

Two-Photon Direct Frequency Comb Spectroscopy of Potassium

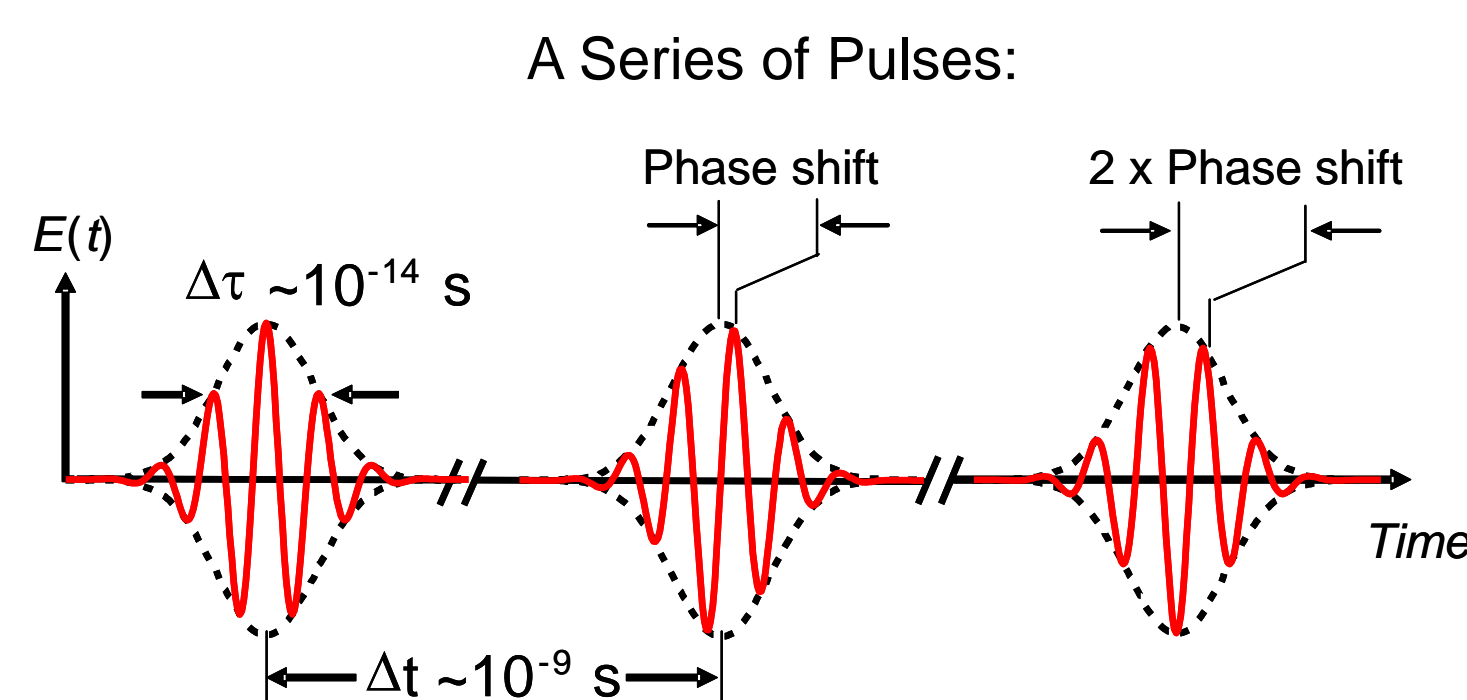
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Introduction

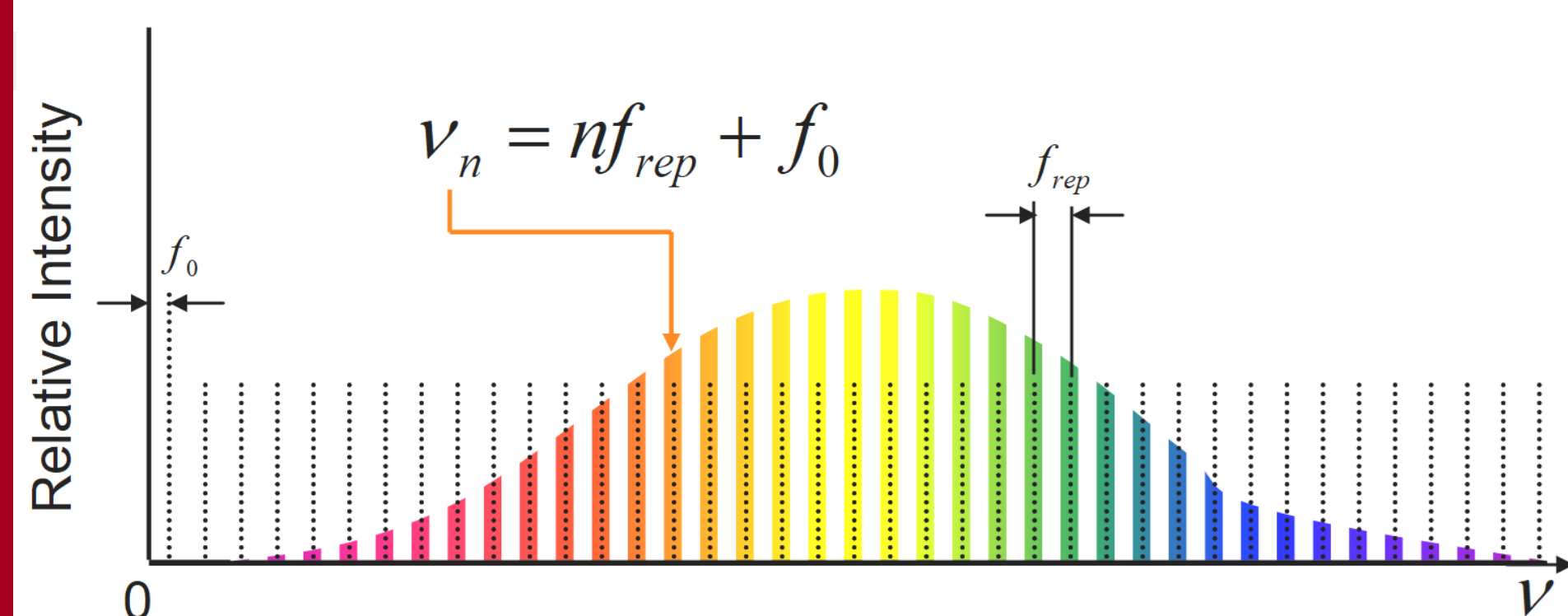
We discuss an experiment that uses direct frequency comb spectroscopy to study two-photon transitions in potassium. Atomic potassium is excited through two-photon transitions by use of the output of a stabilized optical frequency comb. The light generated by the comb is split, counter-propagated and focused into a heated vapor cell that contains potassium atoms. The repetition rate of the frequency comb is scanned and the potassium atoms are excited through various two-photon transitions. Transitions are detected via the fluorescence of the decaying excited state by use of a photomultiplier tube. We compare the experimental spectra with calculations of the two-photon transition amplitudes.

Optical Frequency Comb

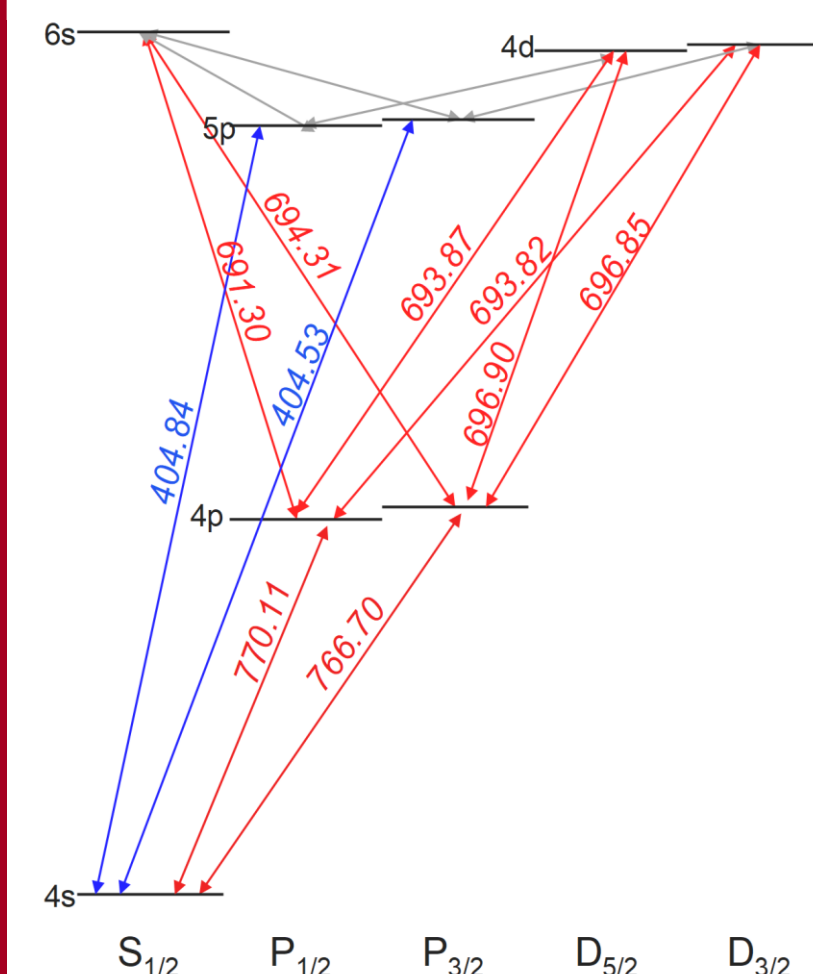
- A mode-locked laser produces a series of ~30 fs long pulses with a repetition rate of 1 GHz.



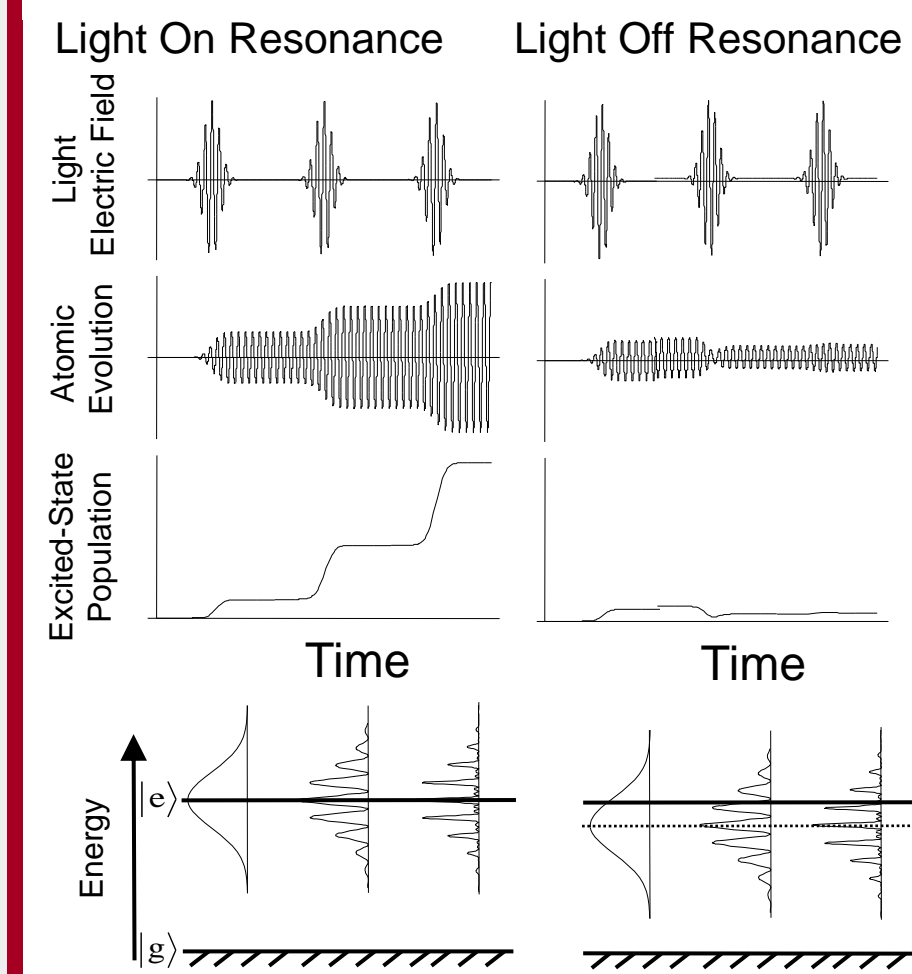
- Phase coherence of the pulses leads to interference and the generation of an optical frequency comb.
- Dispersion causes a phase shift of the carrier wave relative to the envelope, resulting in a shift of the comb structure – the offset frequency f_0 .
- The frequency of each mode is given by an integer mode number, n , and two radio frequencies:
 - The repetition rate, f_{rep} – the separation between modes.
 - The offset frequency, f_0 – the shift of the comb relative to zero frequency.



Energy Level Diagram for Potassium



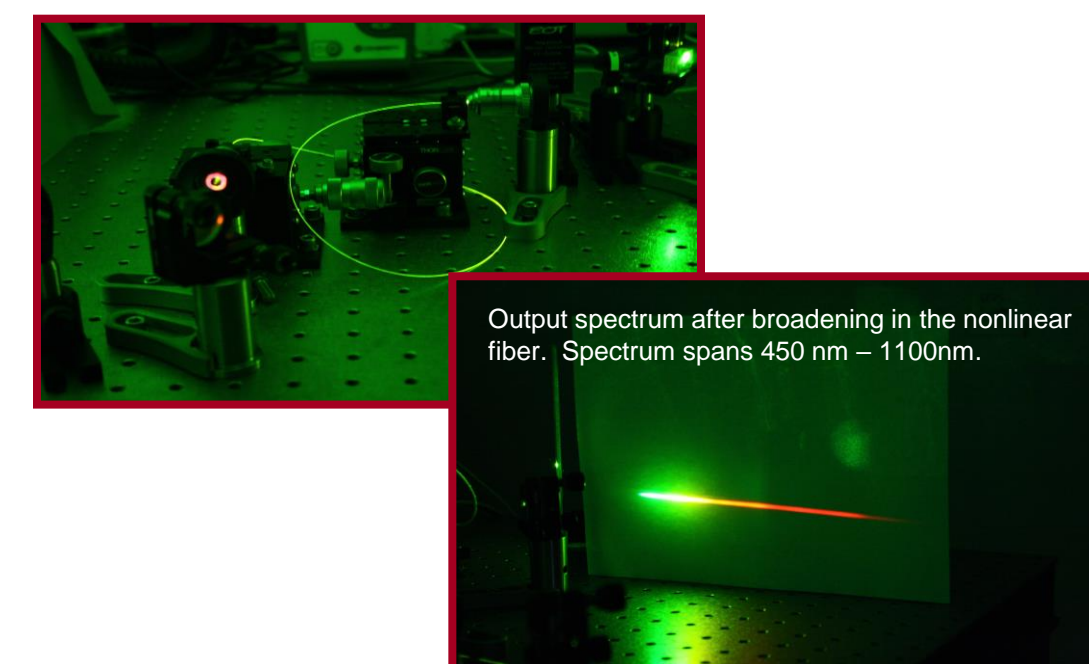
Spectroscopy with Phase Coherent Pulses



Stabilization of the Comb

Stabilizing f_{rep}

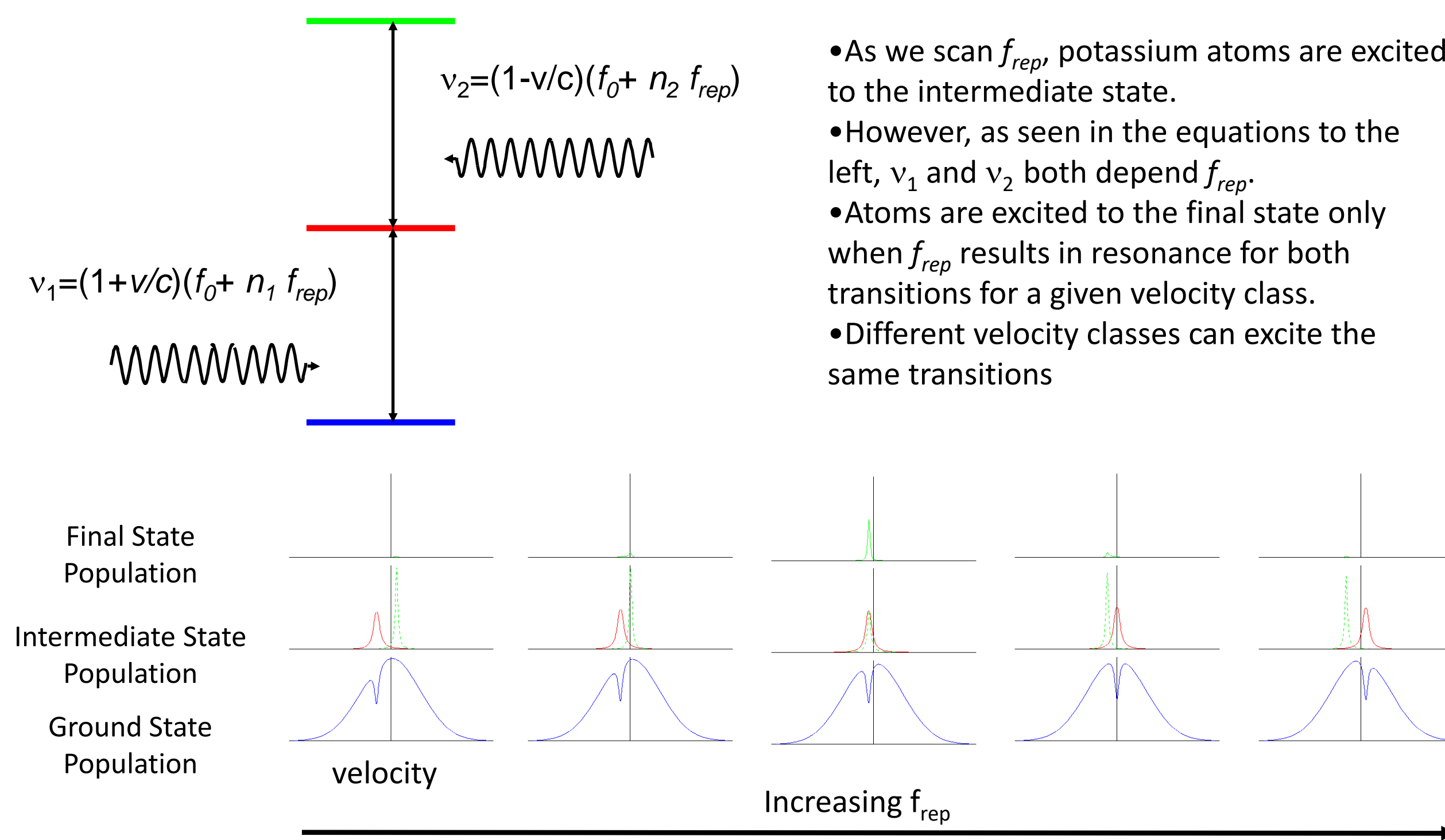
- The interference of the comb modes on the photodetector results in beat signals that are integer multiples of f_{rep} .
- The repetition rate is stabilized to a signal generator that is referenced to an atomic clock providing an accuracy of 10^{-12} in ≈ 100 seconds.
- The repetition rate is controlled by moving one of the Ti:Sapphire mirrors with a piezoceramic.



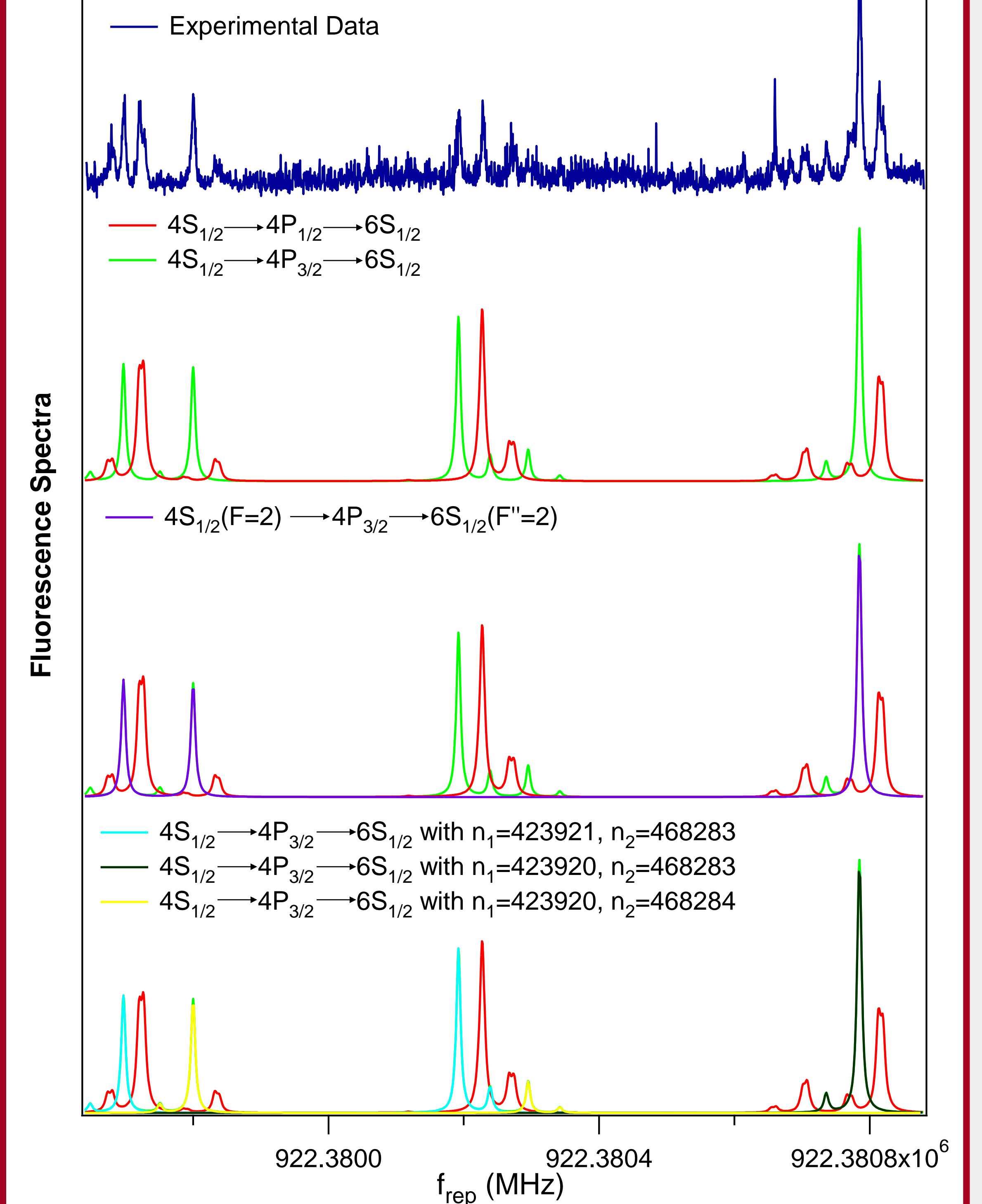
Stabilizing f_0

- Laser output spectrum broadened using highly nonlinear micro-structured fiber so that comb spans an optical octave.
- Double the low frequency modes and compare to the high frequency modes to find f_0 .
- Feedback to the pump power – the extreme nonlinearity of the system results in a change in f_0 .

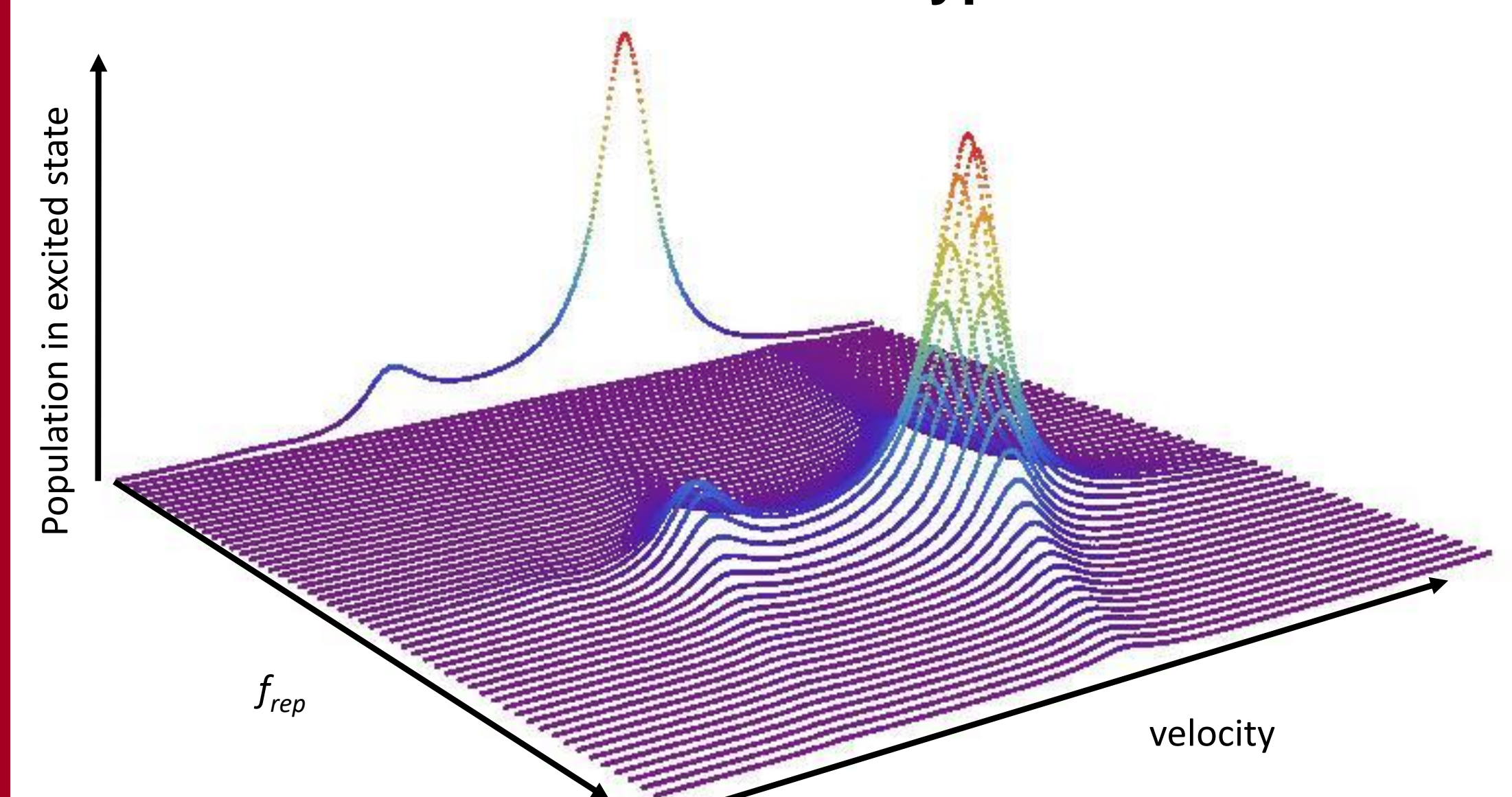
Velocity Selective Double Resonance



Data and Models

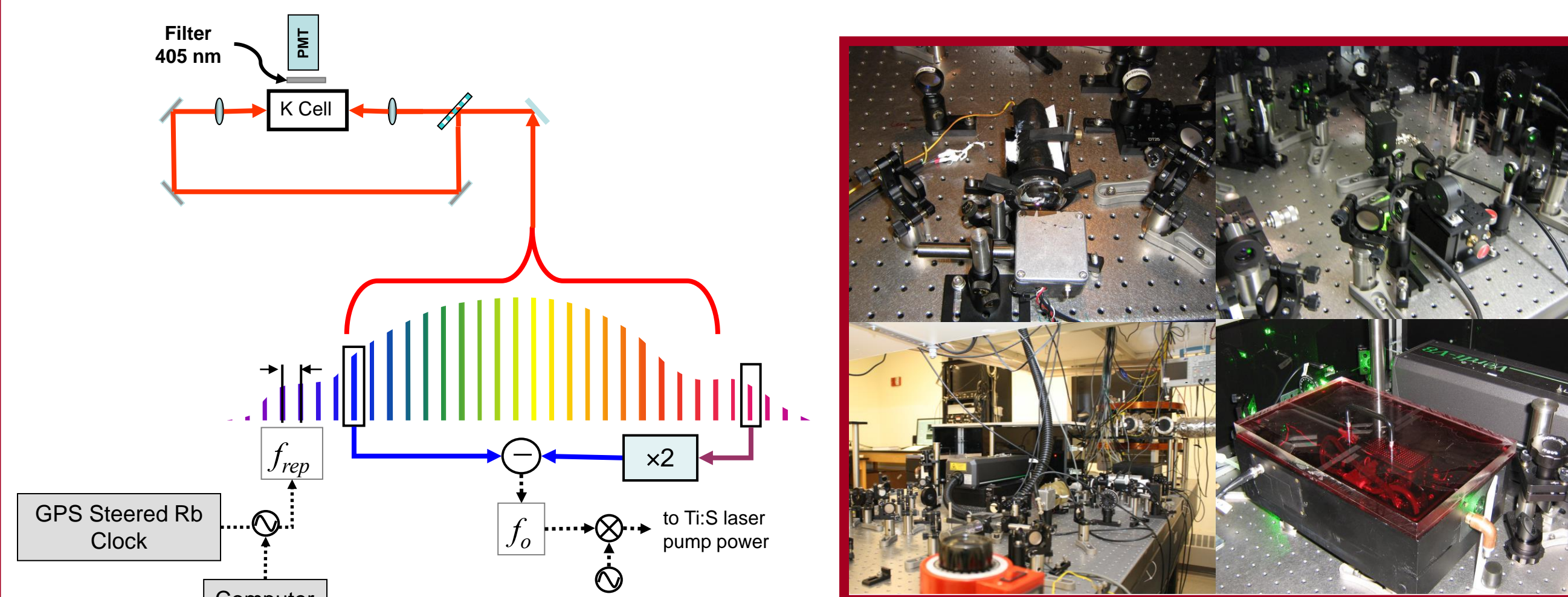


Excitation of $4S_{1/2}(F=2) \rightarrow 4P_{3/2} \rightarrow 6S_{1/2}(F''=2)$ through Different Intermediate Hyperfine States



Acknowledgements

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- The comb is used to excite multiple two-photon resonances.
- The beam is split and counter-propagated through a K vapor cell.
- Detection of blue fluorescence from decay back to the ground state indicates that we are on resonance.
- Transition energies are determined by comparing experimental data to models.