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GAIN MEASUREMENTS AT 5 NM IN NICKEL-LIKE YTTERBIUM

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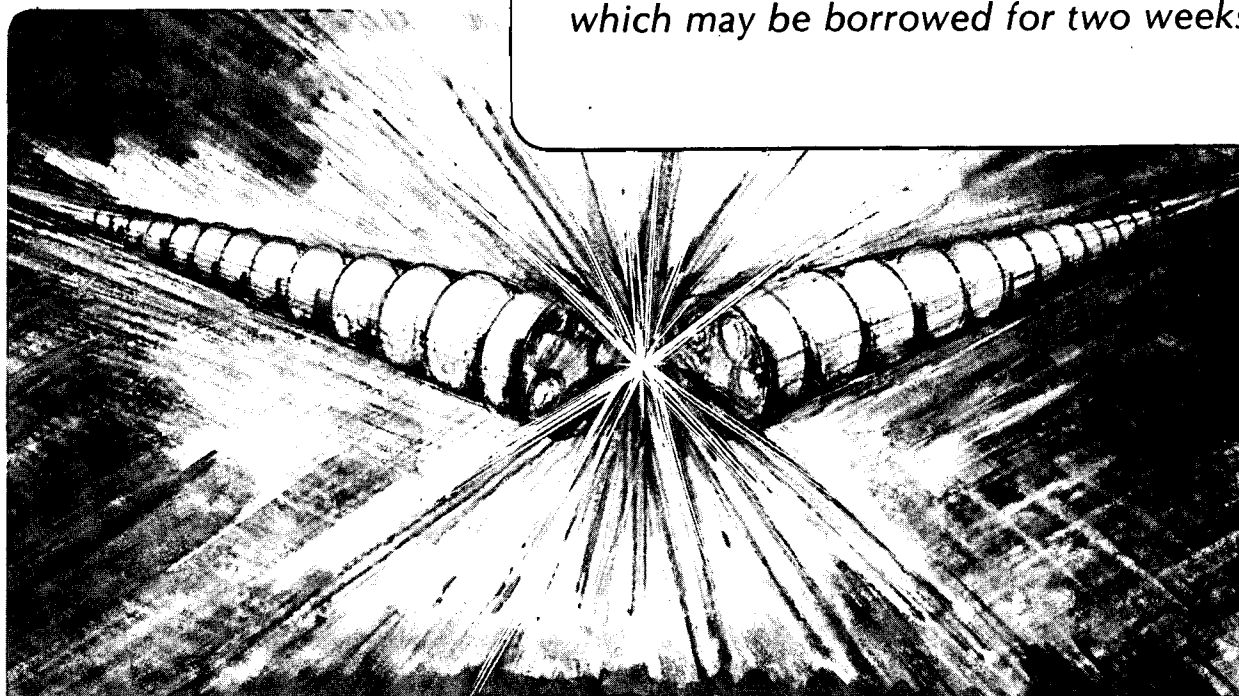
### Gain Measurements at 5 nm in Nickel-like Ytterbium

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M. Louis-Jacquet, D.L. Matthews, D. Naccache, G. Stone,  
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GAIN MEASUREMENTS AT 5 NM IN NICKEL LIKE YTTERBIUM

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Abstract

Soft x-ray gain has been demonstrated at 5.03 nm within a laser produced plasma of Ni-like ytterbium. Experiments will also be described with higher Z Ni-like ions which can produce even shorter wavelength x-ray laser transitions.

GAIN MEASUREMENTS AT 5 NM IN NICKEL LIKE YTTERBIUM

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Since 1984 soft x-ray amplification has been demonstrated in laser produced plasmas containing ions in the neon like isoelectronic sequence.<sup>1</sup> Inversion and hence gain was obtained on 3p - 3s

transitions near 20 nm. Subsequently gain has been demonstrated on the analogous 4d - 4p transitions for ions in the nickel like ionization state.<sup>2</sup> The initial work showed gain of order unity at 7.1 and 6.6 nm in  $\text{Eu}^{35+}$  which are  $J = 0 - 1$ , 4d - 4p transitions sharing the same  $J = 0$  upper state. The upper state is pumped almost exclusively by plasma electron collisions exciting bound electrons directly from the  $3d^{10}$  nickel like ground state. The scheme is of interest because a transition analogous to the 6.6 nm  $J = 0 - 1$  transition in  $\text{Eu}^{35+}$  (at 4.32 nm in  $\text{W}^{46+}$ ) is a possible candidate to produce x-ray amplification within the "water window" between the K absorption edges of oxygen (2.332 nm) and carbon (4.376 nm). The analogous transitions in  $\text{Yb}^{42+}$  are at 5.026 and 5.609 nm and the 5.026 nm line has been observed to have a small signal gain coefficient of  $1.2 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  over 2 gainlengths in experiments carried out using  $0.53 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$  ( $2\omega$ ) irradiation at the Nova laser, at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.<sup>3</sup>

The technique used is to irradiate thin foils of Yb ( $100 \text{ }\mu\text{gcm}^{-2}$  areal density) with two 1 nanosecond pulsed beams of line focused light superposed on the foil. Typical irradiances are  $1 - 2 \times 10^{14} \text{ Wcm}^{-2}$ . The resultant explosion of the foil produces a linear plasma of transverse dimension of order  $200 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$  and length up to 2 cm. Space resolved spectra in the 5 nm region have shown that the conditions for gain are localized in a region of transverse dimension  $100 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ .

Further work has been carried out at the Phebus laser at Centre Etudes Limeil-Valenton, France. The time history of the amplified 5.026 nm line has been observed and indicates an emission time of order 200 picoseconds, compared with the nanosecond timescale emissions of other unamplified lines from the plasma. The results of experiments attempting to optimise the gain at 5.026 nm will be described. These experiments have varied the laser irradiance and pulse duration, the target mass and laser wavelength ( $0.53$  and  $0.35 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ ) in order to alter the plasma density and temperature time history. The variation resulted in large differences in plasma conditions as diagnosed by comparing time resolved 4f - 3d emission from the Ni-like ions and neighboring ionization states. Measurements of the gain for these different plasma

conditions and different ions will be described.

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References

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2. B.J. MacGowan et al., Phys. Rev. Lett. 59, 2157 (1987).
3. B.J. MacGowan et al., submitted to J. Opt. Soc. Am. B.

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