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Highlights on top quark physics with the ATLAS Experiment at the LHC

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Top quark physics

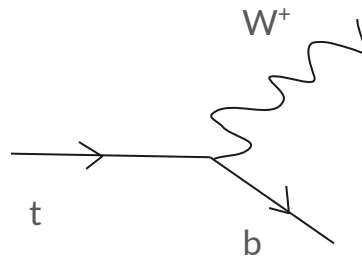
Top quark has unique properties

- The **heaviest** known fundamental particle
- The **largest Yukawa** coupling to **Higgs** $\lambda_t \sim 1$
- Lifetime $\sim 10^{-25}$ s smaller than hadronization time $\sim 10^{-24}$ s = **possibility to study “bare” quark properties**, e.g. spin is transferred to decay products (leptons, down-type quarks)
- Plays important role in EWSB

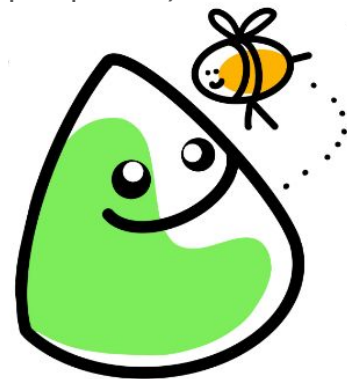
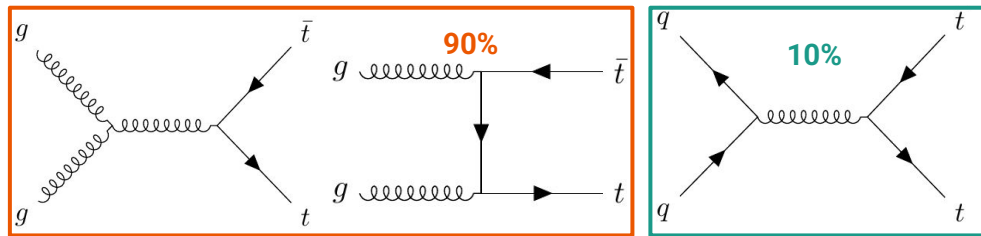
LHC is a top-quark factory \sim **200M top quarks** produced in Run2!

- Top quark dominantly produced in $t\bar{t}$ pairs
- Allows to perform precise measurements

Top decays almost exclusively to **W** and **b** quark



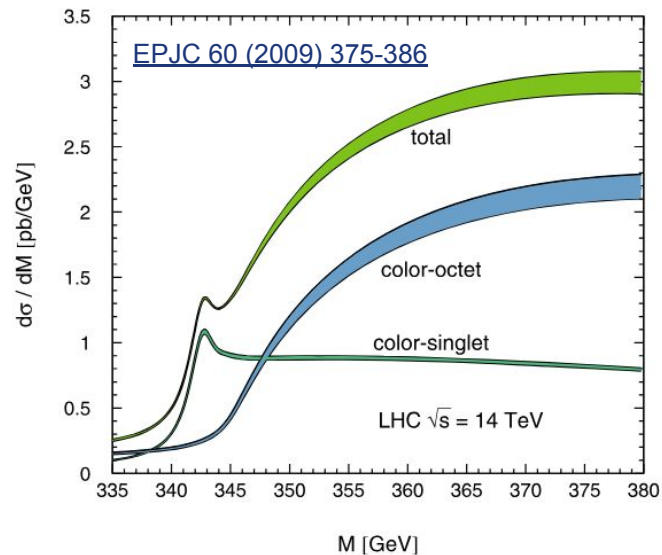
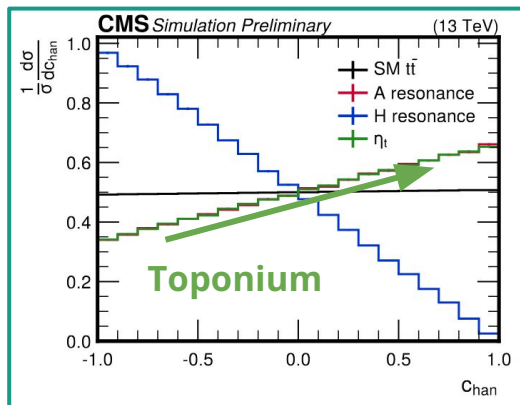
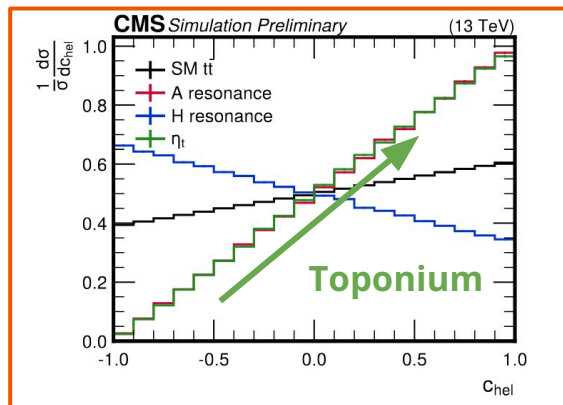
In pp collision at 13TeV:



Observation of Xsection enhancement near $t\bar{t}$ threshold

Toponium = Quasi-bound state of top quarks predicted by SM

- Not the same as $b\bar{b}/c\bar{c}$ (**not a s-channel resonance**)
 - one of top decays first, they do not annihilate themselves
- Pseudoscalar nature dominant - translated to angular properties of top decay products
- Not sensitive enough to be observed in $m_{t\bar{t}}$ spectrum
 - Use variables C_{hel} and C_{han} sensitive to spin-correlations



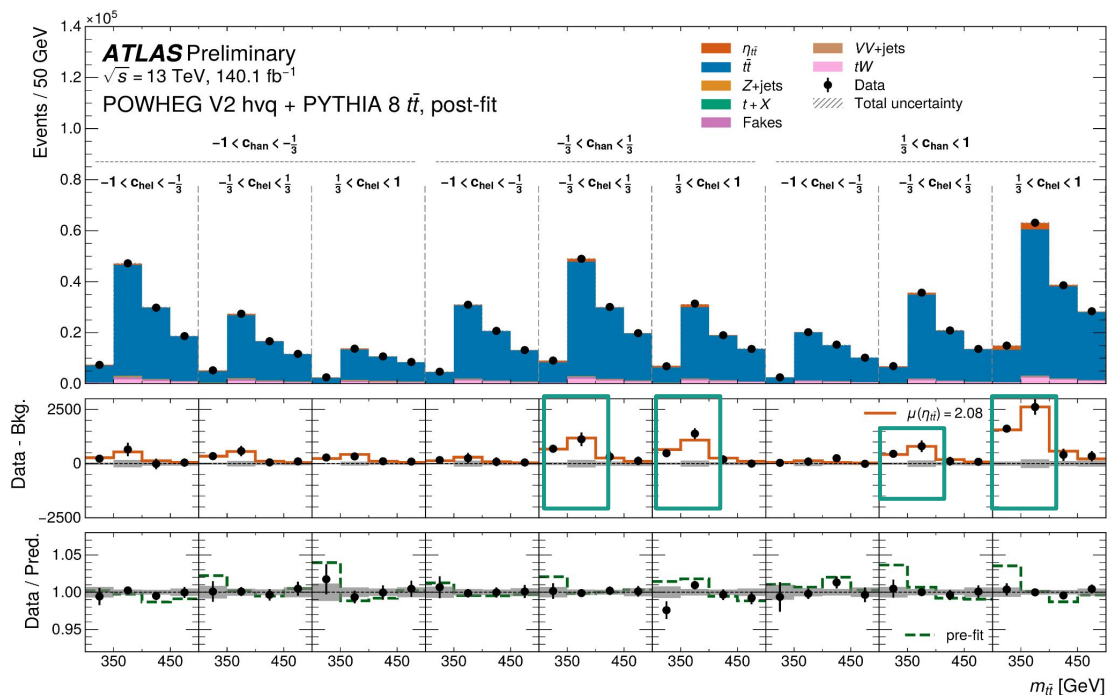
Observed previously by CMS
[\[CMS-TOP-24-007, CMS-PAS-HIG-22-013\]](#)

η_t = BSM-like pseudoscalar color-singlet resonance

[CMS-PAS-HIG-22-013](#)

Observation of Xsection enhancement near $t\bar{t}$ threshold

- Dileptonic $t\bar{t}$ events with $m_{t\bar{t}} \leq 500$ GeV, events divided into 9 SR in c_{hel} , c_{han} and $m_{t\bar{t}}$
- Formation of quasi-bound-state described in non-relativistic QCD (NR-QCD) = $t\bar{t}_{\text{NR-QCD}}$ **model** NEW!
 - Focuses on a toponium-like spin-singlet colour-singlet component



Profile-likelihood fit of 2 models to data (with/without $t\bar{t}_{\text{NR-QCD}}$)

$t\bar{t}$ reconstructed via Ellipse method [[Nucl. Instrum. Meth. A 736 \(2014\) 169](#)]

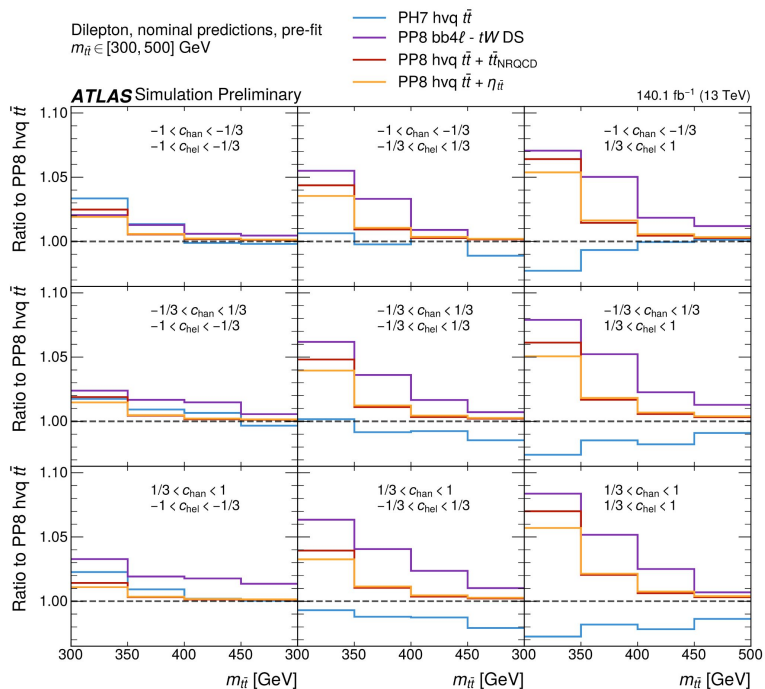
Excess of events compared to baseline (without $t\bar{t}_{\text{NR-QCD}}$ effects) in all SRs **at low $m_{t\bar{t}}$ values**, notably for **larger c_{hel} and c_{han} values**

Baseline model is rejected with an observed (expected) **significance of 7.7σ (5.7σ)**

Observation of Xsection enhancement near $t\bar{t}$ threshold

Measured Xsection of $t\bar{t}$ quasi-bound state:

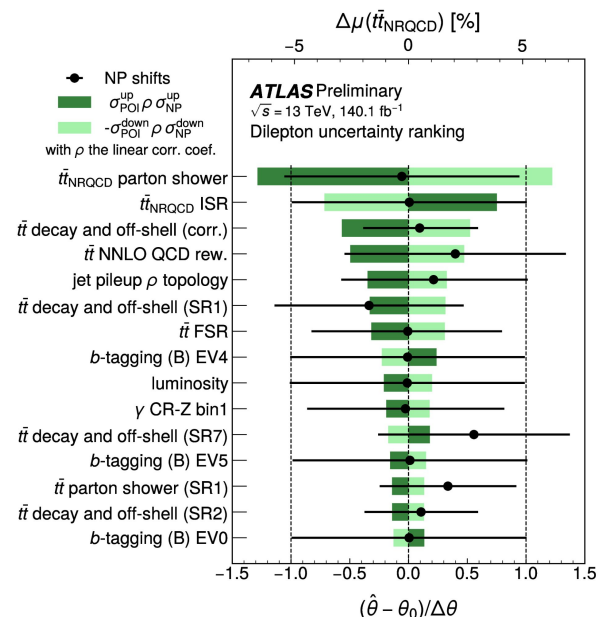
$$\sigma(t\bar{t}_{NR-QCD}) = 9.0 \pm 1.3 \text{ pb} = 9.0 \pm 1.2 \text{ (stat.)} \pm 0.6 \text{ (syst.)}$$



Extremely challenging measurement:

Need more precise models of the threshold region and toponium signal, understanding of NLO EW and NNLO QCD corrections to production NLO and off-shell effects in decay, etc.

Further studies needed to investigate the nature of this excess



Measurement precision limited by signal and background modelling uncertainties.

Top pole mass from $t\bar{t}+j$ events (dilepton channel)

Top-quark mass m_t^{pole} is a free parameter of the SM
 Motivation: consistency checks of SM, electroweak vacuum stability

First time $t\bar{t}+1$ jet m_t^{pole} analysis
 in dilepton channel!

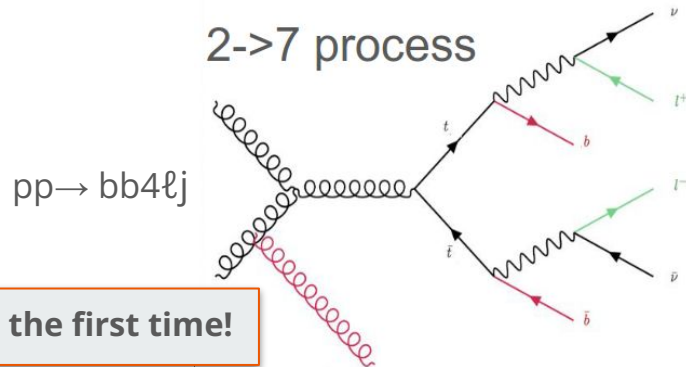
Special observable R

- **High sensitivity** to top-quark mass ($\rho_s > 0.7$)
- **Normalized** = many uncertainties reduce in ratio
- $m_0 = 170$ GeV $\rightarrow R \in [0,1]$ (convention has no impact on result)

$$\mathcal{R}(\rho_s; m_t^{\text{pole}}) = \frac{1}{\sigma_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}} \cdot \frac{d\sigma_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}}{d\rho_s}, \text{ with } \rho_s = \frac{2m_0}{\sqrt{s_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}}}$$

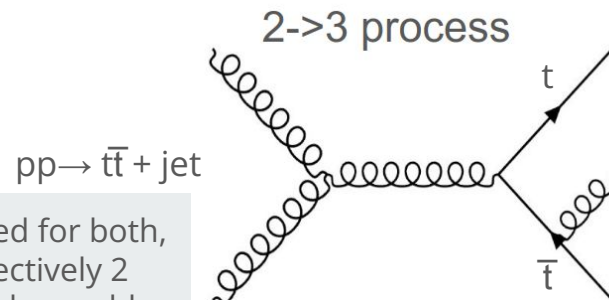
Two fixed-order NLO QCD calculations used to extract m_t^{pole} from Xsection (provides consistency in theoretical definition of m_t):

- **New calculations with decayed top quarks** available (off-shell effects) [[JHEP 11 \(2016\) 098](#)]



Used for the first time!

- Improved settings for **stable top-quarks** calculation [[JHEP 05 \(2022\) 146](#)]

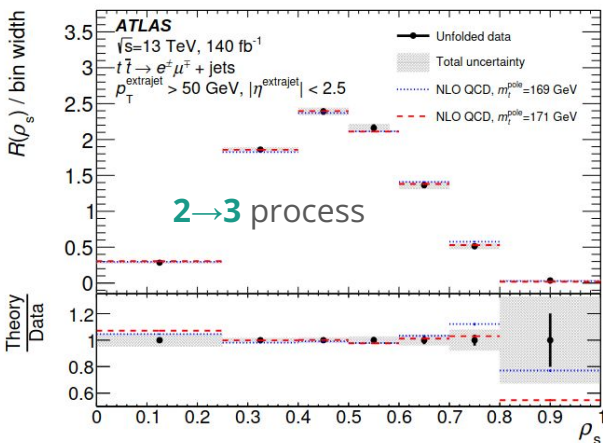


R is defined for both,
 but effectively 2
 different observables

Top pole mass from $t\bar{t}+j$ events (dilepton channel)

Measure **normalized Xsection** in $e^\pm\mu^\mp$ channel of $t\bar{t}$ system + at least 1 jet as a **function of $m_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}} = \rho_s$**

- Unfolded to parton level with Iterative Bayesian Unfolding
 - Parton level definition depends on the process (**2→3** or **2→7**)
- χ^2 fit of $R(\rho_s; m_t^{\text{pole}})$ to fixed-order NLO QCD predictions dependent on $m_t^{\text{pole}} \in [166.0, 179.0]$ GeV to extract m_t^{pole}



Dominant systematic sources:

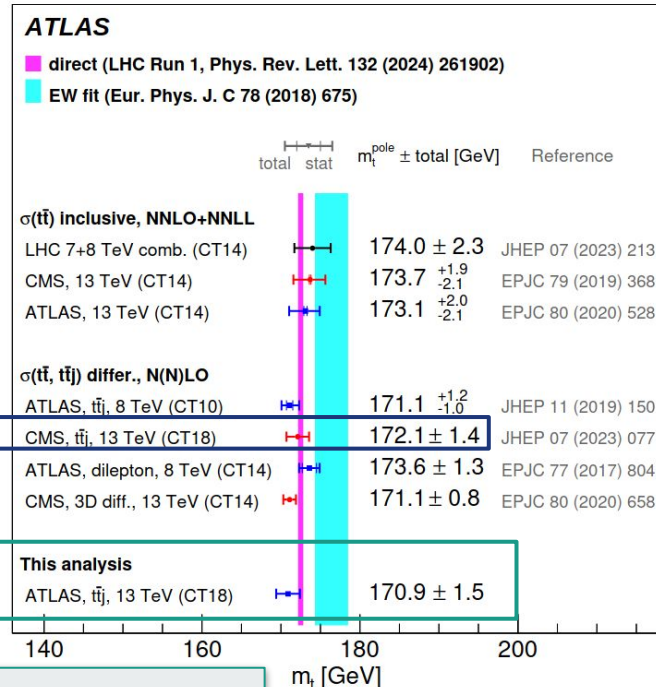
- $t\bar{t}$ modelling, jet-related uncertainties

m_t^{pole} from **2→3** and **2→7** agree within theoretical uncertainties

- m_t^{pole} from **2→7** less precise

2→3 process, main result:

$$m_t^{\text{pole}} = 170.73 \pm 0.33 \text{ (stat.)} \pm 1.36 \text{ (syst.)} {}^{+0.34}_{-0.28} \text{ (scale)} {}^{+0.24}_{-0.24} \text{ (PDF} \oplus \alpha_s) \text{ GeV}$$



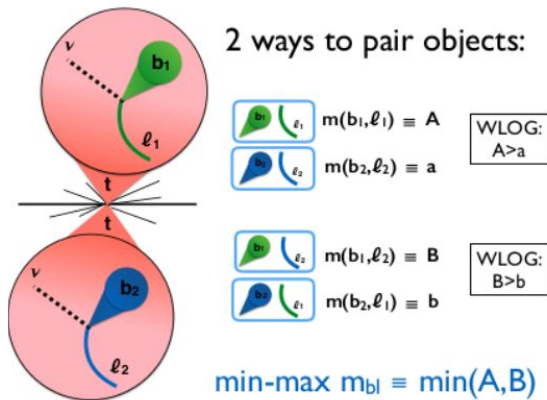
Slightly larger uncertainty wrt **CMS** [JHEP 07 (2023) 077] = more extensive set of modeling unc.

Agrees with precise direct top mass meas. from Run1!

Differential cross sections of WbWb in dilepton channel

- Addresses **t \bar{t} /tWb interference**: measures Xsection in specific variable $m^{b\ell}_{\text{minimax}}$ in sensitive region (**2b-jets exclusive**)
- Helps with WbWb modelling: Xsection for several kinematic variables in more inclusive phase space

$$m^{bl}_{\text{minimax}} \equiv \min \left\{ \max \left(m^{b_1 l_1}, m^{b_2 l_2} \right), \max \left(m^{b_1 l_2}, m^{b_2 l_1} \right) \right\}$$



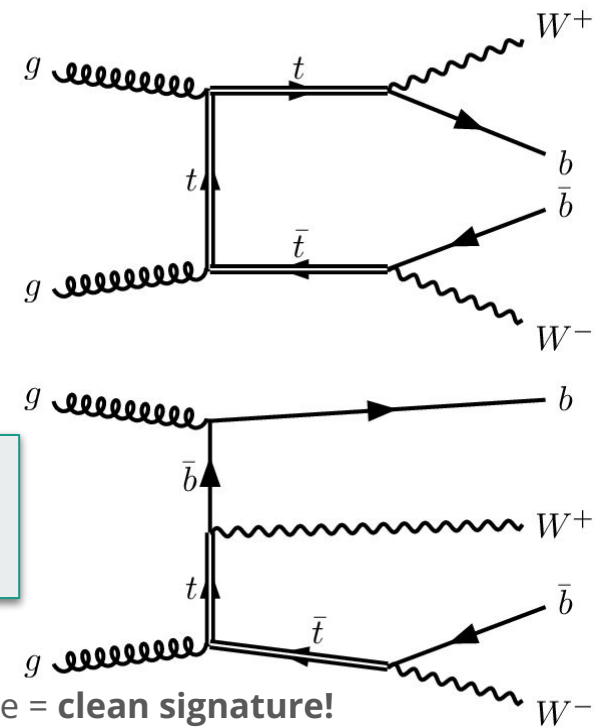
For $t\bar{t}$: $m^{b\ell}_{\text{minimax}} < m_{\text{top}}$ if $N_{\text{b-jets}} = 2$

For tWb: $m^{b\ell}_{\text{minimax}}$ **unconstrained**

Fiducial phase space:

At least **two b-jets**, μ of opposite charge = **clean signature!**

Spectra corrected for detector effects and **unfolded to particle level** by Iterative Bayesian Unfolding (IBU)



Differential cross sections of WbWb in dilepton channel

$M_{\text{minmax}}^{b\ell}$ compared with predictions of various MC generators

Nominal = **Powheg+Pythia8** (tW DR scheme)

- **Best agreement** with data, but **fails** to reproduce the **shape of the tail**

Powheg+Pythia8 (**bb4l**)

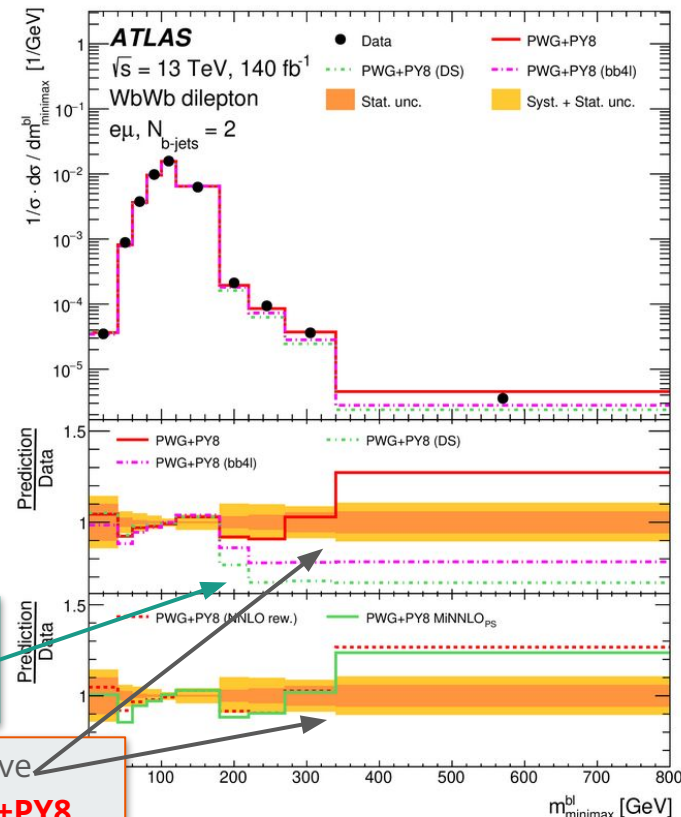
- Expected to be the most precise model, but still under investigation, also not complete set of uncertainties
- **Underestimates** Xsection in the **tail** (the largest interference impact) => **this measurement provides crucial info for its improvement!!**

For $m_{\text{minmax}}^{b\ell}$

Models	χ^2/NDF	p -value
PWG+PY8	12.8/9	0.17
PWG+PY8 (DS)	39.1/9	<0.01
PWG+PY8 (bb4l)	28.6/9	<0.01
PWG+PY8 (NNLO rew.)	12.8/9	0.17
PWG+PY8 MINNLO _{PS}	17.6/9	0.04

PWG+PY8 (DS) [dashed line]
= worst agreement above 180 GeV

NNLO corrections for $m_{\text{minmax}}^{b\ell}$ have
no major impact wrt **nominal PWG+PY8**



Differential cross sections of WbWb in dilepton channel

Differential Xsections of 11 observables in 2b inclusive phase space:

$$p_T^{\text{jet}1}, p_T^{\text{jet}2}, p_T^{\ell 1}, p_T^{\ell 2}, m^{\text{bb}4\ell}, p_T^{\text{bb}4\ell}, p_T^{\text{bb}}, p_T^{\text{bb}\ell\ell}, m^{\text{bb}\ell\ell}, N_{\text{jets}}$$

No model describes simultaneously all observables

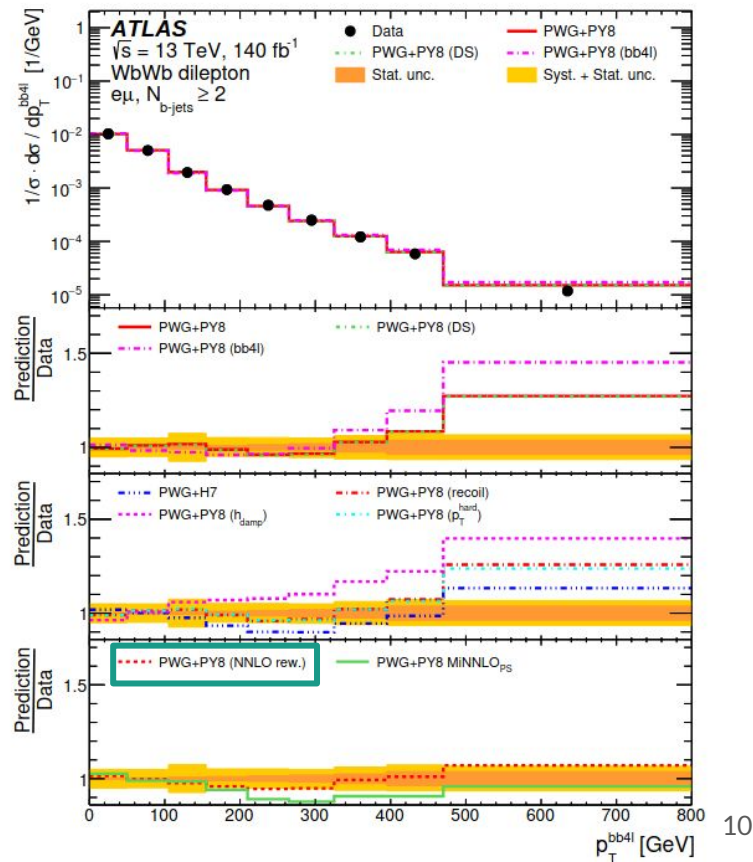
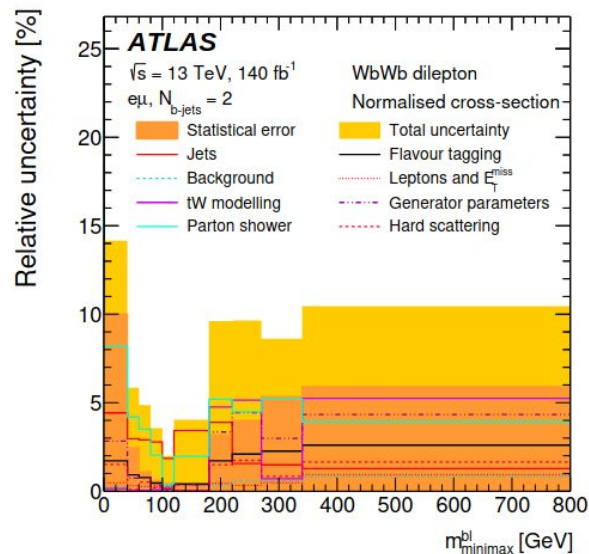
except PWG+PY8 (NNLO rew.)

Uncertainties:

- **Signal** modelling and **flavor-tagging** dominant
- ½ of uncertainty wrt **previous results!**

Legacy ATLAS measurement @ 13 TeV!

Guidance for future MC tuning, WbWb, t \bar{t} and tW interference modelling



High mass $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and LFU-inspired EFT interpretation

Measure $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ ($\ell = e, \mu$) & high mass: $m_{\ell\ell} > m_Z + 10$ GeV => **sensitivity to some 4-fermion EFT operators**

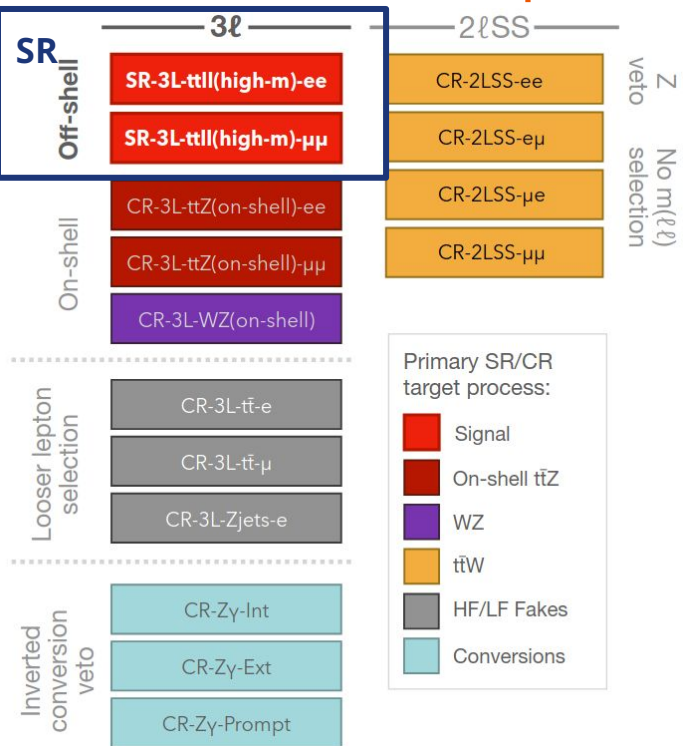
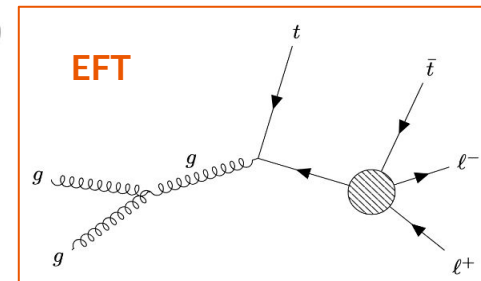
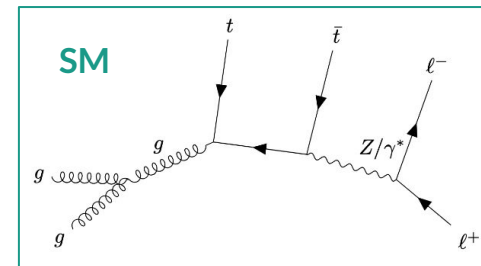
Flavour-specific EFT operators can probe flavour universality violation!

$$\mathcal{L}_{eff} = \mathcal{L}_{SM}^{(4)} + \frac{1}{\Lambda} \sum_i C_i^{(5)} O_i^{(5)} + \frac{1}{\Lambda^2} \sum_i C_i^{(6)} O_i^{(6)} + \mathcal{O}(\Lambda^{-3})$$

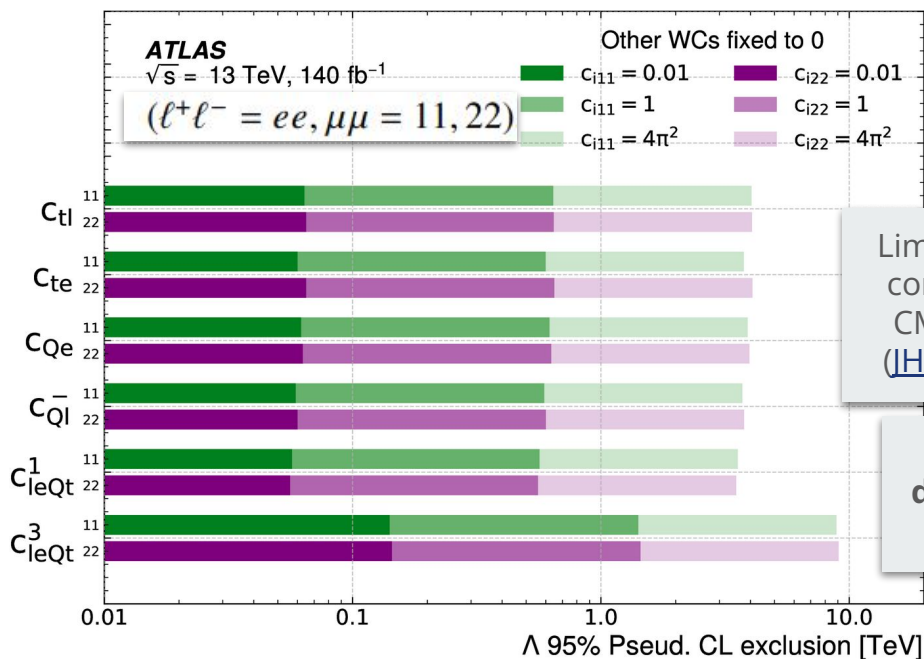
Large impact of EFT in high $m_{\ell\ell}$ bins, but very low $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ statistics
 ($m_{\ell\ell} > 550$ GeV)
 → CR to constrain $t\bar{t}W$, SM $t\bar{t}Z$, WZ +jets, fake leptons

Maximum-likelihood fits of the signal and control categories to data performed.

Statistical uncertainties due to the limited size MC samples handled via dedicated parameters (the Beeston-Barlow “lite” technique)



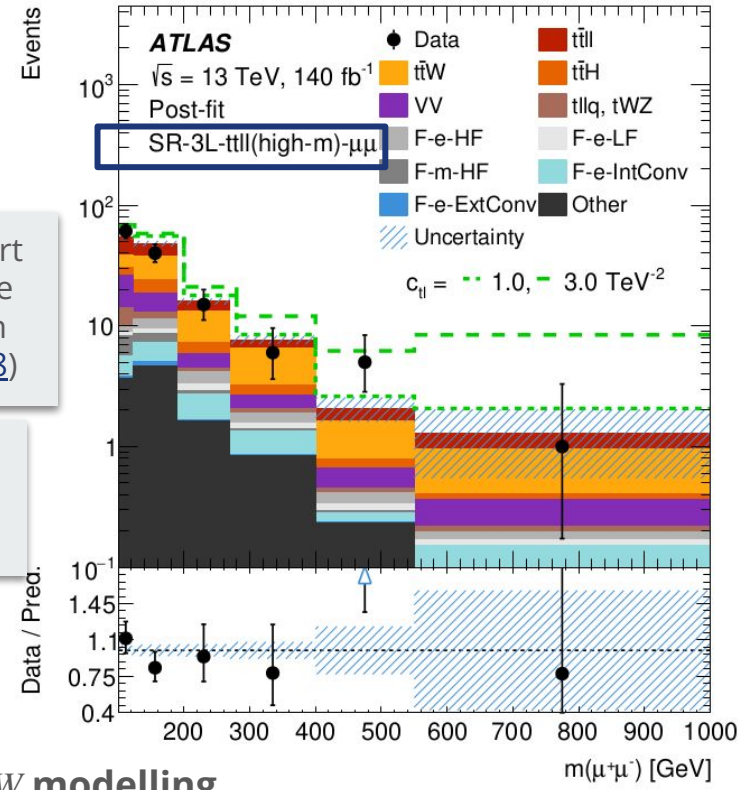
High mass $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and LFU-inspired EFT interpretation



Limits **improved** wrt constraint from the CMS Collaboration ([JHEP 12 \(2023\) 068](https://arxiv.org/abs/1206.068))

No significant deviations from SM

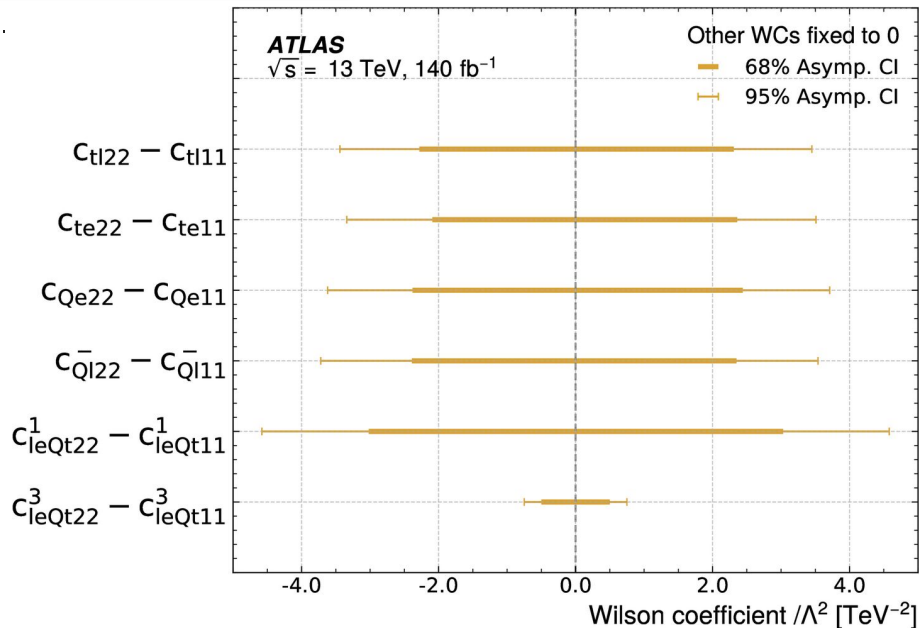
NEW: Pseudodata (toys) used to obtain true coverage!



The largest systematic uncertainties are due to the SM $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and $t\bar{t}W$ **modelling**, and the **limited size of MC samples** in some of the high $m(\ell^+\ell^-)$ bins

High mass $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and LFU-inspired EFT interpretation

($\ell^+\ell^- = ee, \mu\mu = 11, 22$)



Maximum-likelihood fits are performed with the signal parameterised by EFT Wilson Coefficients (WCs); WCs are treated as free floating

LFU-violating signals tested by the difference between electron and muon WC for each operator, e.g.

$$\Delta(c_{t\ell(22)} - c_{t\ell(11)})$$

=> **Tested for the first time at the LHC!**

Limited by Run 2 statistical precision, but cancellation of systematic uncertainties possible

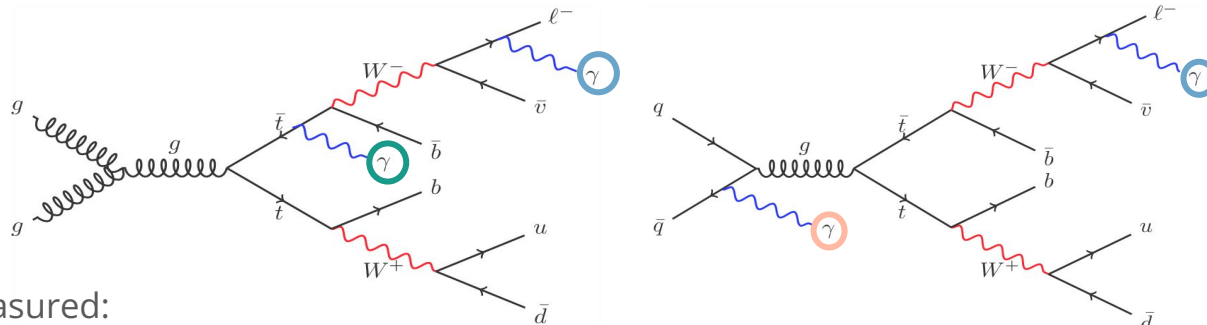
=> with more data higher-precision test of SM possible!

No deviations from the SM or signs of lepton flavour universality violation!

First observation of $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ process

$t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ = Rare process with small Xsection in SM, not studied before

- γ from: **off-shell top**, **initial state radiation**, **charged top-decay products**



Measured:

- $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ fiducial Xsection** at particle level in single-lepton events with exactly 2 high- p_T isolated photons
- Measure **ratio of $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ to $t\bar{t}\gamma$** ($R = \sigma_{t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma} / \sigma_{t\bar{t}\gamma}$) - test the impact of cancelation of systematics, **constrain to the CP-violating coupling terms**
 - $t\bar{t}\gamma$ already measured [JHEP10\(2024\)191](#) (here used for background estimates, synchronization of systematics btw measurements)

Motivation:

Probe of t - γ coupling

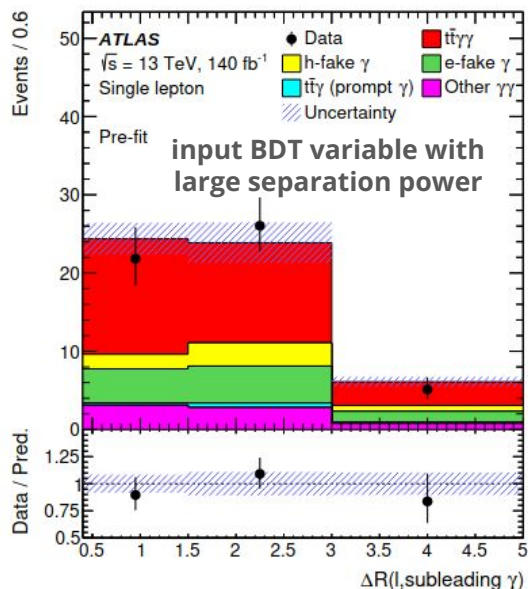
Irreducible background to $t\bar{t}H$ ($H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$)

Sensitive to chromoelectric, chromomagnetic dipole moments = higher order corrections in many BSM
[\[Phys. Rev. D 98, 035040, 2018, Chinese Phys. C 45 113101, \(2021\)\]](#)

First observation of $t\bar{t}\gamma$ process

Inclusive $t\bar{t}\gamma$ Xsection obtained by **Profile Likelihood Unfolding** to Boosted Decision Tree (BDT) output

- BDT used for signal-background discrimination



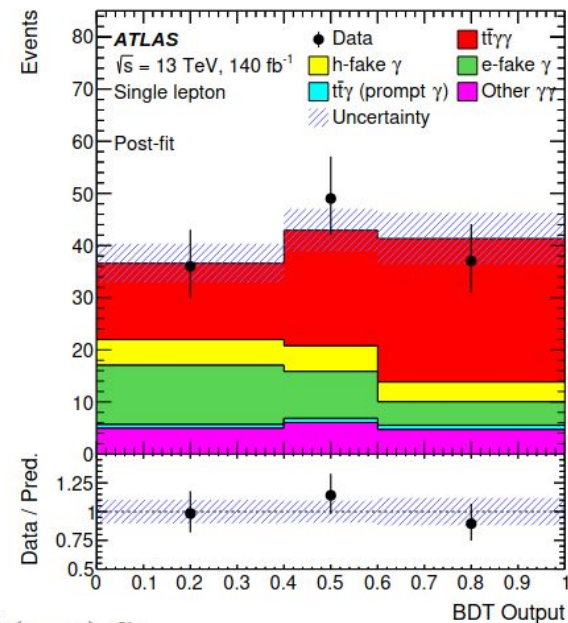
Dominant systematic uncertainties: jet related, fake photon estimates, $W\gamma\gamma$ normalisation, photon isolation and identification

$$\sigma_{t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma} = 2.42^{+0.58}_{-0.53} \text{ fb} = 2.42^{+0.46}_{-0.38} \text{ (stat)}^{+0.35}_{-0.38} \text{ (syst)} \text{ fb}$$

Observed significance for $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ process: 5.2 σ

Relative total uncertainty is ~23%, **rel. statistical uncertainty dominant ~17%**

First observation of $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ process!



First observation of $t\bar{t}\gamma$ process

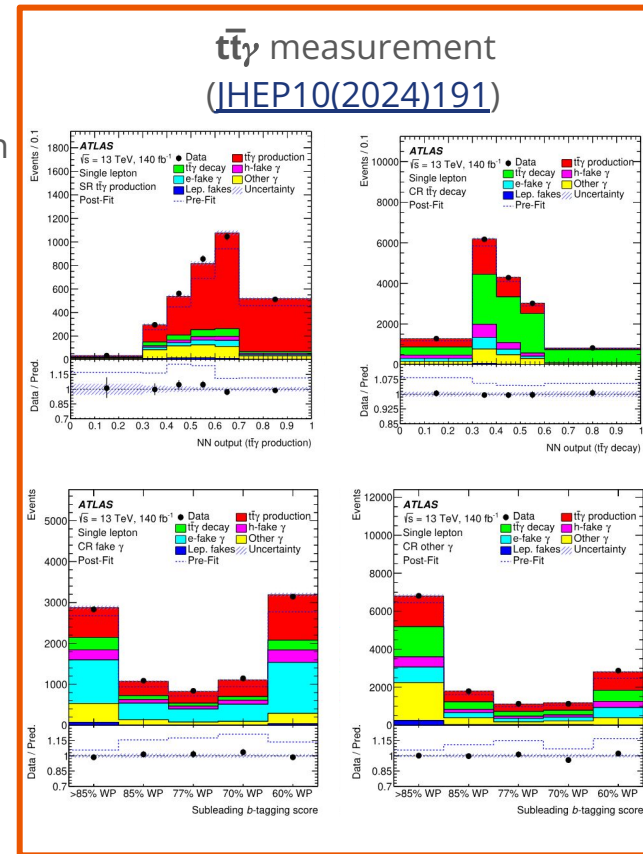
Simultaneous fit performed to the $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ BDT and the variables used in **four regions from the $t\bar{t}\gamma$ measurement** ([JHEP10\(2024\)191](#)).

$$R = (3.30^{+0.70}_{-0.65}) \times 10^{-3} = (3.30^{+0.63}_{-0.55}(\text{stat})^{+0.32}_{-0.34}(\text{syst})) \times 10^{-3}$$

Event reconstruction and selection designed to avoid any statistical overlap between measurements.

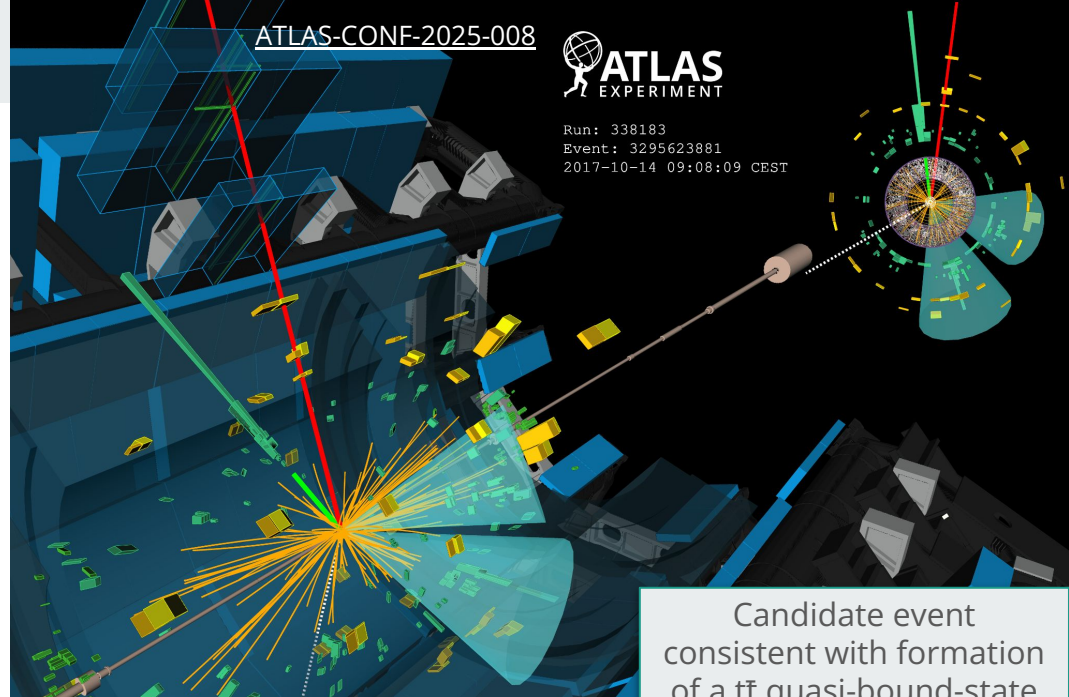
All common sources of **systematic uncertainties** (experimental, background normalisation, modelling of common MC processes) **correlated**.

- **Cancellation of correlated systematics** in R wrt $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ Xsection measurement
 - Mainly **experimental** source and **data-driven estimations of fake-photon backgrounds** cancel out significantly
- **Dominant systematic** uncertainties - jet flavour composition, $W_{\gamma\gamma}$ normalisation, photon isolation and identification, $t\bar{t}\gamma$ modelling
- But **statistical uncertainty is prevailing** ~18% relative unc.





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Summary

- **Xsection enhancement** near $t\bar{t}$ threshold observed with **7.7σ** significance!
- Rare $t\bar{t}\gamma\gamma$ process observed for the first time!
- **Differential Xsections with $WbWb$** final state have large potential to **help with MC simulations** and understanding of $t\bar{t}$ and tW interference
- **LFU violation tested** by difference between flavour-dependent EFT operators in $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ process
- Unprecedented precision achieved in many measurements
- Data from Run 3 will help a lot with the precision of statistically dominated measurements
- **Many more results from ATLAS top quark group!**

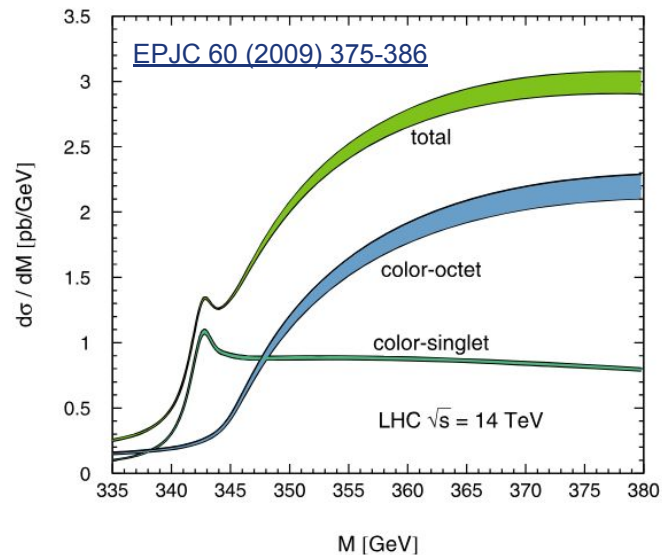
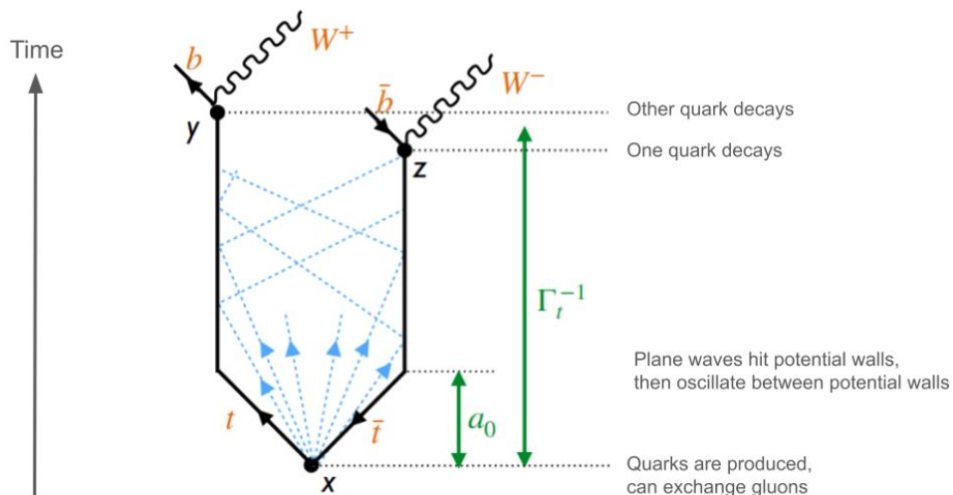
Back up



Observation of Xsection enhancement near $t\bar{t}$ threshold

Toponium = Quasi-bound state of top quarks predicted by SM

- Not the same as $b\bar{b}/c\bar{c}$ (**not a s-channel resonance**)
 - one of top decays first, they do not annihilate themselves
- Coulomb potential with gluon and soft gluon emissions between tops



color-singlet: attractive potential

color-octet: repulsive potential

Top pole mass from $t\bar{t}+j$ events (dilepton channel)

Top-quark mass m_t^{pole} is a free parameter of the SM
 Motivation: consistency checks of SM, electroweak vacuum stability

First time $t\bar{t}+1$ jet m_t^{pole} analysis
 in dilepton channel!

Special observable R

- **High sensitivity** to top-quark mass ($\rho_s > 0.7$)
- **Normalized** = many uncertainties reduce in ratio
- $m_0 = 170$ GeV $\rightarrow R \in [0,1]$ (convention has no impact on result)

$$\mathcal{R}(\rho_s; m_t^{\text{pole}}) = \frac{1}{\sigma_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}} \cdot \frac{d\sigma_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}}{d\rho_s}, \quad \text{with} \quad \rho_s = \frac{2m_0}{\sqrt{s_{t\bar{t}+1\text{-jet}}}}$$

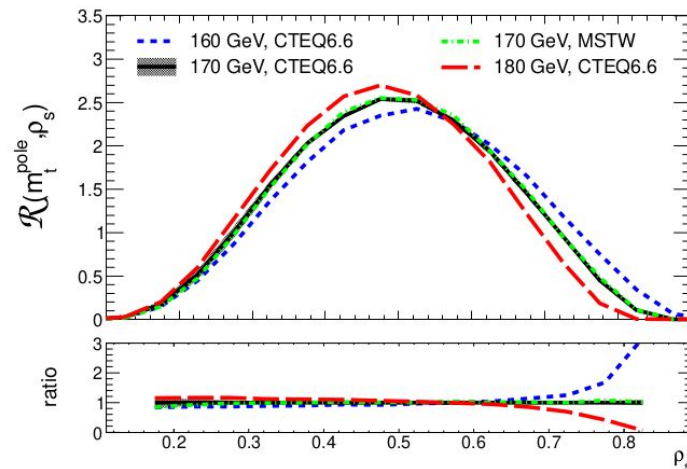
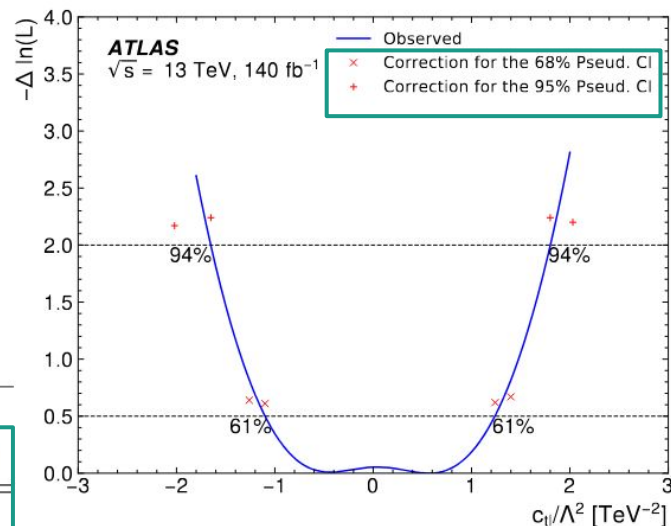


Fig. 4. $\mathcal{R}(m_t^{\text{pole}}, \rho_s)$ calculated at NLO accuracy for different masses $m_t^{\text{pole}} = 160, 170$ and 180 GeV. For $m_t^{\text{pole}} = 170$ GeV the scale and PDF uncertainties evaluated as discussed in the text are shown. The ratio with respect to the result for $m_t^{\text{pole}} = 170$ GeV is shown in the lower plot.

High mass $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and LFU-inspired EFT interpretation

For the first time **pseudodata (toys)** were used to calculate 68% (95%) coverage together with standard asymptotic assumption of profile-likelihood ratio

Wilks' theorem (standard asymptotic method) may not be valid to use in some cases (when **pure-EFT terms dominant**)
=> true coverage calculated from toy pseudodata!



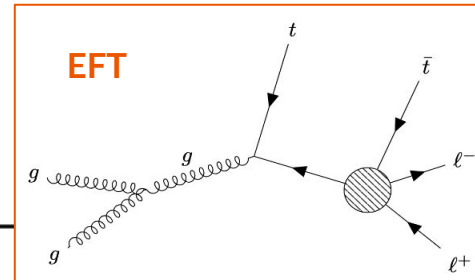
$O(\Lambda^{-4})$ [TeV⁻²]

	Best fit	68% Asymp. CI	68% Pseud. CI	95% Asymp. CI	95% Pseud. CI
$c_{t\ell}$	-0.44	[-1.10, 1.24]	[-1.17, 1.31]	[-1.65, 1.80]	[-1.71, 1.86]
$c_{t\tau}$	-0.45	[-1.05, 1.18]	[-1.21, 1.41]	[-1.57, 1.79]	[-1.64, 1.96]
c_{Qe}	-0.54	[-1.23, 1.19]	[-1.32, 1.32]	[-1.82, 1.83]	[-1.87, 1.88]
$c_{Q\ell}^-$	0.69	[-0.98, 1.41]	[-1.15, 1.74]	[-1.57, 2.03]	[-1.66, 2.33]
c_{leQt}^1	-0.61	[-1.51, 1.50]	[-1.55, 1.54]	[-2.27, 2.27]	[-2.32, 2.33]
c_{leQt}^3	-0.12	[-0.26, 0.26]	[-0.27, 0.27]	[-0.37, 0.37]	[-0.38, 0.38]

High mass $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and LFU-inspired EFT interpretation

Measure $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ & high mass: $m_{\ell\ell} > m_Z + 10 \text{ GeV} \Rightarrow$ **sensitivity to many 4-fermion operators in EFT** = some sensitive to flavour universality violation

$$\mathcal{L}_{eff} = \mathcal{L}_{SM}^{(4)} + \frac{1}{\Lambda} \sum_i C_i^{(5)} O_i^{(5)} + \frac{1}{\Lambda^2} \sum_i C_i^{(6)} O_i^{(6)} + \mathcal{O}(\Lambda^{-3})$$



Operator	Definition	Description
O_{te}	$(\bar{e}_p \gamma_\mu e_r)(\bar{t} \gamma^\mu t)$	R-handed leptons and R-handed quarks in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertex
O_{Qe}	$(\bar{Q} \gamma_\mu Q)(\bar{e}_p \gamma^\mu e_r)$	R-handed leptons and L-handed quarks in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and $b\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertices
O_{tl}	$(\bar{l}_p \gamma_\mu l_r)(\bar{t} \gamma^\mu t)$	L-handed leptons and R-handed quarks in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertex
O_{Ql}^1	$(\bar{l}_p \gamma_\mu l_r)(\bar{Q} \gamma^\mu Q)$	L-handed leptons and L-handed quarks in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and $b\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertices, weak-singlet
O_{Ql}^3	$(\bar{l}_p \sigma^i \gamma_\mu l_r)(\bar{Q} \sigma^i \gamma^\mu Q)$	L-handed leptons and L-handed quarks in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$ and $b\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertices, weak-triplet
O_{leQt}^1	$(\bar{l}_p^j e_r) \epsilon_{jk} (\bar{Q}^k t)$	Mixed L-/R-handed quarks and leptons in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$, $t\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ and $b\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertices, scalar
O_{leQt}^3	$(\bar{l}_p^j \sigma_{\mu\nu} e_r) \epsilon_{jk} (\bar{Q}^k \sigma^{\mu\nu} t)$	Mixed L-/R-handed quarks and leptons in the $t\bar{t}\ell^+\ell^-$, $t\bar{b}\ell\nu$, $\bar{t}b\ell\nu$ and $b\bar{b}\ell^+\ell^-$ vertices, tensor

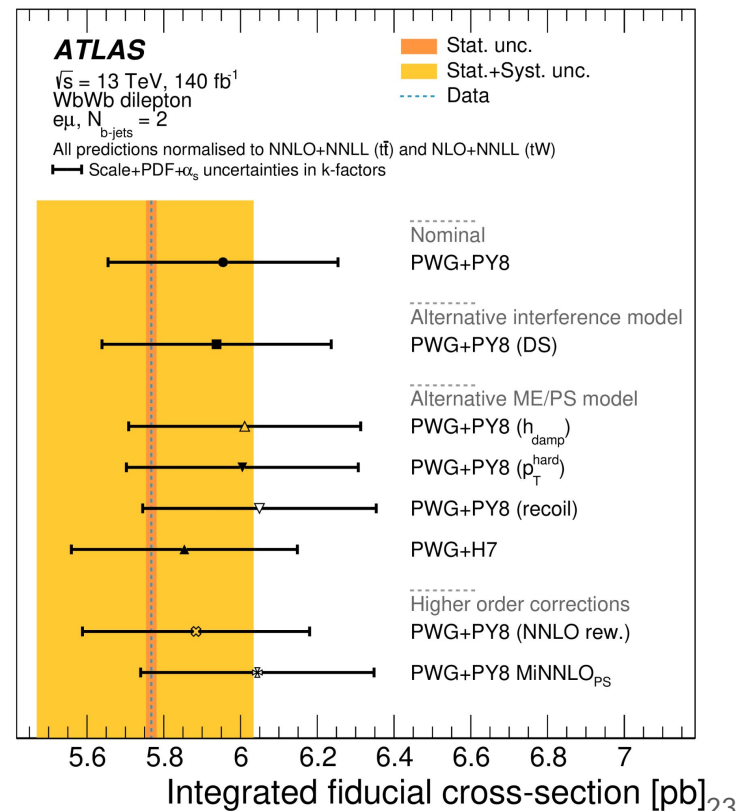
Differential cross sections of WbWb in dilepton channel

Differential Xsections corrected for detector effects and unfolded to particle level by Iterative Bayesian Unfolding (IBU)

Compared with predictions of various MC generators at NNLO in QCD

Improvements (previously only interference [studied](#)):

- measured diff Xsection of additional kinematic variables
- refined modelling of uncertainties
- latest object calibration



Differential cross sections of WbWb in dilepton channel

Samples:

Nominal **PWG+PY8 (DR)** = recoiling the gluon against b -quarks (default strategy in Powheg), $p_{T,\text{hard}} = 0$, $h_{\text{damp}} = 1.5 m_{\text{top}}$

tW PWG+PY8 (DS) => **PWG+PY8 (DS)**, like nominal (tW and $t\bar{t}$) but DS scheme used

$t\bar{t}$ and tW PWG+PY8 ($h_{\text{damp}} = 3m_{\text{top}}$) = **PWG+PY8 (h_{damp})**

$t\bar{t}$ and tW PWG+H7 = **PWG+H7** (DR scheme used to treat the interference of tW and $t\bar{t}$)

$t\bar{t}$ and tW PWG+PY8 ($p_{T,\text{hard}} = 1$) = **PWG+PY8 ($p_{T,\text{hard}}$)** $p_{T,\text{hard}}$ parameter regulates how the Pythia 8 radiation phase space is determined to avoid overlaps with the regions of the phase space already covered by Powheg

$t\bar{t}$ PWG+PY8 (recoil) = **PWG+PY8 (recoil)** $t\bar{t}$ bar: gluon recoils against the top-quark itself during the second and subsequent gluon emissions in the $t \rightarrow W b$ process, tW nominal sample

PWG+PY8 $bb4l$ = generalization of Powheg producing $l^+l^-\bar{v}b\bar{b}$ (accounts for quantum interference effects between the $t\bar{t}$ bar and tW production modes, and off-shell and non-resonant effects, not complete set of uncertainties, still under scrutiny of the ATLAS (NLO+PS))

$t\bar{t}$ NNLO reweighting = **PWG+PY8(NNLO rew.)** ($t\bar{t}$ bar reweighted at parton level to match the NNLO QCD + NLO electroweak (EW) parton-level, tW nominal sample)

$t\bar{t}$ NNLO+PS = **PWG+PY8 MiNNLOPS** ($t\bar{t}$ bar at NNLO+NNLL in QCD, tW nominal sample)