

Search for heavy scalar or pseudoscalar states in $t\bar{t}$ events at CMS

Laurids Jeppe for the CMS collaboration

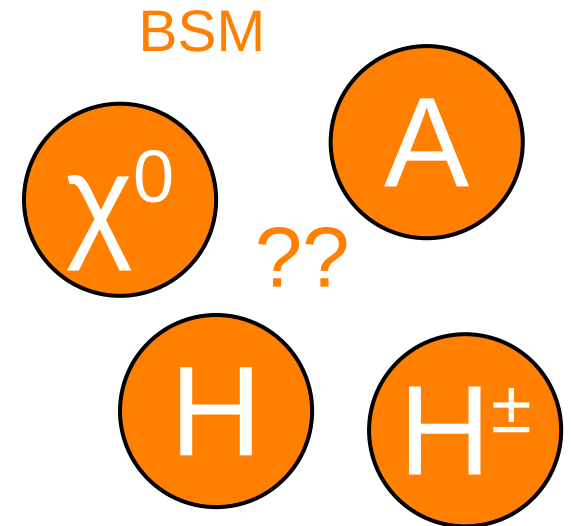
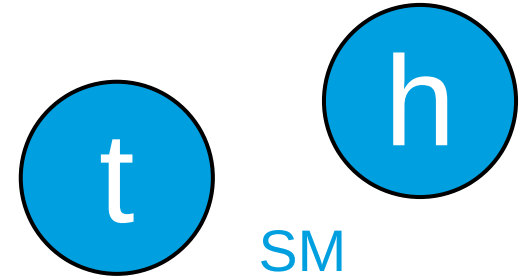
13.11.2024 | CMS-PAS-HIG-22-013



Motivation: BSM!

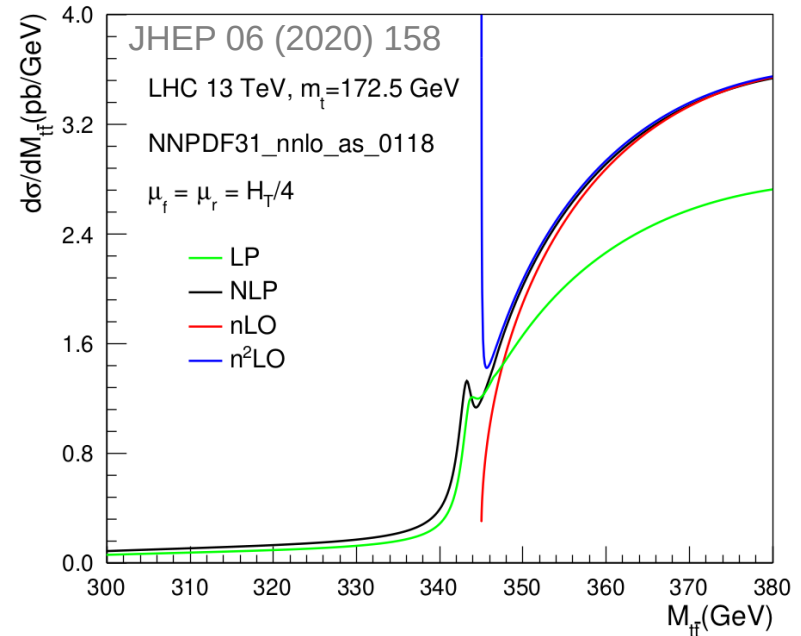
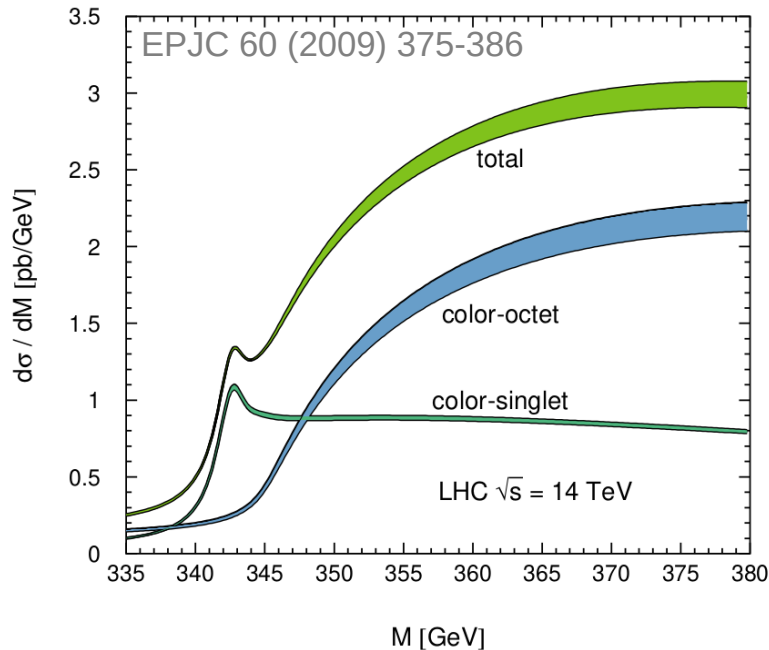
- We know there is BSM – but **where is it?**
- Many models predict extended Higgs sectors
e.g. 2HDM, MSSM...
→ **new scalar or pseudoscalar states**
- If couplings are Yukawa-like:
strongest coupling to top quark
- If mass $> 2m_t$: **decay to $t\bar{t}$** is dominant in large
areas of parameter space

→ **search for heavy (pseudo)scalars in $t\bar{t}$ final states**



Motivation: $t\bar{t}$ bound states?

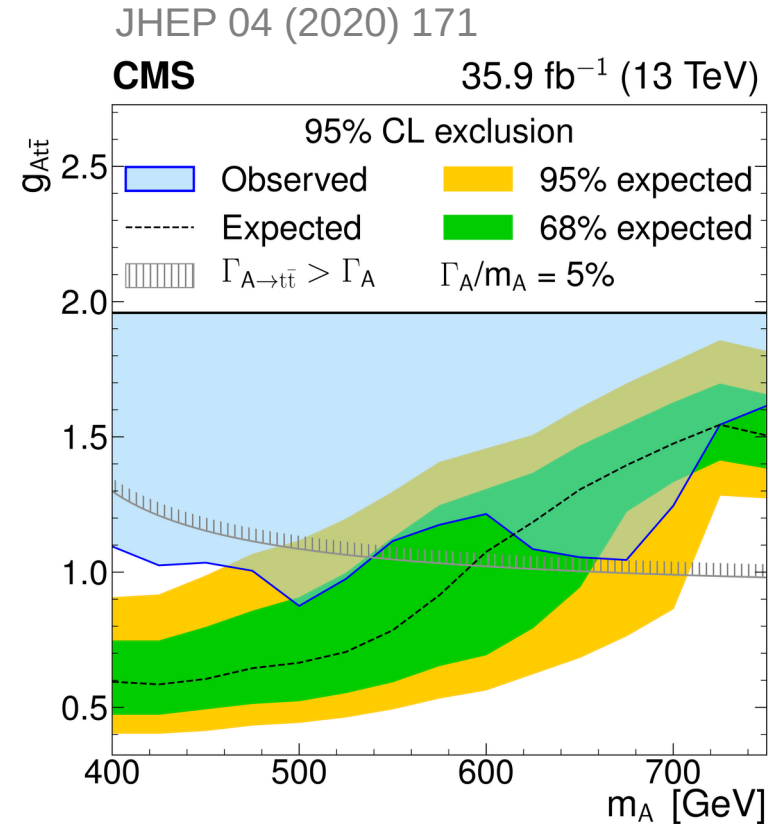
- SM predicts $t\bar{t}$ (quasi-)bound states below the $t\bar{t}$ threshold



- Not observed yet (but there are hints: differential $t\bar{t}$, entanglement...)
- Dominant component: pseudoscalar – can we search for it?

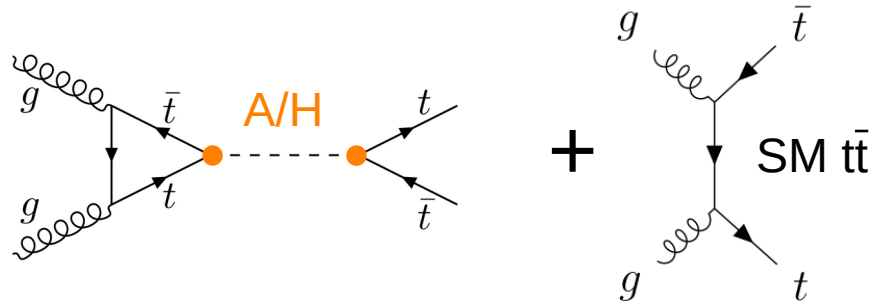
Overview of the search

- Search for new spin-0 (pseudo)scalars in $t\bar{t}$ final states with full Run 2 dataset (138 fb⁻¹)
- Make use of invariant $t\bar{t}$ mass, angular and spin correlation observables
- Two analysis channels: dilepton ($\ell\bar{\ell}$) and lepton+jets (ℓj)
- Builds upon previous work by CMS: JHEP 04 (2020) 171 (2016 data, 35.9 fb⁻¹)
- Also recent full Run 2 result by ATLAS (JHEP08 (2024) 013)



Signal modeling

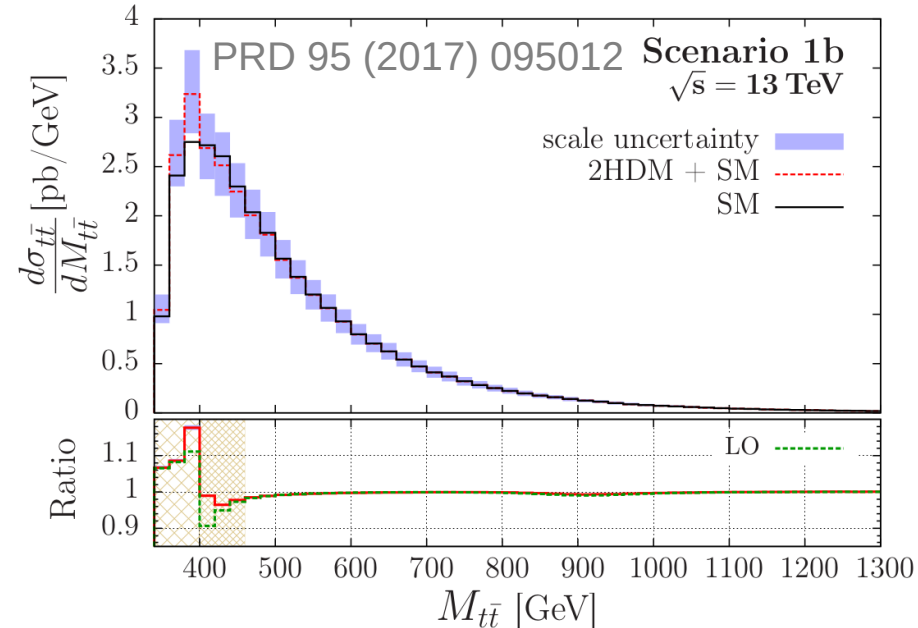
- Generic heavy **pseudoscalar (A)** or **scalar (H)** coupling solely to top quarks
- Production in gluon fusion via top quark loop



- Same final state as SM $t\bar{t}$ → interference
→ **peak-dip structure** in $m_{t\bar{t}}$
- Free parameters: masses, widths, g_A / g_H
- Use NNLO QCD K-factors for normalization

$$\mathcal{L}_A^{\text{int}} = ig_{A t \bar{t}} \frac{m_t}{v} \bar{t} \gamma_5 t A$$

$$\mathcal{L}_H^{\text{int}} = -g_{H t \bar{t}} \frac{m_t}{v} \bar{t} t H$$



Modeling: $t\bar{t}$ bound state effects

- State of the art: non-relativistic QCD (NRQCD)
 - Color-singlet ($^1S_0^{[1]}$) - attractive
 - Peak below the $t\bar{t}$ threshold
 - Color-octet ($^1S_0^{[8]}$ or $^3S_1^{[8]}$) - repulsive
 - Expected to be small below the $t\bar{t}$ threshold
- Lineshape and width not exactly known
 - but below experimental resolution

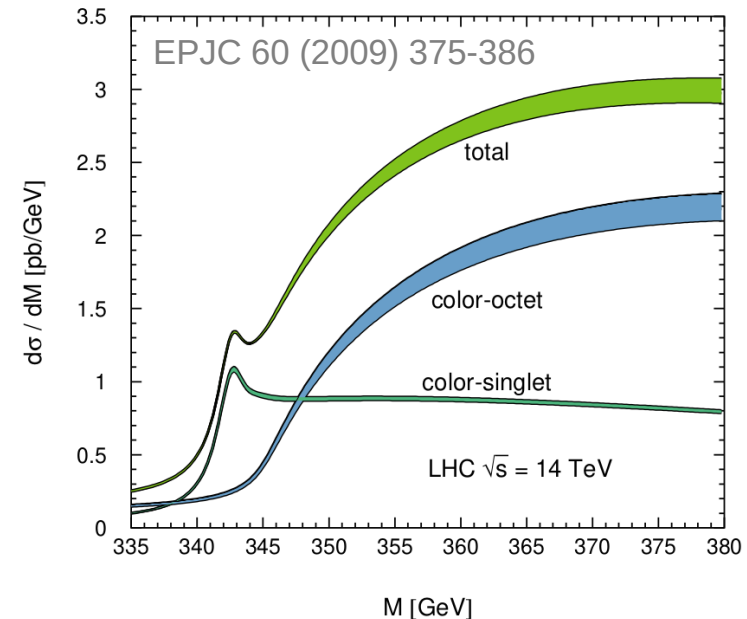
See e.g.

PRD 110 (2024) 5, 054032

JHEP 03 (2024) 099

PRD 104 (2021) 3, 034023

etc.



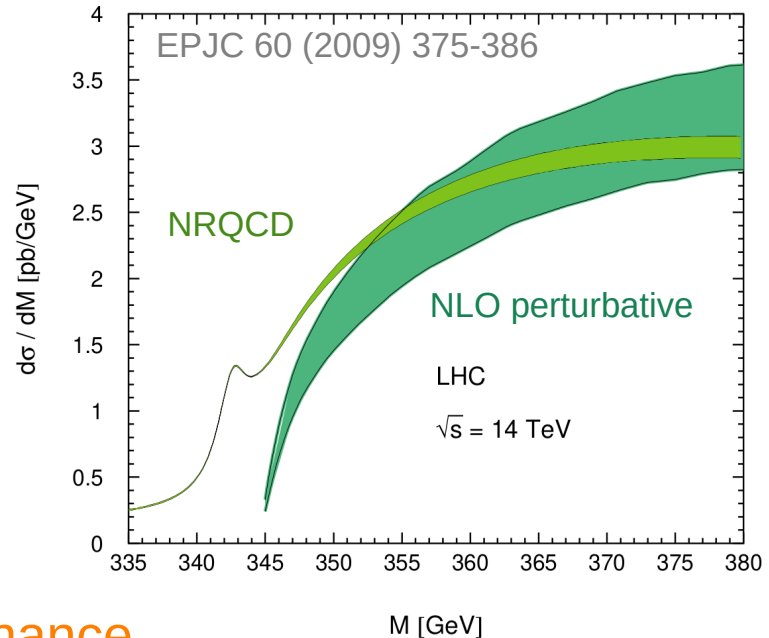
Modeling: $t\bar{t}$ bound state effects

- Use **simplified model for MC simulation: η_t** (PRD 104 (2021) 034023)

- Generic spin-0, color-singlet state η_t
- Couplings to gluons and tops (pseudoscalar)
- Fit mass from NRQCD:

$$m_{\eta_t} - 2m_t = -2 \text{ GeV} \quad \Rightarrow \quad m_{\eta_t} = 343 \text{ GeV}$$

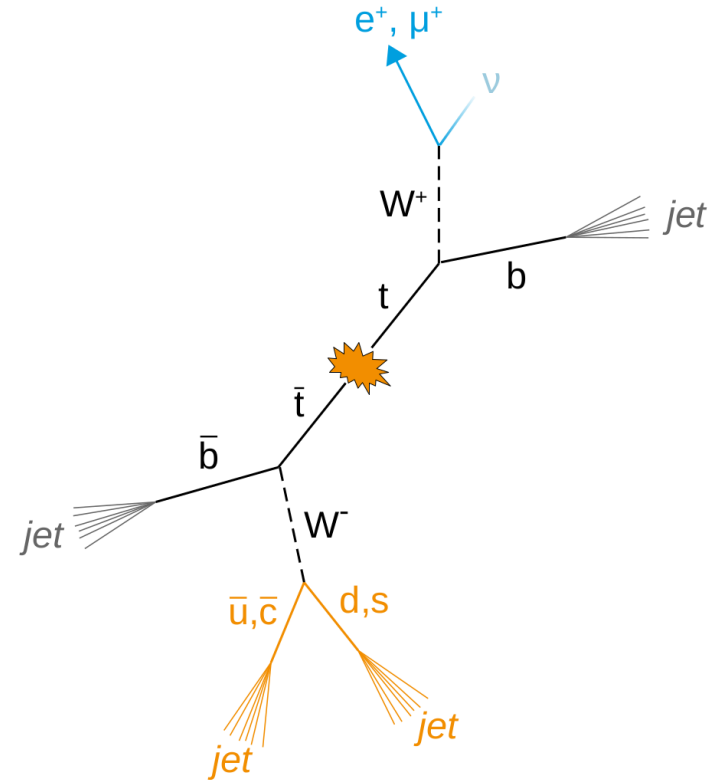
- Restrict to $m_{W_b W_b} \in [337, 349] \text{ GeV}$ to not influence $t\bar{t}$ continuum as predicted by perturbative QCD
- Not available yet: by-event reweighting to NRQCD



- Result: **very similar signature as low-mass A resonance**

Lepton+jets channel

- Require **exactly one lepton** (e/μ), **3 or more jets** and **2 or more b tags**
- Split into 4 categories: **e vs μ** and **3 jets vs 4+ jets**
(NIM A 736 (2014) 169-178)
- Reconstruct $t\bar{t}$ system** with NeutrinoSolver algorithm:
 - Assign b jets by maximum likelihood
 - Energy correction factor applied for 3 jet events (lost or merged jets) (NIM A 788 (2015) 128-136)

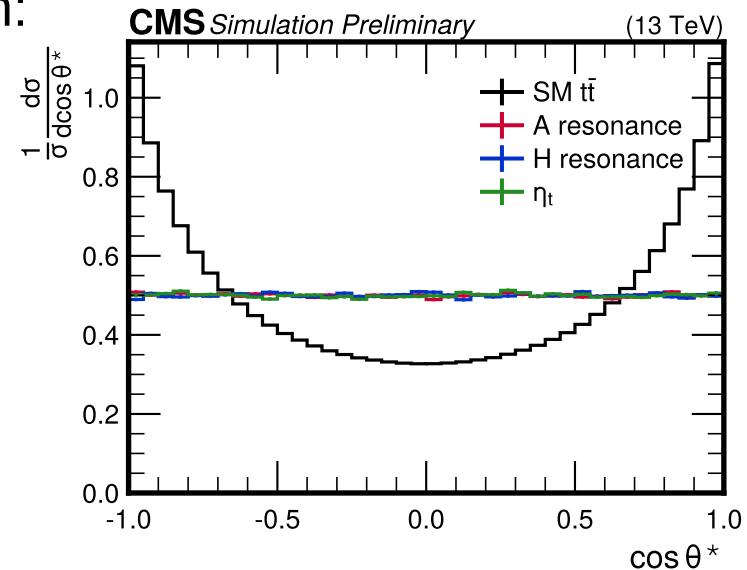


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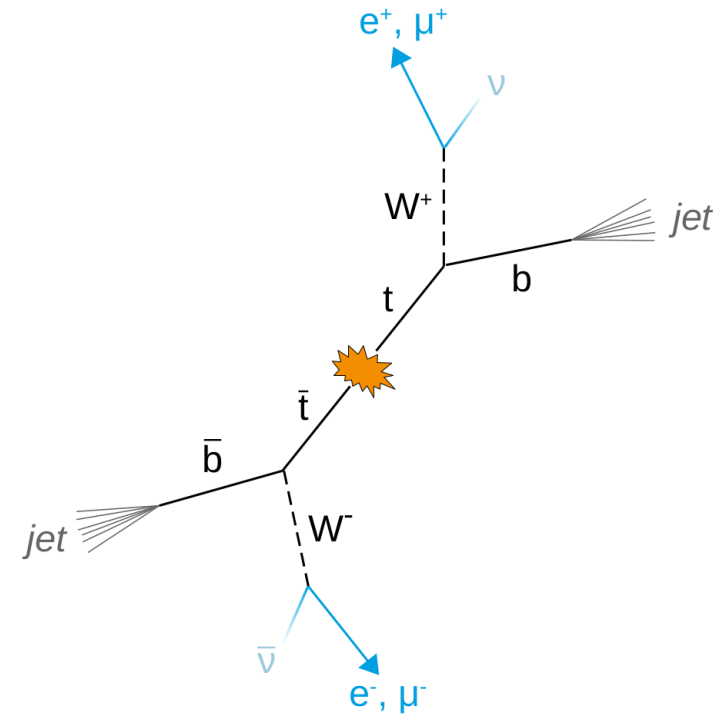
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 - Assign b jets by maximum likelihood
 - Energy correction factor applied for 3 jet events (lost or merged jets) (NIM A 788 (2015) 128-136)
- 2D binning in **$m_{t\bar{t}} \times |\cos\theta^*$**
- θ^* : scattering angle of leptonic top quark
 - SM $t\bar{t}$: peaks at large $\cos\theta^*$
 - A/H signal: isotropic \rightarrow flat distribution
 - \rightarrow Sensitive to spin of mediator (but not parity)



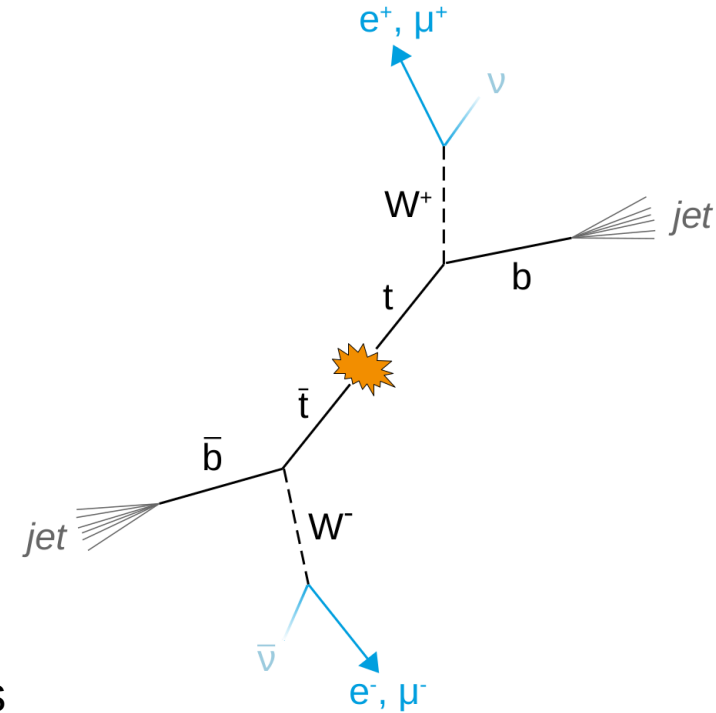
Dilepton channel

- Exactly **two opposite-sign leptons** (e/μ), **at least 2 jets**, and **at least 1 b tag**
- Split by lepton flavor: **ee** , **$e\mu$** and **$\mu\mu$**
- Reject low- $m_{\ell\ell}$ events
Cut away Z peak & require $p_T^{\text{miss}} > 40$ GeV in $ee/\mu\mu$



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- Reject low- $m_{\ell\ell}$ events
Cut away Z peak & require $p_T^{\text{miss}} > 40$ GeV in $ee/\mu\mu$
- **Analytic reconstruction of $t\bar{t}$ system:**
 - Assumptions: all p_T^{miss} from $\nu\nu$, tops and Ws on-shell
 - Assign b jets using likelihood based on $m_{\ell b}$
 - Finite detector resolution: repeat reconstruction 100 times with randomly smeared inputs, take weighted average
(EPJC 75 (2015) 11, 542; PRD 73 (2006) 054015)



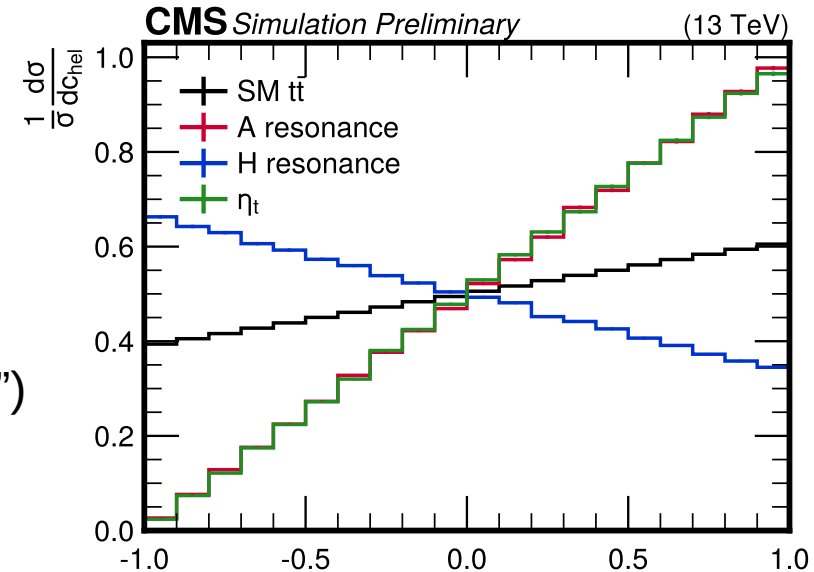
Spin correlation observables

- Both A/H and η_t predict $t\bar{t}$ production in a **pure $t\bar{t}$ spin state**:
 1S_0 or 3P_0 (from A / η_t resp. H)
- Top decays before hadronization \rightarrow transfer spin information to decay products
- Construct **spin correlation observables** from tops & leptons

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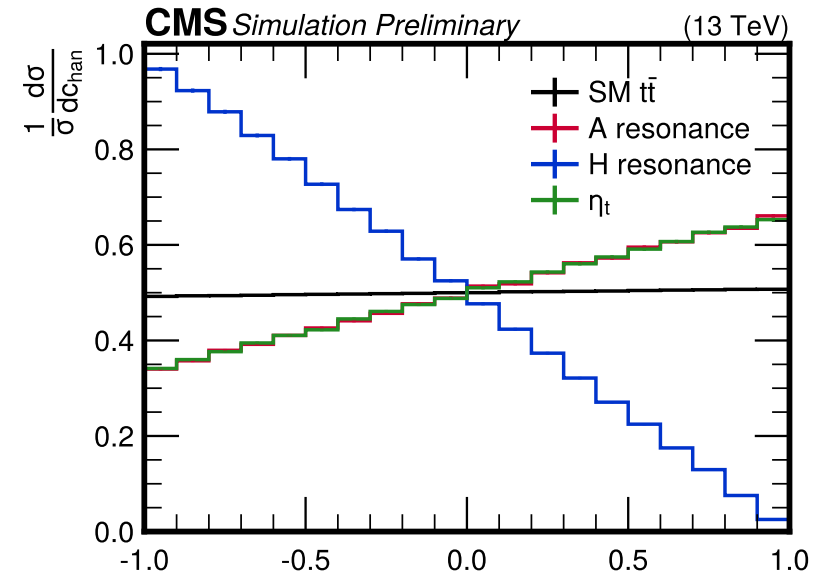
- Variable #1: C_{hel}
 - Boost leptons into rest frames of their parent tops \rightarrow Scalar product between directions of flight
 - Straight line with slope sensitive to $t\bar{t}$ spin state (“D”)
 - Maximal for 1S_0 (from A / η_t) – **separates from SM**



Spin correlation observables

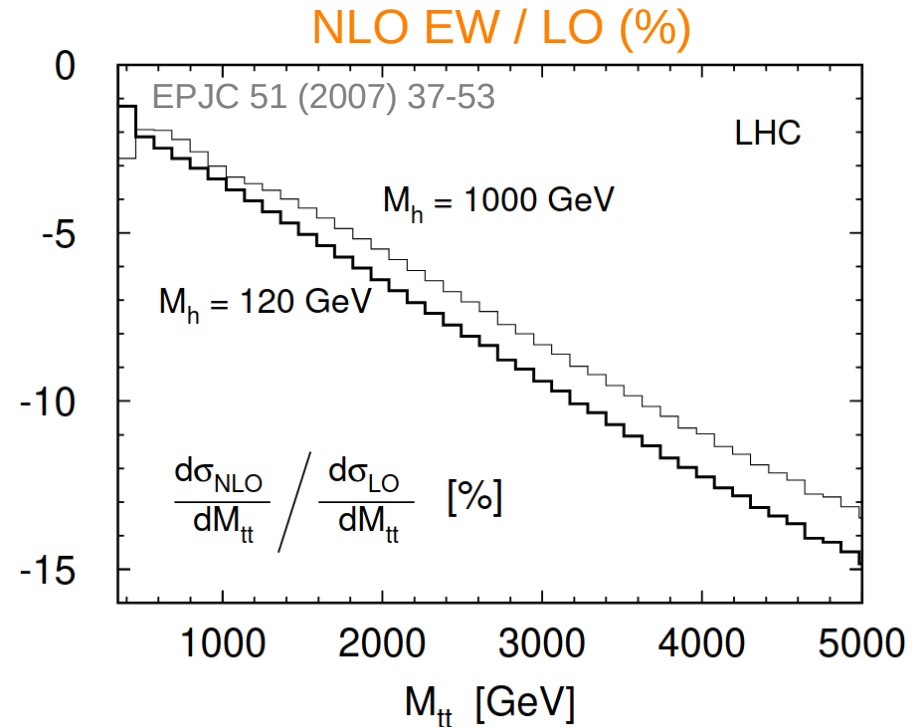
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- Construct **spin correlation observables** from tops & leptons

- Variable #2: C_{chan}
 - Similar as c_{hel} , separating scalars from SM
 - Maximally negative slope for 3P_0 state (from H)
 - Construct similarly from lepton momenta, with sign flip for component parallel to top momentum
- \rightarrow 3 search variables in dilepton: $m_{t\bar{t}} \times C_{\text{hel}} \times C_{\text{chan}}$



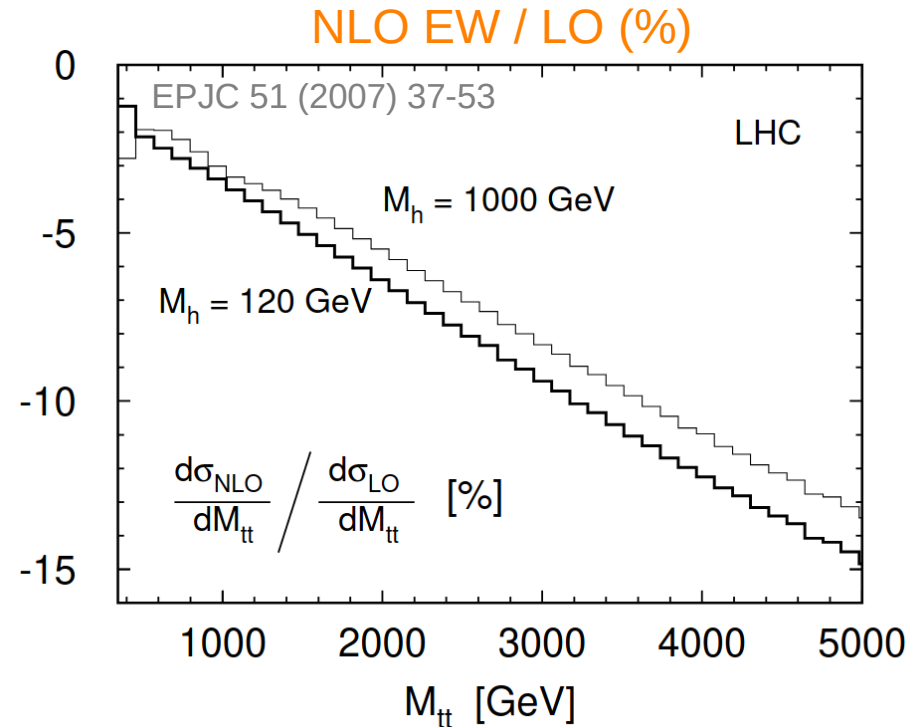
Background modeling

- Major irreducible background: **SM $t\bar{t}$**
 - Model from **NLO MC** (Powheg+Pythia)
 - Correct to **NNLO QCD** and **NLO EW** from fixed-order predictions by reweighting in 2D bins of $m_{t\bar{t}}$ and $\cos\theta^*$
 - NNLO QCD: Matrix (EPJC 78 (2018) 537)
 - NLO EW: Hathor (EPJC 51 (2007) 37)
 - Normalize to NNLO+NNLL cross section (CPC 185 (2014) 2930)



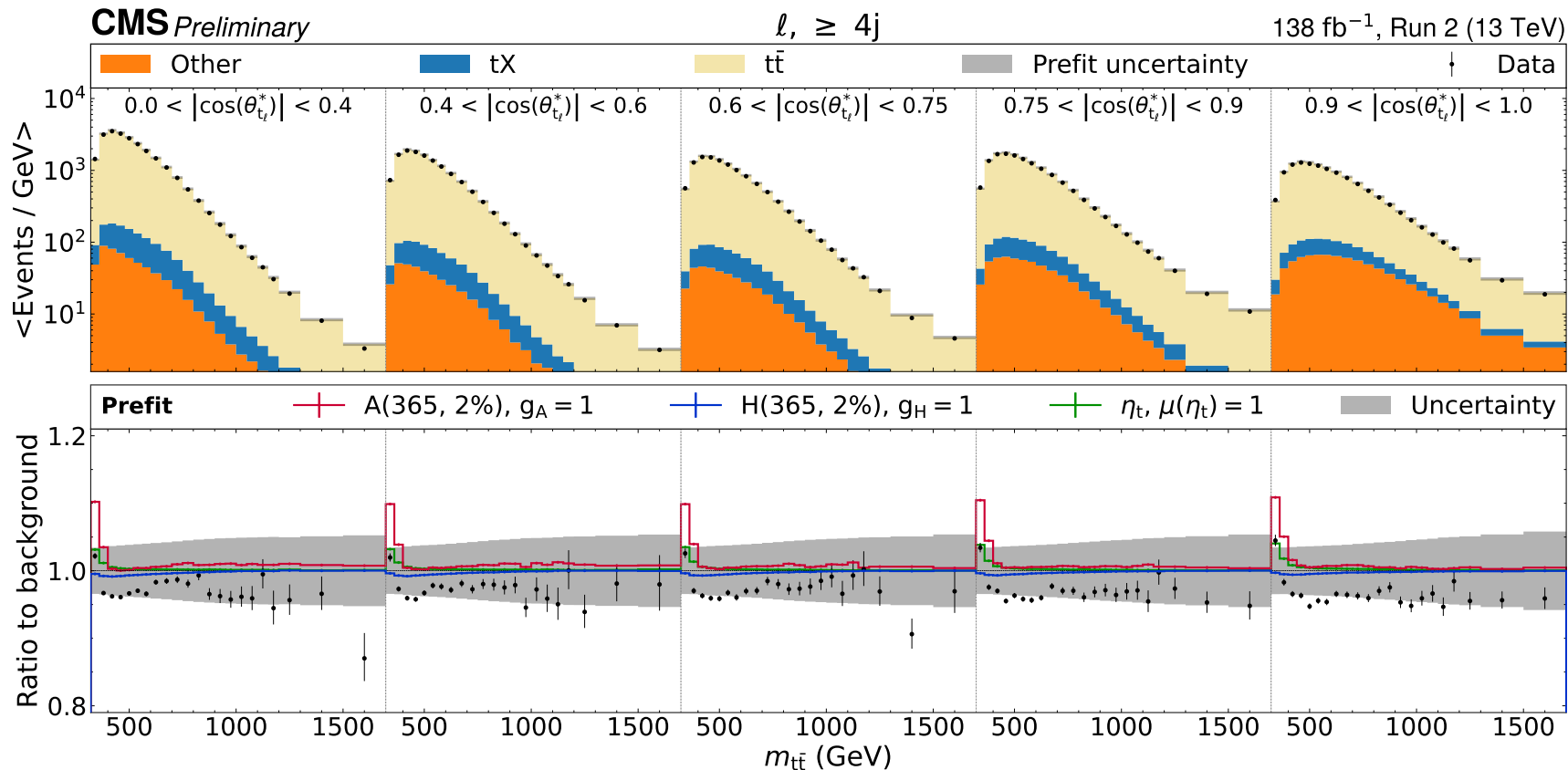
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 - NNLO QCD: Matrix (EPJC 78 (2018) 537)
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 - Normalize to NNLO+NNLL cross section (CPC 185 (2014) 2930)
- Other backgrounds: tW , t channel single-top, rare processes (from MC)
- Z+jets in $\ell\ell$** : from MC with data-driven normalization from Z peak sideband
- QCD+EW processes in ℓ +jets**: data-driven shape from sideband with no b tags



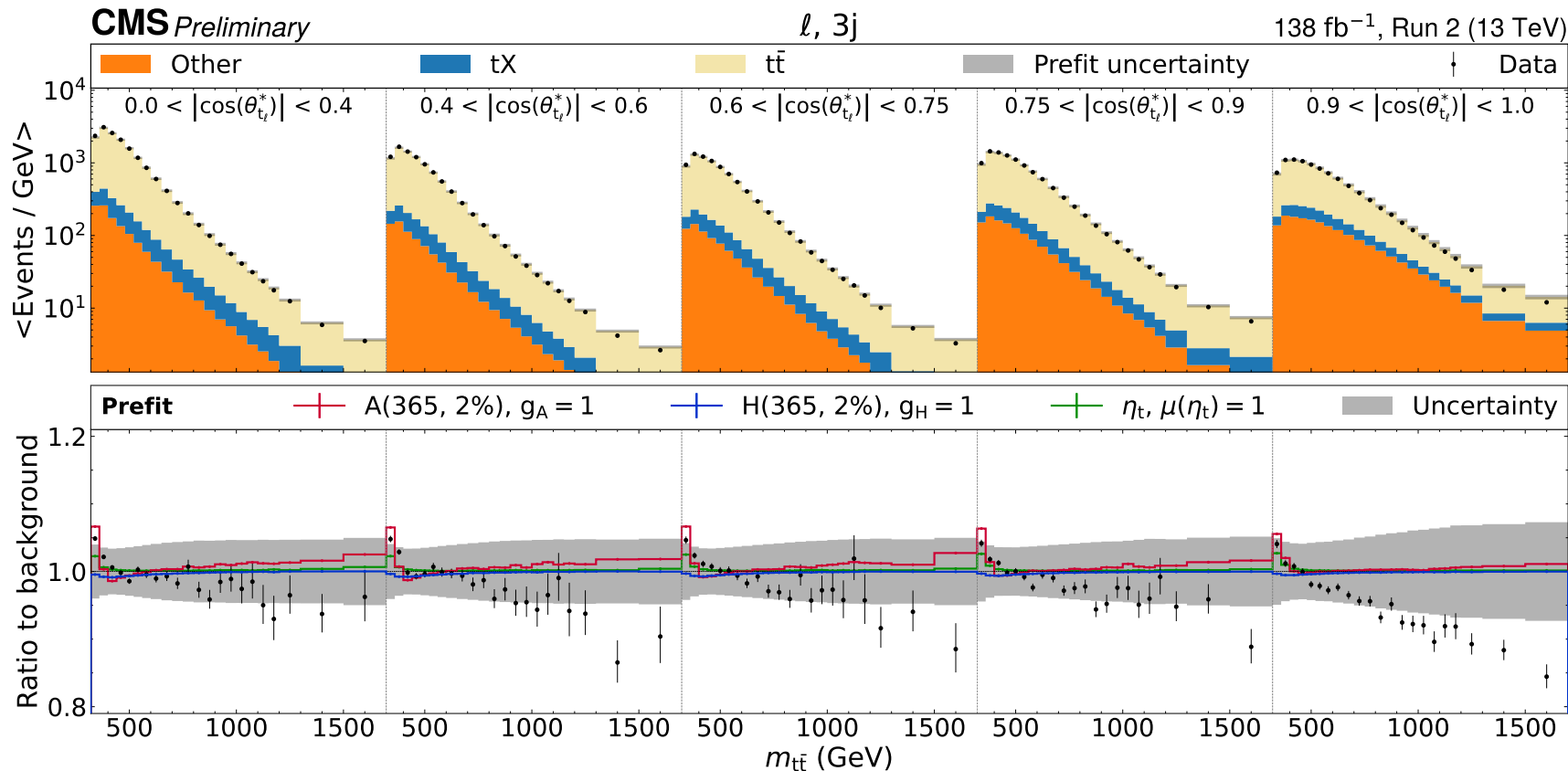
Prefit distributions: $\ell + \geq 4$ jets

Differences between data and prediction observed in low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ bins!



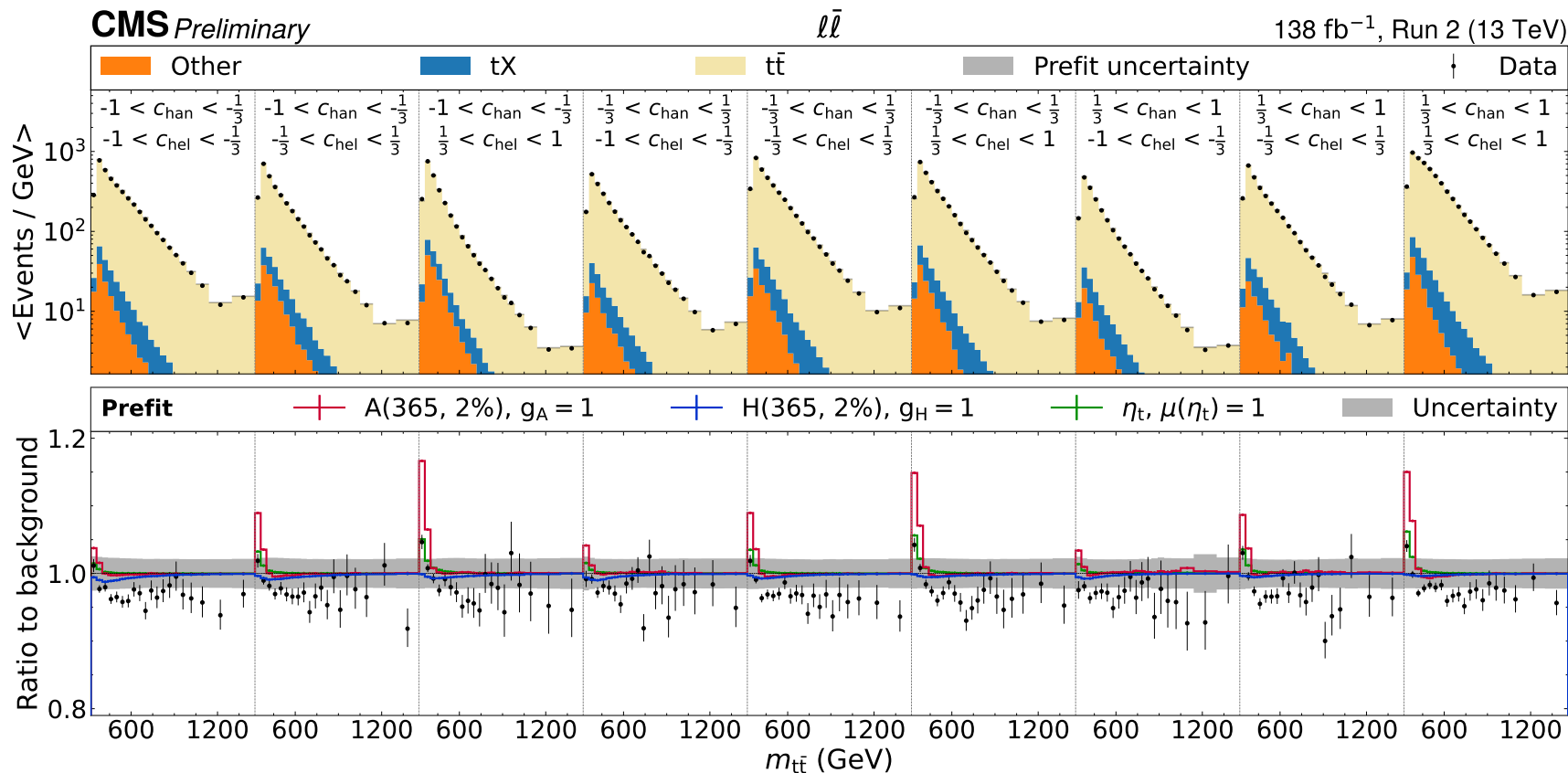
Prefit distributions: $\ell + 3$ jets

Differences between data and prediction observed in low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ bins!



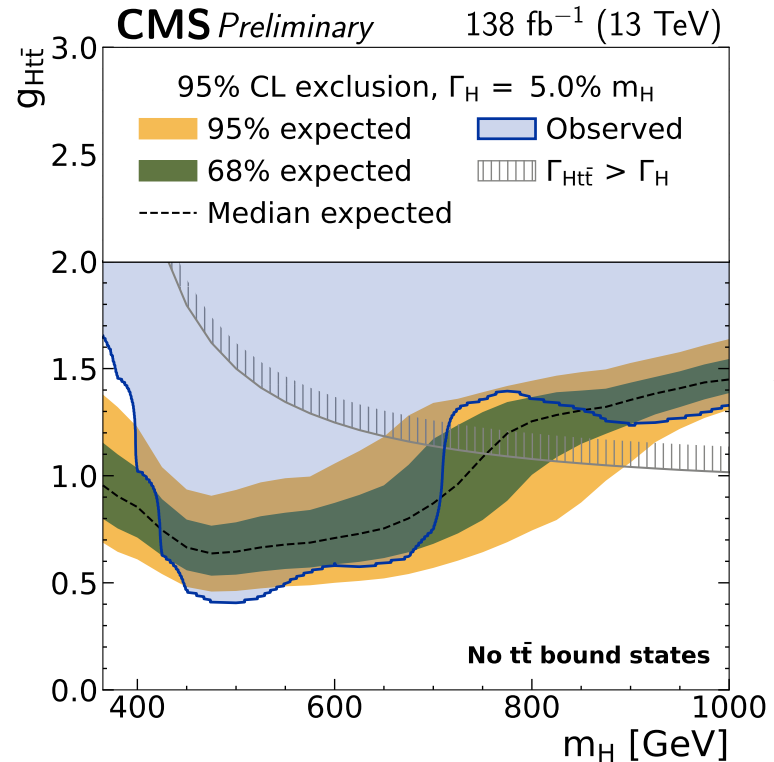
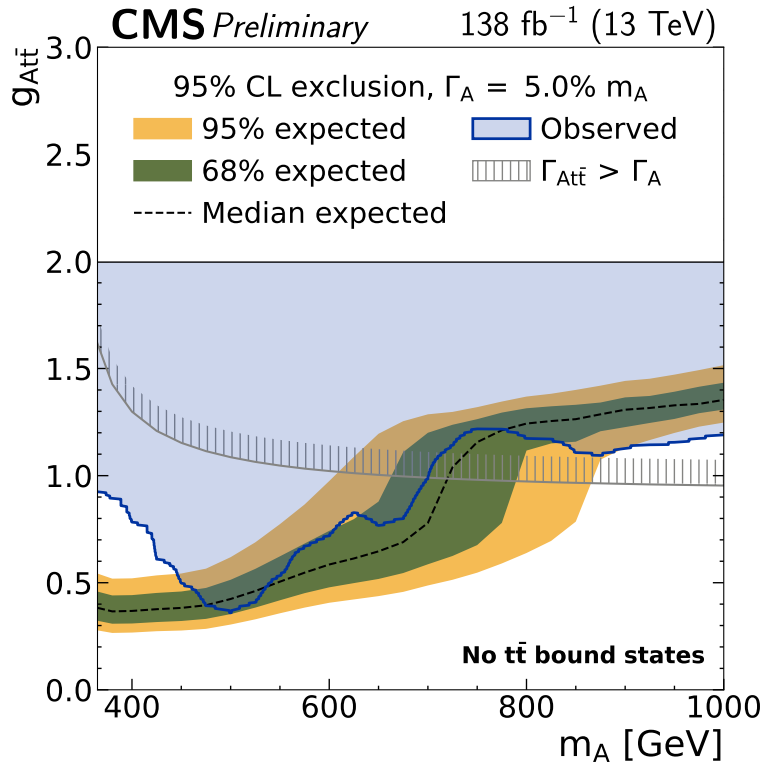
Prefit distributions: $\ell\bar{\ell}$

Differences between data and prediction observed in low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ bins!



A/H interpretation

- Limits on A or H using only the perturbative QCD+EW background model
- Excess at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ visible at low A/H masses – stronger for A



A/H width:
5%

$t\bar{t}$ bound state?

- Excess is located at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$, stronger for pseudoscalar
→ could this be interpreted as $t\bar{t}$ bound state effects?
- Extract cross section using the η_t color-singlet model
 - “cross section” = difference to perturbative prediction

$t\bar{t}$ bound state?

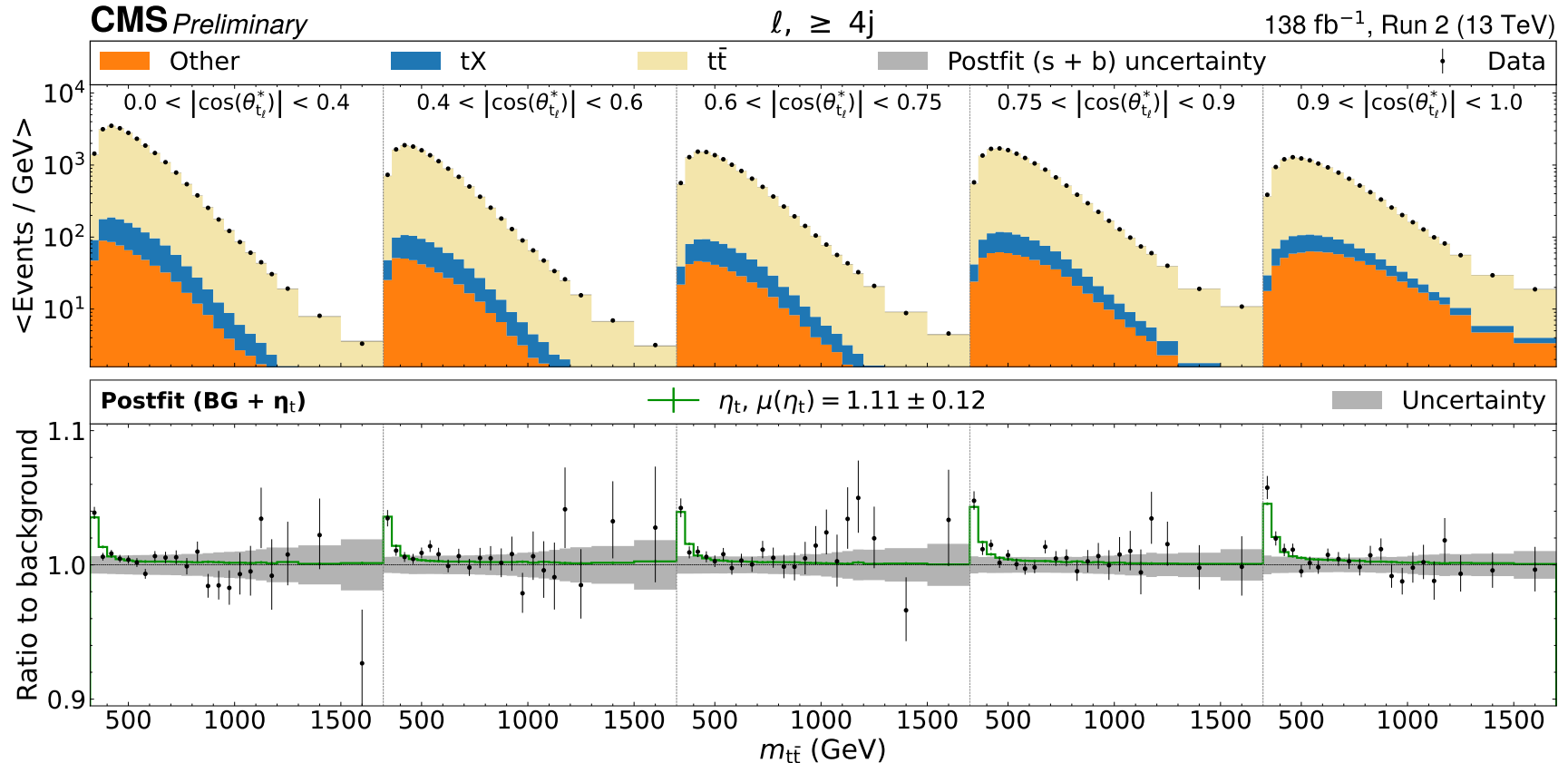
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$$\sigma(\eta_t) = 7.1 \pm 0.8 \text{ pb}$$

- Agrees with NRQCD prediction: $\sigma(\eta_t)^{\text{pred}} = 6.43 \text{ pb}$ (PRD 104 (2021) 034023)
(JHEP 09 (2010) 034)
- Word of caution: this model is not a complete description of a $t\bar{t}$ bound state!
 - missing e.g. color-octet states - expected to be small
soft initial state gluons – could change color-octet into singlet states
etc...

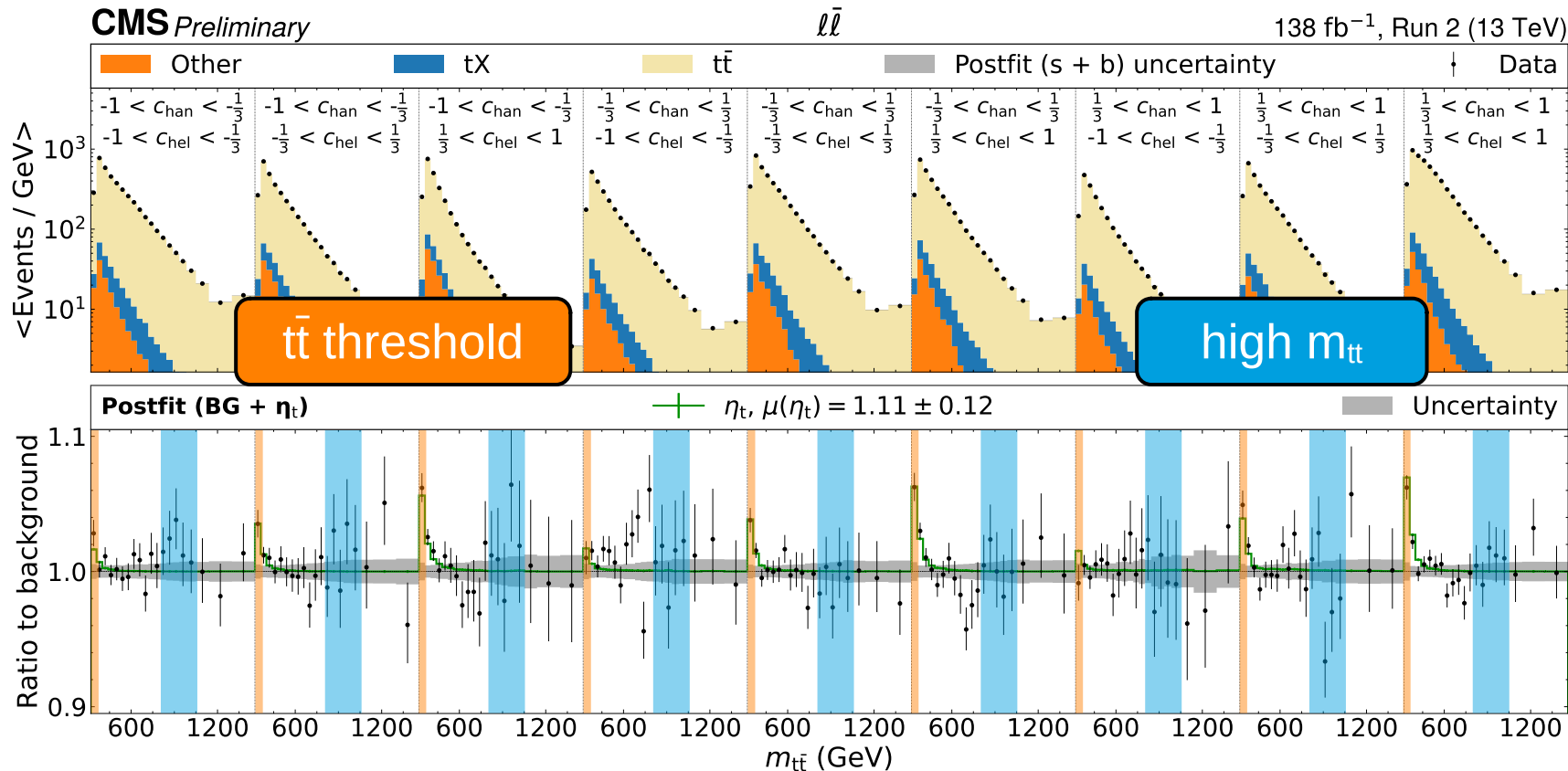
Postfit distributions: η_t ($\ell + \geq 4$ jets)

Postfit for η_t model describing the data well



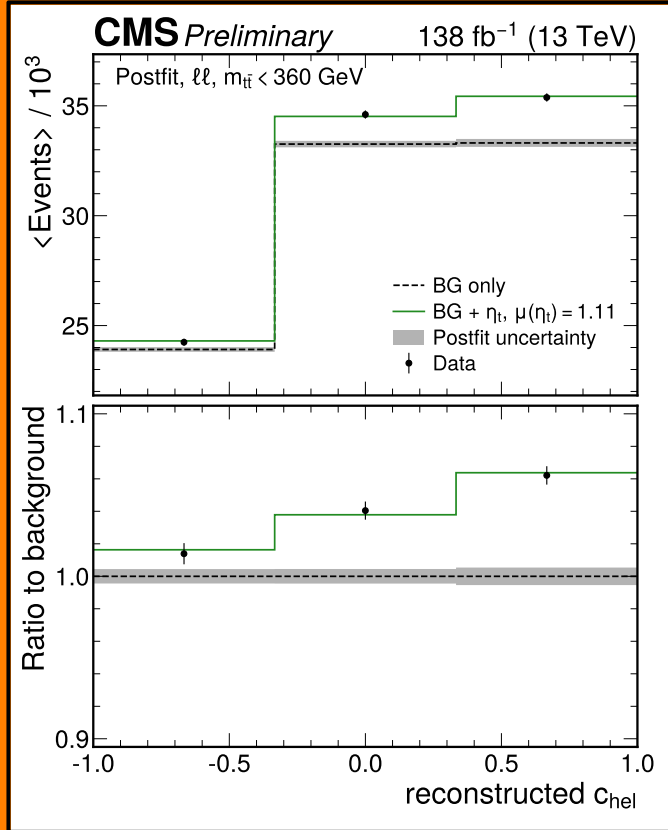
Postfit distributions: η_t ($\ell\bar{\ell}$)

Postfit for η_t model describing the data well

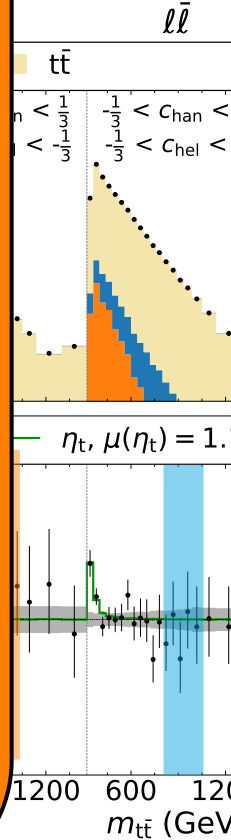


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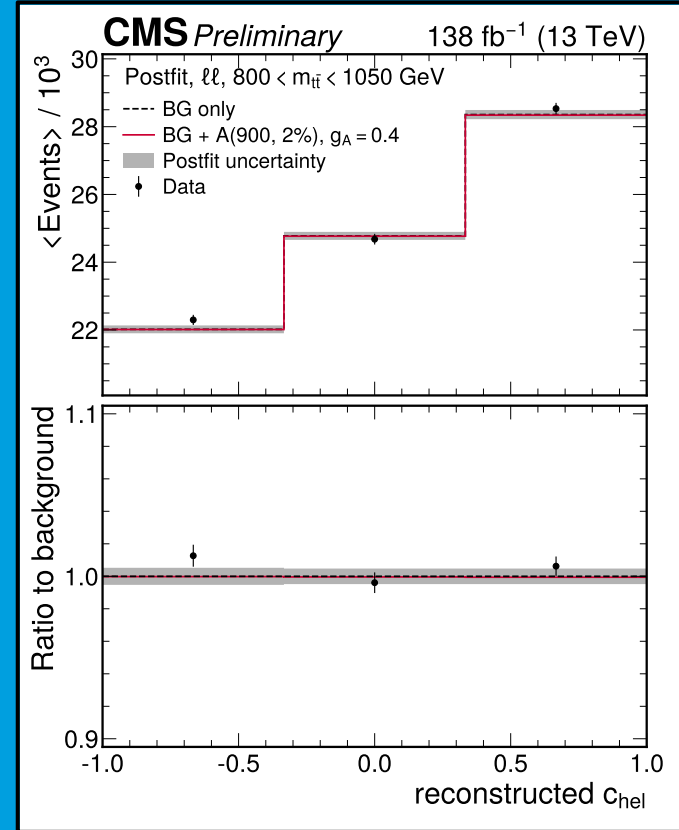
$t\bar{t}$ threshold:
Data shows slope in c_{hel}



ns: m
el describ



high $m_{t\bar{t}}$:
No slope in data



Uncertainties

- Uncertainty on η_t cross section dominated by **background modeling**

- Leading systematic sources:

- EW corrections, including SM Top-Higgs Yukawa:

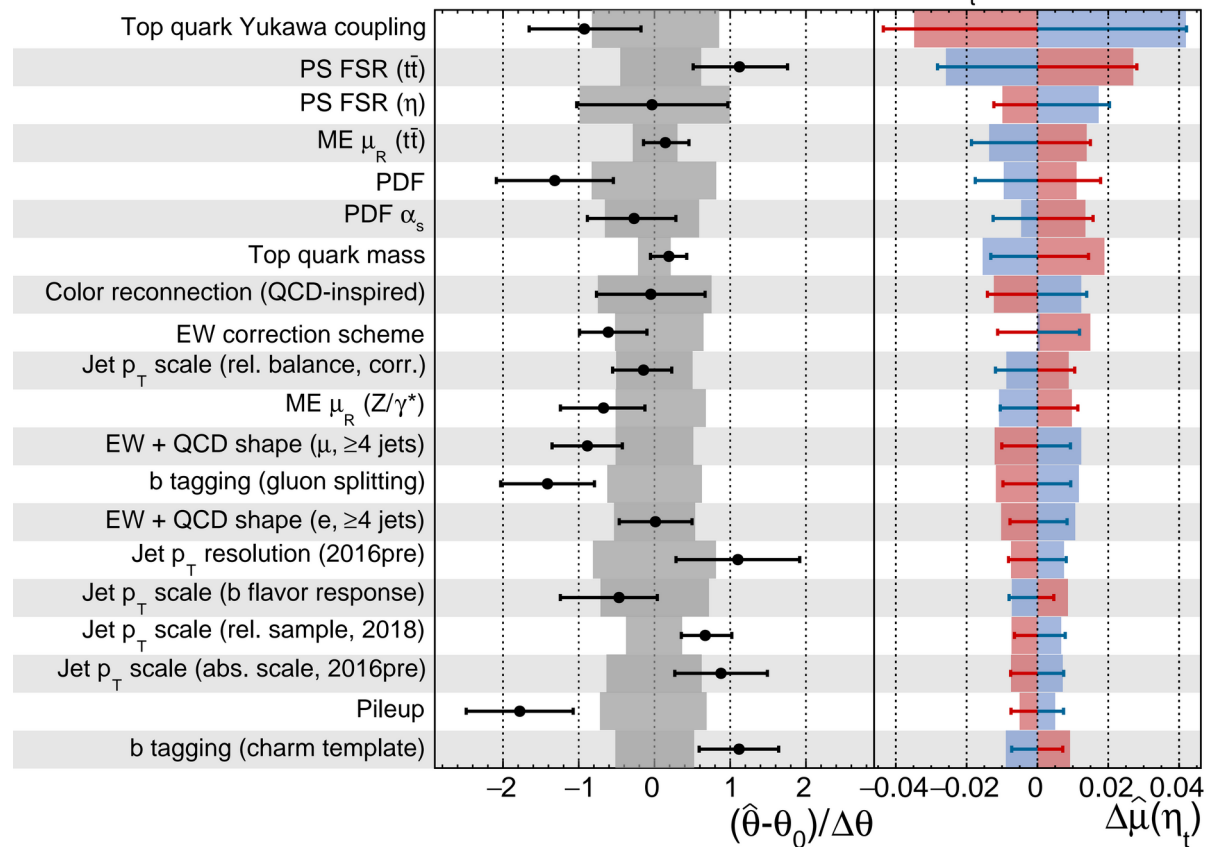
$$y_t = 1.00^{+0.11}_{-0.12} \text{ (EPJC 79 (2019) 421)}$$

- Parton shower scales
- Missing higher orders
- PDF
- Top mass

CMS
Preliminary

● Fit constraint (obs.) — +1 σ impact (obs.) — -1 σ impact (obs.)
 Fit constraint (exp.) +1 σ impact (exp.) -1 σ impact (exp.)

$$\hat{\mu}(\eta_t) = 1.11 \pm 0.12$$



Checks of the result

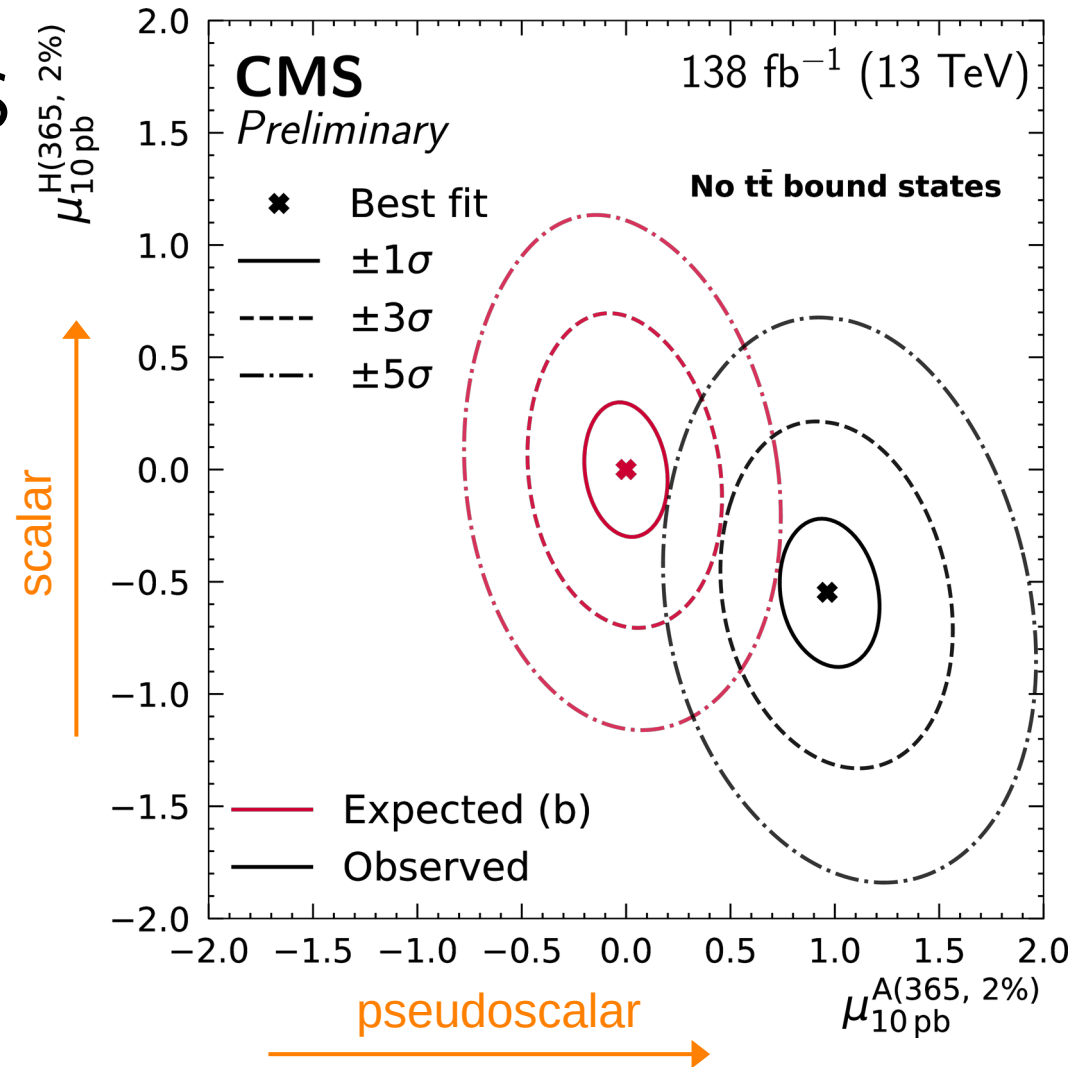
- Off-shell effects in $t\bar{t}$ MC – only approximate in Powheg+Pythia (NWA)
 - Check with Powheg bb41 (complete off-shell NLO calculation of $pp \rightarrow b\bar{b}\ell\bar{\ell}v\bar{v}$)
 - Only available in dilepton for now
 - Redo our extraction with bb41 for the $t\bar{t}+tW$ prediction in $\ell\bar{\ell}$ only

Prediction for SM $t\bar{t}$ and tW	Extracted η_t cross section	Uncertainty
b_bbar_41 (POWHEG vRES)	5.9 pb	18%
Default (POWHEG v2)	7.5 pb	13%

- Results compatible at ~ 2 SD – excess clearly present also with bb41
- Further checks:
 - different generators for SM $t\bar{t}$ (aMC@NLO+Pythia, Powheg+Herwig)
 - different treatment of NNLO QCD/NLO EW corrections
 - decorrelation of several syst. uncs (e.g. top mass)
- All checks compatible with nominal within uncertainty of result

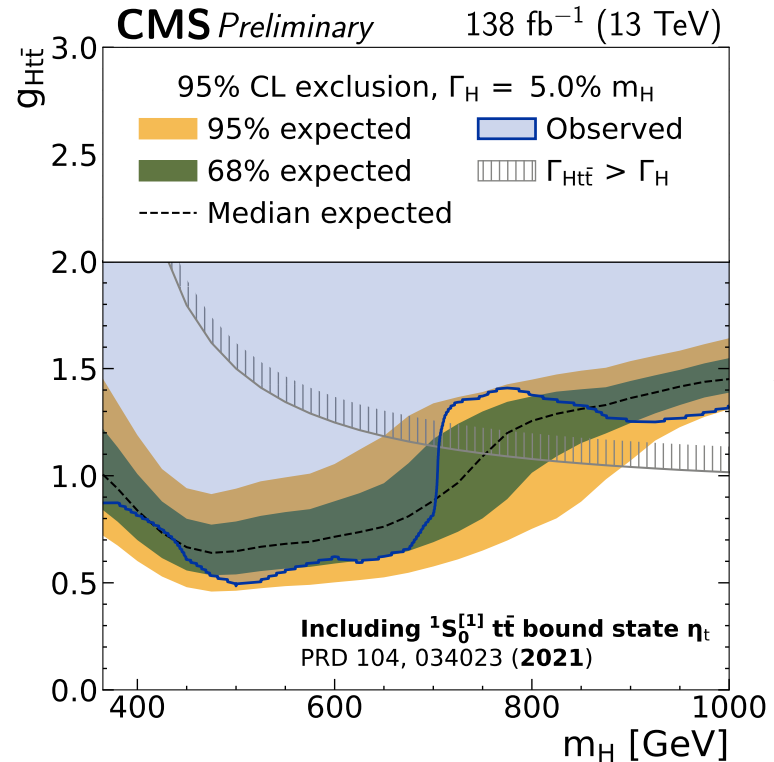
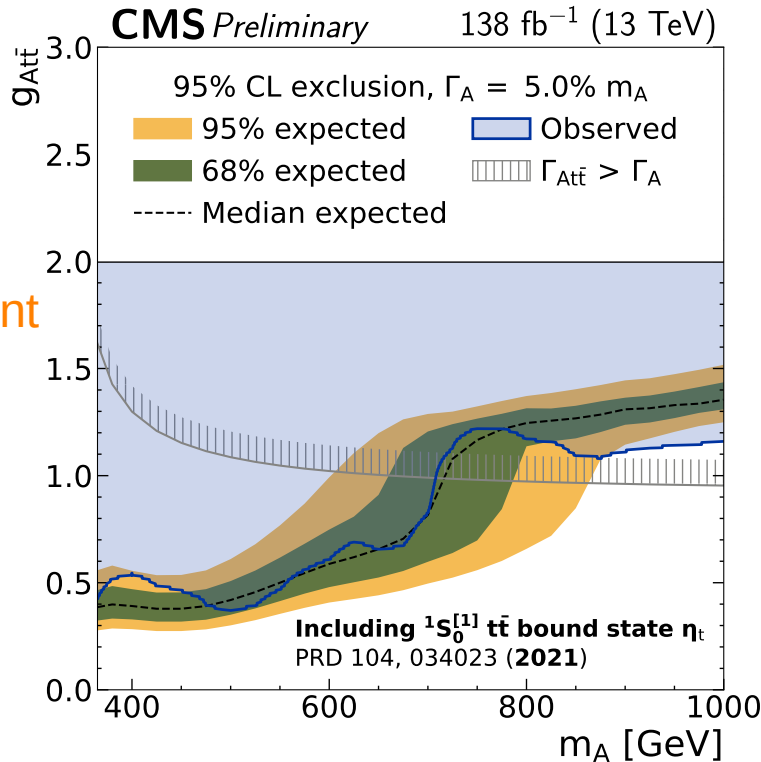
Parity of the excess

- Can we quantify whether the excess is scalar or pseudoscalar?
- Take low-mass A/H resonances as proxies for pure 1S_0 and 3P_0 $t\bar{t}$ states
- 2D fit with arbitrary signal strengths
- Data prefers pure 1S_0 / pseudoscalar
- scalar component compatible with 0 at the level of ~ 2 SD



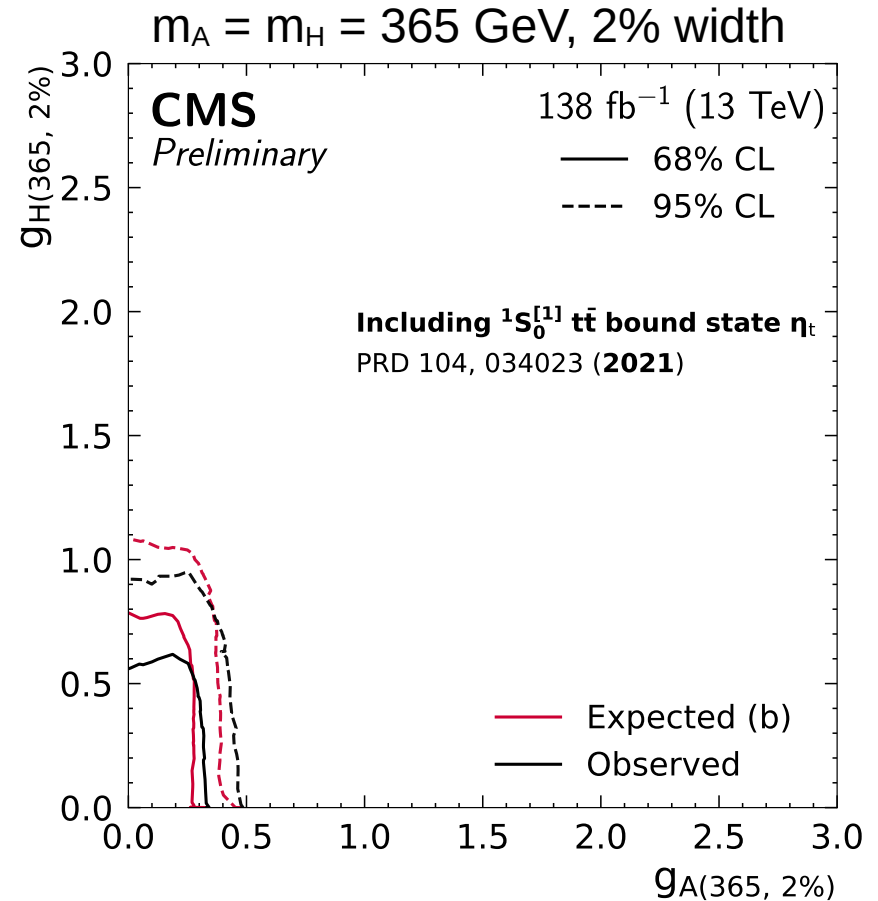
A/H limits including η_t

- QCD + η_t describes data well → **set (BSM) A/H limits**
 → η_t added as an additional BG process with free-floating normalization



A+H interpretation

- BSM models (e.g. 2HDM) often predict the **simultaneous presence of A and H**
- ➔ **Model-independent exclusion contours** for both A and H couplings
 - numerical Feldman-Cousins method
- Input for bounds on concrete BSM models



Summary

- Search for new spin-0 (pseudo)scalars in $t\bar{t}$ final states with full Run 2 dataset
- Dilepton and lepton+jets channels, using $m_{t\bar{t}}$, angular and spin observables
- Observed excess in data at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ – consistent with pseudoscalar
 - Interpretations in terms of a simplified model of a $t\bar{t}$ bound state η_t or a generic pseudoscalar A and scalar H
 - Extracted cross section for a parametrized η_t (toy) model (PRD 104 (2021) 034023)
- Set stringent limits on A , H , and $A+H$ with η_t included in the background
- For the future:
An improved non-relativistic QCD calculation of $t\bar{t}$ bound state effects is crucial!
Input from theory welcome
- Whatever the excess is – it is exciting!

Reference: **CMS-PAS-HIG-22-013**

Backup

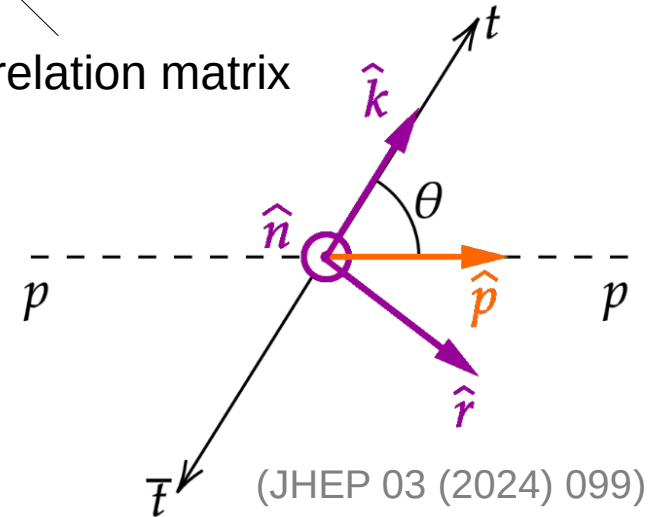
Spin density matrix

- Both A/H and η_t predict $t\bar{t}$ production in a **pure $t\bar{t}$ spin state**: 1S_0 or 3P_0 (from A / η_t resp. H)
- Encoded in **spin density matrix**:

$$\mathbf{R} = A + B_i \sigma_i + \bar{B}_i \bar{\sigma}_i + \sigma_i C_{ij} \bar{\sigma}_j$$

cross section
polarization vectors
correlation matrix

- Choose **helicity basis** $\{\hat{k}, \hat{r}, \hat{n}\}$:
 - \hat{k} : direction of flight of the top quark
 - \hat{r} and \hat{n} : orthogonal to \hat{k}



Definition of c_{hel} and c_{chan}

- Start in $t\bar{t}$ rest frame, boost leptons into rest frames of their parent tops
- Define lepton three-momenta $\hat{\ell}^+$ and $\hat{\ell}^-$ w.r.t $\{\hat{k}, \hat{r}, \hat{n}\}$ basis:

- \hat{k} : direction of flight of the top quark
- \hat{r} : orthogonal to \hat{k} in the scattering plane
- \hat{n} : orthogonal to \hat{k} and \hat{r}

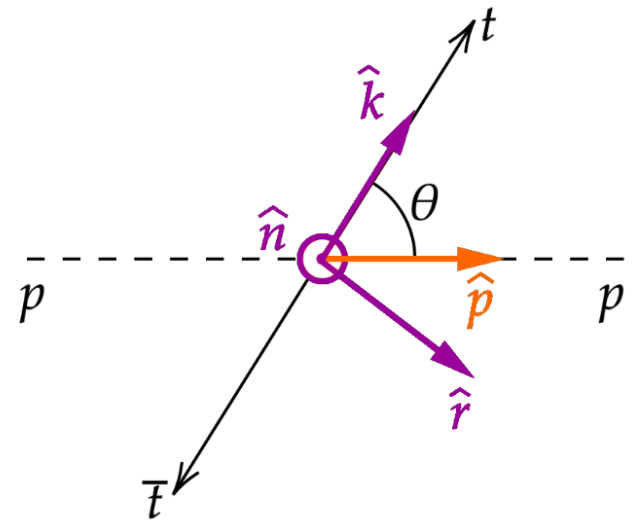
$$c_{\text{hel}} = -(\hat{\ell}^+)_k(\hat{\ell}^-)_k - (\hat{\ell}^+)_r(\hat{\ell}^-)_r - (\hat{\ell}^+)_n(\hat{\ell}^-)_n$$

$$c_{\text{chan}} = +(\hat{\ell}^+)_k(\hat{\ell}^-)_k - (\hat{\ell}^+)_r(\hat{\ell}^-)_r - (\hat{\ell}^+)_n(\hat{\ell}^-)_n$$

- It can be shown that they follow a straight line with

$$\frac{1}{\sigma} \frac{d\sigma}{dc_{\text{hel}}} = \frac{1}{2} (1 - D c_{\text{hel}}) \quad \frac{1}{\sigma} \frac{d\sigma}{dc_{\text{chan}}} = \frac{1}{2} (1 + D^{(k)} c_{\text{chan}})$$

(JHEP 03 (2024) 099)



List of systematic uncertainties

Experimental

- Jet energy corrections - split into 11 subsources
- Jet energy resolution
- Unclustered p_{miss}^T (uncorrelated between years)
- Luminosity – correlated and decorrelated parts between years
- Pileup
- Trigger efficiencies (separate for $\ell\ell$ / ℓj)
- Electron efficiencies (reco. & ID)
- Muon efficiencies – split into syst. and stat.
- B tagging and mistagging efficiencies
 - B tagging split into subsources
- L1 ECAL prefire (where applicable)
- Data-driven EW+QCD BG (ℓ +jets) : shape & rate (50%) uncorrelated between channels
- Data-driven Z+jets normalization ($\ell\ell$)

Theory

- Factorization & renormalization scales:
 - $t\bar{t}$, tW, tq, Z+jets; η_t (BG or signal), A/H signal
 - Uncorrelated between processes
 - $t\bar{t}$: including cross section variation
- Same for initial & final state radiation PS scales
- MC top mass: $\pm 1\text{GeV}$ (interpolated from $\pm 3\text{GeV}$)
 - Also including cross section variations
- ME-PS matching (h_{damp})
- Underlying event tune
- Color reconnection: 3 different samples
- PDF: PCA performed on final templates from 100 replicas → only leading component considered
- PDF α_s
- Electroweak corrections:
 - SM Higgs-Top Yukawa coupling (1 +0.11 -0.12)
 - EW correction scheme (additive v. multiplicative)
- Minor BG cross sections: 15% for tW and tq; 30% for Diboson and $t\bar{t}+X$

List of MC generators

Process	QCD order	ME Generator
$t\bar{t}$	NLO	POWHEG v2 (h _v q)
tW	NLO	POWHEG v2 (ST_wtch)
Z+jets	NNLO	POWHEG v2 (Zj MiNNLO)
t -channel single top	NLO	POWHEG v2 (ST_tch) + MADSPIN
s -channel single top	NLO	MG5_AMC@NLO
$t\bar{t}W$	NLO	MG5_AMC@NLO
$t\bar{t}Z$	NLO	MG5_AMC@NLO
WW, WZ & ZZ	LO	PYTHIA 8.2
A/H signal	LO	MG5_AMC@NLO
η_t signal	LO	MG5_AMC@NLO

Data-driven Z+jets normalization

- b jets in Z+jets are known to be badly modeled in MC – might lead to wrong normalization after requiring ≥ 1 btag
- Take normalization from Z peak sideband ($R_{in/out}$ method)
- Use weaker assumption than standard $R_{in/out}$ (“ratio of ratios”):
Get $R_{in/out}$ in 0 b tag sideband; take “ratio of ratios” for ≥ 1 and 0 btags from MC

$$\frac{(R_{in/out}^{\geq 1b})_{data}}{(R_{in/out}^{\geq 1b})_{MC}} = \frac{(R_{in/out}^{0b})_{data}}{(R_{in/out}^{0b})_{MC}} \quad \longrightarrow \quad SF = \frac{(N_{out}^{\geq 1b})_{data}}{(N_{out}^{\geq 1b})_{MC}} = \frac{(N_{in}^{\geq 1b})_{data}}{(N_{in}^{\geq 1b})_{MC}} \frac{(R_{in/out}^{0b})_{MC}}{(R_{in/out}^{0b})_{data}}.$$

$$\text{with } N_{data} = N_{data}^{\ell\ell} - 0.5N_{data}^{e\mu}k_{\ell\ell}, \quad \text{where } k_{ee} = \frac{1}{k_{\mu\mu}} = \sqrt{\frac{N_{data}^{ee}}{N_{data}^{\mu\mu}}}$$

EW corrections to $t\bar{t}$

- Our EW correction (Hathor) is NLO in EW but LO in QCD
- Ambiguity on how to apply EW corrections to (N)NLO simulation
- Nominal choice: multiplicative

$$\sigma^{\text{rew.}} = \overset{\text{Powheg}}{\sigma_{\text{NLO QCD}}^{\text{LO EW}}} \times \overset{\text{Hathor}}{\frac{\sigma_{\text{LO QCD}}^{\text{NLO EW}}}{\sigma_{\text{LO QCD}}^{\text{LO EW}}}}$$

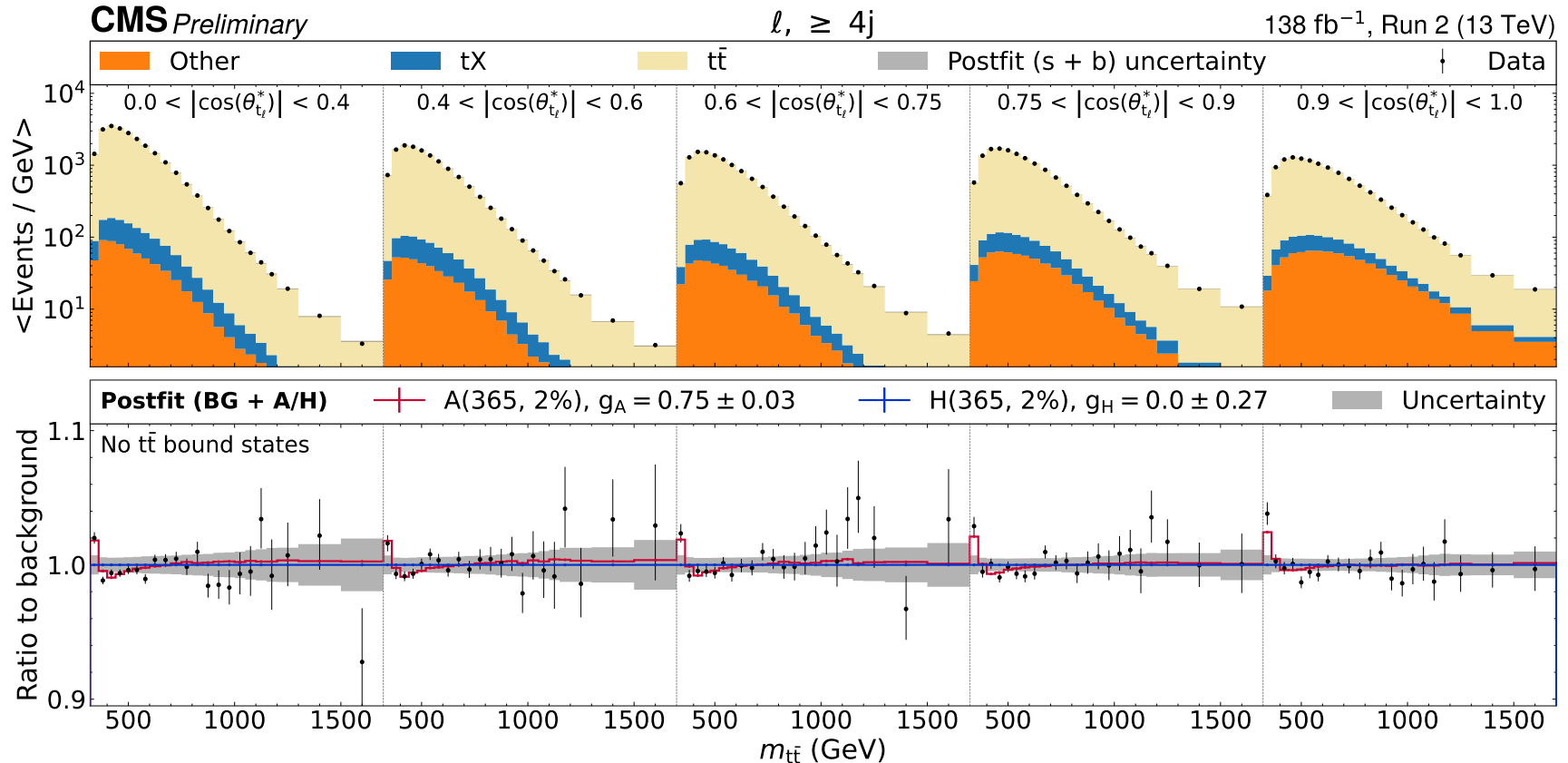
- Alternate choice: additive

$$\sigma^{\text{rew.}} = \overset{\text{MadGraph}}{\sigma_{\text{NLO QCD}}^{\text{LO EW}}} + \sigma_{\text{LO QCD}}^{\text{NLO EW}} - \sigma_{\text{LO QCD}}^{\text{LO EW}}$$

- Difference treated as systematic uncertainty

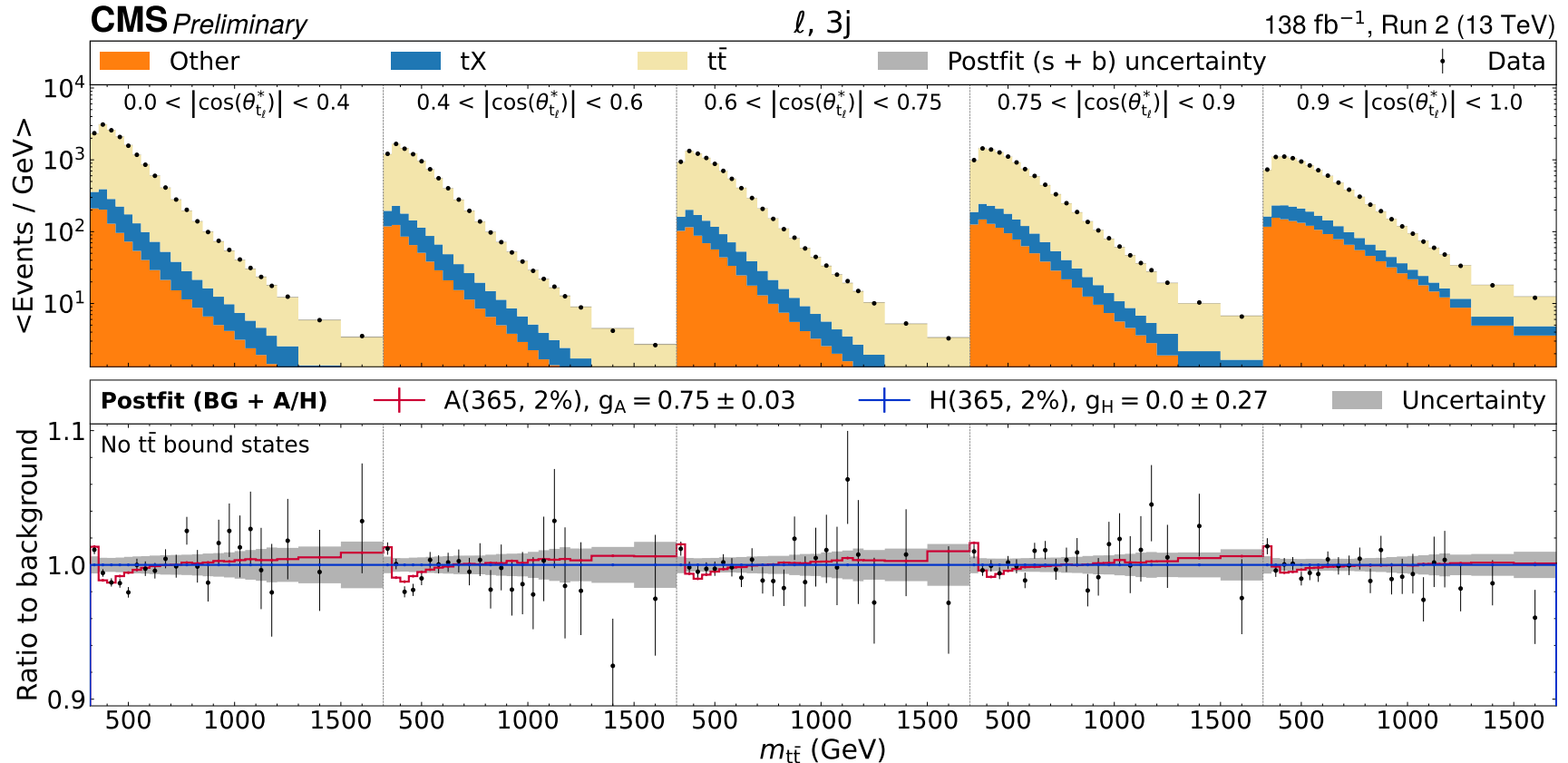
Postfit distributions: A/H

Postfit for A, 365 GeV, 2% width (best fit point)



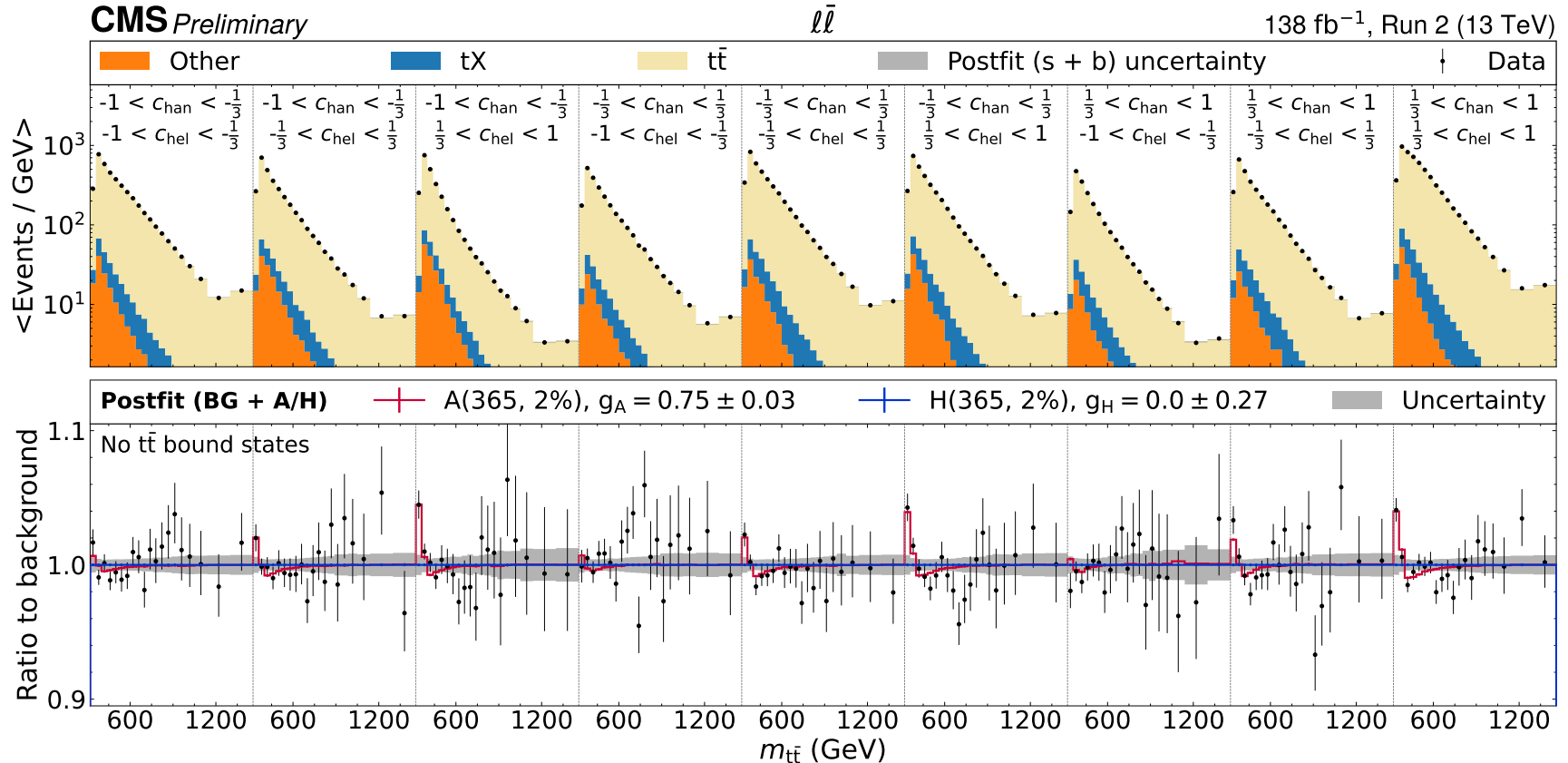
Postfit distributions: A/H

Postfit for A, 365 GeV, 2% width (best fit point)



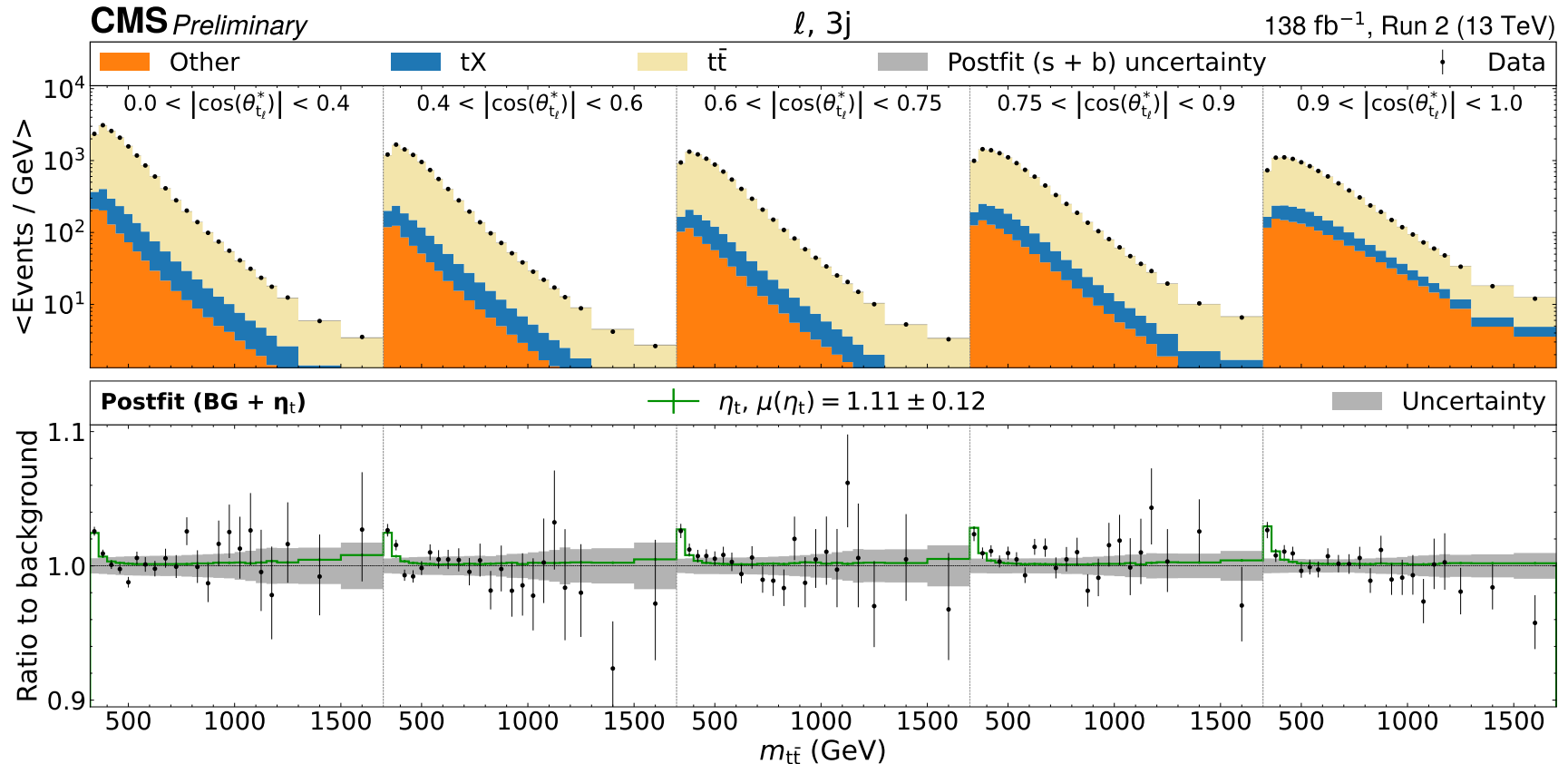
Postfit distributions: A/H

Postfit for A, 365 GeV, 2% width (best fit point)



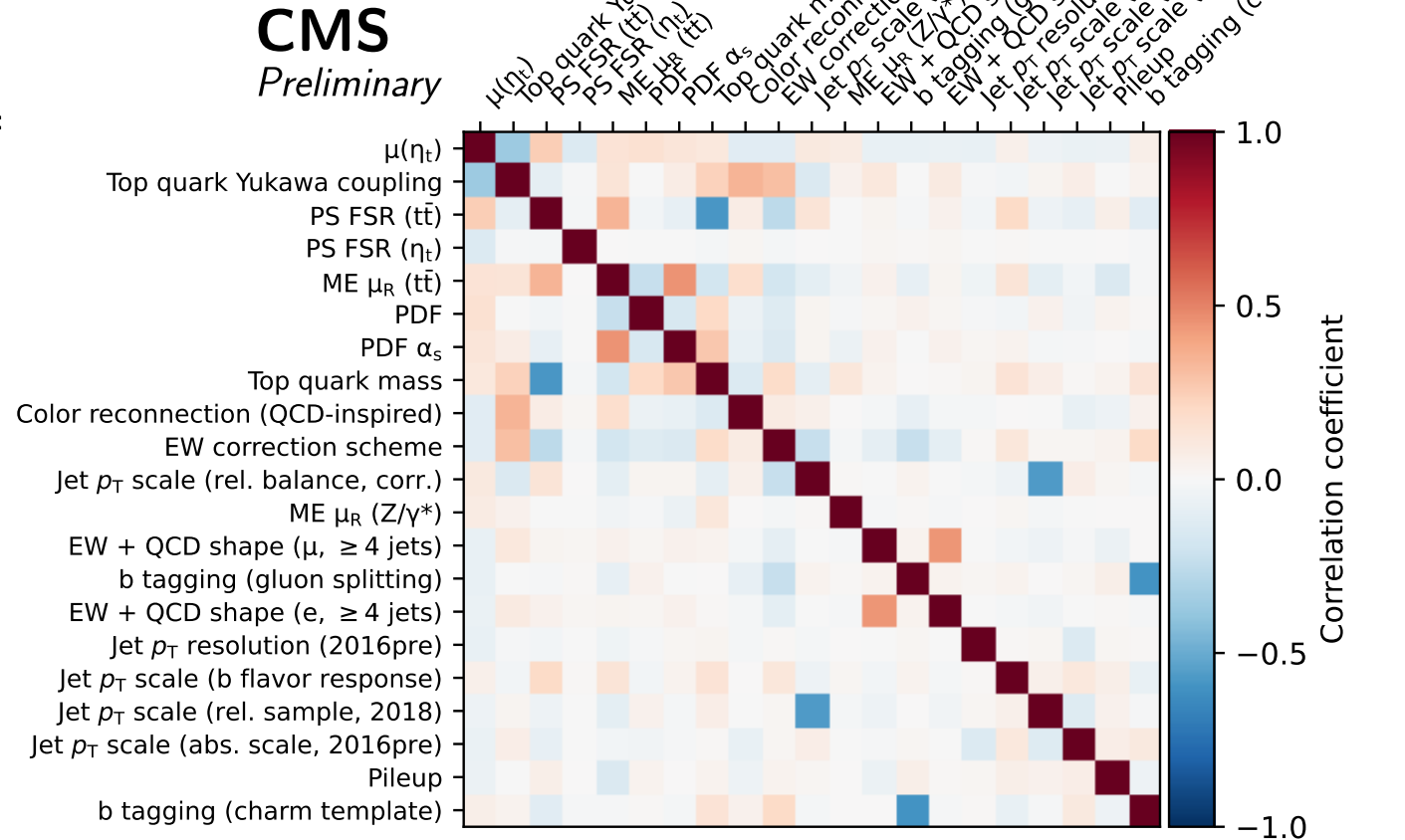
Postfit distributions: η_t

Postfit for η_t



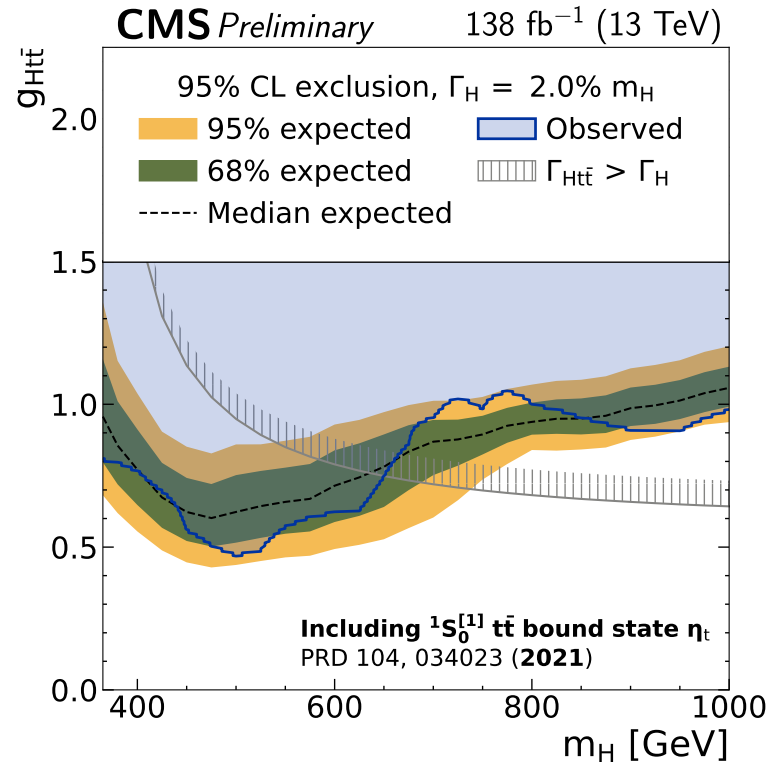
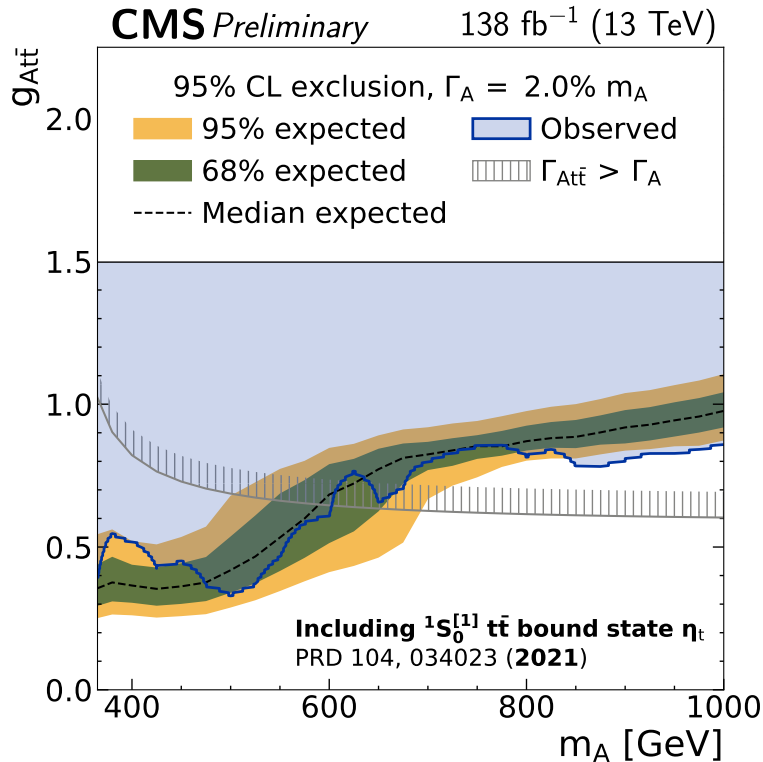
Correlation matrix

- Further assess uncertainty modeling through correlations of nuisance parameters



A/H limits including η_t

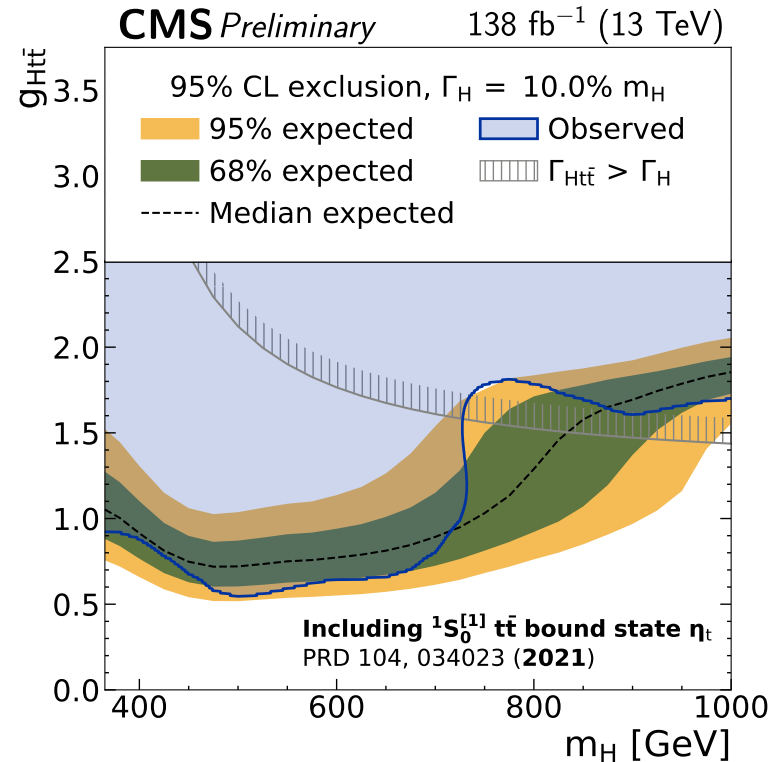
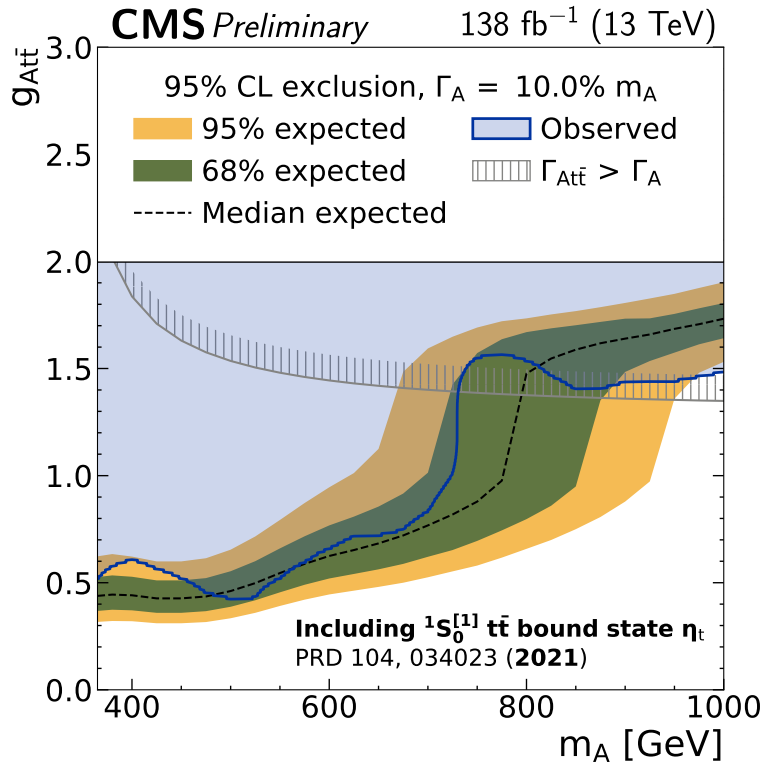
- Limits at different A/H widths



2% width

A/H limits including η_t

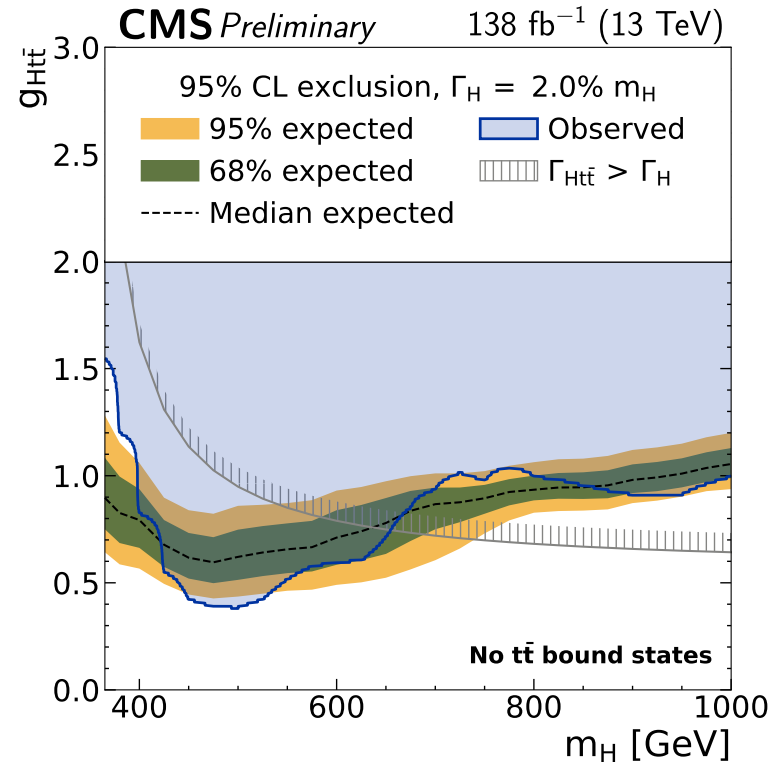
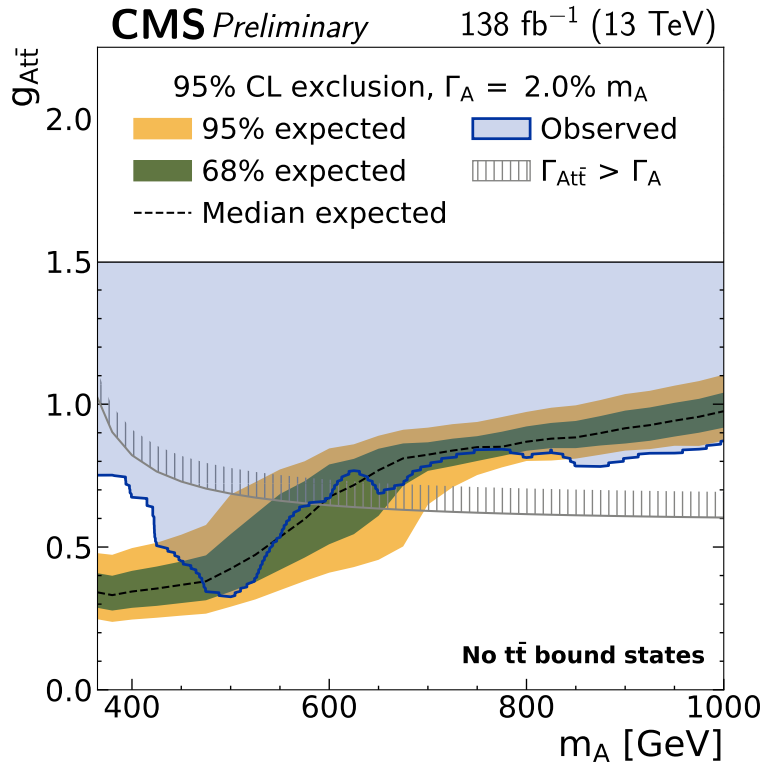
- Limits at different A/H widths



10% width

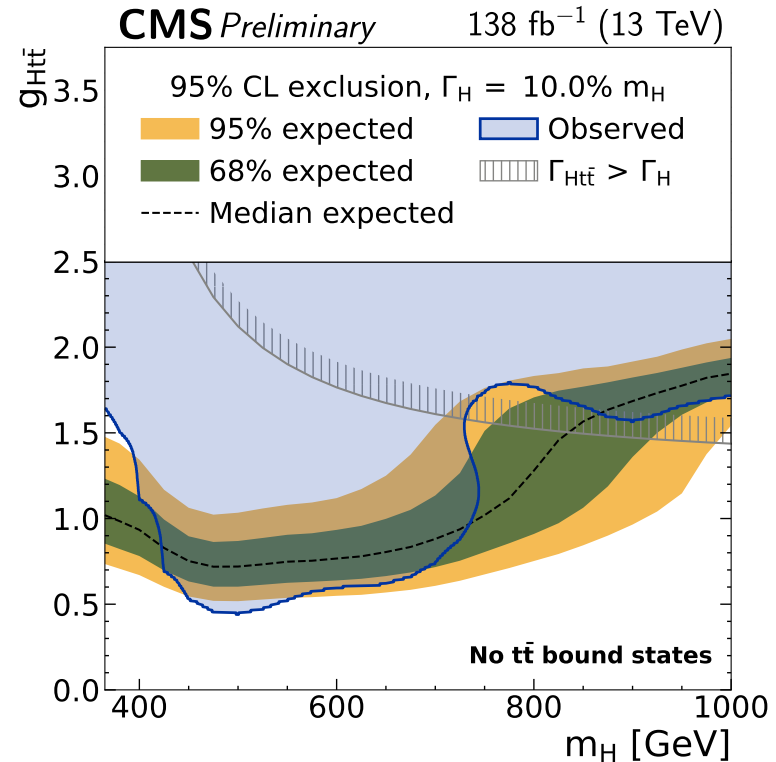
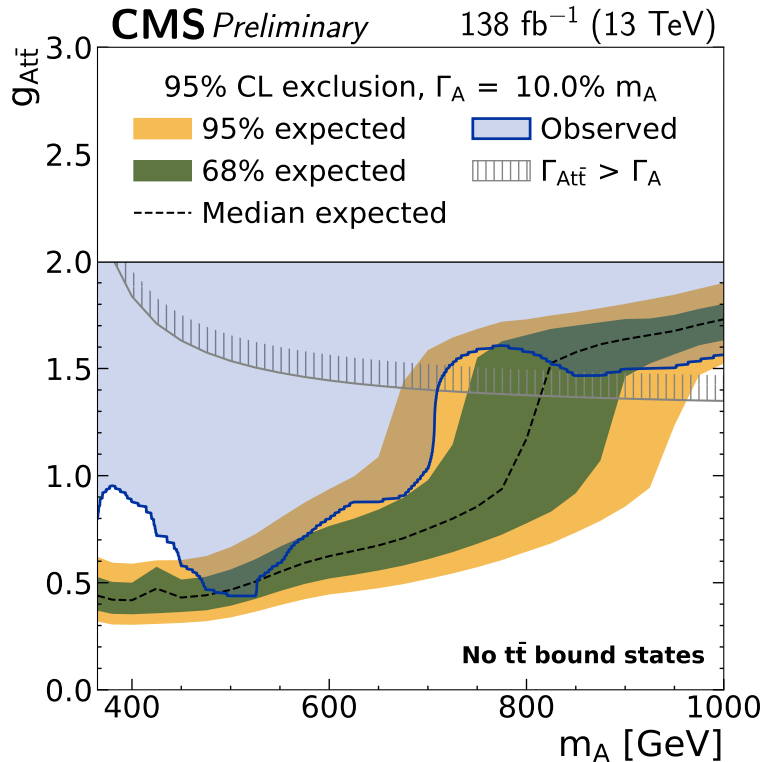
A/H limits without η_t

- Limits at different A/H widths for perturbative QCD background only



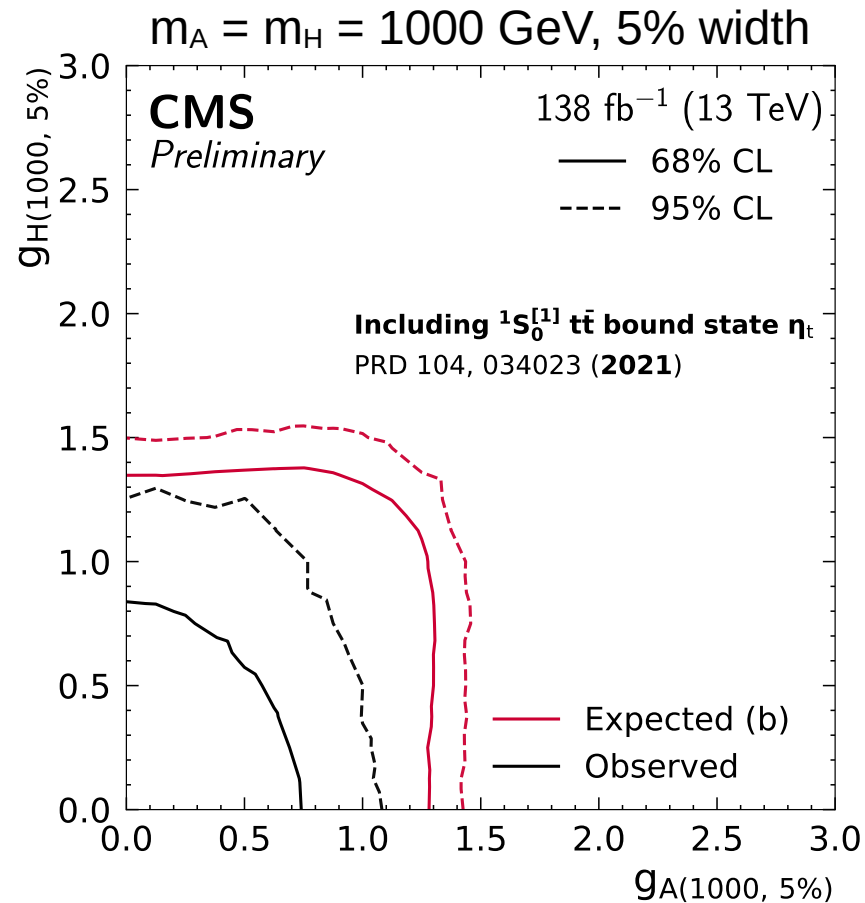
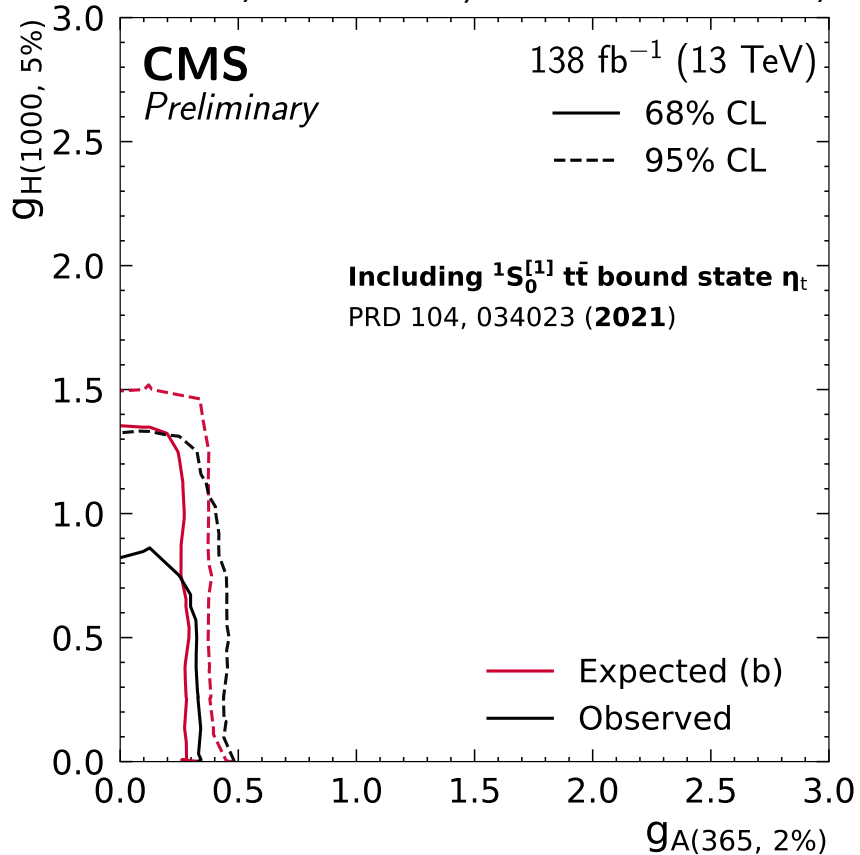
A/H limits without η_t

- Limits at different A/H widths for perturbative QCD background only



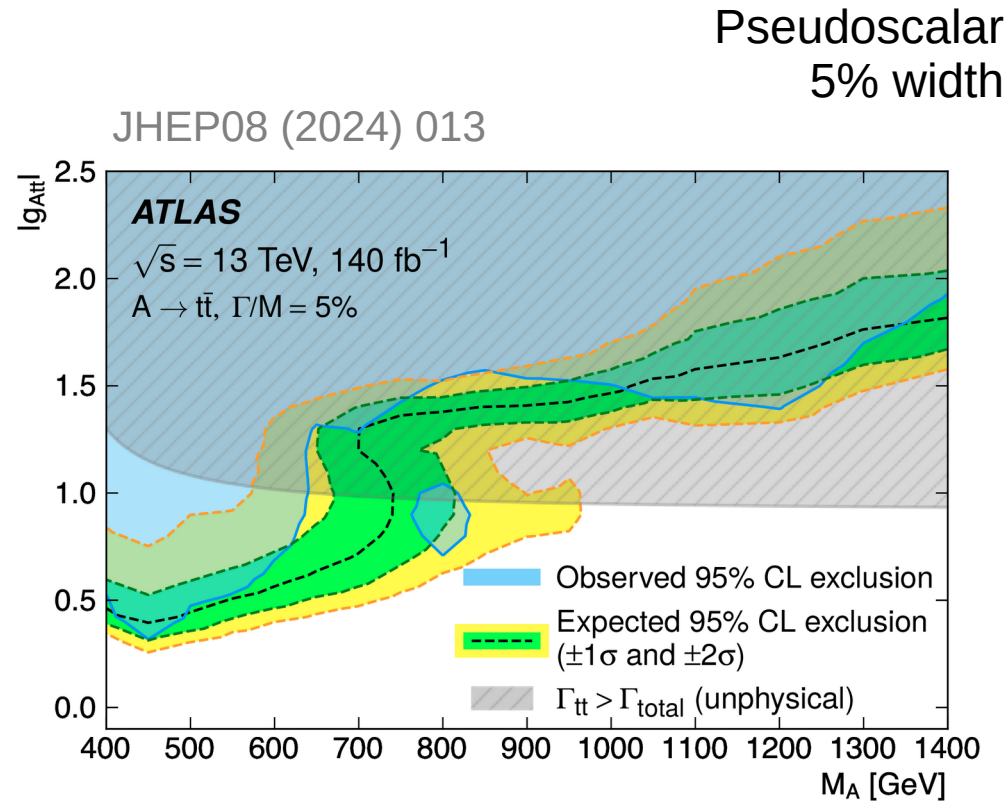
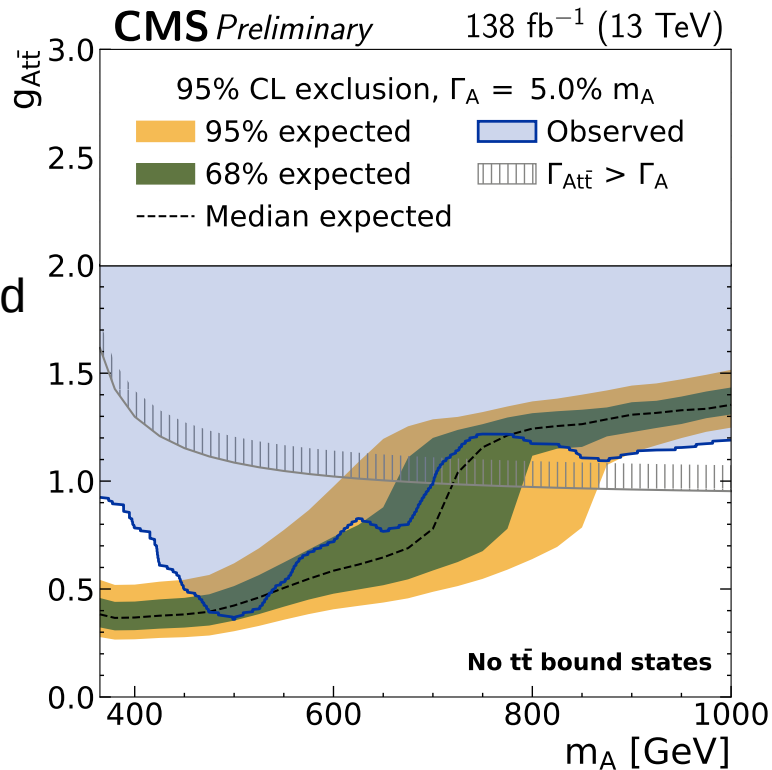
A+H interpretation

$m_A = 365$ GeV, 2% width; $m_H = 1000$ GeV, 5% width



Comparison with ATLAS

- Similar full Run 2 ATLAS result: **does not see any postfit excess!** why?



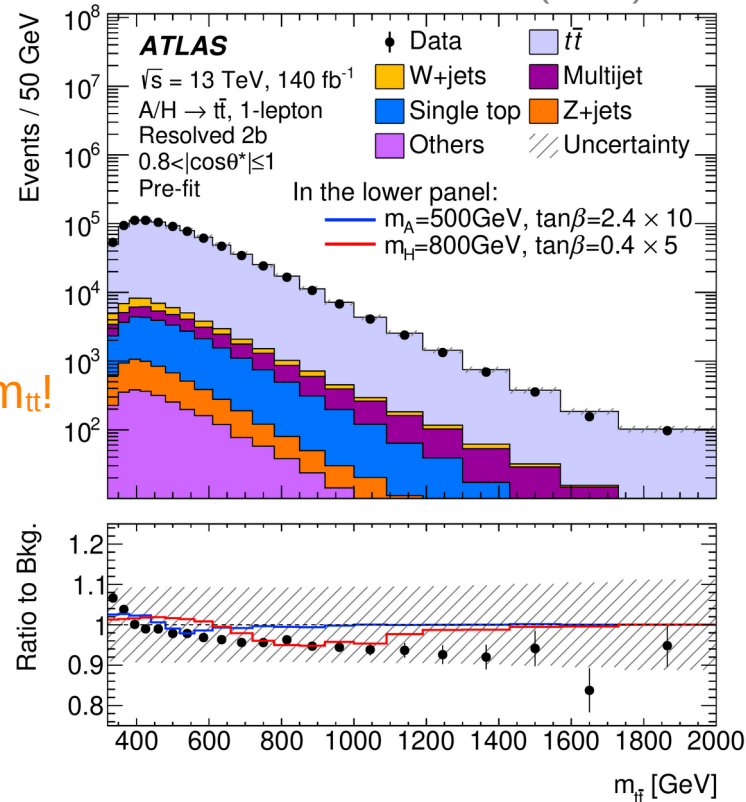
Comparison with ATLAS

- Different channel definitions in ATLAS and CMS

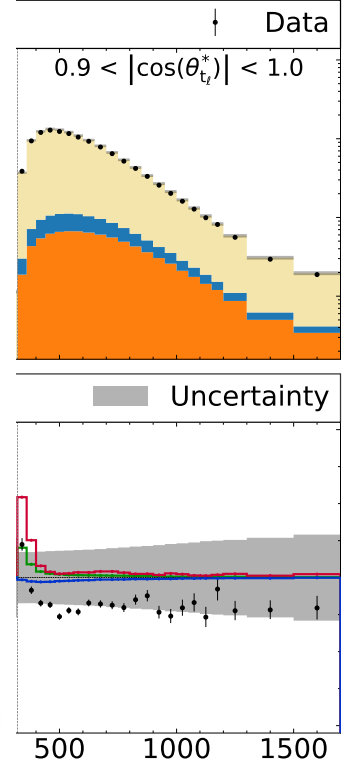
- ℓ +jets resolved:

- ATLAS: $1\ell, 1b, \geq 4$ jets
- CMS: $1\ell, 2b, 3$ jets
- both: $1\ell, 2b, \geq 4$ jets
- compare pre-fit distributions!
- Similar prefit excess in data at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$!

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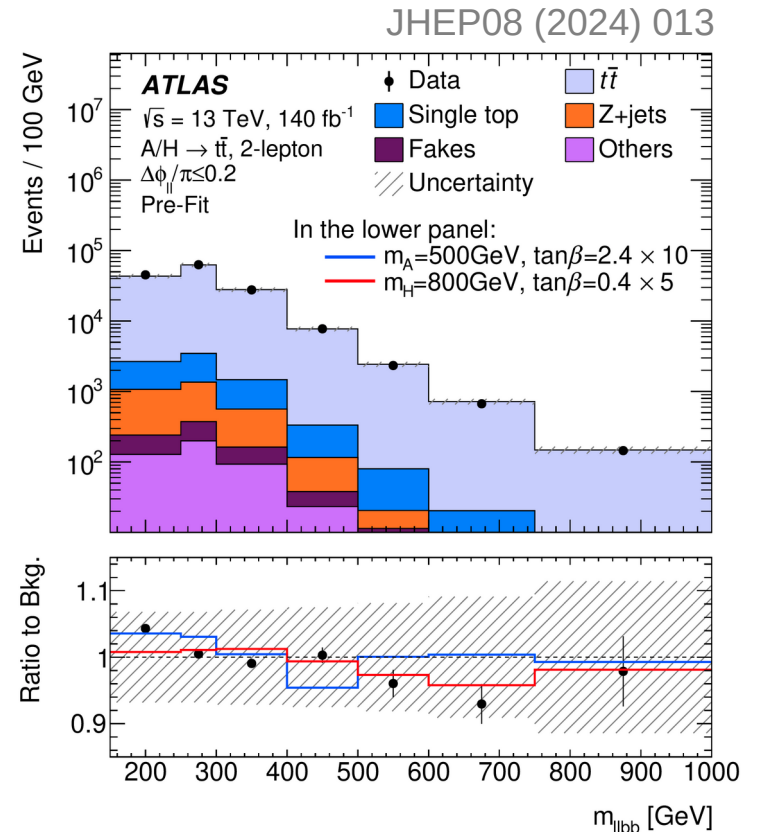


138 fb^{-1} , Run 2 (13 TeV)



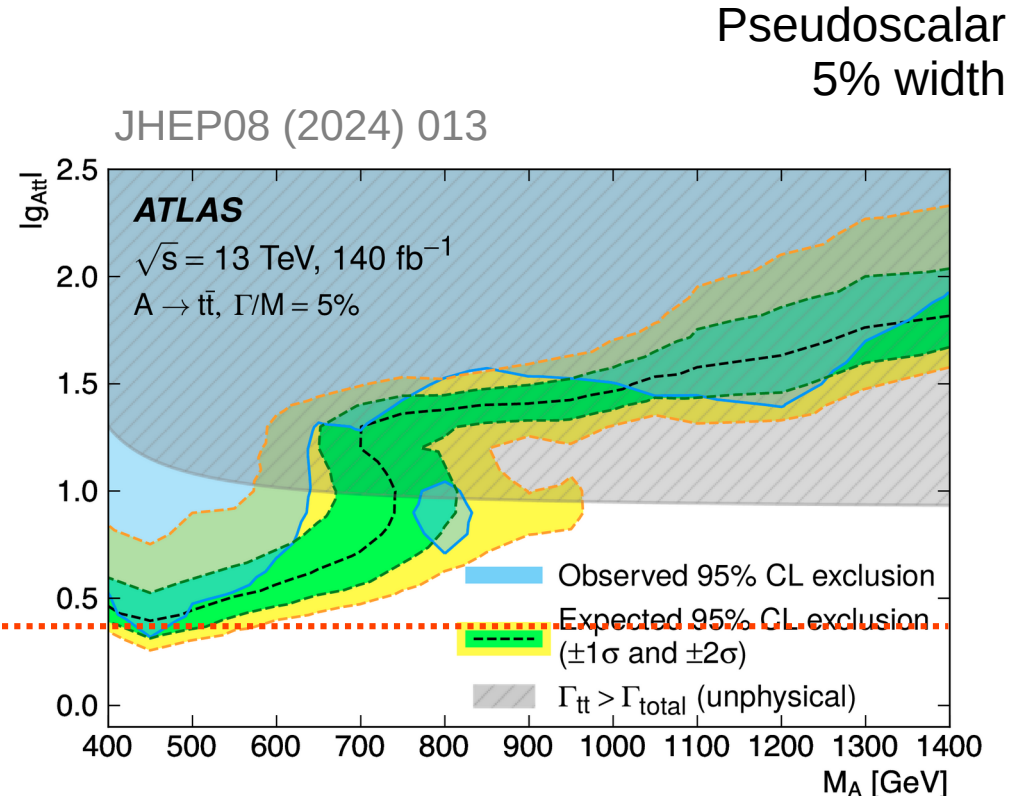
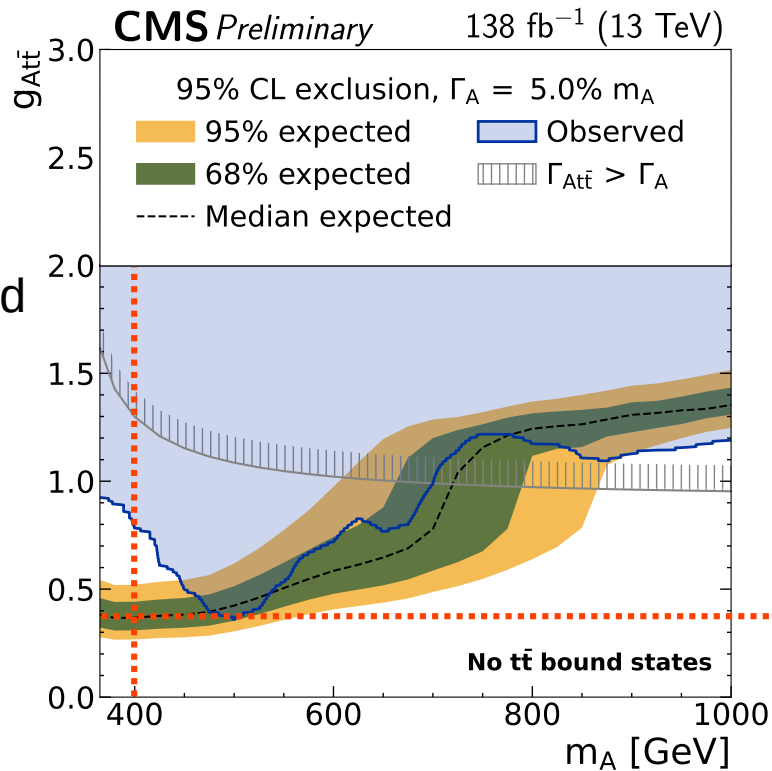
Comparison with ATLAS

- Different channel definitions in ATLAS and CMS
- ℓ +jets resolved:
 - ATLAS: $1\ell, 1b, \geq 4$ jets
 - CMS: $1\ell, 2b, 3$ jets
 - **both: $1\ell, 2b, \geq 4$ jets**
→ compare pre-fit distributions!
 - **Similar prefit excess in data at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$!**
- dilepton: difficult to compare
 - CMS: reconstruct $m_{t\bar{t}} \times C_{\text{hel}} \times C_{\text{chan}}$
 - ATLAS: no top quark reconstruction
instead: $m_{\ell\bar{\ell}bb} \times \Delta\phi_{\ell\bar{\ell}}$



Comparison with ATLAS

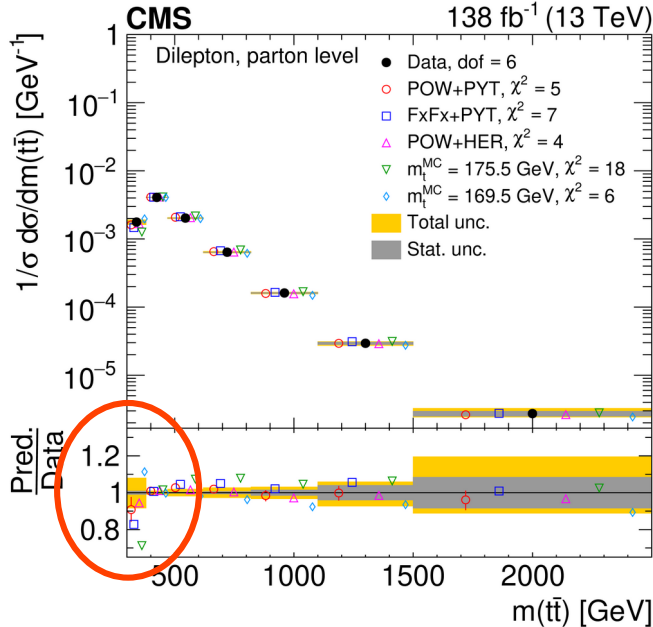
- Similar prefit excess & expected limits – but no postfit excess for ATLAS!
- We are comparing in detail...



SM: $t\bar{t}$ differential measurements

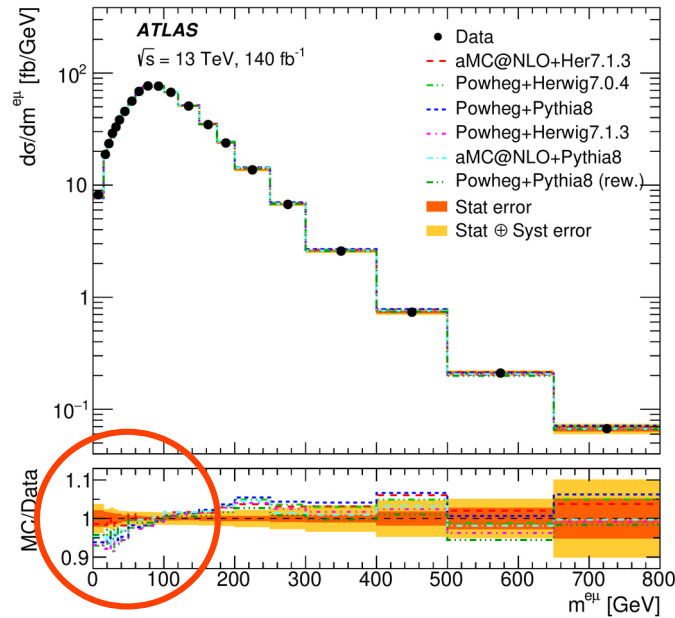
CMS $\ell\bar{\ell} - m_{t\bar{t}}$

CMS-PAS-TOP-20-006



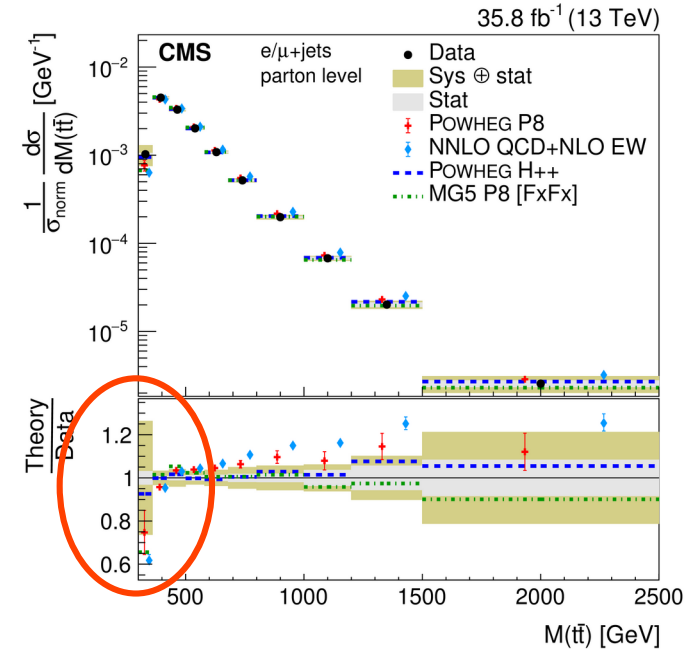
ATLAS $e\mu - m_{e\mu}$

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CMS ℓ +jets - $m_{t\bar{t}}$

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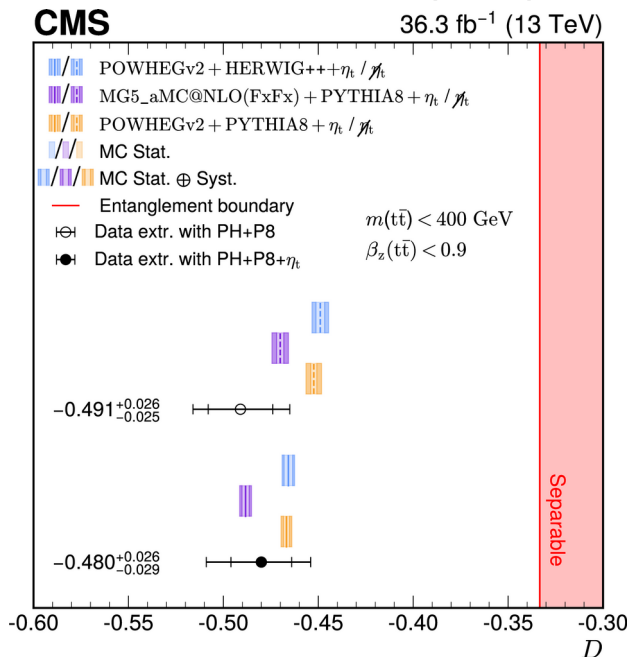


→ good description by theory except for **excess in data in threshold region**

SM: $t\bar{t}$ spin entanglement

- Measured quantity: D “ \approx strength of $t\bar{t}$ spin correlation” (oversimplified)

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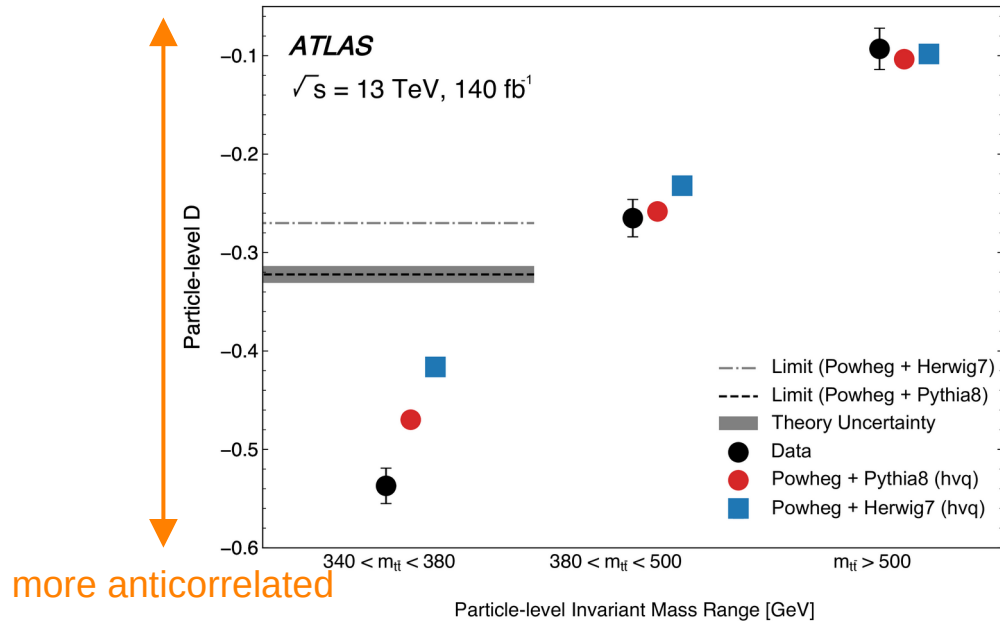


more anticorrelated

less correlated

less correlated

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more anticorrelated