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Stopping of Directed Energetic Electrons in High-Temperature Hydrogenic Plasmas

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Stopping of Directed Energetic Electrons in High-Temperature Hydrogenic Plasmas

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From fundamental principles, the interaction of directed energetic electrons with a high-temperature hydrogenic plasma is analytically modeled. The randomizing effect of scattering off both plasma ions and electrons is treated. For electron energies less than 3 MeV, electron scattering dominates. The net effect is to reduce the penetration from 0.53 to 0.35 g/cm^2 for 1-MeV electrons in a 300g/cm^3 plasma at 5 keV. These considerations are relevant to "fast-ignition" and to fuel pre-heat for inertial confinement fusion.

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A basic problem in plasma physics is the interaction and energy loss of energetic charged particles in plasmas [1-4]. This problem has traditionally focused on ions (*i.e.* protons, alphas, etc.), either in the context of heating and/or ignition in, for example, inertially confined plasmas (ICF) [3-6]; or the use of these particles for diagnosing implosion dynamics [7]. More recently, prompted in part by the concept of fast ignition for ICF [8], workers have begun considering energy deposition from relativistic fast electrons in deuterium-tritium (DT) plasmas [8-13]. Tabak *et al.* [8] used, for example, the energy deposition of Berger and Seltzer [14] that is based on the continuous-slowing-down of electrons in cold matter. This treatment, though quite similar to electron slowing in plasmas, does not include the effects of scattering. Deutsch *et al.* [9] addressed this issue by considering the effects of scattering off the background ions [16,17]; they ignored scattering due to background electrons.

In another important context in ICF, workers addressed the issue of fuel pre-heat due to energetic electrons (~50-300 keV) [5, 18, 19], the consequence of which is to elevate the fuel adiabat to levels that would prohibit ignition. Herein we show that scattering effects could be significant for quantitative evaluations of preheat.

The starting point for these calculations is the relativistic elastic differential cross sections for electrons scattering off fully ionized ions of charge Z [20-22], and off the neutralizing bath of electrons [23,21,24] , which are approximated as

$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{ei} \approx \frac{Z^2}{4}\left(\frac{r_0}{\gamma\beta^2}\right)^2 \frac{1}{\sin^4 \theta/2} \quad ; \tag{1}$$

$$Z\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{ee} \approx Z\,\frac{(\gamma+1)^2}{\left(2^{\sqrt{\frac{\gamma+1}{2}}}\right)^4}\left(\frac{r_0}{\gamma\beta^2}\right)^2 \frac{1}{\sin^4 \theta/2} \quad , \tag{2}$$

where β = v/c and γ =$(1-\beta^2)^{-1/2}$; $r_0 = e^2/m_0c^2$ is the classical electron radius . The potential importance of electron scattering is implied from the ratio

$$\Re = Z\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{ee} \Big/ \left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)^{ei} \approx \frac{4(\gamma+1)^2}{\left(2^{\sqrt{\frac{\gamma+1}{2}}}\right)^4}\frac{1}{Z}. \qquad (3)$$

For a hydrogenic plasma (Z=1) and for $\gamma \lesssim 10$, $\Re \sim 1$, indicating that the electron component is potentially important. As best we can tell, the electron scattering component has been ignored by workers since it was typically assumed, usually justifiably, that ion scattering dominates. However, this won't be the case for problems discussed herein, for relativistic astrophysical jets [25], or for many of the present high-energy laser plasma experiments [26] for which Z is about one and for which $\gamma \lesssim 10$.

To calculate the effects of multiple-scattering a Boltzmann-like diffusion equation is used [27]

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial s} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla f = n_i \int \left[f(\mathbf{x},\mathbf{v}',s) - f(\mathbf{x},\mathbf{v},s)\right]\sigma(|\mathbf{v}-\mathbf{v}'|)d\mathbf{v}' \ , \qquad (4)$$

where f is the angular distribution function of the scattered electrons; n_i is the number density of plasma ions of charge Z; $\mathbf{x}$ is the position where scattering occurs; $\sigma=\sigma_{ei}+Z\sigma_{ee}$ is the total scattering cross section where $\sigma_{ei}=\int(d\sigma/d\Omega)^{ei}\, d\Omega$ and $\sigma_{ee}=\int(d\sigma/d\Omega)^{ee}\, d\Omega$. Eq. (4) is solved in a cylindrical coordinates with the assumption that the scattering is azimuthally symmetric. The solution that satisfies the boundary conditions is [27,28]

$$f(\theta,s) = \frac{1}{4\pi}\sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty}(2\ell+1)P_\ell(\cos\theta)\exp\left(-\int_0^S \sigma_\ell(s')ds'\right) , \qquad (5)$$

where $P_\ell(\cos\theta)$ are the Legendre polynomials. Using orthogonality and projecting the ℓ=1 term,

$$<\cos\theta> = \int f(\theta,s)P_1(\cos\theta)d\Omega = \exp\left(-\int_0^S \sigma_1(s')ds'\right) = \exp\left(-\int_{E_0}^{E}\sigma_1(E)\left(\frac{dE}{ds}\right)^{-1}dE\right), \qquad (6)$$

where $<\cos\theta>$, a function of the residual electron energy, is the measure of the mean scattering angle [29], and is critical to this calculation as it relates

$$\frac{dE}{dx} = <\cos\theta>^{-1}\frac{dE}{ds} \ , \qquad (7)$$

where dE/ds is the stopping power along the path while dE/dx is the linear energy stopping power. In the above,

$$S(E) = \int_0^S ds' = \int_{E_0}^{E}\left(\frac{dE}{ds}\right)^{-1} dE \ , \qquad (8)$$

and

$$\sigma_1(E) = 2\pi n_i \int_0^{\pi}\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)(1-\cos\theta)\sin\theta d\theta \ , \qquad (9)$$

where σ_1 is the diffusion cross section (or transport cross section) which characterizes the loss of directed electron velocity through scattering [2]. Eqs. (1) and (2) are substituted into the Eq. (9) and, after a standard change of variables, the integrations are taken from $b_\perp^{ei}$ or $b_\perp^{ee}$ to λ_D , where λ_D is the Debye length [30], and $b_\perp^{ei} = Zr_0/\gamma\beta^2$ and

$b_{\perp}^{ee} \approx 2(\gamma+1)r_0/[(2^{\sqrt{\frac{\gamma+1}{2}}})^2\gamma\beta^2]$ are the impact parameters for 90° scattering of electrons off ions (*e->i*) or electrons off electrons (*e->e*). Thus

$$\sigma_1(E) = \sigma_1^{ei}(E) + Z\sigma_1^{ee}(E) = 4\pi n_i\left(\frac{r_0}{\gamma\beta^2}\right)^2\left[Z^2 \ln\Lambda^{ei} + \frac{4(\gamma+1)^2}{\left(2^{\sqrt{\frac{\gamma+1}{2}}}\right)^4} Z \ln\Lambda^{ee}\right], \tag{10}$$

where the arguments of the Coulomb logarithm are: $\Lambda^{ei} = \lambda_D / b_{\perp}^{ei}$, and $\Lambda^{ee} = \lambda_D / b_{\perp}^{ee}$. As these Coulomb logarithms play an important role in this and later calculations, they are shown in Fig.1.

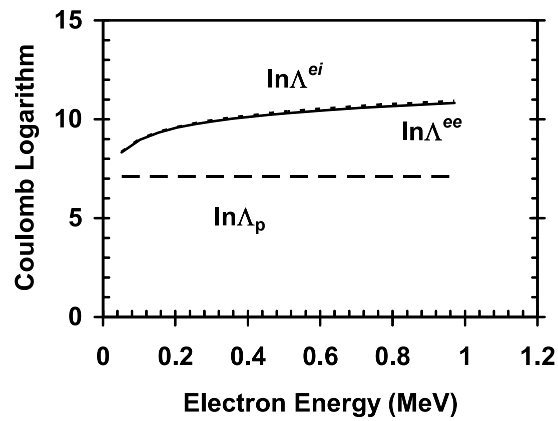

FIG.1 The Coulomb logarithms for incident 1-MeV electrons interacting with a DT plasma (ρ =300g/cm^3; T_e=5 keV). For the background plasma the Coulomb logarithm, lnΛ_p, relevant to plasma transport processes (*e.g.* electrical and thermal conductivity), is about 7.

The stopping power in Eq. (6) consists of contributions from binary interactions with plasma electrons and from plasma oscillations. The binary contribution is [31]

$$\left(\frac{dE}{ds}\right)_b = -n_i Z(\gamma-1)m_0c^2 \int_{\varepsilon_{\min}}^{\varepsilon_{\max}} \varepsilon\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\varepsilon}\right)d\varepsilon , \tag{11}$$

where the differential energy loss cross section is from Møller [23]

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\varepsilon} = \frac{2\pi r_0^2}{(\gamma-1)\beta^2}\left(\frac{1}{\varepsilon^2} + \frac{1}{(1-\varepsilon)^2} + \left(\frac{\gamma-1}{\gamma}\right)^2 - \frac{2\gamma-1}{\gamma^2\varepsilon(1-\varepsilon)}\right) , \tag{12}$$

and ε is the energy transfer in units of $(\gamma$ -1$)m_0c^2$. The lower integration limit reflects the minimum energy transfer, which occurs when an incident electron interacts with a plasma electron at λ_D, *i.e.* $\varepsilon_{\min} = 2\gamma r_0{}^2/[\lambda_D(\gamma-1)]^2$. The upper limit occurs for a head-on collision, for which $\varepsilon_{\max} = 0.5$.

The contribution from plasma oscillations, which reflects the response of the plasma to impact parameters larger than λ_D [32], is

$$\left(\frac{dE}{ds}\right)_c = -\frac{4\pi r_0^2 m_0 c^2 n_i Z}{\beta^2}\ln\left(\frac{1.123\beta}{\sqrt{2kT_e/m_0c^2}}\right) , \tag{13}$$

where relativistic effects are included. Consequently,

$$\frac{dE}{ds} = -\frac{2\pi r_0^2 m_0 c^2 n_i Z}{\beta^2}\left[\ln\left(\frac{(\gamma-1)\lambda_D}{2\sqrt{2\gamma}r_0}\right)^2 + 1 + \frac{1}{8}\left(\frac{\gamma-1}{\gamma}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{2\gamma-1}{\gamma}\right)\ln 2 + \ln\left(\frac{1.123\beta}{\sqrt{2kT_e/m_0c^2}}\right)^2\right] \quad . \qquad (14)$$

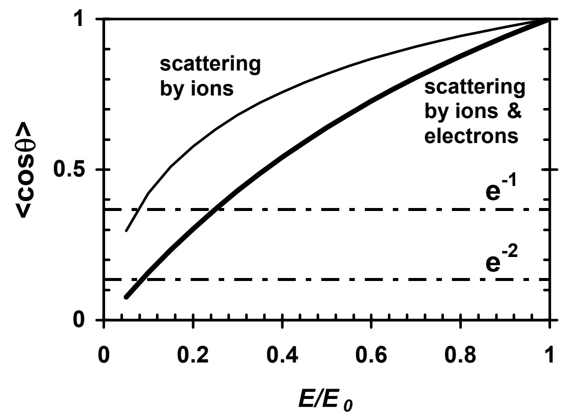

FIG. 2 <cosθ> is plotted against the fraction of the residual energy in a DT plasma for *e->i* and for *e-> i+e* scattering (1-MeV electrons with ρ=300g/cm^3; T_e=5 keV). This illustrates the importance of the electron scattering component. When <cosθ> equals one e-folding, corresponding to $|\theta| \approx 68°$ and $E/E_0 \approx 0.2$, the incident electron has lost memory of its initial direction.

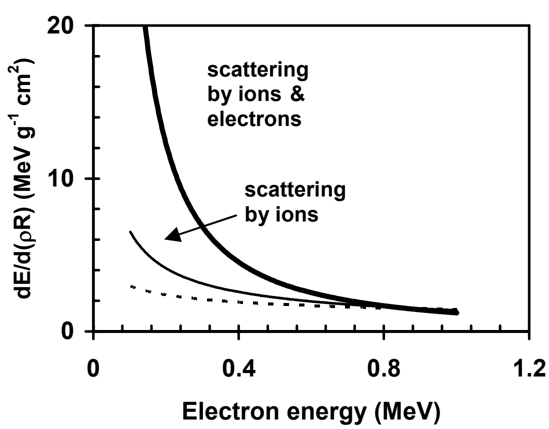

FIG.3 Stopping powers for linear-energy transfer and continuous-slowing-down are plotted as a function of the electron energy for incident 1-MeV electrons in a DT plasma (ρ=300g/cm^3; T_e=5 keV). Significant enhancement of *dE/dx* (solid lines) over *dE/ds* (dashed line) is a consequence of the effects of scatterings.

Fig. 2 illustrates this relationship [Eq. (6)] where the incident electron (E_0 =1 MeV) continuously changes direction as it loses energy. When <cosθ> equals one e-folding, $|\theta| \approx 68°$ and $E/E_0 \approx 0.2$, at which point the incident electron has lost memory of its initial direction.

We iterate upon this process until the electrons are thermalized with the background plasma, which has the cumulative effect of bending the path of the electrons away from their initial direction. Fig. 3 illustrates the enhancement of *dE/dx* for scattering off ions and for scattering off ions plus electrons.

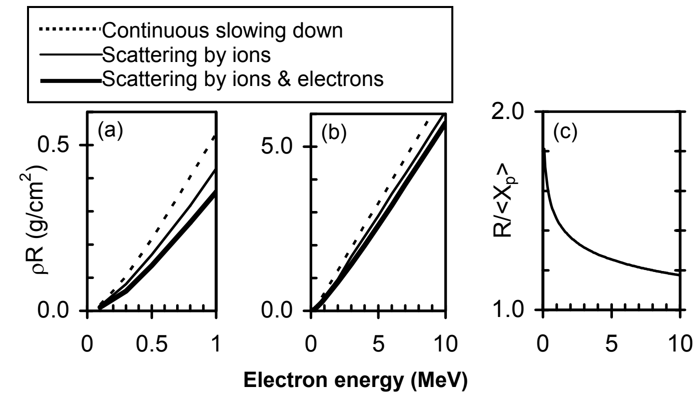

FIG. 4 The range (dashed line) and penetration for 0.1 to 1-MeV electrons [FIG. 4(a)] and for 1 to 10 MeV electrons [FIG. 4(b)] in a DT plasmas (ρ=300g/cm^3; T_e=5 keV). The penetration is shown for scattering off ions, and for scattering off ions plus electrons. A factor of 10 reduction in either the temperature or density results in only ~ 10% reduction in the penetration. FIG. 4 (c) shows the ratio of range to penetration for 0.1 to 10 MeV electrons. As the initial electron energy decreases, the effects of scattering become more pronounced, and the penetration is even further diminished with respect to the range.

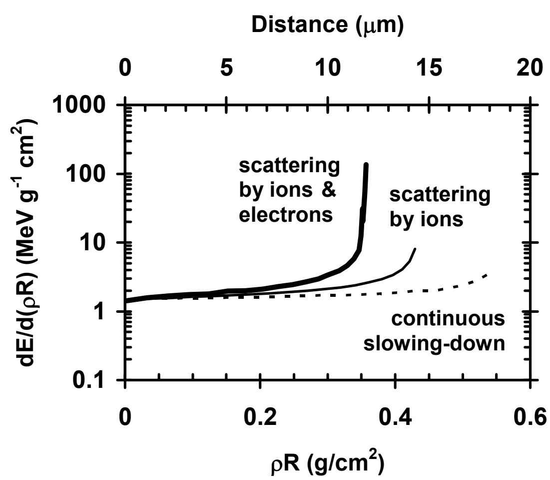

FIG.5 The energy transfer of 1-MeV electrons to background plasma electrons, plotted as a function of the electron penetration, for a DT plasma with ρ=300g/cm^3 and T_e=5 keV. The three curves correspond to three different models. As a result of the scattering effects, the energy transfer increases notably near the end of the penetration (*i.e*. an effective Bragg peak). For these 1-MeV electrons, the effects of scattering reduce the penetration from 0.53 g/cm^2 to 0.35 g/cm^2 [33].

This effect is further illustrated in Fig. 4 where the corresponding set of curves for range (R), and penetration ($\langle X_p \rangle$) with and without the electron contribution, are shown, for electrons with E_0=0.1-10 MeV.

$$R = \int_0^R ds' = \int_{E_0}^{\sim kT} \left(\frac{dE}{ds} \right)^{-1} dE \,, \qquad (15)$$

and

$$\langle X_p \rangle \approx \sum_{n=0} e^{-n} \int_{E_n}^{E_{n+1}} \langle \cos\theta \rangle \left(\frac{dE}{ds} \right)^{-1} dE \quad , \tag{16}$$

where E_0 is the initial energy; E_1, E_2…..correspond to the electron energies at the first, second ….e-folding of $\langle\cos\theta\rangle$ (see Fig.2); R is the total path length the electron traverses as it scatters about and eventually thermalizes; and $\langle X_p \rangle$ is the distance along the *initial* electron trajectory that it eventually reaches. Contributions from electron and ion scattering are both evident in Fig. 4.

Three other points are worth noting: First, the temperature and density dependence are weak, i.e. a factor of 10 reductions in either temperature or density results in only ~ 10% reduction in the penetration. Secondly, as the initial electron energy decreases, the effects of scattering become more pronounced (Fig. 4c), an effect, very similar in nature, that is also seen in the scattering of energetic electrons in metals [34]. And thirdly, for a given electron energy, scattering effects slightly decrease as the target plasma temperature decreases, *i.e.* the path of the electron slightly straightens as the target plasma temperature drops. For example, when the target plasma temperature changes from 5.0 to 0.5 keV (ρ=300 g/cm^3), the ratio $R/\langle X_p\rangle$ is reduced by ~ 5% for 1-MeV electrons. This effect can be identified with Eq. (10), which represents the consequence of scattering.

With the calculation of the penetration as a function of energy loss, the energy deposition can be evaluated (Fig 5). In addition to the differences in total penetration with and without electron scattering contributions, it is seen that the linear-energy-transfer notably increases near the end of its penetration (*i.e.* an effective Bragg peak), an effect which is seen more weakly with just ion scattering. These differences could be important in quantitatively modeling the energy deposition of relativistic electrons for fast ignition, and for critically assessing ignition requirements. Thus fast ignition calculations that assume a uniform energy deposition [10] and a Berger-Seltzer type penetration [8] may need to be revisited [35]. It is also interesting, and a consequence of selecting 1-MeV electrons [Figs. 4 and 5], that the effects of scattering reduce the penetration from 0.53 to 0.35 g/cm^2; this latter value is close to the range of 3.5 MeV alphas, 0.3 g/cm^2, which is required for hot-spot ignition in a 10 keV plasma [3-6].

Finally, in order to explore the importance of electron-on-electron multiple scattering in a hydrogenic setting, and as definitive stopping power experiments in plasmas are extremely difficult, we propose that experiments be undertaken in which a monoenergetic electron beam, with energy between 0.1 and 1.0 MeV, scatters off thin layers of either D_2 or H_2 ice, where the thickness of the ice layer is between ~ 100 and 1000 μm, the appropriate thickness depending on the exact electron energy. Although there are differences in the scattering calculations for cold, condensed hydrogenic matter and a hydrogenic plasma, there is reason to believe that the *relative* importance of the electron-to electron and the electron-to-ion multiple scattering terms will be approximately the same for both states of matter.

In summary, the energy loss and penetration of energetic electrons into a hydrogenic plasma has been analytically calculated. In general scattering enhances the electron linear-energy transfer along the initial electron direction, and can substantially reduce the electron penetration. Energy deposition is shown to increase notably near the end of its range. These results should have relevance to “fast-ignition” and to fuel preheat in inertial confinement fusion, especially to energy deposition calculations that critically assess quantitative ignition conditions.

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