Contents

Preface v

Contributors xv

1 Laser Basics
C. Hirlimann 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Stimulated Emission 1
1.2.1 Absorption 3
1.2.2 Spontaneous Emission 3
1.2.3 Stimulated Emission 4
1.3 Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission 4
1.4 Population Inversion 5
1.4.1 Two-Level System 5
1.4.2 Optical Pumping 6
1.4.3 Light Amplification 8
1.5 Amplified Spontaneous Emission (ASE) 10
1.5.1 Amplifier Decoupling 11
1.6 The Optical Cavity 13
1.6.1 The Fabry–Pérot Interferometer 13
1.6.2 Geometric Point of View 14
1.6.3 Diffractive-Optics Point of View 15
1.6.4 Stability of a Two-Mirror Cavity 17
1.6.5 Longitudinal Modes 20
1.7 Here Comes the Laser! 22
1.8 Conclusion 22
1.9 Problems 22
Further Reading 23
Historial References 23

2 Pulsed Optics
C. Hirlimann 25
2.1 Introduction 25
2.2 Linear Optics 26
2.2.1 Light 26
2.2.2 Light Pulses 28
2.2.3 Relationship Between Duration and Spectral Width 30
2.2.4 Propagation of a Light Pulse in a Transparent Medium 32
2.3 Nonlinear Optics 38
2.3.1 Second-Order Susceptibility 38
2.3.2 Third-Order Susceptibility 45
2.4 Cascaded Nonlinearities 53
2.5 Problems 55
Further Reading 56
References 56

3 Methods for the Generation of Ultrashort Laser Pulses: Mode-Locking
A. Ducasse, C. Rullière and B. Couillaud 57
3.1 Introduction 57
3.2 Principle of the Mode-Locked Operating Regime 60
3.3 General Considerations Concerning Mode-Locking 66
3.4 The Active Mode-Locking Method 67
3.5 Passive and Hybrid Mode-Locking Methods 74
3.6 Self-Locking of the Modes 81
References 87

4 Further Methods for the Generation of Ultrashort Optical Pulses
C. Hirlimann 89
4.1 Introduction 89
4.1.1 Time–Frequency Fourier Relationship 89
4.2 Gas Lasers 91
4.2.1 Mode-Locking 92
4.2.2 Pulse Compression 92
4.3 Dye Lasers 94
4.3.1 Synchronously Pumped Dye Lasers 94
4.3.2 Passive Mode-Locking 96
4.3.3 Really Short Pulses 101
4.3.4 Hybrid Mode-Locking 102
4.3.5 Wavelength Tuning 104
4.4 Solid-State Lasers 106
4.4.1 The Neodymium Ion 106
4.4.2 The Titanium Ion 107
4.4.3 F-Centers 109

4.4.4 Soliton Laser . . . 109
4.5 Pulse Generation Without Mode-Locking . . . 111
4.5.1 Distributed Feedback Dye Laser (DFDL) . . . 111
4.5.2 Traveling-Wave Excitation . . . 112
4.5.3 Space–Time Selection . . . 112
4.5.4 Quenched Cavity . . . 113
4.6 New Developments . . . 114
4.6.1 Diode Pumped Lasers . . . 114
4.6.2 Femtosecond Fibber Lasers . . . 114
4.6.3 Femtosecond Diode Lasers . . . 115
4.6.4 New Gain Materials . . . 117
4.7 Trends . . . 118
References . . . 119

5 Pulsed Semiconductor Lasers
T. Amand and X. Marie . . . 125
5.1 Introduction . . . 125
5.2 Semiconductor Lasers: Principle of Operation . . . 126
5.2.1 Semiconductor Physics Background . . . 126
5.2.2 pn Junction – Homojunction Laser . . . 129
5.3 Semiconductor Laser Devices . . . 131
5.3.1 Double-Heterostructure Laser . . . 132
5.3.2 Quantum Well Lasers . . . 137
5.3.3 Strained Quantum Well and Vertical-Cavity Surface-Emitting Lasers . . . 139
5.4 Semiconductor Lasers in Pulsed-Mode Operation . . . 141
5.4.1 Gain-Switched Operation . . . 143
5.4.2 *Q*-Switched Operation . . . 150
5.4.3 Mode-Locked Operation . . . 159
5.4.4 Mode-Locking by Gain Modulation . . . 160
5.4.5 Mode-Locking by Loss Modulation: Passive Mode-Locking by Absorption Saturation . . . 163
5.4.6 Prospects for Further Developments . . . 170
References . . . 172

6 How to Manipulate and Change the Characteristics of Laser Pulses
F. Salin . . . 175
6.1 Introduction . . . 175
6.2 Pulse Compression . . . 175
6.3 Amplification . . . 178
6.4 Wavelength Tunability . . . 185
6.4.1 Second- and Third-Harmonic Generation . . . 186
6.4.2 Optical Parametric Generators (OPGs) and Amplifiers (OPAs) 187
6.5 Conclusion . . . 192

6.6 Problems . . . 192
References . . . 193

7 How to Measure the Characteristics of Laser Pulses
L. Sarger and J. Oberlé . . . 195
7.1 Introduction . . . 195
7.2 Energy Measurements . . . 196
7.3 Power Measurements . . . 197
7.4 Measurement of the Pulse Temporal Profile . . . 198
7.4.1 Pure Electronic Methods . . . 198
7.4.2 All-Optical Methods . . . 202
7.5 Spectral Measurements . . . 215
7.6 Amplitude–Phase Measurements . . . 216
7.6.1 FROG Technique . . . 217
7.6.2 Frequency Gating . . . 218
7.6.3 Spectal Interferometry and SPIDER . . . 219
References . . . 221

8 Spectroscopic Methods for Analysis of Sample Dynamics
C. Rullière, T. Amand and X. Marie . . . 223
8.1 Introduction . . . 223
8.2 "Pump–Probe" Methods . . . 224
8.2.1 General Principles . . . 224
8.2.2 Time-Resolved Absorption in the UV–Visible Spectral Domain 225
8.2.3 Time-Resolved Absorption in the IR Spectral Domain . . . 233
8.2.4 Pump–Probe Induced Fluorescence . . . 235
8.2.5 Probe-Induced Raman Scattering . . . 237
8.2.6 Coherent Anti-Stokes Raman Scattering (CARS) . . . 241
8.3 Time-Resolved Emission Spectroscopy: Electronic Methods . . . 249
8.3.1 Broad-Bandwidth Photodetectors . . . 250
8.3.2 The Streak Camera . . . 250
8.3.3 "Single"-Photon Counting . . . 250
8.4 Time-Resolved Emission Spectroscopy: Optical Methods . . . 252
8.4.1 The Kerr Shutter . . . 252
8.4.2 Up-conversion Method . . . 255
8.5 Time-Resolved Spectroscopy by Excitation Correlation . . . 260
8.5.1 Experimental Setup . . . 261
8.5.2 Interpretation of the Correlation Signal . . . 262
8.5.3 Example of Application . . . 263
8.6 Transient-Grating Techniques . . . 264
8.6.1 Principle of the Method: Degenerate Four-Wave Mixing (DFWM) . . . 264
8.6.2 Example of Application: *t*-Stilbene Molecule . . . 266
8.6.3 Experimental Tricks . . . 269
8.7 Studies Using the Kerr Effect . . . 270

8.7.1 Kerr "Ellipsometry" . . . 270
8.8 Laboratory Demonstrations . . . 273
8.8.1 How to Demonstrate Pump–Probe Experiments Directly . . . 273
8.8.2 How to Observe Generation of a CARS Signal by Eye . . . 276
8.8.3 How to Build a Kerr Shutter Easily for Demonstration . . . 278
8.8.4 How to Observe a DFWM Diffraction Pattern Directly . . . 279
References . . . 280

9 Coherent Effects in Femtosecond Spectroscopy: A Simple Picture Using the Bloch Equation
M. Joffre . . . 283
9.1 Introduction . . . 283
9.2 Theoretical Model . . . 283
9.2.1 Equation of Evolution . . . 284
9.2.2 Perturbation Theory . . . 286
9.2.3 Two-Level Model . . . 289
9.2.4 Induced Polarization . . . 290
9.3 Applications to Femtosecond Spectroscopy . . . 291
9.3.1 First Order . . . 291
9.3.2 Second Order . . . 292
9.3.3 Third Order . . . 296
9.4 Multidimensional Spectroscopy . . . 304
9.5 Conclusion . . . 306
9.6 Problems . . . 306
References . . . 307

10 Terahertz Femtosecond Pulses
A. Bonvalet and M. Joffre . . . 309
10.1 Introduction . . . 309
10.2 Generation of Terahertz Pulses . . . 310
10.2.1 Photoconductive Switching . . . 311
10.2.2 Optical Rectification in a Nonlinear Medium . . . 314
10.3 Measurement of Terahertz Pulses . . . 316
10.3.1 Fourier Transform Spectroscopy . . . 316
10.3.2 Photoconductive Sampling . . . 319
10.3.3 Free-Space Electro-Optic Sampling . . . 319
10.4 Some Experimental Results . . . 321
10.5 Time-Domain Terahertz Spectroscopy . . . 325
10.6 Conclusion . . . 326
10.7 Problems . . . 329
References . . . 330

11 Coherent Control in Atoms, Molecules and Solids
T. Amand, V. Blanchet, B. Girard and X. Marie 333
11.1 Introduction 333
11.2 Coherent Control in the Frequency Domain 334
11.3 Temporal Coherent Control 339
11.3.1 Principles of Temporal Coherent Control 339
11.3.2 Temporal Coherent Control in Solid State Physics 347
11.4 Coherent Control with Shaped Laser Pulses 356
11.4.1 Generation of Chirped or Shaped Laser Pulses 357
11.4.2 Coherent Control with Chirped Laser Pulses 360
11.4.3 Coherent Control with Shaped Laser Pulses 365
11.5 Coherent Control in Strong Field 374
11.6 Conclusion 385
References 387

12 Attosecond Pulses
E. Constant and E. Mével 395
12.1 Introduction 395
12.2 High-Order Harmonic Generation: A Coherent, Short-Pulse XUV Source 396
12.3 Semiclassical Picture of HHG 398
12.3.1 Atomic Ionization in the Tunnel Domain 399
12.3.2 Electronic Motion in an Electric Field 400
12.3.3 Semiclassical View of HHG 402
12.4 High-Order Harmonic Generation as an Attosecond Pulse Source 405
12.4.1 Emission of an Isolated Attosecond Pulse 408
12.5 Techniques for Measurement of Attosecond Pulses 412
12.5.1 Cross Correlation 412
12.5.2 Laser Streaking 414
12.5.3 Autocorrelation 415
12.5.4 XUV-induced Nonlinear Processes 416
12.5.5 Splitting, Delay Control and Recombination of Attosecond Pulses 416
12.6 Applications of Attosecond Pulses 417
12.7 Conclusion 419
References 419

Index 423