Saturated absorption spectroscopy of the near-UV Cs atom $6S_{1/2}$-$7P_{1/2}$ transition in a MEMS vapor cell

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Microfabricated (MEMS) alkali vapor cells are at the core of high-precision integrated atomic quantum sensors and devices[1], such as microwave and optical clocks, or magnetometers. The first chip-scale atomic device was a microwave atomic clock based on coherent population trapping[2]. It has offered in its industrial and commercialized version an ultra-low size-power-instability budget, impacting a plethora of industrial and scientific applications. Nevertheless, the short-term stability of these clocks is usually limited at about 10^{-10} at 1 s.

Hot vapor MEMS-based optical frequency standards constitute a new generation of miniaturized clocks, with enhanced stability. These references keep the benefit of using wafer-scalable and mass-producible vapor cells while preventing ultra-high vacuum technologies and laser cooling. Among the transitions explored, the $6S_{1/2}$ – $7P_{1/2}$ near-UV transition of Cs atom was used to demonstrate an optical reference[3] with a stability of 2.1×10^{-13} at 1 s and averaging down to a few 10^{-14}. However, this reference was based on a 5 cm-long glass-blown cell, not compliant with the advent of a fully-miniaturized and low-power optical clock.

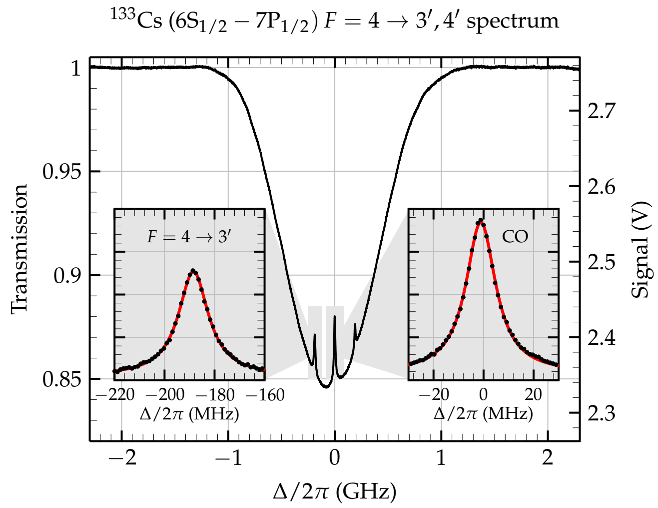

Figure 1 : Sub-Doppler spectroscopy of the Cs atom $6S_{1/2} \to 7P_{1/2}$ transition at 459 nm recorded from a Cs MEMS cell heated at 117 ºC.

In this work[4], we present the characterization of sub-Doppler resonances detected in a microfabricated cell by probing, in a simple saturated absorption configuration, the Cs atom $6S_{1/2}$ – $7P_{1/2}$ transition at 459 nm. The impact of the laser intensity and cell temperature on the sub-Doppler resonance is experimentally investigated. Optimal values are identified for the development of a near-UV microcell-stabilized frequency reference. Detection noise measurements are also reported, predicting a short-term stability in the 10^{-13} range at 1 s. Tests of cells with embedded getters[5] are under progress for improved purity of the cell inner atmosphere and narrowing of the resonance. Latest results will be presented at the conference.

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