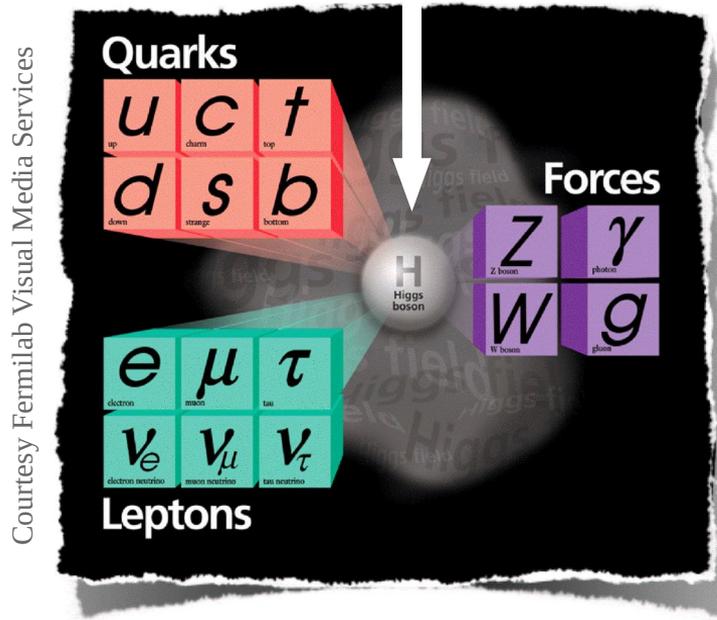


Search for the
Higgs boson decay to charm quarks
at the ATLAS experiment

Hannah Arnold (Nikhef)

The Higgs boson discovered – end of (a long) story?

At the centre of the *Standard Model*

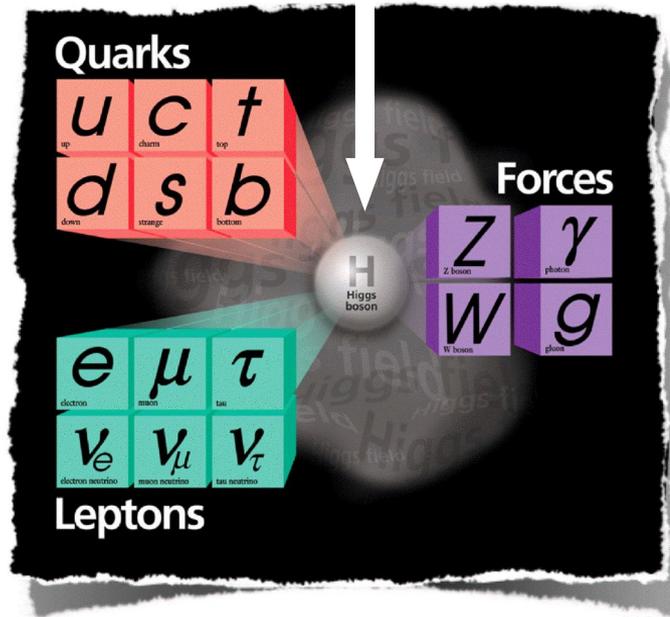


Discovered in 2012 as the last missing piece
– 50 years after its prediction

The Higgs boson discovered – ~~end of (a long) story?~~

just the beginning

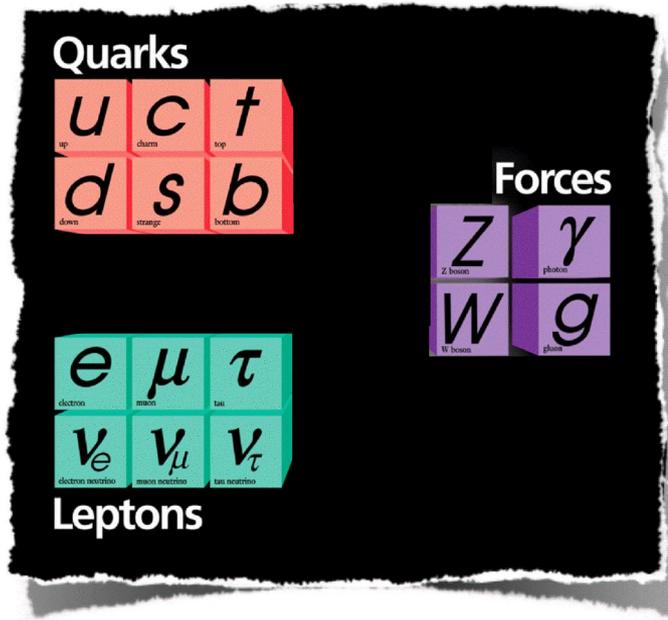
At the centre of the *Standard Model*



All known elementary particles

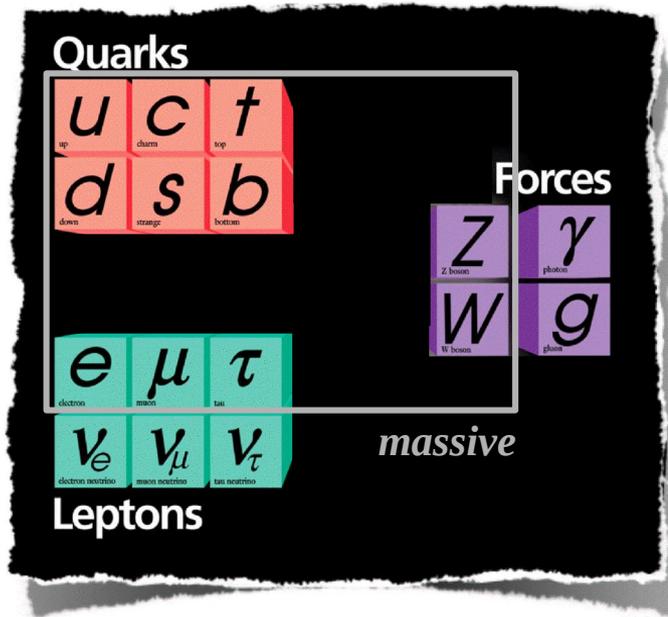


Discovered in 2012 as the last missing piece
– 50 years after its prediction



... describes the dynamics and interactions of **massless fermionic** particles (**quarks** and **leptons**) by exchange of **massless bosonic** mediators (**gauge bosons**)

All known elementary particles

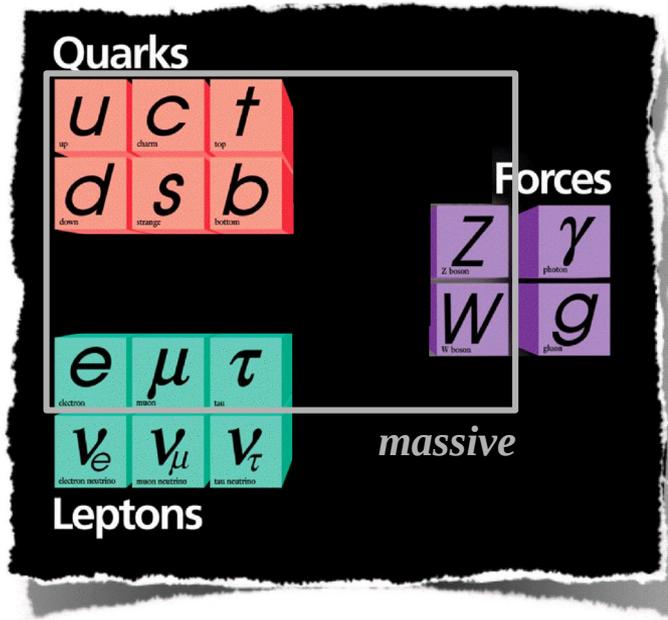


... describes the dynamics and interactions of **massless fermionic** particles (**quarks** and **leptons**) by exchange of **massless bosonic** mediators (**gauge bosons**)

BUT

the **W and Z bosons** and the **charged fermions** are *massive!*

All known elementary particles



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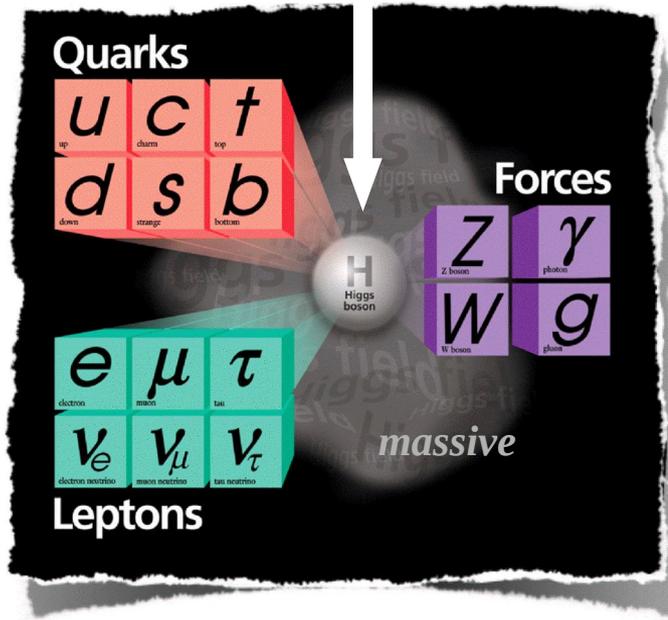
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Solutions:

- + **Brout-Englert-Higgs mechanism**
- + **Yukawa couplings**

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



... describes the dynamics and interactions of **massless fermionic** particles (**quarks** and **leptons**) by exchange of **massless bosonic** mediators (**gauge bosons**)

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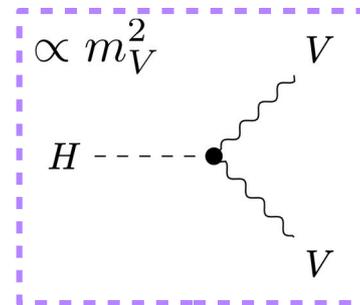
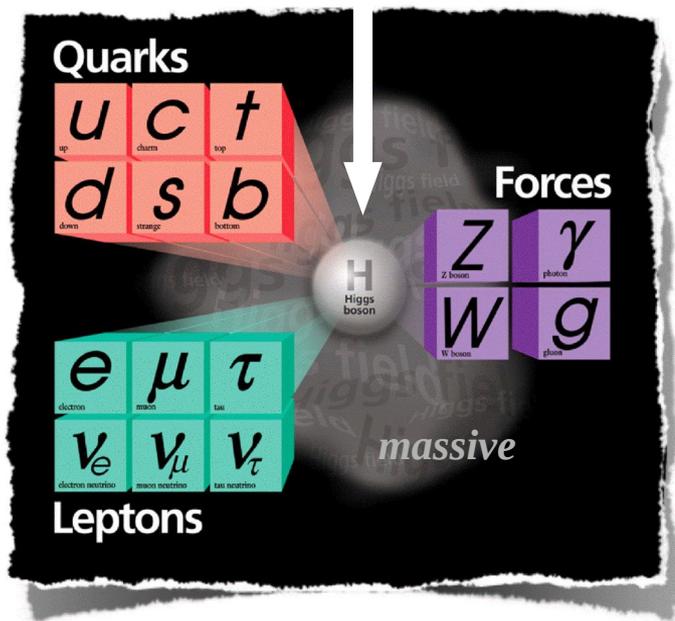
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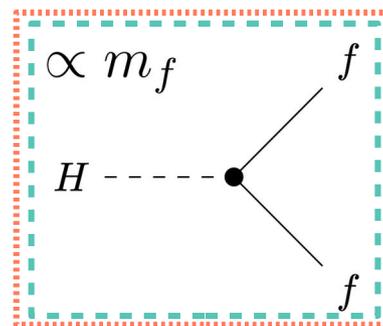
All known elementary particles

The Higgs boson couplings

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



W and Z bosons



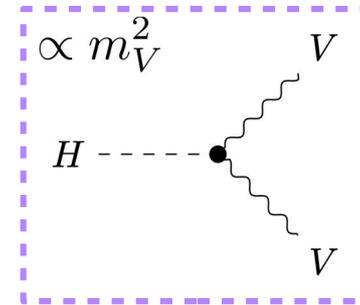
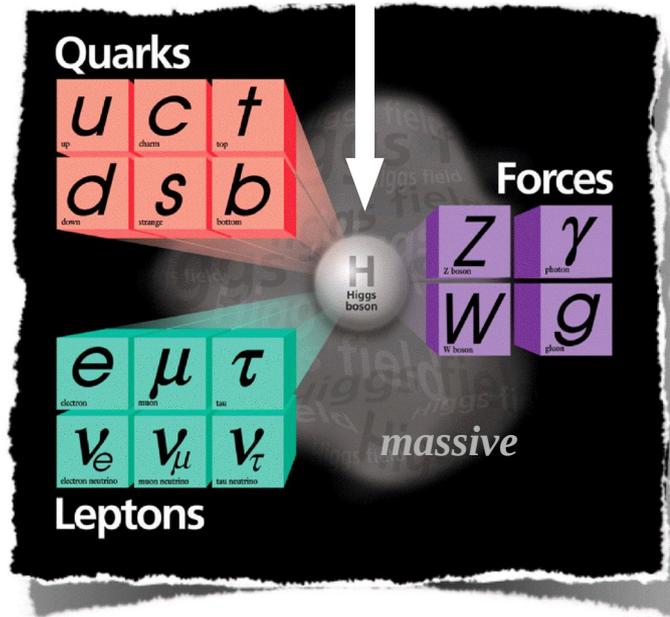
leptons
quarks

All known elementary particles

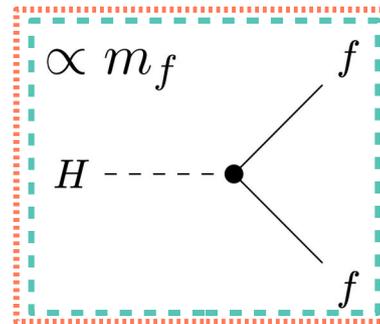
+ self-interaction...

The Higgs boson couplings

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



W and Z bosons



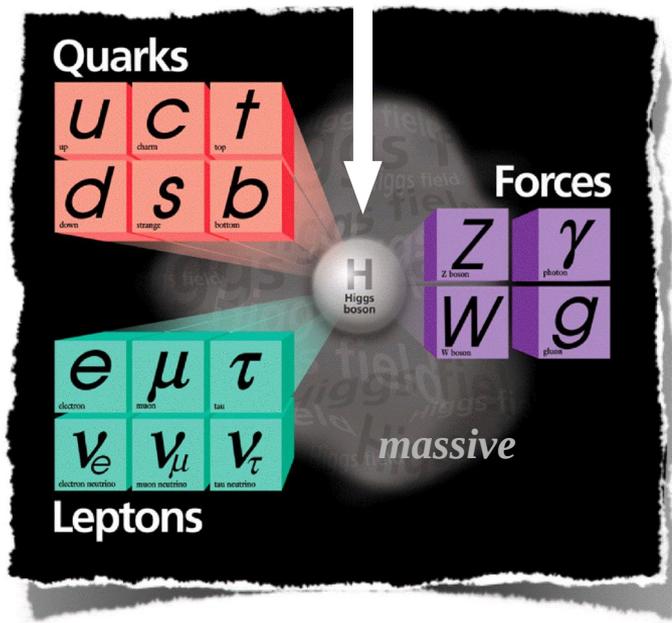
leptons
quarks

All known elementary particles

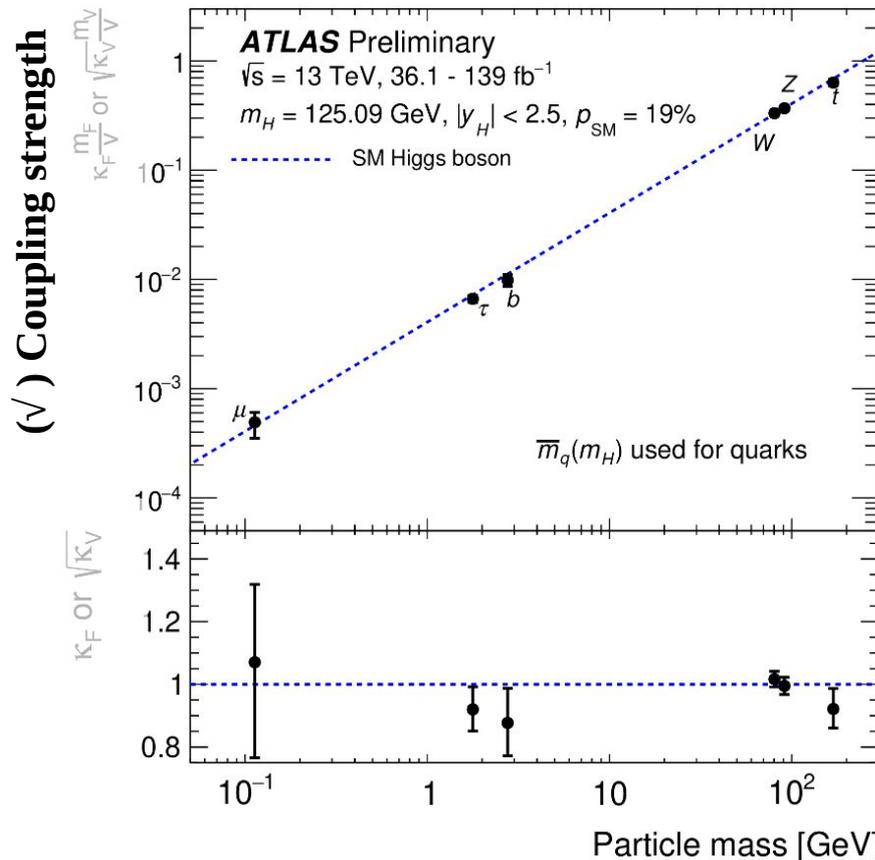
\Rightarrow test by studying the observed Higgs boson's production and decay

The Higgs boson couplings

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



All known elementary particles



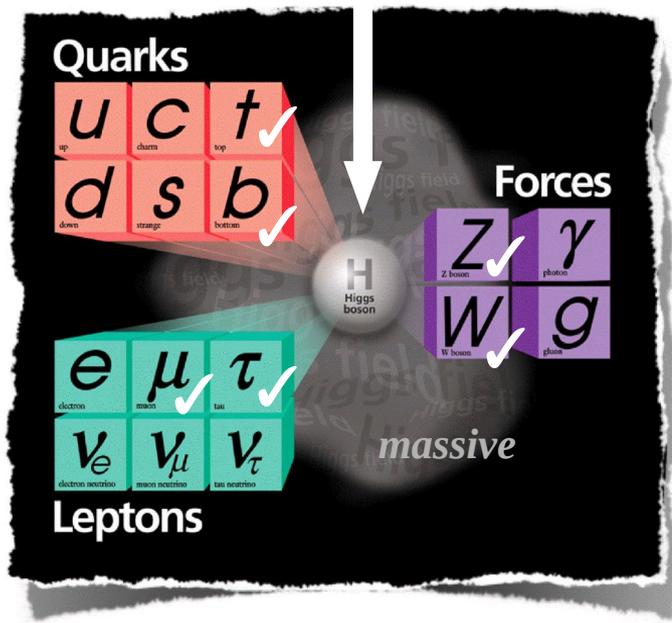
ATLAS-CONF-2021-053

Rel. SM prediction

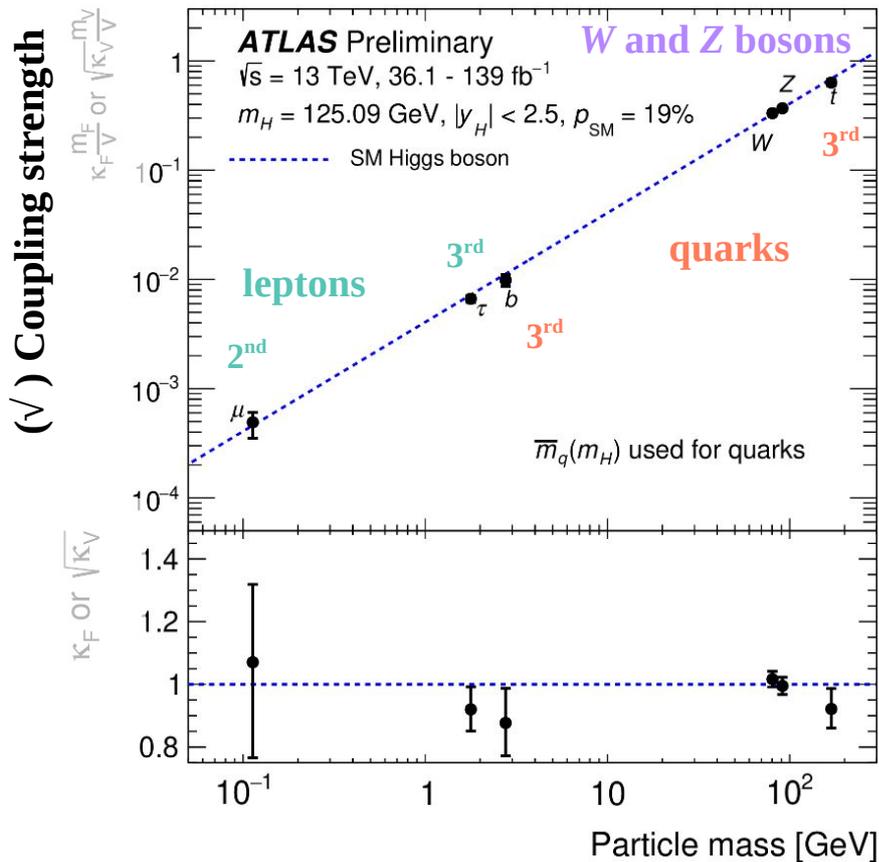
So far excellent agreement with the prediction!

The Higgs boson couplings

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



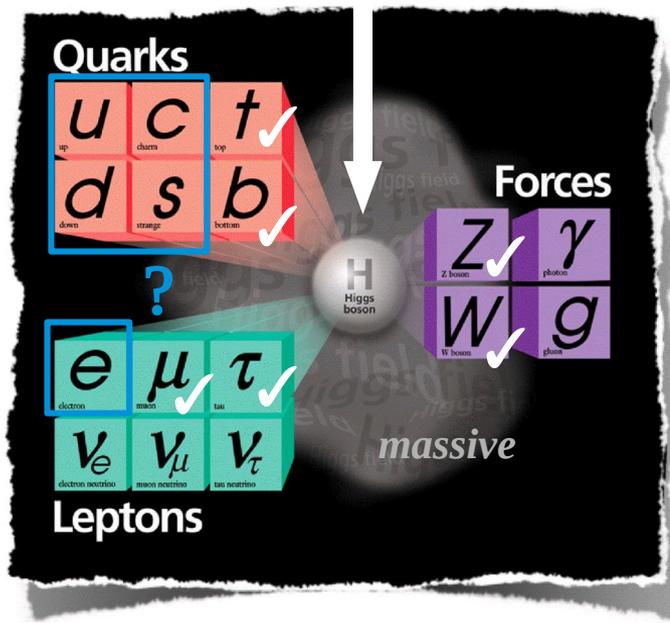
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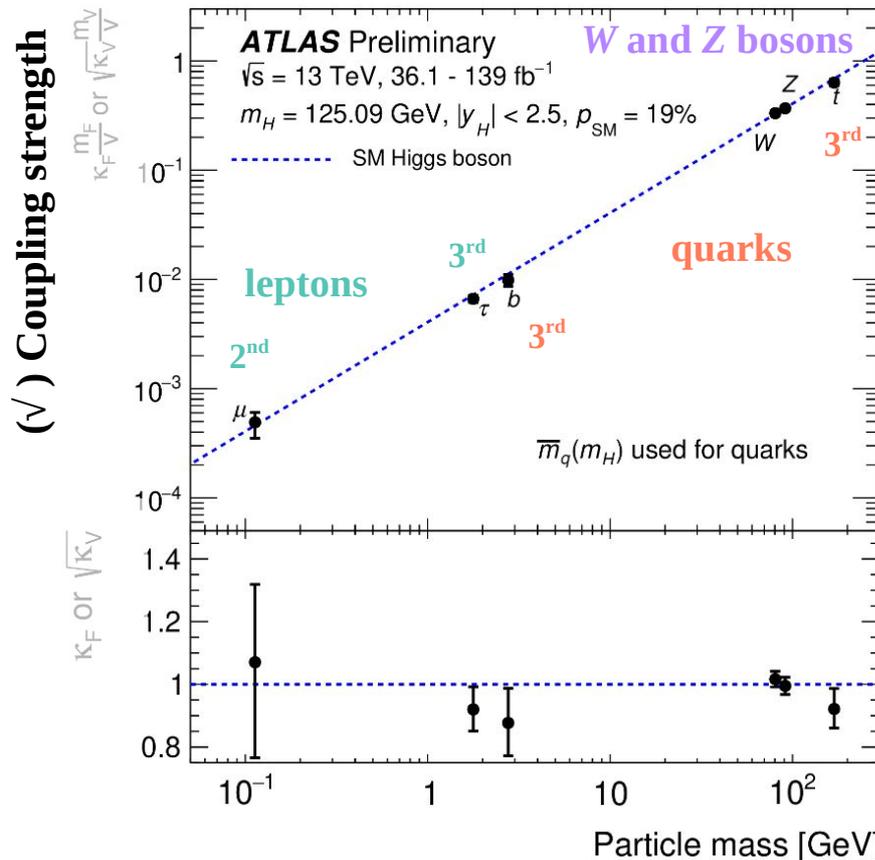
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The Higgs boson couplings

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All known elementary particles

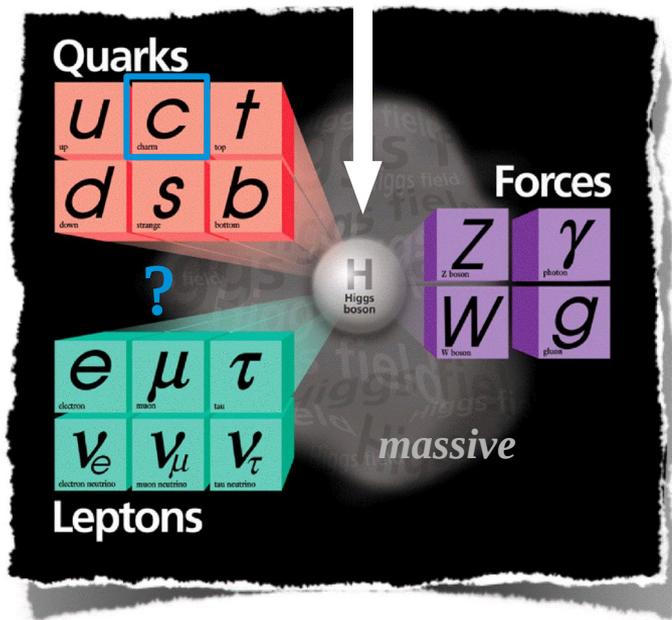


ATLAS-CONF-2021-053

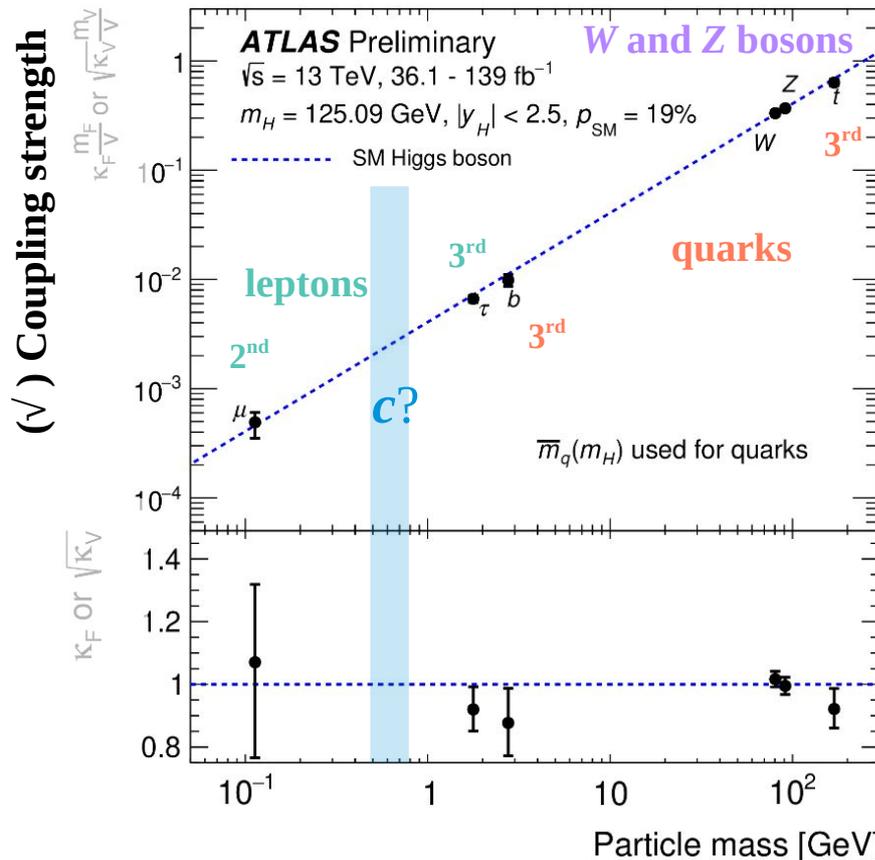
Couplings to electrons and 1st and 2nd generation quarks?

The Higgs boson couplings

At the centre of the *Standard Model*



All known elementary particles



Coupling to charm quarks?

The Higgs boson coupling to charm quarks

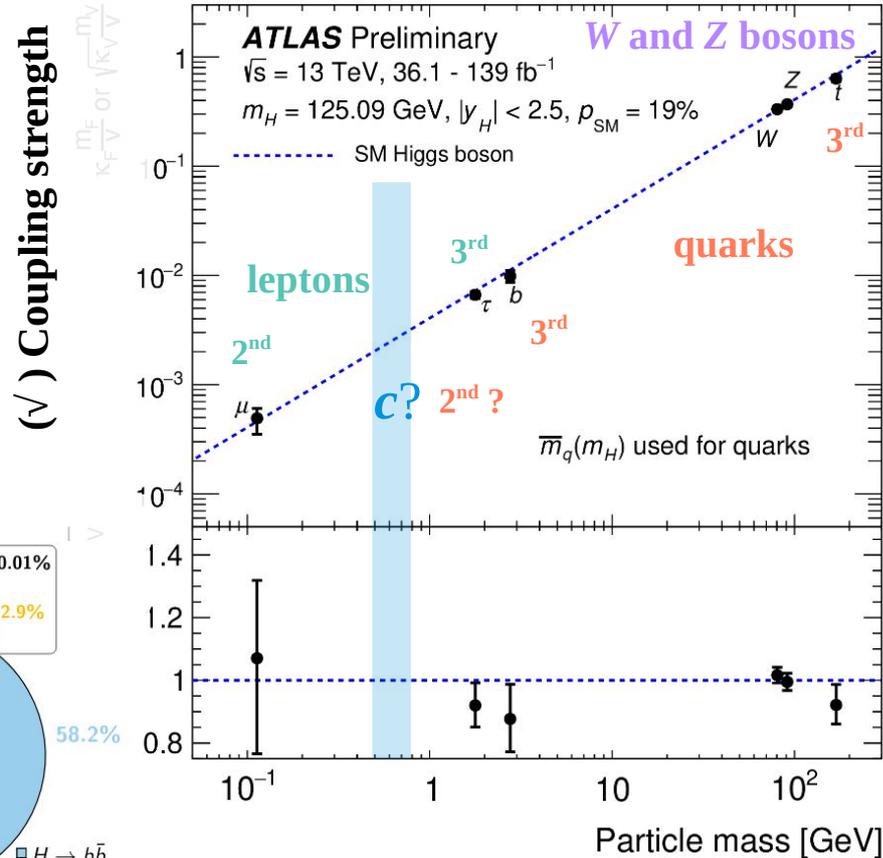
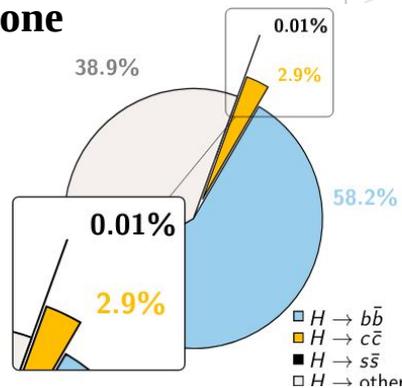
Why is it important to measure it?

Probe of Higgs couplings to 2nd generation quarks – the only viable?

Its smallness in the SM makes it susceptible to possible modifications from potential beyond-the-SM (BSM) models

Many BSM models predict modifications of the Higgs couplings to 2nd (and 1st) generation fermions/quarks alone

$H \rightarrow cc$ largest contribution to the Higgs-boson width that we have **no evidence for yet**

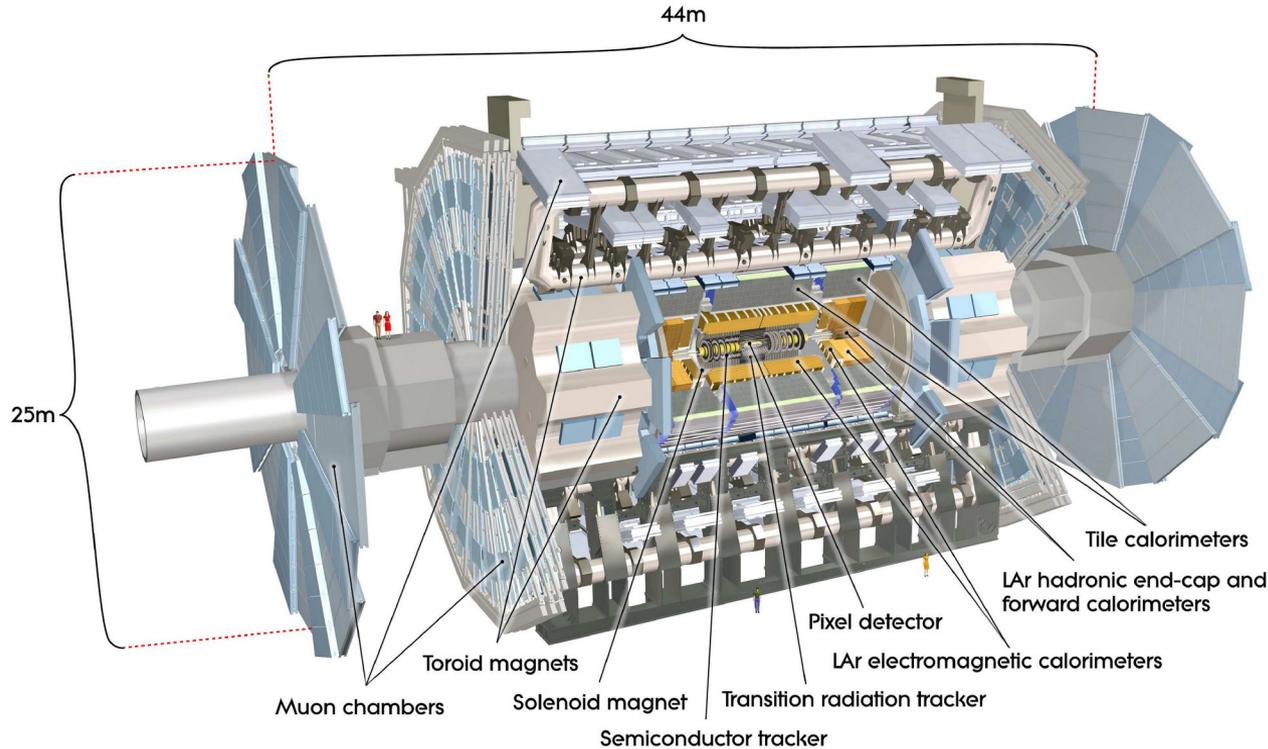


ATLAS-CONF-2021-053

Rel. SM prediction

From A. Chisholm @Higgs Hunting 2021

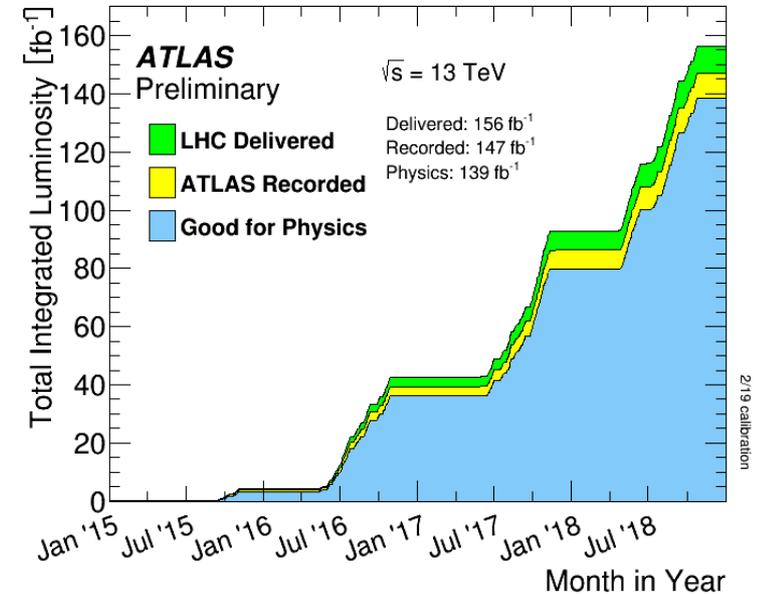
- **Recent VH , $H \rightarrow cc$ search with the ATLAS detector based on the full Run-2 dataset** [[ATLAS-CONF-2021-021](#)]
 - Previous and first search [[PRL 120 \(2018\) 211802](#)]:
 - Based on 36 fb^{-1} of Run-2 data; targets $Z(\rightarrow ll)H(\rightarrow cc)$
 - Observed (expected) upper limit on $\sigma \times \text{BR}$: $110 (150) \times \text{SM prediction}$
- HL-LHC projection for VH , $H \rightarrow cc$ search based on full Run-2 analysis [[ATL-PHYS-PUB-2021-039](#)]
 - Previous projection [[ATL-PHYS-PUB-2018-016](#)]: upper limit on $\sigma \times \text{BR}$: $6.3 \times \text{SM prediction}$ (w/o systematic uncertainties)
- Complementary approaches to constrain the Higgs-boson coupling to charm quarks

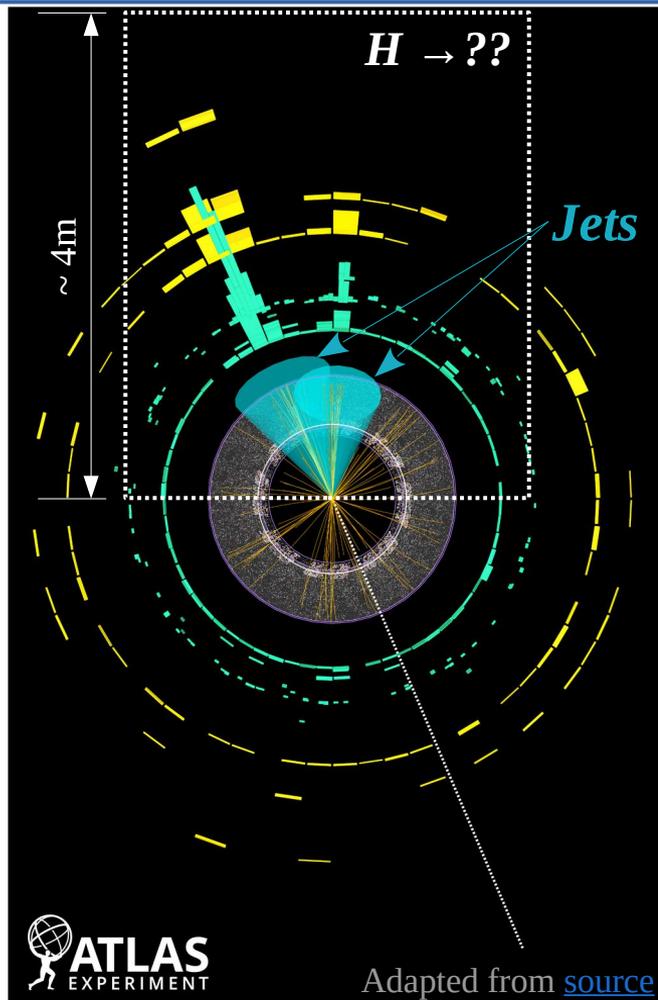


Prerequisites:

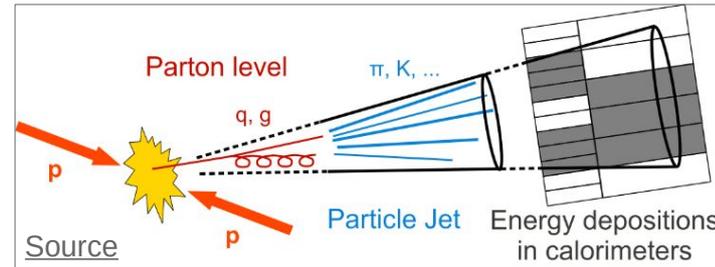
- Lots of high-quality pp -collision data provided by the LHC
- Excellent multi-purpose detector

ATLAS experiment

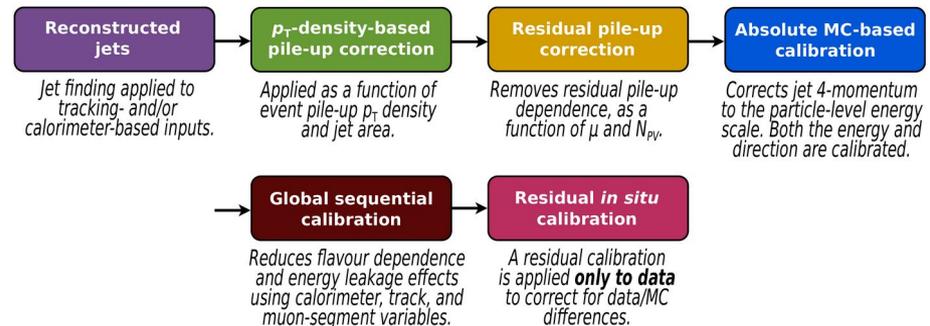




1. Jet reconstruction

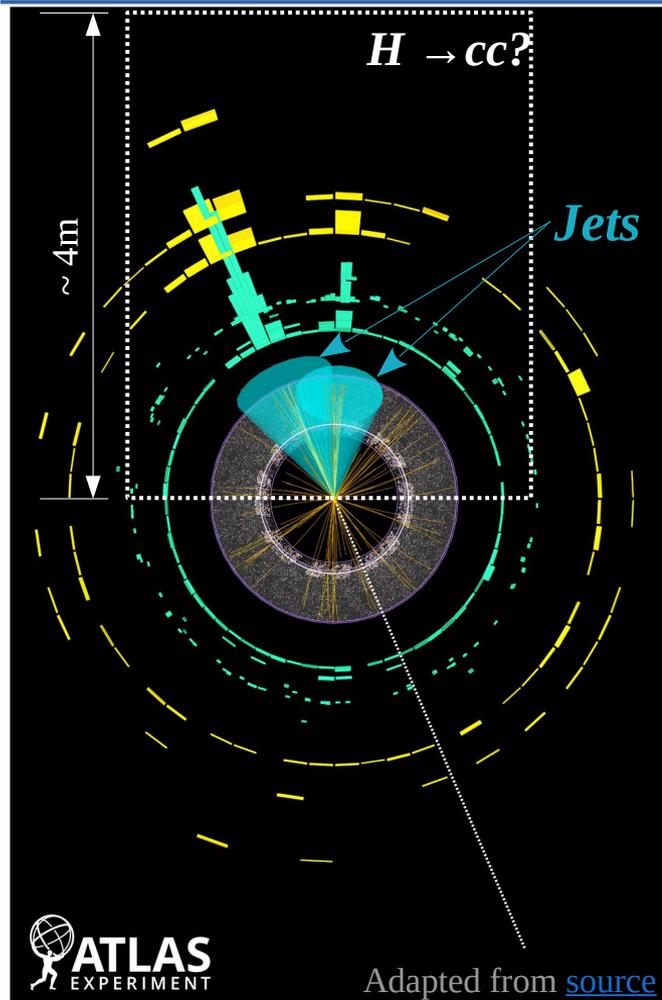


- Jet clustering algorithm: **anti- k_T** with radius-parameters $R = 0.4$
- Inputs: **Calorimeter energy clusters (EMTopo)**
- Calibration of the energy scale:



[Eur. Phys. J. C 81 \(2021\) 689](#)

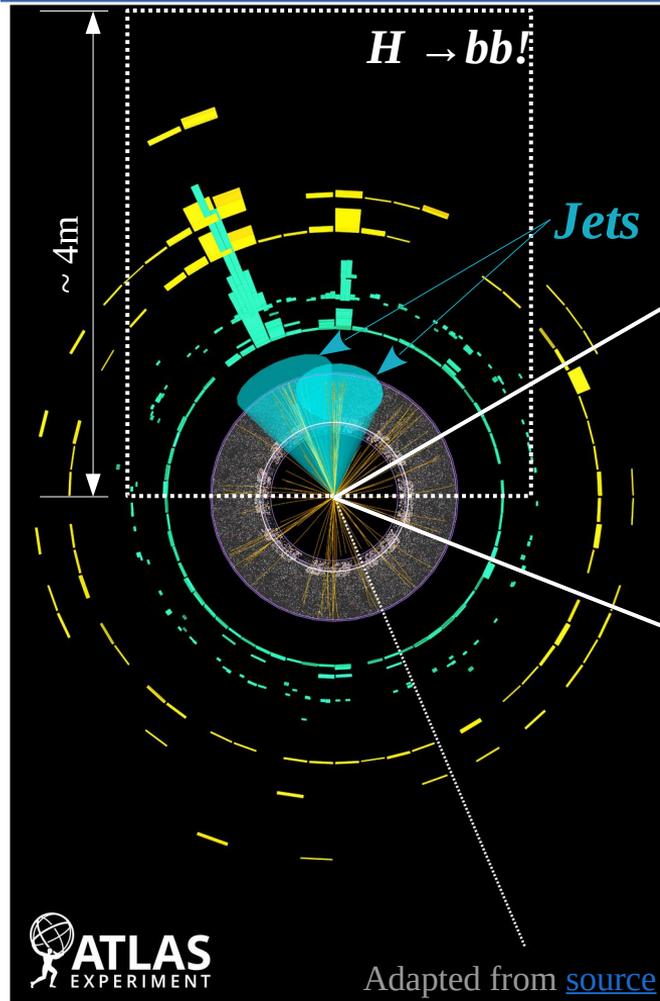
Challenge: how to identify $H \rightarrow cc$?



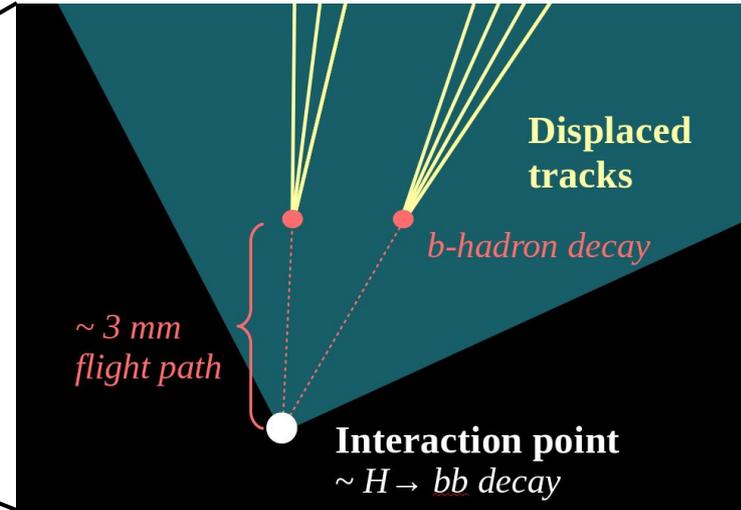
2. c-jet identification

Challenge: how to identify $H \rightarrow ee$ $H \rightarrow bb$?

2. e -jet b -jet identification



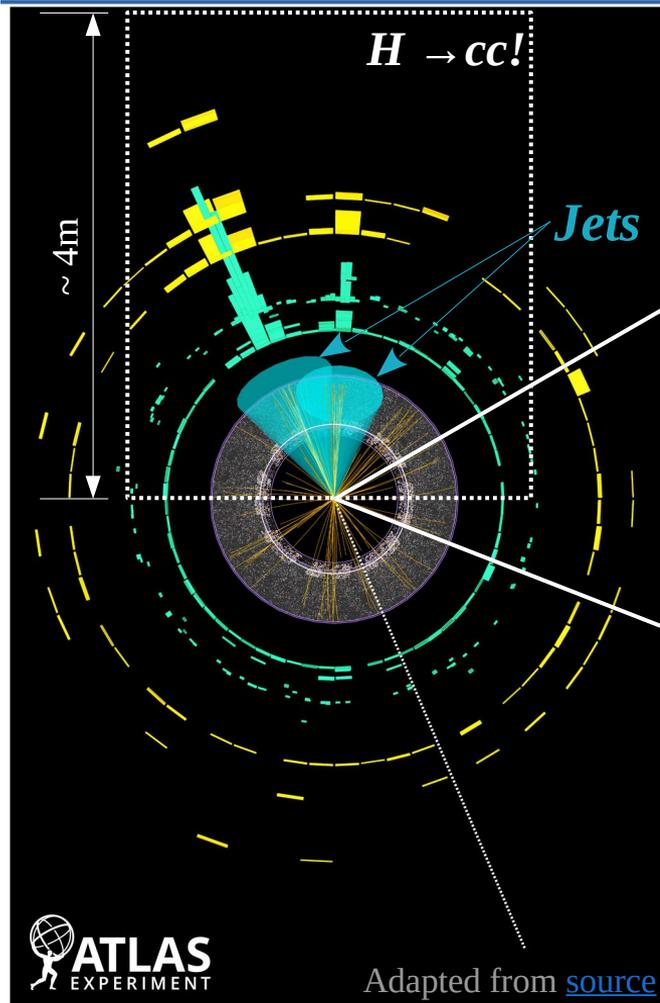
ZOOM



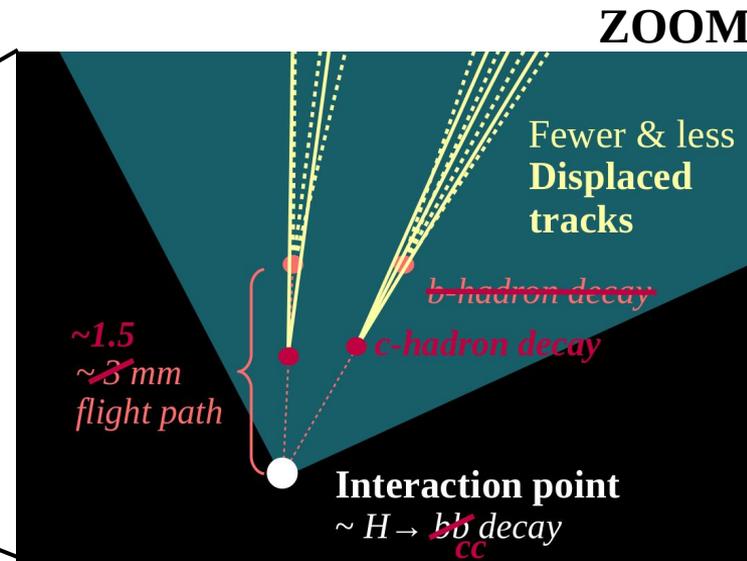
Identification of jets containing b -hadrons

- "b-tagging"

Challenge: how to identify $H \rightarrow cc$?



2. c -jet identification



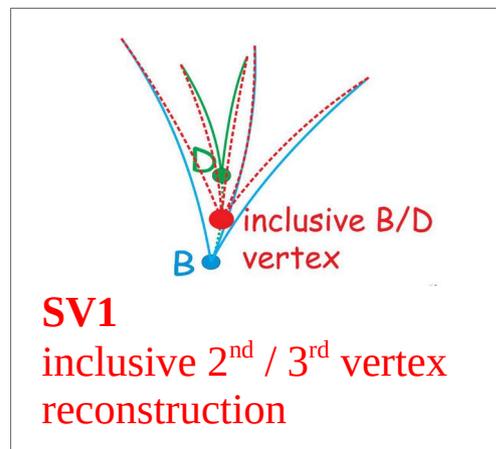
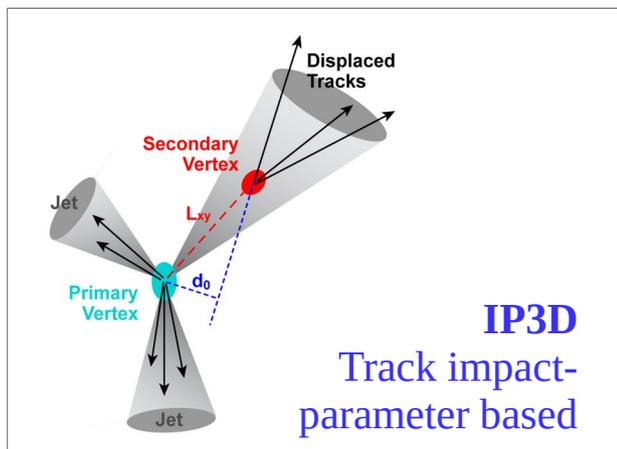
More challenging – hardly explored yet

Identification of jets containing c -hadrons

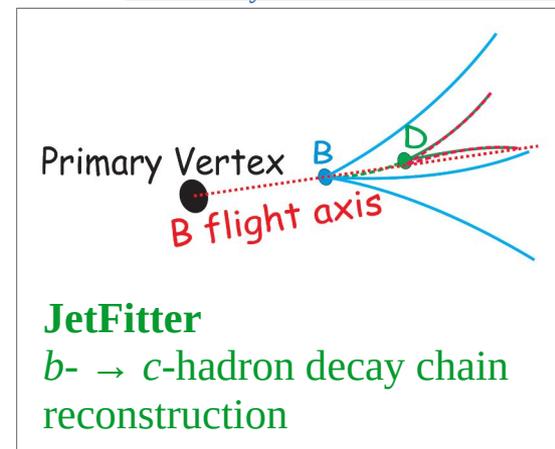
- “ c -tagging”

Current c-tagging strategy: use the algorithms developed for b-tagging, but train with c-jets as signal

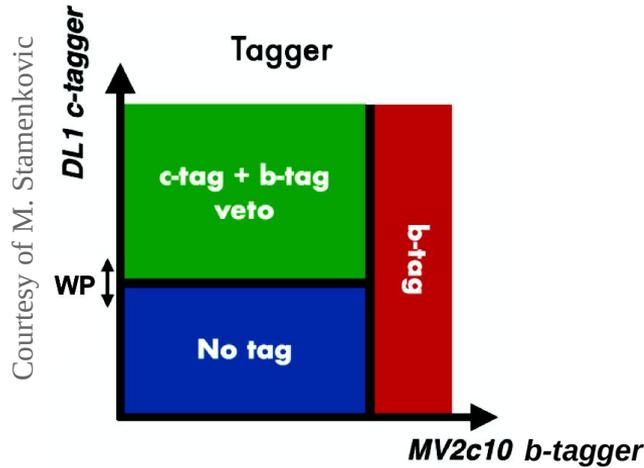
Selection of “low-level” b-tagging algorithms



[2008 J. Phys.: Conf. Ser. 119 032032](#)

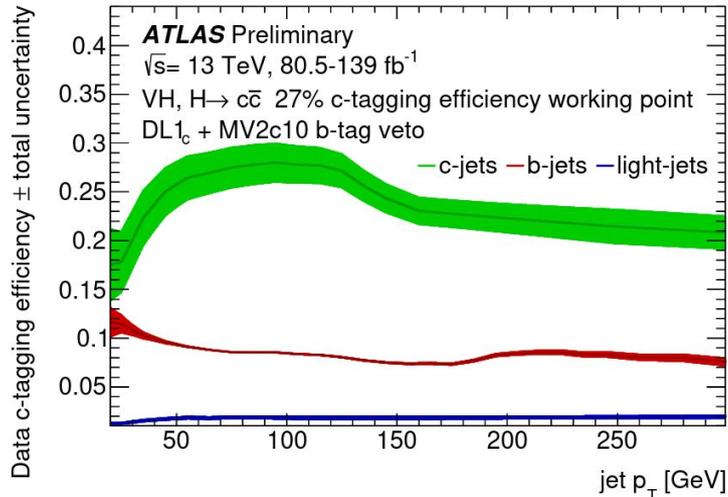


Multivariate analysis techniques used to combine low-level tagger output into final discriminants, e.g. **MV2c10** (BDT-based b-tagger), **DL1c** (DNN based c-tagger)



Dedicated c-tagging:

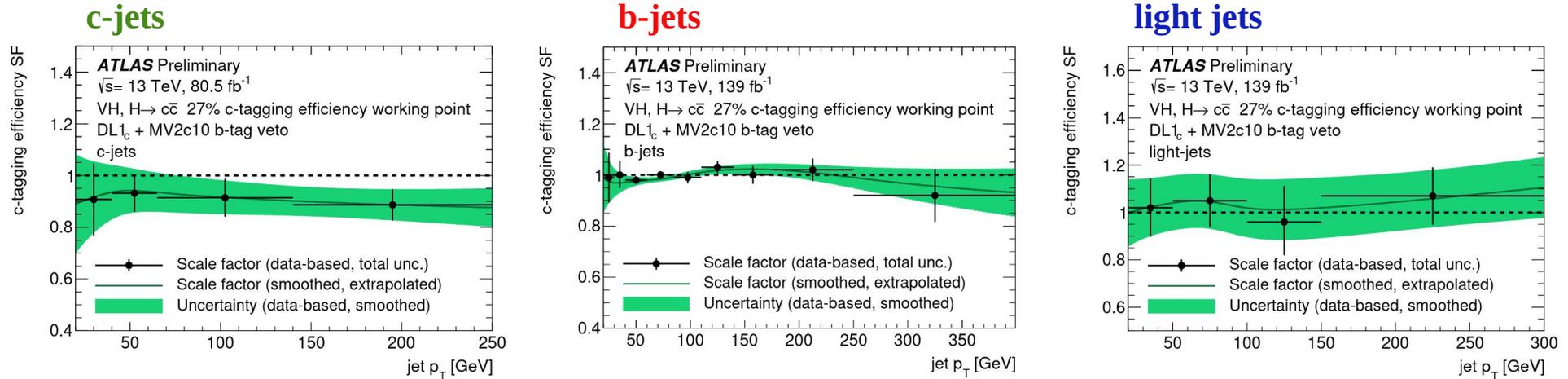
- i. Including b-tag veto \rightarrow orthogonality with $VH(\rightarrow bb)$
- ii. Optimised for $VH(\rightarrow cc)$ limit



	c-tag eff
c-jets	27%
b-jets	8%
l-jets	1.6%

(Average) performance (on $t\bar{t}b\bar{a}r$)

For comparison: a typical b-tagging algorithm achieves a b-jet efficiency of $\sim 70\%$ for similar c-/light jet mistag efficiencies!



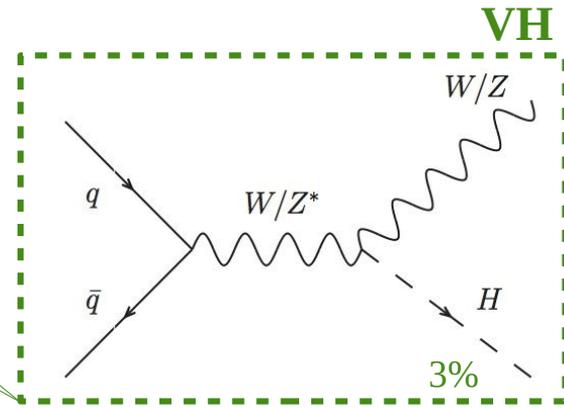
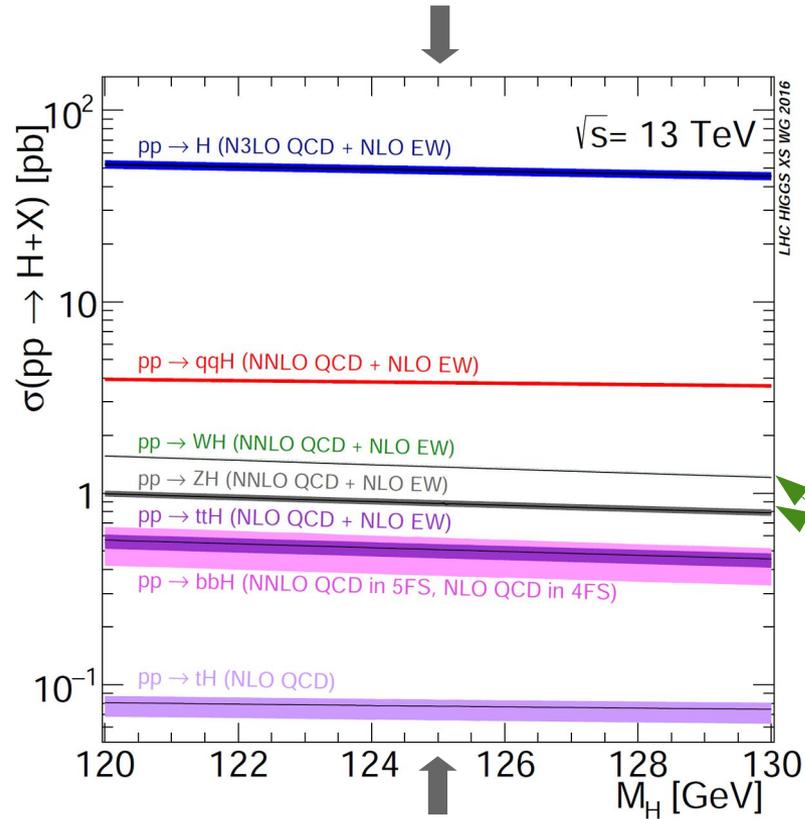
Dedicated calibrations for c -, b - and light-quark jets using “standard” b-tagging calibration methods^(*)

⇒ jet p_T and η dependent data-to-simulation scale factors (per parton shower)

⇒ uncertainties: at most 15%

^(*) [Eur. Phys. J. C79\(2019\) 970](#), [ATLAS-CONF-2018-001](#), [ATLAS-CONF-2018-006](#)

Why VH , $H \rightarrow cc$?

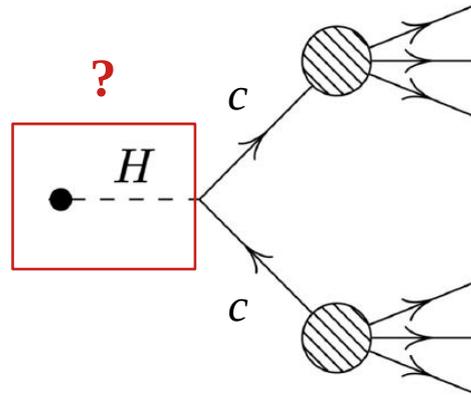


“the golden channel”

Challenge: $H \rightarrow cc$ at the LHC

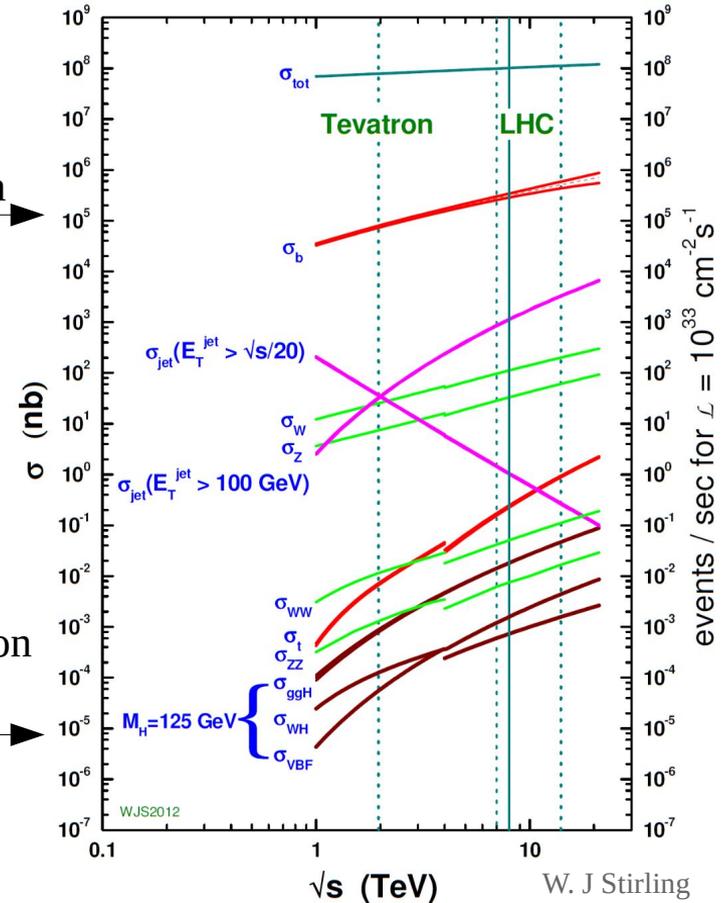
LHC: proton-proton collisions

Challenge: find a *pair of c-jets* in an overwhelming *multi-(c)-jet* background



quark/jet production
Higgs-boson production

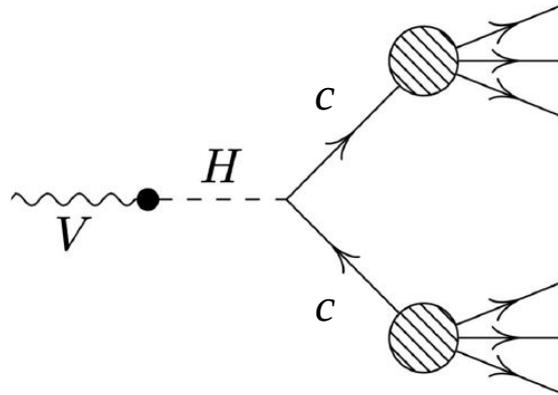
proton - (anti)proton cross sections



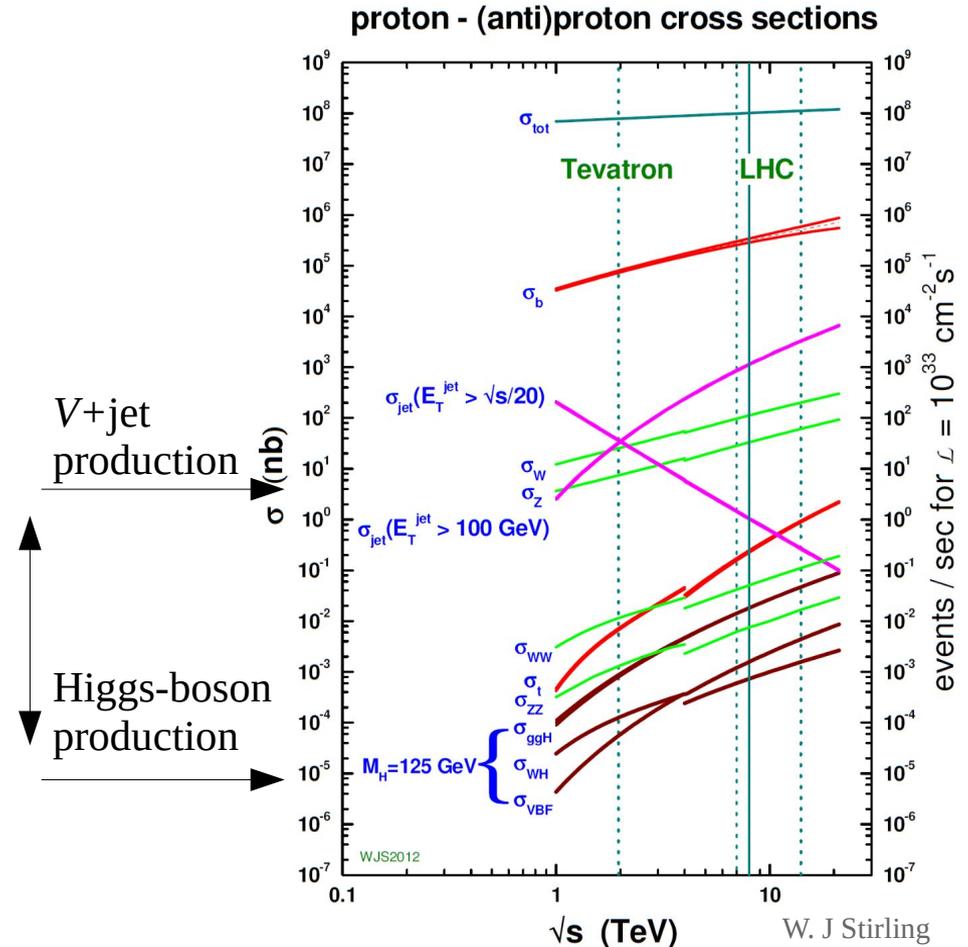
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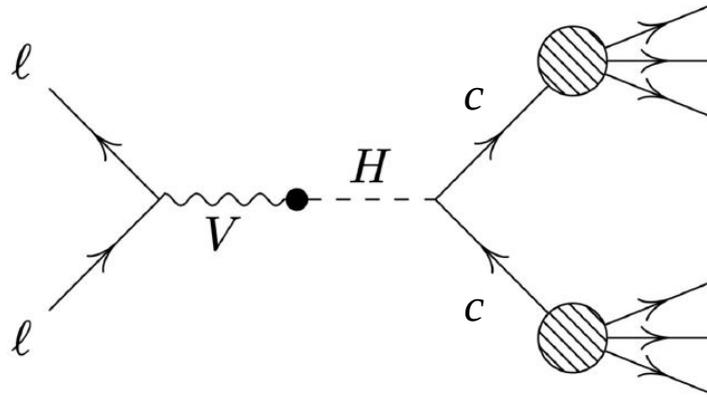
Solution: VH production



Challenge: $H \rightarrow cc$ at the LHC

LHC: proton-proton collisions

Challenge: find a pair of c -jets in an overwhelming multi- (c) -jet background

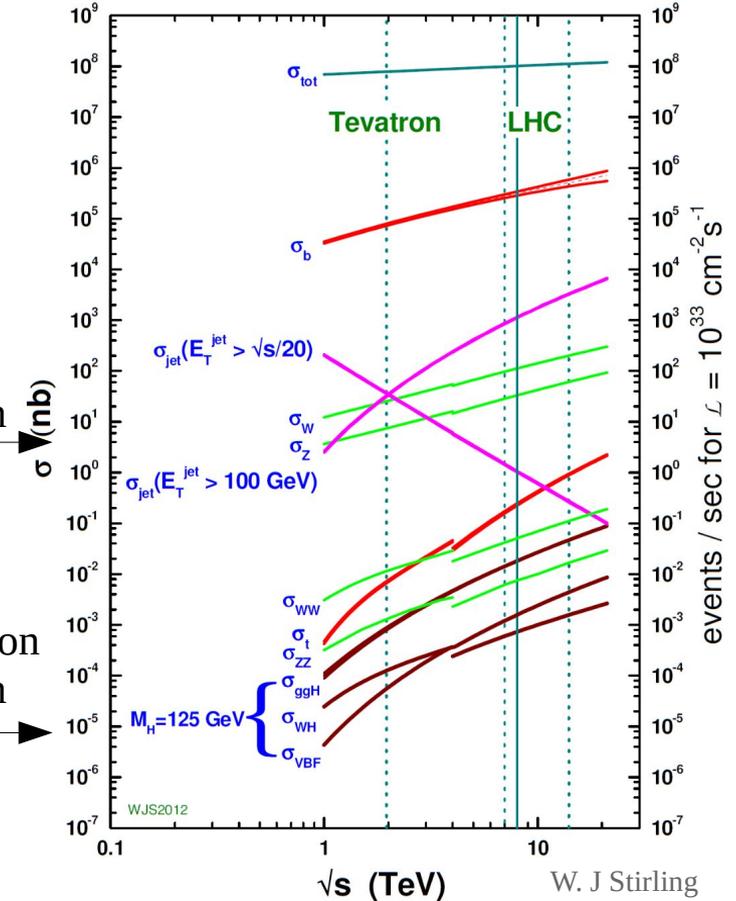


Solution: **VH production**
 + **leptonic V-boson decays**
 \Rightarrow background suppression + triggering

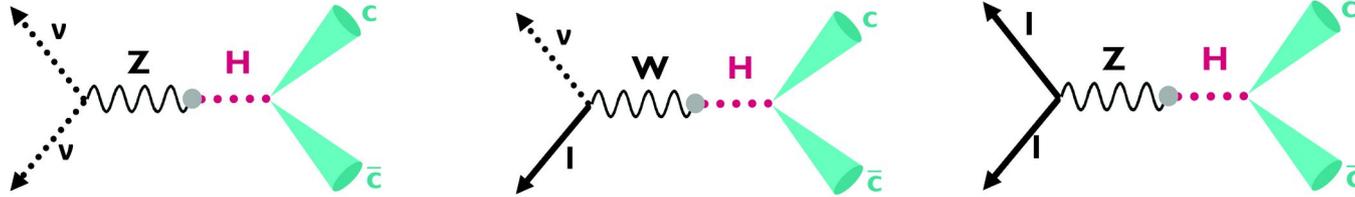
V+jet production

Higgs-boson production

proton - (anti)proton cross sections



Three lepton channels: 0/1/2L - according to number of reconstructed electrons/muons



Courtesy of M. Mironova

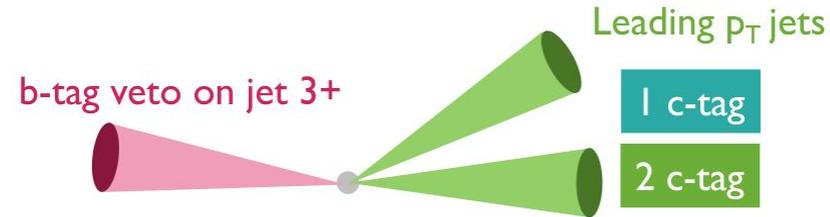
⇒ triggering: electrons, muons or large missing transverse momentum (E_{miss})

Cut-based analysis with $m(jj)$ as final discriminant

- $m(jj)$: invariant mass of the two p_T -leading jets

1 and 2 c-tag categories

- c-tag includes b-veto
 - b-tag veto on additional jets
- ⇒ Orthogonality to $VH(\rightarrow bb)$



Categorisation in $p_T(V)$ and # of jets ⇒ isolate regions with better $S/(\sqrt{B})$

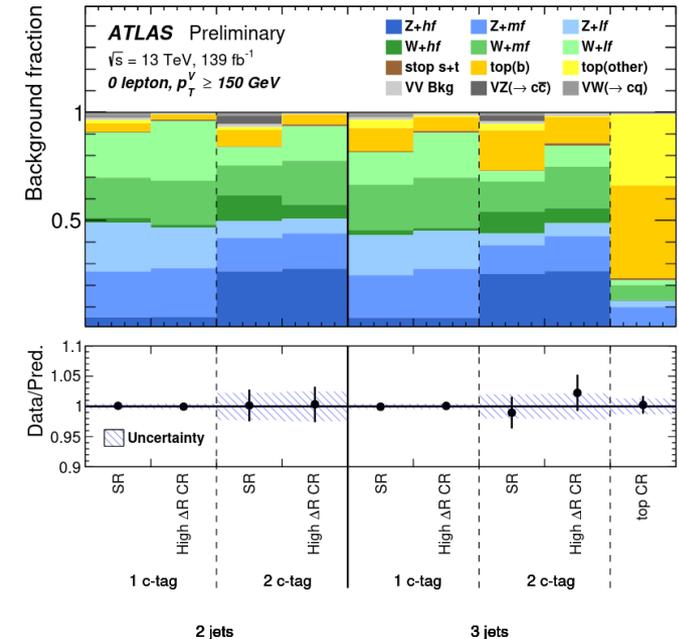
Background estimate

- From *simulation*
exception: multijet contribution in 1L (negligible in 0/2L (after selection))
- *Truth-flavour tagging* to maximise the statistical power of the samples
weight events with the probability of each jet to be c-tagged(+b-tag veto)
- **Systematic uncertainties** from comparisons to alternative samples or simulation settings (acceptances, shapes)
- **Various control regions in data** \Rightarrow determine normalisation and constrain modelling uncertainties

Profile likelihood fit to extract *three* signal strengths simultaneously:

- **$VH(\rightarrow cc)$**
- **$VW(\rightarrow cl)$, $VZ(\rightarrow cc)$** \leftarrow **cross-check signals** \Rightarrow validate analysis strategy

0-lepton channel



Large and diverse background contributions: **Z+jets**, **W+jets**, **top**

Control regions

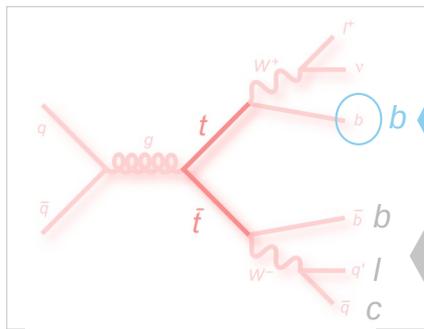
V+jets background ($V = W, Z$)

- $V+hf = V+cc/bb \Rightarrow$ **2 c-tag high- ΔR CR**
- $V+l \Rightarrow$ **0 c-tag “SR” – norm-only (1/2L)**
- $V+mf = \text{rest} \Rightarrow$ **1 c-tag high- ΔR CR**

Top background (0/1L) (*)

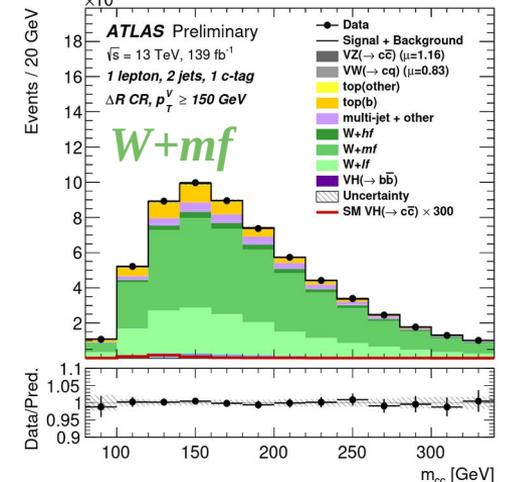
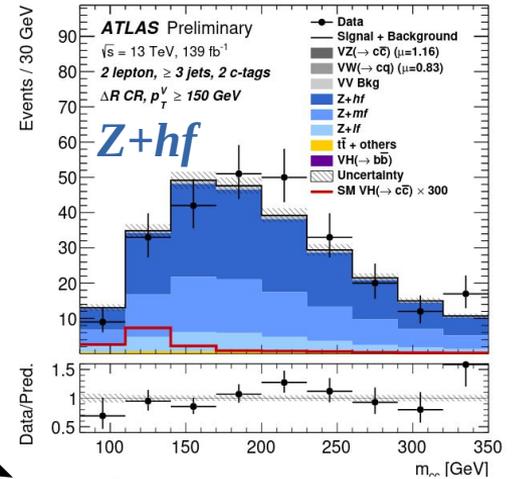
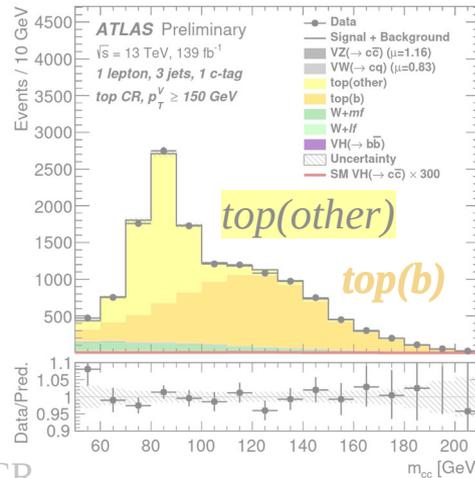
- $top(b)$: Higgs-candidate jets bx ; dominated by bc
- $top(other)$: rest; dominated by cl (from W)

\Rightarrow **top CR: inverted b-tag veto on 3rd jet**



Suppressed in SR,
enriched in CR

Higgs
candidate



(*) In 2L (very) small contribution \Rightarrow norm-only $e\mu$ $t\bar{t}b\bar{a}r$ CR

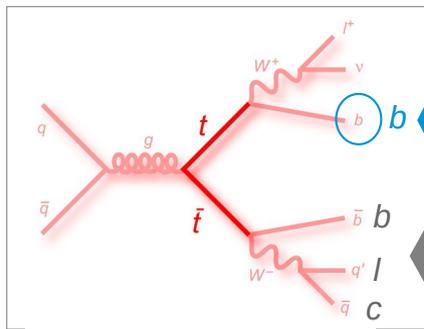
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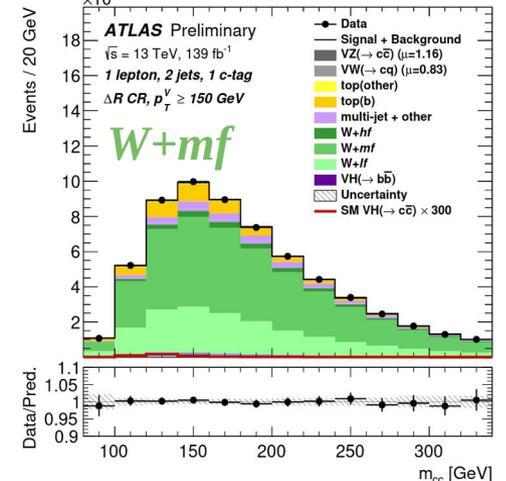
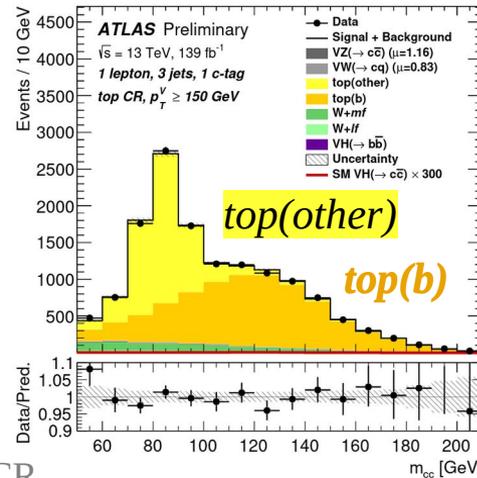
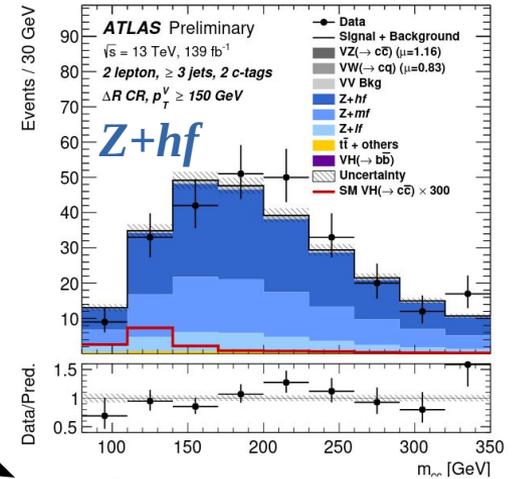
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Suppressed in SR, enriched in CR

Higgs candidate



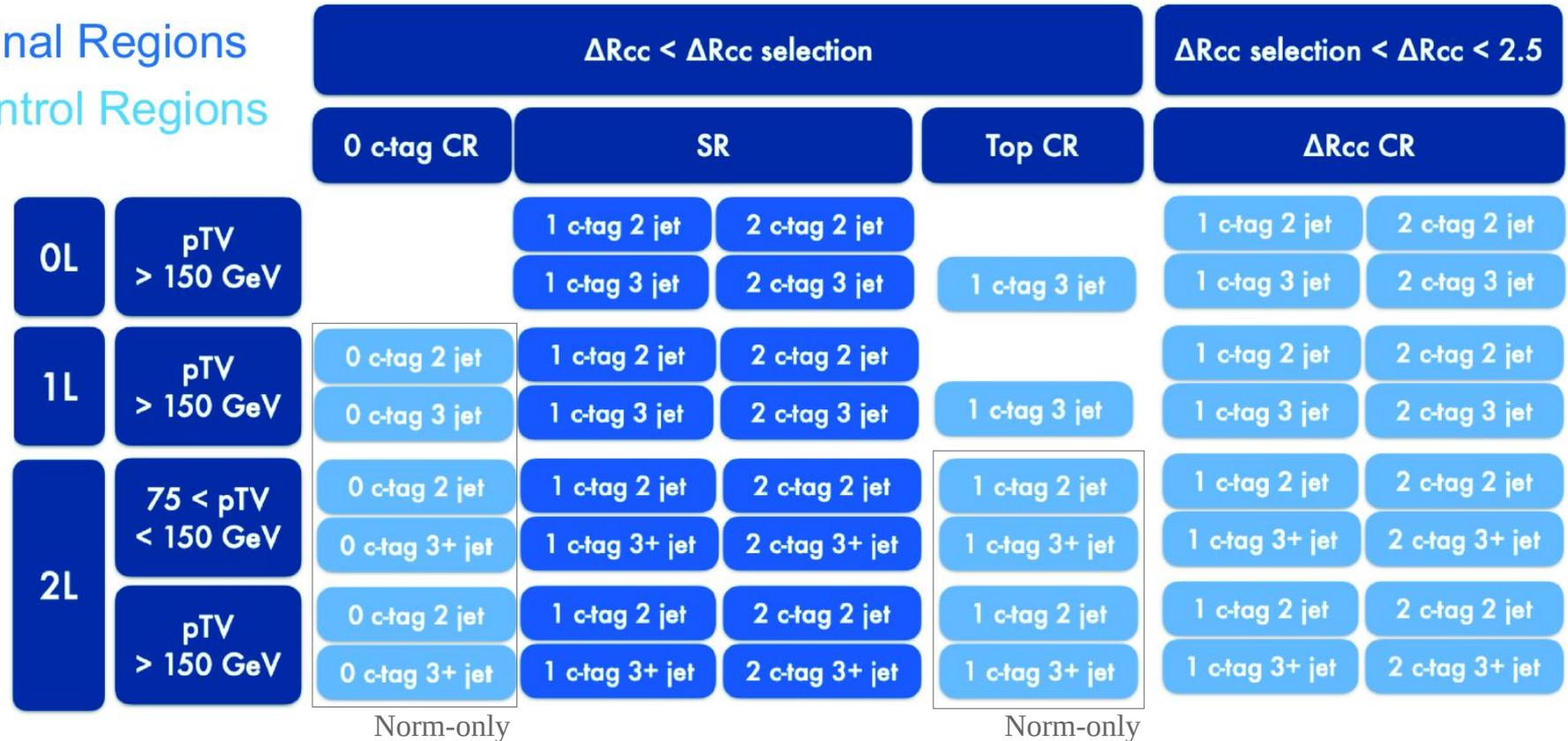
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Summary analysis regions

Courtesy of M. Mironova

16 Signal Regions

28 Control Regions



Summary analysis regions

Courtesy of M. Mironova

16 Signal Regions

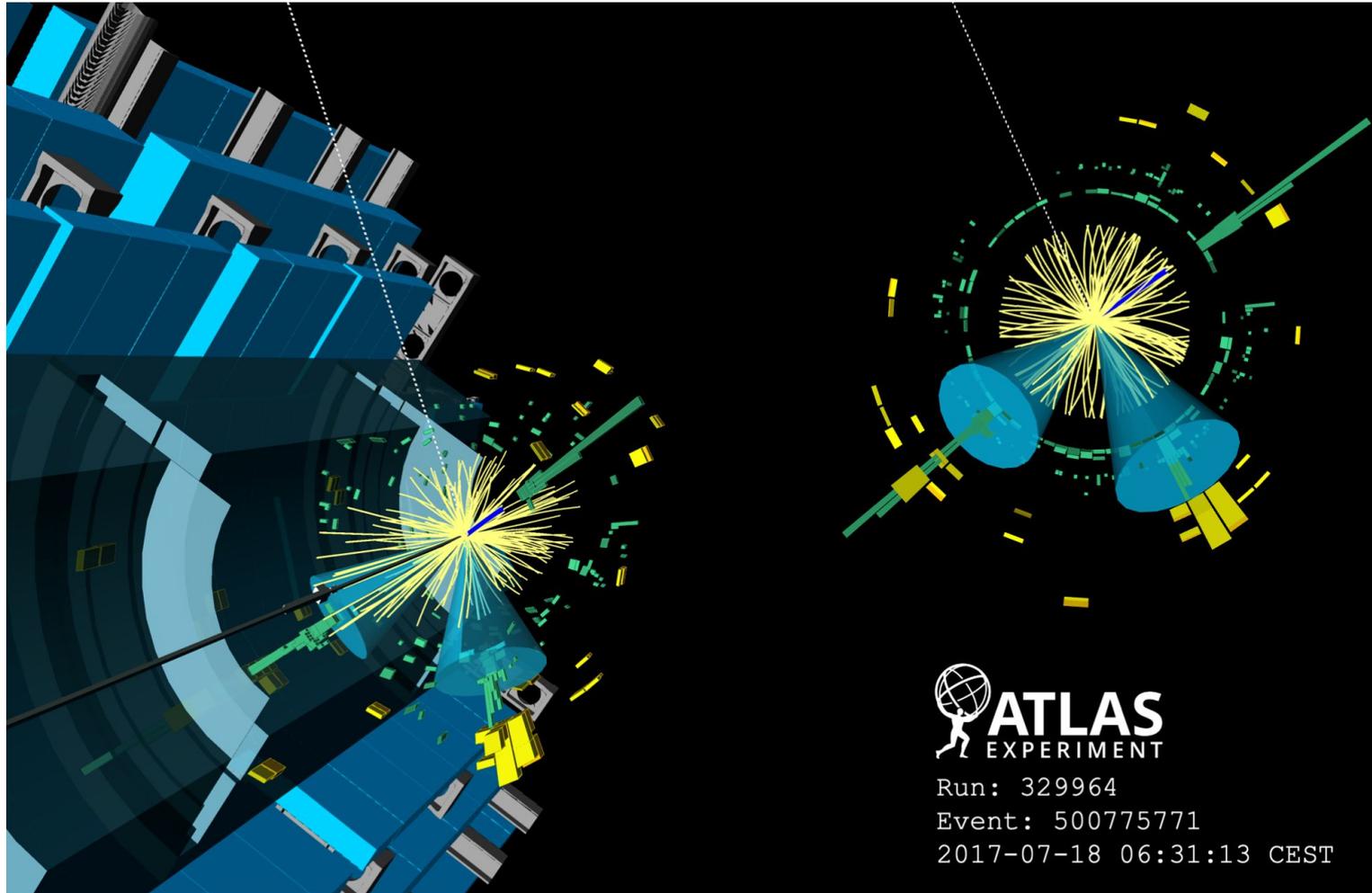
28 Control Regions

		$\Delta R_{cc} < \Delta R_{cc}$ selection				ΔR_{cc} selection $< \Delta R_{cc} < 2.5$		
		0 c-tag CR	SR		Top CR	ΔR_{cc} CR		
0L	pTV > 150 GeV		10	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet	1	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet
			7	1 c-tag 3 jet	2 c-tag 3 jet	0.7	1 c-tag 3 jet	2 c-tag 3 jet
1L	pTV > 150 GeV	0 c-tag	7	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet	0.9	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet
		0 c-tag	5	1 c-tag 3 jet	2 c-tag 3 jet	0.6	1 c-tag 3 jet	2 c-tag 3 jet
2L	75 < pTV < 150 GeV	0 c-tag	3	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet	0.3	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet
		0 c-tag	3	1 c-tag 3+ jet	2 c-tag 3+ jet	0.3	1 c-tag 3+ jet	2 c-tag 3+ jet
	pTV > 150 GeV	0 c-tag	1.5	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet	0.2	1 c-tag 2 jet	2 c-tag 2 jet
		0 c-tag	2	1 c-tag 3+ jet	2 c-tag 3+ jet	0.2	1 c-tag 3+ jet	2 c-tag 3+ jet

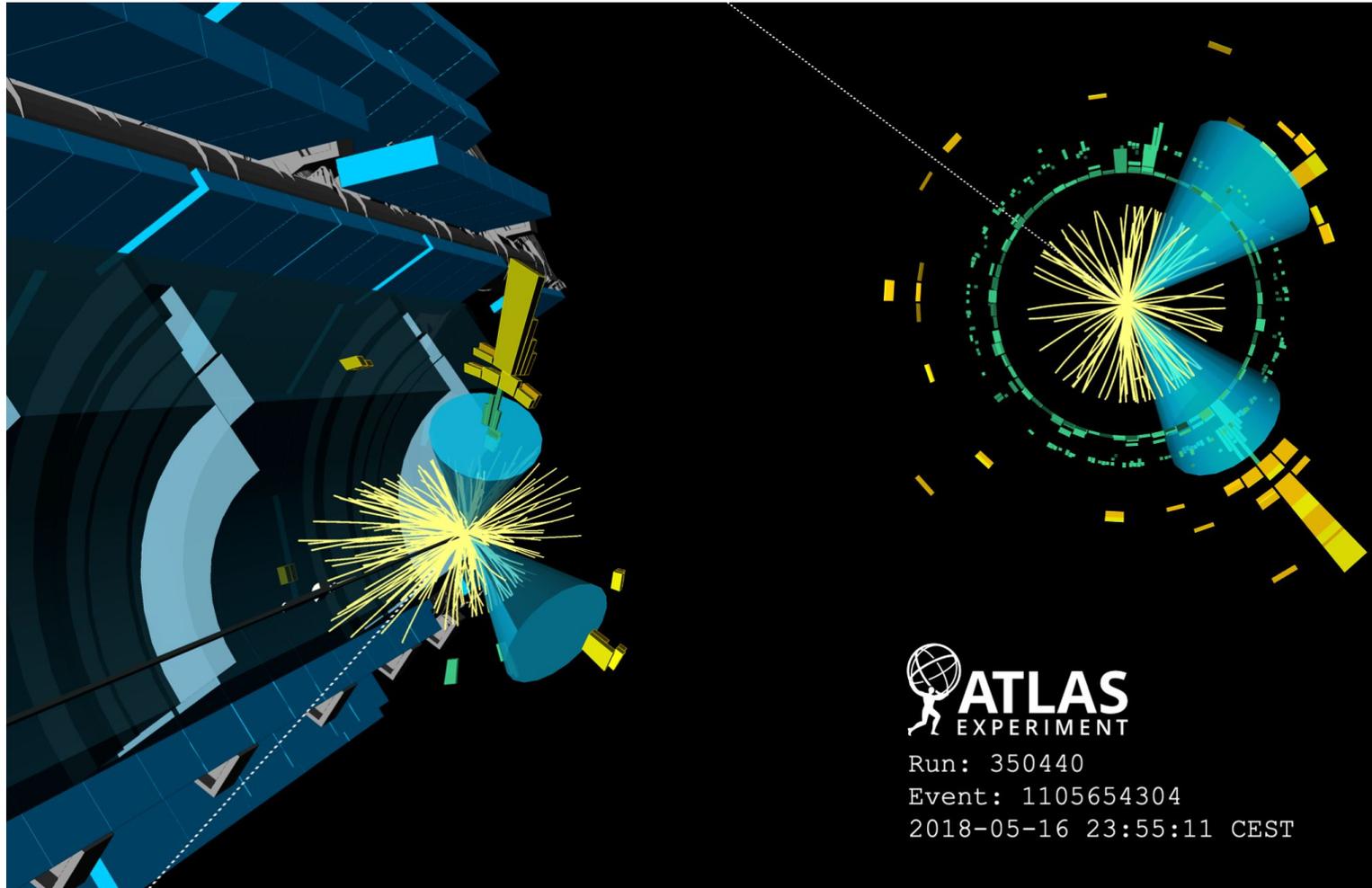
Norm-only

Norm-only

VH(cc) events expected (in the SM)

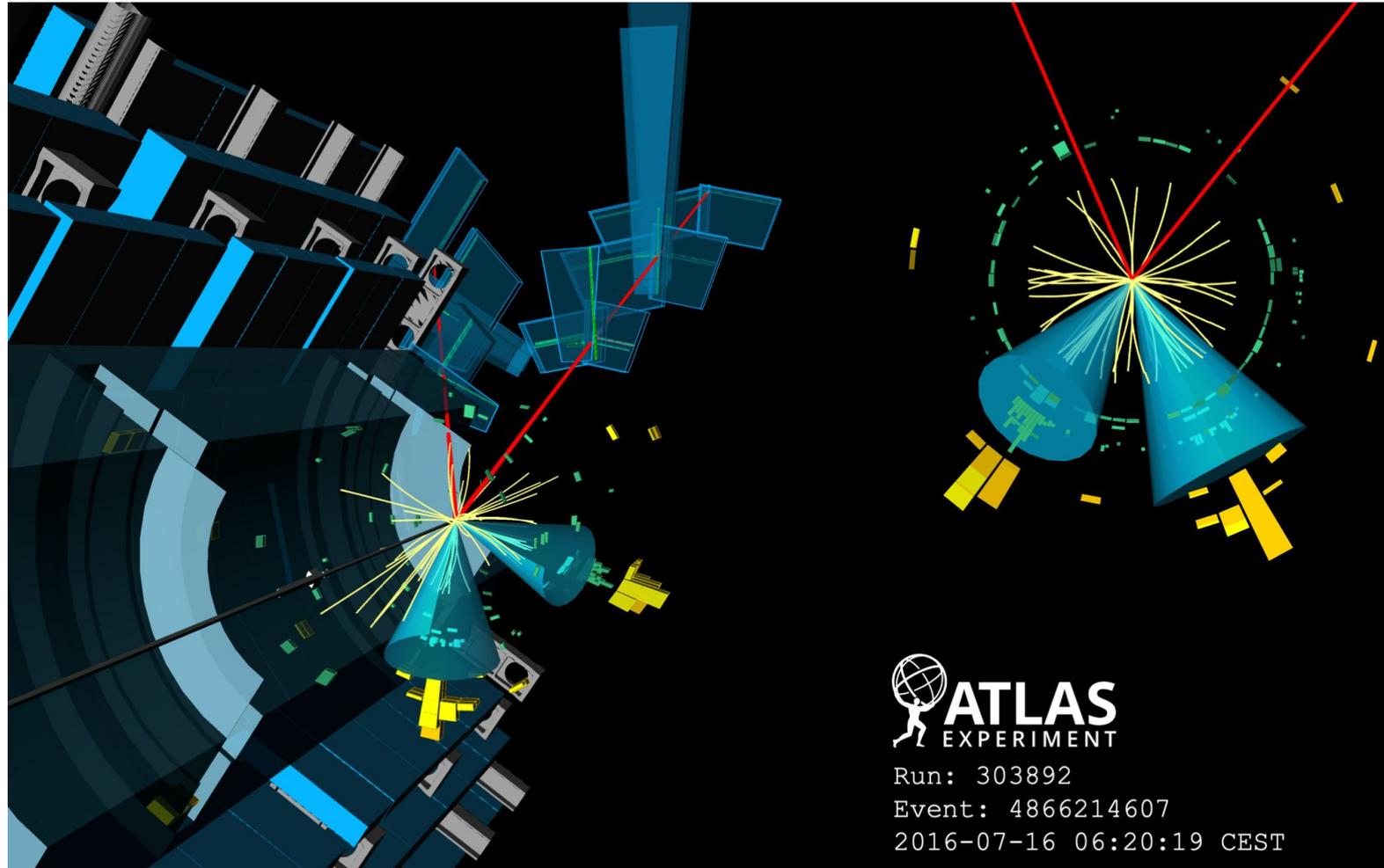


Candidate event display: 1L

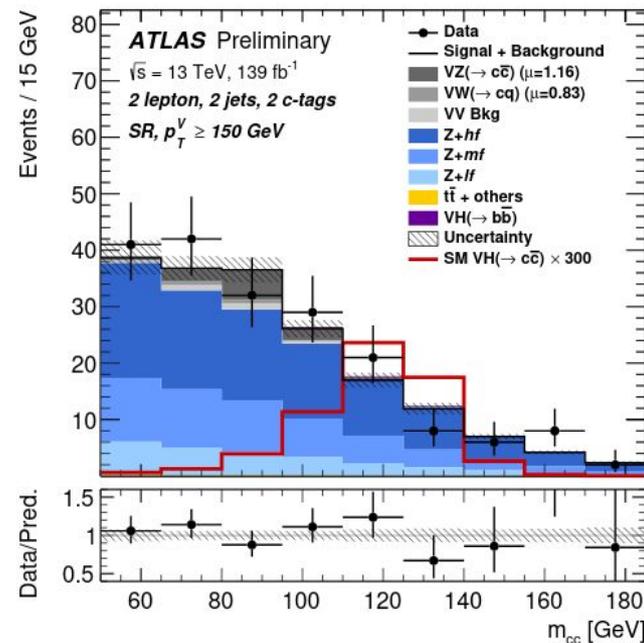
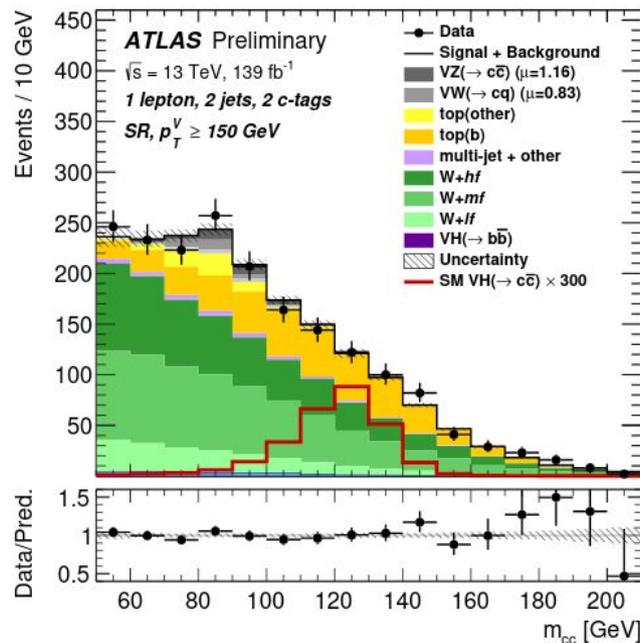
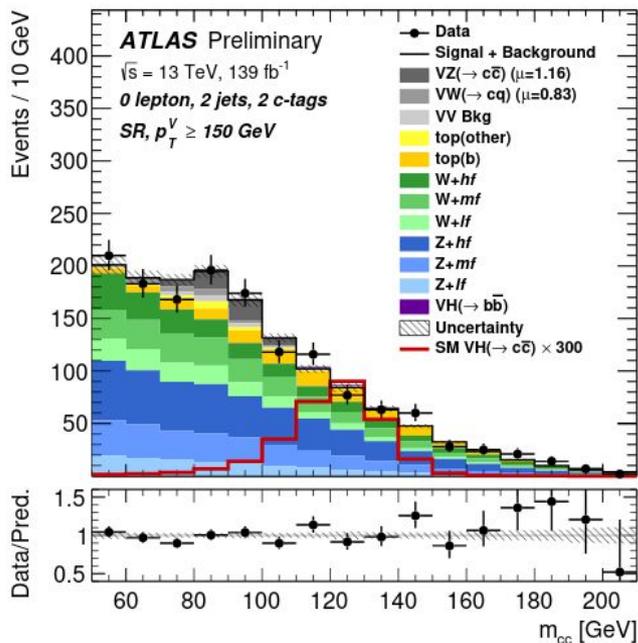


2 c-tag
 $m(cc) = 124 \text{ GeV}$

Candidate event display: 2L

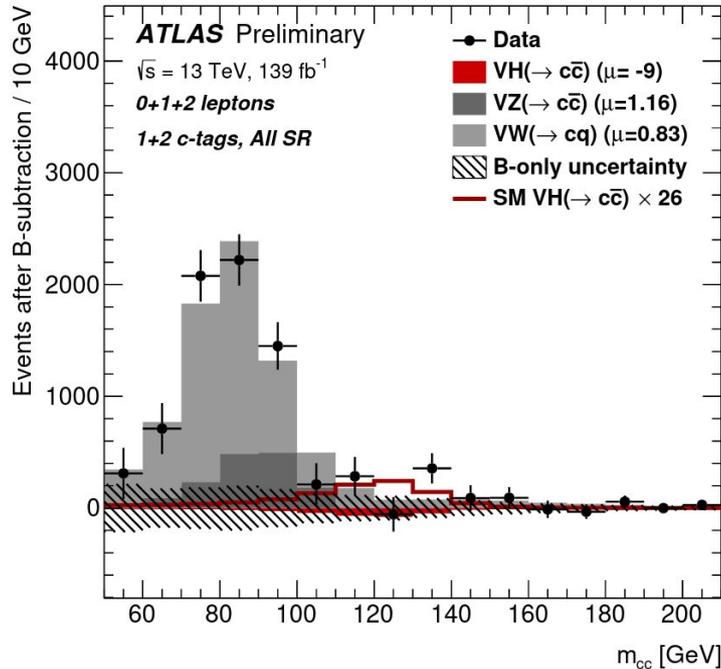


2 c-tag, high $p_T(V)$
 $m(cc) = 123 \text{ GeV}$

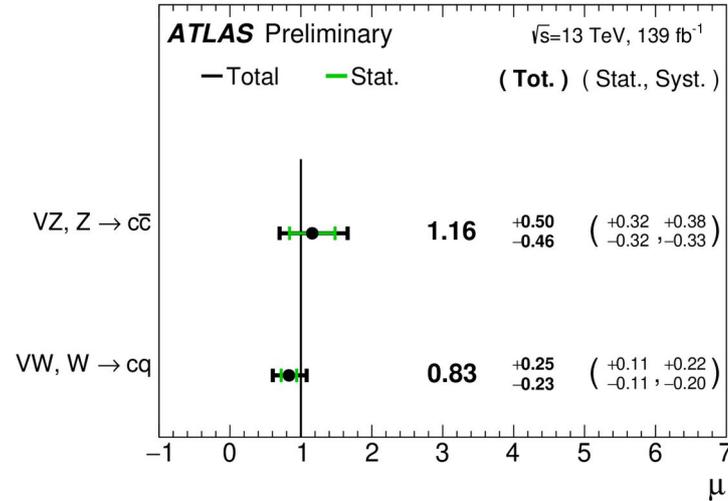


Most sensitive signal regions

Expected signal $\times 300$



Signal strength $\mu = \frac{\sigma \times BR}{\sigma_{SM} \times BR_{SM}}$



Obs. (exp.) significance:

2.6 (2.2) σ

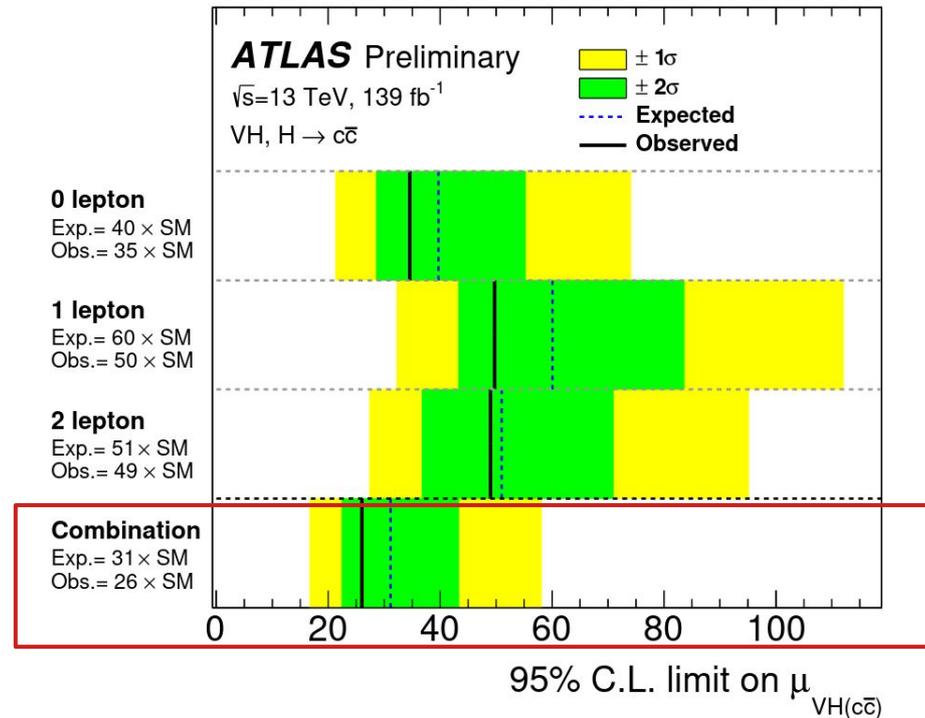
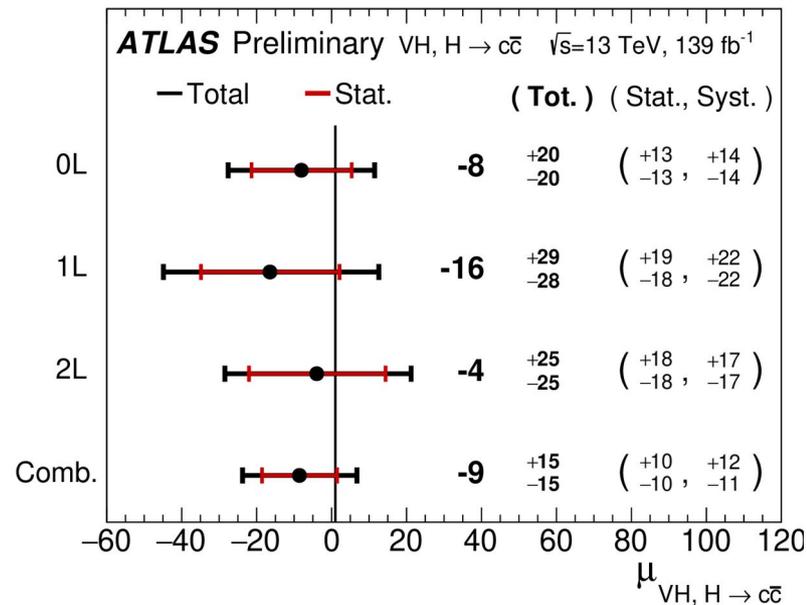
3.8 (4.6) σ

$\mu_{V(H \rightarrow cc)} = -9 \pm 10 \text{ (stat.)} \pm 12 \text{ (syst.)}$

Compatibility with the SM: 84%

First “measurement” of VW/VZ using c-tagging

Good agreement with SM prediction
 \Rightarrow validation of VH($\rightarrow cc$) search strategy



Individual channel results from POI decorrelation (i.e. otherwise fit model unchanged)

- Good agreement between channels
- 0L most sensitive channel (high stat. + bkg. Control from 1/2L)

Most stringent limit on $H \rightarrow cc$ to date!

Source of uncertainty	$\mu_{VH}(c\bar{c})$	
Total	15.3	
Statistical	10.0	
Systematics	11.5	
Statistical uncertainties		
Data statistics only	7.8	
Floating normalisations	5.1	
Theoretical and modelling uncertainties		
$VH(\rightarrow c\bar{c})$	2.1	
Z+jets	7.0	
Top-quark	3.9	
W+jets	3.0	
Diboson	1.0	
$VH(\rightarrow b\bar{b})$	0.8	
Multi-Jet	1.0	
Simulation statistics	4.2	
Experimental uncertainties		
Jets	2.8	
Leptons	0.5	
E_T^{miss}	0.2	
Pile-up and luminosity	0.3	
Flavour tagging	c-jets	1.6
	b-jets	1.1
	light-jets	0.4
	τ -jets	0.3
Truth-flavour tagging	ΔR correction	3.3
	Residual non-closure	1.7

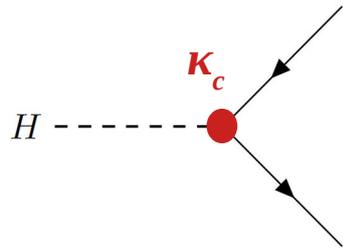
Statistical and systematic uncertainties are of the same order

Uncertainties on the free-floating background normalisations are considered statistical unc.

Dominant systematic uncertainty: Z+jets modelling

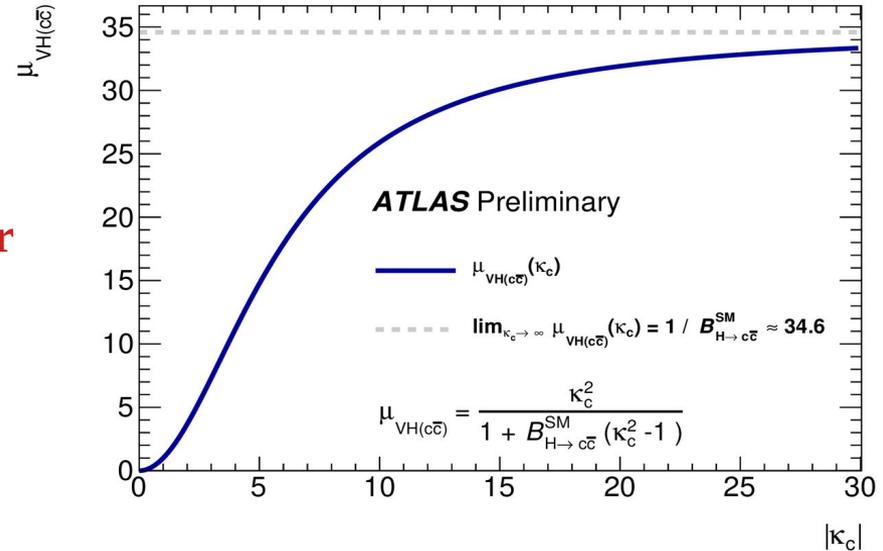
Followed by uncertainties related to the **limited simulated sample sizes**

κ framework \Rightarrow study potential BSM modifications of the Higgs-boson coupling *strength*



Higgs-charm coupling modifier

$\kappa_c = 1$ in SM

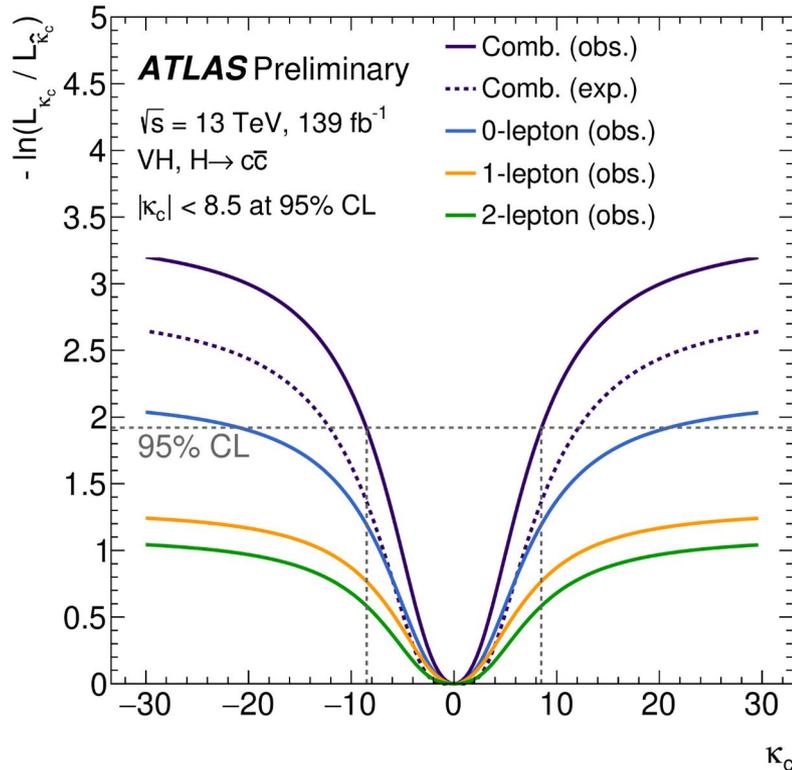


- Modification of the partial decay width by κ_c^2
- Modification of the total Higgs-boson total width, assuming
 - Only decays to SM particles
 - All other coupling-strength modifiers are 1

$$\mu_{VH(c\bar{c})}(\kappa_c) = \frac{\kappa_c^2}{1 + B_{H \rightarrow c\bar{c}}^{\text{SM}} (\kappa_c^2 - 1)}$$

Parametrisation

Neglect modifications to the production because no ggZH parametrisation incl. κ_c is available



Best fit value: $\kappa_c = 0$ (because of negative $\mu_{V(H \rightarrow cc)}$)

First direct constraint on κ_c !

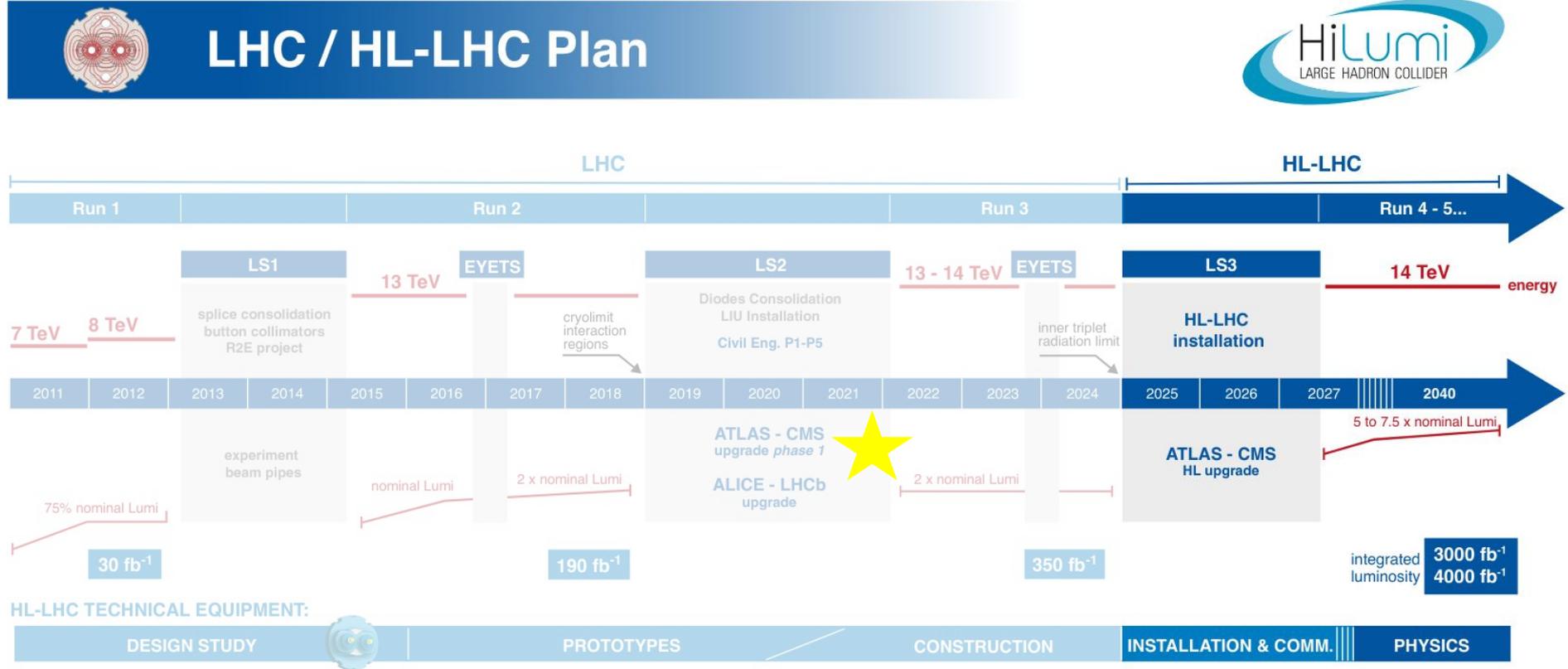
@68% CL: $|\kappa_c| < 3.5$ (4.9) obs. (exp.)

@95% CL: $|\kappa_c| < 8.5$ (12.3) obs. (exp.)

$VH(\rightarrow cc)$ @ the HL-LHC

The High-Luminosity LHC (HL-LHC)

★ We're here



Source

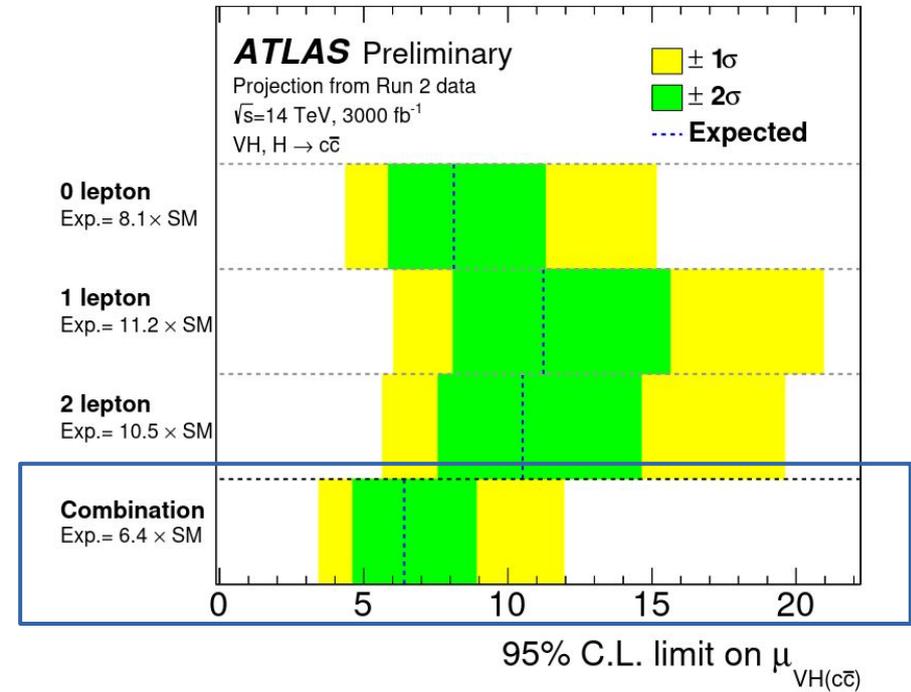
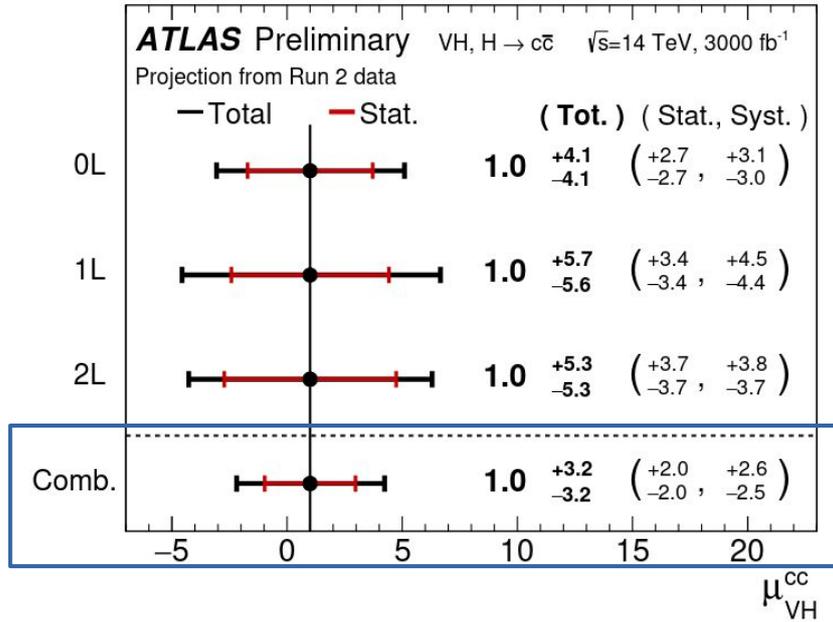
Assumptions for the extrapolation of the full Run-2 analysis

- Luminosity increase: $\times \sim 22$
- Flat CoM cross-section scaling: $\times 1.10-1.18$ \longrightarrow
- **Reduction of most systematic uncertainties by 50%**

Uncertainties	Scale Factor
E_T^{miss}	0.5
Lepton	1
Jet	1
Flavour tagging c -, b - and τ -jets	0.5
Flavour tagging light-jets (MV2c10 in $VH(bb)$)	0.5
Flavour tagging light-jets (DL1 in $VH(cc)$)	1.0
Luminosity	0.58
Signal modelling	0.5
Background modelling	0.5
MC statistics	0
Truth-tagging uncertainties ($VH, H \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ only)	0

$qq \rightarrow WH (H \rightarrow c\bar{c}/b\bar{b})$	1.10
$qq \rightarrow ZH (H \rightarrow c\bar{c}/b\bar{b})$	1.11
$gg \rightarrow ZH (H \rightarrow c\bar{c}/b\bar{b})$	1.18
$t\bar{t}$	1.16
$gg \rightarrow ZZ$	
$qq \rightarrow VV$	
V+jets	1.10
single top	

- **Uncertainties due to limited simulated sample sizes: negligible (!)**



\Rightarrow **systematic uncertainties are of similar size** on the combined signal

\Rightarrow **systematic uncertainties dominating in 0/1L**

0L remains the most sensitive channel

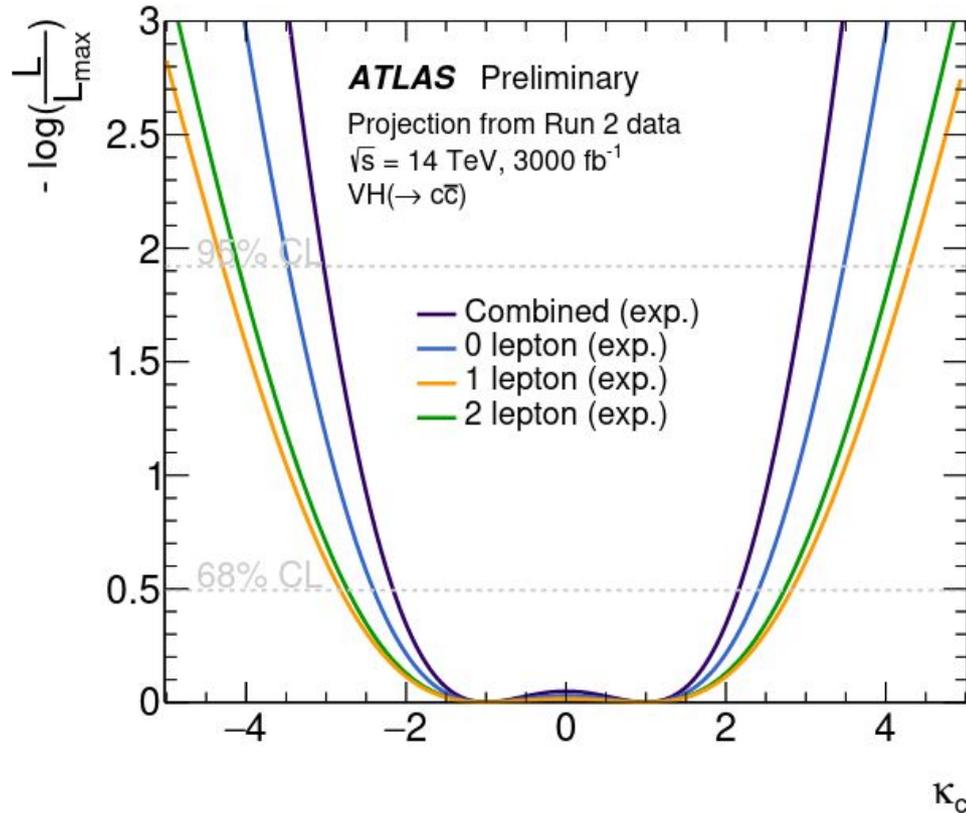
Source of uncertainty	$\Delta\mu_{VH}^{c\bar{c}}$	
Total	3.21	
Statistical	1.97	
Systematics	2.53	
Statistical uncertainties		
Data statistics only	1.59	
Floating normalisations	0.95	
Theoretical and modelling uncertainties		
$VH, H \rightarrow c\bar{c}$	0.27	
Z+jets	1.77	
Top-quark	0.96	
W+jets	0.84	
Diboson	0.34	
$VH, H \rightarrow b\bar{b}$	0.29	
Multi-Jet	0.09	
Experimental uncertainties		
Jets	0.59	
Leptons	0.20	
E_T^{miss}	0.18	
Pile-up and luminosity	0.19	
Flavour tagging	c-jets	0.61
	b-jets	0.16
	light-jets	0.51
	τ -jets	0.19

← **single largest contribution**

Alternative scenarios \Rightarrow impact on expected limit

- **Signal/background modelling unc. $\times 2/0.5$: $-/+10\%$**
($\times 2$: no improvement wrt. Run-2)
- Including truth-flavour tagging unc.: - 4%
- Including MC statistical unc. - assuming they improve as the luminosity: - 5%
- **Improved b-(light)-jet rejections** by $\times 1.5$ (3) thanks to the inner detector upgrade (ITk): **+10-15%**
(With the same DL1c tagger)

Preliminary!



Expected constraints:

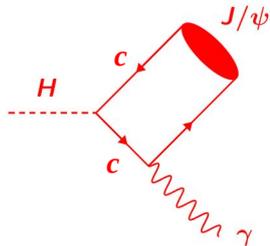
@68% CL: $|\kappa_c| < 2.2$

@95% CL: $|\kappa_c| < 3.0$

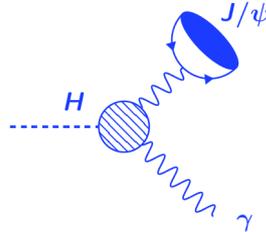
Complementary approaches (attempts?) to constrain the Higgs-charm coupling

Exclusive $H \rightarrow J/\Psi \gamma$ decays

- First proposed in [arXiv:1505.03870](https://arxiv.org/abs/1505.03870); BR $\sim O(10^{-6})$
- Pro: does not require c-tagging; sensitive to **sign and magnitude of κ_c**
- Cons: **destructive interference** of two amplitudes:



$H \rightarrow cc$: sensitive κ_c



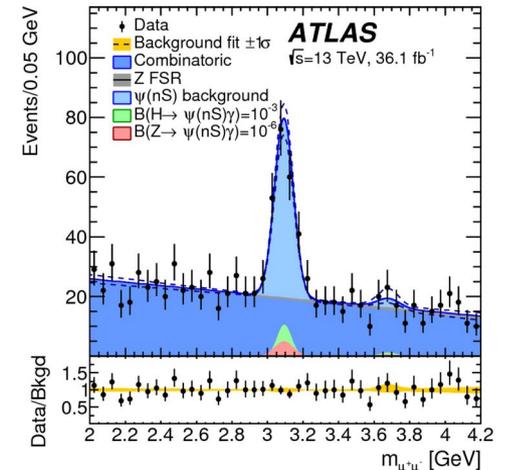
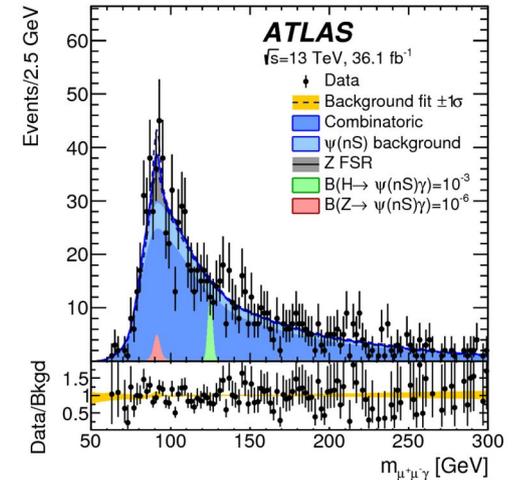
$H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$: dominant ($\times 10$ larger)

From A. Chisholm

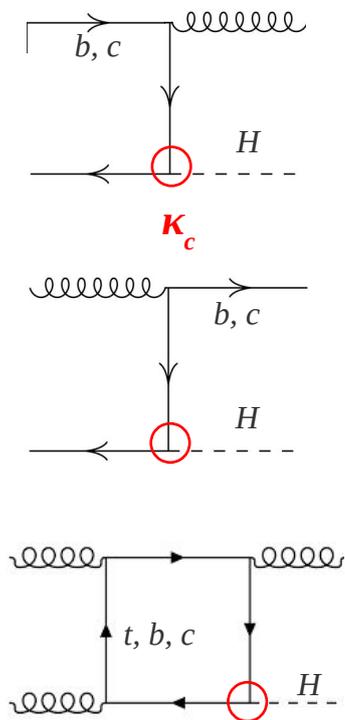
→ Sensitivity to κ_c diluted

Search pioneered by ATLAS in Run 1; updated measurement on partial Run-2 dataset

- **Obs. (exp.) upper limit on BR($H \rightarrow J/\Psi \gamma$) @95% C.L.: 117 (100) \times SM**
- **No κ_c interpretation**



$p_T(H)$ spectrum



First proposed in [Phys. Rev. Lett. 118 \(2017\) 121801](#)

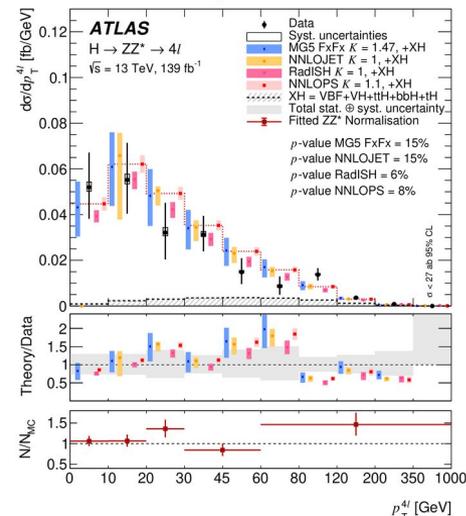
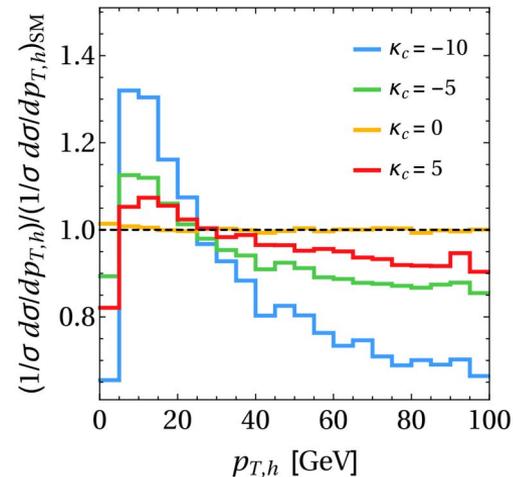
- The $p_T(H)$ spectrum is sensitive to modifications of the *sign and magnitude* of κ_c (and κ_b) in the **production**
 - Pro: does not require c -tagging
 - Cons: indirect (more assumptions)

Approach applied to full Run-2 $p_T(H)$ **differential cross-section measurements** in

- $H \rightarrow ZZ^* \rightarrow 4l$ [[Eur. Phys. J. C 80 \(2020\) 942](#)]
- $H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ [[ATLAS-CONF-2019-029](#)]

$\Rightarrow \kappa_c$ interpretation (simultaneously with κ_b)

(Same assumptions as before: only decays to SM particles are allowed, all other $\kappa = 1$)

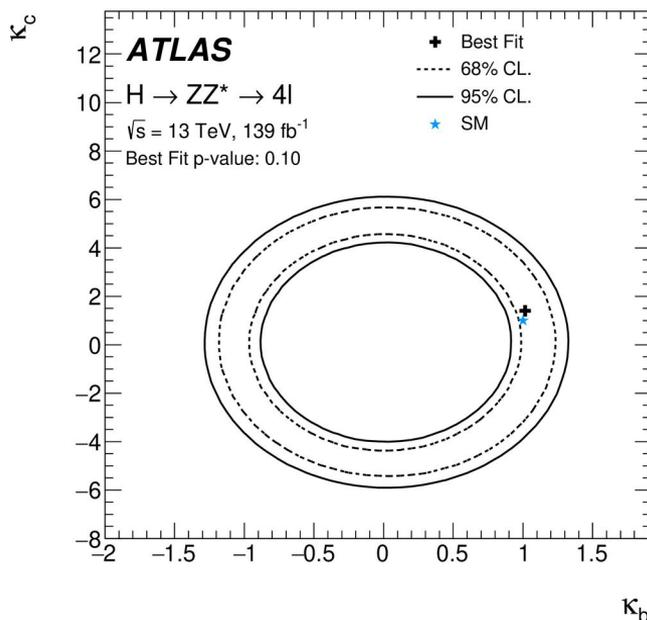


Increasing model-dependence
↓
Improving constraint

Interpretation	Parameter best fit value	95% Confidence Interval
Modifications to only $p_T^{4\ell}$ shape	$\kappa_c = -1.1$	$[-11.7, 10.5]$
	$\kappa_b = 0.28$	$[-3.21, 4.50]$
Modifications to $p_T^{4\ell}$ predictions	$\kappa_c = 0.66$	$[-7.46, 9.27]$
	$\kappa_b = 0.55$	$[-1.82, 3.34]$

Modifications affecting

...only the production



...the production and the total width ($\rightarrow BR$)

Reminder

$V(H \rightarrow cc) [\kappa_b = 1]$
 @95% CL: $|\kappa_c| < 8.5$ (12.3) obs. (exp.)

Direct and indirect constraints are comparable!

Detailed comparison difficult

- Studying Higgs-charm coupling is among the most important open tasks in current Higgs physics
- Most promising approach to **directly probe the charm-Yukawa coupling** at the LHC: $VH(\rightarrow cc)$
- ATLAS' full Run-2 $VH(\rightarrow cc)$ search provides
 - **Most stringent limit on $H \rightarrow cc$ to date**
 - **First direct constraint on charm-Yukawa coupling**
 - 'Measurement' of VW/VZ with c -tagging
- HL-LHC extrapolation results promising
 - Significant work to reduce (modelling) uncertainties necessary
- Measurements of $p_T(H)$ spectra in $H \rightarrow 4l$ (and $H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$) provide **comparable indirect constraints on κ_c**

