Precise timing with PICOSEC Micromegas

on behalf of the PICOSEC Micromegas collaboration

10th symposium on large TPCs for low-energy rare event detection, December 17, 2021



Florian M. Brunbauer

Outline

PICOSEC detection concept: precise timing with Micromegas

Timing studies & detector physics: single photoelectron and MIP beam tests

Towards a robust large-area detector: resistive Micromegas, photocathodes, tileable modules and scalable readout electronics

Picosecond timing needs

Timing requirements on the level of tens of ps set by increasing luminosity and precision measurements

Mitigate pileup

e.g. at High Luminosity Upgrade of LHC with ATLAS/CMS expecting ~150 vertexes/crossing

Precise **Time-of-Flight (ToF)** measurements for Particle Identification (PID) at level of ≈20 ps/MIP can offer Pion/Kaon and Kaon/Proton separation for a wide momentum range

Tagged neutrino beam (time and flavour of tagging) for event-by-event decay measurements (ENUBET)

Precise timing detector requirements:

- Tens of ps timing precision
- Large surface coverage
- Resistance against ageing

- $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^0 e^+ v_e$



J. Va'vra, https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2017.02.075



Embedding a PICOSEC Micromegas layer into an Electromagnetic Calorimeter (EMC)

Timing limitations of gaseous detectors

Ionisation of gas in active volume

Primary electrons produced by ionisation along particle trajectory in drift region

Drift distance differences on the order of millimetres → Timing jitter of ≈ ns

Cherenkov light emission + photocathode or solid secondary converter layer

Primary electrons at well-defined location & time
→ Timing jitter of ≈ tens of ps





PICOSEC detection concept Precise timing with Micromegas

Cherenkov radiator (3 mm MgF_2)

Photocathode (3 nm Cr + 18 nm Csl)

Drift gap (Pre-amplification)

Micromegas (Amplification)



Gas mixture: 80% Ne + 10% C₂H₆ + 10% CF₄ (COMPASS gas)

Schematic not drawn to scale

X. Wang et al., Study of DLC photocathode for PICOSEC detector, RD51 collaboration meeting, October 2018



PICOSEC: Charged particle timing at sub-25 picosecond precision with a Micromegas based detector J. Bortfeldt et. al. (RD51-PICOSEC collaboration), NIM A (903), 2018, <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2018.04.033</u>

- Signal with two distinct components: Electron peak: fast (≈ 0.5 ns)
- Ion tail: slow (≈ 100 ns)





PICOSEC detection concept Precise timing with Micromegas

Signals are recorded from anode pads, amplified and digitised

for time walk



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Rising edge of fast electron peak is used for timing measurements with Constant Fraction Discrimination to account



Measurements of timing performance

Achievable timing resolution is measured with pulsed laser for single photoelectron signals and in test beam campaigns for Minimum Ionising Particle (MIP) timing response



Laser tests

Pulsed laser at IRAMIS facility (CEA Saclay)

Fast photodiode (<5 ps resolution) as **timing reference**.

Detailed detector response studies in well-controlled conditions: direct production of **single photoelectrons** at photocathode.

L. Sohl, Overview on recent PICOSEC-Micromegas developments and performance tests, RD51 Mini-Week February 2020, <u>https://indico.cern.ch/event/872501/contributions/3726013/</u>

Schematic not drawn to scale

MIP test beam campaigns

150 GeV muons and pions from SPS

Two **MCP-PMTs** used as timing reference (<5 ps resolution)

Detector response to MIP (higher number of photoelectrons) and stability







Detector response

Correlation of signal arrival time and pulse amplitude

Time resolution depends primarily on e-peak charge

Narrower SAT distribution for higher pre-amplification field Lime (ns) 8.8 8.7 A+525V/D-200V 3.5 A+525V/D-225V





J. Bortfeldt et. al. (RD51-PICOSEC collaboration), NIM A (903), 2018, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2018.04.033 https://indico.cern.ch/event/716539/contributions/3246636/





Signal arrival time (SAT) = <T_{e-peak}> **Time resolution = RMS (T**e-peak)

Signal arrival time











Detector response

Time resolution depends primarily on e-peak charge

SAT depends on e-peak size:

- bigger pulses -> lower SAT
- higher drift field -> lower SAT

Location of first ionisation determines length of avalanche

Longer avalanches result in bigger e-peak charge SAT reduces with e-peak charge

J.Bortfeldt et al., "Modeling the timing characteristics of the PICOSEC Micromegas detector", NIM A (993), 2021, <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2021.165049</u>





https://indico.cern.ch/event/716539/contributions/3246636



Avalanche length (μ m)



Thin gap Picosec

mixtures performed in laser facility



L. Sohl, et al., Single photoelectron time resolution studies of the PICOSEC-Micromegas detector, JINST Proc. of the 15th Topical Seminar on Innovative Particle and Radiation Detectors 2019, InPress (2020)

- Systematic tests of electric field configurations (drift / amplification fields), drift gaps and gas
 - Smaller drift gap has better performance at **same gain** (Shorter drift time of the first electron)

Excellent timing performance recently confirmed in MIP test beam with thin gap **Picosec** (≈120µm drift gap) - analysis ongoing



T. Papaevangelou, A. Utrobicic, M Lisowska



MIP beam tests

Completed several beam test campaigns at CERN SPS H4 beam line **150 GeV muons and pions**

Versatile test beam setup:

- Tracking system with triple-GEMs (40 µm precision)
- Two MCP-PMTs used as precise timing reference (<5 ps resolution)
- Scintillator as DAQ trigger to select tracking regions









MIP beam tests

Time resolution for 150 GeV muons: 24 ps

Optimum operation point: Anode +275 V / Drift – 475 V

Mean number of photoelectrons per muon = 10.4 ± 0.4



J. Bortfeldt et. al. (RD51-PICOSEC collaboration), NIM A (903), 2018, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2018.04.033







Towards a robust, large-area detector

Robustness

- Photocathode robustness against ion back flow ٠
- Resistive Micromegas for spark protection •



Schematic not drawn to scale

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Resistive Micromegas

Resistive elements (layer, discrete resistors) for readout anodes to limit destructive effect of discharges by limiting energy released

Two design approaches tested and evaluated in beam test campaigns

Optimise resistivity value for multi-channel detectors with systematic tests of different resistivities and simulations

Resistive strips (MAMMA)

Floating strips (COMPASS)



L. Sohl, "Progress of the PICOSEC Micromegas concept towards a robust particle detector with segmented readout" 9th Symposium on large TPCs for low-energy rare event detection", 2018, https://indico.cern.ch/event/715651

Schematic not drawn to scale





L. Sohl, CEA Saclay

Simulation of signals induced in resistive detectors





Photocathode robustness Limitations of Csl

Standard PICOSEC photocathode: 18 nm CsI + 3 nm Cr $\rightarrow \approx 10$ p.e. / MIP

CsI sensitive to humidity, ion backflow and sparks

Csl photocathode after spark

Ion backflow on Csl







Scanning electron microscope images of CsI morphology

Csl: deposited

After VUV exposure

Humidity exposure





https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2009.05.179





Photocathode robustness Protection and alternatives

resolution during prolonged operation. This may be address in two ways:

Making Csl more robust

- Minimise effect of ion back flow while preserving QE •
- Protection layers (MgF₂, LiF, graphene, ...) ullet

Alternative photocathodes

- Inherently robust materials (with possible lower QE) ullet
- Metallic, DLC, B₄C, nano diamonds, CVD diamond, GaN, ...

Robustness of photocathode is important to preserve QE and thus detector efficiency and timing





DLC, Y. Zhou et al



ND, L. Velardi et al.





B₄C, 10.1016/ j.jnucmat.2015.01.015



ASSET

Dedicated setup for photocathode characterisation in vacuum-UV (125-200nm) of small samples and quantify degradation

- Reflection / transmission mode QE •
- Ion bombardment •
- VUV transmission
- Scan across samples •

Reflective mode (vacuum during measurement)



Originally developed for ALICE/HMPID

H. Hödlmoser, PhD thesis

Modified and upgraded in GDD lab













Photocathode studies with ASSET

Tested **CsI** samples and protection layers produced by TFG lab (M. van Stenis, T. Schneider)

Measurements of B_4C , DLC and nano diamond photocathodes with visiting RD51 groups

Reflective/transmissive QE, ion bombardment degradation and VUV transparency measurements





M. Lisowska, ASSET - Photocathode characterisation device, RD51 Mini-Week February 2020, https://indico.cern.ch/event/872501/contributions/3726017





Photocathode materials

Alternatives tested during test beam campaigns

Photocathode	N _{ph.e.} / muon
Cr +18 nm Csl	10.4 ± 0.4
20 nm Cr	0.66 ± 0.13
6 nm Al	1.69 ± 0.01
10 nm Al	2.20 ± 0.05
Cr + 5nm diamond	1.85

Photocathode	N _{ph.e.} / muon
Csl + LiF	<1
Csl + MgF ₂	3.55 ± 0.08

DLC thickness	N _{ph.e.} / muon
2.5nm	3.7
5nm	3.4
7.5nm	2.2
10nm	1.7

Diamond-like carbon (DLC)

Robust material used for resistive electrodes and with promising properties as photocathode.







X. Wang, Recent photocathode and sensor developments for the PICOSEC Micromegas detector, MPGD 2019 https://indico.cern.ch/event/757322/contributions/3387110

Nanodiamond (ND) powder

Based on ≈ 100 nm diamonds particles deposited by spray technique, good QE





Velardi et al., <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diamond.2017.03.017</u> C. Chatterjee et al 2020 J. Phys.: Conf. Ser. 1498 012008 https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1742-6596/1498/1/012008/pdf

Picosec detector modules

Scaling up to tileable modules for larger area coverage

Detector

Several variants of multi-channel PICOSEC prototypes in development / under test to address challenges associated with scaling to larger areas:

Integration

- Mechanics to preserve precise gaps
- Large Cherenkov radiators and photocathodes
- Tileing & compact detector vessel
- Sealed detector
- Resistive multi pad

Electronics

- Signal sharing between pads
- Premplifiers
- Multi-channel digitisers







□ 1 cm

Multi pad (2017) \circ 1 cm

Single pad (2016)

ø1 cm

Large-area coverage Scaling up multi-channel PICOSEC

Multi-pad prototype was evaluated in test beam campaigns to study achievable time resolution for signal shared across multiple pads









Multi pad (2017) 0 1 cm



Large-area coverage Scaling up multi-channel PICOSEC





25 ps timing resolution for all pads

S. Aune et al., "Timing performance of a multi-pad PICOSEC-Micromegas detector prototype", NIM A (993), 2021, <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2021.165076</u>



Large-area coverage



Large-area coverage Scaling up multi-channel PICOSEC

Using tracking information, dependence of time resolution on hit location within pads (center vs. periphery) was observed:

→ non-uniform pre-amplification gap from mechanical deformation \rightarrow lower pre-amplification field \rightarrow lower SAT, wider distribution



Schematic hit locations not drawn to scale

Ideal, uniform preampfification gap



Observed, deformed preamplification gap



Schematic not drawn to scale

Measured mechanical deformation



Challenge for scaling up to larger detectors

- Non-planarity of PCB?
- Tension of Micromegas mesh?
- Bending from gas pressure?
- Bending from mechanical fixation?

S. Aune et al., NIM A (993), 2021, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2021.165076













Detector module mechanics

Experience from first multi-pad prototype: **uniform pre-amplification gap** thickness crucial for timing performance

Increasingly challenging with larger detectors to maintain high gap uniformity ($<10\mu$ m across tens of cm)

Challenges on gap uniformity:

- Stress from stretched micro mesh (14 N/cm) tension \rightarrow rigid ceramic PCB
- Mechanic force when fixed directly to housing → decoupled Micromegas from housing
- Force from spring-loaded contact pins
 - \rightarrow low spring force contacts

Simulation of PCB deformation under mechanical stress





4x 1mm ceramic core PCB chosen for rigidity









10x10 module □ 1 cm

Detector module mechanics

Compact Aluminium vessel with fully decoupled Micromegas PCB

10.4cm x 10.4cm MgF₂ crystal as radiator

Spacers to define pre-amplification gap thickness

Bulk Micromegas with minimised dead area on ceramic-core PCB

- 10x10 pads with 10cm x 10cm active area
- Iterative **polishing** steps to improve substrate and final board planarity
- <10 µm deformation across active area

Gain map shows small variation of gain across active area compatible with residual (<10 μ m) non-planarity of Micromegas PCB

Cross-section





Bulk Micromegas on ceramic PCB





Lab test



Gain uniformy $\sigma = 3.9 \%$











Picosec detector module

Characterisation of 100-channel module

Measurements of signal-arrival-time and time resolution on different anode pads in MIP beams

Confirm planarity and global time walk behaviour

Test **CsI** photocathode (>10 p.e.) and **DLC** photocathode (\approx 3 p.e.)



			24.6 ps		24.1 ps	F	Preli	mina	ary
		24.6 ps	23.9 ps	22.1 ps	22.9 ps	24.7 ps	23.0 <u>ps</u>		23.0
					23.9 ps				
					23.9 <u>ps</u>				
 1	24 ps								

A. Utrobicic, Picosec precise timing detectors : recent results, status and plans, RD51 Collaboration Meeting Nov 2021, https://indico.cern.ch/event/1071632/contributions/4612229/

Schematic not drawn to scale

Global parametrisation of timewalk across measured pads



G. Maniatis, A. Kallitsopoulou, S. Tzamarias



Achieved significantly improved planarity and uniformity of response across 10cm x 10cm active area

Timing performance with CsI photocathode compatible with single channel prototypes

Achieved good timing performance with robust DLC photocathode

Signal sharing

electron peak charge → **universal time walk correction**



Schematic not drawn to scale

Detector shows uniform response and different anode pads exhibit the same trend of signal-arrival-time as function of

Signals shared across multiple pads can be combined to achieve a combined time resolution of $\sigma = 30.0 \pm 0.5$ ps

Sealed detector

10cm x 10cm detector module towards tiling with increased fill factor

Use of **low outgassing** components in detector (ceramic PCBs) and **sealing** techniques (brazing, electron beam welding) for minimal contamination and hermetic sealing.

- **Simplified services**: no need for continuous (flammable) ٠ gas flow
- **High fill-factor:** minimised dead area due to replacement • of o-rings with welds
- **Cleanness for photocathode** ٠

During assembly







3D model

Readout electronics



Experience with different preamp circuits as input for new, optimised implementation for 100 channel PICOSEC modules

Readout electronics

Require readout electronics solution that preserves excellent timing resolution and is scalable to 100s of channels for









Experience with different preamp circuits as input for new, optimised implementation for 100 channel PICOSEC modules

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Summary

The **PICOSEC detection** concept overcomes timing limitations of gaseous detectors and achieves high timing precision of < 25 ps for MIPs.

Beam tests (muons, pions) and laser tests (single-electron response) conducted to optimise the detector performance. Simulations provide an indepth understanding of detector physics.

Tileable 10x10 pad detector modules have been tested in MIP test beams and provide good timing resolution also for signals shared across pads.

Robust photocathodes (**DLC**), **resistive multi-pad** Micromegas and scaling to **larger area coverage** are implemented in new prototypes.

Scalable readout electronics (custom preamplifiers + SAMPIC WTDC) are developed and tested.















Summary

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Future perspectives

Secondary emitters: minimise material budget

Spatial resolution: adjusting pad size, charge sharing

Optical readout with SiPMs

Amplification structure:

optimised double/single gaps, mesh geometries/technologies, resistive multi-pad

Electronics: waveform digitisation vs. threshold based timing















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Gas studies

Gas mixture (Neon-Ethane-CF4)	U _{Amp} (V)	U _{Drift} (V)	echarge (pC)	amplitude (mV)	σ _{tres.} (ps)
80-10-10	275	525	8.58 ± 0.13	166.3 ± 0.2	43.89 ± 1.00
89-2-9	255	445	1.69 ± 0.01	31.56 ± 0.44	112.15 ± 4.03
80-20-0	270	470	0.54 ± 0.01	21.61 ± 0.18	129.21 ± 6.03
85-15-0	310	395	0.74 ± 0.01	22.83 ± 0.21	113.48 ± 4.66
90-10-0	340	340	0.82 ± 0.01	20.72 ± 0.09	150.23 ± 3.17
95-5-0	230	375	1.13 ± 0.01	22.98 ± 0.16	181.09 ± 8.91

L. Sohl, Overview on recent PICOSEC-Micromegas developments and performance tests, RD51 Mini-Week February 2020, https://indico.cern.ch/event/872501/contributions/3726013/

Multi-pad prototype



