



# Femtoscscopy as a precision tool to determine hadronic interactions ?

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by NRW-FAIR



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Epelbaum, Heihoff, UGM, Tscherwon, arXiv:2504.08631 [nucl-th]

# Introduction: Basic ideas

# Interferometry

- Hanbury Brown–Twiss intensity interferometry

→ measure the (angular) size of an object (star)

or spatial/temporal correlations within such an object

Hanbury Brown, Twiss, Phil. Mag. **45** (1954) 663

Nice intro: Baym, *Acta Phys. Pol.* **29** (1998) 1839

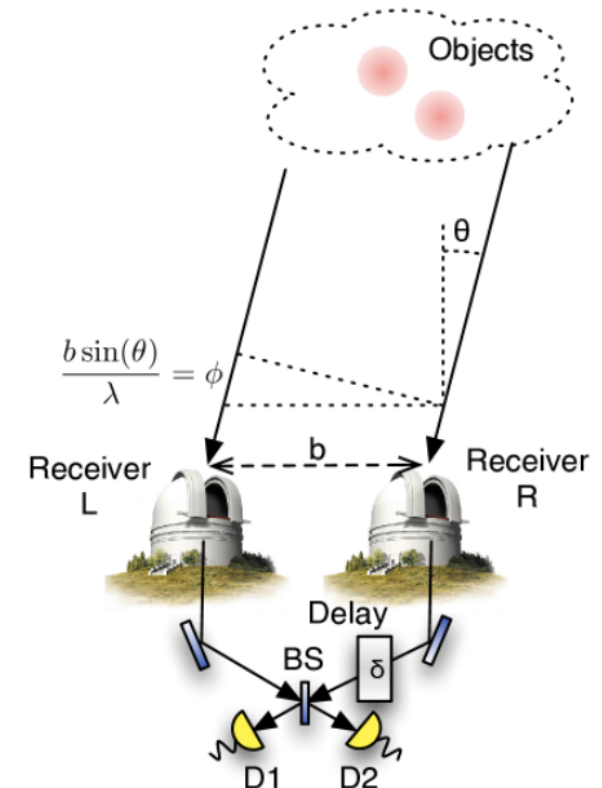
- Intensity correlations (photon fields)

$$g^{(2)}(t_1, t_2, r_1, r_2) = \frac{\langle : I(t_1, r_1) I_2(t_2, r_2) : \rangle}{\langle I(t_1, r_1) \rangle \langle I(t_2, r_2) \rangle}$$

- can also be explained classically (current with intensity  $I$  at relative separation/times)

$$\hookrightarrow g^{(2)}(0, 0) = 2 \text{ for thermal light (Gaussian)}$$

$g^{(2)}(0, 0) = 1$  for coherent light (Dirac delta)



# Basics of Femtoscopy I

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- Original idea

→ measure spatial/temporal correlations within  
(ultra)relativistic heavy-ion collisions (HICs)

## PROTON PICTURES OF HIGH-ENERGY NUCLEAR COLLISIONS

Steven E. KOONIN<sup>1</sup>

*The Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark*

Received 9 June 1977

Correlations between protons emitted with nearly equal momenta are shown to be sensitive to the space-time structure of high-energy heavy-ion collisions. A quantal estimate indicates that final-state interactions and the exclusion principle result in a rich, experimentally accessible correlation structure for relative proton-proton momenta  $\lesssim 50$  MeV/c which can be used to determine the size, velocity, and lifetime of the collision volume

E 53, NUMBER 13

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

24 SEPTEMBER 1977

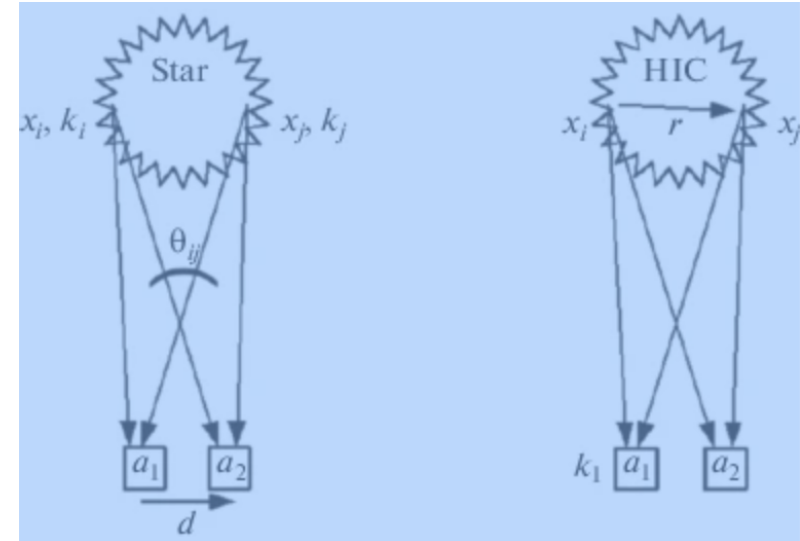
## Pion Interferometry for Exploding Sources

Scott Pratt

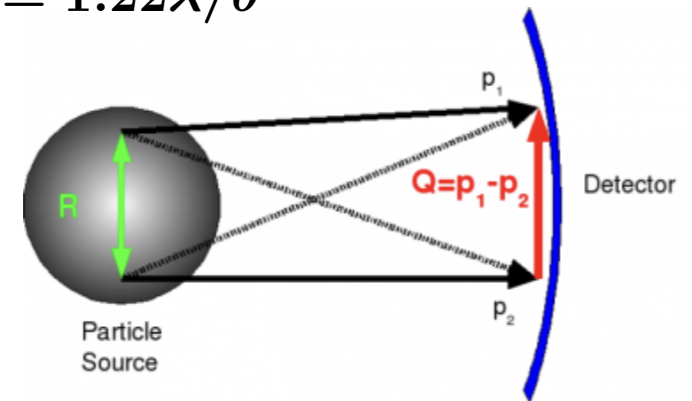
*School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455*

(Received 22 June 1984)

A formula for the two-pion correlation function is derived for an arbitrary chaotic source when the emission spectrum from each point in space-time is known. The experimental fact that pions with high momentum in the center-of-mass frame are more correlated than low-momentum pions is explained by a collective expansion of the source. A simple model illustrates how the pion correlations can be used to measure the expansion velocity of a nuclear fireball.



$$d = 1.22\lambda/\theta$$



Koonin, Phys. Lett. **70B** (1977) 1219

Pratt, Phys. Rev. Lett. **53** (1984) 1219

Review: Lisa et al., Ann. Rev. Nucl. Part. Sci. **55** (2005) 357

- 
- The diagram illustrates the formation of a hypernucleus. On the left, a  $K^-$  meson (green dot) and a proton ( $p$ , blue dot) interact via a wavy line representing a meson exchange, forming a hypernucleus ( $pp$ ) with a size indicated as  $\sim 1$  fm. On the right, a Pb-Pb collision is shown with a large red and blue cloud representing the nuclear overlap. A  $K^-$  meson and a proton are shown emerging from the collision region, with a distance  $r^* > 3$  fm indicated. A ruler at the bottom shows a scale in fm.

$\mathbf{k}$  = the relative momentum,  $S_{12}(\mathbf{r})$  = the source function

Lednicky, Phys. Part. Nucl. **40** (2009) 307

- Note many refinements for coupled channels etc, but let us keep it simple

# Using Femtoscopy

- Many claims by the ALICE collaboration:

Article

Unveiling the strong interaction among hadrons at the LHC

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https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-3001-6

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ALICE Collaboration\*

One of the key challenges for nuclear physics today is to understand from first principles the effective interaction between hadrons with different quark content. First successes have been achieved using techniques that solve the dynamics of quarks and gluons on discrete space-time lattices<sup>1,2</sup>. Experimentally, the dynamics of the strong interaction have been studied by scattering hadrons off each other. Such scattering experiments are difficult or impossible for unstable hadrons<sup>3–6</sup> and so high-quality measurements exist only for hadrons containing up and down quarks<sup>7</sup>. Here we demonstrate that measuring correlations in the momentum space between hadron pairs<sup>8–12</sup> produced in ultrarelativistic proton–proton collisions at the CERN Large Hadron Collider (LHC) provides a precise method with which to obtain the missing information on the interaction dynamics between any pair of unstable hadrons. Specifically, we discuss the case of the interaction of baryons containing strange quarks (hyperons). We demonstrate how, using precision measurements of proton–omega baryon correlations, the effect of the strong interaction for this hadron–hadron pair can be studied with precision similar to, and compared with, predictions from lattice calculations<sup>13,14</sup>. The large number of hyperons identified in proton–proton collisions at the LHC, together with accurate modelling<sup>15</sup> of the small (approximately one femtometre) inter-particle distance and exact predictions for the correlation functions, enables a detailed determination of the short-range part of the nucleon–hyperon interaction.

PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS 124, 092301 (2020)

Scattering Studies with Low-Energy Kaon-Proton Femtoscopy in Proton-Proton Collisions at the LHC

S. Acharya *et al.*\*

(A Large Ion Collider Experiment Collaboration)

(Received 18 July 2019; revised manuscript received 3 December 2019; accepted 11 February 2020; published 6 March 2020)

The study of the strength and behavior of the antikaon-nucleon ( $\bar{K}N$ ) interaction constitutes one of the key focuses of the strangeness sector in low-energy quantum chromodynamics (QCD). In this Letter a unique high-precision measurement of the strong interaction between kaons and protons, close and above the kinematic threshold, is presented. The femtoscopic measurements of the correlation function at low pair-frame relative momentum of  $(K^+p \oplus K^-\bar{p})$  and  $(K^-p \oplus K^+\bar{p})$  pairs measured in  $pp$  collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 5, 7$ , and 13 TeV are reported. A structure observed around a relative momentum of 58 MeV/ $c$  in the measured correlation function of  $(K^-p \oplus K^+\bar{p})$  with a significance of  $4.4\sigma$  constitutes the first experimental evidence for the opening of the  $(\bar{K}^0n \oplus K^0\bar{n})$  isospin breaking channel due to the mass difference between charged and neutral kaons. The measured correlation functions have been compared to Jülich and Kyoto models in addition to the Coulomb potential. The high-precision data at low relative momenta presented in this work prove femtoscopy to be a powerful complementary tool to scattering experiments and provide new constraints above the  $\bar{K}N$  threshold for low-energy QCD chiral models.

Physics Letters B 797 (2019) 134822

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Physics Letters B

www.elsevier.com/locate/physletb

Study of the  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  interaction with femtoscopy correlations in pp and p–Pb collisions at the LHC

ALICE Collaboration

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

**Article history:**  
Received 24 May 2019  
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Available online 1 August 2019  
Editor: L. Rolandi

This work presents new constraints on the existence and the binding energy of a possible  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  bound state, the H-dibaryon, derived from  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  femtoscopic measurements by the ALICE collaboration. The results are obtained from a new measurement using the femtoscopy technique in pp collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 13$  TeV and p–Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 5.02$  TeV, combined with previously published results from pp collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 7$  TeV. The  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  scattering parameter space, spanned by the inverse scattering length  $f_0^{-1}$  and the effective range  $d_0$ , is constrained by comparing the measured  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  correlation function with calculations obtained within the Lednický model. The data are compatible with hypernuclei results and lattice computations, both predicting a shallow attractive interaction, and permit to test different theoretical approaches describing the  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  interaction. The region in the  $(f_0^{-1}, d_0)$  plane which would accommodate a  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  bound state is substantially restricted compared to previous studies. The binding energy of the possible  $\Lambda$ – $\Lambda$  bound state is estimated within an effective-range expansion approach and is found to be  $B_{\Lambda\Lambda} = 3.2^{+1.9}_{-2.4}(\text{stat})^{+1.9}_{-1.0}(\text{syst})$  MeV.

Phys. Lett. B 856 (2024) 138915

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Physics Letters B

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/physletb](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/physletb)

Letter

Investigating the composition of the  $K_0^*(700)$  state with  $\pi^\pm K_S^0$  correlations at the LHC

ALICE Collaboration \*

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Editor: M. Doser

Dataset links: <https://www.hepdata.net/record/ins2739149>

The first measurements of femtoscopic correlations with the particle pair combinations  $\pi^\pm K_S^0$  in pp collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 13$  TeV at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) are reported by the ALICE experiment. Using the femtoscopic approach, it is shown that it is possible to study the elusive  $K_0^*(700)$  particle that has been considered a tetraquark candidate for over forty years. Source and final-state interaction parameters are extracted by fitting a model assuming a Gaussian source to the experimentally measured two-particle correlation functions. The final-state interaction in the  $\pi^\pm K_S^0$  system is modeled through a resonant scattering amplitude, defined in terms of a mass and a coupling parameter. The extracted mass and Breit–Wigner width, derived from the coupling parameter, of the final-state interaction are found to be consistent with previous measurements of the  $K_0^*(700)$ . The small value and increase of the correlation strength with increasing source size support the hypothesis that the  $K_0^*(700)$  is a four-quark state, i.e. a tetraquark state of the form  $(q_1, \bar{q}_2, q_3, \bar{q}_4)$  in which  $q_1, q_3$  and  $q_2, q_4$  indicate the flavor of the valence quarks of the  $\pi$  and  $K_S^0$ . This latter trend is also confirmed via a simple geometric model that assumes a tetraquark structure of the  $K_0^*(700)$  resonance.

# Using Femtoscopy cont'd

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- Another mind-boggling example

$$a(D\pi)^{I=1/2} = 0.02 \pm 0.03 \pm 0.01 \text{ fm}$$

Acharya et al [ALICE coll.], Phys. Rev. D **110** (2024) 032004

↪ this would be a real problem  
for QCD chiral dynamics [and HQSS]!

- Coupled channel chiral dynamics:

$$a(D\pi)^{I=1/2} = 0.37_{-0.02}^{+0.03} \text{ fm}$$

Liu, Orginos, Hanhart, Guo, UGM, Phys. Rev. D **87** (2013) 014508

and many others!

- Lattice QCD:

$$a(D\pi)^{I=1/2} = 0.32_{-0.05}^{+0.06} \text{ fm}$$

Yan, Liu, Liu, Meng, Xiang, Phys. Rev. D **111** (2025) 014503

## Studying the interaction between charm and light-flavor mesons

S. Acharya<sup>129</sup>, D. Adamová<sup>87</sup>, G. Aglieri Rinella<sup>33</sup>, L. Aglietta<sup>25</sup>, M. Agnello<sup>30</sup>, N. Agrawal<sup>26</sup>, Z. Ahmed<sup>137</sup>, S. Ahmad<sup>16</sup>, S. U. Ahn<sup>72</sup> et al. (ALICE Collaboration)

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Phys. Rev. D **110**, 032004 – Published 5 August, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevD.110.032004>

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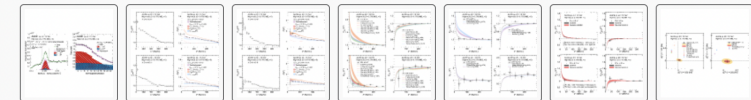
Am score 2

Citations 15

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### Abstract

The two-particle momentum correlation functions between charm mesons ( $D^{*\pm}$  and  $D^\pm$ ) and charged light-flavor mesons ( $\pi^\pm$  and  $K^\pm$ ) in all charge combinations are measured for the first time by the ALICE Collaboration in high-multiplicity proton–proton collisions at a center-of-mass energy of  $\sqrt{s} = 13$  TeV. For  $DK$  and  $D^*K$  pairs, the experimental results are in agreement with theoretical predictions of the residual strong interaction based on quantum chromodynamics calculations on the lattice and chiral effective field theory. In the case of  $D\pi$  and  $D^*\pi$  pairs, tension between the calculations including strong interactions and the measurement is observed. For all particle pairs, the data can be adequately described by Coulomb interaction only, indicating a shallow interaction between charm and light-flavor mesons. Finally, the scattering lengths governing the residual strong interaction of the  $D\pi$  and  $D^*\pi$  systems are determined by fitting the experimental correlation functions with a model that employs a Gaussian potential. The extracted values are small and compatible with zero.



So what is going on here?



# Analysis of the KP formula – a Gedankenexperiment –

- Fundamental flaw of the KP formula:

Combined with the universality assumption for the source function  $S_{12}(\mathbf{r})$ , it implies the measurability of hadronic wave functions and thus also of the corresponding interaction potentials

- But: hadronic potentials are **not** observable (scheme-dependent) [as is well known]

- Consider non-relativistic systems:

$$C(\mathbf{k}) = \langle \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}^{(+)} | \hat{S}_{12} | \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}^{(+)} \rangle \quad \text{for} \quad \langle \mathbf{r}' | \hat{S}_{12} | \mathbf{r} \rangle = \delta(\mathbf{r}' - \mathbf{r}) S_{12}(\mathbf{r}) \quad (\text{local})$$

- Consider unitary transformations ( $\hat{U}^\dagger \hat{U} = \hat{U} \hat{U}^\dagger = 1$ )

$$C(\mathbf{k}) = (\langle \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}^{(+)} | \hat{U}^\dagger) (\hat{U} \hat{S}_{12} \hat{U}^\dagger) (\hat{U} | \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}^{(+)} \rangle) = \langle \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}'^{(+)} | \hat{S}_{12}' | \Psi_{-\mathbf{k}}'^{(+)} \rangle$$

- Universality of the source term means  $\hat{S}_{12}' = \hat{S}_{12}$

↪ model dependence of the calculated correlation functions

- $$\langle p'l | \hat{V}_{\text{Alice}} | pl \rangle = \langle p'l | \hat{V}_{\text{np}, \text{N}^4\text{LO}+}^{S=0} | pl \rangle \quad (l = 0, 1, 2, 3), \quad \hat{V}_{\text{np}}^{S=0} = \hat{V}_{\text{np}}[1 - \vec{\sigma}_1 \cdot \vec{\sigma}_2]/4$$



- Choose a static local source

choose  $r_0 = 1.5 \text{ fm}$



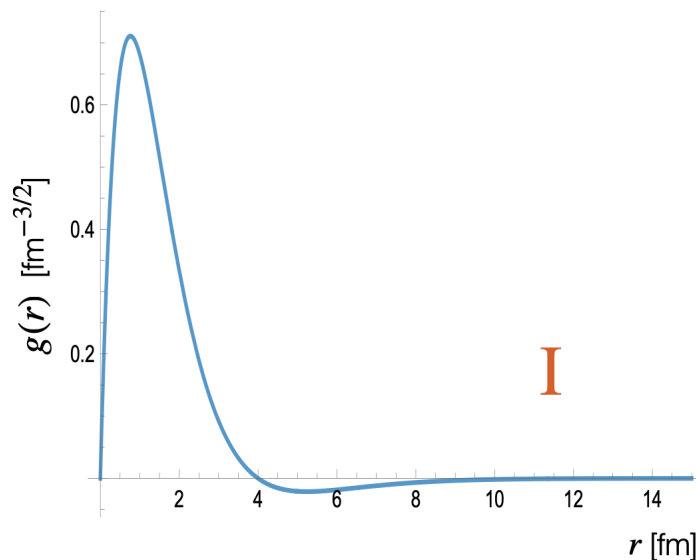
# Gedankenexperiment III

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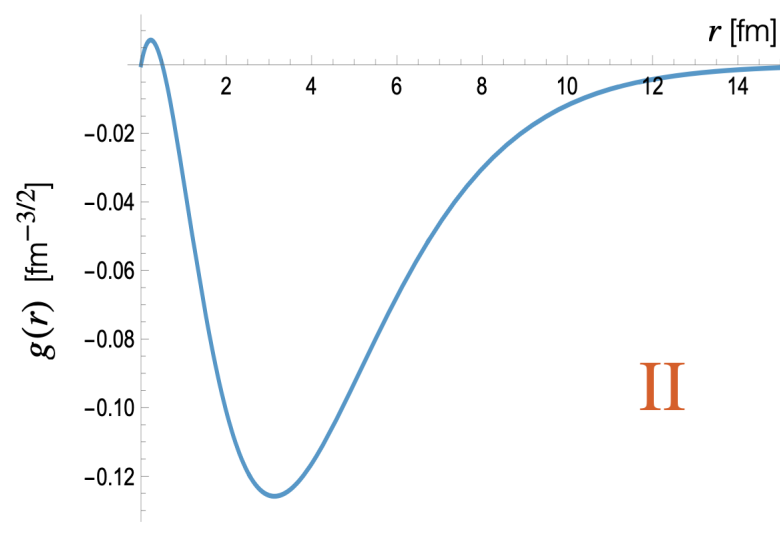
- Bob chooses another basis:  $|\Psi_{\text{Bob}}\rangle = \hat{U}|\Psi_{\text{Alice}}\rangle$ ,  $\hat{U} = 1 - 2|g\rangle\langle g|$ ,  $\langle g|g\rangle = 1$

$$g(\vec{r}) = \langle \vec{r} | g \rangle = Cr(1 - \beta r)e^{-\alpha r} \longrightarrow g(\vec{p}) \sim \frac{p^4 - 3\alpha^3(\alpha - 4\beta) - 2p^2\alpha(\alpha + 6\beta)}{(p^2 + \alpha^2)^4}$$

Sauer, Phys. Rev. Lett. **32** (1974) 626



$$\alpha = 1 \text{ fm}^{-1}, \quad \beta = 0.25 \text{ fm}^{-1}$$



$$\alpha = 0.7 \text{ fm}^{-1}, \quad \beta = 2.0 \text{ fm}^{-1}$$

Fig. courtesy E. Epelbaum

# Gedankenexperiment IV

- In Bob's notation, the potential takes the form (UT only acts on the S-wave)

$$\hat{V}_{\text{Bob}} = \hat{U} \left( \frac{\hat{p}^2}{2\mu} + \hat{V}_{\text{Alice}} \right) \hat{U}^\dagger - \frac{\hat{p}^2}{2\mu}$$

- But the physics is the same!

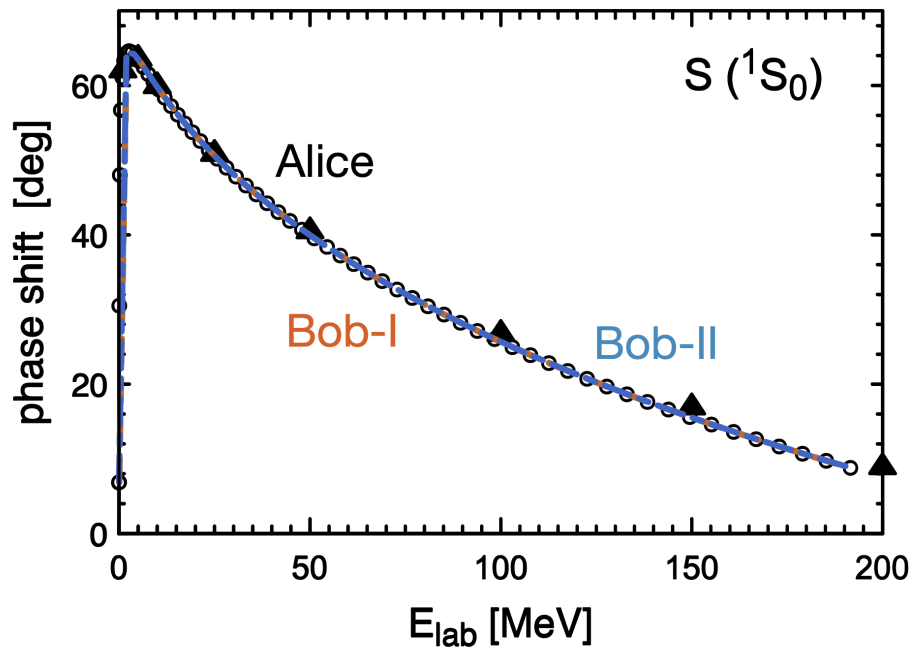
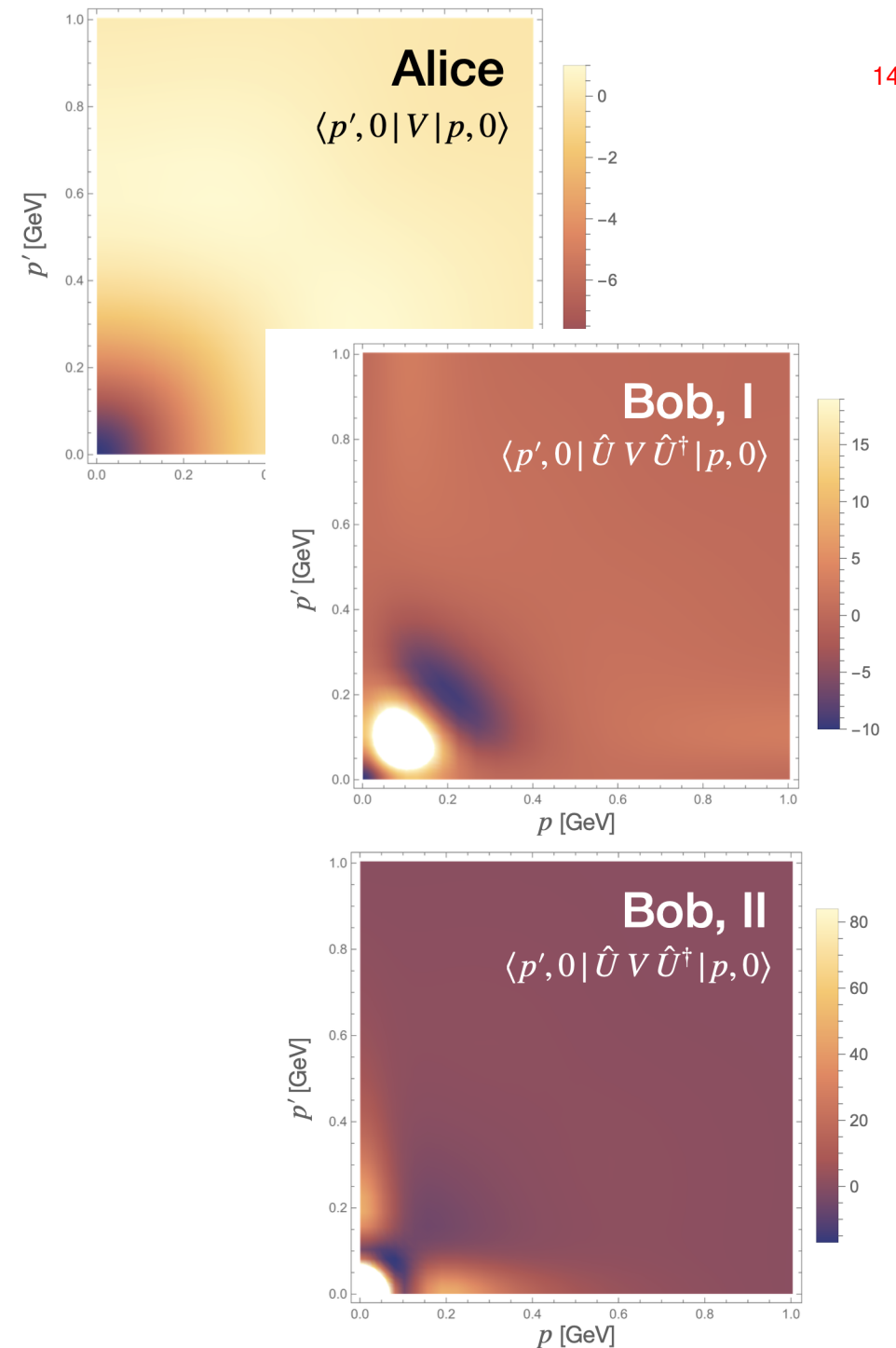
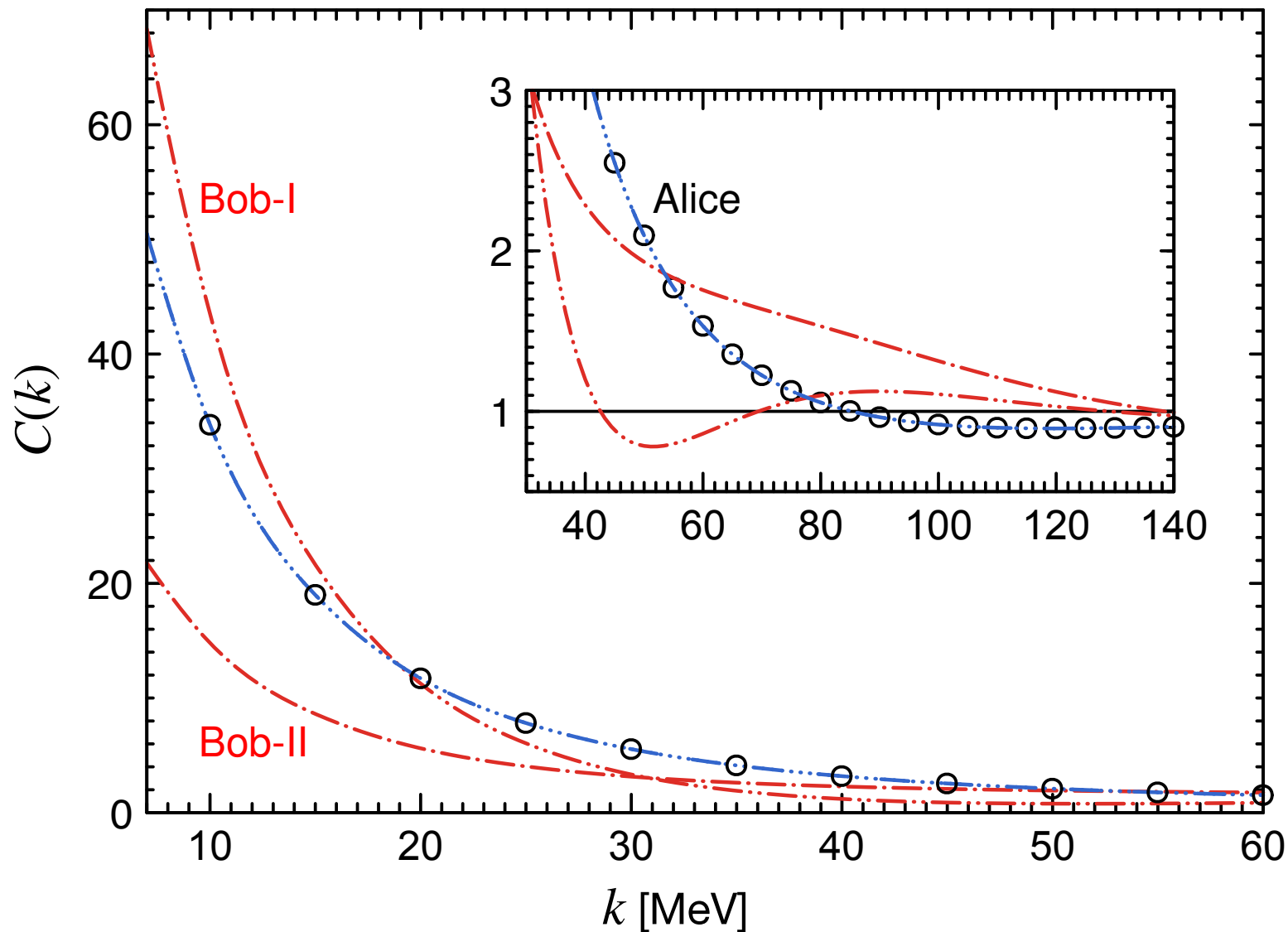


Fig. courtesy E. Epelbaum



- Naturally, Bob's correlation functions look very different from Alice's

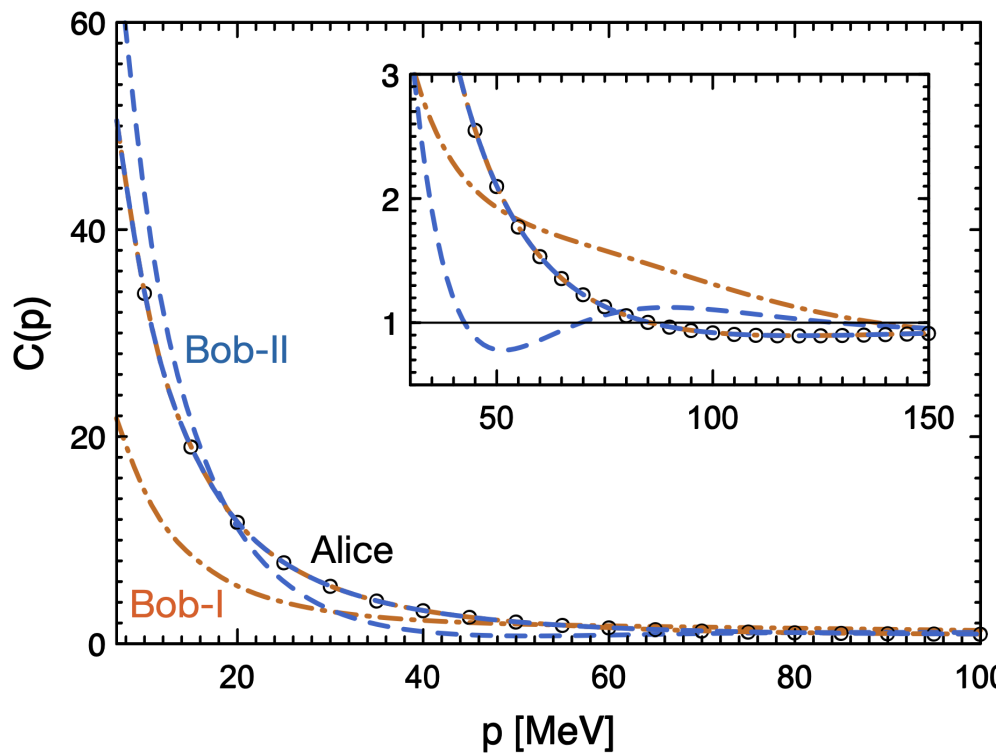
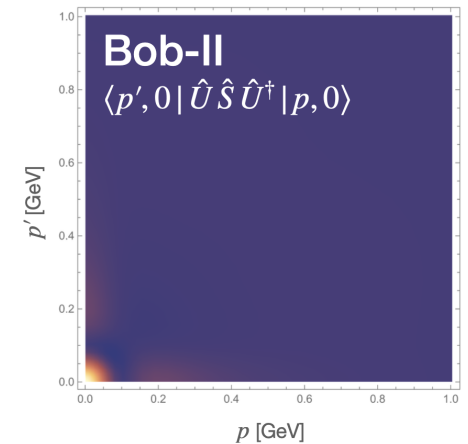
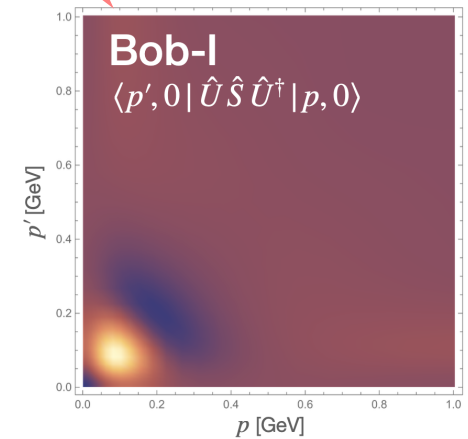
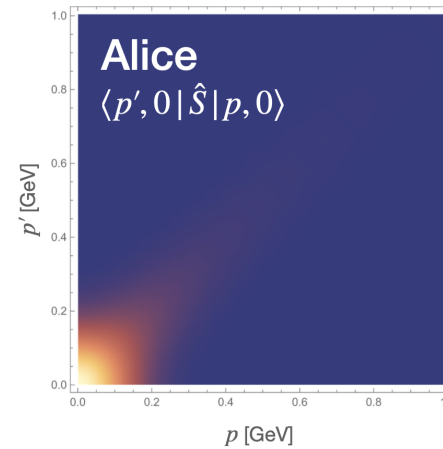


# Gedankenexperiment VI

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- The solution is (of course) trivial:  
The source term needs to be transformed into Bob's conventions

⇒ Correlation functions coincide





# Scheme-dependence in chiral EFT

# Scheme dependence in chiral EFT

- Where does the scheme dependence (off-shell effects) appear in chiral EFT?

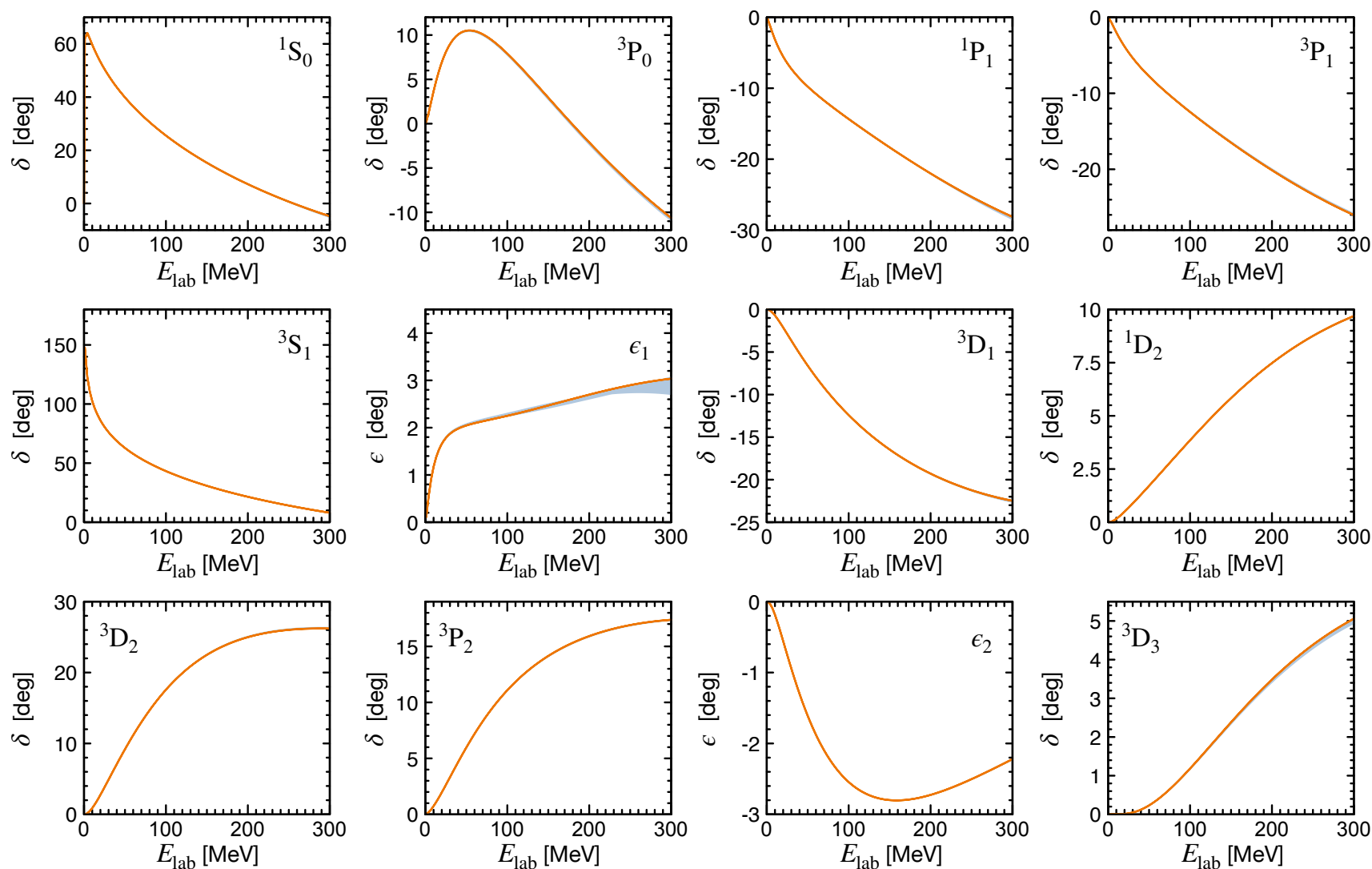
	Two-nucleon force	Three-nucleon force	Four-nucleon force
LO:			
NLO:			
N <sup>2</sup> LO:			
N <sup>3</sup> LO:			
N <sup>4</sup> LO:			

- Most UTs fixed from renormalizability, but ambiguities remain:
  - two phases in  $1/m$  corrections, three phases in the contact terms
  - potentially large scheme-dependence in the  $3N$  force!

Friar (1999), Bernard et al. (2011), Reinert et al., EPJA **54** (2018) 86



- Phase shifts of these 27 NN interactions



	N <sup>4</sup> LO <sup>+</sup> (no os LECs)	N <sup>4</sup> LO <sup>+</sup> (w/ os LECs)	Empirical
$B_d$ [MeV]	2.2246*	2.2246*	2.22456614(41)
$A_S$ [fm <sup>-1/2</sup> ]	0.8846	0.8845...0.8848	0.8845(8)
$\eta$	0.0261	0.0260...0.0263	0.0256(4)
$r_m$ [fm]	1.9662	1.9588...1.9709	—
$Q_0$ [fm <sup>2</sup> ]	0.275	0.269...0.280	—
$P_D$ [%]	4.79	3.80...6.33	—

- The D-state probability  $P_D$  changes under unitary trafo's, as known since long

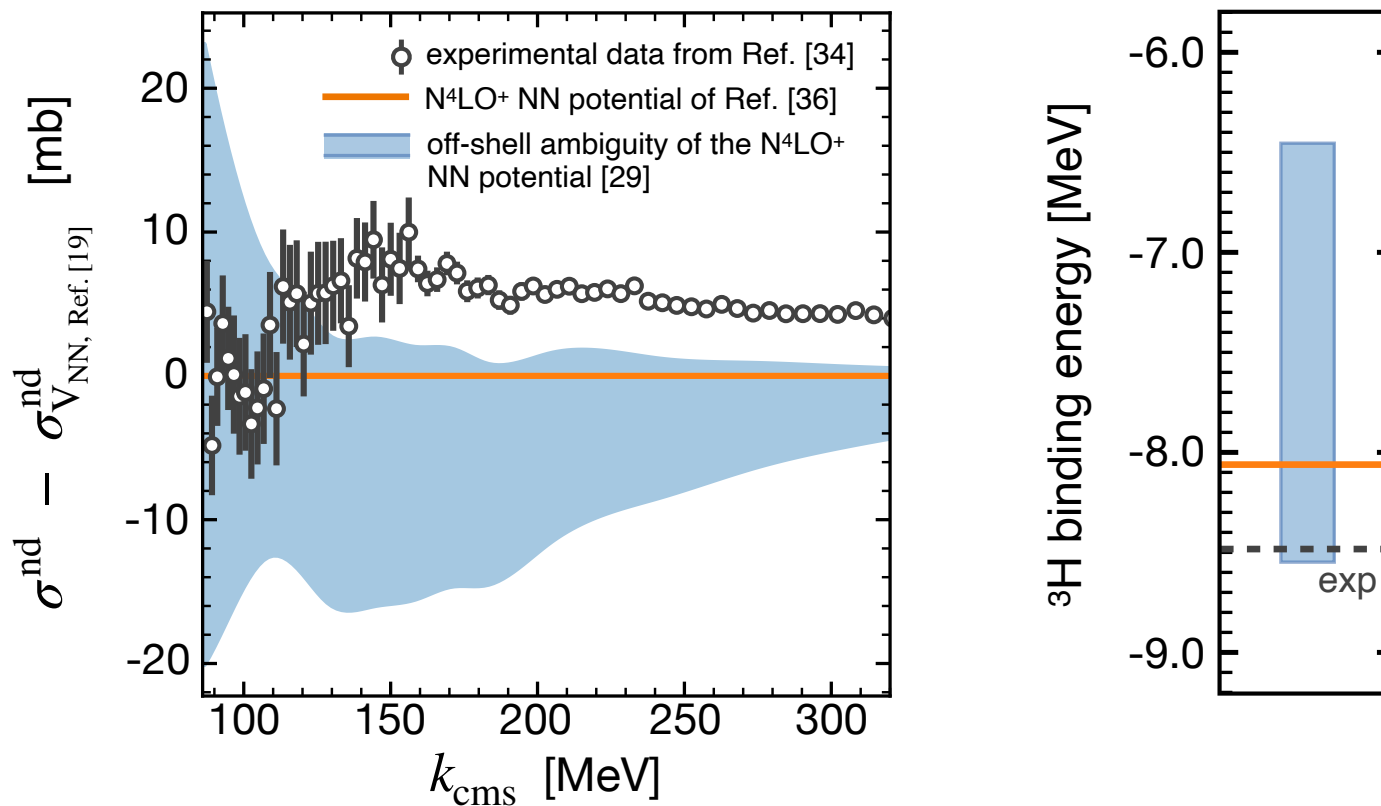
# Three-nucleon interactions

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- ALICE claims to be able to determine 3-hadron interactions such as  $ppp$  or  $p\Lambda\Lambda$

Acharya et al., Eur. Phys. J. A **59** (2023)145, 2023; Phys. Rev. X **14** (2024) 031051; Kievsky et al., Phys. Rev. C **109** (2024) 034006

- calculate  $3N$  observables with the 27 phase-equivalent NN potentials

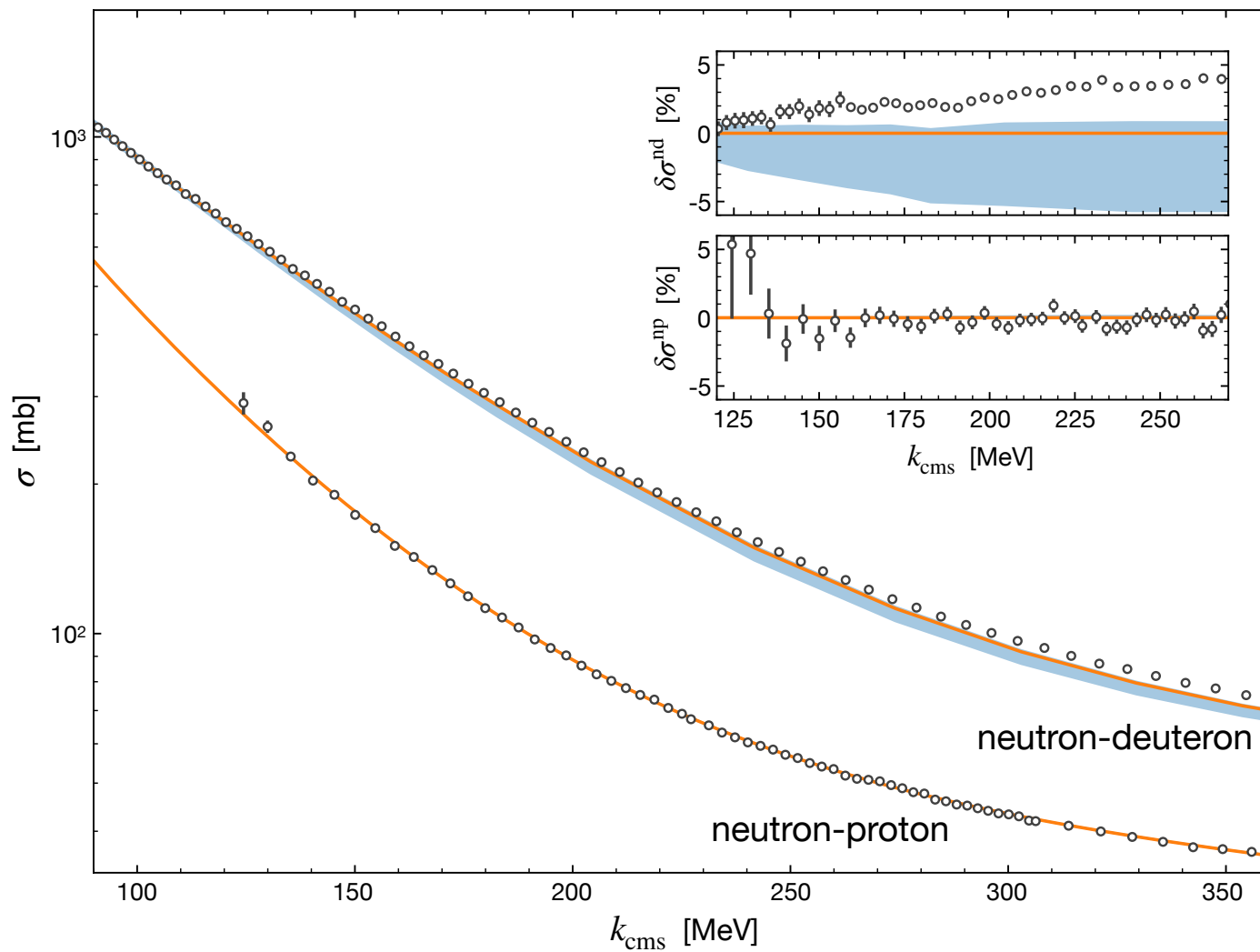


↪ an illustration of the Polyzou-Glöckle theorem Few Body Syst. **9** (1990) 97

↪ which particular 3BF is then to be measured in femtoscopy?

## A closer look at the cross sections

- Consider the  $np$  and  $nd$  total XS, normalized to a high-precision fit:

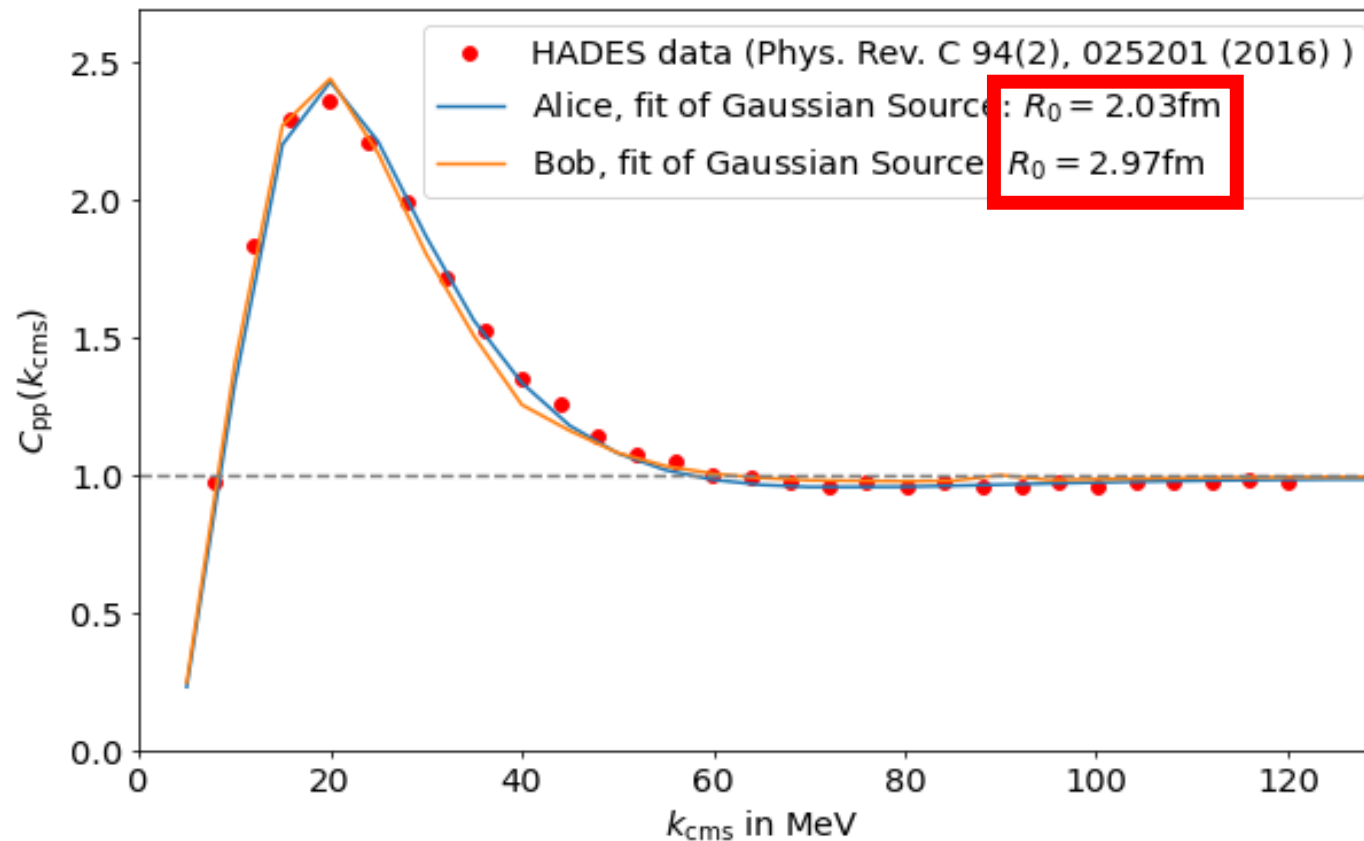
Reinert, Krebs, Epelbaum, Phys. Rev. Lett. **126** (2021) 092501

blue-shaded band not seen!

# Fresh from the press: Proton-proton scattering

24

- Work out  $pp$  scattering at  $N^4\text{LO}^+$  incl. all partial waves and Coulomb  
↪ fit to HADES data on the correlation function w/ and w/o UT



↪ the source radius differs by about 50%, so how can one talk about precision?



- Göbel, Kievsky, 2505.13433 [nucl-th]

→ does not resolve the ambiguities in the 3N force!

- Molina, Oset, 2506.03669 [hep-ph]

↪ but these S-matrices (phase shifts) are not even phase-equivalent !

- ○ ◁ < ^ ▽ > ▷ ●

# Summary

# Takeaways

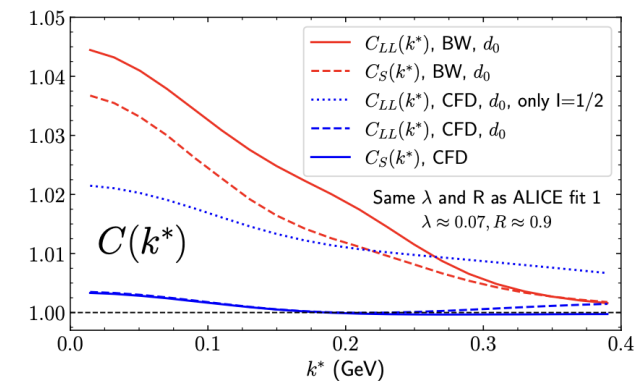
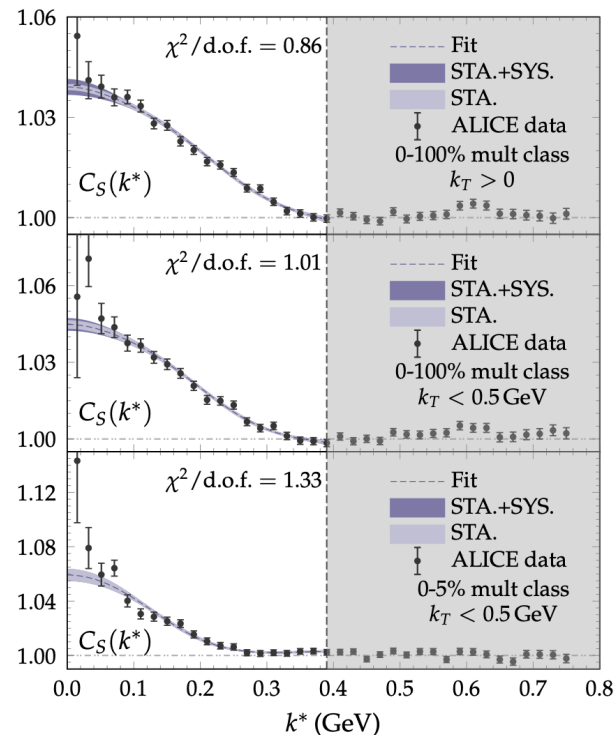
- Nuclear interactions are scheme-dependent (esp. at short distances)
  - They can be calculated / determined provided one fixes the convention and keeps it consistently in all applications (as done in chiral EFT)
- ↪ Can this be achieved in femtoscopy???
- Any model of the source term must at least comply with the principles of QM
- ⇒ Claims of high-precision determinations of hadronic interactions based on femtoscopy are thus (at least) questionable
- For the two-hadron case ( $\pi K$  scattering and the nature of the  $K_0^*(700)$ )
- ↪ much better treatment of the FSI leads to very different conclusions!

Albaladejo, Canoa, Nieves, Pelaez, Ruiz-Arriola, de Elvira, Phys. Lett. B **866** (2025) 139552 [arXiv:2503.19746 [hep-ph]] → next slide

⇒ We need a better formalism to extract precision physics from  $C(k)$ !

Albaladejo, Canoa, Nieves, Pelaez, Ruiz-Arriola, de Elvira, Phys. Lett. B **866** (2025) 139552

- Show some results from the Madrid group (dispersive analysis of  $\pi K \rightarrow \pi K$ ):

Table 1: Parameters and  $\chi^2/\text{d.o.f.}$  of the fits in Fig. 1.

	0-100% m. cl.	0-100% m. cl.	0-5% m. cl.
	$k_T > 0$	$k_T < 0.5 \text{ GeV}$	$k_T < 0.5 \text{ GeV}$
$\chi^2/\text{d.o.f.}$	0.86	1.01	1.33
$R \text{ (fm)}$	0.36(3)(3)	0.41(3)(3)	0.68(5)(3)
$\lambda$	0.19(2)(4)	0.29(4)(5)	0.80(14)(13)
$(N-1) \times 10^2$	0.80(8)(7)	0.85(8)(6)	0.97(6)(4)

- need to account for realistic final-state interactions (another weakness of femtoscopy)
- use the ALICE formalism: the source radius becomes unphysically small

THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION

