Saturation effects in heavy vector meson photoproduction

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Based on 2411.14815

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SURGE collaboration

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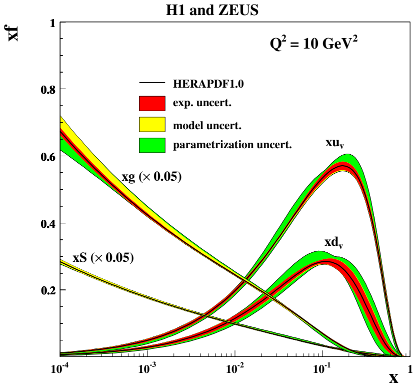
Gluon saturation at high energy

- HERA: rapid growth of gluon distribution at small x
- Growth cannot go on indefinitely: violation of unitarity
- Will eventually be tamed by gluon recombination effects
- Prediction from theory: **gluon saturation**
- Signs of saturation in the experimental data but no definite evidence



H1 and ZEUS (0911.0884)

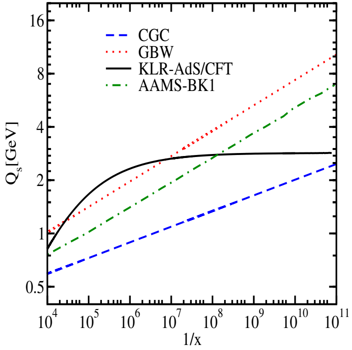
Searching for saturation

- Saturation effects characterized by the **saturation scale** Q_s^2
- For saturation to be important:

  Momentum scale in the process has to be comparable to Q_s^2
- However: Q_s^2 is quite small...
  - Protons: $Q_{s,p}^2 = \mathcal{O}(1\,\mathrm{GeV})$
  - Nuclei: $Q_{s,A}^2 \sim A^{1/3} Q_{s,p}^2$

    $\Rightarrow$ Nuclear enhancement of saturation!
- Energy dependence: $Q_s^2 \sim 1/x^{0.3}$
- Search for saturation:

  Need a high energy (small x) and a low momentum scale



Rezaeian (1001.5266)

Exclusive vector meson production

Ryskin, Z.Phys.C 57 (1993) 89-92

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}}{\mathrm{d}t}\sigma(\gamma^* + A \to V + A) \sim [xg(x)]^2$$

$\Rightarrow$ Very sensitive to the gluon structure of the target!

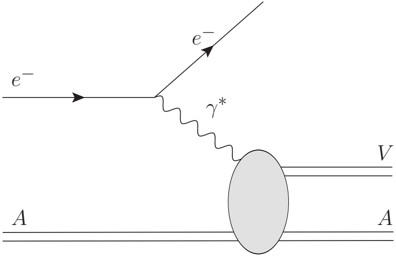
- Heavy vector mesons:

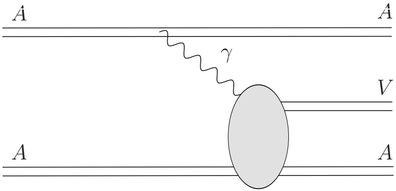
  Heavy quark mass makes the process perturbative

  - Mass also low enough for saturation!

- Can be measured in:
  - DIS: Electron-ion collisions (HERA, EIC, ...)
  - Ultra-peripheral collisions (LHC, ...)

    See Zaochen Ye's talk on Monday



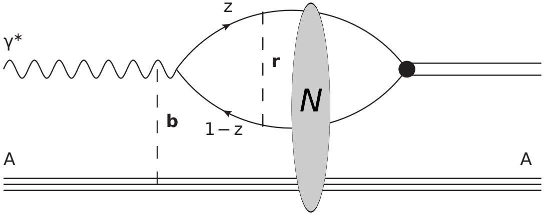


Vector meson production at the leading order in the dipole picture

Invariant amplitude for exclusive vector meson production

$$-i\mathcal{A}^{\lambda} = 2\int \mathrm{d}^2\mathbf{b}\,\mathrm{d}^2\mathbf{r}\,\frac{\mathrm{d}z}{4\pi} e^{-i\mathbf{b}\cdot\mathbf{\Delta}} \Psi_{\gamma^*}^{q\bar{q}}(\mathbf{r},z) N(\mathbf{r},\mathbf{b},x_{\mathbb{P}}) \Psi_{V}^{q\bar{q}*}(\mathbf{r},z), \qquad t = -\mathbf{\Delta}^2$$

- $\Psi_{\gamma^*}^{q\bar{q}}$: Photon light-cone wave function
- N: Dipole–target scattering amplitude
- $\Psi_{V}^{q\bar{q}}$: Vector meson light-cone wave function



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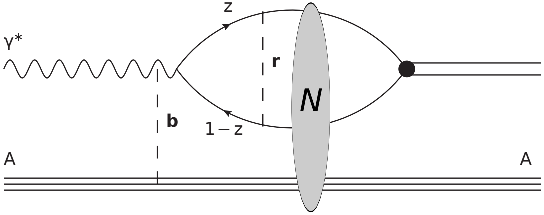
- Dependence on energy W in the dipole amplitude:

$$x_{\mathbb{P}} = \frac{Q^2+M_V^2-t}{W^2+Q^2+m_N^2}$$

  - $Q^2=0$ for photoproduction



Vector meson wave function

- Meson wave function is nonperturbative – has to be modeled
- Various different approaches:

  Nonrelativistic QCD, basis light-front quantization...
- We use the Boosted Gaussian that has been found to work well phenomenologically:

  Kowalski, Motyka, Watt (hep-ph/0606272)

$$\phi_\lambda(r,z) = \mathcal{N}_\lambda \exp\left(-\frac{m_Q^2 \mathcal{R}^2}{8z(1-z)} - \frac{2z(1-z)r^2}{\mathcal{R}^2} + \frac{m_Q^2 \mathcal{R}^2}{2} \right)$$

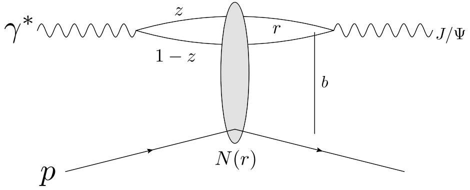
where $\mathcal{N}_\lambda$, $\mathcal{R}$ are parameters fixed by normalization and leptonic decay width

Dipole amplitude N

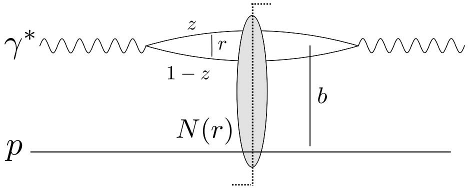
- Describes the interaction with the target
- High energy: **eikonal approximation**

$$N(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, x_{\mathbb{P}}) = 1 - \frac{1}{N_c} \left\langle \mathrm{Tr}\, V(\mathbf{x}) V^\dagger(\mathbf{y}) \right\rangle_{x_{\mathbb{P}}}$$

- Universal: appears in different processes
- Energy dependence given by a perturbative **evolution equation**



$$\sigma^{\gamma^* p \to Vp} \sim |N|^2$$



$$\sigma^{\gamma^* p} \sim N$$

Estimating saturation effects

Balitsky–Kovchegov equation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial \log 1/x} N(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{x}_1) = \frac{N_c \alpha_s}{2\pi^2} \int \mathrm{d}^2\mathbf{x}_2 \, \frac{\mathbf{x}_{01}^2}{\mathbf{x}_{20}^2 \mathbf{x}_{21}^2} \times [N(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{x}_2) + N(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2) - N(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{x}_1) - N(\mathbf{x}_0, \mathbf{x}_2) N(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2)]$$

- Saturation effects introduced by the nonlinear term in the BK equation
- Without nonlinear term: BFKL evolution

  $\Rightarrow$ Compare BK and BFKL evolutions to estimate saturation effects
- We also include the dependence on the impact parameter (usually neglected)
  - Neglecting it can lead to overestimating saturation effects JP et al. (2411.13533)

Initial condition for the high-energy evolution

- Initial condition chosen as the impact-parameter-dependent McLerran–Venugopalan model JP et al. (2411.13533) $\mathbf{r} = \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{y}$, $\mathbf{b} = \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y})$

$$N(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = 1 - \exp\left(- \int \mathrm{d}^2\mathbf{z}\, \kappa\, T(\mathbf{z}) \left[K_0(m|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{z}|) - K_0(m|\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{z}|) \right]^2 \right)$$

  - $T(\mathbf{z})$ = the thickness function describing the shape of the target
  - κ = constant describing the strength of the color field
  - m = infrared regulator

Proton

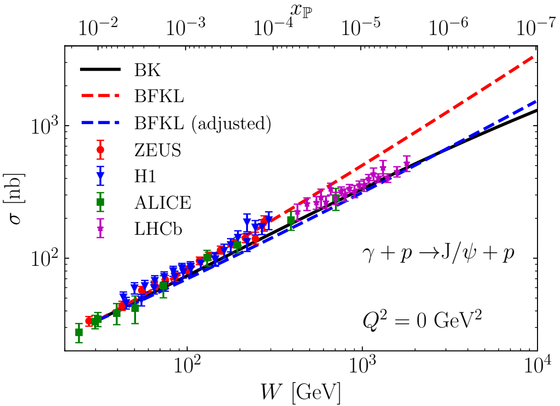
- $T(\mathbf{z})$ = Gaussian
- Parameters fixed by exclusive J/ψ production data

Lead

- From proton to nucleus: Change only $T(\mathbf{z})$
- $T(\mathbf{z})$ = Woods–Saxon

Exclusive J/ψ production: proton targets

- Slight difference between BFKL and BK in the slope
  - Can be compensated by adjusting α_s for BFKL
- Proton data described well by both BK and BFKL equations



JP, Royon (2411.14815)

Exclusive J/ψ production: nuclear targets

- Fit the model to the proton data

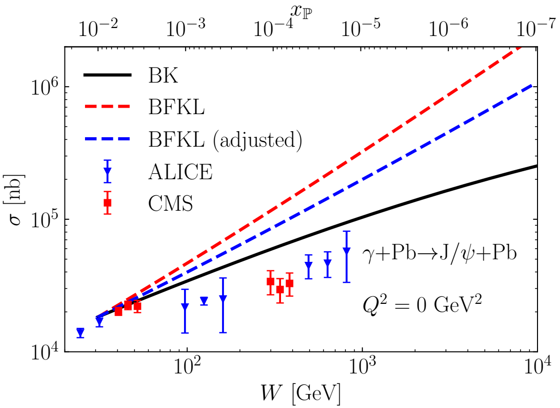
  $\Rightarrow$ Predictions for heavy nuclei
- Differences between BK and BFKL:

  a factor of 2 for $W \sim 1000\,\mathrm{GeV}$
- BFKL results linear as predicted
- BK describes the data much better
- Still not exact agreement:

  A well-known problem, see e.g.

  Mäntysaari, Salazar, Schenke (2312.04194)

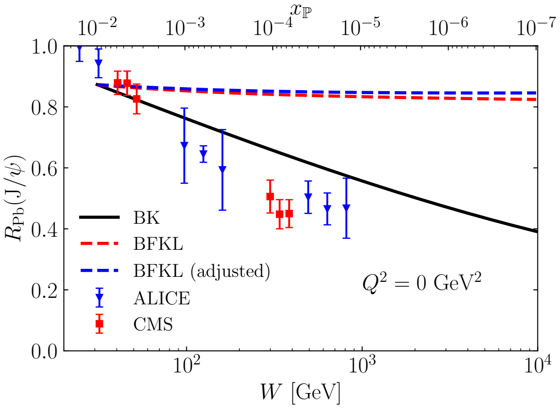
  JP et al. (2411.13533)



JP, Royon (2411.14815)

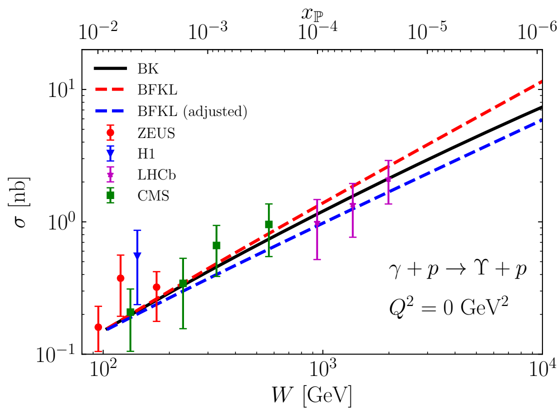
Exclusive J/ψ production: nuclear suppression

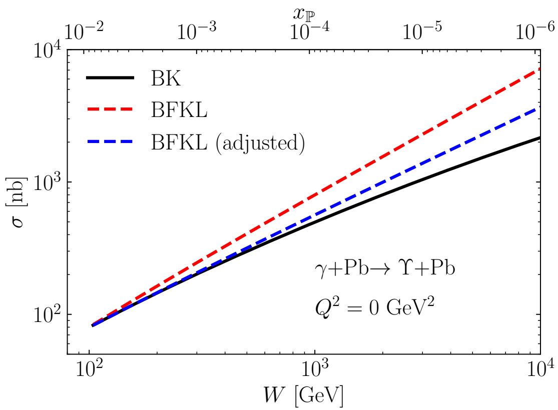
- Nuclear suppresstion factor: $R_A = \sqrt{\sigma_A / \sigma_{IA}}$
  where $\sigma_{IA} = \frac{d\sigma^p}{dt}\Big|_{t=0} \times \int dt\, |F_A(t)|^2$
  is the impulse approximation
- Without saturation: $R_A \approx 1$
- BFKL essentially constant
  - Linear evolution: energy dependence for protons and nuclei expected to be similar
  - Clear disagreement with the data
  - Saturation provides a natural explanation



JP, Royon (2411.14815)

Υ production





- Saturation effects much smaller $\Rightarrow$ Not expecting sizable differences even at the LHC
- Follows from the large mass of Υ

JP, Royon (2411.14815)

Summary

- Gluon saturation expected at the high-energy limit
- Difficult to measure: need both a high energy and a low momentum scale
- Exclusive heavy vector meson photoproduction is a promising process
  - Diffractive process $\Rightarrow$ sensitive to the gluon density
  - Heavy quark mass $\Rightarrow$ large enough to be perturbative, small enough for saturation
- Compare linear BFKL and nonlinear BK evolution to estimate saturation effects
- Proton targets: no sign of saturation in the current data
- Pb targets: J/ψ **shows a clear preference for BK evolution**
  - Saturation effects already visible in the LHC data?