

## Task 2

# Modeling, Fabrication, and Optimization of Niobium Cavities

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## BACKGROUND

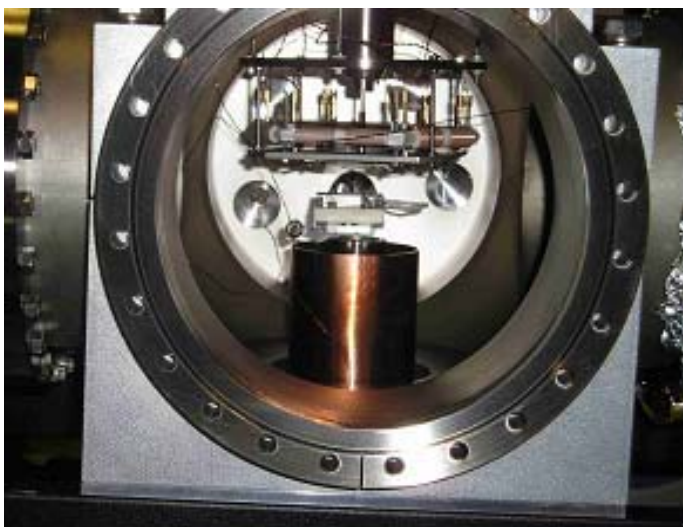
One of the key technologies for the deployment of accelerator-driven transmutation systems is the accelerator itself. Elliptical superconducting niobium cavities are used to increase the efficiency of the high-power accelerators needed to support the transmutation mission.

One of the major sources of energy loss from a superconducting accelerator cavity is a process known as multiple impacting (or “multipacting”) of electrons. This phenomenon limits the maximum amount of energy and power that the niobium cavity can store. As a result, the maximum power available for accelerating the desired charge, as well as the overall performance of the accelerator is reduced. Furthermore, the energy absorbed as a result of multipacting eventually turns into heat. This negatively impacts the performance of both the superconducting cavity and the accelerator.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

This project was tasked with examining the impacts of the design and fabrication technologies for these elliptical niobium cavities on their performance. Niobium was selected primarily due to its behavior at low temperatures.

One objective of this study was to experimentally model the fluid flow resulting in the chemical etching of niobium cavities with the aid of a baffle. Numerical analyses tend to show that



Side view of the secondary electron emission system. The components from top to bottom are: electron gun end, electron beam tube, particle position detector, micro-channel plate stack, business end of the manipulator arm, top of cryostat, and cryostat thermal guard.

the current etching process with a baffle does not uniformly etch the cavity surface. Multiple cavity cell geometries were investigated. Optimization techniques were applied in search of the chemical etching processes, which would lead to cavity walls with near ideal properties.

A Monte Carlo secondary electron microscopy (SEM) code was modified to provide a statistical study of electron impact from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) cleaned niobium samples at near cryogenic temperatures in a UHV environment. A one-of-a-kind secondary electron emission test stand was developed to study, in part, the dynamics of the emitted particles subjected to an electron beam. Coordinating code studies with experiments offers a wealth of knowledge regarding the surface physics of the material that can enhance modeling codes at LANL.

Modeling codes, optimization techniques, and experimentation provided UNLV researchers with a well-rounded study to examine existing and novel niobium cavity designs and cleaning processes for the superconducting radio frequency high-current accelerator.

## RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

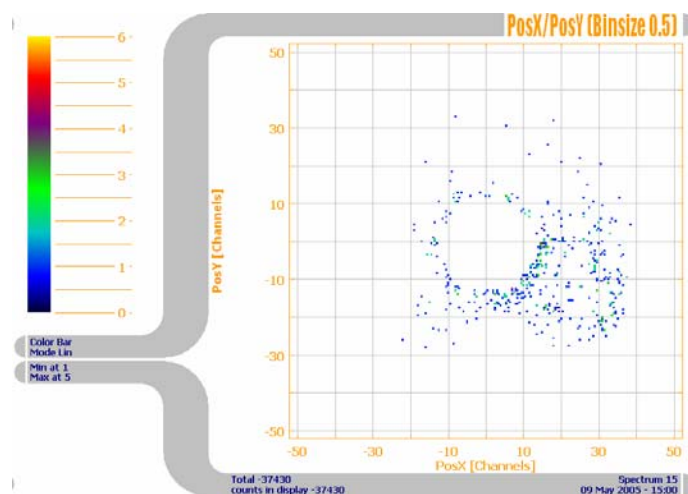
Monte Carlo SEE Code Development and Modifications: A Monte Carlo secondary electron emission code based on the “Single Scatter” approach was obtained from Dr. David Joy of both ORNL and the University of Tennessee. The “Single Scatter” approach follows the primary electron and each generation of secondary electron through the entire cascade. The code was modified to allow for surface layer contaminants in the hopes to verify experimental studies. The code only offers approximate results since the inherent mechanisms internal to the code are valid at higher primary beam energies. A SEE code was used to study the initial particle trajectory conditions of the secondary electron released by the primary electron impacted niobium sample. Results were compared with experiments.

SEE (Secondary Electron Emission) Studies: Niobium samples were cleaned both at LANL and Cornell University and used for experimentation. Two types of cleaning procedures have been used: electro-polishing and buffered chemical polishing. *In situ* pictures of the sample surface were taken with a long-range light microscope for future comparisons.

The experimental setup is unique offering further insights to the SEE process not attained elsewhere. Individual electrons are detected and mapped over the detector surface. With the aid of particle tracking codes, knowledge of the final condition of the electron suggests a family of initial particle trajectory conditions of the emitted electron. Using the Monte Carlo SEE code, the family of initial conditions were evaluated. By March

2004, many of the components of the experimental study reached UNLV with some assembly accomplished. The first secondary electron emission (SEE) measurement was made from the surface of a Faraday cup in September 2004. In December of 2004, the software for the particle positioning detector was finally up and running. The integrity of the code and detector were fine-tuned and initial experiments were completed by April 2005. Experiments on the surface cleaned samples were completed in May of 2005. Experimental studies were completed on the samples provided by LANL.

Revised Etching Process: The current etching method, which uses a baffle to direct the etching fluid toward the surface of the cavity, partially succeeded in achieving its task. However, flow was restricted to the right half of the cavity with very limited circulation in the left half. An alternative design was proposed and modeled. The exit flow is now parallel to flow inlet. Results show that flow circulation was eliminated. The flow is now closer to the surface of the cavity. Optimization techniques were used to improve this design.



*Typical secondary electron emission detected when a 100 ms pulse, 1 keV electron beam impinges on a 30 degree incline, virgin surface of niobium before in situ sample baking. Each pixel represents a spatial bin on the detector. The color of the pixel corresponds to the number of electrons detected at that position. The sample was buffered chemically polished. Single count events have been removed to enhance the scattering tendency.*

Developed Flow Visualization System: To confirm the predictions from the fluid flow models used to analyze the etching process, the UNLV team developed and deployed a flow visualization system. A complete experimental setup, including a computer-controlled x-y traverse and digital camera, was assembled. Flow visualization experiments using a plastic prototype of the niobium cavity used dye injection. Dye injection provided quantitative verification that laminar flow exists within the niobium cavities during etching. Additionally, it verified the absence of re-circulation pockets within the cavities.

The etching process and flow visualization process has led to a thesis. The secondary electron emission studies will also lead to a thesis in the summer of 2005. Results are to be presented at the IEEE ICOPS conference in June of 2005 and a referred journal paper is to be submitted during the summer of 2005.

## TASK 2 PROFILE

Start Date: June 2001  
Completion Date: July 2005

### Theses Generated:

Qin Xue, M.S., Mechanical Engineering, "Modeling and Simulation of the Chemical Etching Process in Niobium Cavities," August 2002.  
Satish Subramanian, M.S., Mechanical Engineering, "Modeling, Optimization, and Flow Visualization of Chemical Etching Process in Niobium Cavities," May 2004.  
Anoop George, M.S. Electrical and Computer Engineering, "Study of Secondary Electron Emission from Niobium at Cryogenic Temperatures," August 2005.

### Conference Proceedings:

A. George, R.A. Schill, Jr., R. Kant, and S. Goldfarb, "Secondary Electron Emission from Niobium at Cryogenic Temperatures," International Conference on Plasma Science 2005, Monterey, CA, June 20-24, 2005.  
M.B. Trabia, W. Culbreth, S. Subramanian, and T. Tajima, "Optimization of Chemical Etching Process in Niobium Cavities," *Proceedings*, ASME 2004 Design Engineering Technical Conferences and Computers and Information in Engineering Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, September 28 – October 2, 2004.  
M. Holl, M. Trabia, and R.A. Schill, Jr., "Optimization of a Five-Cell Niobium Cavity," Sixth International Topical Meeting on the Nuclear Applications of Accelerator Technology, San Diego, CA, June 1-5, 2003.  
Q. Xue, S. Subramanian, M. Trabia, Y.T. Chen, and R.A. Schill, Jr., "Modeling and Optimization of the Chemical Etching Process in Niobium Cavities," International Congress on Advanced Nuclear Power Plants, Hollywood, Florida, June 9-13, 2002.

### Research Staff

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