated by the  $T_{bb}$  three-point correlator (6). (b) Pictorial representation of the resulting distributions for light and heavy quarks.

temporal separation. The three-point function is decomposed in terms of initial states  $(i, m)$  and final states  $(f, n)$  in Euclidean time. The  $\mathcal{Z}_a = \langle a | \mathcal{O}_h^\dagger | \Omega \rangle$  labels the overlap with the  $a$  th state, and  $E_a$  denotes its energy. In addition, operators  $\mathcal{O}_h$  for  $h = B^*, T_{bb}$  with nonzero spin are projected to the appropriate rows  $r$  and irreps  $\Lambda$  of subgroups of the octahedral group. In addition to the connected Wick contraction in Fig. 1(a) there might be in principle also a nonvanishing contribution of disconnected diagrams. The latter are typically found to be very small for EM currents (e.g. at most few percent [81] for nucleon) and we omit them in the current study.

To isolate the ground-state matrix element  $\mathcal{M}_{00}^\mu \equiv \mathcal{M}^\mu$ , we remove the zeroth-order dependence of the three-point correlator (6) on the ground-state overlap factors  $\mathcal{Z}_0^{f(i)}$  and energies  $E_0^{f(i)}$ , obtained from the corresponding two-point

correlators  $C_2(\vec{p}, t) = \langle \Omega | \mathcal{O}_h(\vec{p}, t) \mathcal{O}_h^\dagger(0) | \Omega \rangle$ . This is done by constructing the ratio  $R_3^\mu(\vec{p}, \vec{q}, T; t)$ ,

$$R_3^\mu(\vec{p}_2, \vec{q}, T; t) = \frac{(2E_0^f)(2E_0^i)}{\mathcal{Z}_0^{f*} \mathcal{Z}_0^i} e^{E_0^f(T-t)} e^{E_0^i t} C_3^\mu(\vec{p}_2, \vec{q}, T; t), \quad (7)$$

defined in Eq. (28) of Supplemental Material of Ref. [61], that equals the desired matrix element, up to excited-state contamination. Two models are used in fits to data: a constant fit, assuming no contamination, or a model that also incorporates first-excited states [75]. To improve fit quality, we performed a weighted average of the ratios (7) over selected equivalent directions of the sink and source momenta that yield the same value of  $Q^2$ . The averaged data was simultaneously fitted for four source-sink separations  $(T/a) = 12, 15, 18, 22$ . The averaging procedure and plots showing representative fits are given in Supplemental Material [75].

*Results*—The extracted masses of  $T_{bb}$ ,  $B$ , and  $B^*$ , listed in Table I, render a significant binding energy of the  $T_{bb}$  with respect to the  $BB^*$  threshold,

$$m_{T_{bb}} - (m_B + m_{B^*}) = -64(10) \text{ MeV}, \quad (8)$$

at  $m_\pi \approx 290$  MeV. This is in line with the large binding observed in previous studies, e.g., Refs. [20,23,27–32,34].

The EM form factors of hadrons  $h = T_{bb}, B, B^*$ , and  $\pi$  are shown in Figs. 2(a) and 3 for five values of  $Q^2$ . The latter plot also shows the individual EM form factors of the

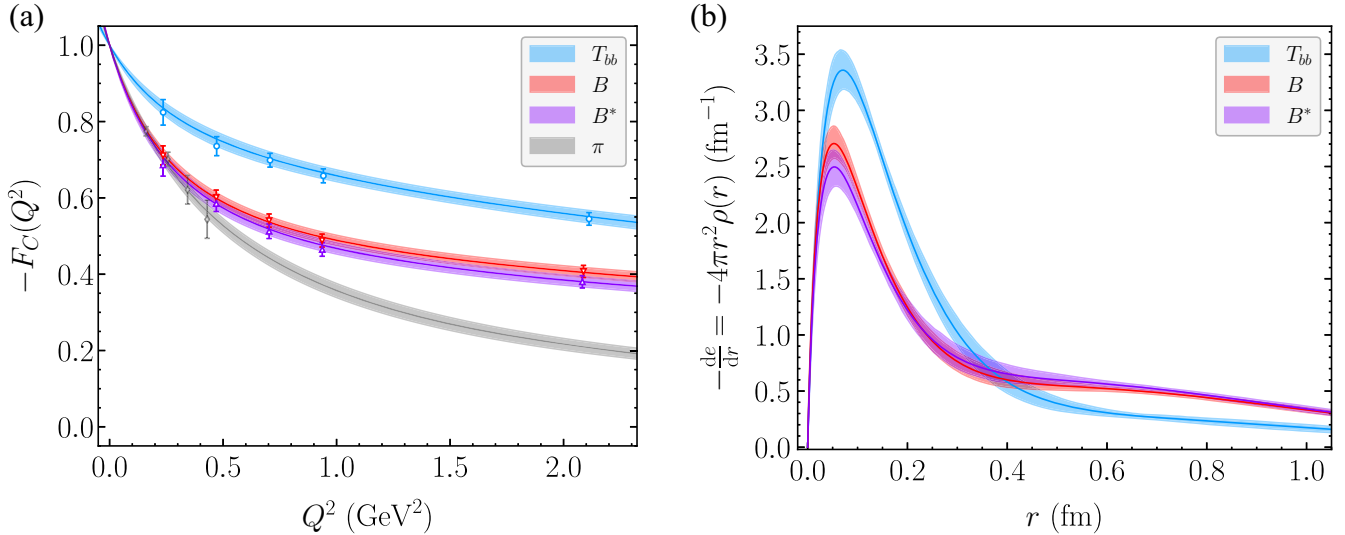


FIG. 2. (a) Charge form factors  $F_C(Q^2)$  of hadrons  $h = T_{bb}, B(b\bar{u}), B^*(b\bar{u}), \pi(d\bar{u})$ , shown as a function of  $Q^2$ . Discrete markers show lattice data, and the bands represent  $z$ -expansion fits. Second order expansion [up to and including  $n = 2$  in Eq. (9)] was used to parametrize  $T_{bb}, B, B^*$  electric form factors, while a first order expansion sufficed for an adequate parametrization of the pion form factor. (b) Position-space charge densities  $\rho(r)$ , represented in the form of  $-(d\epsilon/dr) = -4\pi r^2 \rho$ , are related to the form factors via a Fourier transform. Negative values of charge form factors and distributions are shown, given that considered hadrons are negatively charged.

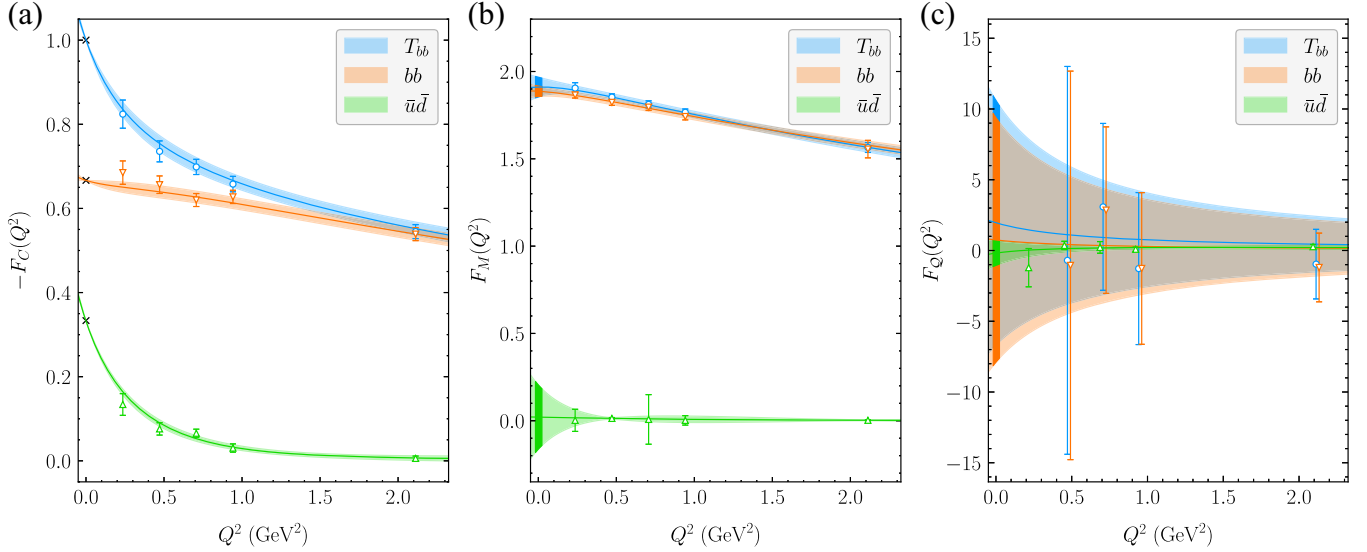


FIG. 3. Form factors of the  $T_{bb}$ . Each subfigure shows the total value of the form factors with separate contributions yielded by the light current  $\hat{j}_{u/d}^\mu$  and the heavy current  $\hat{j}_b^\mu$ . The crosses in (a) mark values to which each of the charge form factors have been normalized at  $Q^2 = 0$ , and the shaded vertical bands in (b) and (c) indicate the values of magnetic dipole moments  $2m_{T_{bb}}\mu$  and electric quadrupole moments  $m_{T_{bb}}^2\mathcal{Q}$ , respectively, also found in Table II. The points on the rightmost plot are slightly horizontally displaced for improved visibility.

light and heavy currents, extracted from matrix elements  $\langle T_{bb} | \hat{j}_{u/d}^\mu | T_{bb} \rangle$  and  $\langle T_{bb} | \hat{j}_b^\mu | T_{bb} \rangle$ , respectively.

Continuous bands in Figs. 2 and 3 follow from parametrizing all form factors using the  $z$ -expansion [82–84] of the form

$$F(Q^2) = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{Q^2}{m_r^2}} \sum_n a_n z^n(Q^2; t_+, t_0). \quad (9)$$

Here  $m_r$  is the mass of the closest resonance, and  $z$  is a variable that maps  $Q^2$  to the unit disk,

$$z(Q^2; t_+, t_0) = \frac{\sqrt{t_+ + Q^2} - \sqrt{t_+ - t_0}}{\sqrt{t_+ + Q^2} + \sqrt{t_+ - t_0}}, \quad (10)$$

where  $t_+$  is the squared mass of the nearest multiparticle threshold and  $t_0$  is a tunable parameter. Table I lists the closest resonances and thresholds employed in fitting Eq. (9) to all form factors. The thresholds  $t_+$  are evaluated at  $m_\pi \approx 290$  MeV. As the  $\rho$  and  $\omega$  resonance masses are not known on our ensemble, we use the PDG values and verify that the fits are robust when varying these masses within the range  $m_{\omega,\rho} \in [750 \text{ MeV}, 900 \text{ MeV}]$ . The coefficients  $a_n$  are fit parameters, and we truncate all expansions at order  $n = 2$  or less, with their numerical values and that of  $t_0$ , given in Supplemental Material [75].

The electric charge and quadrupole form factors encode the information about the spatial charge distribution  $\rho(\vec{r})$  [71] and consequently the charge radius  $r_C \equiv \sqrt{\langle r_C^2 \rangle} = \sqrt{6[dF_C/dQ^2](0)}$ . We find that the

quadrupole contribution in  $T_{bb}$  is negligible with respect to the monopole contribution, as shown in Fig. 3 of Supplemental Material [75]. The corresponding monopole of the spatial charge distribution is obtained via the Fourier transform,  $\rho(r) = \int [d^3q/(2\pi)^3] e^{i\vec{q}\cdot\vec{r}} F_C(|\vec{q}|^2)$ , in the non-relativistic limit, which is a good approximation for  $T_{bb}$ ,  $B$ , and  $B^*$ . The resulting charge radius of the  $T_{bb}$ , 0.499(31) fm, is smaller than that of the  $B$  or  $B^*$  individually (listed in Table I) and significantly smaller than the sum of both, 1.390(31) fm. This is consistent with the  $T_{bb}$  charge density being concentrated at a smaller radius  $r$  than the charge densities of  $B$  or  $B^*$ ; see Fig. 2(b). The compactness of the  $T_{bb}$  implies that the notion of a  $B - B^*$  molecule is not meaningful and instead favors a compact diquark-antidiquark composition [33,85–87]. The  $B$  meson charge radius that we obtain is comparable to the values found in Refs. [88,89] and has been studied previously on the lattice through radial charge distributions in heavy-light mesons [90–92] with static heavy quarks.

TABLE II. Charge radii, magnetic dipole  $\mu$ , and electric quadrupole moments  $\mathcal{Q}$  of  $T_{bb}$  and the constituent (anti)diquarks. The same values are also shown with shaded bands at  $Q^2 = 0$  in Figs. 3(b) and 3(c).

	$T_{bb}$	$[bb]$	$[\bar{u}\bar{d}]$
$\sqrt{\langle r_C^2 \rangle}$ (fm)	0.499(31)	0.174(59)	0.511(14)
$2m_{T_{bb}} \cdot \mu$	1.912(57)	1.887(29)	0.02(18)
$m_{T_{bb}}^2 \cdot \mathcal{Q}$	1.9(8.7)	0.6(8.8)	-0.18(86)

The diquark-antidiquark structure is further supported by investigating the charge distributions of light and heavy (anti)diquarks separately in Fig. 3(a). We find that the  $[bb]$  diquark component of the total charge form factor has significantly weaker  $Q^2$  dependence than the antidiquark  $[\bar{u}\bar{d}]$  component, indicating that the diquark is more localized than the antidiquark; see Table II. This suggests that the structure with a very compact heavy diquark and a relatively spatially extended antidiquark is responsible for the large binding energy of the tetraquark, compatible with some quark model studies [22,62,85,86,93–95].

Motivated by our findings, we assume that the  $T_{bb}$  state vector in the QCD Hilbert space can be expanded in the diquark-antidiquark basis with compatible quantum numbers, in line with quark models applied to QCD exotics. Each diquark-antidiquark state is factorized into three components (orbital, spin, and color) [22,62]:

$$\{[bb]_{\bar{c}}^{l_{bb},s_{bb}}[\bar{u}\bar{d}]_c^{l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}},s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}}\}_{l_{12}}^{J^P=1^+}, \quad (11)$$

where  $l_{bb}$  and  $l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}$  denote the relative orbital angular momenta in the diquark and antidiquark, respectively, and  $s_{bb}, s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}} = 0, 1$  are their corresponding spins.  $l_{12}$  is the relative angular momentum between the diquark and the antidiquark, and  $c = \bar{3}, \bar{6}$  are color configurations, as discussed in the introduction. The values introduced in Eq. (11) are subject to the constraints imposed by the  $T_{bb}$  quantum numbers  $I(J^P) = 0(1^+)$  and the Pauli principle, ensuring that the total  $T_{bb}$  state is antisymmetric with respect to the permutations of the  $b$  quarks or the light antiquarks in the isospin limit. Accounting for this yields three relations [22,93]:

$$(a) (-1)^{s_{bb}+l_{bb}+c} = 1, \quad (b) (-1)^{s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}+l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}+c} = -1, \\ (-1)^{l_{bb}+l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}+l_{12}} = 1 \xrightarrow{(a),(b)} (-1)^{s_{bb}+s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}+l_{12}} = -1, \quad (12)$$

where the first row follows from the Pauli principle and the second ensures positive parity.

Our results for the electric quadrupole form factors are consistent with zero, as presented in Fig. 3(c) and Table II, given the present level of accuracy. This applies to the total value and separate diquark and antidiquark contributions. It indicates that the  $S$ -wave ( $l_{bb} = l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}} = l_{12} = 0$ ) components dominate in the relative wave functions within the diquark, antidiquark, and total system [96,97]. The magnetic dipole moment of the  $T_{bb}$ ,

$$\mu_{T_{bb}} = \langle T_{bb} | \sum_{q=u,d,b} \frac{e_q}{2m_q} (\hat{l}_q + g_q \hat{s}_q) | T_{bb} \rangle = \frac{F_M(0)}{2m_{T_{bb}}}, \quad (13)$$

is determined from the value of the magnetic dipole form factor  $F_M$  at  $Q^2 = 0$ . It is nonzero and almost completely saturated by the contribution from the heavy quarks as seen in Fig. 3(b), implying that the light quarks dominantly form

a spin singlet state, while the heavy quarks are in a spin triplet state,

$$s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}} = 0, \quad s_{bb} = 1. \quad (14)$$

Note that  $T_{bb}$  with molecular structure  $B - B^*$  would not render a spin correlation within two light quarks or correlation within two heavy quarks, disfavoring the molecular structure. Taking into account the orbital and spin quantum numbers, Eq. (12) restricts the diquark-antidiquark to be in an antisymmetric color triplet-antitriplet configuration, i.e.,  $c = \bar{3}$ . This uniquely determines the  $T_{bb}$  state in QCD Hilbert space to be

$$|T_{bb}\rangle = \{[bb]_{\bar{3}}^{l_{bb}=0,s_{bb}=1}[\bar{u}\bar{d}]_3^{l_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}=0,s_{\bar{u}\bar{d}}=0}\}_{l_{12}=0}^{J^P=1^+}, \quad (15)$$

which is the simplest and the dominant configuration not in tension with our lattice results. Result (15) is graphically summarized in Fig. 1(b).

The identified structure features the “good” light anti-diquark [3], in which the attraction between two quarks increases with decreasing  $m_{u/d}$  [98]; therefore, the dominance of this structure is expected to pertain also at the physical light quark masses. We also expect that our findings, including the assignment of the quantum numbers in Eq. (15), are not significantly affected by finite-volume or lattice spacing effects. Future lattice QCD studies at smaller pion masses and lattice spacings, as well as larger volumes, are desirable to confirm this.

**Conclusions**—In this work we have presented the first lattice QCD calculation of electromagnetic form factors of an exotic tetraquark  $T_{bb}$ . All computations were done on one CLS ensemble at the pion mass  $m_\pi \approx 290$  MeV, at which we observe  $T_{bb}$  to be a strongly stable state with a binding energy  $m_{T_{bb}} - (m_B + m_{B^*}) = -64(10)$  MeV.

By probing  $T_{bb}$  with the electromagnetic light and heavy currents, we extracted three form factors that reveal three components of its structure: the electric charge distribution, the magnetic dipole moment, and the electric quadrupole moment. Flavor decompositions of all form factors were determined from the respective matrix elements.

These observables were combined with constraints from the Pauli principle. We have shown that, within the precision of our data, the  $T_{bb}$  is a compact bound state consisting of a heavy diquark  $[bb]$  in a color-antitriplet with spin one, and a light antidiquark  $[\bar{u}\bar{d}]$  in a color-triplet with spin zero. The structure of  $T_{bb}$  is therefore rather unique as it differs from a molecular structure that dominates in many tetraquarks near meson-meson thresholds and prevails in nuclei composed of protons and neutrons.

In the future, it would be valuable to investigate the structure of the  $\Lambda_b$  and  $\Xi_{bb}$  baryons, which might be related to that of  $T_{bb}$  and the  $B$  meson, respectively, via the symmetry between the heavy diquark and the heavy antiquark. Similarly, determining the EM form factors of  $T_{bc}$  and eventually  $T_{cc}$  would shed light on the heavy quark

mass dependence of the internal configuration of double heavy tetraquarks.

Software packages QDP-JIT [99] and Chroma [100] were used for computing the Wick contractions and inverting the heavy quark Dirac operator, and the QUDA multigrid solver was employed for the light quark Dirac operator inversions [101].

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*Data availability*—The data that support the findings of this article are openly available [105], embargo periods may apply.

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