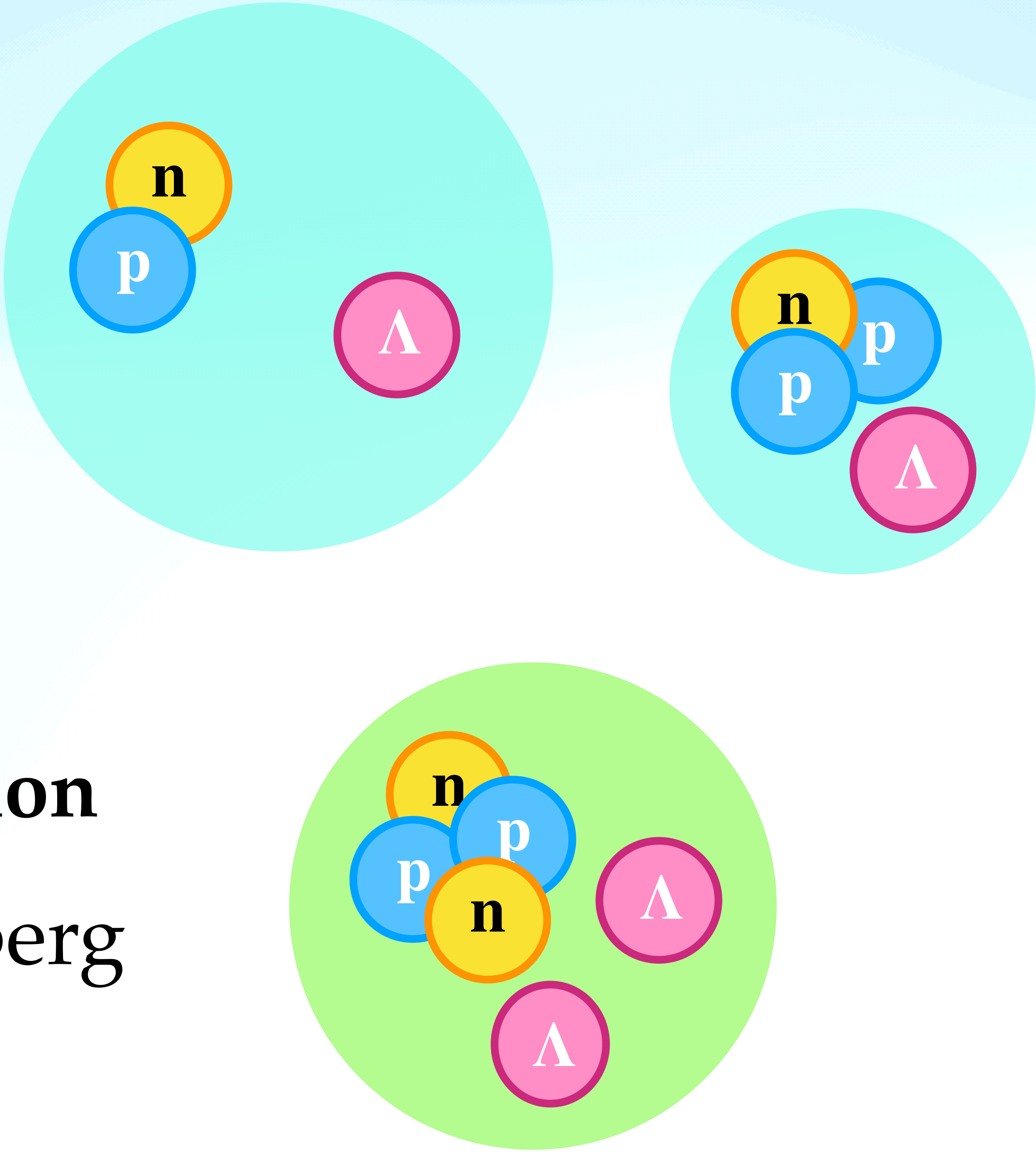
Hypernuclei Production in Heavy-Ion Collisions

(at finite baryon density)

CPOD 2024



Yue Hang Leung
for the STAR collaboration

University of Heidelberg

20th May, 2023

Outline

- Introduction
- ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ Yields and Particle Ratios
- Other Observables
  - ${}^{4}_{\Lambda}H$ Yields
  - Collective Flow
- Summary
- Outlook

What can hypernuclei production in heavy-ion collisions tell us about the **QCD phase diagram**?

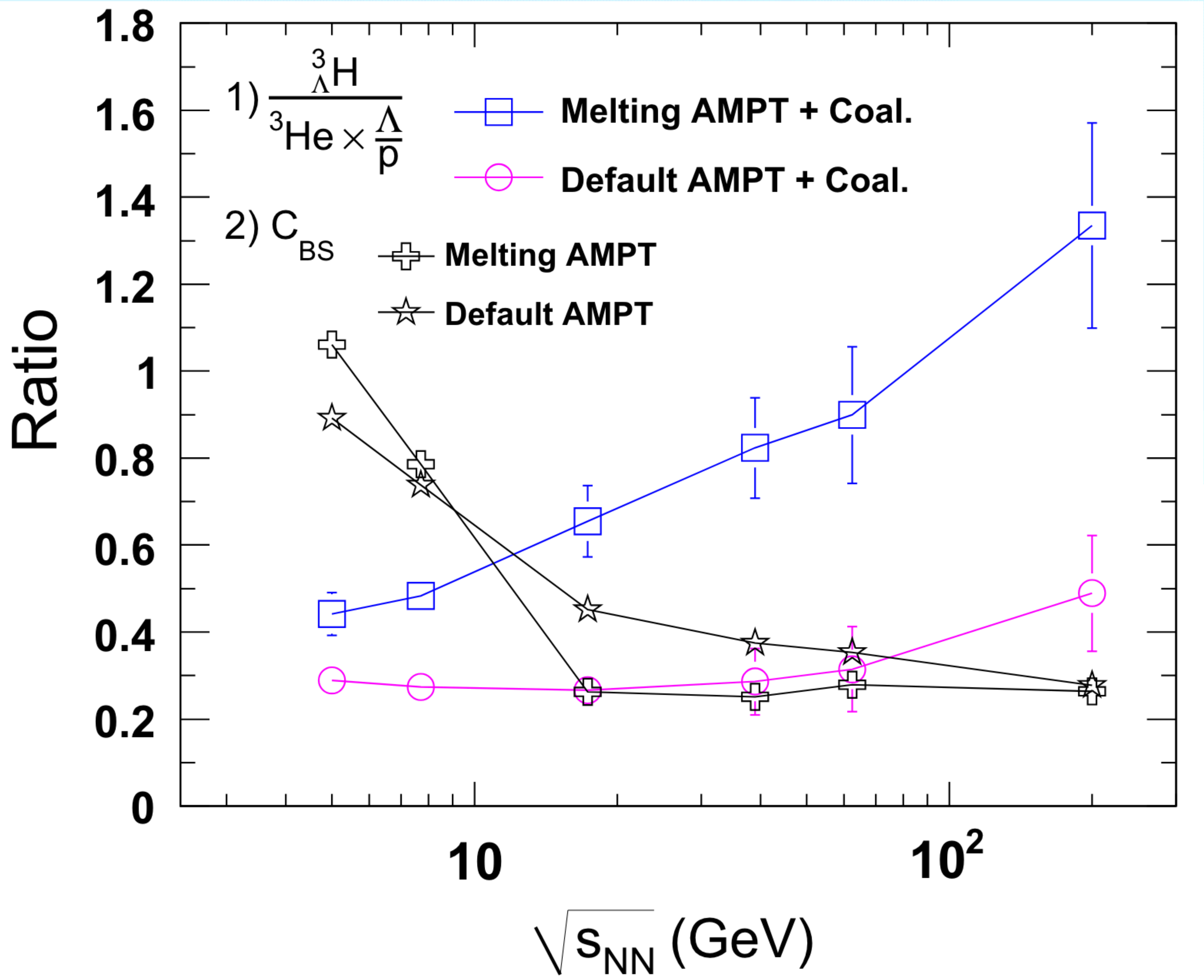
- Hypernuclei yields have been suggested to be sensitive to the **onset of deconfinement**

- $S_3 = \dfrac{{}^{3}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}}{{}^{3}\mathrm{He} \times \frac{\Lambda}{\mathrm{p}}}$ may be enhanced in systems involving partonic interactions

Phys. Lett. B 684 (2010) 224

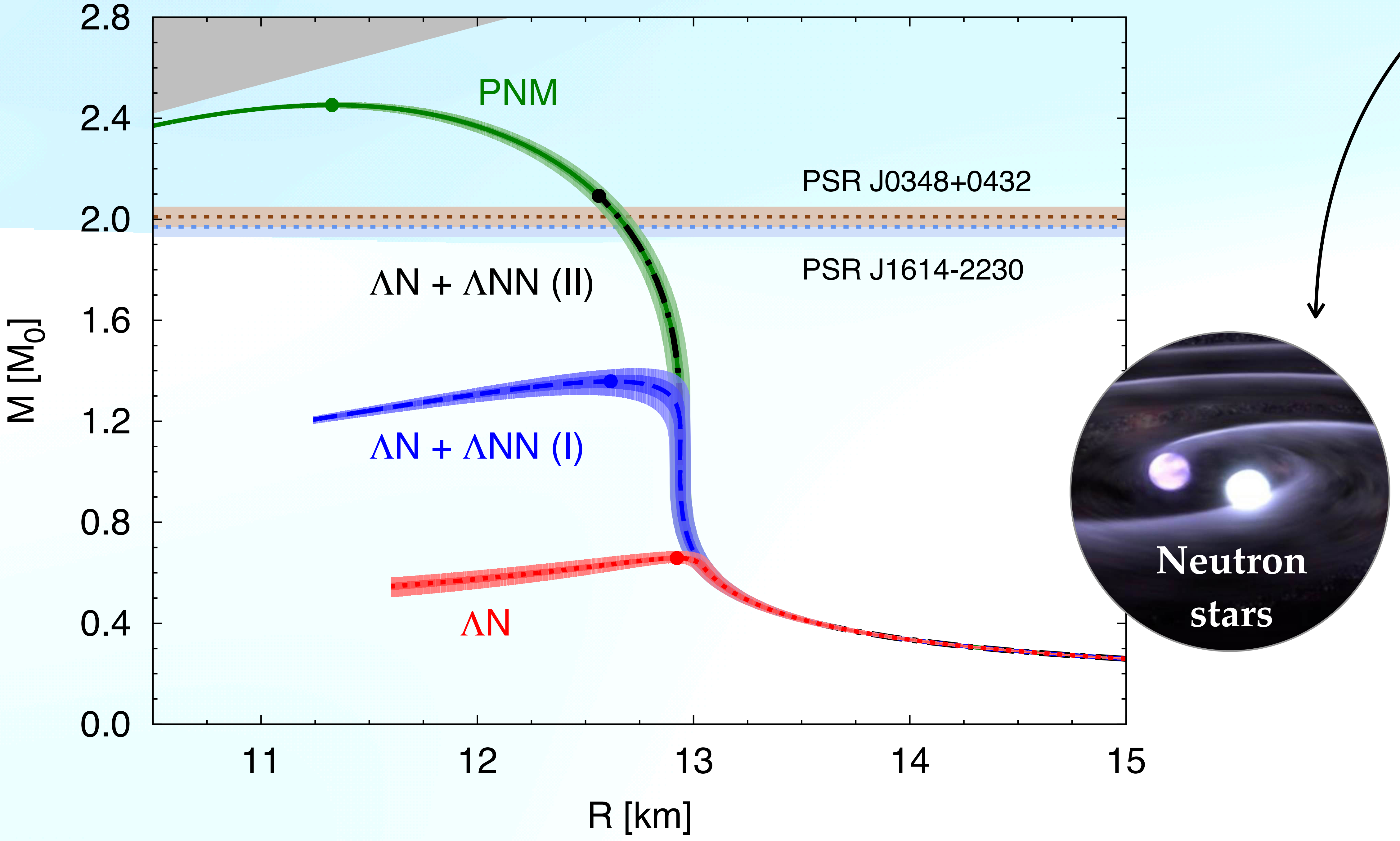
- Baryon clustering near critical point may lead to enhancement of light nuclei ($A \geq 3$) yields

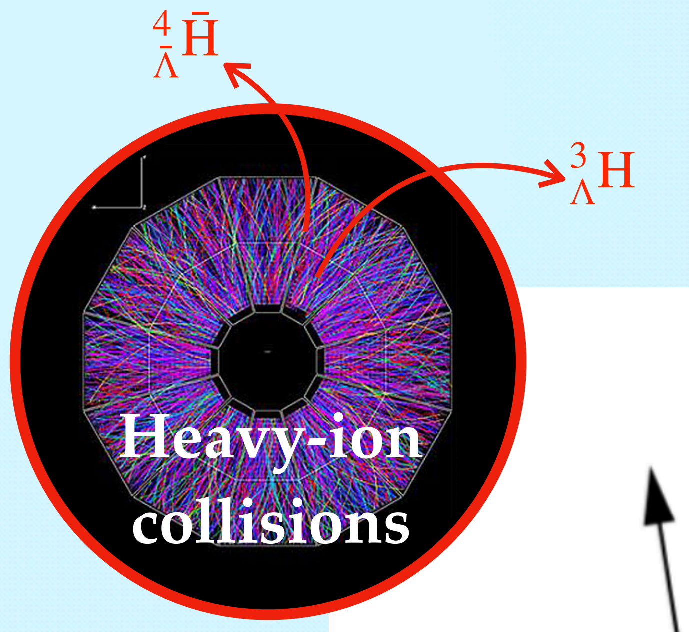
Phys. Rev. C 101 (2020) 034914



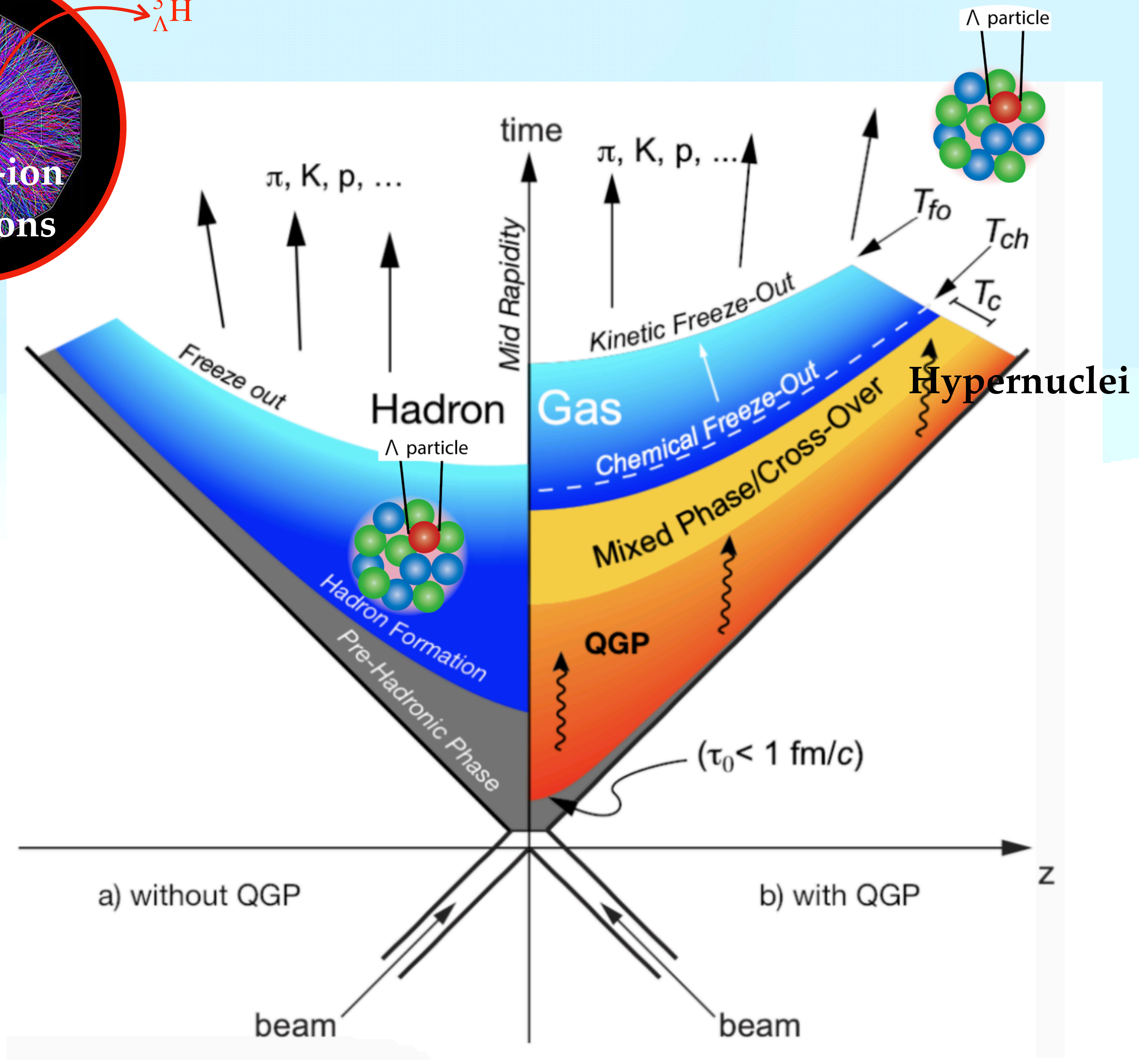
What is the role of **<u>hyperon-nucleon (YN) interaction</u>** in the equation-of-state of high baryon density matter?

- **Hyperon Puzzle:** difficulty to reconcile the measured masses of neutron stars with the presence of hyperons in their interiors





?



- Density dependent YN, YNN interactions are essential for solving the hyperon puzzle

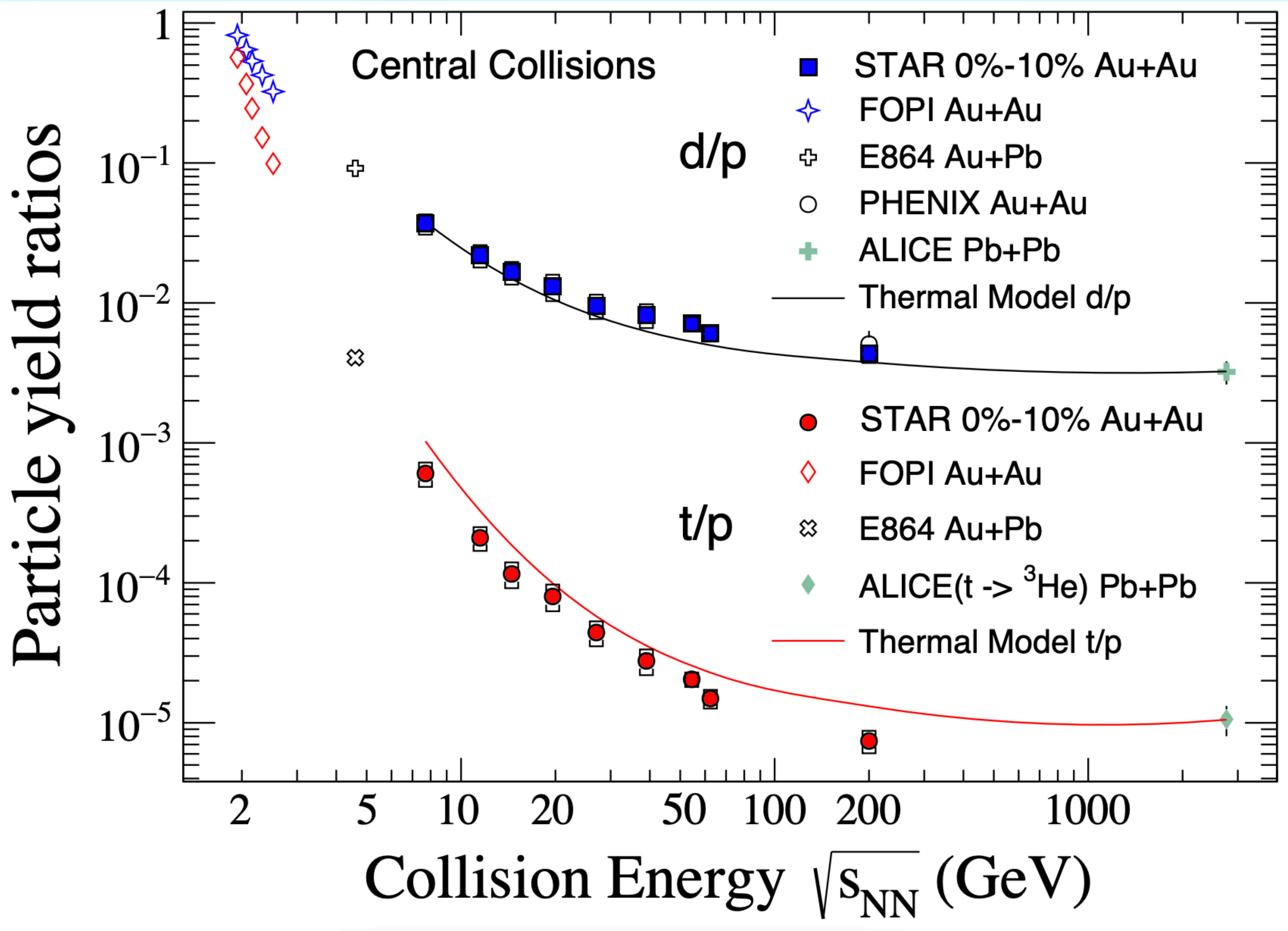
Can hypernuclei production be used to constrain the in-medium Y-N interaction?

T. Gaitanos, Nucl. Phys. A 914 (2013) 405

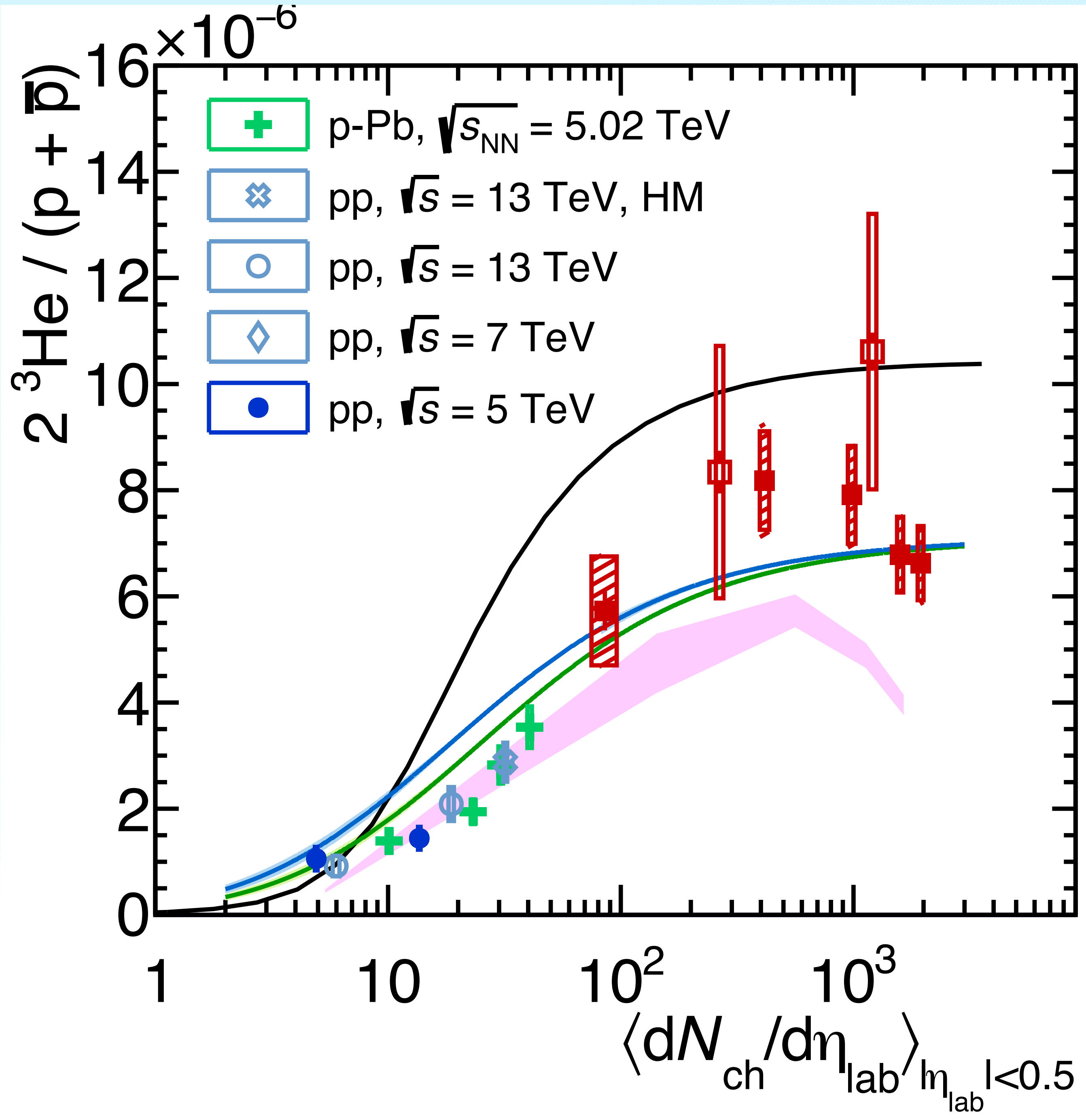
How and when are light nuclei formed in heavy ion collisions?

- Need a solid understanding in **hypernuclei production mechanisms** before we can use them as **probes for medium properties**

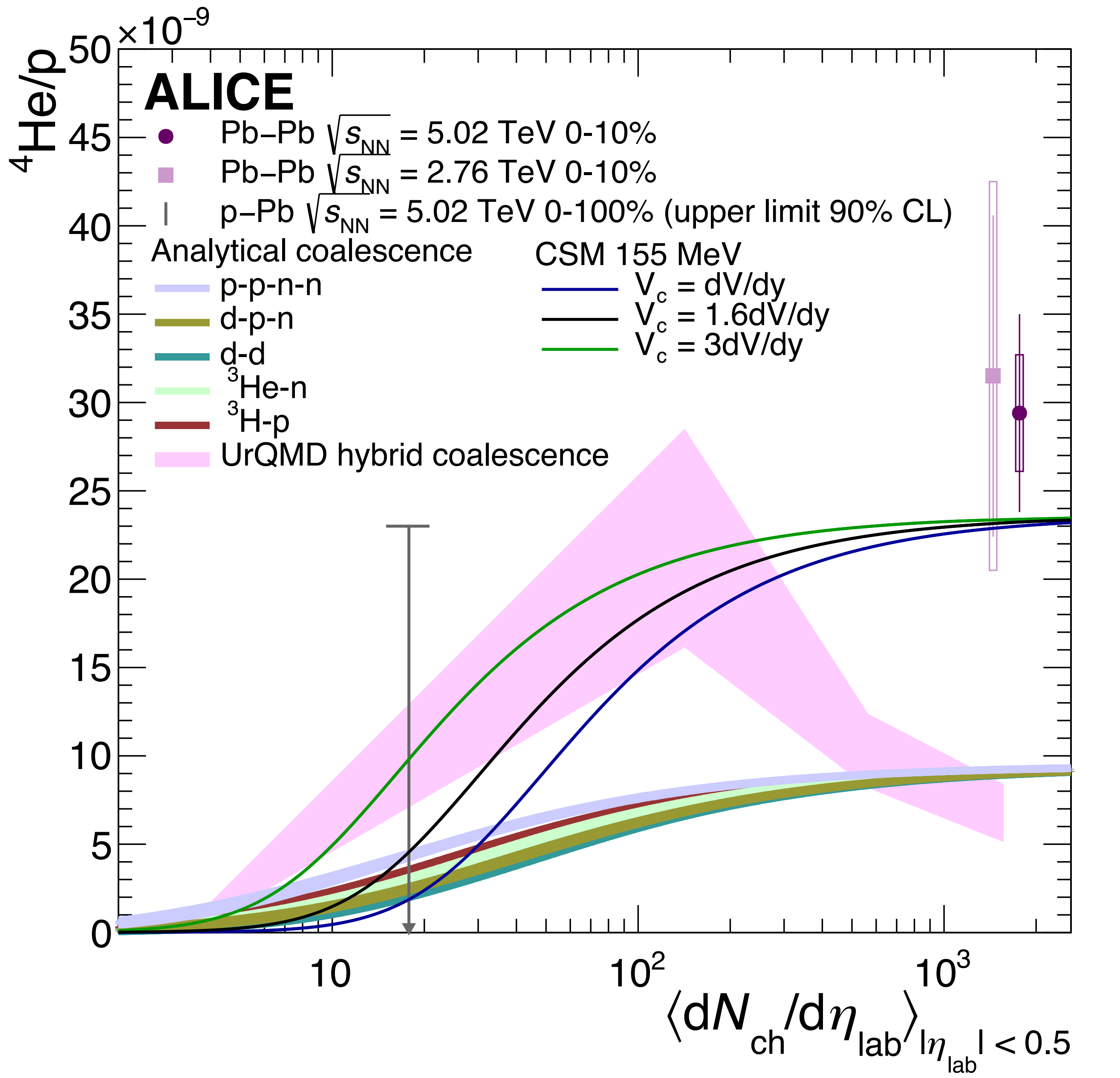
What have we Learnt from Light Nuclei Production?



STAR, Phys. Rev. Lett. 130 (2023) 202301



ALICE, Phys. Rev. C 107 (2023) 064904



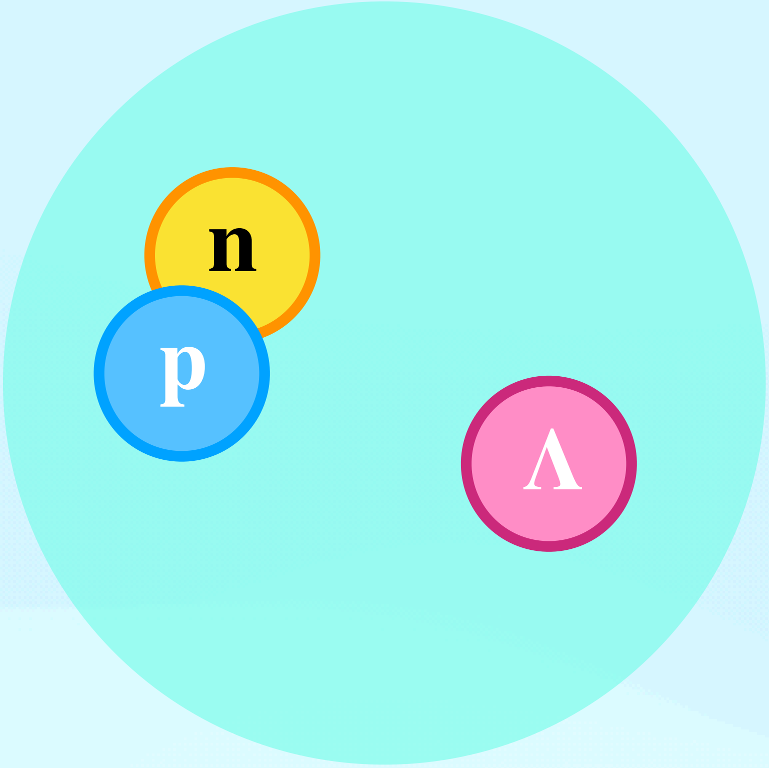
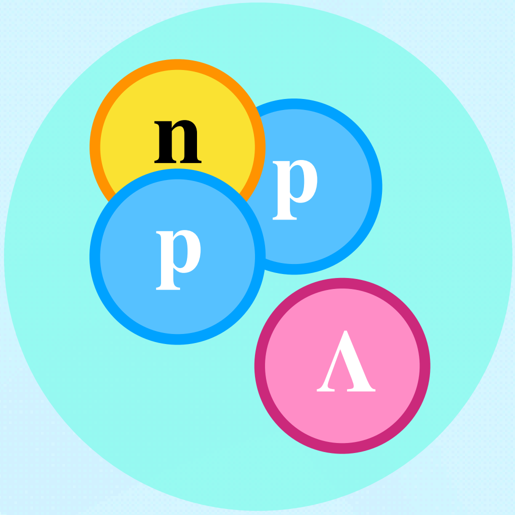
ALICE, arXiv:2311.11758v1

- d/p is fairly well described by thermal model, but t/p is overestimated

- ^{4}He/p is well described by thermal model, but underestimated by various implementations of coalescence formation

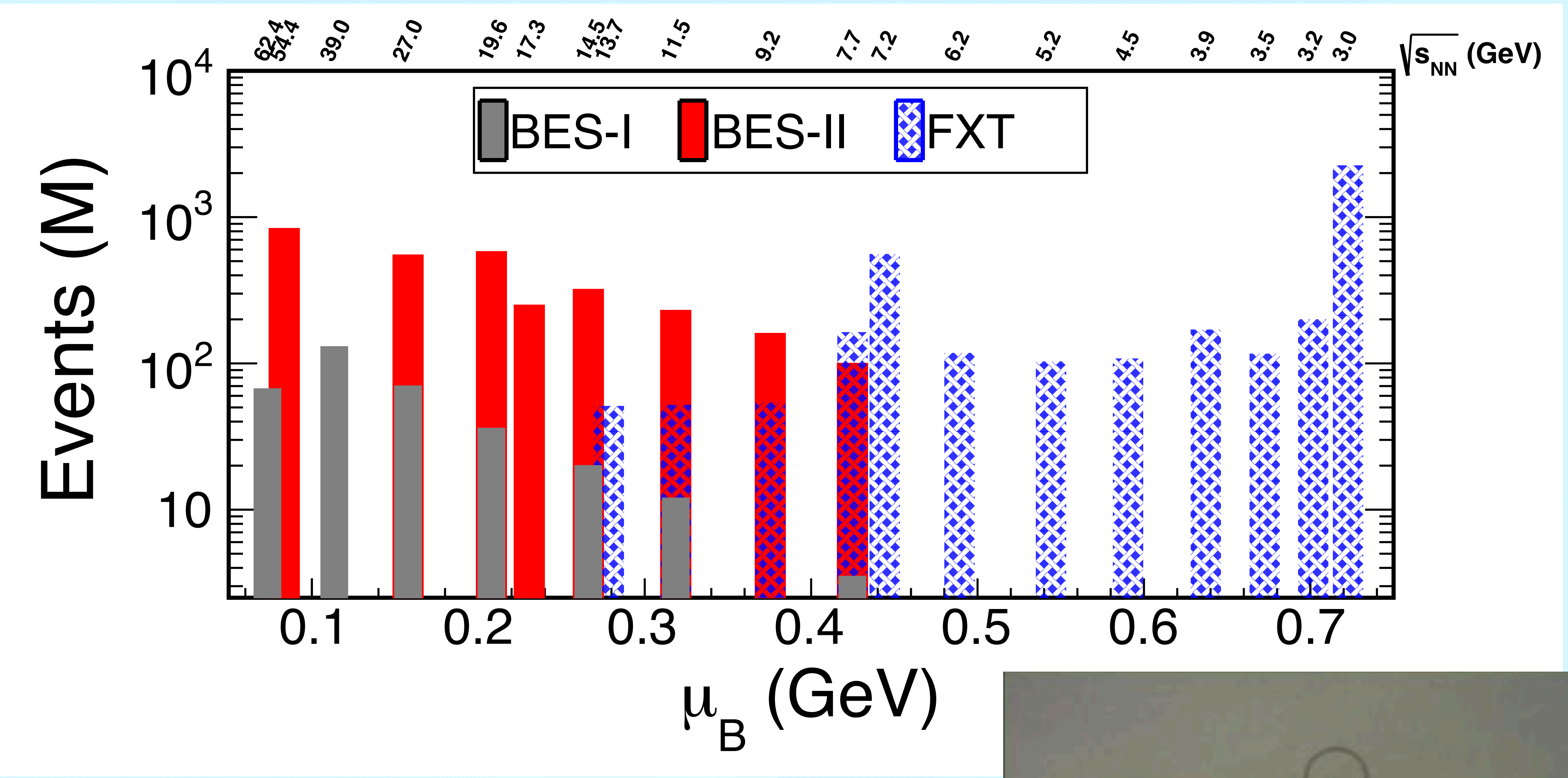
Recent data poses challenges for nuclei production models

Hypertriton ($^{3}_{\Lambda}H$) and Hyperhydrogen-4 ($^{4}_{\Lambda}H$)

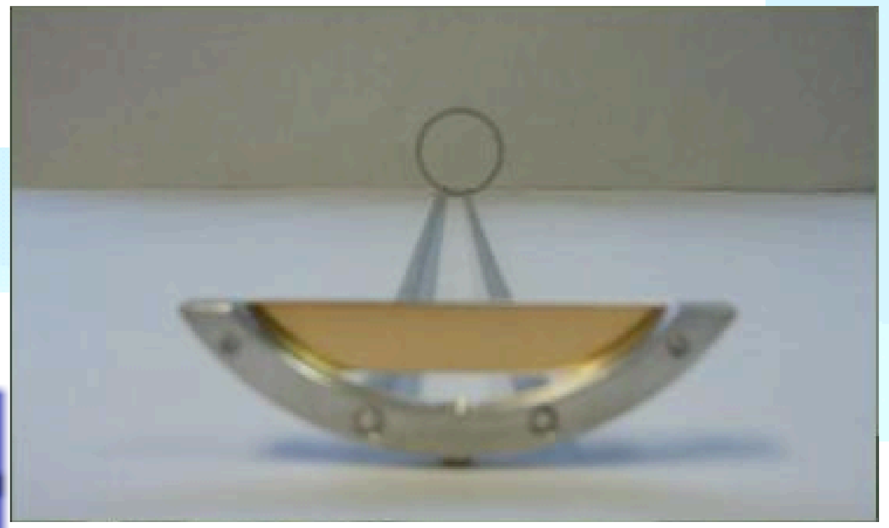
	$^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ 	$^{4}_{\Lambda}H$ 
Λ binding energy	~0.1 MeV	~2.2 MeV
Excited states	Not observed	$^{4}_{\Lambda}H^{*}(1^{+}) \rightarrow {}^{4}_{\Lambda}H(0^{+}) + \gamma$

- Due to its very small binding energy, $^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ production provides unique input for nuclei production models

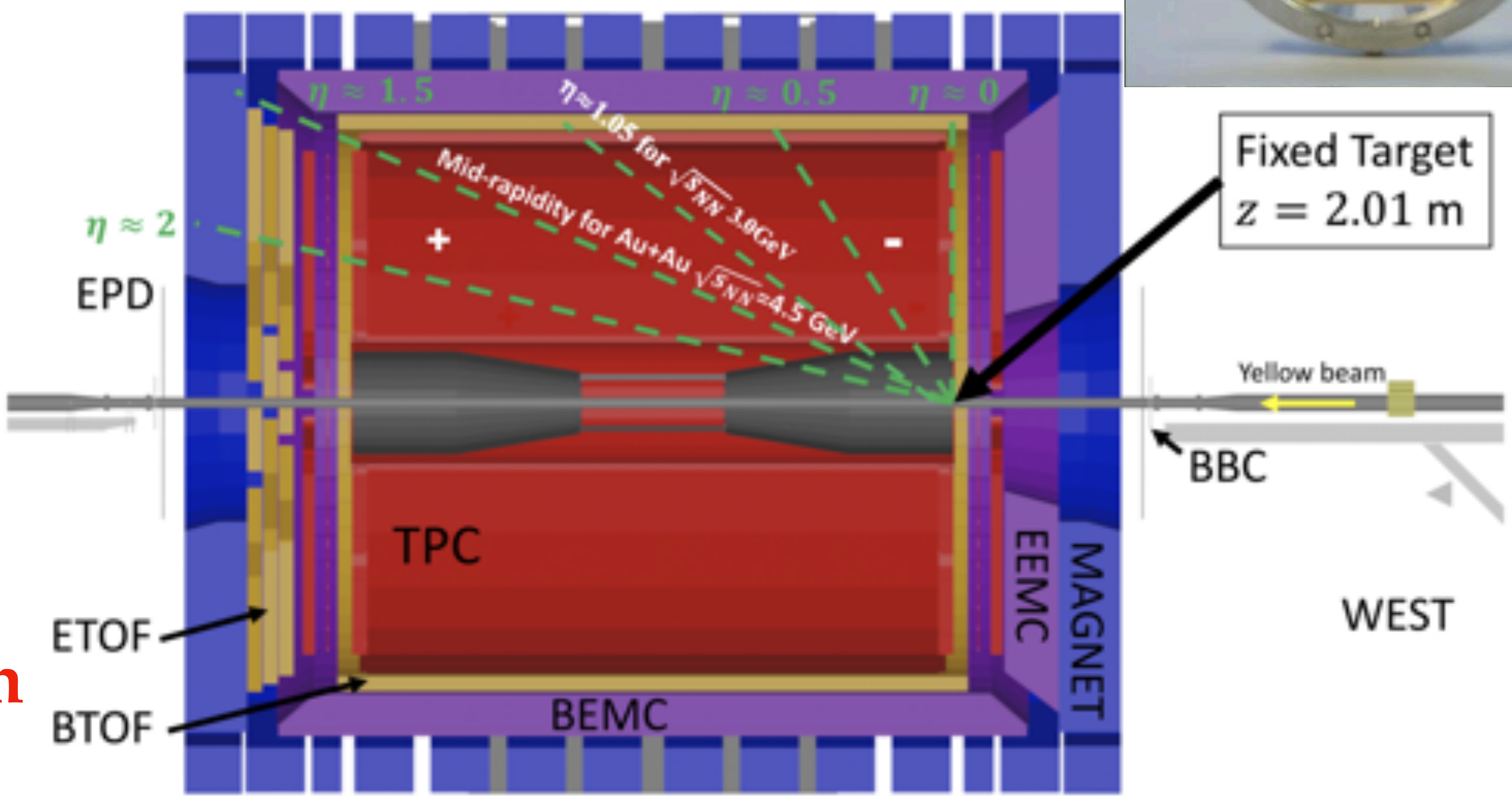
STAR Beam Energy Scan II

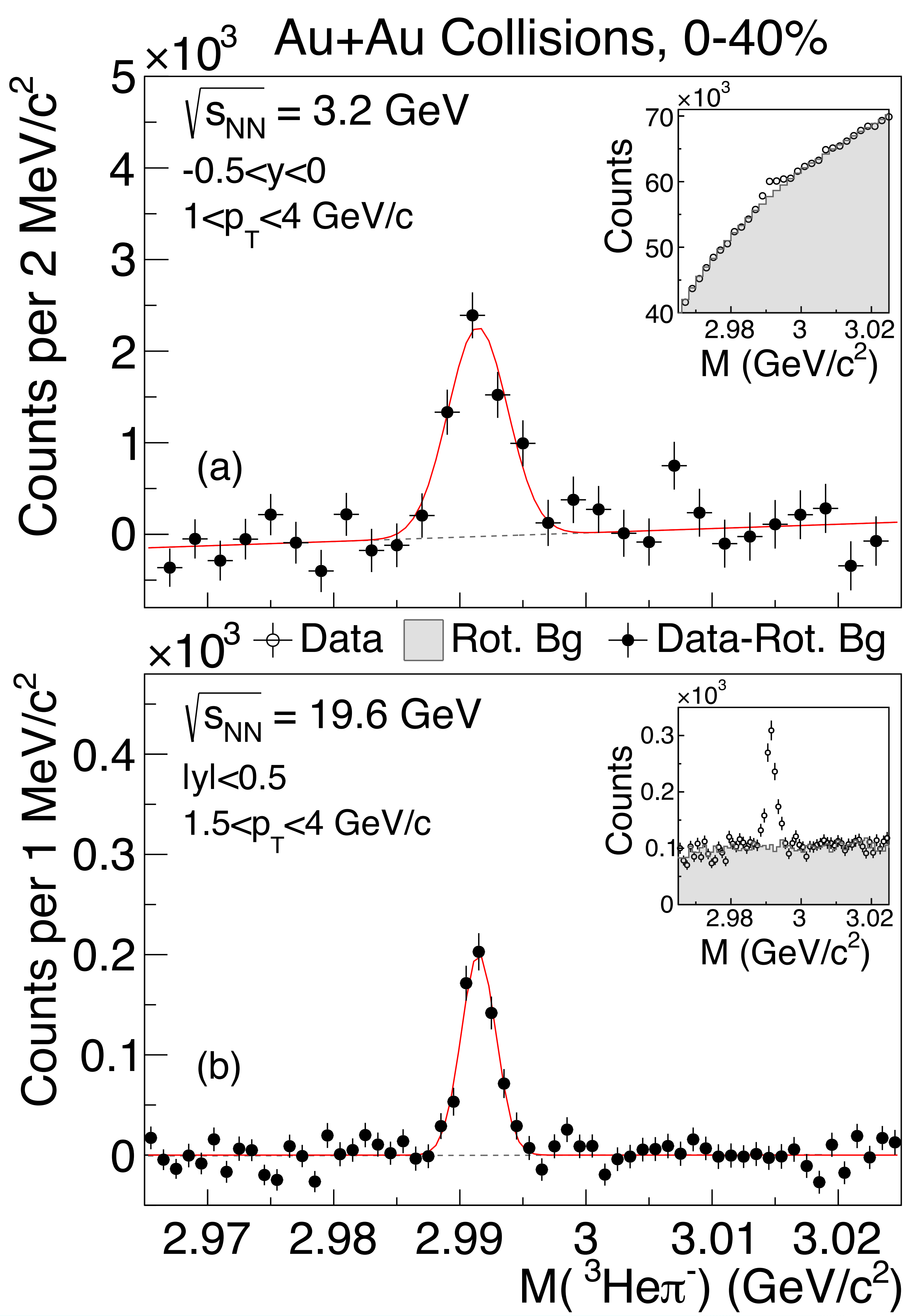


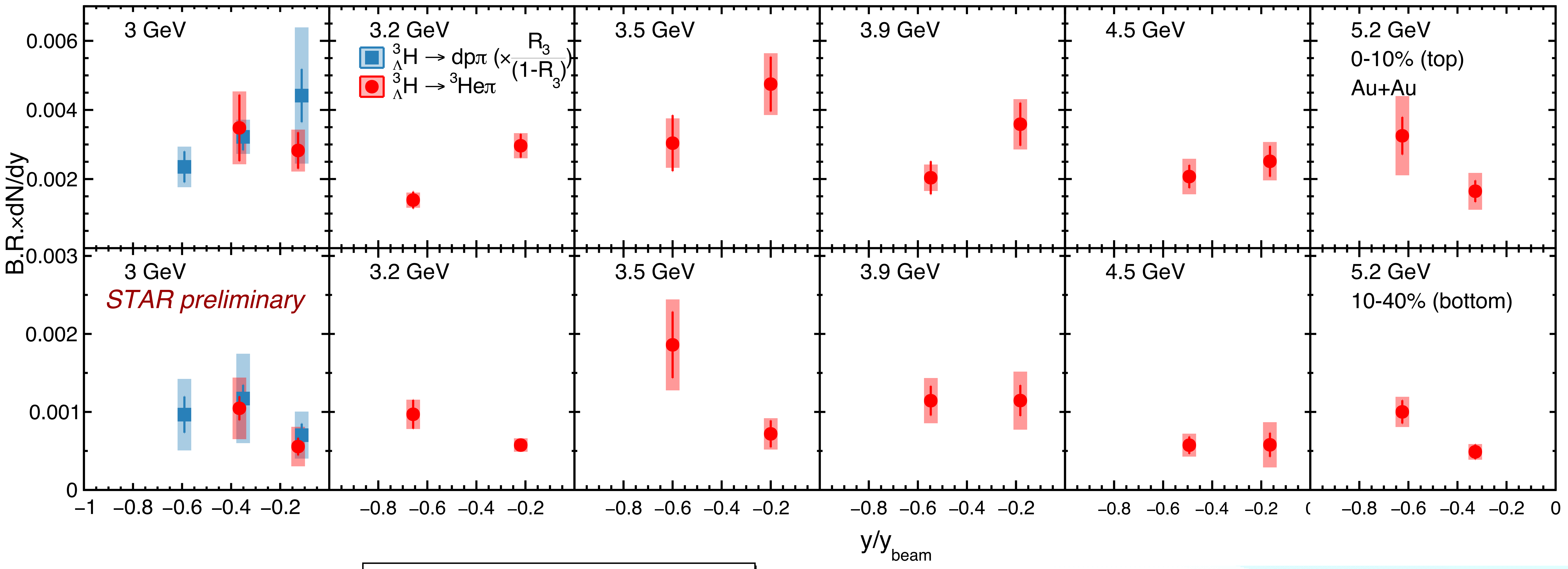
- BES-I (2009-2011)
  - Au+Au collisions $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ = 7.7-62 GeV
  - Main objectives:
    - **Search for onset of deconfinement**
    - **Search for critical end point**

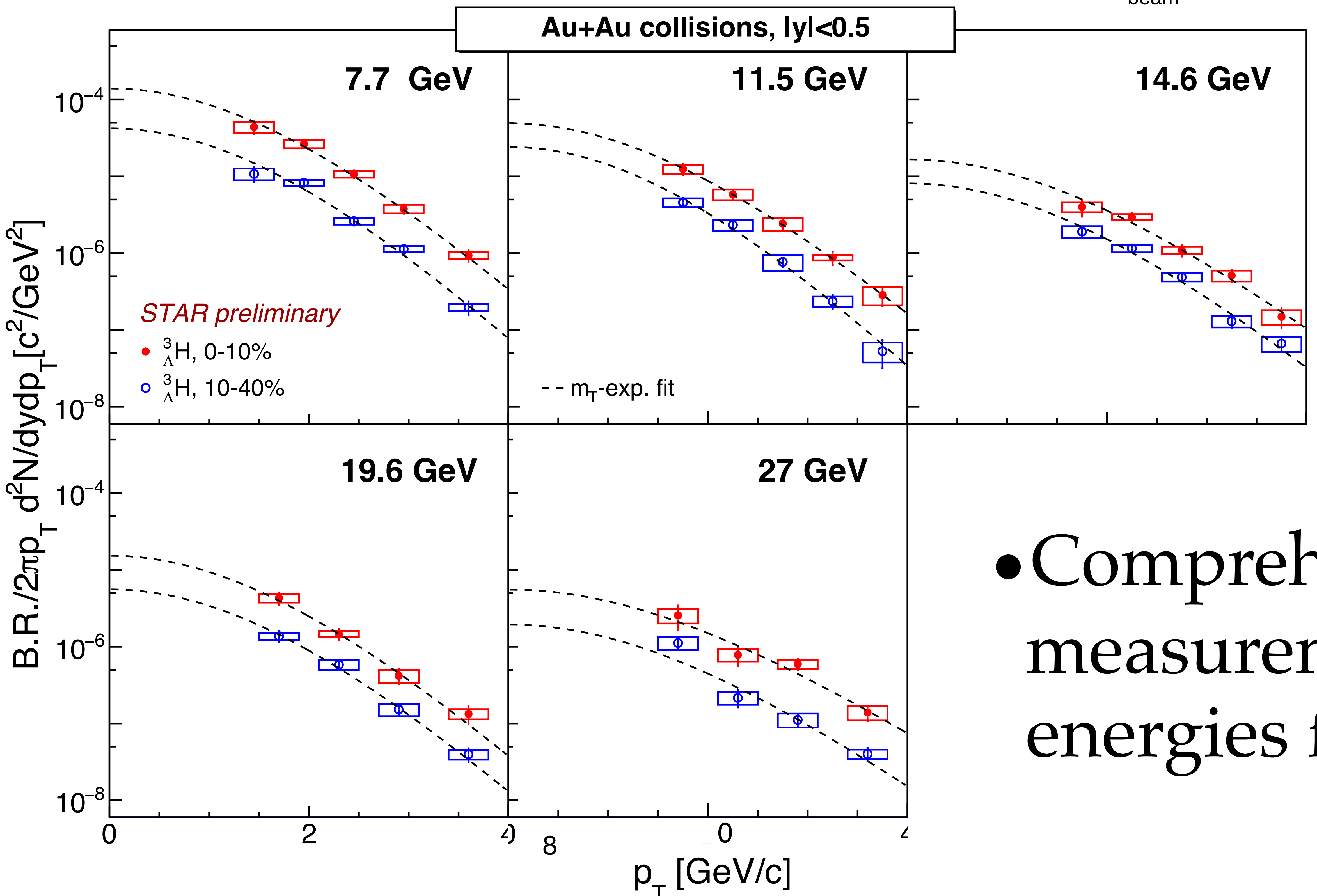


- BES-II (2018-2021)
  - High statistics Au+Au collisions $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ =3-54.4 GeV
  - Fixed target (FXT) collisions extend energy reach down to $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ =3 GeV
    - **Search for possible formation and investigate properties of dense baryonic matter**



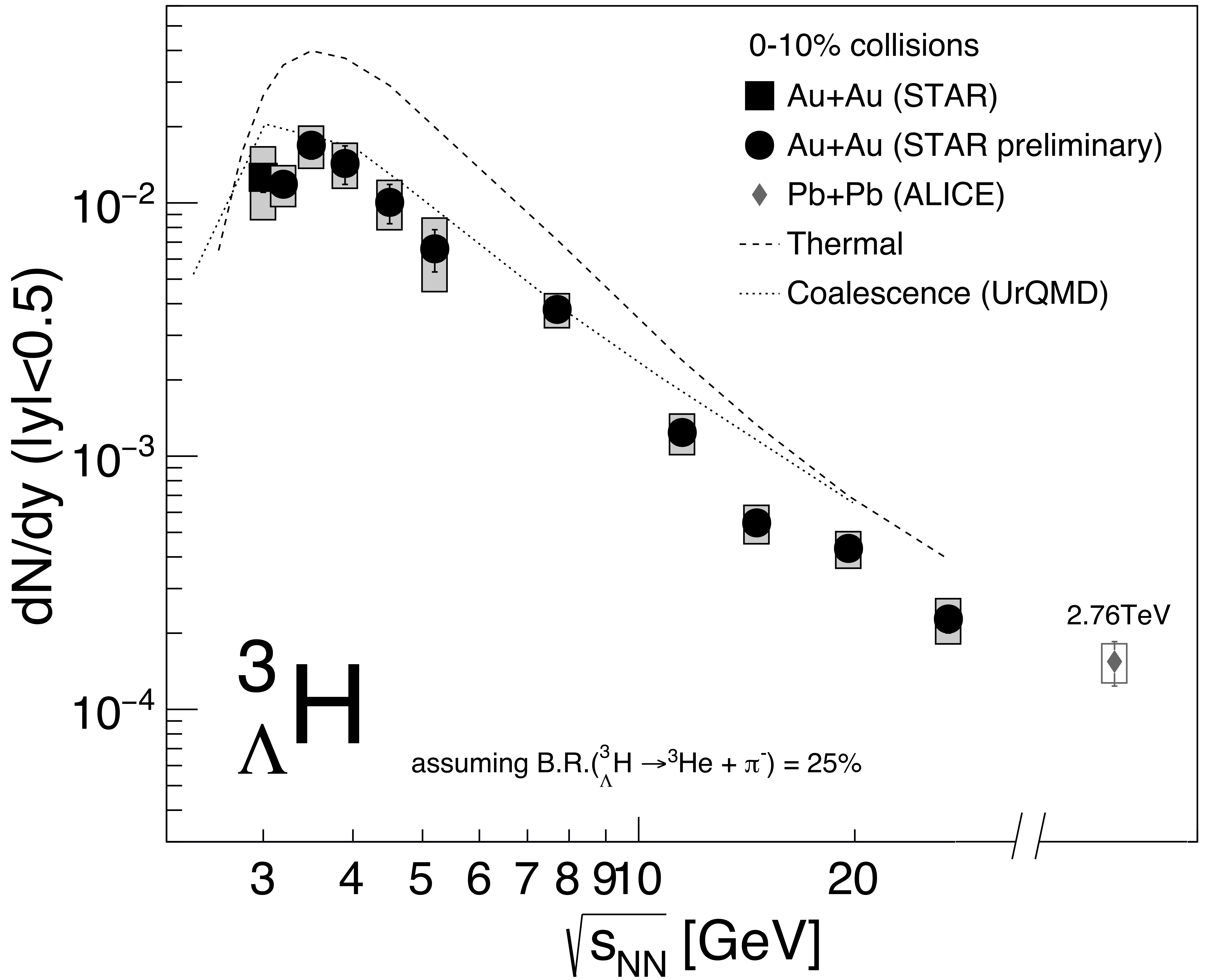






- Comprehensive $^3_\Lambda$H measurements at 11 different energies from 3 to 27 GeV

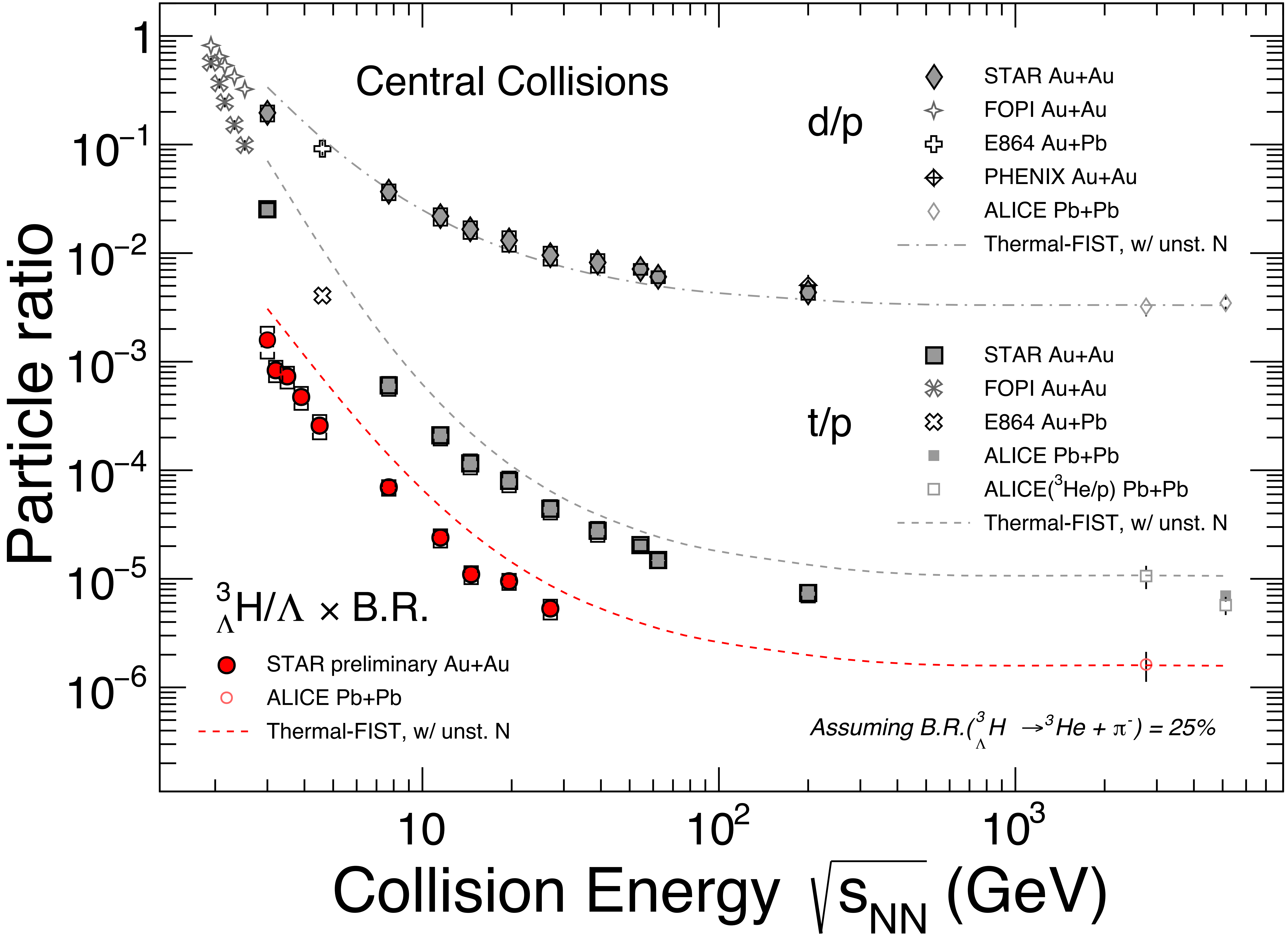
${}^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ Excitation function



- Steep increase from 27 to 4 GeV
- Plateaus at 3-4 GeV
- Interplay between increasing baryon production and stronger strangeness canonical suppression towards low energies

Establishes low energy collision experiments as a promising tool to study exotic strange matter

Nuclei to hadron ratios

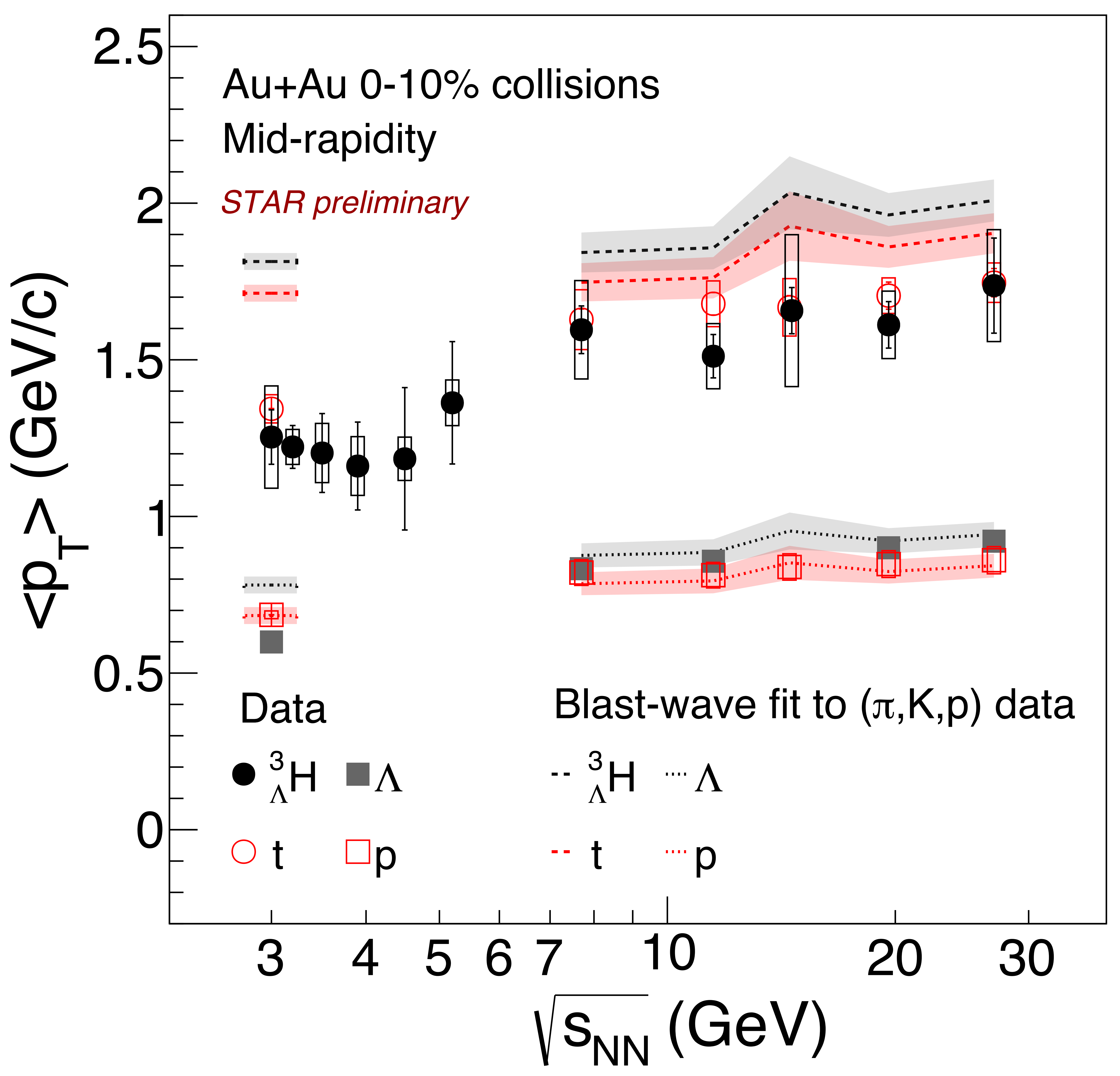


- $^{3}_{\Lambda}$H/Λ ratio in a thermal model calculation is independent of volume and strangeness correlation length
- $^{3}_{\Lambda}$H/Λ, similar to *t*/*p*, are underestimated by thermal model by a factor of 2

$^{3}_{\Lambda}$H (and *t*) are not in thermal equilibrium with light hadrons at chemical freeze-out

STAR, Phys. Rev. Lett. 130 (2023) 202301
STAR, arXiv: 2311.11020

Mean transverse momentum



- $^{3}_{\Lambda}$H and *t* have similar mean p_T
- Both $^{3}_{\Lambda}$H and *t* tend to have lower mean p_T than the blast-wave parametrization using measured kinetic freeze-out parameters from light hadrons (π,K,p)

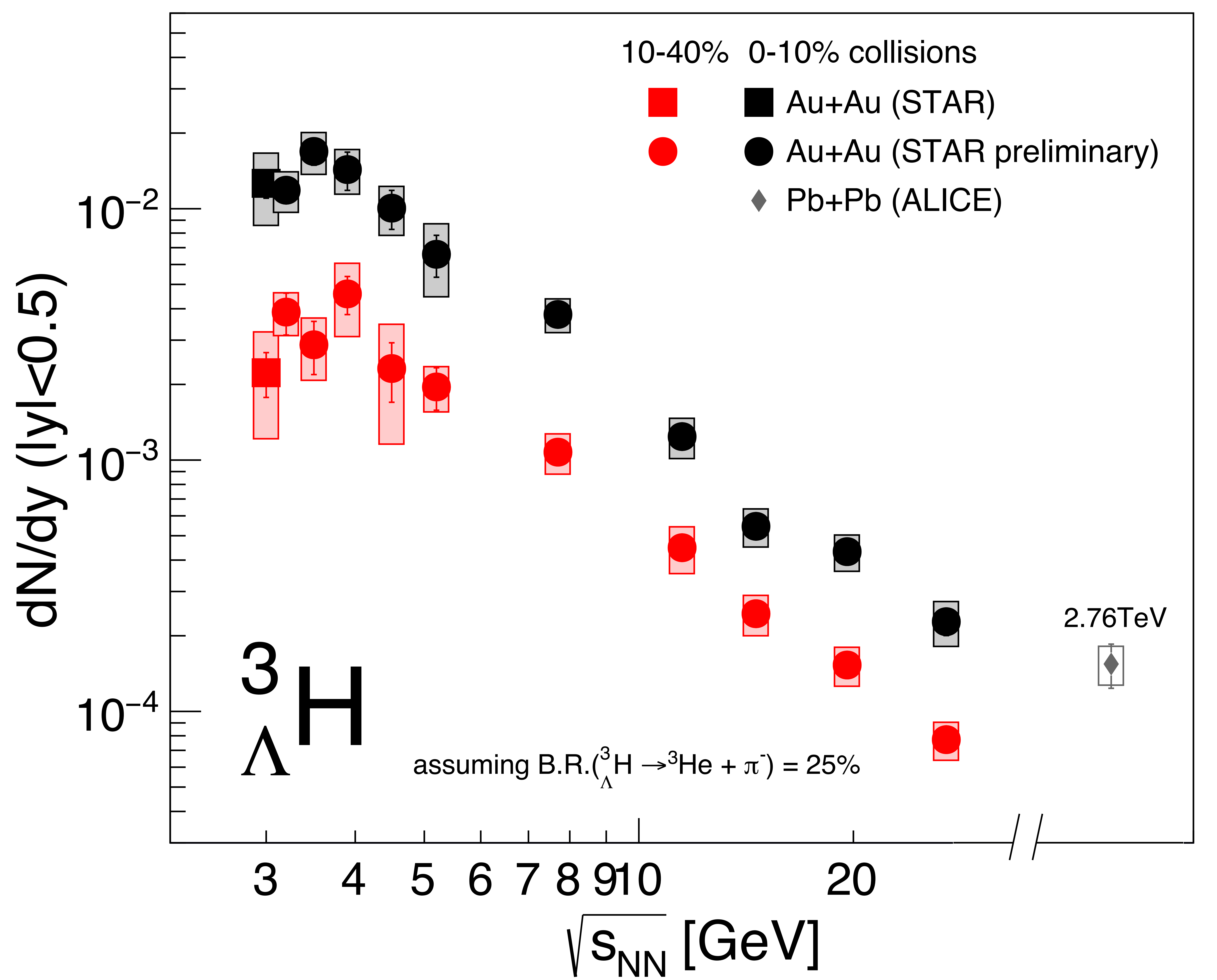
$^{3}_{\Lambda}$H (and *t*) do not follow same collective expansion as light hadrons

- The mean p_T for $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 3 - 4.5$GeV and $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 7.7 - 27$GeV seem to exhibit two different trends

Change in medium properties or expansion dynamics?

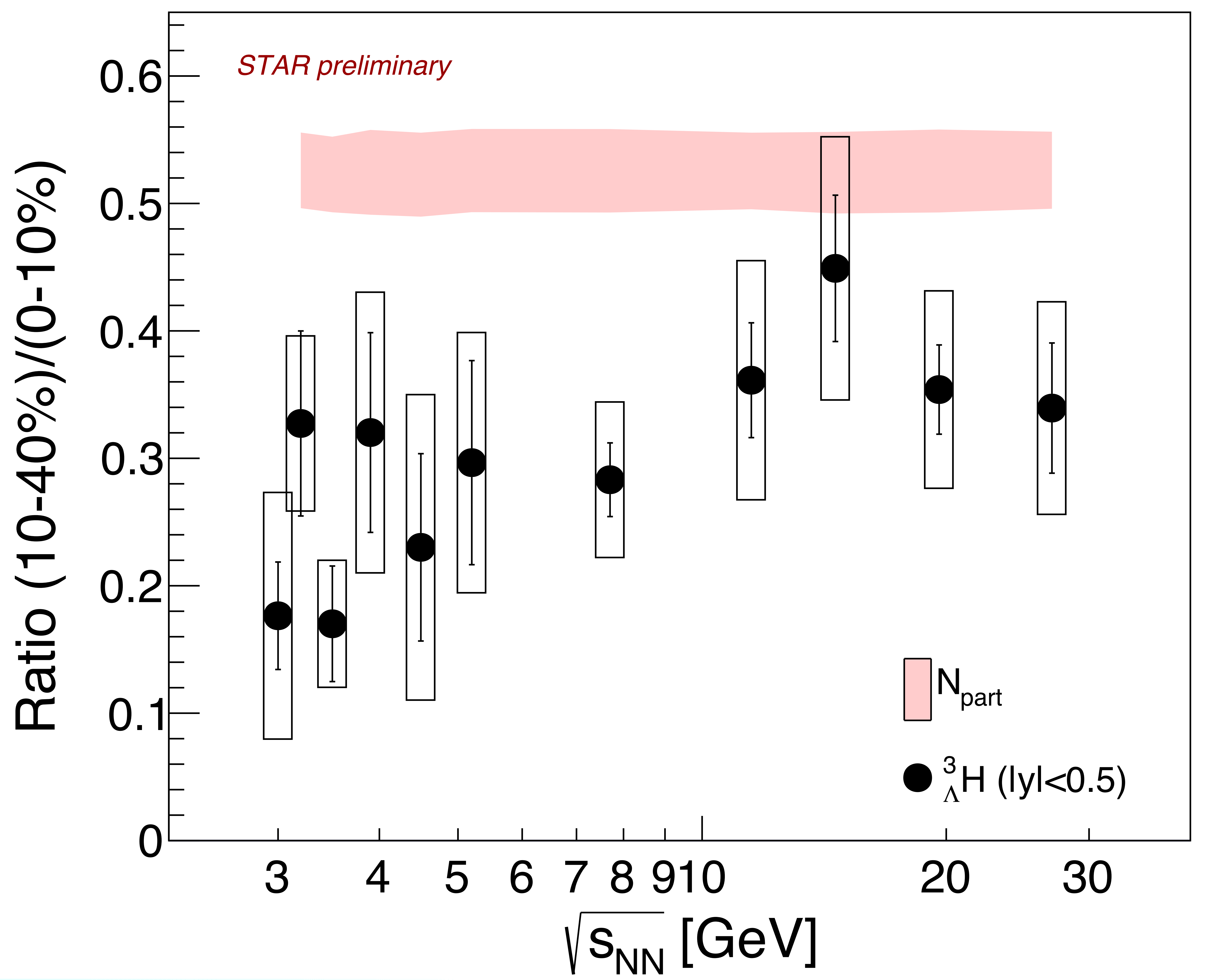
see Y. Zhou, 17:00 20/05 (Mon.)

Centrality dependence of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ production



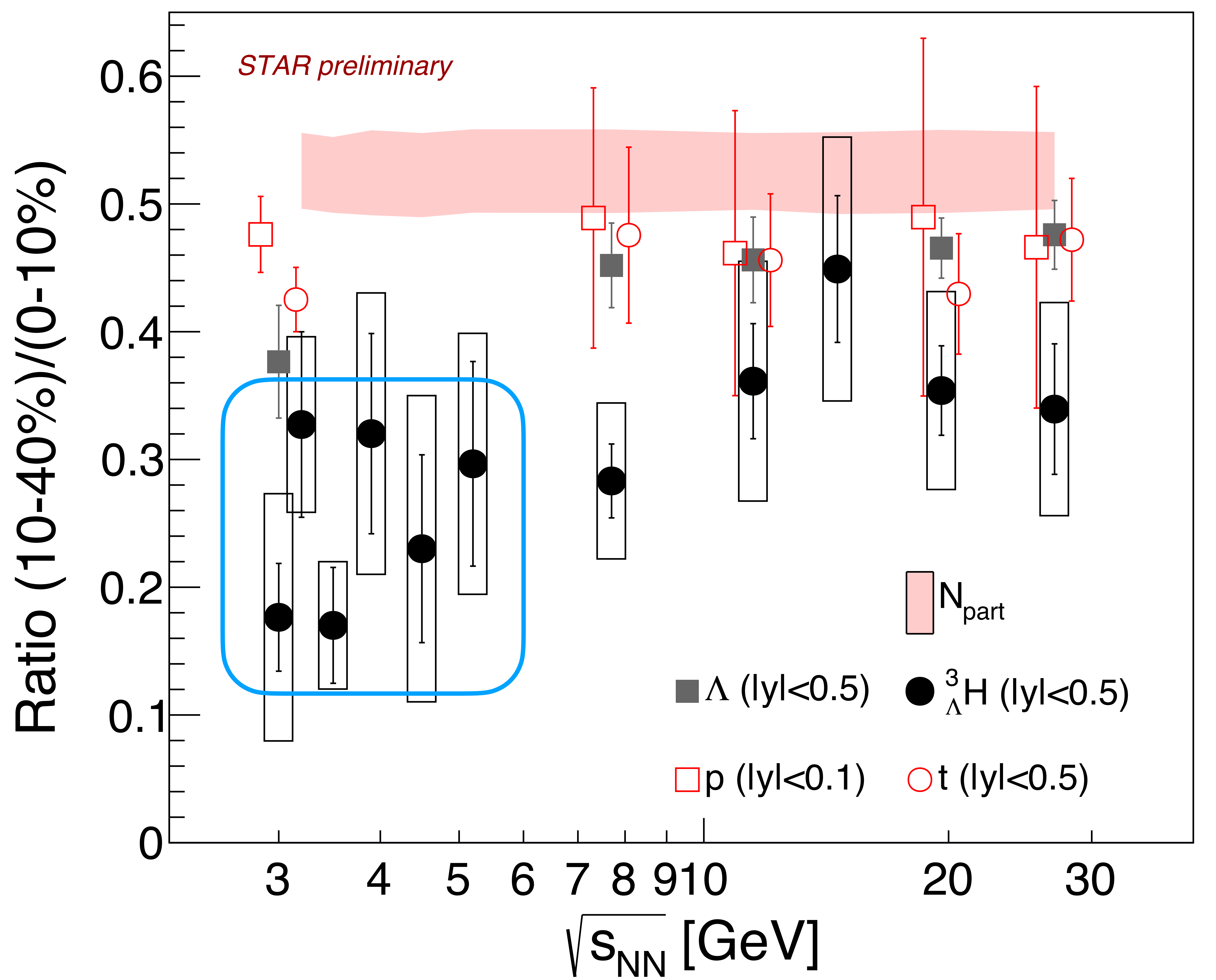
- The yield in mid-central (10-40%) collisions follow the same trend as central (0-10%) collisions

Centrality dependence of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}$ production



- ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}$ production increases more steeply compared to N_{part}, particularly below 7.7 GeV

Centrality dependence of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H production



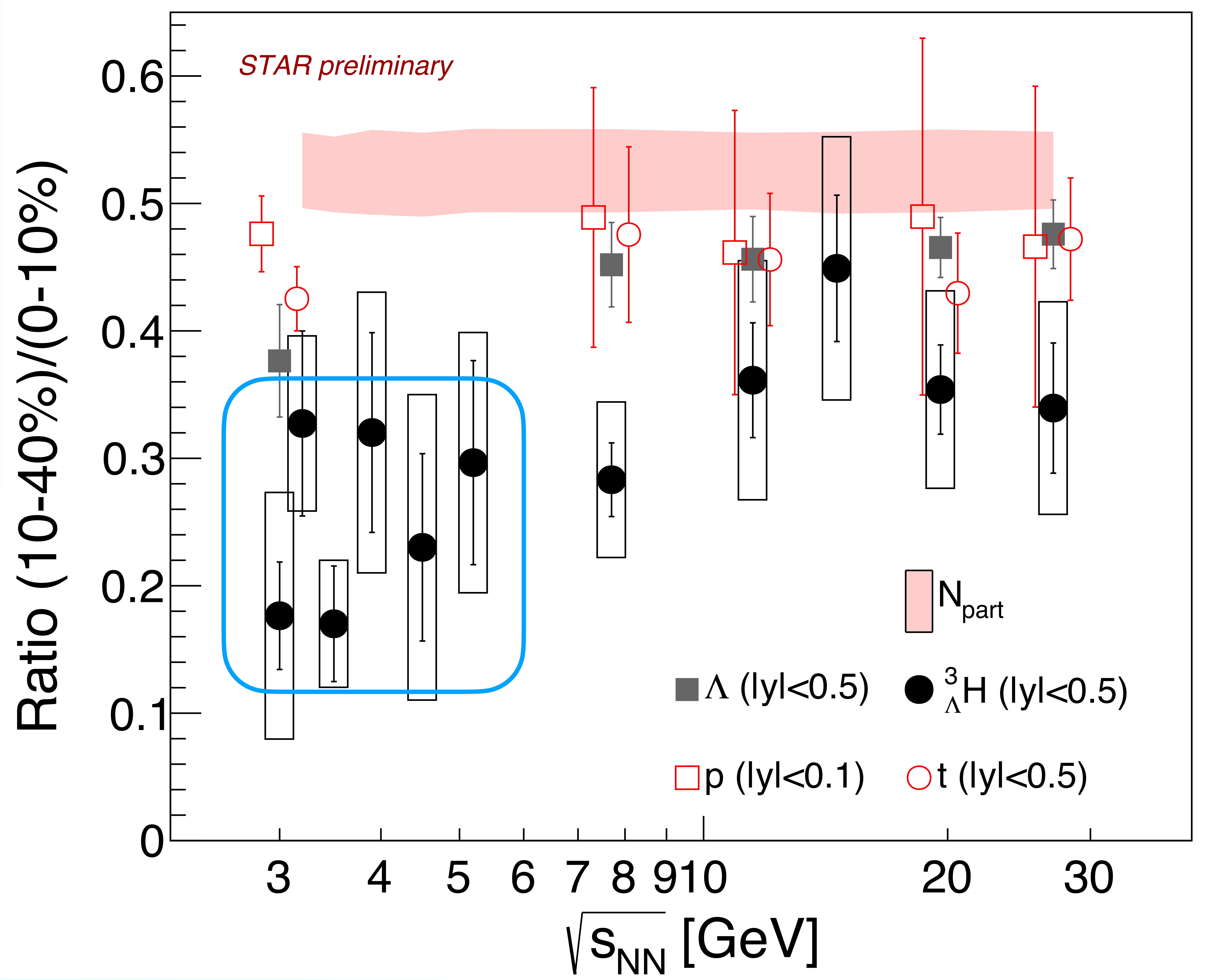
- Proton yield scales with N_{part}
- Λ yield increases more steeply than N_{part}, particularly at low collision energies

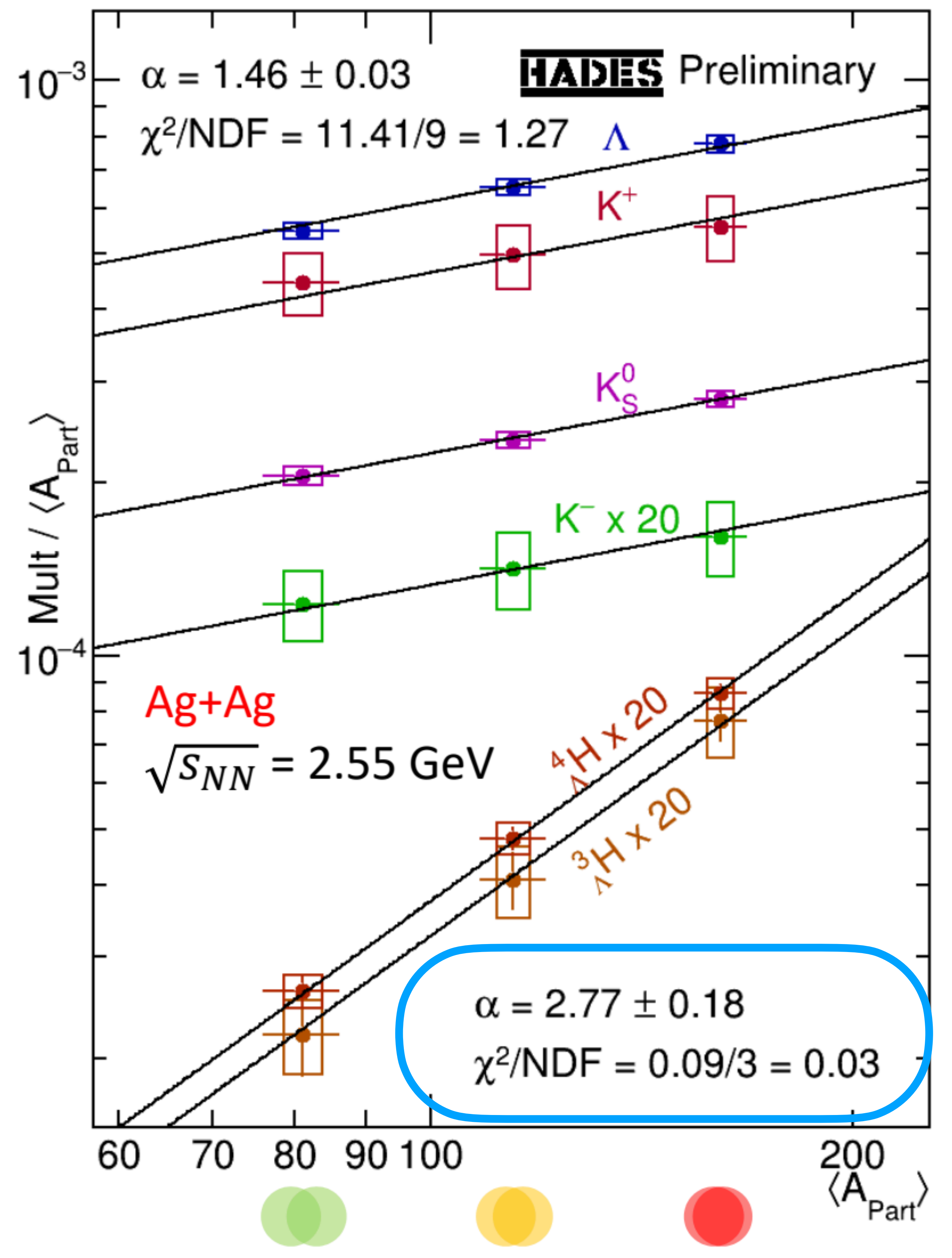
see Y. Zhou, 17:00 20/05 (Mon.)

- At low energies, ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H production tends to increases more steeply than proton, Λ, ^{3}He

Stronger suppression of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H production in more peripheral collisions at low energies?

Centrality dependence of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}$ production



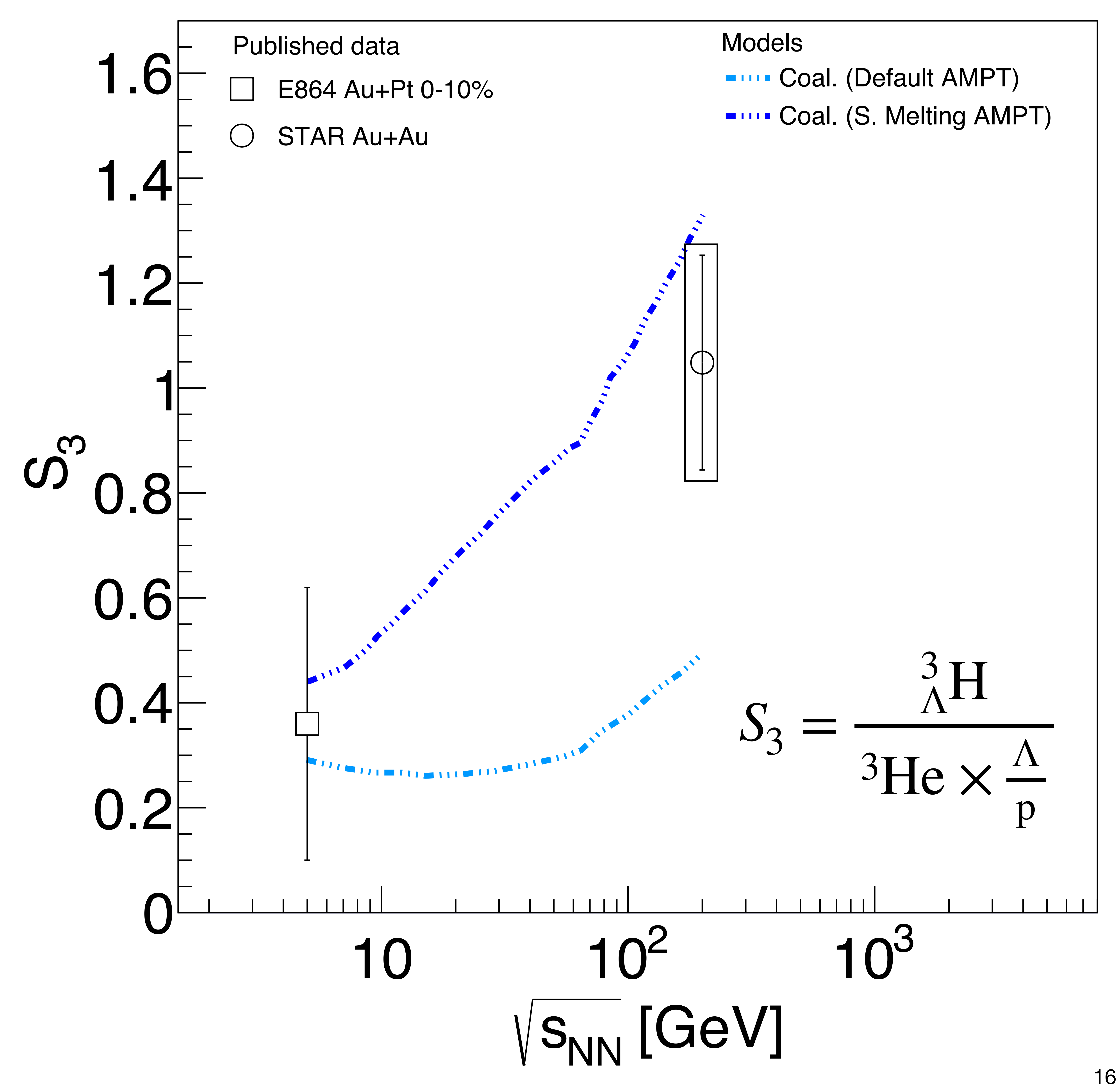


S Spies, (HADES), HYP2022

- Similar observation in Ag+Ag collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}}$=2.55 GeV

Suppression related to the nature of the created medium?

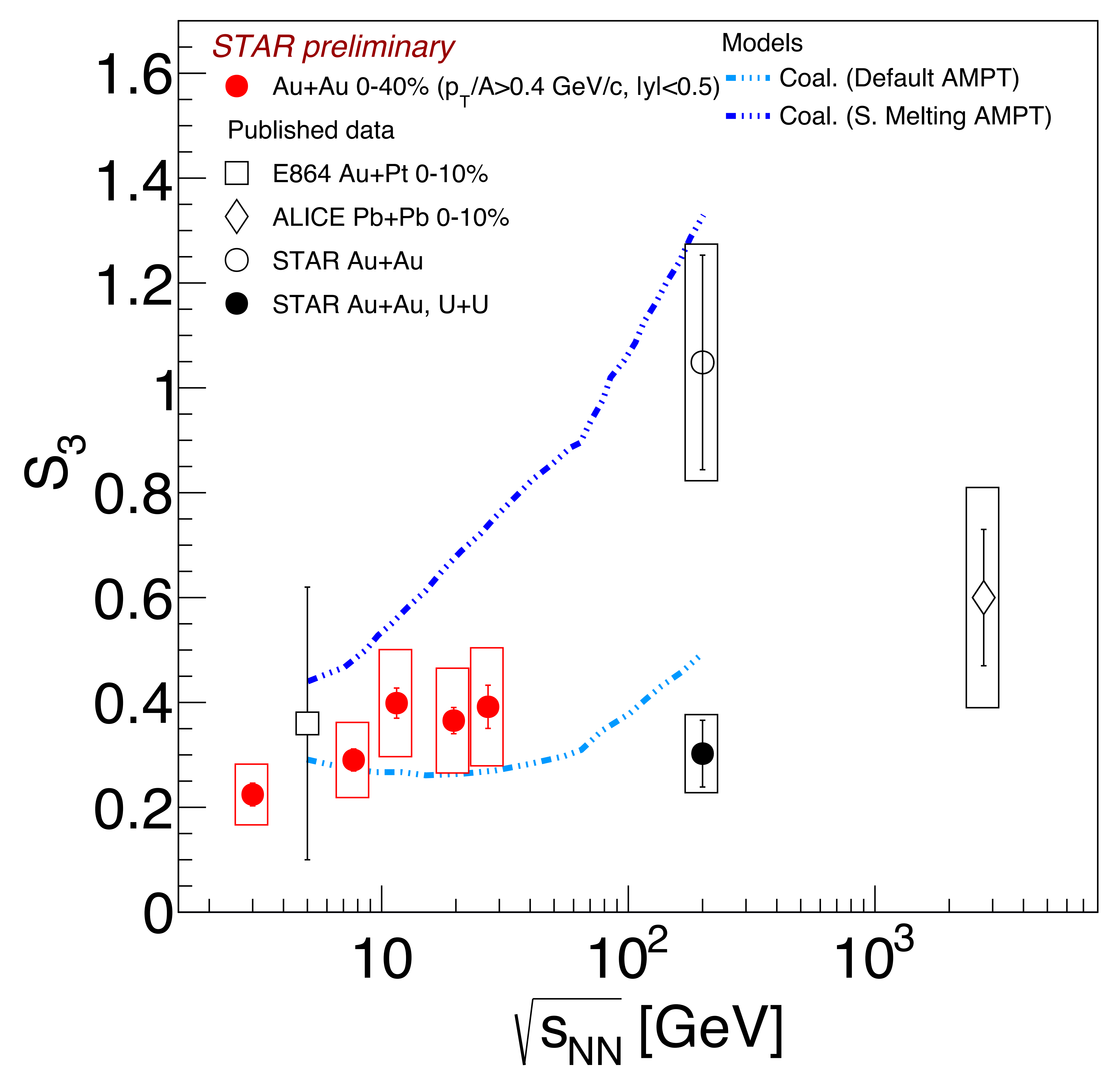
Strangeness Population Factor S_3



- An enhancement of S_3 was proposed as a probe for deconfinement

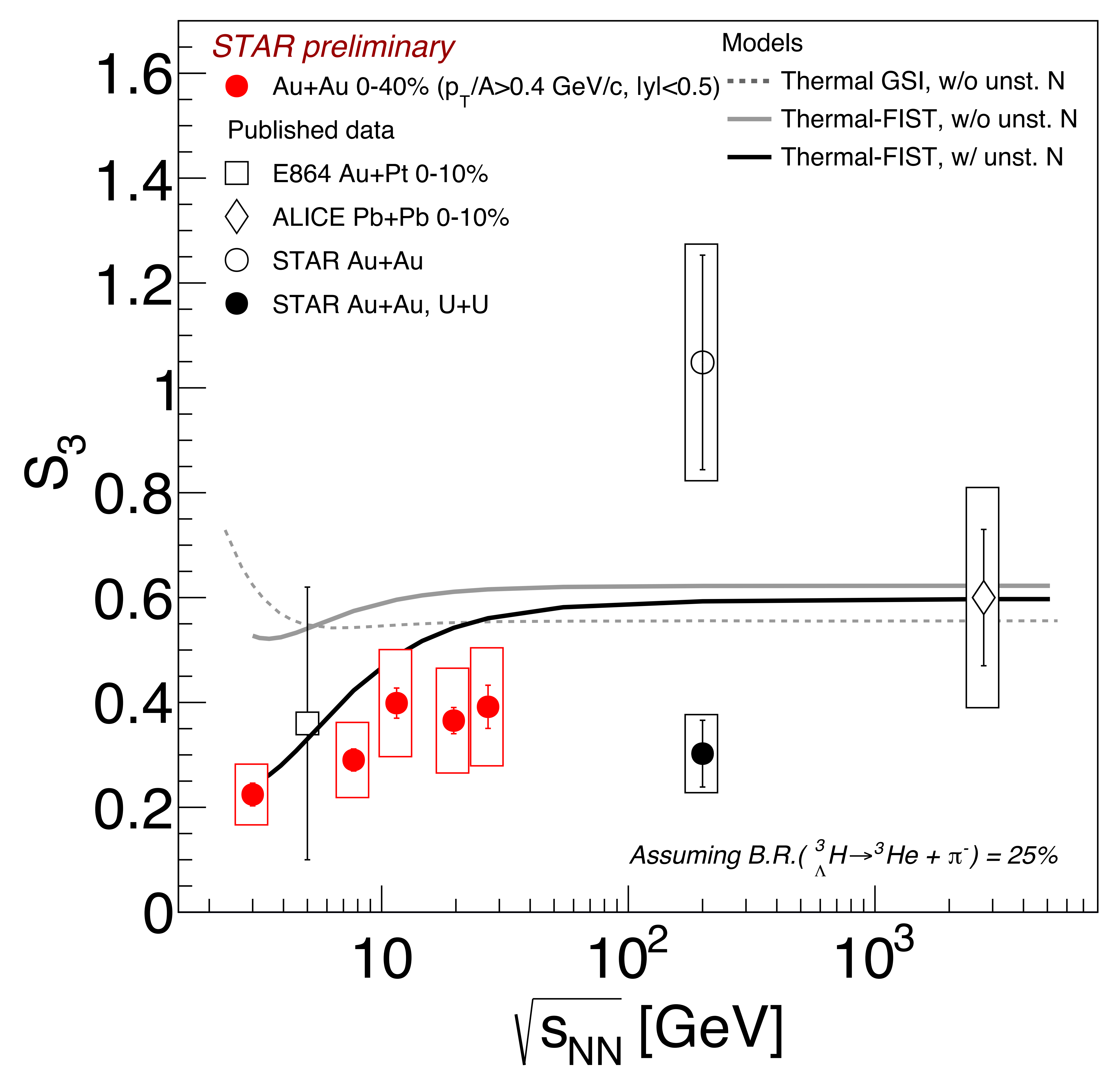
Phys. Lett. B 684 (2010) 224

Strangeness Population Factor S_3



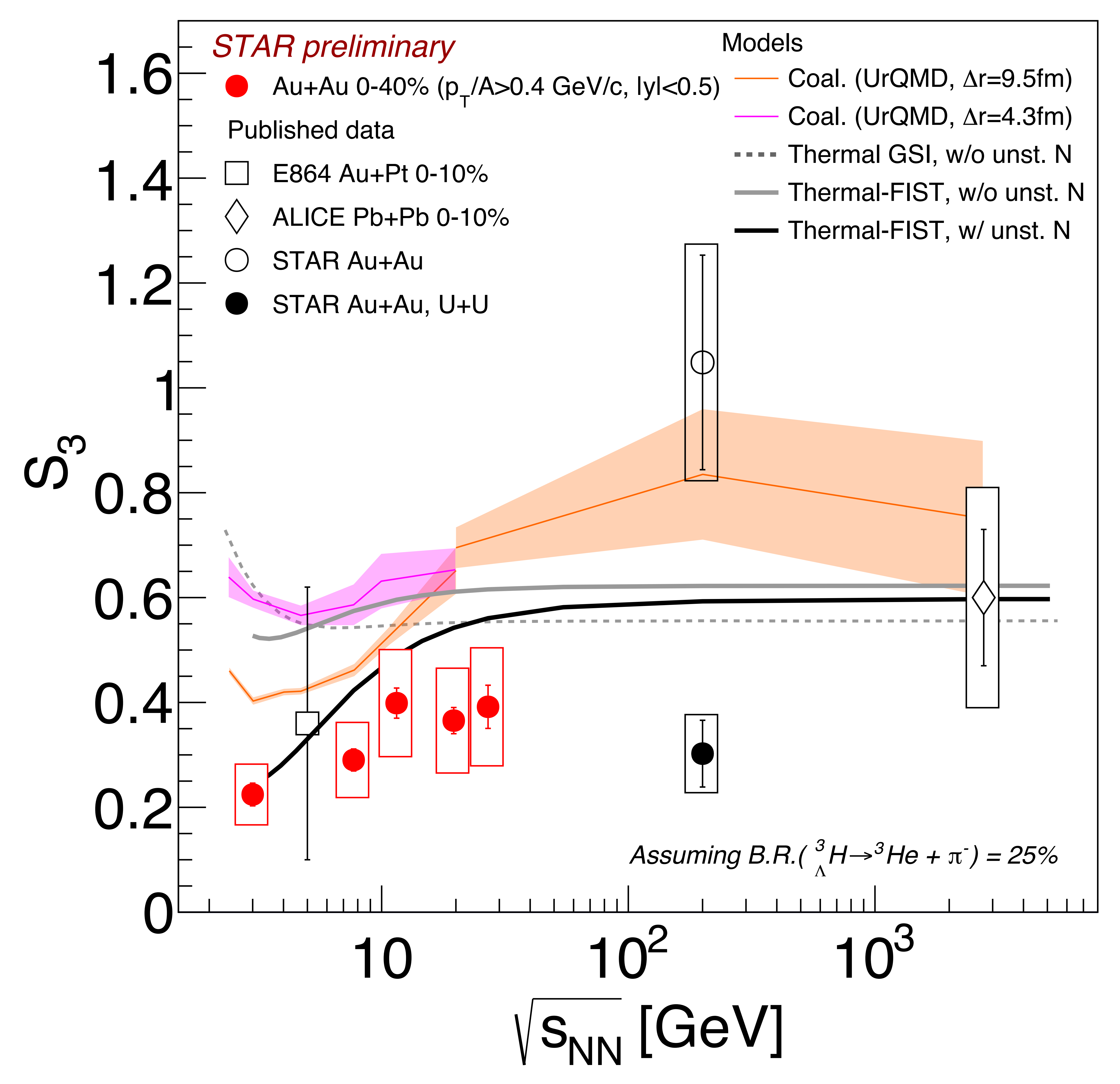
- An enhancement of S_3 was proposed as a probe for deconfinement
- Data indicates a mild increase in S_3 , **do not follow the expectations of the model**

Strangeness Population Factor S_3



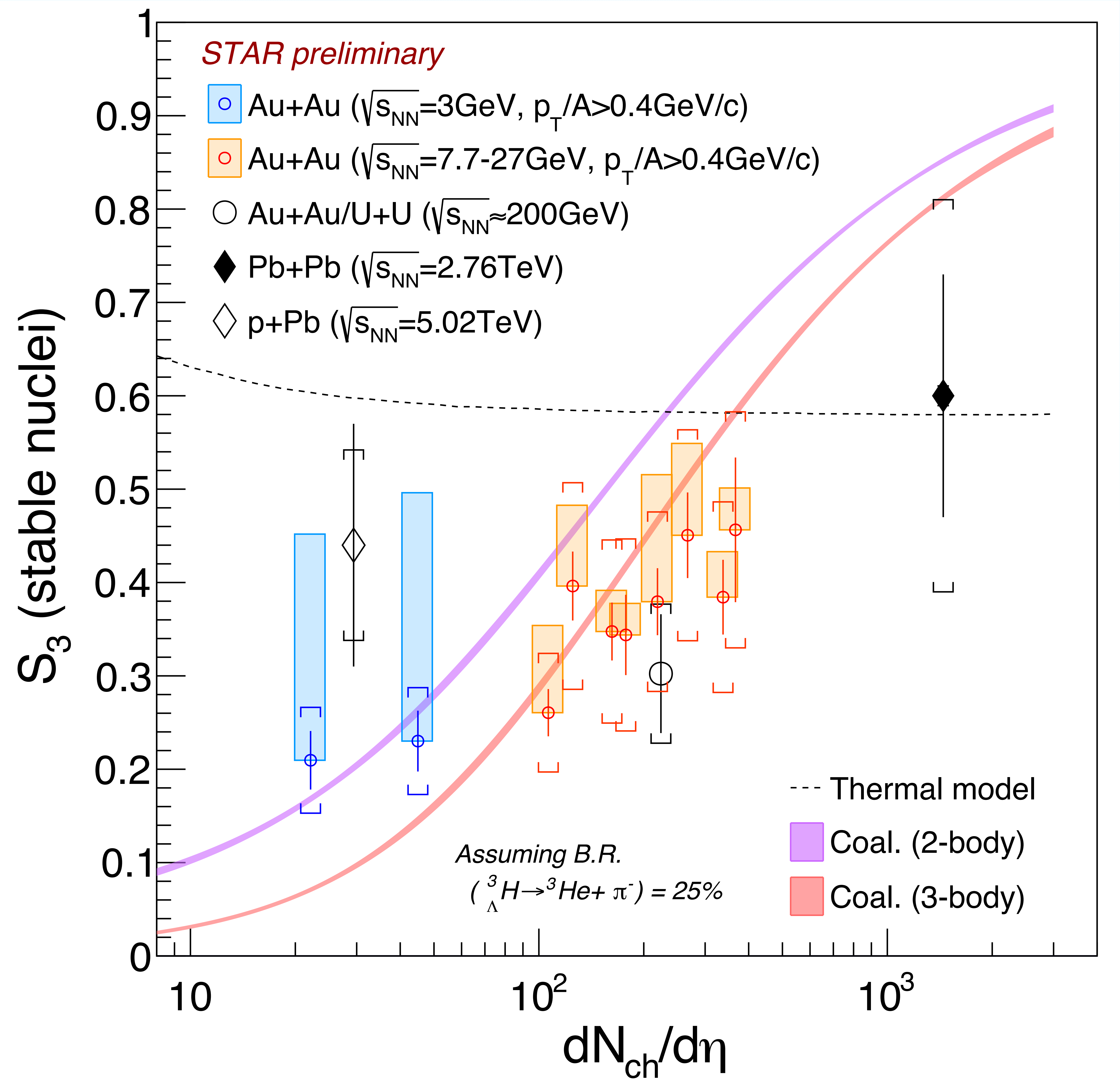
- The measured S_3 is close to thermal model predictions
- The increasing trend is driven by the decreasing feed-down from ^{3}He towards higher energies

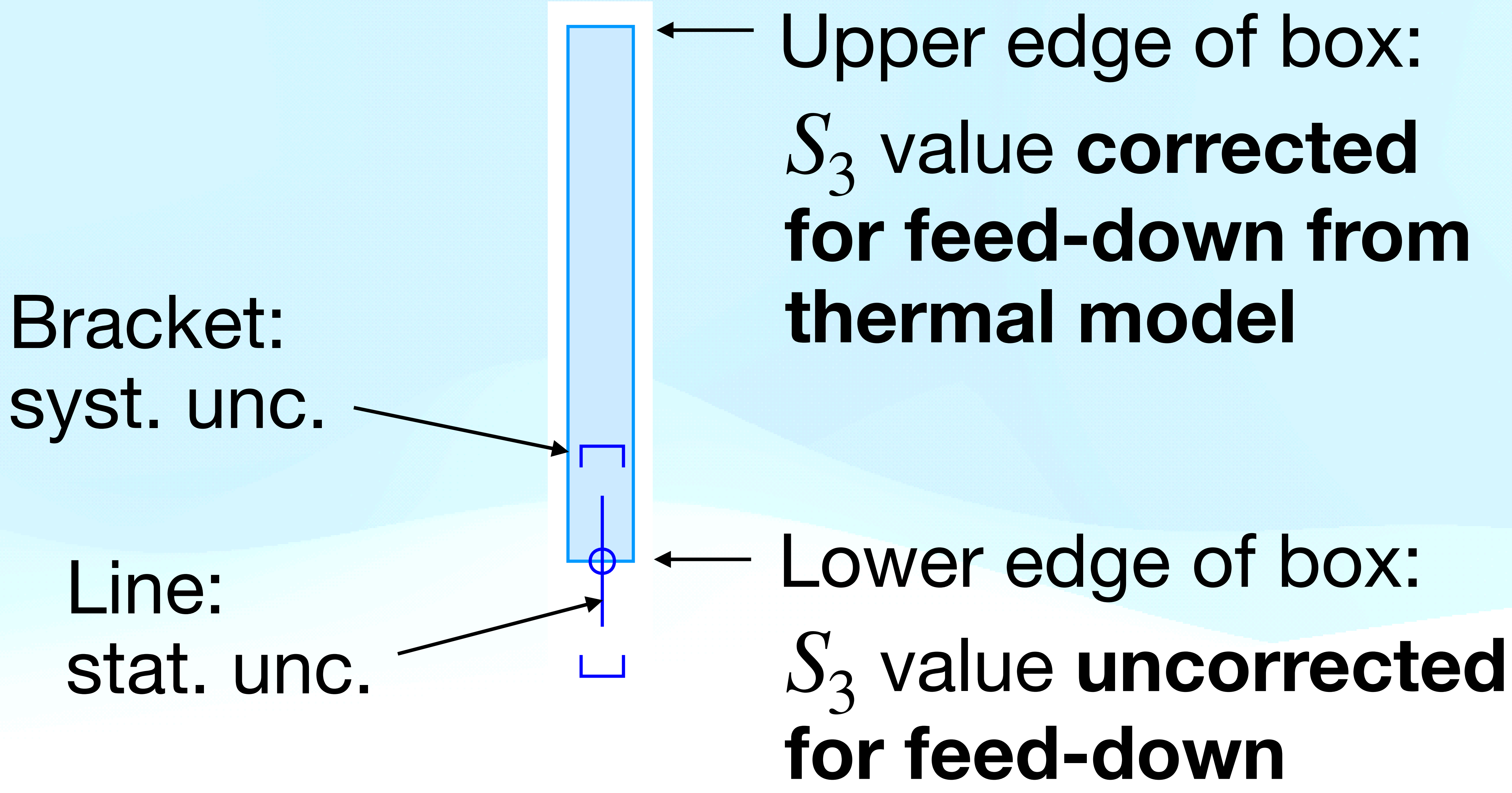
Strangeness Population Factor S_3



- UrQMD + Coalescence seem to overshoot the data
- A key prediction from coalescence models is the suppression of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}H$ production in small systems due to its large radius
- Best represented by investigating the multiplicity dependence, since $dN_{ch}/d\eta$ is a good proxy for volume
  - Possible feed-down should be accounted for when interpreting results

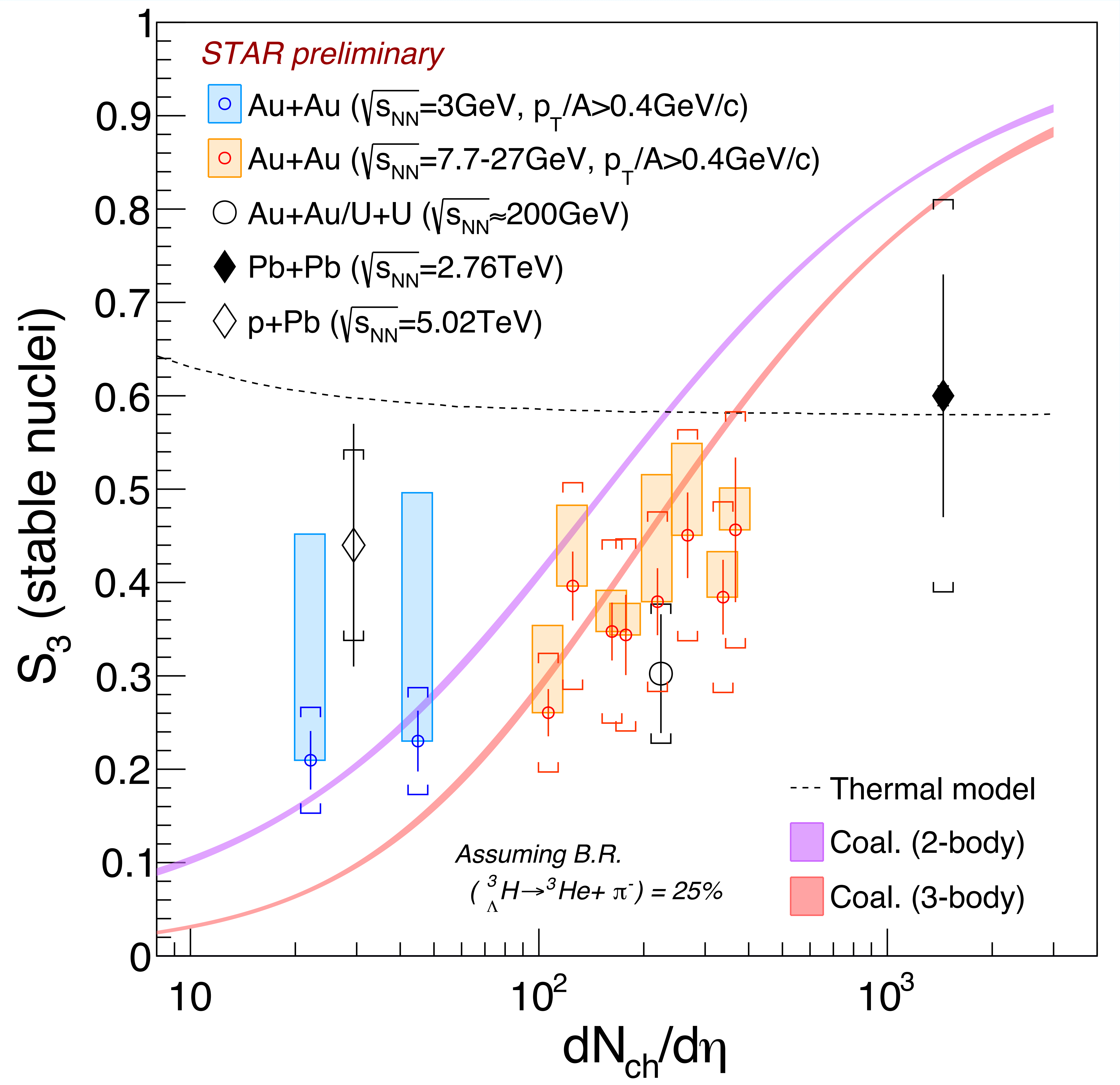
Multiplicity dependence of S_3(stable nuclei)





- Unstable nuclei production are suppressed relative to stable nuclei (see backup)
- The true value of S_3 (stable nuclei) very likely lies between the upper and lower limits

Multiplicity dependence of S_3(stable nuclei)

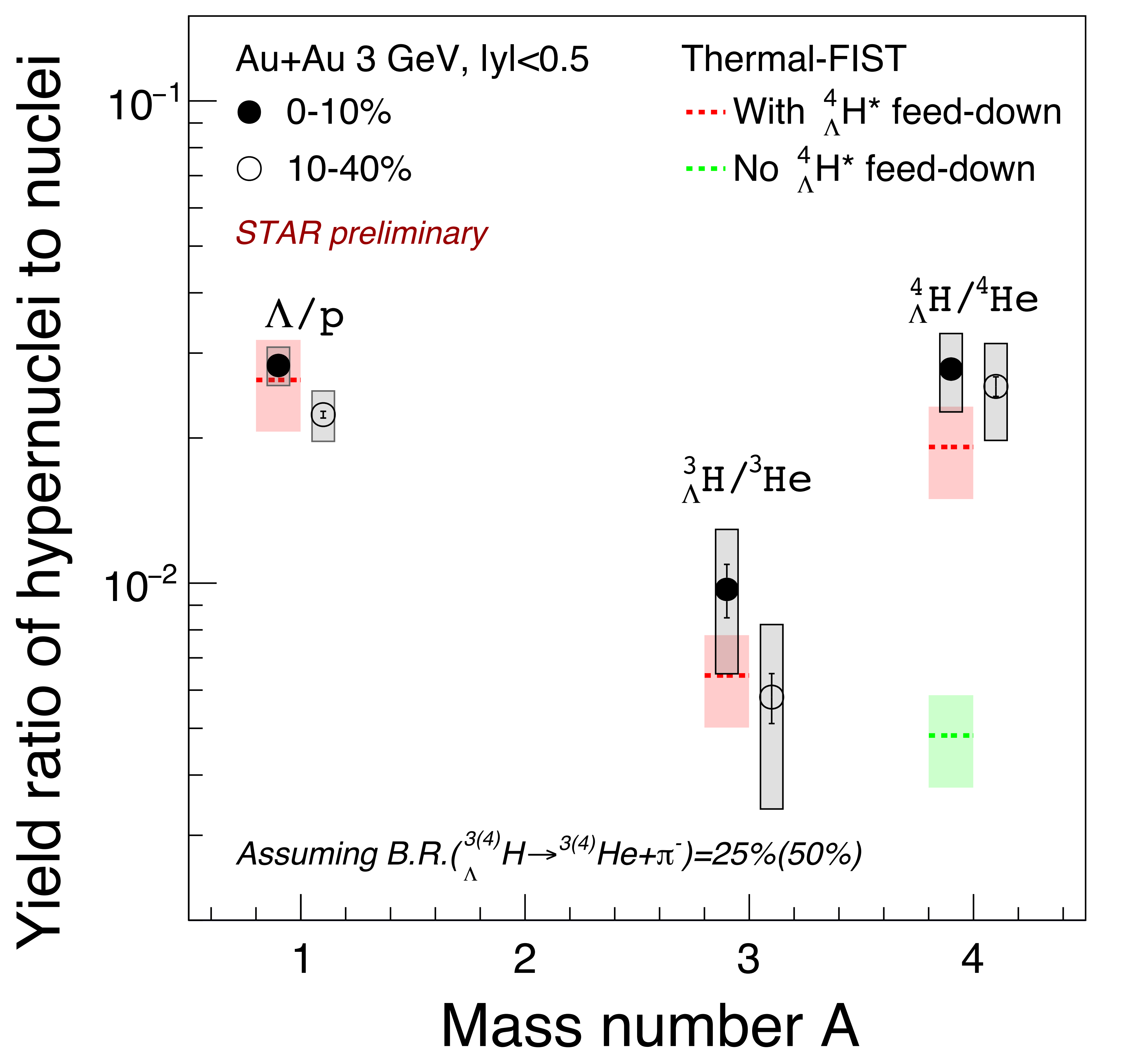


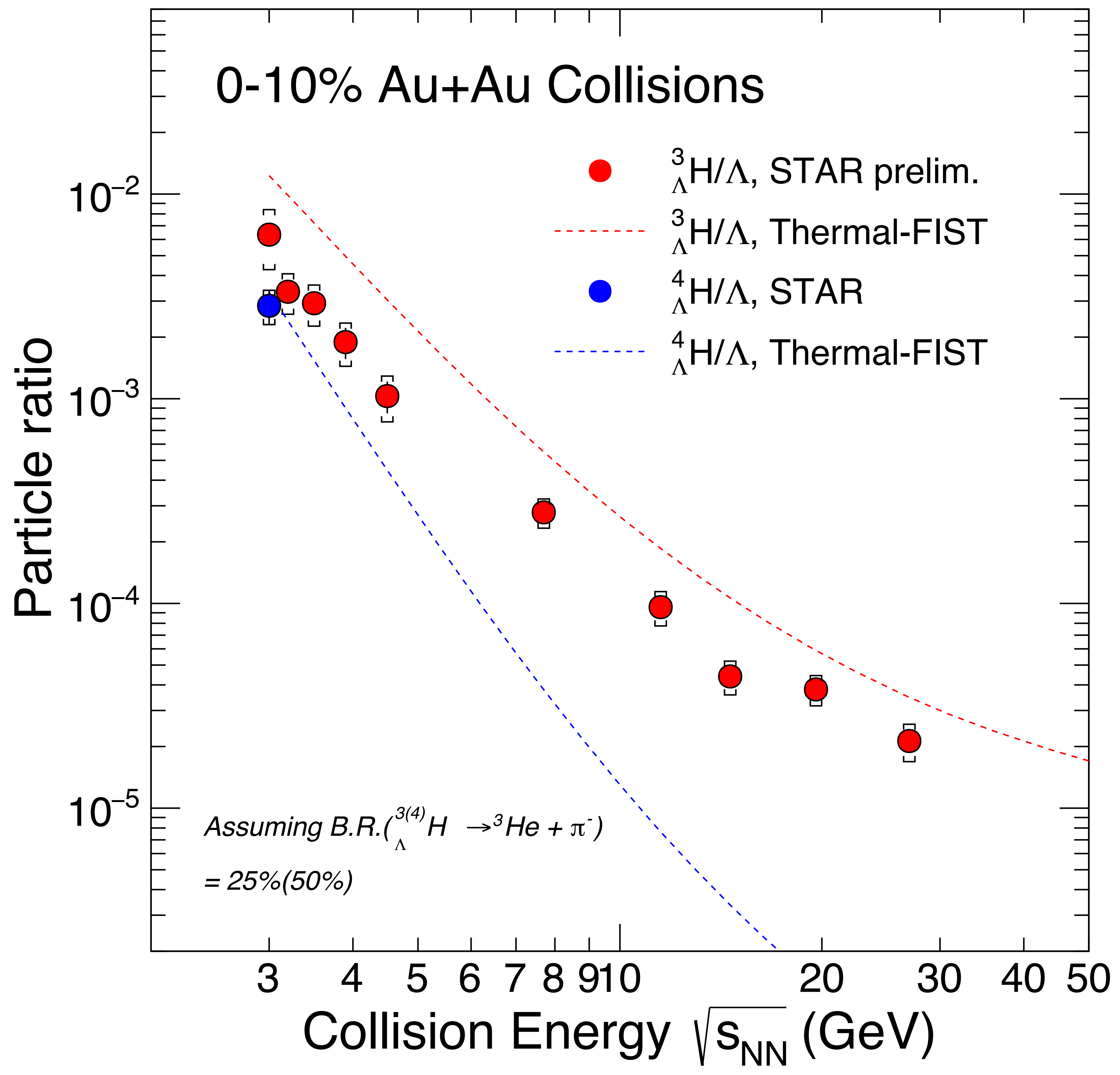
S_3 (stable nuclei) ≈ 0.35

- Existing data for S_3 considering stable nuclei only do not exhibit significant dependence on collision energy, system size
- Data show **milder multiplicity dependence** compared to coalescence, particularly 3-body
- Thermal model tends to overpredict S_3 at $dN_{ch}/d\eta$=200 or lower

More data at very low and very high $dN_{ch}/d\eta$ is needed

${}^{4}_{\Lambda}$H production





- Non-monotonic behavior of hypernuclei to nuclei yields vs mass number

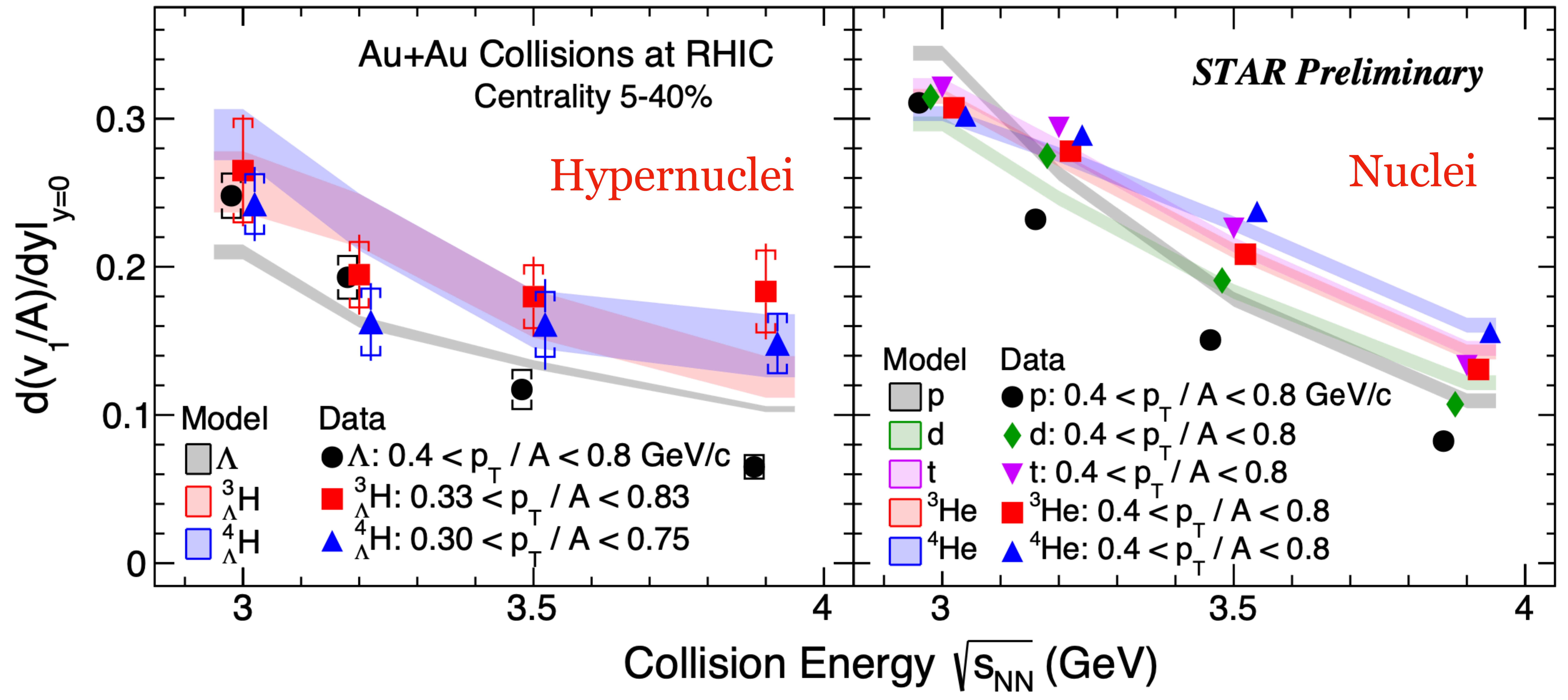
Suggestive of creation of unstable hypernuclei

$${}^{4}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}^{*}(1^{+}) \rightarrow {}^{4}_{\Lambda}\mathrm{H}(0^{+}) + \gamma$$

- ${}^{4}_{\Lambda}$H yields are consistent with thermal model while ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H are not

Binding energy dependence or something else?

Hypernuclei Collective Flow



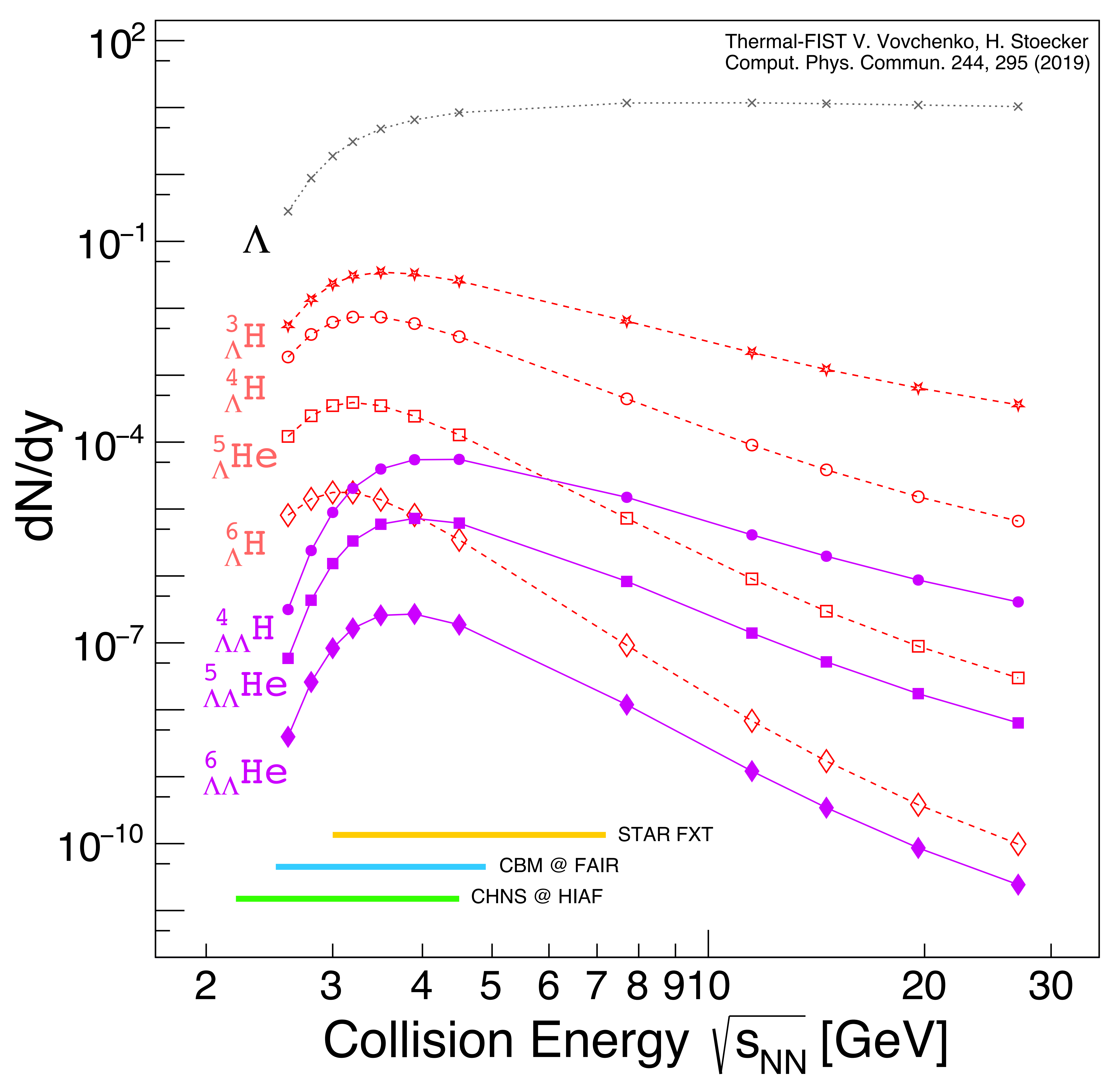
- Directed flow of hypernucei follows mass scaling
- JAM + coalescence approx. describes the data

Qualitatively consistent with coalescence formation of hypernuclei

Summary

- ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H yields in central collisions underestimated by thermal model by a factor of 2
- ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H mean p_T tends to be lower than blast-wave parametrization from light hadrons
  - ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H is not in thermal equilibrium with light hadrons
- Data for S_3 (stable nuclei) are consistent with flat or slightly increasing trend with $dN_{ch}/d\eta$
  - Milder multiplicity dependence compared to coalescence models
- Suppression of ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H in 10-40% collisions at low collision energies observed
- ${}^{4}_{\Lambda}$H yields are consistent with thermal model
  - Hypernuclei data provides new challenges for theoretical models
- ${}^{3}_{\Lambda}$H mean p_T seem to exhibit two separate trends for $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 3 - 4.5$GeV and $7.7 - 27$GeV
  - Change in medium properties or expansion dynamics?

Outlook



RHIC-STAR

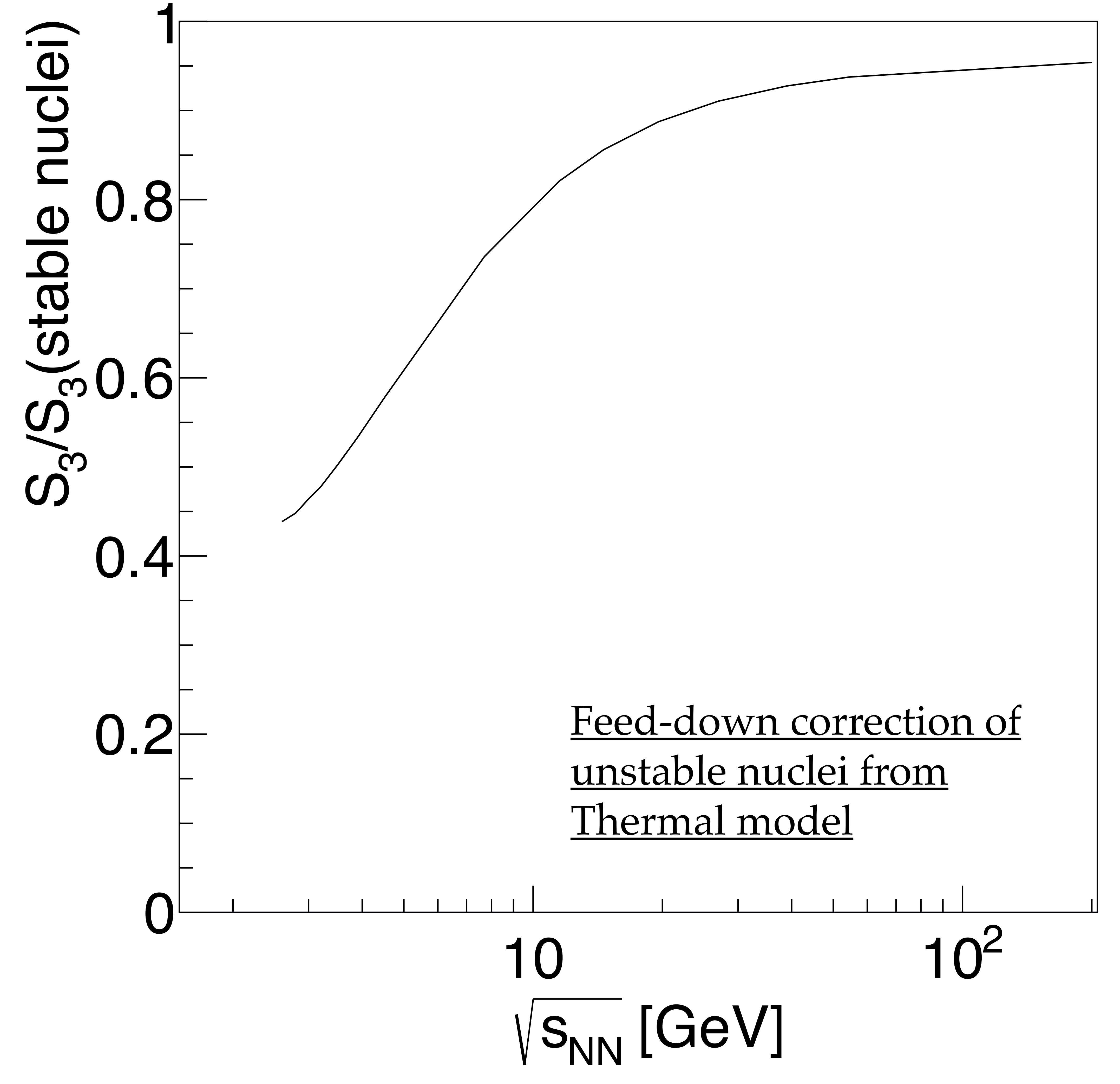
- Heavier hypernuclei, including $^{4}_{\Lambda}$H, $^{4}_{\Lambda}$He, $^{5}_{\Lambda}$He, $^{6}_{\Lambda}$H at FXT energies
- High statistics data at RHIC top energy give opportunities for multiplicity dependence study

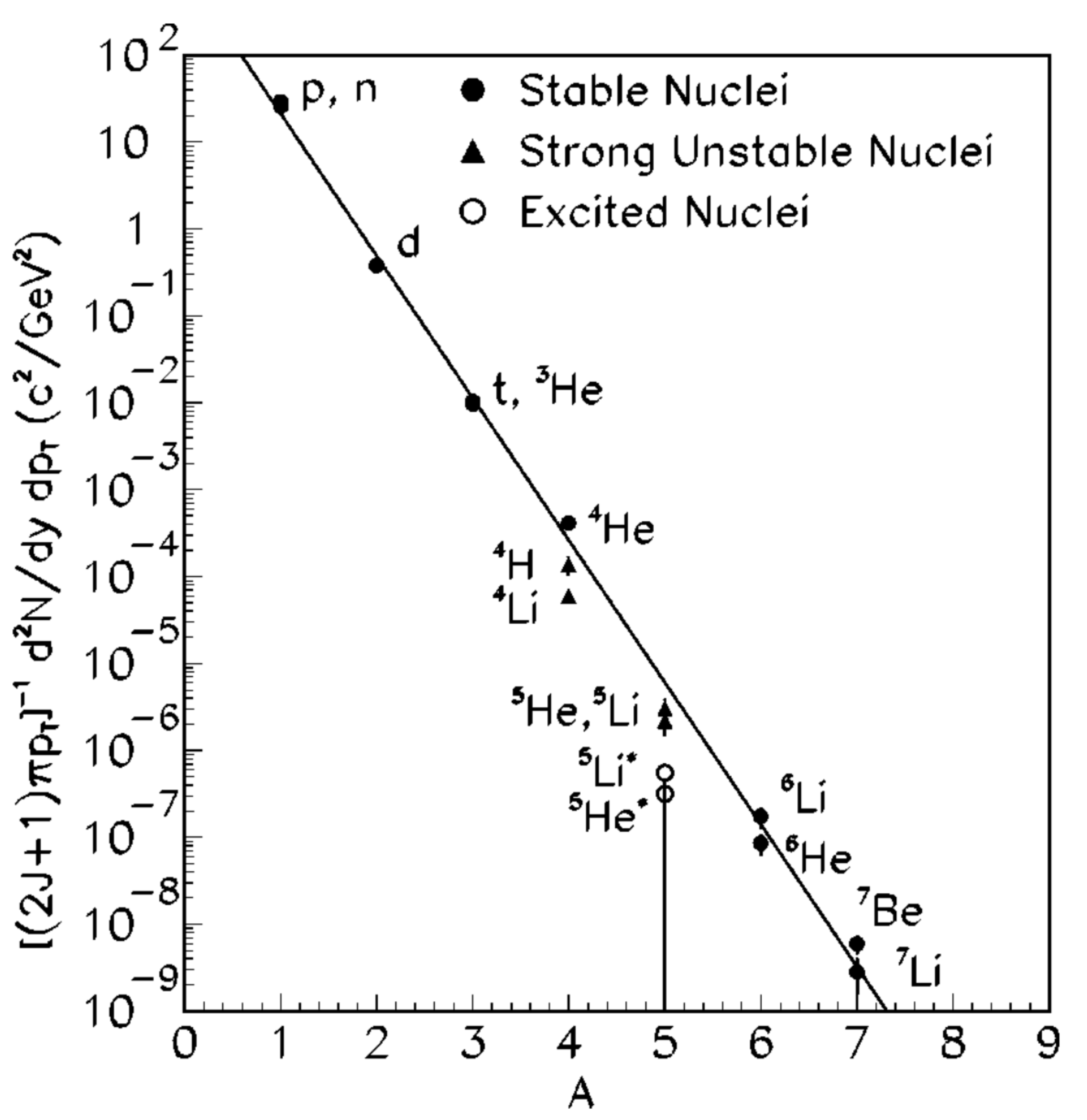
FAIR-CBM and HIAF

- Double-Λ hypernuclei to constrain Λ-Λ interaction, essential for hyperon puzzle resolution

Thank you for listening!

Feed-down from unstable nuclei





Phys. Rev. C 65 (2001) 014906

- Suppression of A=4 unstable states compared to ^{4}He ground state observed at E864

Mean Transverse Momentum as a Function of Collision Energy