EAAC 2017

POLITECNICO MILANO 1863

ERC-2014-CoG No. 647554
ENSURE

Foam-Based Multi-Layer Targets for Laser-Driven Ion Acceleration

Arianna Formenti

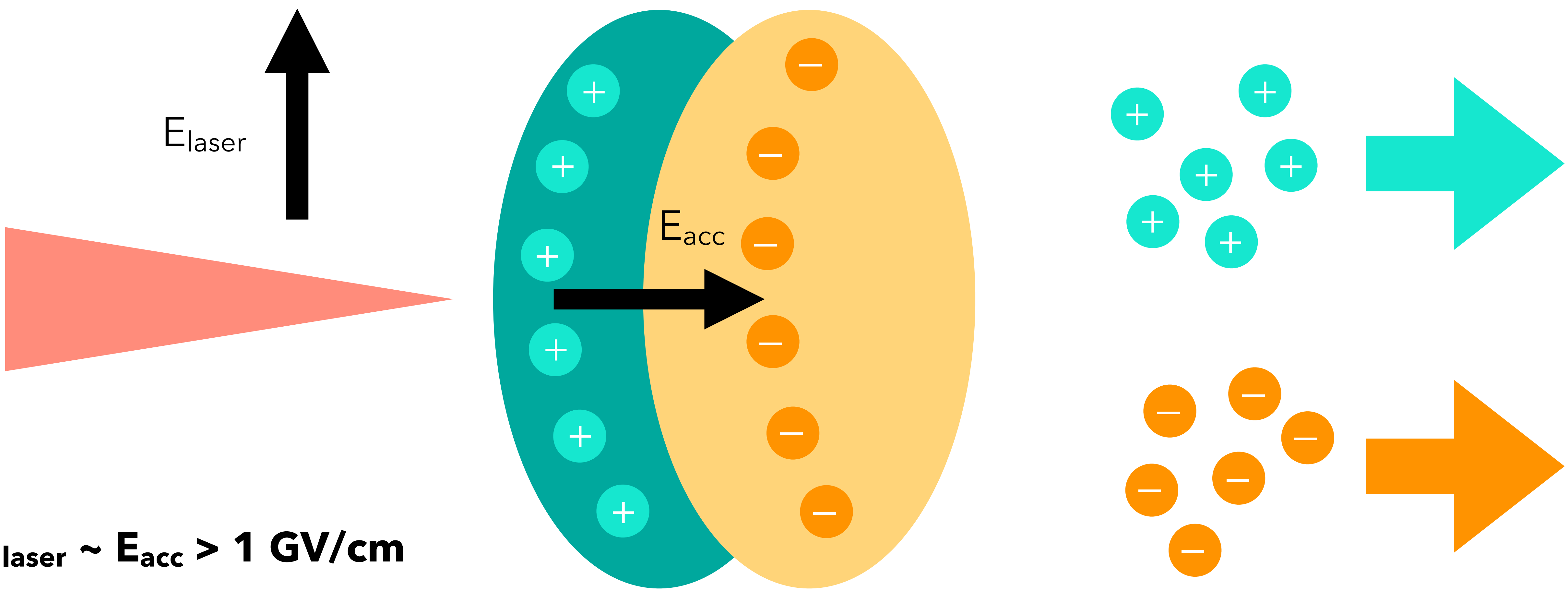
Isola d'Elba, September 27th, 2017

3rd European Advanced Accelerator Concepts Workshop

Plasmas as non-conventional accelerators

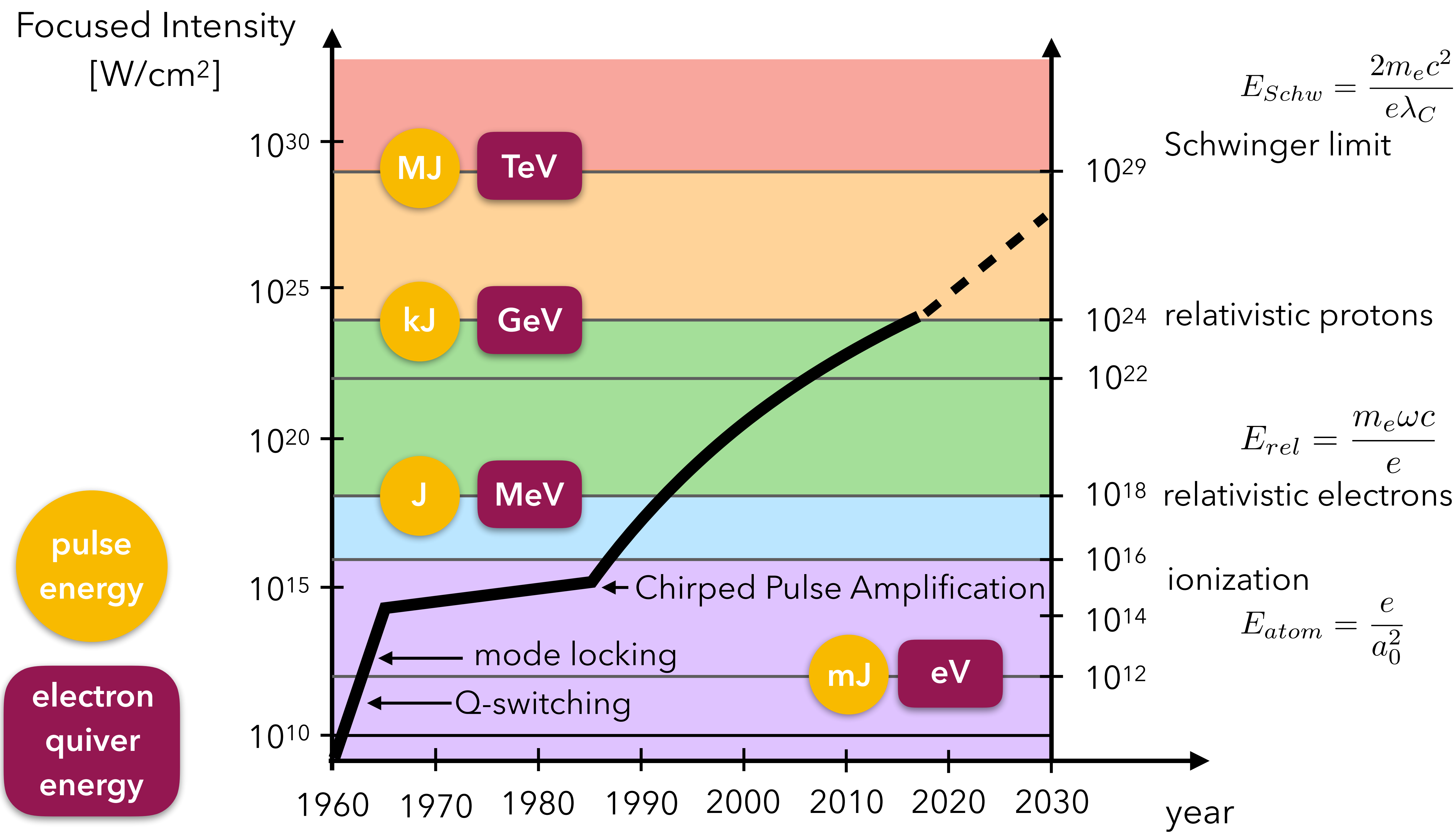
Idea of laser-plasma accelerators

charged particle acceleration → huge quasi-stationary electric field → strong charge separation → PLASMA

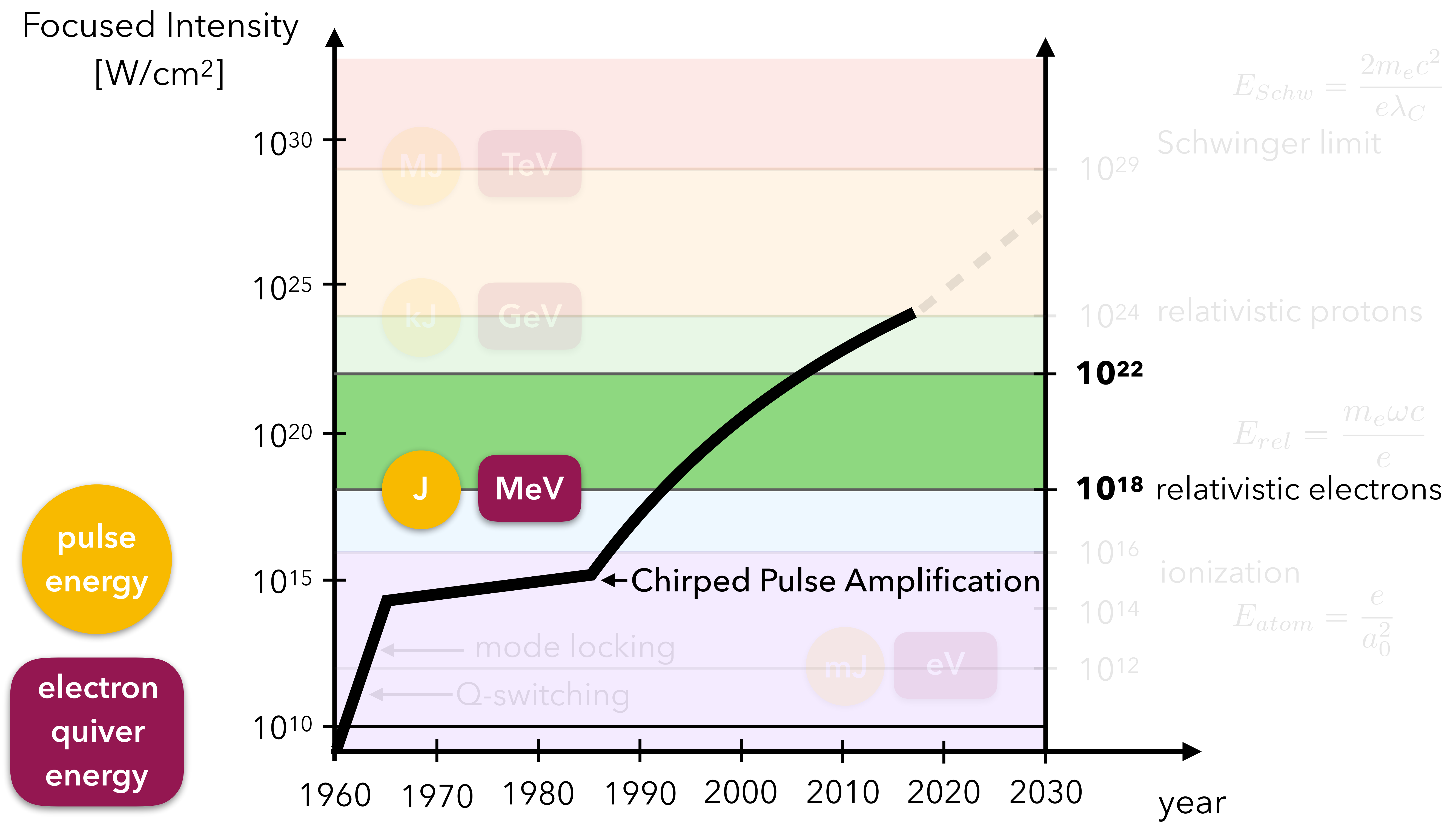


$\mathbf{E_{laser} \sim E_{acc} > 1\ GV/cm}$

What kind of lasers?



Already available ultra-intense lasers



Ultra-intense lasers turn matter into plasma

$$I = \frac{cE_{max}^2}{8\pi}$$

$$v_{osc} = \frac{eE_{max}}{m_e\omega}$$

relativistic electrons in one laser cycle

$$I \geq \frac{1.4 \times 10^{18}}{\lambda^2(\mu m^2)} \frac{W}{cm^2}$$

Typical CPA laser pulse parameters

- Wavelength ≈ 1 - 10 μm
- Energy ≈ 10^{-1} - 10^{3} J
- Power ≈ 100 TW - few PW
- Duration ≈ 10 - 10^{3} fs
- Spot size ∅ < 10 μm
- **Intensity ≈ 10^{18} - 10^{22} W/cm^2**

full ionization!

From huge facilities…

…to table-top systems.

Laser-plasma accelerators: a great challenge

www.engineeringchallenges.org

Why bother?

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Why bother?

Potentially
- compact!
- cheap!
- flexible!

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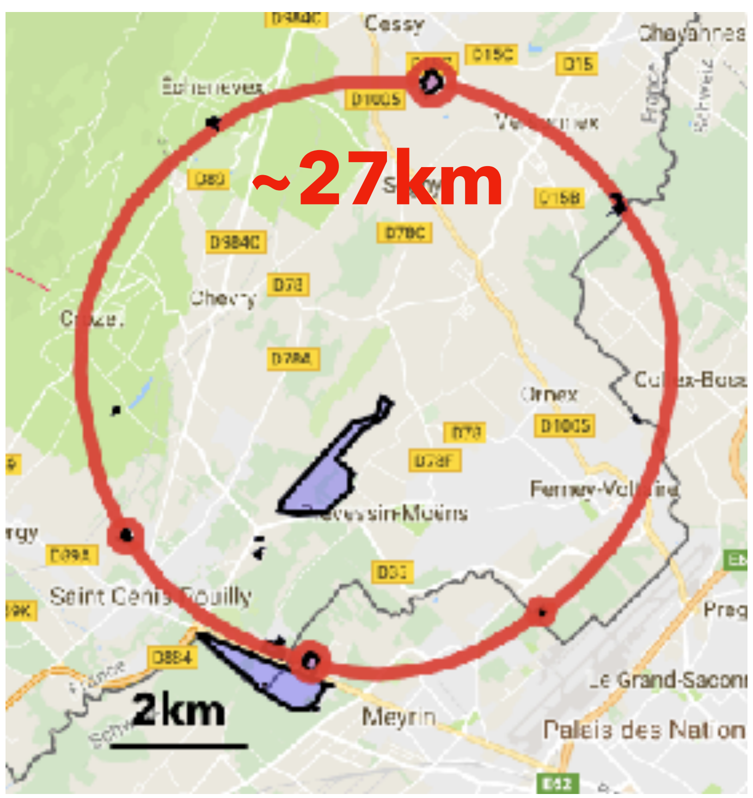
LHC ring, Geneva, Switzerland



Isola d'Elba, Italy

Laser-plasma accelerators: a great challenge

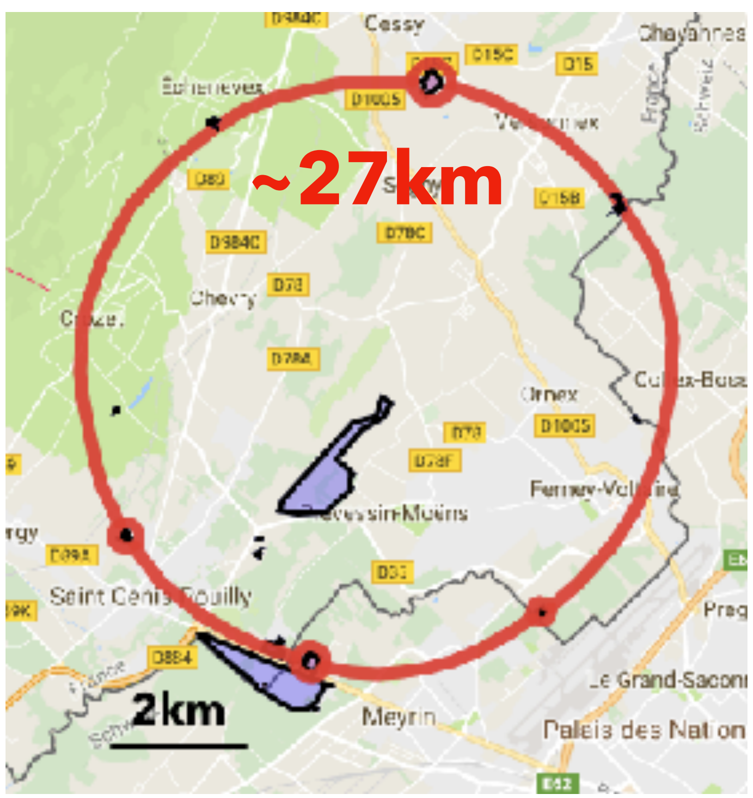
www.engineeringchallenges.org

Why bother?

Potentially
- compact!
- cheap!
- flexible!

However
- controlled process?
- reproducibility?
- reduced performances…

LHC ring, Geneva, Switzerland



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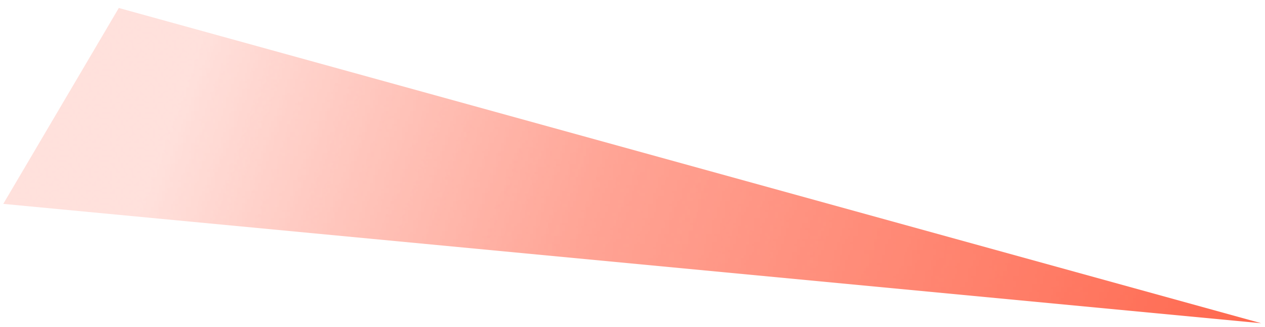
Ions can be accelerated by laser-matter interaction



laser pulse
- ultra-high intensity
- ultra-short duration

Macchi et al. *Rev Mod Phys* 85.2 (2013): 751.
Daido et al. *Rep Prog Phys* 75.5 (2012): 056401.

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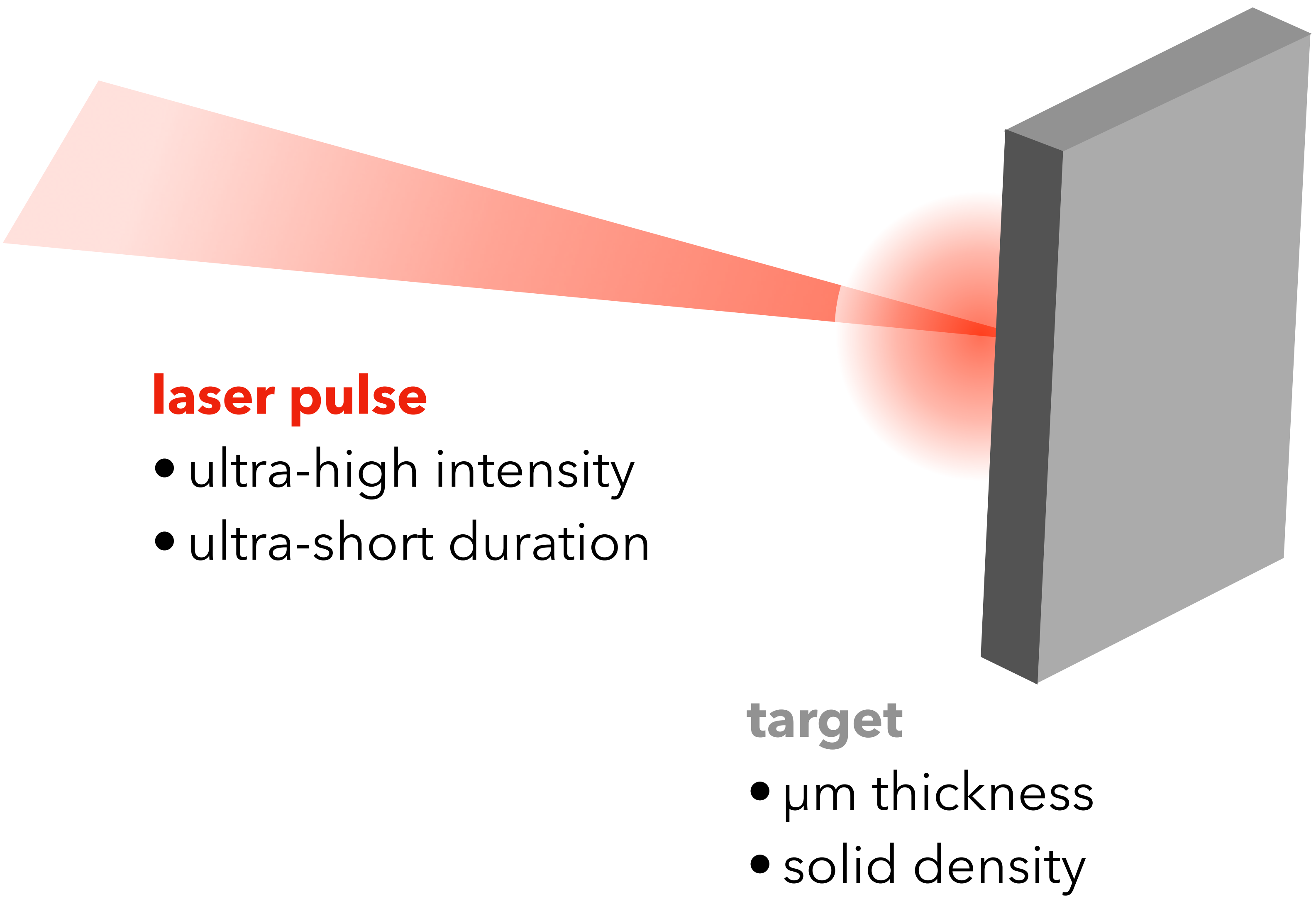

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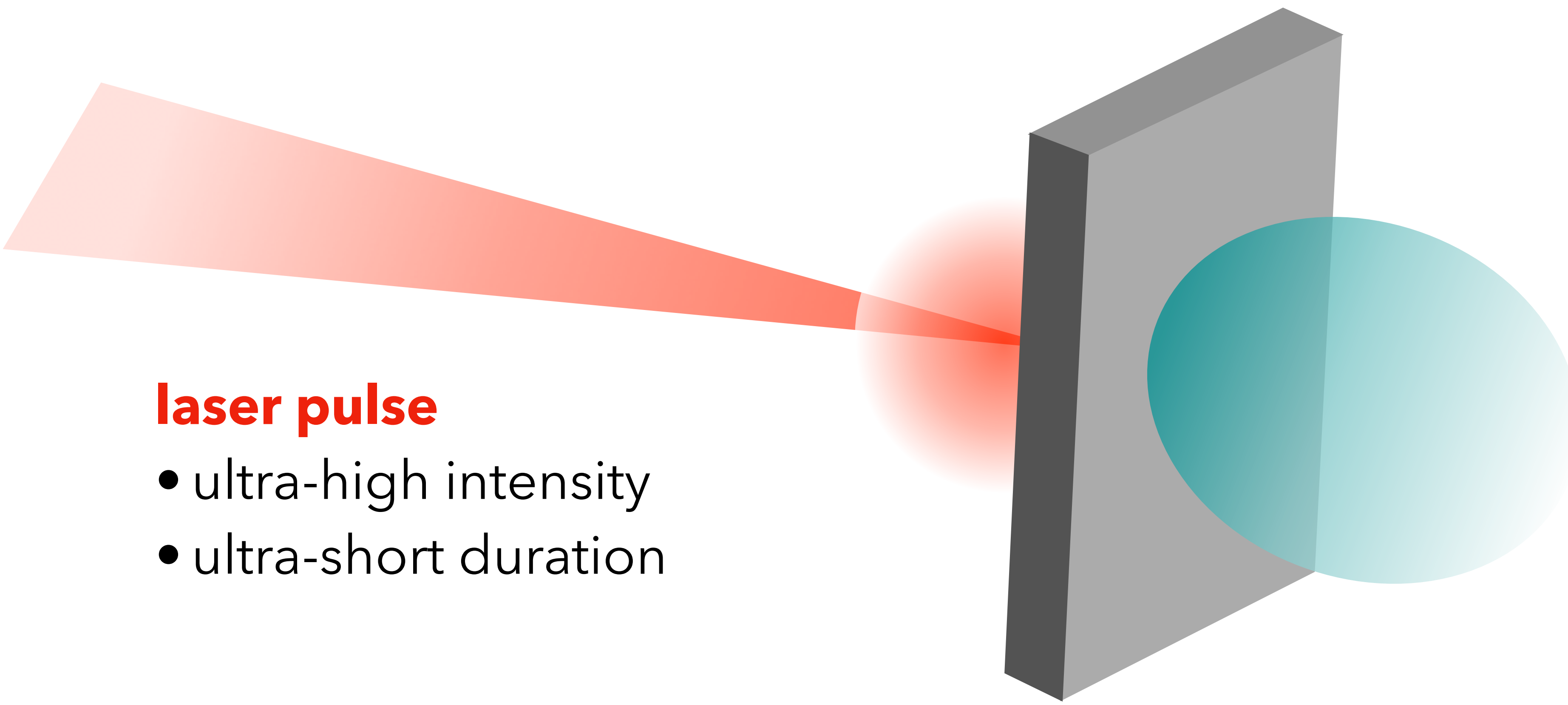

hot electron cloud
- thermal spectrum
- few MeV temperature

laser pulse
- ultra-high intensity
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target
- μm thickness
- solid density

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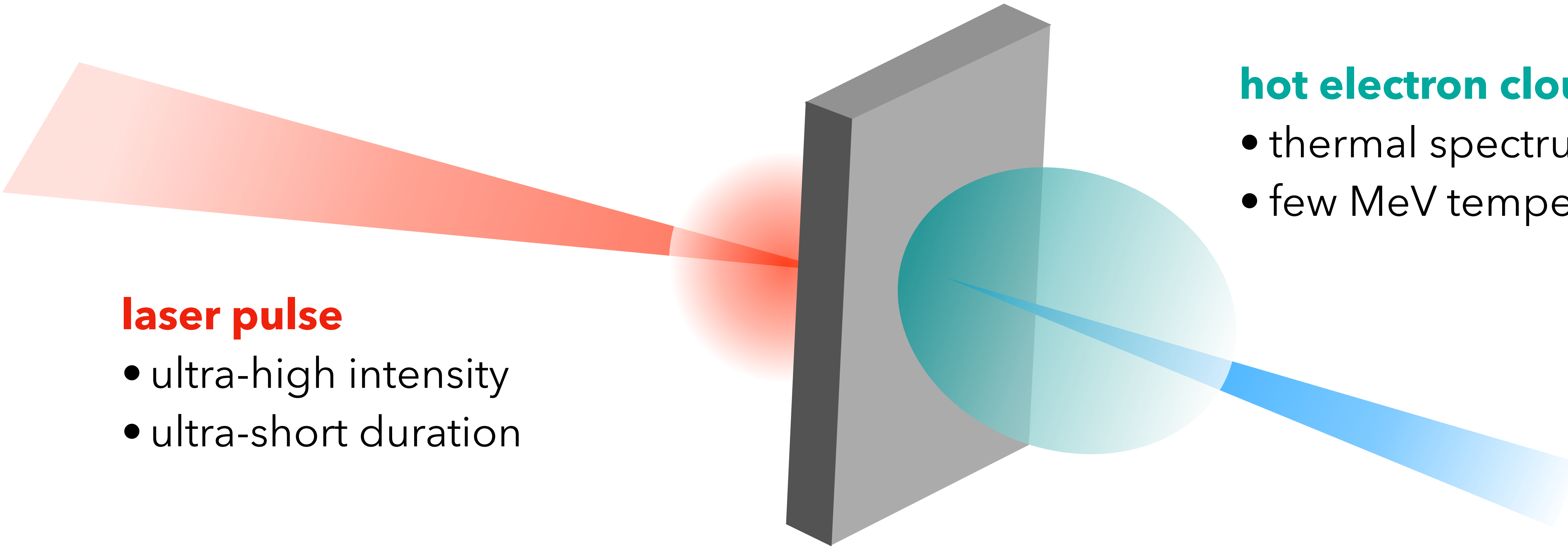

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accelerated ions

- mainly *p* and C^{6+} from impurities
- **broad, exponential spectrum**
- **cutoff energy < 100 MeV**
- collimation along target normal
- number 10^9 - 10^{13}

Macchi et al. *Rev Mod Phys* 85.2 (2013): 751.
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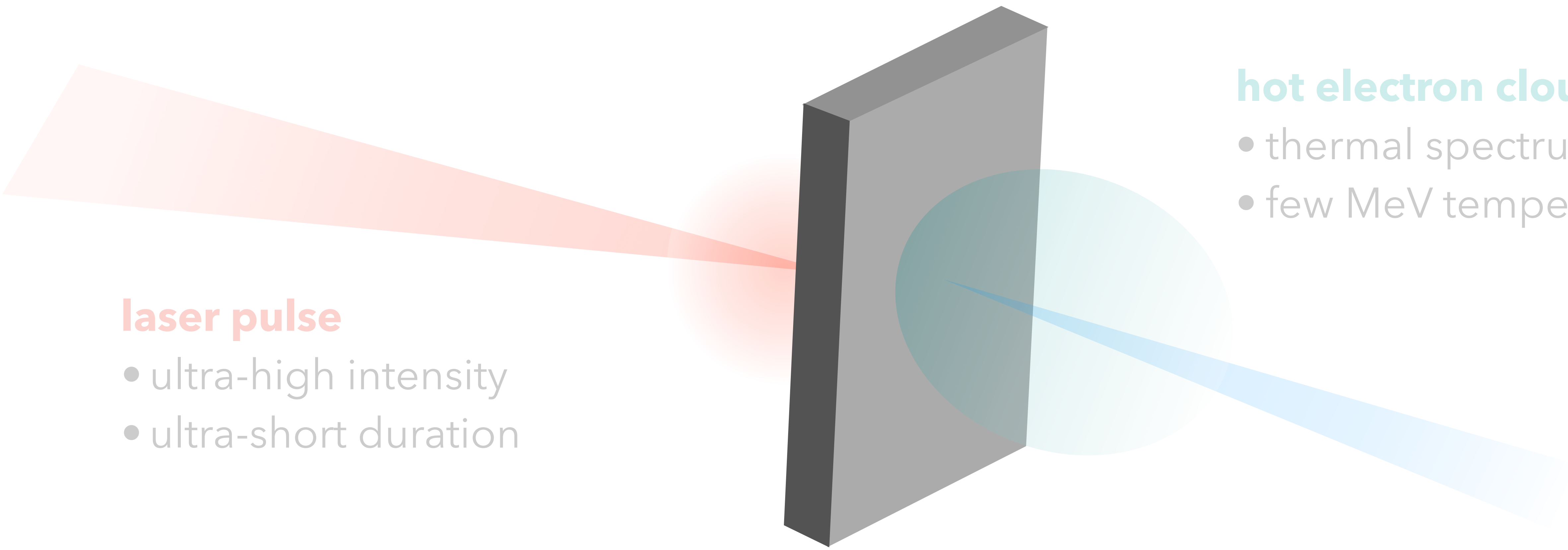
The target is crucial



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Our group @ Politecnico di Milano

NanoLab

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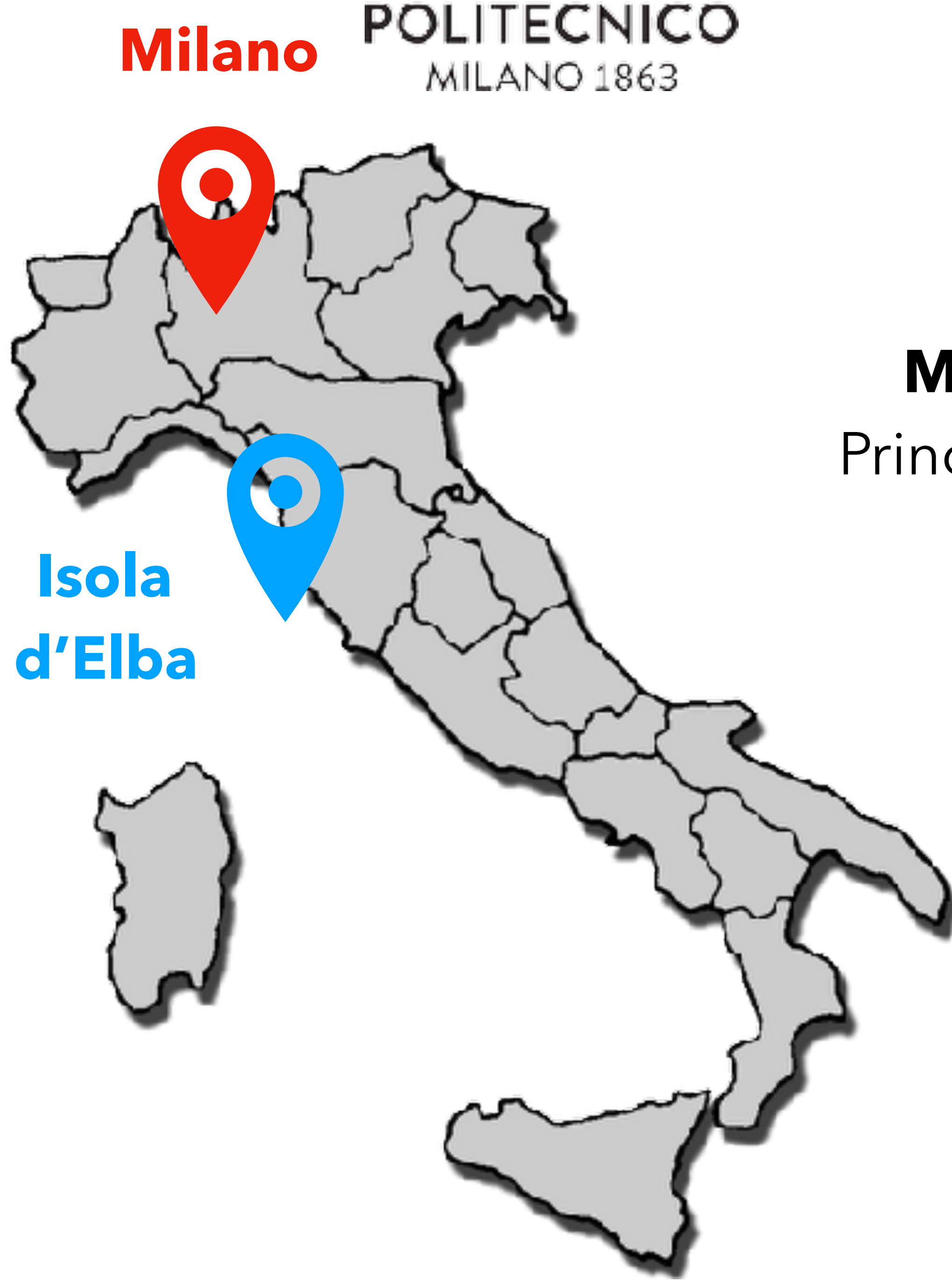

Matteo Passoni
Principal Investigator

erc

ENSURE project

ERC-2014-CoG No. 647554

www.ensure.polimi.it

Ongoing Collaborations

HZDR, SourceLAB, INFN, Queen's University Belfast, 大阪大学 OSAKA UNIVERSITY, CLPU Centro de Láseres Pulsados

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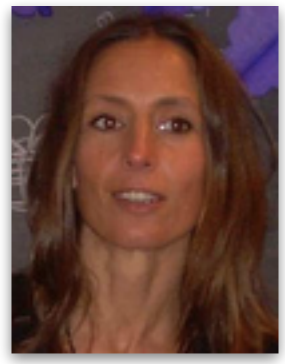
The ENSURE team

Associate Professors

Matteo
Passoni

Margherita
Zavelani Rossi

Researcher



Valeria
Russo

Post-docs

David
Dellasega

Alessandro
Maffini

Luca
Fedeli

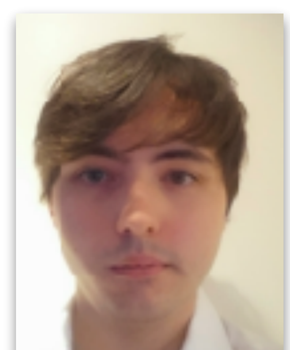
Lorenzo
Cialfi

PhD students

Andrea
Pazzaglia

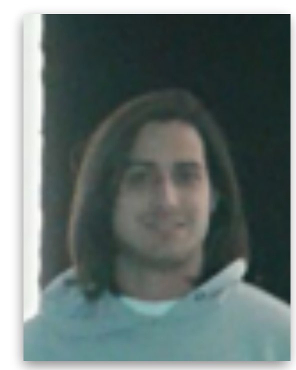
Arianna
Formenti

Francesco
Mirani



Michele
Sala

MSc student



Alessandro
Tentori

The ENSURE team

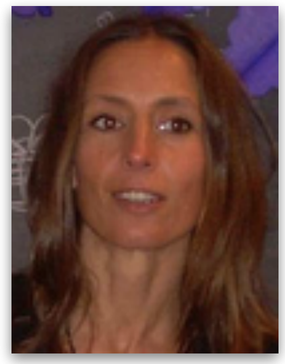
Experimental team

Associate Professors

Matteo Passoni

Margherita Zavelani Rossi

Researcher



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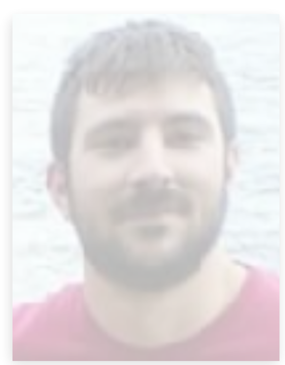
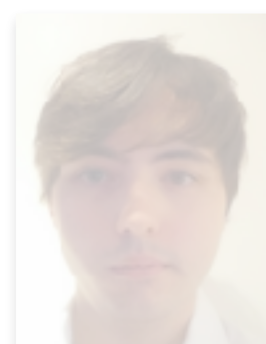


Francesco Mirani



Michele Sala

MSc student

Alessandro Tentori

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Numerical team

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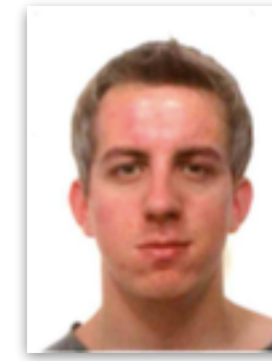
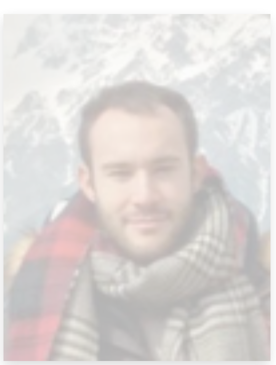


Lorenzo Cialfi

PhD students



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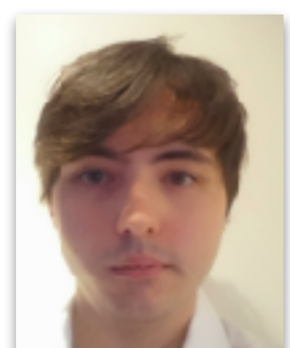

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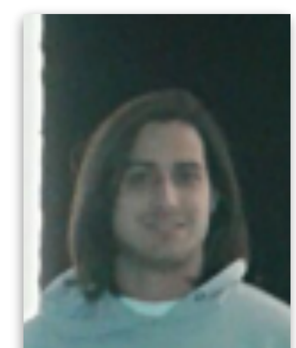
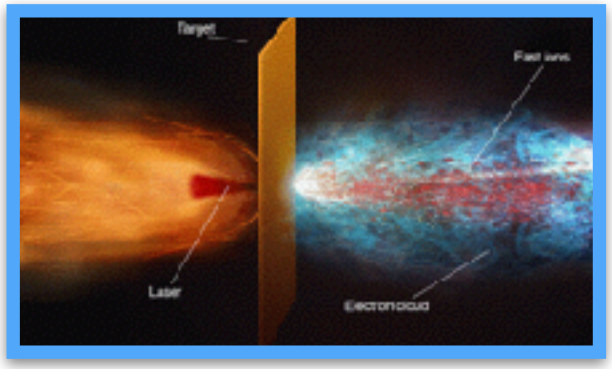


Alessandro Tentori

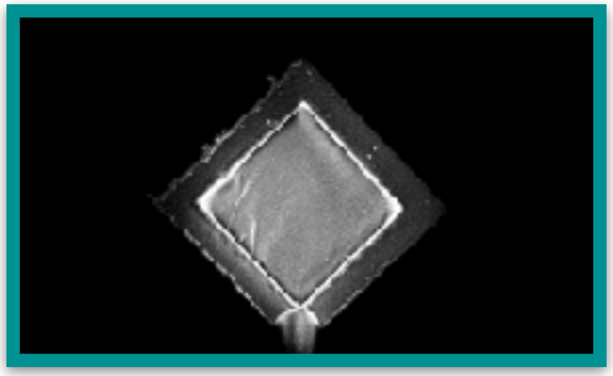
ENSURE research interests



Laser-driven ion acceleration
- theoretical/numerical investigations
- experimental campaigns

Materials science
- development of low-density foams
- advanced targets for laser-plasma experiments

Applications in materials and nuclear science
- materials characterization with laser-driven ions
- secondary neutron sources for applications

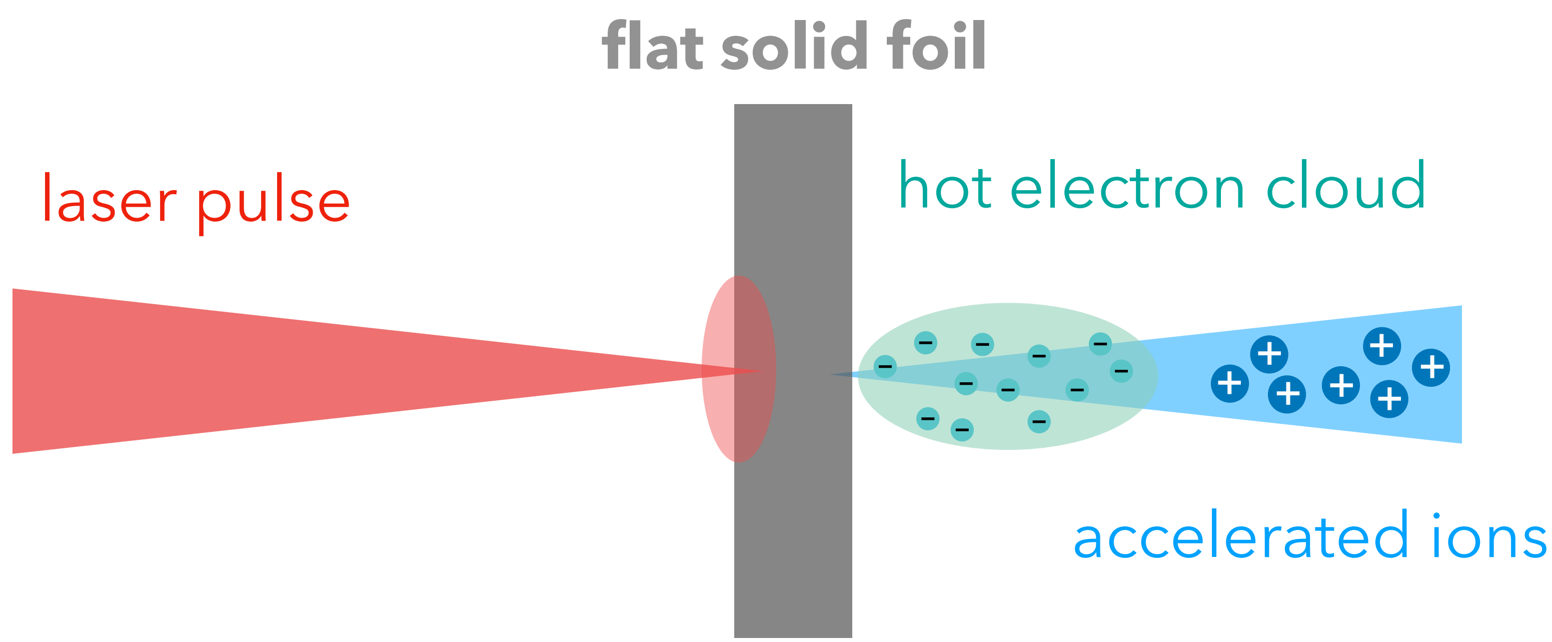


Fundamental physics and laboratory astrophysics
- laser interaction with nanostructured plasmas
- collisionless shock acceleration of ions

A smart target improves the acceleration process

Target Normal Sheath Acceleration (TNSA)

Conventional



Wilks et al. *Phys Plasmas* 8 (2001)

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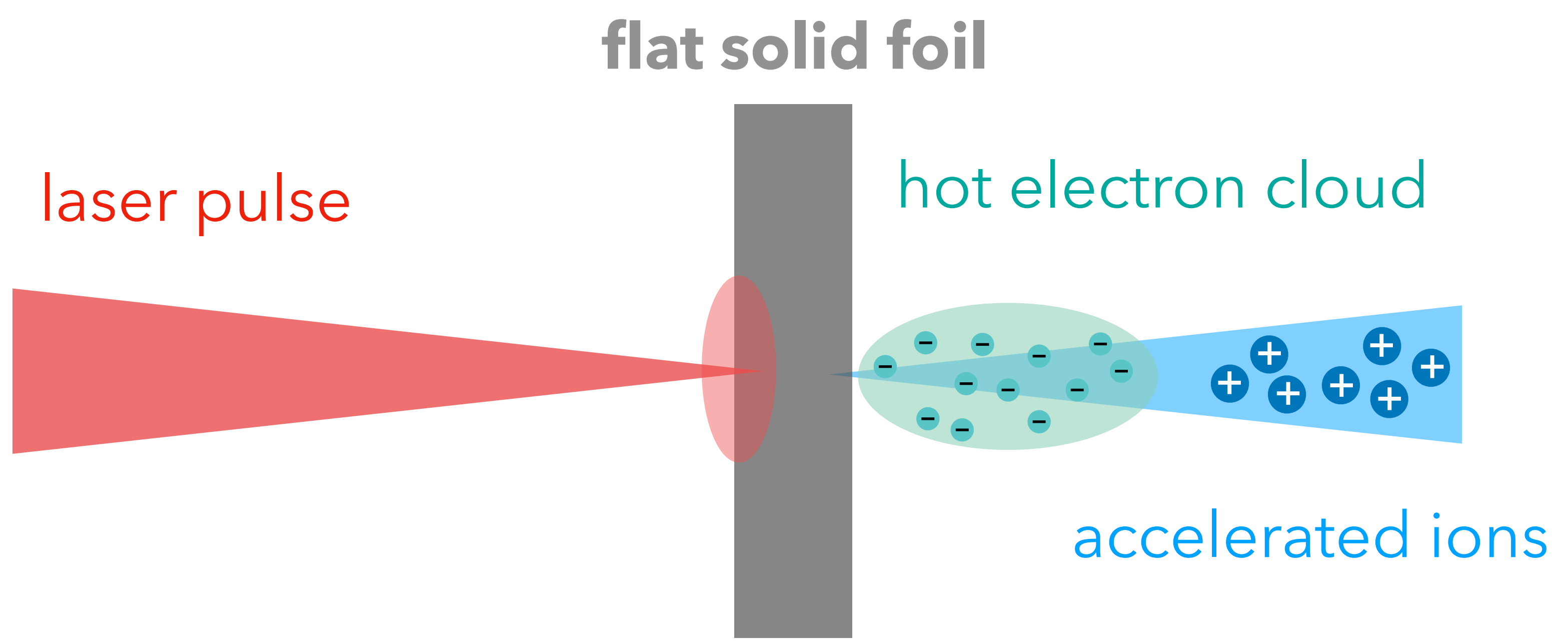

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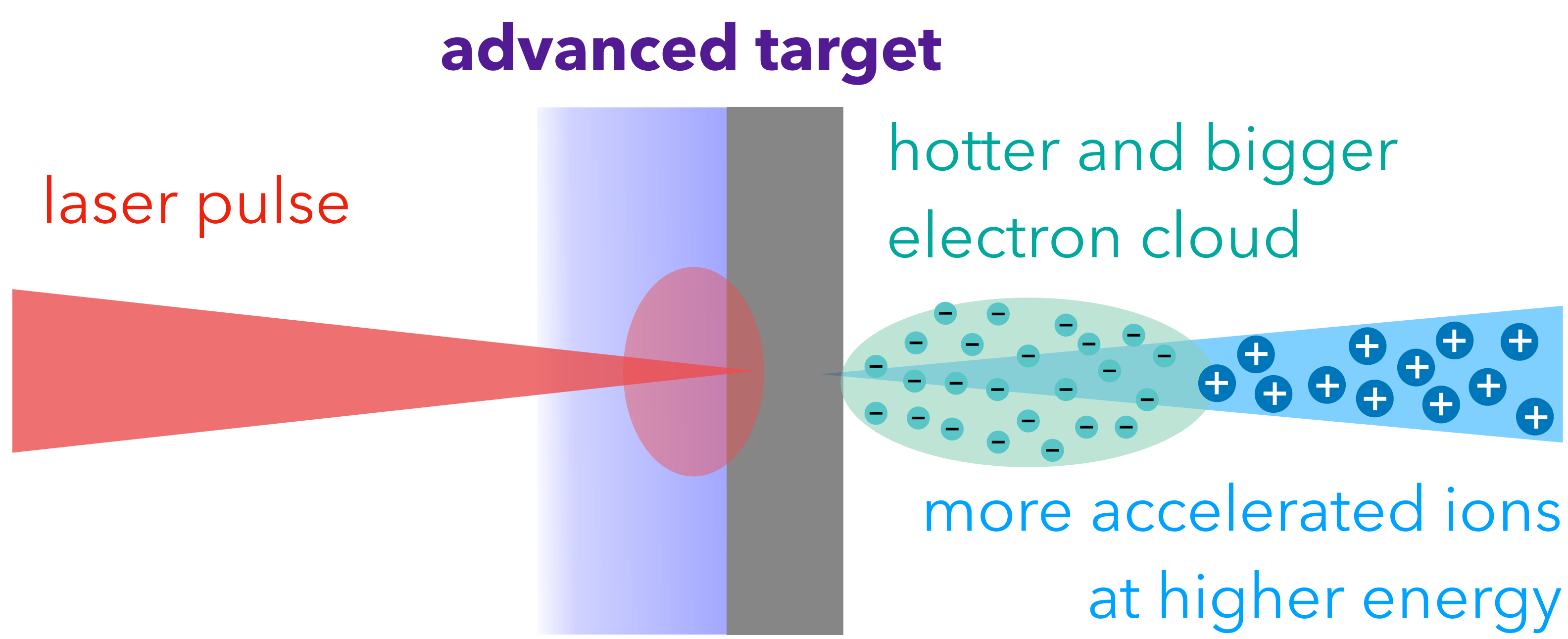
Enhanced



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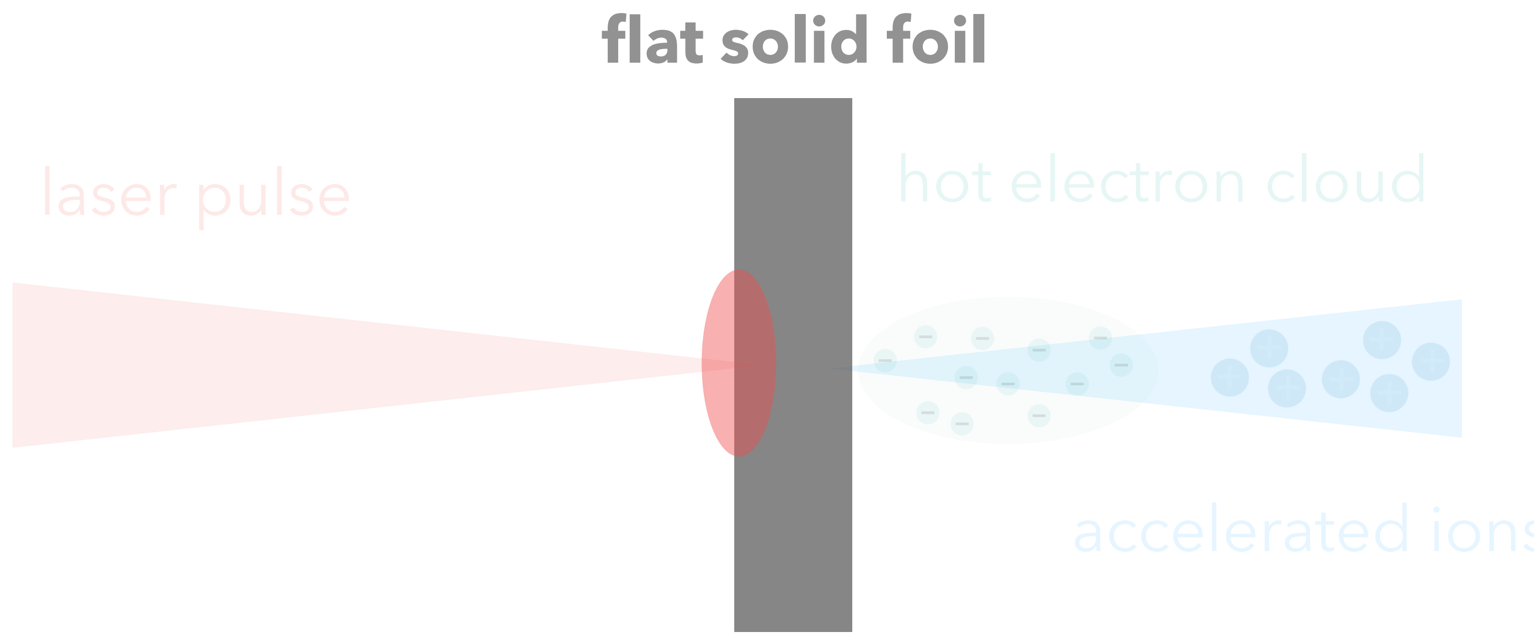

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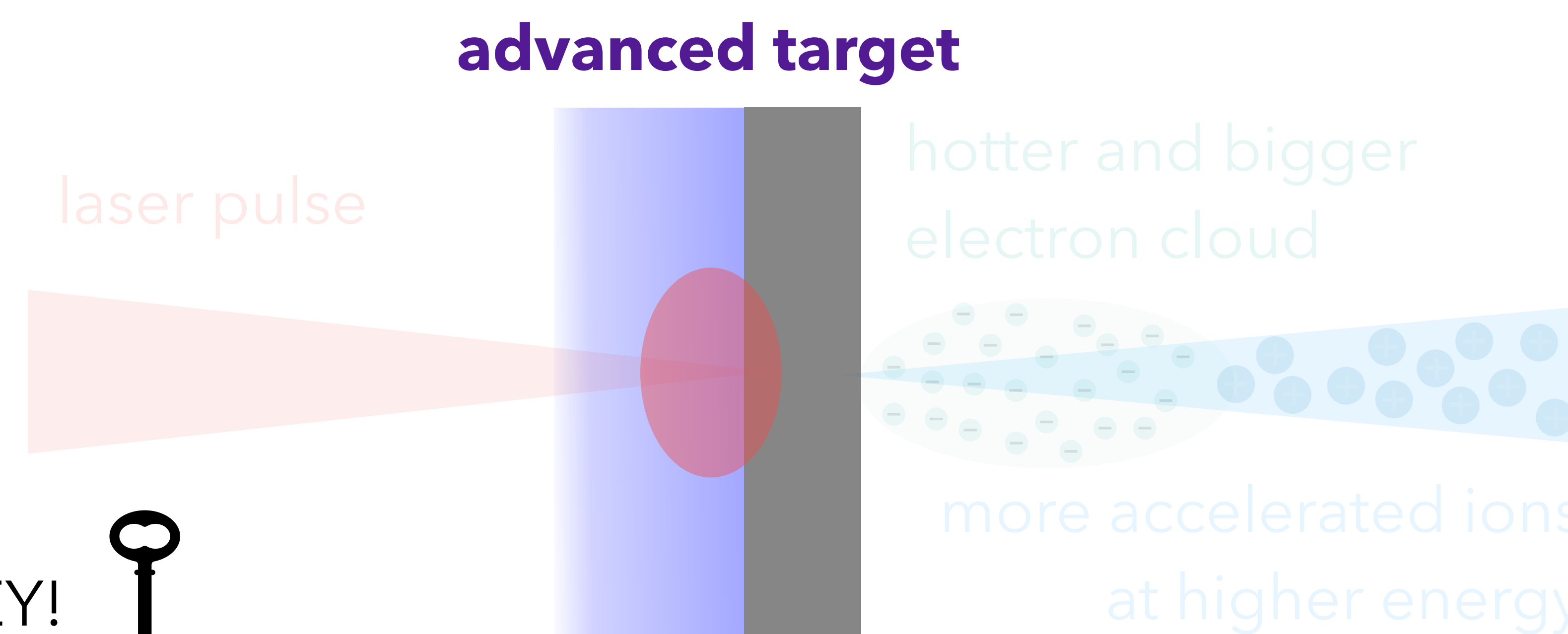
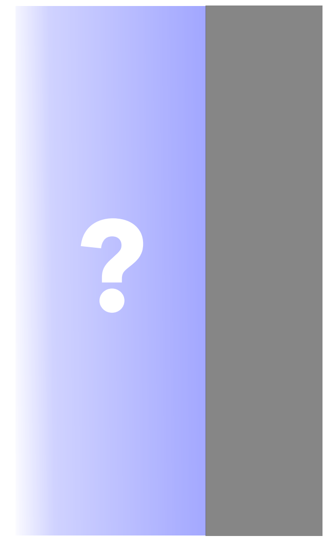


THE TARGET IS THE KEY!

But not any target material is ok

advanced target

What kind of material?
With what properties?



conventional
flat solid foil

Two requirements:

1. **attached** to solid foil → **TNSA-like** process
2. **near-critical** density → stronger **coupling**

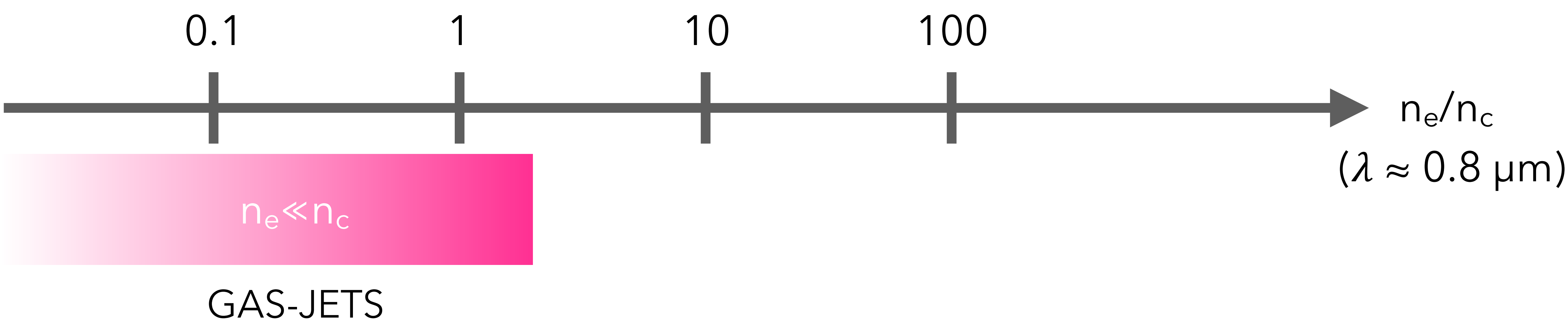
critical density

$$n_c = \frac{\gamma_e \pi m_e c^2}{e\lambda^2}$$

Near-critical materials is what we need

underdense plasmas

- laser propagation
- low absorption
- volume interaction



Near-critical materials is what we need

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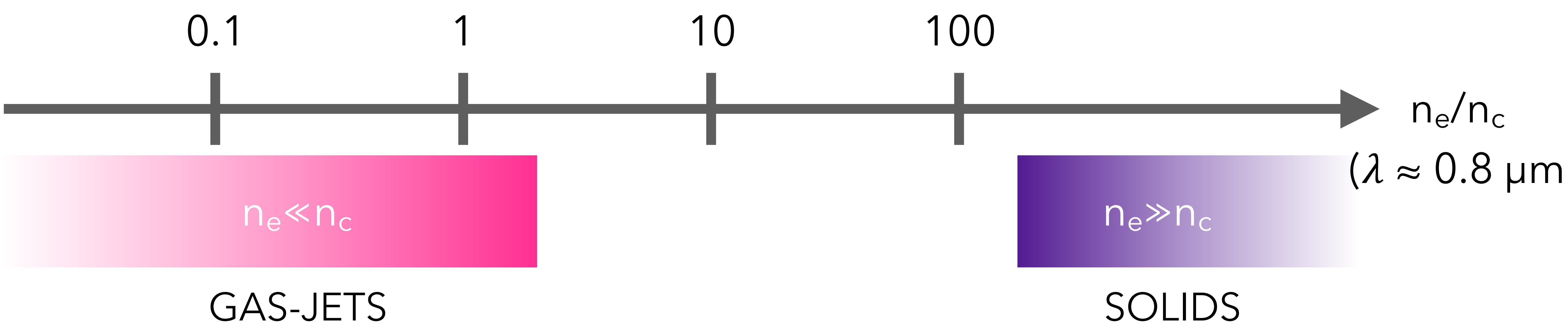
overdense plasmas

- laser reflection
- laser damping
- surface interaction



Near-critical materials is what we need

underdense plasmas

- laser propagation
- low absorption
- volume interaction

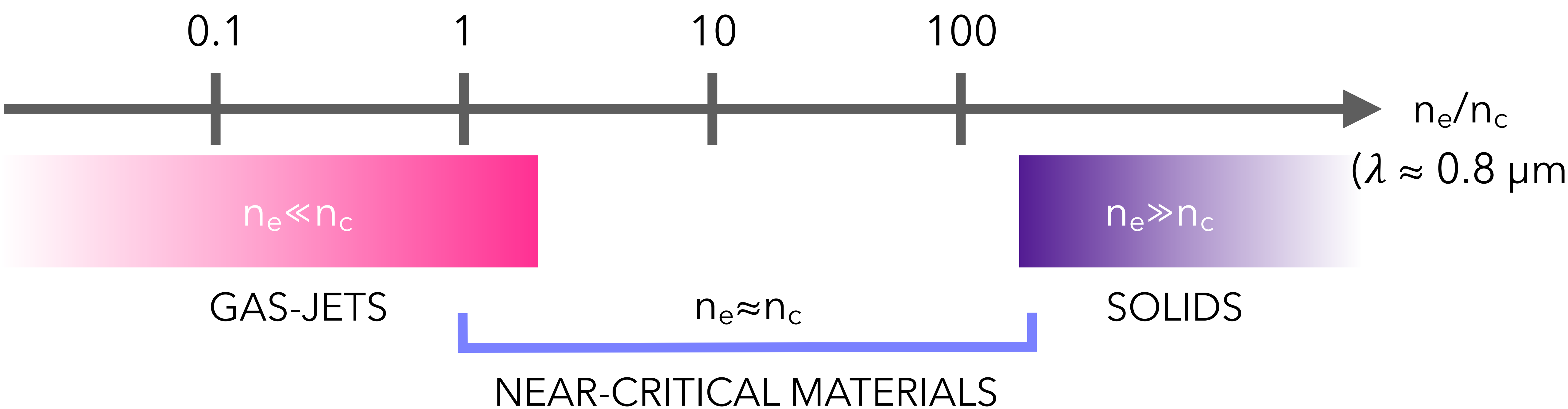
near-critical plasmas

- plasma density **matching** laser frequency
- **strong interaction**

overdense plasmas

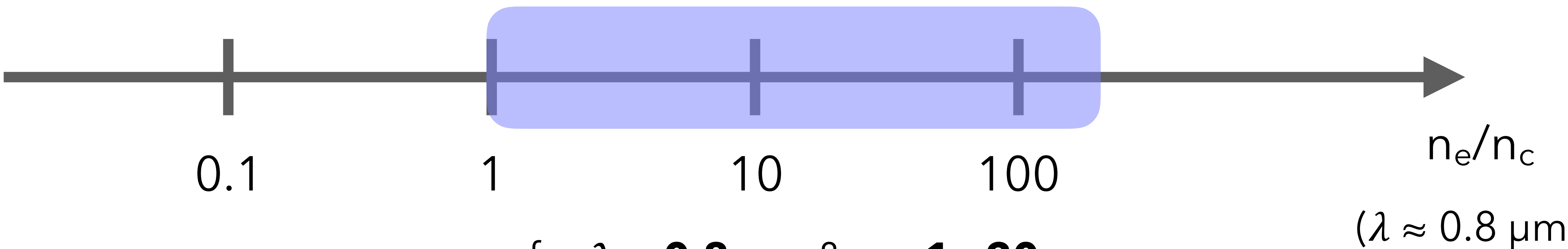
- laser reflection
- laser damping
- surface interaction

complex regime



Producing near-critical materials is challenging

$n_e \approx n_c$

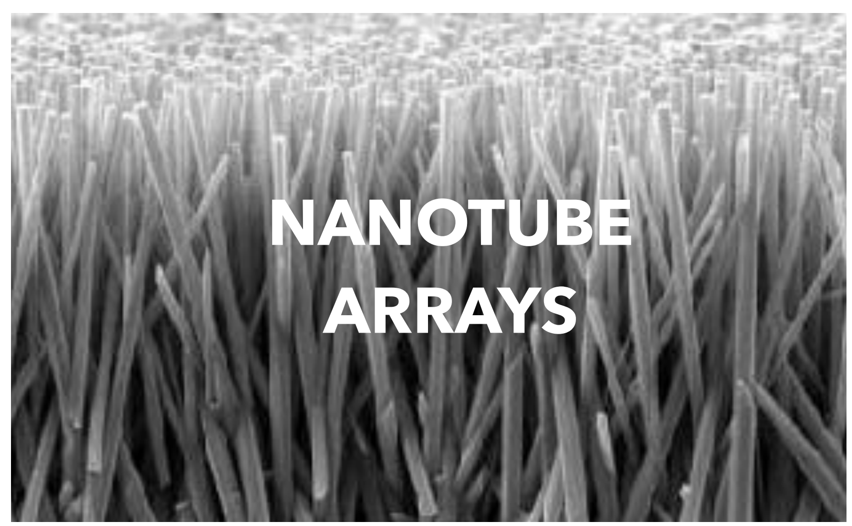


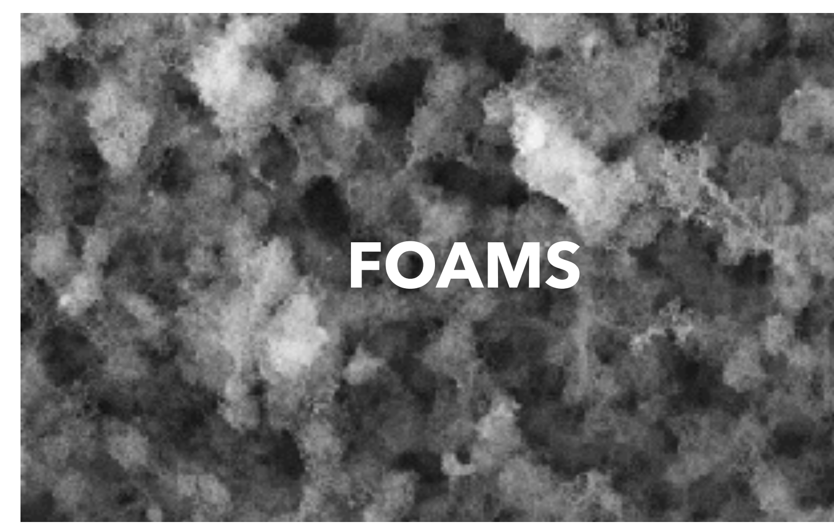
for **$\lambda \approx$ 0.8 μm** & **γ_e=1 - 30**

$n_c \approx$ 6 - 180 mg/cm^3

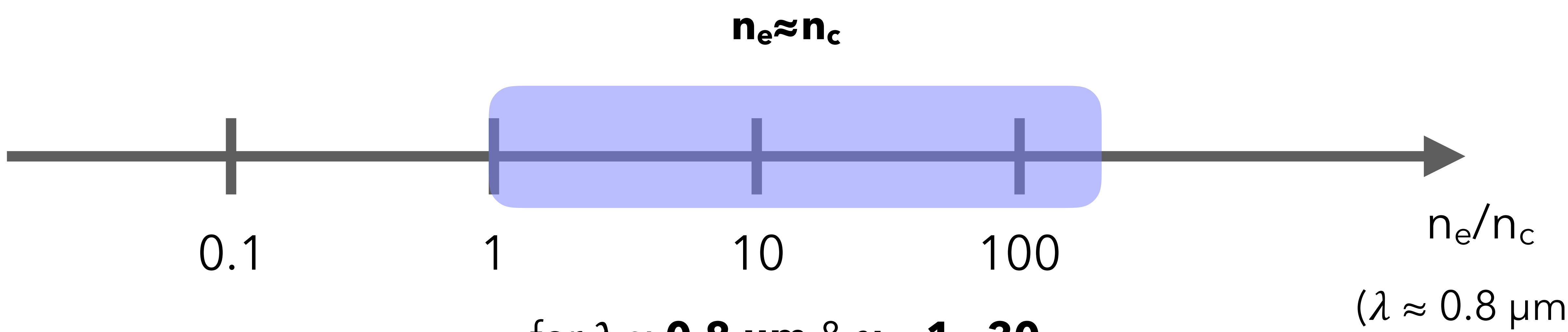
VERY LOW DENSITY:

few options other than pre-heating





We focus of Carbon foams



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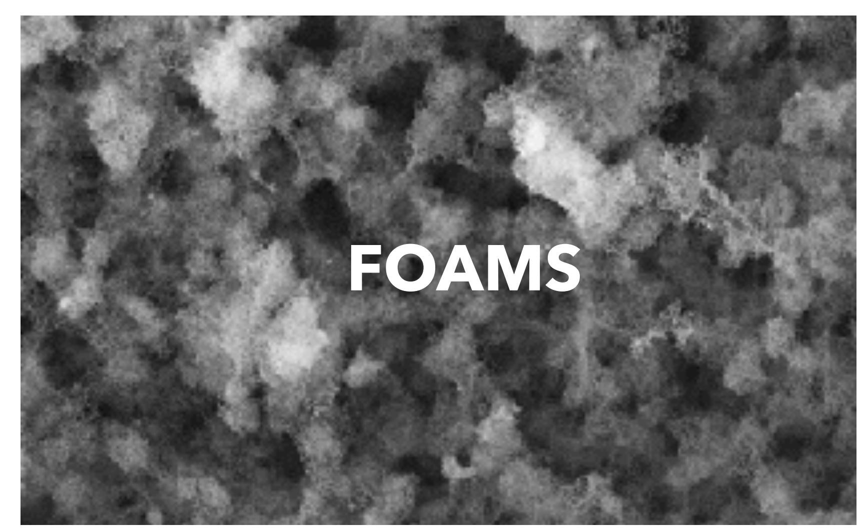
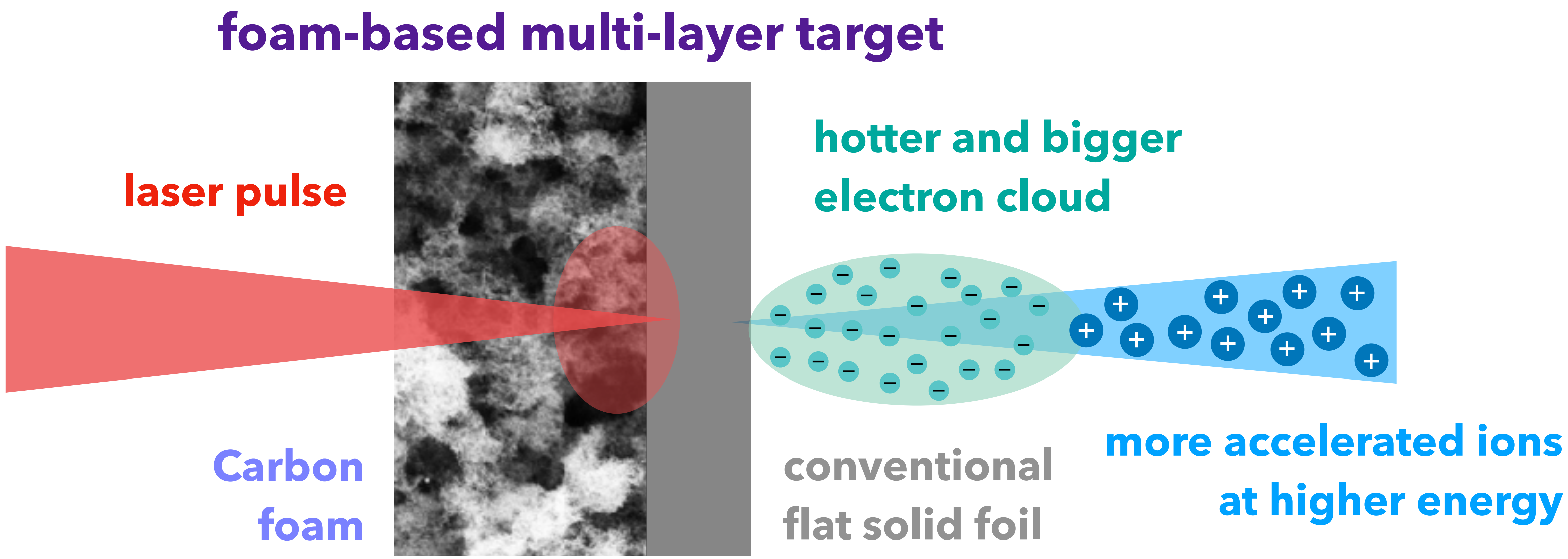


Foams improve ion acceleration performances



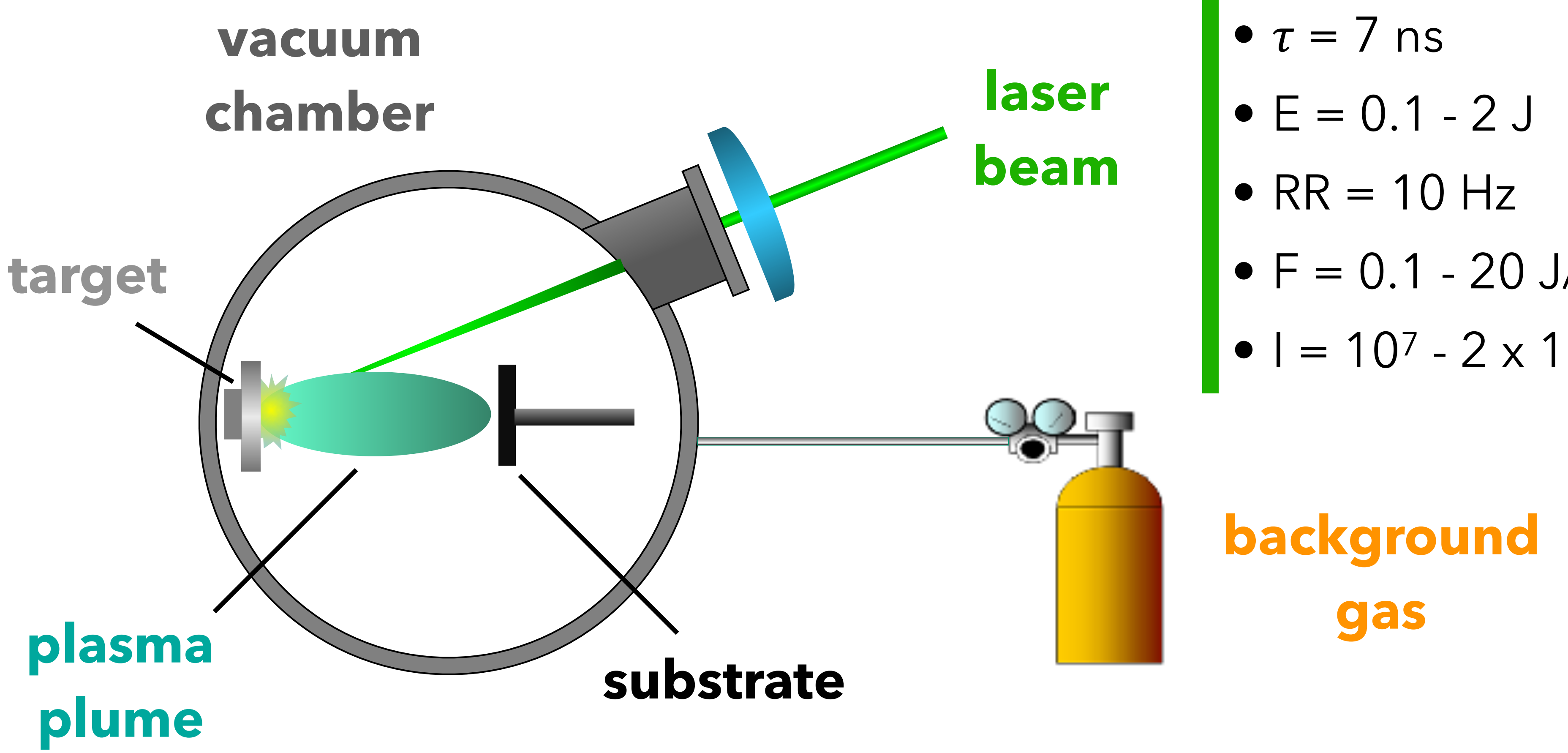
WITH FOAM

- stronger laser energy absorption
- more hot electrons
- higher hot electrons temperature
- increased maximum ion energy
- more accelerated ions
- enhanced robustness

ENHANCED TNSA PROCESS!

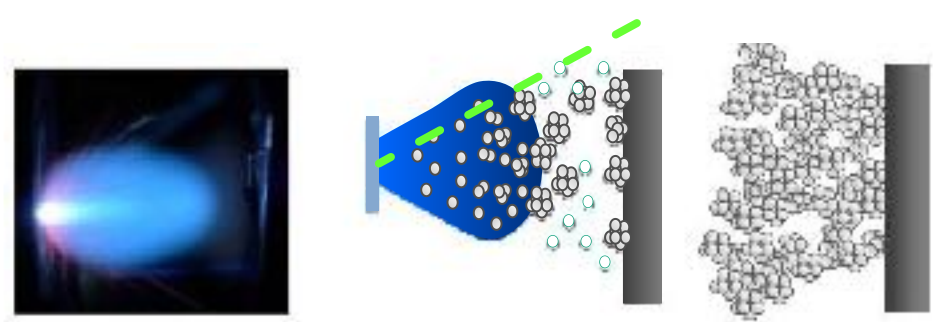
Foams are directly grown on the substrate

production by **Pulsed Laser Deposition (PLD)** technique



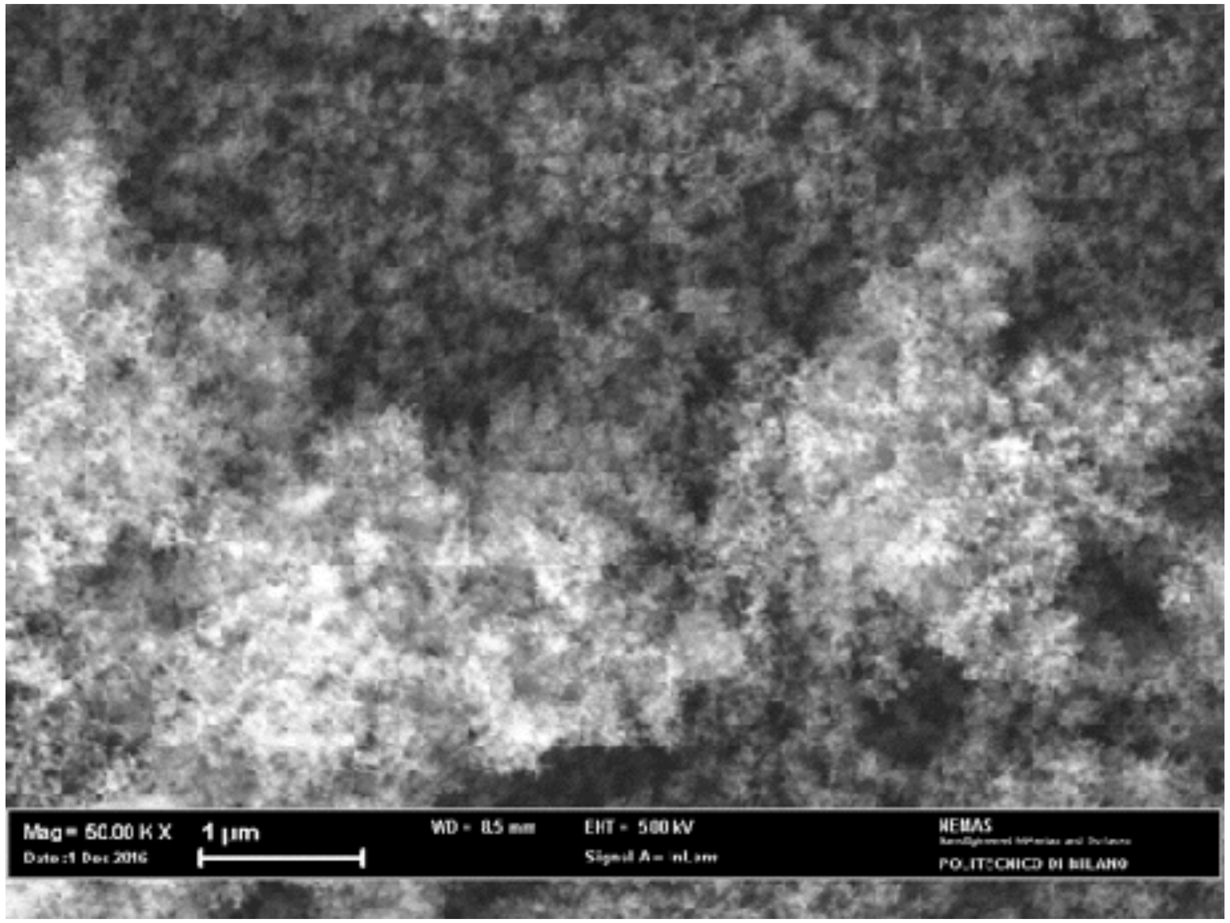
- λ = 266, 532, 1064 nm
- τ = 7 ns
- E = 0.1 - 2 J
- RR = 10 Hz
- F = 0.1 - 20 J/cm^2
- I = 10^7 - 2 x 10^9 W/cm^2

- Inert (He, Ar…)
- Reactive (O_2)

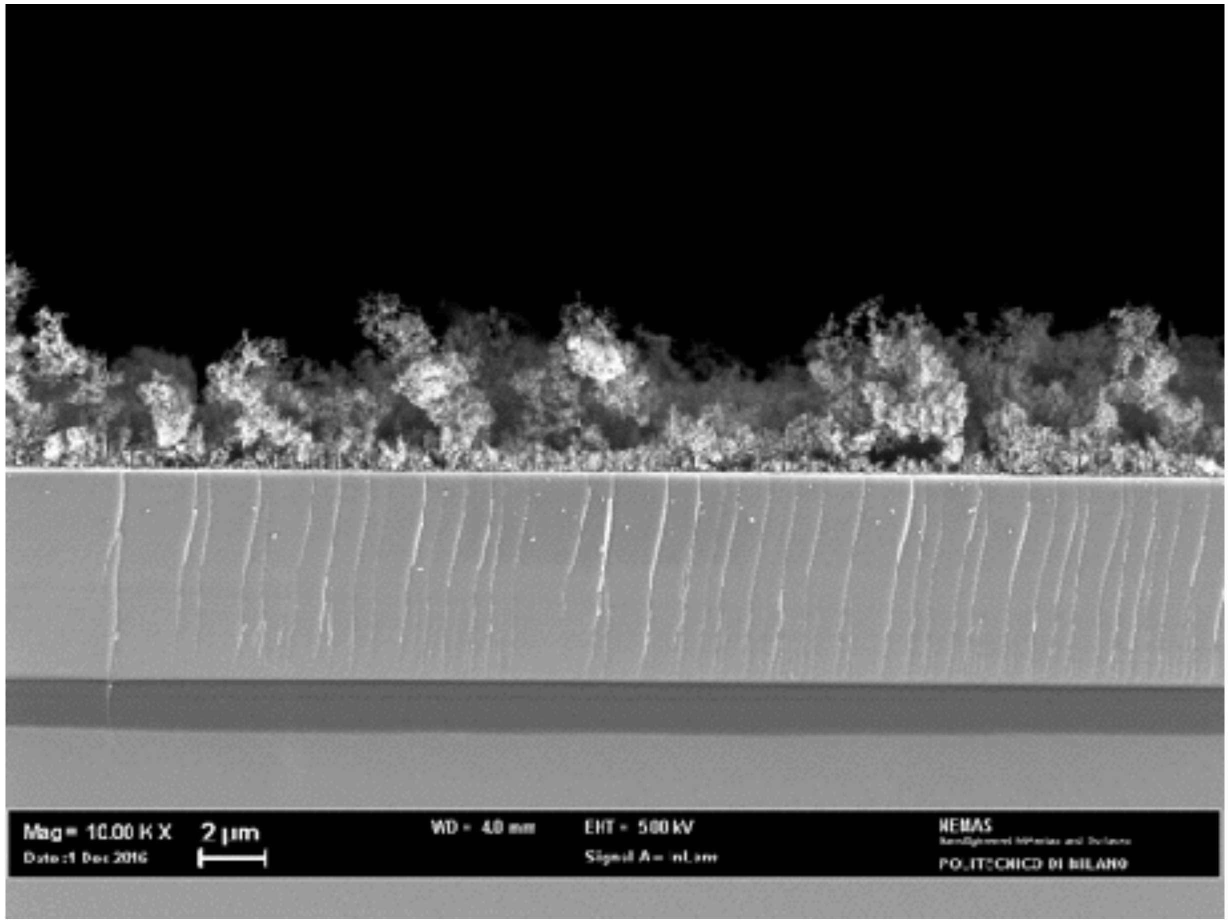


Foams are non-ordinary materials

NanoLab



top view



cross-section

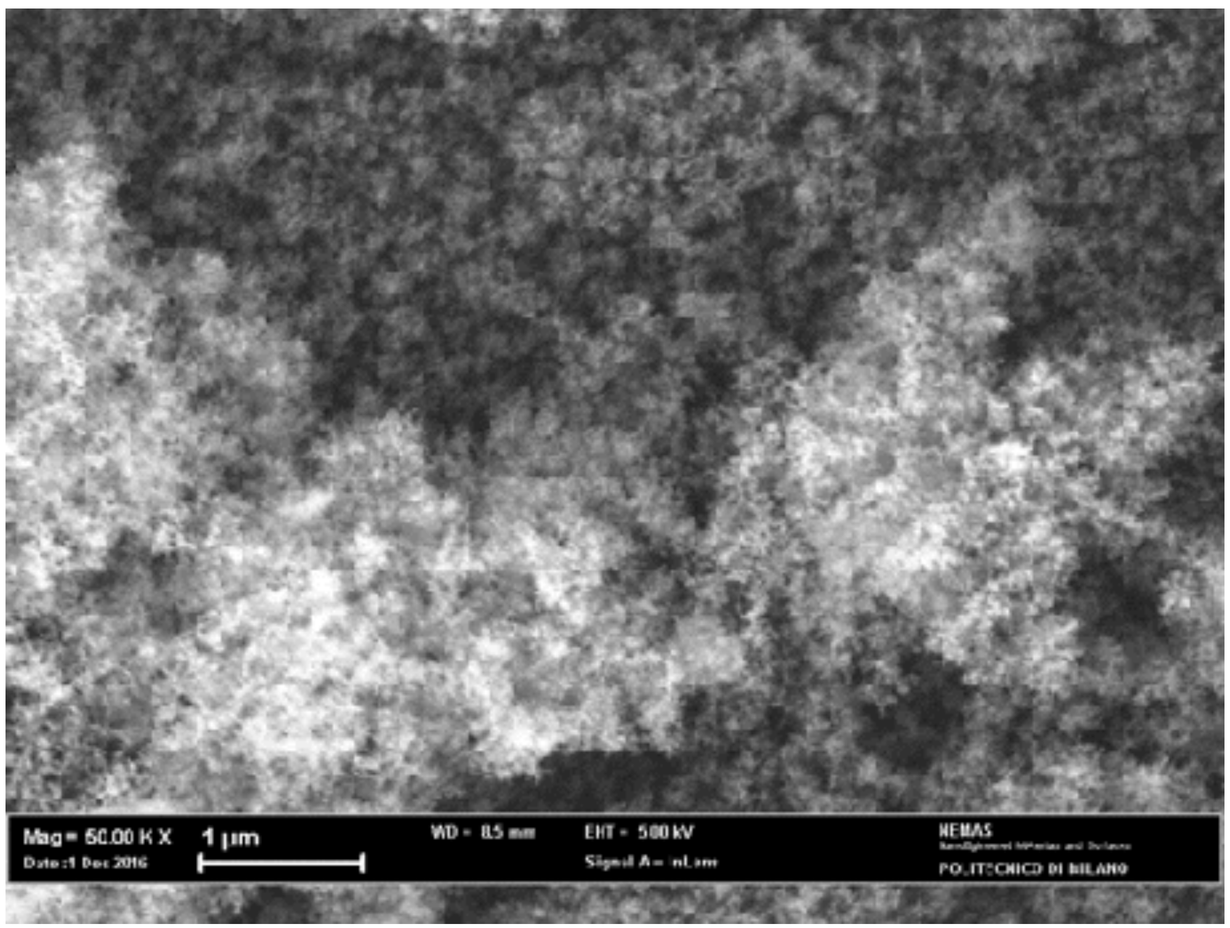
SEM images

Foams are non-ordinary materials

nanostructure | aggregates on the µm-scale | high porosity | low density

complex morphology | self-similar features | non-uniform density profile

non-uniform thickness profile | solid-density building-blocks | tunable



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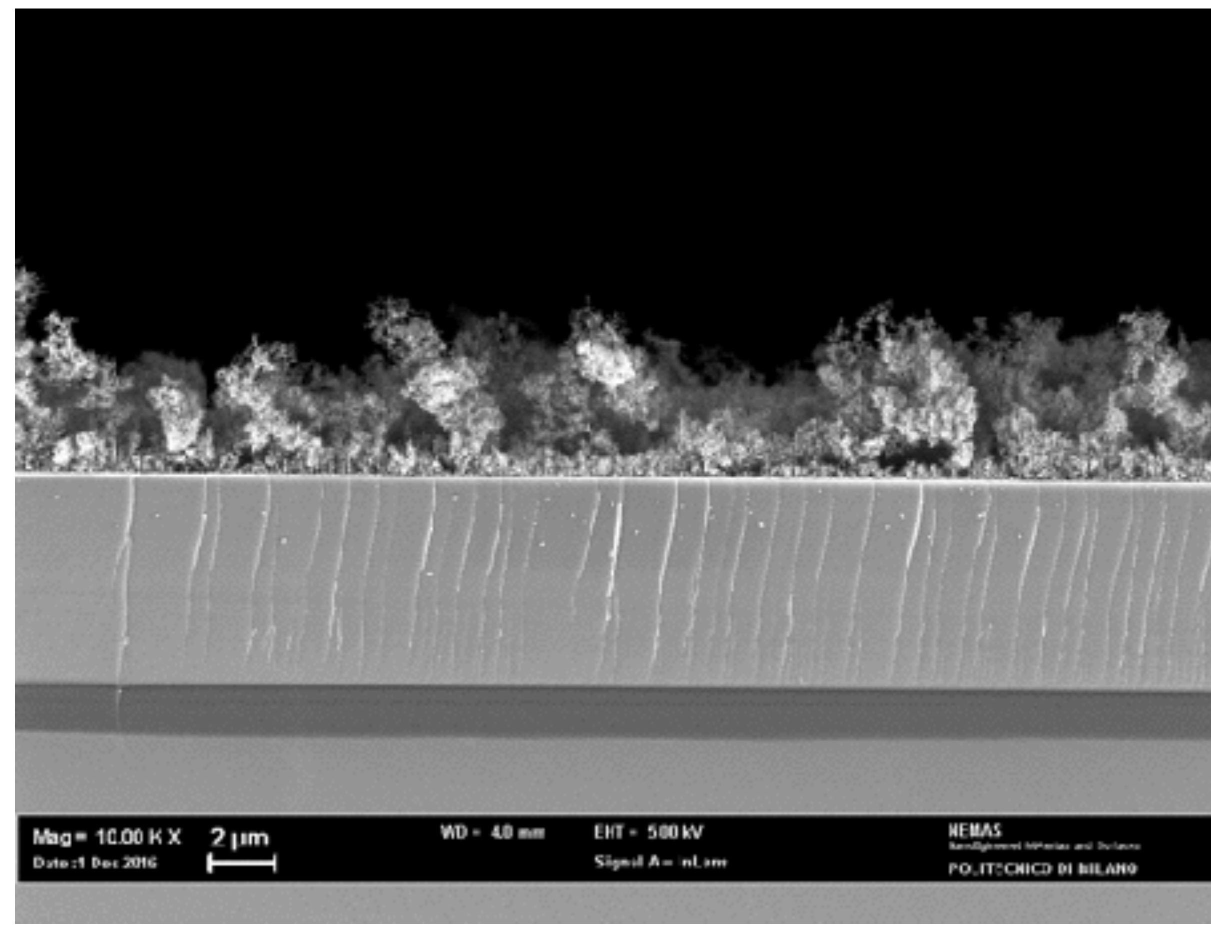

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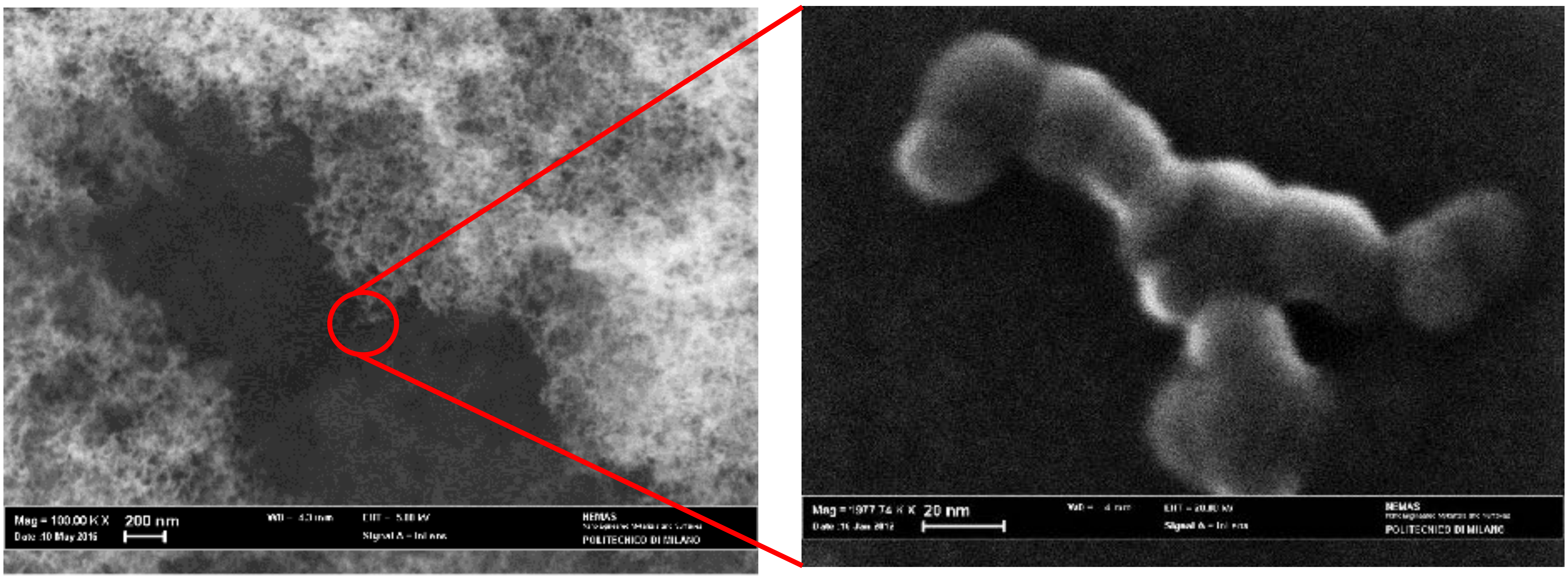


top view — SEM images — building-blocks

Foam features can be tuned on different scales

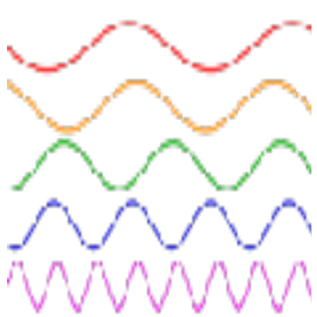
Foam property control

Nano-scale

Micro-scale

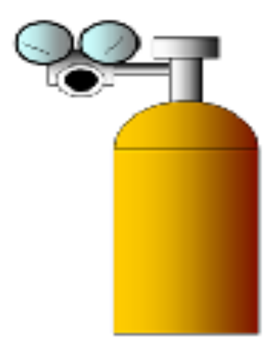
Macro-scale

Laser wavelength

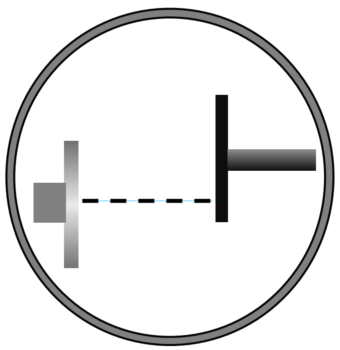


Laser fluence

Gas pressure



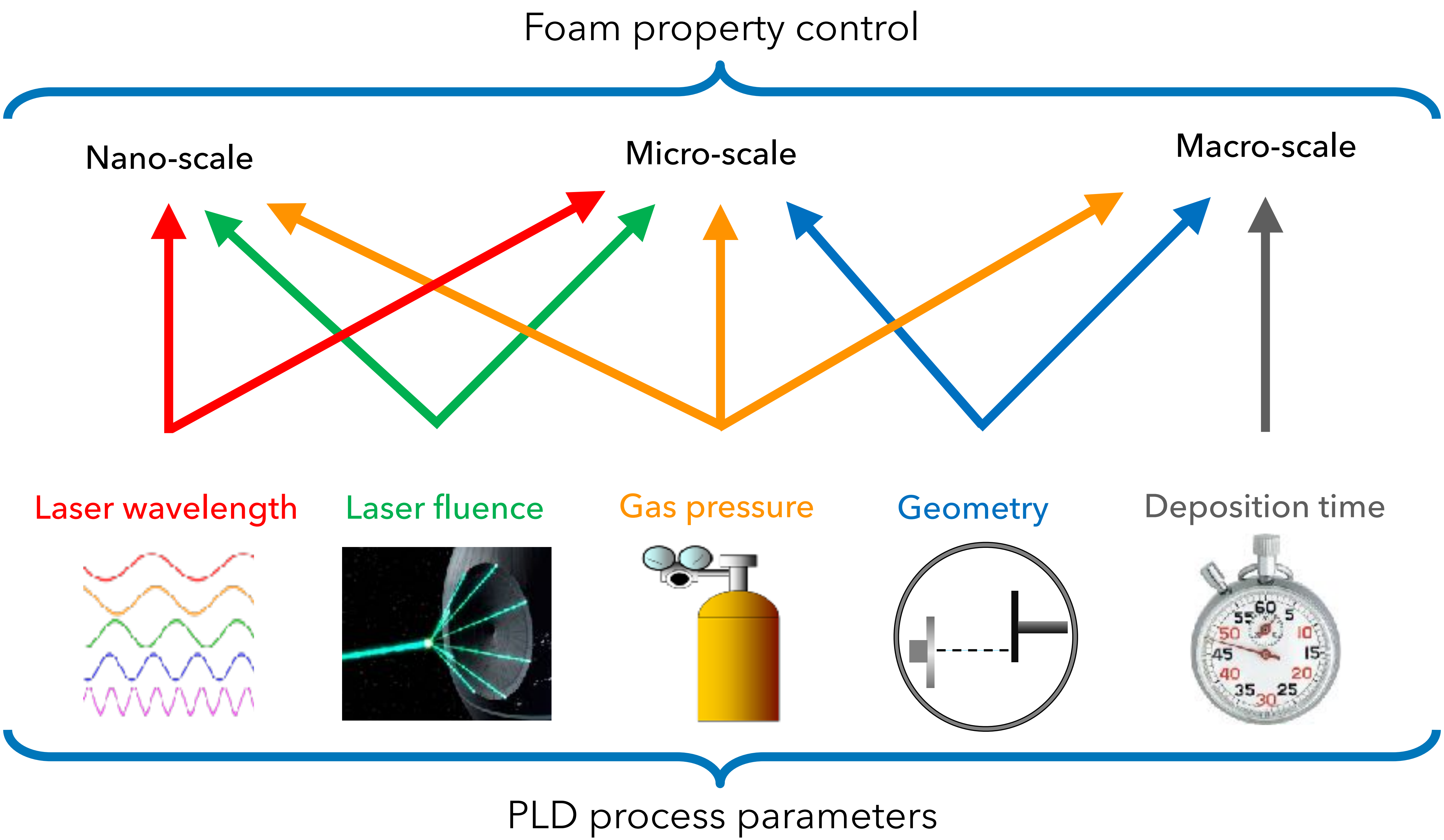
Geometry



Deposition time

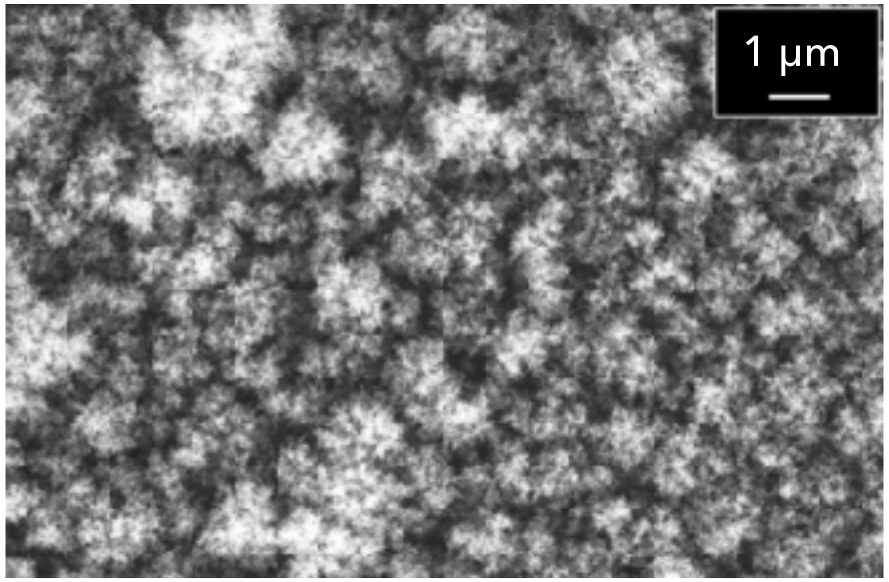
PLD process parameters

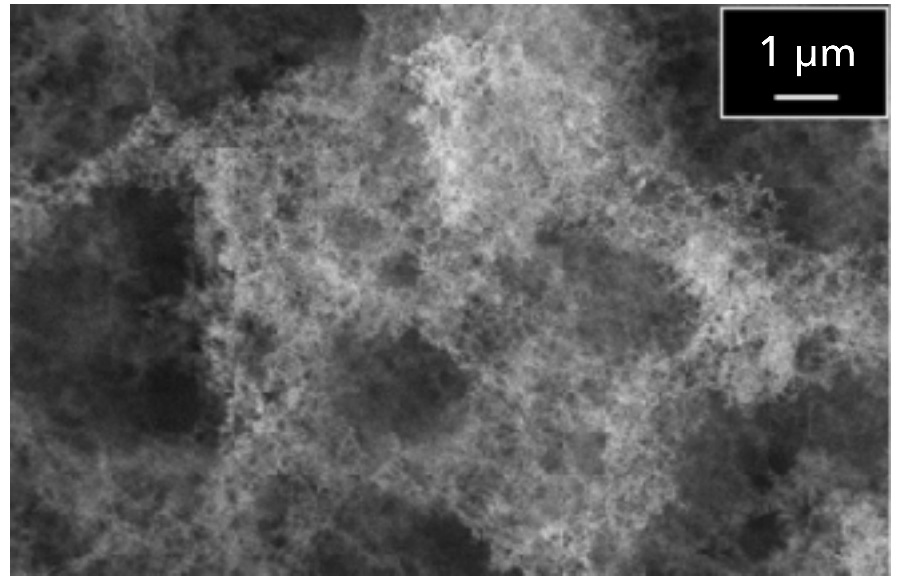
Foam features can be tuned on different scales

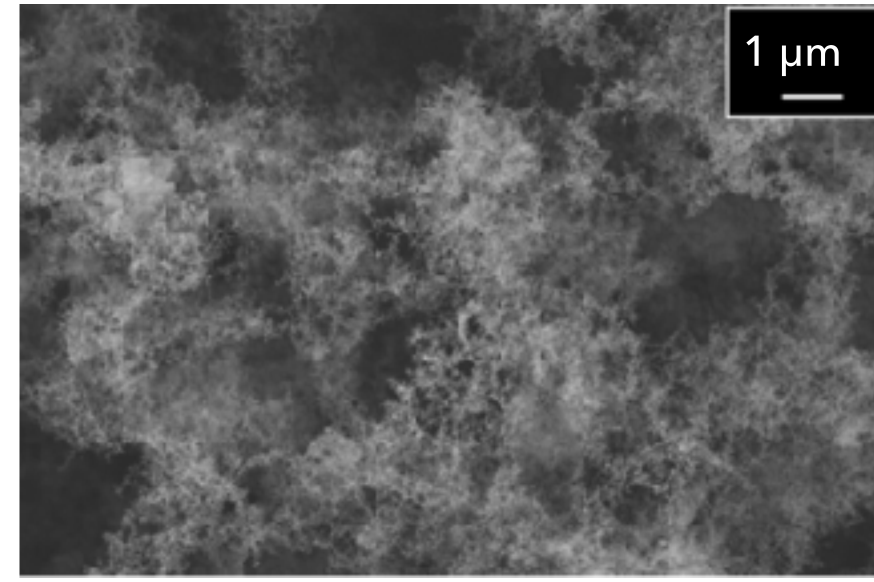


Foam morphology depends on gas pressure

Argon

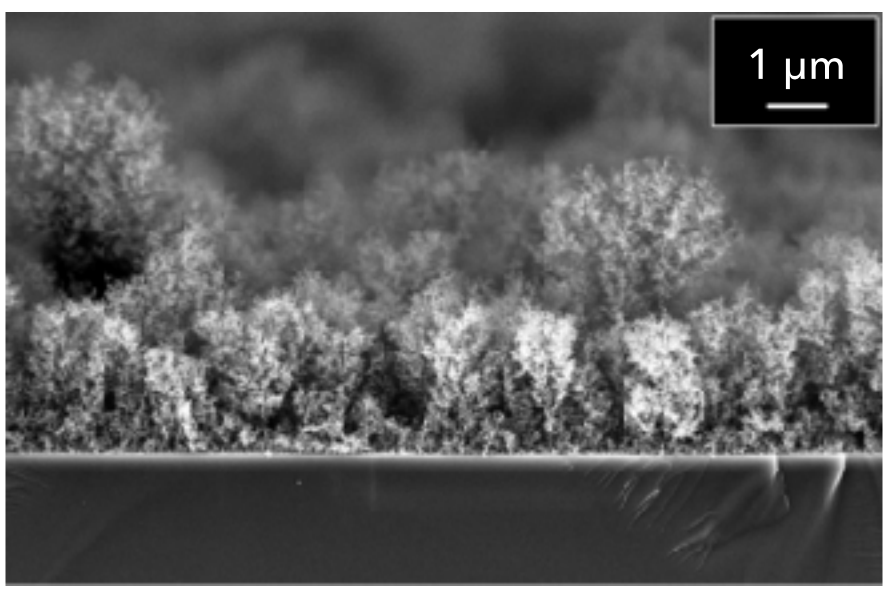


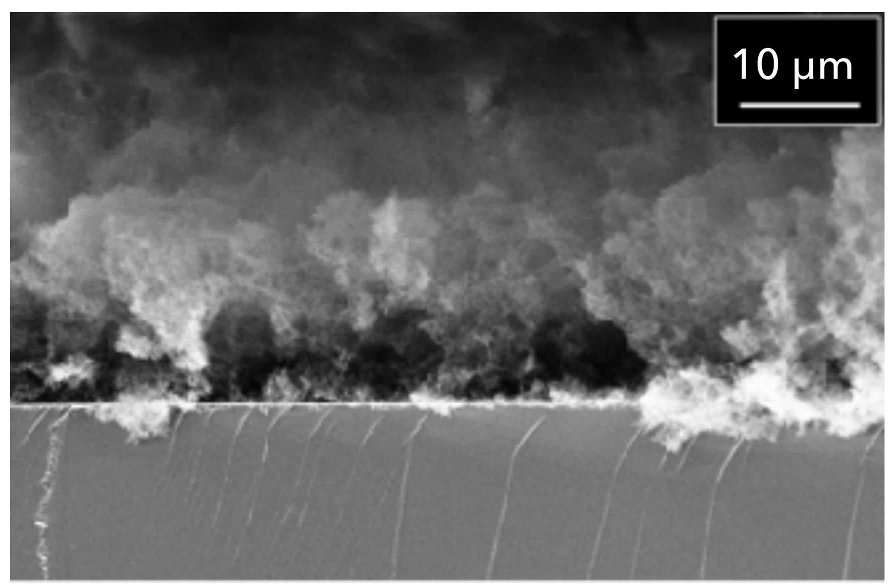


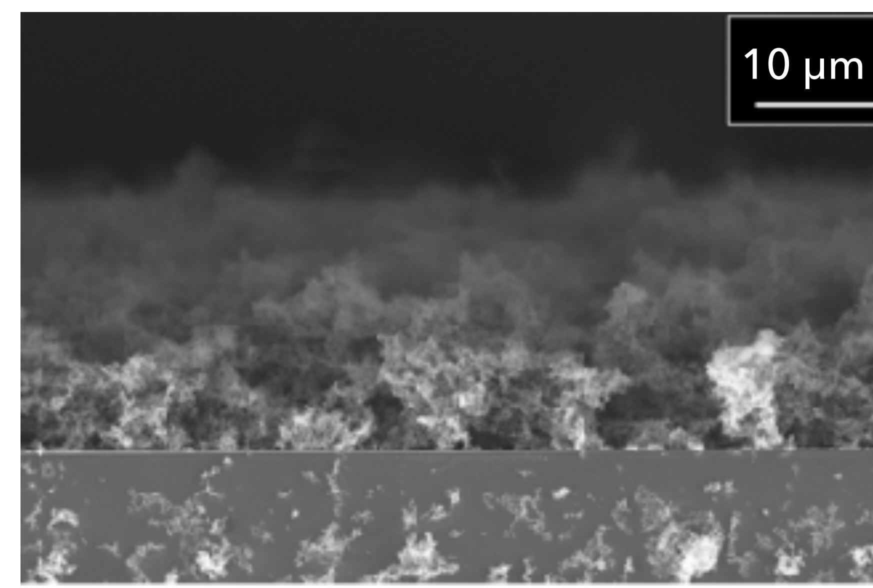


30 Pa 100 Pa 150 Pa

Gas pressure



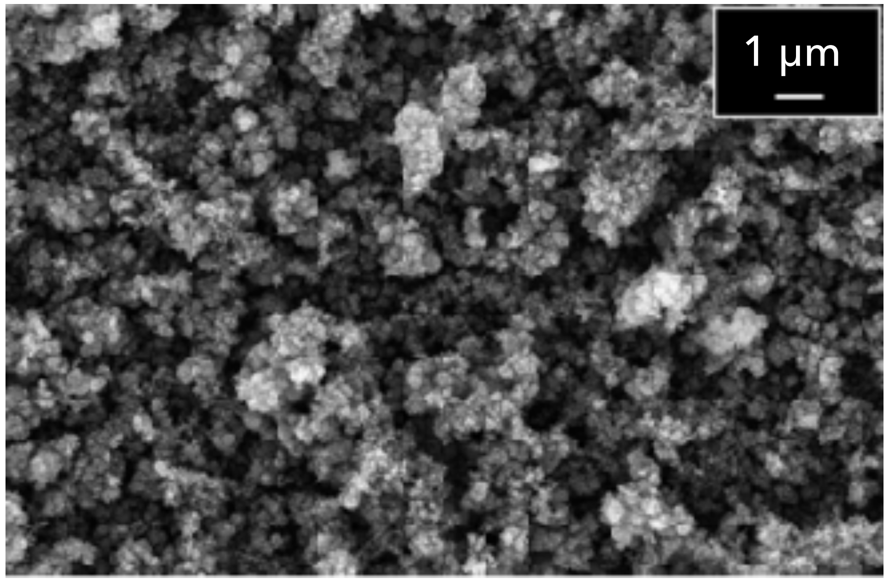




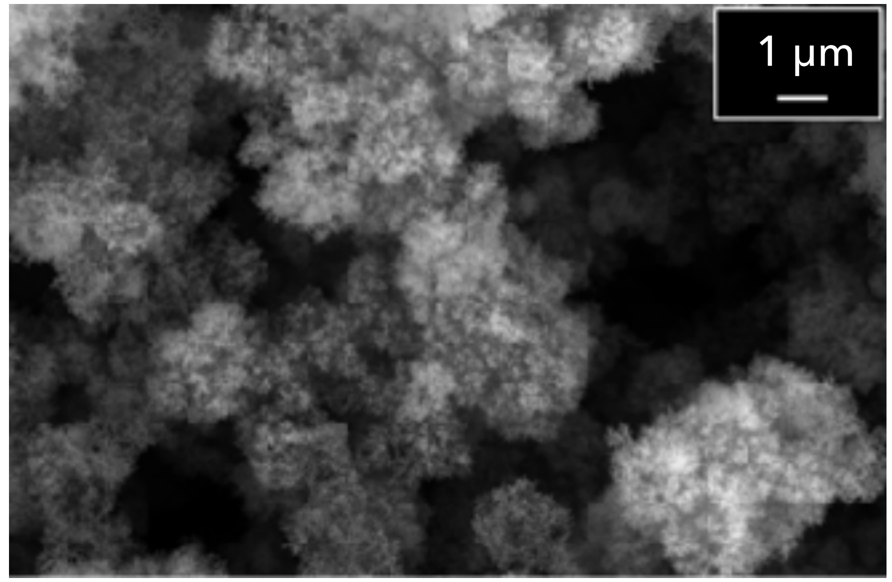
Zani et al. *Carbon* 56 (2013)

Foam morphology depends on the gas type

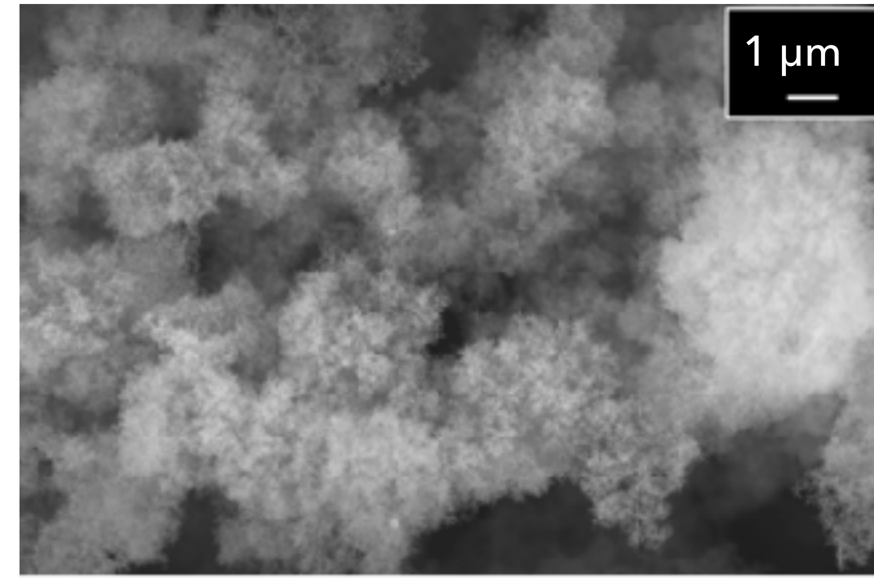
Helium



30 Pa

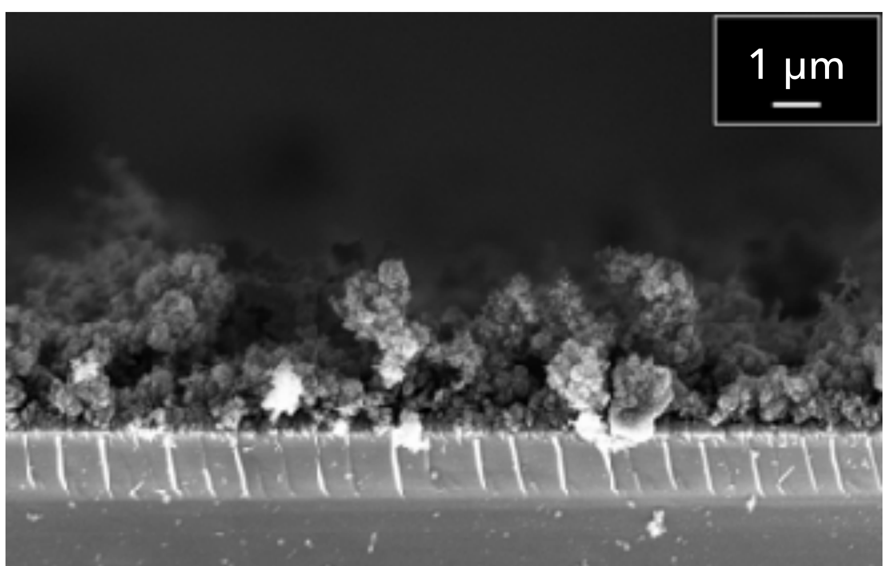


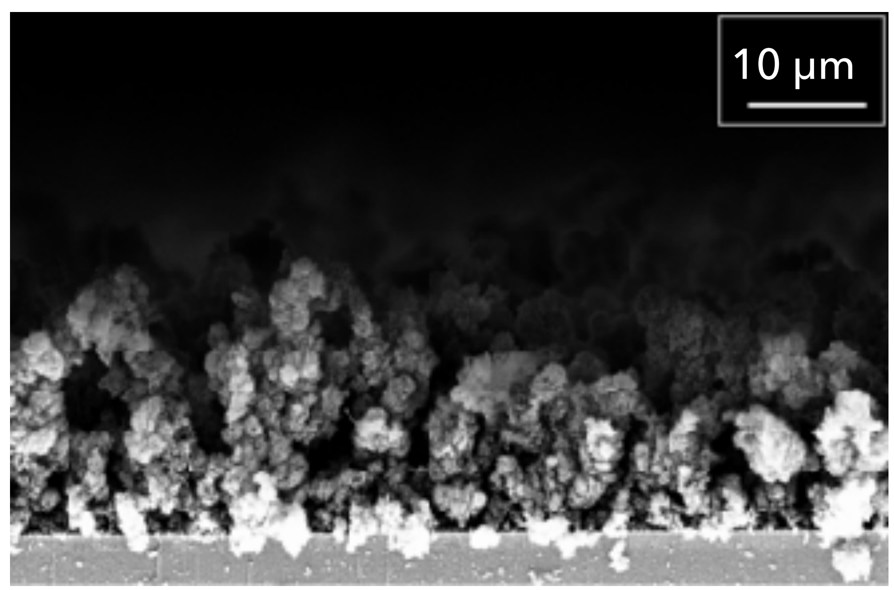
100 Pa

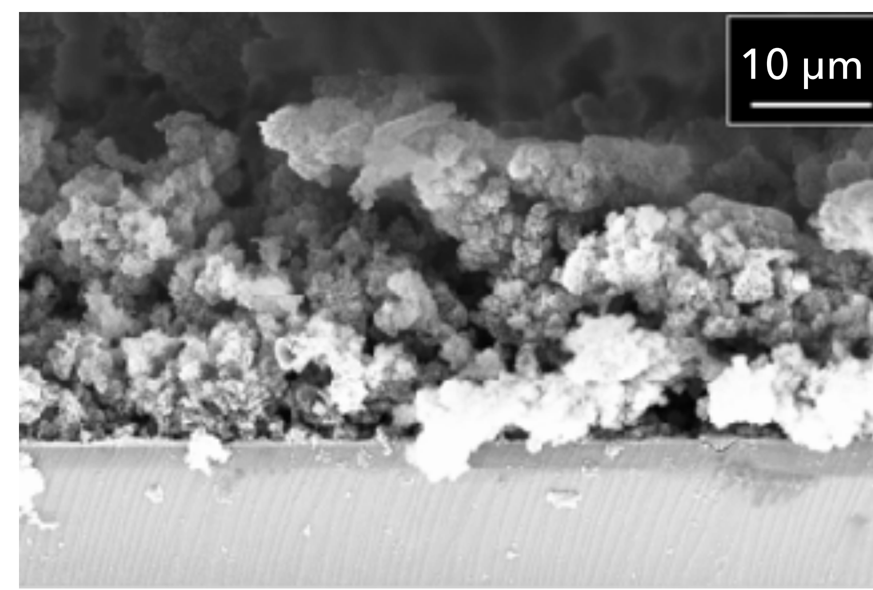


150 Pa

Gas pressure





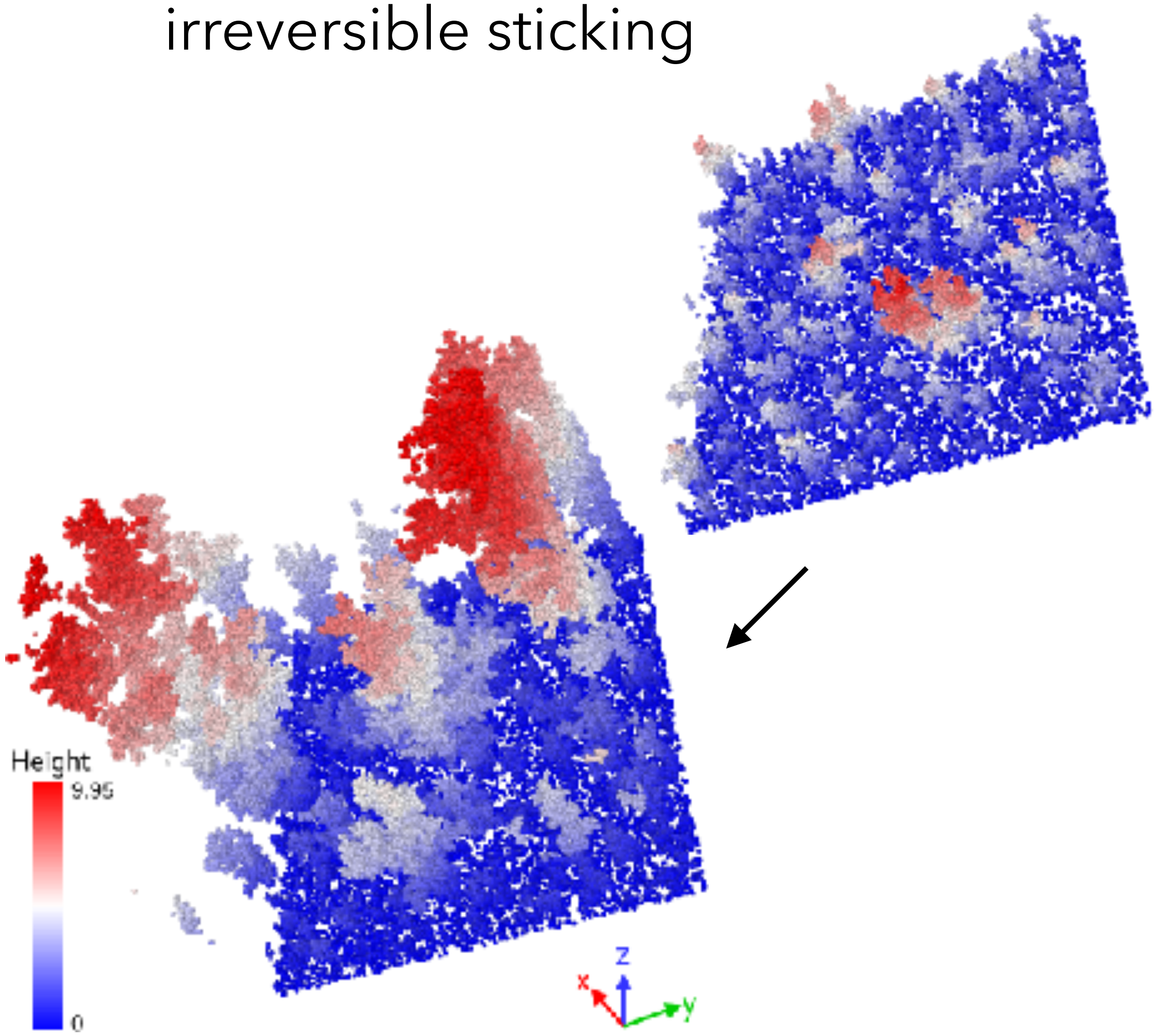


Zani et al. *Carbon* 56 (2013)

Aggregation models can mimic foam growth

Diffusion-Limited (DLA)

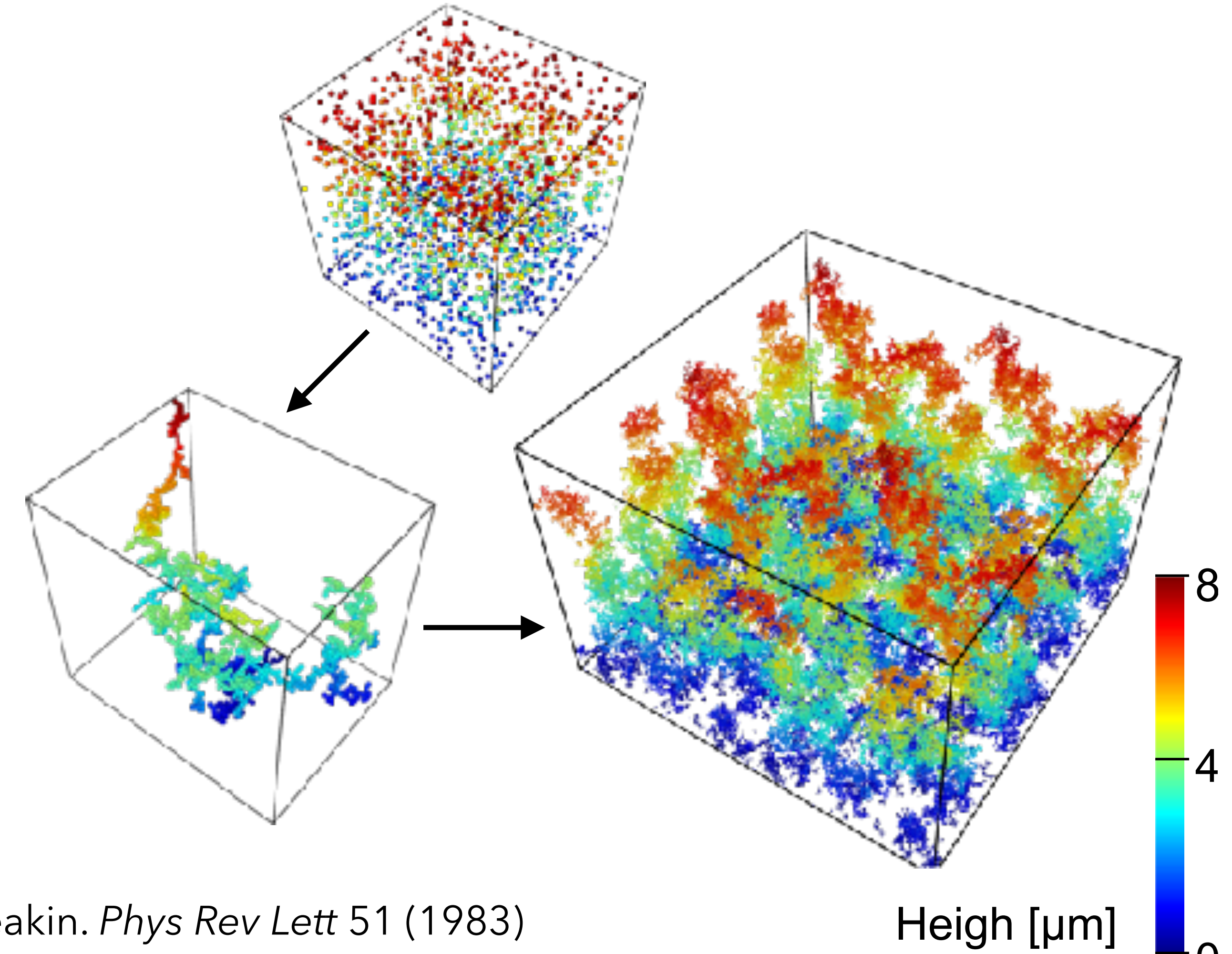
- Brownian motion of particles
- particle deposition in clusters by irreversible sticking



Witten and Sander. *Phys Rev Lett* 47 (1981)

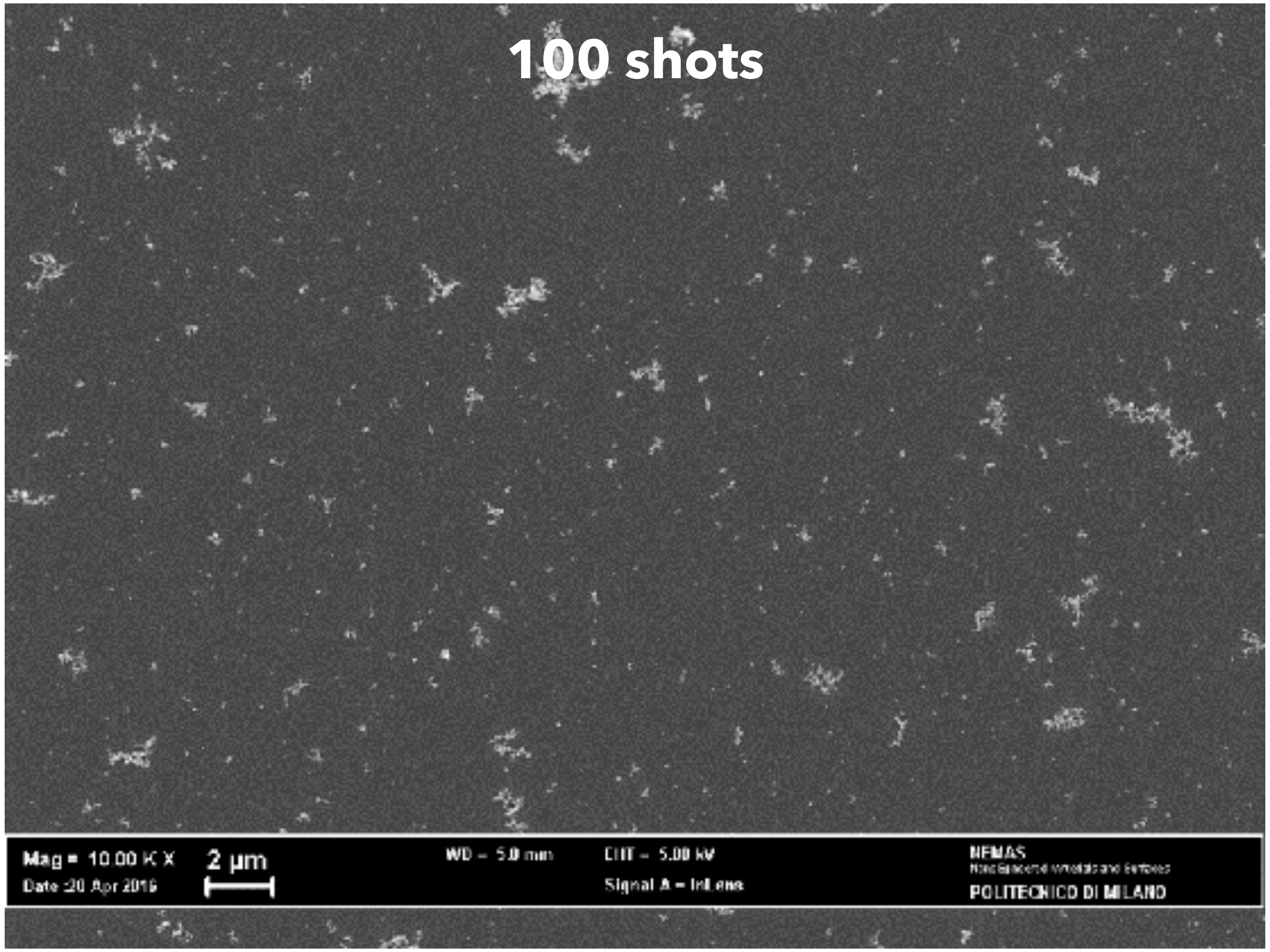
Diffusion-Limited Cluster-Cluster (DLCCA)

- Brownian motion of particles
- particle aggregation in clusters by irreversible sticking
- clusters deposition on substrate

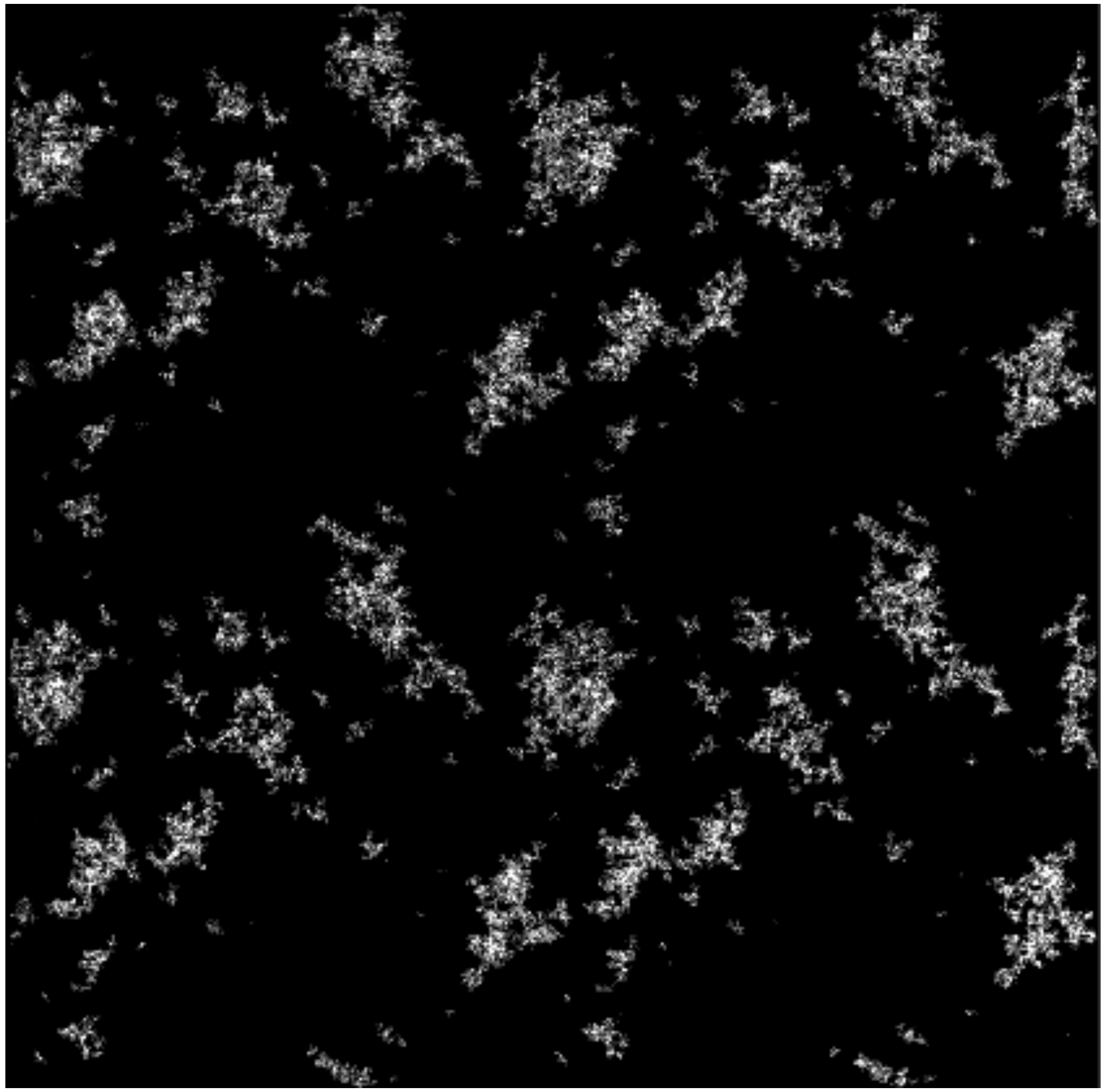


Meakin. *Phys Rev Lett* 51 (1983)

Real vs. synthetic foam growth

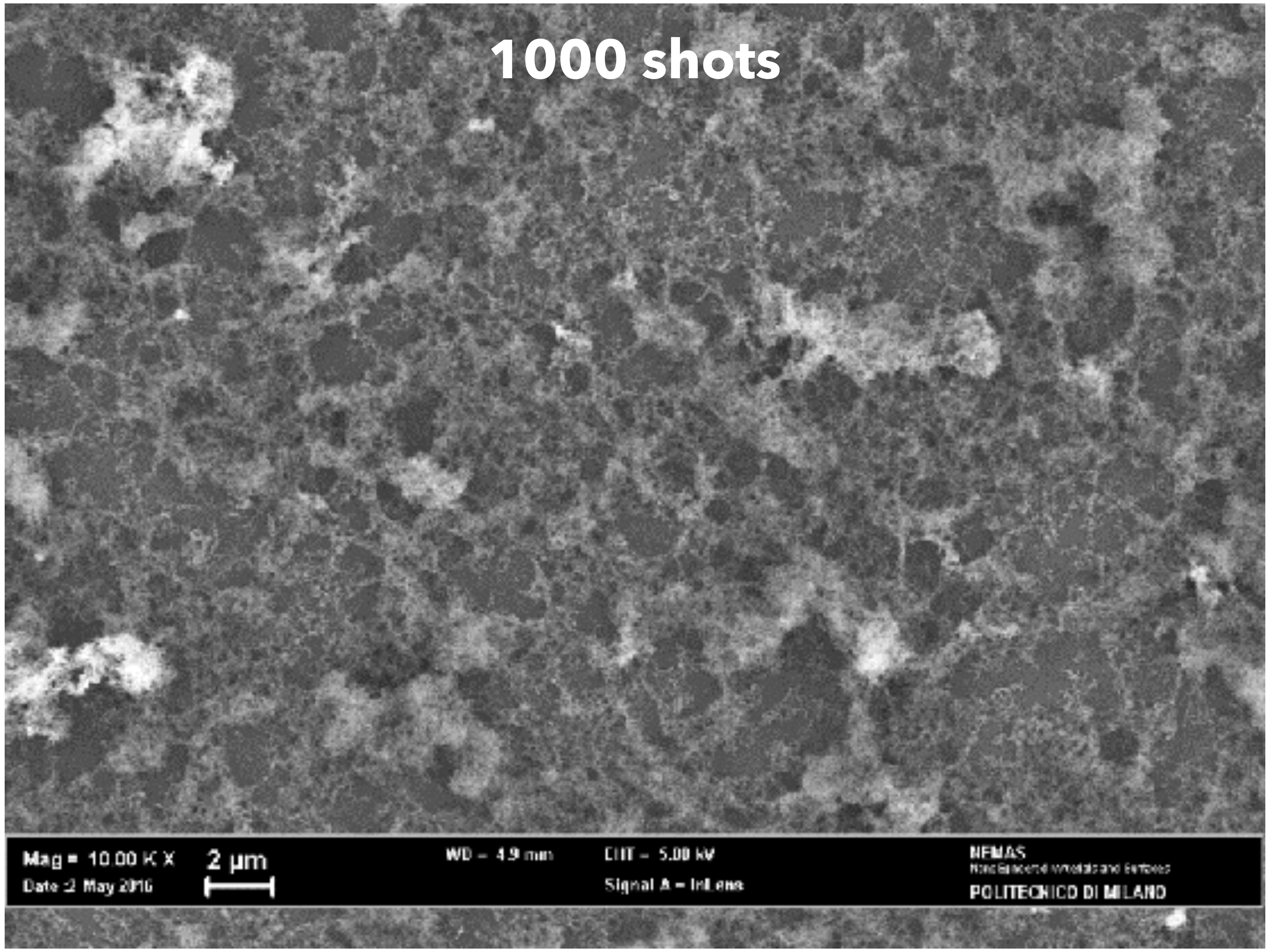


REAL

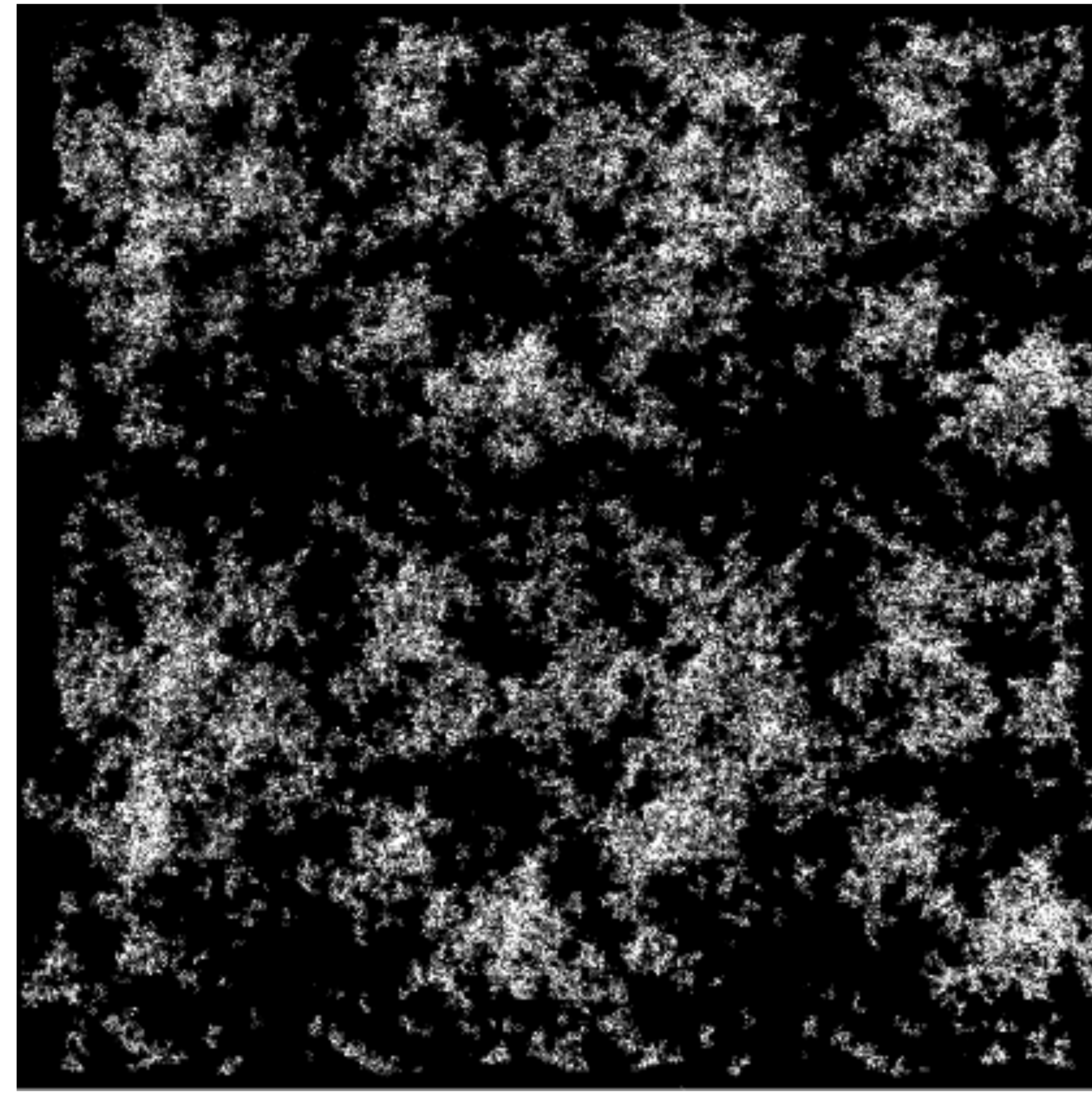


DLCCA MODEL

Real vs. synthetic foam growth

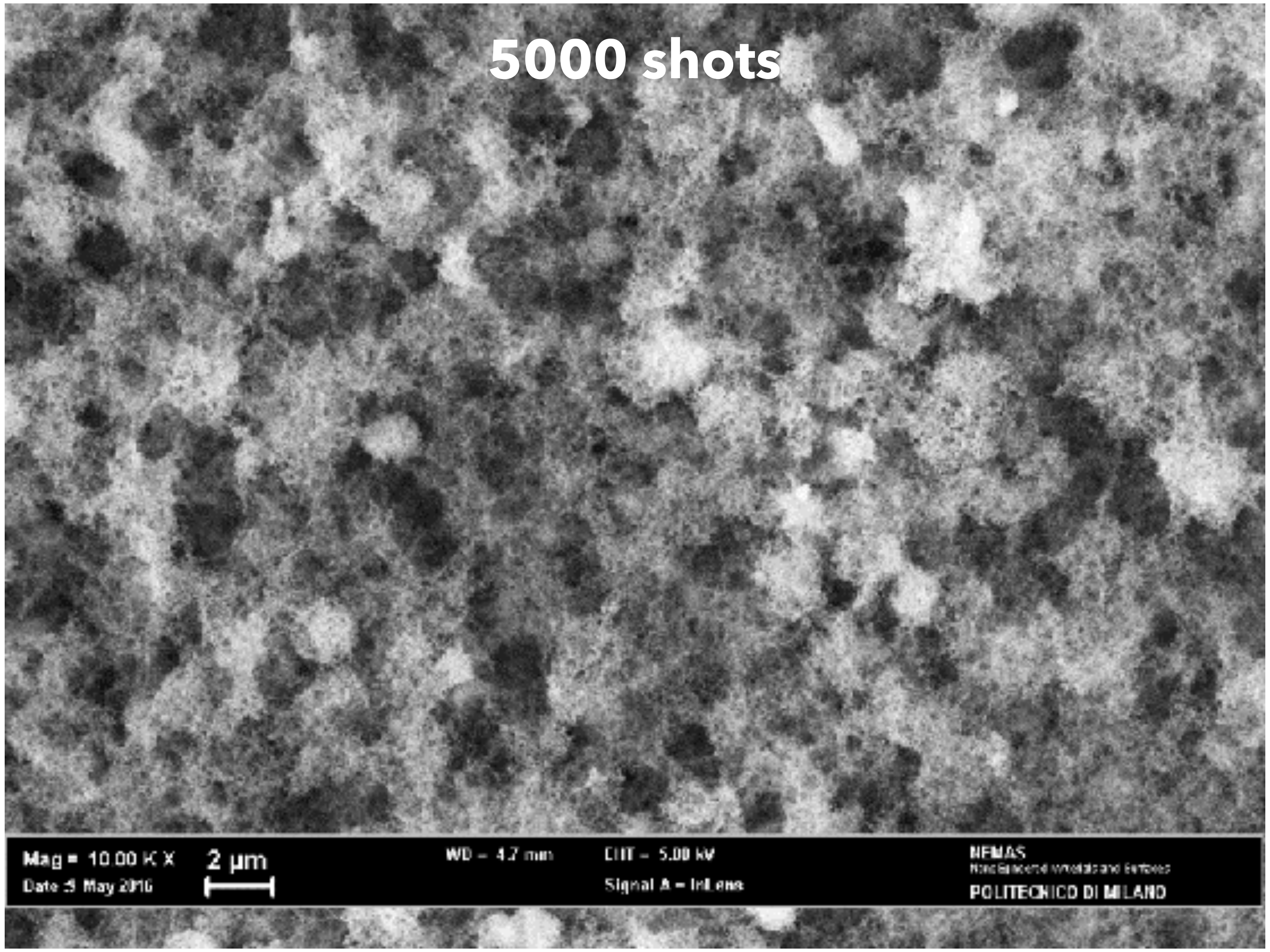


REAL

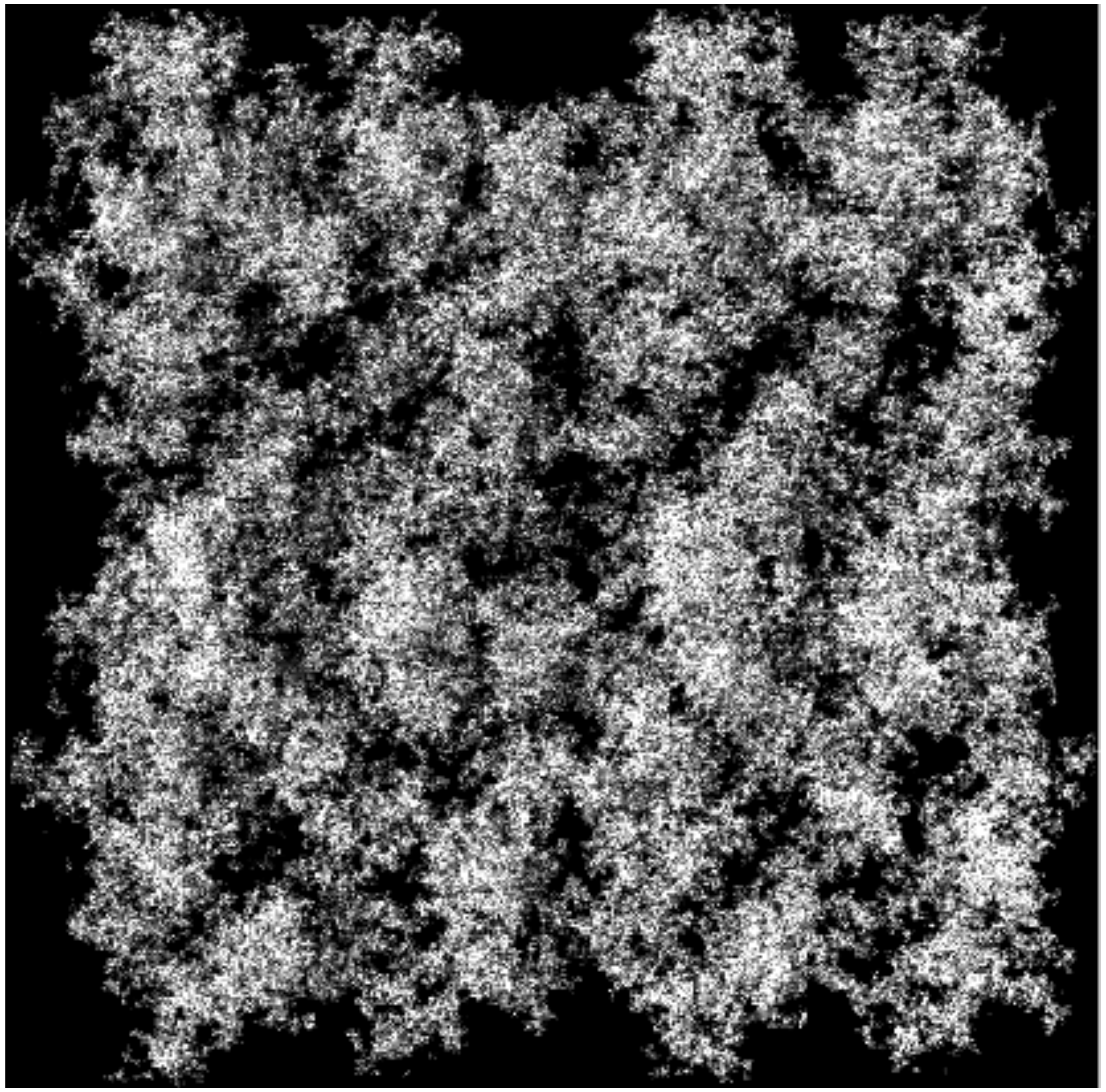


DLCCA MODEL

Real vs. synthetic foam growth



REAL

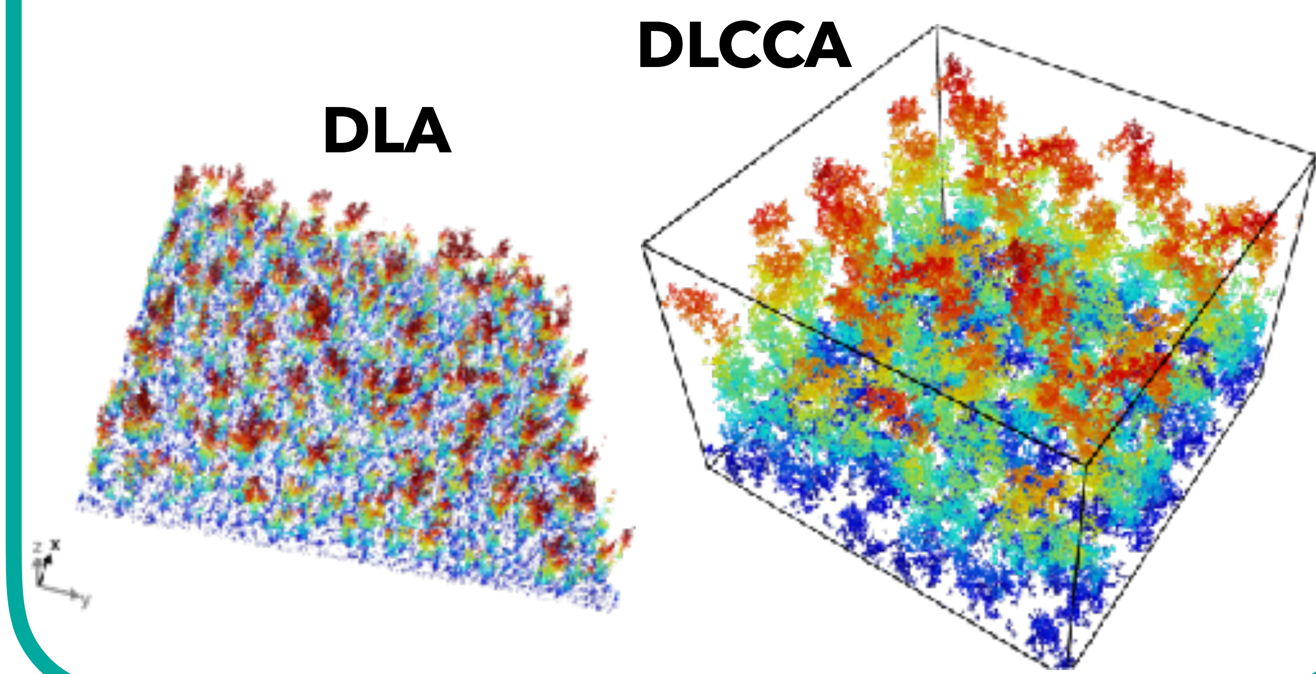


DLCCA MODEL

Choose a foam model to simulate the acceleration

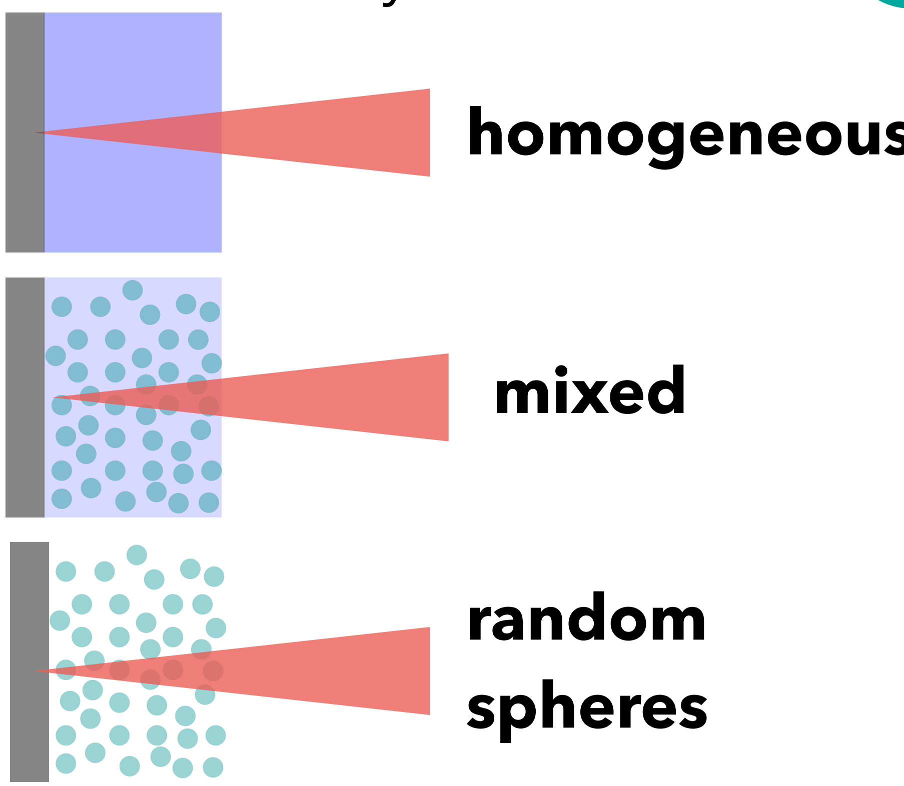
3D

quite realistic



2D

very idealized



Particle-In-Cell codes
for laser-plasma interaction

github.com/ALaDyn/piccante

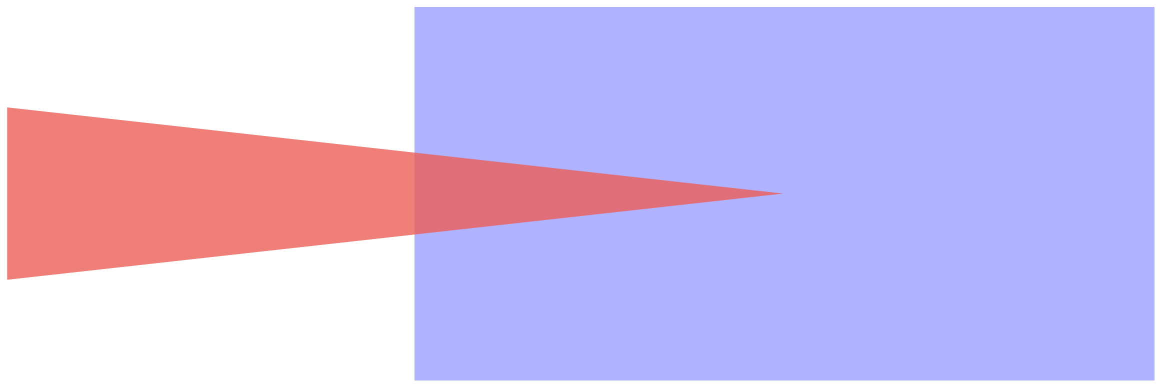
github.com/SmileiPIC/Smilei

But first we investigate the interaction only

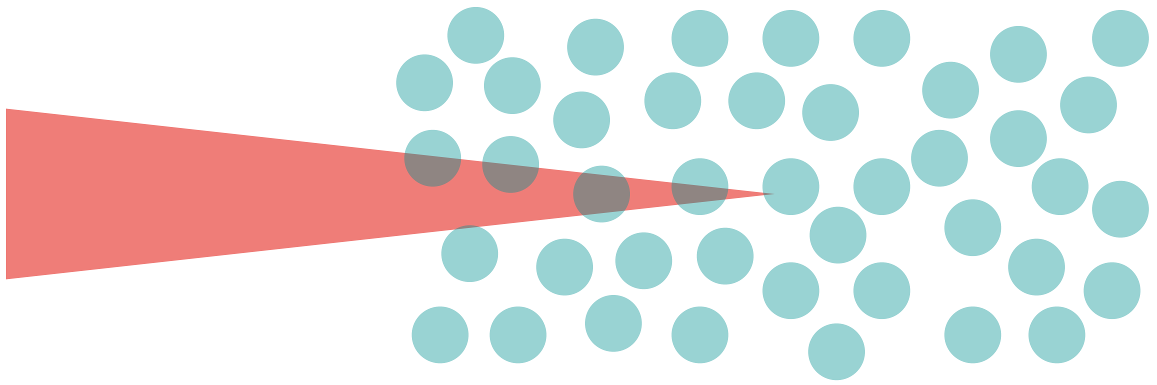
2D

near-critical plasmas

homogeneous



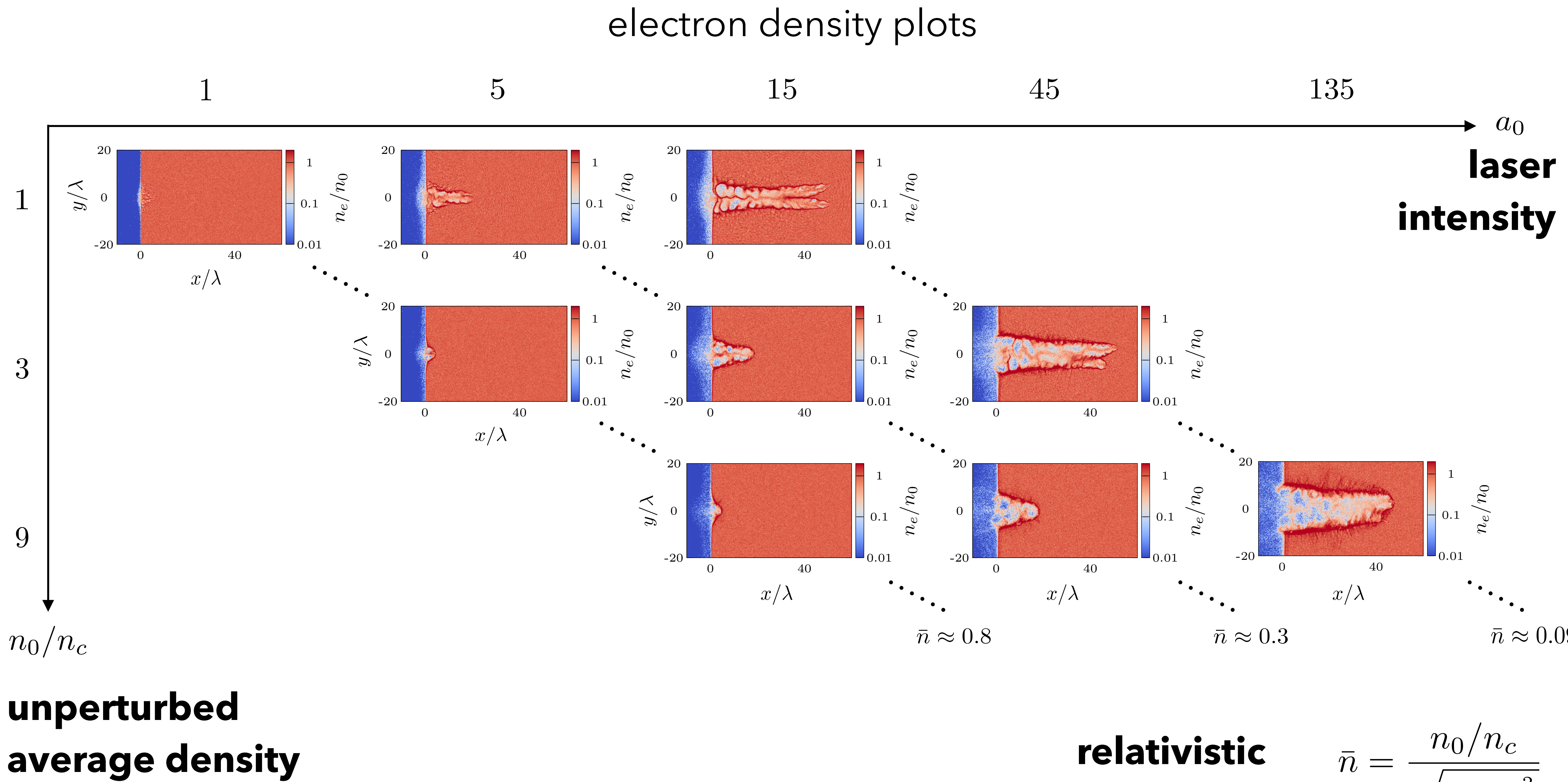
random spheres



no substrate, so no ion acceleration!

Compare simulations of homogeneous plasmas…

2D



relativistic transparency

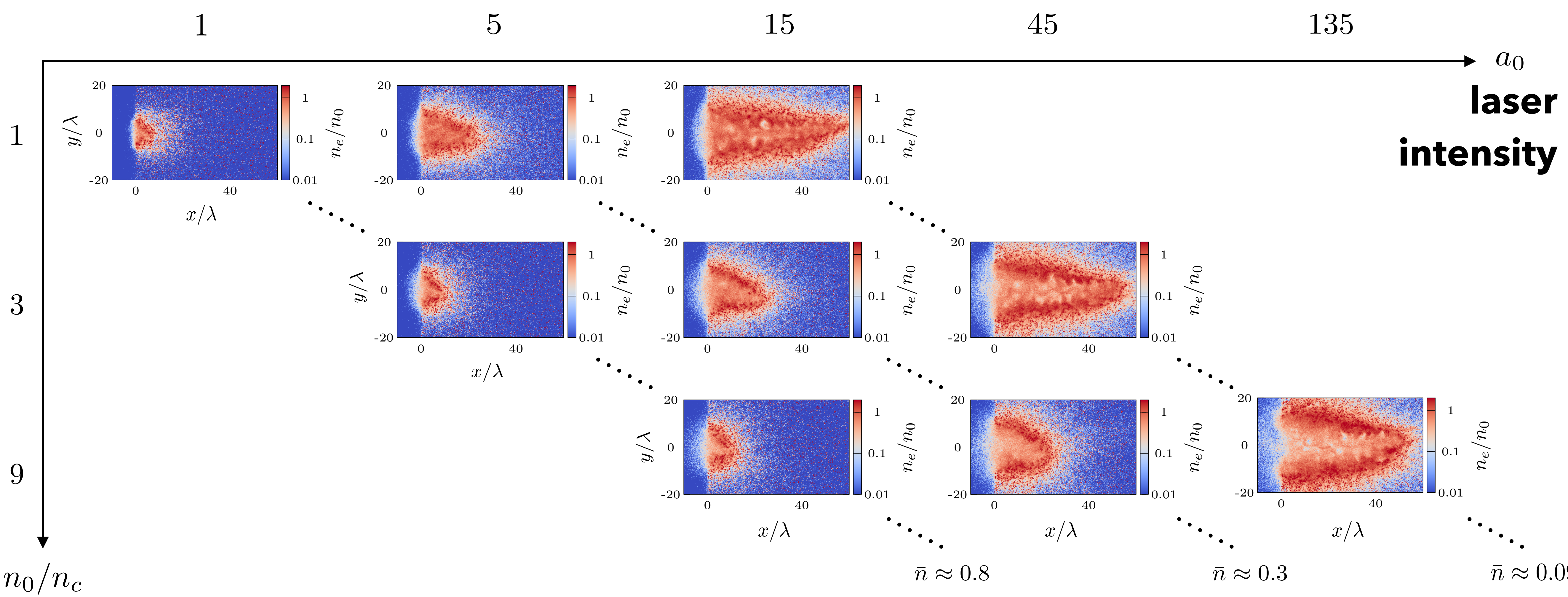
$$\bar{n} = \frac{n_0/n_c}{\sqrt{1 + \frac{a_0^2}{2}}}$$

Fedeli et al. *Eur Phys J D* 71 (2017)

…with simulations of random spheres plasmas

2D

electron density plots



laser intensity

unperturbed average density

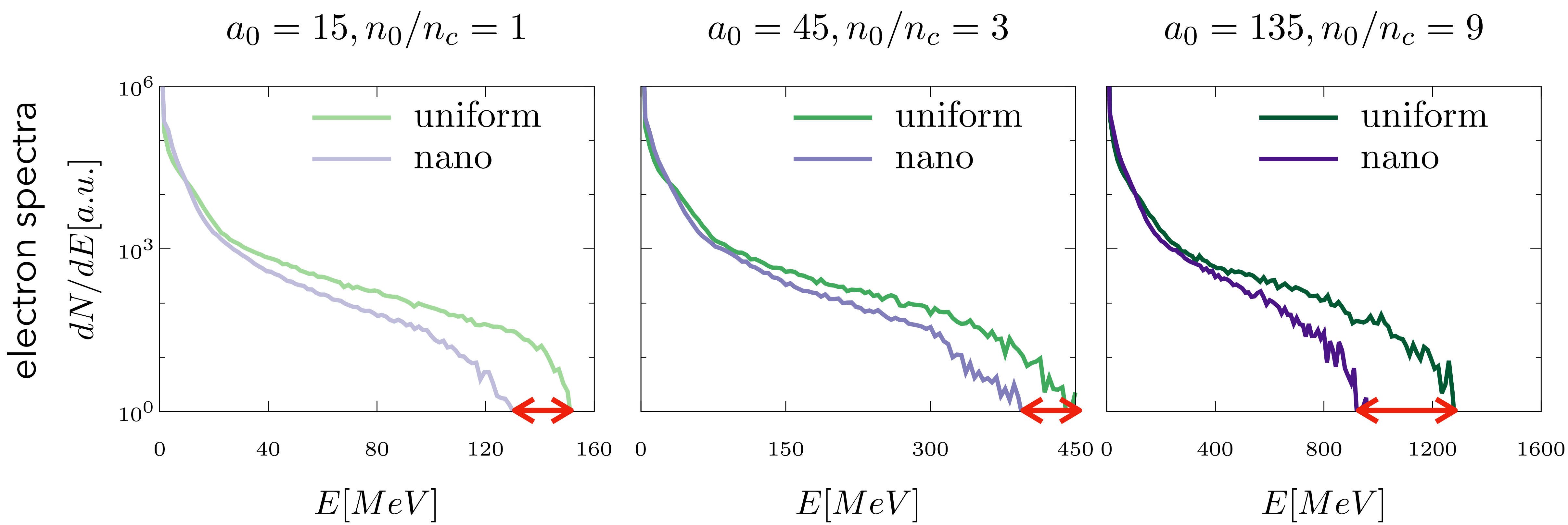
relativistic transparency

$$\bar{n} = \frac{n_0/n_c}{\sqrt{1+\frac{a_0^2}{2}}}$$

Fedeli et al. *Eur Phys J D* 71 (2017)

Main difference is energy repartition

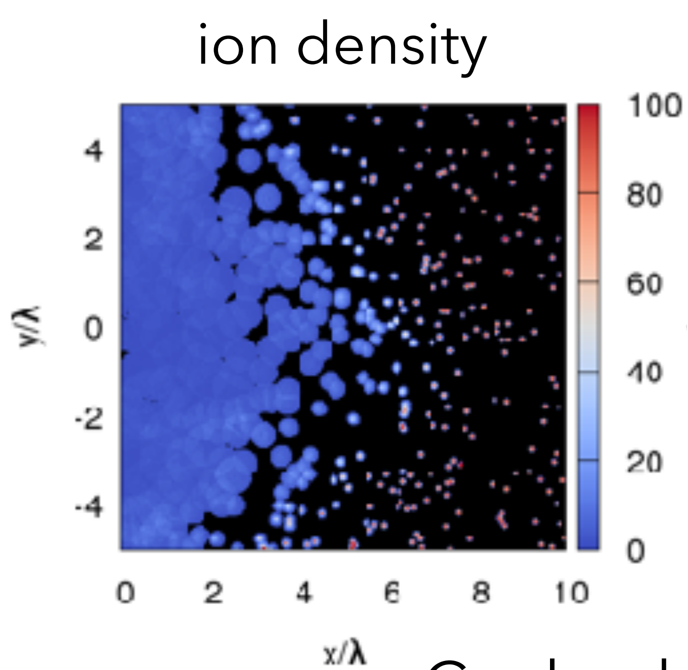
2D

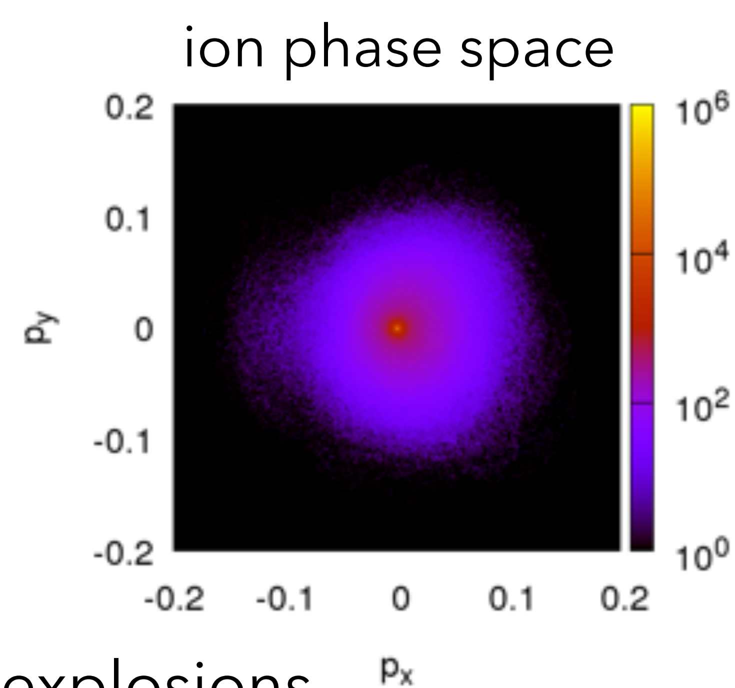


WITH STRUCTURE

less energy to hot electrons

→ Homogeneous foam should be better for ion acceleration!





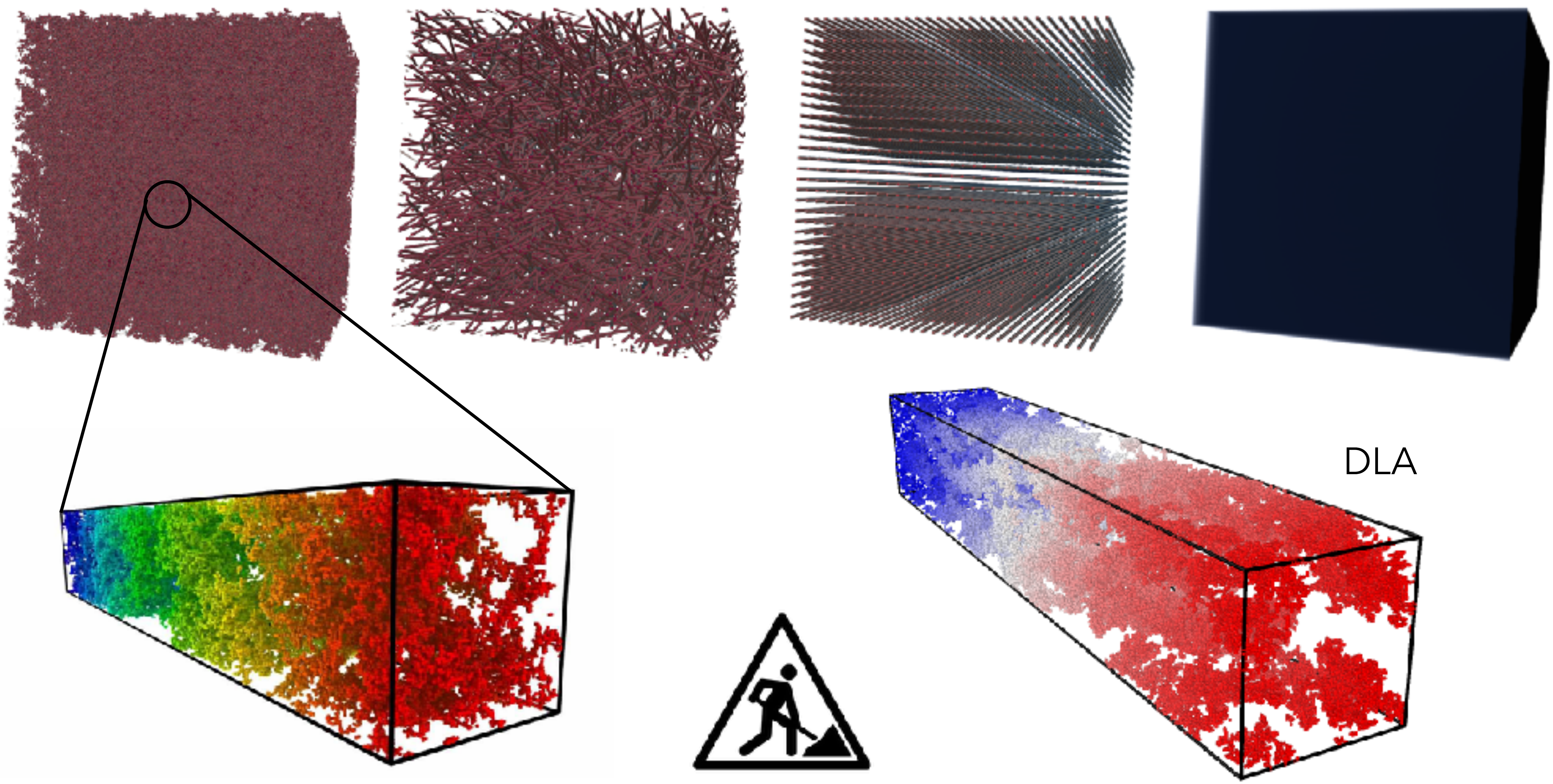
Coulomb explosions

Fedeli et al. *Eur Phys J D* 71 (2017)

Next: compare different kinds of nanostructures

3D

DLCCA | random wires | ordered wires | homogeneous

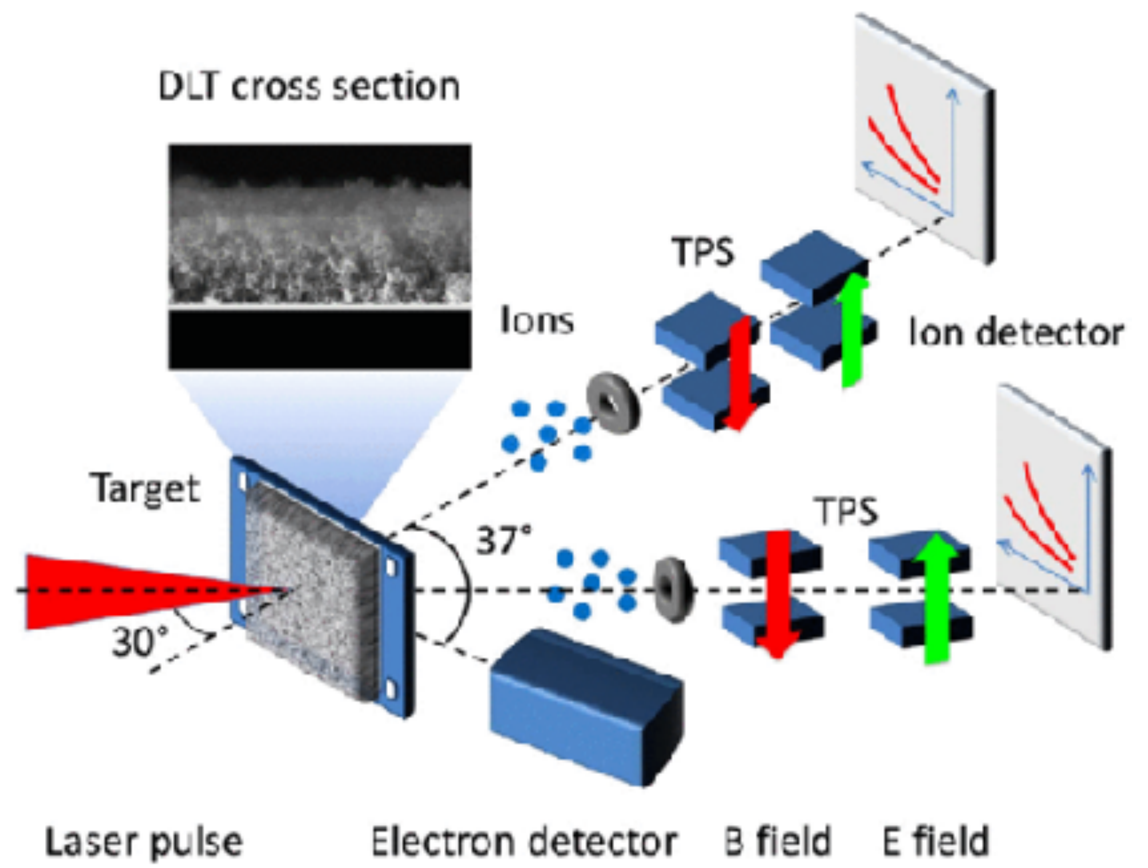


Ion acceleration experiments in laser facilities

3 recent campaigns:

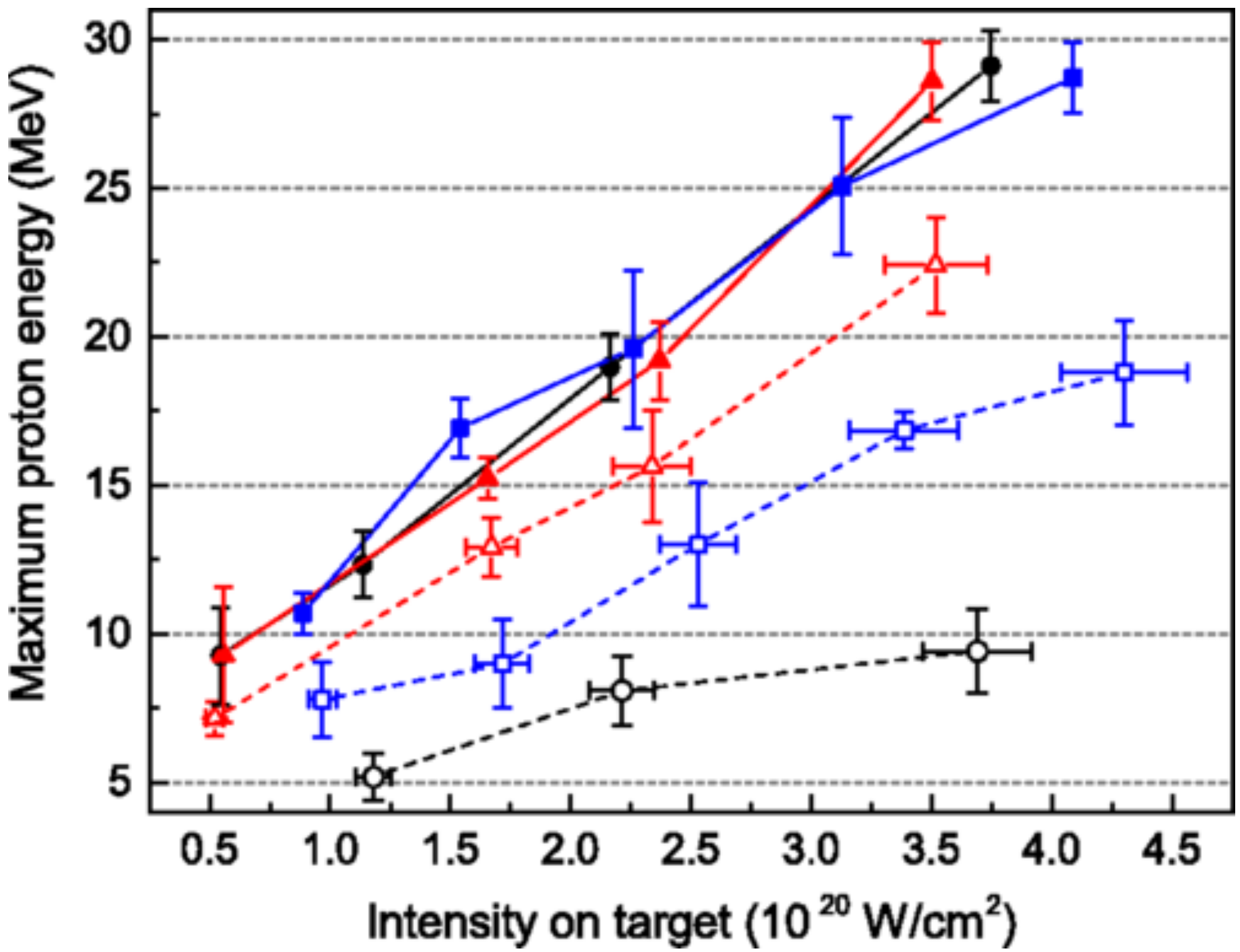
- **GIST**, Gwangju, South Korea, 2015-2016
- **HDZR**, Dresden, Germany, 2017
- **ILE**, Osaka, Japan, 2017

experimental setup



Foams wipe out polarization dependance

maximum proton energy vs. intensity



P-polarization

S-polarization

C-polarization

solid line: foam-attached target

dashed line: flat solid foil

Some parameters:

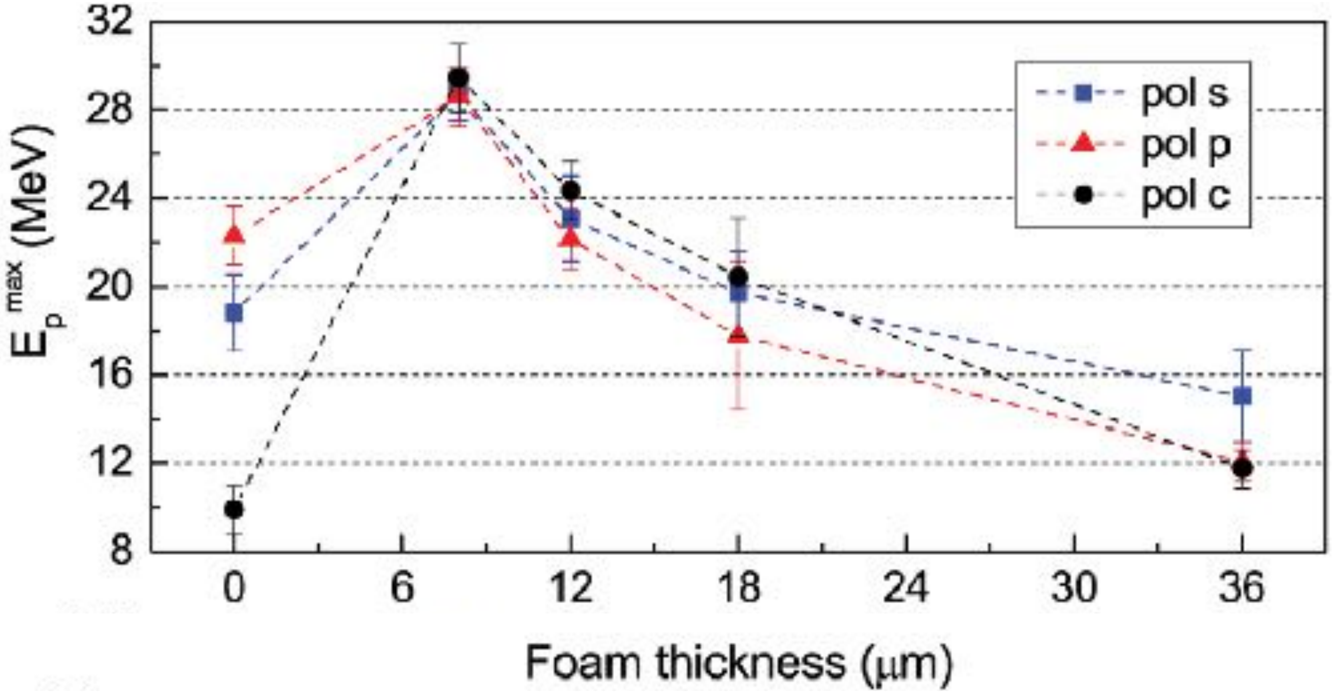
- substrate = Al 0.75 μm
- foam = C 8 μm
- energy on target = 8 J
- angle of incidence = 30°
- duration = 25 fs

Passoni et al. *Phys Rev Accel Beams* 19 (2016)

The thinner the foam the better?

Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology

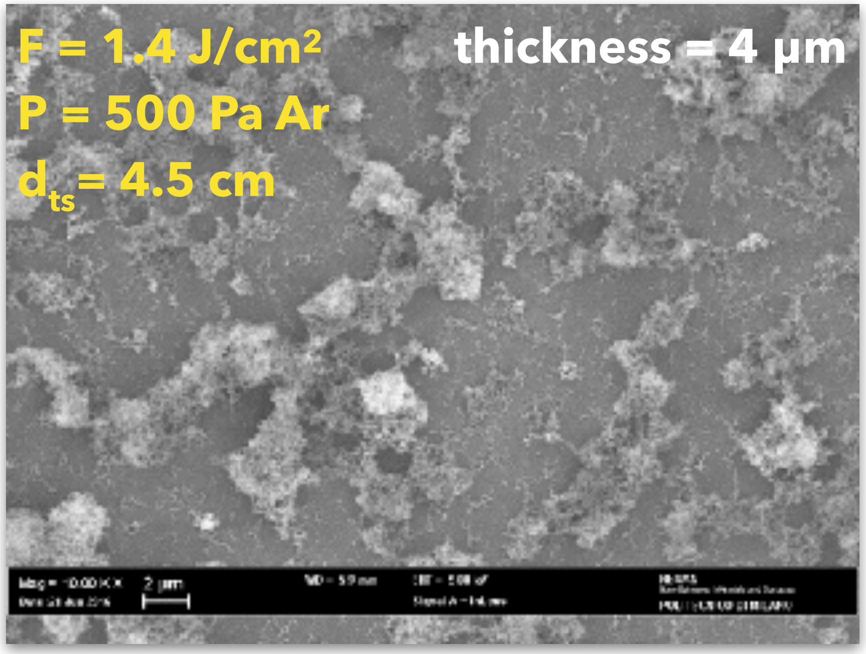
maximum proton energy vs. foam thickness

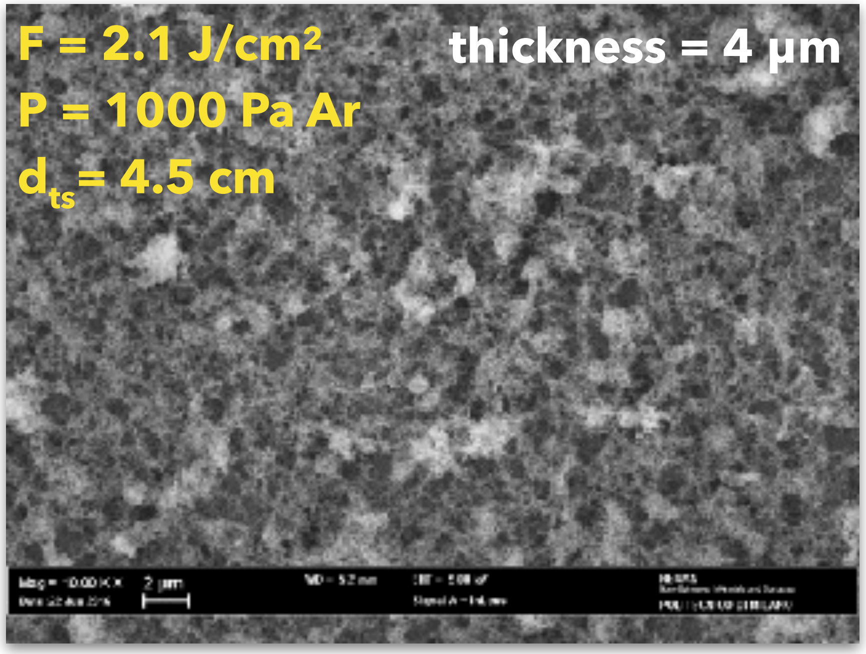


Some parameters:

- substrate = Al 0.75 μm
- **foam thickness = 8, 12, 18, 36 μm**
- energy on target = 8 J
- angle of incidence = 30°
- duration = 25 fs
- intensity = 4.5 x 10^{20} W/cm^2

Remark: reducing foam thickness is not trivial!



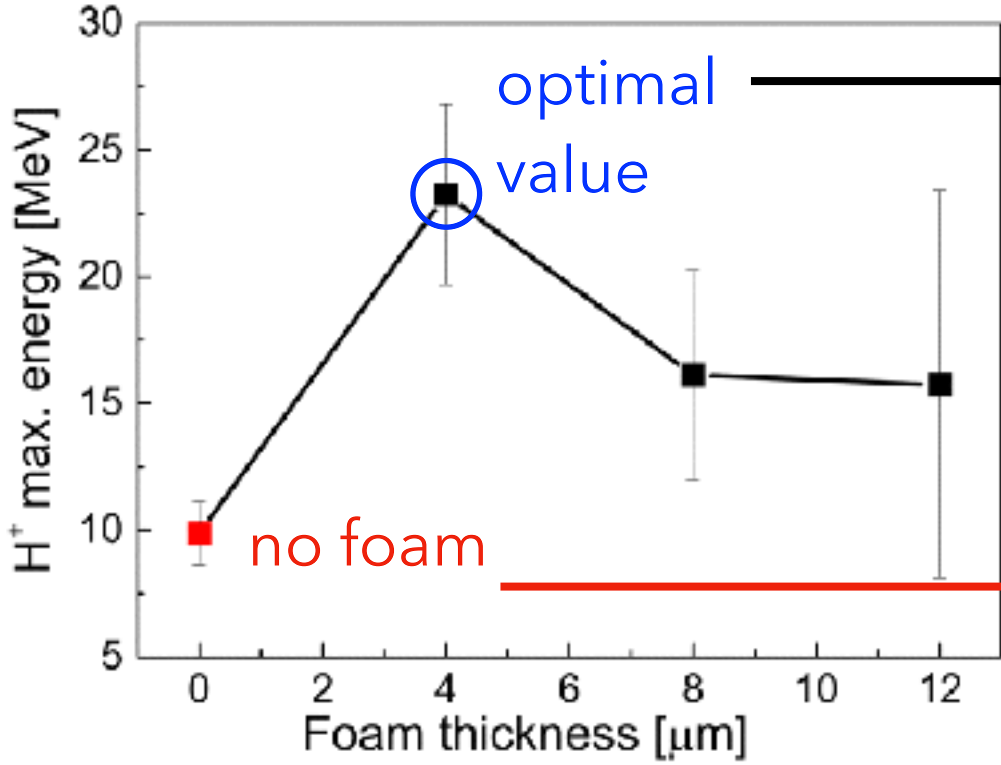


Prencipe et al. *Plasma Phys Contr F* 58 (2016) preliminary

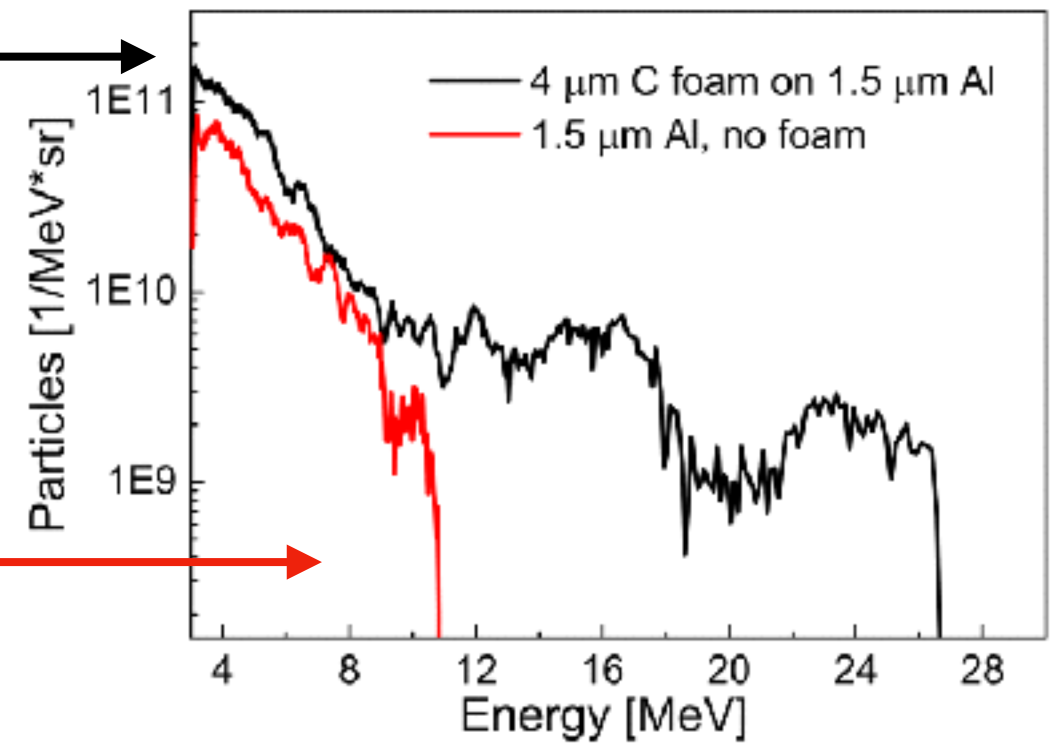
So far the thinner the foam the better

HZDR

maximum proton energy vs. foam thickness

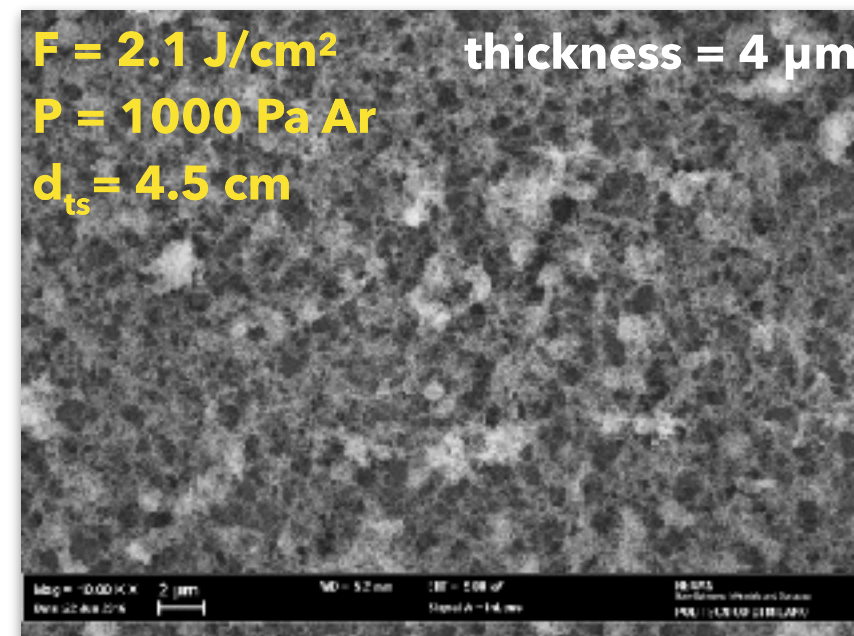


proton energy spectra



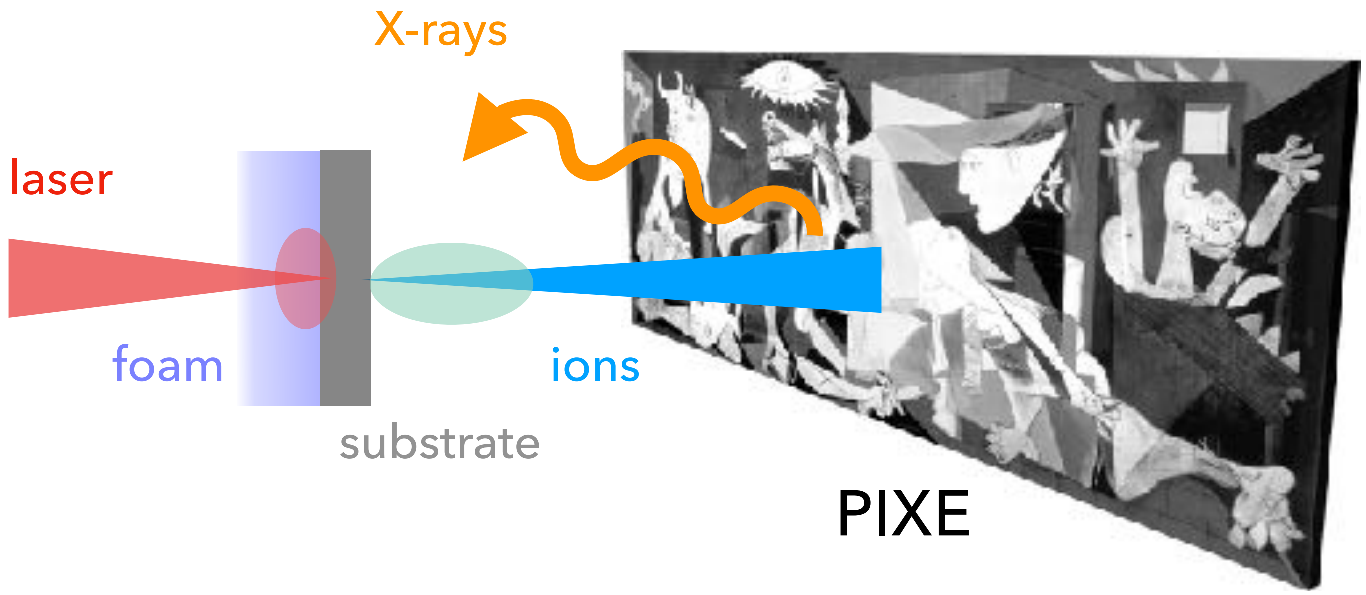
Some parameters:

- Energy on target = 2 J
- Intensity ≤ 5 x 10^{20} W/cm^2
- Power = 150 TW
- Angle of incidence = 2°
- Substrate = Al 1.5 µm
- Foam = C 4,8,12 µm

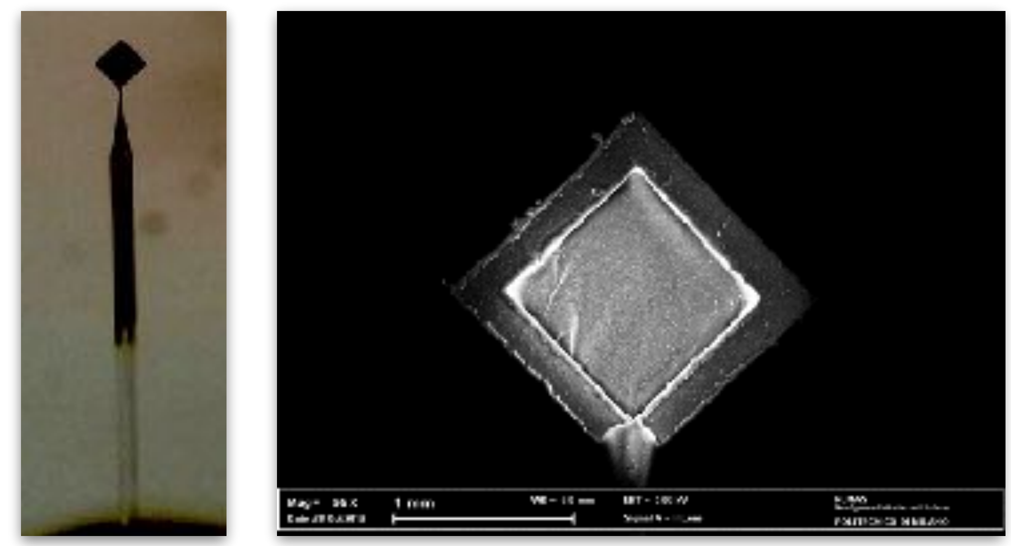


Some applications of laser-induced ions…

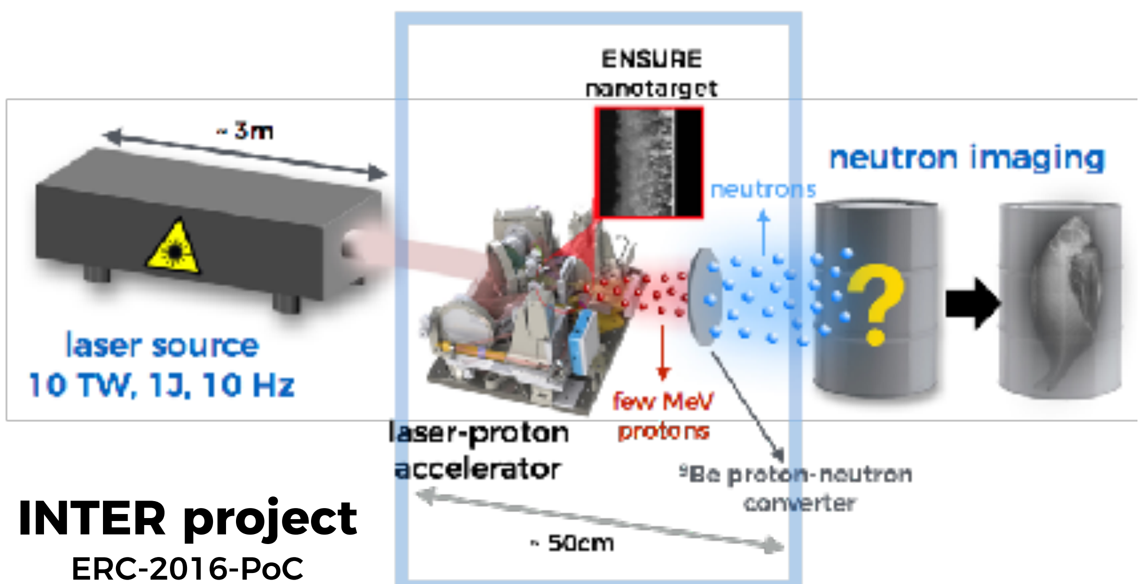
materials characterization



laser-induced collisionless shock



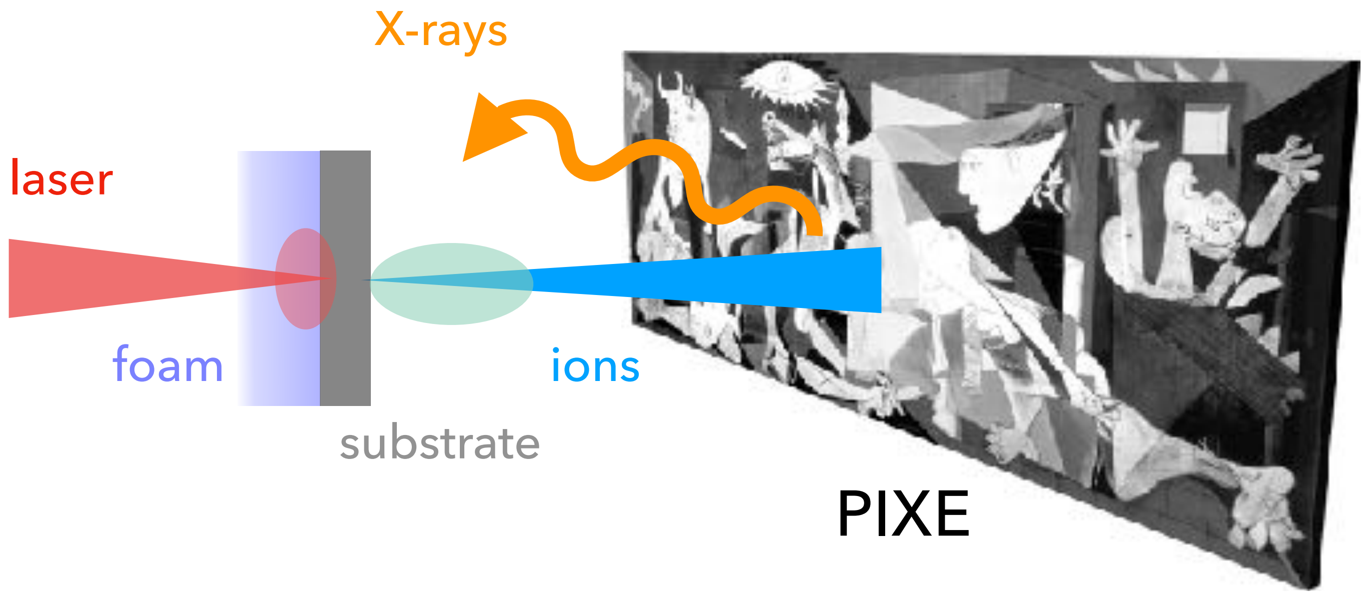
secondary neutron sources



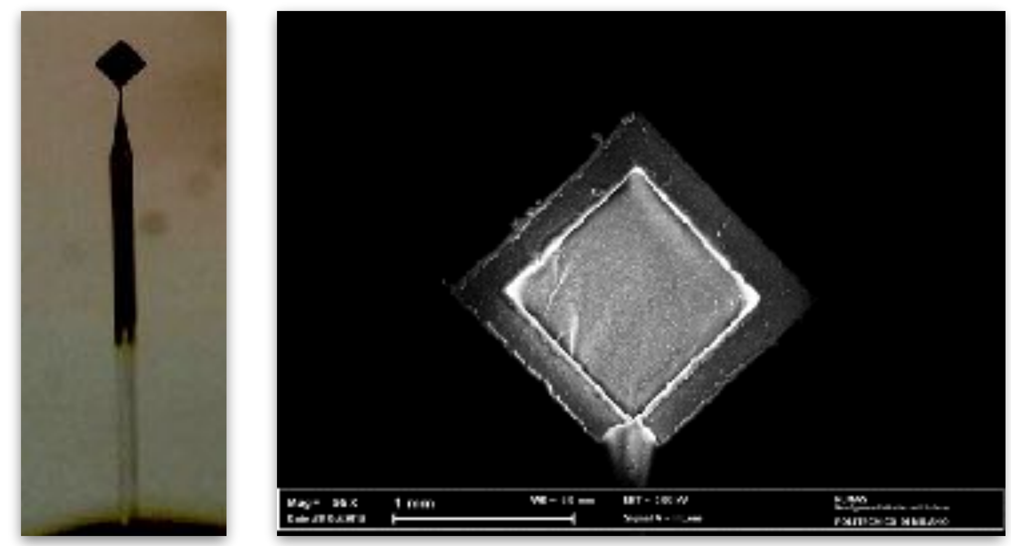
erc **INTER project**
ERC-2016-PoC

…and of foam-based multi-layer targets

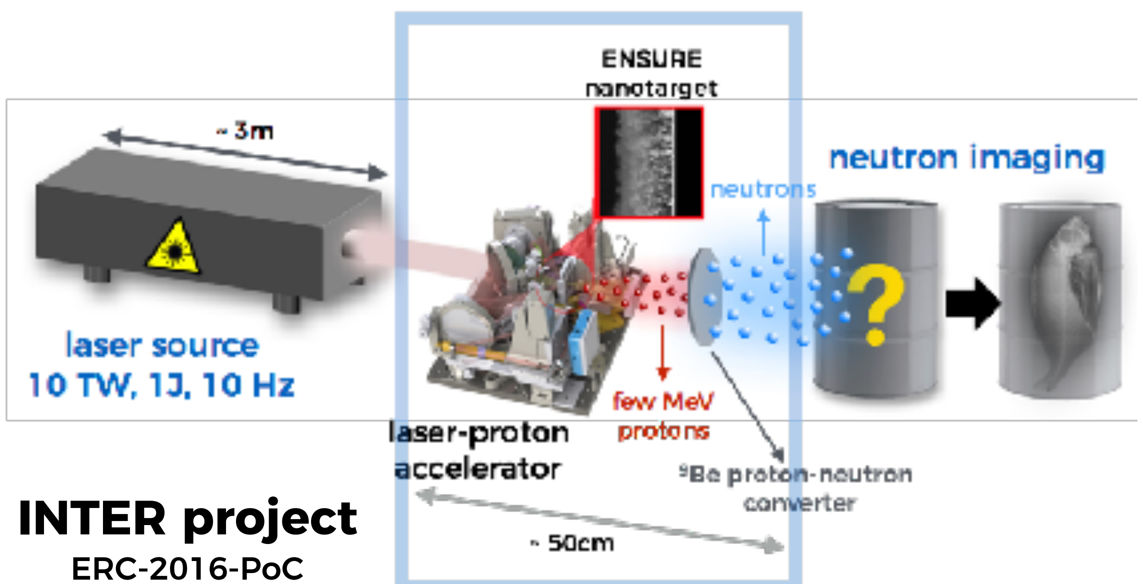
materials characterization



laser-induced collisionless shock

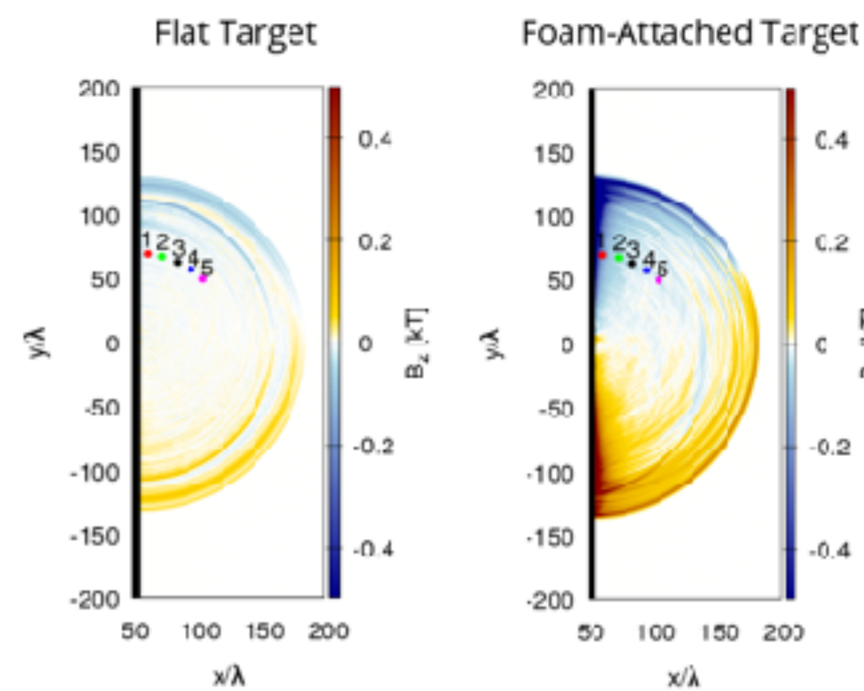


secondary neutron sources

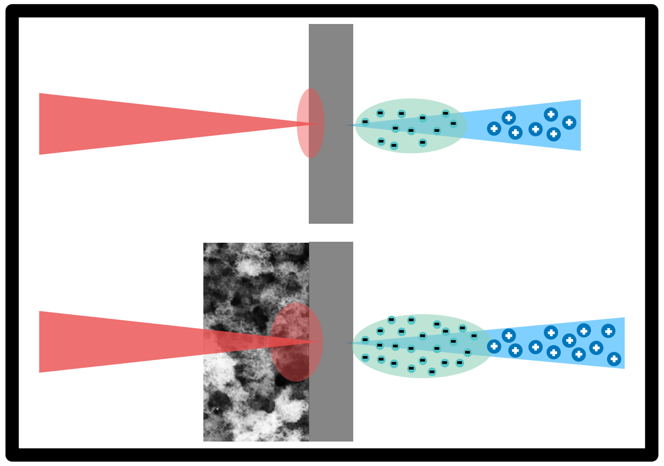


INTER project
ERC-2016-PoC

THz radiation enhancement

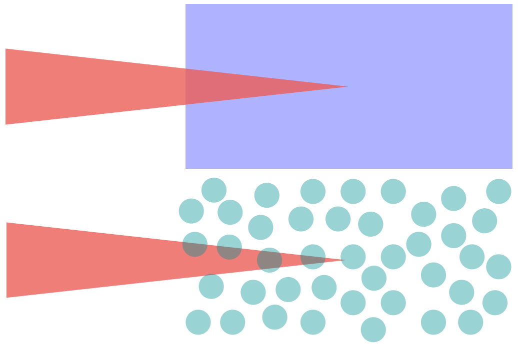


Conclusions

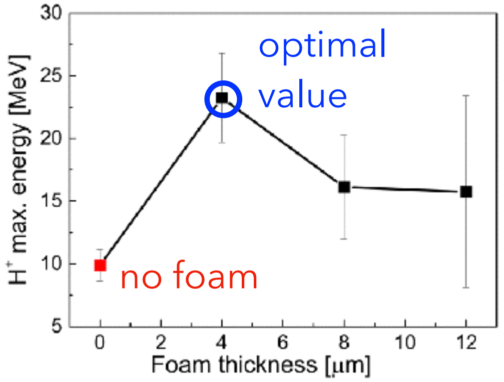


Near-critical nanostructured foams are complex materials useful to enhance laser-driven ion acceleration.

Production of foam materials with novel properties:
low thickness, down to 4 μm



Simulations to investigate foam behavior in the interaction:
uniform should be better for ion acceleration



Ion acceleration experiments with foam-attached targets:
promising results, thinner foams are more efficient

Thank you!

arianna.formenti@polimi.it
www.ensure.polimi.it
www.nanolab.polimi.it