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Spectral Hole Burning in Neutron Irradiated Ruby Crystals

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SPECTRAL HOLE BURNING IN NEUTRON IRRADIATED RUBY CRYSTALS

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Abstract Spectral hole burning was performed in neutron-irradiated ruby. Additional lines were found in the spectra of photoproduct, which were caused by Cr ions. Hole burning mechanisms are discussed in such defective crystals.

Neutron irradiation and the subsequent thermal annealing of $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ leads to the creation of different kinds of defect aggregates, e.g. Ref.¹ The results of spectral hole burning in such defective crystals are somewhat surprising. Namely, spectral hole in these samples reveal very high thermostability: the spectral holes burnt in at low (LHe) temperature are not erased even on the temperature rising up to 670 K, the limit of their thermoresistance being determined by the destructive processes of defect aggregates. This result is valid both on one-step and two-step spectral hole burning in neutron-irradiated $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ ^{2,3}. Thanks to birefringence of sapphire the burning under certain conditions leads to the formation of permanent spectral-spatial gratings.⁴

All the above-mentioned features make a good basis for the application of these crystals as materials for information storage and processing as well as for constructing units for optical and laser devices.

The aim of this investigation was to get information and to make models for the mechanisms of hole burning and the extremely high thermostability of holes in this kind of materials. For this purpose the neutron-irradiated ruby was used. Burning efficiency and thermostability of the holes were compared with the results obtained for neutron-irradiated $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$. Additional lines were found in the photoproduct spectra (in 503 nm spectral range), which were caused by Cr^{3+} ions.

In^{2,5} photoionization as a mechanism of hole burning was proposed, where in principle the trapping of an optical electron may take place in two ways: by means of a nearby-situated acceptor or on the excita-

tion of electron into the conduction band. Here another interesting mechanism is discussed, where analogously with the hole-burning mechanism in $\text{SrF}_2:\text{Pr}^{3+}:\text{D}^-$, after optical excitation of defect an essential rearrangement of the surrounding of the defect is triggered⁶.

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