

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 9/15/94	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Final	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Experimental Studies of Fundamental One- and Two-Photon Lasing Processes		5. FUNDING NUMBERS DAAL03-91-G-0316	
6. AUTHOR(S) Thomas W. Mossberg		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of Oregon Eugene, OR 97403 % Research and Sponsored Programs		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER ARO 29015.5-PH	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Research Office P.O. Box 12211 Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2211		11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views, opinions and/or findings contained in this report are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other documentation.	
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) Theoretical and experimental investigations of two-photon lasing and inversionless lasing have been completed. Continuous-wave two-photon lasing has been demonstrated for the first time and its predicted bistable character verified. The role of pump bandwidth in the production of inversionless gain has been studied and the maximal efficacy of narrow bandwidth of pumps identified. Continuous-wave lasing in a Cascade-type three-level atomic system has been observed.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS two-photon laser inversionless lasing		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 5	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED		16. PRICE CODE	
18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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Experimental Studies of Fundamental One- and Two-Photon Lasing Processes

Final Report

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September 14, 1994

U. S. Army Research Office

DAAL03-91-G-0313

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM STUDIED

Laser action is of interest as a fundamental physical process and because of its widespread importance in technology. The present project has been directed toward enhancing basic understanding of several newly discovered forms of laser action. One of these is laser action based on two-photon stimulated emission. In two-photon laser gain, the gain medium transfers energy to the light field via the simultaneous emission of photon pairs. The individual photons within a pair are highly correlated in time. Two-photon gain is non-linear and leads to qualitatively different laser performance particularly in the case of threshold. The concept of inversionless laser gain has recently become popular. In this case, laser gain occurs in the absence of a population inversion on the lasing transition of the gain medium. Naively, this situation should not occur. Inversionless gain has been suggested as a means of producing laser action in spectral regions where attainment of gain-media population inversion is technologically difficult. We have attempted to elucidate a variety of aspects of two-photon and inversionless gain and lasing using both experimental and theoretical approaches.

SUMMARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS

Two-Photon Lasing. We have provided the first experimental demonstration of continuous-wave two-photon laser action. A novel gain medium consisting of strongly driven two-level atoms was proposed and utilized. For the first time, our experiments demonstrated the bistable operating characteristics of a two-photon laser. In stark contrast to a normal (one-photon) laser, the two-photon laser possesses two stable operating points. One of these is the "off" state. As a result of the stability of the off state, the two-photon laser has been proposed as a high energy device.

What is lasing? Investigation of the various new types of lasing process has lead us to clarify the definition of lasing. We have proposed that laser gain is defined as phase insensitive optical amplification. This definition makes it possible to distinguish lasing processes from the diverse classes of non-linear gain mechanisms.

Pump Bandwidth Effects in Inversionless gain. We have determined that narrowband pump fields lead to substantially larger inversionless gain than can be created with broad bandwidth pump fields. Previous theoretical work had emphasized broad bandwidth pump mechanisms and therefore did not predict maximal gains.

Unexpected Inversions in Three-Level Systems. We have analyzed the dynamics of doubly driven V-type three-level atomic systems and found that certain pairs of atomic states can become inverted even though there is no normal irreversible pathway available for population to enter the upper state of the transition involved. This result is of fundamental and practical interest.

Inversionless Lasing in a Cascade-Type Three-Level Atom. We have performed an experiment in an atomic beam of barium atoms that demonstrates continuous wave lasing in a driven three-level atomic system. Preliminary analysis of the experimental data indicates that the laser emission, observed on the upper transition, was produced in the absence of a population inversion on that transition. Analysis of the experimental results verifies predictions regarding inversionless gain and clarifies its physical origin.

LIST OF ALL PUBLICATIONS AND TECHNICAL REPORTS

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Inversionless gain in driven three-level atoms: A comparison of broadband and monochromatic excitation, G. A. Wilson, K. K. Meduri, P. B. Sellin, and T. W. Mossberg, (accepted for publication in Phys. Rev. A).

Observation of inversionless gain in Cascade-type three-level atom, P. B. Sellin, G. Wilson, K. Meduri, and T. W. Mossberg, (in preparation).

LIST OF PARTICIPATING SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL

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REPORT OF INVENTIONS

None