## An introduction to Ultra-High Energy Cosmic Rays

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Allianz für Astroteilchenphysik





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Astroteilchenphysik

Großgeräte der physikalischen Grundlagenforschung

# Ultra-high energy cosmic rays

Definition wikipedia:

In astroparticle physics, an **ultrahigh-energy cosmic ray** (**UHECR**) is a cosmic ray particle with a kinetic energy greater than 10<sup>18</sup> eV, far beyond both its rest mass and energies typical of other cosmic ray particles.

## Let's have a closer look...

# It was August 7 1912 - 6am ...

### Victor Franz Hess



### Victor Franz Hess:

How fast does an electroscope discharge when we leave the surface of the Earth?

### Expectation:

Discharge should decrease for increasing altitude **Observation**:

After a specific height discharge increases!!



**Ballon of Franz Victor Hess** 



Hess after landing



### Conclusion:

This radiation is not from Earth, it's from space!

24 years later he receives the Nobel price for the discovery of cosmic rays

## ... the story continues...

Year 1938:



MEASURING COSMIC RAYS IN THE SWISS ALPS The author (*left*) and his collaborator, P. Ehrenfest, set up their apparatus in the Jungfraujoch.

# Extensive air showers (EAS)

### **Pierre Auger**



Werner Kolhörster





## **Observation:**

Even at spacings of ~80 m they detect coincidences of particles

## **Explanation:**

These particles are secondary particles from **extensive air showers**!



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## Extensive air showers (EAS)



## Extensive air showers (EAS)



## Why do we care about EAS?



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Primary cosmic rays

# **Detection of EAS**

Two main measurement techniques:

### Fluorescence telescope





### Water-Cherenkov detector



Primary cosmic rays

# **Detection of EAS**

Two main measurement techniques:

### Fluorescence telescope





### Water-Cherenkov detector



Primary cosmic rays

# **Detection of EAS**

Two main measurement techniques:

### Fluorescence telescope





### Water-Cherenkov detector



# Pioneering experiment in 1961



John Linsley

## First giant air shower array at Vulcano ranch / USA

- 19 plastic scintillation counters
- total 8.1 km<sup>2</sup> area



Linsley (checking for rattlesnakes)



- First measurement of energy spectrum above 10<sup>18</sup> eV
- First observation of 10<sup>20</sup> eV air shower
- Extragalactic origin likely!



Wilson

### **Penzias**

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## Haverah Park, UK 1962 - 1987

Using water-Cherenkov tanks

Water Cherenkov tank inside

Water Cherenkov tank inside

Haverah Park, UK 1962-87

## Haverah Park, UK 1962 - 1987

Using water-Cherenkov tanks

Water Cherenkov tank inside



Water Cherenkov tank inside

Haverah Park, UK 1962-87

# Fluorescence light



Light originates from transitions from the second positive system (2P) of molecular nitrogen N<sub>2</sub> and the first negative system (1N) of ionized nitrogen molecules.

## Fly's Eye experiment, Utah, USA

Utilizing fluorescence light

1981 - 1993



First detection of particle with 3.2 x  $10^{20}$  eV (Bird et al. Astrophys.J. 441 (1995) 144-150) Primary type: Unknown

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## Fly's Eye experiment, Utah, USA

Utilizing fluorescence light

1981 - 1993



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# ... today: The Pierre Auger Observatory





### Dates:

### • | 992:

First ideas for a giant extensive air shower experiment by J. Cronin and A.Watson

### • 2000:

Start of construction

### • Since 2004: Data taking

### • **2008**:

Construction complete

# *Aim:* Study ultra-high energy cosmic rays above 10<sup>17</sup> eV



### About 500 collaborators from 18 countries

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## **Pierre Auger Observatory**



- About **3000 km<sup>2</sup>** area
- 1660 water-Cherenkov tanks
- •27 fluorescence telescopes

Additional R&D antennas



## **Pierre Auger Observatory**



## Hybrid technique

### Advantage:

- More accurate energy and directional information
- Lower energy threshold
- Small dependence on interaction models

### Disadvantage:

Only 10-15% duty cycle



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## **Pierre Auger Observatory**



## Hybrid technique

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## **Geometry reconstruction**

1. Determination of the shower

## Two step process:



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150

130

140

## **Geometry reconstruction**

## *Two step process:*

#### 2. Determine geometry within SDP Shower Detector Plane Use timing information of pixel! Express expected arrival time $t_i$ at $\tau_{;}^{showe}$ telescope as function of $R_p$ , $t_0$ and chi<sub>0</sub>: $\chi_0 - \chi_i$ $t_i = t_0 - \tau_i^{\text{shower}} + \tau_i^{\text{prop}}$ $t_i = t_0 + \frac{R_p}{c} \tan\left(\frac{\chi_0 - \chi_i}{2}\right)$ FD shower front. $\chi^2$ /Ndf= 89.34/69 420 400 SD information (impact on ground) 380 time [100 ns] 360 Fit $R_p$ , $t_0$ and chi\_0 to 340 determine geometry 320 300 **Angular resolution** 280 typically less than 1° 260 -10 10 20 30 40 0 19 $\chi$ angle [deg] **Daniel Kuempel** CASPAR2014



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19

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# **Energy reconstruction**

Energy determination from profile fit



## Auger in operation...



Video by S. Saffi

## Auger in operation...



Video by S. Saffi

## ... and today, more than 100 years after the discovery of cosmic rays?

## ... still many open questions:

## Ultra-high energy cosmic rays (UHECR) E > 10

 Where do they come from?
What are they made of?
How are they accelerated?
What can they tell us about fundamental and particle physics?
Is there a maximal energy? **Birth** supernovae pulsar black hole AGN

...

## General picture UHECR

Additional acceleration

shock acceleration (Fermi)

charged particle

### **Propagation**

spallation radioactive decay magnetic fields interactions

### Galactic deflection magnetic field interactions

Death cosmic ray air shower

## Extra-galactic energy density

Cosmic rays can interact with background photons: 



## Interactions

### Pion production

Pion production for a head-on collision of a nucleon *N*:

$$N + \gamma \to N + \pi$$

with the threshold energy

$$E_{\rm thres} = \frac{m_{\pi}(m_N + m_{\pi}/2)}{2\epsilon} \approx 6.8 \cdot 10^{19} \left(\frac{\epsilon}{10^{-3} \,\,{\rm eV}}\right)^{-1} \,{\rm eV}$$

where  $\epsilon \sim 10^{-3} \ {\rm eV}$  represents a typical target photon such as a CMB photon. Both the electromagnetic and the strong interaction play a role. **Example**: Pion production by protons via delta resonance:

 $\begin{array}{ccc} \mathsf{EM} & \mathsf{strong} & & & & \\ \mathsf{interaction} & & & \mathsf{interaction} & & & & & \\ \mathsf{p} + \gamma \to \Delta^+ & & \\ p + \pi_0 & & & \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} n + \pi^+ & & \\ \mathsf{with} \ \mathsf{branching} \ \mathsf{ratio} \ 1/3 & \\ p + \pi_0 & & \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \mathsf{with} \ \mathsf{branching} \ \mathsf{ratio} \ 2/3 & \\ & & \\ \mathsf{photons} \ \mathsf{by} \ \mathsf{hadronic} \ \mathsf{cosmic} \ \mathsf{rays} \end{array}$ 

After the discovery of the CMB (1965) people realized:

### Universe gets opaque for cosmic rays at ultra-high energies: GZK-effect

first realized by Greisen, Zatsepin and Kuzmin in 1966

K. Greisen, PRL 16 748 (1966), G.T. Zatsepin and V.A. Kuzmin Sov. Phys. JETP Lett. 4 78 (1966)

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IRB (Kneiske 2004)

Frequency [Hz]

## Interactions

### Pair production

Pair production by a nucleus with mass number A and charge Z on a photon:  $\begin{array}{c} A \\ Z \end{array} + \gamma \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} A \\ Z \end{array} + e^+ + e^- \end{array}$ 

induces electromagnetic cascades via inverse Compton scattering

with the threshold energy

$$E_{\rm thres} = \frac{m_e(m+m_e)}{\epsilon} \approx 4.8 \cdot 10^{17} \ A \ \left(\frac{\epsilon}{10^{-3} \ \rm eV}\right)^{-1} \rm eV$$

where  $\epsilon \sim 10^{-3} \text{ eV}$  represents a typical target photon such as a CMB photon.

## Interactions

### Pair production

Pair production by a nucleus with mass number A and charge Z on a photon:  $\begin{array}{c} A \\ Z \end{array} + \gamma \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} A \\ Z \end{array} + e^+ + e^- \end{array}$ induces

induces electromagnetic cascades via inverse Compton scattering

with the threshold energy

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where  $\epsilon \sim 10^{-3} \text{ eV}$  represents a typical target photon such as a CMB photon.

### Photodisintegration of nuclei

Gamma ray is absorbed by nuclei and causes it to enter excited state before splitting in two parts.



Changes in energy  $\Delta E$ , and atomic number  $\Delta A$ , are related by  $\Delta E/E = \Delta A/A$ Thus, effective energy loss rate is given by:

$$\frac{1}{E} \left. \frac{\mathrm{d}E}{\mathrm{d}t} \right|_{\mathrm{eff}} = \frac{1}{A} \frac{\mathrm{d}A}{\mathrm{d}t} = \sum_{i} \frac{i}{A} l_{A,i}(E)$$

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rate for emission of *i* 

nucleons of mass A

## Interaction rate

Interaction rate can be calculated as



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### Attenuation length for protons

10<sup>9</sup>

D. Allard, Astropart. Phys. 39-40 (2012) 33-43



## Energy loss rate for Carbon-12



- Low energies: energy loss dominated by expansion of the universe
- Intermediate energies: Most important energy loss is photodisintegration
- High energies:
   Pion production on CMB

## Secondary photons



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## Extragalactic magnetic fields

- Some words of caution: Extragalactic magnetic fields are currently poorly constrained.
- Their origin is not well understood (primordial Universe, magnetic pollution from astrophysical sources, e.g. jets from radio galaxies, ...)
- Typical strength of the field varies:
  - **1-40 μG** with coherence length of about 10 kpc (*clusters of galaxies*)
  - ▶ 10<sup>-16</sup> 10<sup>-6</sup> G with coherence length between 1-10 Mpc (*in filaments*)
- Field strength probably related to matter density in this environment



## Galactic magnetic fields

- Much progress in recent years
- Models based on Faraday rotation measurements and polarized and unpolarized synchrotron emission
- Concentrate on field from Jannson & Farrar: JF12
   R. Jansson and G. R. Farrar, ApJ 757 (2012) 14
   R. Jansson and G. R. Farrar, ApJL 761 (2012) L11
- Field strength of order micro-Gauss





32

# Key results anisotropy

#### **AGN** correlation



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36

#### **TA** hotspot



NATIONAL July 9 2014 GEOGRAPHIC Cosmic-Ray Hotspot Discovered, Offering Clues on Deep A powerful telescope may have found clues to the origin of ultra-high-energy particles that bombard the Earth. Trending Now 01 Q&A: The First-Ever Expedition to Turkmenister's 'Door to Heil' Pirst of its Kind Map Reveals Extent of Why the 67 Glant Shalls Seized in L.A. 04 World Snake Day July 16th DEE DOPPEL-RUKT MIT BES ZU 25.000 KBIT/S WILL JEDER HADEN In this time-lapse photo, stars appear to rotate above Utah's Telescope Array, which astronomers COMMERZBANK DB BAHN





equatorial coordinates

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-60

-30

12

#### **TA** hotspot

Let's have a closer look...



- ► E > 5.7 x 10<sup>19</sup> eV (72 events)
- 19/72 events fall in hotspot (RA=146.7, DEC = 43.2°)
- 4.5 events expected
- LiMa significance = 5.2 sigma
- Estimate 3.4 sigma chance probability (4.6 sigma for 6 years TA data)

## TA hotspot



- Angular distance between hotspot and super galactic plane 19°
- Ursa supercluster is extended by more than 10° from super galactic plane
- TA can not rule out some relationship between hotspot and this supercluster

## Mean deflection for Auger and TA site



#### Mean galactic deflection



#### Mean galactic deflection



# Key results energy spectrum

#### Key results - Energy spectrum



## Key results - Energy spectrum



- Both experiments see spectral structure:
  - The "ankle" at about 5 x 10<sup>18</sup> eV
  - Flux suppression at highest energies
  - Origin still unclear















# Key results composition

#### **Composition observable**

Primary cosmic ray



Depth of shower maximum Xmax Daniel Kuempel

## **Key results - Composition**



Auger data shows a smooth change to a heavier composition

TA results are consistent

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# Key results secondaries

#### Key results - Neutrinos



#### Only a neutrino can induce a young horizontal shower!

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#### Key results - Neutrinos



Limits constrain models with proton primaries & strong source evolution

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52

## Key results - Photons



#### **Identification:**

# Photon induced air showers: Two main characteristics: I.Delayed shower development (larger X<sub>max</sub>) 2.Lack of muons due to smaller photo-nuclear cross-section



#### Key results - Photons



#### Idea: Directional search for photon point sources

#### Measure extensive air showers

- Arrival direction
- Shower characteristics

#### Idea: Directional search for photon point sources Any point sources visible?

#### Measure extensive air showers

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#### Idea: Directional search for photon point sources Any point sources visible?

#### Measure extensive air showers

- Arrival direction
- Shower characteristics



Try to reduce background by selecting only photon-like events
### Key results - Photons



Average particle flux upper limit: 0.035 photons / km<sup>2</sup> / yr Average energy flux upper limit: 0.06 eV / cm<sup>2</sup> / s (energy spectral index -2)



### Key results - Neutral particles (from point sources)

Similar to directional photon search but using no photon cut and surface detector information



Absence of neutrons suggests that sources are extragalactic (or transient, or emitting in jets, or optically thin to escaping protons)

### Constrain models in which EeV protons are produced by a low density of strong sources in the galaxy

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### **UHECR - HEP connection**



#### Difficulties:

- $\bullet$  mass composition can alter  $\Lambda$
- $\bullet$  fluctuations in  $X_{\text{max}}$
- experimental resolution ~ 20 g/cm<sup>2</sup>

$$\sigma_{p-Air} = \frac{\langle m_{Air}}{\lambda_{int}}$$

In practice:  $\sigma_{p-Air}$  by tuning models to describe  $\Lambda$  seen in data

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# UHECR today: multiparameter challenge

### Multiparameter challenge

Aim: Constrain / determine astrophysical parameters Challenge: Many unknown/uncertain parameters



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### Now you come into play



### Simulations

Much progress in recent years 

#### **Propagation codes**



**CRPropa** R.A. Batista et al. ICRC 2013 https://crpropa.desy.de

SimProp R. Aloisio et al. JCAP 10 007 (2012)





#### **Computing power**



Using high statistic experimental data in combination with sophisticated propagation tools and powerful computing clusters we are entering a **new phase of data / MC comparison** 

### **Motivation 3D benchmark scenario**

#### Motivation can be divided into two parts:

#### **I. Physics Motivation:**

Simulate a realistic astrophysical scenario and calibrate it to recent observations including:

- → 3D simulation
- ➡ Nuclei implementation
- ➡ Galactic and extragalactic propagation
- Sources according to large-scale structure
- Extragalactic and galactic magnetic fields

#### 2. Also community Motivation:

Provide a common scenario for collaborators

- Test observables (e.g. anisotropy sensitive parameters)
- Benchmark observables for an easy (and standardized) comparison





# Simulation details

#### Sources:

- Randomly distributed according to large scale structure
- ➡ Minimum distance of 3 Mpc
- Isotropic emission
- Composition according to (galactic composition, DuVernois et al. 1996)

$$\frac{\mathrm{d}N_i}{\mathrm{d}E} \propto x_i A_i^{\alpha - 1} E^{-\alpha}$$

 $x_i$ : relative abundance  $A_i$ : mass number  $\alpha$ : spectral index = 2.0



67

➡ Abundances for Z > 2 scaled by factor k<sub>c</sub>=10
➡ Maximum energy of each element is rigidity dependent:
E<sub>max</sub> = Z<sub>i</sub> R<sub>max</sub>, with R<sub>max</sub> = 150 EeV

➡ Source density: 10<sup>-4</sup> Mpc<sup>-3</sup>

# Simulation details Extragalactic magnetic field:



#### Simulation details Extragalactic magnetic field:

• Periodically repeated turbulent field grid -6.6 • Small grid size -7.2• High resolution (50 kpc) -7.820 G -8.4 y [Mpc]  $\log_{10}(|B|$ 0 -9.0 -9.6-20-10.2-40 -10.8• Large scale structure -11.4• Large grid size -60 • Low resolution (500 kpc) 20 40 60 -60 -40 -200 x [Mpc]

# Magnetic field direction given by multiplying turbulent field grid and large scale structure

#### **Comparison with Auger spectrum**



#### **Arrival directions:**



#### **Composition measurements**



Deviation from measurements

Better model needed

#### **Composition measurements**



# Many other papers on this subject



Astroparticle Physics 39-40 (2012) 33-43

Astroparticle Physics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/astropart

q

Extragalactic propagation of ultrahigh energy cosmic-rays

Denis Allard

Laboratoire Astroparticule et Cosmologie (APC), Université Paris 7/CNRS, 10 rue A. Domon et L. Duquet, 75205 Paris Cedex 13, France



Astroparticle Physics 33 (2010) 151–159 **Astroparticle Physics** 

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/astropart

On the heavy chemical composition of the ultra-high energy cosmic rays Dan Hooper<sup>a,b</sup>, Andrew M. Taylor<sup>c,d,\*</sup>

Frontiers of Physics December 2013, Volume 8, Issue 6, pp 748-758

Cosmic ray energy spectrum from measurements of air shower

T. K. Gaisse



Astroparticle Physics 54, 48 (2014)

Astroparticle Physics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/astropart

#### UHECR composition models

Andrew M. Taylor Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 31 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2, Ireland

84, 105007 (2011) Need for a local source of ultrahigh-energy cosmic-ray nuclei Andrew M. Taylor, <sup>1</sup> Markus Ahlers, <sup>2</sup> and Felix A. Aharonian<sup>3,4</sup>

Ultra high energy cosmic rays: implications of Auger data for source spectra and chemical composition Subm. to JCAP 2013

#### **Bottom line:**

- Typically these papers only use spectrum and composition observables
- Hard source spectral index needed, unless nearby source
- (additional component) is assumed
- Too early to draw decisive conclusions (large parameter space and big uncertainties)

### Multi-messenger approach

#### IceCube PeV neutrino events from extragalactic UHECRs?



### Conclusion I

- Even more than 100 years after the discovery of cosmic rays many questions at ultra-high energies are still unanswered.
- Current large-scale observatories offer a unique opportunity to tackle these questions
- Major achievements in recent years:
  - Clear observation of flux suppression
  - Strongest bounds on EeV neutrinos and photons
  - Strongest bounds on large-scale anisotropies
  - First hints on correlations with nearby matter
  - Increasing heavier composition (Auger) or continuously light (TA)?
  - Proton-proton cross section at very high energy

### **Conclusion II**

- Propagation of UHECRs plays an important role constraining astrophysical parameters
- Modern simulation tools enable ID and 3D simulations in structured (extra)galactic environments including secondaries
- Too early to draw decisive conclusions on astrophysical parameters Use more observables and experimental data





10<sup>19</sup>





Fermi I AT

Secondaries as messengers may further constrain astrophysical parameters, e.g. by comparing with TeV observations

E [eV]

FIGA

### Now it's up to you!

... the future is bright