

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



# Cygnus, and directional DM detection

[2102.04596], [2008.12587]

Ciaran O'Hare  
University of Sydney



## **What is directional detection?**

Detecting the directions of low energy nuclear or electron recoils,  
as well as just their energies

## **Why?**

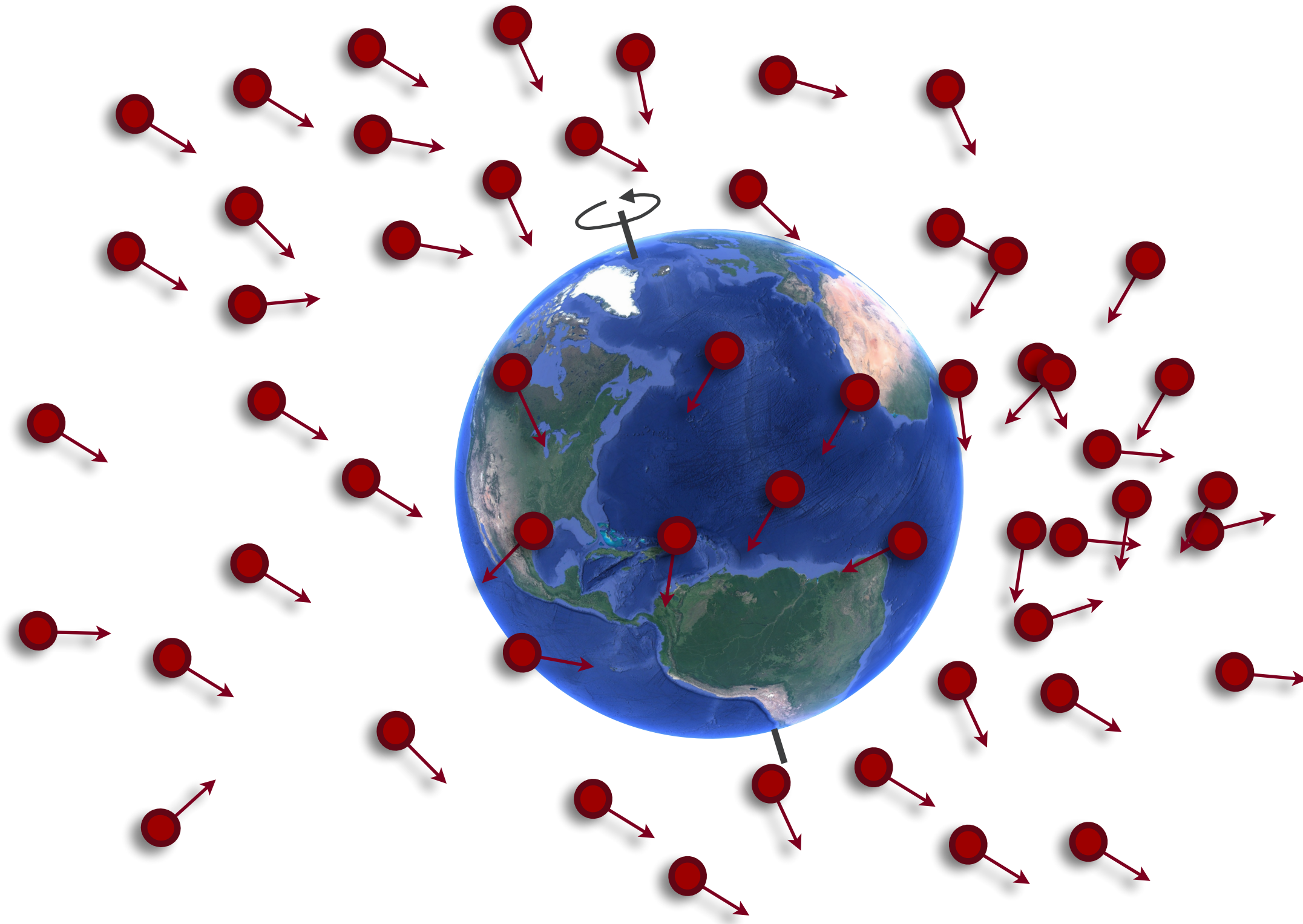
- Extend searches for WIMPs below the neutrino floor
- Provide a means of discovering—or confirming the discovery of—dark matter
  - Directionally detect neutrinos via  $CE\nu NS$  or electron scattering

## **How?**

- Many experimental proposals at varying stages of technological readiness
- Cygnus collaboration built around finding a workable gas TPC with high definition charge readout at a competitive scale

# WIMPs

Weakly Interacting Massive Particles



$$\rho \sim 0.3 \text{ GeV cm}^{-3}$$

$$v \sim 300 \text{ km s}^{-1}$$

# WIMPs

## Weakly Interacting Massive Particles

What does that actually mean?



Dan Hooper  
@DanHooperAstro

Which of the following is closest definition to how you use the word "WIMP".

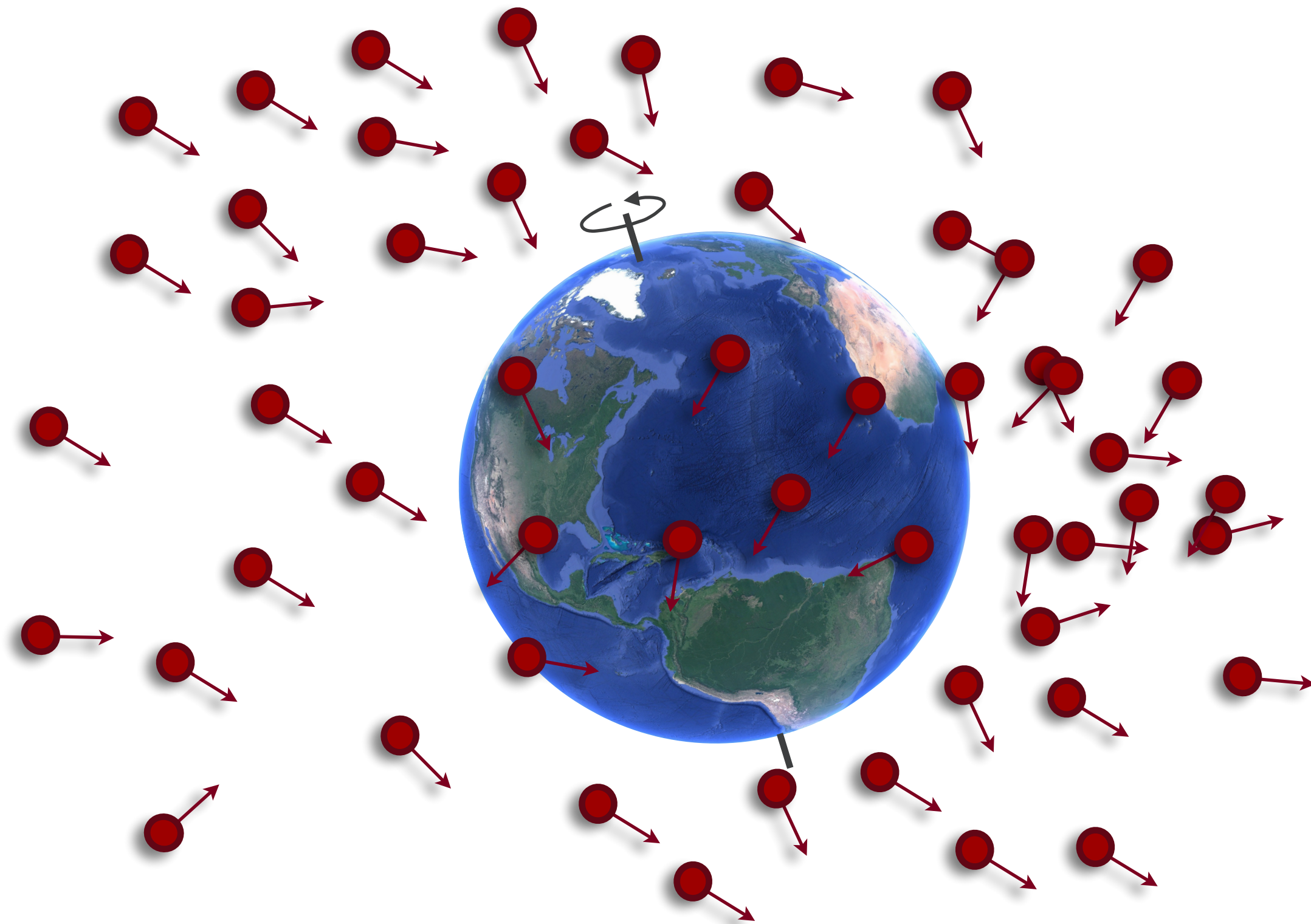
A massive particle dark matter candidate that:

Has electroweak charge

Is a thermal relic

Has a weak-scale mass

Is feebly interacting



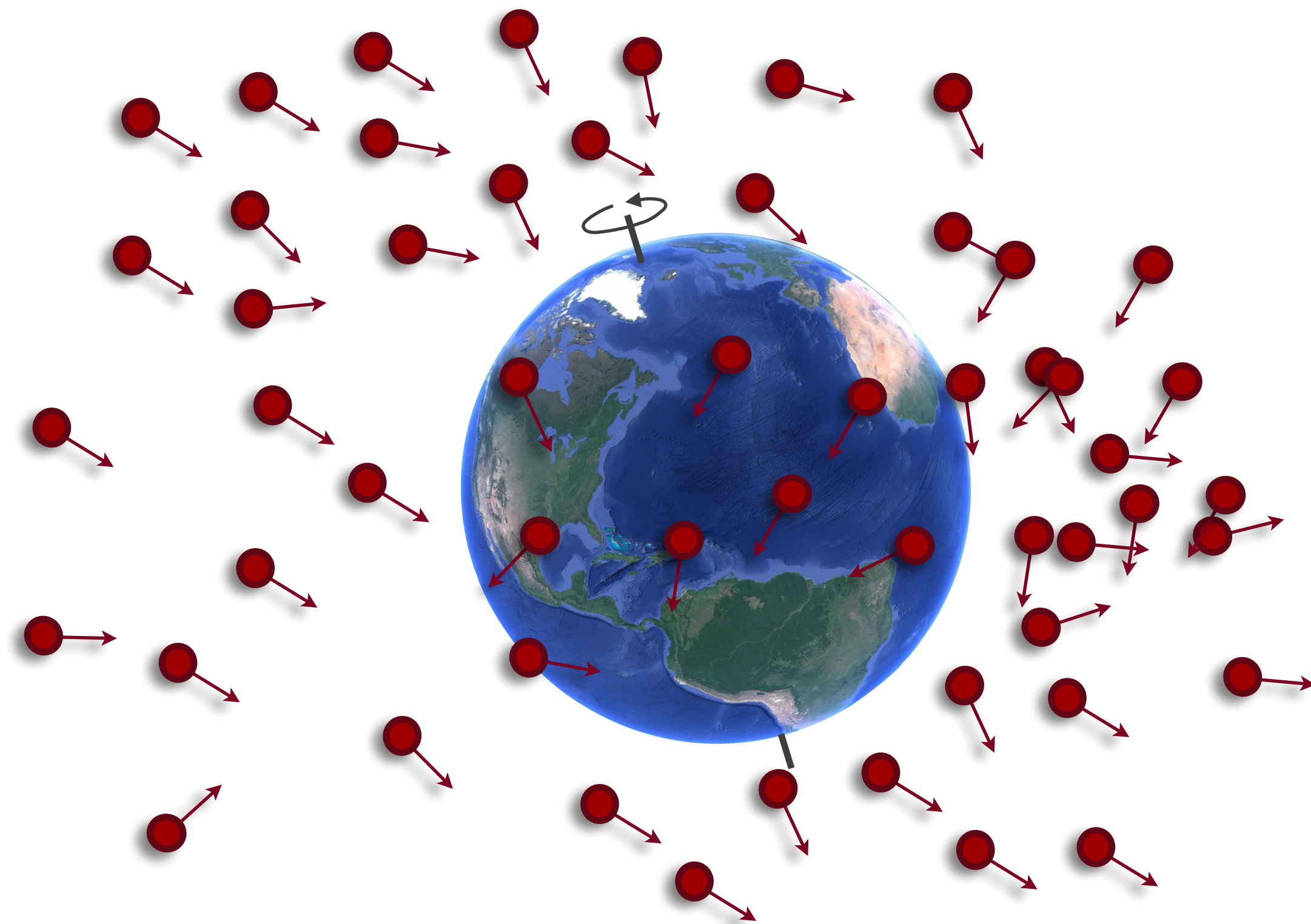
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# WIMPs

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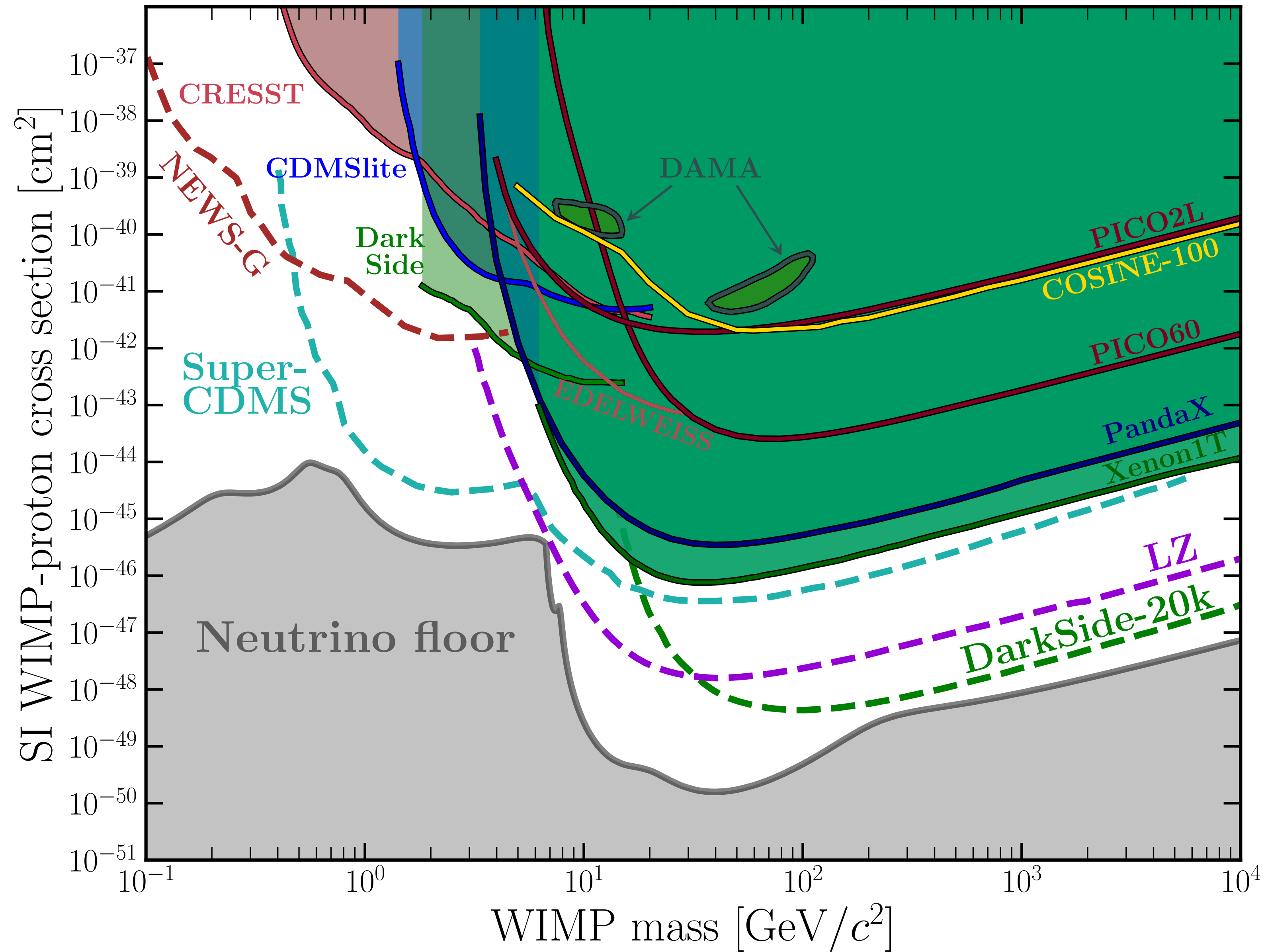
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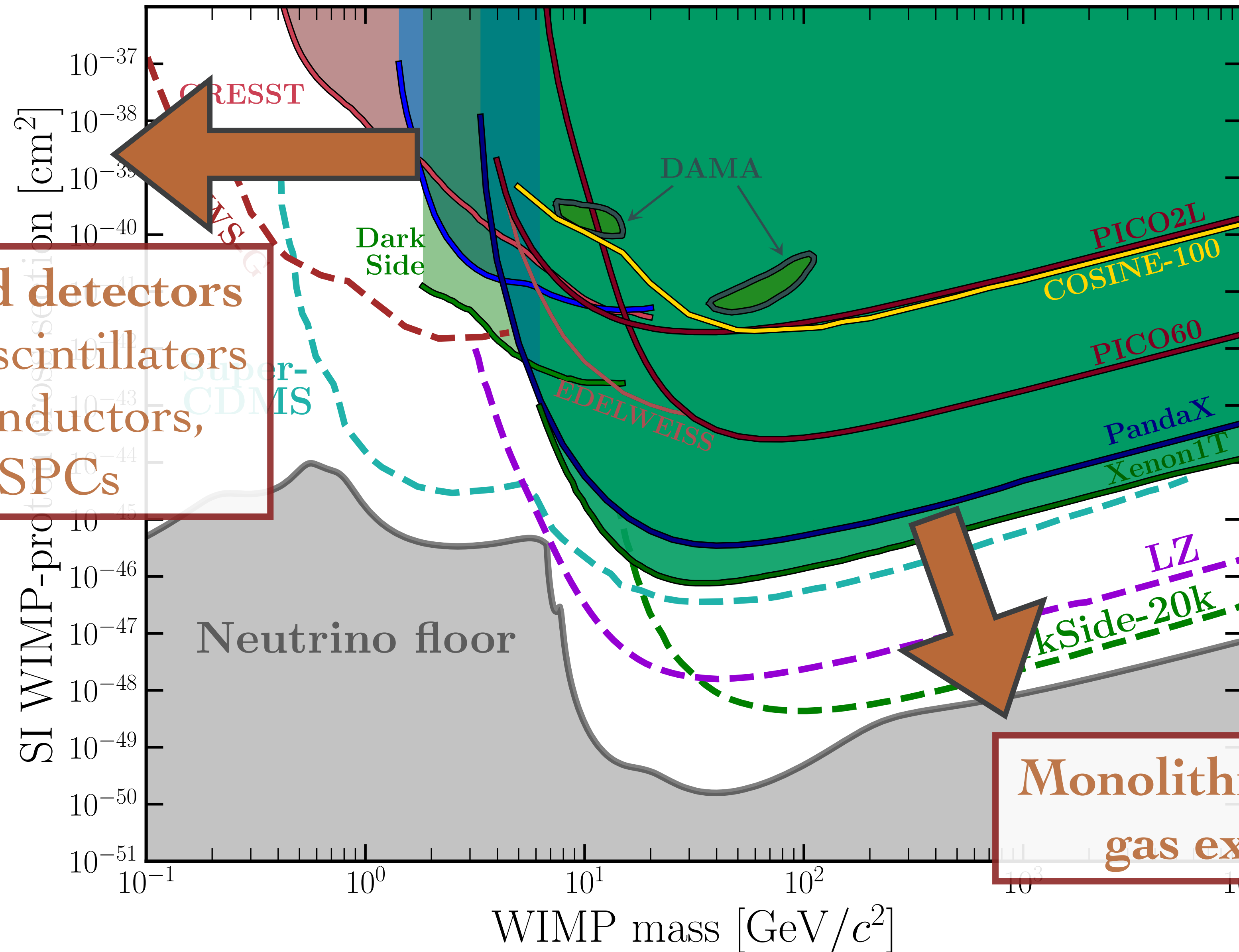
A massive particle dark matter candidate that:

Has electroweak charge	21%
Is a thermal relic	15%
Has a weak-scale mass	21%
<b>Is feebly interacting</b>	<b>44%</b>

# Current status of WIMP direct detection: SI cross section



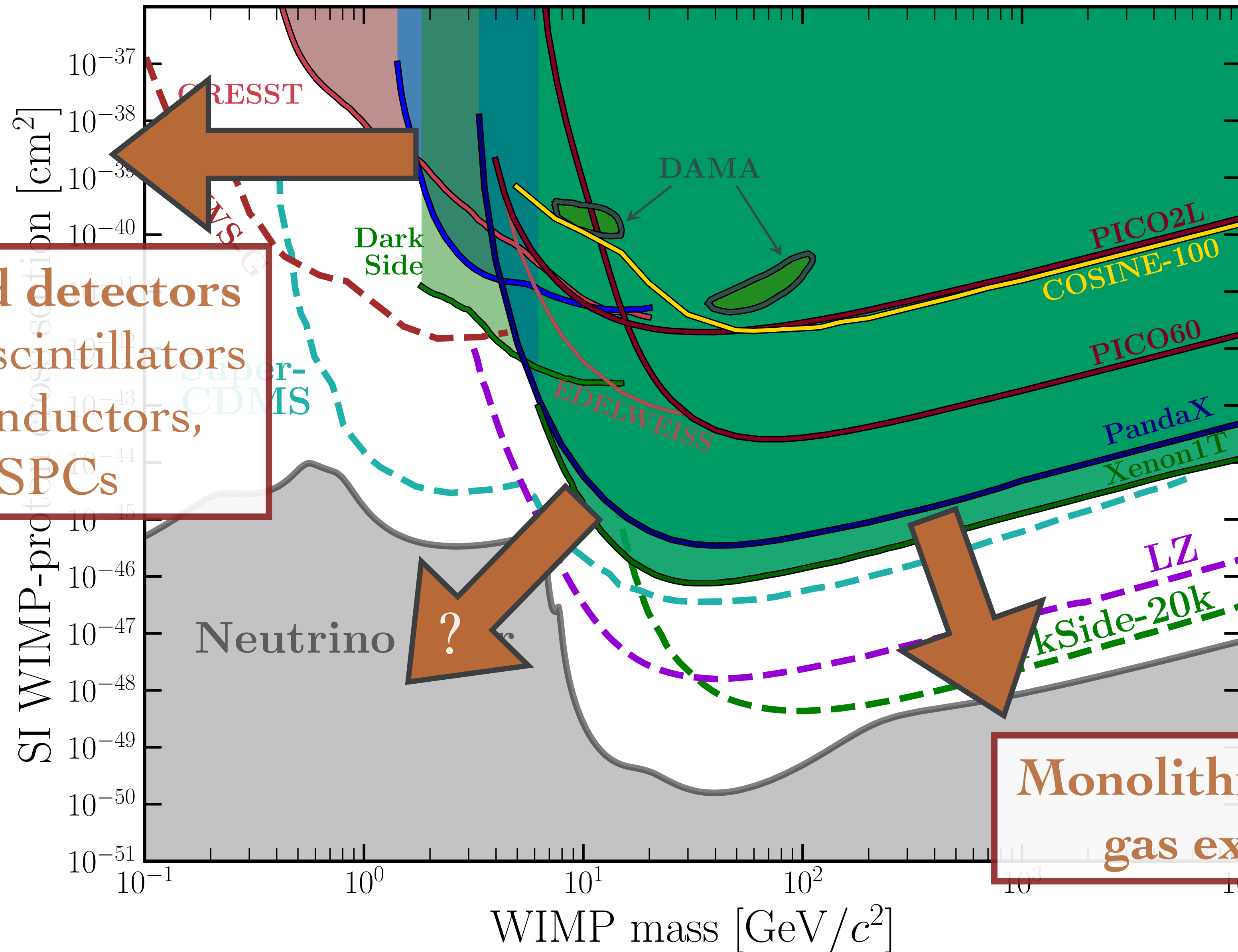
# Current status of WIMP direct detection: SI cross section



Low threshold detectors  
e.g. cryogenic scintillators  
using semiconductors,  
light gas SPCs

Monolithic liquid noble  
gas experiments

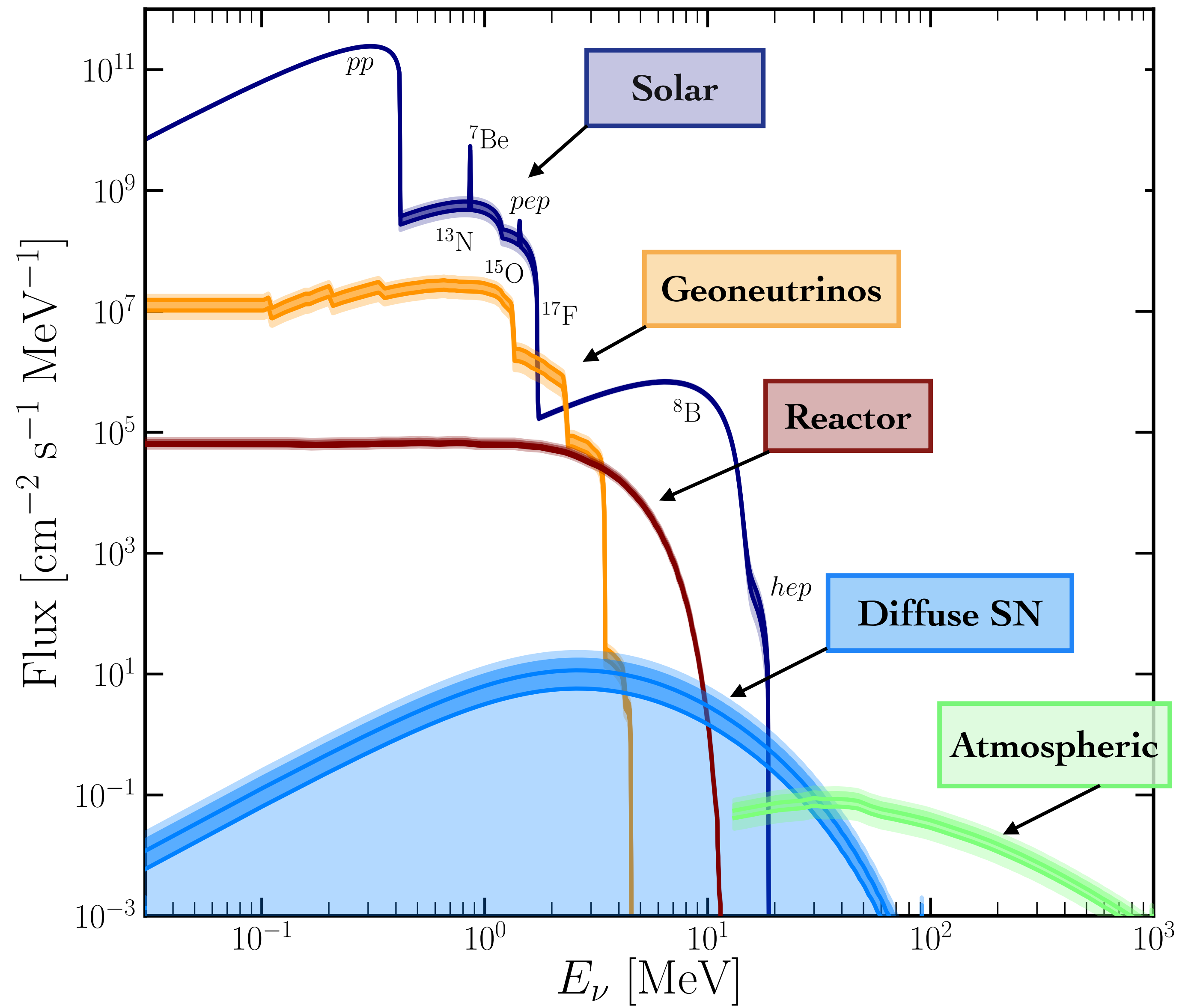
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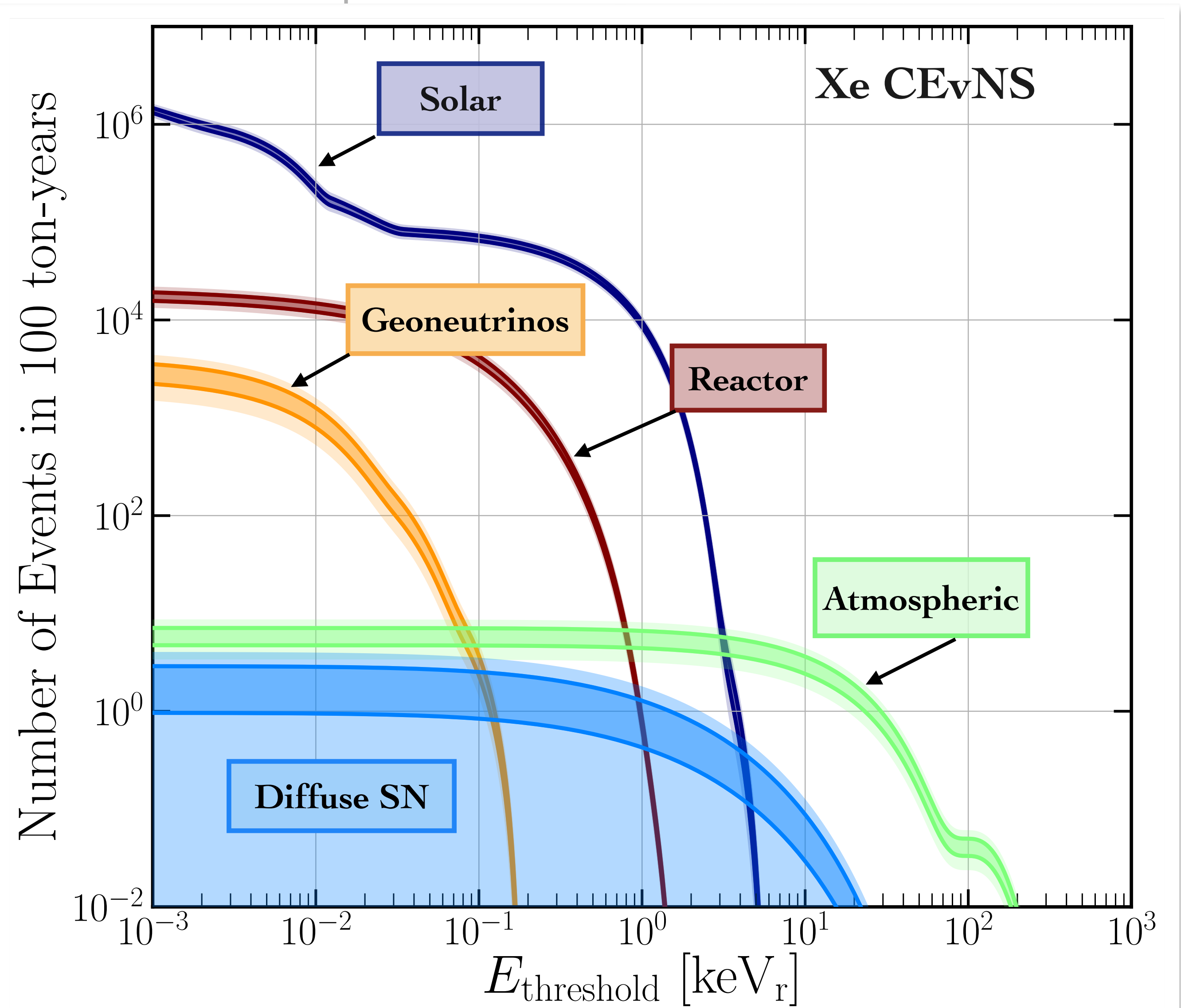
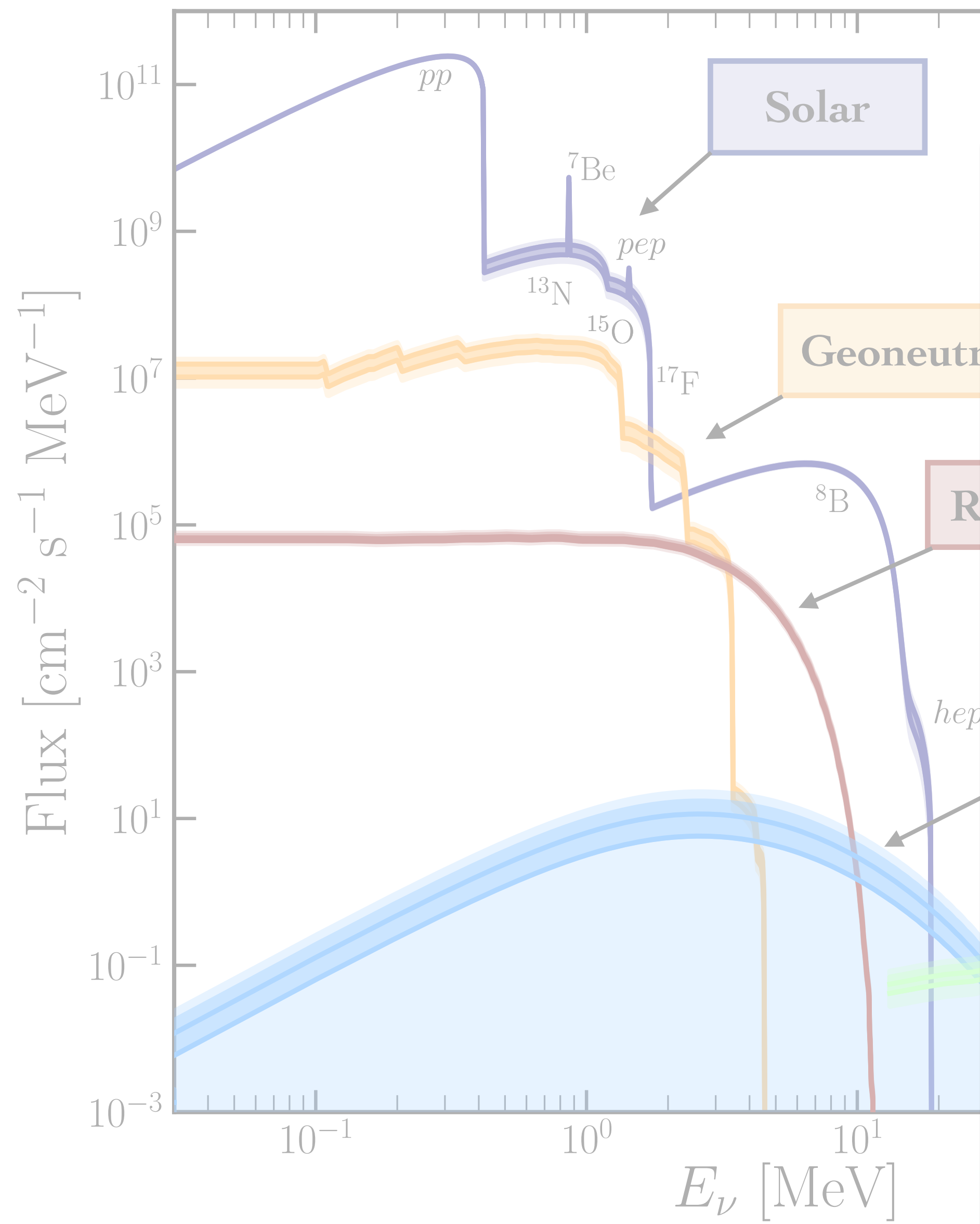


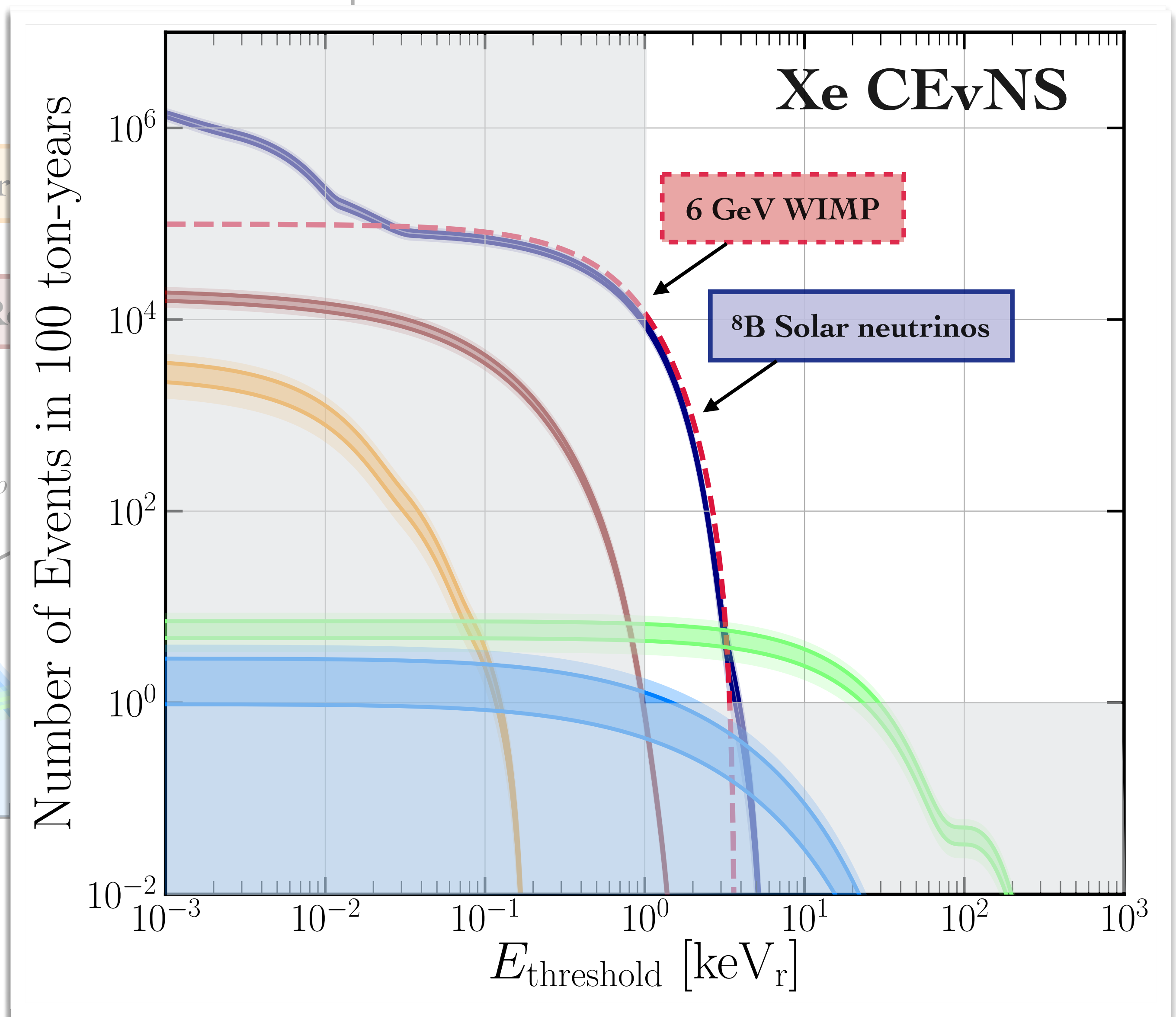
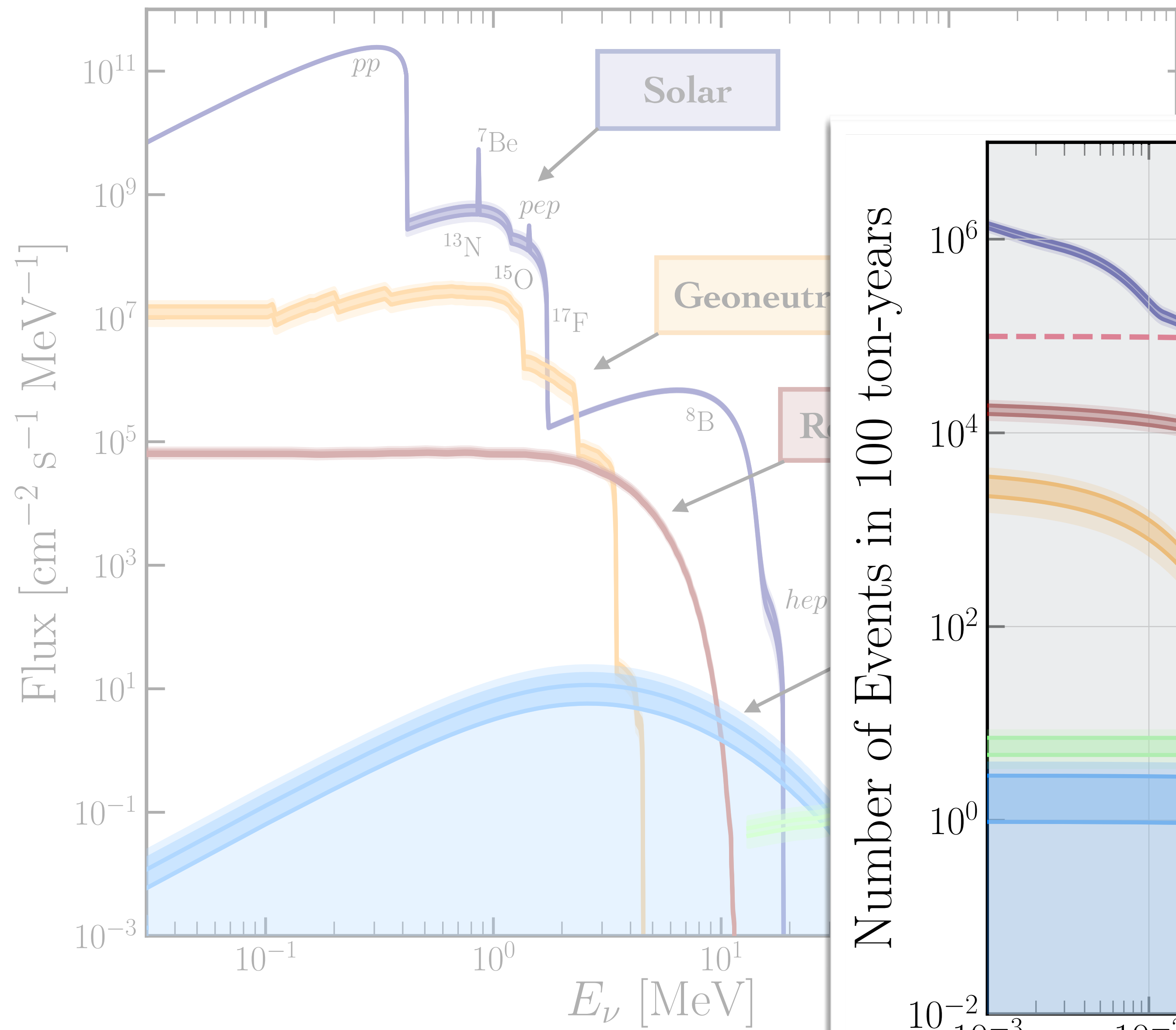
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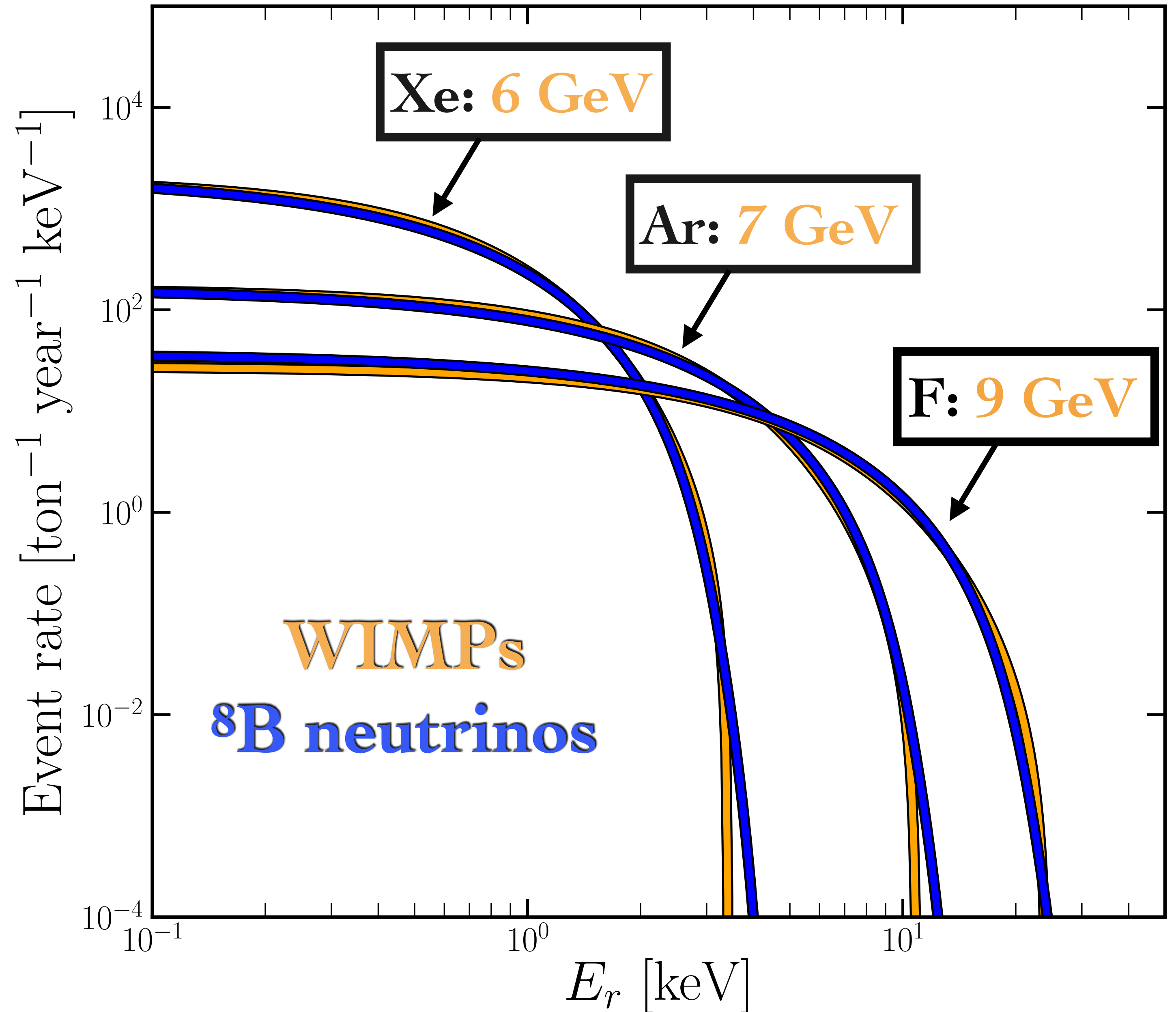


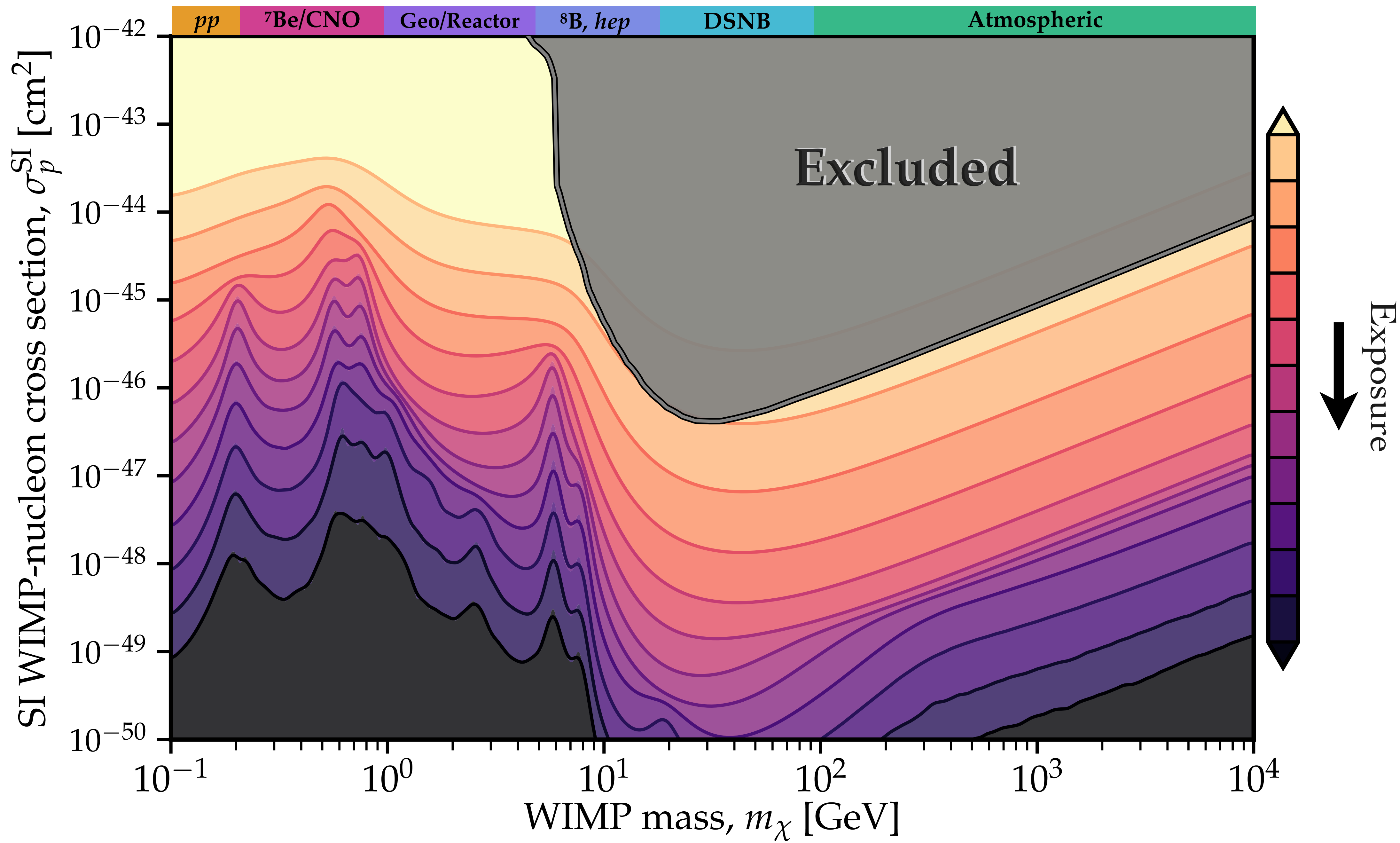


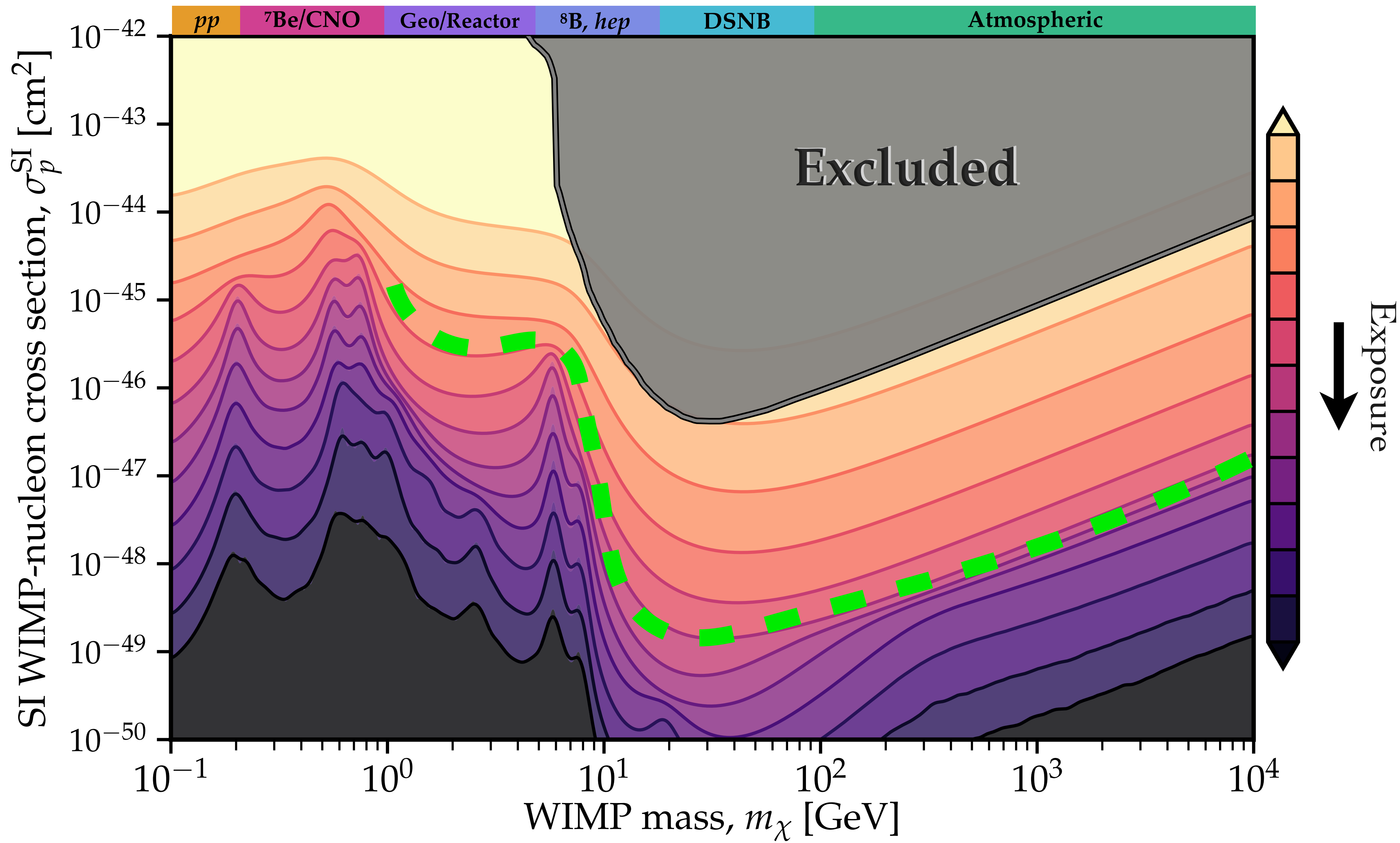


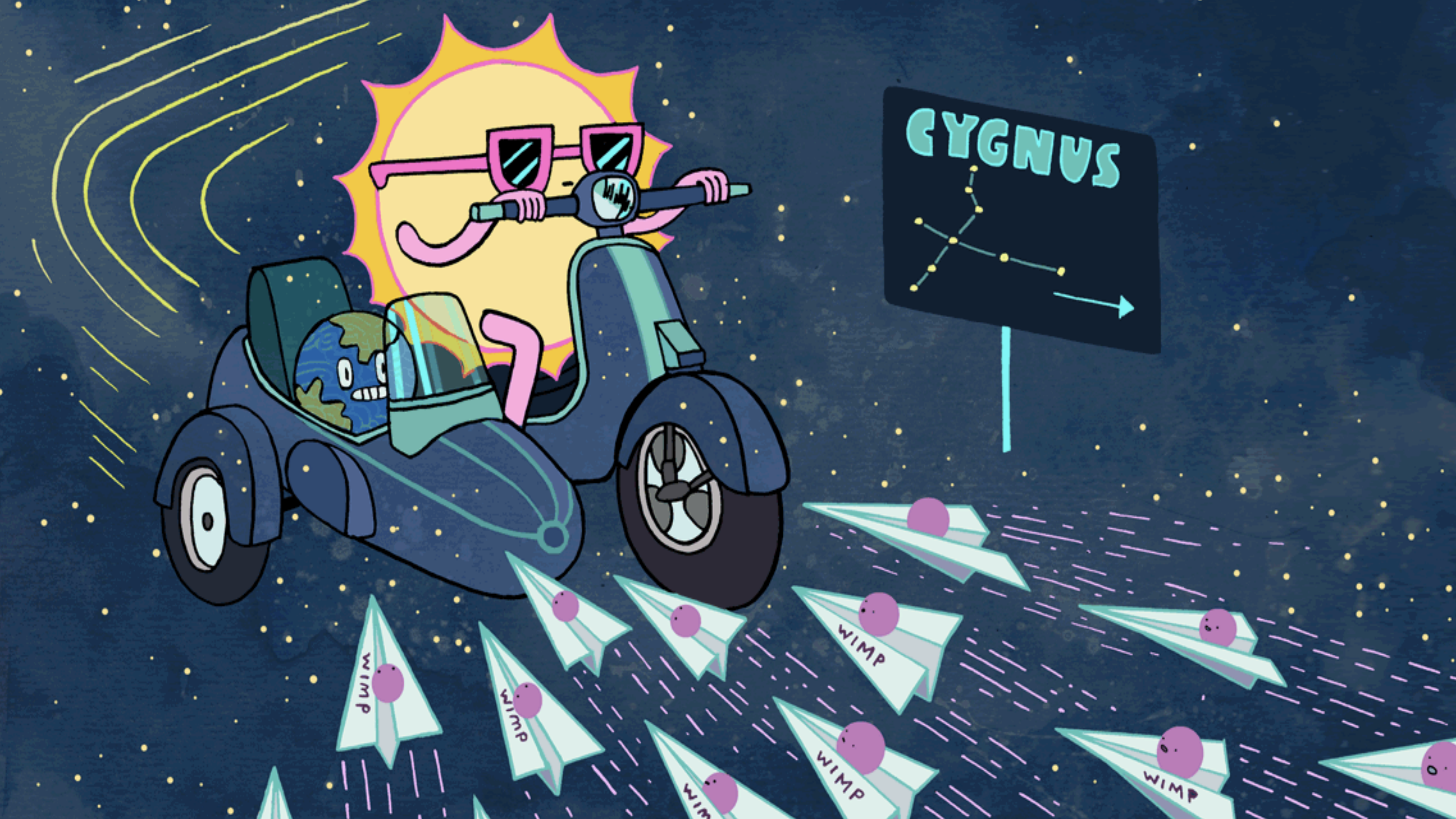
# Why is there a neutrino floor?

→ spectral match  
between DM and solar  
neutrinos









CYGNUS

WIMP

WIMP

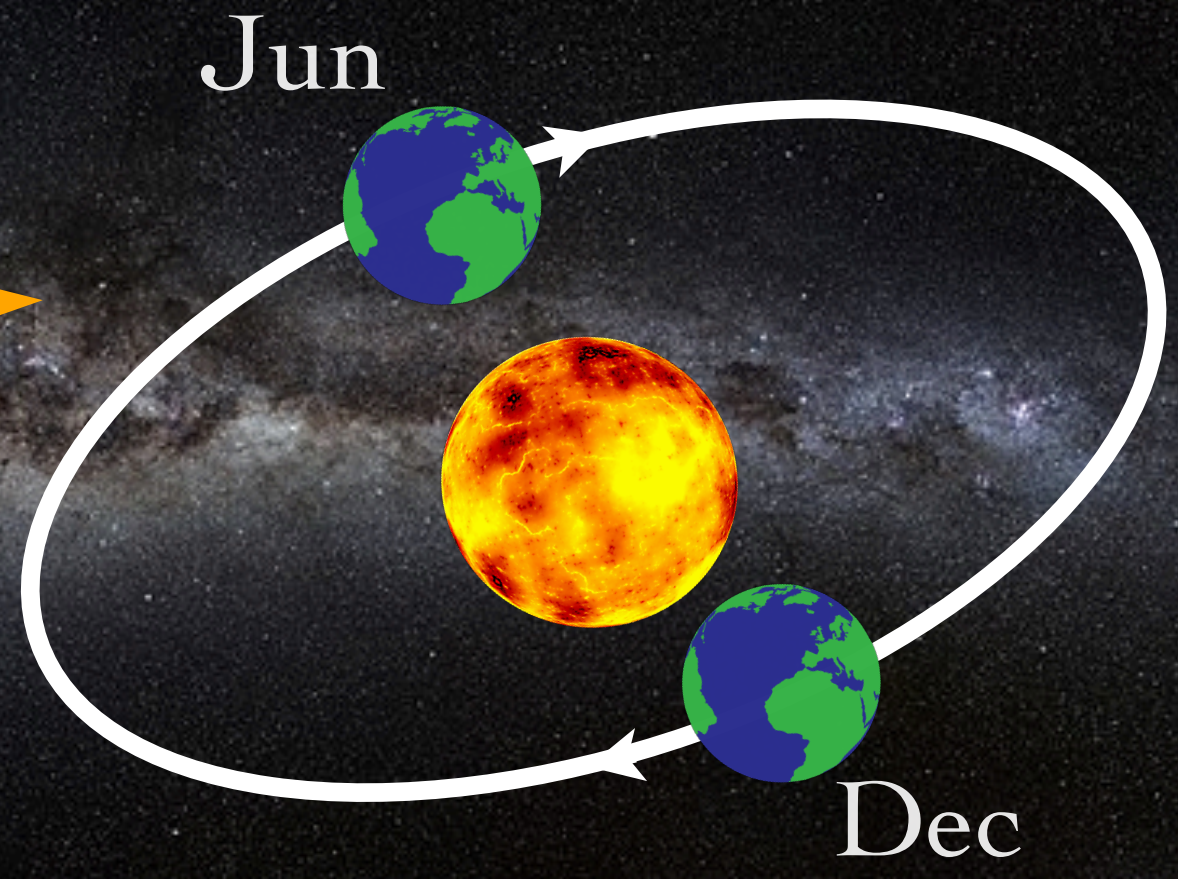
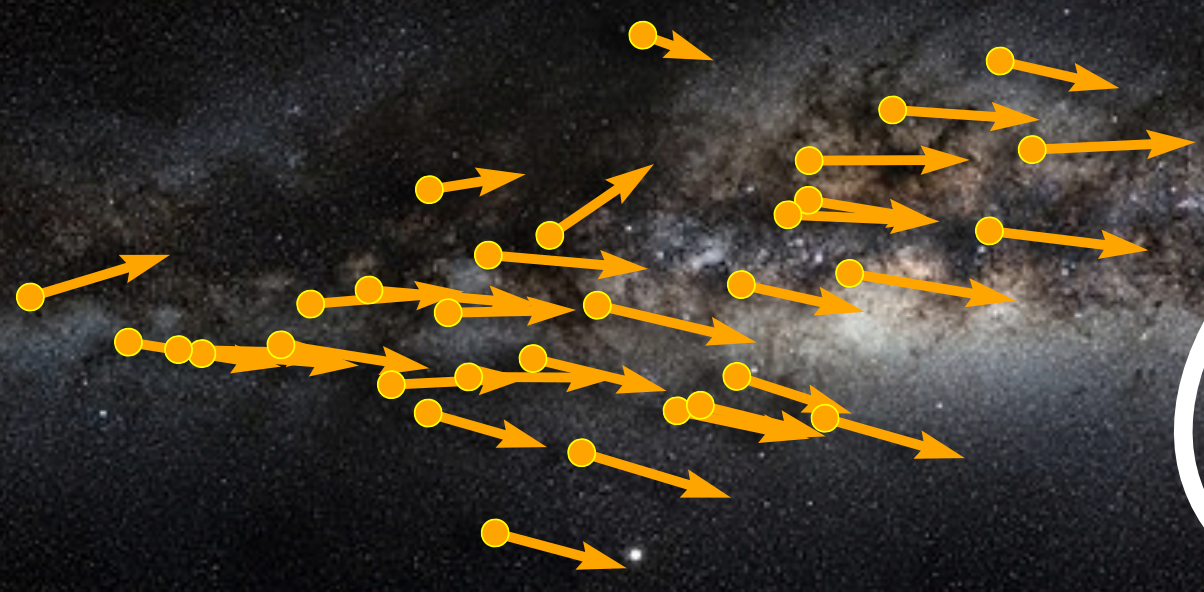
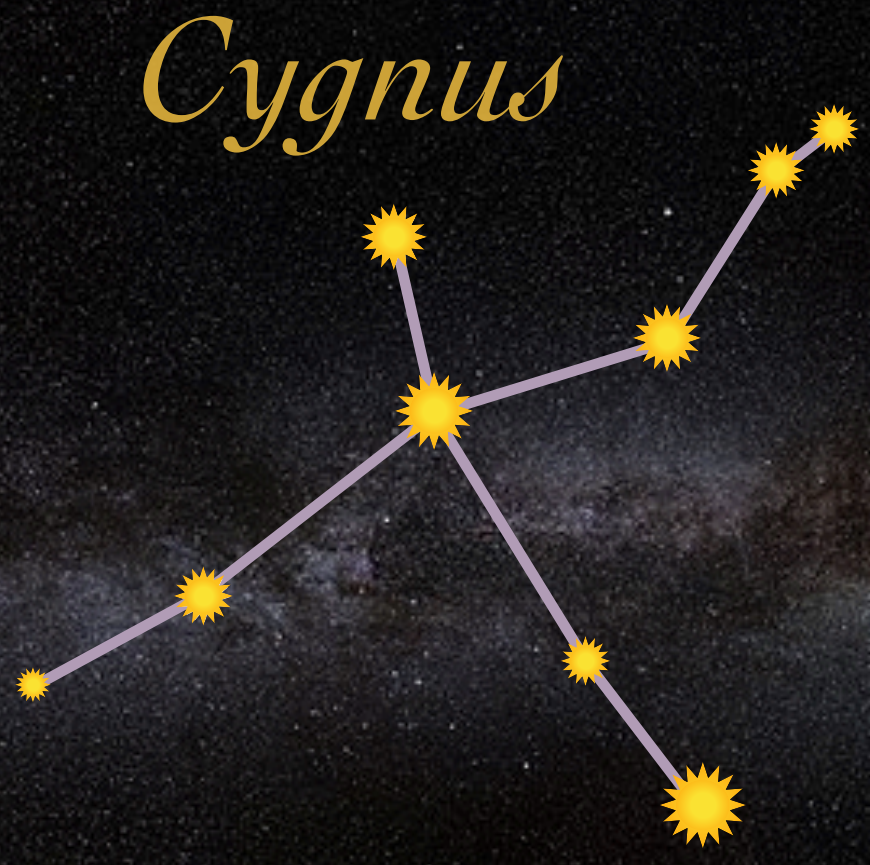
WIMP

WIMP

WIMP

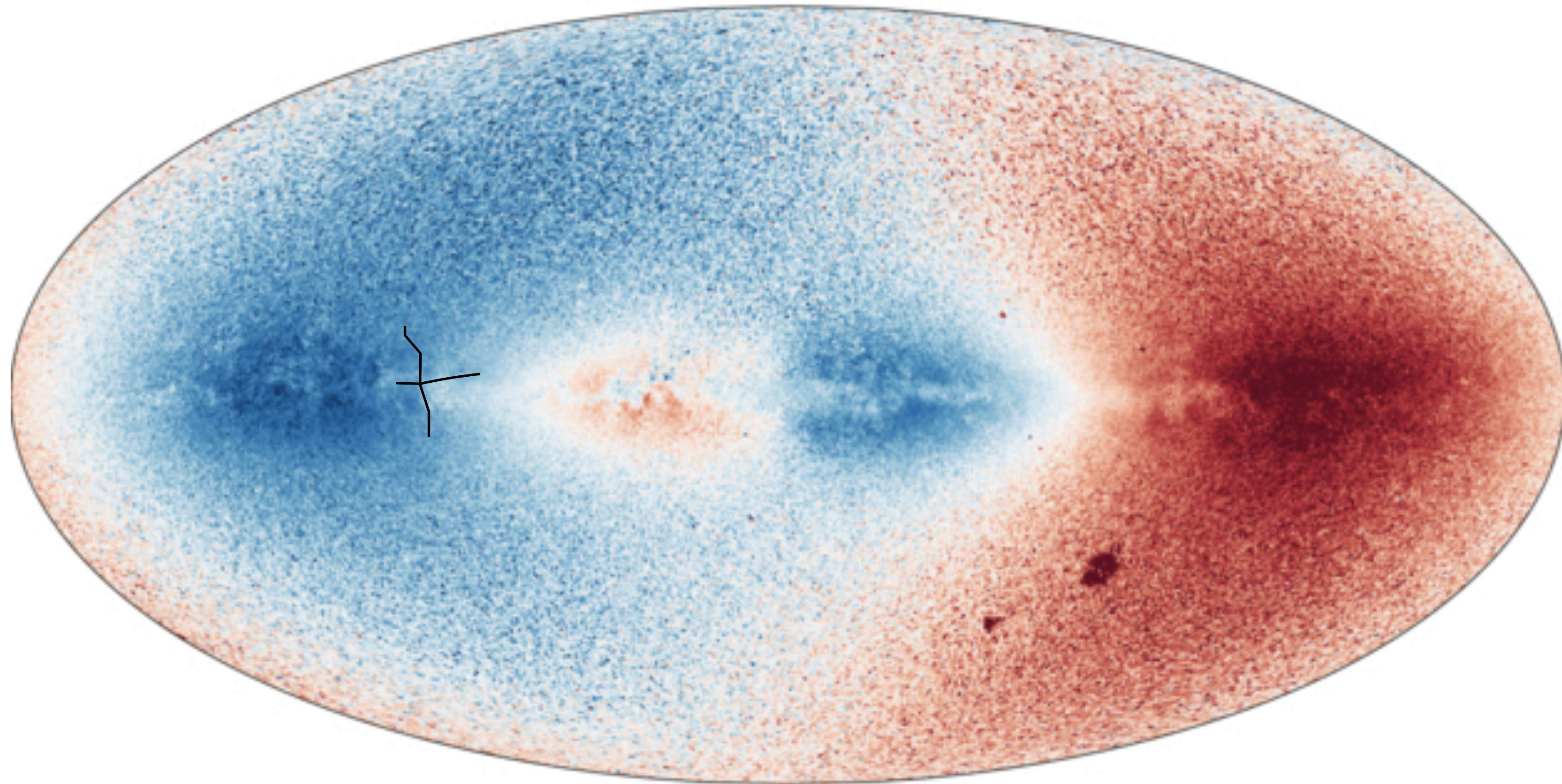
WIMP

WIMP





# Why use directional information?

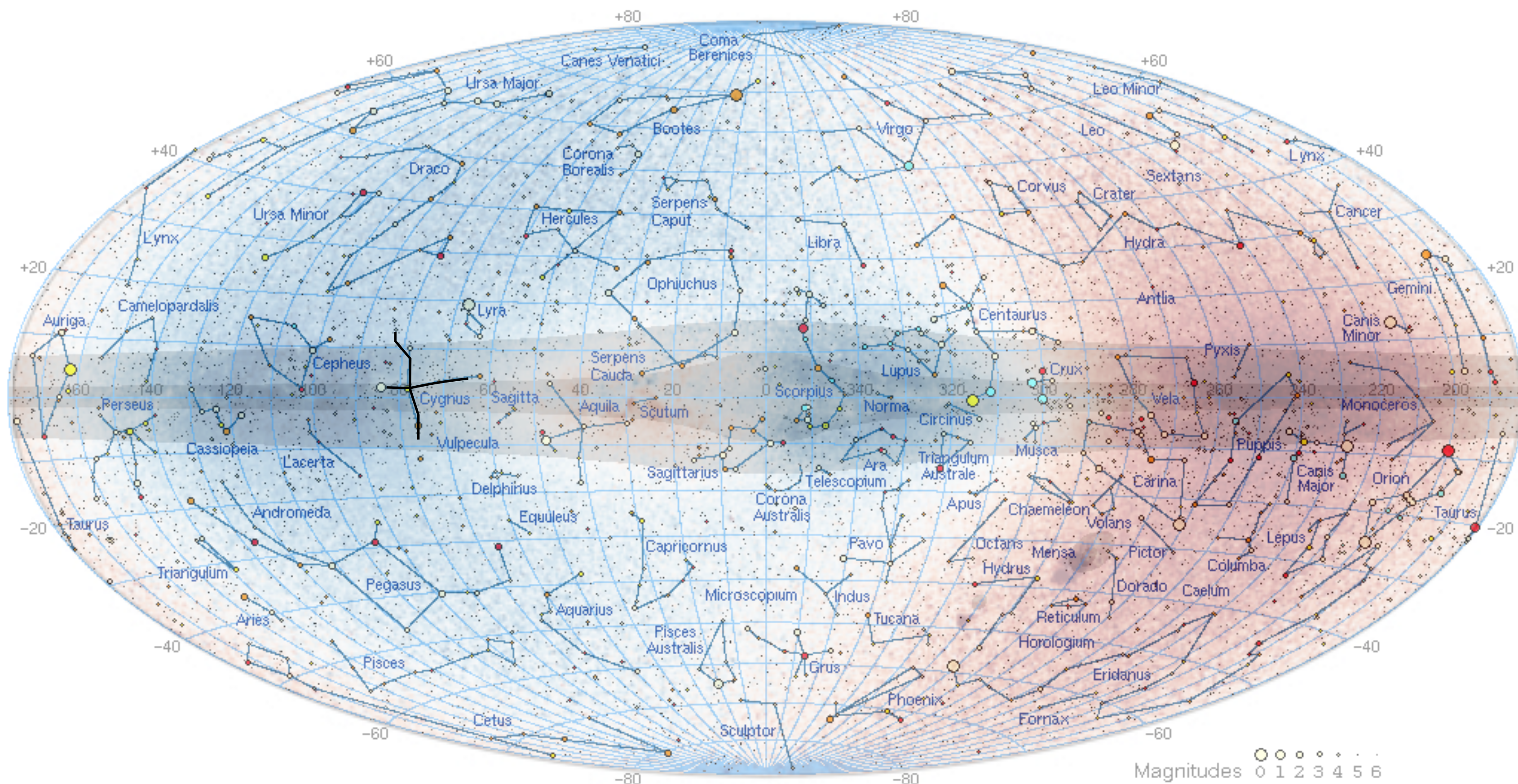


*Gaia* radial velocities

Blue = moving towards us (relatively)

Red = moving away from us

# Why use directional information?



*Gaia* radial velocities

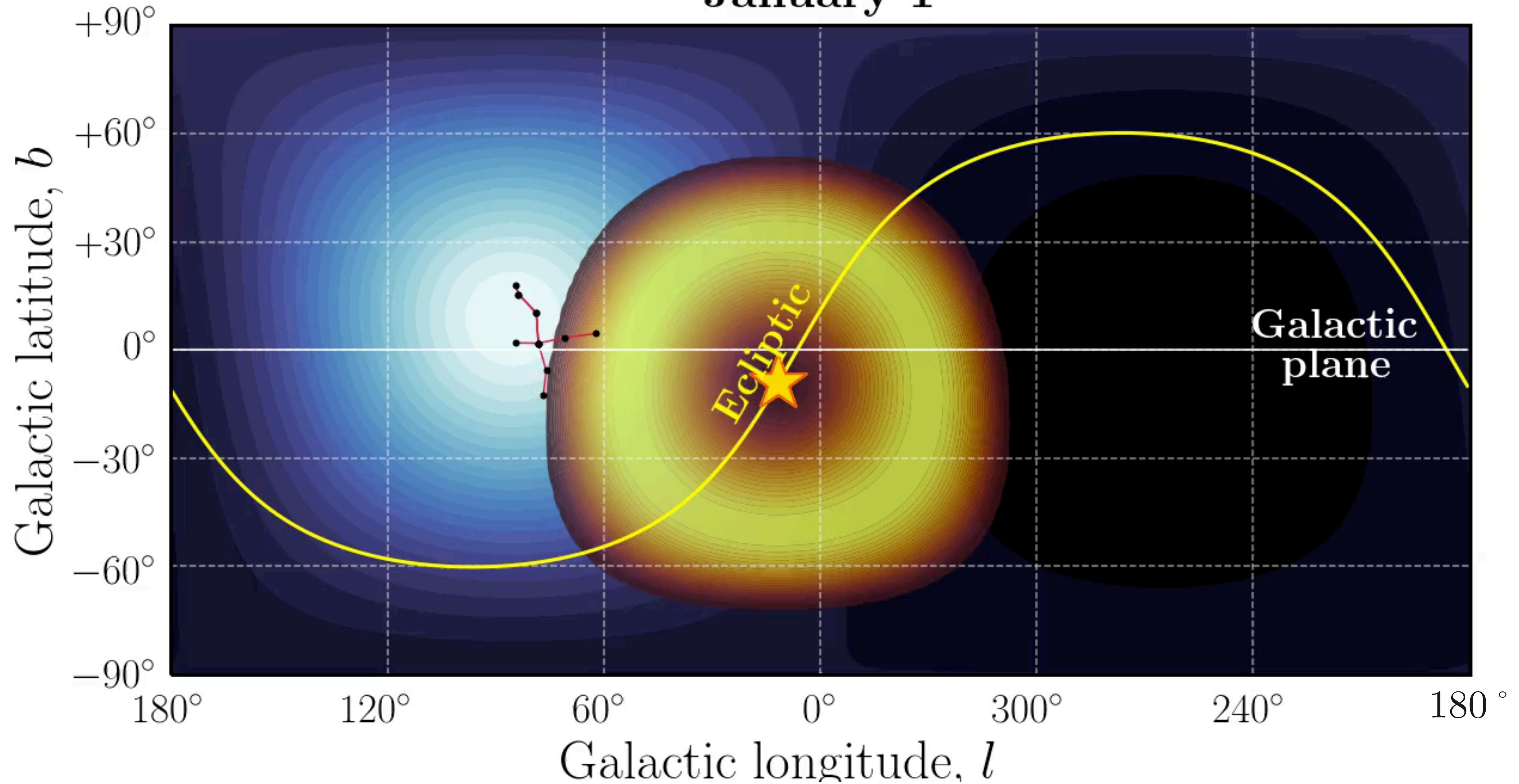
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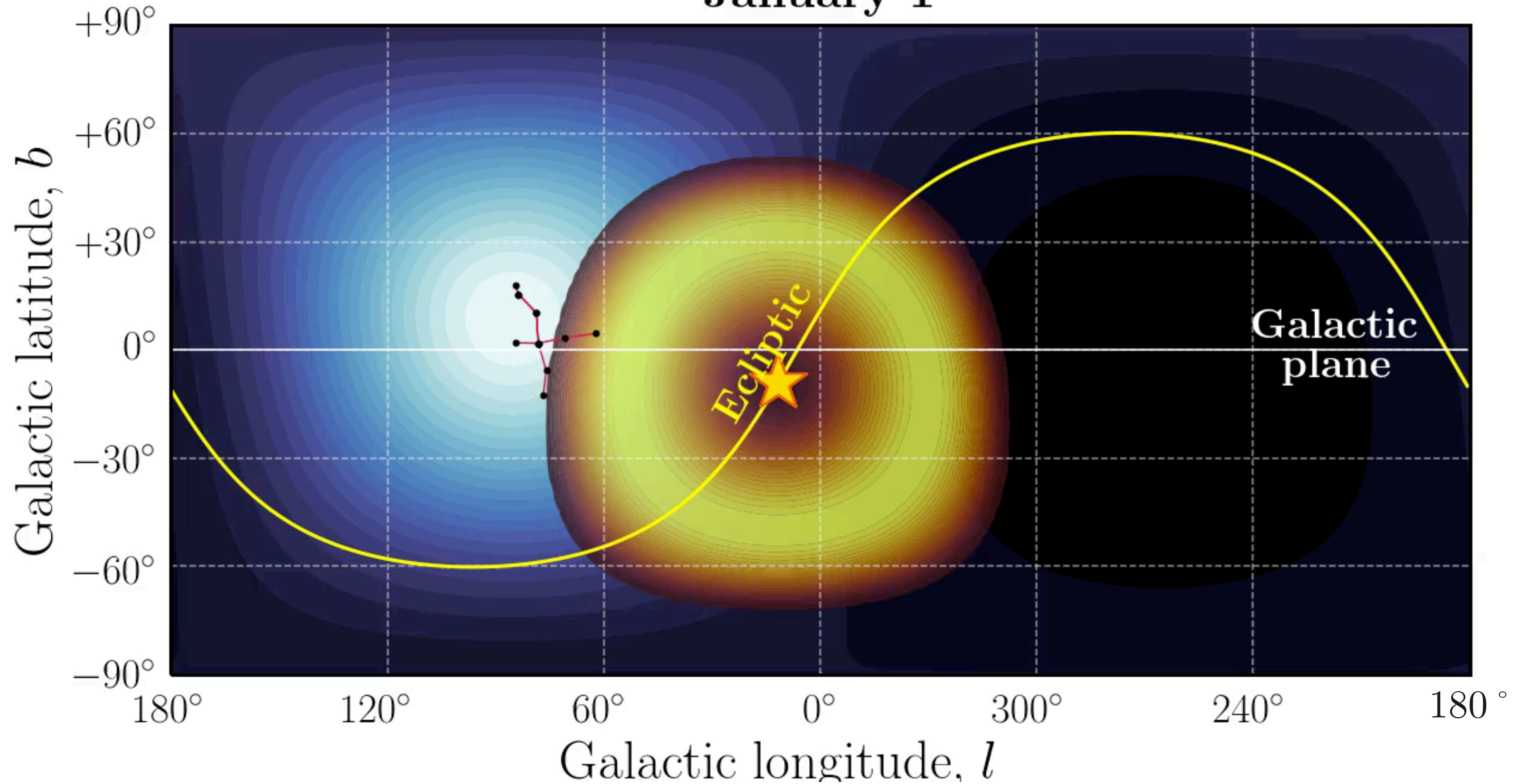
Nothing should mimic dark matter, including **solar neutrinos**

January 1

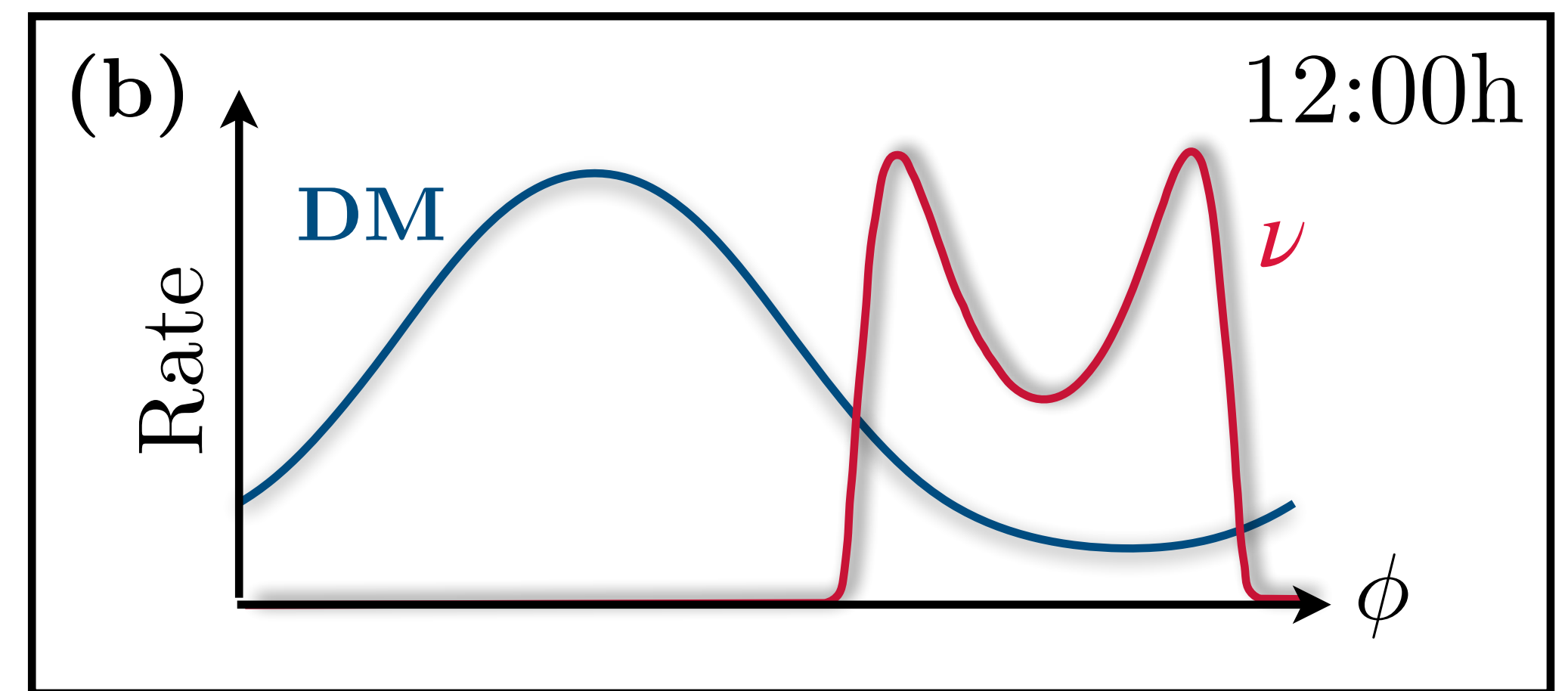
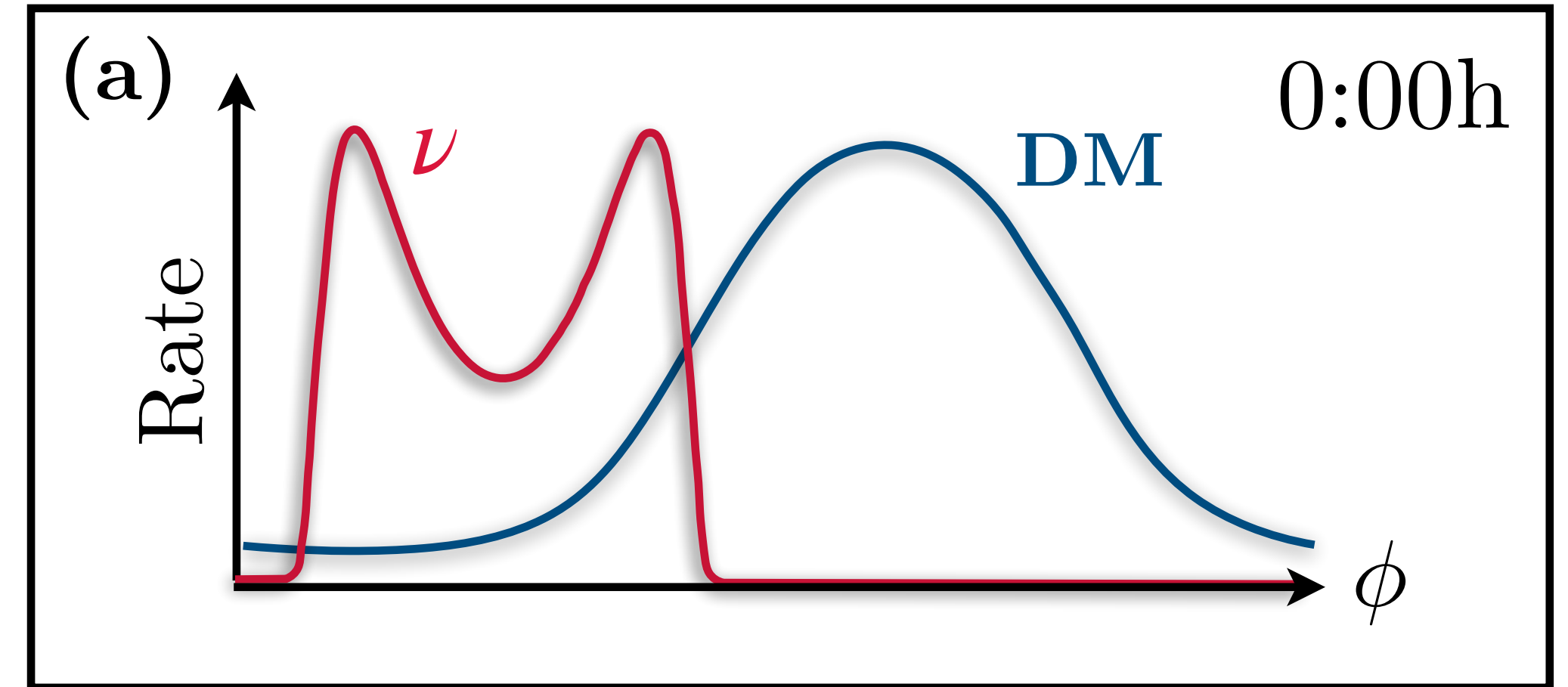
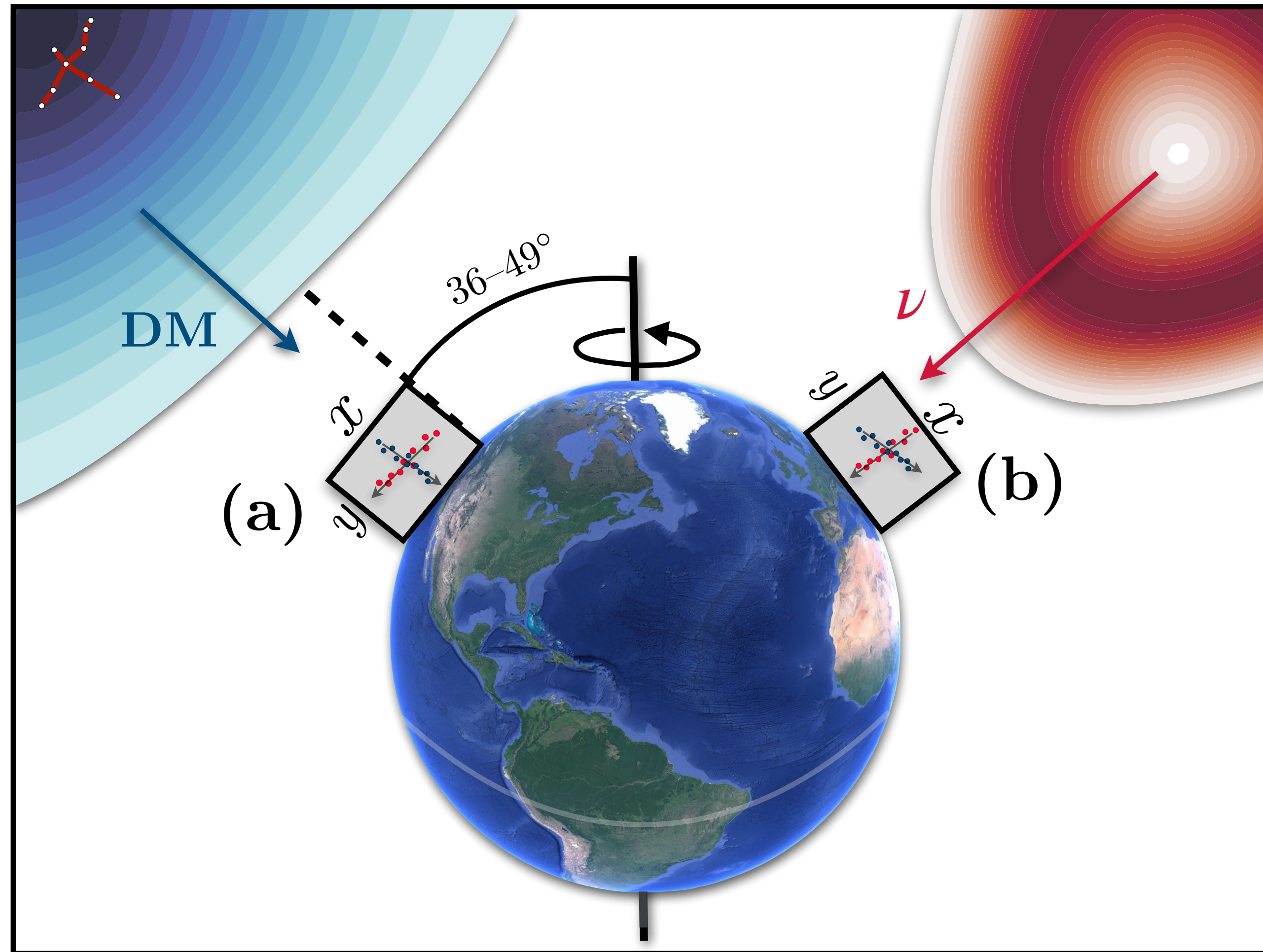


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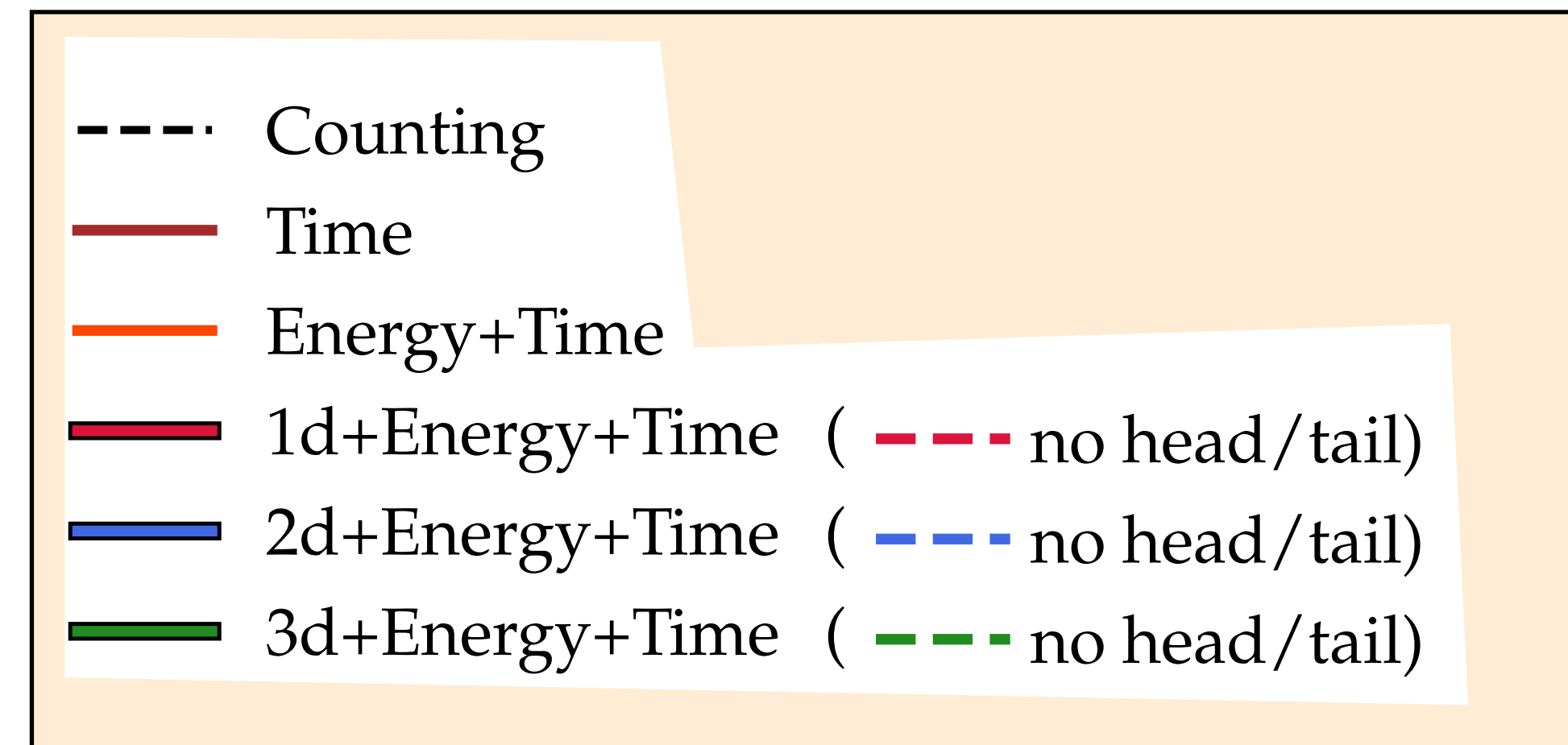
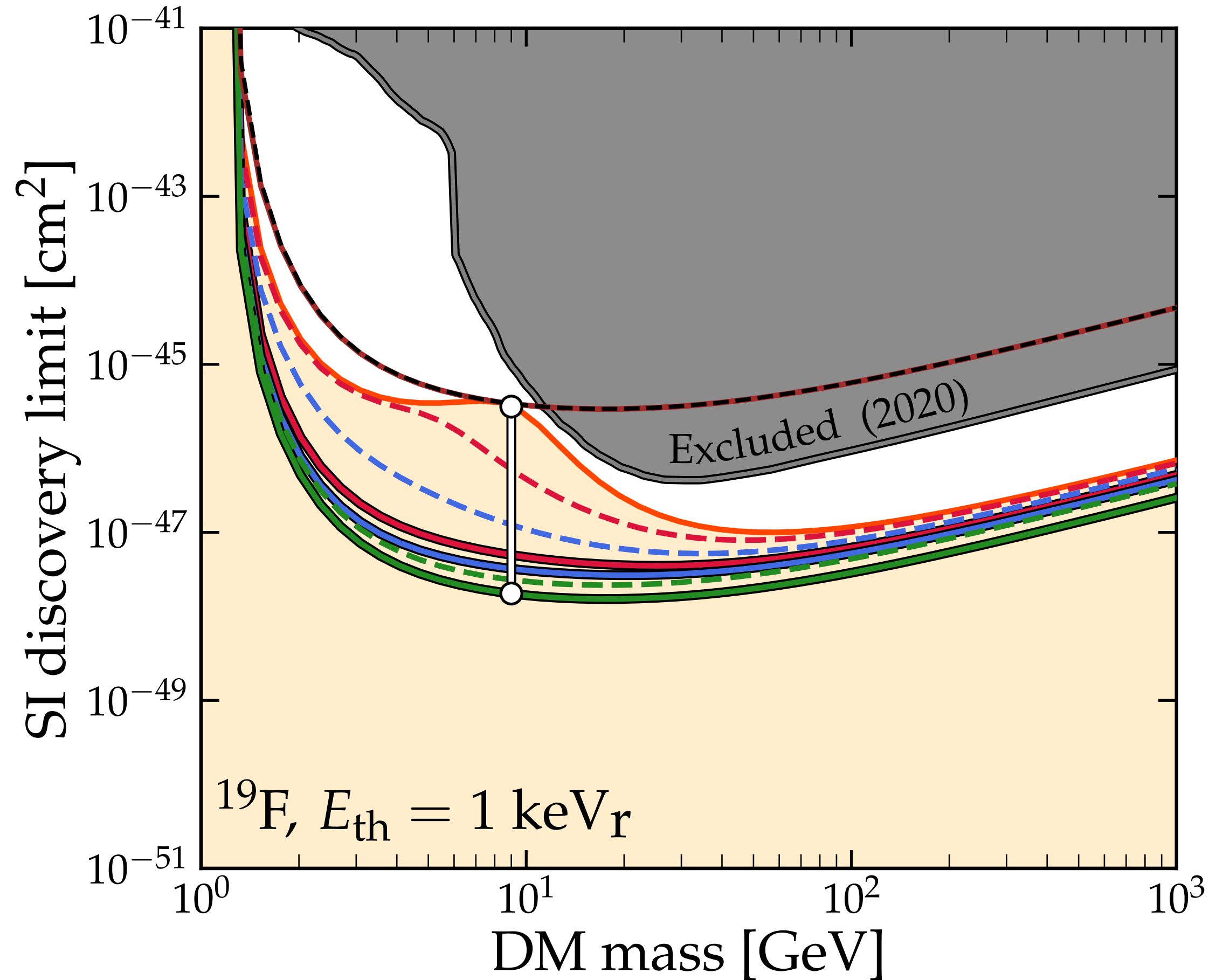


From the detector's perspective, the galactic dipole signature translates to a sidereal daily modulation in angle



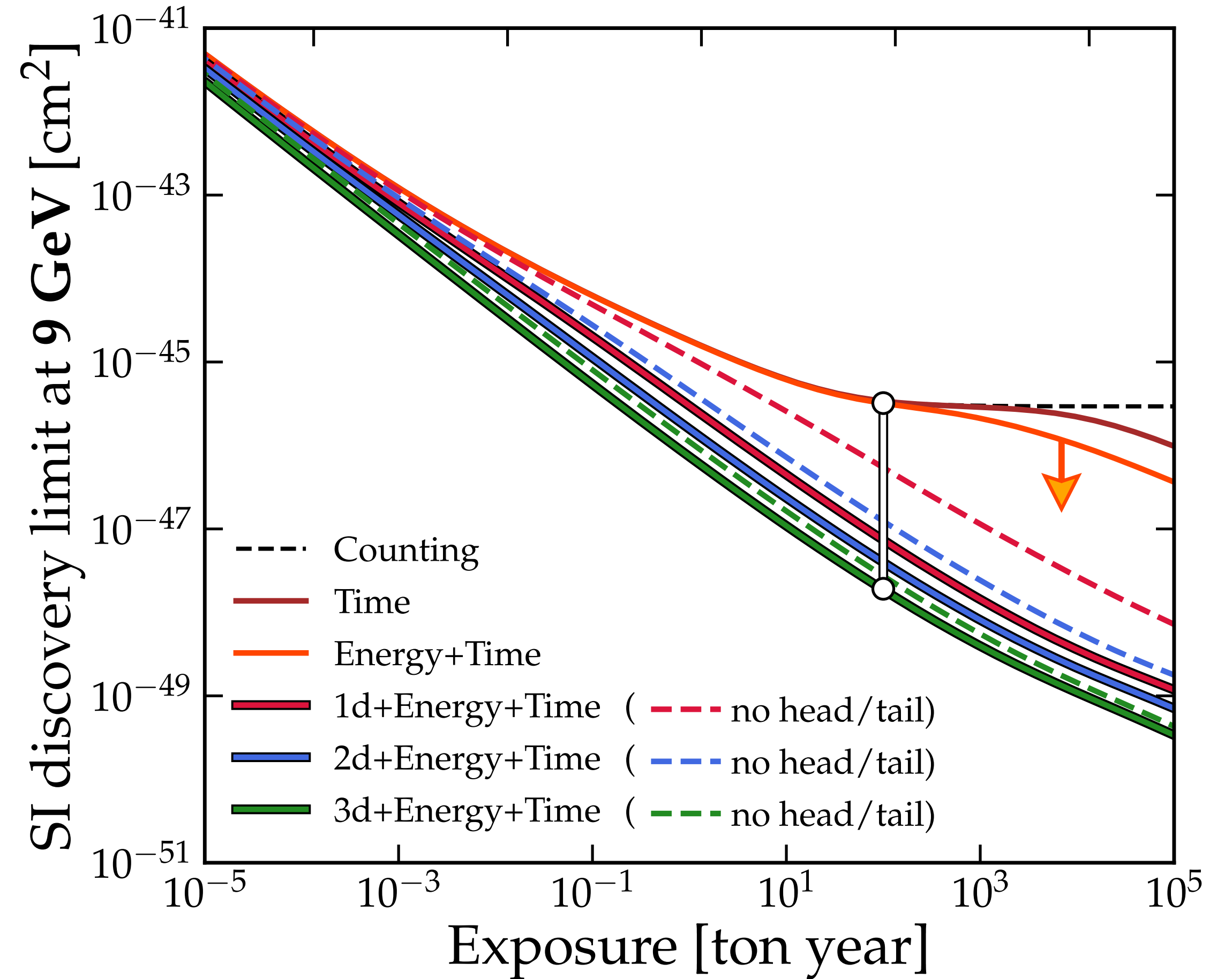
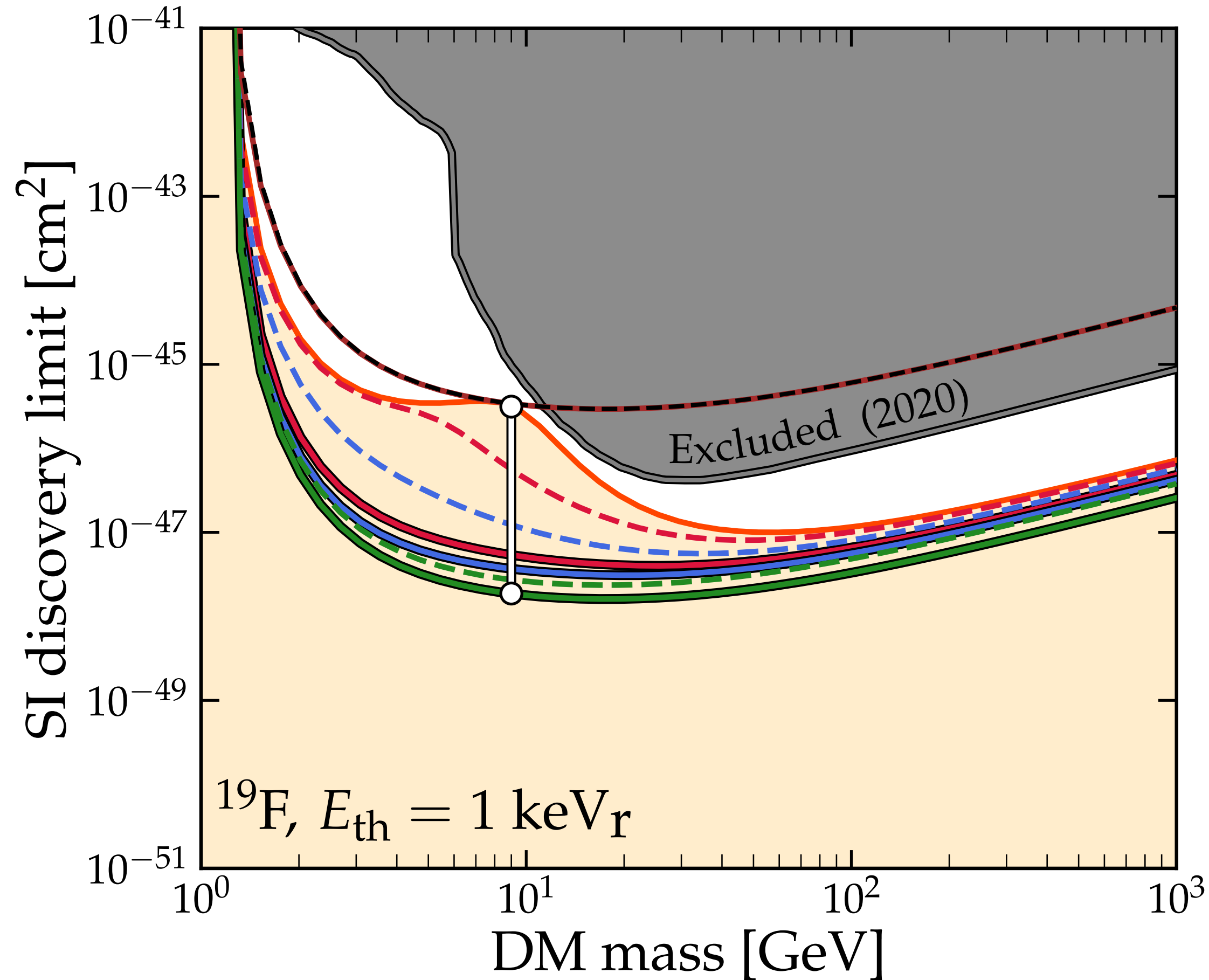
# Subtracting the neutrino background

Same experiment, different levels of information used



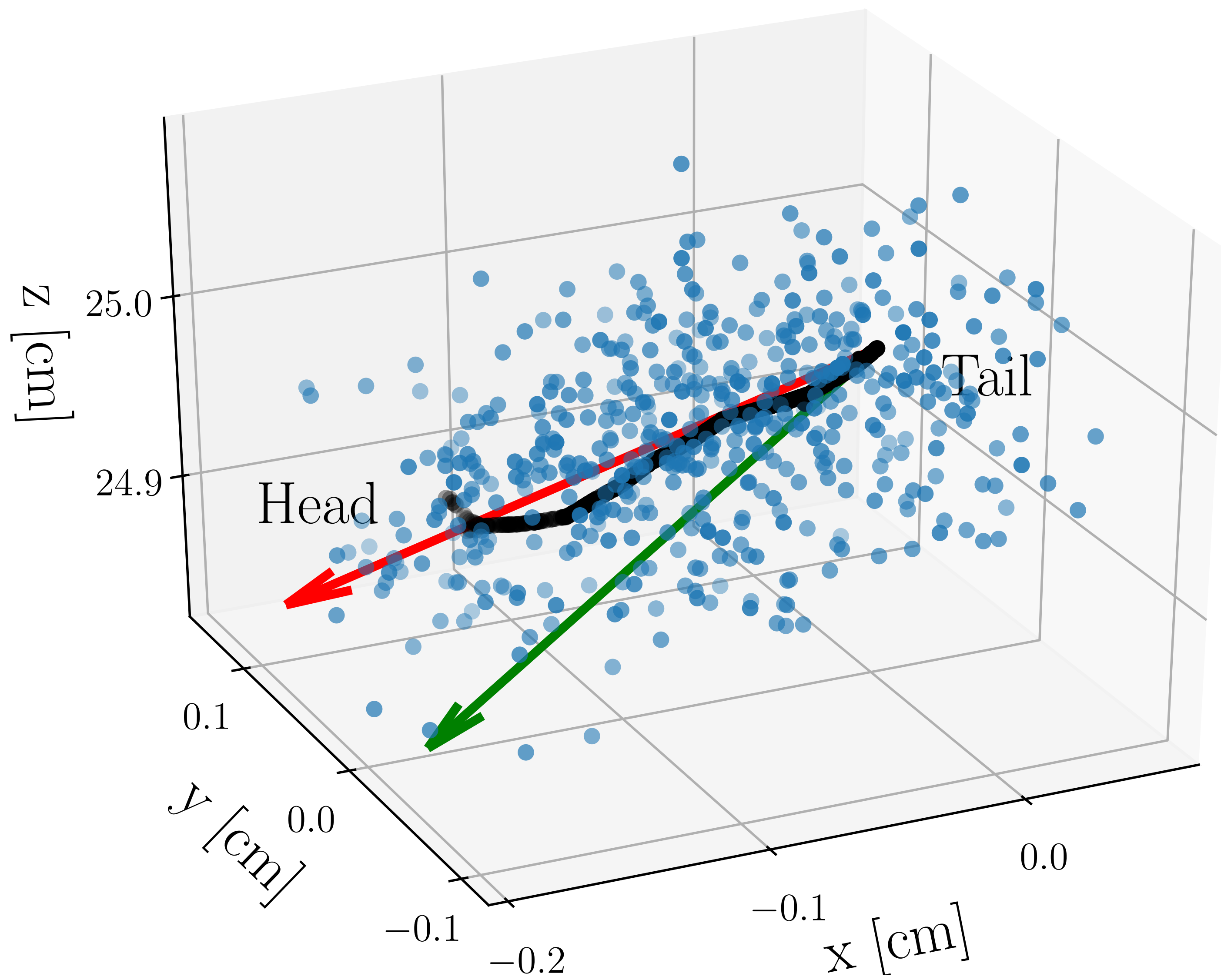
Orange region is inaccessible without directional information

# Subtracting the neutrino background



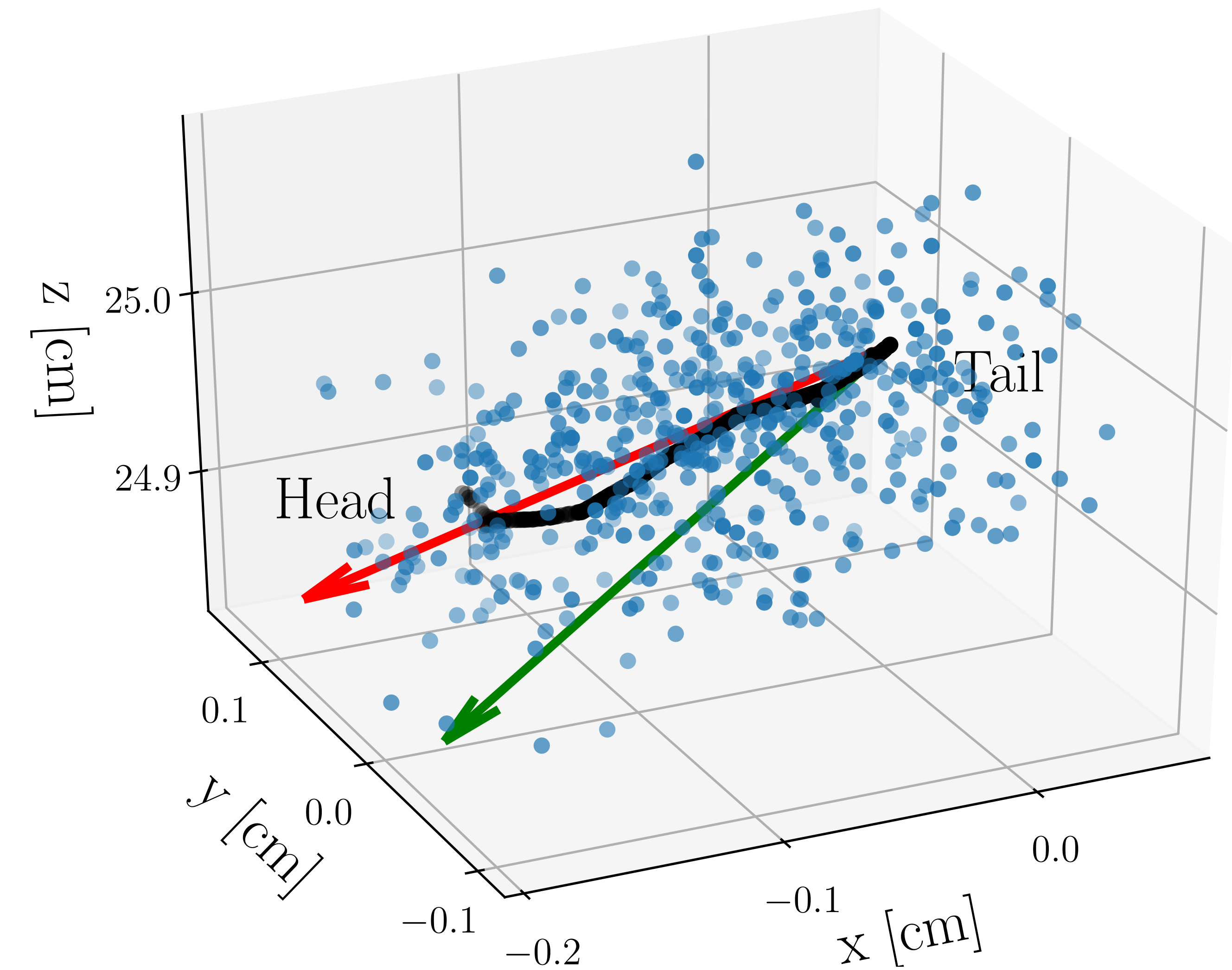
**Orange region is inaccessible without directional information**





- Initial track
- After diffusion
- ↑ True recoil dir.
- ↑ Straggled recoil dir.

**How to detect  
nuclear recoils at the  
keV-scale?**



## The ideal detector measures:

- **Initial** recoil direction, or at least the initial ionisation
- The full 3-dimensions of the track
- The head / tail (i.e. sign of the track vector)
- The time of the event (to account for Earth rotation)

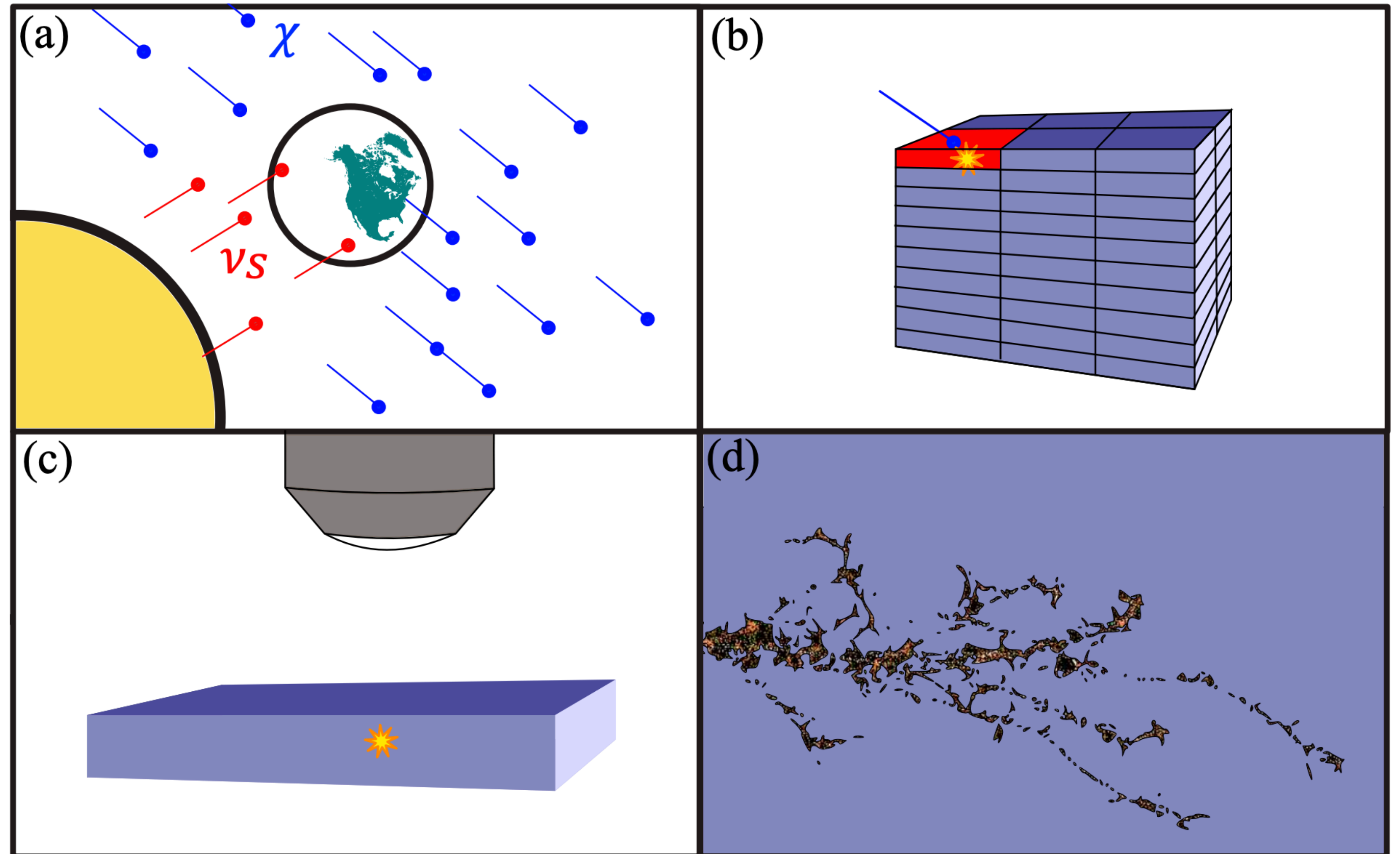
# What would you use to detect keV-scale nuclear recoils?

	Pros	Cons
Solid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High target mass</li><li>• Well-established technologies, e.g. scintillators</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need ultra high resolution imaging</li><li>• Tracks highly scrambled</li></ul>
Liquid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High target mass</li><li>• Readily scalable to large volumes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tracks too short relative to diffusion</li></ul>
Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tracks at mm-scale</li><li>• Nuclear/Electronic tracks are easily distinguishable</li><li>• Imaging in gas TPCs demonstrated since 1990s</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low target mass</li></ul>

# Directionality in solids: crystal defect spectroscopy

Marshall et al. [2009.01028]

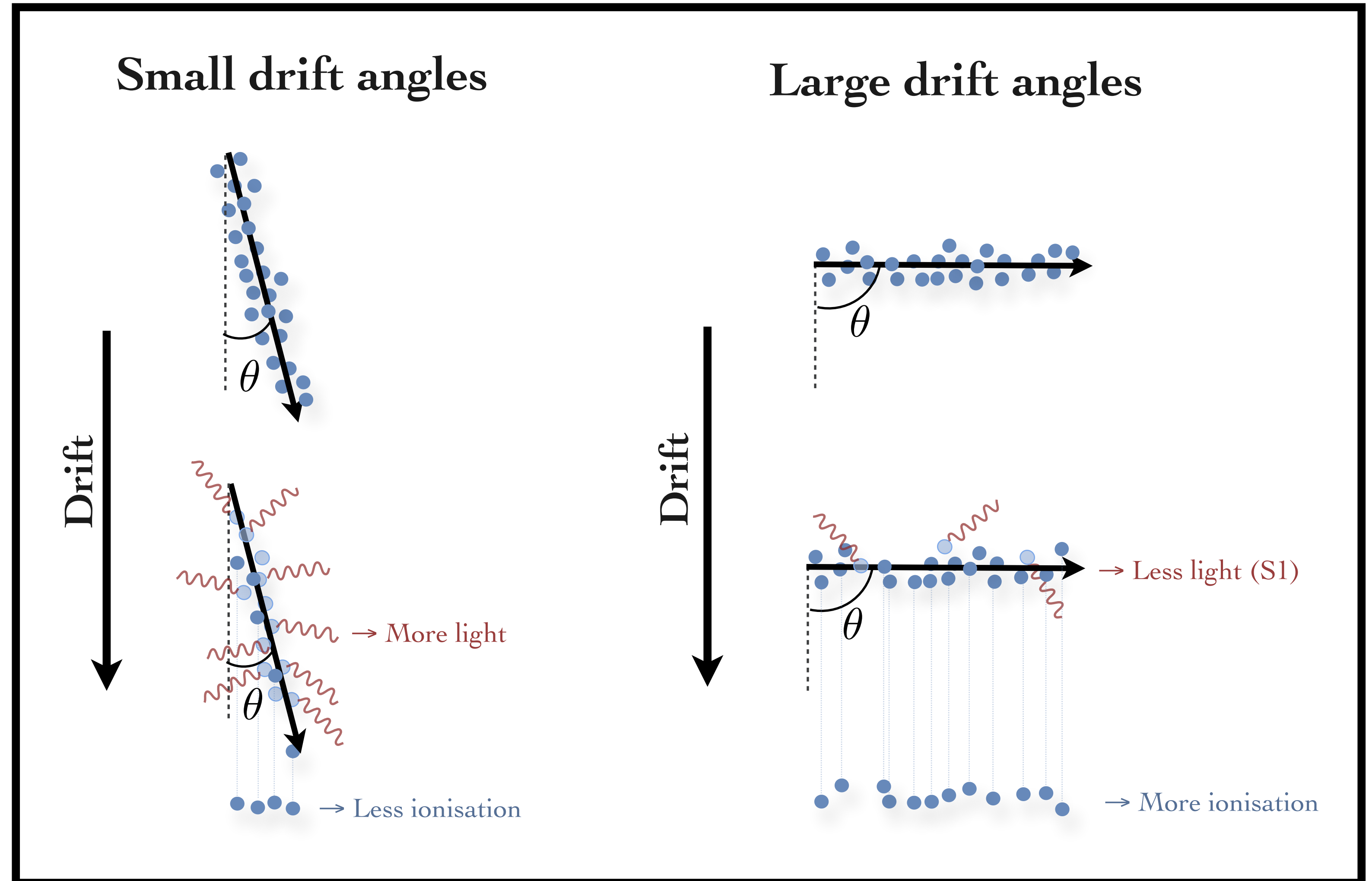
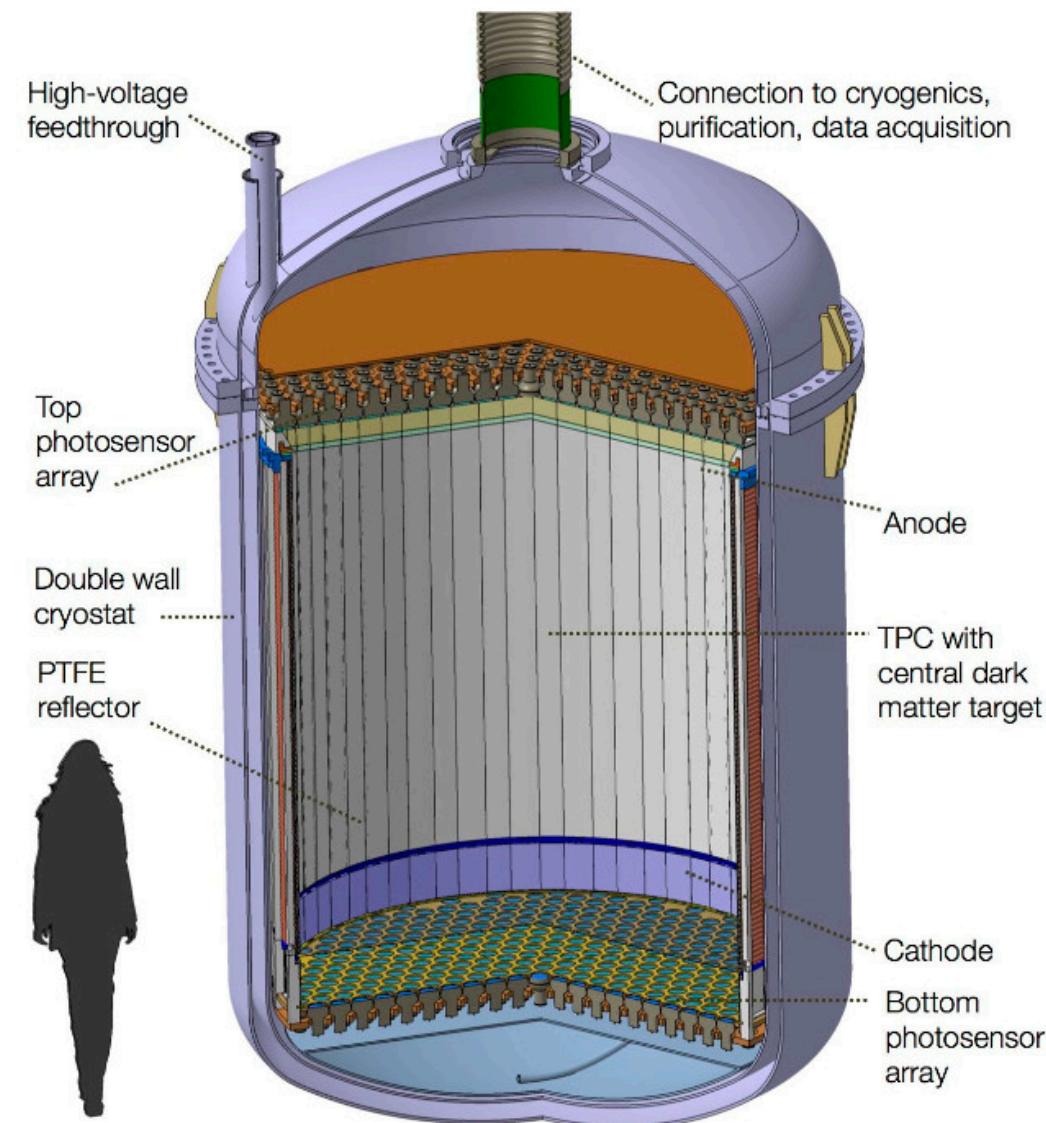
Nitrogen vacancy  
centres in diamond



# Directionality in liquids: columnar recombination

D R Nygren 2013 J. Phys.: Conf. Ser. 460 012006

→ Possible directional effect where charge/light yield in LXe/LAr depends on angle of recoil w.r.t. electric field

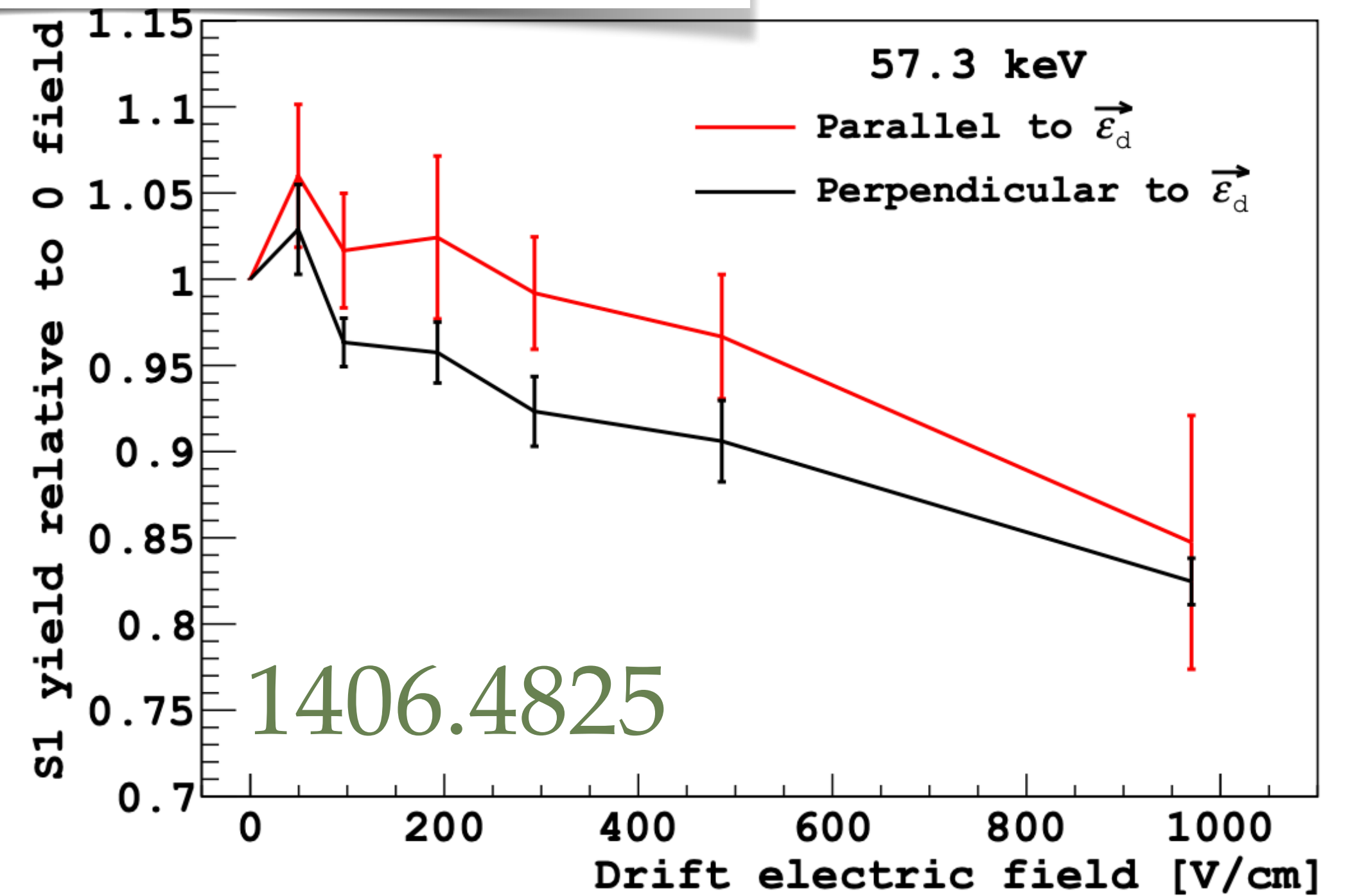


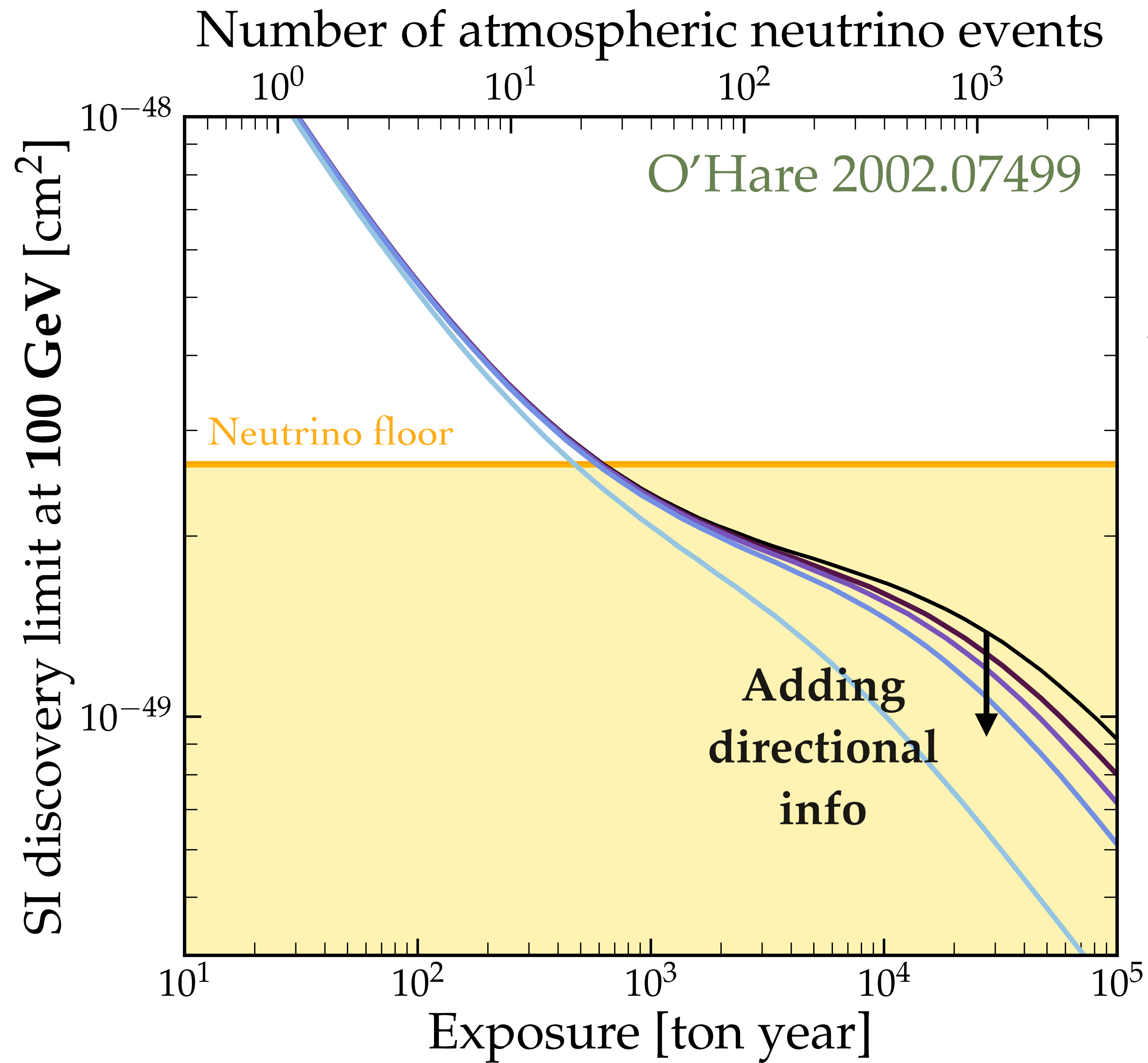
# Directionality in liquids: columnar recombination

- Possible hint in LAr
- Almost certainly unobservable in LXe (at interesting energies)

## Measurement of scintillation and ionization yield and scintillation pulse shape from nuclear recoils in liquid argon

H. Cao,<sup>1</sup> T. Alexander,<sup>2,3</sup> A. Aprahamian,<sup>4</sup> R. Avetisyan,<sup>4</sup> H. O. Back,<sup>1</sup> A. G. Cocco,<sup>5</sup> F. DeJongh,<sup>3</sup> G. Fiorillo,<sup>5</sup> C. Galbiati,<sup>1</sup> L. Grandi,<sup>6</sup> Y. Guardincerri,<sup>3</sup> C. Kendziora,<sup>3</sup> W. H. Lippincott,<sup>3</sup> C. Love,<sup>7</sup> S. Lyons,<sup>4</sup> L. Manenti,<sup>8</sup> C. J. Martoff,<sup>7</sup> Y. Meng,<sup>9</sup> D. Montanari,<sup>3</sup> P. Mosteiro,<sup>1</sup> D. Olivitt,<sup>7</sup> S. Pordes,<sup>3</sup> H. Qian,<sup>1</sup> B. Rossi,<sup>5,1</sup> R. Saldanha,<sup>6</sup> S. Sangiorgio,<sup>10</sup> K. Siegl,<sup>4</sup> S. Y. Strauss,<sup>4</sup> W. Tan,<sup>4</sup> J. Tatarowicz,<sup>7</sup> S. Walker,<sup>7</sup> H. Wang,<sup>9</sup> A. W. Watson,<sup>7</sup> S. Westerdale,<sup>1</sup> and J. Yoo<sup>3</sup>  
(The SCENE Collaboration)





- |                 |   |   |                                    |
|-----------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| No effect       | → | — | Nondirectional                     |
| Realistic       | → | — | Stationary, $\mathcal{A} = 0.5$    |
| Optimistic      | → | — | Stationary, $\mathcal{A} = 1$      |
| Very optimistic | → | — | Cygnus Tracking, $\mathcal{A} = 1$ |
| Impossible      | → | — | Head-Tail, $\mathcal{A} = 1$       |

**Columnar recombination  
doesn't help much, even in  
wildly over-optimistic  
scenario**

# DNA detector?

1206.6809

## New Dark Matter Detectors using DNA or RNA for Nanometer Tracking

Andrzej Drukier,<sup>1,\*</sup> Katherine Freese,<sup>2,3,†</sup> Alejandro Lopez,<sup>2,‡</sup> David Spergel,<sup>4,§</sup> Charles Cantor,<sup>5,¶</sup> George Church,<sup>6,\*\*</sup> and Takeshi Sano<sup>7,††</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *BioTraces Inc., 5660 Oak Tanager Ct., Burke, Va. 22015*

<sup>2</sup> *Michigan Center for Theoretical Physics, Department of Physics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109*

<sup>3</sup> *Physics Department, Caltech, Pasadena, CA 91101*

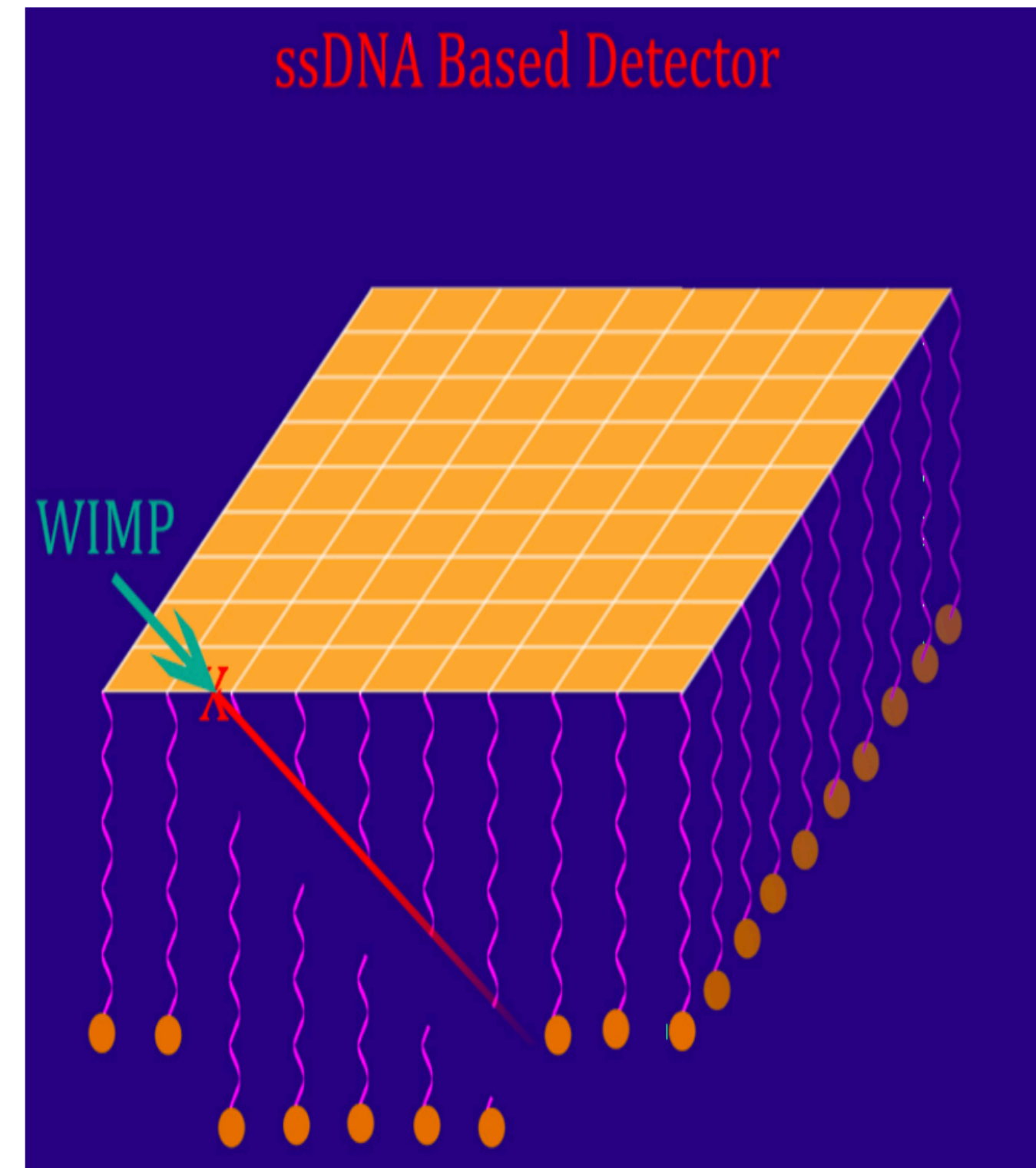
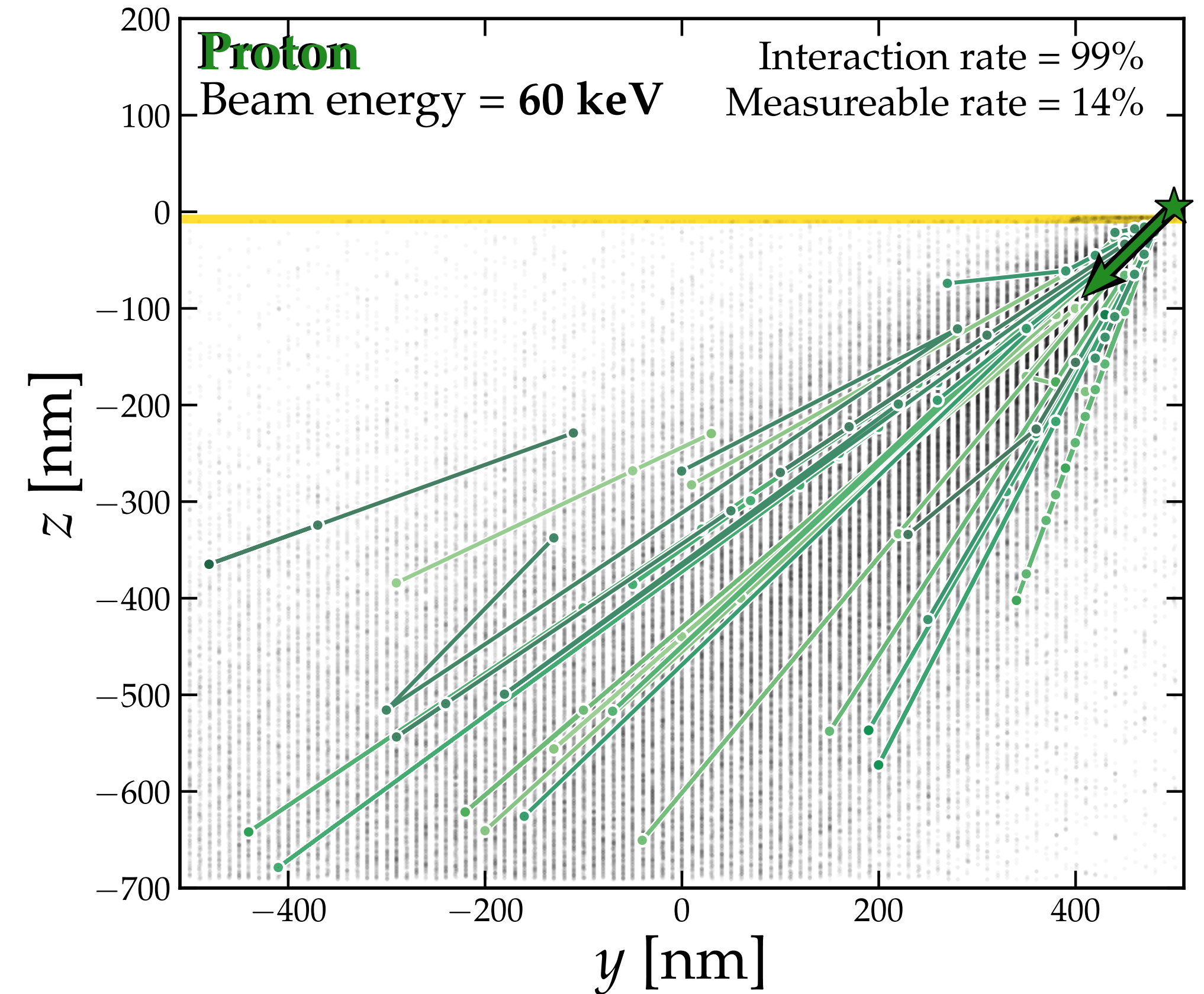
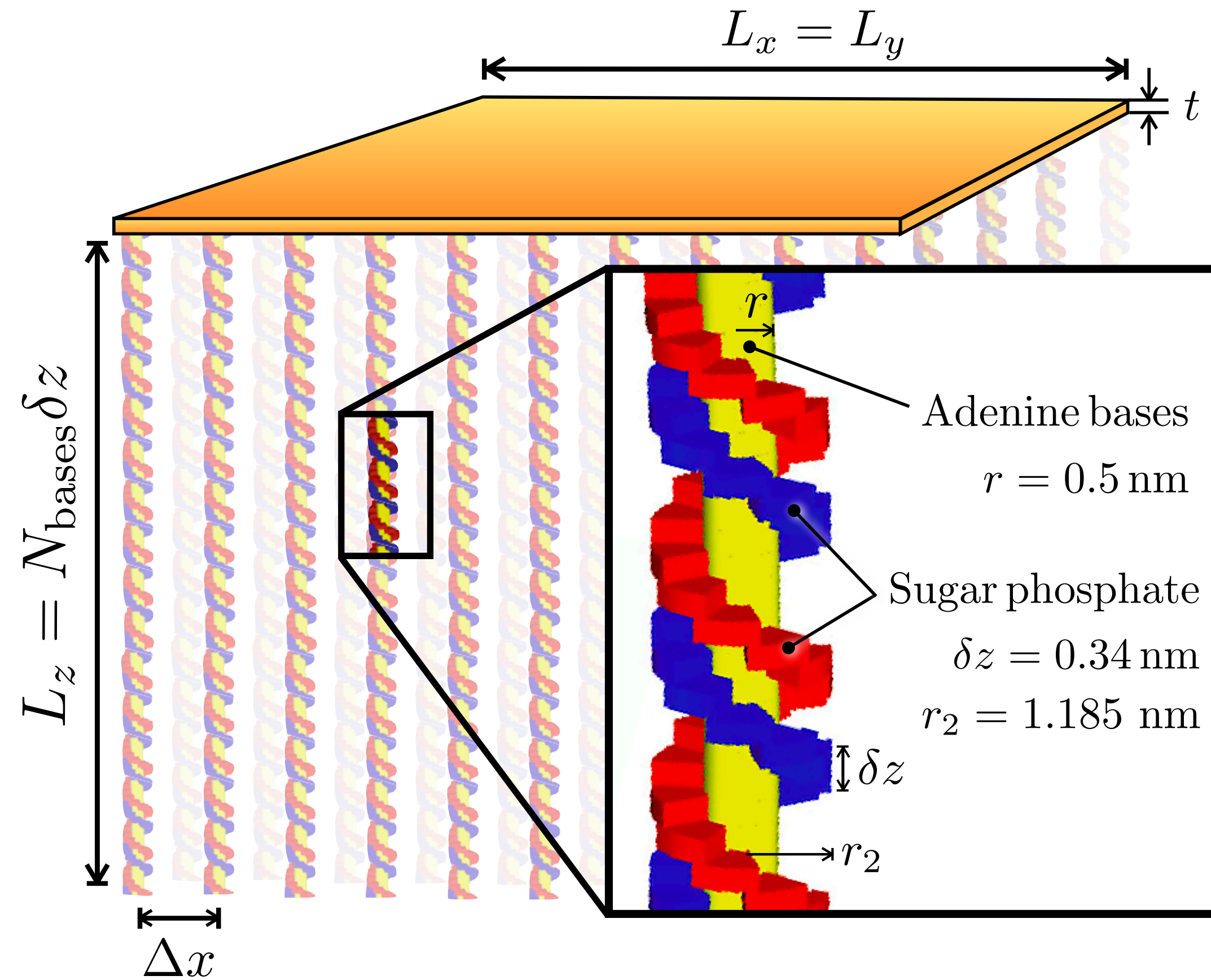


FIG. 2: ssNA/Au Tracking Chamber: A WIMP from the Galaxy scatters elastically with a gold nucleus situated in a thin gold foil. The recoiling Au nucleus traverses hanging strings of single stranded NA, and severs any ssNA it hits. The location of the breaks can be found by amplifying and sequencing the fallen ssNA segment, thereby allowing reconstruction of the track of the recoiling Au nucleus with nanometer accuracy.



# DNA as a particle detector?



Work in progress with students at Sydney

→ Probably not a good DM detector (low target mass), but still interesting as it completely reimagines the idea of recoil imaging

→ Surprisingly this would not be very technologically demanding or expensive, just needs optimisation and verification that it can be useful.



# CYGNUS

- **Proto-Collaboration:** >50 members from US, UK, Aus., Japan, Italy, Spain, China
- **Focus:** Ton-scale gas time projection chamber (TPC)
- **Primary goal:** WIMP discovery below the neutrino floor
- **Secondary goal:** Directional detection of solar neutrinos
- **Tertiary goals:** study DM velocity dist., non-WIMP DM, supernovae + more?



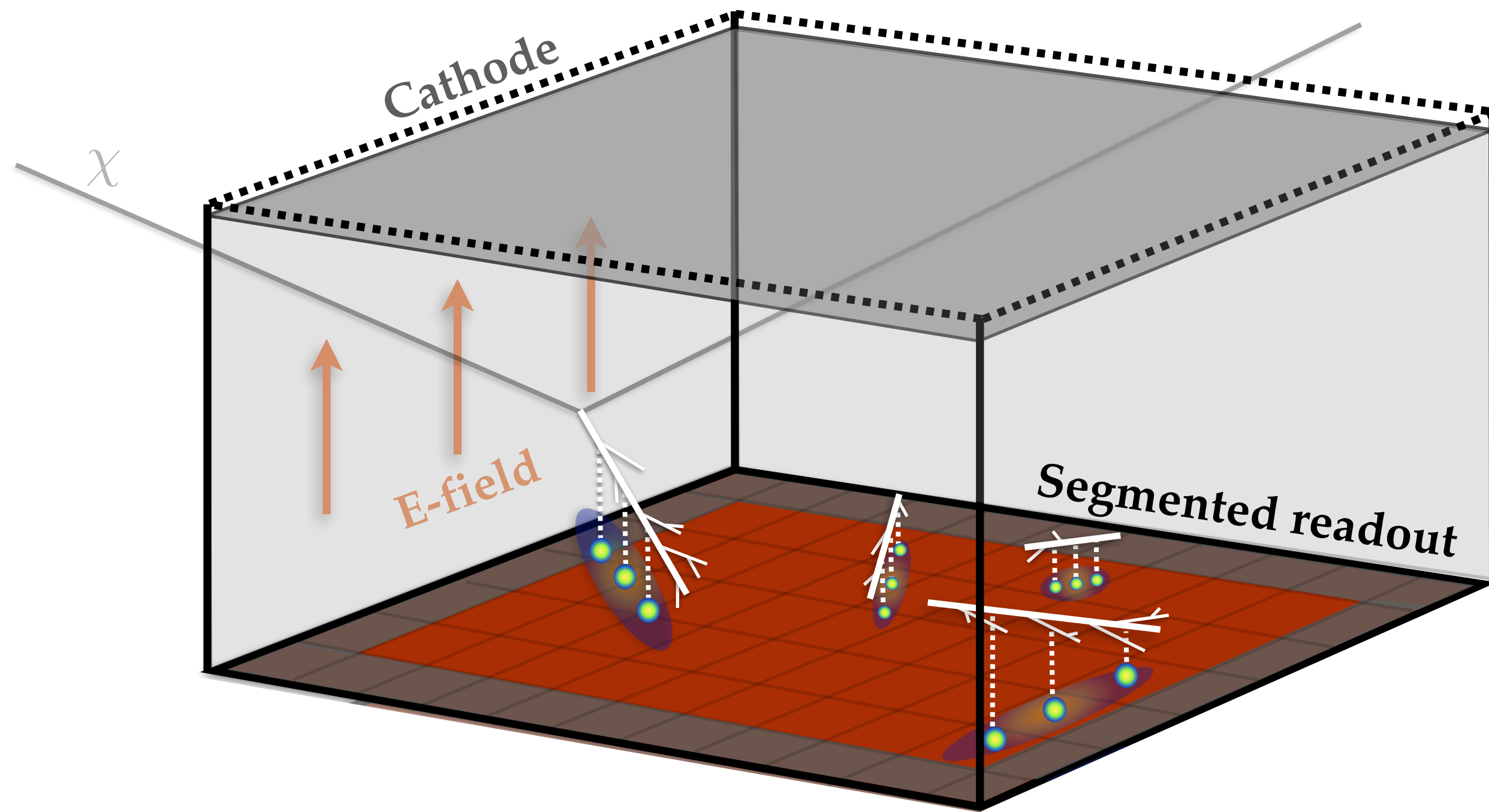
[2008.12587]

**CYGNUS: Feasibility of a nuclear recoil observatory with directional sensitivity to dark matter and neutrinos**

S. E. Vahsen,<sup>1</sup> C. A. J. O'Hare,<sup>2</sup> W. A. Lynch,<sup>3</sup> N. J. C. Spooner,<sup>3</sup> E. Baracchini,<sup>4,5,6</sup> P. Barbeau,<sup>7</sup>  
J. B. R. Battat,<sup>8</sup> B. Crow,<sup>1</sup> C. Deaconu,<sup>9</sup> C. Eldridge,<sup>3</sup> A. C. Ezeribe,<sup>3</sup> M. Ghrear,<sup>1</sup> D. Loomba,<sup>10</sup>  
K. J. Mack,<sup>11</sup> K. Miuchi,<sup>12</sup> F. M. Mouton,<sup>3</sup> N. S. Phan,<sup>13</sup> K. Scholberg,<sup>7</sup> and T. N. Thorpe<sup>1,6</sup>

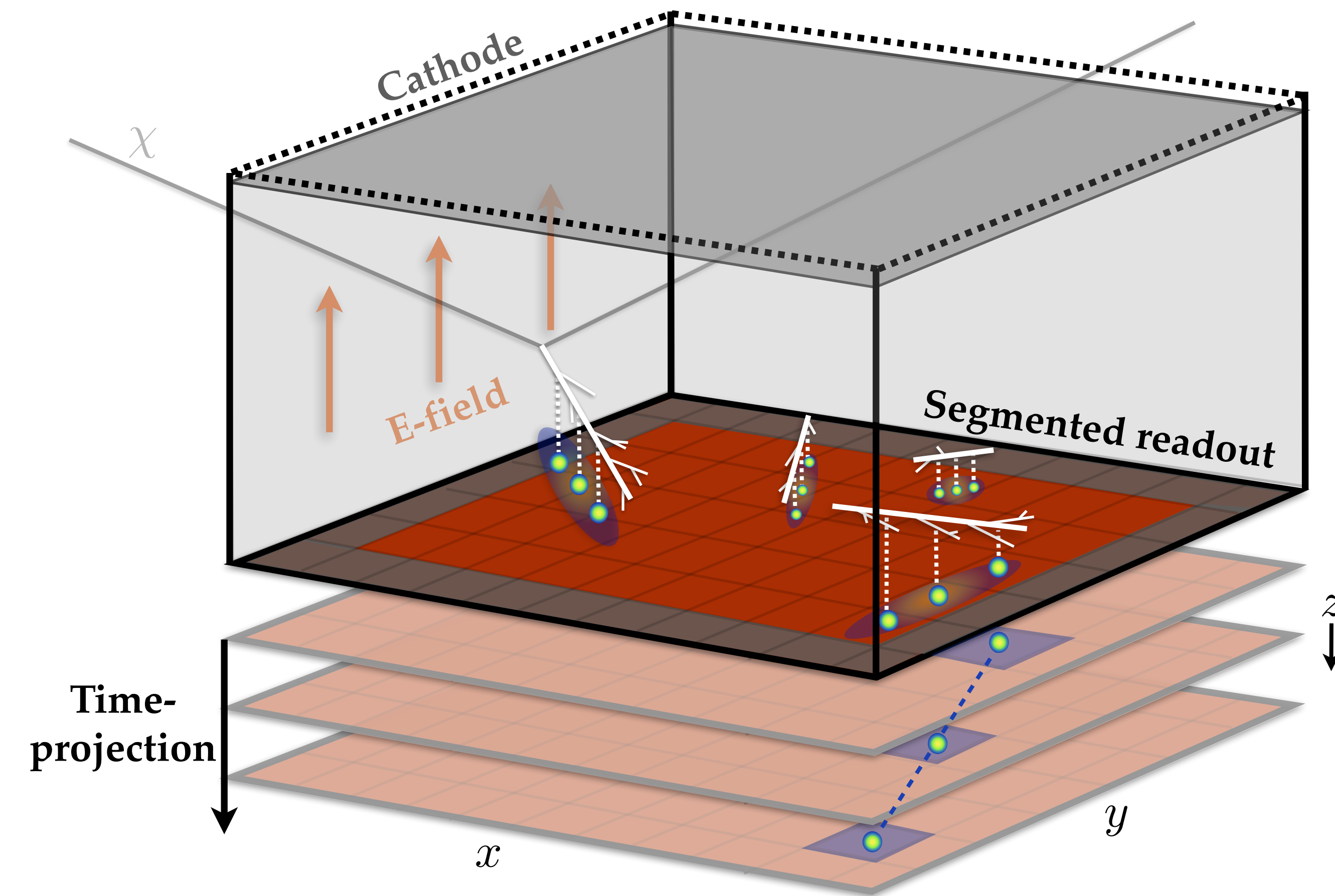
# Focus of Cygnus: gas time projection chamber

Current gas of interest: 1 atm. of He:SF6 at 755:5



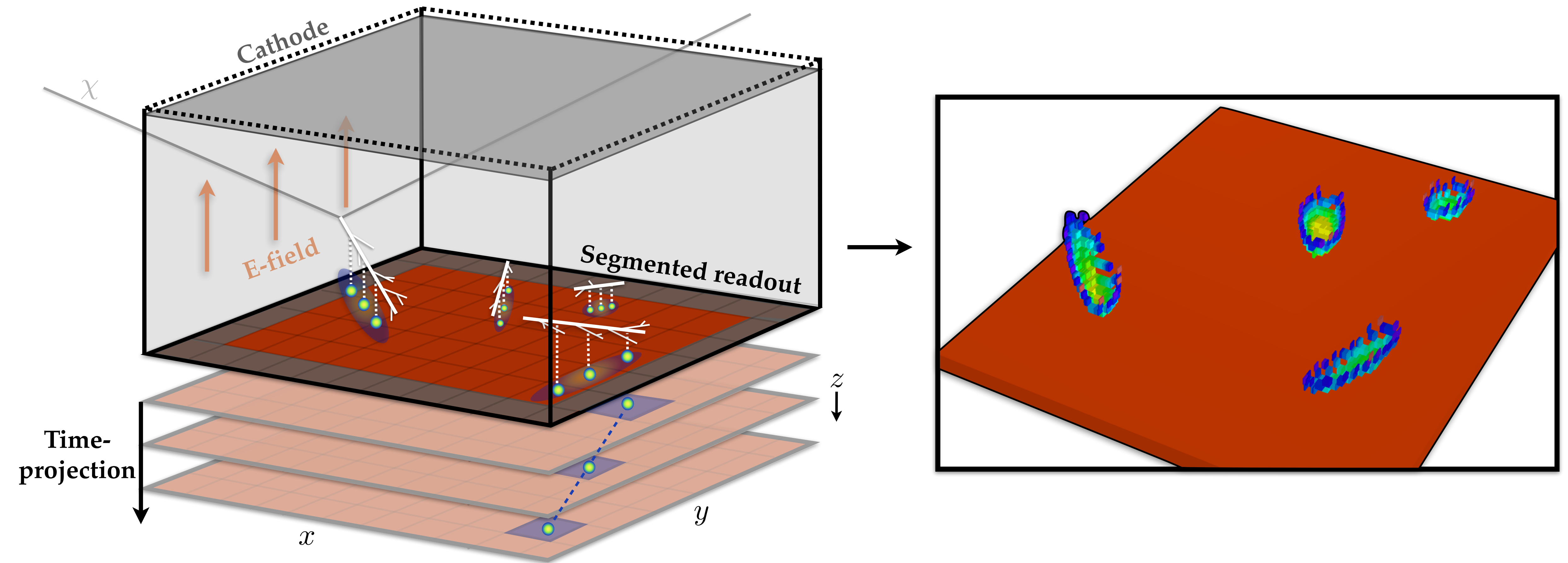
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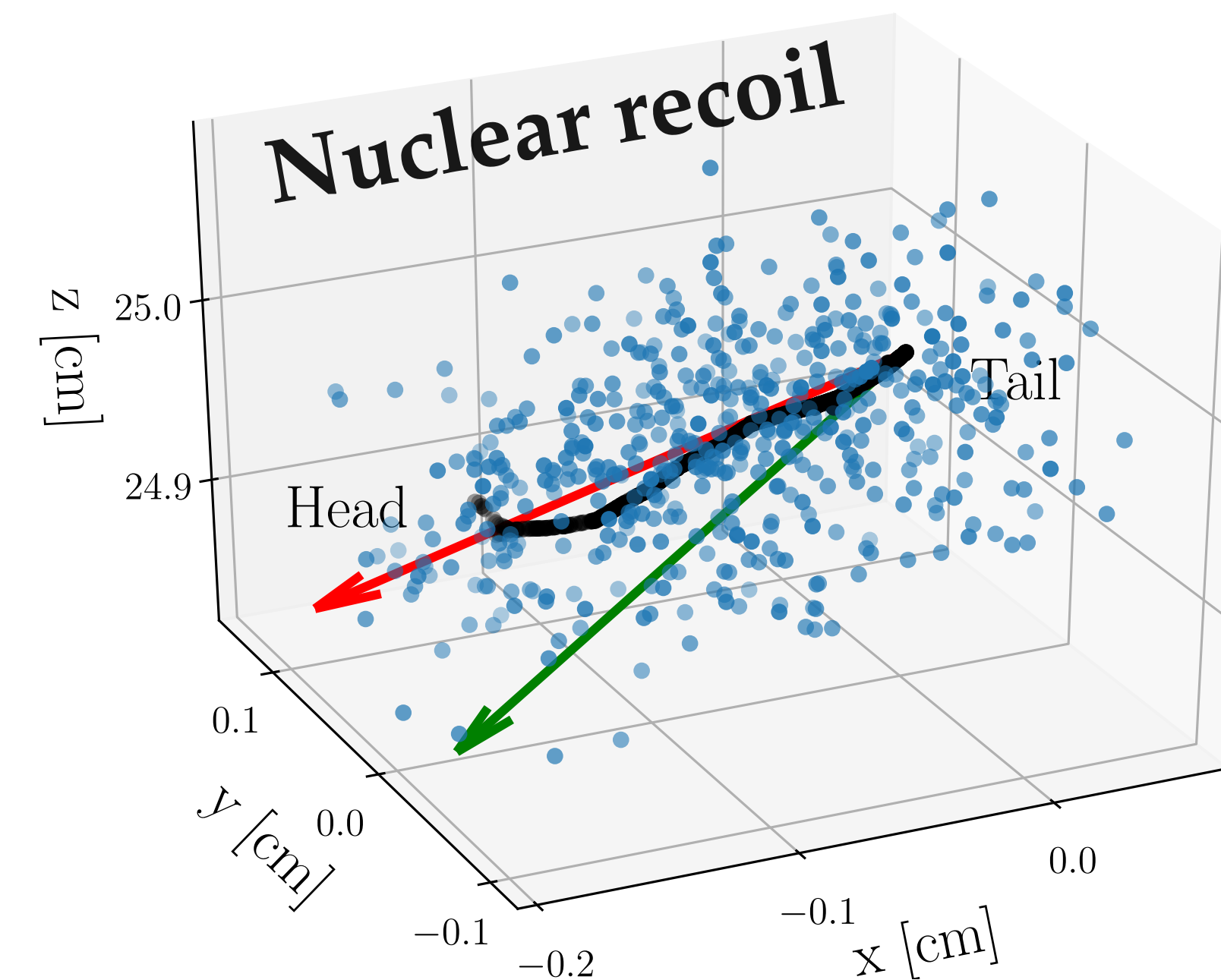
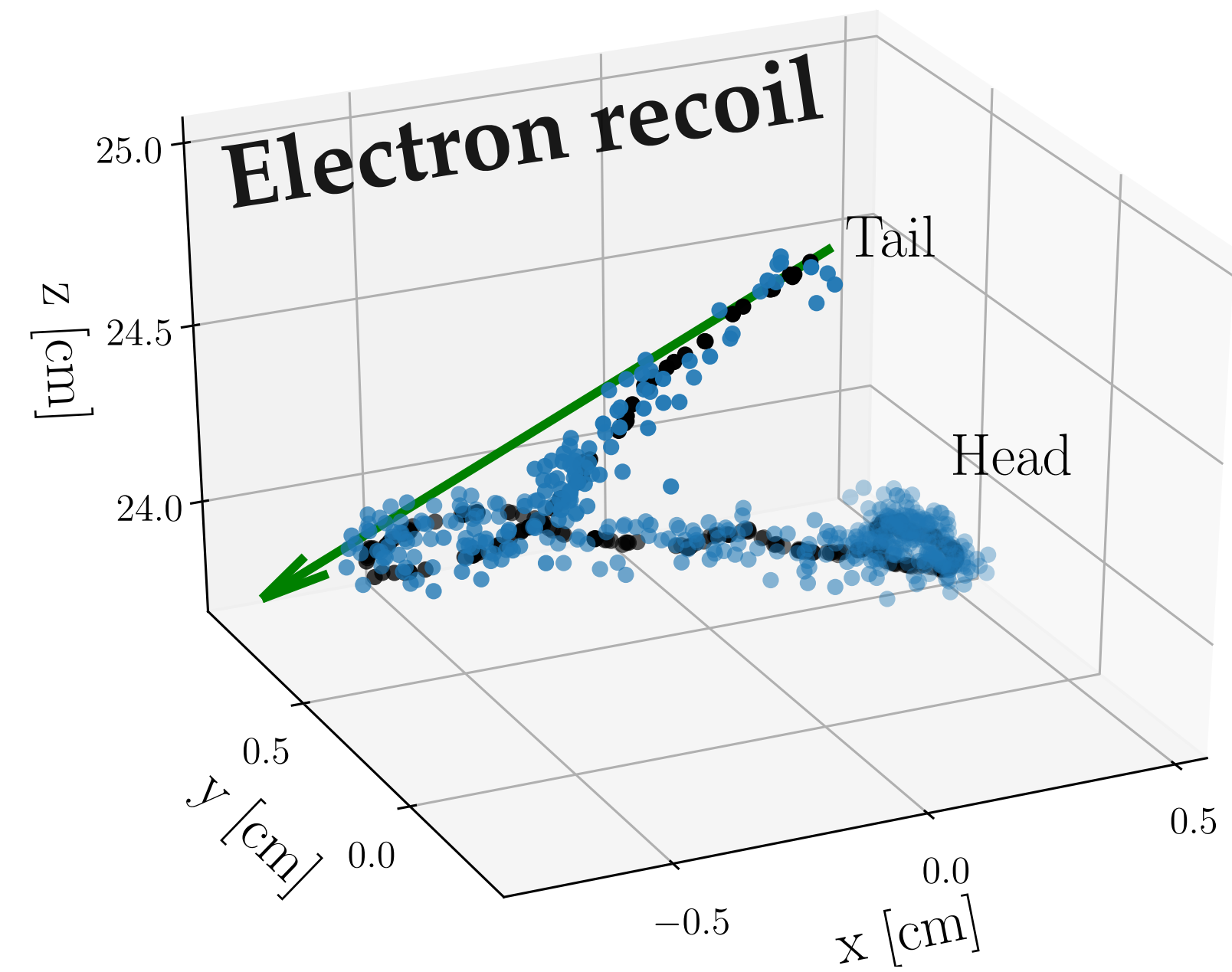


# Angular performance

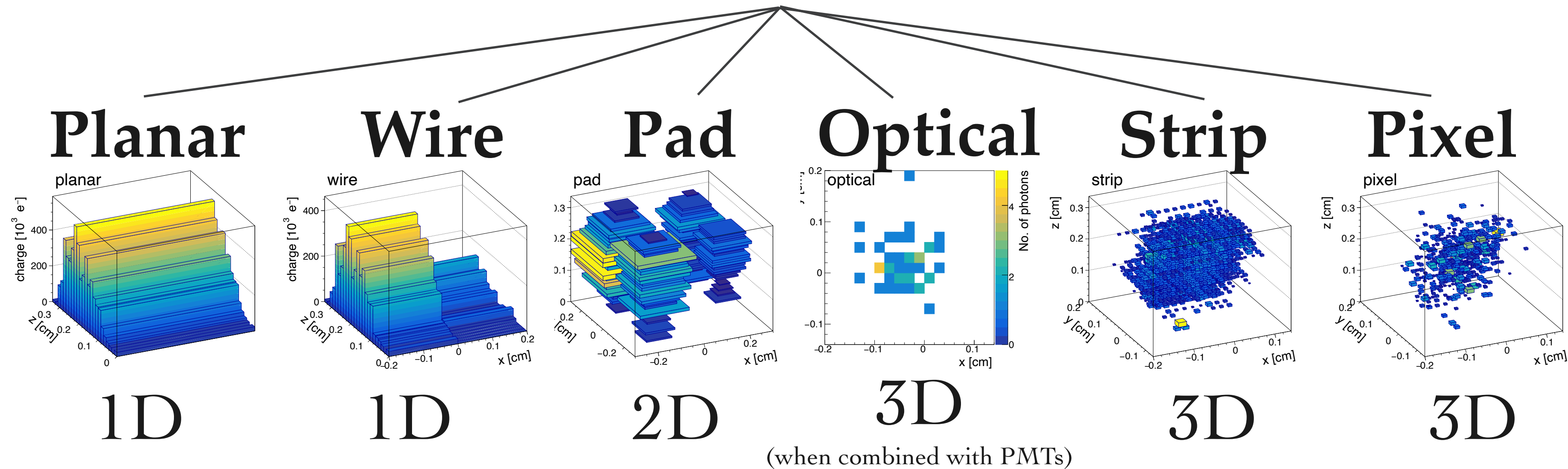
Everything gets worse at lower energies:

- Decreasing quenching factor, means recoils are harder to detect
- Tracks get shorter  $\rightarrow$  harder to measure directions
- Contrast in  $dE/dx$  is slower, harder to measure head-tail
- Harder to distinguish ER/NRs since tracks are short

$\rightarrow$  **Energy dependence of directional performance is very important, and needs to be the focus of all directional detection proposals**



# Readout technologies



Simplest readouts  
→ Worst directional sensitivity but  
lower cost

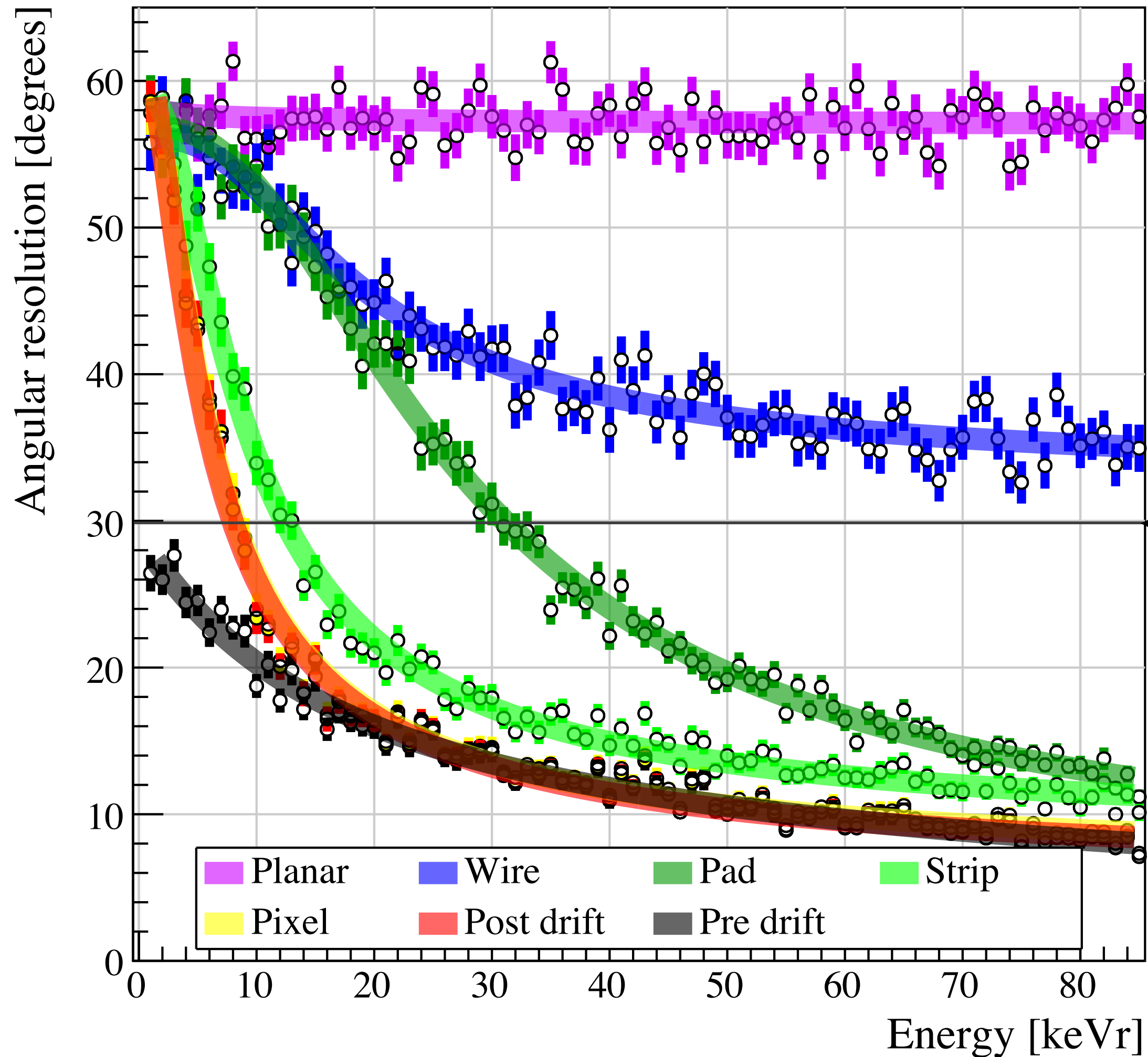
Most highly segmented readouts  
→ Best directional sensitivity but  
Highest cost

**Need a balance between cost *and* directional performance**



# Example: angular resolution

Dispersion in measured (axial) angles relative to initial recoil direction (=1 rad. if there is no correlation and angles are isotropically distributed)



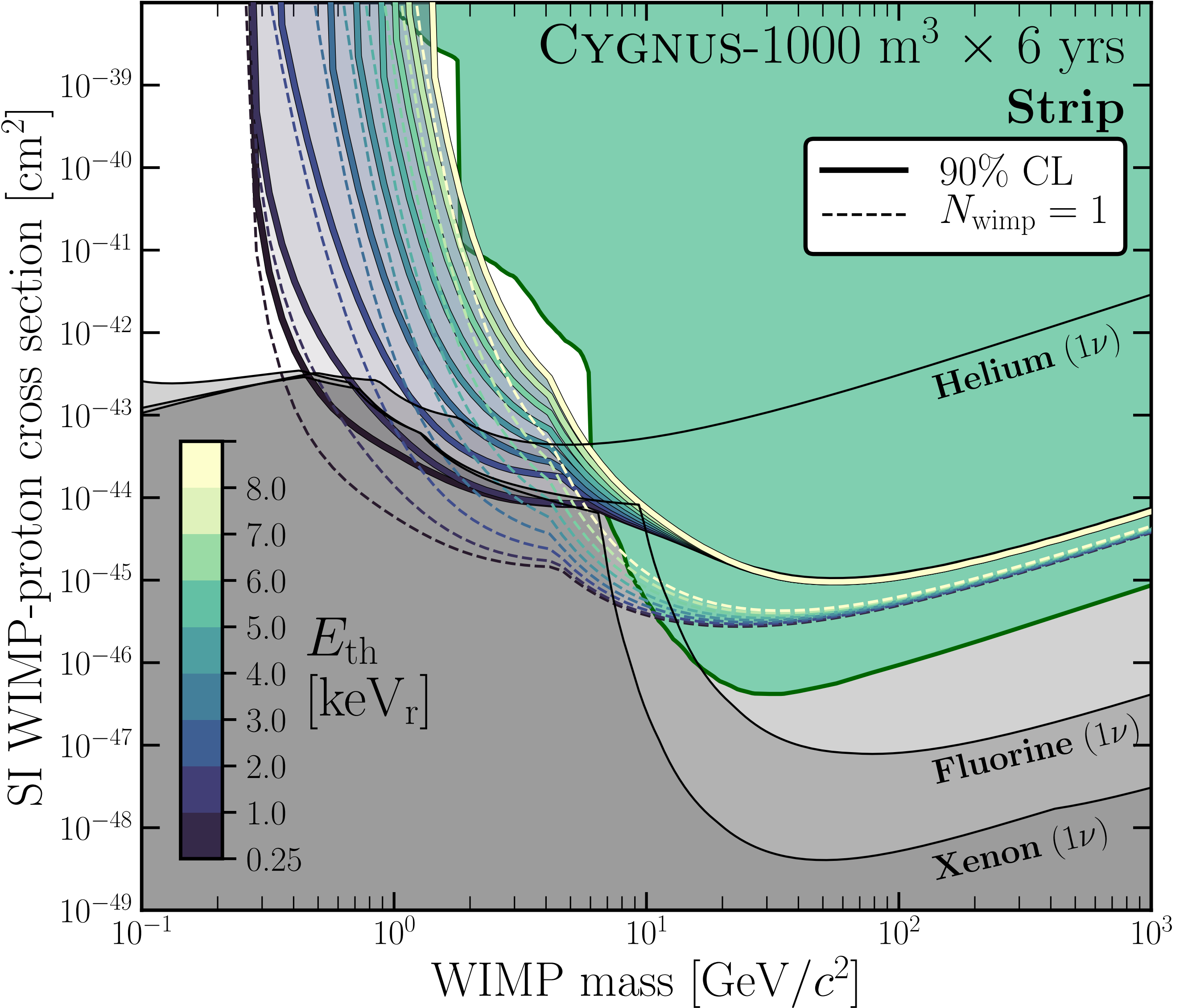
Simulated charge readout comparison  
To realistically discriminate DM and neutrinos, need angular resolution better than  $\sim 30^\circ$

# $\mu$ -PIC (strip) readout currently looks the best in terms of cost vs. directional sensitivity

A closer look at dependence on threshold:

### Threshold:

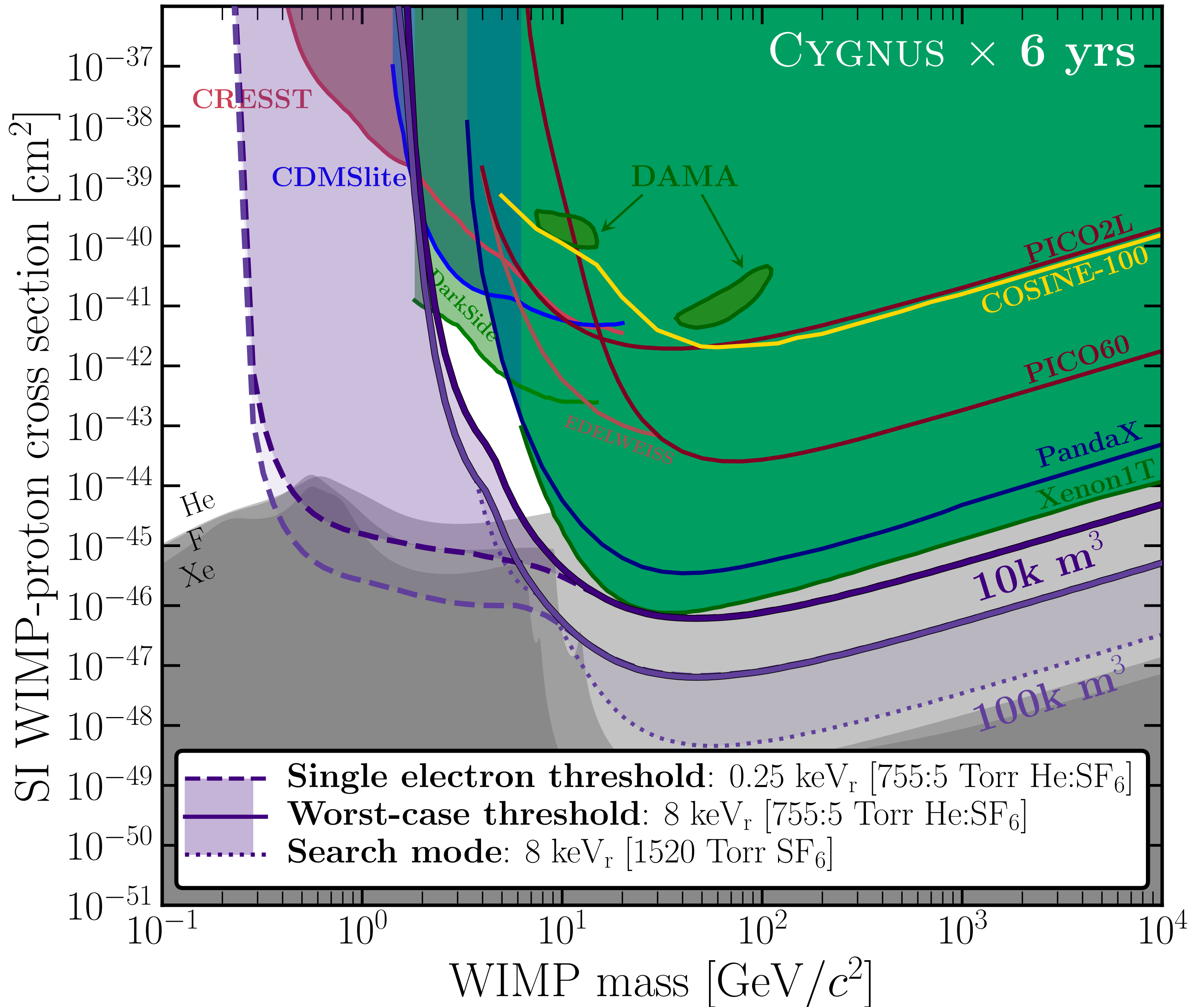
- 8 keVr definitely feasible with simplest electron rejection strategy
- 3 keVr is probably feasible
- 0.25 keVr is theoretical minimum (single electron)



# Sensitivity (SI)

→ Window worst/best case threshold  
→ Search mode: 1 atm. of SF<sub>6</sub> but no directionality (possible way to extend high mass sensitivity)

**Important note:** these limits are true discovery limits, i.e. a signal can be confirmed as DM, so comparison of Cygnus limits with other experiments undersells its potential

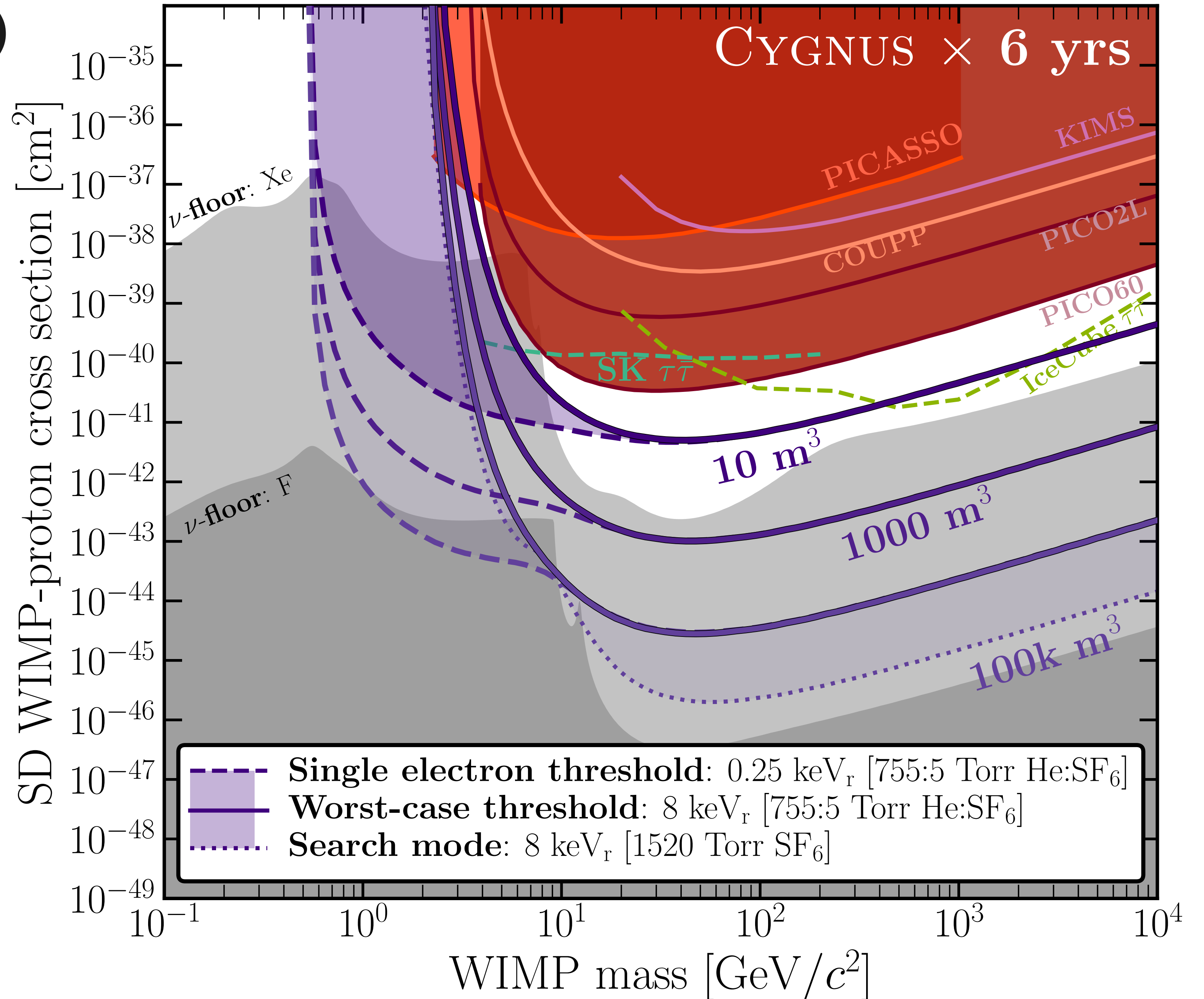


# Sensitivity (SD-p)

→ Fluorine-based fill gases have high proton spin  $\langle S_p \rangle$  → naturally good SD-proton limits

→ He does not set limits on this cross section

**Important note:** these limits are true discovery limits, i.e. a signal can be confirmed as DM, so comparison of Cygnus limits with other experiments undersells its potential

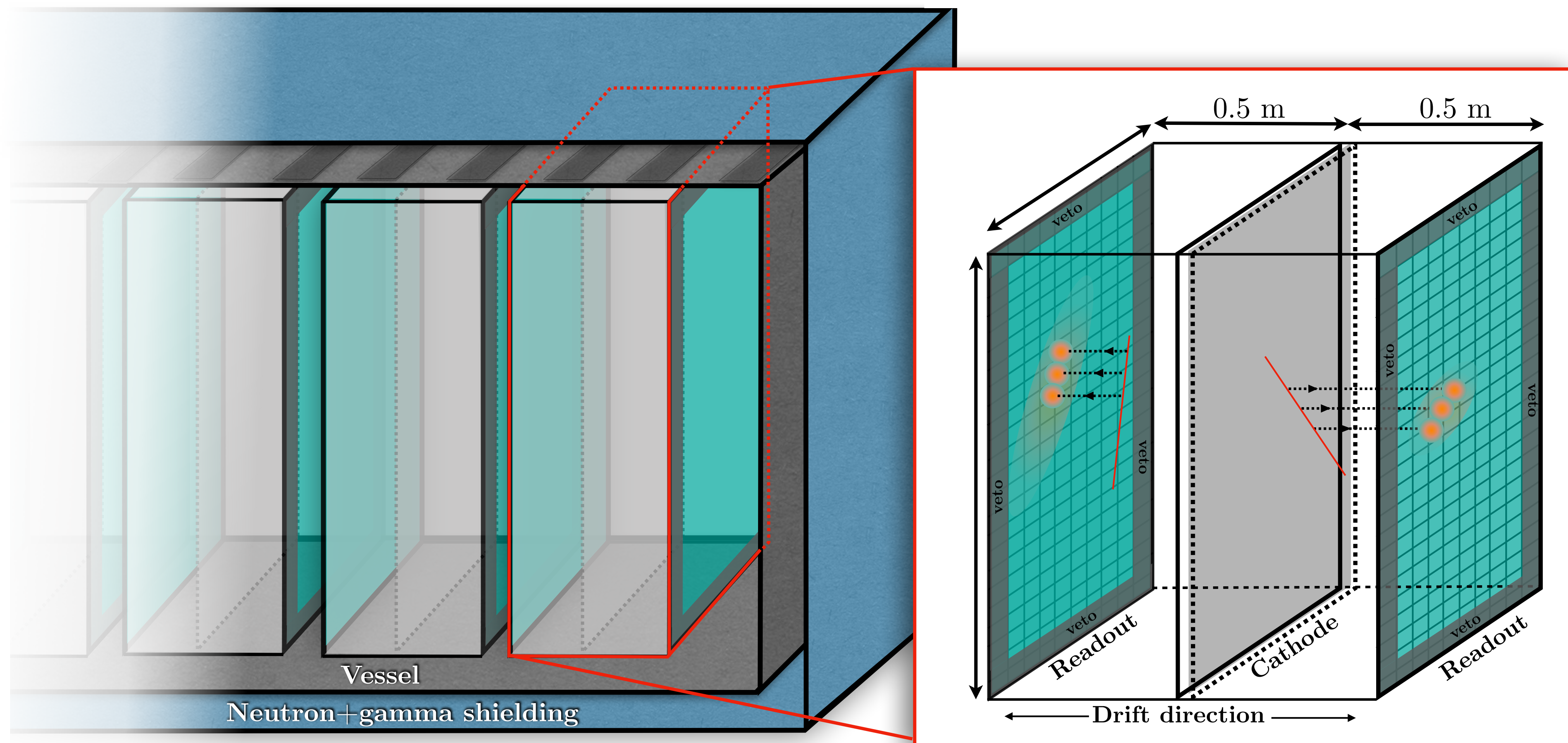


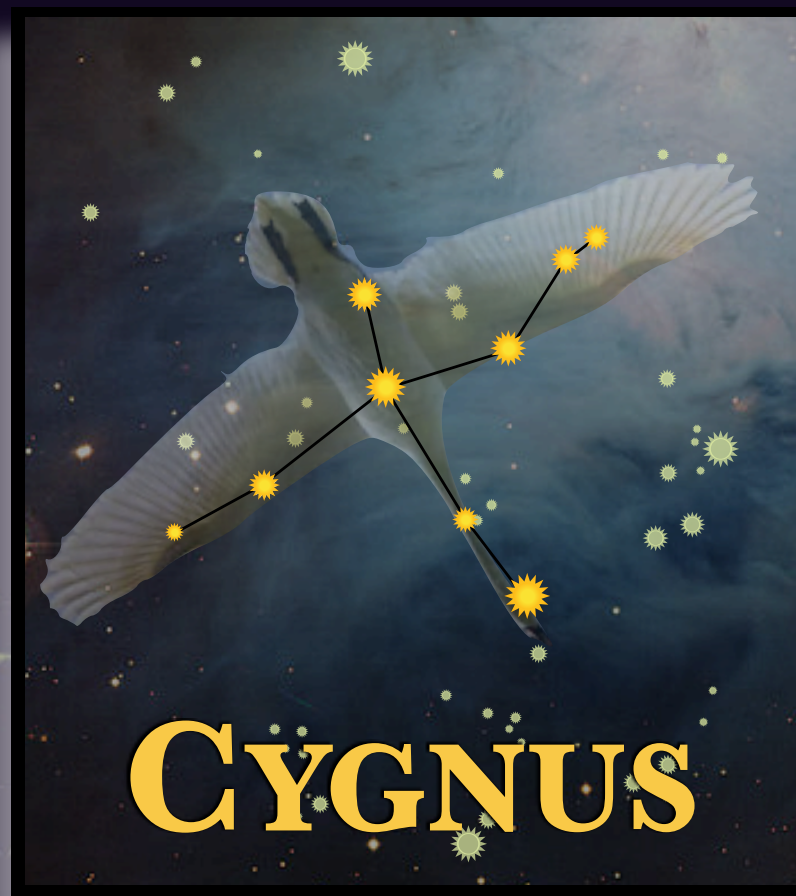
# How to scale up?

Modularity is both necessary, and advantageous

CYGNUS-Nm<sup>3</sup>

CYGNUS-10 m<sup>3</sup> module





**CYGNUS-10**  
Boulby, UK

**CYGNUS-KM**  
Kamioka, Japan

**CYGNUS-HD10**  
Lead, South Dakota

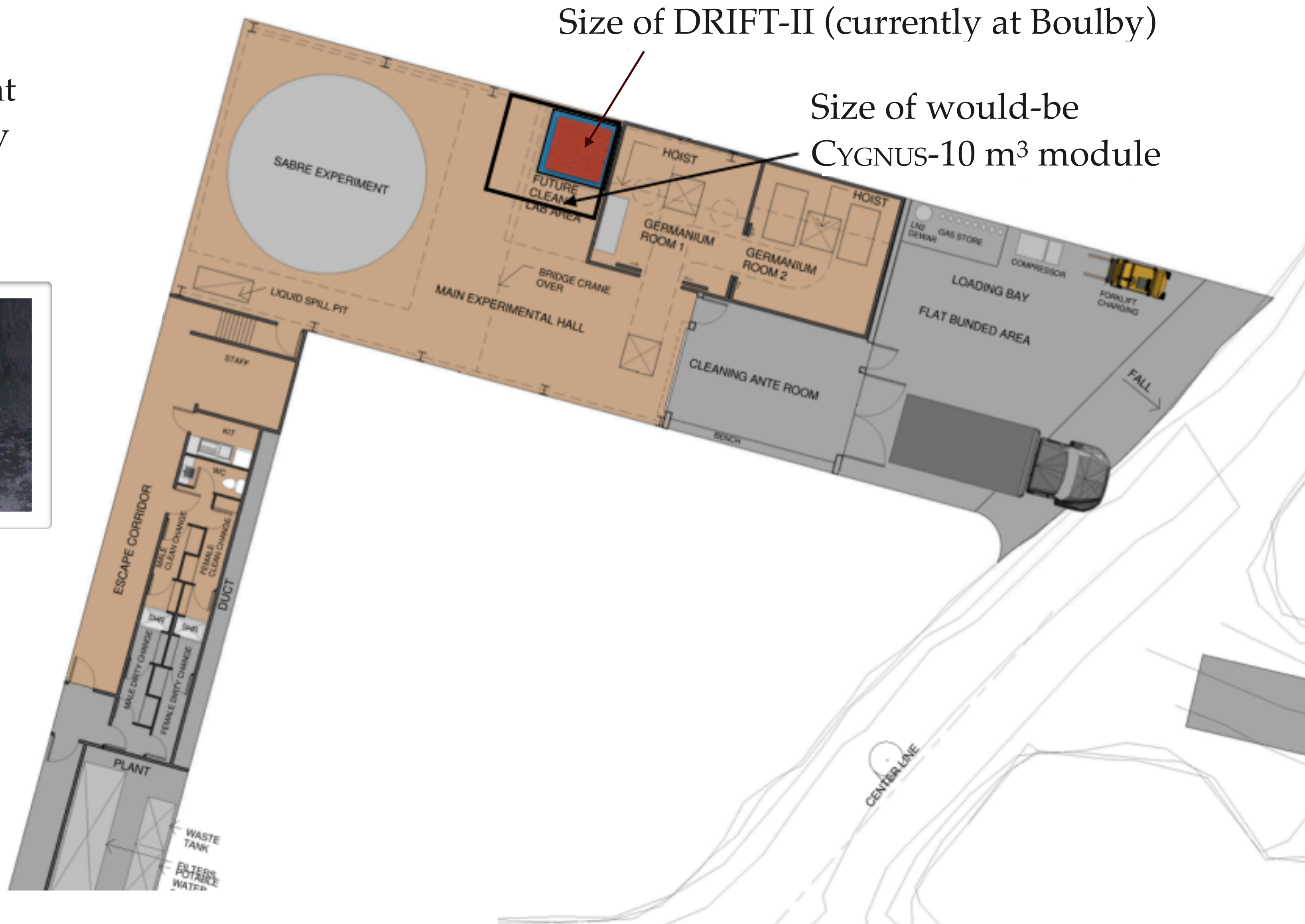
**CYGNO**  
Gran Sasso, Italy

**CYGNUS-OZ**  
Stawell, Aus.

**CYGNUS-Andes**  
Chile/Argentina

# Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory (SUPL)

- ♦ 1.6 km depth, still operational gold mine
- ♦ First underground site in Southern Hemisphere
- ♦ Will host one half of SABRE experiment
- ♦ Cygnus involvement as part of recently formed Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics



**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**



**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

**2. We don't**

**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

**2. We don't**

**Then what?**

**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

↳ We study it

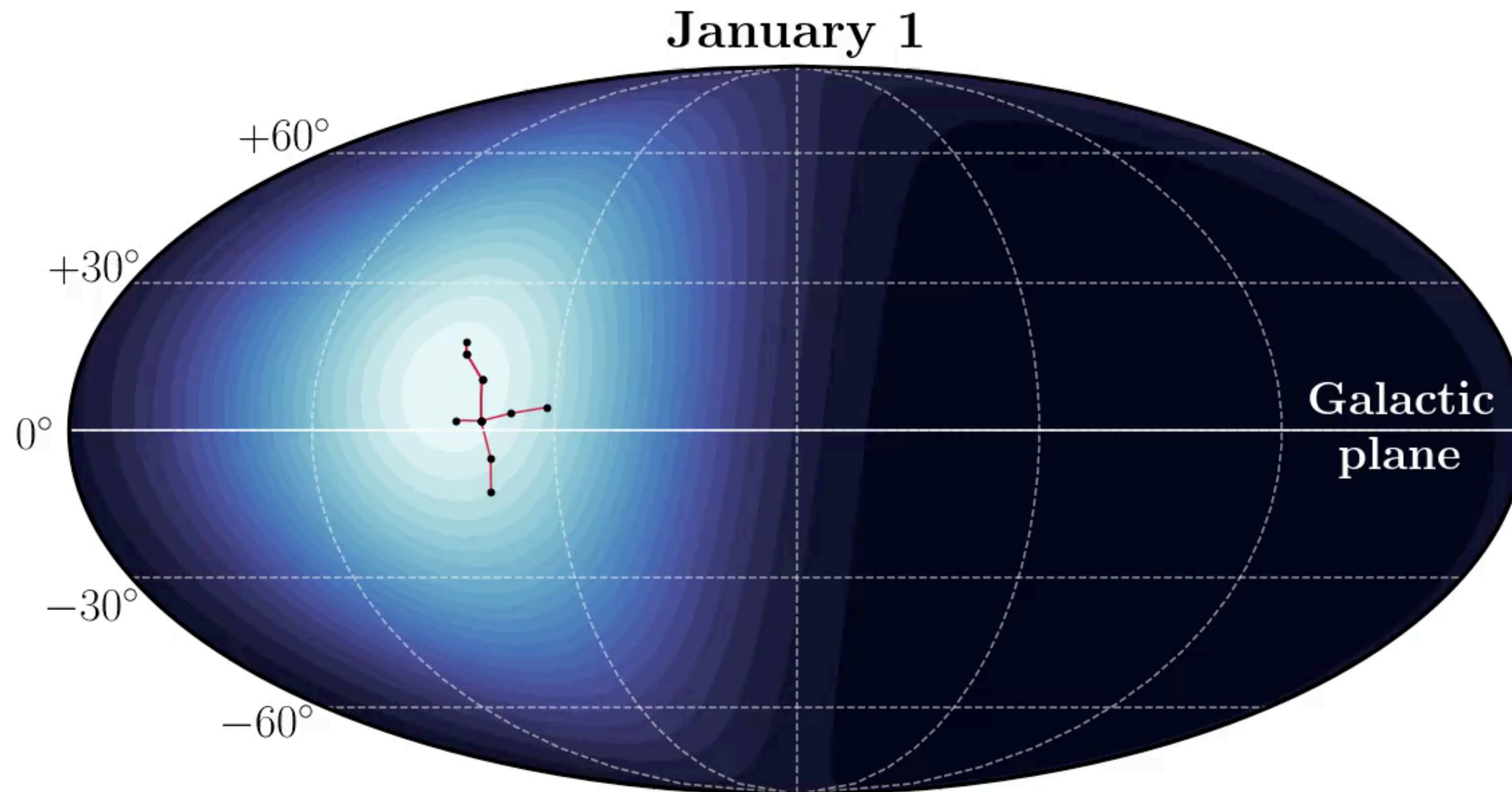
**2. We don't**

**Then what?**

Based on standard assumptions, what should the signal look like?

→ a **Gaussian** peaking towards **Cygnus**

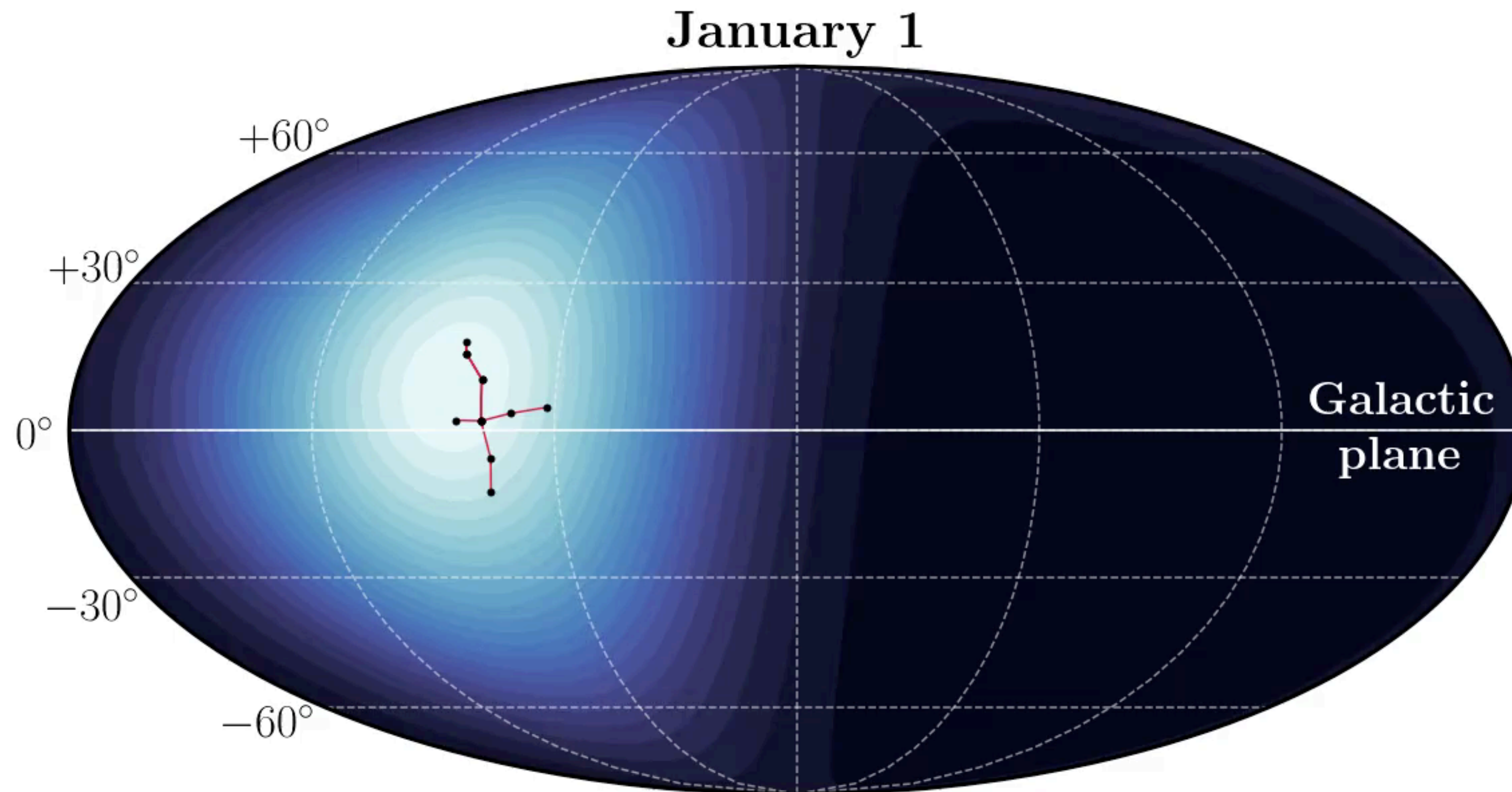
$$\left. \frac{dR(t)}{d \cos \theta} \right|_{E_r} \propto \frac{1}{(2\pi\sigma_v^2)^{1/2}} \exp \left( -\frac{(v_{\min} + v_{\text{lab}}(t) \cos \theta)^2}{2\sigma_v^2} \right)$$



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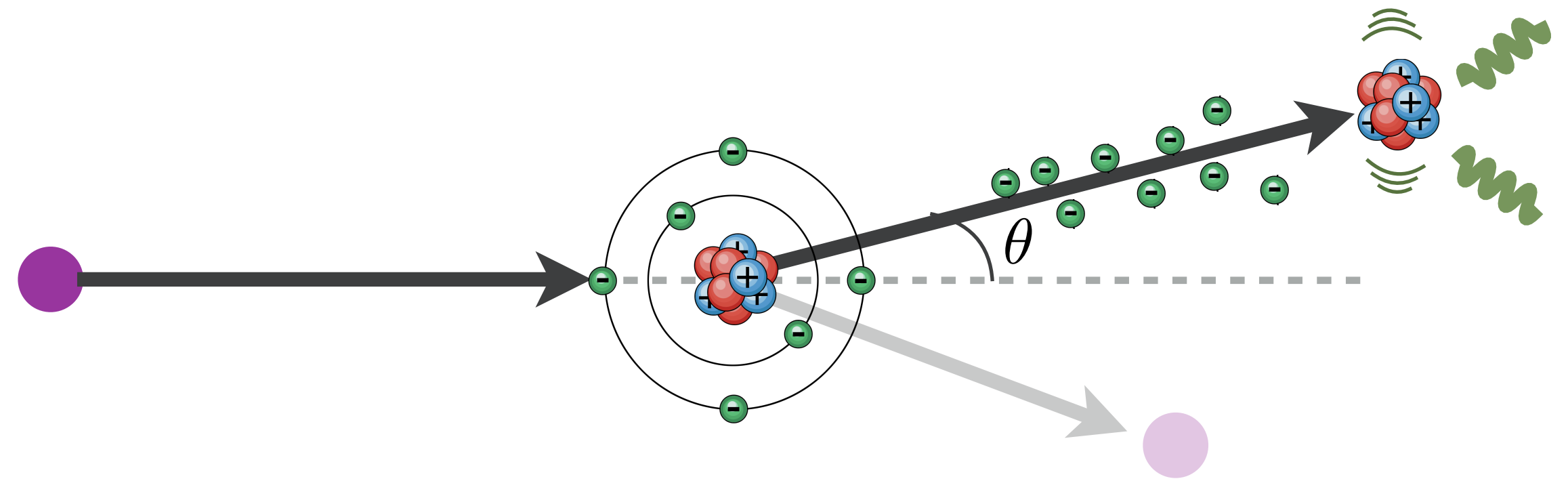
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# Standard prediction based on a few assumptions

- The DM scatters elastically

$$\hookrightarrow E_r = \frac{2m_N m_\chi^2}{(m_N + m_\chi)^2} v^2 \cos^2 \theta$$



- The DM velocity distribution is a Gaussian (SHM)

$$\hookrightarrow f(\mathbf{v}) \sim \exp\left(-\frac{(\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{v}_{\text{lab}})^2}{2\sigma_v^2}\right)$$

- DM-nucleus matrix element does not depend on velocity

$$\hookrightarrow \frac{dR}{d\Omega} \sim \int \delta(v \cos \theta - v_{\text{min}}) f(\mathbf{v}) d^3\mathbf{v}$$

# Interesting to consider cases where these aren't true, e.g.

## **Non-vanilla DM-nucleus kinematics/interactions,**

- inelastic DM
- EFT operators with transverse velocity dependence
- Luminous DM
- Multi-scatter regime, e.g. superheavy/strongly interacting DM

## **Non-Gaussian velocity distributions**

- The Gaia Sausage/Enceladus
- Streams and substructure

## **DM fluxes from directions other than Cygnus**

- Supernova-produced DM
- Cosmic ray-upscattered DM
- Boosted DM



**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

↳ We study it

**2. We don't**

**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

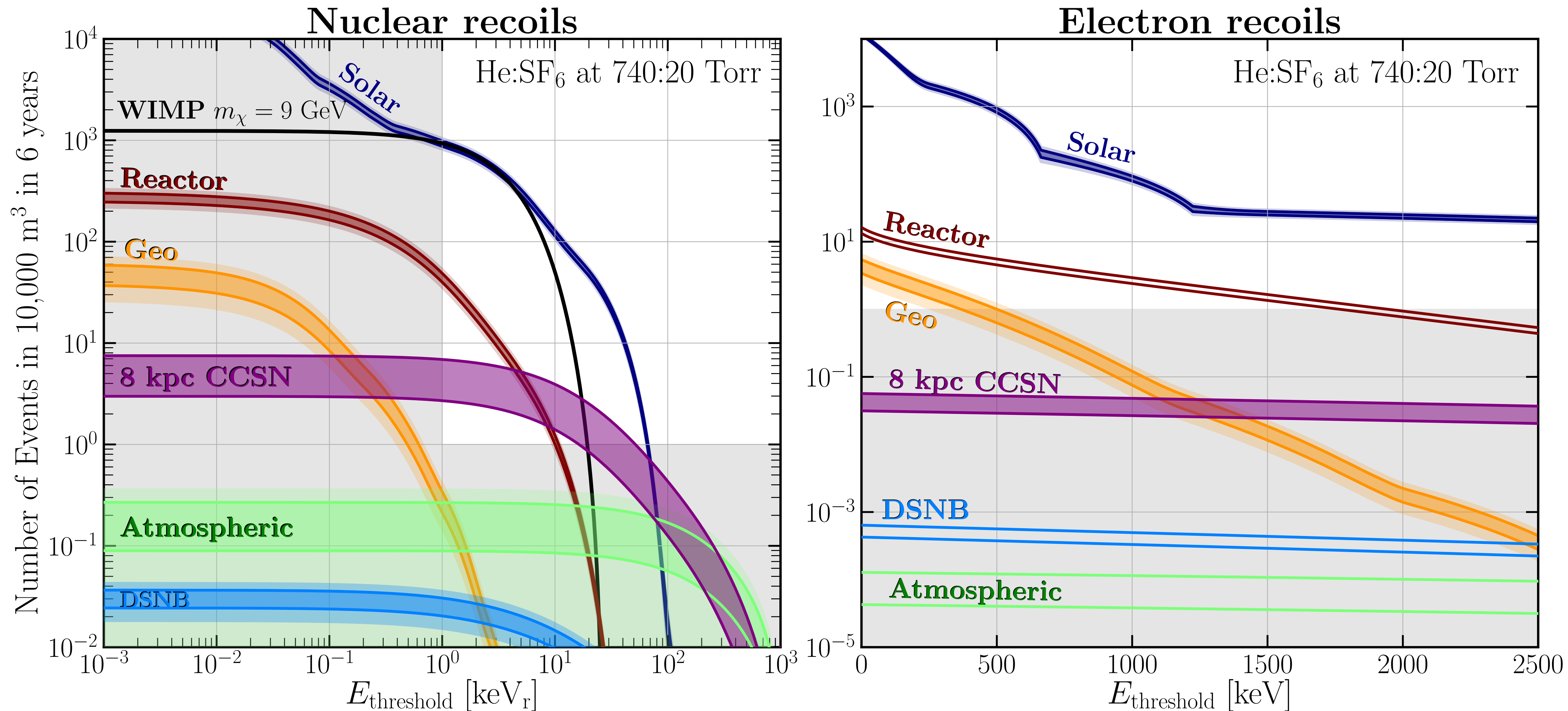
**1. We have a signal**

↳ We study it

**2. We don't**

↳ Our background is our signal

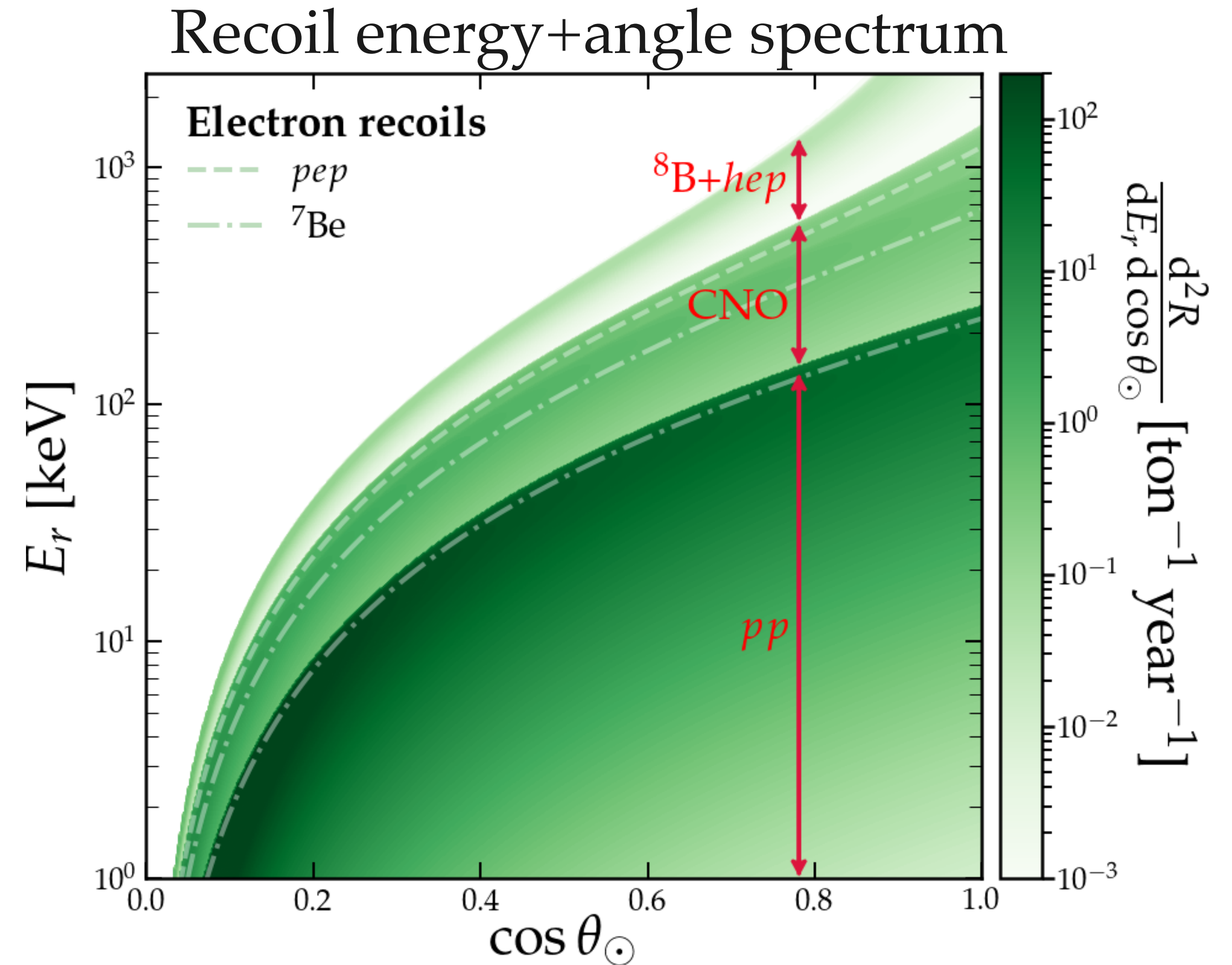
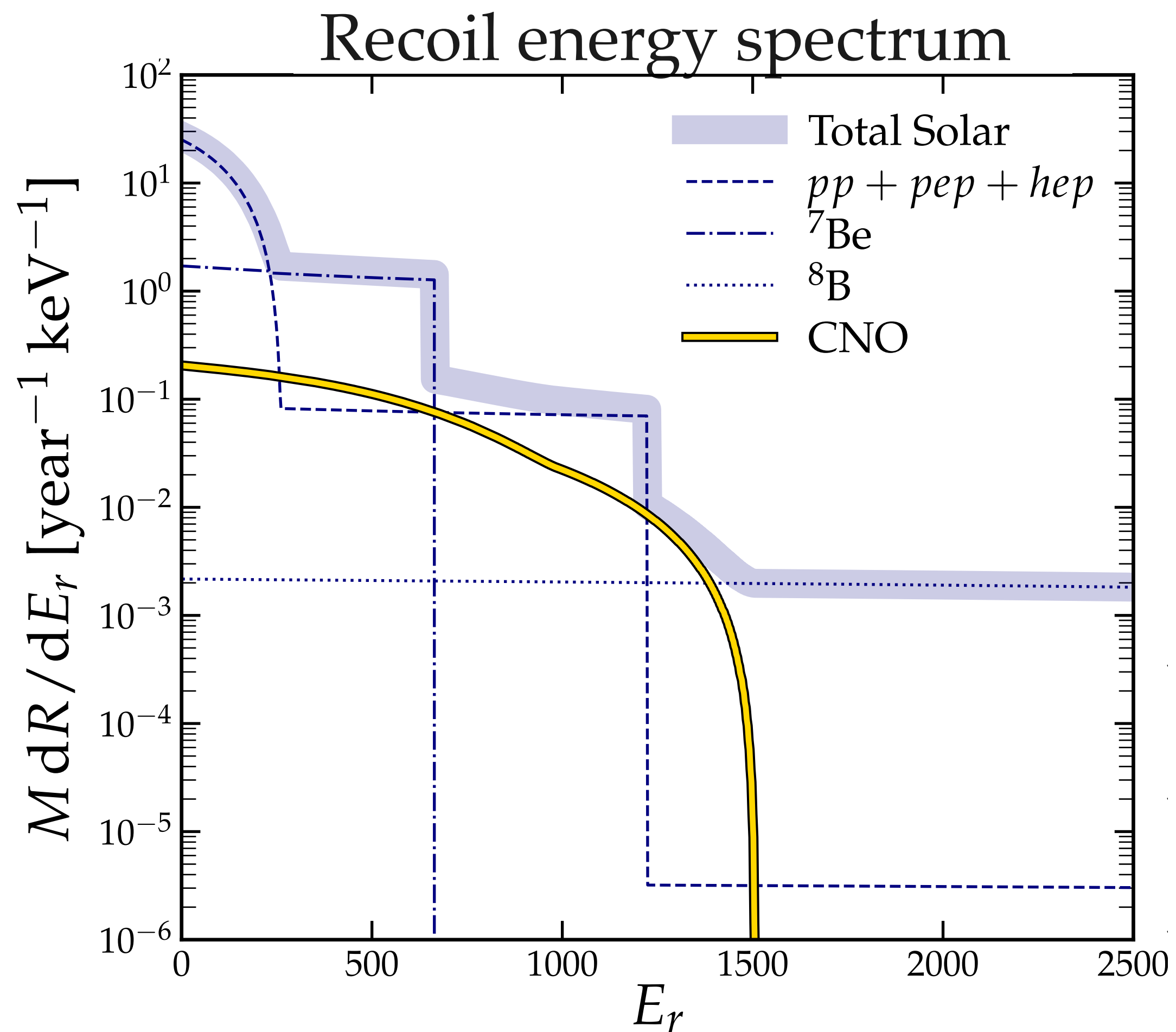
# The neutrino background



A directional detector has the potential for superior background rejection and NR/ER discrimination  
→ this is true even if you're not talking about DM

# Directional neutrino measurements

Given known direction to the Sun, directional information allows one to reconstruct the neutrino energy spectrum event-by-event (in principle)



**Say we build Cygnus and find that...**

**1. We have a signal**

↳ We study it

**2. We don't**

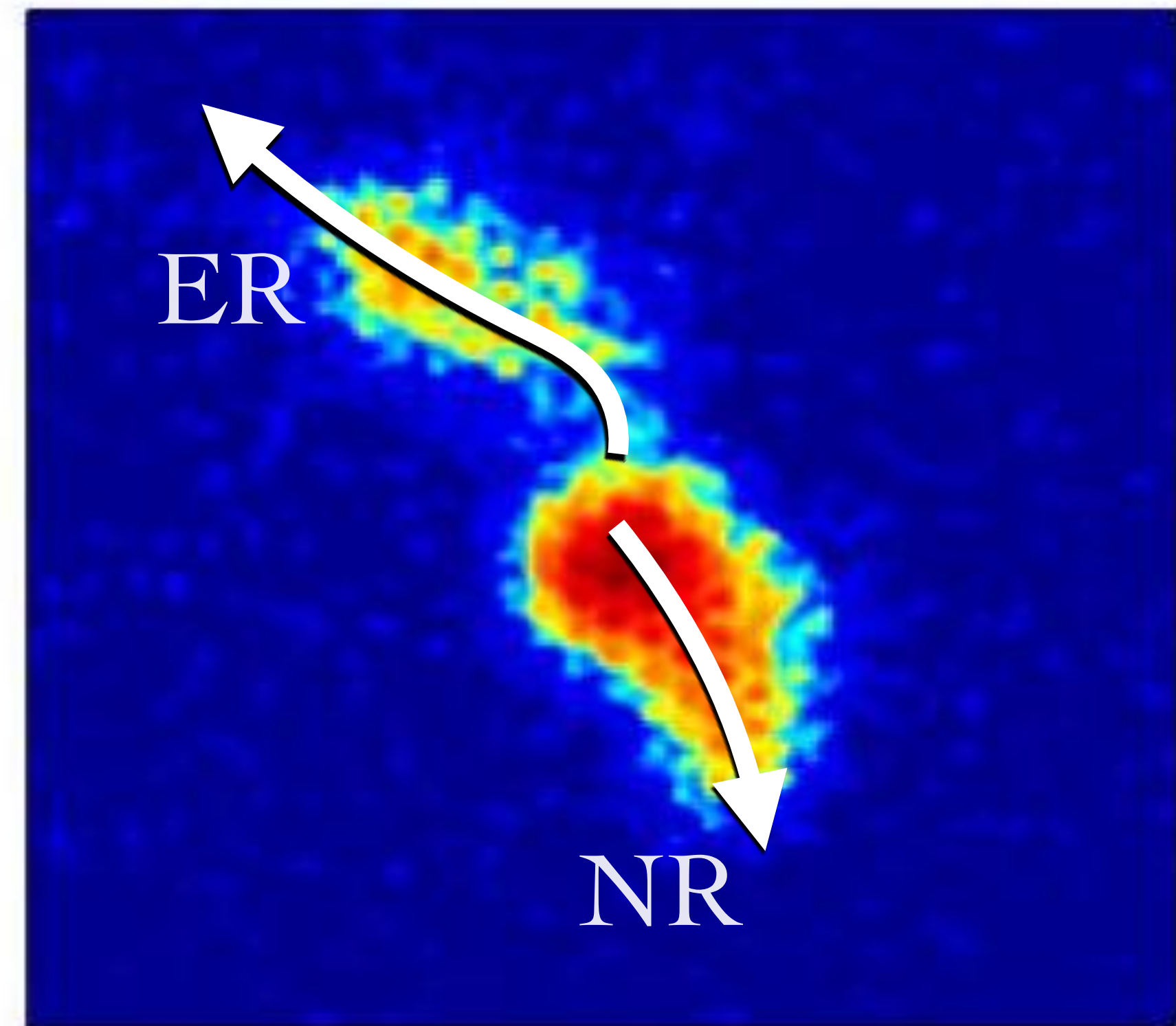
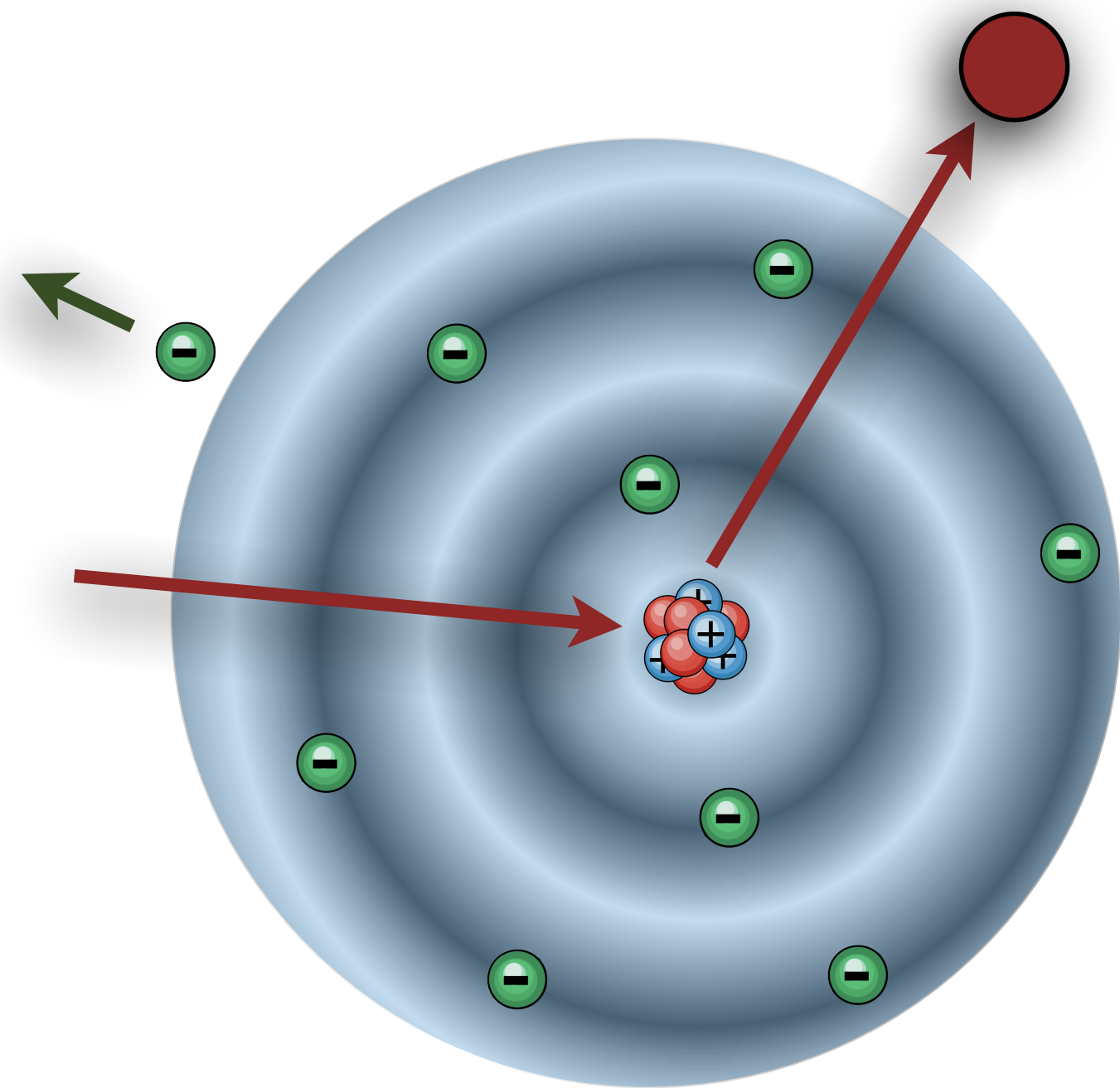
↳ Our background is our signal

Both need large(ish)  $\gtrsim 10 \text{ m}^3$  TPCs

Is there anything else that can be done in the meantime?

# General physics: Measurement of the Migdal effect

→ Emission of  $\sim\text{keV}$  electron for very low energy NRs. Important for sub-GeV DM searches, but on shaky ground theoretically as it has never been measured



Could be confirmed directionally, using a small-scale TPC!

2102.04596

# Directional Recoil Detection

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<sup>2</sup>ARC Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics, The University of Sydney, School of Physics, NSW 2006, Australia; email: ciaran.ohare@sydney.edu.au  
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 2021. XX:1–45

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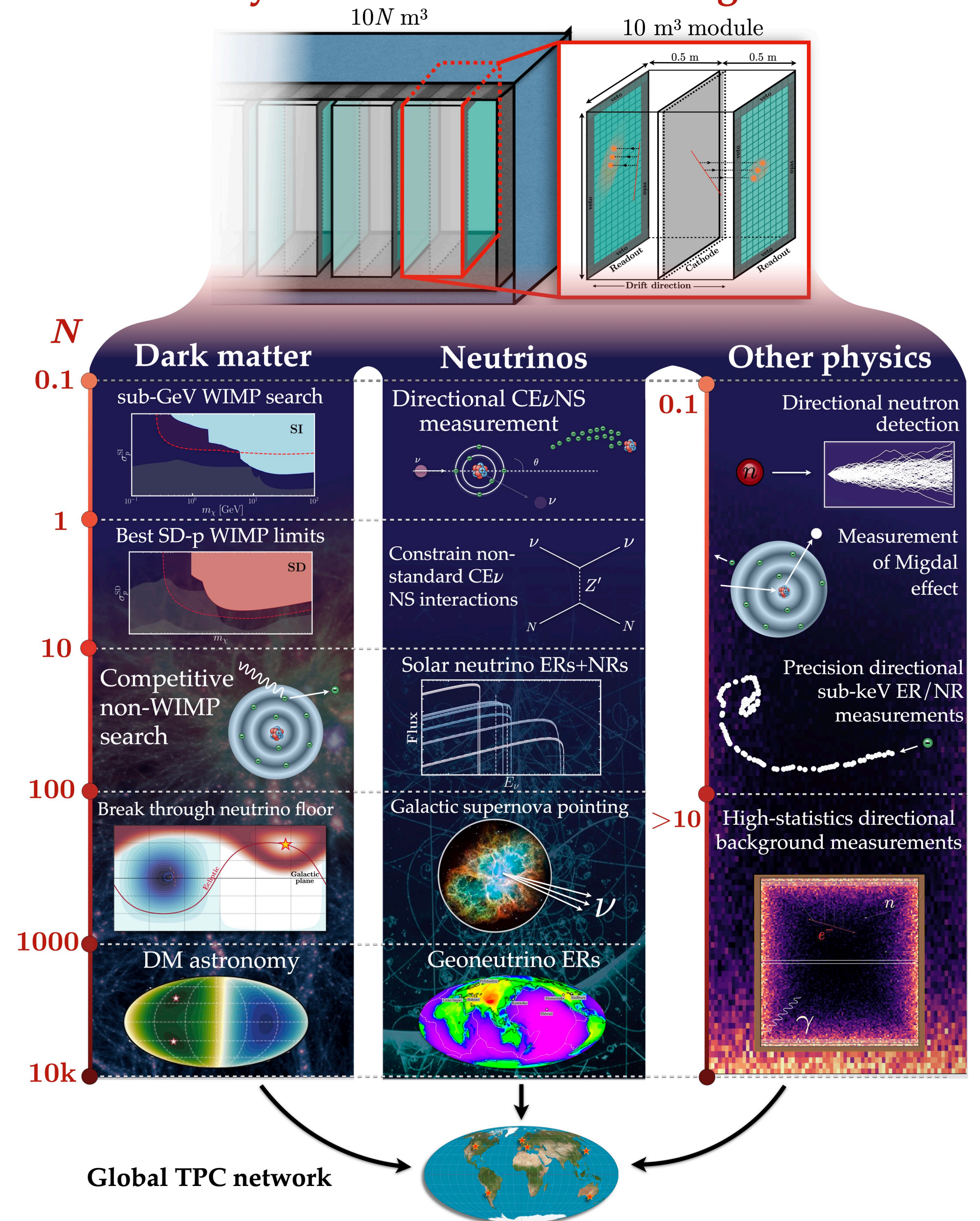
### Keywords

nuclear recoils, electron recoils, dark matter, neutrinos, gas time projection chambers, Migdal effect

### Abstract

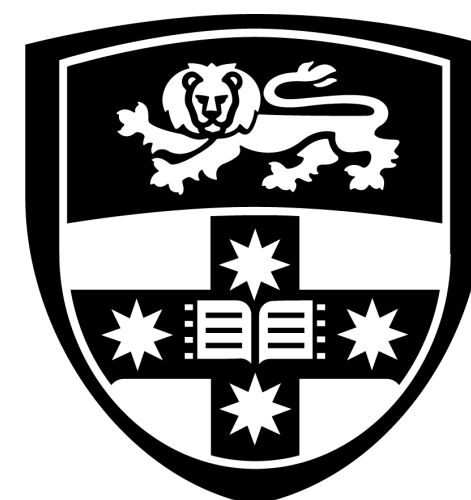
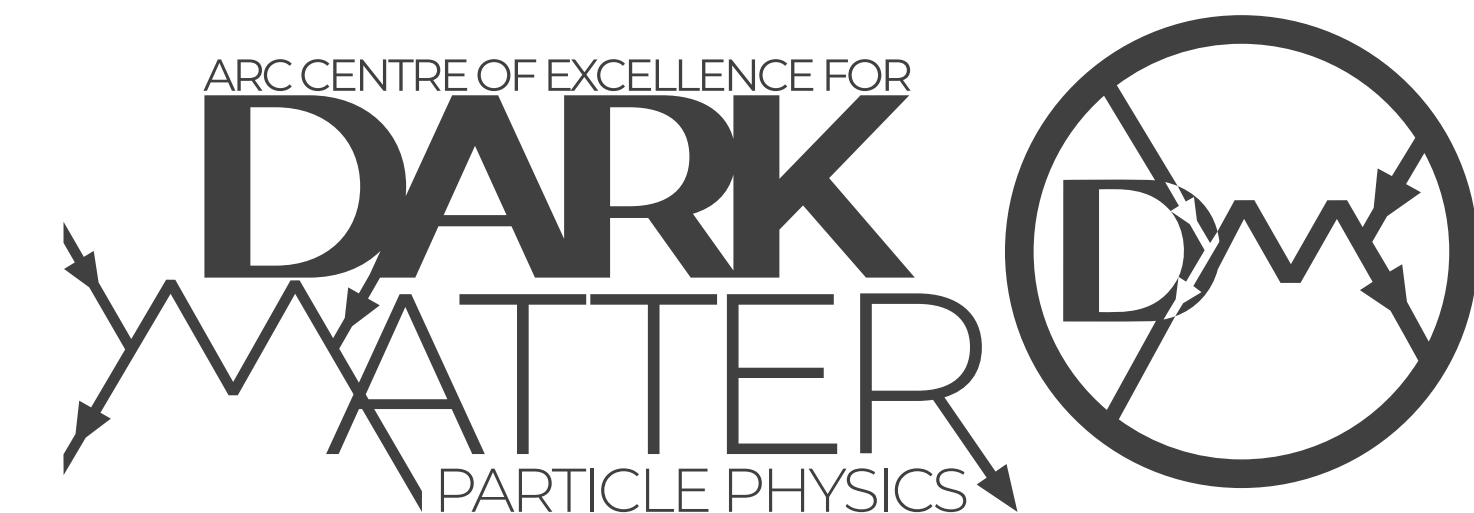
Searches for dark matter-induced recoils have made impressive advances in the last few years. Yet the field is confronted by several outstanding problems. First, the inevitable background of solar neutrinos will soon inhibit the conclusive identification of many dark matter models. Second, and more fundamentally, current experiments have no practical way of confirming a detected signal's galactic origin. The concept of directional detection addresses both of these issues while offering opportunities to study novel dark matter and neutrino-related physics. The concept remains experimentally challenging, but gas time projection chambers are an increasingly attractive option, and when properly configured, would allow directional measurements of both nuclear and electron recoils. In this review, we reassess the required detector performance and survey relevant technologies. Fortunately, the highly-segmented detectors required to achieve good directionality also enable several fundamental and applied physics measurements. We comment on near-term challenges and how the field could be advanced.

## Physics case for a directional gas TPC



# Summary

- Directional TPC network “Cygnus” is an exciting possibility that appears increasingly plausible
- Primary physics goals are to set limits beyond the neutrino floor, and to provide a convincing confirmation of DM in the event of detection
- Exciting physics cases for non-WIMP dark matter, neutrino physics, and general physics measurements, all deserving of further exploration now that the community is converging on a strategy

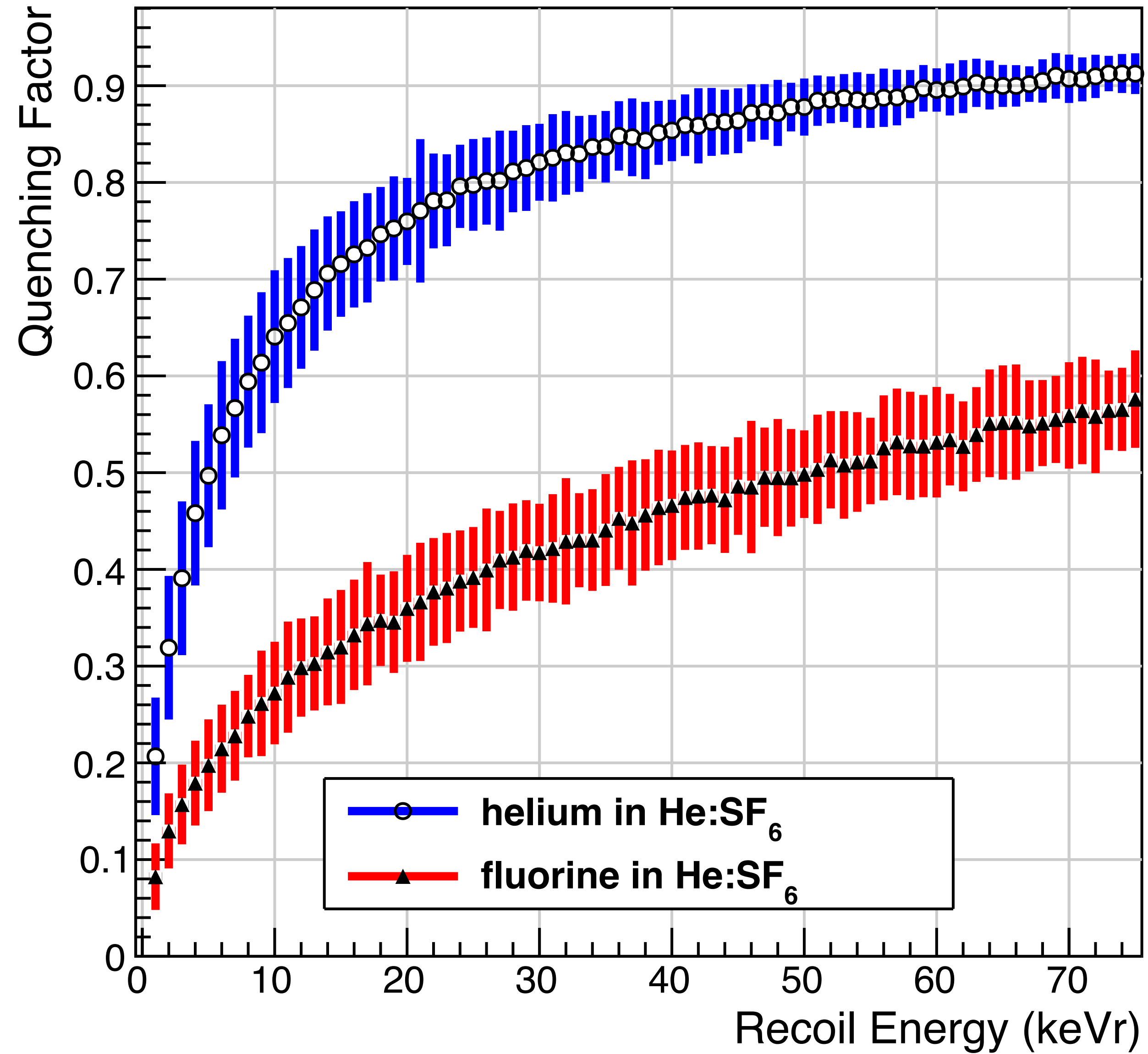


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**SYDNEY**





# Quenching factors for recoils in 1 atm of He+SF<sub>6</sub>



Gas mixture	SF <sub>6</sub>	He:SF <sub>6</sub>	He:SF <sub>6</sub>
Pressure [Torr]	20	740:20	755:5
Density [kg/m <sup>3</sup> ]	0.16	0.32	0.20
$W$ [eV/ion pair]	35.5	38.0	40.0
Trans. diffusion [ $\mu\text{m}/\sqrt{\text{cm}}$ ]	116.2	78.6	78.6
Long. diffusion [ $\mu\text{m}/\sqrt{\text{cm}}$ ]	116.2	78.6	78.6
Drift velocity [mm/ $\mu\text{s}$ ]	0.140	0.140	0.140
Mean avalanche gain	$9 \times 10^3$	$9 \times 10^3$	$9 \times 10^3$

TABLE I. Various gas-dependent parameters assumed in the TPC detector simulation. The values are sourced as follows: the  $W$  factor for pure SF<sub>6</sub> is from a measurement with alpha particles [310], while the  $W$  factors for the He:SF<sub>6</sub> and He:CF<sub>4</sub> mixtures are calculated using Eq.(1) of Ref. [266]. The diffusion values and drift velocity in 20 Torr of pure SF<sub>6</sub> were measured in Ref. [299]. For the He:SF<sub>6</sub> mixtures, no measurements or reliable simulations exist, so we use the 40 Torr pure SF<sub>6</sub> diffusion from Ref. [299] and then assume the electric field can be adjusted to keep the drift velocity constant. The avalanche gain assumed for pure SF<sub>6</sub> has been achieved with THGEMs in Ref. [311] and triple thin GEMs in Ref. [312], and is also used for He:SF<sub>6</sub> mixtures.

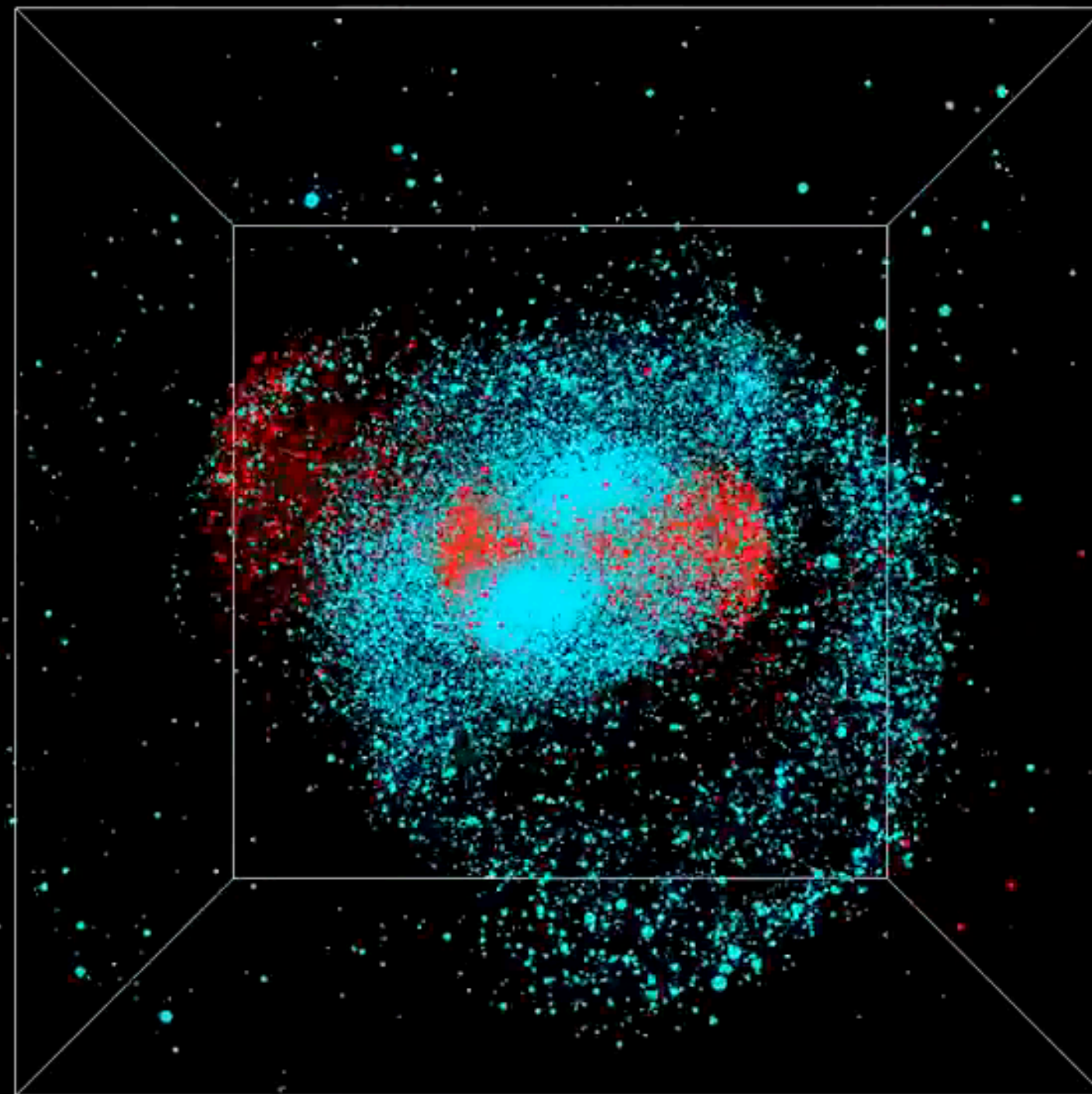
Readout type	Dimensionality	Segmentation ( $x \times y$ )	Capacitance [ $pF$ ]	$\sigma_{\text{noise}}$ in 1 $\mu\text{s}$	Threshold/ $\sigma_{\text{noise}}$
planar	1d ( $z$ )	10 cm $\times$ 10 cm	3000	18000 $e^-$	3.09
wire	2d ( $yz$ )	1 m wires, 2 mm pitch	0.25	800 $e^-$	4.11
pad	3d ( $xyz$ )	3 mm $\times$ 3 mm	0.25	375 $e^-$	4.77
optical	2d ( $xyz$ )	200 $\mu\text{m}$ $\times$ 200 $\mu\text{m}$	n/a	2 photons	5.77
strip	3d ( $xyz$ )	1 m strips, 200 $\mu\text{m}$ pitch	500	2800 $e^-$	4.61
pixel	3d ( $xyz$ )	200 $\mu\text{m}$ $\times$ 200 $\mu\text{m}$	0.012 - 0.200	42 $e^-$	5.77

TABLE II. List of readout-specific parameters that are used in the simulation of each technology we consider here. The capacitance, which determines the noise level, is listed as that for a single detector element. For the optical readout, a yield of  $7.2 \times 10^{-6}$  photons per avalanche electron is used to account for the combined effects of photon yield, geometric optical acceptance, optical transparency, and quantum efficiency.

Should the DM velocity distribution be a Gaussian?

→ Evidence of significant merger in the MW's history

## The Gaia Sausage

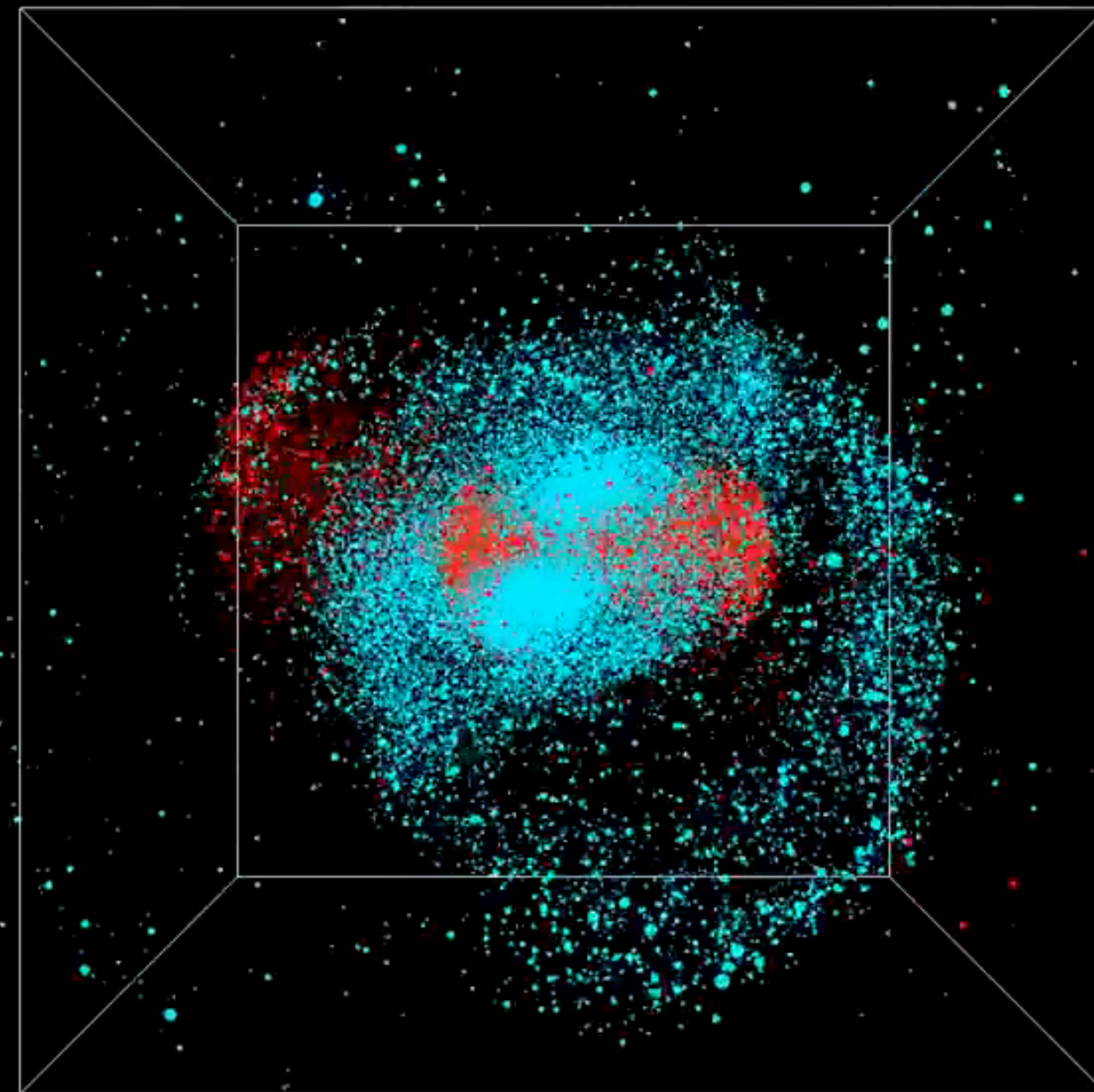


See e.g. Helmi et al. 1806.06038, O'Hare et al., 1810.11468, Necib et al. 1810.12301

Should the DM velocity distribution be a Gaussian?

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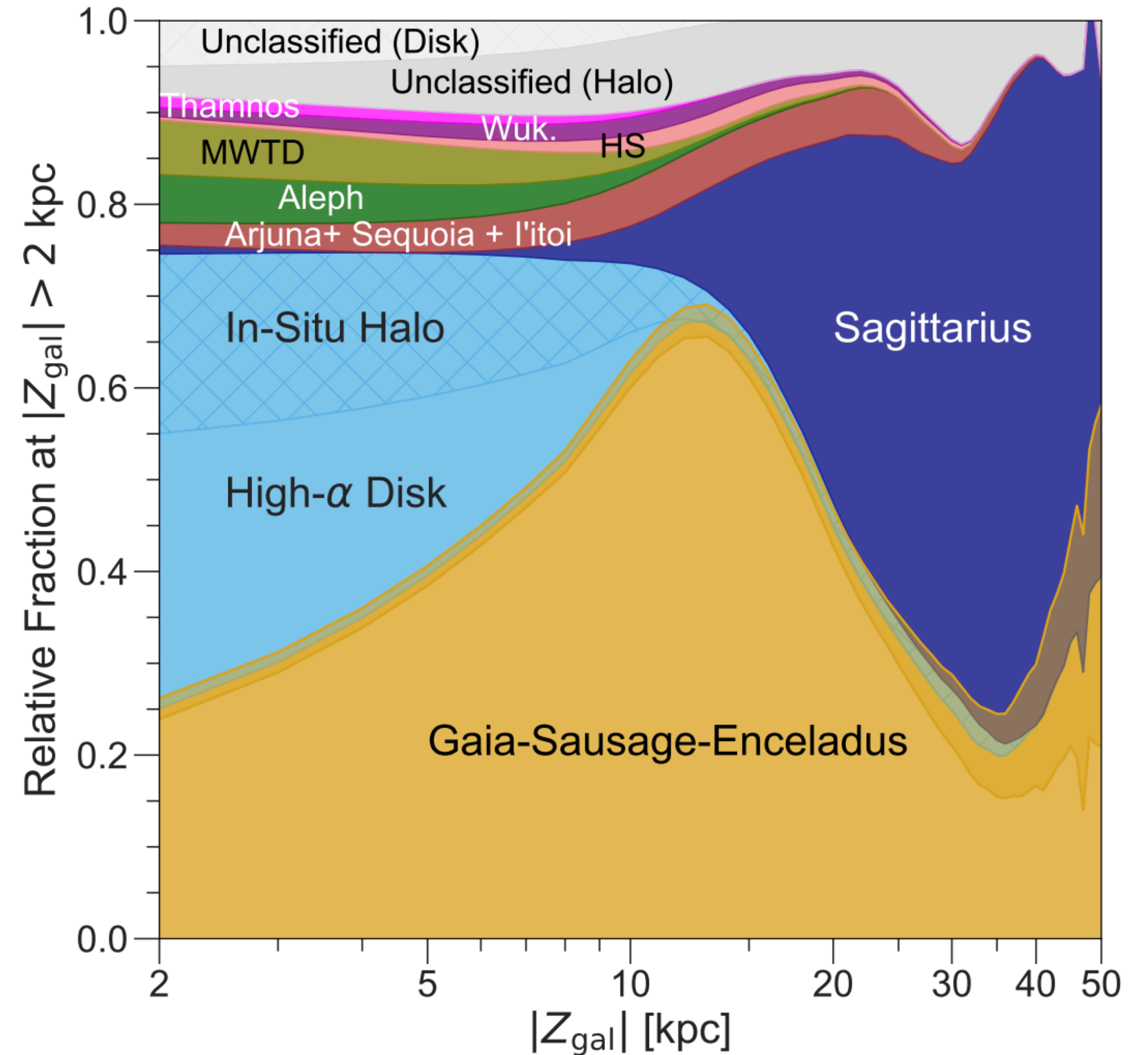
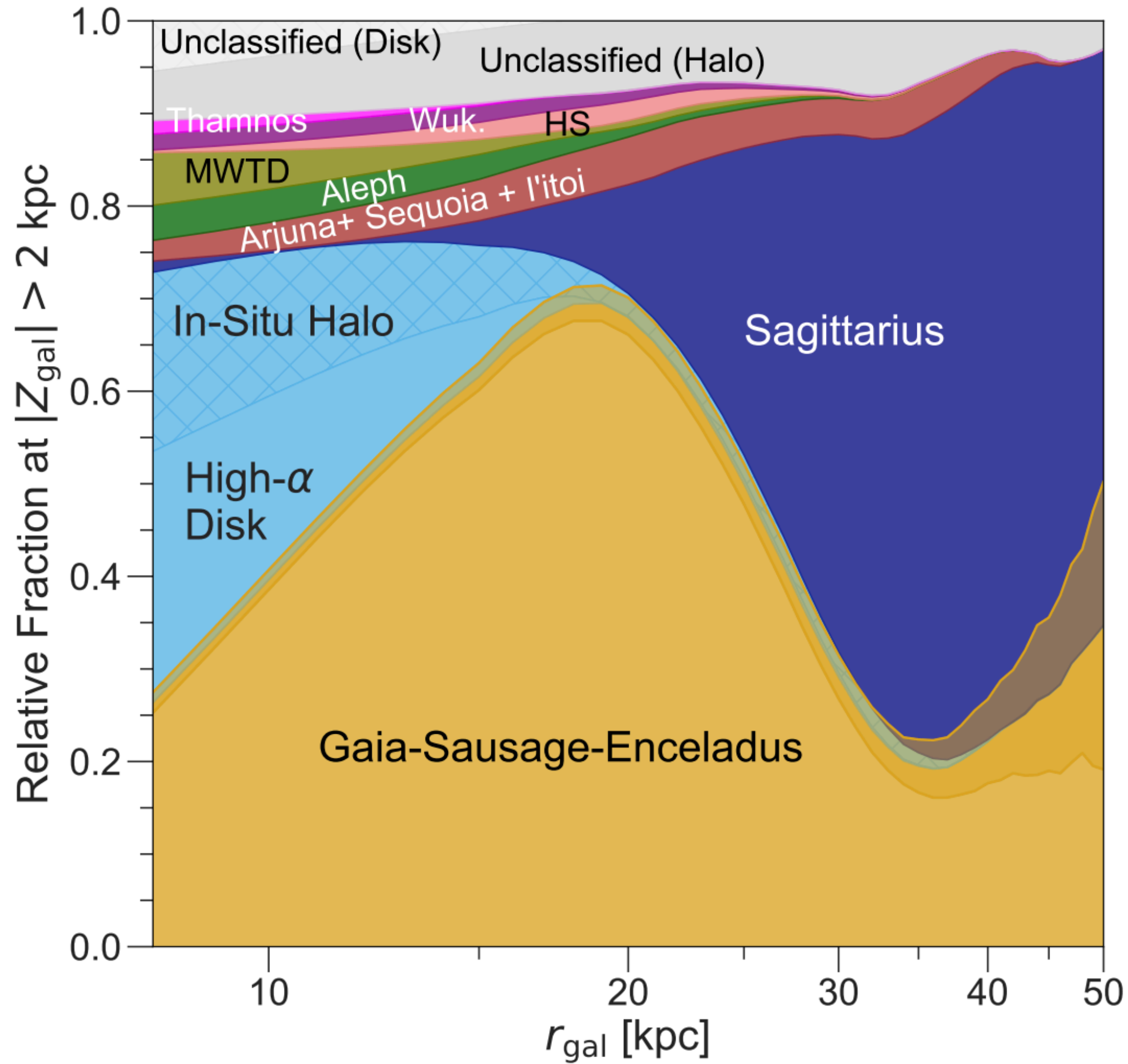
## The Gaia Sausage



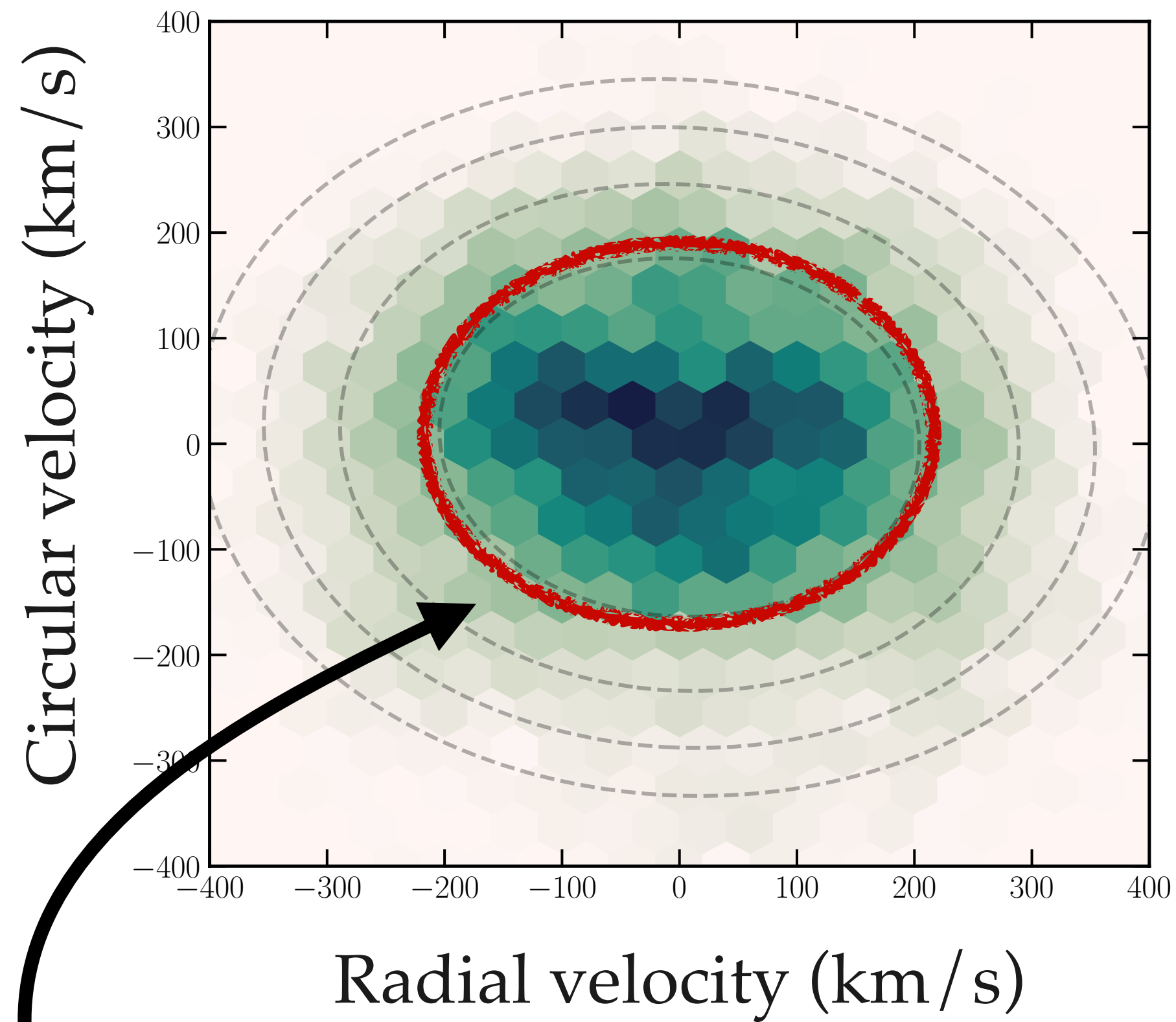
See e.g. Helmi et al. 1806.06038, O'Hare et al., 1810.11468, Necib et al. 1810.12301

# Evidence from the H3 Survey that the Stellar Halo is Entirely Comprised of Substructure

ROHAN P. NAIDU,<sup>1</sup> CHARLIE CONROY,<sup>1</sup> ANA BONACA,<sup>1</sup> BENJAMIN D. JOHNSON,<sup>1</sup> YUAN-SEN TING (丁源森),<sup>2,3,4,5,\*</sup>  
 NELSON CALDWELL,<sup>1</sup> DENNIS ZARITSKY,<sup>6</sup> AND PHILLIP A. CARGILE<sup>1</sup>



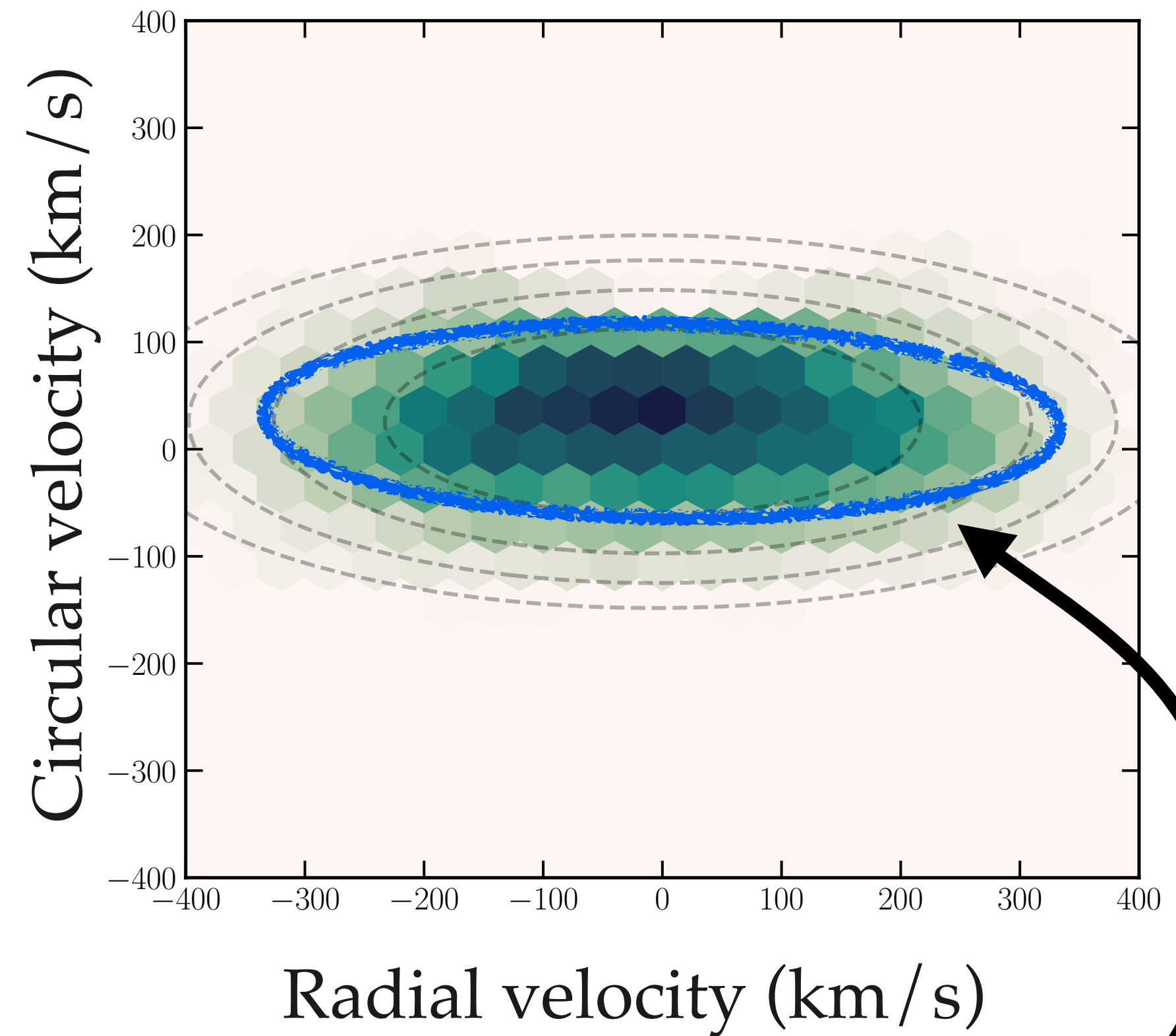
$[\text{Fe}/\text{H}] < -1.5$



### “Metal-poor” halo

- Round velocity ellipsoid
- ~30% of main sequence halo sample
- More metal-poor on average

$[\text{Fe}/\text{H}] > -1.5$



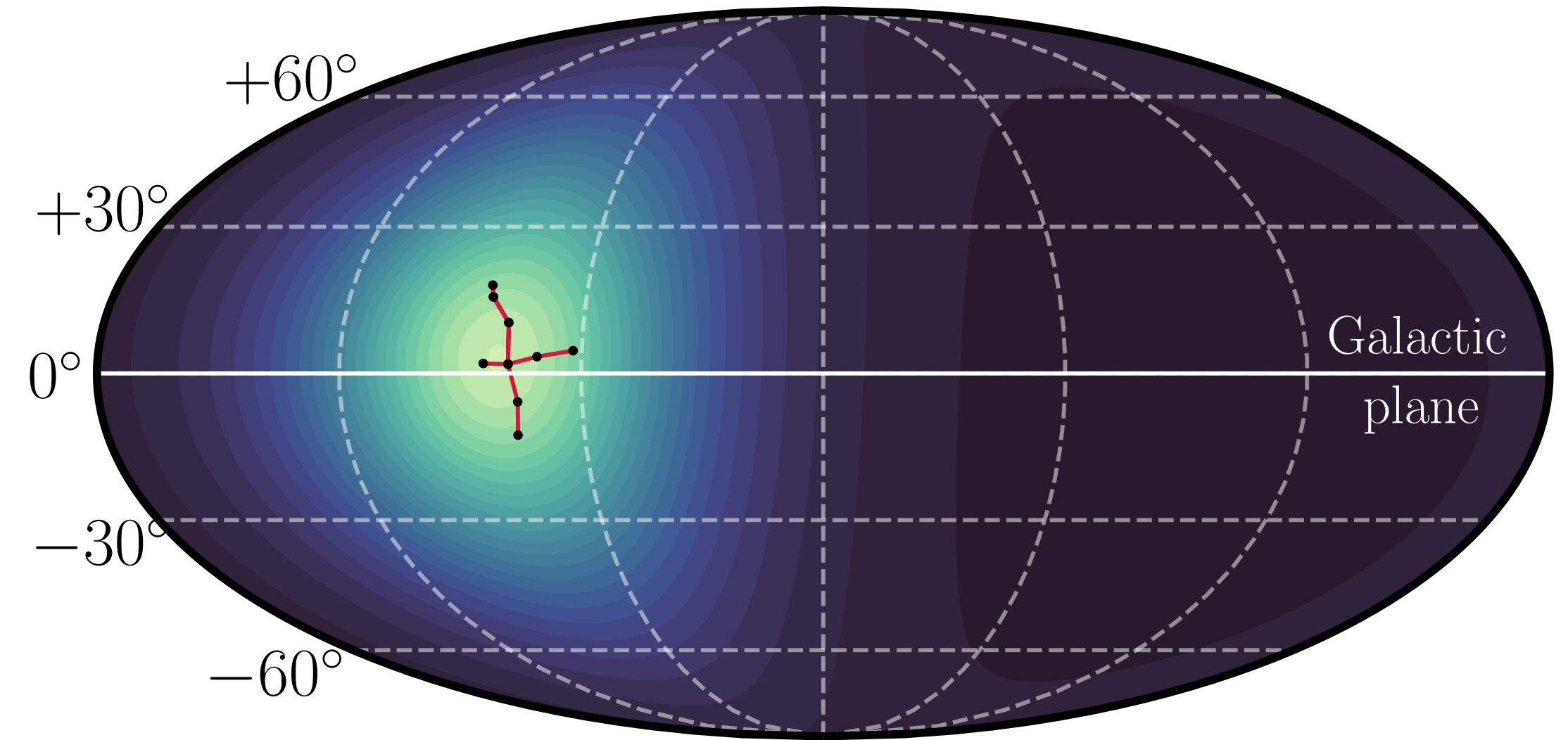
### “Metal-rich” halo

- Highly eccentric radial orbits
- Dominant contribution ~50%
- Characteristic metallicity  $[\text{Fe}/\text{H}] = -1.4$

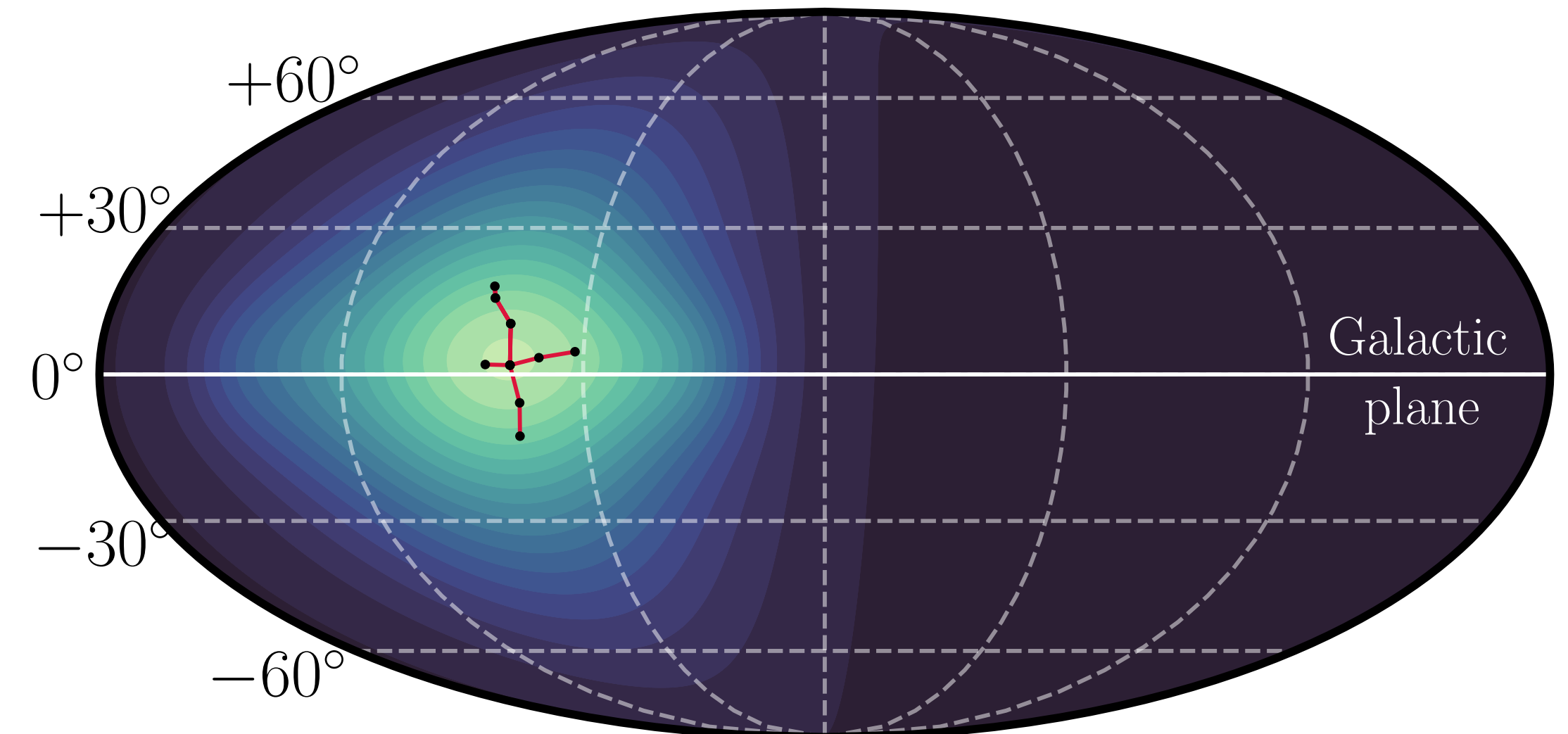
# The Gaia Sausage

seen prominently in the Gaia data → Should also be present in DM distribution

DM Flux for SHM  
(Gaussian distribution)



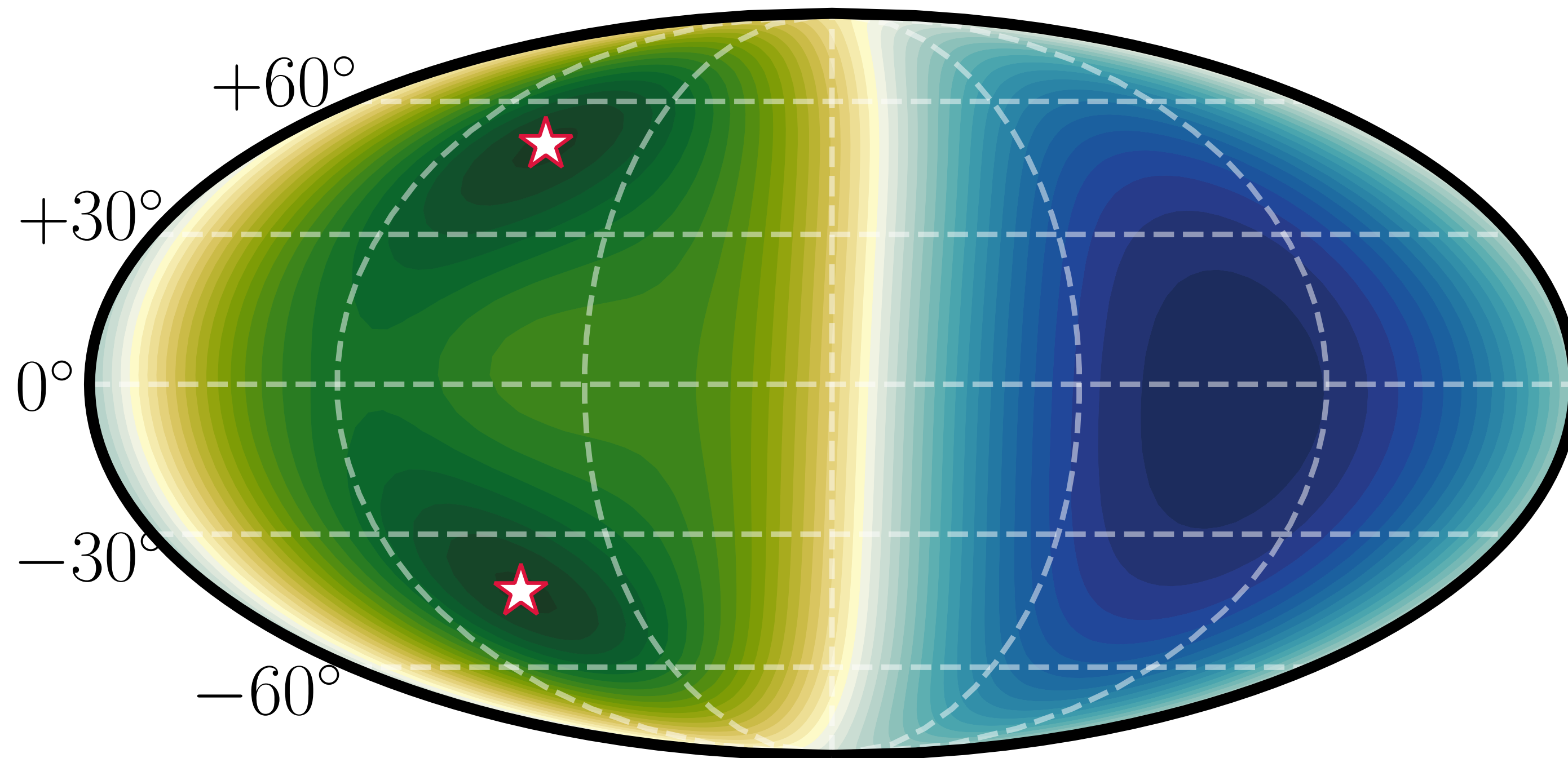
SHM + **Gaia Sausage**  
(Isotropic and radially anisotropic components)





# The Gaia Sausage gives rise to peaks off center from Cygnus

5 – 10 keV



Distribution for 5-10 keVr Fluorine recoils with a 100 GeV WIMP  
Halo model = SHM + Sausage