

## Zuoz -Low energy Particle Physics I.

## Anna Soter

### **ETH** zürich

### Intro / info





This light summer course is a **short** extract of the - Low Energy Particle Physics & Exotic Atoms courses at ETHZ

With some slides borrowed from Aldo Antognini and others

### Includes:

- Simple atoms and exotic atoms
- Spectroscopy methods
- Physics in Penning traps
- Precision decays of the muon and the pion
- Physics using antimatter

- 0

### Beyond SM at Low E

https://lepp.ethz.ch/

Missing: • UCN physics Atomic, neutron and EDM Muon g-2 Electron g-2

• ... DETAILS





## Standard Model and beyond

Why three generations?

Mass hierarchy?

Many free parameters

Too light Higgs

cLFV?



## Standard Model and beyond

CPT

Why three generations?

Mass hierarchy?

Many free parameters

Too light Higgs

cLFV?



### Not enough antimatter in the Universe:

### Baryon Asymmetry

### **Dark Matter?**

Dark Energy?

## The high energy frontier of particle physics

p

p



Collisions at TeV-scale energies
 Direct production of new particles
 Limited by the collider energy



## The intensity- and precision frontier



Complementary way to search for new physics
 We are looking for rare events, and small energy shifts
 Indirect search, to see the "footprint" of new physics by precise observation of particles, in forms of:



Forbidden decays / precision decays

ΔE



## Energy shifts in interactions

## Ingredients for precision particle physics

### Particle accelerators

Muons at PSI

Antiprotons

(p̄) at CERN

World's only low-energy p

World's highest intensity  $cw \pi, \mu$ 

lon traps

Lasers

### Precision methods







# Metrology, calorimetry

## (Some) subjects of Low Energy Particle Physics

### Bound systems I. - Atoms and Exotic atoms

### Precision decays / forbidden decays



Muonic

hydrogen



Antihydrogen



Muonium



 $\mu^+ \to e^+ + \gamma$ 

### Muon and pion decay experiments

### Bound systems II. - Precision physics in traps



### Gravity and the SM



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### Simple atomic systems as precision probes



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(Latest result: Parthey et al. 2011)





### The gross energy levels of the hydrogen atom

Solve Schrödinger equation:

$$\left[\frac{\nabla^2}{2m} + V(r)\right]\Psi_{nlm}(r) = E_{nlm}\Psi_{nlm}(r)$$

in the Coulomb potential: 
$$V(r) = -rac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}rac{Ze^2}{r}$$

Energy n=3 **Energy levels (Bohr)** n=2  $E_{n} = -\frac{(Z\alpha^{2})mc^{2}}{2n^{2}} = -\frac{m}{m_{o}}\frac{R_{\infty}}{n^{2}}$ **Atomic size** n=1  $\langle r \rangle = \frac{\hbar}{Z\alpha c} \frac{n^2}{m}$ 

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### **Relativistic effects**



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### The first terms of the fine structure Hamiltonian



Relativistic treatment of electron kinetic energy:

Spin-orbit interaction

$$E = c\sqrt{p^2 + m_e^2 c^2}$$
$$E = m_e c^2 + \frac{p^2}{2m_e} - \frac{p^4}{8m_e^3 c^2} + \dots$$

magnetic field **B'** in the rest frame of the electron:

$$\mathbf{B'} = -\frac{1}{c^2}\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{E}$$

• The intrinsic magnetic moment of the electron (the spin)  $M_S$  interacts with this:

$$W' = -M_{S} \cdot B'$$

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## The moving electron in the Coulomb field induces a



### Results of the fine structure corrections at n=2





### Unfortunately, Lamb's experiment occured...



- via electron collisions.
- $\rightarrow$  excitation to the 2P-state.
- whereas the 2S-state is meta-stable
- -If 2S-state reaches the W-plate
  - $\rightarrow$  ejection of electrons
- -If LS-state reaches the W-plate
  - $\rightarrow$  NO ejection of electrons

was in disagreement with Dirac prediction

• The measured  $\Delta E(2P_{1/2}-2S_{1/2})\neq 0$ was in disagreement with Dirac prediction

### - H atoms in 1S-state are excited into the 2S-state

- If frequency of microwave is resonant with transition

-The 2P state decays immediately to the ground state



### Lamb's experiment initiated the development of QED



exotic atoms even level crossing

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## Hyperfine splitting

- Nuclear structure effects appear already in the non-relativistic approximation
- Has its origin in the magnetic effects due to the electron and proton spin interaction
- As for the fine structure we introduce the hyperfine splitting as a perturbation

$$H = H_0 + H_{\rm HFS}$$



Coupling of the proton magnetic moment to the electron orbital momentum L Magnetic B-field created by the proton magnetic moment  $M_1$  coupling to the electron spin momentum: **Dipole interaction** 

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### mation pin interaction ırbation

### • 1S state:

## $\frac{2\mu_0}{3}\frac{\mu_{\rm B}g_{\rm e}g_{\rm p}\mu_{\rm N}}{\hbar^2}\boldsymbol{I}\cdot\boldsymbol{S}$





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### +0.15 MHz

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### +1.2 MHz

 $r_p$  proton size





p

## Methods: Spectroscopy







### Needed: a coherent light source - lasers

### Principles

- 1. Optical pumping (here in the 3-level example: L1-> L3, which spontaneously decays to L2)
- 2. Pumped state (L2) is a metastable state: spontaneous emission is "slow".
- 3. Stimulated emission is triggered by intracavity radiation (photons coupled back by cavity mirrors), which prompts L2 to deexcite to L1 by emitting photons of the same phase and direction.



### **Features**

- High spatial coherence: due to point (3) above ⊳
- Narrow spectral linewidth lasers exhibit large ⊳ degree of temporal coherence as well
- These features makes possible to carry out precise measurements on transition energies

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### Precise frequency measurements - the fr





Nth comb line is determined by two parameters

$$f_n = nf_{\rm rep} + f_{\rm ceo}$$

- repetition rate via cavity length
- ceo offset via dispersions with error signal from beating:

$$2f_n - f_{2n} = 2(nf_{rep} + f_{ceo}) - (2nf_{rep} + f_{ceo}) = f_{ceo}.$$



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### Usage of a frequency comb



Absolute frequency measurement / frequency reference.

Locking Fabry-Perot cavities to comb lines

Beatnote of comb and laser: intensity modulation which is slow enough to measure by a photodiode:







## Understanding the interaction of atoms with coherent light

Analogy with parametrically driven coupled and damped mech osc., see from Frimmer & Novotny:

http://dx.doi.org/10.1119/1.4878621

Equation of motions:

$$\ddot{x}_A + \gamma \dot{x}_A + \left[\frac{k+\kappa}{m} - \frac{\Delta k(t)}{m}\right] x_A - \frac{\kappa}{m} x_B = \frac{F(t)}{m}$$
$$\ddot{x}_B + \gamma \dot{x}_B + \left[\frac{k+\kappa}{m} + \frac{\Delta k(t)}{m}\right] x_B - \frac{\kappa}{m} x_A = 0.$$

Introducing carrier, detuning and coupling frequencies:

$$egin{aligned} \Omega_0^2 &= rac{k+\kappa}{m}, \ \Omega_d^2 &= rac{\Delta k}{m}, \ \Omega_c^2 &= rac{\kappa}{m}, \end{aligned}$$

Can be made analogous to the time dependent Schrodinger for 2-level systems

$$i\hbar \; \partial_t |\Psi
angle = \hat{H} |\Psi
angle \quad$$
 with  $|\Psi
angle = a(t) |g
angle + b(t) |e
angle$ 

where the coupling is:  $\langle e|\hat{H}|g\rangle = \hbar\omega_d/2$ 

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## Two level systems: time evolution on a Bloch sphere

The state of the system can be represented with a vector s, and an endpoint at the surface of a sphere:

$$egin{aligned} s_x &= 2|ar{a}||ar{b}|\cos(\phi)| \ s_y &= -2|ar{a}||ar{b}|\sin(\phi)| \ s_z &= |ar{a}|^2 - |ar{b}|^2. \end{aligned}$$

- real part
- imaginary part
- population inversion

North and south pole: ground state and excited state. With damping , the surface "shrinks". Bloch equations:

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t} \begin{bmatrix} s_x \\ s_y \\ s_z \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} -\gamma & -\delta & 0 \\ \delta & -\gamma & A \\ 0 & -A & -\gamma \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} s_x \\ s_y \\ s_z \end{bmatrix}.$$



Amplitudes  $|\bar{a}|$ ,  $|\bar{b}|$  represent state populations in a 2-level system, **A** represents the strength of the drive (of the laser field), **S** the detuning from the energy gap between the 2 states,  $\gamma$  is dissipation by decay.

NOTE: only a single decay from this mechanical analogy both damping in contrast to a quantum-mechanical two-level system that can show different decay rates due to spontaneous emission and dephasing processes.

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### Rabi oscillations

One Rabi-cycle with zero detuning ( $\omega_{drive} = \Delta \Omega$ ) finite damping  $\gamma = \Omega_R/25$ .



To rotate the Bloch vector by the angle  $\Theta$  the driving field with amplitude A has to be turned on for a time  $t_{\Theta} = \Theta/A$ .

Fig. 5. (a) Bloch sphere with trajectory of Bloch vector during resonant Rabi oscillations marked in gray (red online). Starting from the north pole the Bloch vector rotates around the  $e_x$ -axis. To rotate the Bloch vector by the angle  $\Theta$  the driving field with amplitude A has to be turned on for a time  $t_{\Theta} = \Theta/A$ . (b) Rabi oscillations of the populations  $|\bar{a}|^2$  and  $|\bar{b}|^2$  for zero detuning ( $\omega_{drive} = \Delta \Omega$ ) and damping  $\gamma = \Omega_R/25$ . The energy flops back and forth between the two oscillation modes  $x_{+}$  and  $x_{-}$ . The Rabi frequency  $\Omega_{R}$  defines the flopping rate and is given by the rescaled modulation amplitude A of the detuning  $\Delta k$ .

(c)

population

(a)

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### 1/2 and 1 Rabi cycle with no damping



### Example of spectroscopy

Dissipations in atoms: due to decays from both states, and dephasing from e.g. collisions

Application: studying the necessary laser power to carry out a transition, and the effects of power broadening on the lineshape

Can be extended to **multiple** levels





Laser frequency [GHz]

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### Find centroid ( $\Delta E$ )

Width from fit:  $\Gamma_{
m FWHM} = 3.76 \pm 0.26 \; 
m GHz$ 

Dephasing in simulation:  $\Gamma_c = 200 \text{ MHz}$ 

Width from fit:  $\Gamma_{
m FWHM} = 2.0 \pm 0.14 \; 
m GHz$ 

Dephasing in simulation:  $\Gamma_c = 70 \text{ MHz}$ 







### Alternative: Ramsey interferometry



Separated oscillatory fields method

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- A and B are state selector regions

- HF1 and HF2 have same phase
- Central peak does not depend on v



 $P_{\rm up} - P_{\rm down} = \cos \Phi = \cos \left( (\omega_L - \omega_{HF}) T \right)$ 

with detuning  $\hbar\Delta\omega=E_2-E_1-\hbar\omega$  $\frac{\Delta\omega}{\omega} \sim \frac{1}{\omega T} \sqrt{\frac{T_c}{\tau}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}}$ 

Phases matters: Coherence between between the two  $\pi/2$  pulse is required

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 $\Delta \omega$  with a precision of 1/T ( $T \approx 1$  s,  $\omega \sim 10^{15}$  s<sup>-1</sup>)





## Bound systems 1 Atoms and exotic atoms



### **Experimental challenges**



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### The ultimate spectroscopy in hydrogen

### Why 1s-2s spectroscopy?

Strong Binding  $E_n = \frac{R_\infty}{n^2}$ Smallest wave functions  $\langle r \rangle = \frac{\hbar}{Z\alpha c} \frac{n^2}{m}$ Long lifetime - narrow linewidth ⊳

Suited for 2-photon ≥ spectroscopy (Doppler-free spectroscopy)





### Natural linewidth

### **Transition Frequency**

## $\Gamma_{2S} = 1 \text{ Hz}$ $\Gamma_{2P} = 3 \cdot 10^9 \text{ Hz}$

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**Transition Frequency** 



• For one-photon spctroscopy: even though each single atom has small transition width, the measured line is broadened due to Doppler effects because of atoms v-distribution



• Two-photon spectroscopy is Doppler free



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≥

≥

⊳

(Parthey et al. 2011)



16000 -300 Verzögerung: 14000 000 us 0 µs 1200 µs 200 12000 1400 µs 100 10000 1800 µs 100 µs 1600 µs 8000 -10 6000 200 µs 4000 400 µs 1000 µs 2000 -30 -10 10 20 -20 0 Verstimmung [kHz @ 121 nm]

 $\mathbf{J}$ 

Main systematic: second-order Doppler effect

$$\omega = \omega_0 \Big( 1 \pm \frac{v}{c} + \frac{v}{2c} \Big)$$

 $\nu_{1S-2S} = 2466061413187035(10) \text{ Hz} \qquad \text{PRL1}$   $h\nu_{1S-2S} \approx \frac{3}{4} R_{\infty} + \text{QED} + kR_p$ 

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### PRL107.203001



### Modern experiments on the hydrogen atom II - the Lamb shift

### PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS

### Measurement of the Lamb Shift in Hydrogen, n=2

S. R. Lundeen and F. M. Pipkin

Lyman Laboratory of Physics, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 (Received 7 August 1980)

A measurement based on the fast-atomic-beam separated-oscillatory-field method of sub-natural linewidth spectroscopy gives, for the Lamb shift in hydrogen, \$(n=2)=1057.845(9) MHz) The result is not in good agreement with theory.

9 part-per-million measurement of Lamb shift

Determines the proton size to an accuracy of 3%







### N. Bezginov, T. Valdez, M. Horbatsch, A. Marsman, A. C. Vutha, E. A. Hessels, Science 365, 1007–1012 (2019)



## Modern experiments on the hydrogen atom II - the Lamb shift

f-δf



- Proton beam, charge excange on  $H_2$  gas, all four  $2S_{1/2}$  sublevels are populated equally
- Two microwave cavity transfers the unwanted (F=1) states to the short lived P states
- The green transitions (910 MHz) can be then probed with separated oscillatory fields (Ramsey-technique!), and the 2S atoms measured after mixing 2s-2p states with an e-field in a Lyman-α detector
- Phase offset to the drive field cancelled by rotating the apparatus



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### Exotic atoms as simple atomic probes



$$E_n \simeq \frac{Z^2 m^*}{m_e} \frac{R_\infty}{n^2} + \text{QED}(\alpha, \dots) + k m_2^3 R_Z^2 + \varepsilon_1$$



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### hadronic + $\varepsilon_{\rm BSM}$ ...
# Spectroscopy of exotic atoms

### X-ray spectroscopy of atomic cascades





Measuring the energy of characteristic X-rays emitted during cascades

- only negative exotic particles
- MeV-scaled energies with high Z
- broad resonances (short lifetime), low instrument resolution





- only if state lifetime > ns (ground state or metastable states),
- accessible by lasers
- challenging: only a few atoms are at hand
- can lead to measure the ultimate precision





# Hadronic and leptonic exotic atoms



Hadrons, on the other hand interact strongly!

This results in short lifetimes when wave functions of bound states overlap









# Muonic H, He



# X-ray spectroscopy of high-Z muonic atoms



• For the lightest muonic atoms, some transitions are in laser frequencies!

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# Muonic hydrogen





### **Experimental method**



Form  $\mu p$  by stopping  $\mu^-$  in 1 mbar H<sub>2</sub> gas

Fire laser to induce the 2S-2P transition

### **Detect the 2 keV X-rays from 2P-1S decay**



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# The CREMA experiment at PSI



Fire laser to induce the 2S-2P transition

Measure the 2 keV Xrays from 2P-1S decay



Pohl et al., Nature 466, 213 (2010)

- ▶ Produce many  $\mu^-$  at keV energy
- ▶ Form  $\mu p$  by stopping  $\mu^-$  in 1 mbar H2 gas
- About 1% ends up in metastable 2S state



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# The proton charge radius puzzle





# Whirlwind of new analysis, measurements, theoretical advances



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### Present status and outcome



Pohl et al., Nature 466, 213 (2010) Antognini et al., Science 339, 417 (2013) Pohl et al., Science 353, 669 (2016) Beyer et al., Science 358, 79 (2017) 2S-2P N. Bezginov et al., Science 365, 1007-1012 (2019) Xiong, W., Gasparian, A., Gao, H. *et al.Nature* 575, 147–150 (2019) Fleurbaey, et al. PRL 120.18 (2018)

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### 5 new experiments

# The ETH/PSI experiment seems to be confirmed

# The new Rydberg constant $R_{\infty} = \frac{\alpha^2 m_e c}{2h}$ $\frac{\delta R_{\infty}}{R_{\infty}} = 1.9 \times 10^{-12}$



# Hyperfine splitting of µp - HyperMu experiment

PI: A. Antognini



• From HFS → magnetic (Zemach) radii

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• 2S-2P μp • 2S-2P µd

Energy

- 1S-HFS μp



• 2S-2P μ<sup>3</sup>He, μ<sup>4</sup>He • 1S-HFS µ<sup>3</sup>He





### Goal of the HFS measurement in muonic hydrogen

### Goal:

Measure the 1S-HFS in µp with 1-2 ppm accuracy

### Impact:

- Two-photon-exchange (TPE) with 3x10<sup>-4</sup> rel. accuracy ₽
- Zemach radius and polarizability contributions

$$\Delta E_{\rm HFS}^{\rm th} = 182.819(10) - \underbrace{1.301R_Z + 0.064(21)}_{\rm TPE} + \cdots$$
 r

$$\mathbf{R}_{\mathbf{Z}} = \int d^3 \vec{r} \left| \vec{r} \right| \int d^3 \vec{r'} \rho_E(\vec{r} - \vec{r'}) \boldsymbol{\rho}_{\mathbf{M}}(\vec{r'})$$



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 $\mathrm{neV}$ 



# The HyperMu experiment at PSI



By plotting the number of Xrays versus laser frequency we obtain a resonance



### Experimental setup:

- μp atoms thermalises and deexcite to the F=0 level of the ground state
- A laser pulse excite the transition  $\mu p(F = 0) + \gamma \rightarrow \mu p(F = 1)$
- The F=1 state is quenched to F=0  $\mu p(F = 1) + H_2 \rightarrow \mu p(F = 0) + H_2 + E_{kin}$
- The  $\mu$ p having larger kinetic energy reach the target walls and produce X-rays

# Scintillator μ. H<sub>2</sub> gas 50 K `+↓↑ F=1

laser

μp

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m=0

m=-1

m=+1

F=0



# Muonium





Fundamental constants

 $R_{\infty}$ ,  $\alpha$ ,  $m_{\mu}$  $\mu_{\mu}/\mu_{p}$ 



# Test of QED and fundamental symmetries $q_{\mu}/q_{e}$

## Physics motivation for Mu spectroscopy





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### 1s-2s - V. Meyer et al., PRL 84(6) (2000) HFS - W. Liu et al 82, 711 (1999)



# Muonium - probing the SM and beyond



### Free fall of Mu

Test of the Weak Equivalence Principle by measuring the coupling of gravity to:

- fundamental parameters of SM, in the absence of masses generated by the strong interaction
- second generation (anti)fermions of the SM only possible probe of this sector



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# Disclaimer on "exotic gravity"

- Causes more problems than it solves
- Many indirect constrains exist on matter/antimatter (kaon oscillations, gravitational redshift) Short summary: <u>SciPost Phys.</u> <u>Proc. 5, 031 (2021)</u>
- No constrains exist yet with muons or in general second vs first generation, in the absence of strong binding energies
- Not needed to invent exotic gravity for an anomaly



- Y. Stadnik PRL 131, 011001 (2023)
- assuming 10% precision on g of Mu
- Potential originates from virtual ultralight scalar bosons

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<mark>∕lu</mark> Itralight scalar bosons

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) <mark>⁄Iu</mark> Itralight scalar bosons



# Tests of the weak equivalence principle (WEP)

### Foundation of GR. Many formulations since Galilei:

Usually describing that he outcome of any local experiment conducted in gravitational field (local g acceleration) must be the same than in an accelerating lab, where a=g.



Needs to be tested in different experiments sensitive to one of the above!

### Torsion pendula



### Most recent (Eöt-wash group, Washington, US)

### $\eta(\text{Be},\text{Ti}) = [0.3 \pm 1.8] \times 10^{-13}$

Phys. Rev. Lett. 100, (2008)

### Satellite experiments



 $\eta(\text{Ti,Pt}) = [-1.5 \pm 2.3(\text{stat}) \pm 1.5(\text{syst})] \times 10^{-15}$ 

Phys. Rev. Lett. 129, 121102, 2022

### Tests on the largest and smallest scales



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### Various experimental consequences:

▶ Universality of free fall:  $\eta(1,2) = 2 \frac{|g_1 - g_2|}{|g_1 + g_2|}$ 

Local Lorentz invariance

Local position invariance: universality of clocks, lack of variation of fundamental constants

 $\eta(^{85}\text{Rb},^{87}\text{Rb}) = [1.6 \pm 1.8(\text{stat}) \pm 3.4(\text{syst})] \times 10^{-12}$ Phys. Rev. Lett. 125, 191101, 2020

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# The challenges of measuring Mu gravity

### Not possible with existing Mu sources



Why it might be possible now



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### Mu lifetime of 2.2 µs

 $\Delta x = \frac{1}{2}gt^2 < 1 \text{ nm}$ 

We developed a novel Mu beam amenable to interferometry



# Characterisation of the new superthermal muonium



Lowest mean velocity muonium source ever made:  $v_x \approx 2175$  m/s Velocity distribution much narrower than Maxwell-Boltzmann:  $\sigma_{v_x} \approx 70 \text{ m/s}$ Ballistic diffusion  $v_{\text{diff}} \approx 50 \text{ m/s}$ Yields similar amounts to the best 300 K sources  $R(\mu^+ \rightarrow Mu_{vac}) = 10\%$ 



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### Time spectra of target emission





# LEMING Principle







# Main design parameters of LEMING



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Sign of g in ~1 day overall 1% sensitivity @ PSI world's highest intensity cw muons



### Hadronic exotic atoms

Experimental methods depends a lot on the lifetime





# Antiprotonic helium



# $m_{\bar{p}}/m_e$ and CPT test to ~ 8 × 10<sup>-10</sup>



# Precision laser spectroscopy of antiprotonic helium at CERN





# Precision laser spectroscopy of antiprotonic helium at CERN







## Sub-Doppler 2-photon laser spectroscopy









### Doppler-reduced pHe spectroscopy at CERN



The Doppler width:

$$\Delta \nu_{\rm finem} = 2\sqrt{2{\rm ln}2} \ \nu_0 \sqrt{\frac{k_BT}{Mc^2}}$$

can be reduced by a factor:

$$\frac{|\nu_1 - \nu_2|}{\nu_1 + \nu_2}$$



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### *Nature* 475, 7357 (2011). *Science* 354.6312 (2016).





# Improvement in pHe lineshapes over 7 years



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### 15 K 2-photon

### 15 K, 1 photon



### Antiproton mass, CPT test, new phycics

$$\Delta E \approx \frac{m_{\bar{p}}}{m_e} R_{\infty} Q_p^2 \left(\frac{1}{n'^2} - \frac{1}{n^2}\right) + 3\text{-body} + \text{QED+hadronic}$$

$$m_{\bar{p}}/m_e = 1836.2$$

Comparison of p and p̄ mass & charge (CPT test) with trap results to  $5 \times 10^{-10}$ 

$$\omega_0 \sim m_{\bar{p}} Q_{\bar{p}}^2$$

$$\frac{\delta m_{\bar{p}}}{m_{\bar{p}}} = -2\frac{\delta Q_{\bar{p}}}{Q_{\bar{p}}}$$

Penning trap: 
$$\omega_c \sim Q_{ar p}/m_{ar p}$$

$$\frac{\delta m_{\bar{p}}}{m_{\bar{p}}} = \frac{\delta Q_{\bar{p}}}{Q_{\bar{p}}}$$

S. Ulmer, Nature, 524,(2015)



 $rac{m_e}{m_{ar{p}}}\cdot rac{m_p}{m_C}$ Assuming CPT, me to rel. precision  $8 \times 10^{-10}$ Best result from trap: 3 × 10<sup>-11</sup> frac. precision Sturm et al. Nature 2014 **Constrain on exotic forces**  $m_{e}$  (keV/c<sup>2</sup>) 10 100 - fifth forces on subp<sup>\*</sup>He' n=36→34 10-5 angstrom length 10 excluded scales as | a. 10 p4He n-33→3 104 PRL 120, (2018) 10 9 HD J. Mol. Spect. 300, 65 (2014)

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### 1526734 (15)



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# Pionic helium



# $m_{\pi}/m_e$ to 10 ppb

### **Pionic** atoms



Pion: simplest (lightest) hadronic system Mediates the nuclear force at low energy





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### Forms short lived exotic atoms, ending up in the nucleus after fast cascades



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### Low n (np to 1s)

### Measurement of the pion mass



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### Laser spectroscopy?



### Pionic helium spectroscopy experiment at PSI



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# First laser excitation of a mesonic atom



- ▶ three transitions tried **one found**!  $(17, 16) \rightarrow (17, 15)$
- Next steps: repeating experiment in low density targets
- ▶ find narrow **narrow transition** (17, 16)→(16,15)

(Accepted by Nature)







