

**INVESTIGATIONS OF QCD  
HADRONIZATION USING JETS  
MEASURED AT  $\sqrt{s} = 8$  TeV WITH  
THE ALICE DETECTOR.**

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

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Andrew John Castro

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*“Do you ever do something, and then think to yourself: That’s So Raven?.”*

*— Zach Galifianakis*

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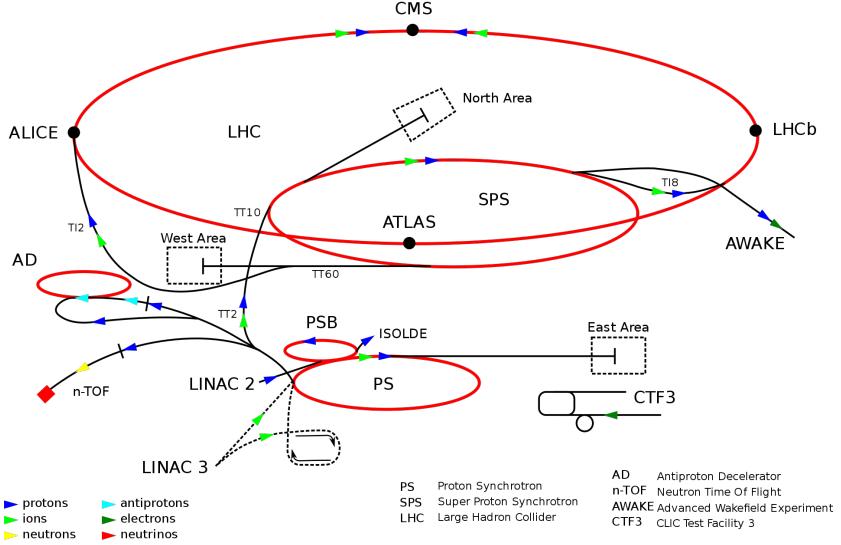
# Chapter 1

## The LHC and ALICE

### 1.1 Overview of the LHC

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC)[\[12\]](#) is a circular particle accelerator located on the Franco-Swiss border near the city of Geneva. It is operated by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and has carried out proton-proton (pp), lead-proton (pPb), and lead-lead (PbPb) collisions at center of mass energies of 0.9-14 TeV, 5.0 TeV, and 2.76-5.5 TeV, respectively. The LHC is approximately 17 miles in circumference and located 200 meters underground. It is located inside the old accelerator tunnel used by the Large Electron-Positron[\[13\]](#) collider of the 1980's. There are over 8000 physicists and engineers making up the four main experiments at the LHC: ATLAS[\[14\]](#), CMS[\[15\]](#), LHCb[\[16\]](#), and ALICE[\[17\]](#). Numerous physics results have been published, with the most famous being the discovery of the Higgs boson in 2012[\[18\]](#)[\[19\]](#).

Figure 1.1 shows a schematic of the LHC along with the pre-accelerators that help to accelerate protons and ions to their final energies before a collision at one of the four experimental interaction points(IP). Protons are injected into the LHC together in groups called ‘bunches’. Every bunch is comprised of about 120 billion protons with about 50 nanoseconds between the arrival of the next bunch. The bunch scheme during the heavy-ion run is reduced to 200 nanoseconds due to the high multiplicity of the events and additional computational resources needed.



**Figure 1.1:** LHC accelerator complex. The four main experiments are shown in their relative locations[1].

### 1.1.1 LHC Operations

The LHC first attempted particle collisions in September of 2008. The initial ramping up of the super conducting magnets led to mechanical failure of the helium pipes inside of the LHC beam line. This fault caused the LHC to remain shut down for over a year while the accelerator was repaired and new safety procedures were implemented. The first successful collisions occurred in 2009 with proton collisions at a reduced energy of 0.9 TeV. 2010 marked the beginning of a new era in the high energy frontier with proton collisions at a record setting 7 TeV. The only other major fault that has occurred was in the summer of 2016. A stone marten chewed through a high voltage line in a power transformer on a ground level building at the LHC. The LHC went offline for about a week while repairs occurred and quickly resumed the physics program. Unfortunately, the marten did not survive.

The typical operating year at the LHC allows for any repairs or upgrades on any of the experiments to be performed during the offline period for the first few months. After the offline period the proton physics program begins and lasts until approximately mid-November. The heavy ion program lasts until the first week of December, after which the LHC shuts down for the remainder of the year. From 2014 until early 2015 the LHC was

shutdown for major renovations and upgrades to the accelerator and a number of sub-detectors on each experiment,. This was known as long shutdown 1 (LS1). After 2018, the LHC will go through another shutdown (LS2) during which the accelerator will have a high luminosity (Hi-Lumi) upgrade. This will be discussed in detail along with the upgrades that will be done to ALICE in chapter 2.

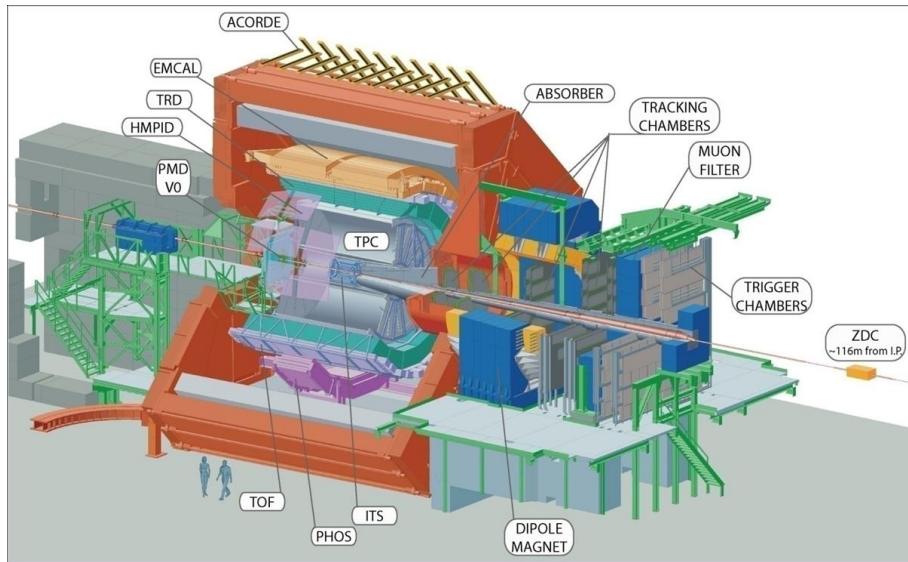
### 1.1.2 LHC Accelerator Complex

The LHC accelerator complex is a succession of particle accelerators that increase the energy of particles before they are injected into the next accelerator. Hydrogen atoms are first passed through a high voltage environment that strips any electrons around the nuclei. Once the nuclei are stripped of their electrons they are injected into the linear accelerator(LINAC). The LINAC uses radio frequency cavities to accelerate particles to 50 MeV before they enter the first circular accelerator the Proton Synchrotron(PS). The PS begins to focus the protons into bunches and further accelerates them to 1.4 GeV before the beam enters the Super Proton Synchrotron(SPS). The SPS will further accelerate the particles to 450 GeV. The beam is then injected into the LHC. Once the beams are injected into the LHC they are accelerated to the final collision energy. Afterwards the beams get ‘squeezed’, or tightly focused, with a series of quadrupole magnets. The final step is to ‘adjust’ the two beams to overlap with one another at each experiments IP. Once the adjust phase is completed, collisions will occur at each experiment and data begins to get collected. This entire process from stripping the electrons to having collisions in each IP takes 20 minutes.

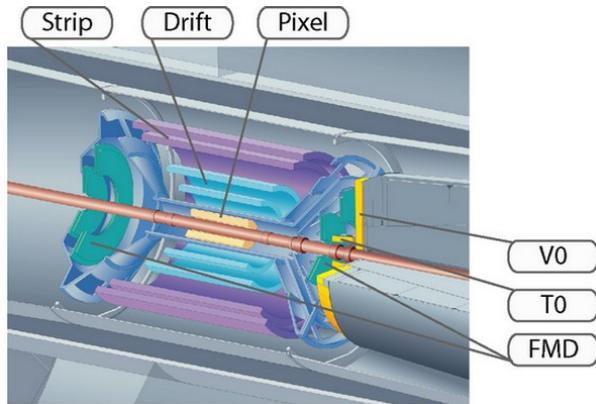
In order for the beam parameters to be maintained in the LHC, numerous dipole and quadrupole magnets are deployed to accelerate, focus, and bend the particle beams. The magnets use a superconducting niobium-titanium alloy that are maintained at an operating temperature of 1.9 K using helium-4. Upgrading these magnets is one of the major goals during LS2 as part of the Hi-Lumi upgrade of the LHC[20].

## 1.2 The ALICE Experiment

A Large Ion Collider Experiment(ALICE) is a general purpose detector that covers a solid angle of  $4\pi$  around the IP. It is 26 m long, 16 m high, 16 m wide, and weighs approximately 10,000 tons[20]. Like many other large scale detectors ALICE is made up of a number of sub-detectors<sup>1</sup> that perform tracking, particle identification(PID), timing, vertex reconstruction, and calorimetry.



**Figure 1.2:** The ALICE Detector at CERN[2].



**Figure 1.3:** ALICE tracker, multiplicity, timing, and vertex detectors located near the interaction point[2].

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<sup>1</sup>In total ALICE has 18 sub-detectors

Figure 1.2 shows the ALICE detector with human figures to set the scale. Figure 1.3 shows the area closest to the IP with the TZERO, VZERO, Inner Tracking System and Forward Multiplicity Detector; these detectors give basic information on the collision such as vertex location, centrality, timing. Further out from the central region are a number of tracking detectors like the Time Projection Chamber and Time-of-Flight detectors that focus on measuring charged particle momentum and PID. Next are the calorimeters that measure particle and jet energies, such as the Electromagnetic Calorimeter, Photon Spectrometer, and the Dijet Calorimeter. All of these sub-detectors are housed in the L3 magnet seen as the red octagon in Figure 1.2. The L3 magnet provides a uniform magnetic field over the central area of ALICE and is responsible for the high PID performance ALICE has over a wide kinematic region[21]. At high rapidity, there is a muon tracker and trigger for muon identification. The following sections give a more detailed discussion of the sub-detectors used for this analysis

### 1.2.1 TZERO

The TZERO(T0)[22] detector is a double layer Cherenkov counter located at 70 cm(T0A) and 370 cm(T0B) from the IP. T0 functions as a trigger and timing detector that determines the precise moment in time at which an event ‘starts’ in the ALICE detector. The timing information from the T0 is fed to other sub-detectors, like the Time-of-Flight and Time Projection Chamber detector, for track reconstruction. The T0 also gives feedback on the target luminosity of the ALICE experiment to the LHC operations center.

### 1.2.2 VZERO

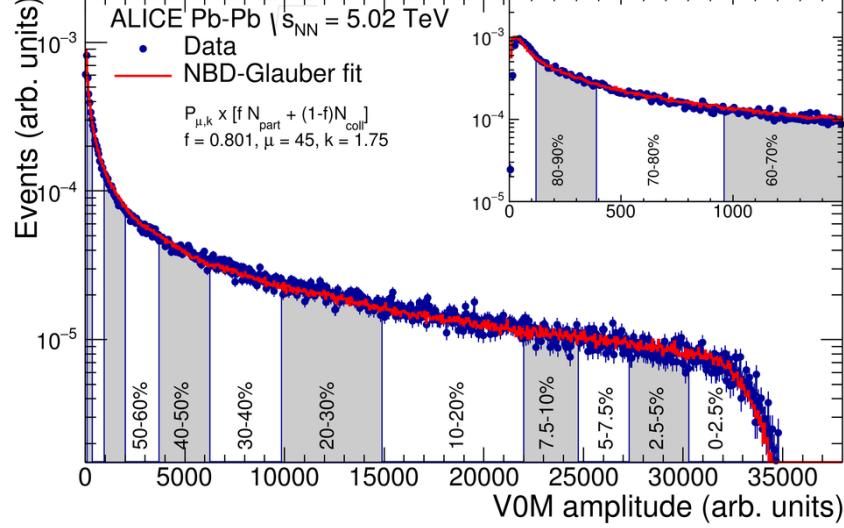
The VZERO(V0)[23] detector is a double layer scintillator array and similar to the T0 is asymmetrically placed at a distance of 86 cm(V0A) and 329 cm(V0C) away from the primary IP. It provides the ‘minimum bias’(MinBias)<sup>2</sup> trigger information for events and centrality information during the heavy-ion run. Centrality<sup>3</sup> is determined by measuring the

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<sup>2</sup>A MinBias event is unsurprisingly defined as an event with the least amount of bias possible. Events recorded with a MinBias trigger attempt to not artificially prefer either diffractive or non-diffractive processes over one another[24].

<sup>3</sup>See Section ??

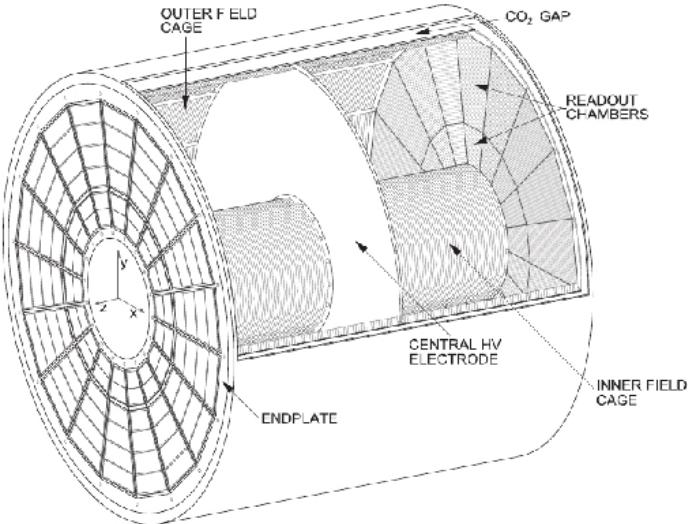
multiplicity amplitude from the V0 and fitting these results to a Glauber<sup>4</sup> distribution, as seen in Figure 1.4. The V0 is also capable of precision measurements of the target luminosity in the ALICE detector.



**Figure 1.4:** Multiplicity measured in the V0 detector with Glauber fits corresponding to centrality[3].

### 1.2.3 Inner Tracking System

The Inner Tracking System(ITS)[26] is six layers of solid state silicon detectors. Closest to the beam line are two layers of Silicon Pixel Detectors. The next two layers are Silicon Drift Detectors and furthest from the beam line are two layers of Silicon Strip Detectors. The main purpose of the ITS is to perform momentum measurements, PID, and vertex reconstruction of charged tracks. PID<sup>5</sup> is performed by measuring the ionization energy,  $\frac{dE}{dx}$ , of charged particles as they traverse the detector[27]. The ITS has a spatial resolution of  $100 \mu\text{m}$ . This allows for measurements of short lived hadrons by reconstructing secondary vertices, which is the distance of closest approach a track has to the primary vertex.



**Figure 1.5:** The ALICE Time Projection Chamber[4].

#### 1.2.4 Time Projection Chamber

The Time Projection Chamber(TPC)[4] is a gaseous charged particle tracker and the largest of its kind in the world. The TPC has full azimuthal coverage, a pseudorapidity acceptance of  $|\eta| \leq 0.7$ , and a volume of  $93 \text{ m}^3$ . Figure 1.5 shows a schematic of the TPC. As charged particles traverse the drift volume of the TPC, they ionize the gas inside<sup>6</sup>. A central cathode in the TPC with a voltage of 100 kV induces a uniform electric field of 400 V/m along the beam axis throughout the drift volume. Ionized electrons will drift down to the cylindrical endcaps of the TPC where the read-out chambers(ROC) are located. There are 18 ROCs on each side of the TPC which are further broken into a Inner Read Out Chamber(IROC) and Outer Read Out Chamber(OROC).

#### The TPC readout

The TPC incorporates a Multi-Wire Proportional Chamber(MWPC) design for amplification and copper pads for readout<sup>7</sup>. Ionized electrons created from charged particles take approximately  $100 \mu\text{s}$  to move from the drift volume to the readout region. Once these

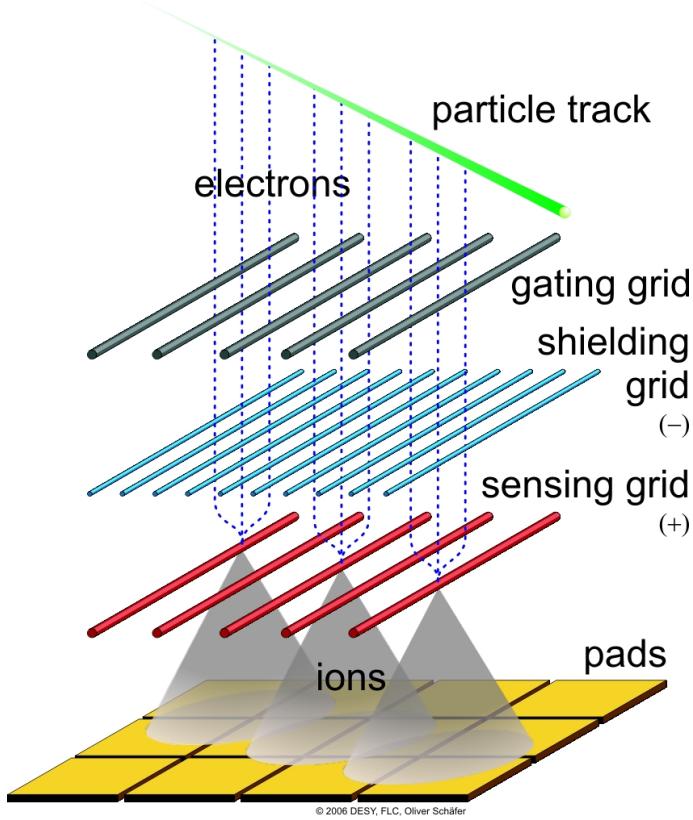
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<sup>4</sup>A Glauber model treats the nucleons composing a nucleus as hard shells, more can be found here [25].

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix A

<sup>6</sup>The TPC has operated with Ne – CO<sub>2</sub> (90-10) and Ar – CO<sub>2</sub> (90-10) gas mixtures in the past

<sup>7</sup>Their are 72 MWPCs and 500K copper pads in the ALICE TPC



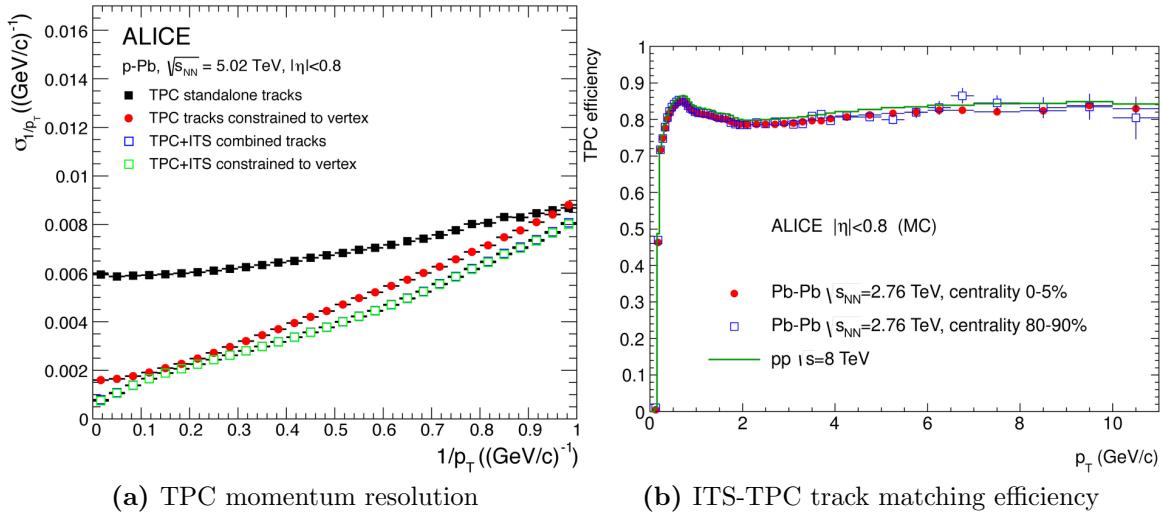
**Figure 1.6:** The TPC readout region[5].

electrons enter the readout region they will undergo an amplification process with the MWPC, seen as the sensing grid wires in Figure 1.6. This amplification process will turn the few dozen ionization electrons generated from a charged particle into thousands of amplification electrons that are easily sensed by the cooper pads and read from the front-end electronics(FEE). Amplification using MWPCs has the disadvantage of creating thousands of ions known as ‘backflow ions’ that can move back into the drift volume of the TPC. The presence of backflow ions in the drift volume of the TPC will cause distortions in the uniform electric field of the TPC. These distortions are known as ‘space-charge’ distortions and will compromise the physics performance of the TPC. In order to minimize the space-charge distortions the TPC incorporates a gating grid[? ]. Once an event is detected in the readout electronics of the TPC a high voltage is induced on the gating grid. This will capture any backflow ions moving from the amplification region to the drift volume. When engaged the gating grid introduces a dead time as any ionization electrons from new events occurring in ALICE will also get captured. The current configuration of the gating grid is

designed to engage it for 300  $\mu\text{s}$  after an event is first detected. This has been shown to absorb approximately 99% of the backflow ions created while preserving the TPC physics performance. The deadtime due to the gating grid along with the drift time for charged particles in the TPC limits the readout to 3.5 kHz. Upgrading the triggered operation of the current TPC to a continuous readout for the Hi-Lumi upgrade of the LHC will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

## TPC Performance

In order to reconstruct the trajectory of a particle, an iterative process known as the Kalman filter approach is deployed. The x-y coordinate which is perpendicular to the beamline are determined via the signal induced on the copper pads. The z component which is parallel to the beamline is reconstructed using the timing information from the T0.

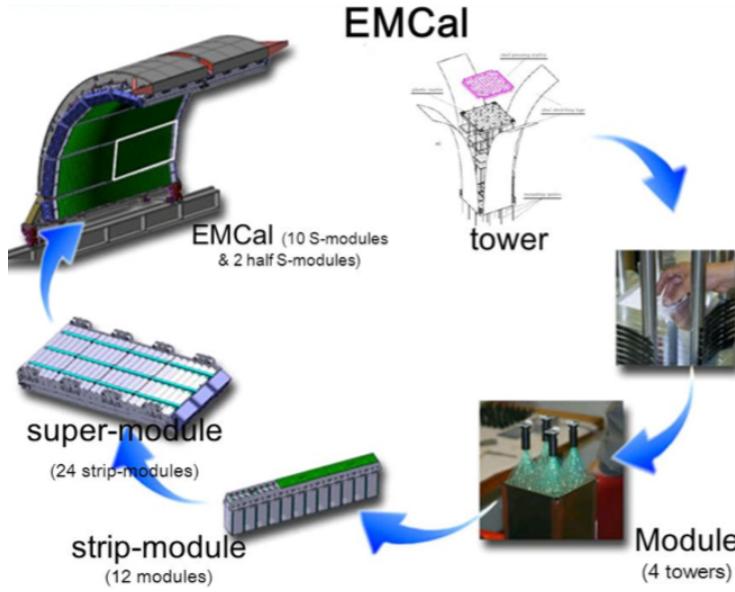


**Figure 1.7:** TPC momentum and tracking resolution[6].

The TPC has excellent momentum resolution between 150 MeV/ $c$  to 100 GeV/ $c$ [28]. Figure 1.7a shows the inverse momentum resolution as being below 10% in black. The momentum resolution was further improved to almost 5% over the full kinematic range by matching TPC tracks to ITS tracks and constraining those tracks to originate from the primary vertex region, red and green respectively. The matching efficiency between ITS tracks to TPC tracks is stable at about 80%, Figure 1.7b.

### 1.2.5 Electromagnetic Calorimeter

The Electromagnetic Calorimeter(EMCal)[29] is a lead based sampling calorimeter located at a radius of 4.5 meters from the beam pipe. It covers a pseudorapidity of  $|\eta| \leq 0.7$  and has azimuthal coverage of  $\Delta\phi = 107$  deg.



**Figure 1.8:** ALICE EMCal along with super modules, tower strips, and towers[7].

Figure 1.8 shows the layout of the EMCal. The smallest element of the EMCal is the ‘tower’<sup>8</sup>. The tower serves as the readout and is made up of several layers of alternating scintillator and Pb-absorber. Particles that interact via the electromagnetic force initiate a shower in the absorber material in the tower. This electromagnetic shower induces light in the scintillator to accumulate in the avalanche photodiodes(APD) in proportion to the particle’s energy. A ‘module’ is an array of four towers that share readout electronics. Twelve modules will be placed in a single strip that provides support to the structure. The largest component of the EMCal is the super-module, consisting of 1,100 towers, which serves as the mounting structure to the ALICE detector. In 2015 Dijet Calorimeter(DCAL) was installed in the ALICE detector to perform back-to-back jet measurements.

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<sup>8</sup>There are 12K towers in the EMCal

## EMCal Performance

As particles enter the EMCal they initiate an electromagnetic shower. The shower of electromagnetic particles spans several neighboring towers, these towers are grouped together into ‘clusters’ and the Analog-To-Digital Conversion(ADC) signal from the clusters corresponds to the energy deposited by the particle. The EMCal was designed so that photons and electrons will fully shower inside of the tower region and thus fully deposit their energy. Hadrons on the other hand will punch through the EMCal and only deposit a small fraction of their energy. PID can be performed using the EMCal via track-cluster matching from the TPC. TPC tracks are geometrically matched to the centroid of a cluster and if no track is matched the cluster originated from a photon. If a track is matched, then the ratio of E/P, the energy of a matched cluster to the momentum of a TPC track, can be used to separate electrons from hadrons.

The energy resolution of the EMCal follows the form seen in equation 1.1

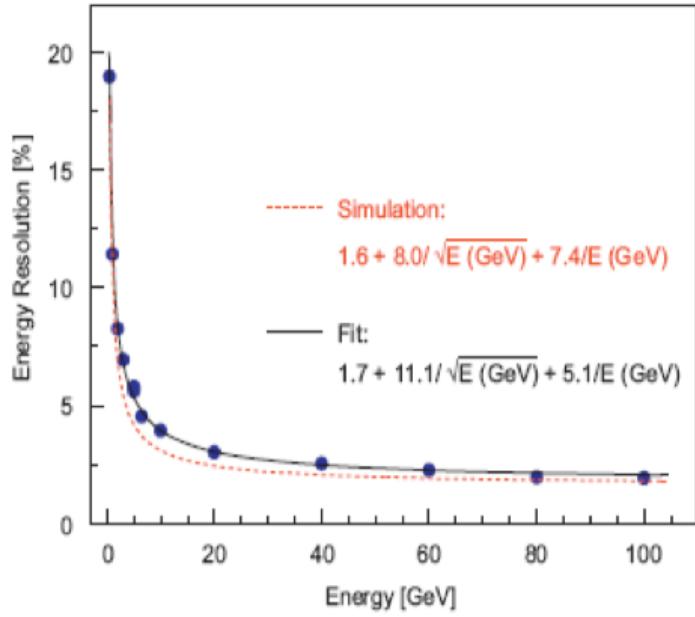
$$\frac{\sigma}{E} = \sqrt{A^2 + \frac{B^2}{E} + \frac{C^2}{E^2}} \quad (1.1)$$

where E is the cluster energy, A characterizes stochastic fluctuations such as photon collection efficiency, B is a function of the systematic effects such as detector non-uniformity, and C is a function of the noise in the Front-end electronics.

As seen in figure 1.1 excellent agreement exists between the measured performance of the EMCal compared to simulations in a kinematic range between 10GeV – 100GeV. The stochastic term, A, is the largest source of uncertainty in the energy resolution due to the EMCal being a sampling calorimeter. Unlike the TPC the resolution improves at high- $p_t$  making the EMCal ideal for measuring high energy particles and jets

## EMCal Trigger

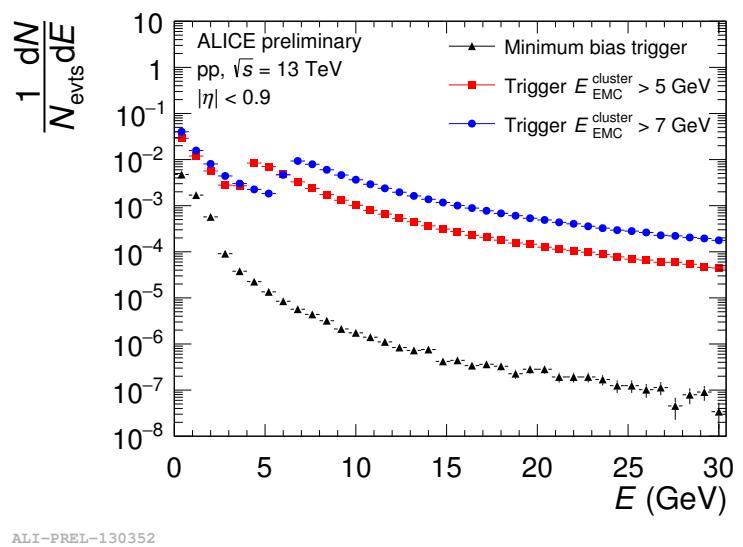
Due to the high luminosity in the LHC only a small fraction of events may be recorded to disk for later analysis. ALICE employs a variety of triggers to record events that have the highest value for performing quality physics analysis. The EMCal can trigger on events in order to increase the effective sample size for high- $p_T$  jets, photons, and electrons. The



**Figure 1.9:** Energy resolution in the EMCal measured in a 2007 test beam at CERN(blue) compared to GEANT3 simulations of the EMCal(orange), fits for the parameters A, B, and C are also shown[8].

two main triggers[30][31] for the EMCal are a jet trigger and a gamma trigger. The gamma trigger is comprised of a 4x4 patch of EMCal towers, while the jet trigger is a 16x16 patch of towers. Once the gamma trigger has surpassed a minimum energy threshold of 5 GeV[32] the event is tagged as a gamma event and the patch location is recorded.

EMCal jet triggered events have an energy threshold of 20 GeV and are similarly tagged and recorded. Figure 1.10 shows the spectra from clusters measured in the EMCal using MinBias data in black and the gamma trigger from the EMCal set to two thresholds, 5 GeV and 7 GeV. Recording the events that satisfy the EMCal triggers introduces a bias towards high-p<sub>T</sub> processes, however by using events that had an EMCal trigger we can extend the kinematic range of an inclusive jet measurement as seen in Figure 1.10. In order to account for this bias it is necessary to calculate a trigger efficiency by comparing spectra from inclusive jets recorded using the MinBias trigger to the spectra generated from the EMCal triggers. The calculation of the trigger efficiency will be discussed in depth in section ??



**Figure 1.10:** Cluster Spectra from the ALICE EMCal. MinBias is shown in black while the red and blue points show the spectra using the gamma trigger at two energy thresholds[9].

# Chapter 2

## The ALICE TPC Upgrade

Students making progress towards a Ph.D on the ALICE experiment are expected to contribute towards hardware work. From 2014 until 2018, I worked on the upgrade of the TPC to a continuous readout. This includes working on a test beam in 2014 for a prototype Read-Out Chamber (ROCs) using Micropattern Gaseous Detectors (MPGD) over the current Multi-Wire Proportional Chamber (MWPC) design. Once a final design for the new ROCs was chosen the production of the new Inner Read-Out Chambers (IROCs) using a stack of four Gaseous Electron Multiplier (GEM) foils took place at the University of Tennessee. During this period I assembled 49 new IROCs. In 2018, I traveled to Yale University and CERN to help with quality assurance of the IROCs built at Tennessee.

### 2.0.1 Physics Motivation

After the 2018 heavy-ion run ends, the LHC will begin the second long shutdown (LS2) and upgrade to the High Luminosity LHC (Hi-Lumi LHC)[33] which was briefly mentioned in section 1.1. The goal of the LHC upgrade is to move into an era of high precision measurements of rare QCD processes and increase the production of soft probes. Once the upgrade is complete the expected event rate in ALICE will be 50 kHz in MinBias PbPb collisions. This will see a factor of x100 increase in MinBias data and a factor of x10 increase in high- $p_T$  triggered data recorded by ALICE.

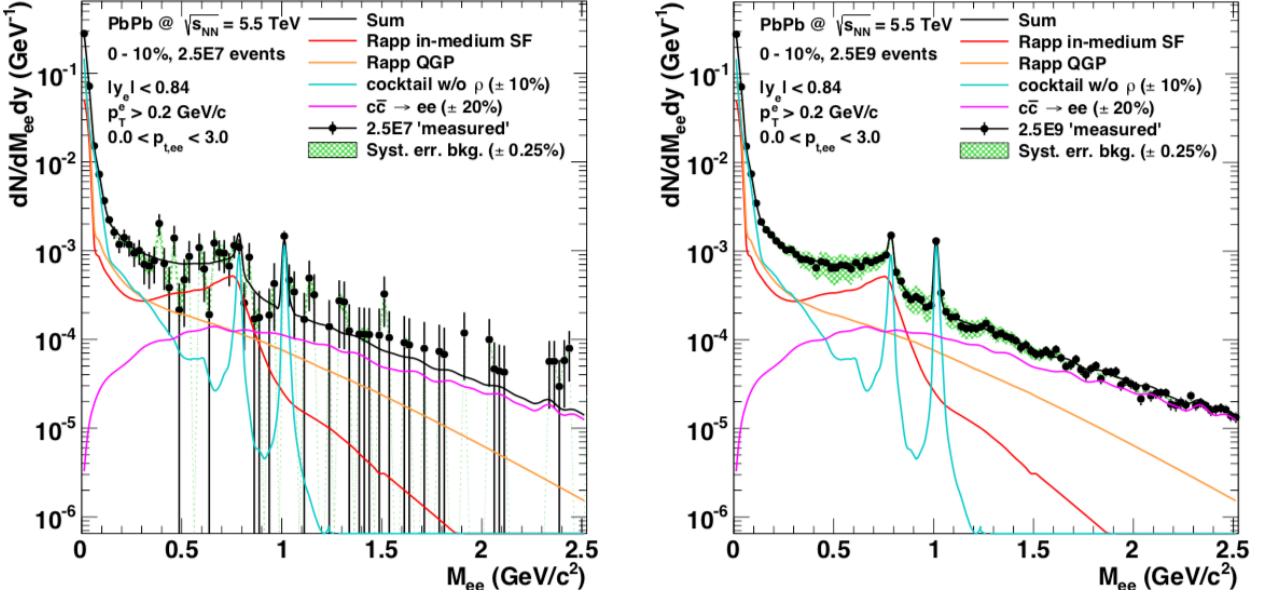
The ALICE experiment has focused on probing the thermodynamic properties of the QGP in the past. The increase in event rate expected from the Hi-Lumi LHC would open new ways to probe the QGP including[34]:

- Increasing the production of jets and allow separation of jet measurements based on the flavor of the initial parton.
- Studying the production mechanisms of light-nuclei, antihyper-nuclei, and other exotic hadrons.
- Probing the initial state temperature and equation of state of the QGP by measuring low-mass dileptons that originate from the earliest stages of a heavy-ion collision.
- Increase the yields of heavy-flavor mesons reconstructed via the secondary-vertex.

In order to probe the full scientific potential, ALICE has proposed a number of upgrade [35] to take place during the shutdown that include:

- Replacing the V0 and T0 detectors with a combined detector, called the Forward Interaction Trigger (FIT)[36].
- Improving the ITS and Muon Tracker spatial resolution by using Monolithic Active Pixel Sensors (MAPS)[37][38].
- Removing the 400 nanosecond dead time associated with the TPC and upgrade the FEE cards to handle the increase in data bandwidth[34].
- New Online/Offline ( $O^2$ ) data processing architecture[39].

Leptons weakly couple to the QGP[40] and by studying these the initial states in heavy ion collisions may be probed[41]. Figure 2.1 shows a simulation of the mass spectra for dileptons between  $0 \text{ GeV}/c - 1 \text{ GeV}/c$  using the current ALICE central detectors with tight kinematic cuts (left). The yields that are quantifiable do not allow for the separation of leptons originating from the QGP from those originating from background sources. After the increase in event rate and the upgraded ITS with improved tracking capabilities measuring



**Figure 2.1:** Simulation of the invariant mass spectra for dileptons in a typical heavy-ion run with current ALICE performance (left) and after upgrade of ALICE for Run-3 (right) in PbPb at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 5.5$  TeV. The dilepton yields originating from the QGP are shown (red and orange), along with background contributions from light-hadrons (blue), and charm (magenta)[34].

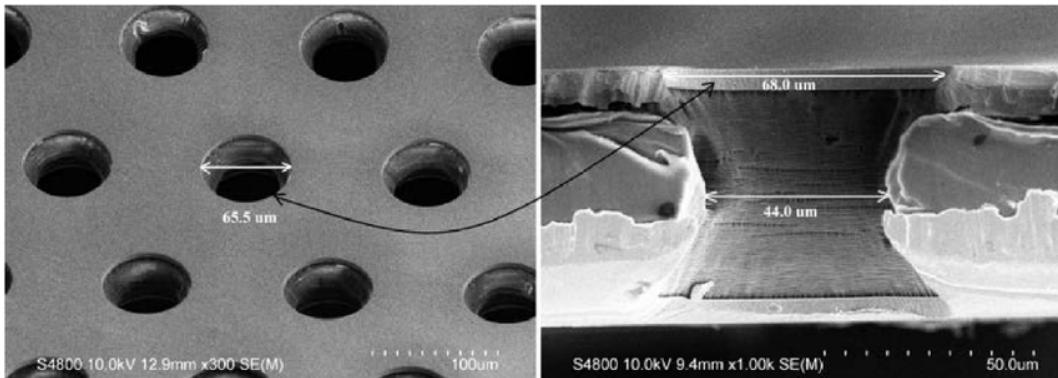
the low-mass dileptons that interacted with the QGP will be possible as shown on the right of Figure 2.1.

The TPC used in the ALICE experiment along with the readout was discussed in section 1.2.4. The ALICE collaboration first proposed an upgrade of the TPC in 2012 with a Letter of Intent (LoI)[34]. A Technical Design Report(TDR)[42] was published in 2013 with an initial design overview. An addendum to the TDR[43] was published in 2015 after the performance of prototype ROCs was measured on a test beam at CERN in 2014. The overall goals of the TPC upgrade are to continuously readout events in the high luminosity environment expected after LS2, to minimize the accumulation of space-charge distortions in the drift field, and to maintain the PID and tracking performance of the current TPC.

## 2.0.2 Gaseous Electron Multiplier Foils

Gaseous Electron Multiplier (GEM) Foils were first proposed by CERN physicist Fabio Sauli in 1997[44]. GEMs belong to a new form of detector technology known as Micropattern

Gaseous Detectors[45] that use microelectronic or chemical etching techniques to print a readout structure onto a material surface.



**Figure 2.2:** Scanning electron microscope image of a GEM foil from top (left) and profile (right)[46].

GEM foils are a Kapton sheet, typically  $50 \mu\text{m}$  thick, with a thin copper coat on both sides of the surface. A weak acid and stencil are used to chemically etch holes throughout the foil. Typically, the holes are between  $10 \mu\text{m}$  -  $100 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter and between  $100 \mu\text{m}$  -  $300 \mu\text{m}$  in pitch as seen in Figure 2.2. A few hundred volts is applied to each of the copper surfaces of the GEM foil causing a strong electric field to be induced in the GEM holes<sup>1</sup>.

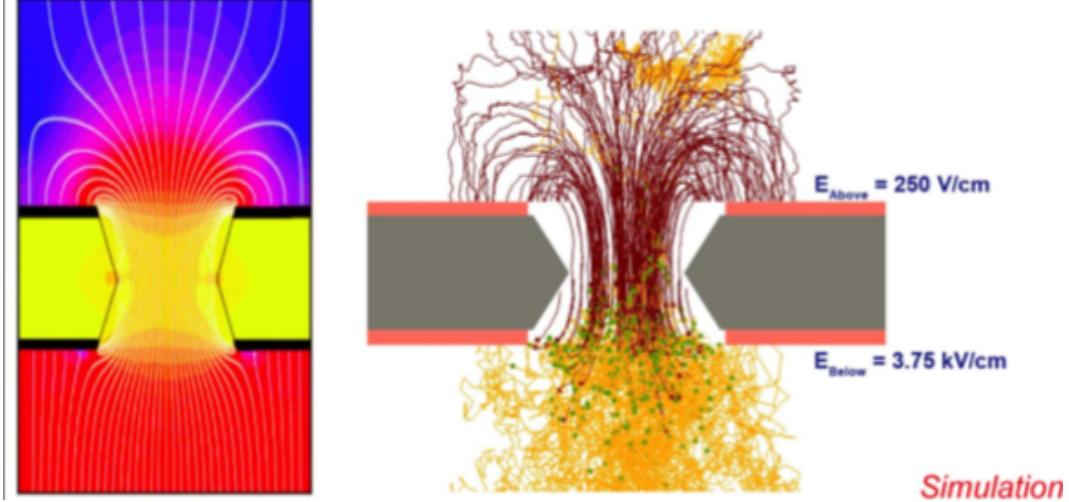
When a ionization electron from a track enters a GEM hole it will cause an avalanche of amplification electrons and ions to be produced similar to MWPCs. Due to the high voltage and strong electric fields around the GEM foil, any back flow ions created from the avalanche will get absorbed by the copper surfaces on the GEM foil, as seen in Figure 2.3.

The configuration of the pitch and size holes on a GEM foil is directly correlated to the amplification properties and ability to capture back flow ions. GEMS with larger holes or shorter pitch between the holes will have more amplification but will also be more ineffective at capturing ions. Likewise, GEMs with shorter holes or larger pitch will have better ion capture abilities yet worse amplification properties. By stacking multiple GEMs on top of one another it is possible to maximize the amplification properties and minimize the backflow.

Creating GEMs with a uniform hole distribution and stacking them in a consistent manner in order to minimize the overlap of holes from one layer to another restricted them to small prototypes and impeded their use on large experiments. Around 2010 two

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<sup>1</sup>The electric field is on the order of  $10 \text{ kV/cm}$



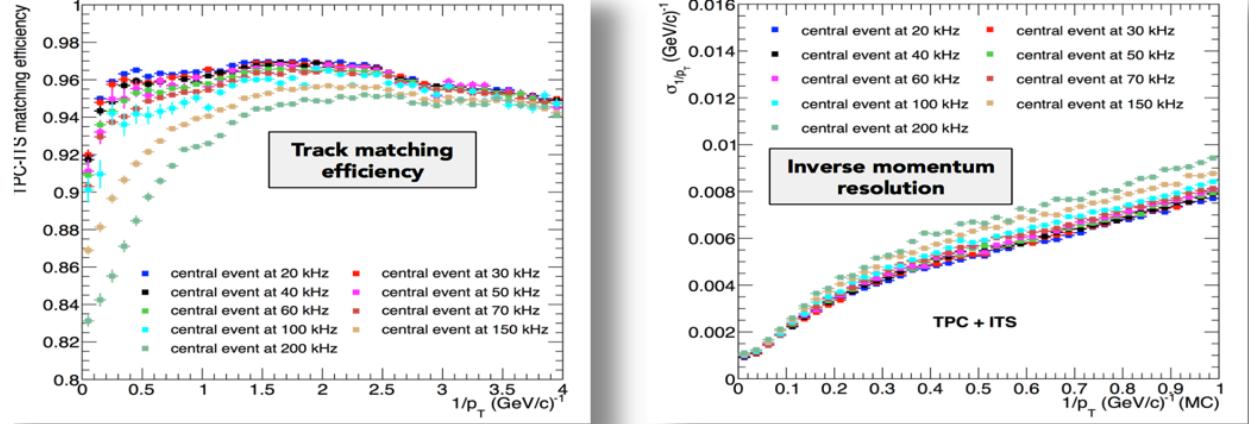
**Figure 2.3:** Profile of GEM with electric-field lines and gradients (left). Simulation of an ionization electron (yellow line) entering a GEM from a drift volume, amplification electrons (green dots, yellow lines) and back flow ions (red lines) are created (right)[47].

methods were developed, the single-mask technique[48] and the NS2 assembly[49], which allowed for a systematic way of etching holes and stretching GEMs so they could be properly aligned. These methods allowed for GEMs to become a viable amplification device for large experiments. As of 2018 the TOTEM, COMPASS, ATLAS, and LHCb experiments have all incorporated GEMs in their trackers and future colliders, such as the Electron-Ion Collider (EIC), plan on using them[50].

### 2.0.3 Research and Development

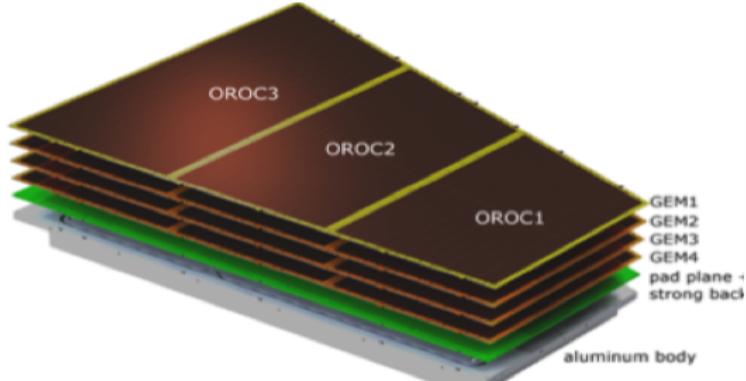
Initially, it was decided that the new ROCs would incorporate a stack of three GEMs with a hole geometry similar to the one incorporated on the LHCb experiments[51] tracking detector. This gave the ALICE TPC upgrade a starting point to bench mark performance for the upgrade as well as the opportunity to use experts in GEM technology already present at CERN. The first phase of the R&D involved simulating the performance of the LHCb 3-GEM stack in the high event rate environment expected after the Hi-Lumi LHC upgrade using a the software package called Garfield++, which is a GEANT4 add-on package built to simulate MPGDs. It was quickly observed from the simulations that a 3-GEM stack would be insufficient in maintaining the performance needed for the TPC while minimizing the ion

back flow. An additional layer of GEM was added to the 3-GEM stack in simulation and it was observed that this configuration would preserve the TPC performance.



**Figure 2.4:** ITS-TPC matching (*left*) and inverse momentum resolution (*right*) for a 4-GEM stack simulated in Garfield++ [52].

Figure 2.4 shows simulations of the track matching efficiency from the ITS to the TPC and the inverse momentum resolution for a 4-GEM stack as a function of the collision rate. The efficiency and resolution only start to diminish at an event rate above 100 kHz, which is double the expected rate after the LHC upgrade, and are well within the range of the current TPC operating at 3.5 kHz.



**Figure 2.5:** Final design of the upgraded readout chambers with a stack of 4 GEMS [42].

The optimal hole configuration was also explored with simulations. Having a first and forth layer with a pitch of  $140\ \mu\text{m}$  and the second and third layer with a pitch of  $280\ \mu\text{m}$ , allowed for the the ROCs to maintain minimal ion backflow while amplifying the signal from

tracks. Figure 2.5 shows the design of the ROCs with a 4-GEM stack, the copper pad plane is glued to a reinforced fiberglass sheet , known as the strongback, to add material strength.

## 2014 Test Beam

The 2014 test beam served as my first task at CERN and introduced me to the TPC, GEMs, and ROCs. I helped with setting up the prototypes on the beam line, recording data from the test beam, and monitoring the performance in real time. To quantify the performances of the prototype it is useful to define the ionic backflow (IBF%) as

$$\text{IBF\%} = \frac{I_{\text{cathode}}}{I_{\text{anode}}} = \frac{1 + \epsilon}{G_{\text{eff}}} \quad (2.1)$$

where  $I_{\text{cathode}}/I_{\text{anode}}$  is the ratio of the currents measured in the cathode and anode portion of a readout as seen in Figure 1.6. The IBF% can also be defined in terms of the number of backflowing ions ( $\epsilon$ ) created at an effective gain ( $G_{\text{eff}}$ ). The effective gain is a measure of the amplification properties and in a gaseous detector is defined as

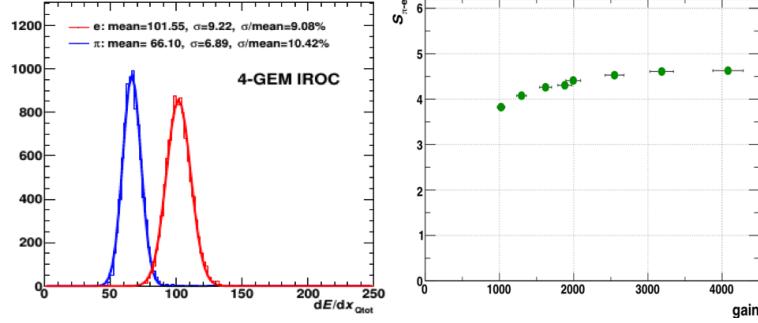
$$G_{\text{eff}} = \frac{I_{\text{anode}}}{e N_{\text{ion}} R} \quad (2.2)$$

where  $e$  is the fundamental electric charge of an electron,  $N_{\text{ion}}$  is the number of captured ions, and  $R$  is the illumination rate from an active source. The test involved using the beam from both the SPS and PS<sup>2</sup> at the LHC cast onto an iron target. This iron target created secondary showers and tracks were measured by the prototype for both energy resolution and PID performance. The nominal TPC gas of CO<sub>2</sub> – N<sub>2</sub> (90-10) was used during the test beam.

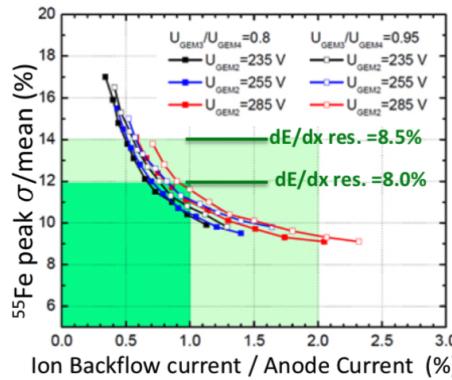
Figure 2.6 shows the PID performance for separating electron and pion tracks created by the iron target, the separation power between the two Gaussian peaks trivially increases above a gain of 2000 and this was chosen as the target effective gain for the new ROCs. Figure 2.7 shows the energy resolution of the iron peak as a function of the relative voltages between GEM 2 ( $U_{\text{GEM2}}$ ) and the ratio of voltages between GEM 3 ( $U_{\text{GEM3}}$ ) and GEM 4 ( $U_{\text{GEM4}}$ ) and shows that the IBF% remains below 1% at a energy resolution of  $\approx 10\%$

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<sup>2</sup>See Section 1.1.2.



**Figure 2.6:**  $dE/dx$  resolution of the 4-GEM IROC prototype (*left*) and the separation power between electrons and pions as a function of gain (*right*) [43].

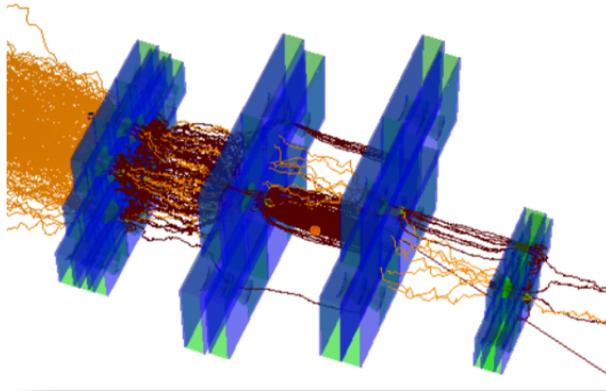


**Figure 2.7:** Energy resolution of the iron peak as measured from the prototype IROC with varying GEM voltages as a function of IBF% [43].

which is consistent with the current TPC performance. The voltages were chosen such that GEM 1 and GEM2, which are closest to the drift volume, would focus mostly on capturing amplification ions while GEM 3 and GEM 4, which are closest to the copper pad readout, would primarily perform the amplification as shown in Figure 2.8.

#### 2.0.4 Production of the Inner Readout Chambers in the U.S.

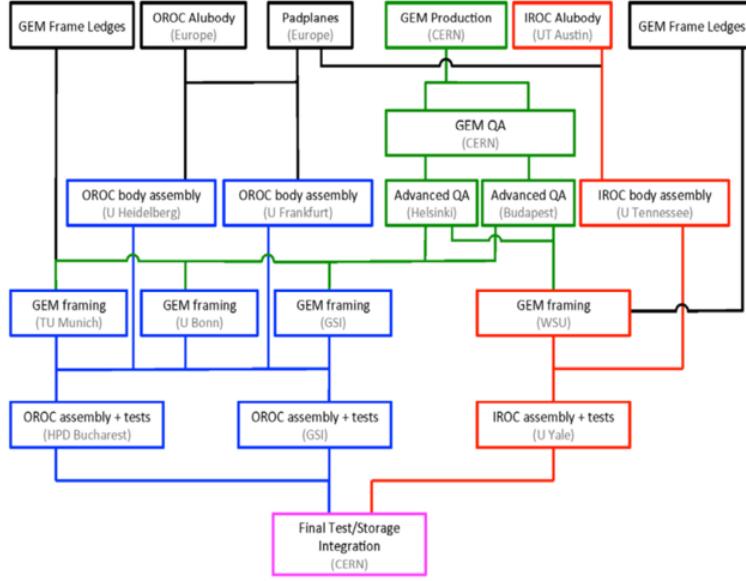
Once a final design was settled on from the simulation and prototype portion of the G&D we entered the production phase. A minimum of 36 new ROCs would need to be built with the 4-GEM stack to replace the old ROCs in the TPC while 4 additional ROCs would be constructed as backups. Due to the size and weight of the ROCs, production of the IROCs would take place in the United States and the OROC production mainly in Germany.



**Figure 2.8:** Simulation of the four GEM (blue) layers after test beam. The configuration is such that the two GEMs closest to the drift volume, right side, absorb the amplification ions created by the two GEMs closest to the readout (right) [43].

Figure 2.13 shows the production flow for the construction of the 4-GEM ROCs. After GEMs are received from the manufacturer they go through a number of quality assurance tests before they are shipped to the institute responsible for framing and stretching them. Wayne State University is responsible for the GEM stretching and mounting for the IROCs. The aluminum bodies at the University of Texas Austin and shipped to Tennessee. At Tennessee we glue the pad plane, aluminum body and strong back together before it is shipped to Yale where the chambers are fit with the GEMs from Wayne State. The production steps for the OROC mirror those performed by the IROC except that it was performed by mainly German institutes.

Figure 2.10 shows the procedure followed at Tennessee in order to build an IROC. Furthest on the left is a picture of gluing a copper pipe into the aluminum body. This copper pipe is flushed with a colant that maintains the temperature of the Front End Electronics (FEE). The next two photos of Figure 2.10 show the pad plane mounted on a vacuum table while glue is applied to it and the aluminum body. Once the two are aligned the glued IROC lead bricks are placed on the ROC and the epoxy is allowed to cure for 24 hours. The right most picture shows the final step of mounting and gluing the HV feedthroughs for the GEM foils. Before a completed IROC leaves Tennessee we performed a gas tightness test that will be discussed more in the next section. Full production of the IROCs ended in November of



**Figure 2.9:** Production flow of the IROCs (red), OROCs (blue), and GEM foils (green)[52].



**Figure 2.10:** The author assembling an Inner Readout Chamber at the University of Tennessee (*Courtesy of Andrew Castro*).

2018 with a total of 47 chambers being built at Tennessee. A surplus of chambers was built due to excess materials we had.

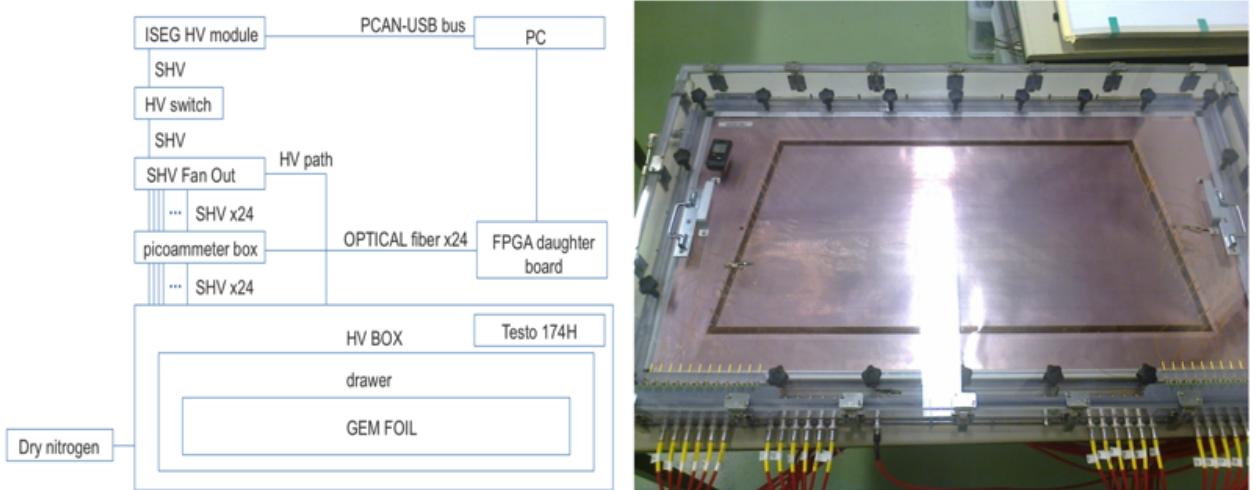
## 2.0.5 GEM and Chamber Quality Assurance

Due to the large amount of work outsourced to numerous universities, international labs, and private contracts for the TPC upgrade, a stringent set of quality assurance (QA)[53][46]

protocols were implemented to monitor any damage sustained during transport and to quickly identify any flaws in the production procedures. The QA can be broken into two major categories: QA performed on the GEM foils as received from the manufacturer and QA performed on complete/semi-complete chambers as they were going through the different production steps. I will discuss only the QA tasks that I was directly involved with.

## GEM QA

In order to evaluate the performance of a GEM foil, a spark test was performed on every foil. Sparks are caused by the discharge of the foil and may be due to the presence of dust on a foil, imperfections in the hole geometry, or a short between the two copper layers of the GEM. The final design of the GEM foils had each foil segmented into twelve sectors with a  $10\text{ M}\Omega$  bias resistor across every segment. Any sparks that occur on the GEM will only discharge a given segment and not the entire foil. Because of the delicate nature of the GEM foil, sparks have the potential to permanently damage a foil or seriously affect the performance of a ROC. Thus GEMs with a high spark rate should be excluded as soon as possible in the production flow.



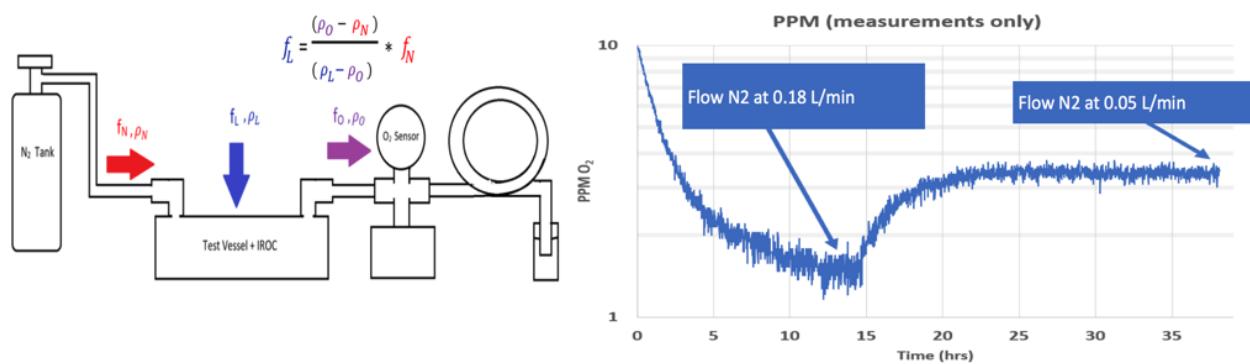
**Figure 2.11:** Schematic for the setup of the GEM foil spark test (*left*)<sup>[53]</sup> and the GEM mounted in the HV gas box (*right*).

The GEM foil spark test involves mounting each foil in a High Voltage (HV) box, which is flushed with  $\text{N}_2$  until it reaches a relative humidity of  $\approx 10\%$ . Once this humidity is reached

500 V is placed across each segment of the GEM and monitored with a LabView interface. A spark is defined as the LabView recording a current above 10 nA across the bias resistor through any GEM segment and read by a multi-channel picoammeter. The criteria for a GEM to fail this QA was to have more than five sparks over a 20 minute recording window.

## Chamber QA

Most of the QA I helped with was on ROC chambers as they went through the production steps. Before completed IROC chambers were sent to Yale, I performed a gas leak test. The leak test consisted of mounting an individual chamber into an aluminum test vessel and flushing the inside of the vessel with N<sub>2</sub> gas. By using a flowmeter to measure the rate that N<sub>2</sub> gas enters the test vessel and an oxygen sensor to measure the amount of oxygen present at the output of the test vessel we can infer the leak rate of each IROC chamber. Figure 2.12 shows a schematic of the setup (left) and what the typical output from the LabView interface (right). By flowing at two different rates and measuring the oxygen content at each rate we could confirm the leak rate.

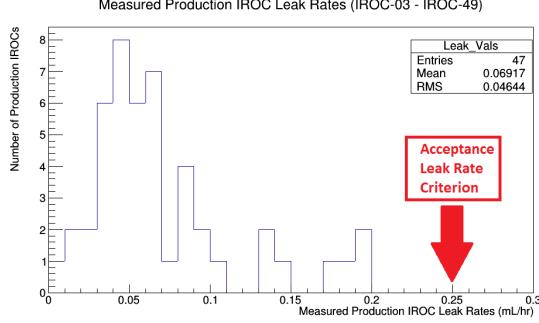


**Figure 2.12:** Schematic of the gas tightness testing setup at the University of Tennessee (*Courtesy of Joseph Rasson*).

The leak rate of a chamber,  $f_L$ , can be quantified as

$$f_L = \left( \frac{\rho_0 - \rho_N}{\rho_L - \rho_0} \right) f_N \quad (2.3)$$

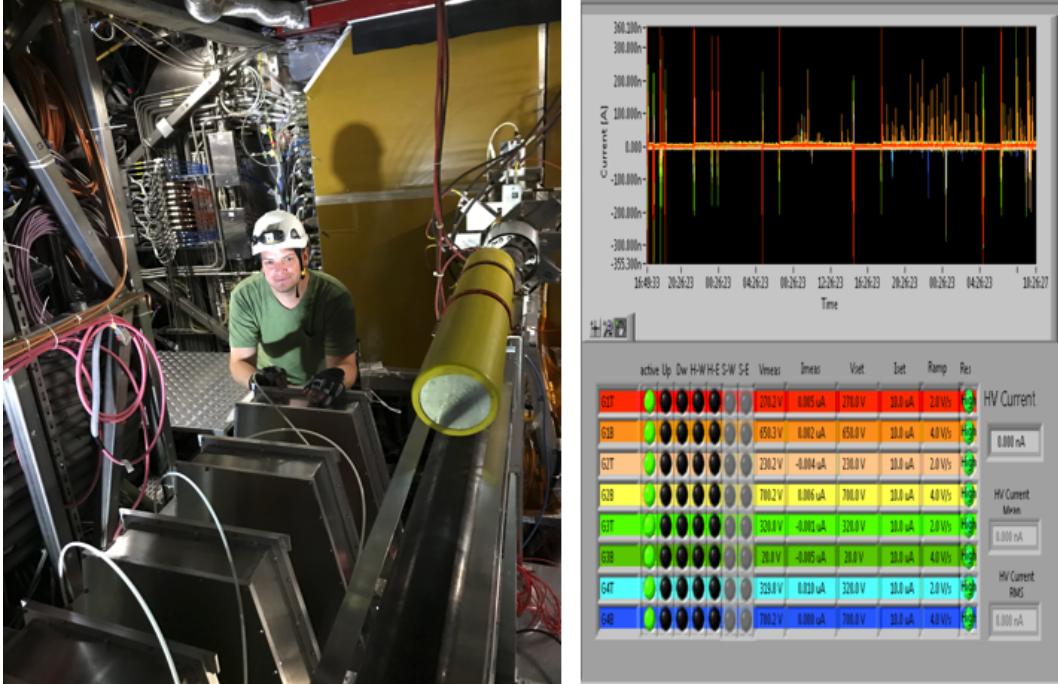
where  $f_N$  is the flow rate of N<sub>2</sub> gas into the test vessel,  $\rho_L$  is the concentration of O<sub>2</sub> in the laboratory,  $\rho_N$  is the O<sub>2</sub> impurity present in the N<sub>2</sub> bottle, and  $\rho_0$  is the O<sub>2</sub> reading from the LabView interface.



**Figure 2.13:** Leak rate of the 47 chambers built at Tennessee with the maximum failure rate at 0.25 ml/hr shown (*Courtesy of Charles Hughes*).

A maximum leak rate of 0.25 mL/hour was placed as the rejection criteria for a given chamber. If a chamber had a leak rate above this the N<sub>2</sub> gas could get swapped out with a helium gas tank and we could use a helium sniffer to identify the areas on the IROC causing the leak and patch the area with epoxy. Figure 2.13 shows the leak rate for all IROCs produced at Tennessee, due to none of the chambers surpassing the leak threshold the helium sniffer was not used in the production of the IROCs.

Once an IROC chamber was fitted with the 4 GEM foils at Yale and sent to CERN a spark test was performed over the entire chamber. The test involved placing each chamber next to the LHC beam line, flushing with the nominal TPC gas, and placing the nominal voltage across each GEM and monitoring the spark rate once a beam was present in the LHC. Figure 2.14 shows myself installing the completed IROC chambers next to the LHC beam line in front of ALICE and the output from the spark monitor. The voltage across each chamber could be varied in real time in order to minimize sparking while maintaining the IROC performance, thus reducing the rate of degradation on a per chamber basis once installed in the TPC.



**Figure 2.14:** The author testing spark testing chambers next to the LHC beam line (*left*) and real time output from the spark test during a live beam (*right*).

### 2.0.6 Outlook

As of November 2018, the 47 IROCs assembled at Tennessee have been received at CERN. None of the built chambers have surpassed the gas leak test performed at CERN and so far only 4 chambers exhibit sparking rates above the threshold. By May of 2019, the LHC beamline around ALICE will be decommissioned and the TPC will be moved to a surface level clean room for the installation of the chambers. The installation of the new FEE electronics and the ROC chambers should take place throughout the summer of 2019. Afterwards there will be a 10 month commissioning with the TPC, during which the performance of the upgraded TPC will be evaluated with cosmic rays. By the end of 2020, the TPC should be back in the ALICE cavern and the beam line will have been re-installed. The Hi-Lumi run of the LHC is expected to start in March of 2021.

%includechapters/chapter-5 %includechapters/chapter-6

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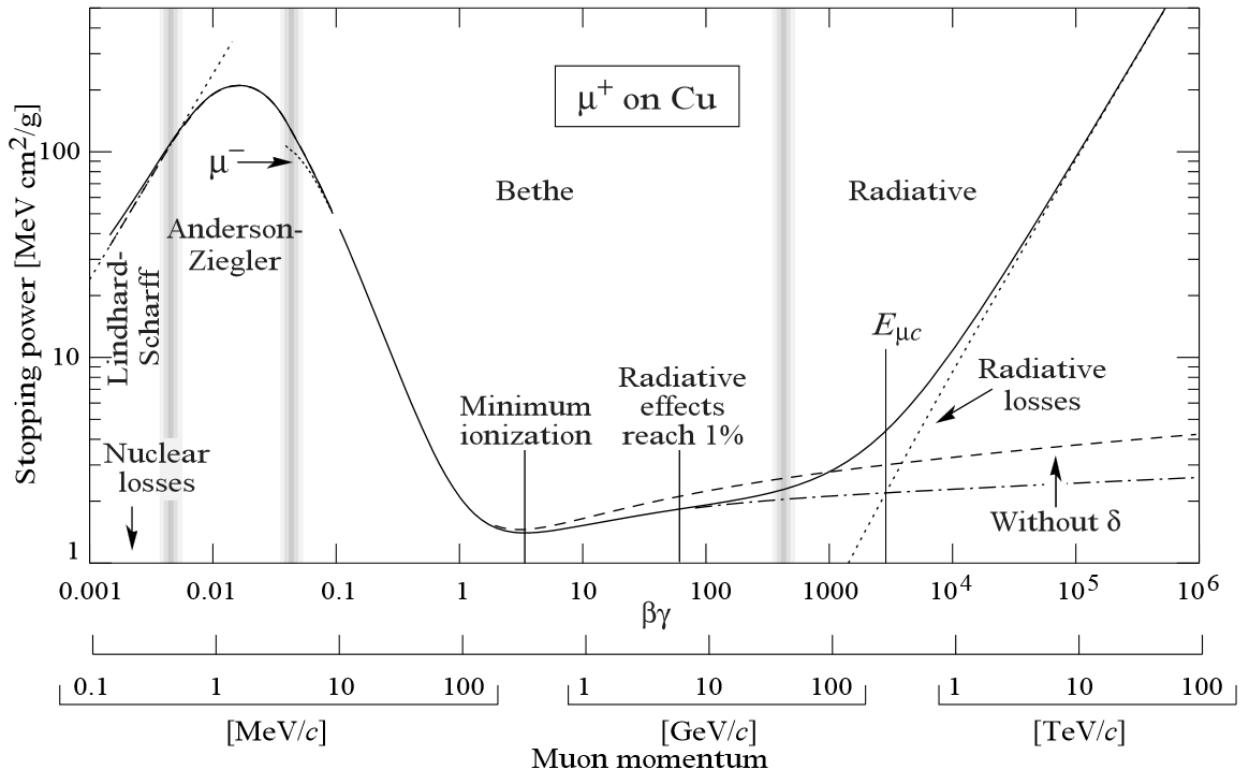
# **Appendices**

## A Particle Identification via Bethe-Bloch

The energy loss of a relativistic charged particle traversing through a medium is given by the Bethe-Bloch relation:

$$\frac{dE}{dx} \propto \frac{1}{\beta^2} \frac{Z}{A} \rho \left[ \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{2m_e c^2 \beta^2 \gamma^2 T_{\max}}{I^2} - \beta^2 - \frac{\delta(\beta\gamma)}{2} \right] \quad (4)$$

where  $\rho$  is the density of the medium,  $\frac{Z}{A}$  is the ratio of the atomic number to the atomic mass of the absorber,  $\beta$  is the ratio of the particle's momentum to energy,  $T_{\max}$  is the maximum transfer energy from the charged particle to an electron in the medium,  $I^2$  is the mean excitation energy of the medium,  $\frac{\delta(\beta\gamma)}{2}$  is a correction factor based on the polarization of the material, and  $\gamma^2$  is the lorentz factor  $\frac{1}{\sqrt{1-\beta^2}}$

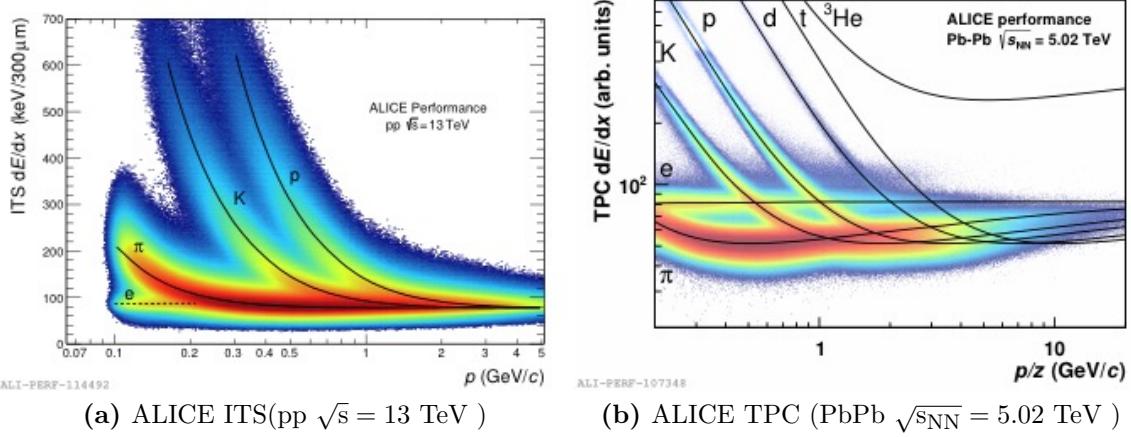


**Figure 15:** Energy loss of a muon traversing a copper medium between 0.1 MeV to 100 TeV [10].

Figure 15 shows the Bethe-Bloch curve for a muon over a wide kinematic range. At low energies the dominate form of energy loss is via elastic scattering, while at high energies

radiation becomes the dominate energy loss mechanism. When  $\beta\gamma \approx 3$  the muon losses the least amount of energy possible and is called a minimum ionization particle(MIP).

The ALICE ITS and TPC<sup>3</sup> cannot directly measure the energy loss of a particle traversing either sub-detector. Instead they perform PID by measuring the relative amplitudes from the sub-detectors read-out elements, pixels in the ITS and copper pads in the TPC. The amplitudes are then fit to the Bethe-Bloch equation as seen in Figure 16. Electrons weakly obey the Bethe-Bloch relationship in the kinematic ranges sensitive to the ITS and TPC and thus have a constant energy loss in both detectors.



**Figure 16:** Specific energy loss for the ITS(*left*) and the TPC(*right*) with Bethe-Bloch fits from different particle species traversing each detector[11].

Figure 16 also shows that the Bethe-Bloch curves merge above some kinematic range, 4 GeV in the ITS and 10 GeV in the TPC. Above this kinematic range particles cannot be distinguished on a track-by-track basis, but by using statistical methods and Gaussian fits PID can be extended up to 20 GeV[54].

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<sup>3</sup>See Section 1.2.3 and Section 1.2.4

# Vita