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# Collapse of Xe polarized atomic states in magnetic fields

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**Abstract.** Ionization of two-photon excited states  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[{}^3/2, {}^5/2]_2$ ,  $M=2$  ( $jl$ -coupling) of xenon atoms by circularly polarized probe light was studied experimentally in a supersonic beam. The observed photoionization signals revealed oscillation structure due to the Larmor precession of atomic states in an external magnetic field. We derived analytical formulas for the photoelectron current and explained the diversity in the structure of the detected oscillations in terms of the principal lines among multiplet components of optical transitions. The obtained numerical data demonstrate collapse and revival (beating) behavior of the photocurrent due to nonlinearity of Zeeman shifts in the presence of the Paschen–Back effect. Our results indicate the possibility of implementing Doppler-free spectroscopy involving bound-free transitions.

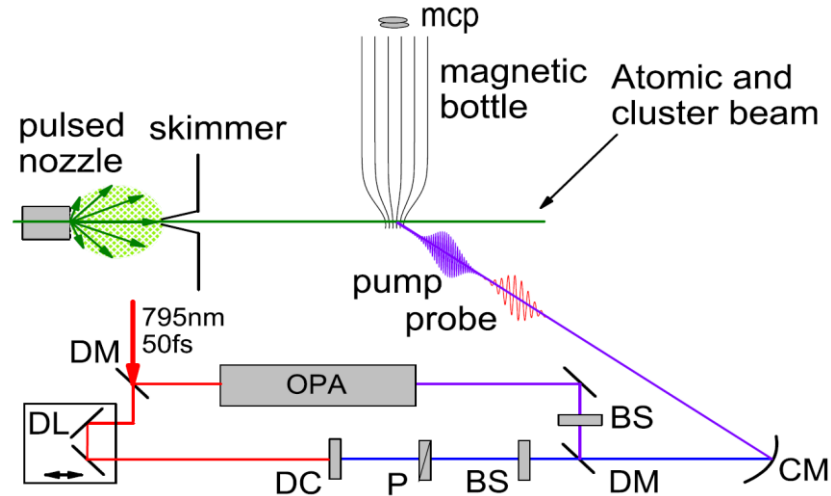
## 1 Introduction

The analysis of temporal dynamics of fluorescence signals after excitation of atomic states by polarized light is an important area of modern spectroscopy [1]. Observation of magnetic resonances in polarized gas media is the basis of constructions and implementations of sensitive magnetometers [2, 3]. Applied controlled external magnetic fields result in diverse types of oscillating structures in detected fluorescence signals that allow making precision measurements of atomic state parameters beyond limitations due to Doppler broadening (Doppler-free spectroscopy) [1, 4, 5, 6]. Traditional methods of spectroscopy are associated mainly with bound-bound transitions with explicitly specified quantum numbers of the initial and final states involved into optical transitions. In the present report, we demonstrate, both experimentally and theoretically, a possibility to examine photocurrent oscillations at Larmor frequencies upon photoionization of polarized xenon atoms in a supersonic beam with polarised probe photons. Our experimental scheme has a number of important advantages compared with the detection of

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36 photons due to the almost 100% efficiency of extracting photoelectrons from the interaction  
 37 zone. Probing excited gas media by photoionization methods allows, as well, to examine  
 38 important details of nonlinear optical pump processes resulting in polarization of atomic states  
 39 [7, 8]. We investigated cases of weak (linear Zeeman effect) and intermediate magnetic field  
 40 values and revealed collapse and revival behaviour of oscillations in photocurrent signals as a  
 41 result of the Paschen–Back effect [9, 10].



42  
43

44 **Figure 1.** Experimental setup. OPA – optical parametric amplifier; DL – delay line; DM - dichroic mirrors; DC -  
 45 doubling crystal; P – polarizer; BS - Babinet–Soleil compensators; CM – concave mirror.

46

## 47 2 Experimental setup

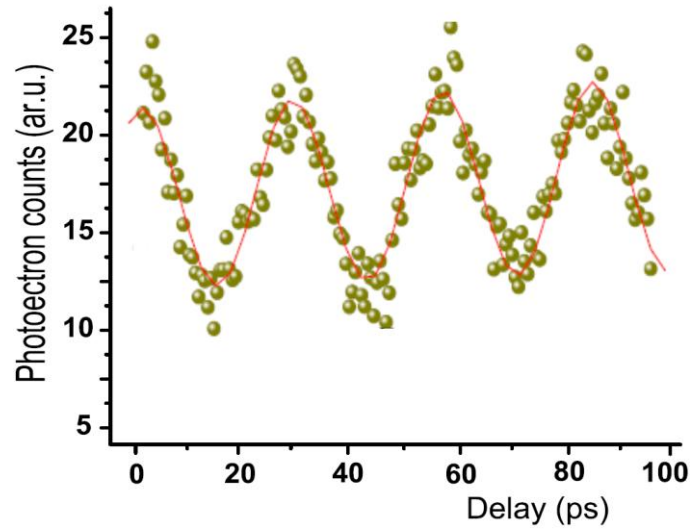
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49 Xenon atoms were produced in a supersonic jet. A pulsed piezoelectric valve opens the  
 50 bottle filled with mixture of xenon (8%) and helium gases under the pressure of 1 Bar into the  
 51 vacuum chamber pumped out to  $10^{-8}$  Torr. The velocity of Xe atoms in the supersonic flow was  
 52 about  $10^5$  cm/sec. The supersonic jet passed the skimmer (see Fig. 1). After the skimmer the  
 53 atoms in the ground unpolarized state crossed the focused laser beams. The Ti-Sapphire  
 54 femtosecond laser PULSAR 10 (Amplitude Technologies, France) [11] has the following  
 55 characteristics: main wavelength - 795 nm., pulse energy - 5 mJ, pulse duration - 50 fs, repetition  
 56 rate - 10 Hz. The outcoming pulse was divided into two parts: (i) 70% of the pulse power  
 57 pumped parametric amplifier TOPAS and was converted to UV radiation for 2-photon excitation  
 58 of atomic states. (ii) The rest 30% of the power was used as probe radiation in the form of the  
 59 second harmonic for ionization of pump-excited atoms. The correlation function of the pump  
 60 (exciting) and probe (ionizing) pulses was measured by the signal of nonresonant multiphoton

61 ionization and amounted to 140 fs (FWHM). Circular polarization of both pump and probe pulses was  
 62 performed using a Babinet-Soleil compensator.

63 Photoelectrons were trapped in an inhomogeneous magnetic field and their energy spectra  
 64 were analysed by a magnetic-bottle time-of-flight electron spectrometer. In our experiments, the  
 65 Teslameter PIE.MG R-2 magnetometer has measured the magnetic field value  $B = |\vec{B}|$  equal to  
 66  $0.825 (\pm 0.006)$  Tesla at the entrance to the magnetic bottle. The field orientation  $\vec{e}_x = \vec{B}/B$   
 67 along x-axis was perpendicular to the quantization z-axis, which coincided with the direction  $\vec{e}_z$   
 68 of the propagation of both laser beams.

69



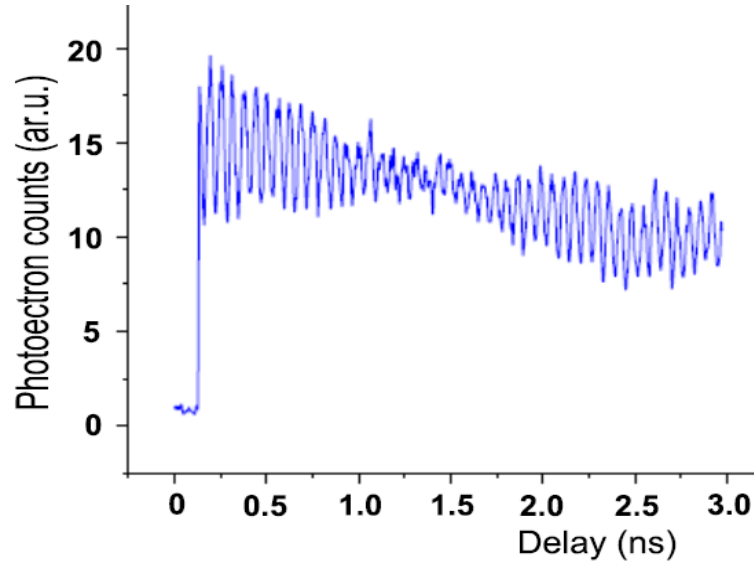
70  
 71 **Figure 2.** Delay dependence of photoionization signal  $I$  for the polarized Xe state  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[^5/2]_2$  ( $78120\text{cm}^{-1}$ ),  
 72  $M=2$ . The points indicate the experimental data, while the solid curve corresponds to analytical results (Eqs. (4), (6),  
 73 (7)) with the ratio of  $l$ -channels weights as 1: 3.4.

74

75 Two-photon excited states  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[^5/2]_2$  ( $78120\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[^3/2]_2$  ( $79212,5\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) ( $jl$ -  
 76 coupling scheme [9]) of Xe atoms having the azimuthal (Zeeman) quantum number  $M=2$  were  
 77 produced by the femtosecond laser light ( $\lambda=256.01\text{nm}$  and  $252.5\text{nm}$ ) of the right circular  
 78 polarization (see Fig. 1). Photoionization of the polarized atoms in the state with the total angular  
 79 momentum  $J=2$  and Zeeman component  $M=2$  was operated as well by right-circularly polarized  
 80 light of the second harmonic of titanium–sapphire laser ( $\lambda = 400 \text{ nm}$ ).

81 The delay time  $t$  between lasers pulses was varied in the range of  $0 - 3 \text{ ns}$ . With varying  $t$ ,  
 82 periodical oscillations of photocurrent pulses of intensity  $I$  (photo-signals) were arising (Figs. 2-  
 83 3), as a result of the Larmor precession of the polarization moments of atomic states in the

84 magnetic field  $\frac{1}{B}$ . This field-value along with the Larmor frequencies  $\omega_L$  of the observed  
 85 oscillations allowed us to determine Landé g-factors, both for the aforementioned excited state of  
 86 the xenon atom using the well-known relation  $\hbar\omega_L = g\mu_B B$  [2,9], where  $\mu_B$  is the Bohr  
 87 magneton. Figure 3 demonstrates the existence of both beatings in the registered signal and some  
 88 relaxation process resulting in population depletion of the ionizing state with the decay constant  
 89  $\tau \approx 6$  ns. Theoretical consideration of the physics of experimental findings is presented in the  
 90 next Section.



91  
 92  
 93  
 94 **Figure 3.** Delay dependence of photoionization signal  $I$  for the polarized Xe state  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[{}^3/2]_2$  ( $79212,5\text{cm}^{-1}$ ),  
 95  $M=2$ .

96  
 97 **3 Theoretical survey**

98 Noteworthy, the conventional treaties of photoionization processes analyze the dependence of  
 99 the observed photocurrent  $I(t, \theta)$  on the angle  $\theta$  between the laser beam and the escaping pho-  
 100 toelectrons. Our experiment provides information on the aggregate electrons yield  $I(t)$  averaged  
 101 over all possible  $\theta$ . In this Section we outline our theoretical study of the oscillation structure  
 102 (see Figs. 2-3) in the photoionization signals  $I(t)$  when polarized atomic states are ionized with  
 103 circularly polarized photons from a laser beam. In what follows, we use the following notation:  
 104 the azimuthal quantum numbers  $M$  along with the indices  $q$  of the polarization moments corre-  
 105 spond to the “excitation coordinate system” with the quantization z-axis, while numbers  $M_x$  re-

106 fer to the system associated with the magnetic field, that is, with the x-axis as the quantization  
 107 axis.

108 It is convenient to consider the effects of coherent interaction of polarized quantum parti-  
 109 cles with light in the framework of the technique of irreducible tensor operators for density ma-  
 110 trices, which deals with the polarization moments of atoms  $\rho_q^\kappa$  and photons  $\Phi_q^\kappa$  [1, 2, 4, 9].

111

### 112 **3.1 Partial photoionization signals**

113 An explicit expression for the photoionization cross-section  $\sigma$  was provided by authors  
 114 of manual [1] (Section 20.2). In what follows, we will use their result in a slightly different form,  
 115 which involves the photo-signal  $I_{\Lambda,\Lambda'}(t)$

$$116 \quad I_{\Lambda,\Lambda'}(t)/J_{ion} \sim D_0 M_0 \Phi_0^0 \rho_0^0(t) + D_1 M_1 \Phi_0^1 \rho_0^1(t) + D_2 M_2 \Phi_0^2 \rho_0^2(t), \quad (1)$$

117 and is more suitable for our purposes. Here  $J_{ion}$  is the intensity of the luminous flux of the ioniz-  
 118 ing probe laser. The indexes in  $I(t)$  indicate the quantum numbers  $\Lambda = 5s^2 5p^5 ({}^2P_j)nl[K]_J$  ( $jl$ -  
 119 coupling scheme [9]) of the bound polarized atomic state in the initial channel and  
 120  $\Lambda' = 5s^2 5p^5 ({}^2P_j)\varepsilon'l'[K']_{J'}$  ones in the final (ionization) channel with the notation  $\varepsilon'$  for the free  
 121 photoelectrons energy. It is assumed that the quantum state  ${}^2P_j$  of the atomic core remain un-  
 122 changed due to the prohibition of intercombination transitions. Factors  $D_\kappa$  are expressed through  
 123  $6j$ -symbols

$$124 \quad D_\kappa = (-1)^{J+J'+1} \left\{ \begin{matrix} 1 & 1 & \kappa \\ J & J & J' \end{matrix} \right\} |(\Lambda \parallel d \parallel \Lambda')|^2 \quad (2)$$

125 and the reduced dipole matrix elements  $(\Lambda \parallel d \parallel \Lambda')$  for bound-free optical transitions [1, 9]. Alt-  
 126 hough the coefficients  $M_\kappa$  are trivial ( $M_\kappa \equiv 1$ ) in the case of partial transitions, they play an im-  
 127 portant role in calculating the total photocurrent (see Eq. 5).

128

### 129 **3.2 Zeeman shifts and density matrices temporal dependence**

130 Effects of an interaction between atoms and magnetic fields are described in terms of  
 131 Zeeman shifts [1, 9]. Due to the spin-orbit interaction, the state  $\Lambda = 5s^2 5p^5 ({}^2P_j)nl[K]$  consists of  
 132 two "fine" components  $J = J_\pm = K \pm 1/2$  with the energy splitting  $\Delta\varepsilon_K = |\varepsilon_{J_+} - \varepsilon_{J_-}|$ . A detailed

133 description of Zeeman shifts  $\Delta\varepsilon(M_x)$  in a coordinate system associated with the applied mag-  
 134 netic field (quantization x-axis) can be found in subsection 8.2 of book [9]. In our experimental  
 135 conditions with comparatively weak magnetic fields, it is sufficient to restrict ourselves to con-  
 136 sidering of the linear and quadratic terms in  $\Delta\varepsilon(M_x)$  over the Larmor frequency  $\omega_L$  [9]:

$$137 \quad \Delta\varepsilon(M_x)/h = M_x\omega_L + \Theta\omega_L^2(J_+^2 - M_x^2);$$

$$138 \quad \Theta = \left(\frac{2 - g_K}{g_J}\right)^2 \frac{1}{\Delta\varepsilon_K/h} \frac{1}{4J_+^2}. \quad (3)$$

139 Here  $g_K$  and  $g_J$  denote Landé g-factors for the state  $5s^25p^5(^2P_j)nl[K]$  and its “fine” component  
 140  $5s^25p^5(^2P_j)nl[K]_j$  respectively.

141 The temporal dynamics of density matrices  $\rho_{MM^*}(t)$  and the relevant polarization mo-  
 142 ments  $\rho_q^\kappa(t)$  in the presence of a magnetic field can be directly calculated using the Wigner rota-  
 143 tion matrices [1, 12]. The latter provide a transformation between representations of an atomic  
 144 density matrix associated with different quantization axes, which are directed along the magnetic  
 145 field (x-axis) or laser beams (z-axis). In more general situations with several components (in our  
 146 case, there are two of them) in a multiplet atomic state (as for the hyperfine components), it is  
 147 preferable to numerically solve the Bloch equations for the density matrix based on, for example,  
 148 the split propagation technique [13, 14].

149 If we are dealing with linear Zeeman shifts, there are simple explicit formulas for  $\rho_{q=0}^\kappa(t)$   
 150 (see Appendix A). The first three atomic polarization moments  $\rho_0^\kappa$  with  $\kappa = 0$  (population),  
 151  $\kappa = 1$  (orientation) and  $\kappa = 2$  (alignment) oscillate on zero, main  $\omega_L$  and double  $2\omega_L$  Larmor  
 152 frequency:

$$153 \quad \rho_0^0(t) = \rho_0^0(t=0); \quad \rho_0^1(t) = \cos(\omega_L t)\rho_0^1(t=0);$$

$$154 \quad \rho_0^2(t) = (3\cos^2(\omega_L t) - 1)/2 \cdot \rho_0^2(t=0) \quad (4)$$

### 156 3.3 Total photoionization signal

157 Expression (1) gives information on the partial cross section of photoionization when the  
 158 quantum numbers  $l', K', J'$  in the final channel are fixed (i.e., measured). Since we did not sepa-  
 159 rate the photoelectrons by  $l', K', J'$  numbers in the experiments, all the partial signals contribute

160 to the final cumulative photocurrent signal  $I(t) = \sum_{\Lambda'} I_{\Lambda, \Lambda'}(t)$ . Importantly, the sum rule for the  
 161 product of three  $6j$ -symbols (see Eq. (4.85) in [9]) makes it possible to perform explicit summa-  
 162 tion over the quantum numbers  $K'$  and  $J'$ , provided that quantum defects of final states in the  
 163 energy continuum are independent on  $K', J'$ . Omitting somewhat tedious algebraic calculations,  
 164 we present the final result:  $I(t) = I_{l'=l+1} + I_{l'=l-1}$ , where two remaining partial signals  $I_{l'}$  relate to  
 165 escaping a free photoelectron with two possible values  $l' = l \pm 1$  of its orbital quantum number.  
 166 The ratio  $I_{l'} / J_{ion}$  is expressed by a formula similar to that included in Eq. (1), with the following  
 167 coefficients

$$168 \quad D_{\kappa} = \left\{ \begin{matrix} 1 & 1 & \kappa \\ l & l & l' \end{matrix} \right\} |nl \parallel d \parallel \varepsilon l'|^2;$$

$$169 \quad M_{\kappa} = (2J+1)(2K+1) \left\{ \begin{matrix} K & K & \kappa \\ J & J & 1/2 \end{matrix} \right\} \left\{ \begin{matrix} l & l & \kappa \\ K & K & j \end{matrix} \right\} (-1)^{J+0.5-l-j} \quad (5)$$

## 170 4 Results and discussion

### 171

172 Our main result boils down to the statement that the observed photocurrent signal  $I(t)$

$$173 \quad I(t) = \sum_{l'=l \pm 1} \chi_{l'} I_{l'}(t); \quad \chi_{l'} = (nl \parallel d \parallel \varepsilon l')^2 \quad (6)$$

174 is obtained as the sum of two partial signals  $I_{l'}(t)$

$$175 \quad I_{l'}(t) = I_0 \cdot \sum_{\kappa=0}^2 D_{\kappa} M_{\kappa} \Phi_0^{\kappa} \rho_0^{\kappa}(t), \quad (7)$$

176 statistical weights  $\chi_{l'}$  of which are determined with the reduced dipole matrix elements (6) of  
 177 bound-free optical transitions of the valence electron. The multiplier  $I_0$  depends on intensities of  
 178 applied lasers and experimental set-up parameters.

179 It is important to note that immediately after the excitation process at time  $t=0$ , the an-  
 180 gular momentum vector  $\hat{J}(t=0)$  of the two-photon excited atomic state  $\Psi_i$  is directed along the  
 181 wave vector (quantization z-axis) of the probe photons. The angular momentum  $\hat{S}_{ph}$  of the pho-  
 182 tons (photon spin) has a unity value and is also directed along the z-axis. Upon the ionization at  
 183 time  $t$ , the atom acquires the photon spin, i.e.



184 
$$\overset{\Gamma}{J}(t) \rightarrow \overset{\Gamma}{J}' = \overset{\Gamma}{J}(t) + \overset{1}{S}_{ph} \quad (8)$$

185

186

**Table 1.** Photon and atomic polarization moments.

	$\kappa = 0$	$\kappa = 1$	$\kappa = 2$
$\Phi_0^\kappa$	$1/\sqrt{3}$	$1/\sqrt{2}$	$1/\sqrt{6}$
$\rho_0^\kappa(t=0)$	$1/\sqrt{5}$	$\sqrt{2}/(\sqrt{5})$	$\sqrt{2}/(\sqrt{7})$

187

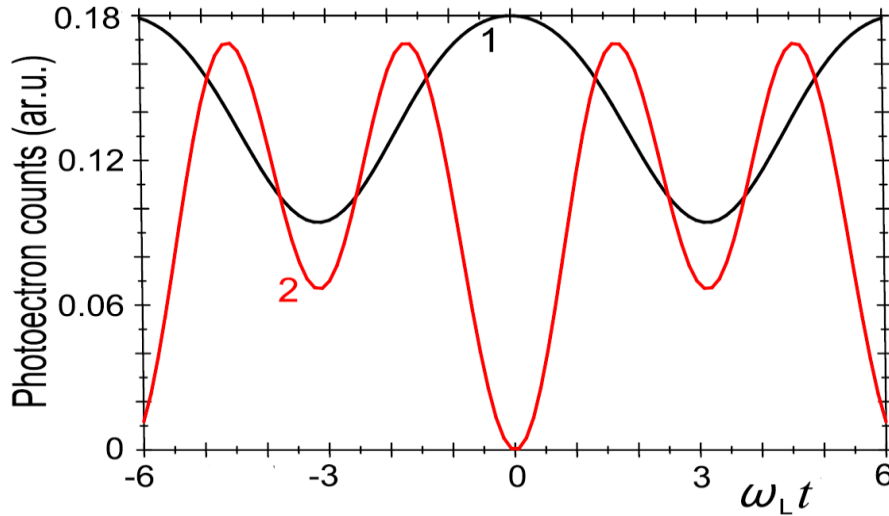
188 **4.1 Partial signals  $I_l(t)$**

189 We first consider the features of photoionization signals  $I_l(t)$  in two outgoing channels  
 190  $l = 1 \rightarrow l' = 1 \pm 1 = 0, 2$  when the polarized Xe states  $\Psi_i = |P_{3/2} 6p[3/2, 5/2]_2, M = 2\rangle$  are ionized by the  
 191 right-circularly polarised probe photons. The corresponding photonic and atomic polarization  
 192 moments are expressed via Wigner  $3j$  symbols [1]

193 
$$\rho_0^\kappa(t=0) = \sqrt{2\kappa+1} \begin{pmatrix} J & J & \kappa \\ M & -M & 0 \end{pmatrix}; \quad \Phi_0^\kappa = \sqrt{2\kappa+1} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & \kappa \\ 1 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (9)$$

194 with the numerical values shown in Table 1 ( $J=2, M=2$ ).

195



196

197 **Figure 4.** Temporal dependence of the partial photoionization signals  $I_l(t)$  (7) in two outgoing channels  $l'=2$  (curve  
 198 1) and  $l'=0$  (curve 2). The case of linear Zeeman shifts. The initial polarized atomic state is  $P_{3/2} 6p[3/2]_2, M=2$

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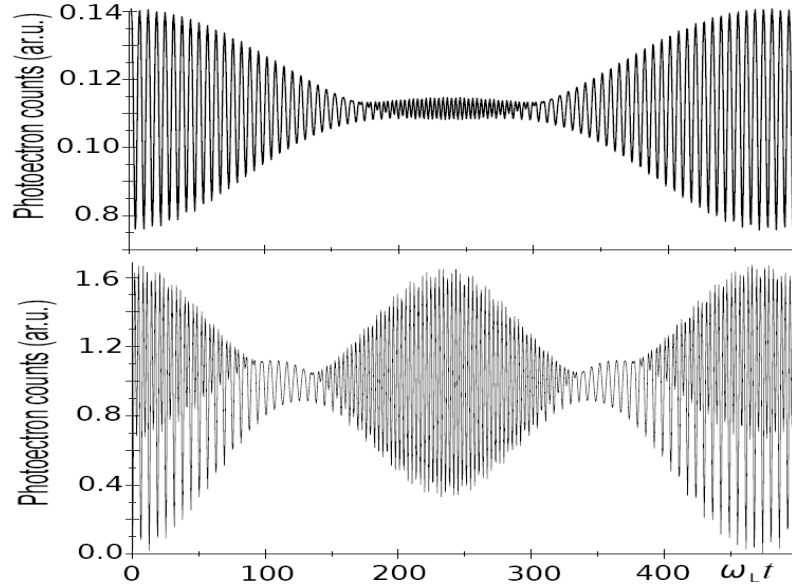
200 Figure 4 shows the oscillation structure of partial photoionization signals  $I_{l'}(t)$  (7) in the  
 201 case of a weak magnetic field (linear case). It reveals both the shift between the calculated pho-  
 202 tocurrent oscillations and quite different shapes. The nature of these findings is due to the exist-  
 203 ence of the so-called principal lines (see subsection 9.2.3 of [9]) with the highest intensities  
 204 among multiplet components of optical transitions. The most intense (principal) lines turn out to  
 205 be those for which the change in  $l$ ,  $K$ , and  $J$  is the same. Photoionization of the  $\Psi_i$ -state  
 206  $P_{3/2}6p[3/2]_2$  with electrons escaping in the channel  $l=1 \rightarrow l'=2$  corresponds to the dominant transi-  
 207 tion  $K=3/2 \rightarrow K'=5/2$ ;  $J=2 \rightarrow J'=3$  for the multiplet  $P_{3/2}6p[3/2]_2 \rightarrow P_{3/2}\epsilon'l'[K']_{J'}$ . It means  
 208 that two vectors with lengths  $2 \binom{1}{J}$  and  $1 \binom{1}{S_{ph}}$  after addition (8) yield a vector of length  $3 \binom{1}{J'}$ ,  
 209 i.e.  $\binom{1}{J}, \binom{1}{S_{ph}}$  should be directed along the same z-axis. The latter is realized at the moment  $t_m = 0$   
 210 of  $\Psi_i$ -state excitation. Because of the Larmor precession, the atomic vector  $\binom{1}{J}$  rotates around the  
 211 magnetic field vector (x-axis), so that its vector sum  $\binom{1}{J'}$  (8) with the constant spin vector  $\binom{1}{S_{ph}}$  be-  
 212 gins to decrease in length. This leads to dropping the probability of the dominant transition  
 213  $J=2 \rightarrow J'=3$  and a weakening of the photoionization signal  $I_{l'=2}(t)$  (see plot 1 in Fig. 4). In the  
 214 case of the channel  $l=1 \rightarrow l'=0$ , another transition  $K=3/2 \rightarrow K'=1/2$ ;  $J=2 \rightarrow J'=1$  is for-  
 215 mally associated with the dominant one. Small values of  $K'=1/2$ , and  $J'=1$ , however, essen-  
 216 tially diminish the corresponding oscillator strength, making the so called satellite component [9]  
 217  $K=3/2 \rightarrow K'=3/2$ ;  $J=2 \rightarrow J'=2$  more intensive. There are two moments  $t_m$  within the  
 218 Larmor period, when the spatial orientation of the vectors  $\binom{1}{J}, \binom{1}{S_{ph}}$  in Eq. (8) does not change the  
 219 length of  $\binom{1}{J}$ :

$$J(J+1) = J(J+1) + 2\sqrt{J(J+1)S_{ph}(S_{ph}+1)} \cos(\omega_L t_m) + S_{ph}(S_{ph}+1) \quad (10)$$

220  
 221  
 222 The solutions  $\omega_L t_m = \arccos(-1/(2\sqrt{3})) = \pm 1.863$  of Eq. (10) for  $J=2, S_{ph}=1$  are in excellent  
 223 agreement with the data of graph 2 in Fig. 4.  
 224

225 Figure 5 demonstrates dramatic changes in the dynamics of partial signals  $I_{l'}(t)$ , when, due to  
 226 the Paschen - Back effect, the nonlinear term in the Zeeman shifts (3) leads to the collapse and  
 227 subsequent retrieval of the polarized moments  $\rho_0^K(t)$  of the ionizing  $\Psi_i$ -state of Xe atom.

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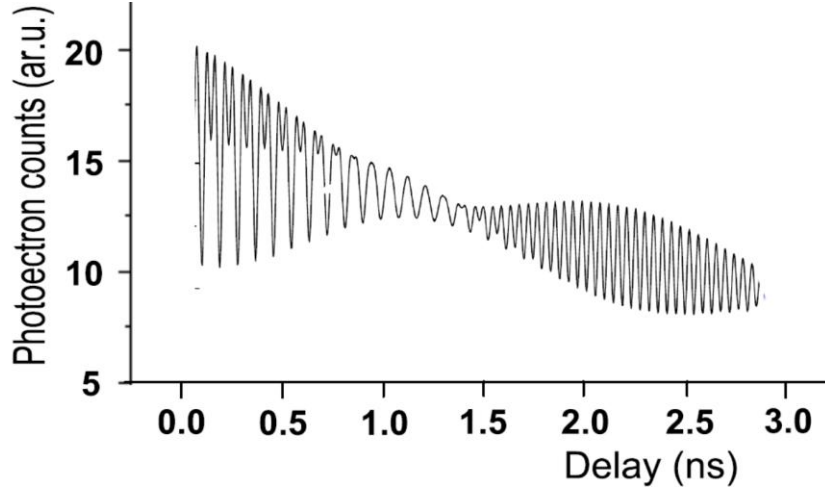
230 **Figure 5.** Same as in Fig. 4 in two outgoing channels  $l'=2$  (upper frame) and  $l'=0$  (lower frame) when the applied  
 231 magnetic field results in the Paschen–Back effect. The value of the dimensionless parameter  $\Theta \cdot \omega_L$  is  $1/150$  (see  
 232 Eq. (3)).

233

#### 234 4.2 Aggregated signal $I(t)$

235 The calculated values of the aggregated photoionization current  $I$  (6) are shown in Fig.2  
 236 (solid curve). A good agreement between the theoretical predictions and the experimentally ob-  
 237 tained photoelectron signals can be seen provided that the ratio  $\chi_{l'=3}/\chi_{l'=1}$  of the statistical  
 238 weights is chosen equal to 3.3. The latter value corresponds to the Bethe rule [9, 15, 16], which  
 239 ascribes a dominant role to photo-processes with the highest possible value of the orbital moment  
 240  $l'$  of the escaping photoelectrons.

241



242

243 **Figure 6.** Same as in Fig. 3 for the aggregate photosignal  $I(t)$  (6). Our numerical results are obtained for the fol-  
 244 lowing parameters: the product  $\Theta \cdot \omega_L = 1/100$ , the ratio  $\chi_{l'=3} / \chi_{l'=1} = 3.1$  and the relaxation constant  $\tau = 6$  ns.

245

246 We also performed numerical simulations to describe the experimental signal depicted in  
 247 Fig. 3. The calculated photocurrent  $I(t)$  temporal evolution is shown in Fig. 6. Signal fading  
 248 was taken into account by introducing the decay fitting function:  $I(t) \rightarrow \exp(-t/\tau)I(t)$  with the  
 249 decay constant  $\tau = 6$  ns. Satisfactory agreement between experimental and theoretical results can  
 250 be observed. The formation of a beat structure in the signal  $I(t)$  is clearly seen as a result of a  
 251 nonlinear quadratic response in the Zeeman energy shifts.

252 Two well-known processes, that can contribute to the attenuation of the detected photo-  
 253 current, do not explain, however, the small value of the fitting parameter  $\tau$ . (i) The natural life-  
 254 time of Xe  $5p^5(^2P_{3/2})6p[^3/2]_2$  state is  $\sim 27$  ns while (ii) the decay time, corresponding to the transit  
 255 time depletion [17] due to the escape of moving Xe atoms from the volume of the probe laser  
 256 beam, turns out to be an order of magnitude larger. On the other hand, the magnitude of the ap-  
 257 plied magnetic field is not sufficient to obtain the fitting value  $\Theta \cdot \omega_L = 1/100$ , necessary for the  
 258 appearance of beats. This means that both the damping and the observed beats in the experi-  
 259 mental signal in Fig. 3 have additional physical sources due, for example, to the rich isotopic  
 260 composition of the Xe samples we use. Landé g-factors values for different isotopes can vary  
 261 within 3%. From the point of view of a formal mathematical description, the role of these varia-  
 262 tions in phase decoherence processes is similar to nonlinear Zeeman shifts and will be analyzed  
 263 in our future publication.

264

265 **5. Conclusion**

266 This paper presents experimental and theoretical studies of photoionization processes  
267 with the participation of two-photon excited states of Xe atoms in the presence of a magnetic  
268 field. The experimental setup did not distinguish between extracting photoelectrons in terms of  
269 quantum numbers and scattering angles. The observed temporal dynamics of the photocurrent  
270 revealed, nevertheless, an oscillatory structure due to the preparation of ionizing atoms in strong-  
271 ly polarized states, which are affected by the Larmor precession. We derived analytical formulas  
272 for the photocurrent explaining the variety of forms of recorded oscillations. The numerical data  
273 carried out demonstrate characteristic beats in oscillations (collapse followed by revival) due to  
274 the quadratic nonlinearity in the Zeeman shifts. We would like to emphasize the possibility of  
275 observing the effects of coherent quantum states interference (in our case, photocurrent oscilla-  
276 tions) in the energy continuum. This allows, in particular, the realization of Doppler- free spec-  
277 troscopy involving bound-free transitions. Additionally, such studies may be of interest and for  
278 magnetic star atmospheres investigations, where xenon is present and its spectral lines were ob-  
279 served. We note as well that such investigations may be of interest and for tokamak plasma  
280 where xenon may be added as impurity.

281

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289

290 **Author contribution statement**

291 All authors contributed equally to the paper.

292

293 **Appendix A. Temporal dependence of polarization moments  $\rho_{q=0}^{\kappa}$**

294 If we restrict ourselves to the effects of linear Zeeman shifts, we can independently study  
 295 the evolution of the polarization moments of atoms  $\rho_q^\kappa(t)$  ( $q = -\kappa, -\kappa = 1, \dots, \kappa$ ) arising from the  
 296 Larmor precession of the atomic angular momentum  $\hat{J}$ . The  $\rho_0^0$  moment describes excited states  
 297 population and is not affected by a magnetic field  $\hat{B}$ , i.e.  $\rho_0^0$  does not depend on  $t$ .

298 In the ‘‘excitation coordinate system’’ (quantization z-axis), three components  $\rho_q^1(t)$  cor-  
 299 respond to spherical components  $J_{0,\pm}$  of the vector  $\hat{J}(t)$  [1,4] which is initially oriented along  
 300 the unit vector  $\hat{e}_z$  (see discussion regarding Eq. (8)). In other words  $\rho_\pm^1(t=0) = 0$  while  
 301  $\Lambda\rho_0^1(t=0) \equiv J_0 = J_z = |\hat{J}|$  ( $\Lambda$  is some constant depending on the excited states parameters). The  
 302 vector  $\hat{J}$  precession around the magnetic field (x-axis) results in  $\Lambda\rho_0^1(t) \equiv J_z(t) = |\hat{J}| \cos(\omega_L t)$   
 303 (compare with Eq. (4)).

304 In the case of the alignment moments ( $\kappa = 2$ ), let’s construct two matrix operators  $\hat{T}(t)$   
 305 and  $\hat{F}$ . The first one  $T_{qq'}(t)$  is proportional to the product of the vector  $\hat{J}(t)$  spherical compo-  
 306 nents  $T_{qq'} = J_q J_{q'}$ , while the second immutable matrix  $F_{qq'}$  is formed by the product of the spher-  
 307 ical components of the unit vector  $\hat{e}_z$ :  $F_{qq'} = \delta_{q0} \delta_{q'0}$ , where  $\delta$  is the Kronecker delta function. In  
 308 the next step, we consider the trace of the matrix product:

$$309 \quad \text{tr}(\hat{T}(t)\hat{F}) = \sum_{qq'} T_{qq'} F_{q'q} = |J_z(t)|^2 = |\hat{J}|^2 \cos^2(\omega_L t). \quad (\text{A1})$$

310 On the other hand, the trace can be viewed as the scalar product of the involved matrices [9], i.e.  
 311 the trace may be written in terms of their irreducible tensor operators [1,9]:

$$312 \quad \text{tr}(\hat{T}(t)\hat{F}) = \sum_{\kappa,q} T_q^\kappa F_{-q}^\kappa (-1)^q = \sum_{\kappa=0,2} T_0^\kappa F_0^\kappa = |\hat{J}|^2 / 3 + T_0^{\kappa=2}(t) F_0^{\kappa=2}, \quad (\text{A2})$$

313 where we account for the following equalities:  $T_0^{\kappa=0} = |\hat{J}|^2 / \sqrt{3}$ ,  $F_0^{\kappa=0} = 1/\sqrt{3}$ ,  $F_q^{\kappa=1} \equiv 0$ ,  
 314  $F_{q \neq 0}^{\kappa=0} \equiv 0$  [1]. The comparison of Eq. (A1) with Eq. (A2) yields the temporal dependence

$$315 \quad T_0^{\kappa=2}(t) F_0^{\kappa=2} = |\hat{J}|^2 (\cos^2(\omega_L t) - 1/3), \quad (\text{A3})$$

316 presented in Eq. (4), for the atomic polarization moment  $\rho_0^{\kappa=2} \sim T_0^{\kappa=2}$ .

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