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# Exact vortex solutions of the complex sine-Gordon theory on the plane

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## Abstract

We construct explicit multivortex solutions for the first and second complex sine-Gordon equations. The constructed solutions are expressible in terms of the modified Bessel and rational functions, respectively. The vorticity-raising and lowering Bäcklund transformations are interpreted as the Schlesinger transformations of the fifth Painlevé equation. © 1998 Published by Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

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*Motivation.* Recently there has been an upsurge of interest in the complex sine-Gordon equation. Originally derived in the reduction of the  $O(4)$  nonlinear  $\sigma$ -model [1] and a theory of dual strings interacting through a scalar field [2], this equation reappeared in a number of field-theoretic [3] and fluid dynamical [4] contexts. The equation was shown to be completely integrable [1,5,6], and the multisoliton solutions were constructed in a variety of forms, both over vanishing [7,8] and nonvanishing backgrounds [9,10]. The study of its quantized version started in [7,11,12] and received a new impetus recently [13] when it was realized that the complex sine-Gordon theory may be reformulated in terms of the gauged Wess-Zumino-Witten action and interpreted as an integrably deformed  $SU(2)/U(1)$ -coset model [14].

The complex sine-Gordon theory can be conveniently defined by its action functional,

$$E_{SG-1} = \int \left[ |\nabla\psi|^2 + (1 - |\psi|^2)^2 \right] \frac{d^2x}{1 - |\psi|^2}. \quad (1)$$

The subscript 1 serves to distinguish this model from another integrable complexification of the sine-Gordon

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theory, the so-called complex sine-Gordon-2:

$$E_{\text{SG-2}} = \int \left[ \frac{|\nabla\psi|^2}{1 - \frac{1}{2}|\psi|^2} + \frac{1}{2}(1 - |\psi|^2)^2 \right] d^2x. \quad (2)$$

The latter system was derived in Ref. [15] as the bosonic limit of a generalized supersymmetric sine-Gordon equation and, independently, in Ref. [16]. Quantum mechanically, the above two complex sine-Gordon models were shown to be the only  $O(2)$ -symmetric theories whose  $S$ -matrix is factorizable at the tree level [12].

In all previous analyses the complex sine-Gordon equations were considered in the  $(1+1)$ -dimensional Minkowski space-time. In the present Letter we study these two models in the 2-dimensional Euclidean space. One reason for this is that they define integrable perturbations of Euclidean conformal field theories; more precisely, Eqs. (1), (2) arise as reductions of the  $SU(2)_N$  gauged Wess-Zumino-Witten model perturbed by a multiplet of primary fields (by  $\Phi^{(1)}$  and  $\Phi^{(2)}$ , respectively) [14,17]. They are closely related to important two-dimensional lattice systems, viz.  $Z_N$  parafermion models perturbed by the first and second thermal operators, respectively [18].

Another motivation for studying solutions of the Euclidean complex sine-Gordon equations comes from a remarkable similarity between Eqs. (1), (2) and several phenomenological lagrangians of condensed matter physics, in particular the Ginsburg-Landau expansion of the free energy in the theory of phase transitions,

$$E_{\text{GL}} = \int \left[ |\nabla\psi|^2 + \frac{1}{2}(1 - |\psi|^2)^2 \right] d^2x, \quad (3)$$

and the energy of the Heisenberg ferromagnet with easy-plane anisotropy [20]:

$$E_{\text{FM}} = \int \left[ (\nabla\alpha)^2 + \sin^2\alpha (\nabla\beta)^2 + \cos^2\alpha \right] d^2x. \quad (4)$$

(Hence we will be using the words ‘‘action’’ and ‘‘energy’’ interchangeably in what follows.) To see that (1), (2) are relatives of (4), one writes  $\psi = \sin\alpha e^{i\beta}$  and  $\psi = \sqrt{2} \sin(\alpha/2) e^{i\beta}$ , transforming Eqs. (1) and (2) into

$$E_{\text{SG-1}} = \int \left[ (\nabla\alpha)^2 + \tan^2\alpha (\nabla\beta)^2 + \cos^2\alpha \right] d^2x \quad (5)$$

and

$$E_{\text{SG-2}} = \frac{1}{2} \int \left[ (\nabla\alpha)^2 + 4\tan^2\frac{\alpha}{2} (\nabla\beta)^2 + \cos^2\alpha \right] d^2x, \quad (6)$$

respectively.

The Ginsburg-Landau free energy (3) is minimized by the Gross-Pitaevski vortices originally discovered in the context of superfluidity [19]. These are topological solitons of the form  $\psi(x, y) = \Phi_n(r) e^{in\theta}$ , where  $\Phi_n \rightarrow 1$  as  $r \rightarrow \infty$ . Although these important solutions were obtained numerically and in various asymptotic regimes, no analytic expressions for the Gross-Pitaevski vortices are available. Similarly, Eq. (4) is minimized by magnetic vortices [20], and again, these are available only numerically. The aim of this note is to demonstrate that the Euclidean complex sine-Gordon equations also exhibit topological soliton solutions. Unlike the Gross-Pitaevski vortices and unlike their magnetic counterparts, the vortices of Eqs. (1) and (2) can be found exactly, and in a closed analytic form. Consequently, the significance of the complex sine-Gordon equations on the plane stems from the fact that they provide a laboratory for studying analytic properties of vortices and their phenomenology in a wide class of condensed matter models.

We construct these solutions in two different ways: (i) by means of an auto-Bäcklund transformation resulting from the spinor representation of the complex sine-Gordon theory, and (ii) via the Schlesinger transformation of the fifth Painlevé equation,

$$W_{rr} + \frac{1}{r}W_r - \left(\frac{1}{W-1} + \frac{1}{2W}\right)W_r^2 = \frac{(W-1)^2}{r^2}\left(\alpha W + \frac{\beta}{W}\right) + \frac{\gamma}{r}W + \delta W \frac{W+1}{W-1}, \quad (7)$$

which arises in a self-similar reduction of Eqs. (1) and (2).

*Vortices via Bäcklund transformation.* The complex sine-Gordon-1 equation,

$$\nabla^2\psi + \frac{(\nabla\psi)^2\bar{\psi}}{1-|\psi|^2} + \psi(1-|\psi|^2) = 0, \quad (8)$$

admits an equivalent representation in terms of the Euclidean spinor field,  $\Psi = (u, v)^T$  [10]:

$$i\bar{\partial}u + v - |u|^2v = 0, \quad (9a)$$

$$i\partial v + u - |v|^2u = 0. \quad (9b)$$

[Here  $\partial = \partial/\partial z$ ,  $\bar{\partial} = \partial/\partial\bar{z}$  and  $z = (x + iy)/2$ .] This is nothing but the Euclidean version of the massive Thirring model; the corresponding action functional has the form

$$\begin{aligned} E_{\text{Th}} &= \int \left[ i\Psi^\dagger\gamma_i\partial_i\Psi + \Psi^\dagger\Psi - \frac{1}{4}(\Psi^\dagger\gamma_i\Psi)^2 - 1 + \text{c.c.} \right] d^2x \\ &= \int (\bar{u}\partial v + \bar{v}\partial u + |u|^2 + |v|^2 - |uv|^2 - 1 + \text{c.c.}) d^2x. \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

Since as one can easily check both  $u$  and  $v$  satisfy Eq. (8), the Thirring model (9) can be regarded as a Bäcklund transformation between two different solutions of Eq. (8). Here we confine ourselves to multivortex solutions of the form  $\psi = \Phi_n(r)e^{in\theta}$ , where  $(r, \theta)$  are polar coordinates on the plane and  $\Phi_n(r)$  is a real function satisfying

$$\frac{d^2\Phi_n}{dr^2} + \frac{1}{r}\frac{d\Phi_n}{dr} + \frac{\Phi_n}{1-\Phi_n^2} \left[ \left(\frac{d\Phi_n}{dr}\right)^2 - \frac{n^2}{r^2} \right] + \Phi_n(1-\Phi_n^2) = 0. \quad (11)$$

Eqs. (9) with  $u$  and  $v$  of the form  $u = -i\Phi_{n-1}e^{i(n-1)\theta}$  and  $v = \Phi_n e^{in\theta}$  furnish an equivalent representation for Eq. (11):

$$-\frac{d\Phi_{n-1}}{dr} + \frac{n-1}{r}\Phi_{n-1} = (1-\Phi_{n-1}^2)\Phi_n, \quad (12a)$$

$$\frac{d\Phi_n}{dr} + \frac{n}{r}\Phi_n = (1-\Phi_n^2)\Phi_{n-1}, \quad (12b)$$

where  $\Phi_n$  and  $\Phi_{n-1}$  satisfy Eq. (11) with  $n$  and  $n' = n - 1$ , respectively. When  $n = 1$ , Eq. (12a) is solved by  $\Phi_0 = 1$  and Eq. (12b) becomes a Riccati equation:

$$\Phi_1' + r^{-1}\Phi_1 = 1 - \Phi_1^2. \quad (13)$$

This equation can be linearized by writing  $\Phi_1 = S'/S$ , where  $S(r)$  satisfies the modified Bessel's equation of zero order:  $S'' + S'/r - S = 0$ . Selecting  $S = I_0(r)$  gives the explicit form of the  $n = 1$  vortex solution of the complex sine-Gordon theory:

$$\Phi_1 = \frac{I_1(r)}{I_0(r)}. \quad (14)$$

Here  $I_0(r)$  and  $I_1 = I_0'(r)$  are the modified Bessel functions of zero and first order, respectively. The vortex is plotted in Fig. 1.

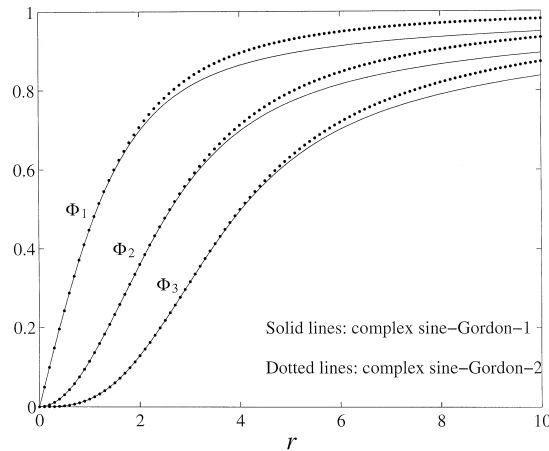


Fig. 1. The vortex solutions with  $n = 1, 2$  and  $3$ .

With the solution  $\Phi_1$  at hand, Eqs. (12) yield a recursion relation allowing us to construct solutions with vorticity  $n > 1$  in a purely algebraic way:

$$\Phi_{n+1} = \frac{-1}{1 - \Phi_n^2} \left[ \frac{d\Phi_n}{dr} - \frac{n}{r} \Phi_n \right] = \Phi_{n-1} - \frac{2}{1 - \Phi_n^2} \frac{d\Phi_n}{dr}, \quad n \geq 1. \tag{15}$$

In particular, the first two higher-order vortices (shown in Fig. 1) are given by

$$\Phi_2 = -\frac{I_0 I_2 - I_1^2}{I_0^2 - I_1^2}, \quad \Phi_3 = \frac{(I_3 - I_1)(I_0^2 - I_1^2) + I_1(I_0 - I_2)^2}{(I_0 - I_2)(I_0 I_2 - 2I_1^2 + I_0^2)},$$

where we have eliminated derivatives by means of the well known relation between the modified Bessel functions of different order:  $I_{n+1} + I_{n-1} = 2I'_n$ . The asymptotic behaviour of the vortex with vorticity  $n$  is readily found from Eq. (12b):

$$\Phi_n \sim \frac{1}{2^n n!} r^n - \frac{1}{2^{n+2} (n+1)!} r^{n+2} + O(r^{n+4}) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow 0, \tag{16}$$

$$\Phi_n \sim 1 - \frac{n}{2r} - \frac{n^2}{8r^2} + O(r^{-3}) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow \infty. \tag{17}$$

One consequence of Eq. (17) is that the energy of the vortices diverges [cf. Eq. (19) below], similarly to the energy of the Gross-Pitaevski and easy-plane ferromagnetic vortices [19,20]. (Physically, this fact simply indicates that there is a cut-off radius in the system, for example the radius of the cylindrical superfluid container, or the distance between two adjacent vortex lines.)

*Bogomol'nyi bound.* An important question is whether the vortex renders the action a minimum. Let  $n = 1$  and rewrite Eq. (1) as

$$E_{SG-1} = \int \left| \partial\psi + |\psi|^2 - 1 \right|^2 \frac{d^2x}{1 - |\psi|^2} + \int \nabla \cdot \mathbf{A} d^2x, \tag{18}$$

where  $\mathbf{A}$  is a real vector field with components

$$A_i = \ln(1 - |\psi|^2) \epsilon_{ij} \partial_j \text{Arg } \psi + 2\psi_i; \quad i = 1, 2,$$

and  $\psi = \psi_1 + i\psi_2$ . Assume our fields are such that  $|\psi|^2 < 1$ ; then the first term in (18) attains its minimum at solutions to the ‘‘Bogomol’nyi equation’’  $\partial\psi = 1 - |\psi|^2$ . This is exactly our Eq. (9b) with  $v = \psi$  and  $u = -i$ ; its vortex solution is given by Eq. (14). The second integral in (18) represents the divergent part of the action; it can be written as a flux through a circle of the radius  $R \rightarrow \infty$ . Perturbing the vortex  $\psi = \Phi_1(r)e^{i\theta}$  by a function  $\delta\psi$  decaying faster than  $1/r$  at infinity will not affect this part; the flux is uniquely determined by the vortex asymptotes:

$$\oint_{C_R} A \cdot n \, dl = 2\pi(2R - \ln R - 1) + \mathcal{O}(R^{-1}). \tag{19}$$

Consequently, the  $n = 1$  vortex saturates the minimum of the action in the class of functions with  $|\psi|^2 < 1$ .

The importance of the last inequality should be specially emphasized. Without the condition  $|\psi|^2 < 1$  being imposed, one could construct a perturbation  $\tilde{\psi}(x, y)$  of the vortex satisfying  $|\tilde{\psi}| = 1$ ,  $\nabla\tilde{\psi} = 0$  on some closed curve on the  $(x, y)$ -plane which does not enclose the origin. Taking then  $|\tilde{\psi}| \gg 1$  in the interior of this contour, the action (1) could be made arbitrarily negative.

It is interesting to note that the first-order Eqs. (9) with generic  $u$  and  $v$  can also be interpreted as the Bogomol’nyi limit for some more general system with twice as many degrees of freedom. The corresponding action functional is

$$E[u, v] = \int \left( \frac{|\nabla u|^2}{1 - |u|^2} + 1 - |u|^2 \right) d^2x + \int \left( \frac{|\nabla v|^2}{1 - |v|^2} + 1 - |v|^2 \right) d^2x + E_{Th}, \tag{20}$$

where  $E_{Th}$  is the Thirring action (10). Clearly, any solution to (9) is automatically a solution to the second-order system (20). The action (20) can be written as

$$E[u, v] = \int \frac{|i\bar{\partial}u + v(1 - |u|^2)|^2}{1 - |u|^2} d^2x + \int \frac{|i\partial v + u(1 - |v|^2)|^2}{1 - |v|^2} d^2x + \int \nabla \cdot A d^2x, \tag{21}$$

where  $A_i = \ln(1 - |v|^2)\epsilon_{ij}\partial_j \text{Arg} v - \ln(1 - |u|^2)\epsilon_{ij}\partial_j \text{Arg} u$ . Assuming, again, that  $|u|^2, |v|^2 < 1$ , the lower bound of the action (20), (21) is saturated by solutions to Eqs. (9).

Some properties of the complex sine-Gordon vortices receive a natural interpretation when the equation is reformulated as a  $\sigma$ -model on a two-dimensional surface  $\Sigma$  embedded in a three-dimensional space  $(n_1, n_2, n_3)$ . The metric on  $\Sigma$  is  $ds^2 = d\alpha^2 + \tan^2\alpha d\beta^2$  [see Eq. (5)]. In order for  $\Sigma$  to be smooth, the space  $(n_1, n_2, n_3)$  has to be pseudoeuclidean and the surface noncompact; in fact it looks like an asymptotically conical infinite bowl:

$$n_1 + in_2 = \tan \alpha e^{i\beta}; \quad n_3 = \frac{1}{q} - \tanh^{-1}q, \quad q = \frac{\cos \alpha}{(1 + \cos^2\alpha)^{1/2}}.$$

Here  $0 \leq \alpha < \pi/2$ ,  $0 \leq \beta < 2\pi$ . In terms of  $n_i$ , the lagrangian (1) reads

$$E_{SG-1} = \int \left[ (\nabla n_1)^2 + (\nabla n_2)^2 - (\nabla n_3)^2 + (1 + n_1^2 + n_2^2)^{-1} \right] d^2x.$$

As  $r \rightarrow \infty$ , all three components of the vortex field,  $n_1$ ,  $n_2$  and  $n_3$ , tend to infinity. Consequently, the vortices map a noncompactified  $(x, y)$ -plane onto a noncompact surface – this accounts for their infinite energy. We also acknowledge the role of the condition  $|\psi|^2 < 1$ , which characterizes solutions admitting the  $\sigma$ -model interpretation.

*Reductions to the Painlevé-V.* The transformation

$$\Phi_n = \frac{1 + W}{1 - W}$$

reduces Eq. (11) to the fifth Painlevé Eq. (7) with coefficients

$$\alpha = n^2/8, \quad \beta = -n^2/8, \quad \gamma = 0, \quad \delta = -2. \quad (22)$$

For  $\gamma = c(1 - a - b)$ , where  $a^2 = 2\alpha$ ,  $b^2 = -2\beta$ , and  $c^2 = -2\delta$ , Eq. (7) admits a reduction [21] to a Riccati equation

$$W_r = r^{-1}(W - 1)(aW + b) + cW. \quad (23)$$

The above relation between the coefficients is in place for  $n = 1$ ; in terms of the vortex modulus  $\Phi_1$ , Eq. (23) turns out to be nothing but our Eq. (13). Next, the Schlesinger transformations of the Painlevé-V to itself [22,23] have the form

$$W_r = r^{-1}(W - 1)(aW + b) + cW \frac{1 + \hat{W}}{1 - \hat{W}}, \quad (24a)$$

$$-\hat{W}_r = r^{-1}(\hat{W} - 1)(\hat{a}\hat{W} + \hat{b}) + c\hat{W} \frac{1 + W}{1 - W}. \quad (24b)$$

Here  $W$  and  $\hat{W}$  satisfy Eq. (7) with the coefficients  $(\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta)$  and  $(\hat{\alpha}, \hat{\beta}, \hat{\gamma}, \delta)$ , respectively, where  $\hat{a}^2 = 2\hat{\alpha}$ ,  $\hat{b}^2 = -2\hat{\beta}$ ,  $\hat{\gamma} = c(b - a)$ , and  $2\hat{a} = a + b - 1 - \gamma/c$ ,  $2\hat{b} = a + b - 1 + \gamma/c$ . With  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  as in Eq. (22), Eqs. (24) amount to the vorticity-raising transformations (12).

We conclude the discussion of the complex sine-Gordon-1 equation by mentioning that it would be natural to expect its vortex solutions (confined to a finite region on the plane) to arise as degenerate cases of its  $N$ -soliton solutions [10] (which have the form of  $N$  intersecting infinite folds). This kind of correspondence between two-dimensionally localized ‘‘lumps’’ and one-dimensional multisolitons exists, for example, in the Kadomtsev-Petviashvili equation [24]. Surprisingly, the only two-dimensionally localized bounded solution resulting from the ‘‘degeneration’’ of the generic two-soliton solution of Eq. (8) is discontinuous at the origin:  $\psi = (X^2 - \sinh^2 Y)(X^2 + \sinh^2 Y)^{-1}$ . Here  $X + iY = e^{i\alpha}(x + iy)$ , and  $\alpha$  is an arbitrary constant angle.

*Vortices of the complex sine-Gordon-2.* The complex sine-Gordon-2 results from the variation of Eq. (2):

$$\nabla^2 \psi + \frac{(\nabla \psi)^2 \bar{\psi}}{2 - |\psi|^2} + \frac{1}{2} \psi (1 - |\psi|^2)(2 - |\psi|^2) = 0. \quad (25)$$

The multivortex Ansatz  $\psi = \Phi_n(r)e^{in\theta} = Q_n^{1/2}(r)e^{in\theta}$  takes it to

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d^2 Q_n}{dr^2} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{dQ_n}{dr} + \frac{1 - Q_n}{Q_n(Q_n - 2)} \left( \frac{dQ_n}{dr} \right)^2 + Q_n(1 - Q_n)(2 - Q_n) + \frac{(a_n^2 - b_n^2)Q_n}{r^2(2 - Q_n)} + \frac{4a_n^2(1 - Q_n)}{r^2 Q_n(2 - Q_n)} \\ = 0, \end{aligned} \quad (26)$$

where  $a_n = 0$  and  $b_n = -2n$ . Next, the substitution

$$Q_n = 2(1 - W)^{-1}$$

transforms Eq. (26) to the Painlevé Eq. (7) with coefficients

$$\alpha = 0, \quad \beta = -2n^2, \quad \gamma = 0, \quad \delta = 2.$$

This time, in order to construct the multivortex solutions we apply the Schlesinger transformation (24) twice. This leads to a recurrent relation

$$Q^{(k-1)} = (2 - Q^{(k)}) \left\{ 1 - \frac{2(a_k + b_k - 1)Q^{(k)}[rQ_r^{(k)} - 2a_k + (a_k + b_k)Q^{(k)}]}{[rQ_r^{(k)} - 2a_k + (a_k + b_k)Q^{(k)}]^2 + r^2Q^{(k)2}(2 - Q^{(k)})^2} \right\}, \quad (27)$$

where  $Q^{(k)}$  and  $Q^{(k-1)}$  satisfy Eq. (26) with the parameters  $(a_k, b_k)$  and  $(a_{k-1}, b_{k-1})$ , respectively. Here  $a_{k-1} = a_k - 1$  and  $b_{k-1} = b_k - 1$ . Starting with a trivial solution  $Q^{(0)} = 1$  arising for  $a_0 = -b_0 = n$ , and using Eq. (27)  $n$  times, we end up with a solution  $Q_n = Q^{(-n)}$  which satisfies Eq. (26) with  $a_n = 0$  and  $b_n = -2n$  and the boundary condition  $Q_n \rightarrow 1$  as  $r \rightarrow \infty$ . These solutions are given by rational functions; in particular, the first three multivortices (see Fig. 1) read

$$\begin{aligned} Q_1 &= \frac{r^2}{r^2 + 4}; & Q_2 &= \frac{r^4(r^2 + 24)^2}{r^8 + 64r^6 + 1152r^4 + 9216r^2 + 36864}; \\ Q_3 &= r^6(r^6 + 144r^4 + 5760r^2 + 92160)^2 D_3^{-1}, \\ D_3 &= r^{18} + 324r^{16} + 41472r^{14} + 2820096r^{12} + 114130944r^{10} + 2919628800r^8 \\ &\quad + 50960793600r^6 + 611529523200r^4 + 4892236185600r^2 + 19568944742400. \end{aligned}$$

The energy of the complex sine-Gordon-2 vortices is logarithmically divergent.

*Concluding remarks.* The Ginsburg-Landau expansion (3) is regarded as a central postulate in the phenomenological theory of phase transitions; however, for some systems Eqs. (1), (2) may happen to provide a more adequate description. In fact, the difference is not as big as one might think. Assuming, for instance,  $|\psi|^2 \leq 1$ , Eq. (2) can be rewritten as

$$E_{\text{SG-2}} \approx \int \left[ |\nabla\psi|^2 + \frac{1}{2}(1 - |\psi|^2)^2 + \frac{|\nabla\psi|^2|\psi|^2}{2} + \dots \right] d^2x; \quad (28)$$

this is different from (3) only in the third term which is small both when  $\psi \sim 0$  and when  $|\psi| \sim 1, \nabla\psi \sim 0$ . More importantly, the complex sine-Gordon models provide a unique opportunity for studying a number of analytic properties which are common to a wide class of vortex-bearing systems. These include the correct Ansatz for two spatially separated vortices, the vortex-phonon scattering matrix and so on; our present construction of coaxial multivortices is hopefully but a first step in this direction. Finally, one may see the complex sine-Gordon vortices as a starting point in the *perturbative* construction of the corresponding solutions of the Ginsburg-Landau and ferromagnet models.

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