

On the response of charge transfer sensitive levels to the pulsations of a plasma generator

Citation for published version (APA):

Fey, F. H. A. G., Stoffels, W. W., van der Mullen, J. J. A. M., & Schram, D. C. (1990). On the response of charge transfer sensitive levels to the pulsations of a plasma generator. In B. Dubreuil (Ed.), *ESCAMPIG 90 : 10th European Sectional Conference on Atomic and Molecular Physics of Ionized Gases, Orleans, France, August 28-31, 1990: Abstracts of invited talks and contributed papers* (pp. 304-305). (Europhysics conference abstracts; Vol. 14E). European Physical Society (EPS).

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/1990

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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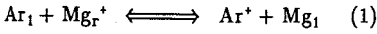
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On the response of charge transfer sensitive levels to the pulsations of a plasma generator

*F.H.A.G. Fey, W.W. Stoffels, J.A.M. van der Mullen, D.C. Schram
Eindhoven University of Technology, Physics Department, P.O. Box 513, 5600 MB
Eindhoven, The Netherlands*

The process of charge transfer can be a relevant excitation mechanism in an Inductively Coupled Plasma (ICP), where different species are imbedded in an argon plasma. An example of such a reaction is



where Mg_r^+ refers to the charge transfer sensitive levels in the MgII system. The relevant levels are shown in figure 1.

This process has been studied before [1] in the recombination zone of a stationary ICP. Another way of investigating the charge transfer is by measuring the time dependent response of the charge transfer sensitive level to pulsations of the RF-generator. By comparing this response to those of other Mg-levels and to those of Ar, the importance of the charge transfer reaction can be estimated. In figure 2a

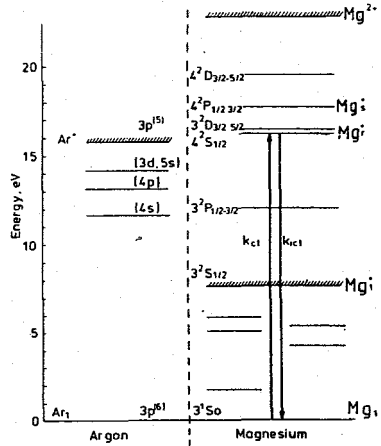


Figure 1. Charge transfer between Mg and Ar.

and 2b the responses are shown of respectively the Ar(5d) level and the Mg⁺(3p) level. The response of Ar(5d) is dominated by the Saha balance and shows a rapid upward jump caused by the cooling of the electrons to the heavy particle temperature when the generator

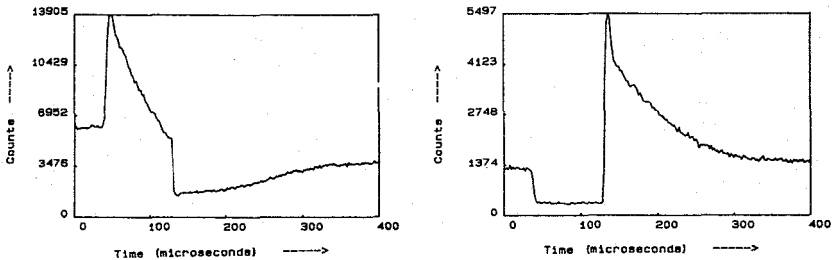


Figure 2. a. Response of Ar(5d), b. Response of Mg⁺(3p)

is switched off and a rapid downward jump due to the heating of the electrons when the generator is switched on again. In the recombination period we see a slow decline. The $Mg^+(3p)$ level, dominated by the Boltzmann balance, shows a rapid downward cooling jump at the offset and an rapid upward jump at the onset.

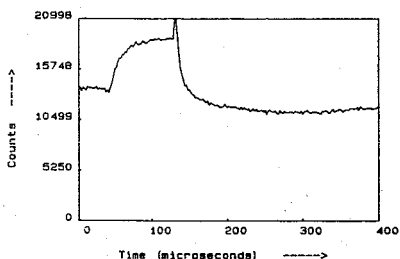


Figure 3. Response of Mg_r^+

The response of Mg_r^+ is totally different to the one of $Mg^+(3p)$ which is representative for all other Mg levels that are not affected by charge transfer. At the offset we see (fig 3.) a slow increase, a saturation effect during recombination and a small jump upward at the onset.

The absence of a rapid response on cooling indicates that electron induced transitions are less important. The slow increase may be related to the fact that recombination in the MgI system increases the Mg_I density which pulls the balance 1 to the left. The rapid response to heating may be interpreted as a population of the Mg_r^+ level via the adjacent lower level in the MgII system, $Mg^+(3p)$. This level (cf. fig. 2b) in its turn is ruled by the Boltzmann balance of electron induced excitation from and deexcitation to the ground state of the MgII system.

These investigations in the program of the Foundation for Fundamental Research on Matter (FOM) have been supported by the Netherlands Technology Foundation (STW).

We would like to thank Ir. G.A.A. Asselman, CFT Philips Eindhoven for providing us with an ICP equipment. We are especially indebted to Dr. W.F. Knippenberg, Philips Research Laboratories Eindhoven, who enabled us to do the pulsation experiments.

- [1] J.A.M. van der Mullen, I.J.M.M. Raaijmakers, A.C.A.P. van Lammeren, D.C. Schram, B. van der Sijde, H.W.J. Schenkelaars, *Spectrochim. Acta*, **42B**, 1039 (1987)