Generation of laser-driven quasi-static or transient fields with applications to the transport of charged particle beams in dense matter and in vacuum

M. Bailly-Grandvaux[1], J.I. Apiñaniz[2], V. Bagnoud[3], D. Batani[1], C. Bellei[1], C. Brabetz[3], J.-L. Dubois[1], M. Ehret[1,4], P. Forestier-Colleoni[1], S. Fujioka[5], L. Giuffrida[1], J.J. Honrubia[6], S. Hulin[1], E. d'Humières[1], S. Kojima[3], Ph. Korneev[1,7], J.-R. Marquès[8], S. Malko[2], A. Morace[3], Ph. Nicolaï[1], O. Peyrusse[1], A. Poyé[1], M. Roth[3,4], S. Sakata[5], G. Schaumann[4], J. Servel[1], V.T. Tikhonchuk[1], L. Volpe[2], Z. Zhang[5], and J.J. Santos[1]

[1] *Univ. Bordeaux, CNRS, CEA, CELIA, UMR 5107, F-33405 Talence, France*
[2] *Scientific area of Pulsed Laser Center C.L.P.U., Salamanca, Spain*
[3] *GSI-PHELIX, Darmstadt, Germany*
[4] *Institut für Kernphysik, Tech. Univ. Darmstadt, Germany*
[5] *Institute of Laser Engineering, Osaka University, Osaka 565-0871, Japan*
[6] *Univ. Politécnica de Madrid, Spain*
[7] *National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, 115409, Moscow, Russian Federation*
[8] *LULI, Ecole Polytechnique, CNRS, CEA, UMR 7605, F-91128 Palaiseau, France*
E-mail: mathieu.bailly-grandvaux@gadz.org

We used laser-plasma processes to generate extreme discharge currents in coil-shaped targets. We explored two distinct laser interaction regimes – using either high-energy nanosecond or high-intensity short-pulse lasers – leading respectively to strong quasi-static magnetic fields (B-fields) [1] or to fast, transient electro-magnetic pulses (EMPs) propagation along the coil targets [2].

The produced quasi-static B-fields on the excess of 500 T are long enough to magnetize secondary targets through resistive diffusion. This has been successfully applied in experiments of laser-generated relativistic electron transport into solid matter, yielding an unprecedented enhancement of a factor 5 on the energy-density flux at 60 µm depth, compared to unmagnetized transport conditions. The transported electron beams were characterized by imaging the Coherent Transition Radiation (CTR) emitted from the targets' rear surface in conjunction to benchmarked 3D PIC-hybrid simulations coupled to a CTR post-processor. For optimized experimental parameters, 70% of the electron beam energy transported to the rear side is kept on-axis within the size of the electron beam source [3].

We also demonstrated that the EMPs streaming along coil-targets – triggered by the target irradiation in the ps-laser relativistic regime – act as micro-lenses, tailoring the transport in vacuum of ion beams accelerated by a second intense laser pulse. We measured efficient focusing of protons with energy up to 10 MeV over ≈ 10 cm distances [2]. The short duration of the discharge, ≈ 30 ps – probed by proton-deflectometry – allows to select the energy of the focused protons by tuning the delay between the lasers. The pulsed discharges can be described as a neutralizing EM mode of ~10 GV/m, streaming close to the speed of light, as inferred from heuristic simulations of the proton-diagnostic coupled to *ab initio* 2D PIC simulations of the laser-target interaction and EMP discharge.

References :

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