



Hard exclusive π^0 muoproduction at COMPASS

Towards Improved Hadron Tomography with Hard Exclusive Reactions, 28-31 July 2025

Karolína Lavičková* on behalf of the COMPASS collaboration

*FNSPE CTU in Prague

July 30, 2025

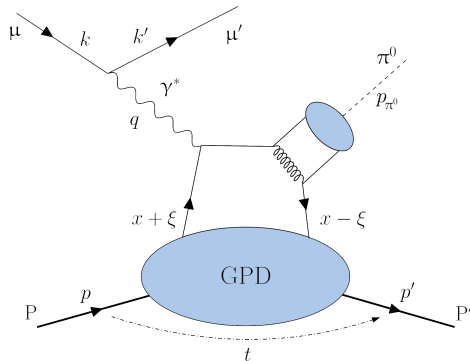


Co-funded by
the European Union



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AND SPORTS

Hard exclusive π^0 muoproduction



Sensitive to the GPDs

- $\tilde{H}(x, \xi, t)$ and $\tilde{E}(x, \xi, t) \rightarrow$ chiral-even (conserving the parton helicity)
- $H_T(x, \xi, t)$ and $\bar{E}_T(x, \xi, t) = 2\tilde{H} + E_T \rightarrow$ chiral-odd (parton helicity flip)
 - H_T related to transversity and $\bar{E}_T$ related to Boer-Mulders PDFs

Cross section for hard exclusive π^0 production

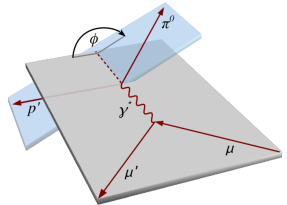
$$\frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} + \epsilon \cos(2\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} + \sqrt{2\epsilon(1+\epsilon)} \cos(\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \mp |P| \sqrt{2\epsilon(1-\epsilon)} \sin(\phi) \frac{d\sigma'_{LT}}{dt} \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle H_T \rangle|^2 - \frac{t'}{8m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle \tilde{H} \rangle|^2 - 2\xi^2 \text{Re} [\langle \tilde{H} \rangle * \langle \tilde{E} \rangle] - \frac{t}{4m_p^2} \xi^2 |\langle \tilde{E} \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} \propto \frac{t'}{16m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \propto \xi \sqrt{1 - \xi^2} \sqrt{-t'} \text{Re} [\langle H_T \rangle * \langle \tilde{E} \rangle]$$



Cross section for hard exclusive π^0 production

$$\frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} + \epsilon \cos(2\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} + \sqrt{2\epsilon(1+\epsilon)} \cos(\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \right. \\ \left. \mp |P| \sqrt{2\epsilon(1-\epsilon)} \sin(\phi) \frac{d\sigma'_{LT}}{dt} \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle H_T \rangle|^2 - \frac{t'}{8m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle \tilde{H} \rangle|^2 - 2\xi^2 \text{Re} \left[\langle \tilde{H} \rangle * \langle \tilde{E} \rangle \right] - \frac{t}{4m_p^2} \xi^2 |\langle \tilde{E} \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} \propto \frac{t'}{16m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \propto \xi \sqrt{1 - \xi^2} \sqrt{-t'} \text{Re} \left[\langle H_T \rangle * \langle \tilde{E} \rangle \right]$$

The last term cancels out upon averaging when using μ^+ and μ^- beams of exactly opposite polarization.

Cross section for hard exclusive π^0 production

$$\frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} + \epsilon \cos(2\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} + \sqrt{2\epsilon(1+\epsilon)} \cos(\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle H_T \rangle|^2 - \frac{t'}{8m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} \propto \frac{t'}{16m_p^2} |\langle \bar{E}_T \rangle|^2$$

- In exclusive π^0 production, the GPDs enter the amplitude in the flavor combination $F = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (\frac{2}{3} F^u + \frac{1}{3} F^d)$
- $\tilde{E}^u$ and $\tilde{E}^d$, $\tilde{H}^u$ and $\tilde{H}^d$ or H_T^u and H_T^d have opposite signs
- $\bar{E}_T^u$ and $\bar{E}_T^d$ are evaluated with the same sign
 $\Rightarrow$ **exclusive π^0 production is dominated by $\bar{E}_T$**

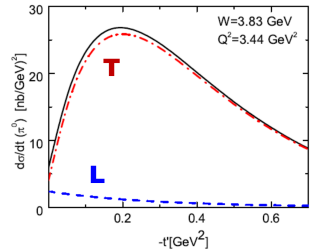
Cross section for hard exclusive π^0 production

$$\frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} = \frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} + \epsilon \cos(2\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{dt} + \sqrt{2\epsilon(1+\epsilon)} \cos(\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{dt} \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle \tilde{H}_T \rangle|^2 - \frac{t'}{8m_p^2} |\langle \tilde{E}_T \rangle|^2 \right]$$

$$\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} \propto \left[(1 - \xi^2) |\langle \tilde{H} \rangle|^2 - 2\xi^2 \text{Re} \left[\langle \tilde{H} \rangle * \langle \tilde{E} \rangle \right] - \frac{t}{4m_p^2} \xi^2 |\langle \tilde{E} \rangle|^2 \right]$$

- GPDs decrease with $-t' = -(t - t_0)$, $t_0 \approx 10^{-2} \Rightarrow -t' \approx |t|$
- $\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt}$ decrease with $-t'$ (dominated by $\tilde{H}$)
- $\frac{d\sigma_T}{dt}$ increase at small $-t'$, then decrease (maximum due to $t' |\langle \tilde{E}_T \rangle|^2$)

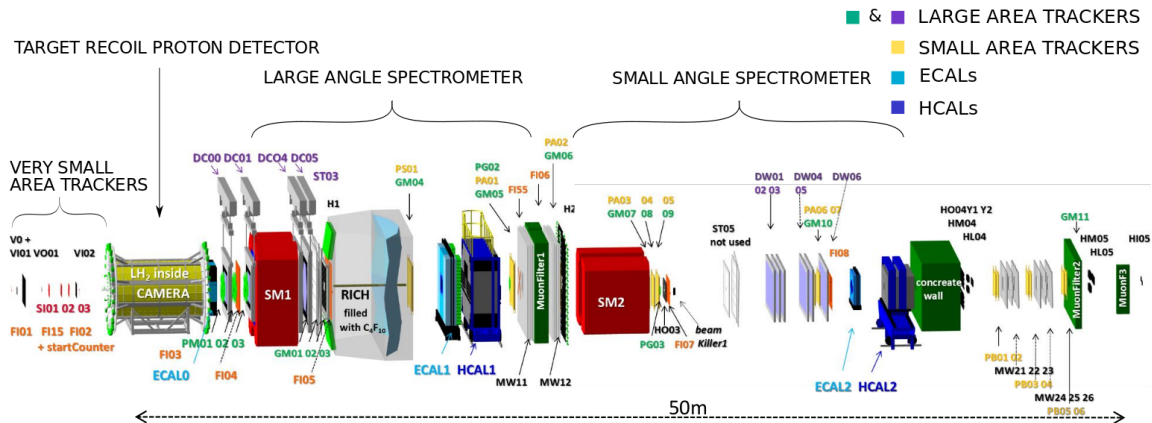


S. Goloskokov, P. Kroll EPJC47 (2011)

The COMPASS fixed target experiment at CERN (2002 - 2022)



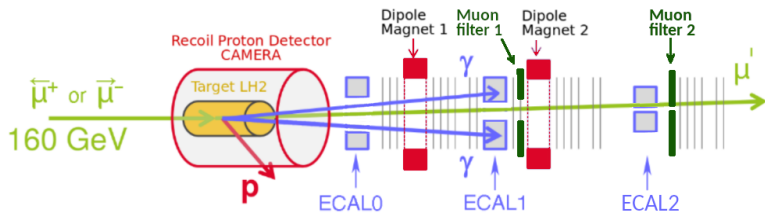
Experimental setup for GPD run



Measurement of the hard exclusive π^0 muoproduction at COMPASS

Beam polarisation
 $\sim \pm 80\%$

Unpolarized target



■ Collected data for HEMP and DVCS

- 2012 - pilot run (results published in PLB 805 135454)
- **2016 - this work** (same beam intensity but 2.3 times larger statistics than 2012)
- 2017 - analysis started recently (2016+2017 $\approx$ 9 times larger statistics than 2012)

Cross section determination

$$\left\langle \frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} \right\rangle_{\Delta\Omega}^{\pm} = \left(\sum_{i=1}^{N_{data}^{\Delta\Omega}^{\pm}} \frac{1}{\Gamma(\Omega_i) a(\Omega_i) \mathcal{L}^{\pm} \Delta\Omega} - f^{\pm} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{LEPTO}^{\Delta\Omega}^{\pm}} \frac{1}{\Gamma(\Omega_i) a(\Omega_i) \mathcal{L}^{\pm} \Delta\Omega} \right)$$

- phase space element $\Delta\Omega = \Delta|t| \Delta\phi \Delta\nu \Delta Q^2$
 - $0.08 < |t| < 0.64 \text{ (GeV/c)}^2$
 - $-\pi < \phi < \pi \text{ rad}$
 - $6.4 < \nu < 40 \text{ GeV}$ (virtual photon energy)
 - $1 < Q^2 < 8 \text{ (GeV/c)}^2$
- virtual photon flux Γ , acceptance a , luminosity $\mathcal{L}$
- background normalization

$$f^{\pm} = r_{LEPTO}^{\pm} \cdot \frac{N_{data}^{\pm}}{N_{LEPTO}^{\pm}}$$

r_{LEPTO} is a fraction of SIDIS background evaluated using LEPTO MC and exclusive HEPGEN++ MC

Cross section determination

$$\left\langle \frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} \right\rangle_{\Delta\Omega}^{\pm} = \left(\sum_{i=1}^{N_{data}^{\Delta\Omega\pm}} \frac{1}{\Gamma(\Omega_i)a(\Omega_i)\mathcal{L}^{\pm}\Delta\Omega} - f^{\pm} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{LEPTO}^{\Delta\Omega\pm}} \frac{1}{\Gamma(\Omega_i)a(\Omega_i)\mathcal{L}^{\pm}\Delta\Omega} \right)$$

- phase space element $\Delta\Omega = \Delta|t|\Delta\Phi\Delta\nu\Delta Q^2$
 - $0.08 < |t| < 0.64 \text{ (GeV/c)}^2$
 - $-\pi < \phi < \pi \text{ rad}$
 - $6.4 < \nu < 40 \text{ GeV}$ (virtual photon energy)
 - $1 < Q^2 < 8 \text{ (GeV/c)}^2$
- virtual photon flux Γ , acceptance a , luminosity $\mathcal{L}$
- spin-independent cross section

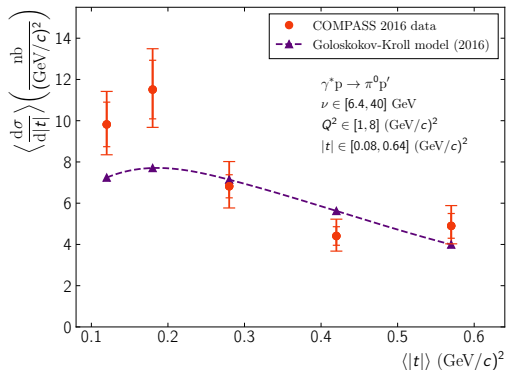
$$\left\langle \frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} \right\rangle_{\Delta\Omega} = \frac{1}{2} \left(\left\langle \frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} \right\rangle_{\Delta\Omega}^{+} + \left\langle \frac{d^2\sigma^{\gamma^*p}}{dt d\phi} \right\rangle_{\Delta\Omega}^{-} \right)$$

Results

Overview: results for the spin-independent cross section from 2016 data

- Full kinematic domain: $\nu \in (6.4, 40)$ GeV and $Q^2 \in (1, 8)$ (GeV/c)²
- Comparison to previously published results in reduced kinematic domain:
 $\nu \in (8.5, 28)$ GeV and $Q^2 \in (1, 5)$ (GeV/c)²
- Study of the ϕ -dependent cross section in different $|t|$ -ranges
- Dependence of the cross section on virtual photon energy ν
- Dependence of the cross section on photon virtuality Q^2

Cross section for $\nu \in (6.4, 40)$ GeV and $Q^2 \in (1, 8)$ (GeV/c)², $\langle x_{Bj} \rangle = 0.134$

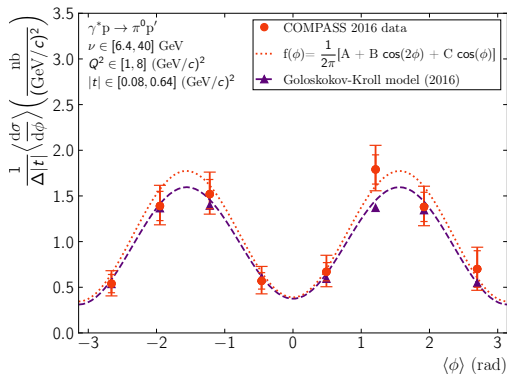


$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (6.7 \pm 0.3_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.9_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (-4.4 \pm 0.5_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.3_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (0.1 \pm 0.2_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.1_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

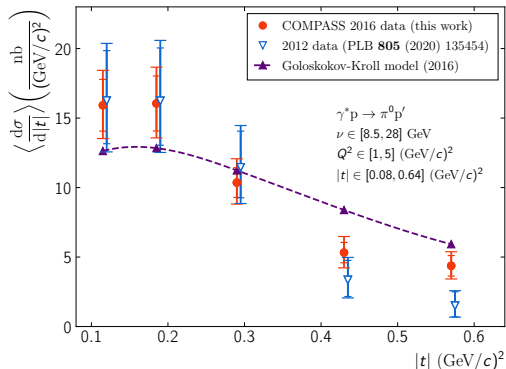
$$\langle \epsilon \rangle = 0.997$$



$$\frac{1}{2\pi} \left[\frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|} + \epsilon \cos(2\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|} + \sqrt{2\epsilon(1+\epsilon)} \cos(\phi) \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{d|t|} \right]$$

■ $\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|}$ as large as $\frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|} \Rightarrow$ Importance of $\vec{E}_T$

Cross section for $\nu \in (8.5, 28)$ GeV and $Q^2 \in (1, 5)$ (GeV/c)², $\langle x_{Bj} \rangle = 0.1$



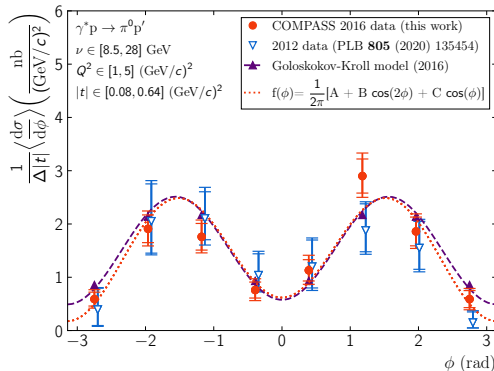
2012 data:

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (8.1 \pm 0.9_{\text{stat}} \pm 1.1_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (-6.0 \pm 1.3_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.7_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (1.4 \pm 0.5_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.3_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\langle \epsilon \rangle = 0.996$$



2016 data:

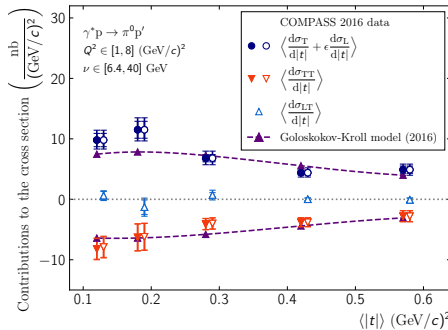
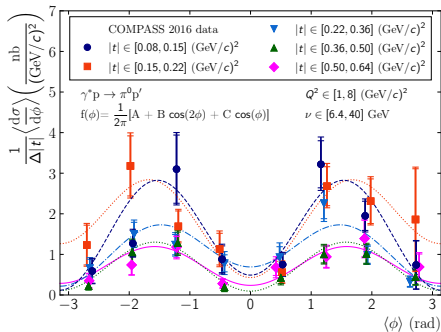
$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (9.0 \pm 0.5_{\text{stat}} \pm 1.1_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (-6.6 \pm 0.8_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.5_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\left\langle \frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{d|t|} \right\rangle = (0.7 \pm 0.3_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.4_{\text{sys}}) \frac{\text{nb}}{(\text{GeV/c})^2}$$

$$\langle \epsilon \rangle = 0.996$$

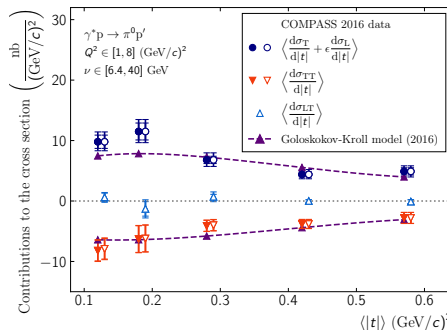
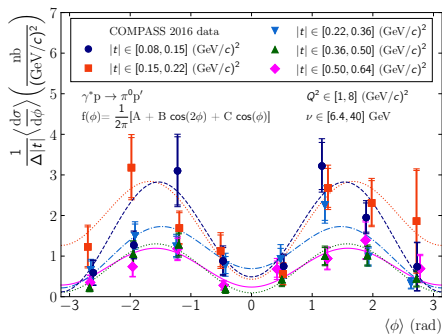
Study of the ϕ -dependent cross section in different $|t|$ -ranges



S. Goloskokov, P. Kroll EPJ C47 (2011) + private communication

	$\langle Q^2 \rangle [(\text{GeV/c})^2]$	$\langle \nu \rangle [\text{GeV}]$	$\langle t \rangle [(\text{GeV/c})^2]$	$\langle x_{Bj} \rangle$	$\langle \epsilon \rangle$
$ t \in [0.08, 0.15]$	1.93	11.76	0.12	0.104	0.996
$ t \in [0.15, 0.22]$	2.11	10.32	0.18	0.123	0.997
$ t \in [0.22, 0.36]$	2.33	9.86	0.28	0.140	0.997
$ t \in [0.36, 0.50]$	2.41	9.29	0.42	0.150	0.998
$ t \in [0.50, 0.64]$	2.65	9.35	0.57	0.165	0.998

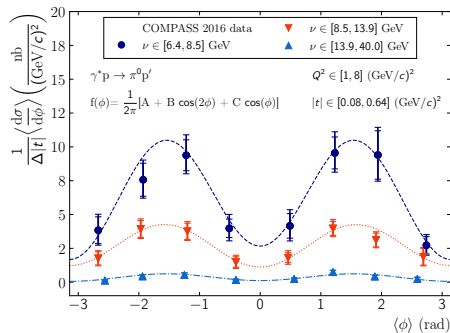
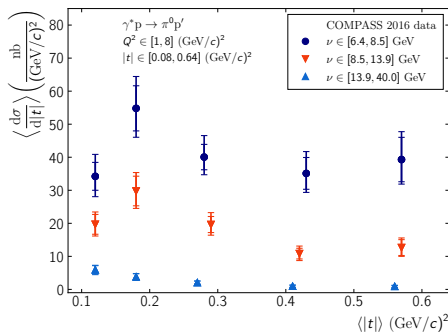
Study of the ϕ -dependent cross section in different $|t|$ -ranges



S. Goloskokov, P. Kroll EPJ C47 (2011) + private communication

- $\frac{d\sigma_{LT}}{d|t|}$ compatible with zero within the stat. uncertainties
 $\Rightarrow$ the solid points correspond to the fit of only the 2 first contributions
- Large and opposite contributions of $\frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|}$ and $\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|}$
- Results could indicate the dominance of $\bar{E}_T$ compared to the other involved GPDs

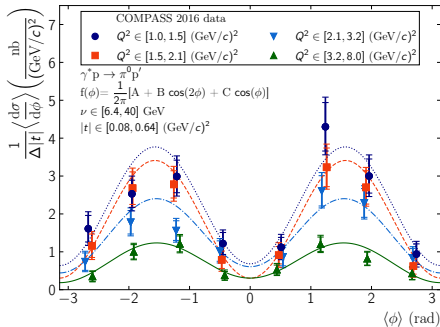
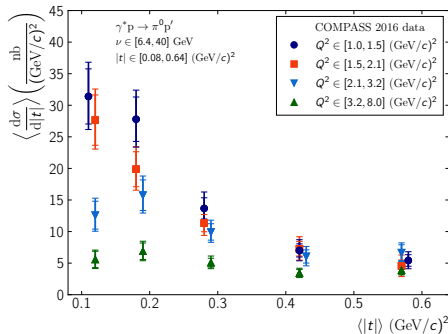
Dependence of the cross section on virtual photon energy ν



	$\langle \nu \rangle$ [GeV]	$\langle Q^2 \rangle$ [(GeV/c) ²]	$\langle x_{Bj} \rangle$	$\langle \epsilon \rangle$
$\nu \in [6.4, 8.5]$	7.35	2.15	0.156	0.999
$\nu \in [8.5, 13.9]$	10.32	2.50	0.131	0.998
$\nu \in [13.9, 40.0]$	21.08	2.09	0.057	0.989

- At small x_{Bj} (large ν), the maximum for the evolution in $|t|$ is no more visible
 $\Rightarrow$ significant longitudinal contribution $\frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|}$

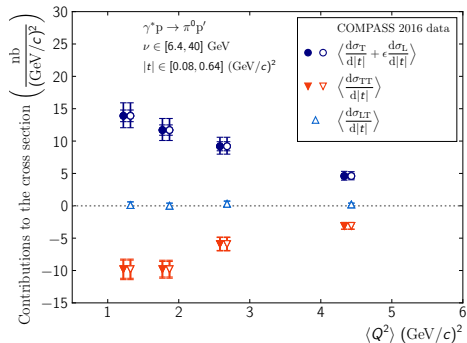
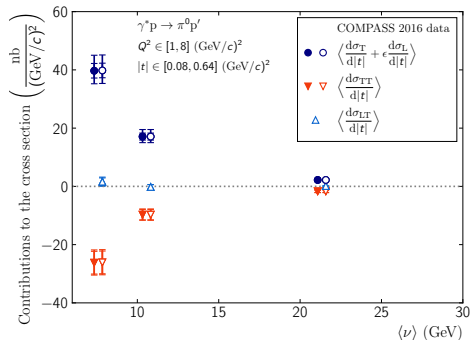
Dependence of the cross section on photon virtuality Q^2



	$\langle Q^2 \rangle$ [(GeV/c) ²]	$\langle \nu \rangle$ [GeV]	$\langle x_{Bj} \rangle$	$\langle \epsilon \rangle$
$Q^2 \in [1.0, 1.5]$	1.22	10.54	0.072	0.997
$Q^2 \in [1.5, 2.1]$	1.77	9.81	0.109	0.997
$Q^2 \in [2.1, 3.2]$	2.58	9.82	0.157	0.997
$Q^2 \in [3.2, 8.0]$	4.33	10.39	0.247	0.997

- At small x_{Bj} (small Q^2), the maximum for the evolution in $|t|$ is no more visible
 $\Rightarrow$ significant longitudinal contribution $\frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|}$

Contributions to the cross section as a function of ν and Q^2



- Strong decrease of the abs. values of $\frac{d\sigma_T}{d|t|} + \epsilon \frac{d\sigma_L}{d|t|}$ and $\frac{d\sigma_{TT}}{d|t|}$ with increasing ν , weaker decrease with increasing Q^2
- Valuable inputs for modelling GPDs, especially description of the major $\vec{E}_T$ contribution
- Should facilitate the study of NLO corrections and higher twist contributions

Summary

- Significant transverse–transverse interference contribution could indicate clear experimental evidence for the chiral-odd GPD $\bar{E}_T$
 - Non-negligible contribution of longitudinally polarised photons is suggested at $x_{Bj} < 0.1$
 - Results provide valuable input for future modelling of GPDs
-
- Paper with results from 2016 data submitted to PLB; preprint arXiv:2412.19923 (2024)
-
- Prospects: analysis of 2017 data started recently
 - 2017 data ≈ 3 times larger statistics than 2016
 - $\Rightarrow$ 2016+2017 enable separate study from μ^+ and μ^- beams $\Rightarrow$ determination of $\frac{d\sigma'_{LT}}{dt}$

BACKUP

Event selection for $\mu p \rightarrow \mu' \pi^0 p'$

■ Vertex candidate

- μ and μ' associated to the vertex
- requirements on μ and μ'

■ π^0 candidate from 2 photons

- pair of neutral clusters in ECALs
- energy thresholds
- timing requirement

■ Proton candidate

- CAMERA
- exclusivity conditions

- $|\Delta\varphi| < 0.4$ rad
- $|\Delta p_T| < 0.3$ GeV/c
- $|M_x^2| < 0.3$ (GeV/c)²
- $|\Delta z_A| < 16$ cm

■ Kinematics

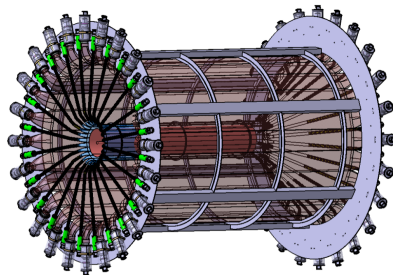
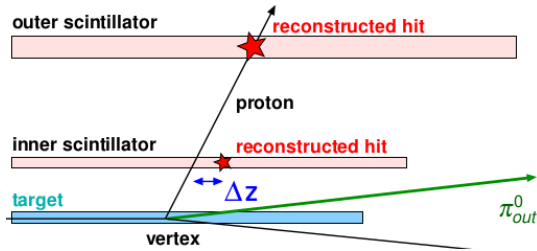
- Kinematic fit
- $6.4 < \nu < 40$ GeV
- $1 < Q^2 < 8$ (GeV/c)²
- $0.08 < |t| < 0.64$ (GeV/c)²

- Events with only one combination:
*vertex candidate + π^0 candidate +
proton candidate* pass the selection

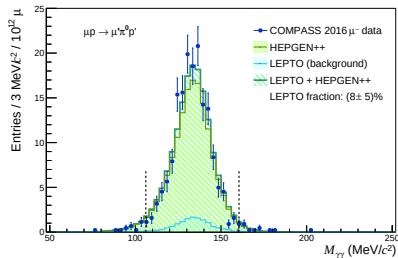
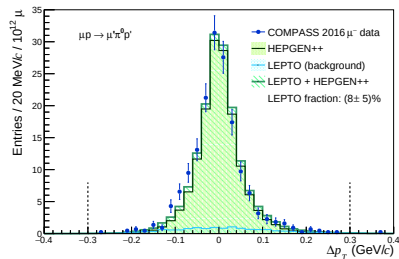
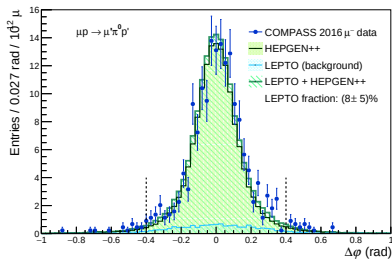
Exclusive variables measured either by the spectrometer or by CAMERA

- $P'_{spec} = P + k - k' - p_{\pi^0}$
- $\Delta\varphi = \varphi_{CAM} - \varphi_{spec}$
- $\Delta p_T = p_{T_{CAM}} - p_{T_{spec}}$
- $M_X^2 = (P + k - k' - p_{\pi^0} - P'_{CAM})^2$

- $|\Delta\varphi| < 0.4 \text{ rad}$
- $|\Delta p_T| < 0.3 \text{ GeV}/c$
- $|M_X^2| < 0.3 (\text{GeV}/c^2)^2$
- $|\Delta z_A| < 16 \text{ cm}$



Example of exclusive variables and π^0 mass



virtual photon flux:

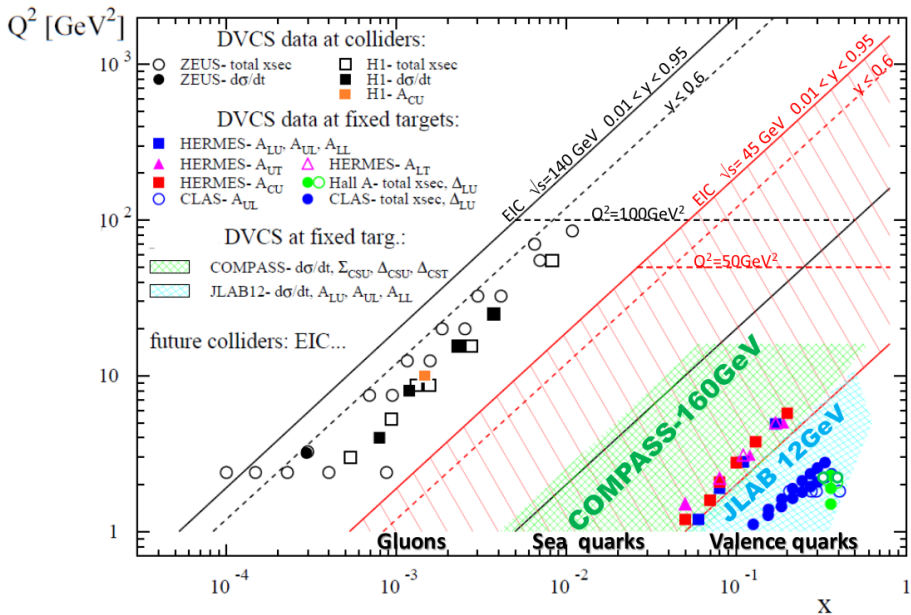
$$\Gamma(Q^2, \nu) = \frac{\alpha_{em}(1 - x_{Bj})}{2\pi Q^2 y E_\mu} \left[y^2 \left(1 - \frac{2m_\mu^2}{Q^2} \right) + \frac{2}{1 + Q^2/\nu^2} \left(1 - y - \frac{Q^2}{4E_\mu^2} \right) \right]$$

virtual photon polarization parameter:

$$\epsilon = \frac{1 - y - \frac{1}{4}y^2 Q^2/\nu^2}{1 - y + \frac{1}{2}y^2 + \frac{1}{4}y^2 Q^2/\nu^2}$$

the longitudinal momentum fraction transfer ξ can be approximated in the COMPASS kinematic regime at small x_{Bj} by

$$\xi \approx \frac{x_{Bj}}{2 - x_{Bj}}.$$



Kinematic fit

- Measurements of exclusive processes at COMPASS are over-constrained
- This can be used to improve the resolution on the measured kinematic quantities by the usage of a kinematically constrained fit
- In case of exclusive π^0 analysis, the fit can be used to improve signal to background ratio
- The goal is to minimize the least square function $\chi^2(\vec{k}) := (\vec{k}_{fit} - \vec{k})^T \hat{C}^{-1}(\vec{k}_{fit} - \vec{k})$
- $\vec{k}$ is the vector of measured quantities (e.g. variables such as momentum and transverse position corresponding to the incoming/scattered muon, initial/final proton and lower/higher energetic photon)
- $\hat{C}$ is the covariance matrix corresponding to the measured quantities
- The Lagrange multiplier method with constraints g_i is used for the minimization:

$$L(\vec{k}, \vec{\alpha}) = \chi^2(\vec{k}) + 2 \sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_i g_i. \quad (1)$$

Kinematic fit - introduction - kinematic constraints

■ Momentum and energy conservation

$$g_i = p_{\mu,i}^{fit} - p_{\mu',i}^{fit} - p_{p',i}^{fit} - p_{\gamma h,i}^{fit} - p_{\gamma l,i}^{fit} = 0, \quad i = 1, 2, 3$$

$$g_4 = E_{\mu}^{fit} + m_p c^2 - E_{\mu'}^{fit} - E_{p'}^{fit} - E_{\gamma h}^{fit} - E_{\gamma l}^{fit} = 0$$

■ Common vertex for all tracks (except initial and final state proton)

$$g_{5+i} = p_{j,3}^{fit} (x_v - x_j^{fit}) - p_{j,1}^{fit} (z_v - z_j^{fit}) = 0 \quad (i,j) \in \{(0,\mu), (2,\mu'), (4,\gamma_h), (6,\gamma_l)\}$$

$$g_{6+i} = p_{j,3}^{fit} (y_v - y_j^{fit}) - p_{j,2}^{fit} (z_v - z_j^{fit}) = 0, \quad (i,j) \in \{(0,\mu), (2,\mu'), (4,\gamma_h), (6,\gamma_l)\}$$

■ Constraints for final state proton

$$g_{13+i} = p_{p',3}^{fit} (x_j^{fit} - x_v) - p_{p',1}^{fit} (z_j^{fit} - z_v) = 0, \quad (i,j) \in \{(0,A), (2,B)\}$$

$$g_{14+i} = p_{p',3}^{fit} (y_j^{fit} - y_v) - p_{p',2}^{fit} (z_j^{fit} - z_v) = 0, \quad (i,j) \in \{(0,A), (2,B)\}$$

■ Mass constraint $g_{17} = (E_{\gamma h}^{fit} + E_{\gamma l}^{fit})^2 - (p_{\gamma h}^{fit} + p_{\gamma l}^{fit})^2 - m_{\pi^0}^2 = 0$