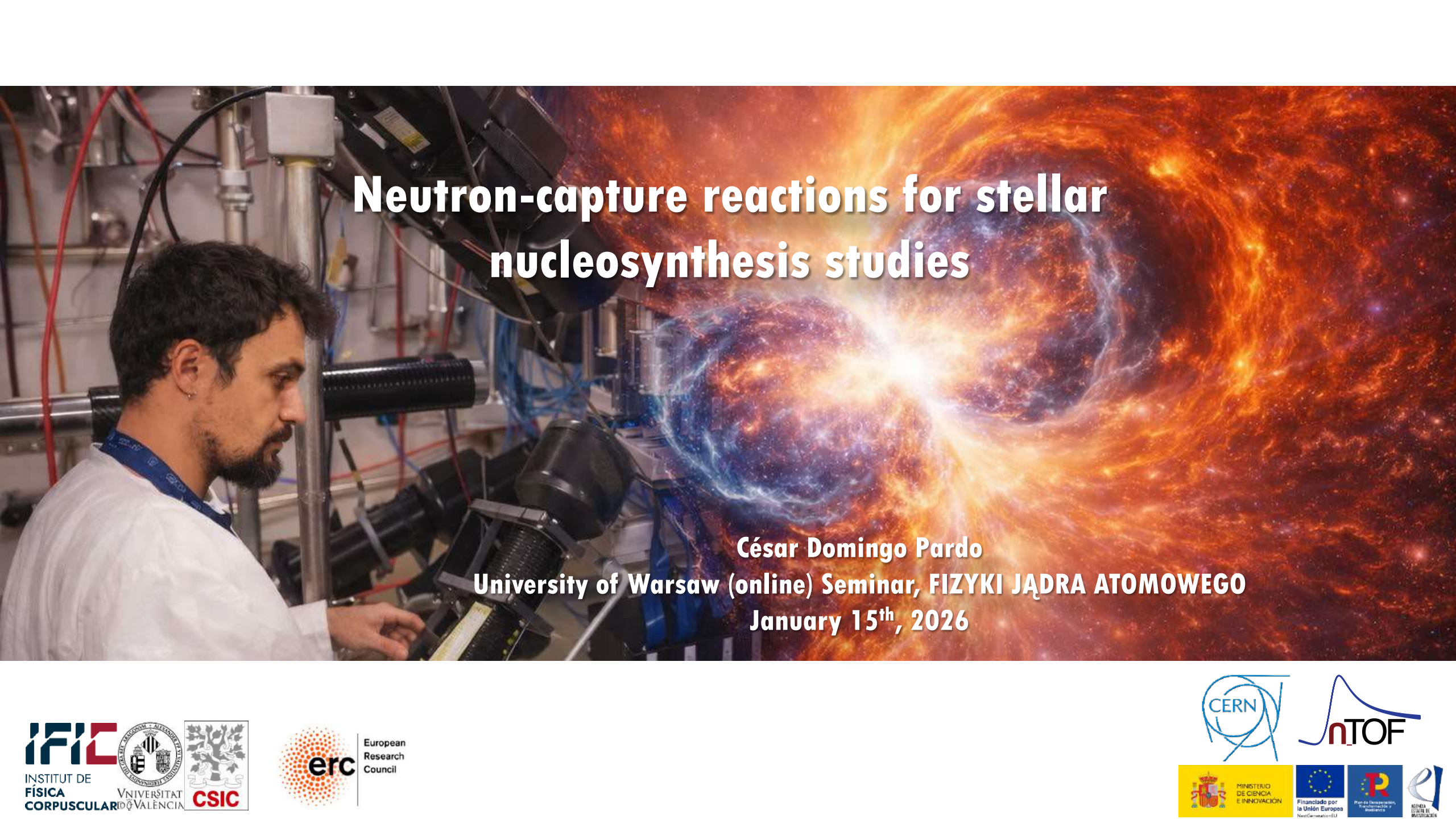




Neutron-capture reactions for stellar nucleosynthesis studies

César Domingo Pardo

University of Warsaw (online) Seminar, FIZYKI JĄDRA ATOMOWEGO

January 15th, 2026

Outline

- Heavy elements nucleosynthesis: How stars make gold (r-process) and lead (s-process)?
- Neutron-capture experiments at CERN n_TOF: Red-Giant stars in the lab
- Enhancing detection sensitivity in neutron capture TOF experiments
- What are the limits?: r-process neutron-reactions in the lab? GSI+TRIUMF+IFIC initiative
- Summary & Outlook

NIST NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

18
VIII A

1 second = 9 192 631 770 periods of radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of ^{133}Cs

^SFor the most accurate values of these and other constants, visit nist.gov/constants.

-  Solids
-  Liquids
-  Gases
-  Artificially Prepared

Atomic Properties of the Elements

NIST NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

18
VIIIA

FREQUENTLY USED FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICAL CONSTANTS⁵

1 second = 9 192 631 770 periods of radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of ¹³³Cs

speed of light in vacuum	<i>c</i>	299 792 458	m s ⁻¹	(exact)
Planck constant	<i>h</i>	6.626 070 15 × 10 ⁻³⁴	J Hz ⁻¹	(exact)
elementary charge	<i>e</i>	1.602 176 634 × 10 ⁻¹⁹	C	(exact)
Avogadro constant	<i>N_A</i>	6.022 140 76 × 10 ²³	mol ⁻¹	(exact)
Boltzmann constant	<i>k</i>	1.380 649 × 10 ⁻²³	J K ⁻¹	(exact)
electron volt	eV	1.602 176 634 × 10 ⁻¹⁹	J	(exact)
electron mass	<i>m_e</i>	9.109 383 71 × 10 ⁻³¹	kg	(exact)
energy equivalent	<i>m_ec²</i>	0.510 998 951	MeV	(exact)
proton mass	<i>m_p</i>	1.672 621 928 × 10 ⁻²⁷	kg	(exact)
energy equivalent	<i>m_pc²</i>	938.272 089	MeV	(exact)
fine-structure constant	<i>α</i>	1/137 035 999		(exact)
Rydberg energy	<i>R_∞hc</i>	13 805 693 1230	eV	(exact)
Newtonian constant of gravitation	<i>G</i>	6.674 × 10 ⁻¹¹	m ³ kg ⁻¹ s ⁻²	(exact)

⁵For the most accurate values of these and other constants, visit nist.gov/constants

■ Solids
■ Liquids
■ Gases
■ Artificially Prepared

Physical Measurement Laboratory www.nist.gov/pml
Standard Reference Data www.nist.gov/srd

13 IIIA	14 IVA	15 VA	16 VIA	17 VIIA	18 VIIIA
5 B Boron 10.81 15.422 8.2590	6 C Carbon 12.011 16.222 11.2603	7 N Nitrogen 14.007 16.222 14.5341	8 O Oxygen 15.999 16.222 13.6181	9 F Fluorine 18.998 16.222 17.4223	10 Ne Neon 20.180 16.222 21.5645
13 Al Aluminum 26.982 (Ne)3s ² 3p	14 Si Silicon 28.085 (Ne)3s ² 3p ²	15 P Phosphorus 30.974 (Ne)3s ² 3p ³	16 S Sulfur 32.06 (Ne)3s ² 3p ⁴	17 Cl Chlorine 35.45 (Ne)3s ² 3p ⁵	18 Ar Argon 39.95 (Ne)3s ² 3p ⁶
31 Ga Gallium 69.723 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p	32 Ge Germanium 72.630 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p ²	33 As Arsenic 74.922 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p ³	34 Se Selenium 78.971 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p ⁴	35 Br Bromine 79.904 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p ⁵	36 Kr Krypton 83.798 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ² 4p ⁶
49 In Indium 114.82 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ²	50 Sn Tin 118.71 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ²	51 Sb Antimony 121.76 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ³	52 Te Tellurium 127.60 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ⁴	53 I Iodine 126.90 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ⁵	54 Xe Xenon 131.29 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ² 5p ⁶
81 Tl Thallium 204.38 (Hg)6p	82 Pb Lead 207.2 (Hg)6p	83 Bi Bismuth 208.98 (Hg)6p	84 Po Polonium (209) (Hg)6p	85 At Astatine (210) (Hg)6p	86 Rn Radon (222) (Hg)6p
113 Nh Nihonium (286)	114 Fl Flerovium (289)	115 Mc Moscovium (290)	116 Lv Livermorium (293)	117 Ts Tennessine (294)	118 Og Oganesson (294)

3 IIIB	4 IVB	5 VB	6 VIB	7 VIIB	8 VIII	9 VIII	10 VIII	11 IB	12 IIB
21 Sc Scandium 44.956 (Ar)3d ¹ 4s ²	22 Ti Titanium 47.887 (Ar)3d ² 4s ²	23 V Vanadium 50.942 (Ar)3d ³ 4s ²	24 Cr Chromium 51.998 (Ar)3d ⁵ 4s ¹	25 Mn Manganese 54.938 (Ar)3d ⁵ 4s ²	26 Fe Iron 55.845 (Ar)3d ⁶ 4s ²	27 Co Cobalt 58.933 (Ar)3d ⁷ 4s ²	28 Ni Nickel 58.693 (Ar)3d ⁸ 4s ²	29 Cu Copper 63.546 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ¹	30 Zn Zinc 65.38 (Ar)3d ¹⁰ 4s ²
39 Y Yttrium 88.906 (Kr)4d ¹ 5s ²	40 Zr Zirconium 91.224 (Kr)4d ² 5s ²	41 Nb Niobium 92.906 (Kr)4d ⁴ 5s ¹	42 Mo Molybdenum 95.95 (Kr)4d ⁵ 5s ¹	43 Tc Technetium (97) (Kr)4d ⁵ 5s ²	44 Ru Ruthenium 101.07 (Kr)4d ⁷ 5s ¹	45 Rh Rhodium 102.91 (Kr)4d ⁸ 5s ¹	46 Pd Palladium 106.42 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ⁰	47 Ag Silver 107.87 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ¹	48 Cd Cadmium 112.41 (Kr)4d ¹⁰ 5s ²
72 Hf Hafnium 178.49 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ² 6s ²	73 Ta Tantalum 180.95 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ³ 6s ²	74 W Tungsten 183.84 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁴ 6s ²	75 Re Rhenium 186.21 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁵ 6s ²	76 Os Osmium 190.23 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁶ 6s ²	77 Ir Iridium 192.22 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁷ 6s ²	78 Pt Platinum 195.08 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁹ 6s ¹	79 Au Gold 196.97 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ¹⁰ 6s ¹	80 Hg Mercury 200.59 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ¹⁰ 6s ²	81 Tl Thallium 204.38 (Hg)6p
104 Rf Rutherfordium (261) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ² 7s ²	105 Db Dubnium (268) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ³ 7s ²	106 Sg Seaborgium (266) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁴ 7s ²	107 Bh Bohrium (270) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁵ 7s ²	108 Hs Hassium (269) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁶ 7s ²	109 Mt Meitnerium (277) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁷ 7s ²	110 Ds Darmstadtium (281)	111 Rg Roentgenium (282)	112 Cn Copernicium (285)	113 Nh Nihonium (286)

57 La	58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu
Lanthanum 138.91 (Xe)5d ¹ 6s ²	Cerium 140.12 (Xe)4f ¹ 5d ¹ 6s ²	Praseodymium 140.91 (Xe)4f ² 6s ²	Neodymium 144.24 (Xe)4f ³ 6s ²	Promethium (145) (Xe)4f ⁴ 6s ²	Samarium 150.36 (Xe)4f ⁶ 6s ²	Europium 151.96 (Xe)4f ⁷ 6s ²	Gadolinium 157.25 (Xe)4f ⁷ 5d ¹ 6s ²	Terbium 158.93 (Xe)4f ⁹ 6s ²	Dysprosium 162.50 (Xe)4f ¹⁰ 6s ²	Holmium 164.93 (Xe)4f ¹¹ 6s ²	Erbium 167.26 (Xe)4f ¹² 6s ²	Thulium 168.93 (Xe)4f ¹³ 6s ²	Ytterbium 173.05 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 6s ²	Lutetium 174.97 (Xe)4f ¹⁴ 5d ¹ 6s ²
89 Ac	90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No	103 Lr
Actinium (227) (Rn)6d ¹ 7s ²	Thorium 232.04 (Rn)6d ² 7s ²	Protactinium 231.04 (Rn)5f ² 6d ¹ 7s ²	Uranium 238.03 (Rn)5f ³ 6d ¹ 7s ²	Neptunium (237) (Rn)5f ⁴ 6d ¹ 7s ²	Plutonium (244) (Rn)5f ⁶ 7s ²	Americium (243) (Rn)5f ⁷ 7s ²	Curium (247) (Rn)5f ⁸ 7s ²	Berkelium (247) (Rn)5f ⁹ 7s ²	Californium (251) (Rn)5f ¹⁰ 7s ²	Einsteinium (252) (Rn)5f ¹¹ 7s ²	Fermium (257) (Rn)5f ¹² 7s ²	Mendelevium (261) (Rn)5f ¹³ 7s ²	Nobelium (259) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 7s ²	Lawrencium (262) (Rn)5f ¹⁴ 7p ¹ 7s ²

Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
IA	IIA	IIIB	IVB	VB	VIB	VIIB	VIII	IB	IIB			
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
1	1 H Hydrogen 1.008 1s ¹	2 He Helium 4.0026 1s ²										
2	3 Li Lithium 6.94 1s ² 2s ¹	4 Be Beryllium 9.0122 1s ² 2s ²										
3	11 Na Sodium 22.990 [Ne]3s ¹	12 Mg Magnesium 24.305 [Ne]3s ²										
4	19 K Potassium 39.098 [Ar]4s ¹	20 Ca Calcium 40.078 [Ar]4s ²	21 Sc Scandium 44.956 [Ar]3d ¹ 4s ²	22 Ti Titanium 47.887 [Ar]3d ² 4s ²	23 V Vanadium 50.942 [Ar]3d ³ 4s ²	24 Cr Chromium 51.998 [Ar]3d ⁵ 4s ¹	25 Mn Manganese 54.938 [Ar]3d ⁵ 4s ²	26 Fe Iron 55.845 [Ar]3d ⁶ 4s ²	27 Co Cobalt 58.933 [Ar]3d ⁷ 4s ²	28 Ni Nickel 58.693 [Ar]3d ⁸ 4s ²	29 Cu Copper 63.546 [Ar]3d ¹⁰ 4s ¹	30 Zn Zinc 65.38 [Ar]3d ¹⁰ 4s ²
5	37 Rb Rubidium 85.468 [Kr]5s ¹	38 Sr Strontium 87.62 [Kr]5s ²	39 Y Yttrium 88.906 [Kr]4d ¹ 5s ²	40 Zr Zirconium 91.224 [Kr]4d ² 5s ²	41 Nb Niobium 92.906 [Kr]4d ⁴ 5s ¹	42 Mo Molybdenum 95.95 [Kr]4d ⁵ 5s ¹	43 Tc Technetium (97) [Kr]4d ⁵ 5s ²	44 Ru Ruthenium 101.07 [Kr]4d ⁷ 5s ¹	45 Rh Rhodium 102.91 [Kr]4d ⁸ 5s ¹	46 Pd Palladium 106.42 [Kr]4d ¹⁰ 5s ⁰	47 Ag Silver 107.87 [Kr]4d ¹⁰ 5s ¹	48 Cd Cadmium 112.41 [Kr]4d ¹⁰ 5s ²
6	55 Cs Cesium 132.91 [Xe]6s ¹	56 Ba Barium 137.33 [Xe]6s ²		72 Hf Hafnium 178.49 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ² 6s ²	73 Ta Tantalum 180.95 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ³ 6s ²	74 W Tungsten 183.84 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁴ 6s ²	75 Re Rhenium 186.21 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁵ 6s ²	76 Os Osmium 190.23 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁶ 6s ²	77 Ir Iridium 192.22 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁷ 6s ²	78 Pt Platinum 195.08 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ⁹ 6s ¹	79 Au Gold 196.97 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ¹⁰ 6s ¹	80 Hg Mercury 200.59 [Xe]4f ¹⁴ 5d ¹⁰ 6s ²
7	87 Fr Francium (223) [Rn]7s ¹	88 Ra Radium 226.025 [Rn]7s ²		104 Rf Rutherfordium (261) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ² 7s ²	105 Db Dubnium (268) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ³ 7s ²	106 Sg Seaborgium (266) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁴ 7s ²	107 Bh Bohrium (270) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁵ 7s ²	108 Hs Hassium (269) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁶ 7s ²	109 Mt Meitnerium (277) [Rn]5f ¹⁴ 6d ⁷ 7s ²	110 Ds Darmstadtium (281)	111 Rg Roentgenium (282)	112 Cn Copernicium (285)

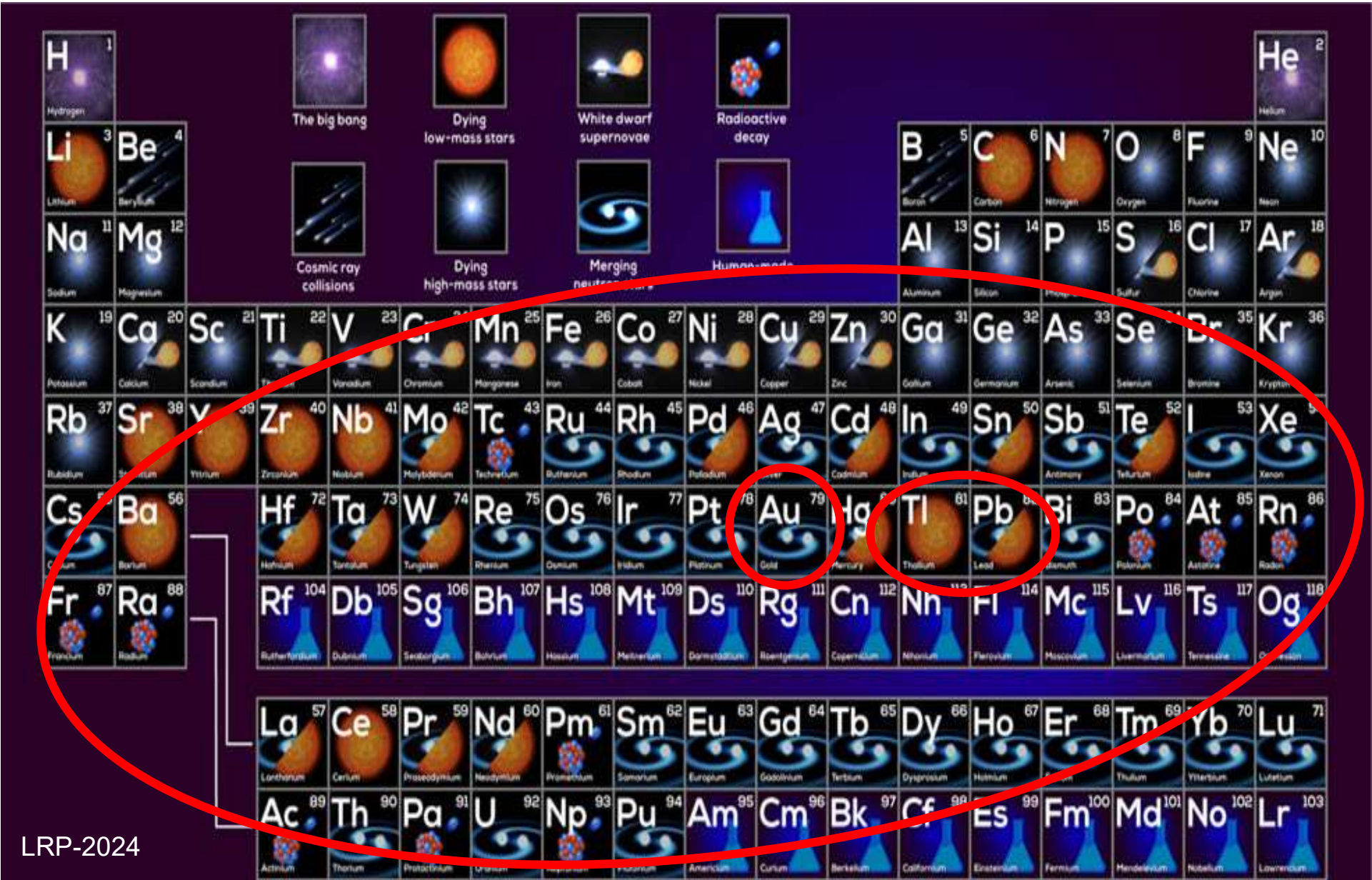
Atomic Number	Ground State
58	1G ₂ ⁰
Symbol	Name
Ce	Cerium
Standard Atomic Weight (w)	Ionization Energy (eV)
140.12	5.5386
Ground-state Configuration	
[Xe]4f ¹ 5d ¹ 6s ²	

[†]Based upon ¹²C. () indicates the mass number of the longest lived isotope.

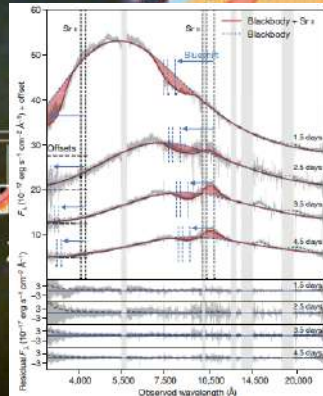
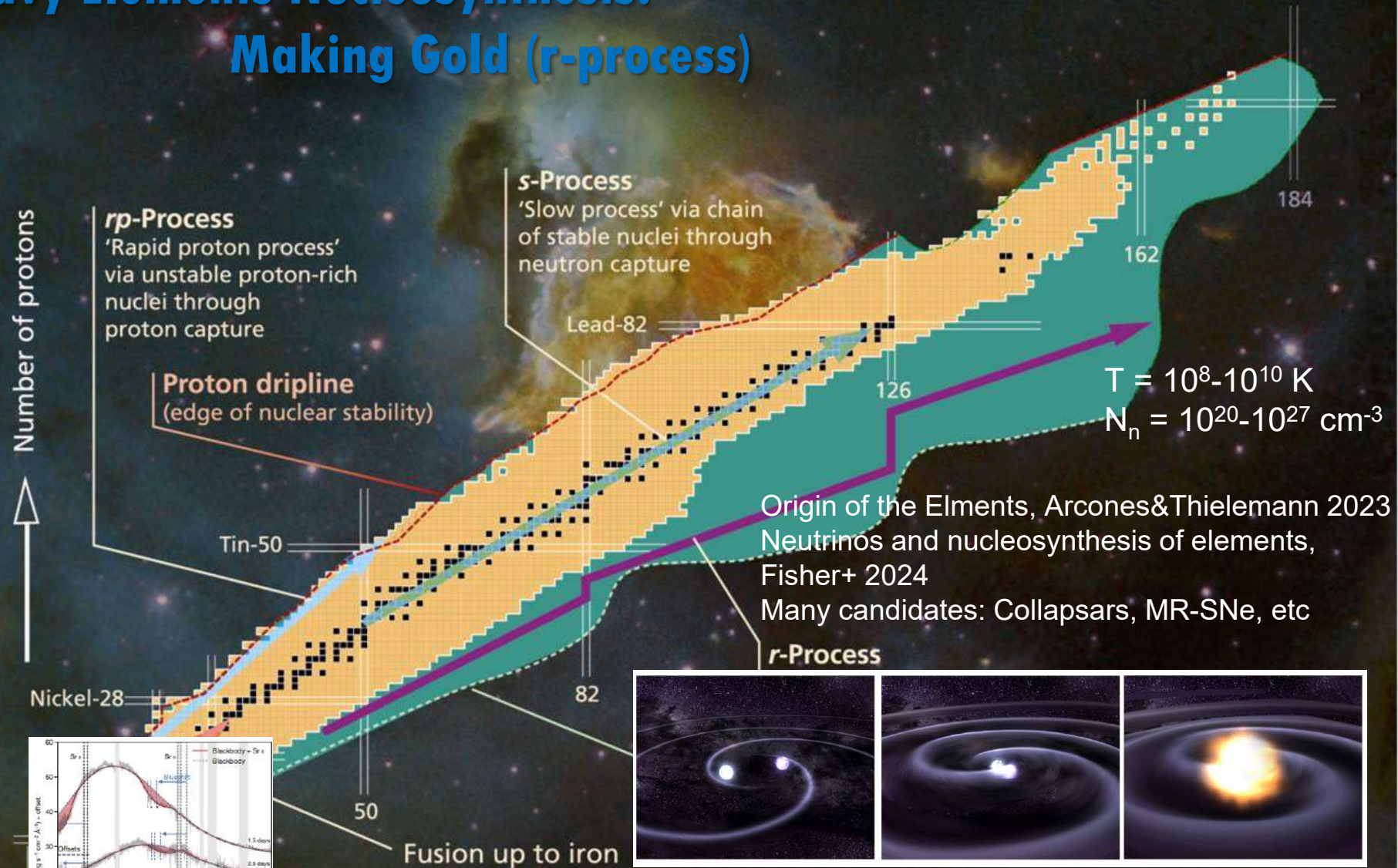
For the most precise values and uncertainties visit ciaaw.org and pml.nist.gov/data.

NIST SP 966 (June 2024)

The origin of the elements: Making Gold (r-process) and Lead (s-process)



Heavy Elements Nucleosynthesis: Making Gold (r-process)



Article
Identification of strontium in the merger of two neutron stars
D.Watson+ 2019

<https://doi.org/10.1038/n45586-019-1676-3>
Received: 8 February 2018
Accepted: 14 August 2019
Published online: 23 October 2019

Darach Watson^{1,2}, Camilla J. Hansen^{1,2}, Jonathan Selsing^{1,2}, Andreas Koch¹, Daniele B. Malesani^{1,2}, Arja D. Andersen¹, Johan P. U. Fynbo^{1,2}, Almudena Antonucci^{1,2}, Andreas Kruuse^{1,2}, Stefano Covino¹, Aniello Grillo¹, Kasper E. Harek^{1,2}, Leslie Hunt¹, Chryssa Kouveliotou^{1,2}, Giorgos Leloudas^{1,2}, Andrew J. Levan^{1,2}, Paolo Mazzali^{1,2} & Elena Pian¹

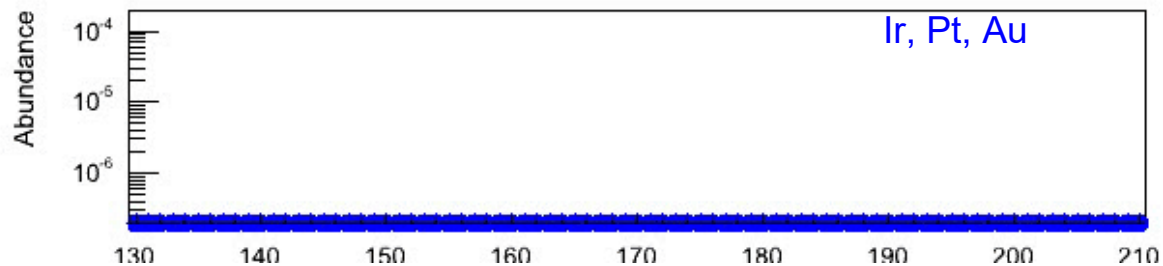
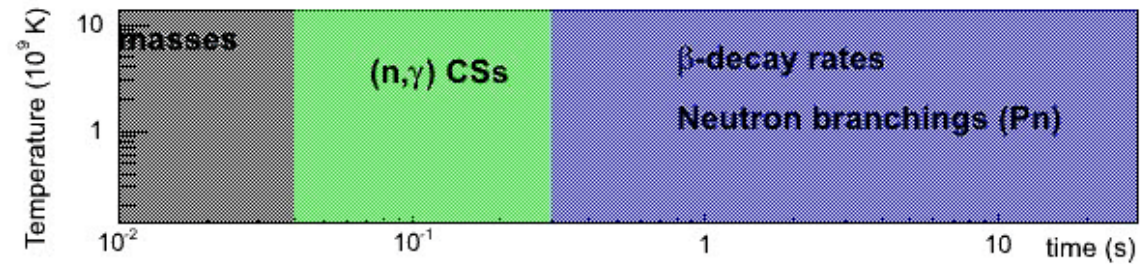
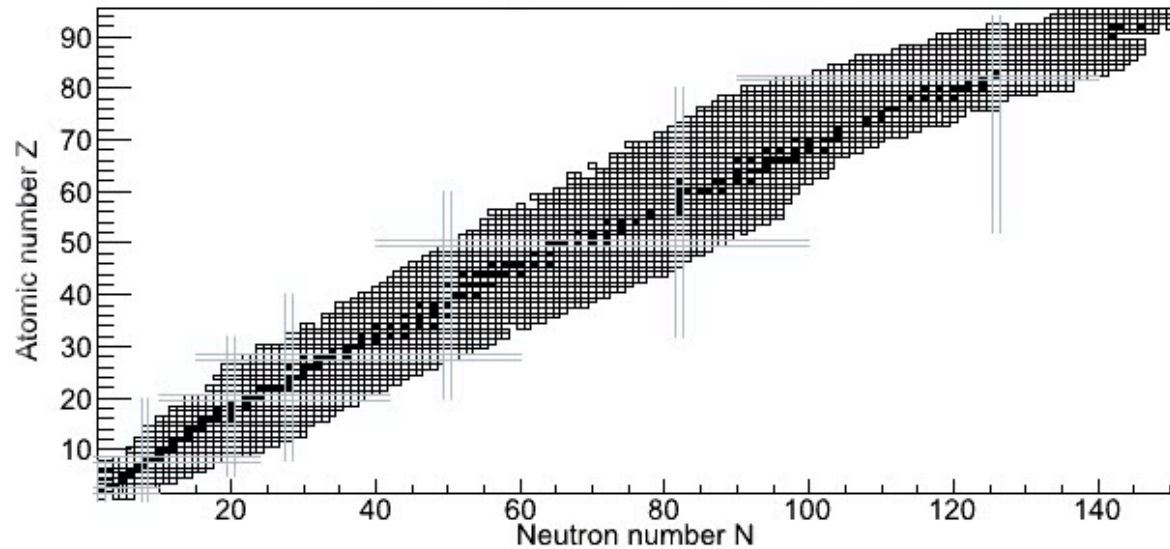
LETTER

S.J. Smartt+ 2017

doi:10.1038/nature24303

A kilonova as the electromagnetic counterpart to a gravitational-wave source

The r-process: all elements at once, in a few seconds



By CDP with ROOT, modSN-Thermotrajectory from AA+GMP'21,
NucNet network code, B. Meyer et al., Clemson University
FRDM+QRPA (P. Möller) + JINA Reaclib Database

Most recent advanced NS-toolkit:

THE ASTROPHYSICAL JOURNAL SUPPLEMENT SERIES, 268:66 (28pp), 2023 October
© 2023. The Author(s). Published by the American Astronomical Society.
<https://doi.org/10.3847/1538-4365/ac0033>

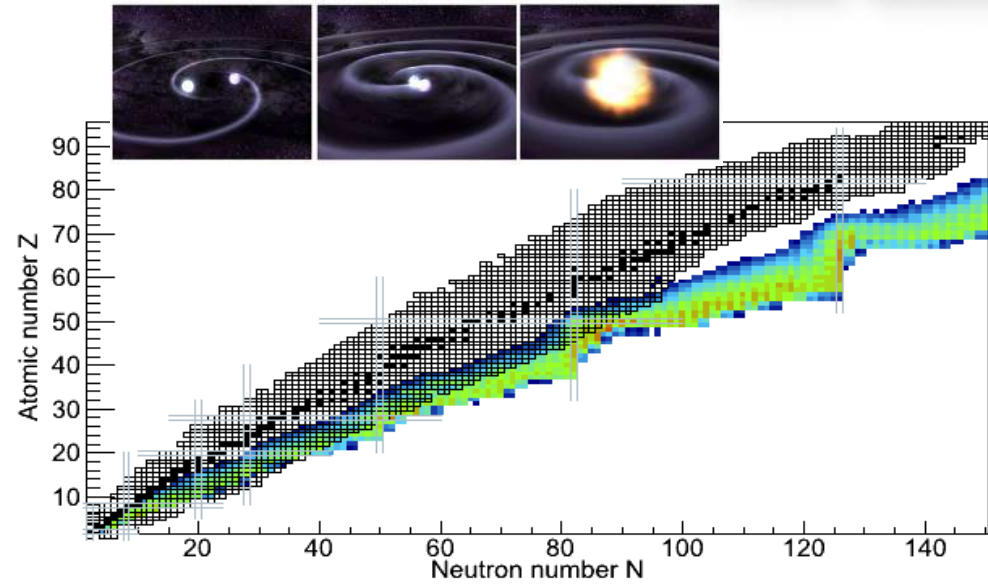
OPEN ACCESS

The Nuclear Reaction Network WinNet

M. Reichert¹, C. Winteler², O. Korobkin³, A. Arcones^{4,5}, J. Bliss⁴, M. Eichler⁴, U. Frischknecht², C. Fröhlich⁶,
R. Hirschi^{7,8}, M. Jacobi¹, J. Kuske⁴, G. Martínez-Pinedo^{4,5}, D. Martin⁴, D. Mochel², T. Rauscher^{2,9}, and
F.-K. Thielemann^{2,5}

CrossMark

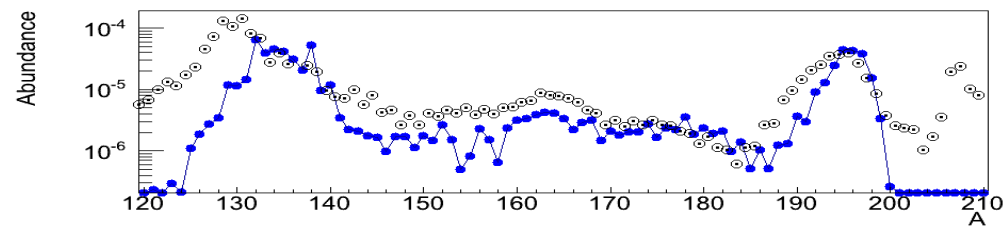
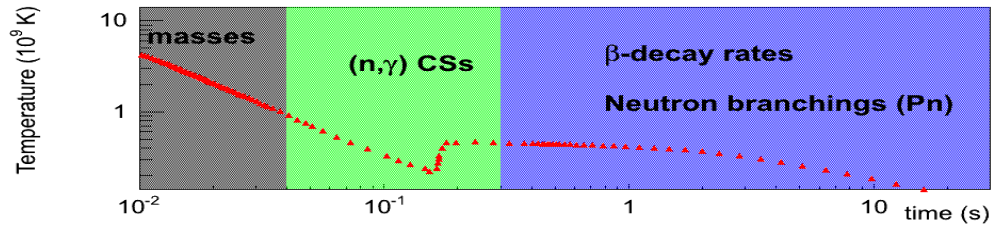
The r-process: How much gold is produced in one event?



?



?



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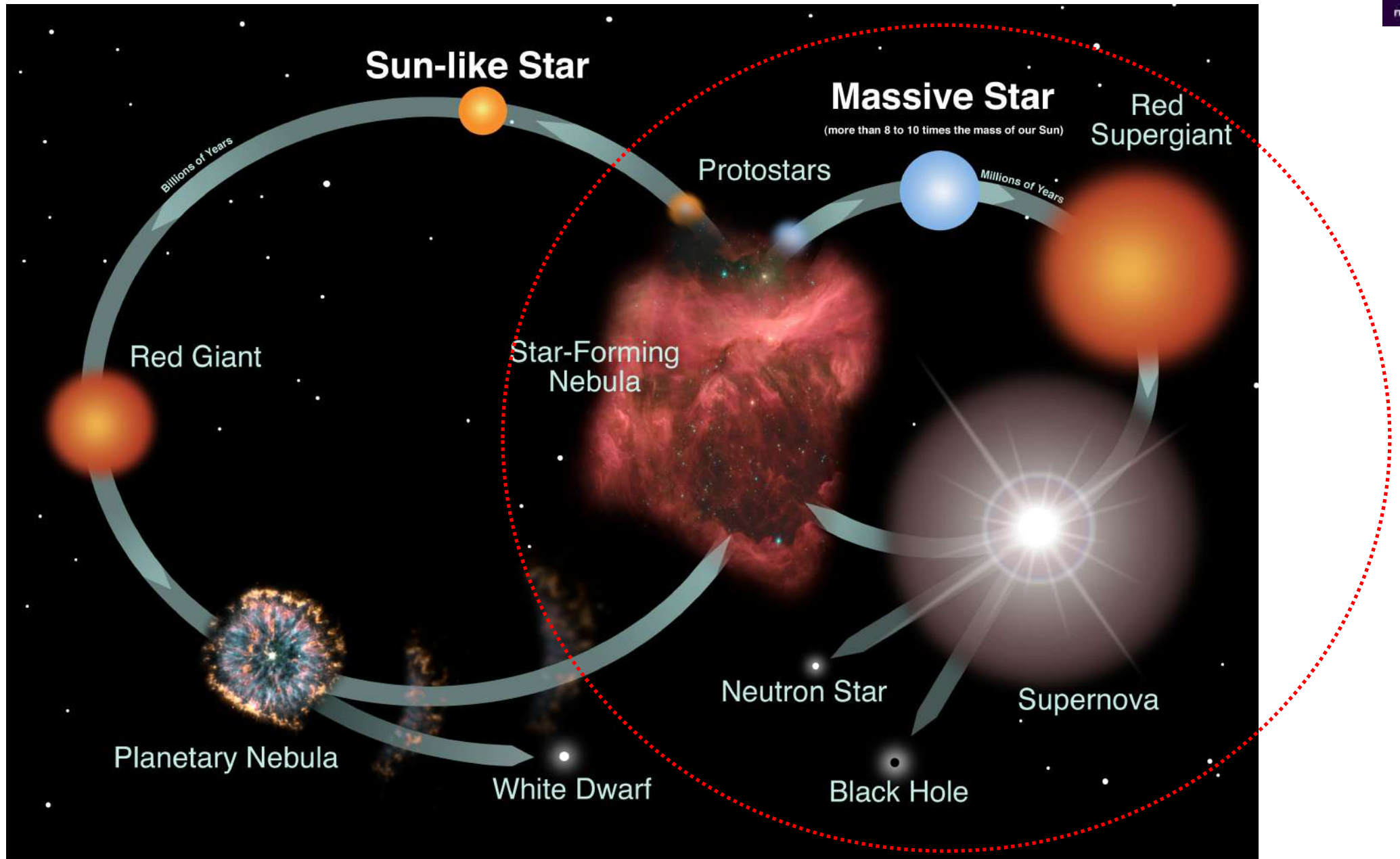
The r-process: How much gold is produced in one event?



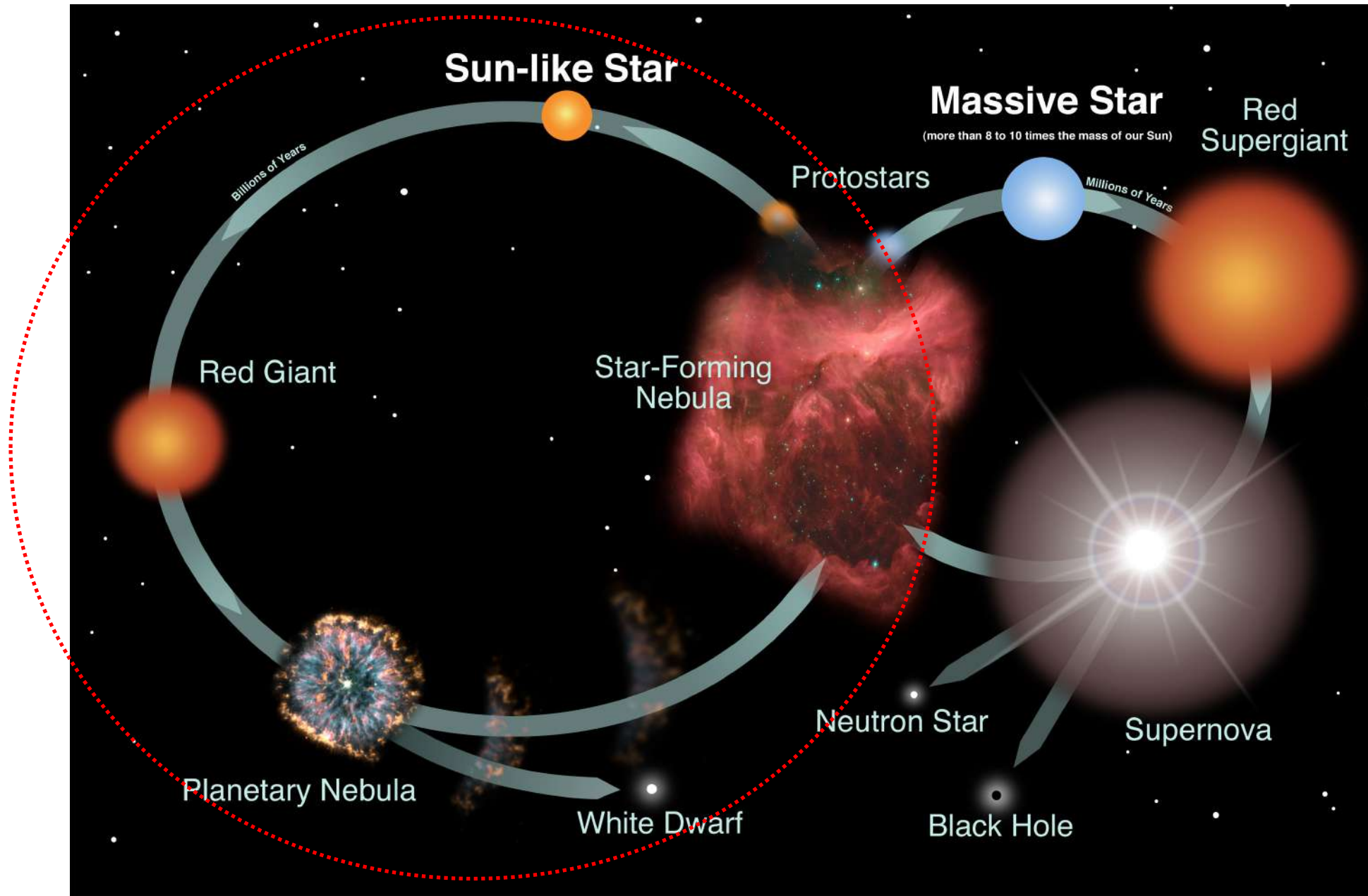
>10 x Planet
Earth' weight



The r-process: Half of the abundances of heavy elements



The s-process: The other half of the observed abundances

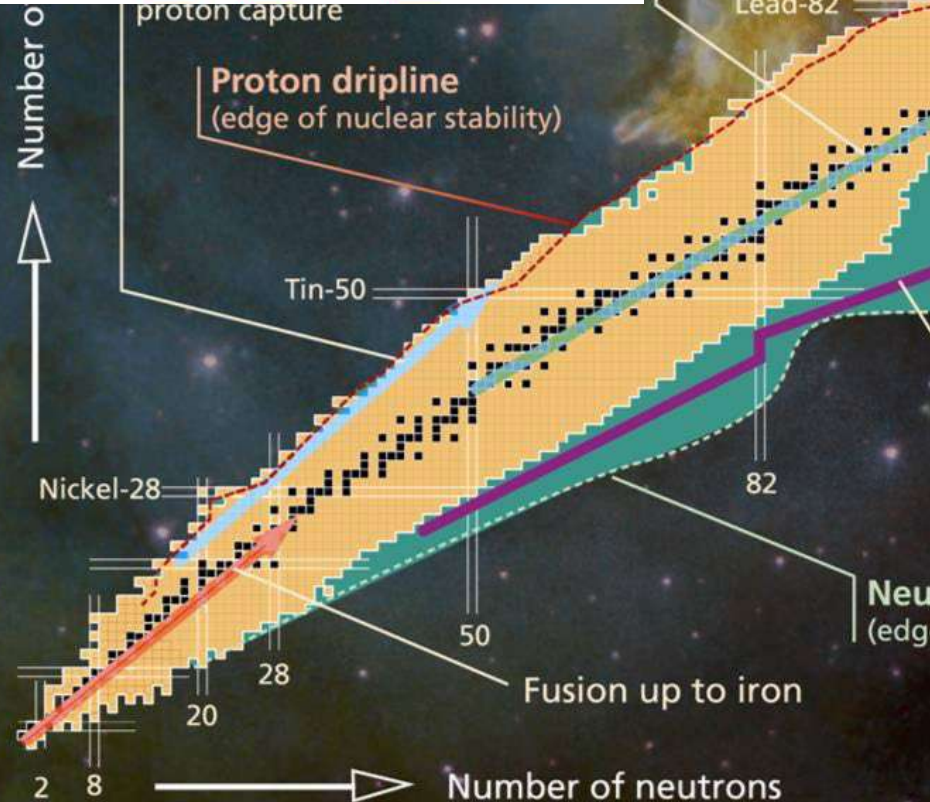
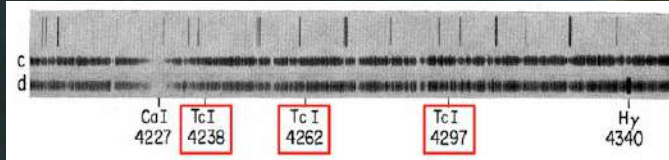


SPECTROSCOPIC OBSERVATIONS OF STARS OF CLASS S

PAUL W. MERRILL
MOUNT WILSON AND PALOMAR OBSERVATORIES
CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Received February 27, 1952

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a brief survey of S-type spectra based largely on spectrograms with dispersion 9 Å/mm of eight stars obtained by I. S. Bowen with the 200-inch telescope. The intensities of several groups of absorption lines and bands and of the more important emission lines are compared in various stars. Radial velocities from both bright and dark lines and a supplementary list of absorption lines identified in the green region are included. The remarkable behavior of certain bright lines of V I and of Cr I in the spectrum of R Cygni is described.



REVIEWS OF MODERN PHYSICS

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 4

OCTOBER, 1957

Synthesis of the Elements in Stars*

E. MARGARET BURBRIDGE, G. R. BURBRIDGE, WILLIAM A. FOWLER, AND F. HOYLE

Kellogg Radiation Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, and
Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories, Carnegie Institution of Washington,
California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California

"It is the stars, The stars above us, govern our conditions";
(*King Lear*, Act IV, Scene 3)

but perhaps

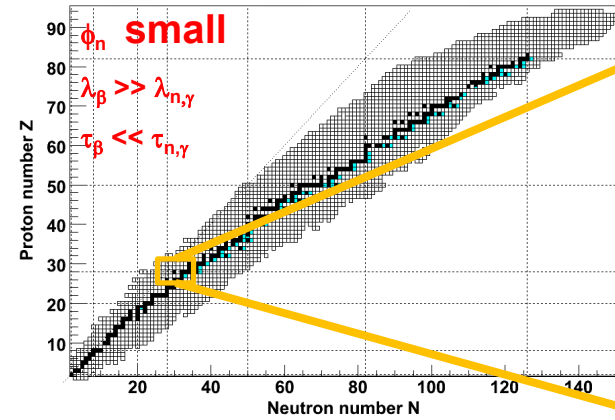
"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves,"
(*Julius Caesar*, Act I, Scene 2)

Ru98	Ru99	Ru100	Ru101	Ru102
0+	5/2+	0+	5/2+	0+
1.88	12.7	12.6	17.0	31.6
Tc97 2.6E6 y 9/2+ EC	Tc98 4.2E+6 y (6)+ β	Tc99 2.11E+5 y 9/2+ β	Tc100 15.8 s 1+ β	Tc101 14.22 m (9/2)+ β
Mo96 0+ 16.68	Mo97 2+ 9.55	Mo98 0+ 24.13	Mo99 1/2+ 65.94 h β	Mo100 0+ 1.2E19 y ββ

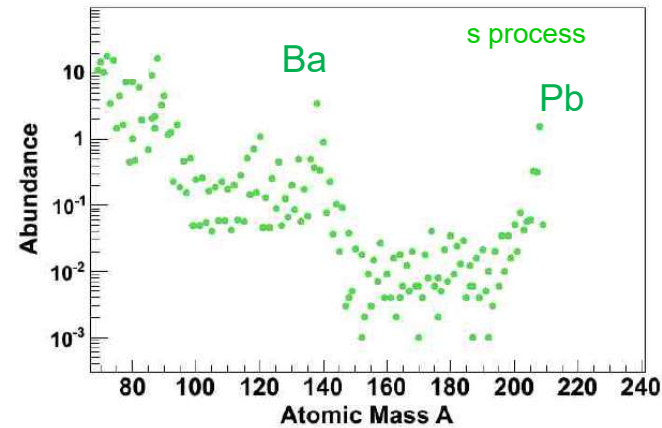
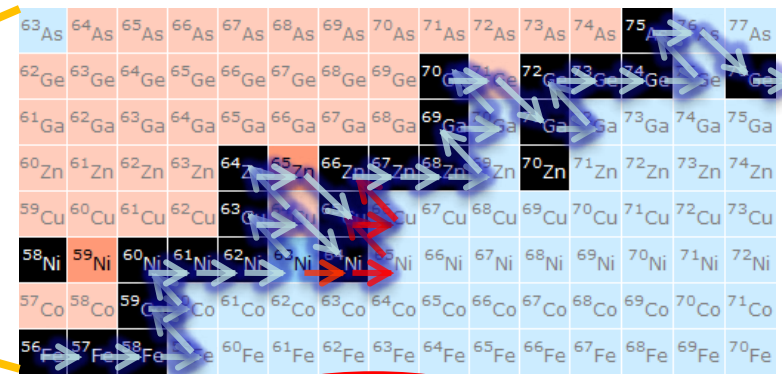
r-Process
'Rapid process' via
unstable neutron-rich nuclei



The slow neutron-capture process (s-process) mechanism: Fe to Pb-Bi

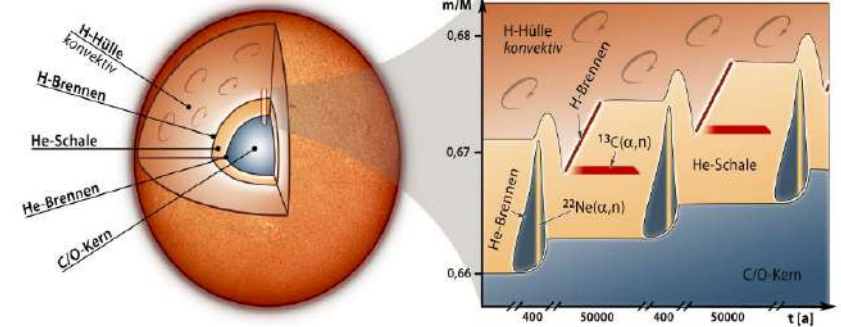


s process in Massive Stars (Red Giants)



Massive Stars ($M > 8M_\odot$)

core He-burning	shell C-burning
$3-3.5 \cdot 10^8$ K	$\sim 1 \cdot 10^9$ K
$kT = 25$ keV	$kT = 90$ keV
10^6 cm $^{-3}$	$10^{11}-10^{12}$ cm $^{-3}$
$^{22}\text{Ne}(^4\text{He}, n)^{25}\text{Mg}$	

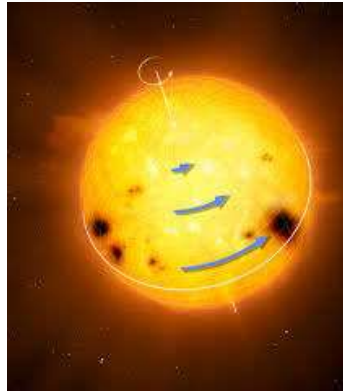


Low-Mass AGB Stars $1.5 M_\odot < M < 3 M_\odot$

shell H-burning	He-flash
$0.9 \cdot 10^8$ K	$3-3.5 \cdot 10^8$ K
$kT = 8$ keV	$kT = 23$ keV
10^7-10^8 cm $^{-3}$	$10^{10}-10^{11}$ cm $^{-3}$

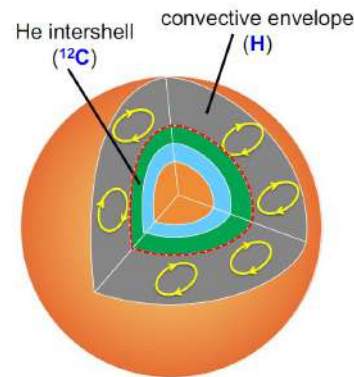


Many open questions in s-process nucleosynthesis



C13-pocket:

- Rotation
 - Overshoot
 - Magnetic Buoyancy
 - Gravity Waves
- Metallicity
Stellar mass
Thermal gradients



REVIEWS OF MODERN PHYSICS, VOLUME 84, JANUARY-MARCH 2012

Rotating massive stars: From first stars to gamma ray bursts

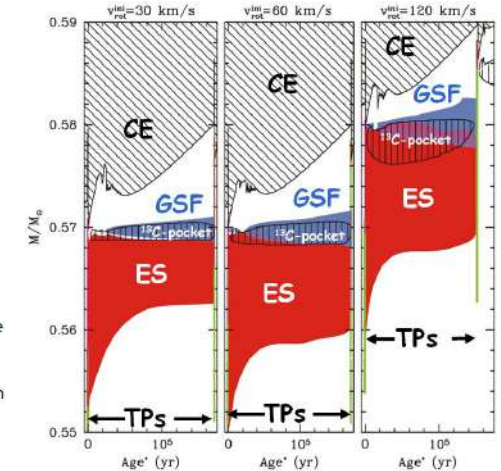
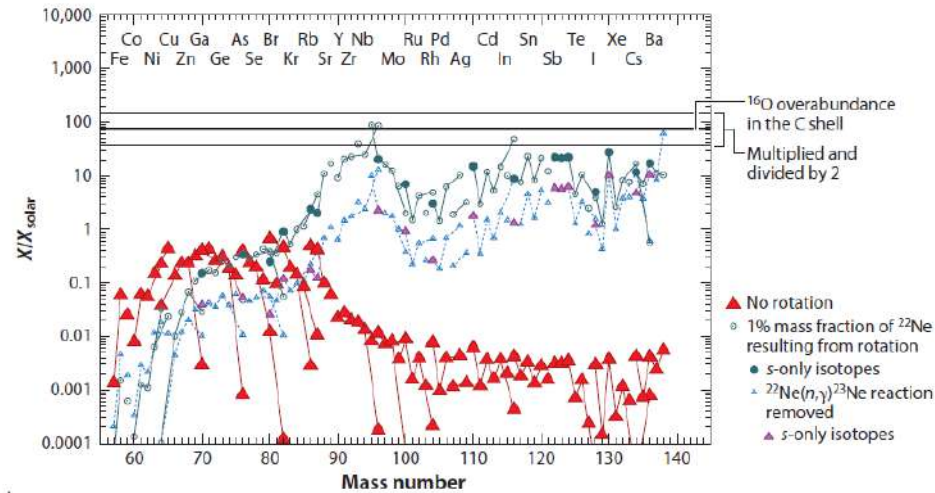
André Maeder* and Georges Meynet†

Geneva Observatory, University of Geneva, 51 chemin des Maillettes,
CH-1290 Versoix, Switzerland

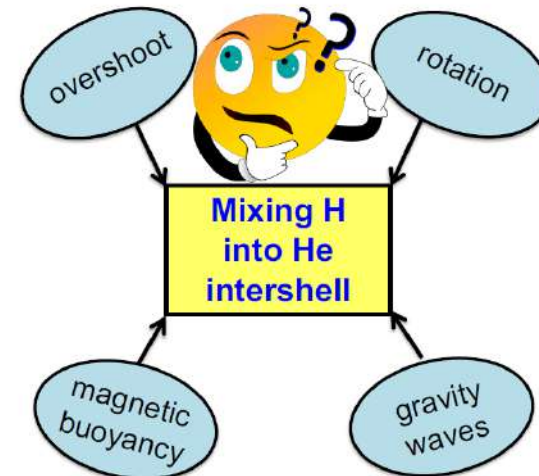
LETTER

Imprints of fast-rotating massive stars in the Galactic Bulge

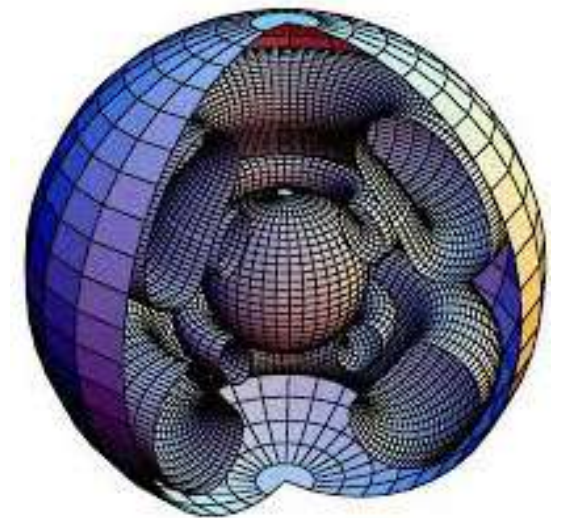
Cristina Chiappini^{1,2,3}, Urs Frischknecht^{4,5}, Georges Meynet¹, Raphael Hirschi^{4,5}, Beatri Barbuy⁷, Marco Pignatari⁴, Thibaut Decressin⁶ & André Maeder²



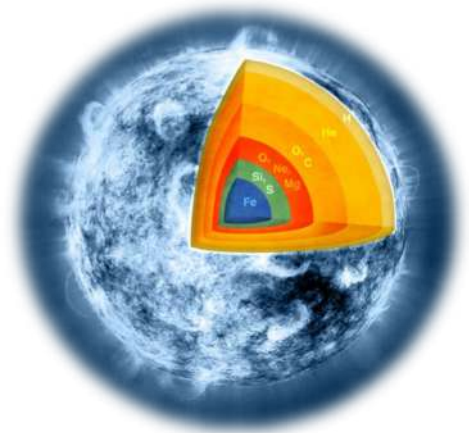
S. Cristallo+2014



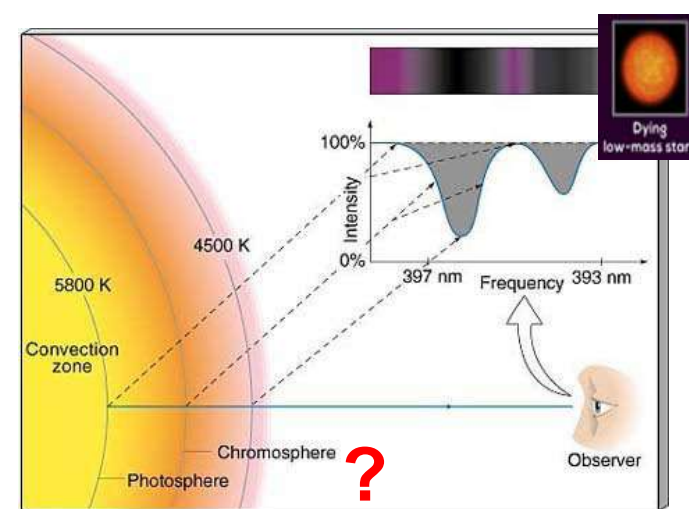
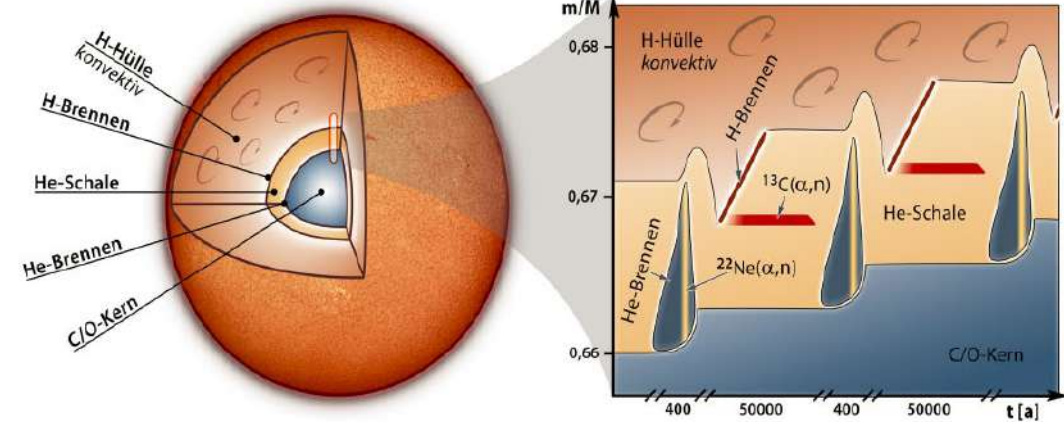
N.Liu 2020



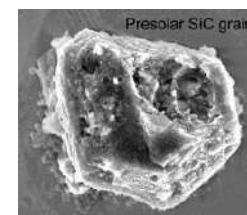
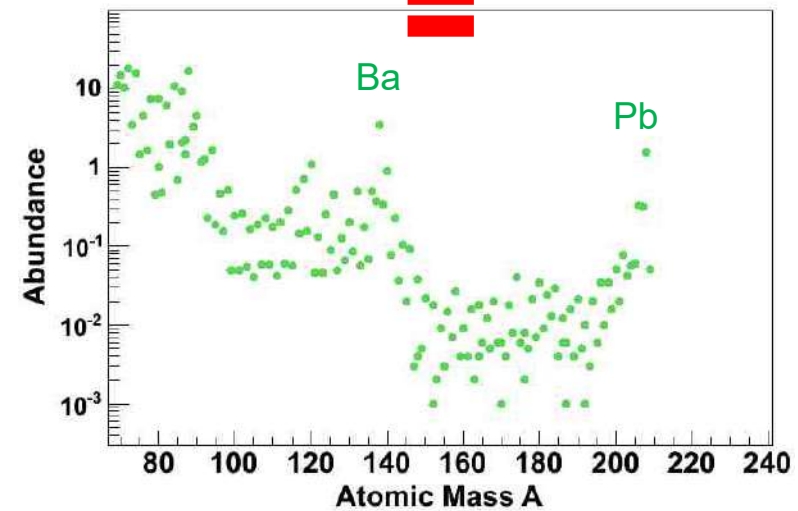
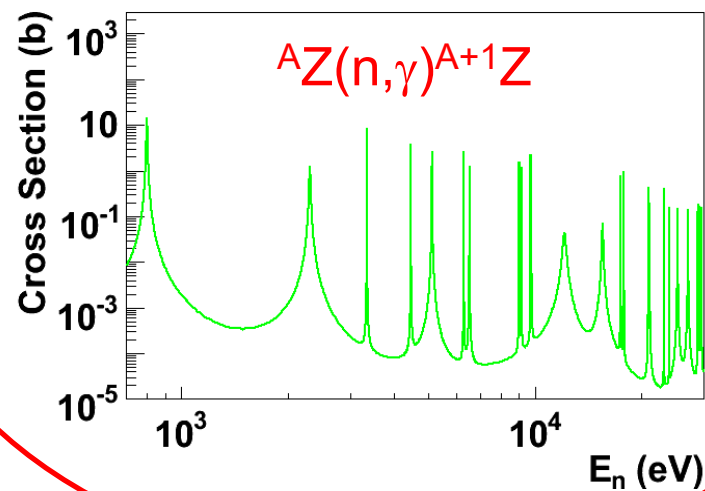
A.Maeder+2012



How does it work?



Experiment: neutron-capture cross sections



Outline

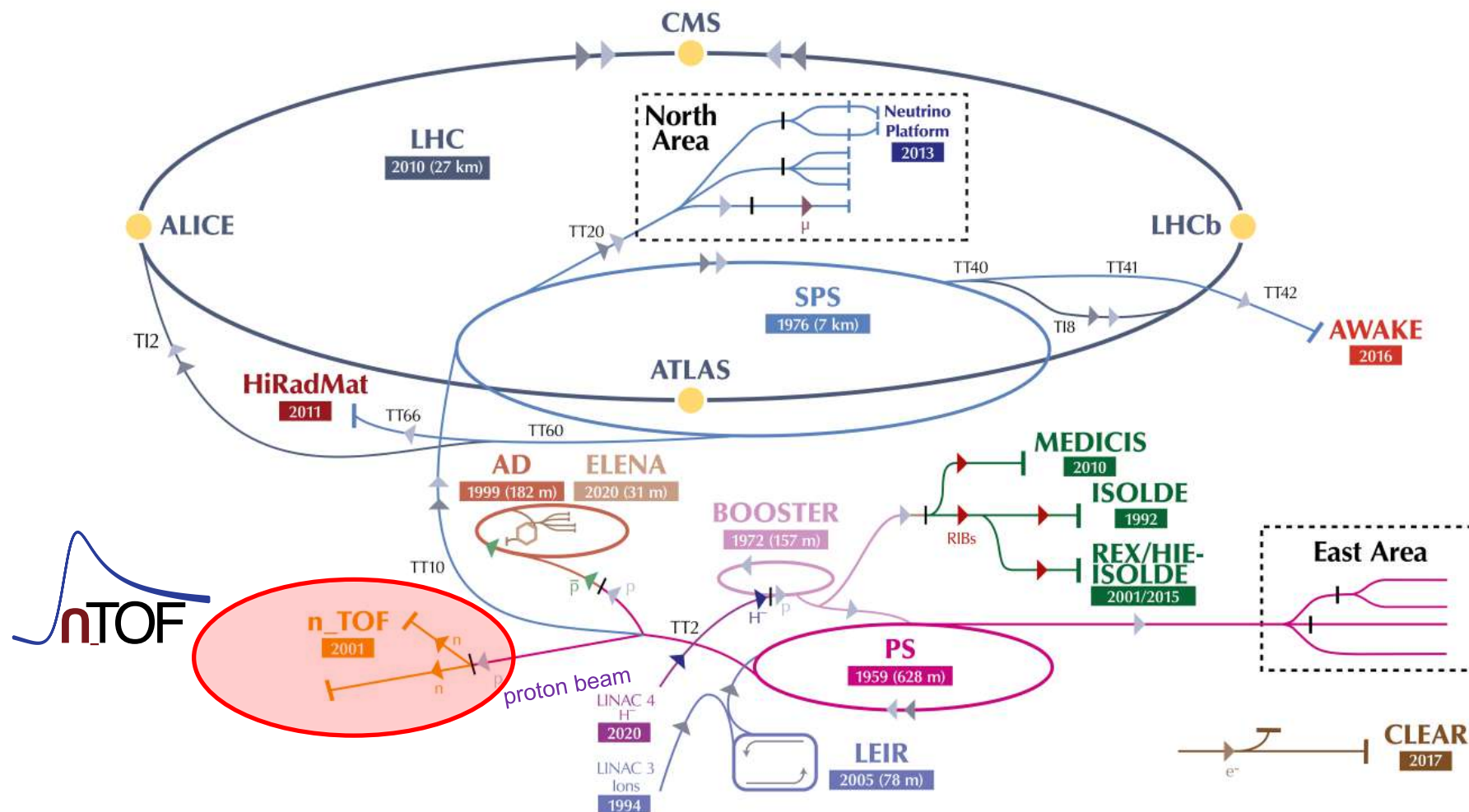
- Heavy elements nucleosynthesis: How stars make gold (r-process) and lead (s-process)?
- Neutron-capture experiments at CERN n_TOF: Red-Giant stars in the lab
- Enhancing detection sensitivity in neutron capture TOF experiments
- Beyond the limits: r-process neutron-reactions in the lab?
- From stars to tumors: ion-range & dose monitoring in hadron therapy
- Summary & Outlook





The CERN accelerator complex

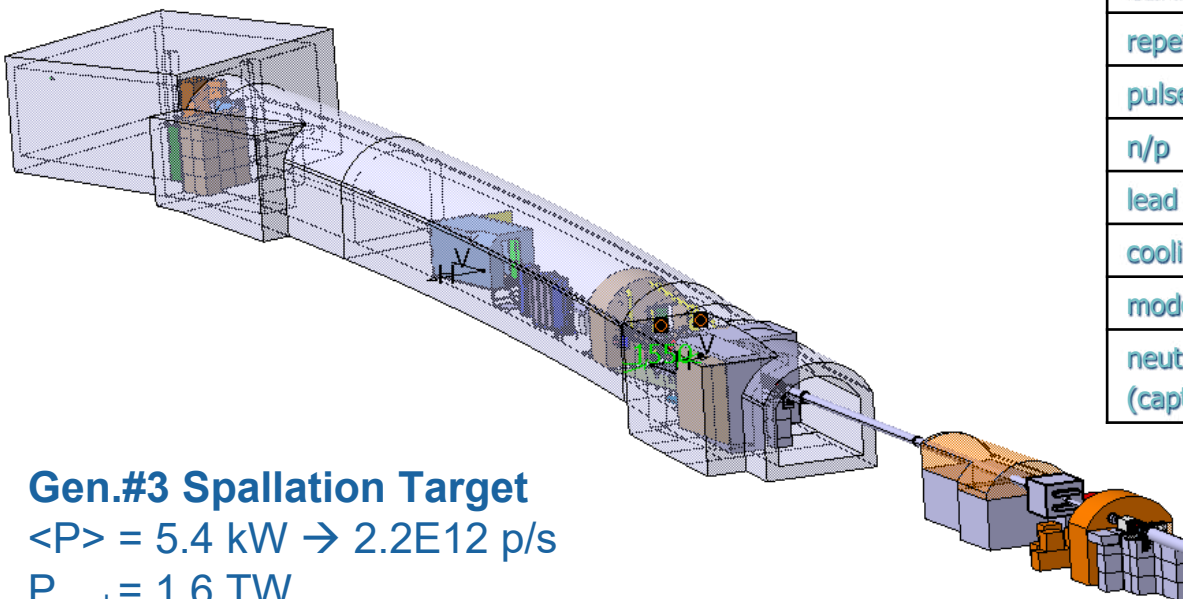
Complexe des accélérateurs du CERN



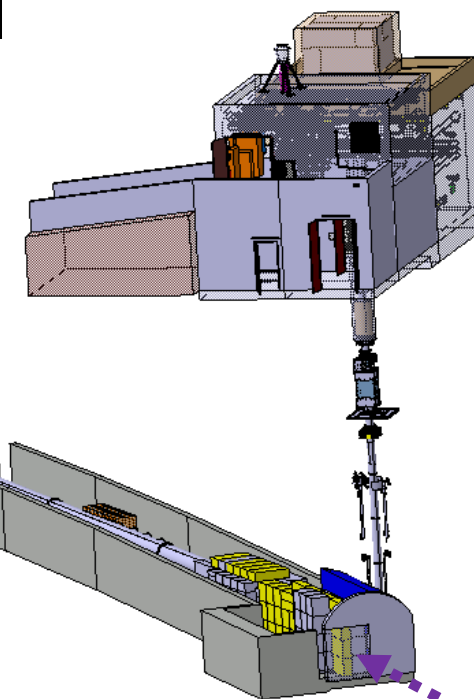
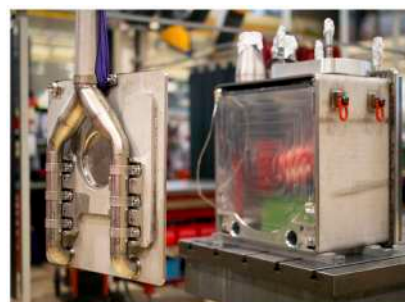
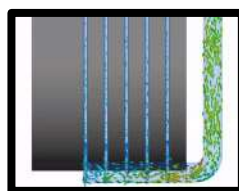
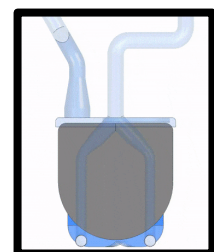
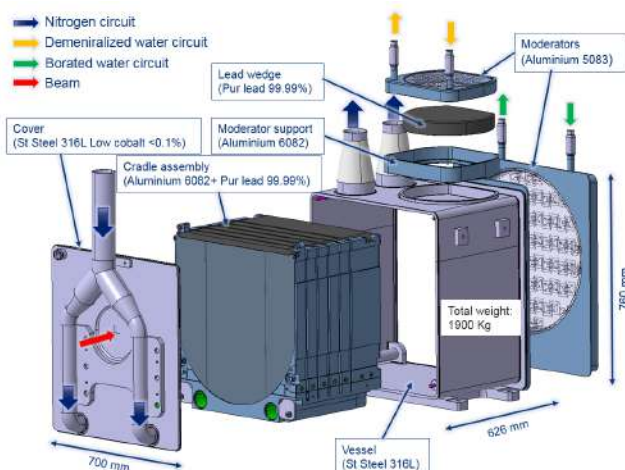
C. Rubbia et al., *A high resolution spallation driven facility at the CERN-PS to measure neutron cross sections in the interval from 1 eV to 250 MeV*, CERN/LHC/98-02(EET) 1998.

CERN n_TOF Collaboration: 150 scientists, 41 institutions worldwide

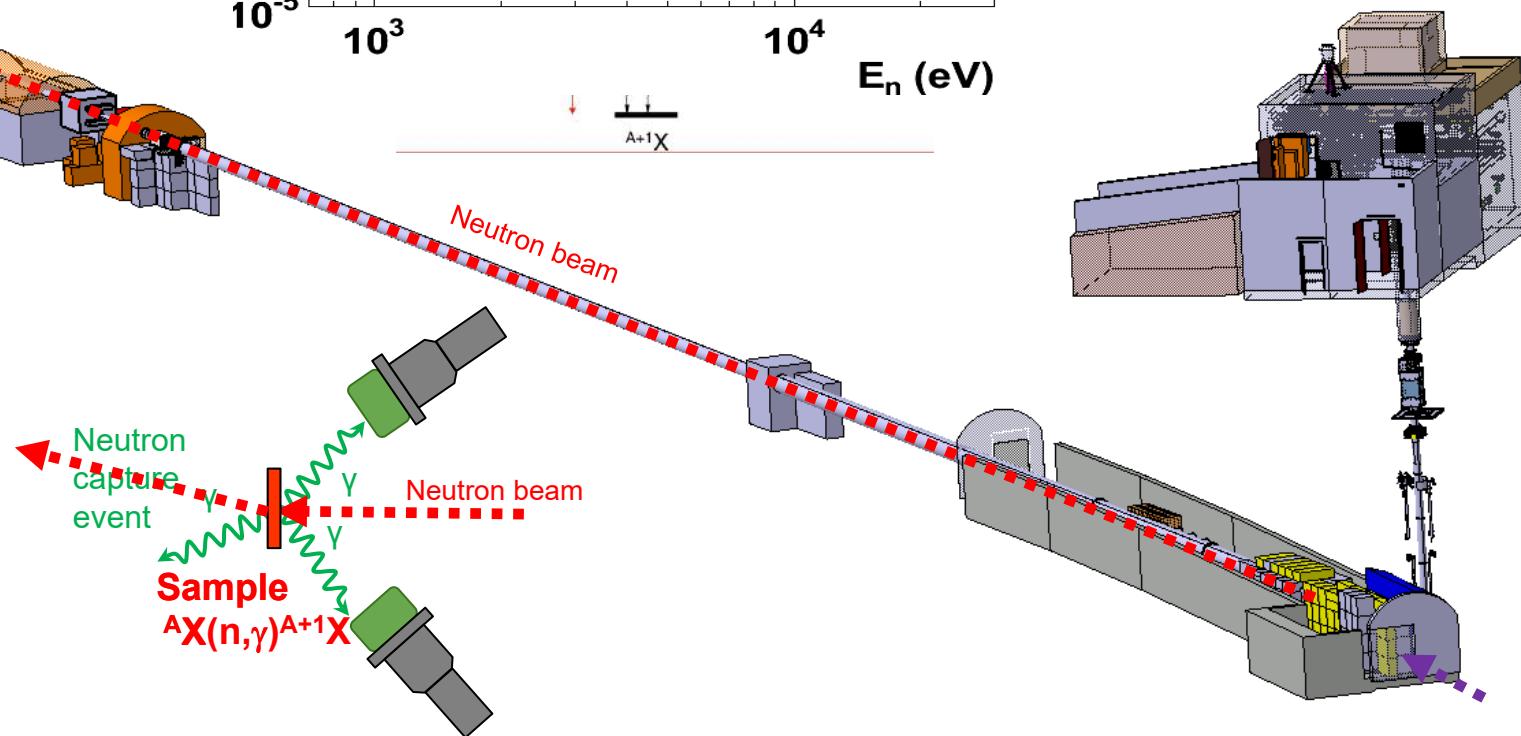
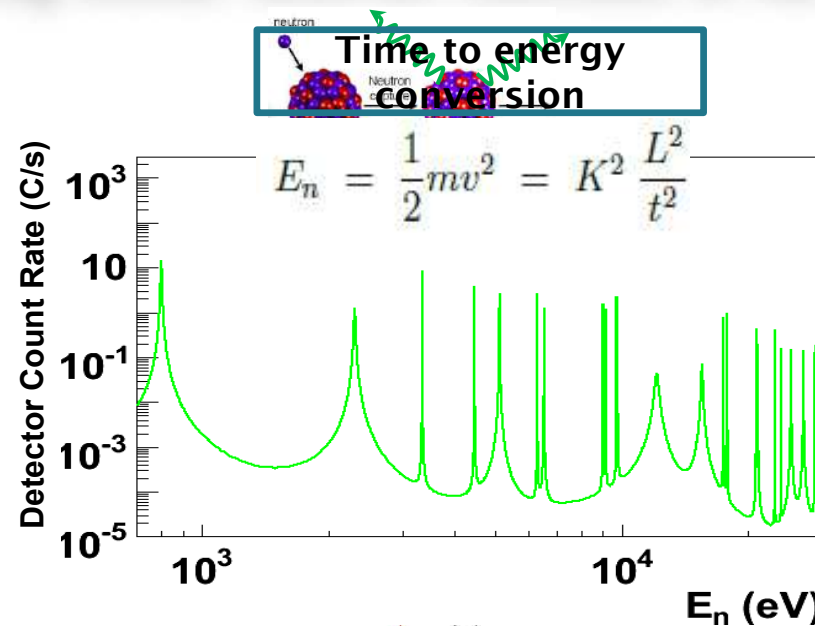
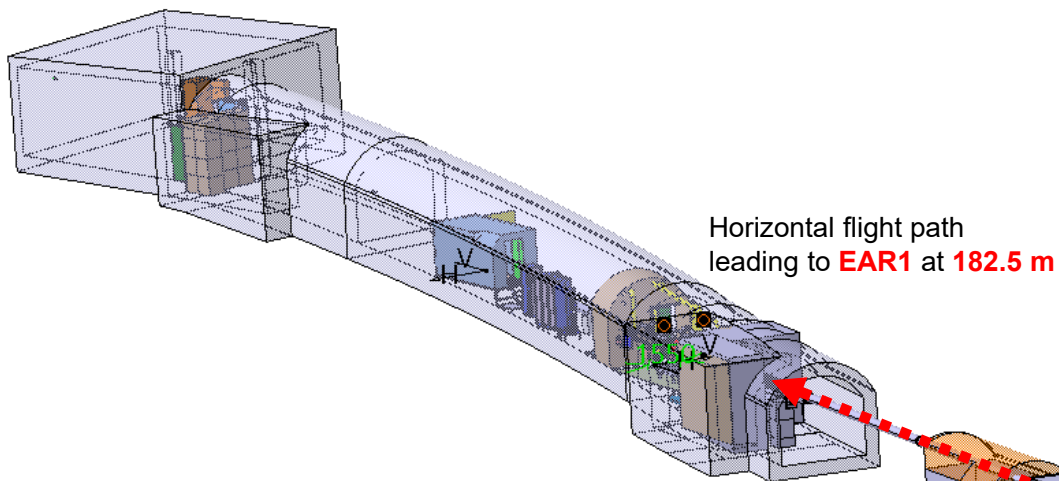
n_TOF + ISOLDE = **75% of PS proton Budget (!)**

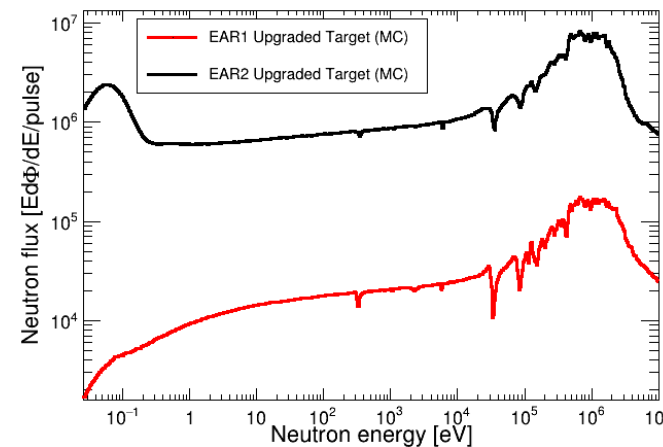
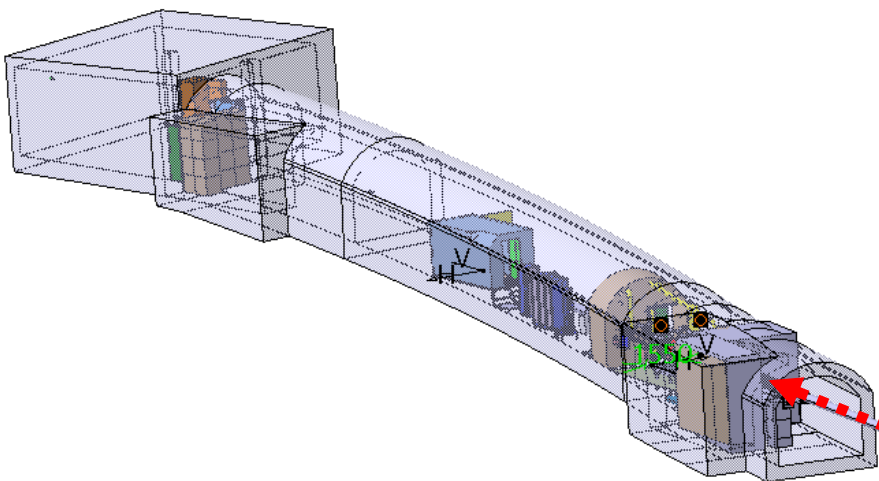


proton beam momentum	20 GeV/c
CERN PS intensity (dedicated mode)	8.5×10^{12} protons/pulse
repetition frequency	1 pulse/1.2s
pulse width	6 ns (rms)
n/p	300
lead target dimensions	80x80x60 cm ³
cooling & moderation material	N ₂ & H ₂ O (borated)
moderator thickness in the exit face	5 cm
neutron beam dimension in EAR-1 (capture mode)	2 cm (FWHM)

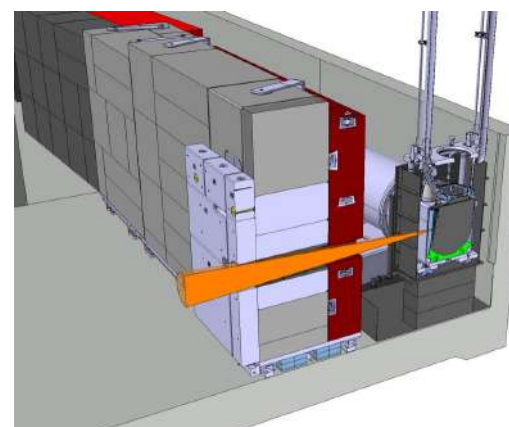
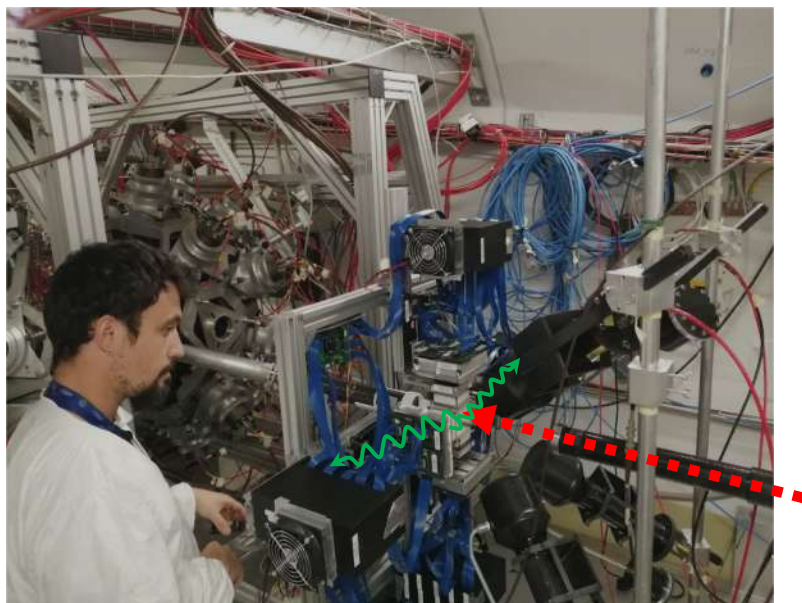
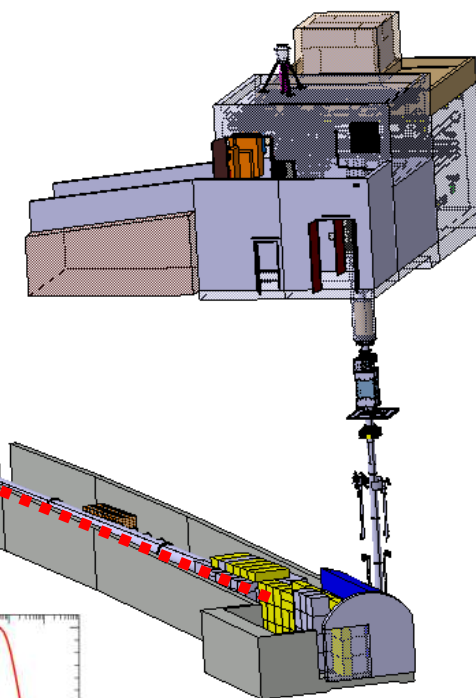


proton beam from the PS

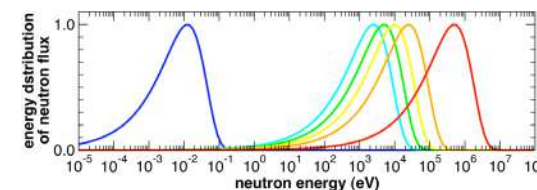




Vertical flight path
leading to **EAR2** at
18.2 m

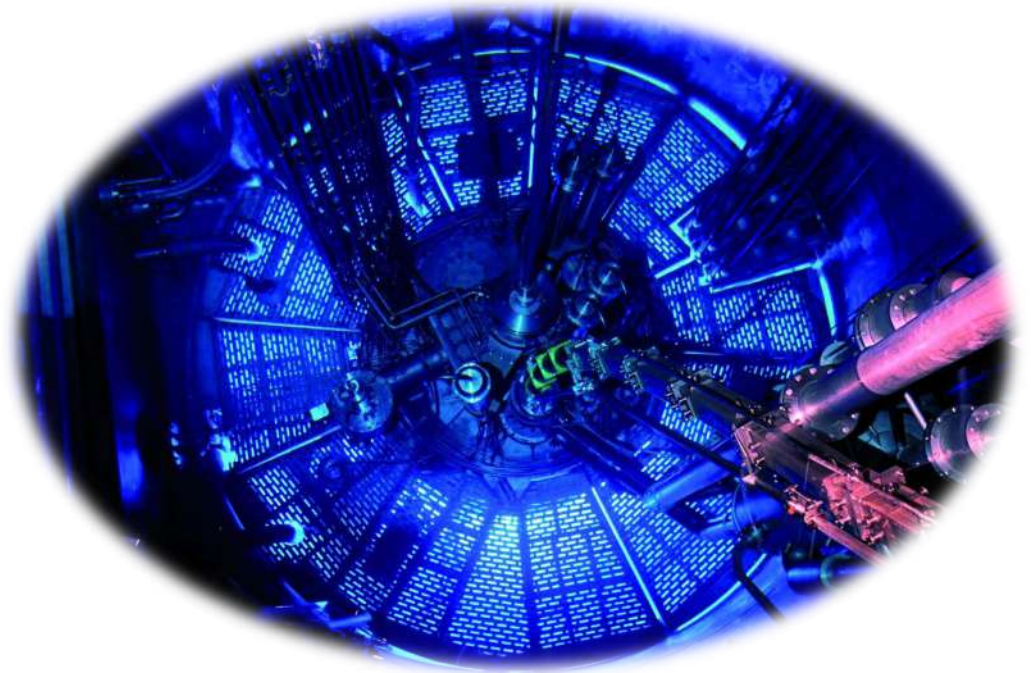


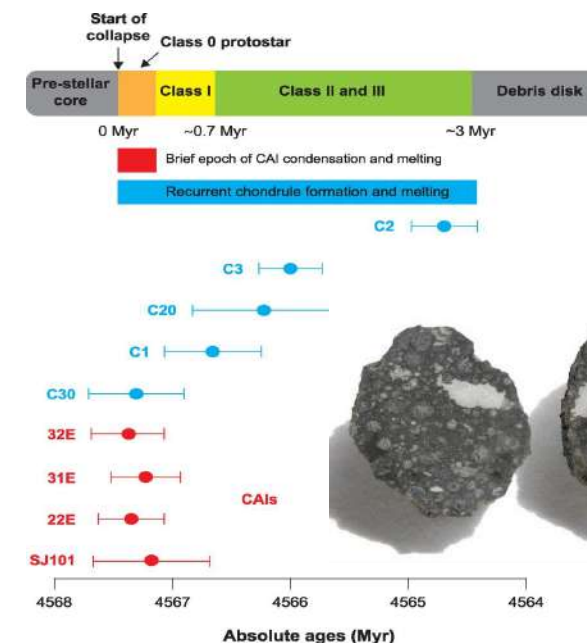
NEAR at
3 m



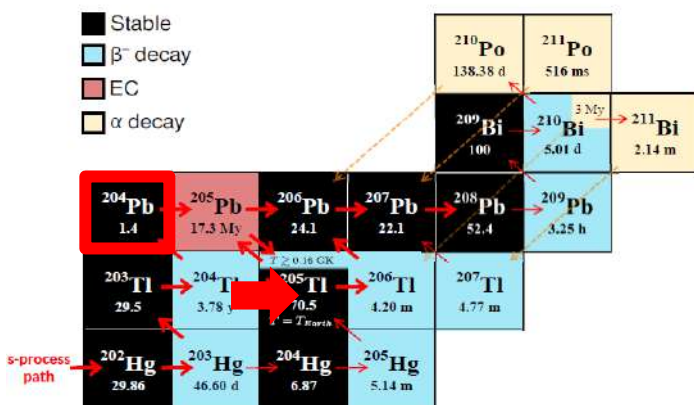


Measuring Neutron capture on ^{204}Tl (3.8y) to understand the cosmic origin of the s-only isotope ^{204}Pb





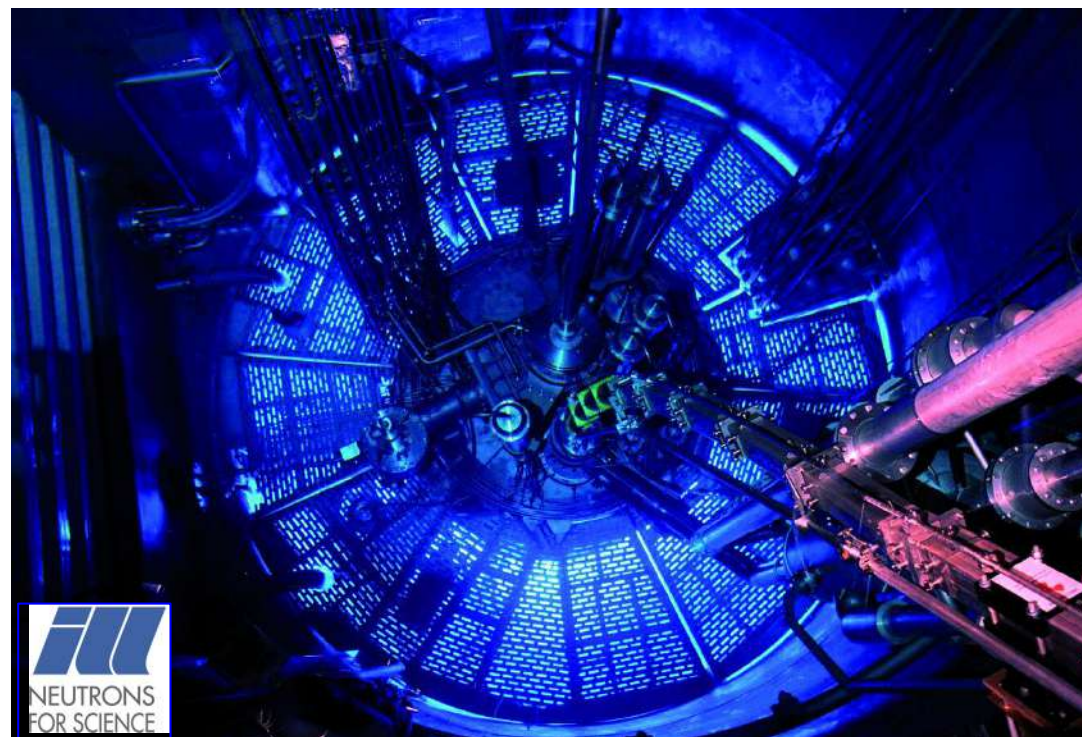
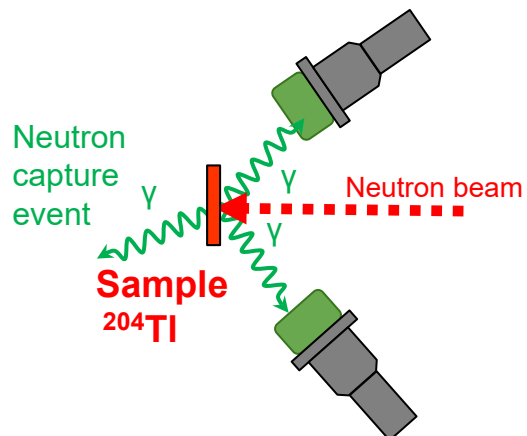
J.N. Connelly et al. Science **338** 2012
DOI: [10.1126/science.1226919](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1226919)



^{203}Tl (225 mg)



^{203}Tl (216 mg)
+
 ^{204}Tl (9 mg)

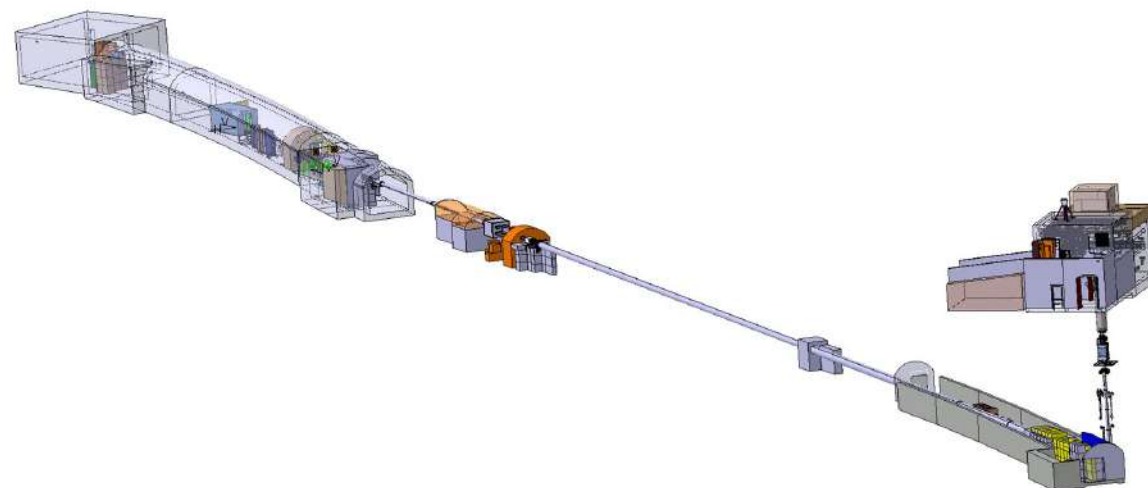
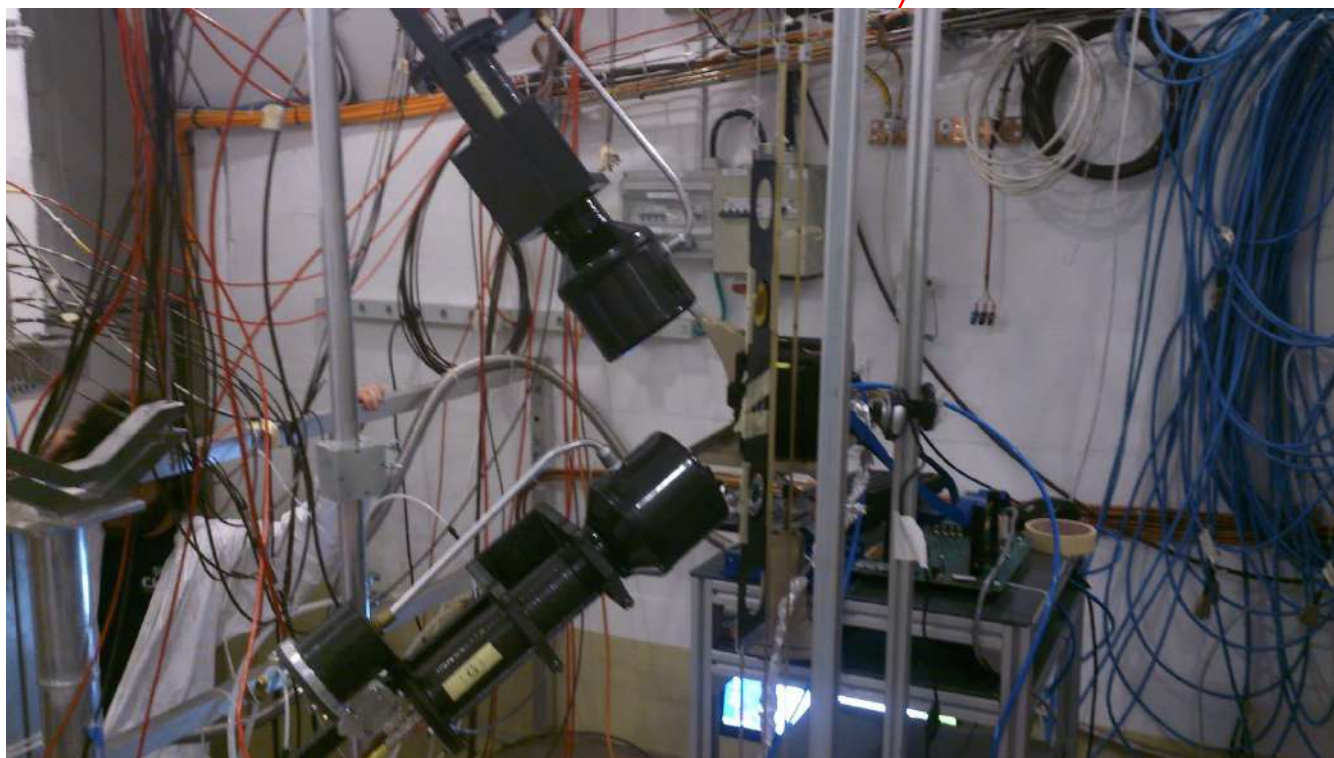
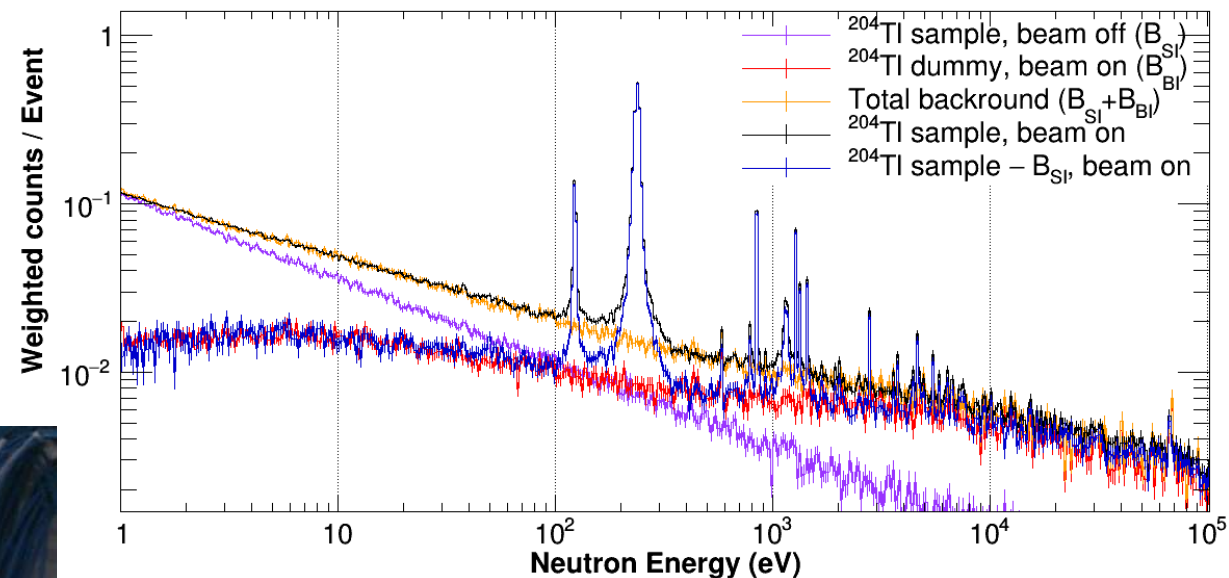
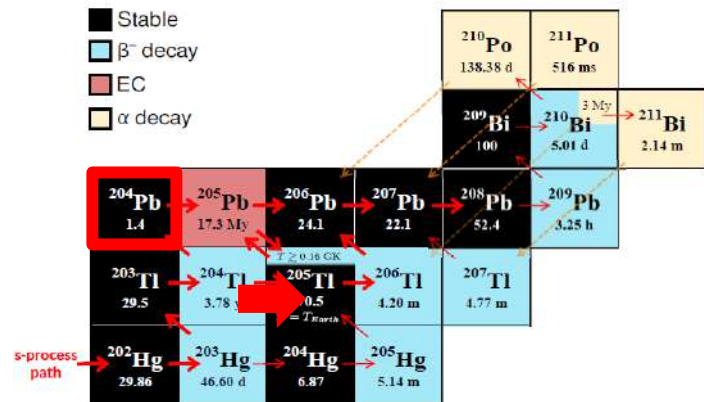


Mimicking stellar nucleosynthesis with a reactor to produce ^{204}Tl

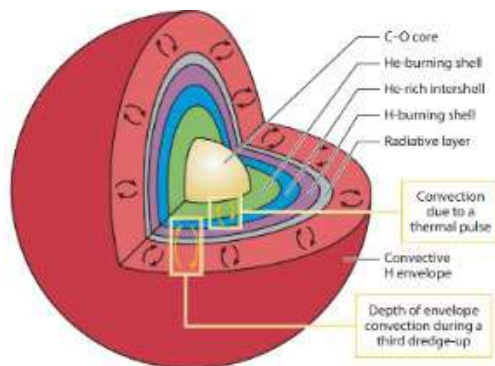
^{204}Tl (3.78y) neutron-capture at CERN n_TOF

^{203}Tl (216 mg)

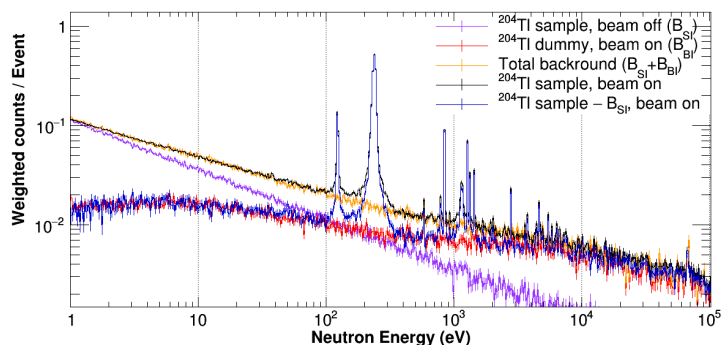
+
 ^{204}Tl (9 mg)



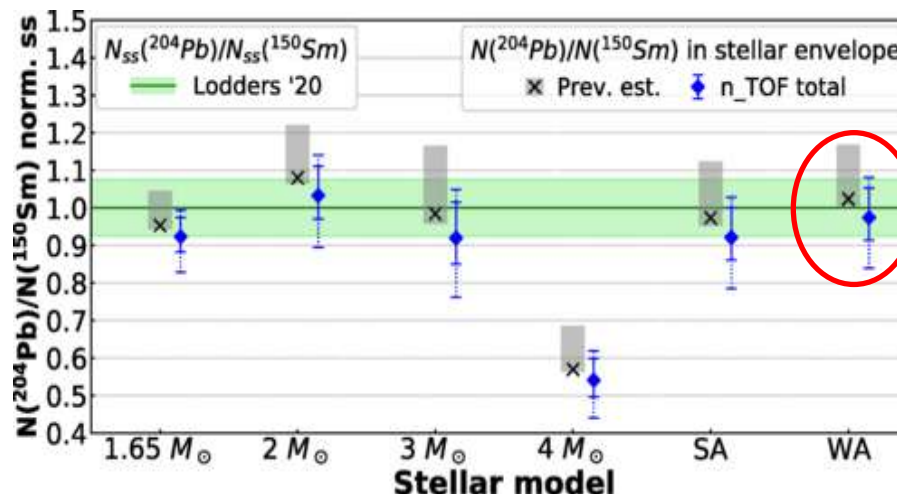
^{204}Pb abundance determined by $^{204}\text{Tl}(n,\gamma)$



Lugaro M. et al. 2018
Annu. Rev. Nucl. Part. Sci. 68:73-90



A Casanovas-Hoste *et al.* (n_TOF)
Physical Review Letters **133**, 052702 (2024)
DOI: [10.1103/PhysRevLett.133.052702](https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevLett.133.052702)



The uncertainty arising from the $^{204}\text{Tl}(n,\gamma)$ cross section on the s -process abundance of ^{204}Pb has been reduced from $\sim 30\%$ down to $+8\%/-6\%$, and the s -process calculations are in agreement with K. Lodders in 2021.

^{204}Pb abundance of pure s -process origin:
→ No need for fractionation mechanisms in early Solar system
→ No need for invoking gamma-process contributions

CI-Chondrites



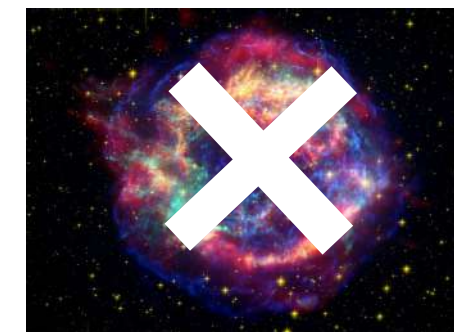
MESA



Lodders, Space Sci. Rev. 217 (2021)



G. Gonzalez 2014

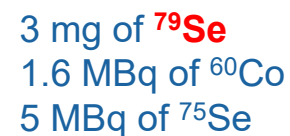
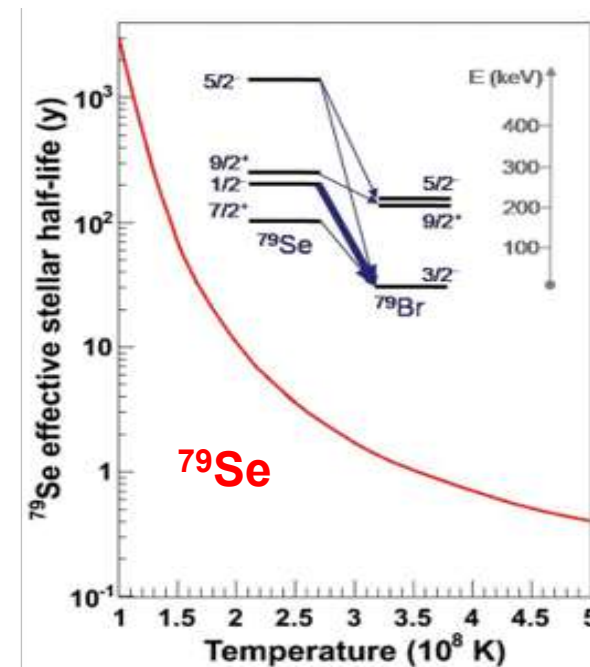


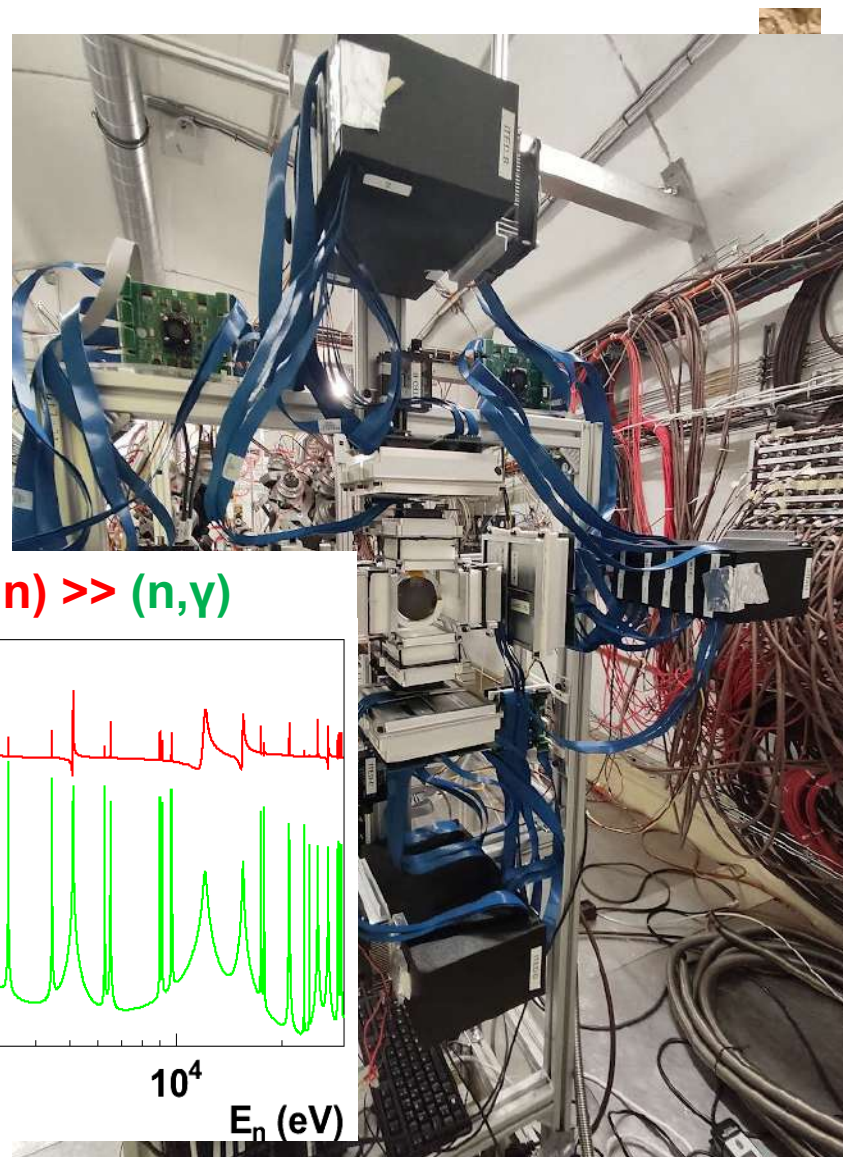
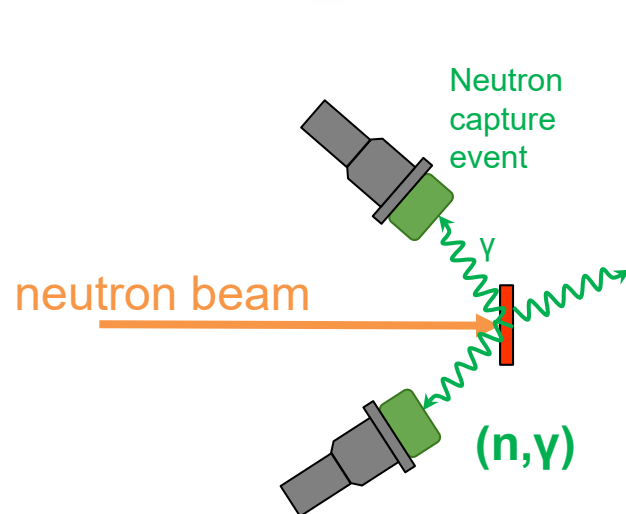
M. Pignatari+ 2016

Measuring Neutron capture on ^{79}Se (200 ky) to 'measure' temperature in Red Giant stars

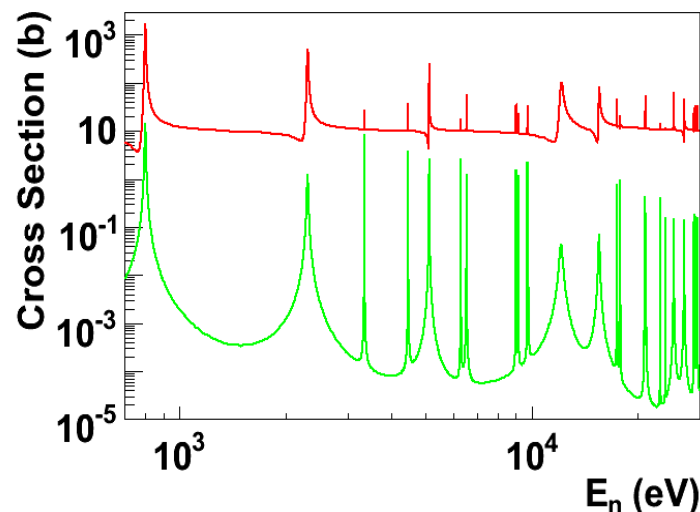
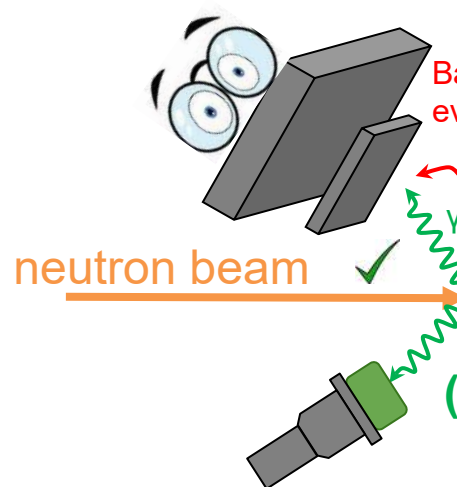


ULRICH OTT*, FRIEDRICH BEGEMANN*, JONGMANN YANG†‡ & SAMUEL EPSTEIN†





COMPTON IMAGING TECHNIQUE

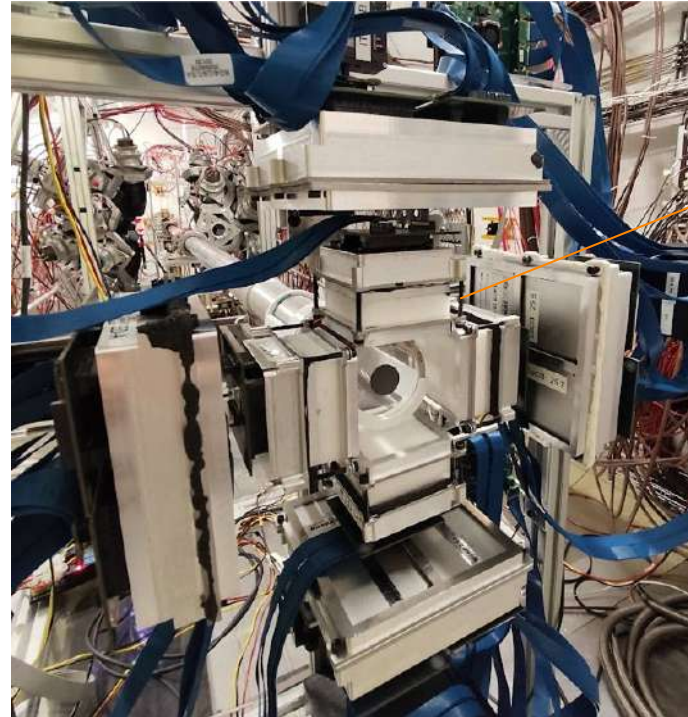


Total-Energy Detector with g-ray imaging capability (i-TED):

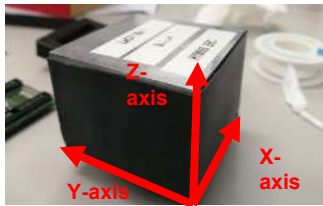
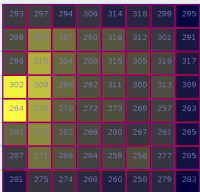
- Need of **very high detection efficiency** → arrays of large monolithic crystals
- Need of **very low neutron sensitivity** → Customized design with $\text{LaCl}_3(\text{Ce})$ and ^6Li -HD-PE absorbers

3D- Spatial calibration techniques:

Final i-TED setup @ n_TOF:



Neutron absorbers based on ^6Li -enriched HD-PE: No γ -ray emission after neutron absorption by ^6Li (!)



Crystal read-out and electronics:



V.Babiano et al, NIM-A 931 (2019)

Optical Photons simulation

P. Olleros *et al.* 2018 JINST13 P03014

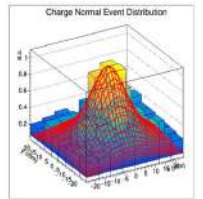
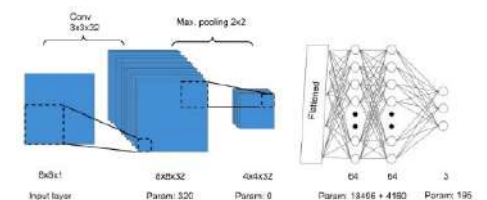
ML-aided 3D-position reconstruction

J. Balibrea et al. NIM-A (2020)

- In total: 20 Position-Sensitive Detectors
- 1150 cm³ of $\text{LaCl}_3(\text{Ce})$
- 1280 readout channels (4xKintex FPGA, 20xTOFPET2 ASICs, PETsys)

Convolutional Neural Network

3D keras models for the individual crystals

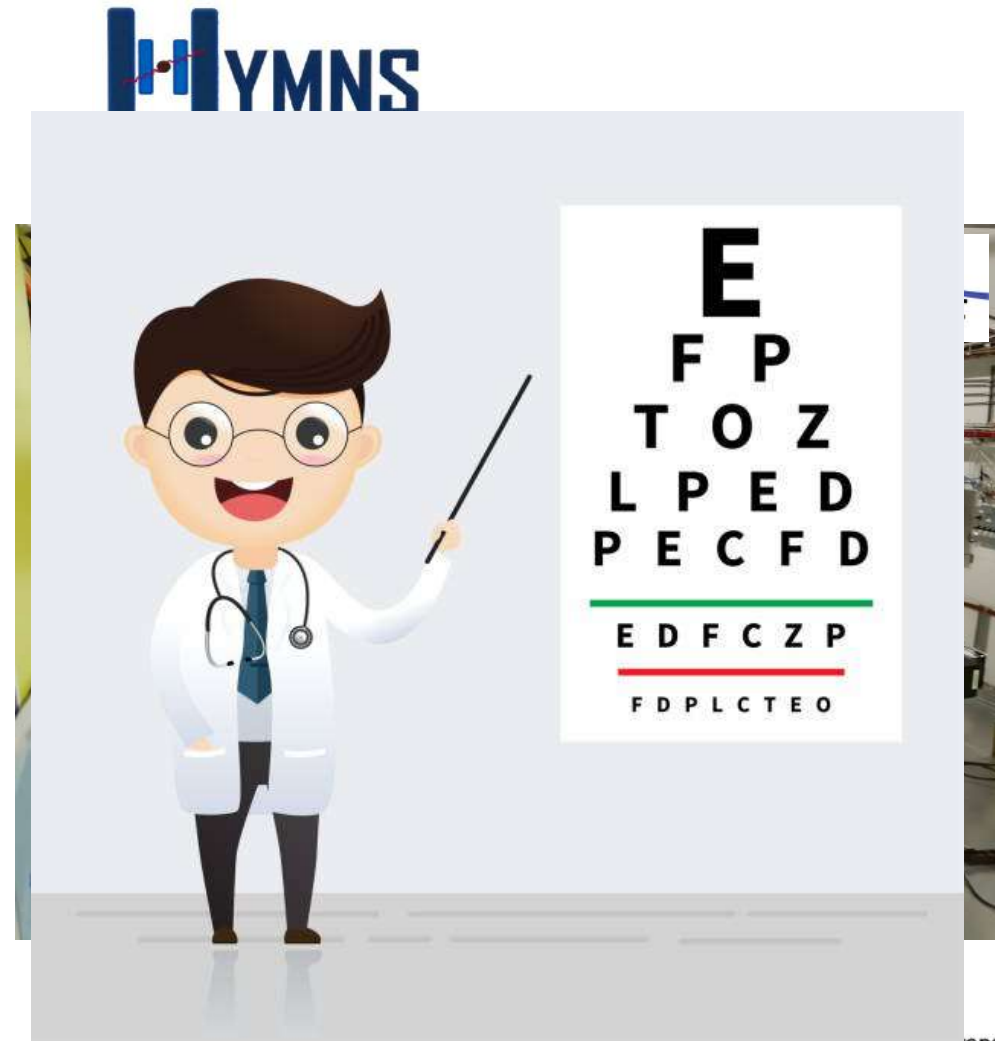
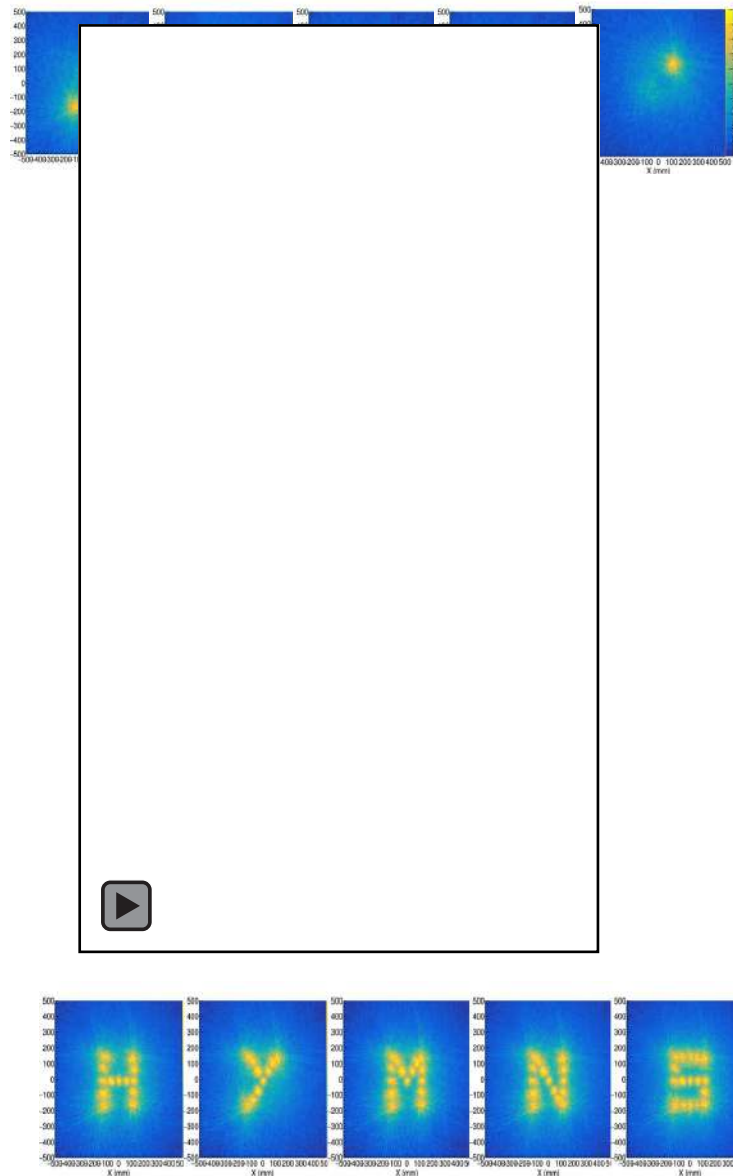


YMNS

erc
European
Research
Council

Testing the gamma-ray vision capability of i-TED

Dynamic image: radioactive source in a remotely controlled XY-gantry imaged at multiple positions



ED VALÈNCIA



CSIC

CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS



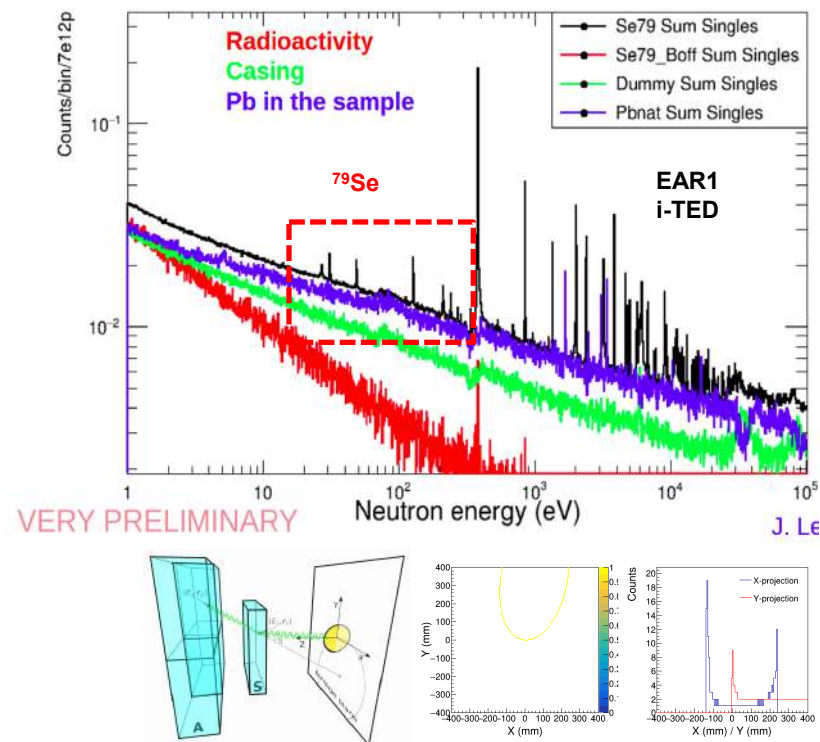
European
Research
Council



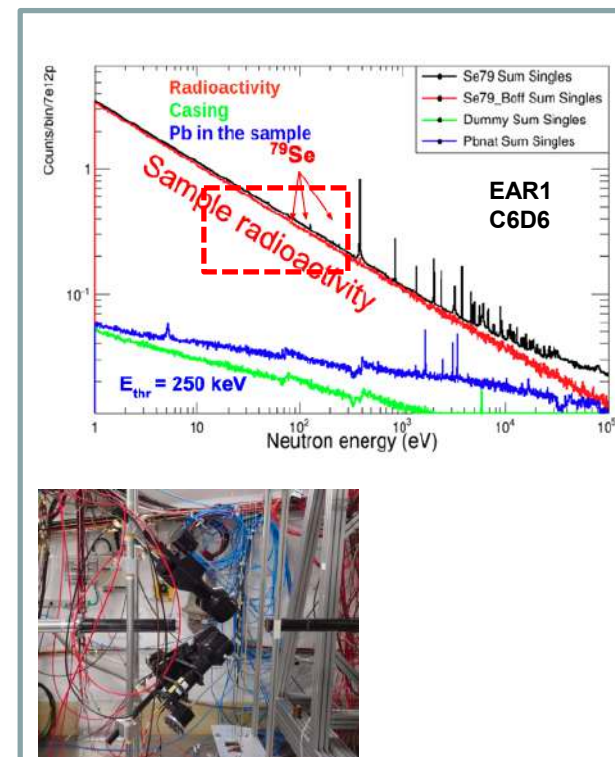
European
Research
Council



Imaging technique:

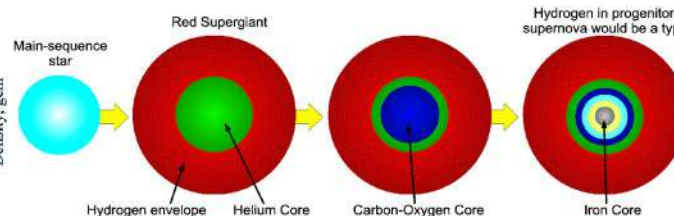
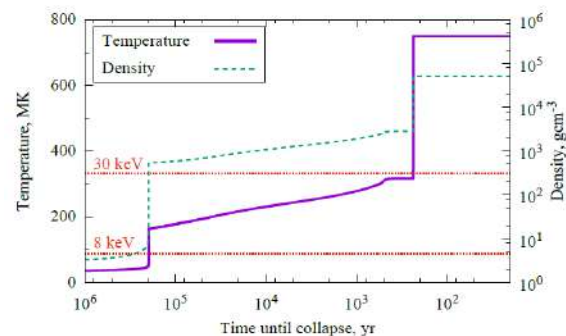


Conventional C6D6 technique:



PRELIMINARY RESULTS –
DATA ANALYSIS IN PROGRESS-

[CDP, NIM-A 825 \(2016\),](#)
[V.Babiano et al. NIM-A 953 \(2020\)](#)
[V.Babiano-Suarez et al., EPJA, \(2022\)](#)
[J. Lerendegui-Marco et al., EPJWC \(2023\)](#)



Outline

- Heavy elements nucleosynthesis: How stars make gold (r-process) and lead (s-process)?
- Neutron-capture experiments at CERN n_TOF: Red-Giant stars in the lab
- Enhancing detection sensitivity in neutron capture TOF experiments
- **Beyond the limits: r-process neutron-reactions in the lab?**
- From stars to tumors: ion-range & dose monitoring in hadron therapy
- Summary & Outlook



Limits in (n,γ) measurements on radioactive samples: s-process branchings



Sample	Half-life (yr)	Q value (MeV)	Comment
^{63}Ni	100.1	β^- , 0.066	TOF work in progress (Couture, 2009), sample with low enrichment
^{79}Se	2.95×10^5	β^- , 0.159	Important branching, constrains s -process temperature in massive stars
^{81}Kr	2.29×10^5	EC, 0.322	Part of ^{79}Se branching
^{85}Kr	10.73	β^- , 0.687	Important branching, constrains neutron density in massive stars
^{95}Zr	64.02 d	β^- , 1.125	Not feasible in near future, but important for neutron density low-mass AGB stars
^{134}Cs	2.0652	β^- , 2.059	Important branching at $A = 134, 135$, sensitive to s -process temperature in low-mass AGB stars, measurement not feasible in near future
^{135}Cs	2.3×10^6	β^- , 0.269	So far only activation measurement at $kT = 25$ keV by Patronis <i>et al.</i> (2004)
^{147}Nd	10.981 d	β^- , 0.896	Important branching at $A = 147/148$, constrains neutron density in low-mass AGB stars
^{147}Pm	2.6234	β^- , 0.225	Part of branching at $A = 147/148$
^{148}Pm	5.368 d	β^- , 2.464	Not feasible in the near future
^{151}Sm	90	β^- , 0.076	Existing TOF measurements, full set of MACS data available (Abbondanno <i>et al.</i> , 2004a; Wisshak <i>et al.</i> , 2006c)
^{154}Eu	8.593	β^- , 1.978	Complex branching at $A = 154, 155$, sensitive to temperature and neutron density
^{155}Eu	4.753	β^- , 0.246	So far only activation measurement at $kT = 25$ keV by Jaag and Käppeler (1995)
^{153}Gd	0.658	EC, 0.244	Part of branching at $A = 154, 155$
^{160}Tb	0.198	β^- , 1.833	Weak temperature-sensitive branching, very challenging experiment
^{163}Ho	4570	EC, 0.0026	Branching at $A = 163$ sensitive to mass density during s process, so far only activation measurement at $kT = 25$ keV by Jaag and Käppeler (1996b)
^{170}Tm	0.352	β^- , 0.968	Important branching, constrains neutron density in low-mass AGB stars
^{171}Tm	1.921	β^- , 0.098	Part of branching at $A = 170, 171$
^{179}Ta	1.82	EC, 0.115	Crucial for s -process contribution to ^{180}Ta , nature's rarest stable isotope
^{185}W	0.206	β^- , 0.432	Important branching, sensitive to neutron density and s -process temperature in low-mass AGB stars
^{204}Tl	3.78	β^- , 0.763	Determines $^{205}\text{Pb}/^{205}\text{Tl}$ clock for dating of early Solar System

REVIEW OF MODERN PHYSICS, VOLUME 83, JANUARY-MARCH 2011

The s process: Nuclear physics, stellar models, and observations

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INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Teramo, I-64100 Teramo, Italy

S. Bisterzo‡
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Wako Aoki§
National Astronomical Observatory, Mitaka, Tokyo 181-8588, Japan

^{151}Sm ^{93}Zr ^{63}Ni ^{171}Tm ^{204}Tl ^{94}Nb ^{79}Se

2001 Time 2025

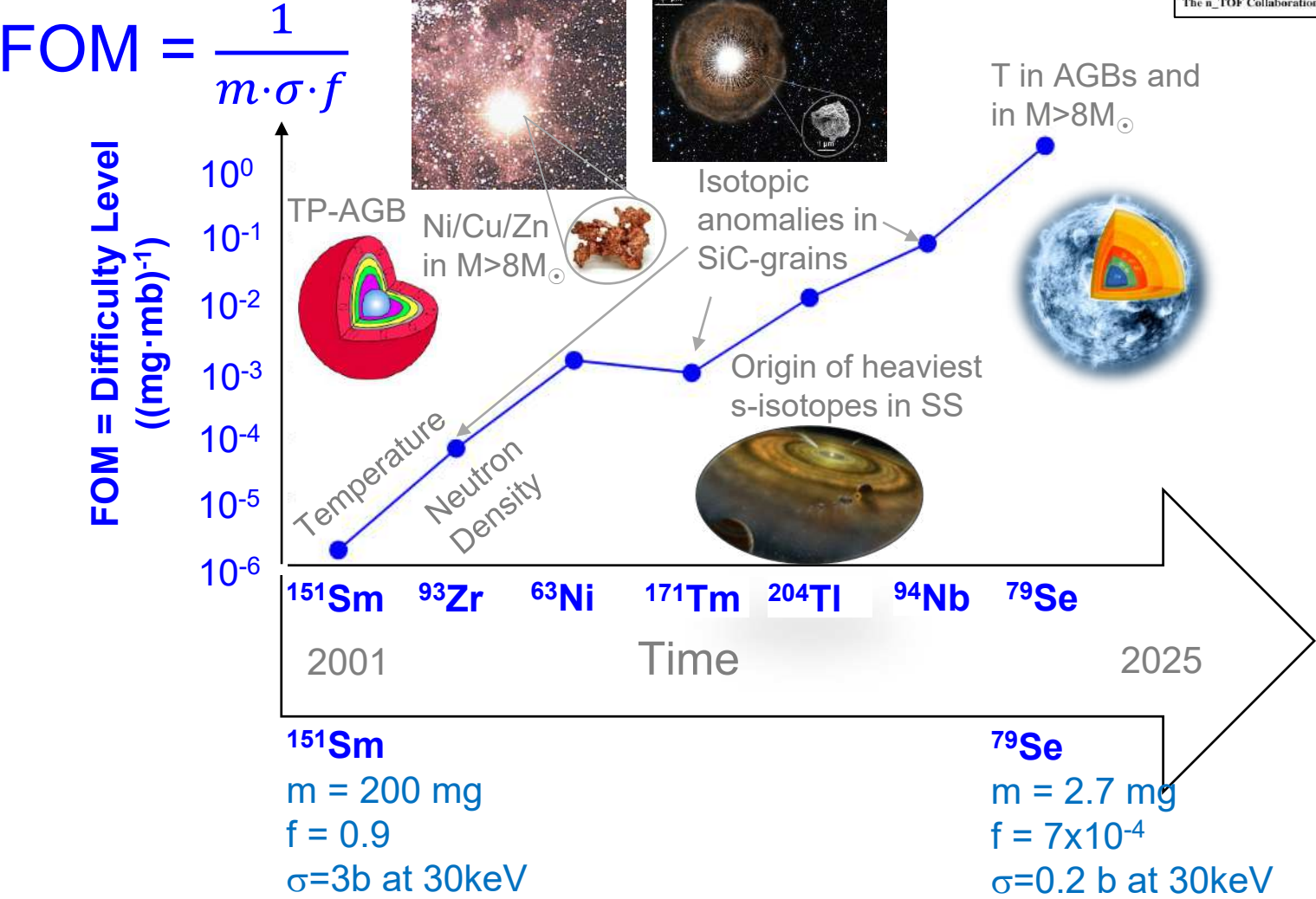
^{151}Sm
 $m = 200$ mg
 $f = 0.9$
 $\sigma = 3$ b at 30 keV



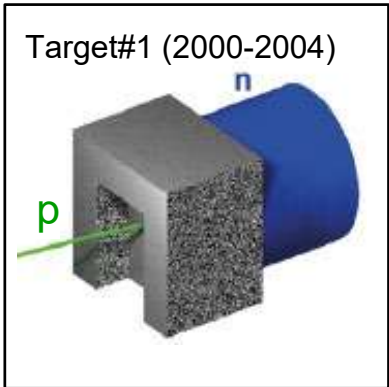
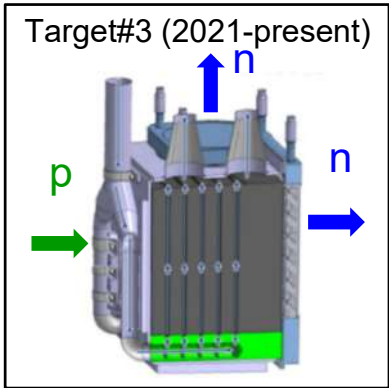
^{79}Se
 $m = 2.7$ mg
 $f = 7 \times 10^{-4}$
 $\sigma = 0.2$ b at 30 keV



Limits in (n,γ) measurements on radioactive samples: s-process branchings

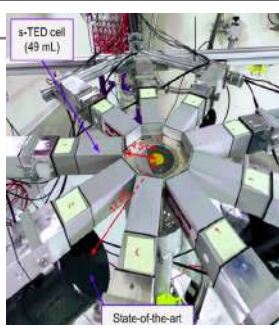
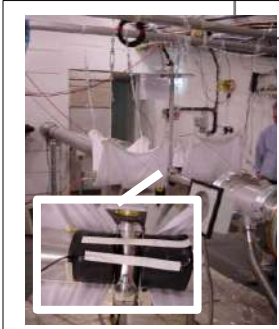
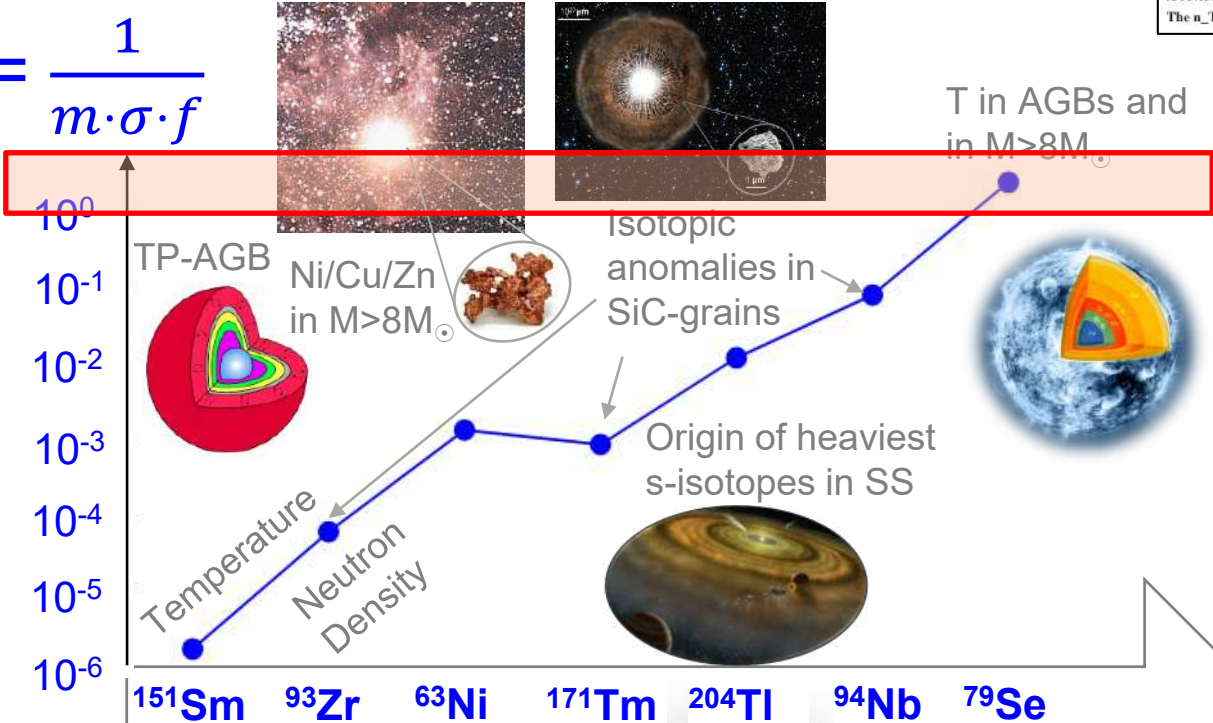


Limits in (n,γ) measurements on radioactive samples: s-process branchings

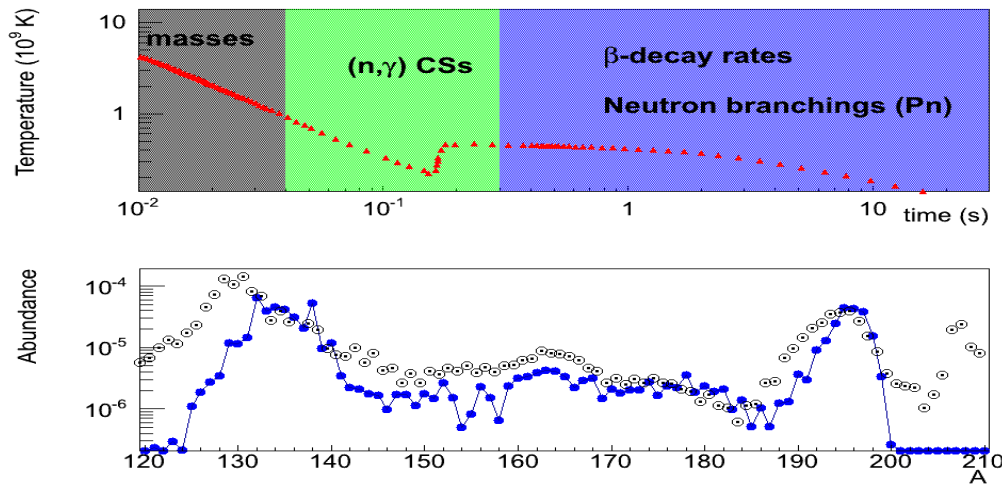
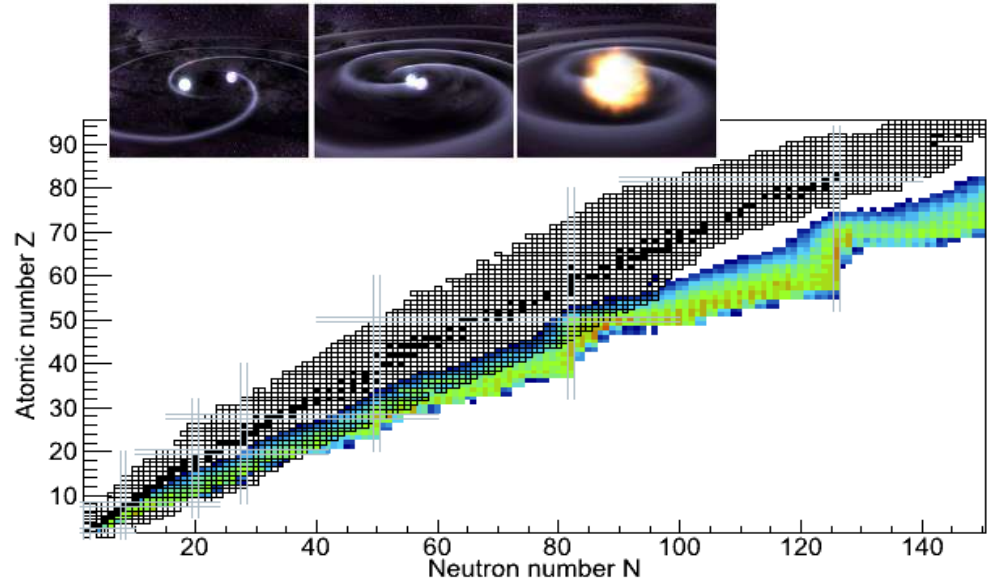


$$FOM = \frac{1}{m \cdot \sigma \cdot f}$$

FOM = Difficulty Level
((mg·mb)⁻¹)



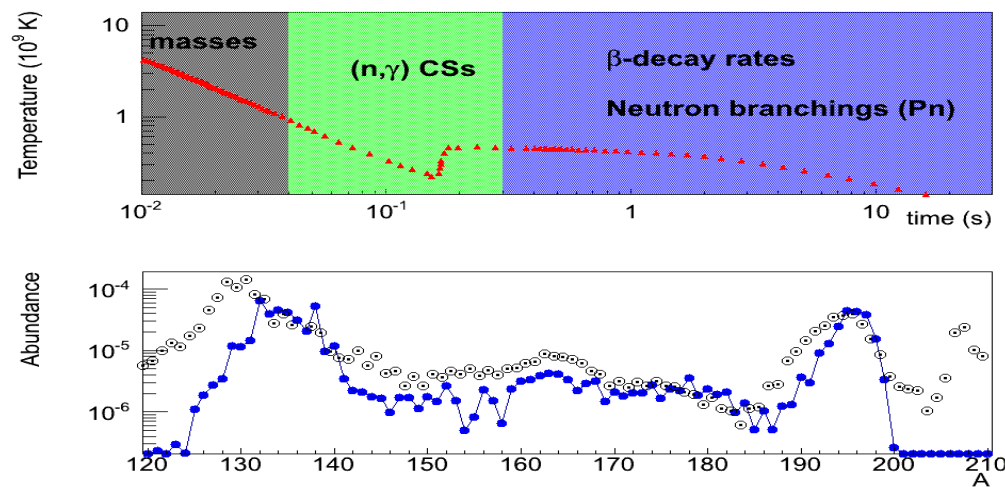
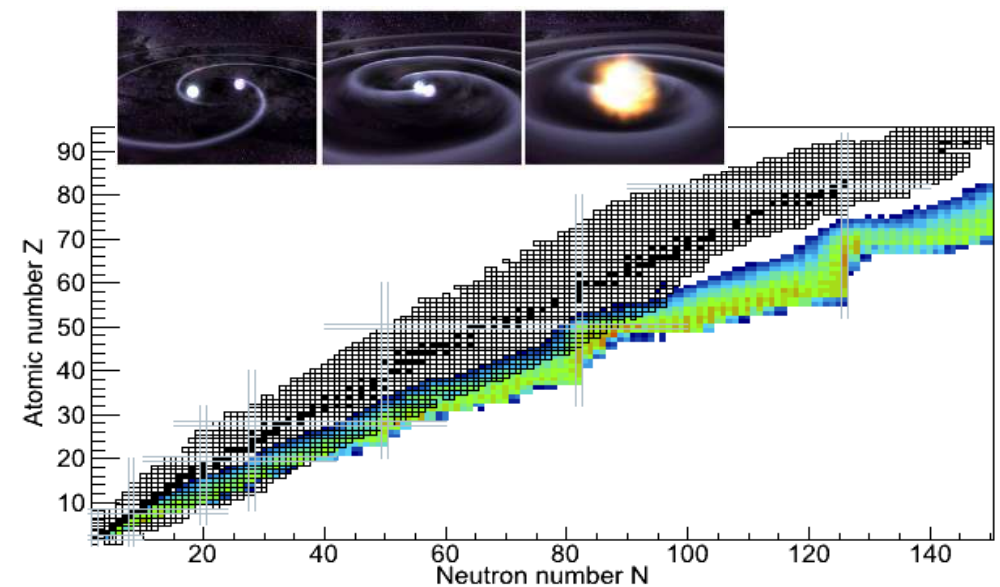
How far are r-nuclei from direct (n, γ) measurements?



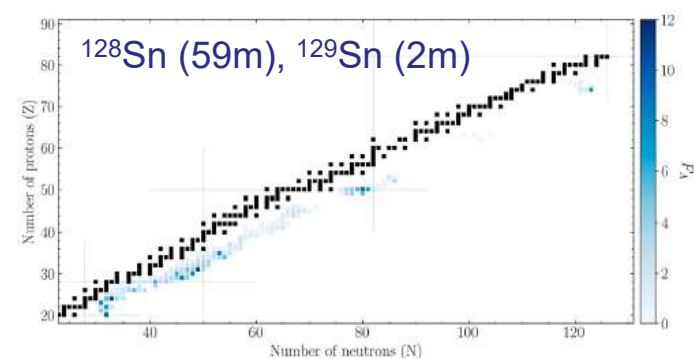
Will it be possible to measure (n, γ) cross sections directly on those nuclei involved in explosive nucleosynthesis?



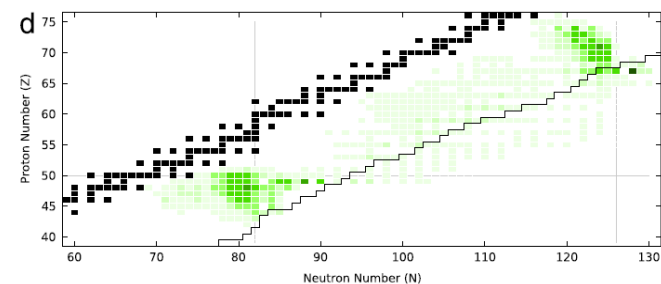
How far are r-nuclei from direct (n, γ) measurements?



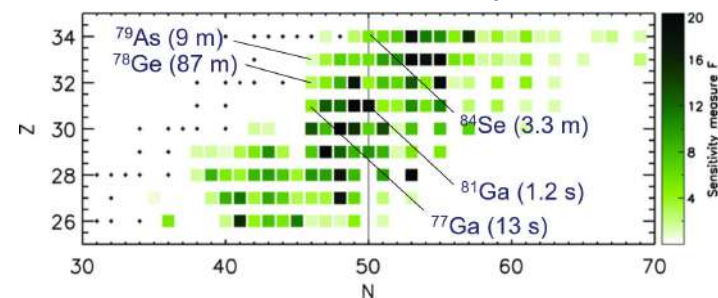
Important neutron-capture isotopes:



Vescovi+2022

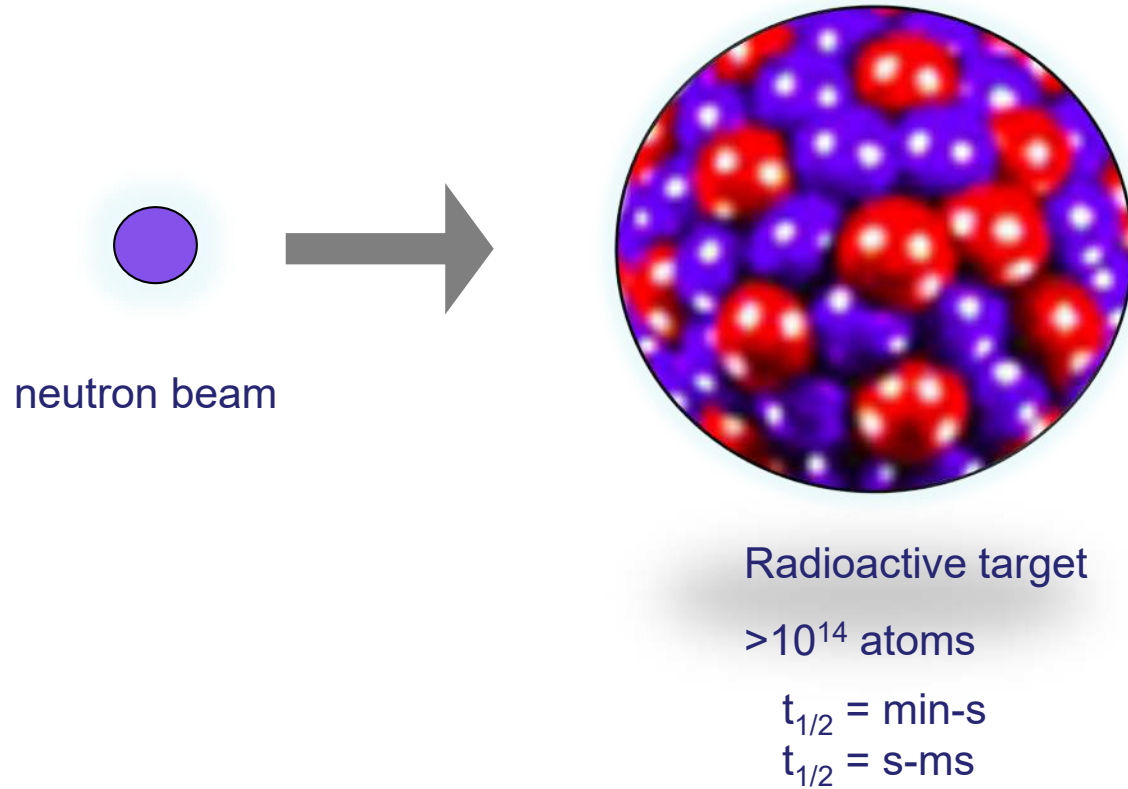


Mumpower+2016

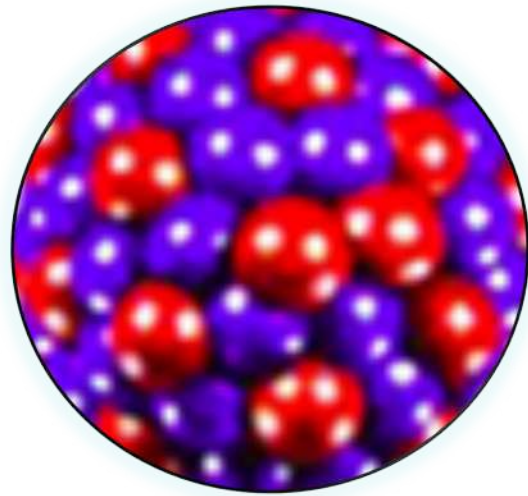


Surman+2014

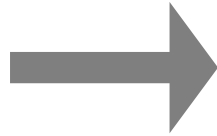
Limitations in (n,γ) measurements with conventional methods



Turning things around: Direct (n,γ) measurements in inverse kinematics using neutron target!

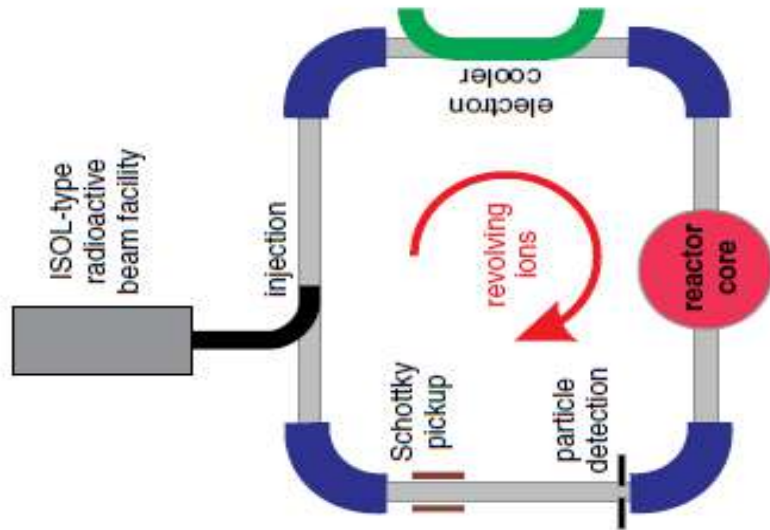


Stored Radioactive Ion Beam
 10^7 ions, 1 MHz, 10^{13} ions/s



neutron target
 $>10^{8-9}$ n/cm²

Free-neutron target concepts



PHYSICAL REVIEW SPECIAL TOPICS - ACCELERATORS AND BEAMS 17, 014701 (2014)

Measurements of neutron-induced reactions in inverse kinematics

René Reifarth¹ and Yuri A. Litvinov^{2,3}

¹Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Max-von-Laue-Str.1, 60438 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

²GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, 64291 Darmstadt, Germany

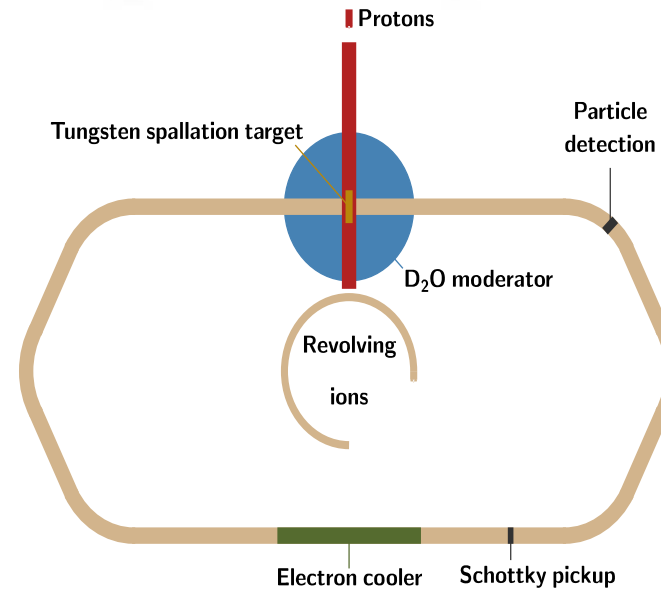
³Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany

Nuclear Reactor:

neutron flux $\rightarrow \phi_n = 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$

areal neutron density $\rightarrow \eta_n = \rho_n \times z = \phi_n / v_n \times 50 \text{ cm} = 2.2 \times 10^{10} \text{ n} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$

Reaction rate = $L \times \text{time} \times \sigma = 2.2 \times 10^{23} \times 24 \text{ h} \times 3600 \times 1 \text{E-}27 \text{ cm}^2/\text{mb} = 20 \times \sigma [\text{mb}] \text{ (Counts/day)}$



PHYSICAL REVIEW ACCELERATORS AND BEAMS 20, 044701 (2017)

Spallation-based neutron target for direct studies of neutron-induced reactions in inverse kinematics

René Reifarth,^{*} Kathrin Göbel, Tanja Heftrich, and Mario Weigand
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, 60438 Frankfurt, Germany

Beatriz Jurado
CENBG, 33175 Gradignan, France

Franz Käppeler
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, 76131 Karlsruhe, Germany

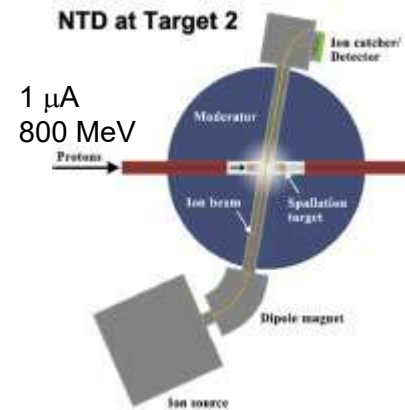
Yuri A. Litvinov
GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, 64291 Darmstadt, Germany
(Received 29 November 2016; published 6 April 2017)

Spallation Target:

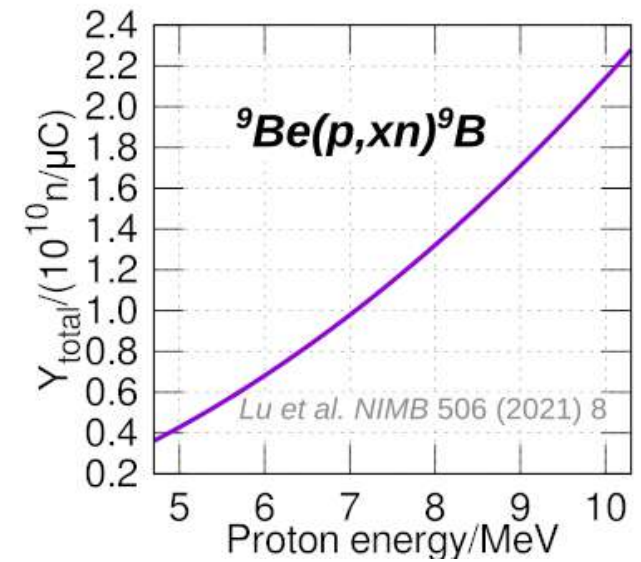
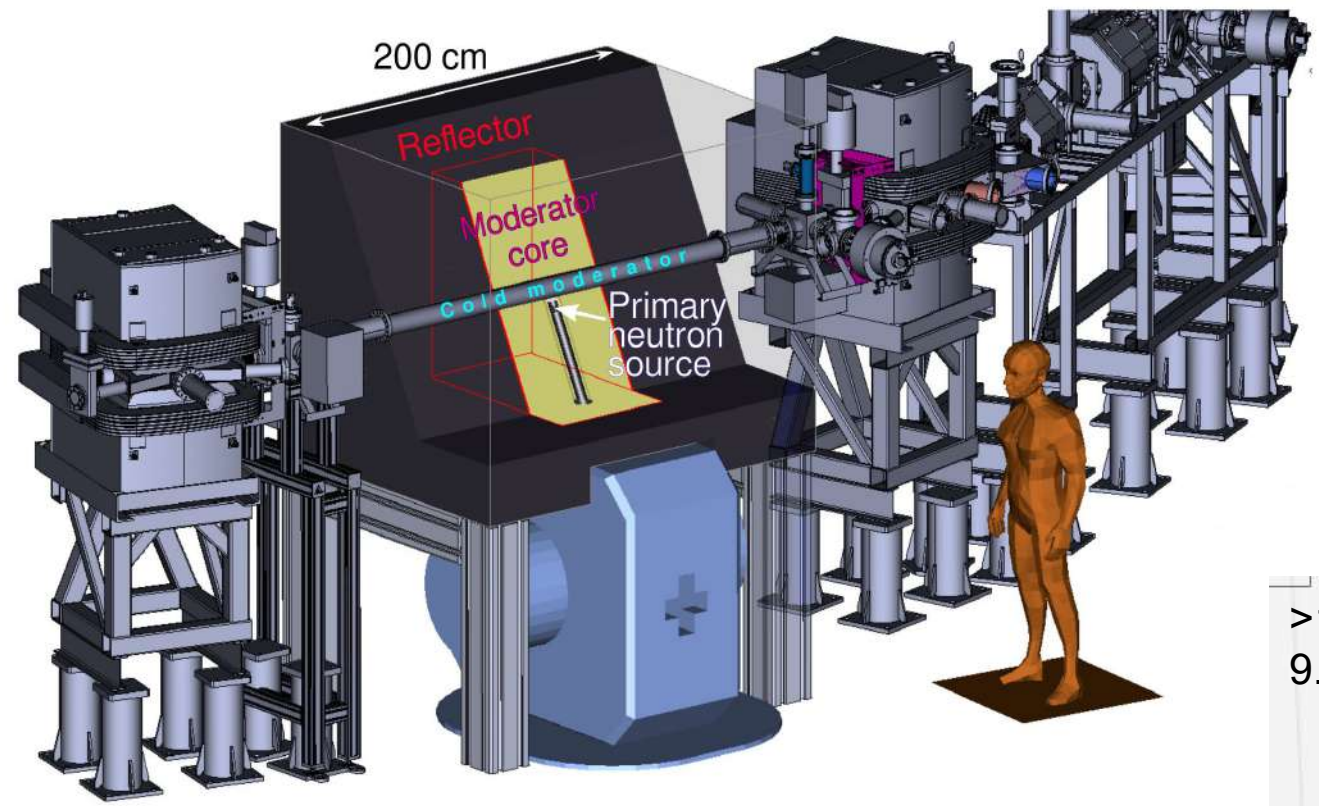
Areal neutron density $\eta_n = 8 \times 10^9 \text{ n} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$ (only a factor 2 < reactor)

Reaction rate = $L \times \text{time} \times \sigma = 8 \times 10^{22} \times 24 \text{ h} \times 3600 \times 1 \text{E-}27 \text{ cm}^2/\text{mb} = 6.9 \times \sigma [\text{mb}]$

See: Andrew L Cooper et al (2024) J. Phys.: Conf. Ser. 2743 012091

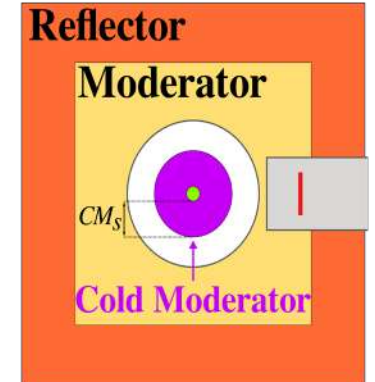
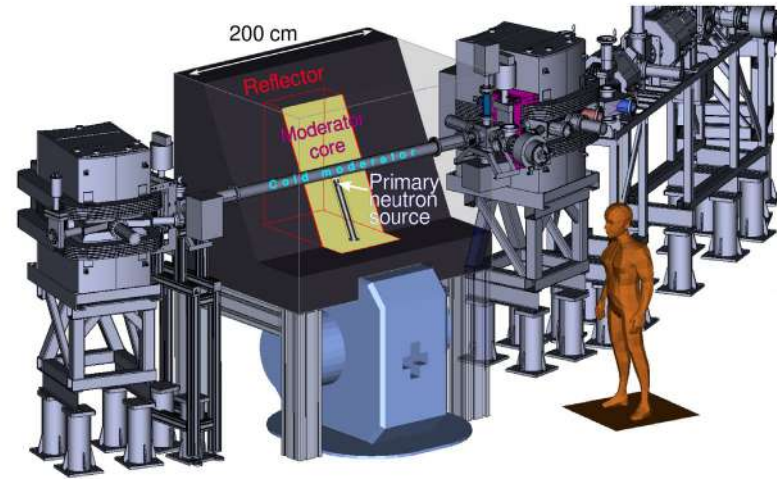


Supercompact-Cyclotron driven Neutron Target: Focus on feasibility



Lot's of literature on CANS, see e.g. Compact Accelerator Based Neutron Sources, IAEA TEC DOCSeriesNo.1981(International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, 2021).

Supercompact-Cyclotron driven Neutron Target



A. Tarifeño-Saldivia et al.
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2508.15465v1>



Submitted to *Physical Review Accelerators and Beams*
Direct Neutron Reactions in Storage Rings Utilizing a Supercompact Cyclotron Neutron Target

Ariel Tarifeño-Saldivia* and César Domingo-Pardo
Instituto de Física Corpuscular (CSIC-Universitat de València), Valencia, Spain

Iris Dillmann
*TRIUMF, Vancouver BC, Canada and
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria BC, Canada*

Yuri A. Litvinov
*GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung GmbH, Darmstadt, Germany and
Institut für Kernphysik, Universität zu Köln, Köln, Germany*



Neutron-target “demo”:

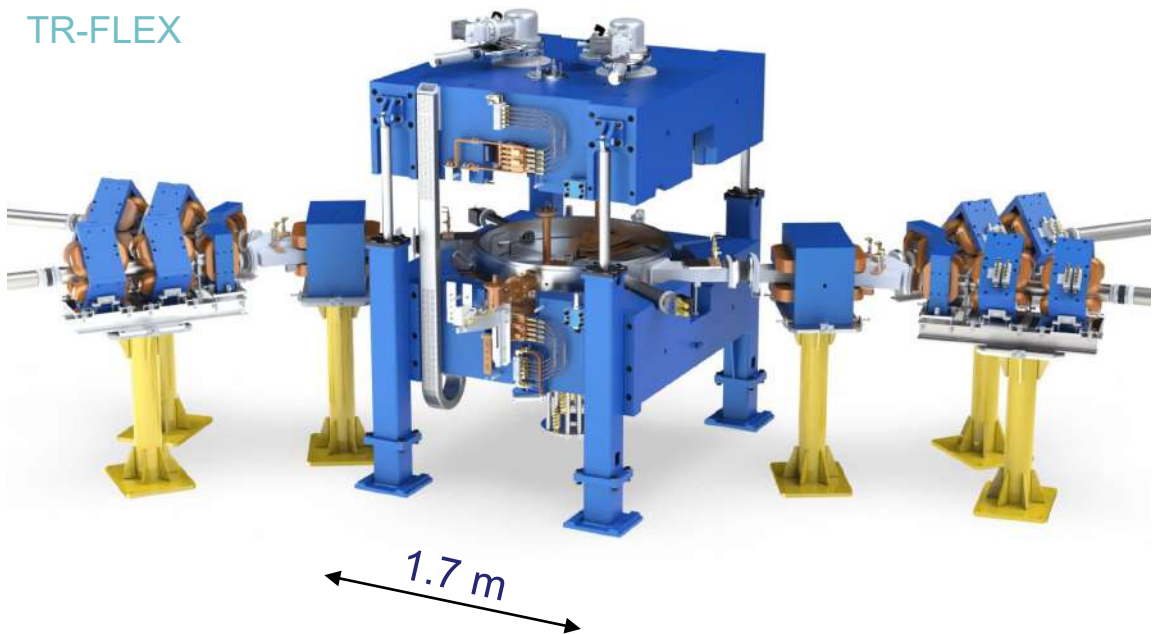
- **Cyclotron:** IBA Cyclone KEY, 9.2 MeV protons, up 130 μA current, 2.1 m² footprint
- **Moderator:** D₂O, 70 x 70 x 70 cm³
- **Reflector:** Graphite, 50 cm thick
- **Cryogenic system:** LH₂, 20 K, 13 mm thickness, 10 mm inner diameter
- **Total size:** 170 x 170 x 200 cm³
- **Areal density:** **3.4 x 10⁶ n/cm²**
- **Where to find it?** [arXiv:2508.15465v1](https://arxiv.org/abs/2508.15465v1)

Cyclotron options future facility (from A. Tarifeño-Saldivia et al. [arXiv:2508.15465v1](https://arxiv.org/abs/2508.15465v1))

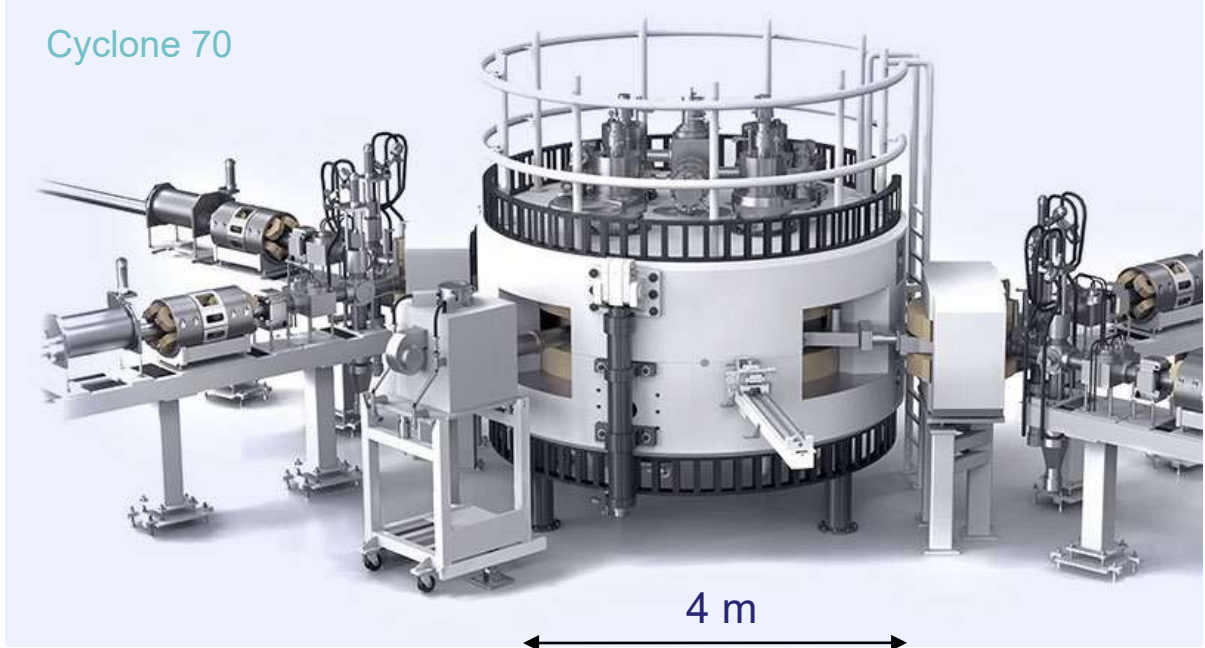


Manufacturer Model		Footprint (m ²)	Weight (tons)	Proton Energy (MeV)	Max Current (μA)	Shielding	Thermal Areal Density (n/cm ²)	Source
IBA	Cyclone KEY	1.5x1.4	7.5	9.2	130	Self-shielding (opt)	3.4×10^6	[38]
Best	BG-95	< 2x2	22	9.5	120	Self-shielding	3.3×10^6	[39, 40]
Best	B6-15/B15p	2.2x2.2	14	10	400 (550 ^a)	Self-shielding	1.2×10^7	[41]
GE	PETtrace 800 series	1.33x1.2	20	16.5	160	Vault	6.7×10^6	[42]
IBA	Cyclone KIUBE	1.9x1.9	18	18	300	Vault	1.5×10^7	[43]
						Self-shielding (opt)		
ACSI	TR-FLEX	1.7x1.7	24	22	800	Vault	6.4×10^7	[44]
IBA	Cyclone IKON	2.2x2.2	30	22	1500	Vault	1.2×10^8	[45]
ACSI	TR-30	2.4x2.4	50	22	1600	Vault	1.3×10^8	[46]
IBA	Cyclone 70	4x4	120	30-70	750	Vault	$>10^9$	[47, 48]

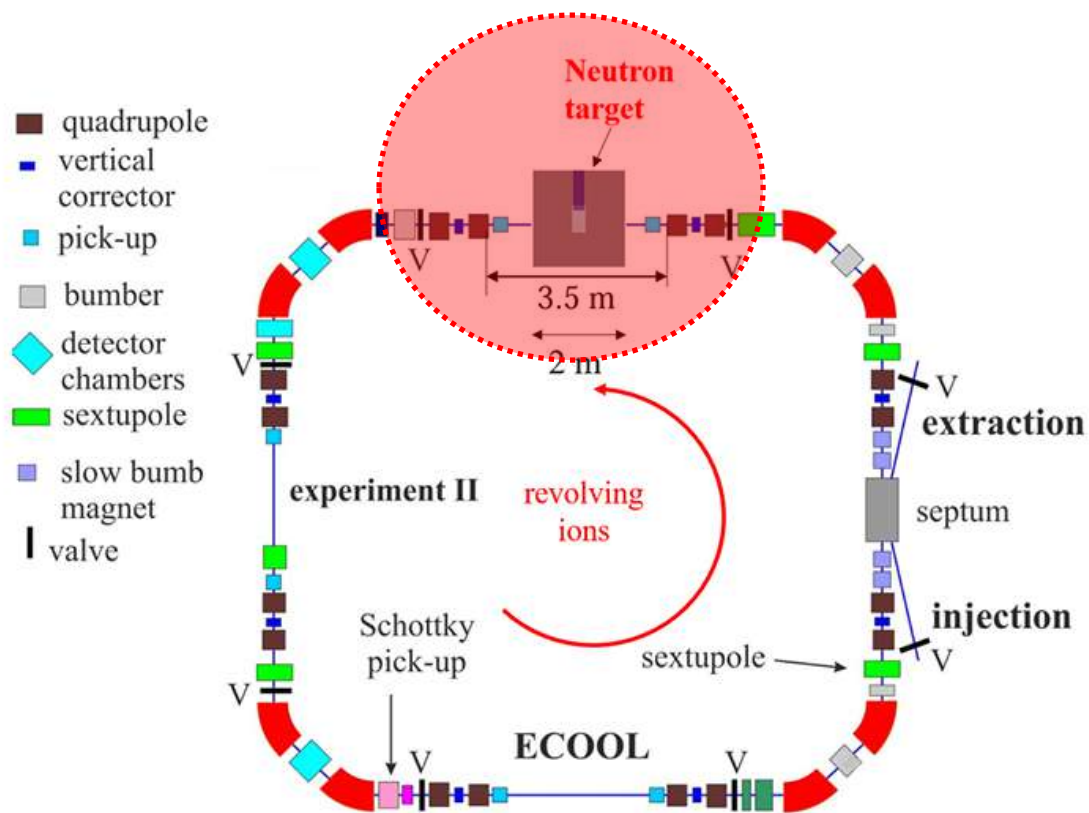
TR-FLEX



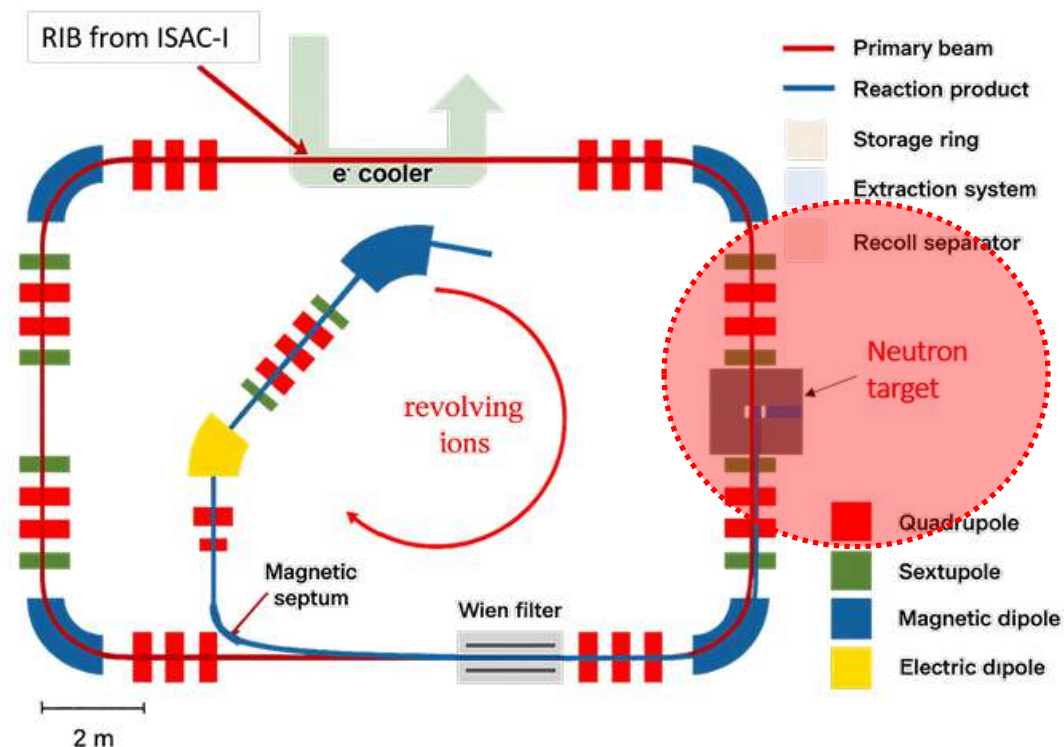
Cyclone 70



Storage-Ring options for a future “production” facility (from A. Tarifeño-Saldivia [arXiv:2508.15465v1](https://arxiv.org/abs/2508.15465v1))

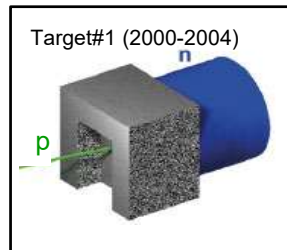
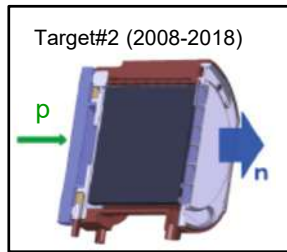
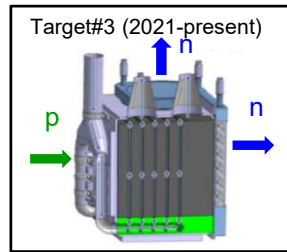


See Manfred Griesser talk at ISOLDE
EPIC workshop, CERN, Geneva, 3 rd 4 th December 2019

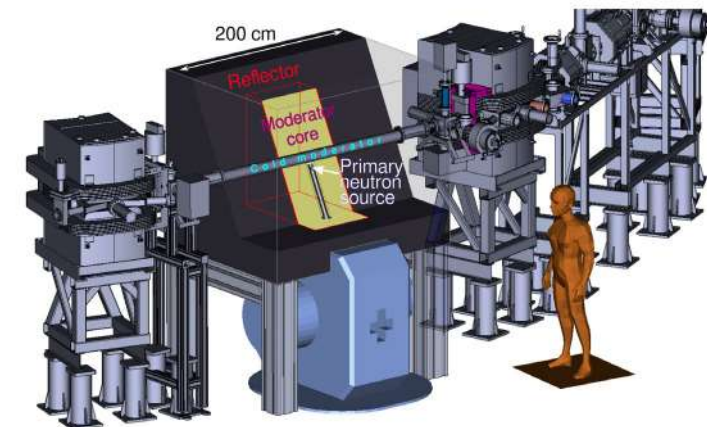
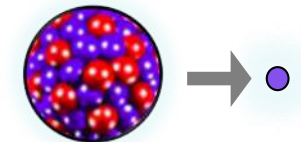
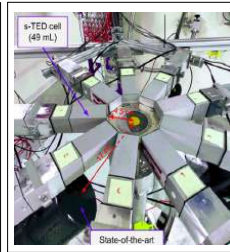
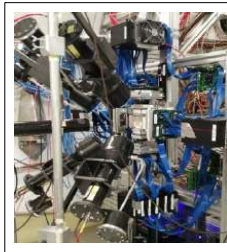
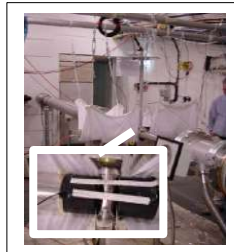
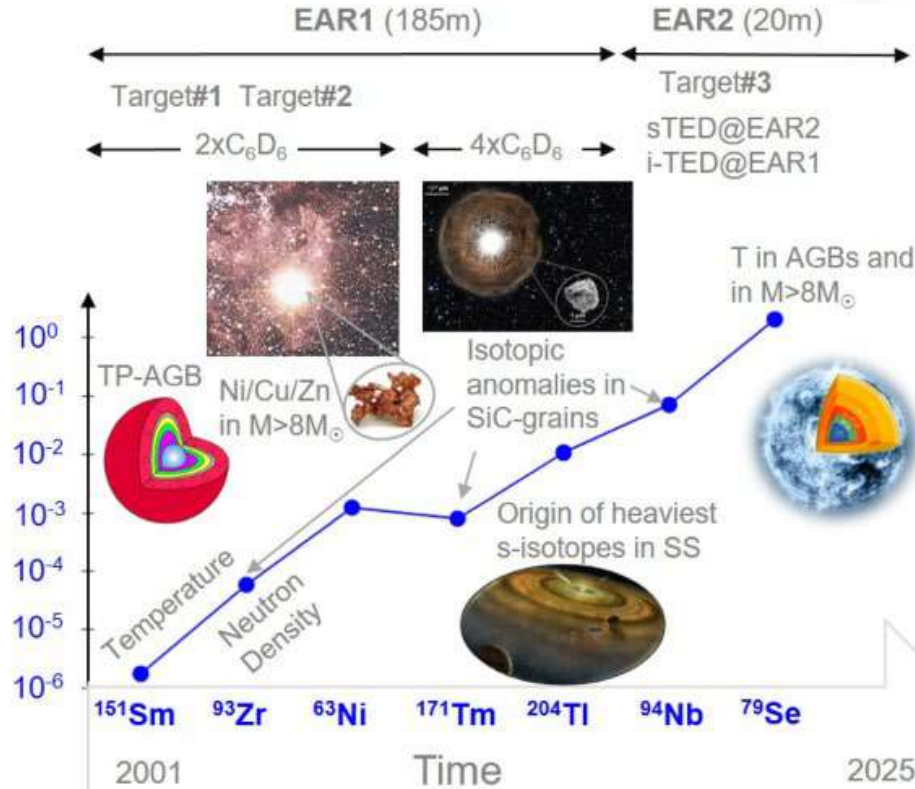


K. Pak, B. Davids, and Y. K. Kim, Nuclear Engineering and
Technology 57, 103392 (2025), [arXiv:2312.11859](https://arxiv.org/abs/2312.11859)
[physics.acc-ph].

Summary & Outlook



FOM = Difficulty Level
($\text{mg} \cdot \text{mb}^{-1}$)



Thanks to CERN n_TOF Collaborators and Gamma-Ray & Neutron Spectroscopy Group @ IFIC

Thanks to all funding agencies and institutions

Thanks for your attention!

