

**CRITICAL STABILITY WORKSHOP**  
Erice, October 9-15, 2011

# New advances in the Trojan Horse Method as an indirect approach to Nuclear Astrophysics

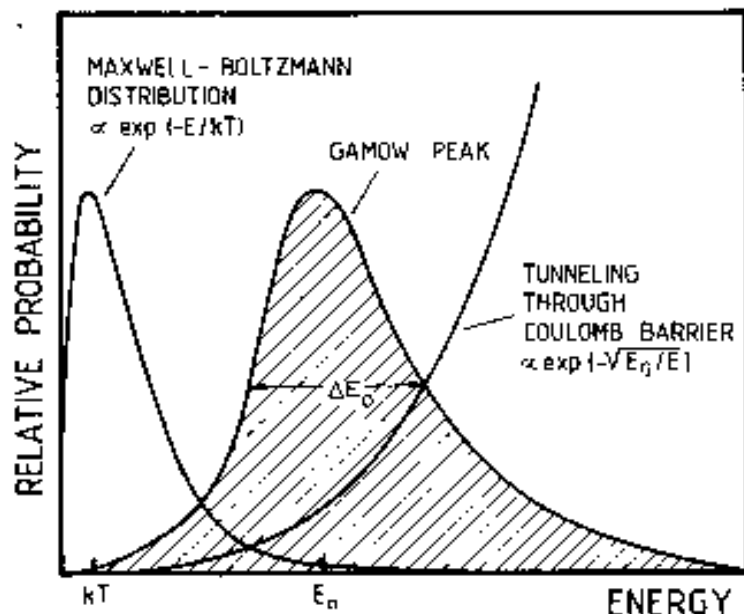
**Aurora Tumino**



# The Trojan Horse Method

Indirect technique to measure charged particle two body cross sections at astrophysical energies

Astrophysical energies are determined by the Gamow peak: the most effective energy region for thermonuclear reactions



The Gamow energy  $E_0 = f(Z_1, Z_2, T)$  varies depending on the reaction and/or the temperature, usually from tens to hundreds of keV.

Why we need indirect techniques?

# Charged particle cross section measurements at astrophysical energies

$\sigma \sim \text{picobarn} \Rightarrow$  Low signal-to-noise ratio due to the **Coulomb barrier** between the interacting nuclei



Extrapolation from the higher energies by using the

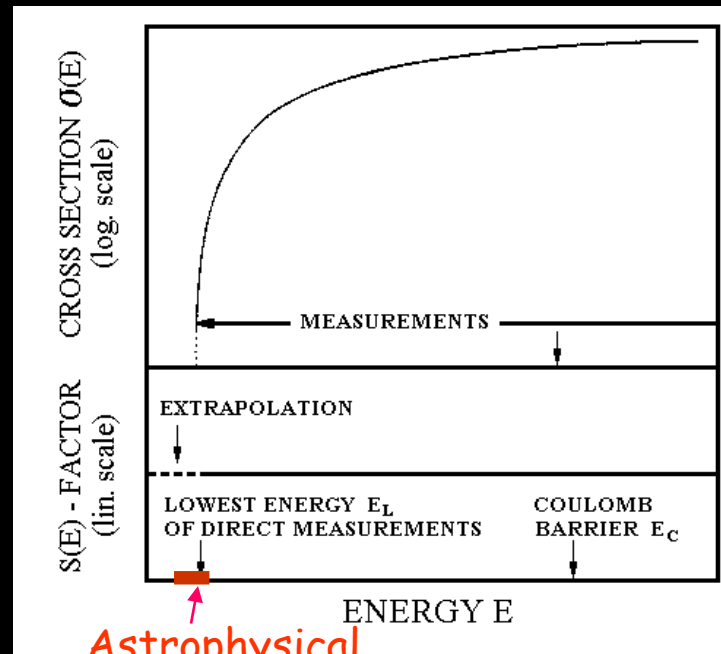
## ASTROPHYSICAL FACTOR

$$S(E) = \sigma(E) E \exp(2\pi\eta)$$

$S(E)$  is a smoothly varying function of the energy than the cross section  $\sigma(E)$

...but large uncertainties in the extrapolation

**$\rightarrow$  EXPERIMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS/SOLUTIONS**



**Astrophysical energies**

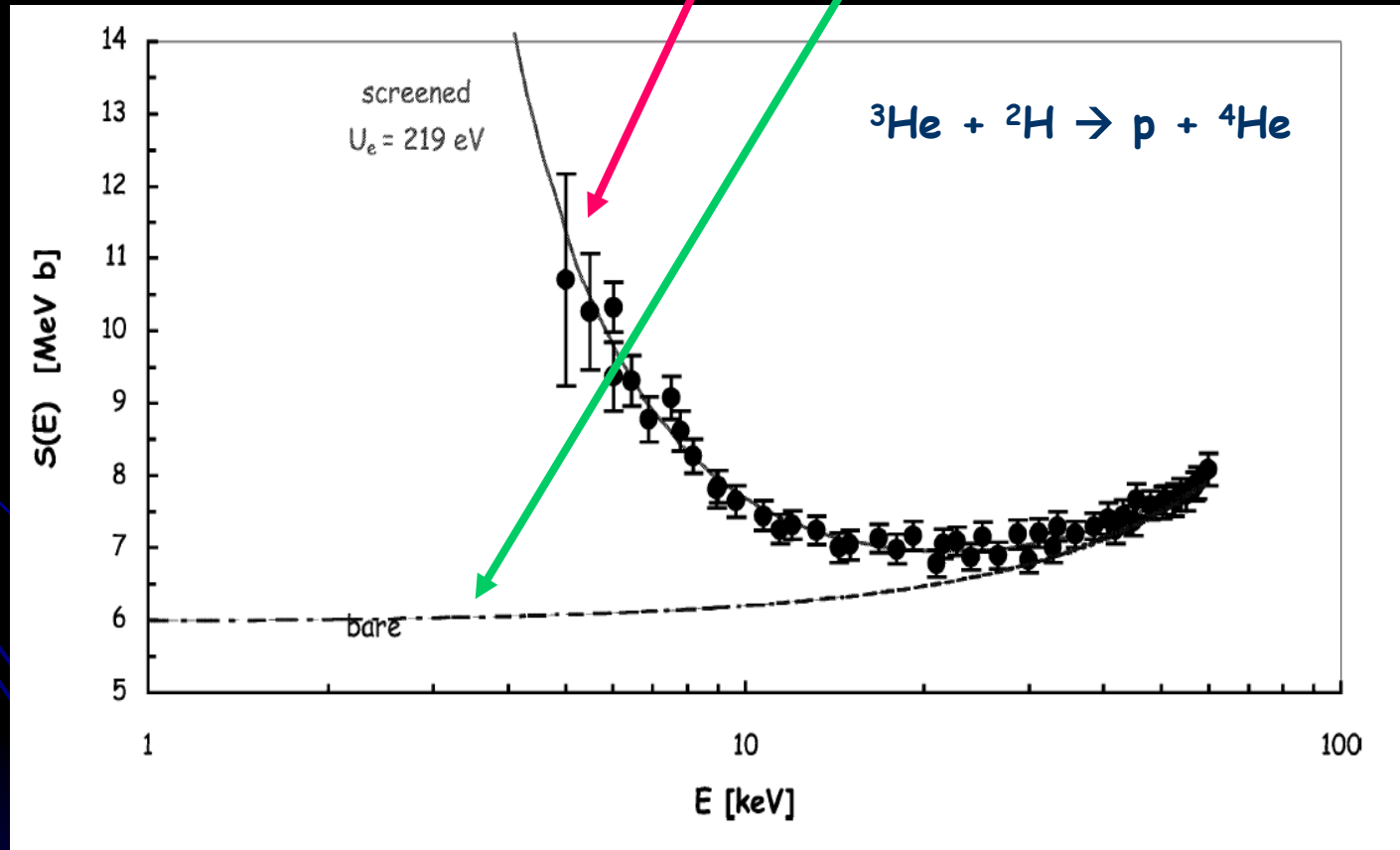
- > to increase the number of detected particles
- > to reduce the background

...but... further problem at astrophysical energies  
→ → → →

# Electron Screening

$S(E)$  enhancement experimentally found due to the Electron Screening

$$S(E)_s = S(E)_b \exp(\pi\eta U_e/E)$$



# Electron Screening

In astrophysical plasma:

- the screening, due to free electrons in plasma, can be different  $\rightarrow$  we need  $S(E)_b$  to evaluate reaction rates



A theoretical approach to extract the electron screening potential  $U_e$  in the laboratory is needed

Experimental studies of reactions involving light nuclides have shown that the **observed exponential enhancement** of the cross section at low energies were in all cases significantly larger **(about a factor of 2)** than it could be accounted for from available atomic-physics model, i.e. the adiabatic limit  $(U_e)_{ad}$



Although we try to improve experimental techniques to measure at very low energy  $\rightarrow \rightarrow$

$S_b(E)$ -factor extracted from extrapolation of higher energy data

... new methods are necessary

- to measure cross sections at never reached energies
- to get independent information on  $U_e$

-> -> -> **INDIRECT METHODS**

❖ **Asymptotic Normalization Coefficients (ANC)**

...to extract direct capture cross sections using peripheral transfer reactions

❖ **Coulomb dissociation**

...to study radiative capture reactions

❖ **Trojan Horse Method (THM)**

...to extract charged particle reaction cross sections using the quasi-free mechanism...

# Trojan Horse Method

Basic principle: astrophysically relevant two-body  $\sigma$  from quasi-free contribution of an appropriate three-body reaction



a:  $x \oplus s$  clusters

## Quasi-free mechanism

- ✓ only  $x - A$  interaction
- ✓  $s = \text{spectator}$  ( $p_s \sim 0$ )

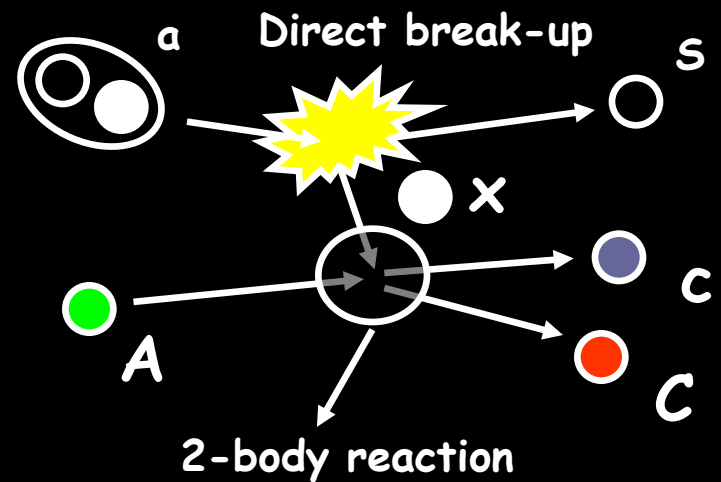
$$E_A > E_{\text{Coul}} \Rightarrow$$

NO Coulomb suppression

NO electron screening

$$E_{\text{q.f.}} = E_{Ax} - B_{x-s} \pm \text{intercluster motion}$$

plays a key role in compensating for the beam energy



→  $E_{\text{q.f.}} \approx 0 \quad !!!$

# Theoretical approaches to the THM



## PWIA hypotheses:

- A does not interact simultaneously with x and s
- The presence of s does not influence the A-x interaction

$$\frac{d^3 b}{d\Omega_c d\Omega_c dE_c} = C \cdot KF \cdot |\langle \Theta | p_s \rangle|^2 \frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}$$

## MPWBA formalism

(S. Typel and H. Wolter, *Few-Body Syst.* 29 (2000) 75)

- distortions introduced in the c+C channel, but plane waves for the three-body entrance/exit channel
- off-energy-shell effects corresponding to the suppression of the Coulomb barrier are included

KF kinematical factors

$|\phi|^2$  momentum distribution of s inside a

$d\sigma^N/d\Omega$  Nuclear cross section for the  $A+x \rightarrow C+c$  reaction

A. Tumino et al., PRL 98, 252502 (2007)

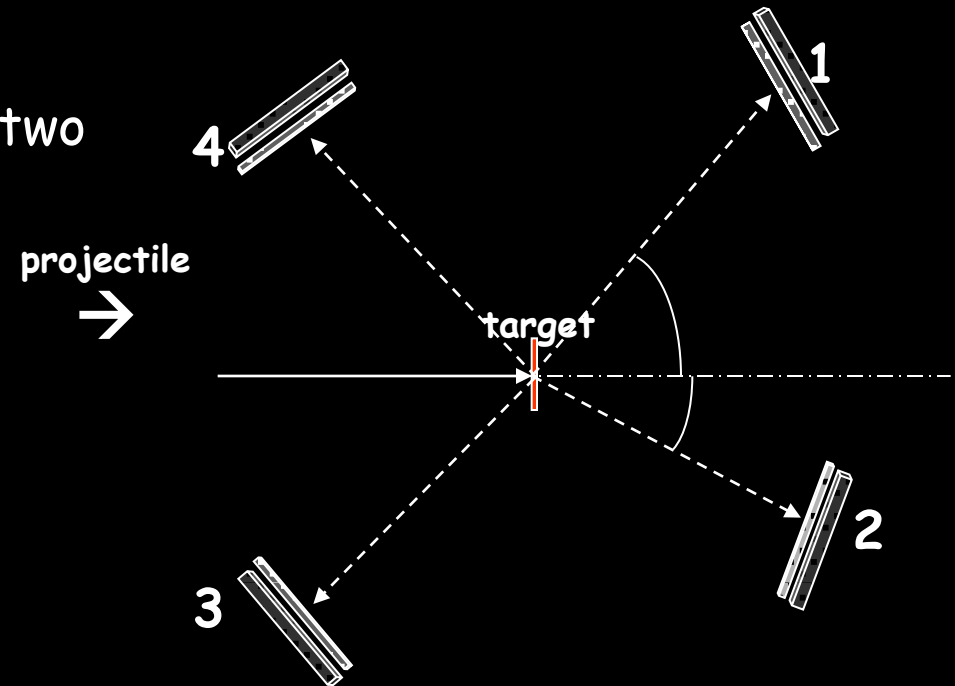
but No absolute value of the cross section



# Typical experimental set-up

Very simple, consisting of few telescopes

Trigger: coincidence detection of two particles



Telescopes:



$\Delta E$ -detector: Silicon detectors (10 to 30  $\mu\text{m}$  thick) or Ionization Chambers



E-detector: Position sensitive detector (500 to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$  thick)

# Selection of quasi-free contribution

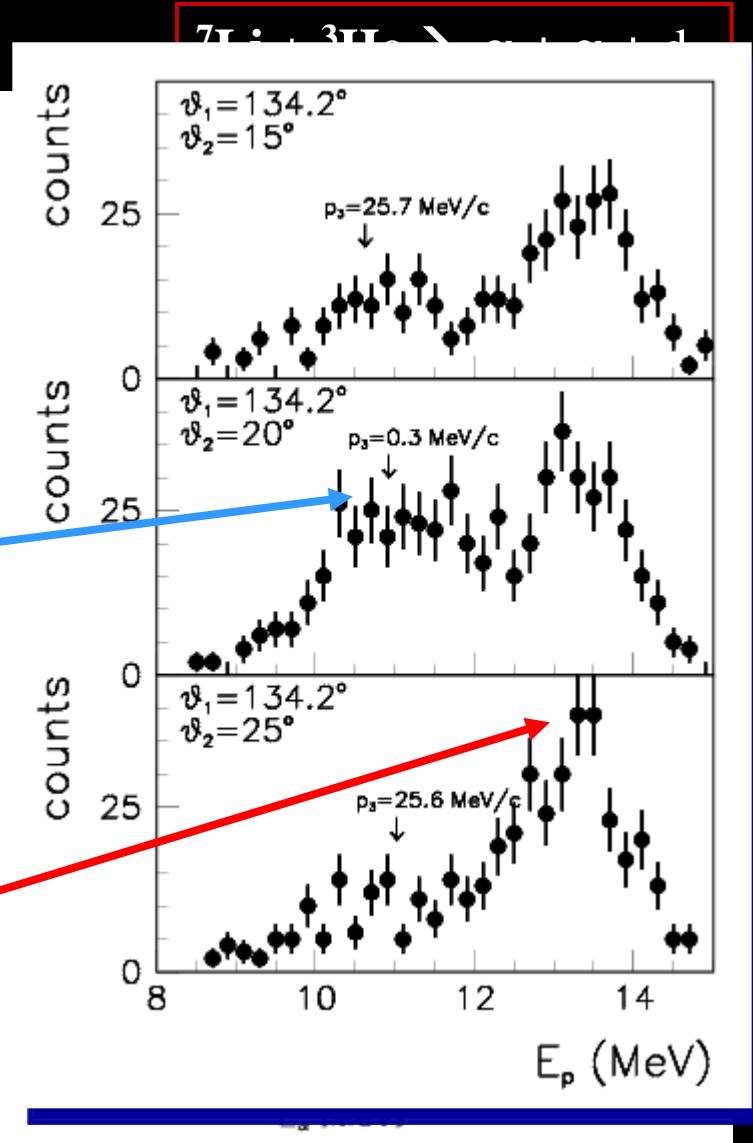
## Angular correlation analysis

coincidence spectra projected onto an  $E$  axis for a fixed  $\theta_1$  and different  $\theta_2$

events corresponding to a quasi-free mechanism show an enhancement of the yield for  $p_3$  approaching zero (QF angles).

Example for the  ${}^3\text{He} + {}^6\text{Li} \rightarrow \alpha + p + \alpha$ :  ${}^4\text{He}$ - $d$  relative motion within  ${}^6\text{Li}$  in  $s$ -wave

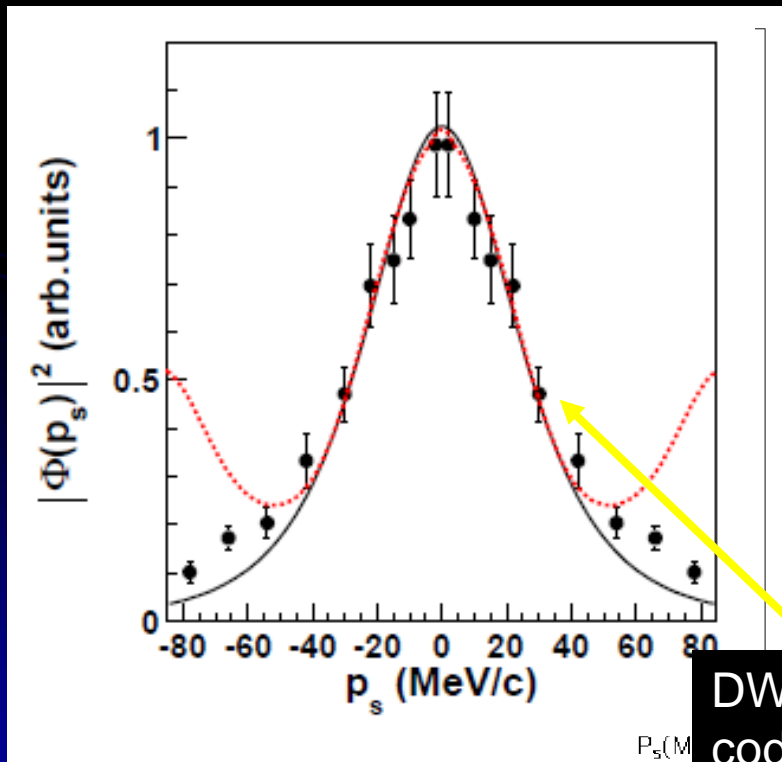
Large background contribution: sequential decay through the  ${}^8\text{Be}$  first excited state (already seen in a previous experiment (Zadro et al. (1987)))



# Selection of quasi-free contribution

## Momentum Distribution

An observable which turns out to be very sensitive to the reaction mechanism is the shape of the experimental momentum distribution



The extracted experimental momentum distribution is compared with the theoretical one. For p-n system it is given by the Hulthén wave function in momentum space:

$$G^2(p_s) = N \left[ \frac{1}{a^2 + p_s^2} - \frac{1}{b^2 + p_s^2} \right]^2$$

N: normalization parameter

$$a = 0.2317 \text{ fm}^{-1}$$

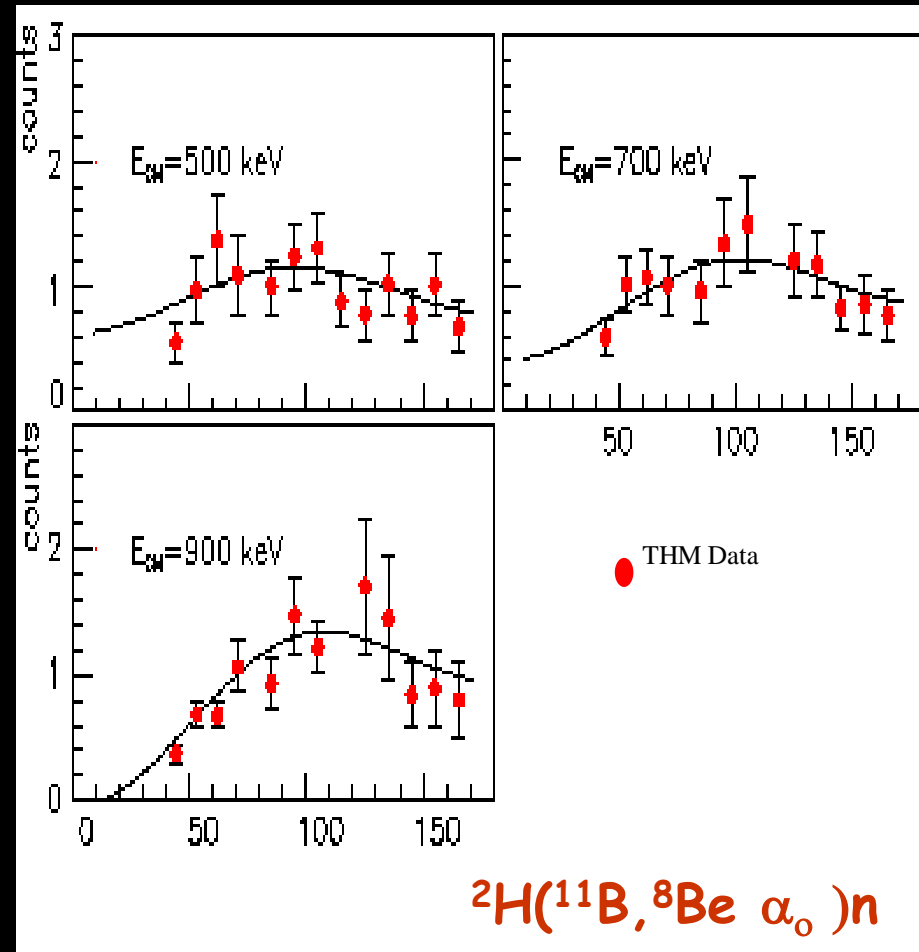
$$b = 1.202 \text{ fm}^{-1}$$

# Extraction of the 2-body cross section

Monte Carlo simulation of the three-body cross section under the assumptions:

- PWIA/DWBA approach
- Quasi-free contribution is the only reaction mechanism
- a  $p_s$  window of 20 MeV/c is considered

$$\sigma_{\text{bare}}(E) = \frac{\text{Coincidence yield}}{KF |\phi(p_s)|^2 P_0^{-1}}$$



Spitaleri et al, PRC 69, 55806 (2004)

The indirect THM cross section  $\sigma_{\text{bare}}(E)$  is normalized to the direct data at high energies, where the electron screening is negligible

**Table XI.1.** Two-Body reactions studied via Trojan Horse Method.

	Reaction	Indirect reaction	$E_{\text{inc}}$ (MeV)	$Q_2$ (MeV)	THM-Nucl. Cluster-x
1	${}^7\text{Li}(p, \alpha){}^4\text{He}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^7\text{Li}, \alpha \alpha)n$	19-22	15.122	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
2	${}^7\text{Li}(p, \alpha){}^4\text{He}$	${}^7\text{Li}({}^3\text{He}, \alpha \alpha){}^2\text{H}$	33	11.853	${}^3\text{He}$ (p)
3	${}^6\text{Li}(p, \alpha){}^3\text{He}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^6\text{Li}, \alpha {}^3\text{He})n$	14,25	1.795	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
4	${}^6\text{Li}(d, \alpha){}^4\text{He}$	${}^6\text{Li}({}^3\text{He}, \alpha \alpha){}^1\text{H}$	17.5	16.879	${}^3\text{He}$ (d)
5	${}^6\text{Li}(d, \alpha){}^4\text{He}$	${}^6\text{Li}({}^6\text{Li}, \alpha \alpha){}^4\text{He}$	5	22.372	${}^6\text{Li}$ (d)
6	${}^9\text{Be}(p, \alpha){}^6\text{Li}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{10}\text{Be}, \alpha {}^6\text{Li})n$	22.35	-0.099	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
7	${}^{10}\text{B}(p, \alpha){}^7\text{Be}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{10}\text{B}, \alpha {}^7\text{Be})n$	24.4	-1.079	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
7	${}^{11}\text{B}(p, \alpha){}^8\text{Be}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{11}\text{B}, \alpha {}^8\text{Be})n$	27	6.36	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
8	${}^{15}\text{N}(p, \alpha){}^{12}\text{C}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{15}\text{N}, \alpha {}^{12}\text{C})n$	60	2.74	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
9	${}^{17}\text{O}(p, \alpha){}^{14}\text{N}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{17}\text{O}, \alpha {}^{14}\text{N})n$	45	-1.032	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
10	${}^{18}\text{O}(p, \alpha){}^{15}\text{N}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^{18}\text{O}, \alpha {}^{15}\text{N})n$	54	1.76	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
11	${}^3\text{He}(d, p){}^4\text{He}$	${}^6\text{Li}({}^3\text{He}, p {}^4\text{He}){}^4\text{He}$	5,6	16.879	${}^6\text{Li}$ (d)
12	${}^2\text{H}(d, p){}^3\text{H}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^6\text{Li}, p {}^3\text{He}){}^4\text{He}$	14	2.59	${}^6\text{Li}$ (d)
13	${}^2\text{H}(d, p){}^3\text{H}$	${}^2\text{He}(d, p {}^3\text{H}){}^1\text{H}$	18	-1.46	${}^3\text{He}$ (d)
14	${}^2\text{H}(d, n){}^3\text{He}$	${}^2\text{H}(d, n {}^3\text{He}){}^1\text{H}$	18	-2.224	${}^3\text{He}$ (d)
15	${}^{12}\text{C}(\alpha, \alpha){}^{12}\text{C}$	${}^6\text{Li}({}^{12}\text{C}, \alpha {}^{12}\text{C}){}^2\text{H}$	20,16	0	${}^6\text{Li}$ ( $\alpha$ )
16	${}^6\text{Li}(n, t){}^4\text{He}$	${}^2\text{H}({}^6\text{Li}, t \alpha){}^1\text{H}$	14	2.224	${}^2\text{H}$ (n)
17	${}^1\text{H}(p, p){}^1\text{H}$	${}^2\text{H}(p, p p)n$	5,6	2.224	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)
18	${}^{19}\text{F}(p, \alpha){}^{16}\text{O}$	${}^{19}\text{F}(p, \alpha {}^{16}\text{O})n$	50	8.11	${}^2\text{H}$ (p)

# Reactions recently studied

${}^6\text{Li} + d \rightarrow \alpha + \alpha$  via  ${}^6\text{Li} + {}^6\text{Li} \rightarrow \alpha + \alpha + \alpha$   
 $S_0 = 16.9 \text{ MeV b}$

$U_e$ (ad)	$U_e$ (THM)	${}^6\text{Li} + d$	$U_e$ (Dir)	${}^6\text{Li} + d$
186 eV	$340 \pm 50 \text{ eV}$		$330 \pm 120 \text{ eV}$	

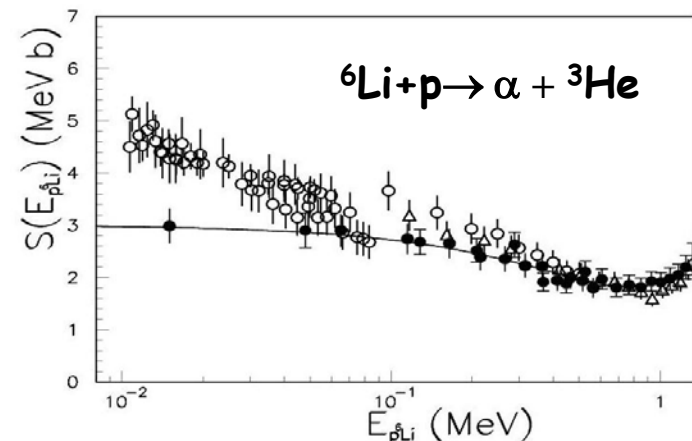
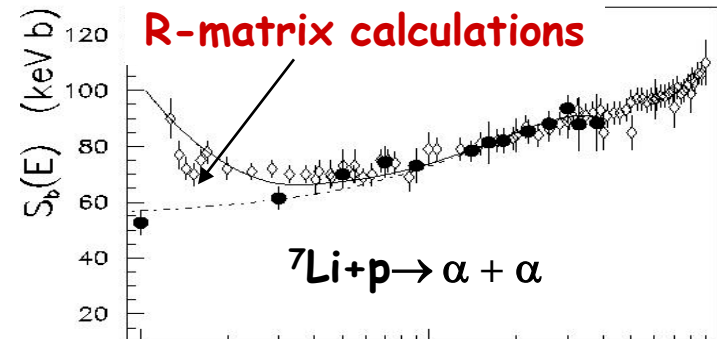
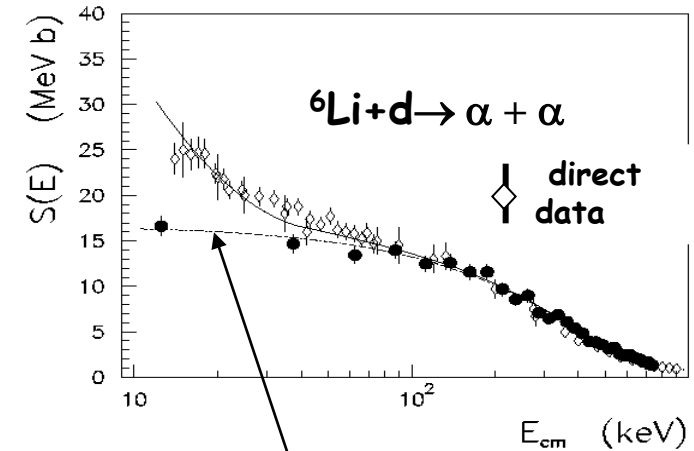
${}^7\text{Li} + p \rightarrow \alpha + \alpha$  via  ${}^7\text{Li} + d \rightarrow \alpha + \alpha + n$   
 $S_0 = 55 \pm 3 \text{ keV b}$

$U_e$ (ad)	$U_e$ (THM)	${}^7\text{Li} + p$	$U_e$ (Dir)	${}^7\text{Li} + p$
186 eV	$330 \pm 40 \text{ eV}$		$300 \pm 160 \text{ eV}$	

${}^6\text{Li} + p \rightarrow \alpha + {}^3\text{He}$  via  ${}^6\text{Li} + d \rightarrow \alpha + {}^3\text{He} + n$   
 $S_0 = 3. \pm 0.9 \text{ MeV b}$

$U_e$ (ad)	$U_e$ (THM)	${}^6\text{Li} + p$	$U_e$ (Dir)	${}^6\text{Li} + p$
186 eV	$435 \pm 40 \text{ eV}$		$440 \pm 80 \text{ eV}$	

C. Spitaleri et al., PRC60 (1999)055802  
 C. Spitaleri et al., PRC63 (2001) 005801  
 A. Tumino et al., PRC67 (2003) 065803

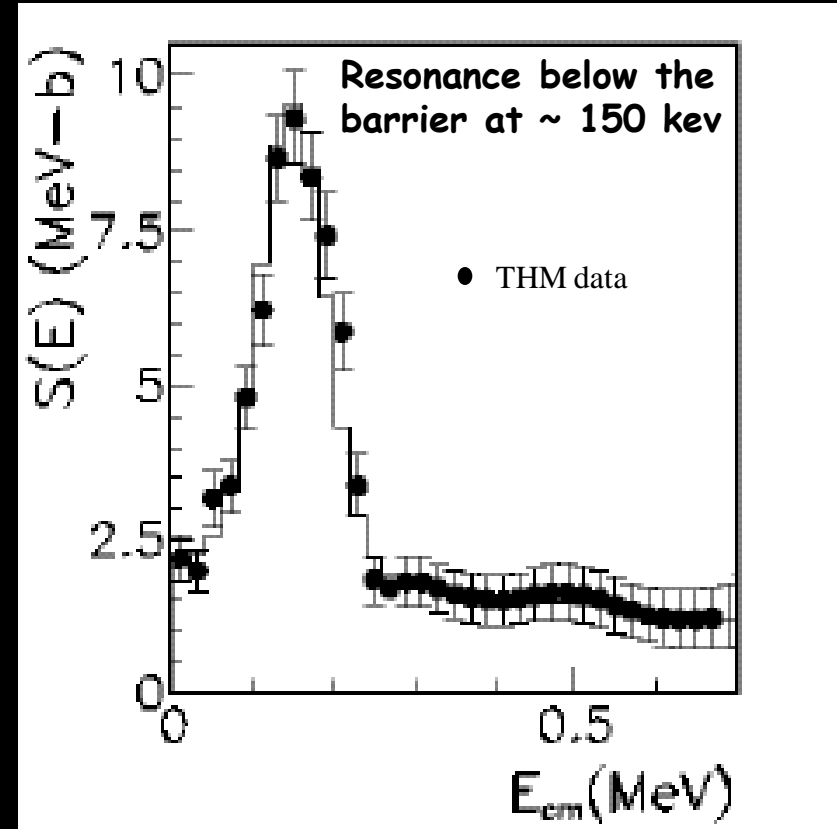


# $^{11}\text{B}(p, \alpha_0)^8\text{Be}$ : direct and indirect data

## □ Astrophysical factor

Direct reaction at astrophysical energies proceeds through an intermediate state of  $^{12}\text{C}$  at 16.1 MeV  $\rightarrow$  Very important result: resonance reproduced through the indirect approach!

$$S(0)_b = 2.2 \pm 0.3 \text{ MeV b}$$

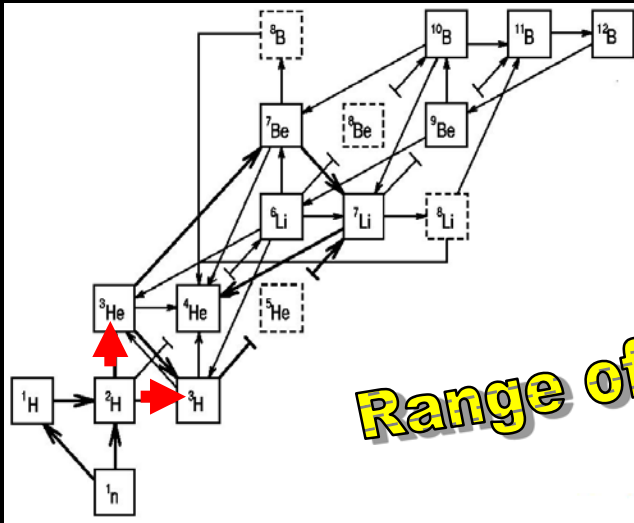


C. Spitaleri et al., PRC 69 (2004) 055806

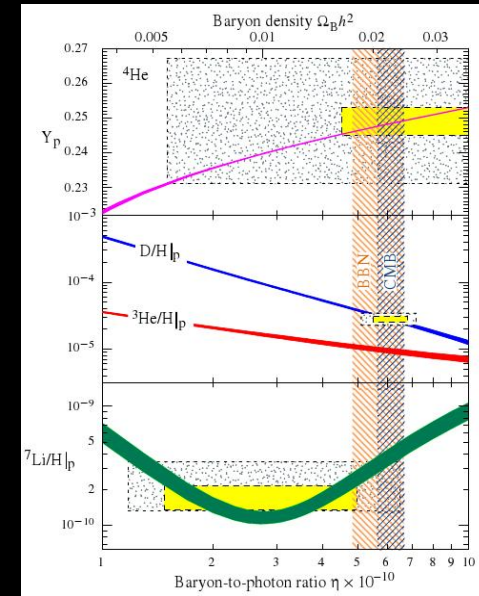
L. Lamia et al., submitted to JPG

# 2H+2H reactions in the primordial nucleosynthesis

$T \approx 10^9 \div 10^{11} \text{ K} - 0.1 \div 10 \text{ MeV} \quad t \approx 10^2 \div 10^3 \text{ s}$



Range of interest: 50-350 keV



## Other contexts of interest

- In the *Pre Main Sequence* phase (PMS) of the stellar
- In the future fusion power plants: nuclear energy production with inertial confinement

Range of interest : 0-30 keV



# $d+d \rightarrow 3\text{He}+n$ two-body cross section



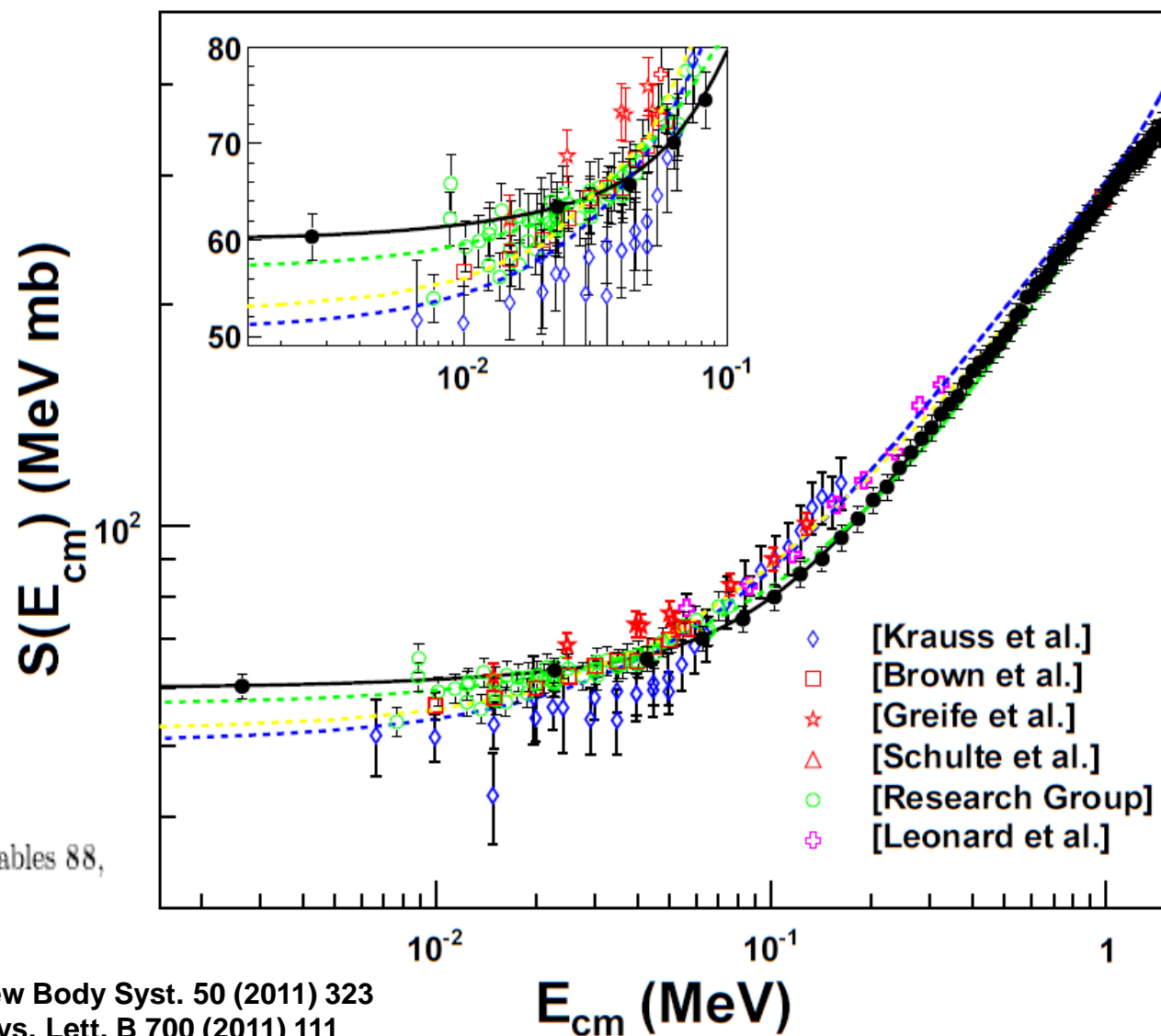
Comparison between THM data (black dots) and direct data (colored symbols)

Yellow line: polynomial expansion reported in the NACRE compilation

Blue line: calculation from the Cyburt compilation

Green line: calculation by P. Descouvemont et al.

C. Angulo *et al.*, Nucl. Phys. A656, 3 (1999)  
R.H. Cyburt, Phys. Rev. D70, 023505 (2004)  
P. Descouvemont *et al.*, At. Data Nucl. Data Tables 88, 203 (2004)



# $d+d \rightarrow 3H+p$ two-body cross section



Symbols and lines with same meaning as in the previous figure

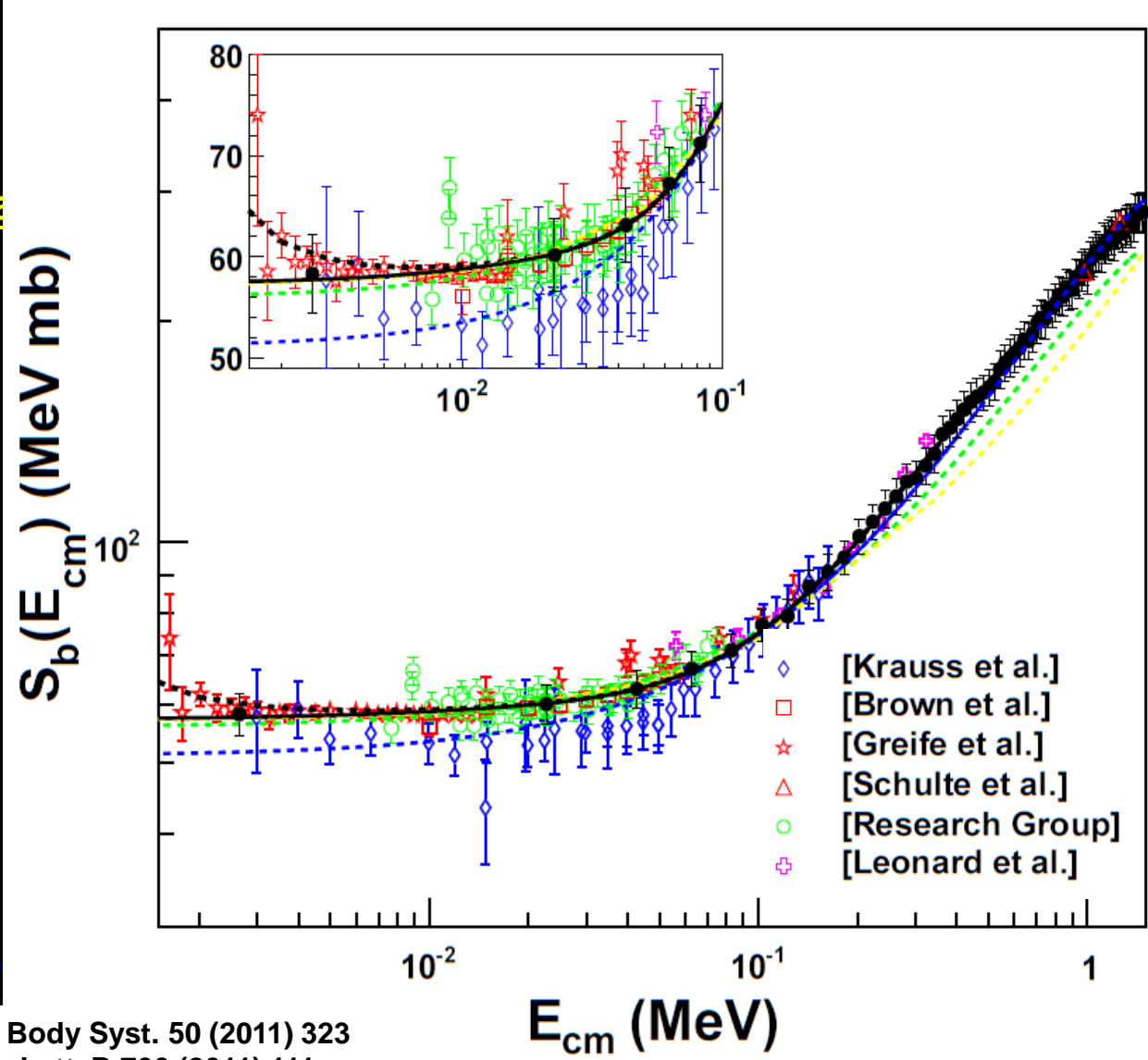
## Screening potential estimate

$$f_{\text{lab}}(E) = \exp(U_e/E)$$

(Assenbaum, H.J. et al., 1987, Z. Phys. A, 327, 461)

$$\rightarrow U_e = 13.2 \pm 1.8 \text{ eV}$$

In agreement with the adiabatic limit

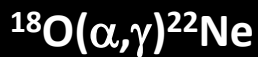
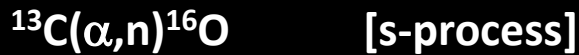


A. Tumino et al., Few Body Syst. 50 (2011) 323  
 A. Tumino et al., Phys. Lett. B 700 (2011) 111

# Recent results for resonant reactions



...reactions belonging to the  ${}^{19}\text{F}$  production/destruction path



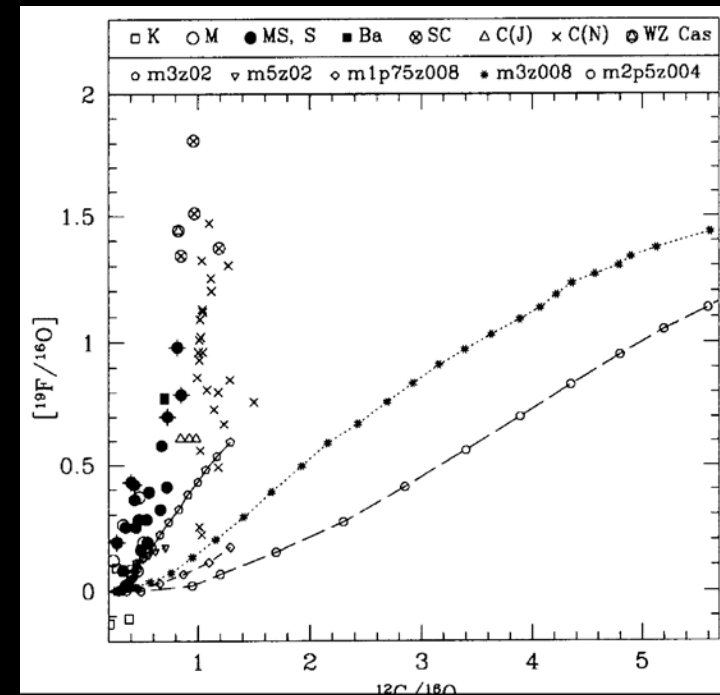
}  ${}^{19}\text{F}$  depleting reactions

The importance of  ${}^{19}\text{F}$  in astrophysics:

◆ its abundance observed in red giants can constrain AGB star models

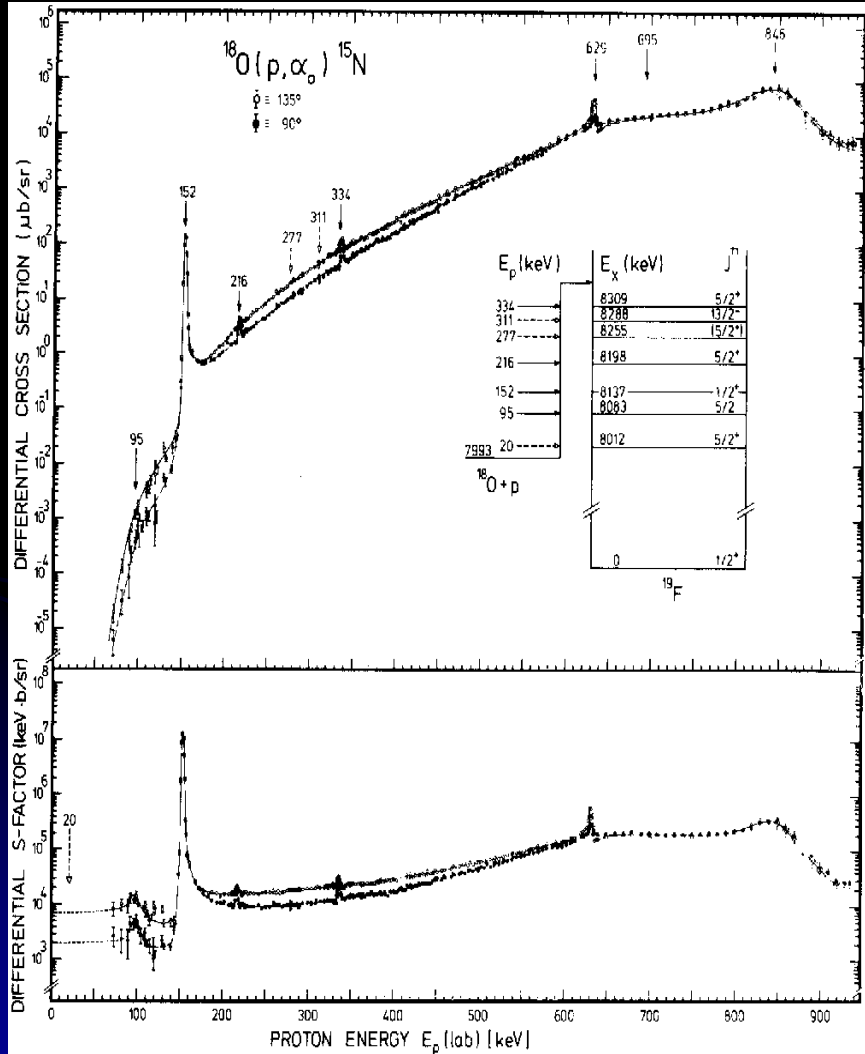
Open problem:

◆ fluorine abundance in red giants is enhanced by large factors with respect to the solar one



This would imply  $C/O$  values much larger than what experimental data suggest

# The $^{18}\text{O}(p,\alpha)^{15}\text{N}$ Reaction: Current Status



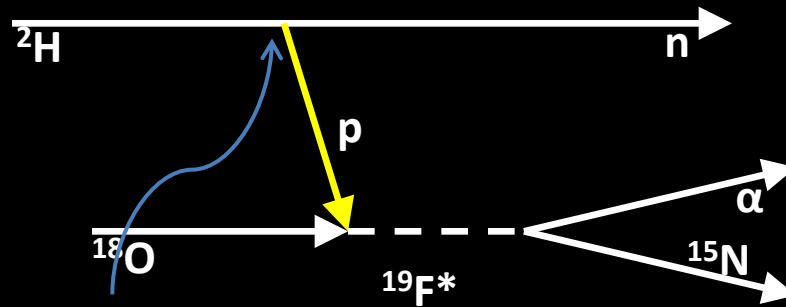
~50 resonances in the 0-7 MeV region

The main contribution to the reaction rate is given by the resonances:

- 1- 20 keV  $J^\pi=5/2^+$
- 2- 144 keV  $J^\pi=1/2^+$  (well established)
- 3- 656 keV  $J^\pi=1/2^+$

# The Trojan horse method for resonant reactions

In the THM the astrophysically relevant reaction, in particular  $^{17,18}\text{O}(p,\alpha)^{14,15}\text{N}$ , studied through an appropriate three-body process  $^2\text{H}(^{17,18}\text{O},\alpha)^{14,15}\text{N}n$ :



The process is a transfer to the continuum where proton (p) is the transferred particle

Upper vertex: direct deuteron breakup

Standard R-Matrix approach cannot be applied to extract the resonance parameters of the  $^{18}\text{O}(p,\alpha)^{15}\text{N}$  → Modified R-Matrix is introduced instead

In the case of a **resonant** THM reaction the cross section takes the form

$$\frac{d^2\sigma}{dE_{C_c} d\Omega_s} \propto \frac{\Gamma_{(C_c)_i}(E) |M_i(E)|^2}{(E - E_{R_i})^2 + \Gamma_i^2(E)/4}$$

$M_i(E)$  is the amplitude of the transfer reaction (upper vertex) that can be easily calculated  
→ The resonance parameters can be extracted and in particular the strength

# How to extract the resonant strength?

When narrow resonances dominate the S-factor the reaction rate can be calculated by means of the resonance strength:

$$(\omega\gamma)_i = \frac{\hat{J}_i}{\hat{J}_p \hat{J}_{^{18}\text{O}}} \frac{\Gamma_{(p^{18}\text{O})_i}(E_{R_i}) \Gamma_{(\alpha^{15}\text{N})_i}(E_{R_i})}{\Gamma_i(E_{R_i})} \quad ({}^{18}\text{O}(p,\alpha){}^{15}\text{N} \text{ case})$$

Where:

- $\hat{J}=2J+1$
  - $\Gamma_{(AB)}$  is the partial width for the A+B channel
  - $\Gamma_i$  is the total width of the i-th resonance
  - $E_{R_i}$  is the resonance energy
- Area of the Breit-Wigner describing the resonance
- no need to know the resonance shape

$$(\omega\gamma)_i = \frac{1}{2\pi} \omega_i N_i \frac{\Gamma_{(p^{18}\text{O})_i}}{|M_i|^2}$$

Where:

- $\omega_i = \hat{J}_i / \hat{J}_p \hat{J}_{^{18}\text{O}}$  statistical factor
- $N_i = \text{THM resonance strength}$
- $M_i = \text{transfer amplitude}$

## Advantages:

- possibility to measure down to zero energy
- No electron screening
- No spectroscopic factors in the  $\Gamma_{(p^{18}\text{O})} / |M_i|^2$  ratio

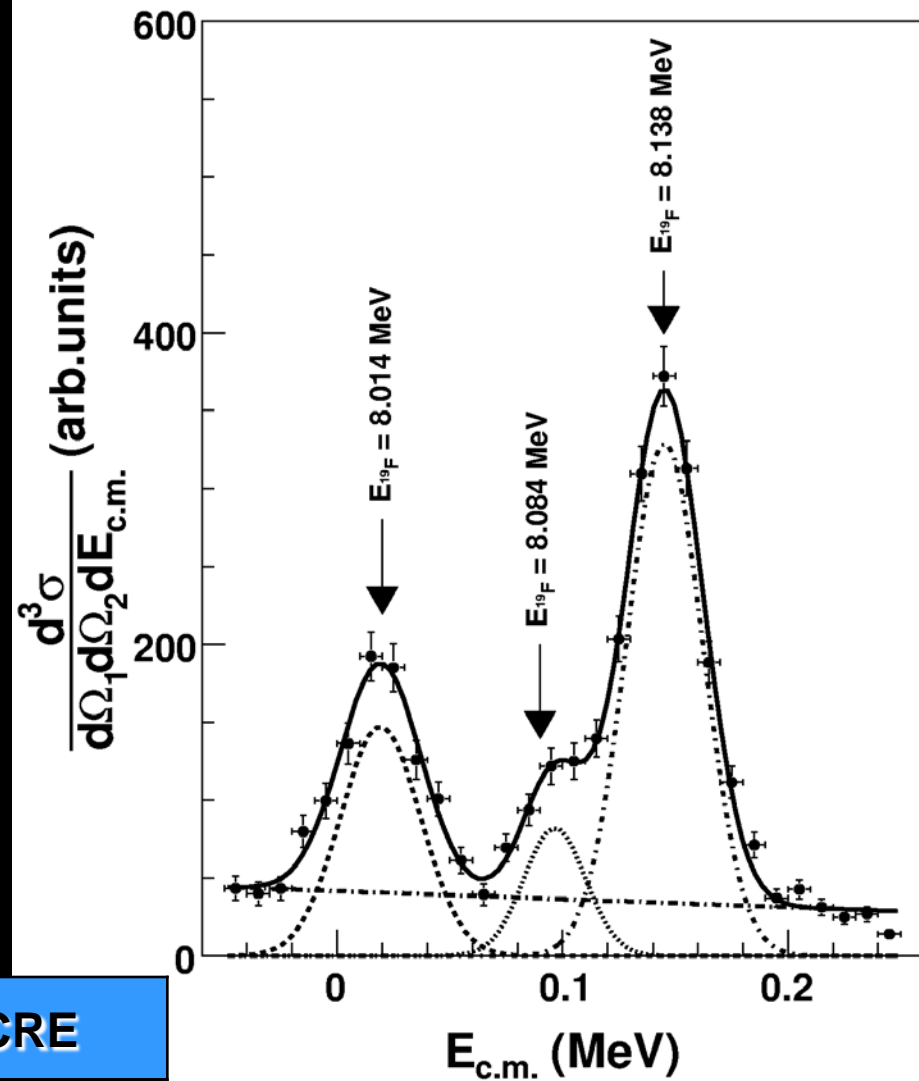
# $^{18}\text{O} + p \rightarrow \alpha + ^{15}\text{N}$ THM Results

In case of narrow resonances reaction rate depending on resonance strength:

$$(\omega\gamma)_i = \frac{\omega_i}{\omega_3} \frac{\Gamma_{p_i}(E_{R_i})}{|M_i(E_{R_i})|^2} \frac{|M_3(E_{R_3})|^2}{\Gamma_{p_3}(E_{R_3})} \frac{N_i}{N_3} (\omega\gamma)_3$$

## Advantages:

- possibility to measure down to zero energy
- No electron screening
- No spectroscopic factors in the  $\Gamma_{(p^{18}\text{O})} / |M_i|^2$  ratio
- no need to know the absolute cross section



$\omega\gamma$ (eV)	Present work	NACRE
20 keV	$8.3^{+3.8}_{-2.6} 10^{-19}$	$6^{+17}_{-5} 10^{-19}$
90 keV	$1.8 \pm 0.3 10^{-7}$	$1.6 \pm 0.5 10^{-7}$

M. La Cognata et al. PRL 101, 152501 (2008)  
M. La Cognata et al. Ap. J. 708, 796 (2010)

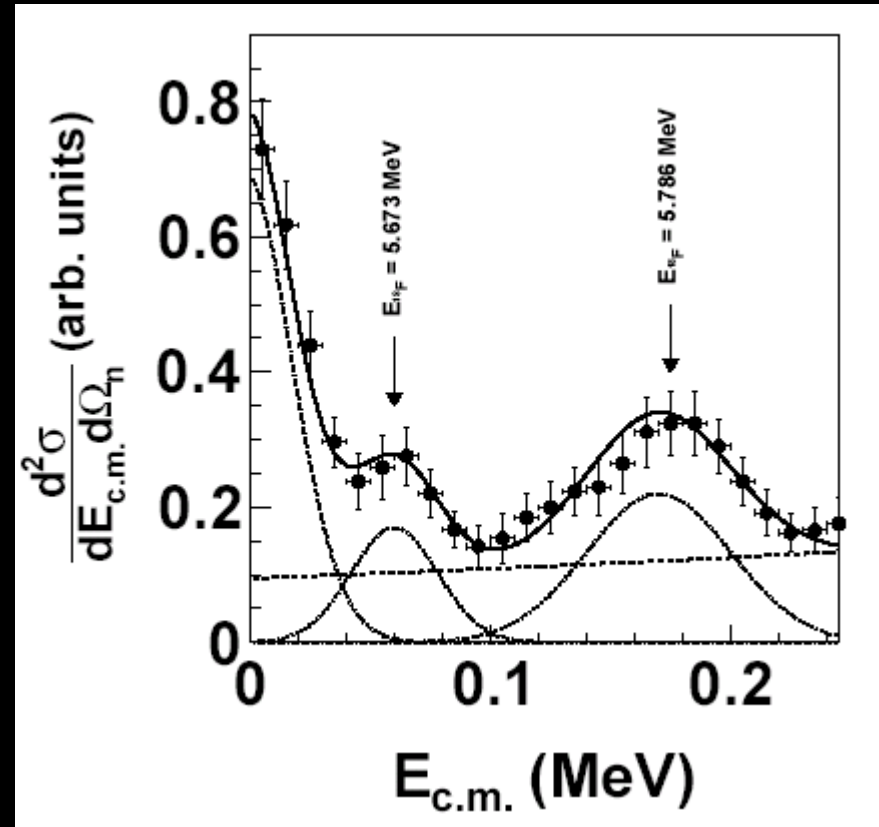
# $^{17}\text{O} + \text{p} \rightarrow \alpha + ^{14}\text{N}$ : recent experiment at LNS

Importance in novae nucleosynthesis and  $\gamma$  astronomy

It affects the production of  $^{18}\text{F}$  removing  $^{17}\text{O}$  from the production path

It influences the  $^{17}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O}$  isotopic ratio, playing a crucial role to constrain extra mixing processes in AGB stars

$$(\omega\gamma)_1 = (3.66^{+0.76}_{-0.64}) \times 10^{-9} \text{ eV}$$



THM reaction rate about 20% smaller than the most recent value reported in literature: screening effect?

$$f_{lab} = \frac{(\omega\gamma)_{Chafa}}{(\omega\gamma)_{THM}} = e^{\frac{\pi\eta(E_{R_i}) U_e}{E_{R_i}}}$$

$$\rightarrow U_e = 1080 \text{ eV}$$

M.L. Sergi et al. PRC (R) (2010)

$$U_{AD} = 594 \text{ eV}$$



# The $^{15}\text{N} + \text{p} \rightarrow \alpha + ^{12}\text{C}$ : Astrophysical $S$ -factor

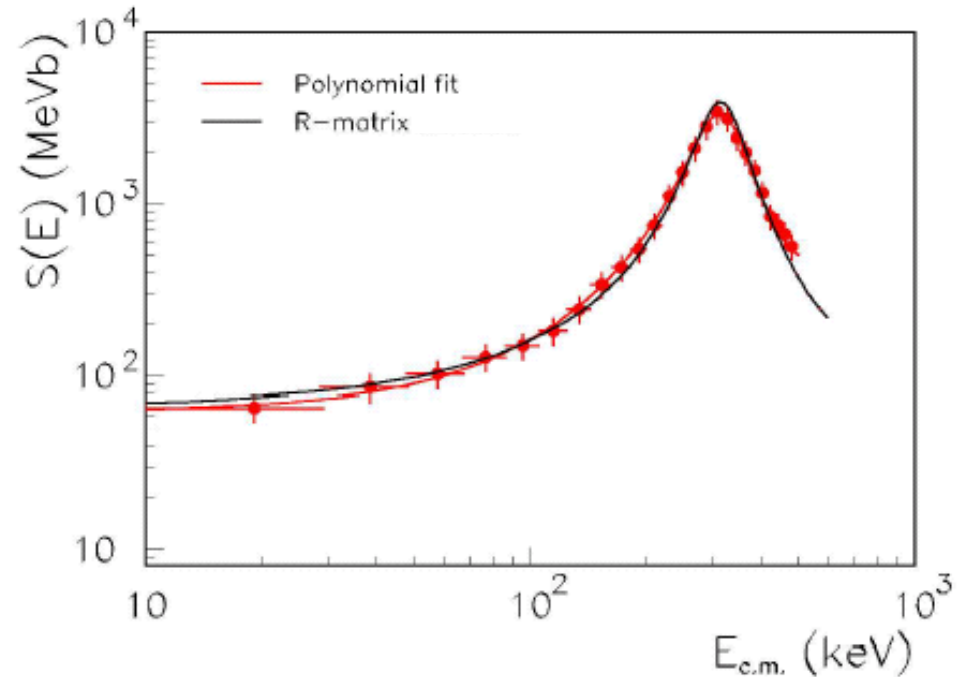
Results reported in terms of  $S(E)$  factors:

- THM data as red dots
- Direct data from NACRE as black + open dots

Standard R-Matrix approach cannot be applied to extract the resonance parameters of the  $^{15}\text{N}(p,\alpha)^{12}\text{C} \rightarrow$  Modified R-Matrix is introduced instead

R-matrix calculation assuming a little destructive interference between the 300 keV, 962 keV (12.44 and 13.09 MeV states of  $^{16}\text{O}$ ) resonances and a subthreshold one ( $^{16}\text{O}$  level at  $E_{\text{exc}} = 9.58$  MeV), all of them with  $J^\pi = 1^-$

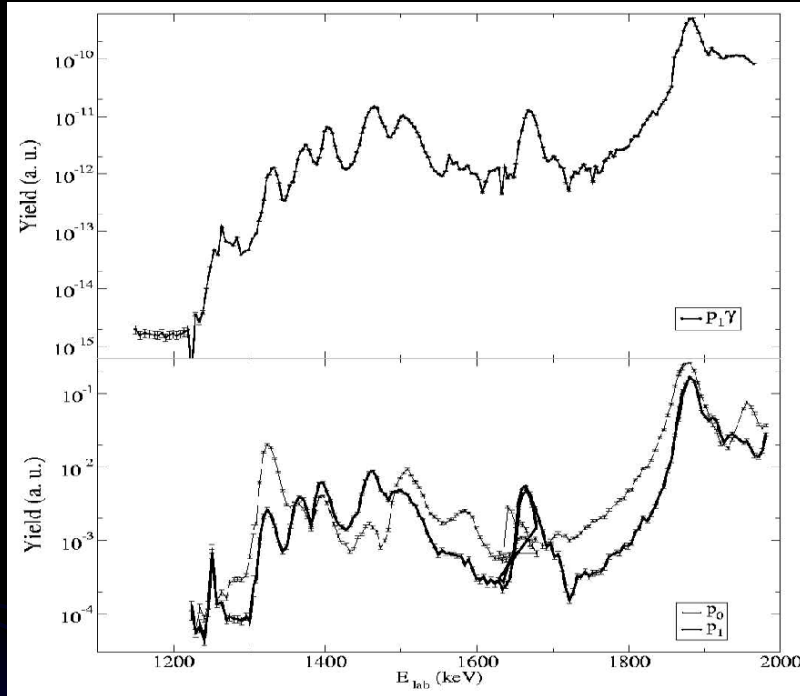
Data very well reproduced!



$$S_{\text{bare}}(0) = 62 \pm 10 \text{ MeVb}$$

# Neutrino

## The $^{19}\text{F}(\alpha, p)^{22}\text{Ne}$ reaction



$^{19}\text{F}(\alpha, p)^{22}\text{Ne}$ : main  $^{19}\text{F}$  destruction channel AGB stars with  $M > 2 M_{\odot}$  and WR stars ( $\sim 30 M_{\odot}$ )

$T \rightarrow 2 \cdot 10^8 \text{ K}$

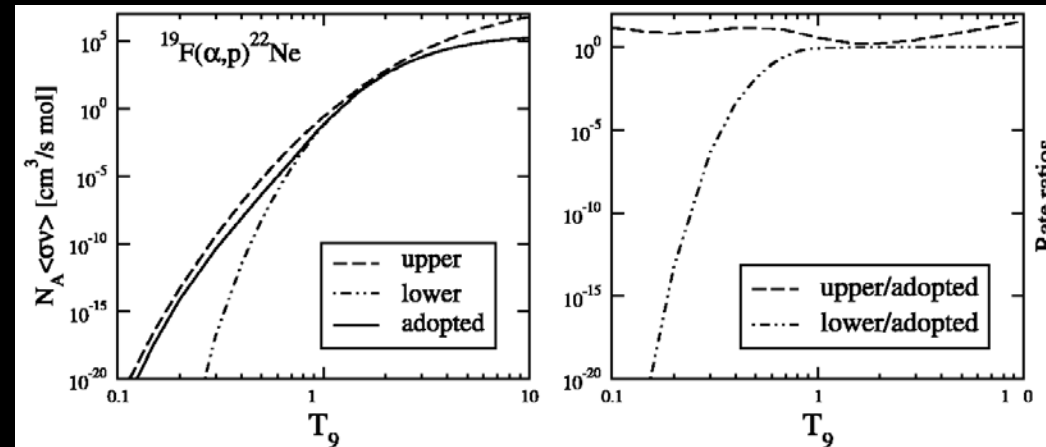
$\Rightarrow$  Energies of interest 300-800 keV

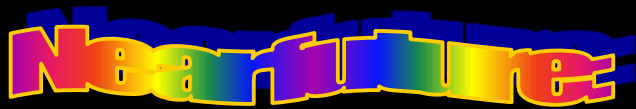
Most recent measurement (2006) down to 800 keV

$\Rightarrow$  Extrapolation impossible because of the many resonances

The rate is calculated by using simplified models

Reaction rate: uncertainty of about 14 orders of magnitude





## The $^{16}\text{O} + ^{12}\text{C}$ experiment

Currently a great interest in the fusion channel in the low energy region because of its critical role in studying a wide range of stellar burning scenarios in carbon-rich environments → constraints on the models



Carbon burning temperature from 0.8 to 1.2 GK, corresponding to center-of-mass energies  $E_{\text{cm}}$  from 1 to 3 MeV

Measured down to  $E_{\text{cm}} = 2.14$  MeV, still at the beginning of the region of astrophysical interest.

Extrapolation from current data to the ultra-low energies is complicated by the presence of resonant structures even in the low-energy part of the excitation function

Further measurements extending down to 1 MeV would be extremely important!

# p-p scattering from THM

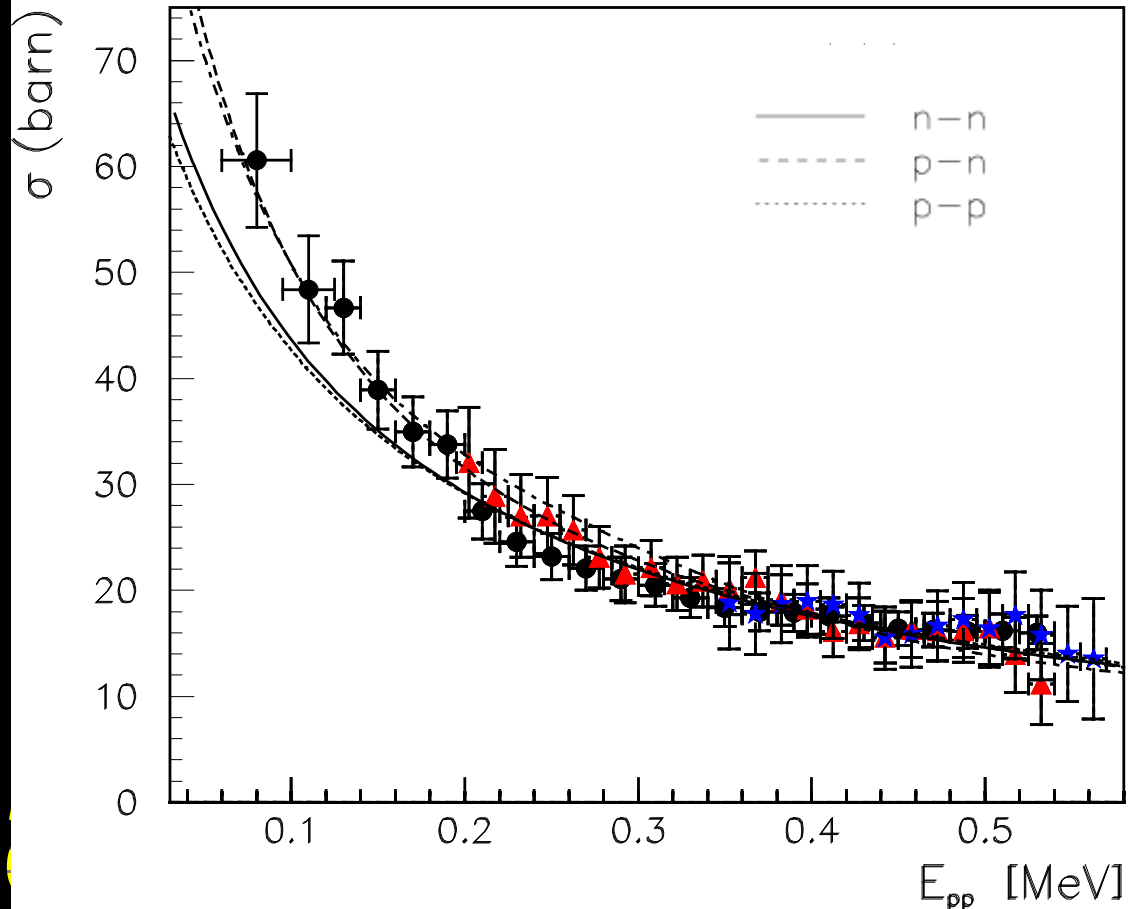
$$\left(\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}\right)_{p_1 p_2 - cm} \propto \frac{d^3\sigma}{dE_{p_1} d\Omega_{p_1} d\Omega_{p_2}} \left/ \left| \phi(p_s) \right|^2 KF \right.$$

p+p elastic scattering via  
p+d → p+p+n

THM p-p cross-section shows  
the 1/E behaviour also in the  
region of the expected  
Coulomb+nuclear interference:

Coulomb effects appear  
completely suppressed

A. Tumino et al. PRL 98, 252502 (2007)  
A. Tumino et al. PRC 67, 065803 (2008)



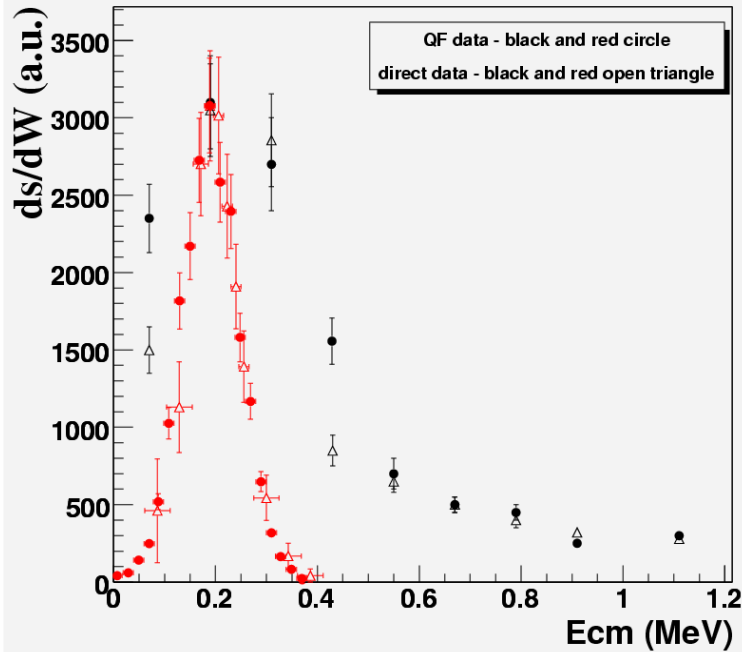
**No minimum**

# Deuteron-Beam as a virtual Neutron-beam

${}^6\text{Li}(n, \alpha){}^3\text{H}$  via  ${}^6\text{Li}(d, \alpha){}^3\text{H}p$  reaction

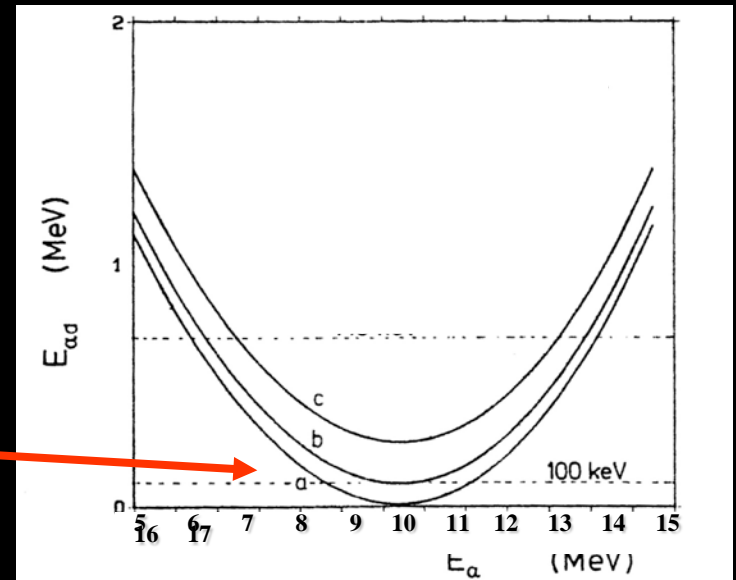
$E_{{}^6\text{Li}} = 14 \text{ MeV}$

The good agreement between THM and direct data suggests that no off-energy shell effects other than those deriving from the Coulomb barrier, when present, should be considered



New results from a recent experiment:  
magnifying glass effect in the resonant region...

A. Tumino et al., EPJ A (2005) 1  
M. Gulino et al., JPG (2010)



# The collaboration

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