



Contribution ID: 74
compétition)

Type: Oral (Student, In Competition) / Orale (Étudiant(e), inscrit à la

High-Flux Table-Top Ultrafast Water Window X-Ray Source Driven By Mid-IR Laser Pulses

Tuesday 17 June 2014 16:15 (15 minutes)

Until very recently, Free Electron Lasers (FEL) and synchrotrons offering femtosecond (10^{-15} s) slicing technology have been the only facilities able to generate femtosecond X-Ray pulses in the water window (280-530 eV) spectral range. Bringing ultrafast science to the soft-X-Ray offer a wide range of application like studying multielectron dynamics in gas phase atoms/molecules, spectroscopy and imaging of biostructures in solution and time-resolved L-edge absorption spectroscopy to study ultrafast dynamics in magnetic materials. However, these facilities are associated with a huge initial investment and offer only limited access to a broad user community. An alternative technology is therefore necessary to make those ultrafast water window X-Ray pulses widely available. To generate those pulses, we realized a totally different approach, based on a table-top extreme frequency upconversion mechanism called High Harmonic Generation (HHG). To do so, we use a customised high-energy optical parametric amplifier (OPA), delivering up to 10mJ of few-cycles pulses centered around 1.8 μm . We focus these pulses into a home-build gas-cell containing few tens of bars of helium, coupled to a flat-field X-Ray spectrometer. Through this highly nonlinear laser-atom interaction (HHG), high-flux ultrafast X-ray pulse trains, spanning almost the entire water window spectral range are then generated [1]. Single laser shot measurement of carbon K-edge (280eV) will be presented.

[1] Légaré et al. (Manuscript in preparation)

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Session Classification: (T3-4) Novel Light and Particle Sources - DAMOPC-PPD / Nouvelles sources de lumière et de particules - DPAMPC-PPD

Track Classification: Division of Atomic, Molecular and Optical Physics, Canada / Division de la physique atomique, moléculaire et photonique, Canada (DAMOPC-DPAMPC)