

Near-wall statistics of a turbulent pipe flow at shear Reynolds numbers up to 40,000

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This paper reports on near wall two-component - two-dimensional (2C-2D) PIV measurements of a turbulent pipe flow at shear Reynolds numbers up to $Re_\tau = 40\,000$ acquired in the CICLoPE facility of the University of Bologna. The 111.5 m long pipe of 900 mm diameter offers a well-established turbulent flow with viscous length scales ranging from $85\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 5\,000$ down to $11\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 40\,000$. These length scales can be resolved with a high-speed PIV camera at image magnification near unity. Statistically converged velocity profiles were determined using multiple sequences of up to 70 000 PIV recordings acquired at sampling rates of 100 Hz up to 10 kHz. Analysis of the velocity statistics shows a well resolved inner peak of the streamwise velocity fluctuations that grows with increasing Reynolds number and an outer peak that develops and moves away from the inner peak with increasing Reynolds number.

1. Introduction

The flow of fluids around and inside solid bodies is ubiquitous in industry and transport with near wall turbulence being recognized as one of the key fundamental issue for the modelling of most of these flows of practical interest and representing the Achille's heel of turbulence models. This is partly due to the lack of reliable measurements very close to the wall at sufficiently high Reynolds numbers to be relevant for practical applications (Smits *et al.* 2011). Even the smallest hot wire probes have difficulties very close to the wall at high Reynolds number (Hultmark *et al.* 2013). An improved characterization and understanding of the very near wall turbulence is essential to build more reliable models and eventually provide the necessary knowledge to yield viable methods that will reduce drag, one of the key issues in the present context of energy savings.

The key problem in currently available measurements is that even in large facilities, the high Reynolds number leads to very small scales near the wall, which are impossible to resolve with the standard laboratory measurement tools that are currently employed around the world.

Previous experimental measurements of high-Re pipe flows are mainly available from Princeton's Super-Pipe facility Hultmark *et al.* (2012, 2013). Due to the small viscous length scales in this facility ($l^* = \nu/u_\tau < 1\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 70\,000$), measurements were

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performed with specialized micro-fabricated hotwire probes (NSTAP). Yet even these probes have not been able to adequately resolve the velocity profile in the viscous layer immediately adjacent to the wall ($y^+ < 15$) as they had a length in viscous units, $l^+ = 60$, which is well beyond the maximum $l^+ = 20$ recommended by [Ligrani & Bradshaw \(1987\)](#) and [Hutchins et al. \(2009\)](#) to keep the error to less than 10% in the streamwise Reynolds stress. Information on the evolution of the inner turbulence peak, considered to be the primary source of turbulence production ([Pullin et al. 2013](#)), thus is very limited and inconclusive.

This type of information is available from DNS of turbulence pipe flow which have been performed by [Ahn et al. \(2015\)](#) for $Re_\tau \approx 3\,000$ and for channel flow up to $Re_\tau \approx 5\,200$ by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#). The Reynolds number of these simulations still are an order of magnitude smaller than the currently available high- Re_τ pipe flow experiments. At these lower Reynolds numbers the so-called outer peak starts to appear but does not yet exhibit a distinct peak or plateau (it appears around $Re_\tau \approx 20\,000$).

Aside from the data available from the Princeton SuperPipe, wall-normal profiles of the streamwise Reynolds stress have been measured by [Schultz & Flack \(2013\)](#) for channel flows up to $Re_\tau = 6\,000$, indicating that the inner peak increases with increasing Reynolds number. A trend that thus far could not be confirmed for pipe flows at similar or higher Reynolds numbers. However, it is also worth noting that in the [Schultz & Flack \(2013\)](#) study, which used laser Doppler velocimetry (LDV), the viscous length scale of $l^* = 2\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 6\,000$ only allowed for measurements down to $y^+ \approx 20$.

In this paper we report on two-component - two-dimensional (2C-2D) near wall velocity measurements of turbulent pipe flow at shear Reynolds numbers ranging between $Re_\tau = 5\,000 - 40\,000$ acquired in the Long Pipe facility in CICLOPE (Center for International Cooperation in Long Pipe Experiments) of the University of Bologna, located in Predappio, Italy ([Talamelli et al. 2009](#); [Örlü et al. 2017](#)). As a consequence of the installation site and the characteristic dimensions of the facility, the Long Pipe offers viscous length scales that can be resolved using conventional imaging hardware. Despite the fact that spatial resolution effects prevent accurate measurements of the streamwise variance at the inner peak for Reynolds number above 28 000, the resolution is sufficient to determine the increasing trend of the inner peak. However, more generally, the new 2C-2D near wall measurements reported here, represent the highest spatial resolution (u, v) velocity measurements up to $Re_\tau = 40\,000$ compared to previous published results ([Hutchins et al. 2009](#); [Hultmark et al. 2013](#); [Örlü et al. 2017](#)) - noting that [Hutchins et al. \(2009\)](#); [Hultmark et al. \(2013\)](#) only measured the streamwise u -velocity component, while [Örlü et al. \(2017\)](#) measured the (u, v) -velocity components at selected points using their probe.

2. Experimental technique

2.1. CICLOPE facility

The Long Pipe (LP) is a unique facility to study high Reynolds number, fully developed turbulent pipe flow. With a diameter of 0.9 m and a length of 111.5 m, the LP operates with air at ambient pressure in closed loop with a 200 kW axial fan in the return duct (Figure 1). A cooling unit ensures temperature stability within $\pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$. The LP is made of 5 m long carbon-fibre sections with a surface roughness $k_{\text{rms}} \approx 0.2\,\mu\text{m}$. At centreline velocities between 5 and 40 m/s the turbulent pipe flow has viscous length scales ranging from $l^* = 85\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 5\,000$ down to $l^* = 11\,\mu\text{m}$ at $Re_\tau = 40\,000$. The wall friction τ_w is determined by a linearly fitting 6 static pressure measurements in the last portion



FIGURE 1. Photograph of the 111.5 m long CICLOPE facility with the measurement location seen at the far end.

of the LP ($88 < L/D < 122$), where the flow is assumed to be fully-developed. The static pressure is measured through 1 mm wall taps placed with a 5 m spacing along the pipe. The estimated uncertainty in τ_w is below $\pm 0.25\%$ as reported in [Fiorini \(2017\)](#).

2.2. PIV technique

The reported length scales of $l^* = 11 - 85 \mu\text{m}$ can be resolved with a high-speed PIV camera at image magnification near unity. The employed PIV measurement approach closely follows the procedures and methods laid out by [Willert \(2015\)](#) to capture the the wall-normal velocity profile and higher order statistics. The near-wall measurement approach has been successfully used in a variety of previous applications however with viewing arrangements involving straight walls ([Soria et al. 2016](#); [Cuvier et al. 2017](#)). To apply the technique in the curved convex contour of the pipe required the design of a new imaging approach. In order to obtain a reasonably orthogonal view of the near wall region a specific circular insert was designed to accommodate a thin 45° high-aspect mirror that was placed about 50 mm from the area of interest (Figure 2, right). While the mirror does protrude into the flow it has a low cross-section (1 mm thickness), considered to have only a minor influence in the imaged domain.

The imaging setup was designed for a magnification of unity ($m = 1.0$) using a macroscopic lens of 200 mm focal length (Nikon Micro-Nikkor 200/4) at a maximum aperture of $f^\# = 5.6$. During the measurements the aperture could be reduced to $f^\#$ ranging from 8 - 11 due to the high energy levels provided by a pulsed, high speed laser (Quantronix Darwin Duo), resulting in an estimated depth of field ranging from 660 μm at $f^\# = 8$ to 1.26 mm at $f^\# = 11$. The approximately $300 \pm 100 \mu\text{m}$ thin laser light sheet was introduced radially into the pipe (Figure 2, left). Thus, the size of the measurement volume in the direction normal to the streamwise-wall-normal plane is given by the thickness of the laser sheet. The PIV image acquisition was undertaken using a high-speed camera with a 4 megapixel CMOS sensor (PCO AG, DIMAX-S4), which has a pixel pitch of 11 μm . Using macroscopic imaging at unity the smallest viscous scales at the facility design point of $Re_\tau = 40\,000$ match the pixel size. The field of view of the camera was reduced to 178 or 200 pixel width and varied in height between 1008 and 2016 pixels. This reduction allowed an increase of the number of acquired image pairs (*i.e.* velocity fields) to more than 70 000 during a single run.

Seeding of 1 μm droplets was provided globally for the PIV experiments via a smoke

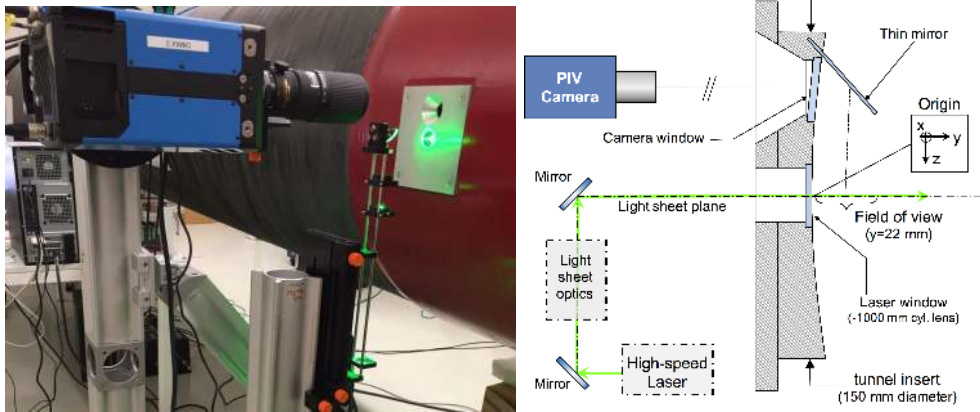


FIGURE 2. Photograph of the PIV setup on the CICLoPE facility (left), schematic of insert for near-wall PIV measurements (right) with coordinate system used for the investigation.

generator using a water-glycol mixture, which was injected into the flow downstream of the test section, allowing it to mix thoroughly before reaching the measurement area after running the full length of the return duct and pipe.

2.3. Acquired data

PIV measurement were performed at five Reynolds number as summarised in Table 1, which also shows the details of the measurement volume for the PIV in viscous units, which, as already pointed out, is controlled by the laser sheet thickness, which is always smaller than the depth-of-field.

Statistically converged velocity profiles could be achieved using up to 70 000 samples per sequence acquired at low laser repetition rates (100 Hz). Higher sampling rates of 10 kHz provide temporally coherent data from which frequency spectra can be obtained.

With increasing Reynolds number ($U_c = 30 - 40$ m/s) a slight vibration was observed in the image data through a fluctuation of the wall position of up to 5 pixels peak-to-peak ($\approx 50 \mu\text{m}$) (Figure 3, left). The vibration had a constant fundamental frequency of about 670 Hz throughout the duration of the measurement campaign and was found to be independent of the Reynolds number (Figure 3, right). It is not possible, without further studies, to determine if this small vibration is due to a vibration of the pipe structure or of the optical set-up, as both would result in the observed relative wall motion. Nonetheless, this offset must be accounted for prior to analysis to warrant reliable data in the immediate vicinity of the wall. Using an image correlation approach the motion of the wall was tracked to better than ± 0.1 pixel, *i.e.* better than $\pm 0.1^+$ at the highest Reynolds number. This displacement data was used to offset the images prior to PIV processing.

The image data was processed using a multigrid/multipass 2C-2D cross-correlation PIV analysis algorithm (Willert & Gharib 1991; Soria 1996) with measurement volumes of 6 pixel in wall-normal direction corresponding to 0.8^+ at $Re_\tau = 5400$ and increasing to 6.1^+ at $Re_\tau = 40000$. In the streamwise direction the measurement volume has a length of 64 pixels ($700 \mu\text{m}$), introducing minor spatial filtering, while in the spanwise direction the measurement volume is controlled by the approximately $300 \mu\text{m}$ thin laser sheet, which also introduces minor spatial filtering. Full details of these measurement parameters and other pertinent experimental parameters are provided in Table 1, which

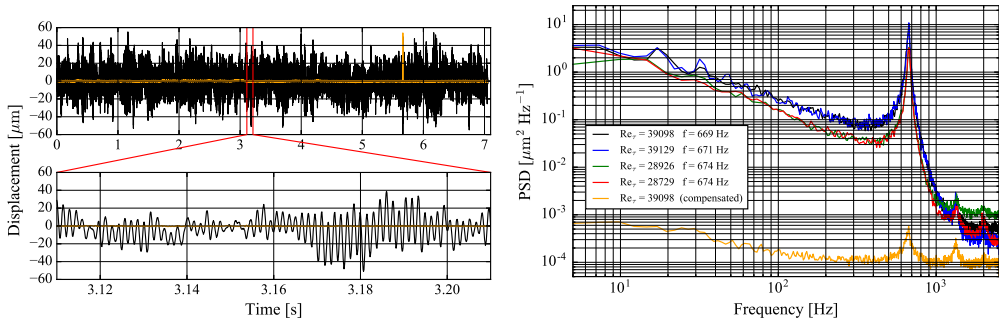


FIGURE 3. Time trace of the detected vibration at $Re_\tau \approx 40\,000$ (left) acquired at 10 kHz. Orange line indicates detected residual vibration after image offset procedure. Right: vibration spectra for different image sequences.

Bulk velocity	U_c	4.6	10.9	19.5	28.1	40.5	m/s
Reynolds number	Re_τ	5 400	11 600	20 000	28 000	40 000	
Pressure gradient	dP/dx	0.174	0.810	2.34	4.62	9.17	Pa/m
Friction velocity	u_τ	0.180	0.395	0.672	0.943	1.332	m/s
Viscous scale	ν/u_τ	85	39	22	16	11	μm
Effective PIV measurement volume size	IW_{x^+}	8.72	19.0	32.2	45.3	64.7	+
	IW_{y^+}	0.82	1.78	3.02	4.25	6.06	+
	IW_{z^+}	3.5	7.7	13.6	18.8	27.3	+
Number of sequences		1	3	3	3	3	
Samples/Sequence ($f_{\text{acq}} = 100$ Hz)	N	35 265	35 265	35 265	35 265	35 265	
Samples/Sequence ($f_{\text{acq}} = 10$ kHz)	N	35 265	70 512	70 512	70 512	70 512	
Independent samples at 100 Hz	N_{eff}	9 670	49 600	83 600	97 695	97 695	
Uncertainty in \overline{U} ($y > 1$ mm)	$\epsilon_{\overline{U}}$	0.32%	0.13%	0.09%	0.08%	0.08%	
Uncertainty in $\sqrt{\langle u'u' \rangle}$ ($y > 1$ mm)	$\epsilon_{u'}$	1.4%	0.65%	0.50%	0.45%	0.45%	
Filtering of $\langle u'u' \rangle$ at $y^+ = 15$		-0.25%	-1%	-2.5%	-4.5%	-7.5%	
Noise estimate at $y^+ = 15$	$\epsilon_{n_{u'u'}}$	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	
Filtering of $\langle u'u' \rangle$ at $y^+ = 200$		-0.2%	-0.4%	-1%	-2%	-3%	
Noise estimate at $y^+ = 200$	$\epsilon_{n_{u'u'}}$	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	2.4%	2.2%	

TABLE 1. PIV acquisition parameters for near-wall turbulent pipe flow measurements

as mentioned above represent the highest spatial resolution (u, v) near wall velocity measurements for $Re_\tau = 5\,400 - 40\,000$.

To support this argument, the missing energy due to PIV filtering is coupled to the finite volume PIV interrogation that was estimated with the 1D transfer function of PIV for the streamwise spectrum as proposed by Foucaut *et al.* (2004) applied to hot-wire spectrum of boundary layer obtained by Carlier & Stanislas (2005). The difference of the integral of the filtered spectrum compared to original one can be considered the best estimation of the missing energy and the result is given in Table 1 for $y^+ = 15$ and 200. Also provided is the PIV noise part which overestimates $\langle u'^2 \rangle^+$ for these two wall normal positions.

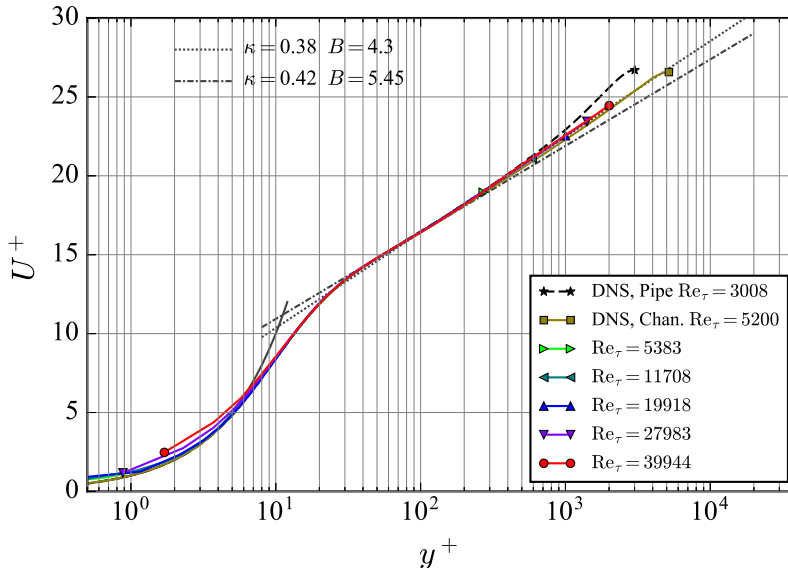


FIGURE 4. Mean streamwise velocity scaled with inner coordinates. DNS of turbulent pipe flow at $Re_\tau = 3008$ by [Ahn et al. \(2015\)](#), DNS of turbulent channel flow data at $Re_\tau = 5200$ by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#).

3. Results and Discussion

The profiles of the mean velocity and measured Reynolds stresses shown in Figures 4 and 5, respectively, show that they only differ marginally from those of turbulent channel flows and flat plate boundary layers from the wall up through the logarithmic layer. The mean streamwise velocity profiles are fairly consistent across all Reynolds numbers and in good agreement with the DNS channel flow results of [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#). A clear log region is also observable. Figure 6 shows the indicator functions for a power law (left) and a log law (right). It does not show a consistently strict plateau region for either case. Although there is less scatter in the power law indicator function shown in Figure 6 (left), there is no horizontal plateau region for $y^+ > 200$ and whilst the log indicator function has more scatter, there is an approximate plateau region for $200 < y^+ < 2000$ observable, which is consistent with the DNS channel flow results of [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#), who found an approximate plateau in the log indicator function between $y^+ = 350$ and $y^+ = 830$.

As far as the Reynolds stresses are concerned, the data show a well resolved inner peak of the streamwise velocity fluctuations $\langle u'^2 \rangle^+$ that grows with increasing Reynolds number (see insert of Figure 5), which so far was not clearly documented in previous measurements of high-Re pipe flows such as the Princeton SuperPipe (see e.g. [Hultmark et al. \(2012\)](#); [Vallikivi et al. \(2015\)](#)), most likely due to lack of spatial resolution. For comparison two profiles of the streamwise velocity fluctuations $\langle u'^2 \rangle^+$ acquired in the SuperPipe using NSTAP hotwire probes are presented in Figure 5, bottom.

The PIV data also provides the wall-normal velocity component v from which two additional terms of the Reynolds stress tensor can be computed. Shown in Figure 5, top, the plateaus of $\langle v'^2 \rangle^+$ and $\langle u'v' \rangle^+$ extend significantly with increasing Re_τ with the ends not captured due to the limited field of view.

At $Re_\tau = 5400$ both the profile and the maximum of $\langle u'^2 \rangle^+$ or *inner peak* matches

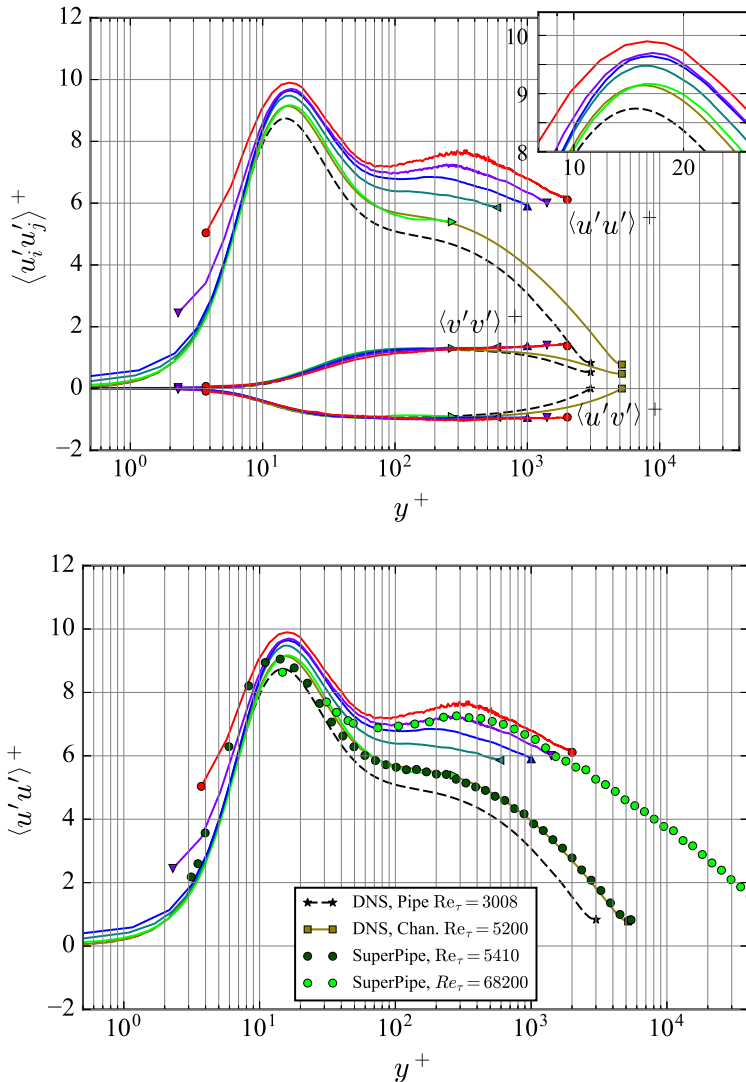


FIGURE 5. Variances and co-variances of the streamwise and wall-normal velocity components. DNS of turbulent pipe flow at $Re_\tau = 3008$ by [Ahn *et al.* \(2015\)](#), DNS of turbulent channel flow data at $Re_\tau = 5200$ by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#). Bottom: variance of streamwise velocity in comparison to NSTAP data obtained in the SuperPipe [Hultmark *et al.* \(2013\)](#); all other symbols as in [Figure 4](#)

the DNS channel flow data at $Re_\tau = 5200$ by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#). [Figure 7](#) shows that with increasing Re_τ the maximum departs from extrapolations made from DNS channel flow data by [Lozano-Durán & Jiménez \(2014\)](#) and [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#) and for turbulent boundary layers by [Sillero *et al.* \(2014\)](#). The present data suggests a nonlinear trend of the inner peak magnitude with Reynolds number which has to be taken with precaution as the filtering effects increase with Reynolds number (-5.5% at the maximum Re_τ studied).

As far as the peak position of $\langle u'^2 \rangle_{max}^+$ with respect to the wall is concerned, the DNS predicts an increase with Re_τ (insert in [Figure 7](#)), which can be clearly observed in the

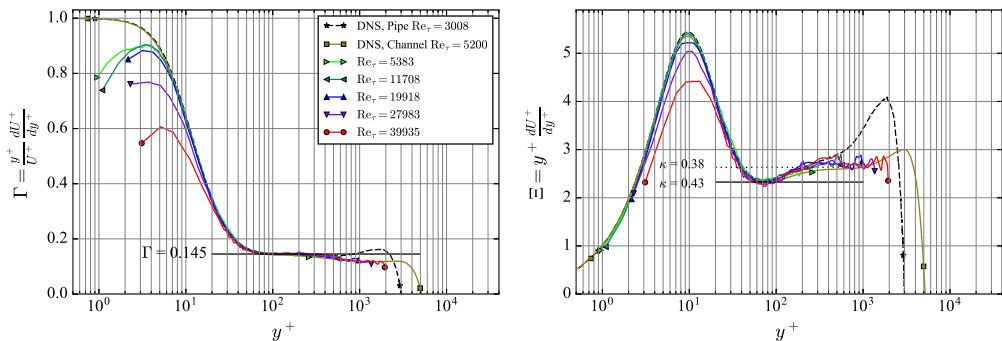


FIGURE 6. Wall-normal distributions of the power law (left) and log law indicator functions (right). DNS of turbulent pipe flow at $Re_\tau = 3008$ by [Ahn et al. \(2015\)](#), DNS of turbulent channel flow data at $Re_\tau = 5200$ by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#).

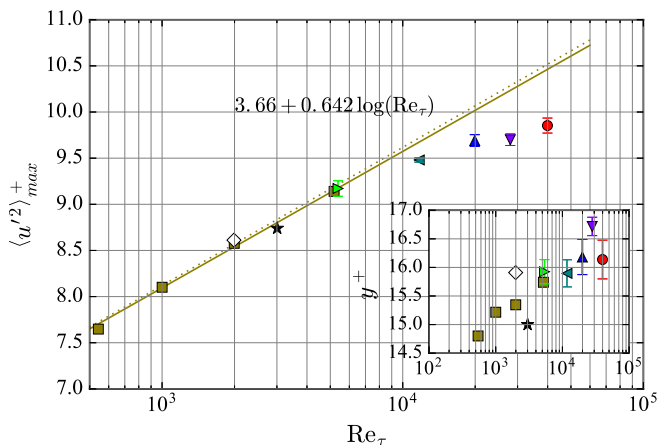


FIGURE 7. Dependence of the variance maximum of u on Reynolds number Re_τ and wall-normal location of maximum (insert). Square symbols (\square) and predicted relationship (solid line) from DNS by [Lee & Moser \(2015\)](#), dotted line by [Lozano-Durán & Jiménez \(2014\)](#), (\star) DNS of turbulent pipe flow at $Re_\tau = 3008$ by [Ahn et al. \(2015\)](#), (\diamond) DNS of turbulent boundary layer at $Re_\tau = 2000$ by [Sillero et al. \(2014\)](#).

present measurements. However, there is some scatter in the peak location due to the finite sampling spacing of 2.0 pixel in y corresponding to 2^+ at $Re_\tau = 40\,000$. Finer spatial sampling and/or peak fitting may improve the estimates of both the position and the magnitude of $\langle u^2 \rangle^+_{max}$.

As shown in [Figure 5](#), although limited to the lower 20 mm of the pipe (*i.e.* $y/R \leq 0.044$), the spatial domain of the present measurements is sufficient to also document the steady growth of the outer peak of the streamwise Reynolds stresses. A distinct outer peak clearly develops with increasing Re_τ and is observable for $Re_\tau \geq 20\,000$. This outer peak is found to shift away from the inner peak with Re_τ , a behaviour that is in good agreement with data acquired in the SuperPipe facility ([Hultmark et al. 2012](#); [Vallikivi et al. 2015](#)) (see also [Figure 5](#), bottom).

Consideration of the wall-normal distribution of the integral time scales of U estimated through integration of the autocorrelation of the streamwise velocity ([Pope 2000](#)) indicates that only the measurements for $Re_\tau = 30\,000$ and $40\,000$ are uncorrelated when

acquired at $f_{\text{acq}} = 100$ Hz. For all other sequences the number of effective samples N_{eff} is lower than N_{tot} and is used for the uncertainty estimates provided in Table 1. Following Benedict & Gould (1996) the uncertainty of both the mean and standard deviation of the streamwise velocity is based on a 95% confidence interval, which is estimated from N_{eff} and the estimated single sample uncertainty of the measured velocity σ_u at the 95% confidence level using:

$$\epsilon_{\bar{U}} = \frac{1.96}{\bar{U}} \sqrt{\frac{\sigma_u^2}{N_{\text{eff}}}}, \quad \epsilon_{u'} = \frac{1.96}{\sqrt{\langle u'u' \rangle}} \sqrt{\frac{\sigma_u^2}{2N_{\text{eff}}}} \quad (3.1)$$

4. Concluding remarks

The combination of a facility offering relatively large viscous scales at high Reynolds number and a specifically adapted implementation of PIV enabled 2C-2D velocity measurements with high spatial and temporal resolution. This allowed for the first time a characterisation of the near wall velocity statistics of turbulent pipe flow at Re_τ upto 40 000, that are beyond the reach of current DNS and thus far could not be resolved in other facilities operating at similar Reynolds number, due to the much reduced viscous scales present there. These new data acquired in the CICLoPE facility not only show the emergence of the outer peak as observed in previous studies (*e.g.* Princeton’s Superpipe), but also provides evidence of the persistence of the inner peak of the streamwise fluctuation, with a consistently higher amplitude than the outer peak. This inner peak is likely to continue to grow at even higher Reynolds numbers, possibly not to be overtaken by the outer peak. In the near wall region up into the logarithmic layer the distribution of the streamwise variance is very similar to that of a flat plate turbulent boundary layer. However, recent hot-wire measurements performed in the same facility show that after applying a correction for lack of spatial resolution, the outer peak resembles more a plateau than a peak (Fiorini 2017). Thus, although the present 2C-2D PIV measurements do not suffer to the same extent from spatial filtering, no firm conclusion about the existence and scaling of the outer peak can be made. However, it is found that the streamwise turbulent energy increases in this outer plateau or peak region with increasing Reynolds number.

As part of the EuHIT project the data presented in this article will be made available on the EuHIT TurBase Knowledge Base (<https://www.euhit.org/infrastructures/turbase-knowledge-base>).

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