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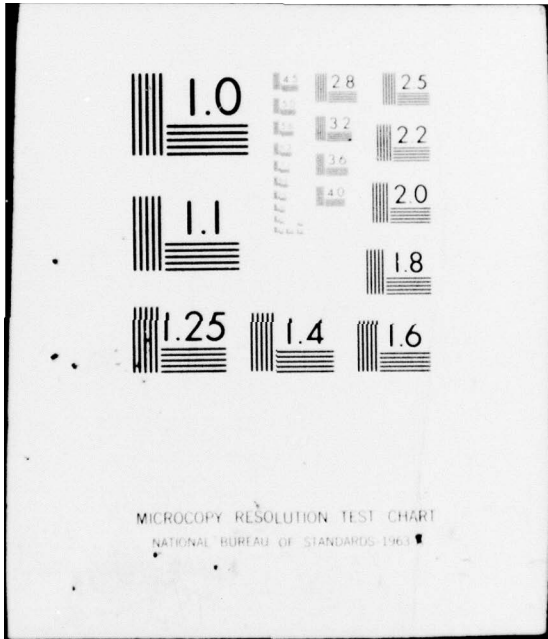
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Manuscripts Submitted or Published Under ARO

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## I. SWEPT ION BEAM SCHEMES

The lifetimes of the upper states of proposed charge-exchange x-ray lasers are typically in the sub-nanosecond range, implying that tremendous pump rates are needed to overcome spontaneous decay losses. In order to mitigate these spontaneous decay losses, Scully, Louisell, and McKnight<sup>1,2</sup> suggested using a modification of McCorkle's<sup>3</sup> ion beam sweep scheme to produce lasing on the 304 Å line of He<sup>+</sup> as a result of the reaction



After analyzing the pickup of electrons by  $\alpha$  particles incident on a hydrogen foil target, they concluded that the thickness of the foil would have to be of order 10 Å to prevent double-electron pickup and de-excitation collisions. Also the Doppler width is relatively large ( $\Delta\omega_D \sim 10^{12} \text{ S}^{-1}$ ) due to multiple scattering. In contrast, the Doppler width for a gaseous hydrogen target ( $N \sim 10^{16} - 10^{17} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ) was estimated to be only  $2 \times 10^{10} \text{ S}^{-1}$ , or twice the homogeneous linewidth. Thus, the gaseous hydrogen target offers significant advantages compared to the foil target.

The laser gain for the case of a gaseous target was calculated using the equation<sup>2</sup>

$$g = (3/2) (\ln 2 / \pi)^{1/2} (\lambda^2 \Delta\omega_s i \Delta P \ell / \Delta\omega_D q V_0 \Delta x \Delta y) \cdot e^{\beta^2} (1 + \text{erf } \beta), \quad (2)$$

where  $\beta = (\ln 2)^{1/2} \Delta\omega_s / \Delta\omega_D$ . The ion beam parameters were taken to be  $i = 30 \text{ mA}$ ,  $V_0 = 9.8 \times 10^7 \text{ cm/s}$ ,  $q = 2e$ , and  $\Delta x \Delta y = 5.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2$ . For an inversion  $\Delta P = .05$  over length  $\ell = 10 \text{ cm}$ , the gain is 47. While this value looks promising, there are two major problems with the calculation. The most obvious problem is the extremely small ion beam area ( $5 \times 5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2$ ) used in the calculation. Considering only the effect of the finite emittance of the ion source, the emittance-limited focal area is given by Langmuir's expression<sup>6</sup>

$$A = f^2 (\epsilon_{th} / \epsilon_0) \quad (3)$$

where  $f$  is the focal distance,  $\epsilon_{th}$  represents the thermal energy of the ion source, and  $\epsilon_o$  is the acceleration energy. Equation (3) is derived under very general assumptions and represents the absolute best focusing that one could hope for. In actual practice, this ideal limit is never attained.<sup>4</sup> Using  $f = 10$  cm,  $\epsilon_{th} = 1$  eV, and  $\epsilon_o = 40$  keV, we find a focal area of  $A = 2.5 \times 10^{-3}$  cm<sup>2</sup>, nearly 50 times larger than the assumed value  $5.5 \times 10^{-5}$  cm<sup>2</sup>.

The second major problem with the gain calculation of Ref. 2 is that the effect of the lethargic response<sup>5</sup> of the active medium to the gain pulse was not included. When the Doppler broadening is small, the response time of the polarization of the laser medium to the pump pulse is given by the inverse homogeneous linewidth. After the pump pulse ceases, the population inversion decays on this same timescale. If the duration of the pump pulse is small compared to the spontaneous lifetime as in Ref. 2, the growth and decay rates of the gain are nearly equal, and the value given by Eq. (2) is not attained. In the case  $\Delta\omega_D \sim \Delta\omega_s$ , the gain expression (2) should be multiplied by the factor<sup>6</sup>

$$e^{-\Delta\omega_s \mu} \operatorname{erf}(\alpha \mu), \quad (4)$$

where  $\alpha \sim \Delta\omega_s$  and  $\mu = t-x/c$ . Thus, expression (2) is reduced by about a factor of 3. It has been noted<sup>5,6</sup> that in swept-gain systems, the atoms are excited just as the radiation pulse arrives, and so the cooperation length of the laser medium is infinite. The laser radiation field is enhanced due to coherence brightening after traveling 15-20 cm, and the detrimental effects of laser lethargy are somewhat mitigated in long active media.

Due to the neglect of emittance, space charge, laser lethargy, fringing fields, and a host of other effects, the gain calculations of Refs. 1 and 2 are probably too large by several orders of magnitude. The swept-focus scheme of Ref. 7 is characterized by an ion beam focal length of 70-80 cm, so emittance effects are an order of magnitude more troublesome. It has been suggested that the high-brightness liquid metal ion source<sup>8</sup> might alleviate some of the beam

focusing problems. But this is effectively a point source, and the beam radius blows up tremendously as the ions follow the field lines radiating outward from the point source.<sup>9</sup> Also, the source temperature is rather high (12 eV; Ref. 8). It has been demonstrated that this source can produce a 100  $\mu$  A ion beam of high brightness,<sup>8</sup> but scaling this up to the tens of milliamperes needed for laser applications is doubtful.<sup>9</sup>

A coaxial focusing scheme in which the ion beam is initially in Harris<sup>10</sup> flow has been proposed.<sup>11</sup> The ion beam propagates between the electrodes of a coaxial transmission line, and space-charge blowup and thermal spreading is prevented by a constant electric field between the coaxial electrodes. Application of a voltage pulse to the coaxial transmission line focuses the ion beam toward the inner electrode where the target is positioned. Experimental implementation of this scheme would be difficult due to the poor accessibility of the inner electrode region where lasing occurs. The positioning of a dense, pulsed gaseous target in this confined region would be a formidable task.

## II. QUASI-STEADY-STATE EXCITATION

It has been noted<sup>6</sup> that the large ion densities produced by plasma guns are attractive for x-ray laser application. The system would be easier to implement due to the absence of focusing and sweeping requirements, and blowup is alleviated by the neutral property of the plasma and the short propagation distance between source and target. In addition, the laser is strongly Doppler broadened ( $\Delta\omega_D \sim 10^{12} - 10^{13} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) due to the high plasma temperature, so laser lethargy should not be a consideration.

A numerical rate equation analysis has been performed<sup>12</sup> for the case of a helium plasma incident on a cesium target. The pump reaction is



where the cross section is  $2 \times 10^{-15} \text{ cm}^2$  at 1 keV ion energy. After consideration

of the collisional reaction that are likely to compete with the pump reaction, it was concluded that excitation of the cesium atoms by plasma electron impact ( $\sigma = 9 \times 10^{-15} \text{ cm}^2$ ) was the most damaging. That is, the plasma electrons might destroy the cesium ground state population on which the pump reaction (5) depends. Indeed, this was the case in the numerical results when the target density was the same order of magnitude as the plasma density ( $n \sim 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ). But when the target density is much greater than the plasma density, the results are entirely different. In this case, the plasma electrons ( $n \sim 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ) destroy only a small fraction of the cesium ground state density (initially  $n \geq 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ), and sufficient cesium neutrals remain in the interaction region for the pump reaction to proceed. Laser intensities of order  $10^6 \text{ W/cm}^2$  are calculated<sup>12,13</sup>. The numerical results are in agreement with a simple analytical model.<sup>13</sup>

When the plasma ions are incident on the gaseous target, they pick up electrons into the upper laser state. As the excited ions travel deeper into the target, spontaneous and stimulated processes fill the lower laser state. Thus, beyond about 0.2 mm from the target edge, the gain is negative. It is therefore necessary that the face of the target be flat to within 0.2 mm along the length of the laser axis. Otherwise, the laser photons will pass through the region of negative gain and be absorbed. The gain is found to be proportional to the slope of the target density profile, that is, proportional to the rate of buildup of cesium atoms in the interaction region.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the operation of the laser depends upon the existence of a flat, steep target density profile; the characteristics of the initial plasma density profile are of secondary importance. These requirements together with the high density ( $n \geq 10^{18} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ) imply a pulsed target produced by vaporization from a flat plate or wire. Numerical studies of the expansion of such a target indicate that density profile slopes of  $n/d \sim 10^{19} \text{ cm}^{-4}$  should be obtainable.<sup>11</sup>

It has been suggested that the reaction



may be used to pump a vacuum uv (1849 Å) laser.<sup>14</sup> Partly due to the relatively large charge-exchange cross section ( $5.5 \times 10^{-15} \text{ cm}^2$  at 10 keV) and the relatively small Doppler width ( $m_{\text{Hg}}/M_{\text{He}} = 50$ ), the laser gain is three orders of magnitude larger than for the reaction (5). This relaxes the requirements on the ion density and gaseous target, and a numerical rate equation analysis indicates that laser operation may be achieved using a conventional Penning ion source ( $n \sim 10^{12} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ) and oven-generated cesium target ( $n \sim 10^{16} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ). Since an ion source rather than a plasma source is used, destruction of the gas target by hot electrons is not a consideration. Quasi-cw laser intensity of order  $100 \text{ W/cm}^2$  is calculated.<sup>14</sup>

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## APPENDIX

Publications supported by this contract and included in this Appendix are:

- a. "Coherence Brightening and Laser Lethargy in X-Ray Laser Amplifiers", F. A. Hopf, P. Meystre, M. O. Scully, and J. Seely, Phys. Rev. Lett. 35, 511 (1975).
- b. "Review of Soft X-Ray Lasers Using Charge Exchange", C. D. Cantrell M. O. Scully, W. H. Louisell, J. Seely et al., in Progress in Lasers and Laser Fusion, ed. B. Kursunoglu, A. Perlmutter, and S. Widmayer (Plenum Press, New York, 1975).
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- e. "Numerical Rate Equation Model for the He-Cs Charge Exchange Laser", J. F. Seely, LASL Report LA-6298-MS (1976).
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