

# Physics 566: Quantum Optics I

## Problem Set 2 Solutions

### Problem 1:

(a) An arbitrary pure state of spin-1/2  $|\psi\rangle = \alpha|\uparrow_z\rangle + \beta|\downarrow_z\rangle = |\alpha|e^{i\phi_\alpha}|\uparrow_z\rangle + |\beta|e^{i\phi_\beta}|\downarrow_z\rangle$ .

The overall phase is irrelevant, and  $|\alpha|^2 + |\beta|^2 = 1 \Rightarrow |\psi\rangle$  is specified by 2 real parameters:

$|\psi\rangle = |\alpha| |\uparrow_z\rangle + \sqrt{1-|\alpha|^2} e^{i(\phi_\beta - \phi_\alpha)} |\downarrow_z\rangle$ . The eigenstate spin-up along the direction  $\vec{e}_n$  can be written  $|\uparrow_n\rangle = \cos\frac{\theta}{2} |\uparrow_z\rangle + e^{i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} |\downarrow_z\rangle$ , where  $\theta, \phi$  define the direction on the sphere.

$\Rightarrow \forall |\psi\rangle \in \mathbb{C}^2$   $|\psi\rangle$  is equivalent to  $|\uparrow_n\rangle$ , with the association  $|\alpha| = \cos\frac{\theta}{2}$ ,  $\phi_\beta - \phi_\alpha = \phi$

(b) Consider the projector

$$\begin{aligned} |\uparrow_n\rangle\langle\uparrow_n| &= (\cos\frac{\theta}{2} |\uparrow_z\rangle + e^{i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} |\downarrow_z\rangle) (\cos\frac{\theta}{2} \langle\uparrow_z| + e^{-i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \langle\downarrow_z|) \\ &= \cos^2\frac{\theta}{2} |\uparrow_z\rangle\langle\uparrow_z| + \sin^2\frac{\theta}{2} |\downarrow_z\rangle\langle\downarrow_z| + \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \cos\frac{\theta}{2} (|\uparrow_z\rangle\langle\downarrow_z| e^{i\phi} + |\downarrow_z\rangle\langle\uparrow_z| e^{-i\phi}) \end{aligned}$$

Using:  $\cos^2\frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{1+\cos\theta}{2}$ ,  $\sin^2\frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{1-\cos\theta}{2}$ ,  $\sin\frac{\theta}{2}\cos\frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{1}{2}\sin\theta$

$$\Rightarrow |\uparrow_n\rangle\langle\uparrow_n| = \frac{1}{2}(\hat{1} + \cos\theta \hat{\sigma}_z + \sin\theta (e^{-i\phi} \hat{\sigma}_+ + e^{i\phi} \hat{\sigma}_-)) = \frac{1}{2}(\hat{1} + \sin\theta (\cos\phi \hat{\sigma}_x + \sin\phi \hat{\sigma}_y) + \cos\theta \hat{\sigma}_z)$$

$$\Rightarrow |\uparrow_n\rangle\langle\uparrow_n| = \frac{1}{2}(\hat{1} + \vec{e}_n \cdot \hat{\sigma}), \text{ where } \vec{e}_n = \sin\theta (\cos\phi \vec{e}_x + \sin\phi \vec{e}_y) + \cos\theta \vec{e}_z$$

(c) Consider  $|\langle\uparrow_n|\uparrow_{n'}\rangle| = |(\cos\frac{\theta}{2} \langle\uparrow_z| + e^{-i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \langle\downarrow_z|) (\cos\frac{\theta'}{2} |\uparrow_z\rangle + e^{i\phi'} \sin\frac{\theta'}{2} |\downarrow_z\rangle)|$

$$= |\cos\frac{\theta}{2} \cos\frac{\theta'}{2} + e^{i(\phi'-\phi)} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \sin\frac{\theta'}{2}| = [(\cos\frac{\theta}{2} \cos\frac{\theta'}{2} + \cos(\phi-\phi') \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \sin\frac{\theta'}{2})^2 + \sin^2(\phi-\phi') \sin^2\frac{\theta}{2} \sin^2\frac{\theta'}{2}]^{1/2}$$

$$= [\cos^2\frac{\theta}{2} \cos^2\frac{\theta'}{2} + \sin^2\frac{\theta}{2} \sin^2\frac{\theta'}{2} + \frac{1}{2} \sin\theta \sin\theta' \cos(\phi-\phi')]^{1/2} = [\frac{1}{2} (1 + \cos\theta \cos\theta' + \sin\theta \sin\theta' \cos(\phi-\phi'))]^{1/2}$$

$$= [\frac{1}{2} (1 + \vec{e}_n \cdot \vec{e}_{n'})]^{1/2} = \sqrt{\frac{1 + \cos\Theta}{2}} \Rightarrow |\langle\uparrow_n|\uparrow_{n'}\rangle| = |\cos\frac{\Theta}{2}|, \text{ where } \cos\Theta = \vec{e}_n \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}$$

Note: Antipodal states  $\Theta = \pi \Rightarrow |\langle\uparrow_n|\uparrow_{-n}\rangle| = |\cos\frac{\pi}{2}| = 0$  as expected

Aside: There is a more elegant solution to part (c) using the Trace operation

$$|\langle \hat{A}_n | \hat{A}_{n'} \rangle|^2 = \text{Tr}(|\hat{A}_n\rangle \langle \hat{A}_n| |\hat{A}_{n'}\rangle \langle \hat{A}_{n'}|) = \text{Tr} \left[ \left( \frac{\hat{1} + \hat{\sigma}_n}{2} \right) \left( \frac{\hat{1} + \hat{\sigma}_{n'}}{2} \right) \right] = \frac{1}{4} \text{Tr}(\hat{1}) + \frac{1}{4} \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_n) + \frac{1}{4} \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_{n'}) + \frac{1}{4} \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_n \hat{\sigma}_{n'})$$

$$\text{Tr}(\hat{1}) = 2, \quad \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_n) = \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_{n'}) = 0, \quad \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_n \hat{\sigma}_{n'}) = \text{Tr}(\vec{e}_n \cdot \hat{\sigma} \hat{\sigma} \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}) = \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_i \hat{\sigma}_j) (\vec{e}_i \cdot \vec{e}_n) (\vec{e}_j \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}) \quad \text{Sum over } i+j$$

$$= 2 \delta_{ij} (\vec{e}_i \cdot \vec{e}_n) (\vec{e}_j \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}) = \vec{e}_n \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}$$

$$\Rightarrow |\langle \hat{A}_n | \hat{A}_{n'} \rangle|^2 = \frac{1}{2} (1 + \vec{e}_n \cdot \vec{e}_{n'}) = \frac{1}{2} (1 + \cos \Theta) = \frac{\cos^2 \frac{\Theta}{2}}{2} \checkmark$$

$$(d) \langle \hat{A}_n | \hat{\sigma}_i | \hat{A}_n \rangle = \text{Tr}(|\hat{A}_n\rangle \langle \hat{A}_n| \hat{\sigma}_i) = \text{Tr} \left( \left( \frac{\hat{1} + \hat{\sigma}_n}{2} \right) \hat{\sigma}_i \right) = \frac{1}{2} \text{Tr}(\hat{\sigma}_i \hat{\sigma}_n) = \vec{e}_i \cdot \vec{e}_n$$

$$\Rightarrow \langle \hat{A}_n | \hat{\sigma} | \hat{A}_n \rangle = \vec{e}_n, \text{ the Bloch vector.}$$

## Problem 2: Spin Precession in a Magnetic Field (Heisenberg Picture)

$$\hat{H} = -\hat{\mu} \cdot \vec{B}, \quad \hat{\mu} = -\gamma \hat{S} \Rightarrow \hat{H} = \gamma \vec{B} \cdot \hat{S}$$

(a) Heisenberg equations of motion for  $i^{\text{th}}$  component of spin:

$$\frac{d}{dt} \hat{S}_i = -\frac{i}{\hbar} [\hat{S}_i, \hat{H}] = -\frac{i}{\hbar} \gamma B_j [\hat{S}_i, \hat{S}_j] = \left(-\frac{i}{\hbar} \gamma B_j\right) (i\hbar \epsilon_{ijk} \hat{S}_k) = \gamma \epsilon_{ijk} B_j \hat{S}_k \quad (\text{Einstein summation})$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{\frac{d}{dt} \hat{S} = \gamma \vec{B} \times \hat{S} = \vec{\Omega} \times \hat{S}} \quad \text{Equation of a gyroscope}$$

$$(b) \hat{H} = \gamma \vec{B} \cdot \hat{S} = \frac{\hbar \gamma \vec{B}}{2} \cdot \hat{\sigma} = \frac{\hbar \vec{\Omega}}{2} \cdot \hat{\sigma} = \frac{\hbar}{2} (\Omega_- \hat{\sigma}_+ + \Omega_+ \hat{\sigma}_- + \Omega_z \hat{\sigma}_z), \quad \hat{\sigma}_{\pm} = \hat{\sigma}_x \pm i \hat{\sigma}_y$$

$$\Omega_{\pm} = \Omega_x \pm i \Omega_y$$

$$\text{Commutators: } [\hat{\sigma}_z, \hat{\sigma}_{\pm}] = \pm 2\hat{\sigma}_{\pm}, \quad [\hat{\sigma}_+, \hat{\sigma}_-] = \hat{\sigma}_z$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{Heisenberg eqs of motion: } \frac{d}{dt} \hat{\sigma}_z = -\frac{i}{\hbar} [\hat{\sigma}_z, \hat{H}] = -i(\Omega_- \hat{\sigma}_+ - \Omega_+ \hat{\sigma}_-)$$

$$\frac{d}{dt} \hat{\sigma}_{\pm} = -\frac{i}{\hbar} [\hat{\sigma}_{\pm}, \hat{H}] = -\frac{i}{2} ([\hat{\sigma}_{\pm}, \hat{\sigma}_z] \Omega_z + [\hat{\sigma}_{\pm}, \hat{\sigma}_{\mp}] \Omega_{\mp}) = -\frac{i}{2} \Omega_z \hat{\sigma}_{\pm} + i \Omega_{\mp} \hat{\sigma}_{\mp}$$

Note: In the standard spin-resonance problem,  $\Omega_+ = \Omega_- = \Omega$ ,  $\Omega_z = -\Delta$

We recover the standard optical Bloch equations with  $w = \langle \hat{\sigma}_z \rangle$ ,  $u - iv = \langle \hat{\sigma}_+ \rangle$

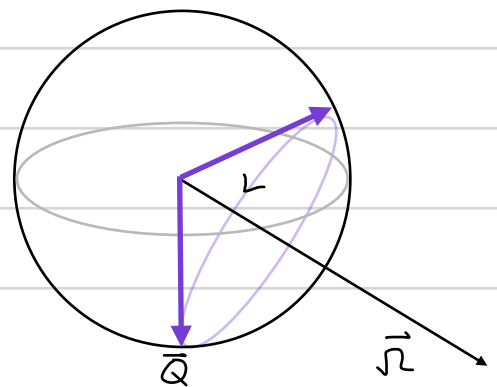
(c) Solving for  $\hat{S}(t)$ : Take a second time derivative (assuming static  $\vec{B}$ )

$$\frac{d^2}{dt^2} \hat{S} = \vec{\Omega} \times \frac{d\hat{S}}{dt} = \vec{\Omega} \times (\vec{\Omega} \times \hat{S}) = \vec{\Omega} (\vec{\Omega} \cdot \hat{S}) - \Omega^2 \hat{S} \Rightarrow \frac{d^2 \hat{S}_{\perp}}{dt^2} = -\Omega^2 \hat{S}_{\perp}, \quad \frac{d^2 \hat{S}_{\parallel}}{dt^2} = 0$$

Perpendicular component to  $\vec{\Omega}$

$$\Rightarrow \hat{S}_{\perp}(t) = \hat{S}_{\perp}(0) \cos(\Omega t) + \frac{d\hat{S}_{\perp}(0)}{dt} \frac{1}{\Omega} \sin(\Omega t)$$

Trajectory of the Bloch vector



### Problem 3

The two dimensional vector space that specifies the polarization state of a photon defines a qubit. We make the association:

$$\vec{e}_+ = \frac{\vec{e}_H + i\vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \Rightarrow |\uparrow_z\rangle$$

$$\vec{e}_- = \frac{\vec{e}_H - i\vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \Rightarrow |\downarrow_z\rangle$$

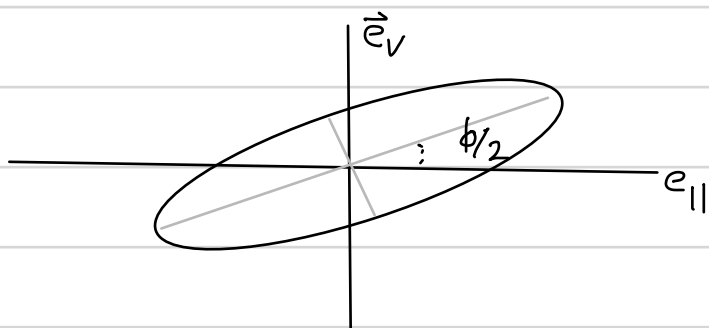
$$(a) \quad |\uparrow_x\rangle = \frac{|\uparrow_z\rangle + |\downarrow_z\rangle}{\sqrt{2}} \Leftrightarrow \frac{\vec{e}_+ + \vec{e}_-}{\sqrt{2}} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} |\uparrow_x\rangle \Leftrightarrow \vec{e}_H \text{ (linear horizontal)} \\ |\downarrow_x\rangle \Leftrightarrow i\vec{e}_V \equiv \vec{e}_V \text{ (linear vertical)} \end{cases}$$

$$|\uparrow_y\rangle = \frac{|\uparrow_z\rangle + i|\downarrow_z\rangle}{\sqrt{2}} \Leftrightarrow \frac{\vec{e}_+ + i\vec{e}_-}{\sqrt{2}} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} |\uparrow_y\rangle \Leftrightarrow \frac{1+i}{\sqrt{2}} \left( \frac{\vec{e}_H + \vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \right) \equiv \frac{\vec{e}_H + \vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \text{ (linear at } 45^\circ \text{ between } \vec{e}_H \text{ and } \vec{e}_V) \\ |\downarrow_y\rangle \Leftrightarrow \frac{1-i}{\sqrt{2}} \left( \frac{\vec{e}_H - \vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \right) \equiv \frac{\vec{e}_H - \vec{e}_V}{\sqrt{2}} \text{ (linear at } -45^\circ \text{ between } \vec{e}_H \text{ and } \vec{e}_V) \end{cases}$$

(b) For an arbitrary state of the qubit,  $|\uparrow_n\rangle = \cos\frac{\theta}{2} |\uparrow_z\rangle + e^{i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} |\downarrow_z\rangle$ , where  $(\theta, \phi)$  is the direction on the Poincaré sphere.

$$\Rightarrow |\uparrow_n\rangle \equiv \cos\frac{\theta}{2} \vec{e}_+ + e^{i\phi} \sin\frac{\theta}{2} \vec{e}_-$$

Recall (e.g. see Jackson 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Chap 7.2), the polarization is generally elliptical



$$r \equiv \frac{\alpha_+}{\alpha_-} = \frac{\cos\frac{\theta}{2}}{\sin\frac{\theta}{2}} e^{i\phi} = \cot\frac{\theta}{2} e^{i\phi}$$

$$\text{Ratio of semimajor/semiminor axis} = \frac{1+r}{1-r} = \frac{1+\cot\frac{\theta}{2}}{1-\cot\frac{\theta}{2}} = \frac{1+\sin\theta}{1-\sin\theta}$$

The ellipticity is characterized by  $|\alpha_+|^2 - |\alpha_-|^2 = |\cos^2\frac{\theta}{2} - \sin^2\frac{\theta}{2}| = |\cos\theta|$

The orientation of the ellipse is shown, making an angle  $\phi/2$  w.r.t.  $\vec{e}_H$ .

(c) Sketch of the Poincaré sphere

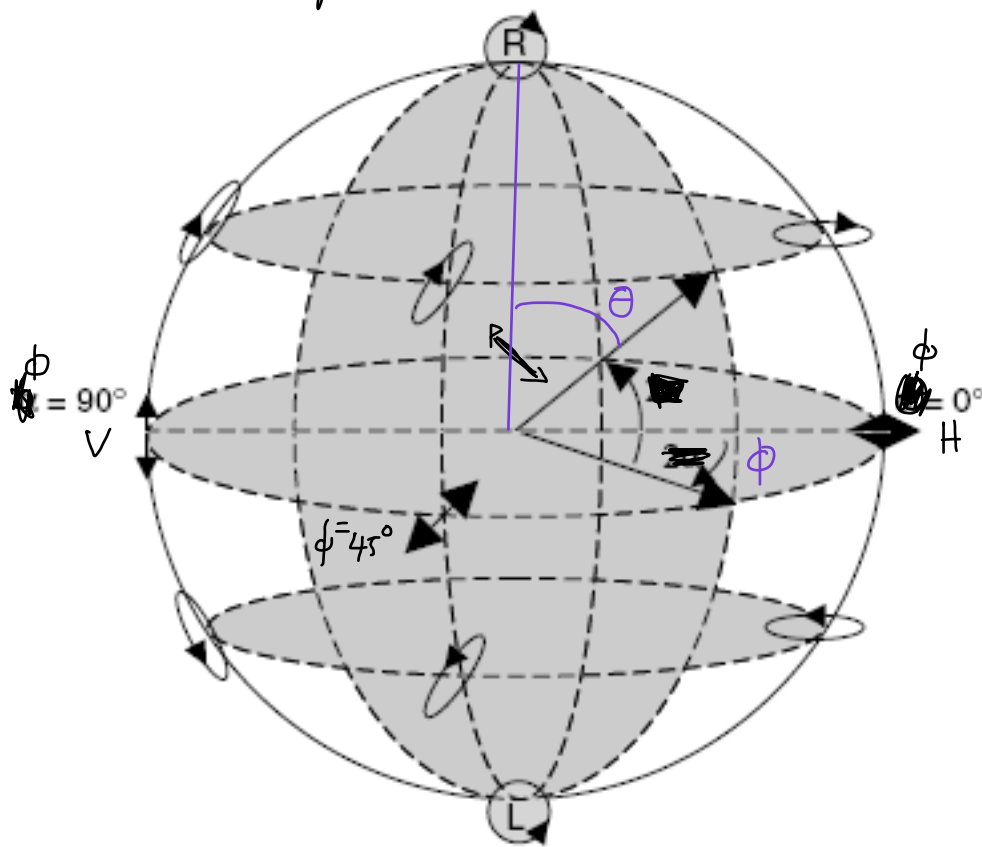


Figure 2.7. Poincaré sphere.

(d) Wave plate induces a phase shift that differs for "ordinary" and "extra ordinary" polarization. Thus, in the  $\vec{e}_o, \vec{e}_e$  basis if

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{E}_{in} = \alpha_o \vec{e}_o + \alpha_e \vec{e}_e &\Rightarrow \vec{E}_{out} = \alpha_o e^{i\phi_o} \vec{e}_o + \alpha_e e^{i\phi_e} \vec{e}_e \\ &\doteq \begin{bmatrix} \alpha_o \\ \alpha_e \end{bmatrix} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} e^{i\phi_o} & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\phi_e} \end{bmatrix}}_{U_{wp}} \begin{bmatrix} \alpha_o \\ \alpha_e \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

$U_{wp}$  is not in  $SU(2)$ , because  $\det(U_{wp}) = e^{i(\phi_e + \phi_o)}$ . To make it in  $SU(2)$ , divide by  $\frac{1}{2} \det(U_{wp})$

$$U_{wp} \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} e^{-i\Delta\phi/2} & 0 \\ 0 & e^{+i\Delta\phi/2} \end{bmatrix} \text{ where } \Delta\phi = \phi_e - \phi_o : \text{ Recall, eigenvectors of } SU(2) \text{ are } e^{\pm i\phi}$$

We seek this relative to a basis of the Poincaré sphere. Note that

$$\vec{e}_o = \cos\theta \vec{e}_H + \sin\theta \vec{e}_V, \quad \vec{e}_e = -\sin\theta \vec{e}_H + \cos\theta \vec{e}_V \quad (\text{rotation on Poincaré sphere by } 2\theta \text{ around } z)$$

⇒ Similarity transformation 
$$\begin{bmatrix} \alpha_H \\ \alpha_V \end{bmatrix} = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & -\sin\theta \\ \sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix}}_S \begin{bmatrix} \alpha_o \\ \alpha_e \end{bmatrix}$$

⇒ In the basis  $(\vec{e}_H, \vec{e}_V)$

$$U_{WP} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & -\sin\theta \\ \sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} e^{-i\Delta\phi/2} & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\Delta\phi/2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & \sin\theta \\ -\sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix} =$$

$$\Rightarrow U_{WP} = \begin{bmatrix} \cos(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) + i \cos 2\theta \sin(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) & -i \sin(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) \sin 2\theta \\ -i \sin(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) \sin 2\theta & \cos(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) - i \cos 2\theta \sin(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}) \end{bmatrix}$$

(c) A quarter-wave plate,  $L = \frac{\lambda}{4(n_e - n_o)} \Rightarrow \Delta\phi = \frac{\pi}{2}$

$$\Rightarrow U_{QWP} = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1+i\cos 2\theta}{\sqrt{2}} & \frac{-i \sin 2\theta}{\sqrt{2}} \\ \frac{-i \sin 2\theta}{\sqrt{2}} & \frac{1-i\cos 2\theta}{\sqrt{2}} \end{bmatrix}$$

To transform linear and  $\vec{e}_H$  to  $\vec{e}_+$  :  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \Rightarrow \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ i \end{bmatrix}$   
 $\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \Rightarrow \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} -i \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{-i}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} i \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} i \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$

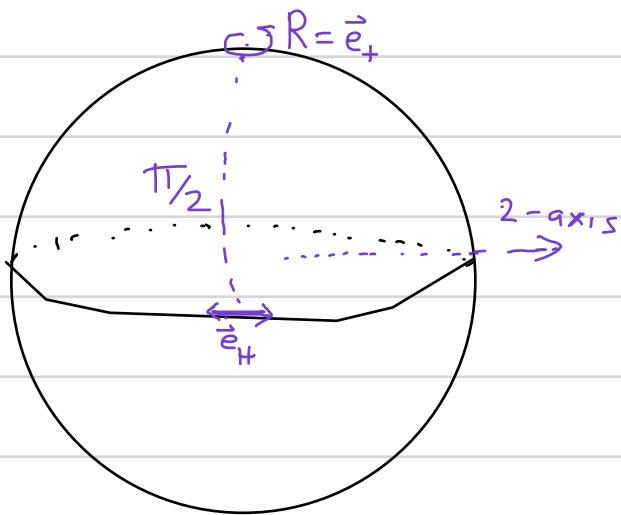
⇒ Choose  $\theta = -\frac{\pi}{4}$  (45° between fast & slow axes) ⇒

$U_{QWP}(\theta = -\frac{\pi}{4}) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & i \\ i & 1 \end{bmatrix}$  in  $\vec{e}_H, \vec{e}_V$  basis ⇒ Rotation by  $-\frac{\pi}{2}$  around z-axis of Poincaré

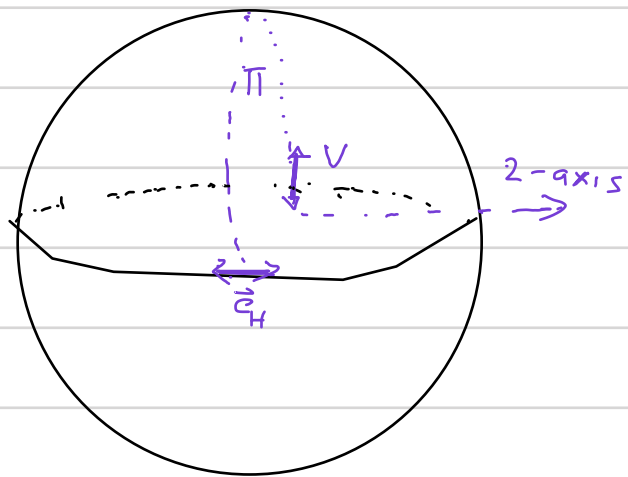
A half-wave plate,  $L = \frac{\lambda}{2(n_e - n_o)} \Rightarrow \Delta\phi = \pi$

$$\Rightarrow U_{QWP} = -i \begin{bmatrix} \cos 2\theta & \sin 2\theta \\ \sin 2\theta & -\cos 2\theta \end{bmatrix}$$

To transform  $\vec{e}_H \rightarrow \vec{e}_V$  :  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$  We achieve this by choosing  $\theta = \frac{\pi}{4}$ . The transformation is a rotation about z-axis by  $\pi$ .



Quarter-wave plate



Half-wave plate

From this geometric construction we see immediately how to orient the wave plate. The axis of rotation (the eigenvector of the waveplate) should be half way between the  $\vec{e}_H$  +  $\vec{e}_V$  directions. The quarter wave plate then is a  $\frac{\pi}{2}$  rotation on the Poincaré sphere, corresponding to  $\vec{e}_H \Rightarrow \vec{e}_+$ ,  $\vec{e}_V \Rightarrow \vec{e}_-$ . The half-wave plate maps  $\vec{e}_H \Rightarrow \vec{e}_V$ ,  $\vec{e}_V \Rightarrow \vec{e}_H$  (overall phase irrelevant).

(f) From part (d), the  $SU(2)$  rotation corresponding to a wave plate, with the crystal axes oriented at angle  $\theta$  w.r.t.  $\vec{e}_H, \vec{e}_V$  direction is  $U_{\theta}^{WP}(\Delta\phi) = e^{-i\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}\hat{e}(\theta)\cdot\hat{\sigma}} = \cos\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}\hat{1} - i(\cos 2\theta\hat{\sigma}_1 + \sin 2\theta\hat{\sigma}_2)\sin\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}$ . (Note: A subtle point — in part (d) we wrote the matrices in the  $\vec{e}_H, \vec{e}_V$  basis this defines  $\hat{\sigma}_i$  in the usual Poincaré sphere) Thus, for a quarter waveplate and half waveplate respectively:

$$\text{QWP: } U_{\theta}^{WP}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right); \quad \text{HWP: } U_{\theta}^{WP}(\pi)$$

We seek to show that we can construct an arbitrary  $SU(2)$  rotation on the Poincaré sphere with two QWP and one HWP. To do this I will employ the Euler angle parameterization. Recall

$$U \in SU(2) \Rightarrow \exists \alpha, \beta, \gamma \text{ (Euler angles) st. } U = U_3(\alpha) U_2(\beta) U_3(\gamma) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{(rotation about 3-axis, then} \\ \text{2-axis, then 3-axis)} \end{array}$$

$$\text{Now, note } U_3(2\theta) U_1\left(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}\right) U_3^\dagger(2\theta) = U_{\theta}^{WP}(\Delta\phi)$$

Thus a sequence of QWP. HWP. QWP

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow U_{\theta_1}^{WP}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) U_{\theta_2}^{WP}(\pi) U_{\theta_3}^{WP}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) &= U_3(2\theta_1) U_1\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) U_3^\dagger(2\theta_1) U_3(2\theta_2) U_1(\pi) U_3^\dagger(2\theta_2) U_3(2\theta_3) U_1\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) U_3^\dagger(2\theta_3) \\ &= U_3(2\theta_1) U_1\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) U_3(4\theta_2 - 2\theta_1 - 2\theta_3) U_1\left(\frac{\pi}{2}\right) U_3(-2\theta_3) = U_3(\alpha) U_2(\beta) U_3(\gamma) \quad \text{Q.E.D.} \end{aligned}$$