

Observing light-by-light scattering at the LHC

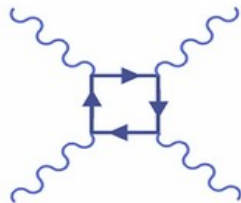
Workshop on photon-induced collisions at the LHC, CERN, June 2014

David d'Enterria

CERN

[DdE & G.G. de Silveira, PRL 111 (2013) 080405; arXiv:1305.7142]

Synopsis: Spotlight on Photon-Photon Scattering



[Wikimedia Commons/Brews ohare](#)

Observing Light-by-Light Scattering at the Large Hadron Collider

David d'Enterria and Gustavo G. da Silveira

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Despite what movie lightsabers suggest, light beams pass through each other without effect. However, two photons will, on rare occasion, bounce off each other. This elastic photon-photon scattering, which occurs via intermediate particles, has never been observed directly, but a new analysis in *Physical Review Letters* shows that the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN could detect around 20 photon-photon events per year.

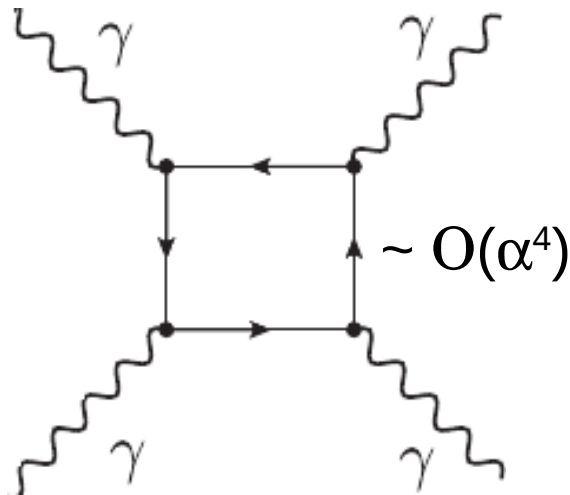
Photons only interact with charged particles, so they shouldn't interact with themselves. But quantum physics allows for a photon to temporarily fluctuate into a particle-antiparticle pair (such as an electron-positron pair), and one of these charged particles can absorb a second photon. When these intermediate particles recombine, they emit two photons. The whole process appears as two photons ricocheting off each other, but it has only been observed indirectly by its effect on the magnetic moments of the electron and muon.

In their direct detection strategy, David d'Enterria of CERN, Switzerland, and Gustavo Silveira of the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium propose using the large flux of "quasireal" photons in the LHC. These are not physical photons but instead are the carriers of the strong electromagnetic forces that surround the protons or lead ions zooming around in the collider. If two quasireal photons scatter off each other, they assume a real nature and can be detected in the LHC detectors. Using computer simulations, the authors show that lead-lead collisions provide the best opportunity for seeing these photon-photon scattering events. Any deviation from the predicted counts could be evidence of new physics, such as the existence of supersymmetry. – *Michael Schirber*

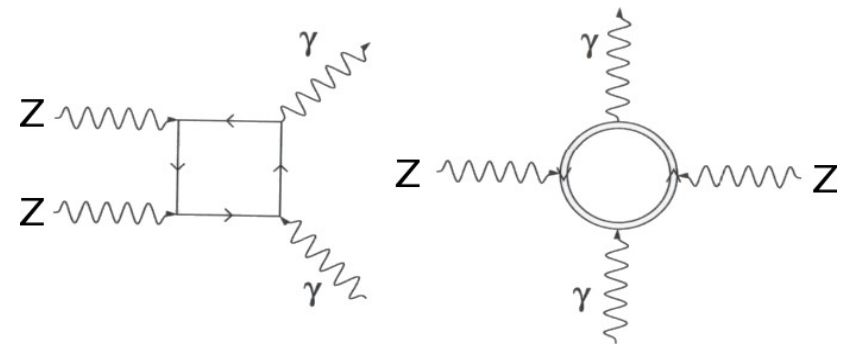
[Previous synopsis](#) | [Next synopsis](#)

Scattering of light-by-light: $\gamma \gamma \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$

- Elastic two-photon collision = fundamental quantum-mechanical process which remains **experimentally unobserved so far**.

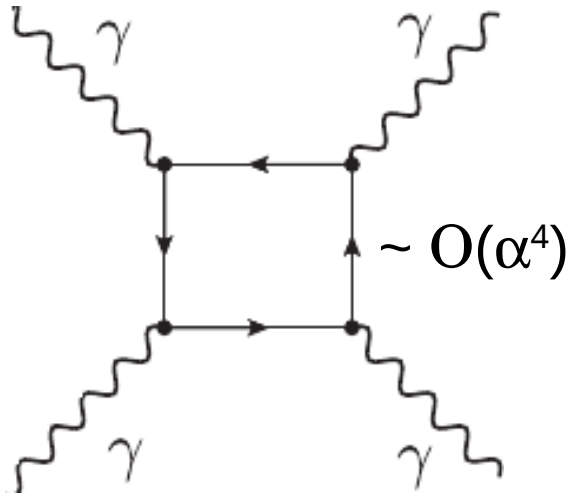


(Only **similar Delbrück scattering**, γ deflection in nucleus Coulomb field, observed so far in the lab):



Scattering of light-by-light: $\gamma \gamma \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$

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Loop contains **virtual charged particles** (q, ℓ, W) from the SM.

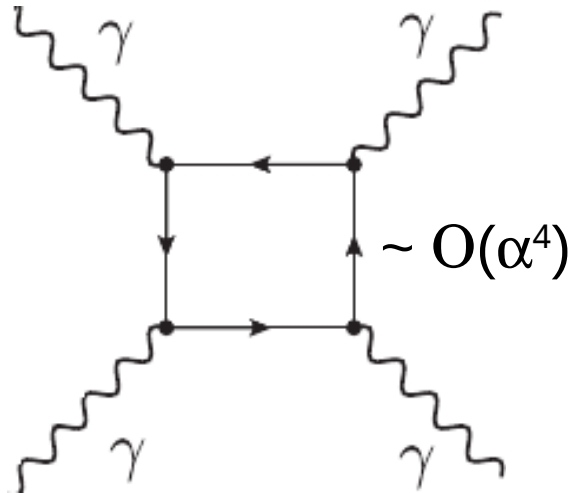
+ New ch. particles (**sparticles, monopoles, unparticles, ...**)?

+ Low-scale **gravity** effects?

+ **non-commutative** interactions ?

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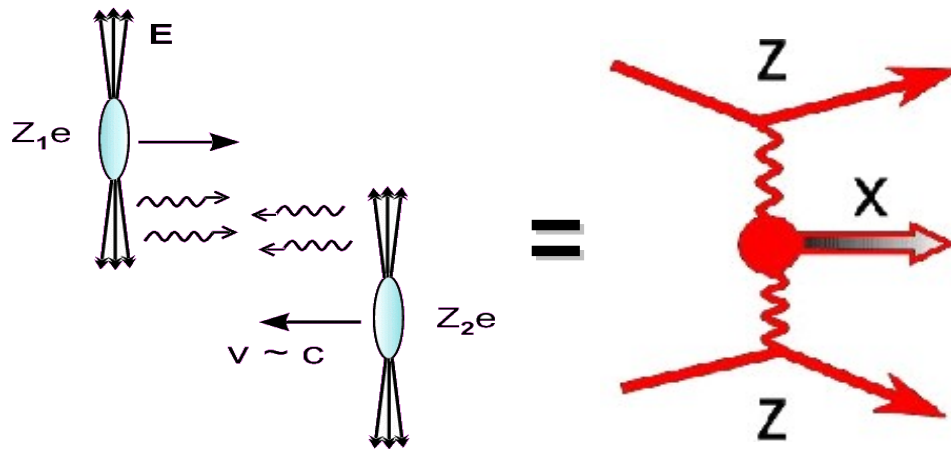
- Experimental **approaches proposed**:

- **Compton-backscattered photons** against laser photons.
- Collisions of **photons from microwave waveguides, cavities, high-power lasers**.
- Collisions at **photon colliders** (via Compton-backscattering laser-light off e^\pm beams).

- How about using **UPC collisions** from p, Pb beams at the LHC?

Photon-induced collisions at the LHC

- **Electromagnetic** ultra-peripheral collisions (UPC): $b_{\min} > R_A + R_B$
- HE ions generate **strong EM fields** from coherent emission of $Z=82$ p's:

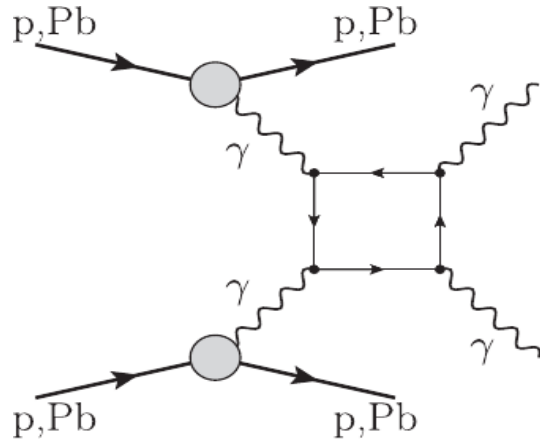


- **Huge photon fluxes:**
 $\sigma(\gamma-\gamma) \sim Z^4$ ($\sim 5 \cdot 10^7$ for PbPb)
 larger than p, e^\pm
- **Beam-energy dependence:**
 Photon luminosities
 increase as $\propto \log^3(\sqrt{s})$

- **Quasi-real** photons (coherence): $Q \sim 1/R \sim 0.06 \text{ GeV}$ (Pb), 0.28 GeV (p)
- Maximum γ energies (LHC): $\omega < \omega_{\max} \approx \frac{\gamma}{R} \sim 80 \text{ GeV}$ (Pb), $\sim 2.5 \text{ TeV}$ (p)

System	$\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ (TeV)	γ	R_A (fm)	ω_{\max} (GeV)	$\sqrt{s_{\gamma\gamma}^{\max}}$ (GeV)
$p-p$	14	7455	0.7	2450	4500
$p\text{-Pb}$	8.8	4690	7.1	130	260
Pb-Pb	5.5	2930	7.1	80	160

Theoretical setup



- **MadGraph** v5.0 MC event generator.

- Equivalent photon approximation:

$$\sigma_{\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}} = \sigma(AB \xrightarrow{\gamma\gamma} A\gamma\gamma B) = \int d\omega_1 d\omega_2 \frac{f_{\gamma/A}(\omega_1)}{\omega_1} \frac{f_{\gamma/B}(\omega_2)}{\omega_2} \sigma_{\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma}(\sqrt{s_{\gamma\gamma}})$$

- **Photon fluxes:**

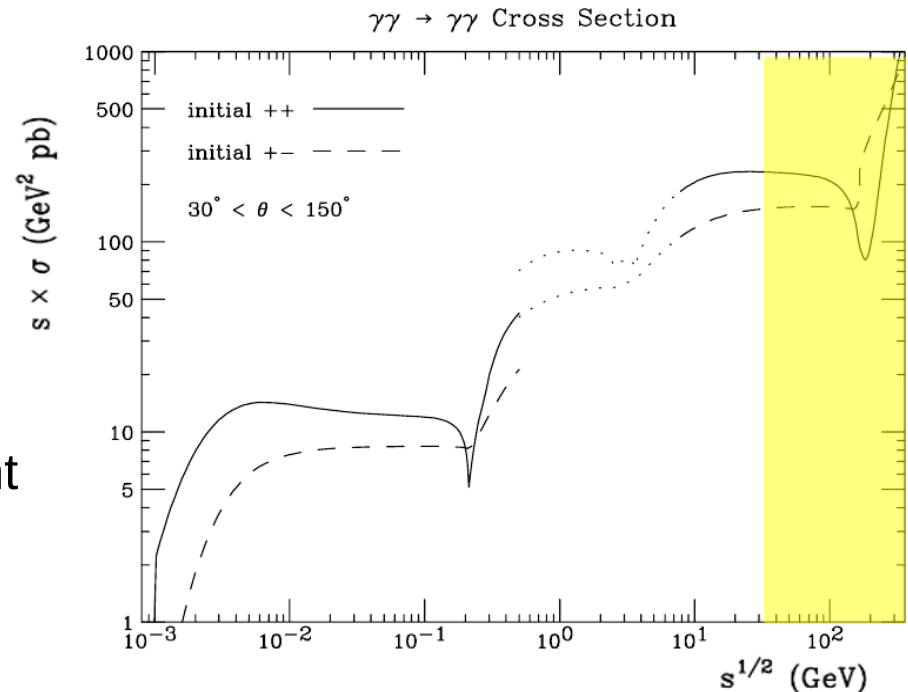
p: Budnev et al. elastic FF [Phys. Rep. 15 (1975)181]

$$A: f_{\gamma/A}(x) = \frac{\alpha Z^2}{\pi} \frac{1}{x} \left[2x_i K_0(x_i) K_1(x_i) - x_i^2 (K_1^2(x_i) - K_0^2(x_i)) \right]$$

- **Elementary NLO $\sigma(\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma)$** from Bern et al. [JHEP 11 (2001) 031]

We use:

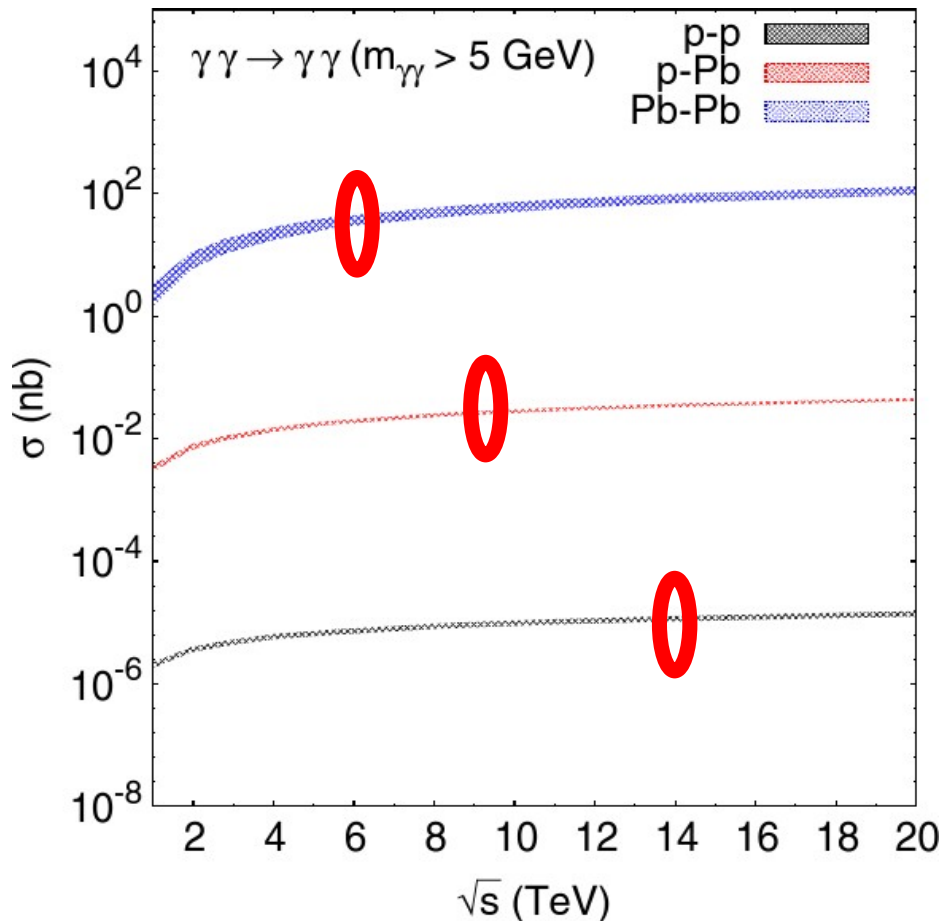
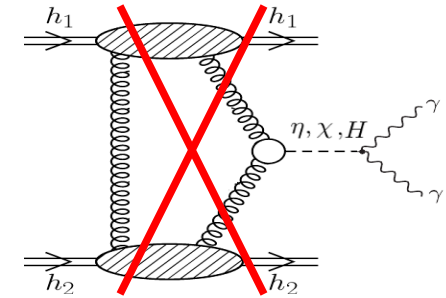
- Simpler **LO expression**: since NLO/LO < 1.1 & gap survival factor $S^2 \sim 0.9-1.0$.
- Just **q, lepton loops** (W only relevant for very-high $\gamma\gamma$ masses)
- **$m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5$ GeV** (above hadronic loops)



$\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ x-sections in p-p, p-Pb, Pb-Pb

■ LbyL continuum computed for $m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5$ GeV:

- Above $\pi^0, \eta, \dots \chi_c$ (3.5-3.9 GeV) di- γ decays.
- Experimental trigger $E_\gamma > 2.5$ GeV



■ LbyL x-sections:

System	$\sqrt{s_{NN}}$ (TeV)	$\sigma_{\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}}$ [$m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5$ GeV]
<i>p-p</i>	14	12 ± 1 fb
<i>p-Pb</i>	8.8	26 ± 3 pb
<i>Pb-Pb</i>	5.5	35 ± 7 nb

Z^4 factor enhances significantly the cross-section for Pb-Pb compared to p-Pb and p-p !

Expected $\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ signal yields

■ Experimental setup (Atlas,CMS):

- EMCal $|\eta| < 2.5$ for photons (with tracking, to remove $\gamma\gamma \rightarrow e^+e^-$)
- $\Delta\eta(\text{rapgap}) \sim 10$ for exclusivity requirement
- ZDCs: to veto neutral fragments from diffractive/CEP/ $\gamma|P$ processes

■ Acceptance & efficiency losses:

- Acc ~ 0.5 (p-p,p-Pb), 0.85 (Pb-Pb, softer EPA: more central $\gamma\gamma$)
- Eff ~ 0.8 (standard γ reco & id)

$$\varepsilon_{pp,pPb \rightarrow \gamma\gamma, PbPb \rightarrow \gamma\gamma} = \varepsilon_{\text{trig}} \cdot \varepsilon_{\text{acc}} \cdot \varepsilon_{\text{rec,id}\gamma}^2 \approx 0.3, 0.55$$

■ Luminosities:

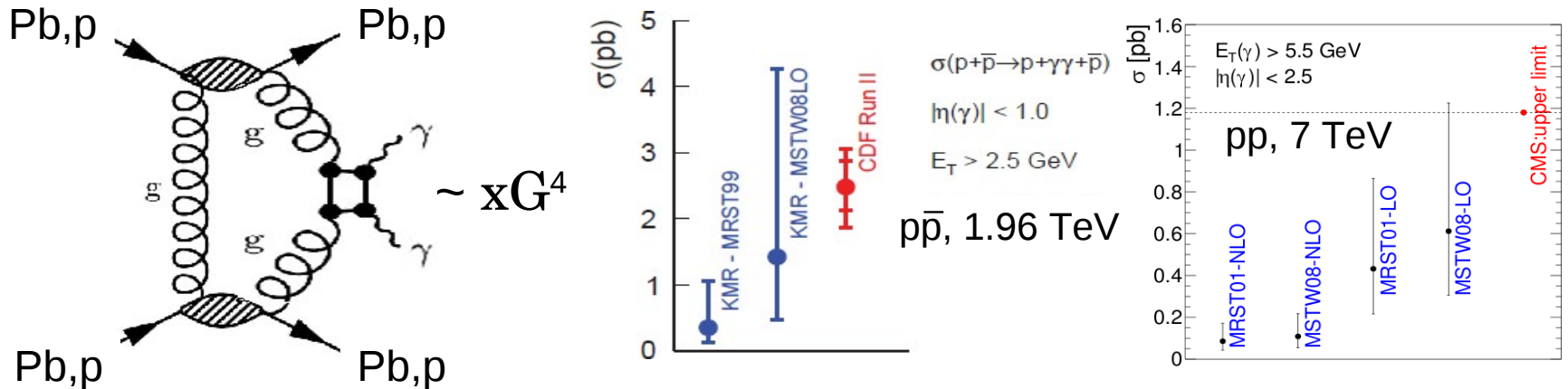
- Full p-Pb, Pb-Pb lumis (with **negligible pileup**)
- 1 fb^{-1} for p-p (1% of L_{int} , at possibly low pileup)

■ Total number of $\gamma\gamma$ pairs/year: $N_{\gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}} = \varepsilon_{\gamma\gamma} \cdot \sigma_{\gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}} \cdot \mathcal{L}_{AB} \cdot \Delta t$

System	$\sqrt{s_{\text{NN}}}$ (TeV)	$\mathcal{L}_{AB} \cdot \Delta t$ (per year)	$\sigma_{\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}}$ [$m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5 \text{ GeV}$]	$N_{\gamma\gamma}^{\text{excl}}$ (per year) [$m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5 \text{ GeV}$, after cuts]
p-p	14	1 fb^{-1}	$12 \pm 1 \text{ fb}$	3
p-Pb	8.8	200 nb^{-1}	$26 \pm 3 \text{ pb}$	2
Pb-Pb	5.5	1 nb^{-1}	$35 \pm 7 \text{ nb}$	18

CEP background to $\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$

- Experimental signal **signature**:
2 isolated photons ($E_\gamma > 2.5$ GeV) & $\Delta\eta \sim 5$ rap-gaps
- **Backgrounds**: Central-Exclusive ($|\mathbb{P}|P, \gamma|P$ di- γ final-states have lower σ_{vis})

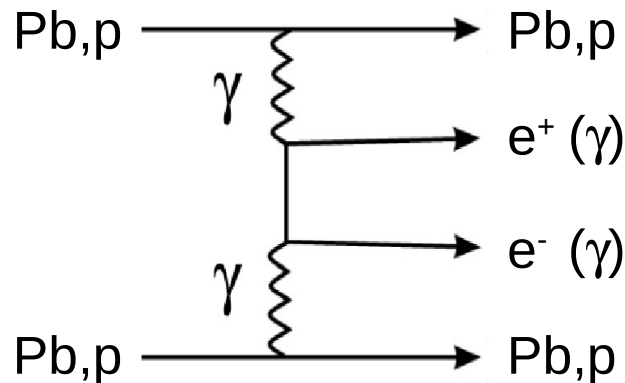


[Other CEP $\gamma\gamma$ final-states: $\sigma(\pi^0\pi^0, \eta\eta) \sim 1-100$ pb, but negligible after BR & $\gamma\gamma$ accept.]

- **SuperCHIC (KMR)**: $\sigma_{\text{CEP } g\bar{g}\gamma\gamma} \sim 10-20$ pb (x3, x1/3 uncertainties: PDF, S^2)
Reducible by factor of **x1/35** by imposing $p_{T\text{min}}$ & acoplanarity cuts:
 $d\sigma/dt \sim e^{-bt}$, $b(\gamma\gamma) \ll b(|\mathbb{P}|P)$: $p_T^{\gamma\gamma} \lesssim 0.1$ GeV, $\Delta\phi_{\gamma\gamma} - \pi \lesssim 0.04$
- **Signal/Background**: $\sigma(\text{LbyL})/\sigma(\text{CEP}) \sim 1/50$ (p-p), 1 (p-Pb), 4 (Pb-Pb)
+ZDC cuts possible for any diffractive remainders in PbPb (Pb fragile: 8 MeV/nucleon)

QED background to $\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$

- Experimental signal **signature**:
2 isolated photons ($E_\gamma > 2.5$ GeV) & $\Delta\eta \sim 5$ rap-gaps
- **Backgrounds**: QED e^+e^- (misidentified by γ 's)



(Starlight)

$$\sigma_{\text{QED PbPb-ee}} (m_{\gamma\gamma} > 5\text{GeV}) \sim 5 \text{ mb}$$

- **Reduction factor = $2.5e+6$** :

$$\text{Acceptance}(\gamma\gamma \text{ central}) = 10\%$$

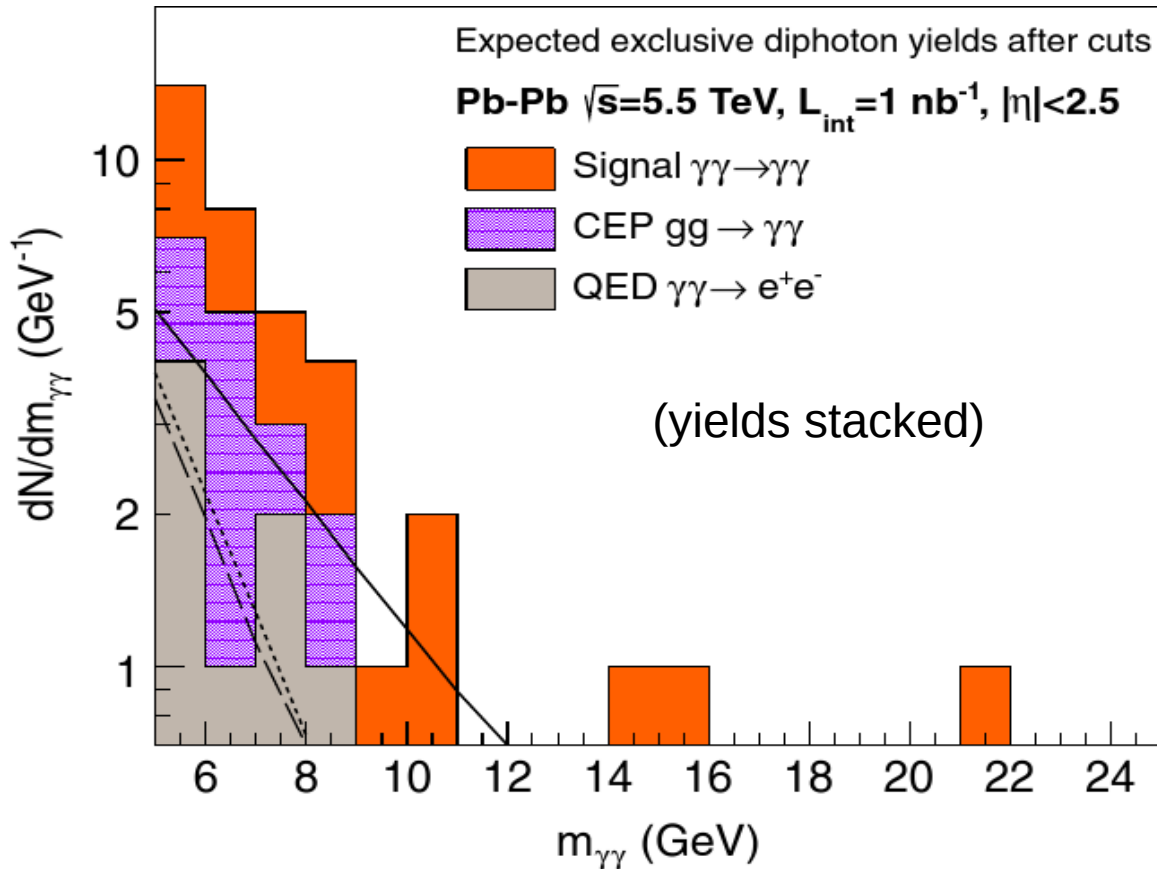
$$f(e-\gamma \text{ misid}')^2 \sim (0.5\%)^2$$

- **Signal/Background: $\sigma(\text{LbyL})/\sigma(\text{QED}) \sim 3$ (Pb-Pb)**

Additional cuts (e.g. acollinearity) possible for extra bckgds, e.g. $(\gamma\gamma \rightarrow q\bar{q} \rightarrow \pi^0\pi^0)$

Final result: diphoton mass distribution

- Combination of **LbyL signal + CEP & QED** backgrounds after cuts Pb-Pb at 5.5 TeV (1 nb^{-1}):



$$N_{\gamma\gamma-\gamma\gamma} \sim 18$$

$$N_{\text{CEP}-\gamma\gamma} \sim 9$$

$$N_{\text{QED-ee}} \sim 8$$

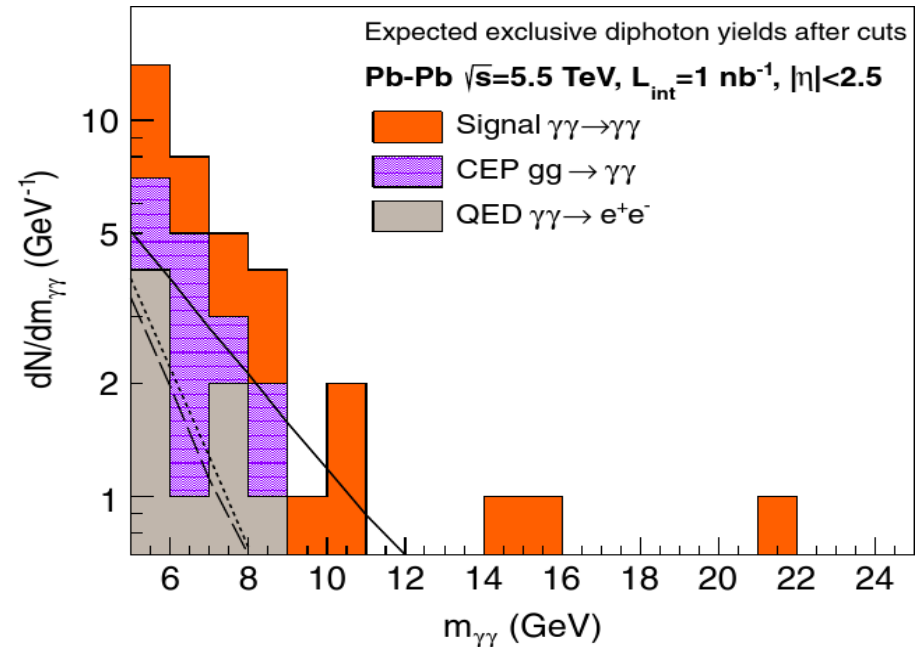
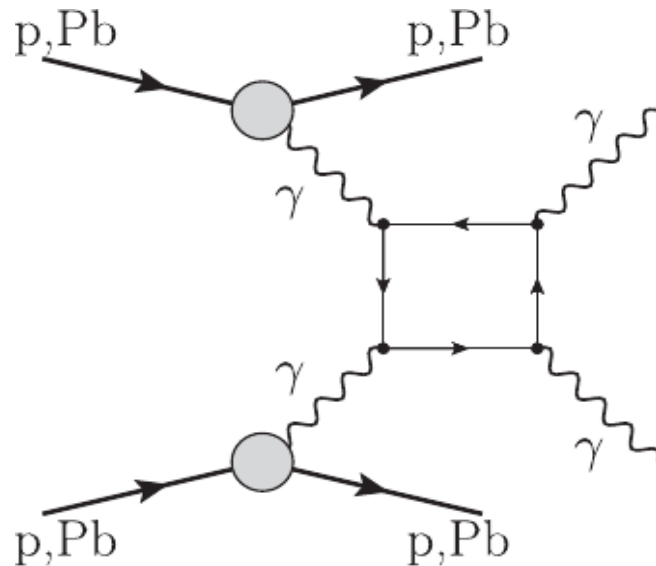
Significance:

$$S/\sqrt{B} \sim 4.4$$

- **LbyL signal** clearly observable over backgrounds (esp. high $m_{\gamma\gamma}$)

Conclusion

- Elastic light-by-light scattering observable in UPC at the LHC
 $pp, pPb, PbPb \rightarrow \gamma\gamma \rightarrow p(Pb) \gamma\gamma p(Pb)$ at $\sqrt{s} = 5.5 - 14$ TeV
- Cross sections (EPA, MadGraph, Bern et al.):
 $\sigma(\gamma\gamma \rightarrow \gamma\gamma) \sim 12$ fb, 26 pb, 35 nb. Rates: 3, 2, 18 pairs/year
Pb-Pb preferred: Maximum rates, minimum backgds (also no pileup)



- LbyL signal clearly observable ($S/\sqrt{B} \sim 4.4$) over CEP/QED backgds.
→ First observation of such a fundamental QM process in the lab ?

Back-up slides