

The reduction techniques of the particle background for the ATHENA X-IFU instrument at L2 orbit: Geant4 and the CryoAC.

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We present the particle background reduction techniques aimed to increase the X-IFU sensitivity, which is reduced by primary protons of both solar and Cosmic Rays origin, and secondary electrons. The adopted solutions involve Monte Carlo simulation by both Geant4 toolkit related to the "expected" background at L2 orbit through the payload mass model and the ray tracing technique to evaluate the soft protons components focused by the optics to the main detector, and the development of an active Cryogenic AntiCoincidence detector and a passive electron shielding to meet the scientific requirements.

The Geant4 simulation

Parameter	Value	What it defines	Main science drivers
Background level	$< 5 \times 10^{-3}$ cts/s/cm ² /keV	Defines the anti coincidence performance and the passive shielding of the detector	Matter assembly in clusters - Metal production and dispersal - low surface brightness objects

$$F_{\min} = \frac{n_{\sigma}}{QA_s} \sqrt{\frac{B_{\text{th}} + Q\Omega_j A_s}{t\Delta E}}$$

To achieve the ATHENA scientific objectives a particle background level $B_{\text{th}} < 5 \times 10^{-3}$ cts/s/cm²/keV is required. Since there are no data from X-ray instruments in L2 we estimate and improve this value with Geant4 Monte Carlo simulations.

Impact to CryoAC design (1)

We exploited Geant4 simulations to investigate the impact of the detectors design on the particle background.

One of the first problems regarding the old baseline design we addressed was the presence of a gap among the cryoAC pixels. This induced an increase of the background in the pixels placed among the gap. We estimated that for a 50 μm gap this would be noticeable in a 60 ks observation.

A solution was proposed to eliminate the gap with 4 pixel on two different planes and slightly overlapping, but this turned out to be worse, since we created 4 different background zones involving the entire detector instead of a tiny strip, so we decided to reduce this gap as much as possible instead.

Impact to CryoAC design (2)

Another issue regarding the old baseline was the presence of an increased background level at the edges of the main detector.

This was caused by high energy particles with very skew trajectories that the CryoAC could not intercept.

To address this problem we studied the impact of the CryoAC size on the background level, and decided to increase the CryoAC size by 40%.

This allowed to obtain a more homogeneous background level along the whole detector surface.

Ongoing activities:

- Satellite, cryostat and FPA mass models update
- Relevant physics models validation/update
- Inclusion of the ray-tracing code in Geant4 to estimate the low energy particles contributions to the particle background
- FPA improvement and L2 environment models improvement
- CryoAC performances improvement

The CryoAC: an instrument inside another instrument.

- 4 pixels made of Silicon absorber sensed by Ir TES. T_{bath} = 50 mK
- CFEE: SQUID + RF filtering
- SQUID (from VTT): We adopt a single stage SQUID, Series Array, at 50 mK
- RF filtering at 2K to reduce EMI towards the FPA
- WFEE (1 board-for-4 pixels) it biases the CryoAC pxl and the SQUIDs; standard FLL
- WBEE (2 boards: N + R) will process the analog pulses from the WFEE, and HK to the ICU; → No VETO onboard. It manages the WFEE in diagnostic mode (FLL, V-PHI, test pulses...).

