AXIONS AND OTHER VERY LIGHT BOSONS, PART III (EXPERIMENTAL LIMITS)

(Revised November 2003 by C. Hagmann, K. van Bibber, and L.J. Rosenberg, LLNL)

In this section we review the experimental methodology and limits on light axions and light pseudoscalars in general. (A comprehensive overview of axion theory is given by H. Murayama in the Part I of this Review, whose notation we follow [1].) Within its scope are purely laboratory experiments, searches where the axion is assumed to be halo dark matter, and searches where the Sun is presumed to be a source of axions. We restrict the discussion to axions of mass $m_A < O(\mathrm{eV})$, as the allowed range for the axion mass is nominally $10^{-6} < m_A < 10^{-2}$ eV. Experimental work in this range predominantly has been through the axion-to-two-photon coupling $g_{A\gamma}$, to which the present review is largely confined. As discussed in Part II of this Review by G. Raffelt, the lower bound to the axion mass derives from a cosmological overclosure argument, and the upper bound most restrictively from SN1987A [2]. Limits from stellar evolution overlap seamlessly above that, connecting with accelerator-based limits that ruled out the original axion. There, it was assumed that the Peccei-Quinn symmetry-breaking scale was the electroweak scale, *i.e.,* $f_A \sim 250$ GeV, implying axions of mass $m_A \sim O(100\,\mathrm{keV})$. These earlier limits from nuclear transitions, particle decays, *etc.,* while not discussed here, are included in the Listings.

While the axion mass is well-determined by the Peccei-Quinn scale, *i.e.,* $m_A = 0.62\,\mathrm{eV}(10^7\,\mathrm{GeV}/f_A)$, the axion-photon coupling $g_{A\gamma}$ is not: $g_{A\gamma} = (\alpha/\pi f_A)g_\gamma$, with $g_\gamma = (E/N - 1.92)/2$, and where E/N is a model-dependent number. It is noteworthy, however, that quite distinct models lead to axion-photon couplings that are not very different. For example, in the case of axions imbedded in Grand Unified Theories, the DFSZ axion [3], $g_\gamma = 0.37$, whereas in one popular implementation of the "hadronic" class of axions, the KSVZ axion [4], $g_\gamma = -0.96$. Hence, between these two models, rates for axion-photon processes $\sim g_{A\gamma}^2$ differ by less than a factor of 10. The Lagrangian $\mathcal{L} = g_{A\gamma}\mathbf{E}\cdot\mathbf{B}\phi_A$, with ϕ_A the axion field,

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permits the conversion of an axion into a single real photon in an external electromagnetic field, *i.e.,* a Primakoff interaction. In the case of relativistic axions, $k_\gamma - k_A \sim m_A^2/2\omega$, pertinent to several experiments below, coherent axion-photon mixing in long magnetic fields results in significant conversion probability even for very weakly coupled axions [5]. This mixing of photons and axions has been posited to explain dimming from distant supernovae and the apparent long interstellar attenuation length of the most energetic cosmic rays [6].

Below are discussed several experimental techniques constraining $g_{A\gamma}$, and their results. Also included are recent unpublished results, and projected sensitivities of experiments soon to be upgraded or made operational. Recent reviews describe these experiments in greater detail [7].

III.1. Microwave cavity experiments: Perhaps the most promising avenue to the discovery of the axion presumes that axions constitute a significant fraction of the local dark matter halo in our galaxy. An estimate for the Cold Dark matter (CDM) component of our local galactic halo is $\rho_{\rm CDM} = 7.5 \times 10^{-25}{\rm g/cm}^3$ ($450\,{\rm MeV/cm}^3$) [8]. That the CDM halo is in fact made of axions (rather than, *e.g.,* WIMPs) is in principle an independent assumption. However should very light axions exist, they would almost necessarily be cosmologically abundant [2]. As shown by Sikivie [9] and Krauss *et al.* [10], halo axions may be detected by their resonant conversion into a quasi-monochromatic microwave signal in a high-Q cavity permeated by a strong static magnetic field. The cavity is tunable and the signal is maximum when the frequency $\nu = m_A(1 + O(10^{-6}))$, the width of the peak representing the virial distribution of thermalized axions in the galactic gravitational potential. The signal may possess finer structure due to axions recently fallen into the galaxy and not yet thermalized [11]. The feasibility of the technique was established in early experiments of small sensitive volume, $V = O(1\,{\rm liter})$ [12] with HFET amplifiers, setting limits in the mass range $4.5 < m_A < 16.3\ \mu{\rm eV}$, but lacking by 2–3 orders of magnitude the sensitivity to detect KSVZ and DFSZ axions (the conversion power $P_{A\to\gamma} \propto g_{A\gamma}^2$). ADMX, a later experiment ($B \sim 7.8$ T, $V \sim 200$ liter) has achieved sensitivity to KSVZ axions over the mass range 1.9–3.3 μeV, and continues to operate [13]. The exclusion regions shown in Figure 1 for Refs. 12,13 are all normalized to the CDM density $\rho_{\rm CDM} = 7.5 \times 10^{-25}$g/cm^3 (450 MeV/cm^3) and 90% CL. A near quantum-limited low noise DC SQUID amplifier [14] is being installed in the upgraded ADMX experiment. A Rydberg atom single-quantum detector [15] is being commissioned in a new RF cavity axion search [16]. These new technologies promise dramatic improvements in experimental sensitivity, which should enable rapid scanning of the axion mass range at or better than the sensitivity required to detect DFSZ axions. The search region of the microwave cavity experiments is shown in detail in Figure 1.

III.2 Optical and Radio Telescope searches: For axions of mass greater than about 10^{-1} eV, their cosmological abundance is no longer dominated by vacuum misalignment of string radiation mechanisms, but rather by thermal emission. Their contribution to critical density is small $\Omega \sim 0.01(m_A/\text{eV})$. However, the spontaneous-decay lifetime of axions, $\tau(A \to 2\gamma) \sim 10^{25}\text{sec}(m_A/\text{eV})^{-5}$ while irrelevant for μeV axions, is short enough to afford a powerful constraint on such thermally produced axions in the eV mass range, by looking for a quasi-monochromatic photon line from galactic clusters. This line, corrected for Doppler shift, would be at half the axion mass and its width would be consistent with the observed virial motion, typically $\Delta\lambda/\lambda \sim 10^{-2}$. The expected line intensity would be of the order $I_A \sim 10^{-17}(m_A/3\,\text{eV})^7 \text{erg}\,\text{cm}^{-2}\text{arcsec}^{-2}\text{Å}^{-1}\text{sec}^{-1}$ for DFSZ axions, comparable to the continuum night emission. The conservative assumption is made that the relative density of thermal axions fallen into the cluster gravitational potential reflects their overall cosmological abundance. A search for thermal axions in three rich Abell clusters was carried out at Kitt Peak National Laboratory [17]; no such line was observed between 3100–8300 Å (m_A = 3–8 eV) after on-off field subtraction of the atmospheric molecular background spectra. A limit everywhere stronger than $g_{A\gamma} < 10^{-10}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ is set, which is seen from Fig. 2 to easily exclude DFSZ axions throughout the mass range.

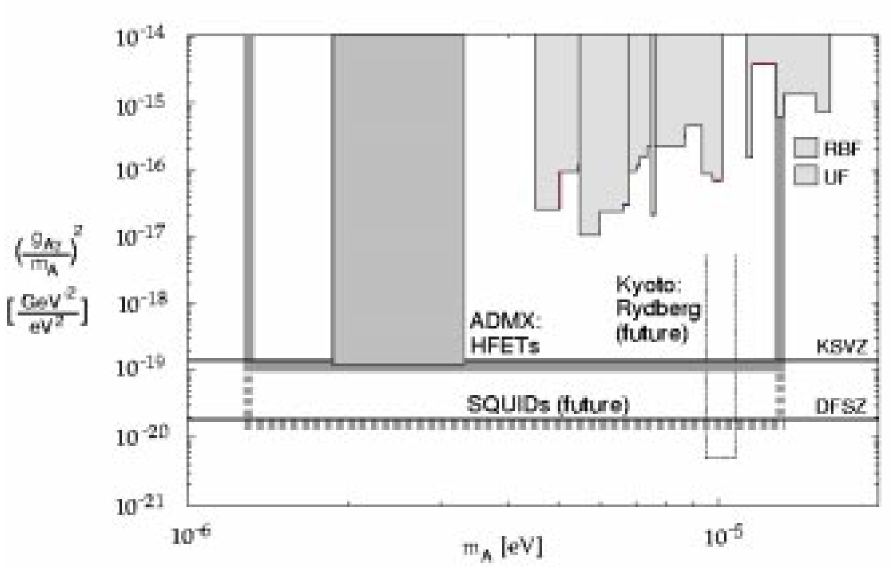

Figure 1: Exclusion region from the microwave cavity experiments, where the plot is flattened by presenting $(g_{A\gamma}/m_A)^2$ versus m_A. The first-generation experiments ("RBF" and "UF" [12]) and in-progress "ADMX" [13] are all HFET-based. Shown also is the full mass range to be covered by the latter experiment (shaded line), and the improved sensitivity when upgraded with DC SQUID amplifiers [14] (shaded dashed line). The expected sensitivity of "CARRACK II" based on a Rydberg single-quantum receiver (dotted line) is also shown in Ref. 16.

Similar in principle to the optical telescope search, microwave photons from spontaneous axion decay in halos of astrophysical objects may be searched for with a radio telescope. One group [18] aimed the Haystack radio dish at several nearby dwarf galaxies. The expected signal is a narrow spectral line with the expected virial width, Doppler shift, and intensity distribution about the center of the galaxies. They reported limits of $g_{A\gamma} < 1.0 \times 10^{-9}\mathrm{GeV}^{-1}$ for $m_A \sim$ few$\times$100 μeV. They propose an interferometric radio telescope search with sensitivity near $g_{A\gamma}$ of $10^{-10}\mathrm{GeV}^{-1}$.

III.3 A search for solar axions: As with the telescope search for thermally produced axions, the search for solar

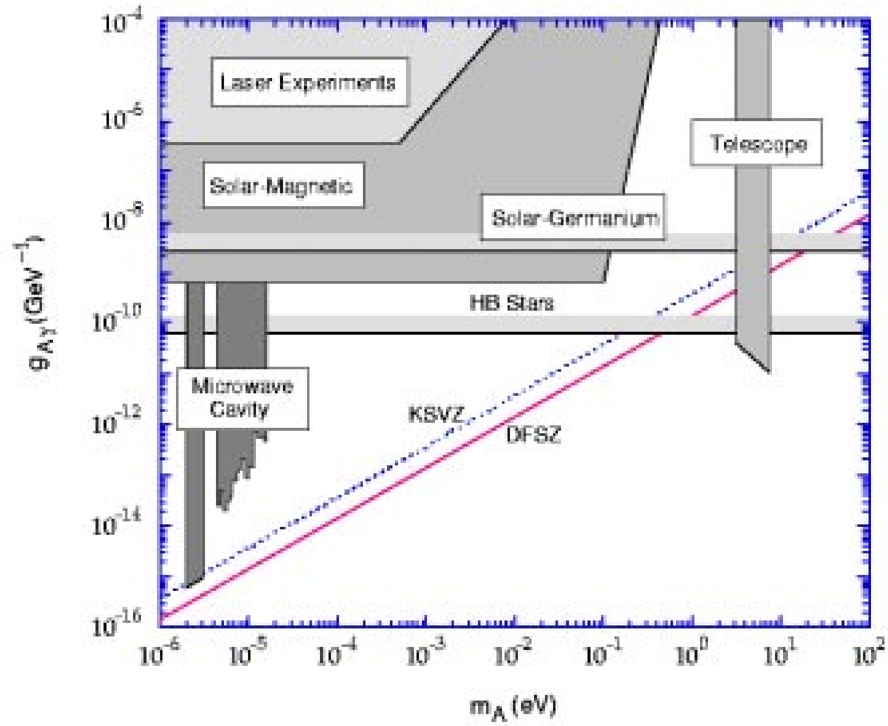

Figure 2: Exclusion region in mass versus axion-photon coupling $(m_A, g_{A\gamma})$ for various experiments. The limit set by globular cluster Horizontal Branch Stars ("HB Stars") is shown in Ref. 2.

axions was stimulated by the possibility of there being a "1 eV window" for hadronic axions (*i.e.,* axions with no tree-level coupling to leptons), a "window" subsequently closed by an improved understanding of the evolution of globular cluster stars and SN1987A [2]. Hadronic axions would be copiously produced within our Sun's interior by a Primakoff process. Their flux at the Earth of $\sim 10^{12}\text{cm}^{-2}\text{sec}^{-1}(m_A/\text{eV})^2$, which is independent of the details of the solar model, is sufficient for a definitive test via the axion reconversion into photons in a large magnetic field. However, their average energy is $\sim$ 4 keV, implying an oscillation length in the vacuum of $2\pi(m_A^2/2\omega)^{-1} \sim O(\text{mm})$, precluding the mixing from achieving its theoretically maximum value in any practical magnet. It was recognized that one could endow the photon with an effective mass in the gas,

$m_\gamma = \omega_{\rm pl}$, thus permitting the axion and photon dispersion relations to be matched [5]. A first simple implementation of this proposal was carried out using a conventional dipole magnet with a conversion volume of variable-pressure gas and a xenon proportional chamber as the x-ray detector [19]. The magnet was fixed in orientation to take data for ~ 1000 sec/day. Axions were excluded for $g_{A\gamma} < 3.6 \times 10^{-9}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ for $m_A < 0.03$ eV, and $g_{A\gamma} < 7.7 \times 10^{-9}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ for $0.03 < m_A < 0.11$ eV (95% CL). A more sensitive experiment (Tokyo axion helioscope) has been completed, using a superconducting magnet on a telescope mount to track the sun continuously. This gives an exclusion limit of $g_{A\gamma} < 6 \times 10^{-10}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ for $m_A < 0.3$ eV [20]. A new experiment CAST (CERN Axion Solar Telescope), using a decommissioned LHC dipole magnet, is taking first data [21]. The projected sensitivity $g_{A\gamma} < 10^{-10}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ for $m_A < 1$ eV, is about that of the globular cluster bounds.

Other searches for solar axions have been carried out using crystal germanium detectors. These exploit the coherent conversion of axions into photons when their angle of incidence satisfies a Bragg condition with a crystalline plane. Analysis of 1.94 kg-yr of data from a 1 kg germanium detector yields a bound of $g_{A\gamma} < 2.7 \times 10^{-9}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ (95% CL) independent of mass up to $m_A \sim 1$ keV [22]. Analysis of 0.2 kg-yr of data from a 0.234 kg germanium detector yields a bound of $g_{A\gamma} < 2.8 \times 10^{-9}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ (95% CL) [23]. A general study of sensitivities [24] concludes these crystal detectors are unlikely to compete with axion bounds arising from globular clusters [25] or helioseismology [26].

III.4 Photon regeneration ("invisible light shining through walls"): Photons propagating through a transverse field (with $\mathbf{E}\|\mathbf{B}$ may convert into axions. For light axions with $m_A^2 l/2\omega \ll 2\pi$, where l is the length of the magnetic field, the axion beam produced is colinear and coherent with the photon beam, and the conversion probability Π is given by $\Pi \sim (1/4)(g_{A\gamma}Bl)^2$. An ideal implementation for this limit is a laser beam propagating down a long, superconducting dipole magnet like those for high-energy physics accelerators. If another such dipole magnet is set up in line with the first, with an optical barrier interposed between them, then photons may be regenerated from the pure axion beam in the second magnet and detected [27]. The overall probability $P(\gamma \rightarrow A \rightarrow \gamma) = \Pi^2$. such an experiment has been carried our, utilizing two magnets of length $l = 4.4$ m and $B = 3.7$ T. Axions with mass $m_A < 10^{-3}$ eV, and $g_{A\gamma} > 6.7 \times 10^{-7}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ were excluded at 95% CL [28]. With sufficient effort, limits comparable to those from stellar evolution would be achievable. Due to the $g^4_{A\gamma}$ rate suppression, however, it does not seem feasible to reach standard axion couplings.

III.5 Polarization experiments: The existence of axions can affect the polarization of light propagating through a transverse magnetic field in two ways [29]. First, as the $\mathbf{E}_{\|}$ component, but not the $\mathbf{E}_{\perp}$ component will be depleted by the production of real axions, there will be in general a small rotation of the polarization vector of linearly polarized light. This effect will be constant for all sufficiently light m_A such that the oscillation length is much longer than the magnet $m^2_A l/2\omega \ll 2\pi$. For heavier axions, the effect oscillates and diminishes with increasing m_A, and vanishes for $m_A > \omega$. The second effect is birefringence of the vacuum, again because there could be a mixing of virtual axions in the $\mathbf{E}_{\|}$ state, but not for the $\mathbf{E}_{\perp}$ state. This will lead to light that is initially linearly polarized becoming elliptically polarized. Higher-order QED also induces vacuum birefringence, and is much stronger than the contribution due to axions. A search for both polarization-rotation and induced ellipticity has been carried out with the same dipole magnets described above [30]. As in the case of photon regeneration, the observables are boosted linearly by the number of passes of the laser beam in the optical cavity within the magnet. The polarization-rotation resulted in a stronger limit than that from ellipticity, $g_{A\gamma} < 3.6 \times 10^{-7}\text{GeV}^{-1}$ (95% CL) for $m_A < 5 \times 10^{-4}$ eV. The limits from ellipticity are better at higher masses, as they fall off smoothly and do not terminate at m_A. Current experiments with greatly improved sensitivity that, while still far from being able to detect standard axions, have measured the QED "light-by-light" contribution for the first time [31]. The overall envelope for limits from the laser-based experiments is shown schematically in Fig. 2.

III.6 Non-Newtonian monopole-dipole couplings: Axions mediate a CP violating monopole-dipole Yukawa-type gravitational interaction potential ($g_s g_p\, \hat{\sigma} \cdot \hat{r}\, \mathrm{e}^{-r/\lambda}$) between spin and matter [32] where $g_s g_p$ is the product of couplings at the scalar and polarized vertices and λ is the range of the force. Two experiments placed upper limits on the product coupling $g_s g_p$ in a system of magnetized media and test masses. One experiment [33] had peak sensitivity near 100 mm (2 μeV axion mass) another [34] had peak sensitivity near 10 mm (20 μeV axion mass). Both lacked sensitivity by 10 orders of magnitude of the sensitivity required to detect couplings implied by the existing limits on a neutron EDM.

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