

Generation of Fully Phase-Controlled Two-Photon Entangled States

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Control over the internal states of trapped ions makes them the ideal system to generate single and two-photon states. Coupling a single ion to an optical cavity enables efficient emission of single photons into a single spatial mode and grants control over their temporal shape, phase, and frequency. Using the long coherence time of the ion's internal states and employing a scheme to protect the coherence of the ion-cavity interaction, we demonstrate the generation of a two-photon entangled state with full control over the phase. Initially, ion-photon entanglement is generated. A second photon is subsequently generated, mapping the ion's state onto the second photon. By adjusting the drive field the phase of the entangled state can be fully controlled. We implement this scheme in the most resource efficient way by utilizing a single $^{40}\text{Ca}^+$ ion coupled to an optical cavity and demonstrate the generation of a two-photon entangled state with full phase control with a fidelity of up to 82%.

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Controlling interaction between matter and light is a fundamental building block for many applications such as quantum networking [1–6], distributed and blind quantum computation [7–12], and networked sensing and timing [13–16]. In particular, multiphoton entangled states are a valuable resource for generating multipartite entanglement across a network [17,18], generating photonic graph states [19], or implementing repeaters for long-distance networks [20–27]. The consecutive emission of photons with real-time control of the emission process can be employed to implement a heralded quantum memory [28,29] and enables feed-forward schemes in linear optics quantum computing [30–32]. Because of the long coherence time, and good control over their internal quantum states, ions are prime candidates for implementing and demonstrating schemes for many of these applications. Recently, important aspects of distributed and blind quantum computing have been demonstrated [9,12] using spontaneously emitted photons. Employing ions coupled to optical cavities promises enhancement in efficiency and improved control of the photonic emission process [33–35]. In recent years, ion-cavity systems have been used to demonstrate several crucial building blocks for quantum networking [36–38].

In this Letter we present the first demonstration of two-photon entangled states generated with a single ion coupled to an optical cavity. Using two consecutive cavity-assisted Raman transitions (similar to [34]), we generate two,

polarization-entangled photons. Because the intermediate state is an ion-photon entangled state, we can control the phase of the two-photon state by manipulating the drive laser parameters of the second photon generation stage. Providing full control over two-photon emission processes and highly indistinguishable photons, this scheme is relevant beyond quantum networking for applications such as quantum memories and feed-forward schemes in linear optics quantum computers.

The ion trap used in this experiment is shown in Fig. 1, and is described in more detail in [39]. A single $^{40}\text{Ca}^+$ ion is trapped in a linear Paul trap and coupled to an optical cavity, which is aligned collinear to the trap axis. The cavity has a length of 5.75 mm and is formed by mirrors with a radius of curvature of 25 mm that are recessed within the end caps of the trap. Both mirrors are mounted on ring piezoactuators to stabilize the cavity length and to translate

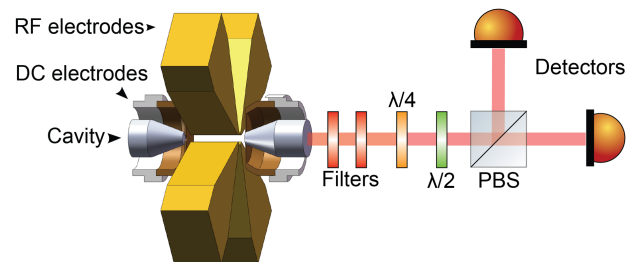


FIG. 1. Single $^{40}\text{Ca}^+$ ions are trapped in a linear Paul trap at the antinode of an optical cavity. The cavity mirrors are placed within the dc end-cap electrodes with an ion-cavity coupling $g_0 = 2\pi \times 0.76$ MHz. The generated photons are sent through two band-pass filters to remove the 894 nm cavity lock light and subsequently through a pair of wave plates and a PBS whose outputs are each coupled to a single photon detector.

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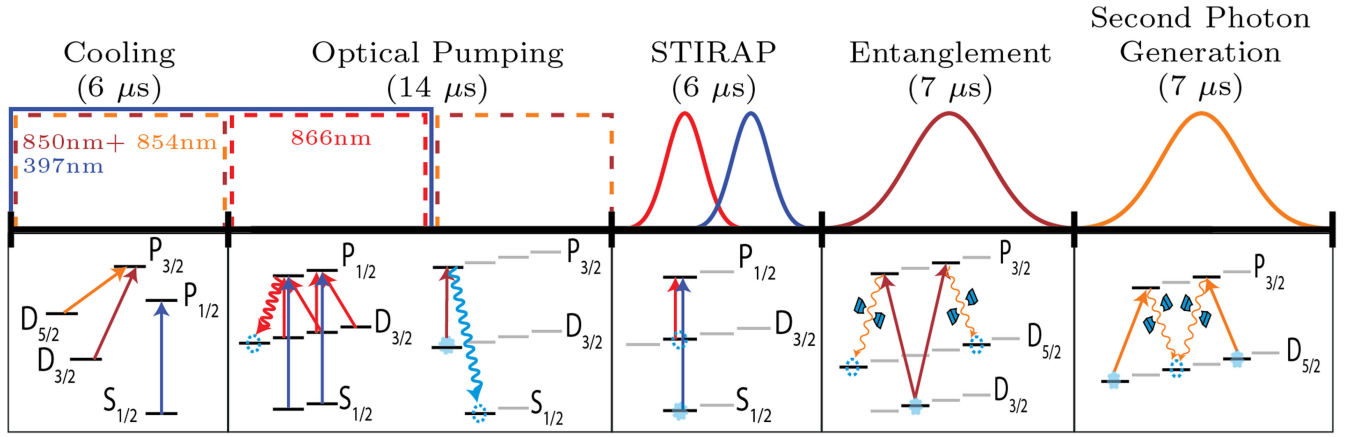


FIG. 2. Experimental pulse sequence for creating entangled photon pairs. The ion is Doppler cooled for 6 μs before being optically pumped into the $S_{1/2}$, $m_j = -1/2$ state with $> 95\%$ efficiency. From this state the ion is transferred to the $D_{3/2}$, $m_j = -1/2$ state via STIRAP. A bichromatic 850 nm pulse produces an ion-photon entangled state. A second bichromatic drive at 854 nm generates a second photon producing a two-photon entangled state.

the cavity with respect to the ion to maximize the ion-cavity coupling [40]. The cavity coupling at the antinode is $g_0 = 2\pi \times 0.76$ MHz and the cavity decay rate is $\kappa = 2\pi \times 0.27$ MHz. The cavity length is stabilized using a laser at 894 nm referenced to the cesium atomic D_1 line. A magnetic field of 8.25 G along the cavity axis provides the quantization axis as well as a large Zeeman splitting between levels to allow for addressing individual transitions within the ion. With this magnetic field along the cavity axis, the cavity couples solely to σ^+ and σ^- transitions of the ion. The cavity is tuned to the zero-field $P_{3/2} - D_{5/2}$ atomic transition at 854 nm.

To generate the two-photon entangled state, we use the following sequence (see Fig. 2). The ion is initially cooled on the $S_{1/2} - P_{1/2}$ transition at 397 nm with lasers on the $D_{3/2} - P_{3/2}$ transition at 850 nm and $D_{5/2} - P_{3/2}$ transition at 854 nm used to repump from the metastable $D_{3/2}$ and $D_{5/2}$ states. Subsequently, the ion is optically pumped into the $D_{3/2}$, $m_j = -3/2$ state using a $\pi + \sigma^-$ polarized 866 nm laser on the $D_{3/2} - P_{1/2}$ transition, followed by a second optical pumping stage using lasers at 850 nm and 854 nm to prepare the ion in the $S_{1/2}$, $m_j = -1/2$ state. The final initialization step is a STIRAP pulse to transfer the population into the $D_{3/2}$, $m_j = -1/2$ level using π -polarized lasers at 397 nm and 866 nm. Utilizing the metastable state as the initial state for entanglement significantly improves indistinguishability of the generated photons as shown in [34], and greatly reduces the impact of spontaneous emission on the fidelity.

A single 854 nm photon is subsequently created by a bichromatically driven cavity-assisted Raman transition with a $\sigma^+ + \sigma^-$ polarized laser at 850 nm. Each tone of the bichromatic drive is tuned such that both are on Raman resonance with a transition to a different Zeeman sublevel of the $D_{5/2}$ manifold, with each transition producing a

different photon polarization, thereby entangling the ion with the polarization of the emitted photon. This ideally produces the maximally entangled state:

$$|\Psi\rangle_{\text{ion-photon}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|D_{5/2, -5/2}, \sigma^+\rangle - |D_{5/2, +3/2}, \sigma^-\rangle). \quad (1)$$

A second bichromatic cavity-assisted Raman transition with an 854 nm drive laser maps the state of the ion onto a second photon, hence creating the final entangled photon-photon state:

$$|\Psi\rangle_{\text{photon-photon}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|\sigma^-, \sigma^+\rangle + e^{i(\phi + \phi_m)}|\sigma^+, \sigma^-\rangle), \quad (2)$$

where all contributions to the superposition phase from atomic structure and deterministic quantum dynamics are included in ϕ . The additional phase ϕ_m is determined by the relative phases of the fields used in the ion-photon entanglement generation stage and the ion-photon state map stage, as the atomic bases in Eq. (1) are determined by the entangling fields. The two photons have a separation of 6 μs with negligible temporal overlap, and the temporal shape of the two photons can be seen in Fig. 3.

To analyze the photonic state, the cavity emission is sent through a motorized quarter-wave plate and a subsequent half-wave plate to change the polarization basis of the photons. A Wollaston prism (PBS) is employed to measure the linear polarization, with each output coupled to a superconducting nanowire single photon detector (SNSPD). The PBS has an extinction ratio of $> 15\,000:1$ for both outputs. The two photon production steps have photon detection probabilities of 1.8×10^{-3} and 0.6×10^{-3} , respectively, giving a total two-photon detection efficiency of 1×10^{-6} .

In order to measure the photon-photon entanglement fidelity, we aim to produce the $|\Psi^\pm\rangle$ Bell states, for which

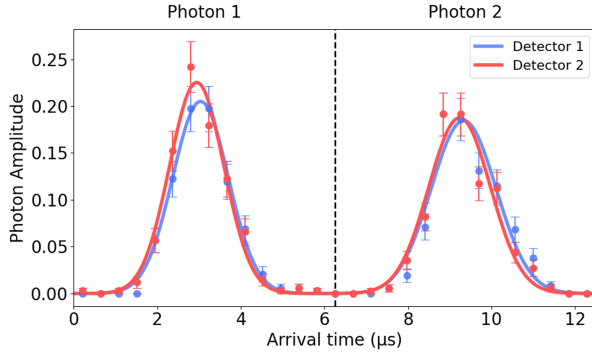


FIG. 3. Photon detection probability for the two polarization channels for measured entangled pairs. Each photon area is normalized to 1 across both polarizations.

the fidelities are given by

$$\mathcal{F}_{\pm} = \frac{1}{4}(1 \pm \langle XX \rangle \pm \langle YY \rangle - \langle ZZ \rangle), \quad (3)$$

with $\langle XX \rangle$, $\langle YY \rangle$, and $\langle ZZ \rangle$ being the expectation values for the two-photon Pauli operators. For the pure state shown in Eq. (2), $\langle XX \rangle$ can be expressed as

$$\langle XX \rangle = \cos(\phi + \phi_m), \quad (4)$$

and hence

$$\langle XX \rangle = \begin{cases} +1 & \text{for } |\Psi^+\rangle \\ -1 & \text{for } |\Psi^-\rangle. \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

Thus, by measuring $\langle XX \rangle$ while tuning the relative phase between the two drive beams for the second photon generation step, we can tune the superposition phase to the desired target state.

Based on this, the experimental sequence proceeded as follows: first the 850 nm bichromatic drive beam powers and detunings were optimized to generate a photon with polarizations σ^+ and σ^- with equal probability. This was then repeated for the second photon with the 854 nm laser. At the start of the experiment, the phase relation between the drive laser fields for the first and second photon is arbitrary and needs to be calibrated by changing their relative phase and measuring the value of $\langle XX \rangle$. During this process, oscillations in value of $\langle XX \rangle$ were observed, and tuned to generate the $|\Psi^{\pm}\rangle$ states [see Figs. 4(c) and 4(d)]. At the same time this also serves to demonstrate control of the phase of the entangled state, with the contrast of the oscillations serving as an indication of the degree of coherence. To measure the fidelity, 100 two-detection events were measured per basis. The detection was gated to measure photons during the two generation windows,

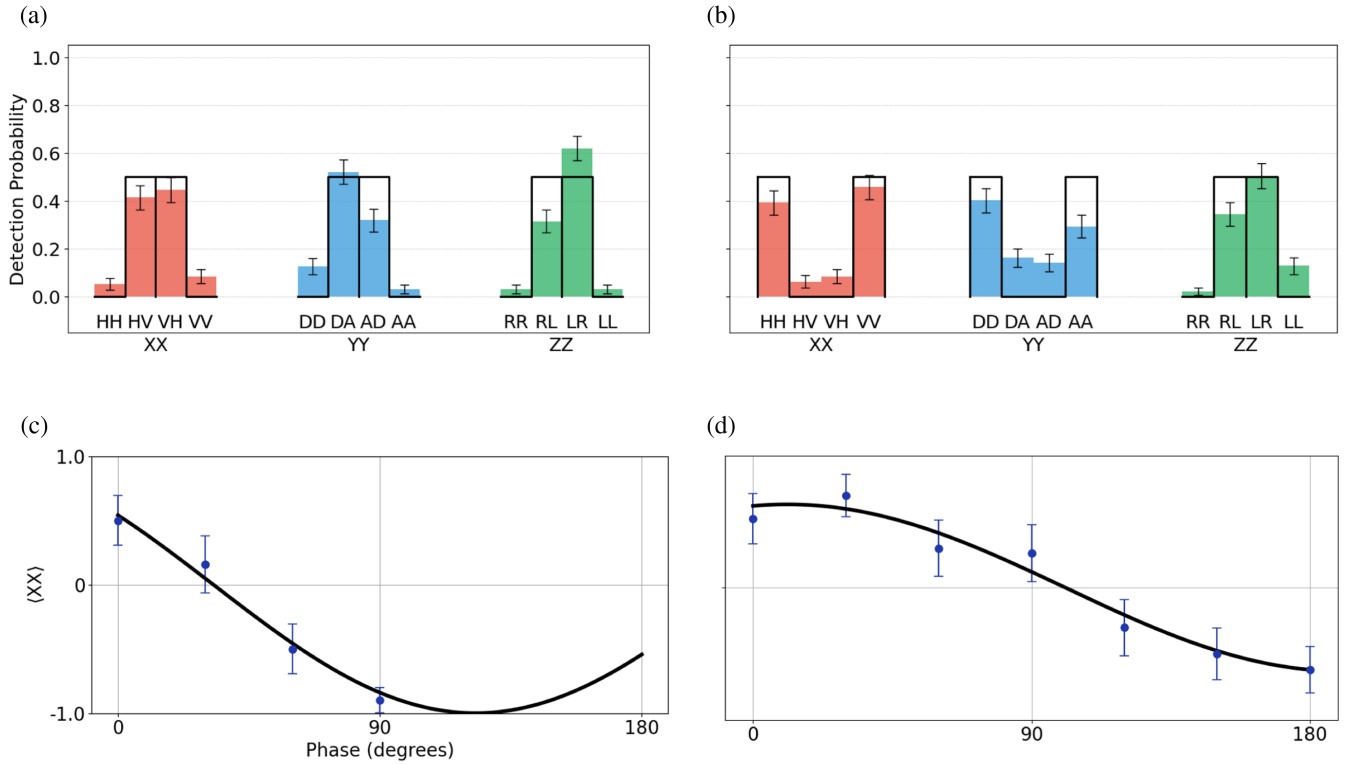


FIG. 4. Detector correlation outcomes for all three measurement bases ($H/V, A/D, R/L$), used to calculate the fidelity of the created (a) $|\Psi_{-}\rangle$ and (b) $|\Psi_{+}\rangle$ Bell states, showing the successful creation of an entangled photon pair with a fidelity of 0.82 ± 0.03 and 0.70 ± 0.04 , respectively. The solid black lines mark the expected results for the perfect Bell state. (c),(d) Contrast measurement in the X basis as the phase is scanned to find the optimum. Solid lines are fitted sin curves of form $A \cdot \sin(x + \phi)$.

and two-detection events within the same time window and detection events during ion drop-outs were removed, in order to minimize the effects of detector dark counts.

The measurement results in each basis for the $|\Psi^-\rangle$ and $|\Psi^+\rangle$ states are shown in Fig. 4. For $|\Psi^-\rangle$, 94 two-photon events contributed to the measurement of $\langle XX \rangle = -0.72 \pm 0.07$, 94 two-photon events to the measurement of $\langle YY \rangle = -0.68 \pm 0.08$, and 92 two-photon events to the measurement of $\langle ZZ \rangle = -0.87 \pm 0.05$ corresponding to a fidelity of $\mathcal{F} = 0.82 \pm 0.03$. For $|\Psi^+\rangle$, 94 two-photon events contributed to the measurement of $\langle XX \rangle = 0.70 \pm 0.07$, 92 two-photon events to the measurement of $\langle YY \rangle = 0.39 \pm 0.10$, and 93 two-photon events to the measurement of $\langle ZZ \rangle = -0.70 \pm 0.07$ corresponding to a fidelity of $\mathcal{F} = 0.70 \pm 0.04$.

The main contribution to the infidelities comes from uncertainty in the Zeeman splitting of the two atomic states. Any discrepancy between the Zeeman splitting and the frequency splitting in the drive fields used for ion-photon entanglement and state mapping leads to an energy difference between the two polarization states of the photons. A consequence of this energy difference is a phase accumulation between the detection of the two photons at rate Δ , where Δ is the energy difference between the two photons [36,41]. Using our phase control, we can compensate for the average phase accumulation, but due to the finite size of the photon wave packet there is a random (near Gaussian) distribution in the separation of arrival times and hence a random distribution of superposition phases. If we let τ represent the difference between the average precession time and the precession time for a given two photon event, this infidelity can be estimated using the analytic formula,

$$\epsilon = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} P(\tau) [1 + \cos(\Delta\tau)] d\tau, \quad (6)$$

for probability distribution $P(\tau)$. Because we are not postselecting with respect to the detection time of the two photons (in contrast to [41]), we have to integrate over all possible detection delays. The Zeeman splitting between the atomic qubit levels was measured by performing cavity-stimulated Raman spectroscopy on the two optical transitions that generate single photons in the first stage (ion-photon entanglement). Experimentally, the detuning of the 850 nm pump field was varied and the single-photon emission efficiency was recorded as a function of frequency. Each transition produces a resonant peak in the emission spectrum, and the Zeeman splitting is extracted from the frequency separation between these two resonances. The measured spectral lines have a full width at half maximum of approximately 1 MHz, allowing the resonance frequencies to be determined with a precision of approximately 100 kHz. This sets an upper bound on the Zeeman splitting error of 200 kHz. We fit $P(\tau)$ using the photon

arrival times and found that this effect can contribute an error of up to 25% for a worst-case measurement of the Zeeman splitting.

An additional infidelity arises during the state-map procedure. Because of different Clebsch-Gordan coefficients of the two cavity-assisted Raman transitions, an asymmetry in Rabi frequency is required for equal transition probability. This leads to differential ac stark shifts, and hence a time-dependent relative phase accumulation during the generation of the second photon. Simulations of the state map procedure of the full 18-level ion-cavity system suggest that this accounts for a fidelity drop of $\sim 5\%$ for optimized process efficiency. By decreasing the Rabi frequency of the drive fields, it is possible to improve the fidelity at the expense of efficiency. For example, an ion-photon state map with 2/3 optimal efficiency was found to reduce the error to just 1%. The impact of spontaneous emission on the fidelity is greatly reduced by using the cavity assisted Raman transition between the $D_{2/3}$ and the $D_{5/2}$ states [34]. The contribution to the infidelity is $< 1\%$.

Other contributions to the infidelity budget are magnetic field drift, laser drift, and amplitude noise. However, simulations indicated that their contributions to the infidelity budget are small ($\sim 1\%$). A detailed discussion of the infidelities in our experiment can be found in Supplemental Material [42].

In this Letter, we demonstrate the generation of fully phase-controlled two-photon entangled states from an emitter-cavity system for the first time. We have demonstrated the generation of two-photon entangled states that correspond to $|\Psi_{\pm}\rangle$ states with fidelities of above 70%. The theoretical limit of the fidelity for our experimental parameters is 95%, limited by the differential ac Stark shift in the photon generation processes due to the asymmetry in our scheme. The scheme presented here offers the possibility to generate any arbitrary two-photon state by interleaving the photon generating steps with a coherent rotation between the two atomic states. Full control over the two-photon state's phase enables new schemes in linear-optics quantum computing, quantum memories, and quantum networking. For example, our scheme can be employed to act as a quantum memory or in feed-forward schemes by inserting a photon measurement and an ion-state manipulation step between the ion-photon entanglement and the state mapping steps.

Performing a Bell-state measurement of a received photon and the first photon of our sequence and a subsequent ion-state manipulation can be used to either map the quantum state of the received photon onto the ion's internal state or to manipulate the ion's quantum state to suit the subsequent quantum-information-processing sequence of the feed-forward scheme. The second photon in the sequence either carries the quantum state of the received photon or can be used in a feed-forward quantum-information-processing process.

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M. K. conceived the scheme. A. A. and I. F. implemented and optimized the experimental setup, performed the experiment, and analyzed the data. All authors contributed to finalizing the manuscript.

Data availability—Data and Supplemental Material are available at Ref. [42].

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