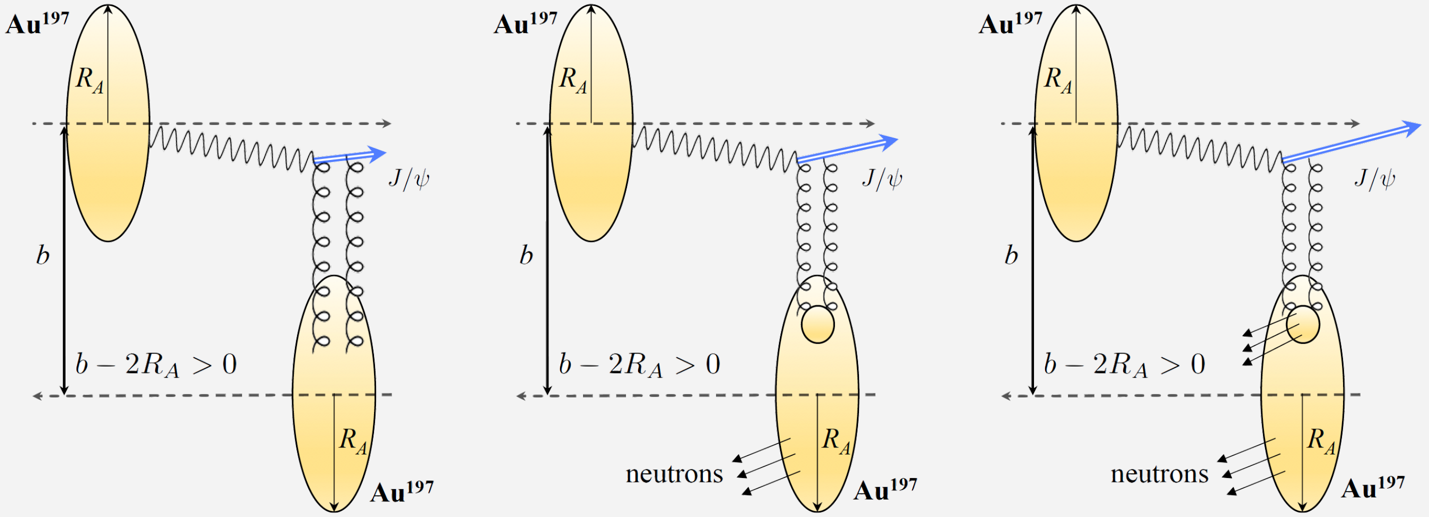
Observation of strong nuclear suppression in exclusive J/ψ photoproduction in Au+Au UPCs at RHIC

Kong Tu (BNL)
for the STAR Collaboration

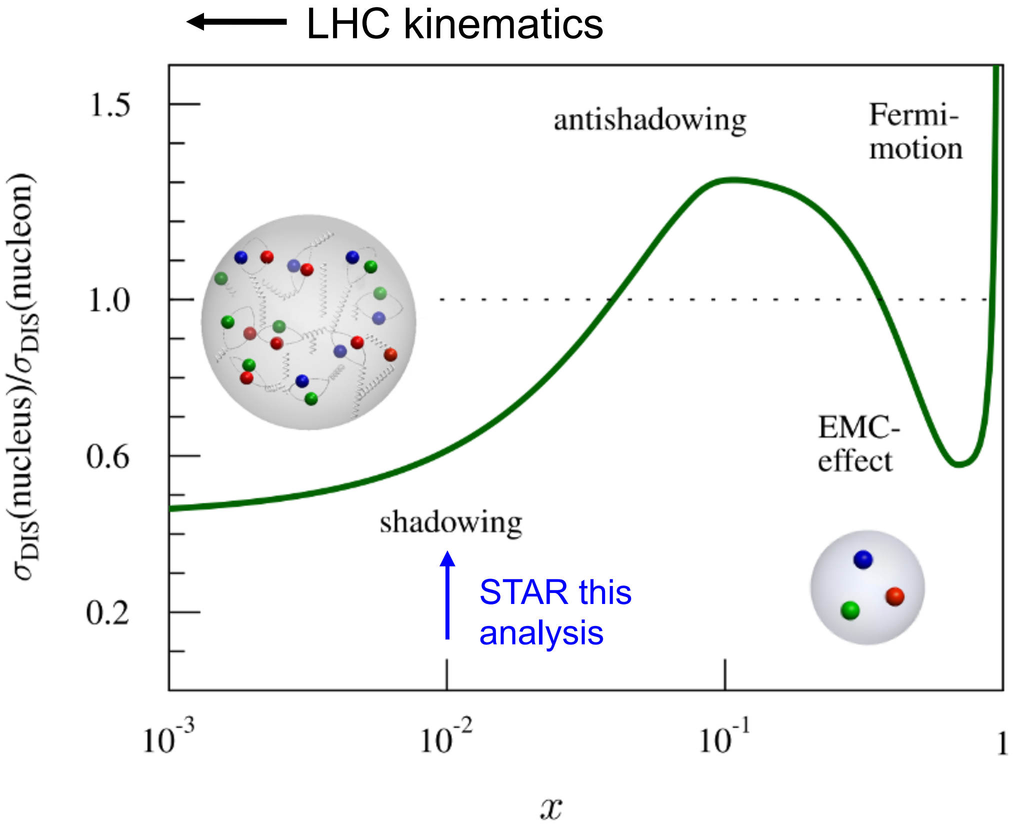
Supported in part by
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Office of Science



(a) Coherent with nucleus stays intact (b) Incoherent with elastic nucleon (c) Incoherent with nucleon dissociative

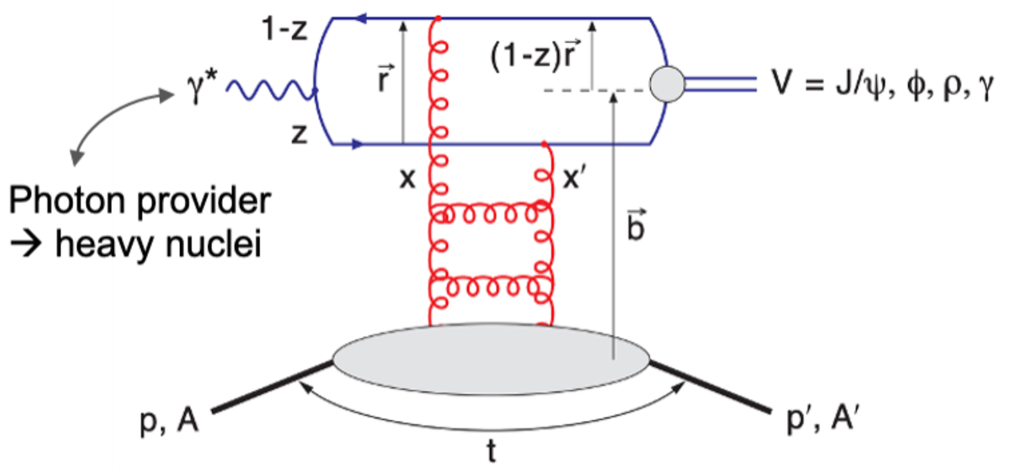
Motivation

- Physics mechanism of **modified parton densities** in heavy nuclei - one of the most pressing questions in both **hot and cold QCD community**.
- Photoproduction of Vector Mesons, e.g., J/ψ, is considered a **clean probe** to the nuclear parton structures.



J/ψ photoproduction

At Leading Order, 2-gluon exchange

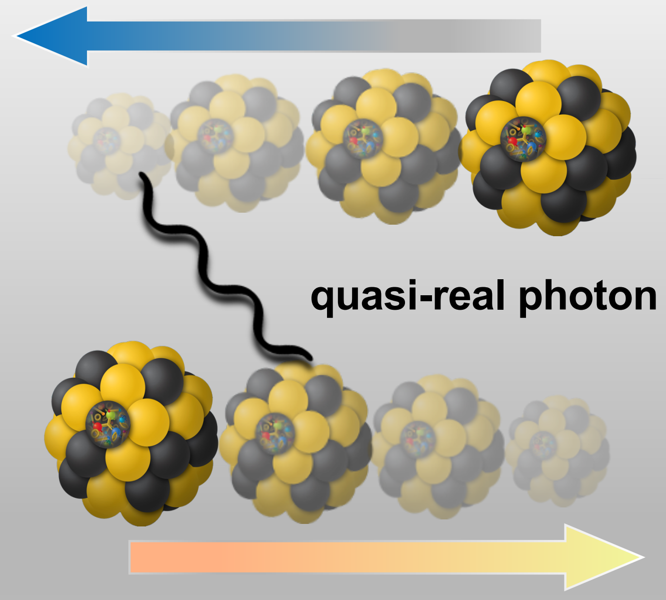


Coherent (target stays intact)	**Incoherent (target breaks up)**
Average nuclear parton density	Event-by-event parton density fluctuations
Momentum transfer (t) and transverse spatial position (b) are Fourier transforms of each other;	

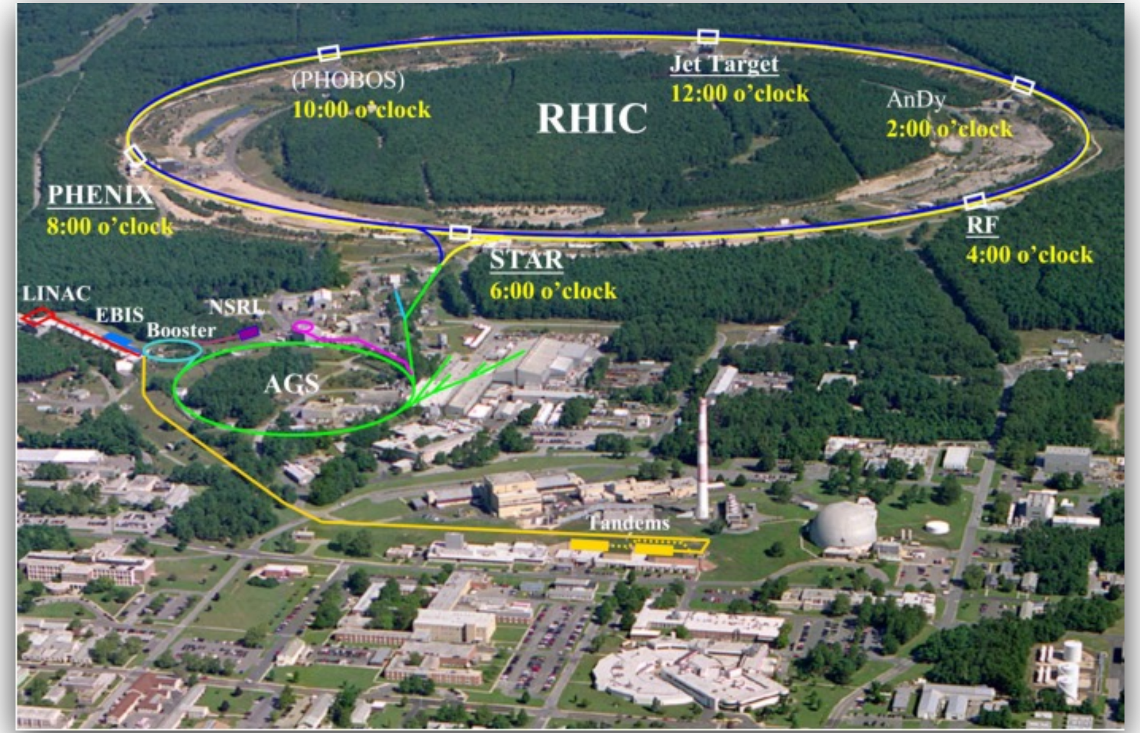
See Z. Tu's talk for gluon spatial distribution at ePIC *Mar 30, 2023, 12:10 PM*.

What can the **coherent** and **incoherent** J/ψ photoproduction at x ~ 0.01 tell us?

Ultra-Peripheral Collisions at RHIC



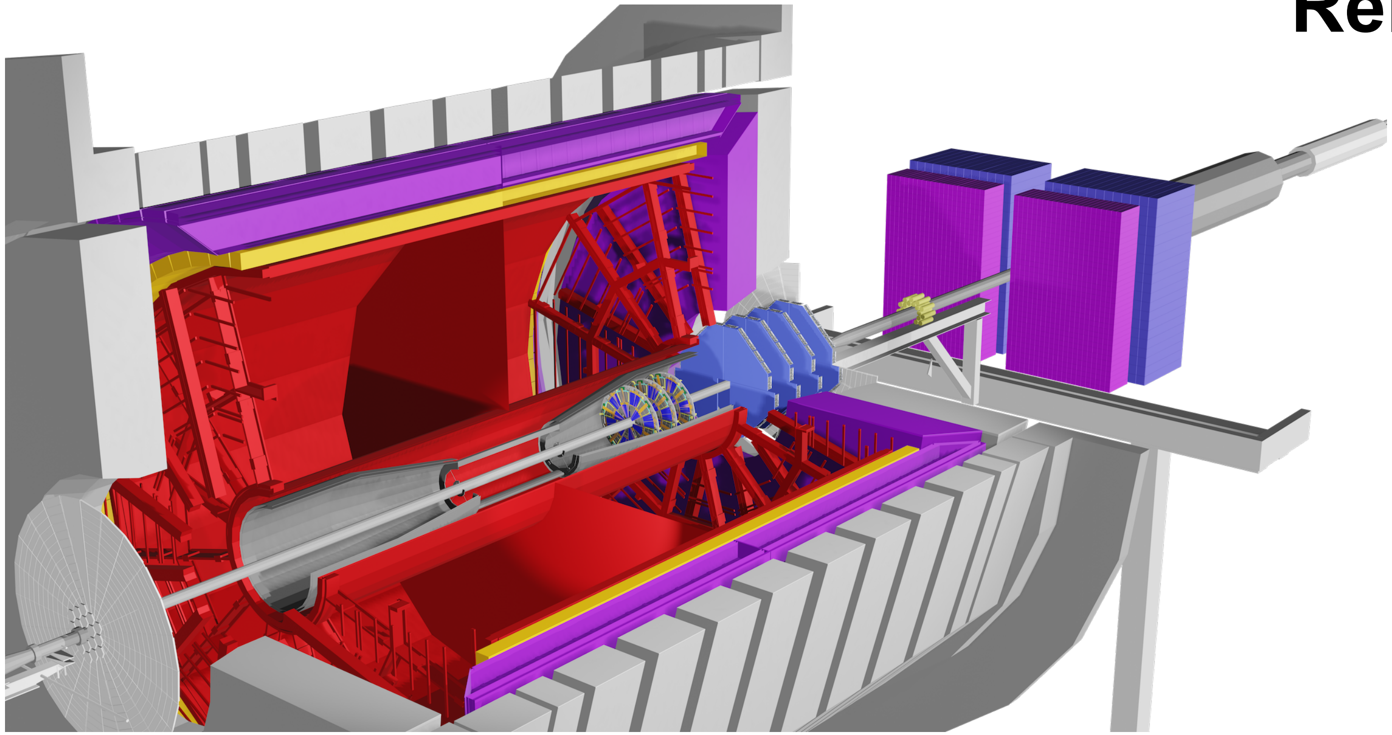
collisions that don't "collide"



U^{238}, Au^{197}, Zr^{96} , Ru^{96}, d^2 at 200 GeV and *pp* at 510 GeV

A versatile program with different species, energy, and polarization.

STAR experiment



Since 2022, STAR has forward detectors ($2.5 < \eta < 4.0$), which would be crucial to the RHIC Run 23-25 physics program

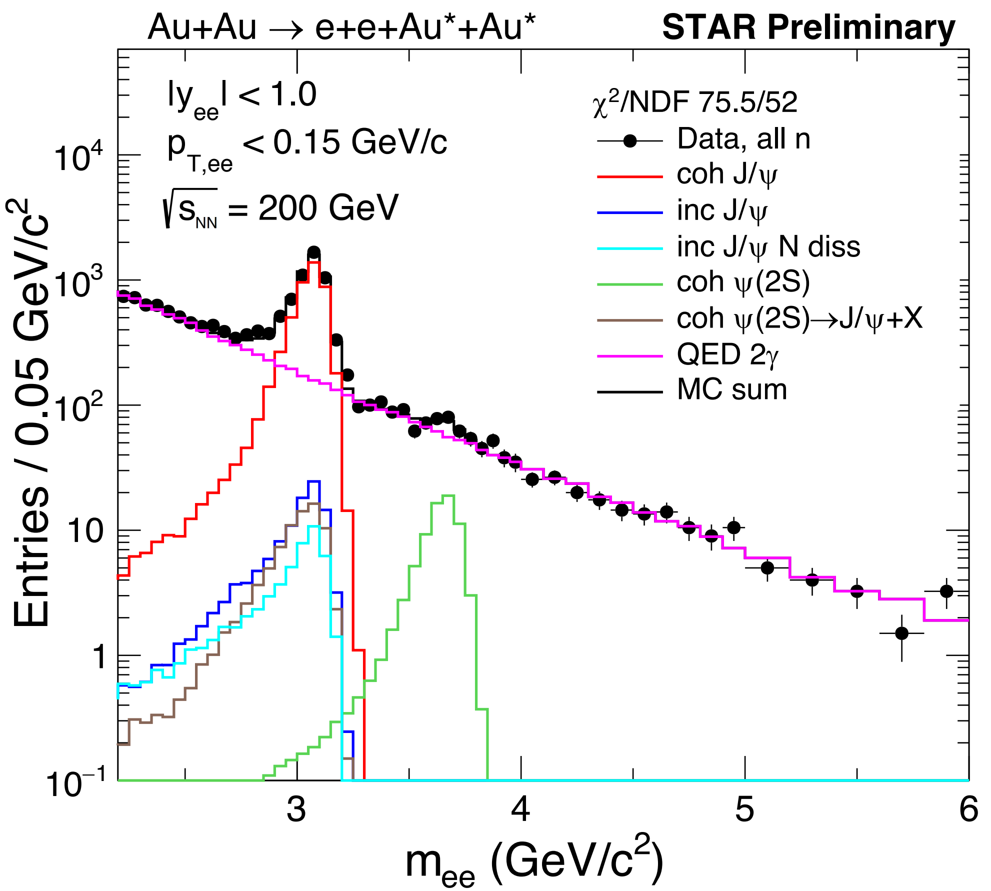
Relevant central detectors

Time Projection Chamber (TPC)

Time-Of-Flight detector (TOF)

Barrel EM Calorimeter (BEMC)

Measuring J/ψ in 200 GeV Au+Au UPCs



Data analysis:

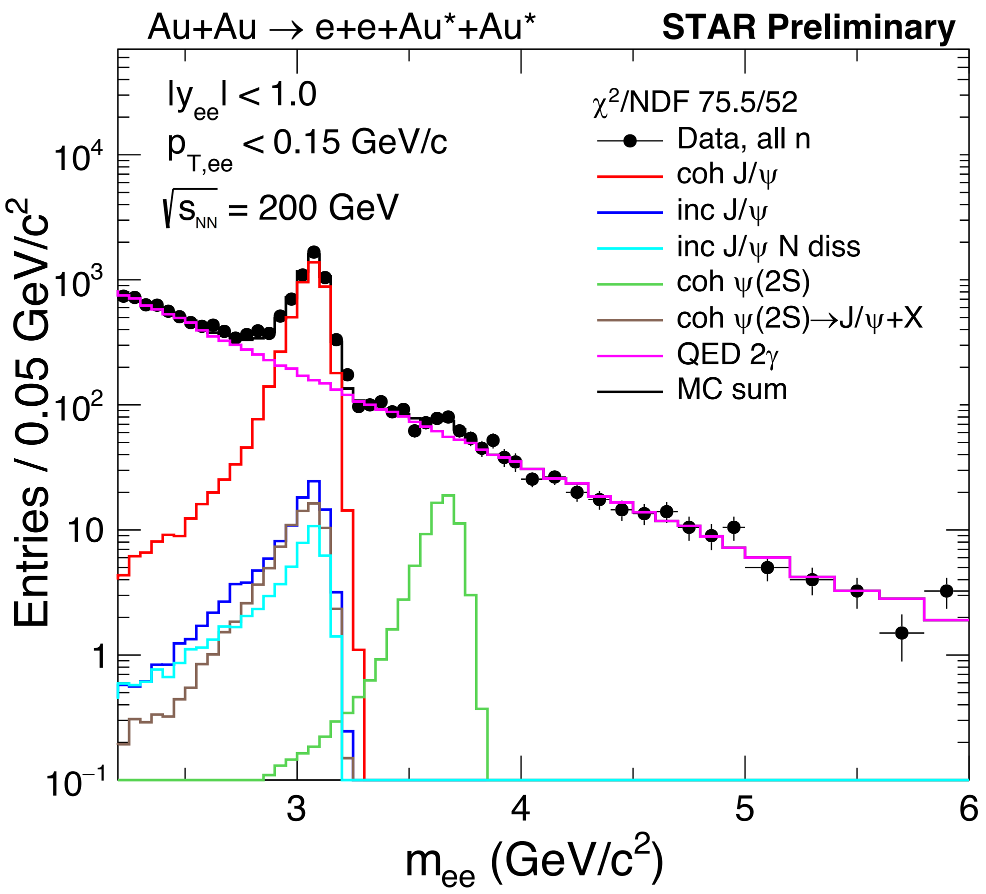
$J/\psi \rightarrow e^+e^-$

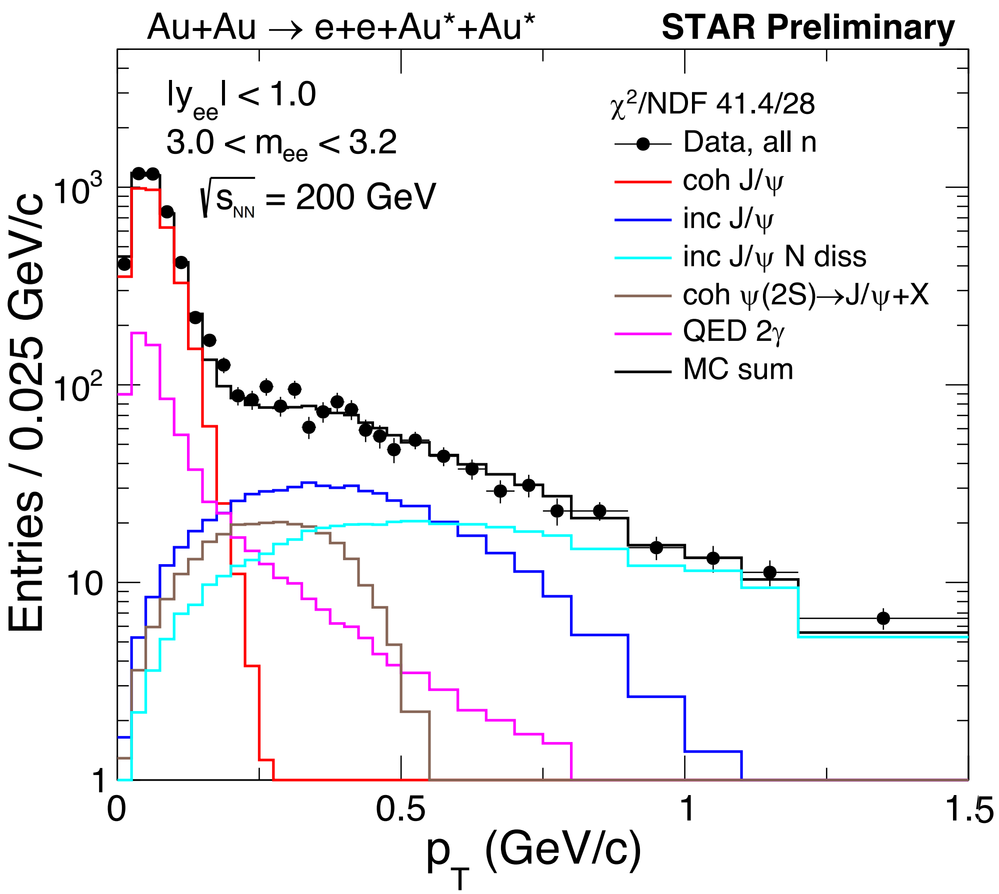
(|y| < 1.0 for J/ψ, electrons within |η|<1.0)

STAR PID (e.g., TPC, TOF) capability ensures high purity of electron candidates.

Different templates from STARLight and H1 *ep* data are used to describe the signal and backgrounds.

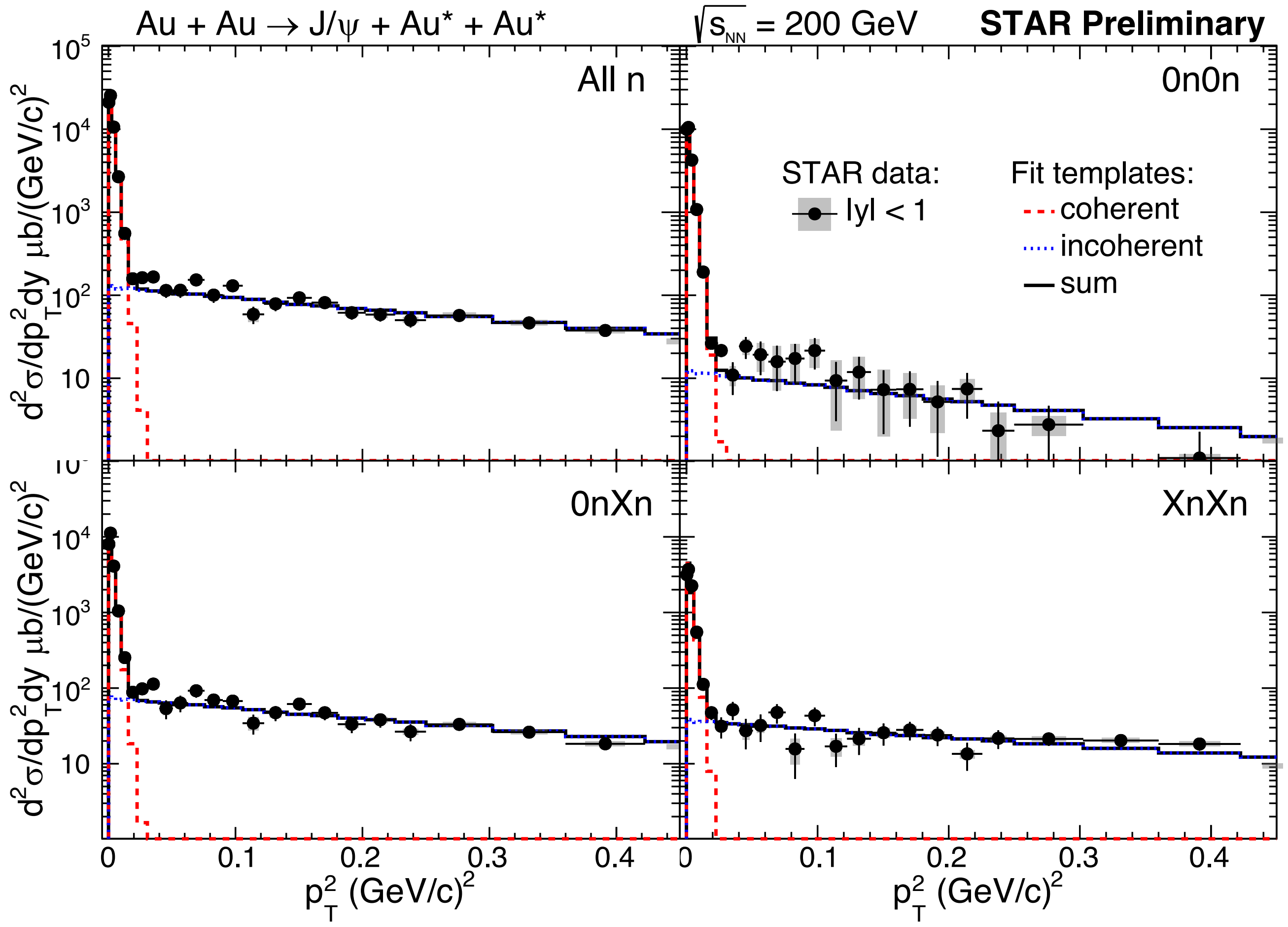
Measuring J/ψ in 200 GeV Au+Au UPCs





when $Q^2 \sim 0$, p_T of J/ψ is directly related to momentum transfer ($t \sim p_T^2$)

Separating coherent and incoherent J/ψ



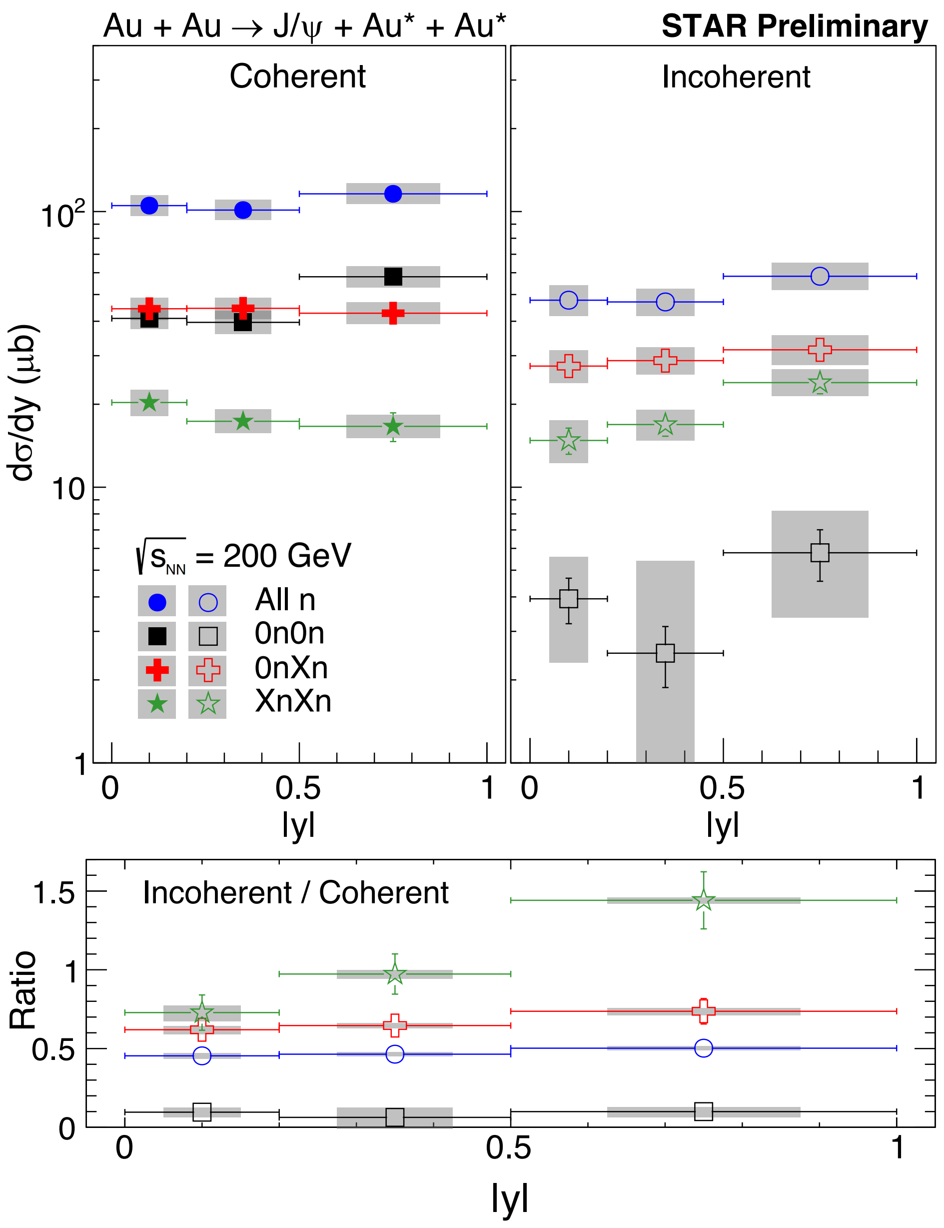
- Low momentum transfer (p_T^2) is dominated by **coherent** photoproduction.
- For incoherent production at low p_T^2, it is extrapolated using different templates.
- These differences, however, are small to the total incoherent production cross section.

First measurement of y-dependence of J/ψ at RHIC

❖ Important measurements to constrain theoretical models

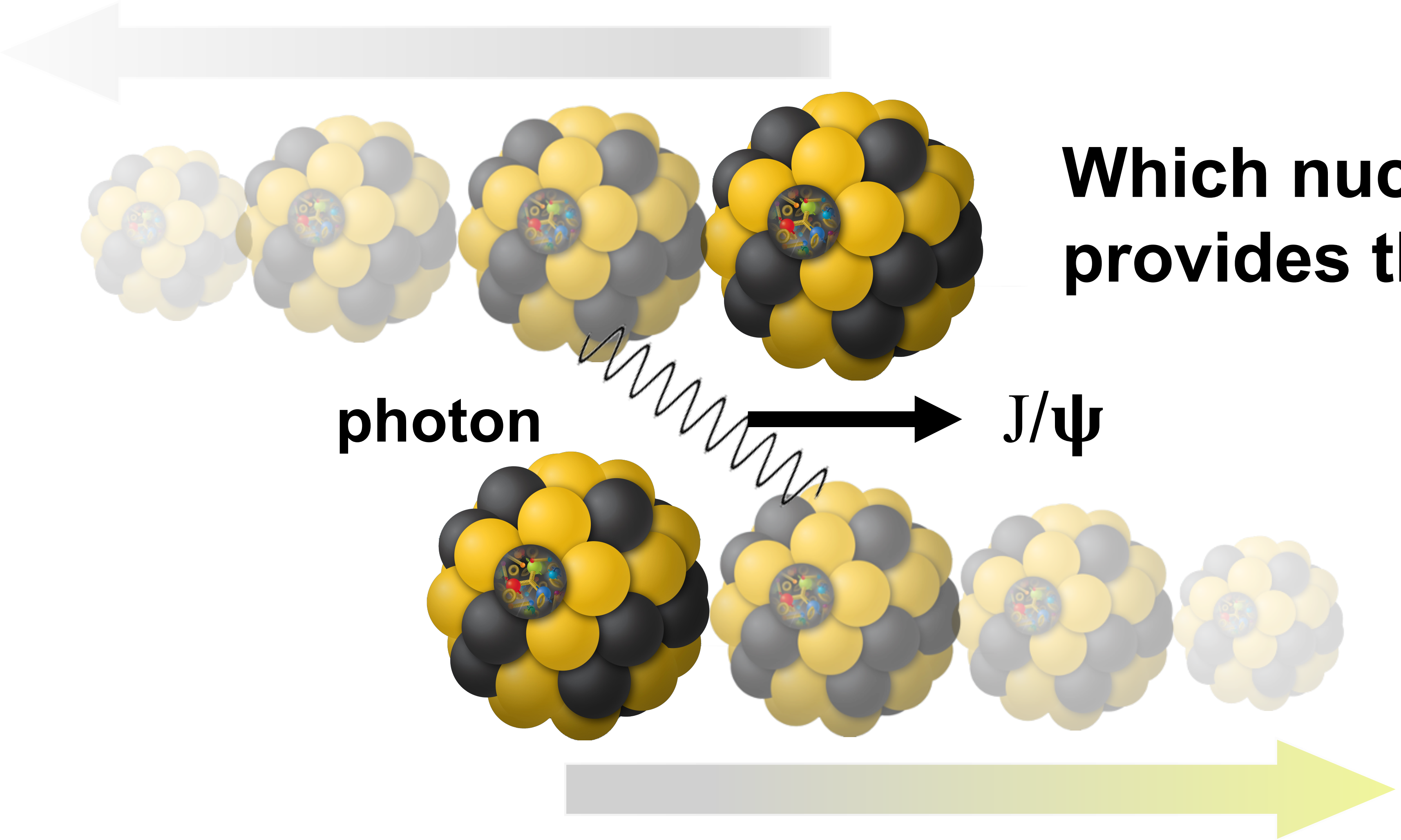
❖ Ratio of incoherent to coherent cross section largely cancels uncertainties both experimentally and theoretically

❖ New studies show this ratio is sensitive to nuclear structure and nuclear deformation (by W. Zhao et al. at a recent INT workshop)



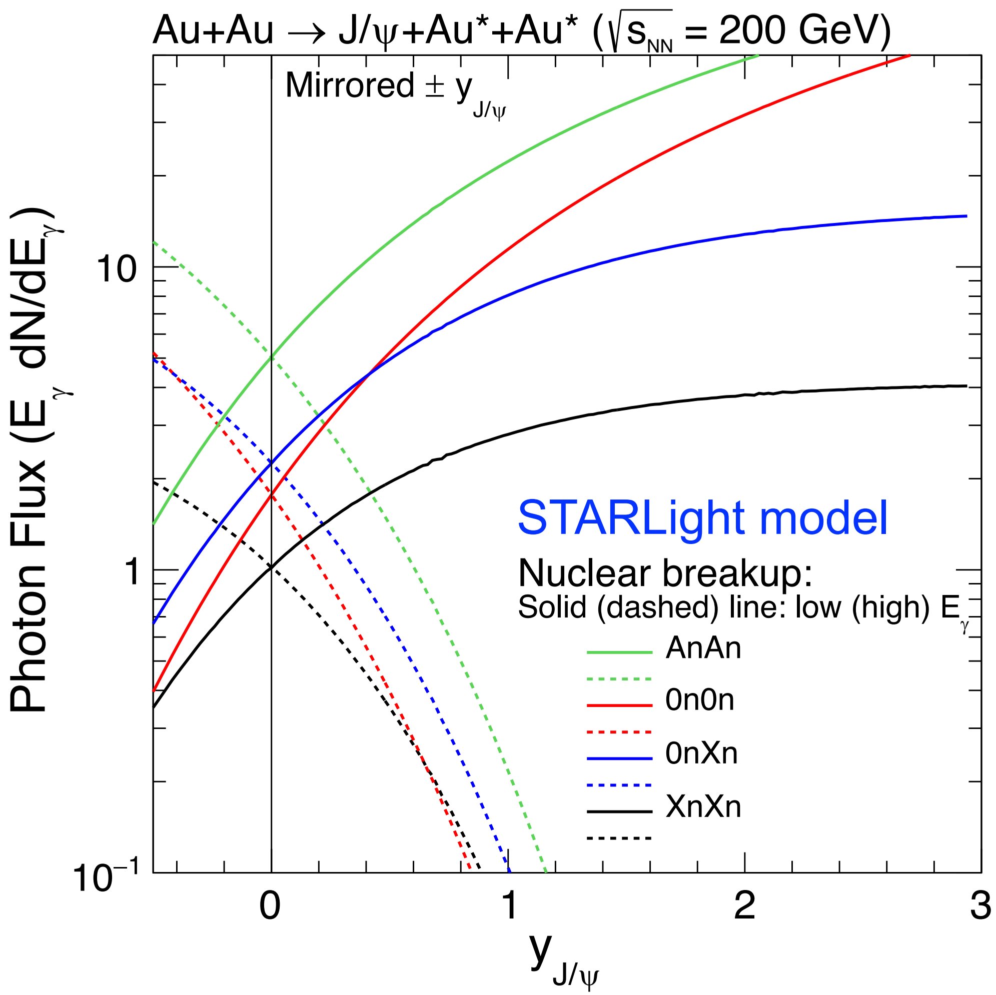
New

AuAu UPCs: two-source ambiguity



Which nucleus provides the photon?

Photon flux and neutron emissions for coherent J/ψ



- If VM at rapidity $y \neq 0$, there is a high energy photon (k_1) candidate and a low energy photon (k_2) one;
- Different photon energies correspond to different flux factors (~number of photons)
- Different neutron emission classes associate with different flux factors

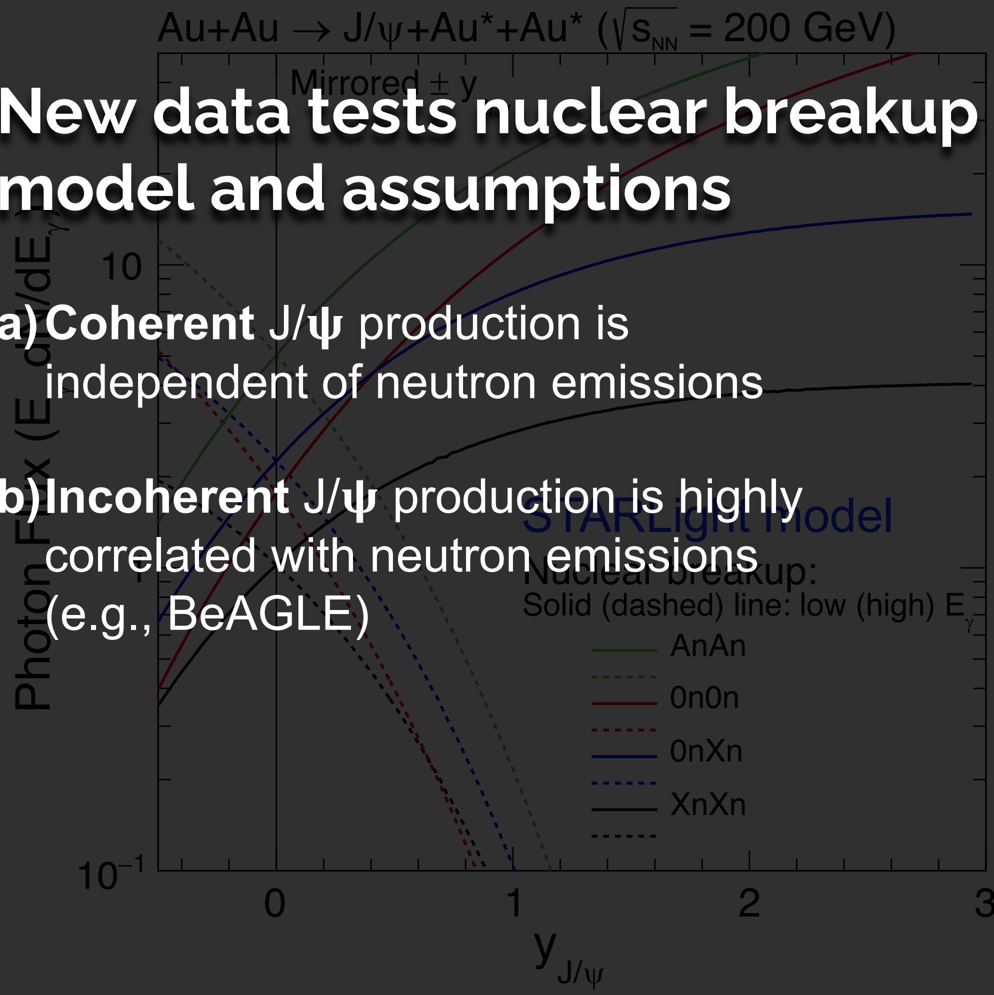
Neutron classes:

- **0n0n:** no neutron on either side
- **0nXn:** >=1 neutron on one side
- **XnXn:** >=1 neutron on both sides

STAR

Photon flux and neutron e… s

New



New data tests nuclear breakup model and assumptions

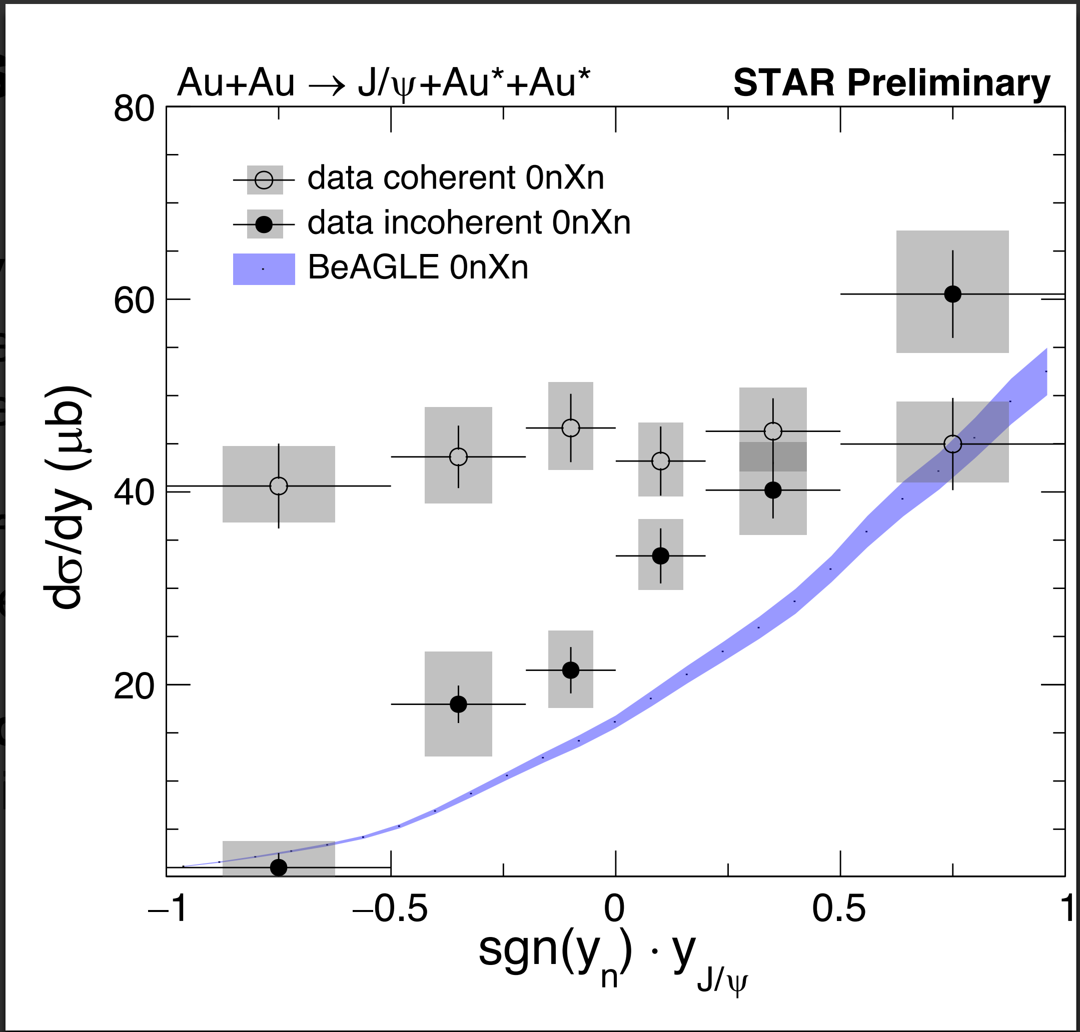
a) **Coherent** J/ψ production is independent of neutron emissions

b) **Incoherent** J/ψ production is highly correlated with neutron emissions (e.g., BeAGLE)

➢ If V… ene… ene…

➢ Diff… diff…

➢ **Eac…** emi…



- **XnXn:** >=1 neutron on both sides

Reference to BeAGLE: *Phys. Rev. D* 106 (2022) 1, 012007

STAR

Neutron emission helps resolve the two-source ambiguity

$$d\sigma^{AnBn}/dy = \Phi^{AnBn}_{T.\gamma}(k_1)\sigma_{\gamma^*+\mathrm{Au}\to\mathrm{J}/\psi+\mathrm{Au}}(k_1) + \Phi^{AnBn}_{T.\gamma}(k_2)\sigma_{\gamma^*+\mathrm{Au}\to\mathrm{J}/\psi+\mathrm{Au}}(k_2)$$

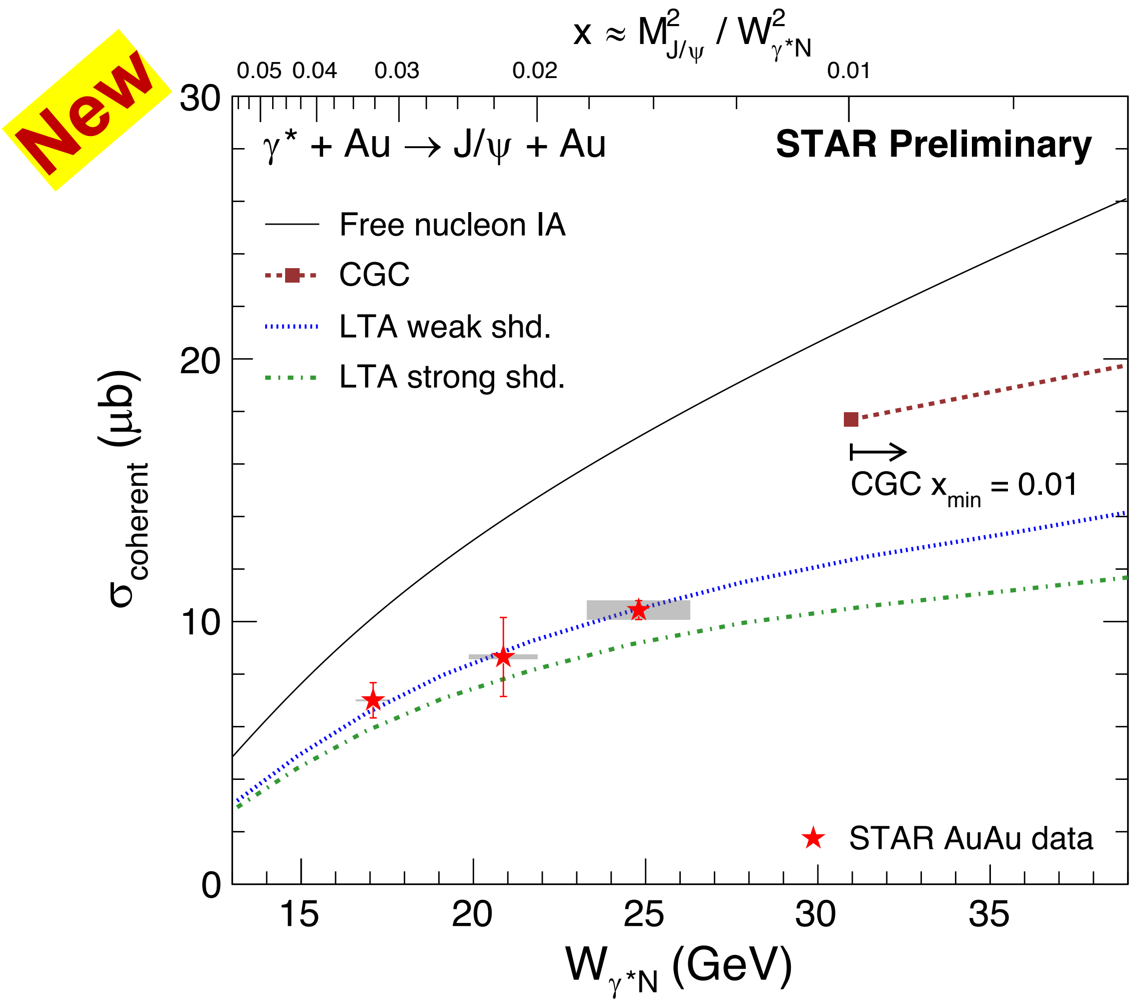
Measurements (slide 9) | Photon fluxes (slide 11) | Unknowns

Eur. Phys. J C (2014) 74:2942

See also CMS talk on Tuesday by Z. Ye

Need to measure differential cross section in *y* and in neutron emission classes; **at least 2 equations to solve 2 unknowns.**

Coherent J/ψ cross section vs energy W



(center-of-mass energy between photon and nucleon)

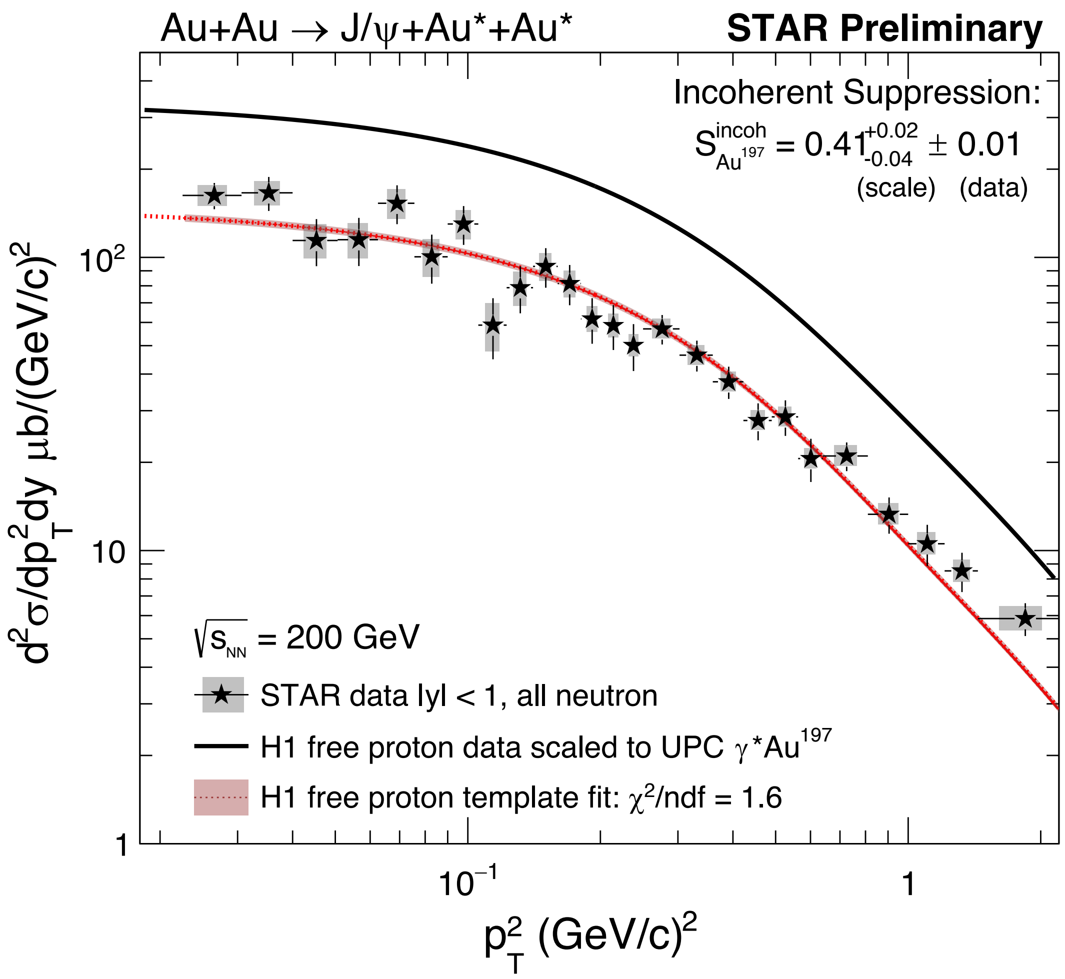
- ❖ STAR kinematics is unique to the low *W* region, while gluon saturation models generally focus on higher energy.
- ❖ Shadowing model LTA describes the data very well. **The suppression factor (data/IA) is ~ 60%**
- ❖ Sensitive to the transition region between high-x and low-x.

Reference to CGC: *Phys. Rev. D* 106 (2022) 7, 074019
Reference to LTA: 1) Guzey, Strikman, Zhalov, EPJC 74 (2014) 7, 2942 2. Strikman, Tverskoy, Zhalov, PLB 626 (2005) 72-79

New

Incoherent J/ψ cross section vs p_T^2

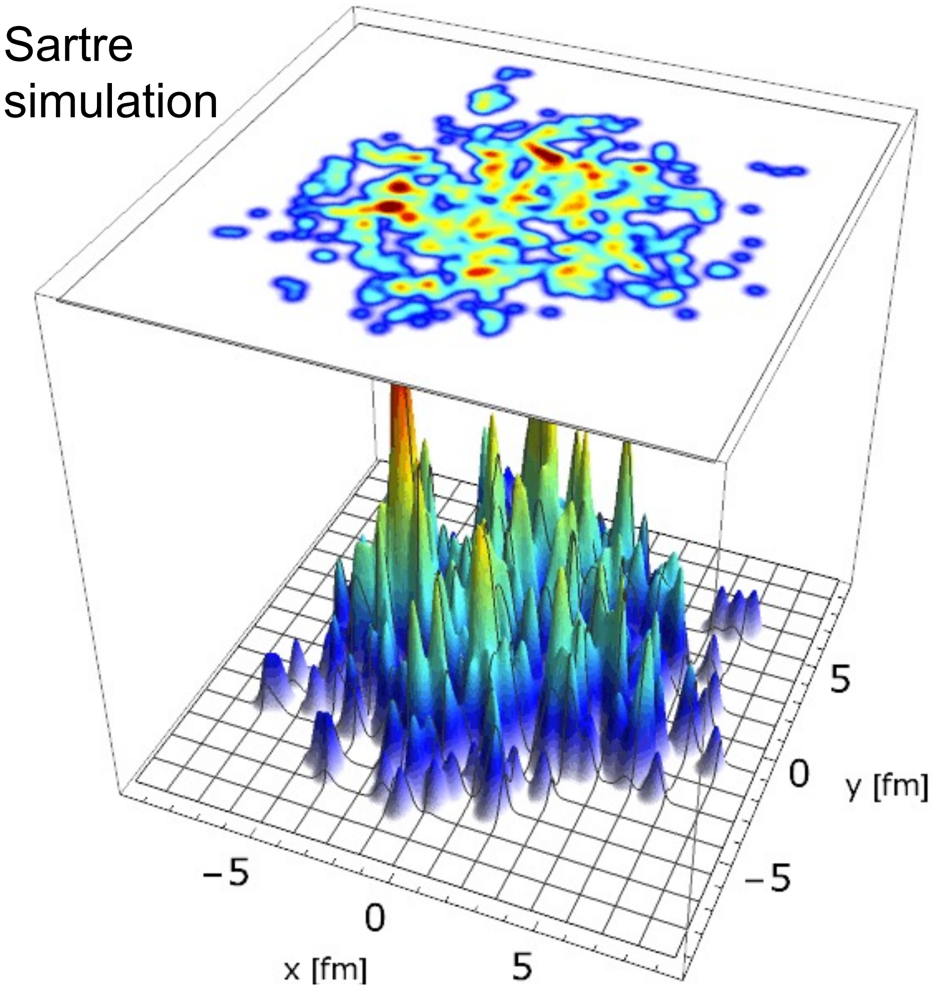
- Compared to the H1 data with free proton. **The suppression factor ~ is 40%.** Stronger than that for coherent production.
- Models have found that the H1 data supports **sub-nucleonic fluctuation**. *[Phys. Rev. Lett. 117 (2016) 5, 052301]*
- STAR data shows the bound nucleon has a similar shape in p_T^2 as the free proton, indicating **similar sub-nucleonic fluctuation in heavy nuclei.** *[Phys. Rev. D 106 (2022) 7, 074019]*



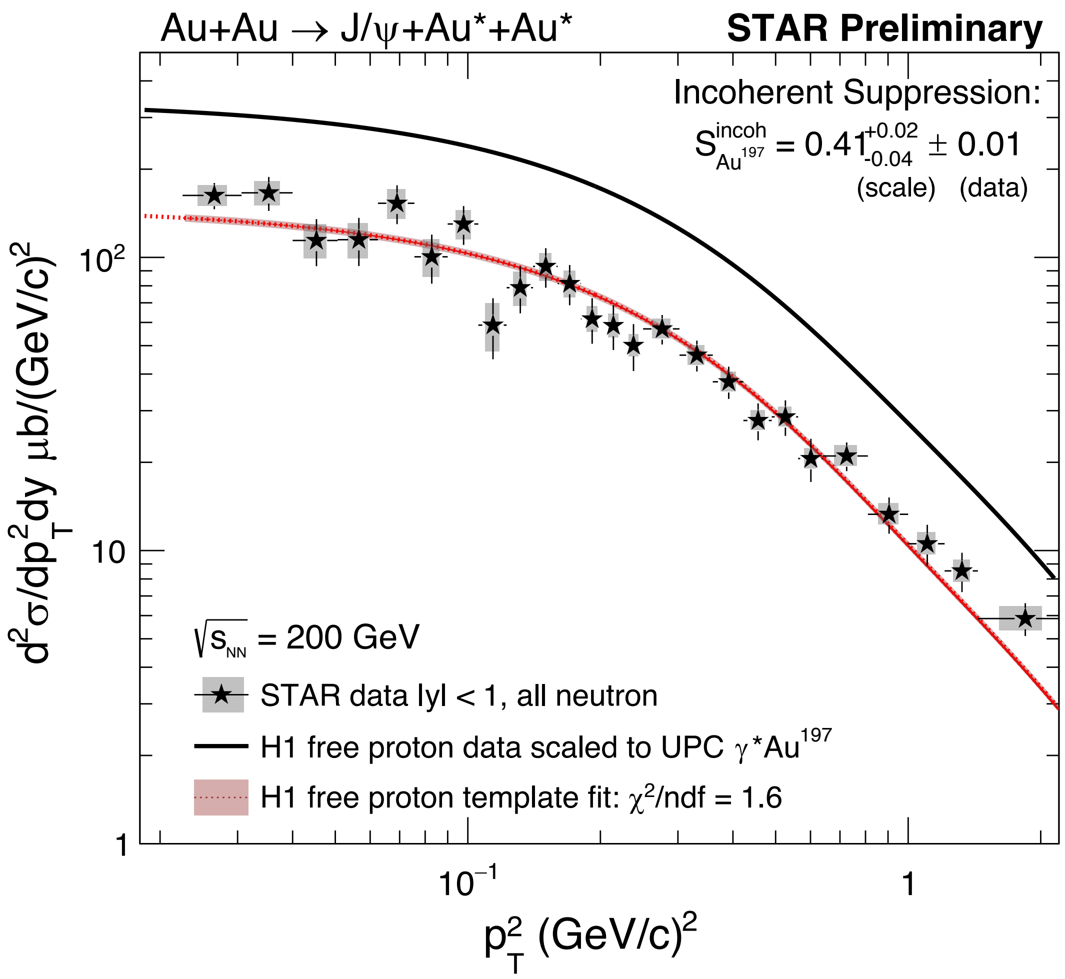
Incoherent J/ψ cross section vs p_T^2

New

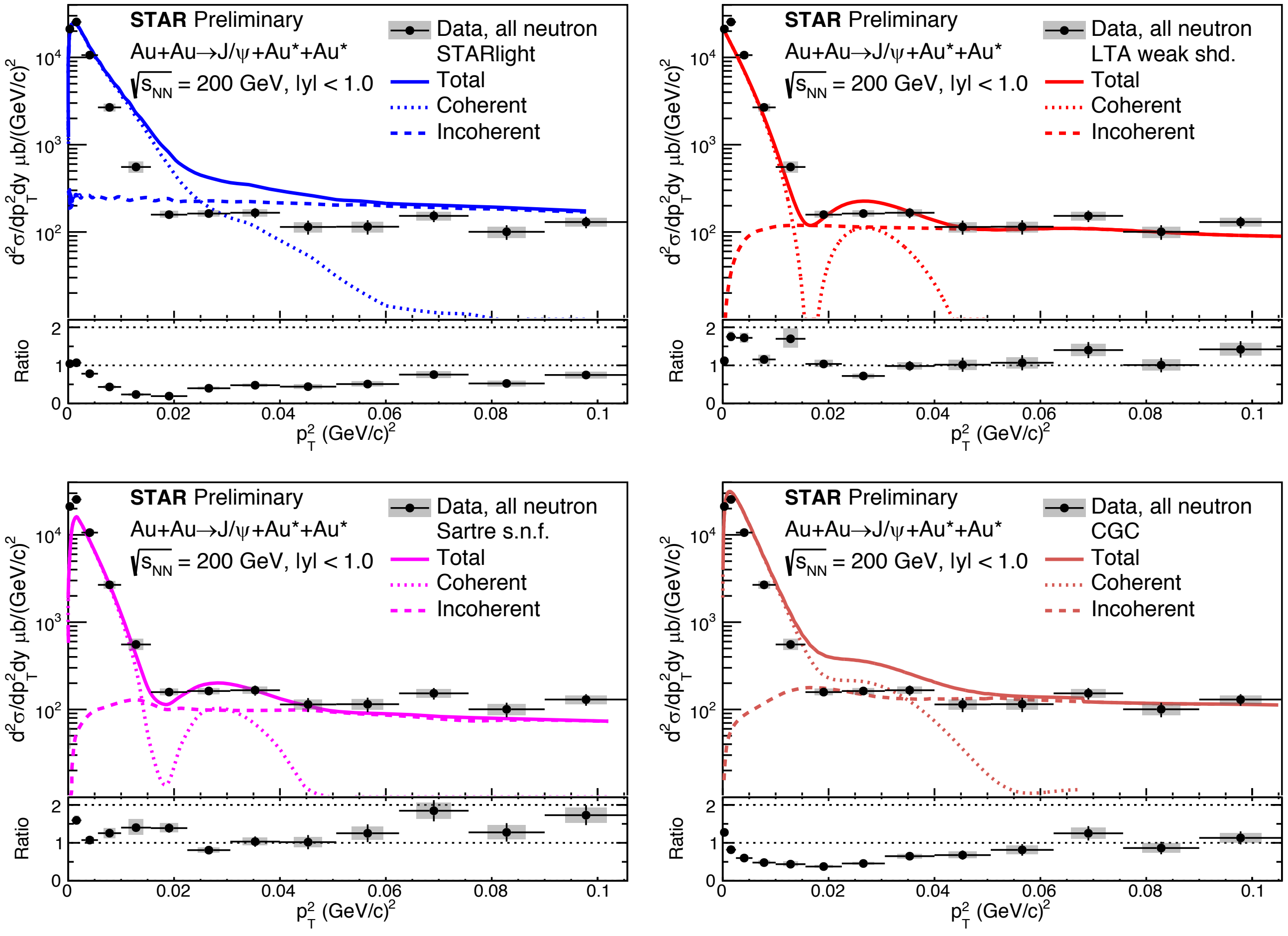
Sartre simulation



[made by A. Kumar (IIT, Delhi)]



A full picture: coherent + incoherent



- ❖ STAR data compared with four theory/MC models.
- ❖ Sartre with sub-nucleonic fluctuation (s.n.f) & CGC are similar models but different by a normalization factor ~ 0.65.
- ❖ **Question to theorists: Why?**

NLO calculation

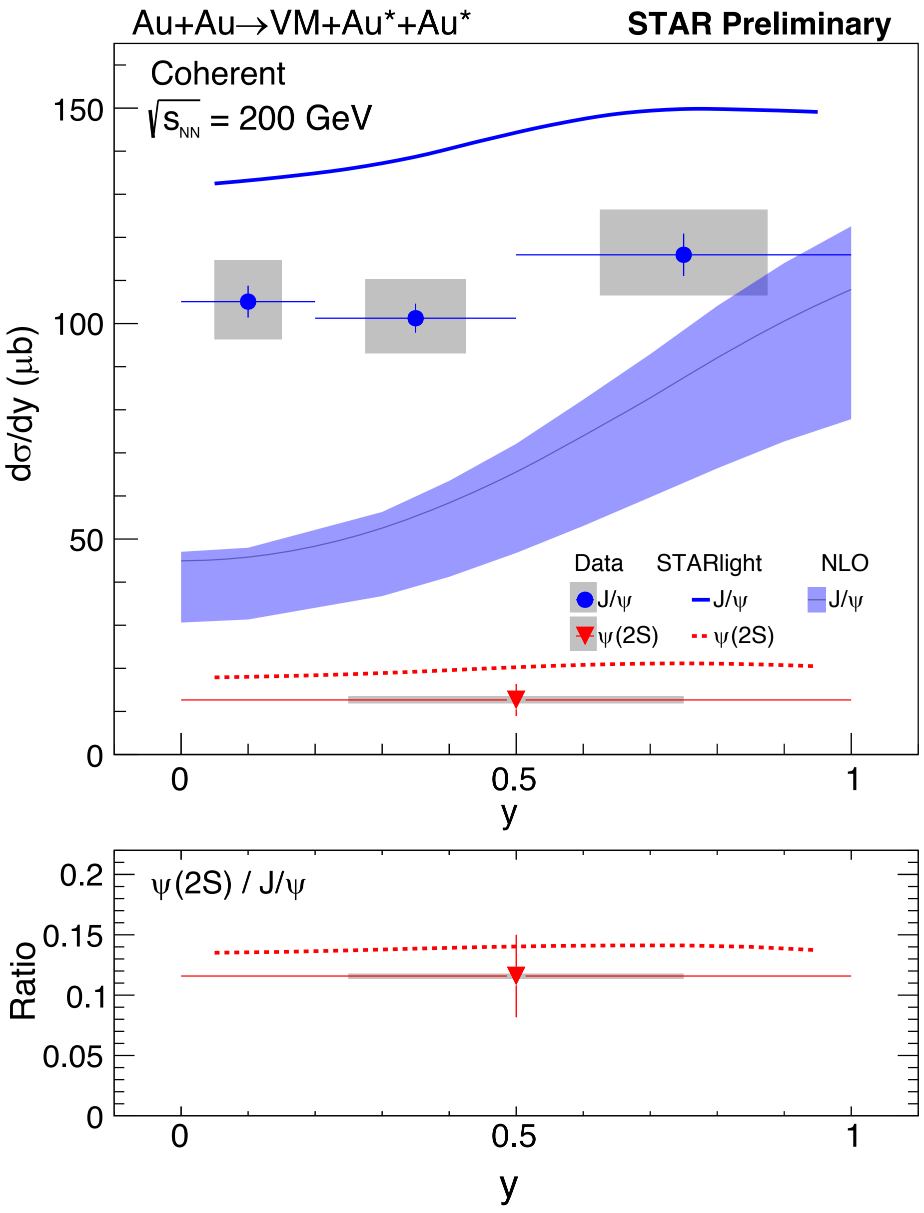
Next-to-Leading Order (NLO) pQCD calculation, constrained **by the LHC data**

EPPS21 + scale at 2.39 GeV.
Only scale uncertainty shown.

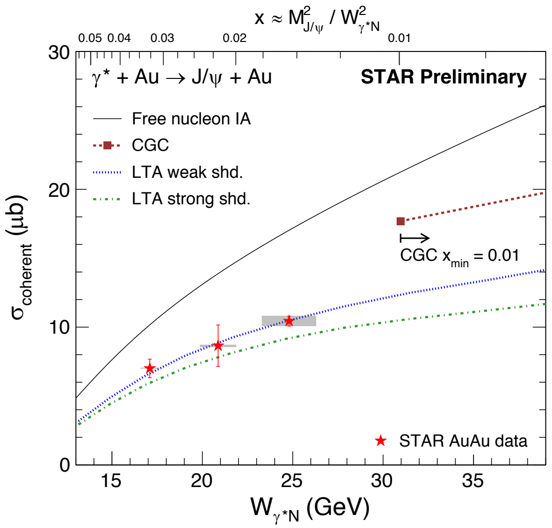
Could not describe the STAR data at y = 0.

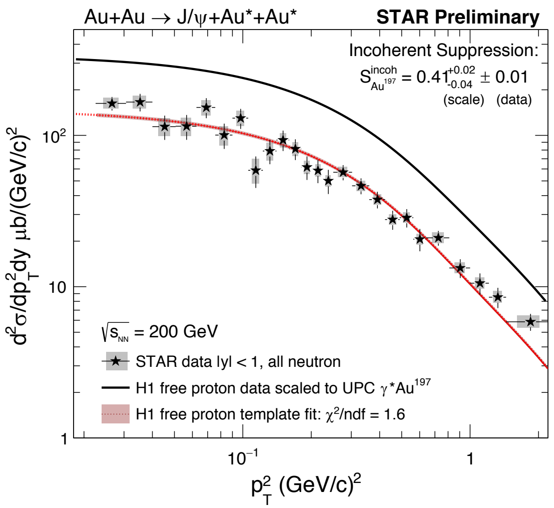
Reference to NLO pQCD calculation:

a) arXiv:2210.16048
b) Phys. Rev. C 106 (2022) 3, 035202



Summary

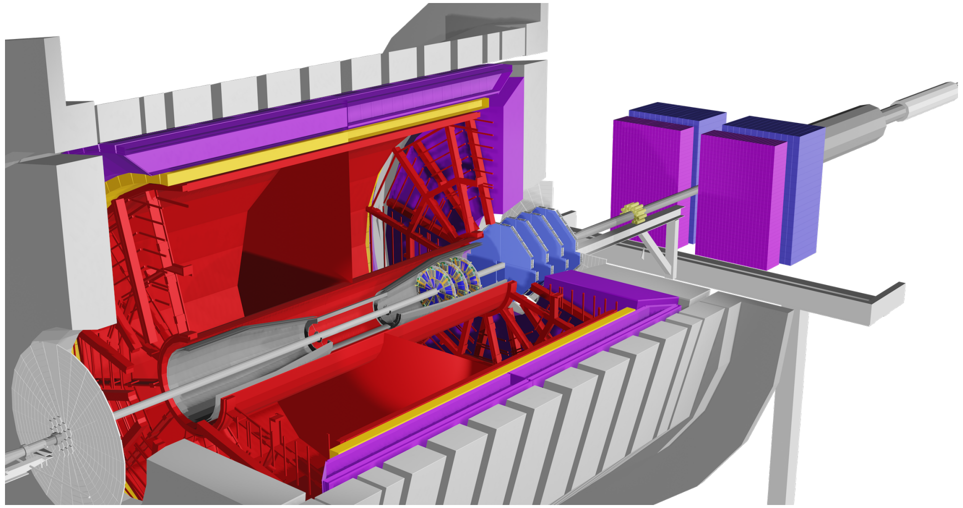




STAR has made many **first-time** J/ψ measurements in UPCs at RHIC:

- ✓ Strong **nuclear suppression** seen for both coherent (~ 40%) and incoherent (~60%) production
- ✓ **Bound** nucleon and **free** proton have similar shape in p_T^2 up to ~ 2 (GeV/c)^2

Outlook



Forward detector at STAR and Run 23-25 enables:

- ✓ Low W phase space down to < 10 GeV
- ✓ First-time **ϕ meson** photoproduction
- ✓ High statistics J/ψ at higher p_T^2
- ✓ Spin-dependent J/ψ production
- ✓ …more

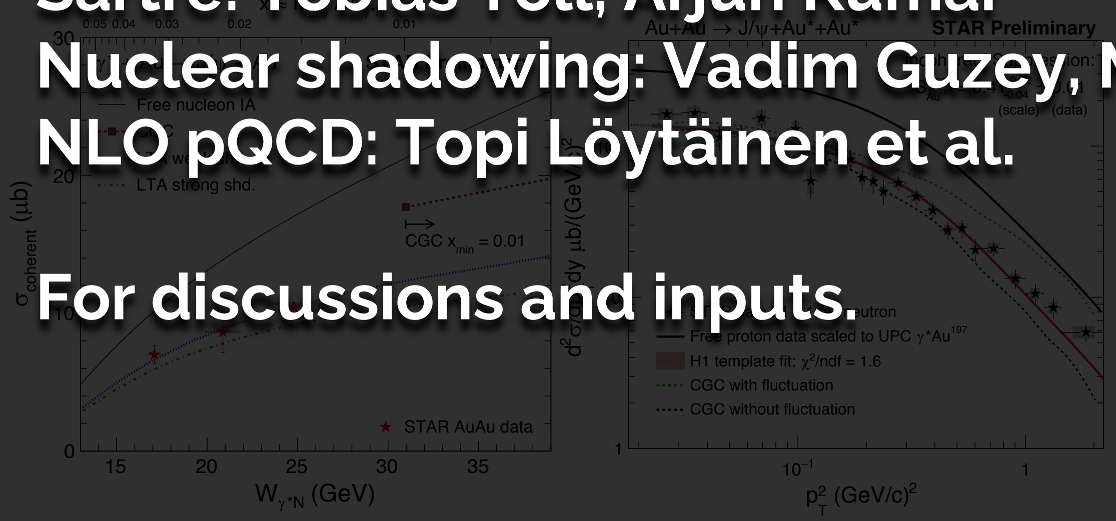
Kong Tu

Special thanks to:

CGC: Heikki Mäntysaari, Farid Salazar, Björn Schenke
Sartre: Tobias Toll, Arjun Kumar
Nuclear shadowing: Vadim Guzey, Mark Strikman, Mikhail Zhalov
NLO pQCD: Topi Löytäinen et al.

For discussions and inputs.

Summary



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Outlook

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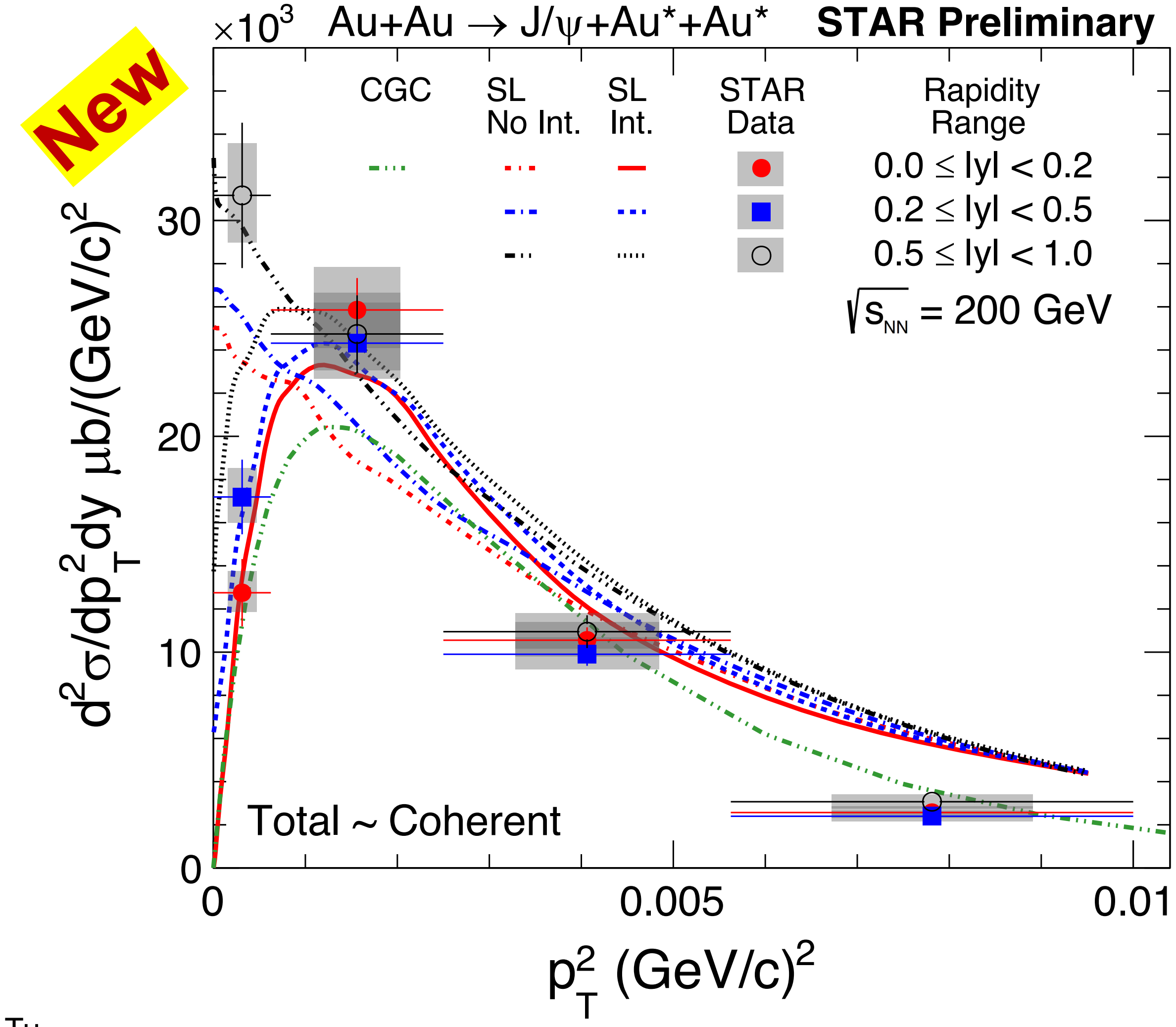
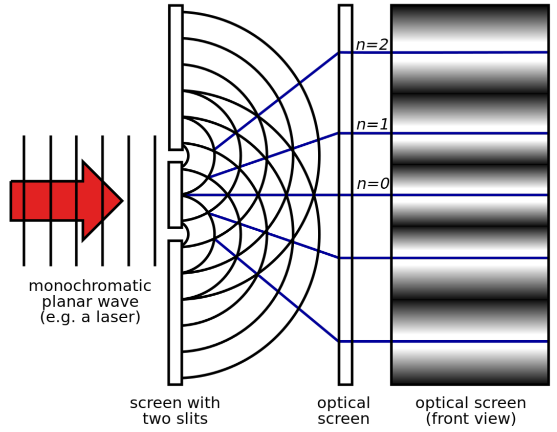
Backup

Two-source interference



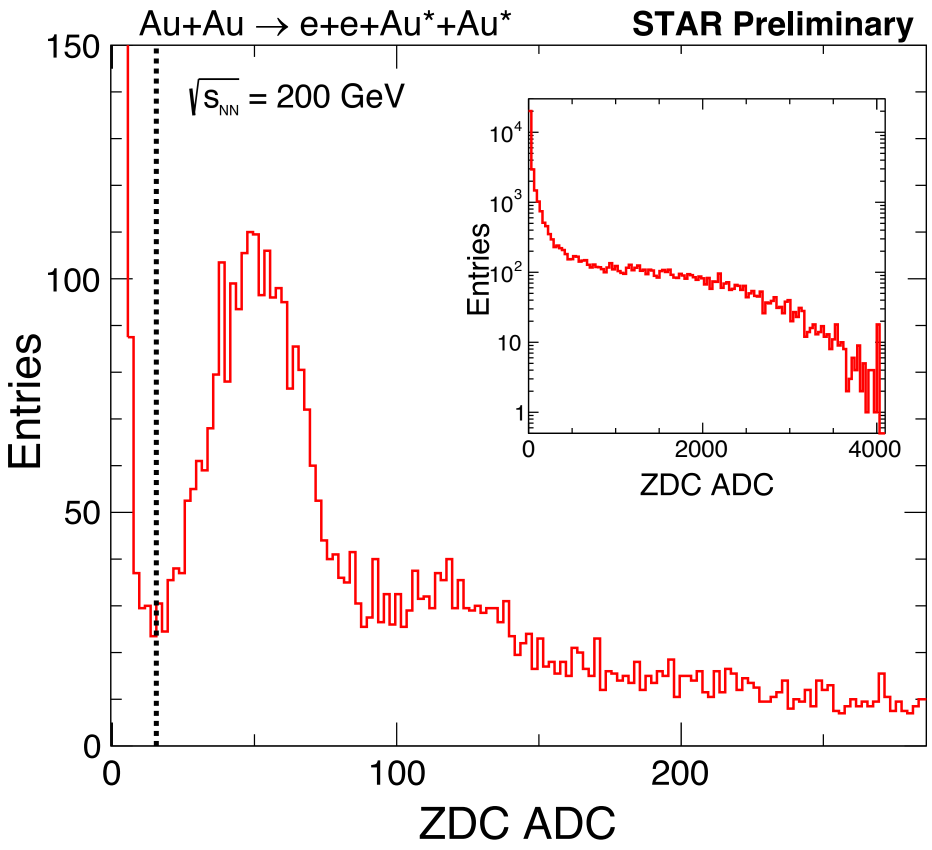
Rapidity dependence is consistent with theory/model; interference effect is stronger if photon energies are similar.



First observed w. ρ^0 in 2008 by STAR (Phys.Rev.Lett.102:112301,2009)

Reference to CGC: *Phys. Rev. D* 106 (2022) 7, 074019

Neutron emissions in UPCs



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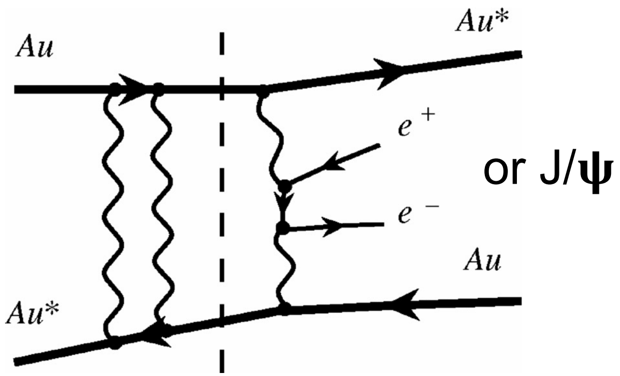
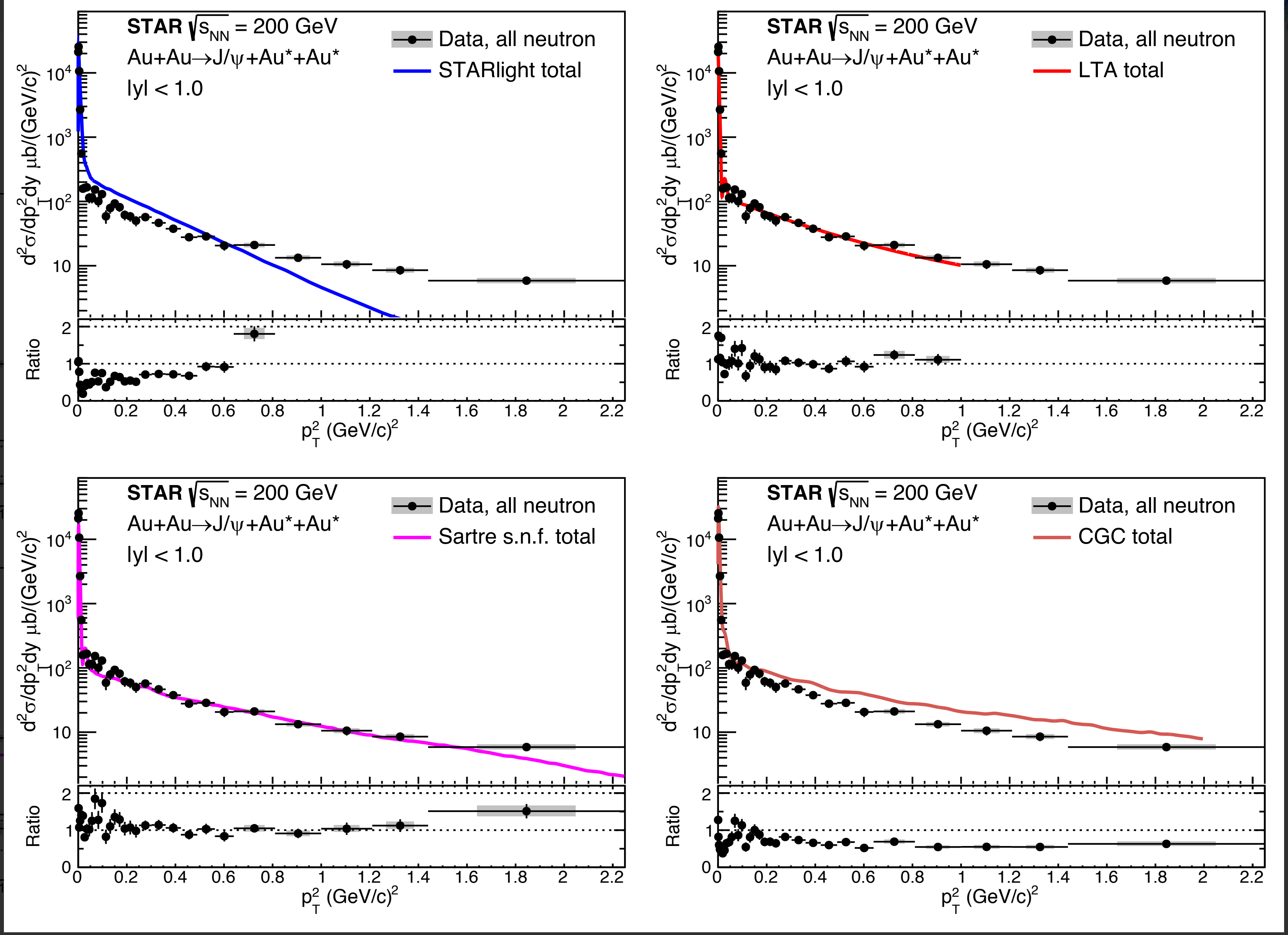


UPCs have large contributions from QED Coulomb excitations

A full picture:

Full momentum region

STAR data is important to understand



Comparison to CGC