

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Recent Work

Title

GERMANIUM FET's POINT THE WAY TO LOWER NOISE PREAMPLIFIERS

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2kr7m1h4>

Authors

Elad, Emanuel
Nakamura, Michiyuki.

Publication Date

1967-05-29

UCRL-17593
Summary

University of California
Ernest O. Lawrence
Radiation Laboratory

GERMANIUM FET's POINT THE WAY
TO LOWER NOISE PREAMPLIFIERS

Emanuel Elad and Michiyuki Nakamura

May 29, 1967

TWO-WEEK LOAN COPY

*This is a Library Circulating Copy
which may be borrowed for two weeks.
For a personal retention copy, call
Tech. Info. Division, Ext. 5545*

DISCLAIMER

This document was prepared as an account of work sponsored by the United States Government. While this document is believed to contain correct information, neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor the Regents of the University of California, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by its trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof, or the Regents of the University of California. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof or the Regents of the University of California.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Lawrence Radiation Laboratory
Berkeley, California

AEC Contract No. W-7405-eng-48

GERMANIUM FET's POINT THE WAY
TO LOWER NOISE PREAMPLIFIERS

Emanuel Elad and Michiyuki Nakamura

May 29, 1967

GERMANIUM FET' s POINT THE WAY
TO LOWER NOISE PREAMPLIFIERS

Emanuel Elad and Michiyuki Nakamura

Lawrence Radiation Laboratory
University of California
Berkeley, California

May 29, 1967

SUMMARY

A novel low-noise preamplifier for use with semiconductor radiation detectors is described. The preamplifier utilizes the low-noise characteristics of a cooled germanium junction field-effect transistor (JFET).

Preamplifiers based on silicon JFET' s are currently used in most high-resolution spectrometers. ^{1, 2} The advantages of the germanium FET over its silicon counterpart are closely related to the properties of the two materials at cryogenic temperatures. Germanium has inherently higher mobility than silicon; lattice scattering in germanium is the dominant scattering mechanism down to liquid helium temperatures, therefore the optimum mobility of germanium is much higher than that of silicon and is attained at much lower temperatures. Also, due to lower ionization energies of impurities in germanium, the density of free carriers in this material at low temperatures is higher than that in silicon. These two factors combine in germanium FET' s to give high transconductance (g_m) at very low temperatures.

It is well known that the main noise source of JFET' s is the thermal noise of the channel. Thus it could have been expected that

lowering the temperature would result in reduced noise of the device.

The described preamplifier employs germanium FET's operated at 4.2°K to attain their high-gain, low-noise characteristics. The input stage consists of two p-channel JFET's type TIXM12 or TIX301 in cascode. The g_m of these transistors at liquid helium temperature is around 25 000 μ mhos, and the input resistance is in the region of 10^{10} to 10^{11} ohm. Input capacitance is approximately 20 pF. The rest of the preamplifier is a conventional type of amplifier using bipolar transistors, which has been described elsewhere.¹

Pulse-generator resolution of the preamplifier for zero external capacitance is 0.3 keV FWHM (Ge) with a slope of 0.018 keV/pF. The very low sensitivity to external capacitance (detector) is a result of the relatively high input capacitance of the FET's, which, on the other hand, prevents the achievement of higher signal-to-noise ratio.

The preamplifier was used with a low-capacitance silicon detector (at 110°K), and the obtained low-energy spectra of ⁵⁵Mn and ²⁴¹Am are shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The K_α and K_β lines of ⁵⁵Mn, only 0.6 keV apart, are resolved and measured with 0.37 keV resolution. The spectrum of ²⁴¹Am shows the fine structure of this source; some of the very weak lines (L_η , L_{β_6} , L_{γ_4}) are resolved from the background noise. The L_α line ($L_{\alpha_1} = 13.96$ keV, $L_{\alpha_2} = 13.78$ keV) was measured with 0.42 keV resolution, and the L_{γ_1} and L_{γ_6} lines (0.68 keV apart) were resolved. The L_{β_1} and L_{β_2} lines (0.81 keV apart), previously barely resolved,¹ now show a 2:1 peak-to-valley ratio.

We believe that spectra resolutions obtained with the described preamplifier are the best ever published, and can certainly be improved

with the technological progress in fabrication of germanium FET's.

Concluding, we can say that the germanium junction FET has proved to be a very-low-noise device when operated at liquid helium temperature. We believe the same is true for other low-energy gap materials, especially the high-mobility materials as InSb, which may serve as the basis for future low-noise devices.

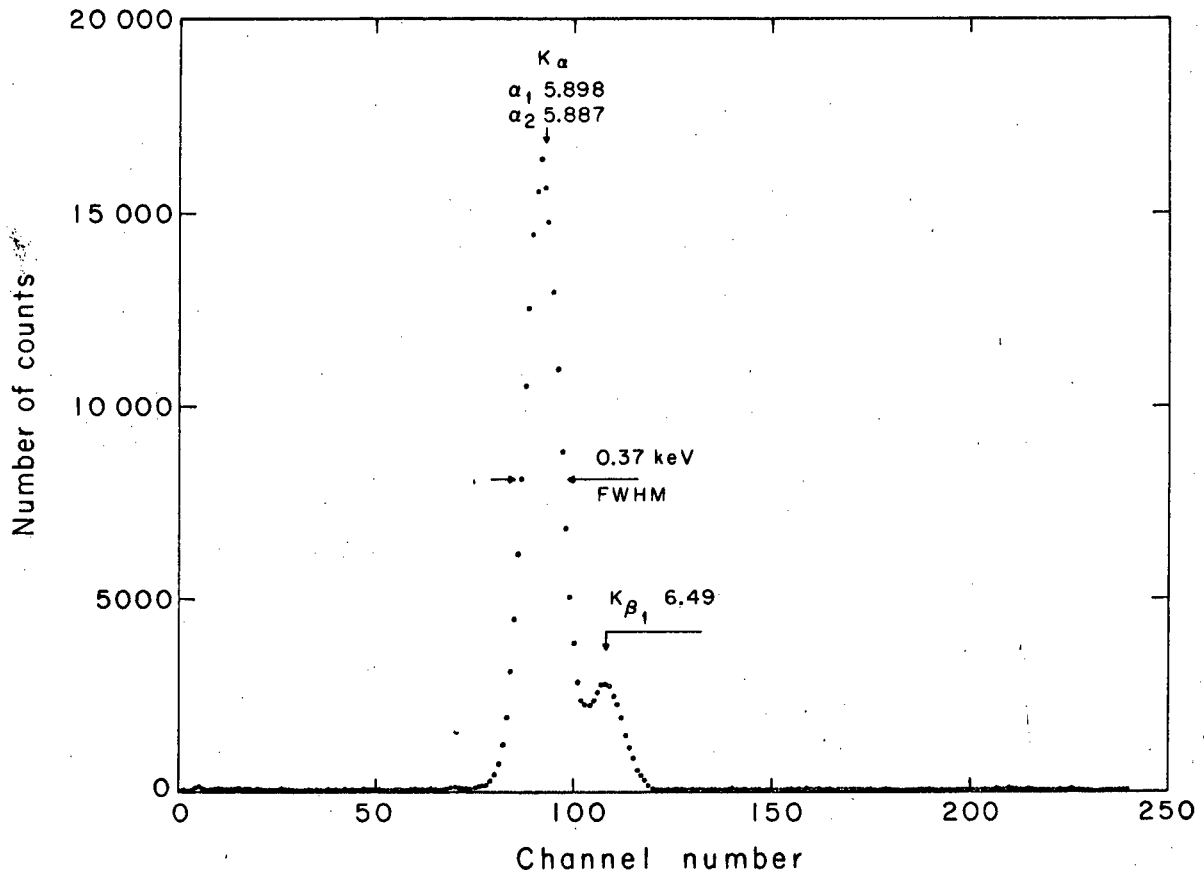
REFERENCES

1. E. Elad, M. Nakamura, "High Resolution Beta- and Gamma-Ray Spectrometer," IEEE, Tran. on NS-14, No. 1, p. 523-532 (February 1967), 13th Nuclear Science Symposium, Boston, Mass., 1966.
2. K. F. Smith, J. E. Cline, "A Low-Noise Charge Sensitive Preamplifier for Semiconductor detectors using Paralleled FET's," IEEE, Tran. on NS-13, No. 3, p. 468-476, (June 1966), Tenth Scintillation and Semiconductor Counter Symposium, Washington, D. C., 1966.

FIGURE CAPTIONS

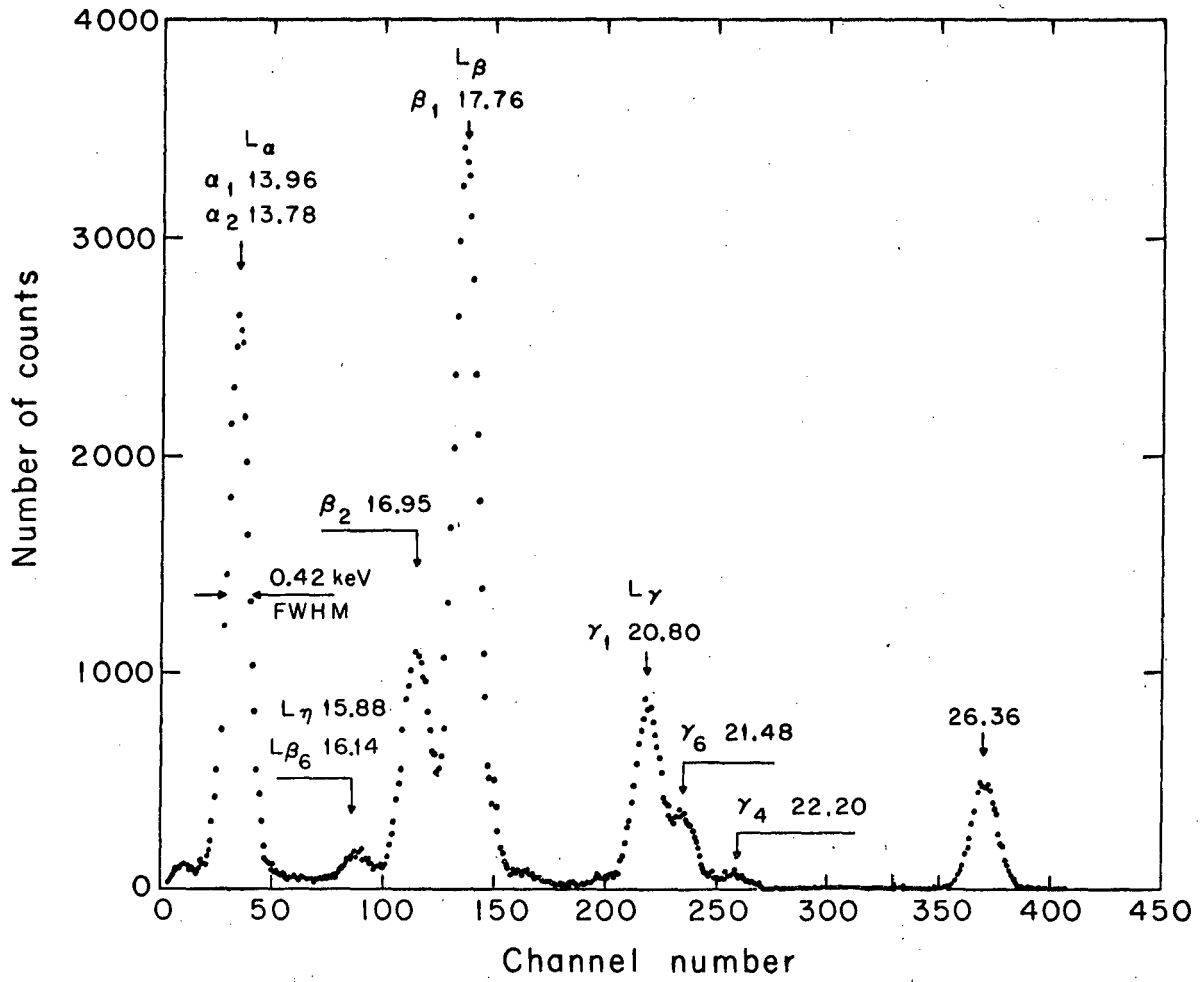
Fig. 1. Spectrum of ^{55}Mn x rays. Energy in keV.

Fig. 2. Spectrum of ^{241}Am x rays. Energy in keV.



XBL676-3227

Fig. 1



XBL676-3228

Fig. 2

This report was prepared as an account of Government sponsored work. Neither the United States, nor the Commission, nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission:

- A. Makes any warranty or representation, expressed or implied, with respect to the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of the information contained in this report, or that the use of any information, apparatus, method, or process disclosed in this report may not infringe privately owned rights; or
- B. Assumes any liabilities with respect to the use of, or for damages resulting from the use of any information, apparatus, method, or process disclosed in this report.

As used in the above, "person acting on behalf of the Commission" includes any employee or contractor of the Commission, or employee of such contractor, to the extent that such employee or contractor of the Commission, or employee of such contractor prepares, disseminates, or provides access to, any information pursuant to his employment or contract with the Commission, or his employment with such contractor.

