Observation of the first ultra-high-energy cosmic neutrino with KM3NeT







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On behalf of the KM3NeT Collaboration



Seminario del Dipartimento di Fisica, UNIGE 20/03/2025



Dipartimento di Fisica Università degli studi di Genova

### Neutrinos at different energy scales







### Neutrinos and multi-messenger astronomy





### The idea of a under-ice/water neutrino telescope

#### ON HIGH ENERGY NEUTRINO PHYSICS

#### M. A. Markov

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, USSR

energy spectrum is reconstructed. We propose setting up apparatus in an underground lake or deep in the ocean in order to separate charged particle directions by Čerenkov radiation. We consider  $\mu$  mesons produced in the ground layers under the apparatus.

Rare events of a frequency of less than one per month are also detectable in cosmic rays. Experiments with cosmic rays are also of interest for their own sake because they may give information on possible high energy neutrinos of cosmic origin.

> Proceeding of 10th ICHEP 1960 Rochester (pag. 578)

B.Pontecorvo







15 pyto Totmerophing

C.N.Yang

G.Bernardini

M.Schwartz







Interesting discussion on that between the 5 physicists





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#### The timeline of Cherenkov neutrino telescopes at VHE

- DUMAND: Deep Underwater Muon and Neutrino Detector proposed by F. Reynes on 1975 (9 strings and 216 OMs, 4.6 Km deep of bottom level).
- BAIKAL Bezrukov, Domogatsky, Berezinsky, Zatsepin 1981 First site exploration and R&D, 1.3 Km depth, Baikal lake, from NT36 (36 OMs) to NT200 (200 OMs)
- NESTOR Pylos island, Greece 3.8 Km deep. Survey started in the 90's (12 floors with 14 OMs per floor, 168 in total)
- AMANDA South Pole 1996 started (19 strings and 677 OMs)
- ANTARES R&D started in 1997, off-shore of Toulon, 2.5 Km deep (12 strings, 75 OMs each string)
- NEMO R&D start in 1998 first site exploration in 2002, off-shore of Capopassero, 33.5 Km deep, phase 1 (4 floors 16 OMs), phase 2 (8 floors 32 OMs)
- IceCube construction 2005-2010, South Pole, 86 strings, 5160 OMs
- KM3NeT/ARCA construction started on Dec 2015, off-shore Capopassero, 2 building blocks with 115 strings per block and 18 Doms each string.





# KM3NeT is a Mediterranean research infrastructure hosting two neutrino detectors

- KM3NeT/ARCA (Astroparticle Research with Cosmics in the Abyss)
  - observation of high energy (GeV ÷ PeV) neutrino sources <sup>-</sup> a telescope offshore Capo Passero (Sicily-Italy) is in construction at a depth of 3500m
- KM3NeT/ORCA (Oscillation Research with Cosmics in the Abyss)
  - determination of the neutrino mass hierarchy f a detector offshore Toulon (France) able to detect neutrinos of tens of GeV is in construction at a depth of 2500m

#### 1 collaboration 1 technology 👉 2 detectors



Journal of Physics G: Nuclear and Particle Physics

PAPER • OPEN ACCESS

#### Letter of intent for KM3NeT 2.0

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# The Telescopes ORCA & ARCA





Vertical distance between DOMs ~36 m

#### |● Volume (0.5 × 2 ) km3





≈8 Mton

Depth ~2500 m

One block of 115 Detection Units

Distance between Detection Units ~20 m

Vertical distance between DOMs ~9 m



# The Telescopes ORCA & ARCA





# KM3NeT collaboration has grown from a core of a few European countries. It now comprises 62 institutes from 22 countries



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# Where KM3NeT takes shape





# KM3NeT today





### Science of the KM3NeT telescope

# Exploration of the neutrino universe

Study the fundamental properties of neutrinos

# Exploration of the abyss





### The Nature paper: 13 February 2025

#### The international journal of science / 13 February 2025

# nature

# **CASE CASE AND INFORMATION INFORMATION**

#### Article

#### Observation of an ultra-high-energy cosmic neutrino with KM3NeT

#### https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-08543-1 The KM3NeT Collaboration\*

#### Received: 19 August 2024

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Check for updates

The detection of cosmic neutrinos with energies above a teraelectronyolt (TeV) offers a unique exploration into astrophysical phenomena<sup>1-3</sup>. Electrically neutral and Interacting only by means of the weak interaction, neutrinos are not deflected by magnetic fields and are rarely absorbed by interstellar matter; their direction Indicates that their cosmic origin might be from the farthest reaches of the Universe. High-energy neutrinos can be produced when ultra-relativistic cosmic-ray protons or nuclei interact with other matter or photons, and their observation could be a signature of these processes. Here we report an exceptionally high-energy event observed by KM3NeT, the deep-sea neutrino telescope in the Mediterranean Sea\*, which we associate with a cosmic neutrino detection. We detect a muon with an estimated energy of 120+110 petaelectronvolts (PeV). In light of its enormous energy and near-horizontal direction, the muon most probably originated from the Interaction of a neutrino of even higher energy in the vicinity of the detector. The cosmic neutrino energy spectrum measured up to now5-7 falls steeply with energy. However, the energy of this event is much larger than that of any neutrino detected so far. This suggests that the neutrino may have originated in a different cosmic accelerator than the lower-energy neutrinos, or this may be the first detection of a cosmogenic neutrino8, resulting from the interactions of ultra-high-energy cosmic rays with background photons in the Universe.

Cosmic neutrinos may be produced either in the vicinity of the cosmicray source or along the cosmic-ray propagation path, leading to the production of secondary unstable particles, which subsequently decay into neutrinos. Cosmic rays interacting in the Earth's atmosphere produce atmospheric neutrinos, which form an experimental background to cosmic neutrinos. To detect cosmic neutrinos, very-large-volume neutrino observatories monitor natural bodies of water or ice for the Cherenkov light induced by the passage of the charged particles that result from neutrino interactions in or near the detector. The KM3NeT research infrastructure comprises two detector arrays of optical sensors deep in the Mediterranean Sea\*. The ARCA detector is located offshore Portopalo di Capo Passero, Sicily, Italy, at a depth of about 3,450 m and connected by means of an electro-optical cable to the shore station of the INFN, Laboratori Nazionali del Sud (LNS). The geometry of ARCA is optimized for the study of high-energy cosmic neutrinos. The ORCA detector is located at a depth of about 2.450 m. offshore Toulon, France, and is optimized for the study of neutrino oscillations. Both detectors are under construction but already operational. Once completed, they will comprise 345 (230 for ARCA and 115 for ORCA) vertical detection lines, each holding 18 optical modules. Each module hosts 31 3-inch photomultiplier tubes (PMTs) pointing in all directions and ensuring 4rt coverage?, Both detectors can identify all flavours of neutrino interactions: those producing long-lived muons, denominated 'tracks', and those producing electromagnetic and hadronic cascades at the neutrino interaction vertex, denominated 'showers'.

Of interest in this article are neutrino interactions that produce high-energy muons, which can travel several kilometres in seawater before being absorbed. These muons lose energy as they propagate mainly because of stochastic radiative processes such as bremsstrahlung, pair production and photonuclear reactions. The average energy loss per unit path length is proportional to the muon energy. Electromagnetic cascades arise from these stochastic energy losse; the number of charged particles that produce Cherenkov radiation in the cascades is proportional to the amount of energy lost by the muon in the signals on the PMTs (denoted as 'hits') are used to reconstruct the muon direction and energy.

Although atmospheric neutrinos are more abundant at lower energies («TeV), cosmic neutrinos should become dominant at energies above 100 TeV. The neutrino energy is thus a crucial parameter for establishing a cosmic origin. The lceCube Collaboration announced the discovery of PeV cosmic neutrinos in 2013 (ref. 10). The most energetic neutrinos reported so far are a  $6.05 \pm 0.72$  PeV electron antineutrino above 10 PeV from the observation of a 4.4-PeV muon<sup>5</sup>.

#### The neutrino event KM3-230213A

An extremely high-energy muon traversing the ARCA detector was observed on 13 February 2023 at 01:16:47 UTC. This event is referred to here as KM3-230213A. At that time, 21 detection lines were in operation.

\*A list of authors and their affiliations appears at the end of the paper. Se-mail: km3net-po@km3net.de



# A unique event observed by KM3NeT

The KM3NeT detector was taking data with the configuration of ARCA21 from 23/09/22 up to 11/09/23 moving then to a higher number of detection units





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# A unique event observed by KM3NeT







# From the reconstructed $\mu$ to the $\nu$

The muon energy is obtained From the quantity of light measured  $E_{\mu} = 120^{+110}_{-60} \text{ PeV}$ 

The corresponding neutrino Energy is

 $E_{\nu} = 220^{+570}_{-100} \text{ PeV}$ 

#### A horizontal muon caused by a neutrino



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# From the reconstructed $\mu$ to the $\nu$





The peculiar properties of KM3-230213A

Taking into account the quality cuts applied to the data it was clear that cannot be a background event and at the same time we have seen a very rare event.



The contamination of atmospheric neutrino with the selection made is at the level  $1-5 imes10^{-5}$  events per year



#### The peculiar properties of KM3-230213A On the left we reported the Effective Area obtained using the quality cuts used for the Selection of KM3-230213A, on the right the equivalent diffuse flux needed to produce one event with the time of data taking of ARCA19/21 KM3NeT coll. Nature 638. 376-382 (2025) 10000 times more energetic than LHC LHC ICECUBE KM3NET **ARCA21** Effective Area 10<sup>3</sup> 10 Effective area [m<sup>2</sup>] 10<sup>2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup> sr<sup>-1</sup>] IceCubelEHE (2018) 10-7 ANTARES (2024) 10<sup>1</sup> $E^2 \Phi_{\nu+\bar{\nu}}^{1f}$ [GeV cm<sup>-2</sup> 10-8 10<sup>0</sup> 10-9 $10^{-1}$ Factor 36 X 10-10 10-2 10-11 105 106 107 108 109 1010 1011 104



107

108

Neutrino energy [GeV]

10<sup>9</sup>

1010

1011

105

INFŃ

106

Neutrino energy [GeV]

#### The equivalent flux of KM3-230213A & the cosmic $\nu$





#### The equivalent flux of KM3-230213A & the cosmic $\nu$

When considering the null observation of IceCube and Pierre Auger telescopes in this energy range The equivalent flux move from  $5.8 \times 10^{-8} GeVcm^{-2}s^{-1}sr^{-1}$  to  $7.5 \times 10^{-10} GeVcm^{-2}s^{-1}sr^{-1}$ 

In this case the measurement of KM3-230213A can be considered a fluctuation of 2.2 - 2.6  $\sigma$ 





# Production of the cosmic $\nu$



 $p + \gamma \rightarrow \Delta^+ \rightarrow \begin{cases} \pi^+ + n & 1/3 \text{ of all cases} \\ \pi^0 + p & 2/3 \text{ of all cases} \end{cases}$ 

 $p + p \rightarrow \begin{cases} \pi^{+} + \text{anything} & 1/3 \text{ of all cases} \\ \pi^{-} + \text{anything} & 1/3 \text{ of all cases} \\ \pi^{0} + \text{anything} & 1/3 \text{ of all cases} \end{cases}$ 

$$\pi^+ \rightarrow \nu_\mu + \mu^+ \rightarrow \nu_\mu + e^+ + \nu_e + \bar{\nu}_\mu$$

When a accelerated Cosmic Ray interact with a nucleon or a photon in a astrophysical environment charged pions are produced and then they decay on  $\nu/\bar{\nu}$ ,  $\mu^{+/-}$ ,  $e^{+/-}$ 





# Galactic emission hypothesys

#### The event KM3-230213A it is hardly connected to the Galactic emission

Map from: Gaggero et al. ApJ Letter 2015

Kra-Gamma (2023) Skymap (summed over all energy bins) in log10(E [GeV])



- It is difficult to imagine that a Galactic accelerator can reach the EeV energies
- A CR with such energy cannot be contained in the Galaxy
- If a local accelerator would be connected with this event we would probably have seen a strong electromagnetic counterpart.



# Galactic emission hypothesys

The event KM3-230213A it is hardly connected to the diffuse Galactic emission



KM3NeT collaboration arXV2502.0837

In this part of the Galaxy, Homogeneous and disohomgeneaous Cosmic-ray Transport scenarios does not different drastically, however the reported equivalent flux of KM3-230213A is hardly conceivable with a Galactic diffuse component.



# Galactic emission hypothesis

KM3NeT coll. arXiv 2502.08387

Whitin the 3° error there are no Galactic potential accelerators And no VHE gamma-ray counterpart have been observed in the mentioned region by HAWC and LHAASO





# Extragalactic emission hypothesis



KM3NeT coll. arXiv 2502.08484 KM3NeT coll. Nature 638, 376-382 (2025)

Within the angular incertitude of the teak-like event a search for known extragalactic sources have been performed from radio to gamma-ray.

The J2000 coordinates of KM3-230213A are: RA = 94.3°, DEC = 7.8° With R(50%) =1.2 and R(99%) = 3.0°, 17 Blazars have been identified within the 3° region, with no significant activity associations looking at 4FGL, e-Rosita, VLA, WISE, NRAO





# Extragalactic emission hypothesis

Even if no significant correlations have been highlighted it is interesting to pose the attention on three possible coincident flaring activities on radio, X and gamma-ray bands from the reported blazars.





A.MARINELLI

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# Extragalactic MM in more detail





Year long gamma-ray enhancement activity Coincident with UHE u

(a) The *Fermi*-LAT light curve and a VLBI image of 0605-085: the brightest radio source in the neutrino localisation region that experiences a gamma-ray flaring activity around the neutrino arrival (Section 5.1).



(b) The radio light curve for PMN J0606-0724 that experiences a major flare in close coincidence to the neutrino arrival (Section 5.2).



(c) The X-ray light curve for MRC 0614-083 that indicates a flaring activity around the neutrino arrival (Section 5.3).

### Radio flare with a time difference of 5 days of UHE $\nu$ arrival

The sparse e-ROSITA sample only extend to ~ 488 days before The UHE ν leaving 3.2 years gap Between it and swift-XRT observations



### Summarizing the Extra Galactic Multi Messenger associations

- 1. Blazar MRC 0614-083 is the closest objects, located 0.6° away from the best fit neutrino position. An indication of the X-ray flare cannot be noted.
- 2. Blazar 0605-085 is one of the 50 brightest blazars on the sky on parsec scales. A long-term gamma-ray flare peaking before the  $\nu$  arrival is observed, however not very significant.

3. Blazar PMN J0606-0724 has presented the major radio flare, which peaks at 15 GHz within 5 days from the UHE  $\nu$  arrival, the pre-trial chance coincidence p-value is estimated to be 0.26.



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# Checking the source emitting power

Considering a single emitting Blazar to produce the neutrino observed

 $E_{\nu} \sim 100 E_{17} \,\mathrm{PeV}$  with  $0.72 \lesssim E_{17} \lesssim 26$   $E_p \sim 20 E_{\nu} \gtrsim 1.5 \,\mathrm{EeV}$ 

A single source at  $z \approx 1$  (Table 1; luminosity distance  $d_L \approx 7 \,\mathrm{Gpc}$ )

The Luminosity and the Jet Power can be estimated with a rough calculation assuming a beaming factor of  $f_{beam} \sim 10^3$  when the emission is concentrated within 4° around the Jet direction.

This imply a source luminosity 
$$L_{\nu} = \frac{E_{\nu} \cdot 4\pi d_L^2}{A \cdot T \cdot f_{\text{beam}}} \approx \frac{1.5 \cdot 10^{49} \text{erg s}^{-1}}{\frac{T}{yr} \cdot f_{\text{beam}}}.$$
  
The hadronic power of the jet  $L_p = 20L_{\nu} \approx \frac{3 \cdot 10^{50} \text{erg s}^{-1}}{\frac{T}{yr} \cdot f_{\text{beam}}}.$ 

For a tipical blazar the power of the jet is  $10^{45} ergs^{-1}$  which requires hundreds of years to obtain the same flux with the same beaming factor.





# Extragalactic transient hypothesis

KM3NeT coll. Nature 638, 376-382 (2025)





When checking the spatial and temporal Coincidence with transient events from GCNs **no** <u>GRB, TDEs or supernova</u> **has been identified** as a possible origin of the UHE neutrino event

Some considerations about the single transient events:

- ) The power of such events can be quite higher respect to a blazar flare.
- 2) This hypothesis can avoid to deal with the PA and IceCube upper limits for the equivalent flux.
  3) They should not be necessarily accompained by an EM counterpart.

A Lorentz Violation case can drastically increase the time window of MM association for GRB cases A.Camelia et al. arXiv 2502.13093



# The diffuse extragalactic hypothesis



The vanilla band represents different classes of extragalactic objects, mostly variable and transients as Blazars, GRBs, TDEs with luminosity between  $10^{44}$  to  $10^{54}$  erg/s

These neutrinos are mostly produced through the photohadronic processes when accelerated cosmic rays interact with thermal or leptonic emitted photons.

### Event rate expected in ARCA21 for different diffuse flux cases.



# The diffuse extragalactic hypothesis

Considering a population of long-lasting emitting sources to produce the neutrino observed



However to explain the UHECR measure by the PA and TA you need  $n_{UHECR} \ge 10^4 Gpc^{-3}$ 

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# Extragalactic emitter candidates

#### When we do a population study up to a certain redshift:



- Important constrains by the Fermi-LAT diffuse gamma-ray emission and IceCube observations.
- Function luminosity distribution known.



- No constrain from the Fermi-LAT diffuse gamma-ray emission, staking constrain from IceCube observations.
- Function luminosity distribution known (SFR)



- No constrain from the Fermi-LAT diffuse gamma-ray emission and IceCube observations.
- Function luminosity distribution ?



## The single transient source hypothesis

In case of a single emitter lasting 1 y it is possible to constrain the inter galactic magnetic field and the redshift also looking for the equivalent electromagnetic

cascade considering a  $E_{\pi_0} = 440 PeV$ 





Halzen et al.







The cosmic rays accelerated on the sources can interact with the background photons (CMB or EBL) during their path to the earth and produce neutrinos called "cosmogenic"





### The deep universe observed through the $\nu$

For the observed energy we can make the hypothesis to explore of the Universe never explored before, or in other words the most faraway accelerators observed for such energies





KM3NeT coll.

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### Modeling the extragalactic injectors

#### Aloisio et al. JCAP 10 (2015) 006



Figure 2. [Left Panel] Fluxes of protons expected at Earth in proton-only scenarios with various models for the cosmological evolution of sources (solid red: no evolution; dashed green: SFR evolution; dot-dashed blue: AGN evolution [38]) normalized to TA data (purple squares); Auger data (olive disks) and KASCADE-Grande data [63] (blue triangles) are also shown for comparison. [Right Panel] Fluxes of neutrinos in the same scenarios (same color code; from bottom to top: no evolution, SFR, and AGN), with colored bands showing the difference between the Stecker (solid) [46, 47] and Kneiske (dashed) [48] EBL models; thin solid lines are neutrino fluxes obtained taking into account only the interaction with CMB photons.





#### Looking at UHECR composition



**Figure 11**. Left: the effect of the uncertainties from models on the energy spectrum. Right: the effect on the relative abundances at the top of the atmosphere. The bands represent the maximal variations given by the results in Table 3. The shaded grey area indicates the energy region where energy-by-energy estimates of the mass composition are not available (i.e. above the median of the highest energy bin used for  $X_{\text{max}}$  data) and mass predictions are mainly based on the shape of the all-particle spectrum.

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#### Cosmological model used for the paper

KM3NeT coll. arXiv 2502.08508

Cosmological framework to compute neutrino fluxes produced in EG propagation;

Assume that each source is identical and distributed with a given evolution m  $\frac{dN}{dE} \propto f_A \left(\frac{E}{10^{18} eV}\right)^{-\gamma} \times f_{cut}(E, Z_A R_{cut}) \times (1+z)^m$ 

Fit to UHECR data —> normalization to neutrino flux.

Important parameters to fix : m and z. All the others are fitted to describe UHECR data.



![](_page_39_Picture_7.jpeg)

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#### Fitting cosmic-ray data with different evolution parameter m

![](_page_40_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_40_Figure_2.jpeg)

![](_page_40_Figure_3.jpeg)

![](_page_40_Picture_4.jpeg)

![](_page_41_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_41_Picture_2.jpeg)

![](_page_41_Picture_3.jpeg)

The emission rate density L(E, z) of cosmic rays per coming volume can be described as:

> The coming sources density can be described by :

![](_page_42_Figure_3.jpeg)

Source Injection Evolution Term $L(E,z) = S(z) imes Q_{CR}(E)$ 

$$S(z) \propto (1+z)^m$$

KM3NeT coll. arXiv 2502.08508

To account for the observed event We possibly need a excessively Strong evolution of sources, More luminous sources.

![](_page_42_Picture_8.jpeg)

![](_page_43_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_43_Picture_2.jpeg)

#### New constrain on proton fraction from IceCube

IceCube presents a new constrain on UHE neutrino flux, Considering 12.6 years of data taking and a new UL up to  $10^{11}\,{\rm GeV}$ 

![](_page_44_Figure_2.jpeg)

![](_page_44_Picture_3.jpeg)

IceCube coll.

arXiv 2502.01963

#### Possible origin of KM3-230213A from heavy DM decay

![](_page_45_Figure_1.jpeg)

KM3NeT coll. &Chianese, Morisi, Saviano

Under study the hypothesis that The UHE neutrino event would have been originated from the decay of heavy Dark Matter, a side three Examples of different DM candidates.

Many interesting hypotheses are under study for Physics BSM, many related works appear in the literature to explain KM3-230213A

![](_page_45_Picture_5.jpeg)

# Summary

- KM3NeT observed the most energetic neutrino ever detected, ~36 times more than most energetic one measured by IceCube, ~10000 times the energies at LHC.
- The event KM3-230213A suggests the rising of a new cosmic component in this energy range.
- The UHE measured event did not present at the moment significant correlations with sources known in the electromagnetic band.
- More observations on this energy range are needed to characterize better this new component.

![](_page_46_Picture_5.jpeg)

![](_page_46_Picture_8.jpeg)

#### Thank you for the Attention

![](_page_47_Picture_1.jpeg)

![](_page_47_Picture_2.jpeg)

![](_page_47_Picture_3.jpeg)