#### The target for relic neutrino detection. An overview.

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October 6, 2022

## $C\nu B$ and CMB

- Gamov: Early Universe is radiation dominated ρ<sub>rad</sub>/ρ<sub>matter</sub> ~ 10<sup>10</sup>.
- Early Universe has equal populations of γ/ν.
- As Universe expands, γ/ν decouple, relic backgrounds (CMB /CνB), keep a "frozen" pictures of the Universe.
- Right now, in your room, there are 411 relic photons and 339 relic neutrinos in every 1 cm<sup>3</sup>.
- The "ν freezout" is much earlier than photons.
- CvB: one of the few yet untested predictions of the SM.



Detecting  $C\nu B$  is a strategic goal for fundamental physics. [Weinberg , 1962]

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Bethe and Peierls in 1934 estimated

 $\sigma \sim 10^{-44} \text{ cm}^2$   $\sigma_{\text{Thomson}} \sim 10^{-25} \text{ cm}^2$   $\sigma_{\text{nuclear}} \sim 10^{-26} \text{ cm}^2$ 

"I have done a terrible thing. I have postulated a particle that cannot be detected." (W. Pauli)

## Neutrinos are massive

- In the last few decades neutrino flavor oscillations where convincingly observed, meaning that neutrinos are massive
- Neutrino oscillations can only measure  $\Delta m$  and hierarchy.



## $\beta$ -decay and neutrino capture



- Neutrino capture is threshold-less soft relic neutrino detection [Weinberg, 1962].
- The 2 parts of the spectrum are separated by  $2m_{\nu}$  <sup>1</sup>
- Before the relic neutrino detection one would be able to measure the neutrino mass  $m_{\nu}$

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Schematic picture that assumes only one neutrino flavour.

## Relic neutrinos leave a signature in the spectrum of a radioactive atom

# Is this goal technically achievable?

## Challenges



Requirements:

- High energy precision (order of  $m_{\nu} \sim {
  m meV}$ )
- Sufficient activity rate (several events per year)

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 $(\sigma v)_{
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$$\lambda = (\sigma n)^{-1} = \left(R_{\text{atom}}^2 \frac{N}{L^3}\right)^{-1} > L$$
$$L > R_{\text{atom}} \sqrt{N} \sim 1 \text{ km}$$

Very naive estimate! In reality much bigger

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$$\Delta E \sim rac{V_{
m source}}{V_{
m detector}}$$

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#### High enough activity

- Low emitter Q-value
- High number of emitters (order of 10<sup>25</sup>)
- Lifetime of emitter: small enough to have a high decay rate, but large enough not to decay instantly
- o Radioactive material in gaseous form does not suit  $(0.93 \,\mathrm{eV}$  resolution)
- Need in the solid-state based experiment

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## PTOLEMY<sup>2</sup> - state of the art

 $C\nu B$  detection experiment challemge:

High energy resolution combined with sufficient number of events.

- **Tritium** as a  $\beta$ -decay emitter.
- Tritium is deposed on graphene sheets (vdW forces).
- ►  $\approx$  4 C $\nu$ B events per year.
- Outstanding energy resolution of the apparatus  $\approx 10 \text{ meV}$ .



 $\beta$ -decay in Tritium <sup>3</sup>





## So that is it?

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No

## Jungle of many-body and chemical effects

The width of the peak (signature of  $C\nu B$ ) is defined by

- energy resolution of the measurement
- physical smearing of the energies of individual electrons

We are interested in effects on  $m_{
u} \sim 10\,{
m meV}$  scale



#### Real spectrum

Energy resolution is defined *not only by the resolution of the measurement device*, but also by **the interaction between the decaying nucleus and the substrate** that affects the energies of individual electrons.



# Chemical bonding of the atom to the substrate

## General mechanism of the broadening



- For a bonded system, recoil energy of the nucleus is not fixed by the kinematics but has some distribution.
- ▶ Uncertainty<sup>4</sup> in the velocity of the centre of mass of the nucleus

$$\Delta u \approx \frac{\hbar}{m_{\rm nucl}\lambda_{\rm nucl}}.$$

The energy of the electron is measured in the laboratory frame of reference, where it acquires an uncertainty<sup>5</sup>

 $\Delta E \approx m_e v_e \Delta u.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>from the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.

 $<sup>{}^{5}\</sup>Delta E$  has the same distribution as  $\Delta u$ .

## General mechanism of the broadening



$$\Delta E \approx \hbar rac{m_e v_e}{m_{
m nucl} \lambda_{
m nucl}},$$

λ<sub>nucl</sub> is the spread of the ground state of the nucleus that is defined by the stiffness of the bonding potential *×*.

$$\lambda_{\rm nucl}^2 = \frac{\hbar}{\sqrt{m_{\rm nucl}\varkappa}}$$

### Bonding potential



For the heavy atom one can expand the potential near its minimum

$$U=\frac{1}{2}\varkappa_{i,j}r_ir_j+U_0$$

The energy uncertainty very weakly depends on the binding potential

$$\Delta E \propto \lambda_{
m nucl}^{-1} \propto \varkappa^{1/4}$$

Energy broadening for the  $\beta$ -decay of the Tritium on graphene



The uncertainty in the electron energy  $\Delta E$ :

- ls of the order of  $0.5 \,\mathrm{eV}$ .
- ► Is 2 orders of magnitude greater than the resolution needed to see the  $C\nu B$  signal.
- Weakly depends on the potential stiffness.
- For molecular tritium the estimate is of the same order.
- Strongly depends on the radioactive nucleus.
- Agrees with the the fully quantum calculation<sup>6</sup>

## Shape of the spectrum for the $\beta$ -decay of the Tritium on graphene<sup>7</sup>



 $\blacktriangleright$   $\mathcal{G}$  - distr. of the electron velocity in the centre of mass ref. frame.

- *F* distr. of the velocity of the centre of mass.
- $\tilde{\mathcal{G}}$  distr. of the electron velocity in the laboratory ref. frame.

 $<sup>^{7}\</sup>Delta E \approx mu\Delta u$ , therefore  $\Delta E$  has the same distribution as  $\Delta u$ .

## The are two possible solutions

### Two possible solutions

$$\frac{\Delta E}{\sqrt{\hbar m_e}} \approx \varkappa^{1/4} \sqrt{\frac{Q}{m_{\rm nucl}^{3/2}}} \equiv \varkappa^{1/4} \gamma$$

#### Changing the binding potential

[Apponi et.al., 2022]

- Making it very soft This will reduce the energy smearing
- Making it very stiff Recoil-less part of the spectrum at the very end does not get smeared, but is suppressed as

 $\mathcal{M} = \mathcal{M}_0 e^{-\lambda^2 k_\beta^2/4}$ 

 ω<sub>vibr</sub> of *H*-based molecules vary within one order of magnitude.

- Changing the  $\beta$ -emitter [Mikulenko et.al., 2021]
- Finding a heavier β-emitter with low Q
   This will reduce the energy smearing
- However, one needs to double-check the capture rate

$$(\sigma v)_{\nu} = rac{p_e^{\max} E_e^{\max}}{\pi} imes rac{1}{2} \sum |\mathcal{M}_{\mathcal{H}}|^2$$
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- Finding a heavier β-emitter with low Q
   This will reduce the energy smearing
- However, one needs to double-check the capture rate Naive estimate for M<sub>H</sub> = const

$$(\sigma v)_{\nu} = 5.3 \cdot 10^{-46} \,\mathrm{cm}^2 imes rac{1 \,\mathrm{year}}{\tau} imes \ imes \left(rac{100 \,\mathrm{keV}}{Q}
ight)^3$$

# First solution: Changing the binding potential

### Changing the binding potential: soft potential

- One way is to use carbon nanotubes [Apponi et.al., 2022] - full mobility along the axis of the nanotube.
- Bound on the emission angle

 $\theta_{\rm max} = \arcsin\left(\Delta E_{\rm allowed} / \Delta E_{\rm existing}\right)$ 

- Reduced event rate by  $\sim \theta_{\max}^{-2}$  times.
  - Free Tritium tends to form molecules.
  - Non-zero recombination rate [Mehta et.al., 2007]

$$\frac{d\lambda}{dt} = -K_{1D}\lambda^3,$$

where  $\lambda$  is a linear density,  $K_{1D}$  recombination rate.

- For Tritium, with lifetime of  $\tau \sim 100 \,\mathrm{d}$ , we get  $\lambda \sim 300 \,\mathrm{cm}^{-1}$ .
- ▶ With 5 Å nanotubes spacing we get surface density of  $\sim 10^{10} {\rm cm}^{-2}$  five orders of magnitude lower than fully loaded graphene.



## Second solution: Changing the $\beta$ -emitter

From the requirements of low γ and meaningfull τ<sub>1/2</sub> by searching all existing transitions of all energy levels (not only ground states).

Parent	$\tau_{1/2}, [\rm yr]$	Daughter	$Q, [\mathrm{keV}]$	$\gamma/\gamma_{3}_{ m H}$
$^{171}\mathrm{Tm}$	1.92	$^{171}\mathrm{Yb}$	96.5	0.110
<sup>63</sup> Ni	101.	$^{63}\mathrm{Cu}$	66.9	0.193
$^{147}\mathrm{Pm}$	2.62	$^{147}\mathrm{Sm}$	225.	0.188
$^{151}\mathrm{Sm}$	90.0	$^{151}\mathrm{Eu}$	75.9	0.107

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- The **daughter** nucleus should be  $\beta$  **stable** or have **lower** Q than parent.
- ▶ This is **not the case** for <sup>151</sup>Sm.
- ▶ <sup>151</sup>Eu  $\alpha$ -decays into <sup>147</sup>Pm which is  $\beta$  unstable with  $\tau_{1/2} = 2.62$  years and with  $Q_{147}_{Pm} > Q_{151}_{Sm}$ .
- ► The lifetime of  ${}^{151}Eu$  is  $\tau_{1/2} = 10^{18}$  years, but we also need to have order of  $10^{27}$  atoms of  ${}^{151}Sm$ .
- ► <sup>147</sup>Sm  $\alpha$ -decays with  $\tau_{1/2} \sim 10^{11}$  years and Q = 2311 keV which can scatter on  $\beta$ -electrons.

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We need to know precise capture rates. Spoiler:

▶ For <sup>63</sup>Ni we can calculate it pretty precise theoretically

$$^{63}\mathrm{Ni}:~~\Gamma_{\mathsf{capt}}=7\cdot10^{-28}\mathsf{y}^{-1}rac{\eta_{
u}}{\langle\eta_{
u}
angle}$$
 per atom

- Typical size of the setup is  $31 \text{ m} \times 31 \text{ m} \times 31 \text{ m}$ .
- ▶ For <sup>171</sup>Tm it is much more tricky.

## Let us discuss how we calculate capture rates

### Calculating neutrino capture rate

Both neutrino capture and β-decay are governed by the same weak interaction:

$$\mathcal{H} \propto ar{e} \gamma_\mu (1-\gamma_5) 
u imes ar{p} \gamma^\mu (g_V - g_A \gamma_5) n$$



### Neutrino capture rate for $^{171}Tm$

▶ In some cases (such as for <sup>3</sup>H and <sup>63</sup>Ni),  $\sum |M_H|^2 = \text{const}$ , hence:

$$(\sigma v)_{\nu} = 5.3 \cdot 10^{-46} \, \mathrm{cm}^2 \times \frac{1 \, \mathrm{year}}{\tau} \times \left(\frac{100 \, \mathrm{keV}}{Q}\right)^3$$

neglecting Coulomb field and assuming  $Q \ll m_e$ 

- For <sup>171</sup>Tm this **not the case**.
- The reason is that for  $^{171}\text{Tm}$   $\sum |\mathcal{M}_{\mathcal{H}}|^2 \neq \text{const}$

#### Unique

 $\sum |\mathcal{M}_{\mathcal{H}}|^2 = C \cdot f(p_e, p_{\nu})$ 

#### Nonunique

$$\sum |\mathcal{M}_{\mathcal{H}}|^2 = c_1 \cdot f_1(p_e, p_{\nu}) + \dots$$

- one final state
- C single nuclear constant
- f known function of  $p_e$ ,  $p_{\nu}$

- several possible final states
- c<sub>i</sub> several nuclear constants
- $f_i$  known functions of  $p_e$ ,  $p_{\nu}$

### Naive estimate

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neglecting Coulomb field and assuming  $Q \ll m_e$ 

- For <sup>171</sup>Tm this **not the case**.
- One can still make the crude estimate using (σν)<sub>ν</sub> ~ (Q<sup>3</sup>τ)<sup>-1</sup> gives

 $\Gamma_{capture}^{171} = 0.05 \ \times \ \Gamma_{capture}^{3}$ 

### Naive estimate. How reliable?

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For some isotopes this not the case, but we can write

$$(\sigma \mathbf{v})_{\nu} = \delta \times (\sigma \mathbf{v})_{\text{est.}}$$

Isotope	Q, keV	au, year	$(\sigma v)_{\nu}$ , $10^{-46}  {\rm cm}^2$	δ
ЗН	18.591	17.8	39.2	0.86
<sup>63</sup> Ni	66.945	145	$6.9 \cdot 10^{-2}$	0.57
<sup>93</sup> Zr	60.63	$2.27 \cdot 10^{6}$	$1.20 \cdot 10^{-5}$	1.15
$^{106}\mathrm{Ru}$	39.4	1.48	29.4	0.51
<sup>107</sup> Pd	33	$9.38 \cdot 10^{6}$	$1.29 \cdot 10^{-5}$	0.83
<sup>187</sup> Re	2.646	$6.28 \cdot 10^{10}$	$2.16 \cdot 10^{-6}$	0.48

For many isotopes,  $\delta \sim 1$ , but we can not be sure about <sup>171</sup>Tm.

Neutrino capture rate from experimental spectrum

- $\sum |\mathcal{M}_{\mathcal{H}}(p_e^{\max}, p_{\nu} \to 0)|^2 \propto (\sigma v)_{\nu}$  cannot be predicted from lifetime  $\tau$  for nonunique transitions
- Measure it directly from the spectrum!

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- Measure it directly from the spectrum!

$$(\sigma v)_{\nu} = \frac{7.0 \cdot 10^{-37} \,\mathrm{cm}^2}{(T_{\mathrm{m}} \text{ in hours})(\Delta E \text{ in keV})} \times \frac{1}{N_{\mathrm{at}}} \left( \frac{N(\varepsilon)}{(\varepsilon \,\mathrm{in \ keV})^2} \right) \Big|_{\varepsilon \to 0}$$

- ► Measure the number of electrons in energy bins  $T_e^n \in [Q - \Delta En, Q - \Delta E(n-1)]$  with width  $\Delta E$  (say, 1 keV)
- $\triangleright \varepsilon_n = \Delta E(n+1/2)$
- $N(\varepsilon_n)$  number of events in the *n*-th bin.
- $N_{\rm at}$  number of  $\beta$ -emitters
- T<sub>m</sub> time of the measurement

### Neutrino capture rate for $^{171}Tm$

- ▶ For <sup>171</sup>Tm no experimental spectrum is available
- To make an estimate of neutrino capture rate, we used BetaShape to compute the spectrum
- BetaShape calculates electromagnetic corrections to the spectrum. Still, it cannot compute nuclear constants and predict the spectrum – treats nonunique as unique



The results from BetaShape need to be verified by an experiment

### Was experimentally tested at EPFL



### Results

 $\blacktriangleright$  With the BetaShape spectra, the capture rate for  $^{171}\mathrm{Tm}$  is

 $\Gamma_{capture}^{\rm 171_{Tm}} = 3\cdot 10^{-2}\Gamma_{capture}$ 

- consistent with the crude estimate up to a factor of two

► Assuming local relic neutrino concentration  $\eta_{\nu} = 56 \, \mathrm{cm}^{-3}$  and Majorana nature, we need

$$N_{\text{atoms for event/year}} = \begin{cases} 2 \cdot 10^{24}, & {}^{3}\text{H} \\ 10^{26}, & {}^{171}\text{Tm} \\ 1.3 \cdot 10^{27}, & {}^{63}\text{Ni} \end{cases}$$

With atom density on a graphene sheet 3.8 · 10<sup>15</sup> cm<sup>-2</sup> and separation of mm between sheets, event/year target would have the volume

 $\label{eq:H} \begin{array}{ll} {}^{3}\mathrm{H}: & V \approx 1\,\mathrm{m}\times8\,\mathrm{m}\times8\,\mathrm{m} \\ {}^{171}\mathrm{Tm}: & V \approx 10\,\mathrm{m}\times15\,\mathrm{m}\times15\,\mathrm{m} \\ {}^{63}\mathrm{Ni}: & V \approx 31\,\mathrm{m}\times31\,\mathrm{m}\times31\,\mathrm{m}. \end{array}$ 

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## Our next main roadblock is...

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### Our next main roadblock is...

finite lifetime of the ion

### Finite lifetime of the daughter ion

- The daughter ion will not be in the ground state. Hence it will have finite lifetime τ.
- We will have Lorentz profile in energy distribution which is very slowly decaying at tails

$$\delta\left(E_{f}-E_{i}\right)\rightarrow\frac{4\tau}{1+(4\pi\tau(E_{f}-E_{i}))^{2}}$$

- This would introduce additional energy smearing to the β-spectrum.
- From requirement  $\Delta E \leq 10 \text{ meV}$  for <sup>171</sup>Tm we need to have the lifetime of the ion  $\tau \geq 10^{-7} \text{s.}$
- The estimate of the lifetime of the  $^{171}Tm$  is  $\tau_{171Tm} \sim 10^{-15}s$ .
- ► For <sup>3</sup>H the situation is even worse. Its daughter, <sup>3</sup>He<sup>+</sup> is an inert gas, so its ionization energy is extremely big.
- From this perspective, transition metals are profitable.

## Is that it?

## Is that it? No, it is only beginning...

### Mechanisms of the intrinsic energy broadening

- Chemical bonding of the atom to the substrate.
- Impurity screening by charges in the substrate.
- X-ray edge singularity.
- Lattice vibrations

- Emission of plasmons and surface polaritons
- Creation of shock wave emission due to the motion of the emitted electron at grazing angles at speeds exceeding the Fermi velocity
- Inhomogeneous broadening

### Conclusions

- Fundamental questions of particle physics and the origin of our Universe could realistically be accessed only through the understanding of the condensed matter effects
- Limitations due to zero point motion bring us to the nessecity of changing the experimental design.
- There are 2 solutions to it: changing the binding potential and changing the emitter.
- Among the possible candidates for new  $\beta$ -emitters are <sup>171</sup>Tm and <sup>63</sup>Ni.
- > Zoo of effects appear in the  $E \sim 10 \text{ meV}$  which needs a much better understanding than usually in CM.

### **Backup slides**

Typically, heavy isotopes are produced in two ways:

- From **nuclear waste** (<sup>147</sup>Pm).
- From lighter stable isotopes by neutron irradiation (<sup>171</sup>Tm, <sup>63</sup>Ni, <sup>147</sup>Pm).

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lsotope	<sup>171</sup> Tm	<sup>170</sup> Tm	<sup>169</sup> Tm
Atoms	1.23×1019	7.4×10 <sup>15b</sup>	2.59×1017b
Activity (Bq)	$1.40 \times 10^{11a}$	$4.6  imes 10^{8}$	-
Mass (µg)	3480	1.9	72.7
Uncertainty (%)	2.4	20	3

Figure: [Heinitz et.al., 2017]

•  $Q_{170_{\rm Tm}} \approx 968 \, \rm keV$  bigger then  $Q_{171_{\rm Tm}} \approx 97 \, \rm keV$  with  $\tau_{1/2} = 130$  days which will completely cover the  $C\nu B$  peak

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Radio- isotope	Half-life	Radioactivity at processing time (127 d post-EOB)		
		(MBq/mg of <sup>146</sup> Nd target)	(%)	
<sup>147</sup> Nd	10.98 d	0.83	3.13	
<sup>147</sup> Pm	2.62 y	$2.55  imes 10^1$	95.3	
<sup>148m</sup> Pm	41.3 d	$1.72 \times 10^{-1}$	0.64	
<sup>148g</sup> Pm <sup>b</sup>	5.37 d	$8.6 \times 10^{-2}$	$3.2 \times 10^{-2}$	
<sup>146</sup> Pm	5.53 y	$\leq 1 \times 10^{-6c}$	$\leq 4 \times 10^{-6c}$	

Figure: [Broderick et.al., 2019]



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<sup>148m</sup> Pm	41.3 d	$1.72 \times 10^{-1}$	0.64	
<sup>148g</sup> Pm <sup>b</sup>	5.37 d	$8.6  imes 10^{-2}$	$3.2 \times 10^{-2}$	
<sup>146</sup> Pm	5.53 y	$\leq 1 \times 10^{-6c}$	$\leq$ 4 $\times$ 10 <sup>-6c</sup>	

Figure: [Williams et.al., 1993]

► All isotopes of <sup>63</sup>Ni are stable.

### General shape of the spectrum

In case when the bonding potential is harmonic, the spectrum is

- Discrete near the edge.
- Continuous further from the edge.
- The envelope has a gaussian distribution.
- The distance between the discrete lines<sup>8</sup> is  $\varepsilon = \hbar \sqrt{\frac{\varkappa}{m_{\text{purel}}}}$ .
- Biggest part of the  $C\nu B$  channel overlaps with the continuum.



 $^{8}10\,\mathrm{meV}$  for the Tritium on graphene and  $0.5\,\mathrm{eV}$  for the molecular tritium.

### Comparison with molecular Tritium

### Similarities:

- ▶ Bonded by a harmonic potential ( $\varkappa_{graphene} \approx 0.1, \varkappa_{mol} \approx 75$ ).
- ► Localized and therefore are subjects to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle  $m\Delta v\Delta x \sim \hbar$ .

#### Differences:

Atomic Tritium on graphene:

- All of the recoil energy goes to the harmonic modes.
- May break the bound after the recoil.



Gaseous molecular Tritium:

- Half of the recoil energy goes to the transnational motion.
- Remains bound after the recoil.



### Neutrino flux9



<sup>9</sup>E. Vitagliano et.al. "Grand Unified Neutrino Spectrum at Earth: Sources and Spectral Components", (2020)

### Neutrino flavours



### **KATRIN**


## PTOLEMY

